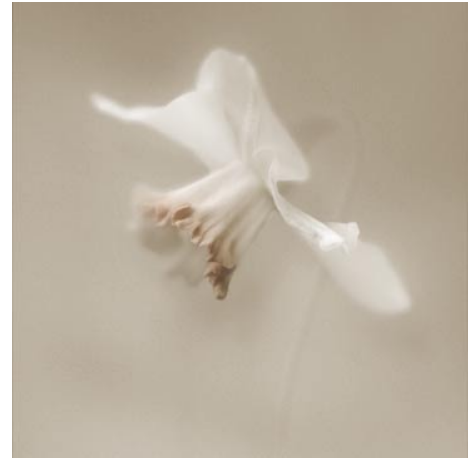


Adobe Photoshop

Creating Something from Nothing - by Julieanne Kost

Unfortunately, you don't always have the luxury of beginning a project or image with a beautiful original image. Although it is more difficult to make a striking image out of a boring, crummy original, it is possible. This tip and technique will demonstrate one way to start with the ordinary and finish with the extraordinary.



Open the original file. This image began with a photograph taken in my back yard. As you can see, it's composition, lighting and character are all lacking. In fact, before Photoshop, I would have filed this one in the round receptacle otherwise known as the trash can! Now, however, with the help of a few tools, I can transform this original photograph into a an amazing image.



Changing the background into a layer. In order to change the Background into a layer, select Layer > New > Layer From Background or, in the Layers palette, simply double click on the *Background*. In the New Layer dialog box, it's best to get in the habit of naming the layers. Click OK. *Note: changing a Background into a layer allows for additional editing options such as changing opacity and blend modes, adding masks and creating transparency. In addition, I have found that changing the Background into a layer increases the speed of the transformation commands.*



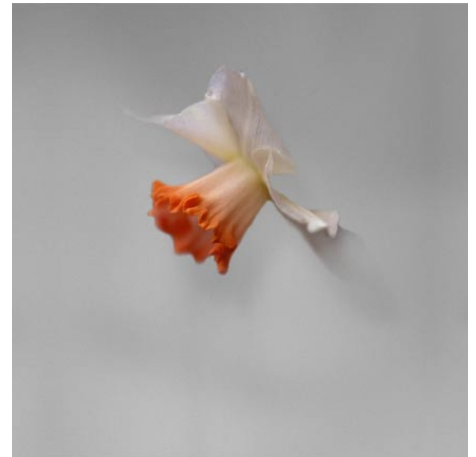
Scaling and repositioning a layer. In order to scale, rotate and move the object all at once, select Image > Free Transform. Position the cursor over one of the corner anchor points displays the straight double headed arrow. Click and drag on these anchor points to scale the flower smaller. *Note: holding the shift key constrains the original image's proportions, avoiding any distortion.* Moving the cursor outside of the Free Transform bounding box displays the bent double headed arrow. Clicking and dragging with this icon will rotate the flower. To reposition the flower, position the cursor inside of the transformation boundaries and drag.



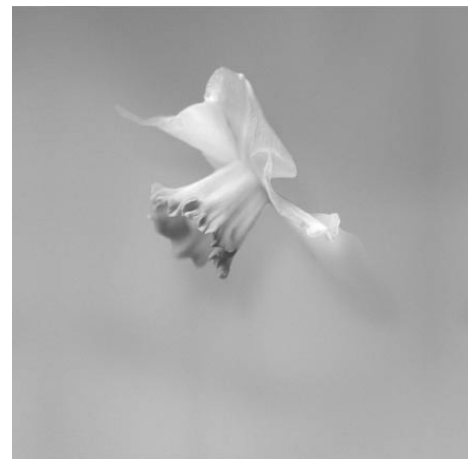
Removing the background. In order to isolate the flower from the background in the most flexible manner possible, select Layer > Add layer Mask > Reveal All or, on the Layers palette, simply click the Layer Mask icon. To hide the dark background behind the flower, with the paintbrush selected and the foreground color set to black, paint in the mask to hide the background. If, while painting with black, too much of the background is hidden, swap the foreground and background color and paint with white to reveal more of the flower.



Adding a background. In order to make this image more interesting, I created a background texture in a new layer. To add the layer, Select layer > New > Layer or, in the Layers palette, simply click on the New Layer icon. I created a radial gradient that transitions from light gray to a deeper gray. To create depth and simulate a soft shadow, I added some lighter and darker brush strokes to the background texture with a large brush set to a low opacity. Finally, I selected Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur to make the paintbrush strokes blend together a bit more and then Filter > Noise > Add Noise (set to monochrome) to add some tooth to the background.



Converting the image to Grayscale. In order to create an image that appears grayscale yet is still actually in RGB mode, select Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Channel Mixer and click OK. In the Channel Mixer dialog box, select a channel from the Output Channel, and check the Monochrome option. Using the sliders, adjust the amount of each of the red, green and blue channels that make up the grayscale image. When satisfied with the conversion, click OK. By adding more of one channel than another, the tonal values of the flower were manipulated until the flower began to glow.



Creating depth of field. In order to add a bit more depth of field to this image, make a copy of the flower layer, by selecting Layer > New > Layer Via Copy or, in the Layers palette, by dragging the flower layer to the New Layer icon. Select Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur and enter a radius to blur the copy of the flower. To isolate the blur to the outer areas of the flower, select Layer > Add layer Mask > Reveal All or, in the Layers palette, simply click the Layer Mask icon. To hide the blurred flower copy in the center area of the image and reveal the sharp area on the layer below, with the paintbrush selected and the foreground color set to black, paint in the mask. If, while painting with black, too much of the blurred copy is hidden, swap the foreground and background color and paint with white.



Adding more of a glow. In order to add more of a glowing effect on both of the flower layers, on the Layers palette, create a new layer by clicking on the new layer icon. Make the flower and blurred flowered the only visible layers and while holding the Option/Mac, Alt/PC, select Merge Visible from the Layers palette pop down menu. This creates a “merged” duplicate of the file on the new layer . On the Tool palette, set the foreground and background colors to their defaults by clicking the small swatches to the lower right of the swatches. Select Filter > Distort > Diffuse Glow and use the sliders to create the glowing effect. If the effect is too strong or doesn’t need to cover the entire flower, lower the opacity of the layer and/or add a layer mask to hide the effect.



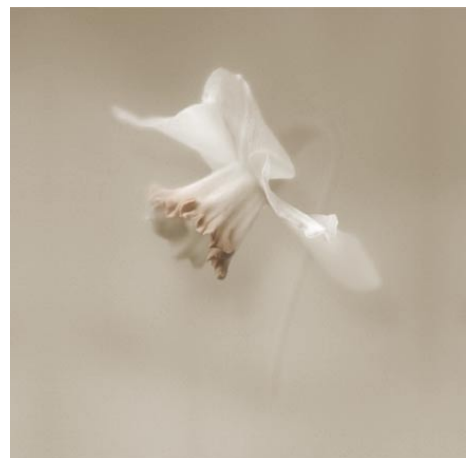
Colorizing the image. To convert the image to a single sepia toned hue, select Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Hue/Saturation and click OK. In the Hue/Saturation dialog box, click the Colorize Option and use the Hue slider to select the color. When satisfied with the colorization, click OK.



Adding color. In order to reveal some of the original color in the pedals of the flower, on the Layers palette, target the colored flower layer. Duplicate the layer by dragging it down to the new layer icon. Reposition the copy of the flower to the top of the layer stack and change the blend mode to Color. To decrease the amount of original color used, lower the opacity of the layer and/or add a layer mask to hide the effect.



Creating the stem. To create the missing stem for the flower, select the Pen tool from the tool palette. From the Options bar, select the path icon and draw a path in the shape of the stem. On the Layers palette, click the New Layer icon to create a new layer. On the Paths palette, convert the path into a selection by selecting Make Path from the drop down menu. Using the paintbrush set to a low opacity, paint with black to draw the shadow side of the stem. Then, paint with white to create the highlight area. At the bottom of the stem, add a layer mask and use the Gradient tool to create a short blend from black to white to gently fade out the bottom of the stem.



Age the photo. In order to create a softer, less detailed image, a bit of noise can be added. To add the noise to all of the layers at the same time, create a flattened copy by clicking, in the Layers palette, the New Layer icon. While holding the Option/Mac, Alt/PC key, select Layer > Merge Layers to create a flattened version. Select Filter > Noise > Add Noise and check the Monochrome option.

