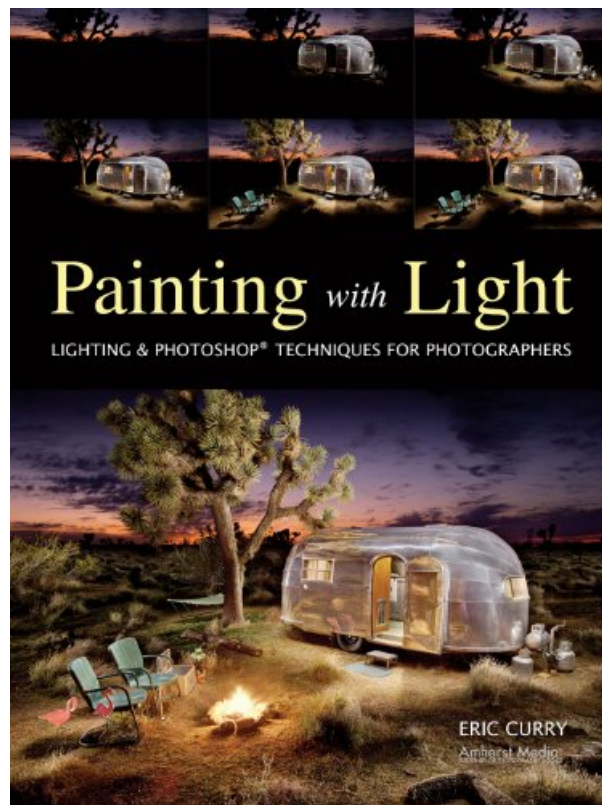
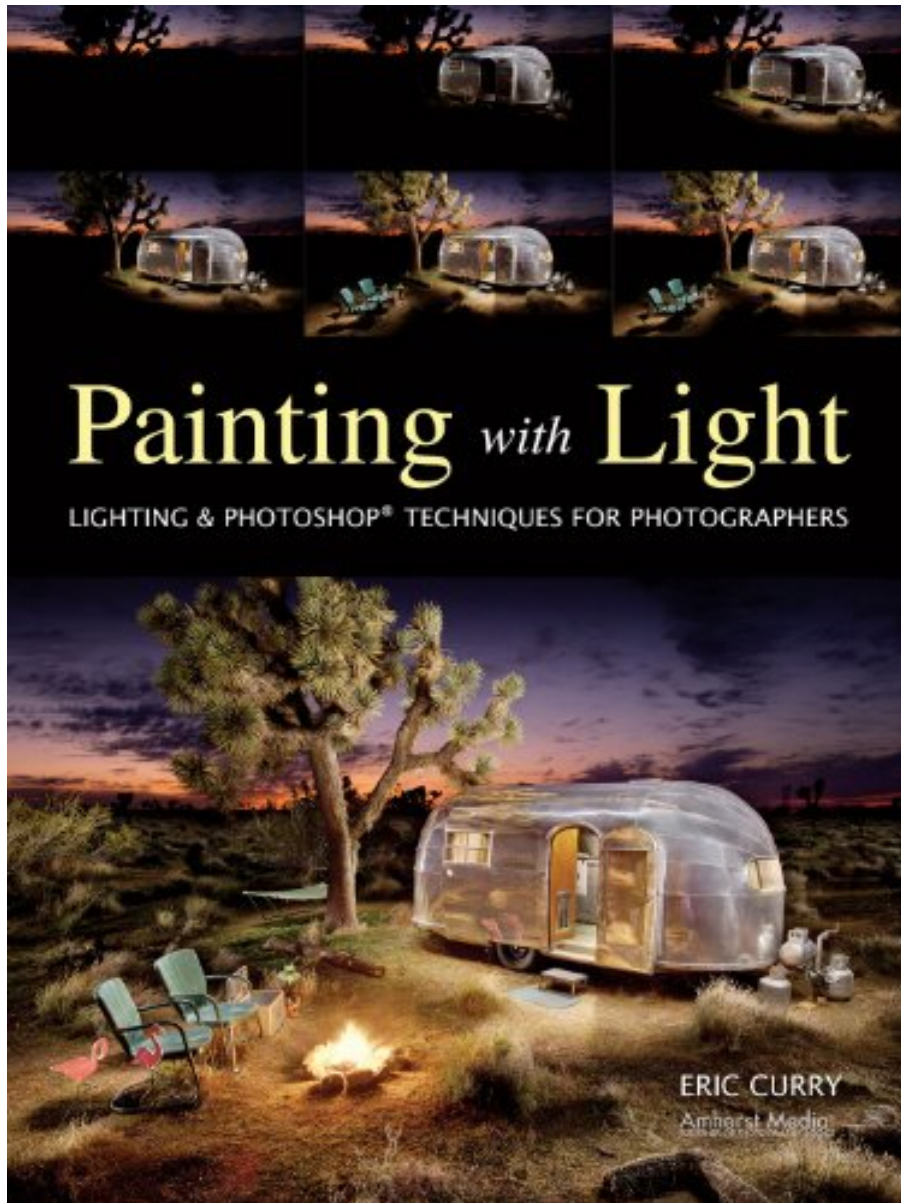


# **PAINING WITH LIGHT: LIGHTING & PHOTOSHOP TECHNIQUES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS BY ERIC CURRY**



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## Review

"His way of painting with light is an artistic approach to photographing a variety of scenes and subjects that readers will find illuminate their imaginations." —Lou Jacobs Jr., author, *Professional Portrait Photography and Studio Lighting*

"Eric Curry took the simple idea of 'painting a subject with the light of flashlight' and took it past a new level to a height I could not even imagine. In addition to tremendous photographic and post production skills, he tells a story in one photograph that would take most people a book! His sense of space and composition are second to none." —Doug Box, director, Texas Professional Photographers Association

"The step-by-step & richly illustrated techniques show you how to master the skill of painting a subject(s) with light. The cover image will give you a very good idea of exactly what can be done with ANY subject matter." —www.NaturePhotographers.net

"An innovative and unique book." —www.ephotozine.com

## About the Author

Eric Curry specializes in industrial photography and was trained in studio still life and special effects photography. He is the former owner of an advertising photography studio and now working on location for select clients and his personal work. He lives in Los Angeles.

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Exploring techniques that will work with the materials that photographers already have on hand, the author designs images through thorough planning and creativity that depict his subjects in breathtaking and unexpected ways that would be impossible without the approach detailed in this photography guide. In addition to the inspiration of the artistry itself, photographers will learn how to push digital imaging to its extremes, taking full advantage of a potential that is largely underutilized. The book covers all the materials photographers should be familiar with and have on hand for their shoot and helps construct sessions that will often involve a full night of photography to create a single final image, and then explores the actual camera and lighting techniques used to produce images. Painting with light is a technique that allows photographers to work in areas with no, or very low, light and then either selectively apply “pops” of light to their subject and setting using a variety of different light sources and modifiers, orchestrate a sequence of light pops during a single long exposure, or—most commonly—create a lengthy sequence of digital captures with a single pop of light illuminating a specific feature of the scene in each. Because they are made without moving the camera, these images can then be combined in postproduction to provide the ultimate in creative control. The composites for several final images are included, showing how the individual captures are treated in Photoshop layers and seamlessly blended to create one highly refined final image.

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

14 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

Bring light into darkness

By photosteve13

I just read Eric Curry's *Painting with Light*, and found it informative and inspiring. In the book he covers how he re-discovered the technique, and how he uses the technique and his passion to make hyper-realistic, storytelling photographs.

The book is written in the style of a friend sharing how he does his speciality. He covers the critical elements of what make his photos different, and why he does things the way he does, without being pedantic on details. He covers everything from the camera type he uses, to the f-stop he recommends, and gives the reason why. I like that he is not just prescriptive, but he treats the reader like a reasoning person. The book is filled with great pictures showing the process of lighting and assembling the images. He does spend some time telling the philosophy behind his series, "American Pride and Passion", and I found that uplifting.

The book is a "How-to" book, and the chapter breakdown looks like this: 1. Logistics. 2. Preparing for the Shoot. 3. The Shoot. 4. Adding Human Subjects. 5. Postproduction. 6. Practical Examples.

Very little fluff, all the writing is purposed to motivate and show you how to use this technique to make your own photographs in this style. If you are at all interested in painting with light, I recommend this book.

15 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

A Beautiful New Approach to an Old Technique

By D. Green

I was fortunate enough to meet Eric Curry when he spoke to the Santa Clarita Valley Photographers Association in early 2012. About 50 photographers attended that meeting, and were entranced and impressed as Curry demonstrated his complex techniques for painting with light. The combination of dozens (or hundreds) of photographs and tens of hours of post-processing appealed to both the get-it-in-camera purists and the Photoshop geeks.

Curry's richly detailed, painterly images, painstakingly created, are a joy to behold, with a realism that evokes Hockney, an American spirit that evokes Rockwell, and an attention to minutiae that Hieronymus Bosch would have been proud of. While photographers often use the term "painting with light" to describe illuminating a time-exposure subject with a handheld light, in Curry's case, the phrase could also apply to the result, as the images look like a surreal mix of painted art and photograph. Curry's technique of laying down light via multiple exposures is not unlike an oil painter's layering of pigment with a brush or knife.

So, it was with some anticipation that I opened Curry's "Painting with Light: Lighting & Photoshop® Techniques for Photographers."

In the true spirit of information-sharing popularized by Websites and blogs like Strobist, Curry generously gives away the family jewels, the keys to the Bentley, and the secret sauce, describing in extreme detail precisely how he goes about creating, shooting and processing his richly detailed art.

Although Curry has attempted to write the book such that a complete photographic novice could attempt his techniques, make no mistake about it: It may be simple, but it is not easy. Only the photographically rigorous need apply! It is a demanding technique, and not for those photographers who would prefer to rely on shortcuts and gimmicks such as HDR, Photoshop plug-ins, and filters. There is no "Auto" button for this challenging, yet rewarding, method.

Still, the approach Curry presents is very straightforward, comprehensive, and understandable. Any serious photographer (amateur or professional), with a cursory understanding of time exposure shooting and Photoshop basics should be able to experiment with, and quickly understand, Curry's techniques. Even more novice photographers may be able to at least play around with the method, though they are less likely to get good results until they have a better understanding of lighting and photographic fundamentals.

Curry's vision is so entirely his own, and his subjects so grandiose, I doubt that we will see photographers rushing out and copying his techniques directly. Rather, I suspect (and hope) photographers will adopt bits and pieces of Curry's techniques and incorporate them into their own work. For me, personally, I can see using light painting to enhance nighttime landscapes. Others may find other uses for it, for both artistic and commercial work.

In short, this is a well-written, beautifully illustrated and useful book, that I would recommend to the serious, passionate and dedicated photographers I know, who are seeking to broaden their vision and seek new ways of expressing their artistry. It presents a whole new set of brushes with which to attack the canvas.

On the down side: The biggest shortcoming I found with the book is lack of thorough explanation of the "B" (or "Bulb") mode that allows cameras to take the long exposures that are fundamental to Curry's work! I'm guessing Curry is so familiar with it, that he may have forgotten that in this digital age, many new photographers may have never tried it. The book mentions "manual shutter" without describing how to access the feature. Having taught photography for several years, I think this omission will stump some newer photographers completely, or at least send them scurrying to their owner's manual or Google. Although I suspect Curry may have wished to avoid describing the dozens of ways different cameras implement this feature, it would really have borne at least a brief mention. Fortunately, it is an oversight easily remedied.

(If this is in the book and I somehow missed it, forgive me. I searched, and couldn't find it anywhere.)

Also, Curry gave short shrift to an option that would help those photographers who have to work alone: An advanced remote release (such as Canon's TC-80N3 or Nikon's MC-36) with built-in self-timer, interval timer, and shutter adjustments, which would allow solo photographers to make many exposures without assistance. Although he does mention it in the section on cable releases, it deserves longer mention. While it could be a bit tricky to use, especially on the large-scale subjects Curry shoots, it would eliminate the running back and forth to the camera that Curry describes, and would definitely help with smaller subjects.

All-in-all, a fine book, groundbreaking in some ways, and admirable for the depth to which Curry goes to simplify his technique and make it understandable. Curry finishes on a strong note, with "A Quick and Dirty Review" that breaks his entire technique down to 10 steps. Read the book, copy this page, and you have a checklist to take into the field as you start creating your own painting with light images.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Should be the basics for every photographer?

By Image Print Reviews

What is photography, if not "painting with light?" Rembrandt and Kinkade were two very different artists who used light to its utmost, and you can do the same with digital imagery if you follow the sage advice provided in this book. The author's techniques should be basic to every photographer, and not an add-on skill put to use when you run out of things to do. Start here, and all your picture-taking will improve, whether you're manipulating the light yourself, using the light that is there, or working in Photoshop to create images that didn't exist in real life.

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