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Tubenose's "Cell Shading With a Mouse"

A nifty coloring tutorial for those of you who don't have a tablet.

"Cell Shading With a Mouse"
written by: [tubenose](#)
posted: Jan/09/2007
hits: 14,155, views: 12,182
style points: infinite, votes: 5
tubenose.deviantart.com

[this rocks!](#)

[yeaux!](#)



Step #1



Welcome back, little grasshoppers! We've got a little nifty tutorial here for those of you who don't have a tablet. It will involve some patience and practice though but rest assured that the results would be quite satisfying! I'll show you how you can still output a clean looking cel-shaded piece of art even without a tablet! It's time to get cracking and let's show them tablet users that mouse-users can also kick butt!

What you need:

1. Photoshop - any version will work (for this I used CS2)
2. Your oh-so-awesome drawing!
3. A scanner
4. Your trusty little mouse

Terms you'd encounter:

PS -Photoshop. Not PlayStation
 BG - Background. Not Big Gorilla
 Layers - Your close friend when using photoshop. Don't be intimidated. Just think of these as pieces of imaginary paper stacked on top of each other.
 Filters - PS's default effects that you can mess with. These would be those motion blurs, clouds filters, lens flare, etc etc.
 Opaque/Opacity - The transparency of something. Opaque colors mean that you can't see through them.

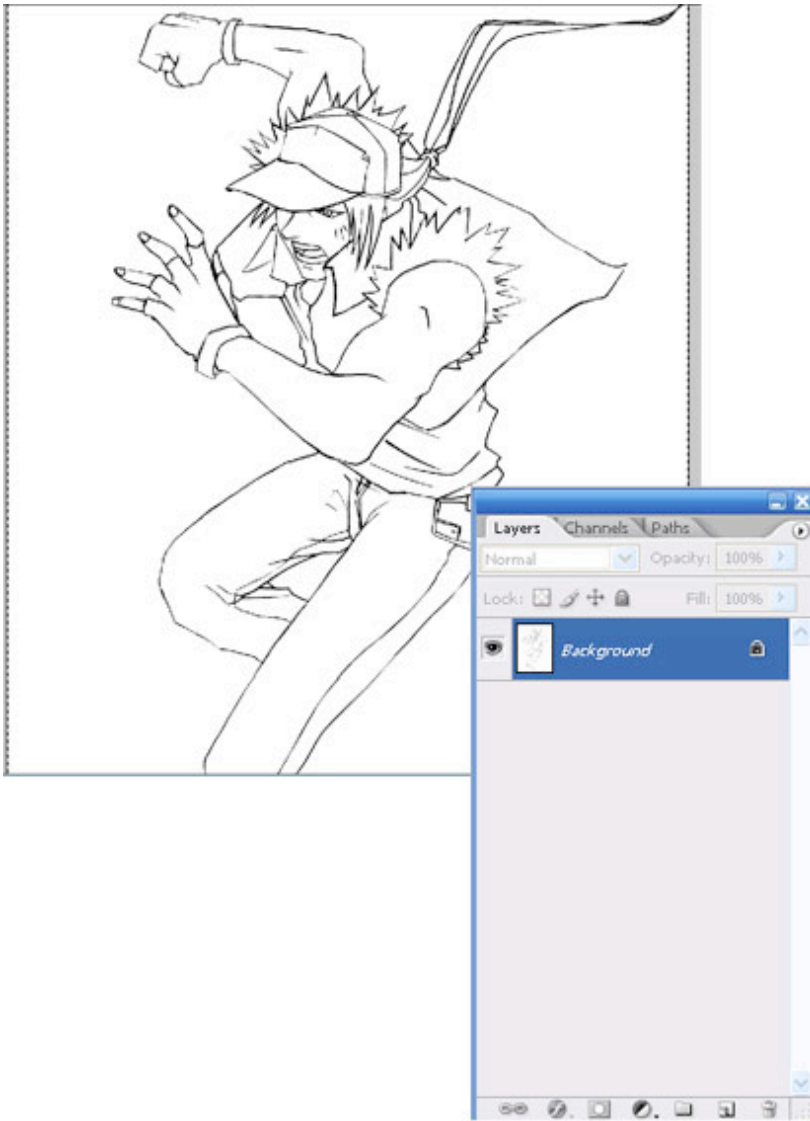
I would assume that at this point you've got your drawing inked, scanned and cleaned up already. I couldn't really do all those on a step-by-step basis because that would have made this the longest tutorial on this side of the Milky Way. There are other tutorials for preparing an artwork, however, I will start and show you how to lift the line-art and put it on a separate layer.

Now to begin. Commence Cel-Shading!

Step 1

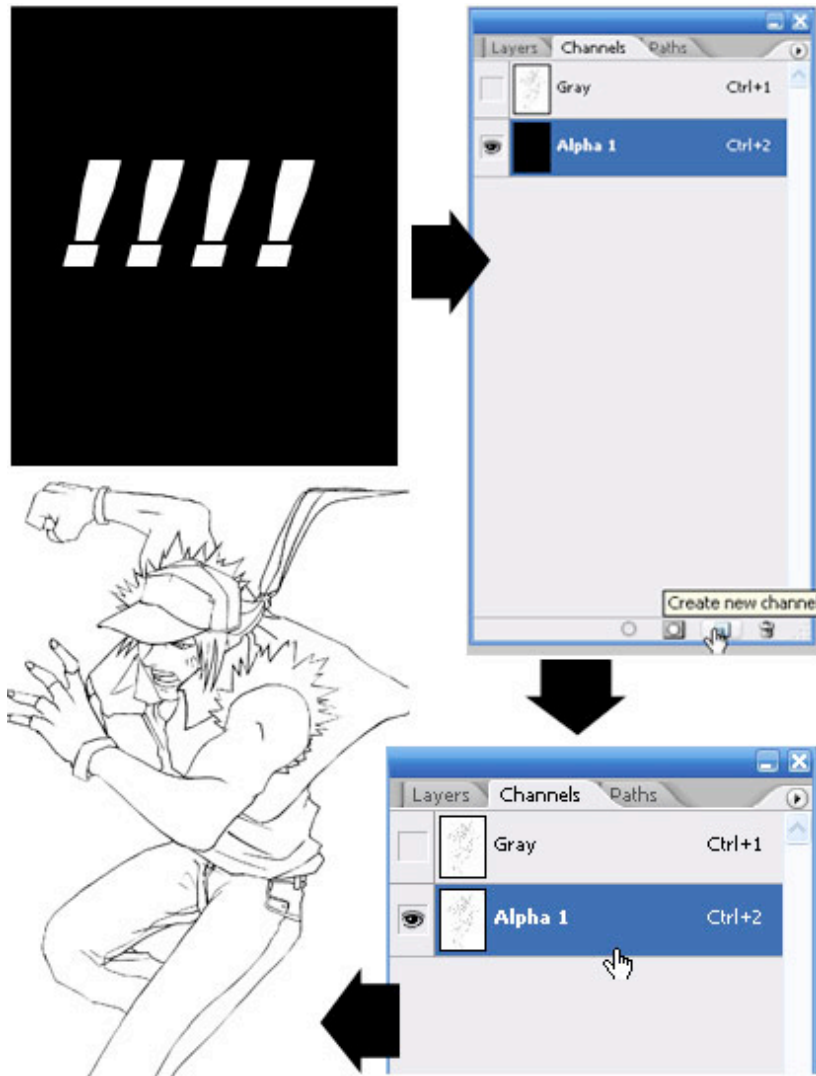
Cleaning up an image is very important, especially if you're using the cel-shading method. Cel-shading won't do well with sketches as it would make the whole picture rather confusing. We want a clean, crisp image to work with as much as possible. Browse around mangarevolution.com to find tips tricks on how to clean an image properly. I sketched out and inked a picture of Terry Bogard because I needed an excuse to draw him again. I've already cleaned this image up for your convenience ;3

Step #2



Next up is lifting the actual line art! As opposed to popular methods like retaining the line art on one layer and adding another layer on top and using the MULTIPLY Blending Option to color it, we'll do it in a slightly different manner. You'll see some advantages with lifting the actual line art later on. You can find a great tutorial on how to do it here: [Digital Lineart Setup](#). I'll give you a quick overview still. Most probably you'll have your image in GREYSCALE at this time, especially if you've cleaned it up in PS. First, SELECT ALL by pressing CTRL + A. Broken lines should appear all over the canvass.

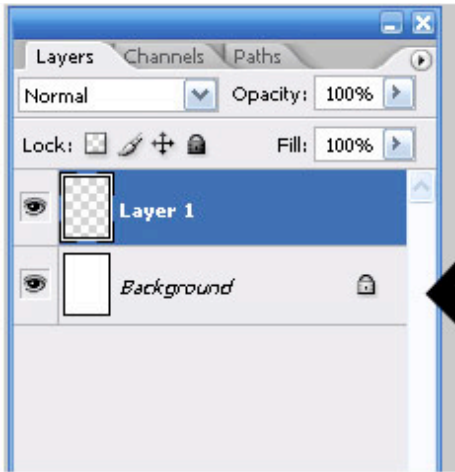
Step #3



After you've SELECTED ALL, Hit CTRL + C to COPY the whole image. Now go to your CHANNELS TAB and click on that little box on the bottom to create a NEW CHANNEL. By default it would be named ALPHA 1.

Whaa?!?! It turned black?? Don't worry, all you have to do is click on the ALPHA 1 CHANNEL then hit CTRL + V to PASTE. Your line art would appear once again.

Step #4



**FILL WITH
WHITE**

+

**CREATE
NEW LAYER**

Go back to your LAYERS TAB and FILL IN the whole image with WHITE. Create a NEW LAYER afterwards and select this. On top of your screen you should see a set of drop down options. Go to SELECT then LOAD SELECTION.

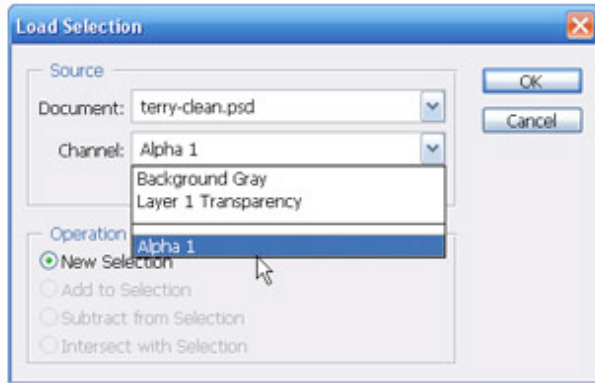


**GO TO
"SELECT"**

+

**"LOAD
SELECTION"**

Step #5



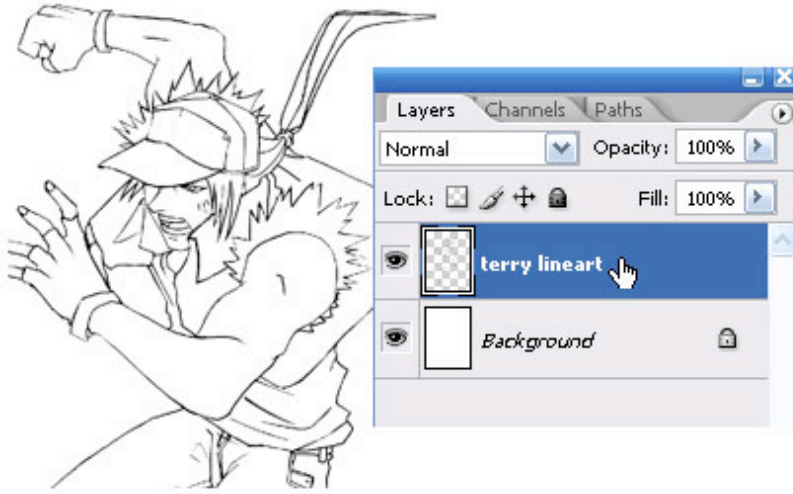
The LOAD SELECTION dialogue box would then appear. Go to the CHANNEL drop down box and select ALPHA 1.

Click OK.

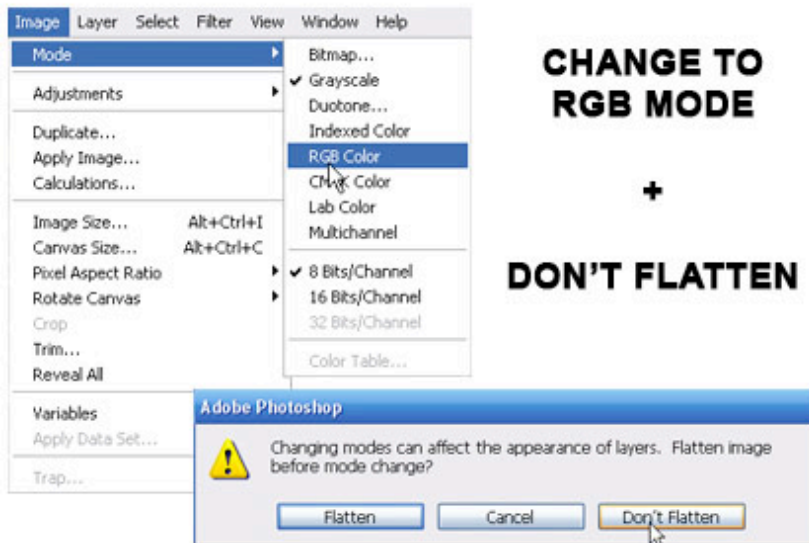
You would then see broken lines forming the shape of your original line art! Booyah! Almost done here. Now, FILL IN the lines with BLACK and viola, your line art has successfully been lifted!



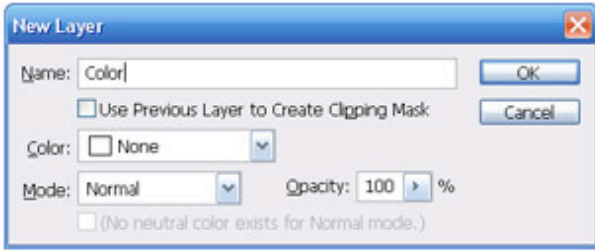
Step #6



Now that we've lifted the line art from the BG layer, we would want to make sure that it's not in GREYSCALE MODE, otherwise we won't be able to apply any color to it. On top of your screen, go to IMAGE then MODE then select RGB COLOR. A dialogue box would appear asking you if you want to Flatten your image. Select DON'T FLATTEN.



Step #7



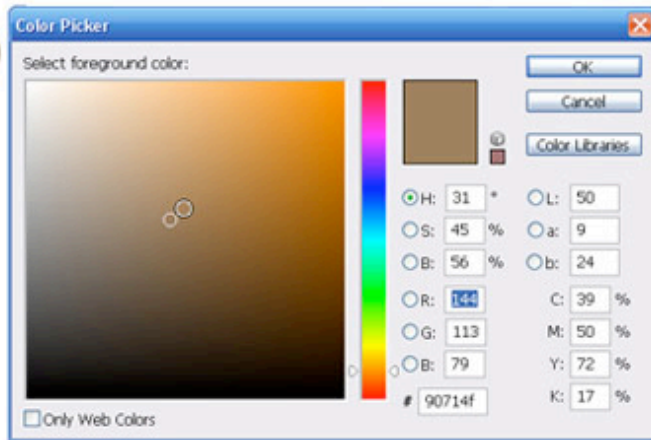
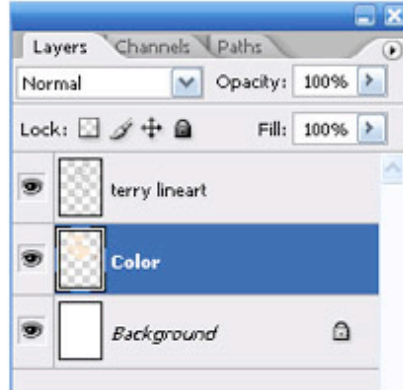
**LINEART
ON TOP**

+

COLOR

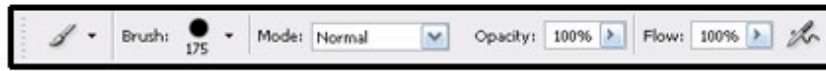
+

BG



Now it's time to color! Since we've already lifted the line art, there is no need to use the multiply option and placing it on top of the image. What we'll do is place another layer UNDERNEATH the line art layer, conveniently naming it "Color". Lol, how original XD. I also laid out 3 different shades that I'll be using for the skin tone, beginning with the lightest shade.

Step #8



**DEFAULT
ROUNDED BRUSH**

**@
100% OPACITY
& 100% FLOW**

**Place Flat Colors
on COLOR LAYER**



What's good about this for mouse users is that you don't need any fancy-shmancy brushes. Just grab the default rounded brush! Make sure the OPACITY and FLOW options are set on 100% though... We don't want any transparent looking colors here.

Start laying out the base color for the skin tone. I use the lightest one first. You don't have to worry about all those excess colors since you can erase them later and your line art is safe and sound in its own little lair... err...layer I mean.

Step #9



Most Cel-shaded images only have 2-3 shades of color for each element of the picture. 4, if you count white. Just select a BASE COLOR first then darken it a few notches, enough for you to see a significant difference. Same goes with the third color. Start planning on where you want the shadows and highlights to appear. Don't forget where your light source is! I placed mine on the upper left (like usual).



Typically, 2-3
Shades of color
are sufficient.



Step #10

Cel Shading in a nutshell...

Painted



Cel-shaded



Blended



Simplified



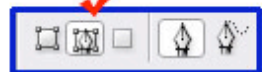
Basically, Cel-shading is a simplified version of colors that are supposedly blended together. Of course they aren't blended per se. In Cel-shading, the colors are very opaque, meaning they aren't transparent, and are clearly separated with different shades. One good thing to bear in mind when cel-shading is that the images tend to give off a "boxy" and sharp look as opposed to the more roundish, well-blended colors of that's painted. The same principle of light and shadow are still applied in cel-shading, you just don't have to worry about making them blend together and polygonal shading is acceptable.

Sketchy art is not recommended for cel-shading because the technique relies heavily on clean, precise and closed lines. It would be quite confusing to cel-shade a sketch because you wouldn't have a clue where a line ends or meets up with another.

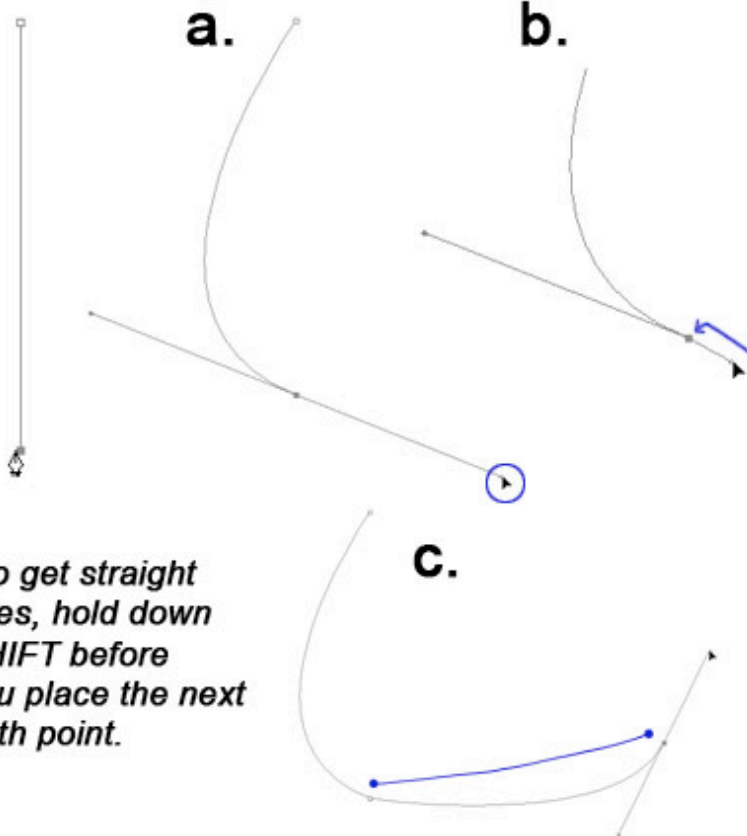
Step #11



THE PATH TOOL CAN BE YOUR FRIEND...



***Use the SPACEBAR for dragging and moving around the canvas**



****To get straight lines, hold down SHIFT before you place the next path point.***

The PATH TOOL is a very powerful selection tool and would most likely be your best friend once you get the hang of it. Let me see if I can explain clearly on how you can use it:

First, select the PATH TOOL by pressing "P" then select a starter point with your path. If you hold down SHIFT and click anywhere else, you'll notice that the path automatically goes straight. This is a nice little feature PS has when you want to create straight selections.

a.) After clicking on the starting point, click anywhere on the canvas. Once you have your second point on, experiment by still holding on the button and dragging the mouse. You'll notice that the line from the start point to the second point curves. Using this can be very helpful when you want to select curved areas instead of clicking a bazillion points trying to get the shape of a circle. Once you drag the path while holding the mouse button down, you'll notice that as the line curves, another line appears by your cursor. Hold ALT and the arrow changes into a little black triangle.

b.) While still holding ALT, drag the little black triangle to your last path point. Basically what you're doing is telling the path tool to start where you left off again to continue creating the path.

c.) Once the black triangle is in place of your last path point, you can repeat step 1 again and have the path curve anyway you want.

The method takes a bit to practice with but once you get used to it, it will make your work a lot FASTER and EASIER. Trust me on this one :D

Step #12



**You can also use the POLYGONAL LASSO TOOL or even just the default ROUND BRUSH.*

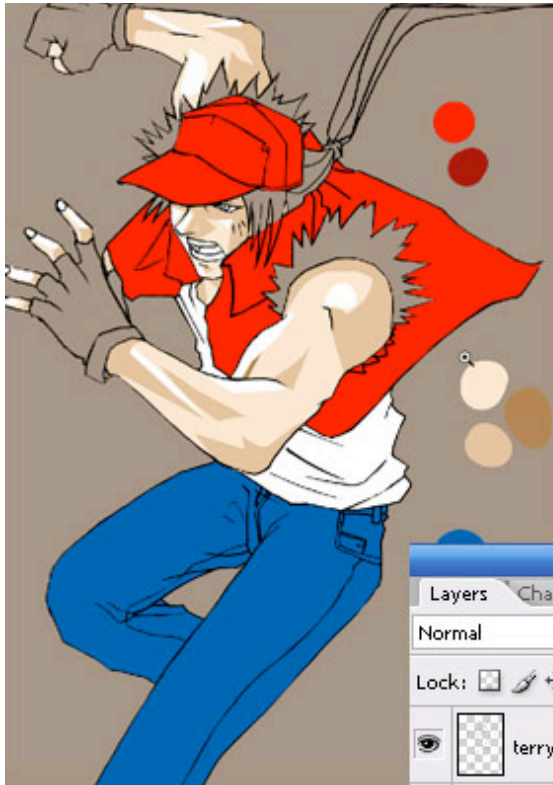
Caution: Using the BRUSH TOOL May cause mouse user's hands to HURT....alot D:



Alternatively, you can use PS's different selection tools like the POLYGONAL LASSO tool. Its like a simplified version of the PATH TOOL but the down side on this one is that you can't create curves and when you accidentally double-click while using it, your selection will be messed up and you'd have to start from the very beginning D:<

You can also just use the rounded opaque brush to lay down the shadings and such but be warned, it puts incredible strain on your hand (because we're using a mouse remember?).

Step #13

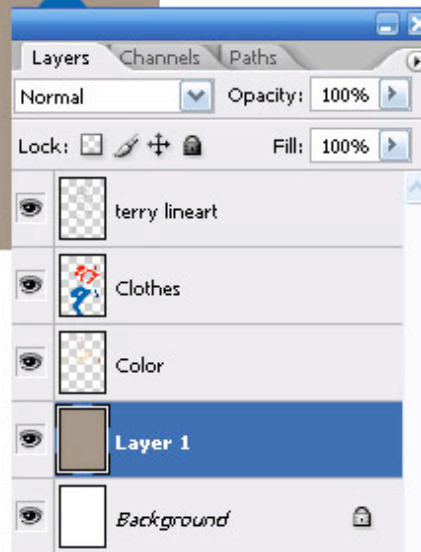


****How many
LAYERS
to use
would be
totally up
to you!***

The method I've shown you is the same on clothes and other elements of the picture. Do you have to create a whole new layer for every single element (hat, jacket, pants, etc...)? It's totally up to you, and your computer's capacity. The only advantage of doing so is that you can color correct certain parts easier. I'll leave the decision to you.

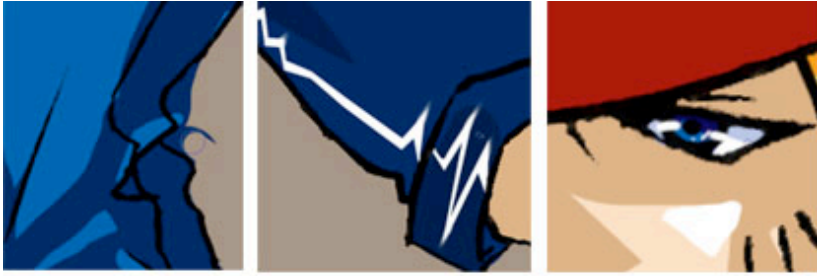
Since we've got the line art and color layers separate, you can add a dark BG color underneath it all just to see any BREAKS in the color. For example, if I had a white BG and colored the shirt WHITE, I wouldn't be able to tell where the shirt's color ends now would I?

DONT FORGET TO SAVE OFTEN!



****The dark BG
color will help you
see breaks in color
especially if you're
using white and
other light shades***

Step #14



After you've placed details and such, you can start cleaning out the excess colors all around. It's looking a whole lot better now especially with that clean white BG eh?



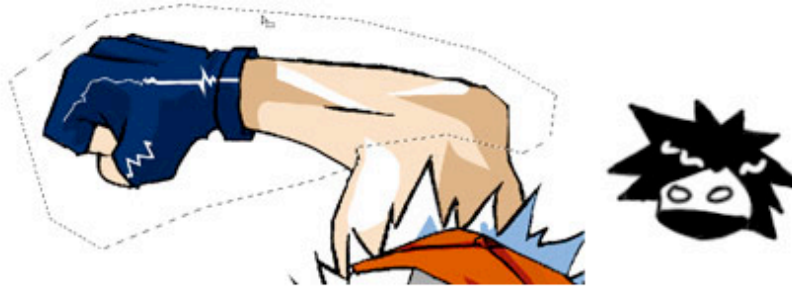
Step #15



**Take advantage of Photoshop's capabilities like the Layer Blending Options or the MOTION BLUR effect to add an extra kick.*

Is it finished? Yeah, I know you want to show off your new full cel-shaded piece of art to your friends but not yet. The fun hasn't stopped yet! Try utilizing PS's special features and filters! Add a BG (since we're so awesome that we've got everything on separate layers already) or some filters and whatnot to enhance the whole image. You can do a SAVE AS at this point if you want so that you still have the original cel-shaded file just in case you mess up with adding effects.

Here, I grabbed an image of the Fatal Fury logo from the net and slapped it in there. Added a star on the back of his jacket, blurred it and applied MOTION BLUR on his hand to give it a sense of motion.



Motion Blur in action! Booyah!



Step #16



Tah-dah! A complete cel-shaded, clean looking, mouse-created, oh so awesome piece of art! Now go and show it off to your friends and be the star of the whole neighborhood!

(That's too long for a special-move-name, tube...)

Artist Profile:



†[tubenose](#)
 Senior Member
 Still smells like Waffles.
 Member Since: Oct/05/2006
 Page Views: 30,454
 Page Hits: 47,888
 Style Points: Infinite
 Total Votes:

Comments & Feedback:

yeaux!
 + BOOKMARK ...
 + BOOKMARK ...



[awsaludares](#)
 hmmm.....
 boo-bad-good enough-good-nice-cool-awesome-PERFECTO000!!!!!!!!!!!!!!ok ur perfect lol



[Tsuki_Darkness](#)
 Thanks for making a tutorial about this because I use a mouse all the time.

1,733
Tutorials: 5

Tutorials:

- [Cell Shading With a Mouse](#)
- [Coloring 3D Spheres](#)
- [Digital Painting](#)
- [Digital Painting / Waffle-y Process](#)
- [Process of -Promenade- via Photoshop!](#)



[Sunny_Jim](#)
i use a mouse ^_^ !! the pen tool is the way to go XD



[supremeX2](#)
Hey dude i thought that all the coloring are done by mouse only as you can see my gallery every thing is done by mouse only but after looking at comments it look like a new thing! :p lol nice to see that there are more who do coloring with mouse



[Jpopgoth](#)
this will help a lot thx >o<

[add comment](#)

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