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Photoshop Elements 8 for Digital Art, Illustration & Cartoons

Chris Madden

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This book is for anyone who wants to draw or paint on a computer - for which Photoshop Elements is the perfect programme. Typical manuals for Elements are aimed primarily at using the programme to manipulate photographs, so naturally they have section after section on how to alter and adjust photos. Because of this concentration on photographic images most manuals follow a route that isn't necessarily of direct relevance to someone who wants to learn how to draw and paint using the software. The basic techniques of drawing and painting in Elements are essentially very simple skills to acquire, so the book includes a step by step 'quick start' section - a guide to the fundamental, no frills techniques necessary to create artwork. This is a hands-on section introducing all of the necessary features needed for creating finished artwork, with no technical knowledge required whatsoever. This whole section can probably be completed in only one or two sessions at your computer. Later chapters elaborate on different aspects of the programme in more detail, starting with those that are most useful to the drawing and painting processes such as the use of brushes and layers. Further chapters deal with topics such as how to make adjustments to your work and how to embellish it by using special effects such as filters. There's are also chapters on how to use a scanner to import images such as sketches that are drawn on paper (and photographs of course), and on how to output your work when it's finished - either by printing it out or by using it electronically in emails or on the web. As an aid to helping the reader to navigate through the book's contents, the book employs a unique grading system, with the contents split into three categories based on importance and complexity. These categories are identified by shaded strips down the side of the page. This innovative system allows the reader to concentrate on the parts of the book that are relevant - so the novice reader can avoid the sections that are too complicated and the more advanced reader can skip the basic sections. The topics in the book are laid out with clarity, making the book ideal as a look-up reference manual for when you get stuck on what to do next. The book doesn't use the approach employed in some digital art books of presenting "How it was done" chapters that talk the reader through the techniques used to create specific (often over elaborate) images. As a result individual techniques can be found in their own sections rather than being buried inside examples - for instance, the information about how to apply semitransparent colour with a paintbrush can be found conveniently in the Brushes chapter under the heading Opacity Control - and not buried deep inside a chapter about 'How to Reproduce this Science Fiction Landscape'. Almost every illustration is created specially for the book, specifically to illustrate the topic in question in the clearest, simplest possible way. Coming in at over 550 pages long, the book is produced in pure black and white. It would cost a fortune otherwise. Being in black and white means that the book doesn't suffer from the poor quality cheap colour reproduction evident in some manuals or the excessively slick, expensive colour reproduction of others. You'll be surprised how unnecessary colour is in an instruction manual of this sort! However, should you want to see any of the images in colour they can be found on easily navigable pages on the author's website, at www.chrismadden.co.uk/create, where they can be seen in more crystal clear clarity than any book reproduction could ever manage. ABOUT THE AUTHOR Chris Madden is a professional cartoonist and illustrator who's been using computers to create digital artwork practically since desktop computers were invented. Well, 1986 actually. You can see examples on the author's website at www.chrismadden.co.uk

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