

Photoshop 7's Brushes Palette: Dynamics

The heart of Photoshop 7's powerful new paint engine is the Brushes palette. In this column, we'll take a look at the Color Dynamics and Other Dynamics panes, as well as the "pane-less" options at the bottom of the palette.

COLOR DYNAMICS

The Color Dynamics pane of Photoshop 7's Brushes palette gives you the chance to blend the foreground and background colors for the brush. Each instance of the brush (every time the brush tip is applied) will use only one color, but the proportions of the foreground and background colors can be varied with the sliders.

The Foreground/Background Jitter slider enables you to vary the color of the brush instances between the foreground and background colors, using various colors that are combinations of the two. When Control is set to Fade, the number specified is the number of different colored brush instances that will occur before the color reverts to the foreground. If you leave Control set to Fade and the Foreground/Background Jitter slider at 0%, the color reverts to the background color after the specified number of steps.

When the Hue Jitter slider is set to a low percent, the hue of the stroke remains close to the foreground color. As the percent grows, the background color is introduced. By about 25%, some additional color can be detected. At 100%, all the hues of the color wheel are used.

The Saturation Jitter slider affects only the saturation of the stroke. When the slider is toward the left (low percent), the saturation remains close to that of the foreground color. Likewise, the Brightness Jitter slider varies from that of the foreground color (left) to the full range of brightness (right).

The Purity slider is not, you will note, a "jitter" option. Rather, it works directly with the saturation value of the stroke. Set to 0%, the slider has no effect. Negative numbers reduce the saturation, with -100% creating a completely desaturated (gray) stroke. At +100, the stroke is completely saturated. Purity does not override the Saturation Jitter slider, but rather restricts it.

OTHER DYNAMICS

The options found in the Other Dynamics pane can be considered the paint dynamics or the tool option dynamics. The Opacity Jitter and Flow Jitter sliders

vary the appearance of the stroke up to but not beyond the values specified in the Options Bar for the Brush tool. Note that these options are not available for other brush-using tools.

ADDITIONAL BRUSH PALETTE OPTIONS

The five options at the bottom of the left column in the Brushes palette don't have separate panes. You activate them on an on/off basis, and can click on either the box or the name.

(The Brushes palette is shown here with the Texture pane visible – note the "Protect Texture" option.) The options are:

- Noise – Noise is added to gray areas of the brush. Brushes defined as solid black are not affected.
- Wet Edges – Simulating watercolors, the paint collects along the edges of the brush stroke.
- Airbrush – The Airbrush option in the Brushes palette activates and deactivates the Airbrush button on the Options Bar for the Brush tool.
- Smoothing – Designed for use with drawing tablets, this option reduces the sharpness of some curves. If your stroke should have sharp angles, don't enable this option. Also be aware that it can result in a reduction in system responsiveness – your screen redraw may be slower.
- Protect Texture – Just as the Global Light option in Layer Style ensures consistency in lighting effects, so too does Protect Texture protect against anomalies in your image. Check this box and all the brushes you use that can employ textures will use the same texture.

Remember, if you've got an under-powered system or your video card is strained by your monitor resolution and color depth, make sure to disable Smoothing. The slower your system, the greater the delay you will experience with this option.

