

Stereoscopic Imaging: A Practical Guide

A Review by Ray Zone

There are few enough books published about stereography that offer pragmatic and clear instructions as to how one should begin, whether the medium is photography or the computer. Shab Levy has made a strong contribution to the small body of literature on the subject with a very well written book that is concise and clear in covering both approaches. As an introduction to stereoscopic fundamentals, it is also right up to date in addressing aspects of stereo imaging that are new to the medium.

A nice introduction by John Dennis sets forth the author's qualifications to write this tome and they are impressive. A founder of the 3D Center of Art & Photography which opened in February of 2004, Levy was before that an Exhibit Designer and Exhibition Director at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) where he created a dynamic exhibit about stereoscopy. Levy is active in the NSA, the SSA, ISU, PSA and the local Cascade Stereoscopic Club founded in 1994. Among his inventions are anaglyphic and phantogram Flipbooks as well as a kit for making View-Master reels with a digital camera, all of which he offers for sale along with the present tome through his website.

After a very brief introduction about the history of stereoscopic photography, techniques and definitions, Levy instructs the reader in free-viewing stereo images using a vivid color "triplet" in the book printed at a size that is easy to fuse. An overview of stereo film and digital cameras incorporates well shot photos of the different devices. Cogent graphic design makes good use of photos, illustrations, graphs and stereo pairs throughout the book in placing illustrative matter in juxtaposition to the text.

Levy is rigorous about the orthoscopic use of the stereo window and he has written and illustrated one of the most succinct and clear discussions on the subject ever written. A visually rich instruction on the use of Adobe Photoshop follows replete with screen grabs showing manipulations of stereo pairs as anaglyphs and cropped images. A cogent discussion with step-by-step instructions for creating phantogram images is next.

Digital production of lenticular prints is thoroughly described along with making composite stereo images using computer techniques.

The primary strength of Levy's book is the clarity of the descriptions for computer tools in producing an array of stereographic applications, from using antique stereocards in digital projection, making View-Master reels with a digital camera, stereo panoramas or creating 2D to 3D conversions from "flat" art. No other book offers such a global discourse on the creation of these varieties of stereographic images.

As if that wasn't enough, Levy discusses animating the stereo image in flipbooks as well as Chromadepth and Pulfrich stereo illusions. The book concludes with the creation of 3D video movies, editing for 3D and drawing in stereo. What more could you ask?

The book is printed on slick stock and the digital color reproduction is first rate. Here is an excellent starter guide that could find widespread use in schools at both an elementary and high school level. Teachers will find it a great resource for instruction. Long time stereographers will also find it useful as an introduction to some of the newer digital techniques for creating 3D imagery.

Shipping via Media Mail is \$5 or \$9 for Priority Mail in the USA or \$15 priority mail to most countries in the world. For purchasing details contact: shablevy@comcast.net or transfer correct amount via PayPal to: shablevy@comcast.net

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