



Creating Museum Templates

Creating Museum Display Templates in Photoshop

In this lesson, you'll learn how to create templates in Photoshop that make your photographs appear as if they are displayed in a museum, using techniques for masking, lighting, and perspective correction.

Duplicating the Base Layer

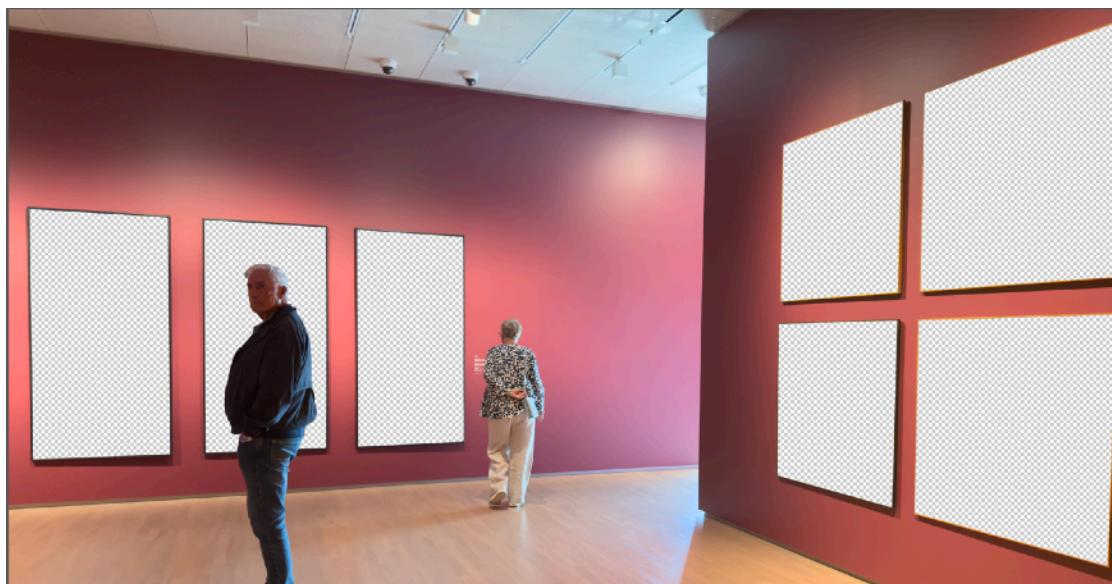
First, duplicate the base layer containing the museum scene. This creates a working layer for masking and ensures the original remains untouched.

1. Select the base layer in the Layers panel.
2. Press Command + J (Mac) or Control + J (Windows) to duplicate the layer.
Alternatively, drag the layer to the "New Layer" icon at the bottom of the Layers panel.

Masking the Artwork

The goal is to create masks that hide the original artwork, leaving the frames visible.

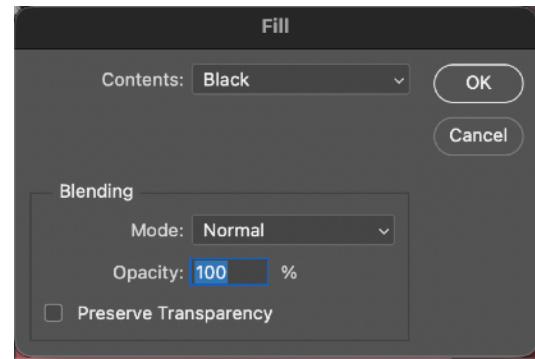
1. Zoom in on the image for better precision.
2. Select the Lasso Tool from the toolbar. For straight lines, consider using the Polygonal Lasso Tool.
3. Begin tracing the artwork's edges. Click to set a starting point.
4. To create straight lines with the regular Lasso Tool, hold down the Option key (Mac) or Alt key (Windows) after your initial click and only release it when the selection is complete.
5. Continue clicking to create straight line segments along the artwork's border.
6. For increased accuracy, create shorter segments.
7. Once the selection is complete, add a layer mask by holding down the Option key (Mac) or Alt key (Windows) and clicking the "Add Layer Mask" icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. This hides the selected area.



Refining the Mask

Inspect the edge of the frame to ensure none of the original art is still visible and if needed refine the mask.

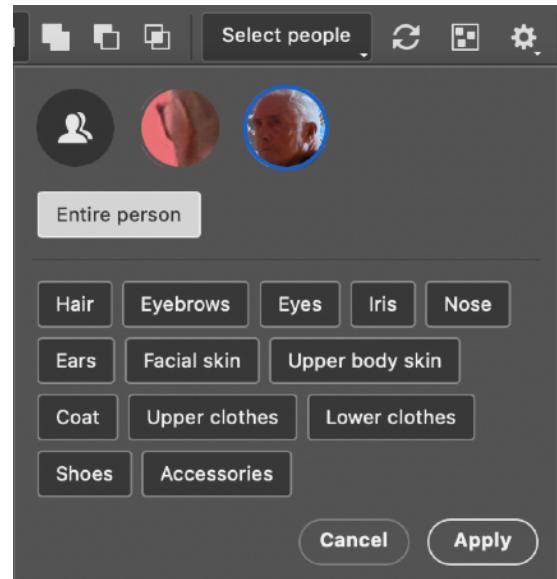
1. Select the layer mask in the Layers panel.
2. Use the Lasso Tool with the Option/Alt key to select any remaining artifacts.
3. To fill these areas with black (to hide them), go to Edit > Fill and choose "Black".
4. Deselect by going to Select > Deselect.



Masking the Overlapping Person

If a person overlaps the artwork, restore their visibility.

1. Select the Object Selection Tool.
2. Click "Select People" in the options bar at the top.
3. Choose the person from the thumbnails below, use the Entire Person option and hit "Apply".
4. Ensure the layer with the mask is visible.
5. Click on the mask and fill the selected area with white by going to Edit > Fill and choosing "White." This makes the person visible again.
6. Use the Brush Tool with black and white to refine the mask around the person. Painting with black hides areas, while painting with white reveals them.



Retouching for Lighting

Retouch the original image to remove the artwork and create a base for realistic lighting.

1. Hide the layer with the mask.
2. Select the Remove Tool from the retouching tools.
3. In the options bar at the top, ensure "Generative AI" is turned on.
4. Also, turn off "Remove After Each Stroke" to simplify the process.
5. Carefully brush over each picture frame to remove it. Hold Shift and click to create straight lines between clicks.
6. If the tool overlaps anything you want to keep, hold down the Option key (Mac) or Alt key (Windows) to subtract from the selection.
7. Press Return or Enter to apply the retouching. Ensure "Create New Layer" is checked in the options bar to avoid directly altering the original layer.



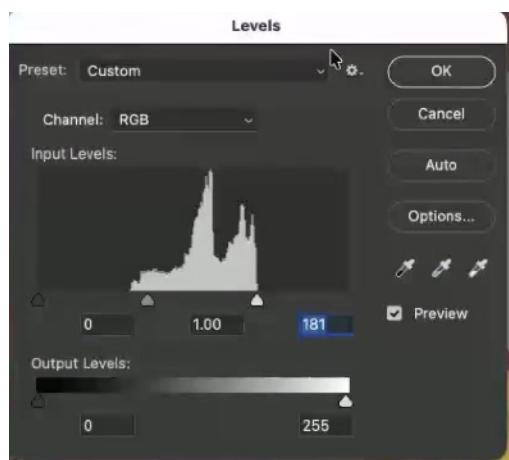
8. Repeat this process for all the frames in the scene, including removing any overlapping people.
9. Select all the newly generated layers from the retouching and merge them by holding the Shift key and clicking on the bottom-most layer, then press Command + E (Mac) to merge.



Desaturating and Adjusting Levels

If the wall in the retouched layer is colored, remove the color. Adjust the levels to ensure the brightest areas are white.

1. If the wall is colored, go to **Image > Adjustments > Desaturate**.
2. Go to **Image > Adjustments > Levels**.
3. Move the white input slider (right slider) to the left until it touches the beginning of the histogram. Hold down the Option key (Mac) or Alt key (Windows) while clicking to see which areas are becoming white. Make sure the area within the artwork is not affected.
4. Delete any unnecessary parts of the layer, like the floor, by making a selection and hitting **Delete**.



Applying the Lighting

Set the blending mode of the lighting layer to "Multiply" to use the retouched layer as realistic shadows and shading for the images we'll end up inserting into the frames.



Adding the Artwork

Insert your own images into the masked frames.

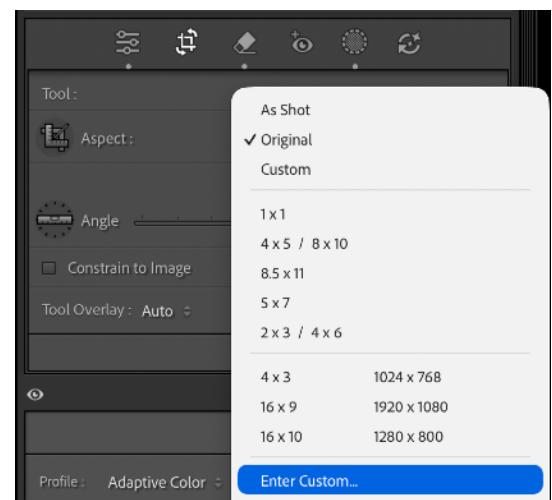
1. Open Lightroom. Crop an image to the proper aspect ratio and export at 2000px.
2. In Photoshop, drag your artwork from your desktop or use File > Place Embedded.
3. Resize the image to approximately fit the frame.
4. Go to Edit > Transform > Distort.
5. Adjust the four corners of the image to align with the frame, going slightly beyond the frame's edges.
6. If the corners snap, hold down the Control key (Mac/Windows) while dragging.
7. Press Return or Enter to apply the distortion.
8. In the Layers panel, move the artwork layer below the room layer and the lighting layer.



Determining Proper Aspect Ratio with the Perspective Crop Tool

To determine the proper aspect ratio for frames that were shot at an angle and therefore have perspective distortion (non-rectangular in the photo), use the Perspective Crop Tool.

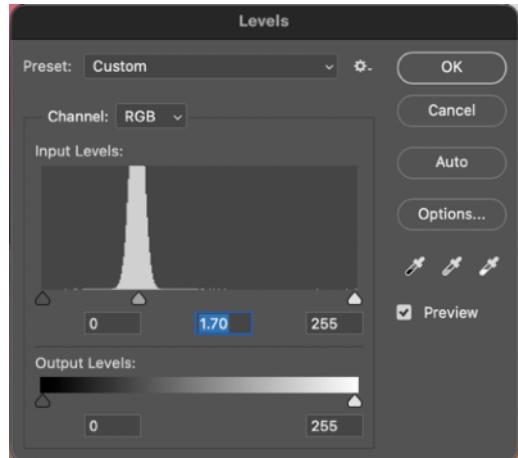
1. If the image contains Smart Objects, temporarily flatten the image by going to Layer > Flatten Image (we'll undo this in a later step).
2. Select the Perspective Crop Tool (click and hold on the Crop Tool to locate this tool).
3. Click on the four corners of the frame.
4. Press Return or Enter to crop and straighten the image.
5. Go to Image > Image Size to see the width and height in pixels. Write down the width & height in pixels which will serve as the aspect ratio for cropping. If you can't see pixels, check Resample to make that option available.
6. Undo the flattening by pressing Command + z (Mac) twice to revert to the layered document.
7. In Lightroom, choose an image, go to the Develop module, select the Crop tool, choose Enter Custom from the Aspect dropdown menu and enter your width and height ratio to crop the image accordingly.



Adding Canvas Texture

To simulate the texture of canvas, add a canvas texture layer.

1. Place a photograph of an empty canvas in the document.
2. Go to **Image > Adjustments > Desaturate** to remove any color.
3. Go to **Image > Adjustments > Levels**. Adjust the middle slider to center the histogram, making the majority of the texture 50% gray.
4. Set the blending mode of the canvas texture layer to "Hard Light" at the top of the layers panel.
5. Lower the opacity to around 10-20% to achieve a subtle effect.



Adding Reflections

For images behind glass, add a reflection to enhance realism.

1. Find an image from a different room in the same museum, shot straight onto the wall.
2. Place this image into your document.
3. Change the blending mode to "Soft Light".
4. Lower the opacity to around 20-22%.



Adding Shadows

If a person casts a shadow on the artwork, recreate it.

1. Make a selection of the shadow area using the Lasso Tool.
2. Go to **Image > Adjustments > Levels**.
3. Adjust the white output level (the right slider under the histogram) to darken the selected area.
4. Apply a slight blur to the shadow by choosing **Filter > Gaussian Blur**.
5. Place the shadow layer just above the image that is inserted into the frame.



Saving as a Template

To prevent accidentally overwriting the original template, save it in Photoshop file format and then add a "t" to the end of the file extension. When you open a file saved this way, it will open as "Untitled," ensuring you don't overwrite the original template.

In conclusion, by using masks to hide art, retouching to get the light correct, and using edit transform distort, you can make artwork that doesn't just look thrown in. Reflections and shadows can add more to your image.