Add Creative Effects To Your Photos

Learn how to apply different artistic filters to your photographs, and modify their properties to produce unique looks

Thanks to Photoshop's filters you can stylize the colors and tones in an image to produce a wide range of creative looks, from pencil sketches to oil paintings . To help you find suitable creative effects, the Filter menu groups filters in folders such as "Artistic" and "Brush Strokes." When choosing any filter, you'll launch the "Filter Gallery."
This window gives you preview thumbnails of how the filtered image might look, as well as providing editable attributes that will change the results produced by the chosen filter.

This tutorial will introduce you to the key features of the Filter Gallery and showcase the effects they create. Filters can dramatically alter an image's appearance, so it makes sense to use the Convert for Smart Filters command that we looked at in the introduction to this chapter. You can then experiment with different filters and fine-tune their effects more easily.

Accented Edges
Adds a light or dark edge around contrasting areas to produce a hand-drawn effect.

Angled Strokes
Use the Direction Balance slider to paint strokes in one direction or produce a cross-hatch effect.

Bas Relief
Create a metallic embossed effect by changing the drop-down menu's Light direction.

Chalk & Charcoal
Adjust the balance between Chalk and Charcoal to create a scratchy mixed-media effect.

Charcoal
Vary stroke thickness and use light and dark balance sliders to create a charcoal effect.

Chrome
Produce etched tin-foil style effects with this simple two-slider filter.
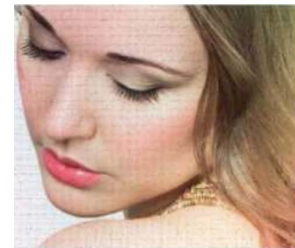
Colored Pencil
Bash out a hand-drawn pencil sketch in a few seconds with this filter.

Conte Crayon
This more complex filter enables you to add textured paper effects to the mix.

Craquelure
Adds eroded canvas artefacts to enhance your filtered photo paintings.

Crosshatch
Creates overlapping diagonal strokes of varying lengths, sharpness and intensity.

Cutout
Recreates the stencilled look produced by the screen-printing process.

Dark Strokes
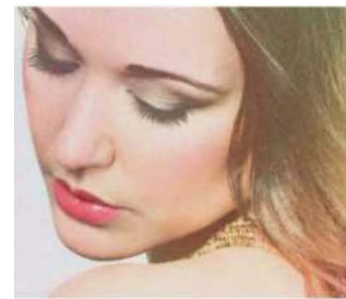Create clipped and stylised dark shadows with this moody and striking filter.

Diffuse Glow

This portrait-enhancing filter flatters complexion and creates a high-key look.

Dry Brush

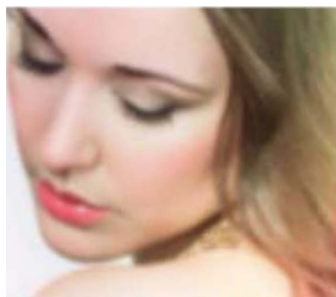Quickly add scratchy paint strokes that echo a traditional painting technique.

Film Grain

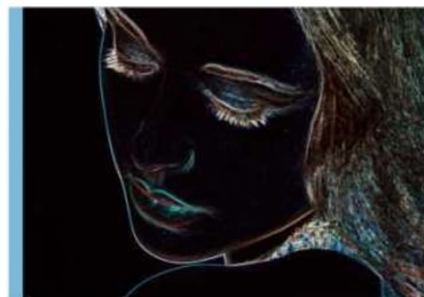Use this filter's sliders to add grain to shadows, highlights or a mix of both.

Fresco

Mimics the effect of painting directly onto a textured wall with editable properties.

Glass

This fun filter enables you to distort your image through a range of glassy surfaces.

Glowing Edges

This filter adds a glow similar to that produced by a neon light to contrasting features.

Grain

Add different grain types to your images, such as horizontal, clumped or contrasty.

Graphic Pen

Creates contrasting areas by adding pen strokes that are densely clustered or wide apart.

Halftone Pattern

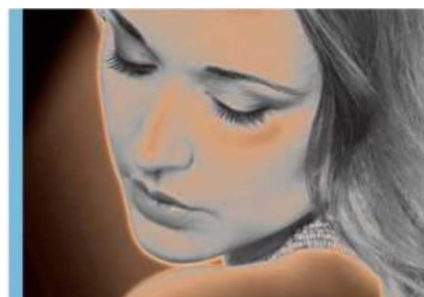Mimics the pop-art look produced by the comic and newspaper printing process.

Ink Outlines

Outlines contrasting forms using three sliders to change the stroke length.

Mosaic Tiles

Builds up a version of your image by overlaying a collection of resizeable interlocking tiles.

Neon Glow

Provides a colour picker so you can add specific glow colours to a photo.

Note Paper
This filter adds raised edges and grain to a greyscale version of the source image.

Ocean Ripple
Like its Glass filter cousin, this distorting filter breaks up the image using patterns.
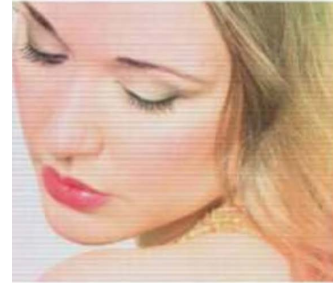
Paint Daubs
Creates a hand-painted effect. Works well in conjunction with other filters.

Palette Knife
Mimics the effect of applying rough smears of paint with a knife instead of a brush.

Patchwork
Creates the illusion that the image is built up of thousands of raised square tiles.

Photocopy
Mimics the effects created by copying a colour image using a mono photocopier.

Plaster
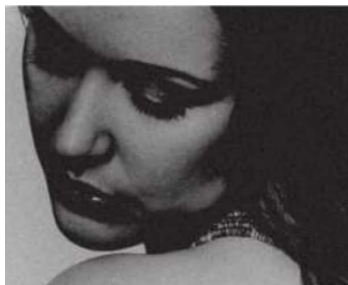Sliders enable you to make the key details in the image rise up above a smooth surface.

Plastic Wrap
This bizarre filter adds specular highlights to the image to mimic plastic wrap.

Poster Edges
Creates a posterised look by simplifying the palette. A popular look in the 1990s.
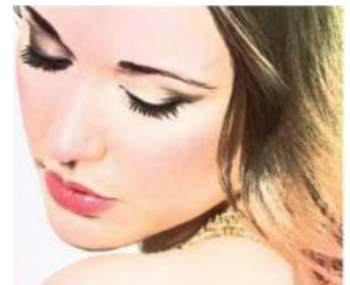
Reticulation
Converts your image to a high-contrast monochrome, and adds grain.

Rough Pastels
Gives an image the look of a pastel drawing, with many editable attributes.

Smudge Stick
Makes a simpler and perhaps less successful pastel effect than Rough Pastels.

Spatter
This converts the pixels of an image into airbrush-style specks of paint.

Sponge
This one simplifies an image and overlays an editable texture onto it.

Sprayed Strokes
Creates a very rough 'painted' rendition of an image. Probably one to avoid.

Stained Glass
This filter might be more useful for mimicking a mosaic rather than stained glass.

Stamp
Produces an effective monochromatic lithograph-style print by tweaking two sliders.

Sumi-e
Produces a simplified and stylised look similar to the one made by the Dark Strokes filter.

Texturizer
Combine this useful filter with a host of others to add a canvas-style texture.

Torn Edges
Another way to create a simplified high-contrast black-and-white version of the source image.

Underpainting
Creates a painterly image with added texture, with controls similar to the Texturizer filter.

Waterpaper
Weaves a paper fibre texture into a filtered image's simplified colours and tones.

Watercolor
A popular filter that reproduces the watercolour effect. Best used alongside other filters.

Oil Paint
Creates a very convincing oil-paint effect. Not part of the Filter Gallery.