

## Photoshop Tip: Create a Winter Wonderland

Change your photos to reflect the holiday season.

By [Bert Monroy](#), Digital Artist

In this Adobe Photoshop exercise, we will dramatically change the mood of an image using the Lighting Effects filter and a few alpha channel and Path tool tricks.

The first thing to do is change the mood by changing the time of day. The image is daytime, which will be converted to night.

1. Click on the Filter menu in Photoshop, point to Render, and select Lighting Effects. This brings up the filter's dialog box, which offers a wide variety of controls. The left side of the box provides a work and preview area. Multiple light sources can be added by dragging the small light bulb icon from below the box and placing it where you want the light to originate. Likewise, lights can be deleted by dragging them into the Trash icon at the bottom. Style has a variety of preset lighting conditions. New sets can be saved into this menu or deleted.
2. The Light Type gives you three choices for the characteristics that your light will have. I chose Omni, which centers the light source, since the effect is the light emanating from the window. The center of the light is moved so that it is centered within the window frame.
3. Clicking on the box at the far right of the Light Type section of the dialog box allows you to select the color of the light source. The Color Picker pops up and a bright yellow/orange is selected. The same box in the Properties section allows you to choose the color the light will fade off to. This time a dark blue is selected. The result can be viewed in the preview portion of the dialog box. Click OK to apply the effect.
4. With the Rectangle selection tool I selected the windowpanes. I sent them to their own layer by clicking on the Layer menu, pointing to New, and then selecting Layer via Copy. A picture of an interior room scene is imported into the file. The scene is then grouped with the layer of the windowpanes (Option/Alt click between the two layers in the layers' palette) so that the room scene seems to be within the windows.
5. Next, the effect of the interior light spilling out from the window has to be created. In the scene, the snow creates a bank that drifts away from the window. This would cause the reflected light to dissipate as it

goes round the bend. To achieve this effect a blank alpha channel is created (click on New Channel icon at the bottom of the Channels' palette).

6. With the Gradient tool, create a gradient from black to white so that the gradient appears at the bottom of the image where the light will appear.
7. Now it is necessary to create the shape of the light from the window. With the Path tool create a set of paths that take on the desired shape.
8. Load the alpha channel as a selection by going to the Channels window and dragging it over the Make Selection icon at the bottom of the palette or Command/Control-clicking on it in the Channels' palette. The marching ants will appear and display the selection from the 50 percent gray to the white of the alpha channel.
9. In the Paths window, click once on the Path previously saved to bring it up on the image. The path will appear over the image and the marching ants of the current selection. On the upper right corner of the Path palette is a small arrow. Clicking on it will drop down a menu with options for the paths. Choose Make Selection.
10. In the dialog box that pops up, a Feather of 2 is entered to soften the edges. Since a selection is currently active, the alpha channel, the Operations box is fully available. Intersect with Selection is chosen.
11. Using the Color Picker, a bright yellow is chosen. Choose Fill from the Edit menu. The Foreground color with an Opacity of 85 percent is chosen.
12. As a final touch, add falling snow.
  1. This is done by creating a new layer. The layer is filled with black.
  2. The Add Noise filter (click on the Filter menu, point to Noise, and select Add Noise) is used with a large amount and Gaussian for the Distribution.
  3. The layer is then blurred (click on the Filter menu, point to Blur, then select Blur More).
  4. The Levels command (click on the Image menu, point to Adjust, then select Levels) is then used to increase the contrast. The dark and light sliders are forced towards the center.
  5. Finally the layer is put into Screen mode to allow the white to be seen.

*Bert Monroy is a digital artist and author of [Bert Monroy: Photorealistic Techniques with Photoshop and Illustrator](#).*

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