



Your guide
Jeff Morgan

Create a cool portrait triptych

Create a whimsical, whacky character portrait by using Photoshop to combine segments from three shots

PhotoPlus Checklist ✓

What you'll need
Photoshop Elements 6 or above

How long it'll take
30 minutes

The skills you'll learn

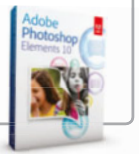
- ✓ How to size and crop images
- ✓ How to combine multiple images in a single document
- ✓ How to use the Canvas Size command to create a border

Here's a really fun creative project that will also produce a nice gift for the subject. We're going to show you how you can make a triptych in the style of Adde Adesokan, whose work you can see at www.flickr.com/theblackstar.

Triptych images of landscapes, interiors and still lifes are all popular, but Adde has created a set of striking triptych portraits which he calls 'Triptychs of Strangers'. His goal was to take three personality-reflecting body shots of complete strangers and combine them into one image. The results look more like caricatures than portraits, as the scale is altered between the three

images, with the head and feet enlarged a little more than the torso to create the look of a 'bobble head' model or cartoon character.

The end result is an off-beat effect that's both amusing and revealing. A really good portrait should tell us something about the subject, and by combining images in this way we're able to reveal more about our subject than we could with a single full-length portrait or head shot. What are the subject's hobbies, interests or dress sense? A triptych can hint at all of these and more, and for this tutorial we're using three suitably character-packed shots of a Welsh rugby supporter.

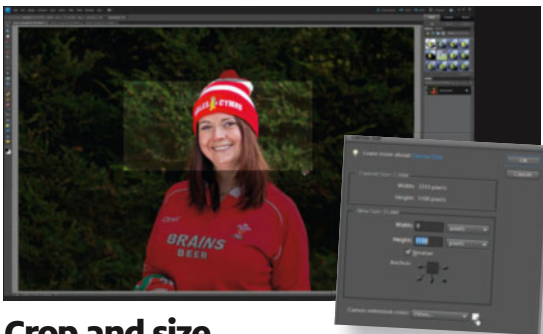


STEP BY STEP Turn three images into one



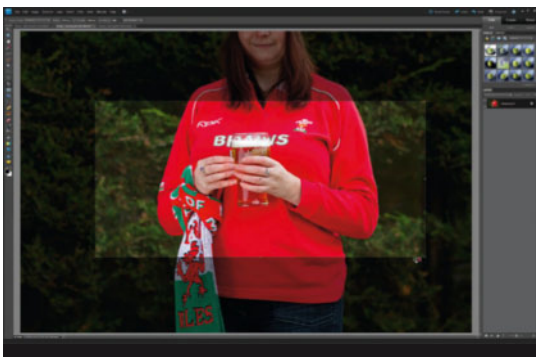
Fine-tune the images

1 Begin by opening trip1_start.jpg, trip2_start.jpg and trip3_start.jpg in Elements. Click the tab for trip1_start.jpg then go to Enhance>AdjustLighting>Shadows/Highlights, set both Lighten Shadows and Darken Highlights to 1% and click OK. Ideally your images will have been shot with the same settings, and you should try to keep any edits you make consistent.



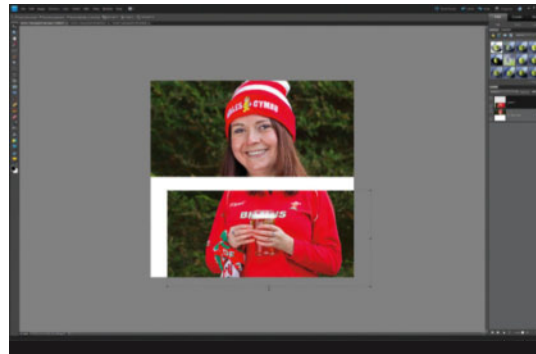
Crop and size

2 Select the Crop tool. Set width to '2333px' (it's important to type the 'px' for pixels), Height to 1100px and Resolution to 300. Draw a crop around the girl's head as shown, and hit Enter to apply the crop. Go to Image>Resize>CanvasSize. Check Relative, set Height to 1150 pixels, click the top-centre anchor box so the extra canvas is added to the bottom of the image and set Canvas Extension Colour to White. Click OK.



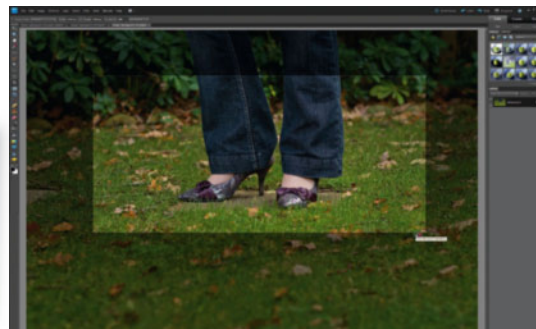
Crop the torso

3 Click on the tab for trip2_start.jpg to switch to the middle image, and apply the same Shadows/Highlights adjustment as in Step 1. Take the Crop tool, and keep the same settings as for Step 2. Crop from just below the girl's shoulders to just below her elbows as shown; the idea is to make the head and feet larger, but have the sides of each segment roughly line up.



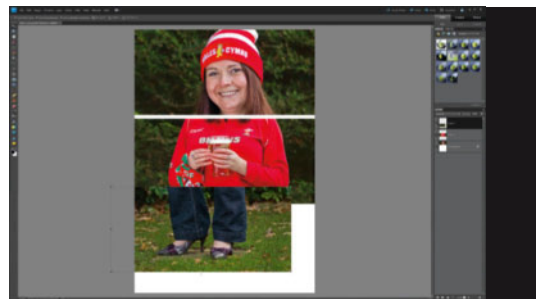
Add the torso...

4 Select the Move tool, click-and-hold in the image and drag up to the tab for trip1_start.jpg. Notice how the image changes to the head shot – drag back down into this image and into the white canvas you added, then release the mouse button to add the torso image as a new layer. Tap the cursor keys to position the layer so it sits at the bottom of the canvas.



...and the feet

5 Extend the canvas as in Step 2 to make room for the feet, then click on the tab for trip3_start.jpg to switch to the feet image. Apply Shadows/Highlights as before, then crop as shown, using the same settings as before. We'll use a different method to add this image to our composite: go to Select>All, then Edit>Copy, then close the trip3 and trip2 images without saving.



Create a border

6 Select trip1_start.jpg again, go to Edit>Paste, and use the Move tool to position the feet layer. To add a border go to Image>Resize>CanvasSize, check Relative, set Width and Height to 200 pixels, and this time leave the anchor point in the centre. It's a good idea to save the image as a PSD in case you want to make changes to layers layer – you can save a JPEG version for emailing or uploading to the web. ■



PhotoPlus Super Tip!

“ If you look closely at Adde's triptychs, you'll notice that he doesn't just angle the camera down to capture the torso and feet shots, but instead lowers the camera so it's always parallel to the ground and centred on the relevant area. This makes things a little more complicated when you're shooting, but makes the finished image much more interesting. The other factor worth mentioning is the use of a narrow depth of field to concentrate your attention on the subject. ”

PhotoPlus Phrase Book

Triptych

The word 'triptych' derives from a Greek word meaning 'threefold'. Historically, triptychs were often created as decorative screens or as altarpieces in churches and cathedrals, and took the form of three panels that were hinged together. In contemporary usage the term is used mainly to refer to works of art that are divided into three sections.

Diptych

As a triptych, but made up of just two panels or images.