ELEMENTS SIX

TOP TEN
Check out the 10 best features of Elements 6, p8

COLOR MANAGEMENT
101
Learn how to print exactly what you see onscreen, p16

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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.
Wow! Another year has gone by, and another new version of Photoshop Elements is here again. As you know, we like to keep you on top of things, so we've asked Corey Barker, the host of the top-rated video cast Photoshop Elements Killer Tips, to give you the lowdown on everything you need to know about the new Photoshop Elements 6.0.

Also, with every new version of Elements we typically get one very important question: Will you still cover the previous version in your tutorials? The answer is a resounding yes! In fact, if you look back through the previous years’ tutorials, you’ll notice that the overwhelming majority of what we cover will work all the way back to version 3.

We’re also continuing our tradition of providing inquiring minds with more on the Web. Dave Huss has written a great feature article on color management and has included online resources for those of you who need a little extra help calibrating your monitor.

Every time we think things have settled down a bit, there are new things to come along and keep us on our toes. We love this stuff though, so we wouldn’t have it any other way. See you next time!

Matt Kloskowski
Editor-in-Chief
mattk@photoshopelementsuser.com
Step by Step

Digital Darkroom
BY MATT KLOSKOWSKI

a touch of urban

LET'S LOOK AT HOW TO CREATE AN OVER-SATURATED, CROSS-PROCESSED, AND HIGH-CONTRAST IMAGE—OTHERWISE KNOWN AS LOMOGRAPHY-STYLE PHOTOGRAPHY (OR "LOMO" PHOTOGRAPHY). I'VE SEEN IT USED ON PHOTOS THAT WEREN'T ANYTHING GREAT BUT BECAME QUITE INTERESTING. WE'LL EXPLORE HOW TO RECREATE THIS STYLE IN PHOTO-SHOP ELEMENTS, AFTER THE SHOT HAS ALREADY BEEN TAKEN.

STEP ONE: Open a photo to use for this exercise. Because the Lomo style is an informal technique, it's often seen in grungy, urban-style photos that, by themselves, look somewhat ordinary.

STEP TWO: First, let's boost the Saturation. Click the Create Adjustment Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette and choose Hue/Saturation.
STEP THREE: In the Hue/Saturation dialog, check Preview and move the Saturation slider toward the right to around 30 (more or less depending on the resolution of your photo). Click OK when you're finished. You'll see the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer appear above the Background layer in the Layers palette.

STEP FOUR: The next step involves giving the photo a little contrast boost. Click on the Background layer and create another adjustment layer, as you did in Step Two, only this time choose Brightness/Contrast from the drop-down menu. In the Brightness/Contrast dialog, check Preview and drag the Contrast slider to the right to around 30–35 (again, depending on your resolution). Click OK to confirm your settings and close the dialog.

STEP FIVE: Now let's play around with the color a little to give the photo a cross-processed look and feel to it. With the Background layer selected again, add a Levels adjustment layer this time. In the Levels dialog, switch the Channel setting from RGB to Red by choosing it from the drop-down menu. Then drag the middle gray slider to the right until you have a noticeable green color cast. Don't click OK yet.
STEP SIX: While still in the Levels dialog, switch the Channel setting to Green. Drag the black slider inward toward the right and the white slider toward the left (just a little for both). This adds a little contrast and enhances the details in the highlights and shadows. Click OK when you’re finished to close the Levels dialog.

STEP SEVEN: Next let’s flatten the image so we can add some edge darkening (another classic Lomo effect). I hate to just flatten everything, however, and lose my changes. Remember, we’ve used adjustment layers, so we can always go back and change the settings by double-clicking the layer thumbnails. So instead of flattening permanently, try this: Click once on the topmost layer, then press Alt-Shift-Ctrl-E (Mac: Option-Shift-Command-E)…whew! Elements will create a new flattened layer of everything in your Layers palette, but your layers will still be intact. Cool, huh?

STEP EIGHT: Finally, let’s add a vignette effect to get that edge darkening we’re looking for. Choose Filter>Correct Camera Distortion (Photoshop Elements 5 only). Under Vignette, move the Amount slider toward the left to ~60. Adjust the Midpoint setting to around 30, then click OK. As you can see, this effect isn’t for every photo but it’s a very creative way to make an ordinary photo look like something more. Give it a try!
ADOBE HAS JUST UNVEILED ITS LATEST AND GREATEST IN CASUAL DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY EDITING: PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 6. I’VE SIFTED THROUGH THE ENHANCEMENTS AND NEW FEATURES AND PICKED OUT TEN OF THESE NEW FEATURES THAT ARE TRULY WORTH THE UPGRADE. SO LET’S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THESE MUST-HAVE FEATURES.

**STREAMLINED INTERFACE**

The most obvious change when you look at the new Elements is its overhauled interface. With a look that some say is similar to its cousin, Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, it’s darker and less cluttered than its predecessors, focusing your attention more on your photo than palettes and tools. The overall placement of items and tools is more simplified, and colored tabs indicate which working mode you’re in: Edit, Create, or Share in the Editor and Organize, Fix, Create, and Share in the Organizer (more on this later). Under each tab are the primary functions relevant to each working mode, and most of them offer step-by-step instructions. So there’s no guesswork. Just open your images and get through the process quickly and easily.

**REFINED SELECTION OPTIONS**

The Quick Selection tool (A) was recently introduced in Photoshop CS3 and now in Elements 6. It’s definitely one of the best selection tools you’ll ever use. Similar to the Selection Brush tool (now nested under the Quick Selection tool), it makes a selection based on the color and texture of the area you’re painting in. Even in relatively low-contrast images, the edge detection is remarkable.

In addition to this, there’s also the Refine Edge feature, available from the Options Bar when the Quick Selection tool is selected. This feature allows you to fine-tune your selection a bit more by setting the Smoothness, Feathering, and Contract/Expand amount. It also gives you the ability to view the selection in standard “marching ants” mode or Custom Overlay Color mode, which is similar to the Quick Mask mode in Photoshop. This preview option is very useful because when you’re feathering or smoothing a selection, you can see how much blurring is taking place.
GUIDED EDIT
If you’re relatively new to Elements, the Guided Edit mode may just be your new best friend. Guided Edit walks you through the most common image correction, restoration, and retouching techniques to soften the learning curve and allow you to start correcting your photos as quickly and easily as possible. The beauty here is that you’re learning as you work. It’s like having your own personal tutor built right into the software.

PHOTOMERGE FOR GROUP SHOTS AND FACES
Now these are two features that may have users wondering how they survived without them. Accessible from the File> New menu, the new Photomerge tools make it easier than ever to combine the best parts of multiple images into one composite image.

The new Group Shot feature provides an interface that displays both the source image and the final image. You can align group photos shot against similar backgrounds, then use the Pencil and Eraser tools to paint in the good parts of one image over the bad parts of the other, resulting in a highly refined shot. Don’t worry if this sounds complicated, Elements helps you through the process with simple explanations for each step.

Similarly, the Faces feature allows you to align different pictures of the same face and blend them, just as you would with Group Shot.

ENHANCED RETOUCHING TOOLS
Good retouching is perhaps one of the hardest things to do to a photo, so any change or improvement to the retouching tools is always a welcome one. The Clone Stamp tool (S) and the Healing Brush tool (J) have a new feature that allows you to view a semitransparent image overlay of your source image for better alignment.

Here’s how they work: When you select either tool, you can activate Overlay in the Options Bar by clicking on the icon to the far right, then checking Show Overlay in the pop-up menu that opens just below. In this menu you can change its Opacity (which is set at 25% by default) and choose to automatically hide the overlay the moment you begin painting (by checking Auto Hide). It also lets you invert the values of the overlay for visibility’s sake, which can be helpful when working on very light or very dark images.

The images we started Photomerge with
We replaced the dad’s head and a portion of his shoulder that had been covered up
ARTWORK AND EFFECTS PART WAYs
Sometimes our creativity needs a little boost. Elements provides this in the form of a large library of preset backgrounds, themes, and artwork. No news there; that’s the essence of Photoshop Elements. However, in Elements 6, your options are even more robust and easier to use.

One noteworthy change though is that the Artwork & Effects palette (Elements 4: Styles and Effects palette) has been divided into two separate palettes. The Effects palette is under the Edit tab, and the Artwork palette is under the Create tab. But they both function much the same way they have in previous versions.

In the Effects palette, there are four icons at the top: Filters, Layer Styles, Photo Effects, and All. Pretty self-explanatory.

One new feature with the Artwork palette, however, is the ability to search the content by specifying a category, such as By Type, Activity, Color, Event, Mood, etc.

Another enhancement in this version is the ability to expand palettes, much like you can with Photoshop CS3. Just click the double arrows in the top-right corner of the palette to toggle between the expanded and collapsed palette views.

STREAMLINED ORGANIZER
The new Organizer has a host of new improvements. Besides the obvious interface change, the windows and panels have been simplified with easier navigation. As you saw earlier, the Organizer also features the colored tabs you saw in the Editor, which assist you in organizing, fixing, creating, and sharing your masterpieces.

And there’s method to Adobe’s madness. These tabs are organized with a typical workflow in mind, leading you right through the creative process. So, theoretically, you could complete an entire project from start to finish without ever straying from the Organizer. If you’re managing an insane number of photos, this can be a huge time saver, which is important because we should be out there shooting and not inside tethered to a computer, right?
SIMPLE FIXES
Under the Fix tab in the Organizer are a number of auto-correction tools that enable you to apply simple image processing, such as adjustments to color, levels, contrast, and sharpening, as well as Auto Red Eye Fix and Crop options. The idea here is that you can organize, correct, and process multiple photos in one easy interface.

The Fix palette also has buttons that link to the Quick Fix, Full Edit, and Guided Edit modes, if you need to make more complex adjustments or composite photos. Under More Options, you can even choose to edit the image with an external editor such as Adobe Photoshop.

SHARING TECHNOLOGY
Elements 6 has added new and easy ways to share photos under the Share tab, accessible from either the Editor or Organizer. You’re able to generate custom photo emails, burn to a CD or DVD, and even email to a mobile device, such as a cell phone or PDA.

Perhaps one of the coolest of these is the ability to create a fully interactive Adobe Flash-enabled photo gallery that you can easily post online. Just click on the Online Gallery icon, and Elements literally walks you through the steps to create an impressive, fully customizable, interactive Flash gallery. Without an iota of programming experience, you can build a gallery from scratch and publish it to a CD or website. How cool is that?

SMART ALBUMS
Smart Albums make it possible to sort through a large number of photos by creating albums based on specific search criteria. For instance, you can sort images by camera model, shutter speed, date, keywords...you name it.

To create a Smart Album, go into the Organizer and click on the Organize tab (at the risk of sounding redundant). In the Albums palette, click-and-hold the down-facing arrow next to the Plus icon at the top of the palette and select New Smart Album. In the New Smart Album dialog, assign a name for your album and enter your criteria, then click OK.

Once you generate a Smart Album and define the criteria, Elements searches your folders and shows only the images that meet the search criteria. Because the Smart Album is saved, you can search for images based on whatever criteria you’ve assigned by simply clicking the Smart Album icon that was added to the palette when you created the album.

I’ve only barely touched on the power of some of the new features that come with the souped-up Elements 6—not to mention its overall improved performance. Launching the program and viewing and sorting through hundreds—even thousands—of images is much quicker. (That really doesn’t do it justice, but I just had to fit it in.) So Elements users unite and rejoice, for our lives are getting just a little easier...well, when it comes to our photos at least.
whimsical woodcut

IN DAYS OF OLD, ARTISTS CREATED BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK BY CARVING AN IMAGE INTO A PIECE OF WOOD WITH A KNIFE OR CHISEL, COVERING IT WITH INK, THEN STAMPING, ROLLING, OR RUBBING THEIR CREATION ONTO FABRIC OR PAPER. TODAY, THIS TECHNIQUE CAN BE REPRODUCED USING A COUPLE FILTERS BUILT INTO PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS.

STEP ONE: Open the photo in Elements and immediately press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to duplicate the Background layer. Turn the visibility of the Background layer off by clicking the Eye icon to the left of its layer in the Layers palette. Duplicating the Background layer is purely a self-protective move, giving you the ability to toss everything but the original layer and be safely back at square one.

STEP TWO: From the Filter menu, choose Adjustments>Gradient Map. In the Gradient Map dialog, click the down-facing triangle to the right of the Gradient Picker, then click the right-facing arrow to open the flyout menu. Choose Pastels from the flyout menu's list.
STEP THREE: From the available pastel gradient swatches, click once on the Brown, Tan, Beige swatch (the last one on the list), then click OK to close the Gradient Map dialog. Tip: For a different color scheme, try experimenting with other gradient color combinations. You’re not required by law to stick with gradients from the Pastels category.

STEP FOUR: From the Filter menu, choose Artistic>Poster Edges. In the Poster Edges dialog, adjust the sliders so that the subject of the photo has a thick, black outline. (We set Edge Thickness to 2, Edge Intensity to 5, and Posterization to 2.) These settings will vary, depending on the amount of contrast in the image. Click OK when you’re finished.

STEP FIVE: To accentuate the photo, you can add a thick black border around the edge. First, choose Edit>Stroke (Outline) Selection. In the Stroke dialog, set Width to somewhere around 5 px, Color to black by clicking on the color swatch, Location to Inside, then click OK to continue.
STEP SIX: For a more studio effect, let’s create two more images to go on either side. Simply choose two more photos and apply the same steps to each one. To make room for the new images in your first woodcut image, choose Image>Resize>Canvas Size. Set Width to 300% (to make the document three times wider), Height to 125%, and click the top-center square in the Anchor grid. This will place the woodcut at the top center of the document and have some room left over for text below. Next, set Canvas Extension Color to white, and click OK.

STEP SEVEN: Create a new layer below your image layer by Ctrl-clicking (Mac: Command-clicking) the Create a New Layer icon in the Layers palette. Next, fill the new layer with white by pressing D to set the Foreground and Background swatches to their default colors (black and white, respectively), then press Ctrl-Backspace (Mac: Command-Delete).

STEP EIGHT: From here, it’s just a matter of dragging the other two woodcuts into the larger document with the Move tool (V) and aligning the top edges. (Tip: Choose View>Grid to make this easier and also to add equal amounts of space in between each one.) Add a quick caption with the Type tool (T), and you’ve created a picture worthy of framing. Until next time, may the creative force be with you all!
color management 101

BY DAVE HUSS

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF COLOR MANAGEMENT IS TO MAKE THE COLORS OF THE PHOTO YOU WANT TO PRINT MATCH THE COLORS OF THE IMAGE THAT APPEARS ON YOUR DISPLAY. TO KEEP YOUR EXPECTATIONS REALISTIC, YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR PRINTED PHOTOS WILL NEVER LOOK EXACTLY LIKE THE ONES DISPLAYED ON YOUR MONITOR. WHY? BECAUSE THE IMAGE ON YOUR DISPLAY IS COMPOSED OF PIXELS THAT TRANSMIT LIGHT, WHILE THE PIGMENT OR DYES ON YOUR PHOTOS REFLECT LIGHT. BIG DIFFERENCE. BUT THERE ARE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS TO MAKE THE COLORS PRODUCED BY YOUR FAVORITE PRINTER GET PRETTY DARN CLOSE TO WHAT YOU SEE ON YOUR SCREEN.

After you’ve calibrated your monitor, you’ll probably notice a slight shift in desktop colors than what you were used to.

Color management attempts to compensate for the fact that computer monitors and printers reproduce a different range of colors. This range of colors is called a color gamut. As an image moves from your digital camera to your monitor and finally your printer, the colors shift slightly. This shift occurs because every device has a different color gamut and, thus, reproduces color differently.

The range of colors that a device can reproduce is defined in a software file called a profile. The profile for a device is provided by its manufacturer and reflects the general color range of the unit. As colors reproduced by your printer are affected by many factors—such as age, temperature, quality of ink, and type/quality of paper being used—its color profile doesn’t always precisely reflect its color capabilities. To resolve this, many professionals calibrate their equipment and create custom profiles.

The color management system used in Photoshop Elements, when enabled, reads each color profile and translates the image colors so that each device reproduces them in the same way. This way, the colors you see on your monitor will be close to the colors in your printed image. Not all of the colors will match exactly because one device may not reproduce the same range of colors as another.
CALIBRATE YOUR MONITOR

The first and most important step is to calibrate the device profile for your monitor, which ensures that the colors displayed on your monitor are accurate. So how do you calibrate your monitor?

When you installed Photoshop Elements, you also installed the Adobe Gamma Utility, which is a rudimentary color calibration application that works great if you’re using a CRT monitor (the bulkier monitors typical to desktop computers) and a trained eye.

Adobe Gamma is a wizard-style application that takes you through the calibration process step by step. While it isn’t terribly accurate, it’s free and better than not performing any kind of calibration at all. After you’ve calibrated your CRT monitor, you should make a point of repeating the process every month.

But what if you’re using an LCD monitor? There are many diverse opinions on the subject of how to use Adobe Gamma with LCD monitors, but the cold hard fact is that Adobe's support site clearly states that Adobe Gamma doesn’t support LCD monitors.

After you’ve calibrated your monitor, you’ll probably notice a slight shift in desktop colors than what you were used to. There’s a tendency for the noncalibrated colors to seem preferable to the calibrated one. This is because you’ve become accustomed to it and not necessarily because the original colors were better.

SET UP YOUR COLOR SPACE

Another aspect to color management is color space. Think of color space as a set of rules that determines the overall limits of the color devices. In Photoshop Elements there are two different color spaces that can be used: sRGB and Adobe RGB. Many people who work with color management have strong opinions as to which color space is best. Many don’t like sRGB for reasons that would take another ten pages to explain. But—like it or not—it’s the color space of choice in Photoshop Elements and that of most consumer digital cameras. In my opinion, the difference between the sRGB and the Adobe RGB color space is so slight, in most cases the same image printed in both spaces will appear identical.

To set up your Photoshop Elements color management, choose Edit>Color Settings. In the Color Settings dialog that pops up, choose one of the following color management options:
• No Color Management: If you select this setting, your image remains untagged, meaning that it won’t have a profile assigned to it. Without color management enabled, Photoshop Elements uses your monitor profile as the working space and removes any embedded profiles that were attached to your image (such as your digital camera) when they’re opened. It also doesn’t add a profile when saving the image.

• Always Optimize Colors for Computer Screens: This is the default setting and best choice if you’re only going to be sharing and viewing your photos online. With this setting selected, Elements uses sRGB as the working space. It uses the embedded profiles that are attached to images and assigns sRGB when opening an image file that doesn’t have a profile attached to it. Many online photo printing services prefer this setting for images that you upload to them, but you need to check with the service you’re using to be sure.

• Always Optimize for Printing: This setting uses Adobe RGB as the working space. It preserves embedded profiles on images that are opened, and assigns Adobe RGB when opening untagged images. Adobe RGB has a larger gamut of colors than sRGB.

• Allow Me to Choose: The previous two color management settings are applied to every image that’s opened or closed. However, this setting lets you choose sRGB (default) or Adobe RGB whenever you open an untagged image file.

CHOOSE WHICH ONE DOES THE HEAVY LIFTING:
When printing on your own home printer, you need to check with the printer manufacturer to see what settings they recommend for using their printer with Photoshop Elements. Most photo printers give you the ability to choose if you want the application (in this case Elements) or the printer to manage the colors. Not surprisingly, many major printer manufacturers recommend that you allow their printer to handle the color management since a majority of their customers don’t calibrate their monitors.

Paper also plays an important role in color management. Therefore, you need to make sure your printer setup shows the same paper that you’re actually printing on. To do this, first go to File>Page Setup. In the Page Setup dialog, click Properties, which will open the dialog for the printer you’ve connected to your computer. Just click on the Paper/Quality Tab and set your Paper Type by choosing a type from the drop-down list. If you don’t do this, you may experience some color shifts in the printing process.

That’s all there is to setting up color management using Photoshop Elements. The key steps to effectively use color management with Photoshop Elements are to calibrate your monitor, set up your color space, and make sure you have the right paper setting.

[For additional resources germane to color management, navigate to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com and click on Extras.]

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.
If you’ve zoomed in on a photo, looking for specs of dust or other blemishes to retouch, here’s a great way to work through your image without missing anything. Rather than manually scrolling through your document (and risk missing some problem areas), use these keys on your keyboard to move your screen view:

• Page Up/Down: moves the image up or down one full screen.
• Ctrl-Page Up/Down (Mac: Command-Page Up/Down): moves the image left or right one full screen
• Home: moves to the upper-left corner
• End: moves to the lower-right corner.

Although the Auto Levels command (found under the Enhance menu) will adjust your photo quickly—often with very good results—it’s not possible to edit the results after you’ve saved the image. Alternatively, try adding a Levels adjustment layer by clicking on the Create Adjustment Layer icon in the Layers palette and choosing Levels from the drop-down list. Instead of adjusting the Input or Output Levels, just click Auto in the Levels dialog. The resulting adjustment will be the same, but you’ll have an editable adjustment layer, if you want to tweak the results.

If you’ve made a selection that’s not rectangular, and you want to crop the document to the smallest size around your selection, try this: After making a selection, use Image>Crop, and the document will be cropped to the smallest rectangular size to fit your selected area.

Tip: If this doesn’t work, you probably have some renegade pixels selected elsewhere in your image—particularly if you used a more global selection tool like the Magic Wand tool (W). You may need to zoom in to spot them. Then delete them by pressing the Alt key (Mac: Option key) with the selection tool of your choice to remove them from your selection.
4 Ever want to turn a layer into a separate document? No problem. In the Layers palette, click the More menu and choose Duplicate Layer from the drop-down list. In the Duplicate Layer dialog that pops up, change Destination to New, name your new file, then click OK. Note: Using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to duplicate the layer won’t work because you don’t get the Duplicate Layer dialog.

5 Scrubby sliders are a great way to quickly adjust settings that give you a continuous range of options in dialogs, palettes, and the Options Bar (such as Opacity, Size, and many of the settings under the Filter menu). Just hover over the name of the field you want to adjust and click-and-drag to the left to lower the setting or to the right to increase it. However, there are some fields that don’t have a name. So what do you do? Simple. Just hold down the Ctrl key (Mac: Command key) as you hover over one of those “nameless” fields, and the scrubby slider will appear.

6 A document that contains many layers can make for a large file size and take a while to open. If you want to open the file as a flattened version (without layers), choose File>Open as you normally would. However, after navigating to your document in the Open dialog’s browser, hold down the Alt and Shift keys (Mac: Option and Shift keys) while you click Open. A dialog will pop up, asking if you want to read the “composite data” instead. That’s basically geek speak for “Do you want to open a flattened image?” Click OK to open a flattened version.

Two important notes about this function: First, it will only work if you have the Maximize PSD File Compatibility set to Always in your Preferences. You can check on this preference by pressing Ctrl-K (Mac: Command-K) to bring up the Preferences dialog, then choose Saving Files from the top-left drop-down menu. It’s under File Compatibility. Second, and very important, don’t save your document, or it will overwrite your original layered file! Let’s repeat that very important warning: Use File>Save As rather than Save. This very important caveat suggests that this function is probably best used to take a quick peek at a flattened document, rather than work on the actual file.

7 For a simple way to add a color tint to a photo that’s fully editable, try this: Add a Solid Color adjustment layer by clicking the Add Adjustment Layer icon in the Layers palette and choosing Solid Color from the drop-down menu. Next, choose the Foreground color you want from the Color Picker and click OK. Now change the blend mode to Color (near the bottom of the drop-down menu) and your photo will be tinted. If it’s too intense, simply lower the Opacity in the Layers palette by dragging its scrubby slider to the left (remember that tip?). To experiment with other colors, double-click on the layer thumbnail (the one on the left) to reopen the Color Picker. As you drag over different colors, you’ll see a preview of your photo with the new tint.
create a euro-style background

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I ATTENDED A CLASS WHERE AUTHOR AND PHOTOGRAPHER SCOTT KELBY TAUGHT HOW TO USE JUST ABOUT ANY PICTURE TO CREATE A MODERN, EUROPEAN ABSTRACT IMAGE. IT’S A COOL EFFECT THAT I’VE SEEN ON DISPLAY IN VARIOUS PLACES. BUT I RECENTLY SAW SOMEONE USE THIS TECHNIQUE TO CREATE A COMPLEMENTARY BACKGROUND, WHICH I THOUGHT WAS PRETTY CLEVER. HERE’S HOW IT WORKS.

STEP ONE: While this works best for still lifes and landscapes, open any image worth framing and choose the Rectangular Marquee tool (M). In the Options Bar, set Mode to Fixed Size, Width to 1 px, and Height to the height of your document. (If you don’t know the height, enter a really large value that’s greater than your document.)

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

STEP TWO: Before you make a selection, press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to put a copy of your image on a new layer. Then click anywhere in your document and a marquee selection 1 px wide will appear. Press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to place that selection on its own layer.
STEP THREE: Press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) to summon Free Transform. Click the center handle and drag it to the right edge of your workspace to stretch your selection. Next, drag the left edge of your selection to the left outer edge of your document. Once your 1-pixel selection is stretched to the entire width of your image, press Enter (Mac: Return) to confirm the transformation. Click this layer’s Eye icon in the Layers palette to turn off its visibility.

STEP FOUR: Click Layer 1 in the Layers palette to make your image layer the active layer again. Then repeat Steps Two and Three, but this time click a different spot from your original 1-pixel selection to add variety. After committing, flip that layer (Image>Rotate>Layer 180º) and hide the layer.

STEP FIVE: Now turn on the visibility of the bottom stretched layer by clicking where the Eye icon was and select the layer. Next, create a new blank layer in between the stretched pixel layers by clicking the Create a New Layer icon in the Layers palette. Press D to set Foreground and Background to their default colors (black and white, respectively). Select the Gradient tool (G), choose Foreground to Transparent from the Gradient Picker in the Options Bar, and drag the Gradient tool horizontally across your entire image (we dragged from right to left).
STEP SIX: Click on the layer that's just above your new gradient to make it the active layer, turn on its visibility, and press Ctrl-G (Mac: Command-G) to Group with Previous. This grouping will make your upper stretched layer disappear wherever there's black in your gradient layer, so the two stretched layers will now blend into a nice Euro background.

STEP SEVEN: Drag Layer 1 to the top position in your Layers palette, then press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) to make the transform handles appear. Drag (Elements 4: Shift-drag) a corner handle toward the center to scale your original image and reveal the Euro backdrop you just made. Position the small image where you want it and press Enter (Mac: Return) to confirm the scaling.

STEP EIGHT: Finally, to really set your original image off from the background, add a couple of image effects from the Artwork and Effects palette (Elements 4: Styles and Effects palette). We added a drop shadow set to High and inner glow to set it off, but you can finish yours off however you want. Then just print your masterpiece and glow with pride.

All images by Larry Becker unless otherwise noted.
A NEWSPAPER PAGE IS A WONDERFUL WAY TO JOURNAL A MEMORABLE EVENT OR OCCASION, ESPECIALLY FOR EVENTS THAT BEG FURTHER EXPLANATION. IN THE EXAMPLE SHOWN HERE, I USED SOME PHOTOS FROM AN ADVENTUROUS FAMILY TRIP TO THE ZOO. BUT YOU CAN ALSO USE THIS SAME TECHNIQUE FOR WEDDINGS, PARTIES, SCHOOL EVENTS... YOU NAME IT.

STEP ONE: Start by choosing a theme and two-to-three photos that capture its essence. Create a new document (File>New>Blank File). In the New dialog, name your document, then set Width to 8", Height to 10", and Resolution to 300 ppi. Look at a newspaper to get an idea of how they’re set up, and on a piece of paper, pencil out a rough sketch of how you want to set up your page.

STEP TWO: Next, we need some gridlines to line everything up. First, make your rulers visible (View>Rulers), then select the Line tool, which is embedded under the Rectangle tool (U). In the Options Bar, set Weight to 1 px and Color to red. Shift-drag your first vertical line at the 0.5" mark. (Holding down the Shift key keeps your line straight.) Next, click the Add to Shape Area icon in the Options Bar to keep all your lines on the same layer. Continue making vertical lines at the 2.5", 3", 5", 5.5", and 7.5" marks to create a template.
STEP THREE: Pick a suitable name for your newspaper, choose the Horizontal Type tool (T), format your text in the Options Bar, then click to start typing. After you’re finished typing, use the Move tool (V) to reposition it. With the Move tool still selected, drag a logo into place somewhere in the nameplate. Next, select the Line tool again, set its Weight to 6 px and Color to black. Shift-drag a couple of horizontal lines under the nameplate in the same way you added the gridlines in Step Two, then switch back to the Horizontal Type tool and enter some header information. A good font to use for this is Minion Pro.

STEP FOUR: Add your main photo by opening the image in Elements (File->Open), then dragging from the Photo Bin into your current document with the Move tool. Press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) to summon Free Transform, drag one of the corner handles (Elements 4: Shift-drag) to fit inside your column, then press Enter (Mac: Return) to commit. To add a stroke, go to Edit->Stroke (Outline) Selection. In the Stroke dialog, set Width to 2 px, Color to black (or whatever color looks good for your layout), and Location to Inside to get crisp corners.

STEP FIVE: For the text, first set the formatting for the font you want in the Options Bar. Then drag out a text box with the Horizontal Type tool to make sure that your text remains confined to your columns. Click inside the text box and either paste text that’s been copied from another document (Edit>Paste) or type it in.
Pauline Washburn has been a Photoshop Elements enthusiast since February 2005. In addition to her work with Elements, she’s been recognized by the Corel Painter Official Magazine for her painterly techniques.

**STEP SIX:** To complete your page, you might like to add an advertisement. I had taken a picture of the zoo prices listed at the front gate, as well as another sign I saw in the zoo. These made great advertisements and lent a touch of authenticity to the page. You can also add a decorative element to divide the advertisement from the rest of the material. To find the ones that come with Elements, select the Custom Shape tool (also nested under the Rectangle tool), then click the down-facing arrow next to the Shape icon and choose Ornaments from the flyout menu.

**STEP SEVEN:** Sometimes newspapers and magazines will break up the monotony of a page by adding some color to one of the columns or a sidebar. To do this, select the Rectangle tool and choose its Color in the Options Bar. Or you can sample a color from one of your images by clicking on it with the Eyedropper tool (I) and set your Foreground color that way. Then just drag out a rectangle the width of the right column. To get it behind the text and image in that column, drag its layer below the others in the Layers palette. Add any other embellishments you want, print the page, and enjoy your late-breaking scrapbook page!

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**Metro Zoo News**

October 17, 2007  
Visitors Run Wild!  
Vol. 28, Issue 13

**The Get Away**

Two teens seen fleeing the scene of the crime today.

It was a busy day today for Metro Zoo officials. Two teenage girls who have yet to be identified were caught fleeing the scene of the crime. These girls broke into several off-limit areas. They were also seen feeding the animals which is prohibited.

Following a foot chase, the girls proceeded to steal one of the Safari vehicles, and the driver sped off before her partner in crime could even enter the vehicle as seen in the photo above.

The lead felon has blonde hair, hazel eyes, approximately 5'4" and 115-120 lb. The other has dark brown hair, brown eyes, approximately 5'4"–5'5" and 120-125 lb. These girls may look innocent but are to be considered very dangerous.

The police are asking for anyone with any information to please step forward and help assist them in capturing these dangerous girls. A $500 reward is being offered.

If you have any information regarding the identity of these girls, please contact local police at 426-HELP.

Pauline Washburn has been a Photoshop Elements enthusiast since February 2005. In addition to her work with Elements, she’s been recognized by the Corel Painter Official Magazine for her painterly techniques.

All images by Pauline Washburn unless otherwise noted.
pen, ink & watercolors

IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH, WE SEE A BEAUTIFUL NEW MEXICAN MORNING WASHING OVER THREE COLORFUL BENCHES. THE BACKGROUND IS FULL OF INTERESTING DETAILS, INCLUDING ANTLERS AND HAND-TOSSED POTTERY. WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS, WE CAN TURN THIS PHOTO INTO AN INK-AND-WATERCOLOR RENDERING.

**STEP ONE:** Open your image, then duplicate the Background layer by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). It’s always a good idea to copy your Background layer before doing any digital editing to preserve your original photo. Double-click on the word Layer 1 in the Layers palette and name the new layer Edges.

[To follow along, download the photograph shown here by navigating to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelements-user.com.]

**STEP TWO:** With the new layer selected, go to Filter>Stylize>Find Edges. The Find Edges filter isolates the edges of your photo and dynamically traces them with a dark line. This gives the photo the look of a pen-and-ink drawing.

**STEP THREE:** Now let’s add the watercolors. Change the Edges layer’s blend mode from Normal to Overlay in the Layers palette. Imagine yourself projecting one slide on top of another; that’s similar to the Overlay blend mode. It superimposes one layer’s pixels onto the layer below while preserving the highlights and shadows of the lower layer. This brings out some of the color of the original while maintaining the pen-and-ink outlines.
STEP FOUR: To add a little more color back into the image, select the Background layer by clicking on it. Click-and-hold the Create Adjustment Layer icon in the Layers palette (it’s the one that looks like a half-black, half-white circle), and choose Hue/Saturation from the dropdown menu.

STEP FIVE: In the Hue/Saturation dialog, slide the Saturation slider to the right to create a more saturated image, then click OK. And there you go—the look of a pen-and-ink drawing with a watercolor wash.

STEP SIX: To add a little extra pizzazz, you may want to add a little diffusion to your image. To do this, select the Edges layer and choose Filter>Stylize>Diffuse. In the Diffuse dialog, experiment with the Mode setting until you get the look you want (we used Normal).
Q & A

I’VE READ ABOUT PEOPLE USING (AND LIKING) THE MAGNETIC LASO TOOL, BUT THE SELECTIONS I GET FROM IT ARE RARELY ACCURATE. HELP!

I feel your pain. The Magnetic Lasso tool (nested under the Lasso tool [L]) is a great choice for selecting specific objects in an image, but it can be a bit frustrating at first. It works by detecting edges of an object, then snapping a selection path to those edges. The sharper the edge, the better it works. So images with clearly defined subjects or objects—due to contrast in light or color—tend to work best. To begin the selection, click once, release the mouse button, and start dragging. You’ll see the selection line begin to attach itself to the nearest detected edge. Clicking the mouse again will put down an anchor point along the path. If you need to delete an anchor point, simply press Backspace (Mac: Delete). To close the selection, return to your starting point and click when you see a circle appear next to the Lasso tool cursor. Or just double-click at any point, and a path will be drawn from your current location to the starting point.

After finishing, other selection tools, such as the regular Lasso tool or the Selection Brush tool (A), can be used to refine your selection. With a bit of practice, the Magnetic Lasso can be a valuable tool to have in your Elements toolbox.

AFTER I APPLY A LAYER STYLE TO A LAYER, IS IT POSSIBLE TO TOGGLE THE LAYER STYLE ON AND OFF, SO I CAN SEE A BEFORE AND AFTER PICTURE OF THE EFFECT?

Absolutely. Go to Layer > Layer Style > Hide All Effects to hide the effect of all your layer styles. To view them again, go to Layer > Layer Style > Show All Effects. From this menu you can also copy, paste, and clear layer styles. Another handy command at the bottom of this menu is Scale Effects. This allows you to increase or decrease the size of the layer style without affecting the image. It’s a great feature for resizing a frame style. Give it a try!

I OFTEN NEED TO QUICKLY PROCESS BATCHES OF IMAGES WITH THE SAME LEVELS SETTINGS, BUT I LIKE MORE CONTROL THAN THE PROCESS MULTIPLE FILES COMMAND OFFERS. IS THERE A WAY TO SAVE THE LEVELS SETTINGS FOR USE ON A FUTURE IMAGE?

Indeed there is. Open your first image and press Ctrl-L (Mac: Command) to bring up the Levels dialog. Enter your adjustments and click OK. Open your next image, and this time, press Alt-Ctrl-L (Mac: Option-Command-L). Adding Alt will open the Levels dialog with the previous settings you used. Click OK to apply, and you’re finished.

This method offers more control than the fully automated Auto Levels option under File > Process Multiple Files but still adds a bit of automation to speed up the workflow. This technique holds true for other commands also, such as Hue/Saturation, which would be Alt-Ctrl-U (Mac: Option-Command-U). And it also works when using menu commands. For example, holding down Alt (Mac: Option) and choosing Enhance > Adjust Lighting > Shadows/Highlights will bring up the settings from the last time you used it. However, it doesn’t work when creating adjustment layers, so these adjustments do tend to be rather permanent.

By Mike Rodriguez

If you have a Photoshop Elements question you’d like to see in this column, 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.)
Learn how you can use simple shapes and a variety of blend modes to transform a picture into a piece of modern art. To view this video tutorial, navigate to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com and click on Videos.

You’ll find tons of useful resources online at the Adobe® Photoshop® Elements Techniques subscriber area:
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