# Photography...
# Live it, breathe it, create it.

## By Quincey Deters

I crave creativity. My camera allows me to feed this need. Whether I am taking a photo of a grand landscape, a bouquet of flowers, or a rusty car, I always try to find a new way of seeing. Making the photograph in the camera is only the beginning of the fun. I love to sit down at the computer and edit my images. I use Adobe Bridge, Camera Raw and Photoshop, along with the Nik Collection of software, for my workflow. During my creative journey, I get to know my images more intimately. I play with the images by moving various sliders, applying adjustment layers and blend modes, and experimenting with filters and plug-ins. In addition to being a great way to learn, this process of discovery has resulted in some exciting artistic creations.

Recently, I learned a technique that turns an ordinary photo into a stunning abstract image in a few steps. I call my creations "Twirl Art". The recipe for success includes a photo, a little imagination, a combination of filters and layers blended together, a slight tweak here and there, and Voila! You have it. You can use Photoshop or Photoshop Elements (Expert/Full Edit Mode) to achieve this effect. The first few steps are consistent for every image; after that, it is entirely up to you. There is no right or wrong way when you are creating, so have fun.

This twirling effect is quite popular in the photographic community. There are various social media groups dedicated to the art of "Twirling", many of whose members have taken this effect to a whole other level. It does not have to be overly complicated (unless you want it to be). There are countless ways to achieve amazing results with this simple process, and create one-of-a-kind images.

While playing with this effect, I have learned a few things that you should keep in mind on your creative journey:

- The colours that are in the image when you begin may not be the same ones in the end.
- The filters and blend modes used may alter the colours.
- Recognize that lighter hues become even lighter.
- Add more saturation to the original image to maintain higher saturation.
- If you have a specific colour scheme in mind for the final image, alter the hue/saturation of individual layers or the entire image.
- Crop the image square prior to processing to create a more symmetrical image.
- Adding duplicate layers, all rotated and flipped in different directions, is simple. You can get carried away. Grouping the layers together is a good way to keep organized.
- Grouping Twirl sets makes it easier to transform and blend the layers. Rename each group to depict what is in it.
- The number of layers used affects the file size. Merging layers together or flattening the image may be required. I have had instance where I failed to do so, and I was unable to save the image because the file was too large.
- Save your file often.
- Renaming the layers, according to what you have done, allows you to better understand what makes the image work or not work.
- Radial Blur defaults to Center. It can be adjusted to create interesting twirls.
- If you know what Twirl angles you will be using when you begin, you can copy the Base layer and rename all the layers in advance of applying the Twirl filter.
- If you find a recipe you like, and you are able to recreate it, you can create an Action Set in Photoshop that will duplicate all the steps for you.

## Twirl Art Instructions

- Select an image from your library and open it in Photoshop.
- Create a duplicate layer of the background by pressing CTRL +J. Select Layer 1.

Original Image
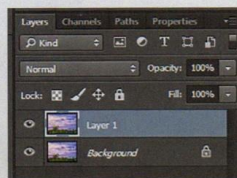
CTRL +J Duplicate Layer

- In the top menu select Filter -> Pixelate -> Mezzotint.
- Select Medium Lines from the Type pull-down menu.

Filter -> Pixelate -> Mezzotint

Medium Lines

- In the top menu, select Filter ->Blur -> Radial Blur.
- Set the Radial Blur amount to 100%, the Blur Method to Zoom and the Quality to Best.
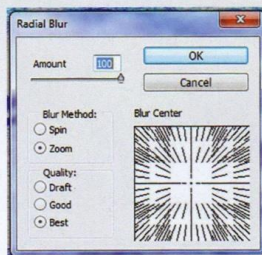


- It is suggested that the Radial Blur filter be applied three to five times.
- CTRL +F is the shortcut to redo the prior Filter. The amount of times you apply this filter is a personal preference.
- Note that some of these processes can take time if you are using high resolution photos.
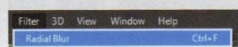


CTRL +F



Filter ->Blur -> Radial Blur

Amount - 100%
Blur Method - Zoom
Quality-Best



Radial Blur x 1



Radial Blur x 3



Layer renamed
BASE-Mezzotint
Radialx3

- Rename Layer 1 as the Base layer. Indicate which filters were used (i.e. BASE-Mezzotint Radialx3), in case you want to recreate the recipe.
- Duplicate the Base layer, CTRL +J.
- In the top menu select Filter ->Distort -> Twirl.
- Select a desired Twirl Angle degree. It is suggested that you use angles between 80° (-80°) and 200° (-200°). I encourage playing with different combinations.
- Zoom out of the preview window to see the effect on the whole image.
- Rename the Twirl layer, indicating the angle selected (i.e. Twirl01 120).
- Select the Base layer and add a duplicate layer (CTRL +J) with the opposing angle, the positive or negative equivalent (120° and -120°). This will create a symmetrical image.
- Rename that Twirl layer accordingly (i.e. Twirl01 -120).
- The number of Twirl layers you create and the angles you use is entirely up to you. There is no right or wrong way to do this!
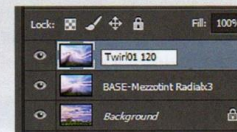


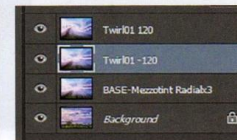Select desired angle

Filter ->Distort -> Twirl
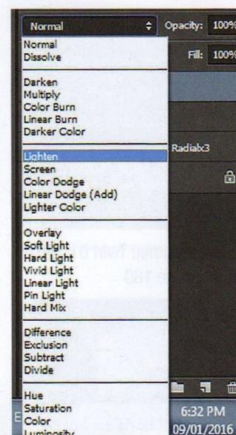


Twirl 120°



Layer renamed Twirl01 120



Twirl -120°



Layer renamed Twirl01 -120
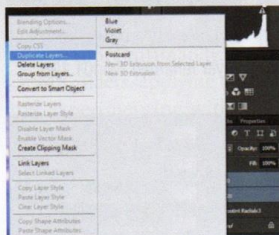


Blend Mode - Lighten

- Activate the top Twirl layer and select the Lighten blend mode. Lighten is the mode most often used in this process.
- Scroll through the other blend modes to see the effect it has on the image.



Twirl Angles –120 (-120)
Blend Mode – Lighten

- Layers of varying angles and transformations can be added to create a more complex image.
- Select both the Twirl layers and duplicate them by pressing CTRL +J, or right click and select Duplicate layers from the menu.
- With both layers still activated, select the Lighten blend mode to apply it to both those layers.
- Transform those two layers. In the top menu select Edit ->Transform -> Rotate 180°.
- CTRL +T will also open the Free Transform tool.
- Rename both those layers to include the transformation information (i.e. Twirl 01 120 copy-rotate 180˚).
- Voila!
- Tweak the image to your liking by adding adjustment layers, filters, etc.



CTRL +J Duplicate Layers
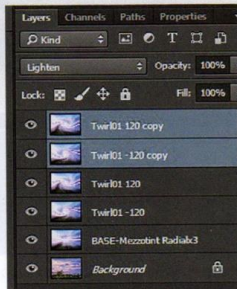


Blend Mode – Lighten



Edit ->Transform -> Rotate 180°



Layer renamed Twirl 01 120 copy-rotate 180



Twirl Angles –120 (-120)
Blend Mode – Lighten
Layer Copy – Rotate 180°



Adjustment Layers – Levels (Luminosity), Curves (Medium Contrast), Saturation (Increased)
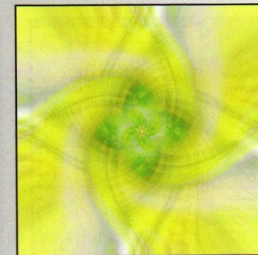


Final image

## Twirl Art Recipes



Original Image. Crop - Square



Twirl Angles - Increments of 40
80 (-80) 120 (-120) 160 (-160)
200 (-200) 240 (-240)
Blend Modes – Various - Lighten, Multiply, Linear Burn, Hard Light, Saturation



Layer Copies - Rotated 90˚ clockwise, 90˚ counter clockwise, 180˚
Blend Mode - Lighten



Original Image
High Key with minimal colours



Twirl Angles – Increments of 100
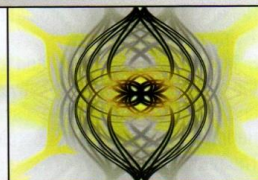100 (-100) 200 (-200) 300 (-300)
Blend Mode – Lighten



Blend Mode – Colour
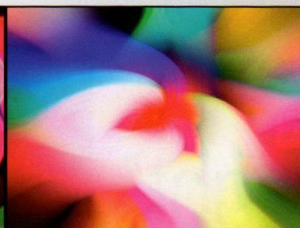


Blend Mode – Pinhole



Blend Mode - Darken



Blend Mode - Darken
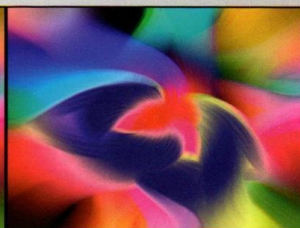Layer Copies - Rotate and Transform (Flip Horizontal)

Original Image
Multi-coloured with dark and light areas

Twirl Angles – Increments of 30
80 (-80) 110 (-110) 140 (-140)
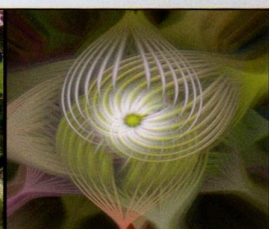Blend Mode - Lighten

Adjusment Layer - Selective Colour
– Changed white to blue

Layer Copies - Rotated 90°
clockwise, 90° counter clock-
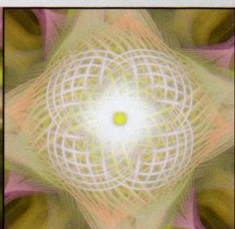wise, 180°
Blend Mode - Lighten
Crop - Square



Original Image
Low Key with minimal colours

Twirl Angles – Increments of 45
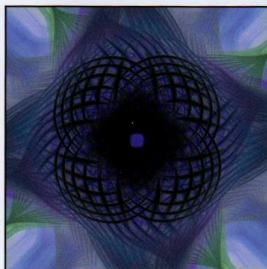45 (-45) to 270 (-270)
Blend Mode - Lighten

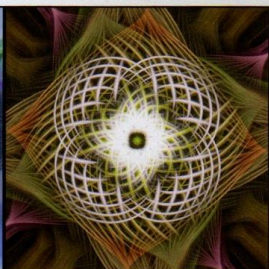Layer Copy – Rotate 180
Blend Mode - Lighten

Layer Copy – Rotate 180, 90
clockwise, 90 counter clock-
wise
Blend Mode – Lighten
Crop - Square

- Use Adjustment Layers such as Hue/Saturation, Curves, Levels, Brightness/Contrast, etc. to enhance the images.
- Use additional Plug-ins, such as the Nik Collection, for added effects.

Adjustment Layers – Curves -
Negative

Color Efex – Dark Contrasts -
Saturated & Detailed

Original Image
High Key with minimal
colours

Original Image
High Key with minimal
colours

Twirl Angles
- Increments of 20
- 80 (-80) to 160 (-160)
Blend Mode - Lighten

Original Image

Twirl Angles - Increments
of 10 – 100 (-100) to 200
(-200)

Blend Mode – Lighten

Layer Copies - Transform
– Flip Horizontal and
Vertical

Blend Mode - Darken