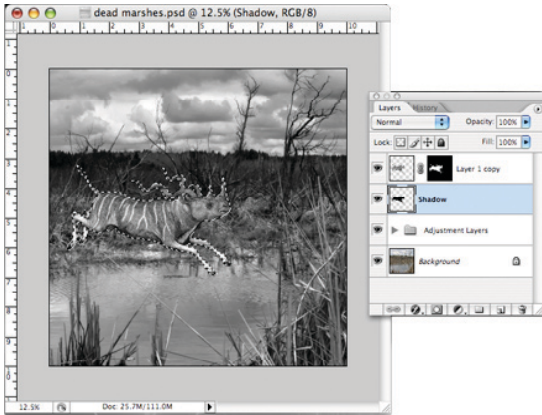


Carrie's Shadow Formula



Step One:

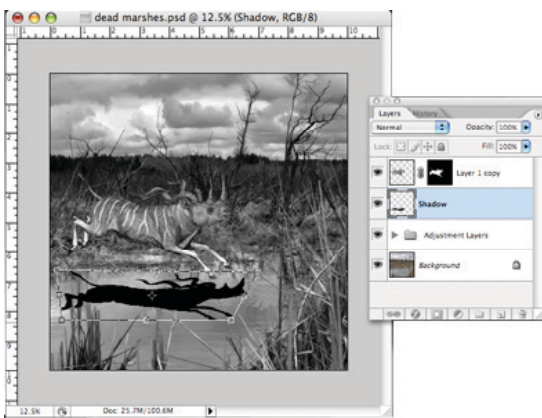
First of all, make a new layer under the layer you will be adding a shadow to. To do so, select Layer > New Layer. Name the new layer 'Shadow.' Move the layer below your Object Layer if necessary.

Step Two:

Load the object layer as a selection. Control+Click the thumbnail of the layer (or layer mask). Or go to Select > Load Selection, then select the layer or layer mask as appropriate.

Step Three:

With this new active selection, make sure you are on the 'Shadow' layer and fill the selection with black. You can use any painting tool including the Paint Bucket or Paint Brush.



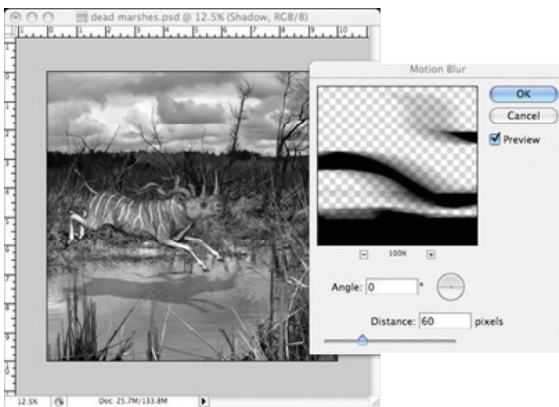
Step Four:

By now you will have a layer named Shadow with a black shape that is identical to the Object Layer. Since you are looking for a 3-dimensional shadow and not 2-dimensional, there is still work to do.

Select Edit > Free Transform. Use the Control Key (Mac-Command Key) to freely edit the corners of the shadow until it is in the correct perspective as the scene it belongs within.

Step Five:

Set the Shadow layer to the layer blending mode Multiply. Use the layer Opacity to control the shadow's transparency. Look at other shadows within the image for hints.



Step Six:

The shadow by now may be partially transparent, but with sharp precise edges. Unless you are matching the light of very harsh lighting, shadows will have falloff around the edges. It is recommended that you add the Motion Blur filter to soften it. Select Filter > Blur > Motion Blur. The settings you use will depend on both the lighting in the image, and the resolution of the file. Keep the Angle at 90 degrees.

Step Seven:

From here you may continue to tweak the shape of the shadow using Free Transform. You may also use a Layer Mask to control where the shadow appears, as well as it's density in different areas. The Liquify command may come in very handy when dealing with an uneven surface such as water.



FINISHED!

Your shadow should add visual weight to the Object Layer within the composition. It should blend in naturally and match the Quality and Direction of Light within the scene. Be careful not to let it come before or after elements in the photo. (In this case, the reeds.) This definitely takes a while to get the hang of, so look at shadows in other photos for visual reference. Good luck!