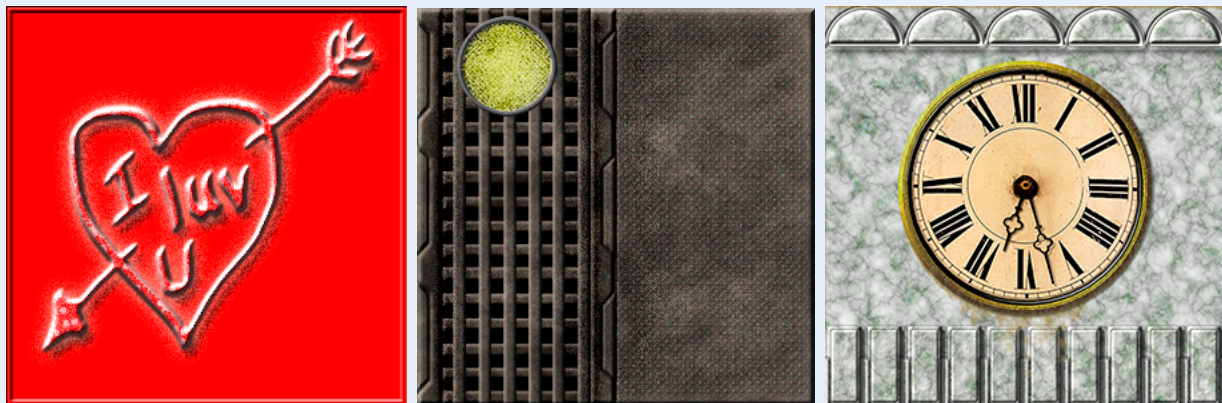


### More Uses For Fill Opacity = 0%

The use of design (line art or shapes) layers with **Fill Opacity = 0%** as templates for embossed shapes certainly isn't restricted to making frames and fancy borders.

The following three examples give you an idea of how versatile this trick can be. They are about as different as you can imagine: an instant Valentine design, a grungy metal element from a sci-fi setting, and an elegant clock in a marble wall.



For each of these three examples, open its .psd file in PhotoShop® and examine the layers and their effects settings to see how they were constructed. Then do the suggested experiments, and any others you think up, to customize each example.

**Want more free activities, tips, and graphics? Look in the Attic!**

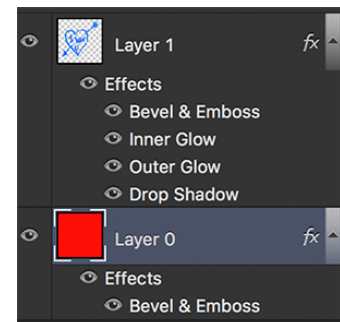


The Valentine design is the simplest. It took me about five minutes. It only has two layers: a red layer for the design background and above that a layer on which I drew the heart and its message freehand using a simple brush.

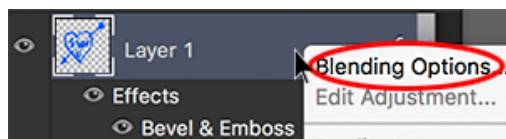
Notice that the red layer is NOT a **Background** layer as PhotoShop terms it. It's a regular layer, because you can't use layer effects on the default **Background** layer you get when you make a new document. When you double-click a PhotoShop **Background** layer, instead of opening the **Layer Styles (Blending Options and Effects)** dialog, you get a dialog to convert it to a regular layer. Throughout this tutorial, I talk about layers that can be hidden or displayed as a background on which the embossed shapes appear; but in PhotoShop terms, these are regular layers.



I filled the **Background** layer with red, converted it to a regular layer, used **Select All**, and applied a **Bevel** effect. **Double-click** the red layer (or rt-click and choose **Blending Options**) to open the **Layer Styles** dialog, and put a **Contour** onto the bevel to get the raised outer edge.



Next I added a new blank layer, and used a small, simple brush to paint the heart, arrow, and letters in blue (but any color will do, as you'll soon see). Then I began experimenting with layer **Effects** on my painted sketch. To investigate these settings, **double-click** the upper layer (or **rt-click** and choose **Blending Options**) to open the **Layer Styles** dialog.



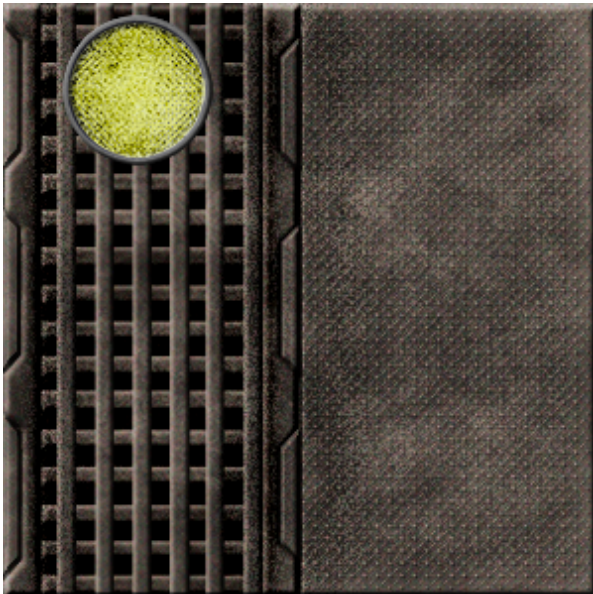
First I applied a **Bevel** with a **Contour** and a **Drop Shadow**. I used **Inner Glow** starting from the **Edge** with **Noise** and **Jitter**, for a splotchy

effect. The easiest way to determine the exact settings is to move the sliders back and forth until the effect looks good. I also used **Outer Glow**, and for that I changed the color of the glow from the default white to a pale yellow for a slightly warmer effect. Then I waved my magic wand...or rather, I set the **Opacity Fill** to **0%**. The blue painted lines disappeared, and all those fancy effects showed up on the red layer.

**Experiments:** See what happens if you change the mode of the **Outer Glow** from **Linear Dodge** to some other mode, such as **Difference**. Play with the settings for **Bevel** and **Drop Shadow**. Put a rainbow **Gradient** onto the layer. Clear the upper layer, choose a small brush, and paint your own Valentine message. (It may be easier if you temporarily put the **Fill Opacity** back to the default **100%** while you paint.) Or maybe you'd prefer a Halloween message? How about, **Booo!** Then set the **Fill Opacity** back to **0%**, and fill the bottom layer with black.



### Sci-Fi Floor Panel



The next example looks very complex, but its many apparently separate pieces are created by placing layers with **Fill Opacity = 0%** plus a **Bevel** above a basic dull metal texture. It's part of a project from a book, **3D Game Textures** by Luke Ahearn (2006), from which I first learned this incredibly flexible technique.

To see all the effects and settings in **sci-fi\_metal\_floor.psd**, hide and



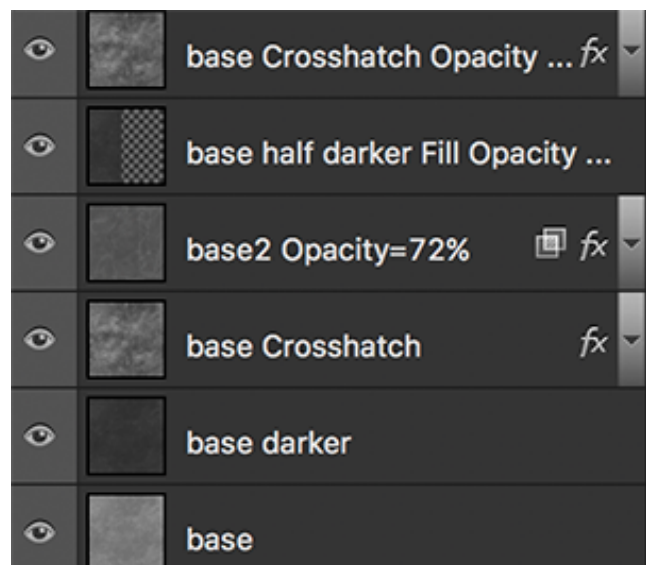
show layers by clicking the **eye icon**, hide and show the list of effects for each level by clicking the **tiny arrow** beside **fx** on a layer, and **double-click** a layer or **rt-click** a layer and choose **Blending Options** to open the **Layer Effects** dialog.

This object is part of a sci-fi scene in a dark and dirty old space station. Metal panels with various bits of machinery, lights, cables, and hoses make up the walls, and there are all kinds of pipes, vents, and panels in the ceiling. This particular panel would be part of the floor. Almost everything is made of worn metal.

Ahearn assumed that if the entire thing was built around the same time, the same metal would have been used throughout. So the first step was to use various filters (**Render Clouds**, **Difference Clouds**, **Add Noise**, many more) to make the bottom **base** layer, a murky texture representing grungy metal.

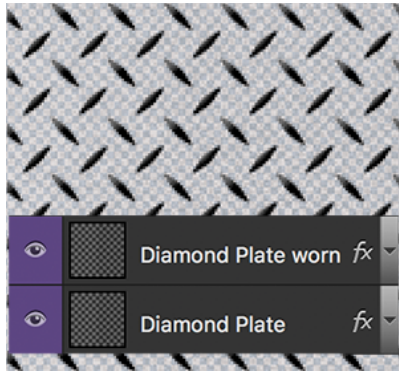
Although there are many, many layers in this psd file, almost all the details are formed by projecting layer effects down to variations of this **base** layer metal.

For example, notice two layers where I lowered the **Brightness** (base darker and base half darker Fill Opacity 85%) and two layers where I used **Brush Strokes**—> **Crosshatch** to make it look worn (base crosshatch and base Crosshatch Opacity 25%). I've coded all these base metal layers in gray (color around the **eye icon**).



## Shaping The Metal

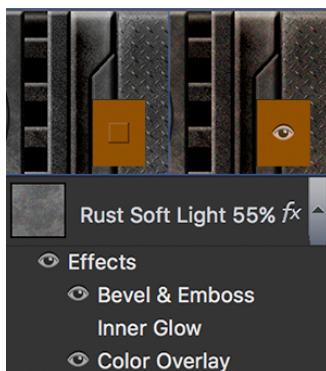
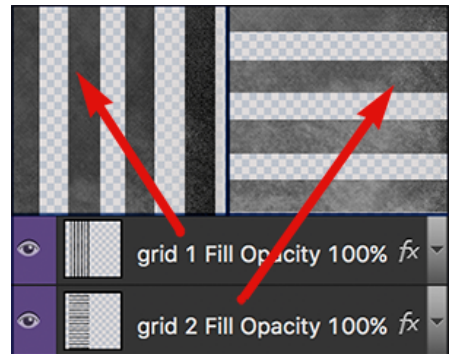
Most of the various seams in this image were formed by simple shapes in layers with **Fill Opacity = 0%**. They were placed above the **base** layer, and I have color-coded these layers in purple. A **Bevel** and other **Layer Effects** produce details of separate sections, surface texture and wear.



Even the non-slip diamond plate surface on the right side of the panel was made in this way. I drew an array of small black shapes, defined it as a **Pattern**, and **filled** the area where it needed to appear on a separate layer. I added the usual **Bevel**, and in this case set **Fill Opacity** to **16%**, letting a tiny bit of the black of the fill pattern darken the pattern.

You are not restricted to setting **Fill Opacity** to **0%** in creating embossed shapes. If **Fill Opacity** is greater than **0**, the color(s) of the shapes will show to greater or lesser extent.

One area where **Fill Opacity** had to be **100%**: the two layers of the gridded area, made with simple stripes of the same **base** material. Otherwise, the bars of the grid that pass underneath would show through. All the layers of the **Small Light** (group folder coded yellow) must be 100% so that it covers the grid under it.



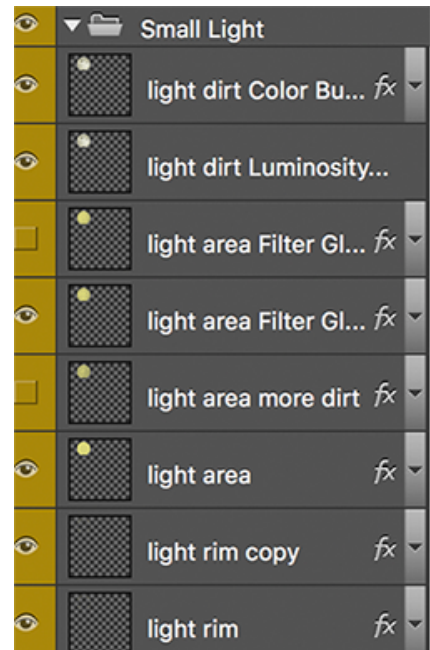
## A Layer Of Rust

The beauty of working in layers to affect a **base** material, is that all parts of the design match and look like parts of the same object. As a finishing

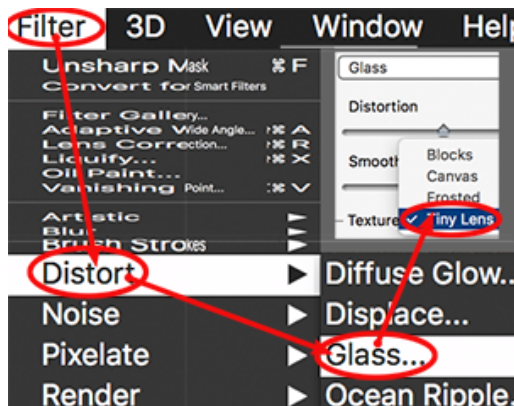
touch, I wanted the entire module to look slightly rusted. For that, I placed a copy of the **base** material as a top layer (**Rust Soft Light 55%** layer coded orange), added a rust-colored **Color Overlay**, and then blended it **Soft Light** at **55% Opacity**. Because it's still the same **base** material, this preserved all the variations of shading, scratches, and wear while subtly altering the overall color.

## Making The Light

I added a small light; the type that might add a bit of illumination beside the walkway. Its layers are in the group folder **Small Light**; open that folder now to see all the layers. It's the only part of this project that uses basic materials other than the **base** metal, but it still uses many of the same layer effects.



Throughout this project, I saved time in creating layers by duplicating a layer that already had all the **Layer Effects** I needed, deleting its contents, and adding simple shapes. To make the light, I duplicated the **Panel** layer, deleted the panel shape, and **copied and pasted** in some of the **base** metal for the circular rim. Of course, I had to set **Fill Opacity = 100%** for these layers. The rim took on the layer effects of the panel, with a **Bevel** to give it shape.

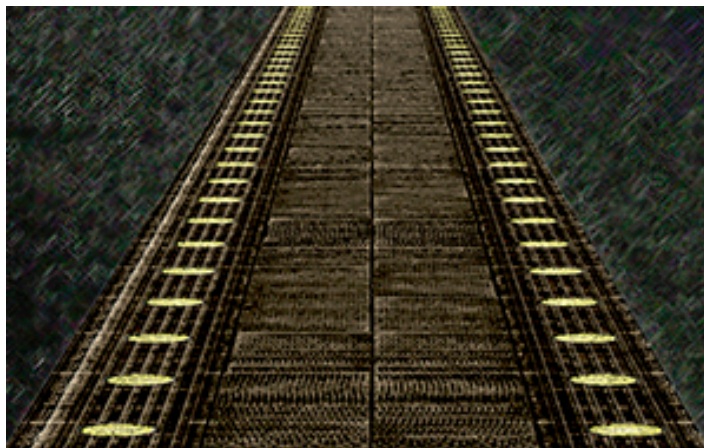


I made in a dull yellow circle (with **Inner Glow**) for the actual light surface in a separate layer, and above that a dirt layer. To make the light look more realistic, I used **Filter—>Distort—>Glass...**, scaling the **Tiny Lens** option to fit the light. It really does look like a glass cover for a light, especially with

the **Bevel** and **Inner Glow Layer Effects** active. The layer of dirt is just a sprinkle of black which I blended using **Luminosity**.

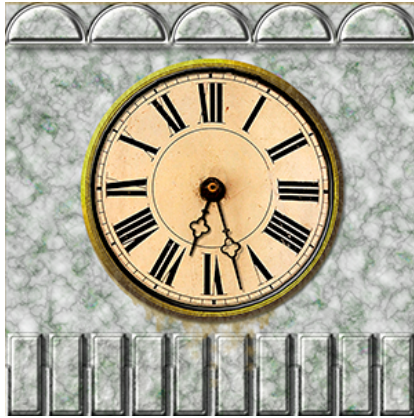
### Experiments:

- There are several choices for the light and for dirt layers, grouped into the **Small Light** folder. Open the folder and try turning on various combinations of layers. Then turn off the **eye icon** on the **Small Light** folder. What happens?
- Make the light look like it sticks up a little. **Double-click** a layer or **rt-click** on the **Small Light** folder and choose **Blending Options from the menu** to open the **Layer Effects** dialog. At the bottom of the options on the left, click **Drop Shadow**. Because this document is set for **Global Light**, the shadow will appear at the same angle as all the other shadows.
- Move the light! In the **Layers** palette, select the layer with the **Small Light** group folder. Get the Move tool, and move the light. All the layers and effects, even the **Drop Shadow**, move as one object.
- What happens if you turn off the **eye icon** on the **base Crosshatch** layer? (It's a copy of the **base metal** layer with a **Crosshatch** filter applied.)
- Turn off rust layer (**base Crosshatch for color** layer coded orange) and the **Effects** on the two grid layers to see what they look like without the **Bevel**. Then turn off the **eye icon** for both **grid** layers. What happens?





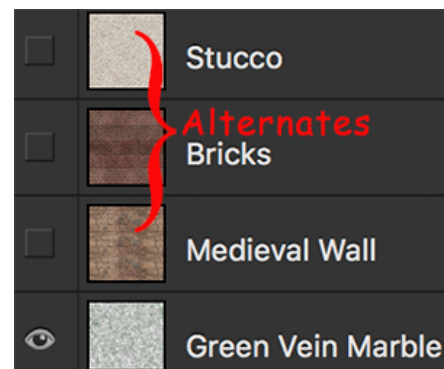
## Elegant Wall Clock



The third example looks complicated, but in reality it's almost as simple to make as the Valentine. To examine how it was made, open **Clock.psd** and click the **eye** icon on the highest **Merged** layer to hide it. Otherwise, you won't see any changes when you turn layers off and on or temporarily adjust the **Layer Effects** settings.

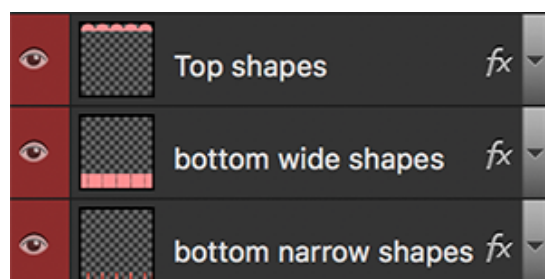
## Background Layers

Look first at the bottom layer, **Green Vein Marble**, which forms the default background for the clock. It was made using a variation of the **White Marble PhotoShop Action**. (For detailed information on using this action, where to download it, and how to install it, see [UsingWhiteMarblePhotoShopAction.pdf](#).)



Above that are three alternate background textures you can use later to experiment. Because we're using **Fill Opacity = 0** layers above to create the embossed shapes, you can switch to a different background without any other changes needed.

## Sculpting Layers



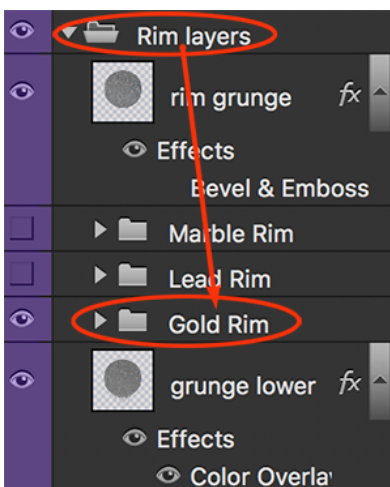
Above all the possible background layers are three layers (**color-coded red**) with the shapes that make up the upper and lower rows of sculpted shapes. The lower two layers have a row of narrow or wider vertical



rectangles; while the third, upper layer has a row of rounded shapes that were sliced from the top of a row of circles. All three layers have **Fill Opacity = 0**, and a **bevel**—but the bevels are not identical for the three layers. Also, each layer has several other **Layer Effects**.

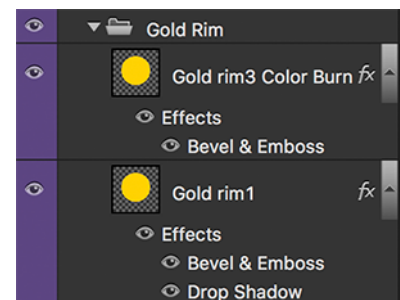
To see which **Layer Effects** are active for each layer, click the **tiny triangle** on the gray bar just to the right of **fx**. All these effects act on whichever background texture is currently visible. In effect, that background layer has three different bevels and many other effects in specific areas matching those simple shapes.

## The Rim

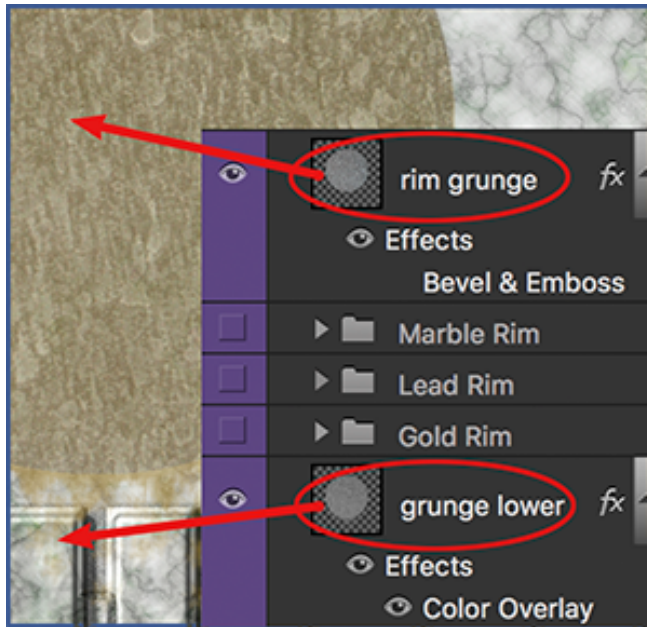


Above the three sculpting layers is a folder labeled **Rim Layers**. Open it now. It contains a **grunge lower** layer, three **group folders** with sets of layers forming three possible rims, and then a layer labeled **rim grunge**. (It's sort of a rim sandwich, with grunge for the bread, I guess) Open the folder for the default rim, which is labeled **Gold Rim**. (The other two rim folders, **Marble Rim** and **Lead Rim**, are alternatives you can play with later.)

Inside the **Gold Rim** folder are the two layers composing the rim, each with a simple golden-yellow circle shape. Each rim layer has a **Bevel** with a **Double-Ring Contour**, the lower rim layer has a **Drop Shadow**, and the upper rim layer is blended **Color Burn**. If you temporarily turn off the **Clock and other ornaments** folder, you'll see the gold rim as a raised metallic gold circle with a fancy beveled edge. The blotches are the result of the **rim grunge** layer.



## Grunge



If you turn off the **rim grunge** layer when you look at the rim circle without the clock, it will appear as almost impossibly shiny and bright metal. But since this is probably a large clock in an outdoor wall or tower, you'd expect to see some wear and some water stains. That's where the grunge comes in! It seems strange at first to make something very elegant and then add stains, but if it's supposed to be a real object and

not just a design, it's the grunge that makes it look real.

I added two grunge layers, using a texture downloaded from textures.com (yes, they have an extensive grunge collection!) to add stains. For the **rim grunge** layer, I cut out a circle from the grunge texture the exact size of the rim, lined it up with the rim layers, gave it the same **Bevel**, and blended **Luminosity**. Then I lowered the **Fill Opacity** slightly to produce a mottled effect. Since this layer is above all three choices for the rim, it will appear on whichever one is turned on.

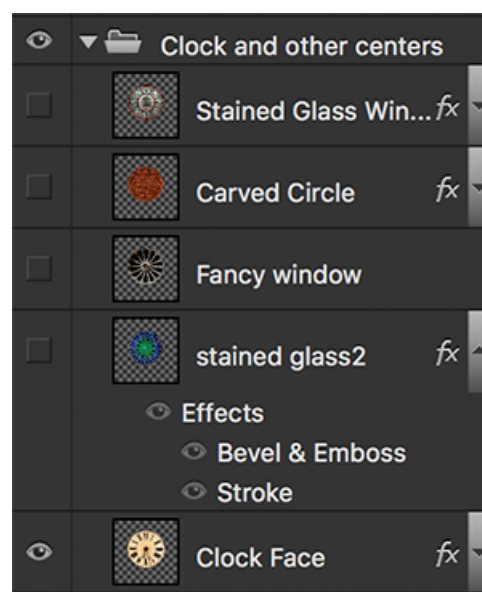
The second grunge layer produces slight water stains on the wall below the rim. For that layer, I made a duplicate of the **rim grunge** layer, and moved it down below all three rim folders. Using the **Clone** tool, I made little dribbles along the bottom edge. I moved the circle shape down just a bit so it would peek out below the rim, added a rust-colored **Color Overlay** to the layer, and lowered the **Fill Opacity** until the stains just barely show against the wall.

## The Clock



Open the **Clock and other ornaments** folder. Until this point, we have made everything from scratch, taking advantage of the many possibilities afforded by the **Layer Effects** and **Blending Modes**. But when it comes to something detailed like a clock face, it's time to look to clip art or free photos. I found this clock face art on Pixabay, a site I use often for clip art, photos, and even videos.

Of course, I had to work on it a little bit before it could go into the project, since it had designs around it and a rounded top. I used **Quick Mask** to select all the parts I didn't need, and added a **Layer Mask** to hide that part of the image. Once I had made sure the edges were as close to perfect as possible, I **rt-clicked** on the mask icon in the layer and chose **Apply Layer Mask**. Then I selected the clock face **only** and chose **Image—>Crop**. Finally, I reduced the size to fit just inside the rim.



The other layers in this folder have alternate central objects to put into the rim, which you can try out in the **Experiments** section below.

The finished project looks quite elegant, and it didn't require any drawing ability! The final step is to make a merged layer that will be easy to copy. The copy could be resized and used in any other project. But the hidden strength of this technique is that you can easily modify it. Try the experiments below to create variations!

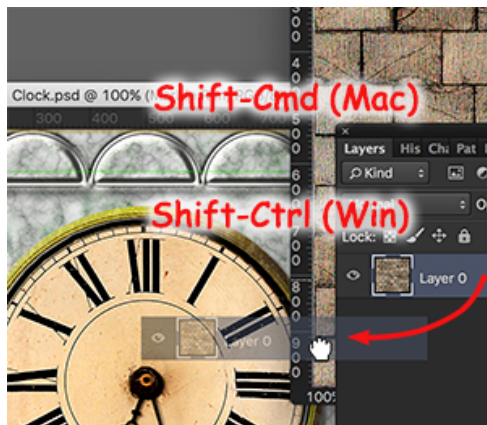


**Experiments:** Probably you noticed that we skipped over layers when analyzing the background layers, rim layers, and the clock. To play around with these, be sure you have hidden the top, **merged layer** by clicking its **eye icon**. You'll also need to check that no layers of the same component above the changes you make are hiding your experiment. For all the layers we skipped and any that you add, you won't need to hide the three sculpting layers or the grunge layers.

## Backgrounds Experiments

Start at the bottom of the stack of layers. Besides the default **Marble** background, there are three other backgrounds to try: layers labeled **Medieval Wall**, **Bricks**, and **Stucco**. To use any of these background layers, simply click the **eye icons** to turn them on and off. The three sculpting layers above will take care of the two rows of embossed shapes.

## Drag In New Backgrounds



I've put two more background graphics (in png format) in the folder **Extra Textures For The Clock**. They are both 1000 pixels square, to match the **Clock.psd** example. Open either **OldConcreteBlocks1000sq.png** or **Mottled1000sq.png**.

In **Clock.psd**, select the layer of the top background choice, **Stucco**. In the open alternate background graphic, while holding down **Shift** and the **Control** (Win) or **Command** (Mac) key, **click and drag** the single layer (**Layer 0**) in the **Layers** palette over to the **Clock.psd** window. This action puts a copy of **Layer 0** into **Clock.psd**, and the modifier keys center it. Both alternate background graphics are the same dimensions as **Clock.psd**, so the new background fits precisely. Because you had the **Stucco** layer selected, the new layer will appear just above it.

Whichever rim and center object you currently have made visible will now appear on the background you just added, complete with the embossed shapes and the water stains.

You're not limited to dragging in backgrounds of exactly the same size as the clock, either. The image just needs to be a minimum of 1000 pixels square, and if it is wider or taller, you can slide it around to find the best part. Or, if it's less than 1000 pixels in either dimension, try enlarging the image, making the shortest side 1000. If it still looks good, it's ready to use!

My favorite site to find background images is **textures.com**, but there are many places to get textures, and many of them are free. Also, you can make a new layer and fill it with a pattern, or start with a solid color and work on it with filters.

I made the mottled, concrete blocks, and the bricks backgrounds by using **Render Clouds** followed by lots of other filters. To get the bricks to have contrasting mortar, I used **Filter—>Texture—>Texturizer...—>Brick** on a separate gray layer, and deleted the main brick gray color, leaving the mortar lines. The **Old Concrete Blocks** background had a downloaded photo of paving stones blended into it.

## Rim Experiments

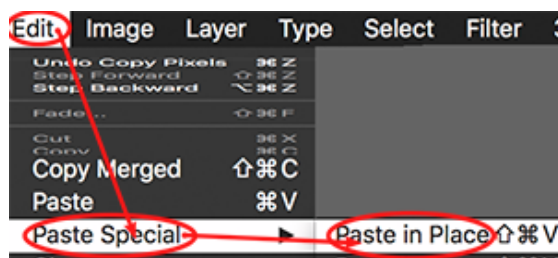
Open the **Rim layers** folder by clicking the **tiny triangle** just left of it. Inside are the two grunge layers, and between them are three folders with sets of layers to form the embossed rim. By default, **Gold Rim** is visible, but you can hide it and substitute the **Lead Rim** or **Marble Rim** simply by clicking their **eye icons**. Try different rims with the many different background choices. Be sure you only have one rim folder showing at a time, or the **Drop Shadows** pile up.

**Lead Rim** is just two gray circles, with the same **Bevel** as the **Gold Rim**, with the upper layer blended **Color Burn** and a **Drop Shadow** added to the lower layer. **Marble Rim** has two layers, each containing a circle copied from the **Green Vein Marble** background, each with the same **Bevel** as the **Gold Rim**. The upper layer is blended **Color Burn** and a **Drop Shadow** was added to the lower layer.

To make the rim, I put a fancy bevel onto the edge of a large golden-yellow circle shape. In this case, I left the **Fill Opacity** at **100%**, since I wanted to form a separate object instead of a carved or embossed shape in the background. There are three layers in each rim folder, all with the same **Bevel**. The bottom two are identical, except for the drop shadow, and the top layer is blended **Color Burn**.

To make the **Lead Rim**. I duplicated the entire **Gold Rim** folder, selected each of the golden-yellow circles in turn, and filled each with a medium gray. So you could make a different color rim the same way: duplicate either the **Gold Rim** or **Lead Rim** folder, open the duplicate, select each layer in turn, use the **Magic Wand** to select inside the circle, and **Fill** with a new color. Also rename the layers and the folder. You may find that you want to change the **Bevel** settings and **Blend Mode** of either upper layer in the new rim set. Try it!

The **Marble Rim** was made a little differently. I used the **Magic Wand** to select one of the circles in a layer in the **Gold Rim folder**, moved down to the **Marble** background layer, and copied. Then I moved back

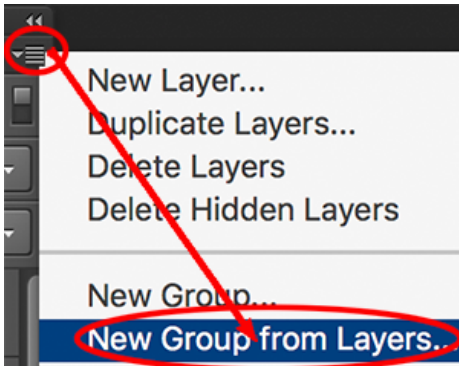


up into the **Rim Layers** folder and selected the top folder, (probably **Lead Rim** at this point) just below the rim grunge layer. I wanted to paste the copied circle as a new layer, but in PhotoShop the default **Paste** would be offset a little bit

from the copied position. To avoid that, I used **Paste Special—>Paste**



**In Place** from the **Edit** menu twice to make two new layers, each with a circle of marble. Alternately, you can **Paste In Place** using the key combination **Shift-Command-V** (Mac) or **Shift-Control-V** (Win).



Then I copied the **Layer Style** from each of the layers in the **Gold Rim** folder, and **Pasted** them in turn into the two new layers. This action duplicated the **Bevels**, **Drop Shadow**, and **Color Burn** blending in the new layers, turning them into a rim made of marble. Finally, just to keep things organized, I selected my two new layers, clicked on the icon in the upper right of the **Layers** palette, and chose **New Group From Layers**, and gave it the name **Marble Rim**, thus creating the **Marble Rim** folder.

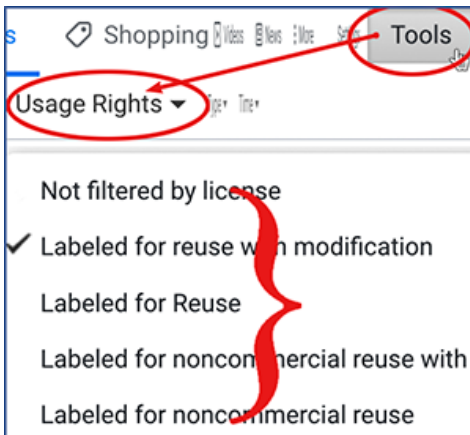
Try making matching rims for any or all of the background choices by following these steps and copying a circle from whichever background layer you want to match. **Paste In Place** to make new layers that are lined up with the rim position, and copy and paste **Layer Styles** from the layers in the **Gold Rim** folder. You also can experiment with **Blending Modes**, different **Bevels**, and other **Layer Effects** to change the appearance of the rims you make.

### Center Object Experiments

Now open the **Clock and other ornaments** folder. Besides the visible layer with the **Clock** clip art, there are four more layers with alternate central objects for the wall. To try them out, click the **eye icons** to show or hide the layers. These are all fairly simple graphics that have been sized to fit in the rim. Experiment with adding **Layer Effects** and hiding and showing various rims and backgrounds with the two stained glass windows, the carved screen, and the ancient fancy window.

You can easily add more center object layers. First, locate something circular, either clip art or a photo. I found the art for the clock and all four central object choices on two websites that have public domain (CC 0) images, pixabay.com and clipsafari.com, and there are many similar sites. You also can locate circular art by searching with **Google Images**, but do check the **usage rights**.

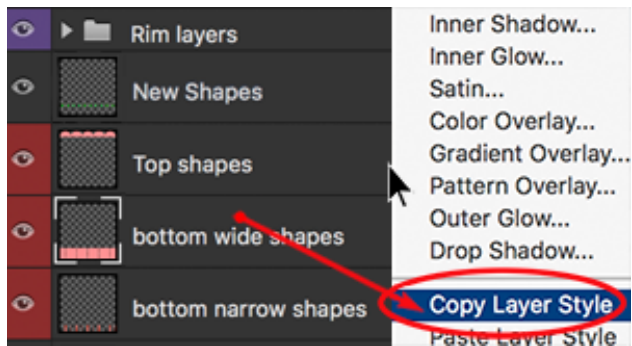
Type in your search terms (I used **round windows**) and look for a button marked **Tools** at the top of the page. Click **Tools**, and another row of options opens, including **Usage Rights**. You can search for images licensed for reuse, reuse with modification, etc. Each search is separate: for example, a search for **reuse with modification** won't include images **not filtered by license** or only labeled for **reuse**.



Open your downloaded image in PhotoShop, and do whatever editing is needed. The last editing step is to resize the circular image to fit just inside the rim. Set **Image Size** to 634 x 634 pixels to fit the rim. **Drag** your new central object into **Clock.psd**, and position it in the rim. You may want to add **Layer Effects** such as a slight **Bevel** and perhaps **Inner Shadow**.

### Sculpting Layers Experiments

- Try adjusting the settings on the Bevels and other layer effects of the three shapes layers (**Top shapes**, **bottom wide shapes**, **bottom narrow shapes**) that create the upper and lower raised areas of the background. What happens when you use a different contour on the bevel?
- Duplicate the **Top shapes** layer. Get a round brush shape for the **eraser**, and stamp the eraser one time in the center of each shape on the duplicate layer. What happens? If you have an interesting brush



shape like a star or dashed circle, try that with the eraser on a duplicate of the **Top shapes** layer.

•Make a **new blank layer**, and use a brush to draw a simple shape, maybe just a dot, above each rectangle in the **bottom**

**wide shapes layer**. Move to the **bottom wide shapes** layer, rt-click, and choose **Copy Layer Style**. Move back to your new layer, rt-click, and choose **Paste Layer Style**. Then open **Blending Options** and set **Fill Opacity** to **0%**.

Change to a different background to see how your new sculpting layers look. If you made a new rim, background, or center object, make them visible, and see what your new complex clip art looks.

### Add Algae

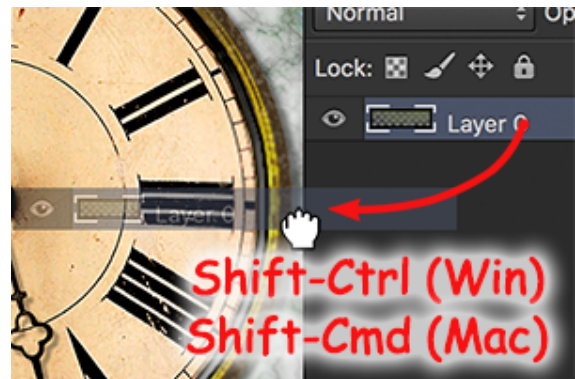
In the **Extra Textures For The Clock** folder, find a file labeled **AlgaeGrungemaps0147\_1\_M.png** and open it now. It is some dull green fuzzy stuff on a transparent background, and I made it from a stained stucco wall texture I downloaded from textures.com. It's 1600 pixels across; wider than **Clock.psd**, giving you an option to move it a bit to find the part that looks best. This graphic doesn't look like much of anything, but with the right blending options, it can add a realistic bit of algae or moss to the background.

In **Clock.psd**, select the top background layer (**Stucco**, unless you added new ones). You are about to drag in the algae graphic in the same way as you added the extra background graphics, and the new layer will appear just above whichever layer you have selected.

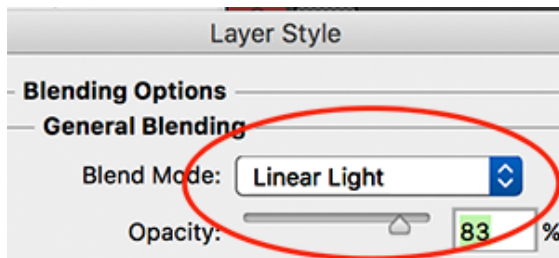
In **AlgaeGrungemaps0147\_1\_M.png**, while holding down **Shift** and the **Control** (Win) or **Command** (Mac) key, click and drag the single layer



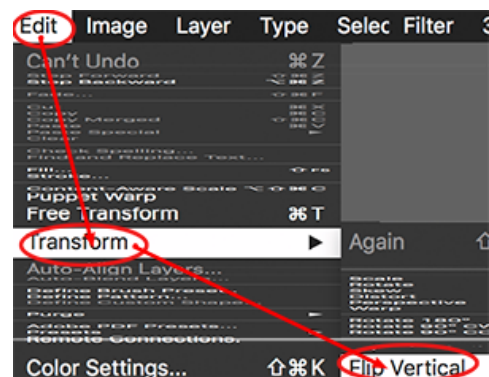
(Layer 0) in the **Layers** palette over to the **Clock.psd** window. This action puts a copy of **Layer 0** into **Clock.psd**, and the modifier keys center it. Move the algae graphic up, until the dark upper margin sits just below the row of rounded shapes. You can move it left and right a short distance to find an area you like.



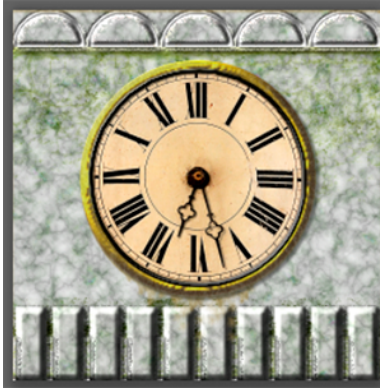
At this point, what you see may not look much like algae. To fix that, **double-click** the algae graphic layer or **rt-click** the layer and choose **Blending Options** to open the **Layer Effects** dialog. Set the **Blend Mode** for **Linear Light**. I also set the **Opacity** for **83%**; see what looks best to you. With a different background choice, you may want to change to a different **Blend Mode** or **Opacity**.



Okay, now add some grungy stuff between the row of rectangular, raised shapes along the bottom. **Drag in** another copy of the algae graphic, or **Duplicate** the layer you just made. With the duplicate layer selected, flip the graphic upside down by choosing **Edit—>Transform—>Flip Vertical**. Move the flipped graphic down until its bottom edge is at the bottom of the clock picture. There will be grunge all across the bottom row of shapes. You can move it sideways a little, to a spot you like.



Get the **Magic Wand**, and be sure that **Contiguous** isn't active. Move to the **bottom wide shapes** layer. **Select** one of the rectangle shapes,



which will really select all of them since they are all the same color. Move back to your flipped grunge layer, and **delete**. This will leave the grunge between the wider embossed shapes. When I did this part, I used three copies of the flipped algae grunge layer; two set to **Blend Mode Multiply** and one set to **Linear Light**.



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Tutorial text, concepts, and screenshots by Ann Brundige. The three examples are original by Ann Brundige, with the following added elements:

Sci-Fi Floor Panel adapted from instructions in [3D Game Textures](#) by Luke Ahearn (2006).

Clock default marble background was generated using White Marble PhotoShop Action by Nate Skow (2007) downloaded from [ShareCG.com](http://ShareCG.com).

Stucco background is TexturesCom\_ConcreteStucco0170\_1\_seamless\_XL.jpg downloaded from [textures.com](http://textures.com).

Grunge layers for clock rim use Grungemaps0003\_M.jpg downloaded from [textures.com](http://textures.com).

Algae grunge is Grungemaps0147\_1\_M.jpg downloaded from [textures.com](http://textures.com).

Clock Face, 2 stained glass circles, and fancy window are from [Pixabay.com](http://Pixabay.com).

Circular carved design is from [ClipSafari.com](http://ClipSafari.com).

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