

Life changing experience

A blend of creativity and technology create impressionist photography in the studios of Dr. Willem Oets.

Advances in computer technology have resulted in the camera lens being the tip of the iceberg in the creative photographic process. Photoshop and similar computer software take basic photography into the realms of impressionism and perfection, replacing the filters and darkroom work of yesteryear

Most photographers present their subject as it is seen through the lens. There's also a rare breed amongst the professional and weekend photographers that take a quantum leap beyond what is seen by the eye to the creation of an expressive visual image.

Dr. Willem Oets is a member of that rare breed: A perfectionist who has immersed himself in photographic art. His work reached new heights with the advent of the digital camera and Photoshop software.

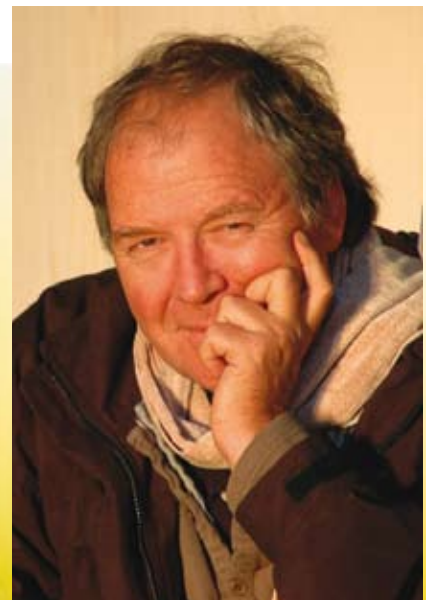
Willem exhibited his enthusiasm for technology in the early days of computers when he developed a spreadsheet for the medicines which he dispensed at his practice. Soon he was providing medi-

cal colleagues with price lists on a floppy disc. Today, his technology business, Medprax employs 12 people and provides a wealth of up-to-the-minute health care data to clients all over SA and Namibia (www.medprax.co.za). He continues to practice medicine in Amamzimtoti.

Computer skills lent strength to Willem's latent artistic talent when he turned his attention to photography in the early 90's. It all started with a photographic workshop in Namaqualand. "My intention was to learn a bit about the camera. It proved to be a life changing experience", he says.

Willem fell in love with the area, purchased land in the Namib and became an instructor at the workshops. He now teaches photography to beginners and professionals there, following in the tradition of his mentors the great Freeman Patterson and Colla Swart.

Willem offers beginner and advanced week-end courses in photography and Photoshop at his Amamzimtoti studio every



Willem Oets

month (www.medimage.co.za). "Many of my students are health professionals with an interest in photography", he says.

Digital photography satisfies Willem's perfectionist nature. "The computer screen has become my canvas", he says. "But film won't die – it is like opera is to music – a niche art form".

Willem's subjects are wide-ranging – from macro photography to flowers, landscapes, people and portraits. The few lucky couples that he



Before Photoshop



After Photoshop

has photographed on their wedding day have a unique reminder of their special day in the form of a limited edition coffee table book illustrated with Willem's amazing photographs.

Surprisingly, Willem had not offered his work for sale until he exhibited at the 2007 "Doctors in Art" exhibition in KZN where he sold all his exhibits.

"I could not find a printer able to achieve the desired end result. Therefore I could not bring myself to offer my photographs for sale", he says. That changed when he purchased

sophisticated printing equipment. He even creates his own printer profiles. Limited editions of his master pieces and certified holographs are now produced on imported art paper and framed by a picture framer who meets Willem's exacting standards.

"Artists are in full control of the creative process, beginning with a blank canvas. The photographer starts with a full canvas in the viewfinder and often has only seconds to recognize, arrange and balance the elements of visual design to make a good photograph. The results of both artist and photographer depend

on their ability to conceptualise what they see onto the canvas", he said.

Master photographer Freeman Patterson put it another way when he said "The key to seeing the world's soul and in the process wakening one's own, is to get over the confusion by which we think that fact is real and imagination an illusion. It is the other way round."

View Willem's website at www.willemoets.com



Magical Moments in Medicine

Claudius Galen (c.130AD – c210AD)

Pillar of medicine in the Greek millennium domination of medicine

Hippocrates and Galen were pillars of Greek medicine. To Hippocrates, medicine was primarily an art. Galen took medicine further into the realms of science. However, his theories were based mainly on Hippocrates' 'four humours' (blood, yellow bile, black bile, phlegm).

Galen was a pathfinder and a topflight scientist in his day. He was a shrewd clinician, competent surgeon and prolific writer. He was convinced that each organ had a purpose and if he could establish that purpose, he would discover how that organ functioned. "Reason finds the answers most quickly, but experience confirms our confidence in them", he said.

The young Alexandria-educated Galen gained immense experience as a physician/surgeon to gladiators at Pergamum (his birthplace). The gladiators experienced terrible injuries so Galen was able to expand his knowledge of living anatomy as well as the applications of hygiene and medicines. This, at a time when dissections of humans was forbidden.



Throughout his life Galen dissected animals in his quest to understand the function of the human body. His surgical endeavours included cataract surgery. Galen is remembered for his complex prescriptions, sometimes containing dozens of ingredients that earned the term 'galenicals'.

The ambitious Galen travelled to Rome to become physician to emperors and their subjects in the Roman Empire. He travelled extensively and his theories dominated European medicine for 1 500 years. It was not until the Renaissance that many of his theories were refuted.

Some of his anatomical and physiological observations were accurate, for example, he proved

that urine was formed in the kidney (as opposed to the bladder as was common belief). His most important discovery was that arteries carry blood, but it took another fourteen hundred years for William Harvey to discover the circulation of the blood. Galen was a prolific writer. His subjects ranged from dietetics, pathology, pharmacy, anatomy and hygiene through to medical philosophy.

The destruction of the library at Alexandria coincided with the end of the Roman empire. Of Galen's 600 books, just 20 survived. These were rescued by Arab physicians who preserved some of the ancient medical texts and, from the 9th century, Galen's work was translated into Arabic on a massive scale.

The end of the Roman empire marked the end of progress in Western medicine and, in particular, surgery, for hundreds of years. It was not until the Renaissance that the knowledge of the ancients was rediscovered, anatomy was accepted and the doors opened to new surgical techniques and practices.