

Anniversary Edition



Digital Wealth Photography



July 2009

Hardeep Singh

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<http://blog.hardeep.name>

Foreword

What appears below is a collection of posts from my blog Digital Wealth <http://blog.Hardeep.name> arranged in order for easy following rather than by date.

This eMagazine is being released to commemorate the first anniversary of the blog (16th July 2009). While this eMagazine is a snapshot of the blog at one particular time, the blog itself is dynamic: the blog posts change with time, based on comments from readers and my own learnings. Hence, if you like a particular topic, please visit the blog, read the latest – and leave your questions / feedback.

It's not easily possible to reproduce all the hyperlinks in the print version. However, against each post a URL to that post is mentioned. If needed, please enter the URL, read the post online with all links intact.

Picnic Scene

By [Hardeep](#) • July 17, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20080717/picnic-scene/>

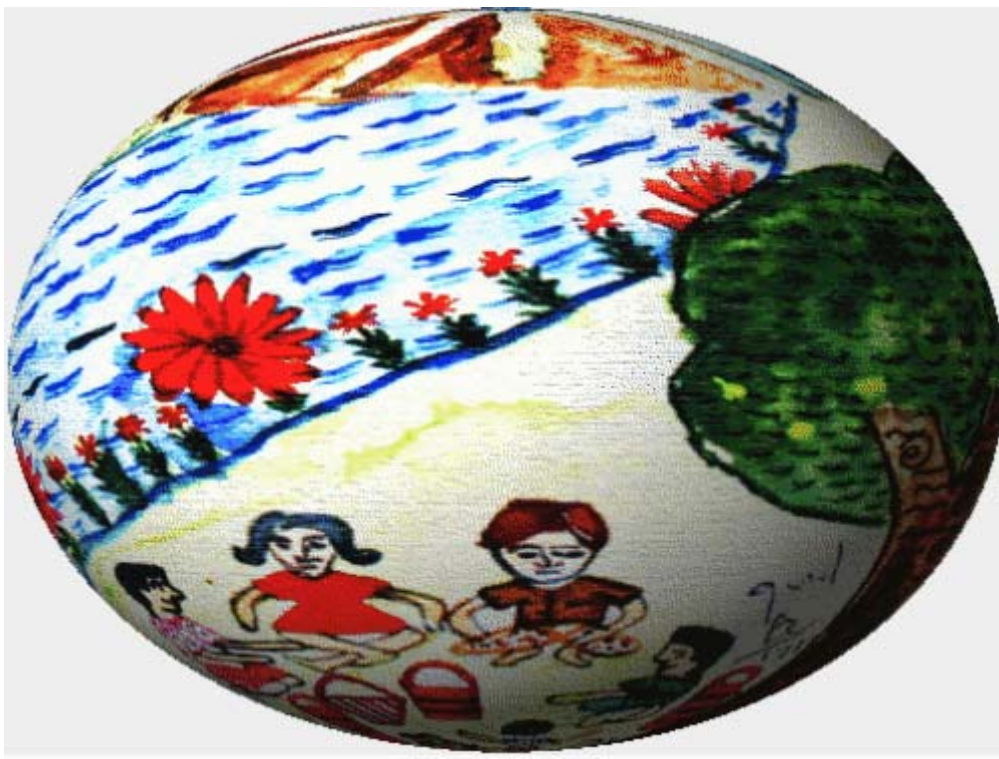
The picture called Picnic Scene was created by Hardeep Singh when he was 11 years old. I am 29 today - cant imagine so much time has passed. What use did I put these 18 years to? The image is licensed under Creative Commons Non-commercial Attribute ShareAlike license.



Picnic Scene

Picnic Scene by [Hardeep Singh](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 2.5 India License](#).

GIMP helped me create a very interesting perspective on the image - I have an association with the Globe that I have never quite understood:



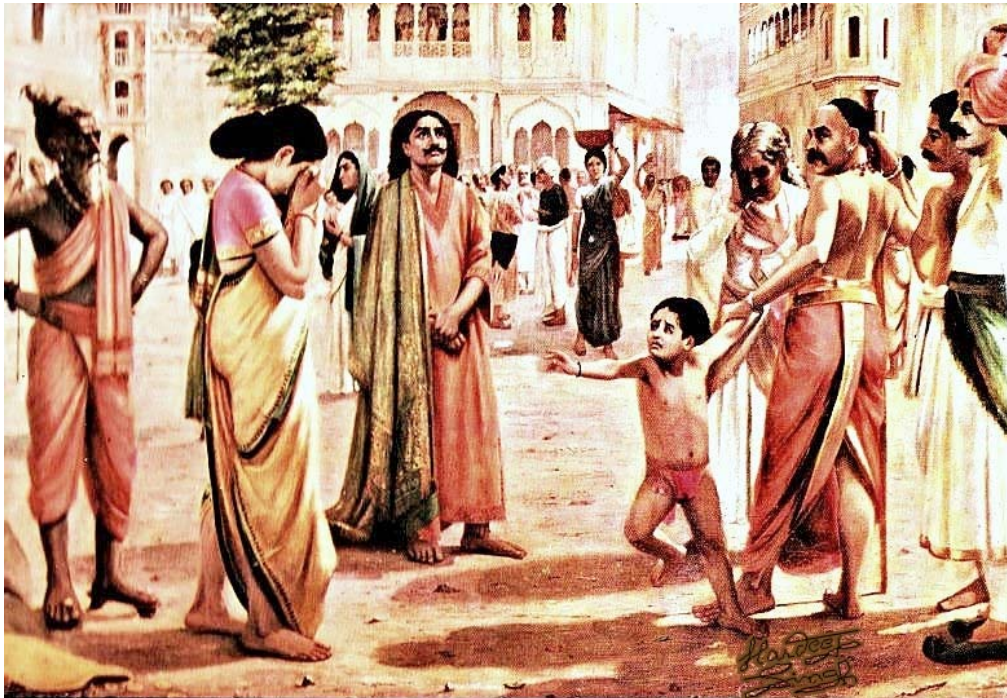
Global Picnic

Nice - isn't it?

[Raja Ravi Verma](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • July 17, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20080717/raja-ravi-verma/>

There is an interesting folklore in India, where Raja Harishchandra, one of the ancestors of Lord Rama promised a saint a large sum of money. He had to sell off himself, his wife and his son in order to repay the debt of this saint. I came across a nice painting by Raja Ravi Verma depicting this. I did some digital improvements on the painting. Here it is:



My photos

By [Hardeep](#) • July 18, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20080718/my-photos/>

Here are some of my all-time favourite photos, taken by myself. These have been pulled up from their respective galleries. For more photos, visit <http://foto.hardeep.name>.











Click on the images to see the full picture.

Eclipse 1 Aug 2008

By [Hardeep](#) • August 1, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20080801/eclipse-1aug2008/>

I just now watched and photographed the solar eclipse from New Delhi in India. Here we had only a partial view.

Ok, here is the much awaited photograph:



Eclipse 1st Aug 2008

The sun shining on the right is a photograph of the overall scene where I was. Eclipses continue to entice me - I have been avidly following them since 1995 when I saw a total solar eclipse in Ranchi. Even the birds seemed confused when the sun rays were blocked.

[Here](#) is computer colored image that shows a total solar eclipse in its full glory.

In Hindu mythology, Arjuna vowed to kill Jaidhrath before Sunset, else he would commit suicide. The opponents made Jaidhrath to hide thinking that since Arjuna would be unable to find him, he wouldn't kill him and would have to commit suicide. However, on the day of the battle, towards the evening, a total solar eclipse occurred and everybody thought the day has ended. Jaidhrath came out of the hiding thinking that Arjuna would commit suicide. At just that moment the eclipse ended, the sun shone brightly and Arjuna, realising that the day is not yet over, killed Jaidhrath.

I have a [collection](#) of Eclipses (both Lunar and Solar) from many different sources - some my own and others from magazines.

[The Moon](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • August 11, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20080811/the-moon/>

I have always wanted to photograph the moon along with the 'features' - the dark spots etc on the surface of moon. Here is a photograph that I finally took recently:



Not bad, but I guess there is room for improvement. Maybe, a shot of the not-so-full moon would look better. Also, I came to know after I took this shot that camera setting advised for such a shot is f/11 1/250 seconds. I will be trying these, and posting here in case I get a better picture.

UPDATE 22nd Sep 2008: I have a new shot, much better compared to above:



Crescent Moon

I used 1/60 sec at the smallest aperture available, ISO 80.

[How does a coconut dry?](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • August 13, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20080813/coconut-dry/>

I have made a timelapse video of the drying of a coconut. Please have a look.

[Flower - a painting in green](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • August 24, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20080824/flower-green/>

Here is one of my nature photographs, from the recent collection [Wild flowers of Indian summer](#):



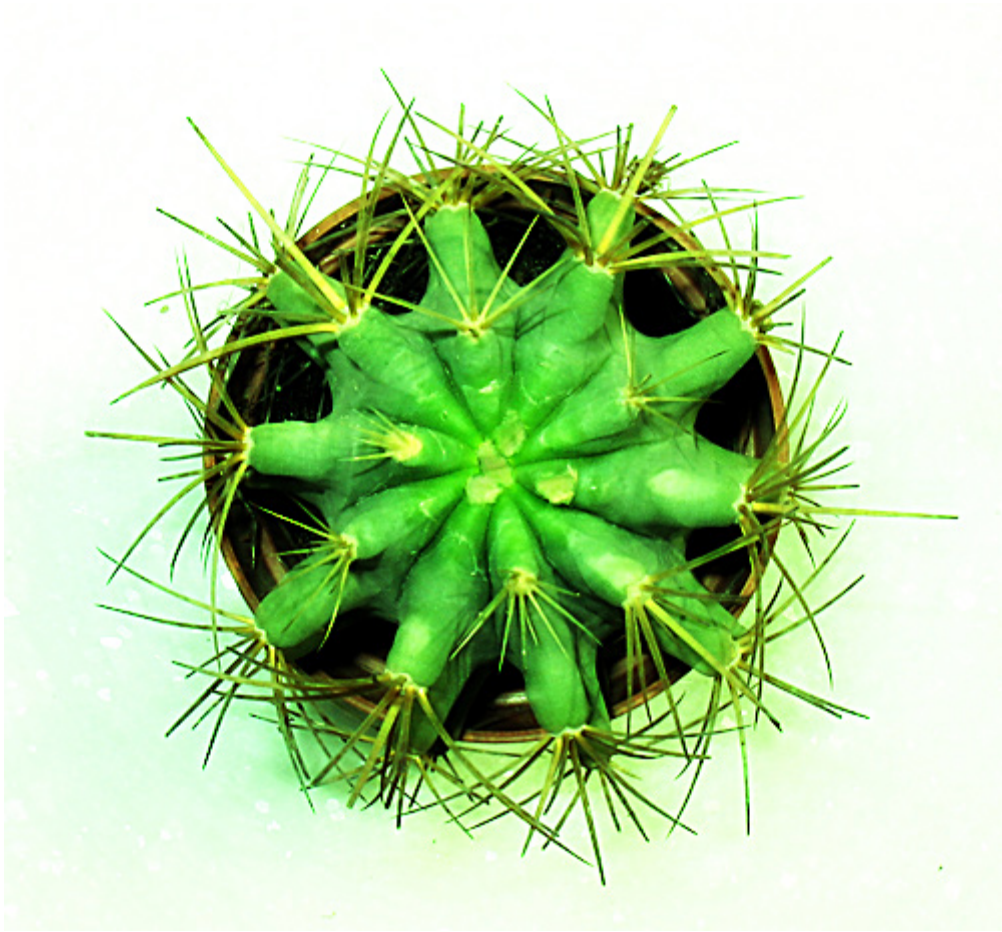
Painting in Green

Like it? Post comments.

[Cactus](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • September 6, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20080906/cactus/>

A photo of a cactus I brought from the Netherlands that I created recently:

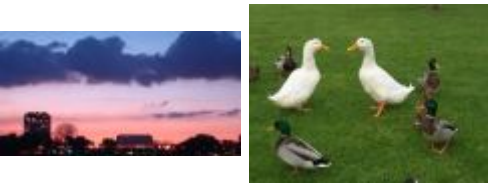


The Dutch Cactus

Photos submitted to HT

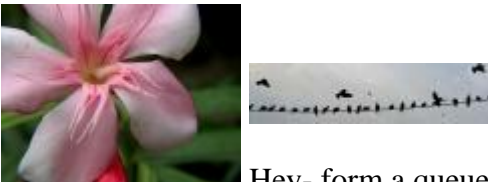
By [Hardeep](#) • September 12, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20080912/photos-ht/>

These are the photos I submitted to Hindustan Times during the photography contest held on Aug 14th:



God's own palette

No apartheid here



Hey- form a queue

Heart & Soul

Click on the images to see the full picture. Yet they decided to give away the awards to some staged action shots.

[Splitting a contact sheet](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • September 24, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20080924/splitting-a-contact-sheet/>

When I received a CD containing contact sheets from my photographer, I was in a hurry to put the photos online. He had promised to send me another CD containing individual photos later, when the printing for the album was completed.

I tried to use normal software like Photoshop to do the trick, and looked for tools online. While there were a number of tools to create a contact sheet, there were none to take it apart. Strange.

After thinking, I was able to write a small Python program to do the trick. I am sharing it for the benefit of everyone, releasing it under [GNU GPL](#). [Download Python](#) and run it like: python split.py Contact.jpg (where split.py is a file containing the code below and Contact.jpg is the contact sheet).

Download [split.py](#) here.

Here, the contact sheet is 1000×800 pixels, and I want to split it into 5 parts horizontally and 4 parts vertically. These parameters need to be changed in the first four lines as per need.

I noticed that since the contact sheet was JPG, and the output was also JPG, it was causing degrading in quality. So, I changed the output format to BMP, and then reconverted back to JPG using other software.

[Ravan burning](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • October 9, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20081009/ravan-burning/>

Yet again India witnessed the effigy-burning of Ravana during the festival of [Dussehra](#). This is how the stage was set initially with Ravana in the middle and Kumbhkaran (Ravana's brother) and Meghnath (Ravana's son) on the sides:



Ravana in the middle

Some pictures of the fireworks that happened to initiate the ceremony:



Fireworks 1



Fireworks 2



Fireworks 3



Fireworks 4



Fireworks 5

In short the story goes as below: Ravana kidnaps Sita, the wife of Rama. Rama launches a battle, and after a few days of fighting, is face to face with Ravana on the day of Dussehra. He shoots a burning arrow and Ravana turns into a fireball:



The Fireball

This is what remains a bit later:



Remains

So Ravana is killed by Rama, and Sita saved. For more details visit the Wikipedia link.

[Sunflower](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • October 17, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20081017/sunflower/>

I wish to share with you today, this photograph I came accross while sifting through my albums:



click to see a bigger photo

Coming up next: a photo of sunflower **oil**: its good for the heart they say.

Brown plant hopper in Delhi

By [Hardeep, via email](#) • November 11, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20081111/brown-plant-hopper-in-delhi/>

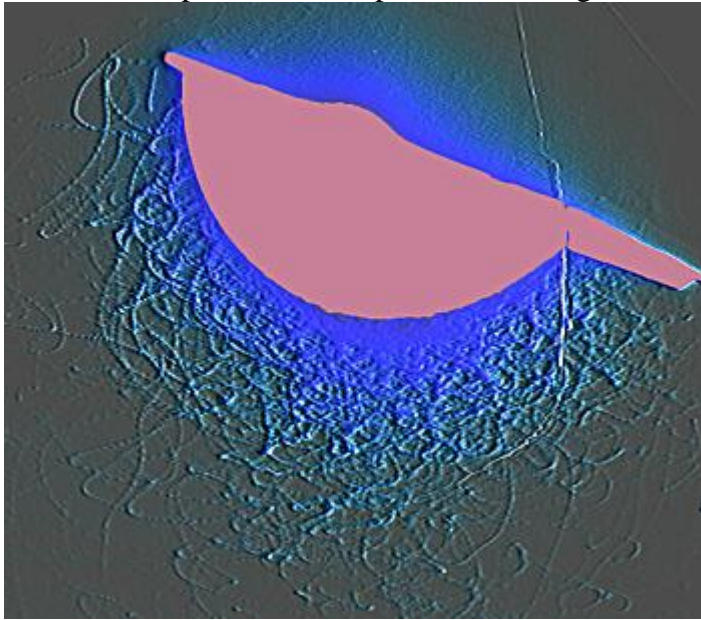
Till around Oct 28th, it was difficult to walk the Delhi streets with the head held high. Talking, eating was absolutely out of question.



Brown Plant Hopper

The reason? The brown plant hopper had migrated to Delhi from Haryana and neighbouring places in hoards. They would get into your mouth, eyes, clothes, and everywhere else! This 'pest' is present in rice plants, and because of the harvest season and because it had developed immunity to the used pesticides - it followed the wind to Delhi looking for food.

Here is a computer coloured photo of an image I took, pests around a lamppost:



Golden Temple

By [Hardeep](#) • November 22, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20081122/golden-temple/>

Ok, my very first Flash based web album is here: [The Golden Temple](#).

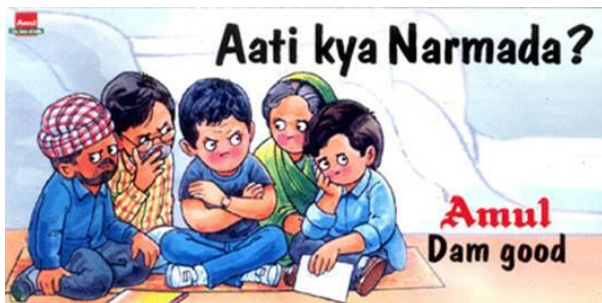
[The Golden Temple](#), at Amritsar, India is the most significant place of worship of the Sikh religion, and one of the oldest. The temple is called Harmandir Sahib, and is indeed covered by a layer of Gold.

I always had the feeling that you would need to buy Adobe Flash to build Flash albums, or at least other paid software. I had always used [JAlbum](#) to build my web albums. However, to my surprise there are free skins for JAlbum that let you build such Flash web albums.

Low budget advertising

By [Hardeep](#) • December 3, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20081203/budget-ads/>

If there is one thing India leads in, it's the art of ad-making. Having traveled to US, and many countries in Europe, I can safely say that and win with a large margin. Who can forget [Amul](#) ads, released each week based on the major news headline from that period?



Amul

I liked the one to the side most. The person at the centre really looks like Amir Khan, when he was protesting against the building of the Narmada Dam. Companies are trying to woo the attention of a billion people, and they have to make

something stand out in order to get noticed. No wonder that the ad making standards have to be very high for the same reason. The cost of these Amul ads would be low, I expect - these do not use print or TV, they appear on the billboards. Yet they manage to seek our attention. Well done India!

Bread mold

By [Hardeep](#) • December 10, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20081210/bread-mold/>

Growing bread mold might sound outrageous, but that is what I did. Here is a photo of what grew:



Bread Mold

Click on the photo to see the high resolution version.

I realised later, that a sideways photograph might have looked better, because it would show the tendrils, like this photo ([source](#)):



Bread Mold - Encyclopedia

Potted flowers

By [Hardeep](#) • December 27, 2008 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20081227/potted-flowers/>

I purchased two potted plants from a roadside vendor. Its springtime in India, and flowers are in bloom. I have always loved photographing flowers, and this purchase resulted in two more photos to be added to the collection:



Sunday Dawn

Moments of change

[Indian Photographers I: Lala Deen Dayal](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • January 6, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20090106/deendayal/>

I have started this series, called Indian Photographers to throw some light on the works of great Indian photographers.

[Deen Dayal](#) was born in Sardhana, Uttar Pradesh. In 1868, Deen Dayal founded his studio [Lala Deen Dayal & Sons](#), and was subsequently commissioned to photograph various temples and palaces of India. He established studios in Secunderabad, Bombay, and Indore in the 1870s. He covered the tour of the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1875, and travelled with Sir Lepel Griffin through Bundelkhand in 1880s.

Some of his old photographs that I like:



Interior of Bashir Bagh Palace, Hyderabad Kashmiri Gate, Delhi Entrance to the Charminar, Hyderabad

[GIF vs JPEG](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • January 10, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20090110/gif-vs-jpeg/>

There must have been times when you would have wondered what the difference is in pictures of type “GIF” (having file extension .gif) and those of type “JPEG” (having file extension .jpg). At other times you might have wondered which type to use for a picture you are uploading. Well, today I am going to solve the problem for you.

GIF stands for **Graphics Interchange Format**, and is more suited for computer generated graphics and images. This is because it can hold a maximum of 256 colors. If the picture you are saving as GIF has more colours, they will be “approximated”. Leaving aside this limitation, GIF is a wonderful format. You can mark some of the pixels as “**transparent**” which means that those pixels do not have a colour of their own, and will take up the background colour when the picture is displayed. This makes them merge easily with any background. In addition, you can create **animations** as well using GIF format.

On the other hand, JPEG, standing for “**Joint Photographics Experts Group**” can store true 24 bit color, and is used more often for real life photographs. This is because real life photographs normally have more than 256 distinct colors. However, these support neither animations, nor transparent pixels.

The compression used by GIF is mostly lossless, while that used by JPEG is lossy - which means that a JPG image will lose some quality each time you save it, whereas a GIF will not.

[Potted flowers - II](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • February 11, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20090211/potted-flowers-ii/>

Some more of my potted flower shots, hope you like them. Please leave your comments behind:



Natural Grace



Smile Please!



The Great Indian Gaija



The first photo, Natural Grace is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 India License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/in/). The other photos (eg. 'Smile Please'), are under the more [restrictive license used by the rest of this blog](#).

[Hardeep's lens](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • March 18, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20090318/hardeeps-lens/>



[Indian Photographers II: Raghu Rai](#)

By [Hardeep](#) • March 27, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20090327/raghu-rai/>

Having talked about [Lala Deen Dayal](#) I want to move on to a more contemporary photographer: Raghu Rai. He was born in 1942, and is a photographer and photojournalist since 1965. He joined The Statesman in 1966 and was awarded the Padamshree in 1971.

A photograph by him:



Sleep

Some more photos featuring him:



Raghu Rai



A gallery of his photos is available [here](#).

(Photographs are copyrighted, except for the one labelled 'Raghu Rai', which is under CC-NC-ND)

[Symbol for the Indian Currency](#)

By [Hardeep, via email](#) • April 10, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20090410/symbol-indian-currency/>



Symbol for Rupee

Economic Times has started a [survey](#) to find a symbol for the Indian currency similar to the Dollar symbol (\$). The site shows some proposed designs, and the visitors can vote for one of those, or the visitors can provide their own suggestions.

To the left is the symbol proposed by me. Its based on Hindi rather than English, and has the Ashok Chakra which shows that the currency is progressive, just as the Euro symbol has two straight lines which signify stability.

Please let me know your thoughts, and suggest design changes.

Summer in Delhi

By [Hardeep](#) • May 9, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20090509/summer-in-delhi/>

The summer season in Delhi is one of scorching heat with temperature running into forties (degree centigrade), and of hot air blowing (called [loo](#)). Its difficult to venture out into the sun even for five minutes. Plants, especially outdoor ones, need a lot of water and care.

However even in this weather there are some beautiful flowers that do not dry up - its amazing how Mother Nature is able to create such a treat. Seasons change, but flowers are simply replaced by other flowers.



Yellow Yellow dirty fellow :-)

Flowering in Summer Zoomed

India Gate

By [Hardeep](#) • May 29, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20090529/india-gate/>

India Gate is a war memorial situated at New Delhi, India. Since India's independence, India Gate has become the site of the Indian Army's Tomb of the Immortal Soldier, known as the *Amar Jawan Jyoti*. Want to share some of my photos of the memorial below.



India Gate - traffic zooming by

India Gate - going for a shower

India Gate - up close

Unlike the rest of this blog, these images are copyright and all rights reserved for now. In future, they may be released under the same license as the rest of the blog.

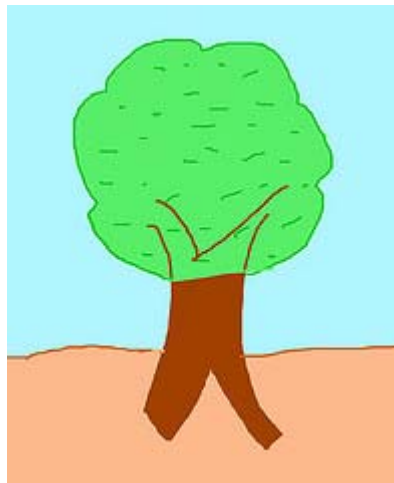
Making letter portraits

By [Hardeep](http://blog.hardeep.name/general/20090620/letterportraits/) • June 20, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/general/20090620/letterportraits/>



Having been impressed by letter portraits (see right), I wanted to figure out how to do them myself. In addition, I have shown you a lot of my own photos on this blog, without making the readers any wiser on how to do stuff. Better late than never, they say - so lets get started.

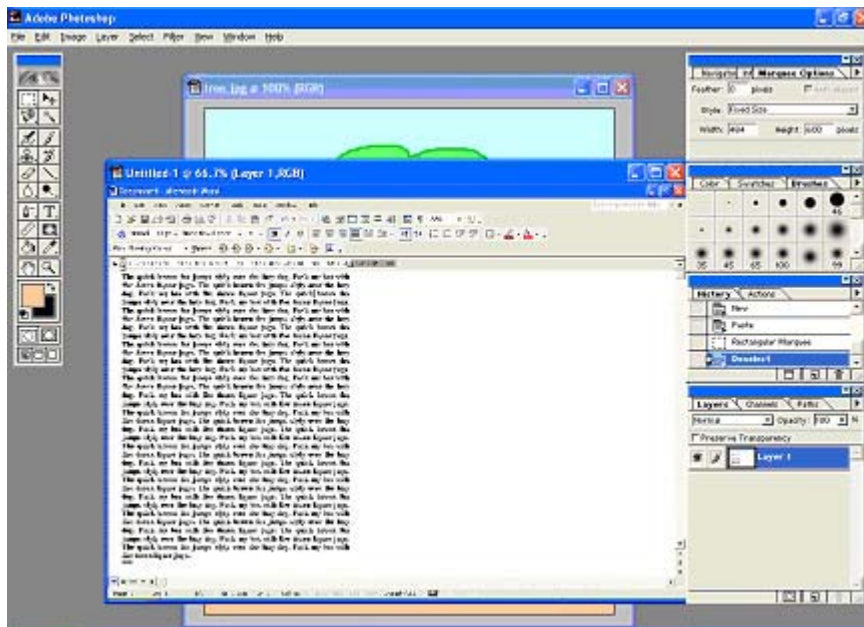
Choose a photo that you want to convert. Not every photo is a good candidate: the photo should be simple, not having a lot of detail. A bigger size say 640 x 480 should be available, and should have some contrast. For the purpose of this tutorial we will use this tree:



The result may not look very good because the photo does not have a unique recognisable shape, but will work fine for this tutorial. You may want to try yourself with this better photo of Indian PM Manmohan Singh:



Step 1 is to open a word editor and type (or copy!) some text into it. It looks best if the text is related to the person whose photo portrait you are making. **Times new roman font is preferable, Size 14, Bold.** Set the zoom to 70% for good results. Take a screen print using Alt-Print Screen key on your keyboard, and bring into Photoshop. The result looks something like this:

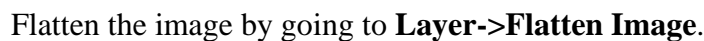


Now crop to retain the text, and copy-paste multiple times to achieve the size you need.

Moving over to the main photo (the tree), go to **Window->Show Channels**. Click on each channel one by one, and see which one has the highest contrast. Retain that one, and delete the others:



Now go back to **Window->Layers**, and from the blending mode (upper left corner where it says Normal), select **Screen**. Things should look like this:



What you want to do after this is up to you. You may want to do **Image->Adjust->Threshold** for complete B&W look. For, as for example with the PM photo above, you may need to do some cleanup using the Eraser tool for a 'clean' look.

If all this is too much work, being a lazy person like me - try this website: <http://lunatic.no/img2ashtml.php>. Upload a photo, and it creates a colored text portrait. Its beautiful and you can choose the characters. Take a screenshot (using Alt-Print Screen) of the result and crop in Photoshop, to save as an image.

If something is hard to follow, please post in comments and I will simplify. The Manmohan Singh photo is by 'ahinsajain' <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ahinsajain/2492752822/>.

Creating a 'difference' in portraits

By [Hardeep](#) • July 4, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/general/20090704/portraits-ii/>

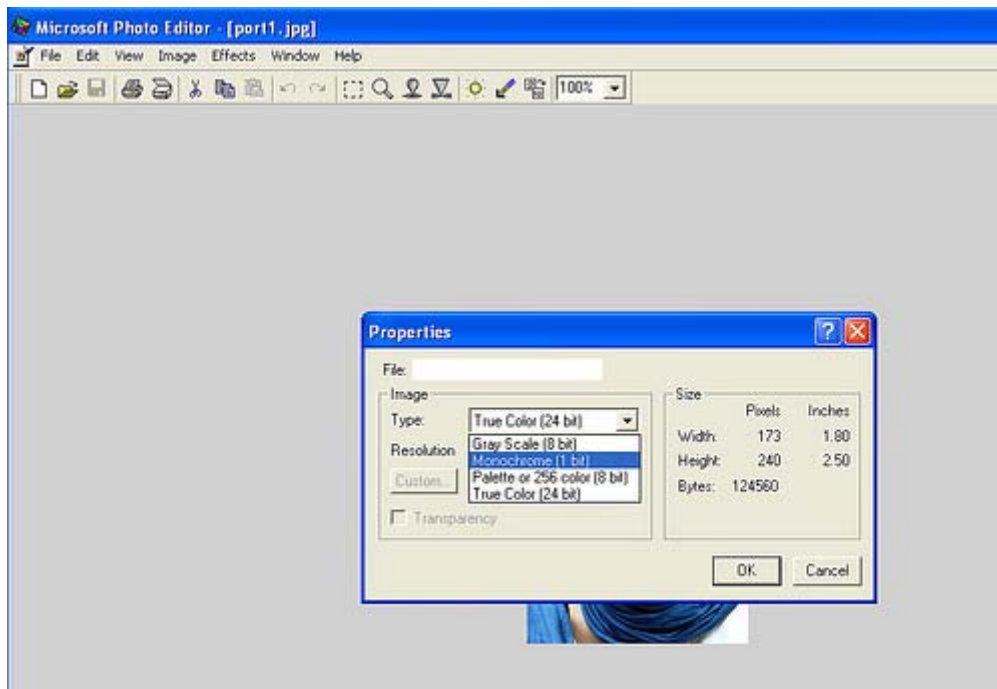


I was reading a magazine where each article had the photo of the author besides it, but in a unique way: looking like something like on the right.

How to get this effect yourself? I will show you today.

In addition to Photoshop you need Microsoft Photo Editor to get this effect. You may have this already on your system, if you have MS Office or you may not - it has been discontinued by Microsoft. If you do not, you can download it from [here](#) or here: <http://www.brothersoft.com/microsoft-photo-editor-128651.html>.

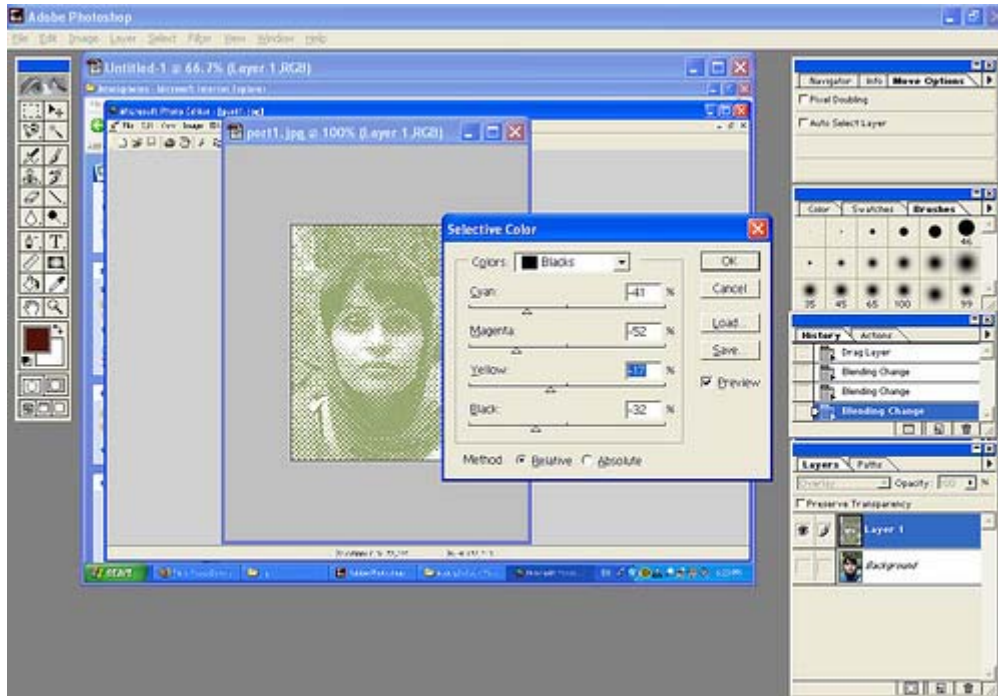
First, open the photo in Microsoft Photo Editor, and then go to **File->Properties**. In the 'Type' field select Monochrome (1 bit) from the drop-down, and press Ok. Save the image.



Microsoft Photo Editor

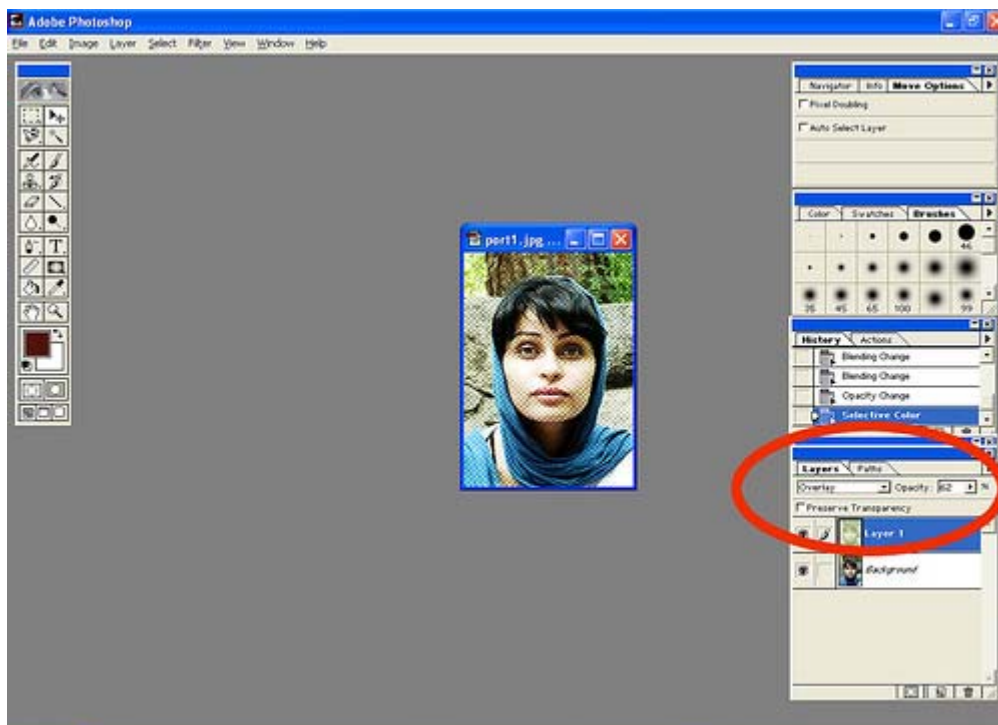
Second, open the original photo in Photoshop (or any other photo editing tool like GIMP). Also open the photo modified through the photo editor. Drag the modified photo over the original, as to form a new layer on top.

Third, (for the modified image layer) bring up the Selective Color panel, by clicking on **Image->Adjust->Selective Color**. For 'Colors', select 'Black' from the drop-down - and choose suitable values for the sliders (or as shown below in the screenshot).



Photoshop

Fourth, select a suitable blending type from the layers window, and suitable Opacity which suits. For this image, we used 'Overlay' and 55%.



Blending

Save the image - flatten it before saving if you want, and you are done. If there is a way to do this without using Microsoft Photo Editor, please post comments.

There are variations possible, if you prefer. One is to 'Invert' the original image in Photoshop before submitting it to the MS Photo Editor (by going into **Image->Adjust->Invert**) and then proceeding as described.

The other is to use only the unicolor image produced by the MS Photo Editor, without blending it with the original. You could use a plain single color layer as the lower one, and do the selective color on the other.



Variation I

Variation II

Photo by Hamed Saber

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/hamed/590034637/>

Of famous backgrounds

By [Hardeep](#) • July 11, 2009 <http://blog.hardeep.name/images/20090711/backgs/>

This photo was never intended for my blog: I never considered it quality enough - but lets start at the beginning.

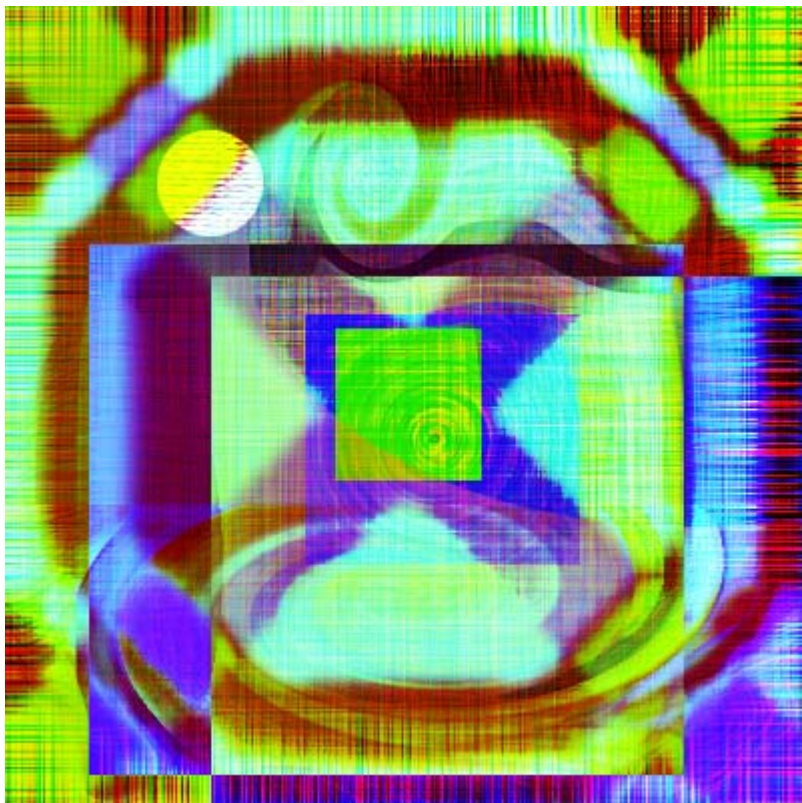
I saw that computer generated art is quite popular on Flickr - so I said why not? I spent all of 5 minutes in creating a piece of 'art'. When finished, to me it looked okay but nothing great. So I uploaded it.



Background I

To me it looks like sound waves emanating from a beating drum. What does it look like to you?

Next day I was surprised to see that the photo had become my most popular photograph. Above in popularity some photos which I had spent hours 'creating'. Strange is life, they say. So encouraged, I made some more photos in the same way, but this time spending a lot more time to make the result more beautiful. Whether I have been successful is for you to decide.



A collage of colors



Foreign



About the author...

The author **Hardeep Singh** is a software project manager by profession, MBA (Finance) by education and a photographer by hobby. He holds the ISO 9000 auditor and ITIL (Foundation) certifications, and is a Linux enthusiast.

He blogs at **Digital Wealth** <http://blog.hardeep.name> on a range of topics from Computers, to Finance, to Photography and Religion. The name Digital Wealth represents knowledge in a digital form.

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