



Complex Cutouts - Video

The cutting out of complex subjects, sometimes from a fussy background is the subject of thousands of YouTube videos. I'm generalising here a little, but I think it's fair to say that it's amateur photographers who ask this question most, example below.



The problem we all face is achieving an effective and professional looking result, with the cut-out we have made. A viewer recently saw my [Red Balloons slide show](#) and asked me how I cut out the balloons from their background. You can find the presentation they were referring to at the link above, if you wish to view it.

How to make an effective cut-out is a good question because these days we have lots of ways to do this, but I still choose a method I've used for almost 20 years. Why? Why don't I use other methods to try and speed up the process to cut-out a complex shape like a balloon or the car above?

The truth is that I already have a reliable technique that has given me a good result for years and I'm reluctant to move away from something that works for me. I take the view. If it isn't

broke, why fix it. I find that my cut-out method is flexible, adjustable when I make an error (which will happen) and gives a result good enough for even a large print.



If all I wanted was a tiny image for a website, (left) I could get away with murder with my cut-out and I could do it reasonably quickly, but not for high quality photography.

Here is where I think the problem lies with some of these selection and cut-out tools & techniques. The fact is, we need experience of these tools to get the best from them and most amateurs don't do enough of this type of work to achieve that experience.

My argument here is that by the time I gained that experience with new tools, I could've used my old tried and tested method and had the work done. Sometimes we may watch an on-line demo that makes the modern tools all look so easy, but maybe we are not always aware that the author of the video has probably selected the right image for the demo. An image where the content, contrast, colours and sharpness, all make the tool and the technique easier to demonstrate.



When we try it on our own images, we often fail miserably simply because we are working on a slightly different type of image to the one demonstrated, and we don't do this work often enough to gain the experience we need for these techniques. So, despite all these super new ways to make selections and cut-outs they don't all work perfectly in all situations. My method seems to work for most.

I have covered this subject a few times. Here are a few links to videos that you may find helpful.

[Videos 53 and 58 from my Photoshop for Photographers set - Part -7](#)

[Photoshop – Making Effective Selections](#)

[The video I created on cutting out a hot air balloon](#)

Photoshop Filter Techniques

One of the main problems when applying filters to an image is to avoid our images looking exactly the same as thousands of others. We should also be striving to improve the image with the application of the filter. At the very least we should not be making the image worse and here's an important fact.

Applying a filter to a mediocre image will result in a filtered mediocre image. With very rare exceptions we cannot turn a sow's ear into a silk purse with the click of a mouse and the addition of a filter.



[Take a look at Impressions – The Art of Photography & The Art of Cornwall Here](#)

[Click here for a video tutorial on Impressionist Filters](#)

New Postings on www.beckhamdigital.photo

[The Red Roadster](#) is not a new video, but it links with the Complex Cut-Outs video above. It's the same technique, but with a different subject.

[Shoreline](#) (image below) is an older slide show that has been re-created as a 60p Mp4 video using the beta version of PicturesToExe 10. The full version of PicturesToExe 10 will be available later this year from www.wnsoft.com



[Albedo 0.39](#) (The proportion of light the Earth reflects back into space) This is also an older slide show that I don't think I ever posted. It was made back in PicturesToExe 5 days using fractals and the slide show, even as an executable file was a very large file. Far too large for what we were creating back then.

Now, things are different and I have created it as a 60p Mp4 video using the beta version of PicturesToExe 10.



Photoshop - Creating a Montage



Creating a Montage is a very creative process because the colour balance, content, composition and appeal are all aspects we are in full control of. Like all editing techniques, things get much easier when we have done this a few times.

Composition is important and try to make sure you don't add images that split the viewer's attention. You could argue with my old forge example above that the text draws us slightly away from the main tower and wheel on the left.

One of the great things about creating a Montage is that we can start off with quite ordinary images, but as long as we take a little care with that colour balance, content, composition and appeal. We can make something great.

[View the Video on YouTube or download it to keep Here](#)

The link above is just one video, but you will find a whole set of videos on the subject of Montage on our Photoshop CS-6 section or our website.

Remember, what we are talking about here are Montage techniques and those techniques do not change, no matter what version of Photoshop you're using. We don't relearn how to drive our car because we have switched from a Ford to a Toyota. The same is true with editing techniques.

The image below for example (Worship) is a simple cut-out of fibreglass statues, superimposed with that dark storm cloud. They are basic Montage techniques.



[Check out our CS-6 set of videos HERE](#)