

COVERS  
PHOTOSHOP

3.0

003

Photoshop

Techniques

*How to*

# **BUILD A SOFT SHADOW FOR POSTSCRIPT ARTWORK.**

Most designers are familiar with creating shadows in a drawing program such as Adobe Illustrator or Macromedia FreeHand. In those programs, you must build shadows with blended shapes or graduations. Even the best shadow built this way often looks computer generated.

Adobe Photoshop, on the other hand, is able to create subtle shadow effects. The following technique will show you how to build a Photoshop shadow for any Illustrator or FreeHand object. You can use this technique to create quick drop shadows for anything from photo boxes or illustrations to company logos.

In addition, this technique is an excellent way to begin integrating the use of Photoshop with other illustration software. Designers have said that this is one technique they use repeatedly.

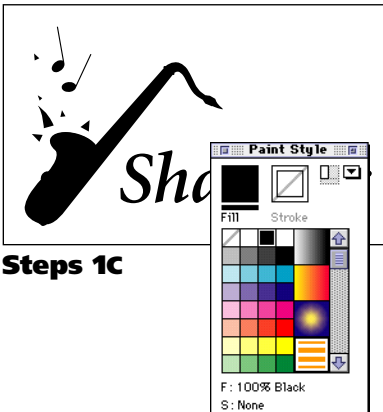


## Building a drop shadow

### Step 1



Steps 1A-B



Steps 1C



Step 1D

#### Isolate the objects you want to shadow.

Start in your Illustrator or FreeHand file. First, you will isolate the parts of your document you want to create a shadow for. You will copy them into a new document and fill them black. Save this new, black outline in an Illustrator format so that you can open it in Photoshop.

#### A: Select the object(s).

#### B: Copy them to a new document.

Choose Copy from the Edit menu; create a new document and choose Paste. You should see a blank document with only the elements you want to shadow.

#### C: Fill your objects with black.

Illustrator and FreeHand both have similar approaches to filling objects. In Illustrator, use the Paint Style palette; In FreeHand, use the Inspector palette.

*Note: Inspect your object. The result should be a black silhouette of the original shape. You may need to do some editing at this point to insure that final shape is what you want.*

#### D: Draw a larger rectangle around the objects.

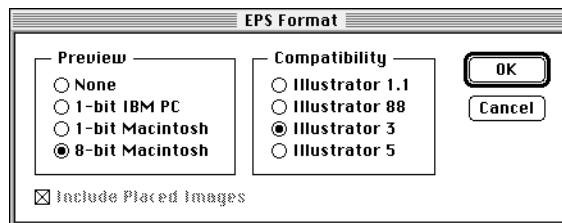
Give your new rectangle a Fill and Stroke of None. (In the example to the left, we've used a dotted line to represent this rectangle) Make sure it is about 1/4 inch larger than your object on each side.

This rectangle will give a border around the object when you import it into Photoshop. This gives you the extra space you need to blur the edges of your shape.

#### E: Export the objects in an Illustrator 3.0 format.

Adobe Photoshop can convert files saved in an Illustrator format.

*In Illustrator, choose Save-as from the File menu and pick "EPS" from the pop-up menu. Illustrator will bring up the EPS Format dialog box. Select Illustrator 3 from the compatibility list.*



*In FreeHand, choose Export from the File menu and pick "Illustrator 3" from the pop-up menu. (If you are using FreeHand 3 instead of FreeHand 4 or 5, you will need to buy an additional utility called "EPS Exchange" to get this option.)*

#### †EPS Exchange.

EPS Exchange is produced by Altsys Corporation. It allows FreeHand 3.0 to save in an Illustrator format. It's features have been incorporated into FreeHand 4.0 or 5.0. Therefore it is no longer widely available. Try calling mail-order distributors or upgrade your copy of FreeHand.

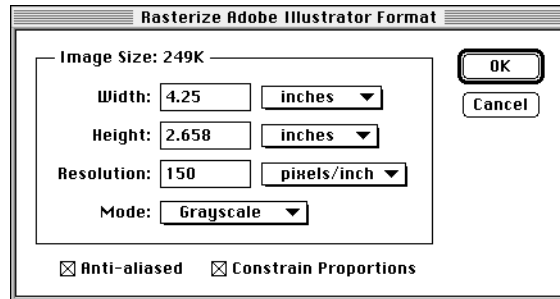
## Step 2

### Open and blur the shape in Photoshop.

To create the soft shadow effect, you will import the black silhouette of your shape and blur it using one of Photoshop's blur filters.

#### A: In Photoshop, open your black shape.

Find and open the file you created in the last step. Your open dialog box should be followed by the EPS Rasterizer dialog box.



Do not change the default width and height; set the resolution to 150 pixels per inch; and select Grayscale for the Mode.

Photoshop will process for a moment or two and you should see the black shape you exported in step 4.

#### B: Choose Blur → Gaussian Blur from the Filter menu.

The larger the number you use as a radius, the more blurred your shadow will appear. Enter a radius of 4 for your first time.

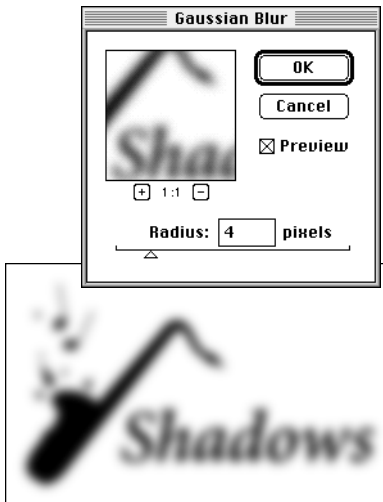
*Note:* As a rule of thumb, use a smaller radius for objects that should appear close to page, and a larger radius for objects that should appear farther off the page. Play with different settings to get the look you want.

#### C: Save your shadow image as a TIFF.

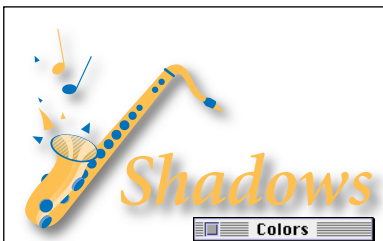
Choose "Save Copy" from Photoshop's File menu. Name your file; choose TIFF from the File Format pop-up menu and click OK.



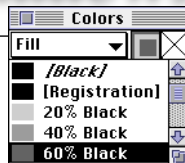
Step 2A



Step 2B



Step 3B



## Step 3

### Place the shadow behind the original shape.

#### A: Place the blurred TIFF behind your original object.

By placing a blurred version behind the original shape, you have created the illusion of a realistic shadow.



#### B: Assign the shadow TIFF a gray color

To adjust the color of the shadow, change the color of the TIFF to a light gray color.

## Problems and concerns



**Without Overprinting**



**With Overprinting**



Acrobat™ Distiller™

### **Shadows over a background color.**

This technique works best when shadowing objects on a white background. If you place your shadow on a colored background, it will appear to have a white box around it.

To get around this “white box” you need to *overprint* the shadow. Refer to issue #011, “How to Overprint a Shadow.”

### **Creating shadows for other programs.**

If you want to shadow a shape from some other program, you can use the Adobe Acrobat Distiller to convert the file to an Illustrator format. (*The Distiller comes free on the Adobe Illustrator 5.5 CD*)

#### **1) Save your file as a “postscript dump.”**

Most major software packages offer this ability. QuarkXPress has a command in the File menu called “Save EPS,” PageMaker allows you to save postscript files from the Print dialog box.

#### **2) Use the Distiller to convert the file to a PDF file.**

PDF files are the supported format for Adobe Acrobat documents. Adobe Illustrator can open convert PDF files.

*Note: Read the Acrobat Distiller documentation for complete instructions.*

#### **3) Open the PDF file in Illustrator.**

Your document should now be visible in an Illustrator format.



[www.swansontech.com](http://www.swansontech.com)