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CLOSE UP



By Candy Cuenco

Getting Lost In The Moment

So often when traveling to a new city, some people try to cram as much time as possible visiting all the must-see tourist sights, trying to fend off the crowds who gather in front of the most popular landmarks for a quick snapshot. For years I was guilty of doing the same thing until I learned what really good travel photography means. When I travel these days, I spend time using all my senses to learn about the place that I am visiting. I observe people more intently, watching their interactions, curious where they shop, eat, work and play. I pop in at bakeries, pastry shops, and markets to smell, touch and taste the local goods. I linger at parks, beaches, museums, and plazas, just observing. Sometimes this takes me hours, and then, when I am ready, I turn on my camera and I start shooting. All of a sudden, everywhere I look is a great photo waiting to happen.

I should warn you though; the downside is that your group often leaves you behind. I can't even begin to tell you the number of times I've found myself suddenly alone trying desperately to catch up with a familiar face. A few weeks ago, on my first day in Italy, in the small town of Vicenza, I was so caught up in looking for the best angle to shoot the historic Teatro Olimpico, I didn't notice my colleagues going inside the theater. I tried to go inside, but the lady who sold the tickets refused to let me in until I paid the admission fee (around 20 euros). She spoke only in Italian, I didn't. After much gesturing and pleading mostly on my part, she found our guide 15 minutes later and let me in.

It's all worth it though. The photos I took from this and all my other trips all reveal a little story, a funny moment in time, an image that I won't be able to recreate even if I do come back. Try getting lost sometime, and see where your camera takes you.



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GET THAT SHOT!

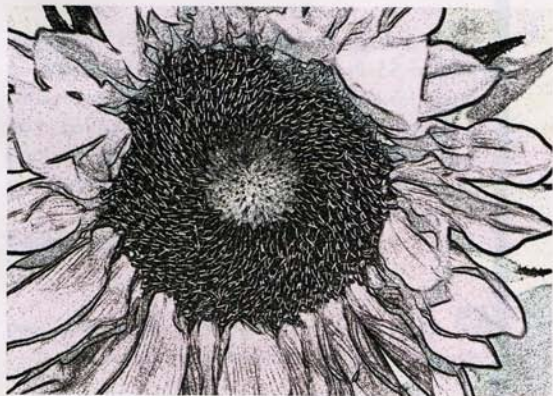
Creating Fauve Effects Using Photoshop

by Peter Smolens

They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. If that is the case, the French impressionists should be very pleased, because photographers have been borrowing from them for years. In France back in the 1800's, a style of painting came about that used bold colors along with stark outlines. Quite controversial in its time, these styles of paintings were made famous by Henri Matisse.



An original image shot with a Nikon D70 and a 35-80mm Nikkor zoom lens. The author used Nikon View importing software to create the digital negative, and performed standard image correction and clean-up using Adobe Photoshop.



The final image product.

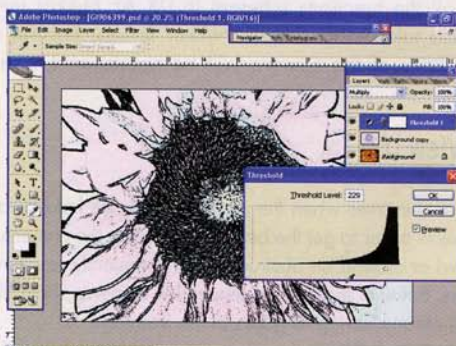
Recently, the National Gallery of Art at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C., there was a show of fauve style paintings. The show featured a number of paintings by Matisse. After viewing these wonderful works of art, it reminded me of a set of images I had made for art school.

Fauve Effects

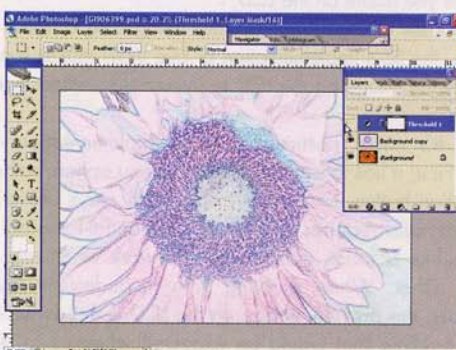
In the darkroom days, to achieve a derivative of a fauve scene I would copy a color slide onto graphics art film. After processing, I would have a high-contrast image of the slide. By re-photographing the combined images, the result would be like a fauve scene.

Today you can use digital editing software such as **Adobe Photoshop** and a few mouse clicks to quickly create the same kind of dramatic award-winning image.

I found this process works best when you use an image that has distinctive edges. In my example, I used a photo



Using the Threshold Adjustment Layer he cleaned up the image; by moving the slider he got stark black and white version of the image.



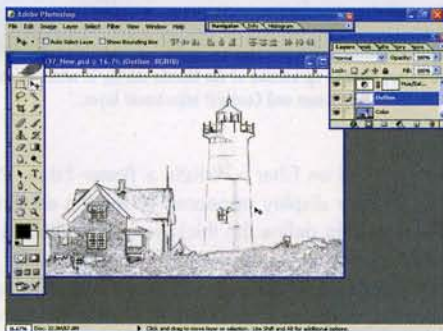
The after effects of using the Find Edges filter.



Here is the Smart Blur dialog. The author gets started on the image by setting the Radius slider to 67 and the Threshold slider to 29, changing the Quality to High and leaving the Mode as Normal.



Here he uses the Channel Mixer function to create a Black and White version of the image by checking the Monochrome check box, seen in the bottom left hand corner of this dialog box.



Here is the resulting image after the outlining was done.



The final result of the image after a few other corrections, leaving it clean and very aesthetically pleasing.

of the Nauset Lighthouse located on Cape Cod, Mass. The original image is a pretty straightforward shot that anyone can take with a point-and-shoot camera. But I wanted something more — something that would give this image additional definition, punch if you will.

After performing the normal corrections and enhancements from the original image, I flattened the layers. One of my standards is that I always make a copy of the background layer. I called this layer "Color."

To enhance the definition, I added a Hue and Saturation adjustment layer. Depending on how defined your image edges are will determine the actual amount of Hue, Saturation and Lightness. By using an adjustment layer you can make changes later if you decide you need additional color.

The Process

Select the color layer and choose Filter > Blur > Smart Blur. When the dialog box appears adjust the Radius and Threshold sliders to smooth out the inside areas, while still retaining the sharp edges. Click OK. The resulting layer should be missing its original textures with a simplified, well-defined set of edges that will be enhanced.

I created a copy of "Color" layer, naming this new layer "Outline." The next step removes the color and creates the black edges, I used the Channel Mixer (Image > Adjustment > Channel Mixer). This has to be done right on the "Outline" layer. Although, you might need to make adjustments to suit your specific image, I used the following settings: Red-25, Green-75, Blue-10. Click on the Monochrome check box making the image appear black and white.

To create the black outlines, use the Find Edges filter (Filter > Stylize > Find Edges). The resulting image will be white with black edges. By changing the Outline layer Mode you can merge the layers. Try the Darken Mode for a softer merge, or Multiply mode for an intense contrasting image.

You can use the Brightness and Contrast adjustment layer if the outline edges are weak or too thick. Depending on your original image, and how much additional help it needs, another method of enhancing the final image is using the Threshold adjustment layer. The final image retains the color while using black outline to define the edges. It is an easy way to turn a normal shot into something special.

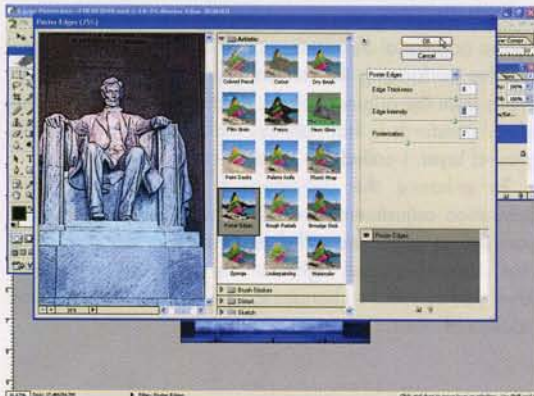
Photoshop Choices

One of the beautiful features of Adobe Photoshop is that there are multiple ways to perform a process. Each different method has its positive and negative aspects. For example, an alternative or variation of the fauve method uses the following process explained below. This is another situation where a bold, graphic-type image works best. In this example I used a close-up image of a sunflower.

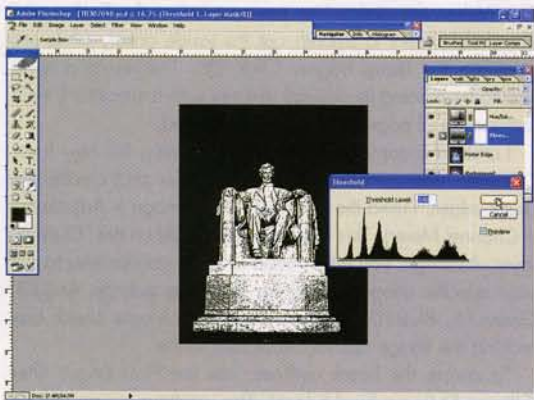
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Creating Fauve Effects Using Photoshop

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Here the author is using the Filter Gallery in Adobe Photoshop CS2; he used the Poster Edge filter and increased the Edge Threshold and Edge Intensity to 8.



Here he uses the Threshold Adjustment Layer to clean up the image.

After making my normal exposure corrections, I flattened my image. This created a base line — an original image to return to in case of problems during the process. Then I created a selection around the flower. Like before, I used the Channel Mixer to create a black and white version of the image.

I used the Find Edge filter to create the black edge around the different parts of the flower. I merged the color and the black and white image using the Multiply Mode. Then I created a Threshold adjustment layer. Moving the slider bar at the bottom, I can remove the color to create the final image.

In my third example, I had a standard shot taken at the statue of our 16th president — Abraham Lincoln — it's the same shot everyone takes when visiting the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C.

As always I made a copy of my background layer, I renamed the layer "Poster Edge" because this was going to be the working layer for the filter. Then I added a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to push the saturation of the image up quite a bit; this helped further define the edges of the image.



Here is a very cleaned up version of the Lincoln statue, in which he used a Brightness and Contrast adjustment layer.

Then I clicked on Filter > Artistic > Poster Edge. When the Filter Gallery display appeared I used the edge thickness slider to help define the thickness. After clicking OK, I had a black and white version of my image.

I then created a Threshold adjustment layer; using the slider bar will help clean up and further define the image. I created another copy of the original Poster Edge layer calling this layer "Poster Edge - Multiply." Moving this new layer to the top changed the blend mode; to multiply combine the color image with the black and white image. The resulting image is definitely not your standard post-card type image.

About the author: Peter has published articles and photos in both Digital Photographer and PRO Digital Imaging. Through his company P.B.S. Studios, Peter has written more than 100 articles for photography, golf, travel, and computer publications. You can see examples of his work at www.pbsstudios.com. Peter, along with his wife (and first editor) Linda, and their three cats (Sophie, Sugar & Spice), live in Manassas, Virginia.

