Camera club Communiqué

October 2020 — U3A ACT Australia

Adobe Changes and Additions

Although there are several alternatives these days to Adobe's *Photoshop* and *Lightroom*, these two seem firmly at the forefront of most photographers' post-processing toolbox. Over the past year or so, there have been some major additions and changes to these two products and incidentally, to *Photoshop's* RAW processor, *Adobe Camera Raw.* While newer contenders for market share in the digital post-processing game have bounded ahead using Artificial Intelligence in particular, but also in writing code which makes for faster performance, the Adobe products have been rather tardy. Of course, the newer processors such as *ON1*, *Affinity* and *Luminar,* do not have the dead weight of heritage code to accommodate (they don't have to be as backwards compatible). Although the new features of the Adobe programs have been around now for a year or so, if you haven't tried them, then there are several YouTube videos to help you get to understand and use them. Taking the programs in turn:

Photoshop: Those of us who have become accustomed to using the *Quick Selection Tool* will now find a vastly improved alternative called the *Object Selection Tool* . This should be available in the Toolbar, but if it does not show when the program is upgraded, then go to *Edit/Toolbar/Restore Defaults* and it should then appear along with *Magic Wand* and *Quick Selection Tool.* How to use the new tool and how to finesse its use can be seen in a couple of videos, one by Matt Kloskowski, *NEW Photoshop Update... AMAZING Hair Selections - (June 2020 What's New).* The second is *Top 20 NEW Features & Updates EXPLAINED! - Photoshop 2020.* This latter deals much more comprehensively with changes to *Photoshop*, including

inter alia changes to text layer properties, updated lens blur, enhanced transform warp and "the fancy crop tool".

Adobe Camera Raw

ACR is a *Photoshop* plug-in which allows *Photoshop* to open RAW files and process them before exporting back to the parent program. It is also the parent of *Lightroom,* the more comprehensive processor having been evolved from ACR. For years most of us have much preferred to work in *Lightroom,* many of us then exporting our work to *Photoshop* for local modifications rather than use the *Adjustment Brushes* available in LR.

In its June 2020 update to v.12.3, ACR now takes on a format very similar to LR and offer most of the options available in what was once its offspring. Perhaps Adobe is aiming to merge the two major programs, PS and LR, in order to compete with other more recent programs such as ON1 and others which can already do more than LR — for example, LR cannot do Layers, PS can; combine the two and users don't have the trouble of importing, exporting and all the rest of the fuss and bother we now have using two programs.

A rather basic view of the new ACR can be seen in *What's new in Adobe Camera Raw 12.3;* a more detailed account is given in *ACR 12.3 Explained from A to Z! (Part 1 of 4).*

Lightroom: There have been changes too in LR. Some of those changes include a *Selective Hue Adjustment, Batch Processing* multiple exports and file types, and *Adaptive ISO presets. In MAJOR Lightroom Update! (NEW in June 2020),* Matt Kloskowski reviews these and other additions to the program.

Although not a new feature, an explanation of how to go *From Lightroom to Photoshop Then Back to Lightroom* might be helpful for those occasions you need to use a feature of PS but, that done, then do some more processing in LR. Here, Anthony Morganti explains "the advantages and disadvantages of using a TIFF file or a PSD file and how for some operations, you should use a Smart Object. "

An interesting addition to LR some time ago was the *Texture Tool* in the *Presence Panel.* Max Wendt is one of the engineers who worked on the development of this tool and in his May 2019 blog *From the ACR Team: Introducing the Texture Control,* he gives a very thorough account of the tool and how to best use it. Texture, of course, is one of those elements

which contribute greatly to our visual perception of the world around us and so is something which photographers need to incorporate into our images if the viewer is to experience the full impact of our work. Another look at the texture tool, but this time also comparing it to the way it operates with that of *Clarity* and *Sharpening*, is Lightroom's New Texture Feature Deep Dive, again with Matt Kloskowski.

Another facility introduced into LR over a year ago now was the *dehaze* tool. This of course, is intended to "cut through" the haze which makes distant objects – such as mountains etc – less clear and sharp. However, there are times also when fog or mist might add to the atmosphere of a photo – the *dehaze* tool can even enhance this. And there are times also when the tool is best left alone. *The Good, Bad, and the Ugly of Lightroom's Dehaze Tool* is a video, again by Matt Kloskowski, but this time hosted on *fstoppers.*

An article on *fstoppers*, this time by Jason Parnell-Brookes called *What's Better for Landscapes: A Polarizer or Lightroom's Dehaze Tool?* is also of interest here, stating that *Polarizing filters are one of the last camera filters that cannot be replicated by software.* It goes on to argue that many photographers believe that a polarising filter can be used to reduce haze: but can it? Alternatively, would Adobe's *dehaze* tool be a better one for this job? The article reports on a series of comparisons using the filter and the tool, alone and in various combinations. Contrary to the older belief, the tests revealed *"… that a polarizer doesn't really remove haze from a picture at all, but it does improve tonal contrast and color accuracy and remove glare from reflective surfaces such as water".* So, don't leave your polariser at home just because you have *dehaze* in LR!

For those who have no interest in any of the above Adobe products, a fascinating video called Insect Flight | Capturing Takeoff & Flying at 3,200 FPS is worth watching. Posted by the NC Museum of Natural Sciences and photographed at this incredibly fast speed by Dr Adrian Smith, it takes a slow motion look at how several insects take off and use their wings for flight. Dr. Smith says on camera "*I've just been trying to find the most interesting insects I could, and film them in a way that I don't think anybody else has.*" The video is also available at Ant Labs where more insects and creepy-crawlies can also be visited.
Bob Hay.