

Chapter 2: Fooling around with Photoshop

Some Layer Styles...

Some critics have slammed the use of layer styles as dummies acts however it is still in my opinion and through my experiences that Layers Styles is still a great feature that allows you to render fantastic stuffs within clicks and little adjustments. They are not that bad after all and they are easy to manipulate and play with. One thing is definite, layer styles don't walk alone, two layer styles can function together or layer styles can function with non-layer styles like gradients. Just remember the rule of the thumb: It has to look right so use them wisely and appropriately. Layer styles can only be build-ups to a composition but it cannot be the only element in the whole composition.

Illustrating my case here:

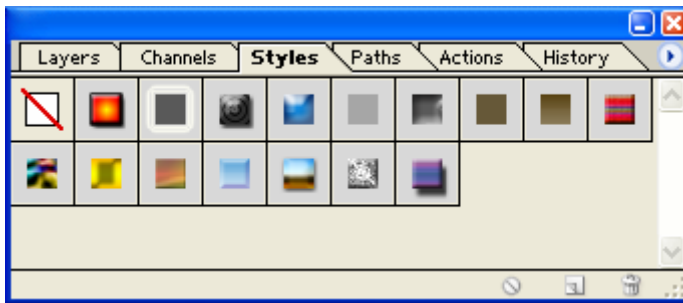


Special Thanks to OmenGeorge and Colin Smith for the Glass Orbs Tutorial – PhotoshopCafe.com

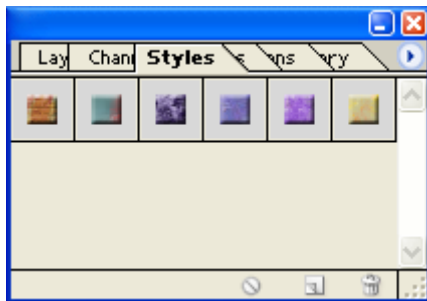
The Orbs in the image are done using Inner Glow and with an overlaying layer of white to transparent gradient. Imagine the orbs without the lighting layer; they look horrendously awful and too fake to look 3D.

In short, layer styles are cool and all that. However, layer styles can only function as supplements and 'helpers' to help us build our compositions. Note that they are not all encompassing. The manual way, sometimes, can help us achieve better and nicer effects especially about casting shadows.

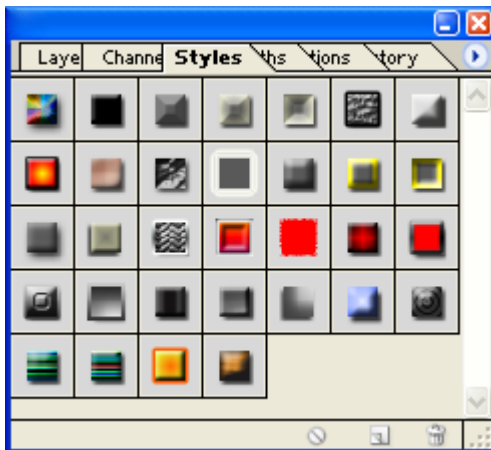
The Styles Palette



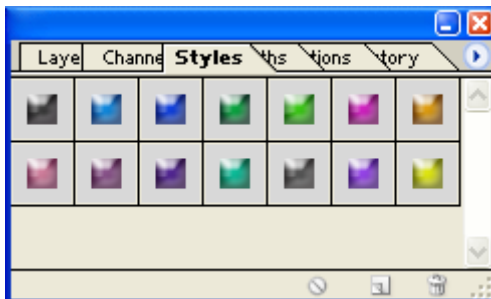
The default styles



The Abstract Styles



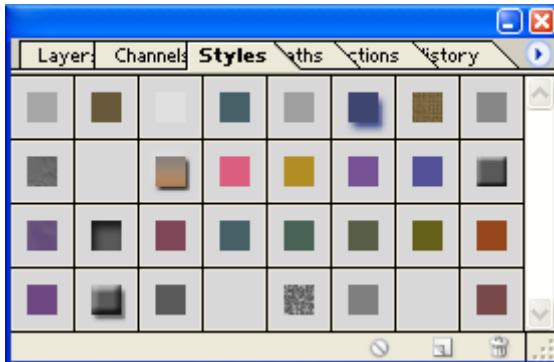
The Buttons Styles



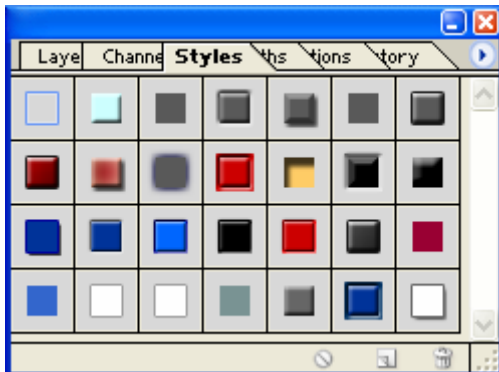
The Glass Buttons Styles



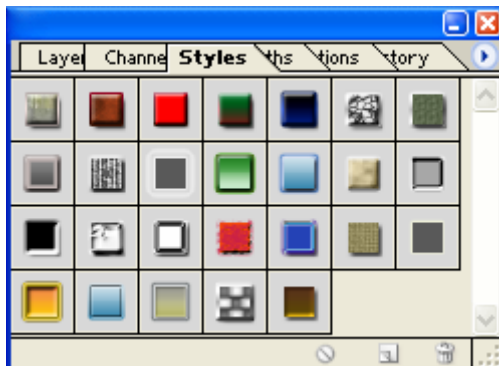
The Image Effects Styles



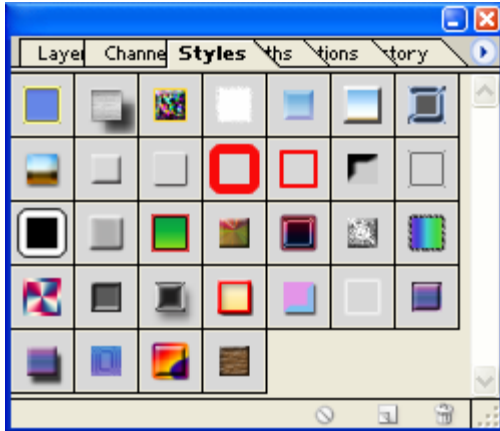
The Photographic Effects Styles



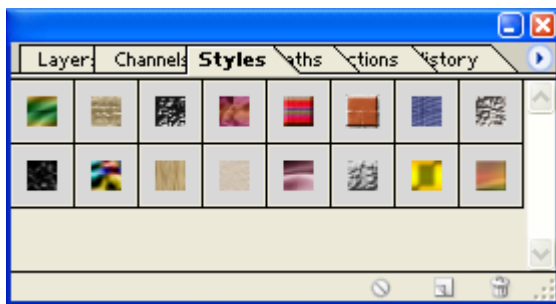
The Rollovers Buttons Styles



The Text Effects Styles



The Text Effects 2 Styles



The Textures Styles

How do you call on the different palettes? See the mini arrow on the palette, click on it and select the different sets of styles.

These effects are there for your usage. Select the layer to apply a particular style to and click on the style. They are easy and fun to play/experiment with. You can modify them too. Do explore and play with them.

The following are layer styles that I personally concocted. Layer Styles is another feature in Photoshop that calls for immense amount of experimentation and play. Over the years, I have concocted and played with many layer styles but I will just be showing two here.

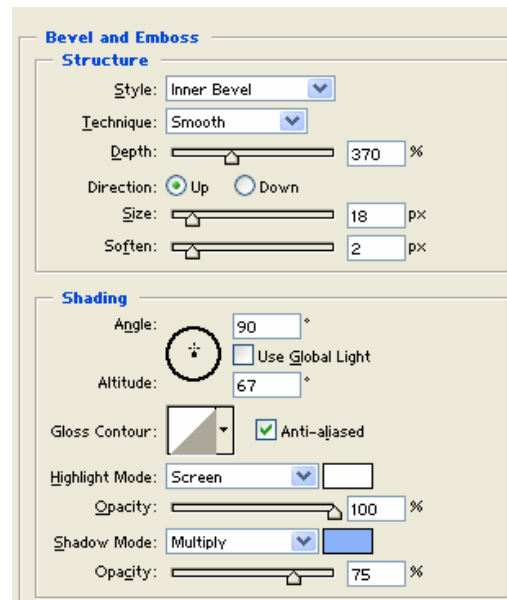
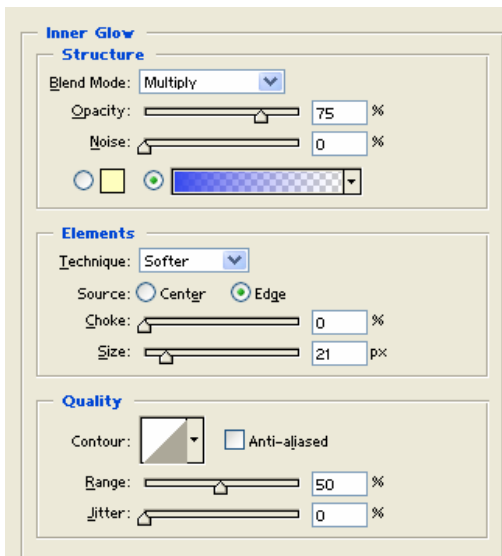
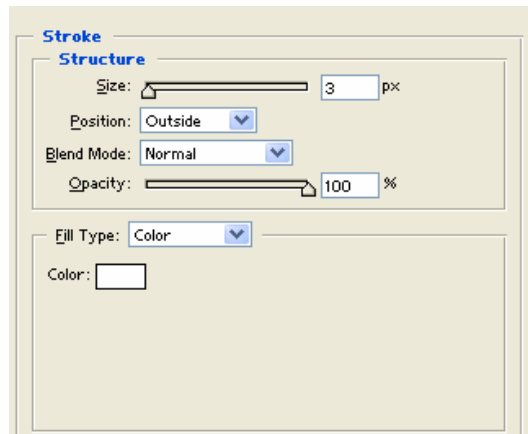
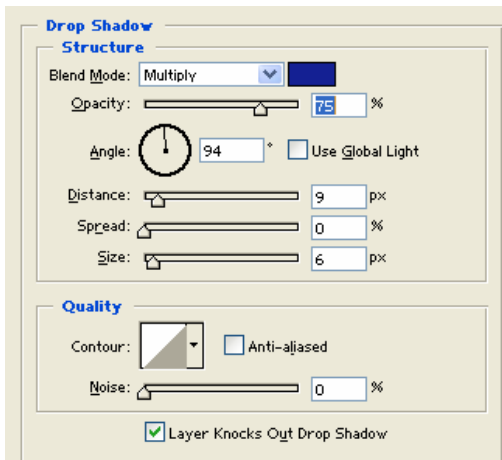
Plastic Effect



I used the plastic effect heavily for this web interface. Can you tell? This whole composition is done 100% Photoshop with paths, custom shapes, filters and enhanced by layer styles which provided the plastic and glass effects.

The curvatures and the banner areas are all enhanced with the plastic effect. I added a thin stroke to the edges of the plastic to show clear defined edges of the design.

The styles:

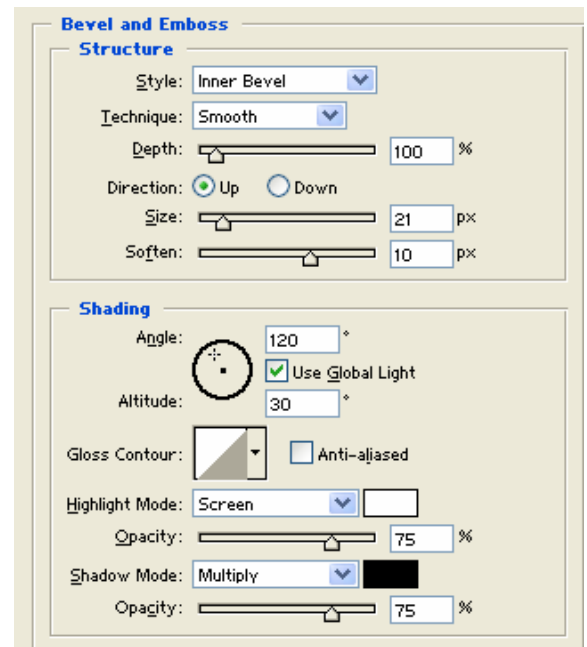
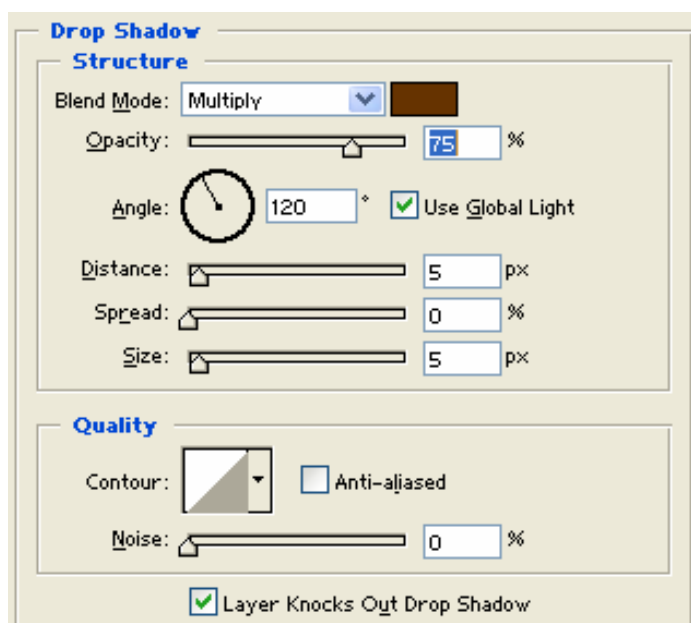


The Metal Text Effect

Rayz Renovations Rayz Renovations

Play around with the settings. The text can be coloured in shades of gold/yellow and the stroke effect can be applied the same way as shown for the plastic effect.

The Styles:



Here is a tutorial on rendering Glass Type with Layer Styles by **Colin Smith**:
<http://www.photoshopcafe.com/tutorials/glass/glass.htm>

The Net is a great place for resources and self-learning on Photoshop. Visit the resources mentioned in Chapter 1 diligently and you are on your way to being a great Photoshop player.

This is the end of Chapter 2 and we will be moving on to Into Design where we will cover how to do designing. You should be now comfortable with selection, use of clone stamp, layers interaction (i.e. blending modes and opacities), the use of certain filters and experimentation of layer styles.

It is hoped that through Chapter 1 and 2, you will be equipped with some basic skills of using Photoshop and know how to utilize its tools. There's too much to cover for Photoshop so the onus is still on you to discover and learn about other tricks and skills through the resources and by your own practice.

*Next, we'll go into **Chapter 3: Into Design** where we'll touch on designing. **Into Design** will cover the action palette, photographic & advertising tricks and express web interface creations.*