How to Cheat in Photoshop Elements 12

The Graphic Novel filter

SOME GREAT NEW FILTERS were added in Elements 11. One of the most impressive is Graphic Novel. As the name suggests, it converts a photo into a monochrome line drawing.

Here we’ll see just how good the filter is by applying it to a photo of a Moroccan shop. The filter’s controls let us fine-tune the effect. We’re able to bring out the detail of the main subject, the shop owner, whilst keeping the background a little less distinct, which prevents it from looking too cluttered.

As with any filter of this kind, however, the results will vary greatly from image to image. Some will turn out much better than others. One way the filter excels is it’s really forgiving about the quality of the original photo. It will work just as well with a high-resolution image as it will with one from a cell phone; lower quality images are sometimes better, in fact!

WHAT YOU’LL LEARN

- Using the presets in the Graphic Novel filter
- Using the manual controls to fine-tune the result

DOWNLOADS

Moroccan shop.jpg

1. Go to Filter > Sketch > Graphic Novel. Its dialog opens. There are four presets and a set of manual controls. The presets are always a good place to start. We found Twisted Plot to be the best.

2. Let’s fine-tune the image. We’ll start with Darkness. This determines how much of the darker areas to bring in to the result. We’ve increased it very slightly to add detail to the man’s face.

3. Next is Clean Look. This controls the level of fine detail the filter includes. We’ll lower it slightly. If we go too far back, it’s too intense. Here we have a good balance; leaving a hint of detail in his jacket.

4. The next slider is Contrast. If we lower it we begin to introduce more gray into the image. We want our effect to be purely black and white, so we’ll leave this at its maximum setting.

5. The final slider is Thickness. This controls the thickness of the finer detail in the image. Again, this setting only needs minor adjustments. We’ve increased it slightly from the preset’s setting.

6. Possibly the most important setting is Smoothness. This softens the jagged edges of the image. It has two levels, applied by clicking the Add button. We’ve applied it once here.

HOT TIP

It’s always best to have the preview at 100%, especially with larger image sizes where some of the detail may not show up when set to fit the view. To do this, press the 1:1 button at the bottom-left of the dialog. To go back to the full view, click the Fit to View button.