

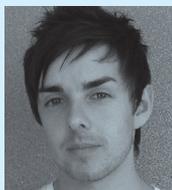
Photoshop CS3 or later

# Merge photography with sketch characters

**Chris Moran** explains how to mix hand-drawn characters and photography effectively

It can take a lot of time and effort to wrestle with Photoshop's Pen tools to create your design elements from scratch, so in this tutorial I'll demonstrate how to give your images a more personal, hand-made touch by bringing to life some sketchbook artwork and transporting it into a new photographic scene. This also gives you the chance to give all your doodles or characters that have never seen the light of day an outing in a brand new environment.

For this project I have chosen a playing card theme, which has dictated how I should take the photograph for my setting. But I'll quite often be inspired by a photograph I've seen in the first place, and think how I could make it into a new world for some crazy creatures. We will also look at how to add some natural-looking shadows to your creations, which will help to effectively bed them into their new home.



#### Chris Moran

— A 3D artist at creative studio The Neighbourhood, Chris graduated from Huddersfield University in 2008 and has since worked on animation projects for BBC, Sony PSP and Fulham Football Club. For more visit [www.the-neighbourhood.com](http://www.the-neighbourhood.com)

#### On the disc

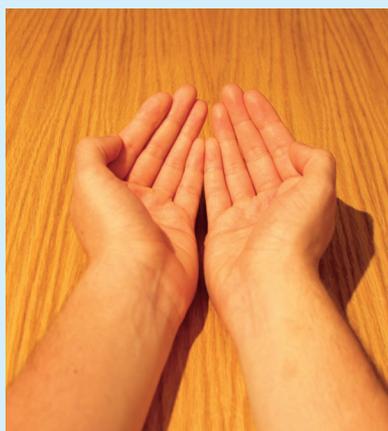
The files relating to this tutorial can be located in DiscContents\Resources\Skech

#### Time needed

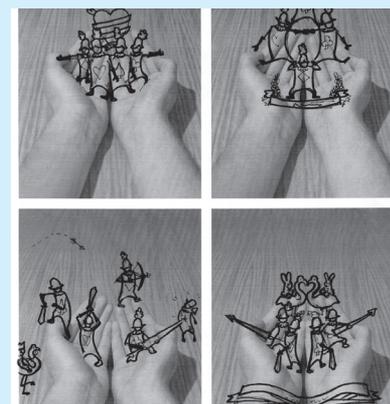
5-6 hours

#### Skills

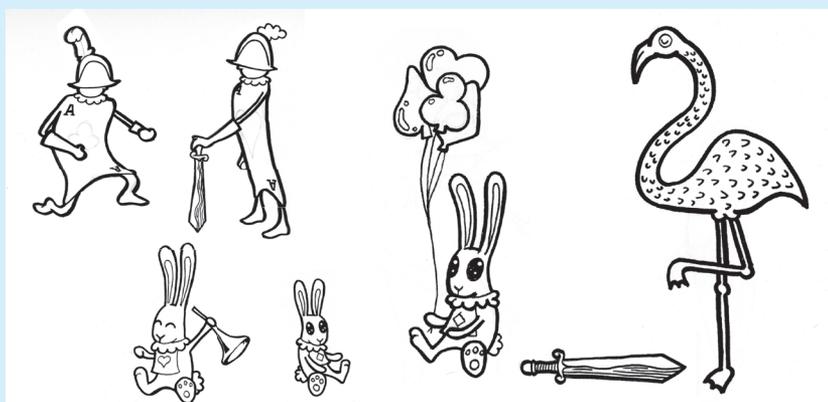
- Add colour to hand-drawn elements
- Integrate sketched elements into a photograph
- Create naturalistic shadows



**01**— The first thing to do is to take or select a photograph. This will be used to form the background of your piece. Open Background.jpg from this issue's disc or, alternatively, take your own photograph that better suits your chosen theme.



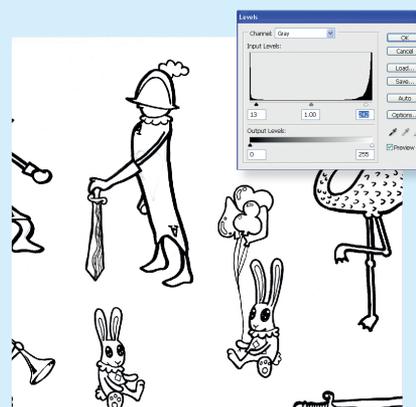
**02**— I like to make a few prints of the photo, using the image about four times per A4 sheet. This way I can experiment with variations of the composition by doodling straight onto the image. It doesn't matter if it's untidy because I'm just trying to get some ideas flowing.



**03**— Once you're happy with one of the compositions, it's time to refine some of the characters. Grab a sketchbook and start developing them. I like to use a few different weights of fineliner and a black marker to make the linework interesting.



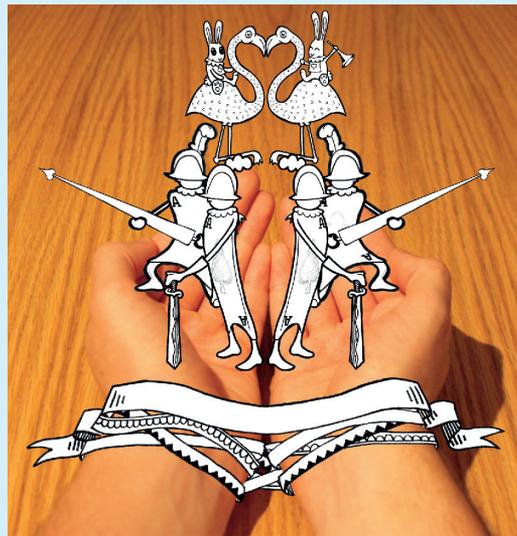
**04**— With a lightbox or tracing paper, draw any elements that need to wrap around objects in your scene or are required to be a specific shape, such as this banner. This is so the proportions match up to the background image and you don't waste time later having to alter or redraw sections.



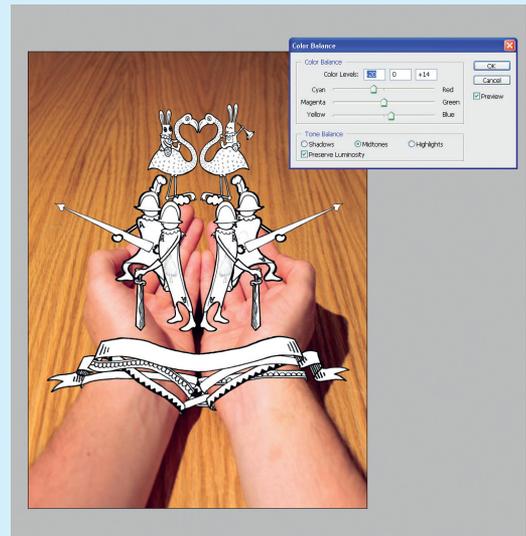
**05**— The next job is to scan the sketches. I do a greyscale scan at 300dpi. If you haven't scanned it in greyscale, just go to Image>Adjustments>Desaturate. Then go to Image>Adjustments>Levels and boost the contrast of the linework by sliding the black and white point markers across a touch.



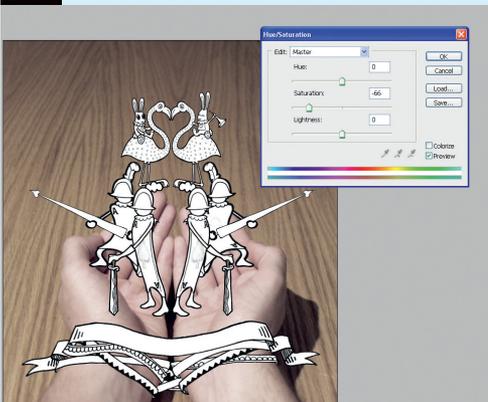
**06** Using the Magic Wand tool, select and delete the white areas around the outside of the scanned elements. Make sure the tolerance range is set high enough so that your selection leaves minimal white edges. To check for white edges, make a new layer (Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+N) and place it underneath your scanned images. Fill it with black to check for any white pixels.



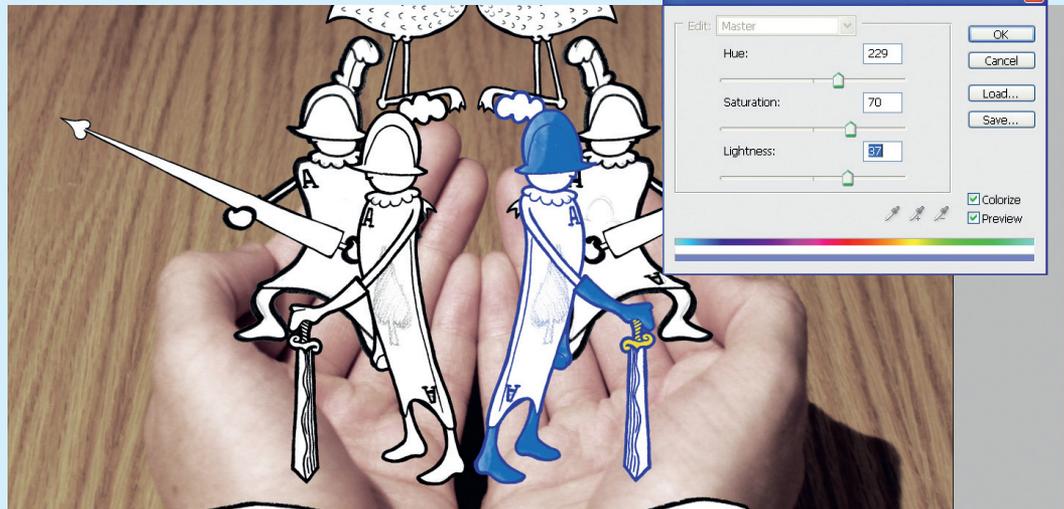
**07** Copy each character onto a new layer above the background image. Position and scale each object until you are happy that the composition is balanced.



**08** Create a Colour Balance adjustment layer above the background image. Slide the markers towards blue and cyan to remove some of the yellow and red tones caused by incandescent lighting.



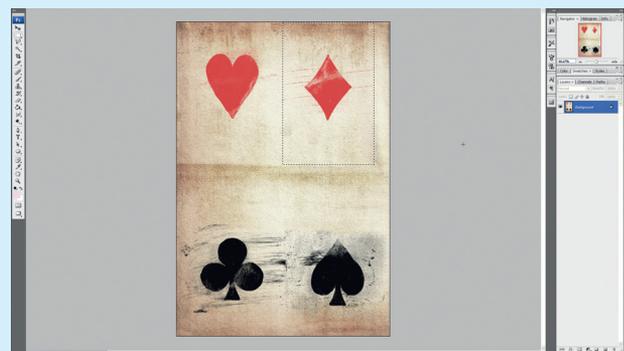
**09** Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and set the Saturation slider to -66. This desaturates the background image slightly, giving the scanned elements more contrast in the scene when we add some colour in the next step.



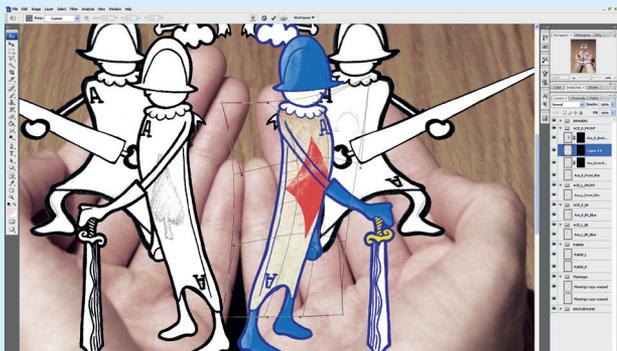
**10** To colour the lines of the characters, go to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation. Check 'Colorize' and adjust the sliders until you get the desired colour. Here I have increased Lightness to +37 and Saturation to +70, giving the lines a deep blue colour which fits in with the playing card theme.



**11** To colour the inner sections of the characters, select an area with the Magic Wand tool. Create a new layer (Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+N) and fill with the Paint Bucket tool. Remember to keep all the colours on separate layers to avoid damaging the original linework.



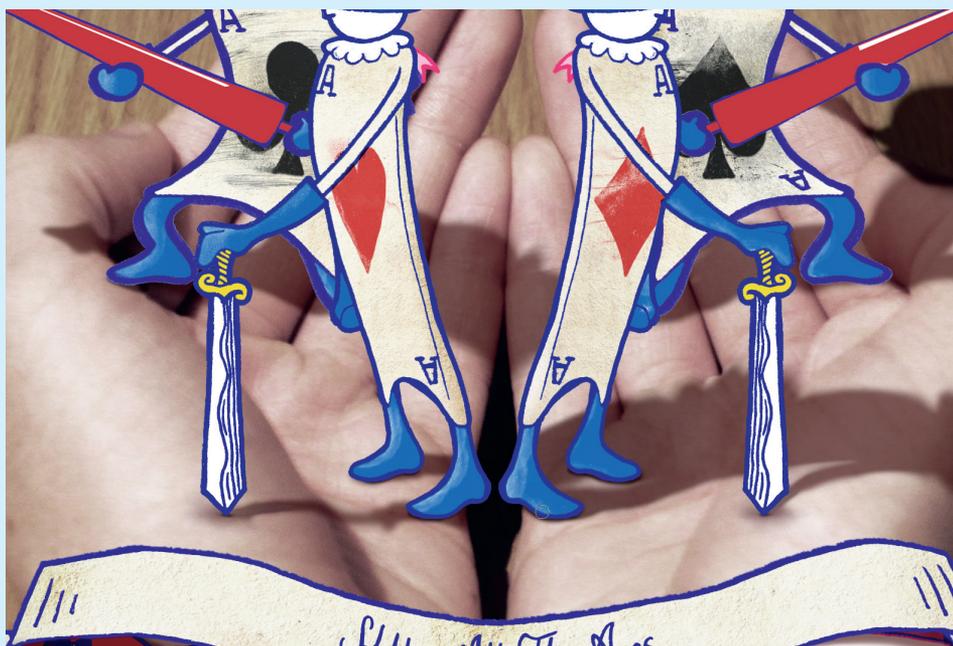
**12** Open CARD\_GUARD.psd from the disc. Using the Rectangular Marquee tool, copy an area of the texture. Again, use the Magic Wand tool to select an area of the image's character that you want to fill with this texture, and press Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+V to paste it into a new layer.



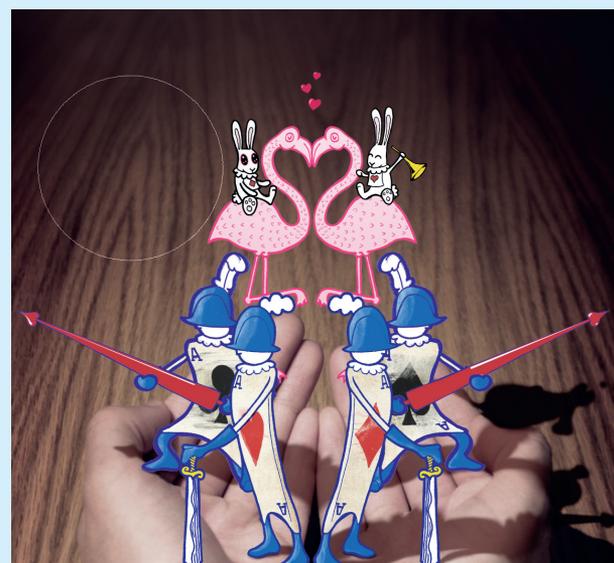
**13** Unlink the layer mask of the card texture, select the layer thumbnail, go to Edit>Transform>Warp and manipulate the layer until it sits at the correct angle according to the pose of your character. Repeat Steps 10 to 12, experimenting with different fills, gradients and textures until all the areas have been coloured.



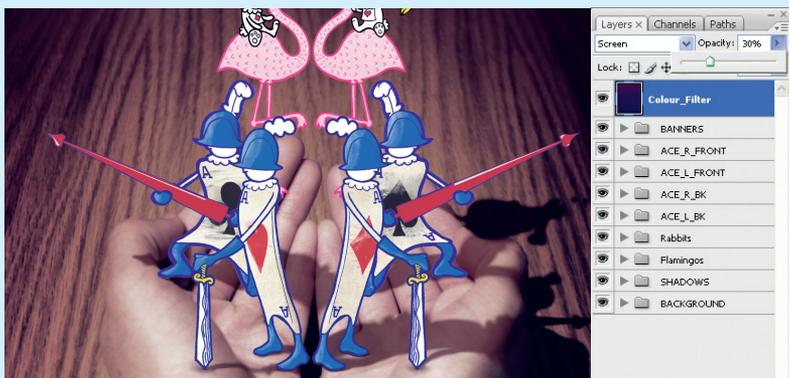
**14** Create a new layer underneath all the character layers – this will be used for the shadows. Use the Eyedropper tool to pick the colour of an existing shadow in the scene and, with a large soft round brush, loosely paint in the objects' shadows, bearing in mind the direction of the light source. Set the layer Blending Mode to Multiply.



**15** Paint in some stronger contact shadows with a smaller brush. Use the Smudge tool to mould the shadows into place, following the contours of the object on which the shadows are cast.



**16** To bring more focus to the central characters, duplicate the background layer and use the Burn tool to darken the edges with a large soft brush. Then duplicate the background copy, go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and set it to around 20 pixels. With a soft brush, erase the sections you want to keep in focus, revealing the sharper image underneath.



**17** Create a new layer at the top of the stack. I fill the layer with a dark-blue-to-purple vertical gradient and set the Layer Mode to Screen. I set the opacity of the layer to 30 per cent. This adds a slight colour grade to the whole piece, tying all the layers together.



**18** The final step is to give the piece a sense of atmosphere. On a new layer with a large soft brush, I paint in a few light blue and pink areas. Set Blending Mode to Linear Dodge with an opacity of 45 per cent. Add any other finishing touches you feel are necessary.