

Transform Photo into Watercolor Painting



Preparation

There are plenty of great stock images to choose from Night Fate Stock of deviantArt. I'm using one of them for this tutorial.

All rights of these resources belong to their respective owners.

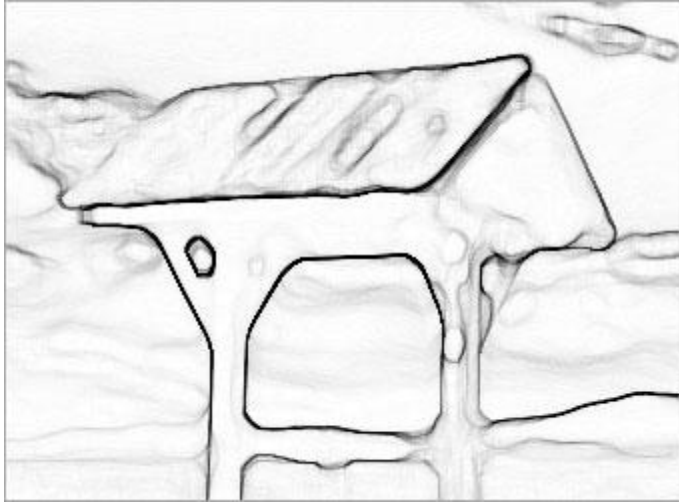


Step 1 – Applying Smart Blur

Create a new document with size 750×550 pixels. Open up the Scenery image, drag into the document and resize it so it fits nicely. Rename this layer as Landscape.

Duplicate Landscape layer. Rename the new layer as Blur Landscape.

Go to Filter > Blur > Smart Blur. Set the Radius to 10 and Threshold to 30.



Step 2a – Applying Glowing Edges

Duplicate the Landscape layer again. Rename the new layer as Outlines. Drag the Outlines layer to be above Blur Landscape layer.

Go to Filter > Stylize > Glowing Edges. Set the Edge Width to 1, Edge Brightness to 12 and Smoothness to 15.

Go to Image > Adjustments > Invert. Then follow by Image > Adjustments > Desaturate.



Step 2b – Applying Glowing Edges

Set the Blend Mode of Outlines layer to Multiply.

Set the Opacity of this layer to 80.



Step 3 – Create Painting Layer

Duplicate the Blur Landscape layer. Rename this new layer as Painting.

Select the Painting layer and go to Image > Adjustments > Invert. Set the Blend Mode to Color Dodge.



Step 4 – Paint with Dry Brush

Set the foreground color to #000000.

Select the Brush tool and open up the presets. Choose Dry Brush. Set the Opacity of this brush to 10%.

Paint briefly over the Painting layer and you will get the effect shown on the left.



Step 5a – Applying Watercolor Effect

Select the Brush tool and open up the presets again. Click on the right pointing arrow and load Wet Media Brushes. Choose Watercolor Textured Surface Brush. Set the Opacity of this brush to 50%. Reduce the brush size to 15pt.

Zoom in and paint the water well on the Painting layer. Use short, random strokes that follow the shape of the water well.



Step 5b – Applying Watercolor Effect

Increase the size of the brush to 100pt.

Use long strokes this time for the sky. Gradually build up the depth of color by painting over certain areas more than once.

To give an impression of real watercolor, it will be good to leave small areas of white here and there.



Step 5c – Applying Watercolor Effect

Repeat the same method on Step 5b for the grasses.



Step 5d – Applying Watercolor Effect

Reduce the brush size to 30pt.

Same thing here, paint short vertical strokes of grasses on the Painting layer.



Step 6 – Apply Watercolor Filter

Duplicate the original Landscape layer. Rename this new layer as Details. Rearrange this Details layer to be the top-most layer.

Go to Filter > Artistic > Watercolor. Set the Brush Details to 12, Shadow Intensity to 0, Texture to 3.

Set the Blend Mode of this layer to Luminosity and Opacity to 25%.



Optional

And we're done! Hope you enjoy this tutorial!

I enhanced the depth and colors of the painting further with a Levels Adjustment Layer. The settings are 9, 1.07, 203.

[Click here to view the final image.](#)