Helpdesk

This month our readers want to know about recreating Hollywood effects and removing skylines BY **ADAM SMITH**

GRITTY EFFECTS

I can't seem to find a good tutorial on how to turn a photo into a Hollywood movie effect. I've seen tutorials on movie effects in Photoshop, but they don't really work correctly or look good. A lot of movie trailer sites have a fake look to them but look great. I've seen many tutorials that don't do it. Can you help?

Deidre Brown

There are many ways to achieve cool effects used regularly in cinematography. The results will depend on the attention you give the image, of course. For one there is the 'Dragan' effect or 'Draganising'. This effect is great for creating strong and unique exposures in your photos, a little like the effects used in the movie *300*.

Then there is the HDR photo effect, or if applied to non-High Dynamic Range imagery, known as Tone Mapping. This is used a lot in promo posters and promotion website images. To achieve this effect, open your image, select Image>Adjustments>Shadow/Highlights and set values that produce best effects without creating what seems a fake image: 65% Shadow Amount and 20% Highlight Amount, for example. Now select Filter>Sharpen>Unsharpen Mask and enter values to give your image a halo effect, for instance 55% Amount, 250px Radius.

OTHER VERSIONS OF PHOTOSHOP: *If you're not using CS3, then apply greyscale the old-fashioned way. Also, you can duplicate your original image to make comparisons later in the creative process*

Once you've clicked OK, select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Black/White. Here you can use the sidebars to perfect your effect and then click OK, applying an Overlay blending mode to this layer effect. Opening a new layer, select Edit>Fill and apply a 50% Gray content use. Now select Filter>Noise>Add Noise, entering an Amount that adheres to your image size. Add a slight 0.5 Radius Gaussian Blur and again add an Overlay blending mode to this layer, decreasing Opacity for the right effect. You can always use the layer masks to edit visual value for best effects. Not a new effect, but one that works.

DODGING AND BURNING

I am working towards a degree in photography and am putting together a narrative installation of black-and-white photos for my final major project. I am looking to create controlled exposure within my images and have been using my Photoshop knowledge to do so. I'm endlessly manipulating imagery with the Dodge and Burn tools and Levels options, and it's becoming very time-consuming. Are there any processes that will create surefire results every time?

Shelly, Cardiff

There are certainly a few processes you can use, including the Monochrome features in CS3, Shelly, but we appreciate not everyone has access to these. There are also some great books on creating monochrome images, so definitely invest in them for future reference. But relating to your question, there is a way to isolate tonal adjustments in most versions of Photoshop.

You can apply these through your Color Range options. To select them go to Menu>Color Range. Here you use a slider to correct your Fuzziness value, refining selections. Within the Color Range dialog box's Select option, you can sample Highlights, Midtones and Shadows. Start by selecting Highlights and click OK. Now select Menu>Modify>Feather – your pixel value depending on the file size. Then choose Curves from the New Fill or Adjustment Layer options. Here you can alter both the Dodge (pulls up) and Burn (pulls down) applications, getting the required effects. All you then have to do is repeat this for your Midtones and Shadows for optimum effect.

GETTING THE BEST EXPOSURE: *You can also duplicate your final image and apply blend modes and opacities to further enhance exposures*

THE SKY IS FALLING

Hi **Advanced Photoshop**. Great job on the magazine, just love the tutorials. I've learnt quite a few tricks from these and really improved my skills.

At the moment I'm looking to create a few fantasy landscapes, as these seem to be popular at the moment. A real challenge, but the only way to learn is the hard way. I'm having a bit of difficulty though, as I'm looking to use photomontage techniques and finding getting rid of skylines a real pain. Please help me find an easy way.

Rebecca, Hull

We have a strong feeling of déjà vu, Rebecca. Funnily enough, we covered such methods in last month's Insider Info. There are quick ways to cut away skylines and they involve using Channels. This technique will help you quickly define specific image areas by selecting a Channel that demonstrates the most definition between object and background. Just start by selecting and duplicating the appropriate Channel layer, relating to your sky colour.

Next, treat this duplicated layer to some Levels treatment (Image>Adjustments>Levels), applying a high exposure or contrast. Then Cmd/Ctrl-click the duplicated channel to activate selection and select the original layer in the Layers palette. With this done, all that's left to do is erase (Cmd/Ctrl+X). Users should be left with a crisp cutout of foreground.

INVERSE AND MASK: *Instead of deleting – since this makes future alteration tricky – inverse your final selection instead, then apply a layer mask*

NICELY BRONZED

I've become recently acquainted with Photoshop, adding it to my array of photography skills. A friend of mine has asked me if I could work on some 21st birthday photos for her, which I am actually getting paid for. She wants me to tidy them up and add a bit of colour and make her looked tanned. Is there a good way to do this in Photoshop? Somebody mentioned Replace Color and Variations, but I'm not so sure. Many thanks.

Kelly, Watford

Variations and Replace Color may have a detrimental effect on your images Kelly, unless you're cutting your imagery into separate layers – and there is a far easier way to create such an effect with minimal fuss and great results.

Start by duplicating the image in question and then applying an Overlay blending mode. This will burn your image and you can lower the Opacity value for the required effect. Around 70 to 80% should suffice. Next, apply a layer mask to this layer, and selecting a soft brush at around 40%, brush away to allow the highlights of eyes, hair and background to remain. Now, keeping your soft-edged brush, set it to Color Dodge, Opacity between 5 and 10%, again dependent on the effect you want. Next, select the Color Picker and choose a tone from your model's tanned skin, then apply to areas of your model you want to shine, giving him or her that healthy glow.

SKY GONE: *The sky has been perfectly masked out, with the original layer still intact in case you need to return to it at any point in the future*

WORK ON THE LAYER: *When applying a healthy glow to your model, activate the layer and not the mask thumbnail, which will have adverse effects*

DAWN TO DUSK

Hi **Advanced Photoshop** team. I have a creative conundrum that I am certain you guys can help me solve. I have a daytime image and am looking to turn it into a nighttime image, but the effects I'm using are a little clumsy. I've tried using Variations, Hue and Saturation and blending modes, and it all seems a little laboured and time-consuming. You got any other options?

Alex, New York

Well Alex, you're on the right track with the blending modes. We'll reveal a process that's quite straightforward. Start by opening your image then set your Image mode to 32-bits. Next, select Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer, choosing Solid Color from the options. Choose a dark blue, according to what the darkest shadow should look like.

Click OK and then add a Multiply blending mode to this layer. Now, in the same options as before, select Exposure (make sure this is dropped below the Solid layer before applying effects). Inside the Exposure dialog box raise your Exposure level to between 3 and 5, dependent on effects. You may feel you need to up your Gamma Correction – no more than 3. The effects should suffice with a little attention from you.

SET THE MOOD: *Take a soft black brush, activate your Solid layer mask and brush away to allow any light value to shine in windows or lamps, creating mood lighting*

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.