Photoshop

Photoshop

Techniques

How to use

POSTSCRIPT ART AS A STENCIL IN PHOTOSHOP.

One of the advantages of using a painting program like Adobe Photoshop is that you can create more natural images. You can mix colors, or paint on top of existing art.
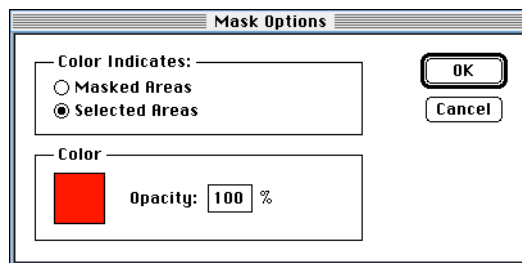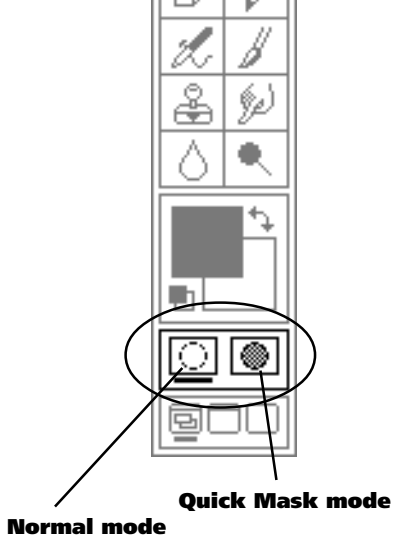
Working with a drawing program like Adobe Illustrator or Aldus FreeHand is more like creating an illustration out of cut paper. You create crisp, clean shapes and layer them to create your image. Drawing programs have the precision needed for creating logos or layouts, but they lack the spontaneous feeling that many designers strive for.

The following technique shows you how to combine the strengths of both these types of programs. You create a basic shape in your drawing program. Then in Photoshop, you use that shape as a stencil to spray-paint inside of. This issue also expands on the use of Photoshop's Quick Mask feature.

Photoshop 2.5's Quick Mask feature.

The Quick Mask controls are found at the bottom of Photoshop's tool palette (see left). For this technique, double-click on the Quick Mask icon and enter the settings below:

Mask Options

Color Indicates:
○ Masked Areas
● Selected Areas

[OK]
[Cancel]

Color
Opacity: 100 %

Normal mode

Quick Mask mode

Quick Mask analogy:

The Quick Mask tool is also dicussed in Photoshop Techniques 001, *"How to Use Quick Mask to Create Special Photo Edges."*

In this technique you will use Photoshop's Quick Mask mode as you would use a stencil and a can of spray-paint. You will place your stencil graphics onto the Quick Mask. After you convert back to Normal mode, these graphics are converted into a selection outline. You can paint away with Photoshop's Airbrush tool, and the color will stay neatly trimmed inside of your stencil shape.

Creating a simple stencil.

Step 1

Step 1A

†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, and therefore it is no longer widely available. Try calling mail-order distributors or upgrade to FreeHand 4.0.

Create black shapes in your drawing program.

Using FreeHand's or Illustrator's drawing tools, create the objects you want to paint in Photoshop. Do not worry about any color here; leave everything black.

A: Create artwork in the drawing program.

B: Export the objects in an Illustrator 3.0 format.
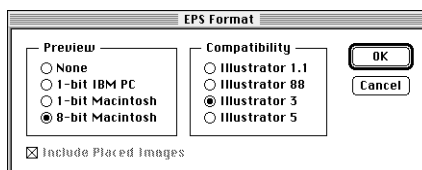Adobe Photoshop can convert files saved in an Illustrator format.

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.

EPS Format

Preview
○ None
○ 1-bit IBM PC
○ 1-bit Macintosh
● 8-bit Macintosh

Compatibility
○ Illustrator 1.1
○ Illustrator 88
● Illustrator 3
○ Illustrator 5

[OK]
[Cancel]

⊠ Include Placed Images

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.)

Step 2

Steps 2A-2C

Step 1D

Open a document in Photoshop

A: Open a backgrounf image in Photoshop.

You can use any type of image for this effect. In this example we have choosen a photo of a brick wall.

Note: You can of course create a new document if you want your stencil effect to appear over a white background.

B: Turn on the Quick Mask mode.

Shortcut: Press Q to switch between QuickMask and Normal mode.

Though the screen will not change, anything you do with the Quick Mask mode selected will change the mask. Your main image will not be effected.

Note: The Quick Mask settings shown at the top of the previous page are different than Photoshop's default settings. Make sure to change them before continuing.

C: Choose Place from Photoshop's File menu.

You will be presented with a standard open dialog box. Find the Illustrator 3.0 file you exported in Step 2 and open it.

Once you have opened your file, the image should appear centered on your page as a selection outline inside a box.

D: Position the placed image and click inside the box.

Once you have placed the image where you want, move the cursor inside the box and click to set the placement. The cursor should change to a gavel when it is positioned inside the box (see example to upper left).

The shapes you created in your drawing program should now be sitting alone on your mask layer.

Tip: You can drag a corner handle to resize the box. Click anywhere on the border of the box to move the entire image.
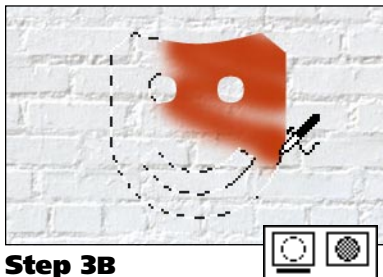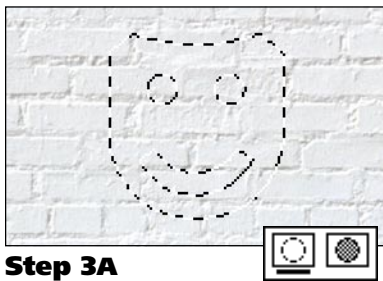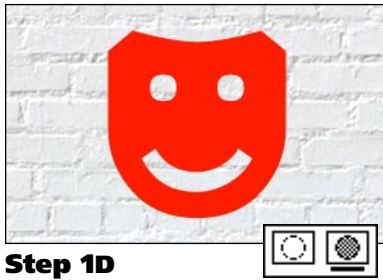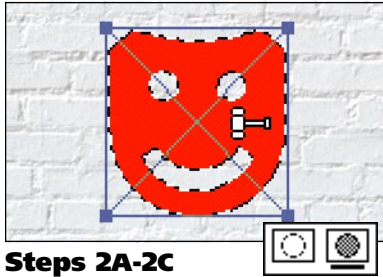
Step 3

Step 3A

Step 3B

Paint inside the selection

A: Switch back to Normal mode.

Shortcut: Press Q to switch between QuickMask and Normal mode.

Photoshop will convert the mask into a selection outline. You should now see the shapes represented as a moving dotted line.

B: Paint and color the shapes using Photoshop's paint tools.

Photoshop will only allow you to draw inside of your selection outline. You can paint away with reckless abandon; all color will be trimmed neatly inside the original shape.

On the cover of this issue, the illusion of a stencil is enhanced by adding the details around the stencil's edge. To create this effect, make the following modifications to the stencil technique.

Changes to Step 1

Changes to Step 1

Create a white graphic in a black box.

When you are building the stencil shape in your drawing software, make them white on top of a black box. This box will form the stencil's outer edge.

Changes to Step 2

Changes to Step 2

Inverse your selection before painting.

Between Steps A and B, choose Inverse from the Select menu. When combined with the previous change, this will create a stencil shape that you can also paint outside of. As you paint away, let a few strokes fall outside of the box edges.

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