Constructing a triptych using Photoshop

Images are copied and orientated onto a New File, the background is coloured, effects are added and the document is flattened, sized and saved as a JPEG.

1. **Preparing your images: –** Select your three images and ensure that they are all at the same resolution (300dpi allows subsequent printing if required). Your triptych does not necessarily have to have three images which are the same size but if they are then a size between 6" x 4" and 6"x 9" should work well.

2. **Creating a New File in photoshop: – File-> New** set suitable parameters for your file (eg. 20" x 16" at 300 dpi is the maximum size for printed triptychs in this salon and Background Contents White) and open the file.

3. **Building the basic triptych: –** Open the three images that are to be used for the triptych. Selecting the move tool, click on the first of your images and drag it onto the New File. Do not worry about detailed positioning at this time. Repeat this for the other two images. You should now have a New File with three images on it. The three original versions of the images may be closed, they are not required further.

4. **Automatic Layers: –** The moves in 3 above will have automatically generated layers on your New File. In Window check Layers to see the details of these. It is also helpful in **View -> Show** to check Layer Edges and Guides. With the move tool selected, checking Auto Select will allow layers to be selected by simply clicking on them with the move tool rather than having to select them in the Layers pallet.

5. **Positioning your images: –** Use the move tool to place your three images in their final positions. **View -> Show** and checking Smart Guides will result in a visual indication (pink lines) when your images are in alignment. Selecting all three layers and with the move tool selected, good use can be made of the alignment options at the top of the page.

6. **Rotating/distorting an image: –** Select the image with the move tool. Edit-> Transform (or Free Transform) allows an image to be turned and distorted. Click on the Commit Transform tick to confirm the changes made and exit from the Transform action.

7. **Changing the colour of the background: –** Select Background in the Layers Pallet. Select a suitable background colour using the foreground/background selector near the bottom of the tool box**.** Apply the colour using the Paint Bucket tool. The Mode will need to be set appropriately – Lighten or Darken.

8. **Adding effects to the first image: –** Select one of your images. At the bottom of the Layers pallet click on effects (*fx* symbol). The drop-down menu that appears provides a number of options but perhaps two of the more useful are Stroke and Drop Shadow. Stroke enables a border to be placed around the image selected. The border size, colour and opacity can all be specified; note that selecting the border to be outside the image will give rounded corners while selecting inside gives square corners. Drop Shadow provides the image with a shadow that makes it appear as if it is floating above the background.

9. **Replicating the effects applied to the first image on the other two images: –** When the effects required for one image have been satisfactorily achieved, in the Layers pallet, under that image, right click on Effects. Select Copy Layer Style. Select the other two images in the Layers pallet, right click and select Paste Layer Style.

10. **Saving the completed triptych: –** First save as a file type which preserves the layers (eg TIFF). This will make any future changes easier. Next in Layer, select Flatten Image. Size the file to meet the Salon requirements. Save as a JPEG.