

Photoshop Club

July 2016

More Layer Masks

Review, last month we focused on Layers, what they were and how to use Layers and Layer Masks. Today, I'd like to build on that with using Layers to add Textures.

Before we get into textures, there are many free textures on the internet, my favorite is, <http://frenchkisstextures.com>, but you can create textures from your surroundings. plywood, concrete, grass, dirt, water surfaces, etc. There are several sites that also sell textures. I'm not going to do this today, but Photoshop CC has a built in textures action.

Open image "Flower Petals" and duplicate the background Layer ⌘+J. Using the Quick Selection Tool (W), select the petals of the flower using the Alt/Option Key to deselect any over selection. When you have a good selection create a layer mask by clicking on the Front Loading Washer icon in the Layers Panel. This creates a mask using the selection, but remembering masks from last week, the mask has blacked out what I want it white, so let's invert the mask. Make sure the new mask is highlighted with a white edge around it, then ⌘ + I to invert the mask.

Now open "Canvas Texture", this will open as a separate file in Photoshop, select it with ⌘ +A you'll see the marching ants around the outside edge. Copy it with ⌘ + C.

Now open the Flower Petal file and make sure the top layer is highlighted & paste the texture by ⌘+V. Use ⌘+T (free transform) to stretch the canvas layer over the flower layer. Now change the Blend Mode from Normal to Multiply, This blends the texture layer with the layer below it. This produces an interesting effect, but you'll see the texture is applied on the flower as well as the background. There are many ways to paint the texture off the subject, but my favorite is to simply click and drag the mask we just created from it's layer onto the Texture layer and it masks out the area of the flower.

Layer Masks continued

Next, Open Image "Pier Structure"

Let's add an Adjustment Layer using Curves, click on the B&W circle and select Curves. Grab the highlight part of the curve and drag it up, then go to the lower dark area section and drag the curve down to create an 'S' curve. This brightens the sky slightly and adds depth to the Blue colors, but this puts too much contrast into the pier structure detail. There are many ways to 'paint' out the effect, but the simplest is as follows:

Make sure the Curves adjustment layer is highlighted. Pull down Image>Apply Image and click OK. Photoshop created a black and white copy of the original image and used it as a mask. Hold down the Alt/Option key and Click on the mask to see the mask. Remember what is Black on the mask conceals the effect of the layer, what's in White reveals the effect and what's in Gray does some of both. So effectively the B&W mask concealed the curves adjustment and persevered the contrast using the layer below.

When can we use this method? Well, since this is such an easy mask to create, it's probably a good starting point for many images, you can always paint with black or white to fine tune the mask as needed.

Replace a Boring Sky

It's always great to live on the coast as we are often treated to amazing skies. Big clouds and blue skies, this makes for great stand-in, images for our photography.

Open "Swing with Dull Sky" in Photoshop and duplicate the background layer ⌘+J and name the top Layer "Swing".

Next Open image "New Sky" image, select this image using ⌘ + A, then copy it using ⌘+C. Go back to the Swing image and paste the new sky into it using ⌘+V. then move the new sky layer between the Swing layers.

Highlight the Swing image, this image is unique as the sky is all one tone, so in this case let's use the quick selection tool and select a small portion of the sky. Be careful as the tool will quickly select the entire sky, so just select a very small sample.

Now pull Select>Similar and Photoshop will select any pixels that are of similar color. Notice some of the water was selected, let's deselect this using Alt/Option and brush over the areas in the water.

Now with the sky selected press the Delete key on a Mac or the backspace key on a PC, this will delete the selected areas and allow the New Sky layer to show through. Click ⌘ + D to deselect and remove the marching Ants.

Click on the new sky layer to highlight it and using the Move Tool (V) move the sky up so that the horizon of the new sky matches the original image. Also the new sky is too dark, so, and pull down Image>Adjustments and select Brightness/Contrast and use the sliders to make the new sky match the original image.

Photoshop CC New Features

With the latest update to Photoshop CC release 2015.5.0 Adobe added some Face features to the Liquify filter. Let me demonstrate how this works.

Open "Faces" in Photoshop, and duplicate the background layer ⌘+J. With the top layer highlighted, pull down Filter>Liquify. Immediately Photoshop will recognize the Face with two curved lines. On the left panel you get the usually tools, the most popular is the first one, the Warp tool. This allows you to reshape body parts as needed. I'm going to skip this section!

Let's go the right panel and you'll find some new features. Most of the Face tools are in the 2nd panel named "Face Aware Liquify" Let's start with the eye section. Move the sliders and watch the changes to the image. You can try each set of sliders and you can create some interesting effects and a few weird ones too.