

The Arts and Crafts Computer: Using Your Computer as an Artist's Tool

5-day workshop with Janet Ashford

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Class Description

With a personal computer and a color printer (plus creativity and some scissors and glue) it's easy and fun to make your own cards, gifts and custom decorations. In this 5-day class we'll use Photoshop basics to produce good-looking designs and photo images. Then we'll print, fold, trim, stitch and stick to make your choice of projects including custom greeting cards, handmade envelopes, photo booklets, window decals, refrigerator magnets, iron-on transfers for cloth, and decorated cans and boxes.

Instructor Biography

Janet Ashford is the author of seven books on computer graphics including *The Arts and Crafts Computer: Using Your Computer as an Artist's Tool* (Peachpit Press, 2002) and *Start with a Scan: A Guide to Transforming Scanned Photos and Objects into High Quality Art* (with John Odam, Peachpit Press, 2nd ed. 2000). Her graphic design business provides services for clients in Mendocino County, California. See her web page at www.jashford.com.

Outline

Monday morning

Introductions

Overview of computer work and studio;
craft work and studio

Basics of scanning through Photoshop

Original photos and art

Copyright-free clip art

Resolution

Basic image-editing in Photoshop

Color photos and art

- correct contrast and brightness (using Levels)
- correct color (using Variations, Hue/Saturation & Selective Color)
- clean up with Clone tool and Dust & Scratches filter
- correct focus with Unsharp Mask
- add and delete objects

Black-and-white clip art

- correct contrast, brightness and focus
- detect "leaks"
- add color

Monday afternoon

Continue basic image-editing

Start creating individual images for projects

Tuesday morning

More Photoshop basics

Color

- Foreground and background color
- Color Palette and the Color Picker (CMYK, RGB)
- Gradients

Selection

- Use magic wand tool to select contiguous color areas; set tool "tolerance"
- Use the lasso tools to select objects
- Select, copy and paste elements from one image to another
- Apply a stroke or fill to a selection outline

Transformation

- Scale (change size)
- Rotate
- Skew
- Distort

Making art from scans

Three easy ways to turn a "scan" into an "illustration"

Apply "darkroom" effects (under Image, Adjust)

- invert to a negative
- high contrast image
- posterization
- solarization (with Solarize filter and with Curves)

Apply graphic filters (under Filter menu)

- Experiment with filters; apply filters in succession

Photo montage

- Use Photoshop's Layers
- Use blending modes

Tuesday afternoon

Greeting cards and envelopes

- Standard sizes, A7 and Baronial/Invitation
- Printing on card stock
- Combining papers/collage

Folded paper boxes

- Copy and paste images into templates
- Print, cut and fold
- Box templates include: Cube box, 4-petal box, holiday box

Folded paper booklets

- Copy and paste images into templates
- Print, cut and fold

Wednesday morning

Scanning three-dimensional objects (use garden flowers)

- correct contrast, color, clean-up, and focus
- create silhouettes (selecting with Wand and Lasso tools)
- create drop shadows (with Layer, Effects, Drop Shadow)

Drawing from scanned references

Convert scanned flowers to "tracing templates"

- scan at large sizes
- convert to grayscale
- exaggerate brightness and contrast
- exaggerate sharpness

Draw with pencil, pen and tracing paper

Scan hand drawings

Add color to line drawings

- add color in Photoshop
 - solid color
 - painted color
 - gradients

- add color to printed line art by hand (with paint, pencil, pastel, etc.)

Wednesday afternoon

Using special inkjet media

Window decal material

- Create and print a stained glass-type image for window/candle decal

Magnetic material

- Create images for refrigerator magnets

Iron-on transfers

- Create a design for a T-shirt or other cloth item (apron, pillow quilt, tote bag)

Opaque stickers

- Create images for stickers (for Altoids tins)

Transparent stickers

- Create images for stickers to apply to glass, metal or wood

Thursday morning

Introduction to type

Type tool

Type basics

- Typefaces; serif and sans serif
- Size and leading
- Type style and weight (Roman, Italic, Bold, and so on)
- Alignment (flush right or left; justified; ragged)
- Kerning and letterspacing

Basics of design

- Proximity
- Alignment
- Repetition
- Contrast

Thursday afternoon

Combining text and graphics

- Add type to the booklets, boxes, magnets, fabric designs, etc.
- Explore possibilities for business cards, flyers, posters, bookmarks, etc.

Create collaborative class book

Friday morning and afternoon

Finishing our projects