

The background of the cover is a photograph of a mountain landscape at golden hour. In the foreground, there are several small, rustic wooden huts scattered across a green, rolling field. The middle ground shows a line of trees and more huts. In the background, large, jagged mountain peaks are illuminated by the warm light of the setting or rising sun, creating a dramatic contrast with the blue sky. The overall mood is peaceful and scenic.

**SLR**

# PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE

DECEMBER  
2017 ISSUE

Photo Editing Apps  
Aperture Settings For Portraits



# 2017

DECEMBER EDITION

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE - EDITOR TANYA PUNTTI  
SLRPHOTOGRAPHYGUIDE.COM



© Kevin Shaw



Cover photo by Kevin Shaw, UK  
ISO 100, f/16, 1/8sec

We are getting our jingle on and offering 20% discount on all our courses for the rest of December. Use code xmas20 to get 20% off any of our courses.



Check out our full list of online photography courses over at <https://www.slrphotographyguide.com/photography-courses/>

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Photo by Michele A Samph, US

© *Photography By Michele*



Photo by Susan Bevenger  
f/22, 1/160sec, ISO 200





Photo by Kim Moir Sherman, Canada  
f/16, 1/13sec, ISO 100

# How To Photograph Christmas Lights

*our best tips*

The best time to photograph Christmas lights is earlier in the evening before it is totally dark. This will allow you to keep your ISO much lower when hand holding a camera, resulting in a cleaner image from noise. The surroundings will still be slightly visible, which adds more interest than a totally black background.





Use a tripod or lean on something like a wall or fence to prevent as much movement as possible.

Use a wide angle lens with a focal length no longer than 24mm. If your lens is having trouble focusing, set the switch on the side of lens to M / MF (manual) and focus manually by rotating the focal ring.

Make sure your onboard flash doesn't fire!

Set manual mode with ISO 800 as a starting point. Use aperture f/2.8 - f/4.6 and shutter speed 1/30 second. Keep adjusting the shutter speed until you get the right amount of light. If the result is too dark, set a slower shutter speed. If it is too light for your liking, set a faster speed.

Set white balance to tungsten. Tungsten white balance setting will help with some of the yellow color cast. If you don't like the color you are seeing, also try Daylight white balance. Ideally you want to shoot RAW file format so you can further tweak white balance later on in post processing.



## Another technique for photographing Christmas lights

Set aperture priority with the lowest f/number your lens will allow, for example f/2.8 up to f/4.6.

Set ISO to 800. Take a test shot. If the image is too light, set a lower ISO. If it's too dark, set a higher ISO.

Again, it's a good idea to use a tripod when possible.





## Christmas Portraits

Set manual mode with the lowest aperture your lens allows. Usually f/2.8 to f/4.6. Keep the lens wide and move yourself in or out to fill the frame. i.e don't zoom the lens. Set ISO 800 to 1600, depending on how well your camera handles low light.

Use a tripod or brace the camera as steady as possible.

Meter the light that falls on your subject's face. ie. Move in close to your subject and focus on part of the face that light is falling onto. Zero the exposure line and check your shutter speed. If the speed isn't at least 1/160sec consider increasing the ISO or use your flash. Now move out again, re-compose and take the shot.



# Best Aperture Settings For Portraits

With holiday season fast approaching no doubt everyone will be taking plenty of family photos. Listed below are our general aperture rules for photographing portraits.

If photographing one person, use the lowest aperture number your lens will allow, which is normally f/2.8-f/4.6. Note, not all lenses go as low as f/2.8 which is fine. Just set the lowest yours will allow.

Setting a low aperture f/number will allow you to keep your shutter at a reasonable speed to capture moving people as sharply as possible without motion blur. Once you've set your aperture, adjust your ISO to a speed that allows a 1/200sec minimum shutter. If shooting indoors and your subject is quite still, you may get away with a 1/160sec shutter.





When photographing two or three people, change the aperture setting to f/4.



Four or more people, set f/5.6 aperture.



# Perfect Bokeh

Each month we'll be showcasing student photos that demonstrate the skill needed to create silky smooth backgrounds. Upload your best bokeh photos to our Facebook group (students only) and use #bokeh in the caption for a chance to see it published in our magazine.



Photo by Nissa Coltran, US  
ISO 400, 1/60sec, f/5.6



Photo by Beth Wojcinski Pennington, US - f/2.8, ISO 1600, 1/200sec, 70mm



Perfect Bokeh

# Creative Flower Photography

Images we fell in love with from members taking our Creative Flower  
Photography course over at  
<https://www.slrphotographyguide.com/creative-flower-photography/>



Photo by Maria D Espinoza, US





 © IMAGE BY  
*Samantha Song*

Photo by Samantha Song, Canada

# Sandie Read

*(student profile)*



*<https://www.facebook.com/SandieReadphotography/>*

No doubt about it, we have an awesome group of photographers in our DSLR Photography course, coming from all walks of life and living in numerous countries. What I love most about our group, is that every time a member shares an image, we learn something about that photographer's part of the world. Sandie is our outback Australian girl. It is through Sandie, that our members learn about country life in Australia. The images Sandie captures of her life on the farm are simply stunning. It wouldn't surprise me to one day see Sandie's work published by the likes of Lonely Planet or Outback Australia magazine and similar distributors. It is already at that quality!







How did you first become interested in photography?

I have always loved capturing special moments. Of all the cameras I have owned, I have only ever used them on auto sports mode. I never knew what any of the other settings meant.

A couple of years ago I was at the Rockhampton quarter horse sale helping my daughter with a client horse when a huge storm came across. I wasn't able to make it back to the horse float, so I took shelter at the canteen while the storm passed. When I got back to the float, I found my camera soaking wet! It was going to cost more to repair the camera than what it was worth. Long story short, I needed another camera asap, and of course I wanted another DSLR for what reason I wasn't sure as I didn't understand how to use them. My husband saw Tanya's online photography course and knew I really wanted to learn how to use my camera, so signed me up for it.

I have two beautiful children, Ashley 24 and Leah 22 years old. Ashley has a severe disability. I had a difficult birth with him. He has autism, epilepsy and intellectual/physical impairment. He needs 24/7 care. This year we have received funding to enable him to live with 2 young men, 24/7 care in a beautiful home. He comes home one week every month. I needed a distraction to stop myself fretting and that's when I became the most interested in photography. For the first time in my life I have done something for myself.

What or who inspires you?

Everything inspires me at the moment. I can't help but see beautiful things to photograph everywhere. I can be driving, working on the farm, walking around the garden, or even watching TV when I see something that catches my eye and I think oh wow, that would make a beautiful photo. I wish I could turn my brain off sometimes, but I do love it. I think my farm, the animals, my family, Tanya Puntti and this amazing group of members, as well as two other very special photography friends in my local area, Lynette Vicary and Lorraine Maskell all inspire me the most.





How has our photography course helped you?

This course has allowed me to understand how my camera works, including what the settings mean. Honestly 12 months ago I only used auto sports mode. I now understand about shutter speed, aperture and ISO. DOF even means something.

This is the first course I have ever taken and I'm so happy that Tanya is an amazing teacher. She explains her lessons in a way that is easy to understand and allows you to grow as a photographer at your own pace. The member's Facebook page has also helped me learn by studying other photographers' photos, their settings, composition, comments, as well as the likes we give each other have all helped with improving my photography skills.





What's your most memorable moment?

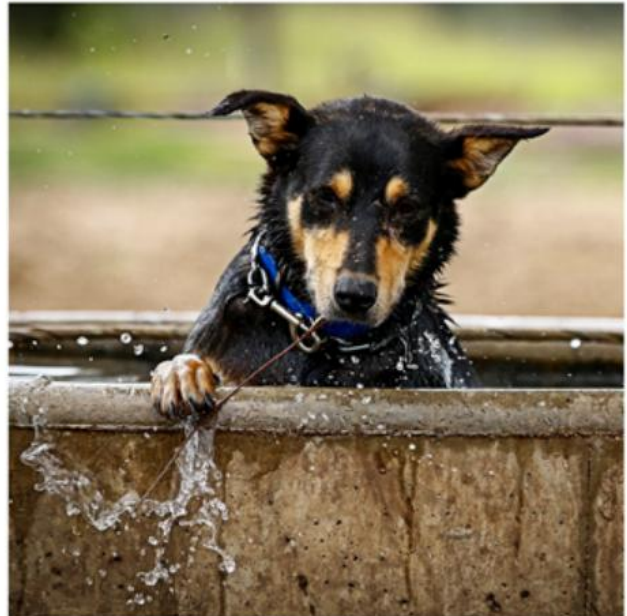
I had taken some photos at a campdraft and posted to my Facebook page. Then out of the blue I received a private message from John Burgess asking if he could have my number and give me a call about my photos. I had seen quite a few posts on Facebook of John's photography which were brilliant action photos of campdrafts. I thought I must have done something wrong. I wasn't trying to sell my work, just put it on my Facebook page to share, so I gave him my number and held my breathe thinking the worse. This man has been taking photos for many years and has such a huge talent. All he wanted to do was give me some advice and find out what equipment I was using. We talked for hours. I told him I was using my canon 70D and kit lens 70-300mm. He loved that I had taken my campdraft photos from a low angle and explained why that was desirable. He also said if I could take the photos I was taking with the gear I was using, if and when I could ever upgrade, I would be blown away with the results. He said a lot of people start with really expensive equipment and don't know how to use them, so they never get the best out of their photography. It just made my day that a complete stranger would take the time to share his knowledge with someone he doesn't even know. Still to this day he keeps in contact via Facebook, and I know if he ever gives one of my photos a 'like', that I'm doing something right.

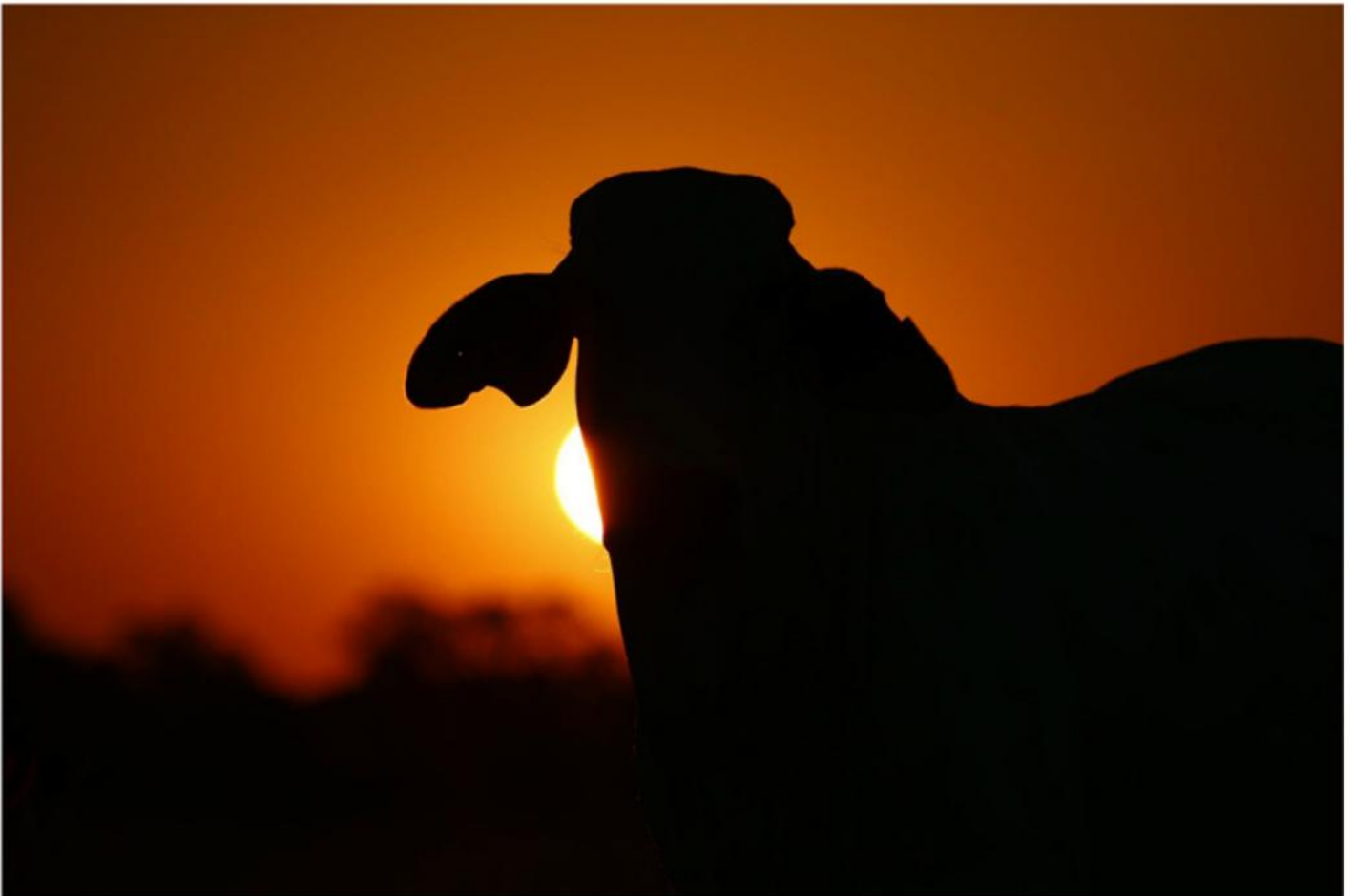




Your favourite location?

I don't really have a favourite location but if I had to choose just one I would say my farm, or any rural outback countryside with horses, cattle and dogs. That would be where I feel most comfortable, as well as at home. Although I would also love to photograph the city lights, beautiful beaches and the fall trees with all those leaf changing colours you see from overseas. I want to photograph everything.







What plans do you have for the future of your photography?

I would like to start a small business selling my images and taking photographs for people. I never in my wildest dreams thought I could do anything like this, but I truly believe that if you enjoy taking photos, have heart and desire to learn, you can become a great photographer. I didn't think I'd enjoy taking family photos because I'm shy and people kind of scare me. I have stepped out of my comfort zone and have been taking some family photos. Much to my surprise I love it. It scares the life out of me on the drive to the photo shoot, but once I get started and the family warms to me and me to them, it's an amazing feeling of being able to capture special moments for them to treasure. The drive home is scary too, as you start thinking I hope I have captured something special for them. I'm not sure if these feelings will go away, but I wish they would. I have been lucky so far that all my photo shoots have been country people who want photos of farms with their horses, cattle and dogs which is what I love best.

I have now started doing another of Tanya's courses 'Photographer's Guide To Marketing' because I don't have a clue on how to charge people or set up a Facebook photography page. I also need to learn how to create a web site. I'm taking this slowly as I think it could be a little overwhelming and a big step into the unknown, plus I have an irrigated cattle property that is a full time job in itself to manage.

What's your best piece of advice for others so far?

Do this course over and over, ask questions, listen, practice, practice, practice, take your camera everywhere, and believe in yourself. When you're having those days when you think why do I bother, I'm not good enough, just remind yourself how far you have come. Never stop learning, and most of all have fun.

To see more of Sandie's work, visit  
<https://www.facebook.com/SandieReadphotography/>

Learn more about our photography course over at  
<https://www.slrphotographyguide.com/online-courses.html>

# Dedicated To Macro

Showcasing a handful of images that we fell in love with from students taking our Macro Photography Course over at <https://www.slrphotographyguide.com/macro-photography-course.html>





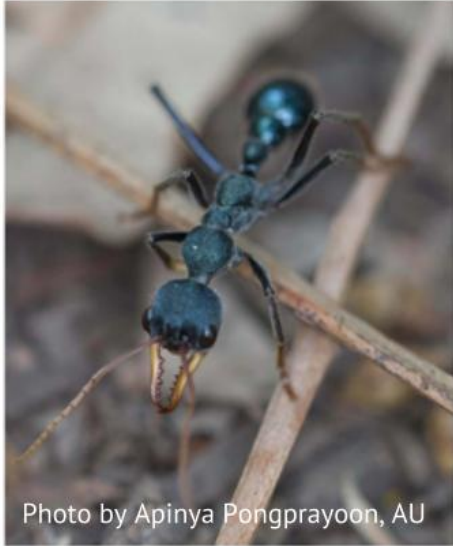


Photo by Apinya Pongprayoon, AU



Photo by Leanne Dieter Gorges, AU



Photo by Debbie Fenton, AU

*Debbie Fenton*  
MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY

# Photo Edit Like A Pro

For those taking our photo editing course, we have hundreds of new addons going up over the next couple of weeks including dreamy sky overlays, bokeh overlays, light leaks, as well as more Lightroom and Adobe Raw Presets. They will all be in high quality HD format. We'll let you know when they are up over in our Private Facebook group so keep watch for them.



If you've already purchased our photography course and are now ready to take your photos to the next level, it also makes sense to learn how to edit your images?

Check out our photo editing course over at  
<https://www.slrphotographyguide.com/photo-edit-like-a-pro.html>



Photo by Danielle Mayes, AU

AFTER



BEFORE





# This month's challenge is: From The Kitchen

This month's challenge is 'From The Kitchen'.

Upload your shots to our private facebook group (students only) and label them 'From The Kitchen Challenge'. Don't forget to add your camera settings and a little about how you took the image.









# Long Shadows



Photo by Marion Hagenvoort, AU

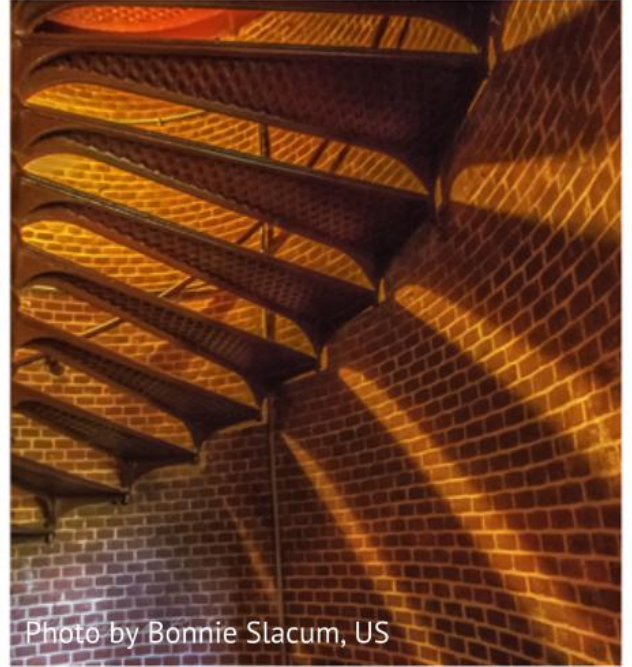


Photo by Bonnie Slacum, US



Photo by Yvonne Warriner, UK



# Highlights from last month's challenge



Photo by Cathy Callaghan, AU



Photo by Marcia Todd Loschiavo



Photo by Jod Ambachtsheer



Photo by Janis Loran, UK



Photo by Teresa Quitter

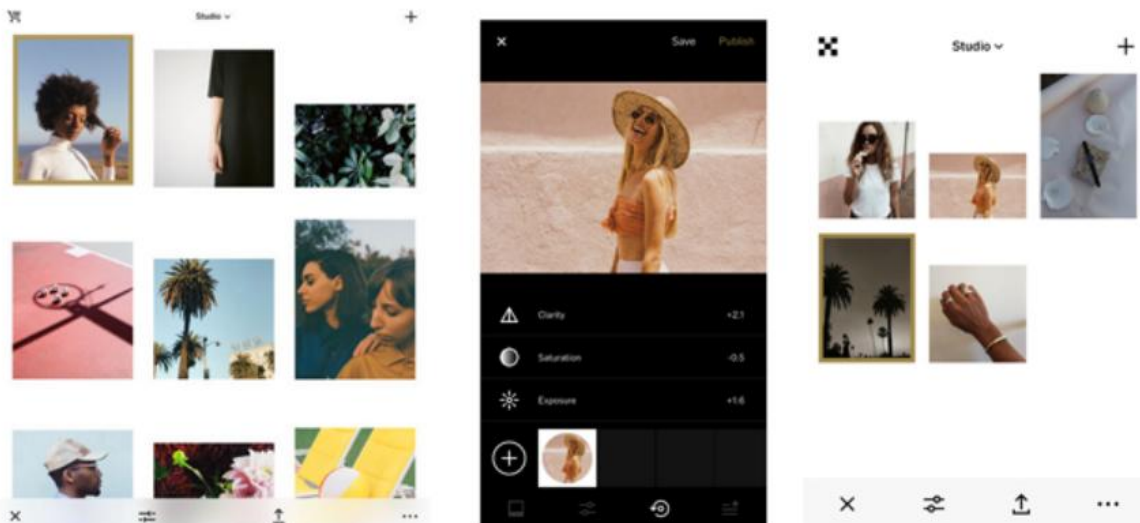
# Photo Editing Apps

*A round up of our favorite Apps for editing images on a smart phone or tablet*

If you asked me a couple of years ago what my favorite photo apps were for editing on a tablet, I'd have told you to forget it! However this past year there have been great improvements for photographers in the app world. As a photographer, I deal with a lot of photo editing, and have to pay attention to detail. These apps I'm sharing below are perfect for creating professional looking photos for very low cost. For example, VSCO which I mention below also offer Lightroom presets for \$59 each. Or alternatively, you can get the app and use their free filters or buy the addons for only a few dollars each.

VSCO - <https://itunes.apple.com/app/id588013838>

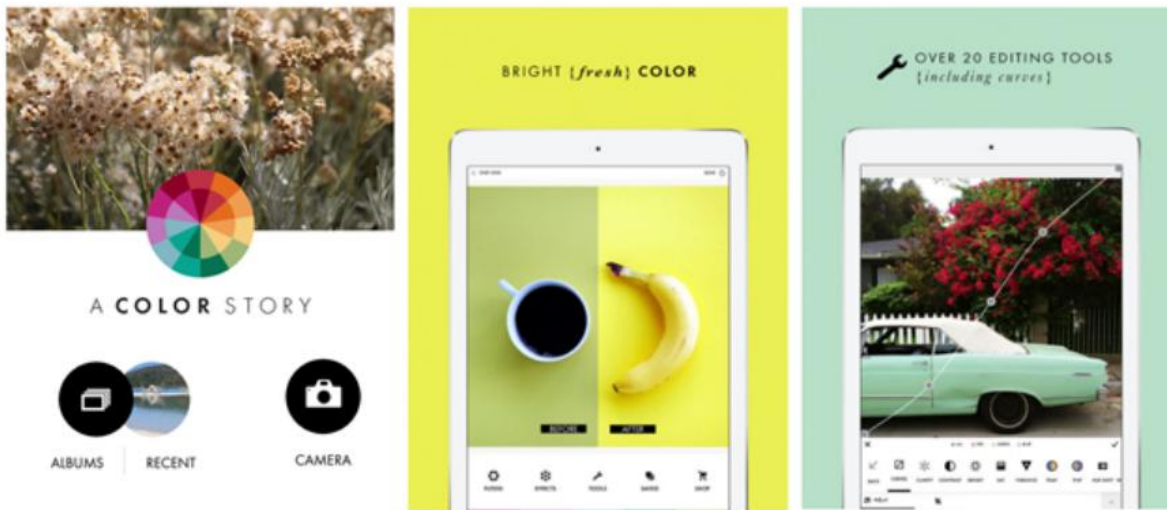
VSCO is hands down the easiest way to edit pictures on a mobile device. It's simply a matter of clicking on each pre-created filter to see which one you like. Certain filters will look more appealing than others depending on the shot. When you're done, download the finished product to your phone. Simple as that! VSCO also allows you to tweak filters or create your very own if you want to give all of your photographs a consistent look without overthinking each edit.





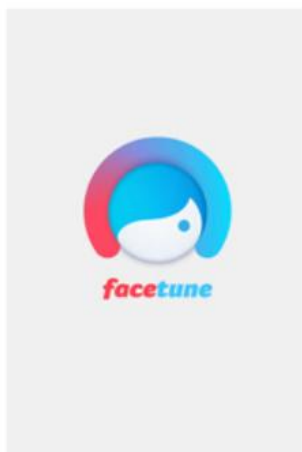
A Color Story - <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/a-color-story/id1015059175>

A Color Story got its name because its filters are designed to make any color really pop in your photos. This app has a little bit of everything for every kind of photo, and has a variety of high quality filter packs to add to your collection, most of them for less than a dollar each! It fast became one of my favorite apps.



FaceTune - <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/facetune-2/id1149994032>

FaceTune is awesome for removing any unwanted objects in a photograph. For example, that little piece of rubbish in the foreground that you didn't notice prior to taking the shot. It has other uses as well, such as removing unwanted blemishes in portraits.



Afterlight - <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/afterlight/id573116090>

Afterlight is similar to VSCO in that it offers dozens of different pre-set filters. What makes Afterlight unique is that it also gives you the option to add creative elements and effects to your photos such as light leaks, selective focus and textures. Afterlight offers an endless selection of adjustments and tweaks that allows photographers to be really creative.



Mextures - <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/afterlight/id573116090>

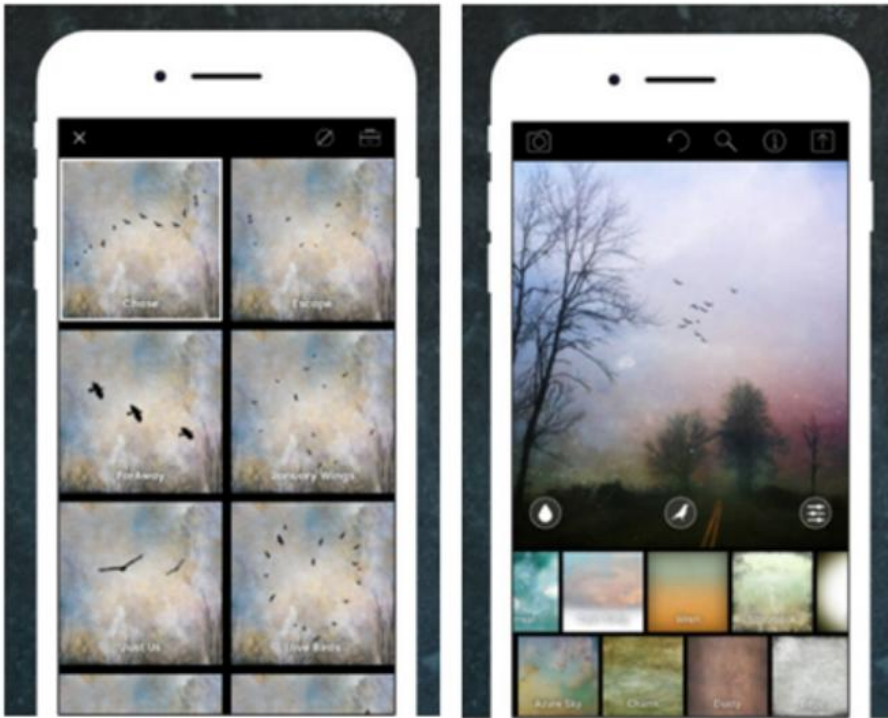
Mextures allows you to edit your images quickly with tons of hand crafted formulas. Or create your own formula with an unlimited combination of textures, authentic film presets and professional grade adjustments. One of my favorite apps for adding depth and atmosphere to an image.





Distressed FX - <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/distressed-fx/id585702631>

Great little app for adding bird overlays to an empty sky. It's also useful for grungy texture overlays and empty trees, however I use it mostly for the birds.



I hope these suggestions are helpful for those who enjoy editing on a tablet. If you have any favorites of your own, let me know in our private facebook group so I can give them a try.

Have fun!  
Tanya Puntti



Did you know our online photography course now comes with 40 Photography Cheat Sheets?

"If you haven't taken advantage of printing the cheat sheets, I strongly suggest you take time to do so. These alone are worth the price of the course." ~ John Smith (student)

Check out our online photography course over at

<https://www.slrphotographyguide.com/online-courses.html>