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Photoshop CS2 RAW: Using Adobe Camera Raw, Bridge, And Photoshop To Get The Most Out Of Your Digital Camera



Synopsis

The RAW file format is the uncompressed data file captured by a digital camera's electronic sensor. When your camera saves an image in RAW format, settings like white balance, sharpening, contrast and saturation are not applied to the image but are saved instead in a separate header. Because RAW files remain virtually untouched by in-camera processing, they are essentially the digital equivalent to exposed but undeveloped film. This makes RAW an increasingly popular format with amateur and professional digital photographers, because it affords greater flexibility and control during the editing process-if you know how to work with RAW files. Most digital camera manufacturers supply their own software for converting RAW data, as do some third party vendors. Increasingly, however, the RAW converter of choice is a plug-in included in the latest version of Adobe Photoshop, the most popular and widely-used digital image editing tool in the world. Adobe Photoshop CS2 is emerging as the best place to edit RAW images, and the best way to master this new format is with Photoshop CS2 RAW. An important book dedicated to working with RAW in Photoshop, this comprehensive guide features a unique design that helps readers grasp the subject through visual instruction and prompts. The entire RAW process is explored, from shooting to using the Adobe plug-in converter and new Bridge navigation software. The primary focus of Photoshop RAW is, as the title suggests, Photoshop editing technique: automating RAW workflow, correcting exposures, extending exposure range, manipulating grayscale and working with the new DNG (Digital Negative) open standard that Adobe supports. Presented by photographer Mikkell Aaland, a pioneer of digital photography and author of eight books, including O'Reilly's Photoshop for the Web and the award-winning Shooting Digital, Photoshop CS2 RAW investigates and instructs in an accessible visual style. Required reading for professionals and dedicated photo hobbyists alike.

Book Information

Paperback: 232 pages

Publisher: O'Reilly Media; 1 edition (March 25, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0596008511

ISBN-13: 978-0596008512

Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.5 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,131,599 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #33 in [Books > Arts &](#)

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Customer Reviews

Mikkel Aaland is an award-winning photographer and the author of nine books, including Photoshop CS2 RAW (O'Reilly 2006), Shooting Digital (2nd edition, Sybex, 2006), Photoshop Elements 4 Solutions (4th edition Sybex/Wiley, 2006), Photoshop for the Web, 2nd edition (O'Reilly, 1999), Still Images in Multimedia (Hayden, 1996), and Digital Photography (Random House, 1992). Since 2001 Aaland has been a regular guest on G4's Call For Help TV Program with Leo Laporte. In 2003 he was a guest columnist for newsweek.com. In 2004, Shooting Digital was named the best "Digital Photography" book of the year by the Designer's Bookshelf. Aaland's documentary photographs have been exhibited in major institutions around the world, including the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris and the former Lenin Museum in Prague. In 1981 he received the National Art Directors award for photography. He has contributed both text and/or photography to Wired, Outside, Digital Creativity, American Photo, The Washington Post, and Newsweek, as well as several European publications. Aaland has been a pioneer in digital photography, an interest that dates back to a 1980 interview he conducted with Ansel Adams. When Aaland asked Adams what he would be pursuing if he were just starting out, Adams discussed at length his fascination with digital photographs of the planets. Aaland has pursued this new technology since its infancy. During the 1980s he reported on digital photography as west coast editor of the Swedish FOTO magazine, and wrote a column on the subject for American Photographer magazine. Aaland is one of the few original Adobe Lightroom's alpha and beta user, and he served as an unpaid advisor on the project for over a year.

Good book, not the best but a lot of things to learn and do if you are not an expert!

This is another entry in the Adobe Camera Raw ("ACR") sweepstakes. These are the books that tell you how to use ACR, which is the front end of Adobe Photoshop, and which is used to process digital photographs taken utilizing the RAW format. This is the format that provides more information and opportunities to control the image than the JPEG format, but also requires more manipulation to get the photograph from camera to final output. There is other software that can be used to process

RAW images but Photoshop, with good reason, dominates the market. Aaland's book is clear and understandable and provides the information that people need to use ACR, particularly if they can't get a handle on Adobe's rather bare-boned and non-linear instructions contained within Photoshop. After a brief discussion of RAW as a format, Aaland starts with a discussion of Adobe Bridge, which is a picture management program provided with Photoshop, the knowledgeable use of which will contribute to effective processing in ACR. He then discusses each of the tools available in ACR and tells you how they work. Where there are similar tools available in both ACR and the main Photoshop program, such as sharpening and noise correction, the author compares them and presents arguments as to when each of the similar tools is best used. He discusses using RAW for generating black and white pictures (although he did not convince me that this was a better approach than creating them in the channel mixer facility of the main Photoshop program) and using the Adobe DNG file format. He finishes up with a brief tour of multiple picture processing and automated functions like actions, contact sheets and web gallery creation. Other than as mentioned above, there is no discussion of processing in the main Photoshop program. There are other books that deal with the ACR function. Like Aaland's book, John Canfield's "Raw 101" is aimed at the beginning ACR user. It seemed a little skimpier, and didn't cover all of the non-ACR functions that Aaland covered, but it also addressed Photoshop Elements, although not in Elements' latest iteration. Rob Sheppard's "Adobe Camera Raw for Digital Photographers Only" is limited to ACR in Photoshop only, is much more detailed than either Canfield or Aaland, emphasizes the artistic use of ACR, and might prove just a little daunting for newcomers to Photoshop. My own feeling is that no one who realizes the capability of Photoshop and wants to employ that capability will feel content reading just one Photoshop book. Each additional book will show how to get more out of the software. Aaland's book will be a good start, but it shouldn't be the end of the educational process.

This full-color book offers clear and concise instruction that takes you step-by-step through the process of using the Camera RAW plug-in in Photoshop as well as the related sections of Bridge and CS2. The author not only explains how to use the settings but devotes entire chapters to some of the problems that can, and often do occur - like dealing with digital noise. I appreciate the fact that he doesn't treat the Camera Raw plug-in as the be-all, do-all tool in Photoshop but rather presents equivalent tools in CS2 that many times are a better choice for particular lighting situations. The layout and organization of the book reminds me of one of Scott Kelby's books; the two major differences being the author doesn't include rambling witticisms throughout the text and unlike the aforementioned books, I think that he thoroughly covers the topic rather than just the highlights. The

book's organization allows you to quickly find the desired topic (or in my case, problem area) and read a brief description and ways to either perform the action or resolve the problem. To date I have read three books on the topic of working with Raw files using the Camera Raw plug-in filter and this book is far superior to any title I have reviewed. If you are a photographer shooting Raw images this is the only book you will need - period.

In the field of digital photography, capturing and developing "RAW" files is a hot topic, largely because this is usually the route to the highest image quality attainable. The subject can be a bit opaque because each manufacturer mechanizes in-camera RAW files differently. Also, there are many different RAW converters (software packages for developing the RAW files into optimized images) from both the camera manufacturers and third parties. One of the most popular RAW converters is Adobe Camera Raw (ACR), originally released by Adobe as a plug-in for Photoshop 7 and Photoshop Elements, and now integrated into both products. Adobe Photoshop is the undisputed king-of-the-hill in digital image editing software and has spawned an entire industry of "how-to" books. The subject is so vast and so technical it's nearly impossible to put it all in one book that is actually readable, though many have tried. In this case I believe the author tried to accomplish too much in too little space. To thoroughly cover the topic of digital RAW would require many more pages, and would be better served, in my view, by taking a more narrowly focused, more studious approach to presenting the information. The target audience is questionable too: too much complexity for beginners; too little real meat for advanced users. I also found the layout of the book disconcerting. It's bright and colorful with lots of white space, and is visually attractive from a graphic artist's perspective, but primary topics are presented as snippets of information followed by a host of screen shots and illustrations and sidebars with explanations. This disrupted the continuity of the ideas and I had to keep backtracking to pick up the main thread. There's no doubt that the author knows his stuff, but the book left me unsatisfied. If you're really looking to understand and use Adobe Camera Raw to its fullest capability, there are better texts available.

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