Helpdesk

We have some great tips and techniques ranging from Lab Color to web design in this issue, provided by Imagine Publishing's interactive media manager BY **LEE GROOMBRIDGE**

SHUTTERSTOCK IMAGE

One of my clients has provided me with some artwork designs for a new website. One of the images he's used is from issue 24 of your magazine, it's a picture of a clock from a company called Shutterstock. The image is royalty-free, so can I just go ahead and include this image in the final website that I produce for free?
Andrew Bell, Poole

After checking the disc, the answer to this question is no! The images provided on this disc were royalty-free but only for Non-Commercial use. As soon as you use the image for a company, or in this case charging a client for designs that include the image, you must pay Shutterstock for it otherwise you'll break the copyright license. This particular image can be purchased by visiting the following link: **www.shutterstock.com/pic-1329143.**

COPYRIGHT: *Always make sure you check and fully understand the copyright concerning an image before using it*

INK SPLATS

Do you know where I can get my hands on some of those cool ink splats that people are using to create that grungy design style that's going around at the moment. I don't fancy getting ink everywhere by creating my own and scanning them in!
Chris Green, Wolverhampton

You're in luck. There's a guy called Tom Tirins that has produced some great ink splats that, as far as we're aware, are free for you to download and use as long as you credit him. The splats are available at **http://www. tomtirinscreations.co.uk**

However, even though it can be messy, there's no substitute for creating your own grunge ink splat material. The results are so random, some of effects you can achieve are amazing, and you would never be able to reproduce them any other way.

COPY LAYER STYLES

Hello, firstly can I just say that I think this section of the magazine is great. I've picked up so many good tips that I would otherwise never have known existed. I've hopefully got a fairly simple one for you here. I'm creating a website design that's got quite a few buttons in it on different layers. To speed up my workflow I was wondering whether there's a keyboard shortcut for copying layer styles from one layer to another?
Ms Dimmick, via email

Thank you for your compliment Ms Dimmick, it's much appreciated! This is a great question, one that we're often asked about. Many people think the only way to copy a set of layer effects is to Ctrl+click (or right+click) the layer from the Layers palette, select Copy Layer Styles, and then select the desired layer, Ctrl+click again and select Paste Layer Styles. This in itself is not the most long-winded thing to do, but you can speed it up – which we're sure many of you out there will be pleased to know!

Create a new layer and add any Layer style, a Drop Shadow for instance. Once applied, a small 'f' should appear in the layer indicating the style has been applied. Create another layer and while holding down the Alt key, click and drag the small 'f' into the desired layer. You will hopefully see that the style is duplicated and put into the new layer.
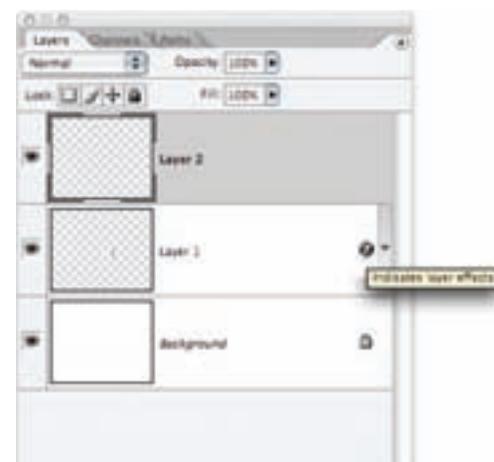
SAVE PRECIOUS TIME: *Use the Alt key to easily and quickly duplicate layers*

CHEQUERED BACKGROUND

I'm creating an image that has an Alpha channel around it. Because of this the chequered background that represents transparency is visible. The problem is the graphic I'm producing uses the exact same tone of grey as the chequered background, and it's hard to see the edge of my shape. Is there any way of changing the colour of the transparency squares?
Ms Attwood, Southampton

This is a common problem when creating graphics with Alpha channels in Photoshop. However you'll be happy to know that the answer to your question is yes. You can change both colours by going to Photoshop> Preferences>Transparency and Gamut. From here you can
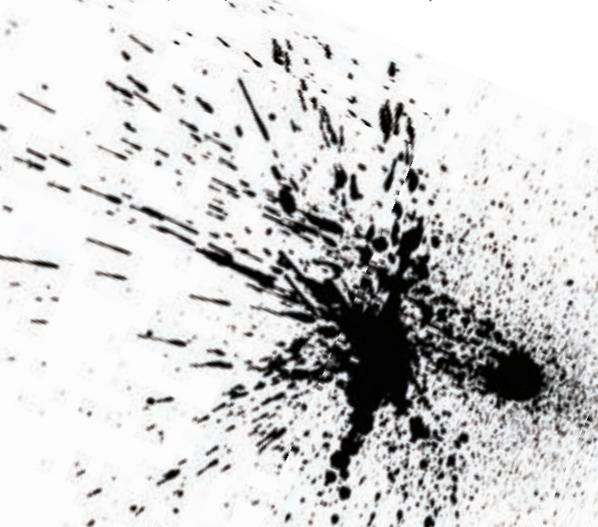
SHADES OF GREY: *Graphics need not be hard to see when using Alpha Channels, use the Preferences tab to alter them*

change the grid size, then either select the preset option of dark, medium or light colours or choose two complete bespoke colours for your transparency grid.

BLACK AND WHITE

I'm a Photographer and have taken a set of colour photos for a clients wedding. However, they want some of the pictures in black and white. I'm aware of the Desaturation function in Photoshop but I'm wondering if this is the best way to convert the colour photographs, or if there's a better option?
Rob Chapman, Reading

This is actually quite a recurring question that's discussed among photographers. There are many ways that you can convert an image to black and white, one of which is the one you mentioned, Desaturation. Each method has pros and cons. The benefit of using the Desaturation method is that it maintains all your original image detail, so this is probably the quickest and most efficient way of converting you images. However it's also worth experimenting with the Channel Mixer. You can access this by going to the Layer>Adjustment Layer>Channel Mixer. Tick the Monochrome option and play around with the sliders. As long as the number of the Red, Green and Blue add up to 100 then the photo will remain at the same exposure level. If however you want to tweek the exposure at the same time you can make the numbers add up to less than 100 to obtain an under-exposed effect, or similarly over 100 will give you an over-exposed effect. Hope this helps you Rob. For more information, there was a great Masterclass article in issue 16 of *Advanced Photoshop* if you can get your hands on one!

HELPDESK
CALL FOR QUESTIONS

Want help with your Photoshop problems? Then let our team of experts sort you out.

Send your emails to us at:
advancedpshop@imagine-publishing.co.uk
Remember to specify whether you're using a PC or Mac and the version number of your edition of Photoshop.

BLACK AND WHITE: *Experiment with the Saturation of an image, or the Channel Mixer to create colourless effects*

FULL SCREEN BACKGROUND COLOUR

Hi *Advanced Photoshop*, I have a really quick question for you about full screen mode. I have a Mac and often work in Full Screen mode when using Photoshop by pressing the F key, so that the desktop icons are not visible. I really want to alter the background colour to white instead of the default grey colour or black. Is there a way to do this?
David G, via email

Nice to hear someone has the same idea as us, we like having a clean background too when working in Photoshop. We also wanted to change the colour of the background in Full Screen Mode. It's quite simple to do you'll be glad to know. Go to Full Screen Mode with the Grey colour in the background. Now change the foreground colour in the Tools palette to the colour you want the background to be. Now with the Paint Bucket Tool – Press G or Shift+G if the Gradient Tool is active, Shift-click anywhere in the Background area. You'll see the colour change before your very eyes!

CURL UP WITH A BOOK: *This book on Lab Color by Dan Margulis is the best we've found on the subject*

LAB COLOR

I can't remember what issue of your magazine it was, but there was a great tutorial about Lab Color a couple of months ago. I was just wondering if you could advise me of any good books I can buy to find out more about this?
Tim Fitzgerald, via email

The tutorial on Lab Color was in issue 24. On the subject of getting more information, we've done our research and unfortunately there are few good publications on this topic, as it's very advanced. So advanced that even some Photoshop professionals may never of even heard of it! The only worthwhile book that we've read on this topic is called *Photoshop LAB Color: The Canyon Conundrum and the Other Adventures in the Most Powerful Colorspace*, written by Dan Margulis. The book goes into great depth and we think it explains Lab Color really well.

FULL SCREEN: *You can alter the colour of the background in Full Screen Mode to suit your image*

HOME PHOTO STUDIOS

Become self-sufficient in your art with your very own personal home studio. We round up the cream of the crop

The key to great illustration and design work is to have an archive of material ready to hand at a moment's notice. Whether it's an album of textures and patterns, products and objects or people and poses, having the choice and versatility allows you to be far more creative in your work.

It's for this reason that a home photographic studio is a great luxury. With everything on hand to capture professional looking shots, you can build up your image bank rapidly – providing yourself with an unlimited library of material to work with. Not only does it offer you boundless creative freedom over the look and feel of your base images, but your working practice becomes self-sufficient too. This way of working means you spend less money on purchasing stock from image libraries, and can bring greater satisfaction and productivity to your projects. The greatest benefit

of all is that those lounge lizards among you can be 100 per cent dedicated to your art, without stepping foot outside the front door.

You can produce your source imagery in a manner of ways, each varying in terms of quality and price. One of the cheapest home studio options is actually a *Blue Peter* style setup you can make yourself. So if you're feeling a bit creative (or generally rather skint) then a white-lines box and a couple of desk lamps are better than nothing. However, there are some easier and more productive combinations for you to try. First, there's the photographic tent – a pop-up material-based cube through which light can be diffused from all angles. These are the cheapest option in terms of shop-bought studio kits, and come in a vast range of sizes.

Next there are the table-top kits, which are great for product photography. Fairly compact in size, they can sit tucked away quite neatly when

not in use. These offer a simple and easy to use option for shooting objects or textures, but that's it in terms of versatility. For greater creativity across a broader spectrum of subjects, then a lighting kit will serve you well. These free-standing lights can be positioned anywhere you wish, making them perfect for both portrait shots and product photography too. Obviously these kits are generally more expensive than others, but they're available on the internet for fairly decent prices. When searching for a home studio it's worth checking out both the high street and the internet. In all honesty, we probably wouldn't buy from the high street due to the inflated prices, but it's a great place to research which setups are most suited to your image needs and, more importantly, your working space.

We've sourced a range of easy-to-use home studio kits, perfect for producing a top quality image archive.

Includes:
- Two flash heads
- Two 90cm silver/ white umbrellas
- Two 120 degree wide-angle umbrella reflectors
- Two 'Handy Stand' lighting support stands

Bowens esprit Gemini 125 Studio-in-a-box

Web: www.bowens.co.uk **Contact:** 01255 422807 **Price:** £579

Bowens is one of the granddaddies of photographic equipment. Originally founded in 1923, it's responsible for paving the way in product design, producing the first single-unit electronic flash, and godsend of many photographers – the monobloc. This British-based company still produces kit from its factory in South East England, offering a top service to enthusiasts and professionals alike.

The esprit Gemini 125 two-head kit is ideal for beginners to photography, who want to experiment with lighting effects. It works well both as an indoor studio setup, as well as a location kit too, allowing you to extend your photographic capabilities to the great outdoors.

Setting up a home studio

The main object of setting up an effective home studio is being able to produce great lighting. By this, we don't just mean lots of it! We mean light that flatters the subject.

You want to avoid images with harsh shadows cast over or around the object, and likewise you don't want bright reflections flaring in the shot. You first need a clear space to set up your gear. Often a corner of a room will suffice. Remember if you're using a lighting kit then you'll need a backdrop to surround your model or object. If you're using the shot as a source image, then plain white will work best, making cutting out of the shape in Photoshop a lot easier.

Next you need to set up your lighting to flatter the subject. We've produced a simple lighting setup, which is a good start when planning your own home studio. Remember to think angles, flattery and space, and you'll be fine!

Position your subject at a suitable angle. Make sure it's positioned at a decent amount of space away from the background to avoid a shadow being cast

"KARLU.COM IS BRIMMING WITH EVERY LIGHT, FIXTURE AND FITTING IMAGINABLE, AND WITH LOW PRICES TOO!"

Includes:
- **Lastolite Cubelite**
- **Carry case**
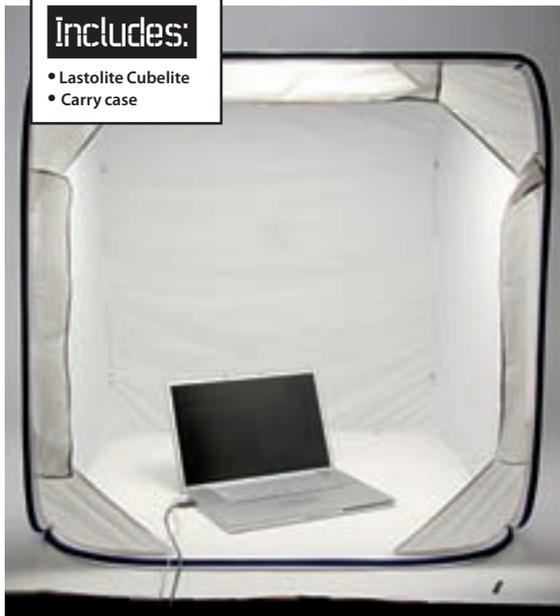
Karlu Daylight Product /Still Life Table Kit

Web: www.karlu.com **Contact:** 0870 765 2000 **Price:** £269

For a comprehensive site that covers every aspect of studio photography, you can't get much more in-depth than **Karlu.com**. This site is brimming with every light, fixture and fitting imaginable, and its vast range means prices are kept low too.

The great thing about this site is it offers 'Live Chat', enabling you to ask questions about the products before you buy. We love this site for its great personal service and friendly staff on the other end of the phone.

This table-top kit is great for shooting a selection of objects, and its smooth graduated back offers an effective backdrop for most products you may wish to shoot.

Check out the site **Karlu.com,** for more information on what the company has to offer – we bet you won't be disappointed!

Lastolite Cubelite

Web: www.lastolite.com **Contact:** 01530 813 381 **Price:** From £69

Lastolite has been around for the last 20 years, producing great portable studio accessories. It made its name with the first collapsible reflector, and now Lastolite is a recognisable world wide brand. It produces equipment for beginners through to the most renowned of pros. Not only does it produce a stack of reflectors, backdrops and studio setups, but it also offer calibration cards, perfect for obtaining spot-on exposure.

The Lastolite Cubelite is just one of the many contorting objects in the range. It has a flexible frame, which means it can flat-pack down in a handy carry bag when it's not in use, or when shooting on location. Not only is it practical, but it's functional too. It's perfect for creating well-lit product shots thanks to its soft light-diffusing walls.

Includes:

- **Studio-out-of-the-box**
- **Also available optional 25 cm/ 10" long tube-type lamps**

Includes:

- **1 x Falcon Eyes mini still-life table**
- **2 x interfit 5200k daylight heads & bulbs, UK**
- **Mains power leads**
- **2 x interfit lighting stands (COR750) / Giottos Pro**
- **Air cushioned stands**

Kaiser Studio-out-of-the-box

Web: www.firstcall-photographic.co.uk **Contact:** 01823 413007 **Price:** £129.99

Firstcall is renowned as a darkroom specialist, but has extended its expertise to all things photographic now the digital age is in full swing. It offers both web-based and telephone sales options, and sells everything from studio equipment through to printing supplies. There are frequent deals online, as well as a stream of brand new products popping up on the site.

It offers this all-in-one studio setup, which takes up minimal space, while offering a complete studio effect. It consists of a baseboard, with white backdrop and trapeze arms, which you attach your camera to. It's great for photographing objects and textures.

"IT TAKES UP MINIMAL SPACE YET IS A COMPLETE STUDIO"

How to get results – basic concepts of shooting in a studio

Backdrop: Make sure this is a plain colour to make the cutting out process easier. The great thing about a home studio is that you can shoot images specifically how you want them, making the Photoshop process quicker.

Lighting setup: Never light from just face on, your subject will look flat and washed out. Always try to have at least three lights to illuminate your subject – two angled from either side and one just off-centre from the front.

Lighting effects: The light strength has a pronounced effect on your image. For example, a very directional light will create a very strong light cast and create harsh shadows in the process. If you diffuse the light with a photo tent or sheet then it'll be a lot softer with fewer shadows.

Reflection: Using reflectors also helps to minimise shadows and illuminate the subject evenly. And if you take a look at the boxout on page 79, you'll see that lighting is extremely important. Use a silver or gold reflector to bounce light back onto the subject to fill in any darker areas with light.