

SELF-PORTRAIT MULTIPLE COMPOSITE

A. Steps for setting-up self-portrait for the composite: READ THIS CAREFULLY AND FOLLOW THE STEPS BELOW CLOSELY and IN ORDER (and I really mean this !!!!!)

1) After your self-portrait is in its final form, you should have a solid white background layer, your scanned sketch in the layer above, and additional editing/painting layers above that. You now need to smash all the editing/painting layers, sketch layer, and white background layer together, into one single-layer “flattened” background image. To do all this [Caution: wait for me to explain this step or ask if you’re not sure how to do it]:

a.) Select “Flatten Image” from the arrowhead-tabbed menu on the layers palette. If you get a prompt asking if you want to “discard hidden layers”, say “OK”.

b.) If you’ve done things right, you should now have a single-layer “background” image.

c.) Next, using the arrow-tabbed layers menu, choose the “Duplicate Layer” command. You will now have two identical layers containing the self-portrait.

d.) Select the bottom (background) layer and fill it with solid white. If you’ve done things correctly you will have only 2 layers; an upper layer with your painted self-portrait and a solid white background layer below. Make sure this is what you have!

2) Produce a square format. First, check the dimensions of your image (go to “Image” – “Canvas Size” in menu to get dimensions). Then, in the background layer, add extra white background canvas (go to “Image” – “Canvas Size”) in order to get identical horizontal and vertical dimensions (e.g. make extra canvas in the shortest dimension to be equivalent with the largest dimension; if your original image is 6” wide x 8” high, then add 2” of extra horizontal canvas).

3) Once you have a square format, reduce the overall image size to 3” x 3” using “Image Size” in the menu. Do not change resolution, but link the vertical and horizontal proportions by checking the “constrain proportions” and “resample image” checkboxes. That way, the image should proportionally reduce to 3 X 3 without changing resolution; note that file size will change, though.

4) If you turn off the eyeball on the white background layer, you will see two bars of transparent pixels on either side of the layer containing the portrait. To avoid weird color shifts from happening in some variations, select and fill the transparent bars with solid white. [You may now wish to use a Levels adjustment to try to match the “white” surrounding your image with the pure white you filled-in the transparent bars with. I’ll show you how.]

5) Use the “Save As” command to save a version of your new, smaller, self-portrait. Again, give it a name that’s different (e.g. Bob’s3x3.psd) than your larger master version; save it in native Photoshop (.psd) format to keep the layering information. Finally, close the file. **IMPORTANT:** Don’t use your original new 3”x3” self-portrait for the image manipulations, just in case something bad happens that’s irreversible. Use the “Save As” command again under the “File” menu in to make an identical working copy, rename it as you wish (e.g. Bob’s3x3copy.psd), and use it to produce all your variations.

B. Creating the 12” x 9” composite image template:

1) Now, create a new Photoshop file for building the composite. Set the resolution at 150 ppi, and make the new file is 12” high x 9” wide. Choose white background and RGB as your color space.

2) Make rulers visible for your new file (View, Show Rulers), and drag guides from the ruler wells to set up the document with guides at 3” intervals vertically and horizontally. Make sure that “Snap to Guides” is checked under the View menu.

3) Save this new 12” x 9” file in native Photoshop format, and give it a functional filename (like Bob’scomposite.psd or Bob’s12x9.psd). This will be the template file into which you will copy/paste your self-portrait variations as you create them.

C. Composite variations of the self-portrait: Basic workflow tips:

- Re-open both your 3x3 portrait and the new 12"x9" master layout you just created. Both files should be simultaneously open and viewable! Check again to make sure both files are in RGB at 150 ppi resolution.
- To place a copy of the duplicate self-portrait into the 1st (upper left) position, mouse-click anywhere in the 3x3 self-portrait file to activate it, choose "Select All" under the "Select" menu, then "Copy Merged" under the "Edit" menu. Then mouse-click on the 12x9 file and use the "Paste" command to paste the copied 3x3 image in the 12x9 (it will be placed in its own layer). Move the small image into its proper position (it should "snap" to the guides).
- Save the master 12" x 9" file again.
- Repeat this basic process with your variations described below, copying the variations as you make them and pasting them into individual layers in the master composite file. Move each variation into its proper position (refer to the blank template guide in this handout).
- After you complete a variation and have pasted it into the master layout, use the History palette in your 3x3 to undo your changes and step back to the original file state. That way, you can produce variations and then erase them to produce more. So, do not save any changes you make as you produce the variations; just use the history palette to revert (yes, to go all the way back to the original file, you could use "Revert" under the File menu, but you could go back too far and also I'd like you to get familiar with using the History palette for creating variations, since it's such a useful working method).
- Lots of techniques to try and keep track of and many (like levels and curves) are vital to master over time. Remember the importance of making good selections when required.
- Artistically, try to make an interesting set of variations that is balanced and harmonious within the composition itself. Think of the "big picture" while you make individual variations.

The Variations: Here is the list of the image variations I'd like you to use for your composite (**STOP!!!!** – do not start this before I give specific instructions and do not do any variations on your own before I give you a specific demo -- I'll demonstrate for you the basic techniques involved): There will be a total of 10 images in your composition.; refer to layout form; also see www.3dotstudio.com/NSCCdigital for an example.

variation 0: upper left; no variation applied -- your duplicated 3"x3" version of original self portrait

variation 1: high contrast and "hard" image; try to eliminate midtone values -- (use levels sliders to adjust tonal extremes and midtones [gamma]; also you could use additional methods [e.g. unsharp mask] to get high contrast effects).

variation 2: low contrast and very "soft" (lighten image and/or decrease saturation, lower contrast using levels or curves adjustment, use Gaussian blur, etc)

variation 3: original color to grayscale (under "Image"..."Mode", convert from RGB to grayscale); you can try to adjust contrast with levels or curves sliders to get a good tonal range in grayscale. If you wish to take things further, convert from grayscale to "Indexed" mode, again in the "Mode" submenu. This will allow you to produce a vividly colored modified grayscale graphic when you utilize the "Color Table" under "Image.....Mode" again.

Wait for the demo! [This variation is great for cartoonists and graphic designers]

variation 4: simple duotone (tinted grayscale) -- convert from grayscale to tinted duotone; old-fashioned (sepiatoned or blue-toned) or unique 2-color effect

variation 5: major color shift (hue/saturation/curves or channels, selective color replace, etc)

variation 6: layer blending effects (blend modes, opacity, etc) [tip: fill the white background layer with a strong color or gradient to enhance the effects of layer blending modes]

variation 7: distorted, disintegrating, wildly colorized, exaggerated, over-the-top image [think "Wired" magazine or "alt-rock" album cover]. Use anything --- (blend modes, layer threshold sliders, levels, curves on individual channels, channel mixer; play with any distortion filters, liquify, etc...multiple filters and effects are fine; anything goes). Of course you can go "wild" in this variation, but use techniques in an experimentally strategic way.

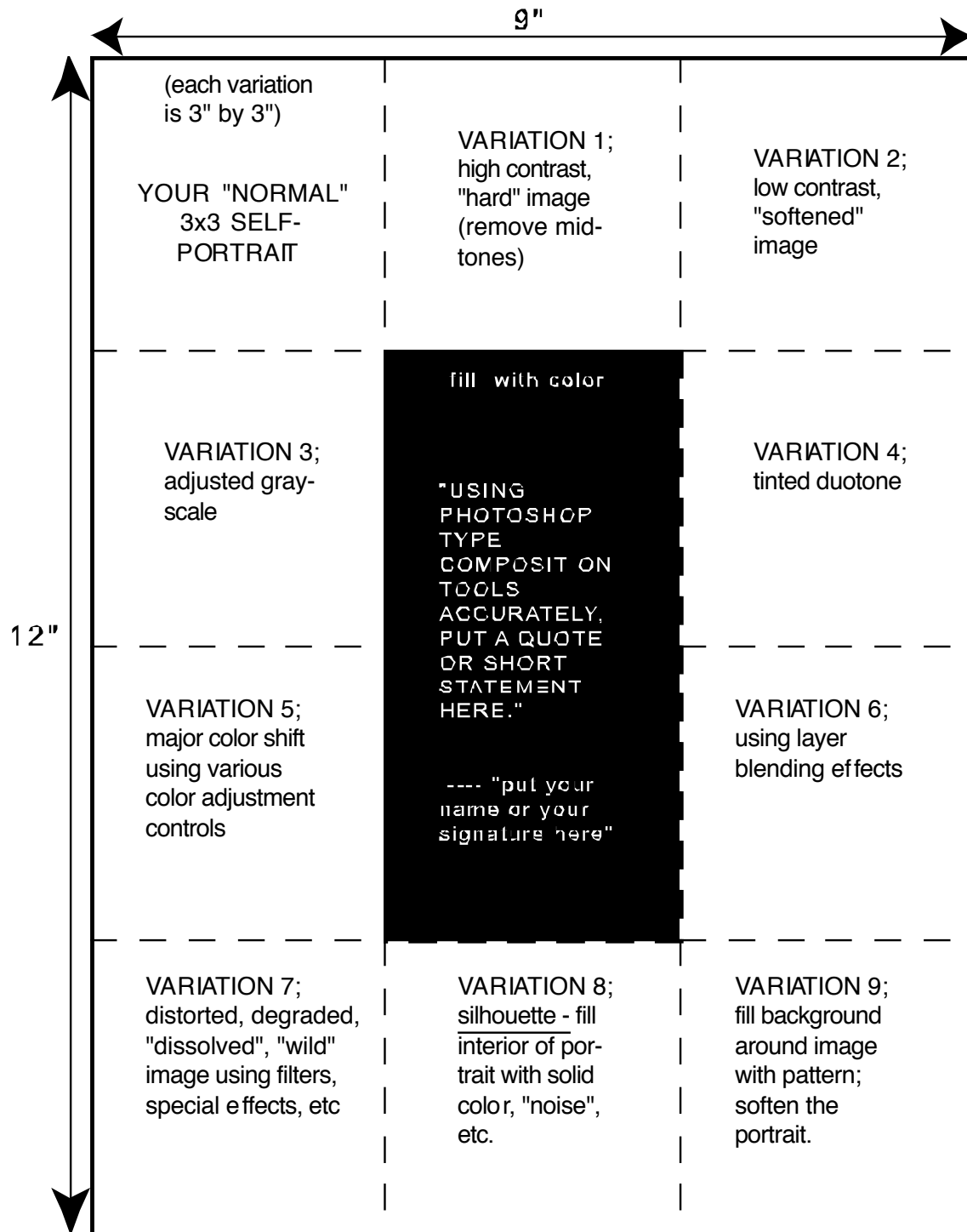
variation 8: silhouetted; select and fill inside of portrait image with solid color, gradient, add noise, etc. You can add multiple strokes around your silhouette or do other things to enhance this variation. Your selection technique is important here.

variation 9: vivid color pattern-filled background (pattern fill and/or pattern stamp, etc); soft, feathered, desaturated portrait in foreground, so that the pattern surround is given emphasis

D. Central Statement: Finally, after you've made and added all your variations to the composite, you will have a 3"x6" blank white space in the center. In a new layer, fill this space with a solid color of your choice. Then, using a contrasting color, use type tool to fit a short phrase, statement, quote, or message into the colored space. You can use special effects (e.g warped text, embossing, glows, etc. if you wish. But pay the closest attention to type composition, balance, spacing, etc. Also, type your name (in smaller type) in the space.

E. The End Game: Now that the composition is "finished," you may find that it's a bit unbalanced with respect to the intensity and/or coloration of the variations from top to bottom. So, if you have time remaining, you can try to balance and unify your 12x9 by going back to some of the variations and applying a harmonizing color to the areas around the portrait. In visual art, sometimes the last, often minor, details are the most important in the process of finishing a composition.

LAYOUT FOR SELF-PORTRAIT MULTIPLES



note: format shown here is not to scale. Use a 9"x12" canvas size in Photoshop for layout. Each portrait is a variation of the original, kept at 150 dpi, but resized to a 3" x 3" format; use original self-portrait as #1 plus 9 variations. I will provide directions in class about what guidelines to use for the image variations.