

9 Shiny surfaces

Introducing... Plastic Wrap



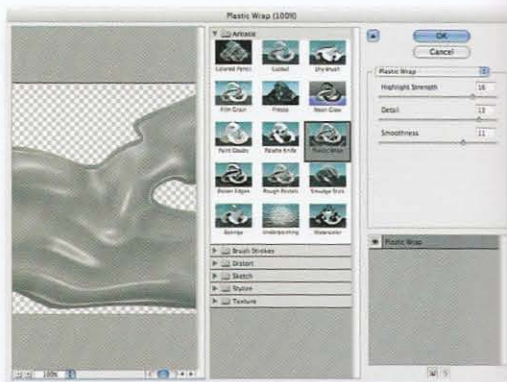
THE PLASTIC WRAP FILTER is one of the most useful special effects Photoshop has to offer. Use it to make anything glisten – from beads of sweat on a dancer's forehead to visceral internal organs (see the Case Study on the following pages). Oh, and if you really want to, you can also use it to draw plastic wrapping.

The illustration above, for *MacUser* magazine, needed the figures to look as if they were encased in plastic. And, of course, I used Plastic Wrap to do this. But I also used it on the sitting figure itself, to make him more shiny; all the figures were modeled in Poser, and needed to look more plastic-like.

In this walkthrough, we're going to use Plastic Wrap to create a syrup spill out of a jar. Exactly the same technique could be used to draw coffee, blood or just about anything that dribbles.



1 I photographed this jar sitting on a wooden surface. Just about any container would do: rotate a stock photo of a mug on its side for the same effect.



4 You'll find the Plastic Wrap filter under the Artistic section of the Filters menu. Drag the sliders until you get the effect you want.



7 Changing the color of the water turns it into different liquids. Here, I've used Hue/Saturation to darken it and add an orange tint – just right for our spilled syrup.

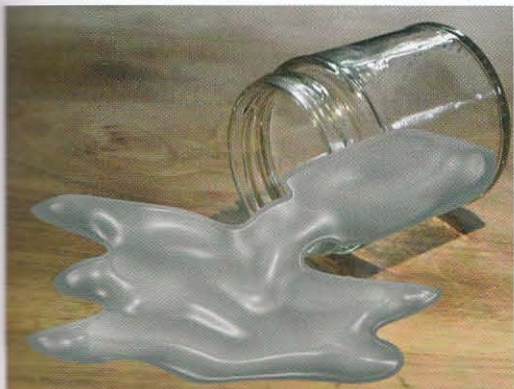
How to Cheat in Photoshop CS5



2 On a new layer, paint the spill in mid gray, with a hard edged brush. Try to imagine how the liquid would pour through the opening of the jar and lie on the table.



3 Use the Dodge and Burn tools to add some random shading to the layer. This is simply a matter of practise; you may have to adjust the shading and reapply the filter.



5 Here's the result of applying the filter. If it doesn't look right, Undo and then fiddle with the shading, then use **⌘ F** **ctrl F** to apply the Plastic Wrap filter again.



6 When we change the mode of the layer from Normal to Hard Light, all the gray disappears - leaving us with just the highlights and shadows. Perfect! Instant water!



8 To complete the effect, let's add some refraction. I've taken a copy of the background image, and applied the Wave filter to it to create a slight rippling effect.



9 The distorted layer is masked out everywhere except where it overlaps the syrup: this gives us a convincing distortion of the neck of the jar, which adds to the effect.



HOT TIP

Adding the shading in step 3 is a little tricky: you've really no idea of knowing how it's going to look until after the Plastic Wrap filter is applied. The trick is to be conservative with the Dodge and Burn tools, keeping the effect subtle. Only a small variation in tone is enough to make Plastic Wrap do its job.

SHORTCUTS

MAC WIN BOTH