Synthetic Galaxy Creation

We'll create a cool, graphic of outerspace using filters and blurs.

1) First, create a new document with a pixel size (have to choose pixels instead of inches) of 1300 width and 500 height.

2) Go to Edit, choose Fill, click color, make it black, make sure blend mode is normal and click OK.

3) Now, we're going to change our black rectangle into a smart object. We do this by right clicking on the layer (ctrl+click) and choosing smart object from the options. Please re-name layer to "Black" or "space" or "totally black"...you get the idea.

4) Now we're going to add a filter. Go to Filter at top tool bar, pick Noise, then Add Noise. The Add Noise dialog box will come up. For our purposes, just make the percentage 25 percent, the distribution Gaussian, and check monochromatic. I'll verbally explain this. Then click OK

5) Then, back in the layers box, delete the filter mask (ctrl+click & choose delete).

6) Next filter we're going to add will help make the pixels bigger for the stars. So go to Filter, the select Blur, and choose Gaussian Blur. In the dialog box, choose a radius of 4 or 6 and click OK.

7) Now, we'll make the stars more crisp and defined. To do this, we'll use an adjustment in Levels. So, right click on the black/white ball icon at the bottom of the layer panel. Choose Levels. Name the new layer "Starmaker" or "Celestial" or whatever...click OK.

8) In Levels (which should appear on top of the Layer panel) type in 40 for the black levels (left box) and 46 for the white levels (far right box). But play with these numbers to work on your stars!

9) Now, turn off the starmaker layer (click on the eye).   We're going to add some blue bounce. Click on the Black layer, then click on the fx icon at the bottom of the layer panel. Choose Gradient Overlay.

10) Inside the Gradient Overlay box, double click on the gradient bar. When the Gradient Editor dialog shows, click on the white paint can. For your color you can type in for "H" value - 215, "S" value - 65, "B" value - 100. Or you can choose your own color of blue. Click OK to accept and OK to Gradient Editor.

11) Back in the Layer Style dialog box, choose a Blend Mode of Linear Dodge with an Opacity value of 50 percent. Finally, choose an angle value of -100 degrees. You

can use your Move tool to drag the color down to the corner so it's not too high. Listen to lesson for this. Then click OK

12) Now, turn your starmaker layer back on - WOW! So, we need to make sure the gradient overlay effect is protected by clipping the starmaker layer to the black layer. Do this by Opt+clicking on the horizontal line in between the two layers. This creates your clipping mask.

13) Highlight both layers using shift+click. Now right click (ctrl+click) on the Starmaker layer and choose Convert to Smart Object

14) Now we will apply a non-destructive crop in order to get rid of some of the stars on the edges. Go to Image on the top tool bar. Choose Canvas Size. Make sure the Relative box is checked. **Make sure your size is in pixels!! (If not, stop & ask for help! Must go to your preferences to set to pixels.) Enter for BOTH width and height values a -100. Click OK then click Proceed when prompted with a warning.

15) Now - another filter! Go to Filter at the top and choose Lens Flare. Make sure the Brightness value is 100 percent and the Lens Type is 50-300mm Zoom. Click OK.

16) Again, delete the filter mask (can do this by right clicking on it or dragging it to mini trash can).

17) Let's help the color here. Right click (Ctrl+Click) again on the black/white ball icon at the bottom of the layers panel. Choose Hue/Saturation. Name layer "colorize". In Hue/Saturation, first check the Colorize box. Then, type in 220 for the Hue value and 40 for the Saturation.

18) Almost Done!! Now we need to change your foreground color. Your background color should be white. Then, in the color panel, make sure you can see your HSB sliders. Type in 220 for the "H" - hue, 100 for the "S" - saturation, and 25 for the "B" - brightness. If your HSB sliders don't show up here, try to apply this after you create a new layer.

19) Now, we're going to create a new layer. Try using CMD+SHIFT+N and label it "clouds".

20) Another filter! Go to Filter, then Render, and choose Clouds. Now, just change the blend mode on this cloud layer to multiply. Also change the opacity to 40 percent or so. Maybe even 20! Or Maybe 50!

21) It's your new galaxy!