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You asked for it! Over the past months we’ve received many requests from folks to shed some light on this new Adobe Photoshop product called Lightroom: What is it? How does it fit in? If I use Elements, would Lightroom benefit me?

The answers...Well, they really depend on what you do with your photography. Lightroom is a brand-new workflow application from Adobe that’s geared for professional photographers, as well as advanced amateurs. I know our audience has a good deal of both. (Yep, many photographers actually use Elements and not the full-blown version of Photoshop.) So we commissioned one of our pros, Dave Huss, to write an article on that very topic. My hope is that after you read Dave’s article, you’ll be able to make an informed decision of whether it’s for you or not.

In addition, I’d like to give a shout out to all of our faithful online visitors. I’m proud to say that our forums have now exceeded 21,000 threads and 10,000 registered members. In the forum world, that’s nothing less than astonishing. In fact, we’ve seen such impressive work represented on the site in our Gallery, we’ve started targeting members to write tutorials for the newsletter—starting with Nanci Marti and Terry Noonan in this issue. Many thanks go out to all of you who participate and make our website even more beneficial for everyone. See you next time...

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Editor-in-Chief
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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.
selective focus

ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT CAN TAKE A GOOD PHOTO AND MAKE IT GREAT IS SELECTIVE FOCUS (A.K.A. DEPTH OF FIELD). BY BLURRING PARTS OF AN IMAGE, YOU CAN NARROW THE DEPTH OF FIELD AND GIVE THE PHOTOGRAPH A MORE REALISTIC APPEARANCE. WHILE THIS STARTS IN THE CAMERA, WE CAN TAKE THIS PROCESS EVEN FURTHER IN THE DIGITAL DARKROOM USING PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS. LET’S TAKE A LOOK.

STEP ONE: Open a photo to work with. Close-up photos work great, but action shots like this guy jumping in midair work well too. Start out by duplicating the bottom layer in your document by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J).

[To follow along, download the illustration shown here by navigating to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com.]

STEP TWO: Since we’re trying to achieve a selective focus, we need to blur part of the photo. The best way to do this is by using the Gaussian Blur filter. Click once on the top copy of the photo in the Layers palette to select it, then go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur.
STEP THREE: In the Gaussian Blur dialog, adjust the Radius slider until your image appears out of focus. The higher the resolution of your photo, the higher you’ll want to set the Radius. It should look like you’re overdue for an eye exam. Then click OK.

STEP FOUR: Okay, the next part of the tutorial involves making it so we can selectively blur parts of the photo while keeping the rest in focus. There’s a cool little trick to do this in Elements. First, click on the bottom copy of the photo in the Layers palette to select that layer. Then click on the Create Adjustment Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette and select Levels from the list. When the Levels dialog opens, just click OK.

STEP FIVE: Now click once on the top copy of the photo to select that layer, then go to Layer>Group with Previous. You’ll see that the layer thumbnail moves to the right, and a small arrow appears next to it. Congratulations—you just learned the secret workaround for creating a layer mask a la Photoshop. A layer mask simply allows you to control how much of the top layer you want to retain by using black to cover (or mask) the layer and white to reveal it. Just remember: black conceals, white reveals.
STEP SIX: Here’s where the magic happens. Notice the little white thumbnail next to the Levels adjustment layer. Click on it to select the mask portion of that layer. (We won’t actually be doing anything with the levels; its sole purpose is to provide the mask.) Select the Brush tool (B), and choose a large, soft-edged brush from the Brush Picker.

STEP SEVEN: Now set your Foreground color to black. Wherever you paint with black, you’ll see the sharp version of the layer beneath your mask peek through. If you go too far, press the X key and paint with white to bring back the blurry photo. If your blurred areas seem too out of focus, reduce the Opacity of your top layer in the Layers palette. You can also move your mask by selecting its thumbnail in the Layers palette, clicking the link icon between the thumbnails to unlink them, and moving it with the Move tool (V) in the document window.

STEP EIGHT: Take this a step further and select the Gradient tool (G). In the Options Bar, select the Radial Gradient option (second icon from the left), then choose the Black, White gradient from the Gradient Picker. Now just click-and-drag from the face (or whatever you want in focus in your photograph) toward any edge of the document. When you let go of your mouse, you’ll see that Elements creates a smoother blend between the sharp photo and the blurry one—simulating a pretty realistic depth-of-field effect.
sensational serigraphs for Warhol wannabes

BY LEESA SNIDER KING

IMAGINE TAKING AN ORDINARY PICTURE AND CREATING A POP SENSATION THAT WOULD MAKE ANDY WARHOL BEAM WITH PRIDE. ELEMENTS MAKES IT EASY. IN THIS TUTORIAL YOU’LL CREATE A HIGH-CONTRAST PHOTO, COLOR TO TASTE, DUPLICATE IT A FEW TIMES, AND RECOLOR.

What makes this technique really fun is the ability to personalize your artwork.

To cross the Great Divide from realism to Warhol-ism, we’ll first need to seriously spike the contrast in our image. We’ll do that by converting it to a pure black-and-white photo. (You can’t get more contrast than that!) The Threshold filter is the quintessential tool for turning an image into a bitmappy, black-and-white, high-contrast image. The shadow areas of the image become black, and the highlights become white. This is exactly what we want to create the look that Warhol was famous for.

STEP ONE: Pop open a photo in Elements and immediately press Ctrl-J (PC: Command-J) to duplicate the Background layer. This is a purely self-protective step that preserves your original image. Hide the Background layer by clicking the Eye icon in the Layers palette.
STEP TWO: We have a decent amount of contrast in the photo, though her lips might get lost if we don’t darken them up a bit. To do this, select the Burn tool (nested under the Sponge tool [O]). In the Options Bar at the top of the screen, set Range to Midtones and Exposure to somewhere around 40%. Tip: You can adjust your brush Size on the fly by using the Left and Right Bracket keys ([/]) to decrease and increase its diameter, respectively. I also used the Burn tool to darken my subject’s cheeks and nose. Likewise, if there are areas of the photo that appear too dark, switch to the Dodge tool (also nested under the Sponge tool) to lighten them. Don’t panic if your image looks a little clownish. Step Three will soften the effect.

STEP THREE: Now we’ll really pump up the contrast by adding a Threshold filter. Just go to Filter>Adjustments>Threshold, adjust the slider in the Threshold dialog until you have a sufficiently high-contrast image, then click OK. Soften the image just a bit by choosing Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and setting the Radius to 1 px.

STEP FOUR: Select the Magic Wand tool (W), and click within a white area. Choose Select>Similar to grab all the remaining white pixels, then press Backspace (Mac: Delete). This will zap the background completely. Press Ctrl-D (PC: Command-D) to deselect and get rid of the marching ants.

ADDING COLOR
Now it’s time to create blocks of color, much the same way Warhol applied flat color shapes to his prints. One method of simulating this effect is to create selections where you want to add color and fill them with the Foreground colors of your choice. Because we’ll want to have the ability to change the color of these blocks later on, we’ll create them on separate layers.

STEP ONE: Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) the Create a New Layer icon at the top left of the Layers palette to add a new layer below the one currently selected. Next, select the Polygo-nal Lasso tool (nested under the Lasso tool [L]), and draw an outline around the face by clicking each time you want to drop an anchor point and change directions. Don’t worry about being precise since this layer is beneath your main layer. Close the selection by hovering your cursor over the original anchor point. When a tiny circle appears next to the Lasso, you’ve hit pay dirt. Click once to close the selection.
STEP TWO: Set your Foreground color to a nice peachy color for her skin by clicking on the Foreground color swatch in the Toolbox and choosing your color from the Color Picker. (We used #fcd68d.) Fill the selection with color by pressing Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete), then deselect. Create a new layer and repeat this process on her lips. Grab the Polygonal Lasso tool (or regular Lasso tool to achieve a more rounded selection), and draw a selection around the lip area. If you want to trace the original lips, hide the skin layer and temporarily turn on the visibility of your Background layer. Now set your Foreground color to a bright lip color, fill the new layer, then deselect. (Tip: If you ever want to adjust the black in your image, simply select your top layer and go over those areas with the Eraser tool [E] to cut it away or the Brush tool [B]—with the Foreground color set to black—to paint more in.)

STEP THREE: Repeat this process for each area you want to color. Alternatively, you could paint your colors in with the Brush tool. To keep everything organized, place each area of color on its own layer, e.g., the lips on one layer, irises on another, and eye makeup on yet another. This makes changing colors easier later on. You can also name each layer by double-clicking on the layers in the Layers palette.

STEP FOUR: Now create a new layer and drag it to the bottom of the layers stack, just above the original Background layer. Fill it with a bright color, and say hello to your new background.

CREATING THE CANVAS
Okay, one down, three more to go! To create the others, we’ll duplicate the layers we just made, reposition them, and apply new colors to the facial features and backgrounds. But first, we’ll need some room to work.

STEP ONE: To increase the canvas size enough to accommodate three more duplicates, we’ll need to double the size of our working area. To do this, choose Image>Resize>Canvas Size. Set the Width and Height to 100% and check Relative. Then click the top-left Anchor box to ensure the original image resides in the top-left position and press OK.
STEP TWO: Select all layers except the Background layer by clicking the layer just above the Background, then Shift-clicking the top layer. From the More menu at the top right of the Layers palette, choose Duplicate Layers. Using the Move tool (V), click on your duplicated image and drag it to the top-right corner of the document. (Tip: Hold the Shift key while dragging to move it in a straight line.)

STEP THREE: Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) the layer thumbnail of the solid background layer, then fill the selection with another bright color and deselect. Next, repeat Steps One to Three (in this section) to create two more duplicates with different-colored backgrounds. Or for a true Warhol reproduction, try creating two rows of three images and use the same image on either end of each row. (Note: If you opt for this design, you’ll need to set your canvas Width and Height to 200 and 100%, respectively, in Step One. Or you can start from your current size and set the Width to 150%, Height to 100%, uncheck Relative, and click on the top-left Anchor box.)

BREAK THE MOLD

What makes this technique really fun is the ability to personalize your artwork. Oh sure, you can seek out Warhol’s art online and use the same color palette he did, but what fun would that be? Instead, use your own vision and create something truly individual. With each color block on its own layer, you can tweak the colors until the cows come home. Also, try experimenting with photos of people with lighter hair colors. For example, if our model had been blonde, we could have colored her hair. Or if her shirt had been lighter, we could have color-blocked it too. The possibilities are endless!
buckets of fun

THE PAINT BUCKET TOOL IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF INTUITIVE DESIGN THAT’S IDEAL FOR NEW USERS. HECK, THE WHOLE DESCRIPTION OF HOW YOU USE IT CAN ALMOST BE SUMMED UP IN THE NAME OF THE TOOL ITSELF. IF YOU WANT TO POUR COLOR INTO A “CONTAINER” WITHIN YOUR IMAGE, SIMPLY SELECT THE PAINT BUCKET TOOL, SET YOUR FOREGROUND COLOR, AND DUMP THE PAINT WHERE YOU WANT IT BY CLICKING. IT’S JUST THAT EASY.

STEP ONE: Start by selecting the Paint Bucket tool (K). In the Options Bar, set its Fill to Foreground, keep the default settings (as shown here), and check Anti-alias, Contiguous, and Use All Layers. Then click on the Create a New Layer icon in the Layers palette.

[To follow along, download the illustration shown here by navigating to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementstechniques.com.]

STEP TWO: Choose your Foreground color by clicking on the Foreground color swatch at the bottom of the Toolbox. This opens the Color Picker, where you can click on the color you want. We started with a dark blue. Now just click the Paint Bucket tool wherever you want dark blue to appear. The “hot spot” for the Paint Bucket tool is the tip of the paint drip that’s falling from the bucket.
STEP THREE: Each time you change colors to paint a different panel of your image, add a new layer like you did in Step One. And because lots of colors will mean lots of layers, it may help to rename your layers according to the colors you use. To rename your layers, simply double-click on the layer name.

STEP FOUR: With certain shapes and smooth edges on your line drawing, there may be little patches that your paint doesn’t fill. You could press Ctrl-Z (Mac: Command-Z) to undo and then mess around with the Tolerance setting, but I find it’s usually easier to just zoom way in on the image (Ctrl—+ [Mac: Command—+]) and click a few times on the stubborn pixels.

STEP FIVE: If you don’t like one of the colors in the final image, it’s generally pretty sloppy to use the Paint Bucket tool repeatedly. The preferred method is to pick a new Foreground color for that layer and press Shift-Alt-Backspace (Mac: Shift Option-Delete) to replace the color in one step.

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 apply a layer style, you’ll see an icon to the right of the layer in the Layers palette (a starburst in Version 5 and the letter F inside a black ball in Version 4). If you want to copy the effect to another layer, simply Alt-drag (Mac: Option-drag) the layer style icon to another layer. Your cursor will turn into a black-and-white double cursor. To delete a layer style, just click-and-drag it on top of the Trash icon at the top of the palette.

Typically, the Magic Wand tool (W) is used to create a selection around a targeted object by selecting pixels within a similar color range. To add another color to the selection, all you have to do is Shift-click on that color, and to delete a color from a selection, simply Alt-click (Mac: Option-click) on the color. However, when you’re working with a simple background that only has a few colors or variations, you could save time by selecting your background and then inverting your selection, which will switch your selection to your foreground object. To do this, simply go to Select-Inverse (or press Shift-Ctrl-I [Mac: Shift-Command-I]).

Copy your selection to its own layer grants you more control over the editing process.

You can load a selection on any layer except the Background layer by Ctrl-clicking (Mac: Command-clicking) the layer’s thumbnail. If you want to load a selection from the Background layer, you’ll need to first double-click on the word Background in the Layers palette, then click OK. This will convert it to an editable layer. If you want to get really tricky and add to your selection using the contents of another layer, Shift-Ctrl-click (Mac: Shift-Command-click) on the new layer. Conversely, to subtract from your selection, Alt-Ctrl-click (Mac: Option-Command-click) on one of the layers.

After making a selection, it can be helpful to work with a copy of your selection on its own layer. Copying your selection to its own layer grants you more control over the editing process. For example, let’s say you increase the sharpness of a copy of your eyes in a photograph to give them some pizzazz, but now you look like a character from a Spielberg movie. You can lower the Opacity of the eyes layer in the Layers palette to reduce the intensity of the sharpening effect.
copying selections to their own layer preserves your original image, allowing you to apply cool effects without permanently altering the pixels in your image. These are wise choices many of us learn the hard way. To copy your selected area to its own layer, press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) with the selection active. If there’s no active selection, the entire layer will be duplicated on its own layer. Or if you want to cut-and-paste an active selection to a new layer, press Shift-Ctrl-J (Mac: Shift-Command-J).

Object alignment is based on an active selection, whether it encompasses the entire document or just a small part of it. The alignment feature (accessible by clicking on Align in the Options Bar) uses the selection as its base and will align all objects you target with the selection. To align multiple layers, select the layer you want all the other layers to align to, then load that layer as a selection by Ctrl-clicking (Mac: Command-clicking) on the layer’s thumbnail. Select additional layers by Ctrl-clicking on their layers (not their thumbnails). With the Move tool (V) active, choose your alignment preference from the Align menu (e.g., Horizontal Centers). This technique will work with any selection, not just a layer selection.

If you drag-and-drop something from one document to another, it will fall wherever you let go of your mouse within the destination document. However, if you Shift-drag the image into your current document, your copied image will be placed in the center of the document, regardless of where your cursor falls. Also, if there is an active selection in your destination file, it will be centered with your selection.

By default, the color of the background area that extends beyond your document is plain ol’ gray. If the color gray depresses you or squelches your creative impulses, by all means change it. Simply select the Paint Bucket tool (K), then click on the Foreground color swatch and choose a color from the Color Picker. Next, position your cursor over the background area and Shift-click to change the color. (Note: This area is not part of your working document so it won’t print.)

Have you ever wished that when you select an image file of any type (e.g., JPEG, TIFF, GIF, etc.), it would automatically open up in Elements? If so, the answer to your wish lies within the File Association Manager found by going to Edit-File Association (PC only). You simply check the file types you want to automatically open in Elements when selected from your file browser. After configuring your file associations (sounds fancy, huh?), you’ll need to quit Elements. As soon as you close out of Elements, your changes will take effect.

Corey Barker is an Education and Curriculum Developer for the National Association of Photoshop Professionals. His expertise in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator has earned him numerous awards in illustration, graphic design, and photography.
elements and lightroom—
a dynamic duo

BY DAVE HUSS

WHEN PHOTOSHOP LIGHTROOM FIRST APPEARED, A FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION WAS, “HOW WELL DOES IT WORK WITH PHOTOSHOP?” ALTHOUGH PHOTOSHOP IS CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE THE INDUSTRY STANDARD AMONG PHOTOGRAPHERS FOR ITS PIXEL-PUSHING PROWESS, PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS IS ARGUABLY A BETTER FIT WITH LIGHTROOM. LET’S EXPLORE THIS MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN.

Lightroom is a workflow tool designed by photographers for photographers. Wait, isn’t Photoshop Elements also a workflow tool? (So glad you asked.) Yes it is, —much in the same way an aircraft carrier and a cruise liner are both ships. While an aircraft carrier would be the perfect candidate to carry out an unsuspecting air strike, it wouldn’t exactly be ideal to carry star-struck vacationers to exotic destinations. In the same manner, Lightroom can import and review photos, perform tonal and color corrections, and remove sensor spots and red eye—just to name a few functions of this wonder tool. What Lightroom can’t do, however, is use filters to create effects, correct all lens distortion, generate really cool emails…you get the picture.

One major advantage of using Lightroom is its ability to quickly process and correct many images in a short period of time. How, you ask? First, Lightroom can make tonal and color corrections right in the Library module (similar to the Organizer in Elements). Another major advantage is its ability to work with images non-destructively. In other words, all Lightroom corrections appear on the image, but the original remains unchanged—meaning all the changes made to an image can be changed or removed. This is especially important for wedding, portrait, and stock photographers.

Once your photos are ready for prime time, you can make a slide show, create a Web gallery, or print them from Lightroom.
HOW THE PROGRAMS WORK IN TANDEM
So how does one get Lightroom and Elements to work together? It’s easier than you might imagine. Let’s assume you’ve used Elements for some time and have a decent-size catalog containing several thousand images. (Yeah, digital images multiply like rabbits when left alone in those dark hard drives.) Let’s also assume you’ve added some keyword tags to your catalog. To preserve the time and effort you’ve invested in the catalog, you only need to use the Import from Elements command under the File menu in Lightroom. Lightroom will extract all the images and the keywords from the catalog and put them into a library in a single operation.

Once the images from the Elements catalog are in the Lightroom library, most people will import and manage future images from Lightroom rather than the Organizer in Elements. And if you’re using Elements on a Mac, you won’t even have to teach Elements and Lightroom to get along since you don’t have the Organizer.

Once you get your programs in sync, you can use them to together in many different ways. I generally use Lightroom to import, sort, and do the majority of my image enhancements, then switch to Elements for advanced editing, creating effects, and emailing photos. Of course, the needs of the photographer reign supreme here. Only you can determine what process works best for you, but here’s what a typical workflow might look like:

After importing your photos into Lightroom, the first step is to separate the keepers from the creepers. Most of the images can be enhanced at the same time. For photos that need extra attention, you can use the Develop module to crop, straighten, and remove red eye and sensor spots. It also has some really cool tools for color and tonal adjustments. But as great as they are, there will be a small percentage of images that require the tools found in Elements, such as plug-ins, layers, lens distortion correction, and filter effects.

For example, let’s assume you want to make a title screen for a slide show. The image shown selected here in Lightroom can be opened in Elements with a single keystroke (Ctrl-E [Mac: Command-E]). I applied a custom shape using the Cookie Cutter tool (Q) to create a painterly edge. Next, I applied a drop shadow to my text by clicking on the Add Text to Your Document icon at the top of the Artwork and Effects palette (Window>Artwork and Effects) and choosing Drop Shadow. (In Elements 4, open the Styles and Effects palette [Window>Styles and Effects] and choose Layer Styles from the left pop-up menu and Drop Shadows from the right.) By all means, do with your photo whatever your imagination dictates; don’t feel beholden to duplicate my modifications.

Viewing images in the Library module

Selecting an image from the Library module

Applying effects in Elements
Dave Huss has more than 25 years’ experience as a photographer and has authored more than 17 books on digital photography and digital photo editing. His latest book is Adobe Photoshop Elements 4: 50 Ways to Create Cool Pictures.

Once your photos are ready for prime time, you can make a slide show, create a Web gallery, or print them from Lightroom. What you can’t do is make a CD/DVD jacket, greeting card, calendar, or any of the other cool options available to you in Elements. You also can’t share your photos via email, a supremely convenient option Elements offers.

WON’T PHOTOSHOP DO A BETTER JOB?
In a word, no. Photoshop may be the industry standard for high-brow design work, but with its bells and whistles comes with a much higher learning curve and price tag. As much as some professionals eschew Elements as a product only fit for consumer photography, the fact of the matter is many professional photographers choose Elements over Photoshop because it has the important tools they need without the increased cost or headache. Plus, it has a whole host of single-click effects and features that can take newer Photoshop users years to learn.

I’ve been using Lightroom and Elements together for almost a year in my photography business. In the early Beta days of Lightroom, the ride was a little rocky, but now that Version 1.0 has been released, these two programs work very smoothly together. It’s especially been a real time saver for processing wedding photos—nay, make that a huge time saver with weddings. (Did I mention it’s really great for weddings?)

Download the 30-day trial version of Lightroom, view all the great Lightroom videos on NAPP’s website, and spend some time using both of them together. Before the 30 days are up, you’ll wonder how you ever got along without both of them.
lights, camera...couch!

JUST ASK ANY PARENT: SOME DAYS IT SEEMS LIKE THE KID IS EVERYWHERE! IN ANY ONE SITTING, JUNIOR CAN CYCLE THROUGH MULTIPLE STAGES OF ENERGY, ATTENTIVENESS, AND INDIFFERENCE—A PERFECT ILLUSTRATION OF LIFE’S DYNAMIC NATURE. OUR PROJECT CELEBRATES LIFE’S WONT TO CHANGE, OFTEN IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.

STEP ONE: You’ll need to plan out your poses before you start. For this project, I took 5–8 shots per pose and used five different poses. After you pick your favorite shot from each pose, copy them into a separate folder and rename the files to keep them organized. Don’t make any changes (cropping, lighting/color adjustments, etc.) to the images yet. When combining the images, we want them to be as identical as possible.

[To follow along, download the illustrations shown here by navigating to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com. You’ll also find tips and suggestions for strategizing your photo shoot.]

STEP TWO: First, we’ll get everything organized. Open all of your images in Elements by choosing File>Open, and make sure the Photo Bin is visible (Window>Photo Bin). You’ll also want to view your images one at a time, so you can see what you’re doing (Window>Images>Maximize Mode). The last thing you may want to do is put your images in order in the Photo Bin by clicking-and-dragging them into place, if they’re not already. Once you’re all set up, select the image you’ll be using for your base image (phase1.jpg, if you’re following along).
STEP THREE: With the Move tool (V) selected, drag your next image from the Photo Bin on top of your base image. (Note: If you’re using Version 4, you’ll need to open both images in Cascade mode, and Shift-drag one onto the other with the Move tool.) You’ll now have two layers: your base image as the Background and your copied image (phase2.jpg if you’re following along). You may now close your copied image by clicking on it in the Photo Bin and pressing Ctrl-W (Mac: Command-W).

STEP FOUR: To keep track of your images, you may want to rename your layers as you work on them. We renamed our copied layer “asleep.” To name your layer, double-click on the layer name in the Layers palette and type your new name.

STEP FIVE: Click on the top layer (“asleep” in our example) to make it active. Using the Lasso tool (L), draw a loose selection around the subject. To prevent sharp transition lines between the photos, go to Select>Feather, set your Feather Radius in the Feather Selection dialog, then click OK. You may need to experiment with the Feather Radius. The higher your image’s resolution, the more you’ll need. (We set ours to 10 px.)
STEP SIX: Now invert your selection (Select> Inverse), then press Backspace (Mac: Delete). This will delete everything except your subject, which should be positioned pretty close to where you want it, if you’re following along with the downloads. If you’re using your own photograph, you may need to use the Move tool or Arrow keys on the keyboard to tweak the positioning. Press Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D) to deselect.

STEP SEVEN: Some erasing may be necessary to smooth out the transition between the two images. If so, select the Eraser tool (E) and choose a fairly large, soft-edged brush. You may also find it helpful to lower the Eraser’s Opacity level in the Options Bar. You can temporarily switch to the Zoom tool by pressing Ctrl-Spacebar (Mac: Command-Spacebar) and zoom in on the area. In our example, we had to erase some ghosting on the awake boy’s arm and above the sleeping boy’s head.

STEP EIGHT: Repeat Steps Three through Seven for each pose. If you’ve been following along, you’ll have five layers. At this point, you may have to change the order of your layers in the Layers palette. For this example, we had to move the layer with the whispering boy below the layer where he is playing with the car. Otherwise, the boy’s arm in the car layer would have been hidden.
Mike Rodriguez holds a master’s degree in Educational Technology and has 15 years of teaching experience. He currently teaches classes in Photoshop Elements, as well as other computer applications.

**STEP NINE:** With all your layers visible, click on the top layer, press More at the top of the palette, and choose Merge Visible to create a merged layer of all your other layers. *(Note: Version 3 users will need to create a new blank layer as the top layer first.)*

**STEP TEN:** And now is the time to do any editing you’d like, such as cropping or adjusting your color, sharpness, brightness, etc. Finally, add a border and some text to complete the image. With a little patience and a lot of imagination, you can create a collage that combines reality and sheer enchantment to the amusement of all.

All images by Mike Rodriguez unless otherwise noted.
**Digital Editing**

**BY TERRY NOOAN**

**take your photo for a spin**

There are few photo-editing endeavors quite as fun as taking an ordinary photograph and creating something extraordinary out of it. In this project, we’ll take a picture of some garden-variety cherries and create wall-hanging material from it by lifting some layers, spinning them a bit, and colorizing the outer perimeters.

**STEP ONE:**
To start, double-click on the Background layer of your image in the Layers palette, then rename it Bottom. Using your Rectangular Marquee tool (M), make a selection in the center of your image, then press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to copy the selection onto its own layer. Rename this layer Top. Change the blend mode in the Layers palette to Multiply or Screen so you can see it. Now go back to the Background layer and repeat this process three more times, making each layer a little bigger than the one before. Rename the layers Green, Gold, and Brown as shown here. Then return the blend modes to Normal.

*To follow along, download the illustrations shown here by navigating to the subscriber area of [www.photoshopelementsuser.com](http://www.photoshopelementsuser.com).*

**STEP TWO:**
To add dimension to the layers, we’ll create a faux drop shadow below each one. First, activate your Top layer by clicking on it, then create a new layer underneath by Ctrl-clicking (Mac: Command-clicking) on the Create a New Layer icon. Next, Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) on the Top layer’s thumbnail to create a selection around the rectangular shape. Set your Foreground color to black by clicking on the Foreground swatch and selecting black from the Color Picker. Then press Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete) to fill the selection with black and deselect (Ctrl-D [Mac: Command-D]). Next, choose Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. In the Gaussian Blur dialog, set the Radius to your liking. Repeat this step for the other layers. (Tip: Press Ctrl-F [Mac: Command-F] after deselecting to reapply your previous blur settings.)
**STEP THREE:** Activate the Top layer, again, then go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. In the New Layer dialog that pops up, check Group With Previous Layer and click OK. This will open the Hue/Saturation dialog. Now reduce the Saturation and bump up the Lightness, then click OK. (We set Saturation to –80 and Lightness to 10.) Choose the Brush tool (B) and select a soft round brush. With the Foreground color set to black, paint the five berries to bring their color back. If you make a mistake, change the Foreground color to white and brush back over the colored areas.

**STEP FOUR:** Now we’ll add a white stroke to the Top and Bottom layers. First, create a new layer above the Hue/Saturation layer. Then Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) on the Top layer’s thumbnail to activate a selection. To add the white stroke, go to Edit>Stroke (Outline) Selection. In the Stroke dialog, set the Width to your liking (we used 5 px), Color to white, and Location to Inside. Then click OK and deselect. Next, select your Bottom layer and repeat this step, giving it an inside, white stroke a little wider than your Top layer’s stroke.

**STEP FIVE:** To start colorizing the outer layers, activate the Green layer and add another Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer like you did in Step Three, except this time check Colorize. Then move the Hue and Saturation sliders to the right, the Lightness slider to the left, and click OK. (We set ours to 65, 37, and –10, respectively.) Repeat this step for your other layers, adjusting these settings to your liking.
STEP SIX: Now let’s touch our photo off with a gradient-filled matte. First, activate your Bottom layer and create a new layer underneath. Next, go to Image>Resize>Canvas Size. In the Canvas Size dialog, enter 1” for both Width and Height, check Relative, then click OK. Choose your Foreground and Background colors by clicking on their swatches in the Toolbox and choosing from the Color Picker. (We used 4a3300 and b40000, respectively.) With the Gradient tool (G) selected, choose the Foreground to Background gradient, and make sure your Linear Gradient is selected. Click-and-drag your cursor from the right edge of the image to about the middle and release.

STEP SEVEN: To add some depth, we are going to use the Burn tool (nested under the Sponge tool). With the Burn tool and a soft brush selected, set Range to Midtones and Exposure to around 50%. Select the Top layer, increase your brush size to roughly half the size of your layer by pressing the Left and Right Bracket keys ([/]). In one continuous stroke, move your brush back and forth across your image, trying not to overlap where you already brushed. Repeat this step for the Green, Gold, Brown, and Bottom layers, running your brush around the outside edges.

STEP EIGHT: Link your Green layer with its shadow layer by Shift-clicking on both layers and pressing the Link Layers icon at the top of the Layers palette. Repeat with the Gold and Brown layers. Next, select the Green layer, press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) for Free Transform, rotate the layer about 45° to the left by dragging counter-clockwise outside the bounding box, then press Enter (Mac: Return) to accept. Repeat this step with the Gold layer, rotating it to the right, and the Brown layer, rotating it to the left. Finally, add a title and voilà—a wall hanging you can display with pride.

Terry Noonan is an Adobe Photoshop Elements Techniques subscriber and has used the resources on the website and the newsletter to hone her skills in Photoshop Elements.

All images by Terry Noonan unless otherwise noted.
I wanted to capture a fairy tale air to my niece’s homecoming photo to make it look like they were holding a memoir of their very special evening. In preparation, I posed them holding a soccer ball, then had my sister remove the ball and snapped several shots. Ultimately, I was able to use one homecoming photo as my background and another to place inside a water globe.

This tutorial uses a custom brush and layer style that are both available for download, as well as the starter images used here. Just navigate to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com. If you’re unsure of how to download and install these, check out Matt Kloskowski’s video tutorial, “Using Custom Brushes” by clicking on Tutorials.

STEP ONE: First, prepare both of the images you’ll be using by extracting them from their backgrounds using your favorite selection method. To clean up the edges, zoom in close by pressing Ctrl-+ (Mac: Command-+), select the Eraser tool (E), then clean up the edges of your selection with a Soft Round brush. Save both of these as their own documents. (To learn more about creating pristine selections in Elements, check out Dave Cross’s two-part tutorial, “Using the Selection Brush,” by navigating to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com and clicking on Tutorials.) Or, if you’re following along with the download, just open both images provided.

STEP TWO: Open the image you want to place inside your globe, then create a new layer above it by clicking the Create a New Layer icon in the Layers palette. Select the Elliptical Marquee tool (nested under the Rectangular Marquee tool [M]), click on a spot near the center of your image, and Alt-Shift-drag (Mac: Option-Shift-drag) a selection. Fill it with a light gray color by clicking the Foreground color swatch in the Toolbox, picking your color from the Color Picker, then pressing Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete). Then drag this layer below your image in the Layers palette.
STEP THREE: This step requires the cloud brushes I created for this tutorial. After you’ve downloaded them and saved them in your Presets folder, select the Brush tool (B). From the Brush Picker’s flyout menu choose Load Brushes. In the Load dialog, choose Nancy’s Clouds.abr and click Load. The six brushes included in the set will load in the Brush Picker window. Press D and then X to set your Foreground color to white.

STEP FOUR: Hide the layer with the couple by clicking on its Eye icon. Next, click on the layer with the gray circle, and create a new layer above it. Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) on the circle layer’s thumbnail to reload the circle selection. By loading the selection first, you’ll constrain your painting to stay inside the selection, thus protecting your background. Now just add a few brush strokes to create the background clouds. (You can experiment with different cloud brushes for varying effects.)

STEP FIVE: Select the layer with your image, and create a new layer above it. Then add a few more cloud strokes. The couple will now be sandwiched between your cloud layers. With all of the layers visible, choose Merge Visible from the Layers palette’s flyout menu.
STEP SIX: Now we’re going to add a bevel style from the set you installed, compliments of Jodi Frye. If you downloaded and installed the style, you’ll find it in the Artwork and Effects palette. Choose Layer Styles from the left drop-down menu and Jodi’s Clear Bevels 3 from the right. Now click-and-drag the Style 10 bevel onto your image. To make adjustments to the bevel, double-click the Effects icon next to the layer name. In the Style Settings dialog that pops up, tweak the settings until you’re happy with the effect, then click OK. Save your image.

STEP SEVEN: Select the image you’ll be moving your globe image into, then drag your globe image into it with the Move tool (V). Now position the globe image on the couple’s hands. To resize the globe to fit the hands, select the globe layer, press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T), and Shift-drag the corner handles of the bounding box to constrain the proportions. Then lower the Opacity of this layer in the Layers palette to around 40%. Next, use the Eraser tool to get rid of the parts of the globe that should be hidden by the fingers, but don’t worry about erasing the parts of the fingers that would be behind the globe.

STEP EIGHT: Return the Opacity of the globe layer back to 100%, and do any fine-tuning necessary with the Eraser tool. Now just create your own background and some text, and you’ve just designed the perfect keepsake to mark any extraordinary day.

Nancy Marti is a Photoshop Elements hobbyist, photographer, and scrapbook designer. She currently designs cards for the troops and does freelance template designs for wedding photographers. She’s also a Creative Design Team member at scrappersguide.com. Her website is www.marti-creations.com.

All images by Nancy Marti unless otherwise noted.
**Q** IS THERE A WAY TO PREVIEW THE FEATHERING OF A SELECTION?

**A** You bet. Open an image and create a selection with a selection tool of your choice. Next, create a new blank layer by clicking on the Create a New Layer icon in the Layers palette. With that new layer active, press Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete) to fill your selection with the Foreground color. Press Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D) to deselect, and go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Make sure Preview is checked, change the Radius until the blur amount matches the amount of feathering you'd like, and press OK. Next, Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) the layer thumbnail to select it. Delete that blurred layer by dragging it onto the Trash icon, leaving your selection on the image. To put your selection on its own layer, Press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). Hide the Background layer by clicking the Eye icon next to the layer thumbnail, and you should see a nicely feathered cutout of your selection.

**Q** WHEN I TAG AN IMAGE USING THE ORGANIZER IN ELEMENTS 5, THE TAG ICON APPEARS FOR A MOMENT, THEN DISAPPEARS. HOW DO I KNOW IF IT WAS APPLIED?

**A** Look below the image thumbnail. If you don't see anything, go to the View menu and make sure Details is selected (Ctrl-D [Mac: Command-D]). If Details is selected, here’s a possibility: When you drag a tag to an image, the tag icon stays in the bottom-left corner of the photo thumbnail for a few seconds and then disappears. In the bottom-right corner, below the thumbnail, a small icon should appear. The icon will vary, depending on the category of the tag. That icon indicates the image has been assigned a tag. Hover your mouse over the icon to see the name of the tag. You can also add multiple tags to the same image.

**Q** HOW CAN I CREATE A ROUNDED RECTANGLE SELECTION?

**A** If you create a rectangular selection and increase the feathering (Select>Feather), you'll get a rounded rectangular selection, but the edges will be blurred by the feather. So what if you want a crisp selection? Easy. Locate the Shape tool (U) in the Toolbox and choose the Rounded Rectangle tool. In the Options Bar, you can change the pixel Radius for rounder corners. (We used 60 px.) Draw a rounded rectangle over the desired area of your image, then go to Edit>Fill Layer, choose 50% Gray, and press OK. Change the blend mode of the Shape 1 layer to Overlay to hide the gray, leaving an outline of your shape. Adjust the size if necessary, then Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) the Shape 1 thumbnail in the Layers palette to select it. Delete the Shape 1 layer, leaving a rounded rectangle selection on your image.

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If you have a Photoshop Elements question you’d like to see in this column, please send it to mrodriguez@photoshopelementsuser.com. If your question just can't wait, visit our Photoshop Elements forum at www.photoshopelementsuser.com/forum to get answers from other members. (But still feel free to send your question along for publishing.)
Spotlight, please! Matt Kloskowski demonstrates how to add drama to your photo with a few simple selection and Levels tricks. You’ll learn how to add contrast without sacrificing the velvety softness formerly exclusive to studio-born portraits. To view this video tutorial, navigate to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com.

You’ll find tons of useful resources online at the Adobe®

Photoshop® Elements Techniques subscriber area:
- 21-day Online Elements Course
- Discussion Forums: Join our online community!
- Amazing print and video tutorials
- Downloadable plug-ins & brushes
- Online Gallery to share your images

BY MATT KLOSKOWSKI

Before

After

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