

## Lesson 4 – Working with Special Effects and Video in Flash CS3 R. Berdan

### Objectives:

1. Special effects – Freehand writing
2. Adding smoke & steam to your photos
3. Creating a video silhouettes and adding music - rotoscoping
4. Converting video to a cartoon effect

**Book Chapter 5 – Adding Animation - 120 minutes**

### Create your signature and make it write to the screen - modified from How to Wow Flash, page 74.

1. Create a new movie, set the dimensions to 650 x 300 dark gray background.
2. Select the paint brush, color white, and sign your name in a script format. Writing with a mouse isn't the best way to do this – a pressure sensitive table would be better.



3. Create a keyframe for the final image – we will set it at 40 – you may want to experiment use more frames for longer text less if the text is short.
4. Select the Alt-key and drag the keyframe 40 back to frame 38. Then. Use the eraser tool to erase the last stroke written.
5. Repeat Alt-drag frame 39 to frame 36 and erase another letter. Continue until you have the entire text done. If the keyframe won't select, click off it then re-select it and try Alt-click and drag back.

Vary the amount you erase, some strokes take longer than others. Also the more frames you remove the slower the writing. To make the effect look realistic takes some practice.

When you are done add a stop action to the last frame.

**Another way to do this – R. B. technique**

1. Write your name then create a keyframe at about one keyframe per letter.. Then place your cursor on the second frame in the time line and and press F6 (insert keyframe) until you made a series of keyframes.

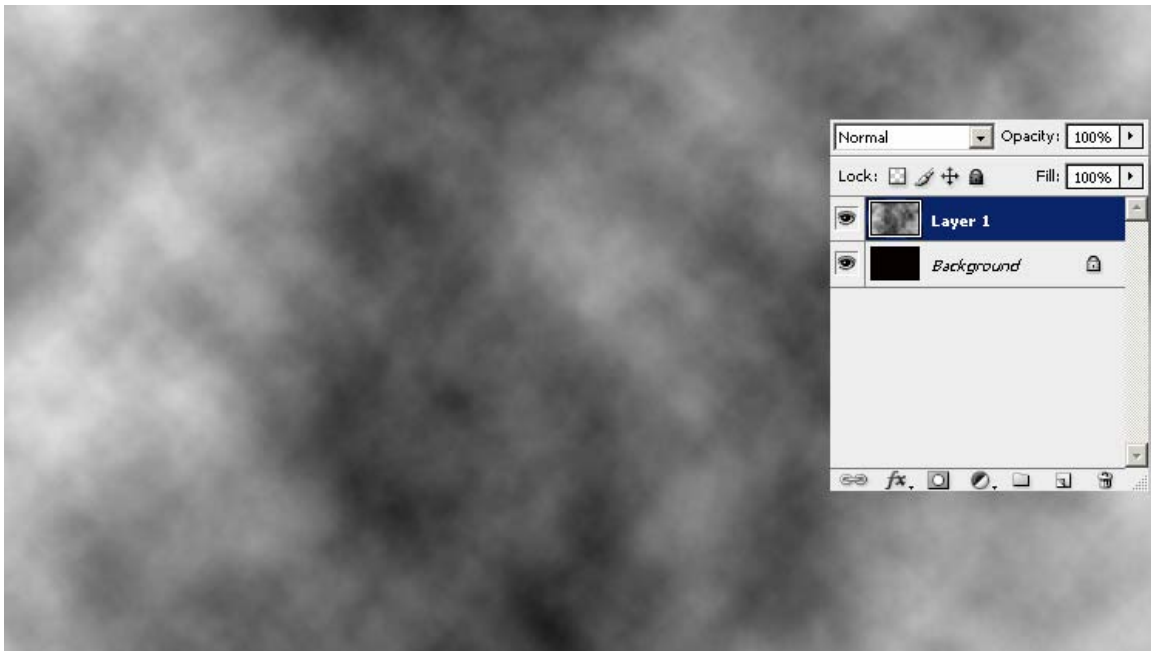
Now start with last keyframe selectively erase as you step backward. Pay attention to the strokes and timing and you can create a very realistic animation. The more careful you are the more realistic your animation will appear. Experiment with slowing the frame rate down. You can also use a guide to position it after you move through each keyframe so you know exactly where to start erasing.

## **Adding Smoke and Steam to your photos – from How to Wow Flash page 96-99**

This technique can add a sense of reality to your photos or movies – we going to make it look like there is fog or smoke rising up in front of the picture. The tutorial provides an image and smoke but we are going to learn how to make the smoke in Photoshop and then animate it in front of a photo. First we will use the images provided in the tutorial then we will make our own smoke.

Make your own – smoke.

1. Start Photoshop create a new file 750 x 500 pixels, 72 dpi and background black. Create a new layer and fill it with white. Select Filter>Render>Difference clouds.



You should see something like the image above. Then Select the burn tool and darken around the edges – you are trying to make the picture look like steam rising. Save your file as a .jpg medium quality should be fine.

2. Start Flash – create a new movie the size of the photo that you want to add steam to.

3. Select file >import and bring the image as a .jpg onto the stage and position it so it fills the background of the movie.

3. Create a new layer above the photo and import your clouds image. Select the clouds image then convert (F8) to a movie clip so we can apply blending modes to it.
4. Open the properties inspector, select the clouds and apply lighten blend mode – this will make the black parts of the image disappear so you only see clouds (smoke or fog) ontop of your photo. (This technique can be effective byitself and can also be applied in photoshop to any image).
5. Next we will animate the cloud inside a nested symbol. Double click the cloud image to edit it. You will see the cloud image with black background in editing mode. Select the image again and convert it to a movie clip again and change the blend mode to Lighten. The image looks a little different then the first time we changed the blend mode because its not on a layer above, but you will see the photo below it. Now we will animate the symbol.
6. Select frame 50 and press F6 (insert keyframe). Right click between the frames and select Create Motion Tween. In frame 50 add a stop() action or you can let it loop. Also you can make the fog or steam go up over top of the image which looks good if you want to loop your animation.
7. Select Frame 50 and move the steam so it covers all of the image up to the top. To make the steam more transparent, with frame 50 selected, select the steam image and in the properties box> chose alpha from the Color menu and select 0%. ( you can vary this amount 0-40%). Then select frame 1 and change the Alpha to about 45% and movie the image in frame 1 so its completely below the image – so when the animation plays the clouds will rise up over the photo.

Go back to the main movie and test by select Control test movie. You should see the steam rise.

(Avoid straight edges being visible at the top of the steam by burning these down and making them darker)

Add more steam – by creating another layer and repeating. However vary the speed, position and even the size of the images as you animate them. For example steam tends to expand as it rises, so in frame 50 make the steam get wider by widening the image. The more layers you add the more steam you can get – you can also use different cloud variations. Try this on some of your favorite images. This effect can add mood to photos of old castles, fog scenes like Spirit Island.

The key is to make sure the clouds you create that you burn the outside edges especially the top and bottom so don't see a straight edge rising over the photo.

## **Creating a Video Silhoutte - from How to Wow page 198**

There are several ways to create animated silhouttes. We will use an example where the movie has already had an alpha channel applied to it so you will see the person dancing and have a transparent background.

1. Start a new movie, make the frame rate 30 fps, use a bright colored background like lime green, pink or light blue. If you want to to use a photo as the background, create another layer, put the photo on the bottom layer and import the movie on the 2<sup>nd</sup> layer).
2. Choose File>Import>Import Video – select the option for progressive download, choose None for skin – click finish. Select Control Test movie to see the movie clip. The background has already been removed for us – now we just need to reduce the brightness of the dancer so she appears like a silhouette.

3. Select the flash movie and convert it to a movie clip in order to apply blend modes. Then in the properties box Choose brightness from the Color menu and reduce the brightness to -100. Test the movie.



4. Now to add some music – Select File import to library and select Runningoutoftime.aif or something of your own choosing. Create a new layer above the movie clip and name it music. Add a keyframe at 185 in the time line for the background layer, the movie layer and the music layer. The end point may be different if you use other music tracks. The goal is to have the music stop when the movie with the dancer stops.

5. Drag the music clip Runningoutoftime.aif from the library onto the first frame of the music layer. In the properties box select stream so the music follows along with the FLV movie. In the last keyframe of the movie add a stop() action. Save and publish your movie.

Vectorizing video – usually this is done by working in a program like Premiere – first reduce the video to Black and white then apply levels and manipulate the image to high contrast – this takes some experimentation. Then choose File>Export>Movie export as bitmap images which will be labeled numerically upon export. Alternatively you can import short video clips into Flash and use the trace bitmap command.

### **Making a Cartoon out of a Video– How to Wow page 190 (use the folders from the Disk)**

1. Start Flash create modify the document size to 720 x 480 and set the frame rate to 16 fps.
2. Create a new movie clip Select Insert>New Symbol select movie clip and name it video.

3. Choose File>Import>Import to Stage navigate to the dancing clips folder – the movie was saved as individual frames there is a total of 105 – flash prompts you to import them as a sequence click Yes.

4. Return to the main movie timeline and drag the movie clip video onto the main stage and use the properties box to set the x,y coordinates to 0,0. Then double click on the movie clip to get back into movie clip editing mode.

5. To create the cartoon effect, select the first keyframe then select Modify>Bitmap>Trace Bitmap Set the threshold to 100, minimum area to 8 so the picture looks hand drawn. Repeat this for each of the 105 frames then return to the main movie, save and Play.

Once the frame has been converted to a bitmap – you could select and delete the background or paint on top of the pictures. Deleting the background does not work well in this example because the women has black pants and the background is also black.

