

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP CS

Creating the Magical Mirror Effect

Rick Sammon. Adapted from one of the 107 lessons in Rick Sammon's Complete Guide to Digital Photography, Rick's 22nd book. Rick Sammon is the host of the Digital Photography Workshop on the DIY network and is a guest host of the Canon Photo Safari on the Outdoor Life Network. Rick also writes the weekly photo column for the Associated Press and teaches digital photography workshops around the world. See www.ricksammon.com.

"It's all done with mirrors" is a popular saying among professional magicians.

Well, these days, digital photography artists are using mirrors, of sorts, to create magical effects on their computer monitors. Basically, a mirror image is one in which one side of a frame is perfectly mirrored (reflected) on the opposite side of the frame—side to side or top to bottom. In Adobe® Photoshop® CS, we use Canvas Size, Copy and Paste to create the effect. It's that easy!

This mirror image of a sunrise on a mountaintop in China (where there is no lake) is one of many mirror images I have had fun creating.

Okay! Let's take a look at how easy it is to create the magical mirror effect in Photoshop.



1. Start with a vision.

The first step is to start with a picture, or perhaps more accurately, a vision of your final mirror image. I started with a picture of a sunrise I took on a mountaintop in China. (I actually used a copy of the image because I never work on my original files. A good idea!)



2. Open the Canvas Size dialog box.

In Photoshop, we can increase the Canvas size (actual working area) of an image by going to Image > Canvas Size. In this screen shot, we see the actual size of my original image. When we first open Canvas Size, the center box in the tick-tac-toe grid is shaded.

3. Increase Canvas Size.

The next step is to increase the Canvas Size (again, the actual working area). We increase the Canvas Size by moving the shaded box into any of the other boxes—and then typing in a new height and/or width dimensions. Because I wanted to increase the height of my Canvas Size on the bottom side of my picture, I moved the shaded area to the top middle box. Then I typed in the new Canvas size—which, for ease of use, was a bit more than double the height of my original photograph.

After I approximately doubled the height of my image, my new working area (new Image Size) looked like this.



4. Create a flipped image of your original.

Creating a flipped image of your original is easy. Start by using the Marquee Tool to select the original image area, the sunrise in this case. Then go to Edit > Copy.

Next go to File > New. When the new document is created, it will be exactly the same size of your copied image.

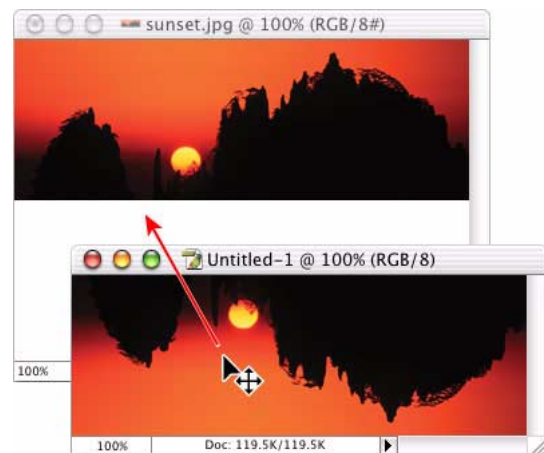
Now go to Edit > Paste. Your image will be pasted into the new document—on a new layer.

To flip the image (vertically in this case), go to Edit > Transform > Flip Vertically. Now the image will be flipped.



5. Create the Magical Mirror Effect.

To create the Magical Mirror Effect, use the Move tool and drag your flipped image into the blank area of your original image. Now carefully line up both images so they look perfectly mirrored. Next flatten your image by going to Layers > Flatten.



6. Conclusion.

An optional and fun thing to do with some vertical mirror images (you can create horizontal mirror images, too) is to create the effect that your original image is reflected in water. Here is how it's done. Select the mirrored part of your image (lower half) using the Marquee tool. Now go to Filters > Distort > Ocean Ripple. Play around with the Ripple Size and Ripple Magnitude until you are happy with the effect. Click on OK. Now go to Select > Deselect to deselect the area on which you have applied the Ocean Ripple filter. Finally, use the Crop tool to trim your picture to your liking.

Most pros agree that Photoshop has changed the way that we not only make pictures—but the way we see potential images. Now that you know about the magical mirror effect, you may see way-cool potential mirror images in your travels. Good luck!

