

## Orton Effect in Landscapes

Following on from the article by Edita Rice on creating Magical Landscapes where she, towards the end, advises the use of the Orton Effect to enhance the dreaminess of certain landscapes to create mood.

The Orton Effect is named after it's creator, Michael Orton in the 1960s, to enhance his Portrait Photography to give a dreamy soft focus look. But in fact it also gives a pseudo 3D image effect a bit like a Xerograph. Michael of course did this in the era of film and used slide transparencies to create the effect; one sharply in focus and the other slightly out of focus and then blend them on the Enlarger for printing.

A similar effect can be used created in digital photography using layers and blur in Photoshop or other post processing packages.

A word of warning though, this became very overused in portrait photography, but can be very effective in Landscape Photography if used sparingly.

Here's how to do it...

1. Post-process your image in Lightroom or Photoshop (or other) until you are happy with the results.
2. Take image into Photoshop.
3. Make a copy of the layer to produce "Background Copy" and make sure this layer is selected.
4. Next go to **Image>Apply Image** and in the dialogue box select the Layer as '**Background**', leave the Channel as '**RGB**' and change the Blending mode to '**Screen**'. Press **OK**. The image should return to a bright image.
5. Next, **Duplicate the Background Copy** to create **Background Copy2**. It's on this layer that the blur will be added.
6. With Background Copy 2 selected, choose **Filters> Blur> Gaussian Blur** and Set the % Blur level to show the image just fully blurred enough to the edge of not being able to see the edges of the original image. Where this occurs will depend upon how many pixels the image contains, e.g. with 24Mpx this is around 15% and with 45-50Mpx this would be around 22%. Achieve what's best for you by experimentation. Press OK.
7. Next, Select BOTH COPY Layers and merge them (**Merge layers**). Now creating the Orton Effect select the **Blend Mode** of this merged layer to '**Multiply**'. The image will become intensely saturated and dark but don't panic!
8. Select **Image> Adjustments>Hue/Saturation** and **reduce** the '**saturation**' until it looks more or less the right saturation. Increase the Lightness until the correct exposure is achieved. The Orton effect has now been created.
9. There is often a loss of contrast when you do blending, so correct this using Curves. If you think you overcooked it, reduce the Opacity of the layer
10. Flatten the final image and save or Return back to Lightroom if required for final adjustments.

Now you will realise that you have applied this effect to the whole image and you might NOT want to do that, i.e. you might just want to apply it to middle distance / background and leave foreground interest or subject sharp.

To be selective, at **Step 5** above, use the '**Select and Mask Tool**' to just loop around the areas you want the blur to take effect. BUT remember to set the feather / edge pixel size to be around 10 to avoid a sharp transition between the non-Orton and Orton areas. Once selected proceed to step 6.

Orton Effect can really make your images Pop, and give that ethereal / magical "Lord of the Rings" or "Game of Thrones" look and feel. BUT you can overdo it and the images look weird. You need to ask yourself, does it look right or is it, isn't it helping? Enhancing or degrading?

You can combine this process in with the Luminosity Mask methodology I have previously described.