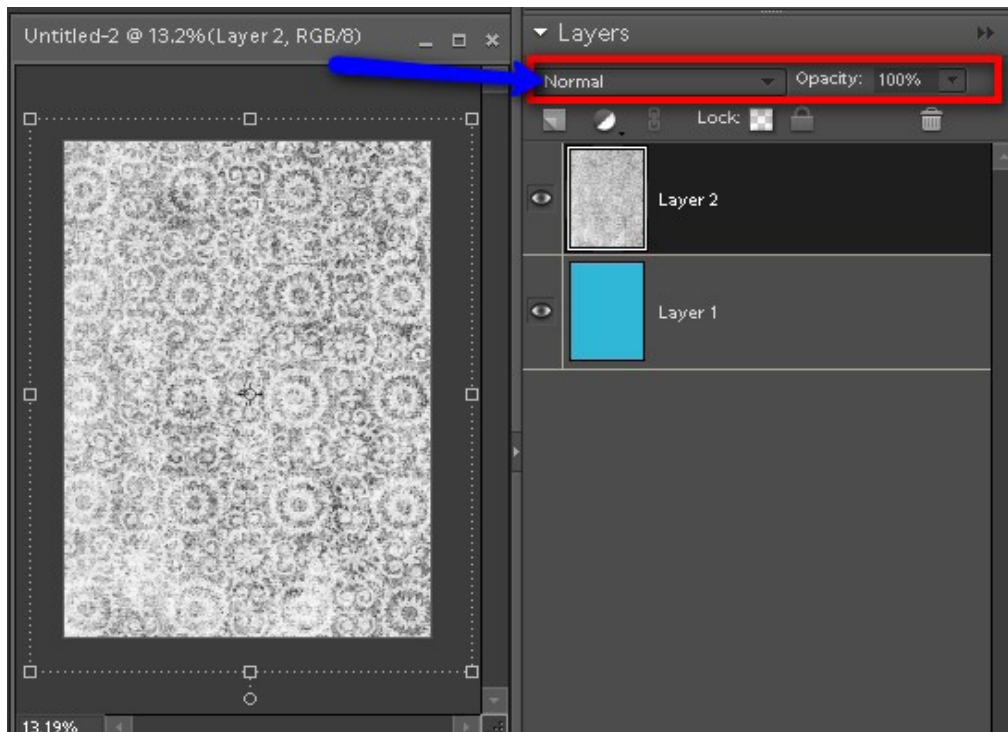**Using Textures and Overlays**

Start with a new file, 5x7 and 300dpi. This is a good size if you later want to print. Also all of the Paperwhimsy hybrid images come 300 dpi, so will be much easier to work with resize, etc.
On layer one choose a medium color from the color box, and fill the layer with the paint bucket tool. Any color is fine, as we can make changes later.
Next open an overlay file, I am using Overlay03.jpg. While this overlay image is active, use the move tool to drag the overlay to the color file, making layer 2. You can close the overlay file to get it out of the way.
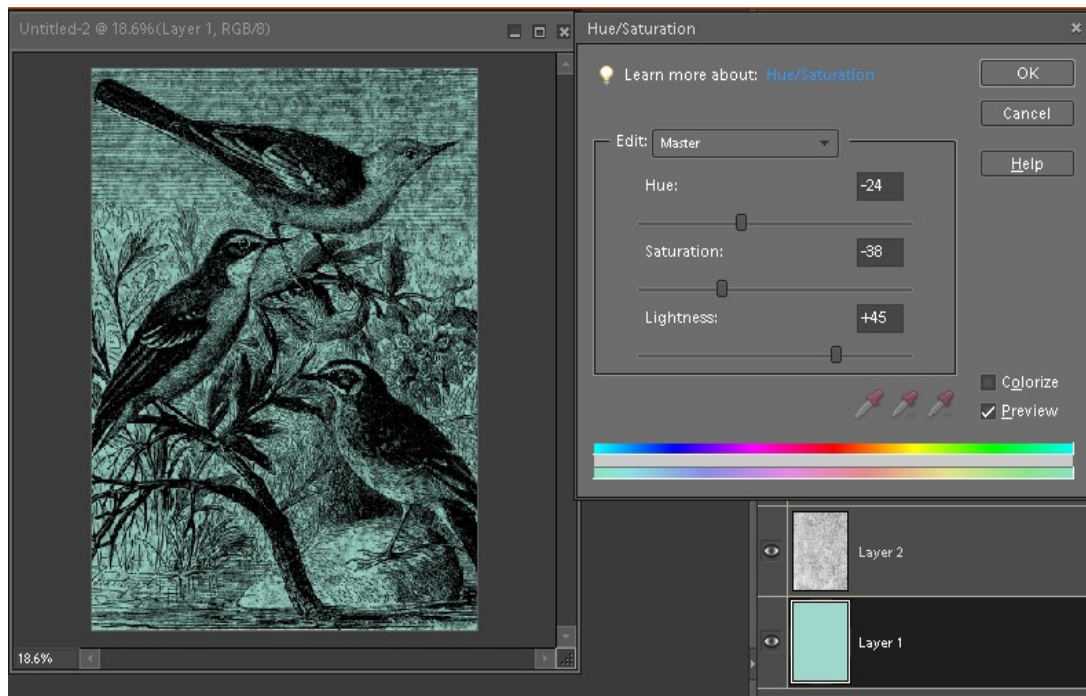You won't be able to see the color layer at this time. We are going to work with the opacity, and blending modes on the overlay layer. One thing I want to mention is that there are thousands of combinations that can be made, just by using these two modes. I have spent hours just going through the different modes for blending, and then changing the opacity. So play with this, and try different combinations.

To make it much easier, if you just click on Normal selection, you can then use the arrow down key on your keyboard to quickly cycle through the different choices. For this tutorial I selected the Multiply blending mode, and 90% opacity. Also, remember that as you build on these layers, you can always go back and change the blending mode and opacity. This is just a starting point.
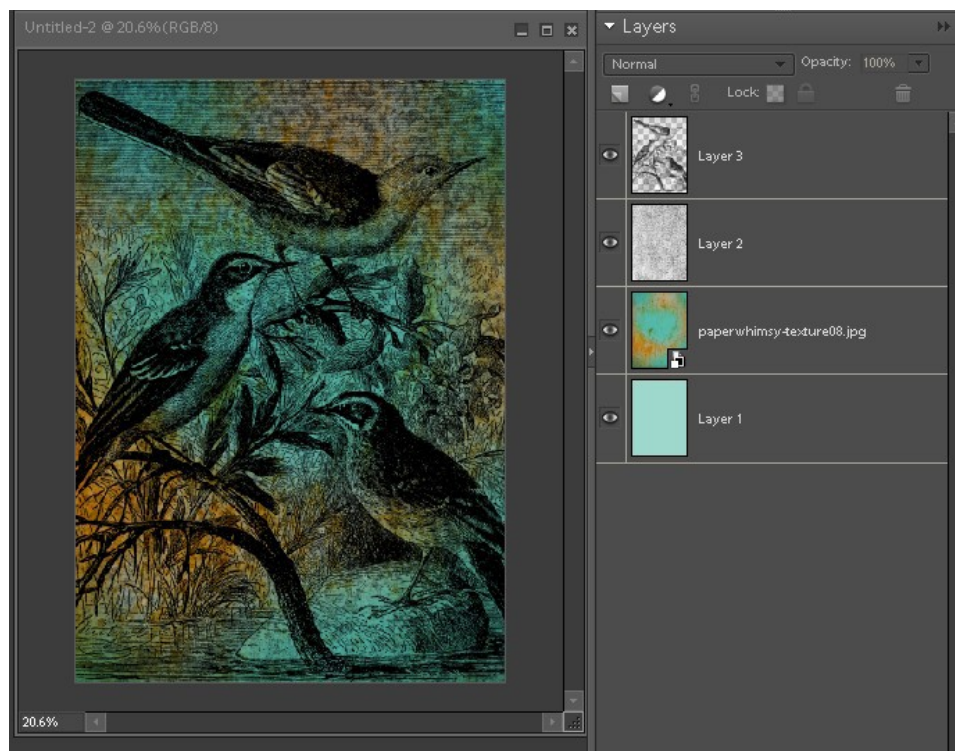Next open a PNG file. I am using birds01.png. While this file is active, click and drag it to your new working file. You can close the png at this time. You will probably need to move it to reposition and resize it, with the Move tool. It should now be you Layer 3, and on top of the other two layers. If not, just click on the layer in the layer palette, and drag it to the topmost position. You probably won't see much difference from the move. Moving layers is a very common thing to do when you start adding more layers.
Now is when you can make more adjustments. My blue layer 1 background seemed a bit dark, so I will use the Color adjustments. Be sure the layer 1 is active in the layer palette. From the top drop down menu item called Enhanced, select Adjust Color, then select Hue/Saturation. Here you can completely change the color, and also the saturation. I chose to change to Hue to -24, the saturation to -38, and lightness to +45. Looks like a totally different composition. I would recommend playing with these adjustments just to see what great combinations you can come up with.
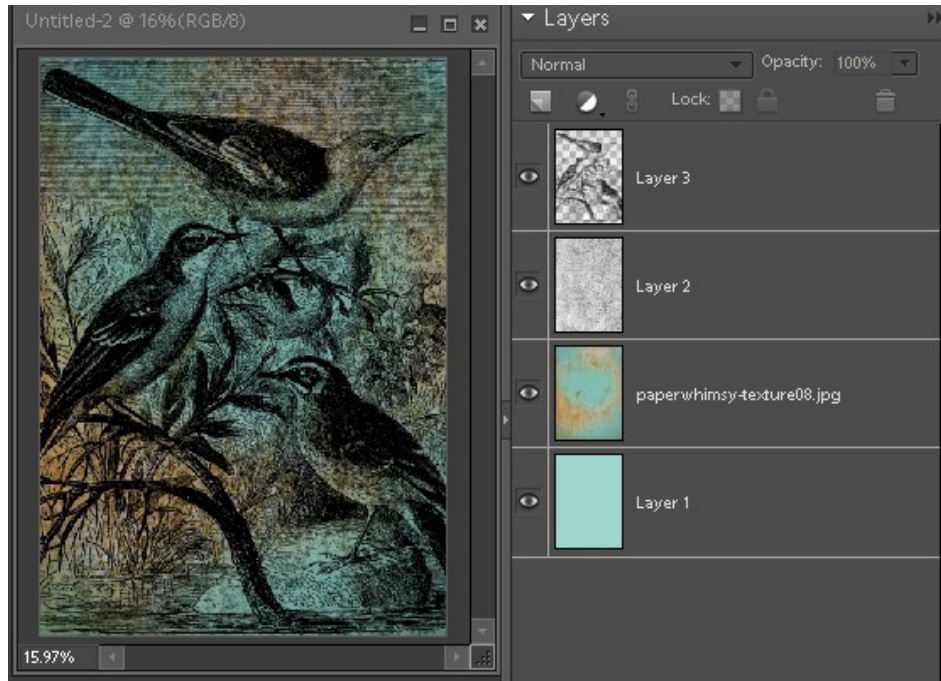
Now this looks pretty good right now, and could be used as is. But what if we wanted to make it a little more interesting.
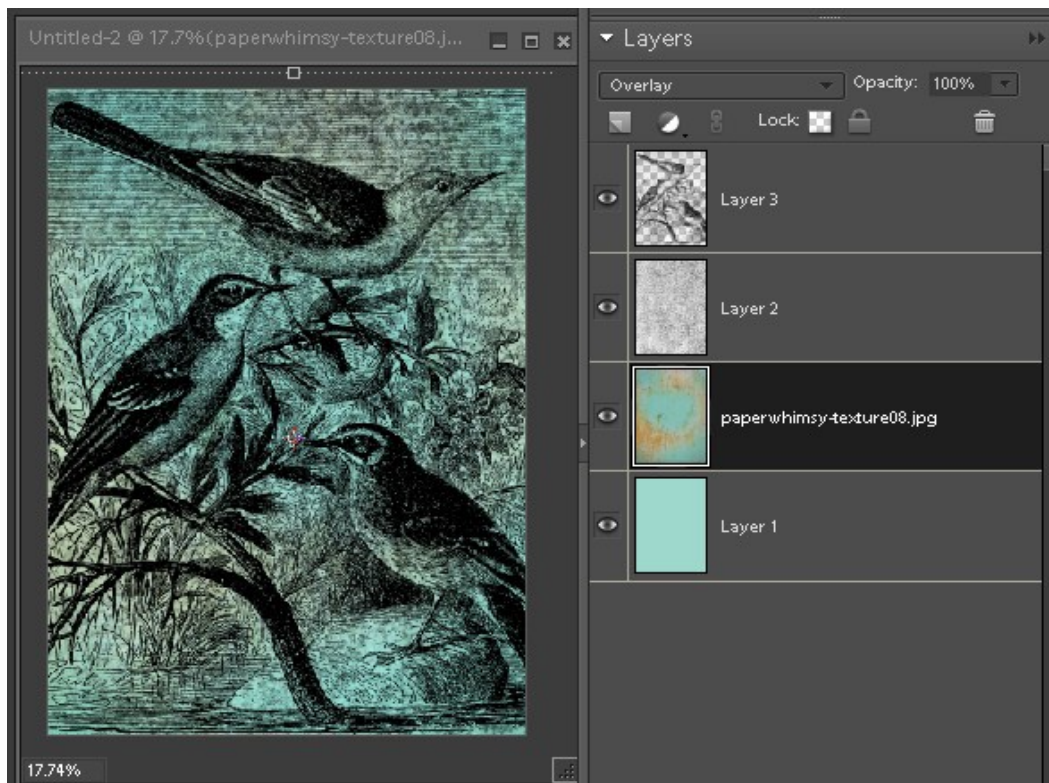Let's open a texture file. I am using Texture08. On you working file, select the layer 1 on the layer palette. Then go and make the texture file active. Click and drag the texture to the working file, reposition and resize as need. The texture file should now be in the second positon in the layer palette. If not, just click and drag it to position.

This seems really dark to me, so there are many things we can do. We can back to the Enhance color, hue and saturation. If you go to Enhance, PSE will ask to simplify the layer, click on OK.
I chose to decrease saturation -25 and lightness to +20. While you are there, play with changing the hue, and see what happens. Sometimes you find something you like even better.
When you have a combination you like click OK.

This may need just a little more tweaking before you are finished. I decided to play with the blending modes one time. With the texture layer selected on the layer palette, I cycled through the blending modes and decided I liked the Overlay blending mode the best.

This is just a simple way to make some great backgrounds, but there are so many more options we can play with. I hope you will try this, and play, and get familiar with the different mode.
Another fun thing to play with is the hide layer. In the layer palette, next to each layer is an eye. If you click on
it, it will hide that layer until you click on the blank area to see it again. Try clicking on the overlay layer and see what happens.
You can save this file for use later, or add some more things to it. Have fun!!