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GIMP Tutorial: Advanced Jigsaw Puzzle Effect

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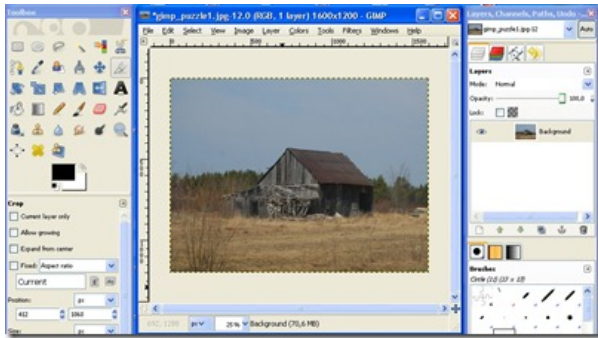


In this tutorial, we examine a technique to create a fancy jigsaw puzzle effect from images or photos using GIMP - the Free Open Source Photo Editor. The process isn't very difficult but requires working with several layers and can take a bit of time to complete. Of

course, using my free downloadable puzzle mask template will cut down on your time considerably.

You can download the files for this tutorial (the .zip folder includes the barn photo and puzzle mask templates) at the end of this article!

1. Launch the GIMP and open your photo. This is the photo I'll be using:



2. From the "Layers Panel", right-click on the background layer and select "Add Alpha Channel" from the menu.

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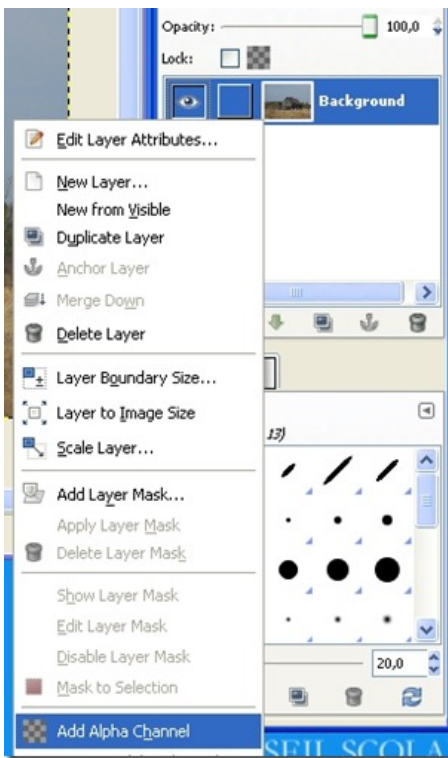
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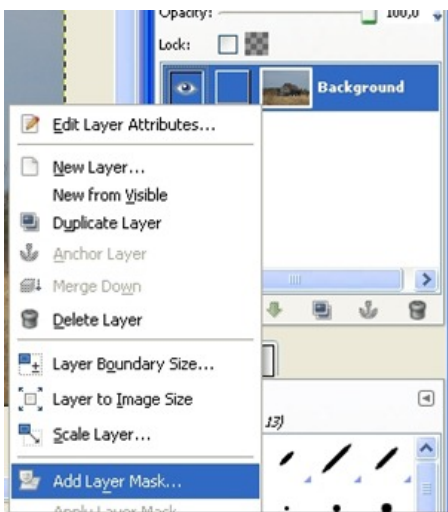
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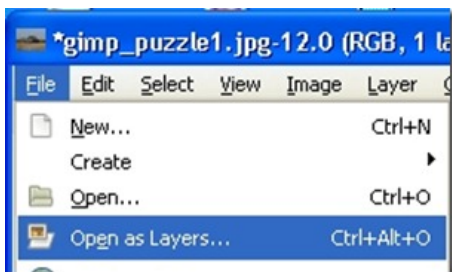
3. Right-click the background layer again and select "Add Layer Mask".



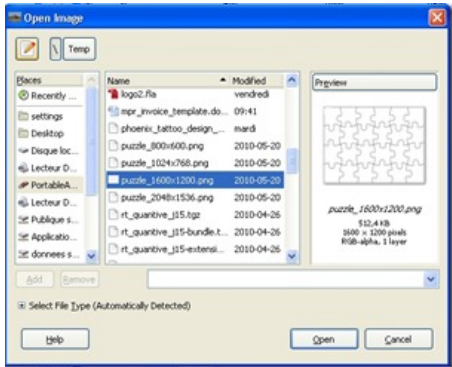
4. From the "Add Layer Mask" dialogue, select "White(Full Opacity)" and click "Add".



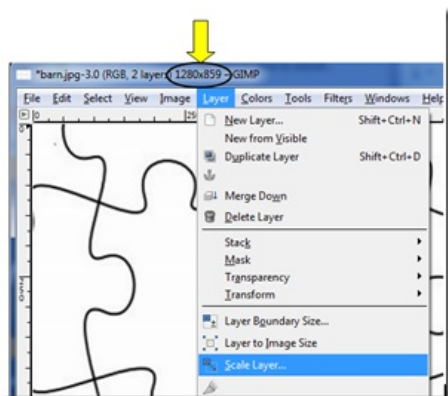
5. Now we open our puzzle template. From the menu, select "File>Open as Layers..."



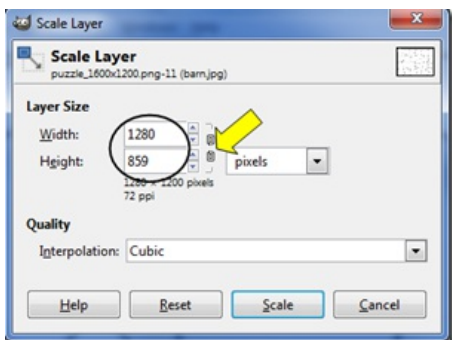
6. Navigate to the folder containing the "puzzle_1600x1200.png" template image. Select it and click "Open".



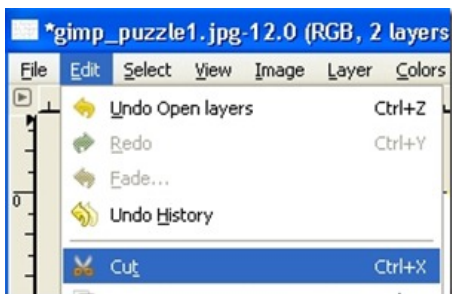
7. Once it opens, you may need to resize it to fit your background image. The puzzle template has a 1600x1200 resolution, but it scales fairly well. Your original image resolution is shown in the GIMP main window title bar (*in the image below, the resolution is 1280x859*). To match your template to your background image, from the menu, select "Layer>Scale Layer".



8. In the "Scale Image" dialogue window, you may need to toggle the "proportional" switch by clicking the small "chain" icon so that it displays as broken. Type in the width and height values of your background image and click "Scale".



9. Next, we cut the template by pressing Ctrl+X or selecting "Edit>Cut" from the menu.



10. In the "Layers Panel", click once on the layer mask (*the white rectangle*) to select it.



11. Press Ctrl+V (paste) twice. Your mask is applied. You should see transparent puzzle piece outlines over your background image.



12. You will have a "Floating Selection" layer following your second paste. Right-click on it and select "Anchor Layer".



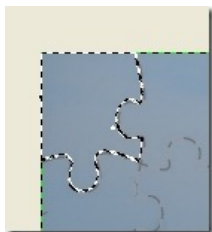
13. Next, choose the "Fuzzy Selection" tool from the toolbox.



14. At this point, everything is set up. The following few steps will need to be repeated until all your individual pieces have been created. In the "Layers Panel", click once on the background mask to select it.



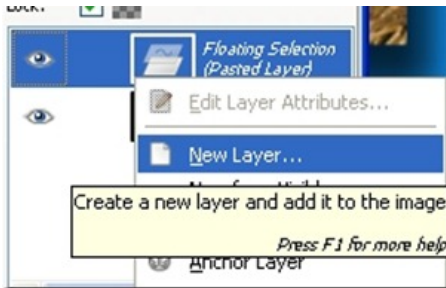
15. Move to your image and click once inside the puzzle piece you wish to create. In this case, I am starting with the upper left piece. The puzzle piece outline should be bordered by an animated dashed line.



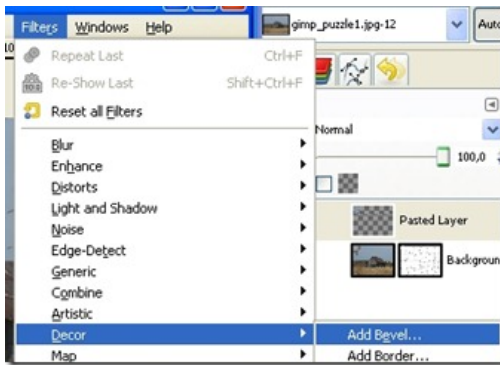
16. To your "Layers panel" again. This time we select the image thumbnail. When selecting between the thumbnail and mask, know that the active item will have a white border.



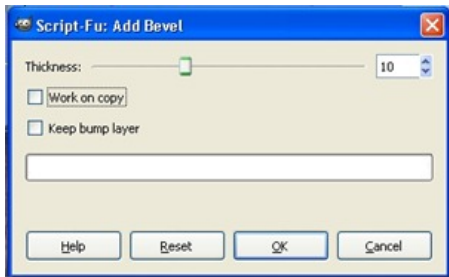
17. Press Ctrl+X to cut and Ctrl+V to paste. You will end up with a "Floating Selection" layer. Right-click on it and select "New Layer".



18. Now we add a rounded bevel to give our piece that press cut look. From the menu, select "Filters>Decor>Add Bevel...".



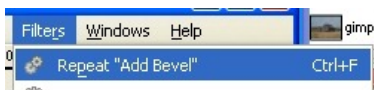
19. From the "Add Bevel" dialogue, increase "Thickness" to 10, uncheck the "Work on copy" checkbox and click "OK".



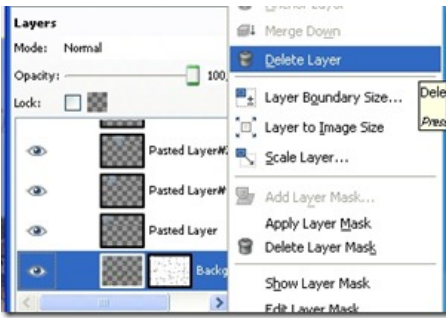
20. A bevel is added to your piece.



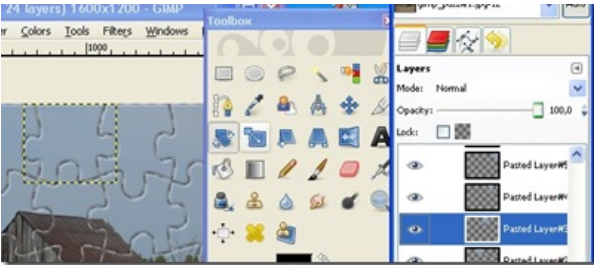
21. Repeat steps 14 through 17 for each puzzle piece. As for the bevel, instead of repeating steps 18 and 19 for each piece, simply press Ctrl+F – which repeats the last filter.



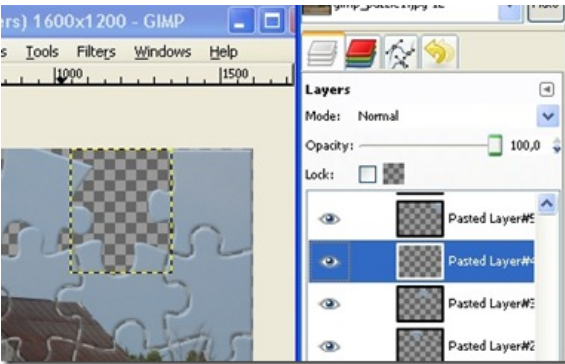
22. Once all of your pieces have been created, we can delete the background layer by right-clicking on it and selecting "Delete Layer".



23. Selecting individual layers from your "Layers Panel", you can choose which piece to rotate, move or delete.



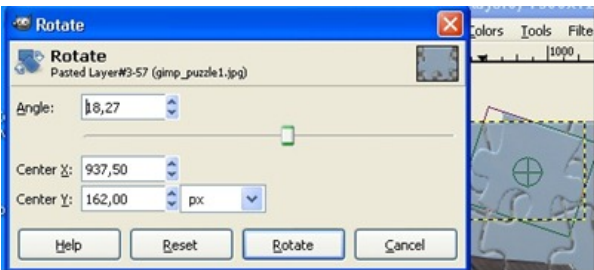
24. To delete a piece, simply select it and press the Delete key.



25. To rotate or move a piece, select its layer then, from the Toolbox, select the "Rotate Tool" or "Move Tool".



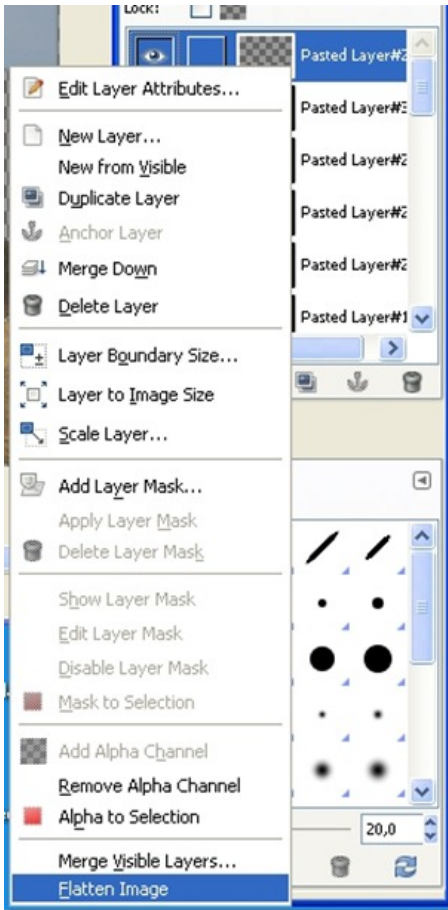
26. To rotate a piece, left click the piece and drag. The "Rotate" dialogue appears...click the "Rotate" button to apply.



27. When you are done, your image should look something like this...



28. If you are happy with it, you will want to flatten the image before saving or printing. Flattening the image will collapse all the individual piece layers AND fill the transparent areas with white. To flatten, right-click any of the layers in the “Layers Panel” and select “Flatten Image”.



29. The final product...

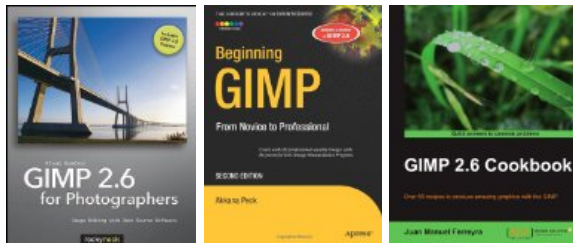


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