

## FUN WITH CAMERA SWIPES

By Diane Miller

I enjoy doing “swipes” where I set a shutter speed of about a second and move the camera fairly quickly up, down or sideways while the shutter is open. A quicker movement will give a smoother result; slower will give a jiggly effect if you are handholding. I like to begin the movement first and then immediately hit the shutter button, to get a smoother start, but anything goes. It’s all a matter of trying things and finding some results that you like. Trees are a favorite subject for vertical swipes. Here’s an example.



I like to do repeated swipes from the same position; they usually give a wide range of results, as I never quite cover the same start to finish composition. If I'm handholding I'll usually do about 10-15 frames. If I'm on a tripod with the motion more carefully constrained to horizontal or vertical, there will be less variation and I will do fewer.

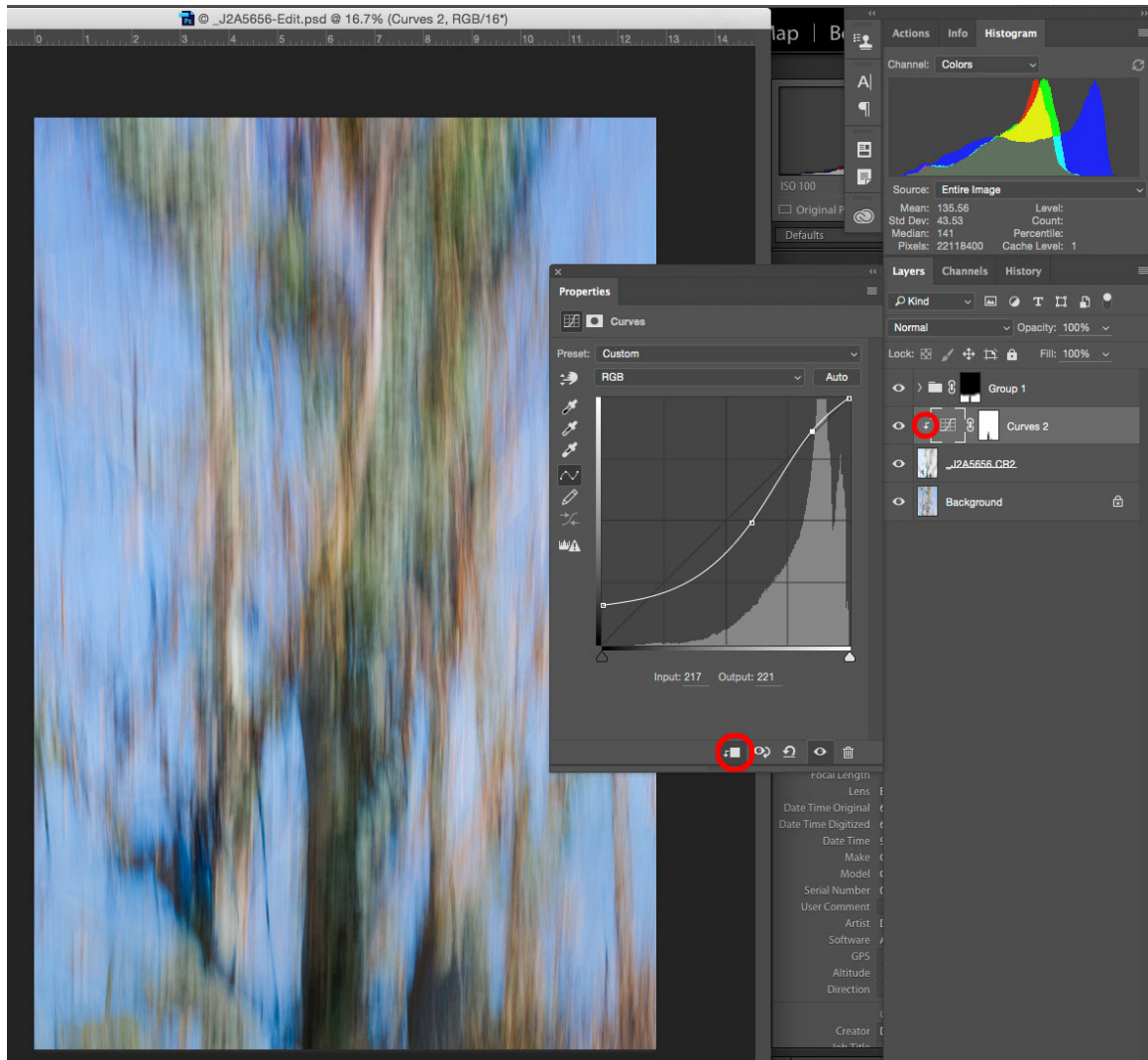
I can set the shutter speed by going to Manual exposure, where I would also have to set an aperture in order to set an exposure. But I think it's more fun to go to Tv mode where I set the shutter speed and the exposure will be set by the camera according to what is in the frame when I first press the shutter button. That can vary quite a bit, especially if I'm doing a vertical tree swipe from top down where there is more sky at the start, compared to the often-darker initial field if I'm going from the bottom up. Having more sky in the frame at the start will give a lower exposure (by the camera setting a smaller aperture) and having a darker composition when going from the bottom up will give a brighter exposure (by the camera opening up the aperture). The choice of aperture in shots like this is usually not important and it's often fun to have this random variation in exposure.

If I'm handholding I will often get verticals or horizontals that are at an angle. If desired, they can be straightened in Photoshop by using the tools in the Edit > Transform > Distort menu. I like vertical lines to be vertical, as in the example image above, but that's just a matter of preference. If I'm close to the subject with a wide angle lens I can get bowed lines, which can be fixed by going to the Lens Correction panel in Adobe Camera Raw or Lightroom, or in Photoshop with the Lens Correction filter or Edit > Transform > Warp.

Here's a special creative twist that I haven't seen mentioned anywhere else: I like to combine two similar shots from the same session. I choose a basic one that has some good structure and then often a simpler one that just feels like it is worth trying. It's all done by ESP. I layer them with the main image choice as the Background layer and try some blend modes for the top layer. (Overlay, Screen or Multiply are often good to start with.) Then I decide if it would look better if that top layer was lighter or darker, more or less saturated, black and white, or any other adjustment you can do with an adjustment layer. To make that adjustment apply only to the top layer, clip it by clicking the leftmost icon at the bottom of the layers palette. (Click again to un-clip.) See the figure below. You will then see the clipped layer indented in the layers palette. Then experiment with the adjustment settings. Sometimes just doing the adjustment layer without clipping can be good, and sometimes it's better if it just changes the top layer by being clipped to it. And that can vary according to the blend mode.

This technique is much more sophisticated than changing the opacity of the top layer. And using a Curve (or Levels) to darken it gives you more control than the old technique of adding an adjustment layer with no adjustments made to it and putting it in Multiply mode and reducing its opacity to lessen the strength of its effect.

The Curve shown here is unconventional in that it has the darks lightened. Blending modes can change contrast in unusual ways.



If you want to do several clipped adjustment layers you can group them into a folder by clicking the folder icon at the bottom of the layers panel (not shown here) and drag them into that folder layer, which will be named Group 1 (or subsequent numbers for new ones). Each layer in the group can have its own mask and the group can have a mask that applies to all the layers.

That's a bit much for this tutorial, but for more information go to my website, <http://www.dianedmiller.com> and check out the Photoshop tutorials.

Have fun with a new technique!