

## → PHOTOSHOP

# PHOTOSHOP EXPERTISE

Using stock images to texture and enhance your photos can give standard portraits an artistic twist. Justin Maller reveals how to achieve a variety of effects in *Photoshop* by experimenting with Adjustment Layers, modes and masks

**ON THE CD**

You'll find all the files you need to complete this tutorial in the folder marked Tutorial\Texture on this issue's CD.

**TIME NEEDED**

1-2 hours

**INFO**

Justin Maller is a graphic artist from Melbourne, Australia. He is currently completing a Bachelor of Creative Arts at Melbourne University, while also creatively directing the crew at [depthcore.com](http://depthcore.com). Check out his portfolio at <http://superlover.com.au>

➔ Photo manipulation has always been one of the most enduring and popular genres of digital art, and also one of the most accessible. It is a great discipline to work within in order to learn the many ins and outs of *Photoshop*, as you work your way through the infinite combination of experiments you can use to augment and alter your own photography.

By blending multiple photographs together and adding your own lighting effects you can yield a range of wonderful and innovative results, which can transform a simple snapshot into a work of art.

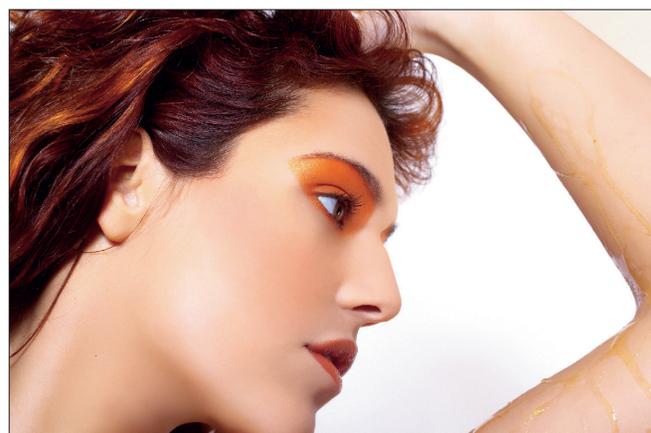
Thanks to the myriad stock-exchange sites currently available on the internet, you now have a veritable smorgasbord of royalty-free images to use as you see fit. In this tutorial, you'll be shown step by step how to use stock imagery as multi-faceted textures, alternate backgrounds and even custom highlight brushes.

In the following steps, you'll also be shown a variety of ways in which to use combinations of multiple Adjustment Layers to enhance and balance your composition, as well as a few simple techniques that will help you to quickly create an assortment of colour variations of your final image.

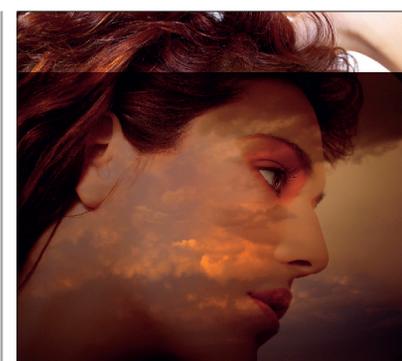
I have provided a set of royalty-free images on the disc for you to work with, but feel free to use your own if you'd prefer.

Illustration and tutorial by Justin Maller  
<http://superlover.com.au>

**1** First open *Photoshop* and import the *girlstock.jpg* file from this issue's CD. This image works well as a standalone photograph, but it contains more negative space than it should, and has little to distinguish it from the pack.



**2** Using the Pen tool, carefully start to trace and isolate the different elements of the photograph – the face, white space and arm. Make separate selections of these parts, then copy each into their own layer, naming as you go. Zoom up nice and close, and take your time so that you create the most accurate traces possible.



**3** Import the *cloudstock.jpg* file from this issue's CD. This image will serve as a darkening ambient texture, so select the Multiply Layer Mode and position the texture over the face. Experiment with the placement and orientation until you are happy, ensuring that the entire face is covered.

**4** Next, select the *Cloudstock* layer from the Layer's palette. Now Ctrl-click on the Face layer to make a selection, before adding a Layer Mask. This will instantly apply a Layer Mask that displays the Cloud Multiply on the face only.



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MOVABLE FLARES

Lens Flares are an effective way to create origin points for artificial highlights and lighting effects. To use them, create a new layer, make a square selection and fill with black. Render a Lens Flare (Filter→Render→LensFlare) in the centre of the square. Set this layer to Screen. You will now have a movable light source that can be placed anywhere on the piece to synthesise a natural highlight. For different results, experiment on this layer with distortion filters, such as Wave and Twirl.

FAIRY FLARES

Minimal use of this technique can serve to add rather sophisticated details to your lighting and highlight effects. Duplicate one of your Movable Flares into a new file. Set the Layer Mode back to Normal and define it as a Brush (Edit→Define→Brush). Back in your main composition, select the Brush menu and find your newly created brush. Select it, head to the Shape Dynamics menu and increase Size Jitter to 100 per cent. Head to Scattering and increase Scatter to 100 per cent. This will now draw shafts of Fairy Flares when brushed across highlights.



**5** Deselect the 'link' icon that joins the layer to its Layer Mask. This will allow you to move and alter the Cloud layer, while keeping its application zone restricted to the 'face' selection. Click on this Layer Mask in the Layer toolbar to edit it, and then use a large brush to remove the overlay from the eye, nose and mouth area.



**6** Import a stock image of an antique, or use the chinese.jpg file on the CD. You can use pretty much anything here, but something with curves is ideal. Set the Layer Mode to Hard Light. This will add dimension and depth to your image.



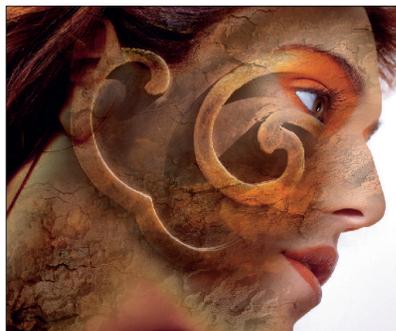
**7** Repeat the Face layer mask technique to restrict the Hard Light on the face. Making sure you are working on the Layer Mask, select a medium brush and remove excess parts of the Antique layer. Try to keep this as tight and minimal as possible.



**8** Import a stock image of a rock surface, or use the texture.jpg file on the CD. This will be your heaviest texture. Position the texture over the face and repeat the Face Masking procedure. Set the layer to Multiply and carefully brush the texture into place, avoiding the eye and mouth areas. Ensure that you present a contrast; don't 'drown' the image by texturing the entire area.



**9** Duplicate the Rockstock layer and remove the Layer Mask. Resize the image to 75 per cent and move it over the neck area. Flip the image horizontally or vertically, before applying a fresh mask and adding finer detail wherever desired. This is an effective method for adding variations to your strong textures, and can be used with other texture layers whenever desired.



**10** Duplicate the untextured base Face layer and bring it to the forefront. Add a Layer Mask and hide the whole layer. Now brush around the edges of the chin and hairline to bring out the natural highlights and contours that may have been obscured by the underlying textures.



**11** Use one of your Custom Highlight Brushes to apply a strong highlight next to the eye. Brush in white, then set the Layer Mode to Overlay. Reduce the Layer Opacity to about 65 per cent so that it sits naturally without looking 'stuck on'. You can now add larger highlights set to a lower opacity around the cheek and neck.



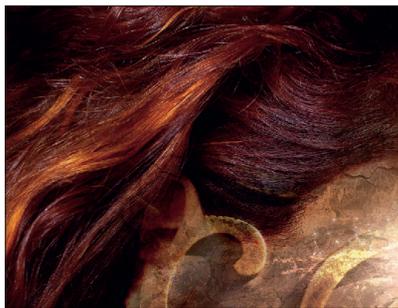
**12** Add a Movable Flare (see Movable Flares, left) to the composition. Place it at the 'origin' of the Highlight Brush. For a softer flare, duplicate the Flare layer and apply a Gaussian Blur of 20 pixels, before setting the Layer Opacity to 50 per cent.



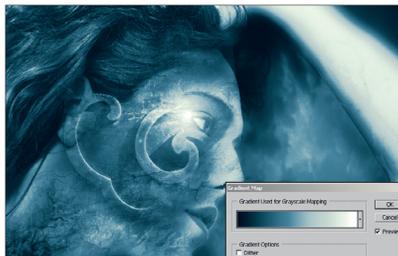
**13** Next, apply some Fairy Flares (see Fairy Flares, left). Minimal application is the key here; this is a great tool when used in moderation, but overuse produces tacky and obvious results. Apply the flares near existing highlights on the arm, curves and eye flare. For more subtle results, set the Layer Mode to Overlay.



**14** Import cloudstock.jpg again and position it over negative space. Ctrl-click your Whitespace layer and add the appropriate mask. Unlink the mask from the layer and move into position. Set Layer Mode to Multiply. Duplicate this layer, reduce the Opacity to 50 per cent and apply a 20 pixel Gaussian Blur. This will ease the integration between figure and background.



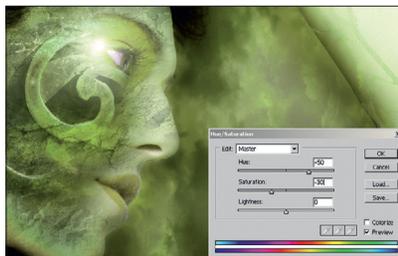
**15** Using a dark colour and a large brush, conceal the small areas of white in the hair. If desired you can use a duplicated layer of stock to do this, but a simple brush job will achieve the same effect.



**16** Apply a Gradient Mask Adjustment Layer. Experiment with the different gradients and the Reverse feature. Try an 'icy' gradient (black-blue-white), a 'fiery' gradient (black-red-yellow) a 'natural' gradient (green-white), and so on. Try to get an idea for what feels right to you.



**17** Remove the Gradient Mask and apply a Colour Balance. Experiment with different combinations, exploring all variations within the Shadow, Midtones and Highlight sections. This is a good way to try out different colour combinations, and to see how the variety of hues will interact with each other within the composition as a whole.



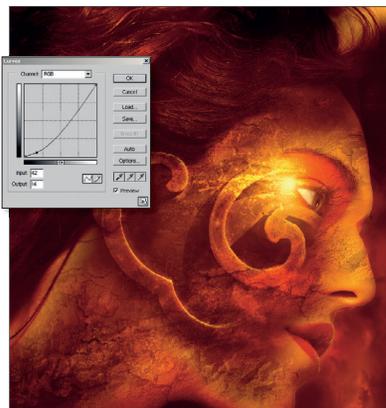
**18** Remove the Colour Balance Adjustment Layer and apply Hue Saturation instead. Drag the Hue slider up and down, noting again which colours work well within the piece. This is a handy way to select an overall palette, but not a good way to get a balanced colour scheme, as some hues will distort and look out of place.



**19** Remove Hue Saturation and apply a Channel Mixer Adjustment Layer. The Channel Mixer is the best and most comprehensive way to build a colour scheme from scratch. Experiment with the different values in each channel, noting the effects each has. Bring the Red values up slightly by about 20-35 per cent.



**20** Adjusting each channel's Contrast level in the Channel Mixer Adjustment Layer will have the smoothest and most powerful universal effect. Increase the Red contrast by 20 per cent and drop the Blue contrast by 30 per cent to achieve a fiery orange colour scheme.



**21** Add a Curves Adjustment Layer to bring out the depth in the piece. Next, drag the base of the curve down so that the shadows deepen. Move this Adjustment Layer so that it sits beneath the Channel Mixer layer. This will give a stronger, less saturated, effect.

### CUSTOM HIGHLIGHT BRUSHES

Creating custom brushes from your stock imagery is a great way to create highlights that sit very naturally with the textures in your image. Open texture.jpg in a new file and add a Threshold Adjustment Layer with a value of 100. Isolate an interesting section by brushing around it with white underneath the Threshold layer. Make a selection of this area and define it as a brush (Edit→DefineBrush). This brush can also be used to create shadows in other pieces.



**22** Finish by applying a fresh Colour Balance layer that tweaks the highlights towards yellow. Apply a Layer Mask and use this Adjustment Layer to bring out the highlights of your flares and the eye area. Try adding Gradient Masks with gradient Layer Masks over the top for extra palette development. **arts**