

Photoshop Elements SIG – February 14, 2007

by John Durrett

Calibrating Your Monitor

A question was asked about how to calibrate your monitor using Adobe Gamma. I want to first point out that Adobe Gamma will only help calibrate CRT (cathode ray tube) monitors. Adobe Gamma will NOT calibrate an LCD (liquid crystal display) monitor.

Adobe provides a Tech Note on how to use Adobe Gamma on a Windows computer. The write up is located at <http://www.adobe.com/cfusion/knowledgebase/index.cfm?id=321608>. Adobe also provides a pdf write up on calibrating your monitor (do a Google search for Adobe Gamma, and find the [write up](#) at the second on the list. Adobe Gamma can be found on your computer at Start > Settings > Control Panel > Appearance and Themes. Find Adobe Gamma and start

the program. Use the Wizard option and follow the steps. This will create a calibrated profile on your computer for your monitor. Photoshop Elements will then use that profile when it displays your images.

Note: If you use another monitor calibration program, such as Spyder2express from colorvision.com (\$79), then the Adobe Tech Note will explain how to remove any conflict with Adobe Gamma. Adobe gives the following discussion for LCDs.

Note: Adobe Gamma does not support LCD monitors. To create a profile for an LCD monitor, use a color calibration tool from companies such as Chromix, ColorVision, Gretag/Macbeth, or X-Rite.”

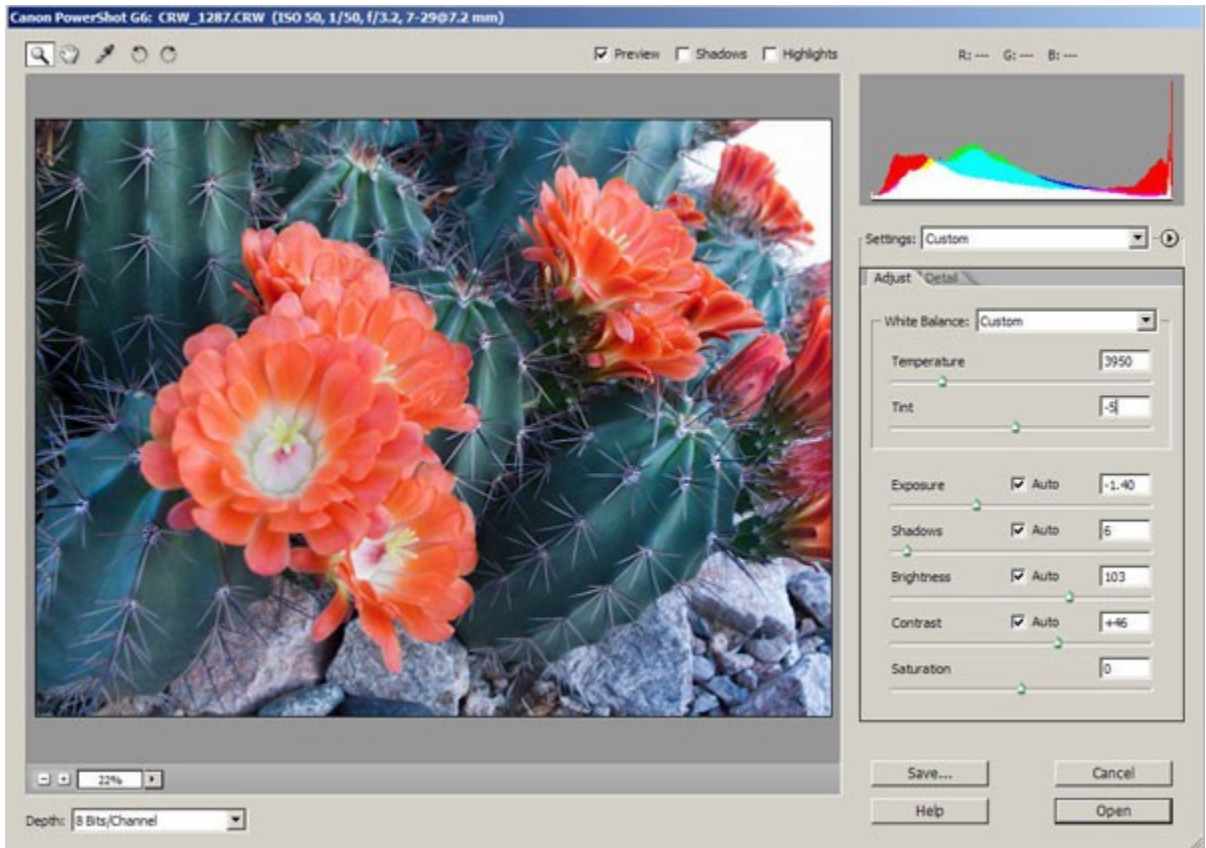
Some new LCD monitors come with a self-calibration button on the monitor. That also works pretty well. And it is free.

Processing RAW Pictures

Many of today's digital cameras can take pictures in the RAW mode. And yet again, many of these cameras come with special software that you can use to download the pictures from your cameras to the computer. But if you have Photoshop Elements, just save your self the trouble of learning yet another software program. My preference is to buy a Card Reader that read the multiple varieties of digital camera memory cards, and use that reader to download the pictures (after all, they are just files) into the computer's hard drive using Windows Explorer. I usually make a new folder for each set of pictures that I am downloading. And, if you have set up Photoshop Elements, it will offer to download all the pictures from your memory card for you. You can do it that way, or using Windows Explorer.

Once you have the photo files on your computer, open Photoshop Elements. Then use File > Open and open your first RAW file. Photoshop Elements always shows you a conversion screen, and offers to do tons of adjustments for you. I have heard pros and cons about using these adjustments, with experts coming down both ways. Some say do your baseline adjustments here, and then follow up adjustments using Photoshop. Others say, skip any adjustments here, and just Open the image and do the changes later in Photoshop. You ought to try it both ways to

experiment. Whatever you do, be sure to save the transformed photo in Adobe's PSD format. Then your original RAW file is always preserved. I usually go straight to the Open icon, and make all of my adjustments in Photoshop Elements. In the following screenshot, I did adjust the Temperature to warm up the picture and the Tint to give me better color tones before I made the transfer.



This is the RAW conversion done within Photoshop Elements 5. It does not take any other software, and will open the image into Photoshop Elements ready to save it as a PSD file. Conversion doesn't get any easier than this

Photo Art Using Filters

Photoshop Elements has many filters that can be used to create works of art out of photos. The good news is that even blurry pictures that you thought were unusable are perfect for filter art. To see some examples of filter art, take a look at one of Janee's [student's homework](http://www.elziefles.com/p2a/week3/index) from this week. (<http://www.elziefles.com/p2a/week3/index>.

[html](#)) Although Elzie's art was done using Photoshop, most of the filters she used are contained within Photoshop Elements. Let's take a look at one of her photos. This was a picture of her sister-in-law, while they were on an outing.



Elzie first duplicated the background layer (the photo) and then applied Filter > Brush Strokes > Dark Strokes, with settings of Balance: 5, Black: 6, White: 2. She changed the mode of the filtered layer to Luminosity. She added a frame of her own design which resulted in the following picture.

Filter Gallery

I like to use the Filter Gallery when I am first trying to discover which filter looks best on a particular picture. Let's take one of my pictures that I took in April 2006 of a cactus in bloom in Arizona. The original picture is the RAW converted picture from the RAW section of these notes.



The rest of Elzie's art is just as stunning.

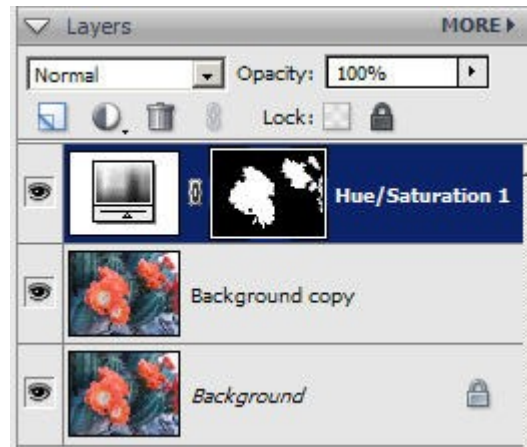
(Photos used by permission of Elzie, www.elziefles.com, 2007).

I open this picture in Photoshop Elements, duplicate the background layer, and select Filter > Filter Gallery from the menu. The Filter Gallery lets me apply and preview almost any of the filters before you have to accept them. You can even stack multiple filters on top of one another and reorder them in the gallery, but I really do not advise doing this within the filter gallery. Just apply them one at a time and control your layers within the layers palette.

We will take a look at applying filters in the next section.

More than Just Filters

Photo art can be more than just adding filters to pictures. Let's play with my cactus. While I like the orange of the blooms, I want to change the color. So the first thing I do, after I have saved it as a PSD file, is to duplicate the background layer. Then I use the Magic Wand selection tool in the + "add to selection" mode to select as much of all the orange blooms as I can, without worrying too much about details. Once I have the selection of all the blooms, then I add a Hue/Saturation layer. Since I had a selection when I added this adjustment layer, I immediately get a Hue/Sat layer with a mask showing the selected blooms in white. [This is a Power lesson in learning how to use Photoshop Elements. If you have a selection and you add an adjustment layer, you will get a mask of that selection.] This is what my layers palette looks like after I have added the Hue/Sat layer., with no adjustments to either hue or saturation (yet).



Next I double click on the first icon on the left in the Hue/Sat layer to open the controls. For this photo, I adjusted the Hue to +40, and the Saturation to -5 for a nice yellow color for the flowers.



Now, I am going to do two things. I want to add one filter to the flowers and another filter to the rest of the picture. I can do this using the Background copy layer. To regain the selection of the blooms, I do a Ctrl + Click on the mask in the Hue/Sat layer. [It took me two years to learn and accept this shortcut, but I use it all the time today.] Then I open the Filter Gallery, and apply

Artistic > Dry Brush, with settings of 6, 5, 2. That creates a filter effect on the yellow flowers. To filter the rest of the picture, I do a selection inverse using Select > Inverse. Now I have the selection of all but the flowers. While I still have the copy of the background layer active, I apply Filter > Adjustments > Posterize, with a setting of 4 to get my twice filtered result.



If I want a different look from the flowers, I can duplicate the background layer, and select the blooms by Ctrl clicking on the mask in the Hue/Sat layer. Then I apply Filter > Stylize > Glowing Edges with settings of Edge Width: 4, Edge Brightness: 7, and Smoothness 5. For a totally different look, I use Select > Inverse to grab the green parts of the cactus and the rocks, and add a Hue/Sat layer immediately

above the new filtered layer and reset the Hue to +92. I follow that with a Filter > Adjustment > Posterize 4 on the filtered layer with the glowing edges. The surprising result is as follows.



You can create your alternate universe. All you have to do is add a few filters.

Closing comments: If you want to discover more applications of filters to your photos, take a look at myjane.com where she shows her Using Filters in Photoshop tutorial at <http://www.myjane.com/tuts/filter/filter.htm> . Most of the filters she shows in the tutorial are found in Photoshop Elements.

Footnote: If you got a black and white handout of this lesson, and you would like a color version, go to <http://www.computerbooters.org/> and find the handout for the Photoshop Elements SIG for February, 2007.

jedurrett@wblsi.net