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PROFILE



Julieanne Kost

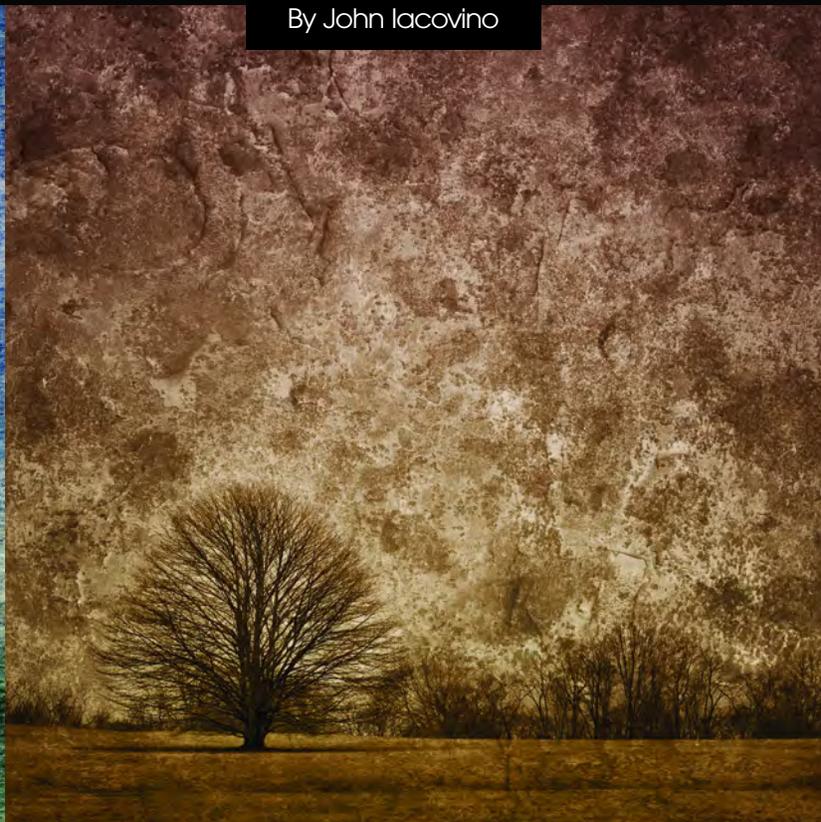




The Gospel Of Photoshop



By John Iacovino





er official title is *Senior Digital Imaging Evangelist for Adobe Photoshop™*.

Not “*Photoshop senior trainer*” or “*Photoshop product promotion manager*” or even “*Photoshop guru*”—though those titles would certainly fit.

She is one of just two North American individuals in Adobe’s Photoshop software division in this capacity. She’s employed by Adobe to go to the four corners of the world and not just spread the gospel of digital image editing, but to educate and inspire a massive audience who already believe.

Rumor has it that Julieanne Kost, an experienced photographer and one of the world’s foremost Photoshop experts, has even performed a few miracles in front of crowds of enraptured professional photographers.

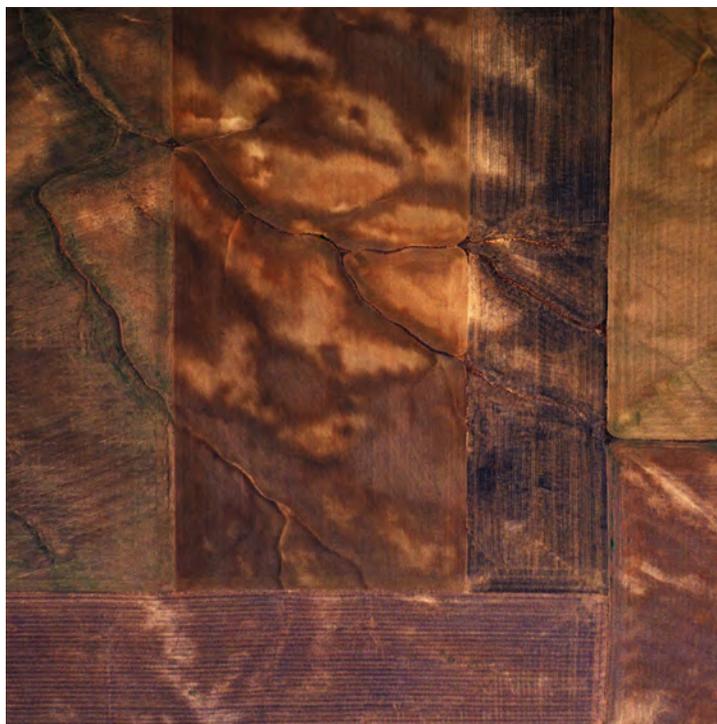
Water into wine? Not a problem using the Brush tool in color mode with a nice dark red color chosen; about 20 percent opacity and a 200 pixel diffused brush. Turning one loaf into many? That’s easy for Kost, employing any one of a dozen different tools at her fingertips.

For nearly a decade, Kost has been spreading the gospel of Photoshop specifically to professional photographers at literally hundreds of tradeshows, conventions or wherever the trade has been known to gather.

She’s in demand. Her travel schedule includes approximately 200 to 250 days a year on the road, almost all of it speaking to professional photographers.

“It’s a grueling schedule, and I could not do it if I were not constantly being energized by the inspiring people I get to meet each day,” says the unassuming tall blonde who actually is a little embarrassed by her title.

“Almost every day I see photographers discover something cool, even awesome, that they can do with the software. I see the spark and then the light goes on in



their eyes, and you can just feel the moment of discovery happening for them. Sharing that moment with real people is what keeps me sane in an airline seat,” she says.

Kost has witnessed the dramatic im-

pact her company’s software has made on the world—and particularly in the world of the professional photographer. She calls it nothing short of revolutionary.

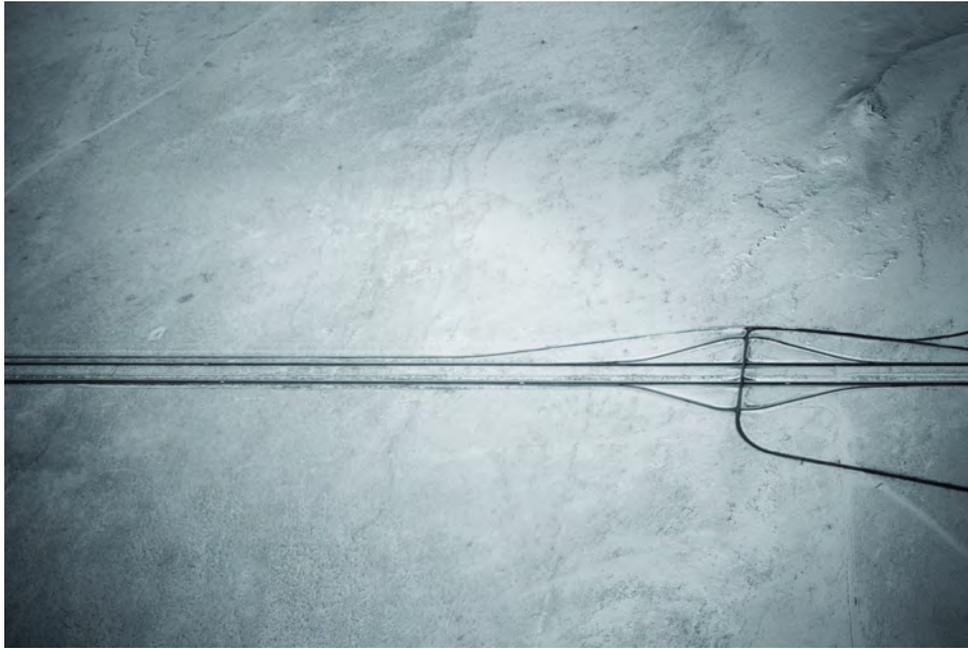
“Most working photographers will begin by learning the 20 percent of Photoshop that is essential for their specific workflow. Learning more features is like icing on the cake—enabling them to create, manage and manipulate images in ways they never thought possible.”

Started Young

Kost has an appreciation for the advantages of digital photo manipulation because she is well acquainted with the traditional alternatives. Her father was an avid amateur photographer who converted the family laundry room (imagine the dust) into a darkroom when Kost was a child. She remembers the smell of developer (and particularly of fix) and the technique of rolling film onto stainless reels in the dark. And naturally, the terms “dodge” and “burn” did not need to be explained to her when she first played around with Photoshop years ago.

She knows firsthand the “wow” feeling photographers are discovering as they get familiar with the tools and features of digital photo editing

“Professional photographers are literally rediscovering the creative process—practically every few months—as they



PHOTOS © JULIEANNE KOST

learn to apply a new software tool (layer masking, selective sharpening or the “healing” tool, for example).

“When can you remember seeing such a variety of truly artful, emotionally evocative, visually stimulating images like the ones photographers are bringing to trade fairs and contests in 2004?” Kost asks.

“Even photographers who are just dipping their little toe in the Photoshop waters are coming out invigorated. I think most photographers would agree: This is a great time to be in this business.”

Kost speaks about Photoshop with the passion of an evangelist, but when it comes to the nuts and bolts of the software, “guru” is perhaps the more accurate description.

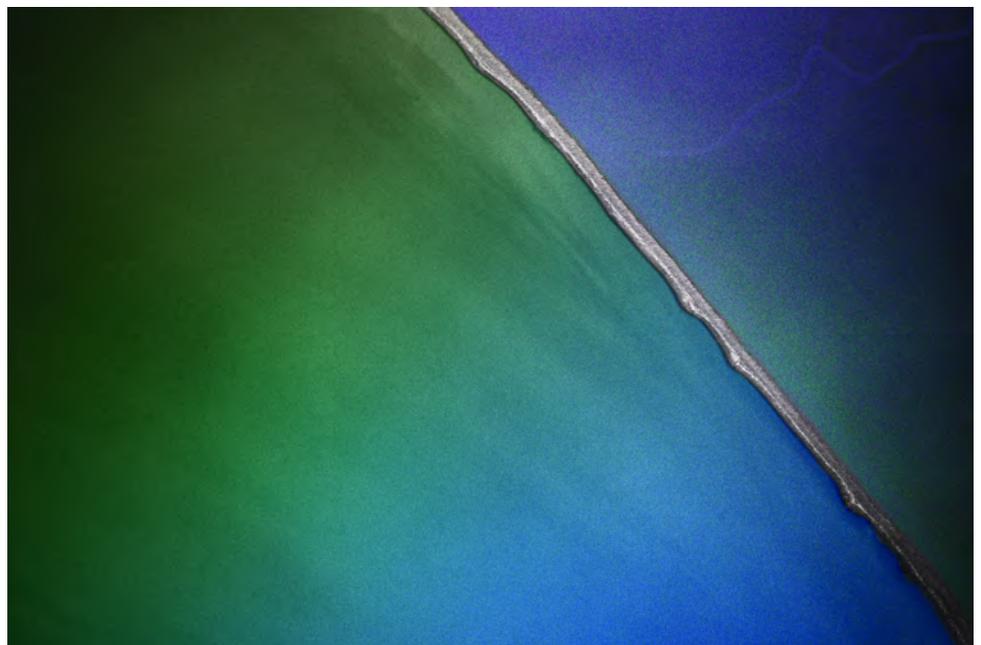
She considers her essential value to photographers as being a person who knows every tool and menu option in the program and its intended use. She explains, “I learn the intended use of features from our engineers, but I’m always amazed at how photographers push the limits of Photoshop and often use tools and features in ways that we may not have thought of.”

Every Tool?

“When it’s your only job, it’s not as hard as it sounds,” she says. It doesn’t hurt that she has engineers and Adobe’s own brain-

trust of software writers in the same office building as her—down the hall, in fact.

“They’re (the software code writers) geniuses,” she says. “Really, they’re scary-smart. Each engineer has a multiple of features they work on in parallel—they’re a



Julianne Kost is not just a Photoshop techie, she is also an accomplished fine artist. The work that appears on pages 8 and 9 is her conceptual art, which has universally received high acclaim. The photos that appear on pages 10 and 12 could be referred to as her aerial artistry—images created at 40,000 feet on her endless coast-to-coast voyages.

phenomenal team and it’s an honor to work with them. For the record, the software engineers never get enough credit for their incredible devotion to their

craft,” she adds. “With those resource people on my team, I really don’t have any excuse for not learning all the product features,” says Kost.

Love at First Byte

Speaking of living in the world of Photoshop 24/7, Kost has another Adobe ally close at hand. Her husband has the exact same job and title for Adobe, except a different product area. He spends his time working with users of Adobe digital video products, specifically Premier™ Pro, After Effects™ and Encore™.

“Dinner table discussions at our house are Adobe all the time; they probably sound a bit geekish to observers,” she confesses. “My husband is very ‘techy’—much more

so than I am—he’s probably my biggest support person, and definitely my biggest fan,” Kost says.

And Kost has many fans. One could say she wrote the book on Photoshop. No, not “a” book, but *THE* book—the one

that comes with the software in the box. One of her more novel Photoshop credits is that Kost worked on the manuals that shipped with the release of Photoshop 5.

“Not exactly the great American novel,” she humbly says. However, she has been asked to personally autograph a few of the manuals by photographers and friends.

“One of the great perks of my job is that I get to meet some of my photographer ‘icons’ in person,” she says. “When I first met my all-time photographer idol, John Sexton, I was so nervous I could barely ask him to sign a copy of one of his books. He was so gracious: He told me he’d sign a copy if I would sign his Photoshop user’s manual. It was the nicest thing he could have done,” she says.

More currently she has produced an entire set of training DVDs for Photoshop CS that are distributed by Software Cinema. They include over 40 Quicktime movies and are accompanied by sample files to teach everything from basic concepts to advanced techniques.

Many portrait photographers new to Photoshop find the program overwhelming. “One of the things I try to get across right from the start when I teach is that you don’t need to know all, or even most of the program to have your work benefit from it,” she says. “Often the challenge is to show restraint and sensitivity. Less is usually more when you’re using digital photo editing tools.”

Still, Kost says she’s very impressed with how photographers are learning at such a rapid rate.

“I really have a ton of respect for the photographers I help,” she says. “I get time during development to learn all the new features, and if I have questions, I get answers from the programmer down the hall who actually created the feature. Most photographers get 10 minutes or less in a seminar to learn a new feature—then I’m gone.

“The fact that this industry is doing so many awesome things with Photoshop just blows me away.”

Favorite Photoshop Tool

“I don’t really have a favorite tool, but I do have a ‘favorite’ real world use of the software,” she says. “I believe that the strength of the tool to help make a change in society is clearly evident when police and forensic artists use the program to show how missing children might look today. Law enforcement people have located individuals based on using those ‘aged’ photographs,” she says.

Kost maintains a web site (www.adobeevangelists.com), which hosts a significant amount of information regarding Adobe products, tips and techniques and additional resources. In addition, she finds that the user-to-user forum on www.adobeforums.com is a fantastic resource for posting questions and answers.

“With the sheer volume of Photoshop users that post to that forum, it’s very likely that someone will know the answer to what you’re asking.

“There are also hundreds of trainers around the country with whom I work. Many of these teachers are great—better than I am in a hundred different ways,” she says. And that’s Julieanne Kost’s real goal—to help hundreds of others in and out of the photographic industry to get so good with Photoshop, that her job continues to be challenging.



John Iacovino is a journalist with 20 years of newspaper and magazine publishing history. Ten years ago he founded Blossom Publishing, a design & print firm producing high-end print marketing projects for portrait photographers. Blossom Publishing currently works with 600 photographers annually nationwide.

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