Using Layers and Textures in Photoshop

A One Day Workshop with Viveca Koh FRPS

The aim of this course is to gain a clearer understanding of working with Photoshop layers, layer masks and blending modes, and to introduce you to working with textures as separate layers on top of your photographs, in order to create enhanced and creative images. Viveca will be going into detail about the sort of processing techniques that she has used on her own photographs, as described in the talks that she presents.

'Postcard From the Edge' © Viveca Koh FRPS

By the end of the course
you should feel confident about working with multiple-layered photographs in Photoshop, specifically adjustment layers and layer masks, and understand how blending modes affect your images. You will learn how to create your own brushes, and how to use these to make further textures and borders to use on your images. You will also learn the technique of 'cloning' or multiplicity, where many versions of the same person appear in one photograph. You will be given an illustrated workbook into which you can make your own notes, to serve as an *aide memoir* of the day.

Course outline
- Examples of textures (presentation)
- Where to find textures online
- Photographing and sourcing one's own textures
- Using layers
- Adjustment layers
- Blending modes
- Using layer masks
- Making your own brushes
- Creating borders with custom paint brushes
- Multiplicity technique (practical)

The emphasis of the course is very much on practising techniques as they are being discussed, working steadily through one element at a time and gradually building on knowledge learned. The pace is relaxed with plenty of opportunities to try out new techniques.

Who the course is suitable for
If you have ever wondered about how to use layers effectively in Photoshop, but so far found it a bit of a mystery, then this course is for you! A basic working knowledge of Photoshop is recommended, although extensive knowledge is absolutely not required.

Your participation
You are encouraged to bring along some of your own photographs onto which you would like to try applying textures, and also any textures you may already have, but Viveca will have both to hand for you to use in case you are unable to bring your own. There will be an opportunity to spend a short time photographing textures following the presentation, dependent on the weather and the venue.

Please bring

- a computer/laptop with preferably Photoshop (CS3 upwards) installed, but users of Photoshop Elements are also very welcome* (please see FAQs)
- some of your own photographs on your laptop or a memory stick/disc that you would like to try texturising, and also any of your own textures if you have them
- your camera and a tripod for the multiplicity part of the workshop
- a cable/remote shutter release if you have one
- a card reader/cable to transfer your photographs from your camera's memory card onto your computer/laptop
- a packed lunch (or use local facilities if available)
- a pen and notebook, although you can make notes on your workbook if preferred

An example of the multiplicity technique that you will learn and create for yourself on the day

© 'Madness, They Call It Madness' shot by and featuring workshop participant Donald Ogg

Testimonials

"A thoroughly enjoyable day and one I would recommend to anyone starting out in Photoshop, or to those who want to understand the principle of layers etc in order to express themselves with their own artistic style." - Neil

"Top class presentation, clear and easy to follow!!" - Robbo

"Excellent - great interaction and proactivity - being able to directly participate and follow the workshop on my laptop really enhanced the experience" - Lisa

"Super day. Really informative and enjoyed the practicality of the day. Thoroughly recommend." - Adrian

"Thank you for your assistance and patience. A most informative day, have learned a great deal." – Andrew

"Thanks for all the hints and tips today, you were patience personified!" - Donald

"All work covered very inspirational - now keen to try out new creative ideas." - Katherine

Image featuring cracked paint texture

'Treasures of the Chateau' © Viveca Koh FRPS

Further information
Viveca will supply a printed and bound workbook for every participant, copyright-free photographs and textures and name badges. You are asked to supply a suitable venue with a digital projector and screen (the room will need to be darkened for the presentation), tables and chairs for up to ten participants and Viveca, adequate power supply for all and tea/coffee making facilities. There is no minimum number of participants but a maximum of ten, as Viveca likes to ensure that she is able to give one-to-one assistance wherever needed. The suggested hours are 10am - 4.30/5pm with one hour for lunch. A workshop can take place on most days of the week including weekends.

Cost
£500 for the day plus Viveca's mileage (45p per mile) to and from your venue. If this is more than 60 miles from Addlestone, Surrey an overnight stay before the workshop is requested. You may also need to factor in any costs for hiring your venue.

To book
Please contact Viveca on viveca.koh@gmail.com or 07956 517 524

FAQs

Q: How much will the day cost me as an individual?
A: This will depend on the exact number of workshop participants. Ten is recommended as a maximum which would equal £50 each, plus Viveca's mileage (at 45p per mile from Addlestone, Surrey) to and from your venue plus any overheads for venue hire, divided equally amongst delegates. If there are less than 10 participants the cost to the individual will increase slightly.

Q: I have never worked with Photoshop or Elements before, is this a suitable workshop for me?
A: No, you do need to have used the software before. The ability to create new documents, select tools, use menus and generally move around the programme is assumed.

Q: I'm a beginner in Photoshop/Elements, will I be able to keep up?
A: Yes, the pace is relaxed and there is plenty of time to try out each section of the course as it arises. Viveca gives 1:1 help wherever it is needed and positively encourages questions, which usually benefit the entire group.

Q: I've already worked with layers and blend modes in Photoshop/Elements, and it turned out well. Will I learn something new on this course?
A: Probably not. This course is aimed at people who have not yet experimented with layers and blending modes, or those who have tried before but got stuck and need some extra assistance.

Q: I don't have a laptop, can I still participate in the course?
A: Yes, previous delegates have brought along desktop computers – if you can get it to the venue, you're good to go!

Q: I use Elements, will I still be able to do everything covered on the workshop?
A: *You will, but some of the steps will be different, and what is printed in the workbook is based on Photoshop. It might be worth considering a subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud for under £10 a month, which provides the full version of Photoshop that is constantly updated.

Q: What do I need to bring with me?
A: Please see the list above on the second page.

Q: Will I need to write lots of notes?
A: Hopefully not. The supplied illustrated workbook covers all the techniques in detail, and it is yours to keep after the workshop. The emphasis will be on experimenting with the techniques during the day, not writing about them, but there is space to add some of your own notes in the workbook should you want to.

Q: What sort of camera do I need for the practical work?
A: A digital camera (not film) - a DSLR or a bridge are best – as long as it attaches to a tripod and contains a memory card from which you can copy images directly to your laptop/computer during the workshop. The ability to use Manual, Aperture or Shutter Priority and to lock focus and exposure will be helpful during the multiplicity part of the workshop.

Q: Do I have to bring any of my own photographs?
A: If you have some photos to which you'd like to try adding textures then please do bring them on your computer. However there will be a few stock photos available for this purpose.

Q: Do I need to bring any texture photographs?
A: Again if you have these and would like to try using your own feel free. If you don't, there will be an opportunity during the workshop to shoot some textures, and Viveca will have copyright-free textures for your use as well.

Q: Do I really need to bring a tripod, why can't I handhold the camera during the practical work?
A: The multiplicity part of the workshop requires a number of photographs to be taken from a single, un-moving viewpoint, so a tripod is the easiest way of ensuring no camera movement during this process.

Q: I don't have a tripod though – help!
A: You may be able to borrow someone else's, there will be plenty of time for the taking of photos during this part of the workshop. Viveca will also have a tripod available.

Any other questions? Please contact Viveca who will be happy to help.