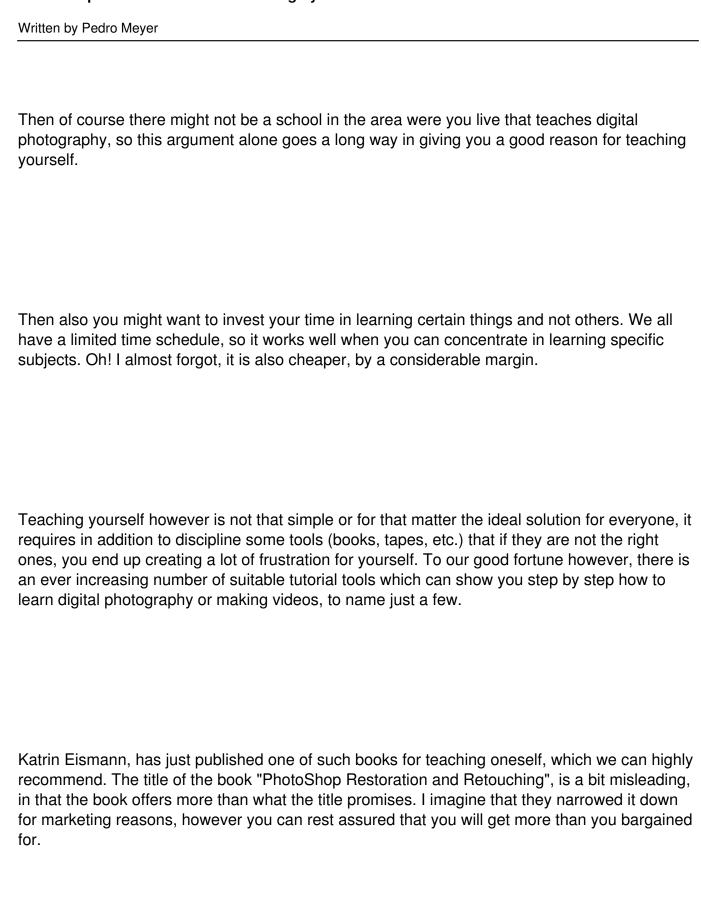One of the problems that I get to hear most often, has to do with training. If someone states that they are interested in learning how to work digitally in photography then "what school do you recommend ?" is the next question that always follows.

The best advice that I can give you, is to teach yourself and have a network with whom to remain in touch to deal with certain questions. So how does one go about teaching oneself, and above all why do it that way.

For one, if you go to take regular school courses, you have to acknowledge that the speed at which you are taught is not necessarily your own. You might be slower or faster in grasping ideas, but when you have to work within a group, there is the inevitable average that sets in, and that might not have much to do with your own personal needs.

Then of course there might not be a school in the area were you live that teaches digital photography, so this argument alone goes a long way in giving you a good reason for teaching yourself.

Then also you might want to invest your time in learning certain things and not others. We all have a limited time schedule, so it works well when you can concentrate in learning specific subjects. Oh! I almost forgot, it is also cheaper, by a considerable margin.

Teaching yourself however is not that simple or for that matter the ideal solution for everyone, it requires in addition to discipline some tools (books, tapes, etc.) that if they are not the right ones, you end up creating a lot of frustration for yourself. To our good fortune however, there is an ever increasing number of suitable tutorial tools which can show you step by step how to learn digital photography or making videos, to name just a few.

Katrin Eismann, has just published one of such books for teaching oneself, which we can highly recommend. The title of the book "PhotoShop Restoration and Retouching", is a bit misleading, in that the book offers more than what the title promises. I imagine that they narrowed it down for marketing reasons, however you can rest assured that you will get more than you bargained for.

PhotoShop Restoration and Retouching by Katrin Eismann
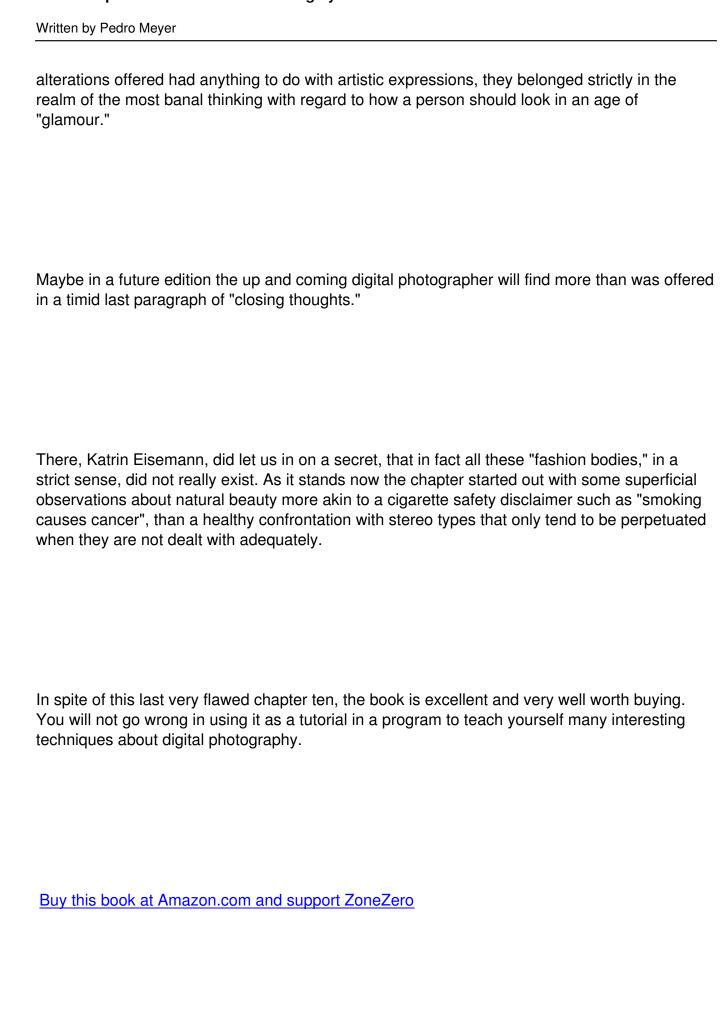
Written by Pedro Meyer

The examples are largely centered around the "Restoration and Retouching" functions of the photographer, but anything you will learn from this book you can also apply to what ever direction your personal photography actually takes you to. You can be a documentary photographer or an architectural or landscape photographer, and for these and other instances you will find a wide array of applicable ideas throughout this book.

The texts are very well written, the design and layout is clear and concise, there is humor, and a lots of images to show along the way in a step by step procedure that even if you happen to be "slow," you will get it. They even have a web site linked to this book for your further explorations. The paper on which this book is printed, I found to be of very fine quality, which allows for good reproductions and easy reading. There is definitely good production value throughout this book.

The publication holds up well until we get to chapter 10 (fortunately, the last one), which is dedicated to Glamour and Fashion Retouching. Some of the examples are out right cheesy and not up to the integrity in the rest of the volume. The part on "Digital Liposuction," already the name, is straight out of a Florida tabloid. A perfectly lovely model whose thighs are nothing to be ashamed off, has been slimmed down according to some questionable esthetical considerations, that makes one wonder how they could have gotten it so wrong in what is otherwise a quite wonderful book.

The whole notion of retouching a picture in order to change the way one looks should not have gone without some critical comments alongside the alterations that are being taught. The author herself, a very good looking woman without any further retouching, goes into this whole illustrated exercise of transforming herself, so as to fit into some preconceived notion of how she ought to look. It is obviously her privilege and choice to make herself out as she fancies, but any critical thinking on such matters is as important as teaching us how to do a nose or lip job on anyone. Why do we even want to alter a face, should not be left unquestioned. None of the

alterations offered had anything to do with artistic expressions, they belonged strictly in the realm of the most banal thinking with regard to how a person should look in an age of "glamour."

Maybe in a future edition the up and coming digital photographer will find more than was offered in a timid last paragraph of "closing thoughts."

There, Katrin Eisemann, did let us in on a secret, that in fact all these "fashion bodies," in a strict sense, did not really exist. As it stands now the chapter started out with some superficial observations about natural beauty more akin to a cigarette safety disclaimer such as "smoking causes cancer", than a healthy confrontation with stereo types that only tend to be perpetuated when they are not dealt with adequately.

In spite of this last very flawed chapter ten, the book is excellent and very well worth buying. You will not go wrong in using it as a tutorial in a program to teach yourself many interesting techniques about digital photography.

[Buy this book at Amazon.com and support ZoneZero](#)

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