**Media Arts 11: Steps to Making a Digital Collage**

Your task is to create a collage of (a) your own beautiful photographs or (b) famous artworks by an artist (your choice!). In both scenarios you will need to follow a few basic steps to get you on the right track. **Keep in mind that these are only a basic guideline because you are going to do what YOU want to do to create a UNIQUE collage using some of the techniques we have learned so far.**

1. Start with a “background” image – Choose the image that you want to ‘anchor’ the other images to; this image will be the layer that you edit the least and will be the most prominent of your images.
2. Unlock your background layer. Do this by double-clicking on the word ‘background’ on your layers menu. Beware: Make sure you keep a separate file of un-altered photographs so that if you don’t like what you have done to your background you still have an original. It is helpful to *rename* your layer.
3. ***Optional:*** If you want to extend the canvas (Make the background image wider so you can add more)
	1. Using your magnification tool, zoom out so you can see the whole image with some additional space around it.
	2. Click “image” then on the drop down menu click “canvas size”
	3. On the “Canvas Size” box that will appear make sure you have “Relative” checked.
	4. You will then add width to your existing image. If your image is about 1inch wide already, for example, you may want to extend the image another 0.5 inches in width (make sure it is in inches!)
	5. Anchor the image to the left side of your screen using the arrows, click on the one pointing left. Press OK
	6. Use “Content Aware Scaling” – “Edit” 🡪 “Content Aware Scaling”’ Grab the right handle (aka the right side edge) and drag it towards the right edge that you have opened up. It should recreate your background image!
4. Choose your second image that you would like to add to the canvas and open it in Photoshop
5. Click “Select” then “all”, then “edit” then “copy”
6. To add the second image to your existing Photoshop file, simply click “Edit” 🡪 “Paste” onto a new Layer (I suggest renaming this layer!)
7. If your image isn’t “facing” the way you want, you can click “Edit” 🡪 “Transform” 🡪 “Flip Horizontal”/”Flip Vertical” etc. This will help you make your subjects face the direction you want, and is a good tool to recreate mirror images
8. Using your **move tool** (and the shift key if the computer you are using needs it), you can now move this image around on your canvas.
9. If you want to start to “fade out” the image, you will use **Content Aware Scale** again. Use the rectangular marquee on the image you want to alter to protect the section of the image. To protect the image click “Select” 🡪 “Save Selection”. You can now rename the Save Selection. Press Ok.
	1. “Select” 🡪 “Deselect” to stop using only that selection and to move on to another part of your work.
10. Click “Edit” 🡪 “Content Aware Scale”. On the top bar where it says “Protect” you will now protect the last selection that you saved (this is why it is so important to start naming your layers and selections!)
	1. Now you can alter all around the image you protected and just alter the edges/background of that particular image!
	2. Adjust the second image as much as you would like. You may want to extend the image outwards (ie to the left) so you have lots of space to work with for blending
	3. Press return/enter to stop what you are doing and move on.
11. Blend the layers together
	1. Add a mask (stay on the layer, not the background)
	2. Use brush tool (black foreground, 100% opacity, size 800 brush will give you lots of area to blend).
	3. One the image, you can now use the brush to “blend” the two photos together. It **will not alter** any areas you have “protected” just the areas around them.
	4. As you move closer to the center of the image, or the focus of the image, you can change the opacity to (example) 40% and continue painting towards your second image. This will make your image look more “seamless” like a vignette.
12. ***Optional***: If you decide that you want the background image to be more prominent/larger…
	1. “Edit” 🡪 “Transform” 🡪 “Scale”. Hold the shift key and pull the image larger. This will make the background image more dominant/larger. You can now move this image around.
	2. I don’t recommend scaling the background too much after you have added other images – you have done so much work blending etc that you don’t want to have to re-do all of that work!
13. **Continue these steps to add your other images.**
14. **Tip:**
	1. If your edges don’t look good – hold down “command” or “control” and click on the thumbnail for whatever layer you are working on you can create a mask/click on the mask you have made.
	2. Choose “Select” 🡪 “refine edge”. Click “Default button” and click on the blue standard view icon; Click the “View” menu at the top, uncheck “Extras”. Then you can play around with the edges by moving the pull bars on contract/expand (etc.) on the “Refine Mask” box that you have already opened. You can do this until you have achieved the look you want.
15. **Go beyond the basics. YOU CAN SEE ALLTHESE STEPS IN ACTION!** Check out the Youtube link:

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kd6OH\_ry6SE

“Photoshop Workbench 231: Creating a Seamless Photo Collage”

Do you want to add a drop shadow or add some more neat aspects to your collage? (Time 12:00 into the video).