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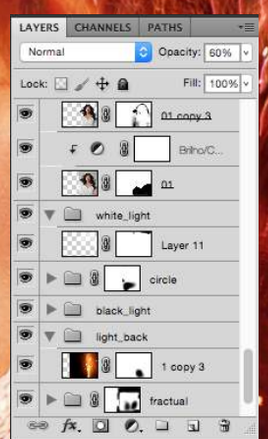

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Welcome

Layers are a ubiquitous feature of Photoshop, an inadmissible part of pretty much any project, big or small. However, handling and working with them can easily get tricky and complex, so this issue we're entirely dedicated to helping you get fully on top of layers, and how to make the most of them to make your artwork the best it can be.

Among our variety of expert tutorials this issue are exciting and fun projects such as making your own digital scrapbook, adding fire to a hot racing car picture, creating prehistoric animal hybrids and editing photos into eye-catching infrared pieces of art. Also, we have our usual great collection of product reviews, interviews with artists, and stunning galleries to draw inspiration from. We hope you enjoy the issue!

Erlingur Einarsson **Editor**
erlingur.einarsson@futurenet.com

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READERS' CHALLENGE

Upload your images to **facebook.com/PhotoshopCreative**

We challenged you...

In issue 167, we challenged you to get creative with the set theme of Darkness. You were allowed to create whatever you wanted, so long as it incorporated the theme somehow.

Alexandre Perez

Moon Man

This is a composition in which lighting and shading play a big part. The cloud and mist were key in creating a creepy atmosphere, and the picture as a whole was given a cohesive tone with unifying adjustments.

This issue's challenge...

Think you can do better? Prove it!

Next issue, the theme is ANIMALS. We don't mind how you incorporate it into your image, just be as creative as you possibly can! Head to **facebook.com/PhotoshopCreative** and simply hit the Challenge link. Closing date: 26/9/2018.

THE PRIZE...

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PortraitPro software

This challenge, one lucky winner will receive PortraitPro software, a must-have for any retouching enthusiast! PortraitPro is great for editing portraits, with responsive sliders and sophisticated photo-editing features.

Honourable mentions See some honourable mentions from this issue's challenge at **facebook.com/photoshopcreative**

TRENDING IMAGES

Check out some of the most popular artwork that's been rocking the internet over the last few weeks, and take inspiration from what's currently trending

There's nothing more inspiring than surfing the internet and seeing what other artists are creating, and we encourage you to do so. Here are some of our favourite pictures that caught our attention recently, courtesy of some of the world's most exciting artists and designers.

Felix's speciality is making miniature models look real, and this is another excellent display of that. We love his work, and we're not alone; he's been featured by Wacom's Gallery 15 times.

Felix Hernández

www.hernandezdreamphography.com

My post-production has become easier. I do the most that I can in-camera but basic Camera Raw adjustments, placing backgrounds, colour matching and color grading are important. Photoshop is my way to go, and I just love and enjoy using it as part of my creative process.

Michał's brushwork is exquisite. 20,000 followers online. We're big fans of this piece, for its big, bold strokes, but also for its subtle texturing.

Michał Sawtyruk

michalsawtyruk.com

This was one of my daily exercises. I wanted to make something simple, no more than a few layers, and something with strong light that set the composition. I started with a thumbnail sketch I already liked so I went with colours after that.

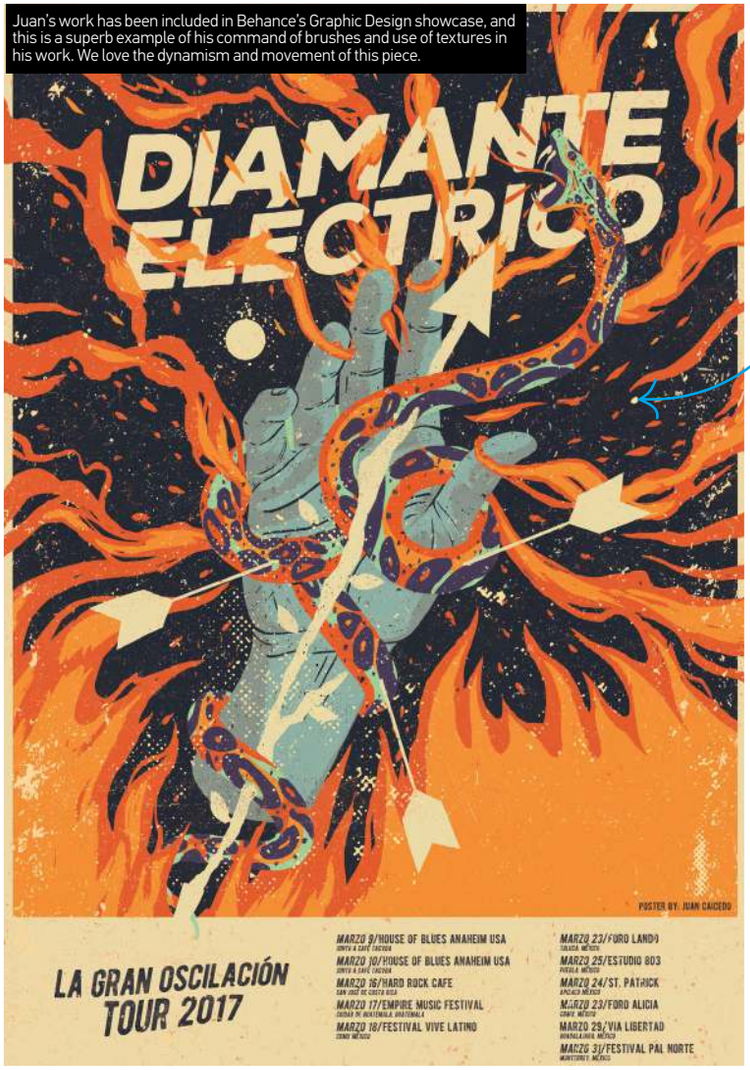
Featured by the AIGA gallery online, Nelson is a logo master capable of producing beautiful icons. This is one of his loveliest yet, and we adore the simple moon and stars behind the fox.

Nelson Fraga

nelsonfraga.com

This was a logo design vectorised in Illustrator and painted in Photoshop with a Wacom Intuos tablet. After importing the vector files, brushes, the Paint Bucket and selection tools were used, working on layers.

Juan's work has been included in Behance's Graphic Design showcase, and this is a superb example of his command of brushes and use of textures in his work. We love the dynamism and movement of this piece.



Juan Caicedo

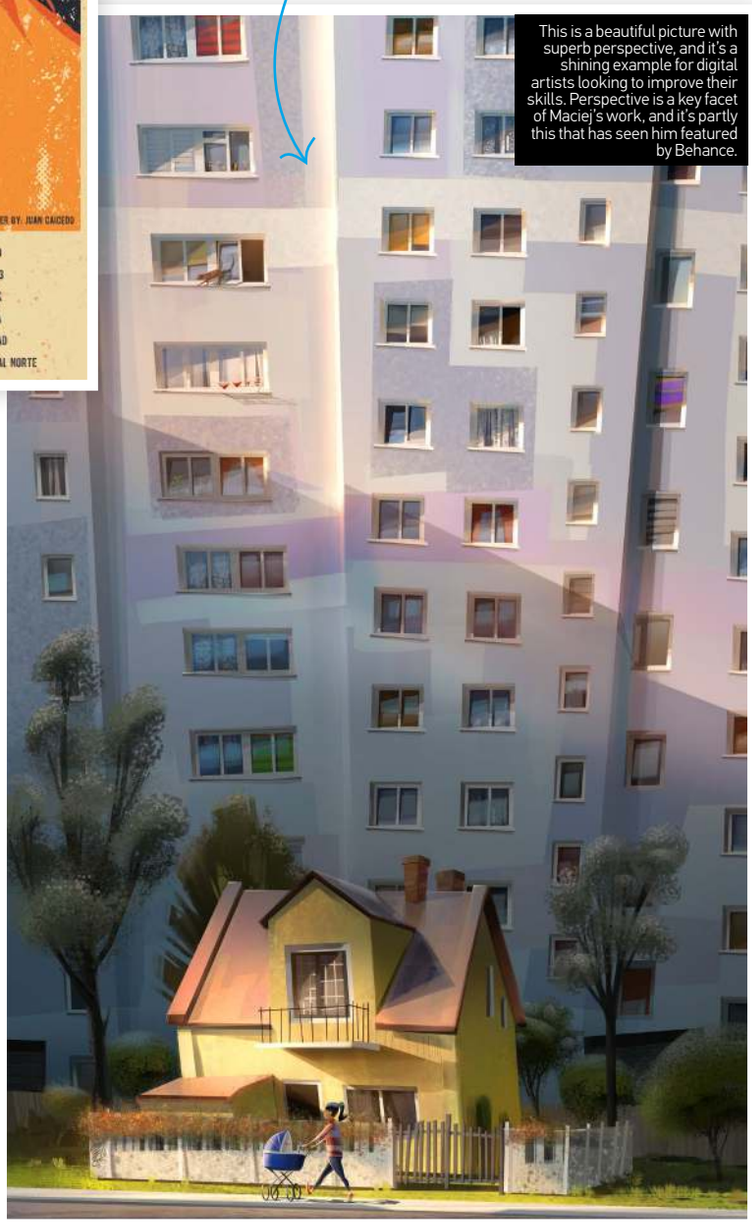
www.instagram.com/jotade.juan/

Starting from the base point, I went to work on the image in Photoshop, where I made the final image composition. After that, I focused on the textures, colour and different specific details that give the image a big value and visual power, which is characteristic of my aesthetic.

Maciej Sidorowicz

maciejsidorowicz.com

The inspiration of this was my city, Warsaw. I painted it entirely in Photoshop; I used as many advantages of Photoshop as I could, such as the time-saving aspects, but I'm always careful to not lose the painterly feel.



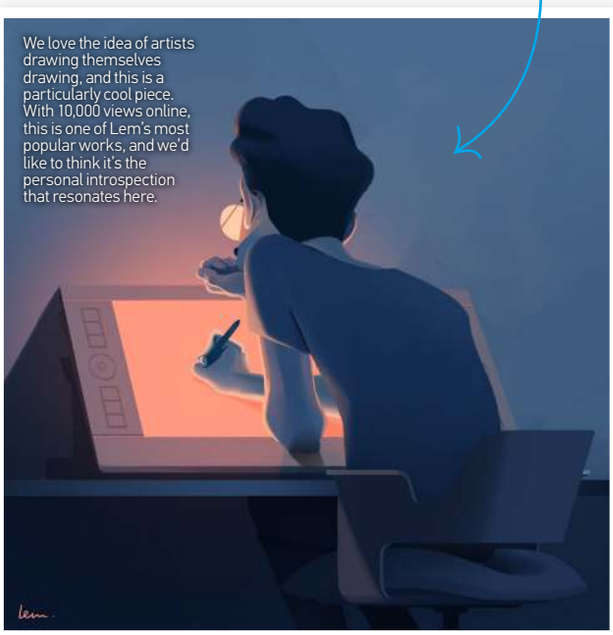
This is a beautiful picture with superb perspective, and it's a shining example for digital artists looking to improve their skills. Perspective is a key facet of Maciej's work, and it's partly this that has seen him featured by Behance.

Lem Lemur

lemlemur.tumblr.com

This image is a self-portrait. It was made with Photoshop CC on a 27-inch Wacom Cintiq and with the help of an amazing brush set from Kyle T Webster. Lighting and colour were important in this piece.

We love the idea of artists drawing themselves drawing, and this is a particularly cool piece. With 10,000 views online, this is one of Lem's most popular works, and we'd like to think it's the personal introspection that resonates here.



READERS' IMAGES

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

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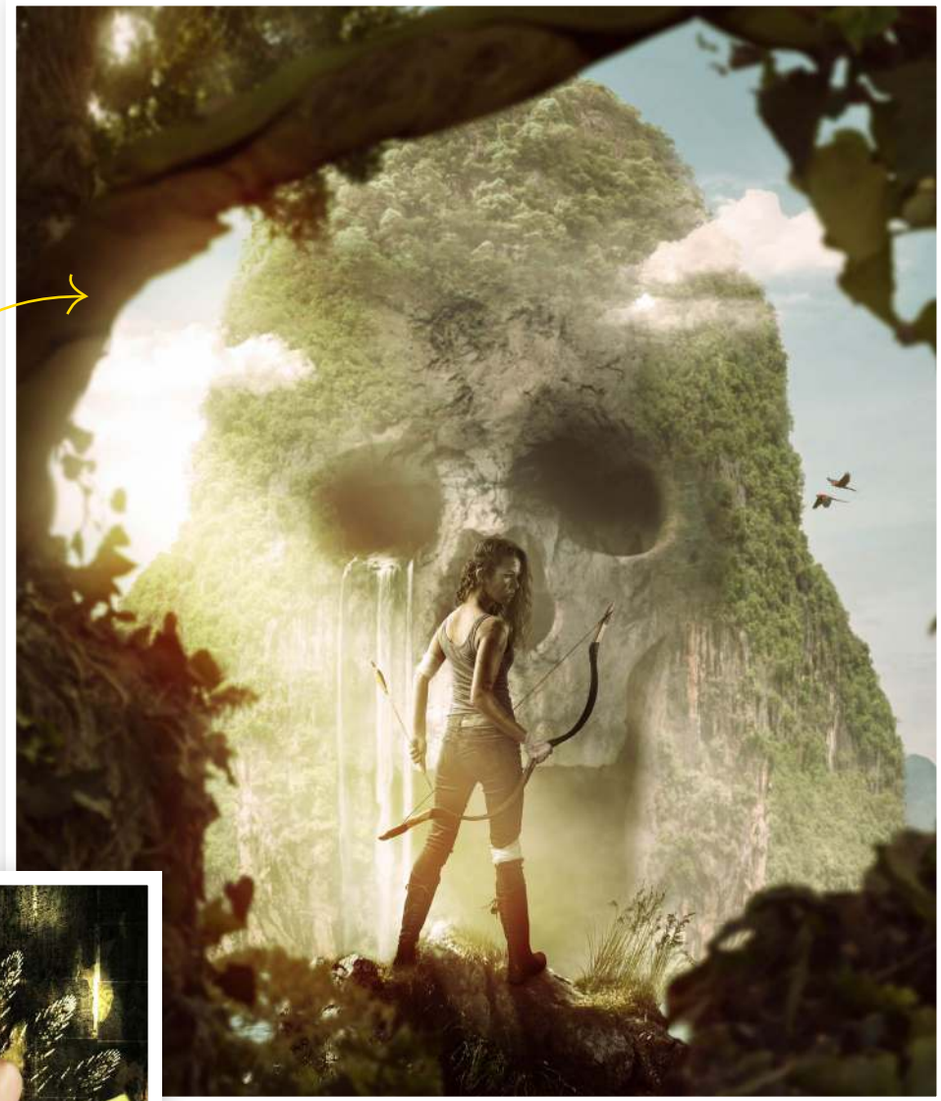
Clinton Lofthouse

Image of the issue

This image basically came from a late-night shoot. We decided to try out a female adventurer concept, and used 11 separate images, mostly free stock, to build up the image from there.

Deepak Maurya

A photographer I know sent me a photo of a model, so I used it for this and added some overlay and background images from Pixabay and Pexels. I referred to tutorials a lot when I made this.

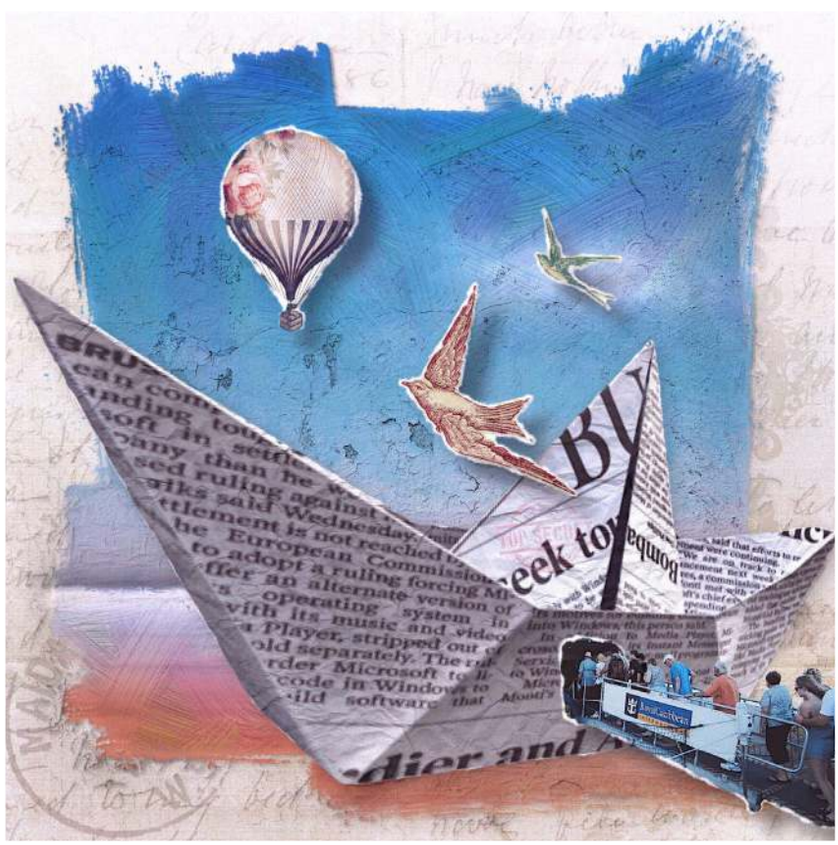


Alexander Chalooupka

I created this image with the use of five stock photos and Photoshop. I used masks and blend modes, along with colour adjustments to tie it together. I created it to give a message of global warming.

Corine Spring

My idea in this illustration was to completely change the hairstyle. I wanted something more structured, so I decided to erase the bun to replace it with a more surprising effect. I integrated a texture to get more volume.



Charli Edwards

Each composite is a mixture of stock imagery, brush work and blend modes in order to create depth, texture and lighting. Each takes several hours to complete and I prefer to work with large files.

Raqee S Najmuldeen

I really benefitted from issue 165 of **Photoshop Creative**, and in particular the torn paper texture. I made use of blend modes, layer masking, filters and brushes in designing this image.

LAYERS PROJECTS TO INSPIRE YOU

From fire portraits to water projects, hybrid animals to flying islands, learn how to create amazing images with the power of layers

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

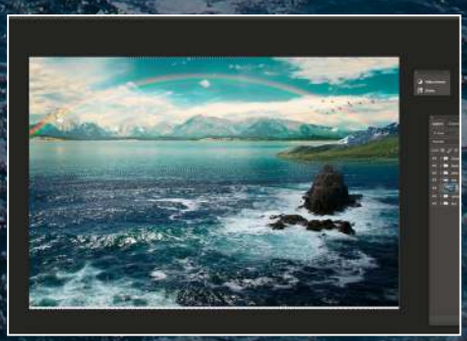
When someone says the words 'Photoshop project', what do you think of? We thought we'd put that to the test to come up with ten essential layer-focused Photoshop projects that everyone should master at some point: and whether you're an expert of the software or brand new to experimenting with it, everyone should have a go at these!

We've got some great-looking projects for you to try over these pages, and they can be a lot of fun to have a go at. Whether you're looking to get creative with water or you're hoping to learn how to swap textures out, all of these pictures are really going to jump off the screen.

But these aren't just the projects that are the most fun to have a go at; they can also teach you a lot about Photoshop. Sure, swapping the head of one animal for another might seem like a pretty trivial – albeit really funny – exercise, but the blending skills you're going to learn will stay with you. Likewise, creating a sports poster can teach you a lot about textures, and a fire portrait can help show you how different light sources react with each other. These are all projects that can benefit not just photomanipulators, but retouchers and even digital artists.

So let's dive right into the projects. What will you learn about layers along the way?

1 Work with 3D layers



Blend the images

01 First create a new document at 444x300mm. Then start to compose the scene adding 'sky.jpg, back_mountain.psd' and 'sea.jpg'. Place these photos as above, and to blend them, make a mask and use the Brush Tool (B) to erase the unnecessary details.

Work with 3D

02 Type "1" using the font Arial Black at 510pt and transform it to a 3D shape (3D> New 3D Extrusion from selected layer). Set the Extrusion Depth to 999px and the coordinates at 0, 1144, 0 / -2.4°, -8.4°, 0.1° / 999.99, 2287.99, 999.99. Repeat for the "0".

Fill the island

03 Select the zero layer, pick the Magic Wand Tool (W), click on the front face, create a new layer, place it into a group (Cmd/Ctrl+G) and click Add Layer Mask. Add the layer Rock ('plant_01_rock.psd') and place it inside the folder, duplicate it until it fills all the space.

2

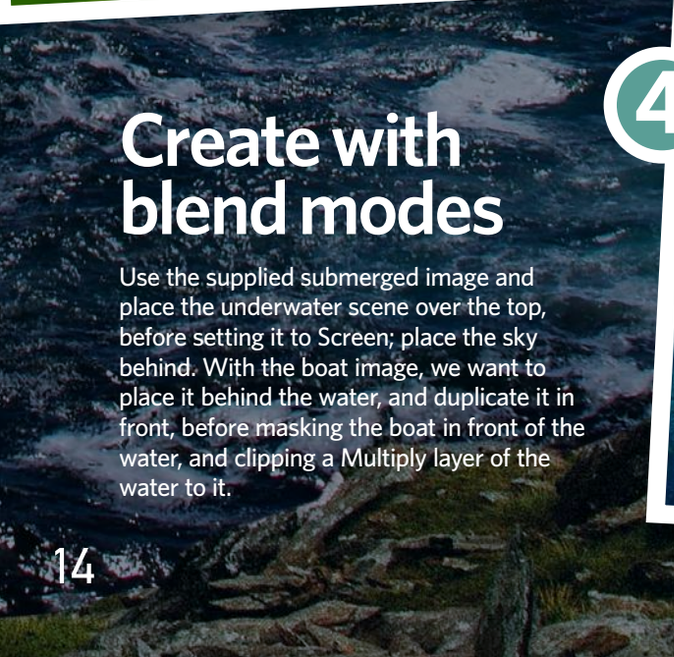
Merge images with masks

Out-of-bounds images often use water filtering out of a screen or device, so with this kind of image, it's important to use a waterfall image with a dark background, before setting it to Screen. Place your background image in the iPad, and blend the image together with masks.

3

Images in objects

Insert the lightbulb image in your document and add the fish image. Mask the fish image over the lightbulb and duplicate it three times; set one to Normal, 40% Opacity, one to Overlay 100%, one to Screen 100% and one to Color 30%. Mask out the cat's paw behind the bulb to give the effect of it being transparent.

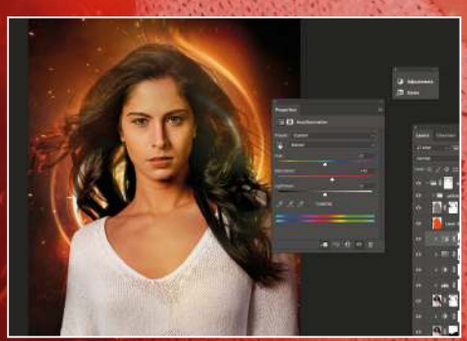


4

Create with blend modes

Use the supplied submerged image and place the underwater scene over the top, before setting it to Screen; place the sky behind. With the boat image, we want to place it behind the water, and duplicate it in front, before masking the boat in front of the water, and clipping a Multiply layer of the water to it.

5 Use layers for a fire portrait



Link adjustment layers

01 Place 'woman.jpg', go to the Adjustment menu, choose Hue/Saturation and set to 0, 15, 0. Hold Cmd/Ctrl+Alt and click on the woman's layer. Repeat to link Color Lookup (3Strip.Look), Brightness/Contrast (6, 11) and Levels (24, 1.00, 255) adjustment layers.

Use the Screen mode

02 Let's add some fire on the woman's hair. Add the layer Folder 05, from 'hair_fire_02.psd', place it just like the image and change the blend mode to Screen. Then, fill up the woman's hair, using the same procedure, with the other layer folders from the same file.

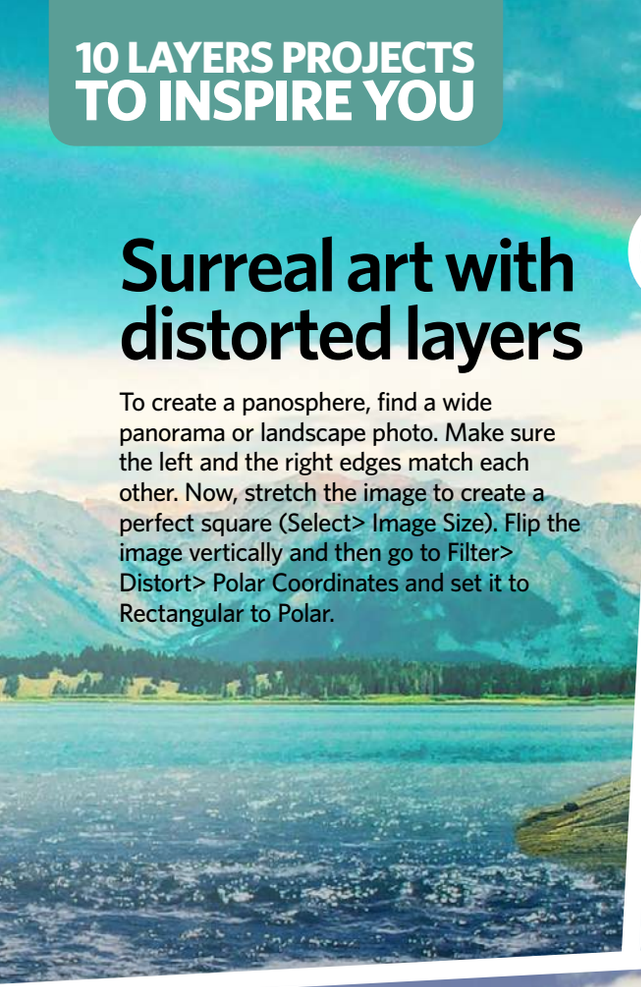
Make a blurry effect

03 Duplicate all layers (Cmd/Ctrl+J) and merge (Cmd/Ctrl+E). Apply the Glass filter (Filter> Filter Gallery> Distort> Glass) and set Distortion: 10, Smoothness: 15, Texture: Frosted, Scaling: 114. Make a mask around the woman's face to erase any excess.

6

Surreal art with distorted layers

To create a panosphere, find a wide panorama or landscape photo. Make sure the left and the right edges match each other. Now, stretch the image to create a perfect square (Select> Image Size). Flip the image vertically and then go to Filter> Distort> Polar Coordinates and set it to Rectangular to Polar.



7

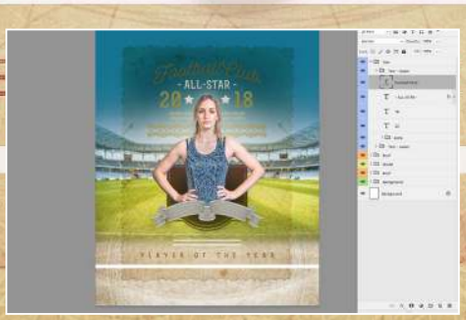
Paste textures on layers

Create an animal hybrid by cutting textures and pasting over the base image. Use the Warp Tool to reshape it and add masks to hide the hard edges. Repeat this process to cover the entire body. Add details using the High Pass technique and custom brushes to paint the fur.

8 Vintage effects

Start the composition

01 Open the model PSD. Select and isolate the model, and perform any desired touch-ups. Save the PSD. Open the main PSD. Place and situate the model. Start layering the background below the model layer.



Add more elements

02 Continue populating the image with various elements. Use the Rectangle Tool for lines, and the Custom Shape Tool for stars. Add some text. Employ warped text (click the button in the options bar).

Finalise

03 Use blend modes and adjustments to finalise the look. Blend in old paper textures with Overlay. Use adjustment layers such as Color Lookup and Color Balance and fine-tune with Curves and Levels.

9 Displace patterns on layers

To create a texture swap, start by saving the start image of the van as a PSD. Now insert the texture and place over the van; cut it out with the Pen. Go to Filter> Distort> Displace, choose a Horizontal and Vertical scale of 10 and select Stretch To Fit and Repeat Edge Pixels. Now copy your start layer above the texture and duplicate twice; clip all three layers to the texture.

Use Hue/Saturation (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U) to desaturate the first of these layers and set the blend mode to Overlay. Desaturate the second layer and set to Multiply, and go to Filter> Blur> Average for the last, before setting it to Soft Light blend mode, 50% Opacity.

Clip a Curves layer to the texture to finish, and adjust the tone.

10 Build an image with layers

Mask and transform

01 Place the mountain image. Grab a selection tool to select the mountain summit, then add a layer mask. Go to Edit> Transform> Flip Vertical. Place the snow landscape. Grab the Elliptical Marquee Tool and then select and mask the image. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to fit on top of the mountain layer.

Bring new images

02 First, click on the snow landscape layer and apply the mask. Go to Filter> Liquify and use the Warp Tool (W) to create the melting effect around the edges. Now, place new images such as the polar bears, penguins, igloo, ice, and clouds and resize accordingly.

Make adjustments

03 Use Levels or Camera Raw Filter to fine-tune the images. Go to Layer> New Adjustment Layer> Color Lookup. Choose: 3DLUT – Moonlight. Grab a soft brush and paint on the adjustment mask to create the shadows. Add a snow effect and use the Lens Flare filter for the sunlight.

Essentials

Works with

CS CC Elements

What you'll learn

How to layer shapes, photos and tidbits to create a scrapbook page

Time taken

2 hours

Expert

Andre Villanueva

My mother got me started early in the fine art of cutting magazines to shreds and then piecing said shreds together to tell some sort of story (or at the very least make something raggedly colourful). Apparently, those childhood creative sessions set me on a one-way, lifelong journey to Collageville. I'm now powerless to resist the urge to admire and create cut-and-paste works. Thanks, mum!

Layer a digital scrapbook page

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Utilise the power of layers and masks to piece together a delightful, handmade-looking scrapbook page

Scrapbooking is a method of creatively chronicling your life. It's akin to collaging. In both, anything goes when deciding what to display and how to display it. One can argue scrapbooking and collage are essentially the same thing, though scrapbooking generally implies you have multiple pages bound and you're focused on relating your life experiences. Collages and scrapbooks typically exist in the physical realm.

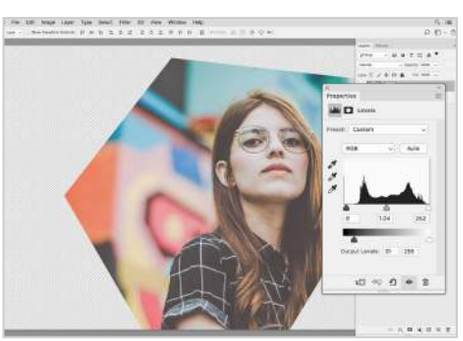
Because Photoshop is a layer-based digital imaging application, it's well suited for assembling layered visuals like a virtual scrapbook page. Sure, the immediacy of physical collaging and the tangibility of the assorted materials handled may be lost when scrapbooking via computer, but you gain many advantages.

Layers are flexible. You can move them up, down and all around, hide and fade areas via masks, meld them together with blend modes and group and duplicate them for efficient editing. When you combine those abilities with history states, selection tools and non-destructive features, you have a creative environment that can make even the most punctilious artist want to start creating.

Follow along, and feel free to substitute any asset for a more personalised result.

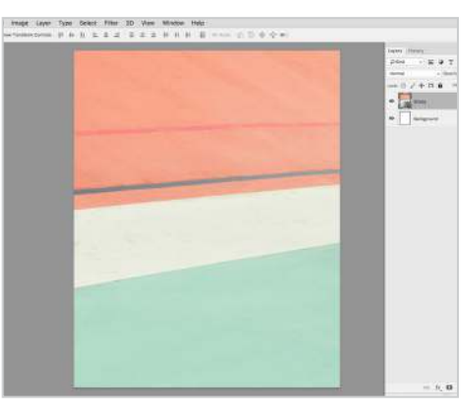
Prep model

01 Open 'model.psd' and zoom out a bit. Using the Polygonal Lasso Tool, click on the corner points to plot a jagged, polygonal selection around the model. Click the Add Layer Mask button in the Layers palette to mask.



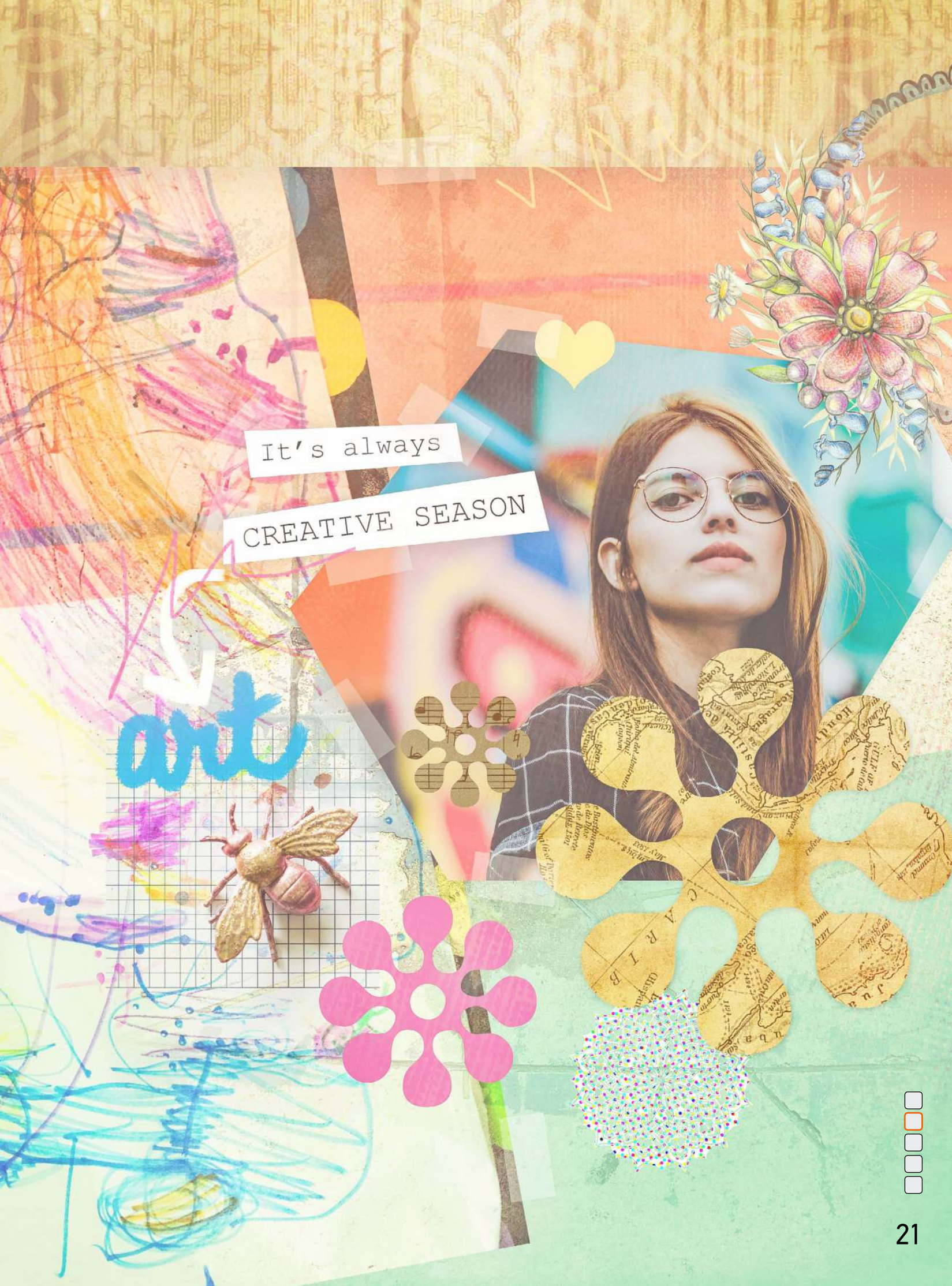
Adjust the Levels

02 Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' button in the Layers palette, choose Levels. Slide the bottom dark slider rightward to limit the dark areas, then play with the sliders under the histogram to improve the image. When done, save and close the PSD.



Start background

03 Open 'main.psd'. It's blank, but you'll remedy that immediately. Go to File> Place [CC: Place Embedded], grab 'strata.jpg'. Scale and position to cover the canvas before committing the place.


It's always
CREATIVE SEASON
art

Add some doodles

04 Ah, the imaginative playfulness of youth... tap into it with some actual children's doodles. Go to File> Place [CC: Place Embedded], 'doodles.jpg'. Scale, rotate and position off to the side before committing. Set to Hard Light blend mode.

Blend in some texture

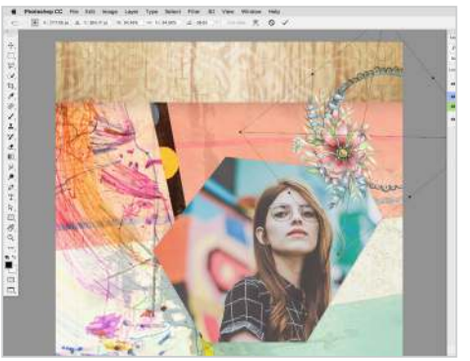
05 Now for some texturing. Place 'downtown.jpg', scale up and position to cover a good bit of the canvas before committing. Set to Hard Light blend mode. Click the Add Layer Mask button. Paint black with a soft-edged brush (40-90% brush Opacity) to reduce in areas.

Create border

06 Place 'mystical.jpg'. Scale and position, ensuring you have enough to cover a strip up top. After committing the place, use the Rectangular Marquee Tool to select target area. Click the Add Layer Mask button. Add a Drop Shadow via the fx button [Elements: Styles button. Edit with gear icon.]

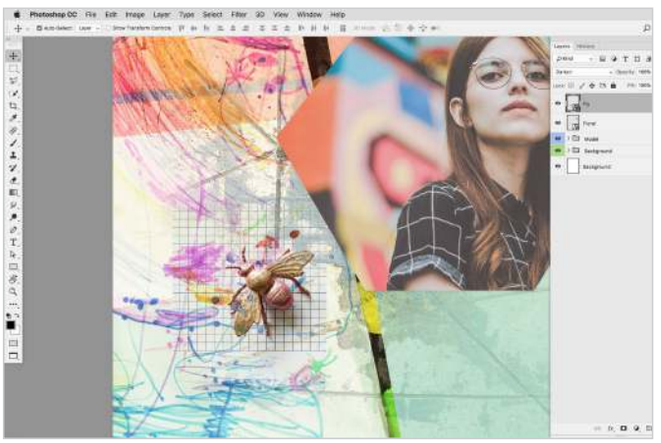
Place model

07 Place the model you prepped earlier [CC: you can use Place Linked if you think you might perform any future edits on the separate model PSD]. Scale, rotate and position before committing the place. Add a slight Drop Shadow via the fx/Styles button.



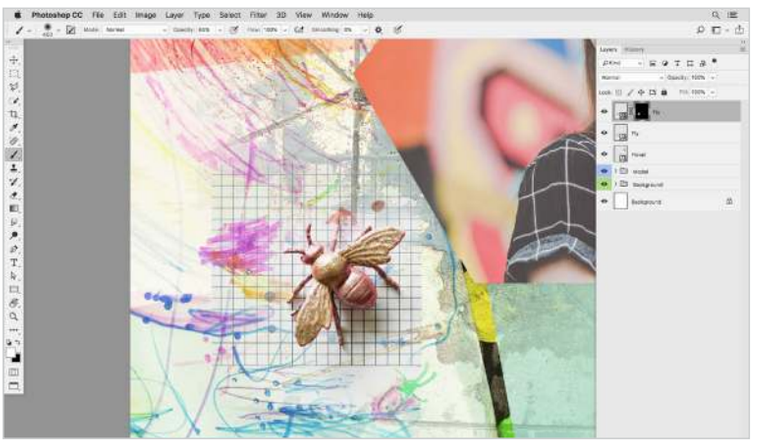
Vintage floral PNG

08 Now it's time to start adding the supporting assets. First up, a vintage floral image. Place 'floral.png'. Scale, rotate and position before committing. As you can see, the PNG format retains transparency for ease of deployment.



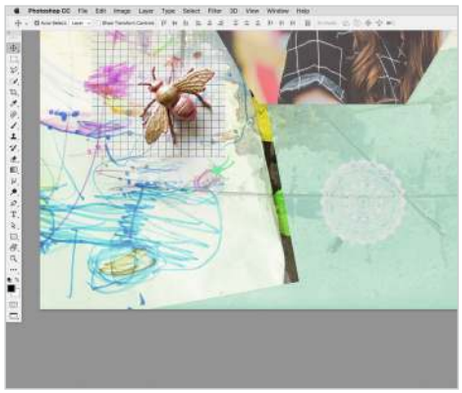
Pretty fly guy

09 Next, place 'fly.png'. After situating/committing the place, try setting the blend mode to Darken. See if you like how the grid blends into the background. If so, continue with the next step. If you don't want to blend, press Cmd/Ctrl+Z to undo, then skip to step 11.



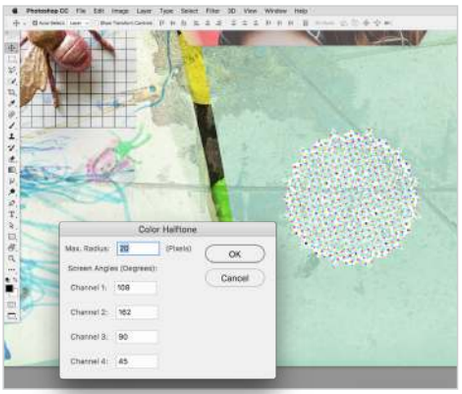
Reinforce the fly

10 If you liked how the grid blended with the background, you may be a bit disappointed in how the fly also started to blend in. To restore substance, press Cmd/Ctrl+J, set the blend mode to Normal. Option/Alt-click the Add Layer Mask button and then paint back with white (30-80% brush Opacity).



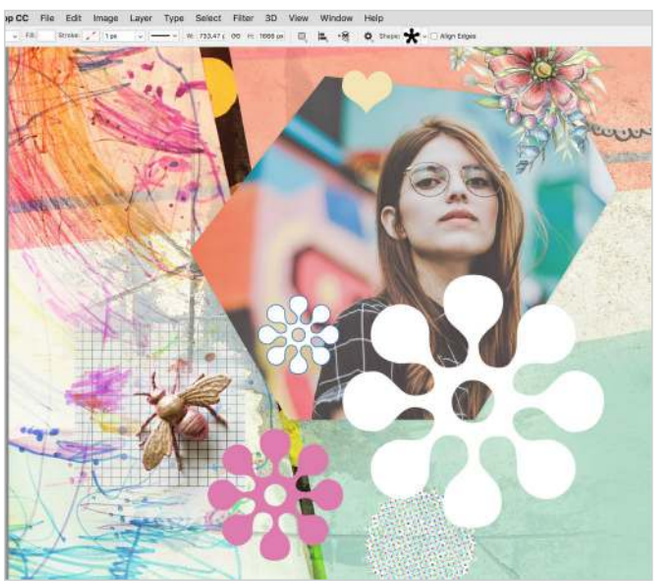
Add mandala and invert

11 Now for another PNG. Place 'mandala.png'. Scale and position it before committing. Press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert. It'll now be light in colour... maybe it's a little too light? Perhaps a filter can help?



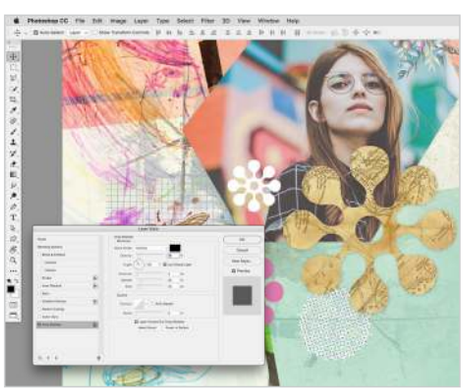
Apply Color Halftone filter

12 Go to Filter> Pixelate> Color Halftone. Set the Max. Radius to 20 pixels. Click OK to see how it looks. If you want to try a different setting, back up (Cmd/Ctrl+Z), then reapply the filter.



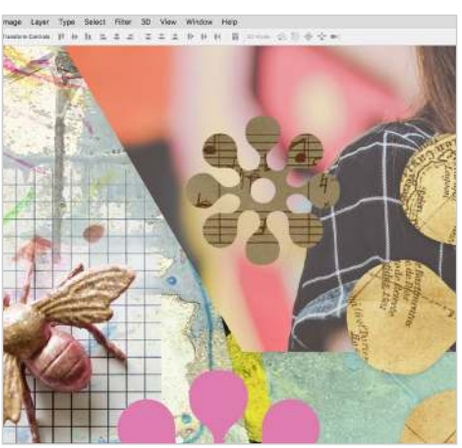
Scatter shapes

13 Select the Custom Shape Tool [CC/CS: set to Shape in options bar]. Use the Custom Shape picker to pick a shape (such as Blob 2). Set the Fill (try #e07aaf, #f5e6b4), then click and drag on the canvas to create shapes on new layers. Add other preset shapes if you like.



Create a clipping mask

14 Select one of the shape layers you created. Place 'map.jpg' directly above it and scale/rotate/position to eclipse the shape. Option/Alt-click between the two layers to create a clipping mask. Select the shape layer and apply a slight drop shadow to make it stand out a smidge.

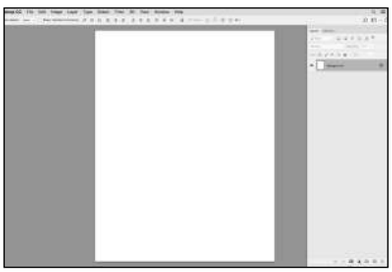


More clipping masks

15 Using the last step as a blueprint, create another clipping mask or two. You can use 'map.jpg' again and/or use 'music.jpg.' You can also bring in your own images if you'd prefer.

Expert edit

Cut out text



Create document

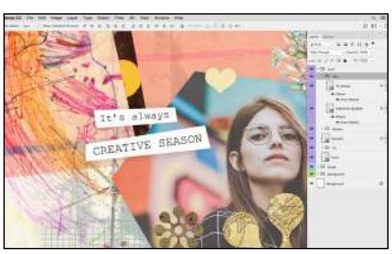
01 Create a document with white background. So you can gauge font sizing in relation to your composition, use the same dimensions as your main PSD.

Add text

02 Create your text with the Horizontal Type Tool using black or a dark colour. Leave adequate breathing room around each line. Experiment with fonts. Here, Courier New is used.

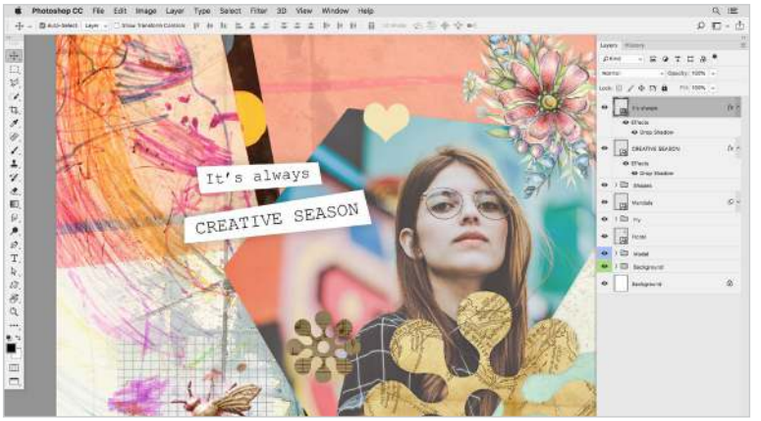
Merge and select

03 When you're done creating the line(s) of text, merge layers (Cmd/Ctrl+Option/Alt+Shift+E) up top. Use the Polygonal Lasso Tool to make a selection.



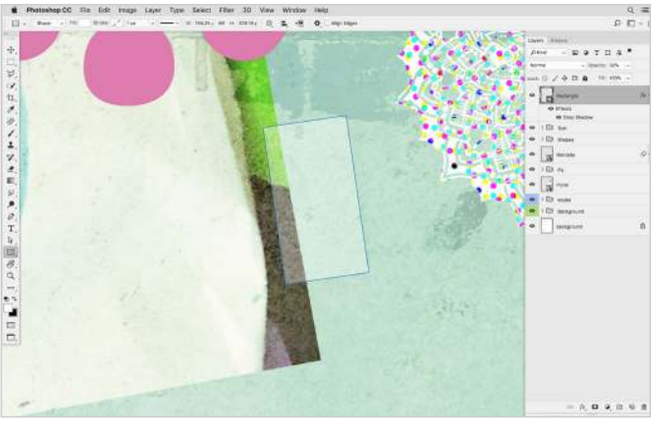
Copy and paste

04 For each selection, copy and paste into your main PSD. Free transform to scale, rotate and position [CC/CS: convert each to Smart Objects first to keep non-destructive].



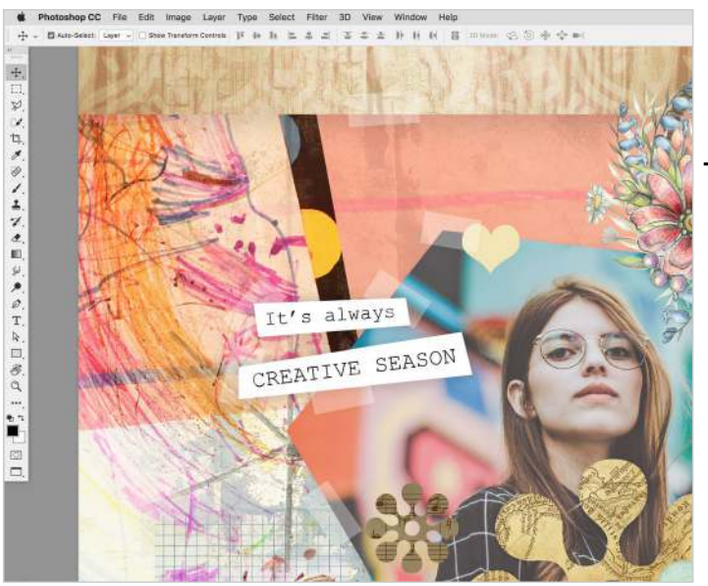
Add text

16 A hallmark of scrapbooking and collage is the presence of text that has been cut out. Use the sidestepper as a guide for creating such text. Alternatively, scan in some of your own documents and cut and paste from those. You can add very slight drop shadows to these.



Create tape strip

17 Use the Rectangle Tool to create a white rectangle on a new layer. Drop the layer Opacity (try 30-40%). Add the tiniest amount of drop shadow if you like. Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) to rotate and position.

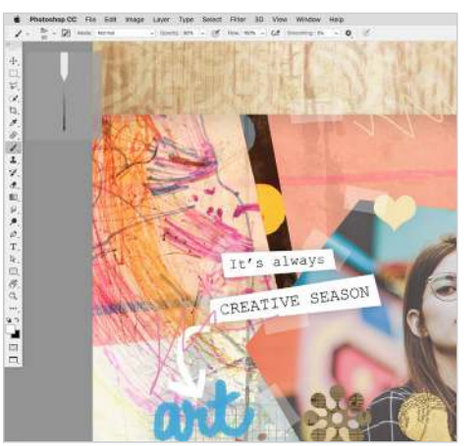


Tape it up!

18 Select the Move Tool. Option/Alt-click and drag to simultaneously copy the shape and position it. Free Transform. Continue copying/positioning and transforming to add tape where you like. Feel free to create one-off strips to inject some variation.

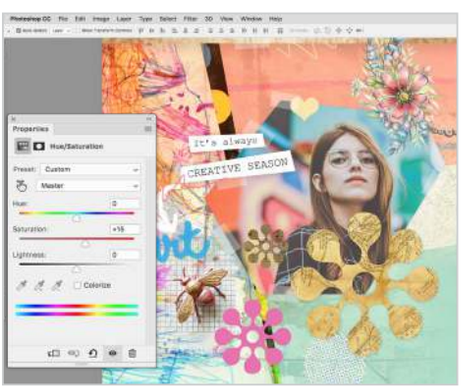
Use a preset brush

19 Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' button, choose Solid Color. Pick a blue like #3ca7d9 and click OK. Click the mask, press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert. Select the Brush Tool. Pick a preset like Rough Round Bristle. Scrawl out something using white: a word, a scribble, a simple doodle...



Scrawl some more

20 Add some more script/scribbles via additional colour layers using other colours (try #f9e7b0, #e574af and white). Use the same brush from the last step and/or test drive some of the other preset brushes.



Boost saturation

21 Pump up the fun and saturation. Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' button, choose Hue/Saturation. Slide the Saturation slider rightward (try +15) to increase the colour saturation. If needed, paint black in the mask to tone the saturation down in areas.

Finalise

22 Finalise as you see fit. Want more texture? Place 'texture.jpg' and blend with Pin Light. Add a layer mask and reduce in areas. Bring in any other bits and pieces you'd like to include. Apply additional adjustments. Save PSD when done.

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Tutorial Lighting effects with blending modes

Expert

Daniel Sinoca

Lighting and fire are two of my favourite subjects to use in designs. And thanks to a wide range of tools and filters available in Photoshop, I can combine them to create eye-catching compositions.

I started to get involved in the digital world over 15 years ago and have been working as a freelance artist ever since, creating all kinds of multimedia projects and tutorial guides.

On the FileSilo

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Essentials

Works with

Elements CS CC

What you'll learn

- How to work with layer styles and blending modes to create different effects

Time taken

3 hours

Lighting effects with blending modes

Discover how to create lighting and glow effects from scratch using blending modes, layer styles and a medley of different techniques

Let's look at how we can create a dramatic flaming car scene in a few easy steps. In this tutorial you'll have a lot of fun learning how to combine images and effects that you've built from scratch. There are two Photoshop features frequently used here; one is the layer styles, and the other is blending modes. Layer styles are presets that can be applied to an image to add glows, shadows, strokes and many other effects. The blending modes work differently; they determine how the pixels from one layer interact with the pixels of another layer to create a combined image.

In the first part of our project, you will make light trails using custom brushes and layer styles to add subtle glows around the strokes to create a realistic effect. In the second part, you'll place some fire images and use the blending modes to combine them with the scene, then use other simple techniques to make the lighting more vibrant. The best way to work with blending modes is by experimentation. So, scroll down and test them out to find which one works best.

Download the images and brushes from the FileSilo and start creating your fiery car explosion scene.

Add the background

01 To begin, let's create the background image for our project. Go to File>Open 'pix_1990268_buildings.jpg'. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the layer and rename it Background_copy. Then go to Edit> Transform> Flip Horizontal.

Create a layer mask

02 Grab the Pen Tool (P) and start creating a path following the footbridge line on the left and centre. In Options, click Selection and then click OK. Add a layer mask (click on the Add Layer Mask button found at the bottom of the Layers panel).

Stretch the image

03 Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to open the Free Transform Tool. In the Options bar, set the Horizontal Scale to 150% and drag it to the right until the image snaps with the document bounds.

Make the street

04 Go to File> Place Embedded 'pix_332361_street.jpg' and press Return/Enter. Grab the Polygonal Lasso Tool (L). Select the curb and the asphalt, then add a layer mask. Go to Layer> Rasterize> Smart Object and then apply the mask, go to Layer> Layer Mask> Apply.

Remove the road lines

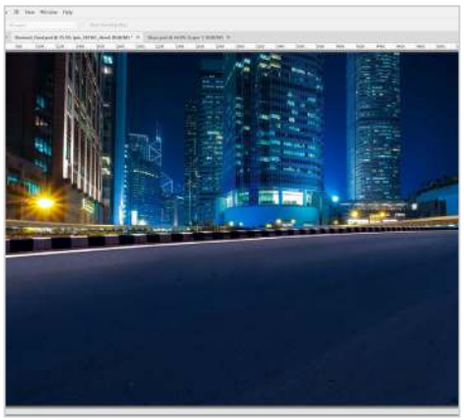
05 First, grab the Spot Healing Brush Tool (J) and remove all the road lines. Now, transform the image into a Smart Object; go to Layer> Smart Objects> Convert to Smart Object.

Resize the road

06 Press Cmd/Ctrl+T. In the Options bar set the Horizontal/Vertical Scale to 200% and place in the centre. Zoom out and holding the Cmd/Ctrl key, start dragging the corner handles to adjust the perspective on both sides. Then use the Warp Tool to bend the road a bit.

Colour adjustments

07 Go to Layer> New Adjustment Layer> Color Lookup. Check 'Use previous layer to create clipping mask' and click OK. Click 3DLUT File and choose NightFromDay.CUBE. Grab a large soft-tip brush (B). Set the Foreground colour to black and paint on the mask to create a subtle light on the curb.

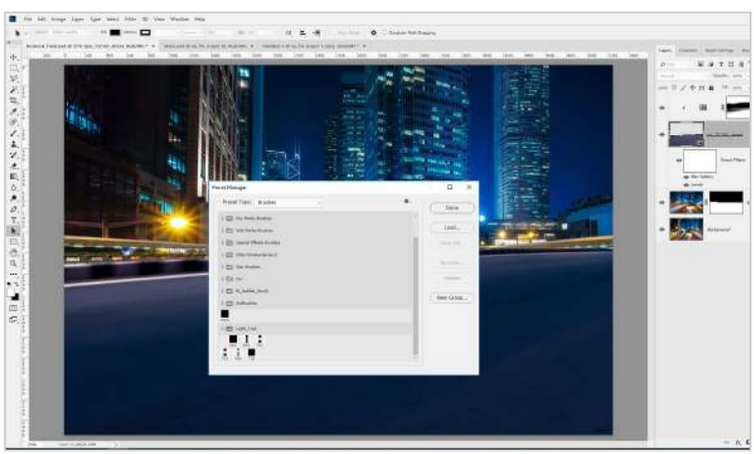


Tweak the tones

08 Now, let's make the street darker by adjusting the tones. Click on the Street layer and then press Cmd/Ctrl+L to open the Levels. Set the Input Level at 0, 0.55, 225 and click OK.

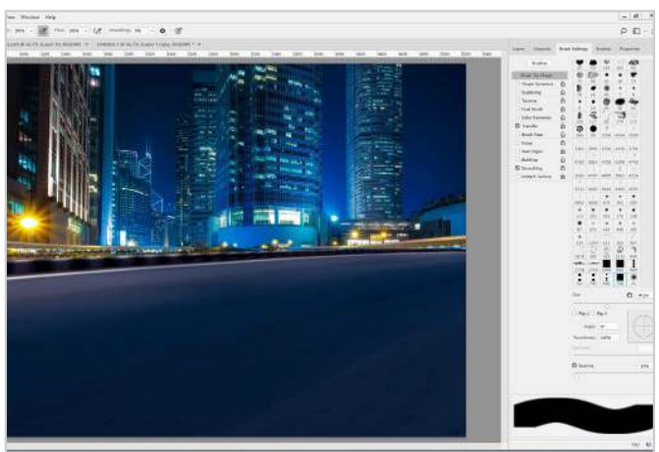
Path Blur filter

09 With the Street layer active, go to Filter> Blur Gallery> Path Blur. Adjust the path by dragging the points. In the Blur Tool panel, tweak the Speed for the start and end points and click OK.



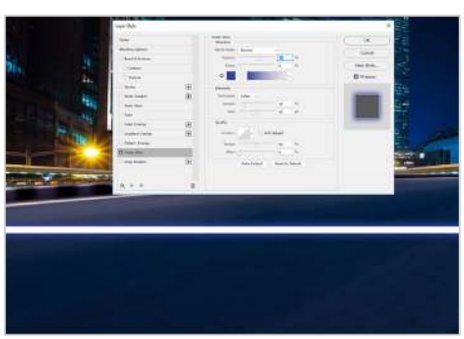
Load brushes

10 For the next step, we'll use custom brushes to create the light trails. First, download and save the file: 'fo_light_trail.abr' from FileSilo. Now go to Edit> Presets> Preset Manager and click Load. Locate the brush and click Load, then press Done.



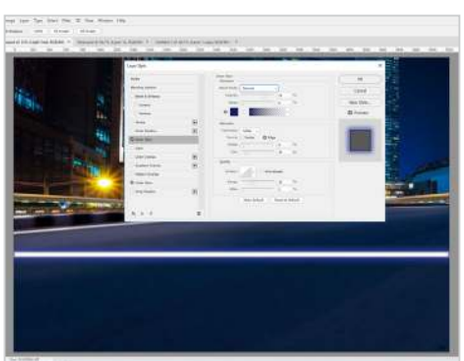
Select the brush

11 Create a new layer on top of the layer stack and name it Light Trail. Now grab the Brush Tool (B) and press F5 to open the Brush panel. Scroll down and find the brush: light_trail_1, then set the Size to 80px.



Create the light trails

12 Set the foreground colour to white. Hold the Shift key and paint the trail. Now apply the glow effect. Go to Layer> Layer Style> Outer Glow. Choose colour #3041ab, Blend Mode: Normal, Opacity: 60%, Spread: 15%, Size: 95px and Contour: Rounded Steps, then click OK.



Inner Glow

13 Open the Layer Styles panel again and select Inner Glow. Choose colour #171963, set the blend mode to Normal, Opacity: 70%, Source: Edge, Choke: 0, Size: 25px, Contour: Rounded Steps and Range: 35%, then click OK.

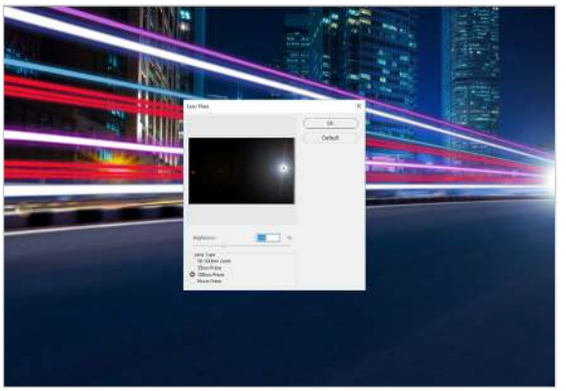
Position the light trail

14 Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and move the light trail right above the curb. Hold Cmd/Ctrl and drag the corner handles to adjust the perspective, then press Return/Enter. Repeat steps 11 to 14 to create more light trails using different brushes, settings and colours.

Expert tip

Glow effect

Here's how to simulate the light emission produced by the fire. Start with a new layer and fill with black. Set the foreground colour to #f09804. Grab the Gradient Tool (G). Choose Foreground to Transparent and gradient type: Radial. Draw the gradient, blend mode: Lighten. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and adjust the size under the car. Create a new layer, blend mode: Vivid Light. Grab a soft brush and paint around the flames to create the effect. Use layer Opacity setting to control intensity.



Lens Flare

15 Create a new layer and fill it with black. Go to Filter> Render> Lens Flare. Keep the Brightness at 100%, choose Lens Type: 105mm Prime and in the preview window move to the right, then click OK. Change the blend to Screen. Press Cmd/Ctrl+L and tweak the effect a bit.

Add more lights

16 Go to File> Place Embedded 'pix_594169_light trail.jpg' and hit Return/Enter. Change the blend mode to Screen and reposition the image. Press Cmd/Ctrl+U and increase the Saturation to 80, then click OK.

Place the car

17 Go to File> Place Embedded 'pxhere_676374_car.jpg'. Resize the image and press Return/Enter. Grab the Pen Tool (P) and draw a path around the car. In Options, click Selection and click OK, then add a layer mask.

Create a neutral layer

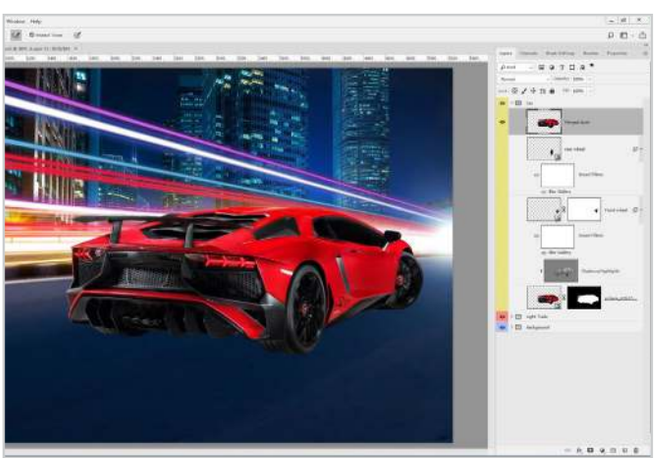
18 Press Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N. Name the new layer Shadows and Highlights, check 'Use previous layer to create clipping mask'. Change the Mode to Overlay and check 'Fill with overlay neutral color (50% gray)', then click OK.

Paint the shadows/highlights

19 Grab the Dodge Tool (O). Set Range to Midtones, Exposure: 100% and start painting the highlights on top of the car. Now, grab the Burn Tool (Shift+O) and use the same settings to reinforce the shadows.

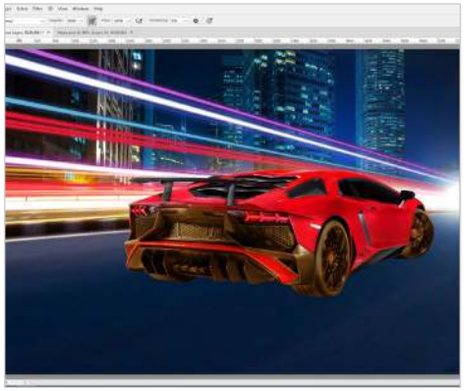
Spin the wheels

20 Grab the Elliptical Marquee Tool (M) and select the rear wheel. Go to Select> Transform Selection and adjust the selection. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate it. Transform into a Smart Object, then go to Filter> Blur Gallery> Spin Blur. Tweak the size and Blur Angle, then repeat this process for the front wheel.



Merge the layers

21 Hold Shift and select all the car-related layers. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the layers and then Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge (Hide the extra layers.) Go to Layer> Smart Objects> Convert to Smart Object.



Bring in colour

22 Create a new layer on top of the car layer. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G to clip the layers. Change the blend to Soft Light. Set the foreground colour to #ef9a22. Grab a Soft Brush (B) and paint the bumper, the rear, and wheels.

Create a shadow

23 Create a new layer below the car layer and name it Shadow. Grab the Polygonal Lasso Tool (L) and draw a selection under the car, fill it with black. Press Cmd/Ctrl+D to deselect. Now go to Filter> Blur> Gaussian Blur. Set Radius to 70px and click OK.

Place the fire

24 Place the image 'pix_2694897_flame1.jpg'. Change the blend to Screen and drag on top of the rear wheel. Resize the image. In Options, click on the Warp Tool and start modelling the fire around the wheel. Duplicate and transform the image a few times (Cmd/Ctrl+J) to complete the shape.

Bring more fire

25 Repeat the last step and add flames on the front wheel. Create a layer mask and hide the unwanted parts. Bring more fire to cover the vehicle. Finally, create a new group to place all the flames and keep the layers organised.

Add details

26 Create a new layer. Use the Pen Tool (P) to select the side window, then add a layer mask. Grab the Brush Tool (B) and draw colourful lines over the window. Apply the Motion Blur filter, then reduce the layer's Opacity to 80%.

Camera Raw

27 Press Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+E to create a merged copy. Convert it to a Smart Object. Go to Filter> Camera Raw. Set the Temperature to -15, Highlights: 15, Shadows: -25, Clarity: 40 and Vibrance: 20, then click OK.

Tips and tricks

Selective colour edits

Path Blur

01 On steps 24 and 25, after you place the fire over the wheels, apply the Path Blur (Filter> Blur Gallery> Path Blur) to each layer to create the motion effect.

Subtle glow effect

02 Create a new layer. Change the blend to Color Dodge. Grab a soft brush, set the foreground colour to a vivid red and paint over the tail lights.

Vivid Light mode

03 Increase the lighting under the bumper. Add a new layer and change its blend to Vivid Light. Choose a vibrant yellow colour and use a brush to paint the bumper.

Create groups

04 Keep the layers organised. Press and hold the Shift key and select the first and the last related layers, then hit Cmd/Ctrl+G to group the images

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Erlingur Einarsson, Editor

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The artist

Mercedes Bazan

Mercedes Bazan is a graphic designer and illustrator from Buenos Aires, Argentina. She is currently based in Dublin, Ireland, working as a remote designer for Stripe. Her style is inspired by Japanese culture and anime/manga. You can see more of her work on her website – **mechibazan.com** – as well as Instagram and Twitter, **@mechibaz**.

Essentials

Time taken
6 hours

Boss

How Dublin-based artist Mercedes created empowering artwork through the medium of an iPad

"Since I got the iPad Pro, I have been sketching and illustrating more than usual," reveals Mercedes Bazan. "I wanted to create a series of strong women, so I started with this one."

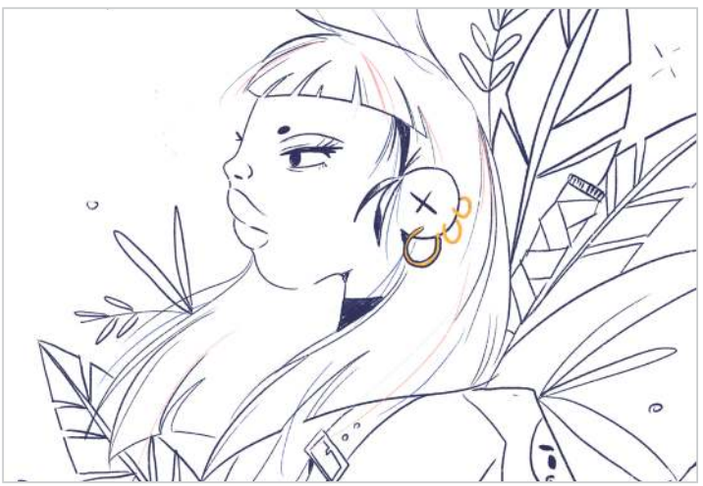
The result of this desire is Mercedes' excellent Boss Girls project, which was featured by The Student Show online. As the project title suggests, it's a collection of portraits that Mercedes designed of strong women – all based on people she knew – and a lot of it came straight off the cuff.

"I don't have a proper style developed so I experimented quite a bit with this piece," she says. "I used the Photoshop app for the iPad Pro, using the default brushes and textures. Then I exported it and added final touch-ups in the desktop Photoshop app."

As mobile technology becomes more and more influential, it's of course natural to see more digital artwork being created on iPads and iPhones. Mercedes' work is a great example of what can be created with the power of a mobile app.

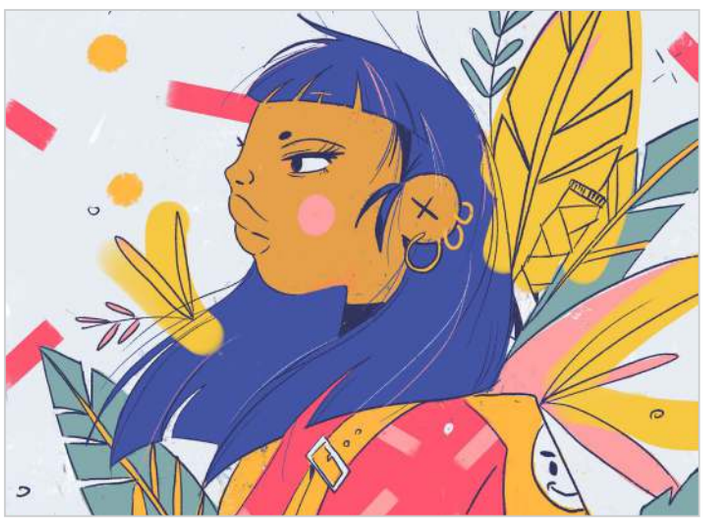
Rough sketch

01 I always start by creating a rough sketch of the character. This doesn't have to be super high fidelity since there is the chance to modify the illustration in the future. When a rough sketch is done you get a better idea/sense of composition in the canvas.



Clean up and background

02 The following step was to create a new layer where I could start redrawing on top of the rough sketch. It really helps to have the sketch layer at a low opacity so you can see the new top outline with more clarity. After the clean version was completed, I moved on to create the background.

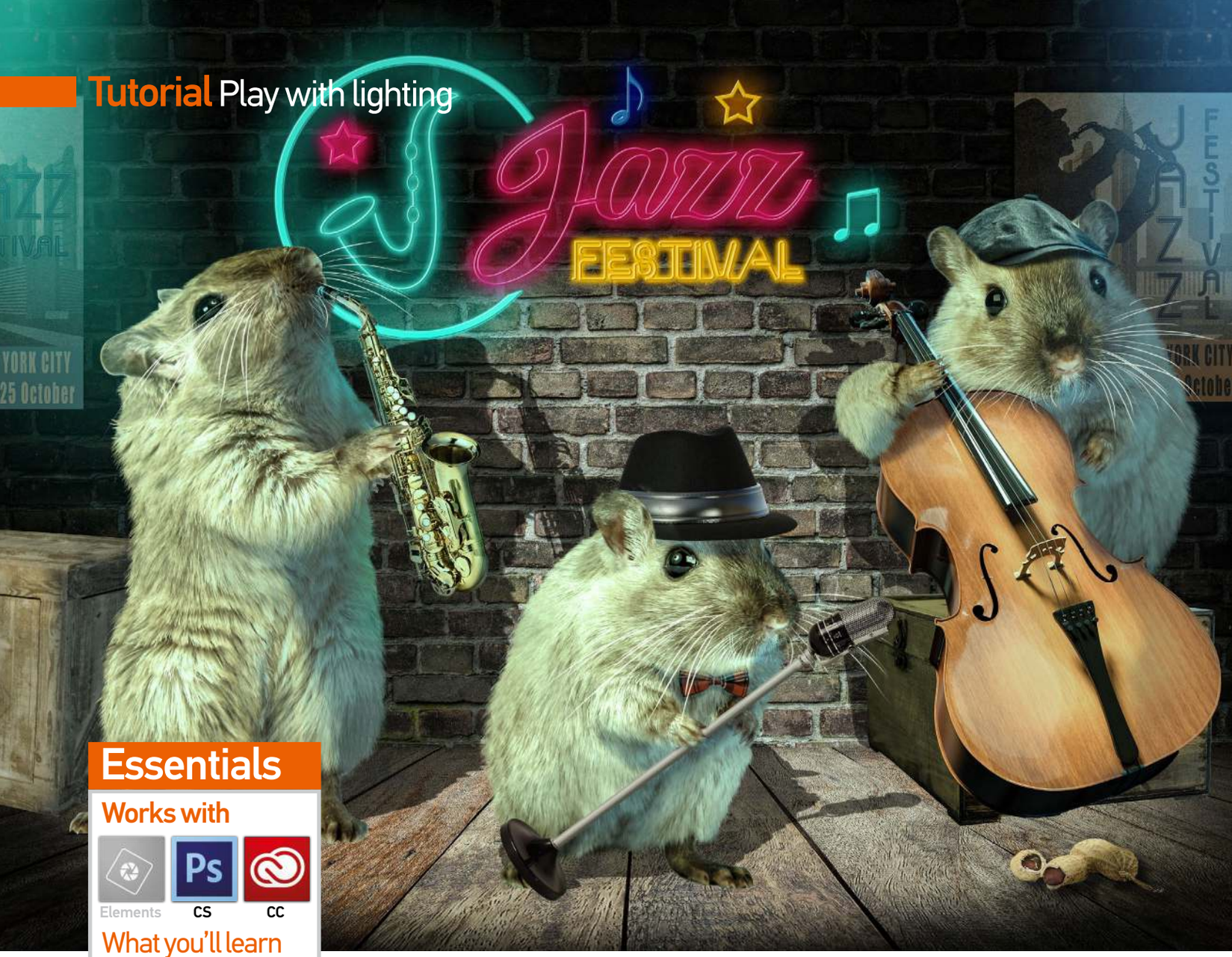


Rough colour

03 With a textured brush, I roughly painted the illustration under the outline. By doing this I got the chance to play with the colour palette and try colour combinations. The following step was to erase any colour outside the outline with the Eraser.

Colour touch-up

04 I modified the colours by playing with the Curves, Hue/Saturation and the Color Balance commands. At the end, I also added some Noise to give the illustration a little bit of texture.



Essentials

Works with

Elements CS CC

What you'll learn

How to use layer styles, masks and filters to create lighting effects

Time taken

3 hours

Expert

Daniel Sinoca

I love to create intense shadows and highlights in my compositions to set the atmosphere or to create dramatic effects. I can quickly achieve this using filters, layer styles and other useful techniques in Photoshop.

I started to get involved in the digital world 15 years ago and have been working as a freelance artist ever since, creating all kinds of multimedia projects and tutorial guides.

Play with lighting

Create dramatic lighting and shadows using a variety of techniques such as masks, layer styles and filters

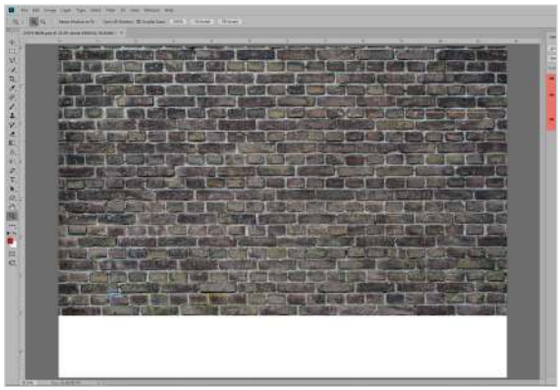
You can easily apply a dramatic effect to any scene by adding intense highlights and shadows. In this tutorial, we'll show you several ways to light an image quickly and efficiently using masks, layer styles and filters.

First, we will build a stage and use adjustment masks to create a realistic spotlight. Next, we'll create a neon sign using layer styles. This is the perfect way to add effects such as shadows, strokes and glows to a layer using default presets or by editing from scratch. Then you'll work with selection tools and custom brushes to create the jazz players. Finally, you will apply some filters in order to create subtle shadows and complete the overall composition. Make sure that you check out the side steps to learn another technique for making spotlights.

One of the most challenging aspects of applying shadows is deciding where they will fall. Just try to imagine where the light source is coming from and then think about the areas the shadows would affect. If you don't have a reference, trust your eyes. Now download the brushes and images from the FileSilo and start creating!

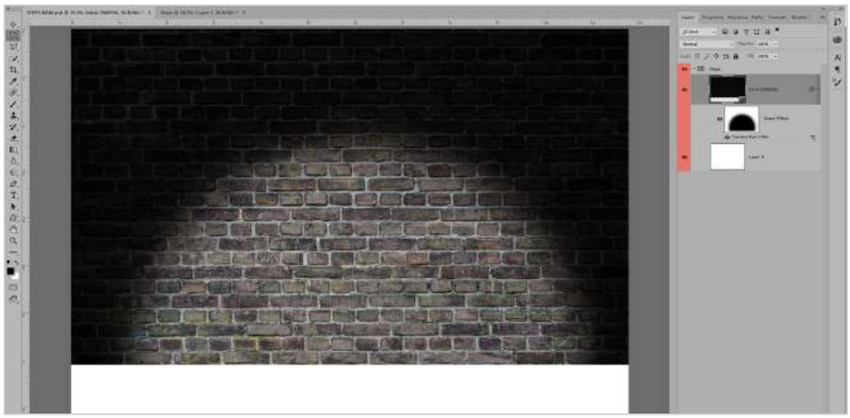
On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**



Set the stage

01 Create a new document at 300x222mm, resolution 300ppi. Now go to File> Place Embedded 'pix-2906556_brick_wall.jpg'. Drag the handles to resize and move to top. Go to Filter> Camera Raw filter. Set the Exposure to -4.20 and click OK.

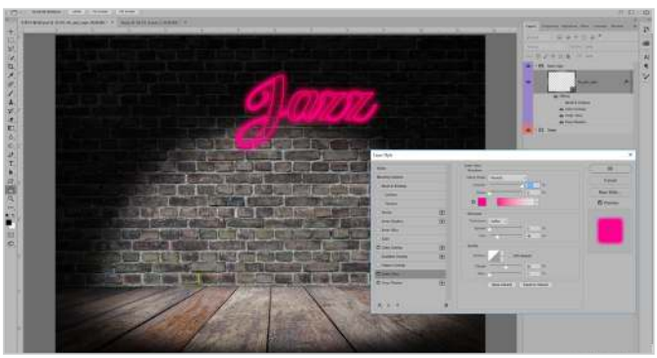


Create the spotlight effect

02 Click on the Smart Filter layer. Grab the Elliptical Marquee Tool (M). Hold Shift and draw a circular selection. Fill it with black. Go to Filter> Blur> Gaussian Blur and set Radius to 125px. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T, resize the selection and move down to keep only half of the effect visible.

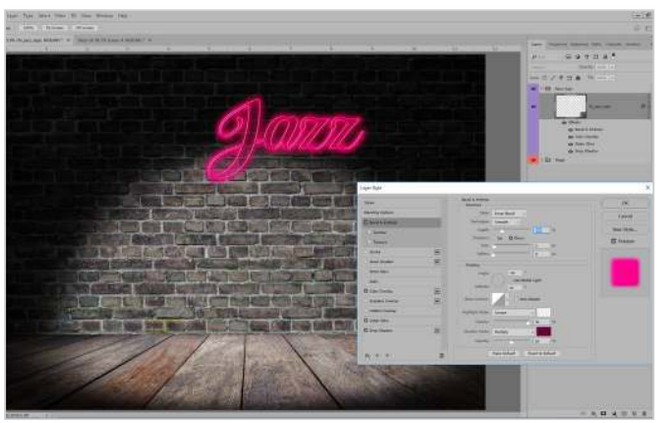
Place the floor

03 Go to File> Place Embedded 'pix-3099096-floor.jpg'. Drag the handles and shrink the image a bit, and then go to Edit> Transform> Perspective and adjust the perspective. Apply the Camera Raw filter as in step 1 and repeat the process in step 2 to create the spotlight effect on the floor.



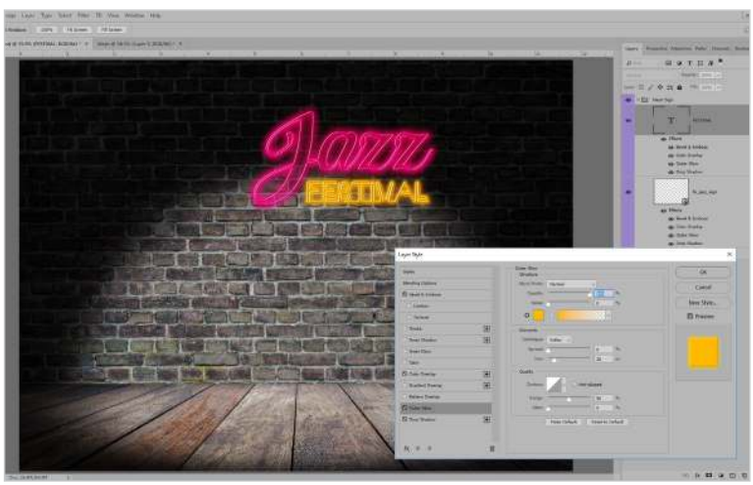
Neon sign

04 Go to File> Place Embedded 'fo_jazz_sign.png' and resize it. Go to Layer> Layer Style> Blending Options. Open Color Overlay and choose colour #ff008e. Open Outer Glow. Set Blend to Normal, colour: #ff008e and vary its size. Click Drop Shadow. Set Blend to Hard Light, colour: #ff008e, Angle: 90° and tweak Spread and Size.



Bevel & Emboss

05 Open the Bevel & Emboss style. Set Style to Inner Bevel, Technique: Smooth, Depth: 240% (may vary), Direction: Down and Size: 2 pixels (may vary). Now, adjust the Angle to -30° and Altitude: 20°. Highlight Mode: Screen, colour white and Opacity: 100%. Shadow Mode: Multiply, colour dark pink, Opacity: 50% and click OK.



Add a new font

06 Download and install the Neon font from **www.dafont.com**. Type the word 'Festival' and repeat steps 4 and 5. Use a vivid colour and remember to replace the colour in each style. Tweak the settings to adjust the glow.

Expert edit

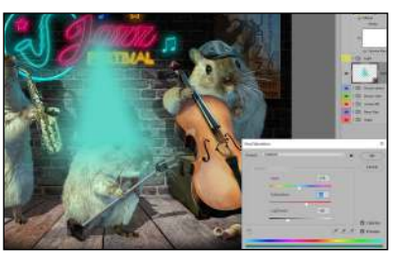
Create spotlights

Define the direction

01 Create a new layer (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N). Name it Spotlight and click OK. Grab the Polygonal Lasso Tool (L). Draw the light beam and fill with white.

Blur Gallery

02 Press Cmd/Ctrl+D to deselect. Go to Filter> Blur Gallery> Field Blur. Drag the pin point to the bottom and set Blur: 260px. Add a second pin on top and set Blur: 180.

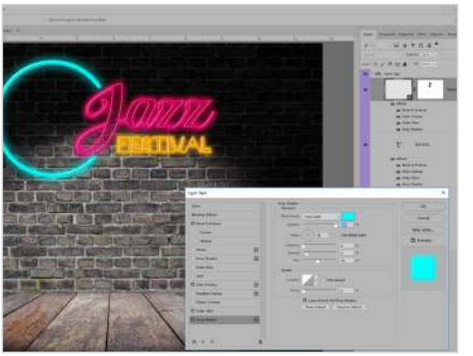


Hue/Saturation

03 Convert the layer into a Smart Object. Open the Hue/Saturation adjustment (Cmd/Ctrl+U). Check: Colorize. Set Hue to 175, Saturation: 60, Lightness: -40 and click OK.

Place the light

04 Drag the spotlight to top left, adjust the size and angle, then reduce the Opacity to 50%. Duplicate the layer, create a new colour, and then move it to the top right.



Create shapes

07 Grab the Ellipse Tool (U). In Options, set Fill: No Color, and Stroke to 20 pixels. Hold Shift and draw an ellipse. Now add a layer mask. Go to Layer> Layer Mask> Reveal All. Hide the area over the text. Repeat the steps to create the neon effect.

Complete the neon sign

08 Go to File> Place Embedded 'fo-sax.png'. Resize and place inside the circle. Again, use the layer styles to create the neon effect. Grab the Custom Shape Tool (Shift+U). Open the Custom Shape Picker and choose new shapes like stars and music notes to complete the sign.

Place the musicians

09 Place image 'pix_1238887_mouse1.jpg'. Grab the Quick Selection Tool (W) and select the mouse, then add a layer mask. Enhance the edges using a regular brush. Go to Layer> Rasterize> Smart Object and then Ctrl/right-click on the layer mask thumbnail and apply the mask.

Extend the fur

10 Let's use custom brushes to create the fur around the body. First, go to Edit> Presets> Preset Manager. Click on the Load button, locate the file: 'fo_fur-brushes.abr', click Load again, then press Done.

Paint with Clone Stamp

11 Grab the Clone Stamp Tool (S). Press F5 and choose the fur brush. Set Spacing: 5%. Click Shape Dynamics and set Size Jitter: 100%. Click Scattering and set Scatter: 25%. Hold Cmd/Alt and set the source, then start painting around the edges. Vary the brush angle and size.

Modify the shape

12 Go to Edit> Puppet Warp. Add a few pin points over the image. Now, drag to straighten the body and make the mouse look up. Go to Filter> Liquify. Grab the Bloat Tool (B) and distort the cheeks to give the impression he is blowing the saxophone.

Place the saxophone

13 Place image 'pix_1538743_saxophone.png.' Grab your favourite selection tool and select the right arm, then copy and paste into a new layer. Place the images, giving the impression the mouse is holding the sax. Merge (Cmd/Ctrl+E) the three layers. Grab the Healing Spot Brush (J) and remove the hard edges.

Add depth

14 Duplicate the mouse (Cmd/Ctrl+J). Name it Floor-Shadow. Set Opacity: 70%. Press Cmd/Ctrl+U and set Lightness: -100. Duplicate the layer again, naming it Wall-Shadow. Drag under the mouse layer. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T. Hold Cmd/Ctrl and adjust the shadows on the floor and wall. Add a layer mask and remove the extra parts.

Create the shadows

15 Go to Layer> New Adjustment Layer> Color Lookup. Check 'Create Clipping Mask' and click OK. Choose 3DLUT: Moonlight.3DL. Grab a Brush. Press F5, locate the fur brush and tweak the setting as in Step 11. Set the Foreground colour to black and start painting on the mask to create the shadows.

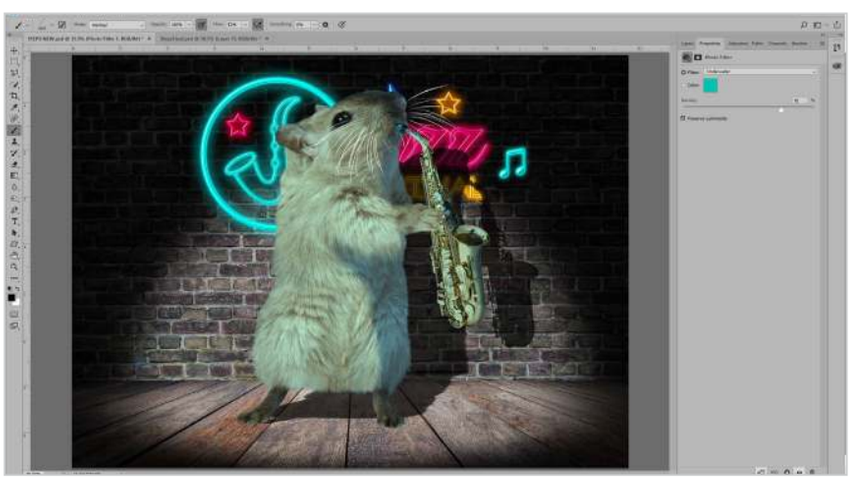


Photo Filter

16 Go to Layer> New Adjustment Layer> Photo Filter. Check 'Create Clipping Mask' and choose Filter: Underwater at 75%. Now, add a new layer. Name it 'Whiskers' Grab the Brush tool (B). Press F5, locate the 'whisker-brush' and paint. Adjust the size and angle, and then mask the unwanted areas.

Create groups

17 To keep the layers organised, place the related images into groups. Hold Shift and click on the layers you want to group and then press Cmd/Ctrl+G. Double-click on the group thumbnail and type a new name. Now press Cmd/Ctrl+T. Hold Shift, then resize the mouse and move to the left.

Place more images

18 Go to File> Place Embedded 'pix_2529109_box.png'. Resize and move to the right. Go to Layer> New Adjustment Layer> Photo Filter. Check 'Use previous layer to create clipping mask' and click OK. Choose Filter: Underwater and set Density to 75%.

Bring in new members

19 Now place 'pix_1239398_mouse2.jpg.' Repeat steps 9 through 17. First, select and mask the image, then paint the fur around the body and make him hold a cello ('pix_2830670_cello.jpg'). Create the shadows and apply the filters. Place and mask a cap to give an extra touch.

Complete the band

20 Place 'pix_1239390_mouse3.jpg'. Apply the techniques you've just learned in the previous steps. Place the microphone, a hat and a bow tie to give the character some personality. Group the layers, tweak the image size and then place at the centre.

The final images

21 Put the poster images on the wall, add a new wooden box on the left and throw some peanuts on the floor to enhance the composition. Make some adjustments using Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L) and Hue/Saturation (Cmd/Ctrl+U). Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and resize the images if necessary.

Camera Raw

22 Click on the top layer of the layer stack. Create a merged copy of all visible layers. Press Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+E. Convert into a Smart Object then go to Filter> Camera Raw. Set Temperature to +6, Clarity: +20 and Vibrance: +10, then click OK.

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Essentials

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What you'll learn

How to adjust colour and tone with adjustments, masks and selections

Time taken

1.5 hours

Expert

Simon Skellon

Infrared is a challenging effect to create, but once you crack it, the image comes together and looks great. I've been working with Photoshop for as long as I can remember, but my techniques are constantly changing as I learn new tools and try out new effects.

On the FileSilo

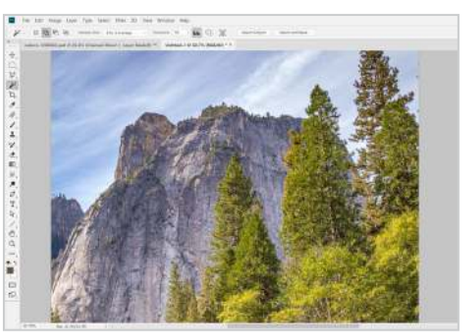
Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

Create the colour infrared look

Transform ordinary landscapes into surreal infrared masterpieces with these core techniques and tools

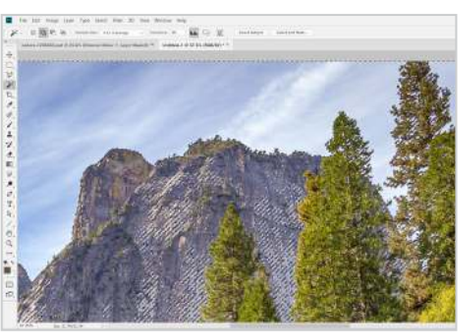
What the deuce is an infrared effect all about? Photographers use infrared imaging for different reasons; from looking deep into space, to revealing heat signals in objects (commonly known as 'thermal imaging'). From a photographer's perspective, it explores a wavelength of light that we just can't see because it's outside the visible spectrum. When applied to landscapes, it reveals interesting features and details, and will also change the colour of foliage, to produce something quite spectacular. Bear in mind, though, what we're doing in Photoshop is simply recreating the look and feel of an infrared image. If we wanted to create true infrared, we would need the right camera setup in addition to all of the correct filters.

In these steps, we'll take you on an infrared journey to creating a custom landscape effect. We'll be putting the Hue/Saturation and Channel Mixer adjustments through their paces, as well as using the Magic Wand Tool to select and separate parts of the image. The resulting effect will make the trees and foliage appear a glowing, reddish pink, and blue skies much more dramatic. And the best thing is, because we're using Photoshop for this, we can mix up colours and really go full-on with this effect without splashing out on expensive camera equipment!



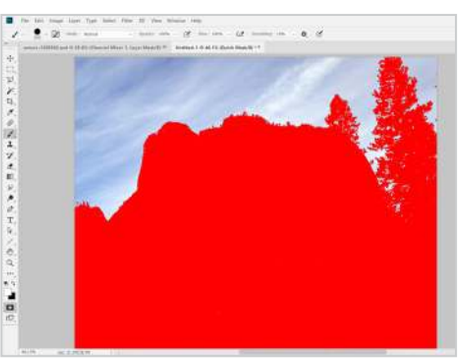
Set up the Magic Wand

01 Open up 'pix_1209302_landscape.jpg' from the FileSilo into Photoshop. To separate the sky from the rest of the image, locate the Magic Wand Tool and set Sample Size to 3 by 3 Average, Tolerance to 55 and uncheck 'Sample only contiguous pixels' in the Options bar.



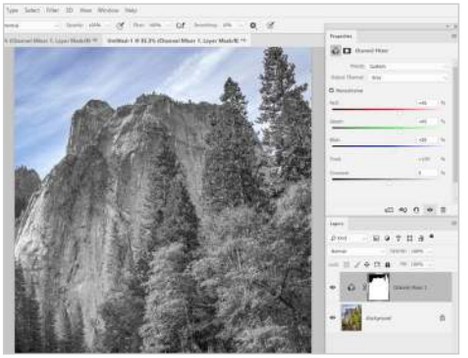
Form a selection

02 Click on the sky to form an initial selection. The rocks and foreground will also be selected, but we can remove them in the next step. Shift-click on the areas of the sky that haven't been included. Notice how the smaller sections of the sky between the trees become part of this selection.



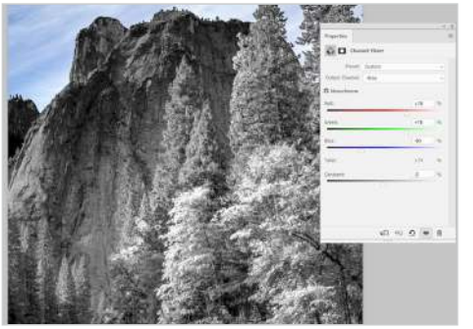
Enter Quick Mask

03 Press Q to load the Quick Mask mode. A red mask should appear over the areas outside the selection. Use the Brush Tool set to black, 100% Opacity and 100% Hardness (gives a solid edge) to fill any gaps in the red mask on the foreground.



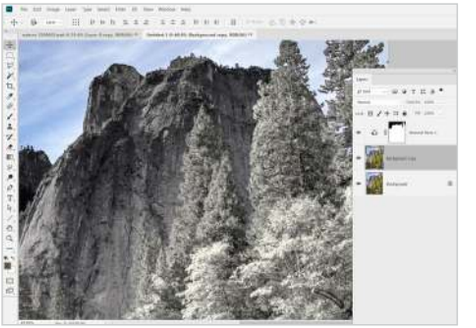
Edit with Channel Mixer

04 Press Q to exit Quick Mask mode and go to the Select menu and Inverse (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+I) to flip the selection area. Add the Channel Mixer adjustment from the base of the Layers palette and tick the Monochrome box inside the adjustment.



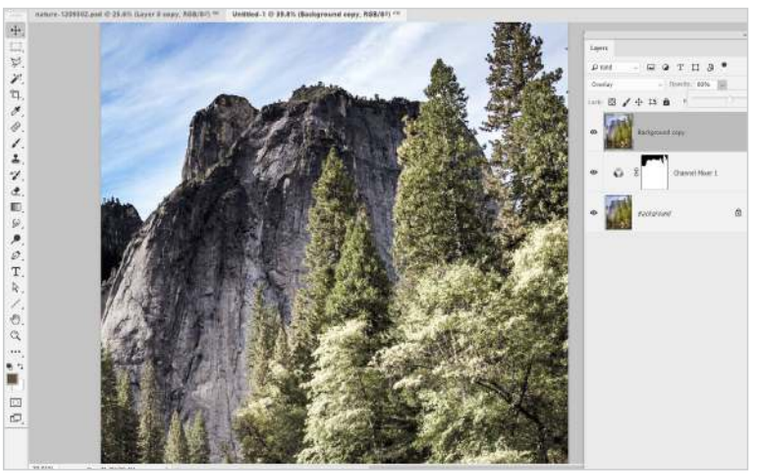
Create the effect

05 Inside the Channel Mixer, increase the Red slider up to +78% and the Green slider to +76% to lighten the foreground. Decrease the Blue slider down to -80% to balance the image, then decrease the Constant slider down to -5% to darken and add more contrast.



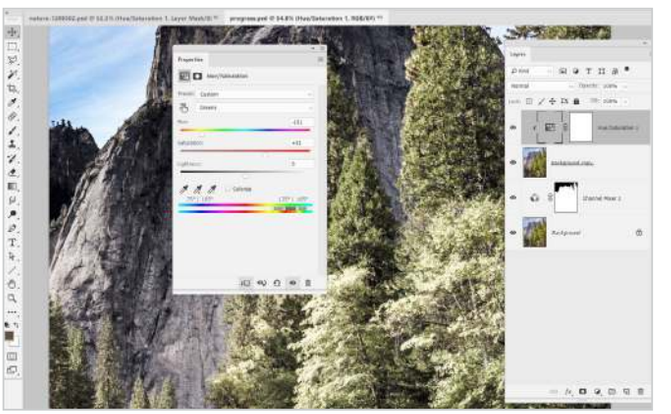
Bring back colour

06 Reduce the Opacity of the Channel Mixer layer down to 90% to bring slight colour back into the image. Now that we've created the base adjustment for the effect, duplicate the Background layer by dragging it onto the New Layer button in the Layers palette.



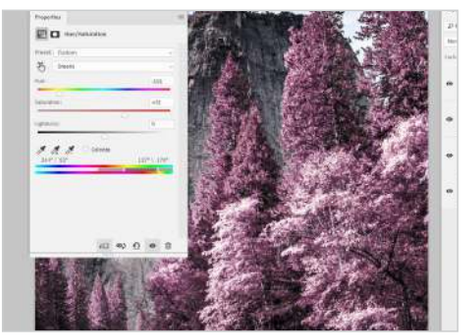
Duplicate and blend

07 Move the duplicate layer to the top of the layer stack above the Channel Mixer and set the duplicate layer's blend mode to Overlay. Lower the Opacity setting of this layer to 60% to soften the effect of the blend mode.



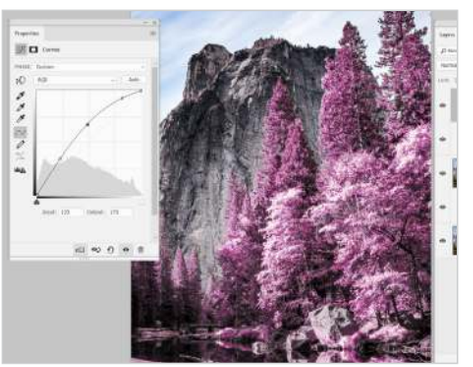
Clip the adjustment

08 Add in a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to the top of the layer stack and clip it to the duplicate background below by going to Layer> Create Clipping Mask. Change the adjustment from Master to Greens, and set Hue to -101, Saturation to +31 and Lightness 0 (be warned that no obvious change will appear).



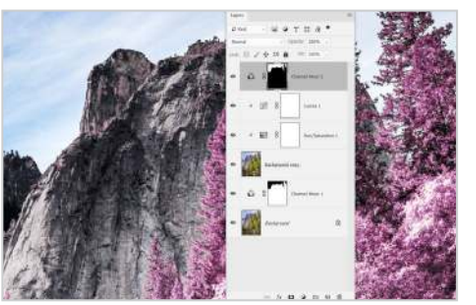
Adjust colour and tone

09 Drag the four colour notches under the eyedroppers in the Hue/Saturation adjustment until they read 344/53 on the left side and 137/179 on the right side. This combination will tint any foliage and trees a purple tone but can be adapted to suit your image.



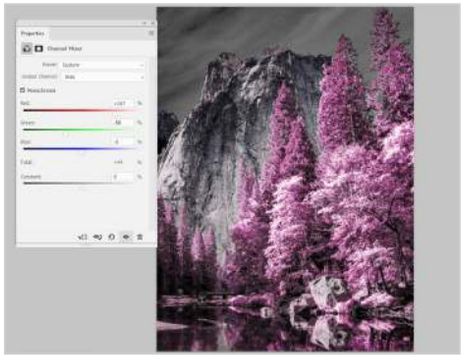
Tweak exposure and contrast

10 Add the Curves adjustment to the top of the layer stack and clip it to the Hue/Saturation adjustment under (Opt/Alt-click between two layers to clip them). Lift up the Curve's line to boost exposure and contrast on the rocks and between the trees.



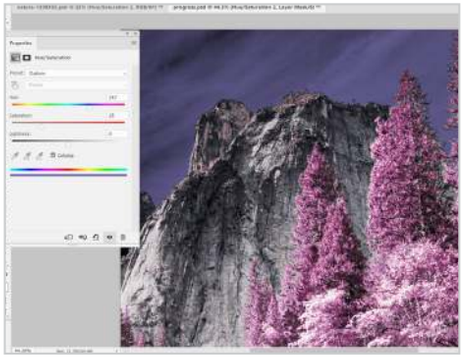
Reuse the selection

11 Reactivate the selection from the Channel Mixer adjustment by Cmd/Ctrl-clicking on the mask. Go to Select> Inverse to flip the selected area, then add a new Channel Mixer adjustment from the base of the Layers palette. The mask of the adjustment should automatically include your selection.



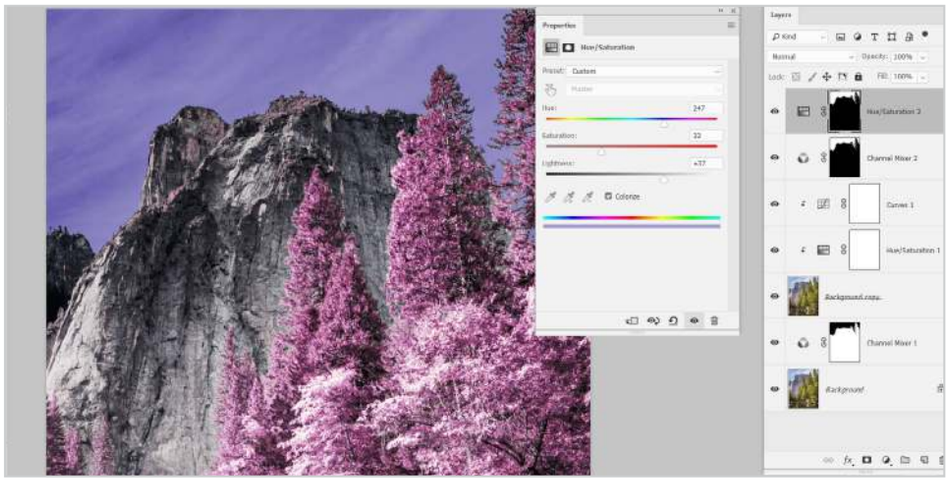
Boost up contrast

12 Inside the Channel Mixer adjustment, tick the Monochrome box to convert to grayscale. Then, adjust the Red slider to +107%, Green: -58% and Blue: -5%. This combination will darken just the sky and will make for a more dramatic effect.



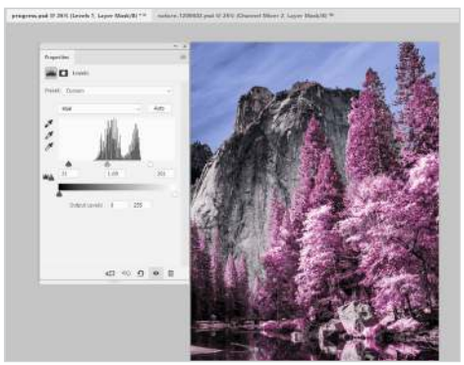
Tint the sky

13 Reactivate the selection once again from the adjustment's mask, and then add a new Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Inside the Hue/Saturation adjustment, tick the Colorize option. Start by setting Hue to 227 for a purple tone for the sky.



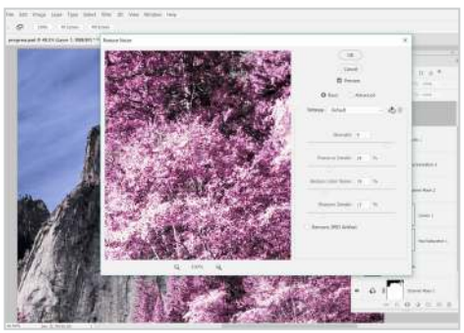
Define the colour

14 Complete the Hue/Saturation adjustment by setting the Saturation slider to 35 and the Lightness slider to +37. This should increase colour content and lighten the effect. You can change the Hue slider for different infrared combinations (see the side steps opposite for more information).



Input Levels adjustment

15 Add a new Levels adjustment above all other layers (using the selection of the sky from before). Increase the brightness of the midtones by sliding the middle point up to 1.09, the white point up to 201 and the black point to 21.

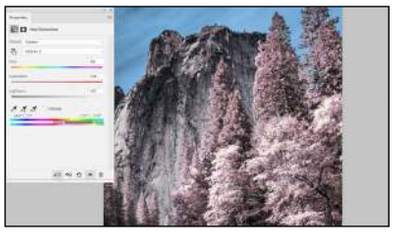


Stamp and reduce noise

16 Click on the top adjustment and press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to create a stamp visible layer. Go to Filter> Noise> Reduce Noise and set Strength to 9, Preserve Details to 24%, Reduce Color Noise to 19% and Sharpen to 14%. This will help to reduce the noise in the sky area.

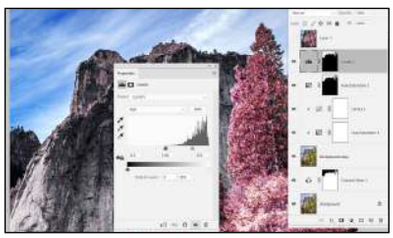
Expert edit

Take creative control



Whiter trees

01 Increasing the Lightness slider in the first Hue/Saturation adjustment will turn the trees nearly white for a subtler effect (be sure to hide the top stamped layer first).



A natural sky

02 Untick Colorize in the Hue/Saturation adjustment. Hide the Channel Mixer adjustment underneath, then tweak the Levels adjustment for a more natural sky.

Dramatic sky

03 Before adding the final noise reduction layer, add a blank layer above the Levels adjustment and change its blend mode to Soft Light. Press G for the Gradient Tool.

Apply gradient

04 Using a black to transparent gradient, drag a gradient over the sky from the corner inwards to create a heavy shadow, making the sky appear more dramatic.

Essentials

Works with

CS CC Elements

What you'll learn

Edit masks, lighting adjustments and use Quick Selection & Polygonal tools

Time taken

1.5 hours

Expert

Simon Skellon

I love working with portraits and adapting the composition based on the subject's expression. I've been working with Photoshop for as long as I can remember, but my techniques are constantly changing as I learn new tools and try out new effects.

Create powerful portraits with masks

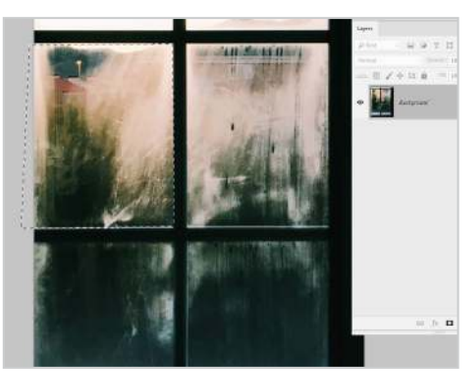
On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

Learn how to make your portrait images more engaging with the addition of a window and new background

This type of effect is a great one to learn if you are just starting out with Photoshop. We cover the basics when it comes to layer masking and forming selections, with the biggest part of this image being about creating a balanced composition. Editing selections with the Polygonal Lasso Tool makes light work of selecting the windows, which will reveal the portrait's figure looking in, and the Quick Selection Tool can glide around the subject to make it easy to add in a new background. With the Refine Edge options, we can blend in our portrait and make this whole image seem connected and realistic. Adding extra elements, such as the background image, is a nice addition, alongside using the Lighting Effects filter, covered at the end of these steps, to adapt the lighting and mood.

Read on to learn more about opacities and how to clip adjustments with their relevant layers. Once you've mastered layer masking and working your way around the Layers palette, there's nothing stopping you from taking this effect even further. Why not add in more subjects, or completely change the background for something different? Whatever tickles your fancy, these steps should have you covered.

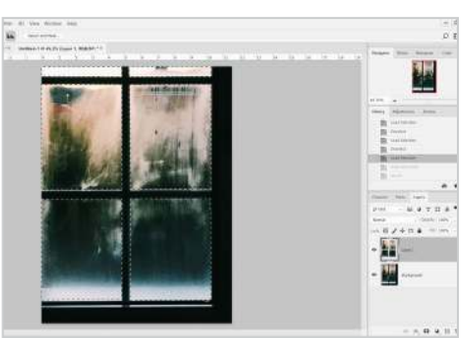


Make a selection

01 Open up 'pix_window_1835359.jpg' from the FileSilo and locate the Polygonal Lasso Tool (L). Start by selecting the first pane of glass from the window by clicking in the four corners and drawing a straight line with the Lasso Tool.

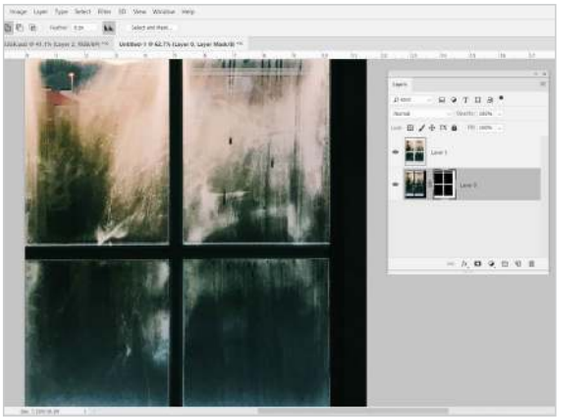
Continue the selection

02 Select the remainder of the glass on the window using the Polygonal Lasso, holding Shift to add additional selections. Make sure Feather is set to 0px in the Options bar beforehand and try to get as tight to the window frame as possible.



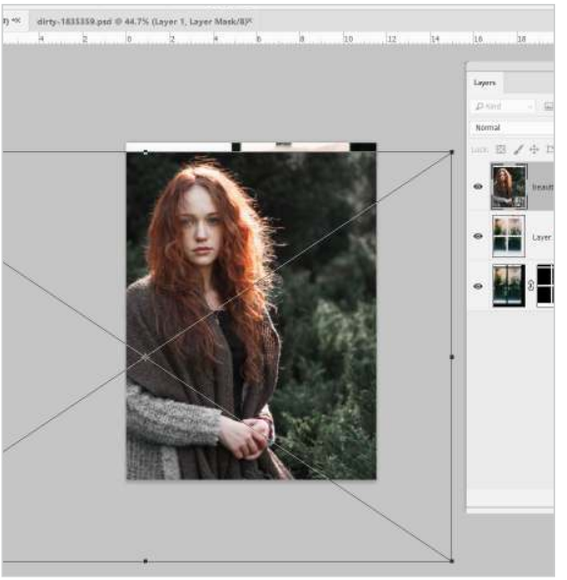
Copy to new layer

03 Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to copy the selected window panes onto a new layer. We'll use this layer to pull out the detail on the glass. Cmd/Ctrl-click on the thumbnail of this layer to reactivate the selection and press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+I to invert the selection.



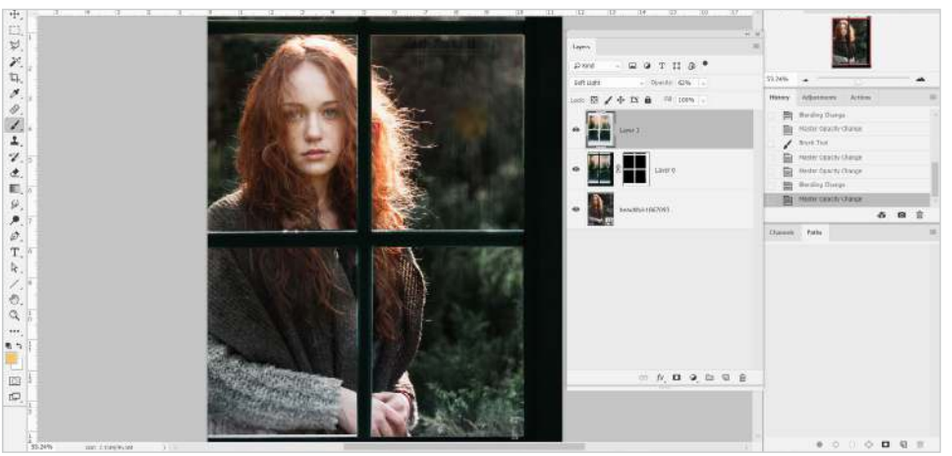
Flip and mask

04 Click on the Background layer and add a layer mask to apply the selection. All you should have left is the window frame on the Background layer and a layer above containing the glass.



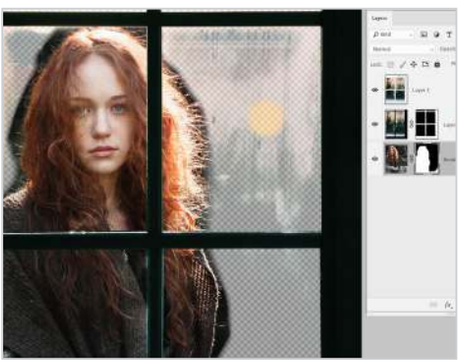
Resize and fit

05 Load up 'pix_portrait_1867093.jpg' from the resources by going to File> Place Embedded. Enlarge the portrait by dragging the corner points while holding Shift. You may need to zoom out to make it easier to see the entire image. Position the portrait to fit over the left side of the window.



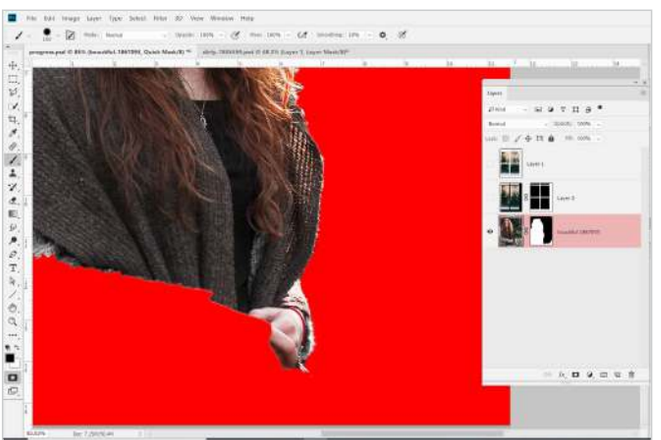
Blend in the glass

06 Drag the portrait's layer to the bottom of the layer stack. At this stage, the portrait will be hidden behind the window. Change the blend mode of the top layer (containing the glass) to Soft Light and lower its Opacity down to 60% to reveal the portrait.



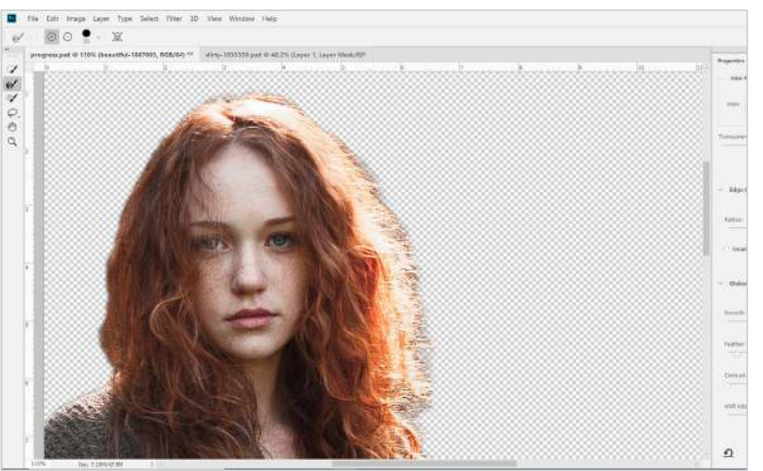
Brush away background

07 Add a layer mask to the portrait layer and select the Brush Tool (B). Set the Foreground colour to black and, with 100% Opacity set in the Options bar, start to remove the background behind the portrait. If it's easier, hide the top two layers.



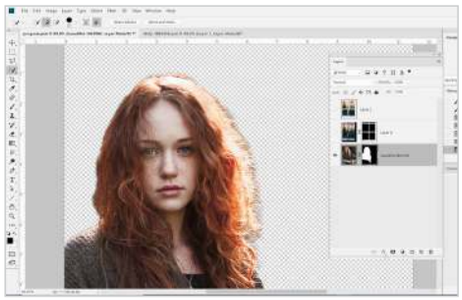
Quickly select and edit

08 Use the Quick Selection Tool to form a selection over the portrait, dragging the selection over the hair. You can press Q to quickly preview the mask, and then use the Brush Tool to retouch the edge (Photoshop CC only). A brush Hardness of 70% works best when retouching in Quick Mask.



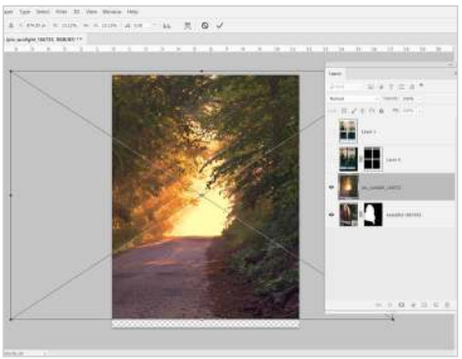
Refine the mask

09 Press the Select and Mask button in the Options bar (Photoshop CC only) or go to Refine Edge. Set Smooth to 23 and Feather to 1.5px, and then set Radius under Edge Detection to 4px. Use the Refine Edge Brush to brush over the hair strands to select them.



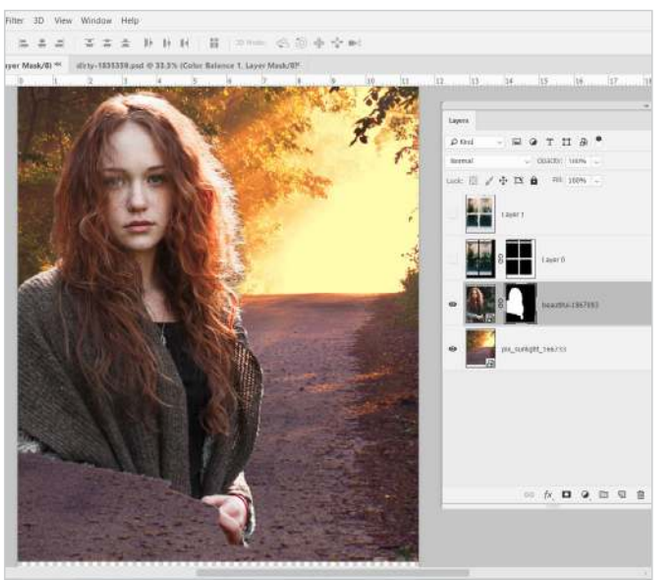
Complete the mask

10 Press OK to return back to Photoshop, and then go to Select> Inverse to switch around the selected area (skip this step in Elements, if a new layer appears). Press Opt/Alt+Backspace to remove the excess area. This will add any background left over to the mask already in the Layers palette.



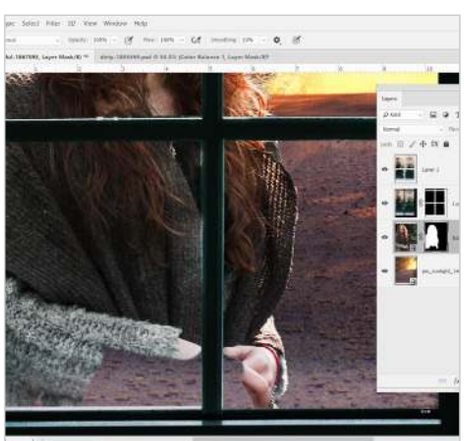
Compose the background

11 Now to add a new background. Go to File> Place Embedded and locate 'pix_sunlight_166733.jpg' from the resource files. Enlarge the image to fit over the canvas area by dragging the corner points while holding down Shift.



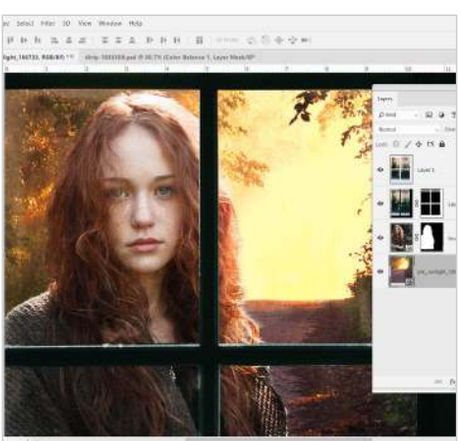
Rearrange and resize

12 Drag the new background layer below the portrait layer. This will reveal the person. You can rearrange the composition or enlarge the background by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+T. Look to create a balanced composition.



Assess layer mask

13 If there are parts of the portrait hidden behind the mask, use a white brush to bring those areas back into view. Reveal the top two layers containing the window frame and glass.



Tidy up the hair

14 Use the Brush Tool to remove any obvious strands of hair that haven't blended. By moving the brightest part of the background image over to the hair, it helps to hide any uneven or cut-off strands.

Expert edit

Enhance the lighting

Create merged layer

01 Hide the layers relating to the window, leaving just the portrait and background layers visible. Click the top visible layer and press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to create a stamp visible.

Set light source

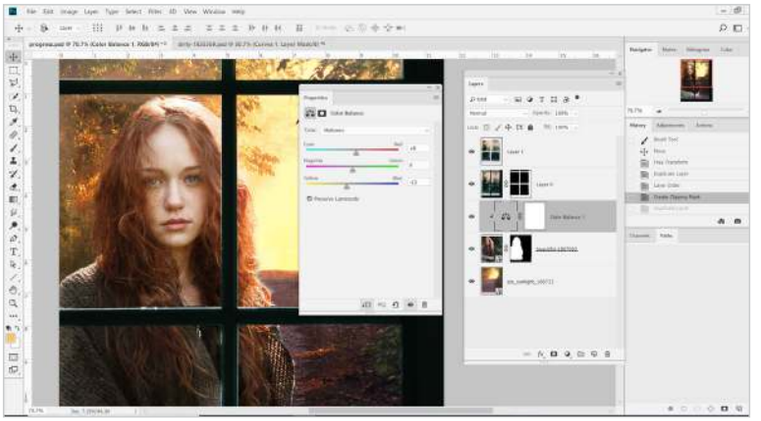
02 Head to the Filter menu and down to Render> Lighting Effects. Select Spotlight from the options along the top and position the light source just to the right side of the model.

Adjust hotspot and tone

03 Set the colour swatch at the top of the adjustments to a light orange, Intensity: 19 and Hotspot: 76. Set the Colorize colour swatch to a darker orange and set Ambience to 3.

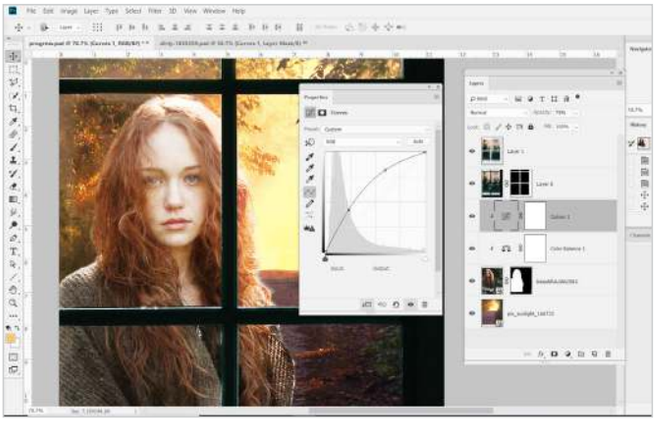
Apply and adjust

04 Hit OK to return to Photoshop and lower the Opacity of the layer to reduce the effect. As this layer was made under the others, it doesn't affect the window and appears as if from behind.



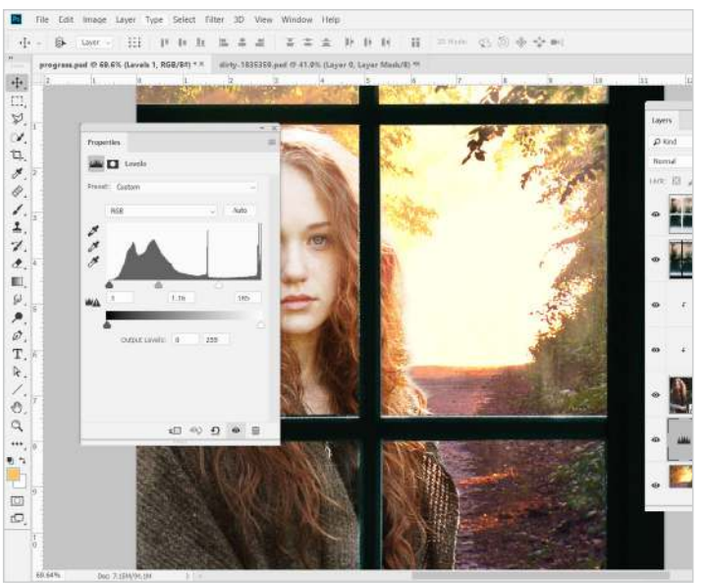
Match tone and colour

15 Add a Color Balance adjustment layer above the portrait (use a Photo Filter adjustment in Elements). Clip the adjustment to the portrait by holding Opt/Alt and clicking between the layers. Increase Cyan/Red to +8 and Yellow/Blue to -13 to balance the colour.



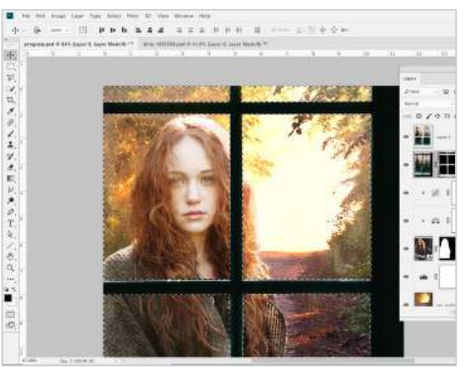
Control brightness and contrast

16 Now add a Curves adjustment layer and clip it to the portrait layer (use Brightness/Contrast in Elements). Increase the brightness by lifting the line in the centre. Look to lighten the shadows by lifting the bottom of the line further.



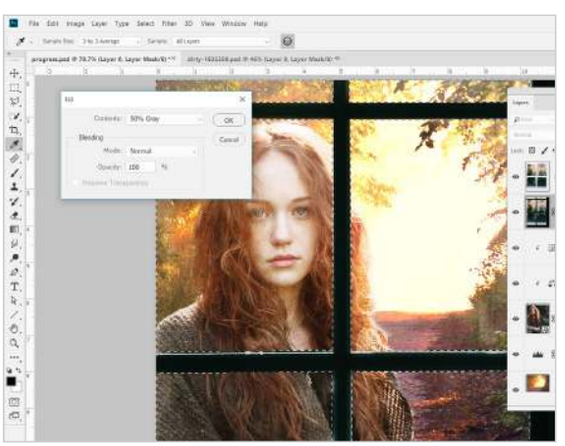
Boost the background

17 Position a new Levels adjustment layer above the background layer and below the portrait. Increase brightness by dragging the white marker to the left until it reads 185, and the middle marker to the left until it reads 1.16 along the base of the histogram.



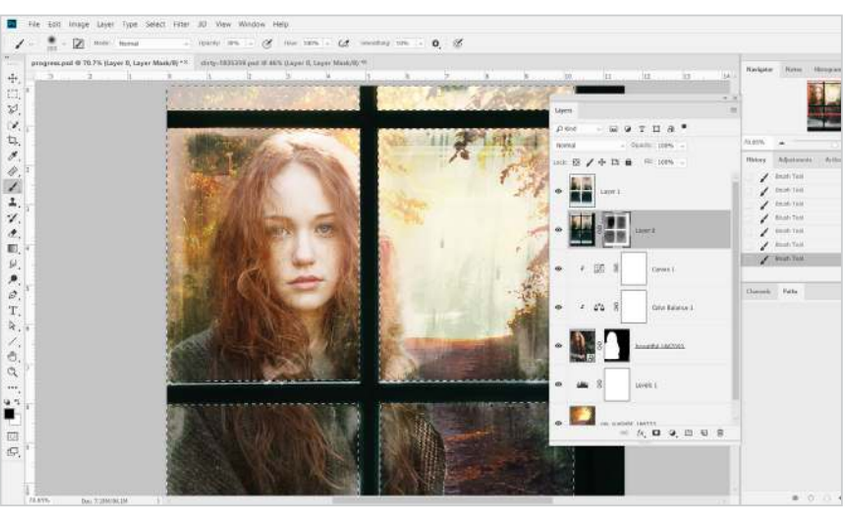
Reselect the glass

18 Reactivate the selection of the window frame by Cmd/Ctrl-clicking on the layer mask of the window layer. At the moment the frame is selected, so press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+I to inverse the selection to include the glass only.



Fill layer mask

19 With the layer mask selected, go to Edit> Fill and select 50% Gray from Contents. Keep Mode set to Normal, Opacity: 100% and hit OK. This will fade the mask hiding the glass and will bring back the original details on the glass.



Reveal more detail

20 Using a soft brush set to 30% Opacity, brush over the central areas of the window panes to reveal more detail in the portrait. The rough edges of the glass should just be visible, adding more realism.

Essentials

Time taken
3 hours

The artist

Clinton Lofthouse

I specialise in composite photography and creative retouching. I am currently creating movie posters, portraits and promo for independent films, digital art for clients as well as teaching Photoshop and creating online tutorials for myself and third parties. See more of my work at www.clintonlofthousephotography.com

High Rise

Bradford-based photographer and artist Clinton on creating the ultimate selfie in Photoshop

"This idea came about because I wanted to create a banner for my Facebook page with me in it," reveals Clinton Lofthouse. "I started with the premise it would be quite simple but then got carried away with myself as usual."

'Carried away' is one way to put it but much of Clinton's work is extremely ambitious. He loves compositing photos that he's taken and the sky is the limit – literally – when it comes to some of his pieces.

"This image is a five-image composite," Clinton explains. "I shot myself in my living room, and then created the background from free stock and an image of a garage that I had. I cut myself out using the Pen Tool, as I always do. I then used the ceiling of a parking garage as the floor and a little wall behind me to represent the skyscraper roof."

While the image does sound fairly straightforward, the attention to detail had to be key to get the image to work. Clinton used the Pen Tool for its accuracy in cutting out subjects and used adjustment layers to harmonise the entire scene once all the images were in place. Plug-ins were key, too. "I used Topaz Clarity to pull out some detail and then used Topaz Detail to sharpen the image."

When it comes to creating big-scale artwork, sometimes all you need is to think outside the box and as Clinton says, get carried away.

Model and floor

01 I cut myself out from the photo using the Pen Tool. I then found an image of an old garage in my library and cut out part of the ceiling, flipped it upside down and used it as the floor I am stood on in the composite. I placed the layer of myself on the floor.

Background and colour

02 Next I dragged in a stock image for the background, making sure the perspective was correct. I then used Curves adjustment layers to match all the elements together in the image. I added a warm Gradient Map over the top.

Style and detail

03 I then added some lens flares into the image by painting them in with an orange and yellow brush set to Screen. Once I had done the flares, I added detail to the image with Topaz Clarity and Topaz Detail.

Expert

Andre Villanueva

I love blending textures on people and objects, so the Displace filter is a very valued filter in my toolbox. I was initially intimidated by the whole process of creating a displacement map and using it with the Displace filter. After doing it a few times, I found it's not very complex at all. I use Displace all the time now. I'm an art director and former college media arts instructor. I've been playing with Photoshop since the early 2000s.

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

Essentials

Works with

Elements CS CC

What you'll learn

- How to apply texture using blend modes, masks and the Displace filter

Time taken

2 hours

Texture with the Displace filter

Armed with the Displace filter and a displacement map, learn the process for making a texture hug the gnarly contours of dinosaur skin

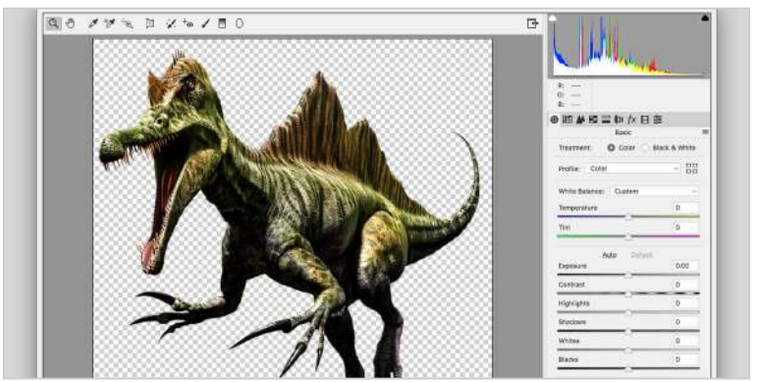
Have you ever overlaid a texture on a person or object and thought: yeah, that's looking a little fake?

Even with the help of all-star Photoshop features like blend modes and masks, a texture may not look completely right unless there's some effort to make it jive with the topography of the underlying surface. What's a digital artist to do?

The Displace filter fits the bill. This filter distorts a layer in accordance to the contours of a displacement map, achieving a more realistic blend. A displacement map is just a copy of the base image you're working with. It's typically blurred to avoid harsh transitions when applying the displacement.

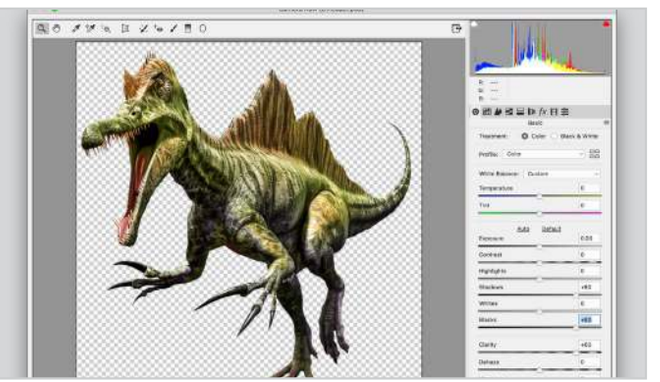
Assigning an appropriate blend mode to a texture will usually ensure a more natural blend. You can also reduce opacity in addition to using a blend mode to tone things down. A layer mask on a texture layer enables you to soften hard edges and fade unwanted regions.

In this tutorial, you'll use the Displace filter to reskin a dinosaur that's jealous of the markings of nearby giraffes. Help it do a skin-shift, then use what you learn to convincingly apply textures in future projects.



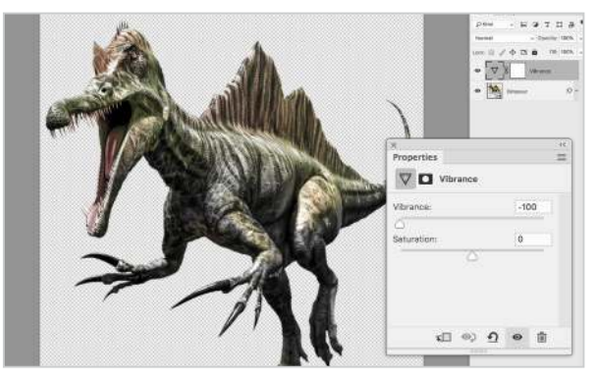
Push the Clarity

01 Firstly, create your displacement map by referring to the sidestepper. Open 'dinosaur.psd'. Ctrl/right-click the Dinosaur layer, choose Convert to Smart Object. Go to Filter> Camera Raw Filter. Under the Basic tab, slide Clarity to +60 to improve midtone contrast.



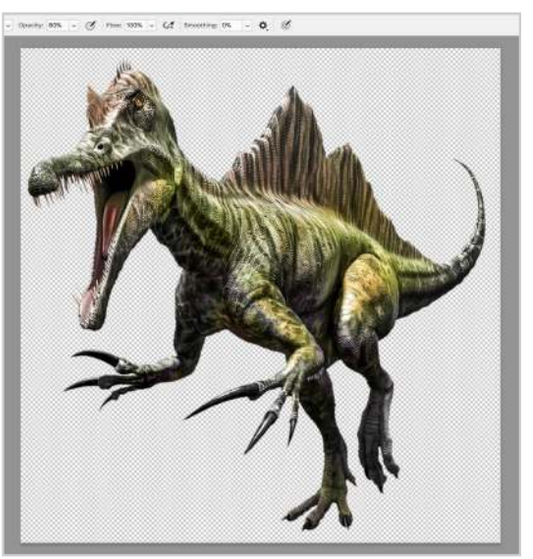
Unearth and amplify detail

02 To continue with the HDR-esque boost, bring out some detail in the dark areas. Slide both Shadows and Blacks rightward to +60. Play around with the other sliders if you like. Click OK to apply the Camera Raw Filter.



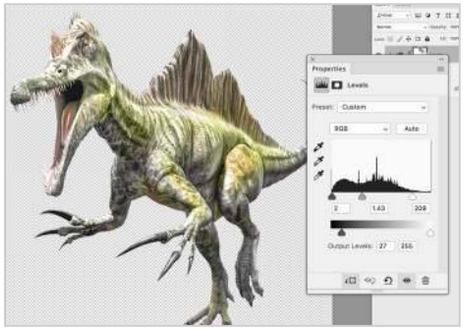
Tone down

03 Now you'll tone the colour down. Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' button, choose Vibrance. Slide Vibrance all the way to the left so it's at -100. Don't be too sad about losing any colouring you like, as you'll restore some of it next.



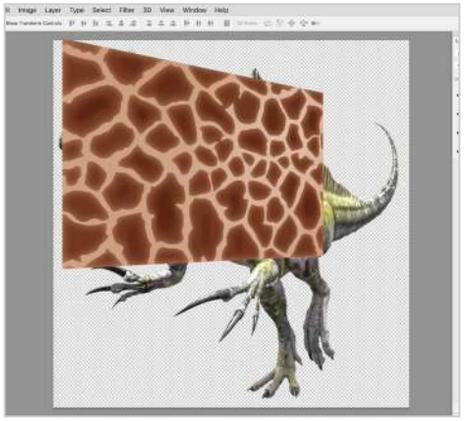
Restore original colour

04 Use the Brush Tool (B) and paint black (soft-edged brush, 40-80% brush Opacity) to restore some of the original colour in areas. Option/Alt-click between the two layers to create a clipping mask. You'll also clip the forthcoming Levels adjustment and giraffe patterns by Option/Alt-clicking between the current and previous layers.



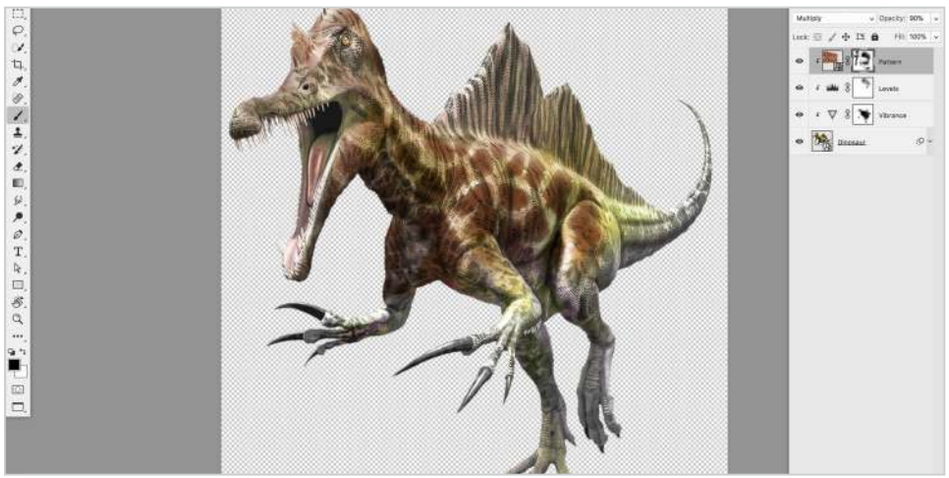
Lighten up

05 Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' button, choose Levels. Slide the dark output slider rightward to 27. Use the sliders under the histogram to adjust further. Paint black in the mask (40-60% brush Opacity) to reduce some areas that have been lightened too much. Remember to clip the layer.



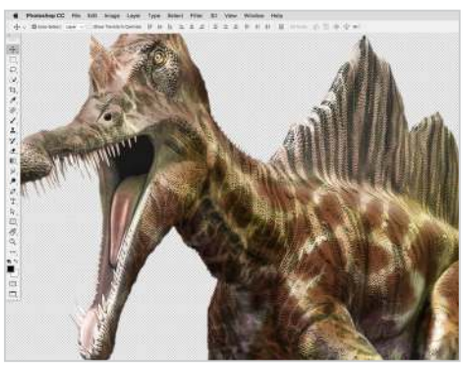
Bring in the pattern

06 Go to File> Place Embedded, grab 'pattern.jpg'. Scale down a bit, then Ctrl/right-click on the canvas and choose Distort. Drag handles to help match the perspective. Press Return/Enter to commit.



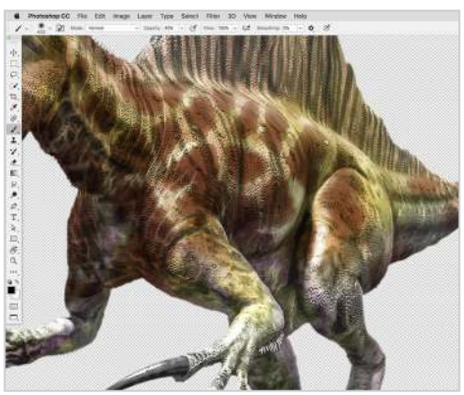
Blend the pattern

07 Now blend in the pattern. Clip the layer. Set the blend mode to Multiply and drop Opacity to 90%. Add a layer mask and paint black (40-100% brush Opacity) to first melt hard edges then reduce the pattern in areas.



Use the Displace filter

08 Once you have the pattern the way you want it, click the layer thumbnail and go to Filter> Distort> Displace. Set both Horizontal and Vertical Scale to 10. Click OK. Next, navigate to and select the displacement map. Click Open.



Add more giraffe skin

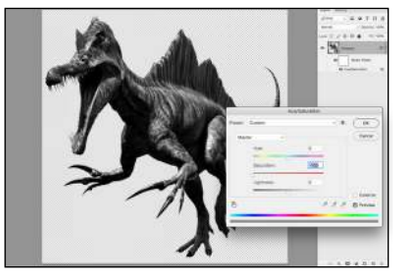
09 More than likely, you weren't able to thoroughly dress the dinosaur with just a single pane of texture. So, add additional texture by repeating steps 6-8, helping to cover any deficiency.

Tips and tricks

Displacement maps

Save a copy

01 To create a displacement map, open 'dinosaur.psd'. Save a copy as 'map.psd'. Ctrl/right-click on the layer, choose Convert to Smart Object.

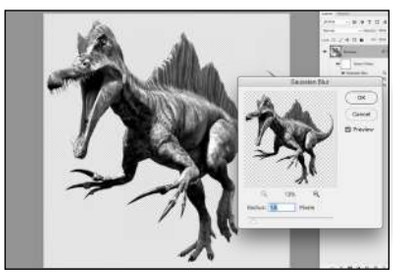


Desaturate

02 Displacement maps don't need colour since the Displace filter only looks at lightness and darkness. Press Cmd/Ctrl+U, slide Saturation to the left.

Adjust the Levels

03 To help the effect, boost contrast. Press Cmd/Ctrl+L to bring up Levels. Use the sliders to improve. Because this is applied non-destructively, you can edit later if necessary. Click OK.



Smooth with blur

04 To help reduce choppiness in the texture, apply a blur. Go to Filter> Blur> Gaussian Blur. Set Radius to 1.5px. Click OK and save the PSD.

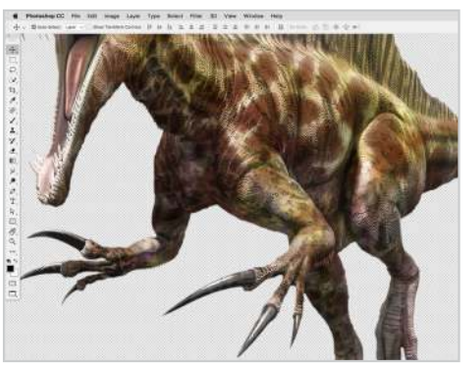
Expert tip

Creative displacement

There are many situations where you can employ the Displace filter, such as: adding road markings, applying brush strokes across bumpy surfaces and giving a person a digital tattoo. You can also create different types of displacement maps and use them on layers just to joggle them. For instance, try displacing text using distressed texture maps for grunge styling. Create displacement maps as large as you think you might need them, and prep them properly.

Patch up areas

10 If you have to patch up more, place and blend in additional instances of 'pattern.jpg'. If you need to tidy up some minor areas, you can use retouching tools such as the Spot Healing Brush Tool on new layers up top (tick Sample All Layers in options bar).



Finalise and save dinosaur

11 Inspect your dinosaur and make any final adjustments. Zoom in with the Zoom Tool (or use Cmd/Ctrl+Plus) to get a good look, and pan around by holding the Spacebar while clicking and dragging. When satisfied, save and close the PSD.

Start scene

12 Now to work on the main composition. Open 'main.psd'. Populate the document by placing 'giraffes.jpg'. Scale and position to fill the canvas before committing the place.

Blur background

13 Because you want to keep the background out of focus, you need to blur it, thus reserving the spotlight for the dinosaur. Go to Filter> Blur> Gaussian Blur, set Radius to 5 pixels. Click OK.

Place dinosaur

14 Bring in the dinosaur. Go to File> Place Embedded (use Place Linked if you want to maintain a link to it), grab 'dinosaur.psd'. Scale and position in a dominating spot before committing the place.

Apply Motion Blur

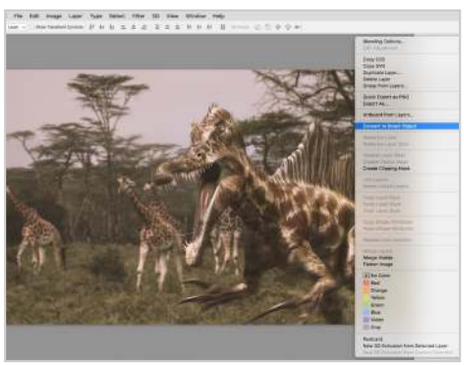
15 Create the illusion of motion. Go to Filter> Blur> Motion Blur. Set Angle to 15 degrees, Distance to 75px (feel free to experiment with these settings). Click OK to apply. Paint black (40-100% brush Opacity) in the filter mask in order to regain some equilibrium.

Adjust with Color Lookup

16 Click the 'Create a new fill or adjustment layer' button, choose Color Lookup. Pick Candlelight.CUBE. Drop the Opacity to 50%. Clip the adjustment layer. Paint black in the mask to reduce if needed.

Apply overall Color Lookup

17 Add another Color Lookup and pick Candlelight.CUBE again. Drop the Opacity to 70%. Add another Color Lookup and pick Kodak 5218 Kodak 2395 (by Adobe).cube. Paint black in the masks to reduce a bit if you like.



Merge layers

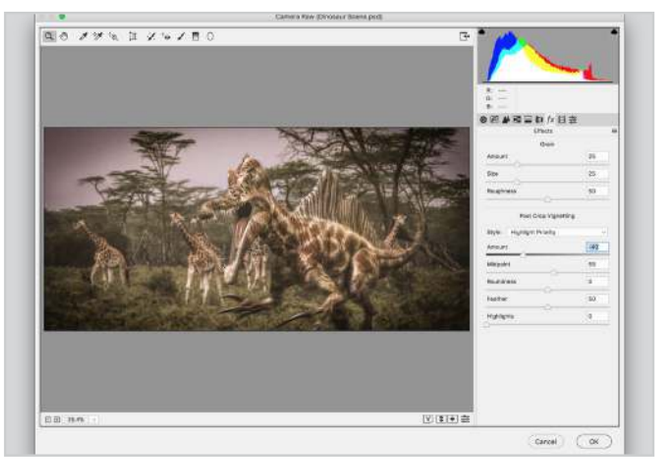
18 Now that you've finished the main composition, merge layers by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+Option/Alt+Shift+E. Ctrl/right-click on the merged layer, choose Convert to Smart Object. You're now set to apply overall non-destructive Smart Filters.

Selectively blur

19 Go to Filter> Blur> Gaussian Blur. Set Radius to 1.5px. Click OK. Click the Smart Filter mask. Invert it by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+I. Paint with white (20-60% brush Opacity) to soften rough edges and areas.

Camera Raw Filter

20 Merge layers, convert to Smart Object. Go to Filter> Camera Raw Filter. Under the Basic tab, increase Shadows, Blacks and Clarity to around +70 each. Play with other sliders if you like. Under the Sharpening tab, increase Sharpening> Amount (try 120). Increase Noise Reduction> Luminance (try 20-30).



Get dramatic

21 Before closing out Camera Raw, head to the Effects tab. Add some grain by sliding Grain> Amount rightward (try 25). Darken the edges by sliding Post Crop Vignetting> Amount leftward (try -40). Play with the other sliders if you like. Click OK.

Finalise

22 If you like what you see, go ahead and save your work. If you want to keep tinkering with the look and bring in more colour, experiment with Color Lookup, Color Balance, and other adjustments. When done, save your PSD.

Glass half full

Maciej Mizer was approached by Australian band Sheppard to create an album cover; what followed was a foray into an art form he'd always wanted to explore

About the artist

Maciej Mizer
www.mosk.p
@mosk_

Maciej Mizer is the lead digital artist and art director at Ars Thanea. He has over 10 years of professional experience in the field. He specialises in visual design, retouching, and image-making with a strong focus on details. In his role at Ars Thanea, he is a part of most of the studio's works, including both the commercial and the independent projects.

Name of the project
Sheppard – Watching the Sky

Sometimes it's easy to forget that album artworks constitute a genre of their own, but some bands can boast having iconic art pieces on their covers, which have cemented their place in culture over the years. When Maciej Mizer was approached by the Australian band Sheppard to create a piece for their second album, it seemed a no-brainer to him to explore working with glass, something that he'd never done before.

The final piece was an ambitious and delicate-looking take on daydreaming that needed a lot of very heavy glass for its creation, but equally, plenty of time was spent on post-production in Photoshop, just to touch-up colours, add shadows and get the picture looking as perfect as it appears on the cover. We caught up with Maciej to discover more about the project.

Did the band's management contact you for this project?

George from Sheppard contacted us. He asked us to create a cover for his band's newest album, *Watching the Sky*. As it happens, we had always wanted to make something from glass, and finally, the perfect chance presented itself.

So what was the concept around this image?

The cover idea revolved around the real-life representation of daydreaming. To achieve that, we had to create a sculpture – a cloud made of glass – and we simply photographed it. We designed and blew several dozen little bubbles in order to create the masterpiece. This is fully handcrafted work, something that could certainly be achieved using CGI, but not this time!

What was involved in creating this piece?

Glass, camera, and Photoshop. That's all.

Photoshop must have been vital for the post-production

Photoshop has many helpful tools and my job requires me to use lots of them on a daily basis. However, I just can't imagine working without layers, Smart Objects, blending modes, masks, and adjustments. The most important thing for projects like this is to not be afraid of experimenting and looking for new solutions. Sometimes it is worth using traditional tools, making something with your own bare hands, even if you can easily do the

All images © Ars Thanea

MACIEJ'S ARTISTIC HISTORY
"Since I was a child I have loved to paint and draw. When I was 16 I got interested in making graffiti. I painted a lot, and my works were on the walls of various cities around Poland."

STUDIO TEAMWORK
"This is the result of great teamwork: Peter Jaworowski, Szymon Świętochowski, Jagoda Żmudzińska, Tomek Chrabołowski, Peter Rosłan, Magda Błocian and Marta Król – you guys absolutely rock!"

BAND'S SUCCESS
As well as having a cool album cover, *Watching the Sky* saw Sheppard reach number one in the album charts in their native country of Australia.

same thing on a computer. The effects may be surprising, and for sure it's much more fun to do it this way.

How did you decide on which colours to use?

The album title, *Watching the Sky*, brought to our mind sky colours, so we wanted to keep the cover in blue. Also, the band gave us a picture they used to promote a single, which was a sky with magenta typography. We added this colour to achieve a bubble effect in our glass composition.

What's your background with using Photoshop?

When I got my first PC I discovered plenty of design software, the first one was Paint Shop Pro. At the very beginning I created simple web designs and I really liked that. Later on I found Photoshop 6.0 and I started to retouch photos and played with photomanipulation. Every software update enabled me to create more advanced stuff. In 2007 I graduated from the University of Computer Science with a computer arts design degree.

What were the biggest challenges involved in this piece?

Our biggest challenge was to find a glassworks open to help us make our idea real, which meant blowing several dozen little glass bubbles, all of them different sizes and shapes. The second challenge was then to put them all together to create a single, perfect shape of a cloud. The final bubble composition weighed about 30kg; each bubble was super delicate and hung separately in space to create a 3D sculpture of a cloud. No one got hurt!

Did the final version differ in any way from how you thought it would, or did Photoshop help tie everything up?

Sometimes the idea can change many times before achieving the perfect result. Luckily, in this case, our concept didn't change at all. We created this piece exactly as we planned since the very beginning. And to be honest, it looks even better that we expected.

What did the band think?

To start with, they fully trusted us on this one. We were given absolute freedom to make it our way. So when we said we would go to a glassworks, they said 'Do it,' and we did it. We were updating them on every stage and they were enthusiastic at all times. We made a making-of video to show the full process at the end and this one-minute piece really impressed them. And in terms of the final version, they loved it.

What's next for you and your team, Maciej?

We are working on a couple of pretty interesting projects now, but as you can probably guess, I am not allowed to say more about them yet. Visit our sites and we will definitely keep you in the loop with Ars Thanea's team updates. Stay tuned!

Essentials

Works with

Elements CS CC

What you'll learn

Create a vector poster with Capture and Draw

Time taken

1 hour

Expert

Jonathan Bail

The Shape Tool is my most loved one in Capture. It does a really excellent job of turning your images into believable vector illustrations.

I am a future digital designer based in Germany. Right now, I am studying digital media and am soon going to start my bachelor degree. I picked up Photoshop when I was 12. I also work as a freelancer.

Create a vector poster with apps

Adobe Capture is awesome for getting projects started. Read on and discover how to use it with Adobe Draw to turn whatever object you like into a vector graphic

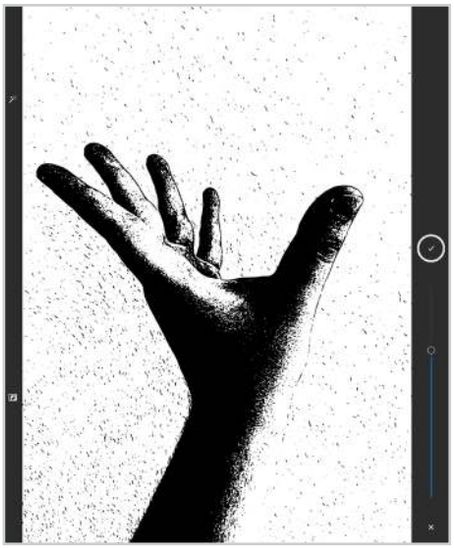
On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

So, you are a superb illustrator? No? Not to worry – it is still possible for you to create some super-cool vector posters. All you need is a little help from a mobile app called Adobe Capture. This enables you to turn any image into a neat vector graphic. It works seamlessly with Adobe Draw, where you can push your illustrations even further.

First you need to find an object that you like or a picture you have already made. Then Capture does all the vectorizing for you, but you can still adjust the result to your taste. For this piece we photographed a hand and a little sculpture in the shape of a pyramid. With a bit of tweaking of the settings in Capture, we quickly created awesome vector images. The automatic cloud synchronisation makes it easy to use the graphics with Adobe CC.

The next step was to bring the vector images into Adobe Draw to play with the composition and add some more colour with the brushes. Finally, it was into the desktop version of Photoshop to apply some layer styles, glow effects and use the Camera Raw Filter to make the poster pop.

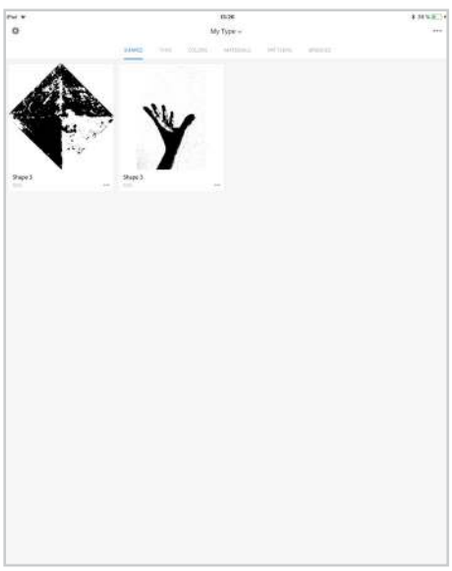


Capture the first object

01 Open Adobe Capture and switch to the Shapes tab. Tap on the camera icon. Adjust the slider until you are happy with the result. Try turning on the flashlight or change the lighting to create interesting vectors. The Invert or Auto Clean buttons may also make your image look better.

Adjust the vectors

02 Press the shutter button in the middle. You can still change all the attributes. When you are happy, hit the shutter button again. In the next screen you can add brush strokes if some of the outlines have got lost, such as on the right side of the hand here.



Explore the settings

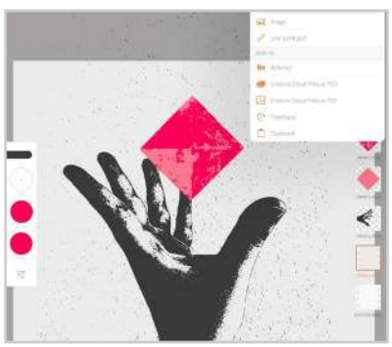
03 Go through the tabs on the top and crop your image to the part you like. Try the Smooth function if your image is a bit jaggedy. Hit Save when you are happy with the result. Next, choose a library you like and repeat the steps with your other objects.

Load your vectors

04 Open Adobe Draw and create a new file. Tap the Shapes icon in the top. Switch to the right tab and choose your library. From there, pick your shape and tap on it. A template of your shape will appear.

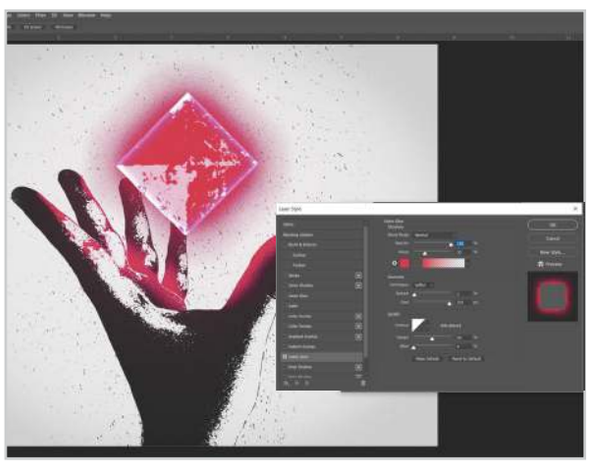
Compose the poster

05 Choose the position and size of the template. Create a new Draw layer and double-tap on the template to fill the shape. The colour is determined by the settings of your brush. Tap the little cross to get rid of the template. Repeat this with your other shapes.



Add colour

06 Fill your background by holding anywhere on the canvas with a nice colour. Create a Draw layer beneath your newly created shapes. Use the basic brush to colour the highlights on the layer beneath. Hit the Share button on top and under Send to... choose 'Creative Cloud files as PSD'.



Finish it in Photoshop

07 In Photoshop use layer styles such as Outer Glow or Inner Glow to add more detail. Paint inside of clipping masks with a brush set to Dissolve for light effects. Select all layers, copy and merge them. Apply the Camera Raw Filter. Under FX, add vignette and grain.

Advanced Use clipping masks for abstractions

On the FileSilo

Download your free resources at **www.filesilo.co.uk/photoshopcreative**

Essentials

Time taken
3 hours

Expert

Andre Villanueva

I crave the open-ended nature of a blank canvas and its unlimited options. However, rules can provide a nice reprieve. Producing templated abstractions is the type of structured creativity that really excites me. Kaleidoscopes from my youth still enchant me with their infinite interpretations of reality. Creating the foundation for this tutorial can be laborious, I admit, but once complete, it's on! With flexible Smart Objects and Place Linked, you can make an endless parade of intriguing variations.

I'm an art director and former college media arts instructor. I've been playing with Photoshop since the early-2000s.

Use clipping masks for abstractions

Create enigmatic nature abstractions with the ability to effortlessly generate endless variations using clipping masks and placed assets

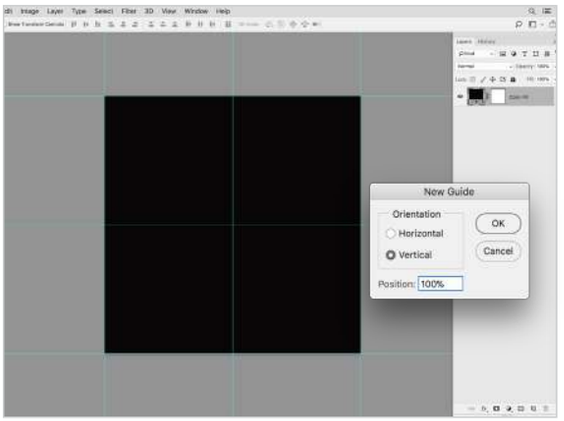
Craving something different? How about joggling up some landscapes via the puzzle-play of structured abstraction? Sound interesting? Well, stretch out your mouse hand (or trackpad fingers) and follow along.

Open play in Photoshop is certainly a joyous affair. Being able to do whatever you want with any ol' asset under the sun is a game many creative types like to take part in. But ultimate freedom can be daunting. When you introduce rules, the horizonless array of options suddenly becomes a lot more manageable, and you can really attack the artistic challenge with concentrated vigour.

Here you'll forge a sliding patchwork of masked imagery. Essentially you'll create some shapes, form masks in the intersections and use a single image masked again and again. The mechanics are simple, but you can produce an infinity of consequences. Who says restrictions have to restrict you?

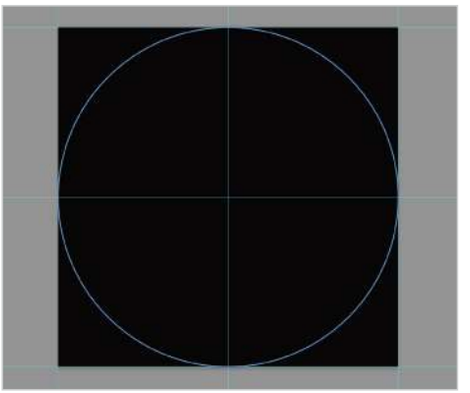
After completing the first shape, you'll witness the true power of Place Linked. By saving the PSD under a different name and relinking the single image to another landscape, you'll engage the creative slot machine and see if you hit the jackpot! If things don't turn out the way you want, simply edit the instances or try another image.

Advanced Use clipping masks for abstractions



Set up the document

01 Open 'circle.psd'. Place guides to assist with the next several steps. Using View> New Guide, set guides at 0%, 50% and 100% for both Horizontal and Vertical. Ensure that View> Snap and View> Snap To> Guides are on.



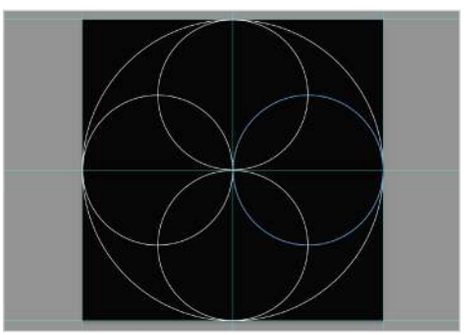
Create large circle

02 Select the Ellipse Tool. In the Options bar, set to Shape, set Fill to None and Stroke to white at 10px. Create a large circle. With the guides in place, the circle should snap to the edges. Hold Spacebar as you're creating to reposition as needed.

Expert tip

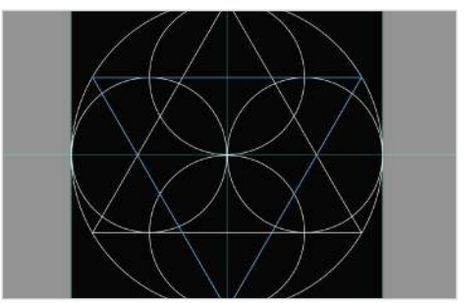
Linked files rock!

Anyone who uses InDesign will be comfortable with the concept of linking imported files. By linking instead of embedding assets, you enjoy smaller file sizes. In a team environment, frequently used assets can be made available for various projects. When the original asset is changed, the update will be reflected in the linked instances. If you're dragging and dropping an asset into a Photoshop document, hold Option/Alt while doing so to make it linked versus embedded.



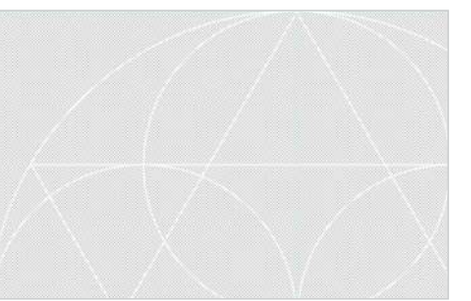
More circles

03 Create a new layer. Create a circle half the height of the main circle. Centre it up top. Select the Move Tool. Holding Option/Alt+Shift, click and drag downward to duplicate the circle and position it until touching down on the bottom edge. Duplicate twice more, filling the sides.



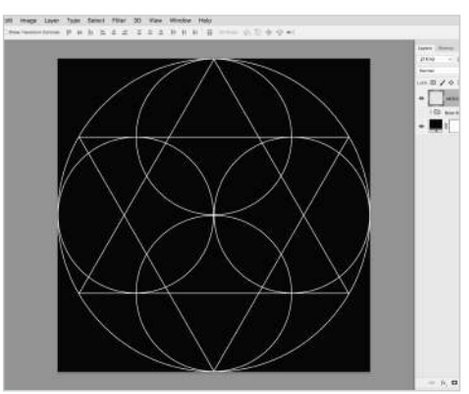
Some triangles

04 Select the Polygon Tool. In the Options bar, set Sides to 3. On a new layer, create a large triangle with the top point touching the top centre of the large circle. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T. Ctrl/right-click, choose Flip Vertical. Holding Shift, drag downward to the bottom edge. Confirm (Return/Enter).



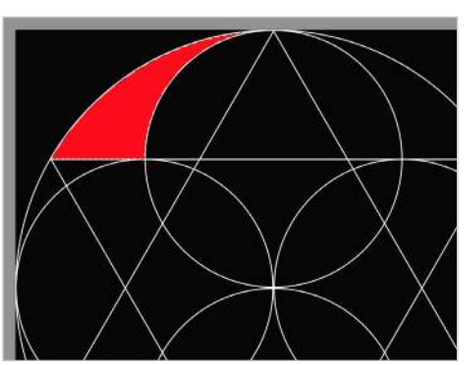
Inspect before proceeding

05 Scrutinise the interconnected shapes. Ensure everything is lined up properly. Zoom in with the Zoom Tool (or use Cmd/Ctrl+Plus) and pan around by holding the Spacebar while clicking and dragging. Reposition/adjust where needed. When satisfied, turn off the visibility of the bottom Color Fill layer by clicking its eye icon.



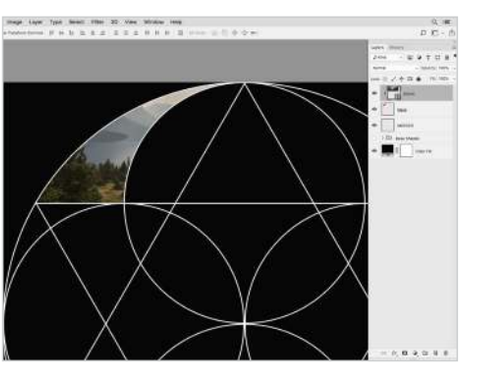
Merge layers

06 With the top layer selected, press Cmd/Ctrl+Option/Alt+Shift+E. Turn off the individual shape layers' visibility, and then turn the bottom Color Fill layer's visibility back on. Hide the guides by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+;.



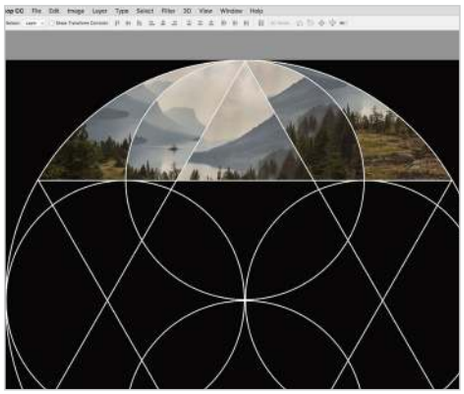
Set up a mask

07 Select the Magic Wand Tool and ensure Contiguous is ticked in the Options bar. Click in the top-left shape. Create a new layer. Set the Foreground colour to something bright (like red), then press Option/Alt+Delete/Backspace to fill the selection with the foreground colour.



Inset scene

08 Go to File> Place Linked, grab 'scene.jpg'. Position above the mask, covering it completely, then press Return/Enter to commit. Holding Option/Alt, click between this layer and the mask below to create a clipping mask. Position the scene layer further with the Move Tool if needed.

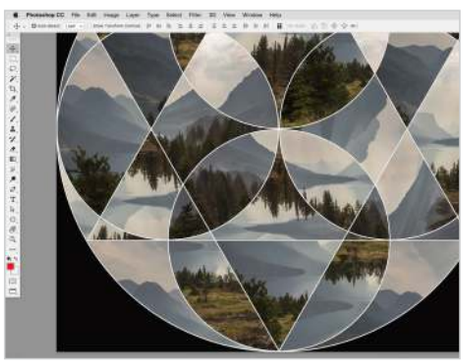


Create more masks

09 Moving rightward and using steps 7-8 as a blueprint, create more shapes and fill them with the same scene via clipping mask. You can Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) the individual scene instances for variation.

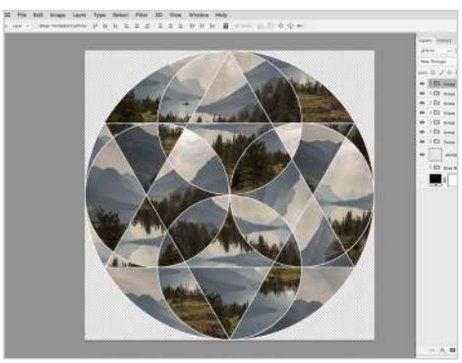
Group layers

10 Even at this stage, you have your hands full with layers and masks. Make things easier with a layer group. With the top layer selected, Shift-click the bottommost mask layer to select the contiguous layers. Press Cmd/Ctrl+G.



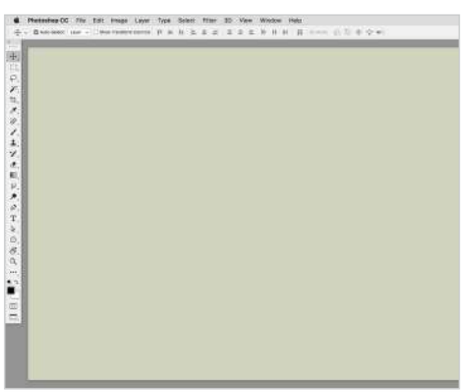
Fill up shape

11 Now work methodically to complete the shape using steps 7-10 as your master guide. Remember to keep using Place Linked (not Place Embedded), and continue using Free Transform to keep things interesting.



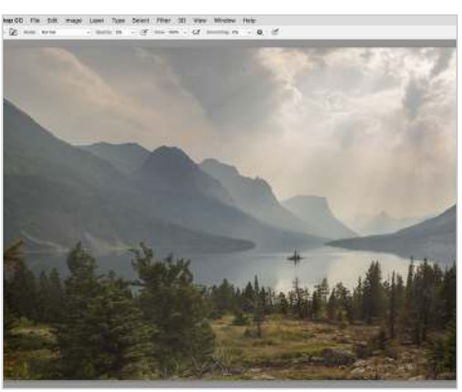
Make adjustments and save

12 Once you've completely filled the shape, take some time to review it as a whole. Ensure you have a nice flow throughout. Adjust where needed. When satisfied, turn off the visibility of the bottom Color Fill layer. Save the PSD.



Start main composition

13 Before starting the main composition, refer to the sidestepper to learn how to easily produce a second circle. When ready, open 'main.psd'. Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' button, choose Solid Color. Pick #d1d5bd and click OK.

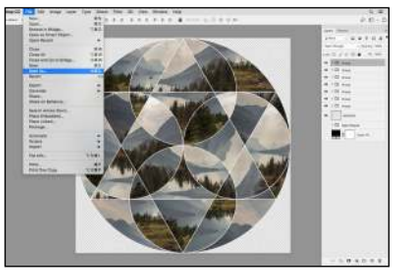


Add scene and mask

14 Place (you can embed) 'scene.jpg'. Scale and position to fill the canvas before committing the place. Click the Add Layer Mask button in the Layers palette. Dab black with a soft-edged brush (5-10% brush Opacity) to fade some of the darker areas.

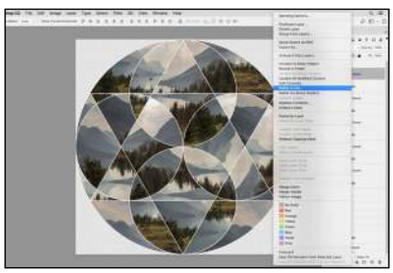
Expert edit

File Placed switcheroo



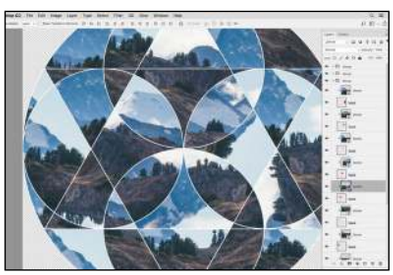
File>Save As

01 After filling all the masks in the first circle using Place Linked and a single image, save the PSD. Then go to File> Save As and use a different name.



Relink

02 Ctrl/right-click on one of the linked scene layers in the second PSD, choose Relink to File. Locate and select the second scene image, then click Place.

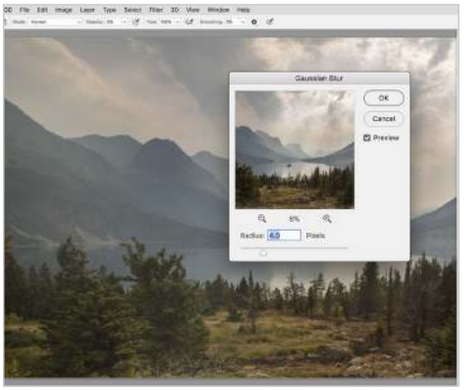


Choose and slide

03 Review the scene. Use the Move Tool to slide things around. To select a layer, Ctrl/right-click on-canvas and choose it from the pop-up menu.

Transform to vary

04 The images are linked, so you can edit them non-destructively. Use Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) to scale, rotate, etc. Save PSD when done.

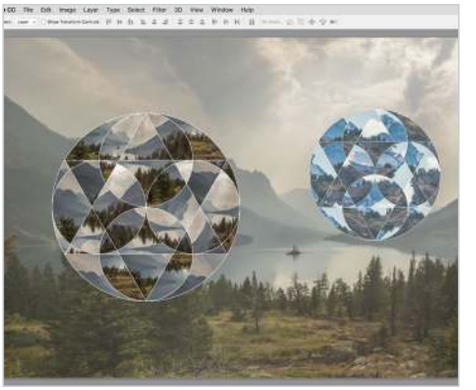


Blur scene

15 Since you'll want to give the abstract shapes prominence, blur the background a bit. Click the layer thumbnail. Go to Filter> Blur> Gaussian Blur. Set Radius to 4px. Click OK.

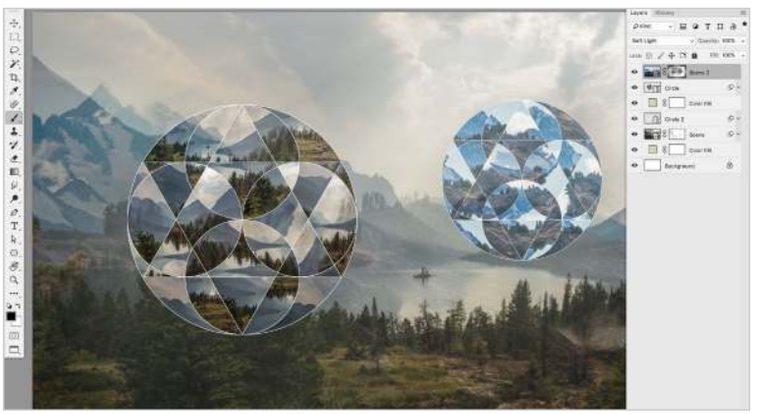
Bring in secondary circle

16 If you created an alternate circle, go ahead and place it now using File> Place Linked. Scale and position before committing the place. Create another Solid Color layer with #d1d5bd. Reduce layer Opacity to 17%.



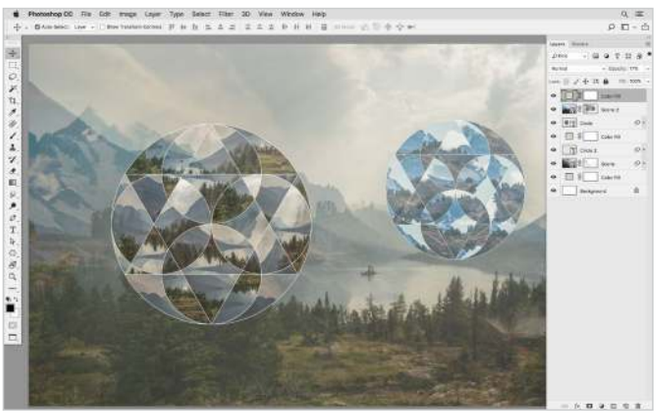
Place main circle

17 Using Place Linked, bring in 'circle.psd'. Scale and position before committing. See the boxout for ideas on applying Smart Filters to placed images. Here Camera Raw Filter is used on both.



Blend second scene

18 To add some blend-alicious interest, place 'scene2.jpg' and commit the place after blanketing the canvas. Set the blend mode to Soft Light. Add a layer mask and paint black (30-60% brush Opacity) to reduce the image in areas.



Overlay more colour

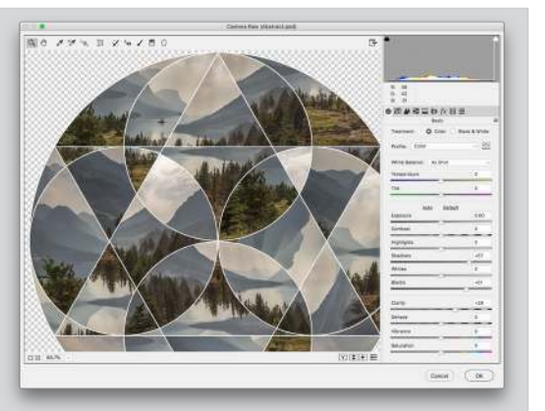
19 To help homogenize and lighten everything a bit more, Option/Alt-click and drag the Color Fill layer from step 16 to the top of the layer stack. Feel free to adjust the Opacity setting for more or less colour.

Finalise

20 Take some time to finalise things. Add some more colour like the last step, but target specific areas via the masks. Add Color Lookup via the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' button. Here FuturisticBleak.3DL is used. Try other adjustments. Save when done.

Expert edit

Smart Filters



Since placed assets are essentially Smart Objects, you can apply filters to them as Smart Filters. This means you can have some non-destructive fun with your abstract shapes. You can test out some of the Artistic or Distort filters on your abstractions to see how they affect things, or employ more utilitarian filters like sharpens and blurs, all with the option to edit the effects at any time without the slightest degradation to the base pixels. For supreme power, call in the big guns (Camera Raw Filter) to bring to bear a full suite of adjustments on your shapes. What's really cool about putting Smart Filters on placed assets is if you make a change to the original asset, the change will be reflected on the placed instance and the Smart Filter will be applied to the revised asset. Nice!

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Expert

Daniel Sinoca

Selections and adjustments are an essential part of my projects. With them, I can create accurate masks and make colour corrections or add different effects to design amazing compositions.

I started to get involved in the digital world over 15 years ago and have been working as a freelance artist ever since, creating all kinds of multimedia projects and tutorial guides.

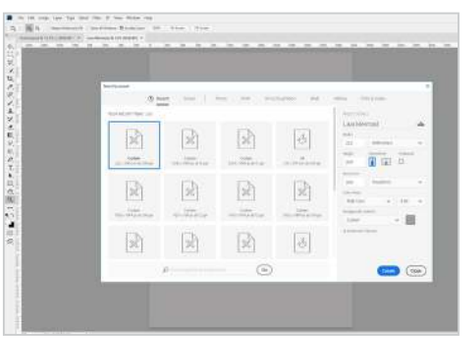
Master photo effects

Use stock images with the Calculations command and the Gradient Map adjustment to create an eye-catching composition

This tutorial is inspired by the Hawaiian legend of Madame Pele, the goddess of volcanoes and fire, who lives at the summit of the Kilauea volcano. She is a well-known and respected deity in the Hawaiian culture.

In the following steps, you will create a lava mermaid using some cool features and commands available in Photoshop. We are going to use basic techniques like masks and adjustments as well as more advanced ones like the Calculation command and the Gradient Map adjustment. The Calculation command enables you to combine two different channels to create selections, or a detailed map, based upon the colour values within an image. It is a convenient tool if you are trying to select images with lots of contrast between the foreground and background colours.

The Gradient Map adjustment is perfect for adding colour to a black-and-white photograph. It matches the greyscale range in an image, with black representing the shadows and white the highlights. This technique should work well with any image, so if you're using a different photo, remember to experiment with the settings in the Gradient Editor or even enhance the shadows and highlights.



Create a new document

01 Begin by creating a new document. Press Cmd/Ctrl+N. Name your project Lava Mermaid. Set the Width to 222mm, Height: 300mm, Resolution: 300ppi, and for Background Contents, choose the colour #a09f9f. Hit Create.

Place the mermaid

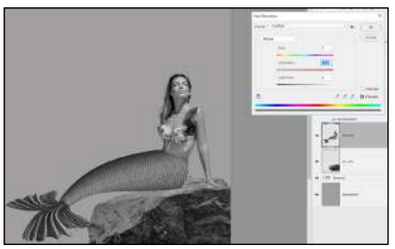
02 Download the mermaid from **www.dreamstime.com** (file ID: 80272285) and Place on the canvas. Grab the Quick Selection Tool (W) and in Options click on the Select Subject button. Use the Quick Selection Tool to enhance the selection and then add a layer mask.

Apply fish scales

03 First, apply the layer mask. Now, go to File> Place Embedded 'fo_scales.png'. Resize and rotate the image, placing it over the legs. In the Options bar, click to switch to Warp Mode and start dragging the handles to reshape the image until you have the mermaid scales in place.

Expert edit

Gradient Map adjustment

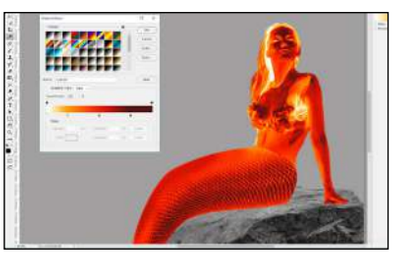


Prepare the image

01 To create the incandescent effect, first desaturate the image. You can use the Hue/Saturation adjustment and then work the Levels or Curves to balance the shadows and highlights.

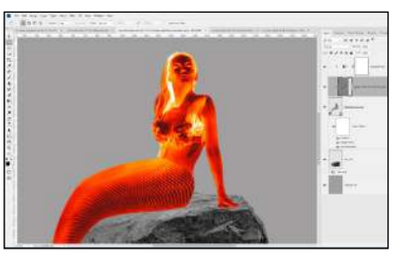
Add filters

02 Filters such as Oil Paint (Filter> Stylize> Oil Paint) will soften the image, helping to enhance the effect. Tweak the Stylization and Cleanliness settings for better results.



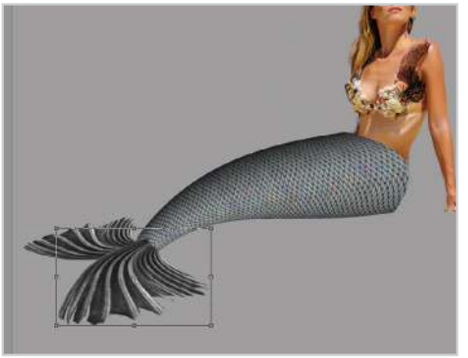
Apply the gradient

03 To create the incandescent effect, invert the gradient map. The highlight areas in the image will become darker, while the shadows will be lighter.



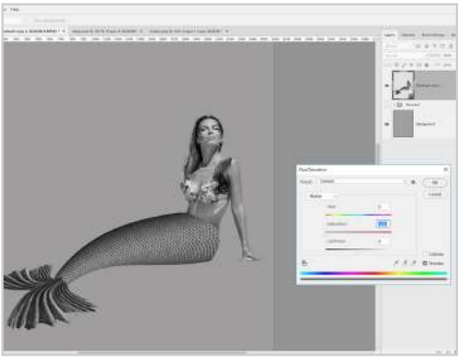
Enhance the tones

04 Create a Neutral Layer, then use the Dodge/Burn tools to enhance the shadows/highlights. To darken an area use the Dodge Tool, to lighten areas, paint with the Burn Tool.



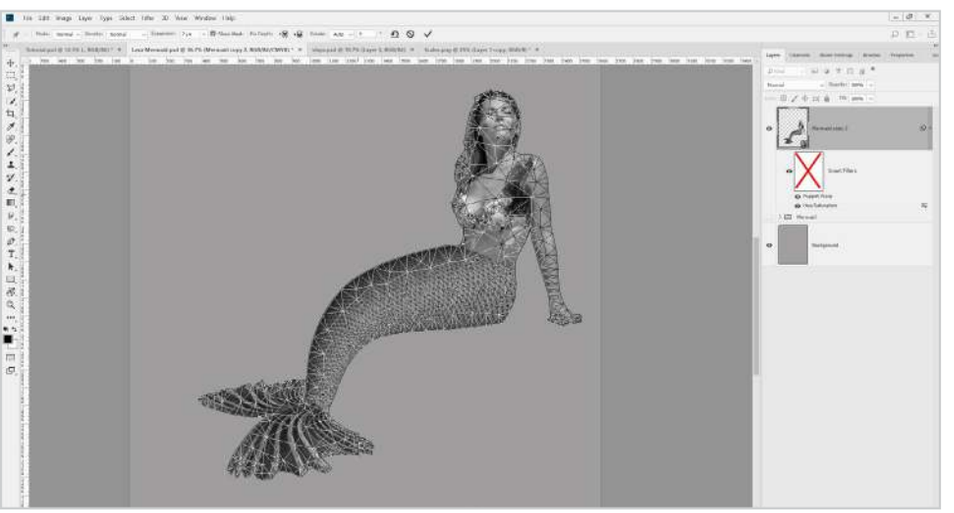
Place the fins

04 Place the image 'fo_fin.png.' Resize it and adjust the perspective by holding Cmd/Ctrl and dragging the handles, then press Return/Enter. Duplicate the image (Cmd/Ctrl+J). Go to Edit> Transform> Flip Horizontal. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and adjust the size and the perspective.



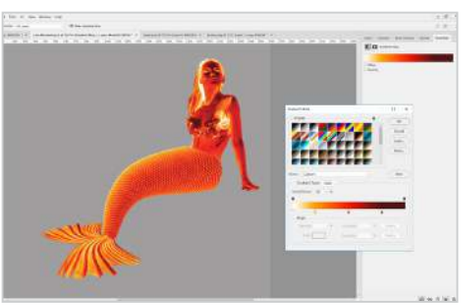
Merge the layers

05 Hold Shift and select the mermaid, scale and the fin layers. Now, press Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge. Transform the image into a Smart Object: go to Layer> Smart Objects> Convert to Smart Object. Press Cmd/Ctrl+U and set Saturation to -100, then click OK.



Edit with Puppet Warp

06 Go to Edit> Puppet Warp. Add a few control points on the image and drag to model the mermaid scales and the fin (make the image look as though she is sitting).

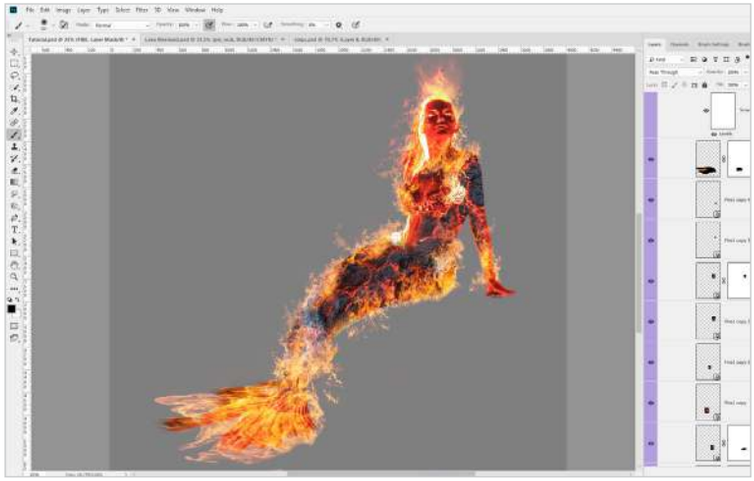


Incandescent effect

07 Go to Layer> New Adjustment Layer> Gradient Map. Open the Gradient Editor and create four colour stops. For the first use #ffffff, Location 0%. For the second: #ff9c00, Location: 20%. For the third enter #ee1d01, Location: 50% and for the fourth: #511414, Location: 80%. Clip the layers (Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G).

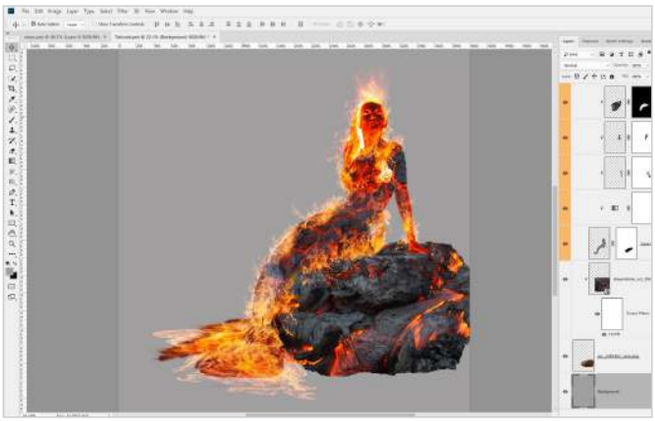
Apply textures

08 Place image 'pix_81175_lava.jpg'. Grab the Lasso Tool (L) and select the lava, then cut and paste into a new layer. Open the Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L) and increase the tones. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and adjust the texture over the body. Duplicate and adjust the texture several times. Clip the layers (Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G).



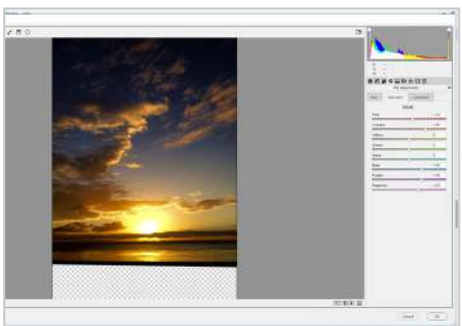
Light up

09 Now let's place the flames. Start with the image 'pix_flame.jpg'. Resize it and change the blend mode to Screen. Repeat this process several times until you have the flames all around the image.



Place the rock

10 Place image 'pix_2485461_rock.png'. Adjust the size and drag under the mermaid layer. Now add a new texture. Download the lava image from **www.dreamstime.com** (file ID: 39679672) and place on top of the rock. Clip the layers (Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G) and adjust the size.

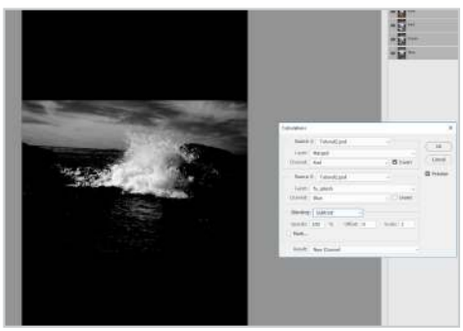


Create the background

11 Bring in more images. Place 'pix_101765_sky.jpg' above the background layer. Go to Filter> Camera Raw. Set Highlights to 5, Clarity: 20, Vibrance: 5. In the HSL Adjustment panel, open Saturation and set Reds to 10, Oranges: 45, Blues: 35, Purples: 35 and Magentas: 25, then click OK.

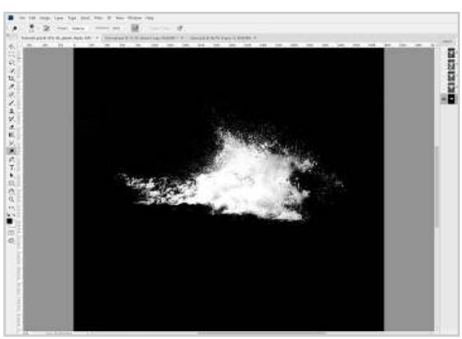
Complete the terrain

12 Place the lava image again (from Dreamstime) and adjust the size. Increase the contrast by opening the Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L). Set the Inputs to 0, 0.80, 230 and click OK.



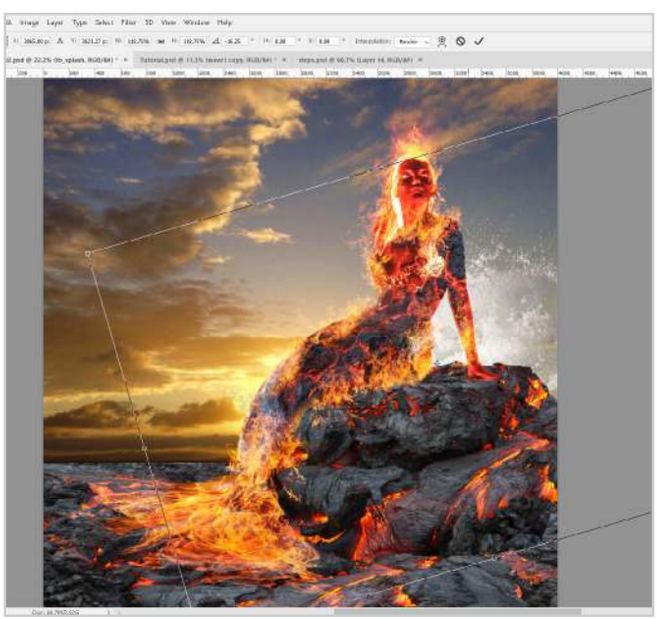
The Calculations command

13 Let's create more lava. Place the image 'fo_splash.jpg' on top of the layer stack. Open the Channels panel and go to Image> Calculations. Set the Source1 Channel to Red and check Invert. Change the Source2 Channel to Blue, Blending: Subtract, Result: New Channel and click OK.



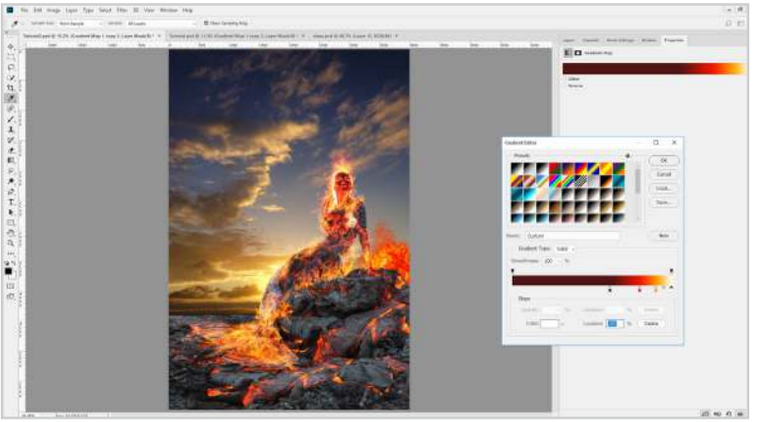
Enhance the contrast

14 Open up Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L) and drag the sliders inwards for high contrast. Now to define the image. Grab the Dodge Tool (O), set Range: Highlights, Exposure: 100%, and then paint over the white areas. Grab the Burn Tool (O), set Range: Midtones, Exposure: 100% and paint over the black areas.



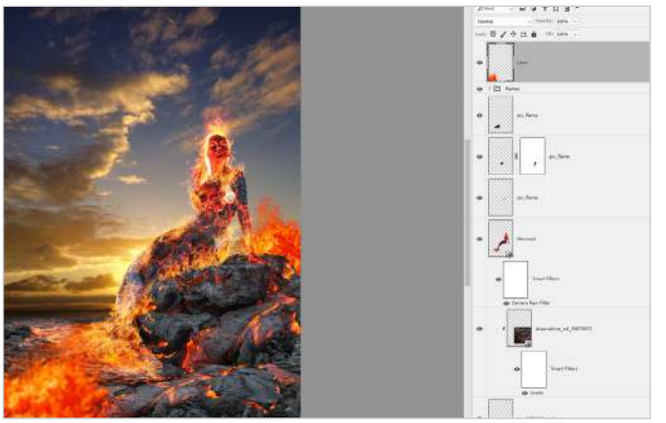
Load selections

15 In the Channels panel, click on the RGB layer then press F7 to open the Layers panel. Go to Select>Load Selection. Choose Channel: Alpha1, set the Operation to New Selection and then click OK. Now add a layer mask. Drag the layer behind the rock and adjust the size.



Gradient Map adjustment

16 Go to Layer> New Adjustment Layer> Gradient Map. Open the Gradient Editor and create four colour stops. For the first use #511414, Location: 60%. For the second: #ee1d01, Location: 80%. For the third enter #ff9c00, Location: 90% and for the fourth: #ffffff, Location: 100%. Clip the layers (Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+G).

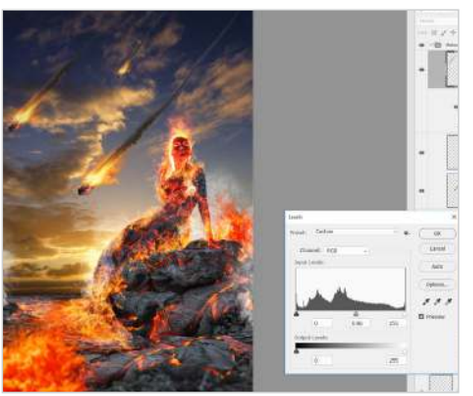


Duplicate the layers

17 Hold Shift and select the lava and the gradient map layers. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate and then press Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge. Name the new layer Lava. Drag on top of the layer stack and move to the bottom-left corner. Now apply the Gaussian Blur filter at 12px.

Smoke images

18 Go to Edit> Presets> Preset Manager. Click Load and locate the brush 'smoke.abr,' then click Load and Done. Grab the Brush Tool (B), choose the smoke brushes and paint behind the mermaid and in other spots around the scene.

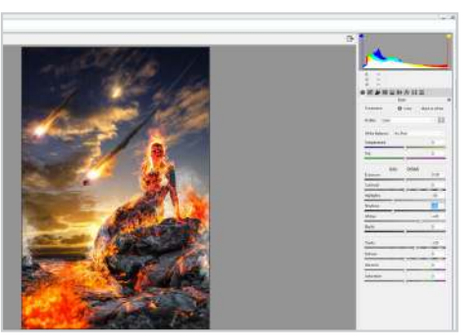


Place the meteors

19 Place 'fo_meteors.png' and adjust the size and angle. Duplicate the image a few times (Cmd/Ctrl+J) and place over the sky. Now, Press Cmd/Ctrl+L to open the Levels and drag the midtones to adjust the tones a bit.

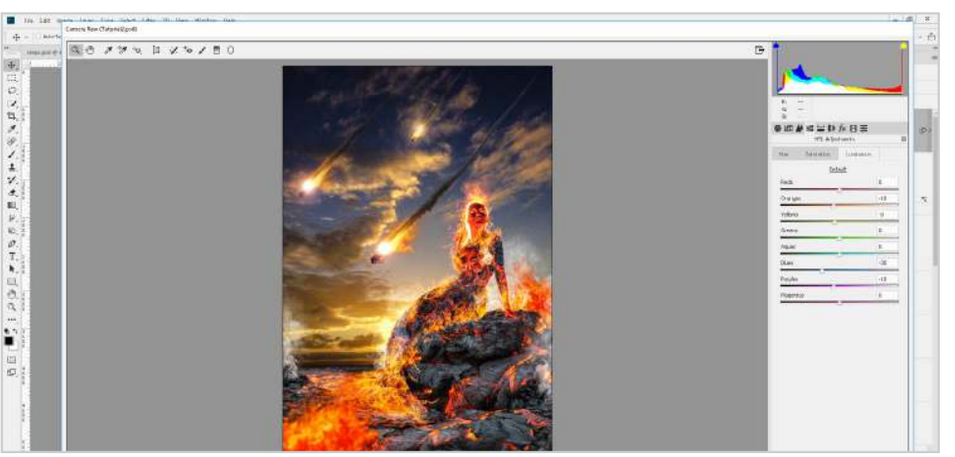
Create a glow effect

20 Add a new layer on top of the meteor layer and fill with black. Go to Filter> Render> Lens Flare. Choose 105mm Prime. In the Preview window drag to the centre and click OK. Change the blend mode to Screen. Resize it and place over the meteor. Control the intensity tweaking the Levels.



Camera Raw

21 Create a merged copy of all the layers by pressing Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+E. Convert to a Smart Object, go to Layer> Smart Objects> Convert to Smart Object. Now go to Filter> Camera Raw. Set the Highlights to -30, Shadows: -30, Whites: 40 and Clarity: 25.



Colour adjustments

22 Still in Camera Raw, open the HSL Adjustment panel. Click in Luminance and set the Oranges to -10, Yellows: -8, Blues: -30 and Purple: -10. Now open the Saturation panel and set the Blue to 20. Finally, open the Effects panel and add a Vignette, then click OK.

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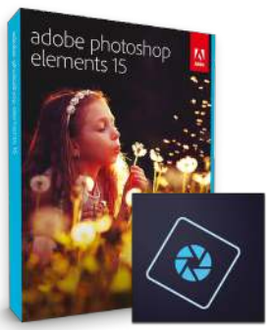
Elements creative



12 pages of practical guides

Essential techniques Follow our step-by-step tutorials

File Edit Image Enhance Layer Select Filter View Window Help

LEARN HOW TO

CREATE A STORM IN A TEACUP

Brew your own surreal magic on p78

On the FileSilo

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Create more in Elements...

Learn to love Levels.....76
Create double exposure.....82
Combine photos & illustrations...84

BRIGHTNESS/ CONTRAST
Alter the brightness and contrast of the image once you've used Levels, just to get the tone perfect.

What does it mean?

HISTOGRAM – The histogram is the black-and-white icon that looks like a graph just above the stoppers. It shows the distribution of tone in the image; the lighter and darker shades are either side of the histogram, with the majority of the tone and colour in the middle of the graph.

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Tool focus...

Learn to love Levels

Touch-up the tone of your image and edit colour non-destructively

Adjustment layers are one of the simpler concepts of Elements, but that doesn't mean they are any less pivotal for your editing endeavours. The adjustment layers are basic tools that control the colour, lightness and the tone of your pictures, and they can all be masked so that you can pinpoint your adjustments to specific parts of your images.

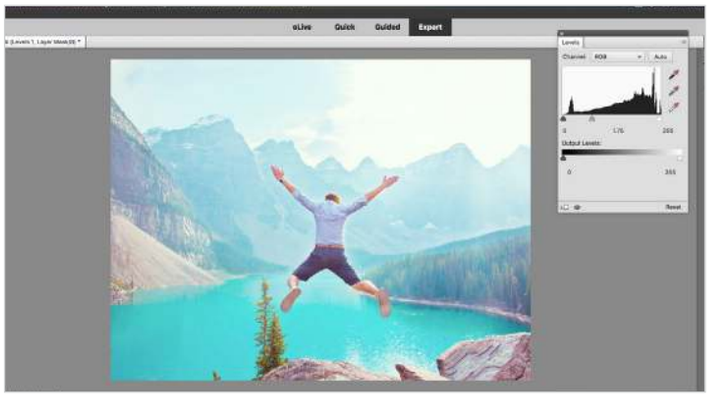
Levels in particular are one of the most important adjustments in Elements. The adjustment enables you to alter the tone of your picture – the whites, the blacks, the darker and the lighter shades – and by using the RGB channel drop-down menu, you are able to target the red, green and blue tones in the pictures, in addition to the dark and light shades.

The Levels adjustment is so great because it's so simple. It's really easy to use thanks to its stoppers, and by tweaking the contrast, brightness and colour, you can completely transform the look of your photo, whether you're looking to correct colour, simply edit the brightness, or maybe create a special finish, such as a retro lomo effect.

Don't just stop with the Levels, either. The best thing about the adjustment layers is that you can use lots of them in combination with each other to enhance your image as a whole. You can group them, you can reduce their opacity and you can change their blend modes. Experiment with the adjustments and get an idea of what you can achieve.

Level it out Edit the individual channels and the overall tone with stoppers

Shortcut
Hit Cmd/Ctrl+L to edit the Levels destructively



Alter the contrast

01 Begin by clicking on the Fill Layer icon, which is located next to the Mask icon above the Layers palette. This is where you'll find the Levels adjustment; use the stoppers to tweak the contrast of your picture.

Focus on the red

02 Use the drop-down menu to select the Red channel and again, tweak the stoppers below the histogram to increase the amount of red in the image. Move the middle stopper to the left to increase the reds.

Edit the green

03 Go to the drop-down menu again and this time, select Green. Alter the stoppers on this channel as before, as this will help control the warm tones; increase it just a little less than you increased the Red channel.

Increase the blue

04 Finally, tweak the Blue channel. Moving the middle stopper of the blue to the left will give the image more of a purple finish, while setting it further to the right will give it more of a yellow tone.

Other useful adjustments Discover the adjustments that work well with Levels

Gradient Map

01 The Gradient Map replaces tones in your picture with those of a gradient. This is good for adding measured colour over a picture and by setting the Gradient Map to Soft Light or Overlay, you can blend the tones into your image.

Hue/Saturation

02 This one controls hue, saturation and lightness. Use it to correct colour, or isolate certain shades using the drop-down menu. You can increase the blues or reds for example, and even extend the range of a specific colour group.

Photo Filter

03 A simple adjustment that adds an overlaying colour to an image. It's particularly useful for warming or cooling your picture with orange and blue respectively, though you can choose any colour to use as a filter.

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VARY THE WEATHER
If you're feeling a bit more summery, why not use brushes to create sunshine, and even create a rainbow over the picture?

Surreal art...

Create a storm in a teacup

Use masks, filters and stock images to build a mini environment

The main philosophy behind a surreal image, of any kind, is to put something in a place that you wouldn't expect. That could involve placing an animal out of its habitat, a person in an unusual situation, or just objects of differing sizes. In fact, size compositions can be extremely fun to play around with.

Creating a composition like this might look advanced, but we're really just creating an ordinary rainy scene. The only difference is that it's in a mug. Just as with any other weather project, we're going to use plenty of filters, masking and stock images to make this project look realistic; the mug just throws up an extra challenge.

This is a project you can try with your own images too. Photograph your own mug and create alternate weather conditions just by using whatever pictures you can find. The same ideals apply: all we're doing is scaling everything down and creating a realistic scene that fits within a specific size.

The phrase 'a storm in a teacup' simply refers to something that seems so big, being contained within something smaller. That's literally what we're doing in this project, to surreal effect, and it's a theme that you can explore with all kinds of surreal projects if you use your imagination.

Make it rain

Mask your city into the mug and alter the weather

Shortcut
Hit L to scroll through the different Lassos

Bring in your background

01 Start by inserting the background of your image. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+T to Transform and then resize the image so that it fits the background of your document. Make sure there's enough focus on the mug.

Clean the mug

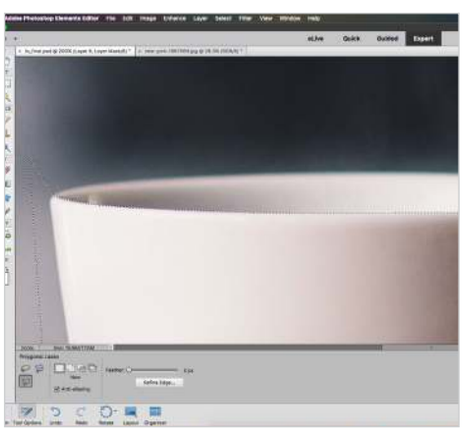
02 Sometimes stock photos you use aren't ideal, and you need to do a little retouching around them. This is the case here: we're going to remove the blackboard effect on the mug so it doesn't distract. Use the Clone Stamp Tool (S) to do this.

Add a shadow

03 On a new layer, make a selection around the mug and the outside edge of the spoon. We're going to use a soft, black brush with a low Opacity setting to create a shadow on the mug from the spoon. This will give the image a little more realism.

Insert the city

04 Drag the skyline image into the document and again, use Transform to resize so it's big enough for the mug. Reduce the Opacity to 30% to see the mug behind it, and therefore be able to resize it accurately.

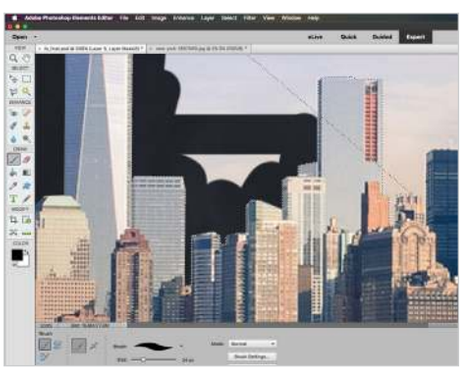


Mask around the mug

05 Hit Mask on the skyline layer, and hide it. Using the Polygonal Lasso, trace the outside edge of the mug carefully. Bring the skyline layer back in and fill this part of the mask in with black.

Cut out buildings

06 Carry on using the Polygonal Lasso to cut around the buildings of the skyline, using its straight lines to follow the edges. When you make selections of the sky on the layer, fill in with black on the mask in order to hide.

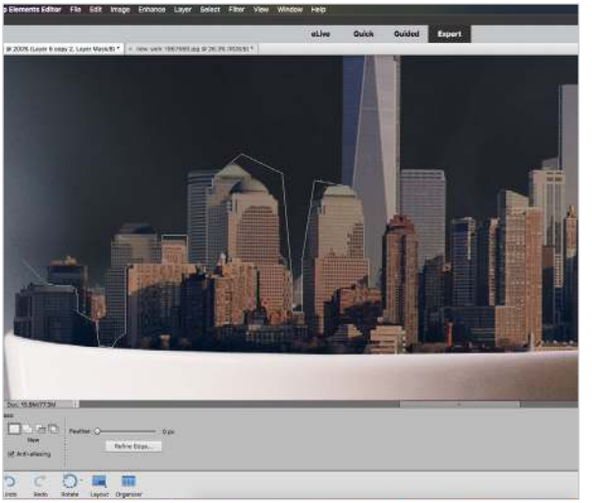


Work around errors

07 Often when selecting with the Polygonal Lasso, you can accidentally double-click and select across your intended selection. When this happens, grab a hard, black brush, and mask out manually. Ctrl/right-click, choose Select Inverse, and then do the opposite across the selection.

Blend the city

08 This is a neat trick for blending the city into the rest of the image tonally. Duplicate the background to the top of the layer stack and go to Filter> Blur> Average. Set the layer to Soft Light and clip it to the city to apply that colour tone over it.



Create some depth

09 Duplicate your Average blur layer and set to Multiply, 60% Opacity. Hit Mask, and mask out any buildings in the foreground. This will give you some buildings that are brighter and some that are darker.

Expert tip

Mask the city

You can use any skyline image to sit in your teacup and any selection tool to cut it out from its background, but there are a few useful tips for this part of the tutorial.

Firstly, don't select the whole skyline in one go. It's likely that you'll make errors, so just select the sky around individual buildings and mask out. From there you can go over edges if you need to with a hard brush, or bring buildings back into the image.

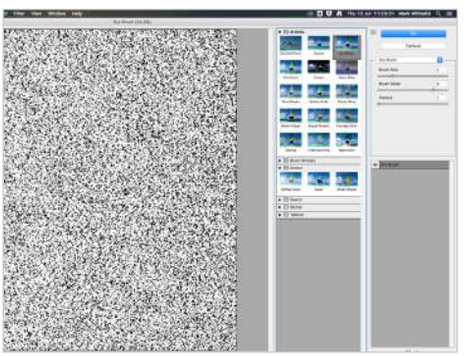
Remember too that the Magnetic Lasso and the Marquees can also help with selections. Use a range of tools to get the best results.

Brush in a shadow

10 Clip a new layer to the skyline layer, and grab a soft, black brush. Touch around the edge of the mug to create a shadow over the bottom of the city. Lower the Opacity setting of this layer to make it a little more subtle.

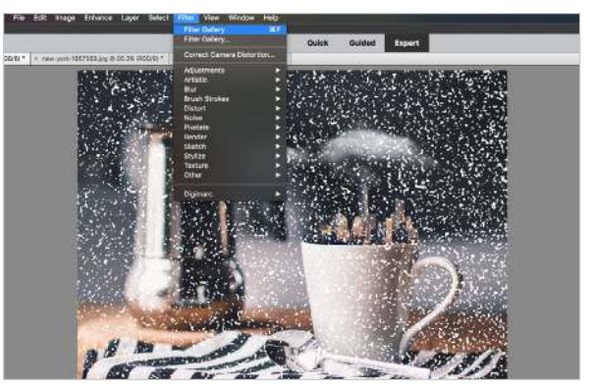
Bring in some cloud

11 Insert the cloud layer, set to Screen and hit Cmd/Ctrl+L to bring up the Levels adjustment. Use the stoppers to increase the contrast of the layer and hit OK. Use a soft, black brush to fade out the moon and other lighter parts from the image.



Start creating rain

12 Create a new layer, fill with white and set your swatches to black and white (D). Go to Filter> Noise> Add Noise. Choose 400%, check Monochromatic and click OK. Go to Filter> Filter Gallery> Dry Brush and use the default settings.



Layer your filter

13 Set your layer to Screen and go to Filter> Filter Gallery to repeat the filter. This will get rid of more black pixels, leaving you with snow-like dots all over the image. Keep doing this until you're satisfied with how much precipitation you have.

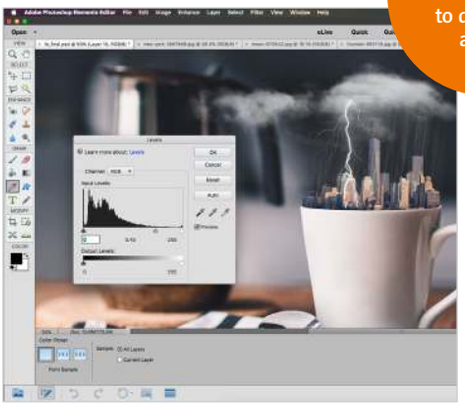
Isolate the effect

14 Hit Mask and reduce the layer to 80% Opacity. Grab a soft brush and mask the effect so that it only appears under the cloud and over the city. You can leave it as snow if you wish, or blur it into rain in the next step.

Shortcut
Hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate a layer

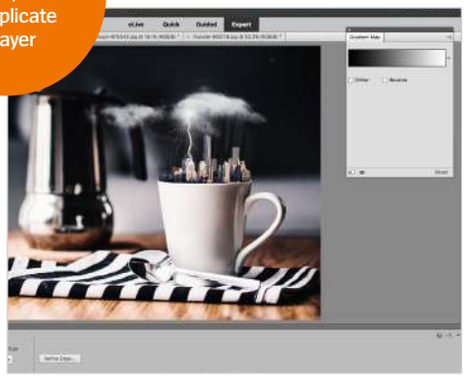
Blur the rain

15 Go to Filter> Blur> Motion Blur and alter both the Distance slider and the Angle wheel to get the perfect amount of blur, so that your filtered layer looks like rain. Hit OK and if need be, use Levels to tweak the contrast of your layer.



Generate some lightning

16 Insert the lightning and set the layer to Screen again. Desaturate this layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U) and use Levels to alter the contrast and brightness of the layer until the lightning looks realistic.



Adjust with gradient maps

17 Use a black-to-white Gradient Map adjustment, set to Soft Light. This will add some cinematic drama to your image as a whole, while helping to keep its elements looking cohesive. Reduce the Opacity to lessen the effect.

Tweak the tone

18 Go to the Fill Layer icon and select Levels. Use the stoppers along with the RGB channel drop-down menu to tweak the contrast, brightness and overall tone of the image, boosting certain colours and reducing others.

Focus on the details

19 Hit Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+Shift+E to create a stamp layer and then duplicate. With your first layer, go to Filter> Blur> Gaussian Blur and choose 10px. With your second go to Filter> Other> High Pass and select 3px, then set to Linear Light. Use masks to fade in each layer and give your image some focus.

How to enhance the lighting

Get the highlights and shadows in your image to pop

Create a new layer and set it to Soft Light, before you touch over the image with black and white to apply highlights and shadows in the image. Use soft brushes with low Opacity settings to apply the effect subtly.

Another trick is to create a stamp layer, duplicate, and set one of these layers to Screen, the other to Multiply. Hit Mask for each, invert (Cmd/Ctrl+I) and mask in highlights and shadows in the picture.

Finally, add a subtle lens flare over the lightning in the image to brighten up that particular area of the picture further.

NOISE TEXTURE
Create a new layer, fill with white and then go to Filter> Noise> Add Noise. Choose 400%, Monochromatic and set to Soft Light, 20% Opacity for a basic texture effect.

What does it mean?

SCREEN – The Screen blend mode will lighten your image without creating block colour. Any pixels on the blend layer that are lighter than the pixels on the layers below will show, while any darker pixels will not. This means that you can set colourful layers against dark silhouettes for this effect.

ADD MORE STARS
Copy the sky layer and use the Threshold adjustment to set it to black and white. Set it to Screen to show more of the stars behind the subject.

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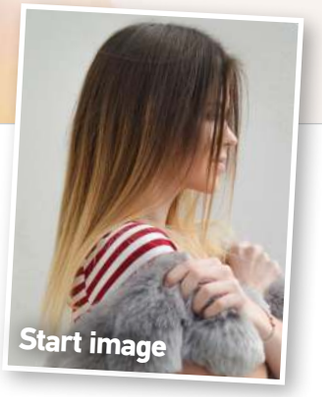


Photo edit...

Create a double exposure

Blend layers, lighting and colour together for an exciting effect

As with penicillin, superglue and the microwave oven, double exposures were discovered by mistake. Purely by accident, photographers found that their cameras were taking photos on existing rolls of films, creating bright shots within silhouettes.

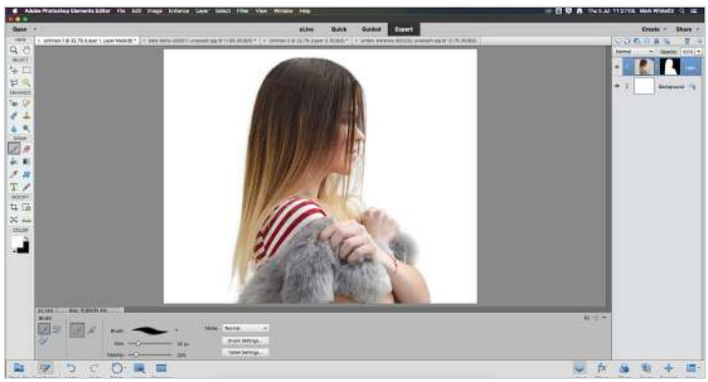
Jump to the world of photo-editing, and we're using that premise to create double exposures in Elements. The same rules apply; we're simply adding brighter pictures over the top of darker ones and altering the blend modes for a colourful result. The key really is to use photos with a clear outline and a strong contrast between bright, light colours and the darker shades.

The images we've supplied can help you create your own double-exposure image, but feel free to use whatever pictures you can find, or even take. Double exposures are simply about making a dark, potentially boring photo look bright and exciting, so there's no correct way to construct them.

It's also an idea to mix up the blend modes as well, to see what Elements can help you create. Often it's the case that trial and error is what creates amazing artwork, rather than following a tutorial to the letter. After all, sometimes the best things really are discovered by accident!

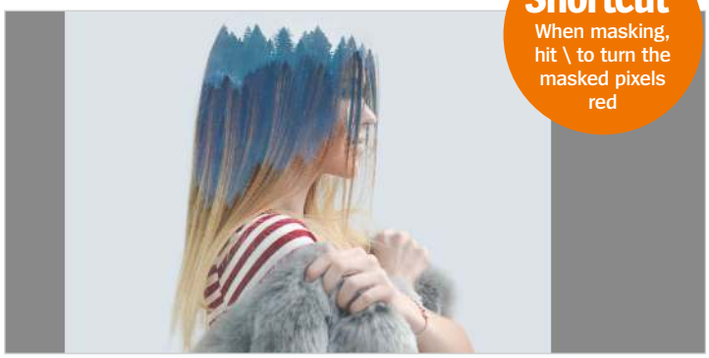
Will it blend? Layer your image and select blend modes to make a double exposure

Shortcut
When masking, hit \ to turn the masked pixels red



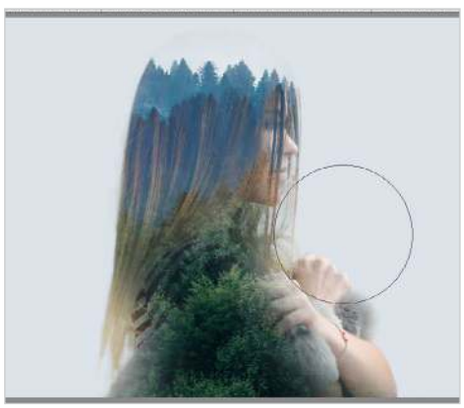
Cut the subject out

01 Start by inserting your subject into the image and hitting the Mask Tool. Grab a brush and use it to trace around the outside of your subject with black. The Brush Tool is best for drawing around the hair; use a lower opacity for more fade.



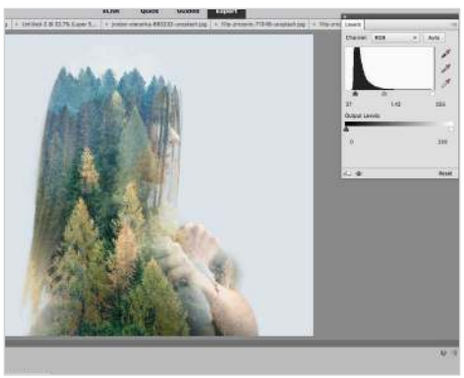
Overlay the trees

02 Insert some trees, and set to Lighten; position over your subject and then Alt/Opt-click it to clip it to your subject. Duplicate this layer, keeping it clipped to the layer, and set this duplicate layer to Screen. Fill the background with the same light blue from the sky.



Add some more

03 Cmd/Ctrl-click the mask layer of the subject; on a new layer, fill with black. Clip another image of some trees to this black layer, and mask the black layer to position the trees over the subject.



Layer up the image

04 Add another image of some trees. Again, mask where necessary and set to Screen. Clip a Levels adjustment to this trees layer and increase the contrast so that it only shows the lighter, brighter trees in the layer over the subject.

Fade the face in

05 Duplicate the original face layer to the top of the layer stack. Ctrl/right-click and apply the mask to the layer, then hit Mask again, before hitting Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert this mask. In soft white, mask the face back in slightly.

Bring in a sky

06 Add in the sky image and set to Screen. Add a Levels adjustment to correct the contrast a little more, add a Black to White Gradient Map adjustment, set to Soft Light, 40% Opacity, to make the image a little more cohesive.

Adjust the piece

07 Hit Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+Shift+E to make a stamp layer of all the layers so far. Go to Filter> Other> High Pass and set to 3px to sharpen the piece, setting it to Overlay. Use Brightness/Contrast and Hue/Saturation to adjust as necessary.

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What does it mean?

REFINE EDGE – Even with the selection tools available, it can be tricky to get just the right finish. This is where Refine Edge comes in. It helps smooth any jagged edges with the Smooth setting, contracts or expands slightly with Shift Edge, while Feather can create a softer edge.

GET DOODLING

Scan, edit and paste in your own hand-drawn elements, and combine them with some photos and textures.

BLENDING LAYERS

Adjustment layers and blending modes bring the different textures together and complement the photo.

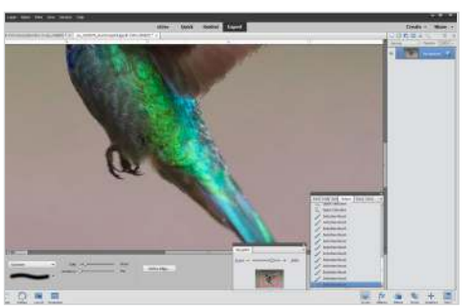
Digital art...

Combine photos with illustrations

Enhance your digital art with hand-drawn doodles

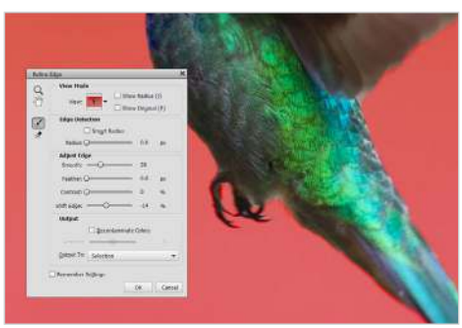
Creating a mixed-media artwork isn't as simple as copying and pasting a few times over. Plenty of thought and time should go in to making sure that all the different elements work well together, and create a cohesive overall image. To prevent your art looking like a jumbled pile of stock material, make the different elements 'interact'; in this image the hummingbird is feeding from the hand-drawn flower. Colour tone is also important here; the paint textures need to look like they are a part of the photo, for example an extension of the bird's wing and tail. By applying adjustments, masks and blend modes we can bring all of these parts of the artwork together; even with the vastly different style of the bird and flowers. Of course, you are going to get the most out of this design if you draw your own flowers and leaves. However, in case you aren't in the doodling mood, we have provided a selection of the drawings used in this image on the FileSilo, so you can get stuck in to the digital editing straight away.

Mixed-media artwork Bring in photos, textures and drawings and blend into one design



Select the bird

01 Open 'pix_2139279_hummingbird.jpg'. Use the Quick Selection Tool (press A) to select the hummingbird. Switch to the Selection Brush (press A again) and use a soft round brush to select the fiddly areas, eg around the feet.

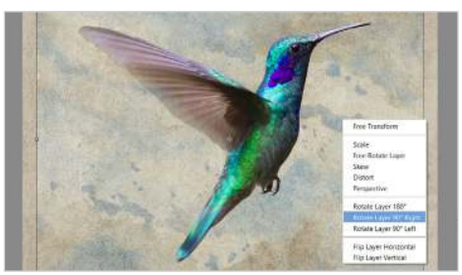


Refine edge

02 Click Refine Edge, and adjust Smooth and Shift Edge for a neater selection. With Output set to selection, click OK and copy (Cmd/Ctrl+C). Open 'pix_1074131 _ paper.jpg' and paste (Cmd/Ctrl+V) in the bird.

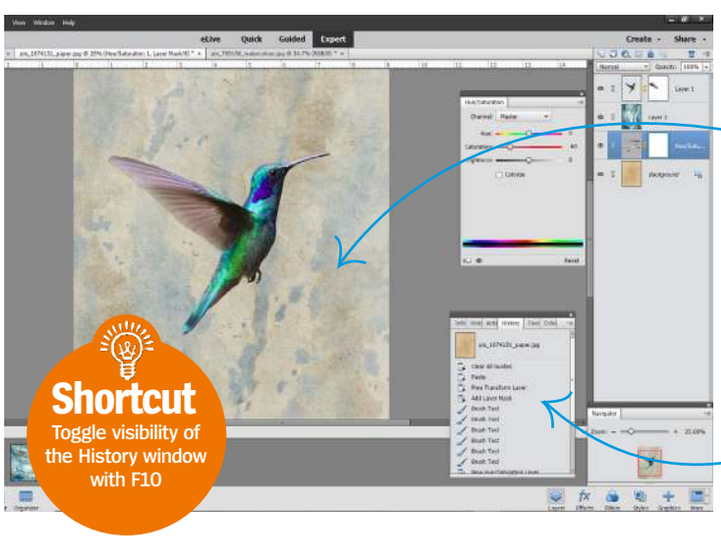
Transform and mask

03 Press Cmd/Ctrl+T, Ctrl/right-click, choose Flip Layer Horizontal and position it in the centre of the canvas, hit Enter to apply. Add a layer mask, and use a black soft round brush at 30% Opacity to fade the wing slightly.



Add watercolour texture

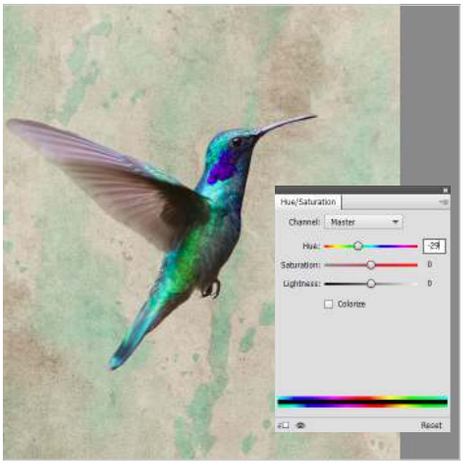
04 Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer directly above the paper layer and enter Saturation: -60. Copy and paste the 'pix_795156_watercolour.jpg' texture below the hummingbird, set it to Overlay and 40% layer Opacity. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T, Ctrl/right-click and choose Rotate 90 degrees right, and enlarge to fill the canvas.



Shortcut
Toggle visibility of the History window with F10

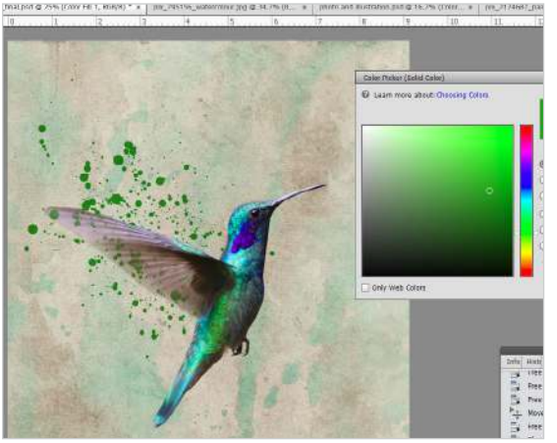
MAKE SPACE
Make sure you leave some empty space around the bird to place the paint splashes and illustrations.

IT'S HISTORY
Cmd/Ctrl+Z is fine to undo one or two edits, but use the History window to undo even further.



Adjust the Hue

05 Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer directly above the watercolour texture, and click the Clip to Layer icon in the bottom-left corner of the adjustment window. Set the Hue to -29.



Add paint spatter

06 Copy and paste in 'pix_2174687_paint_spatter.png' below the bird layer. Set its blending mode to Multiply. Resize, rotate and position it over the bird's tail. Add a Solid Color Fill layer of R:59 G:145 B:22, Ctrl/right-click its layer name in the Layers palette and click Create Clipping Mask.

Expert tip

Be inspired

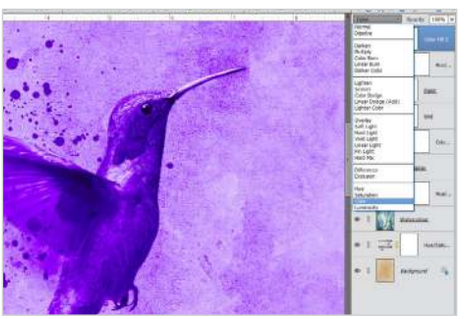
Even the best artists need inspiration! Take some time before you sit down to draw, and gather reference material. Try searching online for mindfulness colouring pages, or simply 'flower doodles', and compile an inspiration board. Of course, you don't want to copy any other drawings, but simply get a few ideas to help you create a variety of designs, such as different pattern fill ideas for leaves or petal shapes. And finally; draw more doodles than you think you need; it's good to have plenty to pick so you don't have to keep duplicating the same drawing!

Apply more paint

07 Open 'pix_2561431_paint.jpg'. Use the Lasso Tool (press L) to select an area you wish to use, and copy and paste it into your artwork directly above the bird layer, set its blending mode to Multiply. Position it beneath the wing, rotating, flipping and resizing as desired.

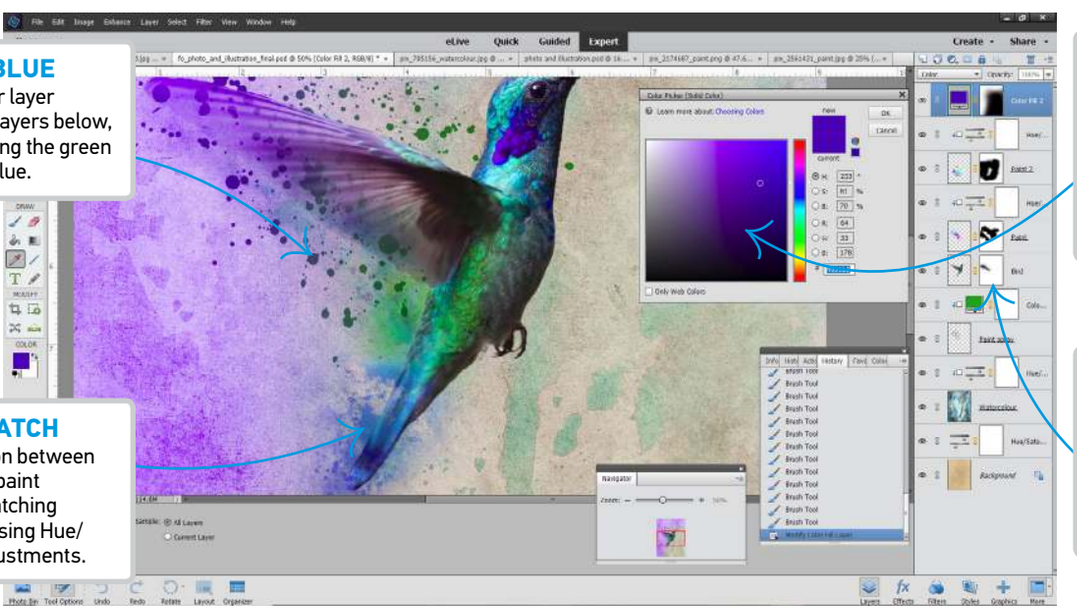
Mask and adjust

08 Add a layer mask and blend the texture in at the edges. Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer, clip it to the paint layer and change the Hue so the paint colour complements the bird. Repeat to add another section of paint down the left side of the tail.



Set a blue tone

09 Add a Solid Color Fill layer of R:64 G:33 B:178. Set the blend mode to Color. Use a black soft round brush at 100% Opacity and around 1600px on its layer mask to remove the blue from the bird's body and the bottom-right half of the canvas.



TURNING BLUE
The Solid Color layer affects all the layers below, including turning the green paint spatter blue.

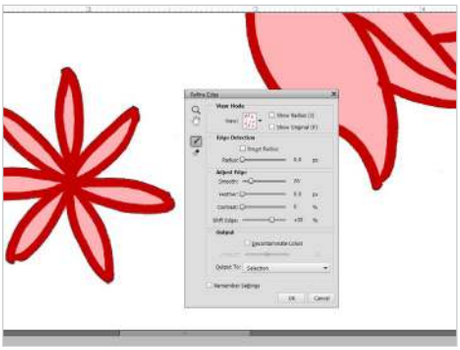
PICK A COLOUR
Double-click a Solid Color Fill layer at any time to open the Color Picker and change its colour.

COLOUR MATCH
Create cohesion between the photo and paint textures by matching their colours using Hue/Saturation adjustments.

SOFT FADE
Masking with a soft round brush at a large size creates a more gradual fade out of the blue.

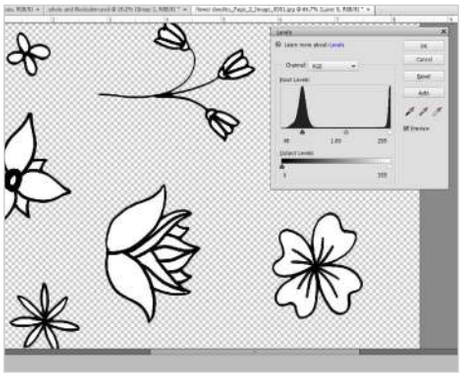
Draw some doodles

10 Grab some plain white paper and a black marker pen and start creating your doodles and illustrations. Scan in your drawings at a resolution of at least 200ppi, and open the files in Elements.



Delete the background

11 Use the Magic Wand Tool (press A) at 60 Tolerance to select the background. Click Refine Edge and adjust Smooth and increase Shift Edge so the selection sits just within the black pen lines. Click OK, and hit Backspace to delete the selected background.



Adjust the Levels

12 Deselect (Cmd/Ctrl+D), press Cmd/Ctrl+L and move the black Input slider so it is directly beneath the highest peak of the first black curve. Use the Lasso Tool to select one drawing at a time, and copy and paste them into your artwork.

Arrange and group

13 Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and resize and position them on the canvas. When you are done, Shift-click each drawing layer in the Layers palette and press Cmd/Ctrl+G to group them. Set the group's blend mode to Multiply.

Add colour

14 Copy and paste in 'pix_17824_rainbow.jpg', set its blend mode to Multiply, resize and position to fill the canvas. Ctrl/right-click its layer name and click Create Clipping Mask. Add a Photo Filter adjustment layer at the top of the layer stack (unclipped), choose the Blue filter.

Move quickly

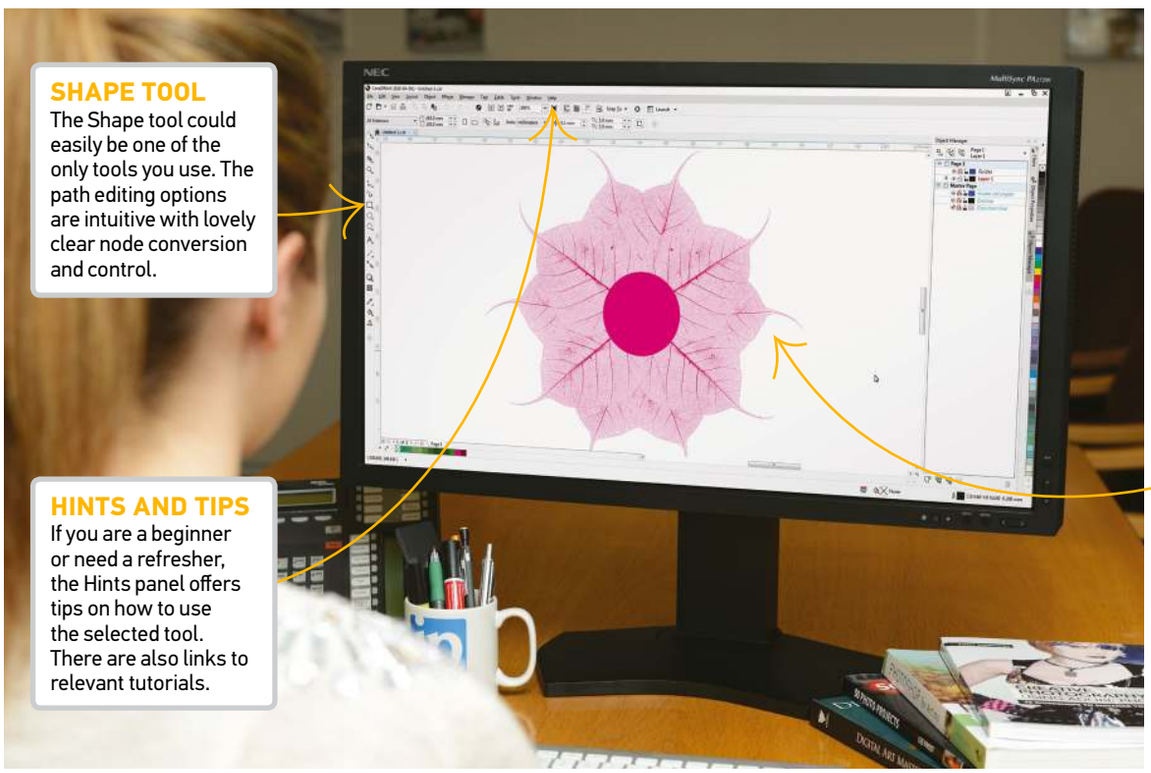
Navigate and position your layers with shortcuts

Positioning and arranging so many individual drawings all on separate layers may be a daunting prospect, but it can be a quick and seamless process with the help of a few keyboard shortcuts. With the Move Tool active (press V), hold Cmd/Ctrl and click an image on the canvas to make it the active layer, enabling you to quickly switch between which layer you are editing without needing to scroll through the Layers palette trying to find the one you want! If you have a group of drawings nicely arranged but want to relocate them on the canvas or resize them as a batch, hold Shift and Cmd/Ctrl while clicking each of them on the canvas to select multiple layers. They can now be moved all together, and by hitting Cmd/Ctrl+T you can even resize, rotate or flip them as a whole.

SOFTWARE Price £599.99 (£199.99 annual subscription) / $781 US Web www.corel.com

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 2018

Introducing the latest release of the Corel graphic design suite



SHAPE TOOL
The Shape tool could easily be one of the only tools you use. The path editing options are intuitive with lovely clear node conversion and control.

HINTS AND TIPS
If you are a beginner or need a refresher, the Hints panel offers tips on how to use the selected tool. There are also links to relevant tutorials.

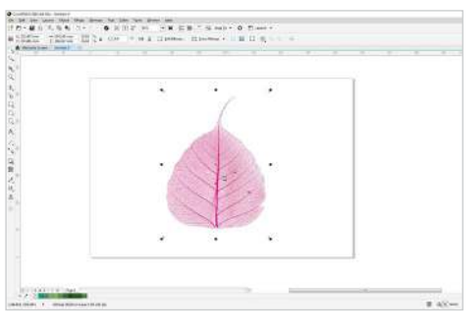
ART BRUSHES
These vector brushes are programmed to create some of the most useful effects. They are totally editable using the advanced Shape tool.

The specs

Company
Corel

Features
Optimised for Windows 10
WordPress output
Page layout tools
Symmetry tool

Create a symmetrical illustration Get familiar with the new Symmetry tool

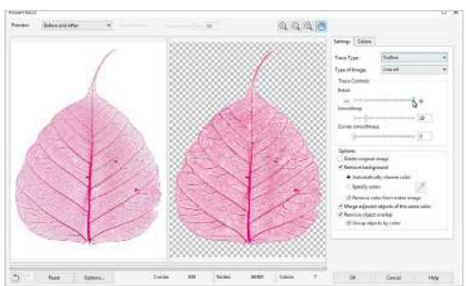


Choose your image

01 Select an image to use in your illustration. Isolate if necessary and consider how the shape will work as a graphic. Colourful and detailed images will work best for this. Open as a bitmap in CorelDRAW.

Power trace

02 Select the bitmap and right-click on it in the Object Manager panel. Open this via the Window menu if it isn't open already. Select Trace Bitmap, then whichever trace style you think will work best for your chosen image.



Refine your trace

03 Adjust the settings in the PowerTRACE dialog box to refine. You can add more or less detail, specify the number of colours, smooth etc. All with a before and after preview. When you are happy with your trace, click OK.

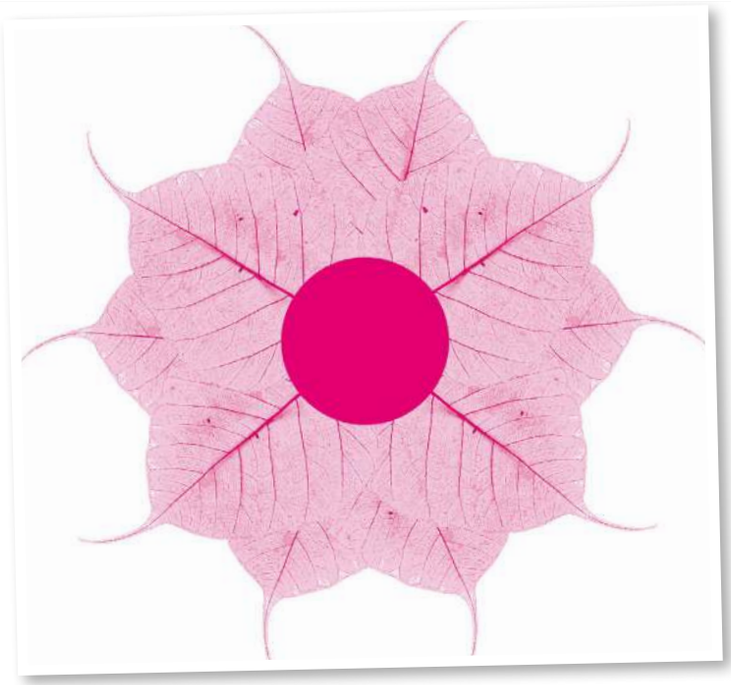
This latest version of CorelDRAW Graphics Suite continues to load up with the best tools for both professional and occasional designers. The suite includes CorelDRAW for vector, bitmap and text design; Corel PHOTO-PAINT for bitmap photo editing; plus Corel Font Manager 2018 and CorelCAPTURE are there on installation to assist. Extras such as Corel AfterShot 3 HD are available for free download.

The software puts an emphasis on automating commonly used effects not only to enhance workflow, but also to make them accessible to beginners and more casual users. The developer has recognised certain techniques that come up again and again in graphic design, and streamlined them effectively while preserving total editability. The Symmetry Tool is brand new for the 2018 release, and makes it so easy for anyone to create professional-looking graphics. In a similar vein, the Impact and Block Shadow tools automate customisable line and shape effects more easily than you can imagine. The user can also specify a multi-page layout and make presentations in the same way as you would in Microsoft PowerPoint. This, coupled with the automated graphics tools, makes CorelDRAW the perfect software for someone creating presentations with limited time for design. It also shows how versatile the software is for many industries, with output for virtually any medium. This latest version has a direct export to WordPress media library, which is a massive timesaver for those frequently creating web images.

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite is a Windows only program, with compatibility up to and beyond Windows 10. Hardware such as the Surface Dial have integrated support, plus excellent graphics tablet optimisation. LiveSketch in particular is a tablet user's dream. This tool enables you to rough line sketch on your tablet, and watch the AI engine collate your many rough lines into a single smooth one. This also includes eraser compatibility without switching tools. Through tools like LiveSketch, Freehand and Shape, the user is encouraged to use a slightly different drawing style than other programs – one where you rough out all your ideas and then perfect.

PHOTO-PAINT is included with its own upgrade for the 2018 Graphics Suite. This is the bitmap-editing software complementary to CorelDRAW. If you're used to Photoshop (and if you're reading this magazine, let's assume you are) you'll be pleased to know there is an option available to make your workspace in Corel more akin to those in Adobe programs. Despite this feature though, there are some issues with the UI, especially for those coming from other software. As is the case with many Windows programs, the shortcuts are there if you're willing to hunt around for them. But many will find themselves trying simple shortcuts to pan, zoom, scroll, change tool etc and becoming frustrated that the settings are buried.

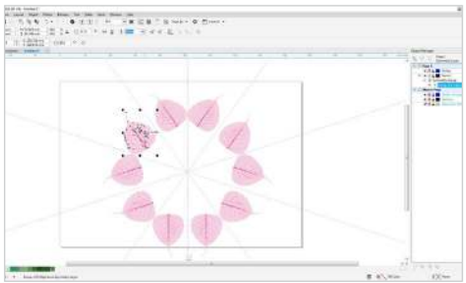
PHOTO-PAINT includes improvements such as bitmap envelopes, simplified image straightening and perspective correction. While much lighter than Photoshop, the tools available in conjunction with CorelDRAW are more than many designers will ever need.



CorelDRAW Graphics Suite is available to buy outright as a perpetual license with the option to pay a little over £100 a year to ensure you are always up to date. Alternatively you can just pay when the upgrade becomes available for roughly half the retail price. But the most attractive option for many will be the subscription fee of just under £200 a year with auto updates as soon as the new versions are available. It's great that Corel offers such flexible price and payment plans, and for the amount it has managed to pack into the software, it's well worth the money.

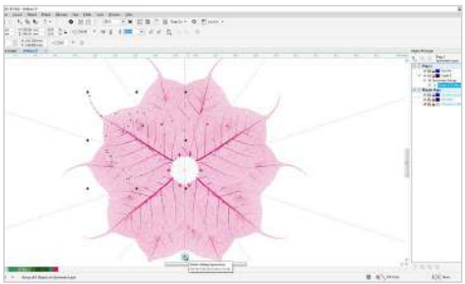
The verdict

9 A graphic design and image-editing software all rolled into one at a competitive price. It would be perfect but for some UI and app compatibility issues.



Symmetry tool

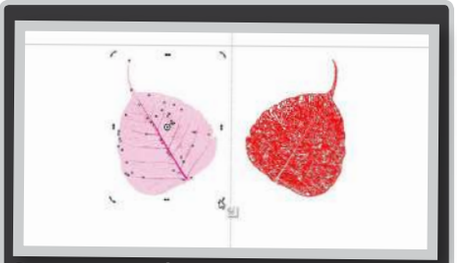
04 Right-click on your new vector and select Create New Symmetry. A dotted mirror line will appear down the middle of your canvas. The top-right panel enables you to quickly add or delete mirror lines, as well as preview your work.



Reshape and embellish

05 Use the Transform and Shape tools to adjust your vector. Your changes will be translated to your mirror vectors. When you're happy, simply click the Finish Editing Symmetry button. You can edit your symmetry at any time.

Standout feature



Symmetry tool
This version of CorelDRAW comes with a brand new tool for symmetrical drawing. This is one of those tools that is largely achieved through technique in other software; requiring several steps to achieve your results. In CorelDRAW it is simple, editable and effective.

HARDWARE Price £TBC Web lensbaby.com

Photoshop creative EDITOR'S CHOICE

FOCUS RING
The focus ring is smooth in operation, which means finding your perfect point of focus relatively easy. Although nudging it out of place is easy too.

SIMPLE DESIGN
The Sol 45's simple design makes it one of the manufacturer's most accessible lenses.

BOKEH
The extreme bokeh that can be achieved with this lens is really stunning.

Lensbaby Sol 45

Shoot creatively with Lensbaby, but be prepared to put in some work

Get creative in-camera with this stunning offering from Lensbaby. The Sol 45 is a brand-new lens from Lensbaby that we managed to get our hands on before its official release date. And boy were we impressed.

This is definitely more accessible than some of the other Lensbaby lenses, but it probably won't suit a novice photographer more used to a point and shoot camera. For those with a little more experience and want for creativity, though, it's really truly amazing!

It's a manual-control lens, so straightaway you can appreciate how it will take a bit more knowledge and perhaps a little experimentation in order to get the perfect capture. But once you've mastered it, you'll reap creative rewards for having spent that bit of extra time on it.

The fixed-aperture lens produces striking and unique imagery. It creates pin-sharp photos around a circular area of focus that is surrounded by stunningly smooth bokeh and attractive bold blur. We had great fun shooting artistic captures with the lens; flowers were particularly enjoyable and portraits were beautifully creative. There are so many possibilities here that mean you can fully unleash your creativity, and the Sol 45 lends itself well to a wide range of photography pursuits.

To get this beautiful selective focus, shooters must pick a subject within the frame, bend the lens toward it, and then twist the focus ring until you reach the desired focus. The focus ring feels smooth and it is pretty simple to get the perfect focus.

This unique lens has been made specifically for DSLR and mirrorless cameras and is compatible with Canon EF, Nikon F, Sony A, Pentax K, Sony E, Fuji X and Samsung NX models. The construction itself feels nicely solid and very well made, however we did worry that although smooth, the focus ring felt perhaps a little loose on our review model.

Colours are very impressive straight out of the camera and will ensure that you will only need to do minimal post-production editing work in Photoshop or Lightroom. For less than £200, this is a really great lens that is completely worth the money.

The specs

Company
Lensbaby

Additional specs
Focal length: 45mm
Aperture: Fixed f3.5
Minimum focusing distance: 355mm
Manual focus

The verdict

10 We really love this lens for shooting creative captures with wonderfully smooth bokeh and stunning colours.

HARDWARE Price £400 / $400 US Web www.benq.com

CRISP IMAGES
Editing photos on this monitor really isn't an issue, because the image quality of the SW240 is superb.

COLOUR MODES
The Colour Mode Hotkey switches between three colour modes. Press and hold the button for a few seconds to change these modes.

THE FRAME
The top and sides of the frame are so thin it gives the screen the appearance of a frameless display.

FLEXIBLE STAND
The screen can be tilted, lifted and even rotated on the stand, so no matter what your viewing preference is, it should accommodate.

The specs

Company
BenQ

Additional specs
Max Resolution: 1920x1200
Dynamic Contrast Ratio: 20m: 1
Display Colours: 1.07 billion
Native Contrast: 1000: 1

BenQ SW240

Make the editing process easier with this design-minded monitor

Choosing a monitor for photo editing can be a tricky task. We have needs the average PC screen won't be tailored for, but companies such as BenQ make models that are designed to be used when editing photos. The SW240 is one such monitor, using IPS technology and Adobe RGP colour space in its screen for more accurate colour representation. It also comes with a series of modes that display these differently. With the BenQ SH240 shading hood attached, you can block glare from ambient light on the sides of the screen, but this has to be purchased separately. The hood is easy to add and remove so you can have it up just when you need it.

The screen's 24.1-inch size may seem like an odd number but it is just the right size to display two portrait images in full A4 size side-by-side, so you can compare quickly when working.

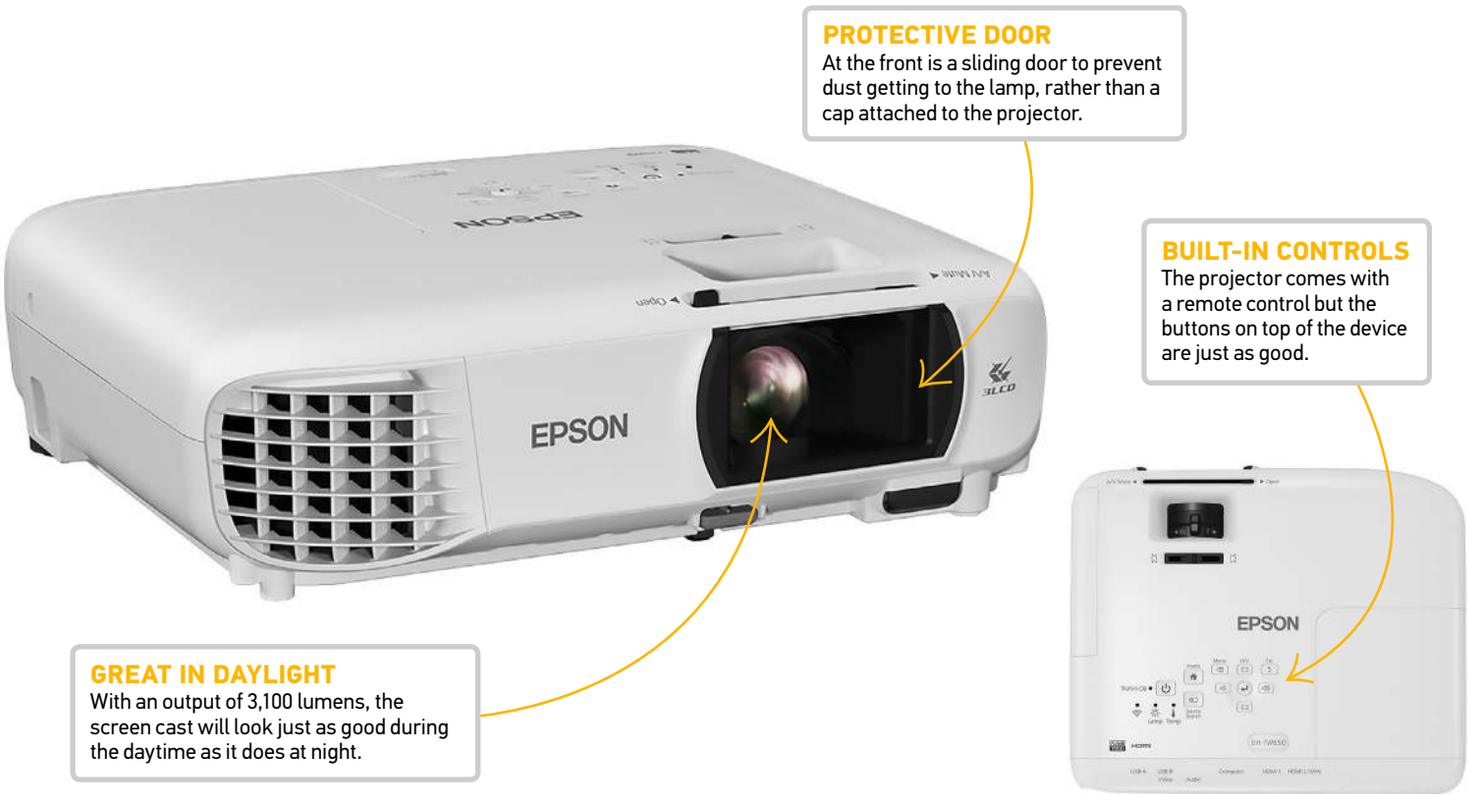
The design of the SW240 is subtle, with the frame along the top and sides being extremely thin, giving the impression that the screen is edgeless. The majority of the buttons along the bottom of the frame don't display their use but pressing any will display their purpose on the screen. The only button with an icon is located on the far left of the row and is the Colour Mode Hotkey, which switches between three colour presets. By default these are Adobe RGB, sRGB and Black & White, but by pressing and holding on the hotkey for five seconds, you can change what these presets are. At the side of the monitor you'll find an SD card slot and two USB inputs, so inputting devices with your projects is quick. The stand enables you to adjust the display up, down, tilt it back and forth and even rotate 180 degrees for looking at portrait images. If that isn't enough, using BenQ's Palette Master Element Calibration Software (which comes in the box), you can adjust the colour performance of the SW240.

As well as being a good monitor for editing photos, the SW240 is a great general-purpose screen with a cool, minimalist design. Being able to easily move the monitor from portrait to landscape makes editing different orientated images easier, and with the shading hood, glare shouldn't be an issue.

The verdict

9 Having a choice of colour modes that you can switch between at the push of a button is great and the image quality of the monitor cannot be faulted.

HARDWARE Price £600 / $650 US Web www.epson.co.uk



Epson EH-TW650

For watching movies or showing your work, this projector has you covered

If you've ever considered getting a projector to display some of your work or for giving presentations, it is definitely worth pursuing as they're more versatile then ever. There are generally two kinds of projector on the market: business and home theatre, each having their own benefits and limitations. Epson's EH-TW650 has features from both kinds of projectors – being easy to set up and portable in size, but also quiet and with HDMI ports for connecting to various devices.

Setting up the projector is no different to a TV – you simply plug it into a wall outlet, connect any devices you want to use via the HDMI or USB inputs and then press the power button on top of the device. The built-in fans are not particularly loud but you can hear them, however this will not be a problem if you're watching a film on it or using it while in an open space.

The bulb has an output of 3,100 lumens, so the screen it is casting can be seen even in bright environments and colours still come out strong. Epson claims it can project in full HD and cast a screen up to 300 inches wide and the bulb should last 4,500 hours on regular mode, rising to 7,500 on durability. A replacement bulb currently costs £62 ,so this may be something to consider before making a purchase.

We tested the projector by making it cast a screen of around 95 inches, and the image quality was absolutely superb. Watching movies in full HD was as good as we had hoped and looking at large landscape images was just as impressive.

If you are looking for a projector that you can pack up to take with you to different places, the EH-TW650 is small enough to fit in a backpack and the build quality is good. The projector has built-in Wi-Fi, which means you can connect to a network and happily stream content from your smartphone or laptop wirelessly.

At the back there is a range of inputs, some more confusing than others. You have a couple of HDMI, a VGA and a USB input as you would expect, but there are also RCA inputs and USB-B video. If you're connecting your entertainment system or computer up to this it will either be via HDMI or the computer input, but the option is there for you.

The specs

Company
Epson

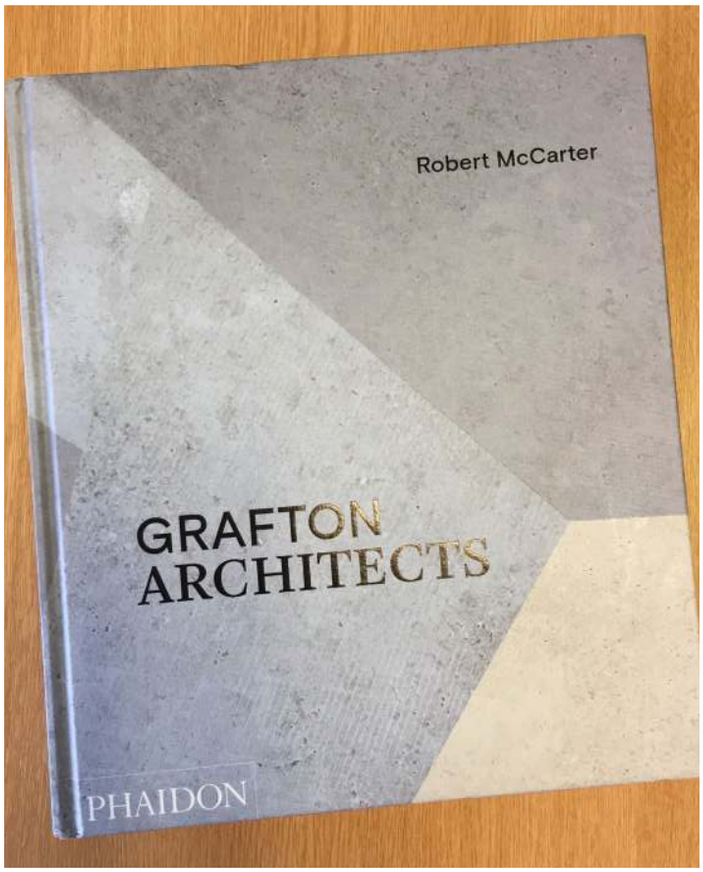
Additional specs
Lumens – 3,100
Max Resolution – 1920 x 1080
Contrast Ratio – 15,000 : 1
Max Display Size – 300 inches

The verdict

9

Easy to set up, portable and with good image quality, the EH-TW650 is great for both casual and professional use.

BOOKS Publisher Phaidon Press Price £55 / $79.95 US Author Robert McCarter Release Date Out now



Photoshop creative EDITOR'S CHOICE

Grafton Architects

Discover 40 years of award-winning design from the Dublin-based architectural agency

In this long overdue monograph, the author gives detailed analysis of 50 projects from the prestigious Grafton Architects. The collection contains over 350 illustrations, which includes sketches, photos, renderings diagrams etc, of both completed and uncompleted works.

Grafton Architects was founded on Dublin's Grafton Street in 1978 by Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara. Their architectural journey began in their native Ireland, but the pair now have private and public buildings to their credit around the world.

Farrell and McNamara are a powerful team. Graduating from the University College Dublin, it wasn't long before they had their own company and were Fellows of major architectural bodies such as The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). They have taught together for decades and have been professors at the Accademia di Architettura since 2013.

The contents page is a bit overly conceptual, with chapter names like 'Making Walls and Grounding Light' and 'Earthbound Groundscape and Aerial Skyscape'. This makes navigating the book with any purpose a bit tedious when you have to always refer to the appendix and notes to find specific and award-winning projects. However, this isn't a reference book – it's a story book so a little poetry can be forgiven. Indeed, a little prose is perfect when describing the effect of a building and its environment in a meaningful way. The author, Robert McCarter, injects each project with sublime, detailed analysis.

The book itself gives the impression of a slab of concrete. Solid and weighty, with a mix of textures coming together in a way that is indicative of the brutalist nod present in many of Grafton's buildings. Broad, square pages give showcase to the project images while the author provides thoughtful and comprehensive descriptions, which immerse you in the nature of the build rather than its mere materials.

The verdict

8

An impressive collection of decades of architectural design. Find inspiration in the practical and beautiful approach to structure.

If you like this then check out

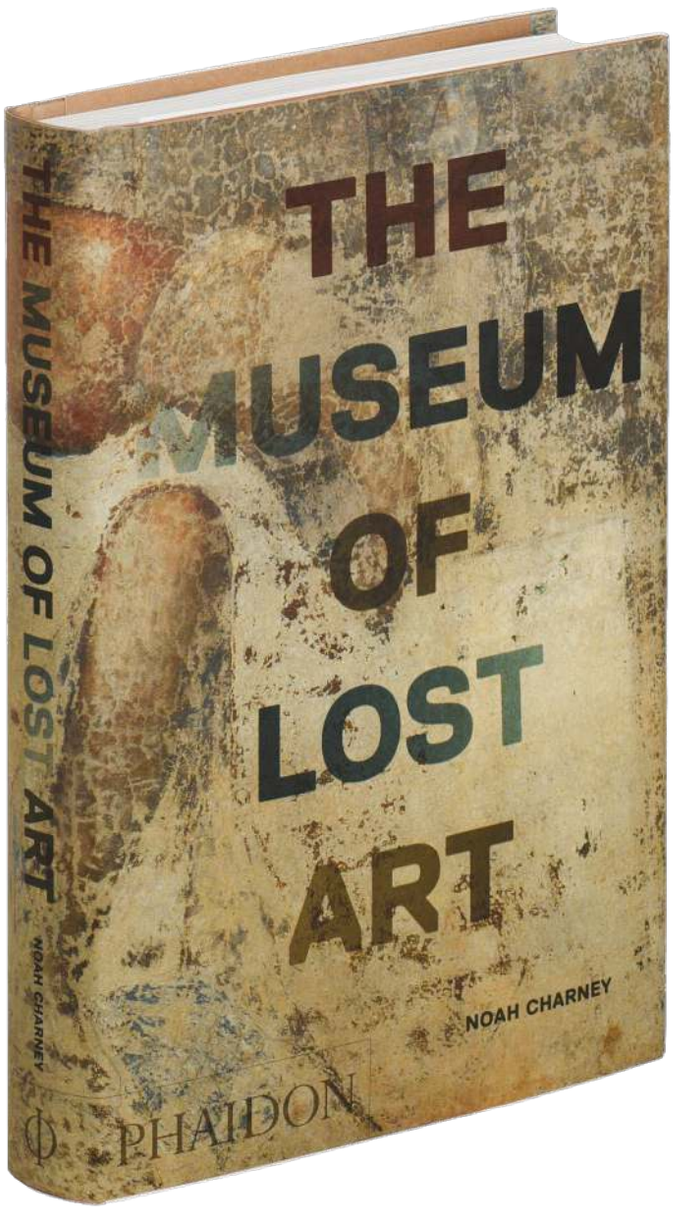
Tadao Ando: The Colours of Light Volume 1 is the digitally remastered collection of the works of one of Japan's most eminent and leading architects.

BOOKS Publisher Phaidon Press Price £19.95 / $35 US Author Noah Charney Release date Out now

The Museum of Lost Art

A unique way of looking at the history of art through the stories behind the world's lost masterpieces

Photoshop creative EDITOR'S CHOICE



It is, perhaps, a little odd to spend time mulling over the artistic masterpieces that have become lost to the world, many of which may never be found. Yet that is exactly what Noah Charney wants us to do, stating that "it is important to study what has been lost and why, to understand how art can best be preserved in the future, to appreciate what has survived, and just how delicate is that miraculous fraction of mankind's creative history that has endured."

With just 280 pages, Charney certainly makes a compelling case for the importance of lost art, even if he can't possibly discuss all of the masterpieces that have disappeared or been destroyed. The book is broken down into different sections focused on the many ways that art can be lost, for example through theft, war, or iconoclasm and mindless vandalism.

It is fascinating to read about artworks that have been deliberately destroyed by their owners, for example Graham Sutherland's portrait of Sir Winston Churchill, which the aging prime minister despised. There is also, rather interestingly, a chapter at the end dedicated to lost art that may just be the stuff of legend, such as The Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

While there are some depressing stories focused on masterpieces lost through human greed and destruction, such as the Amber Room in Catherine Palace in Russia, which was looted by the Nazis during World War II, there are also inspirational ones as Charney also discusses artworks that have been recovered, such as Leonardo da Vinci's recently rediscovered *Salvator Mundi*.

Charney's passion for the topic is obvious throughout the book and his writing is clear and entertaining – necessary for a book that, at time, delves into more serious issues. While *The Museum of Lost Art* is enjoyable, Charney leaves us with a rather sobering thought – that if we are not careful, we may stand to lose some of the world's masterpieces that have managed to survive thus far.

"It is fascinating to read about artworks that have been destroyed by their owners"

The verdict

8 An enjoyable read, Charney engages with the captivating history of lost art while maintaining a balance with the more serious issues.

If you like this then check out

Art Crime: Terrorists, Tomb Raiders, Forgers and Thieves takes things one step further and delves into art crime as a major international problem, as one of the world's highest-grossing criminal trades.

HARDWARE Price £479.99 / $499.99 US Web www.epson.co.uk

TOUCH DISPLAY
The display screen is touch-enabled. From here you can set up and navigate your print settings.

NEW ECOTANK
The new EcoTank has been repositioned to the front of the unit. The ink bottles provided to refill the tanks are foolproof.

HEAVY DUTY BUSINESS
The paper tray carries 250 sheets for uninterrupted output. You can also opt for double-sided printing to save paper.

Epson EcoTank ET-4750

Cut your printing costs without cutting quality

Epson claims that its latest generation of EcoTank will save customers up to 74 per cent on their printing costs. Much of this saving comes from a revolutionary cartridge-free ink refill system. In the box you'll receive three years' worth of ink in bottles to top up your printer's substantial tanks in black, cyan, magenta and yellow. If you're not used to cartridge-free printing, you might be afraid of getting ink everywhere or making some other mistake while maintaining the machine. However, the EcoTank is incredibly simple to set up. Each ink bottle comes with a nozzle mechanism so you can't insert the wrong ink into the wrong tank, and also provides drip-free pouring. Once you are topped up, Epson claims you now have enough ink for 14,000 sheets in black and 11,200 in colour. With the double-sided printing (duplex) function, you'll be saving on paper too. The Auto Document Feeder (ADF) enables auto-duplex printing.

This printer is intended for heavy home office use, with a hefty 250-sheet paper tray if you're into that sort of thing. It's also very attractive, in its table-top compact square design and crisp black finish. It's a print, scan, fax and copy powerhouse that comes with a price to match.

The EcoTank prints at 4,800x1,200dpi and printing speed varies depending on what you're printing. Standard monochrome printing rushes through at 33 A4 pages per minute. This slows to four-and-a-half A4 pages per minute for duplex colour printing. Scanning and copying speed is similarly affected by quality adjustments, which can all be handled via the touch-screen interface. The print and scan quality is impeccable with easily adjustable quality settings. People apparently still use fax, and this one has a three-second page transmission time and 100-page memory. You can also store 60 names and numbers in the address book.

The Wi-Fi capabilities are excellent and mean you can print from virtually anywhere with the EcoTank left on standby. You can download the dedicated app, Epson Connect, or Apple AirPrint and Google Cloud Print to print documents, scan to the cloud, etc. The EcoTank supports 64g/m^2 – 300g/m^2 paper, so will also handle photos and artwork.

The specs

Company
Epson

Additional specs
Cartridge free
4-in-1
Duplex printing
Wi-Fi enabled

The verdict

8 A great all-in-one home office printer with excellent results. However, the price is pretty steep, so unless you use lots of ink, may not actually save you any money.

Tales of an illustrator

Patrick Seymour on how he came to create his distinctive style, how he was introduced to Photoshop 7 and his top tips for beginners

facebook.com/patrickseymourillustrateur • @PatrickSeymour

With nearly 2 million views of his work on Behance and clients that include Adidas and Lexus, Patrick Seymour has one of the most recognisable art styles on the internet; he's even had work featured as the Adobe Illustrator splash screen.

But it all began with Photoshop for Patrick; we caught up with him to learn more about that journey.

How were you first introduced to Photoshop, Patrick?

I remember the first time I heard the word Photoshop. I was at my friend Sébastien's, his father had a computer in his office and Seb was doing a *Call of Duty* wallpaper with four images he had found on the internet. With hindsight it was probably atrocious but to see these images colourised in sepia with transparency between them was absolutely magic. Much better than I could do on Paint at home.

What was your relationship like with art before Photoshop?

I have always loved drawing for as long as I can remember. For me it's the most beautiful hobby, the most relaxing; time passes at the speed of light when I draw. I am privileged to do this job and to love what I do.

You must use Photoshop every day now.

Well, after Seb showed me Photoshop, it was my turn [to use it] and I never stopped. I use it every day for touch-ups, models, layout, colouring, making mock-ups or pasting the faces of my colleagues on other bodies.

What are your favourite tools?

For sure the Liquify Tool, it's perfect to correct a sketch before I start the real illustration. For example, if I want to change an expression in a face of my animal or my character it's pretty easy. Also sometimes when I finish all my lines in Illustrator, I'm not satisfied with some shapes; so I import my illustration into Photoshop and I try different things with the Liquify Tool or the Warp Tool.

So do all images begin on paper for you?

Normally I get a clear image in mind of what I want to do, then I make a quick sketch or a photomontage to judge composition. Then I start the drawing in Photoshop or Illustrator, depending of the concept. If I start in Illustrator, I normally finish it in Photoshop to perfect colour and sometimes use a little bit of Liquify or add textures.

How would you describe your image style?

Digital woodcut or line art are probably good terms for my style. I always wanted to make woodcut art like MC Escher but my hands were too shaky to do the small details. So I tried to reproduce the effect in Illustrator with the Pen Tool. After a dozen illustrations like that in black and white, I tried to chance it a little with colours and transparencies to create different effects.

Are there any big influences in your work?

I do not have any specific people who influence me, I like to be influenced by anything, any time. That's why I always have pencils on me and a piece of paper. Otherwise I also take photos; everything can be a source of inspiration. I developed a typography piece looking at the stairs while walking towards my house. Let yourself be inspired!

That's really cool! Do you have any more useful tips for people who might want to create work like yours?

My biggest tip is to just play with Photoshop. Make errors, try to learn from them and sometimes you will discover something new, a new tool or a new shortcut, even you will be surprised by the finished result and it can be really rewarding. So just don't stop. I'm good in Photoshop because I've used it every day for the past 13 years.

Which projects have you worked on that you're most proud of?

I was really proud of the Refuel-Restart project I made. I collaborated with Jean Landry on those illustrations made in Photoshop; I bought a Wacom pad especially for it and I'm still really impressed with the final product, I think we made three pretty awesome illustrations. It was a complete new style for me, totally out of my comfort zone and I liked it.

What have you got lined up for the future?

Recently I collaborated with Outline Montreal to design interactive LED masks of my illustrations. We made a Kickstarter and the project was a real success. I think the project was funded with 3000% of our target, which was pretty intense. Now we will work to continue this beautiful collaboration and develop new masks in the near future.

Oscar I designed this piece in Illustrator from a reference photo of the statuette. The colors, the texture and the 'shiny' effect have been corrected in Photoshop.

All images © Patrick Seymour

Sarah The design used six photos of women for references, drawn in Illustrator and subsequently colourised and adjusted in Photoshop. I also made small touch-ups on her face and redrew her nose in Photoshop.

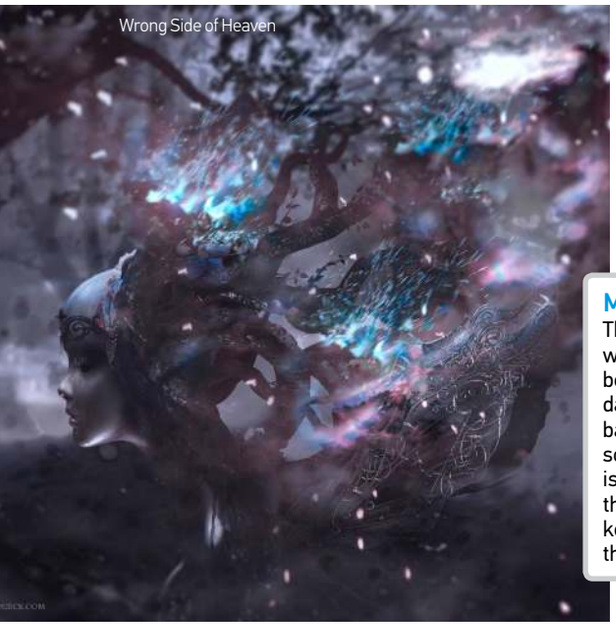
Adidas This was a project made in collaboration with Pierre Manning of Shoot Studio in Montreal. It was a mixture of photo and cutting out to create speed and texture within the image.

Camaieu The drawing was done in Illustrator from a hand-drawn sketch and all the colours were added in Photoshop with the Gradient Tool, Hue/Saturation and Color Balance adjustment layers.

Axwell This image was developed directly in Photoshop from two reference photos. It is the result of a big mixture of filters, a bit of bitmap, some blur effect and Liquify for the phantom effect.

Foam Once again, the sketch was first handmade and later sketched in Illustrator. Once finished I colourised everything in Photoshop, added textures and I think I did a little Liquify later on the beard.

Reader Focus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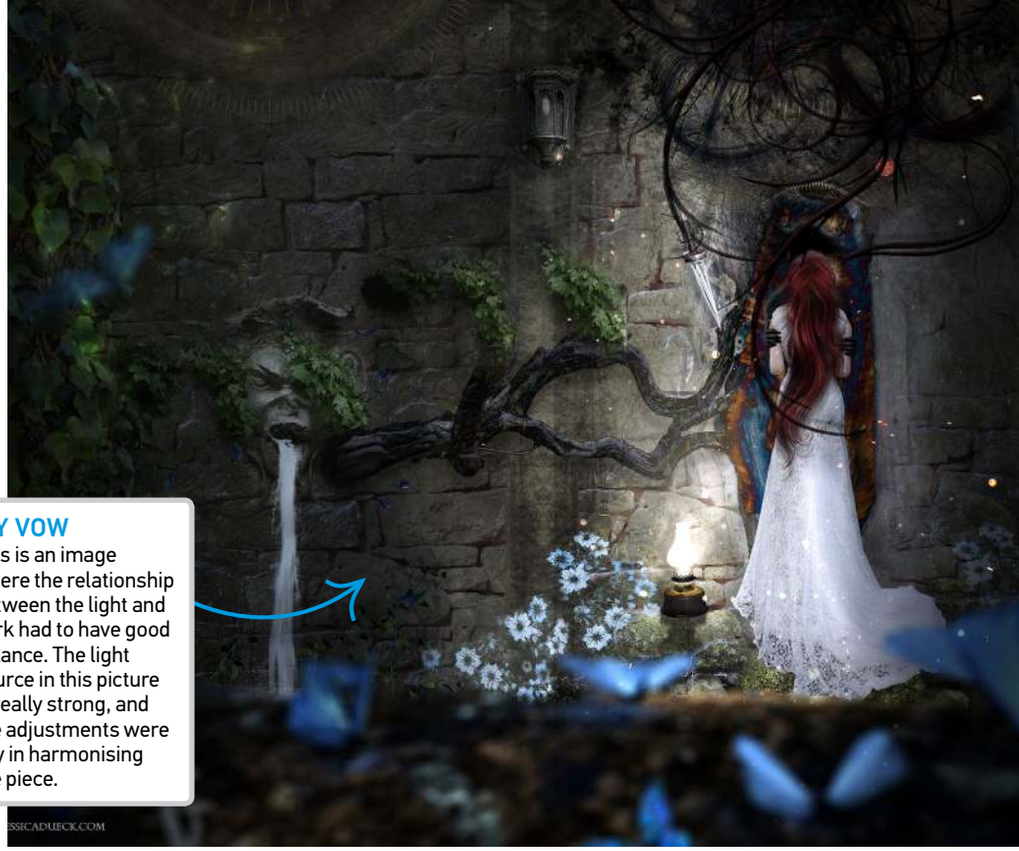


MY VOW
This is an image where the relationship between the light and dark had to have good balance. The light source in this picture is really strong, and the adjustments were key in harmonising the piece.

Winter Solstice

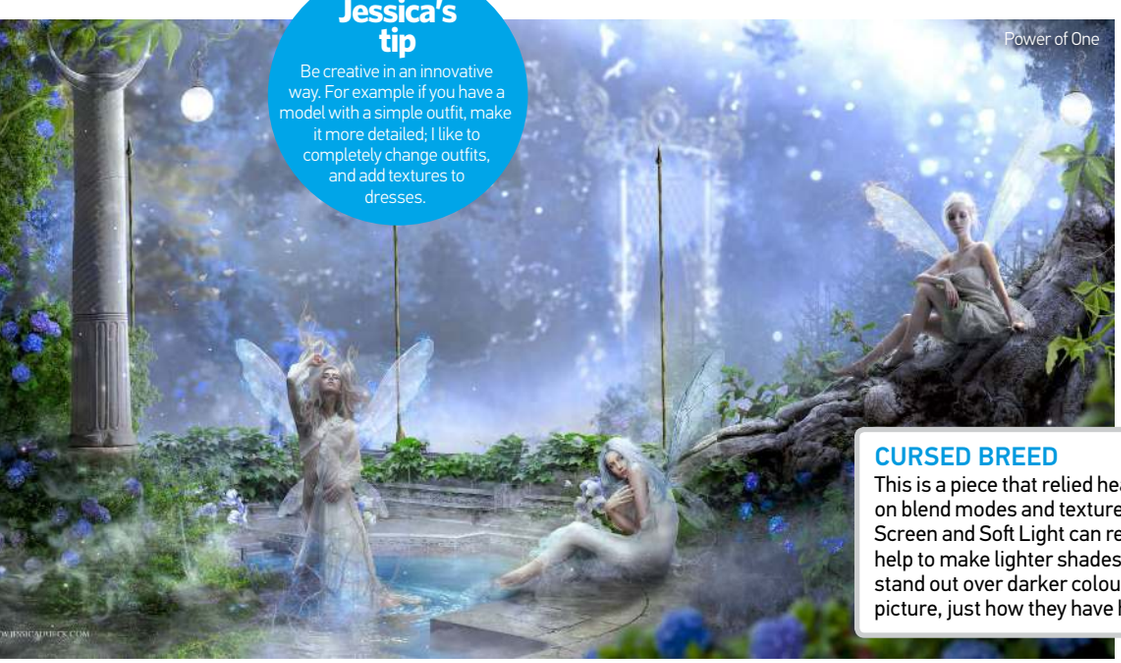
Jessica Dueck

www.jessicadueck.com

I am a digital artist, born in Paraguay. My country isn't typically interested in art in the style I make, so the first time I saw this type of art – photomanipulation and digital paintings – I was 15. I discovered Photoshop after finding an artist in a random gallery online. I got inspired and intrigued by this so I started to research how it was done.

Queen of the Damned

Jessica's tip
Be creative in an innovative way. For example if you have a model with a simple outfit, make it more detailed; I like to completely change outfits, and add textures to dresses.


Power of One

CURSED BREED
This is a piece that relied heavily on blend modes and textures. Screen and Soft Light can really help to make lighter shades stand out over darker colours in a picture, just how they have here.

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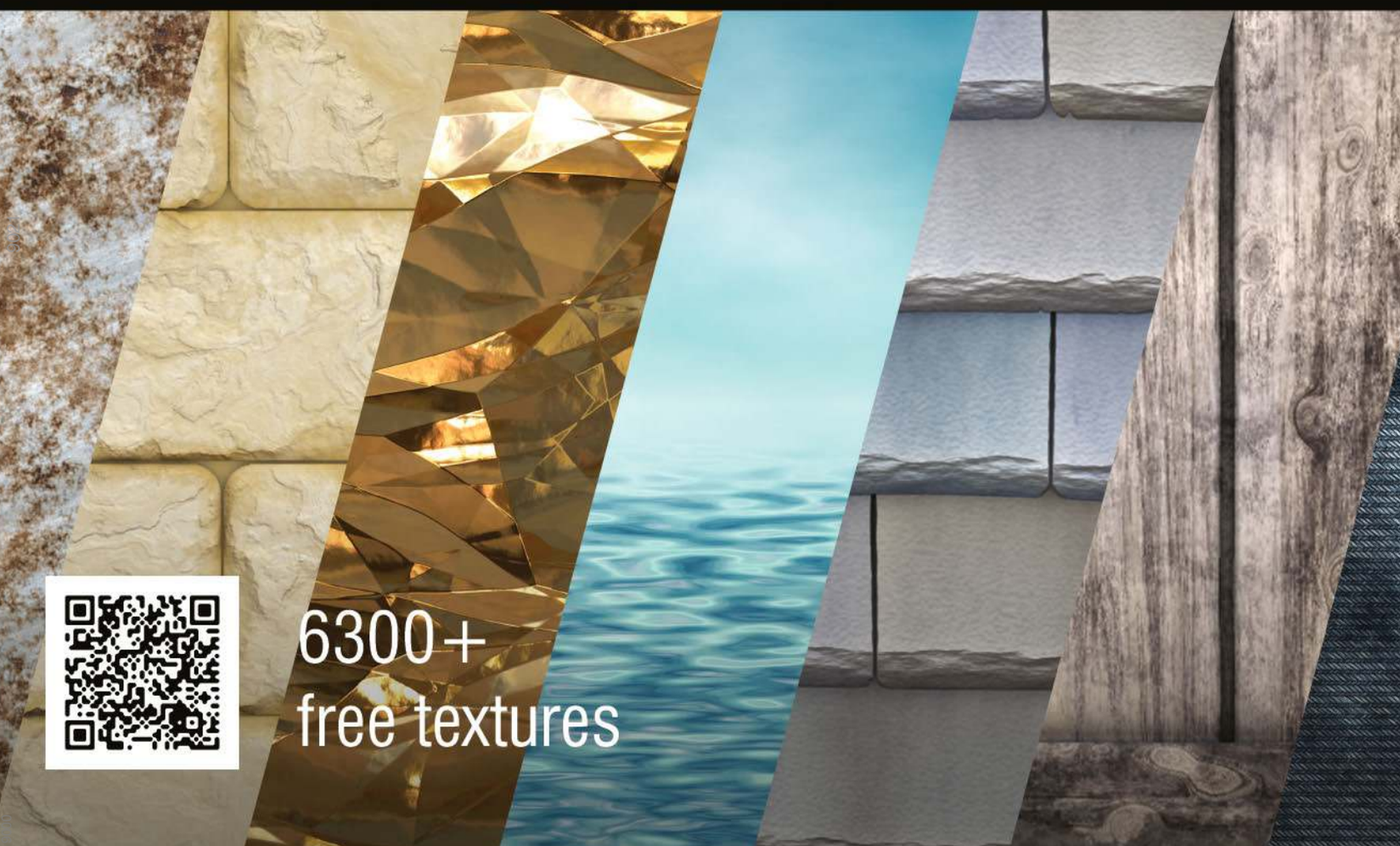
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