


Artist
PROFILE

Agnès Dodart
COUNTRY: US



Agnès Dodart has always been expressing her thoughts, emotions and ideas visually. When she discovered the potential of computer art, she immediately developed a passion for this fascinating medium. The diversity of her creations reflects a variety of influences from her European and American background. She is a self-taught digital artist who works mainly with art galleries.

tinyurl.com/26gpfo

DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD.

FOLDERS: Workshop files, Screenshots

SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2 (demo), Fractal Explorer

Photoshop **CREATE CRYSTAL-LIKE DESIGNS**

Want to turn a solid pattern into a glass structure in minutes? **Agnès Dodart** reveals her secret recipe...

To create this crystal-like design, I'll be working in Photoshop and using a few basic tools of picture manipulation: layering, blending modes and filters. I'm going to guide you through the steps to achieve a crystal, glass or metallic effect on a regular image.

The first, and perhaps the most important thing, is to find a good quality picture suitable for this method.

In order to get good results, the image you choose needs to meet a few requirements: it should be constituted of

clearly defined elements with sharp edges, preferably against a solid or smooth background, and in contrasting tones. Colours aren't important, so long as there's a lot of contrast within the composition. The technique explained in this workshop won't be as effective – or will give very different results – on fuzzy shapes, blurry contours, busy backgrounds, or on low-contrast pictures using mostly soft, neutral tones. The nature of the final effect (crystal, glass or metallic) will mostly depend on these aspects of your starting image.

The picture I chose for this workshop is a fractal pattern generated in Fractal Explorer (a free program, a demo of which is on the DVD). The image is particularly well-suited to yield good results since it meets all of the required conditions; moreover, the intrinsic beauty of its sophisticated pattern makes it an ideal candidate for a crystal-like design. For the purpose of this workshop, I won't go into further detail about fractal images and their creation process, but will focus instead on the method used to turn the picture into a crystal-like design.

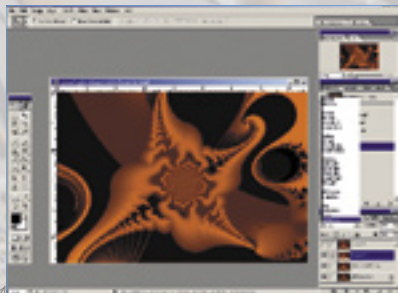
Quick technique Create crystal-like designs

1 Getting started

Let's open the picture (DVD_File1) in Photoshop. We'll start working on a duplicate image, that way we can always go back to the original version later on, if needed. So first, duplicate the layer (Layer>Duplicate Layer>OK). Then we need to enhance the contrast. To do this quickly, use the Auto Contrast command (Image>Adjustments>Auto Contrast) on the duplicate layer.

2 Copy twice

Make two copies of the enhanced duplicate layer. To achieve a crystal-like effect, we're simply going to modify the blending modes and apply a filter on the two new layers we just created.

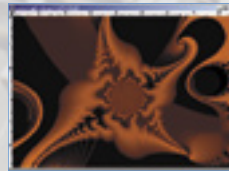
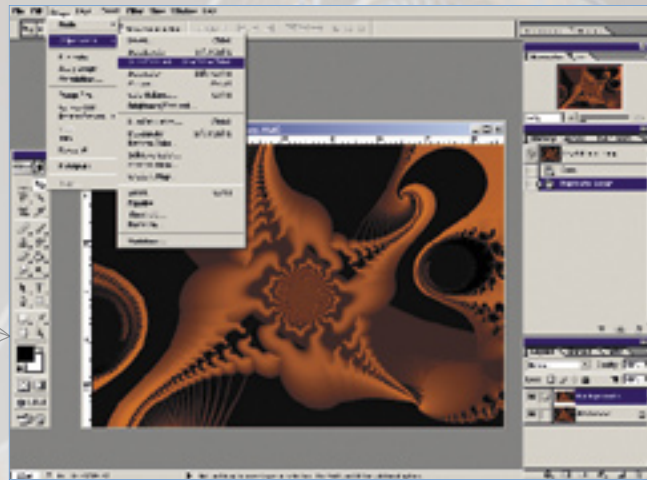
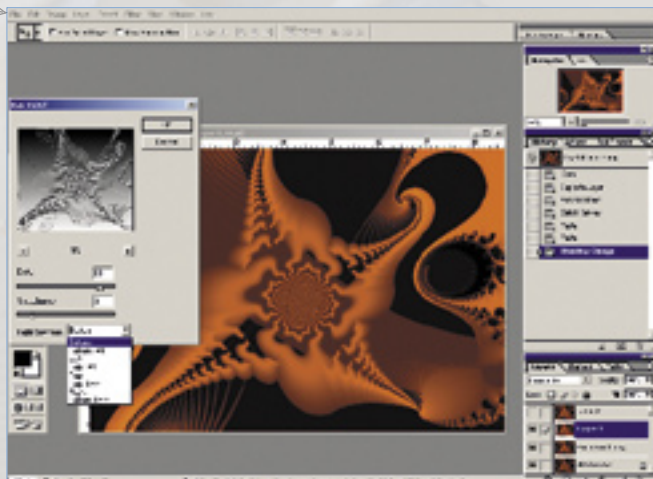


3 Luminosity

Hide the top layer (by clicking on the small eye next to it). Then, select the layer just below and change its blending mode to Luminosity in the Layers palette.

4 Outlining elements

Make sure the foreground and background are set to their default colours (black and white). If not, click the Default Colours icon in the Toolbox. In the Filter menu, select Sketch and choose Bas-Relief. This opens a dialog box with a preview window. Then simply



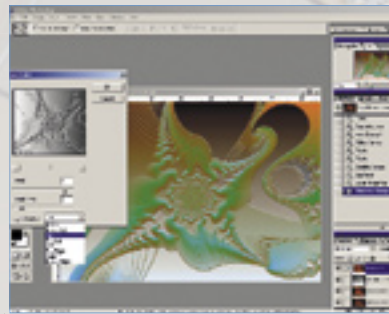
PRO SECRETS

Be organised!

Organise your workflow to avoid confusion and optimise your time, especially when experimenting. One trick is to name layers after the effects are applied and then take snapshots of the results. This enables you to compare different versions of the image you've been tweaking, and enables you to remember the settings chosen.

reduce the viewing percentage in order to see the whole image.

Next, in the Light Direction menu, try different settings until you find one that gives a good outline of the elements in the picture (remember, we need a lot of contrast). I usually find that the non-diagonal settings work best (that is Top, Bottom, Left or Right). For this workshop, choose Bottom, then hit OK. Now is a good time to rename our layer to remember what we just did. Double-click on it and type the name of the filter applied: Bas-Relief Bottom.

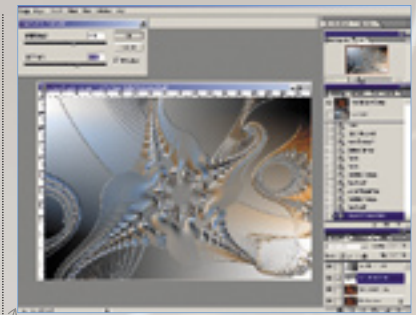


5 Exclusion blending

Select the hidden layer (which should make it visible), then choose the Exclusion blending mode in the Layers palette. We're going to apply the Bas-Relief filter again, but this time we need to select a Light Direction that's perpendicular to the previous one (so either Left or Right). For this workshop, choose Left and change the layer's name to Bas-Relief Left.

6 Create a snapshot

Create a snapshot of the current image: in the History palette, right-click on the last action taken, select New Snapshot, give it a name in the dialog



box, then hit OK. A temporary copy of the image's current state will appear at the top of the History palette and will be stored there until the image is closed.

This is particularly useful if you need to experiment further during a work session and want to compare the effects of different settings. Switching between the snapshots enables you to recover different states of your work to find out which version you like best, or it can enable you to undo all the steps of your experiments if you're not completely satisfied with the results you've got.

7 Final adjustments

Add the final touches that will enhance the image. To refine the colour scheme, select the duplicate layer of the original image and tweak the settings in the Hue and Saturation dialog (Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation). To get bolder contours and to add more depth, select the Bas-Relief layers and adjust the values in the Brightness and Contrast dialog (Image>Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast).

Experiment until you find a combination you're happy with; for this workshop, on the "Bas-Relief Bottom" layer, I set the values at +20 for brightness and +30 for contrast; then on the "Bas-Relief Left" layer, I selected -15 for brightness and +20 for contrast. The original picture isn't needed anymore, so let's delete it and save the new image. ●

