



INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS

TOURON* REMOVER

Information
Sheet No.

PS974

*Turon. A slang term or name locals use to describe visitors. See: Tourist.

Hidden in the Scripts menu is a feature that should make any location photographer jump right out of his/her skin as one of the best things ever in Photoshop.

Photoshop prompts you to work smarter, not harder, and this new Photoshop CS3 Extended technique should open your mind to all kinds of new ideas. Found in the File menu under Scripts, it's called Statistics.

Here's the story: Imagine you are on location, and for whatever reason have been assigned to create a photograph of the Fremont Street Experience at night and you're told it may not to have any people in it. When you get to the site, it looks like Times Square—people walking all over the place. In the past, you'd have hours of post production time (that you didn't budget for) cloning all those people out of the final image. With Photoshop CS3 Extended, you can use a tripod and shoot several images of the scene, including the people walking through the shots and with one click, this feature will automatically remove all the people.

STEP ONE: For the photos in this demonstration, the camera was placed at a low level on a tripod. Multiple frames were shot of the street at an exposure of 1/5 sec at f/2.5 with the camera set to 400 ISO. Steady streams of people were walking by and that resulted in soft, blurry silhouettes of figures because of the 1/5-second exposures. The white balance, focus, and manual exposure were locked to assure a consistent set of images. The original goal was to remove all the people but the technique can do much more.



STEP TWO: There are six images in the folder, all with different people in different positions. A bit of sharpening and noise reduction was applied to the retire group. After the enhancements were complete, they were saved to the folder where you found them. Enough preliminaries; starting now you can explore how Statistics works:

STEP THREE: In the File menu select Scripts>Statistics to open the Image Statistics dialog. Pick Folder from the Use menu to provide the source on which this script will compute the statistics operation and then browse to the folder that you want to use. At the bottom of the Statistics dialog, check the Attempt to Automatically Align Source Images to help register the slight misaligned camera movement between the frames, if there is any.

STEP FOUR: Clever, no? What this really means is that Photoshop will gather all the images up as a Stacked Smart Object. The process has Stack Modes that are kind of like Blend Modes in the Layers panel and it lets you pick a Stack Mode to allow the underlying pixels to blend together in different ways.

Select Maximum from the Choose Stack Mode menu; this makes the script look for anything that's different between all of the stacked images and automatically remove the variances. Now click OK to close the dialog and run the script so Photoshop can create a Smart Object Stack in the Layers panel.

STEP FIVE: Just wait . . . and voilà! All that's left in the image is anything that isn't moving; in this example, the empty street. When the process is complete, choose Flatten Image in the Layers panel's fly out menu, which combines all the files into one.



The Unadjusted Image created using statistics/maximum

The automatically created image may require minimal manual cloning or copying (note the slight ghosts in the background), depending upon the nature and quality of the originals. After you make any of these adjustments that are necessary you can further refine your now fl attended effort by going to Image>Adjustments>Hue and Saturation and adjusting the color balance. Note the signifi cant difference between the colors in the original six photos and the fi nal, shown above.

For an architectural photographer, this must be the most magical process to come along since the Clone Stamp tool. For landscape photographers who have people walking around in the foreground of their shots, this is a quick way to remove all of the distractions in one click. You can remove passing automobiles from scenes when shooting objects beyond them. The potential here is great. Feel free to experiment. Using your own camera and photos try the technique. It will amaze your friends and baffl e your relatives.



The Unadjusted Image created using statistics/minimum

OPTIONAL STEP: Experiment with the other stack modes. For example, rerun the script but use Minimum to see what it does. You will fi nd that it has the opposite effect, making a more interesting photo. It combined all the people together as if there was a bigger crowd. See the mimimum example (above) and compare it with the maximum version on the previous page.

Be aware that when you use the minimum setting you may have to adjust levels and colors to obtain a proper view as the combined photos tend to become a bit darker. The sample above is the native file without correction.

This operation creates a new file; it does not alter the originals. Save its creation with a new name. Then you must flatten the image before any further adjustments can be done.

Experiment further with the various settings; there are eleven of them and becoming familiar with what each does may provide you with a whole new way of creating interesting visuals. Just be sure to always select the "Attempt to Automatically Align Source Images" before you perform the script.

Once you have flattened the image it can be further enhanced and corrected using all other normal tools including the creation of new layers, masks, hue and saturation and any other tools at your disposal as for any other photograph.

Check out the other photo sets in the folder for this project. Try your skill at other pesky unwanted subjects disappear . . . and you will know something about one of PhotoShops unheard features that few of your fellow graphics people even know exists.