



INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHICS ROTSCOPE STYLE PAINTING

PROJECT
No.

PS941

In this Photoshop photo effects tutorial, you're going to look at how to easily combine reality with a rotoscope-style painting. "Rotoscoping" is the term used when artists paint or trace over live-action film, frame-by-frame, to create an animation, and it's being used in everything from TV commercials to Hollywood movies, most notably the recent Keanu Reeves movie "A Scanner Darkly". You will be working with only one frame but the technique can be applied to video footage in After Effects, Premiere or other video editing software.

You're not going to be creating an entire animated sequence here, but you are going to learn how to give a photo that same rotoscoped effect, and it's very easy to do. Rather than applying the effect to the entire image though, which we certainly could do if we wanted, we're only going to apply it to the main subject of the image, leaving everything else in the photo untouched so it looks like we're combining a painting with reality.



THE ORIGINAL IMAGE BEFORE ADJUSTMENTS

Here is the starting image:



And here is one possible image after applying the rotoscope painting effect to the main subject (the boy holding the pigeons) and applying a slight blur to the background crowd:



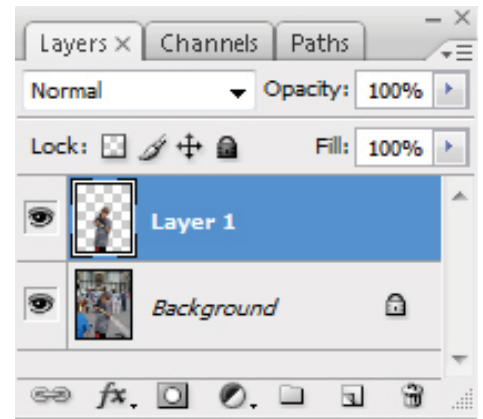
Step 1: Select The Main Subject Of Your Photo

Since you're only going to be applying the effect to the main subject of the image, the first thing you need to do is isolate it from the rest of the photo, which means you're going to need to select it. In the case here, the subject has been outlined in red because you want to apply the effect only to the boy and the birds he is holding, so you need to select only them. You can use any selection tool you're most comfortable with to select your subject. If you are comfortable with it, you might want to use the Pen Tool, but the Magnetic Lasso tool would also work just fine. Go ahead and select your main subject. Remember, you will not see the red line shown here which is just for illustrative purposes.



Step 2: Copy The Selection To A New Layer

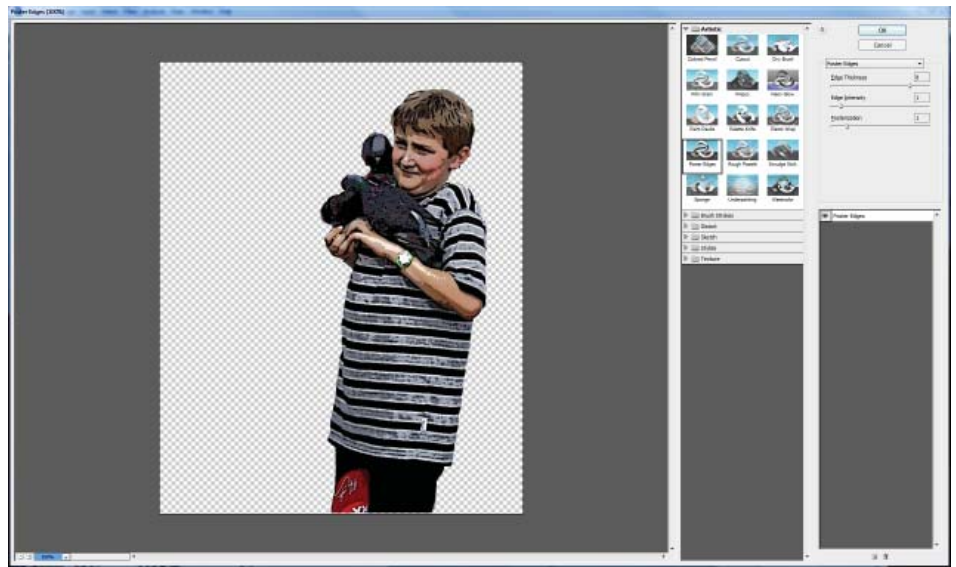
With the main subject selected, use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+J (Win) / Command+J (Mac) to copy the selection onto a new layer above the Background layer. You won't see anything happen in your document window, but if you look in your Layers palette, you'll see that your selection has been copied to a new layer which Photoshop has automatically named "Layer 1":



Step 3: Apply The "Poster Edges" Filter To The New Layer

With "Layer 1" selected in the Layers palette, go up to the Filter menu at the top of the screen, choose Artistic, and then choose Poster Edges.

This brings up Photoshop's Filter Gallery set to the "Poster Edges" filter options on the right (circled in red):



Keep an eye on the large preview area on the left of the screen to see what's happening to your image as you adjust the Poster Edges options. (an enlargement of part of that area for this info sheet is shown in the next column) For this image, the Edge Thickness and Edge Intensity are both set to 1, and Posterization to 2. These settings work best for this image, but feel free to experiment with the options yourself to see if other settings work better for your image. The object is to make the subject look less like an actual photo and more like



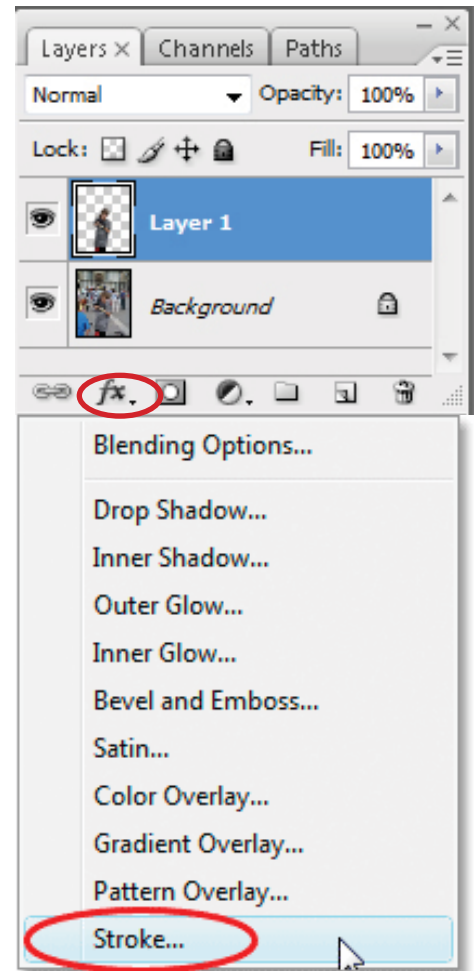
a painting. The main option here is the third one, "Posterization", which determines how many different shades of color your image will contain. Lower values tend to work best.

Click OK when you're happy with the results to exit out of the Filter Gallery. Here's my image after applying the filter:



Step 4: Add A Black Stroke Around The Main Subject

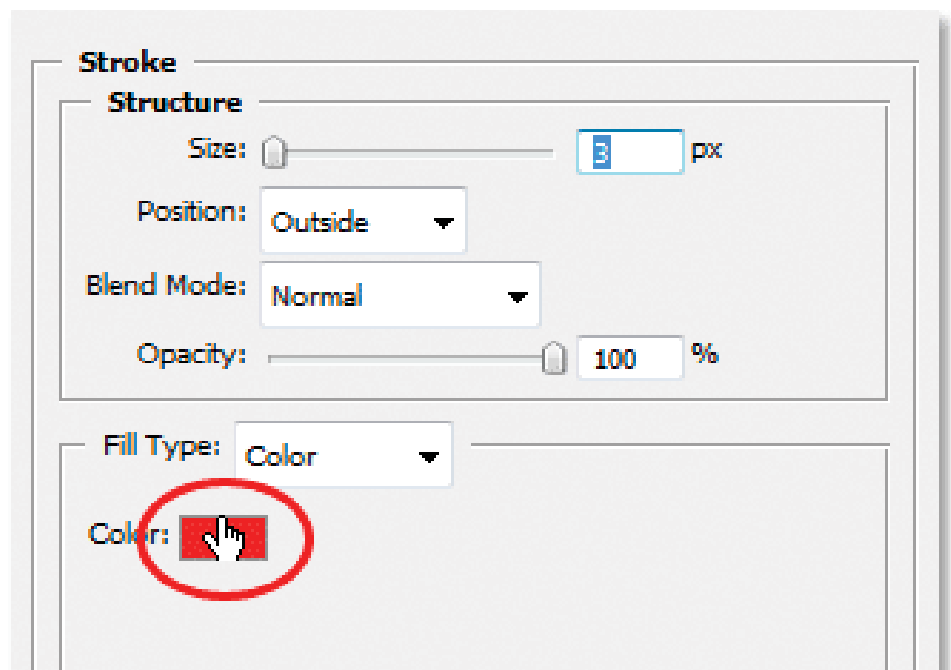
You're going to enhance the effect a little by adding a black stroke around the main subject. With "Layer 1" still selected, click on the Layer Styles icon at the bottom of the Layers palette:



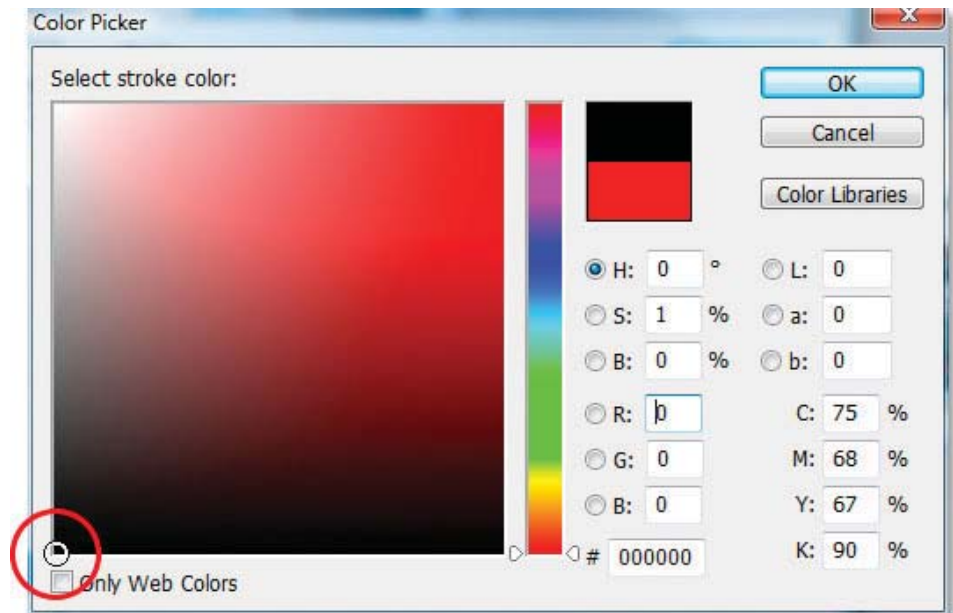
Then choose Stroke from the bottom of the list of Layer Styles that appears:

This brings up the Layer Style dialog box set to the Stroke options in the middle column. Photoshop always sets the default color of the stroke to red (which makes no sense at all). We want our stroke color to be black, so to change it, click on the color swatch to the right of the word "Color":

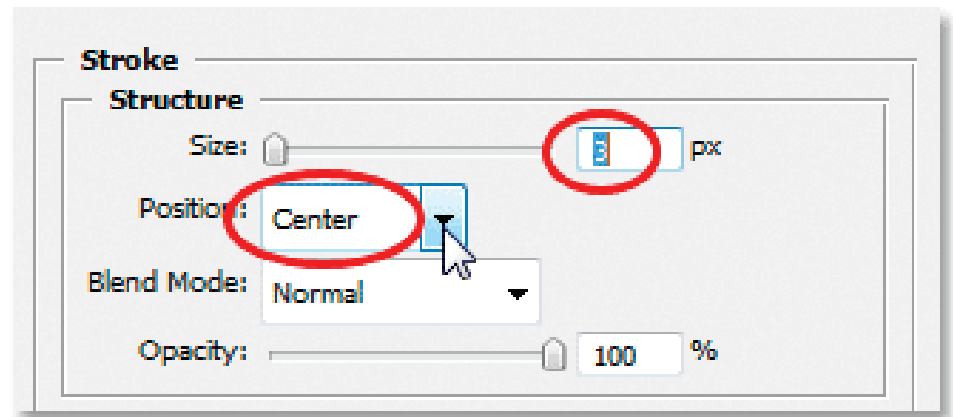
Photoshop's Color Picker will appear. Click in the bottom left corner of the large square area on the left to select black. You'll know you've selected pure black because the values for the "R", "G", and "B" options on the right will all read "0":



Click OK to exit out of the Color Picker. Then, back in the Stroke options in the Layer Style dialog box, set the stroke Size at the top to somewhere between 2-4 pixels depending on the size of your image. I've left mine set to the default of 3 pixels. Then change the stroke Position to Center by clicking on the down-pointing arrow and choosing "Center" from the list:



Photoshop Tutorials: Change the "Size" of your stroke to somewhere between 2-4 pixels, then change the "Position" to "Center".



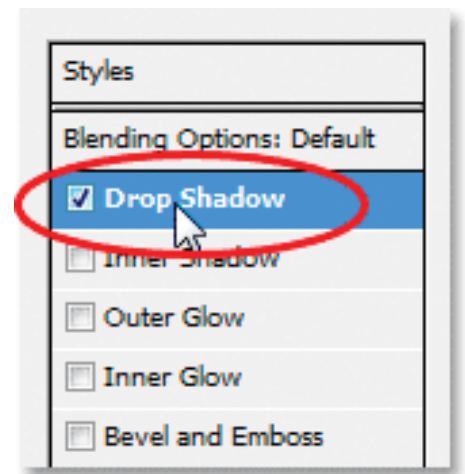
After adding the black stroke around your subject, your image should now look something like this:



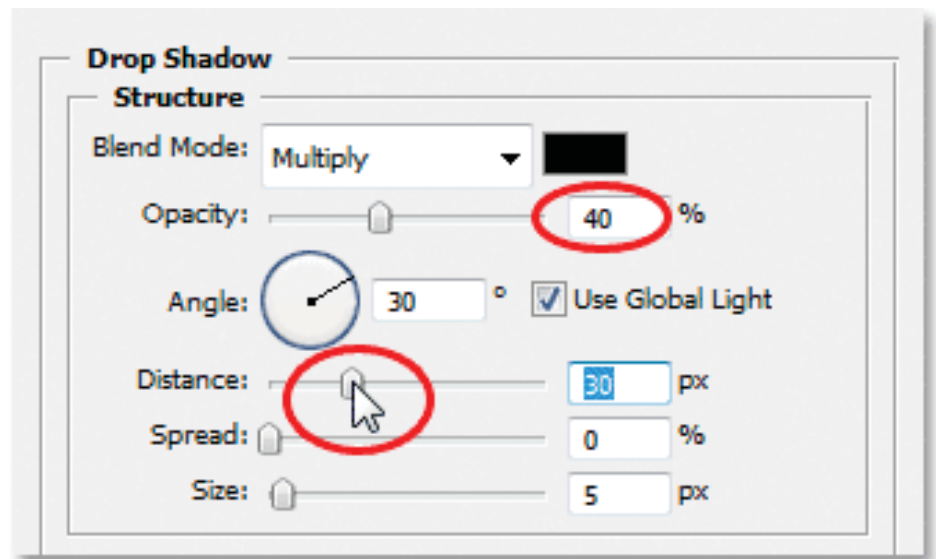
Don't click out of the Layer Style dialog box yet. Optionally, you may want to add one more effect in the form of a Drop Shadow.

Step 5: Add A Drop Shadow

If you decide you wish to provide a Drop Shadow in your photograph, with the Layer Style dialog box still open, click *directly on the words* Drop Shadow on the left of the Layer Style dialog box. **Make sure you click directly on the words and don't simply click inside the checkbox.** You want access to the Drop Shadow options, and for that, you need to click directly on the words.



The middle column of the Layer Style dialog box will change to show the Drop Shadow options. Probably the first thing you want to do is lower the Opacity of the drop shadow down to around 40% so it's not too dark and intense. Then, increase the shadow Distance by dragging the slider to the right. Keep an eye on your image to see how far your shadow is extending outward from your subject as you drag the slider. Here the shadow distance is 30 pixels. Depending on the size of your image, you may want to set yours higher.



While the default for this exercise has the blend mode set to Multiply, you should experiment by trying each of the various blending options before you settle on a final version. Don't be afraid to experiment as the actual settings may vary greatly depending upon your photo content.

You might also want to try applying a slight Gaussian Blur to the background image. This will soften it and make the rotoscoped selection appear more dramatic.

On the left on the next page is the project image with the steps outlined in this Info Sheet. On the right is the same image with a slight Gaussian Blur to the background. This may be appropriate for some images.



THE FINAL IMAGE WITHOUT BLUR



THE FINAL IMAGE WITH 1.0 BACKGROUND BLUR