

Photo Art with your Phone

Deerfield Public Library



Class Outline:

- 1) What is Digital Art?
- 2) Photo-Art Apps
- 3) Combination Techniques
- 4) Photo Basics
- 5) Displaying and Saving
- 6) Practice!
- 7) Questions & Answers

Expected Outcomes:

- 1) Ability to take photos with a smartphone and use apps to manipulate them
- 2) Understanding of how to combine apps to process photos with the aim of making artistic images

What is Digital Art?

- “Digital art is an artistic work or practice that uses digital technology as an essential part of the creative or presentation process.”
- “Art created or modified using a computer or other digital medium.”
- Examples: Computer drawing and animation, photo manipulation and collage, designing on a computer (including designing traditional art objects, like sculpture, textiles, etc.), web– or computer-based presentation of images, videos, .gifs, video games, virtual reality, and more!

But is it Art?

- Context is everything

Great Photo Art Apps...for FREE!

1. **Prisma:** Uses Artificial Intelligence to combine your photo with representations of modern art in different styles. Easy to use. Either take photos in the app or access your phone's photos that you've already taken (recommended). Then click on different art styles and download or share your creations. **Tips:** check in settings to disable the watermark or choose to automatically save new creations. Slide to the right or left to adjust the percent of your original photo included in the image. You can also show off the effects by splitting the image.



2. **Pikazo:** Similar to Prisma, but you can upload your source image as well, giving you more control over the art styles you create. Response time is slower, often taking several minutes. Includes some art images but also has some available for purchase. You can show off the effects by making a collage of the original images and the final image. **Tips:** keep your new source images simple. You have the option to save images with higher resolution.

3. **RollWorld (iOS)** and **Tiny Planet (Android):** These apps take your photos and swirl them so you can make a photo of a skyline or landscape into a circular "tiny planet." **Tips:** use abstract images or nature images to make surprising, artistic swirls. Play with the size, placement, shape, blending and other options.



4. **Glitch Lab (iOS)** & **Glitch! (Android)** These apps allow you to "glitch" your photos, replicating common digital "mistakes" or out-of-date digital styles (pixelization, VHS date/time marks, etc.). Effects are often somewhat randomized (to reflect real-life glitches) so there is less control. **Glitch Lab** has unique shapes you can add, as well as layering capabilities. **Tips:** use the back arrow in the upper left to undo changes. Rotate the photo while you are glitching to create effects in different areas. **Glitch!** has more styles of glitches, but no undo button. **Tips:** try out the vintage digital options—like VHS.



5. **Photoblend:** Allows you to blend your photos to create a double-exposure effect. You can adjust the intensity of the photos and do some basic photo-editing and save your photos. Great for collage effects. Downside is that this free app has a lot of annoying ads. **Tips:** explore the options to edit both photos at once or each individually, determining the level of blending, the contrast, and more. Other features, like Erase and Filters can be useful too.



Great Photo Editing Apps...for FREE!

1. **Adobe Photoshop Express:** Designed for on-the-go photo editing, this is an entry-level photo editing app that offers a handful of features for quick edits and automatic fixes. Basic editing tools are included. You can also enhance photos using slide controls to adjust clarity, contrast, tint, exposure, temperature and more. The app also supports panoramic photo editing, has social media integration, and comes with frames, borders and more than 20 filters to add special effects.



2. **Snapseed:** Great app for polishing your photos! The Auto Correct feature enhances colors, exposure and contrast in a single tap. The Tune Image feature tweaks brightness, shadows, white balance, saturation and other effects, and the Selective Adjust feature also lets you highlight and focus specific objects or areas. Other features include frames, texture and tone adjustment, and sharing via email, Google+ and more. The app also comes with several filters and effects to give your photos a unique

3. **Instagram:** This is the app that your kids use. Instagram is owned by Facebook and has grown to over 600 million active users. The Instagram app is not so much a photo editing app but more of a photo filter app and social network combined. The app automatically crops your photographs to a square and then you can choose a filter and/or borders. This creates Polaroid type photo's which are perfect for products and quick snaps. Although this app is not an advanced photo editor, its social nature is its main appeal.



4. **Aviary:** It's not as powerful as some of the other options here, but it does give you editing options that are powerful enough to get the job done in most cases, and get them done quickly and easily without risking the original photos. Aviary's one-tap auto-enhance is fantastic to use, and unlike other tools, it fixes more than it ruins. You can easily tweak color temperature, remove blur or fuzziness, adjust brightness and contrast, crop and rotate your shot, or straighten it if it's just a little off-kilter. It's simple, and if you don't have a lot of time to pore over a shot, it definitely pulls its weight.

5. **Picstitch:** The best thing about PicStitch is that you can edit all of these photos before you insert them into your frame. And even though Pic Stitch is first and foremost an app to create framed images, it doesn't skimp on its editing options. You can add filter effects, enhance color, add stickers, draw emphasis to certain aspects of your photo, add text, edit red eye and much, much more. And you'll see even more options available within all of these editing tools, but they'll cost ya. You can share your collages on social media or send them to print at Walgreen's.



Combining Effects to Make Original Digital Art

Using the effects of one app can create a great, but predictable, image. Save your manipulated photos to your Photos folder in your phone and then open them up in other apps to keep manipulating them in new apps. Try some of these combinations or make up your own!

Many of these tips and techniques are adapted from *Art with an iPhone: A Photographer's Guide to Creating Altered Realities* by Kat Solma

Blend Textured Backgrounds

Use a photograph of a relatively plain textured surface—think walls with cracks in the paint, dirty windows, old tables, dirt paths, even sections of other paintings. Process them using whatever apps you want until satisfied. Then blend the backgrounds with a photo of an object against a simple background (sky, white paper, etc.) to get a textured effect.



Kat Solma



Original



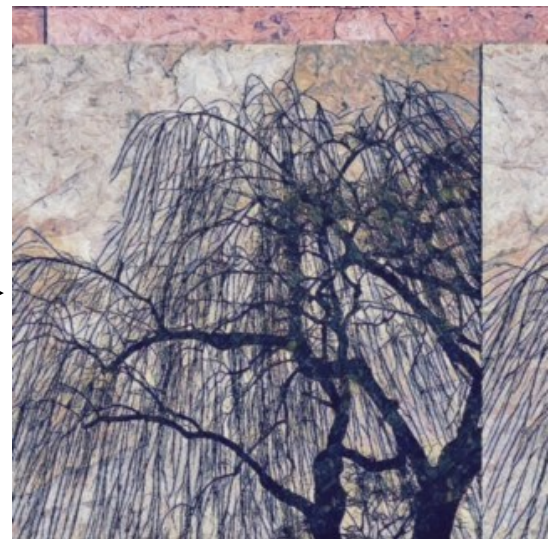
With Prisma (1st time)



Original



With Prisma



Original → Prisma effect → Photoblend (blended with background that was processed with Prisma) → Glitch, edges → Photos App, filter → Prisma effect

Finish with a Painterly Effect

One of the easiest ways to make awesome digital photo art is to first crop, blur, swirl, blend, color, glitch, etc., save, and end with using Prisma or Pikazo (or a paid painterly-effects app) to process the image with your choice of effect. The end result in these apps is usually compelling, especially if a photo has been edited already. (Remember you can adjust the amount of “painting” vs. original photo.) BUT sometimes going a step further makes all the difference. Blend the original photo back in to sharpen lines, or end with a distinctive glitch effect.

Experiment!

How Do I Take Better Pictures?

Move beyond your average point and shoot with your cellphone; a few simple techniques will help!

1. Practice Makes Perfect: Just like with any skill, taking lots of pictures is the surefire way to make sure that you are at the top of your point and shoot game with your cell. Also, take more than one shot! You might get a real winner that you never expected to have. Deleting too quickly can cut down on some awesome, unexpected photos.



2. Don't Zoom In; Get Closer: Your cell camera will zoom in easily, but remember, this zoom is different than your regular camera! When you zoom in on something with your cellphone, you are simply stretching out the pixels, resulting in a distorted pic. Remember that you can also be TOO close and get a blurry product.

Get physically closer to your subject to get those up close and personal details!

3. Shoot at Eye Level: For a diverse type of shot, try shooting at eye level. When we shoot with a downward or upward angle, we get cool perspectives...but, we also block out lighting or create shadows. Getting down to eye level will give you a great picture and give our camera something specific to focus on.

Play the angles game, too! Try a new perspective for a unique shot.



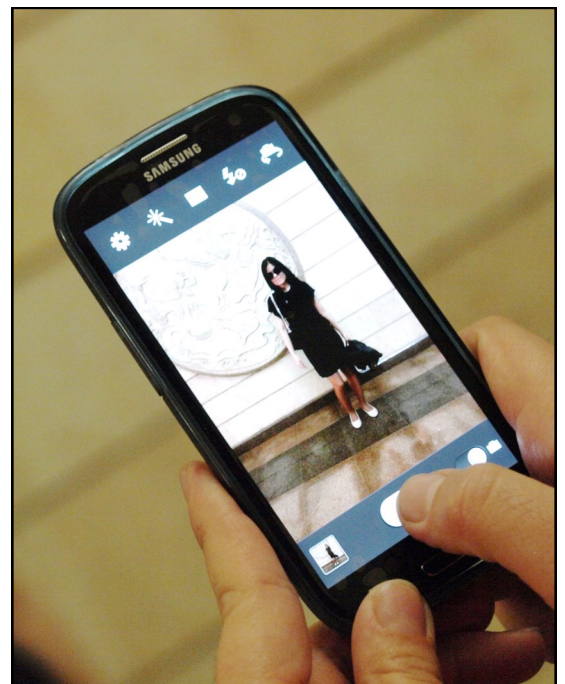
Taking Better Cell Phone Pictures (Continued)

4. **Watch Your Light:** Your regular camera has a flash setting. So does your cellphone camera! Most cameras have settings to a neutral point—auto or off are common. If you are going to be in an area where you know it will be pretty dark, then you might want to turn your camera's flash settings to on. Low light pictures come out too dark and very grainy. If you want your camera to decide whether or not you need the flash, try Auto. (NOTE: Underexposure—low light—may be better than overexposure for later photo editing...)



5. **Background:** A plain background shows off your subject better. When you're shooting the picture, focus on the subject more than the background. Double check your placement, too! Is a basketball hoop apparently growing out of your child's shoulder? Try to do your best to fill the whole frame with the subject.

6. **Resolution:** Your camera will have more than one resolution setting. Setting the camera to the highest setting (even if only temporarily) will give you the best picture quality. Think about how you want to share these pictures. If you're going to email them or upload them to social media, they will look much different on a computer screen than they will on a cellphone screen. You may not see the difference on your phone, but you will in the future or during the editing process.



Taking Better Pictures (Continued)

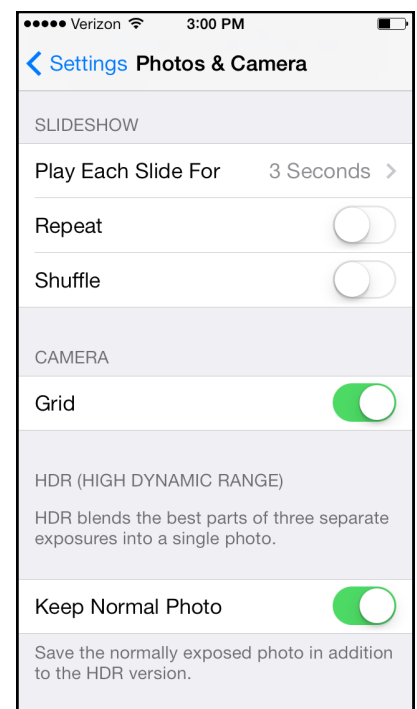
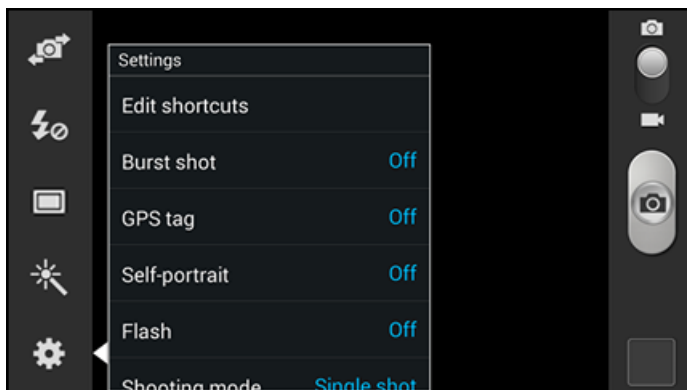
7. **Steady, Steady!:** Find a way to steady your hands while you're taking your pictures. This might mean bracing your arm against a table or using a cup to prop up your cell phone. Get creative with what's around you! Use two hands to take your picture.

You should also keep your hand steady for a few moments after pushing the shutter button. The picture is still processing, so keep it steady!



8. **Keep Your Lens Clean:** Just like many other things that fall into our pockets and purses, gunk and lint cling to your camera lens surface. Before taking a picture, use a lint-free cloth to wipe away any debris.

9. **Know Your Camera's Settings:** Your camera comes with some very diverse settings options. You can try them out...change them! You will always be able to change them back. You might find that the options that you are trying will give you a better photo. Here, we have Samsung and iPhone 5 menu examples. Your phone may vary, but trying them out is still a great idea.





10. Rule of Thirds

Add a grid in your camera's settings (in Settings on iOS, usually in the camera app on Android). This will let you easily use the classic composition technique—the rule of thirds. Focus important objects at the intersection of the lines, frame a horizon line along a long line, or vertical objects on a vertical line. The idea is that these points of interest are pleasing to the eye and more interesting than head on, centered pictures or lopsided pictures where focus is on an edge or in a corner. As with any rule in art—feel free to break it!

Displaying your Photo Art

So you've made a digital masterpiece...now what? Some more obvious ways to display your photo art: you can share your creations on social media, show them off on your phone, add them to a slideshow, make backgrounds for your computer or phone, etc. Consider also having your work printed—there are many services that will make prints on photo paper, cardstock, canvas, etc. Or try making a photo book of your creations! Common printing services include Walgreens, Shutterfly, Mixbook, and Apple's Book service through its Photos application.

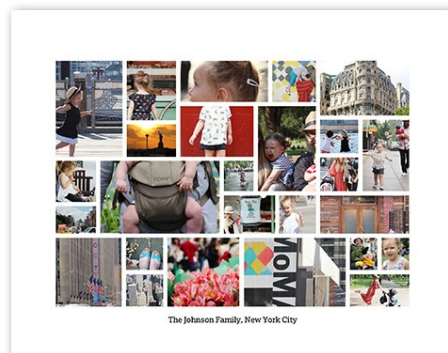
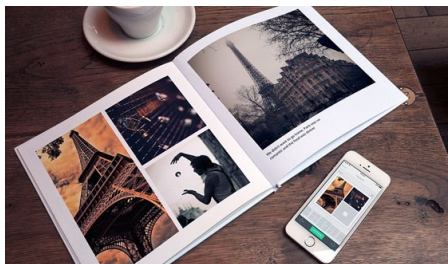


Photo Storage

- Store them directly onto your computer using the programs that are native to your device.
 - *Microsoft Windows Gallery on a PC
 - * iPhoto on Mac (now Photos)
- Online Storage via free accounts:
 - Google photos (free with your Google account, unlimited storage for regular sized pictures)
 - Flickr (free website that allows you to store 1 Terabyte of space, or about 2 million photos)
- Storage Device like a hard drive or a Jump Drive (those sizes will vary depending on the device).

Other Resources:

iPhone Photography School: <http://iphonephotographyschool.com/>

Android Central photography articles: <http://www.androidcentral.com/search/photography?query=photography>

Gale Courses—free with your library card!