

Digital Photo Editing with Photoshop Elements – Workshop Exercise 2

We will begin looking at how to edit and improve your photos. There are different editing modes available in PSE. The Auto Fix Buttons make changes over which you have no control, but the Quick Fix, Full Edit, and Guided Edit modes give you more control over the results. We will begin looking at how to edit and improve your photos using the Quick Fix mode before moving on to the Full Edit mode. This course is intended to make you realize that Auto Fix buttons work OK on 20% and Quick Fix only works OK on 50% of photos. In a few weeks you will know how you can do better using Full Edit. Also we will see how to save your edited images in version sets, so that the original photo remains as an unaltered file.

Launch Photoshop: Double click the desktop icon that looks like a camera to launch PSE (shorthand for Photoshop Elements). The Welcome Screen appears. Click on Organize to launch the Organizer program. The Organizer shows the photos we have already stored in our catalog in Exercise 1. Check that the catalog that you are in is the default “My Catalog” appearing in the lower left, which contains the images from the folder *PSE Lab Images* contained in *My Pictures*. Then click on the Fix tab on the right. A list of options appears in the Task Pane on the right.

Auto Fix Buttons: The top 7 items start with Auto Smart Fix and run down to Crop. If you press any one of these, an automatic process starts, changes your photo, and creates a new file. If the original photo file was *Egret.jpg*, then the new file is *Egret_edited-1.jpg*. These Auto Fix Buttons were put into the Organizer by Adobe for people who did not want to take the time to make their own improvements to a photo using the Edit tools we are going to teach you. You may find their results acceptable about 20% of the time. But our intent is to teach you how you can do better by learning to edit yourself.

Try it. Find the thumbnail of the egret in the Lesson 01 folder, click on it so that is selected, and then click on the top button Auto Smart Fix. Notice that a window pops up while PSE is working, and then the thumbnail of the egret photo is surrounded by a grey box. Click on the arrowhead on the right side of the box, and now you will see the before and after versions of this photo along with the file names. Double click the thumbnail so that it fills the screen and you can see it better. Use the arrow buttons to move between the original and edited versions of the egret.

Then use the left pointing blue arrow at the upper left to return to the previous view showing many thumbnails. Now remove the *Egret_edited-1.jpg* file you just created by clicking on the thumbnail and holding down the right mouse button. Select Delete from Catalog, and in the pop up window also check ‘Also delete selected item from hard disk’.

Start Quick Fix: Select the image *rfox-before.jpg* by clicking on it, so that a blue frame surrounds it. Then go up to the Edit icon and select Quick Fix. It will take a moment for the Editor to open. It is a separate program, and it appears separately along the bottom of your screen. Then look at the lower left and make sure that the View is Before and After-Horizontal. Along the left side is a vertical section called the Toolbox. Make sure that the hand symbol is selected. Near the top under the 2 blue arrows click on the Fit Screen

box. Now you should see Before and After versions of the image (but they look the same so far).

Try Quick Fix, etc: Now the right hand Task Pane shows General Fixes and Smart Fix under it. Click on the Auto button. The result is a real improvement over the original. But let's try a manual control instead. So do either of these steps to undo the Auto Smart Fix: either hit the reset button above the After image, or hit the backward blue arrow, or type Ctrl-Z (Control and Z).

Then use the blue slider under Amount to manually adjust the amount of the Smart Fix. Move it ¼ of the way and stop and see what it looks like. Then move another quarter, and another. Perhaps you want to back off to about the ¼ position if that looks good to you. Look for a Green checkmark and a Red 'do not enter' icon near the slider and click on the Green to accept the change. After trying this Reset the image to its original state.

Now let's try some of the other adjustments available from lower on the Quick Fix palette. Click on the Auto button for Levels. You can see an improvement in the photo with increased contrast and color. Without Reset go down to the Saturation slider bar under Color, and move it about ¼ way to the right. Accept this with by hitting the check mark. Now the colors are more intense and pleasing. Now hit the Reset button. Go back and hit the Auto button for Color. The result is not good. Reset and then do Auto Levels again. This time play with the Hue, Temperature, and Tint sliders one at a time. You probably won't like what you get.

To close *rfox-before.jpg*, Select File > Close from the pull down menu at the top. Say NO to the dialog box asking if you want to save changes to the file. Then you should be back in the Organizer. Select *StPeters.jpg*, go to the Edit tab and open it in Quick Fix. Try Auto Smart Fix and see how much more detail emerges on the walls and ceiling of the basilica. Then reset and try using the Smart Fix slider instead.

Close *StPeters.jpg* and open *SchoolofAthens.jpg*. This Raphael renaissance masterpiece hangs in the Vatican Museum, and the photo was taken hand held with poor lighting. Try Auto Smart Fix. This is certainly an improvement, but maybe we can do better. Reset and try Auto Levels followed by a slight increase in Saturation. Maybe a slight increase in Temperature helps too.

Saving Your Changes: How can you save the changes you made to a photo? You can either go to File > Save or use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-S. Any of these will open the dialog window asking you how and where you want to save the modified file. The suggested name for the last edited file is *SchoolofAthens_edited-1.jpg*, which tells you that you have edited the original file once. The next line has 2 boxes, which always should be checked. They are Include in Organizer and Save in Version Set with Original. This ensures that you can always go back to the original file if you want since both will be saved. The most recent edited version appears as the thumbnail in the Organizer.

Try to improve several of the other photos in the Lesson 01 folder.