Splash Magazines

Printing Secrets of The Pros

By Bob Hershon

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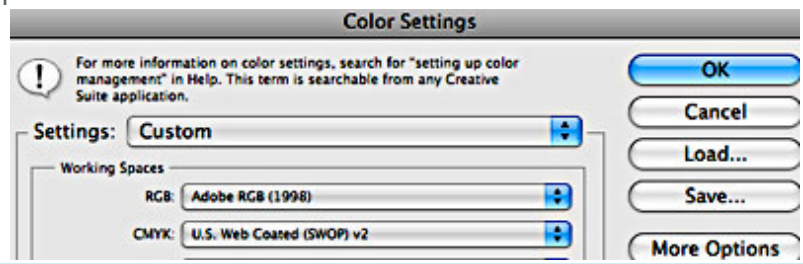
In addition to the demos of the latest software and hardware on the display floor at **Siggraph**, there are a number of classes offered in the **Siggraph Studio**. If you are lucky enough to get a seat, you get a brief (one and a half hours) hands on training on the latest advances in many of the software applications, ranging from **Photoshop**'s new **3D** capabilities to the digital sculpting techniques of **ZBRUSH**. The time allotted as well as the complexity of the software seldom allows you to exit the Studio with something you can apply immediately; rather it wets your appetite for further study or, as the software publishers and authors hope, further purchases.
An exception to the rule was a session taught by one of the printing world's heavyweights **Jack Duganne**. Among his printing clients is artist and Nobel Prize winner Roger Guillemin. Jack who teaches at **Santa Monica College's Academy of Entertainment Technology** entitled the session Fine-Art Printmaking Workflow, "printing multiple proofs in an extremely efficient and effective way to arrive at the perfect print." Basically he showed the way to create multiple digital proofs (soft proofing) that can be combined into one print, like a contact sheet and printed on whatever paper stock you are using and then presented to the client be it a painter, photographer or yourself. Instead of printing a number of prints and making fine adjustments, this technique saves the cost of ink and paper which can be considerable if you are printing canvas size prints on fine art stock like Jack does; and most of all it saves you a great

deal of heartache. For no matter how closely two people match their color profiles on two different computers, there are too many variables (room lighting, screen degradation, visual acuity etc..) for there ever to be a perfect match. And as you will see these multiple proofs may provide possibilities for a print that not only meets but exceeds what you thought was possible for your creation.

This lesson was one that was years in the making for Jack Duganne, who pioneered the art of marrying fine art printmaking and the world of creative digital imaging. Before founding **Duganne Ateliers**, he was the master printer, for what was at the time premiere digital printing and scanning house, **Nash Editions**. Owner **Graham Nash** , who co-founded the company with **Crosby, Stills and Nash** tour manager **R. Mac Holbert**, was a photography collector and fine art photographer who had the resources to develop a company that stretched the limits of what people thought digital imaging could do, Jack coined the term **Giclée** while working there to communicate to fine artists the new possibilities in reproduction that were now available to them.

The following tutorial taken from Jack's presentation at Siggraph, which makes use of Photoshop's "layer comps". Layer comps allow you to store multiple versions of a digital print or photo into one document. This should allow anyone with any level of color printer to create the best print possible while saving ink. It should also give you a notion of what the professional fine art print flow is all about. The composite we will apply the changes to before it is to be printed was created while I practicing one of Jack's other tutorials.

Step one: open a Photoshop document with a variety of tonal colors and varying levels of light. Though this will work on any photo of a print or photograph, the effects will be easier to see if you choose something that meets these requirements. The printed version of your document differs from what you see on your monitor. Sometimes it looks vastly different. Printed images are not as bright, have lower contrast and the color saturation is lower on print than it is on screen. Because of this there have been standards created so when people pass digital files back and forth they can speak the same language it's called color space. Like the pros do, let us pick a working color space. If you do this, your home printer or the print house you take your own masterpiece to, will see something closer to what you have viewed at home and the results will be more predictable. In Photoshop go edit>color settings (shift-command-k on Mac or shift-control-k on PC) and pick Adobe RGB 1998 and U.S. Sheetfed Coated V2.



Correct color settings for printing in CS5

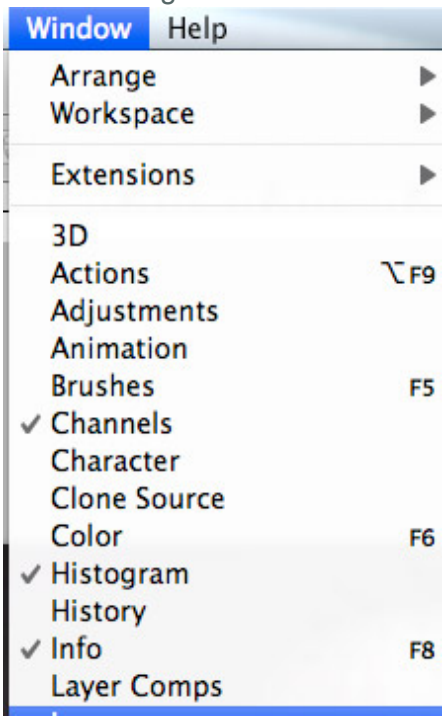
To go one step further many If you have a printer like the **Epson SureColor P800 Inkjet Printer** you can merely go to Epson's website or Google your printer and download the printer and paper specific profile (**ICC PROFILE**). If you have the popular and less expensive, **Canon Pixma iP8720 Wireless Inkjet Photo Printer** you will find these profiles included on your install disk. However you should note that the profiles are for Canon papers. Hmmm.. I wonder why? Most important of all! If you read no further, there is one step that will improve all your prints in an instant if you are a Photoshop user. Always select " **Photoshop manages colors**" when you print **not** the default " **Printer manages colors**". It is under the color management window in the top right of Photoshop's print window.

Correct setting let Photoshop manage colors

I have even seen pros forget to do this and were astounded at the difference it made.

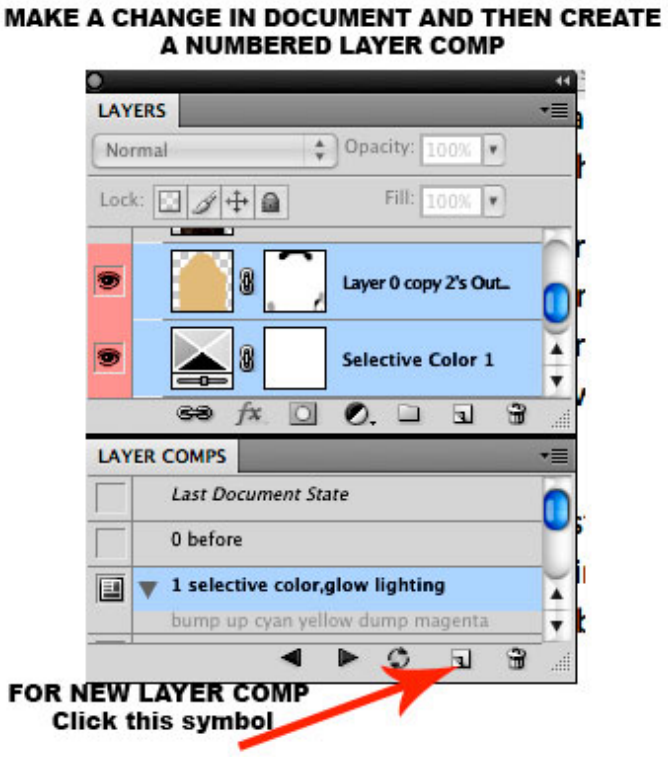
original before changes

This is the Photoshop document before any color or position changes are applied. Here comes the magic. Open up the layer comps panel under **WINDOW** menu pull down in Photoshop. Now every time we make an alteration to the document we make a layer comp and it creates a snapshot of the change we made. Allowing us to store multiple versions in coloring, appearance and position of our original in **ONE DOCUMENT**!

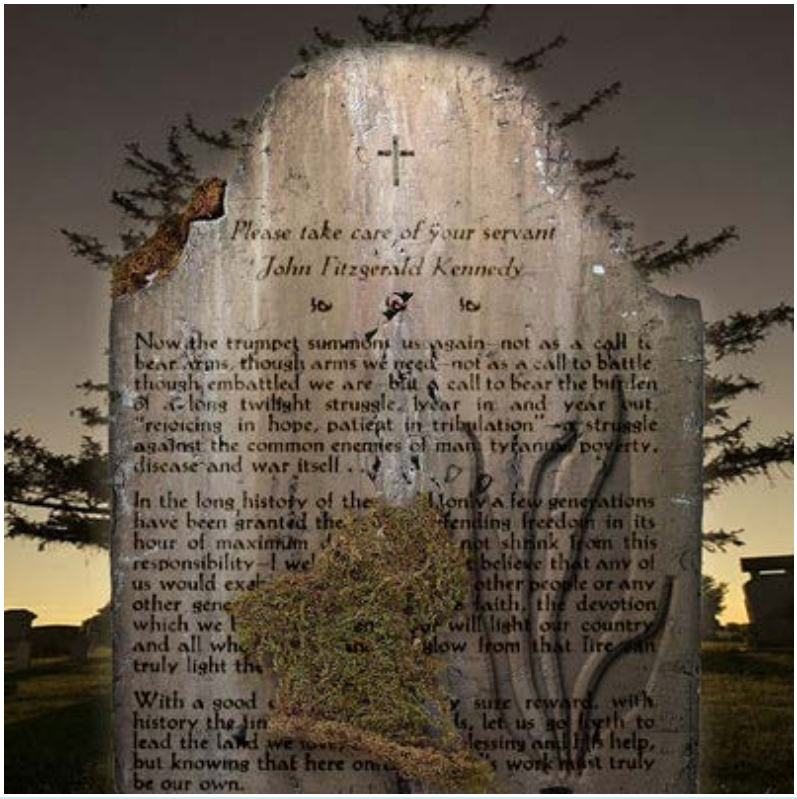


Opening layer comp panel from window drop down

Now we add 2 layers in which we add some lighting changes and color and click symbol for new layer comp. When prompted by the layer comp dialog, title layer comp with a number and description.

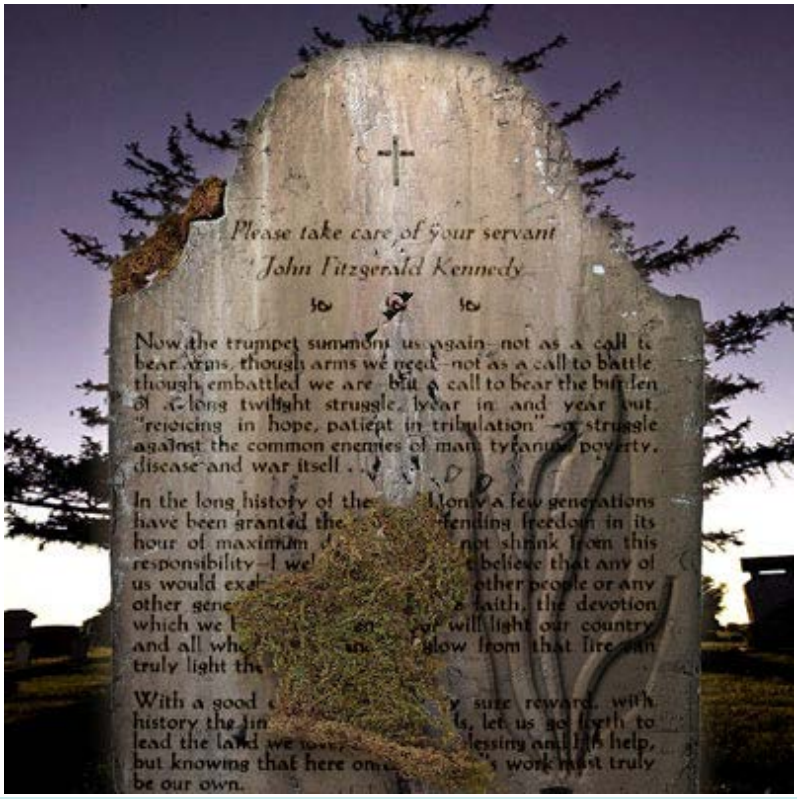


Clicking new layer comp icon



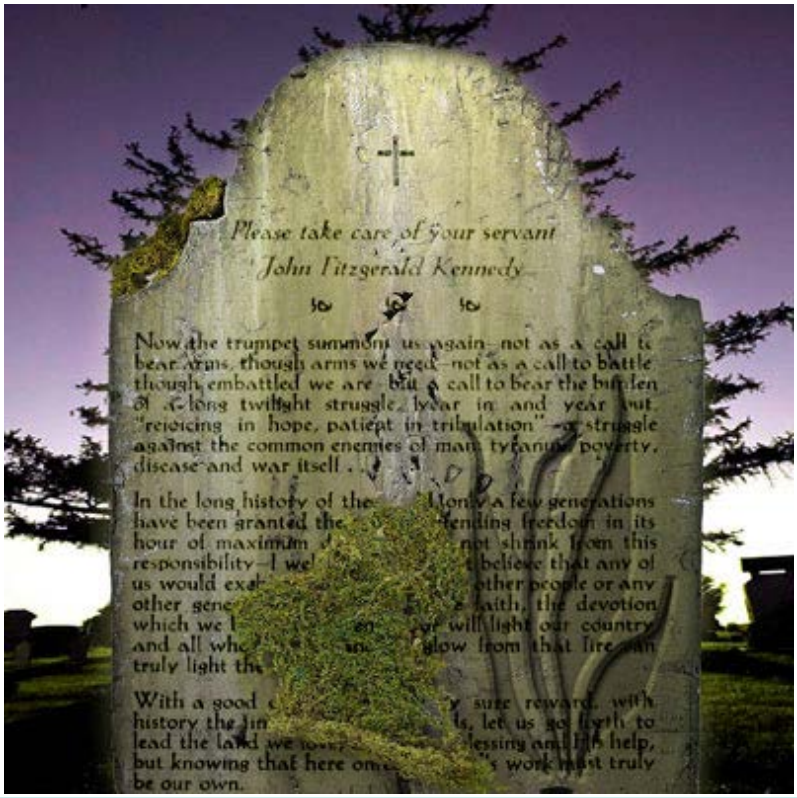
Change in lighting color and glow

We can then change levels to alter the sky color.



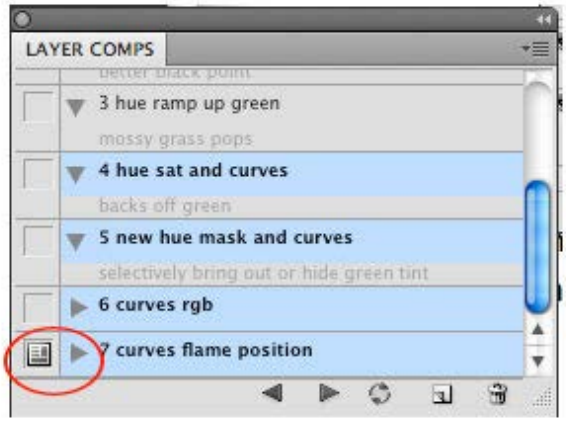
Color levels changed sky color

Now we make a change with hue and saturation and bump up the green way past what looks okay on the screen. Notice how much stronger the grass is and might it not be cool to have a little moss on the grave? Remember printing usually tones down the saturation and now is the time to take chances. We may find we dislike the screen image but will love the print.



Changing hue and saturation to add extra green

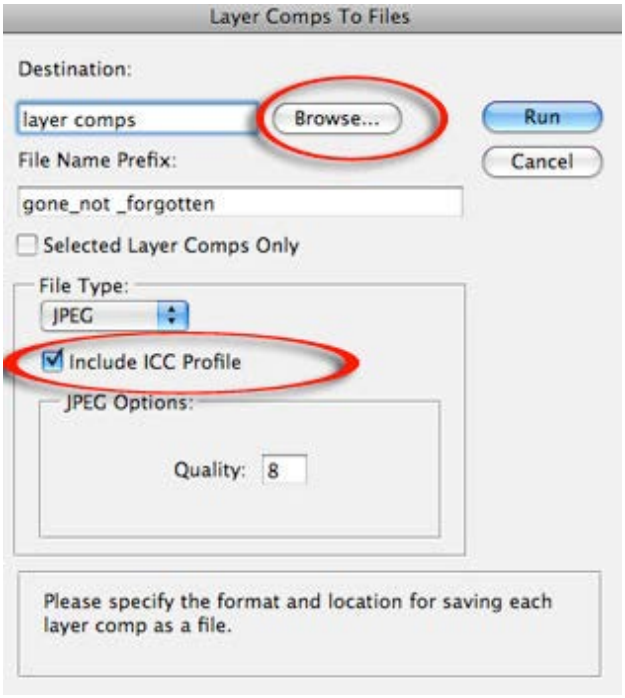
We skip ahead a few changes and see a change in position of the carved in flame and other changes.



Layer comp current change

Layer comps can record position change as well as color (curves)

Almost done. Save your Photoshop document. Go to file>scripts> layer comps to files, when prompted browse to your drive create a folder and hit run.

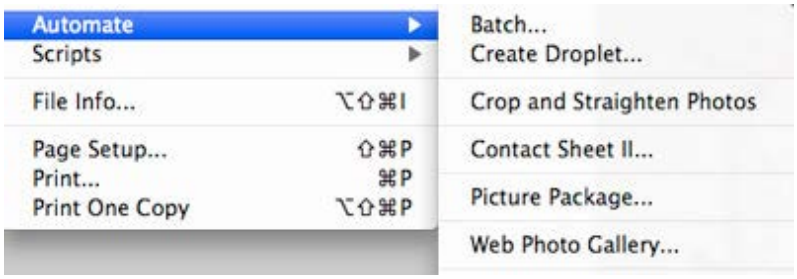


Browse to PSD location and create new folder

Make sure you uncheck selected layer comps unless that is what you want.

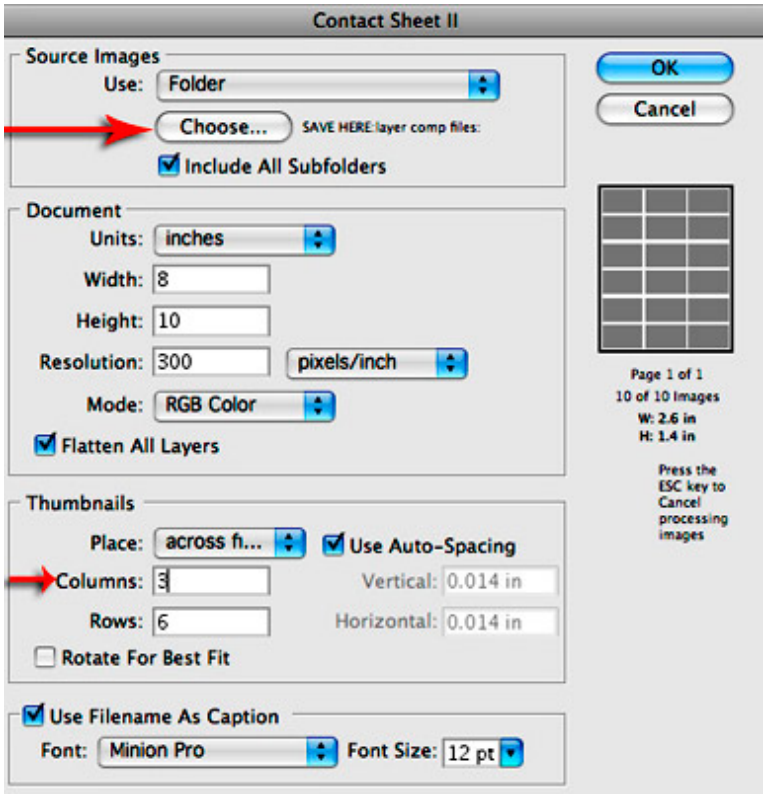
Layer comps to files confirmation

Now you have all your layer comps as individual images in one folder you can take them into Photoshop and arrange them in one document and print them or if you have CS4 and have installed contact sheet option just go file>automate contact sheet and pick the folder.



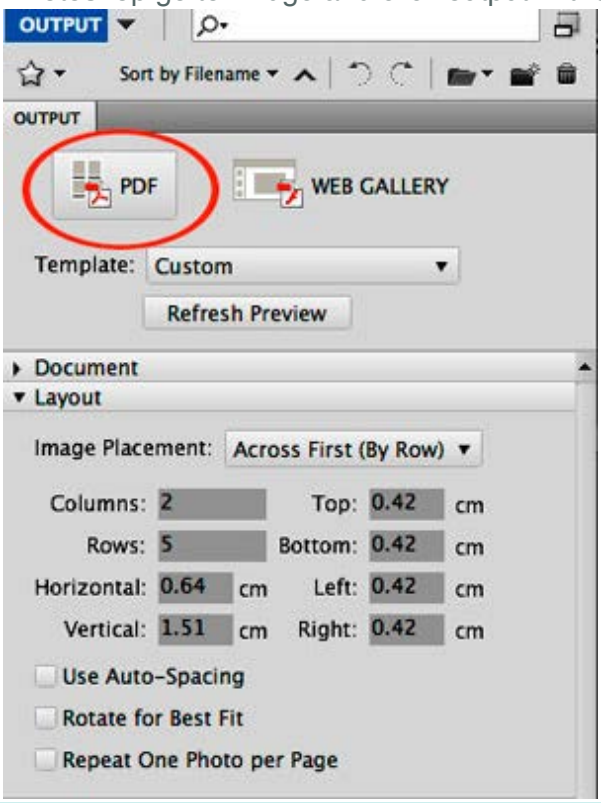
Automating contact sheet in Photoshop

If you have not installed these plug-ins from the goodies folder on your install DVD in **CS4** you can download them from Adobe. To download the **CS5** plug-ins click here for **MAC** or **PC** contact sheet options.



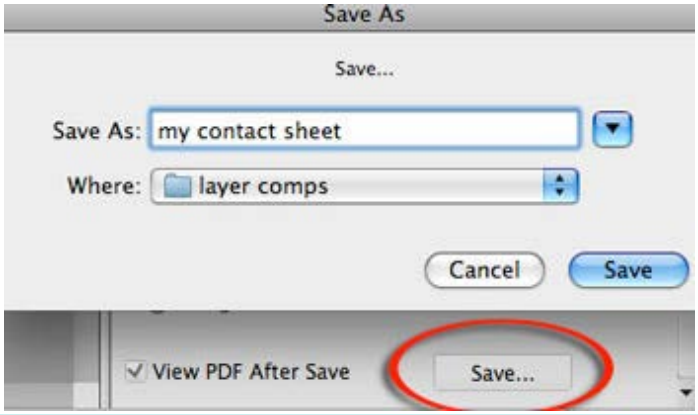
Correct layout for contact sheet in Photoshop

If none of the options work for you in Photoshop go to Bridge and click output in the upper right hand corner.



Correct layout for contact sheet in Bridge

Choose pdf and then contact sheet and then hit save.



Saving Bridge contact sheet

All you have to do is open your contact sheet in Photoshop and hit print.

Layer comps ready for final print

To see Jack at work at Duganne Atelier click here.

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