Start a Fire in Photoshop

Use a new feature in Photoshop 7 to create burning images.

By Bert Monroy

It was difficult to create fire using earlier versions of Photoshop. Photoshop 7's Liquify feature has changed all that. On today's show I'll show you how to use Liquify to create realistic fire.

Step by step

1. Create a new file that's square in shape and set the Background to black.

2. Using White, type in a word you wish to set on fire.

3. Rasterize the text (Layer > Rasterize > Type).

4. Duplicate the layer with the type.

5. The first filter to be applied works only from the left or the right. You want the effect to happen from bottom to top. Rotate the duplicate text layer 90 degrees clockwise (Edit > Transform > Rotate 90 degrees clockwise).

6. Apply the Wind filter from the Left (Filter > Stylize > Wind). Apply it a couple of times to get long streaks.

7. Rotate the layer back to its original upright position (Edit > Transform > Rotate 90° CCW).

8. Apply the Gaussian Blur filter (Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur). Give it just enough to soften the streaks.

9. Create a new layer behind the layer you just blurred and fill it with black.

10. Merge the two layers. Make sure you do not merge the background or the original text layer.

11. Go to the Liquify filter (Filter > Liquify). It should display the currently selected layer (blurred, streaked text) to be modified.

12. Using the Warp and Turbulence tools within the Liquify filter, distort

the streaks into flames. Use small brush shapes and Warp to pull out additional flames from the edges of the text.

13. When you feel you're done, click OK and exit Liquify.

14. Switch the mode of the layer to Screen. This exposes the untouched underlying image where the top layer is black.

15. Go to the Hue/Saturation command (Image > Adjustments > Hue/Saturation). Click the Colorize button to change the hue of the flames and set it to a color that's a warm yellow, about 40 on the Hue bar. Push the Saturation up to 100.

16. Duplicate the layer of the flames. Then go into the Hue/Saturation command, turn off Colorize, and enter a hue change of minus 20. This moves the yellow in the direction of orange.

17. Set the mode of the duplicate to Overlay. This introduces some reds into the flames as seen.

18. Go back to the layer with the original white text and bring it to the front.

19. Click the Lock Transparency button in the layer's palette and fill the text with a gradient from yellow to dark brown. You might want to add a Layer Style of Inner Glow with Red for the color and Normal for the mode.

Bert Monroy is the author of "Photoshop Studio With Bert Monroy," which is available now.

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