

Using Photoshop Elements to Enhance the Color of Photos

By Myrna Wacknov

Below is a description of some steps you can follow to create more color in your photos as an inspiration for creating more colorful portraits. I experiment a lot with different settings and steps. Give my outline a try, then try adding to or changing some of the steps, settings, and soon, to create your own technique. Be sure to save the changes under *save as*, which preserves the original photograph (at top right), but allows you to make unlimited versions of it.

Before I move the photo into Photoshop Elements, I often make basic adjustments regarding contrast, color, balance and exposure. I work on a Macintosh, and the iPhoto software has this feature. This is where I store all of my photos, sort them, create albums, and generally organize my photos. I then export those photos I want to play with to the desktop and open them in the Elements program. When I'm satisfied, I export them back into iPhoto. There's probably a more efficient way, but I'm self-taught and this works for me.

Once you have the image selected in Elements, follow these steps:

Step 1

- Go to *image* (found in the menu across the top of the page),
- Then to *adjustments*,
- Then to *posterize*.
- Try different levels and decide which resulting values you like best (I usually use 4 through 10). This step breaks down the image into colorful values (see the posterized image at right).

Step 2

- Go to *filters* (also found in the menu across the top of the page),
- Then to *brushstrokes*,
- Then to *accent edges*—try **edge width** at 2, **edge brightness** at 24, and **smoothness** at 5.

Step 3

- Again, go to *filters*,
- Then to *paint daubs*—try **brush size** 4, **sharpness** at 7, and **brush type wide blurry**.

Step 4

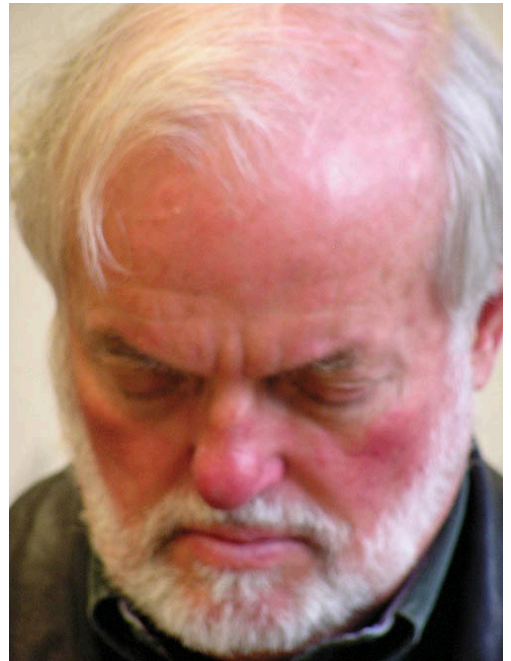
- Go to *enhance* (in the top menu across the page),
- Then to *adjust color*,
- Then to *color variations*.

Try moving the slider and creating different variations with all of the options. I usually play with the color in the midtone range, lightness, darkness and saturation.

Step 5

- Go to *file* in the menu at the top of the page,
- Then to *save as*, and follow the prompts.

For a full-length feature on artist **Myrna Wacknov** and her watercolor portraits, see the October 2007 issue of *Watercolor Magic* (www.watercolormagic.com).



original photo



posterized image