

Creating Cinemagraphs in Photoshop

This playbook outlines the sequential steps required to create a cinemagraph—a photograph that features a minor and repeated movement—using Adobe Photoshop. It guides you through importing footage, selecting a suitable still image, and then animating specific elements within the frame.

Step 1: **Import Video**

Import the video clip you want to use for the cinemagraph into Photoshop by going to 'File > Import > Video Frames to Layers.' Choose the segment of the video you want to use by adjusting the handles on the timeline that appears.

Step 2: **Select Still**

Identify and select the frame you want to use as the base still image for your cinemagraph. This frame can be selected during the video import process, or later on by toggling the visibility of layers in the Photoshop timeline.

Step 3: **Create Mask**

With the still image layer selected, create a layer mask. This mask will be used to reveal the moving parts of the video in the subsequent steps.

Step 4: **Identify Movement**

Play through the video frames to identify the area where you want to show movement. This will usually be a small, repeating action, such as steam rising from a cup of coffee or a flickering flame.

Step 5: **Reveal Motion**

On the layer mask, paint over the area where you want the movement to appear using a soft brush and the color black. The black paint on the mask will reveal the movement from the underlying video layers.

Step 6: **Refine Mask**

Fine-tune the layer mask to ensure that the motion blends seamlessly with the still image. This may involve adding or subtracting areas of the mask and adjusting the edges for a smooth transition.

Step 7: **Loop Animation**

Ensure that your animation loops smoothly by adjusting the layers and timeline. The beginning and end frames should closely resemble each other to create a seamless loop effect.

Step 8: **Export Cinemagraph**

Once the cinemagraph loop is to your liking, export the image by going to 'File > Export > Save for Web (Legacy).' Choose 'GIF' as your format and adjust the settings to balance quality and file size.

General Notes

Layer Visibility

You may need to toggle the visibility of various layers throughout the process to better view and edit the mask and frames.

Mask Opacity

Use different brush opacities when painting on the layer mask to create a gradient effect and make the cinemagraph look more natural.

Frame Rate

Consider the frame rate of the video when selecting your segment. A higher frame rate may produce smoother movement but could increase the file size of the final cinemagraph.