



Photoshop CS3 or later

Self-initiated abstract art

Out-of-this-world work doesn't require a brief, says **JUN**, just careful choice of source material, a few hours and a little imagination

Self-initiated work often means a lack of budget, but that doesn't mean it can't look good. It's all left up to your imagination and creativity. In this tutorial I'll show you how – with a little time on your side – you can overcome the common myth of low budget work, creating an impressive piece of abstract work using Photoshop.

At the end of the tutorial, you should have two new libraries of elements to use in your future projects. The processes and techniques in this tutorial can be broken up and used in many different ways. Likewise, the final image of this tutorial can look as different as you want it to. It's up to you to experiment with the results.



JUN

Working under the moniker/studio UFHO, JUN provides design, direction and illustration across the fields of art, fashion, music and advertising. He is also one half of the art and design outfit Kittozutto. For more, check out www.ufho.com and www.kittozutto.com

On the disc

The background image accompanying this tutorial can be located at `DiscContents\Resources\Pegasus`

Time needed
8 hours

Skills

- Extraction using channels
- Manipulation through warping
- Gradient mapping
- Photoshop actions
- Blending images using blending modes



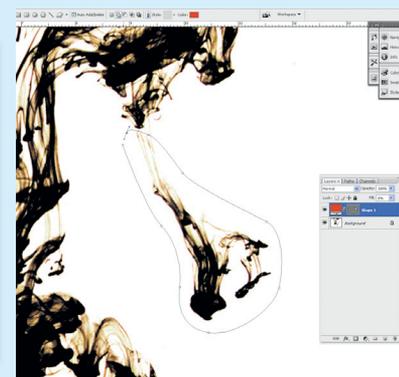
01 In this tutorial we'll be creating a Pegasus. Begin by searching for stock images of horses (or take your own photographs). It doesn't need to be a complete shot of a horse because it's difficult to get the pose you want. I've created my horse guide by piecing up three different horse images that I've found.



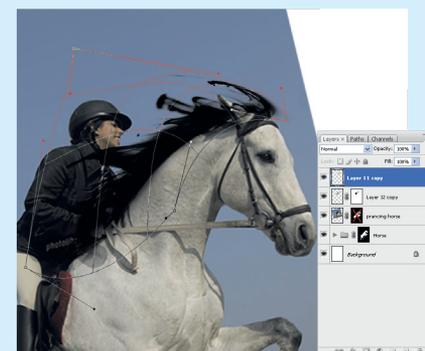
03 Organise your cut-out ink drops into different layers. Now desaturate all layers. Extract each layer ink drop from its background by Ctrl/Cmd+clicking the blue channel in the Channels panel. Invert the selection. Create a new layer and fill the selection with black. Do this for all the images.



05 Continue building the warped ink drops until you have mostly covered the horse. Take note on the direction of the ink flow. Feel free to experiment with drastic transformation. You can mask off unwanted areas later.



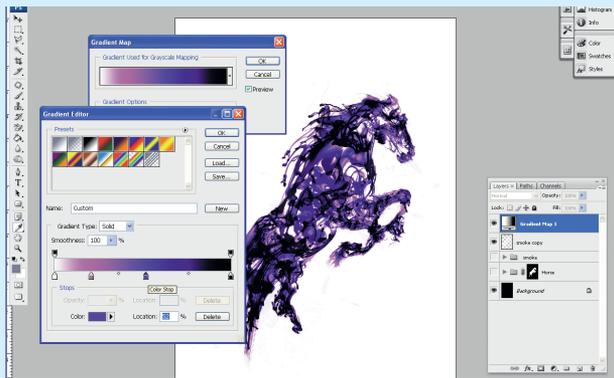
02 Next we'll build our library of ink drop imagery. Search for ink drop images, or photograph ink drops in water and save them in a folder. Open up all the images you've found. Using the Pen tool, start selecting parts of the ink drops you like and cut them out.



04 Open up your horse guide file and your ink drop library. Create a group called 'smoke' in your horse guide PSD. Drag your extracted ink drops in and begin distorting the ink drops to the shape of the horse using the Warp tool. Once you're satisfied, hit Return to confirm the warp transformation.



06 We'll colour the 'inked horse' next. Duplicate the smoke group and hide the original. Merge the new smoke group. Invert the colours to white and fill the background layer with black, as shown. As we'll be using a gradient map to colour the image, do take note of the inverse results of your white and black colours. →



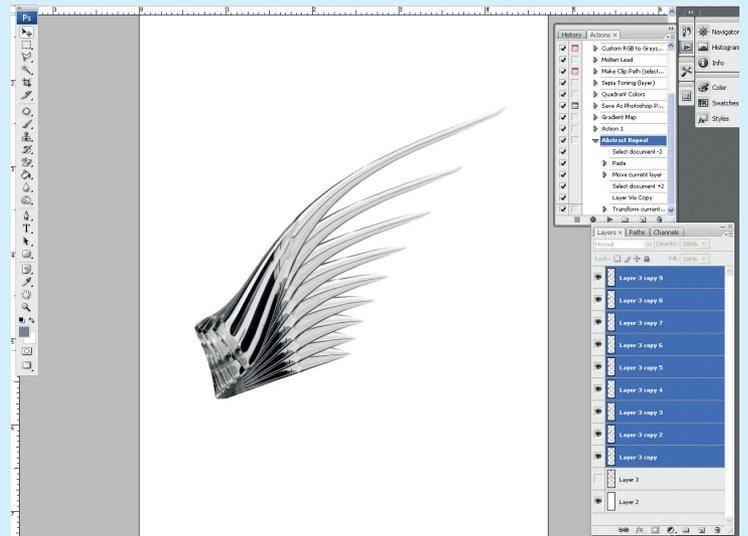
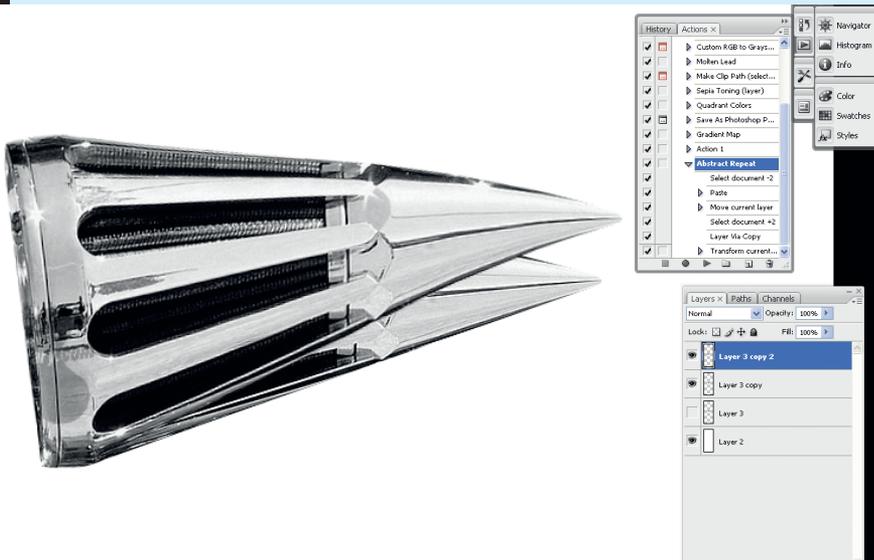
07 Create a new gradient map adjustment layer above the smoke layer. We're going to colour the ink drops with a gradient, as shown. Leave Dither and Reverse options unchecked. The actual colour doesn't matter, as we can adjust it later using the Hue & Saturation controls. I've set the hue to an orange tone.



08 Create a new layer below the smoke layer. We are going to darken a few places to make the horse silhouette look complete. Using a soft brush set to white, brush over the areas not covered by the inks. You have successfully created a coloured 'inked horse'.

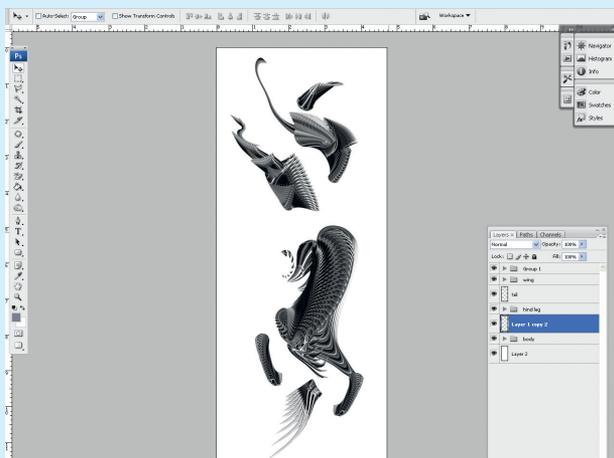


09 Next we're going to create the inner structure and wings for the creature. Search for stock images (or again take photos) of engine parts. In my example I've chosen the motorbike engine parts as shown, and have it pathed out using the Pen tool. Desaturate your selection.



10 Now we'll create a new action to record your next steps. In Recording mode, duplicate the layer, rotate it a little and distort it using the Transformation tools or Warping tools. Confirm the transformation and stop recording.

11 You've created your abstraction action. Hit the Play button a couple of times and you'll see that you've created the wings of your horse. Experiment with the distortions and directions of your action to create different abstract shapes.



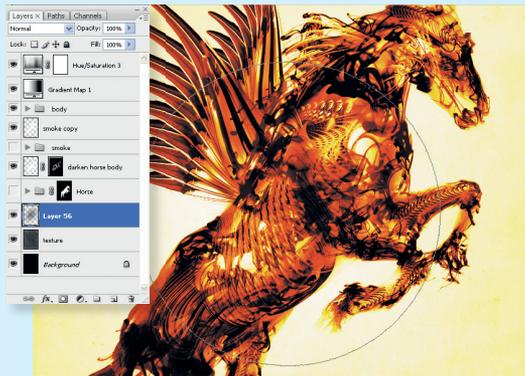
12 By now you will have built up a library of abstract shapes. Give yourself a pat on the back. Go for a break. You'll need fresh eyes for the next part of the tutorial.



13 Drag your folder of abstract shapes in below the gradient map layer of your horse guide. I've named it 'body'. Set the Layer Blending Mode of this group to Pin Light.



14 Distort the rest of the abstract shapes accordingly. Mask off unwanted areas. Again, create a new layer above the wing layers and use a soft white brush to darken the wings.



15 To create a matching background, drag suitable found or created texture images into the layer above the background layer. Set it to Color Dodge at 35% opacity. Create a layer above it and create a white glow behind the horse using a soft black brush.



16 Next we'll add some scenery to the artwork. Open *solstice_31.jpg* from this issue's disc and drag it below the texture layer. Set this layer to 85% opacity.



17 Now to make your Pegasus interact with its surroundings. Add shadows, lighting, mists and other details that add to your artwork. I've added a little lens flare near the head of the Pegasus.



18 You have completed the tutorial and created your own mythical creature – by cleverly combining stock images and photography. Feel free to experiment and add your own finishing touches to the artwork. The final image has its contrast and brightness tweaked slightly.

Visual CV

In pictures: a guide to the career and work of our Technique writers

JUN

A selection of client and personal works from the designer's portfolio



'Reborn' – 2008

For this personal project, the background was stitched together using five different cityscapes, with the rest of the artwork created in Photoshop.

'Soccer' – 2008

I began this personal project to explore new skill sets. It was created using just Photoshop, a soccer player for reference and a soccer ball image.



'Run' – 2008

This self-initiated artwork was created as part of the *Forward* series. It was illustrated using a reference image and some ink drops imagery.

'Dis[c]integrate' poster – 2006

For this Ministry of Sound poster, I smashed up unwanted CDs and scanned them back into Photoshop, employing the Masking, Warping, and Displacement Mapping tools and different blending modes.



'Animusicity' – 2006

For this Ministry of Sound flyer I had to fit the animal's expression with a body that matches – quite unusual back then.