



## Artful Photos

### Lesson 5: Sunflower Walkthrough (Photoshop Elements)

In this lesson, I'll walk you through creating a mixed-media sunflower following the techniques learned in lessons 1-4.

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### Set Up the Workspace

- Begin in Advanced/Expert Mode of Photoshop Elements.
- Create a new 12x12 inch document (File > New > Blank File) at 300 ppi with a white background.
- Press the letter D to reset the Color Chips to the default of black and white.
- Open the Craft-Paper.jpg (File > Open) from the ART-Class-Files.
- Get the Move tool.
- Holding down the Shift key, click and drag the paper over to your document.



- Open the brett-sayles-2802299.jpg (File > Open) from the class download.



## Extract the Subject

- In the Menu Bar, choose Select > Subject.



## Clean Up the Selection

NOTE: If you are using Photoshop Elements 2024, the Selection Brush is automatically activated after using Select Subject.

- Get the Selection Brush tool (Nested with the Quick Selection tools).
- In the Tool Options, click on the Subtract from Selection icon and set the Mode to Selection. Set the Size to 80 px using the Slider. The Size has trouble 'sticking' when it's been added manually. Set the Hardness to 100%.
- Press Ctrl + (Mac: Cmd +) to zoom in if desired.
- On the document, click and drag over the area of the stem at the bottom of the flower to subtract it from the selection.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to cut out the selection and place it on a new layer.



## Add the Sunflower to the Document

- Get the Move tool.
- On the document, hold down the Shift key, and click and drag the sunflower over to your 12x12 inch document.
- In the Layers panel, rename the sunflower layer Extracted. Press Enter/Return to commit the change.



## Refine the Selection

- Get the Lasso tool.
- Press Ctrl + (Mac: Cmd +) to zoom in if desired.
- In the Tool Options, click on the Add to Selection icon, set the Feather to 0 px, and check Anti-aliasing.
- On the document, click and drag to create a selection around the areas you want to remove.



- Press Backspace/Delete to delete the selection.
- Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.
- In the Layers panel, rename the sunflower layer Extracted. Press Enter/Return to commit the change



## Convert the Sunflower to Black and White

- The Color Chips should be set to the default of black and white.
- In the Layers panel, click on the Create a New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon and choose Gradient Map. Click on the Clipping Mask icon at the bottom of the Properties panel, to clip the Gradient Map layer to the Extracted layer.

By default, the Gradient Map adjustment uses a gradient that's based on the current foreground and background colors. This is why our color chips need to be black and white.



We can definitely see variations of tone in the sunflower, but sometimes it's hard to tell if there's going to be enough contrast in an image just by looking at it.

A little trick that can help us decide if an image is suitable is to add the Posterize adjustment layer before we make any adjustments or add filters to the image.

## Add a Posterize Adjustment Layer

- In the Layers panel, click on the New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon, and choose Posterize.
- In the Adjustments panel, set Levels to 4. Click on the Clipping Mask icon at the bottom of the panel to clip the adjustment layer to the Extracted layer. Close the Adjustments panel.



## Adjust the Tones Using the Gradient Map

Use the Color Stops to add more black and medium grey tones to the sunflower.

- Double-click on the thumbnail of the Gradient Map 1 adjustment layer to open the Adjustment panel. Click on the gradient in the Adjustments panel to open the Gradient Editor. If you don't see the names of the gradients, click on the flyout menu and choose Large List.

NOTE: If your gradient is something other than Foreground to Background:

- In the Gradient Editor, choose Default from the Preset menu. Then, choose Foreground to Background.
- In the Gradient Editor, click on the black Color Stop on the left, and drag it to the right to add to the black and medium grey areas of the sunflower. Click on the white Color Stop and drag it to the left to add a bit to the white areas of the sunflower. Click OK. Close the Adjustments panel.



## Merge the Layers

- In the Layers panel, click on the Visibility icon of the Posterize 1 layer to hide it.
- With your Gradient Map 1 adjustment layer active, hold down the Shift key and click on the Extracted layer, so both layers are active.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the layers.
- Press Ctrl E (Mac: Cmd E) to merge the layers.
- Double-click on the name of the merged layer and rename it Modified. Press Enter/Return to commit the change.

## Add an Unsharp Mask Adjustment

Add an adjustment to increase contrast and detail in the photo.

- In the Menu Bar, choose Enhance > Unsharp Mask. Set the Amount to 100%, the Radius to 10 Px, and the Threshold to 10 Levels. Click OK.
- In the Layers panel, activate the Posterize 1 adjustment layer, and click on its Visibility icon to turn it back on.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Create Clipping Mask to clip the Posterize 1 layer to the Modified layer.



## Merge the Layers

- With your Posterize 1 adjustment layer active, hold down the Shift key and click on the Modified layer, so both layers are active.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the layers.
- Press Ctrl E (Mac: Cmd E) to merge the layers.
- Double-click on the name of the merged layer and rename it Posterized. Press Enter/Return to commit the change.

## Group the Sunflower Layers

- In the Layers panel, activate the Posterize 1 adjustment layer, hold down the Shift key and click on the Extracted layer. (You should have four layers active.) Click on the Create a New Group icon to group the layers.
- Double-click on the name of the group and rename the group Master. Press Enter/Return to commit the change.
- Click on the Visibility icon of the Master group to hide it.
- Activate the Posterized layer.

## Deconstruct the Sunflower

Use the Magic Wand to select each of the four tones and place them on separate layers.

- Get the Magic Wand tool.
- In the Tool Options, click on the New Selection icon, set the Tolerance to 40, uncheck Sample All Layers and Contiguous. Check Anti-aliasing.
- On the document, click on a white area of the sunflower with the Magic Wand tool to create a selection.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to cut out and place the selection on a new layer.
- In the Layers panel, double-click on the name of the layer and rename the layer White. Press Enter/Return to commit the change.



- In the Layers panel, activate the Posterized layer.
- On the document, click on a light grey area of the sunflower to create a selection.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to cut out and place the selection on a new layer.
- In the Layers panel, double-click on the name of the layer and rename the layer Light. Press Enter/Return to commit the change.



- In the Layers panel, activate the Posterized layer.
- On the document, click on a medium grey area of the sunflower to create a selection.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to cut out and place the selection on a new layer.
- In the Layers panel, double-click on the name of the layer and rename the layer Medium. Press Enter/Return to commit the change.



- In the Layers panel, activate the Posterized layer.
- On the document, click on a black area of the sunflower to create a selection.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to cut out and place the selection on a new layer.
- In the Layers panel, double-click on the name of the layer and rename it Black. Press Enter/Return to commit the change.



### **Clip a Paper to the Black Layer**

- Click on the Visibility icon of the Posterized layer to hide it.
- The Black layer should be the active layer.
- Get the Move tool.
- Open the Torn-Pages-SyndeeR.jpg (File > Open) from the class download.
- Holding down the Shift key, click on the paper and drag it over to your document.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Create Clipping Mask to clip the paper to the Black layer.



## Clip a Paper to the Medium Layer

- Activate the Medium layer in the Layers panel.
- Open the Messy-Abstract-Paper-SyndeeR.jpg (File > Open) from the class download.
- Holding down the Shift key, click on the paper and drag it over to your document.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Create Clipping Mask to clip the paper to the Medium layer.



## Clip a Paper to the Light Layer

- Activate the Light layer in the Layers panel.
- Open the Collage-Paper-SyndeeR.jpg (File > Open) from the class download.
- Holding down the Shift key, click on the paper and drag it over to your document.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Create Clipping Mask to clip the paper to the light layer.



## Clip a Paper to the White Layer

- Activate the White layer in the Layers panel.
- Open the Yellow-Paint-Paper-SyndeeR.jpg (File > Open) from the class download.
- Holding down the Shift key, click on the paper and drag it over to your document
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Create Clipping Mask to clip the paper to the White layer.



## Group the Layers

- With the layer at the top of the Layers panel active, hold down the Shift key, and click on the Black layer (You should have Eight layers active).
- Click on the Create a New Group icon.
- Double-click on the name of the group and rename it Mixed-Media Flower. Press Enter/Return to commit the change.

## Duplicate and Merge the Group

- In the Layers panel, activate the Master group.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the group.
- With the duplicate group active, right-click (Mac: Ctrl-click) and choose Ungroup Layers. All eight layers from the duplicate group should be active.
- Press Ctrl E (Mac: Cmd E) to merge the layers.
- Double-click directly on the name of the layer and rename it Sunflower. Press Enter/Return to commit the change.
- Click on the Visibility icon of the Master group to hide it.

## Add a Drop Shadow

- In the Menu Bar, choose Window > Styles.
- In the Styles panel, click on one of the shadow styles from the Drop-Shadows-SyndeeR to apply it. If you don't see the names of the styles, open the flyout menu and choose Show Names. Close the Styles panel.



Ideas for using the sunflower element:

- Resize the sunflower to fit your project.
- Move the sunflower to the right (or left) side of your document so that it sits halfway off the edge of the page.
- Move the sunflower down to the bottom-right corner.



Don't forget to try this technique out on other photos and elements!

### Save the Document

- Save your document (File > Save As) as a layered PSD file.
- Give the file a name.
- Save the document in the class folder for this lesson. Click Save.