

SELF-PORTRAIT

This should serve as a good introduction to using some of Photoshop's main feature set (tools, palettes, layers, adjustments, modes) and developing a good workflow. I'm looking for some evidence of style, effort, accuracy, and completeness. So have fun, but put some real work into it, as if it were to be shown to a potential client or could be put in your working portfolio.

WORKING STEPS: [follow these directions carefully !!!!]

1) Scan image in grayscale at 150 ppi and save the image as a native Photoshop file. Give the file a personal identification and a .psd file extension (e.g. Bob'sportrait.psd). Save the file to your folder on ArtShare (and later, to your portable disk).

2)! Convert the image from grayscale to RGB (Image...Mode...RGB), so you can work in color

3) In the layers palette, duplicate the background layer that contains the sketch (using either Layers menu or layers options tab in the Layers palette itself), and rename the new layer *sketch* so that you now have two layers with the sketch in it.

4) Select the lower *background* layer and fill it completely with white to produce a solid white background.

5) Select your *sketch* layer and create a new layer (not a duplicate) above it. This is where you can start your painting and editing over the underlying sketch with selected tools and colors. You can create additional new layers to add various other details, but give the layers names that help tell you what you did in them (like *skintones*, *hair*, *shadows*, *outlines*).

6) Play around in each layer with the layer controls like opacity and blending mode (especially the "Normal", "Multiply", or "Color" mode) to see how that affects the overall image you're creating. You can also adjust selections or whole layers with image adjustment controls like hue, saturation, levels, etc). The idea is to balance the image to attain the satisfactory overall self-portrait you like best. Do not flatten or merge any layers yet; we'll do that later.

7) When you get the image you like, save it, but using "SaveAs", give it a different filename (like Bob'smaster.psd or Bob'scolorportrait.psd) than your original scanned sketch grayscale file. Test to make sure the file is safe and re-openable.

SELF-PORTRAIT CHECKLIST

Make sure you have done the following for your self-portrait:

- scanned and edited composite image at 150 ppi; converted from grayscale to RGB; file in Photoshop native (.psd) format to retain layers
- should be sized to fit and print easily (no larger than 8" x 10")
- should have at least 4 layers used (e.g. white background, scanned sketch, and additional painting/editing layers). More layers are fine, but not less.
- original grayscale scan should be colorized, painted and edited using Photoshop tools, etc. to show evidence of accurate use of tools and some artistic refinement, even if the image is a bit "rough" or "wild". Should show some evidence of highlights, tone, shadow, depth and effort of getting smoothness and detail in the features (e.g. hair, eyes, etc). Example: hair shouldn't just look like a flat pile of color on the head; eyes shouldn't be blank, lifeless disks (like in many Japanese animé characters). Even if your self-portrait is sort of "cartooney" and vividly colored, it should look more like Disney than Hanna-Barbera.

(see other side for more)

Some tips and suggestions:

- use of the graphic tablet may help with brushstrokes and painting
- make sure you paint/colorize only on layers above the sketch layer; it's very difficult to separate color from line if they're in the same layer
- use layer blending modes (e.g. Multiply) and opacity to allow you to paint onto your sketch without covering-up sketch line detail
- you can use selection tools (like the lasso) to outline patches or regions to fill with color. Feather the selections to add natural softness by preventing sharp color borders. Remember that if you paint within a selection, all the brushwork will be confined within the selection borders (good for limiting the brushstrokes)
- Skin color is not just one color, but a variety of tints and hues, highlights, midtones and shadows,. Try to add variation to skin colors from region to region by using multiple brushstrokes of overlapping color or using gradients to fill selected regions. You can make good use of the smudge, blur, sharpen, burn, dodge, etc. tools to work with color patches and regions.
- faces are not flat -- they have peaks and valleys with corresponding highlights and shadows. Figure out how to darken and lighten regions of skintones to give the illusion of depth. One way is to select an area and use the Hue/Saturation/Value sliders (under Image....Adjust...) to increase/decrease skin tones
- Similarly, if you don't like a color you've used on a layer or in a selected area, you can edit the whole layer or selection using Color Balance or Hue/Saturation/Value sliders. You can also use the dodge, burn, and sponge tools to alter colors/intensities.
- Hair can be really difficult and time-consuming. Try to use overlapping gradient fills or rapid varied strokes to rapidly cover areas to suggest basic form and color, texture, tints, highlights, etc. Don't worry about perfection; getting the general concept of the hair worked-out and don't kill yourself over the details here.
- Either early or late in the painting process, you can reduce the darkness or intensity of the black outlines by reducing the opacity of the layer with the sketchlines on it. Also directly on the sketch, you can use the eraser, brush with white paint, and/or smudge, dodge/burn tools to edit your contour lines, even move selections
- Note: If you really don't like the general shape of your face to begin with, scale the layer containing the actual sketch using Free Transform command (Select All, then choose Free Transform from under Edit menu or use the ⌘T keystroke shortcut). You can alter your basic horizontal to vertical proportion pretty easily this way, but caution is advised [ask me].