



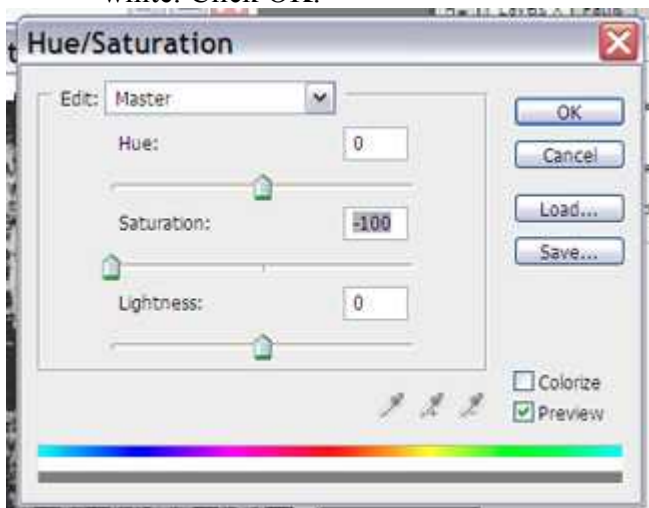
Making a Grunge Brush in Photoshop/Photoshop Elements

By LaWanna Desjardin,
Desjardin Digital Designs
Ldesjardin@gmail.com

In scrapbooking, digital scrapbooking in particular, grunge has become a classic way to add interest and texture to a page. An integral part of this style is the grunge brush, which can be used to ink the edge of a paper or photos, add texture and other techniques. In this tutorial, I'll show you one of my favorite ways to make a grunge brush in Photoshop and Photoshop Elements.

First you'll need an image to begin with. I like working with high-contrast photos that are textured or have interesting shapes. Examples are photos of grass, clouds or even tree lines. The image I'm using for this tutorial is a photo of the side of a rusted old boat trailer of my neighbors. Open the image in Photoshop/Elements and make a copy of the image so that you don't disturb the original.

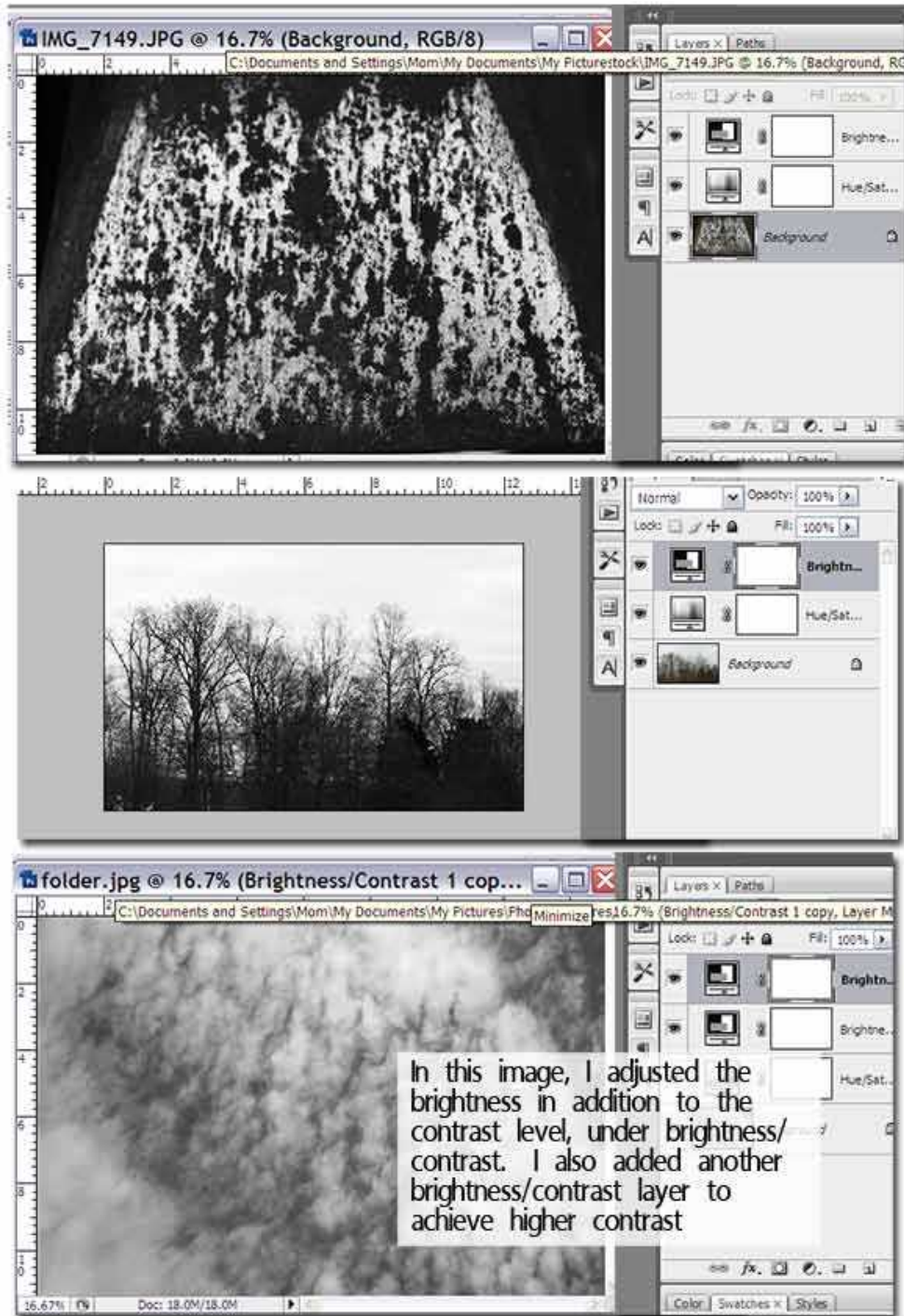
1. You'll need to desaturate the image next. Choose Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation from the menu. You'll see the Hue/Saturation box appear. Under Saturation, move the slider all the way to the left. (In PSE, you can choose Enhance>Adjust Color>Remove Color.) Your image should now look black and white. Click OK.



2. Now go back to the menu and choose Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Brightness/Contrast. Slide the Contrast all the way to the right until you reach the desired contrast. For me, the higher the contrast the better.

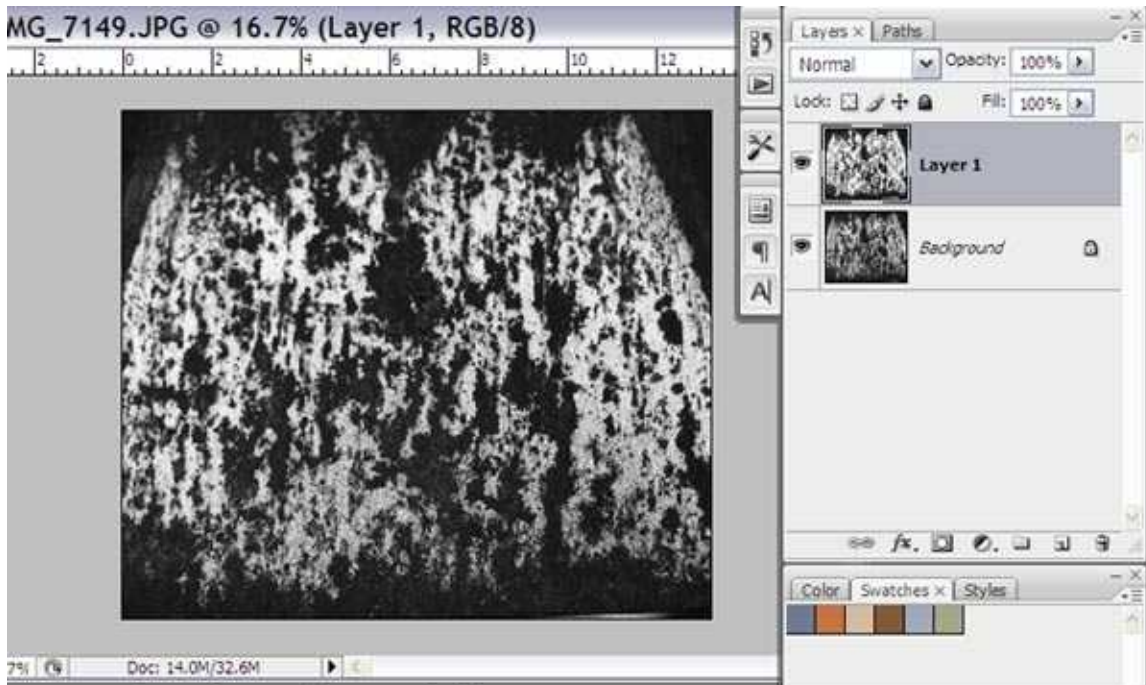


3. Below you see the results of three images I've manipulated in this way. Note that in the last one, I wanted a higher contrast, so I added another brightness/contrast layer and also adjust the brightness slider.

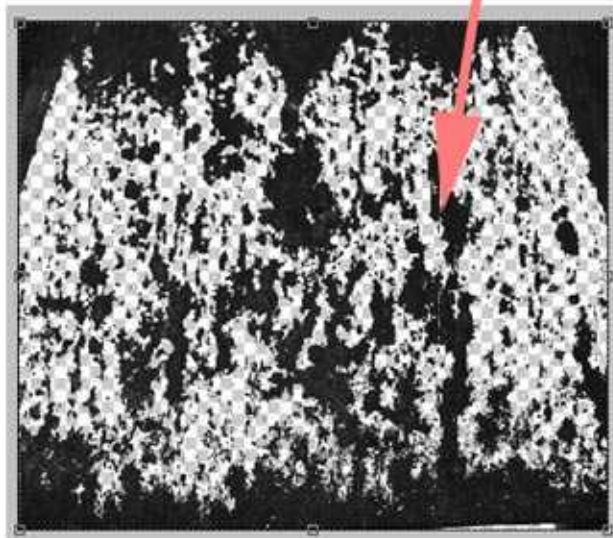


4. Now we will use top image to create a brush. First, for simplicity lets flatten the image. Choose Layer>Flatten Image. I have also cropped the image to get rid of the outside edges of the photo, which are not so interesting.

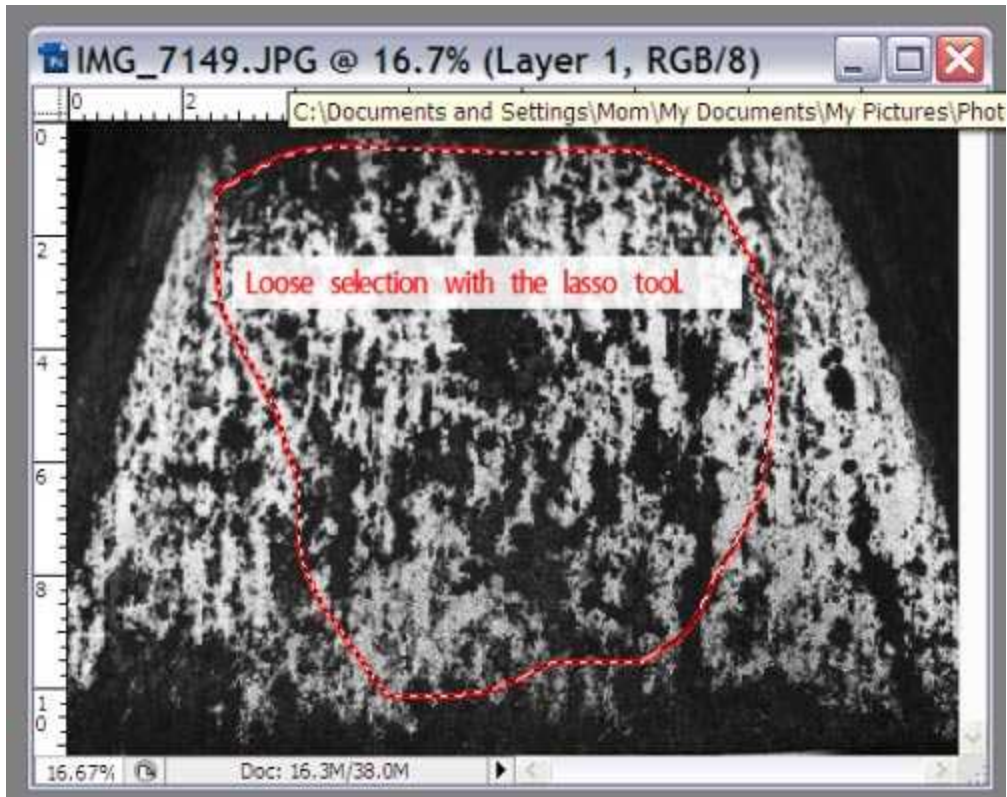
5. Now from the tool box, choose the magic wand tool. We are going to use this to isolate the black parts of the image and use that for the grunge brush. Click on the dark parts of the image. This will activate the marching ants. Now, go to Layer>New>Layer Via Copy. This will put your selection on it's own layer. Your image and layers palette will look something like this:



With Background Layer hidden you can see your future brush more clearly.



6. Okay now for the cool part. Let's make a brush! Make sure you are working from your extracted layer, not from the original. Choose the lasso tool from your tool box. Make a loose, irregular selection from the extraction. (I've put a red stroke around my extraction to make it visible in the screenshot.)



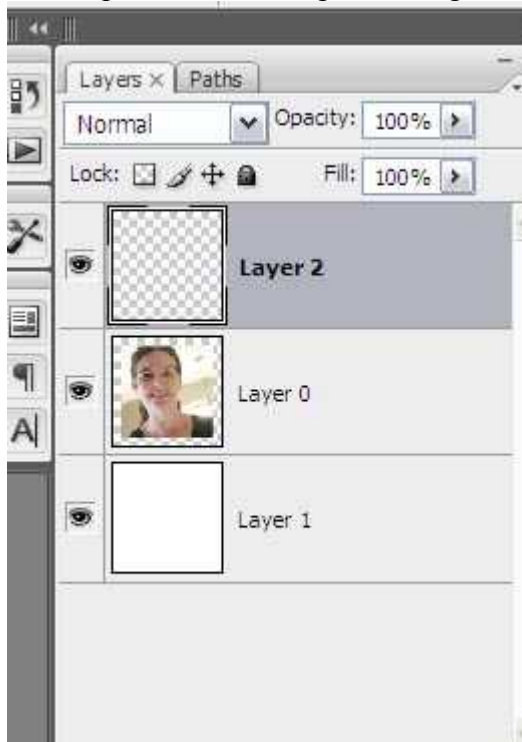
Choose Select>Modify>Feather. Choose a Radius of about 10-25 depending on your preference. Higher values will soften the edges more, and lower values will soften the edges to a lesser degree. When it comes to grunge brushes, I prefer very soft edges for easier blending.

7. Choose Edit/Define Brush Preset. *(In PSE, Choose Edit>Define Brush From Selection.)* Voila! You now have a custom brush! Now you need to save it so that you can use it over and over again. Go to Edit>Preset Manager. Click the brush(es) you want to save. To chose more than one, hold down the control-key while you click. Choose Save Set. Save the brush to a folder where you can easily find, and load it and name it something easy to remember.



Do you want to see what you can do with your new brush? Check it out below for one example, inking the edges of a photo.

1. Begin with a photo, color-filled layer beneath the photo and a blank layer above the photo. Make the photo image a little smaller than the canvas.



2. Choose the blank layer. To load your brush with color, choose a foreground color. I'm using a deep, antique brown. Select the blank layer, and paint around the edges of the photo, using individual clicks. If necessary, adjust the size of the brush, using the left and right bracket keys on the keyboard. Use the brush dynamics option to rotate

your brush if necessary. You can also adjust the opacity of the brush. So far, this is what my photo looks like:



2. Now just clip the paint layer to the photo layer. Make sure the paint layer is chosen. Go to Layer>Create Clipping Mask.
3. Now just use the drop down box in the layers palette to adjust the blending mode. Get a variety of effects with this method.

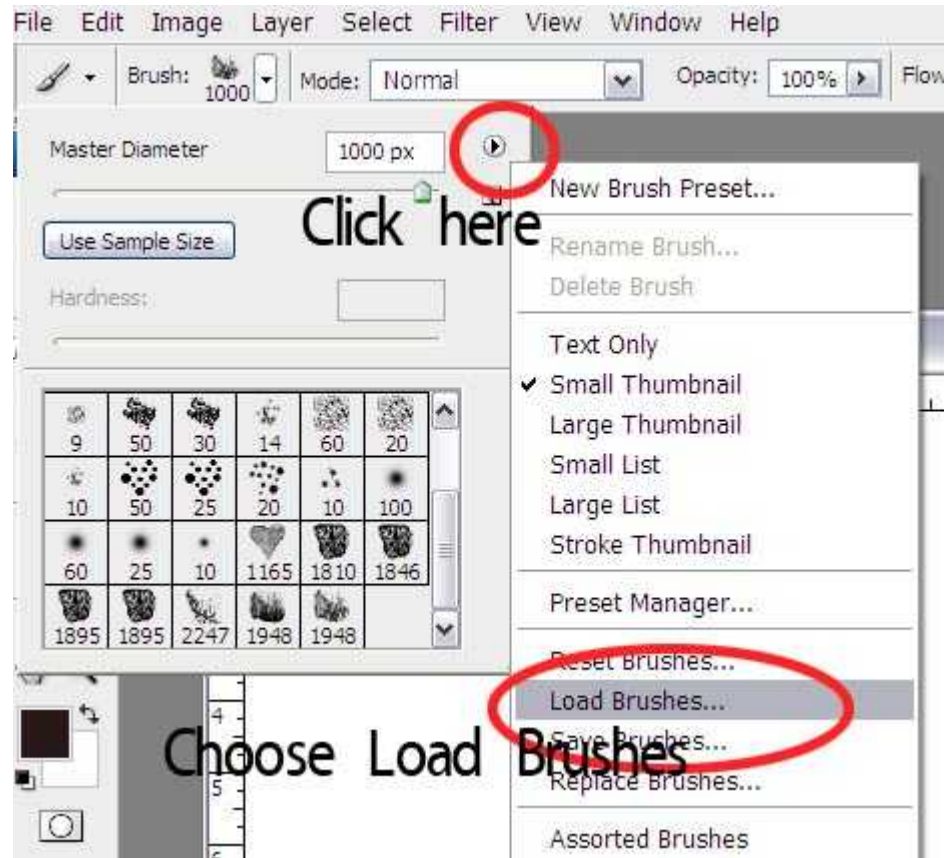


4. You can also layer paint layers with various colors and brushes for a new look.



** Here's a little lesson on loading brushes in Photoshop/Photoshop Elements.*

1. You don't have to store all your brushes in the program folder of Photoshop. This tends to unnecessarily slow down Photoshop and makes navigating the files more tedious. I store them in a separate folder in My Documents called My Brushes.
2. We've already talked about how to save a brush or set of brushes in Photoshop. Now lets load a brush you have saved.
3. Select the Brush Tool. In the options bar, go to select new brush option.
4. Click the arrow at the side of the brushes palette to open a fly-out menu. Choose Load Brushes.



Now Navigate to the saved brush file on your hard drive to load the brushes. They will appear at the bottom of the brush list.