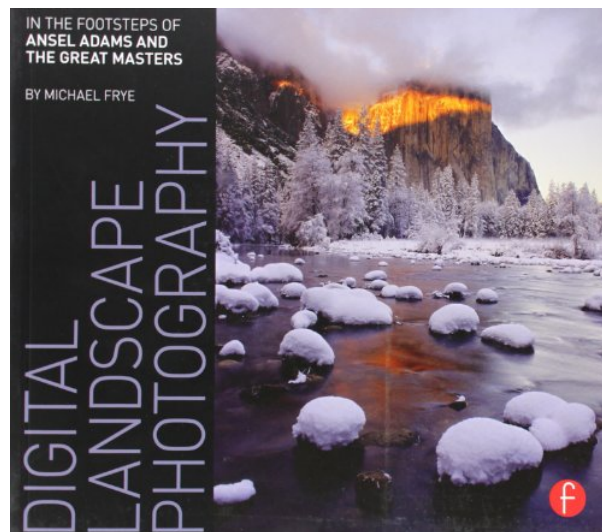
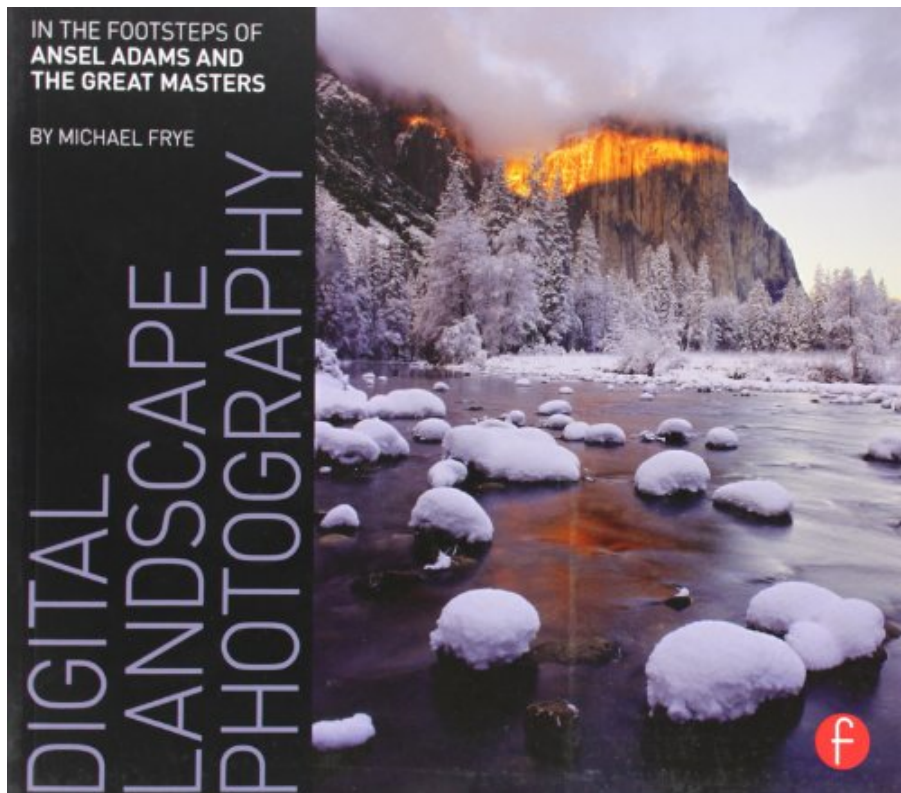


# DIGITAL LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ANSEL ADAMS BY MICHAEL FRYE



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## About the Author

Michael Frye has lived either on or near Yosemite National Park since 1983, and in that time has built up a reputation as one of the most exciting current practioners of fine landscape and nature photography. He has written numerous magazine articles on the art and technique of photography. His work is also featured in Landscape: The World's Top Photographers. His photographs have been published in over thirty countries around the world; magazine credits include National Wildlife, Outdoor Photographer, American Photo, Sunset, and Texas Highways.

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# **DIGITAL LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ANSEL ADAMS BY MICHAEL FRYE PDF**

Ansel Adams (1902-1984) was a pioneer of landscape photography, whose imagery--especially his iconic views of the American National Parks--is widely published and instantly recognizable. While he is undoubtedly one of the best-loved and best-known visionaries of American art, photographers also recognize him as a pioneer of technique, a theoretician, and as one of the great teachers of the craft of photography.

His zone system has been widely adapted, but Adams unique imagery also relied on his determination and application at every stage of the photographic process; he spent years in his darkroom, as well as out in the open air. For decades, this kind of attention to detail required the kind of equipment, time, and facilities that were out of the reach of most photographers--but now, in the digital age, technology has finally made his techniques accessible.

This book will show you what can be learned from Adams working process, and how these lessons can be applied today. The craft of Adams photography is discussed, and the ZONE SYSTEM is related to the digital age. Sections on light, composition, mood, and the darkroom all show what can be achieved today using and understanding his thinking. Michael Frye's own photography provides many stunning examples of the results that can be achieved and, as one of Adams' natural successors in the field, he is well placed to analyze the inspirational shots which open each chapter.

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- 160 pages

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## Most helpful customer reviews

98 of 101 people found the following review helpful.

Lessons from the Masters

By Conrad J. Obregon

Ansel Adams, Edward Weston and Eliot Porter were amongst the greatest landscape photographers of the

twentieth century. Unlike many of today's photographers, they used film. The book "In the Footsteps of Ansel Adams and the Great Masters: Digital Landscape Photography" tries to translate their techniques into the language of modern digital photography.

The first part of the book, called "Technical Foundations" deals with the basic techniques of digital photography with emphasis on how those techniques might be applied to landscape photography. Experienced users may find little new here, although the explanation of the zone system may introduce people who have mastered the histogram to another method of calculating exposure. At the same time, the explanations of the fundamentals may prove much too pithy for beginners. Perhaps the section will most help those already familiar with the basics to understand how to apply these techniques like the masters.

The second part of the book, entitled "Light, Composition and the Art of Seeing" evokes the masters, mostly by quoting their words. The images presented are primarily those of Frye, but those familiar with the masters will recognize that much of his work is clearly derived from their style, except for being captured digitally and usually in color. Although this aspect of photography is the most amorphous to describe in writing, Frye does a good job, and his lovely pictures, taken mostly in Yosemite and other favorite locations of Adams, are well worth studying.

The final part deals with "The Digital Darkroom: Editing, Processing and Printing" and it is here that Frye shows how I imagine the masters would use modern image processing software and hardware rather than the chemical darkroom. Although quite extensive, it is certainly not a Photoshop primer. Instead those who already know how to use such software will see examples of how Frye uses it to emulate the style of the masters. Since most Photoshop manuals do not show many examples of actual applications, this can be quite useful.

My only complaint with the book is that I would have liked a few more photographs by the masters included, with some deeper analysis of the images to reveal the techniques they used to fulfill their vision. There is still plenty of room for the photographer to view and analyze their works in other books.

No photographers should expect (or fear) that after reading this book they will take pictures like the masters. Instead, they should expect that some of the techniques, if adopted, will be incorporated into their own style and add to the quality of their images.

90 of 93 people found the following review helpful.

Not for novices, but also not beyond mid-level amateurs

By Grits

From the on line book description, I was expecting something a bit different. Yet I am not at all disappointed. The description states that the book "[c]ontains a number of breathtaking works by Ansel Adams and other landscape masters such as Edward Weston and Elliot Porter." In 160 pages, there are only three images from Adams, and one each from Weston and Porter. With my own personal feelings about Ansel Adams' work, I looked forward to seeing more. But as I went through the book further and further, I realized that the real value of the book was not merely appreciating Adams' finished works, but rather Frye's own work and how he uses it to show HOW Adams did what he did in a systematic manner. Adams' manual filtering, dodging, burning, etc., are all brought forward into the age of digital photography and digital manipulation of those photographs. For anyone at least somewhat familiar with Adams' ability to "see" a photo before he even took it, as well as his darkroom magic to leave details in both deep shadows and bright highlights, Frye's step-by-step instruction actually helped me appreciate Adams' work even more.

Someone just beginning in photography who does not know what Ansel Adams did beyond taking nice

looking pictures in black and white, would likely get lost very quickly in this book. Someone who has never gone beyond automatic settings with a camera will have a very difficult time following the book. It simply isn't for beginners. But an amateur photographer with at least reasonable experience using manual settings to get desired effects with either light or depth of field, will be able to appreciate this book and learn from it. Experienced amateurs, and I would suspect many professionals, will find this book very helpful with both improvement in technique as well as greater appreciation for the work of the past film-era masters such as Adams, particularly.

While the author assumes at least some familiarity with software such as Photoshop, even a limited degree of experience with it will enable the reader to improve his or her results. This is not a tutorial on the zone system, nor use of software, but rather a good overall demonstration of how each is applied to create a finished product in the digital age. Along the way there is sufficient detailed instruction, however, to make it very practical and useful.

Probably the only reason I did not give it a 5-star rating is because I would like to have seen a bit more on the steps, rather than brief overviews of various photographs and their changes with two or three versions of a photo before the finished product. This isn't to say there isn't considerable written instruction to go along with the images, but there is only so much one can put into a 160 page book covering topics for which whole instructional courses could be designed. Twice the size with correspondingly more detail in the instruction would have been wonderful. And perhaps that's a very positive endorsement of what IS in the book - enough to be appreciated as well as quite useful, with the quality that prompts a desire for even more.

Again, though I didn't get exactly what I expected, and I would like to have had more of what I did get, I'll restate what I said in the beginning: I am not at all disappointed with my selection. If I had first encountered it in a book store and spent some time looking through it, I am quite confident I would have purchased it. In reality, I'd put it at 4½ stars (I reserve 5 stars for only the absolute best products - and this certainly came close). I give it a strong recommendation for anyone who wants to go beyond "good" photography and is willing to put in the effort. This is not a "read it once and you understand" book. Very nice job, Mr. Frye.

49 of 54 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent adaptation of light masters to digital media

By Chris Zee Shutterbug

Digital Landscape Photography

Excellent adaptation of light masters to digital media -minimum self advertising.

Truly an enjoyable and useful book that dissects the Ansel Adams et al style and then explains how to achieve a similar vision in today's digital media. I was immediately taken in by a discussion of one of Adam's classics, "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico, 1941". Briefly we are exposed to his vision, and learn how to see beyond the obvious. Technique for an enduring masterwork - compose in one's mind then incorporate emotions to be moved in one's heart. Hard to put into words, but Michael Frye succeeds quite well.

Surprisingly the notion of a pure image is also dispelled. In other words what you may be tempted to do in Photoshop, Ansel did as well in the darkroom. Dodging and burning are translated into manipulating the curves, layers, saturation and other parameters available to us now. So rest assured, and feel free to evolve your image, Ansel would have done the same.

Much of the book is spent on discussion of the Zone System. Briefly, diving the light in the scene in up to 10 zones from the lightest to the darkest. This is equated to evaluating a digital images' histograms.

Explanations are given regarding when pictures should be high tone (mostly bright) or low tone (mostly dark) and when its just fine to have a gray image. We are also taught about the multiple exposures and HDR images. Combining over and underexposed images in such a way to enhance the image by showing details that otherwise would be hidden in the shadows of erased in blown out highlights.

There are examples of each of these methods sprinkled liberally throughout the book. This is where my comment about self advertising comes in. Many photo self help books are actually a gallery of the authors best works, we are not involved in the process all that much and are simply told to admire.

This is not the case in this book. It succeeds very well in exploring the inner artist in those of us who may not be handy with a paintbrush, but are capable with a camera. The explanation of the thought process behind some of the excellent masters works here (ie Clearing Winter Storm by Adams) combined with the hardware and software techniques makes this an excellent reference source material.

For the beginner it illustrates some of the possibilities, for the advanced amateur it offers the glimpse of becoming a master.

On a technical note, the book is a soft cover one, but the cover and pages are heavy stock that feels plasticized and high quality. Unfortunately the dark pages show fingerprints quite distinctly.

Finally the quality of the images would make this book feel quite at home on a coffee table for the quests to browse through as well.

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