

Getting Started

Ruth Esmé Mitchell captures images on her travels around the world and from everyday life. Here she translates photographs from her journey through London to create her Hackney Lights print. You can document any journey, be inspired by the places around you.



Take your picture

1

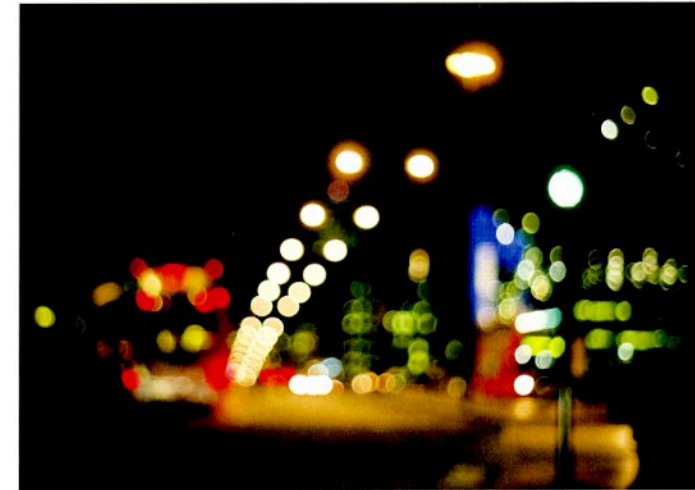
Ruth uses a digital SLR camera to capture her night photography. With the focus on manual she uses the bokeh technique to take her shots. Bokeh is Japanese in origin and refers to blur or a blurry quality.



Take your picture

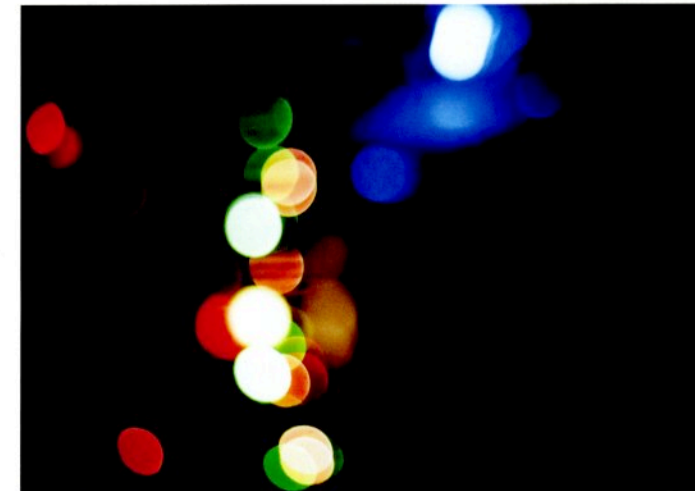
2

Bokeh is different from soft focus photography. In soft focus photography blurriness is added to the subject while the edges are retained in sharp focus, but with bokeh it is only an element of the image that is intentionally blurred. Bokeh is particularly effective at emphasizing certain points of light in the image.



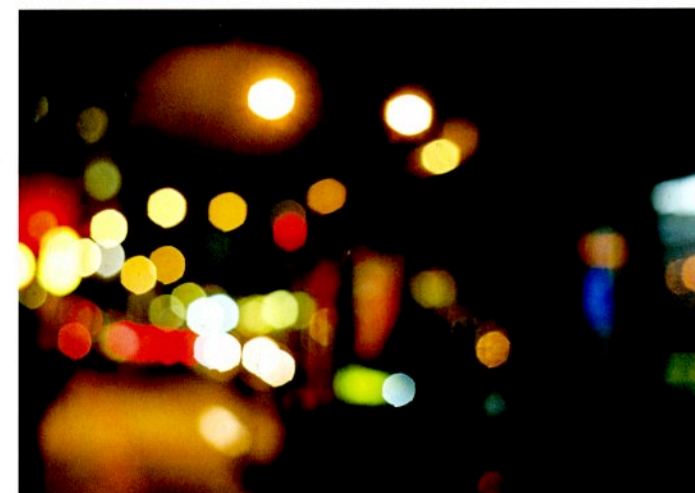
3

Using a digital SLR camera with a 50 mm lens, open up your lens's aperture to its widest setting. Lenses with low F numbers like 2.8, 2.0, 1.8, 1.4 and lower are the best choices for bokeh shots. This large aperture ensures that you have a nice shallow depth of field. Being close to your subject with a good distance between subject and background will help.



4

Take a series of varied photographs to experiment with this technique and you will achieve some stunning effects.



Cropping your photo

5

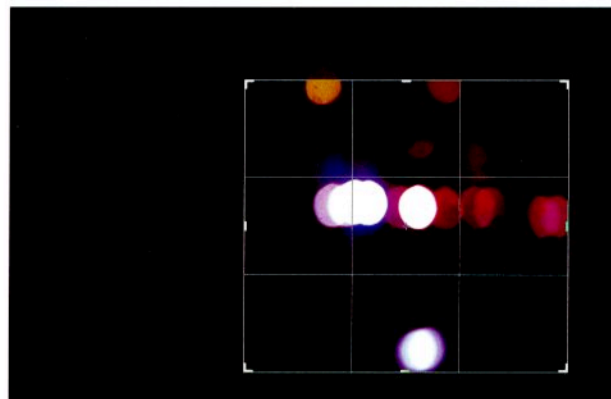
Use the USB cord to connect your camera to your computer, making sure the camera is turned on. Upload your photos from your camera to your computer.

Select and organise your pictures in your photo library.



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Select the Crop tool from the toolbar and make a selection ready to crop. Hit return to action the crop. This cropped image will now be made into the design.



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Before you start to build a pattern, spend a little time preparing your design by changing the scale and composing the image.

To do this first flip your image 90 degrees.

Image > Image Rotation 90 CW
Copy your image
Select > All
Edit > Copy

MC
ONC
RV
ONC

Building a pattern

8

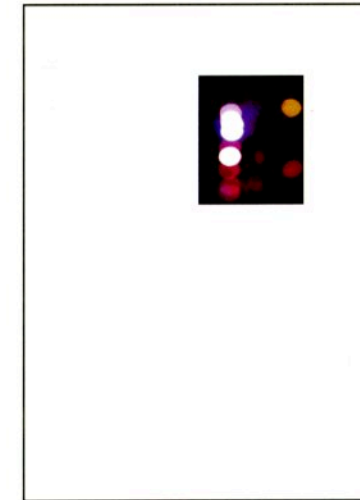
Open a new document sized 30 x 40 cm (12 x 16 in) at 300dpi

Edit > Paste

Now you need to reduce the size of the image and start to build up a pattern.

Select > All

Edit > Transform > Scale



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Continue to copy and paste your image to fill the canvas.

Compose the images to create a natural looking pattern.

With each image a new layer will be created which you can move around. Once you are happy with the arrangement, flatten your image.

Layer > Flatten Image



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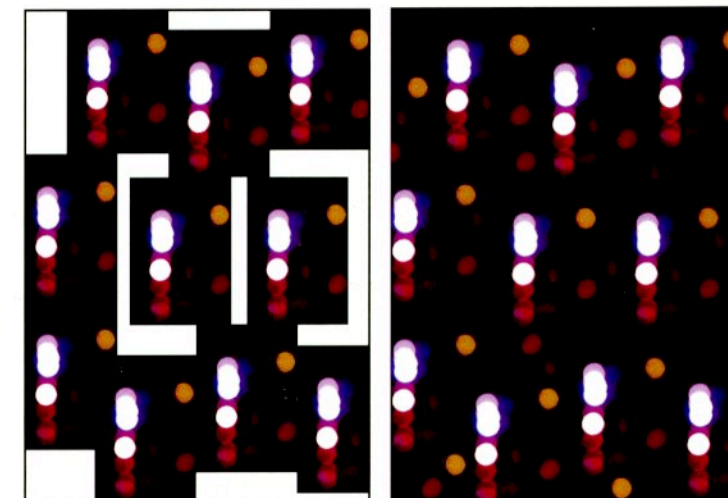
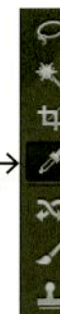
Now you are going to fill the white area. Select the Eyedropper tool from the toolbar.

Pick the dark background colour from one of the images to use as a fill. This colour becomes the foreground colour.

Select the Magic Wand, and with the Shift key held down select all the white areas.

Edit > Fill > Foreground Colour

Eyedropper Tool



Blending

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Next you will give depth to the design.

Duplicate the layer by dragging it down to the New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. With the top layer selected, slightly shift it with the Move tool to reveal the layer below.

Now go to the Blending Mode at the top of the Layers palette. A drop down menu will appear. Choose Screen. This will reveal the layer below.



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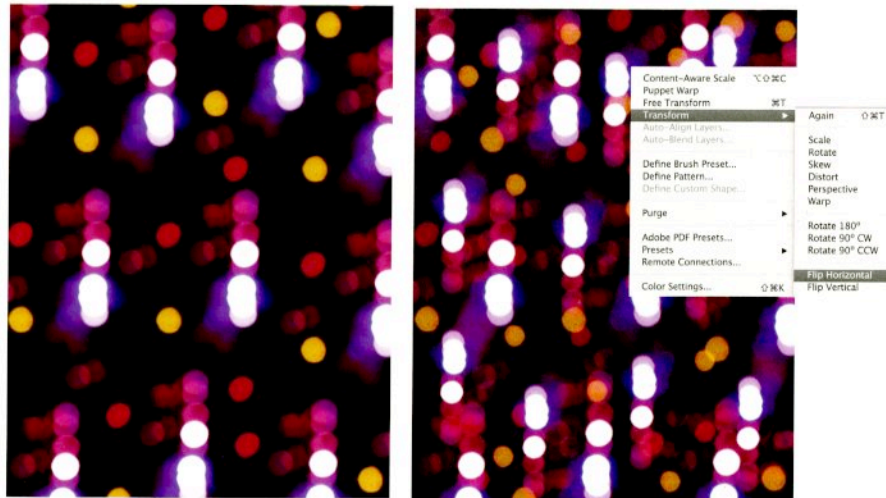
Now flip this layer in the opposite direction.

Edit Transform >

Flip Vertical

Flatten the two layers

Layer > Flatten Image



THE BASIC DESIGN IS COMPLETE!

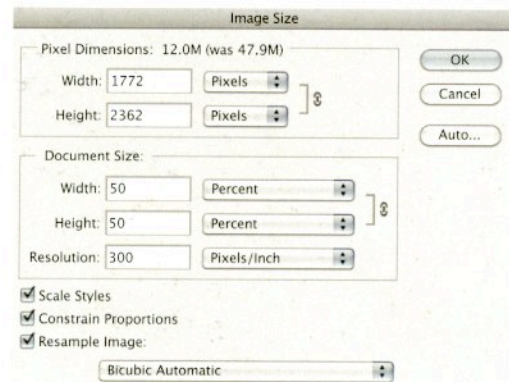
13

Begin to put the design into repeat using the Offset filter. Firstly remind yourself of the image size

Image > Image Size

In the document size put 50 percent in both Width and Height boxes. Jot down the pixel dimensions at the top of the dialogue box. In this case it is 1772 width x 2362 height.

Click Cancel to exit.



Mending

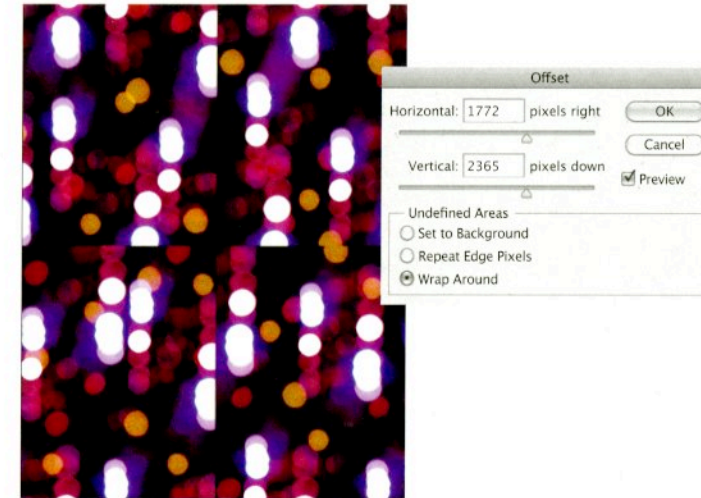
13

Filter > Other > Offset

Ensure that Wrap Around is selected in the Offset dialogue box.

In the new dialogue box put in the pixel dimensions you noted in the Horizontal and Vertical sliders. You will see your design cut into four and flipped.

Look at the outside edges that repeat with each other: the seams between the repeat sections now need mending.



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Try to keep the design looking as natural as possible. The best tool to mend the seams for this design is the Clone tool, which will retain the blurry effect of your pattern. You can use the Clone tool to copy one area to another using the Brush tool.

Select the Clone tool from the toolbar. In the Options bar select a large soft brush to simulate the soft dots in the design. Choose the area you want to clone and press the Alt/Option key to set the copy target point. Move the Clone tool onto the seam and start mending it.



Define pattern

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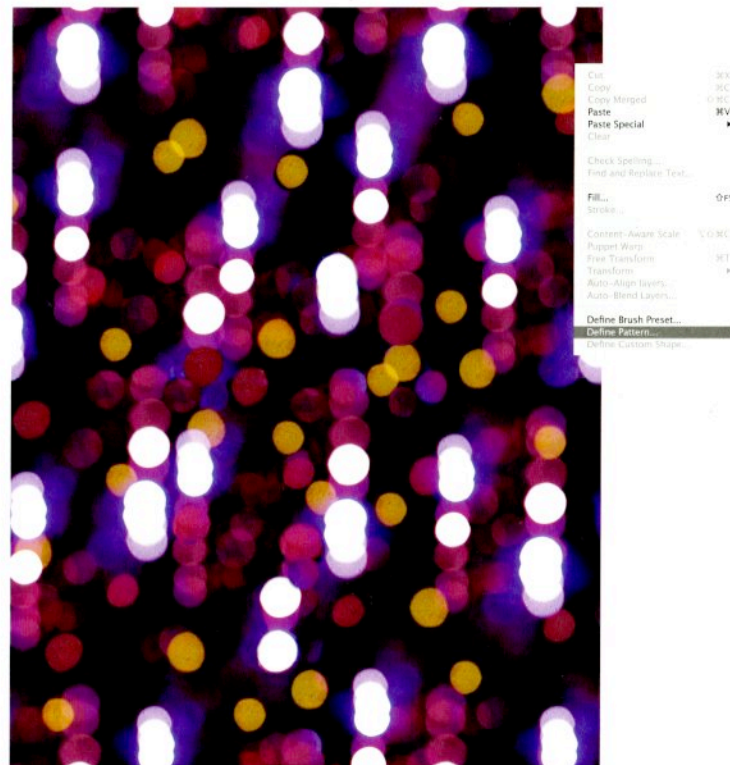
The mending of the seams for this design is fairly simple but take your time and make the design look continuous and natural. Once all the seams are mended your design is complete! Name and save your design.

Your design is ready to define as a pattern. You can enlarge or decrease the unit pattern before you finally define it as a pattern.

Image > Image Size

Our pattern repeat is 30 x 40 cm (11¾ x 15¾ in)

Edit > Define Pattern



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Name your pattern. At this stage it is good to check your repeat for any obvious seams or uneven areas. Open a larger document

Edit > Fill

In the Fill dialogue box, select Pattern and click on Custom Pattern to find your stored pattern. The last pattern shown will be the one you have just worked on. Check your repeat and if you find any uneven areas, go back to the original unit and mend the seams, then name your pattern to save your design unit, when you are happy with it.

