Helpdesk

This month our readers want to know about brushstrokes and upgrading to a new computer, among other things BY **ADAM SMITH**

UPGRADING ISSUES

I have been working on my old Mac for a couple of years now, using Illustrator and Photoshop CS2. I want to buy a new computer, but am worried about getting my programs and saved files across to it, and I can't afford to lose anything. I am so worried I'll lose something during the transfer, or I'll have to repurchase all my programs again! I understand the concepts of digital design, but I'm not a tech-head, so while it might seem a simple question, I have no idea what's the best way to progress.

John Thompson

Hi John. Upgrading your computer can be a real chore, but there are some solutions that will make it a much easier process. First, make sure your old computer is organised. This sounds like basic advice, but you'll be surprised how many artists have work all over their hard drive. For your image files, use a good external drive and transfer all your images onto this. It's good to have a spare hard drive for backing up anyway, and it makes transferring them to your computer incredibly simple. You can't transfer your applications in this manner, as they simply won't work, so you'll need to get your hands on the original CDs and serial numbers, and reinstall them from scratch. There are various packages out there that might tempt you by promising to transfer everything for you, but for the most part, these aren't worth the money. Spend it on a good USB-powered hard drive instead.

HARD DRIVE: *Invest in a good external hard drive, like this one from LaCie, and that will help you transfer to a new computer*
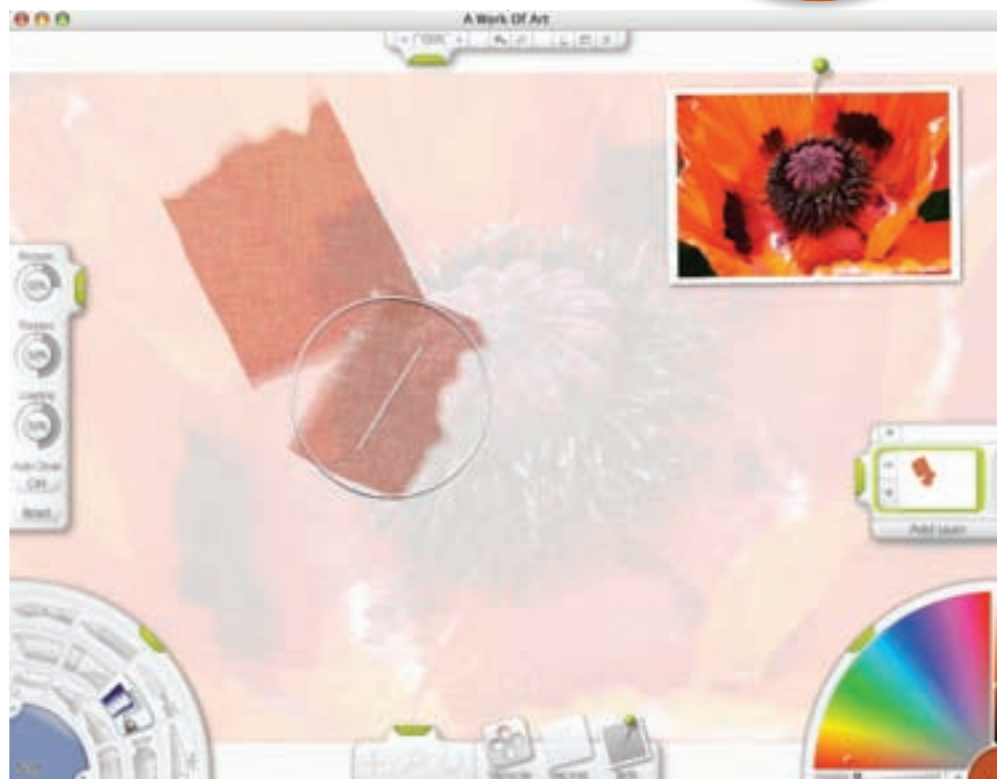
ARTRAGE: *ArtRage 2 is compatible with Photoshop and lets you have more control over mixing paints*

PAINT BLENDING

I just started trying to paint in Photoshop. I want to be able to blend my strokes like I can in Corel Painter, but can't find a way to do it. I can do washes, but that's not what I want. I'd like to be able to put down yellow, select blue, and mix up some green right on the canvas. Can I do that in Photoshop and, if so, how? Thanks.

Bill aka Olesonb, *Advanced Photoshop* **Forum**

Well Bob, this is a question that had us scratching our heads and we got on with some dedicated research to solve your problem. Photoshop is essentially a creative tool, but not as specialised in this area as Corel Painter, which is to be expected. However, those who say that Photoshop does not deliver such dynamics would be a little off.

First, there are ways around the problem. You can get the effect you want by selecting your chosen brush and applying. Then reset the colour, set your brush blending mode to Pin Light, drop the Opacity to between 50-80% dependent on your desired effect and apply. You'll see colours are mixed and created. Utilising layers is also helpful, if protracted, but after all that's why they have been created.

If this doesn't suit your purposes, and you're looking for more direct result, try ArtRage 2.5. This is an-easy-to-use, stylish painting package that enables you to start painting from the moment you open it up, and it's compatible with Photoshop. You can paint with a whole host of media, inclusive of oils, sketch with pencils, sprinkle glitter and more. It will only cost you $39.95/£19.30 and is really good fun.

FOCUS OF ATTENTION: *Photoshop offers several ways to create depth perception in your images and focus the viewer's attention in the right direction by applying appropriate blur effects to the background elements*

DEPTH PERCEPTION

Hi *Advanced Photoshop* team. I'm an enthusiastic user of Photoshop software, and am currently using CS2 and saving up for CS. I like to create a range of imagery and would say I'm mostly a figurative artist. But I'm looking for an easier way to get depth perception in my images. I've been informed about many ways using Copy>Paste and Blur filters, but these effects are time-consuming and not always great. Any idea?
   Pam, Chester

Well Pam, there are a few options that will create enhanced effects. First, you can Cut>Copy>Paste your preferred image into your new composition. Next, duplicate the layer in question and drop this Copy layer underneath the original. Now select Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and than apply an appropriate Radius. Reselect your original layer and Cmd/Ctrl-click your layer thumbnail to make your selection active. Next, choose Select>Modify>Feather. Set your value accordingly – around 20 pixels will usually suffice – and then click OK. Now press Delete to progressively erase edges, giving the image a blurred edge effect.

Alternatively, if you want a vast distinction between background and foreground, you can get the desired effect quickly. Simply Copy>Paste your image and then apply the appropriate blur effect to the layer which is underneath. Now select the layer above, applying a layer mask to this and, with your Foreground Color set to black, Opacity set as required, erase the edges, leaving intact the elements that you want to keep focused.

HOW TO BE AN ACE

I have been using Photoshop since version 7 and think that I know a lot about the program. I have seen some of my peers listed as Adobe Certified Experts. Because I do tutorials for a variety of websites and publications, I think that this accreditation would really help me to get more commissions. How do I go about becoming certified?
   James Smythson

Hi James. You can find out all about the ACE certification program at **www.adobe.com/support/ certification/ace_certify.html**. There are four steps to becoming an ACE, and three certificate types: Single Product, Specialist and Master. The website explains what these certificates entail and what you have to do to gain the qualification. Hope that helps!
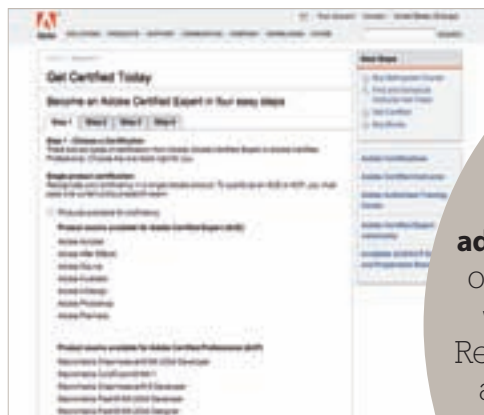
ACE: *How to become an Adobe Certified Expert in four easy steps*

DUOTONES

Hi *Advanced Photoshop*. I'm pretty new to Photoshop, but am picking it up quickly. I am mostly using it to enhance my photographs, retouch models and eliminate distracting elements. As my background is in advanced traditional photographic processes, I would really like to know how to recreate some of my favourite effects digitally. I love working in duotone, carefully toning a black-and-white image in the darkroom. How could I emulate this in Photoshop?
   Deidre Brown

Deidre, this is a simple little process, if you know where to look in the application. Photoshop does have a Duotone editor that's designed to do the hard work for you. Open the image you wish to tint (converting to Grayscale if it's a colour image). Go to Image>Mode>Duotone, which will open the Duotone Options dialog. Change the Type setting to Duotone, then click in the Ink 2 area to open the Custom Colors palette and select your tint colour. By clicking the corresponding Curve icon, you can adjust how the second colour tints the image. You can also create tri- and quadtone images in the same way.

DUOTONE: *It's easy to tint your images using Photoshop's built-in Duotone editor*

HELPDESK
CALL FOR QUESTIONS

Want help with Photoshop?
Send your emails to us at:
advancedpshop@imagine-publishing.co.uk
or post a message on our forum board at
www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/forum.
Remember to specify whether you're using a PC or Mac and the version number of your edition of Photoshop.