Seamlessly Join Multiple Scans

Use this Photoshop how-to to scan oversize items.

By Bert Monroy

Have you ever had to scan an item that's larger than your scanner? The solution is to make separate scans of the overall image, but the problem is creating a single file out of the multiple scans.

On today's show I'll show you how to scan oversize items and properly piece them together in Photoshop.

Piece by piece

When you scan an item, make sure you scan a considerable amount of overlap from one scan to the next.

1. Start with the scan that will be the basis for the overall image.

2. Increase the Canvas Size (Image > Canvas Size) to match the overall size of the original art. Make sure the element in that file is placed correctly within the file. For example, the lower left part of the image should be in the lower left of the file.

3. Using the Move tool, drag the other scans into the new, enlarged file.

4. Place the other scans (now in layers) into the appropriate position with the overlap over the image below it.

5. Place the layer in Difference mode (modes are found at the top of the Layer palette).

6. Where the two layers overlap, you'll see the difference displayed in white. Where they're the same, it'll appear black.

7. Using the Move tool and the cursor keys, nudge the layer into position until the entire overlapping area is black. This will indicate that there is no difference, and that the layers are perfectly aligned.

8. Put the layer back in Normal mode and flatten it.

Bert Monroy is a photorealist painter and Photoshop expert. You can find more information about Monroy at his website. His latest book is "Photoshop Studio With Bert Monroy," which you can purchase online.

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