

Photoshop Pixel Art Animation



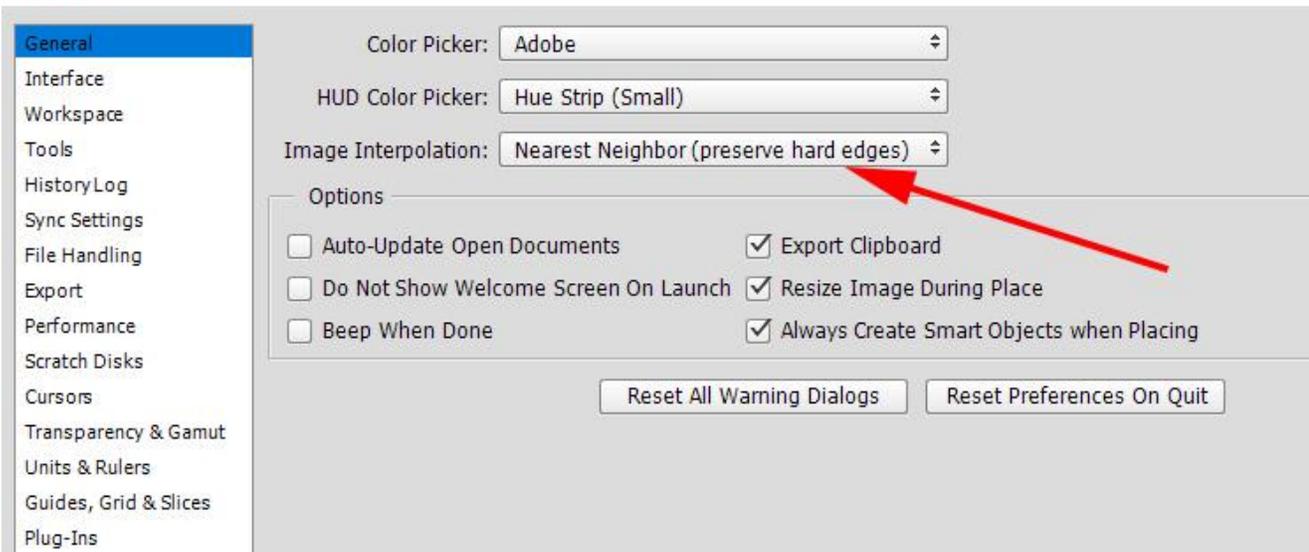
Here is a great resource for the settings you will need in Photoshop as you get started. I took some of my information from this tutorial, and just updated the images for this version of Photoshop:

<http://www.brandontreb.com/configuring-photoshop-for-pixel-art>

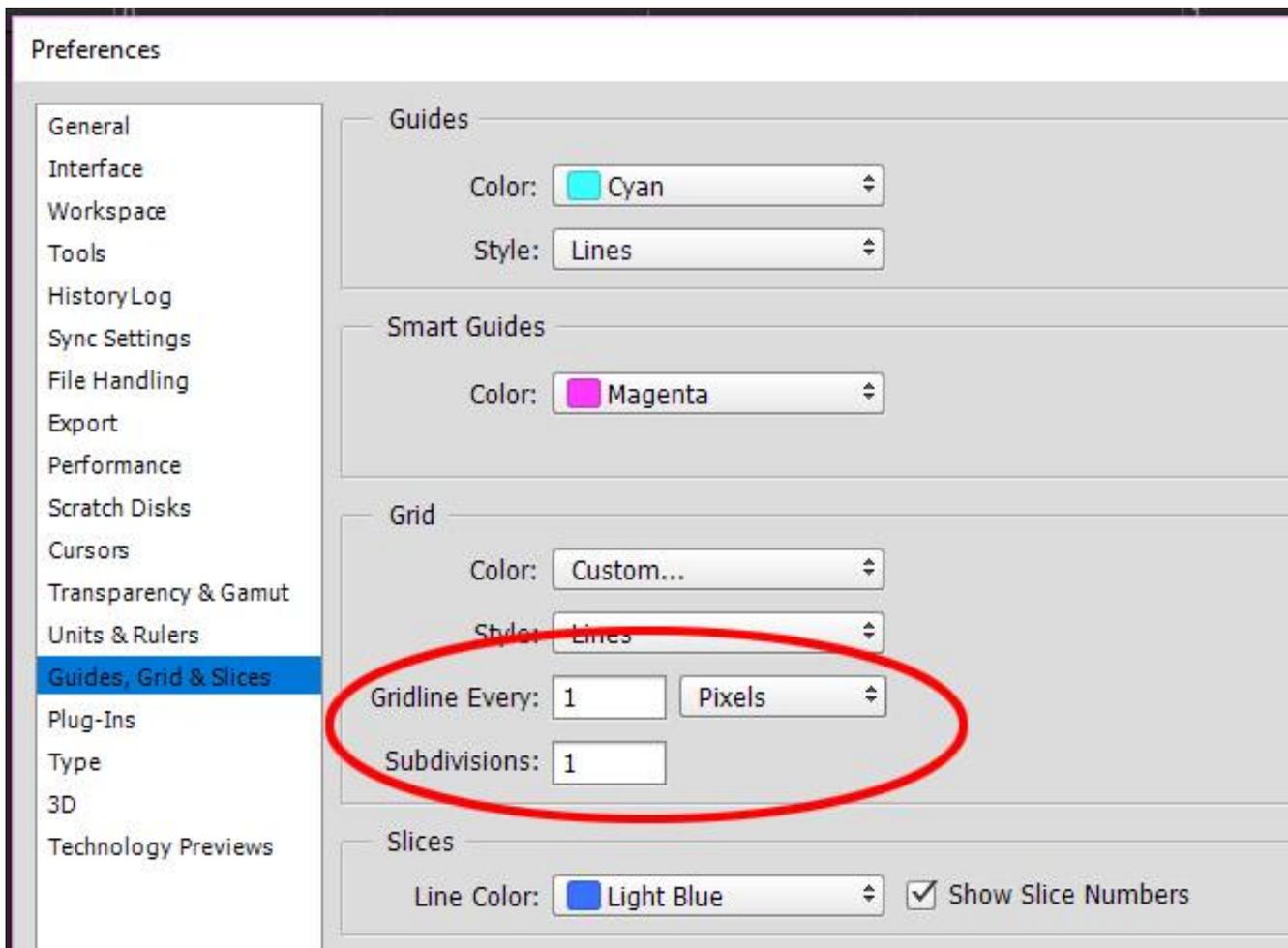
Set-up

1. First you have to decide the size of your image. This will be much smaller than you are used to working. Some suggested sizes:
 - 80x80 pixels for a simple square world.
 - 96x54 pixels for an HD-friendly aspect ratio with a modest room for detail.
 - 128x72 pixels for an HD-friendly aspect ratio with more room for detail.
 - 256x144 pixels for an HD friendly aspect ratio with even more room for detail (great for rotoscoping video but this WILL be labor intensive).
2. Next go to Edit → Preferences → General. Then change the Image Interpolation to Nearest Neighbor (preserve hard edges):

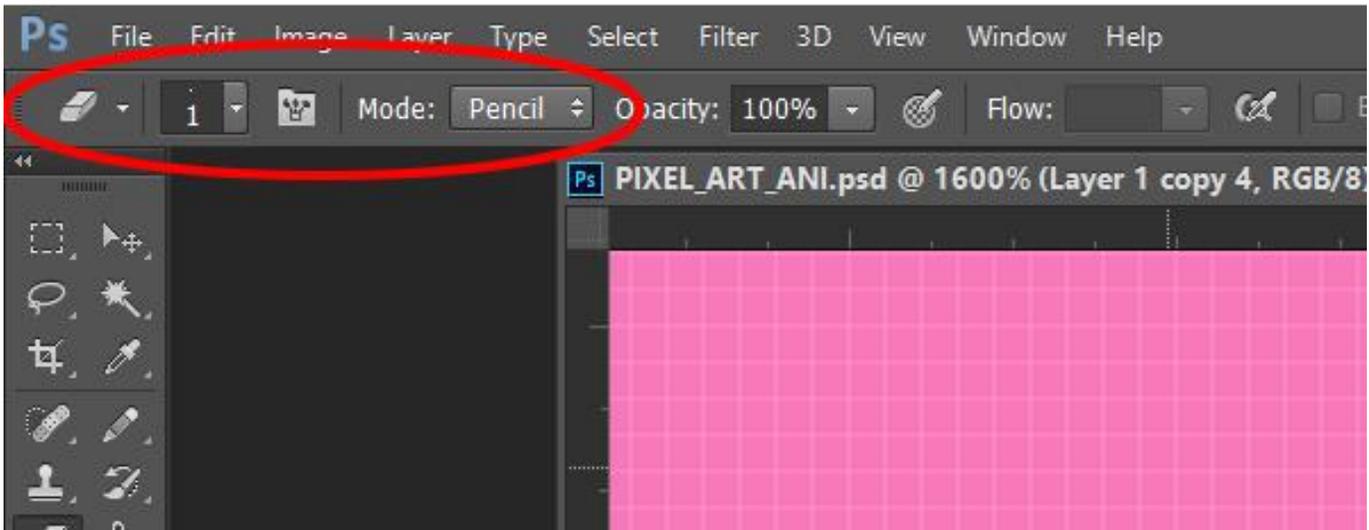
Preferences



3. Within the Preferences, now go down to Edit → Preferences → Guides, Grid & Slices. Change the Gridline to 1, change the Subdivisions to 1, and change the unit to Pixels:

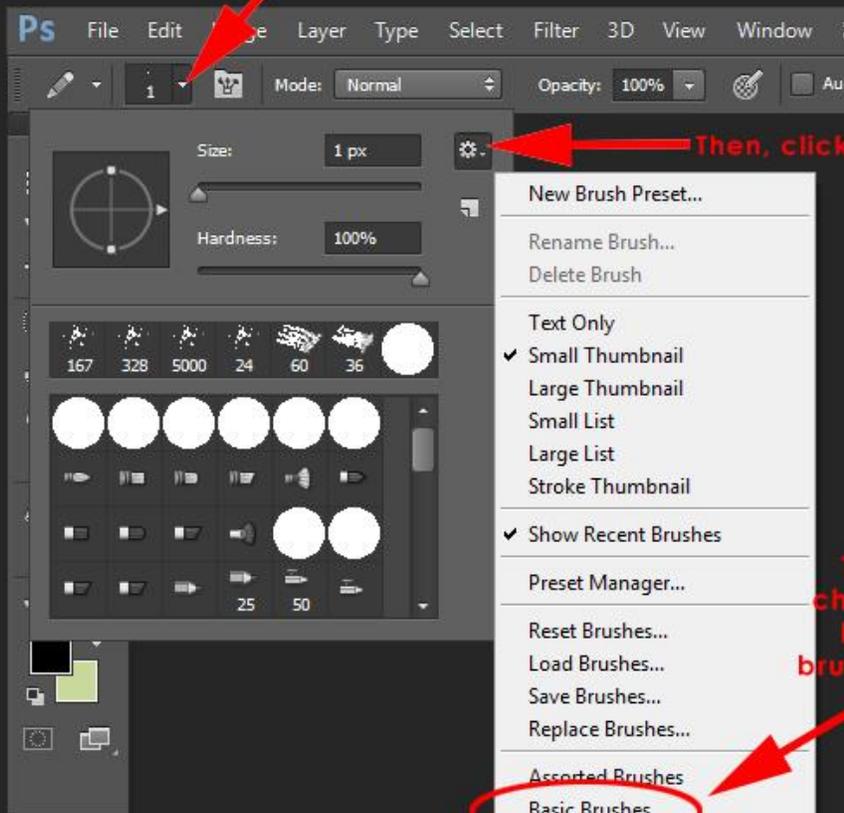


4. Next go to View → Show → Grid, to turn on your grid. This will help you to see ahead of time, where your pixels are going to land.
5. Now we need to set up our drawing tool. Instead of the brush, we are going to use the pencil, which is hidden under the brush tool in the toolbar. Make your pencil 1 or 2 pixels in size (very tiny).



6. After choosing the pencil, click the following:

First, hold down here.

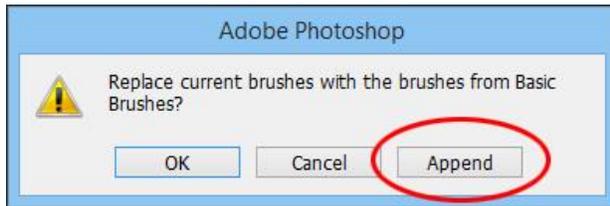


Then, click here.

Third, choose basic brushes.

- New Brush Preset...
- Rename Brush...
- Delete Brush
- Text Only
- Small Thumbnail
- Large Thumbnail
- Small List
- Large List
- Stroke Thumbnail
- Show Recent Brushes
- Preset Manager...
- Reset Brushes...
- Load Brushes...
- Save Brushes...
- Replace Brushes...
- Assorted Brushes
- Basic Brushes**
- Calligraphic Brushes
- DP Brushes
- Drop Shadow Brushes
- Dry Media Brushes
- Faux Finish Brushes
- M Brushes
- Natural Brushes 2
- Natural Brushes
- Round Brushes with Size
- Special Effect Brushes
- Square Brushes
- Thick Heavy Brushes
- Wet Media Brushes

7. A pop-up menu will come up. Choose: Append:



8. Make sure the Mode of your Eraser is also set to Pencil, with the same settings. Note: you can make your eraser larger if you are erasing larger areas of pixels.

Animation

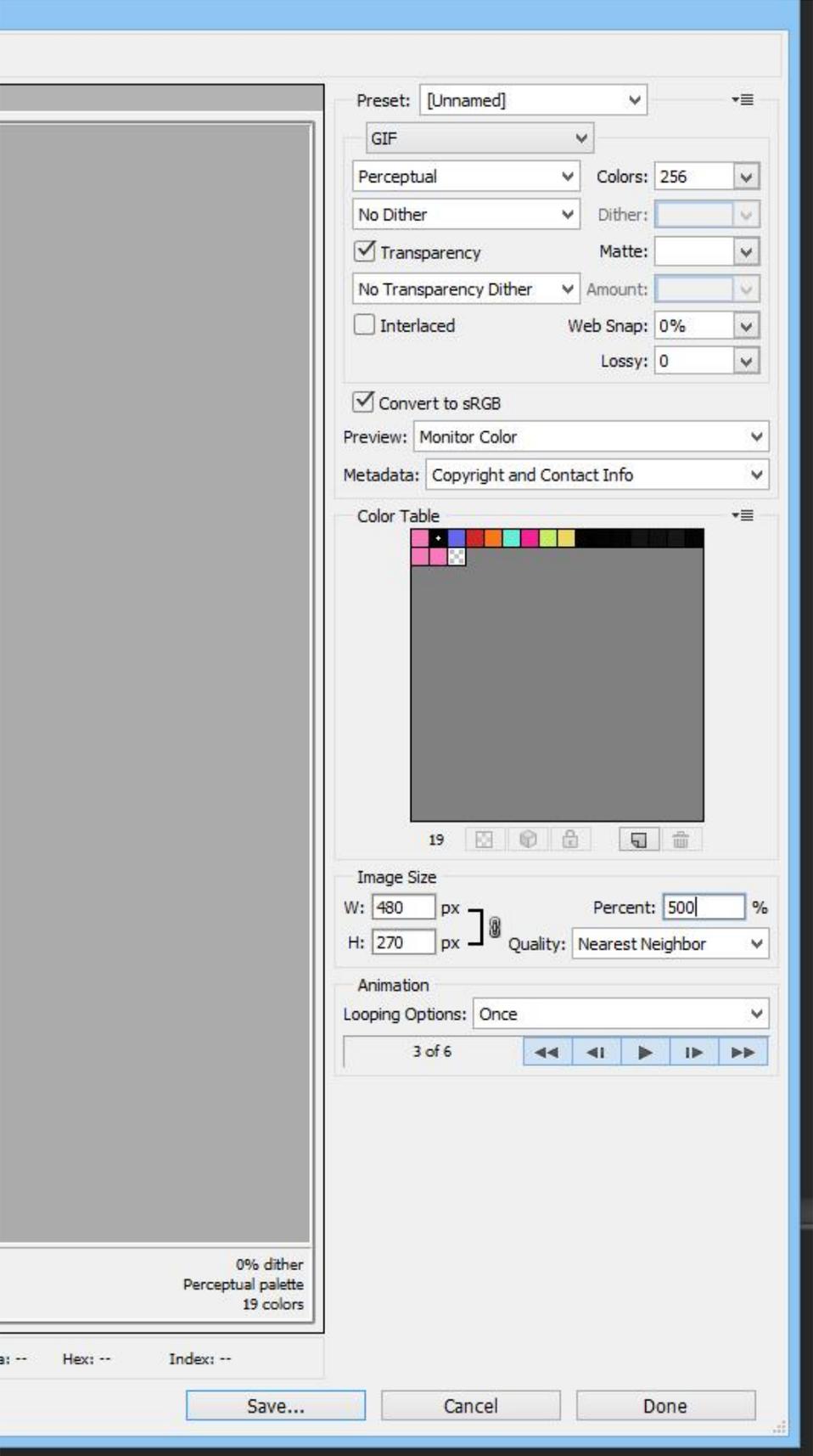
Animate as you would normally do in Photoshop, only drawing in pixels rather than smooth lines. I HIGHLY recommend doing a quick thumbnail board first. Even better, sketch your frames out with the regular brush FIRST, and then convert to pixel art. It's much easier/more natural for us to see in smooth/sketch lines, than it is to see in pixels. You can sketch the frames out with the brush and then draw over them on a separate layer with the pixel pencil for "clean-up."

Tip: to cut down on the layers of both sketch and pixel art: after you are done animating the rough "sketch" lines, export a Quicktime movie. Then, re-import the movie back into Photoshop, and work on top of it. In this way, the sketch art will be in its own flat layer. You can then animate your pixel layers over that.

Exporting a Scaled up .Gif

This is the most important piece. Your animation is tiny, so if you blow it up as it is, it will get blurry. Use the following export technique: File → Export → Save For Web (legacy) when you want to have your animation in .gif format.

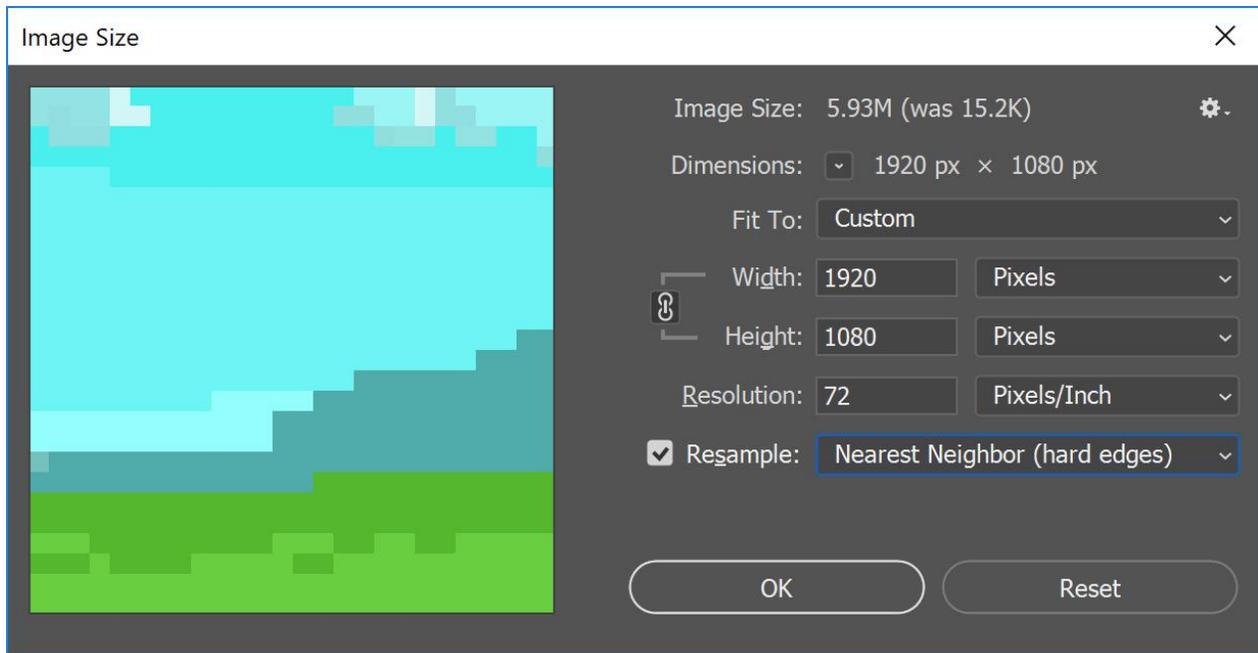
When the window pops up, use the following settings. Choosing Nearest Neighbor for the quality is crucial. Note: the Percent Scale is really dependent on you. I scaled mine up to 500%. You may want to go larger if you are going to put this on a website/vimeo/etc.



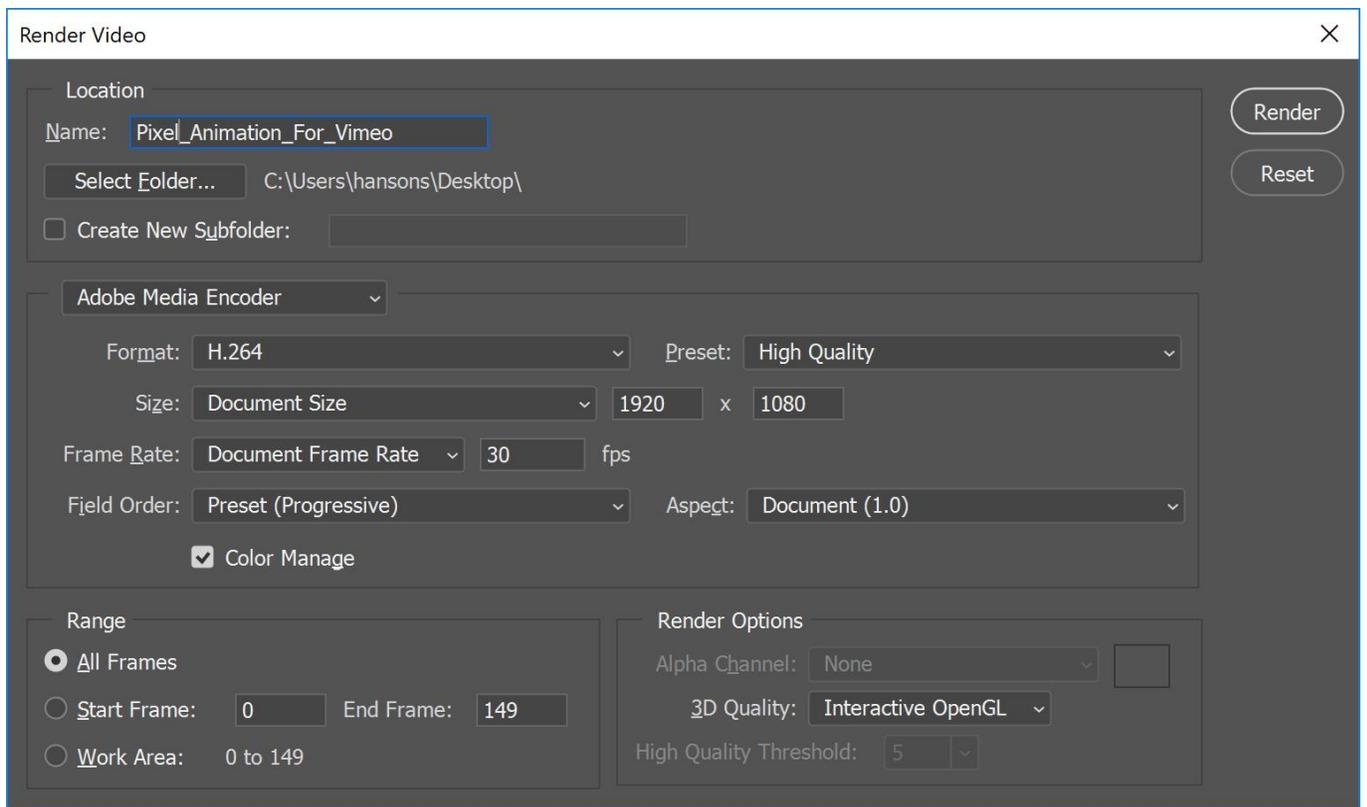
Exporting for Vimeo

If you want to convert this to a movie file, so that you can upload it to www.vimeo.com, or www.youtube.com there are a few additional steps.

1. First you will need to increase the size/scale of your movie, just like you did in the .gif export. Vimeo movies will look their best if they are 1920x1080 pixels in size. Go to Image → Image Size and input the following settings:



2. Hit OK to save the settings. You will notice that your image is full size but none of the pixels look blurry.
3. Next you can Export a movie file for Vimeo. Go to File → Export → Render Video. In the window, use the following settings, and save the movie to the Desktop:



4. Now you are ready to upload and share your movie on the web!