

Image Making #2



Techniques using Adobe Photoshop PSD format

Introduction

PSD definition:

Photoshop's native, layered file format (PhotoShop Drawing). The layers enable an illustration to be built with individual graphic elements that can be moved over and over to obtain a desired result. When the PSD format is converted into a TIFF, JPEG, GIF or other graphics format, the layering is "flattened" into one bitmapped image. For example, it would be very difficult to build a collage of many images overlapping each other without layers, because the placement of each object would have to be perfect from the start. Without layers, once a small bitmap is placed on top of the large bitmap, it becomes "one with the image" and cannot be altered at all or at least without major effort. (pcmag.com, Encyclopaedia, '96-'08)

As we saw in the first image workshop and tutorial, a PSD is a multilayered image file, where each separate layer can continue to be edited, and different layers can also be saved as separate images, in jpeg, gif or png format (or tiff, but this format is not used for work on the Web).

PSD files are like 'master' image files. They are usually never used as a final image format, but are kept for future development and as back up.

PSD Exercise

To learn more about PSDs and how to use them, we are going to make an identity card.

1. Open a new file, using File/New

Make the size approximately 1000 X 600 pixels (we will change this later).

Choose RGB colour

Make the background transparent

NB If your Photoshop version looks slightly different to this, don't worry, the basics, even if they look different, achieve the same thing.

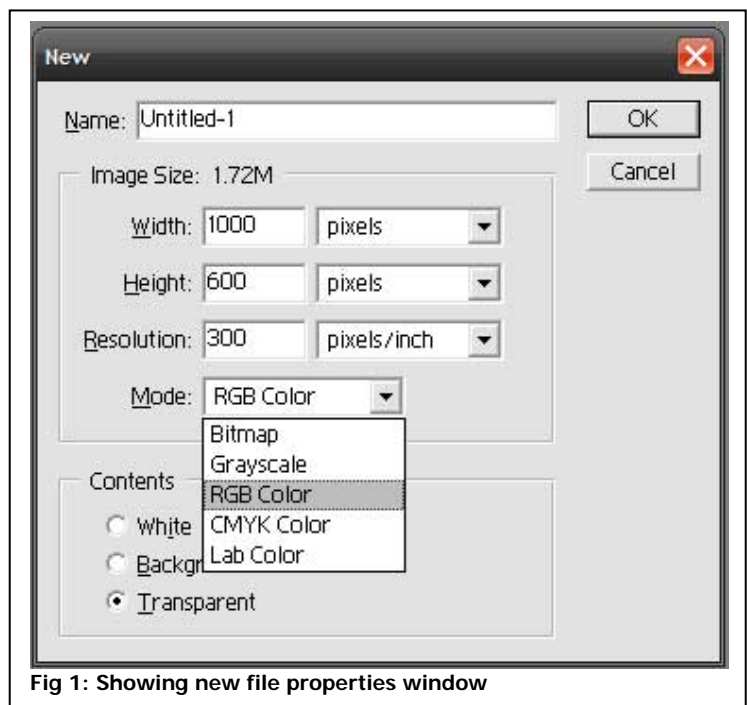


Fig 1: Showing new file properties window

2. Next, let's make sure the image is the right size – go to Image/Image Size and see the settings labelled 'Document Size'. Change these to 8 cm by 5 cm (8cm X 5cm is standard for business or ID cards). If necessary, untick the 'constrain proportions' box, (this means keep the proportions of the image).

See how this changes the Image Size. It's an easy way of making things exactly the size you want, without knowing the pixel width!

3. Select the rounded rectangle tool, so we can draw the background of the card.

Set the Radius to 20px. The radius settings are shown at the top of the workspace.

4. Make sure the colour is black. This is done using the large squares, displayed at the lower end of the main toolbar. The top square is foreground colour, the square behind is the background colour. We need to set the foreground colour to black.

Double click on the square and see the main colour select window. Change it to black.

5. Next, we are going to place an image into our card.

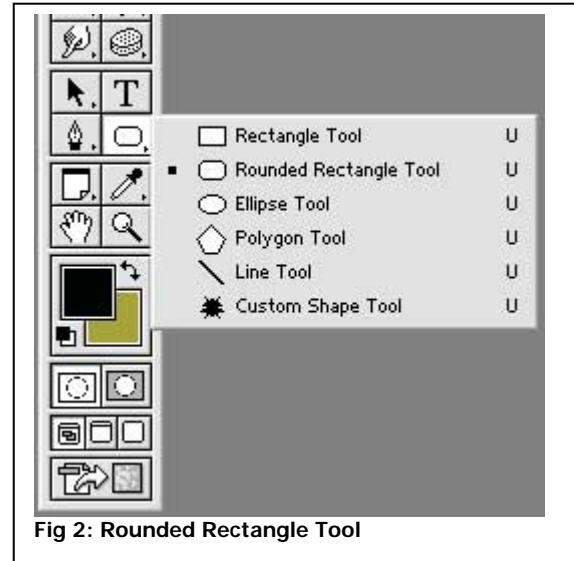
Go to File/Open and select an image of you, or something suitable you may have for a portrait image.

To copy it onto our PSD, we simply use the rectangle marquee tool and select the part of the image we want to use for our portrait.

Then we either go to Edit/Copy, or use the keystroke of ctrl/c to copy the selected part of the image.

Then either use Edit/paste OR use the keystroke ctrl/v to paste the image into the PSD. There is no need to make a new layer, it will do this automatically.

The image should now be on its own layer in the PSD. It is probably a bit big, so use ctrl/t to be bale to resize the image (this is called Free Transform). This makes dotted lines appear round the image, and selection points at the corners, and half way down each side. Use these to resize the image. To keep the proportions of an image, hold down the shift key while you resize.





If you right click while you are in 'Free Transform', you can see a number of actions to choose from. Try these out to see what they do. So now we have a PSD with 2 layers in it, which should look a bit like the first image shown opposite.

Let's give the image a background panel.

6. Create another rounded rectangle, this time colour it white, and place behind the image, but in front of the black background.



Now it should look something like the second image:

Try to make sure your proportions are even and the layout is smart and clean looking.

Now we need some text:

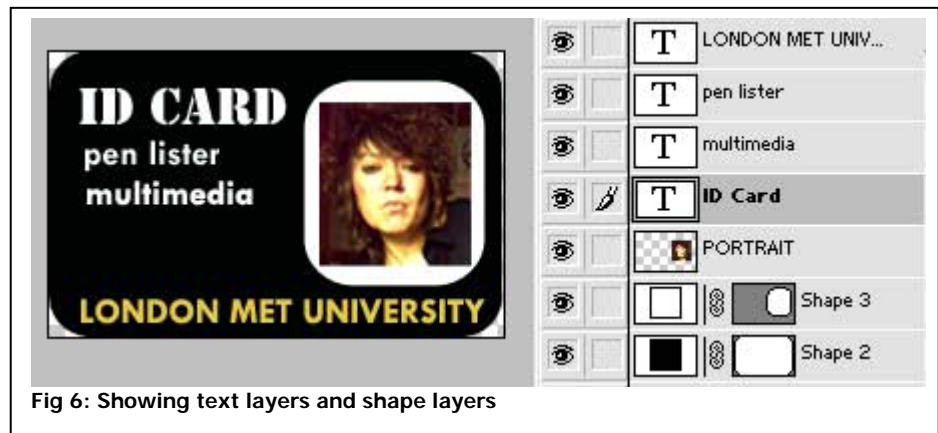
7. Select the type tool from the main toolbar on the left.

Click on to your PSD. The type tool makes its own new layer automatically.

Type 'ID CARD' onto your PSD. To change the font, select the text, just as you would in Microsoft Word, and then change the font by using the drop down menu at the top of the workspace.

8. I have also typed my name, my subject, and the name of the university.

I have used 'Stencil' and 'TW Cen MT'. You can use these fonts or other suitable fonts available on your PC.



The next image shows all the layers in the PSD, and how the PSD now looks.

The type layers can be in a different order, so long as they are all on top of the background. The fonts need to have suitable colours, so we can read them easily on the black background. Experiment with different fonts and styles of font layout to get the best design that you are happy with.

More tips and tricks

Curvy text

Select ID CARD with your text tool, and then click on the little wavy text icon at the top of the workspace, this will open the 'Warp Text' window. We can then do various things with our text. I have chosen 'Arc'. It does this:



Fig 7: Showing warped text

You can choose a lot of different text effects, so try a few out and choose the one you like the best.

Try to make sure you are making a good design, and you can still read what the text says.

Bevel and Emboss

Bevel and emboss is the effect that makes things look like metal plates or plaques. To try this out, do the following:

Select the background panel layer with your mouse (in the layers palette).

Either Right click and select blending options, which opens the styles window for that layer shape, OR use the Layer menu from the top of your workspace to select Layer /Layer style/bevel and emboss. This is the same window opening.

Experiment with the bevel settings, to see what they do. This effect can be used in many ways, so try to find a good way that suits your card.

Notice that you can choose 'inner bevel' or 'outer bevel'. This has a different effect on the shape.

You can choose 'depth', direction and how 'shiny' it looks. You can also change the direction of the light that makes it look shiny.

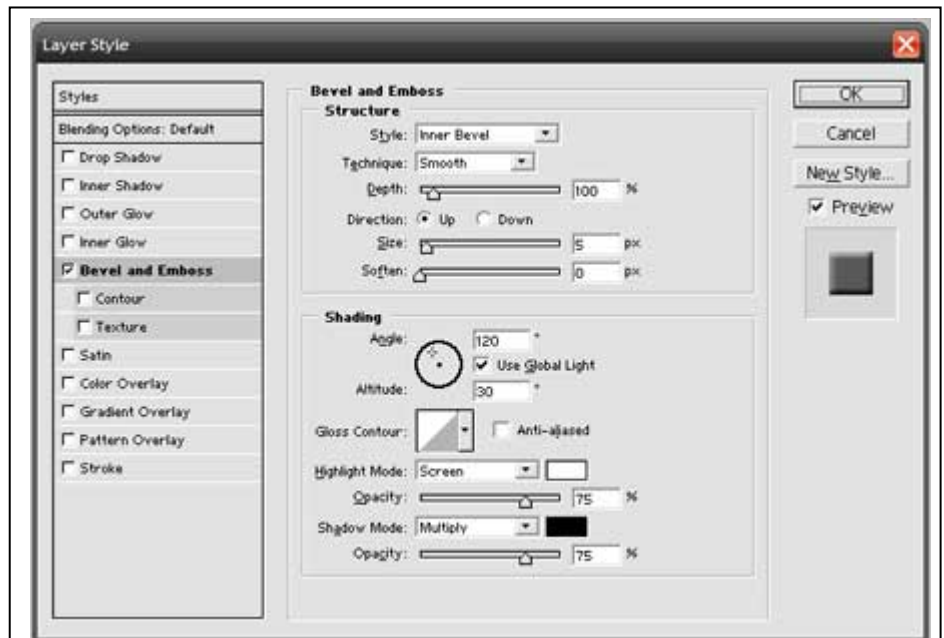


Fig 8: Blending Options window

Try lots of settings out, and perhaps make duplicate the layers to save your experiments for future reference. (Right click on the layer and select 'Duplicate Layer'.

Drop Shadow

To try out a drop shadow, we will place one on the portrait image.



Fig 9: Drop Shadow on the portrait and Bevel Emboss on the black panel

Call up the Blending options window on the portrait layer.

Select 'Drop Shadow'.

Have a look at the settings. Just like in the bevel style, we have direction, depth, colour and other similar settings.

Try a few settings to see what they do. Perhaps duplicate the portrait layer so you can save some of your tests.

The final ID card should look something like the above image (Fig 9).

Here is a shot of how my layers palette looked by the time I had finished the ID card.

Experiment with the icons at the bottom of the layers palette. They make new layers or provide short cuts to the effects. They also create folders, so you can place layers inside folders if you are using a lot of layers in one PSD. This can be very useful!

More PhotoShop Online Tutorials:

pPhotoshopCandy Tutorials
<http://photoshopcandy.com/?cat=7>

Pixel2Life Tutorials
http://www.pixel2life.com/tutorials/adobe_photoshop/

Tutorialized Tutorials
<http://www.tutorialized.com/tutorials/Photoshop/1>

/Pen Lister 2008

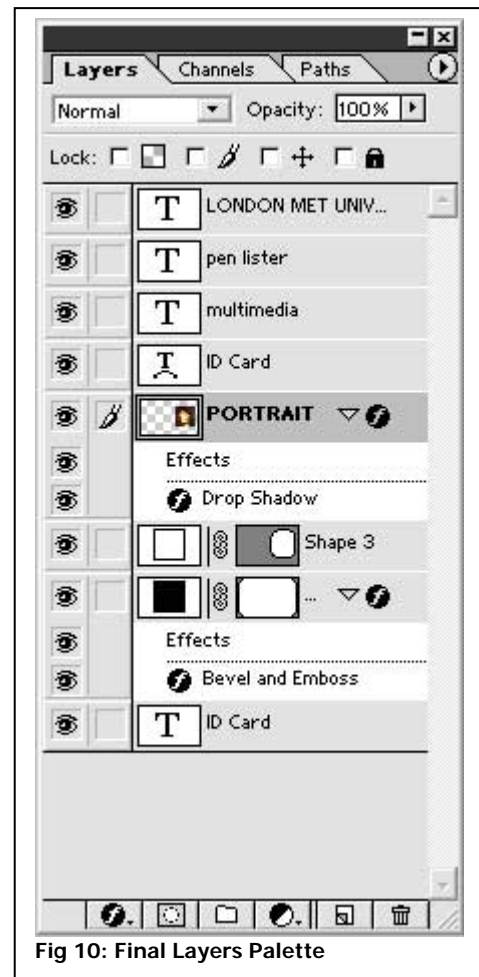


Fig 10: Final Layers Palette