

Working with Smart Objects

When you need to do the same thing to a bunch of images, Smart Objects is the way to go. It is a real time-saver when it comes to doing the same thing to many photos.

1. First we need to open a photo as a Smart Object. To do that, choose File>Open as Smart Object and open a photo. (Figure A)
2. As an example, lets say we want to make a series of rounded corner photos. To do that, we need to get a rounded corner box. You can do that by choosing the Rounded Rectangle tool (under the Rectangle tool).
3. When you have it selected, before you draw anything, make sure that you have clicked the Paths option in the Options bar. (Figure B)
4. Increase the radius to 60. (Figure C)
5. Draw your rounded rectangle that encompasses the faces in the picture.
6. Now we will create a vector mask. To do that, type Control (Command on a Mac) and click the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of your Layers panel. This will hide everything outside the rounded corner rectangle that you created. (Figure D)
7. Choose Window>Masks to open the Masks panel. In that panel, you can control the density and feather of the mask. Use both sliders to see how you can change the look. (Figure E)
8. You will notice that when you feather the mask you can still see the outline of the mask itself. You can make this disappear by clicking on any other layer. The problem is, you don't have another layer currently, so we need to make one.
9. To do that, hold down the Control (Command on a Mac) key and click the New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. This will create a new layer directly below the active layer.
10. Now fill the new layer with white by making sure your foreground color is white and pressing Alt (Option on a Mac) Backspace. This will fill that new layer with white. Make it the active layer, and the box around your mask will disappear.
11. Another thing you can do with this layer is to apply a Color, Gradient or Pattern Overlay Layer Style to the layer to change your background easily. (Figure F)
12. Once you have everything the way you want it for all your pictures (rounded rectangle, color background, feather, etc.), then, in the Layers panel, right-click on the name of the layer, and in the drop-out menu, choose Replace Contents. (Figure G)
13. When the Place dialog box opens, choose the next photo you want to apply the mask to and open it.
14. Save it as a JPEG with a new name and do the same thing again until you have converted them all.
15. If for some reason you need to reposition the mask, just click the link between the mask and Smart Object in the Layers panel, and you will be able to move them independently.
16. You can do the same thing with any vector mask.

