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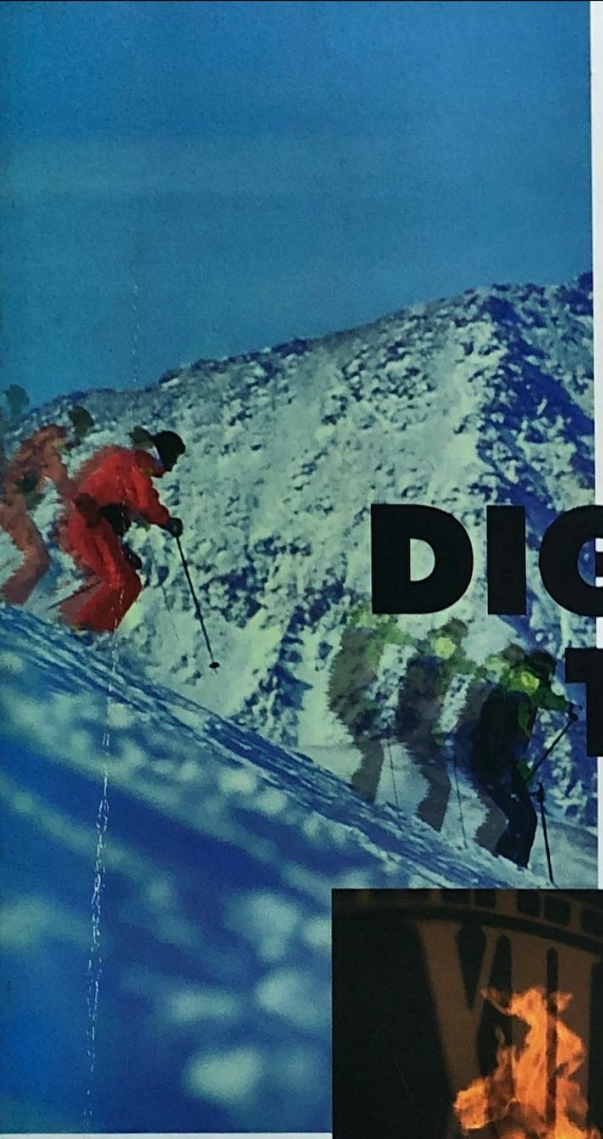
Media Art/Film & Video School of Contemporary Arts—Ramapo College of New Jersey



50 FAST DIGITAL VIDEO TECHNIQUES

by Bonnie Blake
and Doug Sahlin

Step-by-step recipes for professional-quality videos with iMovie™ or Windows® Movie Maker

CD-ROM includes sample clips for each technique and the finished videos

BONNIE BLAKE AND
DOUG SAHLIN

50 FAST DIGITAL VIDEO TECHNIQUES

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To our families, friends, mentors and fellow digital video enthusiasts.

PREFACE

This book presents 50 fast digital video techniques that are essential skills for any digital videographer who wants to take his or her productions to the next level by editing them in iMovie, or Windows Movie Maker. Each technique should take you no more than 15 minutes to perform. Some techniques are simple, and others combine multiple effects. Each technique is divided into two sections: one for iMovie users, the other for Windows Movie Maker users.

This book is written for the digital video enthusiast who wants to create professional looking home movies, but doesn't have the time for an in-depth study of all the features of iMovie and Windows Movie Maker 2.

WHY THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN

We have written several books on graphic software used to edit digital images for print and for the Web, as well as books on Web animation software, and nonlinear video-editing software. The books we have previously written were designed for professionals who use software on a daily basis to earn a living. While writing these books, we noticed a lack of books that show consumers how to use software in conjunction with their digital photography and digital video equipment. The 50 Fast series seemed like the ideal series for a book that shows video enthusiasts how to use iMovie and Windows Movie Maker to create eye-catching professional home movies to share with their friends and relatives. Fortunately the publishers of the series agreed with our vision. Not surprisingly, the book exceeds our expectations as authors, designers, and video editors. It also provides the perfect solution for aspiring independent filmmakers on a tight budget, as well as professionals looking to add pizzazz to their business presentations. After mastering the iMovie and Windows Movie Maker techniques we cover in this book, you will have a firm grasp of basic digital video editing and production techniques. From here, you can easily advance to higher-end post-production video-editing applications and modify these techniques to suit your future goals.

THIS BOOK IS DIFFERENT THAN OTHER DIGITAL VIDEO BOOKS

This book is results oriented. It's not intended to be a standalone reference that covers every feature iMovie or Windows Movie Maker has to offer. Our goal is to provide you with 50 cookbook recipes that you can use to take your home movies or independent productions to the next level. Each technique is task oriented and focuses on a given aspect of the movie-editing process. Each task features detailed step-by-step instructions that show you how to quickly achieve a given task. In addition, we have sprinkled all sorts of essential tips, notes, and creative suggestions throughout. These tips are gems you would never find in a reference manual or traditional how-to book.

In addition to the 50 Fast techniques, this book offers you several extras including the following:

- Detailed illustrations that augment the written steps.
- Thirty-two full-color pages, illustrating the most color-intensive effects.
- Over 50 royalty-free sample clips for each platform are included on the companion CD-ROM in a folder called Clips. We have provided clips in the QuickTime MOV format for iMovie users, and the Windows Media Player WMV format for Windows Movie Maker users. Each clip is 640 x 480 at 30 frames per second to ensure good results while performing each technique. These are the same clips used in each chapter and as such, you can use them to easily follow along with the steps in each technique. Optionally, you can substitute footage that you have captured to follow along with techniques. The book was written in such a way that it works with our clips or yours. When applicable, we tell you what type of footage works best with the technique being presented.
- All of the completed techniques are included as Flash SWF video files on the CD-ROM.
- We've also include trial versions of software and plug-ins for the Macintosh and PC.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK?

This book is for digital video enthusiasts who want to use the nonlinear video-editing software that ships with Macintosh OS X (iMovie) or Windows XP (Windows Movie Maker) to create professional looking movies for home or business. While not a necessity, it is helpful if you have a basic understanding of iMovie (Macintosh OS-X users) or Windows Movie Maker (Windows XP users) before proceeding. If you have not previously explored the powerful features of these applications, you can refer to the application help menu to learn the basics while working through the techniques in this book.

Armed with a basic knowledge of the application, you can use these techniques to add a level of professionalism to your productions that is guaranteed to make you the envy of co-workers, friends, and relatives who view your movies. This book will appeal to you if you need a cookbook of digital video recipes that you can mix and match to create

eye-popping home movies to entertain yourself, friends, and relatives. If you've ever watched a movie or television show and wondered how you could add some of the same razzle-dazzle to your home movies, this is the book for you. In addition, this book is also essential for the professional who wants to incorporate digital video into their business. iMovie and Windows Movie Maker can help you produce stunning video for the Web, and for presentations. Video is fast becoming one of the most popular forms of visual communication in the new millennium. Using iMovie or Windows Movie Maker in concert with our book can get you up and running with this new technology in no time.

WHAT COMPUTER HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE WILL YOU NEED?

The minimum requirements to create home movies in iMovie or Windows Movie Maker are not especially demanding. In fact, if you're already using Macintosh OS X or Windows XP (Home or Professional), your system probably already meets the minimum requirements. However, you'll be happier, and as a result more productive, if your computer features a faster processor and more memory than the minimum requirements for each platform.

Here are the minimum requirements for each platform:

For Windows XP:

- PC with 300 megahertz (MHz) or higher processor clock speed recommended; 233 MHz minimum required (single or dual processor system); Intel Pentium/Celeron family, or AMD K6/Athlon/Duron family, or compatible processor recommended
- 128 megabytes (MB) of RAM or higher recommended (64 MB minimum supported; may limit performance and some features)
- 1.5 gigabytes (GB) of available hard disk space
- Super VGA (800 x 600) or higher-resolution video adapter and monitor
- CD-ROM or DVD drive
- Keyboard and Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device
- A digital (FireWire IEEE 1394) or analog video capture device

For Macintosh:

- Mac OS X v10.1.5 or later
- 400 MHz PowerPC G3 or faster required (700 MHz recommended)

NOTE

You'll get much better performance from your computer while editing digital video with Windows Movie Maker if you add additional memory to your system and upgrade to a faster processor. Your system will be better equipped to handle the demands of digital video editing if you have a 1.0 GHz or faster processor and 512MB RAM. We also recommend that you invest in a large hard drive with a capacity of at least 80GB, as you'll need a lot of available hard disk to capture video. You can augment your internal hard drive with a USB or FireWire hard drive. Both are excellent choices for storing overflow video, however they are too slow to use for capturing video.

- 256MB RAM recommended
2GB of free hard disk space
Macintosh with built-in FireWire ports
- 1,024 x 768 screen resolution or higher QuickTime 6.1 required (download via Software Update)

NOTE

You'll get much better performance from your Macintosh while editing digital video with iMovie if you add additional memory to your system and upgrade to a faster processor. If you plan on making movies that are longer than a minute, we recommend at least 512MB of RAM, if not more. In addition, you should consider investing in a large hard drive with a capacity of at least 80GB, as you'll need a lot of available hard disk to capture video. Make sure the drive is an ATA, UltraATA, or Ultra Wide SCSI, with a minimum spin rate of 7,2000 RPM. USB drives are fine for storage but too slow for capturing. In general, FireWire drives are not recommended for capturing, although they serve as excellent storage devices.

CONVENTIONS USED IN THIS BOOK

In order to make this book as user-friendly as possible, we omitted technical jargon whenever possible. Each technique features information about the videos you'll be using to recreate the technique, as well as "before-and-after" figures to demonstrate the results you can expect when performing this technique. The text is broken down into easy-to-understand steps for each platform. Each example is illustrated with images of the steps you'll be performing with your computer to replicate the technique.

In the first and second chapters, you find techniques that show you how to shoot better home video, as well as techniques for capturing footage to your computer and editing the footage. The last chapter of the book contains information you can use to export your digital video to VHS tape, CD, DVD, and for the Internet. Sandwiched in between are techniques that add polish and panache to your home movies.

We break up each technique into major steps and explain what each step accomplishes. By following the steps and referring to the illustrations, you can reproduce the technique on your computer with the sample clips provided in the Clips folder on the book's accompanying CD-ROM.

In each technique, you are instructed to import the video clips we have provided from the Clips folder of the book's accompanying CD-ROM. Depending on the speed of your CD-ROM drive and computer, this task may take a while. If you have the available hard drive space, we recommend that you copy the sample clips into a folder and import them into the application from there. By doing this, you ensure that the clips import into the application more quickly, plus you'll still have the clips available if you remove the CD-ROM from its drive.

The "About the Video" section of each technique contains information about the equipment used to create the sample clips, as well as information about the settings using to record the video. Throughout the book we present tips, notes, and words of caution based on the experience we have gained editing our own videos.

BONNIE BLAKE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It has been a pleasure working with the Wiley team on such a fun book. Many thanks to Mike Roney who helped our vision for a great book on digital video become a reality. I would also like to thank Tim Borek for his creative insight and direction. Thanks to Beth Taylor and Maureen Spears for your hard work under tight deadlines, and careful scrutiny of our manuscript. Thanks to Laura Moss for keeping on top of the mountain of permissions required for this book. I would also like to express my appreciation and thanks to our friend Margot Maley Hutchinson for all her hard work up front and support from beginning to end.

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DOUG SAHLIN'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Special thanks to the actors who assisted in the sample videos for this book: my good friends Barry Murphy — who in addition to playing a wonderful mystery man in a trench coat is also a talented songwriter and musician; and Larry Decker, a superb triathlete and a world-class human being. A boatload of thanks to my dear friend Cheryl Decker, the quintessence of effervescence and optimism, for getting me a VIP All-access pass to the Great Clermont Triathlon.

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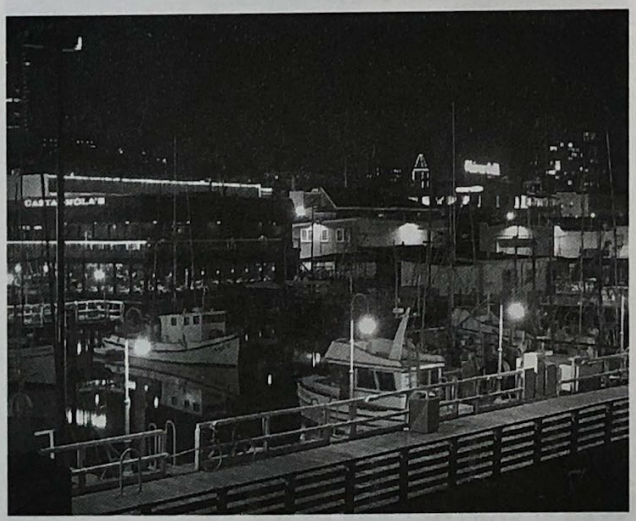

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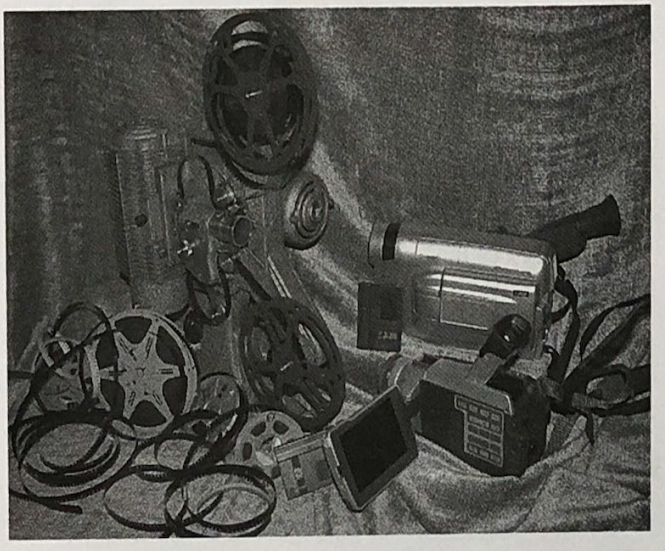

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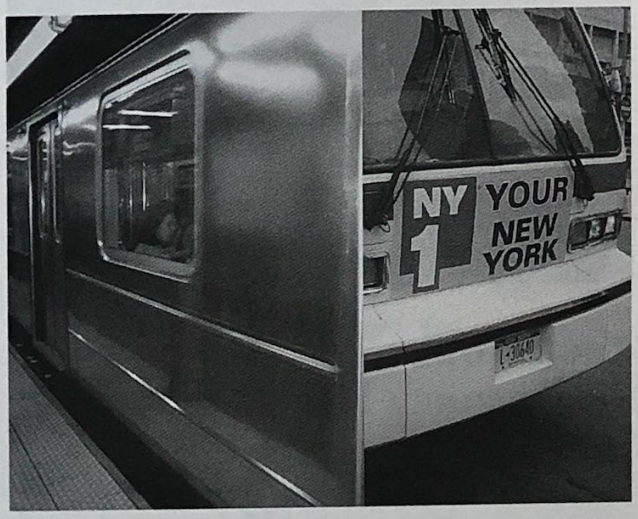

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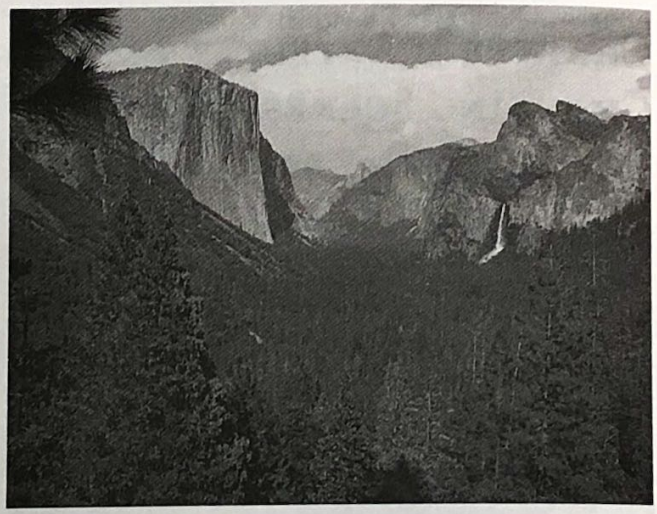

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