

# gadchick

*issue 2 : shoot, click and see*



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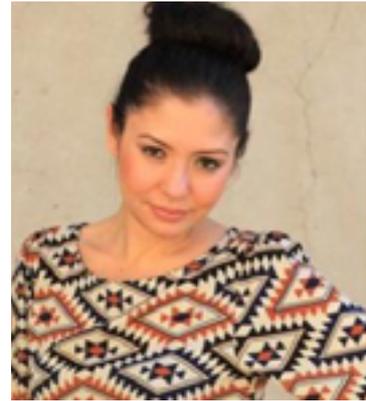
# GADCHICK ISSUE 2 : AUTHORS



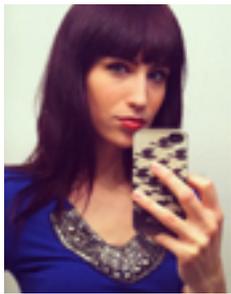
## DIANA LA COUNTE

Diana is a consultant director for various publishing companies. When she's not being a syntax ninja, she is a creative freelance writer. She helps her husband- a writer, professor and librarian tend to their 2 dogs and 3 cats. Founder of Gadchick, she's been known to buy shiny new gadgets over shiny new shoes. She hopes to invent something one day that will make Oprah's Favorite Things List. She blogs at [ourcitylights.org](http://ourcitylights.org).

## ALINE CALLICOTT



Aline is a social media obsessed technology lover and video game enthusiast. When she is not Tweeting, G+ing, Tumbling, Pinning, or Facebook stalking for Gadchick, she is hard at work on her fashion and lifestyle blog. Always a camera and Android phone by her side, much of Aline's free time is spent gaming with her boyfriend. She can be found CTRL+TABing between high heels on sale, Reddit comments, Hello Kitty, Steam sales, tech forums, a Newegg login screen, an Etsy logout screen, and the meme you're going to stumble upon later this week.



## LAURA LAWSON

Laura Lawson is a 20-something artist, writer, and wannabe photographer currently based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She has been an avid iPhoneographer since 2011. Laura is an advocate for the low vision/blind community since getting diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa in 2010. To learn more about Laura's creative efforts or to just say hi, visit her at [www.lauralawsonart.com](http://www.lauralawsonart.com).

## ERIN MICHELETTI

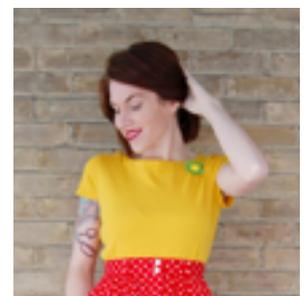


When Erin Micheletti isn't playing with Photoshop, this New Media Director turned freelance writer is busy adding stamps to her passport, scuba diving, perfecting her secret cheesecake recipe, and writing about technology and travel.

## MANDY CURTIS

Mandy Curtis, purveyor of nerdery, blogs on Chocolate and Cream Cake. When not geeking out about everything Doctor Who, lusting after everything neon yellow (it's the new neutral!), hyperventilating over the latest Mass Effect 3 trailer or planning her next (500) projects with the help of Pinterest, she has an alter ego as a copy editor and writer. Mandy lives in Austin with her husband and their animals: Mal, the "long-haired domestic" cat, and Mrs. Mollie Weasley, the chihuahua-mutt.

## CHANTILLY MCKINNON



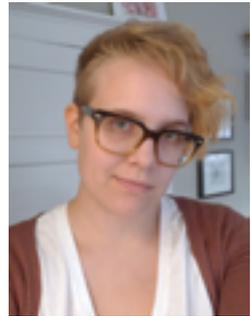
Chantilly McKinnon is a kitsch loving, junk food eating, blog designing, thrift shopping, caking baking, craft making high class broad. She lives in Ontario, Canada with her partner Jesse and daughter Georgia Grace. You can find her blogging regularly at My Girl Thursday.



## KINSEY MHIRE

Kinsey Mhire is a wedding and portrait photographer based in Springfield Missouri and the voice behind the blog Sincerely, Kinsey. She works for Elsie Larson where she is a DIY contributor for Elsie's blog, A Beautiful Mess and helps run her local shop, Red Velvet Art.

## NAN LAWSON



Nan Lawson is a self taught Illustrator living and working in the Silverlake neighborhood of Los Angeles. There, she lives with her Boyfriend and two chubby cats while she daydreams about the perfect pair of glasses and her next cup of coffee. She draws quirky and nerdy things and characters, which are often inspired by hipsters, cult television shows, and flea markets. She sells prints of her work through her shop at [nanlawson.etsy.com](http://nanlawson.etsy.com) and has an illustration blog at [outfitink.tumblr.com](http://outfitink.tumblr.com).



## CHELSEA BROWN

Chelsea Brown is a 23-year-old freelance journalist living in Phoenix, Arizona. She has her Bachelor's degree in Journalism, and is working toward her Master's in Communication Studies. She pens a personal style and lifestyle blog called Tea Talk, where she writes about her daily outfits, life with her sweet boyfriend and their adventures in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area. She adores iced coffee, personal style, and blogging.

## BECA LEWIS SKEELS



Beca Lewis Skeels is a filmmaker, unconventionally trained pastry chef and co-owner of the Tumbleweeds Eyewear Company, this Southern girl still makes the time to shoot photos, blog and read too many books.



## MEG FEE

Meg Fee is a born and bred Texan, who came of age on Manhattan's west side, Meg is a Juilliard trained actor, who loves both writing words and bringing them to life. She is an actor, an essayist, a sometimes Vegan, and a fledgling baker. She loves toting her swanky Cannon all over the big apple, and looks forward to one day taking it off of auto. Until then. She blogs at the wild and wily ways of a brunette bombshell.

## ASHLEE GADD



Ashlee Gadd is an aspiring writer, amateur photographer, and frozen yogurt addict. A self-proclaimed list-maker, joy-chooser, and devout yogi, she's also currently rocking a baby bump and eating everything in sight. Ashlee is the Managing Editor of The Violet and blogs at Where My Heart Resides.



## RHIANNE MOORE

Rhianne Moore is a designer, photographer and blogger from the UK with a passion for photography, modern design and other distractions. Originally from Norwich, Rhianne completed and Design degree in the North of England, where she now lives, focusing on computer aided, graphic and interior design. After graduation, Rhianne started a blog, For the easily distracted... which reignited her passion for photography and started an unexpected journey into blogging and writing, resulting in writing articles for Lomography and becoming a part of the Gadchick team.

# Choosing a Lens

by Chelsea Brown

**C**risp, and clean, in focus and free of any direct blemishes. That is what most people are hoping for when they pull their camera up to their eye, look into the viewfinder, and snap away. However, this is not always the case. Some say they're not photogenic, and others say they are just poor photographers, but in reality, they may just not be using the right lens for the occasion.

How does one go about picking out the right lens? This can be an intimidating, and overwhelming process for many. For Canon and Nikon alone, there are dozens of lenses to choose from. When you go online, you can drown in a sea of lenses. Imagine, walking into a local camera store, surrounded by fancy (and expensive) camera equipment and not knowing where to start. However, it's nice to go into lens shopping with some beefed up knowledge of what you're looking for.

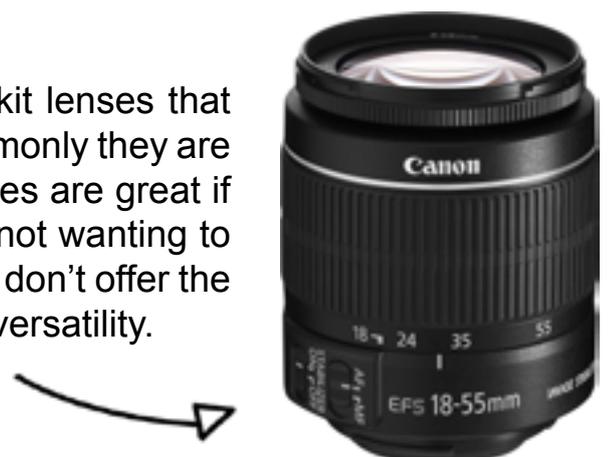
You will end up walking away with a lens that will work best for you and what you are intending to photograph. With an array of lens types, it really can be a bit confusing.

Portrait, telephoto, macro, wide angle, they are all great lenses, but what makes them the perfect lens for you? Well, it really all depends on what your focus is. Do you want to take more portrait style, or needing a wider angle lens to cover more ground in your photos? Are you looking to take great quality photos of tiny, or very close-up objects, or do you just want a fun lens to play around with? Well, look no further, here at Gadchick we have put together a list of the most commonly used lens types, and are offering up details and advice on each of them. Being that we're a woman's focused magazine, we really want to look out for one another, and we thought it would be great to offer up some advice so that you don't feel alone when you're in search for a great new lens.

## Kit lenses

When purchased, most DSLR cameras come with kit lenses that are usually all held to the same standards. Most commonly they are an 18-55 mm, and have a zoom feature. These lenses are great if you're just interested in capturing the moment, and not wanting to switch back and forth between lenses. Although they don't offer the best quality photos, they are great for the price and versatility.

Price point: \$150 and up.





## Macro lenses

These lenses are great for amazing close up shots. If you're looking to photograph anything from nature, to jewelry, this is the lens for you. The most common of the macro lenses is a 50 mm, and they go up to about a 125mm. Although these lenses are not the most practical for every day photography use, they are wonderful for bringing out the details on a small object. They focus directly on one subject and bring out the depth of field.

Price point: \$150 and up.

## Telephoto lenses

Telephoto lenses are any kind of lenses that allow you to take close-up photos from far way. The most common telephoto lens is a 70-200mm, and is perfect for taking a great photo when you don't want to be too intrusive of the space around your subject.

Price point: \$150 and up.



## Portrait lenses

A portrait lens allows you to take a crisp photo with little, to no distortion. They typically don't have a zoom quality to them, and are dedicated to one focal length. The most common of the portrait lenses is the 50mm, and is great for taking headshots, outfit photos, and every day lifestyle photos.

Price point: \$100 and up.

## Wide-angle lenses

Wide-angle lenses are simply fun. The wide-angle frame slightly distorts the look of your photo, but in a neat way. These lenses are often used for action shots, and more landscape/scenery type photos. The most common among wide-angle lenses is the 17mm, or the 16-35mm. If you're looking for a unique view of a wide area, or wanting to get that perfect action shot, I'm sure a wide angle lens would work great for you.

Price point: \$400 and up.



## Prime lenses

These lenses are great for when you're looking to capture a very crisp photo. Prime lenses have a set focal length, and are among the higher quality lenses. The most common among prime lenses is the 50mm. From personal experience, I can highly suggest prime lenses as being a must-have in your camera bag. I'm constantly using my 50mm, and love the sharpness it brings to my photos. I use this lens almost daily with outfit photos, and every day use.

Price point: \$150 and up.

## Toy / Novelty lenses

Although quality lenses are a must in your camera bag, sometimes it's fun to pull out a toy lens and take some really fun, artistic photos. Right now in the market there are a few great toy lenses that really stand out. The Dreamy Diana lens allows your DSLR camera to take photos just like you would if you were using the classic, toy plastic camera itself. The best thing about this is that you get instant gratification from being able to see your photos right after you take them (no film processing necessary). Holga also makes a similar toy DSLR lens that lets you capture the quality of Holga photos without having to use the actual toy camera itself.

Price point: \$30 and up.



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**Sarah Rhodes** of [Arrow](#) and [Apple Photography](#) suggested doing a search on Flickr for the lens type you're interested in using, and checking out all of the photos that were taking with that type of lens. This offers a unique way of testing out camera lenses before you even step into a camera store. Another great tip from Rhodes is she mentioned that each lens is going to act differently depending on what kind of camera body you are using. From this, I would suggest bringing your camera body along on your shopping trip so you can test out the lens on the actual camera you will be using it with.

Ok, so you're now ready to take on your local camera store or favorite Nikon or Canon website with confidence and grace. If you get there and feel stuck, bookmark this issue of Gadchick and feel free to come back to us as a reference. Don't be afraid to ask the store clerk questions and professional opinions. Most of them are hired because of our their knowledge of photography, and are usually always willing to extend a helping hand for an interested customer. Good luck, ladies!



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Available on the iPhone

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# Gadchick Gets Crafty

## Camera DIY



Time to close all the apps, put down the shiny handhelds, and dust off those craft supplies hiding behind all the wires and gizmos in the closet. Gadchick is getting crafty with *Kinsey Mhire*, DIY enthusiast. The project fits perfectly with this issue's theme and it's easy enough to do if you haven't seen that craft box since bringing home macaroni frames from school.



**1 Supplies:** Camera of your choice, (I chose an Instax Mini!), cotton fabric, scissors, exacto knife, Mod Podge, paint brush.



**2** First, cut out two squares of fabric about 4 inches wider than your camera.



**3** Once you've cut out the squares, apply mod podge in small sections at a time and press on the fabric. Make sure you don't get Mod Podge on the buttons and flash!

**4** Once it's completely covered, take the Exacto knife and carefully cut around the sections of unwanted fabric.



Ta da! You're finished! Enjoy your newly renovated camera.

If you've done this project, we'd love to see it. Please email [submission@gadchick.com](mailto:submission@gadchick.com) and we'd love to feature your "new" camera, handheld, or even console on the Gadchick blog.

# *It's not you,*

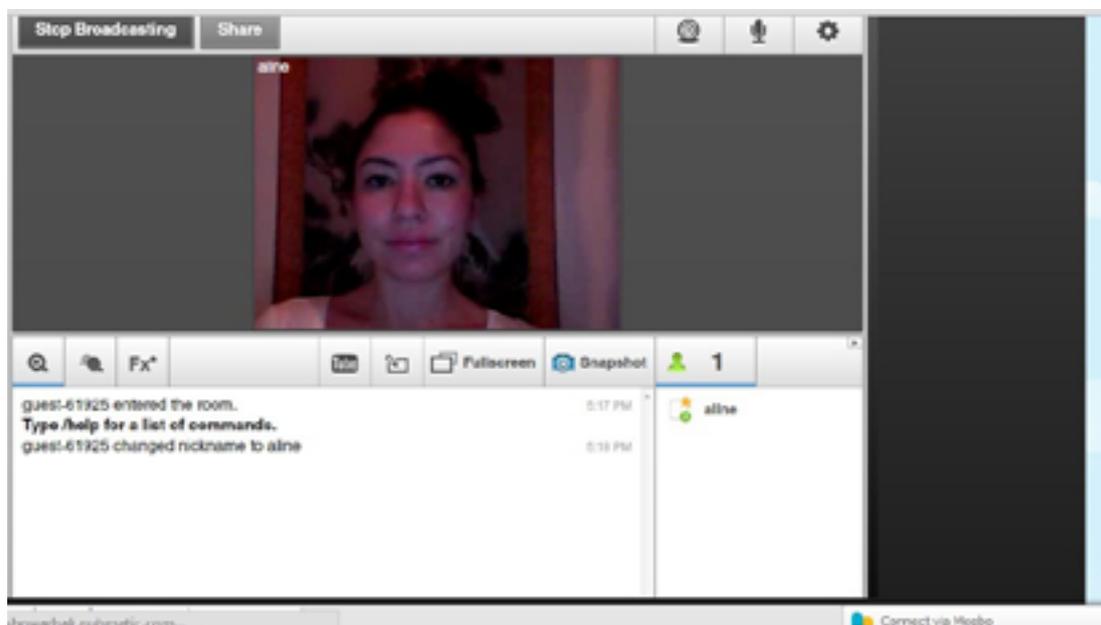
*by Aline Callicott*

# ***It's your webcam***

You don't have to be intimidated or dressed to the nines (heck you don't even really need pants) in order to use a webcam with family in distant places, telecommuting business meetings, obsessive Face Time-ers or your significant other. Whatever your purpose, webcams make us feel closer and more connected than your typical phone call, as long as you have updated webcam drivers installed, a stable internet connection, and follow these simple tips.

## **Light is your friend!**

Keep some light on your face, say, a desk lamp, positioned equal to or above the height of your head. It's nice when you face the brightest thing in the room (which could be hard when ceiling light typically faces one wall). On the contrary, a splash of bright light could be unflattering, so it couldn't hurt to turn down the brightness on your monitor (especially if you wear glasses!); a completely dark background is rather creepy (see: 93% of Youtube webcam videos). And finally, like photography, nothing beats natural light. If you're feeling daring, go outside! You have wi-fi don't you? Sunlight, a blue sky, and a little breeze could make for a lively session.

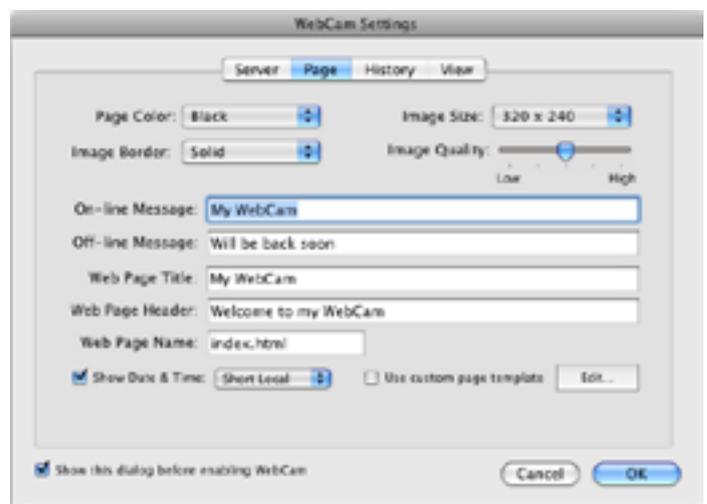
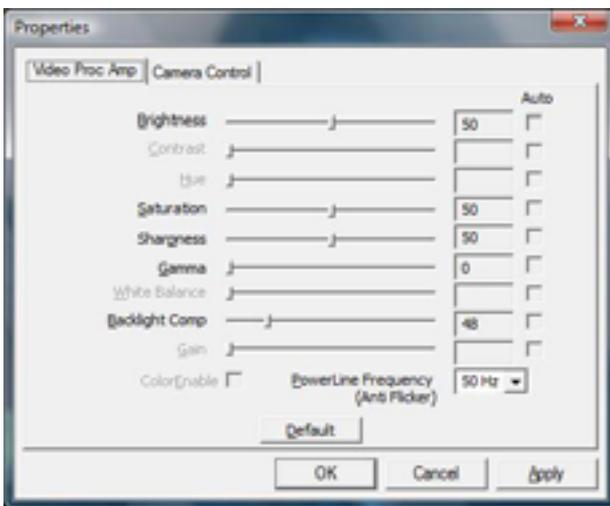


*Too Dark*

## Is This Thing On?

Although headset mics are arguably the most clear for communication, you can't go through all this trouble to look and sound good only to sport cumbersome airplane pilot gear. After making sure input levels are optimum within the program's settings (and troubleshooting), make sure your environment works with you. Background music is unnecessary, speak directly forward at a safe distance, and if you're using a stand-alone mic, don't hold it or fiddle with it. Even mics within laptops are sensitive to nudges and keystroke sounds. In fact, computer microphones in general can be sensitive to any minute sound.

**Pro-tip:** mute button is your friend. It doesn't require a lot of finesse to click without the person knowing, that way no one would know if your Diet Coke has you a little burpy on camera.



## Location, location, location

It may feel a tad awkward, but you look better when you are looking at the camera at the top than when looking at the other person or yourself below. One tip is, move the video windows of yourself and/or the caller to the top of the screen, you can keep your eye on yourself/caller while it appears you're looking right at the camera. The position and location of your camera and your face determine how natural the communication can feel. If on a laptop, make sure the camera isn't below your eyes looking up. Try not to use your webcam while lying on a bed looking down.

## Find a Blank (Or Clean!) canvas!

Nothing is more off-putting than having a video conversation with someone in a messy room. While having a laptop is the easiest way to find a good chatting spot, some may be confined to a desktop computer. If your setup is the latter, make sure to give your background a good cleaning. (I'm sure you did just take it out of the dryer, but the underwear on your bed needs to be folded and put away!) Remember, unless your session is in real clean HD the things behind you are probably showing up dark and grainy.

## Your Pretty Pretty Face

A touch of blush goes a long way! The harsh light and poor quality of webcams can really wash you out. Even if I have an otherwise bare face, I try to make sure that I have a bit of color on my cheeks to give me some warmth. Go with a “natural” look, you will come off as trying too hard if you are in full makeup while sitting in your room. A little bit of powder to keep the shine down, a light gloss, and a swipe of mascara should do. Whether you wear white or have a white background, most webcams automatically white balance. Feel free to fiddle with the video settings in the program; you won’t break your computer by adjusting hue and quality settings. If your background, face, and colors are reading well, slightly turning up the saturation could really liven up your image. G+, Skype and Facetime all give you a visual preview of what you look like before you initialize the session, but it’s good to have a test site to check both visuals with sound. We like TestCamera, and Trust’s web cam tester. Use these to find your best angles and to make any last minute fixes to your hair and makeup.

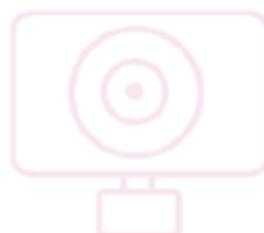


*Bad*



*Good*

Very few people go through the trouble of properly setting up their webcam for optimum results. Typically we use our webcam with people that we are most comfortable with and don’t have to be red-carpet-ready. If you want to feel like a million bucks you can, in your pajama bottoms and Hello Kitty slippers. No one will be the wiser!



# PUGLY PIXEL

**GRAPHICS  
& TUTORIALS**

*AND OTHER FUN STUFF*

**WITH A FOCUS  
ON BLOGGING**

# “Editorial Bytes”

by *Diana La Counte*

When I was a girl, I had my picture taken with Santa; 10 seconds later, an elf handed a watery grey paper to my mom, and before my eyes that image transformed into a photo. It was amazing! And love at first sight!

Flash-forward twenty-five some odd years, and welcome to generation NOW! Everything is instant—the Internet is in our pocket...literally. Even now, there's still a bit of magic left in Polaroid, and if you don't believe me, then hear me out as I tell you a story about Goofy. Yes, that Goofy.

Not long ago, I had an expiring pack of Polaroid, a few free hours, and a season pass to Disneyland—what better place to use the film than Disneyland? Polaroid film is no longer in production, so when you find a pack that still is actually good enough to use, you don't abuse it. You choose your pictures wisely. As I made my way through the park picking the best ten spots for this pack, I came across Goofy. He was in front of the Tower of Terror, which seemed like the perfect backdrop.

I patiently waited in line with five-year-olds who nearly wet themselves in anticipation of meeting and getting photographed with Disney's reigning king of silly. When it was my turn, I asked for just a picture of Goofy being goofy.

He jumped up and down as I snapped a Polaroid of his goofiness.

As I turned to walk away, a cast member tugged at my arm. “Excuse me, miss?” The cast member said, “Goofy would like a picture as well.”

I turned and looked at him. His hands were begging, and then he used his oversized finger to take a fake snapshot of me.

My Polaroid is precious to me, and, as bitchy as it may seem, all I could think was Really, Goofy! Do you have any idea how much this stuff costs?!

I looked down at my camera; only two pictures were left! Two pictures! And I'd have to give it to a damn anthropomorphic dog!

But I obliged.

Grudgingly I took the photo; and joyfully, he took it from my camera—yanking it—not even waiting for it to finish popping out.

I smile. I did my good deed. Then began to leave. This time Goofy stopped me. For a moment, I thought he was going to give me a hug.

No hug.

Goofy again gestured at my camera and made a mock picture sign. Then he pointed at his friend, and used his hands to beg.

Goofy was quickly becoming the Charlie Chaplin of dogs. And he was starting to get on my nerves.

Before I could even consider saying no, the Goofy's cast member friend was clinging on him waiting for me to snap the picture.

Again, Goofy yanked the picture out of my camera and then he waved it in the air and gave the thumbs up sign to the crowd. A few people actually clapped, as Goofy put it to his chest like was his most cherished gift.

The thing was though...it probably was one of his most cherished work gifts. Polaroid—even today—has that magic. Unlike digital cameras that can easily be deleted or reformatted, there's something innocent about analog. It captures moments and tells stories in ways that digital photography simply cannot.

As digital cameras and gadgets attempt to make us drool at features, and make us completely forget the cameras that came before them, it's worth it to take a moment and go down memory lane. To look at the rise and fall of one of the most iconoclastic films that ever graced the hands of photographic fanboys and fan girls alike.



# Instantly Yours – A Short History of Polaroid



*sx70*



*Pink Cool Cam*

**The** year is 1928. A nerdy 19-year-old Jewish boy named Edwin H. Land sneaks into the science lab at Columbia University. He has little money. No reputation. And most of what he learns about science comes from the science books at the library. As his contemporaries bobbed their hair to jazz Jay Gatsby style, Land was learning to manufacture film with millions of polarizing crystals.

By 1932, Land had formed, with a Harvard physics instructor, Land-Wheelwright Laboratories—which would later be renamed the Polaroid Corporation in 1937. Their most known product in this early day: Sunglasses.

It wasn't until ten years later, that Polaroid introduced their must prized product: the instant camera (known then as the "Land Camera"). While only 57 cameras were first manufactured, it quickly became an icon.

The Integral Film packs that most people would come to know (i.e. the some square, white bordered, black back, photos everyone over the age of 25 has at least one of in their closet) were not introduced until 1972.

Polaroid Film was first called Roll Film; with roll film, the film basically would be pulled through rollers, which would pull the film over a chemical substance

that is a piece of ham between two slices of bread (i.e. the exposed negative and the positive sheet); once the positive sheet was pulled away the picture would be revealed. It wasn't exactly rocket science, but it also wasn't quite as automatic as the cameras of the 70's and 80's most of us came to love.

Other companies would try to ride off Polaroid's success—notably Fuji and Kodak (who was sued for patent-infringement after the release of the Kodamatic, and, as a result, had to stop selling the camera)—but no one could ever capture the true beauty or perfection that made Polaroid great.

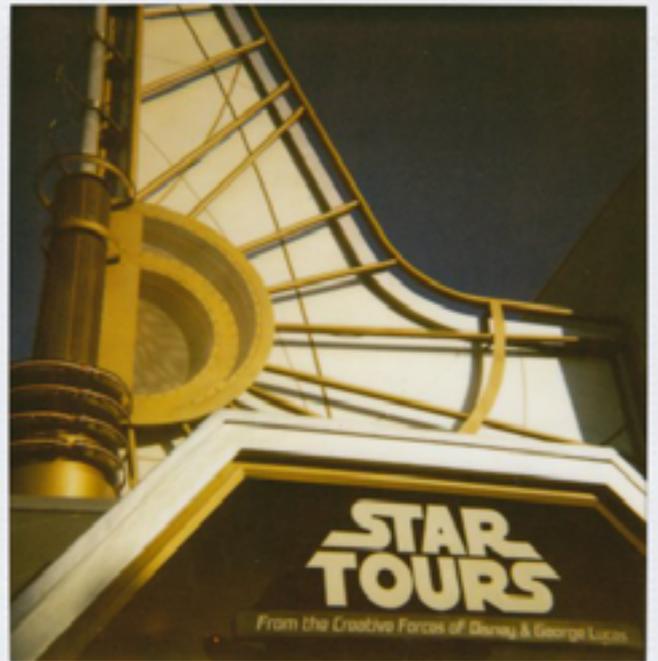
So what happened to Polaroid?

Its first slide was 1977; Polavision was introduced. It was to do to movies what instant film did to photography. Except it never caught on. Despite being used by the likes of Andy Warhol and Charles and Ray Eames, Polavision became a huge disaster—so great that Land would resign from the company.

Polaroid continued to sell instant film throughout the eighties and nineties, but the company, like so many other camera companies, did not realize just how great digital photography would be. By 2001, the company had filed for bankruptcy. For the next several years, its name was licensed to everything to DVD players to TVs. In 2008, it filed for bankruptcy a second time.



*Neighborhood on Spectra*



*Star Tours*



*Florence Bike on Spectra*

Today, Polaroid is just as relevant as ever—but no thanks to the company. While the company still struggles to find it's mojo by getting the likes of Lady Gaga to advertise for them, fan-based organizations like The Impossible Project and New55project have helped make sure the film is not lost.

Azuree Wiitala, a professional photographer and an instant film enthusiast, shared her love for instant film in a digital age;

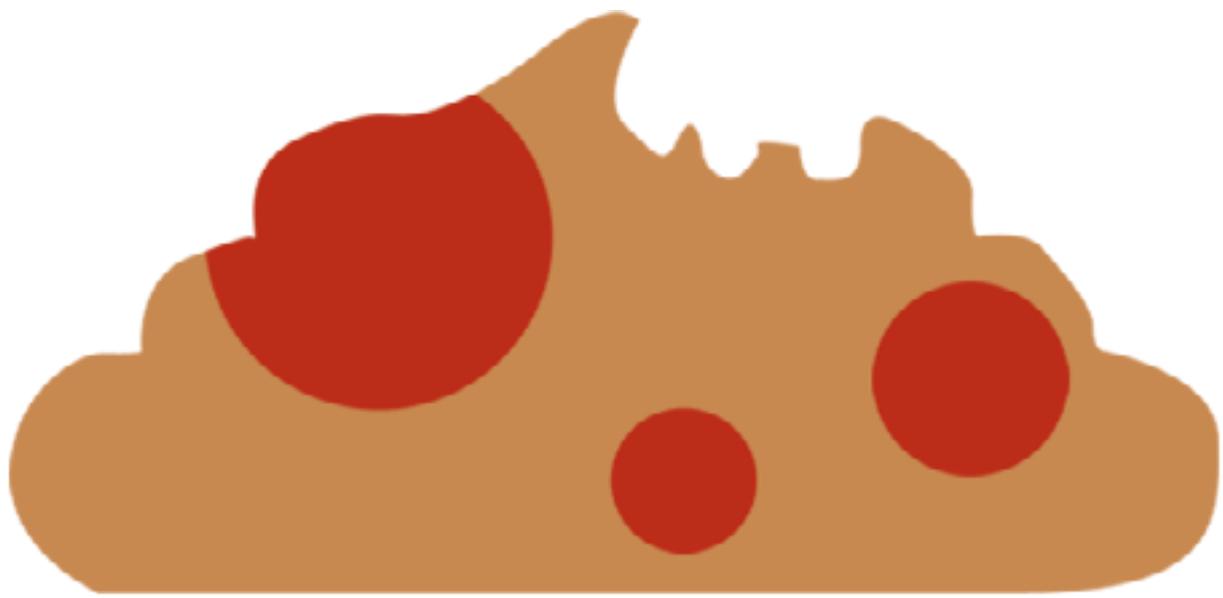
**“A huge appeal of instant film for me is that it is instant. I like that you can see something through a viewfinder, click the shutter and moments later have a reproduction of that sight in your hands. Not locked away on a file in a computer or on your phone, but in your hand! You can put it in a journal or frame it when you get home!! I remember resisting getting a digital camera until I had to remain competitive shooting weddings. It was so cost effective to shoot digitally but only a year or two later I was back at it with film in hand. I found digital images to be so lifeless and I seldom even looked back at the pictures after taking them. With instant film I have a box I can pull out and look at pictures from time to time. I like that. I am especially drawn to the square format of integral films and love that you have a little framed picture in hand!”**

Like life, Polaroid represents something that digital never will—there is no delete button. Once you hit the shutter, the photo lives. The old cameras may be as high tech as a gadget comes but there's no take backs or do overs. It's a lost art. If you want to rediscover an important part of camera history, check out some of these female Polaroid photographers:

- Susannah Conway
- Anne Bowerman
- Jessica Hibbard
- Lauren Beachman



*Scott on Spectra*



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# What's in an Adventurer Photographer's Bag

*by Beca Lewis Skeels*



*Now that you're familiar with lenses from page 4, let professional photographer Beca Lewis Skeels advise you on what she carries in her bag for photo adventures. To familiarize yourself a bit more, click on the links for more information.*

If anything, I would certainly consider myself an adventure photographer. Sure, I photograph products, pets, and cake, but my heart is in climbing through the swamp, camera in hand, or shooting videos. We don't have movie theatres, a mall or many paved roads, so this flash to the past has given me so many opportunities to cultivate my adventuring and my photography. I've learned to be both a minimalist and be prepared for whatever escapade awaits.

I don't carry a full kit with me into the woods. I keep it simple. My Olympus EP-1 has recently been my go-to camera. It's less bulky than my E-410 and the quality of the photos are par. It shoots incredible video, and there really is nothing like gorgeous video in the middle of the swamp. The best part about the EP-1 is that all of my DSRL lenses are interchangeable with the Lumix Micro 4:3 to 4:3 adaptor. My mandatory adventure lenses are the Bell and Howell Fisheye, the Olympus Digital 40-150mm long lens and Olympus Digital 14:42mm lens. I also keep a macro lens handy in case I come across some furry critters or itty bitty fiddler crabs looking for some portrait work.



When it comes to bringing light, I use a Sunpak 433 D and a Sunpak 544 as my kit flashes. Although natural light is my favorite, we tend to go out a lot during the evening, and flashes are key. I keep a soft diffuser on the smaller flash and a flash bracket on the other for versatility. For any adventure, I make sure to have a tripod and reflector 5-in-1 kit. I started using Manfrotto tripods when I was a videographer for PBS and love them. They are reliable, easy to carry and absolutely necessary. The SP Studio Systems reflector kit comes in handy when bringing light to some ones face under heavy tree coverage or bringing in more golden tones in a muted environment.



Whether you shoot in the woods or in a big city alleyway, having reliable waterproof boots is so smart! They're also a pretty perfect accessory with skinny jeans and a parka! I also keep a few snacks, a heavy coat and a knife close by. Adventure photography is unpredictable, bring along extra batteries, charger, a power inverter to plug in the chargers, a heavy-duty flash light and cell phone.

And of course, let's not forget the bag I put it all in. I have several full kit packs, both soft and hard, but I love the canvas bag pictured for an afternoon tromping through muck. It's easy to carry, comfortable and the extra front pocket is great for batteries and snacks. I don't have to set it down to pull out any extra gear like my front zip photo backpack and I got this pack at the swap meet for \$5, which means if it gets splashed with mud or ripped from cypress branches, I won't be as bummed as I would be with the \$200 pack.

Whether I'm shooting an event, creating a series or just romping around, I like to be prepared. I have just about everything I need in this kit for a day in the woods, which gives me a lot more time to adventure!



# Gadchick Interviews:

by Diana La Counte

# Laura Lawson



*LLWater by Laura Lawson*

*If you're on Instagram, Laura Lawson is a familiar name. If her name doesn't come to mind, most likely you've seen her photos on the Popular Page more than we have followers, combined. Ok, so the numbers are exaggerated, but if Instagram is becoming a household name, so is Laura Lawson.*

## *Tell us about yourself, and how long you've been on Instagram.*

I am an artist, blogger, and Nutella lover based in the San Francisco area. Many of the images you see on my feed are homage to the beautiful part of the world I am blessed to call home. Instagram has certainly helped me see everyday life with a fresh perspective, and has changed the way I view my surroundings – which is what it's all about in the first place. I defy monotony. I see everything as a composition. I should probably note that I am not a photographer, at least not in the traditional sense. I've always loved photography but have never really given it a chance, not wanting to be just another hipster with a DSLR. I posted my first Instagram photo on February 7, 2011 while watching the Super Bowl. I had no idea what I was getting myself into back then, but it has truly opened my eyes to a world of creativity and inspiration. I love scrolling through my feed and seeing New York City through @chrisozer's eyes, or @withhearts' daily cup of coffee. I have become completely obsessed with photography and am just beginning to pursue it more seriously.

## *Instagram has opened up so many opportunities for you. Can you share your favorites?*

I have met so many amazing individuals through Instagram, many of whom I've had the privilege to meet in real life. I love social media for bringing like-minded people together from all across the world, and I am so indebted to Instagram for the friendships it has cultivated in my life with fellow nerdy iPhoneographers. In November, I was blessed to sponsor a clean water organization called Seeds Of Hope International Partnerships through an art show I held at a local gallery. I asked the Instagram community to get involved by posting pictures of people holding or drinking water and tagging the images #LLwater. I culled almost 400 pictures, which I printed and assembled into a giant photo collage for the show. It was fascinating to see people from all across the globe get involved in this project. The Instagram installation truly was the hit of the show, and sequentially I am planning a Hipstamatic/Instagram exhibit with a photographer friend of mine later this year.

## *It's not a secret you suffer from retinitis pigmentosa. This is a sad relation; how has it changed your perspective on photography?*

Retinitis pigmentosa, or RP, is an incredibly rare degenerative eye disease that is slowly robbing me of my vision, for those not in the know (look it up on Wikipedia to learn more). I was diagnosed two years ago while attending art school. The repercussions of this diagnosis stretch pretty wide... I was forced to give up driving, and had to accept the ugly reality that I may someday lose my vision entirely. Throughout my grieving and healing process, I have consistently relied on God for direction and strength. I have never lost my inspiration, it has just evolved.

>>>

My #stuffonconcrete series on Instagram transpired through being stuck at home not being able to drive – I simply place objects on a concrete slab in my backyard and photograph them. I now find inspiration in cracks on sidewalks, birds flying overhead, suburbanites walking their dogs. I have found a new normal. I see the beauty in everything and try to take nothing for granted. My entire worldview has shifted for the better. Yes, I would even go so far as to say that RP has been a huge blessing in my life.



*Bikes by Laura Lawson*



*Fly Fly Away by Laura Lawson*

### ***How do you find inspiration through your iPhone camera?***

Your best camera really is the one you always have with you, and currently, that's my iPhone 4. I have learned about composition, color, lighting, and so much more simply by continuously snapping shots while on the go. The ease of access and excellent megapixel quality of the iPhone speaks for itself. It has essentially replaced the point and shoot.

### ***Instagram is a breeding ground for spam, like every popular social media platform. How do you deal?***

Ah yes, there is truly nothing more annoying than your average follow farmer roaming the halls of Instagram looking for the next photo upon which to spit up some spam. I know that the Instagram team is working hard on solving this issue, but in the meantime, it doesn't bother me too much. In my free time I like to spam the spam along with my good friends @reelpeet and @colbruski. We've even gotten some of these kids to realize what they're doing is obnoxious and to let their work speak for itself.

## *What's your favorite photo from Instagram and the story behind it?*

Man, what a question! I had to think long and hard about this one. The first shot that comes to mind is from a recent Instawalk in San Francisco that some friends and I planned. We were overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge and I had the bright idea to have all the iPhoneographers line up and pretend to take a picture in the same direction. It turned out to be a hit, so much so that Instagram asked if they could use the photo as a permanent banner on their blog (I said duh). To me, the photo represents what Instagram is all about. The other image that immediately comes to mind is a good old fashioned #fromwhereistand photo with my dirty white TOMS in front of a giant pile of all the printed photos from my #LLwater project on the ground. I had just received the photos from Printstagram in the mail and was so excited to feature them in my show that I simply dumped them everywhere and captured the moment without thinking. I have found that spontaneity and those unplanned serendipitous moments often give birth to the most unforgettable images.

## *Any wishful thinking for new features on Instagram?*

I love it exactly the way it is. I do miss the old tiltshift, but once the Rise filter was introduced, Instagram peaked.



*Emoji from 1930s by Laura Lawson*



*Follow Your Heart by Laura Lawson*

## *What annoys you on Instagram?*

Well, the spam is extremely annoying of course. I suppose the Popular Page annoys me as well. I never look at it if I can help it. I've seen enough cleavage and pictures of celebrities to last a lifetime, thankyouverymuch. I don't like overly processed photos. I usually just edit my photos in one Instagram filter. I like to keep it clean and simple and can't stand anything resembling HDR. I only follow people whose work is exceptional and inspiring, or if they are my good friends in real life, so I am guaranteed to double tap pretty much every photo I see whenever I scroll through my feed.



*Instawalk by Laura Lawson*

Laura Lawson's [Instagram](#) and [blog](#).



*Instagram is one of the most popular apps in the App store and it has its own verb now (“Instagraming”, “Instawalk”, “Insta-insert verb here”). There are over a dozen tech articles claiming Instagram will be available on Android this year. Let Laura Lawson, the Instaqueen (sorry, Laura, but you’re royalty to us in Instagram), share her best tips for what Apple named App of the Year for 2011.*

The best advice I would give to a fellow Instagram addict, or artist of any kind, is learn how to edit your work. Only select the very best. This will train your eye to see things in new ways. People will be drawn to your work when all they see are outstanding images. And yes, it is completely all right to post a self-portrait from time to time... as long as you’re not using the front facing camera.

I’m most attracted to organic shapes and contrasting textures. I think that’s partly where my #stuffonconcrete series came from – fruit just seems to stand out nicely against pavement. I love simple, bold shapes that communicate clearly. Lately, I have been trying to post more landscape/street scene shots. I never want to get stuck in a certain mode; I always want to be evolving as an artist and challenging myself. I do have a particular style however – I am not as drawn to symmetry or hard lines, for example. I love photographing people and making my friends pose against interesting walls.

I am extremely picky when posting photos to Instagram. I take dozens of pictures every day, but only a few make the insta-cut. Friends chastise me, saying I should feel free to post whatever I want, since after all this is simply nothing more than a virtual diary of my day-to-day life. And while I know that’s true, I still don’t want to lose photographic integrity. What I look for in a post-worthy photo is a straight horizon line, perfect crispness (lately I’ve been shooting in HDR mode), and a good crop.

One reason why I love mobile phone photography is the large number of readily available photo editing apps for the iPhone. I have over 40 photo apps myself, but the two that I use almost exclusively are Filterstorm and Camera+. Filterstorm is fabulous for sharpening, straightening, brightness, and white balance control. To be honest, most of my Instagram shots are only edited with one Instagram filter – I use Valencia and Rise more than any others – but if a shot needs a little tweaking, Filterstorm is my go-to app. Camera+ has some really fun retro looking filters that I will use on occasion. Another thing I love about both these apps in particular is they will save the photo’s geotag, unlike most other photo editing apps.

# Going Digital: My Love Affair with the Pixel

*by Diana La Counte*

I remember like it was yesterday. 1996. A new fancy gizmo called the DVD launched in Japan; Internet Explorer 3 was the advanced browser; P.G. Wodehouse rolled in his grave as Ask Jeeves became an Internet sensation, and I got my first digital camera!

To be more precise, I got an Olympus C800L. This love of my shutter happy fingers boosted the latest and greatest in digital technology—.81 resolution, a LCD screen, built in memory (that's right readers, no fancy SD slot for me), and...well that's about all it boosted, but it was 1996, and I couldn't exactly be picky.



*Olympus C800L*

My next camera came in 1998. It had the best specs! It had over 1 megapixels- 1.2 to be exact. It was an Epson PhotoPC 750Z (I'm not joking, Epson actually made digital cameras back in the day). This bad girl had a 3x optical and could even make grainy 8x10 quality prints! Oh! Did I mention the expansion slot?! It had a slot for Compact Flash—which was all the rage back before SD cards ate them alive.



*Epson PhotoPC 750Z*

Over the years, I've gone through Kodak's, Canon's, Samsung's, and too many others to even begin to count. Why? I love digital.

Every super hero has its origin story, which makes me wonder: what's the digital camera origin story?

Like most origin stories, digital got its powers at the height of the Cold War during a radiation leak at an über secretive U.S. Spy facility that nobody knew existed...okay, okay, so the story wasn't that sexy, but it was still the Cold War: 1975 to be exact. The first attempt at digital was a prototype that Kodak worked on. It weighed eight pounds, had a 0.01 (Yes! 0.01, which also marked it as the only digital camera worse than the camera found on the iPad 2), and took 23 seconds to record an image. Throughout the eighties, a number of companies experimented with digital, but, push come to shove, they were more like video cameras with the ability to capture a still photo.



*Kodak's 1975 Digital Camera Prototype  
(Photo Credit Kodak)*



*Fuji DS-1P*

The cost of early digital cameras (around \$20,000) kept most of these cameras out of consumer's hands. Mostly they were used by newspapers, who needed a way to transmit images to their respected news outlets without satellites—it was used heavily during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protest and also the Gulf War: Part I (not to be confused with the sequel). To put it in today's terms: Digital cameras were sort of the Twitter of 80's/90's political conflicts—it fed us with images almost instantly.

Fuji takes credit for the first “true” digital camera with the Fuji DS-1P in 1988. It was never manufactured in the United States, however.

Throughout the nineties, there was a digital age war on as iconic companies like Nikon fought to stay relevant. Apple even had its hands on digital with the QuickTake (spoiler alert: it wasn't as quick as the name implied). It wasn't until the late nineties, when digital cameras finally started reaching a price point that consumers could actually afford, they really started taking shape.

While some companies lived on, others simply found no way to recapture the glory days of film. Kodak—a company that once represented America's love affair with point and shoot—is perhaps the most tragic example of when digital attacks analog. Sure they had digital cameras, but so did just about every other tech company. Innovation is what mattered, and their lack of timely innovation unseated them from their place on top and they never quite recovered.

In 1997, Kodak traded on the New York Stock Exchange for \$90 dollars; today? It just went bankrupt. The company that gave the world the first prototype of the digital camera, and once controlled a whopping 90% of the U.S. camera hungry hands, is now on life support, and simply waiting for someone to pull the plug.

The real winners of the digital age are the consumers, who can demand innovation. In the digital age, brand name is not nearly as important as features. Before I leave you, stroll with me down memory lane, at a look at ten of the craziest, funniest, oddest, and downright innovative digital cameras to ever hit geek hands:

Yes, Apple had a digital camera. Its name was the QuickTake and it was released before Steve Jobs returned the company to innovation, but after John Sculley had been ousted. It cost \$750 dollars (and you thought iPad's were expensive!), and was launched in 1994. It had a 0.3 resolution, and only released one model compatible with Windows. It was around for three years, but was discontinued in 1997. It wasn't exactly an innovating camera (it is considered one of Apple's greatest flops), but it was a clear sign of what was going to come for cameras.



*Apple QuickTake 100*

Seitz 6x17 was the camera for boys trying to compensate for something they lacked. It's resolution? 160 megapixels! That's not a misprint! When most of today's cameras barely hit 15 megapixel, this camera, released in 2006, proved that some camera makers preferred to reach for the sun and not the sky. Why haven't you heard of it? For starters, it cost about \$35,000. And, in case you are wondering how big a 160 MP picture is—it was nearly 1 gigabyte.



*Seitz 6x17*

Back in 2006, when most camera makers were abandoning their analog cameras, Leica had a revolutionary idea—make an attachment for analog cameras to make them shoot in digital as well. It was heavy, expensive (\$5,000), and had a resolution of 10MP. It was also Leica and crazy cool. It proved you still could have the best of both worlds.



*Leica Digital Module R*

Minolta had a crazy idea in 1998--why not let people shoot in absolutely any direction? It was possible with the detachable lens on the Minolta Dimage V. Through a special cord, users could detach the lens from the body of the camera and take a picture at literally any angle. It had an original price of \$700, had a 2.7x zoom lens, and could hold whopping 32 pictures—okay, okay, the specs aren't amazing, but it had a sweet detachable lens!



*Minolta Dimage V*



*Konica Kanpai*

Imagine a camera that could get those rare family moments when people actually laugh! Okay, so this one isn't a digital camera, but it was definitely innovating. The Konica Kanpai was a voice activated camera that would automatically turn its cute little bod (did we mention it had a built in tripod?) around whenever it heard people laughing, and take a picture.

What would a list of crazy, fun and innovating digital cameras be without at least one that made you say "Aww!"? Meet the Necono Digital Camera. The Japanese camera had an original U.S. price of \$191. With a lens hidden inside the eye, the adorable 3MP camera made the ultimate spy camera (no one ever suspects the cat).



*Necono Digital Camera*



*The World's Smallest Camera*

There are several ways to make headlines, but the easiest is breaking a record. This camera did just that with what they bill as the "World's Smallest Camera." It suffers from perhaps one of the most uninspired names (really? "The World's Smallest Camera" was the best name they could think of?), but it's still impressive. Measuring at 1 1/8 in length and 1 1/16 in width, the finger size camera weighs just 1/2 ounce. The camera comes short in terms of megapixels—only 2 megapixels—but it does have the ability to record video and can even save photos on a microSD card. The camera can still be purchased on Hammacher Schlemmer's website for \$59.95

If you ever want to create true panoramic photos, then you'll need to check out this camera. The Giroptic 360° has cornered the market on 360° cameras—but at \$699, be prepared to shell out cash to experience its innovation. The camera is perfect for real estate agents wanting to dynamically show off a house, but until it gets a price cut, it's not quite ready for primetime.



*Giroptic 360°*

Ok, so the Giroptic doesn't control all the 360 market—but it is the most professional one. If you are looking for a toy, check out the The Dot iPhone Panorama Lens, which is available for a fraction of the Giroptic's price (just \$79). And speaking of the iPhone, head to PhotoJojo and see the latest and greatest in iPhone attachment lens'.



*The Dot iPhone  
Panorama Lens*

3D...you had us at Avatar! But then you had to go off and shove it down our throats in everything from TVs to Video Games—and, of course, cameras. Fuji beat everyone when it released the FinePix REAL 3D . The camera not only shoots in 3D, it records in 3D as well. If you are one of the millions gaga for 3D, then this camera is for you.



*FinePix REAL 3D*

Digital is constantly changing and by the time this goes to print, there will be a bigger, better and more impressive camera than the newest camera models mentioned. I may not always catch up with it, but looking back at my Olympus from 1996, I can't wait to see what else comes next.

# *Embracing Your Self Portrait*

*by Meg Fee*



*Photo Credits: Meg Fee*

**I** like being single.

There I said it.

People always scoff at that. “Incredulous. Incredible.” But I do.

Are there moments I long for companionship? Absolutely.

For the time being I like climbing into my own bed each night, not fighting for cover space or the right side of the bed.

There are certain perks to being young (relatively), single (very), and good-looking (moderately) in New York City. Free food, drink, memoir-worthy adventures, and love affairs that begin and end in a single smile on subway platforms, in coffee shops, or standing just next to the Hudson river.

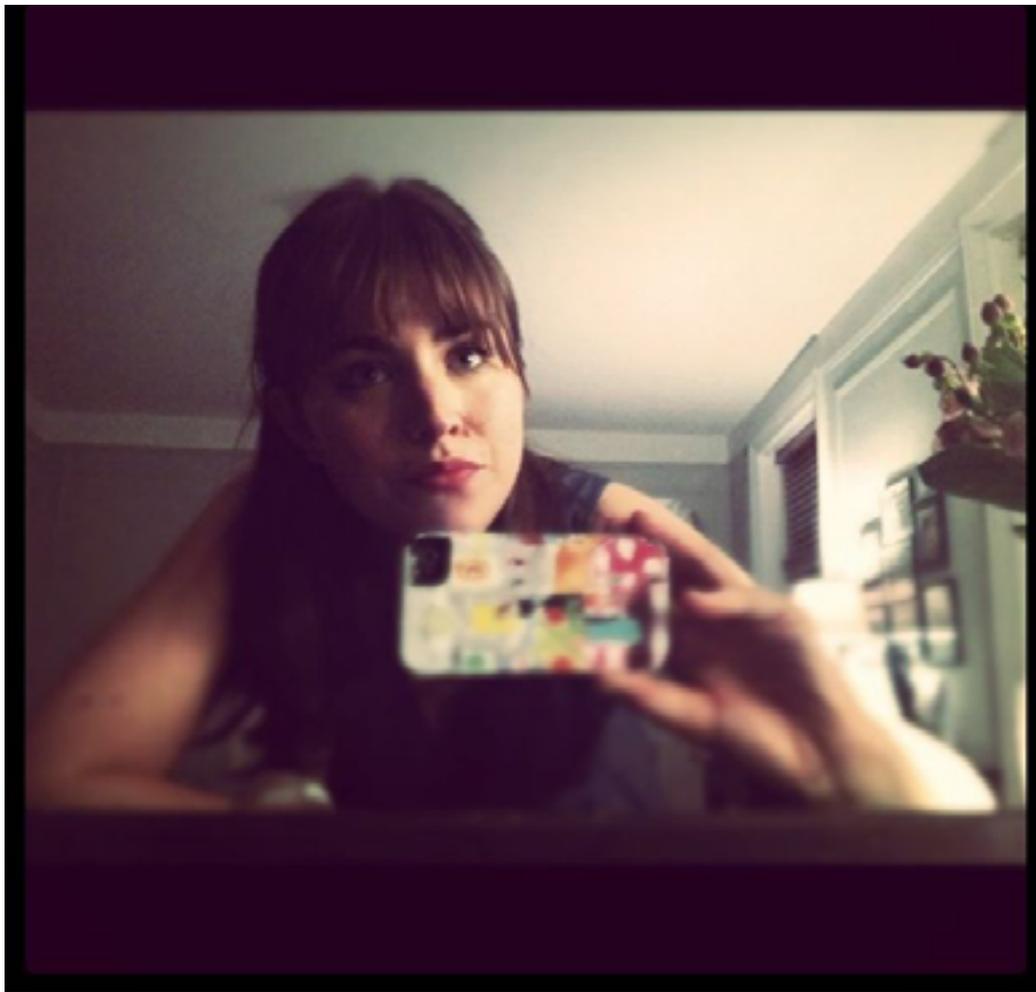
The problem begins and ends, as a single woman and blogger, in photography.

Let's lay it out there: photography is key. It elevates and enhances a blog. Provides immediate interest. And the people want, what the people want: photos of the gal behind the blog.

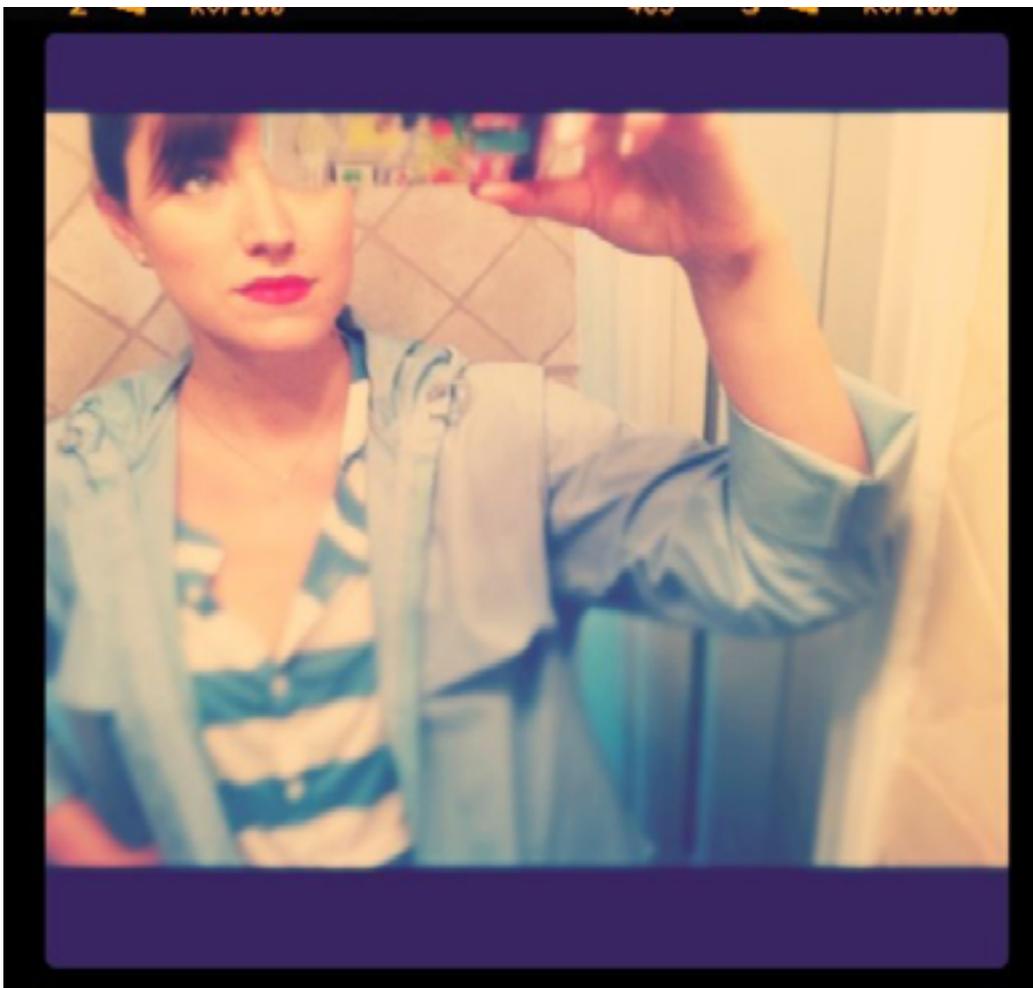
I just need an extra set of hands sometimes. And a boyfriend would do nicely for this. I know, I know, a boyfriend for the sole purpose of taking my photo? Sounds so narcissistic. So instead I trade one narcissistic trait for another- taking photos in the bathroom mirror. With camera in hand I fire away. For every ten pictures I take, there is one that I find acceptable.

When not at home there is the iPhone (or smartphone). It's a single ladies best friend: pictures and directions. I employ the little flip of the camera and fire away. Sure there's that awkward moment when the photo rights itself and I think, Oh dear Lord, is that really what I look like? The feeling usually passes when I filter the photo through instagram, choosing the setting the washes me out the most. The more the "washed look" the filter has, the less the fine-lines and the better I look.





Self-portraiture takes both fearlessness and an inflated sense of vanity. It's a bit more serious than that. You see, there was a large chunk of my life during which I was afraid to have my photo taken. I hid from cameras. Whole years of my life went undocumented. There was the constant fear- at the end of the night someone will pull out a camera, and no one should live in that type of fear. Having your photo taken and being okay with the image--well that just takes some time, a little knowledge, and some practice- the image is not quite you. It can be both alarming and disarming. Once you accept that--that an image is inherently distorted and you might like what the camera reflects back. Once you make peace with this, there is a freedom- freedom from fear. Freedom from thinking the camera tells the truth. It doesn't. It's still valuable and still a hell of a good time. You'll never look exactly the same, and sometimes it takes a good hundred pictures before you find one you really love. And to learn these things, to really know them in your body, that takes practice and time. And for me, I found that freedom by taking silly self-portraits- photos for my eyes alone. It's there in my own makeshift-studios (mostly in bathrooms) I found some release. It was there I came to accept my face in pixilated form--sometimes chubby, sometimes thin, sometimes luminous, and often tired. It was there I practiced the art of seeing the big picture: screw the plumpness of my face, but do I look happy? This may not sound like much but it makes all the difference in the world.



*Photo Credits: Meg Fee*

# How To *Photograph a Kid*

*by Chantilly McKinnon*

You are planning a session of child-focused photography and you think, “it’s going to be a breeze – maybe even fun!” You will keep the shoot short, snap a few photos and come out with some brilliant snapshots that perfectly capture the essence of childhood. Kids are naturally adorable after all, so it won’t take that much work, right? If you have ever thought such a foolish thing then it is clear that you have never witnessed the spark that is ignited the moment that most children spot a camera. A simple child portrait can devolve into a screaming, spit-frothing, mind-numbing mess so quickly that it’s not hard to understand why many are reluctant to mutter the phrase “Say Cheese” ever again.

However, if you’re one of those sweet, naïve individuals (or perhaps brave and foolhardy types) that want to give this unrecognized sport a try then I have a few pieces of advice for you. There has not been one moment in my life that I have ever considered myself a professional anything so please don’t believe that I fancy myself an expert. However, I do lord over one of the most energetic and possibly defiant two year olds I have ever met and I have a decent track record of taking photos that I will love – or at least appreciate – until the end of time.

## *Tip One: Leave the building*

Natural light is the best light so if you can get outdoors. If you’re working with a very bright day it will be better to have your subject stand in a more shaded area so you can avoid having the sun shining in their eyes and a washed out complexion. This will help you get a beautifully lit and much more natural feeling photograph.



*6 months by Chantilly McKinnon*

## *Tip Two: Keep shooting*

Set your camera to continuous shooting and get ready to take about a bazillion shots. Child photography may burn through the aperture life of your camera but it's worth to catch those in-between moments. Kids are wild, crazy animals. Let them do what they do best and you are bound to get something golden on film.



*Real life reaction by Chantilly McKinnon*

## *Tip Three: This is going to take a while*

Natural light is the best light so if you can get outdoors. If you're working with a very bright day it will be better to have your subject stand in a more shaded area so you can avoid having the sun shining in their eyes and a washed out complexion. This will help you get a beautifully lit and much more natural feeling photograph.



*On the pot by Chantilly McKinnon*

## *Tip Four: The Rubber Duckie will make you or break you*

It's all sorts of cliché when you imagine the photographer perched behind the tripod waving around a rubber duck in hopes of catching a smile. It must have worked at some point but when you are imagining this scenario you can hear a kid crying, right? Bring along some fun props to the shoot but don't expect them to be the backbone or the theme. Tread lightly and don't force it. You can never tell how a child will react to a certain toy on a given day but it may work. Props like eye masks and super hero capes are amazing visual elements.



*Little geek by Chantilly McKinnon*

## *Tip Five: Near and Far*

Close ups and wide-angle shots are both key to telling a tale. Get all up in that kids business to catch the nuances of their expression and keep the frame wide to keep the story going. If you are shooting with a DSLR and you don't have the budget to invest in a fancy lens then I'd suggest finding a filter kit on eBay or Amazon. All you do is screw on an adapter ring and you can use tones of different filters. My favorites are the macro and wide angle variety. Plus these babies are usually less than \$20 and get you something akin to a big dollar lens. Sweet!



*Blocking the sun by Chantilly McKinnon*

### *Tip Six: Get small*

For the most part when I'm taking photos of my daughter I am at her height level. This in turn means that I look like a moron for the majority of the time I'm shooting. It also means that I get grass stains in the summer, snow soaked pants in the winter and caked with mud the rest of the year. Maybe the tip should have been to bring a change of clothes. Regardless, taking photos at your subjects level is yet another way to make the picture more natural and to add more personality to the composition. Photography that is shot from an odd angle often leaves me thinking about the position of the photographer rather than the subject in the photo.



*On her level by Chantilly McKinnon*

## *Tip Seven: Photoshop that kid*

This tip may seem evil but it's not, I swear. Photoshop gets a bad reputation because of its truly transformative and sometimes deceptive abilities. I'm not here to tell anyone to wipe away the freckles and Kool-Aid mustaches. What I love about Photoshop the most is something commonly known as actions. A Photoshop action is originally created when one kind soul has taken the time to turn a very long image altering process into a one click action. That action allows the user to create any variety of photo effects or filters – similar to Instagram. I tend to favor those with a vintage feel to them and I have had great success with products from Paint the Moon and Michelle Nicole. Seriously, its one quick click and it can add a whole new feel to an image.



*Hannah by Diana La Counte*

## *Bonus Tip: Have Camera, Will Travel*

I have a serious appreciation for all of the little humiliations that childhood brings. The problem is that most of these magic moments don't happen during a scheduled photo shoot. This is exactly why my iPhone is so close to my heart. It has a good camera and it is always by my side. Don't forget to remember to pull out your phone for a quick snap when your child busts a can of tomato sauce at the grocery store, gets their head stuck in the monkey bars or falls asleep on the pot. Sure, they will hate you for it for years but at least you have the funny picture.

This is as far as Gadchick can help you when it comes to photographing kids. As for the tantrums and broken camera from that photoshoot, we are not responsible!



*Obligatory scream shot by Chantilly McKinnon*

# How to Photoshop Your Ex Out of Photos & Other Tips

*by Erin Micheletti*

## Photoshop Retouching 101

Open a magazine, look at a billboard or simply walk down the street and it's hard not to come face-to-face with a Photoshop disaster. Hands turn into mutant prongs, arms are erased, and skin is airbrushed clear off faces.

Photoshop is great for many things – you can crop, resize, color correct and get all Perez Hilton with your pics to your heart's content. But what if you need to actually – gasp – retouch an image? Is it possible to fix a bad skin day while still looking normal? What about removing your ex-boyfriend from your vacation photos? GadChick is here to help.

Don't have Photoshop? Never fear – GIMP is a free, open-source download that offers many of the same benefits as Photoshop, but without the crazy price tag. While the program is a little rough around the edges (it's open source and not for profit, after all), the basics of these tutorials are also applicable to GIMP.

Ready to say goodbye to acne and ex-boyfriends? Here's how to touch up your photos without turning them into your own little Photoshop of Horrors.

## Basic Color Adjustment

The first step to fixing an image is to be sure that the colors are balanced. Why does this matter? With the wrong color balance, your pearly whites can't sparkle and your skin will look washed out (or gangrene, as the case may be), a color problem that all the skin smoothing in the world can't fix. Fortunately, many of the problems with colors are due to a general color shift. What this means is that there is simply too much of one color in your image, or not enough of another color, depending on how you want to look at the balance problem. For Photoshop newbies, the color balance tool is the easiest to use and understand. (For more advanced users who play with levels and channels – feel free to skip ahead to our skin retouching how-to.)

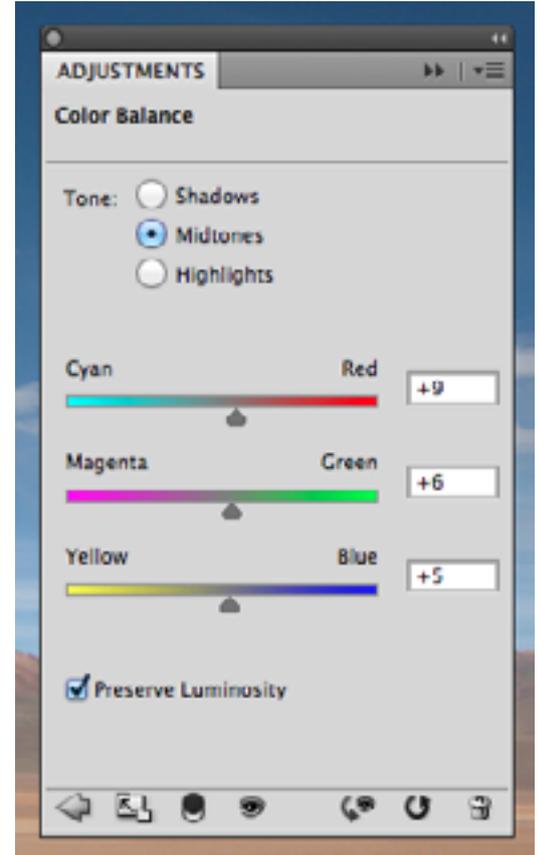
## Step One: Create a Color Adjustment Layer

1. Go to Layers -> New Adjustment Layer -> Color Balance
2. You'll see this Color Balance window:

As the name implies, color balance is all about balancing the relationship between different colors. For all the non-art majors out there, each additive primary color (red, green, and blue) has a complementary subtractive color (cyan, magenta, yellow). Adjusting the amount of each color by adding or subtracting can help color correct images.

3. Play with adjusting the sliders to see how more or less of one color affects the overall colorcast. In this example, the image has too much cyan and yellow. Adjusting the sliders brings the image back to balance.

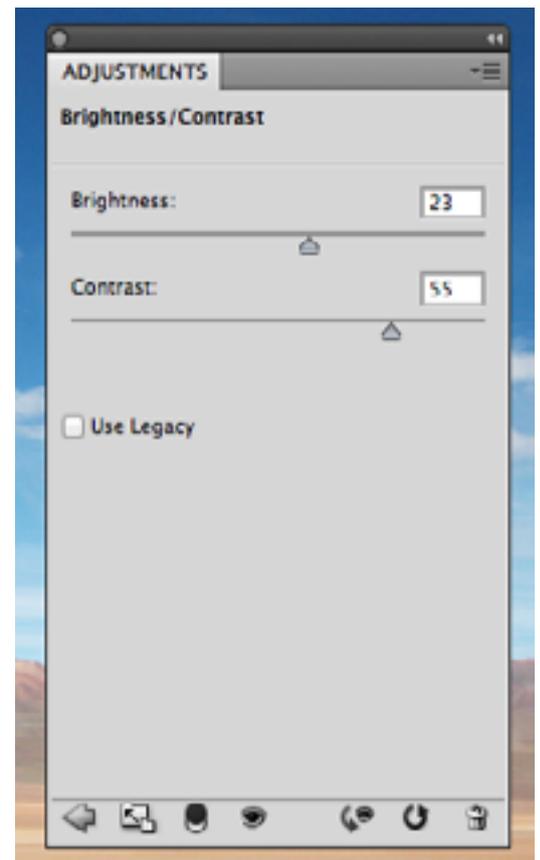
As a word of warning, every monitor is calibrated differently, so be sure to check your settings before getting started. While unlikely, there's nothing worse than color correcting a bunch of images only to find that your monitor display is completely off.



## Step Two: Create a Brightness/Contrast Layer

Sometimes, images will appear washed out. This is a common problem in landscape photography and even every day point-and-shoot snapshots. Depending on the quality of your camera, bright sunlight may simply overwhelm your camera's ability to accurately meter the scene, causing you to lose detail in your sky and color intensity. Adding a brightness/contrast layer is an easy way to bring back your photo's vibrancy.

In our example photo, you can clearly see how color adjustment and brightness/contrast adjustments really bring the image to life! On the left is the original image; in the middle is the image after color adjustments, and on the right is the image after brightness/contrast adjustments. Just a few easy tweaks and your photo will go from blah to wow!





*original*

*after  
colour adjustments*

*after brightness/contrast  
adjustments*

## Basic Skin Retouching

Now that your colors are set, it's time to get to the fun stuff – aka the retouching that most of us think about when we hear the phrase, “Can you Photoshop me?”

The first step in skin retouching is to remember the old adage: “Less is more!” Read, repeat, and take this to heart! When it comes to removing fine lines, freckles, or acne, tread lightly. And remember; zoom out from your image every so often to see the impact that your change has made. When we're zoomed in close, it's easy to go overboard on the edits. The goal is natural – not a forehead that's been smoothed to within an inch of its life!

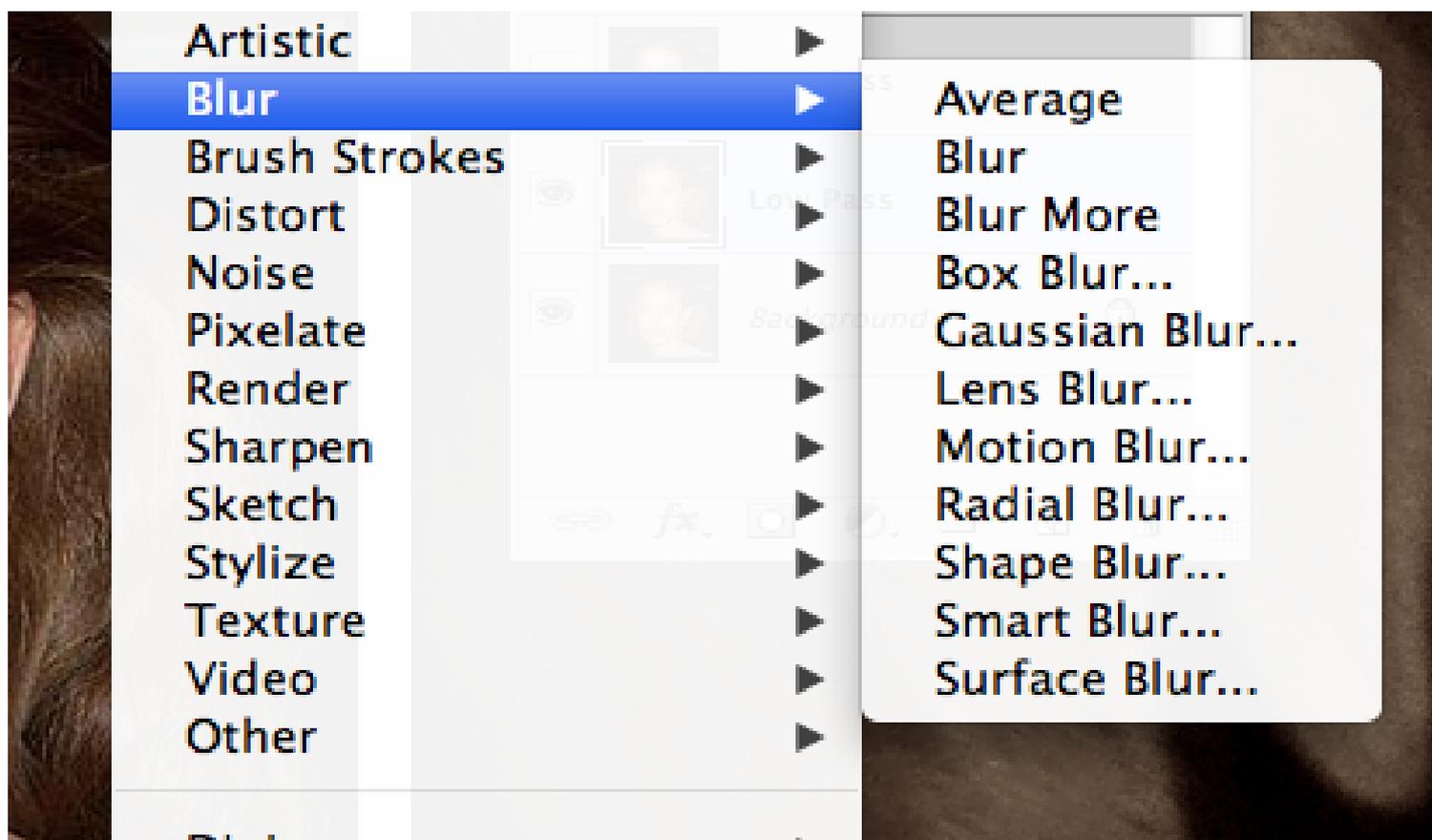
In this example, we're using an un-retouched image of Angelina Jolie – because, hey, even the beautiful people need a little help looking like stars!

## Step 1: Create the effect

1. Open your image. Keep in mind that you'll have better success with natural retouching when using a high-res image so the detail of the skin can really be seen
2. Create two duplicate layers (Layer -> Duplicate Layer); rename the top layer 'High Pass' and the middle layer 'Low Pass'; we'll work on the low pass layer first, so click the eye next to the high pass layer to hide it
3. For the low pass layer, we'll be using the surface blur filter. Go to Filter -> Blur -> Surface blur

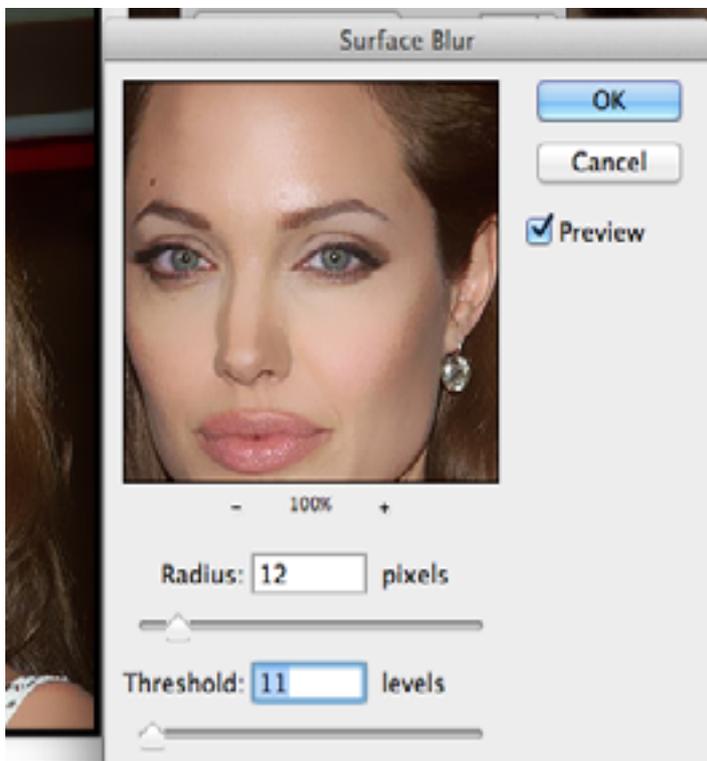
The first step in skin retouching is to remember the old adage: "Less is more!" Read, repeat, and take this to heart! When it comes to removing fine lines, freckles, or acne, tread lightly. And remember; zoom out from your image every so often to see the impact that your change has made. When we're zoomed in close, it's easy to go overboard on the edits. The goal is natural – not a forehead that's been smoothed to within an inch of its life!

In this example, we're using an un-retouched image of Angelina Jolie – because, hey, even the beautiful people need a little help looking like stars!



The Surface blur filter is controlled by managing radius and threshold. Radius specifies the size (radius) of the area that is sampled to create the blur, while threshold defines which pixels will be blurred. Pixels with a tonal value differences less than the threshold will not be blurred. Not sure what all that means? Do the following:

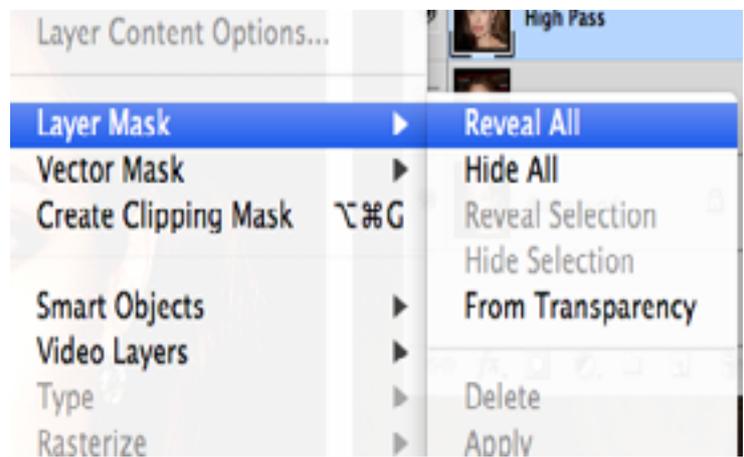
- Lower threshold until the edges just become sharp
- Adjust the radius so that the skin is smooth



## Step 2: Add back details

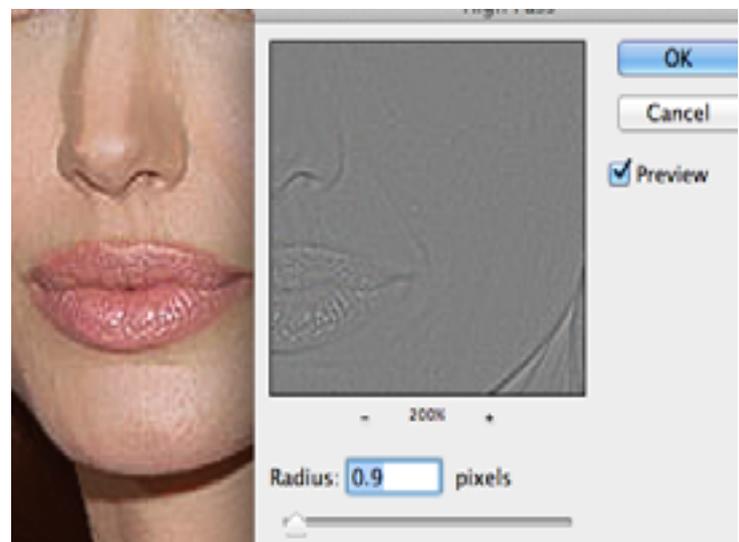
Next, we'll work on the high pass layer, adding back skin details like pores and minor imperfections.

1. Activate the high pass layer by clicking the eye on the layer box, and change the blending mode to Linear Light and the opacity to 50%



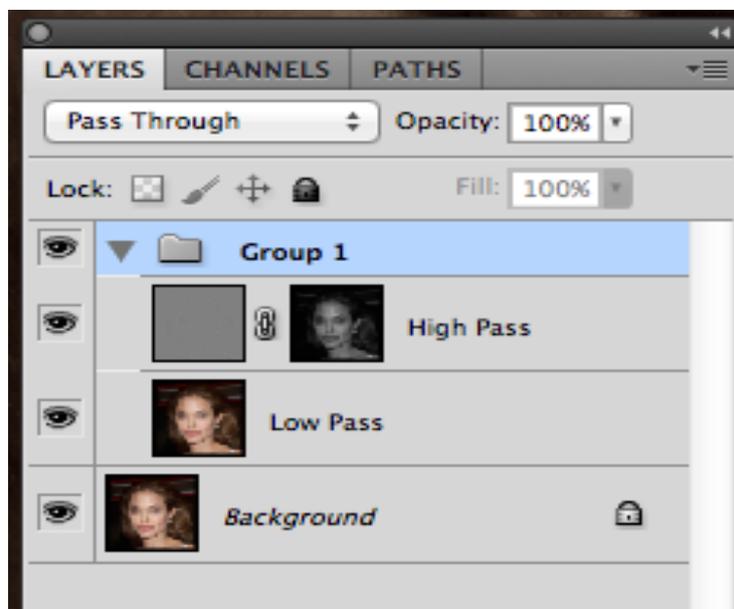
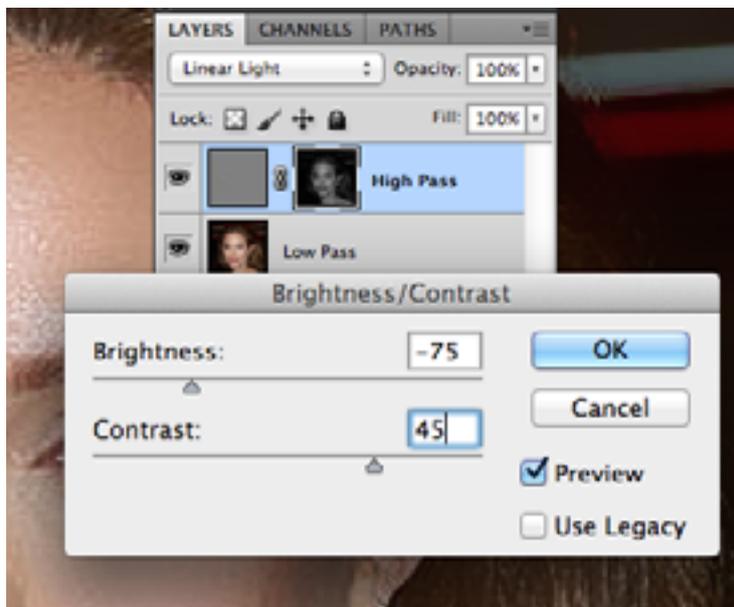
In non-Photoshopped images, natural bumps and pores are most visible on the lighter parts of the skin. We'll use a layer mask to "add back" these natural details.

2. Go to Layer -> Layer Mask and select 'Reveal All'
3. Use the Apply Image tool (Image -> Apply Image) to apply a copy of the image to the layer mask; select background from the layer drop down menu
4. Now that the layer mask has been created, reactivate the High Pass layer by clicking on its thumbnail
5. From Filter -> Other select 'High Pass'
6. Slowly adjust the radius until the skin looks natural; in the example below, we've kept the fine line around her smile



7. Tweak the layer mask settings: click on the layer mask thumbnail to activate it and go to Image -> Adjustments -> Brightness/Contrast

8. Tweak the brightness and contrast so that any skin imperfections are slightly visible in light areas and not visible in dark areas



5. Select the group layer mask and “paint on” the skin smoothing effect

6. Start with a larger diameter and then fill in smaller spots using a smaller brush size

7. Once you have “painted on” all the skin smoothing, simply delete the red layer

### Step 3: Smooth only the skin

Now that the skin is smooth, we have a slight problem – the entire image is also smooth. While this smoothing effect is less noticeable in an image with a soft background (like our example), all-over smoothing will really stand out if you have other people, objects, houses etc. in the background. Using the layer mask tool, we can erase the effect from unwanted areas.

1. Group the top to layers (Low Pass and High Pass)

2. Add layer mask: Layer -> Layer Mask -> Hide All

3. You will now see the original image minus any skin smoothing effect

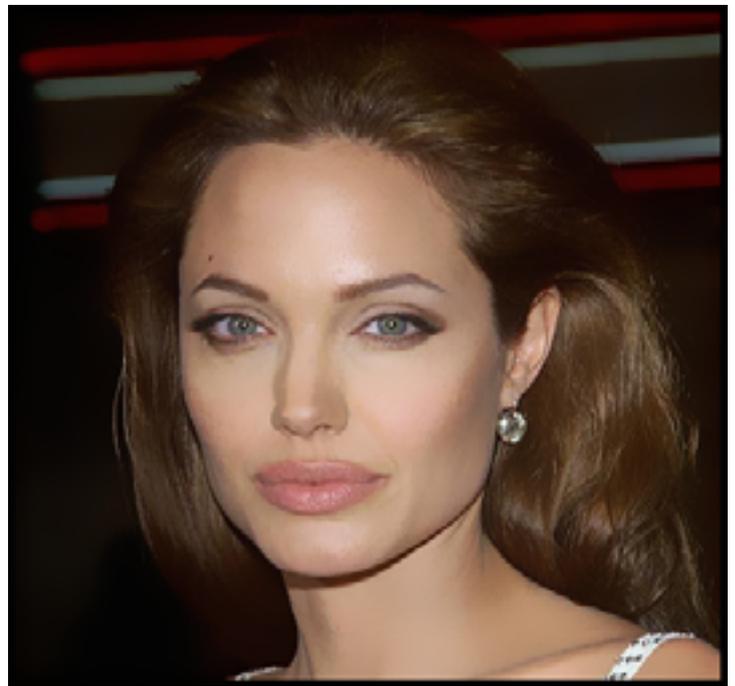
4. Add a new layer above the high pass layer and fill it with red; change the opacity to 50%



Ta-da! Minor blemishes are gone, skin is smooth and your face will glow just like Angelina Jolie's now does – rather than looking like a creepy plastic Barbie doll. In our example here, you can really tell the difference made when we added back subtle skin details.



Original Photo: Note the uneven forehead tones, faint bags under the eye, and fine lines on the face and neck.



Initial Retouch: How creepy – she's turned plastic!



Final retouch: Minor fine lines are back, including the natural lines along her face when she smiles; skin is still a smooth, even tone

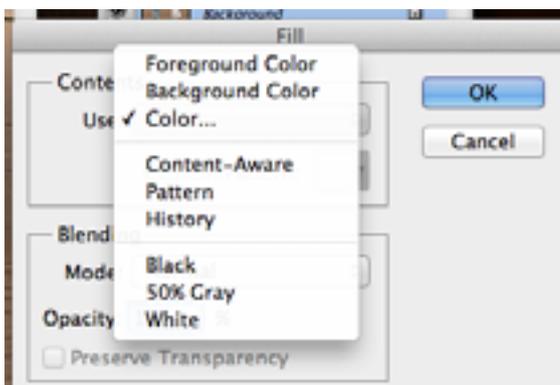
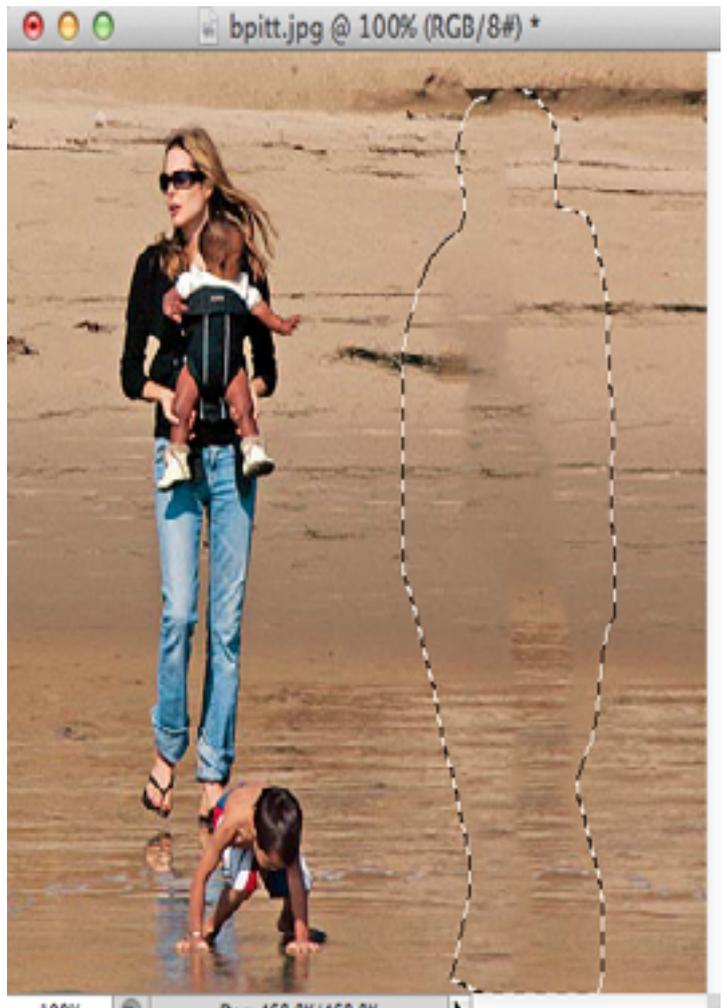
## Boyfriend-be-gone: People (and Object) Removal

You blocked him on Gchat, defriended him on Facebook – now save your photos and remove your ex from your vacation memories. Removing people (or background objects) takes finesse. Like skin retouching, it's best to make a few edits and take a step back to look at the bigger picture. Photoshop offers several tools for removing objects – often a combination of these is most effective for creating a realistic image.

### Step 1: Content Aware

If you have a big object to remove (i.e., your ex-boyfriend), your first stop is “Content-Aware”, a new feature introduced with CS5. In this example, we'll imagine that Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are no longer together – and an angry Angelina wants to remove Brad from all the family photos.

1. Select the object/person using the lasso tool; selection can be rough – there's no need for precision
2. Go to Edit -> Fill and select “Content Aware” from the drop-down menu
3. Ta-da! Photoshop will perform a bit of magic and remove the object for you



As seen here, the removal won't be perfect, but a little touch up action will finish the job.

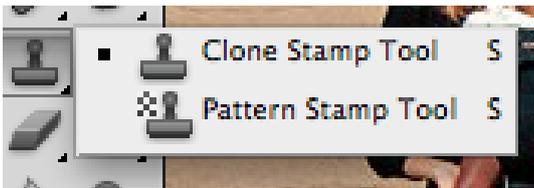
## Step 2: Correct Textures

Content aware may not be perfect, but it gives you a good starting point for removing pesky objects and people. Our next step is to fine-tune the removal by correcting background textures.

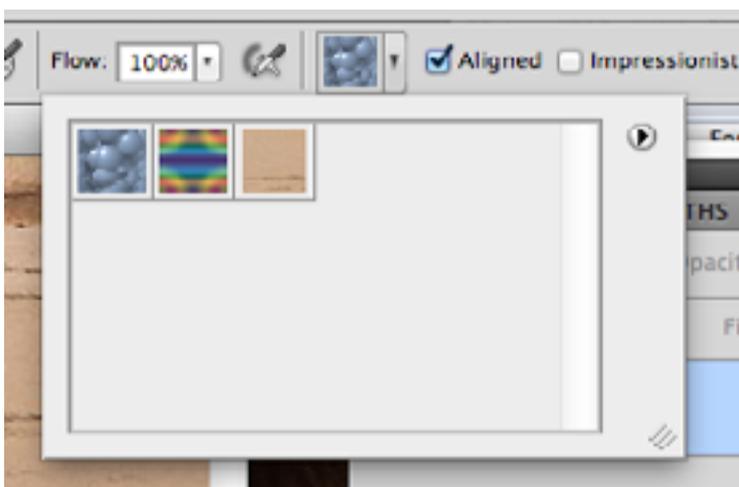
1. Sample a portion of your background using the Marquee Tool
2. Go to Edit -> Define Pattern to create a pattern from the Marquee selection



3. Click and hold down on the Clone Stamp tool until you are able to select Pattern Stamp Tool



4. Select your newly defined pattern from the options box at the top of the screen



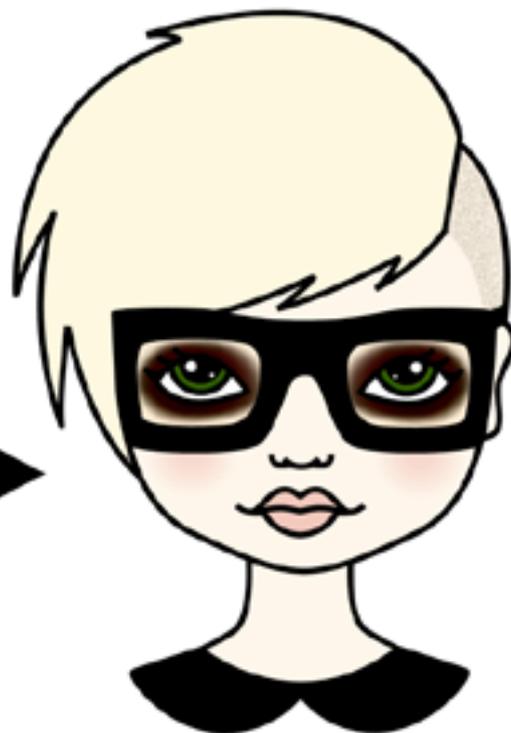
5. Choose a soft brush to "paint" on this pattern
6. Go to Select -> Deselect to be sure the Marquee Tool is no longer active
7. Smooth your background using the Pattern Stamp Tool
8. If distinct lines appear from repeated texture elements (as they do in this example), toggle the 'Aligned' option on and off
9. If you have a complex background, you may need to define multiple pattern areas



## Step 3: Recompose the Image

In this example, we removed an entire person, leaving the image off balance. If the image looks awkward after your object removal, simply use the crop tool to recompose your image and restore photographic balance – just as if the original person or object were never there. Ciao, Brad!

Once you master the basics of retouching, let your creativity run wild! The Internet is packed with great tutorials for creating composition images and adding fun filter effects. We love Pugly Pixel's tutorials. Experiment, make mistakes, but please... no claw hands



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## *gadchick reads*

*Edited by Annalee Newitz and Charlie Anders*  
*Reviewed by Mandy Curtis*

### **There's no right way to stereotype a geek**

I've long considered myself a geek. When I first started reading *She's Such A Geek*, however, I wondered if I, like the many butts of the Inigo Montoya "You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means" meme/joke, had been using it wrong all along. I tend to use the word geek somewhat interchangeably with nerd, regardless of the view that they're quite different. (See [www.geeksaresexy.net/2012/01/04/geek-vs-nerd-the-infographic](http://www.geeksaresexy.net/2012/01/04/geek-vs-nerd-the-infographic) for an example of the "differences.") The farther

I got into the book, I realized I just hadn't yet hit the section that connected more with my type of geekiness.

*She's Such a Geek* is a series of essays written by women of a variety of ages about their lives and various geeky pursuits. The book is divided into six sections—Growing Up Nerd; High Tech; In The Lab; Geek, Interrupted; Games; Superheroes—which loosely envelop the essays contained within. The first few sections, although they include interesting stories, didn't really catch my interest. Don't get me wrong. I, too, spent time enjoying math and science when I was younger, and certainly could have been considered a geek in those subjects along the way. (I was placed in eighth-grade science when I was in seventh grade and was one of five students who attempted AP Calculus in senior year of high school.) I just haven't delved into those subjects in at least a decade, and I therefore had trouble fully connecting with women whose lives revolve around math, science and computers. (Mine currently revolves around grammar, Journalism and eagerly awaiting the release of Mass Effect 3 and The Avengers.)

I also think I would have enjoyed the book more had it had a more positive outlook on the whole. Like I mentioned above, I see myself as a geek. At times I've struggled to find my place in this oft male-dominated culture. But even in the essays with happy endings, it seemed less "this is a worthwhile struggle" and more "damn the (literal) man!" Many of the women who wrote the essays were born in the 1970s; I was born in 1983. Was there such a drastic shift between Generation X and Y that I dealt with less geeksecution (geek + persecution) growing up? Or was my path just easier than most?

Two other cons: A lot of the essays could have used a revision keeping in mind the old “show, don’t tell” adage. Which, I’ll give them, is hard to do in a personal essay. And it might be just me—I’ll admit to being a bit of a square—but at least one of the essays seems to have been included for shock factor. I felt really uncomfortable when I started reading “The Hacker’s Guide to What’s In Her Own Panties” during my lunch break at work, and not just because I despise the word “panties.” (I finished the essay at home.)

That said, reading about other women who have similar interests to me is always entertaining, and there are a lot of good, thought-provoking bits to be found in the book. Including:

“The idea of a female geek seems to be a stereotype buster. But in fact, the figure of the female geek reproduces and reinforces all the negative stereotypes about individuals with an affinity for technology. And because she needs a modifier (female geek) while he does not (geek), she also reinforces the primary notion that technologically competent people are male.”—Suzanne E. Franks, “Suzy the Computer Versus Dr. Sexy”

“Math itself, I believe, is gender neutral. ... That said, humans are still shaping the study of mathematics, and humans have been socialized with certain behaviors and ideas about things like gender. So while math itself may be free of gender bias, the way we practice it is not. It’s harder to see now, and people may not know they’re doing it, but it’s still there.”—Elisabeth Severson, “{Women} ∩ {Mathematics} = [Me, At Least]”

“Big boobs, big guns, and battles skills on characters like Lara Croft create a loose but positive association between women and games. Add this to the perceived rarity of girls who like games, and you have an instant recipe for female idolatry among the male gaming population (especially potent if you factor in the chivalry that role-players typically carry in their pockets). It’s ironic to think that what some call sexual objectification of women in games might actually, under certain circumstances, have contributed to the empowerment of women gamers.”—Morgan Romine, “Fantasy to Frag Doll: The Story of a Gamer Princess”

“Boys get better fantasy lives. Go steal them.”—Quinn Norton, “Dreaming in Unison”  
“I call it the ‘girl takes off her glasses’ myth: Women are viewed as either smart or sexually appealing. ... This myth is one of many impediments preventing the current male-dominated nerd establishment from mentoring young women. With some exceptions, men fear their colleagues will assume they’re sexually infatuated with the women they advise. At the same time, women fear that they’ll be accused of using their feminine wiles to win male mentors. ... We all need to get over our fears and prejudices if we’re going to invent a quantum computer that works, if you know what I mean.”—Annalee Newitz, “When Diana Prince Takes Off Her Glasses”

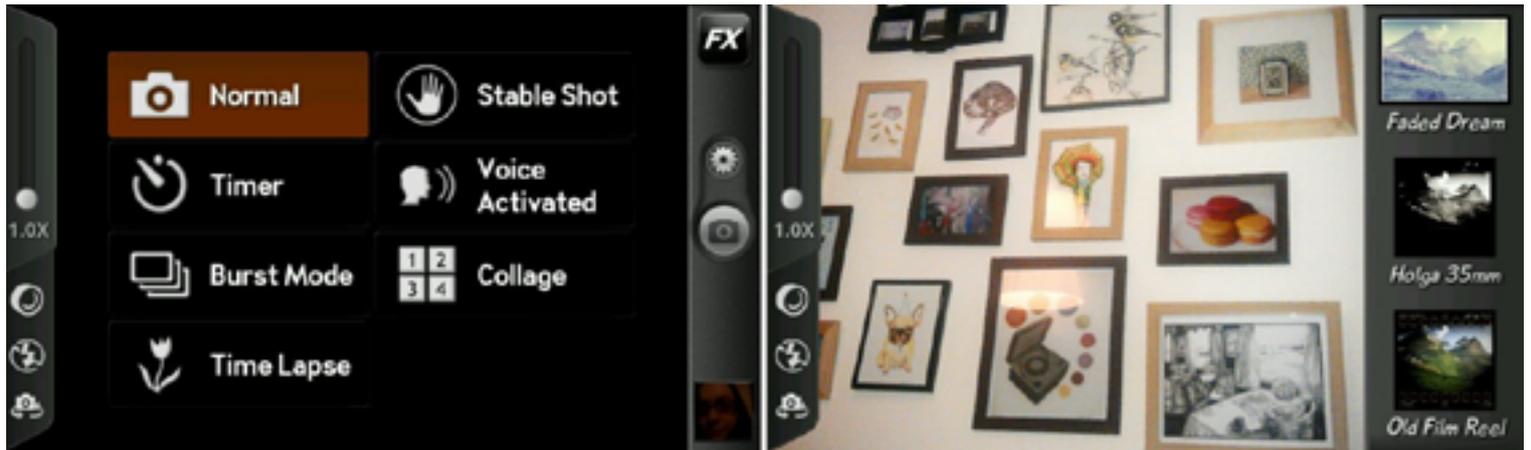
Definitely worth a read if you’re looking to commiserate with your fellow geeks (of the lady variety) or gain some insight into our plight.

Excerpt From

# THE ANDROID PHOTOGRAPHER

Rhianne Moore is a photographer who tested the best (and worst) camera applications, but we are only sharing ones you will love. Below is an excerpt from our upcoming e-book, *The Android Photographer*.

## CAMERA FX



**Price:** £1.79 / \$2.99

**Description:** Camera Zoom FX is an award winning photography application that can be used instead of the stock android camera application to take photos with powerful camera functions. It also has 90 effects, grid overlays and distortions in the post processing mode that can be applied to images taken with the app or ones imported from your gallery.

**What are its limitations:** In some ways this app is the only app that you would need to use – the camera is great and the post processing is efficient, however by trying to cover all the bases, the effects can seem limited compared to other apps that only cover this function.

**When to use it:** This app can be used instead of the stock camera app if you feel it takes better photos and provides more options. The stabilising and scene selections also make it a better camera for more eventful situations where you may want a steadier photo.

### How to:

1. Open the app through the apps menu and orientate your phone accordingly. The app will automatically open to the camera.
2. On the left hand side are the settings for the zoom, the flash, the focus and if your device is compatible, the user facing camera.
3. On the right hand side are more manual settings such as the timer, burst mode and more. You can also access the apps effects with the top right FX button and the gallery with the bottom left image.
4. Once you are happy with your camera settings, you then take a photo by tapping the screen or using the shutter button in the centre of the right hand side.

5. Your image will now load on the screen with two sides of menus.
6. The right hand side has the editing options including pre-set options and also a number of filters, frames and distortions to choose from. You can also edit the brightness/contrast settings or crop your photo from these menus.
7. The left hand menu has the save, share and delete options, so once you are happy you can choose one of those and then continue to take photos.

## ■ FX CAMERA



**Price:** FREE

**Description:** A simple photography app that allows you to take a photo with a number of various effects including toycam, polandroid and fisheye options.

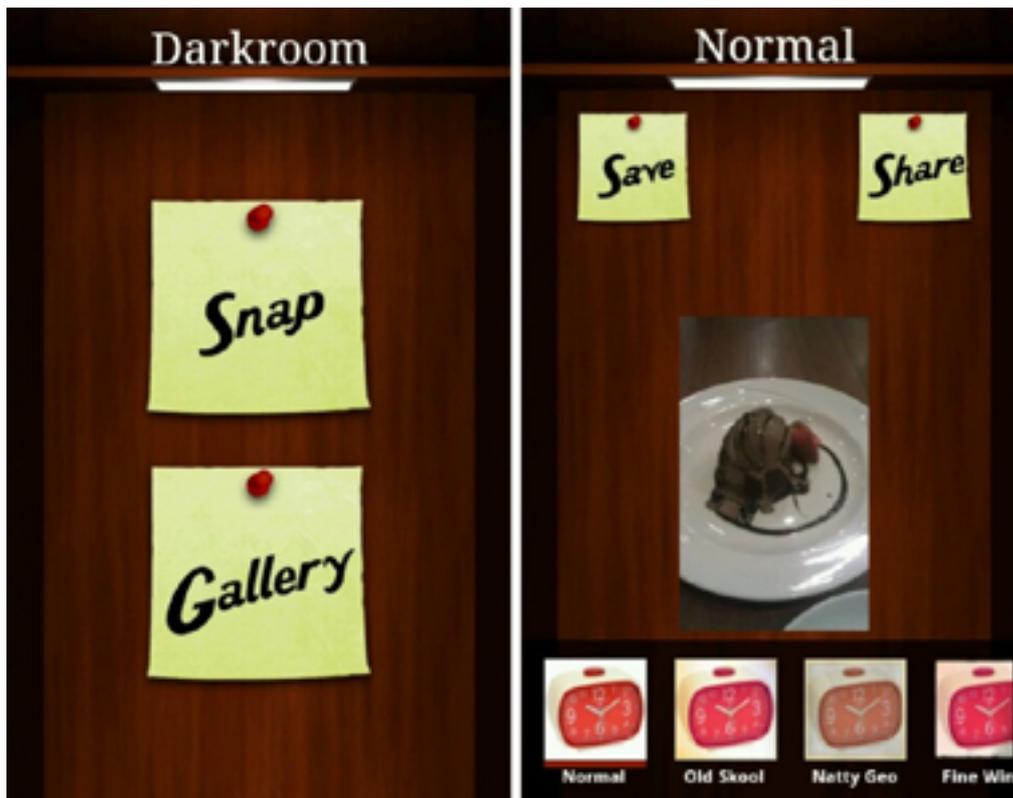
**What are its limitations:** The app is limited to 6 effects to start with and it can only be used to take photos rather than edit any existing photos you have already taken.

**When to use it:** If you want a fast photography application that applies a certain style of effect as soon as you take the photo then this is the app for you, the limited options make the process very fast and the saving and taking of further photos is also quick and easy.

### **How to:**

1. Open the app through the apps menu and orientate your phone accordingly.
2. Choose the style of photo that you want to take from the 6 in the initial menu.
3. Aim your camera and take your photo using the 'shot' button.
4. The Autofocus and Configuration button can also be used to edit how the photo will look before you take it – this is especially fun with the SymmetriCam option.
5. You can now save, share or delete your image with the buttons along the bottom of the phone and then proceed to take more photos.

## ■ DARKROOM CAMERA



**Price:** FREE

**Description:** Add special effects to your camera and photos including old, retro, stamped, and many more effects.

**What are its limitations:** This app can be limited by the country that you live in or the android device that you use, which is a shame.

**When to use it:** This app can be used to take photos and to edit them, so if you want to take a nice photo or edit existing ones then this app is worth considering.

### **How to:**

1. Open the app through the apps menu.
2. Choose whether to 'snap' a photo or open one through your gallery.
3. Edit the photo with the options along the bottom of the screen.
4. You then have the option to save and/or share your photo.

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*by Ashlee Gadd*

# Why a Woman Photographs

Anyone who knows me would agree that I am the polar opposite of a hoarder. Much to my husband's dismay, I'm a big believer in organized cabinets, clean surfaces, and overall tidiness. Everything in my home has a place, and don't even get me started on my love affair with labels. There is nothing I love more than taking carloads of unused items to Goodwill and freeing up space in an extra closet. It's a sickness really—I'm practically a decluttering addict. However, I'd be lying if I said my entire life was clutter-free, because despite my tendency to obsess over simplicity, there is one area of my daily living that leans towards hoarding.

You see...I am a hoarder of memories, and thus, a hoarder of photos.

I fell in love with photography a few years ago when I picked up a camera one day and didn't want to put it down. I still remember the day it happened. My husband and I were at Apple Hill, wandering around the orchards and picking out pumpkins. It was one of those beautiful, perfect days that you don't ever want to forget. With a Canon point and shoot clenched tightly in my hand, I took over 100 pictures that day. Pumpkins, apple strudel, trees, ponds—you name it, I was photographing it.

As a woman (and a pregnant one at that), I am pretty in touch with my emotions, almost to a fault. For me, the greatest benefit of taking pictures is the ability to capture feelings in a single photograph.



*by Ashlee Gadd*

Whether it's a newborn hand wrapped tightly around his mother's finger, or a man looking adoringly into his fiancé's eyes, I love being able to record the memories and raw emotions of people. Even more so, I love documenting my own memories and keeping them safe for the day that I can no longer picture them clearly in my mind. Photos serve as proof; evidence of laughter, happiness, love, teeny tiny fingers and toes—that these things did, and do exist, long after the moment has passed.

I also think as women, we tend to appreciate beauty in ways most men don't. I often deem weird things as beautiful, like the sun reflecting off the dirty swamp near my house. I find beauty in simple things, like old mailboxes and perfectly ripe vegetables. I love to find beauty in the subtle instead of the obvious. When you become a photographer you start to view the world a little differently, almost as if you're always looking through a lens, always looking for beauty. You notice light, shadows, shapes and colors more than before. In addition to personal satisfaction, there is nothing quite like sharing that beauty with people who don't have the time or ability to notice it themselves.

If you ever find yourself at my house, you can rest assured that you'll have a clean place to sit and a coaster on which to set your glass. I promise you won't be overwhelmed by too many things or unnecessary clutter. Whatever you do, just don't open my laptop or my photo drawer. There you will find sheer chaos—thousands of memories and beautiful moments, captured and hoarded in an unorganized fashion.

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