

before

Rhythms & Radiance, Oil Painting by Melody Phaneuf]

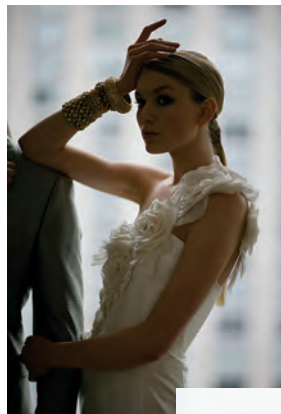


after

COLOR CORRECTION SPECIALIST

The Invisibles: Retouching is the Undetectable Art MARTHA DI MEO

CERTAINLY YOU’VE SEEN THE controversial before-and-after airbrushing photos of young Hollywood ingénues in magazines, and perhaps as a picture professional you’ve thought to yourself, “The self-esteem issues we’re giving to women are terrible, but *holy wow* that is some artful digital retouching!” Don’t be ashamed; we all appreciate good work, especially when the job was clearly difficult. For instance, a very talented friend of mine was once hired to digitally remove the back fat from Sylvester Stallone’s fight scenes in *Rocky Balboa* (2006), and that was a six-month gig of epic ups and downs, much like the story of Rocky. But seeing as the retoucher’s job is often to keep their art as invisible as possible, we decided it might be time to shed some light on this growing art form in a new series where we ask the professionals to give us the scoop on their not-so-secret arts. First up is ASPP member, Martha DiMeo, or ChromaQueen to those who know and love her, who gives us the rundown of three of many professional hats she wears on a daily basis.



PROBLEM SOLVER



COLLABORATOR

Problem Solver
Wedding Style Cover

It was about ten days before the presses were scheduled to roll. The art director and editor were reviewing hundreds of images from a fashion shoot in search of a perfect cover photo when they discovered one grossly under-exposed frame among the outtakes. This was the image they wanted to turn into the magazine's cover. If the image could be saved, we would avoid the expense, effort, time, and stress of pulling together another photo shoot just days before all materials were due on press. The task was three-fold. First, major tonal corrections and "re-lighting" of the subject were needed to correct for the gross under-exposure. Next, the file was converted to a four-color, black & white interpretation. Lastly, the background was removed and standard beauty retouching completed the image. The result was a photograph that met the technical requirements of print reproduction and the artistic vision of the art director and publisher.

Collaborator
Photo extension

Rarely, if ever, do the proportions of a photograph correspond perfectly to the dimensions of the page layout. The role of the Photoshop Specialist is to work collaboratively with the design team to find a solution that transforms the photograph to a



composition that serves the page design. In this example, the art director wanted the layout for this double-page spread to consist of just two large photographs using full-bleed on all sides. The right-hand photo needed to extend across the gutter and onto the left-hand side of the spread. My task was to extend the décor of the runway stage to make it appear that it existed that way in reality. Along with creating the extension of the runway backdrop, careful attention was given to the lighting and resultant shadows cast on the floor. When done skillfully, the hand of the retoucher is never detected.

Color Correction Specialist
Improving color, lighting, and contrast

Art reproduction is a specialty unto itself. It differs from color correction of photographs in that the goal is not simply pleasing color but rather, exact color. The desired result is to emulate the color and tonality of the original painting as closely as possible within the given printing process. In this example the reproduction would be viewed in the same environment as the original painting. When the buyers of the art print viewed the reproduction next to the painting, we wanted them to see they were receiving a quality piece and a true representation of the artist's vision. ✨