FOCUS STACKING

This is one of my basic tools in achieving better sharpness and depth of field in macro images. So it's useful for floral imagery and still-life, indeed any situation where the subject remains stationary and I have a tripod.

Photoshop provides a facility to stack a number of images on each other, align them and then blend them so that the sharpest part of each image comes to the fore in the final merged image.

THIS IS THE METHOD:

STEP 1: In BRIDGE, select your jpeg images (already processed) which you are going to stack by Ctrl + Click on each one.

STEP 2: Go to TOOLS > PHOTOSHOP > LOAD FILES INTO PHOTOSHOP LAYERS.

*{OR if you don't use Bridge*

*open your files using Photoshop directly and then using one of the images as your base, proceed to Copy (Ctrl + A, followed by Ctrl + C) and Paste (Ctrl + V) each of the other images onto the base image. }*

STEP 3: In PHOTOSHOP, open your LAYERS Palette. Select all the layers.

STEP 4: Go to EDIT > AUTO ALIGN LAYERS. From the dialogue box which opens, choose Projection as AUTO.

Note: You may now notice that there gaps around some sides of the image....don't worry, that will be sorted in Step 5.

STEP 5: Go to EDIT > AUTO BLEND LAYERS. From the dialogue box which opens, choose Blend Method as STACK IMAGES and tick the boxes to choose SEAMLESS TONES & COLOURS and also CONTENT AWARE FILL TRANSPARENT AREAS.

Note: Notice that Photoshop has used Content Aware to fill in any spaces caused by the alignment of the layers.

STEP 6: Flatten your image.

STEP 7: Crop your image, if necessary, and do any further editing on the image you need to do.

**FOCUS STACKING** is a digital image processing technique which *COMBINES MULTIPLE IMAGES* taken *AT DIFFERENT FOCUS DISTANCES* to give a resulting image with a greater depth of field than any of the individual source images.