
Electrify Your Images

1.

Electricity

If you download our Team Actions, you'll eventually come across one I made called Hot Electricity, which I used on the image to the left. It's really easy to do and I'm going to explain how it's done here, as well as apply it to some images.

2.

Clouds

When I made some of those actions, I was experimenting with the kind of randomly generated organic patterns you can get if you apply filters and other image adjustments to the clouds effect.

First, create a file whatever size you want. I'd say 4" x 6", 72 ppi minimum. Obviously, I have a square-shaped canvas. With your color swatches set to the default Black & White, fill your file with Filter: Render: Clouds. Clouds is different every time you run it, but you'll get something that resembles what you see at left.

3.

Solarize

Let's run another filter. This one's called Solarize, and it's one of the

Stylize Filters. According to Adobe, it blends a negative and a positive image--similar to exposing a photographic print briefly to light during development.

Anyway, now we're starting to see a hint of the random, stringy lines that will be our electricity. The next step will bring them out more.

4.

Contrast

Now I'll choose Image: Adjust: Brightness/Contrast. You can see where I moved the sliders to on the left to lighten the lights and darken the darks in my Solarized image. We're close to being done now, as you can see. We just need to tint our "electricity" with some color.

For those of you who have headed into the more advanced territory of adjusting Curves or Levels, you'll have a lot more control over this step by doing one of those steps instead of Brightness/Contrast. For everyone else, don't sweat it, Brightness/Contrast will do the job fine.

5.

Color Range

If you're happy with the black background, you can skip to the next step and start colorizing your storm of electricity. But I want to separate the strings of energy from their background. First, I'm going to select the dark areas. With Black as my foreground color, I choose Select: Color Range. You can see the Color Range Dialog box to the left I had the Fuzziness Slider cranked up to it's maximum, 200. The portion of the image that will be selected appears white in the preview.

After I click OK in the Color Range Dialog, I choose Select: Inverse to reverse the selected area and grab the light areas. Next, I Copy and Paste to get "electricity" on it's own layer, without any of the black.

6.

Colorize

Now I'm going to add some color to our electrical disturbance using the Image: Adjust: Hue/Saturation command. I clicked the Colorize option and set the sliders as you see to the left. I chose to make the arcs of electricity appear blue in this case. Maybe I've seen Return of the Jedi too many times.

We're done!

You can see from my history Palette just how simple this was. Now let's put what I made into a couple of photos.

7.

It's Shocking

This happy office worker will never cross the emperor again! I simply pasted what I made above and scaled it to fit the image, then set the Layer Blend

Mode to Overlay.

8.

Electrical Storm

I couldn't decide which image I liked better here. I pasted and scaled the electricity again, this time deleting certain areas to make it appear to be in the sky.

For the bottom image, I just made another Hue/Saturation adjustment. Boy, are these guys going to have a headache in the morning!

We're just getting started. There's a lot you could do from here. Consider using the eraser to selectively alter your electricity, or the history brush to "paint in" the parts you want.

Tutorial Source