

Photo Art Using Filters (PE5)

Photoshop Elements has many filters that can be used to create works of art out of photos. The good news is that even blurry pictures that you thought were unusable are perfect for filter art. This next photo was taken by one of myjanee.com's students, and is used here by permission.



To make this into a piece of art, the student, Elzie, first duplicated the background layer (the photo) and then applied Filter > Brush Strokes > Dark Strokes, with settings of Balance: 5, Black: 6, White: 2. She changed the mode of the filtered layer to Luminosity. She added a frame of her own design which resulted in the following picture.



The rest of Elzie's art was just as stunning. (Photos used by permission of Elzie, www.elziefles.com, 2007)

Filter Gallery

I like to use the Filter Gallery when I am first trying to discover which filter looks best on a particular picture. Let's take one of my pictures that I took in April 2006 of a cactus in bloom in Arizona. The original picture is the RAW converted picture from the RAW section of these notes.



I open this picture in Photoshop Elements, duplicate the background layer, and selected Filter > Filter

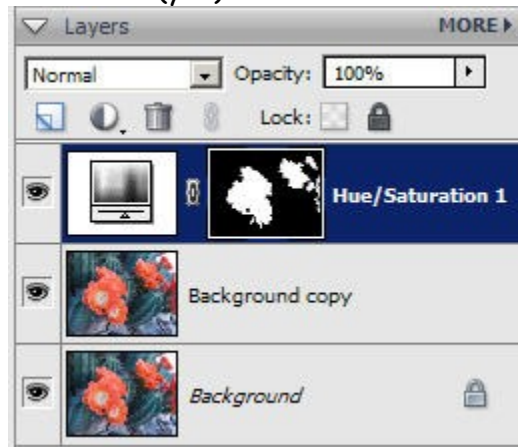
Gallery from the menu. The Filter Gallery lets me apply and preview almost any of the filters before you have to accept them. You can even stack multiple filters on top of one another and reorder them in the gallery, but I really do not advise doing this within the filter gallery. Just apply them one at a time and control your layers within the layers palette.

We will take a look at applying filters in the next section.

More Than Just Filters

Photo art can be more than just adding filters to pictures. Let's play with my cactus. While I like the orange of the blooms, I want to change the color. So the first thing I do, after I have saved it as a PSD file, is to duplicate the background layer. Then I use the Magic Wand selection tool in the "+ add to selection" mode to select as much of all the orange blooms as I can, without worrying too much about details. Once I have the selection of all the blooms, then I add a Hue/Saturation layer. Since I had a selection when I added this adjustment layer, I immediately get a Hue/Sat layer with a mask showing the selected blooms in white. [This is a power lesson in learning how to use Photoshop Elements. If you have a selection and you add an adjustment layer, you will get a mask of that selection.] This is what my layers palette looks like after I have added the Hue/Sat layer., with no

adjustments to either hue or saturation (yet).



Next I double click on the first icon on the left in the Hue/Sat layer to open the controls. For this photo, I adjusted the Hue to +40, and the Saturation to -5 for a nice yellow color for the flowers.



Now, I am going to do two things. I want to add one filter to the flowers and another filter to the rest of the picture. I can do this using the Background copy layer. To regain the selection of the blooms, I do a Ctrl + Click on the mask in the Hue/Sat layer. [It took me two years to learn and accept this shortcut, but I use it all the time now.]

Then I open the Filter Gallery, and apply Artistic > Dry Brush, with settings of 6, 5, 2. That creates a filter effect on the yellow flowers. To filter the rest of the picture, I do a selection inverse using Select > Inverse. Now I have the selection of all but the flowers. While I still have the copy of the background layer active, I apply Filter > Adjustments > Posterize, with a setting of 4 to get my twice filtered result.



If I want a different look from the flowers, I can duplicate the background layer, and select the blooms by Ctrl clicking on the mask in the Hue/Sat layer. Then I apply Filter > Stylize > Glowing Edges with settings of Edge Width: 4, Edge Brightness: 7, and Smoothness 5. For a totally different look, I use Select > Inverse to grab the green parts of the cactus and the rocks, and add a Hue/Sat layer immediately above the new filtered layer and reset the Hue to +92. I follow that with a Filter > Adjustment > Posterize 4 on the

filtered layer with the glowing edges. The surprising result is as follows.



You can create your alternate universe. All you have to do is add a few filters.

Closing comments: If you want to discover more applications of filters to your photos, take a look at myjanee.com where she shows her Using Filters in Photoshop tutorial at <http://www.myjanee.com/tuts/filter/filter.htm> . Most of the filters she shows in the tutorial are found in Photoshop Elements.

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