

Digital Distinction

“The photograph is free. The photographer’s expertise? Priceless.”

By Douglas G. Clark

Despite his reverence for old traditions in art and business, master **jewelry photographer** Avi Roth has fully embraced the glory of the digital age.

During a visit to his Pasadena studio, a building he purchased and remodeled in 1994, Roth rhapsodized and lectured about the incredible frontier technology has made available to photographers. “It’s only restricted by one’s imagination,” he said of **digital photography**.

Yet Roth, the founder of Digital Jeweller, is quick to debunk the notion that technology alone can make an image perfect. “The misconception is that everything can be fixed in Photoshop,” said Roth. “But that’s only half true. There are many parts to the equation. Experience and proper equipment are all vital to the outcome, but most of all mastering the understanding of lighting; the ability to perceive and reproduce.”

Roth describes his studio as an encounter between natural and artificial light, which has the capability of offering various specialties. To demonstrate his work, Roth pinned a tiny piece of lovely gold **jewelry** to a blotter clamped to a short, square table in the center of the studio. From a distance it looked like a mere biology specimen.

But when viewed through Roth’s lens and projected on the computer monitor, suddenly the flawless details of the gold piece glistened with a new brilliance: reflections of white and yellow revealed the mingling of platinum and gold, and these deeper dimensions dazzled and seduced the eye.

Born in Transylvania, Roth was introduced to **photography** by an uncle, a portrait photographer who encouraged his nephew’s curious nature. Modest beginnings with an old Kodak Brownie camera sealed Roth’s love of **photography**. To pursue his passion, in 1968 he enrolled at Tel-Aviv Polytechnic. This led to studies at the London Film School, where he graduated with honors in 1974.

The artistic and multilingual Roth also has a keen business sense. For years he honed skills in international marketing and advertising. In London he directed the manufacturing and importing of fine jewelry for Roth Brothers International. And he was a partner with Development Resource Group, of Pasadena, which facilitated strategic international trade alliances in Russia.

And Roth, an award-winning commercial **photographer** also with extensive credits in fashion, industrial, and entertainment, also enjoys a non-**jewelry** related client list that includes corporations such as ARCO, JC Penny, Lorimar International, Sears, and Aaron Bros., to name a few. “Well photographed images are the least expensive and best performing ‘sales associates’ you’ll ever have,” he said.

Regardless of his long list of past accomplishments, Roth continues to look to the future. After demonstrating his skill with **jewelry photography**, Roth met with a new client, Val Kolton, the CEO of V-Moda. Next summer Kolton’s company will introduce a fashionable line of iPod earphones, which he hopes will be worn like **jewelry**. As Roth considered the best way to photograph the sleek component, Kolton explained why he had called on a **jewelry photographer**.

“We had some bad luck with other photographers. We decided we needed to represent our products like **jewelry** – and luckily we discovered Avi on the Internet,” he said.

When asked what it takes to become a master **jewelry photographer**, Roth said, “Beyond technical skills and the experience one acquires over the years, it takes a deep fundamental understanding of the **jewelry** profession. But most importantly, it takes passion, creativity, and an aesthetic sense.”