

Illustration by Derek Lea  
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## ILLUSTRATION

## PHOTOSHOP FACE/OFF

Here it is, by popular reader demand: the tutorial that takes you, step by step, through the process of creating the cover of our latest *Computer Arts Photoshop Special*

Ever since issue 41 of *Computer Arts Special*, we've been inundated with emails about how its cover was created by illustrator Derek Lea, and in this tutorial you'll find the process outlined in full.

"This image came about when I received an email from Matthew Harvey, Art Editor for *Computer Arts Special*," Lea begins. "He had a vague concept for the cover of an upcoming *Photoshop* special. This time we were going to do something a little different. The subject was to be compelling and not so literal. He was asking for a woman's face on the cover, but not a woman of this world; he wanted something alien or elfish-looking, with some swirling bits of detail around her eyes.

"I don't think either of us really knew what it would end up like for certain. I always applaud an art editor who has faith in an idea that could go in any number of directions – I imagine it's no easy feat to pitch the concept to the administrative folks who have to approve the concept."

He explains the early stages: "I downloaded a supplied photo of the model that was shot by The Walcot Studio in Bath ([www.thewalcotstudio.co.uk](http://www.thewalcotstudio.co.uk)). When I saw the image and how good it was, I felt pressure. This was a great shot of a fantastic model – if this cover went wrong it would be all my fault.

"In thinking how to make her alien, we agreed on a desaturated greyish appearance, and I sent a quick test to Matthew of how the horizontal flipping of half her face was going to work. We agreed that this was the direction to go in. The difficulty was in the detail. I had nothing to go on except for a couple of conversations with Matthew. Some ideas tossed

around were possibly ornate furniture details or fine ironwork. It was the idea of architectural details that struck me as the way to go. I was thinking of a group of buildings in Toronto's financial district that always captivated me as I walked by them. There are dozens of them – littered with exquisite details."

Lea set out with his camera on a freezing cold day. "Anyone who's been in Toronto in December will know that it's cold. Thankfully, there wasn't any snow around at the time, so at least the buildings I wanted to shoot would be clear. Sure, it would've been nice to wait for warmer weather, but we just didn't have the time. In many instances, I would stand on things to get up higher, so that the perspective of the shots was dead-on; things like bicycle racks, newspaper boxes and parked cars in a couple of instances. There was one point where I was standing on top of a newspaper box and a bus pulled up – I was eye to eye with the passengers! Naturally, they were looking at me like I was insane. And I was insane, outside in December climbing on things in downtown Toronto to get just the right images.

"After taking over 70 shots, I called it a day. My hands were aching from the cold and I hate shooting with gloves on. I narrowed my selections down to 23 shots to show Matthew for the go-ahead. He agreed it was going to work. After carefully looking at all the shots, and places on her face we could blend them in, I chose the five most appropriate for this job and got straight down to it. The result is the image on the facing page, with the process revealed step by step on the following pages. Have fun! I know I did, except for the aching fingers part, of course..."



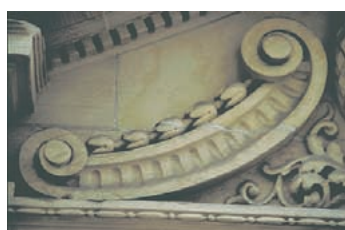
## DOWNLOAD

Click here to download the files you need to complete this tutorial

Artwork, photography, and expertise by Derek Lea, [w] [www.dereklea.com](http://www.dereklea.com). The portrait shot was supplied by The Walcot Studio ([www.thewalcotstudio.co.uk](http://www.thewalcotstudio.co.uk)).

**BELOW** This portrait shot was taken by The Walcot Studio in Bath.

**BELOW LEFT** Illustrator Derek Lea risked life and frozen limb to take 70 architectural shots in Toronto's financial district. Find out how he worked these into the final illustration on the following page.





## PART 1 PREPARING THE FACE

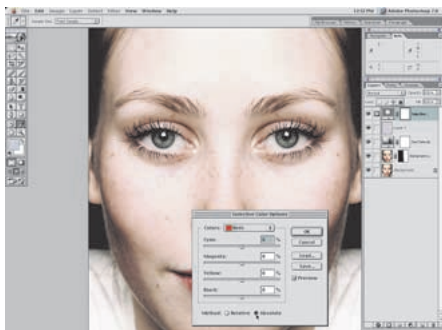
We'll start by flipping half of the face, doing some colour adjustments and then smoothing her complexion ↴



**1** Open the file face.psd (on the CD), then duplicate the background layer by dragging it onto the Create New Layer icon in the Layers palette. On the duplicate layer, choose Edit>Transform>Flip horizontal from the menu to flip it over. Use the Rectangular Marquee to draw a selection over the right half of the model's face.



**2** Now choose Layer>Add Layer Mask>Hide Selection from the menu. Hold down Command and use the arrow keys to nudge the layer a little to the right and up slightly. Watch her lips to see how things are matching up. Now select the Brush tool, choose a large soft brush, and paint over the harsh line down the centre of the mask.



**3** Create a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and desaturate by 10. Create a new layer with a Blending mode of Colour and fill the entire layer (Option+Delete) with a foreground colour of pale purple (C-22,M-15,Y-4, K-0). Create a Selective Colour adjustment layer and make sure Absolute is checked.

### INSIGHT

## ABSOLUTE

We use the Absolute method in Selective Colour because it creates a more dramatic effect. Note that you can only affect specular white using Absolute, because it has no initial colour value. The Relative method is relative to the content of existing colour within a pixel. If you had 10 per cent cyan and then increased the cyan by 10 per cent more, for example, the result would be 11 per cent. But if you used Absolute, it adjusts the colour using an absolute value, resulting in 20 per cent cyan.



**4** In the reds section of the Selective Colour dialog pull-down menu, boost the cyan slider by 9, the magenta by 33, and reduce the yellow by 17. In the neutrals section, increase the cyan by 10 and decrease the magenta by 5. This helps pale the skin and brighten the red lipstick slightly.

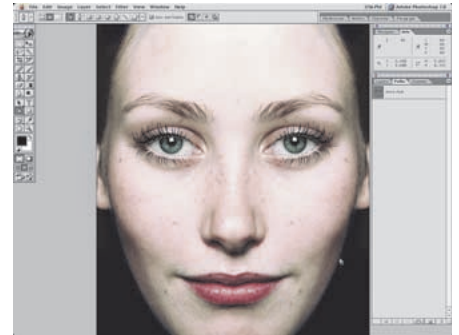


**5** Now it's time to hide the T-shirt and fix up the hairline a bit. Select a soft brush with an opacity of 100 per cent. Create a new layer and sample the dark background colour using the Eyedropper tool (Option). Now paint over the T-shirt and the top area of the hairline – you may find it easier to use slightly smaller brush sizes around the jaw and ears.

### INSIGHT

## NAMING PATHS

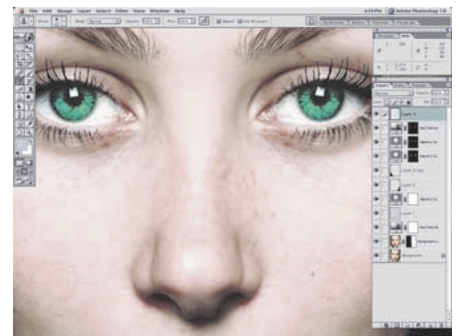
When you create a new path in *Photoshop*, it's named work path by default. So it's a good idea to name a path in the Paths palette if you want to keep it. To do this, simply double-click the Path icon in the Paths palette and enter a name in the resulting field. Remember, if you don't name your path, you could accidentally lose it. When your work path is inactive and you create another path, the work path you had earlier is automatically replaced with your new work path.



**6** Duplicate this layer and use Edit>Free Transform>Flip Horizontal. Hold down the Command key or use the Move tool (V) to slide it to the left side of the image so that it covers it (just like the right side). Select the Pen tool and draw a closed path around each eye. Command-click the Path icon in the Paths palette to generate a selection from it.



**7** Create a new Selective Colour adjustment layer with the current selection active. In the whites section of the pull-down menu, subtract 16 from the cyan, magenta, and yellow channels. Now draw a closed path over each iris. Make a selection and create a new Selective Colour layer. This time, in the neutral section, subtract 25 from the magenta and the black channels.



**8** Make a selection from the same path again, but this time create a new Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and increase the saturation by 25. Now create a new layer and select the Clone Stamp tool(s). Choose a brush tip size of around 65 pixels and make sure that Use All Layer and Align are enabled. Sample nearby areas of clear skin (Option) and then Clone out her freckles on this layer.



**9** Create a new layer. Select the Brush tool and use a combination of large and small soft brushes with opacity settings between 10 and 40, gently painting over the natural blemishes in her skin on this layer. Use the Eyedropper tool to sample different underlying colours for different areas. Keep painting carefully until she looks very smooth.

## PART 2 CHEEK DETAILS

Adding some of those architectural details using Free Transform, masks, layer combinations and Liquify ↴



**10** In the file detail1.psd, generate a selection from the existing path. Use the Move tool to drag the contents of your selection into your working file as a new layer. Use Edit>Free Transform to scale and rotate it approximately into place. Duplicate the layer and change the mode to Overlay. Command-click the layer's icon to generate a selection from it.



**11** Create a new layer with a Colour blending mode. Sample a colour from some nearby skin and fill the selection (Option+Delete) with the colour. Deselect (Command+D). Link these three new layers in the Layers palette and merge them (Command+E) into a single layer. Add a layer mask, then use various soft brushes to softly mask out the hard edges.

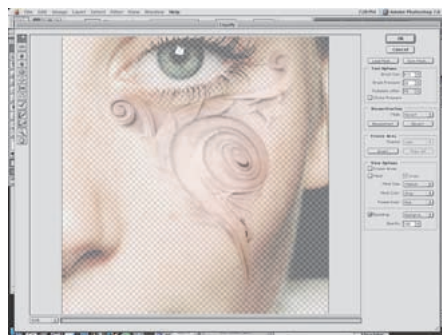
### INSIGHT

#### LAYER STACKS

Building up duplicate layers with different blending modes is a quick and easy (non-linear) way to experiment with different effects. Sometimes you'll hit upon a winning combination that you can add to your bag of tricks. The method used here, of duplicating a normal layer, changing it to an overlay layer and then adding a colour layer on top of the two, makes the architectural details share similar colour and contrast to the face. Definitely one to make a mental note of.



**12** Bring in the piece of detail that is enclosed in a path from the file detail2.psd. Use Free Transform to reshape and rotate it into place on the girl's cheek. Use the same method you used previously to create a stack of layers, then merge them. Now add a mask and gently soften the edges, so that this piece looks like it belongs inside the other.

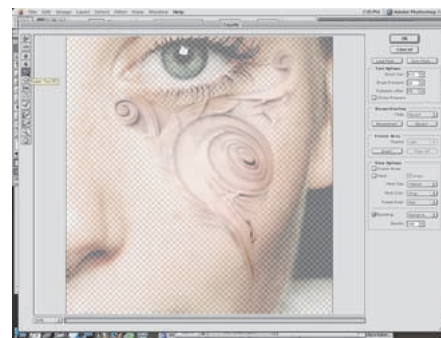


**13** Link the two layers containing the pieces of detail and merge them. Choose Filter>Liquify from the menu. Switch Backdrop on and choose Background Copy from the dropdown. Initially, use the Warp tool with a large brush size and low pressure setting to adjust the shape of the detail so that it follows the facial contour more closely.

### INSIGHT

#### LIQUIFY

The Liquify tool is highly intuitive to use, especially with a Wacom tablet. A pressure-sensitive one is best – because it genuinely gives you the feeling you're painting something soft into shape. Liquify can prove frustrating to the beginner, though, so first off use slight pressure settings and large brushes; you'll make subtle, gradual adjustments this way. Take your time and be patient – jump in with a high-pressure setting and small brush and the filter will feel out of control...



**14** Next, use the Bloat tool to swell areas that need to look raised, and the Pucker tool to shrink areas that need to look recessed. Take your time here, and use a very low-pressure setting to get things looking just right. Use a large brush size to avoid making obvious wavy and warped lines, where smaller strokes would meet.



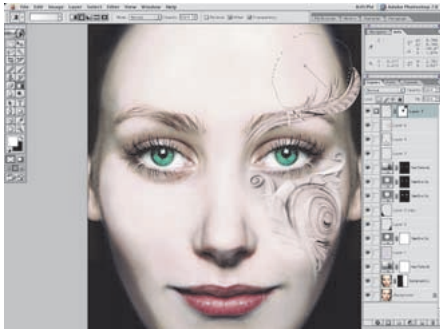
**15** When you've finished, click OK. It may take a minute or two to apply the effect. Do not be frustrated if your effect doesn't match ours exactly. Liquify is such a (pardon the pun) fluid medium that it's very difficult to reproduce the exact effect twice. Go back into the Liquify filter a second or third time if you need to to improve your work.

## PART 3 BROW DETAILS

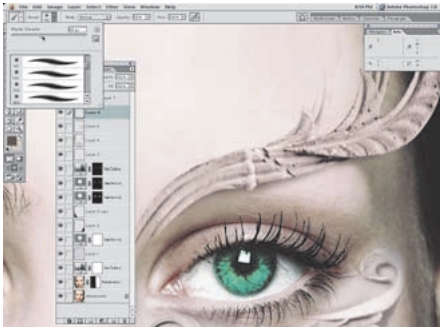
Time to add more architectural details to the brow and forehead ↴



**16** Make a selection from the path included in the file details3.psd. Drag the contents into your working file as a new layer. Use Free Transform to rotate, scale and distort this piece of detail so that it fits nicely over the top of the model's brow. Create a layer stack, as you did for the previous details, then link and merge the layers and add a layer mask. →



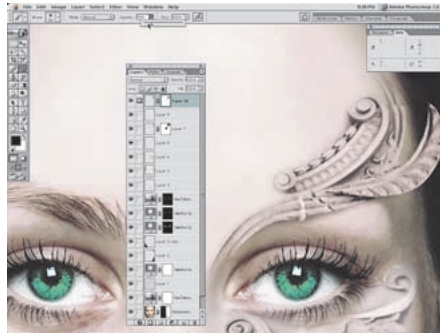
**17** Use a small soft brush on the mask to remove the hard edge of the piece of detail. Use the Radial Gradient tool with a foreground colour of black and a setting of Foreground To Transparent to gently blend the area that overlaps the bridge of the nose. Draw a rough Lasso selection on the upper right area and use the Radial Gradient there, too.



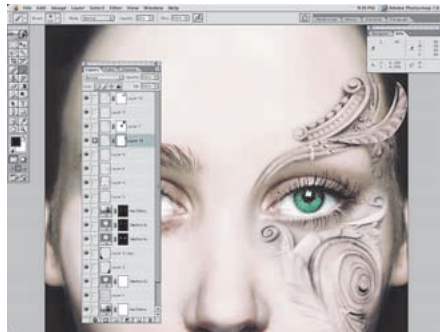
**18** Create a new layer and drag it under the brow detail layer. Use the Clone Stamp tool on this layer to remove the eyebrow that's still showing. As with Liquify, you get a better result if you use a large, soft brush with a low opacity setting, going over and over certain areas. Paint a little shadow under the detail using a soft brush on this layer.



**19** Create a new layer on top of all the others with a blending mode of Lighten. We now want to concentrate on blending the top of the detail into the forehead. Use a soft brush with a low opacity setting to gently paint over the top of the detail, using colours sampled from the forehead.



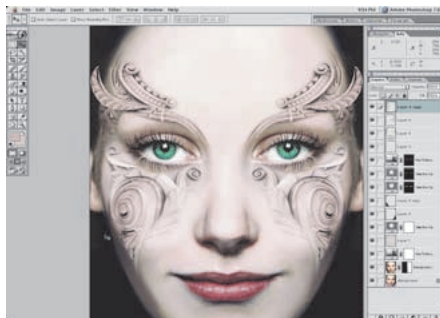
**20** Make a selection from the existing path in the file detail4.psd. Drag the contents into the working file as a new selection. Resize and rotate the piece into place using Free Transform. Create a layer stack, merge it, and create a layer mask. Use a combination of big and small soft brushes with varying opacities to mask out the edges.



**21** Bring in the piece of detail from detail5.psd, and do the same thing you've done four times already. Resize, stack, merge and mask. This time, though, move your layer in the Layers palette so that it's sitting underneath the layer that has the brow detail on it, but still sitting above the layer that you cloned the eyebrow out on.

## PART 4 FINISHING UP

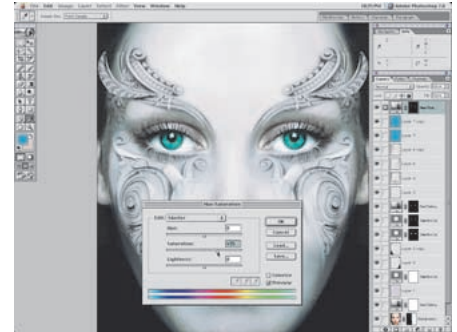
Now to bring detail to the other side and add a few finishing touches ↓



**22** Link all the layers that make up your details, including the layer under the brow and the lighten layer above it. Now Merge them. Duplicate the merged layer and choose Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal from the menu to flip it over. Use the Move tool and drag the layer over to the left and move it into place, as shown.



**23** Click on the foreground colour icon to access the Colour Picker. In the Picker, create a new foreground colour of C-71, M-17, Y-12, K-0. Create a new layer with a Colour blending mode and an opacity setting of 22. Fill the layer with the foreground colour (Option+Delete). Duplicate the layer and change the blending mode to Soft Light.



**24** Generate a selection from the iris path you created earlier. With the selection active, create a new Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Increase the Saturation by 35. The idea for the *Photoshop Special* cover was to have the eyes jump right out at you. Increased saturation against such a desaturated face really helped create this effect.

## FINAL STEP

Well, pat yourself on the back – you've done it. Now you know the secret behind the most popular *Photoshop Special* cover to date. If you still feel like you have the strength left, why not create one more new layer, then use the Clone Stamp tool with a small brush tip to Clone and clean up the eyelashes, just to smarten things up a little bit. □

