Halloween Decor: How to make Super Creepy Photos (Photoshop Tutorial & Printables)

[23 Oct 2012 | By Dot | 17 Comment(s) | 17,706 views]

Update: Related technique and more downloads: Ghost Portraits!
Did you know Great Aunt Gertrude was a zombie? Or Ancient Uncle Elrod was a tad undead? Unfortunately for my Halloween décor, I don't really have ghouls in the family. But we can fake it with a little photo manipulation.

These creepy portraits will look great hung on a wall, or in small frames on your serving table, at any scary Halloween party. You can either design your own, using the instructions provided here, or you can download the set provided here. Then just have them printed in whatever size to fit your frames, at your local print shop on on your home computer.

How to make your own creepy vintage photos

Supplies:

- Photo-editing program. These instructions assume you are working in Photoshop.

- Vintage photo image files. Portraits work best, and the larger the better if you want to print big versions for your walls. You can scan photos of your own relatives, or you can find public domain photos online. [You can find photos from public archives like the Library of Congress with no copyright restrictions here.]
- Skulls: You'll need a transparent photographed skull image. The simplest way to get the skull you need is to use a skull themed Photoshop brush set, of which several can be found online for free.

Method:

This is how to add a creepy skull effect to your photo. There are of course many other possible spooky details you can add. More detailed instructions can be found below the photos.

Step 1: Old Portrait

Step 2:
Skull on a clear background approximately the same size as the head. A skull Photoshop brush works well for this.

Step 3:
With the skull in a separate layer, line up the skull on the face: try to get he mouth and eyes as close as possible.

nancy dorsner (dabbled.org)

1. Open your photo file.
2. Create a new layer, and determine what skull size and shape will best fit your portrait's head. Place skull in new layer. It should have enough transparency to see through it to the portrait layer. If not, you may need to increase the transparency of the skull layer.
3. Line up the skull with the portrait head as well as you can. Resize and move as necessary to get the mouth and eyes of the skull lined up with your portrait.
4. Next, fit the skull to the face. Select the skull. Under the Transform menu, use Warp. Drag the dots around to fit the skull to the angle of the face. In this example, I dragged the right jawline of the skull out to better match the portrait jawline, and pulled in the left side of the skull. I also moved the nose to match up with the portrait nose. It doesn't have to be perfect, but you need the eyes, mouth, nose and jaw to match up as well as possible for best effect. Don't worry about the outline of the skull, we'll be erasing that in the next step.
5. Finally, erase the outside of the skull. Use your eraser (a soft feathered brush) to erase anywhere the skull exceeds the face (like on the left side in this example) and pretty much all the edges of the

skull image, leaving the features intact. You can also erase any shading that doesn't fit with the photo.

Once you have your final files, just take them to your local FedEx Office and have them color printed in whatever size you need to fit your décor.