

# PHOTOSHOP 1: INTERFACE, FILTERS, & ADJUSTMENTS

After opening Photoshop, you can either create a new, blank file or open an existing image.

- To create a new file, go to File > New. You will be asked to give the file a name and to specify its size, resolution (select 72 pixels per inch for Web images, larger—300 is fairly standard—for print images), and color mode (select RGB for the Web, CMYK for print).
- To open an existing image, go to File > Open and select the image that you want to open.

Whether creating a new image or modifying an existing image, you can change the size of the canvas and the color mode at any point. To change the size of the canvas, go to Image > Canvas Size and type in the new dimensions. To change the color mode, go to Image > Mode and select the new mode.

Step 1: Download the photo of ruins (ruins.jpg) found on the Exercise page of our course website; open this file in Photoshop.

## The Interface

The **Menu Bar** across the top of the screen has nine menus: File, Edit, Image, Layer, Select, Filter, View, Window, and Help. Some menu commands have sub-menus, indicated by an arrow next to the command. Some commands have keyboard shortcuts, as indicated next to the name of the command in the menu.

The **Toolbox** has all of the basic tools; some tools have a tiny arrow in the lower right hand corner that reveals additional options for the tool (for instance, “under” the Pencil tool is the Brush tool). Hold your cursor over each tool to see its name and its keyboard shortcut. Toward the bottom of the toolbox are color swatches showing the foreground and background colors. Clicking on one of these swatches will pop up a color selection dialog box. The tiny arrow to the top right allows you to swap foreground and background colors. The tiny black and white swatch symbol to the lower left allows you to reset the colors to the default of black foreground and white background.

The **Palettes** are arranged on the right side of the screen. More palettes are available under the Windows menu at the top of the screen. The palettes are movable and can be docked together; some palettes are grouped together by default. The most important palettes to have open for this exercise are Layers and History.

Step 2: Arrange your workspace so that you have the Layers and History palettes open, along with the Toolbox. Close all other palettes.

## Saving and File Format Options

The first time you save a file (File > Save or File > Save As), a dialog box appears with options. Under the Format menu, note that you can save the file in a variety of formats. The two formats that we’ll be working with in class are “Photoshop” and “JPEG”; their differences are very important.

- Photoshop**: this is Photoshop’s native file format (.psd extension). Saving a file in Photoshop format preserves layers and other information, allowing you to go back to the file later and make changes to the image.
- JPEG**: this is the standard format for photographs (.jpg extension). Saving a file in JPEG format will flatten all of the layers and will compress the graphic, reducing its quality somewhat. The first time you save a graphic in JPEG format, a dialog box will ask for a compression level; a higher compression level will give you a better quality graphic, but also a larger file.

The best strategy is to save your file as a Photoshop file until you’re finished working on it, and then to save the file as a JPEG. Each time you save the file as a JPEG file you lose some quality due to compression. Remember that to save a file as a JPEG, you need to select JPEG from the dropdown Format menu in the dialog box that you get when you select File > Save As.

Step 3: Save the ruins image as a Photoshop file. Be sure to select “Photoshop” in the dropdown format menu and to give the file a name with a .psd extension. Save it on the desktop.

## **Layers**

Photoshop derives much of its power from the fact that it allows you to create images in layers. It's very important to keep an eye on your Layers palette and to use layers effectively.

Essentially, layers are like transparent sheets; when you paint on one sheet, you can still see through the unpainted areas to the sheet below. In addition, the work you do on one layer doesn't have any effect on the work you do on other layers. This is very helpful because you can modify parts of your graphic while leaving other parts untouched.

It's important to know which layer you're working on; that layer will be selected (its color will be blue) in the Layers Palette. The Layers palette lists all layers, layer sets, and layer effects in an image. You can accomplish many tasks—such as creating, hiding, displaying, copying, and deleting layers—using the buttons in the Layers palette.

- To **create a layer**, select the New Layer button (next to the trash can) in the Layers palette.
- To **name a layer**, double click on its current name (probably "Layer 1") and type in the new name.
- To **duplicate a layer**, select the layer and drag it onto the New Layer button.
- To **delete a layer**, select the layer by clicking on it and then click on the trash can (or drag the layer into the trash can) at the bottom of the Layers palette.

Step 4: Rename the current layer from "Background" to "ruins". Duplicate this layer (and notice that this duplicate is automatically named "ruins copy"—you can rename it if you like).

As you create an image in Photoshop, it's wise to work in layers; that is, put each item on its own separate layer. The reason for doing this is that when you apply layer styles, actions, and filters to a layer, these operations affect everything on that layer. Keeping separate parts of your graphic on separate layers gives you more control. You can make layers invisible to see what the entire graphic would look like without that layer, and you can lock layers to prevent any accidental changes from occurring:

- To **make a layer visible/invisible**, click on the eye icon to the left of the layer.
- To **lock or unlock a layer**, click on the lock icon at the top of the Layers palette.

You can also arrange layers on top of or below one another, and you can adjust the opacity of a layer so that layers beneath it are visible.

- To **move a layer** so that it appears on top of or below another layer, click on that layer and drag it to a new position in the Layers palette.
- To **adjust the opacity of a layer**, click on that layer and use the opacity scale on the top middle of the Layers palette.

Step 5: Lock the original "ruins" layer and turn off its visibility. Select the "ruins copy" layer to work on. Adjust its opacity to 50% and then move the opacity back up to 100%.

## **Filters**

Filters are used to achieve different kinds of artistic effects. Go to the Filter menu to view the categories of filters and to select from the sub-menus within each category. Note that selecting most filters will pop up a dialog box that gives you additional options for the filter. As you make selections in these dialog boxes, you can see how the image changes in response.

Step 6: Experiment with filters and their settings by applying different filters to the "ruins copy" layer of the image. Use Edit > Undo after each filter to undo what you've just done. Alternately, if you find a filter that you like and you've created an effect that you want to save, you can stop working on that layer and make another duplicate layer from the original layer for you to work on.

Note that some filters present you with a different interface than others. For now, you should avoid the Extract and Pattern Maker filters, as well as the Video filters and Distort > Displace. You should try out the Liquify filter, though, for some interesting and fairly easy effects.

## **History Palette**

You can use the History palette to undo actions you've taken and to revert to a previous state of an image. If it's simply your most recent action that you want to delete, use the Undo command: Edit > Undo, or Control-Z (PC) or Command-Z (Mac). To delete a series of actions, use the History palette. Click the name of the state or action, and choose Delete from the History palette menu to delete that change and those that came after it. Or pull the slider, along the left side of the History palette, up to the state where you want to be.

Step 7: Continue experimenting with filters. Use the Undo command and the History palette in order to undo filter effects that you don't like.

## **Adjustments**

There are two methods for adjusting the colors in an image. The first method actually alters the colors on the active layer of the image; the second method preserves the colors on the active layer but makes them look different by adding an adjustment layer on top of the active layer.

### **1. Altering the image**

Under Image > Addjustments, you have options for altering the colors in a layer. You can adjust the distribution of dark and light tones in the layer, the color balance, contrast, brightness, hue, saturation, and other color-related features. The options I use most often are Levels, Color Balance, Brightness/Contrast, and Hue/Saturation.

Step 8: In the Layers palette, select the layer you want to work on; turn off the visibility of all of the other layers. Experiment with different color adjustments using the options under Image > Addjustments.

### **2. Adding an adjustment layer**

At the bottom of the Layers palette, there's a round circle that's half dark and half light; this is the adjustment layer button. From the dropdown menu that pops up when you click this button, select a type of adjustment. [The first three options (Solid Color, Pattern Mixer, and Gradient Map) won't work particularly well for this assignment, but the other options should yield some interesting effects.]

You'll see dialog boxes similar to those that you worked with in the previous step. When you make your final selections, notice that there's a new layer added in the Layers palette with the adjustment that you just selected. You can turn off the visibility of this layer to see the original image. Essentially, this method doesn't make any changes to the image on the active layer.

Step 9: Use the History palette to reverse the changes you made in the previous step. Then add adjustment layers using the Layers palette. Experiment with multiple layers, turning on and off their visibility and perhaps changing their opacity as well.

## **Saving**

Imagine that you're finished with the assignment.

- First, save the Photoshop file: File > Save, or Control-S (PC) or Command-S (Mac).
- Next, save the file as a JPEG by going to File > Save As. Select JPEG from the dropdown Format menu.
- Give the file a name.
  - Use all lower case letters
  - Avoid spaces or special characters (like quotation marks, slashes, periods, asterisks, etc.)
  - Type in the extension (in this case, **.jpg**)
- Specify where the file should be saved. In this case, save the file on the desktop.
- In the JPEG dialog box, specify the quality of the file. In this case, you should make it a medium to high file quality.

You're done!