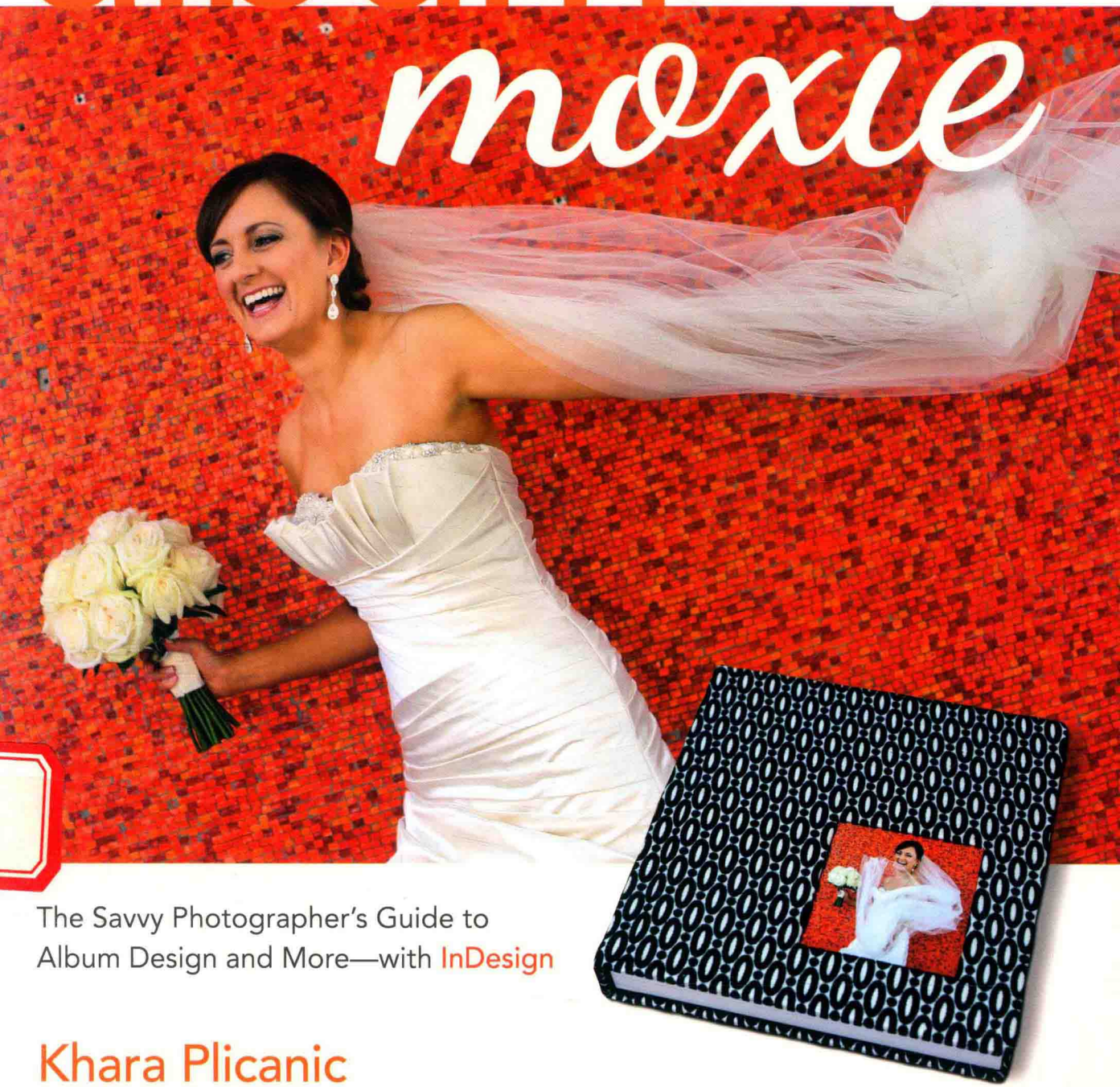
album moxie



The Savvy Photographer's Guide to Album Design and More—with InDesign

Khara Plicanic

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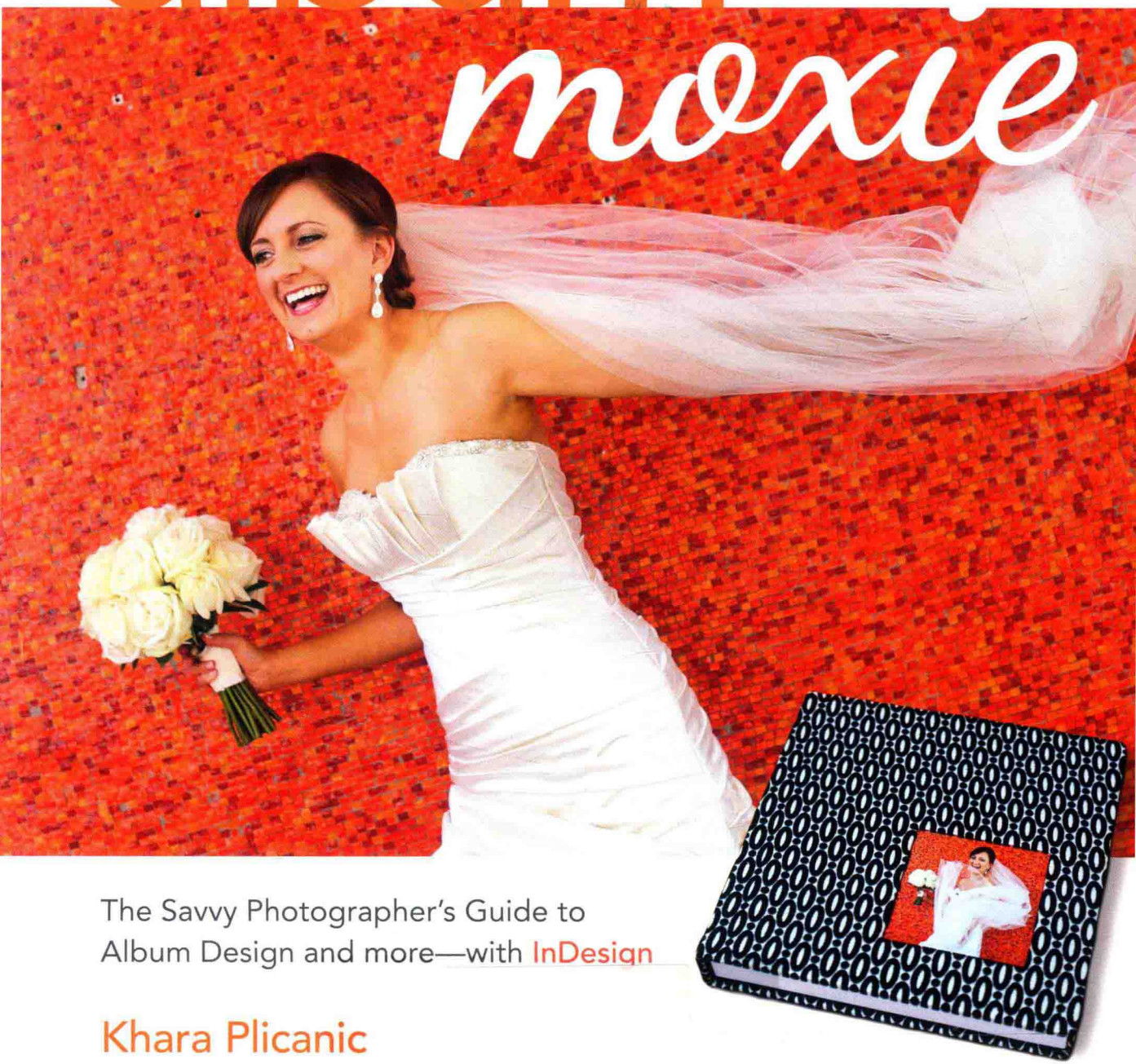

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For photographers in search of a better way.

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And to my family who stood by my side while I pushed through yet another labor of love—you're the best. I love you.

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introduction

The word *"moxie"* is defined as: *force of character, determination, or nerve.*

And that's exactly what it takes to create *truly significant* change of any kind, which includes launching a new business, developing a new product, or overhauling your album workflow.

Trying new things and making big, sweeping changes can feel overwhelming and risky at first, but sometimes, the bigger risk is sticking to the status quo.

Speaking of risk, at the risk of sounding overly dramatic, *Album Moxie* could actually *change your life.*

I say that with confidence because I've seen it happen time and time again. Comments like, "I can't believe how much easier this is!" or "Why did I wait so long to give this a try?" routinely find their way to my inbox and always make me smile. My personal favorites, however, are the many along the lines of, "This has truly changed my life."

As photographers, we often feel our businesses *are* our lives. When things aren't humming along smoothly, the stress can easily carry over into our personal lives as well. For a lot of photographers, album design is part of the problem. Even during the off-season, albums can pile up quickly, stressing us out, and feeling like they drag on *endlessly*.

Upon closer inspection, I've found that in general, we (as photographers and as members of the human species in general) tend to unnecessarily overcomplicate a *lot* of things, and album design is no exception. This book will help you *simplify*.

Drawing from a big ol' heap of moxie, we'll boldly simplify the tools, goals, and even the overall *process* of album design. By the end of the book, in addition to having two finished albums, you'll have an effective plan for strategically dealing with albums from start to finish, as well as a firm grasp of InDesign, which can dramatically simplify your life in and of itself (especially if you've only ever used Adobe Photoshop).

So muster up your inner moxie, and let's do this!

The Plan

As you embark on becoming more savvy with Adobe InDesign and working through *Album Moxie*, keep the end in mind. In this case, the end is a happy you, with an album workflow that's not only under control, but *delightfully* so. In fact, you may find yourself actually *enjoying* albums again (and the profits that come with 'em!). Here's how we'll get from point A to B:

- **Chapter 1** examines the roadblocks and bottlenecks that exist in most album design workflows because a *defined* a problem is already half solved! On the flip side, we'll also talk about what makes albums so darn awesome and the advantages that they can have for your workflow—and your bottom line.
- **Chapter 2** breaks down the overall process of album design, covering everything from what you choose to offer your clients to selecting a vendor to work with. Avoiding future headaches starts here!
- **Chapter 3** goes over the best tools for getting the job done, and some of the answers may surprise you. (Hint: Photoshop is an image-editing program and was never intended to design multipage documents!) InDesign is crucial to the process and you'll quickly see why!
- **Chapter 4** gives you a brief introduction to InDesign while sticking to familiar territory in Photoshop. Combining some InDesign basics with a Photoshop action, you'll learn how to make entire albums (featuring a single image per page) with one simple click—in *seconds*!

- **Chapter 5** helps you feel at home in InDesign by going over preferences and workspace setup. Learning your way around immediately ups your comfort level, making it easy to tackle new and exciting things.
- **Chapter 6** covers how to set up a new document. Though you can always make changes to your document setup later, you'll reap infinite benefits from understanding how to properly set it up from the beginning.
- **Chapter 7** walks you through an *entire* 20-page album design! You'll pick up new InDesign skills with each and every spread, learning all kinds of great tips and tricks along the way. This is a seriously hands-on chapter; you'll walk away with real skills and a real album!
- **Chapter 8** keeps the ball rolling with step-by-step instructions for trouble-shooting, retouching, and exporting the album you designed in Chapter 7. When you're finished, you'll be ready to place your order!
- **Chapter 9** gives you tons of great resources to keep the party going. Learning how to *use* design software is great and all, but to maximize your potential, you'll want to learn more about *design* itself. That includes the basic principles and fun subtopics like typography and color theory.
- **Chapter 10** contains some bonus ideas about using InDesign for blogging and adding value to the client experience (and your marketing) with fun things like Facebook Timeline covers!

By the time you're finished, you'll not only have two finished designs that you can reuse and draw from over and over again (one, a simple album featuring a single image per page, and the other a full-scale custom design), but you'll also have a big-picture strategy in place, and a boatload of new skills to boot. (Pretty exciting, if I do say so myself!)

Who Should Read This Book?

Whether you're a seasoned pro who has been designing albums for a zillion years and are just looking to tighten things up, or you're totally new to the game and have no clue where to start—this book is a game changer.

We'll tackle the what, why, and how of album design, redefining the traditional process from the ground up. Plus, you'll see why InDesign is crucial to the whole process and how it can save you from feeling like you're drowning.

What? You're totally new to InDesign? Never opened it before? Not to worry, I've been expecting you. Come on in, grab a seat, and make yourself comfortable! InDesign is the glue that holds this whole process together and I'll walk you through the basics from the very beginning. There's nothing to worry about, it's all simple stuff.

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1

the buck stops here

It's true. Dealing with albums can be a serious pain in the you-know-what.

And if you've picked up this book, you may already be on the brink of swearing off them for good.

But there's a part of you (albeit, maybe only a teeny, tiny small part) that doesn't want to fold just yet. Somewhere deep down inside, there's a part of you that *knows* there must be a better way. There *has* to be, right?

There *is*.

Getting your album design and workflow under control once and for all is likely easier than you think. And the payoffs can be *huge*. (Who doesn't want that?)

No More Excuses

But before we overhaul the entire process from top to bottom, it's helpful to understand why the current system most people use (if they actually have one) is such a train wreck. That means taking an honest look at what the specific problems are so we can tackle them head-on.

Some of what we uncover won't be pretty. And in most cases, the blame may land squarely on your own two shoulders—which is actually pretty awesome, because it means the power to change is entirely under your own control.

So if you're serious about making a change, the buck stops here. No more excuses. You can totally rock this.

What's Not to Love?

Albums make our clients happy, increase our revenue, and offer us the professional satisfaction that comes with delivering a finished product. But all too often, these things get trumped by a handful of small thorns in our otherwise album-loving sides.

Consider the most common reasons people struggle with albums.

They Can Be a Massive Time Commitment

Ask your fellow photographer friends how long it takes them to build an album, and you're likely to get answers that range from four to eight hours *per book*. In some cases, I've had people tell me it takes them upwards of 30 hours. Yikes. No wonder they feel like swearing off albums completely!

Add up all those hours and for a lot of photographers, the time commitment associated with albums not only makes them a major drag, but also makes them really, *really* expensive to produce—often prohibitively so. And that's not even counting the material costs of the book itself.

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