

TECHNICAL SPOT

Members may remember that at the end of the last meeting I gave a demonstration on how to achieve the “day into night” technique which Les Forrester talked about when he visited. I have now written a short description of what I did.

The live demonstration was deliberately kept short, and my description of the technique does not attempt to go into detail. The Programme sub-Committee (Peter Robinson, Andy Best and Rod Smith) intend to feature brief “Technical Spots” on a regular basis and have a number of topics in mind. These could include:

- further demonstrations of interesting techniques shown by speakers
- demonstrations of specific techniques (eg sharpening, cropping, re-sizing)
- how to solve problems encountered by members.

Before we go much further with this it would be very helpful to have some feedback from members, including comments about whether you like the idea and suggestions for possible topics. Please speak to or email Peter, Andy or myself with your thoughts.

TURNING DAY INTO NIGHT

In his talk “The Art in Architecture” Les Forrester showed some images which had been taken in broad daylight but which looked to have been taken at night. This is how it can be done:

Step 1

Use an image which has a simple, strong division between the sky and the rest of the picture because this will make the process much easier. For example, any trees in the picture will be very difficult to deal with.



Step 2



In this case I started by making the picture black & white. I did this by creating a 'Hue and Saturation' adjustment layer, then moving the 'Saturation' slider all the way to the left.

The technique works equally well in colour, so if that's your preference then simply skip this step.

Step 3

Turning the sky black. To do this it's necessary first to select the sky in order to separate it out from the rest of the picture. I did this using the Magic Wand on the sky, plus the Polygonal Lasso to capture some stray edges. Doing this is likely to result in a white line around the edge of the selection, so from the 'Select' menu choose 'Modify' then 'Expand' and set it at 2 pixels.



In the picture above the edge of the selection is represented by the white line. When using Photoshop you will see a line of 'marching ants', but these cannot be captured by a screen grab hence my use of the white line.

Step 4

Having made the selection I created a 'levels' adjustment layer and moved the black (left-hand) slider all the way to the right. Note the selection has disappeared and been replaced by a mask on the adjustment layer.



Step 5

Change the appearance of the building, which means first making a selection of the building rather than the sky. To do this, right-click on the 'Levels' adjustment layer mask and choose 'Add mask to selection' from the drop-down menu and the sky selection will re-appear on the picture. Then from the 'Select' menu choose 'Inverse' and the selection will be reversed so that everything except the sky (ie the building) is selected. Make a new 'Levels' adjustment layer and the reversed selection will appear on the mask. Adjust the sliders to achieve the appearance you wish.



I have used Photoshop CS6 for this exercise, so this features in the screen-grabs. This process will also work in Elements, although the appearance of some parts of the screen may be different.