

Simple Surreal Landscape

By Kirin Knapp

Use some easy photo manipulation skills to make a surreal landscape scene.

Here are all of the images we're going to use.



Open a new file and make it oversized so you have plenty of room – I made mine 800×800px.

Since we are working with a couple smaller images and we want the area to be larger, we just need to do a few easy things.

Take your one image you like, in this case it's the vertical grass and sky scene. I want it to be double the size in width. Duplicate the image and flip it horizontally Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal. Then match up the edges. Merge the two layers together to make one when they are lined up.



Copy one of the pictures of sky and clouds you have, paste it on a new layer. Resize it CTRL+T holding shift and dragging one of the corner anchors in until it fits in the sky in your image.



Change the blending mode for that layer from “Normal” from “Lighten”. You do this in the Layers window. This will make that blue blend in with the existing sky and the white clouds be the only thing visible.

Copy another set of clouds and repeat this.



Take the Eraser and a Soft Round brush and erase along any harsh lines to help smooth the clouds into the picture.



And add more clouds. We're doing this so the picture does not look like it was just duplicated and flipped. We're making it asymmetrical.



Now select the Healing Brush tool with a Soft Round brush. Be sure you are on the original scene layer with the duplicated images. Hold ALT down on the left side of the sky somewhere, and then click a few times where the sky is still obviously symmetrical. This takes pieces of where you clicked with the ALT key and moves them over to the other side of the sky where you click. It's really a nice little tool.



Do the same thing in the grass. With the grass, because there are lightness changes in it, if you ALT+click in the middle of the grass in one place, you'll want to click it in the middle of the grass in another. Try to keep it on the same horizontal line, but cover up the fact that it all looks like a mirror image.





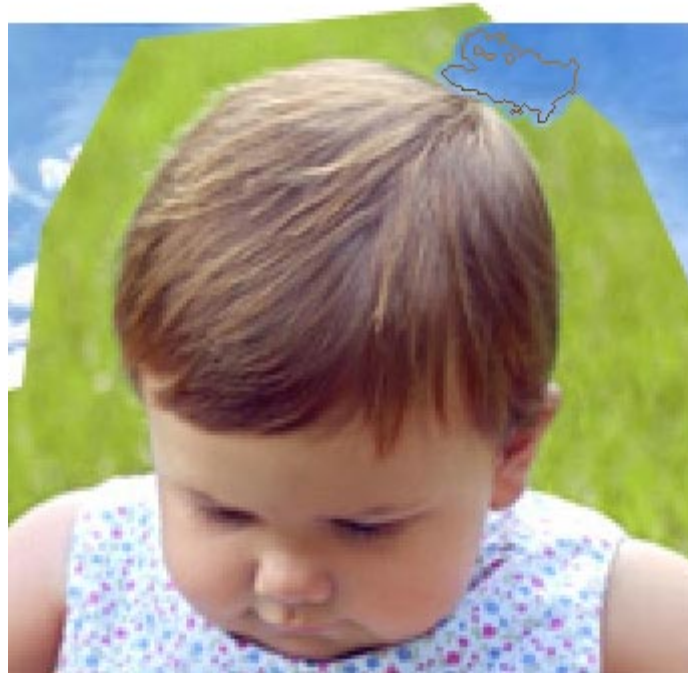
Enter the baby!

Use your Polygonal Lasso tool and cut out the baby from her picture. You can leave some grass around her, we'll be fixing the fact that it doesn't match.

Once you paste the baby (above all of the cloud layers), adjust the Hue/Saturation. We want to edit the green color. Change that in the "Edit" drop-down it supplies for you, then slide the sliders around until you get a similar color for the grass as that in the picture.



Zoom in on the kid's head and get the Eraser out again, with a Chalk brush.

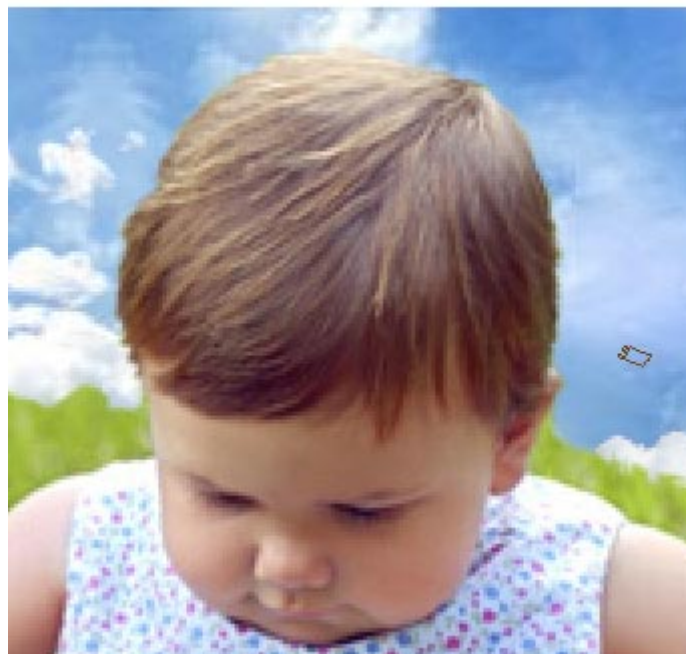
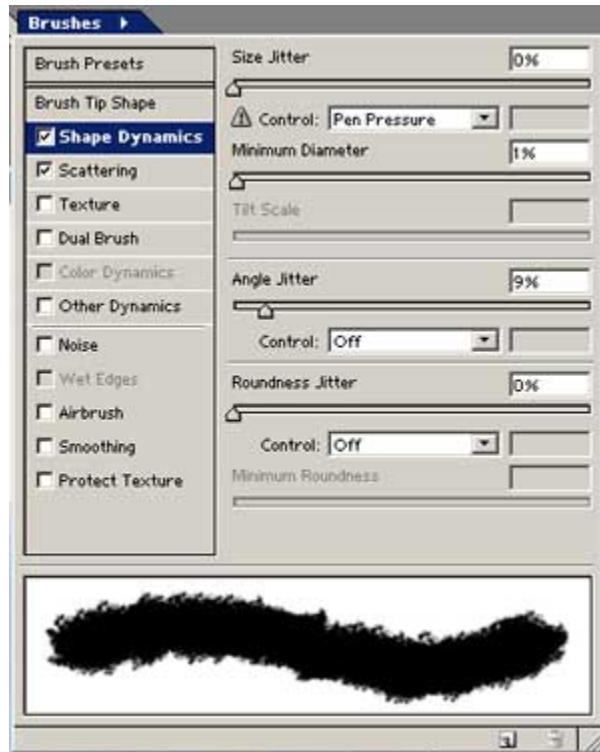


Erase around her head.



While still using the Chalk brush, we're going to adjust how the brush functions. For this, we want to go to the Brushes menu and click on Shape Dynamics and Scattering. This will make the brush less predictable. Under Shape Dynamics, up the Angle Jitter a little bit. You'll see the little

preview change some as you move it around. Why did we do this? Because the baby's head is not a globe or a box, she has hair. This will give us a hair texture.



Resize the baby to fit the picture.



When you zoom in you can see how the grass still around her stands out some, so we're going to erase this now.



Use the Dodge tool to lighten up the baby's shadows. She doesn't blend very well in the picture at this point, so we need to make her highlights and shadows look more like she is sitting outside in an open field.

Use a Soft Round brush with your Dodge tool and lighten the top of her head, and her arms and legs and sides. Take note of where the sun is coming from and lighten those areas in correlation.



When you lighten areas you'll also be able to see the grass you missed earlier when you were cutting it down, so you'll probably want to go back in again if you missed any spots.

Now, overall lighten the baby. Adjust the Hue/Saturation CTRL+U and adjust the lightness to about +10.



And now the baby looks a little more like she belongs. Ignore the fact that there aren't any parents or anything around...



All right, a couple more details to the picture.

Cut out one of the moons and paste it into our picture.



Change the layer's blending mode to Screen to make it transparent and eliminate the black.



Scale it down to fit in the sky. Keep this one a little larger.

Do this again with the other moon picture. Cut it out, paste it, make it Screen, and scale it down, making it smaller than the first moon.



Rotate them CTRL+T so the brighter area of the moon is facing the sun. Then, use the Eraser with a Soft Round brush on the opposite side of the moons and make them face out some. You want the brighter side facing the sun since the sun is the only reason that the moon glows in the first place.



Now, go back to the kid's layer.

Duplicate her layer.

Preserve the transparency in the Layers window on the copy of the child that is on the bottom. Fill her in with black. Then, skew the black image of the child so it acts as a shadow. Angle it away from the sun.



Change the Opacity of the shadow's layer to about 20%.

And we're done! A surreal scene with a child in it. It's easy to make, and you can use these little tips and ideas to make an even more elaborate scene.

