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How to Create a Typographic Portrait in Illustrator by All that i do in art

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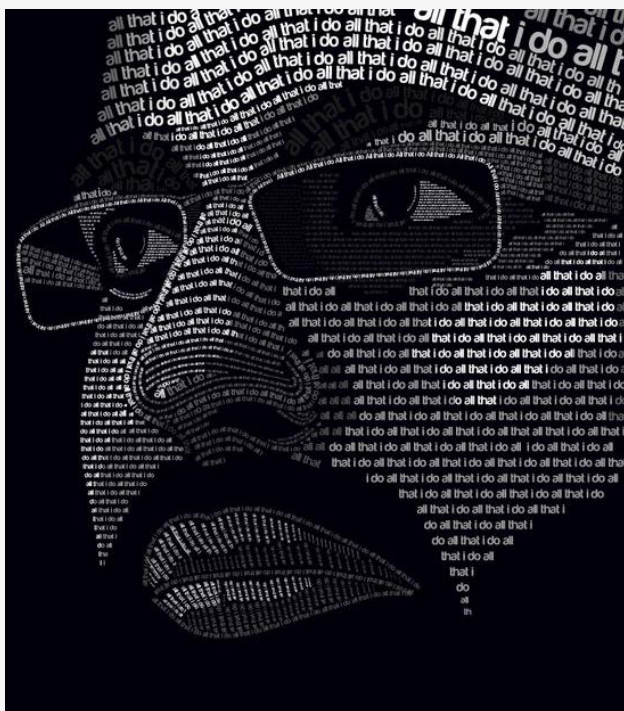
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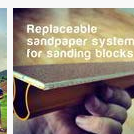**1,284** favorites

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All that i do
All That I Do

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Bio: I am a happy go lucky person whose interests vary from aeromodelling, painting to micro-controllers and scrap building. I am a certified mechanical engineer and ...
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More by All that i do:

Hello people

I am sure you guys must have seen the amazing typographic portraits artist have made all over the world featuring eminent personalities and famous stars. If you have ever wondered how to go on about creating one for yourself, this instructable is for you.

You can create a typographic portrait for your loved ones with ease and surprise them. So lets start with the tutorial.

What you would need :

- Base image which you would like to convert to a typographic portrait.
- A vector software like Adobe Illustrator. Some others are coral draw, inkscape, gimp etc

- Patience
- Little creativity (optional)

I will be using Adobe illustrator to demonstrate this tutorial. However almost all vector softwares have the same basic tools and this tutorial can be replicated easily with other vector softwares.

Step 1: Choosing a Base Image
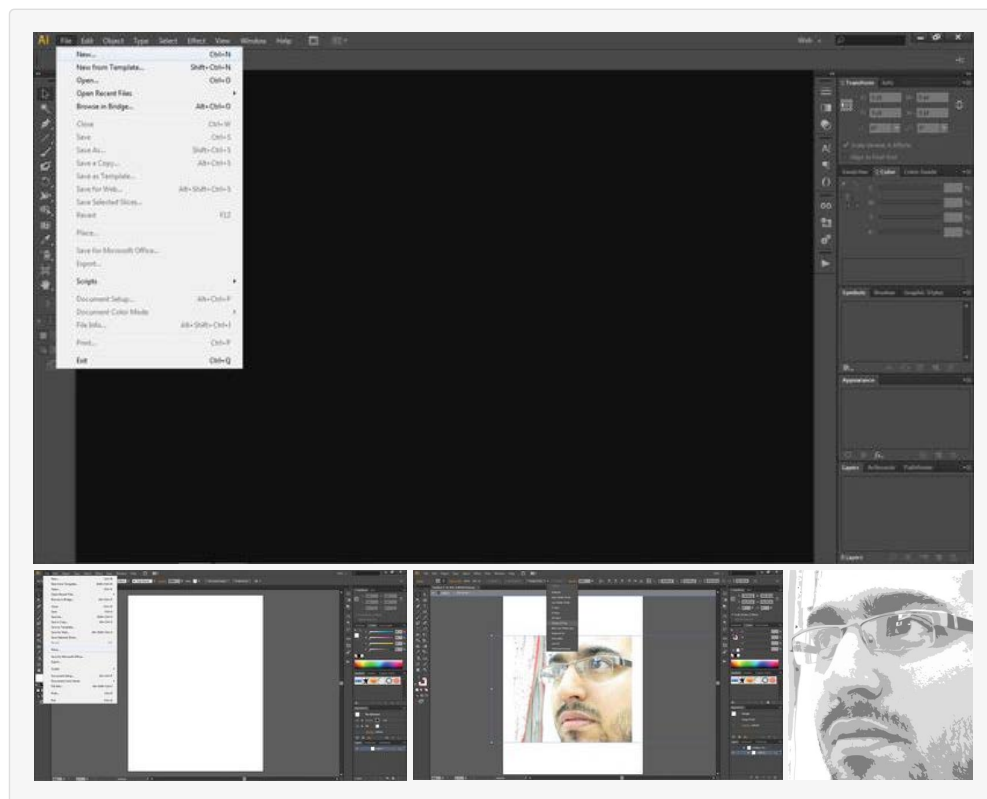
The first task you have to do is choose an image to base your typographic portrait on. Be careful to choose an image which has good contrast between subject and background.

The image should not be under exposed or over exposed. This will make your job tougher. The image should be black and white or coloured converted to one.

For the tutorial , I will chose a coloured image and then converted it to a black and white image. Converting the image to black and white helps in understanding the shades of the subject in a better way. This in turn will help you to choose the appropriate text shade giving a more life like depth to the typographic portrait.

I chose my own image and converted to black and white using Illustrator. You can use any other software to do the same.
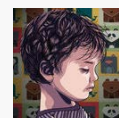
- Open a new file in Illustrator
- Place the image in the newly opened file.
- From the 'Image trace' option click 'Shades of grey'

Take a look at the pictures for any clarification. The resulting image is also attached. This gives us the base picture on which our typographic portrait will be created.
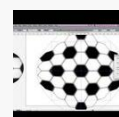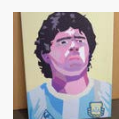
Step 2: Defining Key Text Areas of the Image
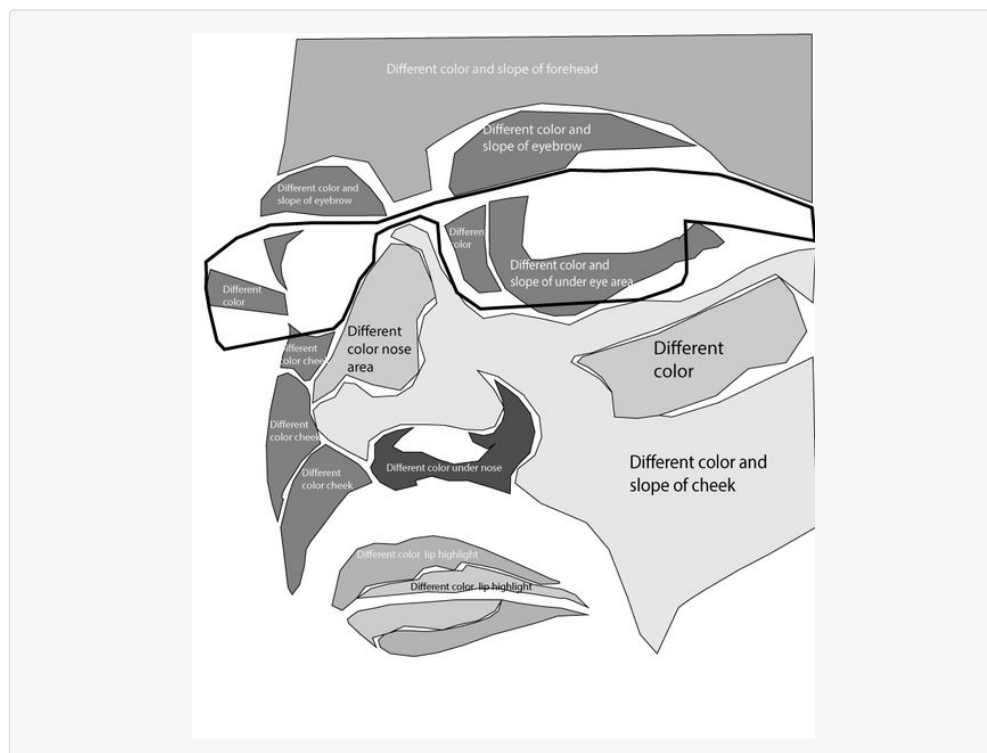
Now this is the most important and tricky part. This step can make or break your typographic portrait. The idea here is to break down the image into as small text sections as possible. The text sections can be divided on the basis of the following :

- Different shade required
- Different text slope required
- Different text size required

The more number of sections you divide your picture into, the more crisp and accurate your typo portrait will be. However this also means a lot of fine detailed work and requires a lot of patience. For the sake of this tutorial I will break down the image into a moderate number of text areas.

Have a look at the attached image to understand how I have broken down the image into key areas based on the above three parameters.

Also you will have to define any objects like spectacle rims etc with a line of text.

Step 3: Creating Slope Lines for the Text
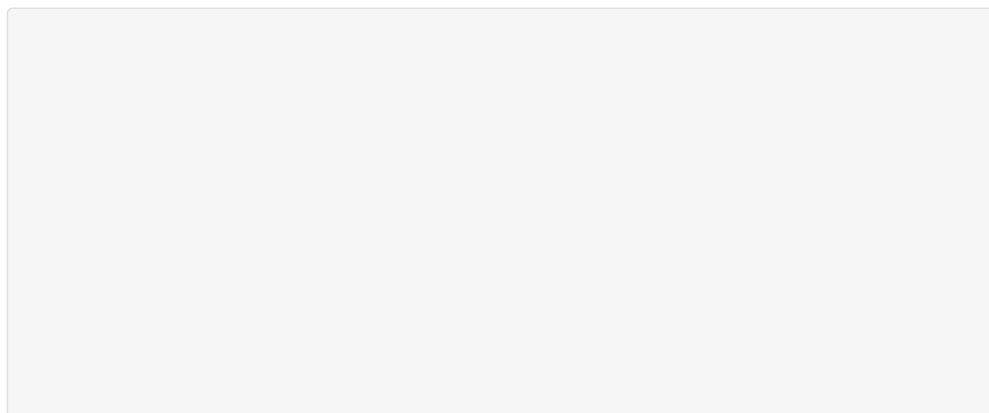
The second most important step is to create slope lines across the subject. This is more like depicting the contour through the lines. These lines will be used to write the text along the line curve. The curved text will give fullness to the typo portrait so make sure you take plenty of time and don't rush this step.

Open Pen Tool in illustrator and start creating lines based on the subject.

You don't have be very accurate in creating a perfect smooth curve using the pen tool. After you have created the rough lines you can use the line smooth tool to improve the curves.

It is absolutely not necessary that you have to create the contour line exactly like I have done. You can experiment with your own style. This is where your creativity kicks in. You are the creator of your own masterpiece and experimenting with different styles will only improve your skill and creativity.

Take a look at how I have defined the slope/contour lines for my subject.

Step 4: Start Writing the Text
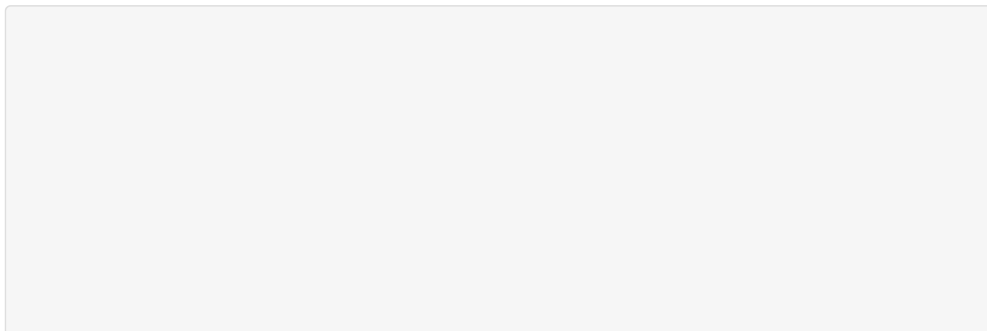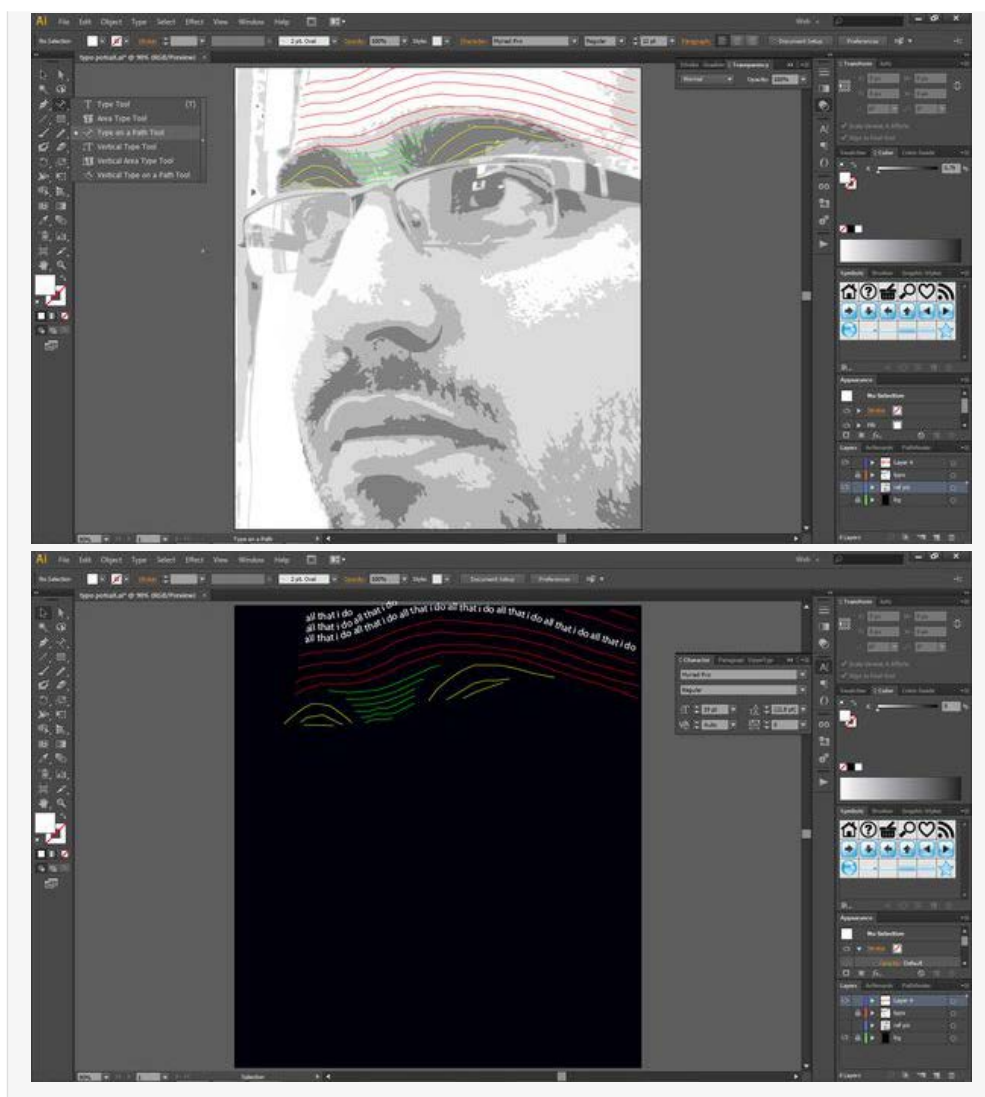
This is where the fun part begins. After you have completed drawing the slopes, use the type on a path tool in illustrator to write text on the slope lines or contours. Experiment with different font sizes, different font colours etc. Remember there is no right way to do this, there is just your way.

Use words that describe your subject or better write a letter to them through this typographic portrait. After you have finished writing the text, use the key text areas that you defined in step 2, to decide the colour of the font.

Remember to experiment with different fonts, size and colour. Stop only when you are satisfied with the look.

This was my first attempt at creating a typographic portrait and took me well over a month. So remember there is no short-cut to create your masterpiece.

Step 5: Conclusion
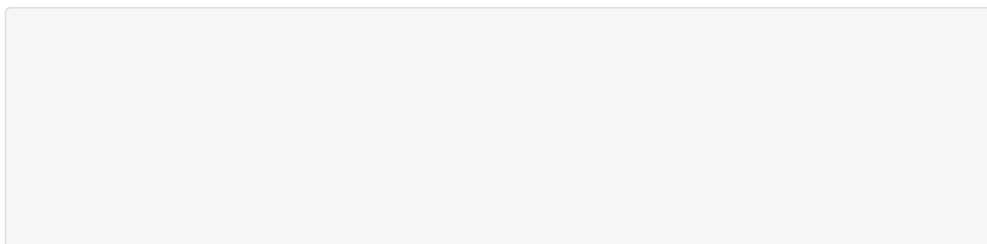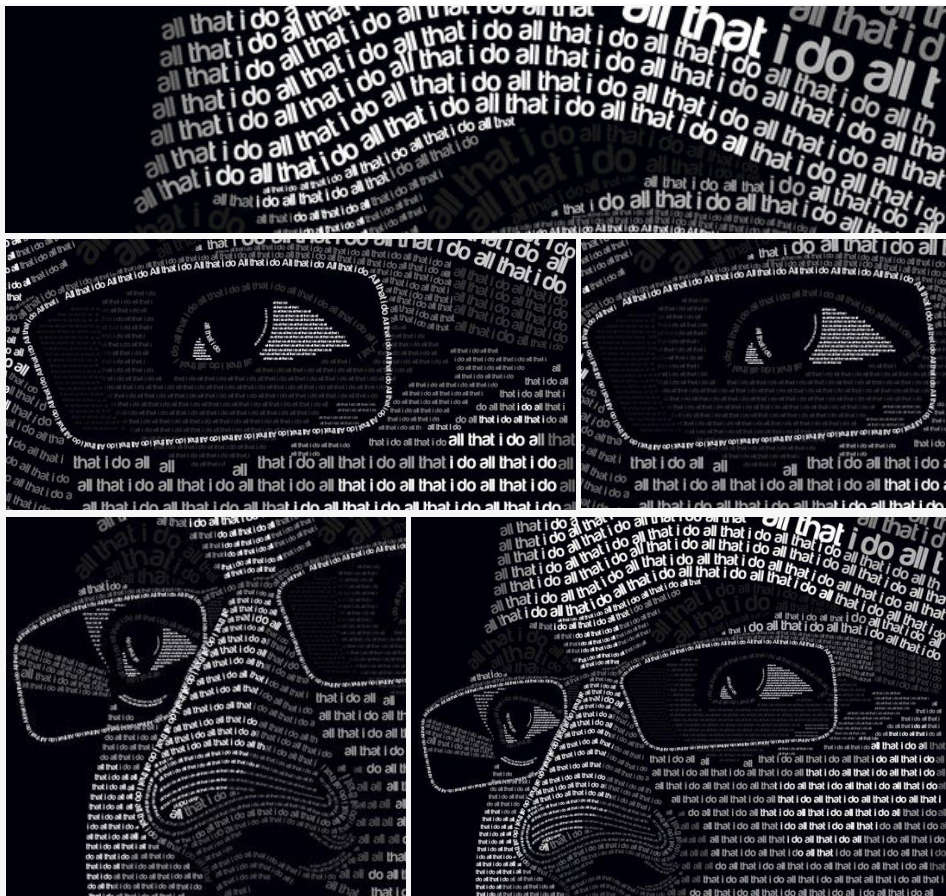
I hope you got a good understanding of the process to create a typographic portrait. I have attached various crops of my portrait for you guys to have a look at.

These show the minute details that went into creating this portrait and possibly helps you get an idea on how to create yours.

If you have any comments doubts, shot them at me and I will be happy to respond.

Cheers

Ankur Kaul

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Comments

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Please be positive and constructive.

be nice

w I Made it!   ☐ Add Images   Post Comment

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djackklingler3   2016-03-19   Reply

Would an image that you previously rotoscoped work as well?

All that i do . djackklingler3   2016-05-11   Reply

Yup

---

missjeherbert   2016-05-11   Reply

Been looking for something just like this to help teach my KS4 Graphic Design
students. Think they are gonna love this one!

Thanks and well done, some great work!

Jo
x

All that i do . missjeherbert   2016-05-11   Reply

Thanks..glad this could be of use to you. Do post here what your students
create.

ShrustiS   2016-03-16   Reply

i did not understand the second step of breaking apart. what eactly did you do
in that?

YaënD   2015-12-31   Reply

great, I gonna try it with free software Illustrator or with TheGimp to see if it
works.

All that i do . YaënD   2016-01-18   Reply

Should definitely work man. All the best

Arnoldofingo   2015-12-31   Reply

Ya did all that without ONE typo...? BRAVO~

All that i do . Arnoldofingo   2016-01-18   Reply

Ha ha yes..but I have secretly also put my wifey's nickname in the image.
Best of luck finding that.

Laral   2016-01-01   Reply

That looks great. A lot of work.

All that i do . Laral   2016-01-18   Reply

Yes a lot of work but rewarding in the end. Thanks

mahavishna   2016-01-01   Reply

sorry i don't understand one thing

how did you put your curvy types (type on a path) on the areas you created in
step 2?

normally you either type on a path or on an area, how did you do both of them
together?

"use the key text areas that you defined in step 2, to decide the colour of the
font"

i dont get this sentence

thanks

All that i do . mahavishna   2016-01-18   Reply

Hi mahavishna

The curvy type is created from type on a path tool. It has nothing to do
with the areas created in step 2. The areas created in step two are just a
reference for the colour the text would take. To give a 3d depth to the
image the text needs to be given colour according to the light and shade
on the picture, this is where the areas defined instep two help with.

pachytrance   2015-12-29   Reply

That's awesome man

All that i do . pachytrance   2015-12-31   Reply

Thanks bro !!

BJeanBaird   2015-12-31   Reply

That is wonderful! Congratulations on your win.

All that i do . BJeanBaird   2015-12-31   Reply

Thank you so much. Yes winning the challenge made this worth the effort

Geniebeaniechilibeanie   2015-12-31   Reply

Love it love it love it

All that i do . Geniebeaniechilibeanie   2015-12-31   Reply

Thanks a ton !!

sabu.dawdy   2015-07-29   Reply

Congrats on your win. This is amazing

All that i do . sabu.dawdy   2015-07-29   Reply

Thank you so much :)

PVT skittles   2015-07-28   Reply

you won! thats awesome man, I wish I could be as amasing with photoshop as you are

All that i do . PVT skittles   2015-07-28   Reply

Thanks George,

I am self taught..so you see its not that tough. Only practice makes a man perfect. So keep learning brother.

To shine like the sun, you have to burn like the sun.

Hvents4   2015-06-15   Reply

Hi this is so cool! I always wondered how to make all of these cool things on photoshop and such. I use gimp, and I was wondering how long this took you? Just want to make sure I'm on the right track.

Love the instructable though, thanks for sharing this!

All that i do . Hvents4   2015-06-15   Reply

Glad you liked the instructable. It took me a month working 1-2 hours per day. Creating typographic portrait takes time, but then it stays forever with you :)

Hvents4 . All that i do   2015-06-29   Reply

Wow, thanks for the estimate. Looks awesome!

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fpayton1   2015-06-23   Reply

love it

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tcunningham9   2015-06-22   Reply
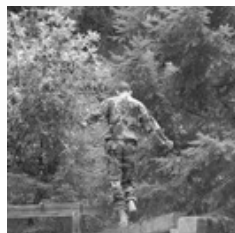
http://sanjuanislander.com/news-articles/people/19243/family-scatters-iraq-vet-s-ashes

How can I get you to make one of my recently deceased
soldier son for me? And how much? I have no knowledge in all this but would
love one of my son
Teri Cunningham
Milimama2005@gmail.com

All that i do . tcunningham9   2015-06-22   Reply

Hi Teri

Replied on your email.

Thanks

NikosL　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　2015-06-22　Reply

Nice instructable! I would like to know if this could be done with photoshop as well.

All that i do . NikosL　　　　　　　　　　　2015-06-22　Reply

Yes definitely possible with photoshop as well

MeeGusta　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　2015-06-19　Reply

Wow! Looks great! Thanks for the idea.

rich.meyer.503　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　2015-06-18　Reply

Thank you. I actually could follow your presentation.

DanT4　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　2015-06-18　Reply

One tip I have is to draw the contour lines on a separate layer. Then you can delete or hide the layer when you're done with the text.

�L　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　2015-06-18　Reply

wow I would start and whalla, it would be Christmas, cuz once you get started it would be hard to stop.....good thing my chair is uncomfortable.

kimberley.vaughan.7　　　　　　　　　　　　2015-06-17　Reply

Thank you very much, that was very kind of you to share this. I am now on a mission to complete the same. Thanks mate! aussie girl

All that i do . kimberley.vaughan.7　　　　　2015-06-17　Reply

Go Aussie Go !! and don't forget my pint of VB :)

kimberley.vaughan.7 . All that i do | 2015-06-17 | Reply

heh heh heh! Go Large with the VB :)

ddiseñoyweb | 2015-06-16 | Reply

Wow! Thanks for this idea :) Great job!

All that i do . ddiseñoyweb | 2015-06-17 | Reply

Thanks

thundrepance | 2015-06-16 | Reply

i've always wanted to know how to do this; **thank-you** for posting it! **x^)**

All that i do . thundrepance | 2015-06-17 | Reply

Glad you liked it :)

chall fowler | 2015-06-16 | Reply

I can't wait to give this a try!

All that i do . chall fowler | 2015-06-16 | Reply

Glad you liked it..do share what you create here :)

tcpipchip | 2015-06-16 | Reply

looks the kraftwerk boing boom tschak video clip!

All that i do . tcpipchip | 2015-06-16 | Reply

Ha ha lol..didn't know that.

RENE-L | 2015-06-11 | Reply

Does Illustrator have a warping feature for text? I think my photoshop does, that

should cut your time for more than half.

I never tried one. I should try it.

RoseA3 . RENE-L   2015-06-16   Reply

Yes, Illustrator has text warping features.

All that i do . RENE-L   2015-06-12   Reply

Not that I am aware of one. You can try in photoshop..that would definitely reduce the time.

samalert . RENE-L   2015-06-12   Reply

This is a very time consuming process. The time it will take to draw the contours is too much. Its very similar to creating the low poly potraits.

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