

# The Digital Renaissance

Donna Kamper

Subtitled *Classic Painting Techniques in Photoshop and Painter* and promising “how to translate the methods and skills found in traditional art to the digital medium,” this book was an instant draw (for me). Of course, I don’t know traditional art methods or skills, but I was still hopeful.

The volume seemed slim considering the subject, but in 160 pages it gave me an boost in both confidence and ability! The first eight pages are a fast overview of both *Painter’s* and *Photoshop’s* interface and tools, and then the book moves into exploring the different artists’ techniques.

The tutorials focus on artists such as Raphael, Van Gogh, Renoir, Klimt, Matisse and Picasso among others. The tutorials begin with a review of the artist and period each lived in, not only giving a sense of history but also explaining the constraints and circumstances that informed their art.

The Tutorials proceed in steps. Each step is then broken down into individual instructions. Michelangelo’s tutorial begins by creating the appropriate paper, paper color and texture to use for the sketch. This is followed by hints about how to sketch the action of the figure(s) in both *Painter* and *Photoshop*, so you can work in whichever program you’re most comfortable with.

In Van Gogh’s chapter, after prepping the canvas and creating the sketch(both of which contain valuable hints and tips for using color and changing the brush)

you move into color choices. Techniques for blending, mixing, building up color and defining edges are all part of this tutorial.

Recreating Gustav Klimt’s trademark rich golds and intricate patterns are an integral part of that chapter. Achieving effects such as Texture and Impasto are also covered (although downloading the custom brush from the companion website she refers the reader to isn’t possible, as it doesn’t exist – See my Note below).

The author gives multiple tips and explanations, from working with layers to creating patterns or paper. I particularly found her discussion about how to apply the Golden Ratio successfully, even to a distorted image, both helpful and applicable.

**Note:** A companion volume, *The Digital Renaissance: Old-Master Techniques in Painter and Photoshop*, by this author is also available. In previewing it on Amazon, every page available for viewing is an exact page-by-page duplicate of this book, including the Table of Contents and the Index. Either Amazon inadvertently duplicated them (although the name in each book’s footer differs) or...?

Two websites are referenced in the book for more information/resources, but one is up for sale and the other is neglected (last entry a year ago).

I think the book is worthwhile, but it looks like you should only purchase this one or the companion book, not both. It seems a shame, not least because I was hoping the other one would help me build on what I’ve learned from this book.

## About: *The Digital Renaissance*

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