

Digital Photo Image Editing

- using Adobe® Photoshop Elements

Workshop 8: INTRODUCTION TO LAYERS

Objective

Now that we have made a selection, let's explore how to create a Layer from it. Layers are probably the most powerful and exciting/creative part of Photoshop. This is what distinguishes Photoshop and Elements from other less powerful image editing programs. This exercise is just an introduction. We will look at some of the artistic things that you can do as an illustration of some of the capability, but unfortunately we won't have time to go into a lot of detail. You can experiment at home or stayed tuned to the later developments in this course.

The Layers Palette
Adobe Photoshop Elements

The image shows a screenshot of the Layers Palette in Adobe Photoshop Elements. The palette is titled 'Layers' and contains a list of layers. At the top, there is a 'Layer Opacity' section with a dropdown menu set to 'Normal' and an 'Opacity' slider set to 100%. Below this is a 'Layer Control Bar' with icons for creating a new layer, adding a fill or adjustment layer, deleting a layer, linking layers, locking layer transparency, and locking the layer. The layers list includes: 'Stamp Visible Layer' (selected, with a blue background), 'Harvest Fest' (with a style icon), 'Saturday, October 30 County Fa' (text layer), 'Bullet Points' (text layer with a font warning icon), 'It's that time of year again!' (text layer), 'Pumpkins Layer 3' (with a checkerboard pattern), 'Pumpkins Layer 2' (with a checkerboard pattern), 'Layer 1' (with a checkerboard pattern), and 'Background' (locked, with a lock icon). Annotations with arrows point to various elements: 'Layer Mode' points to the 'Normal' dropdown; 'The Visible Layer (Selected)' points to the 'Stamp Visible Layer'; 'Layer Thumbnail' points to the 'Stamp Visible Layer' thumbnail; 'A Warped Text Layer' points to the 'Harvest Fest' layer; 'A Standard Text Layer' points to the 'Saturday, October 30 County Fa' layer; 'A Font Warning' points to the 'Bullet Points' layer; 'Eye Icon Layer Visibility (click on and off)' points to the eye icon of 'Pumpkins Layer 3'; 'Transparent Areas (checkerboard)' points to the checkerboard patterns of 'Pumpkins Layer 2' and 'Layer 1'; 'The Background Layer' points to the 'Background' layer; 'The "More" Fly-out Menu for Layer options. Select "Layers Palette Options" to change the size of these icons!' points to the 'More' button; 'Layer Control Bar See Below' points to the control bar; 'This is a special "Stamp Visible" layer. SHIFT-CTRL-ALT-E (Windows) SHIFT-OPT-CMD-E (Mac)' points to the 'Stamp Visible Layer'; 'Layer has a Style applied. Double-click it to modify.' points to the style icon on 'Harvest Fest'; 'Create New Layer', 'Add a New Fill or Adjustment Layer', and 'Delete a Layer' point to the top icons of the control bar; 'Link Layers', 'Lock Layer Transparency', and 'Lock Layer' point to the bottom icons of the control bar; 'Layer Name (editable)' points to the name 'Pumpkins Layer 2'; and 'Layer is Partially Locked (Cannot be moved)' points to the lock icon on the 'Background' layer. A black box at the bottom right contains the text: 'Layers above the Background Layer can be moved by dragging them up/down'.

Layer Opacity

Layer Mode

The Visible Layer (Selected)

Layer Thumbnail

A Warped Text Layer

A Standard Text Layer

A Font Warning

Eye Icon Layer Visibility (click on and off)

Transparent Areas (checkerboard)

The Background Layer

The "More" Fly-out Menu for Layer options. Select "Layers Palette Options" to change the size of these icons!

Layer Control Bar See Below

This is a special "Stamp Visible" layer. SHIFT-CTRL-ALT-E (Windows) SHIFT-OPT-CMD-E (Mac)

Layer has a Style applied. Double-click it to modify.

Create New Layer

Add a New Fill or Adjustment Layer

Delete a Layer

Link Layers

Lock Layer Transparency

Lock Layer

Layer Name (editable)

Layers above the Background Layer can be moved by dragging them up/down

Layer is Partially Locked (Cannot be moved)

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Exercise 08-01 Using Layers

Image: *Multilayer beach.psd*

- An image composed of layers is viewed from the top down. We are going to illustrate this by looking at a sample image.
- Open the **Lab Images Week 8** and select the file *Multilayer beach.psd*. Note, the file extension *‘.psd’*. This is the Photoshop native format.
- One of the first things to notice is that there are a lot of layers. If we look **down the stack**, we see the bottom one is the only one with the **“eyeball”** turn on. Let’s turn on the top one. Now we see nothing. The underlying layer is completely hidden by the full coverage white layer on top.
- Now turn off the upper layer and turn on the man and the background. We could get the move tool and resize the image to fit in the window. But let’s **cut out the window view** and **place the man behind the window**.
- Make a copy of the background layer using **Layer > Duplicate Layer** (for pixel preservation), then take the **rectangular marquee** selection tool and select the part that we want to delete and hit **backspace/delete** key. Make sure that you are on the right layer-- must be able to see it **“eyeball”** on, *must have selected the layer to work on-you will see that layer highlighted*.
- Now let’s **select the man** and the **cut out window**. Other than scale--window looks like it is at sand level and man is too close, you have the idea.
- Now let’s **turn on the woman layer**. Note that she completely hides the man below. If we reduce the **opacity** to say 60 % then we can see some of the underlying layers. This can be very helpful when trying to line up images that are on several different layers-- panoramas for example. We will come back to this in a minute.

Blending Mode

- Let’s look at another feature-- **blending mode**.
- **Normal** is normal.
- If we want to lighten a picture that is under exposed we can select **Screen**. We will do this in a minute.
- First let’s do some wild things. Let’s select the beach and apply **hard mix**. We have posterized the image.
- Now go to **Layers>New Adjustment Layer>Invert**. This is kind of a wild image considering what we started with.

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Exercise 08-02 Linda with Layers

Image: *linda-before.jpg*.

- Let's go back to Linda and see how we could edit it using layers and preserve the original.
- Open the **Lab Images Week 8** and select the file *linda-before.jpg*.
- Make an **oval selection** of Linda's face as before using the **Feather** as it was set before at 50 pixels.
- Make a new layer using **Layer > New > Layer** .
- Then go to **Enhance > Adjust Lighting > Shadows/highlights**.
- Now select the background layer and make a copy and blur it using the Gaussian filter **Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur**. This time select a large radius say 90.
- Now reduce the **opacity** of the blurred layer to about 65%.

Exercise 08-03 Correcting Poor Exposure

Images: *Under Exposed flower.jpg*
Over exposed bird.jpg

- Now open the **Lab Images Week 8** and select the file *Under Exposed flower.jpg*
- Make a copy using **Layer > Duplicate Layer**.
- Then change the blending mode to **Screen**.
- Now **Layer > Duplicate Layer** again--Note the blending mode is still **Screen**.
- You can make several more copies using **Layer > Duplicate Layer**.
- On the last one you can adjust the effect of the last layer by adjusting the **opacity** to get it just right.
- You can try the other options under **Lighten**, they will do different things. As a rule **Screen** is the blending mode to use to help underexposed photos.

- Now open *Over exposed bird.jpg*
- Make a copy and select blending mode **Multiply**.
- Make a total of three copies using **Layer > Duplicate Layer**. None of these corrected pictures are as good as a well exposed original, but it may save a poorly exposed photo.

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Exercise 08-04 Opacity

Image: *Picture composite.psd*

- Now back to the opacity. Open the **Lab Images Week 8** and select the file ***Picture composite.psd***. There are four images on a white background. They probably came from scanning a large picture.
- Reduce the **opacity** of the upper right image to say 50 % and line up the image. Then restore the **opacity** to 100%.
- Now get the **Eraser** (E) (16th tool down or RC down 8) pick a large **brush** say 150 (Increase right square bracket, decrease left square bracket), **soften** it (Shift left square bracket) and draw down the line.

Adjustment Layers

- We have had a quick look at **Image Layers**. There are other types of layers.
- One is the **Adjustment Layer**. This allows us to make adjustments to an underlying layer without changing the layer.
- As you have already seen PSE images saved in ***psd*** format save Layers along with the picture. Therefore, we can make changes to pictures that are easily reversible to repurpose a picture or to further improve it when our photo editing skills get better.
- Another benefit to adjustment layers is that they are **instructions** and hence quite small so that the stored image is not excessive. If you use adjustment layers exclusively, you are doing what is called non-destructive editing.
- Another kind of layer is the **Type Layer**. It is used to type text onto the photo. It is again **instructions** (vector, unless simplified or rasterized) and can be scaled and warped etc. without loss of definition.