

July 2024

FOCUS

a magazine by the Professional Photographers of San Diego County



Liwa Sunset
by Rachel Blaser

PPSDC 
Professional Photographers of San Diego County

www.ppsdc.com

Code of Ethics

- 1 Observe the highest standard of honesty in all my transactions, avoiding the use of false, confusing, inaccurate and misleading terms, descriptions and claims.
- 2 At all times endeavor to produce photographs of a quality equal or superior to the samples I display; to apply my best efforts towards providing the best possible photographic services and to play my part in raising the general standard of photographic craftsmanship.
- 3 Show a friendly spirit of cooperation to my fellow professional photographers and assist them whenever possible should they be in trouble or difficulty.
- 4 At all times avoid the use of unfair competitive practices and hereby subscribe to the Federal Trade Commission Rules of Fair Competitive Practices for the professional photographic industry.
- 5 Assist my fellow professional photographers and share my knowledge with them and encourage them individually and collectively to achieve and maintain the highest standards of quality.
- 6 Recognize the authority of the Association in all matters relating to the interpretation of this code.

CONTENT

President's Message	3
May Best-in-Show	4
Best-in-Category	5-6, 8
Photoshop Tips	7
<i>by Ken Hofheinz</i>	
Merit Awards	9-11
An Interview with Jennifer	13-15

Monthly Meetings:

<http://www.ppsdc.com>
Check our site for upcoming events.

PPSDC 2024

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President's Message

I am thrilled to share with you the exciting developments and achievements within our vibrant community. Over the past months, the Professional Photographers of San Diego County have been exceptionally busy, with our members showcasing their incredible talents and dedication to the craft. Your enthusiasm and commitment have been truly inspiring, and it is with great pride that I highlight some of our collective accomplishments.

Our members have been actively participating in various image competitions, honing their skills and pushing the boundaries of creativity and technical excellence. From stunning portrait photography that captures the essence of human emotion, to the compelling narratives of photojournalism, and the innovative expressions in digital artistry, our photographers are making significant strides. The effort to compete has not only improved individual capabilities but has also elevated the overall standard of our community's work.

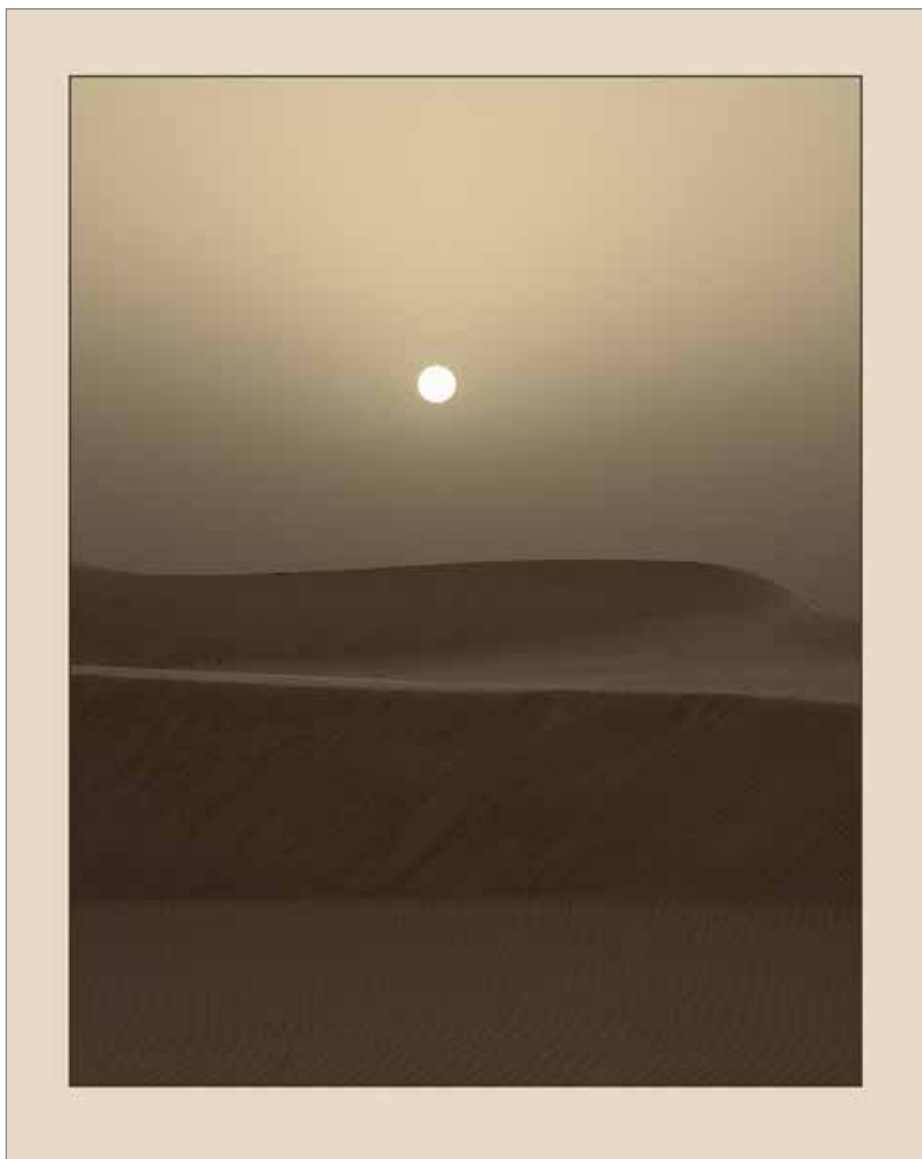
In addition to competition, continuous learning has been at the forefront of our activities. We have organized numerous workshops and seminars focused on enhancing technical skills, from advanced lighting techniques to the latest in post-processing software. These educational opportunities have equipped our members with the knowledge and tools needed to stay ahead in the ever-evolving field of photography.

As we look forward to the coming months, I encourage each of you to continue participating, learning, and sharing your unique perspectives. Together, we will continue to foster a supportive environment that champions excellence and innovation. Thank you for your dedication and passion, which make the Professional Photographers of San Diego County a beacon of creativity and professionalism.

Warm regards,

Michelle Pennings, Master Photographer, CPP.
2021 San Diego Photographer of The Year PPSDC
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Liwa Sunset

By Rachel Blaser

This photo was taken in the Rub' al Khali Desert – the Empty Quarter – which covers about a third of the Arabian Peninsula and is the largest continuous sand desert on Earth. Liwa is the site of a large oasis in the desert, with date plantations and historic settlements. Sunsets here are otherworldly, thanks to the dense haze rising from the warm gulf waters combined with dust and sand particles blown up from the desert. Photographically, this is handy because the dust and haze filter out a lot of the sunlight, making it possible to capture some of the foreground detail in the sand dunes without completely blasting out the sky – though I did some post-processing to even out the exposure and bring out the texture of the sand. It was possible here to climb the

taller dunes and get a sweeping vista of the dune fields, but I ended up liking the minimalism of this shot better than the expansive ones – the simple geometrical lines and muted colors reflect a sense of simplicity and stillness of this place. •

Canon 5D MarkII, F/8 with my favorite all-purpose lens, a 100mm macro



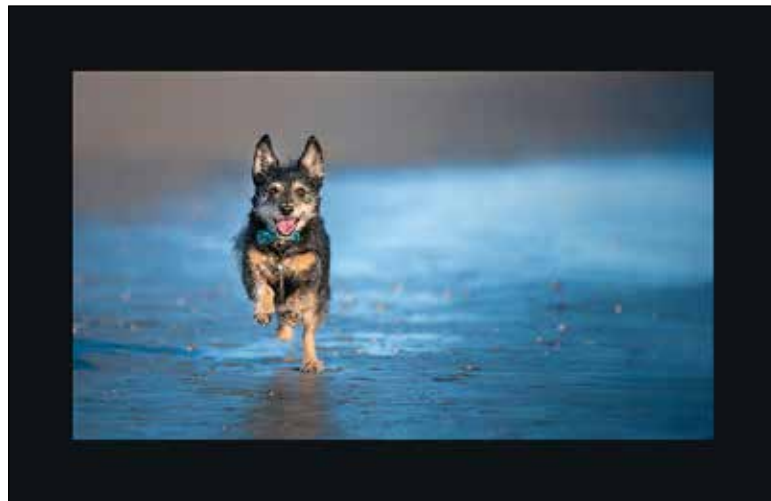
BEST-IN-DIGITAL-IMAGING

Watching and Waiting
- Barbara Fletcher

BEST-IN-ILLUSTRATIVE

Enchanted
- Otto Kruse





BEST-IN-PETS
The Dapper Prance
 - Alexis Heisa

BEST-IN-PHOTOJOURNALISM
Train Master
 - Otto Kruse



Fill Light á la Photoshop

By Ken Hofheinz, Photoshop Guy



Mac to PC conversion
 opt = alt cmd = ctrl

You have captured a nice image with just the right smile. But the darn flash didn't fire or you didn't have one or ... (you can fill in your own excuse). We can add that fill light you wish you had, á la Photoshop.

So let's fix it and make it look "natural." This technique works way better than the "Dodge" tool as far as looking natural.

Here we go - make sure your layers panel is visible. Add a curves adjustment layer. (At the bottom of the layers panel, looks sort of like a "yin and yang" symbol.) You will see the curves display. Click on the middle of the curve and drag straight up. Make it a bit brighter than you would like it.

Now select the mask that comes with the curve. We are going to invert it, making it black. CMD + I (mac) or Ctrl + I (pc). So the image should have just gone back to the way it started out.

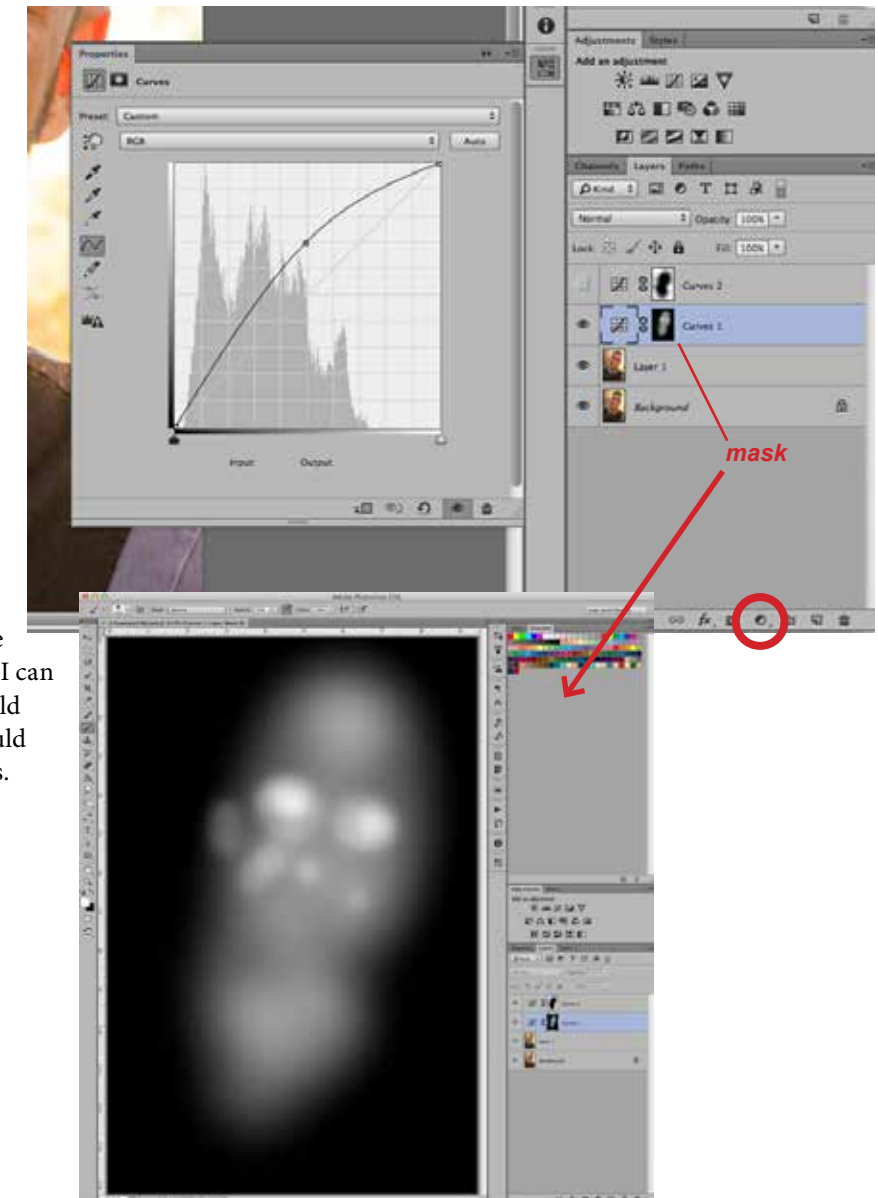
Now we will bring in the "light" where we want it. Select the brush tool, make sure it is soft (hardness set to 0) opacity set to around 20% and the color set to white. I like my brush size just a little smaller than the forehead for a few quick dabs on his face. Then I reduced the brush to the size of one of his eyes. All you are doing is painting in the light you want. As simple as that. Lest you think it isn't that easy I am including the mask I did for this layer. This layer mask took all of 30 seconds. If you want more light just paint some more in. If you don't like it copy the curves layer and do it again. Hide the first one. Hey this is so quick and easy I can do multiple layers. I could add more, I could change the blending mode on a layer. I could make it darker and burn in some hot spots.

Check page 12 for the finished image. And the last quick adjustment I added.

Continued on page 12

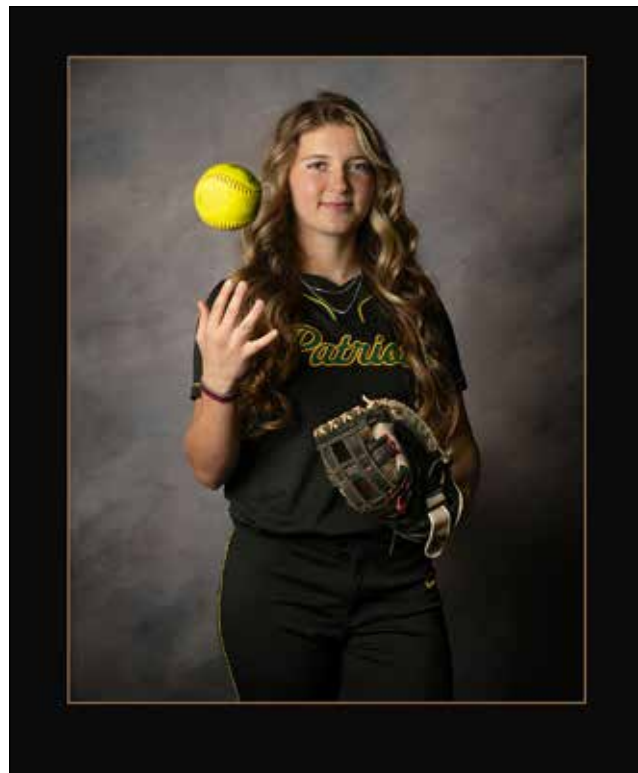


Before



BEST-IN-CATEGORY

BEST-IN-PORTRAITS
A Photo For Grandma
- Michelle Pennings



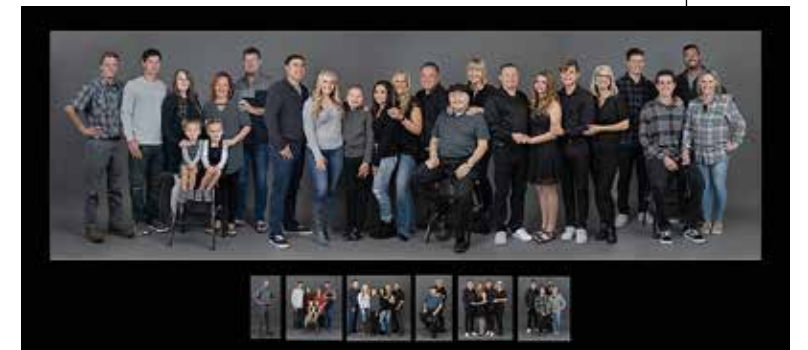
BEST-IN-SENIOR
Put Me In Coach
- Thom Vollenweider

MERIT AWARDS

DIGITAL IMAGING



— *Marsh Dweller*
- Barbara Fletcher



*From Kentucky to Cali, —
We Are Family*
- Michelle Pennings



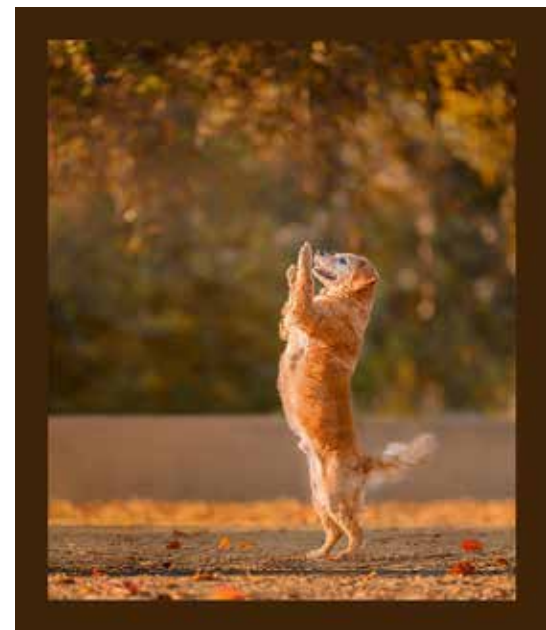
— *Painted Iris*
- Barbara Fletcher

MERIT AWARDS

PHOTOJOURNALISM



Stampede —
- Thom Vollenweider



PET

Paws Up!
- Alexis Heisa



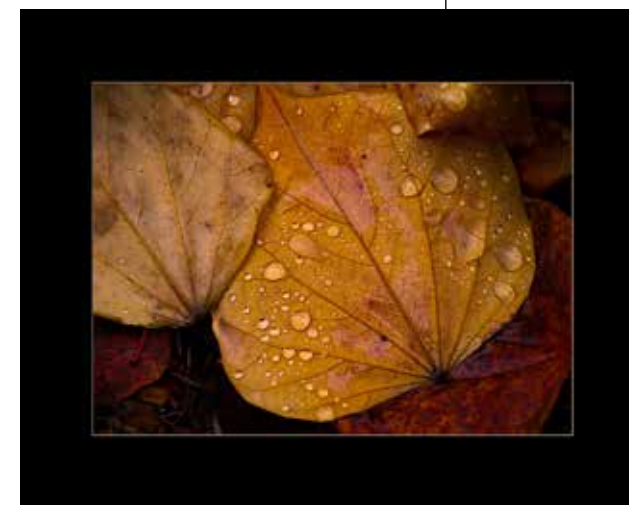
Small Dog, Big World —
- Alexis Heisa

MERIT AWARDS

**NATURE/
LANDSCAPE**



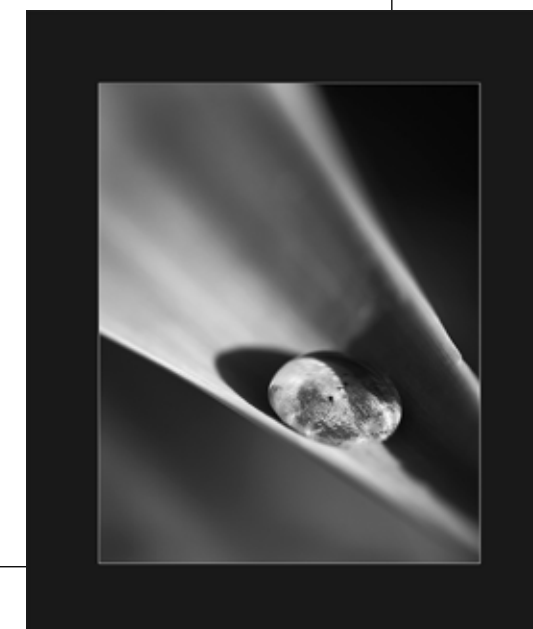
Stillness
- Rachel Blaser



Fall Leaves —
- Gunner Kruse



Chalk Creek
- Dan Clouser



Water on Agave Leaf —
- Gunner Kruse

Fill Light á la Photoshop

Continued from page 7

The last adjustment made was to darken up some areas. Add another curves adjustment layer and this time select the middle of the curve and drag down. This makes it darker. Again make it a little darker than you want. Select the mask and invert it. (CMD + I)

Select the brush tool with the same settings as before and paint in the areas you would like to darken.

One thing about darkening an image this way is that it can change your color. If you like the look keep it, but if you don't want any shift in color, change the adjustment layers' blending mode to Luminosity. •



Before



After

“Owning a nice camera doesn't make you a *Photographer* any more than owning a nice stove makes you a *chef*.”

Get out and shoot.



An Interview with Jennifer Curry Wingrove retired Prima Ballerina, Professional Ballet Photographer and PPSDC Photographer of the Year, 2023

This is the second year Jennifer has held a workshop for PPSDC to show her process of photographing Ballet dancers. Because of this workshop, we thought everyone might want to get to know her a little better. While she told her story at our June General Meeting where she spoke of: The Courage to Strive for Artistic Excellence and Pushing through Vulnerability with Risk. Here she goes into more depth about vulnerability, risk and being courageous.

How old were you when you started ballet?
I was 10 years old when I started Ballet. I had just watched “*The Nutcracker*” for the first time in a theater, and was absolutely enthralled with what I had just seen. I wanted to be Clara and the Sugarplum Fairy SO BAD. The following year, my Mother gave me a month of ballet lessons for my birthday – thinking that after a month I would be ready to move on to another curiosity or interest. Boy was she wrong! I fell in love from Day 1!! And in fact, I ended up fulfilling my desire to dance those leading roles in *Nutcracker*, and so much more. Thank you Mom!!

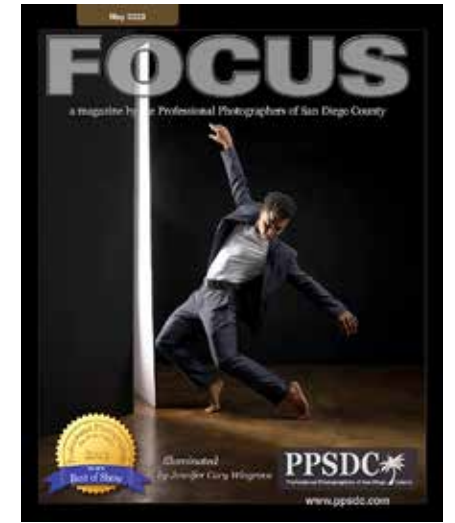
What age did you know you wanted to dance professionally? How long did it take you before you were ready to dance professionally?
When I received the role of Clara in “*The Nutcracker*” at the age of 13, I knew THEN that I wanted to become a professional ballet dancer. I worked hard in the Junior Company before being invited to dance with the Senior company at the age of 17, which is when I could call myself a Professional Dancer (dancing with a contract and compensation). I started out in the corps de ballet, and danced my way through the ranks of soloist, principal, and then finally attaining my dream position of Prima Ballerina.

What was your favorite thing about being a dancer? (Was there something special you felt while dancing?)
So many emotions here... so many things I loved and felt while dancing. Dancing was my EVERYTHING. I felt free to express and emote in my movements. I was always the “actress” as well as the technician. I LOVED exuding a character or atmosphere to the audience, bringing them into a different world than their own. I also felt almost superhuman in the prime of my craft. For instance, executing extra-ordinary movements on pointe felt NATURAL, whereas walking around pedestrian style did not.

In fact, I was clumsy offstage! My mom sarcastically called me “Grace” in my normal everyday life. I laugh about it now, now that my body can no longer function as it did when I was a Ballerina, I pine for those days... deeply.

Tell us about the company you were in? What was it known for, what were you known for?

I was fortunate to dance for the California Ballet Company (CBC) in San Diego, CA, which was by far the biggest and most well know ballet company in San Diego. We were the company that “kept the classics alive” - we did all the full length ballet productions in all the big theaters in town, many times with



Behind the scene of the last workshop.



Garage door light.





Leaf blower



Swoosh it.

Attendee's image



Rosanna Photography

full orchestra. The company boasted 50 years of rich history, developing incredible dancers and teachers, hosting famous international guest artists and choreographers, putting on large beautiful productions in the best theaters in town, and toured internationally. Fun Fact: Flora Small Jennings, mother of the CBC founder Maxine K. Mahon, was the first Ballerina in San Diego. She later became a devoted costume designer for CBC.

Who or what were you most intimidated by and why?
 Those who I was most intimidated by were those who I learned so much from: the Ballerinas before me. I wasn't certain I could ever do what they did, dance how they did, and I was envious of them. Which only made me work harder and longer to get to where they were. I am grateful for them. Sometimes it's a hard lesson to know that there will ALWAYS be someone better than you. However, the moment when one surrenders to that knowledge can also be the moment one stops being jealous and chooses to LEARN from them.

What event caused you the most anxiety to stretch into where you wanted to be? Talk about taking risks. What did you learn about yourself as you became vulnerable and started taking more risks?
 I started out as a shy, intimidated young dancer, who quickly learned that shy was not going to get me where I wanted to be. So I started to step forward – literally. I started standing at the FRONT of the class, not in the back row. I started staying and watching the Senior dancers, and even stood up to learn their parts. I was starting to become noticed, which encouraged me to become more courageous. I came to auditions for parts that I maybe wasn't ready for, until one day I was. Those risks paid off in that I started getting more and more roles, proving myself through each one. And eventually became the dancer who did not have to audition, as I earned the position of Soloist and then Principal dancer. It paid off to push through my vulnerability and take risks.

How did you know when you were done with ballet?
 Was it a hard transition to leave?
 My body told me. My heart and soul were NEVER done (and still aren't), but at 40 years old the wear and tear that the intense training and dancing took on my body could not be ignored. I decided to retire while still on the top of my game, which took some people by surprise. But the pain I was feeling and hiding everyday started to outweigh the pleasure, and I knew it was time. I will never forget my last bow onstage at the Civic Theater after my last performance of "The Nutcracker", which was fitting as that particular ballet was also my very first performance as well. My mother was there, and cried with me.

How did you transition from ballet to photographing ballet?
 While dancing with CBC, my mother was one of the company dance photographers. And back then of course it was FILM. I grew up with a darkroom in my garage, and learned film photography and processing at an early age. And loved it. I ended up taking it in high school, and entered into competitions even back then – with film and self-made prints! I continued photography in college as a photographer for the college newspaper at UCSD. As I started dancing more, photography was on hold as I had less time for it. Then digital cameras came out, and I was curious. I bought myself my first DSLR, and experimented by photographing my dancer friends between shows as well as onstage. Needless to say, I fell in love again with photography. Upon retirement, I decided to focus

more on dance portrait photography as it kept dance in my life. I eventually started a business and opened up Wingrove Studios Photography. I love my studio and the craft and have widened my clientele to anyone and everyone!

What is it about Photography that excites you?
 Photography gives me an opportunity to create and express my artistic self, which is important as I do not have that opportunity in dance any longer. I also get the opportunity to teach and mentor, which I love!

How has PPSDC helped you become more in Photography?
 PPSDC has helped me to become a better photographer, through education as well as mentorship and community. PPSDC has pushed me to create more and get out of my comfort zone, and to take risks in exploration and curation.

If you could go backwards in time, what are five things that you would tell your younger self?
 Stop worrying so much about what other people think.
 Don't give up when things don't go as planned.
 Trust your instincts.
 Find play in work.
 Value friendships and relationships deeply.

Attendee's images



Melanie Robertson



Swoosh it big.



Patricia Crockett



Melanie Robertson

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