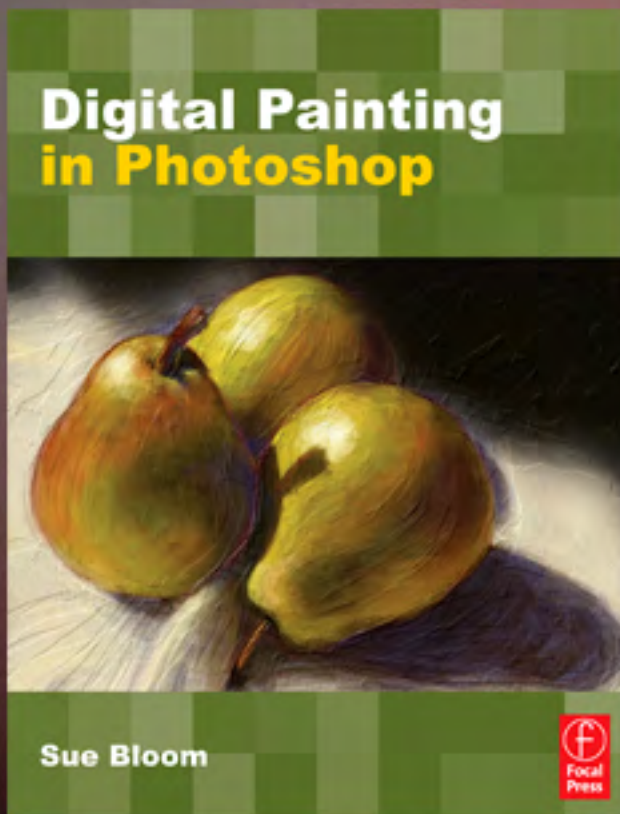


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**Digital Painting in
Photoshop**
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The Basic Tools for Painting in Photoshop

The techniques employed in this book have several things in common. There are basic tools and concepts that are used throughout the book. These tools and why they are important are laid out for you here in Chapter 2, as a reference.

Photoshop has many wonderful tools that can be used for painting, but they are often ignored, misunderstood, or hidden. The hidden ones are usually hiding in plain sight. They are the tools that you may have never tried. You know the ones; like the glowing edges filter. What in the world would you use that wacky filter for? It sports neon colors and a black background. What were the software engineers thinking? I'll show you how that crazy filter can be your ticket to great sketches.

Photoshop is awash in wonderful brushes, but most users never go past the basic brushes to the libraries full of great brush tools. We will also explore making your own brushes from scratch. The same is true of textures.

FIG. 2-1 Digital painting of a water lily.

Photoshop has dozens of textures that can be applied to your work, giving a textural feel like canvas or the look of a handmade paper. The textures are a bit more hidden but very accessible when you realize their intrinsic value. Again, we will look at how you can create your own textures.

Last, there are great tool techniques that you can learn using the Art History Brush, the History Brush, and the Pattern Stamp Brush. These tools can greatly aid you on your painterly quest.

Brushes

Lots of tools are called brushes. The brush is a brush, of course, but so is the Clone tool. The eraser is a brush. We use brushes on our masks. Photoshop is full of brushes. Most Photoshop users know that there are hard brushes and soft brushes. The hard brushes have a hard, concrete edge, with no feathering. You can control the softness of the edge in the brush dynamics, under Hardness.

This is similar to the feather used in the Rectangular and Elliptical Marquee tools. A feather of 0 yields a solid edge. A feather of 40 yields a soft edge. A feather of 80 yields a very soft edge. This technique is good for vignetting a photo. The amount of feather needed will be determined by the size and resolution of the targeted file. Larger files contain more pixels and will need a higher feather amount to achieve a very soft edge.

Brushes are critical for how a mark is laid down. The softness of the edge is important, but beyond that, the primary consideration is the texture of the mark. Photoshop has libraries full of brushes. They can be viewed by clicking on the triangle at the upper right corner.

The Default Brush menu offers a huge array of brushes, even one for your cat, entitled Fuzzball. Some are bizarre and some are quite useful.

As a convenience for you, I've created a reference section containing all the various Brush Libraries and the brush names and the type of stroke that they make. They are listed here in the order that they appear in the Photoshop menu. I hope it saves time for you, as you search for just that right brush.

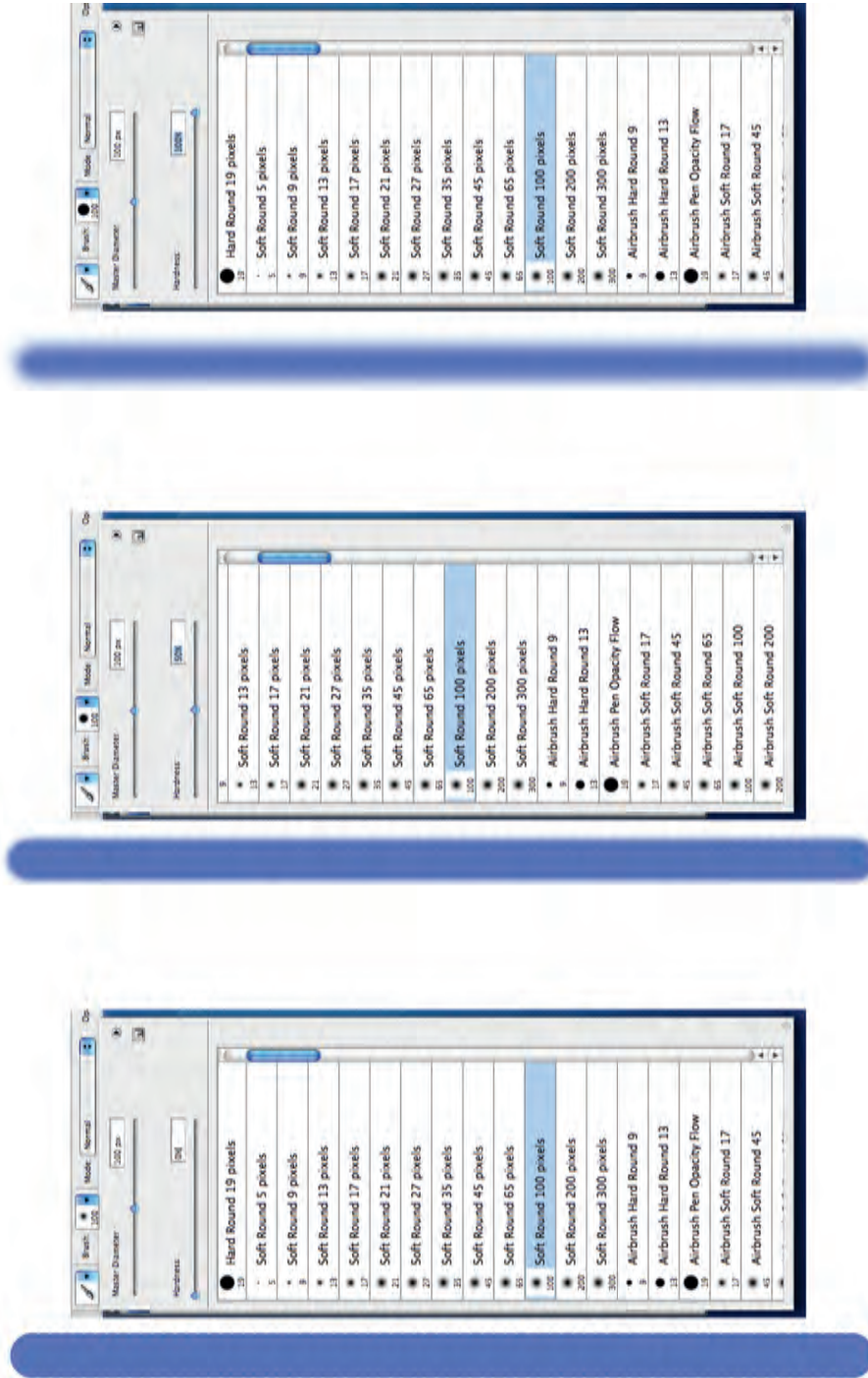


FIG. 2-2 Left: 100% hardness; middle: 50% hardness; right: 0% hardness.



FIG. 2-3 Left: 0 feather; middle: 40 pixel feather; right: 80 pixel feather, using the Elliptical Marquee tool.

That covers the brushes that come embedded in various Brush Libraries in Photoshop. However, there are more brushes to explore. You can gather more brushes from various Internet sites, many of them free, or you can craft your own brush from scratch. It is so easy, and no one will have a brush just like yours.

When thinking about what characteristics you want your brush to possess, consider the type of medium that you are working with. Watercolor artists use soft sable brushes to handle that thin layer of pigment suspended in water. Oil paints require a much sturdier brush. The bristles on an oil painting brush are generally coarse and thick. They are often made from pig or ox hair. An oil painting brush needs strength and durability to move thick oil paint around. This type of brush frequently leaves marks in the paint, showing the tracks of those coarse bristles. Pastels and charcoal are dry painting mediums. They leave their pigment deposits on paper that has texture, known as “tooth.” The mark that these dry mediums leave behind is rough, especially on the edges, but occasionally with gaps in the mark itself. They have vacant or small empty areas where the paper shows through the mark. The choice of a brush is a major factor when beginning a digital painting.

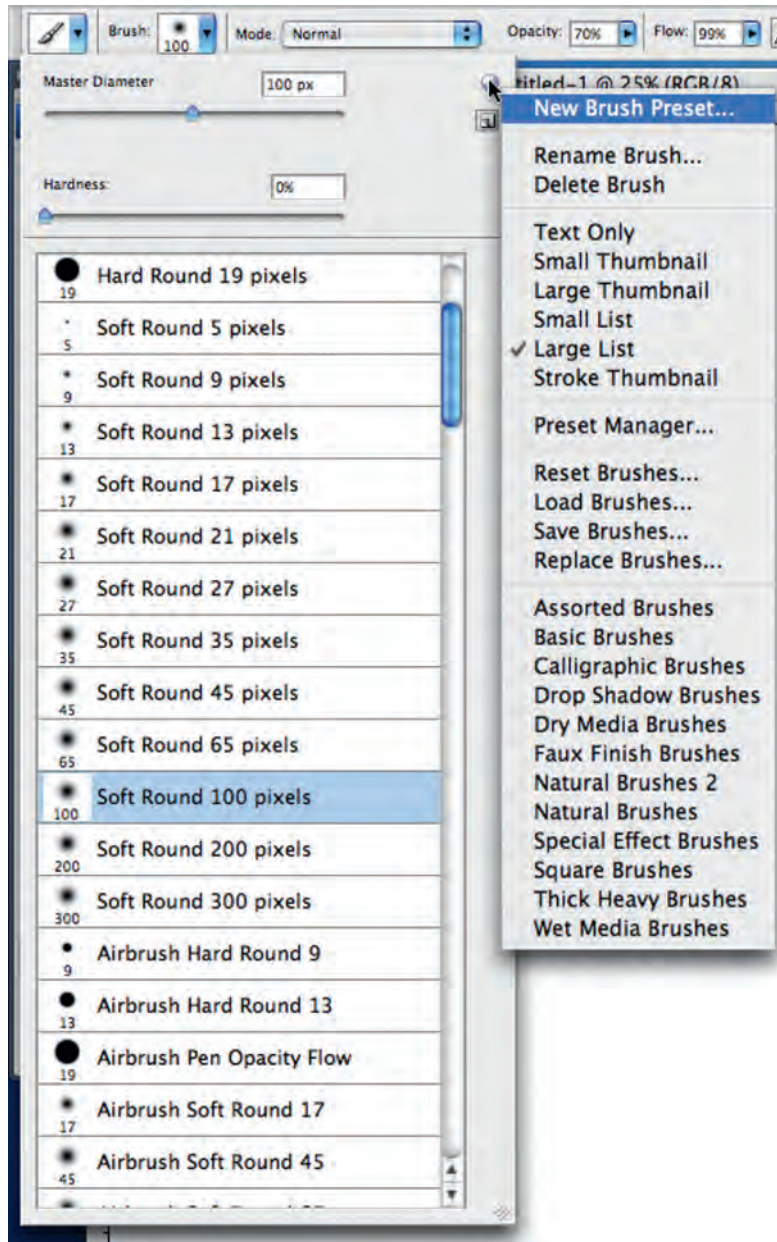


FIG. 2-4 Menu that reveals Brush Libraries (below) and how they can be viewed as thumbnails and lists.