Placer County Photography Club
News Blast

August 2026

Composite Image—October's Assigned Subject

A Composite Image??

The Assigned Subject for October is a Composite Image. You will be allowed to submit one image in October and that image must be a Composite Image. Why, you ask? This Assigned Subject serves several purposes:

- It is creative.
- It takes you outside your comfort zone.
- It stretches your imagination.
- It helps you learn new skills.
- It is fun to do.
- It might come in handy sometime.
- Seeing everyone's composite interpretations will be eye-opening, awe-inspiring, and instructive.
- Limit is one image because we have a presentation, and, based on the club's past experience with composites, the discussions will be lively, animated, and hilarious.

Learning to create a composite image is the purpose of this exercise so everyone starts at the same place, using the same images to create their composites.

What Is Composite Photography?

Composite photography is the technique of merging two or more separate photographs into a single cohesive image using software like Adobe Photoshop. Composites are also used to combine multiple exposures, to create panoramas, to focus stack, or just to have fun creating something unique or imaginary.

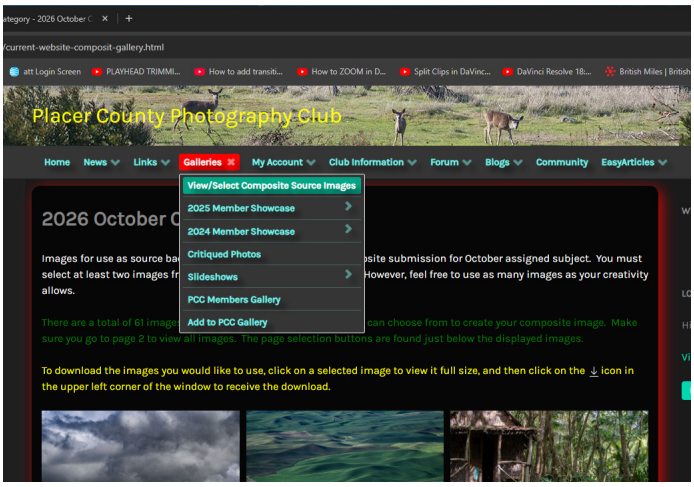
Composites are useful in many ways. If you want to create a special effect; if you want to create a memory; if you want to create a poster or greeting card; if you need to fix flawed elements like a dull sky, replace a subject who blinked, or add new elements to the photograph. ***See page 2 for examples and page 3 for how to create composites.***

The Rules

The rules for this Assigned Subject are very different from how we normally create and submit images so we're giving you a two month notice to plan, learn, and practice.

- You cannot use your own images to create the composite.
- You must create your composite image using only images provided by the PCPC (see below).
- You must use parts of at least two images that you have downloaded from the PCPC website.
- You cannot use any AI generated images as a part of your composite.
- Submit only one image named: AS-Title-Your Name.
- Use your imagination and have fun!

There are 61 images (backgrounds, subjects, and everything in between) on the website. Go to https://placerphotoclub.org. Once you are logged in, select ***Galleries*** (see image below) and at the top of the drop down menu, select ***View/Select Composite Source***. Review and download any or all of the images to create your composite. There are two pages of photos from which to choose. Scroll to the bottom to access page 2.



Using Composites

This challenge is not only fun and creative, learning how to make composites can be very rewarding and useful to your photography. The following images are examples of how composites can be used and created. None of these composites uses any of the images that will be used for this exercise. And so that you won't think this is nonsensical, meaningless, or a waste of your time, these examples illustrate some practical uses for composites.

Posters or Greeting Cards

The image above is a composite of 4 images: the house and clouds are the main image with the moon, lightning bolt, and owl from three separate images. There are some AI generated elements added but please note that AI generated elements are not allowed for this challenge.

Focus Stacking

The image above is a composite of 15 images created using focus stacking. In order to get the entire flower in tack sharp focus because I used a macro lens with a very shallow depth of focus, I used my camera's built-in Focus Shift Shooting mode, which automatically captures a series of images by shifting focus distances and then I merged all images together on a computer leaving only the in focus parts of each image.

Portraits

Sometimes it's necessary to create a composite when you're taking family photos and somebody blinks or one person moves. This is a composite of 3 images and I replaced the background with a sky because the background was distracting.

This was an enagement shoot and there actually were rose petals being tossed but because of where the rose petals were falling, I had to select the best portrait and then add rose petals from other images which I kept in color while making the rest of the image monochrome.

Combining Images

The image above is a composite of 3 images to create a more interesting photograph.

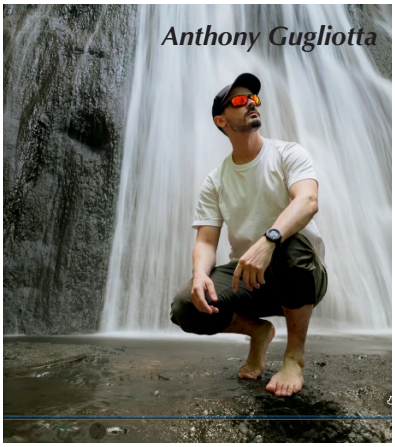
Creating Composites

Briefly, to make a composite photo, choose a background image and one or more photos with subjects or other elements you want to include. Cut out your subject(s) and other elements, place them onto the background as a new layer(s), use a layer mask to clean the edges, and adjust colors, shadows, and tones so everything blends naturally.

Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom are considered the standard for finishing images regardless of what kind of camera you use. If you need guidance on creating composites, Julieanne Kost, who has been explaining the ins and outs of Photoshop and Lightroom for 30 years and is the Senior Digital Imaging Evangelist at Adobe, is one of the best sources for information about those programs. Much of her content is free, including the 25 minute YouTube Video called Compositing. Please note: this video will start in the middle so you will have to drag the slider to the left to start it over from the beginning.

Julieanne's blog (click here) offers extensive information and guidance about using Photoshop and Lightroom as well.

Another photographer who creates tutorials about composites is Anthony Gugliotta. Here is a link to his video on composites. He is a photographer and full-time content creator from Toronto who posts how-to videos on YouTube.



Finding Resources

There are lots of resources on line to help you with creating composites. These days, Google and AI can summarize what you're looking for quickly. You can't use AI to create your composites but you sure can use AI to figure out how to create them. If you use software other than Photoshop or Lightroom, you will need to consult the manual for that software to learn how to create composite images. There are also some on-line sources for finishing photos and creating composites. I have not tested these sites and although they claim to be free, there may ultimately be charges so beware. The three I found are:

Canva: https://www.canva.com/photo-editor/
Photopea: https://www.photopea.com
GIMP: https://www.gimp.org

Links to YouTube videos on creating composites using Canva, Photopea, and GIMP.

Canva:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iy-4WBEjSNI
Photopea:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVham3FUaIg
GIMP:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJiBDfGr18o
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7gOieyvIGE

Please remember that the PCPC does not endorse any of these photo editing programs. They are listed here for those members who do not use Photoshop or Lightroom or other software that allows compositing and who may want to try them out.

Club Details

Website: PlacerPhotoClub.org.
Email: placercameraclub@gmail.com
PCPC Board Members (2026):

President ----------Dick Bosworth
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Do you have questions about photography or suggestions about what you want to see blasted out or in the regular newsletter? Please send them to: pcphotoclubnewsletter@gmail.com