



Victoria Kelly

Don't Let Your Photos Go...

# Undressed

One of the best selling items I offer in my studio is the senior "hotshots" album with favorite images from their session. These books are sized 8x8, contain 10 sides and up to 20 images, mounted into a self-mount book from the "Elements" line at Finao.

My first efforts in creating these books were time-consuming and an ordeal to produce. I spent hours reviewing digital scrapping websites and building an impressive graphics library of brushes, papers, flourishes and the like. It didn't take me long to realize that I had accumulated so much "stuff" that it was next to impossible to remember what papers could complement which brushes and into what folder had I put my favorite flourishes. And, since my time is my money, I figured I'd better come up with a way to make a custom book for every senior in 45 minutes or less.

And then the cavalry appeared. I came across a great tool called PhotoDUDS from Beth Forester in West Virginia. As a master photographer with a large senior clientele, she has collaborated with a designer to come up with a fantabulous collection of graphics, brushes, templates and ideas.

## 45 minutes

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My first PhotoDUDS purchase was the "Kork" collection. My criteria for deeming this product an A+ on the Victoria Kelly "what have you done for me lately" scale was whether or not I could create a 10-side senior book using ONLY the contents of the collection. It had to be visually stimulating, easy to use, and created in 45 minutes or less. (Now, mind you, this 45 minutes DOES NOT include the time I spend in retouching and readying the images for the book. Keep in mind that the book is an add on to a sale and the retouching time has already been allocated in the initial print order.)

Just as there are many different ways to accomplish a single task in Photoshop, there are many different ways to design a book. In a nutshell, here's my process:

My books are sized 8x8, so I create 5 empty documents sized at 16x8 with a guide set to vertical at 8 inches. As I create the documents, I name each one of them with where it will go in the book, i.e., "p0203, p0405" and so on. The first and last single pages are created as one double spread labeled "p0110".

For this example I'm using 3 of Anna's images and one of the newest PhotoDUDS collections, "Heraldry". I open each image that will be used in the book and begin dropping them on the pages where I think I want them to be placed. This is just an exercise to get the images on the spreads and ready for the next step.

When I've accounted for all the images to be used in the book, I begin refining the placement and sizing the images on the pages. At this point, the theme of the book becomes clear (yep, you've caught me...I very rarely know what a book is going to look like when I start the design process. It's how my creative mojo works.) and I've decided which PhotoDUDS collection I'm going to use for the embellishments: Kork, Bohemian, Memento or one of the other senior collections that are available.

Believe it or not, at this point the bulk of the design work is complete. I work with thumbnails of the spreads, open the backgrounds folder for whatever collection I'm using and begin dropping the backgrounds onto the bottom layer of the spread. Once I'm happy with the backgrounds, the embellishments to be used to enhance the images and the pages pretty much set themselves.

I customize every book with the senior's name, year of graduation and high school. Each senior that comes into the studio is required to complete a "411" sheet that includes their name/nickname, school and other pertinent information. There are a bazillion ways to spell "Lizzie" and you certainly don't want to remake a book because of a spelling error!

Each PhotoDUDS collection makes it easy to be as simple or intricate in your layout as you would like. The brushes, elements and papers are extremely well-designed and changing a color is as simple as making a hue/saturation adjustment. And, if you're having trouble getting YOUR creative mojo to kick into gear, there's a great idea gallery on the DUDS website you can browse for inspiration.



Many of the collections contain what I call "bonus" goodies--ready-made templates for gallery wraps, cards, 411 cards and stickers. The templates come to you in layers ready to be customized, and, in addition, the press-printed items have an extra layer with printing guidelines so that you don't have to worry about cutting off an important part of your image.

So...if you're looking to maximize your time in the process of delivering a stellar product, visit the PhotoDUDS website at [www.photoduds.com](http://www.photoduds.com) and check out the collections. With all the time you'll be saving you can sit back, relax and enjoy your favorite beverage while contemplating all that holiday shopping you need to be doing.

