

Photography masterclass:

8. Image manipulation

Professional photographer **Zak Waters** originally started out as an assistant to several Magnum photographers and now freelances for the quality UK press and news agencies. Here he explains how to manipulate images



Not long after photography was first invented, photographers started to experiment with image manipulation – Elise Wright and Frances Griffiths'

famous Fairy and Gnome photographs (taken around 1917) are perfect examples.

With today's technology, we can literally do anything we want with images. None

of my colleagues in the editorial field would deliberately go out of their way to manipulate a photograph to lie about the truth, but in the fields of advertising or art there can be value in creating new perspectives and challenging perceptions.

The great leader in image manipulation is Photoshop, the current one being Adobe Photoshop CS3. Photoshop is the industry standard image editing programme for the professional market. Adobe Photoshop Elements is the consumer orientated version – it doesn't have all of CS3's features but is a far cheaper alternative.

A good start when manipulating images is to calibrate your monitor, so that what you see on screen is similar to what you see when the image is printed. This can be a complex procedure, but there is plenty of help around and a wide variety of software packages to suit your needs.

Using Photoshop can be daunting. I've been using it for 8 years and I'm still learning. Focus on what you need to know and you'll gradually pick up other things once you've mastered a few editing tools.

Learning to resize your image in the Image Size dialog box is a good start, as

you may need to adjust the size to upload to the web or to print it out. Understanding pixel dimensions, document sizes and resolution is also important. Changing the red, green or blue (RGB) channels or the grey scale by using the 'levels', 'curves' or 'brightness & contrast' controls is a key tool. The Clone Stamp tool is very good for eliminating dust and scratch marks from your image. It takes a sample of the image, which you can then apply over another part of the same image. It's good for duplicating an object or removing any defects on the image due to a dirty camera sensor.

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