

Written by [T. Michael Testi](#)
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Most people tend to think of Adobe Photoshop as a program to edit and enhance photographs or make Web graphics, but there is a whole other side to Photoshop that can bring out your inner artist. Whether it is the pigments of the cave dwellers, the materials of the Renaissance, or the pixels of the digital artists humans have felt a need to express themselves through painting.

The goal of *Digital Painting in Photoshop* is to offer you techniques for working in the new world of digital painting. You will learn how to push pixels instead of pigment. Your monitor will be your canvas. And when all said and done, a printer will apply the pigments. *Digital Painting in Photoshop* is 248 pages divided into 8 chapters.

Chapter 1, "Introduction to the Concept of Digital Painting," begins by giving a brief overview of painting and its relationship to technology. This is a short chapter wherein the author describes workflow, techniques, and a general outline of the rest of the book.

Chapter 2, "The Basic Tools for Painting in Photoshop," examines the tools that Photoshop gives you for digital painting, most notably its brushes. After examining the brushes that are available, will see how you can make your own brushes, how to work with texture libraries, patterns, and how to apply a pattern texture. This is a detailed chapter and gives you an arsenal to use in the rest of the book.

Chapter 3, "Charcoal Drawings in Photoshop," starts off with a history of the use of charcoal to create drawings. You learn about the traditional materials, and how they are created. Then you will see the techniques used to create charcoal drawings. Finally you look at specific techniques for portraits, landscapes, and a conte brownish-red look.

Chapter 4, "Pastel Drawing in Photoshop," examines the techniques associated with artists like Degas. In this chapter you start off by looking at what constitutes pastel drawings and some of the techniques that are used. Next you will see how to create a pastel brush, look at some issues for when you want to print pastels, and look at some examples of the pastel style.

Chapter 5, "Painting with Watercolors in Photoshop," now turns our attention to replicating watercolor techniques and an overview of the medium. In this chapter you look at a landscape scene and work with the techniques for rendering the image. You will see how to use the appropriate brushes, how to use Pattern Stamp tool and working with a simple two-layer watercolor technique.

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Chapter 6, "Painting with Oil Paints in Photoshop," begins with a brief history of oil painting. It then moves to working with an Impasto Technique to recreate the painting that is used on the cover of this book. Next you will work with a Bevel and Emboss Layer style of oil painting. Again you will examine printing considerations with regard to oil painting.

Chapter 7, "Illustration Techniques in Photoshop," now looks at techniques that might be used for illustrative purposes within Photoshop. These include stylization, Faux HDR, pen and ink mixed with aquatinting, a soft focus effect, and a cut out effect.

Chapter 8, "Effects Using Third-Party Software as Photoshop Plug-ins," finally examines some plug-ins for Photoshop that can be used to enhance colors, contrast, and mood. These include Nik Color Efex Pro, Ailen Skin's Snap Art, and Ben Vista's PhotoArtist 2.

Overall, I liked *Digital Painting in Photoshop*. While I am not much into pastels and charcoal, I realize that since this is an overview book it is meant to expose you to all of the different styles. While it does not go into depth on any given style, it does give you a solid introduction to of them all.

If I had one problem with the book it is that in the second chapter, the author prints out images of all of the brushes as a reference. My thinking is that this should have been located in an appendix with only specific brush information located in the immediate chapter.

Digital Painting in Photoshop is well thought out, well explained, and provides a good look at how digital painting can be accomplished from within Photoshop. If you are familiar with Photoshop, and are willing to explore and experiment, then this book will provide a good foundation into the realm of digital painting and I therefore recommend this book.

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Book Review - *Digital Painting In Photoshop* By Susan Ruddick Bloom

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