A TEXASgenuine RECIPE

Shooting subjects outdoors can be difficult. The unpredictable nature of weather, coordinating talent, travel to the shoot location, and timing the correct sun angle with the perfect background can be a challenge. We're providing pre-packaged raw materials, and templates to make the job of assembling advertising materials much easier.

INGREDIENTS

A sampling of those raw materials are included on the disc distributed in December's **TEXASgenuine 2010 CTE Workshop**. The disc includes 11 Photoshop documents under marketing materials in billboard, newspaper / magazine, and banner formats you can use as templates for your own projects. The layered elements can be substituted, resized, repositioned or added to as needed. Available for download at http://clients.interactcom.com/TEXASgenuine_Background_Gallery/ or http://clients.interactcom.com/TEXASgenuine_Background_Gallery_2/ and on a disc distributed in January 2011 are more Texas landscapes (photographed specifically for this project) to be used as backdrops, a variety of models ready to be placed into those backgrounds, and the TEXASgenuine logo in a variety of formats.

BACKGROUND PHOTOS
Backgrounds currently available are primarily west Texas landscapes. By the end of January 2011 we'll be adding more urban cityscapes and scenes from central and eastern Texas.

> **SIZE**   Background images are 21 megapixel images (5616 x 3744 pixels) so, depending on your output resolution needs, they can be significantly cropped if needed.

> **FORMATS**   The background images in high-resolution JPEG format are between 9 and 18 MB each. If you require a higher bit depth version in a lossless TIFF or Canon Raw (.CR2) format please contact Andrew Hughes at andrew.hughes@interactcom.com with specific image requests. .CR2 files are approximately 30 MB each and 16 bit TIFFs are approximately 126 MB each.

> Most all photos were exposure bracketed (-1, 0, +1) and are suitable for HDR processing. The three raw .CR2 or TIFF files for selected images can also be furnished if you want to experiment with HDR image processing.

> Most images are framed to include significant portion of sky to allow for placement of text in your layout.

SUBJECT PHOTOS

You are encouraged to take and composite your own photos of students, grads, instructors, etc. but we've included a variety of subjects already removed from their backgrounds and ready to composite with the above backgrounds. They can be found and downloaded here http://clients.interactcom.com/TEXASgenuine_People_Gallery/

SIZE Subject photos are roughly 1500 x 3500 pixels.

FORMAT Photos are available in .PNG format that retain background transparency and will import directly into a layer in Photoshop.

CHOOSING & MIXING INGREDIENTS ─────────────────────────────

• Begin by selecting a background image from http://clients.interactcom.com/TEXASgenuine_Background_Gallery/ or http://clients.interactcom.com/TEXASgenuine_Background_Gallery_2/ or from the DVD.

• Copy and paste your background image into a Photoshop document with the correct size, resolution and color mode for your project.

• Select and copy a photo of a person or people from the disc or from http://clients.interactcom.com/TEXASgenuine_People_Gallery/ A successful photo composite requires matching the primary light angles. Look at the shadows in both images to determine the primary light source direction (sun and key light.) If need be, most background or people photos can be flopped for a better match. If the background includes a recognized landmark that will not be correct if flopped, consider flopping the subject instead to match the background's lighting angle.

• Paste the person or people in a layer above the background. Position and size the subject relative to the background. Most background and subject photos were taken from the same height to facilitate the best composite. Experiment with position and size of the subject to create the most convincing composite. The subjects lower body will not show so no artificial shadows on the background need to be created.

• Match the background and subject's overall gamma, highlight intensity, and shadow detail by using any number of image adjustment tools in Photoshop.

• When complete, especially if your images have been significantly downsized, apply a bit of unsharp mask to the background and subject layers. We recommend starting with the Radius somewhere between .5 and 1, Threshold to around 10, and the Amount around 150. It's advisable to view your image at 100% when sharpening to better see the effects of this filter.

• Depending on your usual workflow the remainder of the layout can be created within Photoshop or your photo composite can be imported into another layout application for adding your text, TEXASgenuine logo http://www.interactcom.com/interact/clients/logos.html, your college logo, and any other graphic elements.
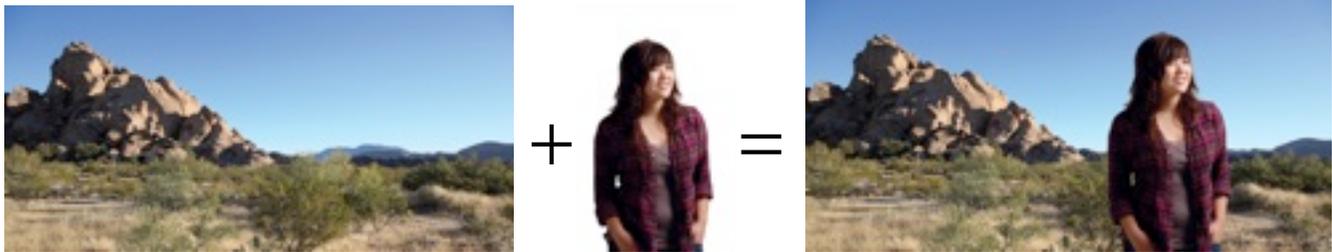
ADDING YOUR OWN INGREDIENTS

You are encouraged to photograph your own students, faculty and staff to place into these templates. As stated earlier, matching the direction of the light sources is the most important factor. By preselecting backgrounds appropriate to your area you can better match the studio lighting angles and quality of light to each landscape. Study the background photos to determine where the sun was and set the studio lighting to match.

• If a background photo has been chosen that was taken into the sun use a stronger backlight and approximate the lighting one would achieve by a fill-in flash or a strong bounce.

• Lens choice is less critical but it is recommended to shy away from wide-angle and telephoto lenses as they will either compress or exaggerate the model's features. The modes on the disc were photographed with a 50 mm lens.

• With a few exceptions the background photos were taken between 4 and 5 feet off the ground. If working with a background photo taken from higher or lower angle, try to match camera angles.

• We've had better results removing people from evenly lit white backgrounds than anything else so that is what we recommend for your subject photo shoot.

CUT-OUT PROCEDURE

Removing people from backgrounds is becoming easier with each new version of Photoshop. You may already have perfected this technique but if not, there is a wealth of information available free on the web. Search on "techniques for cutting hair in Photoshop" and "removing backgrounds in Photoshop." For the subjects available here we primarily used the Refine Edge tool using Edge Detection to create the layer masks. Some tweaking is inevitable but this tool makes quick work of difficult objects like hair.

Happy photo compositing.