

JOHN PAUL CAPONIGRO

TECHNIQUE

A FINE ART PRINTING WORKFLOW

1. Identify Objectives
2. Analyze the image
3. Image acquisition
4. Crop
5. Minor retouching
6. Major retouching
7. Global correction
8. Local correction
9. Sharpening;
10. Check retouching
11. Softproof
12. Proof
13. Check media condition
14. Final output
15. Check for defects
16. Sign and annotate
17. Outgas
18. Seal
19. Store
20. Inventory
21. Prepare for presentation

This workflow is adopted with the goal of creating a master file of the highest quality. The master file is high resolution (unresampled), high bit (16), wide gamut (Pro Photo). The master file will be used indefinitely and output on a variety of media. Adjustments are made with layers, thus indefinitely modifiable; turn them off and you return to the unmodified source file. Any component of the master file may be readjusted without affecting the other components. All derivative files of the same image are cast off from this source.

Workflow is dynamic not static. Modify your workflow according to your objectives.

Here's an example of why and how you might modify this workflow. I'm never 100% certain any of my images will meet my standards until they're done. So, I focus on the big picture first, deferring work on time consuming details, such as minor retouching and



John Paul Caponigro. *Antarctica I*, 2006. *Lamarie Channel*.

refining masks, until I'm sure the image will meet my standards. Because I plan to make a master file that will last me for years, seeing me through many changes in output media, I softproof only before printing, not while mastering the file.

In contrast, my dear friend Mac Holbert at Nash Editions must make the very best of the images his clients deliver and they determine the final output media before commencing building the file for print. Because he's certain that an image will be printed, and because each of his 77 jobs is media specific, Mac softproofs before adjusting a file. These are two different answers, and they're both right, given their respective objectives and conditions.

A wisely considered, well defined, rigorously implemented workflow is an excellent foundation for all of your imaging endeavors, but guard against being slavishly faithful to it or you may overlook other useful opportunities.