Beckham Digital
February 2015 Newsletter

Canon's 50MP camera – This new camera offers the highest mega-pixels ever seen in a full frame sensor, an amazing 50.6MP. How do they squeeze all those pixels onto such a small sensor?

It is said that the new camera offers unparalleled quality with exceptional resolution and responsiveness. Whether you're shooting landscapes, architecture, wildlife or portraits. The EOS 5DS R also features a low pass cancellation filter to maximise the sensor's resolution and visible image quality.

Already people are asking if we need such high resolution images and of course the answer has to be yes. Its development is much more than just being able to create a larger print. As the pixel count has grown over the years, we have seen advantages in sharper images, a greater crop flexibility, less noise in high ISO settings, better gradations and there is no reason to believe we will not see this here too.

Yes, it's bound to be expensive and beyond most of us, but don't allow that to influence you into joining the sheep like chorus of *Why do we need 50MP?* Remember every innovation at the top end, trickles down to the masses in time.

Read more about this camera HERE

Smart Objects + Smart Filters = Smart Photographer

Had you been a Photoshop user for the past few years you will have noticed the option of Smart Objects and Smart Filters appearing in the software menus. Recent conversations seem to suggest that these options are not used as often as they might be, because their function is not fully understood.
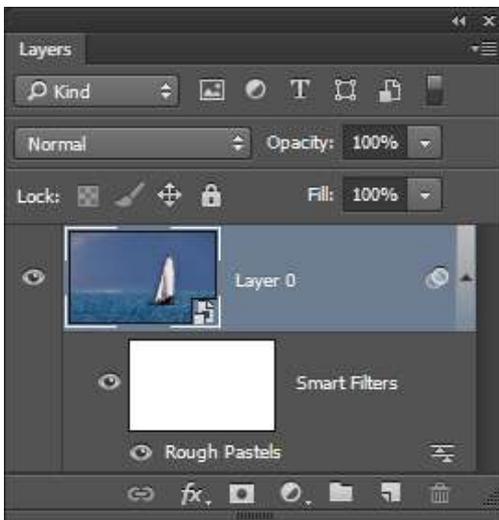
What is a Smart Object or a Smart Filter? It's simply the picture you're working on in Photoshop, but it's given super powers for as long you need those powers. It's pretty common knowledge that if you photocopy a document, then photocopy the copy. You don't have to do this many times before the print quality is lost.

It's much the same with our images. If we were to apply extra colour, then later decide we want a little less colour and even later still decide we were right the first time ! We are making a change to our picture, then adjusting those changes and then adjusting the changes of the changes.....and so on.

Smart Objects and Smart Filters preserve an image's original state with all its original characteristics, enabling you to make 50 changes on top of changes, but all in a non-destructive way with no loss of image quality. Probably the most powerful Smart Object you can create is the one in Adobe Camera Raw, because here we have non-destructive editing of a file that already has an enormous latitude.

A practical example may be if we made a montage image. When we add images into our montage

we may not know how big or small those additions need to be. They will be in constant change as we add more content. Once we have reduced the size of an image, we cannot then drag it back to its original size. Quality will be lost, but not if we work with Smart Objects.

Perhaps it's best to use this subject as our video subject this month.

New PTE tutorials - To Download

Over the past few weeks we have started recording new video tutorials for PicturesToExe as Individual Downloads so you can choose just the ones that interest you. We are also putting them into categories such as Text and Text Effects and Visual Effects. Other categories will be added in time and most of these videos contain a sample slide show, so you can see in advance exactly what we achieve in the video. Below are some quick links to the demo's we have made so far. The image below relates to Text on a Path

Adding a thin outline to your images

Creating Stylish Backgrounds

Creating a Matt Frame with Images

Creating a Matt frame with animation

Creating and applying distressed edges

Free Fonts no demo, but this is a free Video

Text on a Path

How to Win Competitions – or improve your photography

Yes, I know, it's not politically correct to say this is it? However, stop for a moment and think of what a judge is looking for in the images they are judging for us. It's not hard to make a list because every judge repeats that list at every competition and here's the thing.

What the judges are looking for is the self same thing you should be looking for when out with your camera or sitting at your PC

Why wait for someone else to tell you what's wrong with your picture when you can do most of that yourself. Here are some of the issues that judges raise at *EVERY* competition.

Composition issues: Poor composition or no composition at all
Obvious distractions: White highlights, especially around the edges, dust marks etc
Over cropped images: Pixels/noise showing in the image and detracting from it

Over sharpened: Edges have halos and the image looks unnatural in appearance
Not sharp enough: The image is not sharp where it should be
Weak edges: The image is weak around the edges which draws our eye out of the picture.
Depth of field/Camera shake issues: Parts of the image are sharp, but important parts are not.
Colour: Images over or under saturated making them look false and unnatural
Colour Balance: Obvious colour casts that are easy to fix in any image editor
Contrast: A vital ingredient in most images (not all) but lacking in many
Clarity: Generally a mixture of mid range contrast, colour and tone, images just look weak
Viewpoint: Image shot from the standing position when it should not have been.
**Photo fashion** Avoid doing what everyone else is doing 9* neutral density filters as an example.

Can't we spot most of these before we submit our images and improve our own Photography at the same time?

PicturesToExe – Under development

Well, PicturesToExe is constantly under development, that is the great thing about it. In my view PicturesToExe is establishing itself as the Photoshop of the Audio Visual world. The main development is currently to improve the Objects and Animation screen, but we will see other creative refinements too.

Wnsoft we will be adding more colour correction options, including brightness and contrast levels for keyframes of objects. This will give almost unlimited transition options. Already we can add dynamic blur to keyframes and save those settings as a style. Imagine combining colour and contrast options alongside the dynamic blur and with the transitions already available?
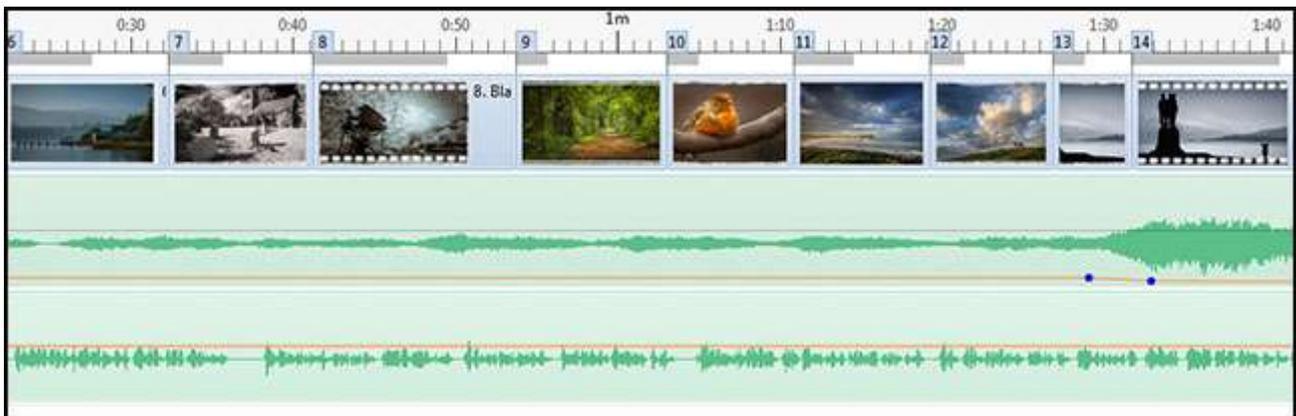
There are also some improvements to find missing files if the user inadvertently moves or renames vital AV files, a great improvement that makes the software even stronger. We will also be able to export an Mp3 or Wav file out of PTE as a stand alone sound file. Lots to look forward to for those who use this great software and if you don't use it, why not.

PicturesToExe Trial Software Here

Buy PicturesToExe HERE

Successful Images with Wow Value

Readers may recall this image from the cover of our December 2014 issue. It was also the subject of one of our Master Class Video Tutorials.

I tested the image in an open club competition in February and it scored 10 points, which seems to indicate we got the image editing right and also our tutorial.

You can see the original in the small thumbnail here.

The set subject section of the same competition was Machinery and the images below were entered into that section.

The image immediately below was shot at the Duxford Air Museum in Cambridgeshire UK. A tripod was used for obvious reasons and the image edited in Photoshop Creative Cloud. The image scored top marks of 10 points.

The image below called Black & Brass scored 9 points and was taken at the Nene Valley Railway in the UK.

I mention and show these two images, not to brag about receiving high scores, but as evidence for what I said above in the section titled. **How to Win Competitions.** Much of what we need to do to improve our photographic standard and therefore do better in competition at the same time, is basic stuff.

So, while we are on this subject. The image below was my fourth entry into the open section called Lake McQuarrie and it scored 8 points.

Simplicity and Value – Never the twain shall meet

I read something recently which said "It would be great if somebody made a tutorial that would explain the basics simply". The writer was referring to a fairly complex photographic/presentation/animation subject, involving two fairly complex software programs, Photoshop and PicturesToExe.

To do what was being asked meant that those programs would need to be in the hands of someone reasonably expert in their use.

Being familiar with both programs and also being in the middle of a book that discusses human nature, I had the following thoughts.

Firstly, what is it is about the output from any creative medium (like photography) that appeals to us? For many, it has to be something with a fair degree of uniqueness and not easy to produce. That, along with good technical quality is what helps create that wow value. It's why Eric Clapton and Mark Knopfler have the following they do. If everyone could learn to play the guitar like those two, neither would be valued by us. We like the fact that what we are looking at or listening to, is something special, something unique even.

In life we generally find that anything that is quick and easy to produce, does not have value. I offer the supermarket food product that says just add water and stir, or microwave for 90 second for perfect....this or that. Not our idea of a gourmet meal is it.

So, in this case we have a photographer asking for a simple tutorial for a complex subject. Common sense and reasoning suggests that a set of instructions cannot deal with a complex subject and remain simple.

Then I started to think about the word simple. Make the tutorial simple for who? To the person who is already considered knowledgeable in these two software packages? Or the person who is a beginner with little knowledge of these software programs?

Generally speaking if you made a tutorial dedicated to the first group, it's likely to go over the head of the second group.

If you made the tutorial for the second group, the first group are likely to find it slow and perhaps tedious. I wonder if that fact is why with millions of tutorials on line, we still sometimes find it near impossible at times to find something that covers what we wish to do.

Humans search for simplicity in many walks of life, but as soon as it is achieved, the end result loses all value. It's our human nature. Evidence for this can be seen in the art world and the huge

amounts paid for unique works. When we come up with a machine that can paint like Rembrandt and churn out oils one after the other in minutes on a conveyor belt, they will have no value, just that of the materials used.

In a more basic sense we can look at filter effects in photographic images. If they are easy and simple to apply, they have little or no value, solely due to the fact they ARE so easy and simple to apply.

What is created simply and easily is novel and the effect is transient and to those who have been around photographic circles a while, often downright boring. Images that require time, effort, and creativity have some value.

Doesn't this all sum up what photographic enthusiasts are all trying to do? To develop their skills to a level where they can produce images that contain that uniqueness. Something that stands out from the crowd for the right reasons.

All these skills can be learned if the photographer wishes to. Searching for simple ways to provide something which is considered complex and/or unique, will never provide anything of value.

Should we discover a simple route to complex or unique images, the moment we do, the uniqueness and value immediately dies, because it's now ordinary, and everyone can do it.

If I could name one thing that sets successful photographers aside from the non successful it would not be anything to do with photography at all. It's not equipment, it's not some hereditary skill, just plain and simple effort. Successful people work harder, it's often as simple as that.

Photoshop Creative Cloud – Now Available as full downloads

These three categories of videos are now available as a direct download, which is far quicker than the postman. We downloaded our own Raw category of videos as a test in just 32 minutes using an average broadband connection.

Each of these categories can be purchased either on disk, as individual videos of your choice, or the entire category as a download. We have provided direct links for your convenience. You will not find a better way to learn Photoshop.

Getting Started Disk – Individual downloads – Entire disk as a download   Our Intro Video

Understanding Layers Disk – Individual downloads – Entire disk as a download   Our Intro Video

Shooting Raw Disk – Individual downloads – Entire disk as a download   Our Intro Video

Quick Links to all our Latest Slide Shows

Loco's in Steam

Infra-Red Presentation/tutorial

London Calling

Our UK Introduction Presentation

The Fire Trail

Inclement Weather (Scotland)

Invisible Light

Quick Links to Video Tutorials

Lightroom 5

Photoshop CC – Disks

Photoshop CC – Downloads

All other Photoshop Tutorials (other versions CS-3, CS-4, CS-5, CS-6, Lightroom)
Lightroom

PicturesToExe Tutorials

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Digital Infra-Red

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