

Shawn's Fourth Tuesday February 23, 2010

Borders, Edges and Frames

We would never think of just tacking our printed images, directly onto the wall. We'd at the least, use a white mat and black metal frame. If we were to go farther, we'd match the colors in our print to a mat color or colors. We might have one, two or three mats at varying widths and even choose a frame by color and/or finish as well. Should we do any less for the images we project? What about images we place into the newly available photo books? Do they not also deserve that finishing touch that a frame provides?

Using a program like Photoshop, we can add that mat border and frame. The advantage of Photoshop is that we can go even farther and add simple to advanced borders and design/provide some simple to really advanced edges.

Borders

Boarders can be added easily using the Canvas Size command. Once your image is finished, to add a Border, select Image > Canvas Size. Make sure that the center square is selected (to ensure that the frame is added evenly around the image) add a Width and a Height remembering that adding 4" will be split and add 2" above and 2" below the image, or 2" to the left and right. (you may find it easier to work in pixels rather than parts of an inch... change 'inches' to 'pixels') On Canvas extension color, select black, white or gray or 'other' and select your favorite color from the color picker or move your cursor over your image and the picker turns into an eyedropper and you can then select a color from the image for the border. Repeat as necessary. Remember too that a 100 pixel border may work well on an 11x14 but not so well on a reduced size image for projection.

You can use the Stroke command, but to do so, you need to increase the Canvas Size using White to give a blank canvas area for the Stroke (unless you use it internally and cover part of your image.)

Edges

Edges are almost opposite of Borders in that you usually eat away at the image to give it a rough, torn or tattered edge finish. There are a number of Photoshop Plug-Ins that will do Edges for you.

A great/free plug-in that I've been playing with is by Filter Forge. The URL (web address) is:

<http://www.filterforge.com/download/>

Filter Forge Freepack 3 – Frames

A set of seven filters that create frames for your photos. Apply a realistic painted wooden frame or a vignette, give your photos a classic elegant feel or a ragged harsh look, and more.

Here's an easy way to do your own Edges:

Flatten your image, increase canvas size Image > Canvas Size make sure the area is centered and add an appropriate border size for your image size. Remember, a 6" input will be split to 3" on each side (or top/bottom). Select White and OK. Drag the Background to the Copy Machine and turn the eye off for the Background. To better see the results of creating Edges, you should add a Color Background. Go to Layer > New Fill Color > Solid Layer and select White for now. Drag the new Fill Layer below the Background Copy. Later, you can change the color, double click on the Fill layer's left icon and you can then use the eye dropper tool to select a color from the image if you'd like.

Select the Background Copy and use the Magic Wand tool with a Tolerance of 10, to select the white border. Once Selected, do a Command I (ctrl I on a PC) to invert the selection and click the Add Layer Mask Icon in the Layer Panel Tray. Making sure that the Layer Mask is still selected, select the Brush Tool and a Dry Chalk or Soft Pastel brush. (rough edged brushes work better for the various edge treatments) Set the size of the Brush and click the upper left corner of the image. Move the Brush to the upper right and Shift Click to have the Brush draw a line from upper left to upper right. Move the Brush to the lower right and Shift Click. Move the Brush to the lower left and Shift Click. Move the brush to the upper left and Shift Click again to complete the Edge. (You can do the edge yourself by drawing freehand with the brush. You can select any number of brushes , do multiple passes or make your own brush to do the job.)

Adding a Drop Shadow -Click on the Icon of the Background Image and then select the f/x icon from the bottom of the Layer Pallet box. Select Drop Shadow and adjust the Drop Shadow to your liking.

Frames

The Filter Forge free plug-in mentioned above, includes a few frames that you can play with. The following text allows you to create what looks like a 'normal' frame with as many layers of color matting as you'd like. It also uses Drop Shadows to fake depth as one mat is placed on top of the next.

Open the image to be matted. Finish all 'work' and Layer > Flatten the image.

1. Isolate the image that will get an inner shadow.

-Select the Background image in the Layers Palette.

-Press Command - A (PC Ctrl - A) to select entire image.

-Press Shift - Command - J (PC Shift -ctrl-J) to cut the photo off the background and put it onto its own layer. (Layer-1)

2. To make the matt:

-Make sure that Background is selected.

-Image > Canvas size - 0.1 inch H & V Relative (centered)- Color > White - OK

This puts a 0.05" white strip all around the image which, with a colored matt section will look like the cut edge of the colored matt.

-Image > Canvas size -H-2 inches V-2 inches -Color > Other and select a light color of your choice. You can use the color picker to select a color in the image BUT this technique relies on a lighter color on the inner mats to look right. (the Drop Shadow we will add later shows up better if there is a lighter mat to put it on)

3. Isolate the image that will get an inner shadow:

-Select the Background image in the Layers Palette.

-Press Command - A (PC Ctrl - A) to select entire image.

-Press Shift - Command - J (PC Shift -ctrl-J) to cut the photo off the background and put it onto its own layer (Layer 2).

4. To make the next matt:

-Make sure that Background is selected.

-Image > Canvas size - 0.1 inch H & V Relative (centered)-white -OK

The above will put a 0.05" white strip all around the image which, with a colored matt section will look like the cut edge of the colored matt.

-Image > Canvas size -H-4 inches V-6 inches (here, the 6 is used to give an optically centered mat. If you plan to make a third or fourth mat, keep the H and V numbers the same until the final outside mat.) -Color - other and select a light color of your choice. You can use the color picker to select a color in the image BUT this technique relies on a lighter color on the inner mats to look right. (on the final outer mat, you can use a darker image as there will be no drop shadow)

5. Inner shadow:

-Select Layer2

-Click the f/x icon in the lower tray of the Layers palette to pull up the Add a Layer Style menu.

-Select Inner Shadow

-Select Global Light -Set Blend to Multiply -Color to Black -Opacity about 75% -Angle 125 deg. -Distance 20 -Choke 0 -size 10 > OK

6. Inner Shadow on the inner matt (Layer1)

- Select Layer1
- Click the f/x icon in the lower tray of the Layers palette to pull up the Add a Layer Style menu.
- Select Inner Shadow
- Select Global Light -Set Blend to Multiply -Color to Black -Opacity about 75% -Angle 125 deg. -Distance 20 -Choke 0 -size 10
- choke 0 -size 10 > OK

7. To make the matt 'optically centered'

- make sure View > Rulers is checked on -make sure the background is selected
- Select the crop tool
- Click at the bottom right corner and drag up to the top left, stop 1 inch short of the top of the top matt, check the ruler.

-Click the check box and you now have a 2 inch border all around except the bottom at 3 inches. You can vary the Frame size for your image by substituting larger or smaller numbers for the mat board, remembering that to get 2" on a side, you must enter 4" as the 4" is split between the two sides. If you want the frame 'optically centered', the final mat layer needs to have the Vertical layer larger on the bottom, but to do the bottom, you do both and cut the top down see #4 at H=4 and V=6, then later cropped 1 off the top.

8. You can repeat Steps 3 and 4 as many times as you'd like for as many mat layers as you'd like. You will also have to do #5 on each Layer 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. for each one that you do.