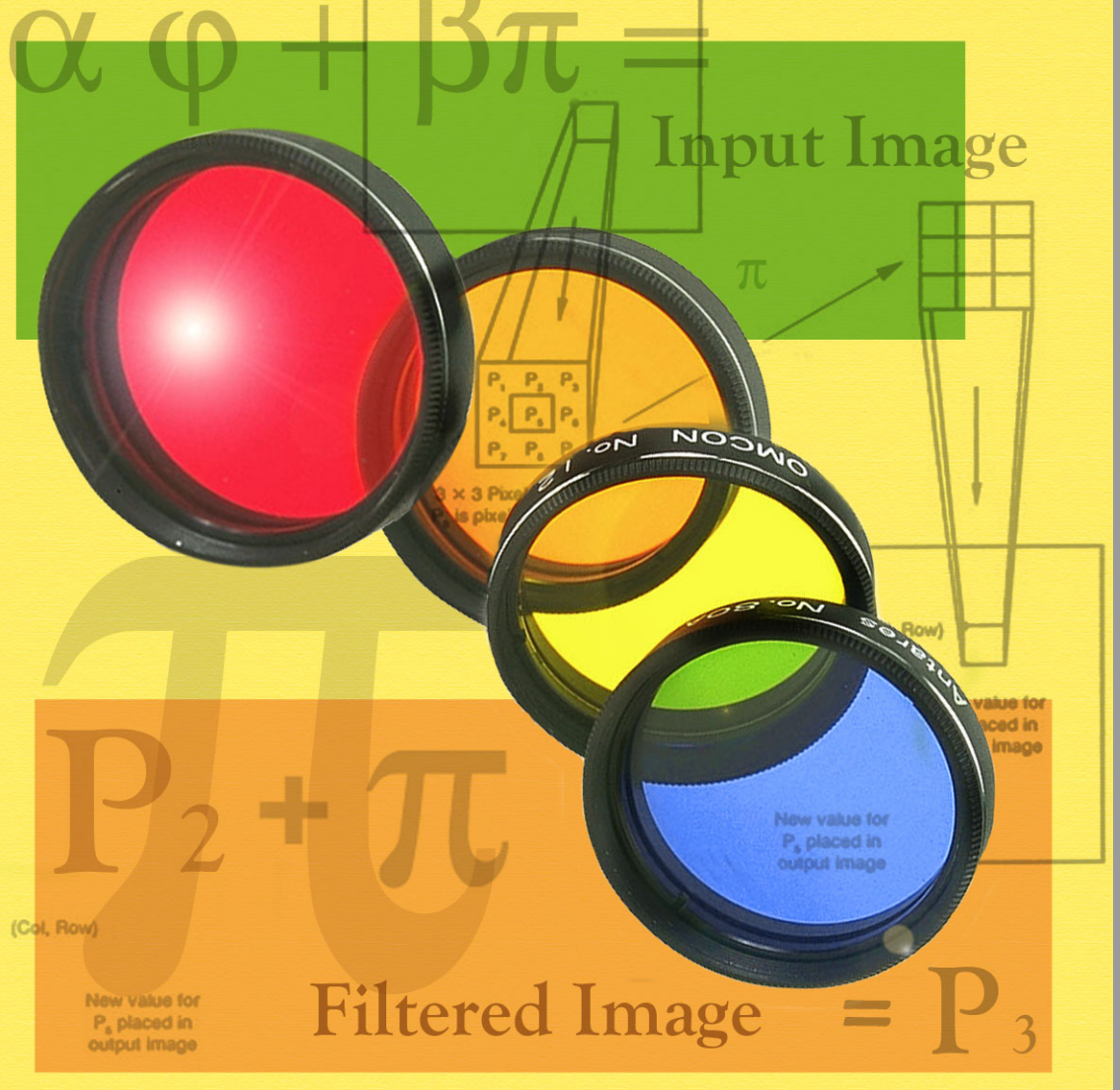


digitalphotography
the complete course

New York Institute of Photography

Photoshop 14: Filters

Unit Five
Lesson Twenty Eight

page size

Quit

click to begin

Table of Contents

What Is a Filter?

Traditional photographers have been using filters over their camera lenses for years. Camera filters serve many purposes, some of which are contrast control, glare and reflection control, color adjustments, and the creation of special visual effects. [SEE FIGURE 1]

Today, in Photoshop, these traditional filter techniques and many more effects can be created with image filters. As with camera filters in traditional photography, Photoshop filters alter your image. Before we begin to use image filters let's review the three basic guidelines for creating an image:

1.) Know your subject;
2.) Focus attention on your subject;
3.) Simplify your subject.

When using filters always question your intention for using a particular effect and consider a filter as yet another tool that will aid you in creating an impressive image.

Figure 1 Camera with filter over the lens.

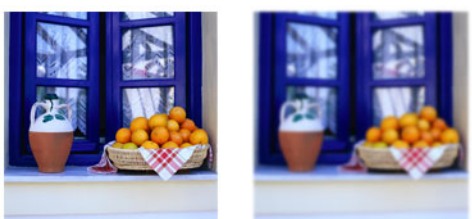


Image with soft filter as compared to a sharp image.

What Happens to Your Image When a Filter is Applied?

Image filters in relation to a computer are somewhat the same in definition as a traditional filter. Basically, a computer program applies "something" to an image that transforms one image into another. Rather than "attaching" a filter to your camera or "inserting" a gel over your lights as in traditional photography the computer applies a filter or "something" over your image. In the case of a computer, however, that "something" is a sequence of mathematical operations known as algorithms. Pixels in simple definition are really numbers, numbers that represent color. The application of algorithms on the pixel data of a digital image changes one image into another image. For example, Photoshop's twirl filter takes the pixels of an image and pushes the pixels around into a twirling pattern. How? you might ask. Well, the answer is more complicated than you really need to know. Essentially, mathematics in conjunction with computer programming gives form to the algorithms necessary to perform these filter effects. All you need to know is that a filter transforms an original image into another image and that there are many options available to us within the world of the digital darkroom. [SEE FIGURE 2]

Figure 2 Original Image. *Image after Twirl filter.*

Many avid Photoshop users start with applying filters to an image because it is fun and creative. Yet, there are many uses for filters, some of which fall into the category of essential and others that are less practical and are simply entertaining at best. It is important to remember that there is no exact science to using filters. Experimenting with different options and filter combinations is all part of the learning process. As a novice to image filters experiment with the multiplicity of filter options to become aware of the power of the tool and to discover which filters help you focus on your subject.

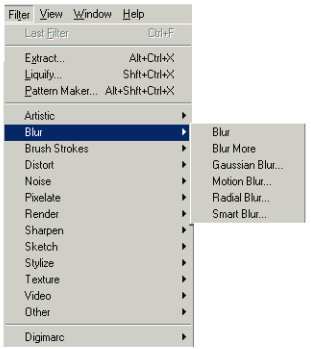
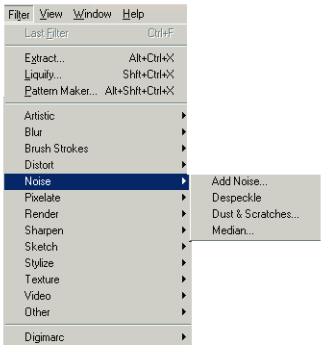
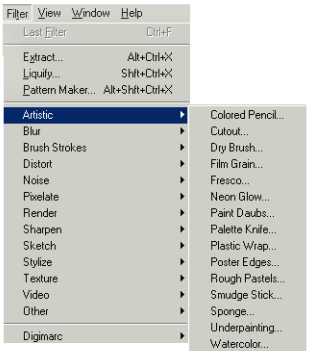


Figure 3 Filter>Blur.



Filter>Noise.



Filter>Artistic.

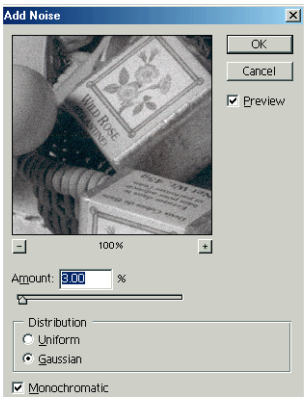


Figure 4 Add Noise Options dialog box.

Applying Filters.

The filters in Photoshop can be found under the menu command Filter. Once you select Filter a menu appears with an extensive list of filters to choose from. Photoshop organizes these filters in a very logical way. For instance, if you choose **Filter>Blur** a submenu appears that lists further options in the family of blurring an image. If you choose **Filter>Noise**, a submenu appears that lists a set of options that fall into the categories of digital noise, dust, scratches, and de-speckling. If you choose **Filter>Artistic**, a submenu appears listing a range of filters that could be defined as artistic effects. [SEE FIGURE 3]

Once you have chosen a filter from the filter submenu, an option dialog box will appear, enabling you to choose more options and control over the desired effect. The options will vary depending upon the nature of each filter. [SEE FIGURE 4]

Applying Filters To Layers and Selections.

You can apply a filter to an entire layer or you can confine the filter effect to a selection. To apply a filter to a layer, simply click to activate the desired layer in the layers palette, then choose the desired filter effect from the filter submenu.

To apply a filter to a selection, simply activate a selection, then choose a desired filter from the filter submenu. The filter effect will be confined to the active "marching ants" selection. [SEE FIGURE 5]

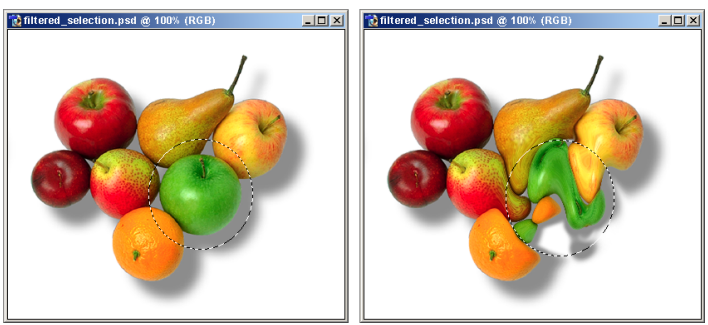


Figure 5 Before and after a filter is applied to a "marching ants" selection.

When You Cannot Apply a Filter.

In some instances, Photoshop will not allow you to apply a filter, such is the case when the filter menu appears "grayed out." [SEE FIGURE 6]

There are several factors that will affect whether or not you can apply a filter:

1) Filters are only applicable to pixels.

2) You cannot apply a filter to a vector image.

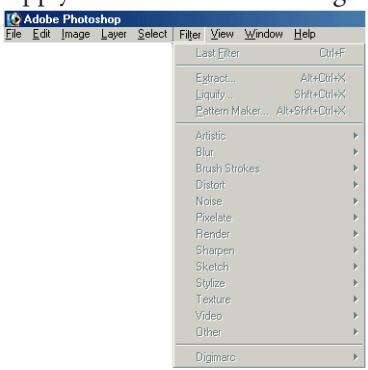


Figure 6 Filter menu grayed out.

Note: A filter can only be applied to pixels, if you attempt to apply a filter to a vector-based image Photoshop will warn you to rasterize the image. A vector image is an image that is based on points and mathematical relationships between them. Rasterizing is the process of converting a vector based image into pixels. To rasterize an image Choose ***Layer>Rasterize>Layer.***

Typical examples of vector based images would be logos, clip art, and fonts.

3) Filters cannot be applied to images in Bitmap Mode or Indexed Color Mode.

Note: Bitmap Mode uses only two color values either black or white. Many filters cannot be applied to an image that is in Bitmap Mode. Index color mode uses a maximum of 256 colors which is a limited color palette. While this color mode is beneficial because it reduces your file size, it limits you in the areas of editing and limits your ability to apply filters to an image.

The term "Bitmap image" is different from the term "Bitmap Mode". Bitmap image is a general term for images that are made of pixels. Bitmap Mode is a mode in Photoshop that uses only two colors: black and white, as explained earlier.

To change the mode of an image, choose **Image>Mode.**

4) Some filters may only be applied to RGB images. Again to convert your image to RGB Choose **Image>Mode>RGB.**

5) Filters such as Gaussian Blur, Add Noise, Dust & Scratches, Median, Unsharp Mask, Solarize, and High Pass filters can be used with both 8-Bit and 16-Bit per channel images.

Review: Remember the difference between 8-bit and 16-bit per channel images? Well, there has been an ongoing debate about the difference in quality achieved in a print when working with 16-bit images verses 8-bit images. For the web it is necessary to work in an 8-bit channel, but if you are planning to print your images you might consider working with 16-bit channel because you retain more image detail and there is less image degradation. There are pros and cons to working with 16-bit images. Although you are gaining more image detail and information when you work with a 16-channel you are also increasing your file size and have fewer tools available to work with in Photoshop.

There are many ways to work within Photoshop and your working process will depend upon your desired end product. Many digital photographers opt to scan all their material as 16-bit

and then convert to 8-bit for a smaller file size and a more efficient workflow. The 16-bit file is saved as a master and can be retrieved when problems occur or when the final output of the image changes.

Previewing Filters.

Filter Dialog Box.

In most cases, once you have chosen a filter, a filter dialog box will appear. The dialog box allows you to enter values or select options pertaining to the nature of the filter you have chosen. Within the filters dialog box there is a preview window that allows you to preview the image with the filter before you actually apply it.

Note: Filters in menu with "..." after the name will open a dialog box. The other filters will not and automatically apply effect. One filter that automatically applies its effect is ***Filter>Pixelate>Fragment****.*

Tip: If you would like a little more control with a filter that does not have a dialog box try the following:

First, duplicate the layer you wish to apply the filter to. Choose ***Layer>Duplicate Layer.*** *Name the layer if you wish and click* ***OK.***

Activate the new duplicated layer in the layers palette by single clicking it. Now apply the Fragment filter to the layer.Choose ***Filter>Pixelate>Fragment.*** *Now adjust the opacity of the layer by going to the layers palette and moving the opacity slider to control the intensity of the fragment filter.*

This technique allows you to make slight adjustments within a filter that does not have a dialog box.

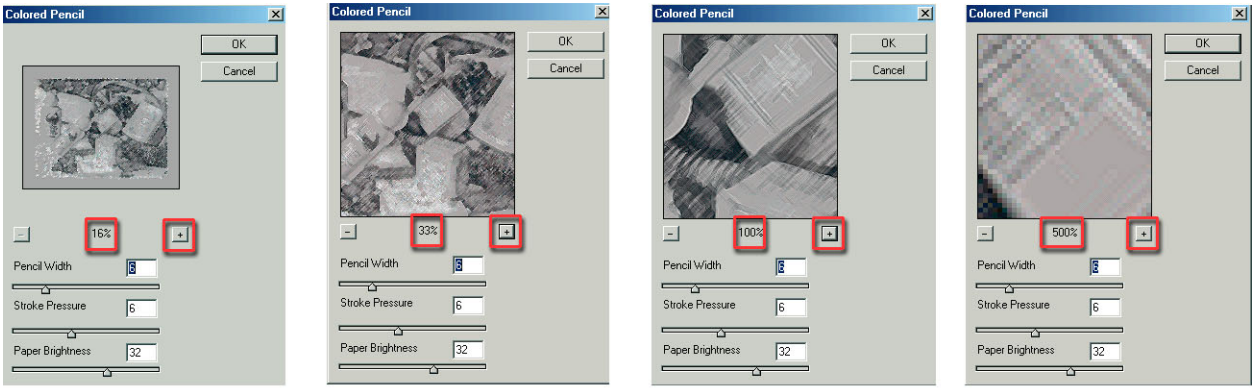


Figure 7 Preview window plus and minus buttons.

Preview Options.

By clicking the plus and minus buttons, you can zoom in and out of the preview window. This allows you to preview a filter's effects on specific image detail. [SEE FIGURE 7]

When you click on the plus and minus preview buttons, your image will zoom in and out at several percentages ranging from 10% to 1600 %. Once your preview has been zoomed in, it now becomes possible to navigate within the preview window by clicking in the center and then dragging.

Figure 8 "Soap.psd" *© Carolanne Leslie*

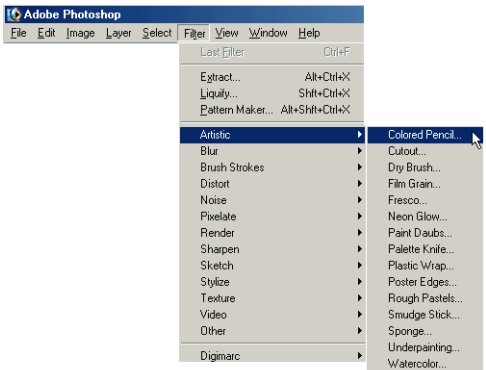


Figure 9 Filter>Artistic >Colored Pencil.

To illustrate these features, let us apply the colored pencil filter to this image by following the steps below.

1) Open the practice image "Soap.psd" [SEE FIGURE 8]

2) Choose **Filter>Artistic>Colored Pencil.** [SEE FIGURE 9]

The Colored Pencil dialog box appears.

Notice how the image preview opens up at 100 percent.

3) Click on the zoom out (-) button.

By clicking on the (-) button the image zooms out to 50 percent.

4) Click on the (+) button.

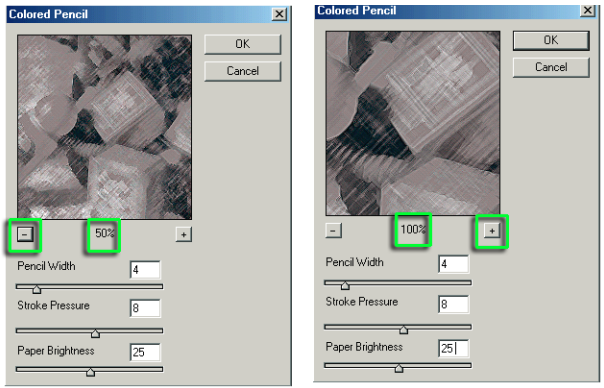


Figure 9a Preview button with 50% next to 100%.

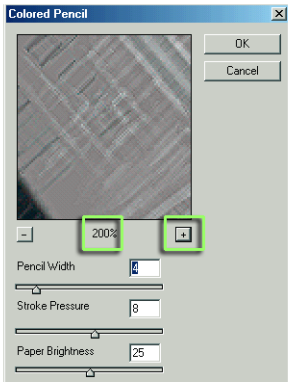


Figure 10 Image preview zoom 200%.

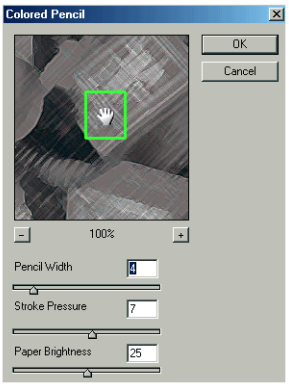
By clicking on the (+) button again, the image has zoomed back to 100 percent.

By clicking on the (+) and (-) buttons you can zoom both in and out on the image. [SEE FIGURE 9A]

5) Click again and you have now zoomed in to 200 percent. [SEE FIGURE 10]

Click one more time on the (+) button.

Continue clicking to focus on the detail of the image.



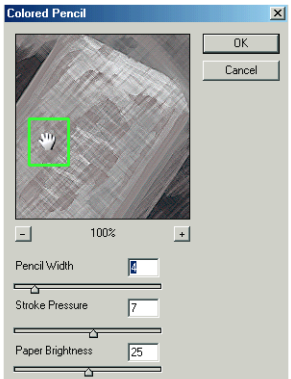


Figure 11 Navigate image with Hand tool.

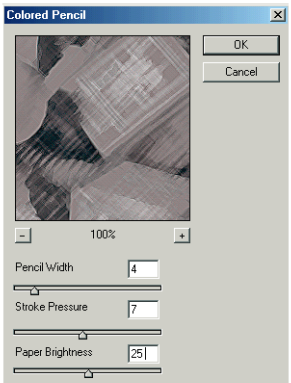


Figure 12 4, 7, 25

Figure 13 Image after filter applied.

6) Click in the center of the image and then drag to navigate within the preview window. [SEE FIGURE 11]

7) Enter a value of 4 for the pencil width. [SEE FIGURE 12]

8) Enter a value of 7 for the stoke pressure.

9) Enter a value of 25 for the paper brightness.

10) Click **OK** to apply the filter. The filter has now been applied to the image. [SEE FIGURE 13]

These are values we have chosen for "soap.psd." When using your own images, experiment with the sliders and preview window. Using the preview window before you apply a filter can be quite beneficial in helping you decide whether or not it works best with your image. Notice how navigating within the preview window allows you to focus on specific details within your image.

Edit Fade Filter.

After you have applied a filter you may decide that the effect is either too strong or perhaps too vague. Instead of starting over you can pick up where you left off by choosing the Fade Filter command. The Fade Filter command allows you to modify the last applied filter effect. As an example, let's go back to the image that we applied the colored pencil filter to and follow the steps below.

1) Go back to “Soap.psd.”

2) Choose **Edit>Fade.** [SEE FIGURE 14]

The Fade dialog box appears.

3) Select the preview option to preview the effect, set the Mode to "Normal." [SEE FIGURE 15]

4) Enter a value of 45.

Figure 14 Edit>Fade.

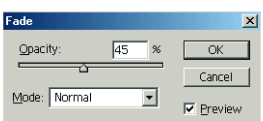


Figure 15 Fade Dialog Box with Preview on, layer mode normal, and at opacity 45%.

5) Click **OK**. [SEE FIGURE 16]

The Fade command combines the newly applied filter effect with the original layer. By changing the opacity you can affect how opaque or transparent the applied filter is.

Figure 16 Image after applying Fade command.

Improving Performance.

Time Saving Previews.

Applying a filter can be very time consuming because it requires a lot of memory to function. Fortunately, some filters open up with a preview option that allows you to see the filter results before you actually apply it. Still, not all filters have a preview option available. So, it becomes important to think about ways to save time and memory, especially if you are working on a large image.

One good way to save time is to apply a filter to a small portion of an image. By doing this you can save a significant amount of time, since you are asking the computer to do fewer calculations. Applying a filter to a small portion of an image allows you to create a custom preview. The best way to do this is to make a selection and apply the filter to the isolated area.

In the following steps, we are going to apply a filter to a small portion of an image.

Figure 17 "window.psd"

Figure 18

Figure 19 Marquee selection where we want to preview filter.

1) Open the practice image "window.psd" [SEE FIGURE 17]

2) Select the Marquee tool from the toolbox. [SEE FIGURE 18]

3) Click and drag a marquee selection anywhere within the image. [SEE FIGURE 19]

4) Choose **Filter>Sketch>Chalk & Charcoal**. [SEE FIGURE 20]

The Chalk and Charcoal Dialog Box appears.

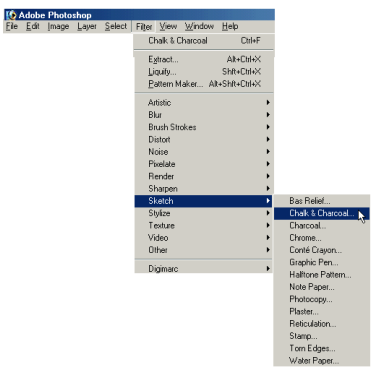


Figure 20

5) Click OK. To apply with default settings. [SEE FIGURE 20A]

Notice how much faster a filter can be applied to a small portion as opposed to an entire image. After viewing the preview of the filter effect you can decide whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the effect. By applying the filter to a small portion of your image, you have saved yourself time in making your decision.

Choose **Edit>Undo Chalk & Charcoal** to undo the filter effect. [SEE FIGURE 20B]

Note: As always there are gives and takes when working in Photoshop. Speed is good but so is process, and often quality comes from patience and making fine tuned adjustments. Consider "building" filter effects through multiple layers and opacity adjustments. By doing so, you will be increasing your file size and slowing down the speed of your computer but you will gain more control.

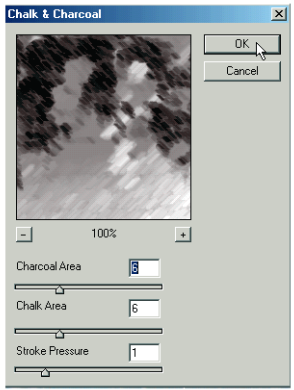


Figure 20a Default settings.

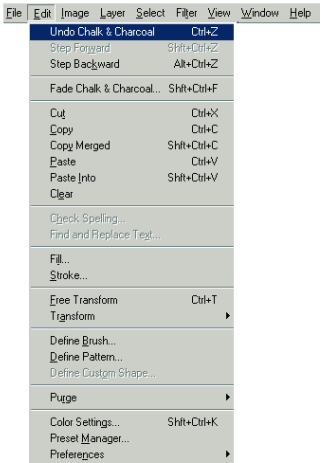


Figure 20b Edit>Undo.

Allocate Memory to Photoshop.

If you are working within a Macintosh environment, a good way to speed up the process of applying filters is to allocate more RAM to Photoshop. Since there are many operating systems in use, methods in allocating RAM differ. The best way to do this is to consult your computer's operating system help menu. After you have accessed the help menu, do a search on memory topics. There should be step-by-step directions on how to allocate more memory to a specific software program.

If you are working within a PC environment you don't have to worry about allocating RAM manually because most operating systems automatically allocate RAM during the running of a software program. This automatic operation of allocation or de- allocation is called dynamic memory allocation.

Exit Other Software Programs.

Having several software programs open at once uses up a lot of memory. Therefore, closing all other software programs when you are working in Photoshop will free up memory and subsequently improve Photoshop performance.

Use the Purge Command.

Most operations can be undone and redone by way of using the History Palette. However, saving all of your steps in the History Palette increases the size of your image and uses up a lot of memory. A limited amount of memory makes it difficult to apply filters. In these instances, it becomes necessary to make more memory available. To clear up memory you can clear the History Palette and or the clipboard. The Purge command permanently clears memory from either the clip board or the History Palette. If you choose **Edit>Undo**, you are undoing your last applied operation. By choosing **Edit>Purge>Clipboard** you are freeing memory that has been stored temporarily on the clipboard. By choosing **Edit>Purge>Histories** you will be purging all states in the History Palette, upon doing this you should notice a marked improvement in Photoshop performance. If you choose

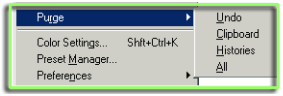


Figure 21 Purge command and submenu.

Purge>All, you will be purging both the clipboard and the History Palette memory, simultaneously.

It is important to remember that using the purge command is a permanent function, which means that it cannot be undone. Therefore, before you opt to use the purge command make sure you are happy with your work at that stage. [SEE FIGURE 21]

Note: The Purge function is important to use when you are trying to increase the speed of your computer. Using the purge function when applying filters is not always the best solution. If you are trying multiple filters you may want to revert to your history palette to retrieve an action. Although the history palette takes up memory it can be a safety net. Always make sure you are content with your image before you decided to Purge.

Filter Overview.

There are nearly 100 filters included with Photoshop. They have many uses and the range of creative and technical possibilities are endless, especially when filters are used in combinations. Therefore, because there are so many filters available, to make things easier we are going to narrow them down into two categories, artistic and technical.

Artistic Filters.

Artistic filters reproduce the look of fine art or natural media art emulating traditional art techniques. Some of the filters that fall within this category are: painterly effects, textures, pencil, pastel, sketch effects, distortion, rendering, lighting and stylizing effects. These categories are very general but within each category is a submenu that enables more specific options. These options yield for a myriad of possible visual effects that can be created.

Visual Direction.

It is important to keep in mind that it is easy to use filters. With relatively little skill you can apply a ready-made filter to an image and call it art. With that in mind, a better approach might be to develop your unique style. Ultimately, having a specific visual direction and then experimenting with a series of filters may help you to achieve a variety of effects that you can call your own.

Polaroid Transfer.

Before the digital darkroom photographers sought to push the boundaries of the traditional photographs through alternative development processes. These techniques employed more tactile forms of image manipulation. The desire to try, learn and experiment with different kinds of film, processing and image capturing devices is inherent to the nature of every photographer. Many of Photoshop's filters are inspired by these alternative process techniques and can be used alone or in tandem to recreate these classic aesthetics.

Polaroid transfers are a fantastic example of photographers expanding their artistic visions through developing new imaging techniques. The process involves shooting a picture with Polaroid sheet film, allowing the film to develop for a few seconds then pulling the negative and positive pieces apart and finally placing the negative side down on the desired surface (usually watercolor paper) to complete the transfer. The result is a positive dye emulsion transfer result-

Figure 22 Polaroid Transfer Image example.

Figure 23 Soap.psd before edge added to it.

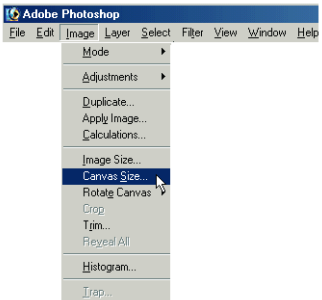


Figure 24 Canvas size canvas menu command.

ing in a wonderful painterly and impressionistic version of your original image. This process, although fairly straight forward, is time consuming, costly and a bit messy with all the chemicals. [SEE FIGURE 22]

However with Photoshop it has become easier to recreate this Polaroid transfer effect by applying a series of Photoshop filters. In the following example we will show you one way in which you can achieve the look of a Polaroid transfer edge to your image. We'll start by adding a one-inch border to an image. We can do that by choosing the Canvas Size command and adding two inches to the width and height dimensions. Then we will isolate the outer edge of the image and apply a series of filters that will result in the look of a smudged edge similar to a polaroid transfer edge.

1) Open the image named "Soap.psd" (from your Unit 5 practice images folder) [SEE FIGURE 23]

2) Add a 2 inch border. Choose **Image>Canvas Size**. [SEE FIGURE 24]

The canvas size command lets you add or remove space to your image.

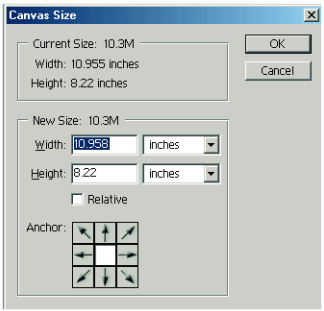


Figure 25 Canvas size dialog box.

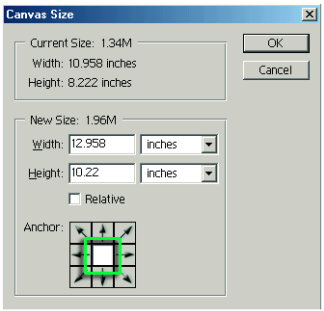


Figure 26 Anchor option with middle setting selected.

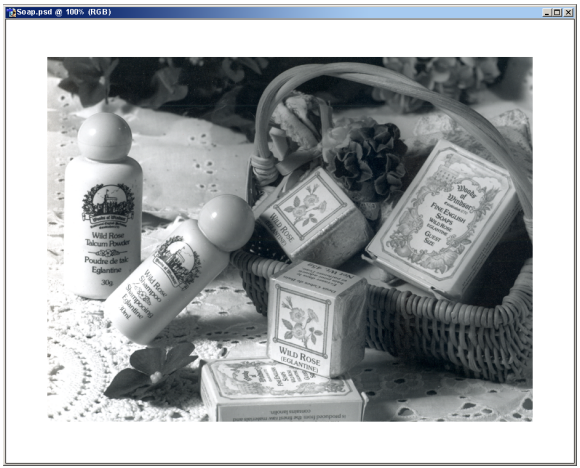


Figure 27 Image on larger Canvas Size.

The Canvas Size dialog box appears. [SEE FIGURE 25]

3) Add two inches to each dimension:

Change the width value to 12.958 (10.958 + 2.0 = 12.958).

Change the height value to 8.22 (8.22 + 2.0 = 10.22).

By adding a two inches to the overall canvas size, you are essentially adding a one inch border all around the image.

The anchor square dictates how the new canvas will be added.

By placing the anchor setting in the middle, the new canvas will be added all around the image, as indicated by the arrows. [SEE FIGURE 26]

Click **OK**. [SEE FIGURE 27]

Note: The added area of your canvas will be your current background color selection. Make sure to check the color of the

Figure 28
Marquee tool.

Figure 29 Marquee selection on image.

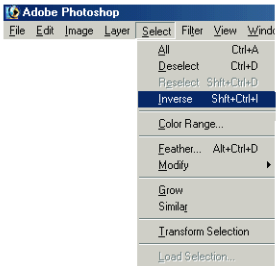


Figure 30 Select>Inverse.

Figure 31 Inversed selection.

background in your tools palette before you change your canvas size. If you do not like the color of the background, double click on the background color and the color dialog box will appear. Choose a background color and then change the canvas size.

4) Select the Marquee tool from the toolbox. [SEE FIGURE 28]

5) Drag a selection box about 1/4 inch inside the image area. [SEE FIGURE 29]

The image is now selected.

6) Choose **Select>Inverse**. [SEE FIGURE 30]

By inverting the selection we will be isolating the outer edge of the image. [SEE FIGURE 31]

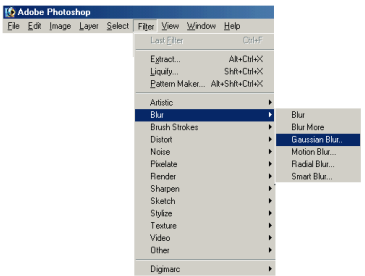


Figure 32 Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur.

Figure 33 Drag to 4.5.

Figure 34 Image result blurred edge.

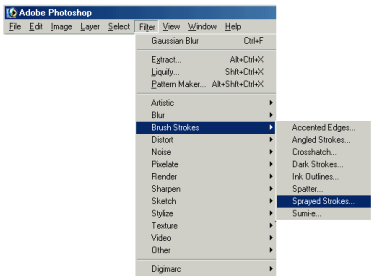


Figure 35 Filter>Brush Strokes>Sprayed Strokes.

7) Choose **Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur**. [SEE FIGURE 32]

The Gaussian Blur dialog box appears.

8) Enter a radius value of 4.5 pixels. [SEE FIGURE 33]

9) Click **OK**. [SEE FIGURE 34]

The outer edge of the image has been blurred.

10) Choose **Filter>Brush Strokes>Sprayed Strokes**. [SEE FIGURE 35]

The Sprayed Strokes dialog box appears.

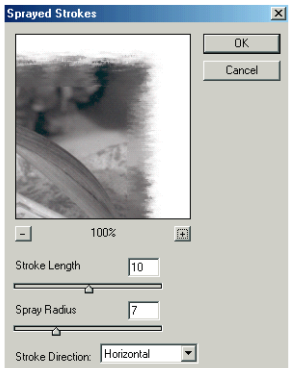


Figure 36 10 on stroke length, spray radius 7, horizontal.

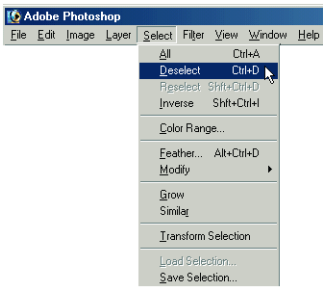


Figure 37 Select>Deselect.

Figure 38 Image after filters are applied.

11) Enter a Stroke Length value of 10. [SEE FIGURE 36]

12) Enter a Spray Radius value of 7.

13) Choose Horizontal for Stroke Direction.

14) Click **OK**.

15) Choose **Select>Deselect**. [SEE FIGURE 37] to deselect the marching ants selection.

16) Your new edge has been added. [SEE FIGURE 38]

The numbers that were chosen for the stroke direction, length, and spray radius were subjective choices. Remember to experiment with different numbers based on your own judgements, and feather or refine effect to your taste.

Figure 39 Example of 3 different edges using Wave, Ocean Ripple, and Glass Filters, respectively.

Experiment with Other Filters.

If you look at the edges of the image now, you can see how the series of filters applied to this image mimics the look and feel of a polaroid transfer edge. There are many filters that can be applied to the edge of an image, try applying the ripple filter or the dry pastels along with textures to achieve a more artistic edge. Keep experimenting until you feel you have come up with a look you can call your own. Here are few edges that we have come up with by experimenting with filters. [SEE FIGURE 39]

Figure 40 An example of a hand tinted image.

Figure 41 "window.psd"

Create a Hand Tinted Black-and-White Image.

Before color photography was invented, beautiful images were created with color photo paints on black and white photographs, otherwise known as hand tinted images. Over the years this vintage look has become valued as a beautiful artistic photographic finish. Despite the invention of color printing, people have been recreating this effect over and over based on artistic merit alone. [SEE FIGURE 40]

In the following exercise, we are going to show you how to re-create the look of a hand tinted black-and-white image using Photoshop techniques and filters. Basically the procedure is to combine and blend a duplicate black and white layer with the original color layer to achieve the look and feel of a hand tinted image. Then we apply the mezzotint filter so that the image appears as if it has traditional photographic film grain.

1) Open the practice image named "Window.psd." [SEE FIGURE 41]

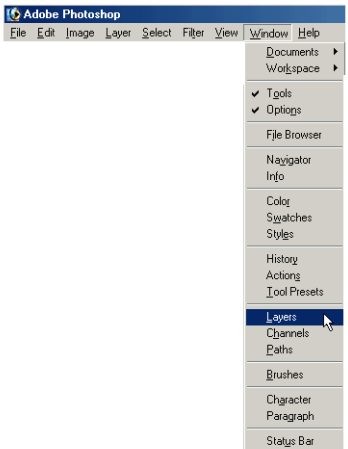


Figure 42 Window>Show Layers.

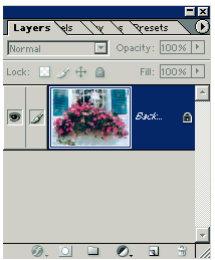


Figure 43 Layers palette.

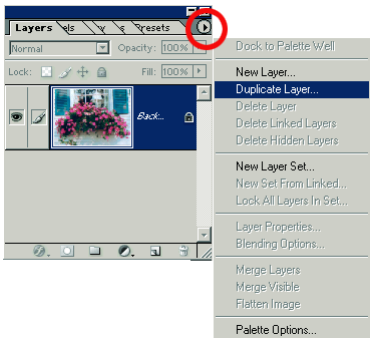


Figure 44 Layer>Duplicate Layer.

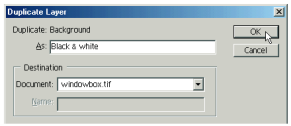


Figure 45 Name layer in dialog box.

2) Choose **Window>Layers**. [SEE FIGURE 42]

The Layers Palette appears. [SEE FIGURE 43]

3) From the Layers Palette, choose **Layer>Duplicate Layer.** [SEE FIGURE 44]

The Duplicate Layer dialog box appears.

We are duplicating the background layer so that we can create a black and white version of the original layer.

4) Type "Black & White" in the field box. You have now named the duplicate layer "black and white". [SEE FIGURE 45]

5) Click **OK**. A new duplicate layer is created.

6) Activate the “Black & White” layer in the Layers Palette by single clicking it.

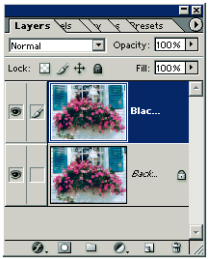


Figure 46 Layers palette activated with black and white layer.

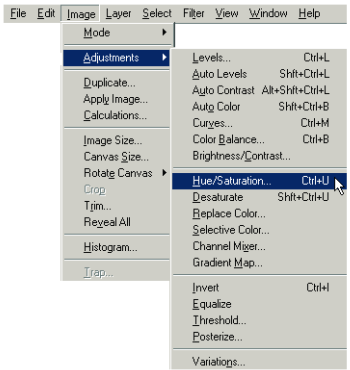


Figure 47 Image>Adjustment>Hue/Saturation

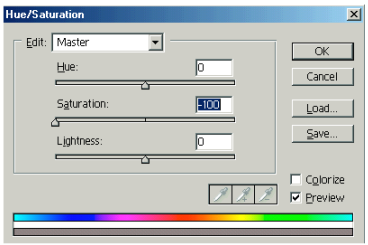


Figure 48 Change Saturation to -100 in Hue/Saturation Dialog Box.

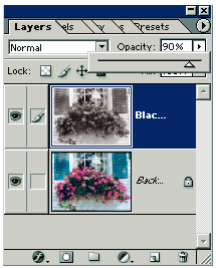


Figure 49 Set Opacity to 90 in Layers Palette.

A layer is active when it appears highlighted in the Layers Palette. [SEE FIGURE 46]

7) Choose **Image>Adjustment>Hue/Saturation**. [SEE FIGURE 47]

The Hue/Saturation dialog box appears.

8) Enter a Saturation value of -100. [SEE FIGURE 48]

A saturation value of -100 changes the layer to black-and-white values.

9) Click **OK**.

10) In the Layers palette enter an Opacity value of 90. [SEE FIGURE 49]

By changing the opacity of the black and white layer we have essentially blended the two layers together. The image retains pixel data from both the color and black and white layers.

11) Activate the background layer by single-clicking it in the Layers Palette.

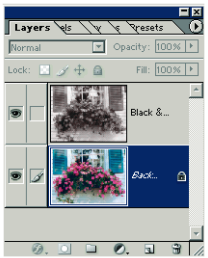


Figure 50 Background layer activated.

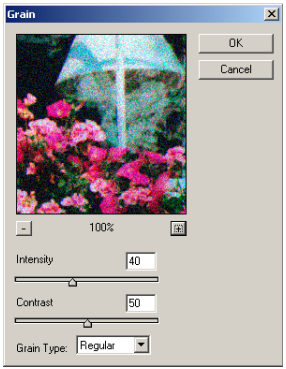


Figure 51 Grain dialog box.

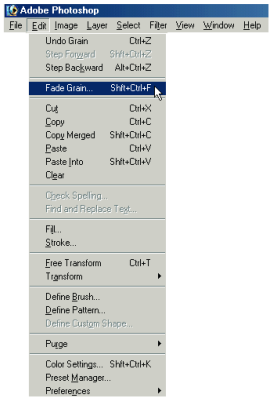


Figure 52 Edit>Fade Grain.

A layer is active when it appears highlighted in the Layers Palette. [SEE FIGURE 50]

12) Choose **Filter>Texture>Grain**.

The Grain dialog box appears. [SEE FIGURE 51]

By applying the Grain filter we are re-creating the look of traditional photographic film grain. We've chosen values of Intensity: 40, Contrast: 50 and Regular Grain Type. Feel free to experiment with your own values and Grain Types, and don't forget to use the hand Tool in the image preview window to see how your choices affect all parts of the image.

13) Choose **Edit>Fade Grain**. [SEE FIGURE 52]

The fade dialog box appears.

By choosing the fade Grain filter we can reduce the filter's effect.

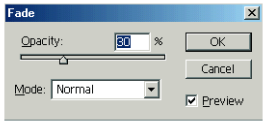


Figure 53 Change opacity to 30%.

14) Enter a value of 30 with mode "normal". [SEE FIGURE 53]

We have chosen a value of 30 so that the grain in the image appears more subdued than when it was originally applied.

15) Click **OK**.

Image after filter is applied. [SEE FIGURE 54]

Figure 54 Image after filter is applied.

By combining the black and white and color layers, you are essentially creating a subdued color effect replicating the look of an old hand-tinted image. Furthermore, by adding the Grain filter, you are recreating the feel of traditional photographic grain which adds to the illusion of film.

Technical Filters.

As we have mentioned earlier, not all filters are about creating special effects. Many of Photoshop's filters are technically oriented. Some may even be considered essential and should be used on your images regularly.

Depth of Field and Blur Filters.

Film photographers go to great lengths to improve the depth of field in their images, but with digital cameras, achieving selective focus is a real challenge. Because the electronic sensor on a typical digital camera is considerably smaller than a 35 mm, depth of field is greatly affected. As a model, the rough depth of field aperture equivalent of a digital camera compared to a traditional 35mm film camera would be five times smaller. Thus, a digital aperture of F4 gives the same depth of field as a 35mm at F22. Therefore, some digital photographers opt not to concern themselves with depth of field while they are shooting. Instead they may choose to re-create a shallow depth of field later on within Photoshop.

A successful image is often a simple one. You as a photographer need to decide who or what you would like your audience to focus on. Sometimes, drawing attention to a subject is as simple as throwing your background out of focus so that your foreground subjects stand out. This is what we mean by selectively focusing your images. Still, as mentioned above, achieving this with a digital camera can be quite difficult. The following is an example of how to achieve the look of an image that has been "selectively focused" by a film camera lens but in reality has been re-created in Photoshop.

Figure 55 "Hide_and_seek.psd"

1) Open the practice image named "Hide_and_seek.psd". [SEE FIGURE 55]

Figure 56
Quick Mask.

Figure 57 Red Quick Mask overlay.

Figure 58
Standard Mode.

The children in this image are competing with the background because both the foreground objects and the background objects are in sharp focus. In order to throw the background out of focus we are going to first isolate it and then apply a blurring filter.

2) Start by making a rough selection of the two children in the foreground using the Lasso, and then refine the selection using Quick Mask.

3) Enable Quick Mask Mode by clicking on the icon in the tools menu or pressing the "Q" key. [SEE FIGURE 56]

By painting a Quick Mask over the two children, you are essentially selecting the background. Quick Mask makes selecting the background easy and ensures the children are protected from modification.[SEE FIGURE 57]

4) When you are satisfied with your selection, return to Standard Mode clicking on the icon in the toolbox or by pressing the "Q" key a second time. [SEE FIGURE 58]

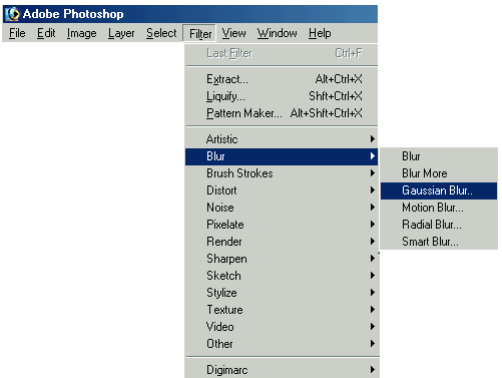


Figure 59 Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur.

Figure 60 Preview on Gaussian Blur 3.5.

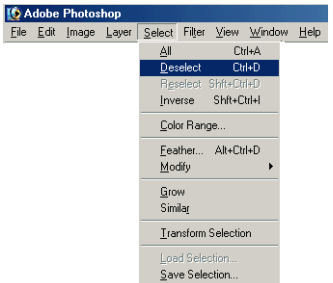


Figure 61 Select>Deselect.

5) With the background selection active choose **Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur.** [SEE FIGURE 59]

The Gaussian Blur dialog box appears.

6) With the preview option selected, enter a Radius value of 3.5. [SEE FIGURE 60]

The amount you blur the background is a subjective choice. Experiment with different values. Every image will have different needs.

7) Click **OK**.

The filter has now been applied.

8) Choose **Select>Deselect**. [SEE FIGURE 61]

Figure 69 Image before and after.

This deactivates the selection so that you can view your results. [SEE FIGURE 69]

Notice how blurring the background directs your attention to the main subject matter the children. By applying a blur filter to the background we have re-created the look of an image that has been selectively focused with a film camera lens.

Filters and Digital Art.

The implications of filters upon computer art are enormous. The digital world is still in development and programmers are working diligently to aid digital artists in their creative process. There are multitudinous options available to us as digital artists. As programmers create more filters, our job as computer illustrators, designers, retouchers, and even fine artists becomes easier. The real trick is in using these filters to help develop our own style. As with any art form, experimentation and practice is key.

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Quit

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