



Printing Services

Want to show off your artwork? To maximise exposure, an increasing number of Photoshop artists are seeking out unique printing services to display their labours in more than just a frame



There are literally hundreds of routes Photoshop artists can follow to have art made tangible, but one of the most obvious and heavily subscribed to services is canvas printing. The premise involves the artist sending a digital file to the manufacturer, who prints it onto a canvas, which is then affixed to a wooden frame ready for hanging.

One such company is Berkshire-based Photo Canvas Printing (www.photocanvasprinting.com). Simon Hopkin, owner of the company, says a service like this has wide-ranging appeal for Photoshop artists wanting to print anything from a ten-hour crafted masterpiece to a simple snap of a family member: "As artwork goes, we all have our own tastes and opinions, as such a piece of art does not appeal to everyone. The majority of us however, enjoy the photos we have taken, or digital images we have created ourselves, because they are individual to us and have a personal meaning. People want to personalise their surroundings with their own creative work, which evokes personal memories or feelings, on a medium that is more tactile and its texture warmer than a photo behind a glass frame." Despite growing interest from the everyday photographer, the art of canvas printing has recently faced criticism with art pundits labelling it a 'commercial fad'. Simon concedes that although this is partially accurate, the demand for canvases isn't waning: "Large stretched canvas prints are very fashionable at the moment, but this kind of service has been around for a few years now. Whilst fashions are obviously temporary, we believe that as this is such a useful service to enable people to create permanent, personal works of art, it should be around for some time to come. From our experience the market is growing, which I believe is partially due to the rapid uptake of broadband and the increasing number of people getting into digital photography and Photoshop. The growth is partially due to fashion and, as with all fashions at some point, canvas prints may become less popular. But I foresee this service maintaining its growth for at least the next four or five years."



BUSINESS MINDED: By combining your design skills with a commercial venture you could rake in the cash

T-SHIRT APPEAL:
Consider getting your work printed onto a t-shirt for the maximum exposure



In this trade there appears to be one particular area of contention between printers, and that is which type of ink should be used. At Photo Canvas Printing Simon is proud of his large format HP printers with specially formulated inks and six-ink HP Colour layer technology. Others in the industry are adamant that the ink printers only coat the surface of the fabric rather than become embedded into the textile.

One advocate of the dye process is Bags Of Love (www.bagsoflove.co.uk). "We use a new deep fibre method of printing where the inks are impregnated deep into the fibres of the canvas and are therefore ideal for stretching," explains the fact sheet on the company's website. "Our process is not old-fashioned common inkjet printing where the ink is sprayed onto the surface and is left to dry meaning it is susceptible to cracking and cannot be stretched without disturbing the dried ink surface."

Bags of Love offers canvas printing, in addition to printing art on bags, books, diaries, blinds, wallpaper, calendars, keepsake tins and photo puzzles. The London-based company guarantees the products will endure for a year and can be ordered in four simple steps. Customers simply decide which piece of art and product they want to combine, and an online form is completed where users detail

specifications and submit the image – the rest is then down to the company. One of the most unique services offered by this website is personalised roller blinds. The art is printed on synthetic fabric that can be seen from both sides of the window. Customers interested in this service should remember that >>>

JUST DOING IT

Photoshop artists sending files to any company for print should check how they want to receive the files; most will request artists send their files either as Adobe Illustrator 8.0 or earlier EPS files with outlined fonts, or Photoshop files at least 300dpi at the final print size.

If the order is a multi-colour job, customers should make sure they structure each colour on its own individual layer. This is particularly important for jobs that involve screen-printing (used predominately in t-shirt design).

If users are only printing one colour it is common for companies to request lineart-only graphics saved as a 1200dpi TIF. To save space and ease transfer, zip the file, which will reduce its volume considerably.



“ONE OF THE MEDIA FORMATS TO SEE A HUGE INCREASE IN POPULARITY IS POSTCARDS”

when ordering the price is based on 10cm steps rounding up. Additionally, as there are two ways of mounting the blinds, relief or recess, measuring takes on further complications. Relief mounting, width wise, is where the blind screws to the window frame or facing wall, and stands proud of the wall or frame. You must include at least 5cm in width to house the spindle fittings as well as the blind. However if you crave a recess mount, the blind goes inside the ‘box’ of the window and the precise measurements of this will need to be communicated.

Hanging blinds is one way to get your 2D images into a tangible format, but what about hanging wallpaper? Print2wallpaper, www.print2wallpaper.com, specialises in converting your images in this way. The company requests artists submit a file that is at least 1.5MB for a result that is printed to 720dpi. The art is applied using eco solvent-based inks; these are favoured as they are highly durable.

Another route artists can pursue is the lower cost route of bumper stickers and badges. One such online service comes in the form of Seatthole, www.seatthole.com, who admits: “We want to see your merchandise table filled up with custom t-shirts, buttons and stickers.” The Seattle-grown firm reports to have stamped over 60,000 custom buttons and 100,000 shirts, and offer users templates to make the service as easy as possible to exploit.

CANVAS ART: Get your digital works printed onto canvas and show them off with pride

One of the media formats to see a huge increase in popularity is postcards. It seems that more and more artists are keen to get their work widely spread to potential clients in tangible form, and postcards are one of the cheapest and most suited products for the job. One such firm specialising in printing individualised postcards is www.modernpostcard.com. For this service, the company provides a free colour kit to ensure monitor calibration is in line with the software’s colour values. Monitor calibration is essential for any Photoshop artist, as the images displayed on-screen may not be reflected when in print if your monitor is outputting incorrect colour values. Calibrating your unit seeks to reset black and white points, and contrast brightness and gamma (midtone density). To do this, creatives will need to employ a device such as Pantone’s Huey or ColorVision’s Spyder to accurately calibrate their machines. What is more, many artists may not be aware that images displayed on LCD screens typically appear darker than those on the bulkier CRT counterparts, and as a result are not recommended for preparing print-ready image files.

An upcoming German company known as Spreadshirt has revolutionised the printing industry for Photoshop artists desperate to get their prints onto clothing, but are constrained by the lack of



STICK UP: Stickers, flyers and badges are a low-cost, low-profile way of getting your work out there

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finances. "The shop platform, www.spreadshirt.co.uk, lets anyone start their own online shop for free. This is used by artists to create custom apparel and gifts that they can offer through their website," Sarah Falcon, Spreadshirt's UK marketing and development officer informs us. "This is a great solution for designers wanting to offer their work for sale: they create the products, set the commission on the sale, and Spreadshirt takes care of processing orders, stocking goods, customer services and returns."

The service has already established over 100,000 artists. One such designer is Jeremy Kalgreen of Amorphia Apparel (<http://amorphia-apparel.com>) who says: "My dream is to one day be hanging out somewhere and see some stranger walk in wearing a shirt of my design." Angela Lorbach established Jerkass Clothing Co (www.jerkassclothing.com) thanks to the service. "I started creating t-shirt designs for friends in college," boasts the Milwaukee-based entrepreneur. "I discovered Spreadshirt in 2005 and things really took off. They handle the boring day-to-day business stuff. Which leaves me time to focus on the artwork and let the creative juices flow."

Sarah Falcon claims the rapid uptake of the Internet will only seek to propel the service, which is now looking towards the under-subscribed Asian market. "T-shirt design isn't new, but it's becoming easier to do. The distribution channels have become broader and more democratic with the help of the Internet."

Whatever format your artwork embodies, it's worthwhile remembering to check your system's colour values using calibration software and hardware. Also, if your art contains text it's worth getting a friend to proofread it for mistakes. Finally, once ordered and delivered, you can sit back and admire your artwork in all its glory – whether it's on a mug, a badge, a book, a t-shirt or the wallpaper.

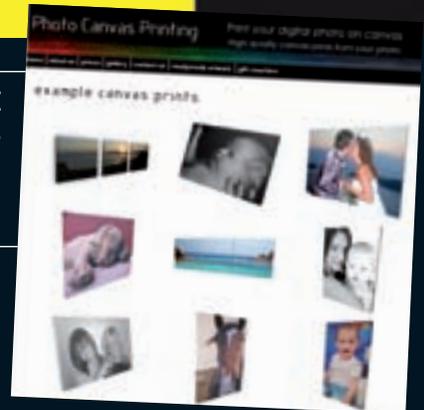


MARKET IT: With the right marketing you can set up your own business based around your art skills

SERVICES

WWW.PHOTOCANVASPRINTING.COM

Photo Canvas Printing specialises in taking works of art and printing them onto a canvas. The sizes range from picture frame to whole walls, and can be even be split into sections.



WWW.BAGSOFFLOVE.CO.UK

The service prints images on bags, books, diaries, blinds, wallpaper, calendars, keepsake tins and photo puzzles. The company guarantees the quality will endure for at least a year.

WWW.PRINT2CANVAS.CO.UK

If a canvas doesn't quite do your digital art the justice it deserves, why not plaster it all over your walls? Print2wallpaper is a popular branch of the Print2canvas site.



WWW.SEATTHOLE.COM

If vinyl bumper stickers and one-inch pins are what you need to sell your art, then perhaps take a look at US company SeatHole. It also specialises in printing t-shirts and jumpers.

WWW.MODERNPOSTCARD.COM

One of the most cost-effective, but still visually creative, ways of getting your work seen is to print them on to postcards. As Modern Postcard offers a range of styles, there is room for some imagination.



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books

If you're passionate about pixels, let it show and stack your bookshelves with Photoshop volumes

Photoshop Elements Drop Dead Lighting

Author: Barry Huggins

Publisher: Ilex Press

Price: £17.99 / \$23.96

ISBN: 1-904705-93-6

Web: www.ilex-press.com

This simply laid out guide is recommended for digital artists who enjoy photo manipulation and experimenting with different conditions in an image.

Drop Dead Lighting Techniques begins with more simplistic lighting projects and basic explanations of the tools and features of Photoshop you will use to create them, but then progresses to more complicated techniques such as altering light conditions to completely transform an image. Equally important as producing the light itself is how it changes the area around it, so topics such as shadows and projections are covered in depth. The tutorials are written in an easy-to-



understand manner – great for covering more complex subjects, such as the way light is refracted by glass. ■

Rating: **4/5**

Hacking Photoshop CS2

Author: Shangara Singh

Publisher: Wiley

Price: £19.99 / \$29.99

ISBN: 0-7645-9788-4

Web: www.wiley.com

This book provides explanations of Photoshop's many settings and tools. *Hacking Photoshop CS2* describes how to use areas, such as the Camera Raw dialog box, more effectively and is packed with handy tips and shortcuts.

This is not a tutorial-based book, but more an in-depth coverage of the key areas within the program. Even the most experienced users of Photoshop are likely to benefit from the tips in the opening chapter of the book on how to use the workspace to its full potential. Another very useful section of the manual discusses creating actions and saving them as droplets, an important area to understand for those who use Photoshop



frequently. Although this is not a complete guide to the program, it does include a vast amount of interesting material. ■

Rating: **3/5**

Photoshop CS2 Gone Wild

Author: Sherry London

Publisher: Wiley

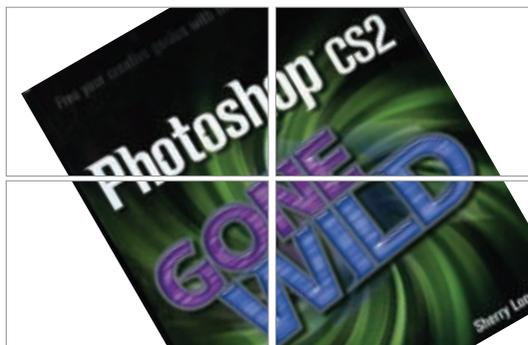
Price: £22.99 / \$34.99

ISBN: 0-7645-9813-9

Web: www.wiley.com

This is not your conventional Photoshop guide. True to its title it provides some very wild and wacky project ideas. Although many of them employ interesting techniques a few of the results don't really hit the mark and can look a bit too bizarre.

All of the projects are clearly organised with an overview of what will be achieved. Not everyone may want to know how to distort a cat to fit in a bottle or apply a tribal face to a tree, but this is where this book's charm lies. It does serve in an informative sense too, covering areas that are unique to CS2, such as the Vanishing Point filter and Smart objects. This is not a



straight-laced manual, but a demonstration of the unique, if not always the most realistic, artwork you can produce. ■

Rating: **3/5**

books

The Fundamentals Of Creative Design

Author: Gavin Ambrose and Paul Harris

Publisher: AVA Publishing

Price: £14.95 / \$28.21

ISBN: 2-88479-023-3

Web: www.avabooks.com

Understanding the concepts behind successful design is crucial and this guide gives a good grounding in the most important areas.

Relevant attractive visual examples and in-depth coverage of topics including colour, layout and the use of typography make *The Fundamentals Of Creative Design* an engaging exploration. It is easier to understand a theory if you see it put into practice, so each chapter being supported by examples of contemporary designers' work makes this book indispensable. This is an ideal resource for those wanting to brush up on their design skills and use classic design theories to improve their artwork. ■

Rating: **3/5**

CD Art

Author: Charlotte Rivers

Publisher: Rotovision

Price: £19.99 / \$30.00

ISBN: 2-88046-745-4

Web: www.rotovision.com

Music fanatics and designers alike will delight in reading CD Art. It is entertaining and sure to stimulate your creative side, making you think differently about design.

The book is boldly and attractively presented from cover to cover and crammed with innovative examples of design for CD labels and case inserts. As music albums need to be eye-catching to increase sales it makes sense that some of the best examples of graphic design are found within this area. If you like the sound of this book another recommended read is *DVD Art*, packed with even more experimental and groundbreaking designs. ■

Rating: **4/5**

Mac Digital Photography

Author: Dennis R. Cohen and Erica Sadun

Publisher: Sybex

Price: £22.99 / \$29.99

ISBN: 0-7821-4272-9

Web: www.sybex.com

Although this is essentially a Mac-dedicated book it goes further by exploring inventive creative techniques.

You will develop your understanding of how your Mac can enhance photographic projects and also become more adventurous when composing shots. This useful guide shows you how to produce great-looking photographic results on your Mac. Photoshop Elements is discussed in detail, in addition to Mac-based applications such as iPhoto. A great read for any Mac enthusiast. ■

Rating: **3/5**



books

Building Design Portfolios

Author: Sara Eisenman
Publisher: Rockport
Price: £27.50 / \$40.00
ISBN: 1-59253-223-3
Web: www.rockpub.com

Presentation of your work is vitally important when trying to impress potential clients. That is why this guide is a must-have for those wanting to make their artwork stand out from the rest.

Invaluable guidance is given about the correct way to present your work in a variety of ways including online, as a motion portfolio, PDF portfolio and promotional book. *Building Design Portfolios* demonstrates using examples of successful and innovative presentation of the best designers' work and includes crucial information compiled using interviews from design professionals about what they look for in portfolios. ■

Rating: 3/5

After Effects And Photoshop, Second Edition

Author: Jeff Foster
Publisher: Sybex
Price: £31.99 / \$49.99
ISBN: 0-7821-4455-1
Web: www.sybex.com

This book is a perfect addition to your design library, exploring how Photoshop can be used in combination with another program in the Adobe family to create effects and animations.

Although it will inspire beginners, a basic understanding of After Effects does help. Photoshop complements motion graphic design so much and using it in conjunction with After Effects is the perfect progression for adventurous designers. *After Effects And Photoshop* features examples of professional techniques, such as motion titling and making movies from stills. This book is unique, showing how to combine these two powerful applications to great effect. ■

Rating: 4/5

Commercial Photoshop with Bert Monroy

Author: Bert Monroy
Publisher: New Riders
Price: £34.99 / \$45.00
ISBN: 0-7357-1388
Web: www.newriders.com

Anyone familiar with his work knows Monroy's most complex artwork comprises of thousands of layers.

Each chapter of this book is introduced by a Monroy masterpiece, acting as a perfect source of inspiration to motivate you to try out the tutorials. The opening overview of Photoshop provides vast amounts of essential information. Discussion then focuses on composition, producing photo-realistic effects and using Photoshop with Illustrator. ■

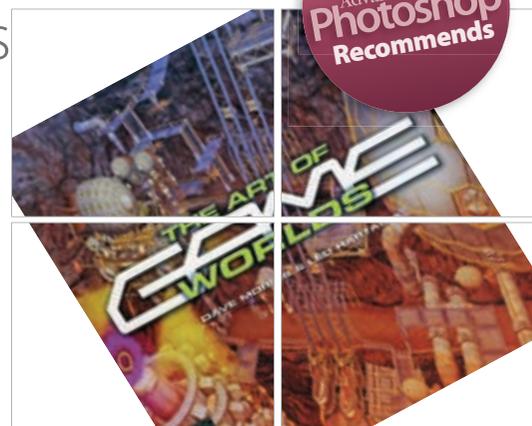
Rating: 4/5

The Art of Game Worlds

Author: Dave Morris and Leo Hartas
Publisher: Ilex Press
Price: £17.95 / \$29.95
ISBN: 1-904705-34-0
Web: www.illex-press.com

As is expected with such a book, it is filled with exceptional examples of game design that are large enough to fully appreciate.

The greatest strength of *The Art of Game Worlds* are the Insider Secrets sections in which experts in their field are interviewed and reveal the inspirations and techniques behind their work. Do not expect step-by-step instructions on how the artwork was produced, as the purpose of the book is more of a showcase of the best artwork. The opening chapters also give a good grounding in the history of game design and handy advice on how to get started and create your basic setting and



initial colours and lighting. The exploration even broadens to the type of background music and sound effects used. ■

Rating: 5/5

Graphic Japan

Author: Natalie Avella
Publisher: Rotovision
Price: £24.99 / \$35.00
ISBN: 2-88046-771-3
Web: www.rotovision.com

It is difficult to miss the incredible influence that Japanese art has had within so many areas of design.

This is why a book such as *Graphic Japan* is so essential for anyone who is passionate about graphic arts and trends in creativity. Both the visuals and explanatory texts are presented in an approachable way. In fact the entire book's design and even its typefaces follow the principals of Japanese design, being delicate and elegant.

The book is organised into small collections of chapters in the form of essays and large galleries comprising of a varied array of striking examples of Japanese design. If you are enthusiastic



about innovative and cutting-edge design and want to gain inspiration, then *Graphic Japan* is the perfect purchase. ■

Rating: 4/5

Classic Photoshop Effects

Author: Scott Kelby
Publisher: Peachpit Press
Price: £30.99 / \$39.99
ISBN: 0-321-27225-0
Web: www.peachpit.com

There is virtually nothing that Scott Kelby doesn't know about Photoshop and Classic Photoshop Effects reinforces this fact.

The best thing is that it is very easy to follow the step-by-steps, but it remains entertaining. You may be surprised at just how impressive the results are from the straightforward instructions. Large screenshots and frequent dialog boxes showing the necessary settings play a large part in the guide.

Experienced Photoshop users are likely to be familiar with many of the techniques, but there are also sure to be some new tricks presented in a fun way for you to try out. When a guide is



informative whilst informal in style it is often a winning combination, and this is true of *Classic Photoshop Effects*. ■

Rating: 4/5

fonts

Jazz up your Photoshop work with new and exciting fonts from these sites

Font Diner

Web: www.fontdiner.com

The fonts on offer at Font Diner are high quality, trendy and available for both PC and Mac, meaning that there should be something here to suit, whatever your need.

The entire theme of the site's design is retro, with the homepage resembling a menu, and this retro feel carries through into the style of the fonts.

In addition to the font sets that are for sale, one section not to miss is Free Silverware, which is home to a fantastic selection of free fonts. If you want to see what can be done with the fonts, then check out the Home-made Specialities section for examples of designs that have integrated the typefaces. ■

Advanced
Photoshop
Recommends

Rating: 4/5



Divide By Zero

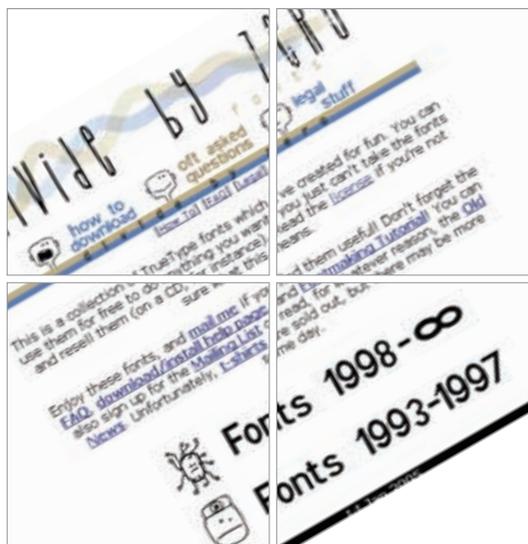
Web: <http://fonts.tom7.com>

Divide By Zero boasts a large collection of free pixel and TrueType fonts for Mac and Windows, proving that you don't have to splash the cash to create professional-looking works of art.

All of the fonts are designed to be fun and unique, and you can even learn how to create your own using the font-making tutorial. This lesson not only recommends hardware and software such as Fontographer, but also goes in-depth into the process of creating your own TrueType fonts from scratch.

So if you are looking for unusual and quirky fonts then you are sure to find them within the selection here, which is categorised into useful and descriptive sections such as Messy, Girly, Cute and Dingbats. ■

Rating: 4/5



Chank

Web: www.chank.com

Chank features many fonts that you may be familiar with, as they have featured in many designers' work and on popular websites.

The site has been established for a long time and has developed a very extensive collection of classic, commercial and unique fonts.

The free fonts in Chank's archive are all available for both Mac and PC users, and were created by designers from all areas of the world. Some of the most popular font styles available at the site include handwriting, graffiti-like and bubbly. As well as free fonts, Chank's Fontpaks offer great-looking, unusual fonts for a low price. If you can't find what you need here, then you probably won't find it at all. ■

Rating: 4/5



fonts

MiniFonts

Web: www.minifonts.com

Don't be fooled by the name, there are plenty of fonts here. The fonts on this website are not free, but they are still very affordable and of extremely high quality.

Intended to be used for web design, the fonts are in a pixel style, but they are also suitable for other digital projects. Choose from more than 230 fonts and benefit from discounted bundles of grouped sets.

There are also pixel font related articles on the site, such as how to design your own pixel fonts and how the font style has developed over the years. If you want to use the fonts on web pages they are ideal, as they are designed to appear crisp even at small sizes. ■

Rating: 3/5

MyFonts

Web: www.myfonts.com

MyFonts is one of the largest font sites on the web, with over 50,000 fonts ready to buy. Despite its size, it is simple to locate the most suitable font for you.

You can search using keywords, descriptive terms, font foundry or designer's name. Have you ever seen a great font used and wanted to know what it is? Using the WhatTheFont feature you can upload scanned fonts and the closest match will be found for you to purchase.

There are also sections that list the current best-selling fonts and a news area for keeping on top of typographical goings-on.

Another useful section of the MyFonts website that any creative should pay a visit to is the forum, where you can interact with experts about everything font related. ■

Rating: 4/5

Astigmatic One Eye Typographic Institute

Web: www.astigmatic.com

The name and font collection of this site are both very unusual. The design of the site is eye-catching and easy to navigate around, making your font hunt that little bit easier and enjoyable.

Some of the fonts you have to pay for, but there is also an extensive freeware section of alphabetically listed fonts so if you know what you are looking for then finding it is a breeze.

Both PC and Mac fonts can be downloaded from the site in both traditional and crazy styles. Wild Monkeys, Chicken Scratch and Lovesick are just a few of the fonts on the site, and just the name of these gives an indication of the bizarre styles that are on offer.

You can also choose to join the site's electronic mailing list to be alerted when new fonts arrive on the site, keeping you up to date with the latest trends in typography. ■

Rating: 4/5

clipart

We have gathered together the best clipart on the web for use in your digital projects

Best Clipart

Web: www.bestclipart.com

Downloading the clipart graphics on this site is absolutely free, but you must sign up first to view the gallery, which also won't cost anything.

This site offers a lot of variety when it comes to clipart themes. As the images have a sketchy feel, more than a computer-generated look, they may not be to everyone's taste but they are still interesting and appropriate for a lot of projects. With over 1000 images to choose from, you are sure to find something that takes your fancy. There is also a selection of backgrounds, wallpapers and templates that may be interesting to those wanting to incorporate the images into websites. This is not one of the largest clipart sites, but still worth checking out. ■

Rating: **4/5**



Webclipart

Web: www.webclipart.com

Although the title of this site indicates it is solely web-based, the graphics featured are suitable for other creative work.

If you are interested in using GIF animations there is a nice collection of these, and even a step-by-step guide of how to make them yourself. In addition to a selection of graphics, this site also aims to educate, through such sections as the Photoshop tips area. New tutorials are added every week, as is a selection of fine graphics from WebSpice, a rapidly growing web art subscription service. These are free to download so are well worth checking out. This site is unique in the fact that it combines a gallery of images for you to use with instruction on how you can create them yourself. ■

Rating: **3/5**



Art-Builders

Web: www.artbuilders.com

There is a wide selection of file formats offered to you when downloading graphics from Art-Builders, including EPS, JPEG, TIFF, PSD.

The clipart images look more professional than other sites, as professional artists and designers have developed each one and they are also not free to download. You only pay for the images you need and they are exclusive to you as you state what you require. You can therefore assign different specifications for your image and use the easy-to-fill-in description form. Images are created for you quickly (3-24 hours) and if you need multiple images the site also offers a discount when you buy large amounts of clipart. The site does also feature a free gallery of original clipart images, postcards, wallpapers and icons. ■

Rating: **4/5**



clipart

Cool Free Clipart

Web: www.coolfreeclipart.net

The purpose of this site is really in the name. It does indeed stock a wide selection of cool free clipart for your perusal.

This is a great site offering a fine selection of free images for you to incorporate into your non-commercial artwork and designs.

Many of the graphics have been added recently, such as a collection of 40 music-related images. Some of the other categories that have recently expanded are animals, cartoon and media, so it is worthwhile to keep checking back for even more additions. The home page also features links to a nice selection of other clipart sites and graphics resources for you to visit.

Although the site has recently developed it is not as extensive as other collections featured here. ■

Rating: **3/5**

321Clipart

Web: www.321clipart.com

321Clipart provides free JPEG images, GIFs and graphics for you to download. The selection here is immense, with over 12,000 images to pick from.

If you are going to use these cliparts on your site and not in a creative project all they ask is for you to add a link to their site so more people can enjoy using the graphics free of charge – a small price to pay we think. The site also features ready-to-use Web Templates if you are interested in creating a site and want someone else to take the strain of designing it.

While the 321Clipart site is not the most attractive thing to look at, it is very easy to use, and the searching facilities make locating the right graphic quick and simple. ■

Rating: **3/5**

Clip Art Center

Web: www.clip-art-center.com

Standard access to this site is free and enables you to choose from 8000 graphics. The site also makes it easy to search for images using keyword or category.

You can even choose which images are displayed by selecting whether you require black-and-white or colour clipart, and/or indicate the image format you prefer.

The selection is not just limited to clipart and photos, but there are also plenty of animations, arrows, backgrounds and buttons to play with.

If you access the Premium features you will be able to use vector image formats, royalty-free graphics, original clipart, carry out advanced searches and use the Images Per Page option. The design of the site is quite basic, but it is easy to navigate around. ■

Rating: **3/5**