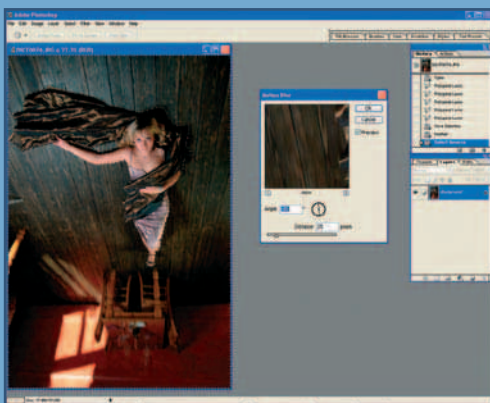


Go Glossy

Duncan Evans celebrates the party season with some glamorous portraits

With Christmas fast approaching, now is the time of parties, restaurants and dressing to impress. Unless you're a photographer of course, in which case it's time to spruce up those portraits with a collection of neat ideas for the party season. In this feature you can go for creative lighting with portable studio kit, or rely on natural light, reflectors and the photographer's friend, *Photoshop*.

The idea of this shot is to simulate the effect of reflective fabric flying behind the model who is wearing a satin, reflective dress, without recourse to a wind machine or a trip to somewhere very, very windy. All good and well if you do have a wind machine and a nice background to stand the model against, but otherwise, here's the easy way to create this dynamic look.



1 First select all around the subject. Don't feather the selection because any subsequent hue shifts will affect the feathered edge as well, giving a line around the subject. Invert the selection and run the Motion Blur filter (Filter... Blur... Motion Blur). Match the blur's angle to the direction of the wood and use a strength of 25. This should generate some movement, without turning the background into paste.



Photography by Duncan Evans

MATERIAL GIRL

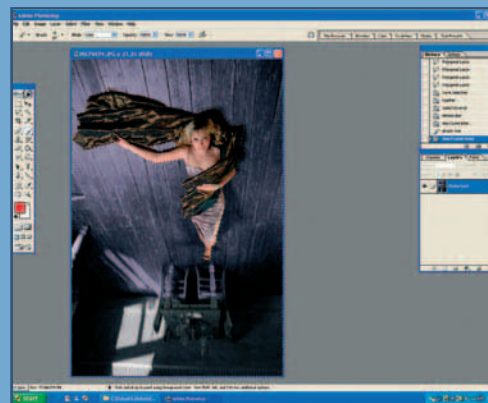
Firstly find lots of spare room on the floor. If it's a wooden floor, either arrange the subject so that they follow the lines up, or lay across them, so it gives a background like a log cabin. Next, set up the main light to hit the face, fabric and top of the subject. If you have another light

position that on the other side to light up the legs. If not, use a reflector in that position, which is what was used here.

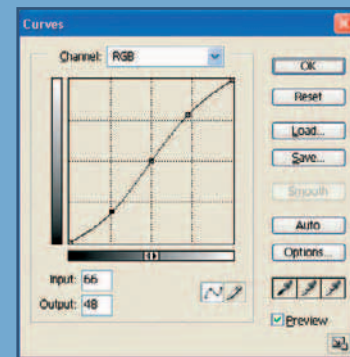
Stand above the subject – a stepladder is the safest thing. A table will create a more extreme effect than standing on a chair,

though that is obviously easier.

Stand at the end where the model's head is and look over and down the torso for the shot. If you stand anywhere else it will show up the neck area and even on fat-less subjects, this doesn't look good. Fire away, then head for *Photoshop*.



2 With the background still selected, go to Image... Adjust... Hue/Saturation. Pick reds and use the sampler to click on the wood. That should target the colour properly. Then use the Hue adjustment to shift it so that it contrasts with the colour of the outfit – in this case a light purple colour.



3 Reduce the saturation of the background so that it separates from the foreground, then invert the selection. Now select Image... Adjust... Curves and enter an S-shape curve to boost the contrast, shadows and highlights of the main subject. Flatten the image then crop to the desired shape and save.

CROSS PROCESSING



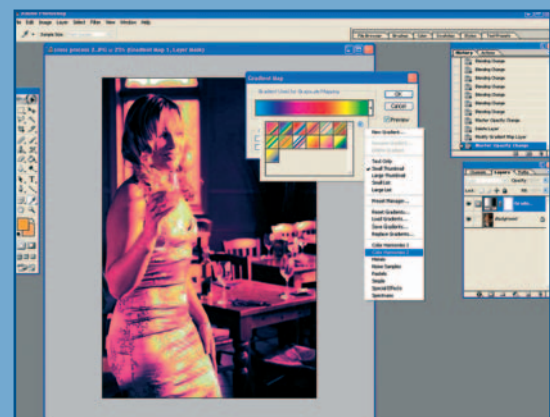
Cross processing is technique from film photography. It involves developing slide film using the chemicals for print film chemistry and vice versa. The effect of the chemicals is that some colours stay the same while other undergo startling hue shifts.

The exact effect is not predictable, and much film and potions are usually required to get a decent result. When it does come off the effect can be arty, surreal or simply very pleasing.

Simulating this in *Photoshop* is not an exact science either, but experimentation is easy if you follow this technique.



1 Take the original image and create a new Gradient Fill Adjustment Layer. Don't worry about the exact one just yet. Whatever effect is used will probably be too powerful, so change the blend mode to Colour and reduce the opacity to 50 per cent. This will make it much more palatable.



2 Double-click on the Gradient Map in the Layers palette to bring up the gradient being used. Click on the small arrow facing right, underneath the gradient to bring up the various categories of fills. The pastel ones tend to be very subtle and suit lighter images, while the metal ones are very vivid and require a different blending mode to be anything other than garish. Select one of the gradients that contain colours already present in the original image until a suitable fill is found.

TECHNIQUE : PORTRAITS

BACK LIGHTING

If the sun is shining and the subject stands against a window, they will turn into a silhouette. There are two ways of dealing with this: either balance the exposure so there is as much light in front of the person as behind, or exploit the effect, while still making the person visible.

HALO EFFECT

In this shot the background was very bright, forming a halo around the model's head. There is also a pleasant colour cast from a large tungsten lamp to the right. An aperture of f_4 was used to ensure that the background disappeared out of focus – if it could be seen at all. Then, in Aperture Priority mode, spot metering was used to meter just to the right of centre of the girl.

The exposure time of $1/8$ th sec was required as this was the middle part of the exposure range where the light from the tungsten lamp was falling.

Setting the automatic white balance system to 6,600°K (equivalent to the bright day/bright



Here the natural backlighting was used to create a halo around the model's head

cloudy day setting) meant the colour from the lamp would be registered, deliberately causing a warm colour cast to appear.

BALANCED EXPOSURE

The tungsten lamp was dispensed with in this shot and a portable flash head with a softbox set up to the right of the model.



Backlighting can be easily compensated using a controllable flash head

The aperture setting of f_4 was desired to blur the background and so the flash head was set to quarter power, which also gave a meter reading of f_4 .

To get the background to register, the camera was set in Aperture Priority mode, the f_4 aperture dialled in and spot metering used to take a reading from the cloud/trees

level with the model's head. This gave a shutter speed setting of $1/250$ th sec.

The camera was then set to Manual, and a shutter speed of $1/250$ th and aperture of f_4 were dialled in.

This balanced the brightness of the foreground with the bright light in the background.

AND THERE'S MORE

Here are more ideas for creating interesting and distinctive portraits.

MOODY LOOKS



The close-up here runs the risk of distorting the leading arm, and is also quite dramatic with the shadows across the face – this is always useful when aiming for a moody portrait



A safer version of the moody portrait. The shot is from further back, so there is no risk of distortion and with her head turned more to the light, there is still an interplay of light and shadow but it isn't as extreme

MYSTERIOUS FOCUSING



Using a wide aperture – $f_2.8$ in Aperture Priority – and focussing on the foreground, the subject can be seen pondering in the background. Who is she waiting for, why is the room empty, who is that figure?



Using the same aperture but reversing the concept – now the subject is plainly visible, but the out of focus table in the foreground sets the questions

Thanks to model Natalie McEntee. See more of Natalie at:
<http://Natalie82.net-model.com>