





Project 3: Artistic Composite

www.ElaineButlerPhotography.com

Step	Action	PS Elements
1.	Plan the composite, and shoot	<p>Generate the concept, and plan image elements required.</p> <p>Shoot images similarly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If taking a landscape or background shot to place a model into: check your depth of field: Where you are placing the model needs to be sharp! • If shooting a model: shoot on high contrasting background to aid subject selection: Dark subject on pale background... pale subject on dark background. • Shoot using the same lighting conditions, eg: same lighting set-up: direction, angle, strength of lighting is important • If possible: use the same lens and focal length • from the same perspective, eg from head height, or sitting height, ground level, on tripod. <p>It is much harder to match up afterwards than to capture in camera</p> <div>    </div>
2.	Select images for background & foreground	<p>In this example I have chosen the Cathedral as background and a model as the foreground subject.</p> <p>Open both images</p> <p>Note the lighting direction & shadow of the subject in original image</p>
3.	Match up tonality and contrast in both images	<p>Both were shot in colour originally. To be in harmony with each other a simple method is to make both images mono.</p> <p><u>In Guided Menu:</u> Select Black & White:</p> <p>Select a preset: Light to dark (not great control)</p> <p><u>In Expert Menu:</u> Enhance- Convert to Black & White;</p> <p>Select a style Eg : portrait, Adjust sliders gently eg + red</p> <p><u>Open in Camera Raw:</u> File: Open Camera Raw:_Treatment: (there are 20 colour & 17 mono options available) B&W select filter, eg: B&W yellow, and slider to select amount eg 126, close B&W file, then use sliders, open image</p>

		<p>Or use: NIK software to process the photos to look similar. Filter: Nik: Silver Efex Pro2: using the “(006) High Structure Smooth “ filter. Settings :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure -20% • Contrast – 0% • Brightness- 0% • Grain- 500 • Film Type- Neutral • Finishing adjustments –off
4.	Select the subject to be pasted onto the background	<p><u>In Expert mode:</u> In subject image make duplicate layer then Use ‘Quick selection’ tool, selection brush Click on ‘Select Subject’ and ‘add’ or ‘subtract’ to your selection with quick selection brush You could use the ‘selection brush’ to add or subtract tricky parts (To be extremely exact... I have often used the eraser tool at 1x pixel to fine tune edges of the selection) Copy and paste into the background image: it appears in a new layer. The Foreground should be on the upper layer to be visible. Like placing a figurine on a cake. You can move layers and swap their place in the layercake if needed.</p>
5.	Move and Resize the foreground / background to match up the two images	<p>Command/ ctrl T to transform, ‘ok/ return’ to confirm. Keep converging lines in mind, to have the correct perspective: eg: Check what should be about waist height in the background and place her waistline there, resizing to match the surroundings.</p>
6.	Transparency	<p>eg: for see-through layers of her dress; If not using layers and masks: you can use eraser tool at 12-35% opacity: then you can just about see the architecture through the cloth, looking like she is actually there. Use 100% opacity to erase any hanging threads/ untidiness... or to improve the symmetry of the pose in this case.</p>
7.	‘Ground’ the subject: create a shadow	<p>Shadow: This is important to avoid the idea she is just floating on the background: <u>To add drop shadow:</u> Click on subject layer mask Double click on right side of layer name: Layer style options box opens Click drop shadow: blend mode normal: ok (if needed)Double click drop shadow layer Opacity c65, Angle c14, distance c50 , spread c 45, size c 150 Click ok OR use a spatter brush eg no 46 at size 205 exposure 1% to ‘burn’ : ‘highlights’ , then ‘midtones’, then ‘shadows’, around her feet, the floor under her, and on each layer separately.</p>
8.	Use Dodge and Burn to finetune	<p>Dodge and burn to shade any areas required for realistic effect. Usually I don’t use these at more than 1% or up to max 3% except if I want to darken something dramatically and quickly. If so I would only use up to 7 or 8% max. I darkened parts of the dress, etc.</p>

	tones, shading and shadow.	
9.	TIP: Duplicate and flatten/ merge visible	At various key stages as I work on an image, I save the psd image as version1 or version2 etc, in case I want to revert to an earlier stage. I always hold the original images in that folder too, as source material(go to 'File': 'Duplicate', to created a 'duplicate' image ie: save a copy of what you have worked on so far. You can then 'flatten' the duplicate copy & begin working on the whole image, as one, for dodging & burning ease.
10.	Add Vignette to lend more drama to the image: or to draw attention to the core aspect	<p>in '<u>guided</u>' menu, add vignette, using 'feather' at about 171 which softens the circle of the vignette, and 'roundness' at about 74 which also makes it less obvious that a vignette has been applied.</p> <p>OR:</p> <p>In expert menu  adjustment layer gradient: foreground to transparent, style: eg: <u>diamond</u>, reverse, angle 90, scale about 193, dither to prevent banding.</p> <p>OR:</p> <p>Filter -Camera Raw Filter- Radial filter Position and use sliders to your taste: inside vs outside range Outside I have used here: Exposure -2, Contrast =7, Highlight =66. Shadows=100 Whites -3. Blacks -31 Texture =66 Clarity =7 Dehaze =39 Sharp =50 Noise-85</p>
11.	Final touches	'spot healing tool ' : 'content aware' for a couple of minor skin blemishes, etc.
12.	Signature	<p>Save duplicate: flatten to work on a global signature layer.</p> <p>To add a signature: Expert mode: Type tool: select font: eg Apple Chancery, size 14, select a colour from the colour wheel that's not too obvious or jarring: not too bright/ dark. You don't want to focus the attention on the signature rather than the image.</p>
13.	Save as PSD file and as JPEG	so that you have the source file if there are any further aspects needing retouch..... often only spotted much later, or by someone else: eg: a judge!!

25 May 2020