

Photoshop Painting Produces Photo-like Qualities

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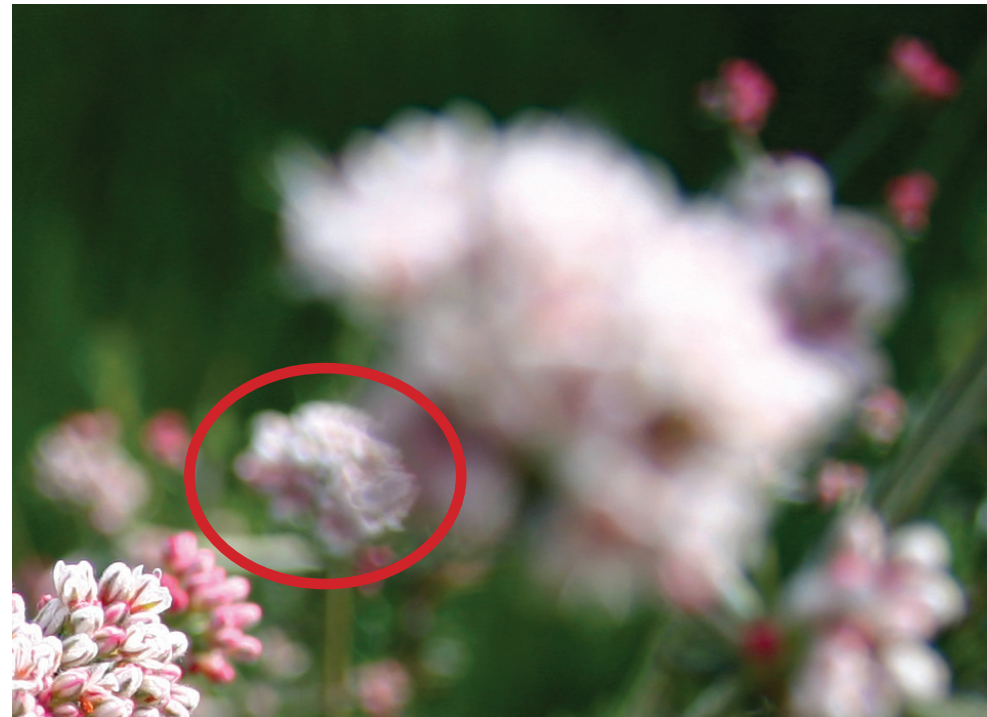
Adobe Photoshop, perhaps best known for its extraordinary photo editing capabilities, can also produce digital paintings that simulate photographic effects.

Struggling to find just the right image of an oak tree led me to begin my exploration of painting in Photoshop. I never use the eraser, but instead, lay down multiple paint strokes in the colors of my chosen palette, building up transparencies and color nuances with each click and drag of the mouse.

Photoshop's endless brush variations combine with the morphing textures created by overlaying strokes of varying colors and opacities. The resulting image mimics the soft, out-of-focus areas, such as the ones here, taken with a Canon Digital Rebel using the macro setting.

The sharp contrast between the areas in- and out-of-focus in these California wildflower images, taken on a recent hike, struck me as being remarkably similar to the effects I've achieved painting in Photoshop.

I was surprised to see how closely the textural qualities of the soft pink blossom and multicolored blades of grass resembled the textures achieved using Photoshop's paintbrush tool on the "wet edges" setting.



Notice the similarities between areas inside the ellipse between the photograph and the Photoshop painting. Any of the out-of-focus areas in this photograph can be recreated using Photoshop's wet paint setting. (California Buckweat - *Eriogonum fasciculatum*) ©2010



The red rectangles represent the two cropped and enlarged florals shown here. ©2010

Contrast

Excite the eye and attract attention with one of the oldest design tricks in the book—contrast. In these photographs, colors create contrast, but making a clear distinction between in- and out-of-focus elements adds even more contrast to draw the eye.

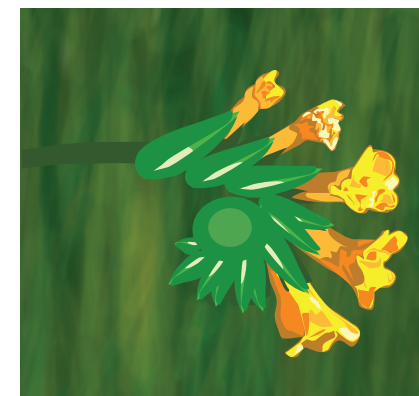
Grasses like the ones in these photos can be recreated in Photoshop using the wet edges paint brush. Additionally, contrast can be achieved by stylizing the focal point, as in the vector graphic in this Adobe Illustrator rendering of the wildflower.



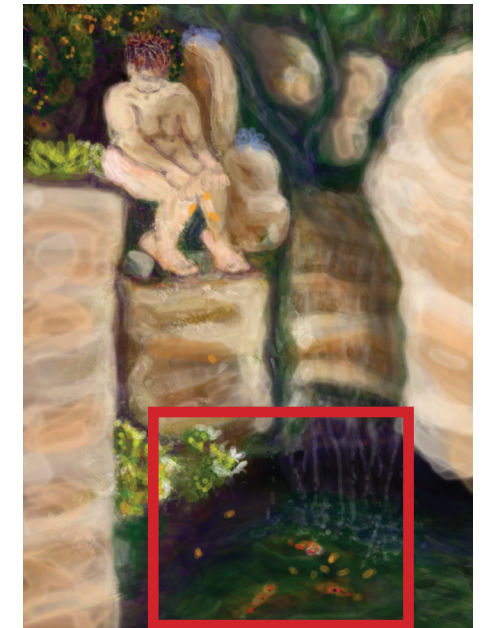
The outgrowth of wildflowers in the rocks was painted with Photoshop's paintbrush on the wet edge setting. By altering color and opacity, the resulting effects are similar to those in achieved with marco photo settings.



In this enlarged area of the wildflower photo, the blades of grass in the background bear a resemblance to the grass painted in the Fiddleneck wildflower. ©2010



The background grass was painted using Photoshop's paintbrush with wet edges. The foreground is created in Adobe Illustrator using the pen tool with a limited color palette. (Fiddleneck) ©2010



Digital Painting ©2002



The tree that start me on the digital painting path. ©2001