

Portrait Civil War Reenactor



Figure 1: Starting Photo

Don't you just hate it when you come to an event with the expressed purpose of taking some great photos only to discover that you forgot to charge your battery and now it's dead? Actually it was all 4 of them. But I still had my cell phone, so.....

This is one of the reenactors that I took a photo of. My goal was to get a very rough watercolor that emphasized his beard. The fact that his head was cocked I think only added to the image.

Step 1 – Mild HDR effect in Topaz Clarity

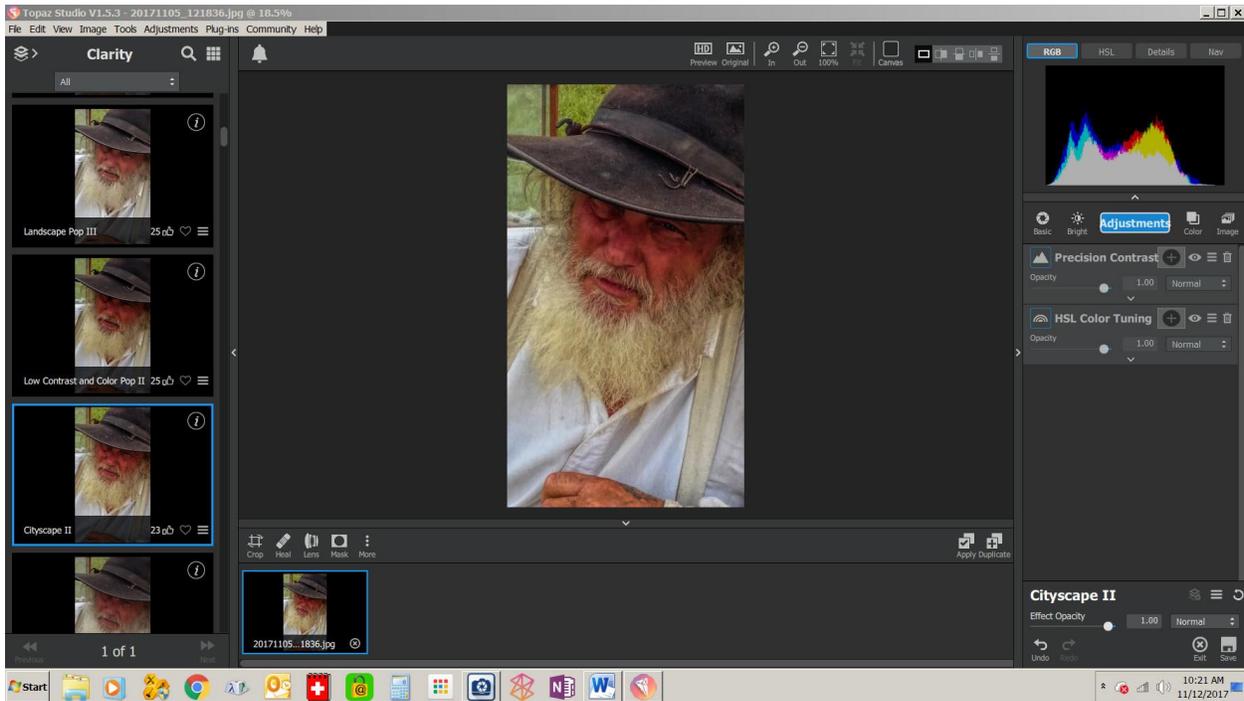


Figure 2: Using the Clarity add-on in Topaz Studio, I added a mild HDR effect

Step 2 – Add White Vignette in ACDsee Ultimate

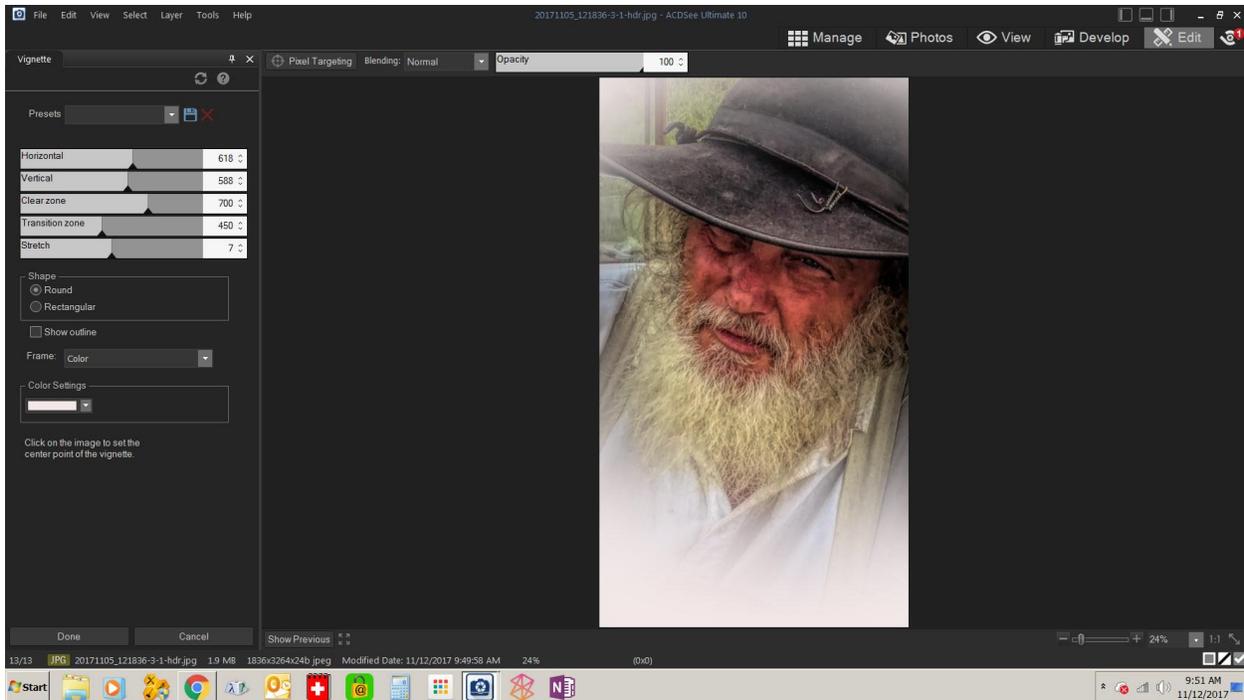


Figure 3: I Adding White Vignette in ACDsee Ultimate

Step 3 -Topaz Impressions

Since I wasn't sure at this point which medium look I wanted, I started first with Topaz Impressions. This was the Default rendering, but I changed the brush to type O2 and used the high brush strokes option to get a painterly look

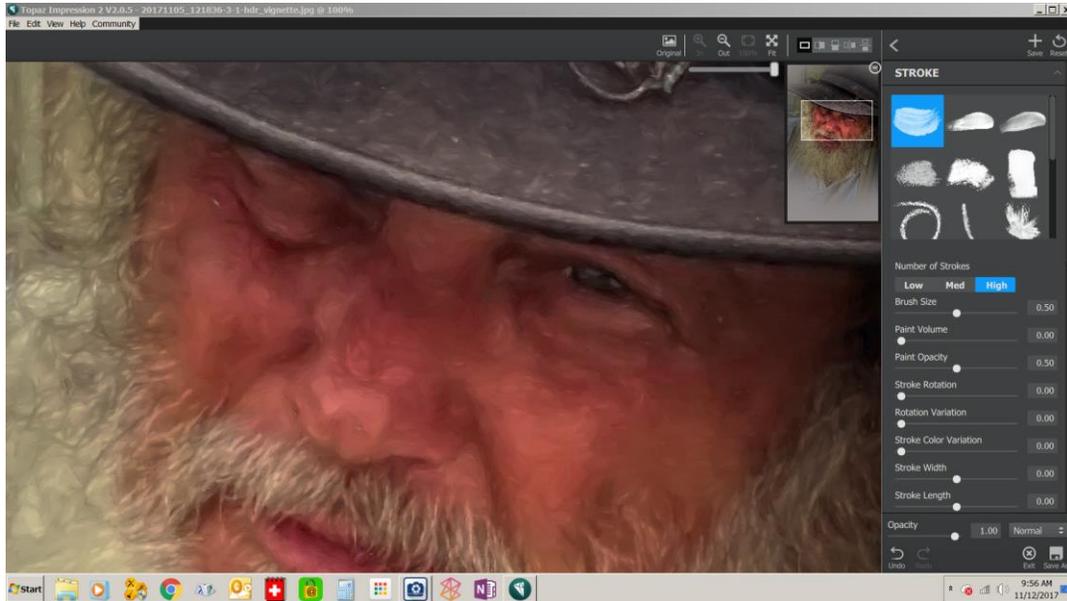


Figure 4: This was the Default Effect setting in Topaz Impressions



Step 4 – Go For the Watercolor Look

After looking at the image, I decided I wanted to go for a rough watercolor look instead of the one that Topaz Impressions rendered. For this I used [Fotosketcher](#). I used the Altered Image from Topaz Impressions as the starting point. And Applied the default settings for Paint Effect 9. Unlike many other programs that try to get a watercolor effect, this one is *spot-on* because it rebuilds the image using various sized semi-transparent brush stroke templates. The result is a very realistic watercolor rendition as shown here.

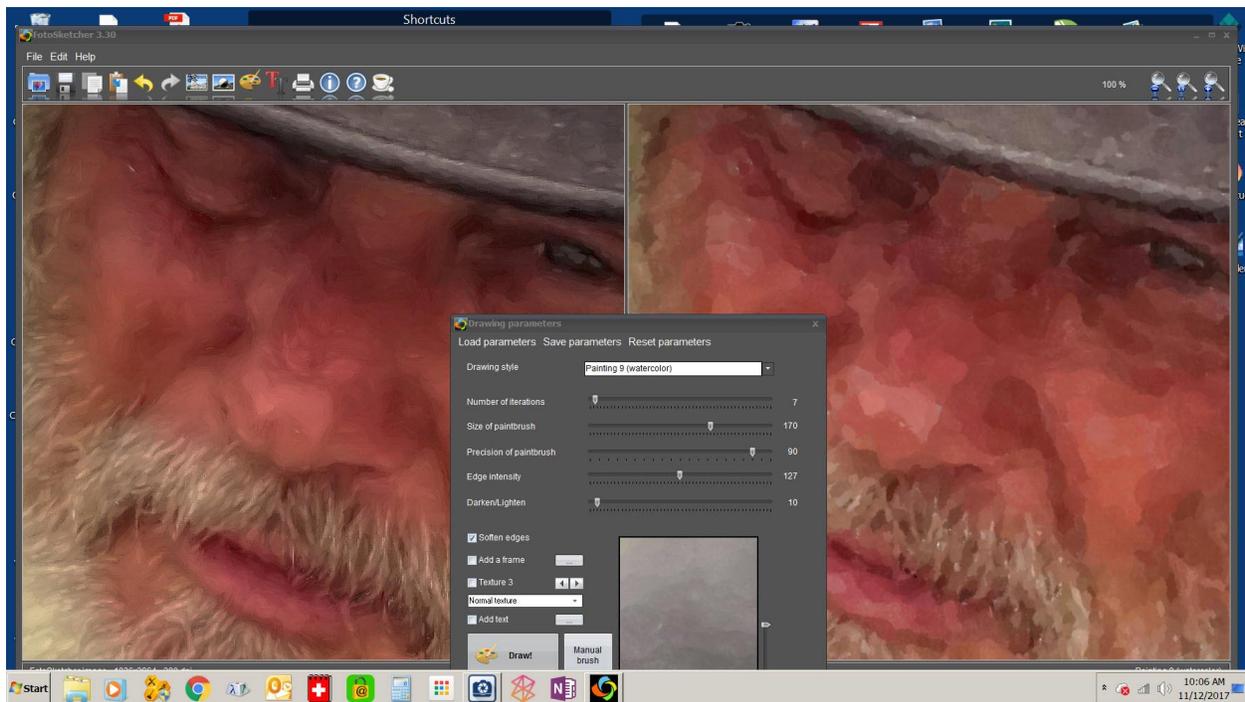




Figure 5:Image rendered with Fotosketcher Paint Effect 9

Step 5 – Adding Watercolor Background Effect with Corel Painter

This step could also have been done with Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, ACDsee Ultimate or any other program that uses layers. To start, I brought the image onto a canvas filled with a slightly gray tone to give me more area to work on.

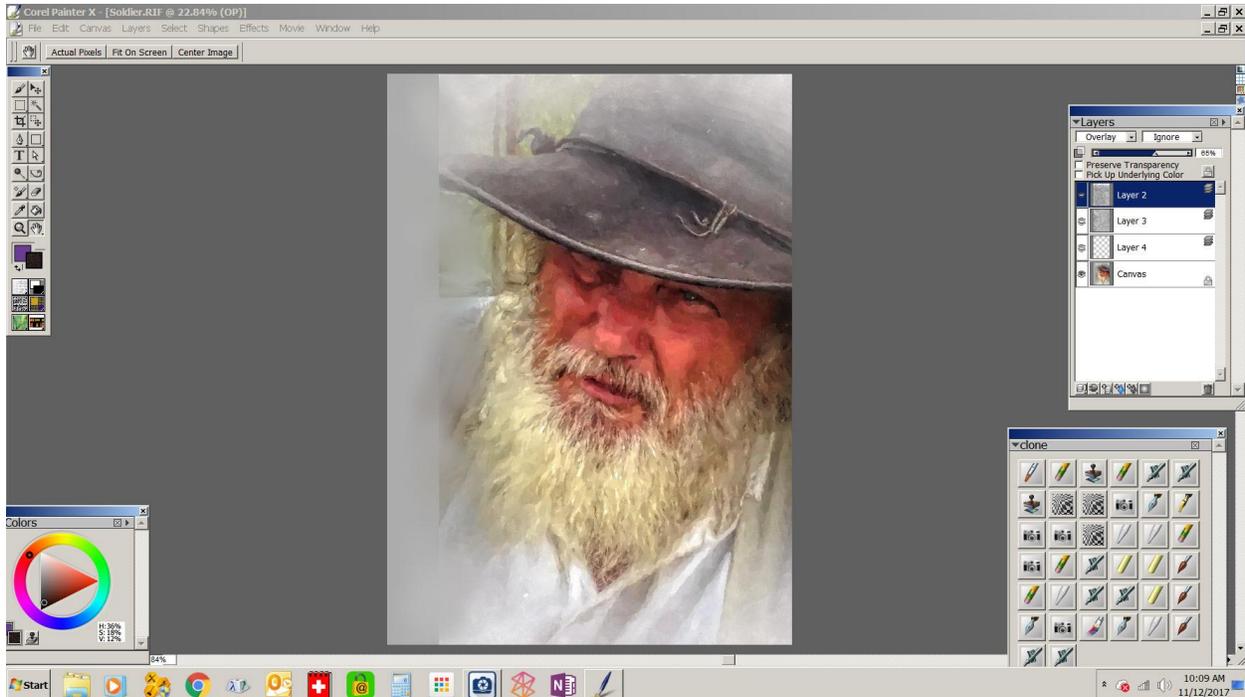


Figure 6: Image placed on gray filled canvas in Corel Painter

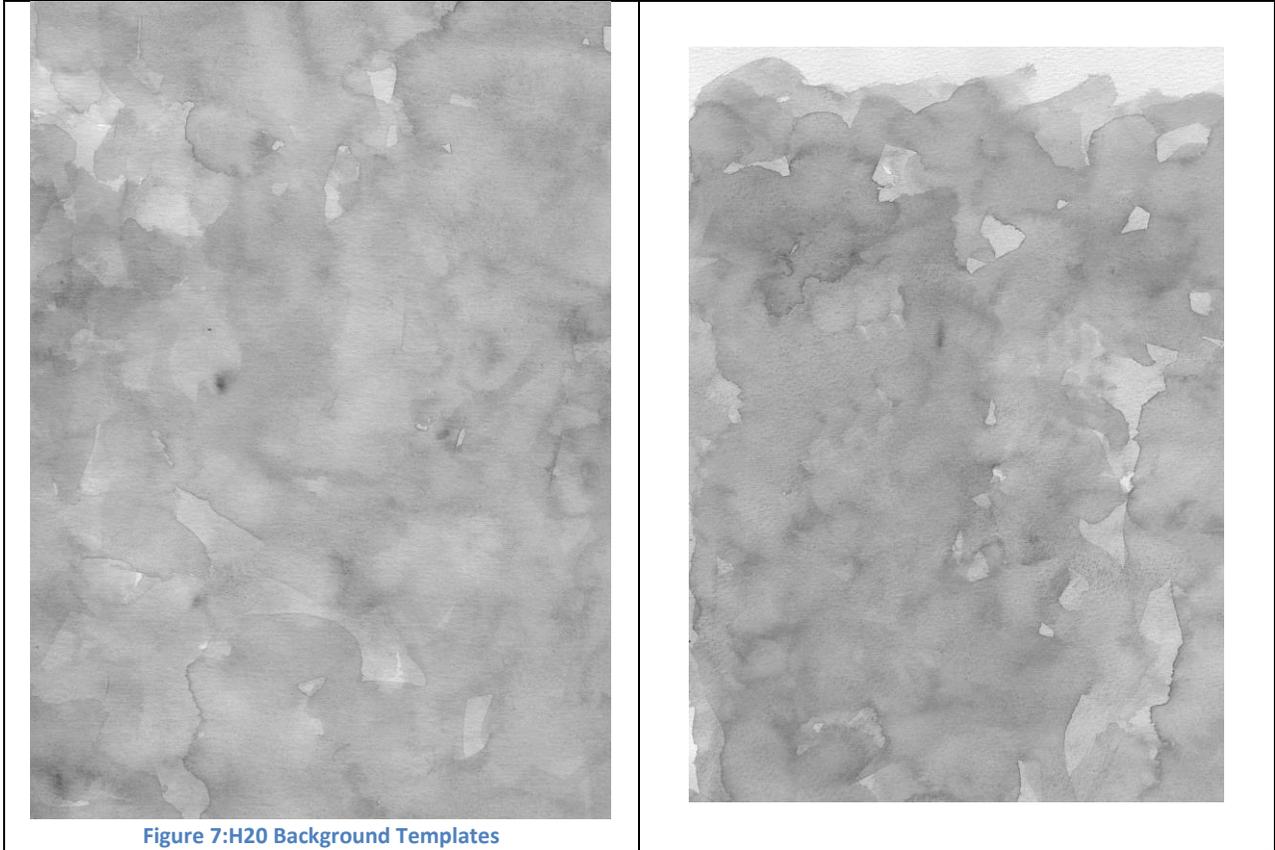


Figure 7:H2O Background Templates

The next step is to bring in one my pre-made H2O background templates. These are simply watercolor brush strokes made on good watercolor paper, and then scanned at high resolution and saved as gray scale JPEG images.

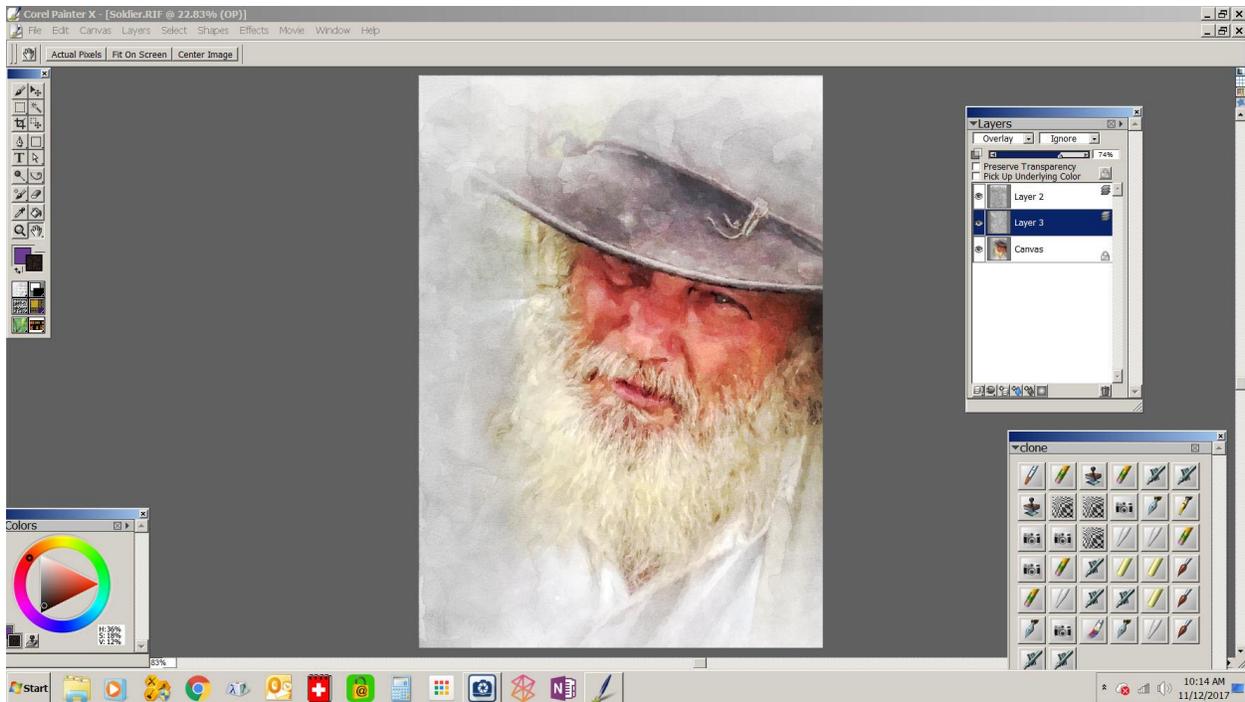


Figure 8 :H2O backgrounds added as layers using overlay composite method at about 75% opacity.

This fuses the watercolor patterns to the colors or the original image giving it the final touches of a real watercolor. I also blended the edges slightly and added the highlight to the pupil. I then came back to my basic editing program (ACDsee Ultimate) to crop it and tweak color and sharpness slightly.



Figure 9: Final cropped image