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The Professional Portfolio

AGAINST THE CLOCK
mastering graphic technology

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The image on the cover shows the skylight at the center of the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, in New York City. (©Hujjie | Dreamstime.com)

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Acknowledgements

ABOUT AGAINST THE CLOCK

Against The Clock, long recognized as one of the nation's leaders in courseware development, has been publishing high-quality educational materials for the graphic and computer arts industries since 1990. The company has developed a solid and widely-respected approach to teaching people how to effectively use graphics applications, while maintaining a disciplined approach to real-world problems.

Having developed the *Against The Clock* and the *Essentials for Design* series with Prentice Hall/Pearson Education, ATC drew from years of professional experience and instructor feedback to develop *The Professional Portfolio Series*, focusing on the Adobe Creative Suite. These books feature step-by-step explanations, detailed foundational information, and advice and tips from industry professionals that offer practical solutions to technical issues.

Against The Clock works closely with all major software developers to create learning solutions that fulfill both the requirements of instructors and the needs of students. Thousands of graphic arts professionals — designers, illustrators, imaging specialists, prepress experts, and production managers — began their educations with Against The Clock training books. These professionals studied at Baker College, Nossi College of Art, Virginia Tech, Appalachian State University, Keiser College, University of South Carolina, Gress Graphic Arts Institute, Kean University, Southern Polytechnic State University, Brenau University, and many other educational institutions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS, ARTISTS, AND EDITORS

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Walk-Through

Project 2

Vintage Car Montage

Your client hosts an annual vintage car show that draws more than 20,000 visitors over a two-week period. You have been hired to create a composite image for the cover of the event program.

This project incorporates the following skills:

- Resizing and resampling supplied images
- Creating complex vector paths and shape layers
- Compositing images as Smart Objects
- Applying non-destructive styles, effects, and filters
- Developing custom artistic background

Project Goals

Each project begins with a clear description of the overall concepts that are explained in the project; these goals closely match the different "stages" of the project workflow.

Project Meeting

client comments

We need an image to use on the cover of a program for this year's Vintage Car Show. The main focus is food — we keep it consistent from year to year. The area available for the image is 7" wide by 8" high.

We don't have any specific images or concepts in mind, but we would like the image to be a composite instead of just a single image. We had thought about hiring a traditional artist to create a painting, but we don't have time.

Hopefully you can come up with something that highlights the "vintage" concept of the Vintage Car Show.

art director comments

I think we'll go with a montage to highlight one primary car and several smaller inset photos. I've located a number of great vintage car images at www.publicdomainpictures.net.

The main car needs to be knocked out of its background so it can be more prominent. A vector path will work well to meet this goal because you can edit it at any time without losing quality.

The main image is a bit small for the defined canvas size, so you'll need to enlarge it a bit so it fills more of the space.

The client wants an overall artistic effect. I think you can use styles, filters, and effects on the background objects and inset images to solve those problems. Photoshop's Smart Object capabilities will be a significant advantage in this task because we can edit the effects and filters if the client isn't thrilled with the initial effort.

project objectives

To complete this project, you will:

- Resize and resample an existing source image
- Edit the canvas size
- Create a vector-based layer mask
- Create a vector shape layer
- Create a clipping mask
- Add texture to a shape layer
- Apply custom layer effects
- Use the Filter Gallery
- Liquify a layer
- Use the Eyedropper tool
- Create a custom gradient
- Create a gradient fill layer
- Create a pattern fill layer
- Print a composite proof

The Project Meeting

Each project includes the client's initial comments, which provide valuable information about the job. The Project Art Director, a vital part of any design workflow, also provides fundamental advice and production requirements.

Project Objectives

Each Project Meeting includes a summary of the specific skills required to complete the project.

Stage 2 Working with Vector Tools

Vector paths, also called Bézier curves, are defined mathematically based on the position of anchor points and the length and angle of direction handles that are connected to those anchor points. Unlike the paths in a raster image, vector paths do not lose a defined resolution until they are output.

Because of this, vector paths can be scaled at any time without any loss of quality.

Photoshop includes a number of tools for creating vector paths.

- The **Pen tool** places individual anchor points each time you click; line segments connect each point. If you click and drag, you create a point with direction handles, which precisely control the shape of the connecting vector paths.
- The **Freeform Pen tool** draws vector paths wherever you drag, just as you would draw with a pencil on paper.
- The **Rectangle and Ellipse tools** create shapes that you would expect based on the tool names (square or circle, respectively). If you press Shift while you click and drag, you create a shape with equal height and width (a square or circle, respectively).
- The **Polygon tool** creates a shape with any number of sides. Clicking once opens a dialog box where you can define the number of sides. Clicking once again, each anchor point has direction handles that make the corners rounded instead of sharp. If you choose the Star option, the Inset Sides By value determines where the inner points of the star appear relative to the overall shape diameter. You can also check the Smooth Indent option to create smooth curves on the inside points of the shape (instead of outer points).
- The **Line tool** creates open straight lines with two points, one at each end. When first created, the points have no direction handles and the connecting segment is a straight line.
- The **Custom Shape tool** creates vector-based shapes from built-in or external libraries. (You will use this tool in Project 5: Creating Covers.)

When you use the vector drawing tools, you have the option to create a new shape, path, or pixels.

When you choose Shape, the shape is placed on a vector-based shape layer. If you choose Path, the shape exists only as a work path in the Paths panel. If you choose Pixels, the resulting shape is created as pixels on the previously selected layer. No vector path is created.

Real-World Workflow

Projects are broken into logical lessons or "stages" of the workflow. Brief introductions at the beginning of each stage provide vital foundational material required to complete the task.

CREATE A VECTOR-BASED LAYER MASK

Now that your car outline shape is nearly complete, you are going to use the path to create a vector-based layer mask, which will remove the car from the surrounding background. Unlike the pixel-based masks you created in Project 1: Composite Montage, all the edges of a vector mask are defined by a vector path which means they cannot have degrees of transparency. To edit the mask edge, you have to edit the vector path.

- With **montage.psd** open, set your view percentage so you can see the entire car in the document window.
- Select the **Car Outline path** in the Paths panel and select the **Car layer** in the Layers panel.
- Choose **Layer-Vector Mask-Current Path**.

As you can see, a new path is added to the Paths panel. The name "Car Vector Mask" identifies this path as a vector mask for the layer named Car. The name in italics indicates that it is a temporary path, which only appears in the panel when the masked layer is selected.

Nothing is added to the Channels panel because channels are raster-based; they do not store vector-based path information.

The path you want to use as the mask is selected.

The layer you want to mask is selected.

The mask path is visible in the Paths panel when the masked layer is selected.

The mask thumbnail is added to the masked layer.

No alpha channel is added to the file.

Step-By-Step Exercises

Every stage of the workflow is broken into multiple hands-on, step-by-step exercises.

Visual Explanations

Wherever possible, screen shots are annotated so that you can quickly identify important information.

Understanding the Paths Panel

If you use the Pen tool in Paths mode, the vector path that you create is stored in the Paths panel rather than attached to a specific layer.

When you first create a path, it is stored as a geometry option, allowing another shape adds to the current work path, which is stored temporarily until you deselect the path.

If you want to be able to access a path later in your work, you can save the work path with a custom name. Saved paths are stored in the Paths panel and you intentionally delete them.

If you click a saved path name in the panel, the path becomes visible in the document window. You can then use the vector drawing and editing tools to edit the path.

In the Paths panel options menu, you can choose **Make Selection** to make a matching anti-selection based on the path shape. You can use the resulting dialog box to define the details of the selection.

If you choose **Fill Path** in the Options menu, you can use the resulting dialog box to determine how the fill will be created. You can choose the color or pattern, the blending mode and opacity, and whether to blend the edge of the resulting fill so it blends smoothly into underlying layers.

If you choose the **Stroke Path** option, you must also choose which tool will create the stroke; the applied stroke will have the last-used settings for the selected tool. In other words, you have to define the tool options (brush size, hardness, etc.) that you want before using this option.

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path mode | the work path is only temporary | Click here to open the panel options menu.

Click a saved path to select it and reveal the path in the document window.

Click the empty entry of the panel to deselect the active path and hide it in the document window.

The Fill Path and Stroke Path options add the resulting pixels to the currently active layer — an important distinction from the Shape Layer option, which automatically creates a new layer when you begin painting the vector path. It is also important to remember that although the path remains a vector path, color that is applied to the fill or stroke of the path is raster or pixel-based; it does not have the same scalability as a vector shape layer.

If you choose the Clipping Path option, which is essential to mask that defines the visible area of an image if the file is placed into a page-layout application such as Adobe InDesign. (The white area in the illustration defines what areas will be visible as a vector shape layer.)

Buttons across the bottom of the Paths panel provide quick access to many of the features explained here. They are, from left to right:

- Fill Path with Foreground Color
- Stroke Path with Brush
- Load Path as a Selection
- Make Work Path from Selection
- Add Layer Mask
- Create New Path
- Delete Path

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Photoshop Foundations

Additional functionality, related tools, and underlying graphic design concepts are included throughout the book.

8. Review the information in the Properties panel.

This panel automatically appears when you create a new shape with one of the vector shape tools. It shows the dimensions and position of the resulting shape, as well as other properties that were available in the Options panel before you created the shape.

Note: Because you are creating a vector shape, you can edit its properties as any time without losing quality or pixel integrity (as would happen for pixel-based raster data).

9. Highlight the current X field and type 8. Press Tab to highlight the Y field, then type 9 again. Press Return/Enter to apply the change.

The X and Y fields define the object's position based on its top-left corner.

Note: Fields in the Properties panel only recognize measurements in pixels. Use units menu when needed.

Align type for stroke | Line cap type for stroke | Line join type for stroke | Stroke parameters | Corner Radius options | Path Operations

Advice and Warnings

Where appropriate, sidebars provide shortcuts, warnings, or tips about the topic at hand.

Project Review

fill in the blank

- _____ sharpens an image by increasing contrast along the edges in an image.
- _____ refers to the overall image area, like the surface used by traditional painters.
- The _____ tool is used to draw freeform vector-based shapes and paths.
- A _____ is a special type of Photoshop layer that retains vector path information.
- _____ control the shape of a curve between two anchor points.
- The _____ tool can be used to fill areas with solid colors or patterns.
- A _____ is a smooth transition from one color to another.
- The _____ command is used to show only areas of one layer that fall within the area of the underlying layer.
- In the Liquify filter, the _____ tool can be used to protect specific areas from being liquified.
- The _____ allows with different filters and filters to compound multiple filters' artistic effects.

short answer

- Briefly explain the difference between vectors and pixels.
- Briefly describe two different tool modes when using a vector drawing tool.
- Briefly explain the difference between the Path Selection tool and the Direct Selection tool.

Project Review

After completing each project, you can complete these fill-in-the-blank and short-answer questions to test your understanding of the concepts in the project.

Portfolio Builder Project

Use what you learned in this project to complete the following freeform exercise. Carefully read the art director and client comments, then create your own design to meet the needs of the project. Use the space below to sketch ideas; when finished, write a brief explanation of your reasoning behind your final design.

art director comments

I downloaded a comp image with a map of Africa that we can use to get the shape right, and then we can incorporate their photos into the map outline.

I think the ideal size for the print is 10 x 12". You should create a vector shape layer from the map image so that you can enlarge it to fill as much space as possible in the final print.

To complete this project, you should:

- Download the **PSCC_PB_Project2.zip** archive from the Student Files Web page to access the map image and animal photos.
- Save the animal images in the TIFF format if you want to place them as Smart Objects.
- Create a final poster using whatever styles, filters, and other artistic elements you need.

client comments

We at the Global Wildlife Fund need to create an artistic poster to thank you for donors. A colleague suggested that we might be able to find someone who can do what we want with Photoshop, and probably do it much faster and for far less money than a traditional artist.

Here's what we have in mind: we'd like a map of the African continent with indigenous animals inside the shape of the continent. We've already gathered up a collection of images of African animals; we'd rather not have to pay for stock images when we already have so many of our own.

project justification

Project 2

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Portfolio Builder Projects

Each step-by-step project is accompanied by a freeform project, allowing you to practice skills and creativity, resulting in an extensive and diverse portfolio of work.

Project Summary

Vectors offer an advantage over pixel-based images because they can be freely scaled and edited without losing quality. This project focused on many different options related to working with vectors in Photoshop — drawing paths, creating shape layers, and editing vector shape properties. You used images and a custom artistic pattern.

This project also introduced some of the creative tools that can turn photos and flat colors into gradient and pattern fill layers, and layer Blending modes. You will use these options many times in your career as you complete different types of projects in Photoshop.

- Create a compound vector shape layer
- Edit corner properties of vector shapes
- Apply a color to a vector shape layer
- Liquify paths to create outline effects
- Use a vector mask to remove an image from its background
- Composite multiple images using Smart Objects
- Apply effects to images to create a "stunning" effect
- Use gradients and patterns to create a custom background
- Adjust blending mode and opacity to blend one layer into another

Project 2: Vintage Car Montage 147

Visual Summary

Using an annotated version of the finished project, you can quickly identify the skills used to complete different aspects of the job.

Projects at a Glance

The *Against The Clock Portfolio Series* teaches graphic design software tools and techniques entirely within the framework of real-world projects; we introduce and explain skills where they would naturally fall into a real project workflow.

The project-based approach in *The Professional Portfolio Series* allows you to get in depth with the software beginning in Project 1 — you don't have to read several chapters of introductory material before you can start creating finished artwork.

Our approach also prevents “topic tedium” — in other words, we don't require you to read pages and pages of information about text (for example); instead, we explain text tools and options as part of a larger project (in this case, as part of a postcard series).

Clear, easy-to-read, step-by-step instructions walk you through every phase of each job, from creating a new file to saving the finished piece. Wherever logical, we also offer practical advice and tips about underlying concepts and graphic design practices that will benefit students as they enter the job market.

The projects in this book reflect a range of different types of Photoshop jobs, from creating a magazine ad to correcting menu images to building a Web page. When you finish the eight projects in this book (and the accompanying Portfolio Builder exercises), you will have a substantial body of work that should impress any potential employer.

The eight Photoshop projects are described briefly here; more detail is provided in the full table of contents (beginning on Page viii).

project 1

Composite Movie Ad

- ❑ Compositing Images and Artwork
- ❑ Managing Layers
- ❑ Creating Complex Selections
- ❑ Saving Photoshop Files for Print



project 2

Vintage Car Montage

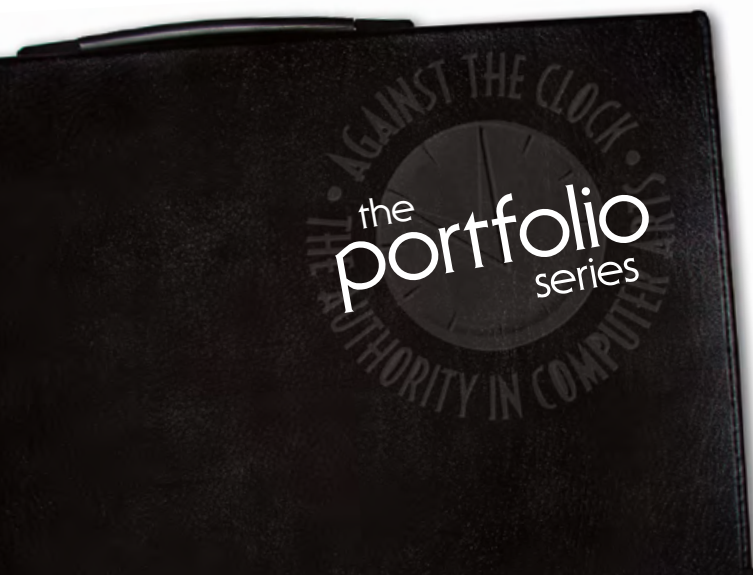
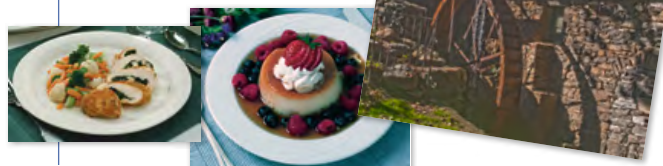
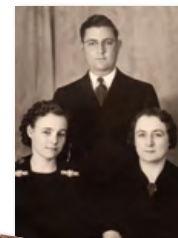
- ❑ Enlarging Source Files
- ❑ Working with Vector Tools
- ❑ Applying Styles and Filters



project 3

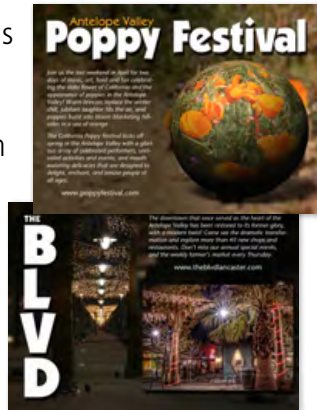
Menu Image Correction

- ❑ Retouching Damaged Images
- ❑ Correcting Lighting Problems
- ❑ Correcting Color Problems
- ❑ Preparing Images for Print
- ❑ Working with HDR Images



City Promotion Cards

- Creating New Files
- Manipulating Pixels
- Working with Type
- Creating Style with Layers
- Working in 3D



House Painting

- Filling Solid Areas
- Painting with Brushes
- Working with Patterns
- Painting Nature



Calendar Cover

- Managing Missing Fonts
- Creating a Complex Mask
- Creating Custom Vector Shapes
- Working with Spot Channels



Photographer's Web Page

- Automating Repetitive Tasks
- Editing Layers for Visual Effect
- Generating Web-Ready Assets



Advertising Samples

- Cleaning and Adjusting Images
- Working in Perspective
- Working with Lighting



Our goal in this book is to familiarize you with the majority of the Photoshop tool set, so you can be more productive and more marketable in your career as a graphic designer.

It is important to keep in mind that Photoshop is an extremely versatile and powerful application. The sheer volume of available tools, panels, and features can seem intimidating when you first look at the software interface. Most of these tools, however, are fairly simple to use with a bit of background information and a little practice.

Wherever necessary, we explain the underlying concepts and terms that are required for understanding the software. We're confident that these projects provide the practice you need to be able to create sophisticated artwork by the end of the very first project.

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Getting Started

PREREQUISITES

To use *The Professional Portfolio Series*, you should know how to use your mouse to point and click, as well as how to drag items around the screen. You should be able to resize and arrange windows on your desktop to maximize your available space. You should know how to access drop-down menus, and understand how check boxes and radio buttons work. It also doesn't hurt to have a good understanding of how your operating system organizes files and folders, and how to navigate your way around them. If you're familiar with these fundamental skills, then you know all that's necessary to use the Portfolio Series.

RESOURCE FILES

All the files you need to complete the projects in this book — except, of course, the Photoshop application files — are on the Student Files Web page at againsttheclock.com. See the inside back cover of this book for access information.

Each archive (ZIP) file is named according to the related project (e.g., **Movie_PSCC16_RF.zip**). At the beginning of each project, you must download the archive for that project and expand it to access the resource files that you need to complete the exercises. Detailed instructions for this process are included in the Interface chapter.

Files required for the related Portfolio Builder exercises at the end of each project are also available on the Student Files page; these archives are also named by project (e.g., **Airborne_PSCC16_PB.zip**).

ATC FONTS

You must download and install the ATC fonts from the Student Files Web page to ensure that your exercises and projects work as described in the book. You should replace older (pre-2013) ATC fonts with the ones on the Student Files Web page.

SOFTWARE VERSIONS

This book was written and tested using the June 2016 release of Adobe Photoshop CC software (version 17.0). You can find the specific version number in the Splash Screen that appears while your application is launching.

Because Adobe has announced periodic upgrades rather than releasing new full versions, some features and functionality might have changed since publication. Please check the Errata section of the Against The Clock Web site for any significant issues that might have arisen from these periodic upgrades.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

The Professional Portfolio Series was designed to work on both Macintosh or Windows computers; where differences exist from one platform to another, we include specific instructions relative to each platform. One issue that remains different from Macintosh to Windows is the use of different modifier keys (Control, Shift, etc.) to accomplish the same task. When we present key commands, we always follow the same Macintosh/Windows format — Macintosh keys are listed first, then a slash, followed by the Windows key commands.