

AUT University

Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies

SCHOOL OF FUTURE ENVIRONMENTS

A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Creative Technologies AK1320.

2022

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DIGITAL IMAGE WIZARDRY

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Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Tarun Verma

24.05.2022

Abstract

The invention of Digital Images has brought a new era for the visual industry. With the high demand of visuals in storytelling, the production is slow because it takes a lot of artists to draw or paint on paper. However, with the use of the latest digital tools, good results can be achieved fast and efficiently. This research explores the use of digital tools within the field of Art to create fantasy induced artworks. It demonstrates the use of Adobe Photoshop for compositing different images into one piece of artwork with supporting videos which break down every layer of effects and images composited in Photoshop layer by layer using a video editing application. It focuses on the use of different elements that are combined together to create an otherworldly image and different techniques in Photoshop to achieve desired results. These techniques are used in the film & animation industry by every production studio, the idea is to achieve the best possible results by practice.

Introduction

Imagine you're walking in a mall and your attention is snagged by an image of a man having dinner with three bears sitting next to him on a dining table or a house flying in the sky with a gigantic moon in the background. All these images can be called composited images. They are the most appealing visuals you can add to your website or social media which is going to fascinate your friends and family. However, they are fake or recreated using digital tools. These images are created by combining two or more images together in such a way that they seem appealing but not realistic.

Everyone composites images in their own way. For instance, cutting the faces of your friends from their picture and sticking them onto an animal, it might not be appealing to others but your friends might find it hilarious which makes sense. Or it could be a collection of different images as a whole organized into a single frame.

Processing of digital images is based on mathematical calculations and the techniques used are based on human instincts and visual judgements (Rafael Gonzalez et al., 2017).

This research explores the possibilities of image manipulation by recreating fantasy-based artworks and learning techniques of image compositing on an advanced level using Photoshop. The stock Images are taken from different sources like Deviant art and Google images. Being in the VFX industry back in India, I am proficient at using different tools on Photoshop. However, the techniques are learned from YouTube channel [Rafy A.](#)

Digital Image Wizardry is focused on breaking down steps involved in the process of creating an artwork using different images and presenting the flow of creating by a breakdown video which shows each layer one by one swiping from left to right. This breakdown video is similar to any VFX movie breakdown video in which they create a surreal scene which is not possible to shoot. For instance, Game of Thrones, Harry Potter and many more. However, it's more advanced because they have used a technique called "tracking" to track the position of the camera and matched it with the compositing element they want to add in. My work is completely based on still images.

In *Digital Image Wizardry*, few artworks have been produced using stock images from Deviant Art which are free to use. Starting with explaining how fantasy is involved in the story, comics and films. How it

affects the audience and builds a reputation for itself in the genre. It presents work of a few inspirational artists who have been working on this theme and with the help of their techniques the artworks in *Digital Image Wizardry* have been created. It familiarizes the readers to platforms like Deviant Art from which the stock images are used to compose the final artwork. It discusses my journey in digital media from designing flyers as a beginner to being a professional VFX artist and so on. It demonstrates six of my best artworks that have been created as a mode of practice for my Masters of Creative Technologies using Adobe Photoshop and explains the usage of tools and how it has been implemented in an artwork step by step. Reading the process of creation will take you on a magical and technical journey of image manipulation.

Fantasy

Fantasy pervades human culture, that is, fantasy pervades humanity. (Collins and Pearce 1985: 4)

What is fantasy? We think of Monsters, Wizards, elves, Dragons and trolls when it comes to fantasy. However, it's not just limited to that. It is much easier to identify the typical elements of fantasy, than it is to identify the category of fantasy itself. While practicing, the category is well defined but when it comes to stating why a work belongs to a category horror or science fiction it becomes a real challenge. (Laetz, B., & Johnston, J.J. 2008)

Laetz, B., & Johnston, J.J. (2008). What is Fantasy? *Philosophy and Literature* 32(1), 161-172.
[doi:10.1353/phl.0.0013](https://doi.org/10.1353/phl.0.0013).

We all are indulged in fantasy of some kind. As human beings we all are different when it comes to imagine, dream and wish. (Furby, J., & Hines, C. 2011) It all depends on our daily life experiences. For instance, the dream of a child is unlike the dream of an adult. It totally depends on the experiences of that person, a ten-year-old child's dream would probably be about a fairy or Candyland as they see them in the story book. However, an adult's dream would be so complicated as they go through a lot of complications in their life. It could be job, family or travel experiences.

Furby, J., & Hines, C. (2011). *Fantasy*. Taylor & Francis Group.

It seems obvious, there is a strong relationship between fantasy, cinema and artworks. Fantasy can be created but cannot be captured. Hence, it is developed through mediums like art and movies. Many fantasy-based movies are produced by Walt Disney Studios such as (Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs [David Hand, 1937], Cinderella [Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson and Hamilton Luske, 1950], Frozen [Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, 2013]), with the use of latest technology in CGI animation these movies are produced such as Harry Potter (2001– 2011), The Chronicles of Narnia (2005– 2010) or The Hobbit (2012– 2014).

The beginning of fantasy art can be found in England in the middle of the 19th century. *Alice in wonderland* was the first book to illustrate pages where readers can visually experience sophisticated visual worlds filled with talking ducks, grinning cats, smoking caterpillars and lizards working as chimney sweeps.

The cartoon book *Tarzan of the Apes* was a great success in 1912. The demand became so high and its success made sure that more and more artists needed to be trained in this new subject.

Serious authors like H.P Lovecraft, Ray Bradbury or Philip K. Dick were also involved in this new genre of fantasy in the early 20th century. The US magazine *Weird Tales* is another pioneer in the fantasy genre which began to publish fantasy, science fiction and horror stories in the comic style in 1923 which included works by horror specialist H.P Lovecraft.

Readers shouldn't mistake fantasy for sci-fi - the class is completely different, brings up Hanson. Indeed, even the themes found in the two classifications demonstrate it. Spaceships, for instance, are inconceivable in the fantasy world. All things considered, fantasy ought to be all around as informal as could really be expected, finished with winged serpents and beasts and hot legends.

<https://www.dw.com/en/weird-tales-and-hobbits-how-fantasy-art-became-popular/a-55487036>

Deviant Art

DeviantArt is an online community for artists. It's a place where you can share and receive feedback on your art (in whatever form it takes). Consider Facebook crossed with Instagram, but with an emphasis on art and a sharing platform. It is truly a community. It might not be for you if all you want to do is post art and not be a part of a community, but if you're improving and seeking criticism, it's worth a shot. There are many good folks in the community that are willing to help and share. It's free to sign up, much like Facebook, but there's also a paid subscription option. It can be used as a portfolio for artists who want to share their artwork and receive criticism from the people throughout the world. It has no age limitations as it can contain doodle art from a 10-year-old child or a masterpiece from an 80-year-old maestro.

Deviant art has a collection of abstract images from different users and artists which are free to use. Images used to create compositions in *Digital Image Wizardry* are taken from this platform. They are available in various formats like PNG or JPEG whichever is fit for the composition as required, it can be searched by simply typing the keywords for the theme on the search bar and it will show all the images related to the theme or artist. They can be downloaded in high resolution and are ready to be used in the composition.

Digital Images Wizardry purely showcases the practical implementation of images from Deviant art into a single composition which creates a new fantasy world.

Inspiration

I've always been attracted towards technology, especially its involvement in art. Artworks have evolved with the development in technology. In ancient times people used to carve painting on the walls and stones, with the invention of paper and pencils their painting or sketch started to contain more details and it looked more appealing. As the time went by, more and more tools for painting came up and artworks started to look more and more appealing. Not only that, it became easy to sketch on paper with pencils with a mobility to sketch anywhere. It became comparably easier than carving drawings on stones and walls.

Subsequently, computers came in around 1940 and gradually sketches on paper turned into digital format with the help of a digital screen where graphics were electronically generated. It is known as computer generated graphics. Digital technology has introduced television which plays a vital role in media. With the involvement of television digital pictures became mandatory because television will only accept digital formats. That's how computer-generated graphics became a key element in broadcasting. With the rising demand for digital content computer graphics are being developed and getting more refined day by day. Today, most of the media content is digital and involves computer generated graphics. With the development of computer applications like Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, digital content has developed exceptionally in terms of possibility to create a stunning output.

Later on, digital games came in called 'Video games' where you respond to an illustration on the screen and play the game. I've been influenced by a concept artist and a digital illustrator named Raphael Lacoste. He was the art director for Ubisoft which is a famous game development studio based in Montreal, Canada. His concept art for games like Prince of Persia and Assassin's Creed are exquisite.

1. Raphael Lacoste

Raphael Lacoste is my favorite and top inspiring Digital Art content creator From Montreal Canada. He is the Art Director at Ubisoft and Electronic Arts. Assassin's Creed Origin is my favorite title by Ubisoft for which he did Art direction and illustration.

His concept art and environment design are unique in many ways. He creates artworks on photoshop working with different sets of tools which inspires me a lot. The way he creates the volumetric fog is stunning and gives an illusion of depth which inspires me a lot in my artworks. He uses simple brush strokes to paint landscapes and buildings. However, he uses 'Wacom Tablet' which is a pointing device like a pen with a tablet for more precise illustrations.

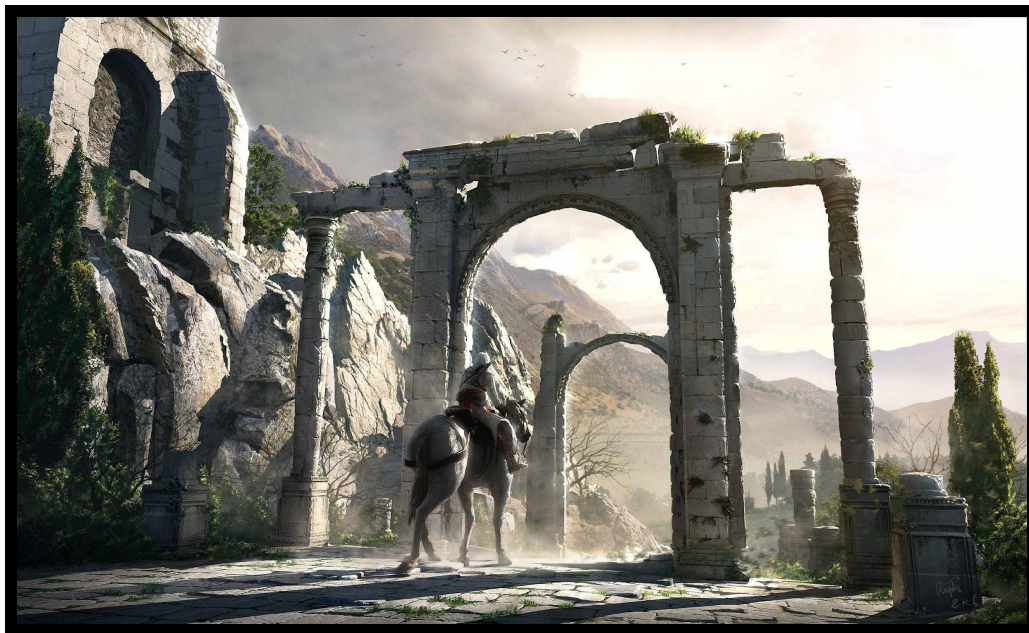
The use of colors in his artworks is so unique that it creates an illusion of depth. The mood in his artworks is melancholic, that attracts me more towards his paintings. The way he orients the frame is very appealing because he places the character and the building in such a way that it gives an idea of that world in a real scale. Which helps the 3D modelers to create a 3D view out of the painting to be used for video games. For this to happen the Art design should be very finely detailed. Elements like water, stones and trees should be realistic in the painting to appear realistic in the game world.

Following are some of his concept artworks for Games-



[South Kingdom, Assassin's Creed](#) By Raphael Lacoste

Visible at: Artstation <https://www.artstation.com/artwork/31LJv>



[The North Kingdom - Assassin's Creed](#) By Raphael Lacoste

Visible at: Artstation <https://www.artstation.com/artwork/NZwD>



[Assassin's Creed - London Mood](#) By Raphael Lacoste

Visible at: Artstation <https://www.artstation.com/artwork/x3QoR>

2. Rafy Alfazri

Rafy Alfazri is a hobbyist digital art creator from Indonesia. He has a YouTube channel called “Rafy A” in which he posts photo manipulation tutorials. His tutorials are very inspiring and obliging even for the beginner digital artists. From searching different Raw images and turning them into an alluring composition, his tutorials guide through every technique step by step. His techniques include using different layer blending mode options, selection tool, cropping images, using mask and using brush tool. He demonstrates color matching techniques to blend multiple images into one composition by using tools such as levels and color balance.

By watching his tutorials on YouTube, I’ve learned a lot of techniques which have helped me create the artworks showcased in *Digital Image Wizardry*. Furthermore, these techniques are not only limited to compositing digital artworks but they also help me with editing or enhancing the photographs I take when I go traveling or trekking. For instance, when photos are captured using a mobile device it doesn't have the quality of a photo taken from a DSLR camera. There are limitations in terms of adjusting focus or exposure. However, with the help of Photoshop, background can be blurred to a desired level and colors can be enhanced. Using the same techniques which are used to enhance or match the color of raw images in artistic compositions.

Following are some of his artworks-



[Side Wing Sunset](#) By Rafy A

Visible at: Rafy-A <http://www.rafy-a.com/2020/04/side-wing-sunset-effect-photo.html>



[Old House Photo Manipulation](#) By Rafy A

Visible at: Rafy-A <http://www.rafy-a.com/2020/02/composite-old-house-photo-manipulation.html>



[Girl and the Bear](http://www.rafy-a.com/2019/09/girl-and-bear-photo-manipulation.html) By Rafy A

Visible at: Rafy-A <http://www.rafy-a.com/2019/09/girl-and-bear-photo-manipulation.html>

3. Erik Johansson <https://www.erikjo.com/>

Erik Johansson is a Swedish photographer and visual artist working from Prague, Czech Republic. Erik primarily works on personal projects and participates in international exhibits. He doesn't capture moments the way typical photographers do; instead, he uses his camera and creativity to capture photographs.

It's always crucial to Erik to maintain a high level of realism in his work. He wants the audience to feel as if they're a part of the action. Despite the fact that he spends a lot of time in post-production and integrating images, he always strives to capture as much as he can in camera on site. It usually entails making props and coming up with unique methods to prepare the shot. When merging photographs in a realistic manner, light and perspective are vital, and if some elements cannot be shot on location, a similar scenario must be put up in a controlled environment. Understanding each phase of the process, from idea to planning to shooting and post-production, is critical to ensuring that everything comes together smoothly. Every shot and component has a function.

His work inspires me in many ways, as he does not use stock images or illustration. Instead, he captures them himself and with the use Photoshop he combines his images in a complex way. Following this process is time consuming and because of that he is only able to produce around ten images in a year.

Following are some of his artworks -



[Go Your Own Road](#) By Erik Johansson

Visible at: Erikjo <https://www.erikjo.com/work/go-your-own-road>



[Full Moon Service](#) By Erik Johansson

Visible at: Erikjo <https://www.erikjo.com/work/full-moon-service>



[The Forest Library](#) By Erik Johansson

Visible at: Erikjo <https://www.erikjo.com/work/the-forest-library>

5. From Inspiration to Action

Computer generated graphics have always been an intriguing subject to me since my father bought me my first personal computer. It wasn't a powerful machine that could handle complex graphic applications. However, it introduced me to some of the graphic applications like CorelDraw and MS Paint. I started drawing and designing basic graphics like text, logos and paintings. I started spending more time on my computer rather than going outside and playing with my friends. That was the time I decided I wanted to be a graphic designer. My father saw some potential in me related to computer graphics and bought me a powerful computer back in 2011 which could support all the graphic applications and video games. That was the time my actual graphic designing journey began. I got enrolled in an institution where I learned 3D modeling, basic animation and graphic design which was at the level of industry standards. I started working as a freelancer for designing flyers and logos. Throughout my learning journey, I was also indulged in video games like Far Cry, Assassin's Creed, Call of Duty and always wondered how the game studios develop them and what applications they use to develop them. That was the time I decided to pursue a Masters in Computer Animation and advance VFX course. During my masters I learned how to create detailed 3D models using Autodesk Maya and how to animate them. My specialization was in VFX, I began using my 3D models in a video footage by compositing them into video. It is a complex process as it requires different applications to finish each stage. 3D models need to be matched with the video footage not just in terms of lighting and shadows but also with the movement of the footage as if it's a video. To match the movement of the 3D model with the footage there is a technique called "Tracking", the process will track down movement of the footage and apply it to the 3D model so that it moves along with footage and make the viewers believe that 3D model is a part of footage. By the end of my masters, I created a few showreels which showcases my work with 3D compositing and advanced VFX which are uploaded on my YouTube Channel.

Here are the links to my showreels:

[Lamborghini Aventador 3D Compositing by Tarun Verma](#)

[Uh-60 Black Hawk Take off 3D Compositing by Tarun Verma](#)

[Snow Particle VFX by Tarun Verma](#)

Soon afterwards, I got a chance to work with a VFX studio called Prime Focus World. The studio converts Hollywood and Bollywood movies into 3D. In technical terms it's known as "Stereoscopy". I started working as a VFX paint artist with the VFX paint department. My job role was to clean the footage by removing the wires and harness for stunt scenes frame by frame in the movie. Not only that, I was also creating clean plates for 3D shots to add the illusion of depth between character and background by the ViewD department. The ViewD department is where the illusion of depth was created for the footage at Prime Focus World.

While being in the VFX industry I was always intrigued by digital artworks created by compositing different images or footages. Being inspired by the VFX work done in a fantasy drama television show like *Game of Thrones* in which they've composited digital paintings with footage using a green screen to create an unrealistic world. They've also presented their work by producing a VFX breakdown video in which they show each layer one by one. Their breakdown video inspired me to create my own

breakdown videos for my artworks. I began searching for artworks and artists who are into digital Image compositing and watched their tutorials which has inspired me to create my own artworks in *Digital Image Wizardry*.

Searching Images

To create a composition, searching high quality images on platforms like DeviantArt and Google which have similar viewing angles so that when it's combined together, they will complement each other. For instance, if a house needs to be put together with the ground, both images of the house and the ground need to be viewed or clicked from nearly the same angle. If those images are not in the same orientation or angle they will never go together in a composition. The composition will look disoriented and will not be so appealing. The image of the house cannot be used if it's clicked from the top angle to be used with the image of the ground which is clicked from the front angle. We are not used to perceiving things in the real world like that. It will create confusion with viewers and will make them look away from it.

Searching images is time consuming because there are infinite numbers of images on the internet with different angles and orientation. Finding the perfect image can be tricky but not impossible. In this process visualizing plays an important role and saves a lot of time. Visualizing helps a lot in terms of achieving better results. If one can visualize the final composition just by looking at different images it's more likely that the end result would be good. The key points to better visualization are to keep in mind about the orientation and viewing angle of the image and combining them in your imagination. With this process it is easy to search images which are desired. For instance, searching images 'House' will show all the houses the internet has, most of them are counterproductive. However, searching 'wooden house with front angle' will show only the images of the houses which have front angle orientation and will match with the ground.

Setting up

To begin with, putting up the background image first is always considered because it will become the first layer to work on. It could be Sky or the ground or both together in an image. Like in the real world, the farthest object in the image will be the first layer. When another image is added it will come over the first layer and become the second layer. However, for instance if the first layer is 'sky' and second layer is 'house' the first layer has to be below the second layer because sky will be blocking the house which is absurd to look at. There are ways to fix that in Photoshop for a desired setting. The layer above the first layer can always be erased and it will reveal the layer beneath it. It gives more control for selecting the specific section of an image to be used in the composition.

1. Underwater Island

Underwater Island is a composition of images with different elements like clouds, book, whale, water, wooden floor, birds and a castle on an island. By combining all these elements together using image manipulation techniques on Photoshop an individual artwork is achieved. The concept of this artwork is fantasy and surrealism.

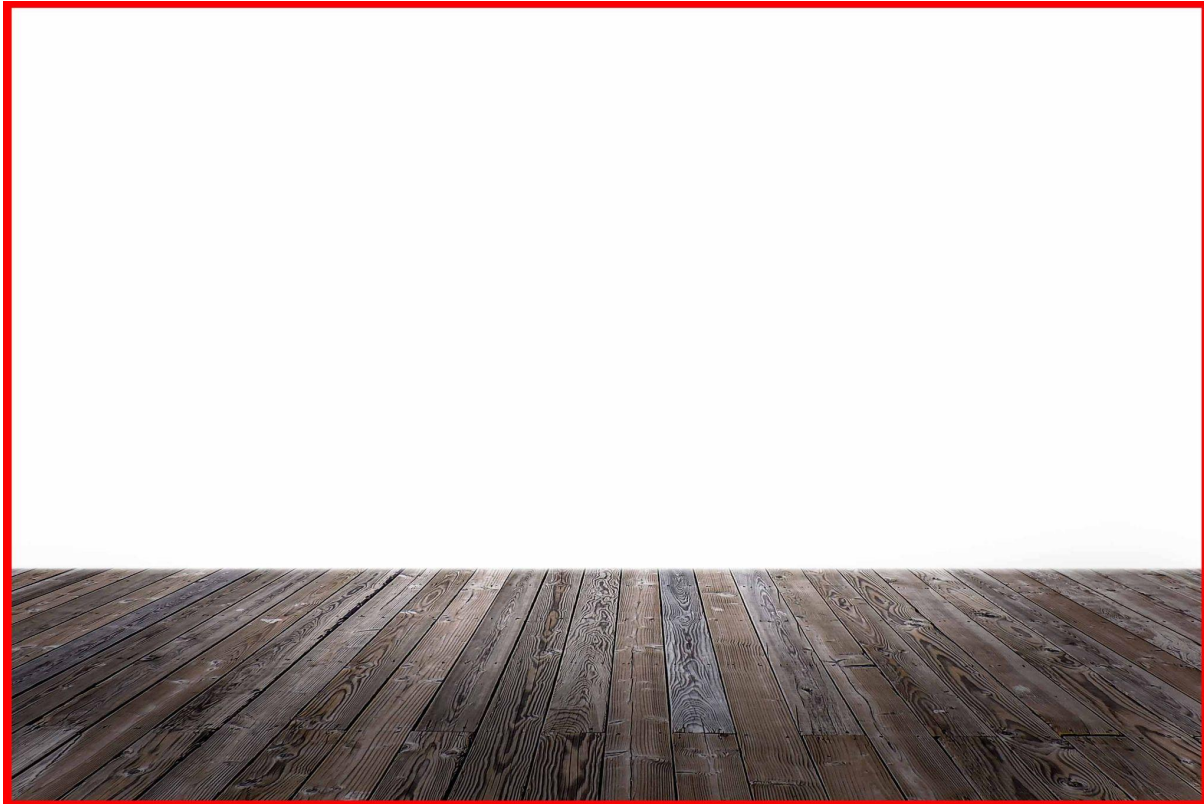
To begin with, the image of the wooden floor is skewed and scaled according to the desired perspective. To apply a skew, the layer of the wooden floor is selected and by pressing the Ctrl+T keys the layer goes into transform mode. When the layer is in transform mode, right clicking it allows us to control different aspects of the images like Scale, Rotate, Skew, Distort, Perspective, Warp and Flip. In this case, Skew and scale options are selected. Then the image can be skewed or scaled by dragging the anchor points of the image.



Original Image [Wooden Floor](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/illuminatingdreamz/art/Woodendock6-639992933>

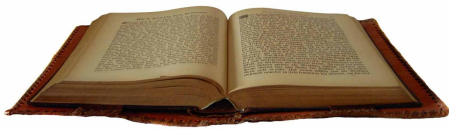
The requirement is just the wooden floor because it grants the whole composition to have an antique feel to it. Hence, the sky, water and the landscape are removed using the selection tool in Photoshop. The saturation is lowered, curves and levels are adjusted. Saturation allows one to control the intensity of colors in an image. Curves and levels control the intensity of the light.



Composited Image

In the next layer, an image of a book is added. The old book is chosen for this composition because it goes really well with the wooden floor and binds the whole composition together. The old yellow pages in it define the age of the book. A new book with fresh pages will not be appealing and won't make any story for the composition. The texture of wood was originally lighter in color. After some color correction it's dark and brown in color to match with the book.

Same process is used to extract the book from the background using the selection tool and place it over the wooden floor. However, the perspective of the book has to be matched with the floor. Skew and perspective tools are used to match the book with the floor.

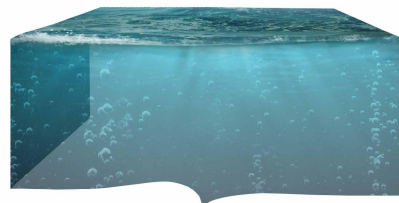


Original Image [Old Book](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/nightgraue/art/Old-Book-2-32898680>

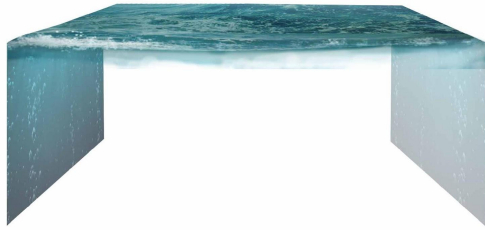
After the floor and book are matched with perspective, it's time to add water. Image of water contains rising bubbles from the bottom to the top just like it is seen in a fish aquarium to give water a feeling of an aquarium over the book. However, the blue water appears like it's from the ocean. The appearance of ocean water in the shape of an aquarium gives the composition a creative feel.

The creation of water over the book includes four layers of different images. However, the same image of water is duplicated, scaled, skewed and rotated to be used on either side. The sky and the landscape are removed using the selection tool as the requirement is only water from the image. The bottom region of water is cropped according to the shape of the book's page.



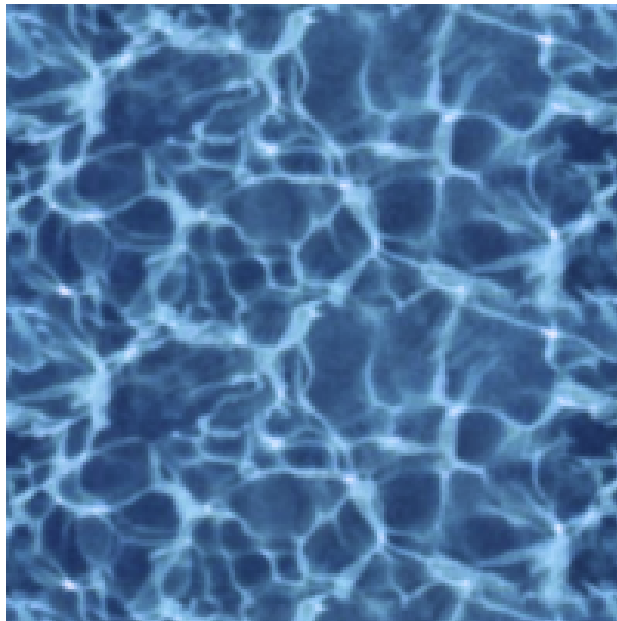
Original Image [Underwater](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/moonglowlilly/art/Ocean-Bg-Stock-340063593>



Composited Image

In the next step, an image of ripple is added on the front of water to give the texture of the water. Ripple is a texture of water which makes the water body alive, especially in the ocean. However, ripples are not present in an aquarium but in this composition ocean water is composed in an aquarium like environment, hence it's important to have the ripple texture. The image is skewed to match the perspective and opacity is lowered to desired level.



Ripple (Original Image)



Composited Image (Without Ripple)



Composited Image (With Ripple)

Now, we have the book, wooden floor and water composited together in an image. It's time to add the dominant element in the composition which is a castle on an island. It is divided into two parts, which

means castle and island are two different images. Castle appears more elegant than a house; it seems like one of the castles in Romania. For instance, if we look at 'Bran Castle' in the city Brasov, Romania, it has big spikes on top of the turrets known as 'The Spires'. It looks old and blends with the style of the book. The trees around it give a lush feeling of being in a rich environment.



Original Image [Castle](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt

<https://www.deviantart.com/alexanderhuebner/art/Burg-Hochosterwitz-Stock-7-320831034>

Similarly, like the previous process the castle is extracted from the image and positioned on the composition over the water. In this image, a scaling tool is used to make it fit in the center of the composition because the image is large. It has to be scaled down to make it appear as if it is on an island in the middle of water. It will be placed on the top in the layer palette as it needs to be on top of water.



Composited Image

In the next step, an image of a whale is added. Whale is used because it's a massive fish which makes the viewers believe that it can support an island. A PNG image is used because it always has a transparent background which means the background layer will be visible without cropping or cutting the image using the selection tool.

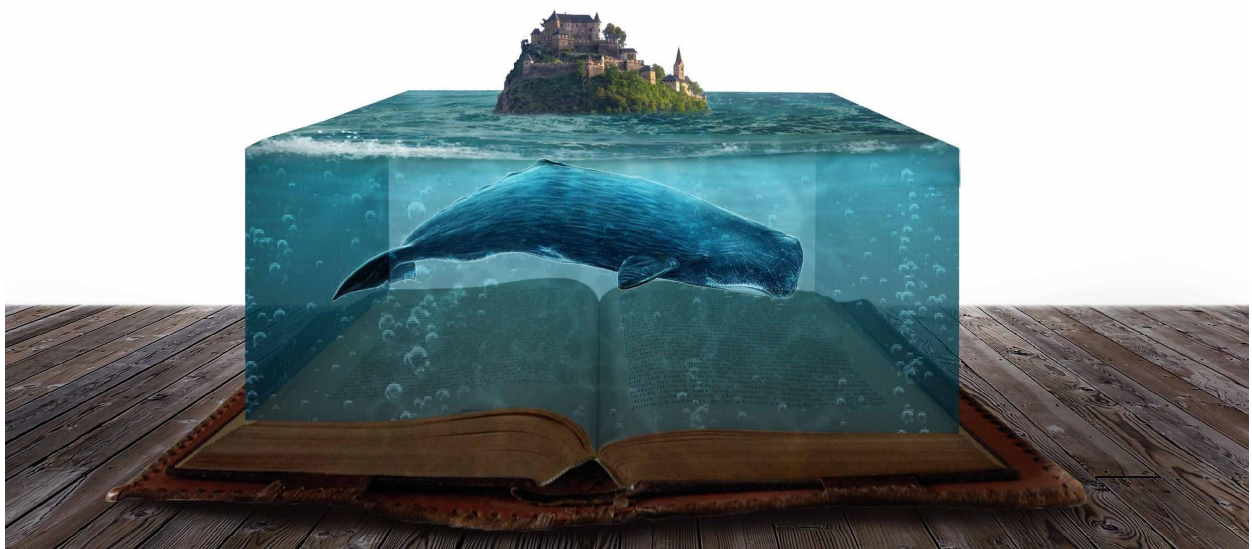


Original Image [Whale](#)

Visible at: Pikpng

https://www.pikpng.com/pngvi/TRwbRo_whale-png-download-image-sperm-whale-whale-png-clipart/

The layer of whale will be beneath the layer of water to be seen as if it is underwater. The opacity of the water can be adjusted according to the desired visibility of the whale. The ripple effect of the water is also over the layer of the whale as it is required to reflect on the whale as well. In the real world, when we look at a fish in an aquarium, we are looking at it through the water. Similarly, in this artwork the reflective and refractive properties of water can be seen on the whale.



Composited Image

Color corrections are made using the Hue/Saturation tool to match the color of the whale with the water. That means adding blue color to the Highlight and Mid-tones of the images makes it more appealing and makes it believable that it's submerged in the water.

Afterwards, an image of a mountain is used to make an island emerging out of the whale. The mountain is similar to the shape of a fish.

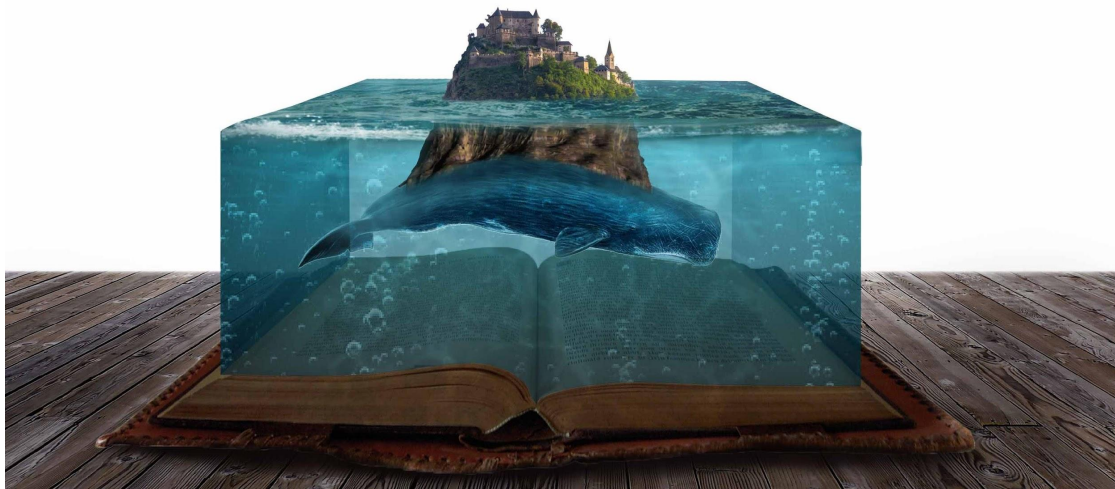


Original Image [Mountain](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt

<https://www.deviantart.com/mysticmorning/art/Mountain-png-stock-2-235313702>

It is placed between the whale and castle floating on the water to make a bridge that connects the castle to the underwater whale. With the help of photoshop tools like skew and distort it is stretched to match with the curve of the whale. This way it appears like it's a part of the whale. However, the stock image of the mountain is flat on the bottom.



Composited Image

Just like the layer of whale sits beneath the layer of water, this layer will sit below the water as well to have the ripple and the color of water over it to appear like it's submerged underwater. The blue color over the whale and mountain needs to be matched with each other in order to appear that they are joined together.

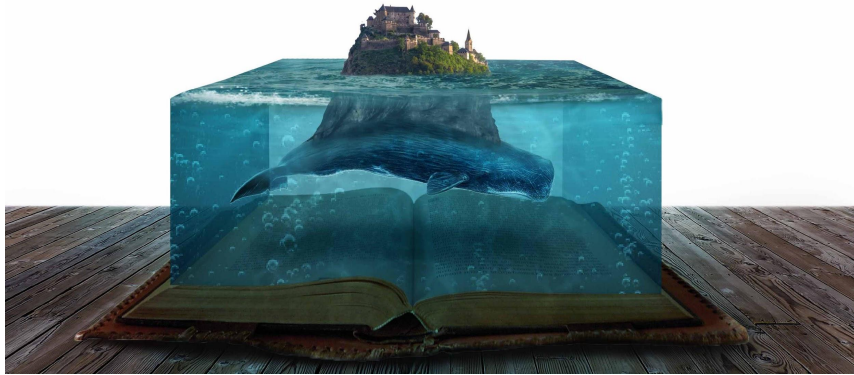
The bottom region of the mountain is erased using an eraser tool with around 20-30% strength to remove sharp edges of the mountain. This technique also blends them together seamlessly.



Composited Image

With few adjustments in color balance, Hue/Saturation and levels it appears to be a part of the whale. Afterwards, Color of the mountain is matched with the color of the whale as both of these elements are underwater.

To give this composition a real world like appearance, shadow is added under the whale on pages of the book. To add the shadow, a brush tool is used on a new layer. Black color is used with a soft brush and soft strokes on the pages with blending mode changed to overlay. Similarly, the shadow layer is below the water layer so that it has a ripple effect and other properties of water.



Composited Image

Clouds are added in the background to give a surreal mood to the composition. It gives the artwork a feeling of gloomy weather, this kind of weather gives a dramatic feel to the viewers. If this was an animated or a video footage, clouds would move with thunder and ripples of water would come alive. This would add an extra appeal to the viewers. However, this is a still image and there are limitations to addons.

The stock image is flipped and repositioned to fit with the composition.



Original Image [Cloud](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/dh-textures/art/Storm-Cloud-Stock-210586378>



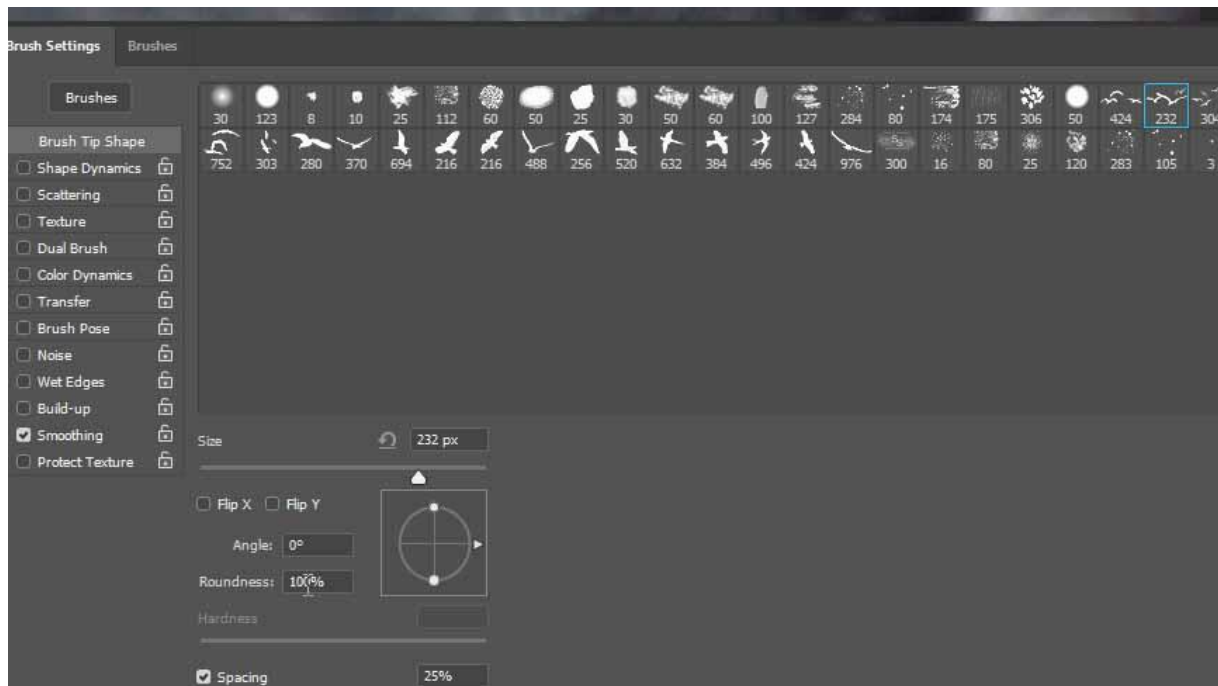
Composited Image

Finally, Birds are placed above the castle. With the birds hovering above the castle gives a feeling that the place is habitable and not abandoned. Usually, they hover above the spot where there is feed for them, like fishes or humans throwing food at them. Just like seagulls surround people when they are eating near the beach expecting them to throw food at them.

Brush tool has been used to create birds instead of an image. With Photoshop various brush tools are available to download for the internet. With this tool, it requires selecting from various brush stroke options. When we have the brush downloaded and selected, it turns the brush stroke into birds. The technique to use this is not to drag like a stroke but to hit on the same spot and it will draw birds. This tool gives the freedom to choose size, adjust the angle, tweak the roundness and determine the spacing between each bird.



Composited Image



Photoshop Brushes

Finally, a new layer is created which adds color to the whole composition and binds them together. It's called the final color grading. This is a very important layer and technique to apply finishing touch to composition. The images which are used, they all have different colors as a stock image. Applying a color to the whole composition in a new layer binds the whole composition together.



Final Composition. *Underwater Island*

Breakdown Video : <https://youtu.be/9qzWOGGgQi0>

2. Pirates in a Bottle

Pirates in a Bottle consists of elements like Sand, Glass Bottle, Pirate ship, Shark fish and Water. It is one of the favorite compositions that I've worked on. It was challenging on technical aspects and time consuming. The most challenging part in this artwork was turning an opaque bottle to translucent. It had to go through a process of making a selection through a color range in which only the grayscale color is selected. That's how the reflective part is still visible and it is one of the main characteristics of glass.

To begin with, an image of sand is used as the base. To give a feeling that the bottle was carried to the shore of the beach from the sea like a message in a bottle. Like in ancient times people used to write messages on a piece of paper, lock it in a bottle and let it float into the ocean. If somebody finds the bottle, that person would be able to read the message. The concept of this composition is based on 'Message in a bottle'. However, instead of a message written on a piece of paper it contains water with a Pirate Ship sailing on it and a shark fish lurking underwater to hunt the pirates.



Original Image [Sand](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/thegreenrabbit/art/Desert-Sand-Stock-250712139>

In the next step, an image of the sky with chunks of clouds is added. The image has hues of orange and pink to give a feeling of an evening sky. The sand in the stock image is similar to the sand found on a beach. Sunset is the best time to click photos on a beach, keeping that in mind an evening sky is chosen

for the background. In photography, it's called golden hour. It is the time of the day just before sunset and after sunrise. During this period of time the light is soft and has shades of orange and pink. These colors affect the mood of a photograph dramatically. The soft light doesn't burn the image and retains the details of the subject.



Original Image [Sky](#)

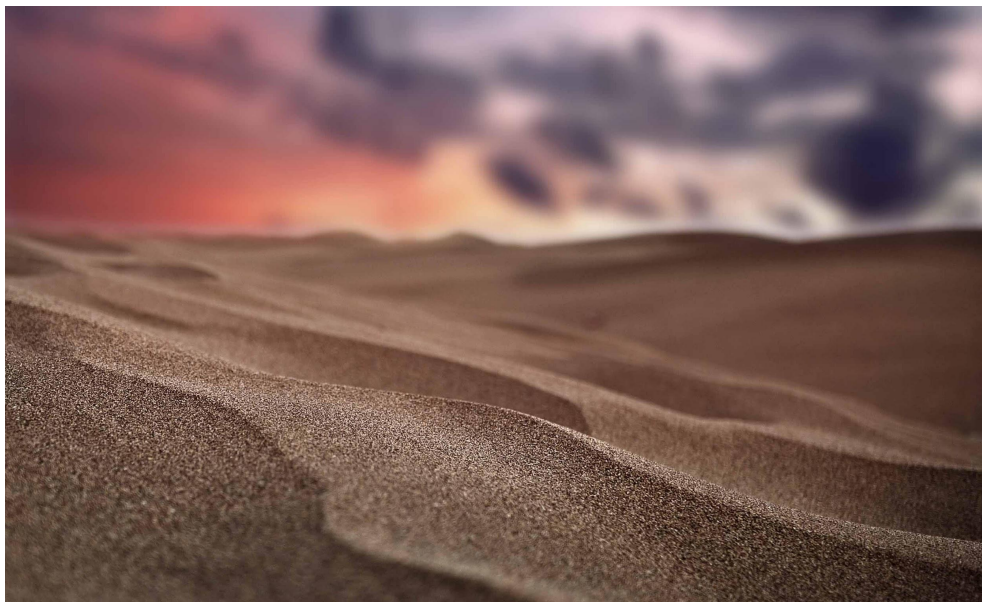
Visible at: Photos <https://photos.com/featured/pink-clouds-in-sky-photodisc.html>

The image is adjusted beneath the layer of sand. However, the image has higher resolution than the composition, hence it gives a room to play with adjustments especially in scaling and position. It is blurred with the help of a tool called “Gaussian Blur”. Blur adds more detail to composition as it brings out the subject to focus. It shifts the focus of the viewers to the subject close to the camera. It is the same effect we achieve while clicking through a DSLR camera. However, in a DSLR it's the lens which is responsible to focus the subject and defocus the objects in the background. The amount of blur is determined by the power of zoom in the lens. For instance, if the lens kit is 18-55mm, the objects in the background won't be blurred as much as it would with 70-300mm. Here, 18mm and 70mm is the minimum focus length while 55mm and 300mm is the maximum focus length.



Composited Image

In the next step, the color of sand is matched with the color of sky. The prominent light always comes from the sky and it affects the color of the elements on the ground. Color is matched using color balance and curves tools. Hues of red and orange are added to the image of sand as the light from the sky is the same color. The stock image of sand was shot in a different lighting condition, it appears that it was shot in gloomy weather during the afternoon. However, with the evening sky the lighting condition has changed and it will reflect on the sand as well. This will make the viewers believe that the sand was shot in dusk lighting.



Composited image

Now it's time to put the bottle on the sand. The bottle has a cork on the top instead of a cap. This type of bottle is used because in ancient times people used wine bottles which usually came with cork on top. The bottle has to be translucent because it needs to reveal the contents inside it and that's the whole concept of this artwork. However, a wine bottle would have been perfect for the composition as it was used to send messages back in old days but there are some limitations while searching for a perfect wine bottle that would look appealing with this composition. Most wine bottles are colored and are not completely transparent and have labels on them. That's another reason for not using it.



Original Image [Bottle](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/nellygraceng/art/Bottles-01-529160021>

This image contains two bottles. However, this right one seems perfect for the composition. The bottle is cropped out from the image using the selection tool and placed on the sand.



Composited Image

The bottle is slightly inclined towards the right which makes it look like it came floating from the sea. To achieve this, the bottle is rotated using the transform tool by pressing Ctrl+T and selecting the rotate option and rotating it clockwise to about 70 degrees. To make it appear like it's stuck on the sand, the bottom part of the bottle is cropped according to the flow of the sand.

In the next step, the bottle is turned translucent to retrieve its glass property as the image is clicked with the white background which is undesirable. To do this, the selection of the bottle is made using the gray color which means only the gray colored region of the bottle will be selected. Using the select inverse option gray color is deselected and the white region of the glass is selected. Once the white region is selected it can be removed just by pressing the delete key. The next image shows the final result.



Composited Image

In the next step, an image of the water is added and masked into the bottle. Masking is a method of concealing a portion of a layer. This provides more editing options than wiping or removing a portion of a layer permanently. In this case, a layer of bottle is used as a mask and the water will only appear within the range of the bottle. It would not spill outside of the bottle which makes it easy to modify or edit.



Original Image [Water](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/pure-poison89/art/Premade-10-342799804>

In order to put water inside the bottle, a mask is made from the shape of the bottle then the image of water is added. The mask doesn't allow the image of the water to go out of the bottle. Hence, it appears like water is inside the bottle. The layer of water is below the bottle to show the visible effect of glass over it. In the real world, the color of water is not blue. In fact, water is colorless. It appears blue because of the light and the color of its base. For Instance, water in a swimming pool appears blue because it has blue tiles at the bottom. Similarly, the water in the ocean appears green or blue because water absorbs the red color from the sunlight and does not reflect back, it only reflects hues of blue and green.



Composited Image

Next up, the shadow of the bottle is created using a brush tool and reducing the opacity to make it appear like a real shadow. Reducing the opacity makes the sand visible behind it. Blue tint is added as the light is passing through blue water. To add blue color, a brush tool is used with low intensity by selecting the blue color of the water from the bottle with the help of an ink drop tool. Ink drop tool is used to select any color from an image and use it on a brush. It allows selecting the precise color and applying it using a brush tool. Shadow is created in the front of the bottle because the light is coming from the background. Blue color is added to the shadow as the light is going through the bottle and the water has a blue tint. The blue color to shadow gives it a more realistic feel to the viewers.



Composited Image

To make the shadow appear more like it's coming from the bottle, water texture is added using an image. To add the texture of water on shadow, an image of the water texture is placed over the shadow and the blending mode is changed to 'Lighten' to have the ripple effect over the shadow. However, placing the whole water texture image over shadow, some part of the water texture was spilling out of the shadow region. The requirement of water texture is only on the shadow. Hence, the rest of the water textured has been erased using an eraser tool.



Original Image [water texture](https://www.deviantart.com/rosalinesstock/art/Water-62895138)

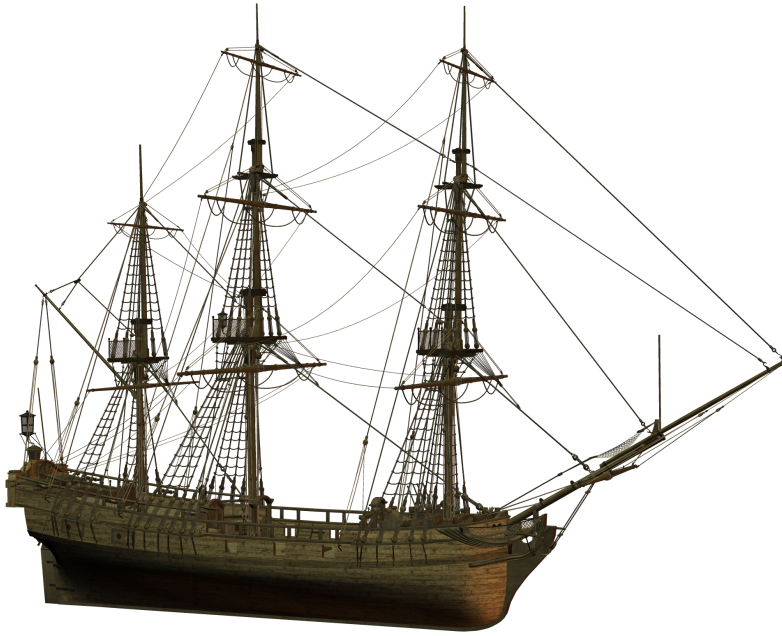
Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/rosalinesstock/art/Water-62895138>

The following image contains the texture of water in the shadow. The texture has been erased prominently from the edges to have the shadow visible more on the edges. However, the ripples have not been erased in the center, opacity of the layer has been reduced to 40% as it requires it to appear even throughout the center of the shadow.



Composited Image

In the following step, a PNG image of a Pirate ship is added and skewed to match the perspective. An old pirate ship is used to enhance the story and feel in the composition. The wooden texture of the pirate ship has the aspects of an old era which make it believable that the ship is from former times. It looks like one of the ships from a PC game called Age of Empires in which you can transport the army through water. The image is in PNG format, it is not required to crop it out from the background because the background is transparent. With the transparent background, the layer beneath the PNG layer is visible.



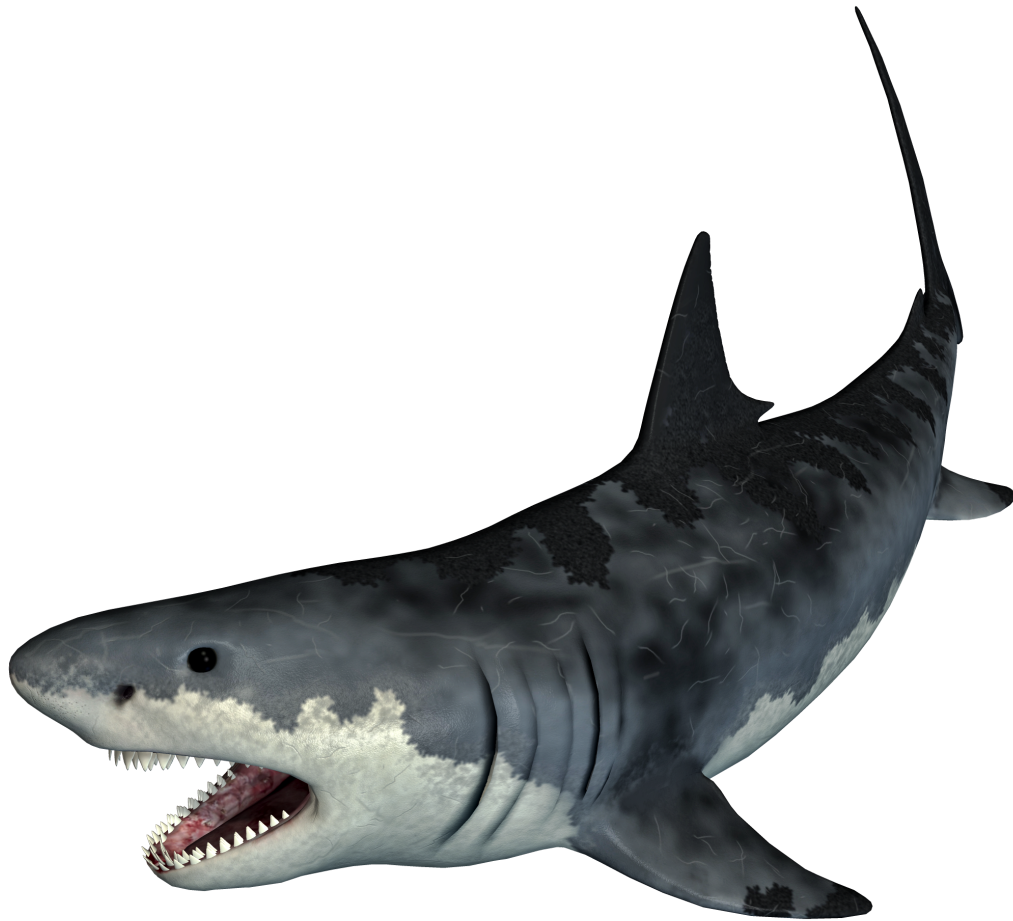
Original Image [Pirate ship](#)

Visibleat:DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/moonchilde-stock/art/Pirate-Ships-II-Stock-96362745>



Composited Image

Finally, Shark Fish Is added to the composition below the ship. The image is PNG as well, just like the image of a pirate ship. It doesn't require it to be cropped out from an image. However, it requires color correction to match with the color of water. With some color correction the shark appears submerged in the water. Layer of shark is placed under a layer of bottle and water.



Original Image [Shark](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/roy3d/art/9-Monster-Shark-Stock-PNG-s-425830570>

For the final touch, a brush tool is used to create and enhance lighting to the whole composition. Using a soft brush and selecting the color (pink) from the sky because it's the most prominent color in the composition a brush stroke is created in a new layer and the blending mode is changed to overlay.



Final Composition *Pirates in a Bottle*

Breakdown Video : <https://youtu.be/nMDwy2sR0Ng>

3. Bubble Island

Bubble Island is created during the lockdown and is inspired by the country New Zealand. During the period of lockdown, New Zealand has taken some good measures to keep the country safe from Covid. By closing the borders for international tourists and putting up a free vaccination campaign, this country is now the best country to live in under the circumstances. The floating island depicts the country New Zealand which is surrounded by Covid and is covered by a bubble. The bubble is a shield which protects the island from viruses. During lockdown people were not supposed to break their bubble by meeting people from outside their bubble. It was really a hard time for people to cope up with this situation, especially the working people. Some of them lost their jobs or were told to work from home. Difficult times were not just limited to working people only but with students like me as well. Being at home and having no friends was really tough for me. Hence, I've created "*Bubble Island*" which was really fun to work on during those days.

This piece of art includes a floating island inside a bubble, the island consists of a house and a man. However, the whole island is surrounded by the covid virus.

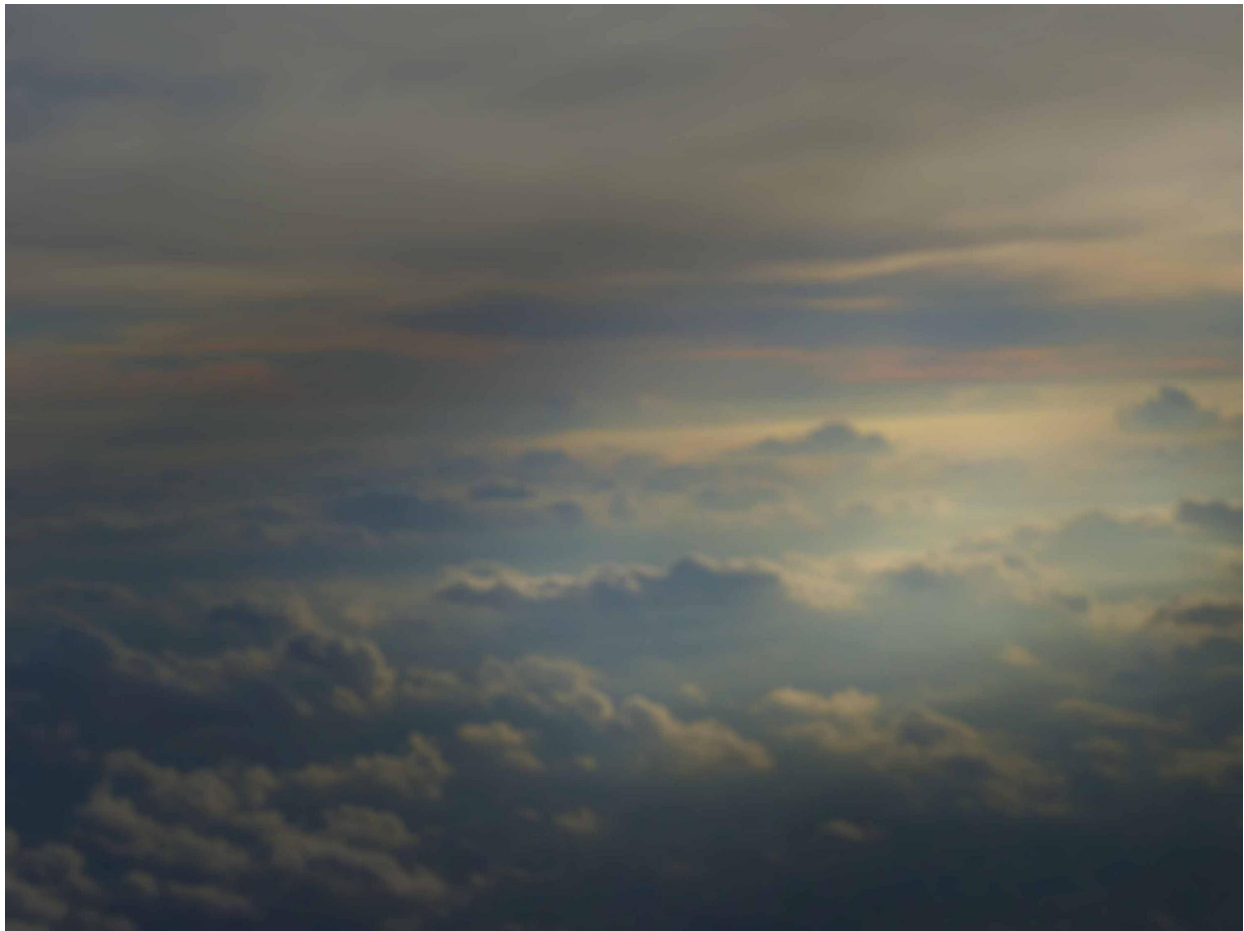
Initially, An Image of clouds is used as the background. The image seems like it's shot from an airplane because the clouds are below in the frame. Usually, the flight of an airplane is above the clouds as the air is thin at such heights. Thin air generates less friction as compared to the air below 10,000ft. It allows the airplane to glide smoothly and use less fuel as the drag is low. The requirement was a floating island so it had to be between or above clouds.



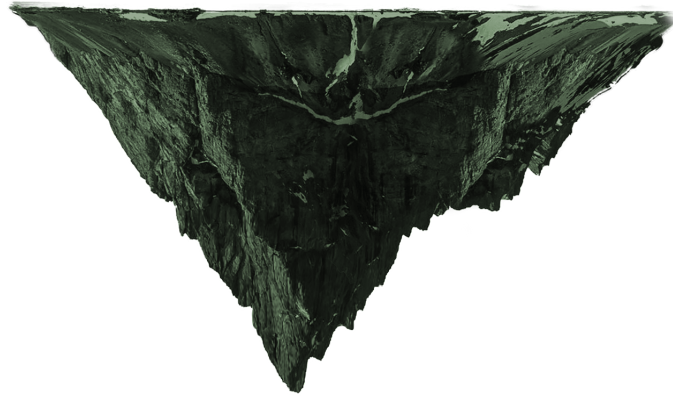
Original Image [Clouds](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/ratinrage/art/Sky-Stock-584992679>

In the next step, color is adjusted using a color balance tool, brightness is reduced using levels and blurred using gaussian blur tool to make the clouds seem more dramatic and cinematic. Brightness is reduced towards the left side of the image to make it appear that the light is prominently falling from the right side. To achieve this, a circular selection tool is used to select the part of the image that needs to be brighter and by right clicking on the selection it shows a few options. One of the options is Select Inverse, by selecting Select Inverse the selection will select the portion of the image which is not in the oval circle. Now we have the desired selection to reduce the brightness. Right click on the selection also allows to add feather edges if selection which makes the effect blend in seamlessly with the unselected part of image.



After the color correction of clouds, it's time to put the PNG image of a floating piece of terrain which depicts an island for this artwork. The floating island appears like an upside-down mountain. However, the stock image is already flipped upside down with a transparent background as if it's a PNG image. The snow is visible in the cracks of the terrain, usually snow stays for a longer period of time in the cracks of mountains. That's how this terrain seems like an upside-down mountain.



Original PNG Image [Terrain](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt

<https://www.deviantart.com/mattiamc/art/Floating-Terrain-Mountain-02-PNG-Bonus-519934600>



Composited image

The shadow is created using the brush tool on the bottom left part of the terrain as the light is falling from the top right corner of the image.



Shadow

After the terrain is finalized with shadow and correct placement. A PNG image of grass is added on the top of the terrain. As this artwork is based on the concept of New Zealand, green grass is used because this country has a lush green environment. Grass provides a base to the house which will be placed on top of it. The top region of terrain is flat. However, by placing an image of grass on top of it provides a whole new perspective.



Original Image [Grass](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt

<https://www.deviantart.com/mattiamc/art/Floating-Terrain-Mountain-02-PNG-Bonus-519934600>



Composited Image

The Grass is placed, scaled and skewed to fit on the top of the terrain. Color correction is done to match lighting with composition as the original image of grass is too intense in colors. Hence, the brightness and saturation has been reduced.

Afterwards, a PNG image of a tree is placed on top of grass.



Original Image [Tree](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/moonglowlilly/art/PNG-TREE-AB-330801213>



Composited Image

The light on the tree is adjusted according to the background light by simply using a brush tool and enhancing the brightness on the top right portion of the tree to match it with the whole lighting in the composition. In the real world, light is always brighter on the side which is facing towards the source of light. The prominent source of light is falling from the right side. However, a brush tool is used to enhance the exposure on leaves of trees. To do this, exposure is selected instead of color and smudged over the leaf where the exposure needs more.

In the next step, an old wooden house is cropped from an image. New Zealand has a lot of wooden houses which have slanted roofs with a ridge. The house in this composition has a similar roof like most houses in New Zealand. The texture of the wood is old and it gives a sense that it has been abandoned.



Original Image [House](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/wyonet/art/old-wooden-house-569651337>



Composited Image

The original image of the house is intense in terms of brightness and saturation. Hence, the brightness is reduced as well as saturation. Shadow is created in the front section of the house using the brush tool as desired. The bottom region of the image has a path which is coming out of the house. However, the path is not required in composition and it has been erased to reveal the layer of grass beneath it.



Shadow & Brightness levels (House)

Afterwards, a man standing is cropped from the original image of the house. However, man has been relocated in the composition. He has been moved slightly towards the right than the original image. If the man was in his original position, the shadow of the house would cover him as well. To make this composition more dramatic, he has been moved to the right so that he'll be in the light and his shadow can be created. His shadow also brings out the depth between him and the house which gives the viewers an assumption of volume for the space.



Standing man (Composited)

Shadow is created for the man as well and matched with the orientation of the shadow of the house. His shadow is stretched just like the house because the light is falling horizontally. If the light falls vertically, the shadow will be small and will form near the base of an object. Just like when we go for a walk in the evening or morning, during that period of time our sun is near the horizon. We notice that our shadow is stretched and seems like it's a shadow of a taller person. However, if we go out during noon when our sun is right above our head, we see a shadow near our feet and it's not stretched at all.



Shadow of man (Composited)

Now, it's time to put them inside a bubble. To create a bubble, an image of a crystal juggling ball is used. The juggling ball is cropped and rotated according to the light of the composition. In the original image, the light is falling from the top. However, in this composition it's coming from the top right. Crystal ball and a water bubble have similar reflection properties. However, it depends upon the lighting condition and the background color of their image. The stock image of the crystal ball has a slightly white background and the light is falling from the top, which provides reflection on the edges. Reflection is the property that makes the ball appear like a bubble. Erasing the central region of crystal, unrequired reflection has been eliminated and the house behind the crystal ball is visible.



Original Image [Crystal Juggling Ball](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/luckystock/art/ball2-45384482>

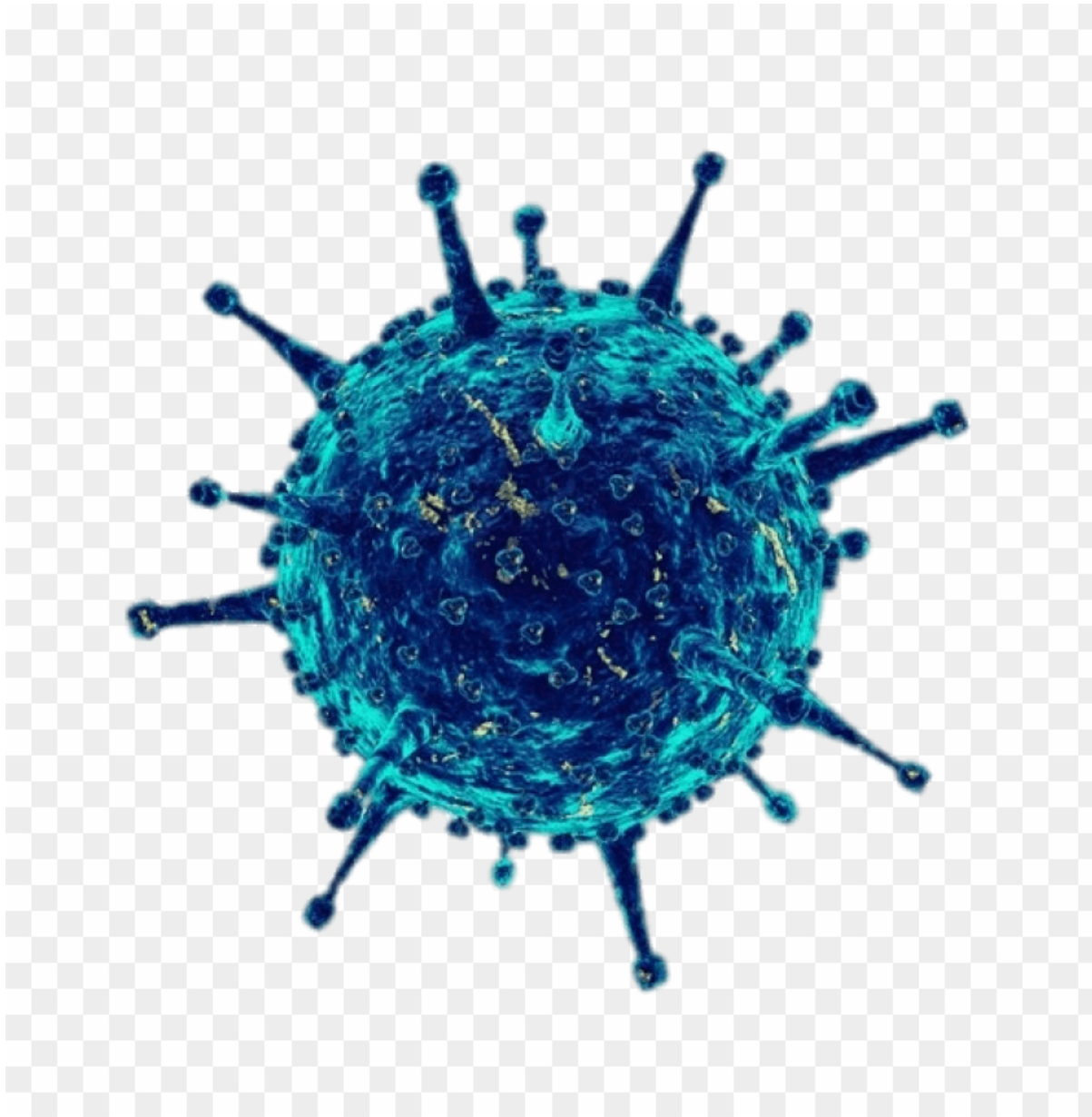
The ball is cropped out of the original image and placed into the composition over the house. However, the center part of the ball is useless as it has shades of gray. It has been removed using the selection tool and adding feather to the edge of the selection. Feather smoothens the hard edges of the selection which makes the object blend seamlessly with the composition. The bottom portion of the ball is erased

using the eraser tool as it is not required. When a floating water bubble lands on the floor or a smooth surface like a table, it changes its shape from a full circle to a semi-circle. The requirement is a semi-circle shaped bubble as the base is flat grass.



Composited image

To demonstrate that this floating island is surrounded by Covid-19, an illustration of CoronaVirus is used. It's duplicated, randomly and slightly rotated so that it doesn't appear that it's duplicated and placed around the island. The illustration of the virus seems like an underwater or naval mine which is a self-contained explosive device placed in water to create a defensive area to protect the fleet of ships and submarines. It provides a secure perimeter in the water and also destroys torpedoes, enemy submarines or any other unauthorized object from entering the safety zone. The floating island is floating in the territory of a virus which can be devastating as an underwater mine protected by a shield of the bubble. The shield provides cover from the explosion of the mines as Covid vaccine and wearing a mask reduces the risk of getting infected by Corona Virus.



Original Image [Corona Virus](#)

Visible at: Stickpng <https://www.stickpng.com/img/nature/viruses/blue-virus-with-tentacles>

By duplicating the virus four times, the island is surrounded by four illustrations of the virus. To give an illusion of depth, the large virus at bottom right is blurred so that it looks out of focus and near the camera. To match the lighting of the whole environment with the virus, Light and shadow has been created on each illustration of the virus. However, the position of each virus is different from each other. Hence, the lighting and shadow is created according to the source of light. After this, all the objects in

the composition will match with the lighting and shadows with lighting of the whole composition. With the matched lighting and shadows, the composition starts to appear as one.



Composited Image

Now, we have the floating island surrounded by CoronaVirus. It's time to add some lighting and color to the composition which will enhance the whole visual experience. With the use of a brush tool, orange color is added by simply using a brush stroke on the clouds and changing the blending mode from normal to color dodge. Orange color is used to demonstrate the evening sunset color which gives a dramatic feel to the composition. The blending mode color dodge works only on white, that means orange color will only be visible on the bright portion of the clouds.

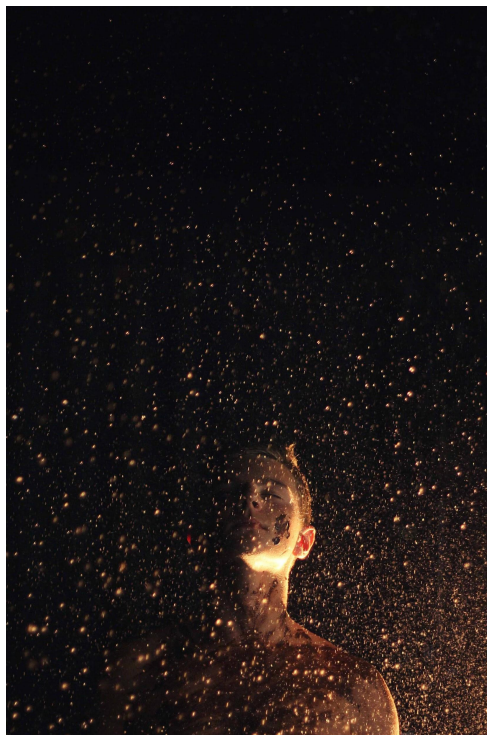


Normal Blending Mode



Color Dodge Blending Mode

Afterwards, spark particles are cropped from an image and added around the virus to make them appear vicious and alive. It seems the virus is generating sparks while floating around. The blending mode for the particles layer is changed to screen to blend it with the composition. The stock image of the spark particle has black background. Hence, the screen blending mode eliminates the black color and makes the orange particles protrude from the black background.



Original Image [Particles](https://unsplash.com/photos/h9Rx3zOYZws)

Visible at: Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/photos/h9Rx3zOYZws>



Composited Image

Finally, to hold the whole composition together orange color is added to the whole composition. Since orange is the most prominent color for this composition, it has been applied to blend the whole composition together. Due to this, reflection on the bubble has an orange tint which looks appealing and the rest of the clouds has an orange tint as well. The floating viruses seem more like they are floating in an evening sky with orange hues.



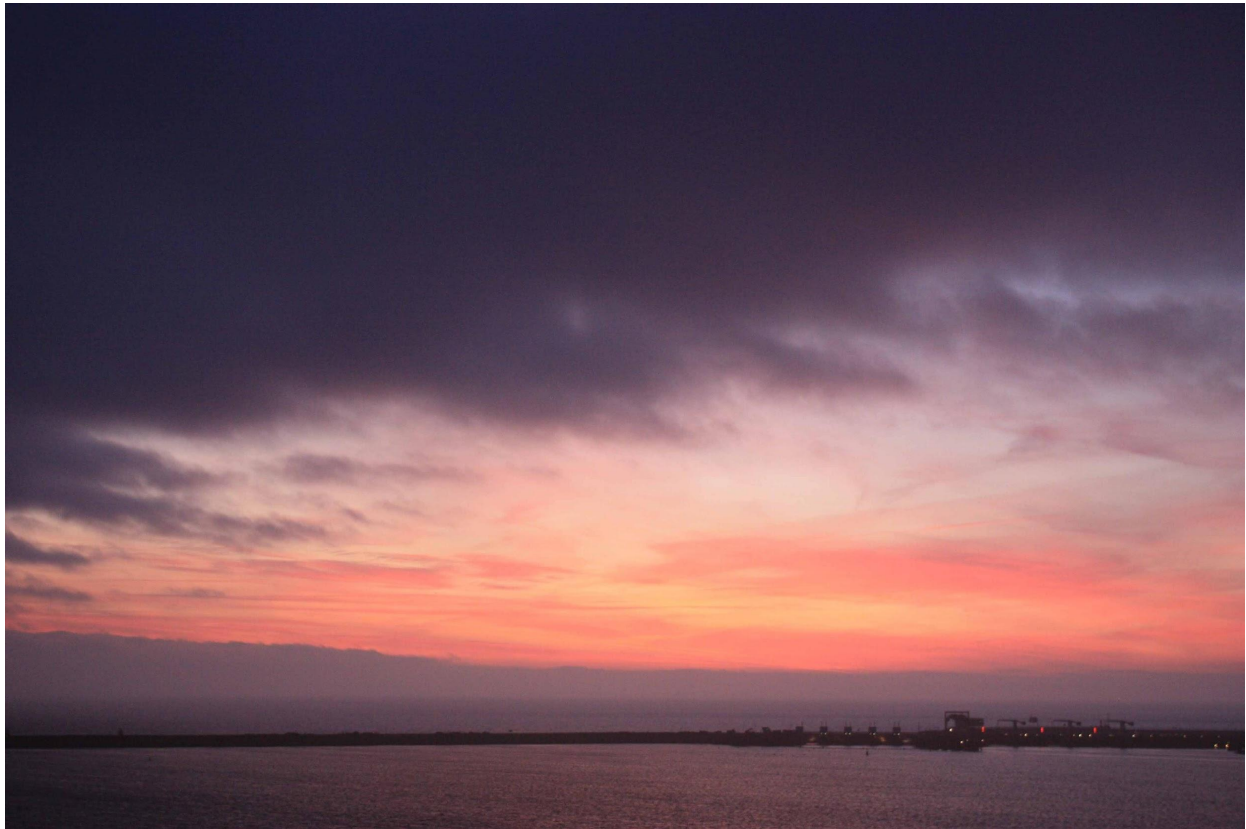
Final Composition *Bubble Island*

Breakdown Video : <https://youtu.be/1wTpO1ZMuRA>

4. Apocalypse Survivor

Apocalypse Survivor is based on a theme of destruction as it contains elements like a wrecked car, withered tree, old barrels, the 'old house' same as from previous artwork (Bubble Island) and an old man. I believe the artwork gives a feeling of sorrow to the viewers. The old man is staring at his old house which survived the apocalyptic wind which makes the viewers believe that the man had a lonesome life and he is only left with his house. Just like *Bubble Island* this artwork involves an evening sky with long and stretched out shadows. However, it is based on a theme of covid and this artwork has a different mood. It is absolutely stunning to achieve a different mood using similar colors. The evening sky with orange and pink hues provides a dramatic and cinematic feel. The wrecked car and withered trees are used to enhance the sense of destruction. Now the man is only left with the house and is in love with it even if it's old and has increased the feeling of love towards it. Hence, apocalyptic can be romantic.

To initiate this artwork, an image of sky is used at the beginning. The image has orange and pink hues which gives a feeling of dust and smog after the wind. However, the sky part is required from the image and the ground part is cropped and faded out.



Original Image [Purple sky](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/castock/art/Purple-morning-156090305>



Composited image

After the sky is placed, changes to color balance and hue/saturation have been made to achieve desired color and saturation.

Now, an image of barren land with distant mountains is used. Barren land goes well with the apocalyptic feel that is to be achieved. Image of the sky is erased according to the mountain ridge to make it appear in one composition.



Original Image [Barren Land](http://www.deviantart.com/faestock/art/Phoenix-3-362205890)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/faestock/art/Phoenix-3-362205890>



Composited Image

Now, the ground and sky are matched, some color grading is applied to enhance the mood and give the composition a feeling of fantasy. The brightness of the ground is slightly reduced and a stroke of orange color is used to enhance the color of dusk using a brush tool and blending mode is 'overlay' for the layer of orange color.



Composited image

The background is composed and the colors are perfect for the mood that is to be achieved. It's time to add the cropped house which has been added on previous artwork (Bubble Island) so it doesn't need to be cropped out of the original image again. To achieve this, the layer of the cropped house is copied from the previous artwork and pasted on the layer panel of this composition.



Composited Image

The house is strategically placed according to the light from the background. With the light falling from the background, in a realistic world shadow is formed. However, in this artwork instead of using a brush tool a different technique is used. In this technique, the layer of the house is duplicated and flipped vertically and turned into black color. It is then skewed and stretched according to the light to match the perspective.



House with shadow (Composited Image)

The house is too bright to fit with lighting of composition because the original image was shot in different and bright lighting conditions. Therefore, the color balance and hue/saturation are adjusted according to composition.



House with color correction and reduced brightness (Composited Image)

The house is now composited with the background. The next step involves placing a PNG image of the withered trees to enhance the apocalyptic feel in the whole composition. The trees seem like they've had leaves on them before the destructive wind.



Original Image [Trees](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt



Composited Image

After placing trees in the composition, a wrecked car is strategically placed. The wrecked car really binds the story of destruction in the composition together. As most of the elements are destroyed the car should appear destroyed as well. The car is cropped from a stock image and placed in the composition.



Original Image [Wrecked Car](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/ana-ene-eme/art/burned-car-2-180936664>



Composited Image

After the car is placed, it's time to create the shadow for it. However, a brush tool is used to create shadow as it doesn't require much detail because the object is distant from the camera.



Car shadow (Composited Images)

With the wrecked car, composition looks brilliant. However, it's slightly inclined towards the left in terms of elements. A good composition looks better with balanced or symmetric elements. Therefore, barrels will be placed on the right side of the house to balance out the composition.

The Barrels are cropped out from a stock image and the shadow is created using a brush tool.



Original Image [Barrel 1](#)



Original Image [Barrel 2](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/purple-elf-stock/art/Barrel-80290235>

<https://www.deviantart.com/regenstock/art/Wooden-barrel-2-19577806>



Composited Image

Finally, an old man will be placed. Similar to other elements in composition, the old man is cropped from a stock image and placed in front of the house. The technique for creating shadow for this element is similar to the technique used to create shadow for house by duplicating the image, flipping it vertically, changing the color to black and reducing the opacity. Slight color and brightness changes are made to the image to match with lighting of the composition.



Original Image [Old Man](#)

Visible at: DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/nickistock/art/Old-man-V2-61506651>



Composited Image

To apply a finishing touch, subtle brush strokes are used to enhance the lighting around the house. To keep the focus on the house 'Vignette' effect is created using a brush tool. However, instead of blur, black color is used to darken the composition from the sides. This effect draws attention to the element which is bright and dominant, in this composition it's the house.



Final Composition *Apocalypse Survivor*

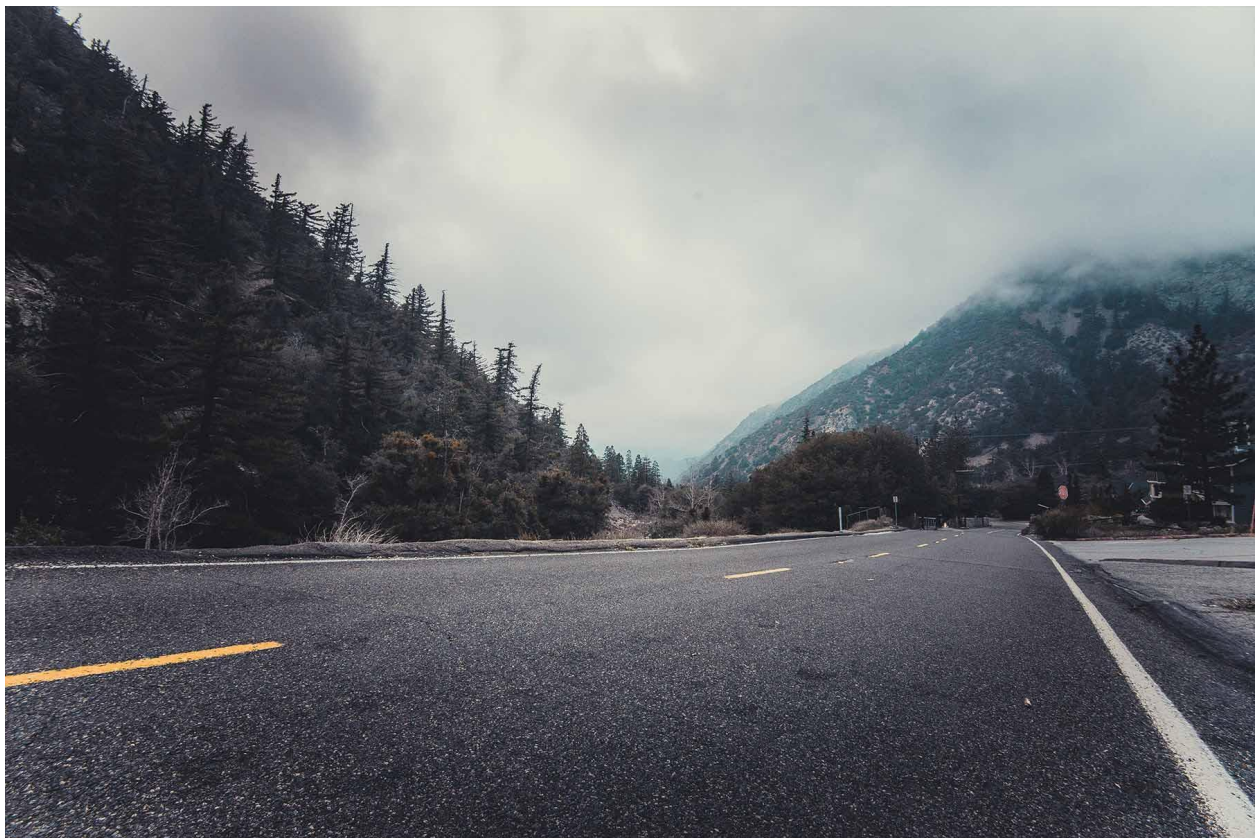
Breakdown Video : <https://youtu.be/TVZ7JXAKnX0>

5. Shape, Lights & Reflections

Creating artwork using elements like a house, floating island, a big whale, a shark and pirate ship is appealing. However, it has some limitations to it. For instance, they do not have a geometric shape or a special effect like 'reflection'. In a realistic world, a mirror is an object that reflects light. It can be of any shape oval, square or rectangle.

In *Shape, Lights & Reflections*, tetrahedron shape is used to reflect light and surroundings. A tetrahedron has four sides. However, the sides are triangular in shape. It is a 3-Dimensional shape just like a cube but with four triangular sides instead of square. This artwork showcases reflections of the surrounding environment and lighting on a tetrahedron shape using some basic and advanced image manipulation techniques.

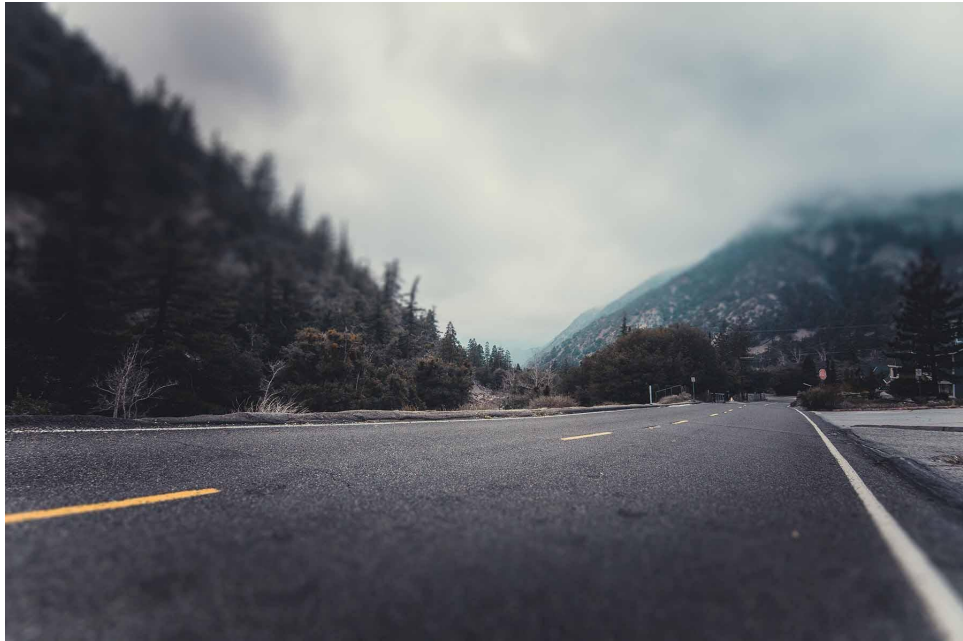
Initially, a stock background image is placed. Background image consists of a road and mountains. It seems like the road is going through a mountain valley.



Original Image [Background](#)

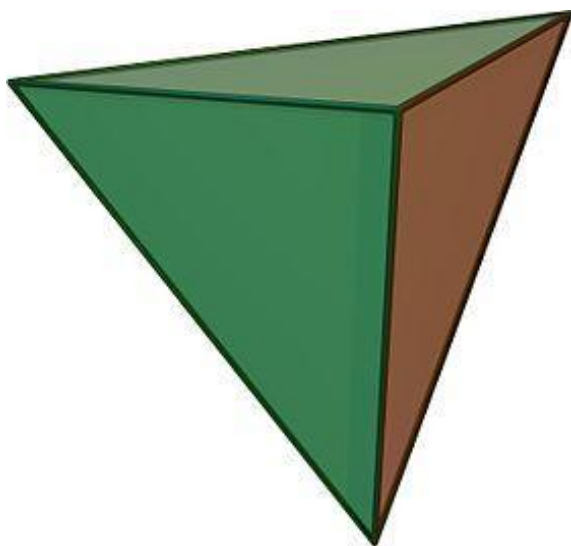
Visible at: Pexels <https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-showing-asphalt-road-428431/>

Afterwards, the image is blurred from the sides to draw the attention of viewers to the center of image where the shape will be placed.



Blur Effect

After applying the blur effect to the background image. An image of the tetrahedron shape is strategically placed on the road.



Original Image [Tetrahedron Shape](#)

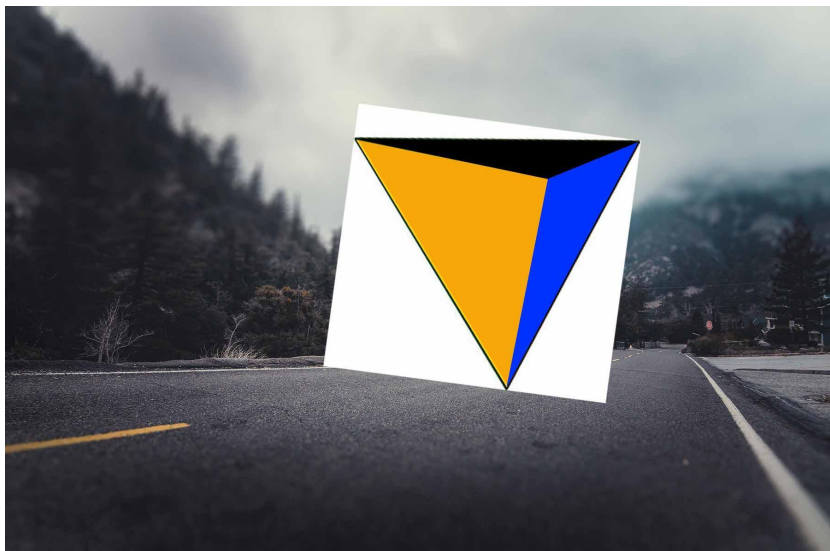
Visible at:

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/83/Tetrahedron.jpg/280px-Tetrahedron.jpg>



Composited image

The next step involves selecting sides of the shape by drawing shapes on it using a polygon tool.



Composited Image

Now, the shapes are traced using the polygon tool and a new shape has been created over it. The layer of the image is no longer required as it was just used as a reference to draw shape.



Composited Image

After achieving the shape by tracing, the background image is duplicated and placed on each side of the shape. However, the left part of the shape is going to reflect the left side of the background which is a yellow triangle.



Composited Image

Similarly, duplicating the background and placing it on top of a black triangle. However, it will reflect the top section of the background. Hence, the top side of the mountain is placed on black triangle shape.



Composited Image

Finally, the background is duplicated again and placed on the right side of the shape which is a blue triangle. It reflects the right side of the background.



After placing background images on each side of the shape and placing it strategically to achieve reflection effect, edges are refined to add more details of a mirror as if it's reflecting light.



Refined Edges of the shape

Now, the edges are refined and it appears like the shape is reflecting the surroundings. With refined edges of the shape, it makes it more believable that the shape itself is a mirror.

After finalizing the shape with a mirror effect on it, light is created behind the shape to give it a surreal appeal.



Light behind the shape

When there is a light, there is a shadow. Hence, shadow is created for the shape which will define the depth and distance of the shape from the camera.



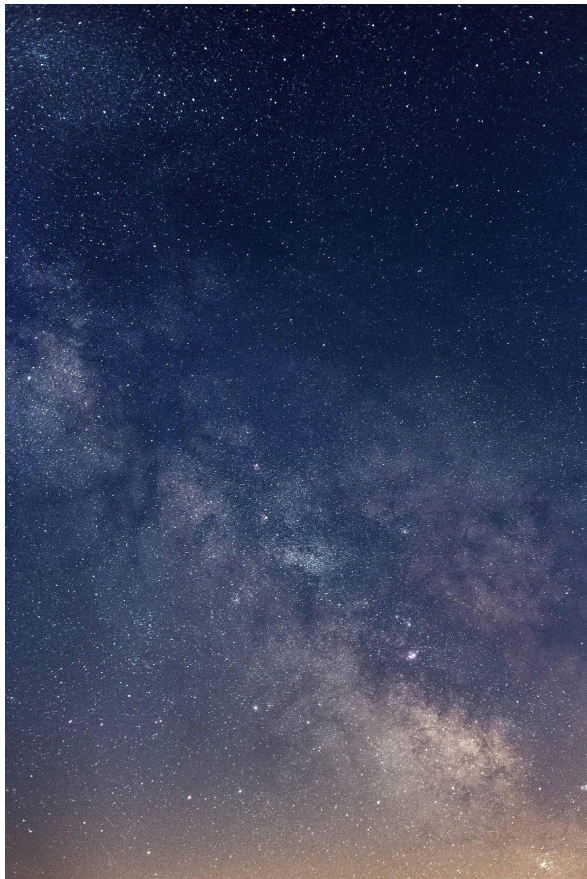
Final Composition *Shape, Lights & Reflections*

Breakdown Video : <https://youtube.com/shorts/2HENFgMXgmo?feature=share>

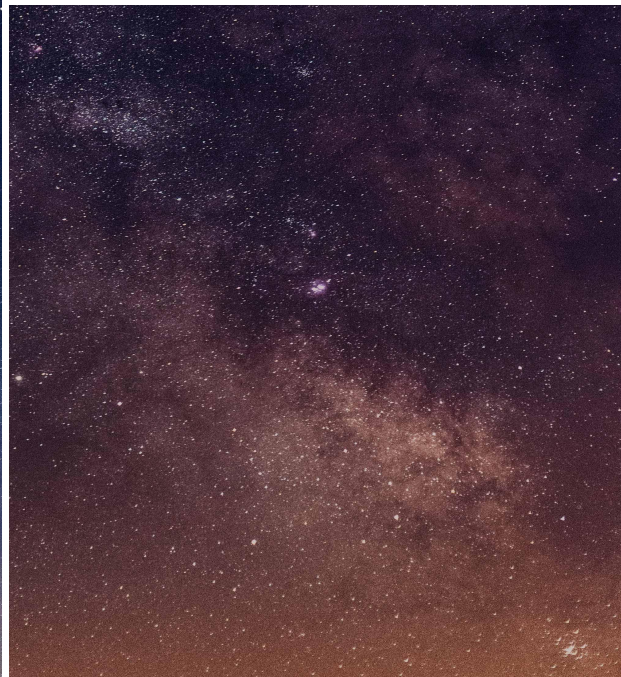
6. Jelly House

Jelly House seems like it's out of someone's dream. With elements like the moon, jellyfish, sky full of stars and houses. The way it's composed together, it's presented in a dreamlike atmosphere. The moon over the house has tentacles of jellyfish with a sky full of stars in the background. It appears like the moon is a parachute for a house and it's about to take the house off the ground, that's what grants this artwork a dreamlike feeling. However, for this artwork, ground and house is from the same stock image and stays intact in the frame.

To begin with, a stock image of sky with stars is placed as a background image. However, some alterations have been made on the color balance, levels and a layer of blue color is added on the top and its blending mode has changed to overlay.

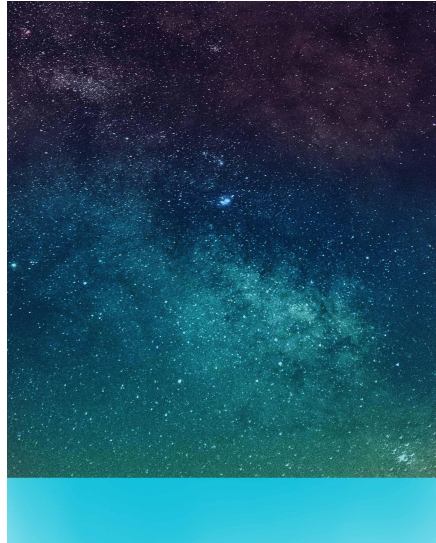


Original Image [Starry Sky](https://www.pexels.com/photo/stars-during-nighttime-127577/)



Composited image with adjusted level and color balance

Visible at: Pexels <https://www.pexels.com/photo/stars-during-nighttime-127577/>



Starry sky with added blue color.

The blue color enhances the surreal mood of the sky. After achieving the desired color and feel of the sky, a stock image of a house with ground will be placed over the layer of the sky.



Original Image [House](#)

Visible at: Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/photos/eWqOgJ-lfil>



Composited Image

After placing the house in the composition, a stock image of jelly fish will be placed behind the house. Jelly fish is cropped out of the original image and flipped horizontally in composition. In the original image of the jellyfish it is facing towards the left. However, after flipping it horizontally it appears more appealing and goes really well with the whole composition.



Original Image [Jellyfish](#)

Visible at: Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/photos/w7WVYjY8c5>



Composited Image

Now, the jellyfish has been placed on the right spot, some adjustment is made with a hue/saturation tool to change the color of jelly fish to orange. Why orange? Because it has to match with the color of the moon that will be placed over it.



Composited Image



Original Image [Moon](#)

Visible at: Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/photos/IG9WiAR78zQ>

The stock image of the moon has orange and red hues in it. It is the phase of the moon called “Blood Moon”. It occurs when Earth’s moon is in total lunar eclipse. Eclipse is when the shadow of earth covers the moon completely. It is an astonishing view from earth because usually the moon is always bright white in color. This phase occurs twice a year as the moon revolves earth and earth revolves our sun.

However, the moon in the stock image has an orange portion on the right side. Hence, the stock image is rotated as the orange portion of the moon is required to be on top in composition. Afterwards, with the help of an eraser tool, the white portion of the moon is erased to match with tentacles of jellyfish so that it appears like the moon has tentacles.



Composited Image

Now, the moon appears like it has tentacles. Some lighting effects are added between the moon and house to make it look like it's alive and magical.



Composited Image

The stock image of the house is too bright for the composition because it's shot in daylight. However, the composition has night light conditions. Therefore, the brightness and color will be reduced using levels and color balance tools.



Composited Image

After that the brightness and color of the house is adjusted to the composition. It's time to add light to the roof of the house. The light on the roof will make the viewers believe that the moon is illuminating and will provide life and detail to composition.



Composited Image

With the creation of light, shadow will form. Now, shadows will be created for the house. The prominent light is coming from the moon so the shadow will fall on the ground in front of the house.



Composited Image

Now, having all the elements placed and matched with color, brightness and lighting. Final color grading will be applied to the whole composition to bind all the elements together.



Final Composition *Jelly House*

Breakdown Video : https://youtube.com/shorts/91P6_WNsDqI?feature=share

Conclusion

Art has been developed in many different ways, whether it is the style of an artist or the tools which have been used. I've been creating art since my kindergarten days. However, it was with just using crayons, color pencils, water colors, paper or a drawing sheet. Later on, in my school days I was introduced to computers and that's how I fell in love with digital graphics.

Digital Image Wizardry doesn't just focus on the digital artworks and the process behind it, it also tells my story and a journey. The journey from being an amateur artist to being a VFX artist for a big company in the industry and it just doesn't end there. It's more about the thirst and desperation of learning something new because at some point everybody reaches their potential and starts to live a monotonous life. It happened to me. That's when I decided I needed to learn more and came to New Zealand to pursue Masters of Creative Technologies from Auckland University Of Technology in Auckland. During my days in the university, I've learned a lot about academic writing. However, it has taught me about other things outside the university as well. Being alone in the country has been difficult, with learning all those academic things I needed to pay my bills as well. To pay my bills I needed a job. Initially I worked on the roads as a traffic controller for a few months. Later on, I started designing plans for temporary traffic management on AutoCad. Being a digital artist helped me a lot in learning traffic management plan design and currently I'm working with Evolution Road Services which is a big company that provides design services for traffic management in Auckland. My designing skills helped me a lot to learn how to design traffic management plans. For instance, there are some tools in AutoCad which are similar to the tools in Photoshop. The only difference is that Photoshop is a pixel based software and AutoCad is a vector based software. However, they use similar tools and both have a layer palette. Soon, I decided that I want to pursue my career as a traffic management designer as it has been a successful one year and six months being in the industry and I love my job.

Though there are a lot of technical terms in the process of image manipulation for each artwork in *Digital Image Wizardry*. However, it is more about the learning process by getting inspired and inspiring others. Art is in everything we do, it's all about recognising the artist inside yourself and implementing it in your lifestyle to make your life worth living.

“These are the Principles for the Development of a Complete Mind : Study the science of art. Study the art of science. Develop your senses - especially learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else.” - Leonardo da Vinci

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