

Contents

Introduction.....	7
Study Unit 1: Getting Started.....	17
Study Unit 2: Brushes, Pencils and Pens (Oh My!).....	23
Assignment 1.....	37
Study Unit 3: Setting up your canvas.....	39
Study Unit 4: Working with Files.....	43
Study Unit 5: Playing with Colour.....	49
Assignment 2.....	59
Study Unit 6: Selection and Transformation – moving things about.....	61
Study Unit 7: From Tradition to Digital – scanning in your line art.....	77
Study Unit 8: Selection ad Transformation – changing shapes and sizes.....	85
Study Unit 9: Getting fancy with bucket fill – the blend tool.....	93
Study Unit 10: Highlights and Shadows.....	105
Assignment 3.....	111
Study Unit 11: Using Layers.....	113
Assignment 4.....	149
Study Unit 12: Drawing Shapes and Lines.....	151
Study Unit 13: Filters.....	157
Study Unit 14: Words meet Pictures.....	169
Assignment 5.....	185
Study Unit 15: Vectors.....	187
Assignment 6.....	215

This one:



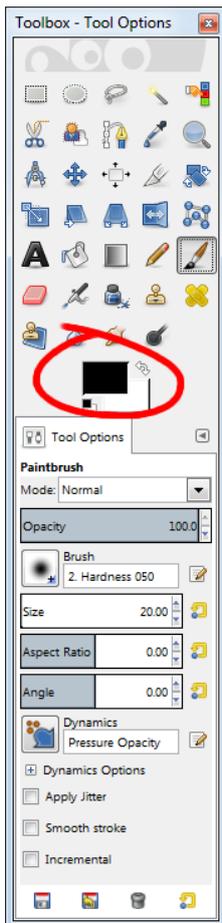
Select this and click onto your canvas. It zooms in. Click again and it will keep zooming in until you are so close you are drawing at a pixel by pixel layer. GIMP has a slightly annoying feature which zooms you in to an almost microscopic level if it thinks you have double pressed the pen. If this happens don't worry, just go to the View menu, hover over Zoom and select the Fit Image In Window option (or press Shift+Ctrl+J).

This enables you to work closely and add detail which looks more impressive when zoomed out as I did below on this doodle of an eye:



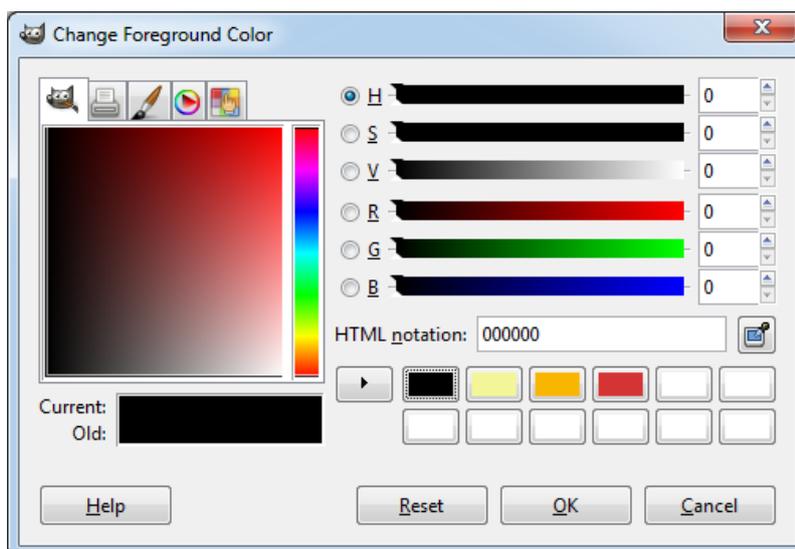
Enjoy yourself!

The feeling you are experiencing should be similar to when you first held a paintbrush or a coloured pencil or a piece of charcoal. You are making the first steps into a powerful new artistic medium and we are barely scratching the surface of the power at your fingertips! Keep on with this until that plastic pen feels as natural to you as your real world pencils or brushes, and that screen is just another piece of paper or blank canvas.



On the left hand side on that toolbar we have been using is your gateway to colour. I have circled it on the screen shot to the left. The black rectangle indicates the Foreground colour, and the White one behind it the Background. You can select either of these and set them to any colour you wish, and also swap them over by clicking the pen on that double headed arrow in the top right corner of the two rectangles. We will work with Foreground for now.

Press that black rectangle and you will be presented with the pop up window below:



STUDY UNIT 10: Highlights and Shadow

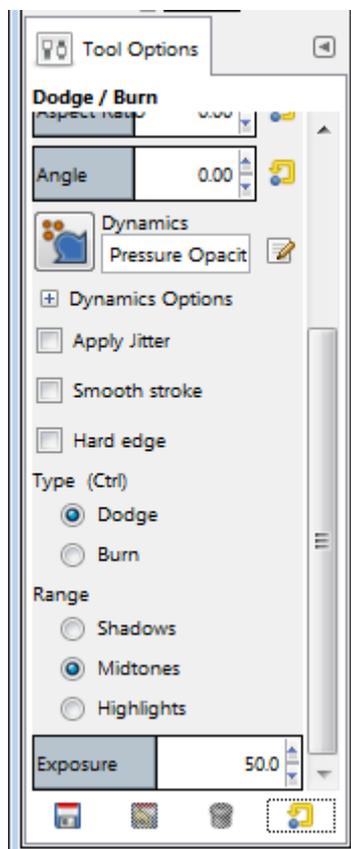
Adding highlights and shading to your digital illustration is a matter of style. You may not have any highlights in your work as a rule, but it is useful to know how to do it digitally. This section will add some more techniques and tools to your repertoire.

So far we have discussed drawing tools (Pencil, Airbrush, Ink and Paintbrush), Opacity, the Eraser and Colour. All of these could be used to give the impression of depth in your composition by suggesting light and shade. We have also explored some of the Selection tools too which will be invaluable to ensure you are only working on specific areas of your composition. There are a number of useful tools on that left hand tool bar which will also help you achieve the effect of highlights and shading in your work; Dodge, Burn and Smudge.

Dodge / Burn



Dodge and Burn are both accessed from the same button in GIMP, and it is quite common to find them grouped together like this as they are effectively the same tool. When you select this tool you get what appears to be a standard selection of brush settings, but down at the bottom (and you may have to scroll the toolbar down to see them) are the important controls:



For me, Dodge and Burn are a shortcut to applying highlights and shadows to your compositions. Dodge lightens and Burn darkens.

As with Opacity, both Dodge and Burn will have an increasing effect the more you apply them, getting darker or lighter accordingly. Look at this shape below, which was shaded using Dodge and Burn:

Transformation and Layers

Now we are working with layers we need to revisit the transformation tools, and talk about how you use them differently. I also promised I would step you through getting a drawing onto the side of a photographed cardboard box.

The first and most obvious difference when you combine transformation and layers is that you can now break your drawing up across multiple layers and transform each element differently. I will often draw a background and then place my character or characters or key objects onto separate layers. This way I can literally play with the composition until I am happy with it, and also (as I have already mentioned) I can recompose it with ease if a client decides *they* don't like the way it is laid out.

Like the example of the little girl sitting on the rock at the beginning of this section. I admit that this sometimes makes my composition muscles a little flabby, as I have become accustomed to having this feature at my disposal, but that is why I recommend you keep your finger in your traditional methods....or not care when traditional artists call you lazy....yes that has happened 😊

Let's use that illustration at the beginning of the section to demonstrate some of this.

We shall use the little yoga girl as an example:



If I was drawing this I would automatically draw the main character onto a different layer. In my experience, she is the part of the drawing I am most likely going to need to move around. This is the simplest way to begin.

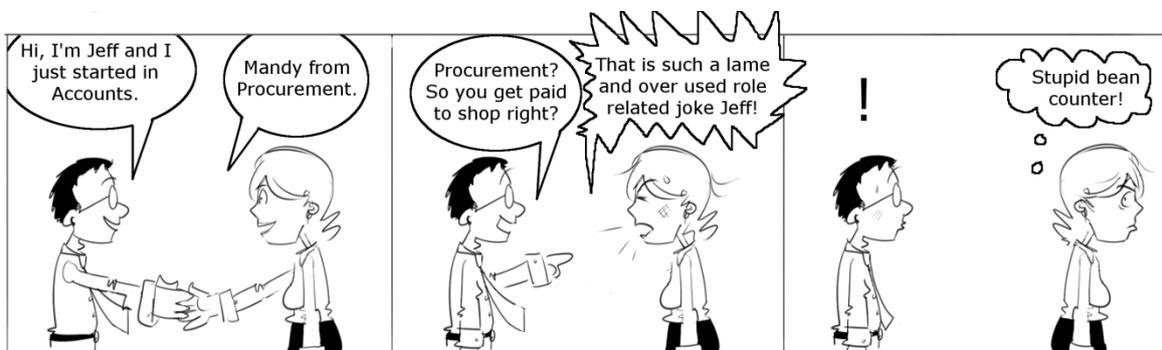
Which looks like this when it is all put together:



Now we need to tidy up our speech bubbles.

There are two schools of thought here now.

Clearly we need to make those tails on the speech bubbles look as if they are part of the bubble, and we will paint over those black lines to achieve that. The next decision depends on who you are producing this comic strip for. I have worked for magazine Editors who allocate you a very specific space and will not allow you to break out of your boxes, and I have worked for Editors who are much more relaxed about it. The choice is yours, but if the choice was mine (and it is) I would produce something like this:



In other packages you won't have to work as hard as in GIMP. Some will offer you shapes which are easily turned into bubbles and boxes and helpfully stay on their own layers. Others are specialist comic and cartoon producing tools which make this part of the job a dream (check out Comic Creator). I had to get my brush out with some white paint on it and work on both those layers until I achieved the above.

Remember always that GIMP is free and once you have the concepts of Digital Illustration you can use any package you like ☺