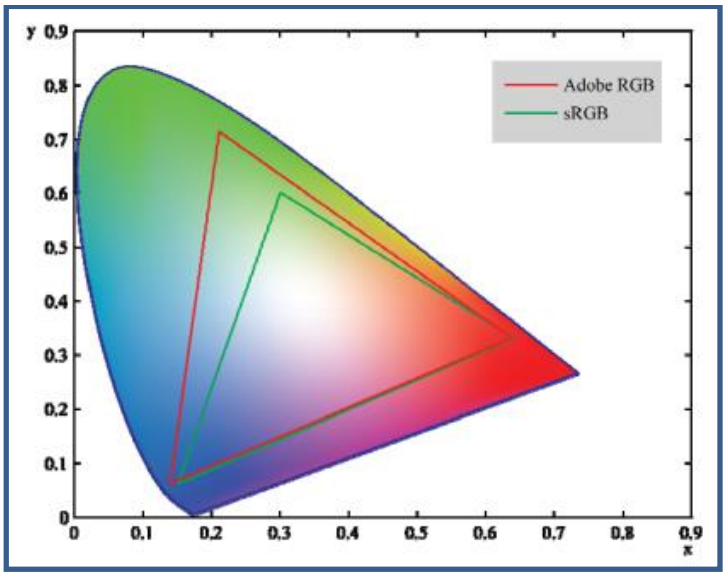
Mysteries of Photography #12: Is sRGB all that bad?

In Mysteries #11, I discussed the origins and limitations of the common colorspace standards common in photography, sRGB and Adobe RGB.

Just to remind you, this diagram represents the limits of human colour perception and the range of colours encompassed by these two colorspaces. sRGB is in green and Adobe RGB in red.

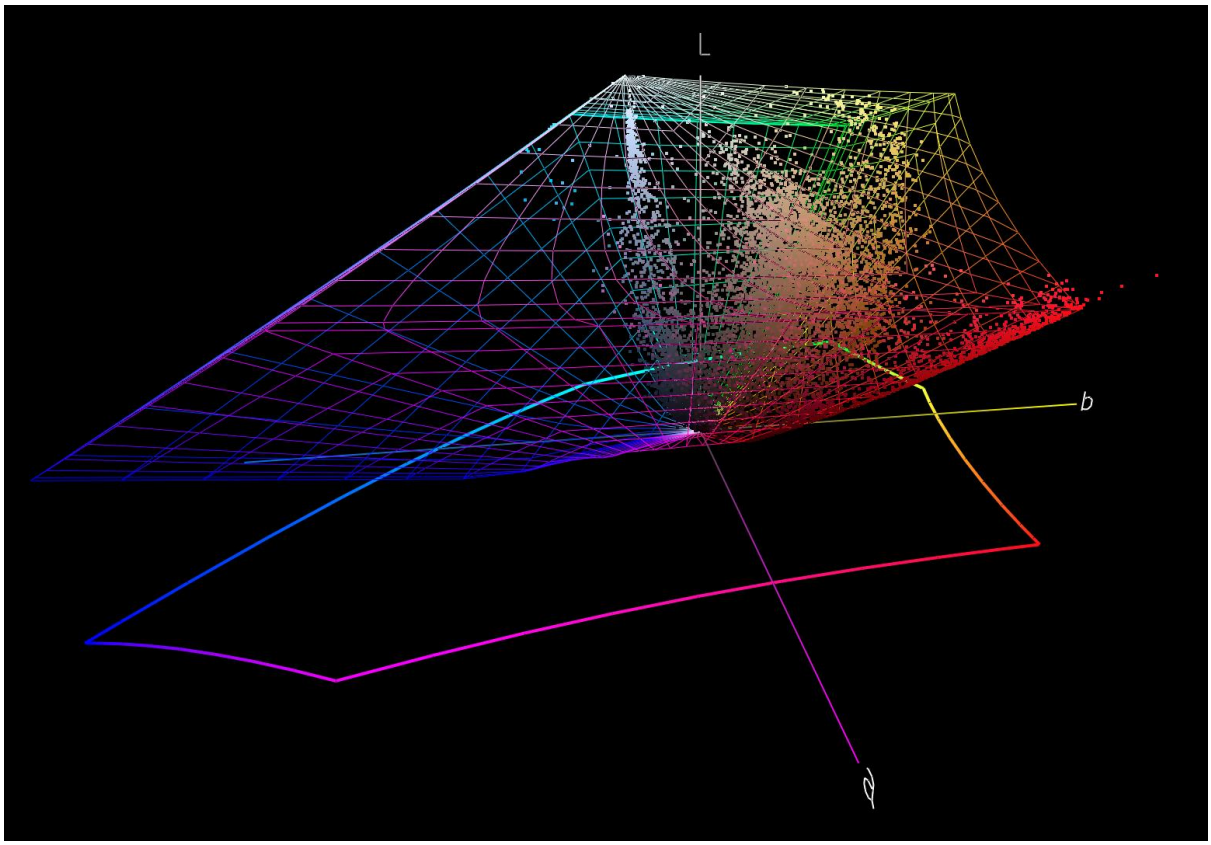


Both cover only part of what we can perceive with sRGB being significantly smaller than Adobe RGB. But, in the real world of photography, is the sRGB colorspace all that bad?

Let's take this highly coloured image that was shot in RAW and exported as Adobe RGB and see how its components go in sRGB.

I have used Colorthink2 to compare the colours covered by sRGB with the colours in individual pixels in this Adobe RGB image with a 3D graph. sRGB colorspace is shown as the

wireframe and the dots are from the above image. There is a little bit of a spatter of red dots outside sRGB but surprisingly little.



So maybe sRGB isn't that bad after all.

Console yourself with that thought when you export your RAW images into sRGB for competitions. Trying to sneak in images in Adobe RGB (with colours that are out of gamut in sRGB) into a competition that specifies sRGB is extreme unlikely to give you an advantage and may result in your images looking worse than if you exported them in sRGB.

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