

NEWSLETTER



September 2010

PREAMBLE

I apologize for skipping the June edition of the newsletter (again!) but as you know I have been having some health problems. Now that I am nearly back to normal (and I don't need any comments about that either!) I will try to keep the newsletters coming. I would appreciate any articles, leads or comments about relevant subjects for inclusion in future editions.

BRUSHES

After Peggy's great presentation at the July meeting on the subject of brushes I thought it useful to explain how you can create your own brushes from every day images.

Once you get familiar with Photoshop brushes, you'll quite quickly want to start making your own. Find out all you need to know about making Photoshop brushes right here, and then get started!

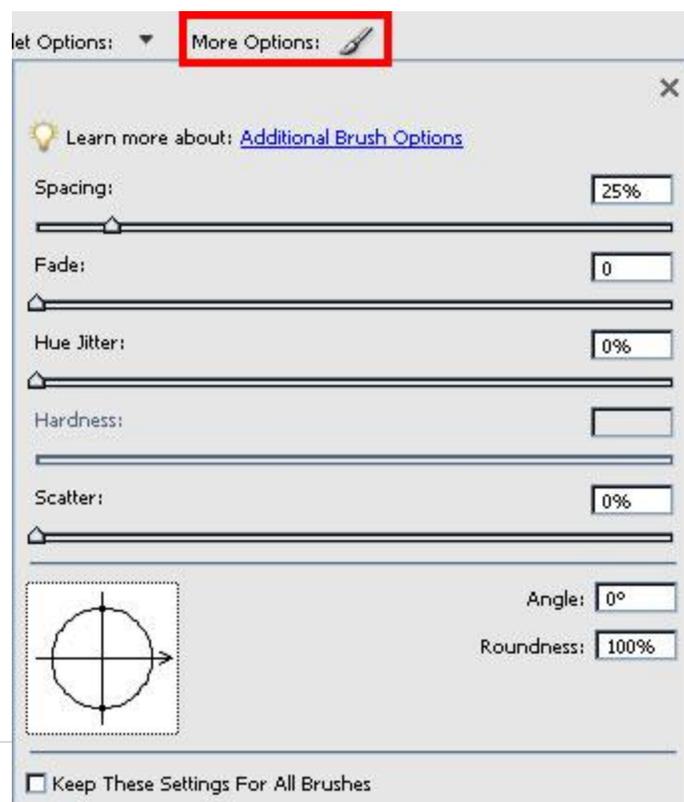
The Source Image. There's not much to it all really. Unless it's just a basic shape like a square or a circle, every brush needs a source image, so let's start there. You can use any image, no matter how simple or complex, but obviously different types of image will give different eventual results. Experiment with different levels of detail to try out the different effects. Once you've got your image, decide whether you want to use all of it, or just a part of it. If you want to use all of it, then you needn't do anything more. If you just want a part of it, then use the selection tools to select the parts you want to use. This doesn't have to be a regular shape either, non-standard selections work too.

Define the Brush. Here's where we actually start to create Photoshop brushes. Go to the Edit menu, and select the 'Define Brush' option. If you made a selection, it will instead read 'Define Brush from Selection'. Once you click that, a preview of the brush will appear, along with a text box. Give the brush a name, and then click ok.

Placing the Brush. "Where'd it go?" you might say. The brush you defined got added to the end of whatever brush set you already had open. So if you were using a default brush before, you should now find that the last brush in the 'Default Brushes' set is the one you just made! It won't be there for long though. The next time you change brush sets, the brush will disappear from the brush set it got added to. It's only there temporarily. So the next job is to save it to it's own brush set.

Define a New Brush Set. Click on the brush palette, and then click the circled arrow on the right to display the drop down menu. From here select the 'Preset Manager' option. You can also access this screen by selecting 'Preset Manager' from the Edit menu. Scroll down until you find your brush, and then click it to select it. You can select more than one brush at a time by clicking and dragging, or using the control and shift keys while clicking. Select the 'Save Set' button to save your selected brushes to a set of their own. It won't appear until the next time you load Photoshop, but now you can add brushes to that set as you please. Select the set from the brush palette and define new brushes like you already have to add other brushes to the set, but always remember to return to the preset manager to save the set, or otherwise your changes will be lost. You can also mix and match brushes from many different sets in the preset manager to make any collection or combination you like. It can be worth categorizing and organizing your brushes, especially if you have a lot of them.

Additional Settings. Once you have a brush set, you can also add some special features to the brushes. Select a brush from the set in the brush palette as usual, and then click the button reading 'More Options' at the very end of the brush toolbar.



Spacing - How often the brush is repeated when dragged, expressed as a percentage of the brushes shortest side length.

Fade - How many times the brush will be printed before it fades out completely. A value of 0 indicates no fade.

Hue Jitter - A random variation in the color of the brush, as it is dragged.

Scatter - A random variation in the placement of the brush, as it is dragged.

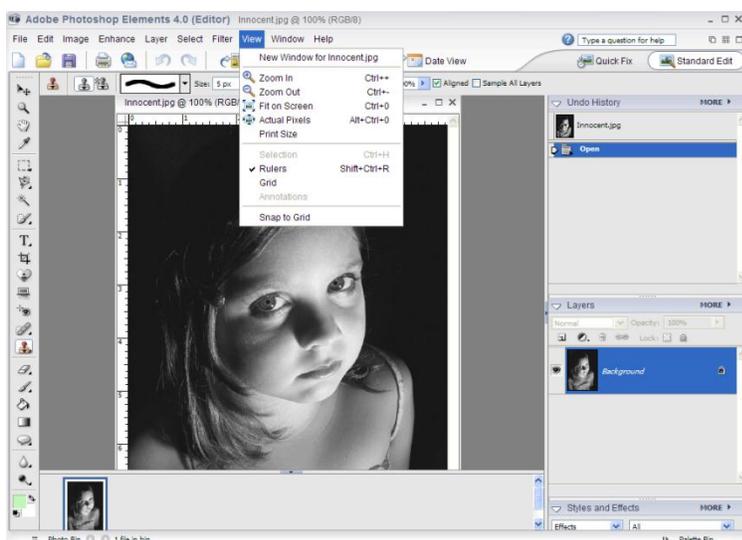
The other options are not important when defining brushes from pictures. If you alter these options for a brush, you can achieve some nice effects. To retain those settings you must re-save the brush with them however. To do this, go to the brush palette, and again click the circled arrow. Click the top option 'Save Brush' and then enter a name to save the brush with its extra options. You can always delete the original if you only wish to keep the new version.

VIEWING PICTURES FOR RETOUCHING

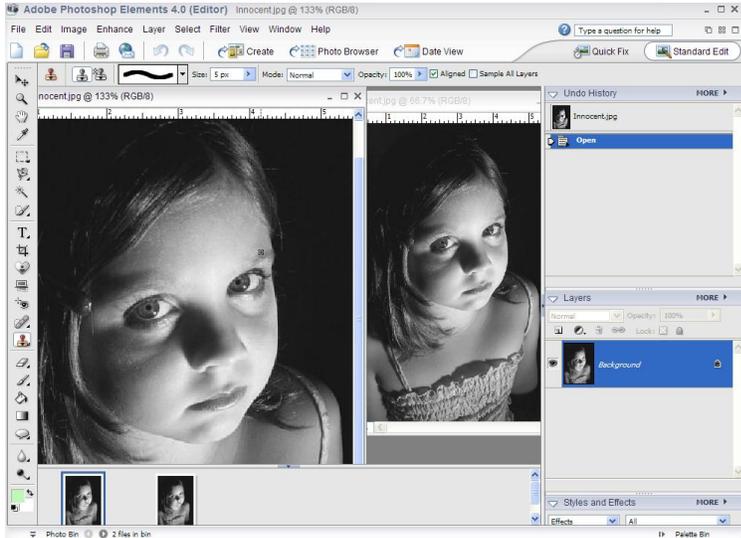
Sometimes when you are fixing old pictures or removing unwanted features from pictures you need to zoom in very close to see the details of your work. This is fine but you also need to see the effect on the picture as a whole. At one time the only way to do this was to continually zoom in and out which is very time consuming.

However there is a feature in Elements that allows you to have two separate windows of the same picture. By having this enabled you can have different views of the same image and therefore zoom in on one whilst watching the overall effect on the other. To open simultaneous windows of the same image proceed as follows:

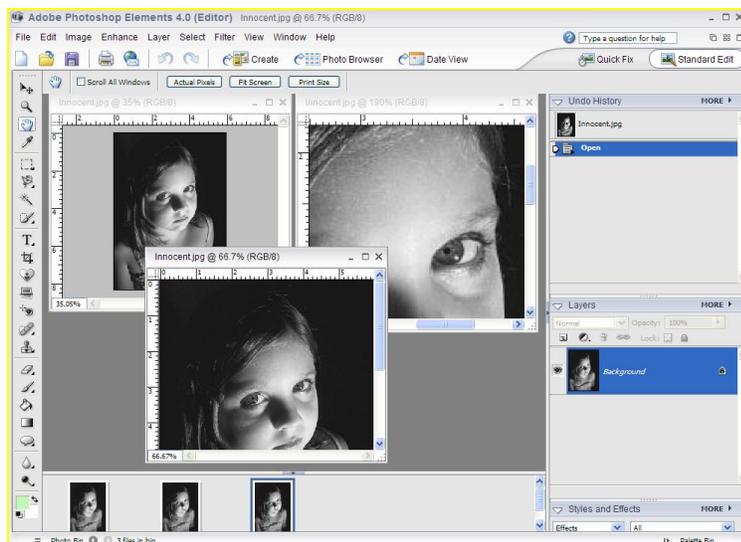
Open up the image you wish to work on and then select View> New Window for XYZ where XYZ is the name of your image, see below:



Both pictures will appear in the picture bin at the bottom of the Elements work space and then it is just a matter either dragging the image without the blue border (the inactive one) or going to the menu bar and choosing Images >tile or Images>cascade. This will bring both images into the work space and you can change the zoom of one for “interfering” while watching the result on the other image for the overall effect. See below:



You are not limited to just two images; try opening a third image with a different magnification. When you have more than two open however it can be a problem moving to the section of the image you want to manipulate. To counter this choose the “Hand Tool” from the tool bar and on the Options Bar check the “Scroll All Windows” box and all the images will move together. See below:



I hope this helps when you get into a situation where close up work is necessary but you need to see the “big picture.”

Fun Images from “Befunky”



When you feel like playing around with an image and adding unusual effects this site is for you. Many of the effects are not wonderful on their own but with a little “interfering” you can get an interesting image.

You can try it for free although the image will have a watermark (which can easily be disguised as you can see on the left) or you can pay a nominal sum for watermark free and an expanded variety of effects. Go to www.befunky.com and see for yourself.

Image Resizing

Finally I have had a couple of queries from friends of mine regarding image resolution and enlarging and downsizing images. I realize there is some confusion regarding this and although you can do both in Elements most of the text books are either confusing or vague about the adjustments. I would like to refer you to the tutorial on my web site: Understanding Images, Part 2. Guide to Resolution, Size and Printing, this is a simple guide which should help.

Finally I would like to thank everyone for their support and good wishes during my repeat battle with cancer and assure everyone I plan on being around for a long time to come!

Remember anything interesting or informative for the next newsletter (due in December) would be greatly appreciated.