

CREATING WITH PIXELS

Gudny Campbell

EXPLORE THE MAGIC
OF BLENDING IMAGES
WITH PATTERNS AND
BRUSHES

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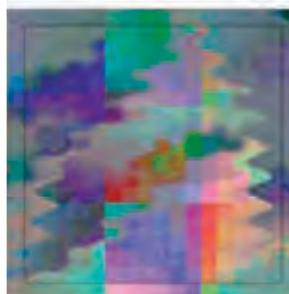
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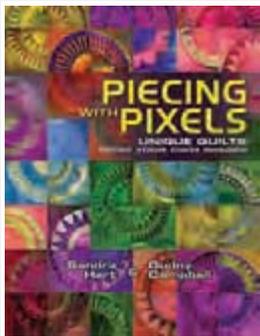
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PREFACE

I love playing with Adobe® Photoshop® Elements, discovering new tools, and combining them to make digital art. When I realized that patterns could have transparent parts, I started creating stencil like patterns and tiling them. About the same time I discovered the magic of blending. I showed my designs to friends. They loved them, and wanted to learn how to create them, which led to this book. The designs blend patterns, and brushes with my photos and Digital Stash textures.



This book is a companion to the techniques Sandra Hart and I explored in our book *“Piecing with Pixels”* where we showed you how to digitally create beautiful quilts using Elements Cookie Cutter shapes, and a dazzling Digital Stash starting with your photograph, then transforming it with Elements filters.

Special thanks to Sandy Hart, the coauthor of *“Piecing with Pixels”*, a great friend who encourages me to try new things and sparks my imagination.

I am very grateful to my Pixel Pals, Gloria Hatton, Debbie Biller, Anna Mae Gazo, Katie Macklin, Elizabeth Hull and Cheryl Smith who tested the stencil instructions and design projects, and contributed their wonderful designs to the gallery.

Thanks to Carol Deuel for her support and page design suggestions.

Special thanks to Sylvia Pastor, who introduced me to quilting.

I am grateful to my family for enriching my life and for their support in following my dreams.

INTRODUCTION

“Creating with Pixels” adds a new dimension to digital quilting, showing you how to easily blend patterns, brushes and texture with your favorite photos to create beautiful and unique designs using Adobe® Photoshop® Elements tools.

- **Getting started is simple.**
- **Design with your favorite photos blended with texture and stencil patterns.**
- **20 projects one page or less with easy to follow step-by-step instructions.**
- **Projects tested by beginning to advanced users.**

THE COMPONENTS INCLUDE:

PHOTOS: Start with your favorite digital photos. Here are some from the design projects.



DIGITAL STASH: It is so much fun to apply Elements filters to your photos creating a Digital Stash of textures. You can make all kinds of texture including stripes, checks, swirls, etc.



STENCIL PATTERNS AND BRUSHES: Create resizable, stencil like patterns or brushes with transparent parts.



STACKING LAYERS: After assembling all the photos and Digital Stash, stack them in layers in a file. Add stencil patterns, tiling them to create a design, or stamp with a stencil brush.

BLENDING: Add Elements blending modes to some of the stacked layers to create wonderful effects.

Elements blending modes is the MAGIC which combines photo, Digital Stash texture, and stencil layers into a design, interacting with them, changing the color, darkness, lightness or contrast.

Scrolling through the 25 blending modes to view the different effects is so easy, and you get some amazing results. Click on the blending modes pull-down menu in the layers panel, highlighted in red below. Layers which have blending applied are circled in yellow throughout the book. Notice how blending changed the grey patterns to the image colors.



PLAY WITH PIXELS TO CREATE UNIQUE DESIGNS

This book guides you through easy to follow step-by-step instructions for blending photos with Digital Stash textures, patterns and brushes, inspiring you to play with different design variations. Every project has been tested by beginning to advanced users. Getting started is simple, all of the project instructions are one page or less.

THE CHAPTERS INCLUDE:

The Basics explains Elements version differences, the workspace and tools, and preferences you should set.

Digital Stash shows how to create fabulous texture using Elements filters with examples from the design projects.

Patterns and Brushes explains how to create patterns and brushes from shapes or your photos, and save and manage them in library sets. It describes how to use patterns with the Paint Bucket, Pattern Fill Layer and Pattern Stamp and brushes with the Brush, Pattern Stamp or Selection Brush tools to create your unique designs.

Blending suggests ways to use Elements blending modes to create wonderful designs by combining your photos and Digital Stash with patterns and brushes and shows several examples of the 25 blending modes.

Designs explains how to complete a design, create a border, and print, and includes twenty design projects with step-by-step instructions full of creative ideas. The projects are one page or less and include several variations to further your creative play.

Gallery showcases quilts and digital art, many showing design variations, others showing different creative ideas.

Resources lists web sites for tips, supplies, books, etc.

I suggest browsing through the chapters before starting the designs, especially pages 30-33 of the Designs chapter. Try the exercise on page 31 which introduces you to blending. Refer to individual chapter sections for more information when completing the designs.

When using the tools, experiment with different options. Sometimes, wonderful results like stripes or stencil patterns can happen.

Since the designs are digital you can resize and use them in a variety of ways. Print them on fabric and make quilts or clothing, print on paper and make scrapbook pages or note cards, even print on canvas.

PATTERNS & BRUSHES

Elements has a few default patterns and brushes in the preset library. The power and creativity is in defining and using your own. Patterns and brushes are important resources for every designer. If you have good pattern and brush libraries, it is easier to build high quality content and experiment with new ideas.

This chapter explains how to define patterns and brushes (called presets) and save and manage them with the *Edit>Preset Manager*. It also explains the pattern and brush tools used to create the design projects.

Why use Patterns and Brushes

- Create patterns or brushes from your photos or Digital Stash for quick access when playing with designs or to easily resize. The Pattern Library and the Colored Photo and Digital Stash columns on the next page show examples.
- Create stencil patterns like the 1/2 square triangle. The three Stencil columns on the next page and the Pattern Library on this page show stencil pattern examples.
- Create one or multiple copies of a pattern by tiling. The Paint Bucket row on the next page shows tiling examples.
- Fussy cut by moving a pattern around on an image.
- Add all kinds of texture like rust, floral effects, swirls to your designs to give them any look you want.
- Download vast amounts of patterns and brushes from the Internet.
- Select the *Paint Bucket* tool, choose pattern and click to recolor a section of a layer or image.
- The *Layer > New Fill Layer > Pattern* lets you scale a pattern preset from 1 to 1000% on a new layer which you can simplify to convert to a regular layer.
- With the Brush or Pattern Stamp, add one or more brush shapes anywhere on an image.

- Use the *Brush* tool to stamp one or more copies or draw a straight line with the foreground color.
- With the *Pattern Stamp* tool, fill a brush shape with a pattern preset like using a digital rubber stamp.
- Stacking pattern stencils and clipping them with photos creates some very interesting layered designs.

Pattern and Brush Libraries

Think of the **Pattern library** as Element's storage area, like a file folder, where you can store your favorite photos, Digital Stash, texture and stencils, and quickly use them with the pattern tools.

You can create libraries for different pattern categories or projects as well. For example, the Sudoku design needs 9 photos or Digital Stash and a grid stencil pattern. You could save them all in a Sudoku pattern library as a set. You could create a pattern library that only has stripes stencils, or one with only Digital Stash. Pattern tools let you recolor an image or selection, or create a new layer with a pattern at 1 to 1000%. One way to retrieve a pattern is to select *Layer > New Fill Layer > Pattern* to place it on a new layer.



The **Brush library** is similar to the pattern library, except that brushes in the Brush library are converted to black or shades of grey and used by the brush tools.



BLENDING

Blending is the MAGIC that transforms your design with some amazing results. In the example below, the Solid Checks pattern (blend layer with Exclusion selected) was blended with a pale Digital Stash image (base layer). The next page shows all the blending modes for this example. In the book, examples showing layers with blending applied are circled in yellow.



Blending on a selected layer, interacts with the layers below, changing the darkness, lightness, contrast, or brightness. Pixels on the blend layer combine with pixels on the base layer, depending on the blending mode selected. The bottom layer, the base, is always Normal. You can stack multiple layers above the base layer with the same or different blending modes.

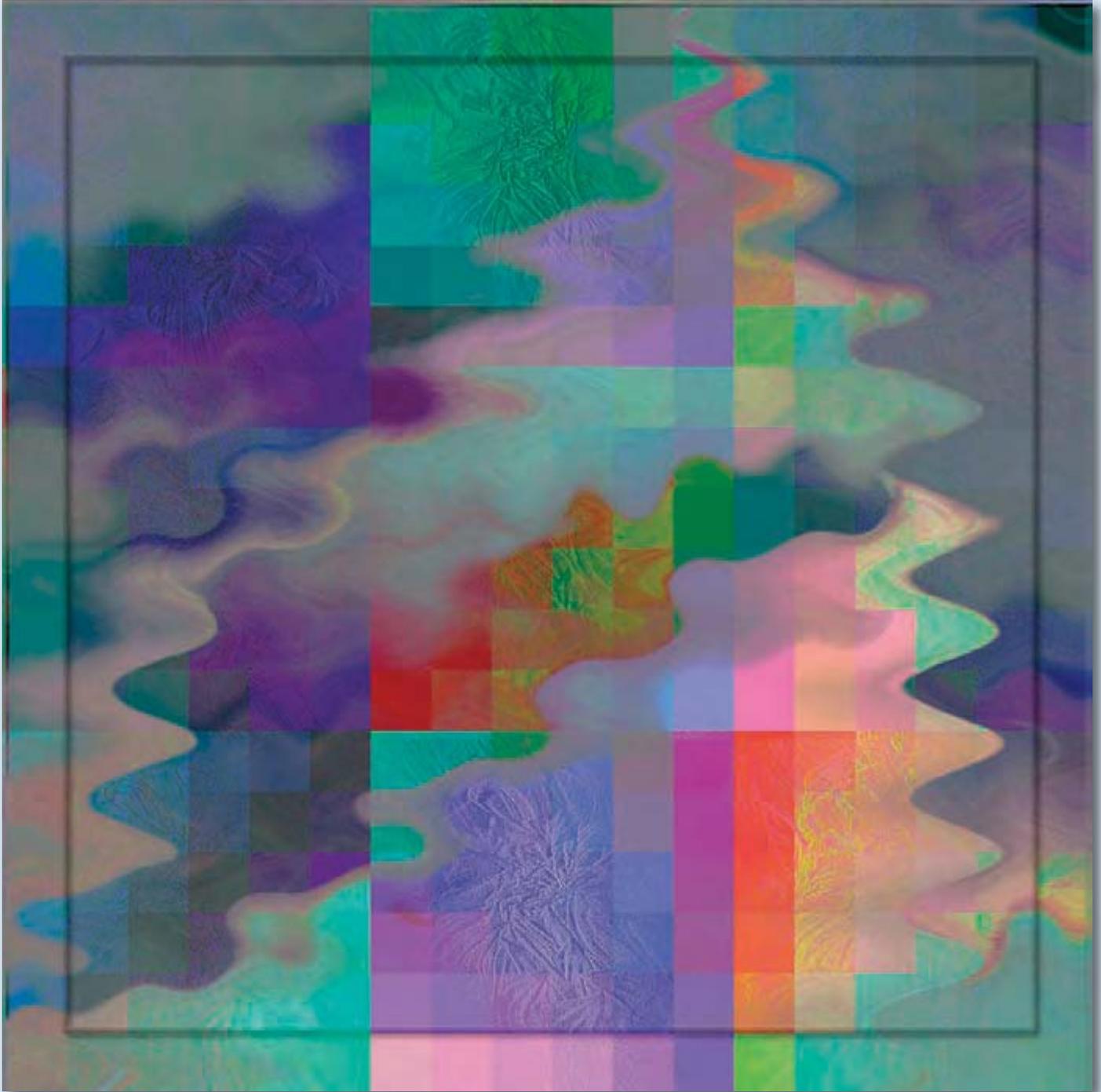
I recommend that you take 5 minutes to watch the Adobe TV blending modes video for a better understanding of blending modes:

<http://tv.adobe.com/watch/learn-photoshop-elements-7/blending-layers-together/>

The blending modes pull-down menu shown on the right, groups by the kind of blending that occurs: darkening, lightening, adding contrast, comparing layers and affecting the brightness and color. The top one, Normal, is the default.

Some of my favorites are darken, overlay, soft light and multiply, but each blend is different. My best advice is to scroll through **ALL** the blending modes each time you blend and pick the one you like best. It varies greatly with different patterns, brushes, textures and images. As you will see in the Designs, I used many different modes. After you blend, apply a levels adjustment layer as the top layer to tweak the contrast and brightness.

Blending Modes	
Normal-Default	Normal
	Dissolve
Darkens layers below	Darken
	Multiply
	Color Burn
	Linear Burn
	Darker Color
Lightens layers Below	Lighten
	Screen
	Color Dodge
	Linear Dodge (Add)
	Lighter Color
Adds contrast to layers below	Overlay
	Soft Light
	Hard Light
	Vivid Light
	Linear Light
	Pin Light
	Hard Mix
Compares selected layer and layers below	Difference
	Exclusion
Affects brightness, color of layers below	Hue
	Saturation
	Color
	Luminosity



Sine Waves

I am having a great time playing with the solid checks pattern. I started with a petal rose image, filtered it with Wave-sine, and rotated it 90 degrees. I clipped a pale dahlia texture (Digital Stash) pattern to the solid checks pattern to add texture and blended the layers.

TECHNIQUES:

Pattern Fill Layer, page 20

Blending, page 24

Clipping Mask, page 23

Digital Stash-Filters, page 8

PATTERNS:

Solid Checks, 2"x2", page 16

Digital Stash-Bas Relief Dahlia, page 8

Circle Offset 8"x8", page 15

GALLERY: pages 82, 87

1. Define the *Solid Checks*, 2"x2", and *Circle Offset*, 8"x8", patterns.

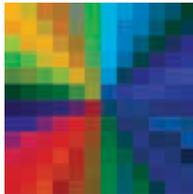
2. Open a photo. *Crop* to an even numbered height and width, either a rectangle or a square, 300 ppi resolution. *File > Save As* a new name. My image is a rose petal, 12" x 12", 300 ppi.



3. Duplicate the layer. Hide the bottom layer as a backup, so you can repeat this step if desired. Apply a filter. I used *Filter > Distort > Wave* with sine selected. To add to your Digital Stash, save as a .jpg.

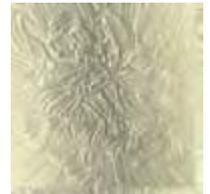
4. Play with the angle. Rotate the filtered image 90 degrees. If it looks nice, continue, if not keep rotating or use the original angle.

5. Select *Layer > New Fill Layer > Pattern* and click *OK*, selecting the *Solid Checks* pattern scaled at 400% or your preference if your file is not 12" x 12". Drag it around to select colors that complement your image, but make sure the checks line up with the edges. *Layer>Simplify Layer*. Scroll through layer blending modes. Layers with blending modes are circled in yellow. I used *Exclusion*.



6. If you want more texture, select *Layer > New Fill Layer > Pattern* and click *OK*, selecting a pale texture pattern. I created a pattern from an ivory Bas Relief filtered dahlia Digital Stash. *Layer>Simplify Layer*.

Press *Ctrl g (MAC Cmd g)* to clip it to the checks layer below. Play with blending modes. I used *Darken* so the texture shows on the checks.

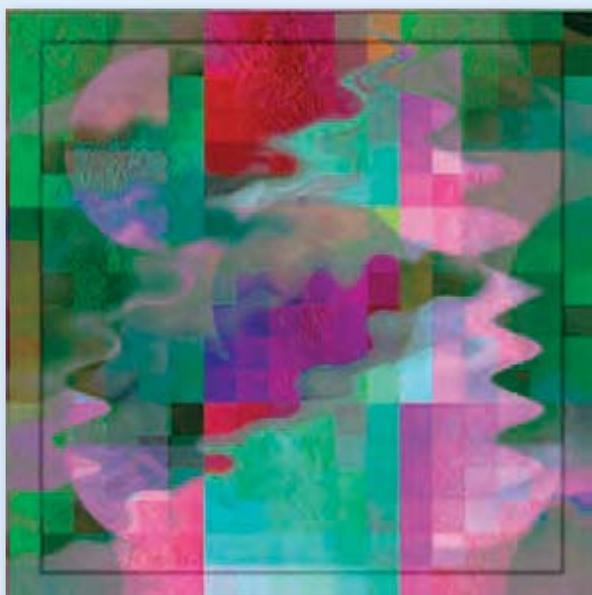


7. Tweak the brightness, and contrast with the Levels Adjustment Layer.



Tweak the colors with the Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer. If you aren't happy with the result, or want to compare it to the original, hide the layer.

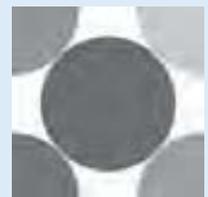
8. Add an optional border, and save your file as a .psd to preserve the layers.



VARIATION

Play with other patterns.

To create the alternative below, I inserted the Circle Offset Pattern, page 15, between the Solid Checks and Wave Sine layers. I also changed the Hue/Saturation.



To create the image on the left I set the blending mode to *Overlay* on the new Circle Offset layer.

