



essentials

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN

One hour

YOUR EXPERT

Tim
Shelbourne

KEY SKILLS
COVERED

What you'll learn

USING
BRUSHES

SELECTING
COLOURS

CREATING
A PAINTED
EFFECT

Digital painting from scratch

PART 1

You don't need to have the artistic skills of Rembrandt to paint a stunning landscape in Photoshop. Bring the dynamic brushes into play and anyone can paint this beautiful landscape

If you've always wanted to paint but have never felt that you were blessed with

enough artistic ability and talent, this Photoshop project might just be the answer. Here we're going to run through a Photoshop painting technique that requires little or no traditional painting ability, because we'll be using Photoshop's dynamic brushes which, in essence, do all the hard work for you!

Drawing our inspiration from the legendary Bob Ross (www.bobross.com), we're going to be creating a full-blown landscape with water, mountains and trees, but rather than having to draw each element, the

brushes we use will create all the required shapes and textures for amazingly realistic results!

In this first part of a two-part tutorial, we will be using brushes which are installed with Photoshop straight out of the box. Of course, for these brushes to perform as we want them to, each one will require a little modification to its dynamic properties, and we'll make these changes in the Photoshop Brushes palette.

In order to help you navigate around this palette and get a good grasp on all things brushes, we are publishing the definitive guide to Photoshop brushes in this issue on page 16 – and ideally you should

read this feature before starting on this project.

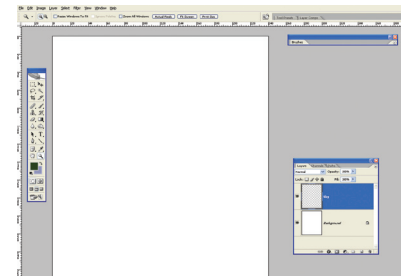
In this issue we're showing you how to paint the sky, water and stunningly realistic snow-capped mountains. Next month we'll add trees, bushes and the finishing touches which give the final polish to the painting. Remember, we're using no photographic components or references at all here, but starting with a completely blank canvas just as a traditional artist would. Quite literally painting from scratch.

So, remember to read the Definitive Brush Guide feature, then don that artist beret and dive into the wonderful world of landscape painting... the Photoshop way!

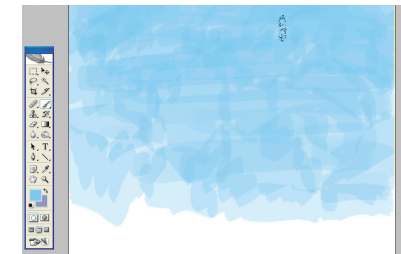


SET UP A DOCUMENT

Begin to paint



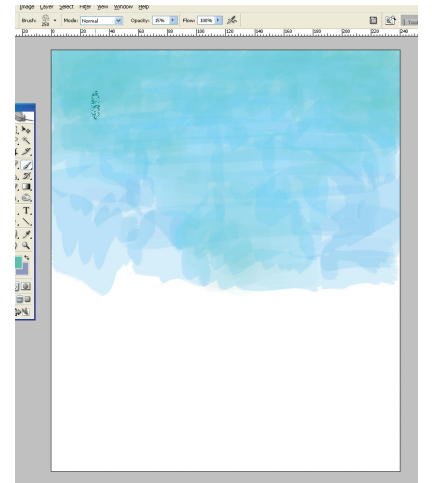
01 Create a new document First create a new document. Go to File>New. Choose Millimetres for the measurement units and enter 290 for Height, 240 for Width. Enter 300 pixels/inch for Resolution, RGB for Color Mode and White for Background Contents. Click OK to create the document. Now add a new layer, naming it 'Sky'. Click the Brush tool.



02 Choose a brush Hit F5 to display the Brushes palette. Click the arrow to display the Brushes menu and pick Thick Heavy Bristles to load them. In the brush thumbnails hit Flat Bristle. In Shape Dynamics set Minimum Diameter to 75%. Click the Foreground colour swatch and choose a light blue. In the Options bar set the opacity to 33%. Using a large brush, paint roughly over the top half of the image.

03 Paint and blur

Choose a slightly darker blue for the Foreground swatch. Reduce the opacity to 15% in the Options bar. Now paint roughly in the centre of the sky, across the top edge and over the upper corners. Next, go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Use a Blur Radius of 120 pixels and click OK. Add a new layer, naming it 'Clouds'.



Tip



Modify tone and colour

The great thing about Photoshop painting is that nothing is permanent. If you've painted onto a layer but aren't happy with the colour and tone, you can easily change it. To alter the colour of some brushwork on a layer, go to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation and adjust the Hue slider. To change the tone of painted components, go to Image>Adjustments>Levels. Adjust tones via the Shadow, Midtone or Highlight sliders below the Histogram.

Tip

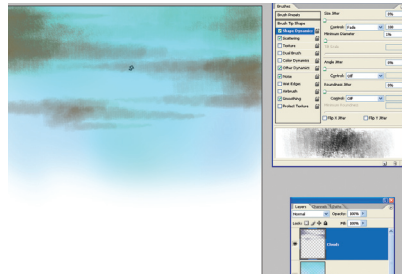


Layer, layers everywhere

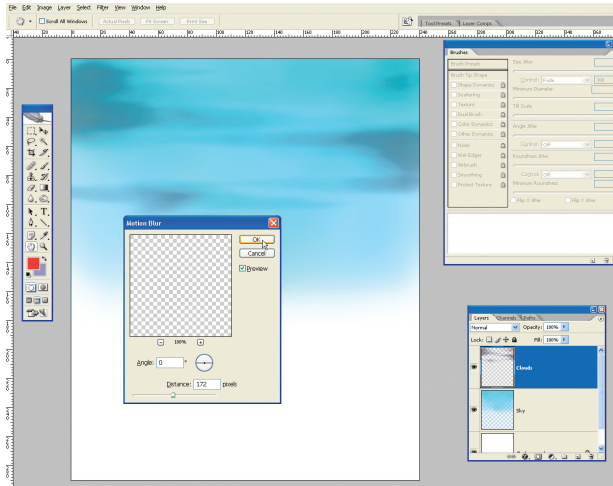
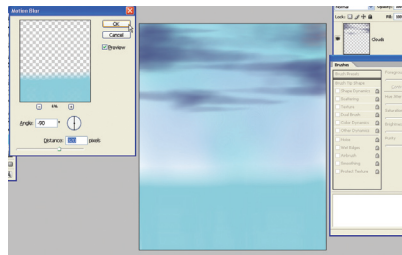
We use lots of layers here, and with good reason. By painting the components on separate layers, if you're not happy with their position, colour or tone, you can adjust them independently of the rest of the elements on other layers. You can even resize individual elements via Edit>Transform>Scale – just drag on the handles around the bounding box before hitting Return.

BUILD UP DETAIL

Filters help too

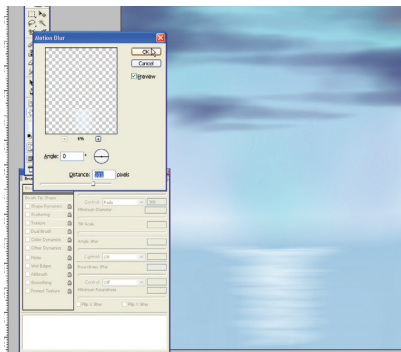
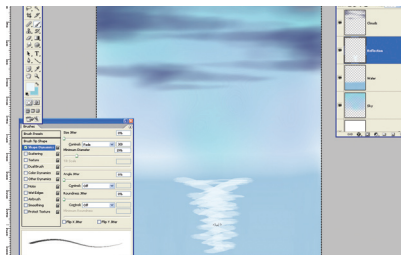


04 Paint the clouds Load the Dry Media brushes and choose Pastel Medium Tip. Select Scattering from the Brushes palette and enter 137%. Click Brush Tip Shape and set Spacing to 39%. In Other Dynamics, set Opacity Control to Fade. Choose a deep blue for the Foreground swatch. Now begin to add the horizontal clouds using numerous single clicks.

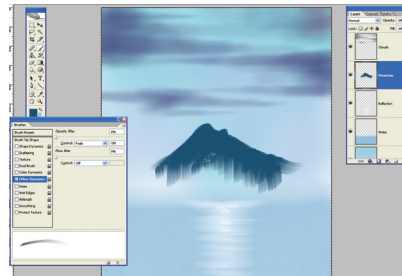


05 Rework clouds

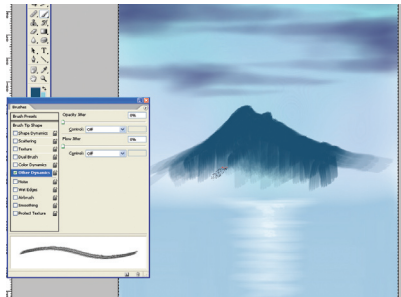
Reduce the size of the brush as you paint toward the ends of the clouds by hitting the left-facing square bracket key on the keyboard. Work over the thicker parts of the clouds repeatedly to increase the intensity. When done, go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Use a Radius of 8 pixels. Now go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. Set Distance to 172 and Angle to 0.



06 Paint the water Add a new layer, naming it 'Water'. Choose the Flat Bristle brush again and reduce its roundness to 60%. Set the brush's opacity to 60%. Use the brush at a large size (approx 500 pixels) and paint horizontally across the lower half of the image. Leave a few white gaps between strokes. Go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. Use an Angle of -90 and Distance of 320.



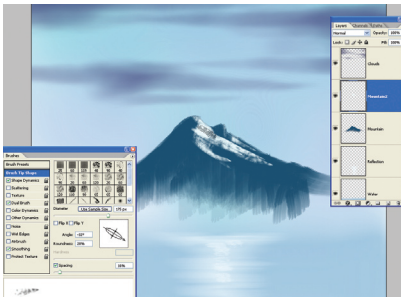
07 Add some reflection In the Brushes palette, choose Shape Dynamics and set Size Jitter Control to Fade. Enter 300 in the Jitter value box. Set Minimum Diameter to 20%. Pick a very light blue for the Foreground swatch and set opacity to 58%. Create a new layer called 'Reflection'. Paint overlapping criss-cross strokes down the central area of the water. Taper the width of these toward the bottom of the image.



09 The mountain top Reduce the roundness of the brush to 0% in Brush Tip Shape. Set Angle to 30 degrees. Turn off Shape Dynamics. In Other Dynamics, set Opacity Control to Fade. Enter a Fade value of 150. Create a new layer called 'Mountain'. Using a large Flat Bristle brush, paint the mountain top. You may have to paint over it a few times to make it fully opaque.

10 Start to fade The brush is set up so that when you draw the downward slopes of the mountain the brushstroke will fade out to completely transparent. Now, with downward strokes fill in the mountain shape. At the bottom of the mountain reduce the opacity to 14% and add some final downward strokes.

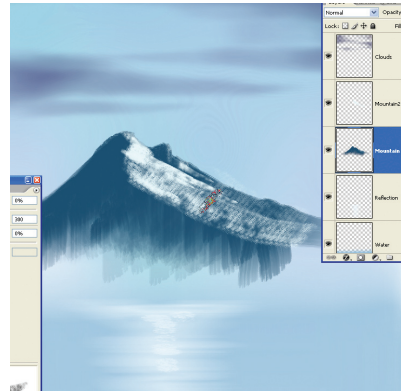
08 Blur and highlight Now blur this reflection via Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. Set Angle to -90 degrees and Distance to 120. Once blurred, add a few small highlights to the centre of the reflection with the brush.



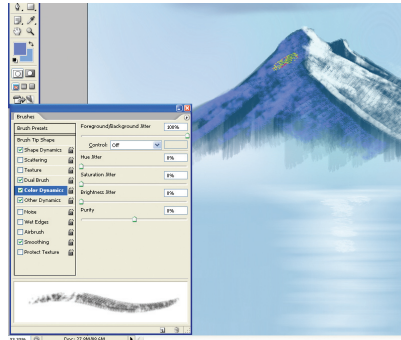
11 First snow Add a new layer ('Mountain 2'). From the Brushes palette menu, load the Faux Finish brush set. Choose the Sea Sponge 2 Light brush from the thumbnails. Set Angle to -32, Roundness to 28%. Choose white for your Foreground colour. Now paint the snow down the right-hand side of the mountain.

MAKE A MOUNTAIN OUT OF A BRUSH HILL

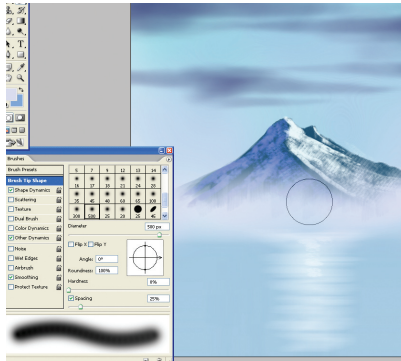
Your snow-capped vista



12 More snow cover Reduce the opacity of the brush to 46% in the Options bar. Click on Brush Tip Shape and change the brush angle to 48 degrees and increase the size of the brush a little. Paint some more snow down the right-hand side. You can paint again over certain areas to intensify the snow there.



13 Snow in the shade Add another new layer. Set the angle of the brush to 32 degrees and the size to 175 pixels. In Color Dynamics set Foreground/Background Jitter to 100%. Choose a vivid violet blue for the Foreground swatch and a lighter blue for the Background swatch. Now drag this brush over the left side of the mountain to add shaded areas of snow.



14 Add mist Add another new layer. Load the Basic Brushes set from the Brushes palette menu. Choose a soft round brush. Reduce the opacity to 17%. Choose a very light blue/lilac for the Foreground swatch. Now brush over the base of the mountain, building up the opacity gradually by working over some areas more than others.

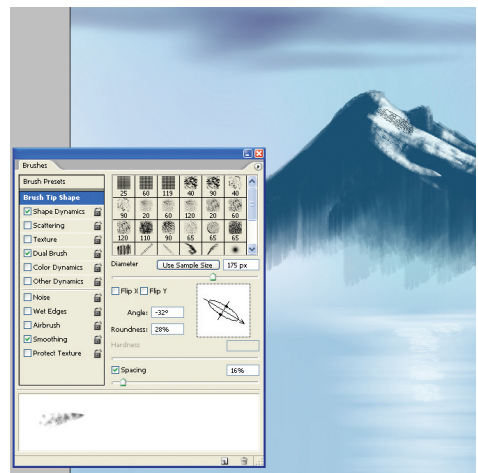
PAINTING THE MOUNTAIN

Achieve realism with brushes

At this stage of the painting, the snow-capped mountain is the centre of interest, so it's worth taking your time to paint it carefully for maximum effect. Key to this technique

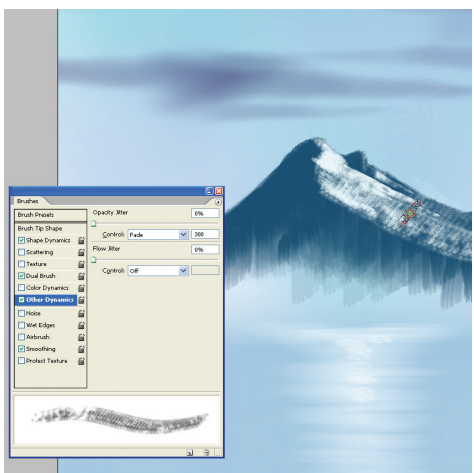
are two things – colour and how the brush lays colour down on the image. Here we're going to look at each stage of the painting process. It's important to adjust

the angle of the brush at every stage, and you are easily able to do this via the Brush Tip Shape section of the Brushes palette.



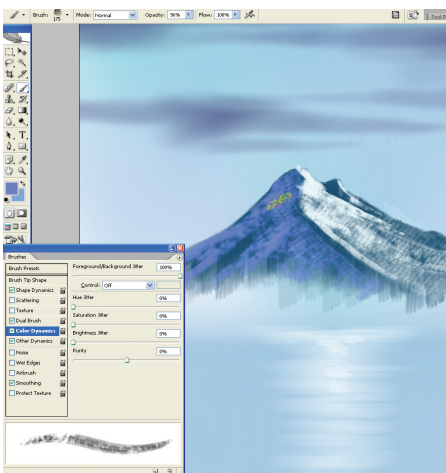
Hit and miss

The brush we're using to add the snow is ideal because it has a texture built into it so that the colour hits and misses the virtual surface of the painting, creating a convincing effect of snowfall. Begin by applying some thin, fairly opaque sharp strokes for the brightest areas of snow on the right side of the mountain.



Clean sweep

Now we've adjusted the angle and size of the brush, you can add some less opaque, more broken areas of snow. A couple of sweeps of the brush should be all you need. To make sure you paint only over the mountain itself and not the sky, it may help to Ctrl/Cmd-click the main Mountain layer to generate a selection.



Light and shade

After choosing the new snow colour for the Foreground swatch, use the brush at the new angle to add more shaded, broken snow cover down the left side of the mountain. Because this snow is painted in a darker colour than the highlighted snow on the left, it gives a convincing illusion of light and shade.



Expert Tip



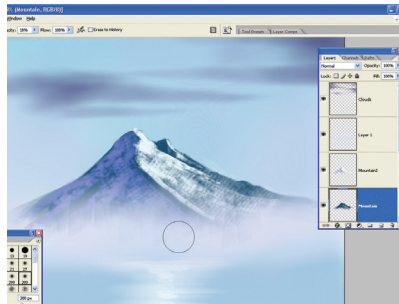
Not a mighty mouse!

You can use a mouse for painting, but a graphics tablet gives more freedom. With a tablet the brush dynamics can be controlled via pressure on the drawing stylus. Wacom makes excellent tablets (www.wacom.com) so buy one today!

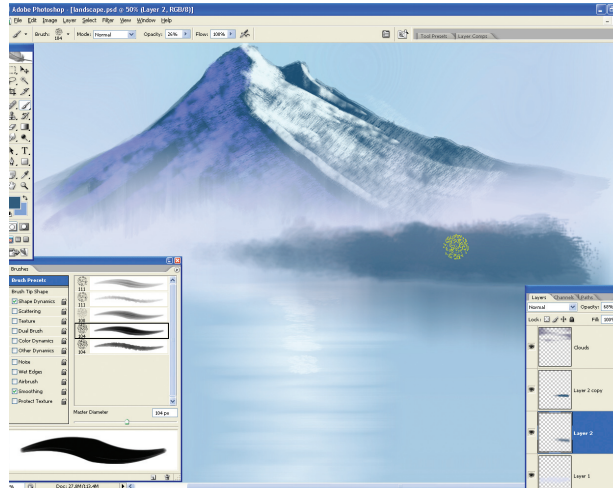


SOFTEN THE EFFECT

Work the mountain in

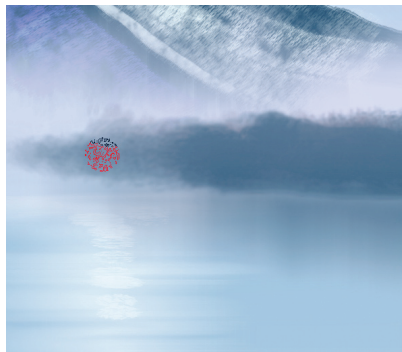


15 Erase hard edges If any hard edges at the base of the mountain are visible though the mist, return to the main Mountain layer and use the Eraser tool with a soft brush to carefully erase them. Use the Eraser at a low opacity for this. You can set the Eraser opacity in the Options bar.

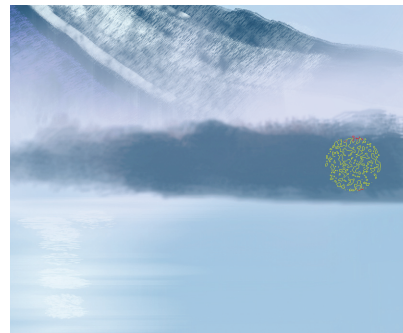


16 Distant foothills

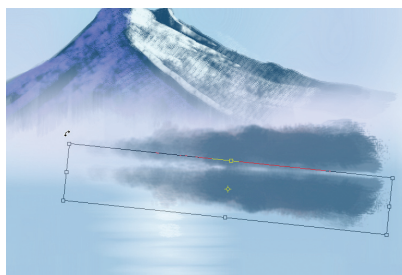
Add a new layer. From the Brushes palette, load Thick Heavy Brushes. Choose Smoother Round Bristle from the brush thumbnails. In the Options bar, set the Brush opacity to 25%, and choose a dark petrol blue for the Foreground swatch. Now, with this brush at a suitable size, begin to add the foothills from the right-hand side using single clicks.



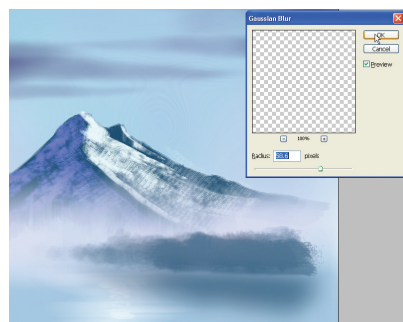
17 Create distance As you work from right to left, reduce the size of the brush with the left-facing square bracket key on the keyboard in order to create the illusion of distance and perspective.



18 Intensify with more clicks Enlarge the size of the brush again and rework over the areas nearest the right of the picture, again using single clicks. The more you work over one area, the more you'll exaggerate the foothills nearest to the viewer.



19 Duplicate and flip Duplicate this layer and go to Edit>Transform>Flip Vertical. Now go to Edit>Transform>Free Transform. Drag the reflected layer down from within the bounding box so it sits below the painted hills. Now place your cursor outside the left-hand bottom corner of the bounding box and drag the entire layer anti-clockwise a little.

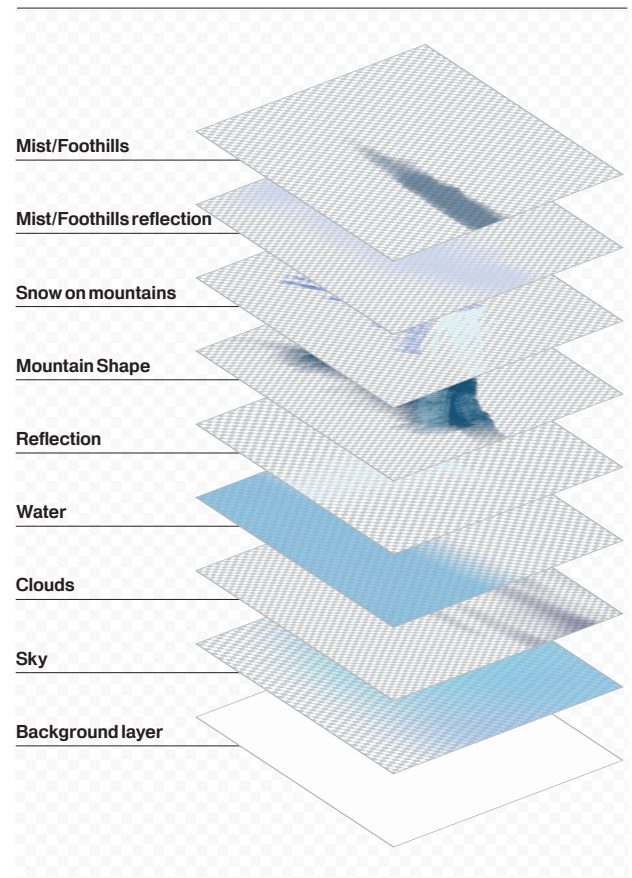


20 A little blur Blur this layer via Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Use a medium Radius value (about 58) to create the reflection effect. Now flatten the image, save as a PSD file and prepare to move on to the next stages, detailed in next month's issue!



The layer structure

Building a mountain



NEXT ISSUE | DISCOVER HOW TO PAINT TREES AND LAND USING BRUSHES!