

GIF Animation Assignment

Intro:

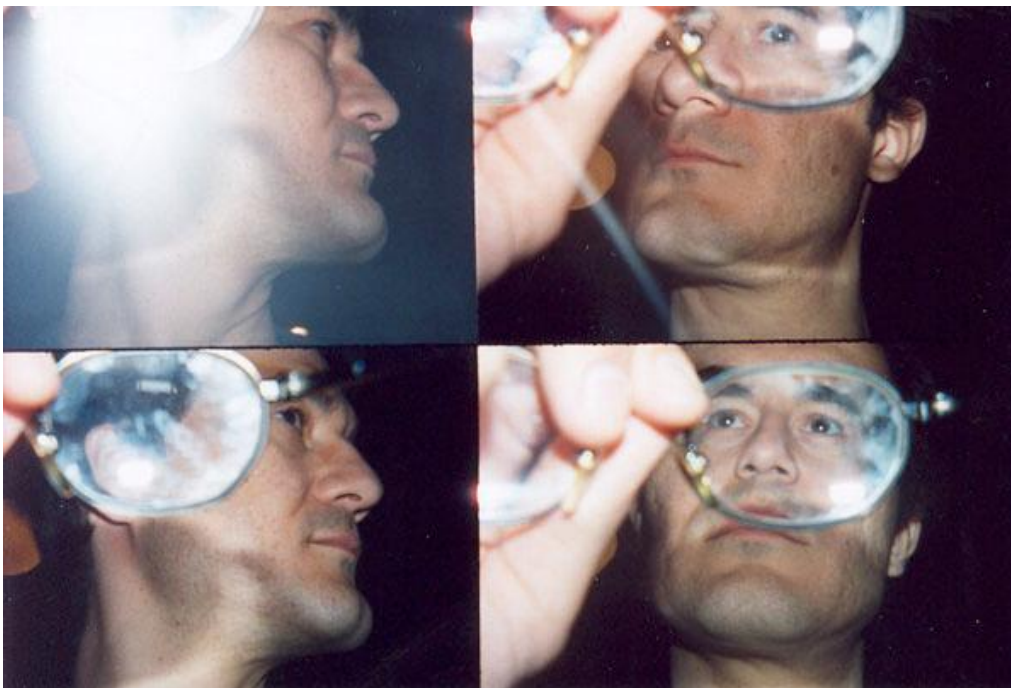
Files with the extension .gif are web compatible image files just as are .jpeg and .png image files. Each of these three types of files treats the image differently in how it maximizes image quality while reducing file size (something that is essential for the web).

For example, .gif files tend to be ideal for simple graphic symbols since they tend to have a limited color range while remaining lossless. .Jpeg files, on the other hand tend to be ideal for photographs since they render a smoother color rendering but are lossy (the image degrades with compression and becomes blocky). But another significant difference between .gif files and other web image files are that .gif files can support simple animation.

One important aspect to consider when creating any images and video for the web is that the web only supports 256 colors. The complete color palette available in Photoshop runs in the millions of colors.

Creating a GIF Animation:

For this assignment, you will create a minimum of 4 images as a source for your GIF animation. These images can be taken with a digital camera or scanned. These images should relate to each other thematically, though they need not create a fluid animation sequence. Below is a sequence of four pictures I created with a 4-lensed camera with a time delay on each lens.



Once you have your 4 or more still images, you should create two folders on your hard drive. The first should be labeled “Raw Images” or “Non-Web Images” and the second folder should be labeled “Web Images.” You will save your original images in the “Non-Web Images” folder. You will also save your layered images or “Master” images in this folder. The only images you save in the “Web Images” folder are those files that you upload to your blog (i.e. your resized original images

and your raw, tinted and stylized .gif).

The web reflects images at their actual size at 72dpi (this is the same resolution used in video). If you are scanning a small image you still want to scan your image at 300dpi so you can blow up the image a bit for flexibility.

For the web, you will want to reduce your image size (if the images are hi-resolution), so that the images don't dwarf your blog post. For this assignment, you'll set your image size to no larger than 400 px (height) or 400px (length) but no less than 200 px (height) or 200 px (width). To resize your image go to Image > Image Size and change the pixel dimensions in the box that pops up. You will also want to make sure that your resolution is 72 pixels/inch. You should do this with every image in your sequence.

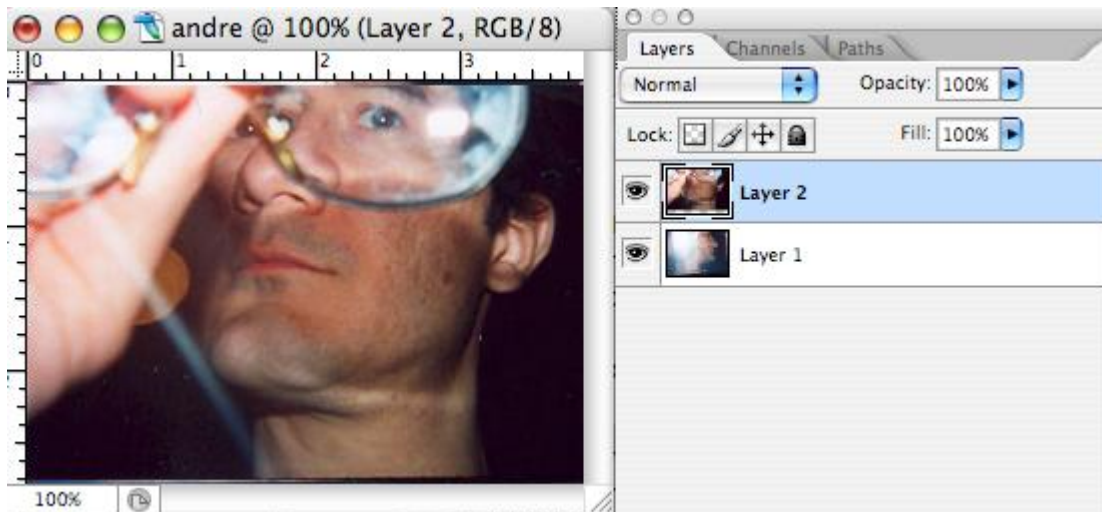
Open your first image and copy it (Apple + C)

Then open a new document (File > New - or Apple + N). If you copied your image properly, the new document should reflect the dimensions of your selection. So when you paste the selection (Apple + V) into the new layered document, it should fit snugly within this new document.

Save this new document as "gif master."

If you haven't yet done so, open your layers window (Window > Layer – checked) At this point, your gif master will have one layer.

Open your second image (resized to the same dimensions as your first image). Copy this second image and paste it into the gif master. This second image should appear as your second layer.

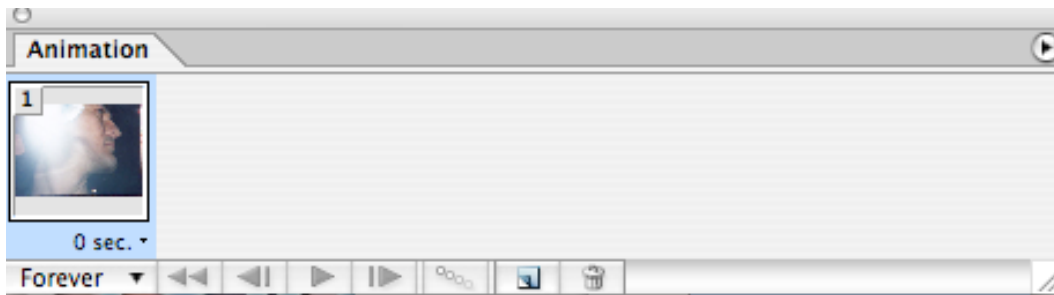


Repeat this copy and paste process until you have stacked all your images as layers in your gif master. If necessary, line your images up with the base layer (layer 1) using the difference blending mode, as we did in class.

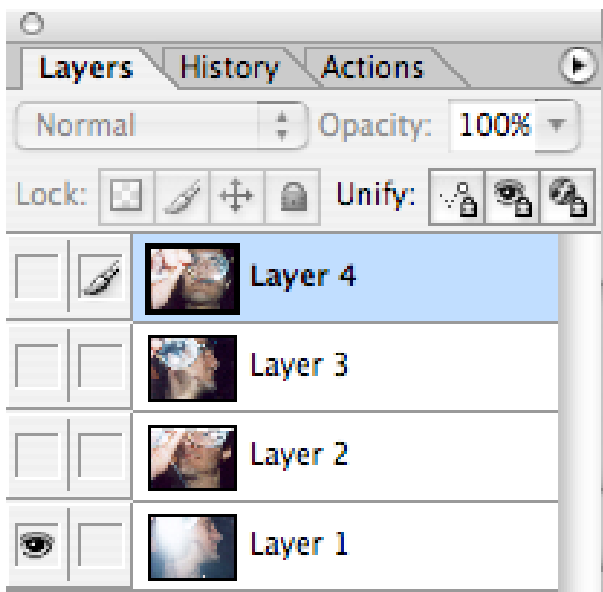
Once you have four or more layers, you are prepared to animate your gif file.

At this point, save your gif master and then save it as “animation master.” This way, you have two separate files: a gif master and an animation master. Right now, you should be working on the animation master file.

Open your animation window (Window > Animation – Animation should be checked).



Turn off the layer visibility (the eyeball icon) on all layers except for the bottom most layer.



Then click on the duplicate frame icon (what looks like a page turning) in the animation window and turn on the layer visibility for the second layer from the bottom. Now you have a second frame of animation.



Repeat this process for all the layers and play back in your animation. Remember that you can adjust the time each frame plays by clicking on the tiny arrows next to the “0 sec.” Adjust to your liking. I strongly suggest having at least a .1 second delay between each frame.

Finally, you are ready to save your gif animation. Click on File > Save for Web and Devices and save your gif animation as “raw gif animation” to the Web Images folder.

You should open your gif in Safari or Firefox or some other browser to see how your gif would play on the web.

Once you have tested your “raw gif animation” file in an internet browser, you can create your tinted and stylized gifs in the same fashion. You’ll want to have a master file for each of these gifs, so that, if there are any problems with the gif animation, you can go back to the master. Simply open up the gif master file and save it as “tinted master” and also “stylized master.” You will create your animations from these masters just as you created your raw gif animation from your animation master.

Remember for the tinted gif to desaturate the original image (Image > Adjustments > Desaturate).

The stylized gif will allow you to explore some of the filters Photoshop offers.