



contributors our panel of experts



NICK SPENCE

www.nick-spence.com



If Photoshop news be the food of life, then Nick has a nice full belly! Nick is the man when it comes to sniffing out a story for our news section

– you can see what he's found this issue on p10.



MATTHEW HENRY

www.matthewhenry.net



Matthew is a professional digital imageer and is well versed in all things Photoshop. This issue he reveals how Channels can be used to create pin-sharp cutouts. Turn to page 28 to see how.



CHARLENE CHUA

www.charlenechua.com



Charlene is a full-time illustrator and all-round creative sort, and we could think of no one better to write a tutorial on turning photos into flat-colour art. See how she created our cover by turning to page 32.



MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM



Mark was recently in Vegas to pick up a design award, so we wanted to exploit his experience and get him to create us a lovely neon sign to capture the feel of the big city. It all happens on page 46.



HANNAH GAL

www.hannahgal.co.uk



Hannah continues her digital art quest with a trip to Japan and a look at the traditional woodprint medium. Emulate this style and produce beautiful art – page 50.



ROBERT ANSELM

www.chainstyle.com



When he's not battling adverse weather conditions, Rob can be found working away on his successful Photoshop resource site, Chainstyle. He can also be found writing tutorials for us – p60.



GEORGE CAIRNS

www.georgecairns.com



George has been using Photoshop for years and years, and has amassed quite a lot of knowledge. There's a double whammy of George this issue, starting on page 42 where he shows how to turn a person,



invisible. Don't believe us? Turn to it now and have a look. He's also continuing his stint as our resident Photoshop problem solver, and brings more solutions to your Photoshop queries in the Advice Centre over on page 74.

Photoshop creative

Imagine Publishing Ltd
Richmond House
33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth
Dorset BH2 6EZ
t +44 (0) 1202 586200

Website: www.pshopcreative.co.uk

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Magazine

Editor

Jo Cole

t 01202 586224

jo.cole@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Art Editor

Lora Sykes

Staff Writer

Zoe Mutter

zoe.mutter@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Senior Sub Editor

Colleen Johnson

Group Art Editor

Ross Andrews

Contributors

Robert Anselmi, George Cairns, Charlene Chua, Hannah Gal, Matthew Henry, Mark Shufflebottom and Nick Spence

Special thanks to...

CVision, Lexmark and the tips faery

Coverdisc

Interactive Media Manager

Lee Groombridge

Multimedia Editor

Rodger Page

pscxtrahelp@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Advertising

Digital or printed media packs are available on request.

Deputy Advertising Manager

Sam Kerslake

t 01202 586223

sam.kerslake@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Advertising Sales Executives

Hannah Bradshaw

t 01202 586236

hannah.bradshaw@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Nathalie Stainer

t 01202 586222

nathalie.stainer@imagine-publishing.co.uk

International

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International Manager

Cathy Blackman

t +44 (0) 1202 586201

Email: licensing@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Subscriptions

Subscribe to Photoshop Creative today!

t +44 (0)870 428 8354

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6 issue subscription (UK) – £21.60

13 issue subscription (Overseas) – £80.00

Circulation

Circulation & Export Manager

Darren Pearce

t 01202 586200

Production

Production Director

Jane Hawkins

t 01202 586200

Founders

Managing Director Damian Butt

Finance Director Steven Boyd

Creative Director Mark Kendrick

Printed by

St Ives Andover, West Portway, Andover, SP10 3SF

Photoshop Creative is distributed by Seymour Distribution, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9

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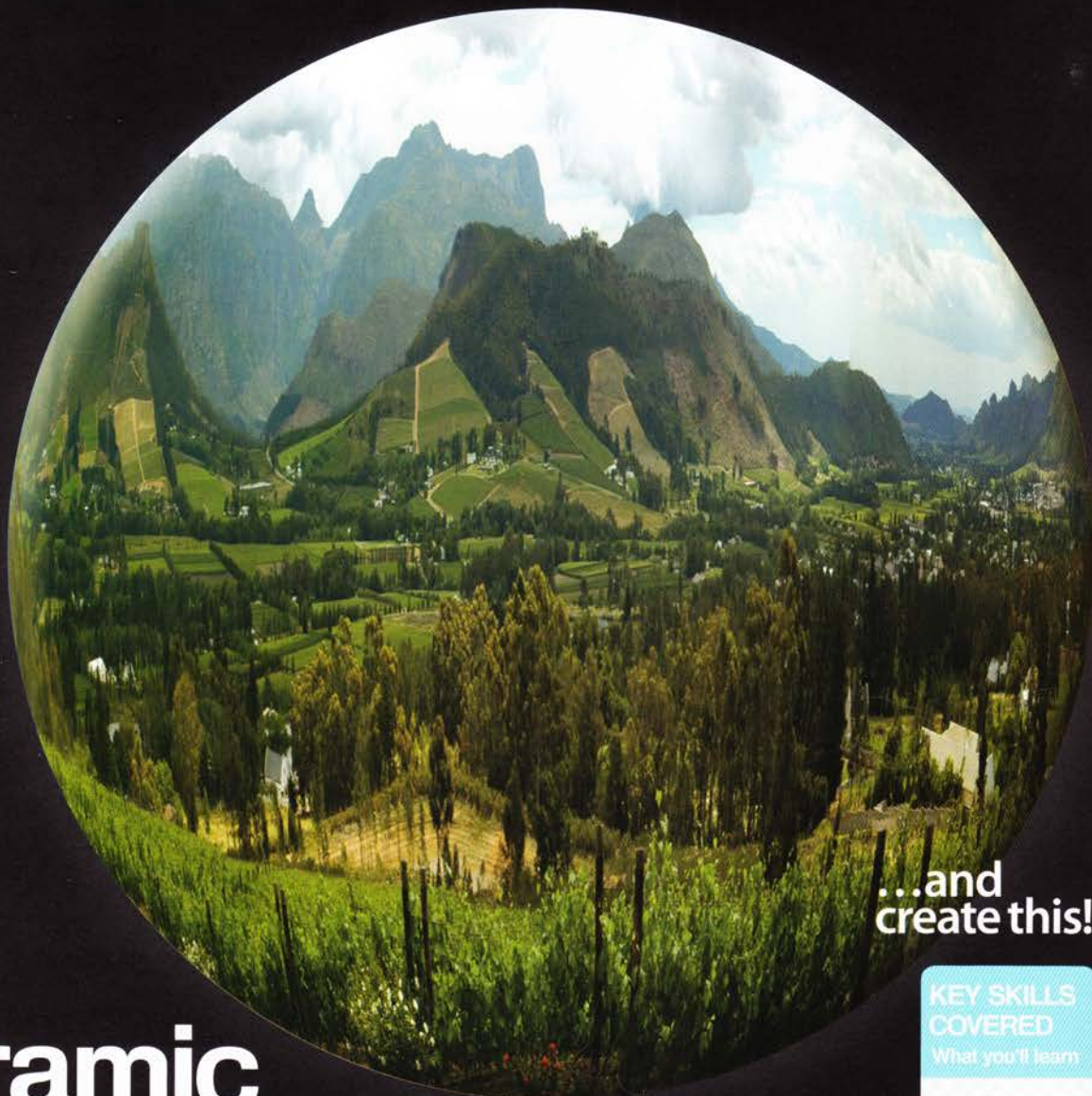
Photoshop Creative © 2006 Imagine Publishing Ltd
ISSN 1747-7816

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Take these images...



...and create this!

Panoramic fisheye lens effect

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

CREATE A PANORAMA
USE THE WARP TOOL

essentials

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN

20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT

Rob Anselmi

ON THE CD

Source photos
and fisheye action

Simulate a fisheye lens effect on a group of photos using the Photomerge and Fisheye Warp Transformation features in Photoshop



Fisheye lenses are one of those wonderfully surreal pieces of equipment that provide photographers with the ability to create a

180-degree view of the world they see in front of them.

And while Photoshop cannot re-create the experience of a genuine fisheye lens, that doesn't mean it can't come very close. It will even enable you to come close to creating the field of view you'd get with an actual fisheye lens.

The secret is to create a panoramic image that pulls in as much of the field of view as you would normally achieve with a traditional lens. Were you to have a fisheye lens, you'd be able to take one image and have a full 180-degree field of view in all directions. Using the method outlined over these pages, you can take a series of photos, stitch them together and then apply a fisheye distortion to the final image along a single axis.

Before jumping into this tutorial, you'll need a series of four to six images that can be used to create a panoramic landscape.

To do this, find a suitable 180-degree view from left to right. Then screw your camera to your tripod, and have all camera settings on Manual. Allow only the left-to-right tripod swivel to move. Lock everything else down. It's not necessary to take a full 180-degree view, but it is necessary to make sure that each image has enough overlap to stitch together properly (Roughly 15-20 per cent overlap between images).

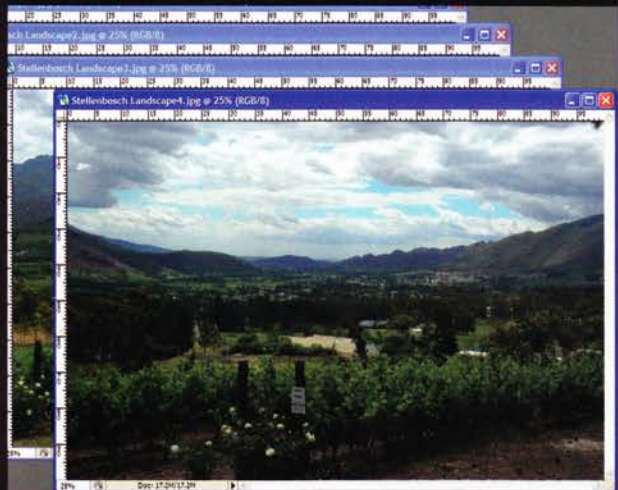
But before you embark on a panoramic photo journey, load up the source files from this issue's disc and follow the tutorial.

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS2



PANORAMIC BEGINNINGS

Set up the big picture



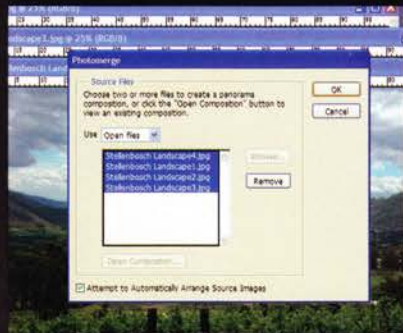
01 Import the photos into Photoshop

Open all your images in Photoshop. For this tutorial we are using a beautiful hilltop landscape. Landscapes tend to be the preferred choice for panoramas, but urban scenes can often provide some interesting and creative photographic jewels as well.

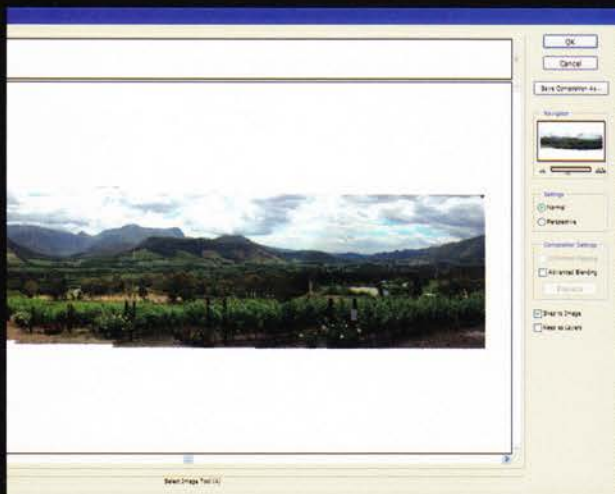


02 Open the Photomerge dialog box

Access the Photomerge dialog by going into File>Automate>Photomerge. This is where the magic starts to happen, and where Photoshop's automation features really shine through.



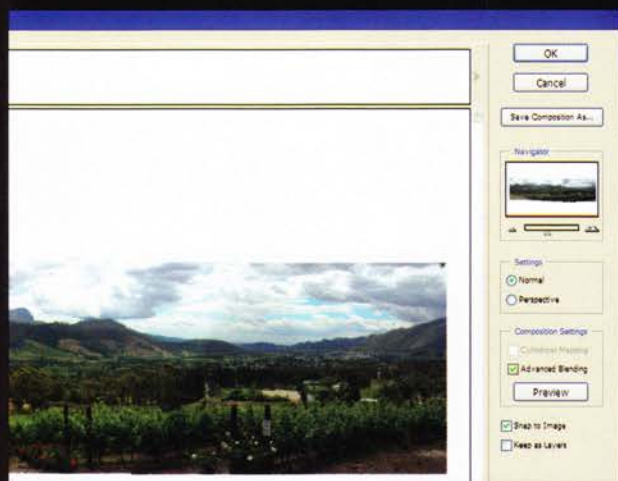
03 Select all open photos In the Photomerge dialog box, a listbox displays all the images that are open in Photoshop. Select the first photo in the series, then, holding your Shift key down, select the last photo in the series. All photos will turn blue when selected. Now click OK.



04

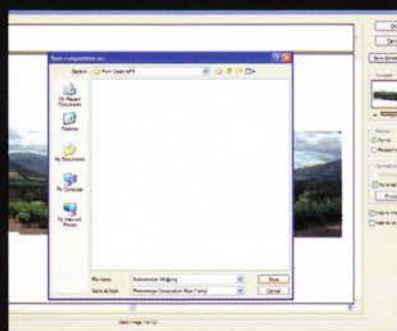
Photomerge part 2

As soon as you click OK, Photoshop shuffles through your images and a second Photomerge dialog box opens. You are automatically presented with Photoshop's best guess as to how your panorama should be displayed.



05 Become an advanced user

Click the Advanced Blending radio button. This almost always helps your image look more realistic, and can usually correct lighting differences between each image. Why this option is not a default is still a mystery.



06 Save the composition or click OK

To save the composition for later retrieval, click the Save Composition As button. This allows you to save your composition as a .pmg file which can be opened in the Photomerge dialog at a later time. Now click the OK button.

Expert Tip



If Photomerge makes a mess of things...

If you've taken the images correctly, they will stitch together quite nicely. If not, you may have to shift an image around, and try to blend them together after the fact. Often it's easier to start over with a new set of pictures, as Photomerge gives you a limited set of options for enhancing the composition.

Tip



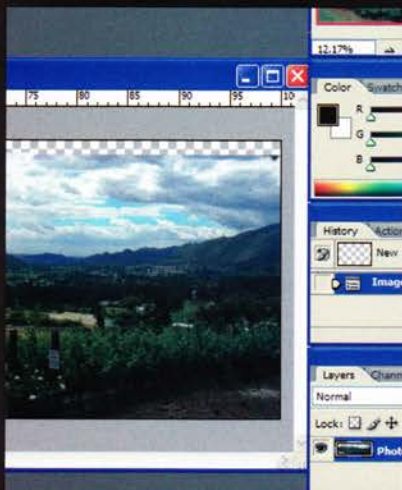
Concave versus convex fisheyes

While it's becoming commonplace to call this 'expanded' image effect a fisheye effect, a fisheye lens can also produce a concave (imploding) image, not a convex (exploding) image. The middle of the image is further away than the edges, and not the other way around. If you would prefer this effect, drag the node from step 13 downward. This will create a concave image, pushing the middle of the image further back.



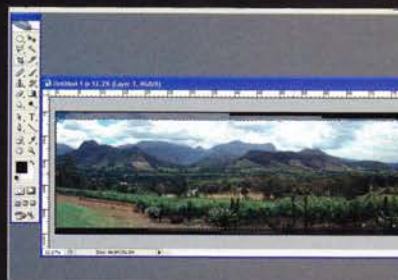
TIDY THE PANORAMA

Get ready for the fisheye

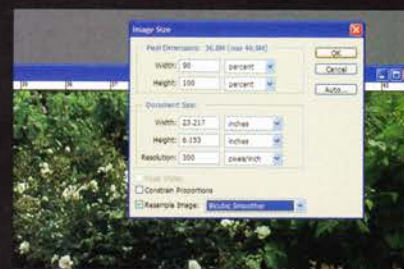


07 Close all but the panorama document

Photoshop takes a little time to render the panorama, but what you end up with is a newly created panorama document. At this point, you can close all other photos, as they aren't needed any more.



08 Crop your panorama Select the Crop tool, and create a crop selection that encompasses as much of the original image as possible. When finished, commit to the crop selection by clicking the green checkmark in the Options bar. Note that it may help to see the edges by adding a temporary black or white fill layer underneath the image layer.



09 Compact the image Go to Image>Image Size and deselect the Constrain Proportions checkbox. Then reduce the image to 90% width, leaving the height untouched. Select the Bicubic Smoother option for resampling. If you listen close, you can almost hear the Photoshop puritans wince in agony! But keep in mind we are sacrificing a little stress on the image for art's sake.



Understand fisheye lenses

See the world in a different way



Fisheye lenses are used by photographers to get an exaggerated view of the world. They were originally used in astronomy to capture the whole of the sky, but they soon found their way into traditional photography.

A fisheye lens is basically a wide-angle lens and can produce a very wide, partly spherical image. To get a good idea of what results a fisheye lens will give, imagine a spyhole on a door. Parts of the view come toward the viewer, while the rest recedes away. Fisheye lenses are often used in landscape

photography because they are excellent for suggesting the curve of the Earth (above). Their bulbous nature is also great for exaggerating objects. The cat photograph that you can see on the right is a perfect example of this.

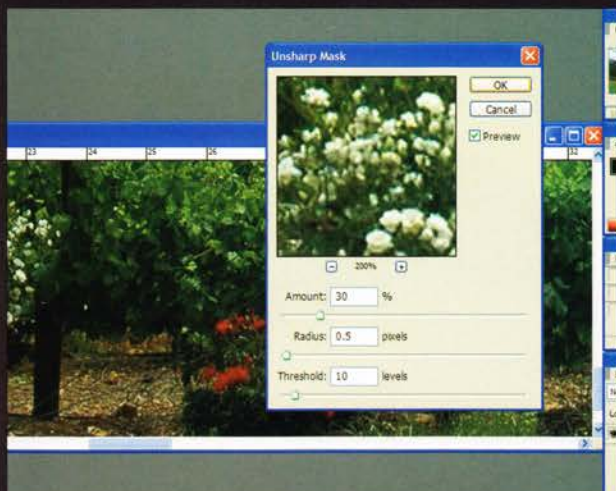
Fisheye lenses can be a great tool for photographers, but if you can't afford the lens or your camera won't accept one, you can use our tutorial to fake the look. By taking a panoramic image and then warping it to get the trademark convex result, you can emulate a fisheye lens with confidence.





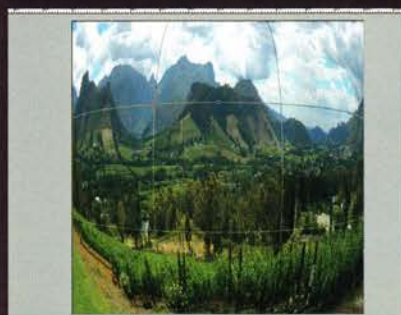
WARPED BEHAVIOUR

It's time to get adventurous...



10 Sharpen the image

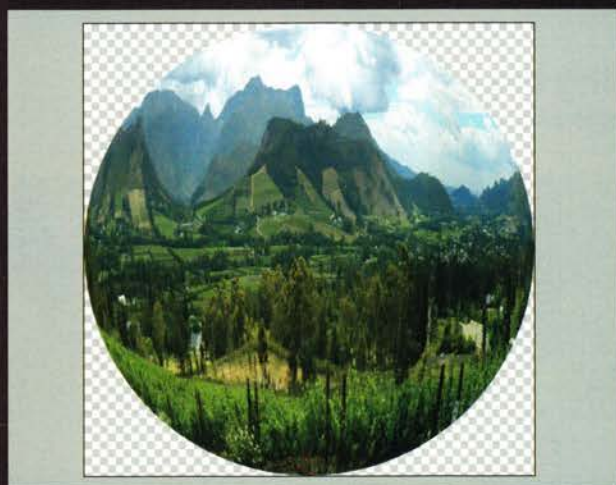
Next, sharpen the image slightly (Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask). These settings vary depending on image size, but DO NOT oversharpen. Sharpen just below the point where you can see a change in the Preview box. This may seem counter-intuitive, but the idea is to add a pinch of sharpening after a spoonful of bicubic smoothing.



12 Warp the image Go into Edit>Transform>Warp, and in the Options bar select the Warp: Fisheye option. At this point, you can move the square node located in the middle of the top horizontal warp guideline either up or down to expand or contract the fisheye effect. Leave the default and commit to the transformation.

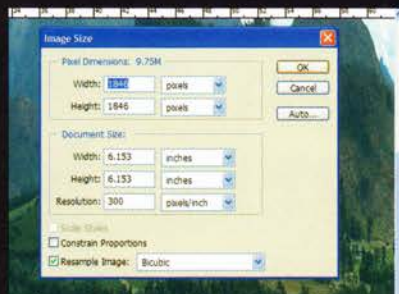


13 More cropping You may notice that the image has some nasty transparent pixels at the edges. Go to Select>All, then Select>Transform Selection. Enter 99.5% in both the Width and Height option toolbar fields. Now go to Image>Crop to remove these unwanted strays. When finished, go to Select>Deselect to remove the selection.



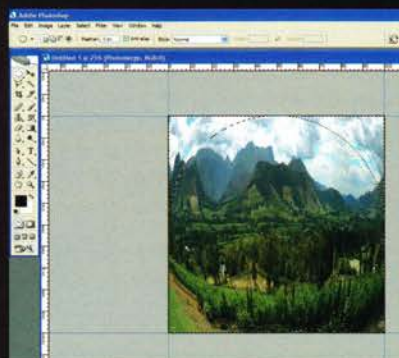
15 Fit the square peg into the round hole

Go to Select>Inverse, and then press the Delete key. You are left with the circle image on a transparent layer. When done, go to Select>Deselect, and View>Clear Guides to get rid of the guides.

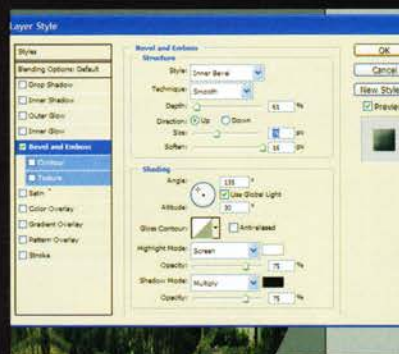


11 Wash, rinse, lather and repeat

Repeat the previous two steps, alternating between Image Size and Unsharp Mask until your image is a perfect square. Note that for the very last resize step you'll want to resize using pixels, not a percentage, ensuring a perfect square. This image was sized/sharpened 14 times. Check the CD for an action that will save time performing this step.



14 Create a circle selection Make sure that View>Snap To>Guides is selected, and View>Snap is also selected. Now add guides to all document edges, and drag a circle selection from the top left to bottom right corner.



16 Add the final touches

Expand the canvas (Edit>Canvas Size) by about 10%, then add a white fill layer underneath the image. Select the image layer again, and add an Inner Bevel layer style, as shown.

Resources



Photomerge isn't your only solution

Photomerge is a handy tool, but there are many other software packages that can create panoramas from a series of images. If you would like to explore them, or if you have an older version of Photoshop, try visiting <http://panotools.sourceforge.net/>, which provides plenty of info and access to the Panotools. Be warned: these are known to have a steep learning curve as they were built by a maths professor – but it's the best program out there. For a more user-friendly option, go to PTGui (www.ptgui.com) or PTAssembler (www.tawbaware.com/ptasmblr.htm).

Expert Tip



Spherize filter

The Spherize filter (Filter>Distort>Spherize) can do much the same as the Warp tool. The Spherize trick is easy. Open an image; reduce it to a perfect square. Increase the canvas size 150% for Width and Height. Apply the Spherize filter twice, with Amount at 100% and Normal mode. You'll get a perfect circle that fits on the canvas every time.