

Constructing a Triptych using FastStone

Constructing a digitally projected triptych with Faststone

If you wish to construct a triptych image but don't have access to Photoshop or similar this method allows you to build a basic digital triptych suitable for projection. The resulting triptych is unlikely to have a resolution high enough to enable an acceptable print to be produced. The software used is not available for Macs.

The method uses FastStone. This is a free to download, user friendly, image browser and editor program. It is highly recommended. Here is the download page :-

<http://www.faststone.org/FSViewerDownload.htm>

There are FastStone tutorials available on the web but the easiest way to learn the software is to use it. As FastStone uses a full screen you may find it convenient to print out these instructions for reference rather than having to continually swop between screens to read the steps to be followed.

Select the three images you wish to combine as a triptych. Ideally for this method your triptych should be designed to consist of three images in a line. Move the images into a common folder.

Size your images to the same DPI.

To size images in FastStone :-

1. Open the image
2. Move your cursor to the far left of the screen to reveal a toolbox menu
3. Select "Resize", select "Print Size", set the common DPI (e.g. 72 or 300) and set the dimensions you wish for the image. Make sure that the "Preserve aspect ratio" box is ticked
4. "Save As" the resized image with a new name into your folder. The "Save As" is near the top of the toolbox menu. Note there is no "Save" option with Faststone. When using "Save As" an alert will be signalled if you have not given your edited file a new name and so are in danger of overwriting your original file.

Create a common coloured border round your resized images.

To do this :-

1. Open the image
2. Move your cursor to the far left of the screen and click on "Border Effects"
3. Tick a border and select a size and colour for your border. This border will eventually become the background for your three triptych prints. Experiment with the size of the border (e.g. 500) - the bigger it is made the bigger will be the gap between the triptych images
4. Click on the colour box to open a colour pallet
5. Use the same colour border for each of the three images
6. Save each image with its new border
7. Note :- in the event of a mistake use the "Undo" button at the bottom of the toolbox menu

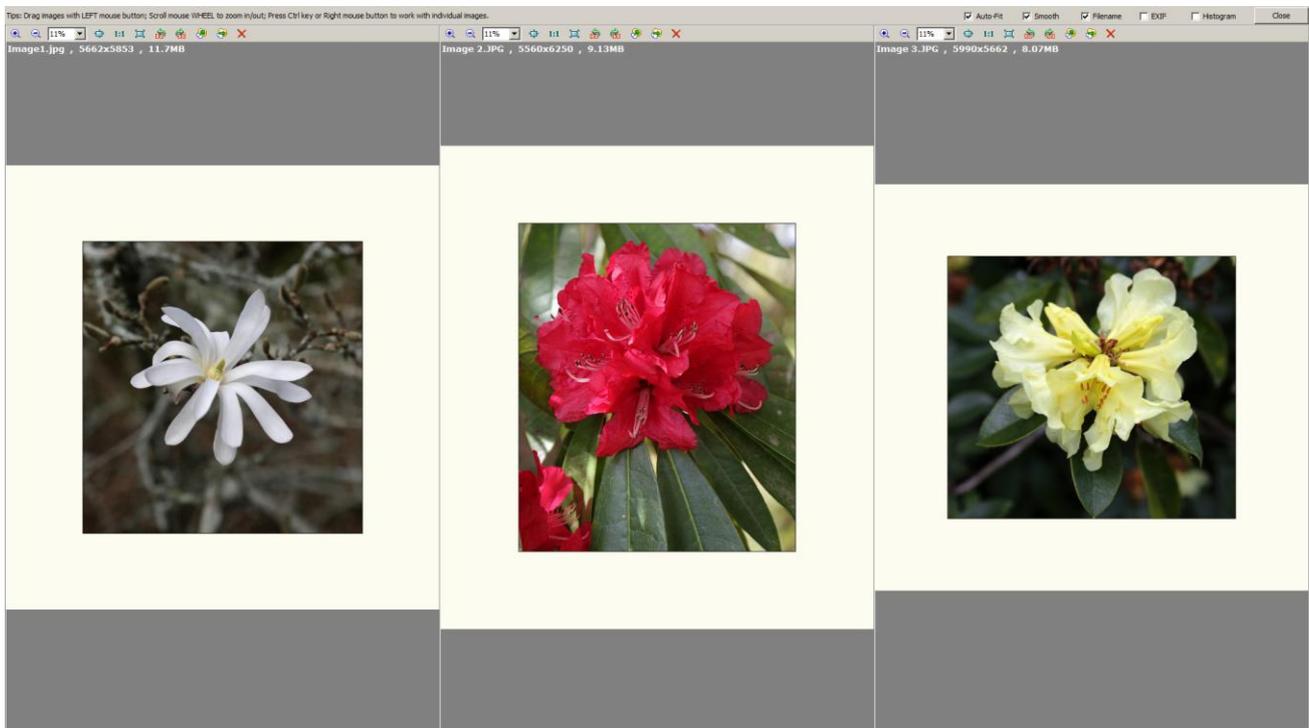
By clicking and dragging, place your new bordered images in the folder in the sequence in which you wish them to appear in your triptych.

Click on your first image, hold down control and click on the other two resized image images.

At the top of the screen look for the "two **same sized** pine trees" icon. Click on this. You should now have the three images displayed together on your screen. They should be starting to look like a triptych.

By using your mouse wheel you should be able to zoom in or out until the images on the screen look an appropriate size for projection. By clicking on one image and holding down the control key the size of that image can be adjusted independently of the other two images. Note if your mouse wheel does not control the image size, select "Settings" at the top of the FastStone page (or press f12), select "Zoom In/Out" for the Mouse wheel action and check OK. At this stage you may well need to go back and redo your borders if the gaps between the images are either not completely covered by the borders or appear too big.

Below - three flower images with the same size and colour off-white borders viewed together using FastStone's "Compare selected images" (Pine trees) facility :-



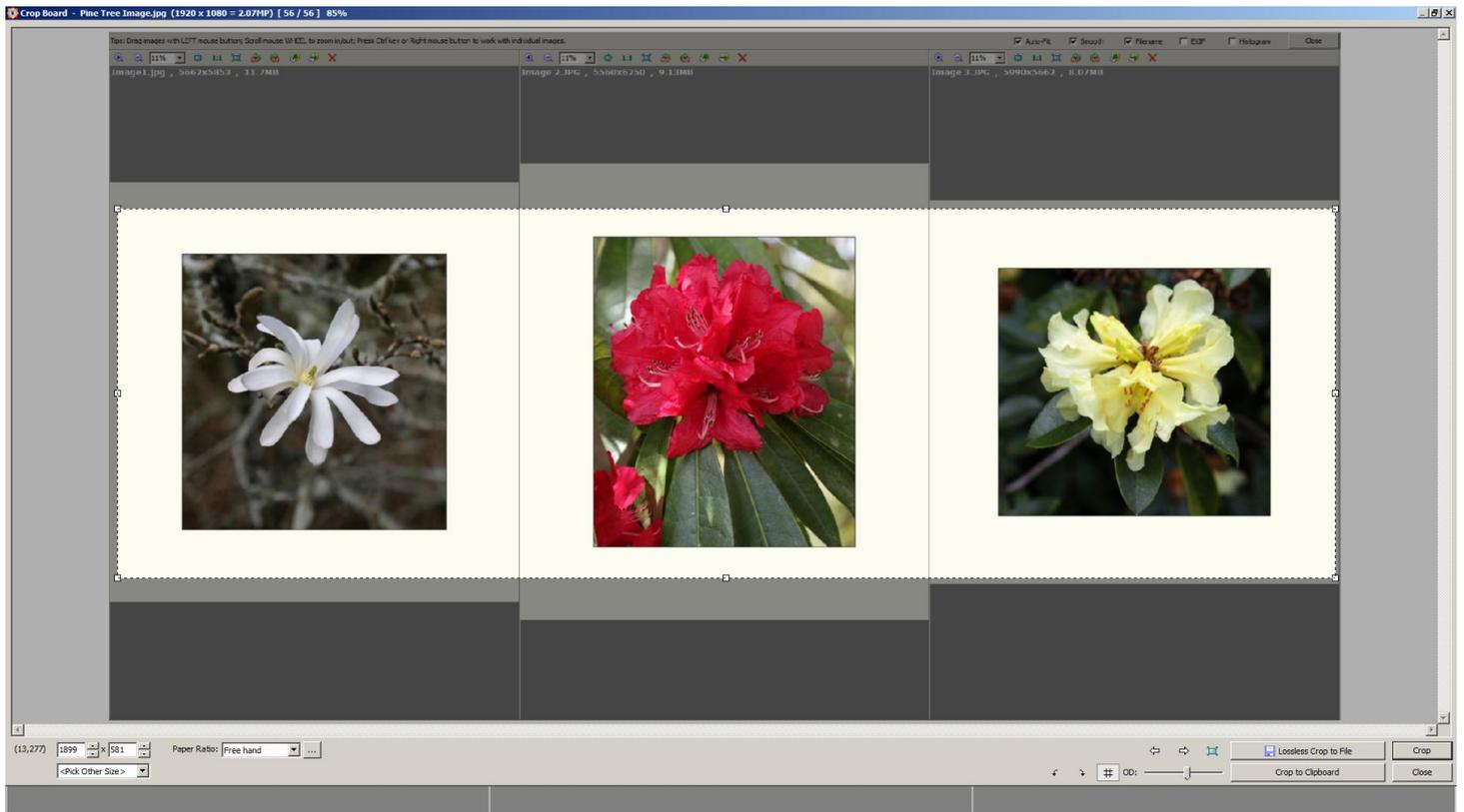
When your images are arranged to your liking press the keyboard Print Screen key. Nothing will happen but you have now effectively copied what is on the screen.

Open ANY jpeg image with FastStone. Make a right click on the image and select "paste Image". The screen print of your three triptych pictures will be pasted onto the jpeg image you have opened. Save this jpeg copy to a new file name. You now have a triptych of your three chosen pictures. (The original jpeg image that the triptych pictures were copied onto will remain unchanged in its initial state).

Crop your triptych to remove the unwanted area outside the borders. To do this :-

1. With your triptych image open press X on the keyboard - this will open the cropping page
2. Against the Paper Ratio box select the Freehand option.
3. Click on the image and drag a rectangle to determine the area to be retained.
4. Click on the " Crop" box on the right hand side of the page
5. Save your cropped triptych under a new file name

Below - the three flowers triptych in the cropping page



The cropped triptych has two vertical lines where the borders join. Remove these using the clone tool. To do This :-

1. With the triptych open press O on the keyboard. This opens the cloning and healing page
2. At the top of the page click on the "Clone" option
3. The size and hardness of cloning can be changed in the boxes in the top left hand corner of the page
4. Hold down Control and click on an area of border that does not have a line passing through it - this is your clone source area
5. Release Control and click and move the cursor circle over the line to be cloned out
6. Continue moving along the line so long as your source area is over a clear border
7. You will need to repeat steps 3 to 5 until both lines have been cloned out
8. If you make a mistake click on the Undo button at the bottom of the page
9. When the lines have been cloned out click OK and Save the cloned image

If the outside border of the cloned triptych is not big enough add extra border by revisiting "Border Effects" in the toolbox menu.

Ensure that your triptych conforms to the rules of the Nelson National Triptych Salon by visiting "Resize" in the toolbox, choosing the "Pixels" box and setting the width and height to suitable values (maxima 1620 wide 1080 high). Sharpen and save your completed triptych.

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