

How to Photograph Your Artists' Book

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San Diego Book Arts
November 12, 2020

Class Purpose

- Discuss the basic concepts to consider when photographing your books and/or collages
- Display different lights you could use and how
- Show actual examples of photographing different books using different setups
- Discuss how to prepare your photos for a website

Ask Yourself:

If you can only create one photograph to show off your book: which presentation, orientation, angle... shows your book off to its best advantage?

Prepare to Photograph

- ****How Many Photos Can You Provide per Book?
- ****What Do You Want To Say About Your Book?
- What Concept/Message Do You Wish To Convey?
- Why Are You Taking This Photo?
 - Promotion, Website, Entry...

Book Orientation

- **What Is Most Important?**
 - Content?
 - Cover?
 - Structure?
 - All of the Above?
- **What Angle Is The Best?**
 - From The Top
 - From The Side
 - From Below
- **Orientation**
 - Open
 - Closed
 - Partially Open
 - On It's Side
 - Laying Flat (Or Close to Flat)
 - Propped Up

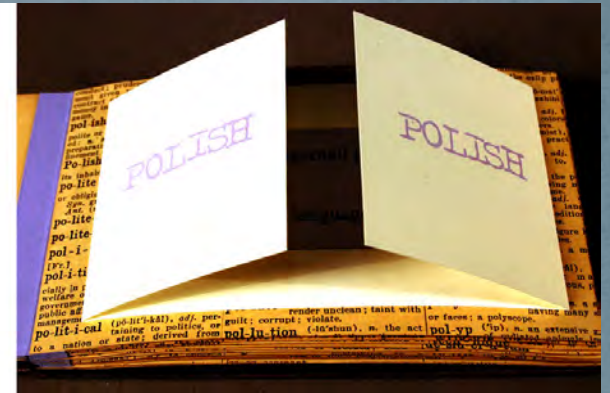
And...

- **How Much Content Do You Wish To Show?**
 - What Is The Best Way To Show Off The Content?
- **Shadows**
 - Include Or Avoid?
- **What Is The Effect/Mood You Wish To Convey?**

Background?

- **Color?**
 - White? Black? Gray? Other?
- **Texture?**
 - Cloth? Velvet? Rice Paper?
- **Shiny or Matt?**
 - Reflections? Or Not?
- **Use a “Sweep”?**
- **Does it Express the Feeling You Wish to Convey?**
- **Not Too Busy!!!**
 - **Does Not Compete With The Book!**

Examples (Books By Rae Trujillo)



Examples and More Information

Instructions

- 23 Sandy Gallery

<https://23sandy.com/search?q=photograph+your+book&type=product%2carticle%2cpage>

Examples

- Donna Seager Gallery

•<http://www.donnaseagergallery.com/>

- 23 Sandy Gallery

•<http://www.23sandy.com/>

- Abecedarian Gallery

•<http://www.abecedariangallery.com/>

- Vamp and Tramp

•<http://www.vampandtramp.com/>

Potential Issues: Color of Light

3 Main Types Of Light

- **Tungsten** – Natural Yellow Color
 - Special Tungsten Film
 - Examples: Standard Light Bulbs, Halogen Bulbs
- **Daylight** – Natural Blue Color
 - Examples: Natural Sunlight,
 - Special “Daylight” Light Bulbs (OTT Lights)
 - Actually Outside
- **Florescent** – Includes CFL lights
 - They Come In Many Different Colors
 - Avoid Where Possible
- **Potential Issues:**
 - “Color Shift” If Improper Match Of Media And Lighting
 - Watch Out for Yellow or Blue “Color Cast”
- **Solutions:**
 - Know The “Temperature” Of Your Lights
 - Set White Balance in Camera Properly – Auto?

Example of Color Shift



Positioning Lights

- **Rounded Vs. Flat Appearance**
 - Impacted By Angle Of Light To Subject
 - Angle Down – 45 degrees
- **Number Of Lights**
 - One? Two? More?
 - How Many Do You Have Available?
 - Go Outside?
- **Balance Of Lights**
 - One Stronger Than The Other?
 - Equal Light On Both Sides?
 - One Behind? Above?

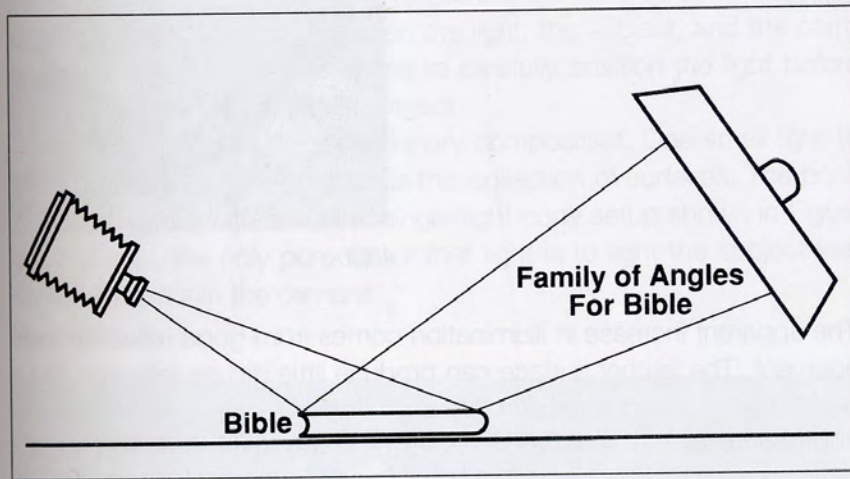
Light Examples

Lights From Studio in a Box -
Older Halogen
- Not Necessary!

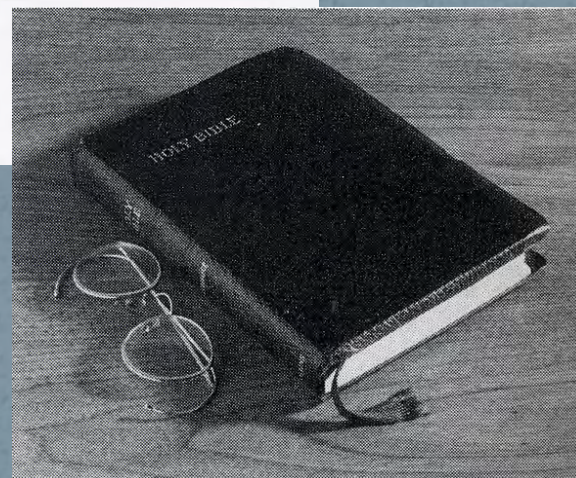


CN-160 LED Light

Lighting Setup Example



◀ A light filling the family of angles defined by the black leather Bible.



Harsh Light Example



Diffused/Softer Light Example



Set Up Example

Supplies:

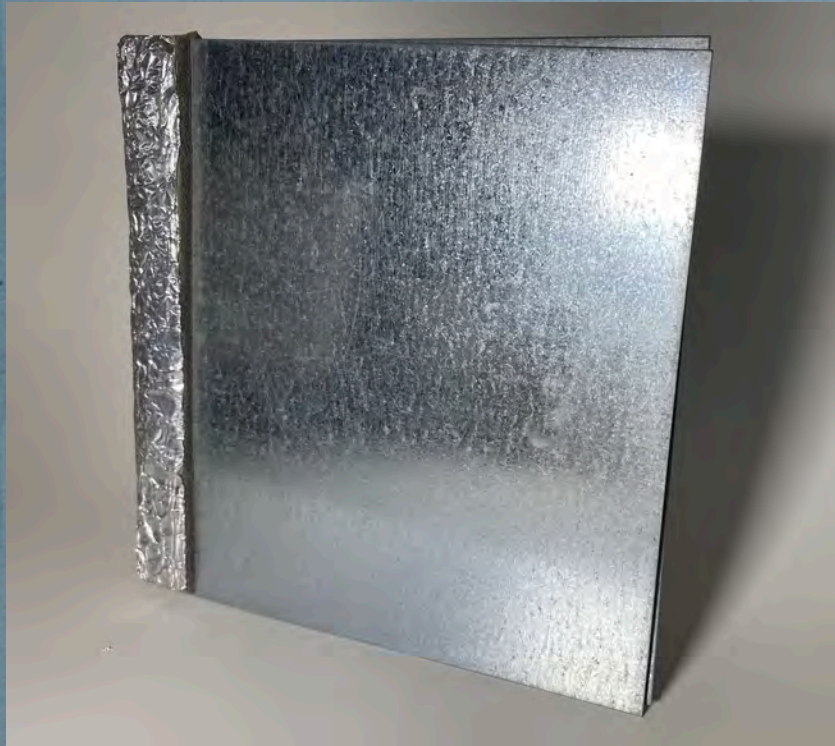
- White/Cream Paper
- Tape
- Light (Optional)

Note Curve



Setup With Light





Photography Tips

- Your Cell Phone Works Great!
- Generally Include Your Entire Book In Your Image – Don't Cut It Off!
- Shoot As Close As You Can – To Show More Details
- Verify That Lighting Illuminates The Book In The Best Possible Way
 - If Not, Change Position
 - Of the Lights and/or
 - Of the Book
- Shoot At The Highest Quality Possible – You Can Always Reduce Later as Needed
 - Raw Vs. Jpeg

Camera Settings

- Shoot on a Tripod When Possible
- Aperture Priority
 - F22+ (For More Depth of Field)
 - Lets Your Camera Determine the Shutter Speed (if you are shooting on a tripod)
- White Balance
 - Auto or Change Based on the Lights You Are Using
- Angle of the Camera
 - Vary Based on Your Desired Results
- Raw – If Possible

Photographing

- Which Lights Will You Use?
 - White Balance Appropriately – Auto?
 - Block Out “Stray Light” Where Possible
 - Ideally – Shoot Outside **
- Set Up To Use?
 - “Sweep?”
 - Homemade “Sweep”?
 - Background To Use?
 - Piece Of Paper?
 - Shiny Or Matt
 - Cloth?
 - Velvet Has A Nice Effect But Iron First!
 - Lighting
 - “Studio In A Box”
 - Cheap Lights Available From China – CN-160

Basic Digital Workflow

- Take Photos
- Transfer Photos To Your Computer
- Manipulate Photos As Needed In Photoshop,
Including:
 - Get Rid Of Dust And Scratches
 - Crop
 - Make Color Corrections
 - Adjust Contrast
 - Sharpen
 - Resize As Needed
 - “Save As” In Desired Format e.g. jpeg
 - Using Names per the BABA Standards

Copy Stand For “Flat” Items

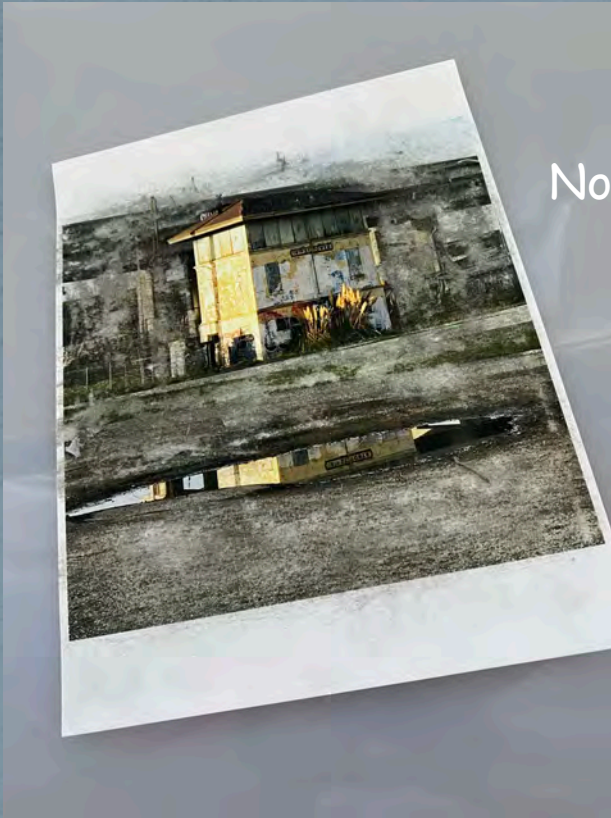


- 2 x 45 degree lights
- Parallel camera - Straight over the item!

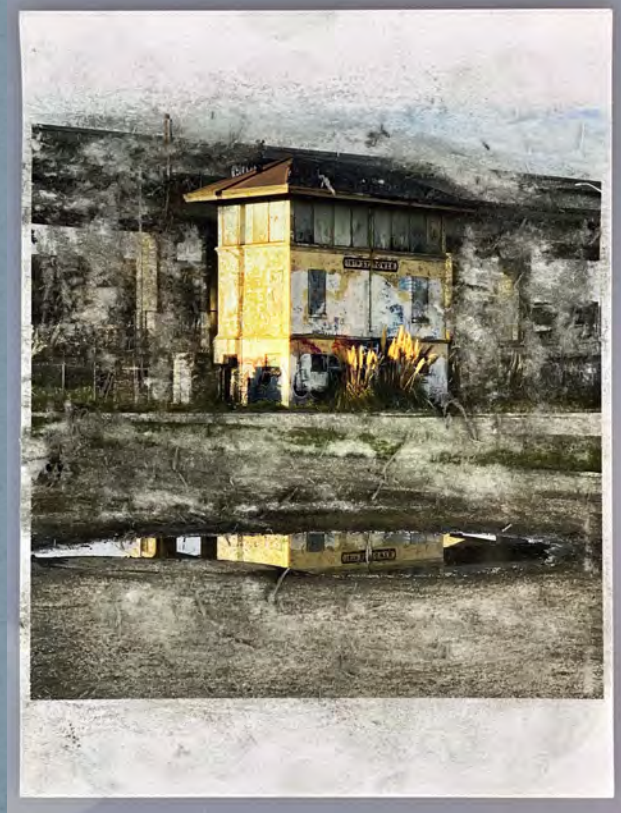
Photograph “Flat” Items

- Even Lighting Everywhere
- Camera Perfectly Parallel - Difficult
- Adjust As Needed E.g. Perspective
- Adjust Color as Needed to be Perfectly Consistent

Examples



Not great!



BABA Standards

- **Website**
 - Image Processing: cropped, color corrected & sharpened
 - Dimensions= no larger than 2000 pixels on the longest side
 - Resolution= does not matter
 - File Format= JPEG
- **Naming Conventions (Note: You Will Be Saving Each Image Twice)**
 - Please label image files with:
 - Book Name_
 - Year Created_
 - Your Name_
 - The letter of the piece (book)
 - a letter to indicate if there are more than one photo for a single book.
 - For example, if Insiya submits two images of her book, they would be labeled
"TheHeartLongs_2019_InsiyaDhatt_A.jpg" and
"TheHeartLongs_2019_InsiyaDhatt_B.jpg"

Specifications

- Specifications for submitted images:
 - Color images in tiff or jpeg format
 - Digital images should be at no longer than 2000 pixels on the longest side
 - Shot in a studio setting with soft lighting (no glare) with a single color background that doesn't distract from the book
 - In focus

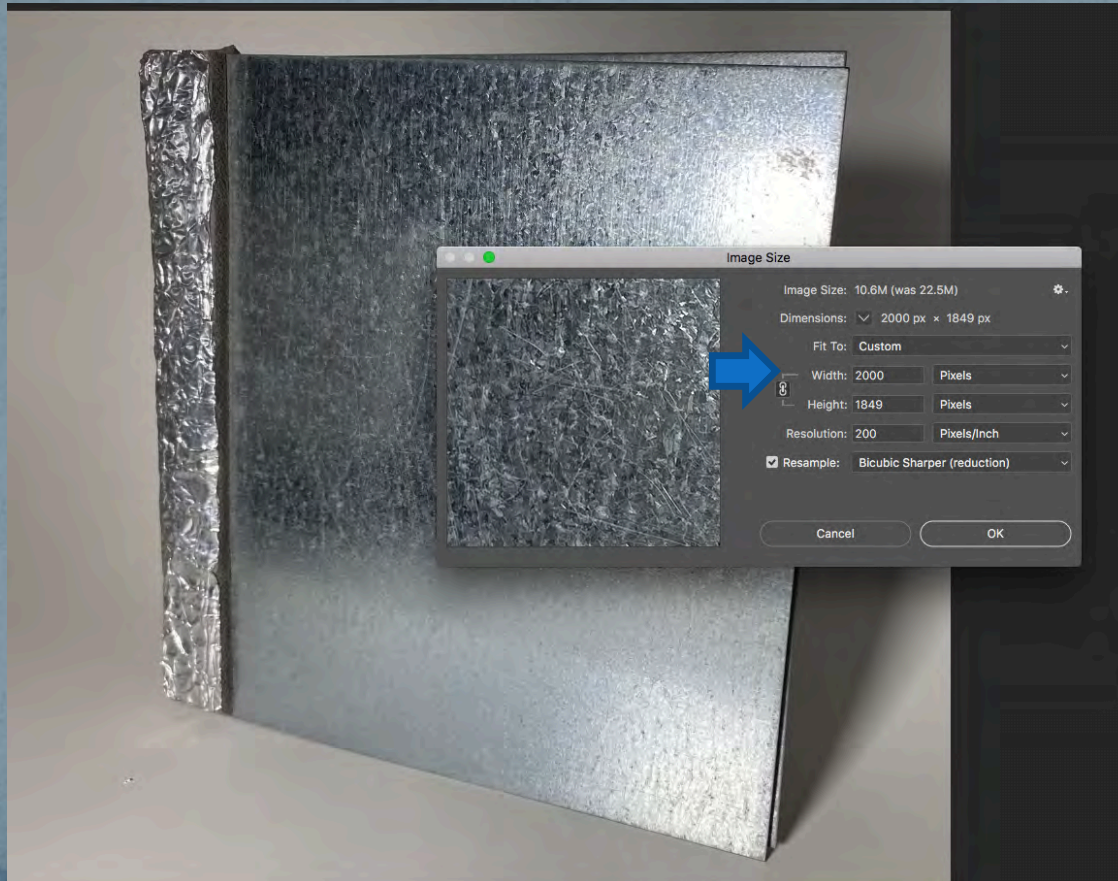
These should be books you think best represent your vision as a book artist!

iPhone Photo Apps

- Snapseed
 - Crop
 - Color Correct
 - Remove Blemishes
- iResize
 - Make Standard Size

Resize Photo for The Website

- Use **Image – Image Size** (in the top menu)
- You will see a window that looks like this:
 - Note that in this example, the Width is 2000 pixels and the Height is 1849 pixels (so the Width is the largest dimension)



Save As

Select the Appropriate folder (You May Want a Special BABA Folder)

Name the file per the BABA Naming Conventions

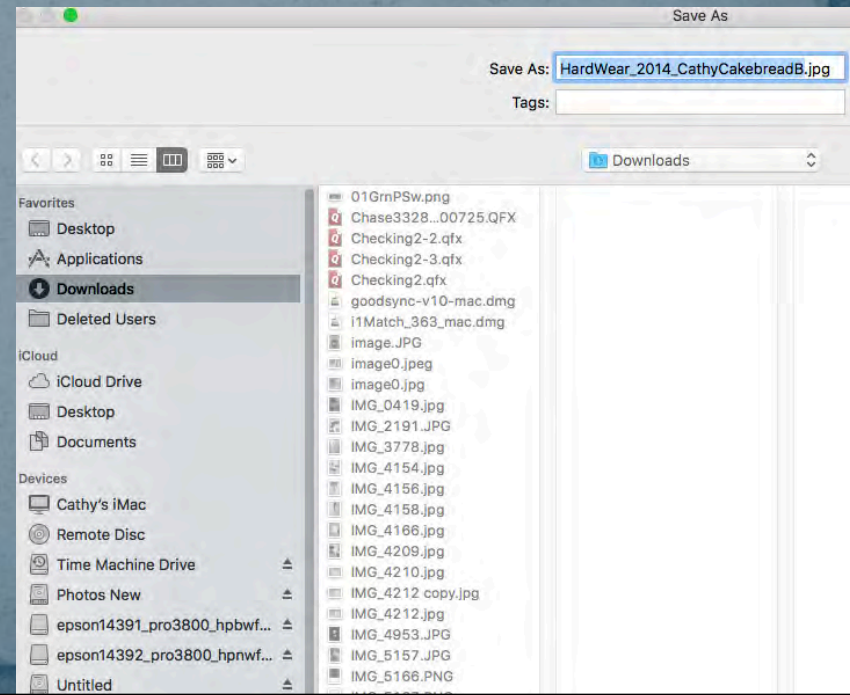
BookName_Year_YourName_A.jpg as a jpg

* e.g., *HardWear_2014_CathyCakebread_B.jpg*

Click on the Save As

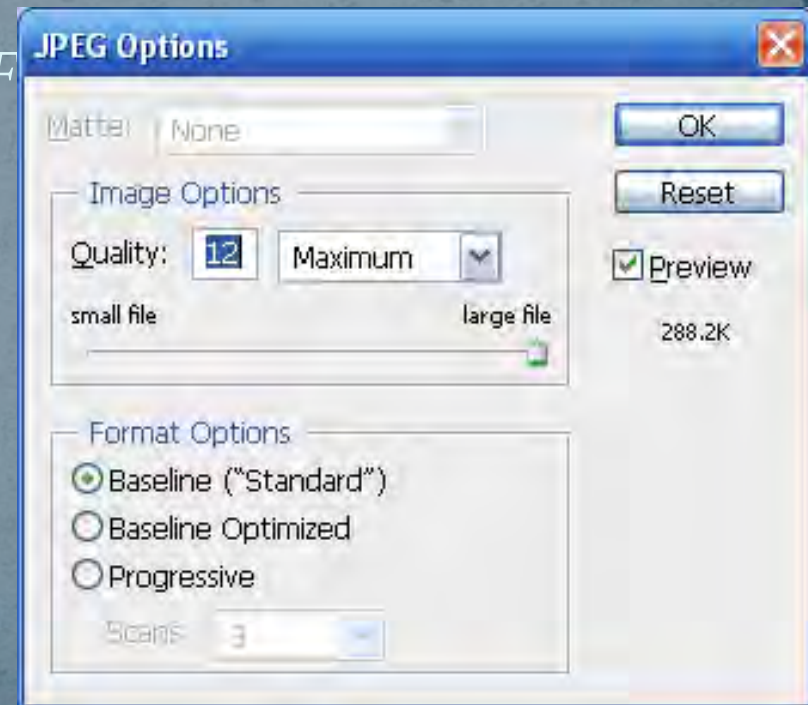
File – Close (in the Top Menu)

Note: do not save the original file or it will be saved as the smaller version

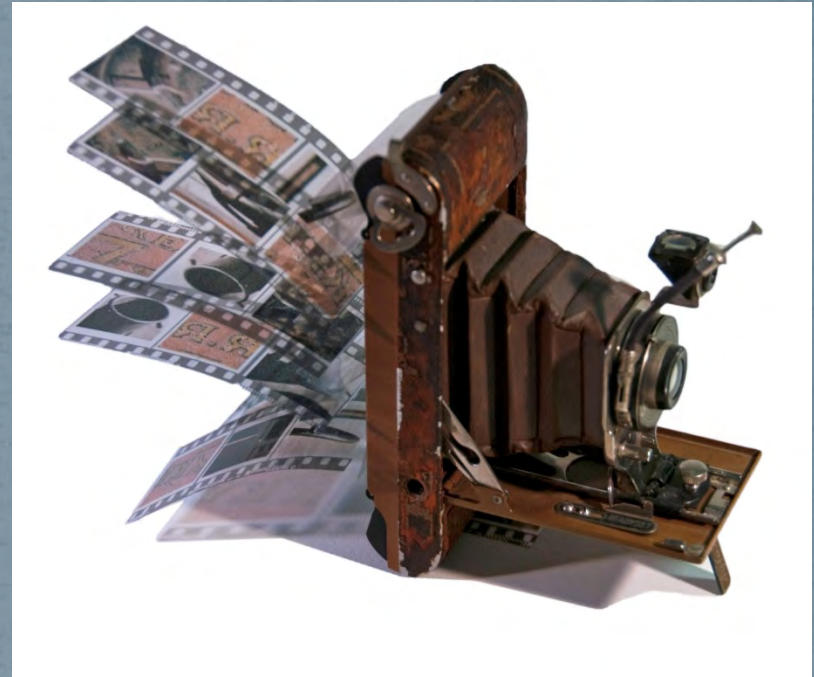
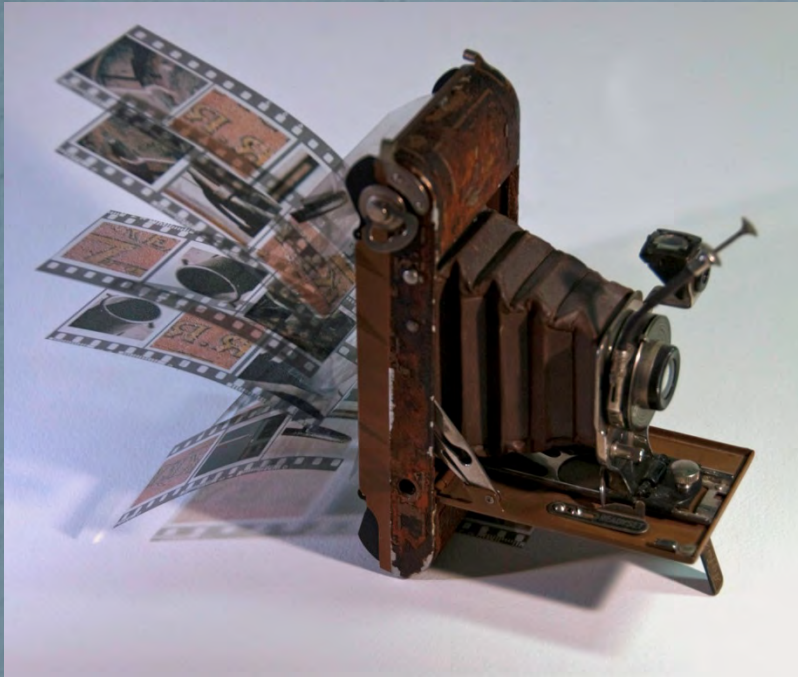


To Finish:

- Move the slider all the way to the right “large file”
 - (10-12 is fine)
- Click on the OK button
- You now have a file that is ready to email or add to the Website
- **File – Close** (In the Top Menu)
- **Note:** *Do Not Save the Original File or It Will Be Saved as the Smaller Version*



(Optional - Advanced) Further Updates in Photoshop



For Advanced Photoshop Users: I used the Quick Selection tool in Photoshop to select the grayish background and then I deleted it to get a cleaner looking background. Nice but not necessary.

Questions?

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My Thanks To Rae Trujillo For Some of The Book
Examples Used For This Class