

Creating a Window Through Your Brochure Cover

One area of Adobe InDesign that sets it apart from any other layout program is Transparent Effects. In this tutorial, I'll be discussing how it's possible to cut a window right through your page to a beautiful picture below using Layers, Custom Grids, soft Drop Shadows and the Pathfinder palette. It's a quick way to simulate a die cut without adding any production cost.

STEP 1: Layers of Simplicity

The best way to start any page design that will involve a complex stacking order of objects is to set up Layers. It will make working on your layout as simple as 1-2-3. In your Layers palette (Window > Layers), Double-click on Layer 1 and change the name to "Background Picture" and click OK. Then under the Options (arrow) menu of the Layers palette, choose New Layer, name the Layer "Grid Window" and click OK. Create one last Layer (on top) called "Type and Top Objects."

STEP 2: A Marginal Beginning to a Sure Success

To begin setting up a grid for what will become the "panes of a window" through your page, first we have to move the page margins. Go to the Layout menu > Margins and Columns...and in the window that opens, make the Top, Left, and Right Margins 1", and the Bottom Margin 3". Check Preview to see the new position of your Margins and click OK.

STEP 3: Grid-Like Accuracy

Now we're ready to set up our guides for a grid of window panes. Go to the Layout menu > Create Guides... and in the window that opens, set up 3 Rows and 3 Columns with .1667" Gutters for both. In the Options section of the window, next to "Fit Guides to," choose Margins. Check Preview to see your work and click OK. You set up a perfect 3 X 3 Grid of Guides in seconds, without a ruler or a

calculator.

STEP 4: Let's Get Organized

Before I start getting too far ahead of myself, we'd better get organized. Start by selecting all your Text Frames and look at your Layers palette to see which Layer they are in. A selection indicator (small square) to the right of a Layer will let you know on which Layer(s) your type is located. Click and drag the indicator(s), one at a time, to the top Layer.

We're also going to have to add Bleed to our layout. Even though our layout will not look like it bleeds off the page, it really will. You'll see what I mean as we move forward. To set up a .125" Bleed, go to the File menu > Document Setup and in the Bleed section of the window, select the first fill-in box and press the Up Arrow on your keyboard twice, now click the "link" icon to the right (which should make all Bleeds .125"), and click OK.

STEP 5: Building a Window Frame

Start by clicking on the "Grid Window" Layer to activate it as your working Layer. You will see the Pen icon move, letting you know that you will now be "writing to" that Layer. Select your Rectangle tool (M), then click and drag from the upper left Bleed to the lower right Bleed. Fill the rectangle with Paper color (white) from the Swatches palette (Window > Swatches).

STEP 6: Painless Panes

Click and drag with the Rectangle tool (M) to create a rectangle that fills the upper left grid section. It should snap right to your Guides. Fill it with any color from the Swatches palette (temporarily) just to make it easy to see and select. Option-Drag (Alt.-Drag on PC) the first Rectangle to create a second rectangle, making sure it snaps to the next Grid Guides. With the second Rectangle selected, Option-Drag (Alt.-Drag on PC) to create a third rectangle. Now select All three rectangles in the top row and Option-Drag (Alt.-Drag on PC) them to copy a second row. Repeat with the second row to create a bottom row.

STEP 7: Use Your Rectangles to Cut Glass

Marquee across your white background and all of your individual color-filled rectangles. Then Shift-Click on the white background object to deselect it - leaving just your "panes" selected. Open your Pathfinder palette (Window > Pathfinder). With all your "panes" selected, click on the first Pathfinder button on the left (A) - Add. This combines all selected objects into ONE object.

Now, Shift-Click on the white background to add it to your selection and click the second button from the left in the Pathfinder palette (B) - Subtract. This "subtracts" your frontmost object (the combined panes) from the backmost object (the background). Don't expect the results to make you scream, "WOW!" A white object, with panes cut through it on a white background can't be seen.

Click on your object, and in your Object menu, go to Drop Shadow. In the Drop Shadow window, check to turn the Effect on, and click OK. Now that's a "WOW!"

STEP 8: Place Some Flowers Outside

Now that we have a "window," let's Place an image of some flowers "outside." In the Layers palette, click on the "Background Picture" Layer to Activate it. Draw a Picture Frame using the Rectangle Frame tool (F). With the new frame selected, go to File > Place, find your image and click OK. Make just a few minor tweaks to the sizing of the image and the Drop Shadow Effect and, "Voila!" - a beautiful cover layout.

Jeff Witchel is an Adobe Certified Instructor for Adobe Illustrator CS2 and Adobe InDesign CS2 with training clients in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. He just completed his first DVD training project with Magnet Media in New York - "Inside Adobe Illustrator CS2." Jeff also is a regular on the Layers Forum, known to many as "AdobeAce."

Training website -
<http://mywebpages.comcast.net/AdobeAce>

Portfolio website -
<http://mywebpages.comcast.net/witcheladv>

Garden image from iStockphoto -
www.istockphoto.com

Tutorial Source