## Fancy Frames Using The
## Fill Opacity = 0% PhotoShop® Trick



**ClipSafari.com** has a wide selection of line art ornate frames. After experimenting with several of them, I've found a way to use these clip art frame designs to make very fancy borders, which could be used to frame a portrait photograph or title page.

They're very easy and fun to do, and the tutorial will give you a chance to try out a bunch of PhotoShop filters and effects you probably haven't used before. Here are step-by-step instructions.

After you finish the tutorial, download the **Fancy Frames Collection**, a set of finished frames I made using three different clip art designs. Also work through the **LearnFrom3FrameExamples.pdf** to steal the tricks I used to make them.



**Want more free activities, tips, and graphics?  Look in the Attic!**

1. Download one of the antique frames from **ClipSafari.com**. You can see them all by typing **vintage frames** into the **Search** box. A design with fairly thick lines that completely enclose spaces is easier to work with. If there are broken lines, you'll need to first connect the broken spaces.
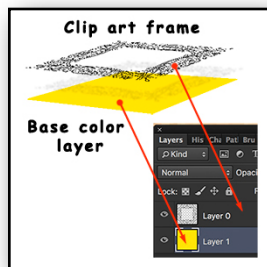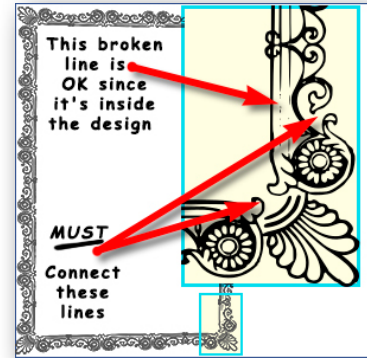


2. Open the frame clip art in PhotoShop®. Add a new layer <u>below</u> the frame, and fill it with your chosen base color. I used a golden yellow for two of the frames, a silvery blue-gray as an alternative color for one frame, and a wood grain pattern for the flowery folk art design.

3. (Here's where you need unbroken lines!) Using the **Magic Wand** set for **Contiguous**, select the area **inside** the frame clip art on its layer, then switch to the base color layer with the selection still active. **Delete** the central area.
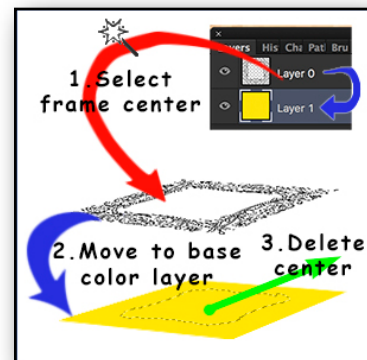


4. Depending on the design, you may want to leave the original rectangle boundaries for the outer edges. Or, if the design has an interesting and continuous outer edge, select the excess outer area(s) on the frame clip art layer, again switch to the lower base color layer, and delete.
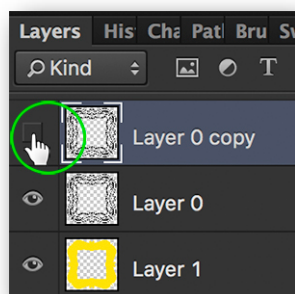
5. At this point, you should have a layer in the base color with the frame opening, and above that the layer with the original frame clip art. **Duplicate** the frame clip art layer, and for now, click the **eye icon** on the duplicate frame clip art layer to **make it invisible**.
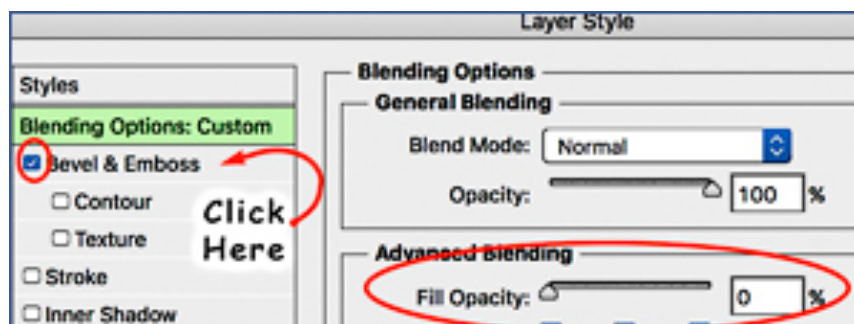
6. Here comes the tricky part! Be sure you have moved back to the original frame clip art layer before proceeding. Either **double-click** the frame clip art layer, or **rt-click** the frame clip art layer and choose **Blending Options** from the menu that opens. Set the **Fill Opacity** to 0.



Check the little square beside **Bevel and Emboss**, click on the words **Bevel and Emboss** to open its dialog, and adjust the settings until you like the effect on the base color layer.
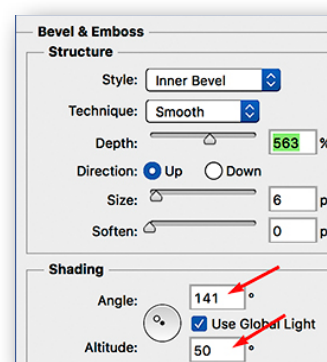
### *What did we do?*

If you have used **Blending Options** before, you probably have been puzzled by the two opacity sliders, one in the **General Blending** area



simply labeled **Opacity,** and the second one below that in **Advanced Blending** labeled **Fill Opacity**. The **Opacity** slider does exactly what you would expect: it controls how transparent the layer is, and lets you set a layer for any appearance between invisible, through various degrees of translucent, to solid.
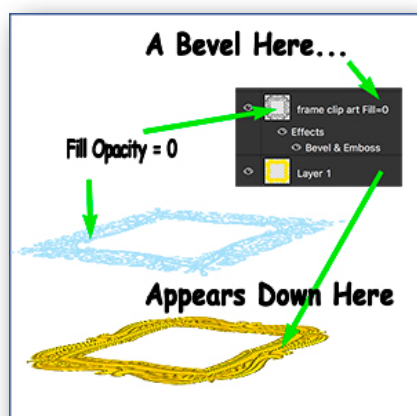
The **Fill Opacity** slider does the same thing... and something more. Even when it is set at 0% to make the contents of the layer invisible, all layer effects you have set will affect the layer

below. So in effect, we have used **the lines of the frame clip art** as a **pattern** to cause **beveled** and **embossed areas** to appear in the base color layer below it.

7. Click the **eye icon** on the duplicate frame clip art layer you made earlier so that it's visible again. This will display the (probably black) lines of the original design on top of the embossed image. Either **double-click** the duplicate frame clip art layer, or **rt-click** the layer and choose **Blending Options** from the menu. Reduce the **Opacity** so that the black lines look like shadows or shading. Also try the effect of various **Blending Modes** (Soft Light, Overlay, Multiply, etc.). Click **OK** once you like the results.
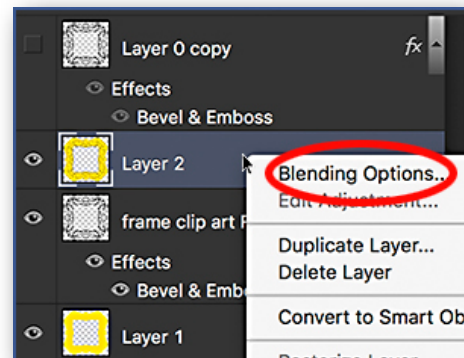
## Making A Merged Layer

Holding down the **option** (Mac) or **alt** (Windows) key, **rt-click** any visible layer (except **Text** layers), and choose **Merge Visible**. This action should create a merged layer, but leave the other layers unchanged.
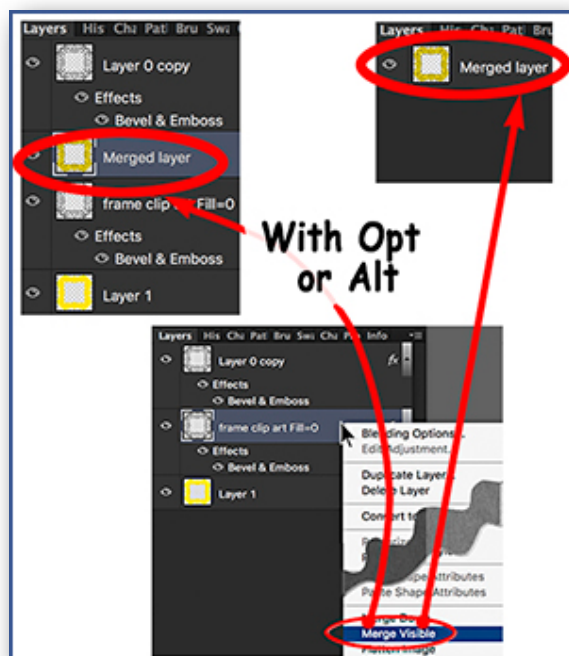
Alternately, **save** before doing the merge, don't use the **option** (Mac) or **alt** (Windows) key, **rt-click a visible layer**, choose **Merge Visible**, and then **save with a new name**. (The alternate procedure will collapse the layers down to one, so you need the first **save** to retain a copy of them.)

Label the merged layer **Merged solid areas**, and be sure you don't lose this layer while decorating the frame. You may want to lock it!

**Customizing The Frame**

From this point, you can get creative and make multiple versions of the frame with different decoration added. By coloring, styling, and texturing individual areas on **duplicates** of the merged layer, you can create a series of different frame images. **Be sure to retain the original merged layer.** You'll need it to select its solid-color areas.

For each frame variation:

•   Make a **duplicate** of the merged layer (let's name it **My Custom Frame**), then move back to the **Merged solid areas** layer.

•   Select some solid areas on the **Merged solid areas** layer that you want to decorate, move to the **My Custom Frame** layer, and use filters, fills, and/or pattern fills to get the effect you want on your selection.

•   Repeat by selecting a different set of solid areas of the **Merged solid areas** layer, moving to the **My Custom Frame** layer, and experimenting with different filters and effects.

You can apply adjustments like **Hue/Saturation** to a set of selected areas. Another option is to duplicate the decorated layer and try out various **Blending Modes**, then use opacity settings on the blended layer to control the amount of the effect.

You also can use the **Styles** palette, but you need to do one extra step. If you simply select parts of the frame design, go to the layer you are decorating, and apply a style, the style ignores your selection and appear on the entire frame.

The way around this is to **Copy** the selection, move to the layer you're working on, and **Paste**. Instead of pasting into the working layer, this will create a new layer just above it containing the selected areas and

lined up with the rest of the design. Apply a style to that partial layer, and it will only appear where you intended.

You can duplicate the partial layer, and try another style on it. Then by turning layers on and off, and creating multiple merged layers, you can get many different frame variations starting with a single frame clip art. Rename the merged layers because you'll want to be able to quickly find your finished frames and save a .jpg or .png version to use in your projects.

With all of these options, the possibilities truly are without limit. And there are **fourteen pages** of vintage frames to play with on **Clip Safari**!

### Ready To Use

I've gathered a set of finished fancy frames, ready to use, in the folder labeled **Fancy Frames Collection**. Also take a look at the files I made these from, the three .psd files in the **Three Frames** folder, and read comments about these files in **LearnFrom3FrameExamples.pdf**. By turning various layers on and off you can learn a lot about these effects.

You also may stumble upon a new variation for a frame. If you invent one you like, use **Save As...**, set the file format to **.png**, and give your creation a new name.