

**USING ACTIONS TO TRACK YOUR STEPS** – Do you ever wish you could remember every single filter you used when an artistic image turned out **really** well? If you answered yes, then you'll love this tutorial.

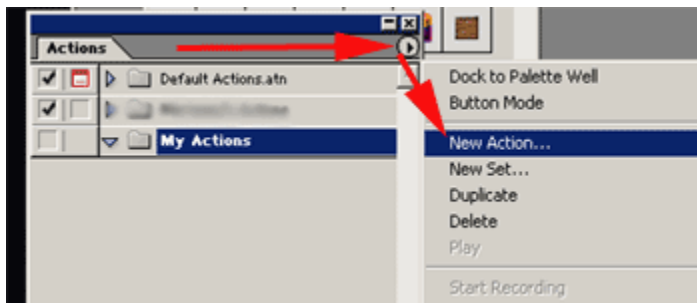
I use this trick every time I start a new art project. Not only does it let you know what filters you used but it shows the EXACT settings of each one! You can even print them out when done (see the end of the tutorial).

1. Open an image. It is VERY important to have an image open BEFORE you begin. If you do not, your Action will open the same image you're about to work on every time you use your new action.

2. Open your Actions Palette. If your Actions Palette isn't showing, go to the top tool bar and click on Window>Actions. If there is already a check mark by "Actions", then your Actions Palette is hiding under another palette. This can often happen so just move your palettes around and look for it.

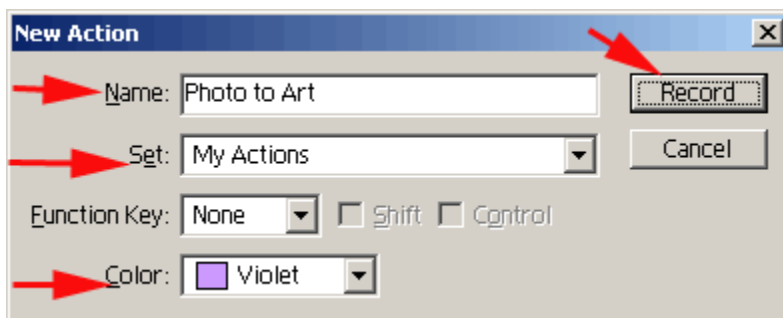
Click on folder in the Actions Palette. You might only have one called "Default". (If you'd like to create your own personal Actions Folder, refer to my EZ-ACTION tutorial).

Now click the arrow directly to the right of the Actions tab. A drop down menu will appear. Choose "new action".



The following box will come up. No information is actually required but entering information will make it easier to find your Action. I suggest the following:

First, name the Action something that will identify the procedure you're about to perform. For example, if you are going to play with filters, you might type "Image to Art". Next, the "Set" refers to which folder you would like your Action to appear in. Again, it doesn't matter where you put it. Just make a note of it. Next is "function key". This is only a good idea if you plan to use this action repeatedly. Next is "color". I assigned Purple so I can find my action at a glance. Finally, click RECORD. **It will appear that nothing happens.**



3. At the bottom of the Actions Palette, note that the "Record" icon has turned RED.



Now, go to your image and start experimenting! EVERY single step you perform will be "recorded".

**NOTE:** During your creative process, don't worry if you change your mind about a filter or anything you might want to do to the image. Don't click the STOP button. Just cancel the filter or whatever function you were doing and proceed. You will be able to delete any steps you don't want from your Action later.

4. When your image is as you'd like it to be, go to the bottom of the Actions Palette and click on the "Stop" icon. DO NOT SAVE THE IMAGE first. If you do, it becomes part of your Action which you don't want.



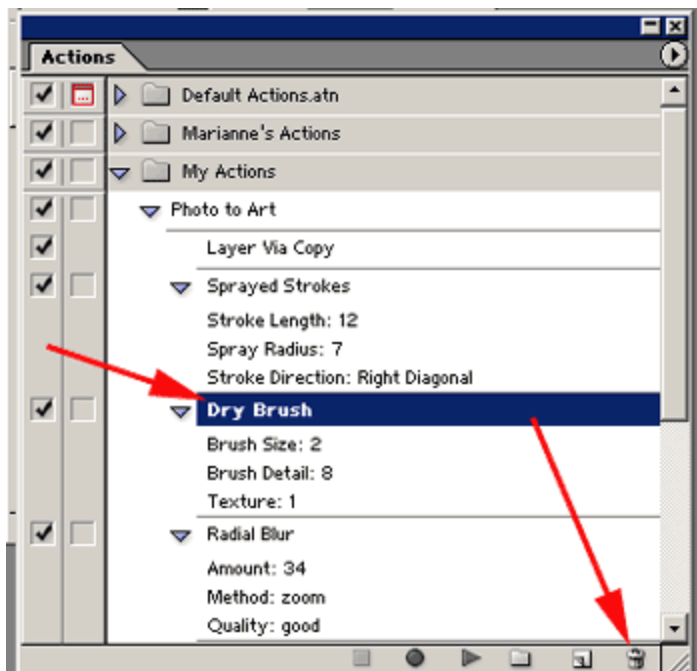
5. Now test your Action. Open another image. Go to the Actions Palette and look for the Action you just created. Click on the name you assigned to your action. If you put the action in a folder, you will need to open the folder first and then click on the action. Now press "Play". It is an arrow that looks similar to any tape player. Voila! Instant Art!



6. Now let's take a look at the steps in the Action. First locate your action. Note that there is an arrow to the left of the name. Click on the arrow and all the steps will spill out. Each step will also have an arrow. Click on it to find the exact settings of that step!

You might have noticed that the action listed even the steps you decided not to use. You may have started to use a filter but then didn't like the effect or tried a blending mode that you didn't keep. You can leave it that way or you can delete these steps from your Action.

To delete specific steps, click on the one you that you cancelled during the action or one that you might not want and do this: Highlight it and drag it into the Trash. Or just highlight it and click on the Trash Can.



You can also have your action stop at certain points and alter your settings. Look to the left of each step. You will see two gray boxes. The one to the far left will probably have a check mark in it. This allows the step to take place. If you uncheck this box, the step will not take place. The box to the right of the Check Mark box is my favorite. If you click inside this box, you'll see a little icon. When this shows, your action will stop and allow you to make changes. When I get a new action from the web, I usually turn this box on so I can see EXACTLY what is happening and also change settings if I want. Cool, huh?!

**FINALLY....**go to the next page to see how to print out a text version of your Action.

**PRINTING ACTIONS:**

As explained in my EZ-Action tutorial, you can also print out the steps of your new Action. Just click on the desired Action Set. Hold the Control and Alt key (command & Option) and press the little arrow at the top right of the Actions Palette. Choose "Save Actions". Note that it will be saved as a .txt file. If the extension say .atn, then you didn't hold the keys as directed.

REMEMBER WHERE YOU SAVE IT! (write down the location). Find the file, double click to open and print!