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Discover the best selection methods to combine photos

DRAMATIC LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Conjure up this storm using powerful adjustments

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- Paint digital watercolour
- Go from camera to canvas
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HOW TO MAKE POP ART WITH FILTERS

Stunning portrait effects with simple editing tricks

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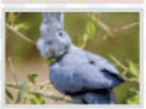
Discover the latest artwork from the Gallery on page 6

Welcome

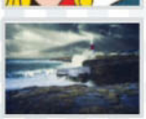
5 THINGS YOU WILL LEARN THIS ISSUE

01 Unleash masks
Blend together this wild composition with help from layer masks and adjustments



02 Animal hybrids
Dare to create your own animal hybrid? Start with this combination of a rabbit and a bird!

03 Make pop art with filters
Understand how filters and layers can work together to create this pop art masterpiece



04 Dramatic landscape effects
Control the weather and turn this sunny setting into a thunderstorm composition

05 Compose a photo collage
Discover new and interesting ways to show off your photos with a themed collage

We are always being caught out by the insufficient quality of smart phone photography, although incredibly accessible and convenient. That's why this issue's feature has come to light, showing you just how important the camera is to image editing inside Photoshop. Turn to p12 for more. Or, head straight to the tutorials and learn how to use masks in a creative way. Turn to p28 to find out how to create an animal hybrid composite, and learn to paint with our easy-to-follow guide to watercolour on p52. Our beginners' pages are a great place to start learning Photoshop, offering up a selection of helpful guides; some of which include ways to control light and exposure, and making a digital corkboard display. Happy editing!

Simon Skellon **Deputy Editor**
simon.skellon@imagine-publishing.co.uk

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 18 SEPTEMBER 2014!

Contents

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Q&A
Your Photoshop questions answered
P90

Visit the **Photoshop Creative** online shop at
imagineshop.co.uk
for back issues, books and merchandise

Essentials

06 Readers' gallery
See what your fellow readers have been creating in Photoshop

10 Readers' challenge
Your chance to win a photo-editing plug-in worth £30!

12 Feature: From Camera to Canvas
Take your best images in camera and edit with ease in Photoshop

22 Tutorials
Your creative learning starts with a masking masterclass

82 Reviews
We put a host of creative products to the test, including a mini camera

88 Subscribe
Never miss an issue when you have it delivered (US readers p66)

90 Q&A essentials
Your Photoshop Elements, CS and CC problems solved

98 Expert interview
We catch up with digital artist Mark Goh about his images

Top tips

40 Five of the best
A round-up of five of the must-have gadgets

60 Top ten
Blending tips revealed for composing better scenes

12

FROM
CAMERA TO CANVAS

Capturing images that are just right for Photoshop is no walk in the park. We reveal the essentials for taking better photos, then editing effects

Readers' gallery

06

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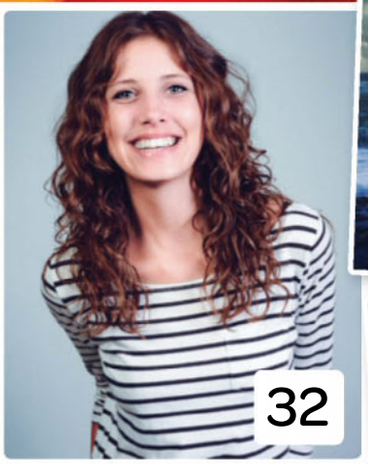

Tutorials

22 **Unleash masks**
Bring your images to life using layer masks and adjustments

28 **Create an animal hybrid**
Blend two animals into one image using the clone tools

32 **Correct skin tone in portraits**
Retouch and spruce up a portrait image quickly

36 **Make pop art with filters**
Discover the techniques behind a pop art effect

42 **Transform your cityscapes**
Light up a city image with layer styles and brushes

46 **Dramatic landscape effects**
Change the weather by creating your own storm effect

52 **Paint digital watercolour**
Learn to paint a watercolour scene the easy way

56 **Get the letterpress look**
Design an authentic letterpress print effect

62 **Compose a photocollage**
Create themed collages using a collection of photos

Photoshop for beginners

New to Photoshop? Check out our introductory guide

68 **The Brush tool**
Discover what this powerful tool can do in Photoshop

70 **Create a display**
Lay out a corkboard display inside Elements

74 **Sharpen images**
Make image detail pop with these easy-to-follow tips

76 **Manipulate light**
Improve the lighting in your images for better results

80 **Creative colours**
Give yourself a new look by changing hair and eye colour

READERS' IMAGES

Welcome to an inspirational round-up of great Photoshop artwork created by none other than your fellow readers

Eduardo Barboza

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Eduardo_Bass

"A scene from Greek mythology where the God of the Sea attacks a ship. Made in Photoshop with manipulation techniques."

"The picture was based on an animal wearing armour, which had an epic theme."

IMAGE OF THE MONTH

Michael Norris

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Mike

"Using a photo as a reference, I sketched some face detail using the Pen tool then added paint splats in layers. I tweaked the colours using Saturation."

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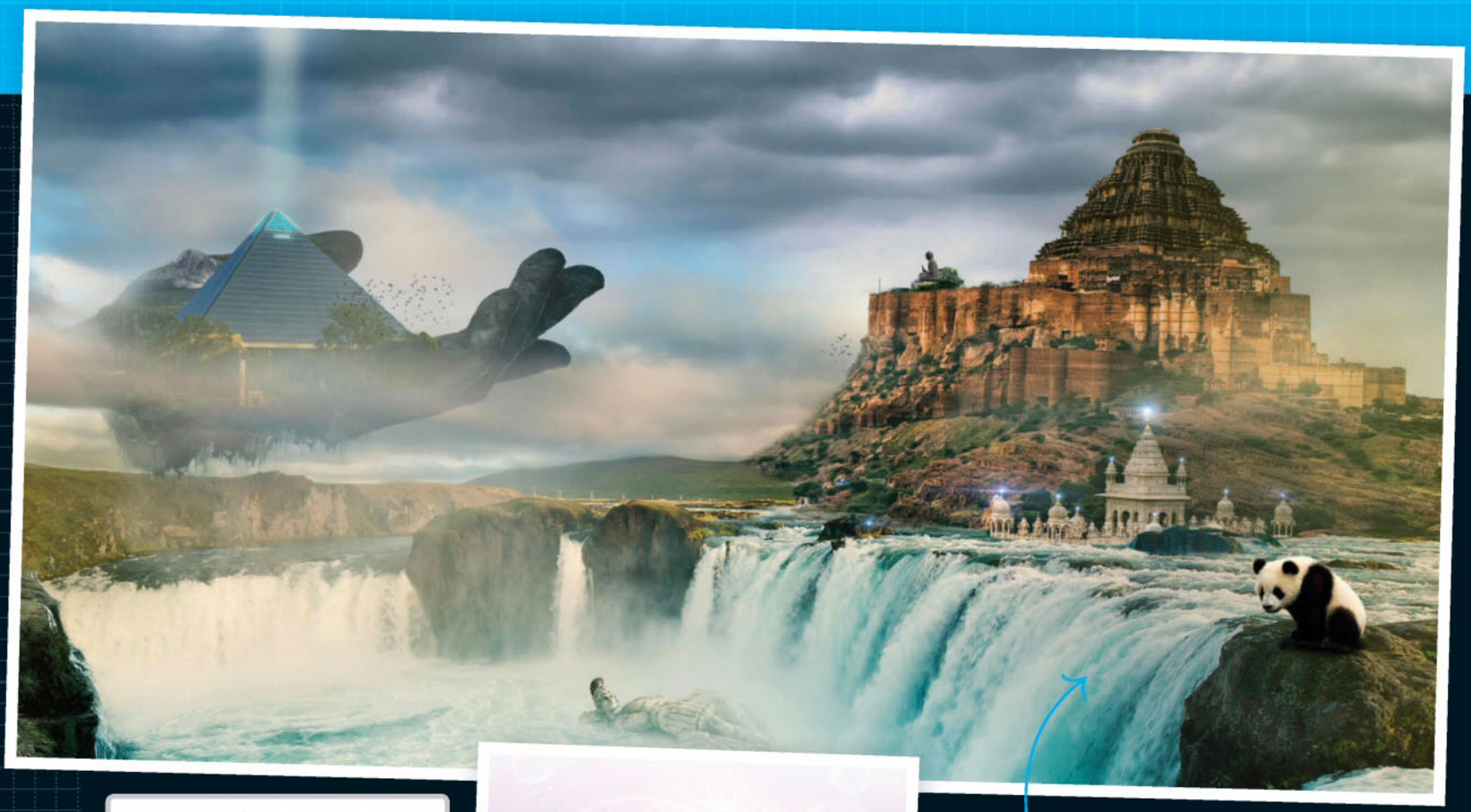
Anna Przybylska
www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/zwyklaania

"This effect was created in a very simple way, using a grass texture I already had and a clipping mask. Then grass brushes and other elements of the composition, such as birds and butterflies, were added at the end."

Thomas Lennon
www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/LittleTimmy

"I created this image by applying layer masks and taking an abstract outlook in my creativity. For me, colours are just as important as the image, and the overall look and feel really stands out with the colours being used. I always take great pride and meticulous attention when creating something in Photoshop."



SJ Lykana

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/SJ_Lykana

"I used a tablet and stylus to paint over the model, changing hair colour, adding body art, wings and a headdress. I then drew a bubble, inserted the elephant photo and added a splash. Finally using a series of customised shapes and brushes, I painted in the background."

"After preparing and positioning the model and the crab, I painted over them using my tablet. I completely changed the hairstyle, customised the clothing and added body art. The background was painted using customised shapes and brushes and some experimentation with blend modes."

Alex Ch-V

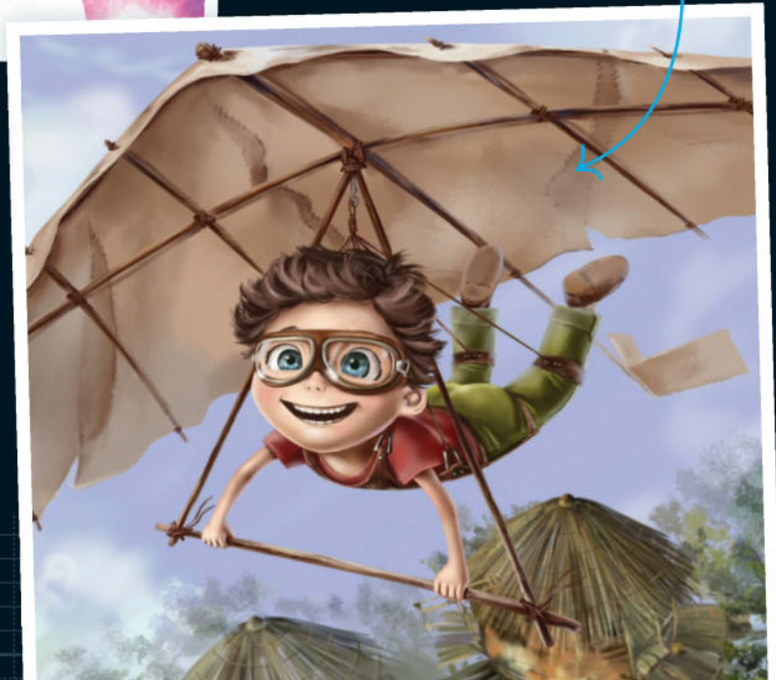
www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Knightroad

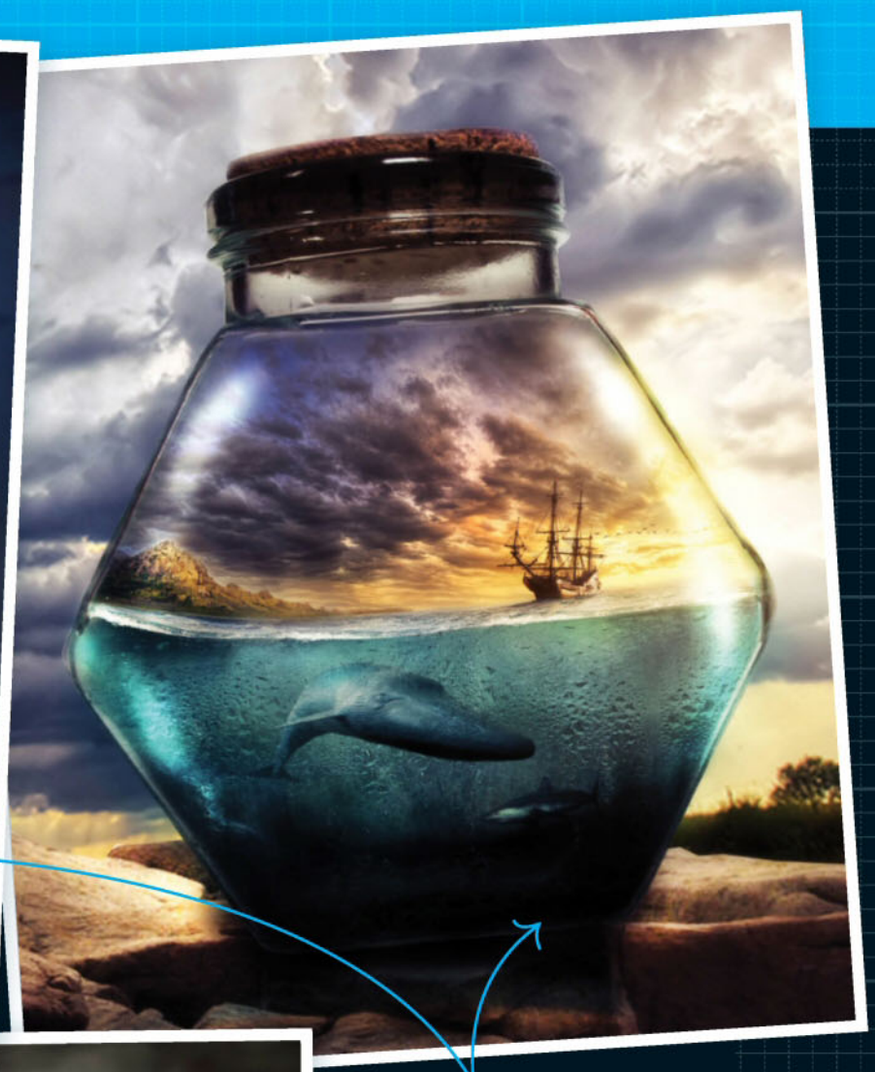
"I used several stock images and blend modes to create my stone hand. From there my environment is based on three stock images of waterfalls that were masked out and blended together."

Lorri Kajenna

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Kajenna

"This is a message to children that a life not spent in front of the computer is exciting. All you need to do is just switch on your imagination and see how many things you're able to do."





Fábio Danielato

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Binho

"I took almost all the saturation and brightness out, to give more prominence to the lighting and reflections in the samurai."

"I decided to create this image after seeing a video on YouTube that inspired me. I looked for images, added textures and some sparkles to the edges."

Lisa Davies

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Lisa90

"I took a picture of my boyfriend sitting on a table. I then took a picture of the cow ornament. I added shadows and highlights with Dodge and Burn. For the colours I used the Curves and Selective Color adjustments."

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READERS' CHALLENGE

Upload your images to **photoshopcreative.co.uk**

Challenge entries

The best entries and overall challenge winner

1 Corine Spring

In My Head

"The construction of the background with grunge textures, and giving the face a mask, was the basis of the piece, followed by integration of the various elements to create the scene."

2 Iain Pointer

A Weird Dream

"Driving along a country road in a strange dream..."

3 Bart Giusto

Trapped in Time

"Our young lady is trapped in time. She's happy to be part of the present while appreciating the past. My image of Stonehenge made the perfect pedestal for time and space."

4 Tricia Parry

Women

"I assembled a selection of women portraits and cut them out and built the background and shapes around them, tweaking with adjustment layers."

Simon Skellon

"Corine has created an incredible image. We are especially fond of the flying telephone booths!"

Readers' Challenge WINNER

Download our images

Think you can do better? Prove it!

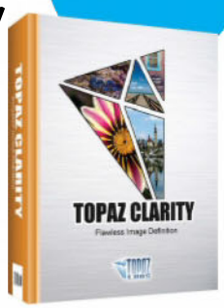
Get creative with the images on your disc and you could win a fantastic prize! You can use as many of the images as you like (from previous issues too!) and include your own photos if you wish. Just head over to **www.photoshopcreative.co.uk** and hit the Challenge link. Good luck!

THE PRIZE

WORTH £30!

Topaz Clarity worth £30!

Enter our challenge and you could win this photo enhancing plug-in by Topaz Labs, called Clarity. This can bring a new level of detail to all of your images in just a few clicks by using a number of clever adjustments and easy-to-apply presets for any situation.



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FROM CAMERA TO CANVAS

Editing images is one thing; taking a photo specifically for this purpose is another. Discover how to shoot and create your best-ever images, then share them with those around you

TAKE PHOTOS READY FOR EDITING

Great Photoshop edits and composites start in the camera, as we explain in this guide

There is a big difference between taking a photo and calling upon Photoshop to improve it, and taking a photo with the sole intention of using Photoshop to turn it into something greater or even something completely different.

If you are planning on getting creative in Photoshop, then the key rule to remember is that you can't out-edit a bad photo. If there is loss of detail due to over- or underexposure, bad blurring, or little distinction between foreground and background, then you are going to struggle to use Photoshop in the way that you want. Use these tips to avoid taking wasted shots.

EXPERT TIP

Take more than one

Don't put all your eggs in one basket. You might capture the perfect scene, get home and find that someone or something has ruined the shot. Take a couple of photos in succession so you can choose the best ones to use in Photoshop when you get home.

AVOID PHOTO APPS

If you take a great picture on your phone that you later want to use in Photoshop, don't process it through photo apps or Instagram, unless you keep the original as a separate file. While these apps create great effects, they also reduce the image quality and file size, so you will have less to work with in Photoshop. Save the special effects for your computer.

HEDGE YOUR BETS

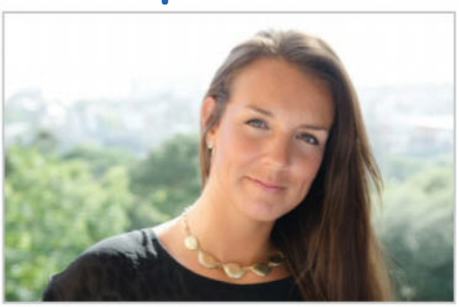
Don't give yourself extra editing tasks; take multiple shots to avoid distractions such as people creeping into the frame.

Photograph for Photoshop

The key considerations when snapping shots

Landscapes

01 Landscapes make for great backgrounds, especially with composites, and you want them as clean as possible. The sky can make all the difference, so the brighter or more dramatic it is the better. Use a tripod if you can, to ensure that there is no blur.



Portraits

02 When taking photos of people for Photoshop, you want your subject to be looking at the camera and evenly lit as much as possible – harsh shadows will make it harder to edit or compose into a new scene. Natural light is best, as it doesn't introduce colour casts.

Close-ups

03 Ensure the subject is pin-sharp against what will likely be a blurry background. If you want to cut out the object, make sure that there is a clear distinction from the background (which is preferably as even and simple as possible) and that it is fully in the frame.

SHOOT BETTER IMAGES FOR PHOTOSHOP

Discover the best camera tricks for improving your images and effects in Photoshop

It's easy to get into the 'I'll fix it in Photoshop later' mentality, but just imagine the results from editing a fantastic start image. You don't have to be a keen photographer to get better results in-camera either; simple adjustments to your camera settings can have a big impact. Move away from the Auto mode; selecting the right shooting mode is a good habit to get into. This will enable you to take more control over the outcome of your captures, whether you're keen to blur out distracting backgrounds or ensure sharper shots of moving subjects. Check out our top tips and hands-on advice to help you get started.

EXPERT TIP

Get to grips with settings

Scene modes are a great starting point to get out of using Auto all the time. For more control over creative effects, check out the semi-automatic modes. Aperture priority and shutter priority will enable you to adjust two of the most important exposure settings.

CRAFT THE SHOT

Creating this depth of field in Photoshop would take time, but picking the right mode in-camera saves any hassle.

THE RIGHT RESOLUTION

High-resolution images are guaranteed with RAW files, but when shooting in JPEG you'll have the choice to select between high or low resolution. Low resolution may seem like an unusual choice, but it's great if you're keen to share images online straight from the camera. But you will have less to work with if you choose to edit or even print the images later on.

Take control of aperture Capture shots in-camera to enhance in Photoshop

Adjust aperture

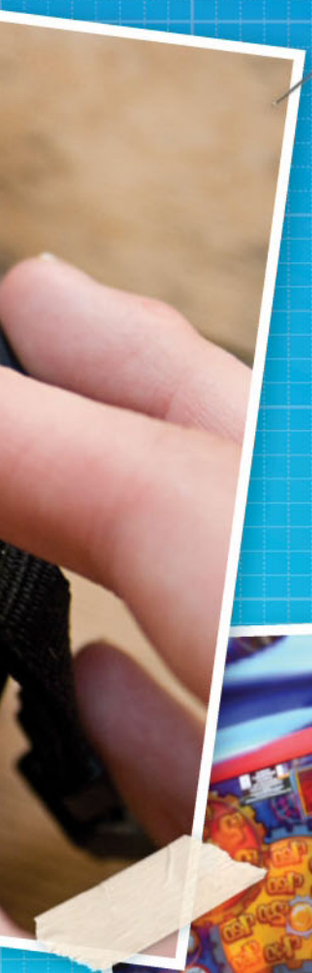
01 Softening the background will ensure your subject stands out. To do this, select the aperture priority mode and input a wide aperture setting (small f-number) between f2.8-f5.6. The camera will take care of the shutter speed so that your shots are correctly exposed.

Keep a low ISO

02 ISO increases the camera's sensitivity to light, which is useful if you're shooting indoors or at night, as it will brighten up your shots. However, high ISO settings can introduce noise that's difficult to remove in Photoshop. To avoid this ensure your ISO is low (80-200).

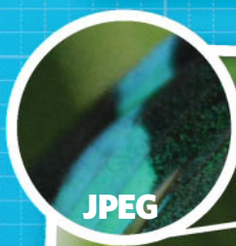
Control focus

03 Ensure you've focused on your subject, as this can't be corrected in Photoshop. This is particularly important when using wide apertures, as the rest of the image will be blurred. Select single AF or One Shot mode and position the focus point on your subject.



FOCUS CORRECTLY

An out-of-focus image is irreparable in Photoshop, so it's imperative that you focus correctly in-camera at all times. Many cameras now offer a selection of focusing modes that suit a whole host of situations so there's no reason to get it wrong. For moving subjects, select Continuous AF (AI Servo), which will lock focus and then track your subjects to ensure they remain in focus until you're ready to shoot. Single AF mode is great for stationary subjects, and you can position the focus point almost anywhere in the frame. Some cameras even offer Face Detection AF, which is ideal for portraits as it guarantees your model's face and features are kept sharp.



RAW VS JPEG FILES

The file formats you choose to shoot in can have a big impact on your editing abilities. Most cameras give you the option of RAW or JPEG, with the exception of smartphones and some compact cameras. JPEG files are a popular choice as they take up less room on your memory card. But in order to keep them small your camera will compress the image, so it won't hold as much information as a RAW file. Each time you edit a JPEG its quality and size will reduce, which is why uncompressed RAW files are better for editing. With these, you can enhance things you didn't get quite right in the camera, such as exposure and white balance, without reducing the quality of the original image.

Experiment with shutter speed

Get pin-sharp shots when shooting for Photoshop

Adjust shutter speed

01 It's important to get sharp shots in-camera. Select shutter priority mode on your camera's mode dial and input a fast shutter speed (1/125sec or above). The camera determines the correct aperture.

Steady your camera

02 Keeping your camera steady is important, so either position it on a flat surface or invest in a tripod. Screw the tripod plate onto the bottom of your camera and ensure the legs are on steady ground.

Use self-timer

03 Use a remote shutter or your camera's self-timer once it's on a tripod. You can adjust how long it takes for the self-timer to shoot in your camera's menu. Ensure you've focused correctly first.

WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOS

Give your images a professional edge without having to buy a professional camera

Lighting can be tricky. Photos can be too dark, have a weird colour cast, or simply be flat, all leaving your images a bit weak. Even if your lighting is perfect you can't always account for blemishes in the photo, or these wonky horizons that seem to suddenly appear. This section is all about retouching and honing your Photoshop skills, so that even if your camera lets you down your photos still have that professional look.

REMOVE BLEMISHES
There are many ways to remove blemishes. Try the Spot Healing Brush, Heal, Patch or Clone Stamp tools and you'll soon find which ones suit the situation.

QUICKLY CORRECT COLOURS

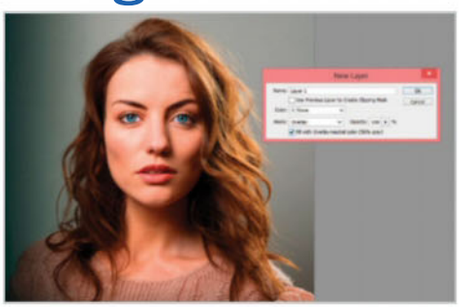
If a photo has incorrect colours, instead of using Auto Color try adding a Curves adjustment layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves). In Curves you'll see three eyedropper icons: black, grey and white. Selecting one and picking part of your photo will correct the colours so the point matches the eyedropper. So if you know something's meant to be grey, click on it with the grey eyedropper and the rest will fall into place.

EXPERT TIP

Sharpen your image

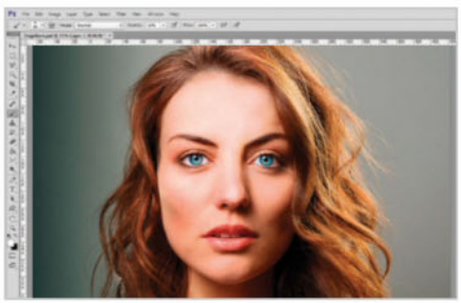
Combine a filter with blend modes to sharpen photos. With your image open, duplicate the layer and set the blend mode to Vivid Light. Go to Filter>Other>High Pass and drag the slider between 2 and 4px, or whatever works best. Hit OK to finish.

Dodge and burn Make non-destructive enhancements to shadows and highlights



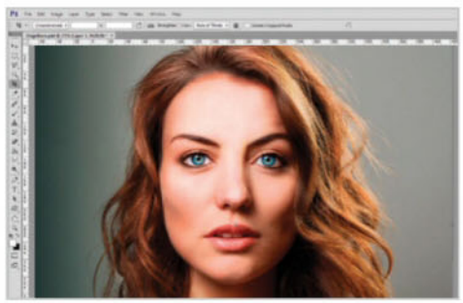
Create a grey layer

01 Open your image and create a 50% Gray layer via Layer>New>Layer. Select the blend mode and change it to Overlay and tick the check box to fill it with a neutral colour. Hit OK. This layer will now have no effect on your base image other than to protect it.



Dodge the highlights

02 Select the Brush tool (B) and lower the Opacity to 10-15%. Press D to reset your colours to default, then X to switch white to the Foreground colour. Draw in white on the grey layer to brighten areas such as eyes, forehead or hair highlights.



Burn the shadows

03 Now hit X again to switch to black. Paint with 5-10% Opacity over shadow areas to enhance the depth, for example eye make-up, around the hair line or defining facial features. To reverse any of the effects, simply paint with 50% grey back on the layer.

SIMPLE TIPS FOR GREAT-LOOKING PHOTO EFFECTS

Find quick and easy ways to give your images interesting finishes

Photoshop has loads of filters and adjustments to make your images something special. The key is to experiment. In this section you'll find some tips and steps to get you started, but then it's over to you to get creative. All of these techniques can be applied to any photo from any camera, from holiday snaps to carefully composed pieces. Follow along and see types of effects you can achieve.

EXPERT TIP

Easy black and white

They say black and white captures the soul, and luckily Photoshop has a great adjustment layer that converts photos to black and white in just one easy step. In your Layers palette, click the Create New Fill Or Adjustment icon and simply select Black & White.

ONE-CLICK B&W

Use the Black & White adjustment layer to adjust the tonal variations of the monochrome conversion for the best results.

Create easy retro styles

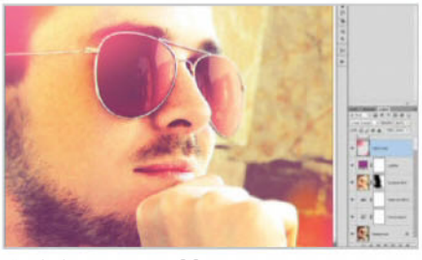
Use these steps to add a vintage effect

Adjust the colour

01 Open your image and add a Curves adjustment layer. Using the RGB drop-down, create an S shape for the Red curve. Repeat with the Green curve and drag a single point down in the Blue. Add a purple Solid Color fill layer (Layer>New Fill Layer> Solid Color) with blend mode set to Lighten.

Wash out the blacks

02 Add a Levels adjustment layer and drag the black Output slider towards the white. Bring in the black slider to around 10-20 to keep contrast. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to create a stamp of the edit.



Add retro effects

03 On the new layer add a 5-7px Gaussian Blur (Filter>Blur> Gaussian Blur). Add a layer mask and paint black where you don't want it blurred. Add a final layer, set to Linear Dodge and paint in red and yellow for faux light leaks.

CREATIVE BLUR EFFECTS

Within the Filter>Blur menu you'll find a host of cool effects you can add to your photos, for example Radial Blur on a central subject, or Motion Blur on an action-packed image. To keep some key areas in focus, duplicate your base photo first with Cmd/Ctrl+J and apply the blur to the top layer. Add a layer mask and paint in black over the subject to keep some areas sharp.

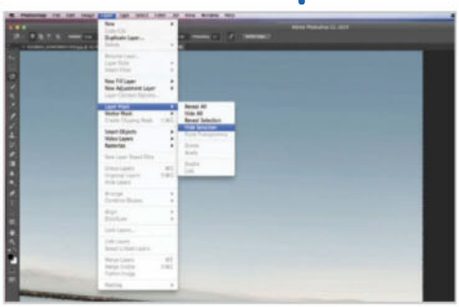
CREATE A COMPOSITE

Blend multiple photos into a new composition for superior images

One of the most common tasks to do in Photoshop is to create a composite. This is simply blending two or more images together so that they look like they belong together. You can start off with something simple, like bringing in a new skyline, and you can build up to complex images with hundreds of layers to create amazing works of art. Using the same techniques, you can call upon compositing to bring pretty much any idea you can conjure up to life.

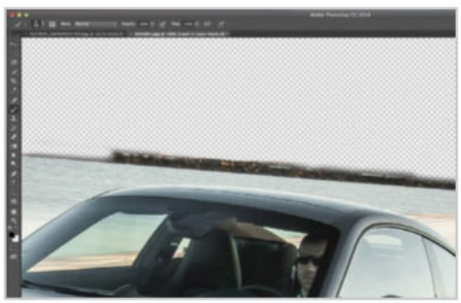
Build a composite

Introduce a new landscape and colour match the scene



Initial selection

01 Open your start image. With your chosen selection tool, you want to make a rough selection of the sky area (we used the Lasso tool); it only has to be rough, as we'll tidy it up in a minute. When you have a selection, go to Layer>Layer Mask>Hide Selection to add a mask.



Tidy the mask

02 Select the mask thumbnail and then choose the Brush tool. Make sure that the Foreground and Background colours are set to default black and white, then paint black to hide and white to reveal. Tidy up the mask so that none of the sky is visible.

Bring in the sky

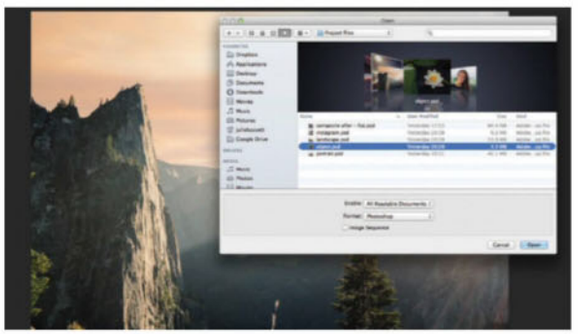
03 Open your sky image. Go to Edit>Select All and then Edit>Copy. Go back into your start image and then Edit>Paste. This will bring in your sky on a new layer. Move the whole layer below the other layer so that the sky sits in the space created by the mask.

WORK ON LAYERS

When you are working on composites that combine a number of images, you should ensure that each element is on its own individual layer. You should also name each layer and keep them organised, so that you can go back in and change things if you need to. Always save your work as you progress, keeping the layered version somewhere safe. You don't want to lose hours of hard work, after all!

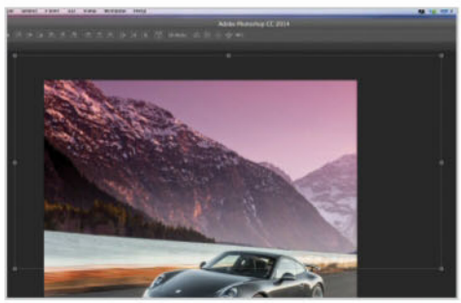
MASTER SELECTIONS

When it comes to composites, a good skill to have under your belt is making a selection. The whole point of a composite is to take bits and pieces from different images and blend them together, and it won't look seamless if the original selections aren't perfect. Practise as many different methods as you can so that you can use the right one for the right image.



STAY ORGANISED

When you are creating composites, the first thing you need to do is make sure that all the required images are in one place. Create a folder for your project on your computer so that you don't have to hunt around to find different images. You'll also want to get all your basic edits done on each image first, so that you can concentrate on your composite.



Move the sky

04 Tick Show Transform Controls in the Options bar. Hold down Shift and drag the corner handles to enlarge the sky to fill the space. Hover over the bottom-right corner handle until a rotation arrow appears. Drag to twist the sky to match the perspective.

Change the colour

05 Hold down Cmd/Ctrl and click on the layers mask thumbnail, which will select the area. Add a Color Balance adjustment layer with the mask attached to isolated layer. Move the slider towards Magenta and a little Red to match the sky colouring.

EXPERT TIP

Keep it editable

For composites it pays to work in a non-destructive manner, using masks and adjustment layers. Often, when you come back to a composite after a few days, you see little bits that just aren't right and you can go in and perfect them without losing your original work.

EXPERT TIP

Back up on the cloud

There are a number of free and affordable cloud storage providers online that enable you to upload multiple image files for sharing and storing. It's a great way to back up your images after editing, and what's more, you can conveniently access your images via Wi-Fi.

SHARE YOUR SHOTS ONLINE

Discover different ways to back up and share your photos with friends and family

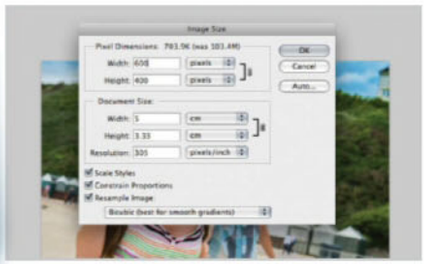
It's easier than ever to share your shots with others online, and some cameras even enable you to do it instantly after capture thanks to built-in Wi-Fi technology. Uploading images to social networks, or image hosting sites, is a great way to share memories with family and friends on the go, as well as back up and store your shots remotely. It's always important, however, that you prepare images properly for the web so that they are correctly sized and of a good quality to view. Check out our top tips for sharing and resizing your shots.

WI-FI TRANSFERS

It's now easier to transfer images straight from your camera to your computer for editing wtih Wi-Fi technology. Many new cameras offer built-in Wi-Fi that simplifies the process for you, but there are even Wi-Fi-enabled memory cards on the market that are ideal if your camera doesn't meet the specs. Most Wi-Fi-capable cameras will even allow you to upload images directly online after capture, bypassing the editing process.

Resize shots for the web

Ensure captures are correctly sized for online



Adjust image size

01 Once you've edited your image, go to Image>Image Size and in the dialog box ensure that Constrain Proportions is ticked. Now input 600 pixels into the Width box under Pixel Dimensions and click OK.

Save for web

02 To save the now smaller image specifically for the web, go to File>Save for Web & Devices. In the dialog box ensure you select to save the image as a JPEG, which will compress the file.

Maintain quality

03 To ensure the image still appears good quality online, select the Very High option. You can also adjust the Quality slider, with 80 being a good option. Ensure Convert to sRGB is selected and click Save.

PRINT YOUR PHOTOS

Create lasting keepsakes of your favourite photos by printing them out at home

Although there are many great online printing services, it can be frustrating having to wait days for the photos to arrive on your doorstep. Printing at home is much more straightforward and quicker to do; it can be affordable, too. What's more, you can optimise your photos for print using Photoshop, so once you've finished editing you can get professional-quality prints in a matter of moments. See our tips below for some guidance on how to get great print results.

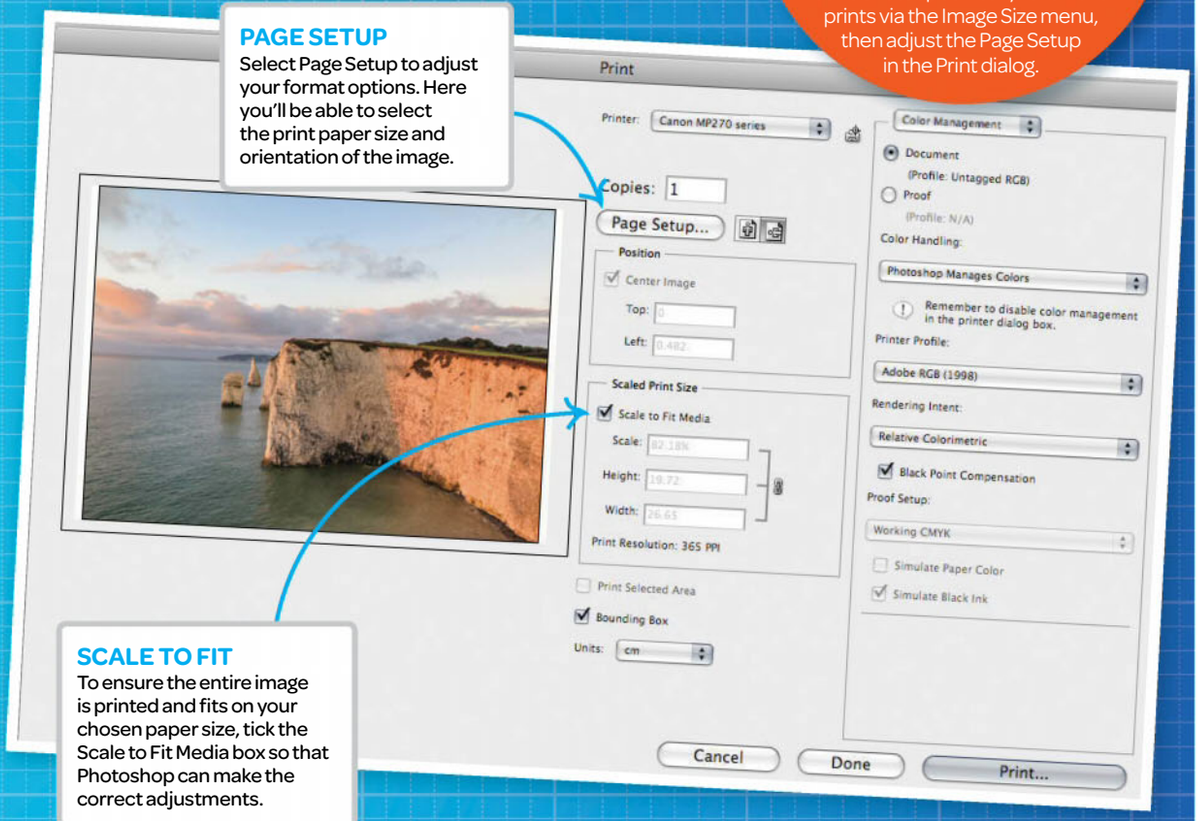
EXPERT TIP

Print quality

Ensure your image is at the best resolution for the intended print size. If you're printing on A4 or larger, go to Image>Image Size and input 300 pixels/inch. You can resize shots specifically for smaller prints via the Image Size menu, then adjust the Page Setup in the Print dialog.

PAGE SETUP

Select Page Setup to adjust your format options. Here you'll be able to select the print paper size and orientation of the image.



SCALE TO FIT

To ensure the entire image is printed and fits on your chosen paper size, tick the Scale to Fit Media box so that Photoshop can make the correct adjustments.

Photo papers Ensure optimum prints for your compositions

Epsom Premium Semigloss

Web: www.epsom.com
Price: From around £16 for 20 sheets (A4)

Epsom has a vast and fantastic range of photo papers that suit all budgets and printers. The thick and heavy Premium Semigloss photo paper promises a great finish, which is ideal for creating stunning prints of your favourite shots at home. It's also resin coated and can be used with either pigment or colour ink. What's more, it's available to purchase in a wide range of sizes, including the standard A4.

Hahnemühle Photo Silk Baryta 310

Web: www.hahnemuehle.com
Price: From around £23.75 for 25 sheets (A4)

Hahnemühle Photo now offers a great selection of high-quality papers at different sizes that can be used with an inkjet printer at home. The Silk Baryta 310 is a white, silk gloss baryta paper that has the look and feel of traditional silver halide photo paper. The specialist coating guarantees a professional finish with impressive contrast and vivid colours. It's also acid-free so prints will be long lasting.

Fotospeed Panoramic Inkjet Media

Web: www.fotospeed.com
Price: From around £30 for 25 sheets (A4)

You can print impressive panoramic images at home on a standard A4 photo printer without having to reduce the image dimensions using Fotospeed's Panoramic Inkjet Media. Simply download the Photoshop template available on its website to create 210mm x 594mm prints. The paper is also available in a range of finishes, including gloss and lustre.

THINK CONTEXT

BLACKNIGHT SOLUTIONS

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How do you use masks?
Tweet us @pshopcreative

Unleash masks

Piece together a vibrant composition using layer masks, shapes, flowers and fireworks

Multi-layered photocompositions are very popular nowadays. These engaging images appear in all types of venues, from slick adverts and packaging to interactive screens and beyond. But when you're planning a big visual like this, it's prudent to amass photos and assets that support the theme you had in mind. This will minimise the need to search for images mid-editing, which can be disruptive to the artistic thought process. In the resource files, you'll find an assortment of shapes and photos (courtesy of **www.mediamilitia.com** and **http://emilysimagery.com**) for following along with our steps.

We'll show you how to use the Quick Selection tool, Magic Wand, layer masks and blend modes to get the images extracted, merged, and arranged around the model. The Gaussian Blur filter will be used to throw things out of focus, helping establish a sense of depth. The simple act of overlapping objects and moving them up or down the stacking order in your Layers palette also helps in pumping up depth.

After completion, try replacing some of the images with your own. Better yet, populate a whole new canvas with your friends, family or pet images. The possibilities are only constrained by the number of layers available!

On the disc

Follow this technique using the supplied files

Essentials

Works with

Photoshop CS6 and above, CC & Elements 11 or later

What you'll learn

Build a portrait using masks, selection tools and adjustment layers

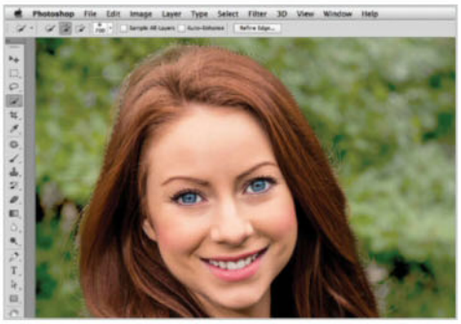
Time taken

1.5 hours

Expert

Andre Villanueva

"I love nothing more than to piece together creative compositions using photos and objects. I first discovered Photoshop in the early 2000s while in school for web design. After graduation, I taught for several years in the Media Arts department. I'm now an Art Director for a tech company in the Southeast US, soothing my inner instructor by sharing creative techniques with readers."



Create a rough selection

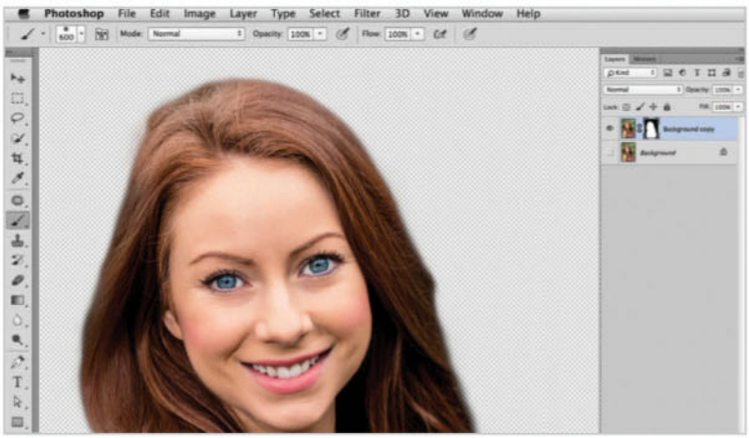
01 Open 'Model.jpg'. Use the Quick Selection tool to make a rough selection around the model. Click and drag to add to the selection. To remove areas, hold Opt/Alt as you click and drag. When finished, go to Select>Refine Edge.

Use Refine Radius tool

02 Use the Refine Radius tool to paint around the selection's edge. Use the square bracket keys to resize the brush as you go. Continue to use the Refine Radius tool where necessary during the next step as well.

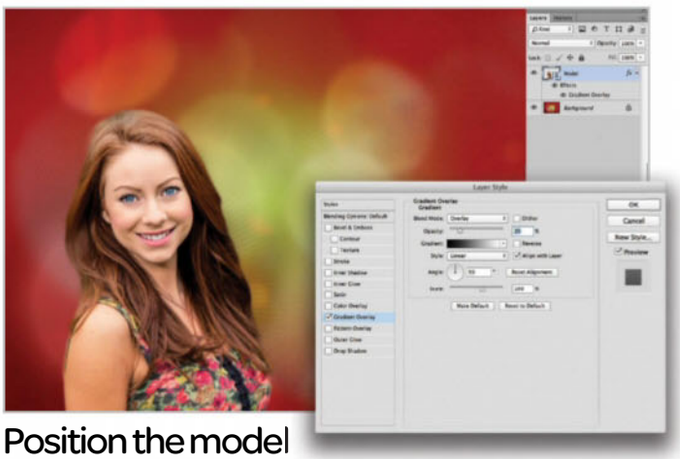
Adjust settings and output

03 To improve the selection, use Smooth, Feather, Contrast, and Decontaminate Colors. To help remove fringing, nudge Shift Edge slightly to the left. For Output To, choose New Layer with Layer Mask. Click OK when done.



Clean up the selection

04 Select the Brush tool and a Soft Round brush at 100% Opacity. Click the layer mask, paint white to restore missing detail and paint black to remove excess detail. Use the square brackets to resize the brush, and zoom as needed. Adjust the brush's Opacity and Hardness for sensitive detail work. Save as 'Model.psd'.

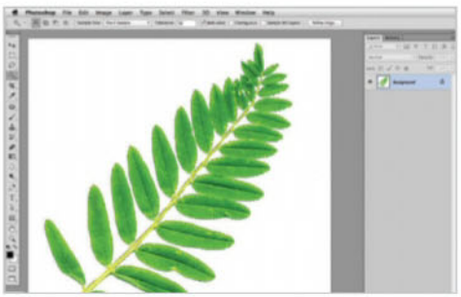


Position the model

05 Open 'Start.psd'. Go to File>Place and add the 'Model.psd' saved earlier. Scale down and position before confirming. Press D. Using the Layer palette's fx button, add a Gradient Overlay using the first preset (skip this if you're using Elements). Set the style's blend mode to Overlay, Opacity to 20% and click OK.

Add some sparkles

06 Go to File>Place and add 'Sparkle.png'. Position them and hit Enter to confirm. Place behind the model by moving below the model's layer in the Layers palette. Select the Move tool (V). Quickly duplicate the layer by Opt/Alt+clicking on the canvas and dragging away from the original.



Select leaves

07 Open 'Leaves1.jpg' and activate the Magic Wand tool (W). Untick Contiguous in the Options bar. Click on the white area. Shift-click any unselected white. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+I. Copy (Cmd/Ctrl+C) then paste (Cmd/Ctrl+V) into the main document. Move below model and scale or rotate with Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T).

Add more leaves

08 Repeat previous steps for 'Leaves2.jpg'. Use the Quick Selection tool to select 'Leaf1.jpg' and 'Leaf2.jpg'. Copy and paste into the main document. Keep above the model. Use Move tool to position and make duplicates. Scale or rotate with Free Transform, use varying blurs (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur) to establish depth.

Go all out with radials

09 Place the three 'Radial.eps' files (Elements users, pick the PNG versions) and scale them before hitting Enter. Arrange them below and around the model. Apply a light Gaussian Blur to these to help keep them blurred into the background.

Add a bunch of flowers

10 Continue by selecting, copying and pasting, arranging, and duplicating the bouquet and flower images with the steps we employed for the leaves. Place the flowers below and above the model and apply light Gaussian Blurs.

Add dotted streaks

11 Place 'Spiral.png' below the model. Set the blend mode to Linear Dodge. Apply a layer mask and use a Soft Round brush at 100% Opacity to paint with black to hide the left side and remove any excess. Apply a light Gaussian Blur filter effect.

Set off the fireworks

12 Place 'Fireworks1.jpg' below the model. Set the blend mode to Screen. Place 'Fireworks2.jpg' and set to Lighten. Now duplicate both several times and scale for variety. Position the duplicates below and above the model of your composition.

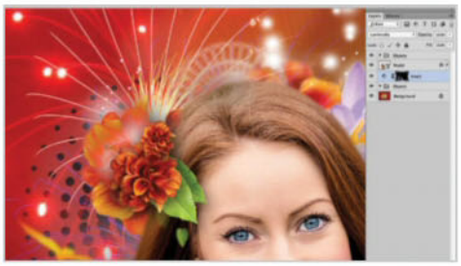
Birds and butterflies

13 Open the butterfly and bird files (if using Elements, just place the PNG versions). Select each object, copy and paste into the document. Apply Gradient Overlay layer styles; choose any of the colourful presets. Scale or rotate with Free Transform and apply Gaussian Blur to each.

What can go wrong? Finishing touches

Incorrectly enhance

Adjustment layers such as Levels, Curves, and Vibrance applied at the top of the stacking order are always good for overall tuning of tone and colour. Sharpening is also a sensible option. Merge your layers (hold Opt/Alt and go to Layer>Merge Visible) and convert to a smart object. Apply the Unsharp Mask (Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask) or the improved Smart Sharpen in Photoshop CC. The awesome Camera Raw filter in Photoshop CC is a one-stop editing shop. Apply this to a merged smart object of your layers and play with the many settings. You can definitely have too much of a good thing, so add final adjustments conservatively and work your way up to reduce the chances of over-editing.



An invert glow effect

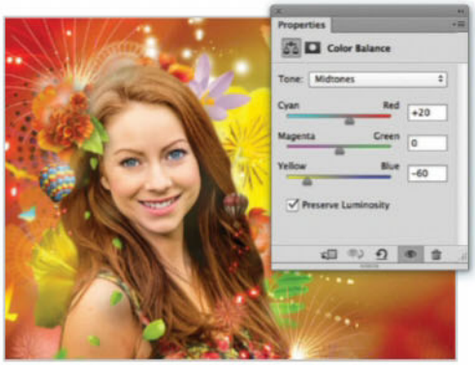
14 Click the Create New Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette and choose Invert. Set the blend mode to Luminosity. Move just below the model. Click the layer mask and hit Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert, hiding the effect. With white and a Soft Round brush at 80% Opacity, dab in spots throughout the image.

Add balloons

15 Place 'Ballon1.eps' and 'Balloon2.eps' above model (Elements; use png versions). Scale and position. Duplicate Balloon2, move to the top of the image and scale up. Apply a Gaussian Blur, 25px Radius. Duplicate Balloon1, enlarge it, and move to right. Apply a Gaussian Blur, 40px Radius.

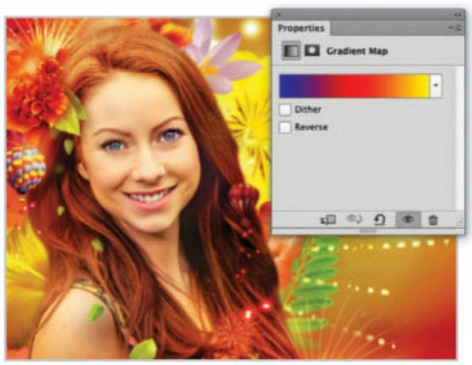
Add glares

16 Select the top layer. Click the Create New Fill layer button in the Layers palette, pick the Solid Color option. Pick white and click the layer mask. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert. With white and a soft brush at 80% Opacity, dab several glares throughout.



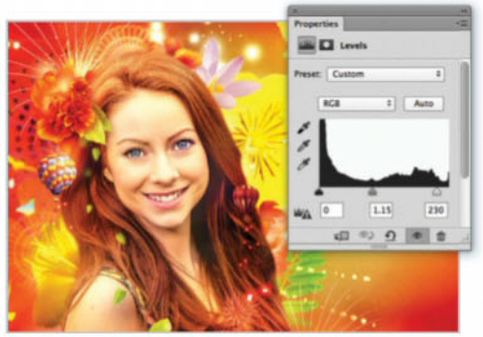
Pump up colour

17 Click the Create New Adjustment layer button in the Layers palette and choose Color Balance. Set to Midtones, change the sliders (from top to bottom) to +20, 0, -60. (Elements users, use Photo Filter with a Deep Yellow, 60% Density). Paint black in a mask to reduce on the model's skin.



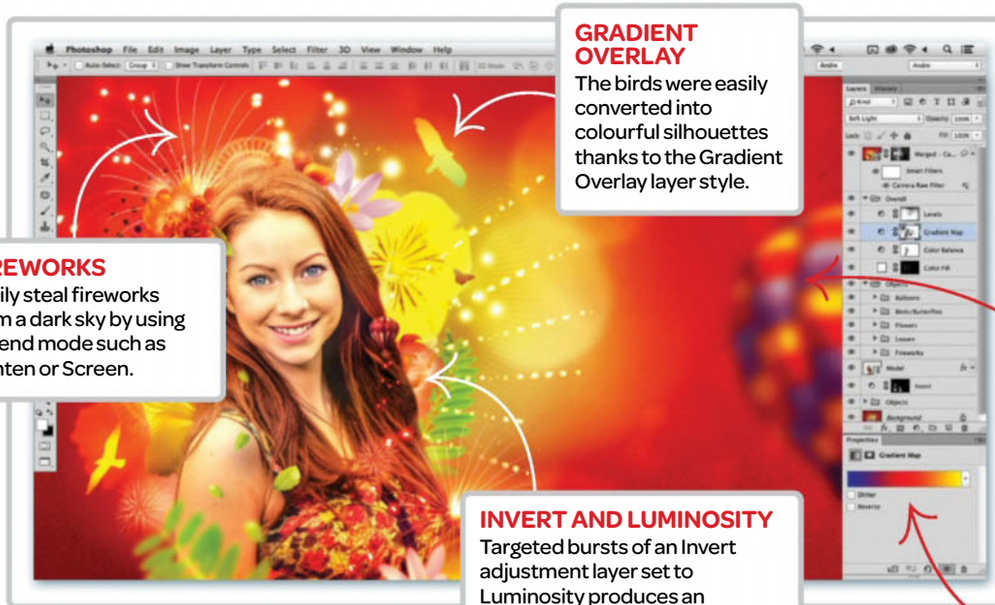
Deepen and intensify

18 From the same adjustment menu, choose the Gradient Map option. Pick the Blue, Red, Yellow preset. Set the layer's blend mode to Soft Light. With black and a nice Soft Round brush, paint areas in the mask at 60% Opacity to reduce the colouring on the model.



Lighten up

19 Add a new Levels adjustment layer from the same menu. Move the highlights and midtones sliders gently leftward to add contrast. With black and a soft brush, paint areas in the mask at 60% Opacity in any areas that have been lightened too much by the adjustment to complete the effect.



GRADIENT OVERLAY
The birds were easily converted into colourful silhouettes thanks to the Gradient Overlay layer style.

FIREWORKS
Easily steal fireworks from a dark sky by using a blend mode such as Lighten or Screen.

INVERT AND LUMINOSITY
Targeted bursts of an Invert adjustment layer set to Luminosity produces an interesting glow effect.

GAUSSIAN BLUR
Apply Gaussian Blurs to put layers out of focus. Use smart objects so you can edit at will (Photoshop CS3 or later).

GRADIENT MAPS
A Gradient Map adjustment layer set to Soft Light ties everything together and intensifies the overall colour.

Closer look Colourful editing

Check out some of the techniques used

Hahnemühle
PAPER MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Hahnemühle Photo Range

Digital Photo Media

The Hahnemühle Photo media has what it takes to create visually captivating prints.

No matter if on high-gloss, satin finished, pearlescent or matt papers - all the Hahnemühle Photo media guarantee razor-sharp pictures with perfect colour fidelity. In cooperation with the ink-absorbing layer, the exclusive base paper guarantees an extensive colour gamut, the best possible contrasts of light and shade, the finest colour tones in detail-rich prints.

Photo Glossy
260gsm/290gsm

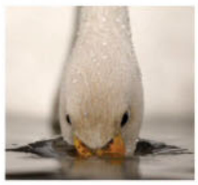


Photo Luster
260gsm/290gsm

Photo Matt Fibre 200gsm

Photo Matt Fibre Duo
210gsm

Photo Canvas 320gsm

Photo Silk Baryta 310gsm

Photo Pearl
310gsm

International awards such as the 2014 TIPA Award for Hahnemühle Photo Silk Baryta confirms and highlights the quality of our fine art inkjet papers.

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uksales@hahnemuehle.com www.hahnemuehle.com

On the disc

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Essentials

Works with

Photoshop CS, Photoshop CC and Elements

What you'll learn

- Use adjustment layers to edit and blend different animal images

Time taken

1 hour

Expert

Daniel Sinoca

"My favourite features in Photoshop are adjustment layers. These are versatile, powerful and facilitate the whole editing process. I started to get involved in the digital world more than ten years ago and have been working as a freelance artist ever since, creating all kinds of multimedia projects and tutorial guides."

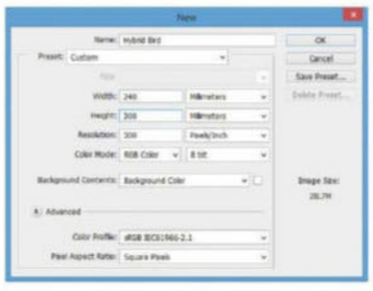
Create an animal hybrid

Find out the techniques behind creating animal hybrids using Photoshop's Clone tools and adjustments

Animal hybrids have fascinated people since the ancient times, with some people believing in them, while others do not. They are found everywhere, in old and new books, movies, arts, and of course in our imagination – especially if you are an enthusiastic Photoshop user.

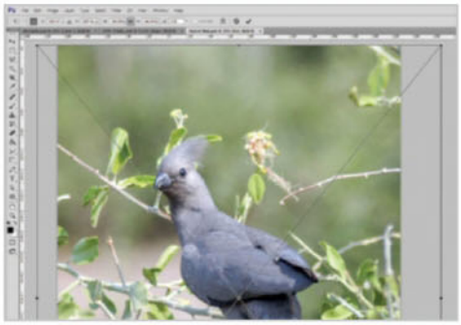
In this tutorial we'll show you how to blend two images using adjustment layers and other techniques to create a very cute rabbit bird. Photoshop's adjustment layers give you a high level of control over your edits, so you can experiment with many types of adjustments whenever it suits you. Another point to make about adjustment layers is their ability to use a mask to apply the effect exactly where it's needed. Follow these steps to learn how to clip the layers so the adjustment will affect only the layer immediately below.

Just a quick note to add; if you are using your own images, you'll need to apply different adjustments than the ones we've demonstrated. Try to find the ones that will work best for your images. The key is to balance the colours and adjust the contrast to create a seamless transition. Don't forget to check the supplied resources for the images and brush file.



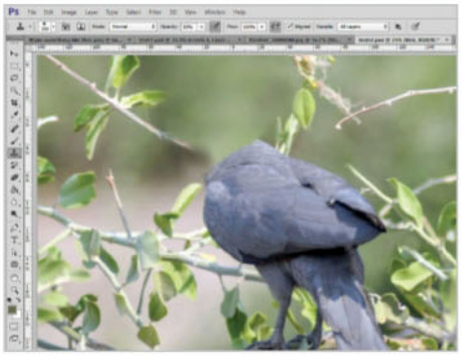
Set the stage

01 Create a new blank file. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+N, name your project 'Hybrid bird' and then set the Width to 240mm, the Height to 300mm and the Resolution to 300 pixels/inch. Confirm this by clicking OK.



Place image

02 Go to File>Place 'Bird.jpg' (from the resources). In the Options bar, tick the Constrain Proportions box and change the Width to 140% and hit Enter. Go to Layer>Rasterize>Layer (Elements users choose Simplify).



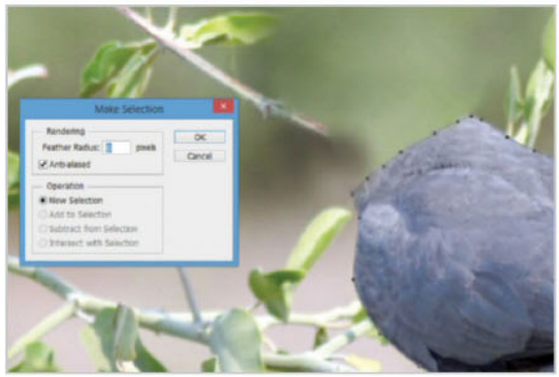
Clone stamping

03 Now grab the Clone Stamp tool (S). Select a soft brush tip brush, size 200px. Hold Opt/Alt and click over the green background to define the source colour and then paint to remove the bird's head.

Expert tip

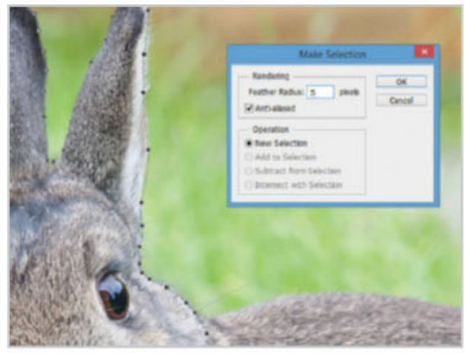
Photoshop Elements

To apply the vignette effect in Photoshop Elements, switch to Guided Edit mode by clicking on the navigation bar at the top. Scroll down and choose the Vignette photo effect. Now just follow the instructions on the right column. First select the colour of the vignette you would like to create, then drag the Intensity slider to increase or decrease the effect at the corners. You can also click on Refine Shape to make extra changes to the vignette.



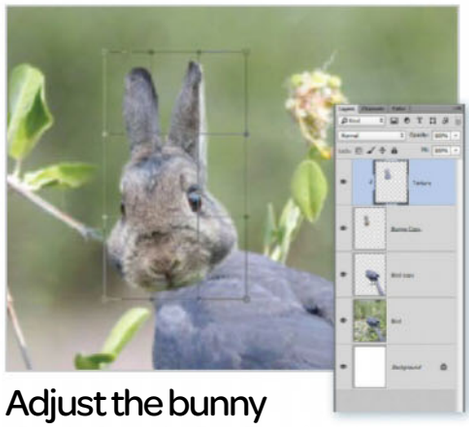
Make a selection

04 Grab the Pen tool (P). Elements users grab the Polygonal Lasso tool. In the Options bar select Path and add the anchor points around the bird. Hold down Opt/Alt key to adjust the points and Ctrl/right-click and click Make Selection. Duplicate the layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J) and name it 'Bird_Copy'.



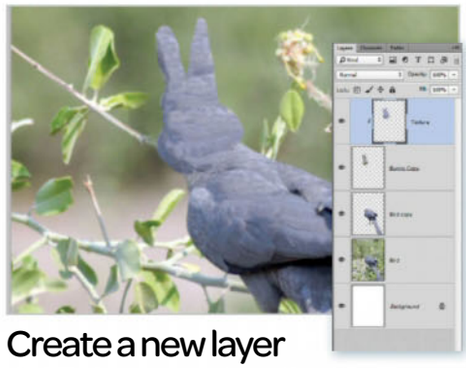
Place bunny

05 Go to File>Place and open 'Bunny.jpg'. Grab the Pen tool (P) to select just the bunny's head. In the Options bar click Selection, and on the Make Selection window set the Feather Radius to 5 pixels and hit OK. Now hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the layer. Select and delete the bunny's layer.



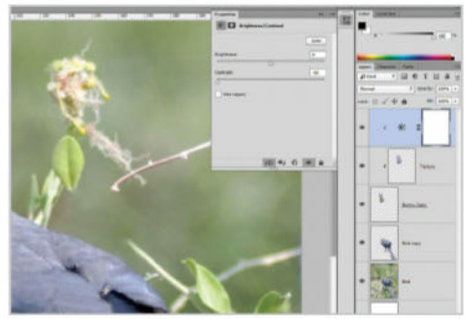
Adjust the bunny

06 Open the Free Transform box (Cmd/Ctrl+T) and scale the image to around 160%. Now drag the bunny above the wing. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+T again and select the Warp option. Drag the control points to adjust the bunny's face slightly.



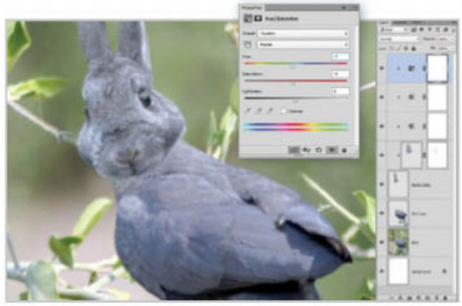
Create a new layer

07 Create a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N) and name it 'Texture'. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G to clip the layers (Elements users hit Cmd/Ctrl+G). Grab the Clone Stamp tool (S). Hold Opt/Alt and click over the wing to define the source colour, and then paint over the bird's head. Set the blend mode to Color.



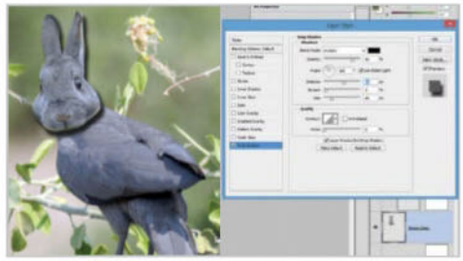
Adjustment layers

08 Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. Grab the Brush tool (B), set the Foreground colour to black and paint the eyes and nose. Click the Create Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers palette and choose Brightness/Contrast. Set Contrast to -50 and clip the layers using the down arrow in the adjustment.



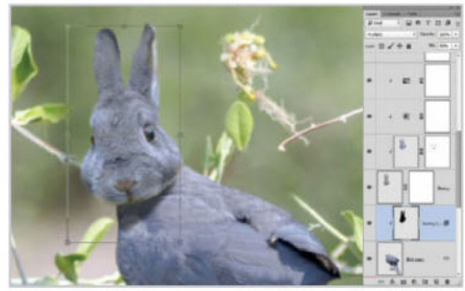
More adjustments

09 We need a few more adjustment layers to match the colours. Add Hue/Saturation, setting Hue: -7, Saturation: 15 and Lightness: 0. Now add the Brightness/Contrast again, set the Brightness to 0 and Contrast to -20. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G to clip the layers (Cmd/Ctrl+G in Elements).



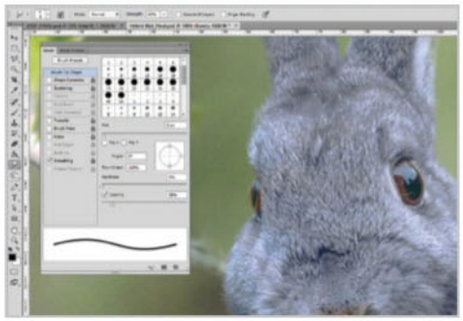
Layer styles

10 Click on the Bunny layer. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Drop Shadow. Set the Opacity to 80% in the Blending option. Click Drop Shadow and set Opacity to 60%, Angle to 120 degrees, Distance to 60px, Spread to 5% and Size to 40px. Hit OK and Ctrl/right-click on the style's name in the Layers palette and select Create Layer.



The Transform tool

11 Now we need to adjust the shadow. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and drag the corners to adjust the perspective and hit Enter. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G to clip the layers. Select the Bird_copy layer and add a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer. Set the Brightness to -5 and Contrast to 10.

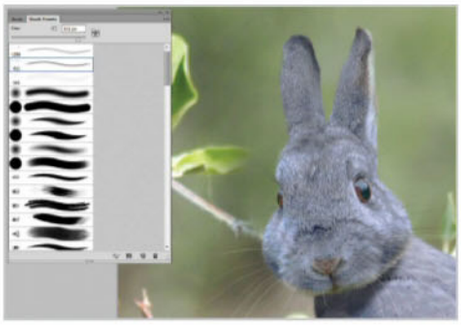


Create fur

12 Click on the Bunny layer. Grab the Smudge tool and hit F5. Select a soft brush around 6px and set Strength to 60%. Zoom in, and place your mouse on the edge of the bunny. Click, drag and quick release the button to create the effect. Add fur around the face, back and legs.

Draw the whiskers

13 Create a new layer on top and name it Whiskers. Hit F5 and select a small soft brush. Set the Flow to 70% and select the option to control the pressure (if you have a stylus). Set the Foreground colour to black and draw the whiskers.



Load brushes

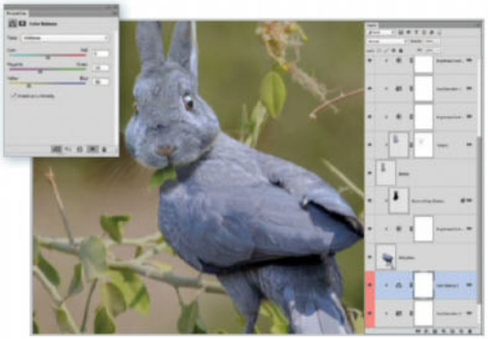
14 Don't worry if you haven't got a tablet, create the whiskers using custom brushes. Hit F5 and click on Brush Preset. Click on the top-right menu and select Load Brushes. Locate 'Whiskers.abr' from the resources and click Load. Change the size and direction and paint around the face.

Lunch time!

15 Click on the Bird layer. Grab the Polygonal Lasso tool (L) and select any leaf. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+J and name the new layer Leaf. Drag the layer under the whisker's layers. Position the leaf next to the mouth and add a layer mask. Paint bite marks into the leaf and remove the leaf from under the mouth.

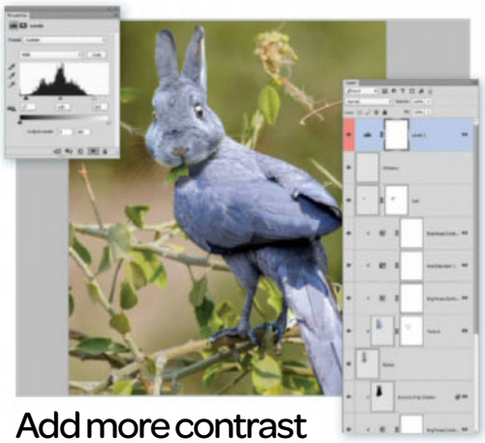
Burn and Dodge tools

16 Grab the Burn tool (O), set the Range to Midtones, Exposure to 30% and paint a shadow over the leaf to add realistic lighting. Now select the Bunny layer and grab the Dodge tool (O). Set the Range to Midtones, Exposure to 30% and paint over the eyes to create a vibrant colour.



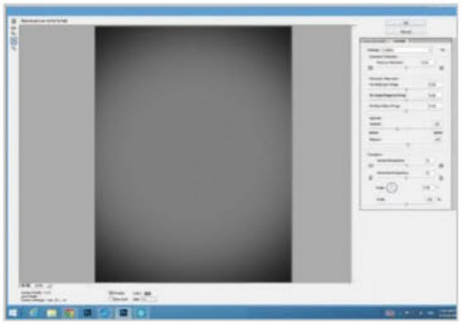
New adjustment layers

17 Select the Bird layer. Now add the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer, set the Hue to 0, Saturation to +10 and Lightness to -30. Let's change the colour a bit. Add the Color Balance adjustment layer and set the tones to Midtones, Cyan to 0, Magenta to -20, and Yellow to -50.



Add more contrast

18 To add some more contrast, create a new Levels adjustment layer on top of the layer stack. Set the shadow's Input Level to 17, the midtones to 1.00 and the highlights to 213.



Vignette effect

19 Press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N. In the New Layer box, name it Vignette, tick use Previous Layer to Create a Clipping Mask box and set the blend mode to Overlay. Tick Fill Overlay Neutral Color box and hit OK. Now go to Filter>Lens Correction. Click on Custom and adjust the Vignette adjustment.

On the disc

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Essentials

Works with

Photoshop CS3 and above, Photoshop CC

What you'll learn

- Fix skin tones with the Refine Edge command and colour adjustments

Time taken

30 mins

Expert

Ahmad Elabbar

"Photo-retouching is sometimes essential in altering tones and light to make the final image come together naturally. I'm a freelance graphic designer and visual artist based in the UK. Originally from Libya, I'm now back in England studying Physics as an undergraduate."

Correct skin tones in portraits

Learn how to edit skin tones to transform any image into a studio-worthy photographic portrait

In this tutorial, we'll be taking a look at an image that was exposed badly on the day of the shoot, and using a number of simple Photoshop tools and tricks, we'll transform it into a striking, canvas-ready portrait.

Unwanted tones appear everywhere in photography for many different reasons that may have nothing to do with the model's actual skin tone on the day; being able to correct for this is essential. Sometimes, even experienced photographers can forget to adjust camera settings and end up with excess light or colour. For example, if a portrait was being taken under a sunny sky and the photographer forgot to change the white balance to match the temperature, such as having it on an indoor florescent mode, the colours will be off and the image will need to be adjusted afterwards in Photoshop.

You should always look to capture as near-a-perfect shot as possible, but mistakes happen. And knowing how to save an image in Photoshop can prevent losing a precious moment forever.

Select skin tones

01 Open this image from the supplied resources and go to Select>Color Range. From the Select drop-down, choose Skin Tones and make sure the option Detect Faces is checked. Set the Fuzziness slider to 30 and click OK. A rough selection around the skin and parts of the hair will appear.

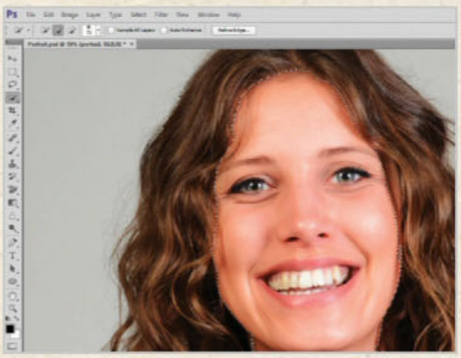
Add areas to selection

02 Notice that some of the lighter tones in the skin have been excluded from the selection. To include them as well, use the Lasso tool (L) while holding Shift to add areas of the face to the selection.

Expert tip

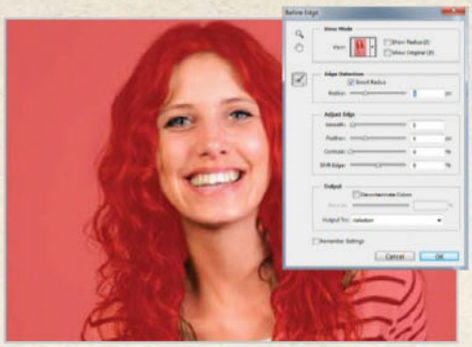
Subtle vignettes

When shooting a studio photo of a model against a background, a vignette is usually created around the edges due to the way the flash light falls. In this tutorial, we've used the Brush tool to apply the vignette. Another powerful way to mimic the studio vignette is using the Gradient tool (G), with a gradient that goes from black to transparent and set to Radial in the Options bar. To apply the effect, click and drag from the face to outside the canvas on a new layer.



Deselect the hair

03 To get rid of parts of the hair that have been included in the selection, use the Quick Selection tool (W). Carefully brush over the strands of selected hair (hold Opt/Alt). Reduce the size of the brush when working close to the face for precision.

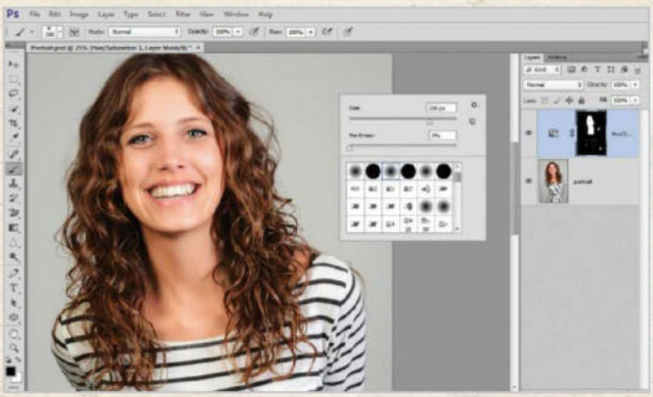


Refine the selection

04 To smooth the transition between the selected skin tones and the rest of the unselected image, go to Select>Refine Edge. Check the Smart Radius box, and set the Radius, Smooth and Feather options to 5px, then click OK. Turn the page for more tips on using Refine Edge.

Tone down skin tones

05 While the selection is still on, go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. Notice how a mask appears with the adjustment layer, with the selected areas filled in white so that the adjustment only applies to those areas. Set Hue to +5 and Saturation to -15.



Brush away areas

06 Click on the mask to select it. Using the Brush tool (B), brush in either black or white around the areas of the image to readjust the effect of the last step. Use a soft brush for this. Brushing on the mask in black reduces the effect, whereas brushing in white reveals it.

Selective Vibrance

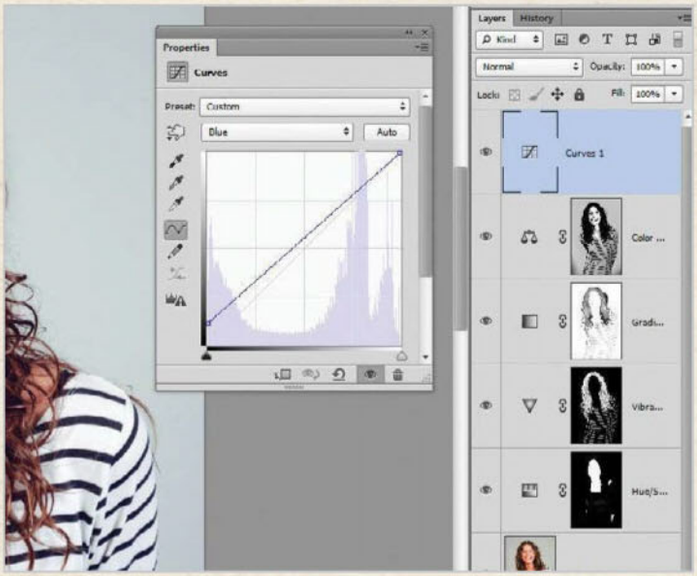
07 To adjust the hair tones separately, go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Vibrance. Click on the mask and go to Select>Color Range, and using the sampler, sample the hair strands to select them, then click OK. Now set Vibrance to +60 and Saturation to +5.

Add contrast

08 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Gradient Map and choose a default black to white gradient. Set blend mode to Soft Light with an Opacity of 60%. Reduce the effect on the hair by brushing the mask in black using a soft brush.

A cooling effect

09 To take out some of the warmer tones in the skin and background, go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Color Balance. Set the Tone to Midtones, and bring the Cyan/Red channel to -40 or more. Brush this effect away from the hair using the layer's mask and the Brush tool.



Deep blues

10 To bring in some rich blue shades into the image's shadows, go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves. Select the Blue channel, and raise the lower left edge of the curve slightly. Do this from the very bottom of the curve to maintain a straight line.

Highlights and shading

11 Add a new layer, set to Soft Light. Using a soft brush with a size of about 100px and Opacity of 10%, carefully paint over the highlights in the image (especially the face and hair to increase brightness). Also, paint over the shadows using black.

Vignettes for portraits

12 A great way to draw focus to the face is to add a vignette. To do this, add a new layer and set it to Soft Light. Using a large soft brush of about 2000px with Opacity set to 30%, paint over the corners in black to darken them down.

Expert edit

A rough selection

01 Make a fast selection around the model using the Quick Selection tool. Include the stray hairs in this selection, then click the Refine Edge button at the top of the interface.

Extract the strays

02 Check the Smart Radius box and set the Radius to 8px. Click on the Refine Radius tool and set Size to about 100px, and then trace over the stray hairs to detect them.

Perfect the selection

03 To make sure none of the original background remains in the new selection, click on Decontaminate Colors and set the Amount to 65%. Export the selection on a new layer with a mask.

Test it out

04 To make sure the selection is seamless, set the extracted image against a background with colour and texture. Refine using the same method until the extraction is perfect.

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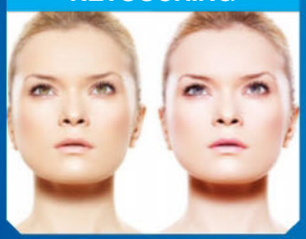				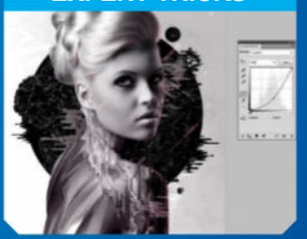

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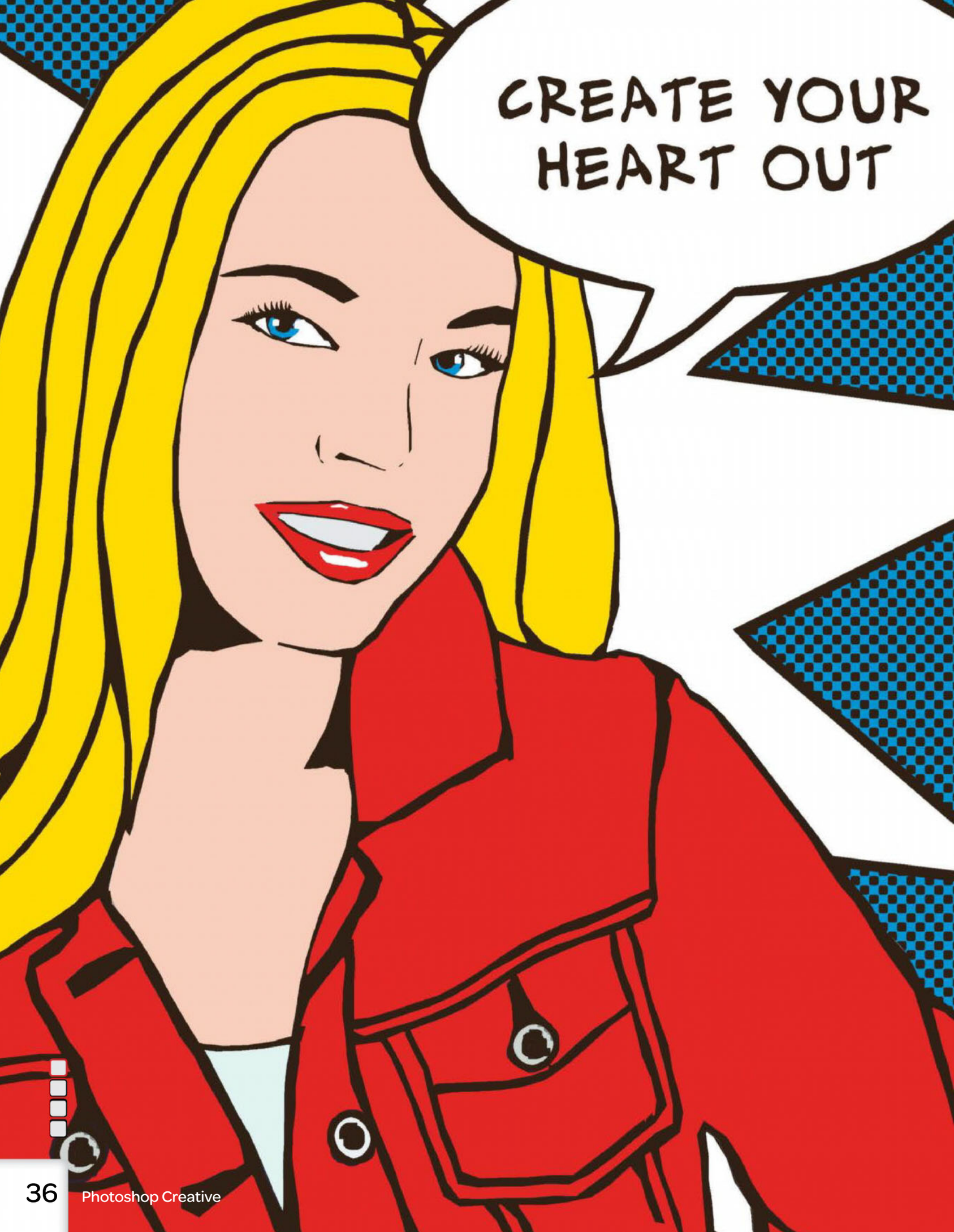

CREATE YOUR
HEART OUT

On the disc

Follow this technique using the supplied files

Essentials

Works with

Photoshop CS2 and above, CC and Elements

What you'll learn

Edit with the Cutout filter and layers to achieve a special pop art effect

Time taken

45 mins

Expert

Jenni Sanders

"Filters can be seen as cliché but I love to push their boundaries and see just how much I can get out of them. My first experience with photomanipulation was watching my father clone out holidaymakers from our family beach photographs."

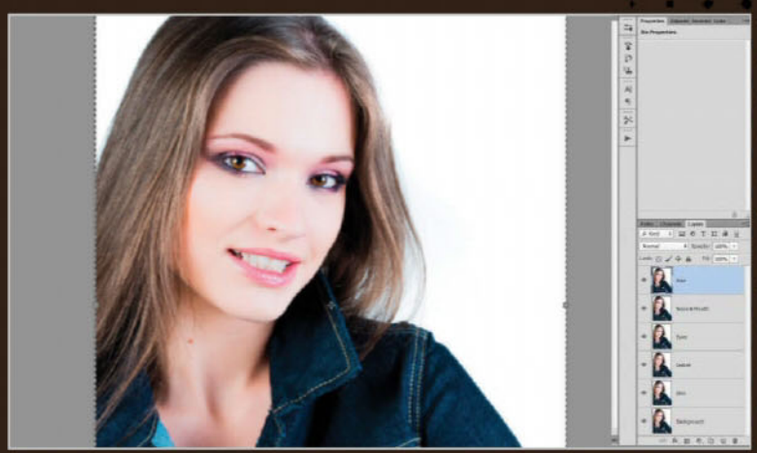
Make pop art with filters

Turn a photo into a funky pop art piece, bringing together filters and layers to create bold colours and shapes

The pop art movement came about as a celebration of popular culture, beginning in the 1950s and made famous by artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. Using their style as inspiration, in this project we'll show you how to bring together the key characteristics of bright primary colours and flat, comic-book style imagery using simple filters and layers in Photoshop.

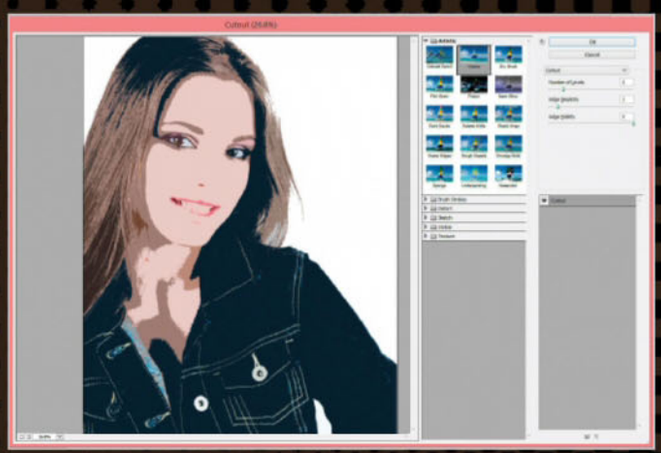
We'll begin by simplifying the portrait with the Cutout filter, reducing the photo to just a few levels of colour, before creating the black outline with the Brush tool and Accented Edges filter. We'll also replicate traditional techniques such as the Ben-Day dots, which pop artists often used to create their images, using the Halftone Pattern filter.

When working with filters, very rarely is there a 'one size fits all' setting, so instead, in this tutorial, each element of the portrait is going to be dealt with separately; the eyes for example need more levels than the hair or the jacket. This gives you the most control over the pop art look and also allows you to take each step as a guideline to apply to any portrait.



Prepare your image

01 Open up the portrait from the resources. Use the Crop tool (C) to crop around her head and shoulders. Duplicate the Background layer five times by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+J. We're creating layers for the jacket, skin, nose and mouth, eyes and the hair. Rename accordingly.



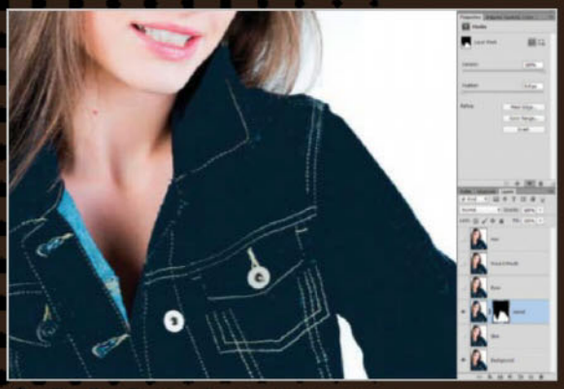
Cut out the jacket

02 Hide all layers with the eye icon, apart from Jacket and Background. Select the Jacket layer and go to Filters>Filter Gallery. Chose Cutout in the Artistic section and set the Levels to 3, Simplicity to 1, and Fidelity to 3. Hit OK.

Expert tip

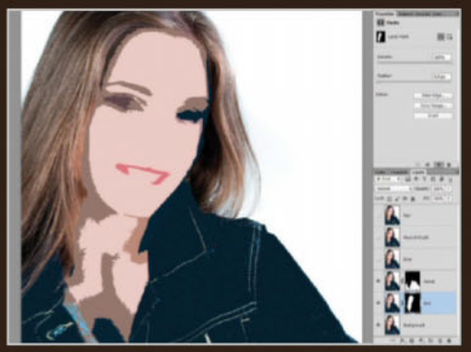
Colour schemes

Pop art was all about bold colours – especially the three primary colours: red, yellow and blue. By sticking to this, you automatically get the right look. But, pop art was also predominantly printed or illustrated, so this means to get pure black was often a rarity. Create a realistic look with a Solid Color adjustment layer set to a very dark orange, and change the blend mode to Lighten. This will mute the blacks slightly and give it a vintage feel.



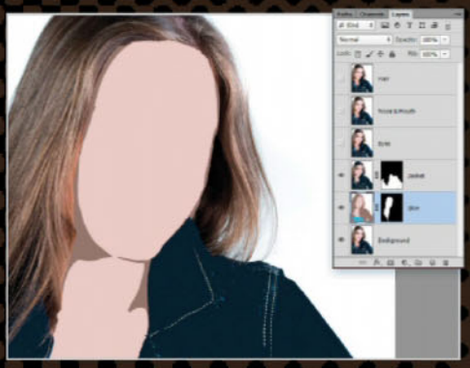
Mask the jacket

03 This filter doesn't work as well for the rest of the image, so add a new layer mask (using the option at the base of Layers palette) and paint black over everything but the jacket to hide. Use a Hard Round brush to keep the edges solid.



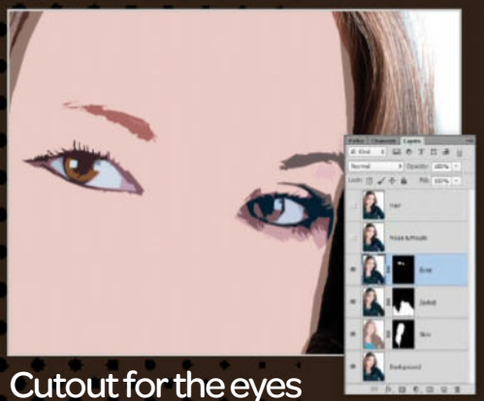
Cutout for the skin

04 Make the Skin layer visible. Apply the Cutout filter, this time with Levels: 3, Simplicity: 8 and Fidelity: 2. Add a layer mask and hide anything that isn't skin using a brush. Pop art skin effects are very simple, so we need to further tidy up this layer.



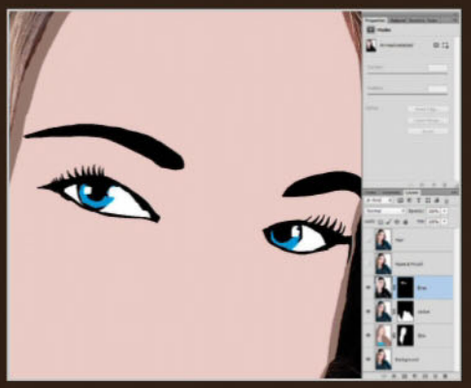
Simplify the skin

05 Use the Eyedropper tool (I) to pick a skin colour from the image. Use the Brush to paint over the face and neck to remove the features and simplify the shadows. Pick the darkest skin tone and fill with the Paint Bucket tool (G) all the remaining shadow areas.



Cutout for the eyes

06 Apply the Cutout filter on the Eyes layer, with Levels at 4, Simplicity at 5 and Fidelity at 3. Hit OK and add a layer mask to hide all but the eyes. Use the Paint Bucket tool to fill the area, then use the Brush tool for precision. With an Eyedropper (I), click on the skin to select the colour around the eyes.



Pop art eyes

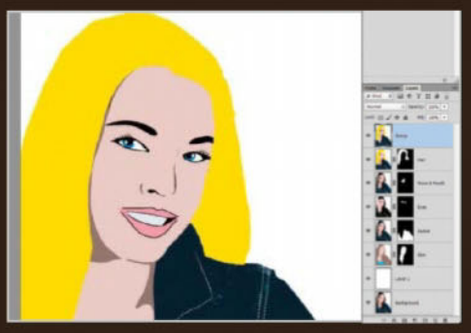
07 Fill the pupils in a bright, primary blue and the brown edges in black. Use a Hard Round brush to touch up areas such as the pupil, and draw in some extra eyelashes in black. Make the whites of the eyes brighter by painting with white.

Nose and mouth

08 Select the Nose and Mouth layer. Apply the Cutout filter with Levels: 8, Simplicity: 0, Fidelity: 3 and apply a new mask. Simplify the skin tones (as you did with the eyes) and paint in the lips.

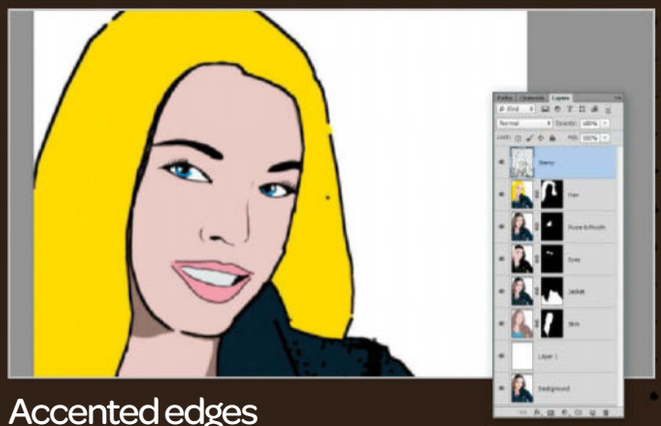
Draw in the nose

09 Make the Hair layer visible and set its Opacity to 20%. On the Nose layer, paint lines in black for the nose outline. It's a tricky shape and may take a few attempts. Draw a black outline around the lips, too.



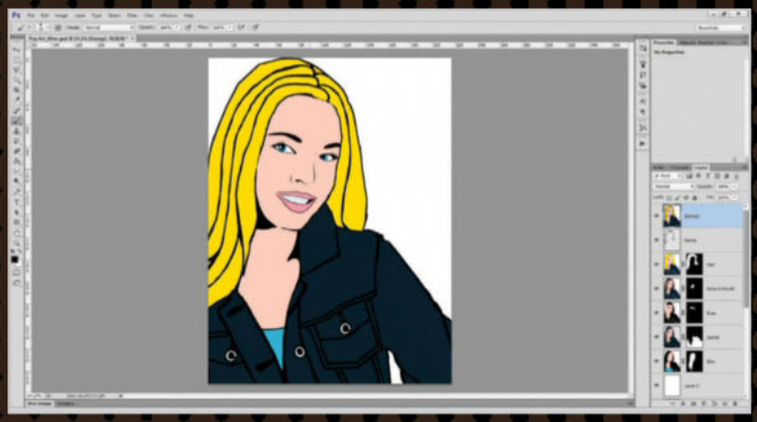
Cutout for hair

10 Set Hair back to 100%. Using the photo as a guide, paint yellow over the hair area. Use a mask to hide the rest of the layer. Add a new layer above the Background image (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N) and fill it white. Create a stamp of all your layers with Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+Opt/Alt+E.



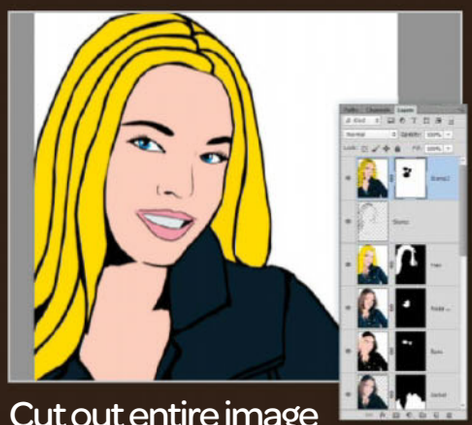
Accented edges

11 With the top layer selected, get the outline started with Filter>Filter Gallery>Brush Strokes>Accented Edges. Set Width: 14, Brightness: 0 and Smoothness: 1. Hit OK. Use the Magic Wand tool (W) to delete any areas that aren't outlines. Also erase the lines over the face.



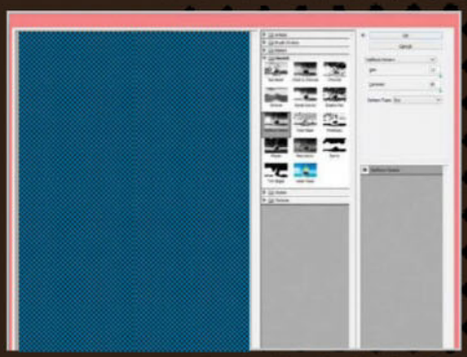
Neaten the outlines

12 Go around with a black brush and the Eraser tool (E) to neaten the edges. Also draw in some new lines for hair definition. Don't worry about neatness. Use the Paint Bucket tool to fill the skin shading in black. Create another stamp layer at the top of the palette.



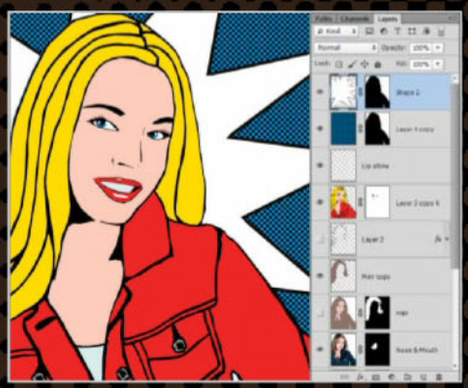
Cut out entire image

13 On the new stamp layer, apply the Cutout filter to the whole image, with Levels: 8, Simplicity: 6 and Fidelity: 2. This neatens up the outlines, but makes the eyes look weird. So add a layer mask and paint black to reveal the original eyes.



Halftone background

14 Create a new layer and fill with blue from the eyes. Use a layer mask to make it visible only in the background. With the Foreground set to blue and Background to black, go to Filter>Filter Gallery>Sketch> Halftone Pattern. Set Size and Contrast to max, and Pattern Type to Dots.



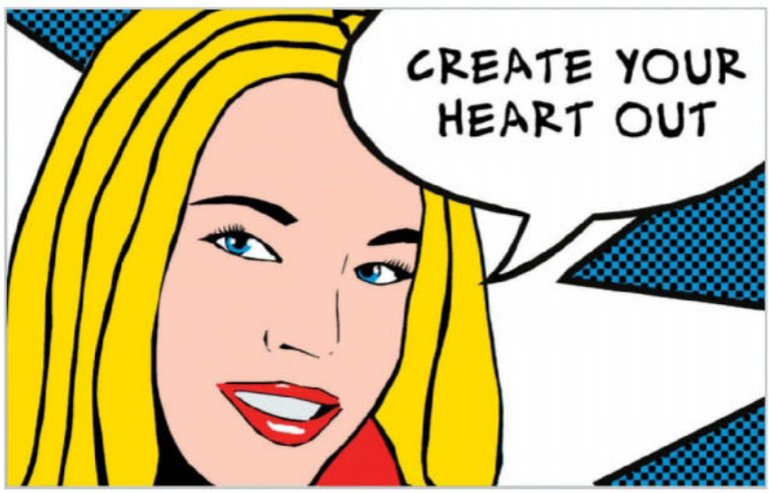
Finishing touches

15 In the Custom Shapes (U) options, add a white explosion shape with a black edge, using the same mask as the Halftone layer. Using the last stamp layer, you can also fill parts of the image with any colour you want. Just have fun and mix it up!

Extra treatment
Comic speech bubble

For a real comic book feel, make your pop art person talk

Add a speech bubble Custom Shape (U) filled white, with a black stroke that matches the thickness of the rest of the image. Position it next to her face so that it doesn't obscure it, but so that it's still her speech bubble. Select the Type tool (T) and enter some words. You can find some cool comic-book style fonts online, such as on **www.dafont.com**. Try and get a font that matches the style of the image like this one called Alex Toth. The speech bubble itself might look a bit smooth compared to the rest of the image. Rasterize the shape by Ctrl/right-clicking on the thumbnail and selecting Rasterize Layer. Now apply the Cutout filter to the font and the edges will become the same style as all the rest of the image.



Five of the best gadgets

Enhance your Photoshop editing with this collection of premium accessories

For those interested in image manipulation and digital art, Photoshop and Photoshop Elements is likely to be at the heart of what you do. But to get the best results and expand your creative potential, you need to surround yourself with the right selection of accessories. To help you out, we've chosen five items that we think should be high up on your wish list, from a DSLR to a high-performance graphics tablet.

01 WACOM INTUOS PRO

Web: www.wacom.com **Price:** From £199.90/$249US

Although image manipulation and digital painting is possible with a regular mouse, many artists prefer to use a graphics tablet for more comfort and control over their brushes. Wacom's Intuos Pro range boasts pen tilt recognition and 2,048 levels of pressure sensitivity for excellent brush strokes, with multi-touch finger gestures for moving across your canvas and adapting Photoshop's tools as you paint and manipulate over layers.

PERFECT FOR PAINTING
The Intuos Pro range is available in three sizes, and also as a Special Edition, which boasts an attractive silver and black design and is priced at £319.99/$379US.

STAY BACKED UP
Used as a standalone drive, transfer speeds reach 400MB/s, increasing to 480MB/s when used with the G-DOCK ev with Thunderbolt.

02 G-DRIVE EV SSD

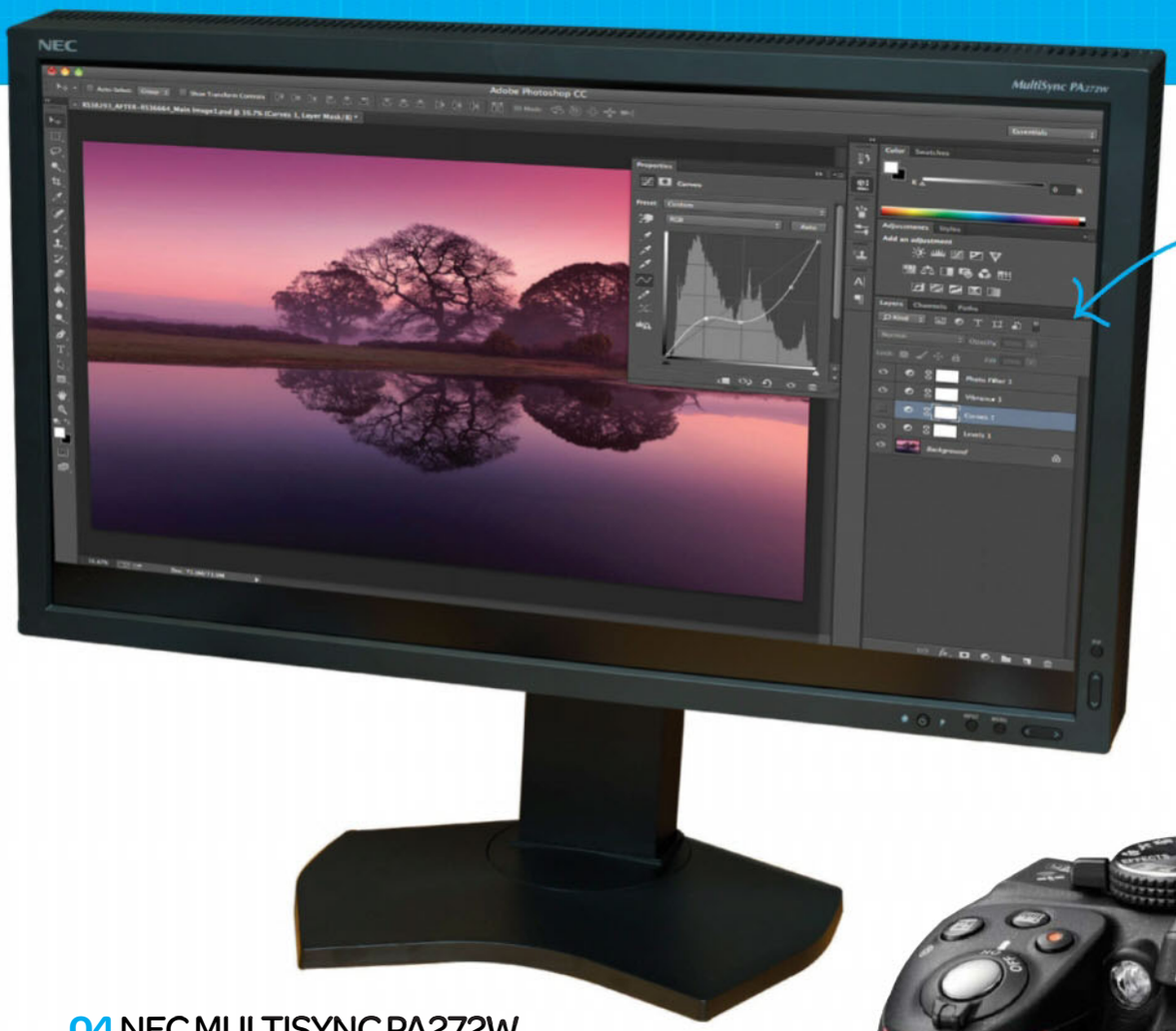
Web: www.g-technology.com **Price:** £320.65/$499.95US

Too many Photoshop layered files hogging up precious space on your computer's hard drive? Time to reach for an external solution such as this one from G-Technology. This is USB 3.0 powered that gives you 512GB of extra space. The drive offers plug-and-play capability when used with Mac OS but can be formatted for Windows, too. So if your PC decides to give up on you, you've always got your files backed up safely.

03 CANON PIXMA MX535

Web: www.canon.com **Price:** £99.99/$149.99US

Easily incorporate artwork and other documents into your Photoshop canvas with the help of an all-in-one scanner, copier and printer. This one by Canon gives support for a range of paper types such as glossy and matte to suit all kinds of imagery. The MX535 is tablet and smartphone friendly, so you can link up to your favourite devices easily. The printer is capable of high-resolution prints at 1200 by 4800dpi, with auto copy and scan to USB options.



A GLORIOUS DISPLAY
This is a widescreen, flat panel display that has a resolution of 2560 by 1440. This will go far to enhance your editing experience.

IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY
This is a good model for confident beginners to intermediate photographers, and is extremely well constructed. There are a number of kit options available as well, so you can branch out if you need to.

04 NEC MULTISYNC PA272W

Web: www.necdisplay.com **Price:** £1,058/$1,299US

Splash out on a decent monitor and you'll see a big difference in colour and tones in your Photoshop work. It can be tempting to overlook the value of a quality monitor, but this should form an integral part of your wish list. This model by NEC comes calibrated to support 99.3% of the Adobe RGB colour space, meaning you'll be able to achieve colour-accurate prints with ease.

05 NIKON D5300

Web: www.nikon.com **Price:** £719.99/$799.95US

All good ideas for your next Photoshop project should start with even better images. Take your photography to the next level by investing in a quality DSLR such as the Nikon D5300. This camera features a 24.2-megapixel sensor, so it packs in a lot of pixels. The standard ISO range of 100-12,800 is expandable up to 25,600, making those night shots easier to expose.

PRINT FROM THE WEB
A Wi-Fi and cloud-enabled printer will make printing much simpler.

Essentials

Works with

Photoshop CS5 and above, Photoshop CC

What you'll learn

Use the Polygonal Lasso tool, adjustments and layer styles

Time taken

4 hours

Expert

Andy Hau

"Cities inspire a lot of my work, both as an architect and as a Photoshop artist. I am a London-based architect and graphic designer, and the owner of A.H.A Design Ltd, a multidisciplinary design studio. In all of my work, I believe that all design should have an element of joy about it – from its inception to the final product."

Transform your cityscapes

Use Photoshop to revel in the bright lights and the buzz of a cityscape

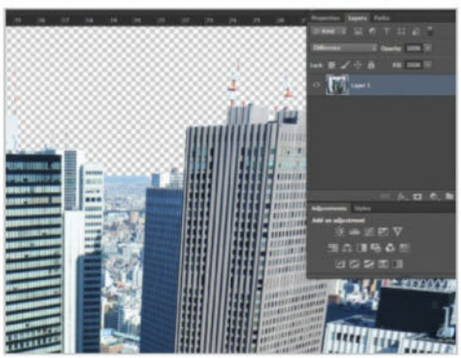
According to a recent 'scientific' survey, living in big cities will make you miserable. While we don't wish to appear modishly antagonistic, we'd have to disagree; we love the big city lifestyle. Of course, we realise that it's not for everyone but we love the commotion and noise of city life. We love that buzz in the air on a Friday evening, full of promise and expectancy, when office workers pour out onto the streets and temporarily archive their working lives for another week. We love the neon that stains the indigo night sky with a comforting orange glow, just like a Photoshop Gradient Fill layer. We even find there's something reassuring about the wails of police sirens, pitch-bending as they dissipate into the distance. In this tutorial we are going to utilise some of Photoshop's lighting techniques to recreate the euphoric beauty of the city. Try this effect using the original cityscape used in our tutorial by heading to **www.shutterstock.com** (see the resources for a direct link). We've supplied some alternatives for you to follow along with, or why not try this on some of your own city images?

On the disc

Follow this technique using the supplied files

The right scene

01 Choose an appropriate cityscape scene and drag it into the canvas. Don't try to photomontage an entire city. You are unlikely to find enough photos of buildings taken from exactly the right perspective to make this look convincing.

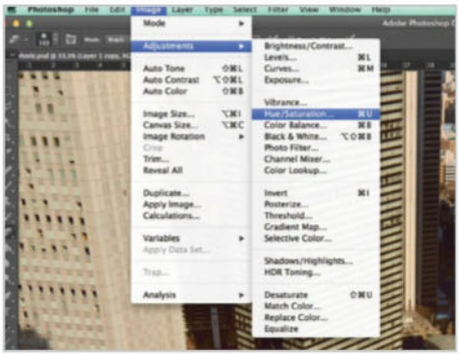


Remove the sky

02 Start by removing the sky in the existing scene by using the Polygonal Lasso tool (L). Hit Backspace to say goodbye sky! There's no need to cut out every single aerial and chimney – a lot of it will be lost in the pixels, so just keep whatever you feel is appropriate.

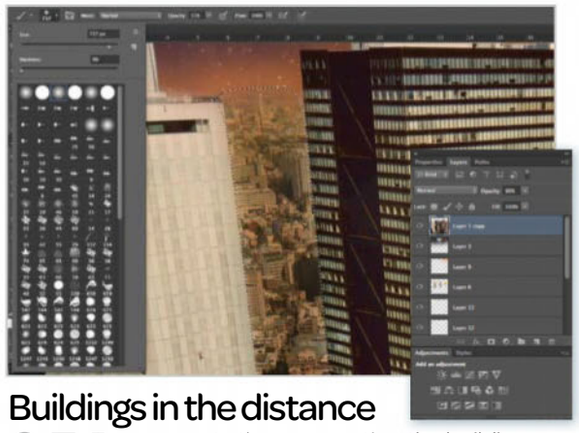
A new sky

03 You could use a photo for the new sky or you can paint your own sunset by using a Soft Round brush (B) and orangey-red hues. Use a cloud brush from the supplied resources on a medium opacity setting to create areas of cloud in a very light grey colour.



Match colour

04 The new sky will determine what needs to be adjusted in the existing scene in terms of colour. We've created a sunset, so the existing scene will need to be warmer. Go to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation and increase Hue to +180 for an orange tint.



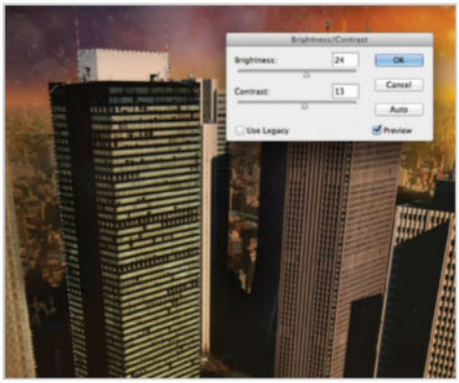
Buildings in the distance

05 To exaggerate the perspective, the buildings in the distance need to be softened. Select the buildings with the Polygonal Lasso and very gently delete them by using the Eraser (E) on a low Opacity setting (10% or less). The further away the buildings, the softer they should appear.

Expert tip

Make safe tweaks

For most artists, the process of creating the image is easy; it's the hours of tinkering afterwards without destroying everything you've already created that's the hardest part. In this image, we knew we wanted more contrast but didn't really want to change a hundred-odd layers in order to do so. The solution was to use the Brightness/Contrast adjustment's mask to change the entire scene without destroying any of the hard work.



Buildings in the foreground

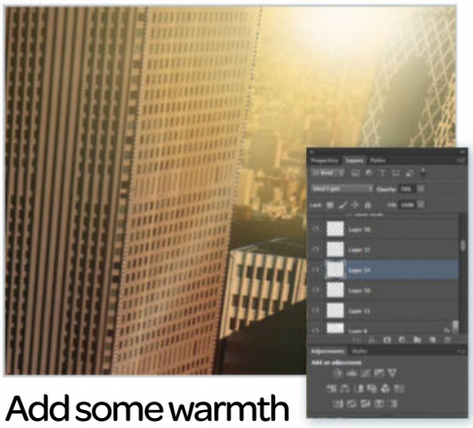
06 The closest buildings need to be strengthened and darkened to make them stand out. Select them with the Polygonal Lasso and boost the brightness and contrast settings.

Solar flare

07 Give a cinematic atmosphere by creating a large burst of sunlight using a large Soft Round brush on a new layer. Obscure some of the buildings to intensify the feeling of brightness. Lower the Opacity of the layer to 90% or less.

Deep darkness

08 In preparation for the lights we are going to put into the scene, we need to darken the areas that are far away from the sun burst. Select these areas with the Polygonal Lasso and in Brightness/Contrast, use -50 and 17 respectively.

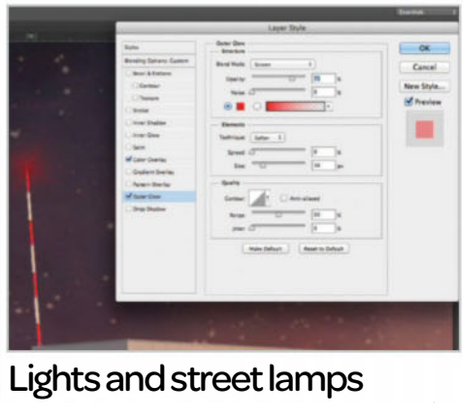


Add some warmth

09 To indicate that the sun is bathing the buildings with a warm light, add some light orange highlights onto some of the facades of the buildings by using a Soft Brush with a low Opacity setting.

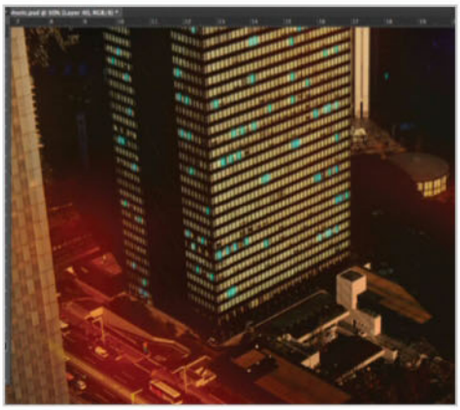
Lights in buildings

10 Create boundaries over the windows with the Polygonal Lasso. Fill them with vibrant, zesty colours to indicate light. Each colour should be on a separate layer. Double-click the layer to apply an Outer Glow, changing the colour where necessary.



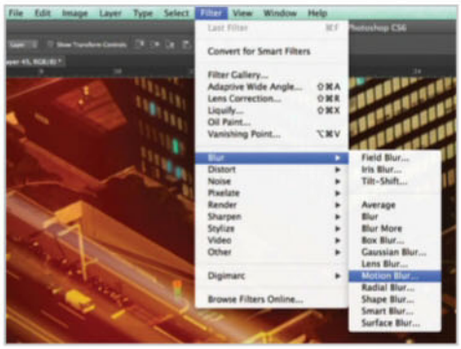
Lights and street lamps

11 Subtle detail will help bring a sense of reality. To create the aircraft warning lights and the streetlights, use a sparkle brush (from the supplied resources) to create a light burst. Double-click on the layer to apply an Outer Glow.



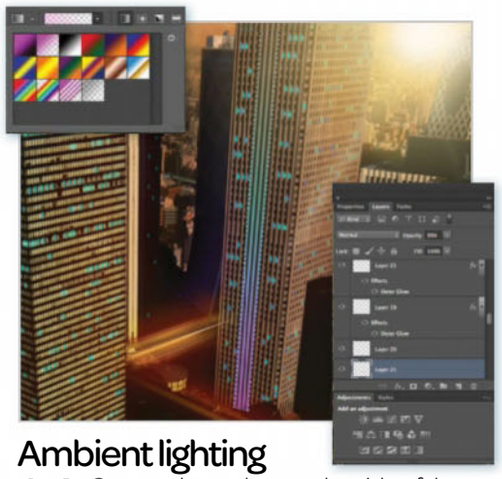
Prep for light trails

12 Use a Soft Round brush to create an orange haze on top of the roads. Change the blend mode of the layer to Vivid Light. Lower the Opacity of the layer to 45%, to help blend it into the roads.



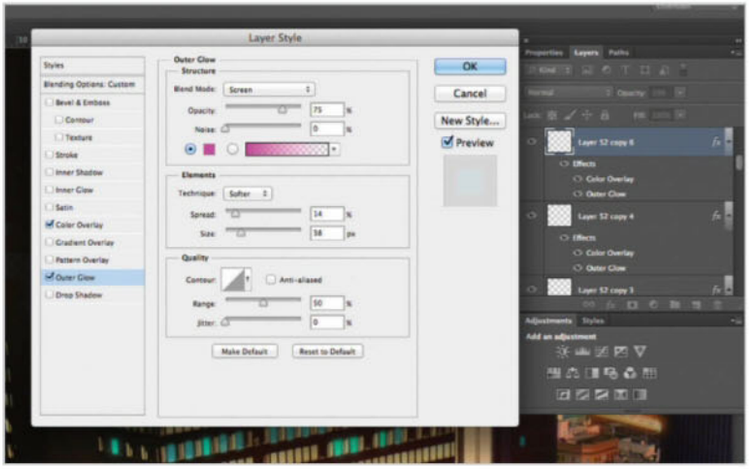
Paint the trails

13 On a new layer, create the light trails by adding long, thin boundaries with the Polygonal Lasso and fill them with a light orange colour. Blur the light streaks with a Motion Blur (Filter>Blur>Motion Blur) and then change the blend mode of the layer to Linear Light.



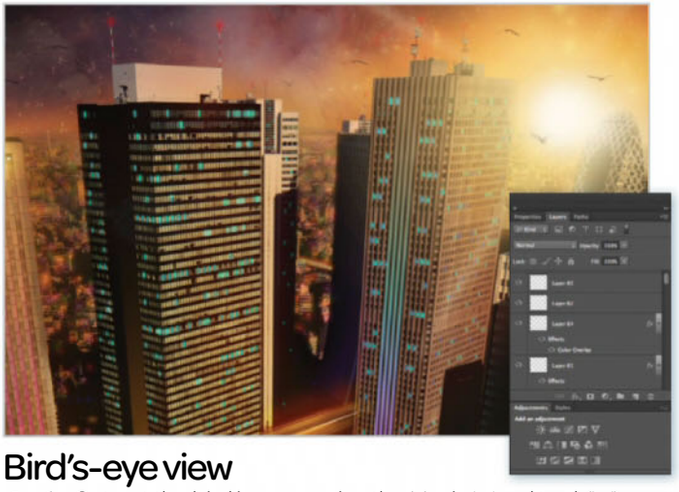
Ambient lighting

14 Create a boundary on the side of the buildings and fill it with the Gradient tool (G). With the boundaries still selected, fill it with another Gradient Fill in a different colour to create a chromatic effect.



Lights in the distance

15 Use a small brush to create the lights in the window of the background buildings. Double-click the layer to apply an Outer Glow. Change the blend mode of the layer to Linear Light.



Bird's-eye view

16 Cut out the bird images using the Magic Wand tool (W). Lower the Opacity of the layers to fade the birds into the sky. Finally, zoom out to make sure that the colours and composition of the image are balanced.

Expert tip
Moderation is key

When it comes to lighting, we have to begrudgingly operate a lighter hand (excuse the pun). As the lighting starts to make the scene look more vibrant, it's tempting to blanket bomb the image with lights at the brightest setting. However, by only allowing some of the lights to shine you'll create a more convincing effect and avoid the Christmas fairy lights look. Many of the lights in our image are on the lowest Opacity setting and hardly visible. But when viewed in totality, your mind subconsciously picks up on these subtleties to help form a coherent picture.

Essentials

Works with

Photoshop CS3 and above, CC and Elements

What you'll learn

- Use layers, layer masks and adjustment layers to create a stormy image

Time taken
2 hours

Expert

Stewart Wood

"Compositing images and creating something new is my favourite type of image editing. The first photo I took with a digital camera needed a sky replaced; this was my first composite. At Stewart Wood Photography most of my images, even my portraits, are composites and I've been playing with compositing images for years."

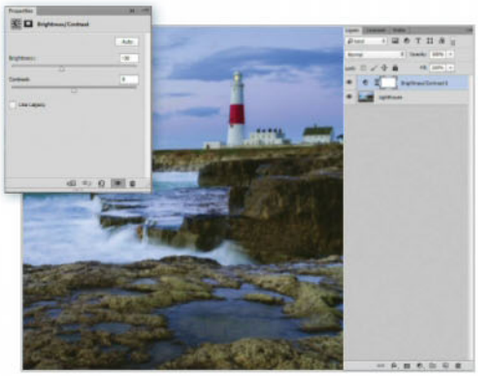
Dramatic landscape effects

Learn the basics behind compositing images to create a whole new atmosphere

Being able to create an image that only exists digitally is one great reason for using Photoshop. With layers, layer masks, adjustment layers and filters you're free to create whatever your imagination can come up with. Ever wanted to walk on the moon? Photoshop is here to help you. Ever wanted to be in a dramatic storm without getting wet? Photoshop can help with that, too.

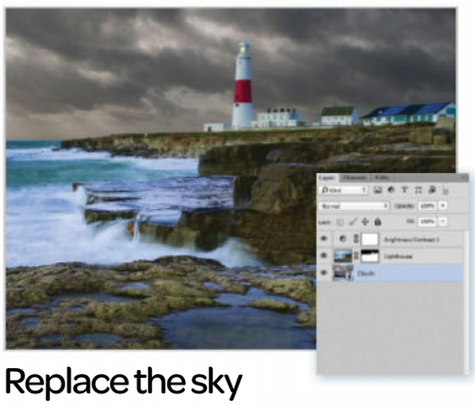
In this tutorial we're going to turn a normal landscape image into a stormy scene. This may sound like a tricky procedure, but in fact it's not that hard, so long as you follow the steps at all times and have fun with it!

We'll be changing the sky, adding waves and creating rain using filters, as well as using layer masks to make all the elements blend in together. At the end you'll have a basic knowledge of compositing. What's more, composited scenes don't even have to look photo-real, so you can play with styles like surreal or realism.



Darken the image

01 Go to File>Open and select the file 'Landscape.jpg'. Double-click on the layer to unlock it and rename it to Lighthouse. Now, go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Brightness/Contrast. In the Brightness section enter a value of -30.



Replace the sky

02 Select the Quick Selection tool (W) and then the sky. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Hide Selection. Go to File>Place Embedded (older versions use Place). Choose the file 'Clouds.jpg'. Resize to fit using the control handles and move the layer below the lighthouse.

Colour the sky

03 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. Select 'Use previous layer to create clipping mask' and click OK. Tick the Colorize box and use 199 for Hue and 12 for Saturation. Now with a soft black brush, select the Lighthouse layer mask and clean it up.

On the disc

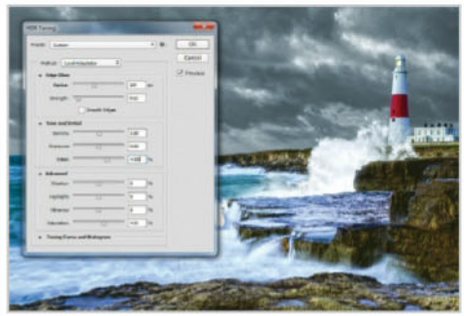
Learn this technique using the supplied files

Add some waves

04 Select the top layer and go to File>Place Embedded and select 'Wave1.jpg'. Go to Select>Color Range (in Elements, use the Magic Wand tool), pick Highlights and set 30% for Fuzziness and 200 for Range. Go to Select>Modify>Feather and enter a Radius of 0.5 pixels.

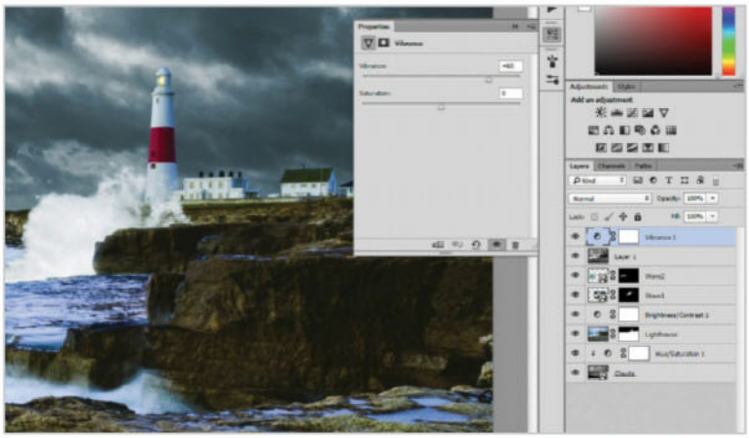
Blend the waves

05 Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal Selection. Position the waves to crash on the rocks and with a soft black brush, paint on the layer mask to blend them into the image. Repeat the last two steps to add more waves using 'wave2.jpg'.



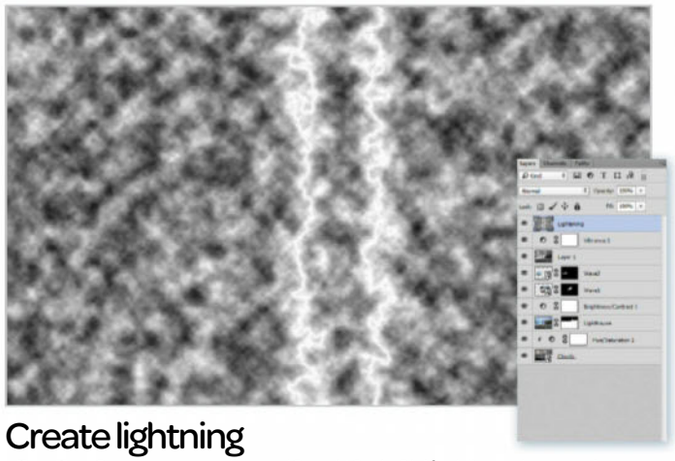
HDR toning

06 Go to Select>All, then to Edit>Copy Merged, then File>New. Photoshop should default to the clipboard, and click OK. Go to Edit>Paste, then to the HDR Toning adjustment (in Elements, Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Shadows/Highlights). Click Yes to flatten and enter +100% for Detail.



Add vibrance

07 Copy this layer back over to the image in the same way as before. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U to desaturate. Change the layer's blend mode to Overlay and its Opacity to 35%. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Vibrance and enter +60 (in Elements, use Hue/Saturation).



Create lightning

08 Create a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N) and name it Lightning. Select the Gradient tool (G) and pick the Reflected Gradient option. Painting from black to white, drag out from the centre. Go to Filter>Render>Difference Clouds. Press Cmd/Ctrl+ I to invert the colours.

Refine the lightning

09 Go to Image>Adjustments>Levels. Enter 240 into the Shadow input box. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. With a hard black brush, paint away parts until one bolt of lightning is left. Change the blend mode to Screen and Opacity to 80%.

Position the lightning

10 Go to Edit>Free Transform and reposition the lightning. Mask it out from in front of the lighthouse. Set up a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and create a clipping mask like before. Click Colorize and enter 223 in the Hue setting. Repeat the lightning steps to add more to the image.

Create some rain

11 Create a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N) and name this layer Rain. Go to Edit>Fill, use 50% Gray and click OK. Go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Use an Amount of 150%, set to Gaussian and tick Monochromatic. Change the blend mode of this layer to Screen.

Blur the rain

12 Go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur and use an Angle of -60 and a Distance of 50. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels. Select 'Use previous layer to create clipping mask' and click OK. Enter 84 for the shadows, 0.14 for the midtones and 162 for the highlights.

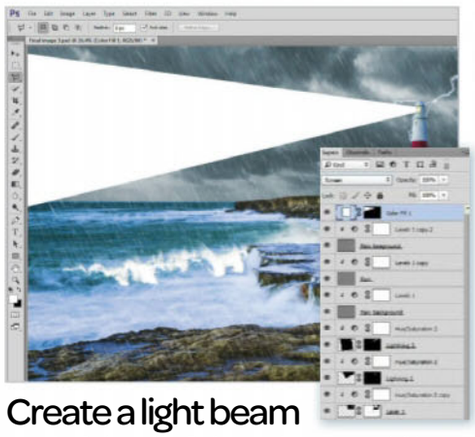
Add more rain

13 To simulate a focal depth, repeat the last step for a foreground layer and a background layer. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and blur the background and foreground rain by 5 pixels. Go to Edit>Free Transform and size up the rain to remove the edges.

Expert tip

Composite tips

Sometimes when piecing different images together into a different scene you can get to a point where something just doesn't look right. When you're not sure what the problem is, put a black and white adjustment layer on top of your layer stack. This will eliminate any colour and allow you to just see the brightness and shapes in the image. In this image, for example, if the lighting and composition looks fine, you'll know the problem is with the colour.

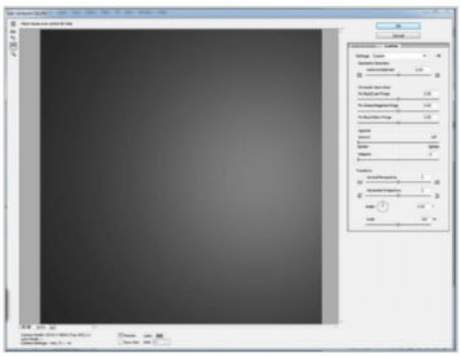


Create a light beam

14 Select the Polygonal Lasso tool (L) and draw a beam shape coming from the lighthouse. Go to Layer>New Fill Layer>Solid Color. Select white as the colour and change the blend mode to Screen.

Lighting effects

15 Select the Solid Color's layer mask and go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Enter a Radius of 50 pixels and change the layer's Opacity to 50%. Repeat steps 14 and 15 to add lighting to the lighthouse tower, and a lightning bolt at the top left of the image.



Add a vignette

16 Create a new layer and name it Vignette. Go to Edit>Fill and fill with 50% Gray. Go to Filter>Lens Correction. Click the custom tab and enter a Vignette Amount of -100 and a Midpoint of 0. Click OK to confirm.

Blend elements

17 Change the blend mode to Overlay and Opacity to 75%. Go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Enter 1% in the Amount, use Gaussian and Monochromatic. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Photo Filter and use a Cooling Filter (80) set to 25%.

Reduce the saturation

18 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. Reduce the Saturation by -25. Select the layer mask and invert it (Cmd/Ctrl+I). Use a soft white brush to paint over the layer mask to reduce the saturation where needed.

Darken some more

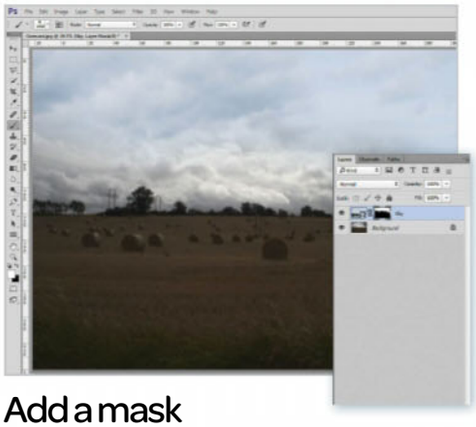
19 Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels. Set the midtones to 0.80. Select the layer mask and invert it. With a soft white brush, paint in the layer mask around the edges and in the dark clouds and shadows to darken them.

PROJECT 2 Fix overcast skies

Compositing can fix your landscape images

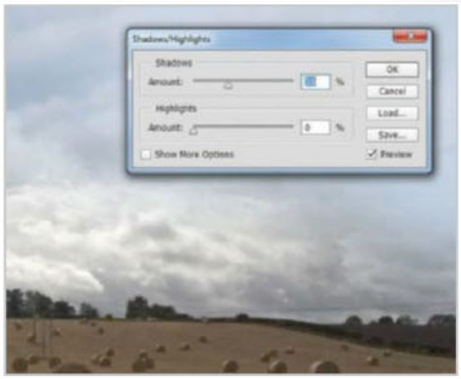
Prepare your layers

01 Go to File>Open and select the file 'Landscape.jpg'. Go to File>Place Embedded (for older versions use Place). Choose the file 'Clouds.jpg'.



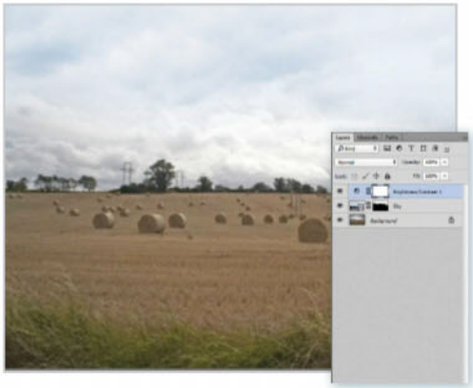
Add a mask

02 Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. Select one of the soft black brushes and mask out the land, leaving some of the original clouds in.



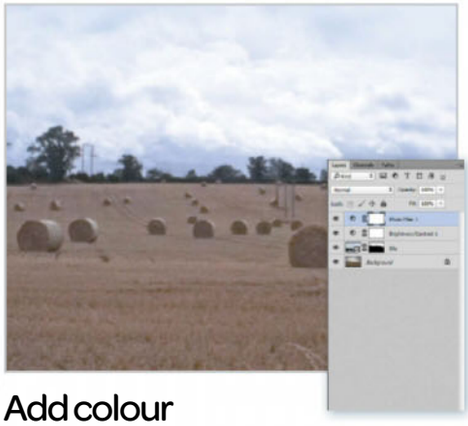
Shadows and Highlights

03 Let's fix the darkness in the field. Select the Background layer and go to Image>Adjustments>Shadows/Highlights. Leave the setting at default and click OK.



Increase the brightness

04 Now to brighten the whole image. Select the top layer and set up a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer. Set the Brightness to 40.



Add colour

05 Now we need to add some colour to the sky. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Photo Filter and choose the Cooling Filter (80).

Final touches

06 We don't want the blue on the field, so let's fix that now. Use a soft black brush and paint the filter away from the ground. Change the layer's Opacity to 25%.

Alternative edit
Change the atmosphere

If you change the light source in the image to say a sunset scene you will need to also change the shadows in the image using a Levels adjustment layer. The shadows in an image will define where the light source is. To do this, go to Layer>New adjustment layer>Levels. Change the highlight level to 150-160. Invert the Levels layer mask (Cmd/Ctrl+I) and with a soft white brush paint at 10-20% opacity over the shadows where they are needed.

SAVE RHINOS NOW

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An animal in crisis
In eastern Africa, poachers use automatic weapons to slaughter endangered rhinos. The animals are shot and the horns are hacked away, tearing deep into the rhinos' flesh with the rhino left to die.

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Ol Pejeta is a leading conservancy fighting against this cruelty. It needs more funds so more rangers and surveillance can be deployed on the ground to save rhinos from this horrible treatment.

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World of Animals magazine takes a stand against these atrocities and is proud to be in partnership with the Ol Pejeta Conservancy – 10% of our profits go towards saving rhinos in the fight against poaching

Buy World of Animals at all good shops now

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On the disc

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Essentials

Works with

Photoshop CS and above, CC and Photoshop Elements

What you'll learn

Paint with basic brushes to sketch and colour a watercolour

Time taken

40 mins

Expert

Sara Biddle

"I enjoy the creative freedom of working in this sketchy watercolour style, and it works perfectly with a water scene. This tutorial covers many of the techniques that I often use in my work as a freelance illustrator. Art is something that I have always been, and continue to be, passionate about."

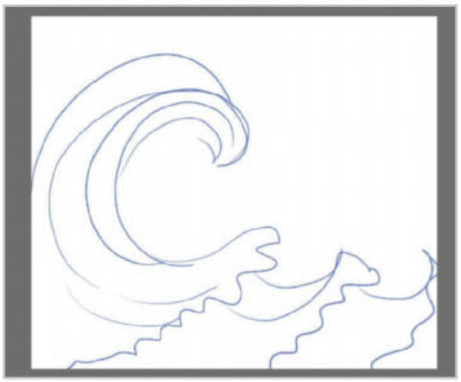
Paint digital watercolour

Jump right in with the Brush tool and get creative with this easy watercolour painting technique

If you think there are lots of complicated filters and enhancement tricks involved in painting watercolur, you may be surprised to learn that there are none whatsoever. A water scene is perfectly suited to a watercolour style, and you only need a few basic brushes for this.

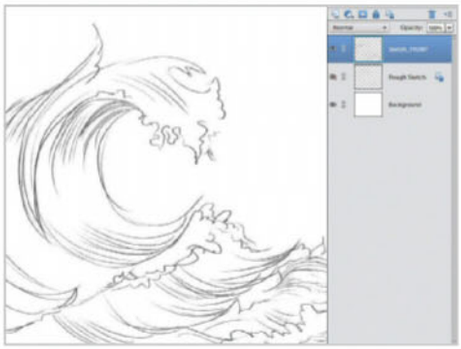
To create the sketch, we've used a standard Hard Round brush. To paint in the colour, we used a watercolour brush, (which is actually the Watercolour Textured Surface brush from Photoshop's Wet Media presets just with a few modifications). In the final stages, we show you how to use a basic Soft Round brush to blend. The image for this tutorial was created using a stylus with pen pressure – if you don't have a stylus, a mouse can be just as easily used. All you need to do is adjust the Opacity and Flow sliders down to your preferred percentage.

After completion of this tutorial, you will be ready to set sail and dive into your own pool of watercolour and water-related creations. Have fun, relax and let the waves of creation wash over you.



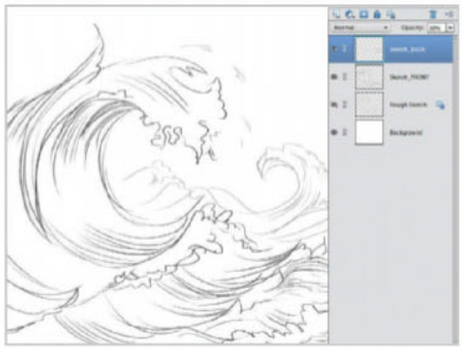
Draft a rough sketch

01 Begin by creating a new layer. Draw out the simple shape of the water with a round brush (or load up the supplied 'Sketches.psd' and skip to step 4). Get a good feel for the shape of the water. When finished, reduce the layer's Opacity to 50%.



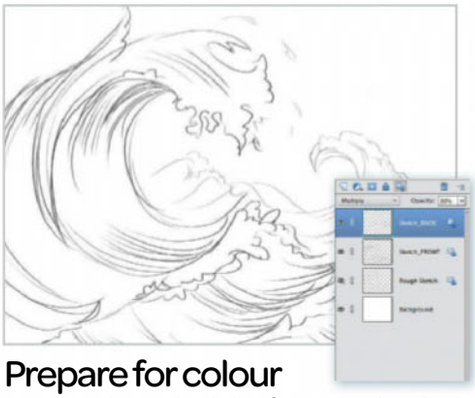
Make a clean sketch

02 Set the brush's diameter to a small size. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N to create a new layer. Using the rough sketch as a guide, sketch out more detailed water with lots of sketchy lines to illustrate the direction and flow. Hide the rough sketch guide when it's no longer needed.



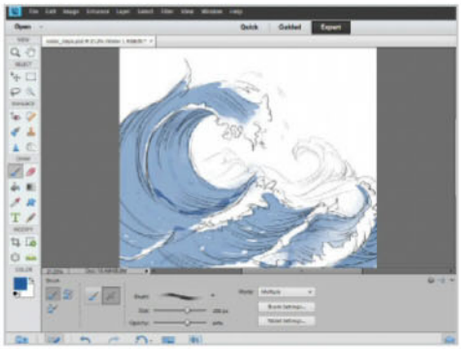
Draw background waves

03 Add detail to the background using the same technique. Make a new layer and then sketch some waves in the distance behind the main waves we've already drawn. Reduce this background sketch layer's Opacity to 50%, to give the impression that they are farther away.



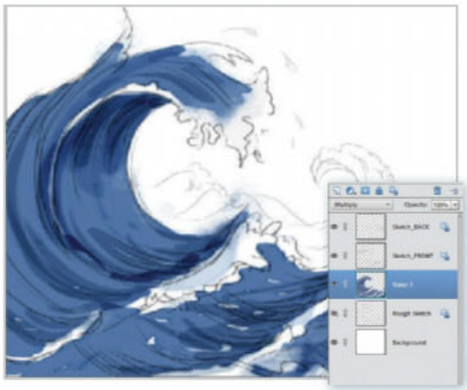
Prepare for colour

04 Change both the foreground and background sketch layers to Multiply mode. This will keep the sketch visible throughout the colouring process. We will also Lock Transparent Pixels on these two layers by selecting the layers individually and pressing the / key.



Wash over the foreground

05 Make a new layer underneath the sketch layers, and set the mode to Multiply. Using the supplied 'Watercolour brush.abr', paint in blue waves without lifting the brush to get a thin coat that covers the entire foreground, except for the wave peaks. These should remain colourless.

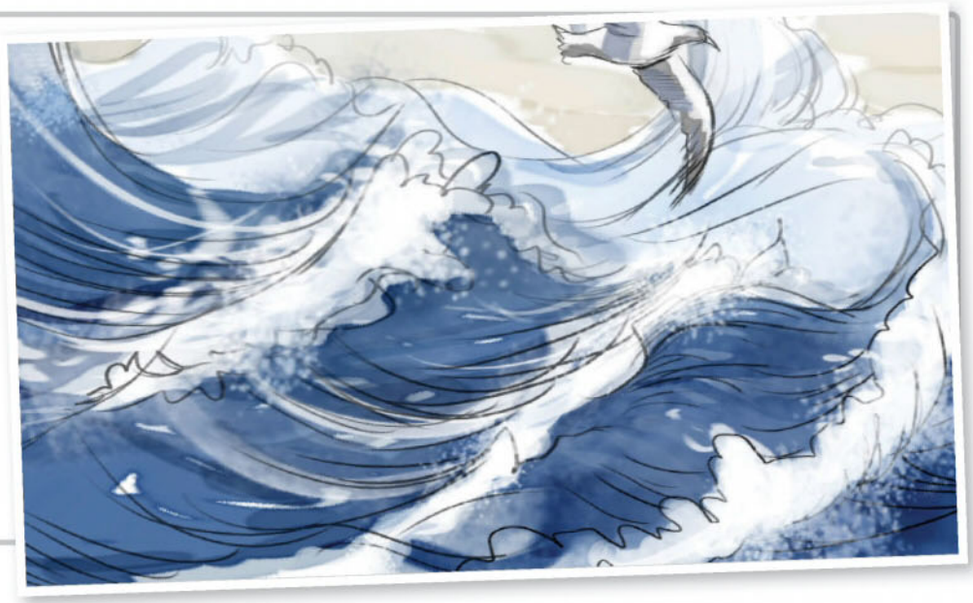


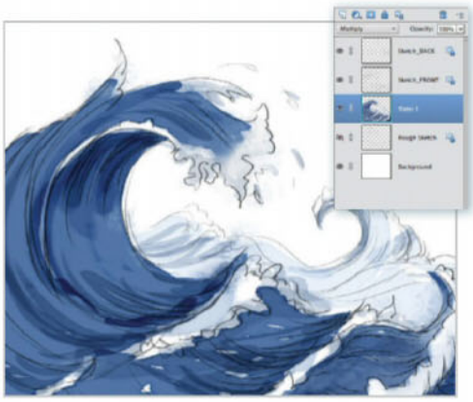
Add darker colour variations

06 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the watercolour layer, then press Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge the two layers into one. Next, use the Brush tool to paint in lines flowing in the direction of the waves and underneath the curve of the big wave.

Expert Tip
Smudge tool spume

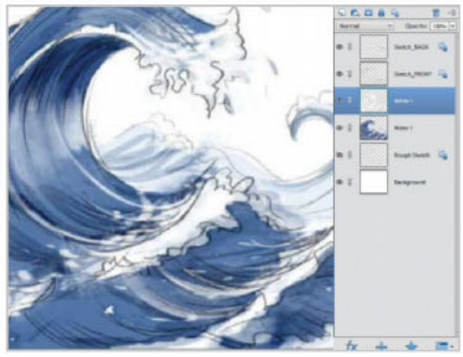
The Smudge tool can be used in combination with the Brush tool in many ways, especially for blending and pushing or pulling colour around. Depending on which brush tip is used with the Smudge tool, the effects can vary drastically. A dotted brush tip (such as the one included with the resources) can make for some nice effects in this water scene. With a light Foreground colour picked and the Finger Painting option checked, paint over the splashy areas of your work for easy water spume.





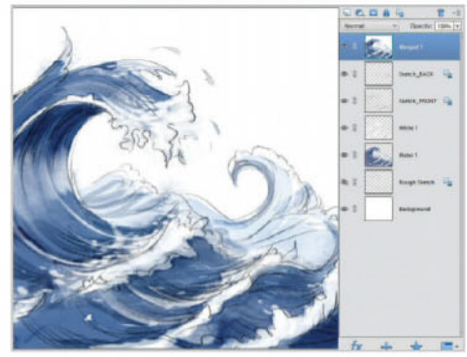
Colour the background

07 Grab a lighter shade of blue and paint in the base coat for the background waves, then follow it up with a few brushstrokes under the wave curls and along the water flow. We've also used a grey-blue colour on the foamy peaks.



Paint highlights and spume

08 Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+J and make sure this new layer is underneath the sketch but above the colour in the stack. With white, or nearly white colour, paint in short dotted strokes as spume and foam. Strokes along the curvature of the water create the impression of highlights.

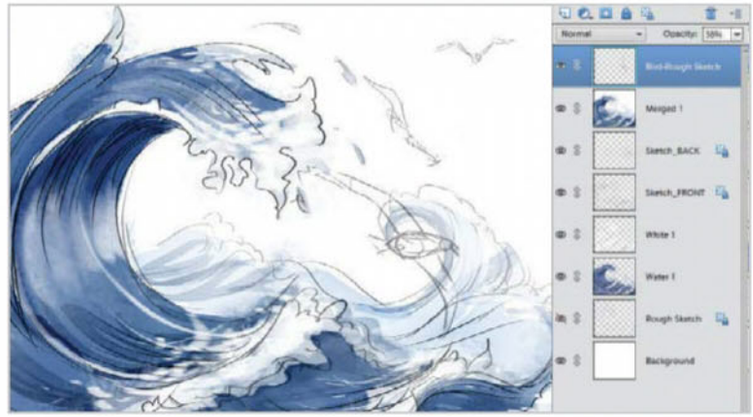


Merge and tweak

09 Select the topmost layer in the stack and press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E. This merges all visible layers onto a new layer at the very top. You have the option now to address any tweaks such as colour adjustments. Use Filter>Liquify to slightly reposition the waves to your liking.

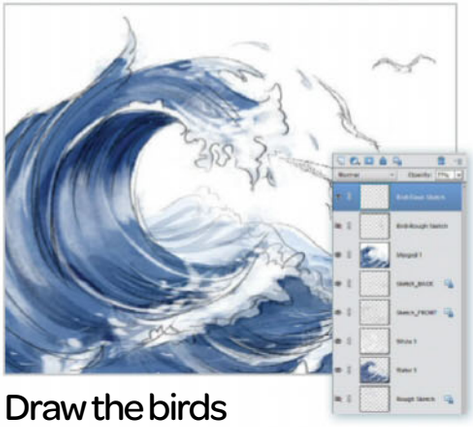
Fade the background

10 With the merged layer selected, grab a big Soft Round brush in white, and gently with a low-opacity brush, paint over the background waves to lightly fade them, pushing them further back into the distance.



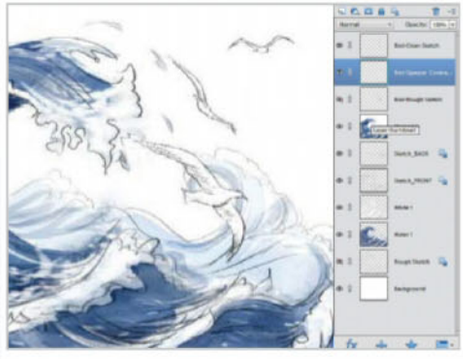
Sketch the bird placement

11 Create a new layer on top and use the Hard Round brush to sketch out the general placement and shape of the birds. Much like before, this rough sketch will just be a guide. Reduce the layer's Opacity so that it's transparent but still visible.



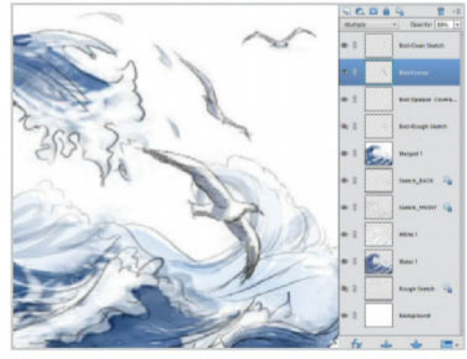
Draw the birds

12 Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N and use the rough sketch as a guide to draw in the birds with more accuracy. When the drawing is done, hide or delete the rough sketch layer, as it's not needed.



Make the birds opaque

13 We can see the waves though the birds. Fix this by grabbing the Brush with 100% Opacity and make a new layer under the sketch. Cover the entire body of the bird with the Background colour (white) so that the waves can't be seen.



Give them colour

14 Make a new Multiply layer just under the clean bird drawing. Use the watercolour brush to paint in some colour on the birds. Since the birds are white, we'll add some shadows with cream and grey-blue brushes.

Paint a distant beach

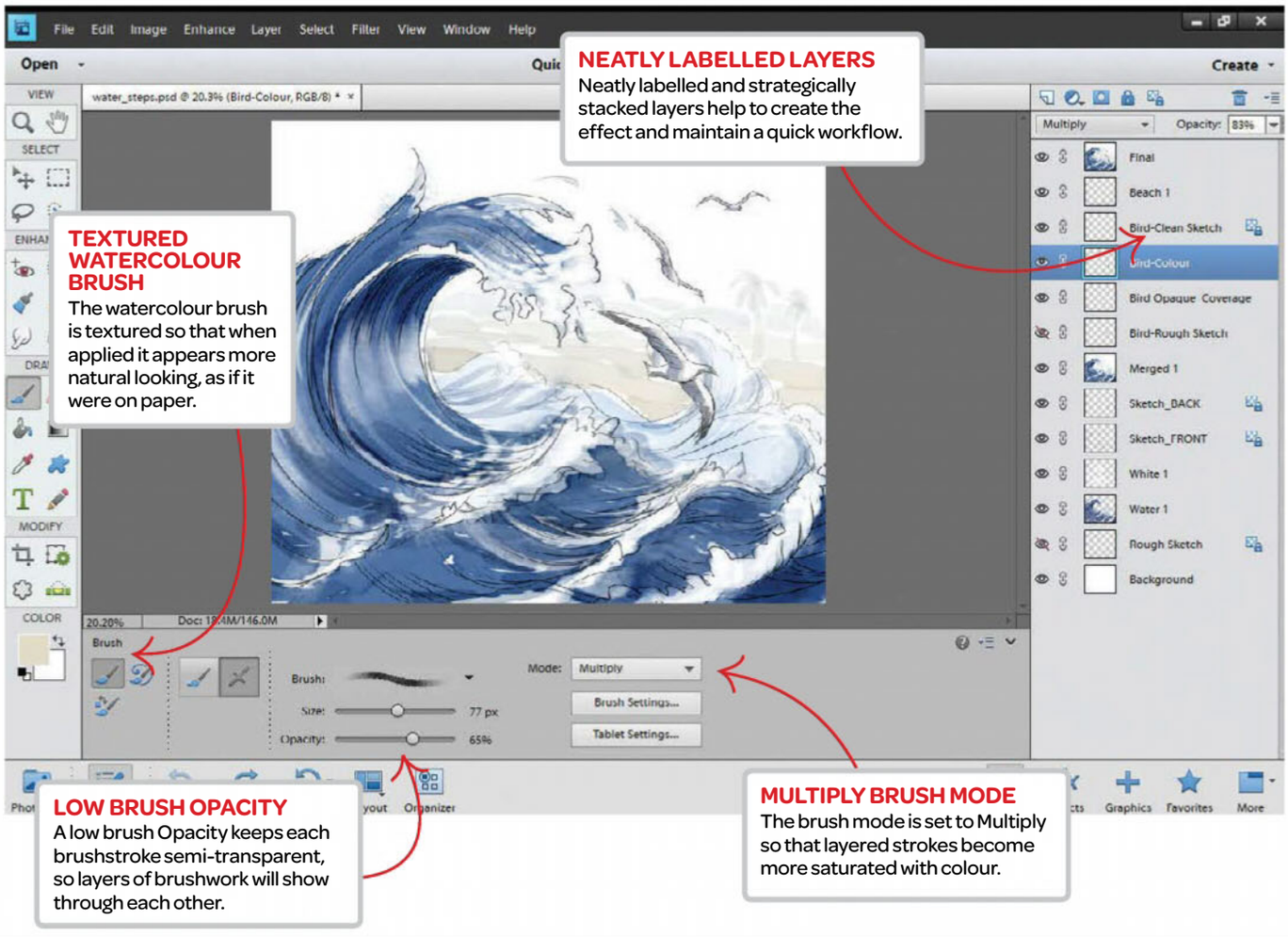
15 On a new Multiply layer at the very top of the stack, use a sandy orange to paint a beach in the distance behind the waves. Use lower brush opacities on the beach as it goes upwards into the horizon to give the impression of distance.

Add in some hills

16 On the same layer as the beach, use a light grey and daub some hills in the far distance. From here, make a new merged layer with Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to make adjustments to colour, if necessary, to complete the scene.

Closer look Digital watercolour at a glance

See how layers and brushes work together to get the effect



Save the date
02·08·15
Nyssa & Russell
RSVP

On the disc

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Essentials

Works with

Photoshop CS3 and above, and Photoshop CC

What you'll learn

Make a letterpress effect with layers, brushes and the Type tool

Time taken

3 hours

Expert

Danielle Dixon

"I love Photoshop and recreating traditional artistic styles within it. Throughout my career as an illustrator, layout designer and graphic designer, I have used Photoshop time and again. I love to share my discoveries and skills with you."

Get the letterpress look

Uncover your layer styles and Type tool to create letterpress-style art with striking texture

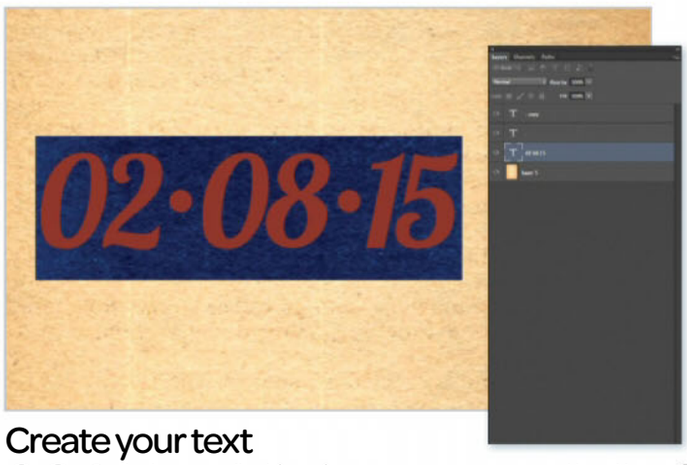
Letterpress printing is a traditional technique involving relief printing and a printing press. Its retro ink stamp style is a very popular effect to recreate in Photoshop, without all of the mess! Creating the effect involves multiple layer styles being applied to shape and text layers. With these settings in place, we then use a variety of textured backgrounds and brushes with different blend modes on top, tying it all together.

The applied layer styles will trick the viewer's eye into believing that the letters have really been pressed into thick quality paper. This basic print technique can produce bespoke and creative textures, with the main focus of the image looking embossed and almost handmade.

In our example we will show you how to create a basic letterpress effect, and how best to utilise the features within Photoshop. Once you have read through and understood the techniques explained, take the skills learnt and apply them to a whole multitude of items such as invites, posters, logos and cards. Don't be restricted when working; experiment and have fun, as the outcomes will always be different and exciting.

Set up your canvas

01 Create a new A4 document and grab the 'Texture.jpg' background from the resources. Open it up into Photoshop and drag and drop it into your canvas. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to activate the Transform tools, then hold down Shift and drag a corner point outwards, extending the proportions as you go.



Create your text

02 Grab the supplied font from your resources and load it into Photoshop by double-clicking on it. Once installed it will be visible in Photoshop. Select the Type tool from the toolbar and write your text. Highlight it and then select the aforementioned font and a suitable size in the Options bar.

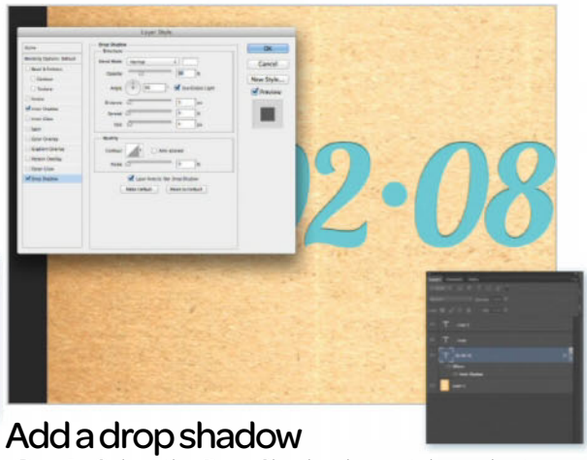
Expert tip

Letterpress imprint

To get that special letterpress-style imprint with the text elements, apply the Bevel & Emboss layer style. Set the Style to Emboss, Technique to Smooth and Depth setting to around 168%. Make its Size 16px and Soften to 1px, with an Angle to 95 degrees, Altitude to 32 and adjust the Highlight and Shadow strengths for different looks. Setting the style up this way helps to make your lettering feel more 'pushed' in, but do try other settings.

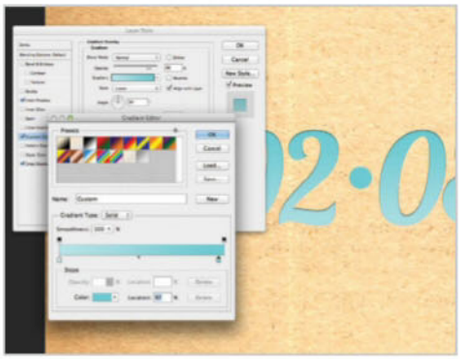
Layer styles

03 Double-click the text layer in the Layers palette to bring up the Layer Styles dialog box. Select the Inner Shadow box down the left and ensure it's set to Multiply at 60% Opacity and Angle: 90. We have set the Distance to 3px and Size to 4px.



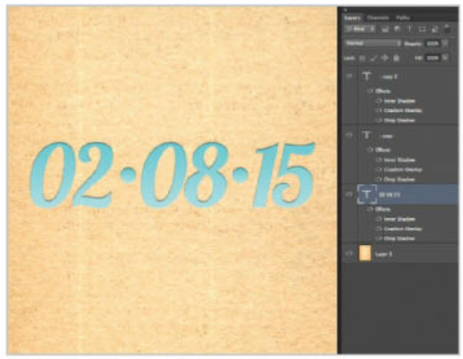
Add a drop shadow

04 Select the Drop Shadow layer style, and set the blend mode to Normal. Double-click on the coloured rectangle and select white. Keep the Angle at 90, Opacity at 30%, set Distance to 3px and the Size to 4px.



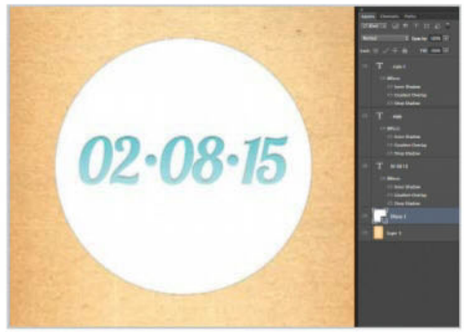
Colour it up

05 Click on the Gradient Overlay style and set blend mode to Normal and Opacity to 80%. Click on the Gradient colours box, click on the bottom colour stoppers and set one as a dark tone and one a light tone.



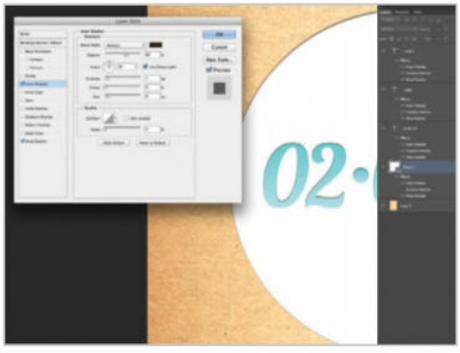
Show off your style

06 All values can be tweaked to suit individual projects; this is just a guideline. When done with your layer styles, hit OK. You'll see in the Layers palette all the styles you applied are displayed. Copying these layer styles to other layers is simple!



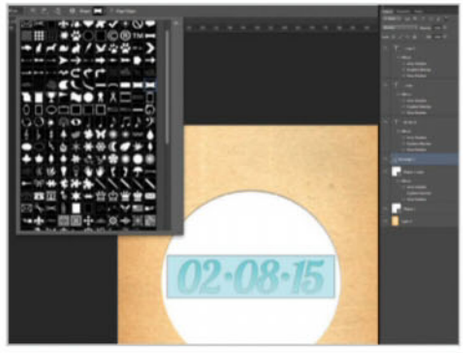
Copy and paste

07 Hold down Opt/Alt+Shift and click on the top sub-layer called Effects. Drag and drop onto another layer. Next select the Ellipse tool from the toolbar, hold down Shift to keep perspective, and draw a circle. In the Layers palette, drag and drop this layer to sit under the text.



Tweak your settings

08 Copy the layer styles to this layer; double-click onto the Inner Shadow layer to re-open the Layer Styles menu. Change Distance to 7 and the Size to 8. It is a larger shape so a little more definition looks good. Uncheck the Gradient Overlay option.



Build up the image

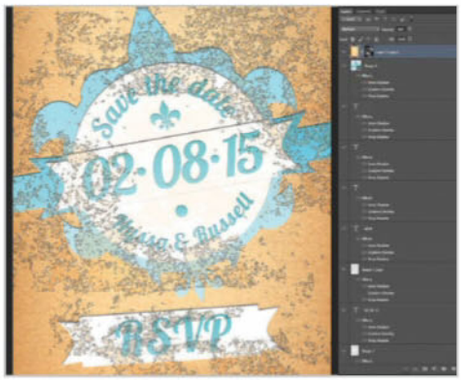
09 Add in the arched type (see side bar) and then duplicate the circle. Increase its Size as shown in the side bar, using H and W boxes. Select the Rectangle tool and create a shape, then with the Custom Shape tool, draw a banner.

Refine your shapes

10 Merge the layers (Cmd/Ctrl+E) and copy the layer styles from the circle layer to this now merged shape. Using the same method of merging, create a decorative background like ours, mixing custom and regular shapes together. Tweak your layer styles to suit individual shapes.

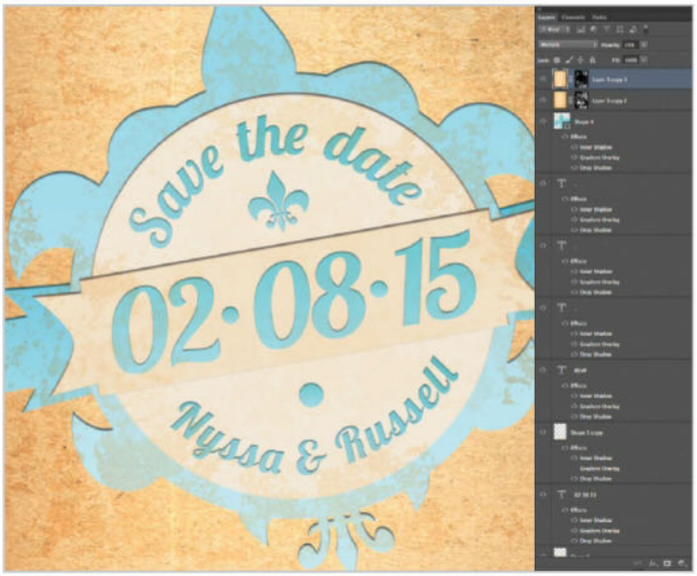
Blend mode alteration

11 Shift-click all of your layers except for the texture and press Cmd/Ctrl+T. Rotate your shape slightly and duplicate the texture background. Move it to the top of the layer stack and set its blend mode to Multiply, and then lower its Opacity to 40%.



Add some grunge

12 Select the Magic Wand tool (W) and click on the texture layer to select some of its texture. Enhance definition with a Levels adjustment (Cmd/Ctrl+L) if needed. Add a new mask to this layer, hiding away the selected areas of the texture.

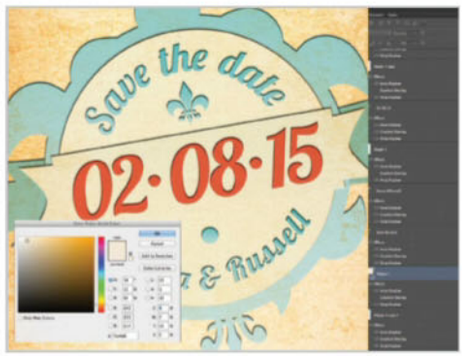


New texture and depth

13 Duplicate this layer and select the Brush tool (B). Set your Foreground/Background swatches to black and white. Click on the mask's thumbnail and paint away some of the texture, leaving more detail in the background. Add a new layer and select the Brush tool again.

Apply texture with brushes

14 Load up the free texture brush. Choose a dark brown colour and set the layer's blend mode to Color Burn, and then simply paint on to apply. Erase some elements so the effect is subtle, lowering the layer's Opacity if needed.

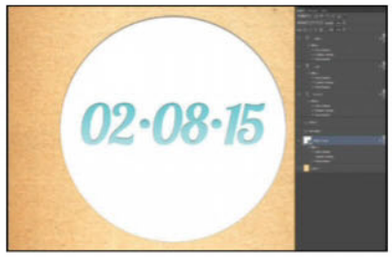


And to finish!

15 Now that your letterpress effect has taken shape, go back and edit any colours or settings until completely satisfied. Keep zooming in to check how things look. Take a look at our tip on the opposite page for another great finishing touch.

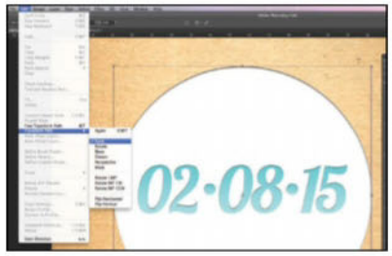
Expert edit

Form text along a path



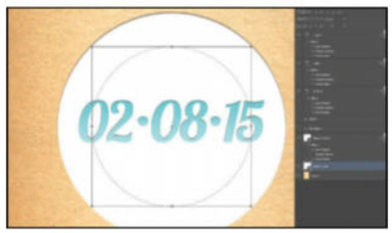
Create the path

01 To create shaped text, first you must create a path. You can either use the Pen tool or a shape as we have. Click onto the circle's shape layer in the Layers palette.



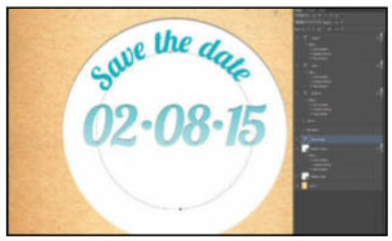
Set up the path

02 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the layer and click on the sub-layer Effects. Drag and drop onto the Trash icon to delete. Go to Edit>Transform Path>Scale.



Select the Type tool

03 In the Options bar, alter the Height and Width to 70%. Hit OK, select the Horizontal Type tool, hover over the shape outline, and then click onto the path.



Write your text

04 Type, and set the size and font in the Options bar. To move the text on a path, select the Direct Selection tool (A). Click on the text and the cursor will change so you can move the text.

TOP 10 Best ways to blend images

Use our hot list of tips to get the best out of your photo compositions

FREE RESOURCES! Download a pack of 50 high-quality stock photos and vector graphics from your disc this issue, courtesy of **www.shutterstock.com**, and give these tips for blending a go!

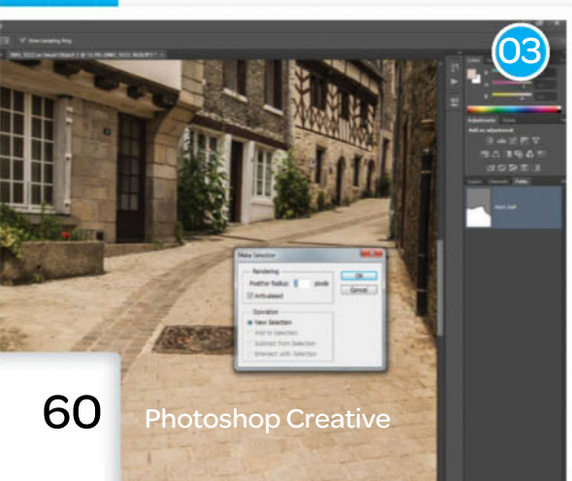
Creating the perfect scene in Photoshop requires practice and patience, along with the skills and abilities to merge and blend more than one image successfully into another. And it's not always landscapes and scenery that require merging. Portions of faces, arms, or even skin tones require some work. Read on for a varied, but by no means exhaustive list of tips for that perfect blend.

01 THE RIGHT ANGLES

The images being merged will need to look convincing when pieced together. The key element to get right when starting a project is making sure the composition and the angle of the background image are at least similar to the foreground subjects. Not only will it look more believable, but when you come to edit the composition the process will be a whole lot easier.

02 THE MIGHTY PEN

The Pen tool is, in effect, a line drawing and selection tool. You can use it to make incredibly accurate selections, as well as using the anchor points to bend and warp the shape of the line you are creating to fit the outline of the subject you want to cut out. The Pen tool varies from the Lasso selection tool because it offers more variation. It can be used to create illustrative line work, paths, or just a selection.



03 FIND YOUR PATH

A path is a kind of layer that acts as a record of your selections made with the Pen tool. Paths save the information so you can return to it later and turn it back into a selection, feather it, or transform it. If you are using quite a selection-heavy image and you want to come back to that selection or create more selections and save them as well, then you can. Paths allow you to save many selections as individual paths that can be arranged and named just like layers.

04 STEP BACK IN TIME

If you forget to Undo straight away, use the History to rewind the clock and fix any mistakes you've made. Obviously there are limits to your time travelling, so make sure you allow for plenty of editing mistakes by increasing your history steps to over 100 in Photoshop's Preference menu. Access this by using Preferences, and then using the File Handling tab. History enables you to jump back to a pre-mistake state. This is very useful for perfecting edge detail.

05 HELPFUL HISTOGRAMS

Histograms are great (though their name might be rather dull). They allow you to see your image's exposure at a glance. This is massively useful when you want to add two images together, as you can see how they match up in terms of shadow and highlights and also in terms of colour.

06 TRANSFORM AND TRANSFORM AGAIN

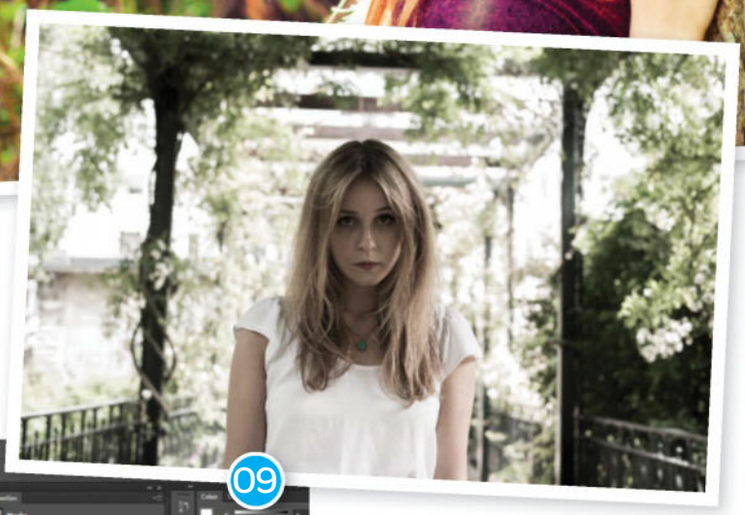
Okay, so not every image is going to look great at an initial glance when dropped onto its intended background. By using the Free Transform tool (Cmd/Ctrl+T), you can alter the perspective, size and scale of an image and bend it to fit your needs.

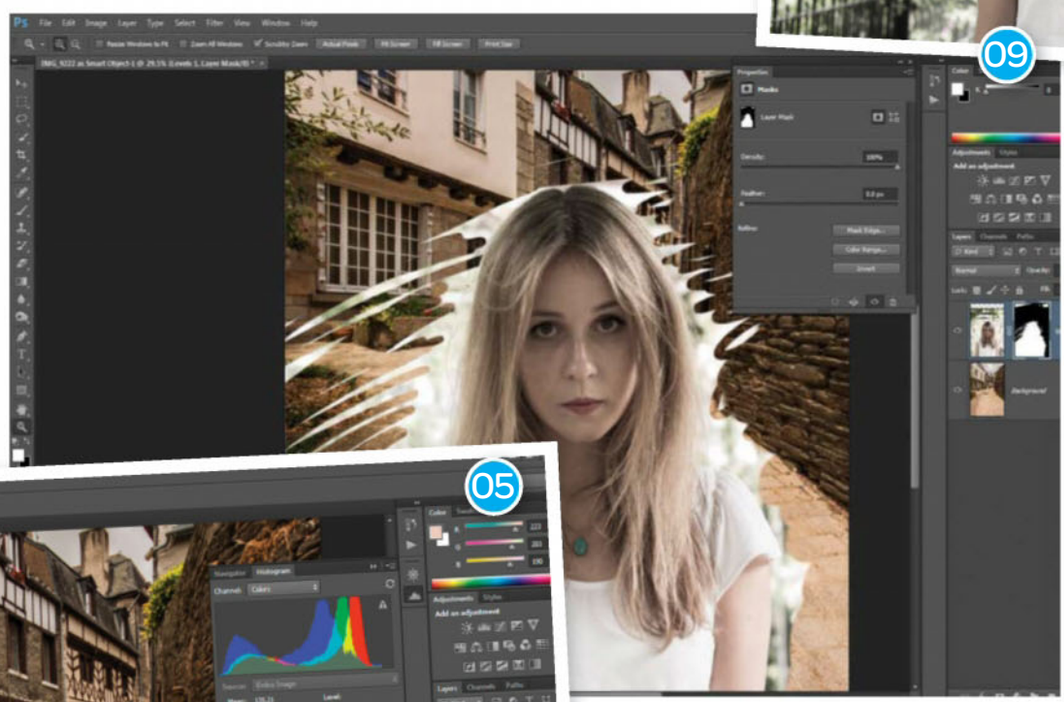
07 BALANCED BRUSHWORK

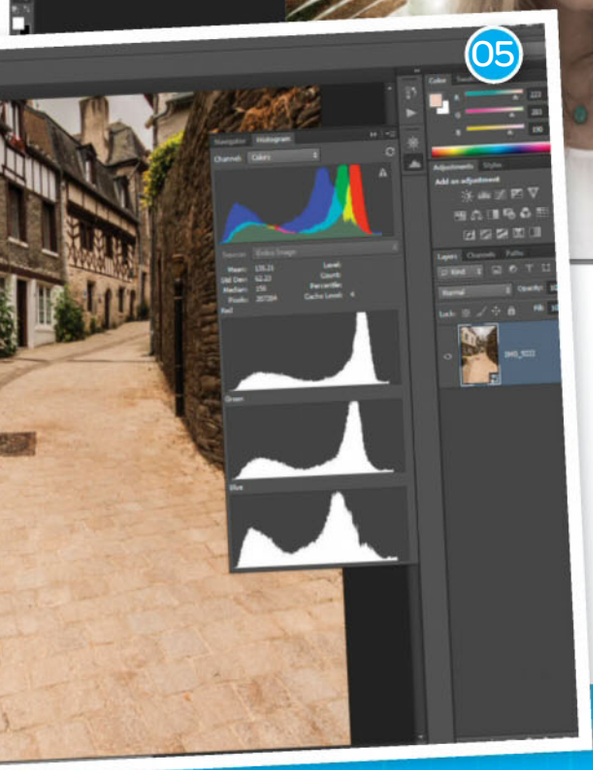
Add depth and shading to an image with the Dodge and Burn tools. These are handy to use when merging and blending layers and images, and are very effective for defining your image's edge detail and faking the lighting. Take control of your results by using all the options available to you by selecting Shadows or Highlights when dodging or burning an image's details.

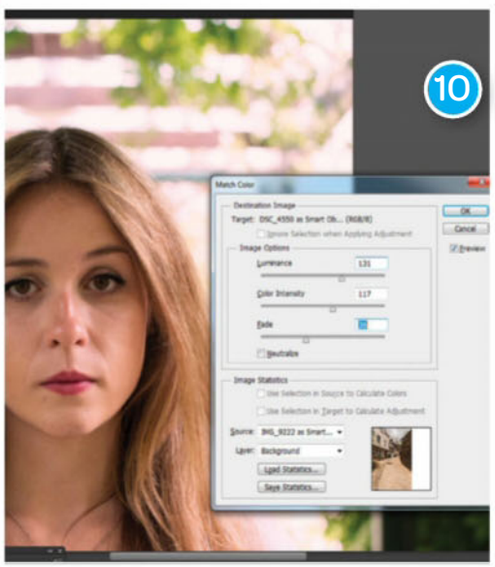
08 ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

Arguably one of the most powerful features in Photoshop is the adjustment layer. This gives the ability to make an edit, be it a colour curve or an exposure adjustment, and if needs must you can go back and adjust it at any point. Not only that, but you can alter the layer properties of the adjustment layer as well as move it up or down the layer stack and see how it interacts with other layers; a must-have for blending.









09 MARVELLOUS MASKS

Afraid of erasing detail for good? Don't want to cut too much away from a layer? Why not use a mask? By using paint brushes and a greyscale palette, you can effectively tell Photoshop what parts of a layer you want to be visible. Depending on the masking mode you are using, you will either paint in or paint out parts of an image using black, white, or grey. Ideal for making non-destructive edits to a layer, because like the adjustment layer, it's completely editable.

10 WHICH COLOUR?

If you are using two images that were shot with different lighting and at different times of the day, merging them is going to cause some problems, right? Wrong. With the Match Color command, you can do just that and match the colours of one image to another. So long as both files are open at the same time, it can also be used on layers as well. Head to Image>Adjustments>Match Color to get started with this incredibly helpful blending feature.

On the disc

Follow this technique using the supplied files

Essentials

Works with

Photoshop CS6 and above, Photoshop CC

What you'll learn

- Use smart objects when dealing with lots of photos and layer styles

Time taken

2 hours

Expert

Kirk Nelson

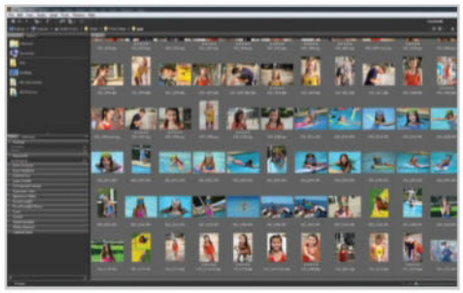
"I'm always looking for projects to work with the hundreds of photos I have of my children. I'm a graphics artist, freelance writer and instructor, and have been working with Photoshop for nearly two decades. I'm just your friendly neighbourhood graphics geek!"

Compose a photo collage

Learn how to display your family photos in a fun and lively themed collage

One of the challenges of being a parent in the digital age is figuring out what to do with the near endless stream of family snapshots being captured day-in day-out. For every 'stop-in-your-tracks-oh-how-cute' moment of your kids, you probably have dozens if not hundreds of 'just-okay' snapshots. You could just dump them all up on social media and expect friends and family to sort through them. But if you are a creative individual, then you could put your talents to use and design a fun, attractive, and completely unique photo collage!

In this tutorial we'll take you through the steps for arranging dozens of water-themed photos into a water droplet-shaped collage; complete with water splash textures. The techniques are straightforward and simple enough to master. But arranging several photos can be rather time-consuming, so we've also included a few time-saving techniques. Even though this project is based around a water theme, we fully encourage you to find a shape that matches the theme of your own photos, and use these techniques to create a personal collage for your own family.

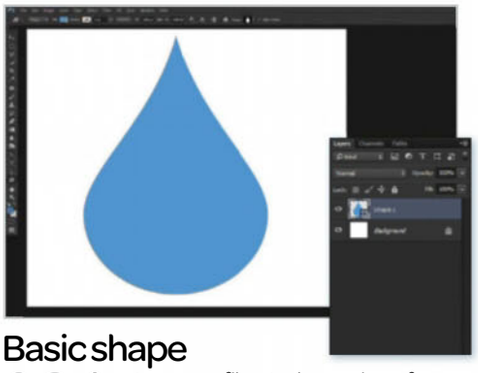


Your photo collection

01 Begin by gathering a collection of photos to use for the project. Try to find photos that fall into a common theme. In this example, all these images have a water theme during summertime. The collection should contain somewhere between 60 and 100 images.

Image grooming

02 Go through the collection of photos to perform any colour adjustments, lighting corrections, or cropping. The collection should have a good variety of colourful subjects and compositions, or the final collage will end up looking too repetitive.



Basic shape

03 Create a new file at a large size of 230 x 200mm at 300 pixels/inch. Use the Custom Shape tool (U) to create a large basic shape in the centre of the canvas. A large blue raindrop is appropriate for our collection of water themed photos.

Place a photo

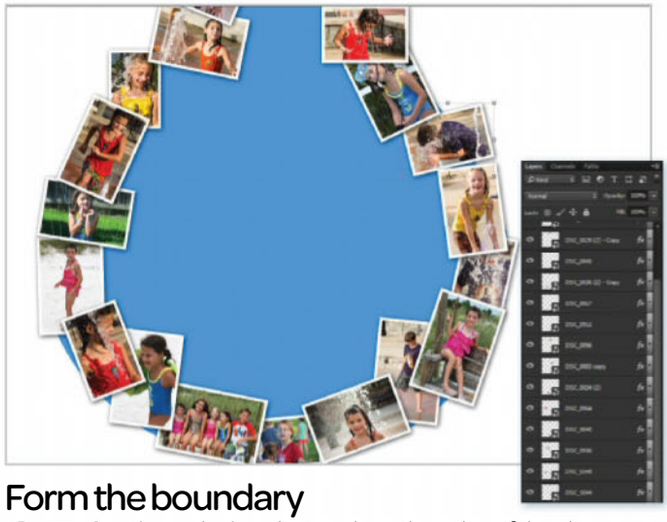
04 Go to File>Place Linked (or Embedded if you prefer) and choose one of your photos to insert into the project. Scale the photo to be fairly small and then rotate slightly using the corner control boxes.

Layer styles

05 Add a Stroke layer style to the photo (Layer>Layer Style>Stroke). Use a Size of 10 pixels, Inside position and set its colour to white. Then add a Drop Shadow with a Distance of 5 and Size of 18px.

Add more photos

06 Place another photo into the composition and position in the same manner as before. The layer styles can be copied from one layer to another by Ctrl/right-clicking on the layer thumbnail and choosing Copy Layer Styles, then Ctrl/right-clicking on the new layer and choosing Paste Layer Styles.



Form the boundary

07 Continue placing photos along the edge of the shape. Vary the order of your photo placement so the photos don't all overlap in the same direction. Pay attention to the lines within the photos so they lead towards the shape and not away.

Fill in the centre

08 Begin to fill the centre of the shape with more photos. Pay attention to avoid patterns of position, rotation, colour and composition. The design should have a random appearance, but still intentionally show the faces in most of the photos.

Visual check

09 As the design begins to fill up with photos, occasionally zoom out to view the entire composition and check for obvious issues. Look for groupings of photos that are too similar in orientation, colour and subject. Then rearrange photos to break up groups that are visually distracting.

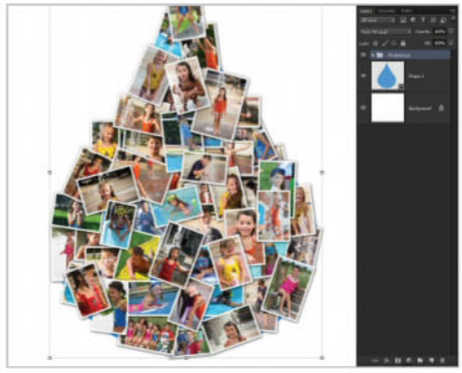
Expert tip

Find custom shapes

Photoshop comes with several topical libraries of custom shapes pre-installed. But most of them are not loaded by default. If you are having trouble finding the raindrop shape in your set, you may need to add the Natural library. To do that, first use the drop-down selection for the custom shapes and look for the cog icon at the top-right. Use that to activate the context menu and select Nature from the library list.

Fill the holes

10 Place photos behind the main set to fill holes and seams, so none of the blue from the drop shape is visible. Don't worry about the content of these filler photos being visible, but use the opportunity to introduce splashes of colour.



Group the photos

11 Select all the photos and group them together by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+G. This cleans up the Layers palette and makes the remaining steps easier to navigate without getting lost in a sea of photo layers.

Shape to shadow

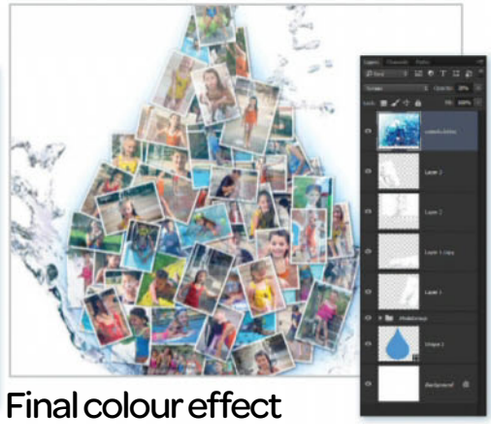
12 Select the droplet layer and open the Properties panel. Set the shape's Feather setting to 60 pixels. This creates a type of colourised shadow behind the collection of photos.

Water stock

13 Open the stock of water splashes from the supplied resources and layer the images over the collage. Set the blend mode to Multiply and erase any distracting edge lines, or splash areas that conceal faces in the photos.

Wrap around

14 Shape the water splashes to match the curve of the droplet shape by using Edit>Transform>Warp. Adjust the warp handles to fit the stock around the shape. Then click the Apply checkmark in the Options bar to commit the transformation.



Final colour effect

15 Finish by layering in the bright blue 'Bubbles.jpg' image. Place it at the top of the layer stack, set the blend mode to Screen and reduce the Opacity to 38%. This brings a very blue hue to the composition and enhances the watery theme.

Advanced effects Mix up the shape of your collage

Explore some other ideas for fun designs

Falling photos

Placing the photos as smart objects provides the benefit of using the Warp transformation non-destructively. One fun use of this is to create a falling photo effect where the photos appear to be floating down and splashing into a puddle.

Heart shape

Experiment with other shapes for the arrangement. Keep to shapes that are solid, simple and very recognisable. That way the rough alignment of the photo edges won't obscure it. For this heart shape, a red blur was added behind the background.

Negative space

Instead of filling in a shape, consider filling in the space around it and leaving the shape open for text or texture. This negative space will require additional photos or duplicates of some in the collection, so don't worry about creating double-ups.

Photo cutouts

There's no reason why the photo borders need to be rectangular. Try using the shape as a cutout effect for the photos. Use the same Custom Shape tool to draw out the shape as a path. Then go to Layer>Vector Mask> Current Path.

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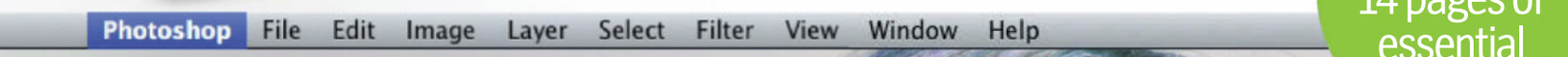


Step-by-steps...

Essential editing guides

Discover the power of the Brush tool 68
Create fun displays in Elements 70
Sharpen your images in Elements 74
Learn to manipulate light in Elements 76

Creative edit...

UNDERSTAND COLOUR ADJUSTMENTS

Want to try out a new look? Find out how to alter hair and eye colour on p80

Tool focus...

Discover the power of the Brush tool

Find out how to paint, erase and retouch with one of Photoshop's finest tools; the Brush

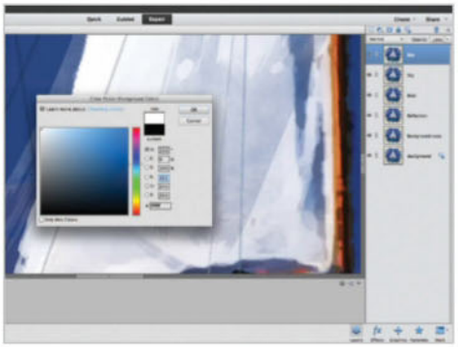
The Brush tool has to be one of the most diverse tools in the entire Photoshop suite, as it's used together with an array of delectable tools as well as on its own. From the Eraser to masking techniques, to Dodge, Burn, retouching and beyond, it really is the bee's knees of the editing toolbox.

Using it on its own requires patience and, like many Photoshop techniques, practise. As with anything artistic, the best advice is to simply experiment. Sticking at a technique is a sure-fire way of getting better at it, but employing a helping hand in the form of a stylus and tablet offers double assurance of painterly perfection. A stylus and tablet allows you to paint as you would with a paintbrush in real media, except digitally. For the more dedicated of us, it's a worthwhile purchase if you use the Brush tool regularly. Graphics tablets come in the form of the cheap and cheerful to the pricey and professional, so a good spot of researching is advised if you'd like to ditch the mouse and aim for more creative grounds.

Mastering the Brush tool Paint with patience and creativity to build up your layers

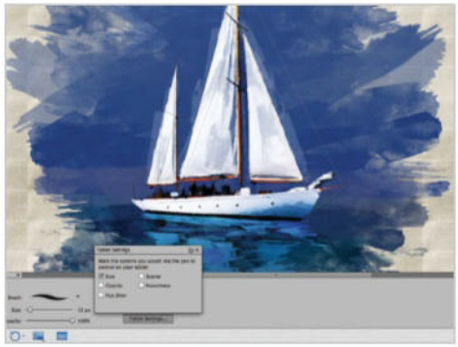
Load a brush

01 An online search will reveal a plethora of brushes. Download to your desktop and, with the Brush tool selected, load the Brush Presets palette. Click the small icon at the top-right of the palette and hit Load Brushes. Navigate to your downloaded brushes to begin.



Build layers

02 Begin painting the sea with an array of blues, building up colours in swirly sea-like movements. For each part of the scene, create a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N). Take your time and zoom in and out.



Using a stylus

03 A graphics tablet enables you to control pen pressure. In the Options bar, mark what you'd like your pen to control. Size allows you to alter the width of your brush tip with the pressure being applied.

More than painting Recreate photographic effects and make selections

Dabs of bokeh

You can create high-end photography effects with dabs of white. Open your image and, on a new layer, lower the Opacity of the Brush. Dab dots of white by clicking once. Repeat your dabs with varying brush sizes, lowering and altering the opacity each time you dab.

Paint selections

The Quick Selection tool is great for cutting out a clean object from its background. With the tool selected, click on the object's background and use the Add to and Subtract from selection icons in the Options bar to adjust. Use the Selection Brush option for trickier outline areas.

Paint spillages

Websites like **deviantart.com** have an abundance of artists who just wish to share their personal brushes with other artists, and often require no fee. Download your brushes and stamp them around existing text for great, personalised typography effects in minutes.

Brush to retouch

As well as the Clone Stamp and Spot Healing Brush tools, you can use a soft, low-opacity brush to dab away blemishes. Zoom in and hold the Opt/Alt key, and then click on a nearby colour to the offending area. Now dab onto the blemish to form digital make-up.

OTHER OBJECTS
Create notes, receipts or other decorative elements.

福壽康寧

STICK A PIN IN IT
Use real photos of drawing pins to 'attach' images.

安全火柴
注意防潮

TUACAHN

POLAROID FRAMES
Introduce digital frames, such as these Polaroid ones, to give the impression of real photos being attached to a board.

On the disc

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Creative project...

Create fun displays in Elements

Make your very own digital corkboard to preserve those special memories, photos and souvenirs

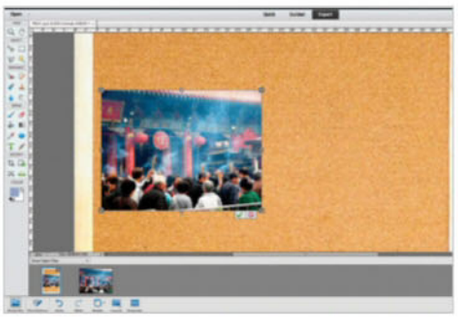
By using photos, souvenirs and your Photoshop skills, you can easily create a digital corkboard full of precious objects. Doing this digitally enables you to preserve the real items while still having them on display. It also allows you to add in other imagery that inspires.

The technique is surprisingly simple to do. Once you have the right formula, the options are endless. Simply cut out, add effects and place images on your board. In this tutorial we'll run through three ways for adding photos, objects and creating a display from scratch. Each technique uses a basic pattern, so follow the steps carefully and you'll begin to notice similar techniques cropping up. By the end, you'll be a master of layers!

Have fun with this and don't restrict yourself to the examples in the tutorial. You can create a board full of holiday mementoes for your own wall that could make for a tribute to give to a friend or family member. This is the ideal way to start making a collage of your favourite images, so stay creative and make it yours!

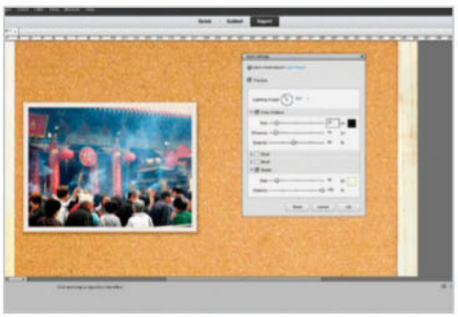
TECHNIQUE 1 Make it yours

Create a basic composite using your own photos



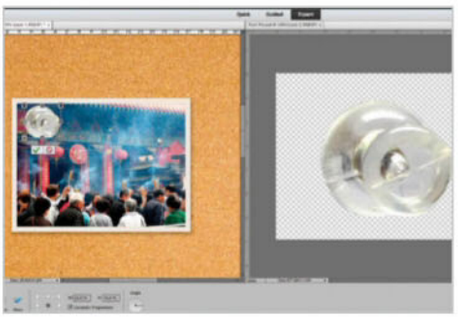
Position your photo

01 Open 'Corkboard.psd' and your photos into Elements. Open the Photo Bin and drag a thumbnail onto the main corkboard image. Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to resize and position it on the board. Hit Enter, or click the tick icon, to apply changes.



Add a drop shadow

02 Click the FX icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. Select Stroke from the drop-down and double-click the first option. Click the Cog icon to access settings. Add a 30px White Stroke, tick Drop Shadow setting Size: 29, Distance: 14 and Opacity to 44%.

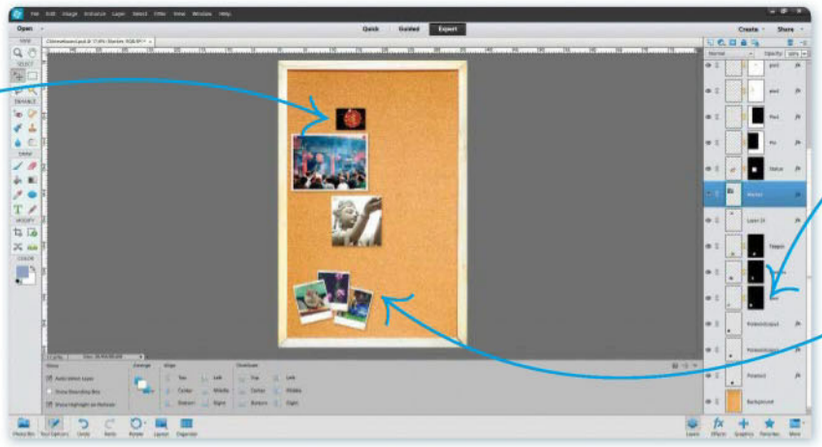


Add some pins

03 Open 'Push Pin.psd' and add it to the image. Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to resize and position it over a corner of the photo. Use Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate and position the second pin at the opposite corner. Repeat these steps with other photos.

DROP SHADOW
A drop shadow is a quick way to add realism to your corkboard, as if it were actually on the board.

AUTO-SELECT LAYERS
Having the Move tool (V) set to Auto-Select can be very useful when dealing with lots of different layers.



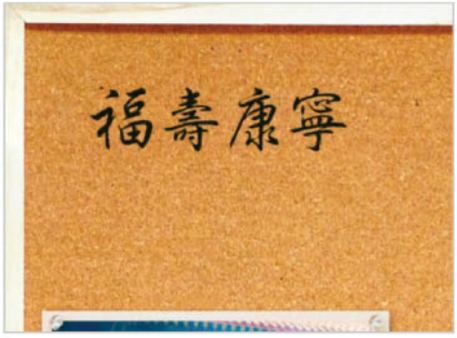
THE POLAROID EFFECT
Insert the Polaroid image from the supplied files and place your photos on top of it with a layer mask for a classic, vintage look.

TRANSFORM PHOTOS
Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to rotate and resize your photos to add variety into your composition.

TECHNIQUE 2 Create new elements

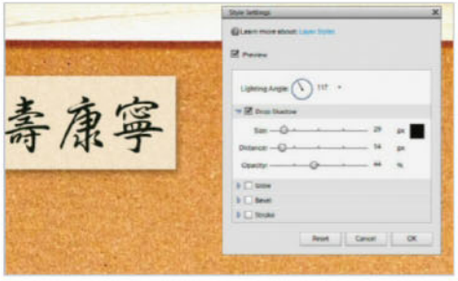
Use simple tools to make objects from scratch

You don't just have to use photos; this section will run through a variety of different ways of adding new kinds of images into your project. There's quite a lot to take in with this section and each step is jammed full of different ideas and techniques, so take your time and read each one carefully. Don't be afraid to play around, but most of all have fun!



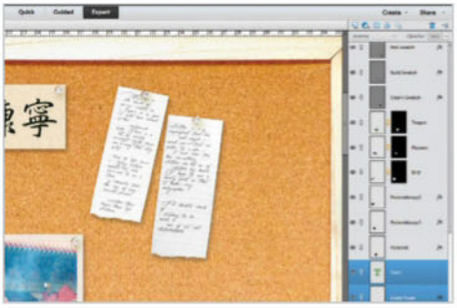
Insert object elements

01 Open up 'Chinese Characters.psd' or a photo of your choice into Elements. Using the Photo Bin add it onto the corkboard. Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to resize and position, hit Enter or click the tick icon to apply.



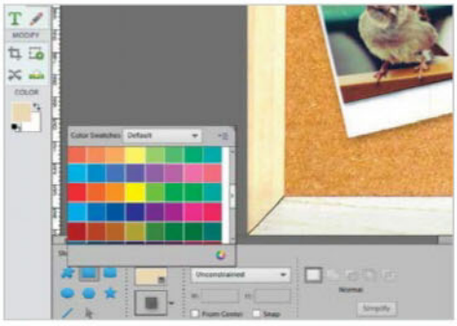
Create a new rectangle

02 Select the layer underneath the characters. Use the Shape tool (U) to draw a rectangle as a background with the colour set to off-white. With the rectangle active, select the FX menu. Add a drop shadow. Click the Cog icon and set Size to 29%, Distance to 14px and Opacity to 44%.



Add notes

03 Insert 'Lined Paper.psd' using the Photo Bin. Select the Type tool (T) and click inside the paper to add writing. Use a handwritten font for a nice effect. Rotate and resize both layers with Cmd/Ctrl+T. Add a drop shadow using the previous step as a guide.

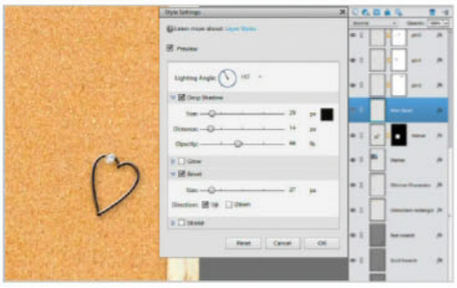


Create colour swatches

04 Use the Rectangle tool (U) to create some colour swatches. You can use the Eyedropper tool (I) to grab colours from your image, or pick one of the default colours. Add a drop shadow with the FX menu.

Draw in your elements

05 Have a go at drawing something with the Brush tool (B). Keep the Opacity low and pick a Chalk or Pastel brush. Have the Mode set to Multiply, as this will build up dark tones automatically for quicker shading.



Shapes and layer styles

06 Create a wire effect quickly using the hollow heart Custom Shape. Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to rotate. Open the FX menu, add the Drop Shadow, then select Bevel. Change the Direction to Up and the Size to 30px. Then add in a pin for it to hang on.

Simple compositing

Ensure your display is as effective as it can be

VARY YOUR SHAPES
Adding objects can be much more interesting than lots of rectangles. Vary the shapes for a diverse look.

PHOTO BIN
Use the Photo Bin to keep track of all the new images you want to add.

USE PINS REALISTICALLY
Some of the additions wouldn't have visible pins so there's no need to add them.

ORDER LAYERS
Don't forget that you can overlap elements for extra realism by positioning them over each other and also adjusting layer order.

TECHNIQUE 3

Edit with real objects

Seamlessly integrate objects into your corkboard

To keep the whole composition interesting, we need more than just flat rectangles. Scanning in photos, or found objects of different shapes and sizes, can add a whole new dimension to the corkboard. There are many example objects included with the supplied files, but this is all about creating a unique corkboard of your own filled with the things that matter to you.

Prepare to add objects

01 Open up all the objects you want to add to the corkboard; some images are included with your resources for you to get started. Some images used here have been found on stock websites; it's great way to enhance a presentation.

Add and position

02 Drag in your first new object and position it using Cmd/Ctrl+T. Add a drop shadow via the FX menu using the previous settings. Then add a pin by duplicating it (Cmd/Ctrl+J) from a previous layer and repositioning it accordingly.

Using layer masks

03 Use the same techniques to add the rest of your objects. Many will actually need to be cut out before they look right for your image. To do this, add a layer mask to the image's layer and use brushes to hide parts of the image.

Cut out objects

04 Use a black brush to paint on the layer mask over the areas to hide. If you make a mistake, switch to white and draw back areas. Use these steps to keep adding objects until you've made the full composition. Don't forget to add shadows and pins!

What does it mean?

ANGLE When you choose Motion Blur from the Remove drop-down in the Adjust Sharpness dialog box, you also need to set the Angle to get correct effect. You should set the angle to correspond with the motion blur in your image so that Elements knows what it is trying to correct.

On the disc

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Photo edit...

Sharpen your images in Photoshop Elements

Get the most out of your images with our quick sharpening guide for Elements

When it comes to editing your photos, there are certain tasks that can nearly always guarantee great improvements. One of these is sharpening, which pretty much any photo can benefit from. Sharpening enhances the details in your images and makes the edges pin-sharp and defined.

There are a few different tools and methods that you can use in Elements to sharpen your images, including the Unsharp Mask, which emulates an old darkroom technique, and the Sharpen tool, where you can selectively sharpen areas in your image. However, we're going to look at the Adjust Sharpness command, which gives a nice balance between simple application and a measure of control over the effect.

Oversharpening can be a problem and lead to undesirable results, but if you are intending to print your images, you might find that you need to go a little further with sharpening than you would need to for viewing on-screen. Because of this, it is worth having two versions of your image: one for screen and one for print. Let's get started and have a look at how to subtly apply sharpening to improve any photo.

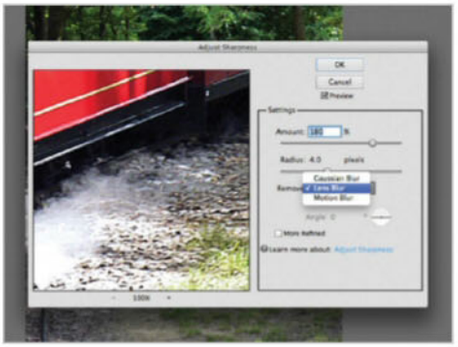
Sharpen those details We show you how to sharpen your snaps in minutes

Duplicate the layer

01 Open the supplied photo, or one of your own, and duplicate the layer (Layer>Duplicate Layer) to preserve the original. Change the blend mode to Luminosity to prevent colour shifts when sharpening.

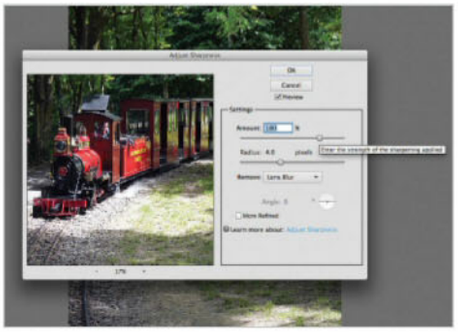
Adjust the sharpness

02 There are lots of sharpening options but to have a measure of control over the results, go to Enhance>Adjust Sharpness. This brings up a dialog box with options that you can alter to suit your image.



Blur option

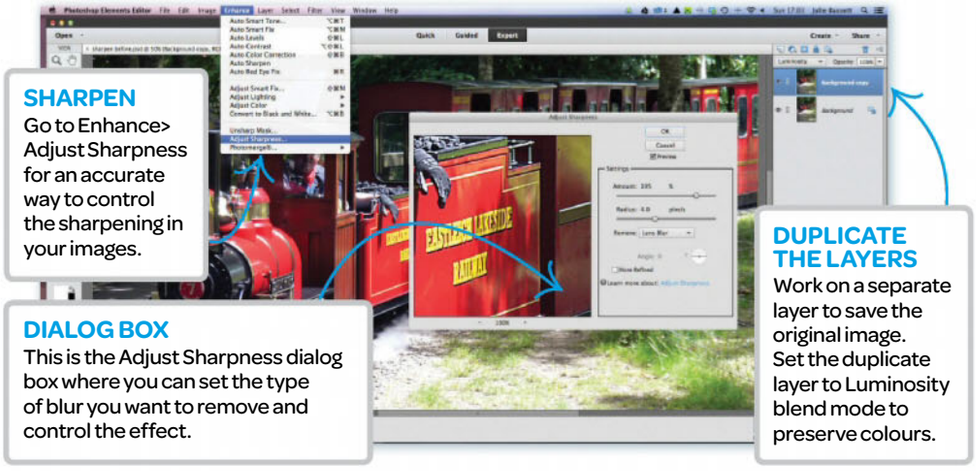
03 Pick your blur type from the Remove menu. Use Lens Blur for this image, as this enhances the edges and detail with less chance of halos appearing. Motion Blur is good for camera shake or moving subjects.



Alter the settings

04 Amount sets the level of sharpening. Slide this to 180% and set Radius to 4 pixels. This affects the edges of the objects; a high Radius leads to more noticeable sharpening, which is not always a good thing.

Adjust sharpness Work smarter with your layers



SHARPEN
Go to Enhance> Adjust Sharpness for an accurate way to control the sharpening in your images.

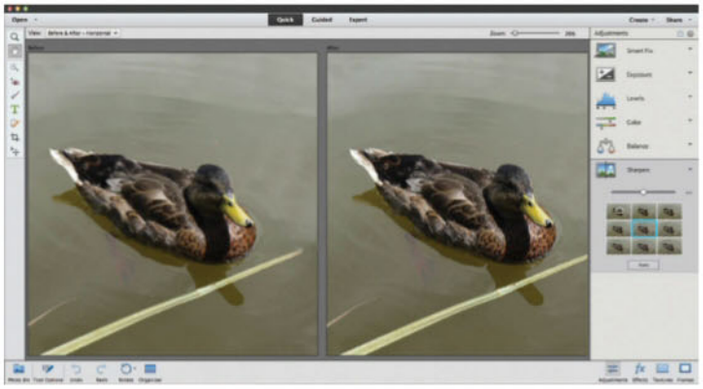
DIALOG BOX
This is the Adjust Sharpness dialog box where you can set the type of blur you want to remove and control the effect.

DUPLICATE THE LAYERS
Work on a separate layer to save the original image. Set the duplicate layer to Luminosity blend mode to preserve colours.

Sharpening success A couple of pointers to ensure a smooth sharpening experience

Don't oversharpen

It is quite easy to go too far when sharpening images, which is why it is best to work on a duplicate layer. Oversharpening can lead to halos appearing around your image and you can also introduce noise, neither of which is particularly desirable.



A quick sharpen

In Elements there's a simple one-step way to sharpen your images. Open a photo in Quick mode and you will see the Sharpen option in the right-hand menu. Simply scroll through the thumbnails to find the right level of sharpening and click on one to apply.

What does it mean?

EXPOSURE This is simply the amount of light that your image has been subjected to when it was taken. Exposure can be affected by the shutter speed or the environment. If it is a particularly bright or dull day, then differing levels of light can make your image appear over or underexposed.

On the disc

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Photo fixes...

Learn to manipulate light in Elements

Sort out those pesky exposure woes with a few quick and simple tricks from the editing book

Lighting your photographs is probably one of the hardest things to get right when taking pictures; even the pros can get it wrong sometimes. Your photos can end up looking too dark or too light and it can seem like the photo is ruined. But that doesn't need to be the case. Some of the fantastic tools within Photoshop Elements can help you to sort out these problems in no time at all. Whether your shutter speed was too fast for enough light to enter, leaving you with an underexposed image, or it didn't close fast enough, leaving you with an overexposed image, Elements can help fix these issues. In fact, it's not quite the problem you thought.

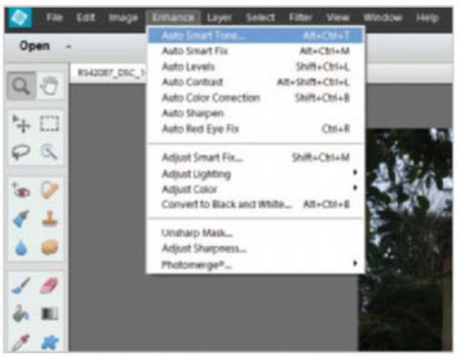
What's also great about Elements is you can select certain parts of the image to change. If only a certain part of your photo seems to be affected, you can concentrate on that area, so if your model seems to be overly dark, you can select them and not change the surrounding environment, which we will explore in the third tutorial. It's really simple, and you won't break a sweat.

TECHNIQUE 1

Shed some light

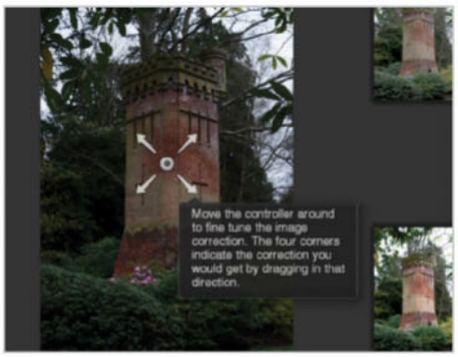
Fix underexposure in three simple steps

Have you ever gone to photograph a really great scene only to find there just isn't enough light to make the shot as impressive as you first thought? Don't worry, it happens to the best of us, but the good news is that it's very easy to fix in Elements!



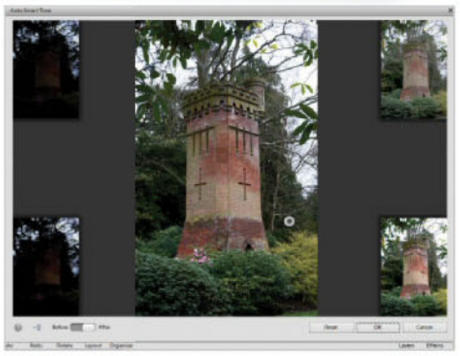
Quick editing

01 Open up your shot that's underexposed. Elements has a host of handy built-in tools. By going into Enhance>Auto Smart Tone, you will be able to easily correct the exposure of the shot.



Make a choice

02 Clicking on this option will open a command box. Follow the instructions to select the area in the grid that appears. It will show you what the image will look like. You can select any part of the grid.



Complete the edits

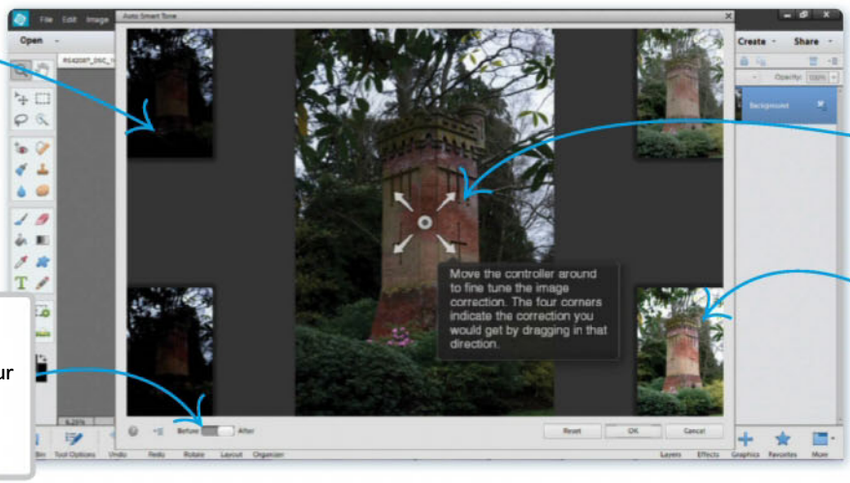
03 Click OK in the interface once the exposure has been fixed. We've chosen to lean towards the bottom right-hand corner as this option added the most light to this image.

Use the Auto features

Utilise Elements' automatic edits to fix your photos

FIX OVEREXPOSURE
The left-hand side of the interface will allow you to fix overexposure by taking away light from the image.

BEFORE AND AFTER
Toggle this button to view the before and after of your image – it can be handy for checking everything is looking just right.



AUTO TONING
Inside Auto Smart Tone, control exactly what needs fixing by moving the arrow around the grid that appears.

FIX UNDEREXPOSURE
The right-hand side of Auto Smart Tone will enable you to fix underexposure by adding more light to the image.

TECHNIQUE 2

Too bright!

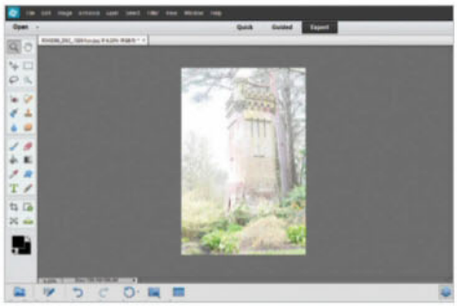
How to deal with your camera over compensating the exposure

When taking a photo your camera can sometimes get confused and take in too much light when it's in Auto mode. Your camera may have underestimated how much light there actually was in the scene and applied a shutter speed that was too long, so the resulting image was too bright. Here's how to sort it.

SOLID FILL
Use the different Fill layers to edit photos; in this case a Solid Fill was used in order to make tweaks to the colours.

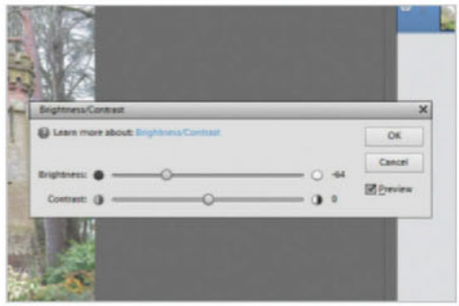
Enhance exposure

Apply these quick fixes to your images



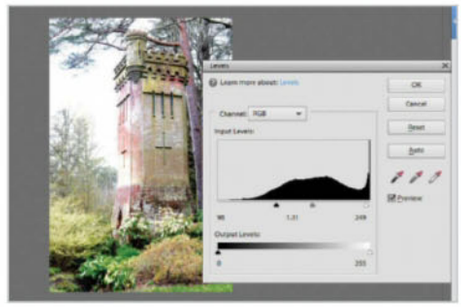
Identify the problem

01 It is clear that this photo has been overexposed, but if you study it, the background is much lighter than the foreground. We can fix this by using the selection tools at a later stage.



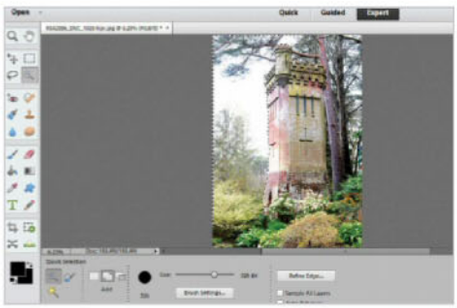
Brightness and contrast

02 First off, take the edge off the sheer brightness of the image by going to Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Brightness/Contrast. Here we've set Brightness to -64 and left the Contrast at 0.



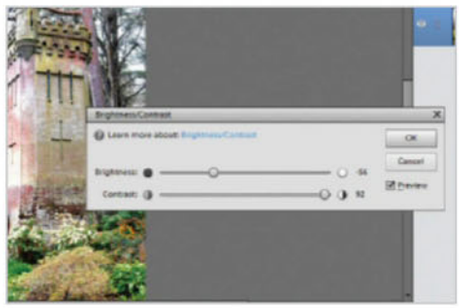
Level up

03 Another way to fix the light is to use the Levels adjustment. By adjusting the black, grey and white arrows, you can change the light in the image. We used 98, 1.31 and 249 as the Input Level.



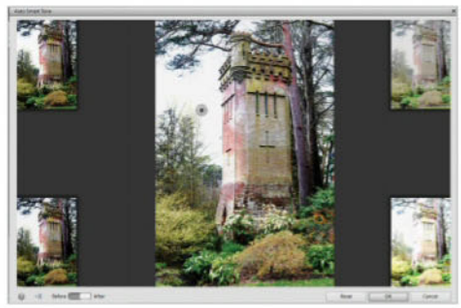
Selection time

04 Because the background of this photo was still quite bright, the selection tools can isolate an area to edit. Here we have used the Quick Selection tool, but use whatever tool you are most comfortable with.



Adjust lighting

05 Once again, head to Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Brightness/Contrast and play with the sliders until the selection matches the rest of your image. We have opted for Brightness: -56 and Contrast: 92.



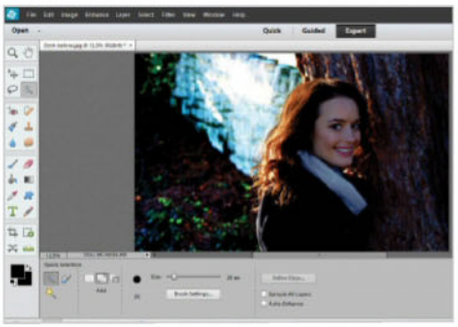
Smart Tone

06 The image still appears to have a bit of a contrasting tone to it, so we can enter into the Auto Smart Tone menu once again and play with the pins until any lighting corrections have been resolved.

TECHNIQUE 3 Make your images pop

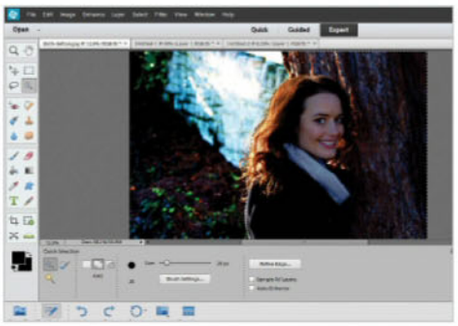
Fix all exposure problems in one image

Sometimes your photo will be subjected to both underexposure and overexposure. This is because your background is so bright that it confuses the camera into thinking that there is more light than there is. If you haven't compensated the shot with the use of the flash, the result can be a darker foreground subject to the image.



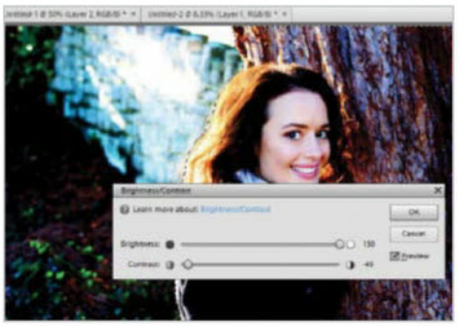
Evaluate your image

01 The first step is to look at your image and decide what the problem areas are. The background has affected the exposure of the model, so it's too bright while she is too dark.



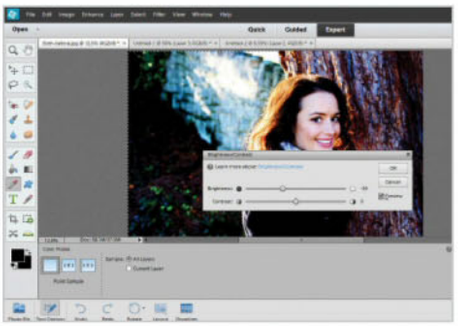
Select your subject

02 We'll start with our model using the Quick Selection tool, but you should use the selection technique of your choice. After editing the model we will combat the overexposed background.



Brightness/Contrast

03 Enter the Enhance menu and select Adjust Lighting>Brightness/Contrast. You want to play with the sliders until you are satisfied with the look of the model. We have opted for Brightness: 150, Contrast: -45.



Inverse

04 Now select the background and re-apply the Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer, tweaking the settings to -39 for Brightness. Create a balance of foreground exposure and background exposure.

ADD AND SUBTRACT
When using the Quick Selection tool you can decide whether to add to your selection or take away from it with these options.

SELECTION TYPE
If your preference isn't the Quick Selection tool, you can choose to use the Selection Brush or the Magic Wand.

SELECTION AREA
Your selection will be shown by a moving dotted line, which means you can either add or subtract from this at any time.

BRUSH SIZE
To get those difficult areas, you can change the size of the brush in order to be more precise with your selection.

What does it mean?

FEATHERING SELECTIONS

Feathering refers to the softening of the edge of a selection, causing the colour blend to be softer around the edges, creating a more believable separation. Feathering is an option available on all selections, and is generally available when you right-click inside the selection.

On the disc

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Creative colour...

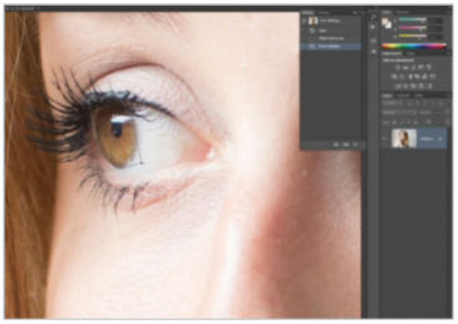
Alter hair and eye colour in Photoshop

Learn how to edit colours creatively in your portraits

When editing an image or creating a piece of art, it's the most basic tweaks that can make or break an image. Something as simple as changing the colour of a model's eyes, if approached without due care and attention, will look totally fake. Whenever you are creating something that is fantastical and creative, the devil can really be in the detail and with colour editing, it's no different.

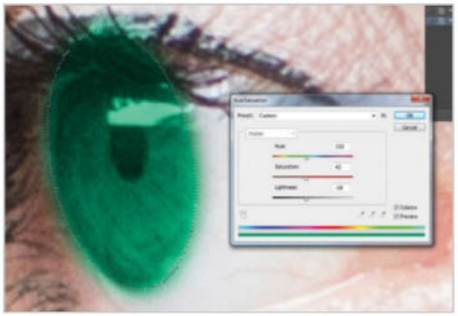
The key area to attain realism when editing is the division between the edited area and the unedited area. So, getting to grips with selection tools will benefit you greatly. For the colour editing element, the usual subjects are all present; Hue/Saturation, Color Balance and even the Levels and Curves adjustments will enhance your images. Simply changing a colour is one thing, but blending the tone to match the rest of the image is where the art comes into play.

Don't be afraid to mix things up with different tools and tricks; what you can do with the HSL panel is greatly different to the Color Balance adjustment and vice versa, so do experiment.



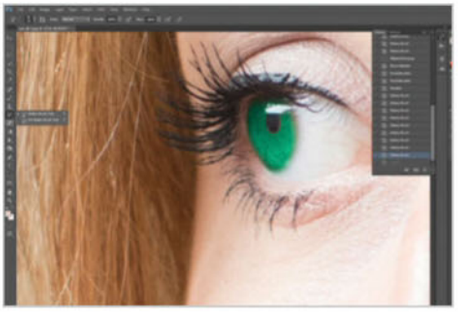
Use a selection tool

01 Zoom to 200% and use the Elliptical Marquee tool to select around the iris. Transform your selection if needed by right-clicking inside the selection and choosing Transform Selection. Hold and drag the anchor points to move the circle to fit.



Alter colour with HSL

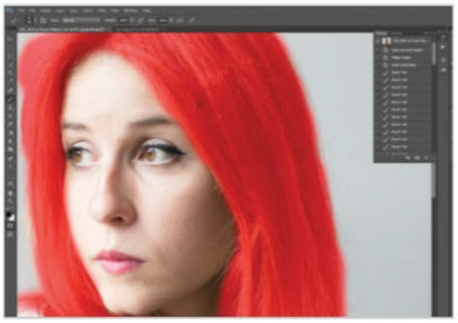
02 By using the HSL controls (Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation), you can alter the eye colour using the drop-down colour list. So on a blue-eyed model, select Blue and alter the Hue to suit the new desired colour.



Change history easily

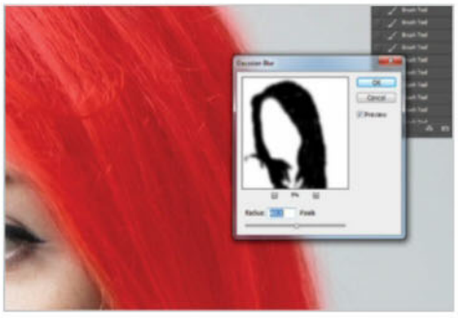
03 There may be some areas that you don't want to alter. For example, the eyelids might have been picked up in the selection and given a strange hue. To avoid this, use the History Brush tool and paint back the pupil and catch lights.

Try a new look Use quick masks and adjustments to save on hair dye!



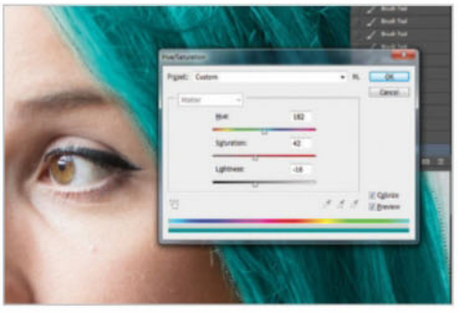
Enter the quick mask

01 To create a smooth and soft hair selection, try the Quick Mask mode. To access this, press Q. Switching to your Brush tool (B), begin painting the model's hair, (it will turn red). This enables you to see your selection being painted.



Blurred lines

02 As hair is generally soft, use Gaussian Blur (Filter>Blur) to feather your selection. When happy with the results, simply click the Quick Mask button at the base of the toolbar to return to your image. Now Ctrl/right-click the selection and invert it.



Blonde to blue

03 While your selected area is active, bring up the Hue/Saturation adjustment and tick the Colorize button. This gives you the ability to change the colour as a whole and create a new colour scheme, rather than editing one specific tone.

SOFTWARE **Price** Approx £87/$149 US **Web** www.alienskin.com

Alien Skin Exposure 6

Discover a wealth of presets at your fingertips to easily enhance or transform your images

The specs

Company Alien Skin Software

Additional specs

- Adobe Photoshop CS6 or later
- Mac OS X 10.8 or later
- Windows 7 or later
- 1280×768 resolution or greater

Exposure 6 is the newest release from the team at Alien Skin and covers a wide range of analogue film effects for photographers. Available as a plug-in for Photoshop (there's no version for Photoshop Elements users, though) and also as stand-alone, the software boasts a lightning-fast processing engine and will give images the realistic finishes of traditional film.

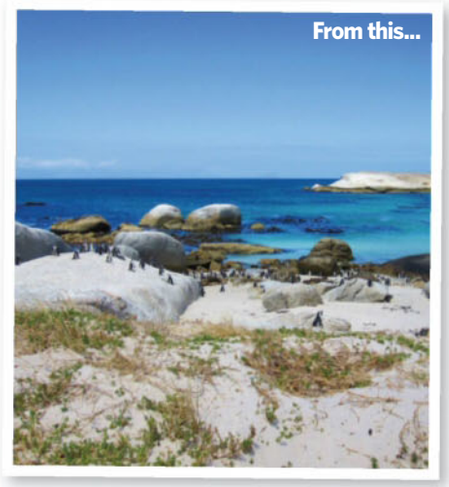
Alien Skin has produced its biggest update to Exposure since it was first released, focusing on significantly improving key areas. The first notable change is the easier-to-use interface; it's cleaner and darker which means quicker navigation between panels and image effects. The addition of a new basic control panel is also welcomed, meaning that fine-tuning photos is available as soon as the software is booted up.

Presets are at the core of Exposure 6, but with over 450 different ones to choose from there is an argument that there are simply too many to get through! However, all of the presets are lined up with instant previews, meaning that you no longer have to click and wait for the changes to take effect. For beginners, hovering over each individual preset brings up a yellow box which explains what each one will do to your photo, so you can get to grips with the terminology faster. The company does also offer tutorials via its website, for those that would want them.

The addition of creative focus effects to the preset menu means that adding a vignette and changing lens focus gives more control over how the image looks, without having to make in-camera changes. The vast array of these creative options include the introduction of bokeh, new borders, light effects and textures. Exposure 6 now also supports Apple's retina display, which is useful for optimum visual output from image to image. In terms of overall usability, we found that Exposure was a great choice for those who prefer a more visual experience. But it is still just a starting point for the intermediate photographers out there who would wish to make more professional edits. Although Photoshop does have a wide range of filters pre-installed, for anyone who doesn't have the time, knowledge or inclination to play around with them, Exposure is a successful addition to any workflow.

With more and more affordable plug-ins becoming available for Photoshop users, the price tag of $149 is arguably a bit steep. If you have been an avid subscriber to previous versions of Exposure, then you will be happy with the upgrade offer for $69. For those of you that will be starting from scratch, it's also worth noting that Alien Skin does offer education-related discounts.

Overall, Exposure caters for all sorts of post-shoot editing. What is especially useful is having adjustments and presets at the tip of your fingertips for those situations where time is of the essence. However, we are aware that if you already have Photoshop and are comfortable with using filters, it's probably not going to be worth investing in a similar – albeit easier-to-use – plug-in.

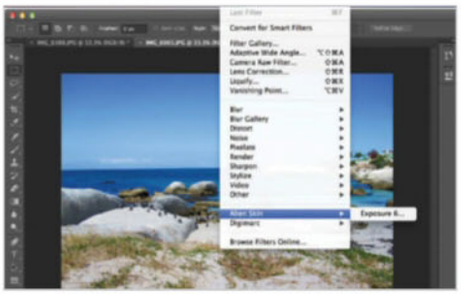


The verdict

8 Focuses on convenience and simplicity, and makes for a great choice for beginners and intermediate Photoshop users, even though it's a little costly.

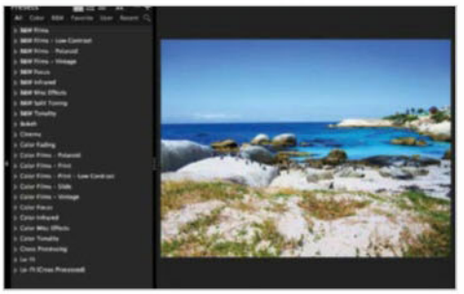
Apply Exposure effects to your images

Experiment with light effects in Exposure 6 to create a traditional finish



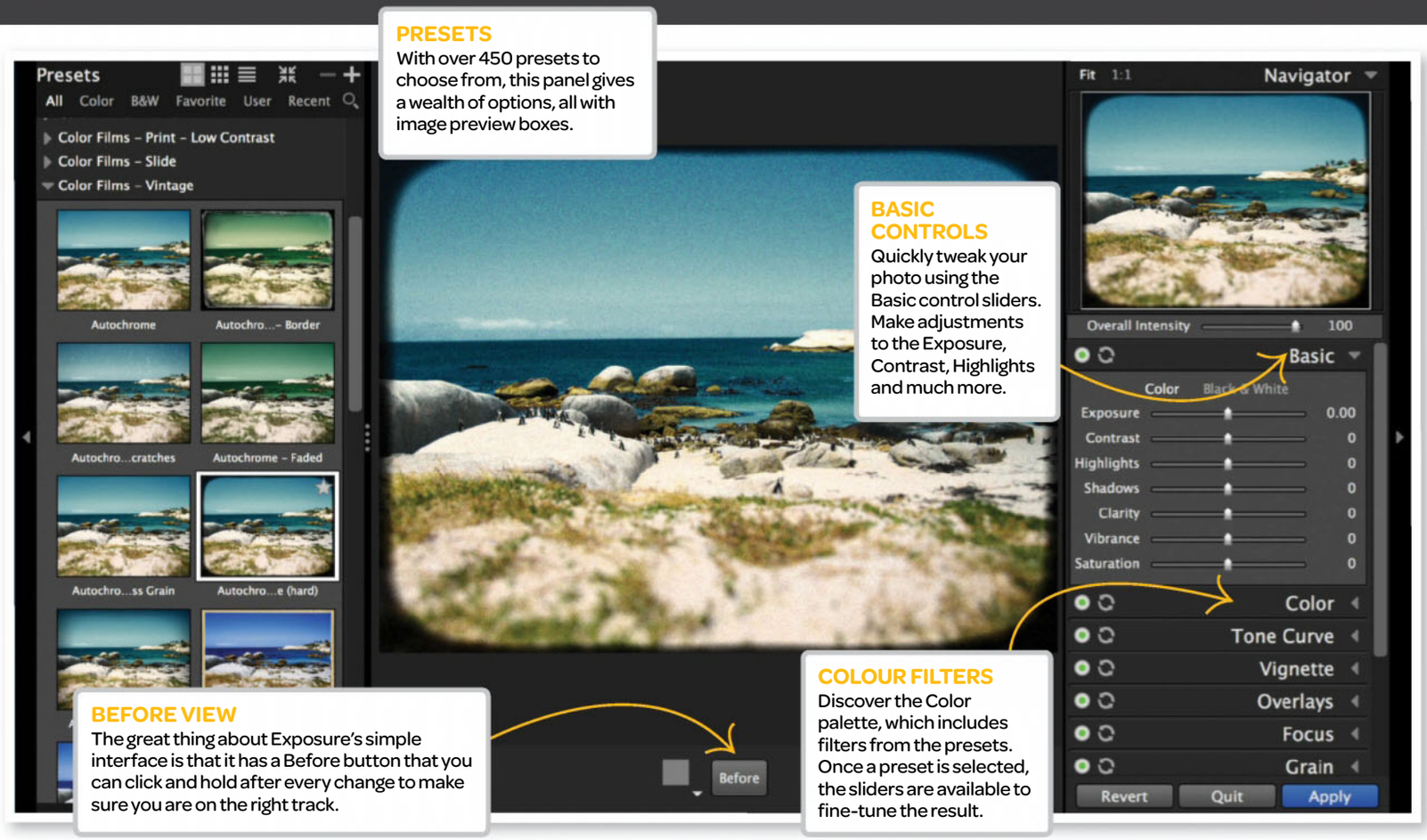
Open Photoshop

01 Once you have installed Exposure, open Photoshop and click File>Open. Pick the image you wish to edit and then choose Filter>Alien Skin>Exposure 6. This opens a pop-up window with your image in.



Basic adjustments

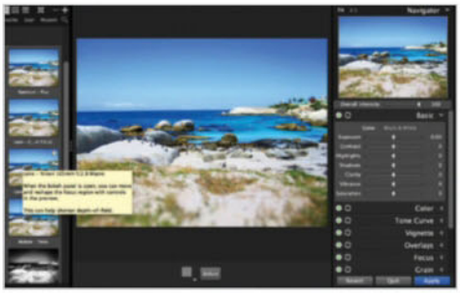
02 Click the Basic panel on the right-hand side. Move the sliders individually from left to right until you get the desired effect. For crazy colours, push the Vibrance and Saturation levels up to +15 or more.



Standout feature

Black-and-white photo effects

The array of black-and-white presets available is absolutely staggering. Mix the presets with the new creative focus options and you are on to a winner. Manipulate focus, vignette and depth of field all at the same time by picking an effective black and white preset from the selection.



Enhancements

03 To enhance aspects and blur less important areas, choose Bokeh from the Presets menu and click the one most suited to your photo. We chose Lens-Nikon 105mm to blur the foreground. Click Apply.

Add a vintage filter

04 Go back into Exposure 6 and from the Preset menu, click Color Films - Vintage. For a traditional effect, choose Autochrome - Vignette (hard). This not only affects colour, but adds texture and a border.

Finish up

05 Once you are happy with your changes, click Apply. This will take you back to Photoshop where you will see each change on a new layer. This is great for non-destructive editing to go back to the effect at a later stage.

PREVIEW WINDOW
The interface includes a movable preview window to give you a quick peek at the results of the pastel effect.

EFFECT SLIDERS
Configure the pastel effect by adjusting specific attributes of the filter. The Stroke Length provides a useful way to set a minimum and maximum range.

The specs

Company
AKVIS

Additional specs
Photoshop and Photoshop Elements
Windows XP or later
Mac OS X 10.4 or later
2GB RAM (minimum)

Standout feature

Stroke Direction tool
One of the most standard features of AKVIS Pastel is the Stroke Direction tool. The idea behind the tool is that the filtering algorithm can't always know exactly where a stroke should appear. So the Stroke Direction tool lets you guide the strokes. That way the final effect will have a more natural appearance.

PLUG-IN

Price Approx £29/$49 **Web** www.akvis.com

AKVIS Pastel

A filter that doesn't look like a filter! Turn your photos into vibrant pastel artworks

Photoshop users have a kind of love-hate relationship with filters, especially with the filters that are supposed to produce a traditional artistic effect. This is because they never really appear convincing enough, and are therefore almost always used as part of a process to create a completely different effect. The problem is that filters can find it hard to make a clear distinction between features of the image. Details are just treated according to a particular formula. This can produce a very mechanical effect where a person's eyes have no more, or less, detail than the background area.

AKVIS has released a plug-in called Pastel, and it attempts to do what the native filters in Photoshop cannot – that is create a convincing hand-made effect. Pastel has been specifically programmed to detect edges and the changes in colour and contrast in an image. This, in turn, helps to create a more believable pastel effect. But it gets even more impressive when paired with the Stroke Direction tool, which provides you with direct input into way the strokes are applied.

The final effect is a much more life-like representation of a handcrafted pastel image than anything that came before it.

The verdict

8 Impressive pastel effects can be had, but some improvements are needed to the interface, such as a bigger preview and ways to adjust colour.

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Samsung NX Mini

A new compact with a new sensor – does it have enough on offer to make its mark?

The specs

Company Samsung

Additional specs

20.5MP • Samsung NX-M lens mount • 3-inch LCD with Touch • ISO 160-12800 (expandable to 100-25600)

Offering up more than a simple compact camera can, but negating the weight, bulk and cost of a DSLR, the compact system camera (CSC for short) has become popular with both dedicated photographers and consumers who want a camera that provides more than a smartphone or basic compact.

So how is the Samsung NX Mini, which features a new NX-M lens mount, pitched? The camera accepts microSD memory cards, as opposed to regular SD cards. This will be a non-issue for many, but will cause some photographers who are in possession of a clutch of SD cards to make an additional purchase on top for the camera.

There's a range of wireless sharing capabilities built in, driven by a combination of NFC (Near Field Communications), which allows images to be shared between the camera and compatible devices simply via proximity and a Wi-Fi connection. You can even pair the NX Mini with a smartphone app to use it as a baby monitor. The screen can be flipped up 180 degrees, but it would be useful if it could be manoeuvred into a wider range of positions. The camera is designed to accept (and is supplied with) a hand strap rather than a neck strap; this may sound unimportant, but it does make the camera less suitable for more serious outdoor photography.

The NX Mini feels quite professional in other respects, though. Build quality, for instance, is generally impressive. There's an all-metal body and with the leather-like exterior – which is available in white, black, pink, mint green and dark brown – the camera looks and feels the part. It can't be an easy prospect to produce a camera that's both highly portable and ergonomically impressive, and yet still be comfortable for those with bigger hands to hold and operate.

The biggest surprise during our tests was image quality, which is really good for a sensor of just 13.2 x 8.8mm. If we looked very closely there was some evidence of a slight 'watercolour' effect that smaller sensors can often exhibit, but during testing it appeared to be very minimal compared to other models of this type. Detail from the BSI CMOS sensor is fairly good – as there are 20.5-megapixels on offer – but the small size of the sensor ultimately works against the megapixels and limits the actual resolution you can achieve. Colours are generally excellent; they're both accurate and vibrant, even with only the standard picture modes selected. Noise is well contained but by the time you approach the heady heights of ISO 3200, noise is causing more of an issue, with out-of-focus areas rendered in a slightly splotchy fashion that's certainly unattractive.

Some cameras of this ilk fall down by constantly getting in the way when it comes to actually taking photos. Having to riffle through menus every time you want to change something is always a nuisance, but the NX Mini largely avoids this pitfall through its touch screen, as you can simply tap to adjust the aperture, ISO or exposure compensation. Of course, command dials on a DSLR are rather more intuitive and faster, but the NX Mini doesn't frustrate as much as other cameras without them.

The verdict

7 Samsung's NX Mini has a number of appealing features for sharing images and staying connected, but the sensor size places an inevitable limit on image quality.

Capture with the NX Mini

Samsung's camera is straightforward – here's what to expect

Interchangeable lenses

01 The NX Mini is a mirrorless model, which is how it manages to be so compact, but it's an interchangeable lens camera nonetheless. Align the white dots on the lens on the camera and twist to attach.

Touch-screen adjustments

02 One of the best things about the NX Mini is its intuitive touch screen. You can use this to make all the changes to key shooting parameters such as aperture, ISO and exposure compensation.

Direct link

03 One of the fundamental philosophies behind the design of the NX Mini is its wireless connectivity. The button provides access to a range of wireless options and can be used to transfer images to a computer.

LENS RANGE
The array of optics on offer is presently limited to a 9-27mm f3.5-5.6 zoom lens, and the 9mm f3.5 and 17mm f1.8 prime lenses.

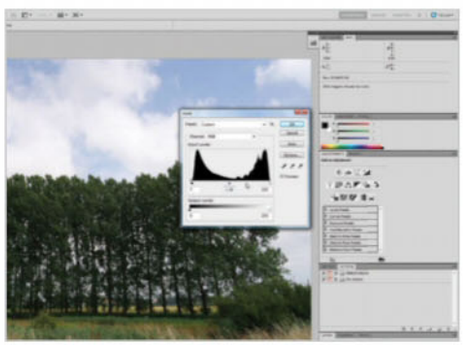
COLOUR VIBRANCY
Even with the camera's auto image manipulation algorithms turned off, the colours produced by the NX Mini are both accurate and punchy.

ERGONOMICS
The camera doesn't feature a grip but is easy to handle. Those with small or big hands should feel equally comfortable using the camera.

SHARING IMAGES
The camera supports Near Field Communication technology, which allows images to be shared between the camera and compatible devices simply via proximity.

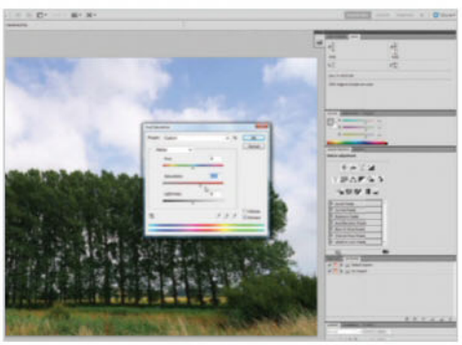
Standout feature

Self-portrait potential
There's a selfie mode that takes advantage of the 180-degree flip capability of the LCD screen. This enables you to capture a self-portrait by simply winking or smiling at the camera – though this seemed slightly temperamental during our tests. The Beauty Face setting ensures that skin is automatically smoothed, though you may prefer to turn this off and do your own retouching in Photoshop.



Exposure adjustment

04 The dynamic range is unlikely to be much of a match for cameras with APS-C sensors, and highlight detail can be sometimes clipped. Photoshop's Levels adjustment is useful to improve these flaws.



Colour boost

05 Unless you want to capture images that you can upload and share immediately, it's often best to turn off the Picture Wizard and Smart Filter options and tweak the colours manually using Photoshop.

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Jenni Sanders
"It's always great fun to play with new tools and to stretch your limits. Take time testing and be curious."

Daniel Sinoca
"You can use filters to apply special effects to any image to create a impressive photo composition."

Andre Villanueva
"I love mixing and experimenting with filters and textures to come up with endlessly exciting combinations."

Julie Bassett
"I never really like to resign a bad photo to the trash, so I'm always looking for new ways to improve, mend and reuse them."

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HOW CAN I CREATE ATMOSPHERE IN AN IMAGE?

Create the background using the Gradient tool set to Radial. To add stars to a sky, fill a new layer with black and go to Filter>Noise and set the Amount to 50%, select Gaussian and tick Monochromatic. Now apply a three-pixel Gaussian Blur (Filter>Blur>Gaussian) and open the Levels adjustment (Image>Adjustments>Levels). Adjust the sliders until the stars appear, and change the blend mode to Lighten.

Add a new layer and name it Planet. Grab the Elliptical Marquee tool, hold Shift and create a selection. Fill with a Radial Gradient and grab planet textures (a quick online search will reveal many) and place on the layer. Press Cmd/Ctrl+G to clip the layers, and change the blend mode to Overlay. Hold Shift, select the layers and merge them (Layer>Merge Layers).

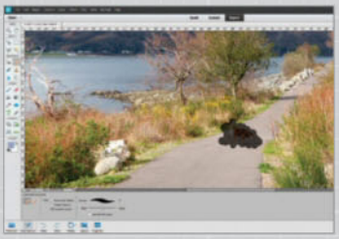
Open the Layer Style menu (Layer>Layer Style) and apply Inner and Outer Glows. Choose a colour of your liking and set Size to 250 pixels and Opacity to 100% for both. Hold Shift, select all layers and merge them. Go to Filter>Render and apply the Lens Flare. To add interest to the composition, create a new layer and using the Elliptical Marquee, create a big circular selection, and fill it with another Radial Gradient. Place a new texture on top and change the blend mode to Overlay. Merge the layers and apply Inner and Outer Glow styles once more.

WHAT ARE THE SECRETS BEHIND MANGA ART?

Manga is the name of comics created in Japan, so as you might have guessed, it has a very cartoon-ish look. There is a lot of variety among styles; there are many that stay relatively true to life, some stylise certain aspects, it's also common to see a strong character twice the size of any normal person, or features that are physically impossible. The cartoonish style gives freedom to play with proportions, so it's good to know some key features, such as block colours, big, bright eyes, small noses and mouths, to help your work stay recognisable among fans.

Hair is also important in manga styles; it is drawn in thicker spikes or strands rather than realistically fine, with the main details being added around fringes. Manga characters are often incredibly bright and vibrant, with bold hair colours or accents in their clothes, not to mention their larger-than-life emotions.

Jenni's expert edit Remove objects in Elements

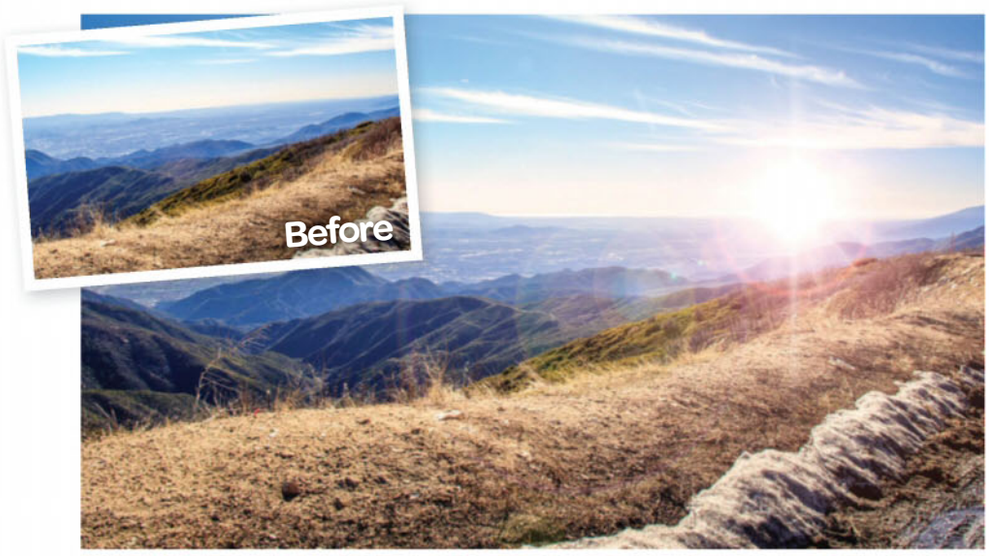


01 Healing in Elements can be easier than cloning, as it samples the new pixels for you. Open an image with a distracting subject to remove from the scene.

02 Select the Spot Healing Brush (J) and set to Content-Aware. This is automated, unlike the Healing Brush which manually samples areas.

03 Make your brush size relatively big so it only takes a few passes to cover your unwanted object. Draw over it in one continuous stroke.

04 Release your mouse and Elements will create a new area. For the most part, it is pretty accurate, but for any touch-ups, try the Clone Stamp tool.



HOW DO I USE THE LENS FLARE FILTER?

The Lens Flare filter is great for special effects. For example, you can intensify the light to create an impressive landscape image. Hold Opt/Alt and click Create a New Layer using the icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. Head to Filter>Render>Lens Flare, and set the Brightness to 120%. Pick the 50-300mm Zoom under Lens Type and hit OK. Now move the Lens Flare on top of the landscape layer and change the blend mode for the layer to Hard Light (depending of the photo you are using, you can use Overlay or try a different blend mode). Combining the filter with a sunburst-style brush will help emphasise the beams of light and make it look more distorted.

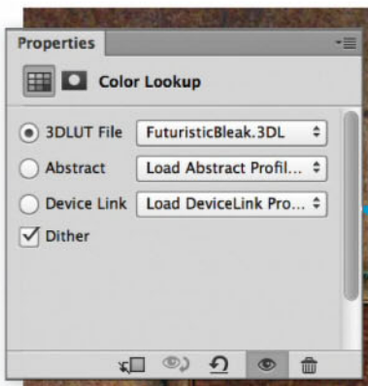
Andre's expert edit Essential tools for graphical text

01 Create base shapes using the Rectangle tool. Add some text using the Horizontal Type tool. Try out different fonts to match your project's personality, and experiment with size.

02 Use the fx button in the Layers palette to add layer styles. Create a dashed stroke on a shape with the stroke properties in the Options bar.

03 Textures can add a good bit of character. You can place them below the text, or position some on top, set to blend modes such as Overlay to merge.

04 Adjustment layers at the top of the stacking order are perfect for finishing touches. We used Levels, Vibrance and Color Lookup to lock down the exact mood that we wanted.

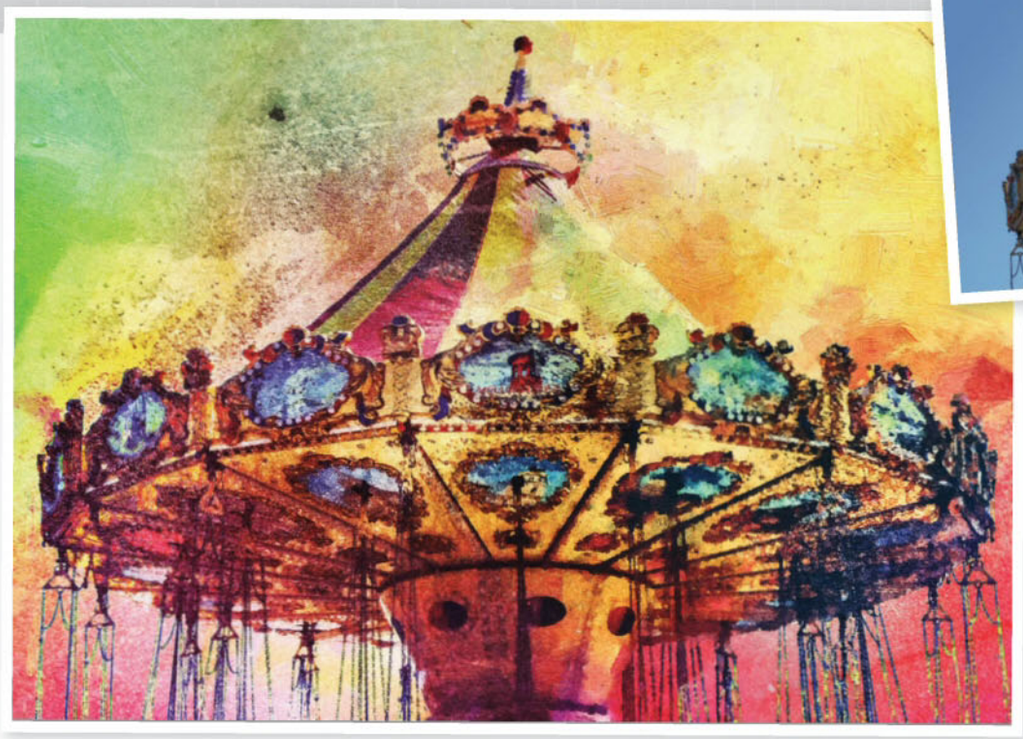


COLOR LOOKUP
Try the Color Lookup adjustment for some quick makeovers. Here we used Futuristic Bleak for a subdued and stylish look.

DASHED STROKE
Vector shape layers can have dashed strokes in CS6 or later. Adjust stroke colour and properties in the Options bar.

THE PERFECT FONT
Select a font that matches your project's personality. There are many sites such as **www.fontfabric.com** with excellent options.

LAYER STYLES
Layer styles can boost the 'cool' factor in text and shapes. Try different combinations and save them in the Styles palette.



IS COMBINING FILTERS AND TEXTURES EASY TO DO?

It is very easy, and definitely worth doing. Applying filters and textures can help you elevate normal photos into colourful artwork. The look can be created by duplicating your layer and applying various Sketch and Artistic filters such as Palette Knife, Underpainting, and Paint Daubs. Use blend modes to mix them and layer masks to hide unneeded areas. Add rough textures to the top, merge with blend modes, and use the Mixer Brush tool to add some unifying strokes throughout.

WHAT ARE THE BEST TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR RETOUCHING?

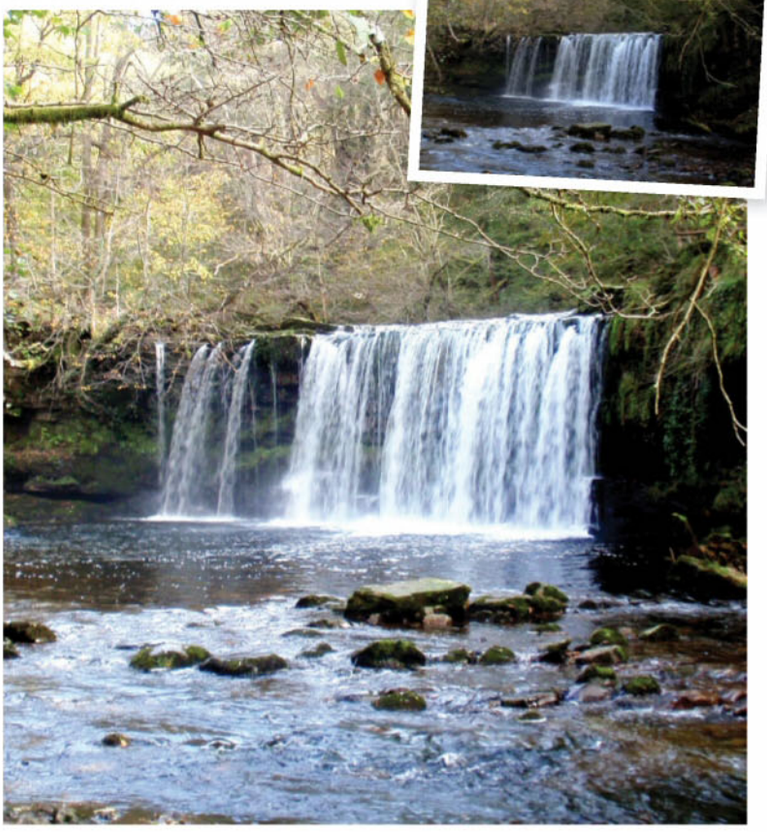
One of the key aspects of retouching is often overlooked and that's colour correction. A basic instinct is to go straight for the Healing Brush tool, but you'd be surprised at how much better a person's face looks after you even out skin tone, or in this case, how much better a pint of beer looks without a green tinge. This can be done using Color Balance or Curves, or for better control try adding a Solid Color adjustment layer with a mask in order to build up tones manually.

Once colour is sorted out, then you can move onto adding tone. Create your own highlights and shadows using soft gradients created with either a selection or the Brush tool on a new layer. Curves adjustment layers can also be used. When it's time to grab the Healing Brush tool you might have less work to do than you think!

WHAT DOES THE PERSPECTIVE CROP TOOL DO?

The Perspective Crop tool (Photoshop CS6 onwards) is designed to deal with two common problems in photography at the same time – it crops your image to make it more interesting, but it also fixes routine perspective problems.

Open your image as usual and go to the Crop tool. Hold down your mouse on the Crop tool to show its fly-out menu, and you will find the Perspective Crop tool. Draw out a crop box as normal and make sure that Show Grid is ticked in the tool Options bar. You can now use the grid to move the handles of the crop box and line it up with the angles of your image. Make sure that you don't go outside the canvas area. When you hit the tick to commit, your image will be cropped and adjusted to its new perspective at the same time.



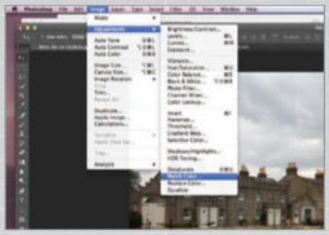
HOW DO I IMPROVE COLOUR AND CONTRAST QUICKLY?

There are plenty of tools built into Photoshop that help you to make really quick improvements to both the colour and the contrast of your images. The first thing that you should try is looking at the Levels (Image>Adjustment>Levels). By clicking and dragging on the little triangular handles, you can change the tone of the shadows (left), midtones (middle) and highlights (right). If you see areas where the Levels histogram has no information, drag the handles in to meet the edges of the graph for an instant change.

You can also use Curves to control your contrast (Image>Adjustments>Curves). Quite often, manipulating the line into a gentle S-shaped curve is a simple way of finding a good balance for colour and contrast. Apply both Levels and Curves as adjustment layers and you have even more control, as you can go back in and edit whenever you need to, keeping the original photo.

Julie's expert edit Use the Match Color adjustment

01 Open two images; one that you want to edit and the other one you want to steal colour from. Make sure that the image you are altering is the active one.



02 Go to Image> Adjustments>Match Color. Your image is automatically selected as the Target (the image you are editing).

03 In the Source drop-down menu at the bottom, select the second image (the one that you want to take the colours from). The colours are automatically applied to your target image.

04 Now use the various sliders to edit the image to suit your requirements. We found that increasing the level of Fade helped to give a realistic image.

Not just for dummies

for Beginners

A clear, comprehensive series for people who want to start learning about iPhone, iPad, Mac, Photoshop, photography and more

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pcreative@servicehelpline.co.uk
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☏ Overseas +44 1795 592 871
13 issue subscription (UK) – £62.40
13 issue subscription (Europe) – £70
13 issue subscription (ROW) – £80

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Printed by Wyndeham Heron Ltd, Bentails Complex, Colchester Road, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex, CM9 4NW

Distributed in the UK & Eire by : Seymour Distribution, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT
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Distributed in Australia by: Gordon & Gotch, Equinox Centre, 26 Rodborough Road, Frenchs Forest, NSW 2086
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Distributed in the rest of the world by: Marketforce, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SU
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ISSN 1747-7816

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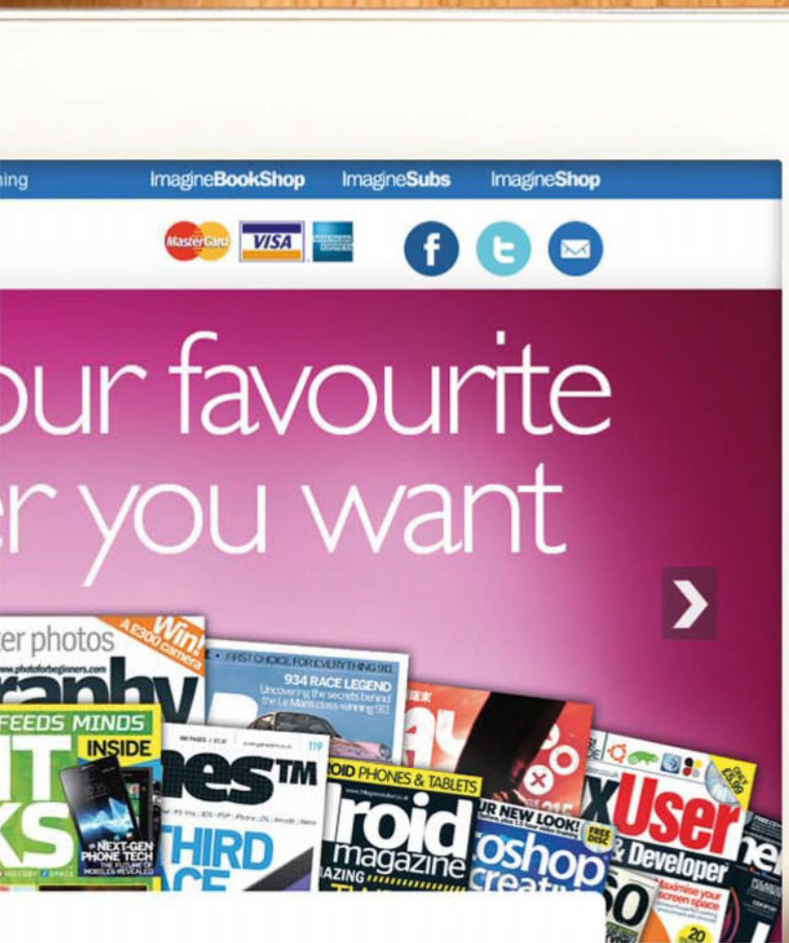

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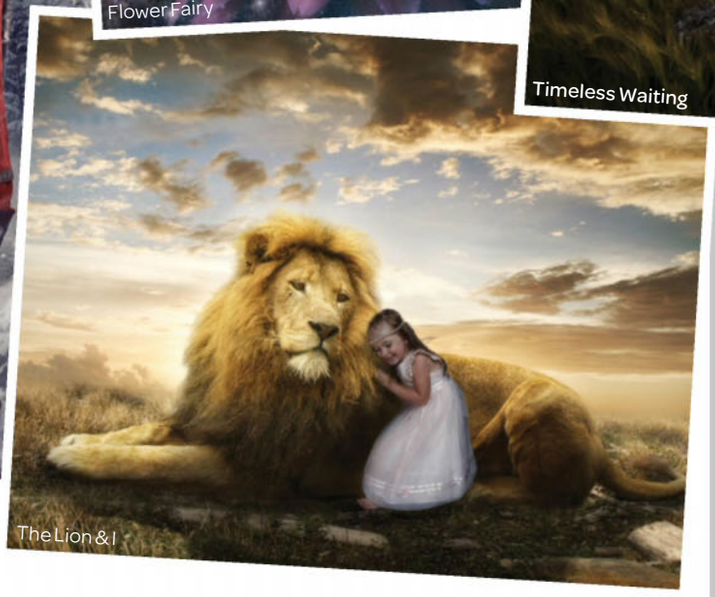
The Lion & I

Timeless Waiting

Mark Goh

Find out how Mark got started with Photoshop and what his favourite tools are to create with

Freelance artist and photographer Mark Goh started to take photos only a few years ago. Eventually, he became inspired by creative manipulations, and started to form his own fantasy scenes in Photoshop. We catch up with the man to find out more.

Why did you start learning Photoshop?

When I first started photography I was interested in image creation. Photoshop is a tool that helps to beautify the image and eventually transform it into artwork. Manipulation is an art that further broadens my imagination; I use it as a way to express my thoughts and feelings. I always find it challenging, even now.

What are your favourite parts of Photoshop?

My favourite part of Photoshop is dodging and burning. I like to add depth as well as even out the shadow and light areas. I use the Curves adjustment to darken or brighten the stock images, so that they have different lighting. Lowering the saturation in Hue/Saturation is also a favourite, as well as adding filters to blend the overall colour scheme.

What's your favourite composition?

The Lion & I is my favourite. The image shows a child's innocence and purity of mind, and how they can connect with the natural environment. It tells a story of coexistence with our environment and surroundings.

What advice can you give to Photoshop beginners?

Never stop learning; this is the key to success. Spend time learning new techniques and applying what you have learned. Keep trying until you fully understand what Photoshop can do for you. Be creative and bold.

Visit **www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/travellerplanet** for more of Mark's work, and **http://travellerplanet.deviantart.com** for image credits.

The Making Of Timeless Waiting

Mark shows the key steps behind blending his scene

Stock hunt

I started off looking for different elements. I wanted to find a serene landscape that merged beautifully into the mountains and field.

Blending in

To enhance the composition I added in a tree and darkened the environment using Curves and Hue/Saturation adjustments.

Place the subject

I selected a model and a rock. I placed them in the right place to look realistic. Next, using Burn tools, I created shadows in the environment.

Tonal adjustments

The final stages involved adding colour and contrast to achieve the right tone. I wanted to create a painterly effect for the overall image.

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