

John Paul Caponigro's technique for creating FOG in Photoshop

Transcribed by Michael Hohol from Kelbyone.com:

John Paul Caponigro's "Atmospheric FX" published February 2008.

Mr. Caponigro's web site: <https://www.johnpaulcaponigro.com>

<https://www.johnpaulcaponigro.com/gallery/traveling-exhibits/>

He has excellent composite images.

Creating FOG

1. Open your real image
2. Starting with your real image, add a layer #1 above it, and fill the new layer with a color picked (use the color picker tool) from somewhere within the real image - perhaps a light color. You can change the opacity of that filled layer to see its effect but for now set it at 100%
3. Note that natural fog builds up the further away from the viewer with the haziest the further away
4. Change the opacity of the layer #1 until it looks like a maximum effect that you desire for the furthest away from the viewer
5. Add a layer mask to the layer #1, add a gradient Foreground to Background (with black as the foreground), start at the bottom of the mask and drag upward; note you can make a perfectly vertical gradient by holding the shift key while you drag upward (note that if you move the top of the gradient line while holding the shift key it will land on 45 degree or 90 degree). The mask will now have a gradient of black at the bottom and white at the top. You can further control this by doing a IMAGE > ADJUSTMENTS > CURVES to the mask of layer #1 and when you pull the curve line vertically below or above the 45 degree it will shift the midpoint of the gradient making it darker or lighter, and you can move the black point horizontally to the right and move the white point to the left to make transition quicker more abruptly – note you can also move the black point up or white point down to make the mask grey. By using changes to the curve, you can be very precise on how the fog effect will be. However, don't get hung up at this time with trying to figure out what to make the density of the mask.
6. It is best to look at the total effect of the layer #1 with the image in combination with each. To do this do not have the mask selected (not you can select the mask by holding down the Option key (Apple) and clicking on the mask), use the curve method as listed above.
7. To make the fog more natural with complexity, you can add noise Gaussian. Add a new layer #2, fill this with 50% grey. Change the blend mode from Normal to Overlay. Go to FILTER > NOISE > ADD NOISE, maybe 2 or 4% (you can move the slider right and left to see what you like). and you may like the effect by clicking on Monochromatic. Note you could also use texture or grain to make the fog more natural.
8. You can add a different effect by doing the following. Duplicate the layer #1, and unclick the layer #1. Select the mask of this new layer. Add FILTER > RENDER > DIFFERENCE CLOUDS. Note that every time you do a Command Z and then Command F (undo and

redo the filter) it gives you different 'clouds', so you can cycle through this a number of times to find the effect you like. You can now stay with this effect of the new layer, or turn on the layer #1 to get a combined effect, and you could adjust the opacity of this new layer to see what you like; sometimes having these two layers active will make the total effect more natural and complex.

9. You could also find an image of say the clouds or fog or smoke itself can be used to add the effect you want, instead of using the preceding techniques.
 - a. It may be best to start with a real picture and change it to black & white.
 - b. Select the Channels. Command and Click on that channel which automatically selects whiter areas of the image.
 - c. Create a new layer. Add a layer mask, which adds the B/W image as the mask.
 - d. Drag with the shift key depressed this layer into your real image.
 - e. Using the picked color from #2 above (you could click on the layer #1 that you previously made in item #2 above, to fill this new layer (do not fill the mask with this color).
 - f. With all the other layers except the noise layer, turned off, you can see the complexity of your new mask that was created from a cloud fog or smoke B/W image.
 - g. Add IMAGE > ADJUSTMENTS > CURVES to the newest mask. Adjust as you like, as described in item #5 above.
 - h. You can turn on layer #1 for complexity.
 - i. Adjust opacity as needed.
 - j. You may want to lighten the color of the fill that you used with the color picker for your new layer. Use IMAGE . ADJUSTMENTS > HUE/SATURATION. You may want to adjust the Lightness, however you could also make adjustments to the Hue or Saturation. Again you may need to adjust the opacity.