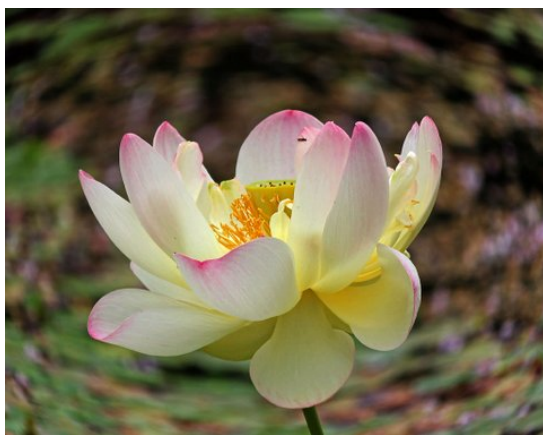
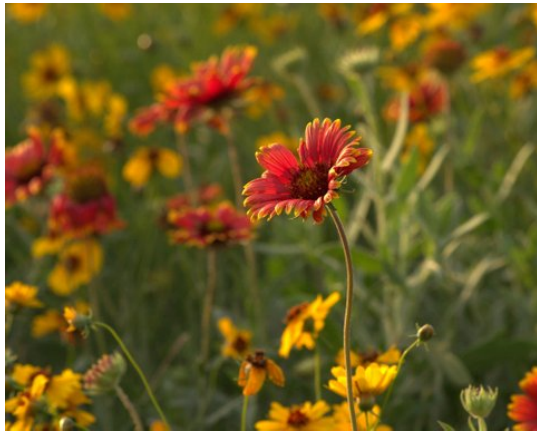


March 2014 Elements SIG - The ORB Technique

Listed below are the instructions for the technique and some before and after images – submitted by member Sherry McRae



This article showcases some of the best low-cost and free actions on the Web—from nine great developers; you can also find more links and detailed instructions for installing actions in the Subscriber area of the *Photoshop Elements Techniques* Web site.

To better understand actions, let's take a look at the "orb" effect, which has been popular for some time with Elements users. To create an orb using one of your photos, crop the photo into a square, and then follow these four steps:

1. From the Filter menu, apply **Distort>Polar Coordinates**
2. In the Polar Coordinates dialog, click the radio button marked **"Polar to Rectangular,"** then click OK
3. From the Image menu, select **Rotate>180°**
4. Apply the Polar Coordinates filter again, only this time, click **"Rectangular to Polar."**

Due to the effect's popularity, Wendy Williams decided to record the orb steps as an action. After installing Wendy's action, instead of manually performing the four steps above, you simply select the action from the Effects palette, click the Apply button, and—*Voilà*—you have

an orb. Most actions have many more steps than this, but they can be just this simple to use.

There are numerous people who make their actions available for download online. Some very generous action creators provide their actions free, and if you are using them, we encourage you to leave a comment on their site or blog in appreciation. Better yet, click on the Donate button, if one's available on the Web site. When you see actions for sale that you'd really like to have, go ahead and buy them—most of them are very reasonably priced—it helps encourage the creators to develop more actions. (Also, make sure you check each designer's site for their actions' terms of use.)

One caution to be aware of before downloading any action: make sure that the author clearly states the action will run in Photoshop Elements. Not all Photoshop actions will run in Elements.

Some actions require participation from the user and may not do all the work for you. An action may stop during its execution and ask for input, and some completed actions leave editable layers in the image, so you can adjust the effect after the fact. It's wise to read the instructions included with the more complex actions so you know what to expect.



Wendy's Orb Action, available in the Subscriber Download area, turns a cropped image (above) into a lovely orb (left).