Q&A
VTC – August 21, 2021
GIMP, a Tool for Image Editing Layers of Vacation Photos
by Art Gresham

Q. Steve: What capabilities does Gimp have that Photoshop doesn't?

A. [GIMP vs. Photoshop (Is GIMP Really Just as Good?) 2021 (expertphotography.com)](#)
This is a good overall evaluation of the two programs. Although it does not do a feature-by-feature comparison, it is informative about the overall and some of the significant tools. Another more detailed review at https://www.designbuckle.com/adobe-photoshop-vs-gimp/ but hassimilar conclusions.

Q. Why don't you use layer masks instead of destroying original images?

A. Several reasons. The first is because I did not know about the feature until I started prepping for this demonstration and after I had installed the newer version (2.10) on my Win10 machine.

Second, I started using GIMP in 2014, and this was the first way I discovered by self-taught trial and error, and it just seemed to work. My Linux system (with version 2.08) I have found also does have thetool, unknown to me. And now that I have gone back with an old photo, I LIKE IT. I will use it and teach it as a better way.

Third, for the sake of simplicity, showing "Erase" as a concept is not too hard to grasp in a beginner's seminar. And having a picture under it (a 'layer') show-through where you just erased is pretty straightforward. The Layer mask is a more elegant way of doing the same thing and has some distinct advantages for correcting and fixing the mask as needed.

Q. Kathleen: I do not understand the order of the layers?

A. I hope I was able to demonstrate this during the Q&A. Basically, the layers (seen on the right cornerof the program window) are like sheets of transparent plastic which you can re-order (Click on drag up and down) to determine what is in front (covering) the content 'under' it. Or use the menu Layer, Stack to move them up and down.

Q. Carol: Are there copyright concerns, using a picture of a person (at the train station) without thatperson's permission?

A. Short answer, YES, if you are publishing publicly or putting on the internet a copyrighted work, you should always follow the owner's desired limitations. For example, two of the photos Iused are from the site https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/alma-stock-photo.html where a search will find 'Ella Station.' Generally, the photos I edit are my own or from CreativeCommons.Org.

Q. Gary: 4 questions

1. A brief comparison between GIMP and Photoshop, ON1, Irfan?

A. Judy, thanks for the question, but this presentation is about GIMP, and Art doesn't use the other apps.Here are some websites for you to check out.
IrfanView vs. GIMP: Which Software Is Better? (fixthephoto.com)
GIMP vs. Photoshop (Is GIMP Really Just as Good?) 2021
(expertphotography.com)ON1 Photo RAW VS GIMP - compare differences &
reviews? (saashub.com)
Good resources, thanks Judy.

2. RAW format camera-specific plugins

A. the https://www.rawtherapee.com/ plugin for GIMP should allow you to do this. I have not needed to edit RAW, so no personal knowledge. Several help sites are available to install it.

3. Spotlight tool to direct shadows? GIMP does not have the Spotlight tool you have in PS, but this tutorial will show how to do some effects that may accomplish a similar effect (depending, of course, onwhat you wanted to do)

a. very simple light (In version 2.8, but concept same)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaNWR5h0qiY

b. a complex light with reflections and multiple tools (In version 2.10, very good quality)https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_ARBKNyeio

4. Perspective tool example? See below answer.

Q. David: If I take a photo of a building, the top shows narrow and the bottom wide. Can Gimp correct the perspective view?

A. Great requests. And I will give you two tips.
First, from the Supreme Court photo, the wide-angle lens caused some tipping in of the left end of thebuilding, and the windows on the right end are marked here with a red line for reference.

After applying the Perspective tool from the Transform Tools menu, or Shift P, with the building layerselected, you can grab the lower-left corner and drag it to the right, and similarly for the right corner to the left. And I also dragged the bottomleft corner downward, causing the steps to be somewhat more squaredwith the frame of the picture. Here you can see that the reference lines are now vertical.

Second, that leaves some 'transparent' gaps on the edges. To remove them, use the **Crop tool,** with the corners set to exclude those newly formed gaps. (Obviously, you would not be showing the red lines which I haveleft in here for demonstration) (Also see Alan's question about Crop tool)
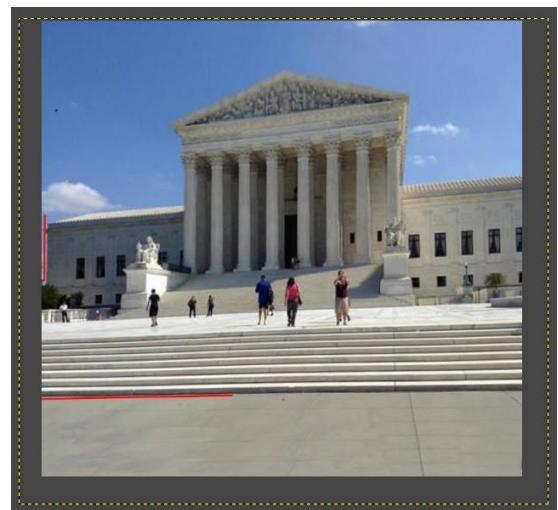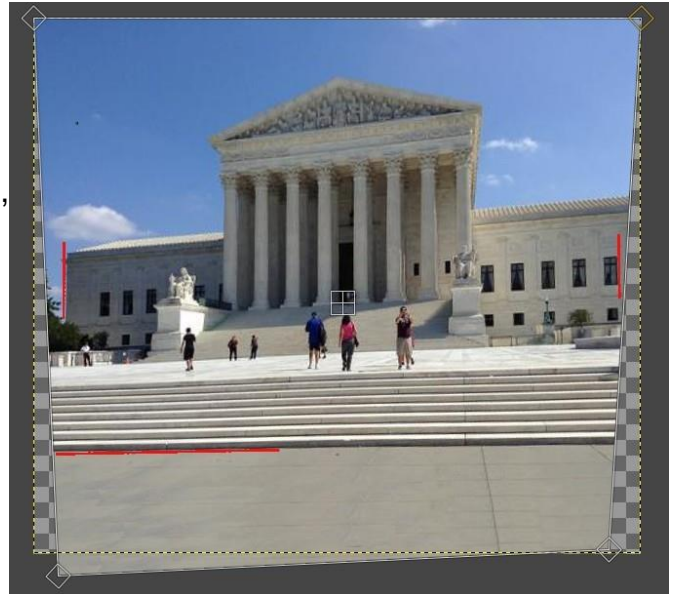
Q. Della: Adobe Photoshop has various selection tools (by color, by erasing, by selection, etc.). How is this selection tool?

A. In addition to Selection by the Rectangle or Ellipse, you can use the Fuzzy Select (by a contiguous region based on color) and the Select by Color, two very similar tools. Also, the Scissors Select toselect shapes using intelligent edge fitting and free select to draw a line around your target.

Q. Kathryn: Is there a way to remove reflection on glass?

A. Difficult, depending on the subject matter. The Dodge tool could minimize a small reflection in the corner (to darken it but retain the color and image content). Or if the clone tool can replicate the adjacent un-reflected surface, then Smudge to smooth the transitions. The Heal tool also works well.

Q. Carol: A skilled photo editor could put someone in a photo, in a location they have never been orwith people they don't know. How hard is it to detect if a photo has been modified?

A. Depending on the quality of the workmanship, it can be very difficult with the human eye. I have read about a program that can examine a photo at a pixel level and mathematically determine areas thathave been altered. However, I see many examples in social media that are so poorly done that they are easy to spot. I guess that media darlings are not the best at photoshopping themselves and maybe need some training!!?

Q. David: Is there a rotation tool?

A. Sure. In the Tools, Transform Tool called 'Rotate' (Shift R) to manipulate a layer. Or Layer Transform to Flip, or Rotate the entire image group (in multiples of 90 degrees)

Q. Jay: How did you colorize the old BW photo?

Answer 1. Much like my use of transparency and layers, probably not in the best way, but a way that was fun for me to experiment with layers. My brute force method was to create multiple copies of the photo as layers. In each layer, I used the color tools to change the color and intensity of that color. And then erased the parts of the picture that I did not want to have that color. Sort of a poor man's color separation process. For example, here is the layer that gave the skin tones, the red on the wagon. But the mountain greens are erased (transparent). Certainly, Photoshop has a much more sophisticated tool for this, I am sure.

Answer 2. Now that I am much wiser and have taken the time to both learn about the Layer Masks,and have found tutorials to help me, a much better method to accomplish the same thing is demonstrated in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFDdS9iRfPE

Q. Alan: I tried this a month ago and failed to figure it out. (a) How do I crop a photo? (b) How do I import it? (c) Do I create a Project? (d) How do I enlarge the photo to its original size (e), and how do I save it? (f) Do I need to make layers to do this?

**A.** I suspect I may not fully understand these questions, but I will give it a try—multipart answers.

(b) & (c) Starting at the beginning to Create an empty project, in the GIMP file menu-click New to start a blank sheet, or Open File to pick the photo you want. And open it. You can also drag and drop an image into GIMP or do a Windows' Open With'...GIMP. If adding another photo as I was doing, you can add the next one with Open with Layers.

(e) That is your new project which you can name and save. It saves with an .XCF extension. If you want to create it as a JPG or PNG (or one of the many other image extensions), use File Export or Export As.

(d) Not sure what you mean by enlarging to the original size. It loads into GIMP as whatever size it wastaken. To resize the photo, you use the Image Menu item Scale Image. If you want to save the edited photo the same size (number of pixels x pixels), no change should be necessary. Changing it, however, is often required when adding multiple layers to make the image comparable to another layer. If you mean to resize your on-screen view of the picture, you zoom up and down either with the Control Scroll wheel or change in the menu View – Zoom.

(f) And NO, you do not need to use layers unless you NEED to use layers.

(a) To Crop an image, select the Crop tool,click and drag the frame corners
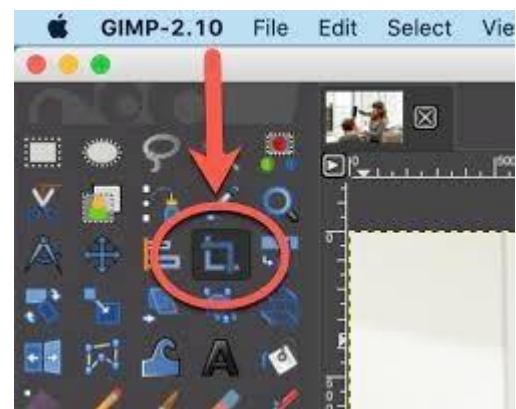
Q. Alan: How does the list of images on the right relate to the list of images on the left?

A. I think what you saw on the left was the changelog scrolling up as I made changes. If youUNDO changes, it works its way back down that list. So, you are seeing each incremental change and can stop when you have Un-Done your Boo-Boo. ON the right was a graphical list of the layers.

Q. Jay: Could it help bring colors back of a faded old color photo?

A. Yes. There are ten tools to correct color, brightness, contrast, etc., in the Colors menu. They can makevery sophisticated changes. See next answer also

Q. Jay: Some slides were stored in an area of the house that got hotter than I expected and faded the colors. Is it possible to bring the original darker shades back? The photos are on Kodak slides that werescanned in using a Canon 9900F scanner.

A. I would suggest a beginning tutorial to give you the idea at https://howtoscan.ca/slide-scanning/fix-colour-slide-scan-gimp.php

General Comment. There are so many 'TOOLS,' and each has many option settings it can be challengingto learn or even be aware of the tool or technique. That is where a web search can get you going much faster. If I had done that years ago, those pictures I demonstrated could have been faster and better.
I am still learning after all these years.

Art Gresham 1editor101@uchug.org