

# Image File Exchange Exercise

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## A Critique-Based Photography Exercise

developed by Huntington Witherill and Mark Wainer • June 2020

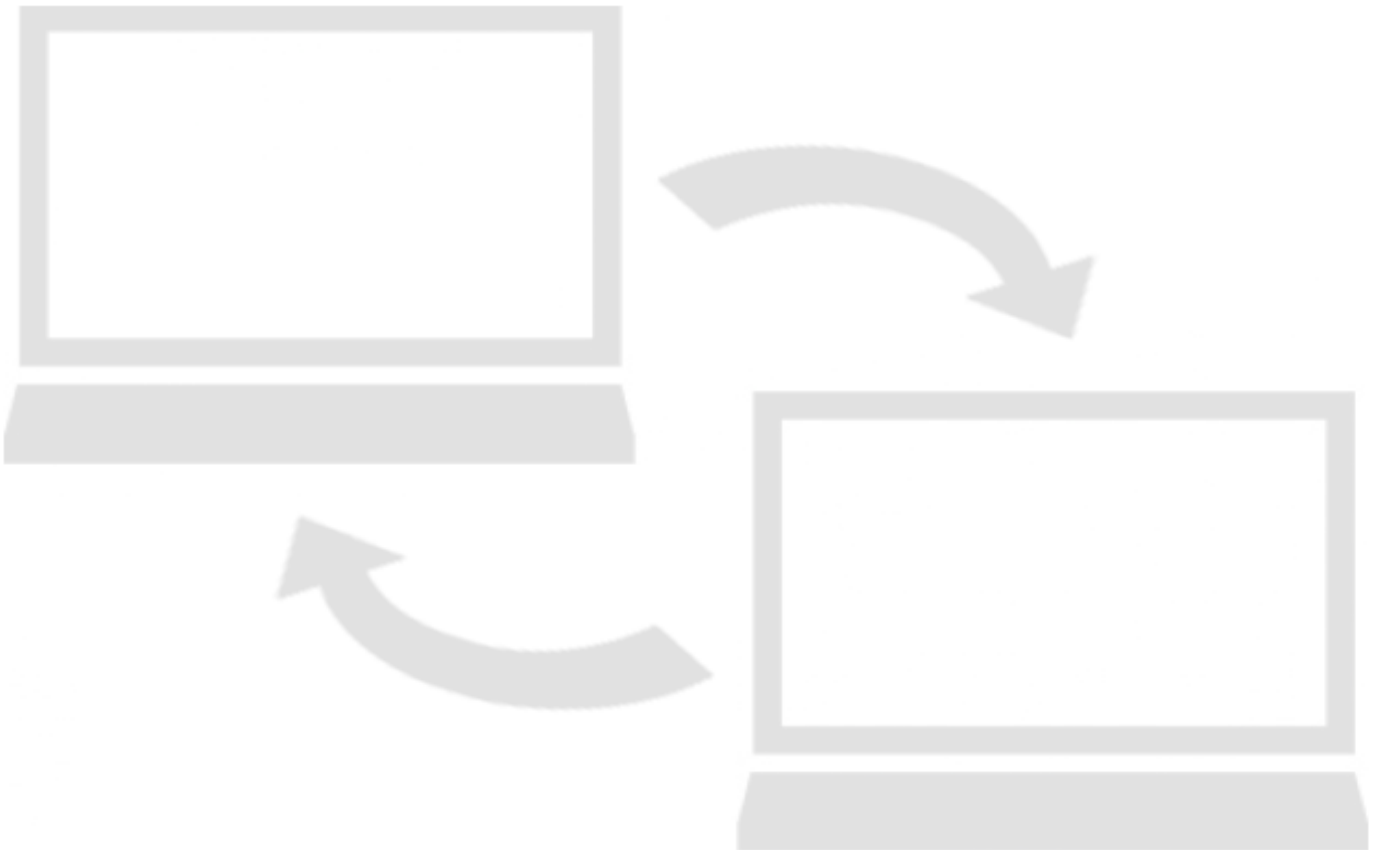
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### Quick Start Guide

Prior to beginning the exercise, itself, choose a fellow photographer with whom you'd like to participate, and then discuss (and mutually agree upon) any specific rules and/or restrictions you may wish to apply to the exercise, itself.

1. Each participant shall pick (3) different (not previously post-processed) RAW images (from their own image archive) to initially share with their counterpart, via email, as reduced size JPEG files (suggest 10" long-dimension, at 72ppi).
2. After participants have received and reviewed their counterpart's selection of three (3) images, each participant shall select one (1) of their counterpart's images for post-processing.
3. Once each participant has made their final image selection, participants should then mutually (and simultaneously) transfer (via FTP, or other online file transfer service) the original RAW files associated with each participant's final image selection.
4. Upon receipt of their counterpart's RAW image file, participants should then proceed to post-process both their own image, and their counterpart's image, for subsequent review, discussion, and critique purposes.
5. Once participants have completed post-processing both their own and their counterpart's RAW image files, the results should, thereafter, be simultaneously transferred (via FTP, or other online file transfer service) so that each participant ends up with both their own, and their counterpart's finished image files (suggest flattened, single layer PSD, or TIFF files).
6. Comparing and contrasting the various results (via mutual discussion and constructive critique) will be where the overall value of the exercise is revealed.

# Image File Exchange Exercise

## Detailed Description and Guidelines

### **Purpose–**

Originally proposed (June 18, 2020) by Huntington Witherill and Mark Wainer, the Image File Exchange Exercise (IFEE) is intended to be a photography-based information sharing and critique exercise (similar to a print critique) that is designed to explore and contrast the differences between various photographers' working methods and decision-making processes, through the act of post-processing images that have been originally conceived of (and captured) by chosen photographers other than one's self.

### **Premise and Setup–**

Each participating photographer shall agree to exchange at least one (1) originally shot, full resolution, direct-from-camera, and not previously post-processed digital RAW image file with at least one mutually agreed upon "other" participating photographer (friend, colleague etc.). The objective being that each participating photographer will then post-process (to completion) the others' original digital image file, without limitation, in any manner they so choose. In addition, each photographer will also agree to post-process (to completion) whatever original digital image file they have supplied to their counterpart, for purposes of subsequently comparing and contrasting post-processing styles, overall visualization, and the practical and aesthetic decision-making – given two (or more) photographers who have post-processed identical original images.

### **Rules–**

1. To begin, each photographer should select (from their own image archive) three (3) or more individual RAW images (or multiple exposure "sets" of RAW files in the event that bracketed exposures were used for purposes of HDR, for example) and those three (3) individual images (or sets) should be converted and saved (without subsequent post-processing) as separate smaller jpeg files (suggested jpeg size: 10" on the long dimension, at 72ppi) in order to be initially shared, via email, between all participants. It's important that the chosen images, themselves, not have been previously post-processed, in any way. From the selection of 3 images (or sets) exchanged as jpeg files, each photographer will then review the received jpegs and choose one (1) image (or set of bracketed exposures) as their choice for post-processing to completion. (Offering a choice of 3 different images is designed to allow each photographer an opportunity to avoid images they may potentially be unable to relate to.)
2. Once each photographer has made their selection of a single image (or single set of bracketed exposures) the original, full resolution, direct-from-camera, and not (in any way) post-processed high-resolution RAW image file(s) will be mutually exchanged (simultaneously, by and between

each participating photographer) through the act of transferring the original RAW files through an online file transfer website such as: <https://wettransfer.com/> or <https://dropbox.com/>. (Note- It is suggested that, for reasons of potential RAW file incompatibility with older computer systems, high-resolution RAW files to be transferred should be converted, saved, and transferred as .DNG files.)

3. Once the original high-resolution .DNG files have been received by each participant, all participants are then free to “post-process” both their own, and their counterpart’s image files to completion, in any way they so choose. There should be no limitation, nor any restrictions, whatsoever, placed upon how (or in what manner) your counterpart post-processes your own original image. The purpose of the exercise is to explore how others respond to your originally captured images.
4. Once all participants have completed post-processing of their own, and their counterpart’s images, a mutually agreed upon time should be arranged whereby all participants agree to simultaneously transfer (via online file transfer protocol) the completed high-resolution image files (flattened, single layer, high resolution files in either .psd, or .tiff file format are recommended) to their counterpart participant(s).

Although it should go without saying, any post-processing of images, *after* you have seen what your counterpart has achieved, is to be highly discouraged. The purpose of the exercise is to hopefully achieve a form of “double-blind” study in relation to how individual photographers relate to, visualize, and resolve (differently) a given set of photographic post-processing challenges. Obviously, a level of trust (between participants) will be necessary in order to achieve the desired results of the exercise, itself.

Once the practical implementation of the exercise has been completed by all participants, subsequent active group discussion and evaluation of the exchange, the specific results, and the overall implications of the exercise, itself, will be where the true value of the exercise is revealed.

Finally, all those participating in the above outlined exercise will want to mutually agree upon specific terms related to the “final disposition” of the finished (post-processed) image files, prior to beginning the exercise, itself. For example, you might want to agree (as a hypothetical) that if your counterpart wishes to add (to their own portfolio) the image that they have originally shot, and you have post-processed to completion, that a mutual credit line will be required for any subsequent use of the image in question. Or, contrarily, you may wish to agree that no additional use (beyond the exercise, itself) will be permitted (under any circumstances) and that all high-resolution image files will be permanently deleted (by all participants) at the conclusion of the exercise.

The instructions outlined above are by no means set in stone. They are merely *suggested* guidelines which can, of course, be modified to suit any number of different situations, depending upon individual participants’ specific requirements. What’s most important is that all participants be in complete agreement about the rules, themselves... **prior** to beginning the exercise, itself.