A GUIDE ON COLOUR CORRECTION

CONARTIST

BOOK 6

Colour Correction

A basic guide for students on how to
use basic tools in Photoshop to colour correct
photos or artwork

First let me begin be saying that 'soft proofing' or the art of trying to colour-correct any image on an uncalibrated monitor is a waste of time. At the very least you should use your computer's built in calibration tools to adjust the brightness, gamma and colour of your monitor.

ON A MAC: Choose 'DISPLAYS' from System Preferences

ON A PC: Choose 'Adobe Gamma' from Control Panel

Follow the prompts and see for yourself how your monitor will start to behave itself. Don't forget, you

will always receive a better result by using a proper Calibration device such as Spyder or x-Rite.

SOFT PROOFING PHOTOS

You can use the following technique to check and correct photos of your artwork that you have taken using a Step Wedge (see overleaf - Photograph Artwork).

STEP 1.

Open the photo you have taken with the Step Wedge in shot and zoom in so that so you can see the Step Wedge clearly on your screen.

STEP 2.

In the Layer Palette choose Levels from the Adjustment menu. Now choose the mid-grey eye dropper and click on the M-middle grey (neutral) swatch of the Step Wedge in the photo. This will help adjust the tonal values and exposure of your image.

STEP 3.

Now, hold down the Option key and slowly move the little black 'triangle' slider towards the right until only a slight trace of black pixels appear in the preview box. Next move the white 'triangle' slider to the left until a trace of white pixels appear.

STEP 4.

That's it. You can now drag this Adjustment layer from the Step Wedge photo across to the photo that does not have the Step Wedge. The settings you have chosen above will be applied to any other photo which was taken under the same lighting conditions. This is the photo you should crop, retouch and send to the printers.

CORRECTING WHITE BALANCE

Sometimes your photos may give off an unwanted colour cast depending on where and how the photo was taken. Artificial lighting tends to produce a warm (yellow) cast whereas, natural light (ambient light) will produce a cool (blue) cast. It is therefore important to know how to correct the white balance in order to improve or remove the colour cast in a photo.

STEP 1.

Open the photo in Photoshop.

STEP 2.

Choose the Eyedropper tool and in its options bar - change the Sample Size: to '5 by 5 Average'.

STEP 3.

Now open the Layers Palette and choose 'Levels' from the Adjustment

pop-up menu.

STEP 4.

Select the little 'white' eye dropper
and click the whitest area on the
image, Next choose the 'black' eye
dropper and click the darkest
(blackest) area on the image. You
should see the changes instantly.

Sometimes, choosing Auto Color
in Photoshop (Image menu) is all
you need to do to correct colour.
To be honest, there is a lot more
information on this subject to even
begin to do it justice. Try Googling
this subject and teach yourself
as much as you can. It's worth the
trouble.

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