Working with Actions

In mid-November a school asked me how to break a photo into a jigsaw puzzle. I told them the easiest way to do it this was with an ACTION. If you haven't used Photoshop Actions before then here's how to create your own jigsaw puzzle (and a bunch of other cool stuff) in no time.

📢 Step 1: Jump on the Internet and go to Adobe Exchange. You can find it here: http://www.adobe.com/cfusion/exchange.

📢 Click Photoshop at the bottom of the web page (Figure A).

📢 This will take you to the Photoshop Exchange page where you need to click in the Search the Exchange field. (Figure B).

📢 Search for jigsaw puzzle. (Don't think that's all you'll find here. Browse for a while and you will find some amazing actions—all free!)

📢 When you find a jigsaw puzzle action you like, download it. You will need an Adobe ID to do the download but don't worry, they are free and take only a couple of minutes to create.

📢 Once you have downloaded the Action you need to put it where Photoshop can find it. On a Mac put the new Action into Applications>Adobe Photoshop CS(X)>Presets>Actions. On a PC put the new Action into C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CS(X)\Presets\Actions. The X after CS stands for the version of Photoshop you are using.

📢 Then open your photo (that you would like to make into a jigsaw puzzle in Photoshop.

📢 Open the Actions panel.

📢 Choose Load Actions from the Action panel's drop out menu (Figure C).

📢 Click on the Action you downloaded in the Action Panel and click the Play button at the bottom of the panel (Figure D) and depending on which Action you downloaded, your photo will now become a jigsaw.

📢 The entire process took about a minute. It will go slower depending on your computer but shouldn't take longer than two to three minutes no matter what.

📢 Using this particular action, I was offered a chance to change the look of the pieces while the Action was running. That means I could effect how the emboss, bevel and shadow of each piece looked.

📢 The Action I used here is by Panos (http://www.panosfx.com/) who posts a bunch of free Actions on the Adobe Exchange site but also sells more powerful versions of these Actions on his own website. By more powerful, I mean able to do more things. For instance, the Action I downloaded for free could only create a puzzle with six or 20 pieces. If you want to be able to create other numbers of pieces, you will need the commercial version but most actions are very reasonable.

📢 This Action will also allow you to remove puzzle pieces or move them around as each puzzle piece is on its own layer.