

I have a group of filters, including the polarizer, which I believe can not be replicated digitally. One of the filters within this group is the old traditional 'cross-screen' filter. This filter gained popularity when used at weddings where the candles would flair into a star-burst and also very popularly used on chrome-work, hardly a Harley engin was shot not using a cross-screen filter for that extra sparkle.

Not having a cross-screen filter handy at times, they are not that readily available in all filter sizes, made me look into digital look alike options. One of the best alternatives for me came from an inspirational tutorial in 'Digital Photo', I added a couple of my own moves and pushed the limits.

This tutorial will take you through various steps and different results, however all of them are concerned with the creation of a cross-glare on highlights.



A bit corny, but a wedding photo I took for a family member. The added digital 'cross screen filter' manipulation was well received by all. This effect was created with the first 5 steps of this tutorial.

intro

This tutorial will take you through a number of stages and you could opt-out at any stage, or skip a stage or two to get the result you desire. My final result at end of tutorial more than met my expectations although it might not be every bodies cup of tea.

The photo used (on right) first went through a little post processing in Lightroom before the Photoshop process was entered to.

'Cross Screen Filter' tutorial can be done in Elements and Photoshop 4 or later.

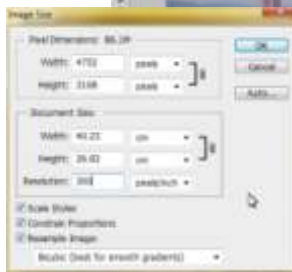


step 1

I believe that even should you manipulate extensively always use an as good as possible photo.

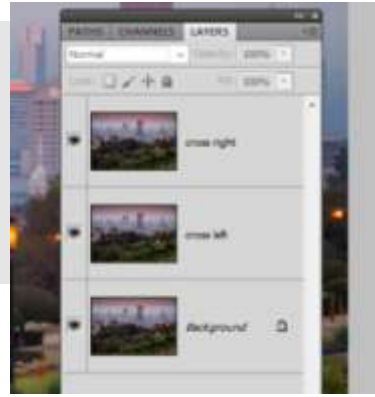
This was an early morning city-scape of Pretoria taken from the Union Buildings during August, the time of the year in which the sunrise reflects from the black glass of the Reserve Bank building.

The file is a 16 bit 86meg Tiff, on which basic sharpening and editing has been done in Lightroom.



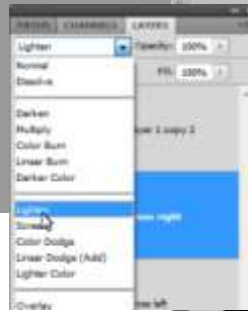
step ①

- Open your file and open layers.
- Inside the Layers palette, click on the Background Layer and make two copies by using the shortcut key **Ctrl+J** twice. The layers will appear above the Background in the Layers stack.
- You now have three identical Layers, a good policy is to name the layers -
- double-click on the words **Layer 1** and type in **cross left** and then do the same for **Layer 2** name it **cross right**.



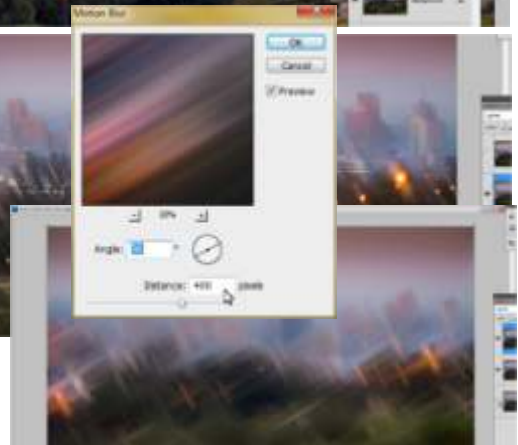
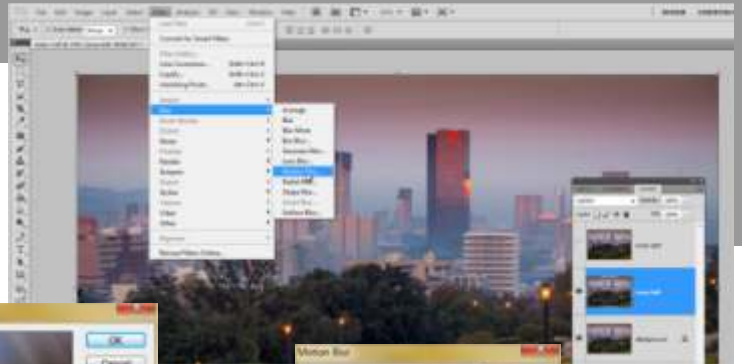
step ②

- Click on the **cross left** Layer to highlight, now click where it says **Normal** at the top and select the **Lighten** Blending Mode from the list.
- Repeat this procedure with the **cross right** Layer.
- There won't be any difference in the image, your Layers are now set up for the next stage.



step ③

- With the **cross left** Layer active, go to **Filter - Blur - Motion Blur** and in the dialog box, set the Angle to -60 degrees and the Distance to 300px. This will create a streaky, blurred effect for a length of 300 pixels.
- With the **cross right** Layer active, go to **Filter - Blur - Motion Blur** and in the dialog box, set the Angle to 30 degrees and the Distance to 400px. This will create a streaky, blurred effect for a length of 400 pixels.
- By switching off the 'eye' icons on the Background, you will only see the motion blurs (on right).



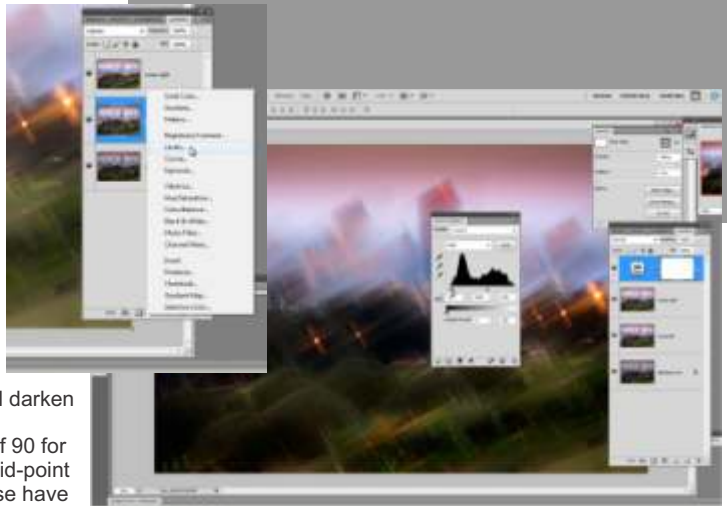
step ④

- Click on the **cross left** Layer to make it active, use **Ctrl+L** to open the Levels palette. Move the right hand slider (white point) to the left to brighten up the highlights. I used an Input Levels setting of 192, your image should dictate what your input level should be, it should however always pass the clear area.
- Now select the **cross right** Layer, press **Ctrl+L** and run Levels again.
- Use a setting similar or close to the one used with **cross left**.
- Some highlights might be blown out at this stage but might aid to the eventual creative result.



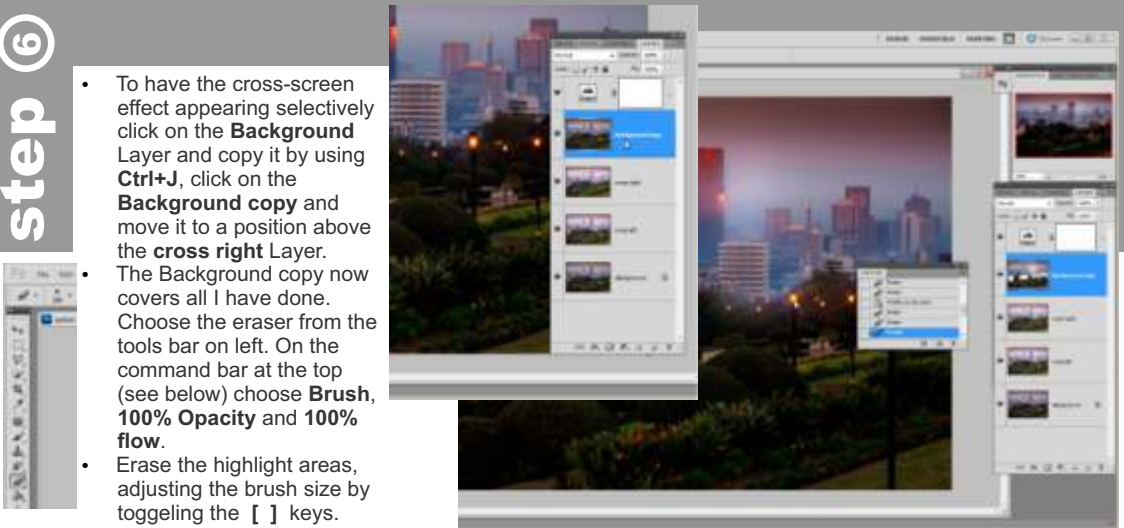
step ⑤

- The **Lighten** Blending Mode knocked out some contrast and caused the image look a bit washed out. **Levels** adjustment over the whole image will be the obvious solution.
- Click the **Adjustment Layer icon** (half black/half white circle) at the foot of the Layers palette, and select Levels from the drop-down list. Move the Black point slider to the right to darken the shadows.
- Test the mid-point slider as well - moving it to the right will darken the mid-tones.
- I used Input **Levels** settings of 90 for black point and 0.83 on the mid-point slider, your image will of course have it's own unique settings.



step ⑥

- To have the cross-screen effect appearing selectively click on the **Background** Layer and copy it by using **Ctrl+J**, click on the **Background copy** and move it to a position above the **cross right** Layer.
- The Background copy now covers all I have done. Choose the eraser from the tools bar on left. On the command bar at the top (see below) choose **Brush**, **100% Opacity** and **100% flow**.
- Erase the highlight areas, adjusting the brush size by toggling the [] keys.



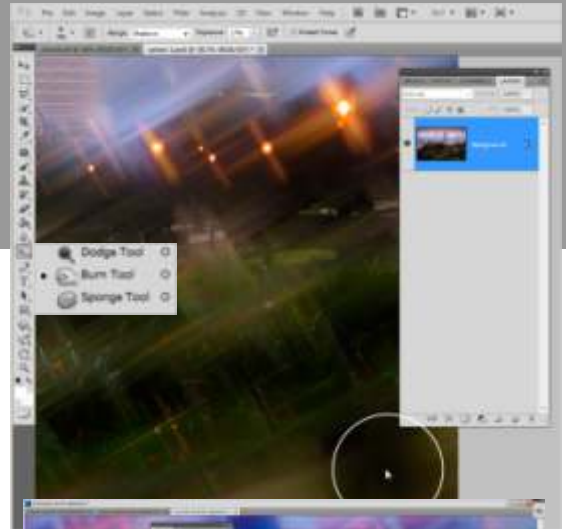
- Make sure the **Caps Lock** key is not on, this will turn your erase circle cursor into a cross-hair cursor.

step 7

- This is an alternative step and 'step 6' must be ignored.
- After step 5 flatten image (right click on **Background Layer** and choose **Flatten image** at bottom of drop-down menu).



- Choose Burn Tool from toolbox on left.
- On command bar at top choose **Shadows** in **range** window and **15-20%** in **Exposure** window.
- Start knocking out areas by 'burning' them, adjusting the brush size by toggling the [] keys.
- This is a fantastic tool and allows for increasing the composition by burning corners and also creates a dramatic effect.



For my 'Grand Final' I added more colour. This extreme manipulation (to me) made my image a little reminiscent of the dynamics and movement of the Futurists with a touch of Cubism

