

Photoshop Elements SIG - May 11, 2005
by John Durrett - SIG Co-lead

Outside Resources

Several people have asked me to recommend books for learning Photoshop Elements (PE). I have used many different PE books, and offer the following as my top two picks: Photoshop Elements 3, The Missing Manual by Barbara Brundage, and The Photoshop Elements 3 Book for Digital Photographers by Scott Kelby. Brundage's book shows how PE works by reviewing the PE tools and how they can be used. Kelby's book is a collection of "how-to's", such as how to brighten teeth, remove blemishes, create photo montages, etc.

In addition to these books, I recommend the tutorials that Janee Aranoff has created at her janeec.com website. You can find them under Photoshop Resources > Janee's PS Tutorials. Just look for the Photoshop Elements link on her tutorials page.

If you really want to learn more on your own, I strongly recommend taking the Photoshop Elements courses offered online at lvsonline.com. These courses are written and taught by Janee, so you get all her experience plus her personal online support and evaluations as you progress through the courses. The cost is only \$25 for each six week course. It is a great way to learn.

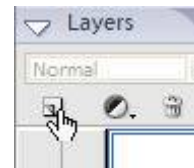
Overview

In a two part series that starts this month we will begin focusing on how to use the Selection tools. We will review the basics on how to make initial selections from tools such as the Marquee Tools (rectangular and elliptical) and the Lasso Tools (regular, polygonal and magic). We will also demonstrate how to add and subtract from

those initial targets to improve your selections. The Magic Wand will be use to show how to make both congruent and non-congruent selections, along with a discussion on when to use the different approaches. Selection tools are immaterial without knowing why you use them. We will show how selection tools are used to isolate portions of a figure/photo and either adjust, correct, copy, move, or eliminate the selections.

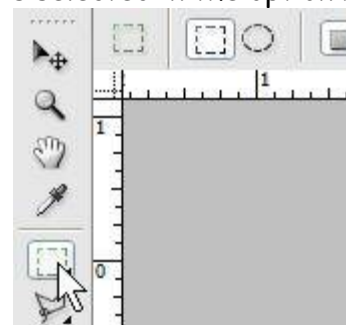
Marquee Selection Tools

Start a new file by selecting File > New > Blank File (Ctrl+N). Make the file 400 pixels wide by 400 pixels high, resolution of 72 pixels per inch and keep the Background Contents as White, click OK. Open the Layers Palette so it is visible at the right side. Create a new layer by clicking on the New Layer Icon.



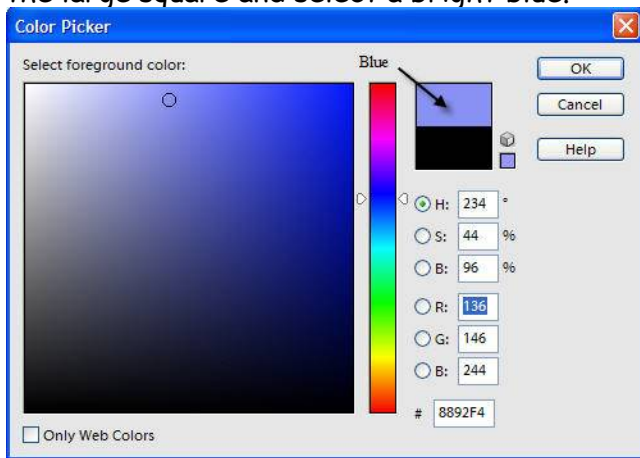
New Layer Icon Selection

Now, go to the Toolbox and select the Rectangular Marquee tool. Be sure that the rectangle is selected in the option bar.



Marquee Tool Selection

Click and drag a rectangle in the blank white space of the new file. Note that the rectangle appears as a line of "marching ants" on the screen. That indicates that the area is a selection. Now we will fill the rectangle with a color. To do that, click on the Foreground color square at the bottom of the Tool Menu. That will open the Color Picker. Using your mouse, click inside the blue region on the vertical color slide to the right of the color square. Then, move the mouse inside the large square and select a bright blue.



Color Picker

The two small rectangles on the right are now black and blue, with the blue being the new color selection. Click OK. Note that the Foreground Color has turned Blue. To fill the selection rectangle, first click on the Paint Bucket in the Toolbox. Then click inside the selection rectangle. The rectangle should turn to the blue of the Foreground Color. Now deselect the selection by either choosing Select>Deselect or Ctrl+D. Let's rename the layer that contains the blue rectangle. Go to the Layers Palette and double-click on the words Layer 1 in the new layer. Type in the word Rectangle, and click Enter. Before we add any more figures to this graphic, click on the New Layer icon and add another layer. Double click on the default name for the new

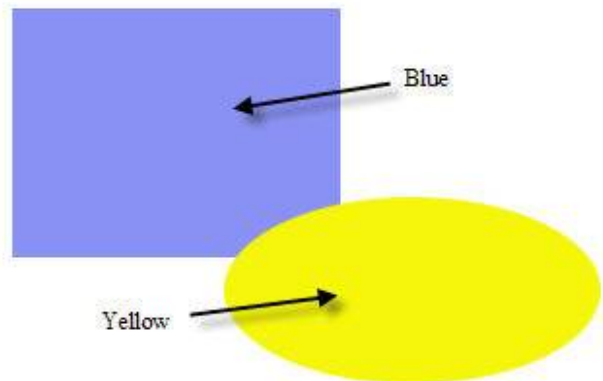
layer and type in word Ellipse. This will be our ellipse layer.

Go to the Toolbox and click on the Marquee tool. Click and hold to see the other choices for this tool. Select the Elliptical Marquee selection tool.



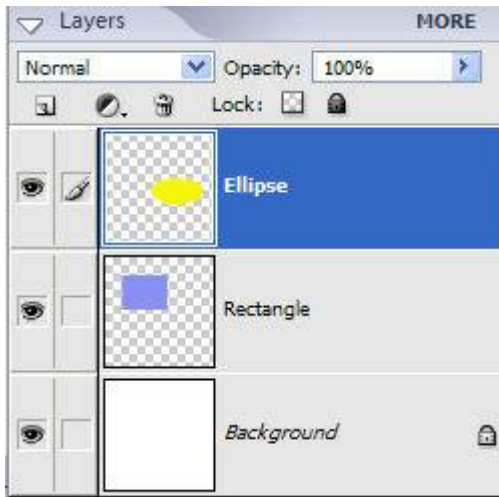
Elliptical Marquee Tool

Now, click and draw an ellipse on this new layer, starting just inside the lower right corner of the blue rectangle. Use the Color Picker to choose a new color for the Foreground Color, such as a yellow. Click on the Paint Bucket tool and click inside the ellipse selection to fill it with yellow. Type Ctrl+D to deselect the ellipse. It is time to save the working file. Select File>Save As and save the file as selection_shapes.psd. Your figure will look something like this.



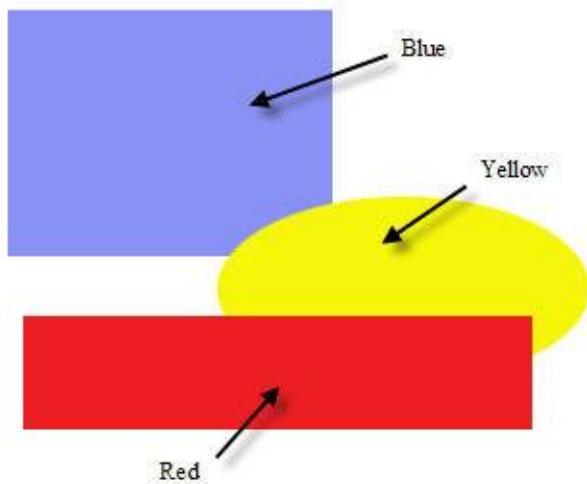
Graphic with Blue and Yellow Figures

If you have kept up, your Layers Palette should look like the following.

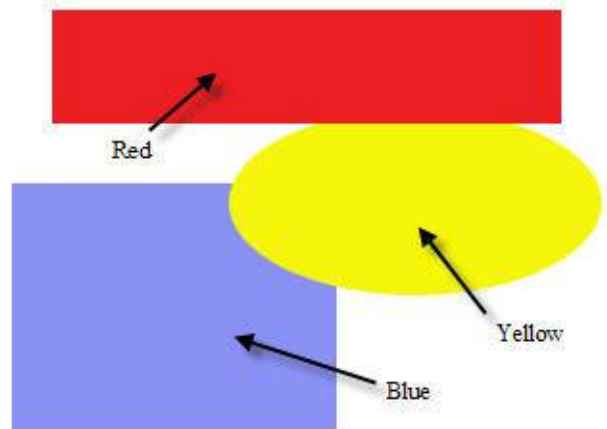


Layers for Rectangle & Ellipse

OK, one more layer to go. First click on the Ellipse layer and be sure it is the Active layer. Then add a new layer and rename it Red Rectangle. (You clicked on the Ellipse Layer first so that the new layer ends up immediately above the Ellipse layer when you add it.) Select the Marquee Tool and change it back to the rectangle mode. Click and drag a long horizontal rectangle below the blue one that extends into the yellow ellipse. Change the Foreground Color to a red using the Color Picker and fill the new rectangle with red using the Paint Bucket. Click Ctrl+D to deselect the rectangle and "set" the red color. Now save the file with Ctrl+S.

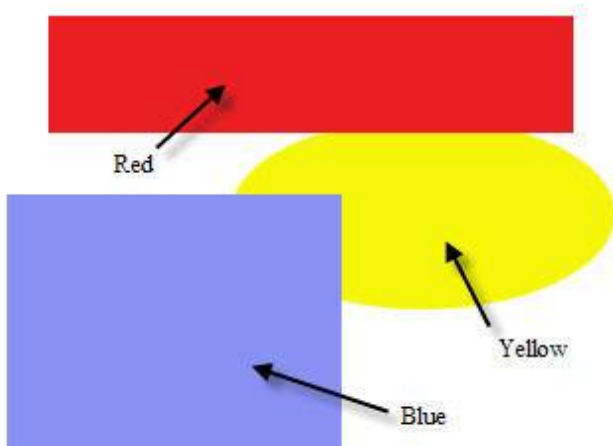


Now the fun starts. We want to move a few things using the Move tool. Find the Move tool in the Toolbox and select it. It's the pointer arrow at the top of the Tool Menu. Make the blue rectangle layer active by clicking on that layer. Because we are using the Move tool, the blue rectangle in the graphic now has a selection around it. Click and drag on the rectangle to move the rectangle within the graphic. The rectangle moves to a new place in the layer when you release the Move tool. Click on the layers individually and move the ellipse and the red rectangle and see if you can come up with a figure that looks like this.



Relocated Figures

Each of these figures is on a separate layer, so we can change the relative depth of the figures in the graphic by moving the layers up or down. For example, click and hold the mouse on the Ellipse layer and drag the layer below the blue Rectangle layer. Now the yellow ellipse will look like it lies behind the blue rectangle in the graphic. That's the beauty of how layers work. Once we have something on a layer we can move it and change its apparent depth of field. The final figure should look like this. Save the file.

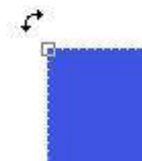


Yellow Ellipse Moves to Back

Changing Shapes with the Move Tool

Using the same file we just saved, select the blue Rectangle layer. The selection appears around the rectangle with small circles at the corners and at the middle of the sides. Using the Move Tool, hold the Shift key down and click on one of the corners of the rectangle and drag the corner out to make the rectangle larger. Because we held the Shift key, the rectangle retained its relative scale. If you do not use the Shift key, then the relative shape of the figure will change. If we wanted to have the rectangle enlarge or shrink and remain centered over the same spot, we would hold the Shift+Alt keys and click and drag on a corner of the rectangle. Try it.

There is one more thing that we can do with the Move Tool and that is to rotate a figure. With the blue Rectangle layer remaining active, move your mouse just outside one of the corners of the rectangle in the graphic until you see the pointer under the mouse point turn into a curved double arrow.



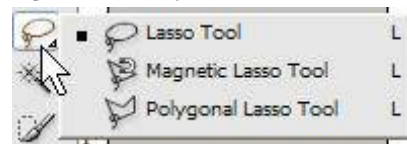
Rotate Selection Arrows

Click and hold the Rotation Arrows and rotate the blue rectangle to any angle. To set the rectangle to the new position, either double click off to the side of the rectangle or click on to another layer.

You now have the ability to move, rotate, and either enlarge or shrink the size of any figure on an individual layer. These talents are fundamental to working with Photoshop Elements. You will learn to use the same skills to move and resize people within pictures. And that's just a small part of the power of Photoshop Elements.

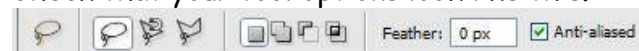
Lasso Tools

The basic Lasso Tool is used to create irregular selections, such as around a person or a non-geometric shape. Open a new file Ctrl+N and make it 400x400 pixels, 72 ppi, with a white background. Click OK to finish making the new file. Click on the Lasso Tool in the Toolbox, making sure you select the Lasso Tool and not the Magic Lasso Tool or the Polygonal Lasso Tool.



Lasso Tool

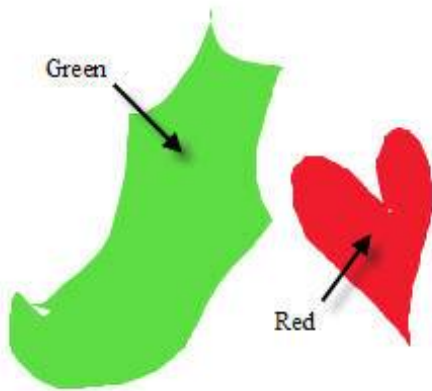
Check that your tool options look like this.



Lasso Tool Options

At this point we will use a 0 pixel Feather. Create a new layer in the Layers Palette and

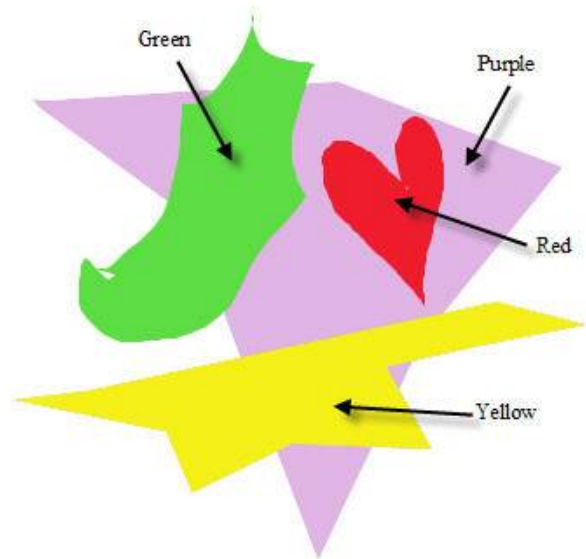
rename it **Lasso tool**. With the **Lasso tool** layer active, click on the blank canvas of the new file and make an irregular shape that closes onto itself at the starting point. When you reach your starting position, release the mouse to form the selection. Use the Color Picker to choose a favorite color of yours for the Foreground color. Then, instead of using the Paint Bucket, hit the Alt key plus the Backspace key (Alt+Backspace). Your selection fills with your new color just the same way as the Paint Bucket. Alt+Backspace is a much used keyboard shortcut that can be used to fill any selection with the Foreground Color. Press Ctrl+D to deselect the selection. Create a new Layer, rename it **Lasso Too**, create another Lasso selection on the Lasso Too layer, choose another Foreground color and fill the selection with the new color. Deselect the selection. Your graphic probably doesn't look anything like this, but it might.



Lasso Tool Selections

Create a new layer, and rename it **Polygonal Tool**. Now, select the **Polygonal Lasso Tool** from the Toolbox. Click on the canvas and release the mouse. Then move the mouse across the canvas to a new point and click there. You have a straight line from your starting point to the second click. Proceed to move the mouse, click, move, click, and move until you are ready to close the figure; then

click once again. The figure closes into a polygonal selection. Fill that selection with a different color. Make another Polygonal selection and fill with yet another color. Move the layers up and down to create a graphic of your liking. It may look something like this.



Lasso Tool Graphic

It is important to understand that layers are used to isolate objects in a composition. If you have isolated the objects then you can move and adjust them independently. That is at the heart of Photoshop Elements.

Homework

If you are up for it, try this. Create a new file, 400x400 pixels, 72 ppi, and white background. Using the Marquee tools (Rectangle and Ellipse) and the Lasso Tools (Regular and Polygonal) create your own multicolor graphic using multiple layers. Use a new layer for each selection/figure. Resize, rotate and stretch. What happens if you change the Feather before you create your selections? Experiment. Print and bring your creation to the next SIG meeting. Good luck.