Additional Information to the book "Photoshop Restoration & Retouching, 2nd edition" by Katrin Eismann for QUE July 2003.
For additional information, please visit http://www.digitalretouch.org

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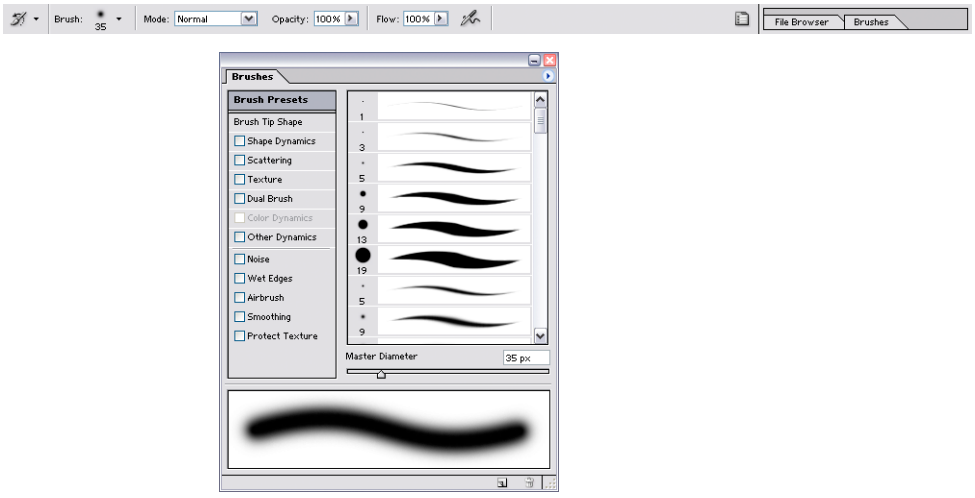
Maintaining Image Texture with Brushes and Building Custom Brushes

Although we usually strive to restore the entire image, there are times where the background is too damaged or simply too busy or inappropriate. In those cases it simply makes sense to replace or eliminate the background. Photoshop offers many ways of moving a subject into a new setting as described in chapter 7, "Rebuilding, Rearranging, and Repairing Portraits", but Photoshop 7 has a new, powerful, and very creative new alternative for this situation.

Photoshop 7 has a totally new paint engine that offers virtually infinite control over the shape, size, hardness, texture, and even beginning and ending dynamics of every brushstroke you make. The advantages of the new paint engine aren't immediately visible, unless you dig into the Brush Options available for any of the painting tools.

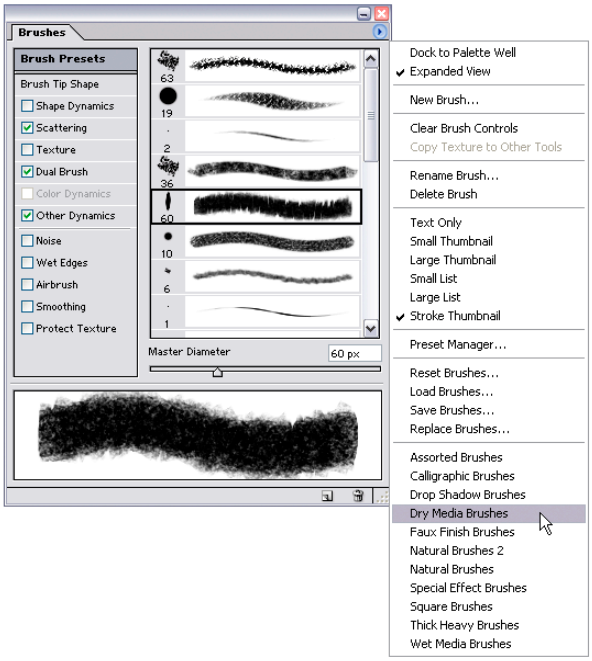
In this exercise, we're going to select and modify a custom brush that can be used with any of the painting tools to provide a unique, creative look. Then we'll save this brush so it will be available for use with the Paintbrush, Clone Stamp, or any other painting tool. Finally, we'll use the new custom brush for some creative retouching.

1. First we'll construct our brush using the Brushes palette. To access the Brushes palette, select Window > Brushes. Alternatively, for any tool that has access to the new paint engine, a small icon will



appear on the Options Bar, as seen below.

2. At first glance, the number of options may seem intimidating, but don't worry, there are lots more. The default display as shown above previews a plain, round brush at many different sizes for both hard and soft edges. There is a slider bar at the bottom to control pixel size, and a number of optional settings at the left for you to explore. But we want to move beyond plain, round brushes, so click on the Brush Palette Options arrow in the upper right corner to display the many other types of brushes that come with Photoshop 7. Select Dry Media Brushes as shown below.

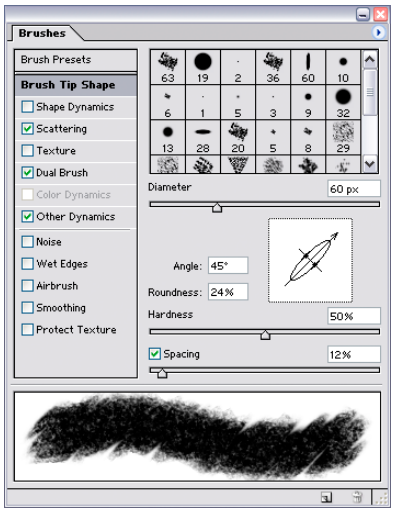


You'll get a dialog asking if you want to replace the current brushes, just click OK. There are now a number of new brush choices now, but we'll use Soft Pastel Large.

Selecting Dry Media Brushes from the Brush Palette Options. Notice Soft Pastel Large is both highlighted and previewed.

3. Notice that Soft Pastel Large has some options already checked, such as Scattering. Those are very powerful controls, but we can use the default values. But we still need to click on Brush Tip Shape and set the options to match those seen in the following

illustration. We've changed the angle and the hardness, but left the size alone since that can be controlled on the fly using the left



and right bracket keys.

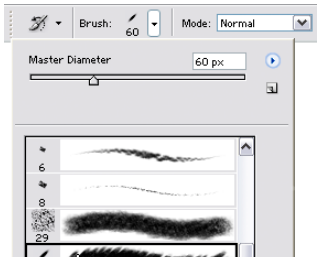
Changing the angle and hardness values for Brush Tip Shape.

4. We've put a lot of work into designing our new custom brush, and it would be a shame to have to go through all this again. Under the Brush palette options, select New Brush and give your custom brush a unique name. Keep it short, but descriptive, such

as Soft Pastel Diagonal.

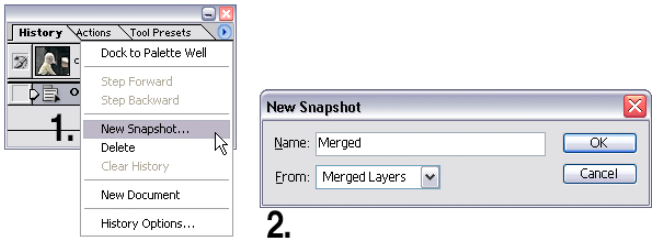
Saving the custom brush with a unique name.

5. Once saved, your new custom brush will be available for use with any painting tool. Notice how, it is available from the Brush Presets menu even though the active tool is the History Brush.



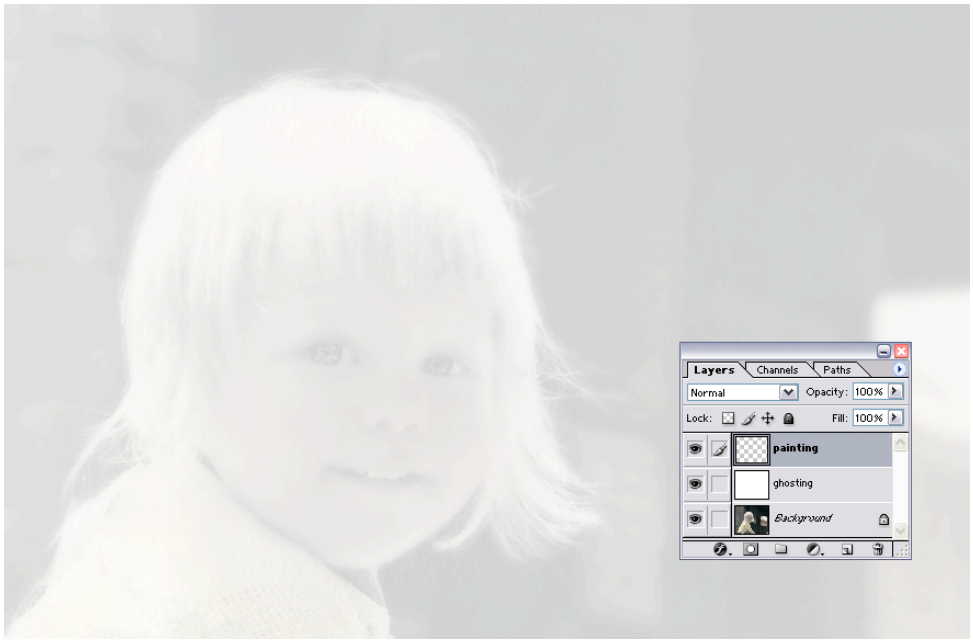
Once custom brushes are saved, they can be used with any painting tool.

6. Now that we have a new custom brush, let's use it. Open your image (I'm simply using the final version of the little girl picture from earlier this chapter) and take a merged snapshot as shown here.



Taking a merged snapshot.

7. Make a new layer at the top of your stack, fill it with white, and turn down the opacity to 50%. This is so we can still see the original image, but only a little. Now make another new layer. This will be where we do our painting. As you can see, we have a pale version of our image visible, but we're actually going to be painting on a blank layer.



Painting on a working layer over the semi-transparent white layer.

8. Using the History Brush with the merged snapshot set as the source, and with the new custom brush, begin painting over your subject, as shown next. Start with a fairly large brush, and don't change sizes unless you step back in the history first to undo any painting you've done so far. You want one consistent brush size.

Painting with the custom brush with the History Brush set to the merged snapshot.

9. Set the opacity of the white fill layer back to 100% to see the full effect, as shown in figure 5.92. You might need to go in and fill in some semi-transparent areas that weren't visible while the underlying image was still partly visible.

Setting the opacity of the white layer back to 100% hides the underlying layers.