REVAMPED RETOOLED AND BETTER THAN EVER
Discover the unlimited power and flexibility of layer styles, p12

DIGITAL DARKROOM
Give your digital images a quick color boost, p4

STORMY FORECAST
Get the most from images taken in not-so-perfect weather, p8

Get More Online at photoshopelementsuser.com
I have to admit that one of my favorite sections in many magazines is the Q&A column. I don’t know why—I’m just a Q&A type of guy, I guess. Well, I’m happy to report that we have a brand new column in Photoshop Elements Techniques. Can you guess what it covers? You got it…Q&As.

When we decided to add this column to the newsletter, the first question was who should write it. I figured who better than the ultimate question answerer herself, Wendy Williams. If you haven’t been by the forums over at www.photoshopelementsuser.com/forum, let me share with you a quick statistic. Wendy is a popular forum participant and—as of this writing—has penned nearly 25,000 posts. So if she’s not qualified to answer your questions, I don’t know who the heck is. Plus, you’ll notice that no other columns have been shortened to include this new column because we’re actually adding more pages to the newsletter.

So you now have two tasks: (1) Read Wendy’s new Q&A column on page 31, and (2) stop by the website and start participating in the forums. And you don’t have to be a subscriber to participate, so invite a friend! You’ll be amazed at the benefits you receive from being an active member there. See you next time.

Matt Kloskowski
Editor-in-Chief
mattk@photoshopelementsuser.com
CONTENTS
VOL 4, NO 1

features

08 ANIMAL ELEMENTS
Photography guru Moose Peterson shows you how to revive lackluster pictures taken in inclement weather.

12 LAYER STYLES: REVAMPED, RETOOLLED AND BETTER THAN EVER
Learn how to customize, save, and share your layer styles with the increased flexibility Adobe Photoshop Elements 5 affords.

22 HOW TO CREATE WHIMSICAL FRAMES
Decorate your photos with cutouts you can make with the Cookie Cutter tool.

step by step

04 DIGITAL DARKROOM: GIVE YOUR IMAGES A COLOR BOOST
Too much gray in your world? The Hue/Saturation adjustment is a great place to turn to for a quick color boost.

28 REALITY CHECK: CREATING FANTASY ART FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
Create your own Lord of the Rings artwork using composites of photos you take and a really active imagination.

columns

16 BEGINNERS’ WORKSHOP: THE IMPRESSIONIST BRUSH TOOL
Get all kinds of crazy with the Impressionist Brush tool. Then enter your creation in an impromptu contest.

25 SCRAPBOOKERS’ WORKSHOP: MAKE A STATEMENT
Explore how text effects can add zing to your scrapbook page.

CONTRIBUTORS

Text and design: Felix Nelson

Cover design: Felix Nelson

Inside photo credits: Dave Danstra; iStockphoto/Debi Bishop, Adrian Cernescu, Dawn Jagroop Denis Pepin, Tobias Ott, Judy Watt, Jean Yves

YOUR LEARNING DOESN’T STOP HERE!
It continues online, where you get exclusive access to print and video tutorials, discussion forums, downloads, and a personal user gallery. It’s all part of the value-added benefits of being an Adobe Photoshop Elements Techniques newsletter and website subscriber. Wherever you see the symbol at the end of an article, it means there’s additional material for that story at www.photoshopelementsuser.com/subscriber/printextras.php.
give your images a color boost

OFTEN, YOU MAY FIND THAT A SPECIFIC AREA OF A PHOTO LOOKS DULLER THAN THE REST OF THE PHOTO. WHEN THIS HAPPENS, THE HUE/SATURATION ADJUSTMENT IS A GREAT PLACE TO TURN TO FOR A QUICK COLOR BOOST.

STEP ONE: Open a photo that needs a color boost. Here, we have a photo that was taken in the fall in Maine. You’d think there would be a lot more fall colors in this image, but it happened to be the rainiest (and mildest) fall season Maine experienced in years. So we’ll just have to add some autumnal colors ourselves. First, pick which areas you’d like to boost. We’re going to concentrate on the reds and oranges in this photo.

STEP TWO: Click on the Create Adjustment Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette and select Hue/Saturation. This will open the Hue/Saturation dialog and automatically add a new Hue/Saturation adjustment layer in your Layers palette.

STEP THREE: Let’s start off by adjusting the Hue setting. Drag the Hue slider toward the left to about –40 for a nice fall color. Anything higher than –40 will most likely leave the color too green, and anything lower than –40 will likely make it more purple than red/orange. Click OK to close the dialog.
STEP FOUR: Here’s a before and after. As you can see, the photo looks much more “fallish” than it did before. Plus, don’t forget that you can always double-click the thumbnail of the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer in the Layers palette to go back and edit the settings.

STEP FIVE: This same concept works with specific colors in an image as well. Here’s an example of a photo that suffers from a bit of undersaturation in the grass and trees. These green areas could use a little color boost.
STEP SIX: Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer just like you did in Step Two. But this time change the Edit drop-down menu from Master to Greens to specifically target those areas. Then drag the Saturation slider to the right to increase the color saturation of the greens.

STEP SEVEN: In the example here, boosting the saturation in the green areas didn’t affect the image very much. Grass actually contains more yellow than green—at least that’s how Photoshop Elements sees it.

STEP EIGHT: So this time choose Yellows from the Master list, and drag the Saturation slider to the right to about +40 (any higher and you run the risk of oversaturating the photo). At this point, you should see a huge difference. Click OK to close the dialog. Now you have a nice way to boost the color in specific areas of your photos.
animal elements

BY MOOSE PETERSON

IMAGINE THIS SCENARIO AND SEE IF YOU CAN RELATE...YOU'RE IN ALASKA FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND YOU FIND YOUR BASIC ALASKA SUMMER WEATHER: RAINY AND OVERCAST. YOU FILL UP YOUR HARD DRIVE WITH KILLER IMAGES OF A BALD EAGLE, A MOOSE, AND SUNDRY LANDSCAPES. BUT WHEN YOU GET HOME AND LOOK AT THEM ON YOUR CALIBRATED MONITOR, YOU'RE SORELY DISAPPOINTED.

Maybe you just got a new puppy in the house, and you've been photographing its first day home with the family. You look at your photographs later, only to find you didn't exactly give your new addition to the family the exposure it deserved. Is there any hope for your images? You bet!

What we're entering here is the world of fixing, rather than finishing, your photographs. There is nothing wrong with fixing images, other than the fact that you run the risk of not obtaining the maximum quality from your digital file. Getting it right from the start, when you press the shutter release, is the preferred method of maximizing quality. You can start improving your photography with Scott Kelby's new book The Digital Photography Book (I can't recommend this resource enough) before you venture out again. For now though, let's use the power and ease of Elements to infuse life back into your photographs. We'll start with a photo of my namesake who lives outside of Anchorage, Alaska.

ADDING DRAMA WITH CONTRAST

We want to work quickly, maintain flexibility, and safeguard our quality when working on a file. Launch Elements, click on Edit and Enhance Photos, and open the desired file (Ctrl-O [Mac: Command-O]). Here he is, standing knee-high in bright grasses in the waning, overcast Alaska light. The bright foreground and background don't communicate the drama we felt standing in front of this behemoth. We'll bring that drama out by first going to Quick Fix, and under Lighting, clicking the Contrast Auto button. This instantly makes a big difference, bringing out that rich, chocolate brown in the moose's coat. Now we need to finish this off by dealing with the foreground/background. (Hint: press Ctrl-0 [Mac: Command-0; zero] to fill your screen with the photo.)

Click on Full Edit (Standard Edit in Elements 4). We're going to use layers to maintain flexibility while safeguarding our quality. (Because layers never make permanent modifications of our original file, they can be modified or discarded at any time.) Head to Layer-New Adjustment Layer, choose Levels, then click OK. Don't worry about numbers. Instead, using your own judgment, grab the middle gray tone slider, and move it to the right until the

[To download the images used in this tutorial, go to www.photoshopelementsuser.com/subscriber/printextras.php.]
foreground is a tad darker than you want. Then click OK. Next, press D to set your Foreground color to white, and fill the layer mask with black by pressing Ctrl-Backspace (Mac: Command-Delete). This hides the Levels adjustment. Select the Brush tool (B) and press 5 for 50% opacity. Using the Right and Left Bracket keys to adjust the brush size—and a soft-edged brush—paint the darkness back into the foreground/background. Bang...you’re done!

FIXING A COLOR CAST
A common problem that you can’t always prevent is color cast. Luckily, Elements can help you remove the cast. Let’s start with your basic bald eagle photo taken on another overcast day in Alaska. Open the photo and let’s again go into Quick Fix. Under Lighting, click on the Levels Auto button. Instantly, the color cast is gone. The drab, gray skies have their color back, and the white of the bald eagle has brightened. This grand bird deserves a little extra TLC, so let’s take the photo one step further. Simply click on the Color Auto button, and look at the improvement.

This time, click on the Levels Auto button or Color Auto button to see what happens to the photo. Not much. Why? Because of the nature of the photo: The whites and blacks pretty much dominate, leaving little for Auto to fix. What if you click on the Smart Fix Auto button under General Fixes? Smart Fix brings up the shadow levels a bit, as well as the highlight values. You can see Sadie a little better now, but your eye goes to the brighter snow first, defeating the purpose of the composition and photograph. We can move the Amount slider and make a little improvement, but it still doesn’t support our composition. What to do? Let’s take creative control by going into Full Edit and doing some good old-fashioned burning and dodging, digital darkroom style.

We’re going to use layers again, creating two of them in total, the first for darkness. We’re heading again to Layer-New Adjustment Layer and choosing Levels. Click OK. We’re going to move the same gray slider to the right, making the entire photo darker. What to do? Let’s move the Amount slider to the right, making the entire photo darker. In this example, I’m darkening the snow, knowing I’m going to paint in that darkness so the eye goes to Sadie and not the snow.

BRINGING OUT THE SUBJECT
Last fall our oldest son went off to college, so we got a new dog. Sadie was one cute puppy and full of energy. Ever tried to capture a puppy’s verve in every photo? It can be quite challenging. I have to admit, Sadie got the best of me—photographically speaking—on several occasions. But that’s why we have Elements. Again, open the photo in Elements and go to Quick Fix.

This time, click on the Levels Auto button or Color Auto button to see what happens to the photo. Not much. Why? Because of the nature of the photo: The whites and blacks pretty much dominate, leaving little for Auto to fix. What if you click on the Smart Fix Auto button under General Fixes? Smart Fix brings up the shadow levels a bit, as well as the highlight values. You can see Sadie a little better now, but your eye goes to the brighter snow first, defeating the purpose of the composition and photograph. We can move the Amount slider and make a little improvement, but it still doesn’t support our composition. What to do? Let’s take creative control by going into Full Edit and doing some good old-fashioned burning and dodging, digital darkroom style.

We’re going to use layers again, creating two of them in total, the first for darkness. We’re heading again to Layer-New Adjustment Layer and choosing Levels. Click OK. We’re going to move the same gray slider to the right, making the entire photo darker. What to do? Let’s move the Amount slider to the right, making the entire photo darker. In this example, I’m darkening the snow, knowing I’m going to paint in that darkness so the eye goes to Sadie and not the snow.
Moose Peterson, recipient of the John Muir Conservation Award, is famous for his California company, Wildlife Research Photography. His work has been published in magazines worldwide, and he has authored 23 books. Moose lectures to photographers across the country, including our own Photoshop World.

Feature

Adobe Photoshop Elements

Techniques

10

Fill the layer mask with black (Ctrl-Backspace [Mac: Command-Delete]), press B for the Brush tool and 2 for 20% opacity, and a-burning we go. You’re going to paint with white (burn in) to your taste. Whereas you have the Reset button in Quick Fix to do a before/after comparison, here you click on the Eye icon in the layer to turn it on and off to see the before and after.

With certain aspects of the snow darkened, we’re going to dodge Sadie, so the eye goes to her. You guessed it...go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels, then click OK. This time, move the gray slider to the left to lighten the photo. Fill the layer mask with black, then carefully paint in the brightness, so the eye goes to the puppy immediately. Let’s say you don’t think you dodged enough. Double-click on the Levels thumbnail in the dodge layer. That brings up the Levels dialog where you can now move the gray slider farther to the left and instantly see those areas you painted getting brighter. Cool!

Quick Fix is great when time is an issue or you’re prepping an image to send via email. However, using a couple very simple but effective tools in Full Edit mode grants you much greater control over the image, making the composition you worked so hard on come to life. In photography, every tool has its place and time; it’s up to you to determine when and how to most effectively use them.

MATCHING THE COLOR YOU REMEMBER

Color is a big part of our vision, so it’s no wonder it’s a big part of our photography. But one thing I hear from photographers a lot is their photos just don’t have the color they remember. Trying to match a photograph to the color that has probably been augmented by the emotion of the moment can prove daunting.

It’s hard for memories to live up to themselves, huh? But you can bring that remembered color back to your images. The first step is to remove the color cast, which we’ve already learned how to do. The next is to match what our heart remembers to what our eyes see on the computer monitor.

In Full Edit mode, we’re going to put the power of layers to work for us again with a photograph I took of some Alaskan fall foliage. Under Layer>New Adjustment Layer, let’s start with Brightness/Contrast. The effect we’re going for here compares to underexposure at the time of capture. I lowered the Brightness to -4 and increased the Contrast to +8.

Next, we’ll add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation) and increase the Saturation. Personally, I never take the Saturation above +20 because it degrades the image too much. But you can see here how our red leaves now fly off the page. At any point in this process, you can fill the layer mask and paint in the effect of the layer as you remember it.

You want to perfect your habits at the camera. That’s where the best quality comes from. At the same time, learning the power of the digital darkroom to finish your photos is essential. Photoshop Elements is a great place to start learning. Don’t get stuck on the numbers, techniques, or order I’ve done things here. Grasp the concepts and logic; then make it your own, so your photographs can tell their story.
Layer styles are a collection of effects that are added in a single operation.

The key to understanding layer styles is in the name: These effects are applied to the content of the entire layer—regardless of what is on the layer—including selections you have made. Layer styles are simply a collection of effects that are added in a single operation. And since they’re saved in the Layers palette, you can apply them over and over to get the same result. If you want to add the same effect to text on scrapbook pages, buttons for a webpage, or any other application that may require a consistent design, layer styles are the answer.

Layer styles have been included in Adobe Photoshop Elements since the very first version, but in Elements 5, new controls mean more options for customizing the styles that come with Elements or customizing styles that you download from the web. You can even save and share your layer styles with others.

Layer styles have been included in Adobe Photoshop Elements since the very first version, but in Elements 5, new controls mean more options for customizing the styles that come with Elements or customizing styles that you download from the web. You can even save and share your layer styles with others.

Layer styles' new home
In Elements 5, the Styles and Effects palette has been incorporated into a new palette called the Artwork and Effects palette. This new palette is really five palettes rolled into one: Artwork, Themes, Special Effects, Text, and Favorites. (The Artwork, Themes, and Favorites palettes are all new to Elements 5.) Each of these five palettes has its own set of drop-down menus. By default, the Artwork and Effects palette is docked in the Palette Bin on the right side of the work area. If you can’t see it, go to Window>Artwork and Effects to make it visible.

To access the Layer Styles options in the Artwork and Effects palette, click the third icon from the left. The palette will be labeled Special Effects. You will see two drop-down menus in this palette. On the left is a category menu, which includes Filters, Layer Styles, Photo Effects, and All (which gives you a list of all the filters/effects in the second drop-down list). On the right is a subcategory menu, which contains options specific to each of the categories.
You’ll see thumbnail representations of the various layer styles in each subcategory, although you can choose how these are displayed. To modify your view, click the More button at the top of the palette, which will open the palette’s flyout menu. From this menu you can choose from List View, Small Thumbnail View, or Large Thumbnail View (the default).

To apply a style to your active layer, do one of the following:
• Double-click the layer style thumbnail in the palette.
• Click the style to highlight it in the palette and then click the Apply button at the bottom of the palette.
• Right-click on the thumbnail and choose Apply to Document from the contextual menu.
• Click the style to highlight it in the palette and then choose Apply from the More flyout menu.

RULES ARE RULES
Layer styles have rules that they follow. To use layer styles effectively and efficiently, you need to understand the rules that layer styles follow:

1. Layer styles are applied to the entire layer, ignoring any selections you have made. So if you want a layer style applied only to a specific object, you should place it on its own layer.

2. Layer styles will not apply to the Background layer because a Background layer is not a true layer. If you want to apply a layer style to a background, you must rename the Background layer to make it editable. To do this, double-click on the Background layer in the Layers palette to open the New Layer dialog, and either type in a new name for the layer or just click OK. (You can also go to Layer>New>Layer from Background.)

3. A layer style can have more than one effect, such as a drop shadow, inner shadow, pattern, or photographic effect (to name just a few). Each one of these can be manipulated separately to give a new effect (see “Layer Style Settings” below).

4. If you try to add a layer style and nothing happens, make sure you’re not trying to apply it to an empty layer. If there is no object on the layer, there will be no visible effect. At minimum, give the empty layer a fill color, and you’ll see the style applied to the color.

LAYER STYLE SETTINGS
Once you’ve applied a style to your layer, you can modify your settings by double-clicking the sunburst icon to the right of your layer name. This will open the Style Settings dialog. You will see a check next to each active style, with additional options for those styles in expanded submenus. Check Preview at the top of the dialog to see your changes on the fly. You can make changes to the following settings:

Lighting Angle: To adjust the angle of the lighting, either drag the indicator on the lighting dial to the desired angle, or enter the angle measurement.

Drop Shadow: Drop Shadow has four controls: Size, Distance, Opacity, and Color. Click the color swatch to open the Color Picker and choose the shadow color. Changing the color allows you to create shadows that look as if they are shining through colored glass or plastic.

Glow: Choose either an Inner or Outer Glow, or both, and adjust the Size, Opacity, and Color.

Bevel: Choose the Bevel Size and Direction.

Stroke: Choose Size, Opacity, and Color.
Layer styles can be saved as .asl files that can then be shared among users. These files can contain a single layer style or a whole library of layer styles. You can even use layer styles that were created in the full version of Photoshop; you just won’t have the editing ability that Photoshop allows.

There are many styles to download from the subscriber area at the Photoshop Elements Techniques website (www.photoshopelementsuser.com/subscriber/downloads.php). Al Ward’s website (www.actionfx.com) also has many styles for download. Some are free and some require a subscription. The Adobe Exchange website (www.adobe.com/cfusion/exchange) is another good source for Photoshop layer styles.

To install your downloaded layer styles in Elements 5, you will need to first close the program. Then navigate to C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Application Data\Adobe\Photoshop Elements\5.0\Photo Creations\Special Effects\Layer Styles. You can drop the .asl file into this folder, but then it will show up in every subcategory of the Special Effects palette. To avoid this duplication, make a new folder in the Layer Styles folder, give it an appropriate name, and place the .asl file in this folder. Restart Elements and you should see a dialog that tells you Elements is “Building Artwork and Effects.” When it’s done, the new styles will be available in the Special Effects palette under a new subcategory with the name you assigned.

Saving and Sharing Layer Styles

Not only can layer styles that you have installed be applied to other images, they can also be shared with others. Even though you may have been told that layer styles can only be saved and shared in the full version of Photoshop and not in Elements, there’s a way to circumvent that limitation:

1. Create a new document (Ctrl-N) and give it a transparent background by selecting Transparent from the Background Contents drop-down menu. Add some content. (The object can be as simple as a filled marquee, text, or a custom shape.)

2. Use a basic layer style or one you’ve downloaded and installed.

3. Make the customizations you want.

4. Create a folder on your hard drive called “Layer Styles.”

5. Save your customized style as a .psd file to the folder you created. This will make it easy to find your styles when you want to use them. (Hint: You may want to name your file according to the style you’re using, e.g., neongrn_ds.psd for a style using a neon green glow and drop shadow.)
To use the styles you have saved, open one of the files from the Layer Styles folder. Make sure the layer with the style applied is active, and go to Layer>Layer Style>Copy Layer Style (or Right-click the layer in the Layers palette and choose Copy Layer Style from the contextual menu). Switch to the document to which you want to apply the style, and choose Layer>Layer Style>Paste Layer Style (or Right-click the layer in the Layers palette and choose Paste Layer Style).

**The Photo Layout Feature**

We can’t have objects all dressed up with nowhere to go, so here are a few tips on how to use Photoshop Element 5’s new Photo Layout feature, which makes creating a scrapbook page a snap. For starters, let’s create a basic photo layout without frames. Go to File>Create>Photo Layout. Choose a layout, but don’t choose a theme. Click OK. To add your photos, click on the frame, and select your photo from the Open dialog that pops up. Or, if you already have your photos open, just drag-and-drop them onto the frames. Open the Artwork and Effects palette and choose Artwork (the first icon). Select Backgrounds from the category pop-up menu on the left, choose a subcategory, and apply the background. Or create your own background using textures or a photo.

Right-click on one of the photo layers in the Layers palette and choose Duplicate Frame Layer. (Note: The keyboard shortcut Ctrl-J won’t work on frame layers.) Now switch to the Special Effects palette, choose Layer Styles in the left drop-down menu and Wow Neon from the right. Add one of the Wow Neon layer styles to the duplicate frame layer. Use one of the neon styles because they’re only outlines and will look like a frame around your photo. Double-click the sunburst icon in the Layers palette to open the Style Settings dialog, and edit the style to create your own custom frame.

Copy the layer style (Layer>Layer Style>Copy Layer Style). Duplicate the other images you wish to frame, select the duplicate frame layers one at a time, and paste the layer style on each duplicate layer (Layer>Layer Style>Paste Layer Style.) Layer styles are also a great way to dress up the text on a scrapbook page. Just add your text, and apply the layer style of your choice.
Last time we covered the basic brush tools, so I promised we’d get a little crazy with the Impressionist Brush. Truth is, that’s the only way to use the Impressionist Brush: You’ve gotta get a little crazy with it! Don’t expect soft, subtle, smoothly applied effects. Don’t count on simple settings and precise results. Not here. The first time you use the Impressionist Brush the natural reaction is *Aarrrghhh!!! What just happened?* Relax...remember you’ve always got Ctrl-Z (Mac: Command-Z), so you can undo any huge mistakes.

And for those of you who have come to expect the standard Tool Time format—where we go through a tool’s capabilities and all of the settings you can adjust—I’m sorry to say that there are just way too many possibilities to cover here. All I can give you are a few general guidelines. Once you get more comfortable with this sassy tool, you may find yourself throwing even my guidelines out the window. If you want to really learn this tool, you’ll want to experiment to get the look you want. It will take some time to go through all of the available brushes to see what happens when you paint. In fact, after you experiment for a while, you might stumble across a combination of brushes and settings that give you a truly amazing effect (maybe even better than mine).

If you discover a technique with the Impressionist Brush that you really like, let me know. You might just win something! What’s this? A contest in the middle of a tutorial? That’s just crazy! You’re right. It is crazy...but still not as crazy as you may find yourself getting with this brush. If you’re one of the top five picks, you will have your choice of one of our books or DVDs. So email your Impressionist Brush creations to me by March 5, 2007 to: impresslarry@photoshopelementsuser.com. (Please use JPEG format and limit your file size to 400 KB.)

Because the Impressionist Movement consisted of splotches and smears of colors that represented light, movement, color, and even emotion in an abstract way, the Impressionist Brush tool tries to mimic that abstract style. The guidelines I told you about for using the Impressionist Brush are pretty simple.

**GUIDELINE 1:**
You’ll probably get the best effects by using small, unusually shaped brushes rather than regular, round brushes.

**GUIDELINE 2:**
In the More Options settings, usually an Area setting around 50 works well. Much smaller (20 or less) and you get very little effect. Much larger (100+) and your image will be little more than a big smudge.

**GUIDELINE 3:**
Also in the More Options settings, the Tight Short and the Dab styles are the best to start with. Tight Short gives a softer appearance and Dab gives a more stippled look, but both of these are far less smeary and give the artist a bit more control to apply effects more precisely.

**GUIDELINE 4:**
If you just want to apply an evenly distributed, painterly effect to your image, try some of the options from the Filter menu. You can achieve beautiful effects that are immediately applied across your entire image. One of the biggest reasons to use the Impressionist Brush, instead
of a Filter, is that you can mix brush types and treat part of your image with one effect and another part of your image with a different one.

**GUIDELINE 5:**
The Impressionist Brush never pulls colors from the color swatches in your Toolbox; instead, it moves colors around that are already in your image.

Now that you have the guidelines, open up a picture and start experimenting. Let your imagination run wild! If that’s just a little too much freedom, the following tutorial will help you understand how to use the Impressionist Brush. But remember, there are gazillions of ways you can combine your brush type, size, stroke, and settings. This tutorial is just the result of one of my many experiments.

Because this picture is a soft picture of a young girl and flowers, I’ll use techniques and brushes that flatter the subject and don’t create harsh edges. Also, because I like the detail of the flower stems, the girl’s eyelashes, and her mouth, I’ll use brush types and settings that won’t obscure those shapes completely. (If you are working on a photo of a building or car, you’ll probably want the sharper and rougher brushes/settings to give you a more industrial feel.)

Start by duplicating the original image (Ctrl-J [Mac: Command-J]). No matter what kind of editing you’re doing, this is always a good practice, so your original image doesn’t get damaged. But with the Impressionist Brush and the likelihood of lots of trial and error, you may want to make lots of copies of your original so you can compare various techniques until you find one you really like.

Make sure you’ve selected the Impressionist Brush. The Impressionist Brush is one of the options under the Brush tool icon in the Toolbox.

Click on the down-facing arrow to the right of your Brush thumbnail to reveal the Brush Picker, which allows you to change your brush shape/type.

While in the Brush Picker, click the right-facing triangle that opens a flyout menu, giving you even more brush options and choices. Choose Large Thumbnail (if it’s not already selected) and drag out the bottom right of your preview window, so you can see the options as large as possible.

Now click on the Brushes pop-up menu, so all of your brush sets appear. (This is where you would normally spend time selecting various brushes for trial-and-error experimentation. For now, we’ll continue with a brush I know will work.) From the pop-up menu, choose Assorted Brushes; then select the brush that looks like two small squiggles with the number 21 below it.

In the Options Bar, make sure your brush settings under More Options are set to Tight Short, around 50 pixels, and 0 Tolerance. Note: Leave your blending Mode set to Normal and Opacity set to 100% for this tutorial, unless otherwise specified. (These are fun settings to experiment with because a Darken mode or lower opacity percentage can alter the impact of your brush.)

Pressing-and-holding the mouse button will cause the Impressionist Brush to continually “mix” the paint, so just get accustomed to the brush’s impact by single-clicking in various places on your image. As I mentioned, the details of the lips, eyelashes, and nose are important, so I had to single-click a few times and then Undo (Ctrl-Z [Mac: Command-Z]) until I found a spot that would work without eclipsing the important details.

In areas like the hair, I could move more quickly, scrubbing the mouse over larger areas. But be careful: If you move the mouse too fast, it will “skip” through the image, and if you move too slowly—or go back over areas repeatedly—you might eliminate too much detail.

Now that the girl is brushed enough, it’s time to change brushes to work on the flower stems. Go back to your Brush Picker and, from the same brush set, choose the Triangle brush with the 9 under it. Focus on painting just the stems. If you lose too much detail,
Undo and try again. It works best to stroke in the direction of the stem rather than scrubbing across the stem. (Tip: If the brush seems to be reacting way too fast, drop the Opacity setting to around 20% and try again.)

Switch brushes one last time and select the Dashed Circle 2 brush, which has the number 41 beneath it. Then under More Options, change the Style from Tight Short to Dab. This will make the flower blooms more defined. Also, make sure you reset your Opacity to 100%, and alternate between single-clicks, double-clicks, and slight scrubbing. This gives the flower blossoms a unique pattern from the rest of the image, yet they retain most of their more florid characteristics.

That’s it! Your masterpiece is finished. If you think the effect is too dramatic, reduce the Opacity of the painted layer to 70% or 50% to allow your original image to show through until the look is just the way you like it. It’s official... you’re no longer a beginner... you’re now an artiste! ■

Larry Becker is a nationally known author, speaker, and technology trainer whose areas of expertise range from digital imaging, desktop publishing, and computer-based video and music to PDAs, smartphones, and the occasional garage-door opener. Larry also conducts training seminars for the Adobe Photoshop Elements Techniques newsletter and website.
When you zoom way in on your work, it’s easy to forget how the size you’re looking at relates to the finished size.

1. Imagine that you added an adjustment layer and spent a fair amount of time painting on its layer mask—just to decide later that you should have used a different type of adjustment layer. Rather than starting all over again, Photoshop Elements has a simple solution. Just go to Layer>Change Layer Content, and choose a new adjustment layer. The adjustment layer will change, but the layer mask that you previously worked on will be preserved (and applied to the new adjustment layer).

2. To move multiple layers from one document into another, use the Layers palette. First, hold down Ctrl (Mac: Command) and click on each of the layers you want to move. Then in the Layers palette, click-and-drag your selected layers into the other document.

3. To quickly change the view of your current document to Fit on Screen, double-click on the Hand tool in the Toolbox. Double-click on the Zoom tool to change the view to 100%.

4. If you have created custom brushes, color swatches, gradients, or patterns, there are two ways the Preset Manager can make your life easier. Both involve the same procedure but serve different purposes. Let’s use brushes as an example. From the Edit menu, choose Preset Manager and select Brushes from the Preset Type drop-down menu. Holding down Ctrl (Mac: Command), click on each of the brushes you’ve created to select them. Then click on the Save Set button, at which point you’ll be asked where you want to save the brush set. In this first example, we’ll show you where to save a set of your custom presets, so they’ll be accessible from the Brushes drop-
down menu in the Brushes palette. To do this, save your set into the following location: C:\Programs\Adobe Photoshop Elements\Presets\Brushes (Mac: Hard Drive:Applications: Adobe Photoshop Elements:Presets:Brushes). (If you’ve never saved a set of brushes before, chances are it will default to this location.) After you restart Photoshop Elements, your brush set will appear in the pull-down menu of brush sets.

In most dialogs that have a Cancel button, you can change Cancel to Reset by holding down Alt (Mac: Option). Click on the Reset button to put all the settings back to their original values. This eliminates the need to cancel the command and then reopen it.

When you zoom way in on your work, it’s easy to forget how the size you’re looking at relates to the finished size. It’s not uncommon to do some painting or cloning at a very high magnification and then not really see the effect when you return to 100% view. One way to avoid this is to create two views of the same document. To do this, make sure your image is in Cascade view and then go to the View menu and choose New Window for [your document name]. Position the two windows so you can see them both (see example below), and use the Zoom tool (Z) to zoom in on the document you’ll be working on. Keep the second window at a magnification that simulates the printing size. Now, as you make a change to the zoomed-in window, it will be reflected in the normal view, allowing you to see your work in the context of the printing size.

After clicking on the Gradient tool, you can quickly scroll through the gradients in the Gradient picker (without opening it). Just press > (the greater than symbol) on your keyboard to go to the next gradient and < (the less than symbol) to switch to the previous gradient. Press Shift-< to activate the first gradient in the Gradient picker or Shift-> to go to the last gradient.
how to create whimsical frames

BY JANEE ARONOFF

ADOBE HAS TUCKED MANY TREATS INTO ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS FOR US. ONE OF THESE IS THE COOKIE CUTTER TOOL. IN THIS ARTICLE, WE’LL EXAMINE ONE CREATIVE USE FOR THIS TOOL AS WE MAKE A WHIMSICAL FRAME FOR A PORTRAIT USING CUTOUTS FROM ANOTHER PHOTO.

Cutouts made with the Cookie Cutter tool can be used in many ways to decorate a photo.

You’ll be using your Layers palette for this project, so make sure that it’s out on your desktop, over on the right side. Choose Window>Layers if you don’t see it. For this example, we’ll use a photo of budding model Mira, and we’ll frame her in flowers. A picture of tulips will be the source for the flower cutouts. I’ve already done some retouching of Mira, which included changing the background.

[To follow along, download the images used in this tutorial at www.photoshopelementsuser.com/subscriber/printextras.php.]

ADD A FRAME LAYER

Adding a frame layer above the photo will give us an outline where we can put our cutouts.

STEP ONE: Click on the Create a new Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette. This adds a new layer above the photo layer. Double-click its name and rename it “Frame.”

STEP TWO: Choose a color for your frame by clicking the Foreground color swatch at the bottom of your Toolbox. From the Color Picker, choose your color and click OK. We used white.

STEP THREE: Press Alt-backspace (Mac: Option-Delete) to fill your canvas with this color. Your photo will disappear, but you should still see it in your Layers palette.

STEP FOUR: Using the slider at the top of the Layers palette, reduce the Opacity of the Frame layer to about 40%. This enables you to see your photo below.

STEP FIVE: Choose the Rectangular Marquee tool (M), the top tool among the selection tools in the Toolbox. Set the Feather the way you want it in the Options Bar—amounts greater than 0 px will give you a soft edge.
STEP SIX: Click-and-drag to frame your subject. Press the Backspace (Mac: Delete) key to delete this selection from your Frame layer. Press Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D) to Deselect, and raise the Opacity of the Frame layer back to 100%.

DUPLICATE THE PHOTO LAYERS
WE’LL BE MAKING CUTOUTS FROM THE FLOWERS IN THE SOURCE PHOTO. BUT EACH TIME WE USE THE COOKIE CUTTER TOOL, IT DISCARDS THE REST OF THE PHOTO—A VERY DESTRUCTIVE EDIT! THEREFORE, WE NEED TO FIRST DUPLICATE THIS PHOTO LAYER, SINCE WE’LL BE USING IT FOR MORE THAN ONE CUTOUT.

STEP ONE: Rename the source photo layer. In this example, we’ll use the name “Flower,” because each of the layers we create will be a flower. Double-click on the layer name in the Layers palette and rename it. If the source photo is on the Background layer, double-clicking will bring up the New Layer dialog. Rename it and click OK.

STEP TWO: Press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) for each cutout you plan to make. I’m going to use about 19 flowers, so I’ll duplicate this layer 19 times. (You can always make more later if needed.) Watch your Layers palette and you’ll see your photo layer replicating.

STEP THREE: This step will enable you to better see your cutouts. Make a new layer by clicking on the Create a new Layer icon in your Layers palette. Drag this layer right above your bottom layer. Fill it with a color that contrasts well with your cutouts (we used black) and label it “Backdrop.”

STEP FOUR: Turn off the Eye icons for all but the topmost layer and your Backdrop layer. You will not see the Backdrop yet, as the topmost photo layer is still covering the whole canvas.

MAKE AND MOVE THE CUTOUTS
NOW IT’S TIME TO SET UP THE COOKIE CUTTER TOOL OPTIONS, MAKE THE CUTOUTS, AND MOVE THEM INTO THE TARGET IMAGE.

STEP ONE: Choose the Cookie Cutter tool (Q) and in the Options Bar, click the Shape pop-up menu to see the default set of shapes in the Custom Shape Picker. Click the right-facing arrow at the top of the picker to see all the available Shape sets. Here we’re using Flowers. Chose a shape and it’ll appear in the preview thumbnail in the Options Bar.

STEP TWO: Now click the Shape Options pop-up menu in the Options Bar. If you want your cutouts to be exactly the same size, it’s easiest to use this option and choose a measurement. For this project, we’re using a Fixed Size of 300x300 pixels, and we turned on the From Center checkbox. This will center the shape where we click the tool.

STEP THREE: Click on the topmost layer in the Layers palette to select it. If you set the Shape Options to create a specified size, all you do now is click on your image. You can still move, resize, or rotate the cutout—without sacrificing image quality. Press the Enter (Mac: Return) key to finish the cut.

STEP FOUR: Turn on the Eye icon for the next layer down, click on it to select it, and cut out another shape. Hit Enter (Mac: Return) to complete the cut.

STEP FIVE: Use the Move tool (V) to move the new shape if it’s on top of another. Change your Cookie Cutter tool shape if you like, and continue to cut shapes out of your photo until you have all you need.
STEP SIX: Choose the Move tool and in the Options Bar, turn on the Auto Select Layer checkbox. This enables you to click-and-drag an object to move it without having to select that particular layer. (Note: You have to click on the actual object or the Move tool will try to move whatever’s directly under it.)

STEP SEVEN: With your two image files side by side, drag each of the cutouts from the source image over to the target photo. Your cutouts will still remain in the source image file. You’re just moving a copy of each to your target photo.

Tip: You can move all of the cutouts at one time. Select all of the layers by clicking on the top cutout layer and then Shift-clicking on the bottom cutout layer. (In Elements 3, link the cut-out layers by clicking the boxes next to the visibility Eye icon in the Layers palette.) With the Move tool, click on one of the flowers, and drag all of the selected layers over to your target photo.

FINISHING TOUCHES

ALTHOUGH THIS IS PRETTY ALREADY, WE CAN ADD ANOTHER DIMENSION BY APPLYING A LAYER STYLE OR TWO.

STEP ONE: Choose Window>Artwork and Effects to make this palette visible for Elements version 5. (Note: Choose Window>Styles and Effects for earlier versions of Elements.)

STEP TWO: Click on the top cutout layer of your target photo. Press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to duplicate this layer. Then try out different Artwork and Effects till you find a good combination. We used a Simple Outer Glow here by selecting Layer Styles in the top-left pop-up menu and Outer Glows in the top-right pop-up menu. The Simple Outer Glow style should be the first one in the list. We also changed the color in the Frame layer so that the outer glow was visible.

STEP THREE: Once you’ve found your style, you can apply it to another layer in one of two ways:

• If your style is just one button, as is the outer glow in this example, click on the layer in the Layers palette to select it, then click the style icon in the Artwork and Effects palette.

• If your style is more complicated, then go to Layer>Layer Style>Copy Layer Style. Click to select the next layer and then choose Layer>Layer Style>Paste Layer Style.

In our final example, changing the Frame layer color and adding an outer glow lights up this border. Cutouts made with the Cookie Cutter tool can be used in many ways to decorate a photo. See what you can do with them.

All photos by Janee Aronoff. May be used for educational purposes. May not be republished in any form without permission from the photographer.

An Adobe Certified Instructor for Photoshop CS and CS2, Janee Aronoff runs myjanee.com Photoshop Resources, which features online classes and tutorials. Janee has contributed to five books on Photoshop and Photoshop Elements and has written numerous magazine articles for image-editing magazines. She can be reached at myjanee@hotmail.com.
make a statement!

The written word is very powerful. You can convey a lot of emotion with your choice of words. But did you know that your choice of fonts and how they are placed on the page also convey emotion? Let’s explore how font choices, warp text, and word art can make an impact on your scrapbook page.

**Step One:** With the overwhelming number of fonts available, it’s sometimes hard to choose the right one. Just as when choosing a color scheme for your layout, think about what mood you’re trying to convey when choosing a font. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- If your photos are formal (wedding, graduation, or portrait studio), you may want to choose a calligraphy or script font. Or perhaps you’d like a book-style classic look.
- If you want a playful mood, try a handwriting font. You can also look for one that fits the theme of your layout; for example, this Ant Pile font (available free for download from www.doghause.com/fonts.asp) is perfect for a picnic theme.
- For a heritage layout, try a typewriter font. You can choose a “clean” one or one that looks like it was typed on an antique typewriter, with parts of the letters faded or missing.

**Step Two:** Once you’ve chosen your font, a simple way to create interest with words is to use the Warp Text feature. Type in your phrase, and click on the Create Warped Text icon in the Options Bar. (It’s the “T” with the curved line under it.) The Warp Text dialog will open. From the Style drop-down menu, choose Arch. In this example, we used a Black Jack font, the default Distortion settings, and a +50 Bend.
STEP THREE: Play with the Horizontal and Vertical Distortion settings to get different effects. Adjusting the Bend slider will also give movement to your type.

STEP FOUR: To change perspective, experiment with the Vertical Distortion slider.

WORD ART
Word art, as it’s commonly called, entails combining fonts and arranging them to evoke a mood in your layout. For optimal versatility, put each word or phrase on its own layer. That way you can easily rearrange and resize each word or phrase in order to get the effect you’re looking for. Try rotating some of the text too.

Enlarge the font size for the important words in your quote, and consider adding a graphic to reinforce what you’re saying. Your type doesn’t have to be black either. Add some color to give the phrase some extra punch.

STEP ONE: Create a new document (File-New-Blank File) about 10x6” at 300 ppi. Choose a font (we used Herculanum Regular), select the Type tool (T), and type in the word “Mothers.” From your Artwork and Effects palette (Styles and Effects in version 4), choose Layer Styles in the left drop-down menu and Drop Shadows in the right drop-down menu, and choose Soft Edge.

STEP TWO: Now we’re going to add an ethereal glow to soften the text a bit. Create a new layer by clicking on the top-left icon in your Layers palette. Using your Rectangular Marquee tool (M), set the Feather amount to 25 pixels in the Options Bar, and drag a selection around the word “Mothers.” (You’ll notice the feather rounds the corners of your selection.) Choose a fill color for the selection from the Foreground color swatch in your Toolbox, and press Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete) to fill it with your Foreground color. Set the blend mode to Multiply and the Opacity to 20% (both located at the top of your Layers palette).
A scrapbooker for many years, Irene O’Neill went digital in 2003 and has never looked back. She teaches digital scrapbooking at 3Scrapateers Academy at www.3Scrapateers.com and is also a designer there.

STEP THREE: On another layer and with another font (we used Lucida Calligraphy Italic), choose a different color for your type in the Options Bar, type in the next part of the phrase, and drag it into place.

STEP FOUR: On a third layer, type in “Forever” using the same font you used for the word “Mother.” Then follow the same procedure to add a drop shadow and a colored glow.

Finally, hold down the Ctrl key (Mac: Command key), select all of your type layers and “glow” layers in the Layers palette, then use the Move tool to drag the word art into an open scrapbook page.
realistic check: creating fantasy art from photographs

Utilizing composites of your own photos, you can lay the foundation for imaginative fantasy artwork that combines painterly and illustrative qualities. Let’s take a look at how I fashioned Dionaea Muscipula Britannia from a series of digital photos, eventually turning my friend into a hapless victim of a giant carnivorous plant!

**STEP ONE:** Before capturing your photographs, it’s a good idea to begin with a rough pencil sketch of the general idea. This doesn’t need to be very detailed—just a loose blueprint to guide your photos and the human subjects within them. After you have your scene sketched, it’s time to start taking pictures. I started by giving my friend a few simple props to hold, such as a squirt gun and an empty poster tube. He also posed on a chair to simulate being eaten alive, conveying an appropriate sense of dread.

**STEP TWO:** Create a new file to collect your images. I chose the 8x10 preset with a resolution of 300 ppi. Using the Move tool (V), place all your photos into the new file by dragging-and-dropping them. Then delete the Background layer by dragging it on top of the Trash icon, and save your file. Turn off the visibility of the character layers by clicking on the Eye icon in the Layers palette. Choose one of the environment photos to be your base layer, and move it to the bottom of the stack. Decrease the opacity of the other environment layers to around 50%, using the Opacity Slider in the Layers palette.

To quickly select unwanted areas and delete them, use the Polygonal Lasso tool. Don’t worry about creating a convincing and seamless panoramic collage; you’re only creating a guide to be painted over later. Place your characters in the scene, and create an interesting composition. Repeat the process of cutting away extraneous sections until you are left with a final composite of background and foreground elements.
STEP THREE: Open your Brush tool (B), and select the Flat Rough brush from the Options Bar (in the Pen Pressure set). Lower the brush’s opacity to 72% to allow for a multi-layered stroke when painting over the same area. A smaller brush will afford greater control; however, a larger brush will increase the abstract nature of the image, thus lending more of a painterly feel. You can vary both the size and brush type throughout a single image. Create a layer for each object, so you can experiment with the individual layers’ blend modes.

STEP FOUR: Move your brush over the area you want to paint. Choose your color by holding down the Alt (Mac: Option) key. The Brush tool will momentarily change into the Eyedropper tool. Click once to load the color beneath the Eyedropper. Release and start painting. Periodically select a new color directly from your photo composite. When you’re finished painting, add highlights and shadows. First, create a layer at the very top of the stack and name it “Shadows.” Change its blend mode to Multiply. Click on the Foreground color swatch at the bottom of the Toolbox and choose a mid-range gray. As you paint your shadows, notice how your strokes darken all the underlying pixels. By changing the opacity of the current brush and/or the Shadows layer, you can alter the intensity of the darkness.

The process for highlights is the same, except you set the layer blend mode to Overlay and the Foreground color to white. When you paint on this layer, you will be bringing out the luminosity of the underlying pixels, creating hot spots where you want the light to be most concentrated.

STEP FIVE: Now you may want to correct the color shift you get from sampling colors in diverse source photos. From the Layer menu, choose Flatten Image. Then choose Enhance>Adjust Color>Remove Color Cast. By clicking in various areas as directed by the dialog, you can effect an overall color shift. For more control, use Enhance>Adjust Color>Color Variations. In this dialog you can alter the RGB values in the Midtones, Shadows, Highlights, and Saturation simply by selecting preview thumbnails of the variously altered states.

I used Remove Color Cast to better meld the colors of the image and add warmth for a vaguely nostalgic sensation.

Dividing the digital paint among layers based on each object allows greater control.

Paint quickly to capture your impulses, straying from the photo collage to increase the painterly vibe.

FOR MORE PHOTO TECHNIQUES, VISIT WWW.PHOTOSHOPELEMENTSUSER.COM
**Step Six:** I like my images to exhibit a hand-drawn feel. To achieve this, I draw the painting on a sheet of white paper. I suggest a 4B pencil. It's a thick, soft lead that produces a nice rough line. Scan the drawing using the File>Import command. Then cut the pencil drawing into its constituent parts using the Polygonal Lasso tool. Then use Image>Transform>Distort to conform each segment of the drawing to the painting. For example, by cutting out the soldier's knife, I can distort and reshape it so it matches the painting better. Set the Blending Mode of your sketch layers to Multiply, and the white areas will turn invisible.

**Step Seven:** Final tweaks might include zooming in to seek out and destroy aberrant pixels or my favorite: applying a texture. This dirties up the image. For natural looking textures, try scanning and combining various rough papers or even swatches of cloth. Be sure to make them grayscale images; otherwise their color will adversely influence your painting. Place the texture at the top of the layer stack, and set its blend mode to Overlay or Multiply. By doing this, you can emulate a hand-made impression. Through continued experimentation, you will discover an endless array of possibilities for manipulating your photographs and transforming them into exciting scenes of fantasy!