

Digital Watercolor Wash Technique

Using Photoshop to Adopt a Traditional Style

Pencil Sketch:

- Create a clean transfer pencil sketch: I personally like to use Marker paper and a mechanical pencil with a .5mm-.7mm lead, preferably 2H-4H. I tend to have a heavy hand so this helps me control my lines.
- Scan the sketch: Scan at 300 ppi in Grayscale mode. To add a textured background, or show the tooth of the paper, I sometimes place a piece of jet black charcoal paper behind my sketch.
- Open sketch in Photoshop: Your sketch will open in the "background" layer. I like to duplicate my sketch, and keep the background layer pure white (CMYK 0%), "Multiply" the sketch layer.
- Colorize sketch: Apple-U will bring up the Hue/Saturation menu. Use this to colorize your sketch to an appropriate color that will blend well with your composition and color palette.
- Duplicate Sketch layer for Filters: I like to use a second layer of my sketch with an applied "Dust and Scratches" or "Watercolor" filter to give the drawing more of a painterly feel.

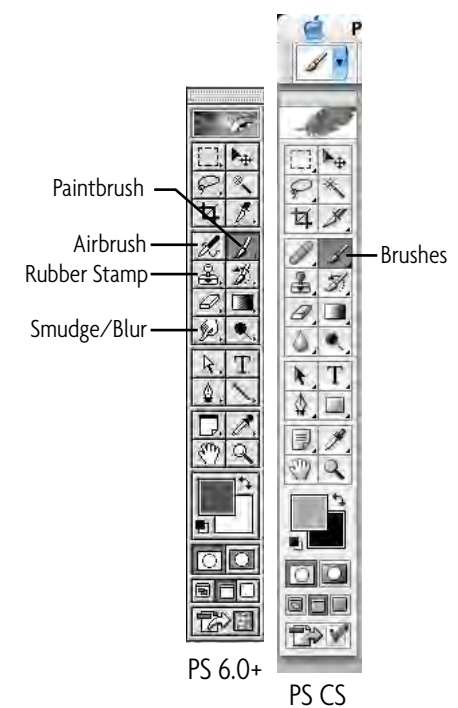
Layers:

- Create the layers you need: See the reverse for an example. I typically use several basic layers that appear in almost all of my work. Here are my layers:
 - sketch
 - local color
 - multiplied shadows
 - highlights
 - details
 - duplicate sketch with filters
 - duplicate color "glaze" with filters or masks
 - white or textured/colored background
- Now you are ready to paint/render
 - Blur, despeckle, dust and scratch, or smudge underlying sketch layer
 - Create paths if need be
 - Create and multiply new "local color" layer and paint in local color with a "wet" or "textured" art brush. Make sure opacity is less than 50%, and the flow is a little slower than 100%
 - Airbrush out any defects you don't like. You can also use the "smudge" tool.
 - Create and multiply shadow layers
 - Create a highlights layer
 - If needed, create a "detailed highlights" layer for finishing touches.
 - Use masks and paths only when a crisp edge is needed.

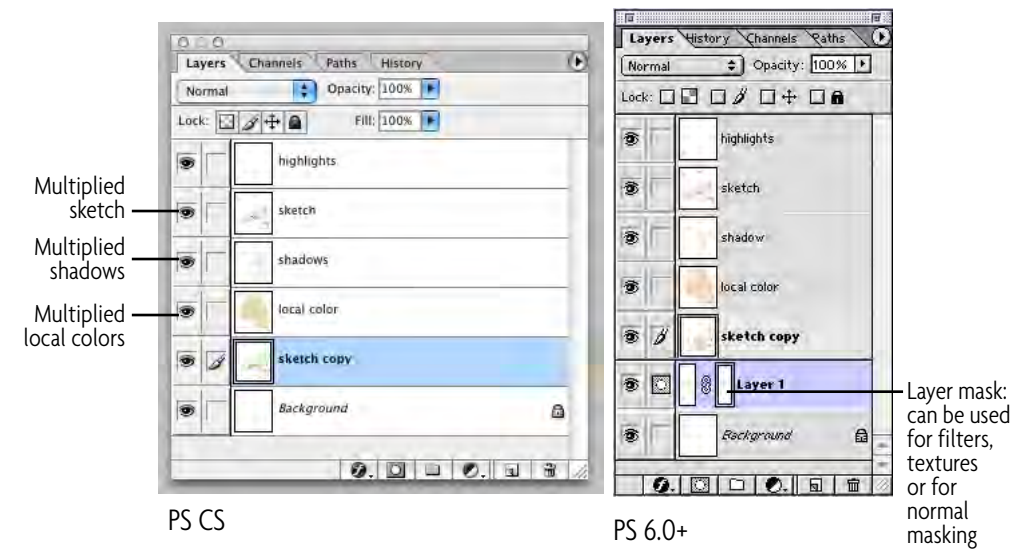
Brushes

- Wet paint brushes: Wet paint brushes are paint brushes that behave much like watercolor brushes. They have soft edges, are transparent, and will multiply color the more glazes you apply. These are used when establishing local color.
- Textured paint brushes: As above, these can be wet paint brushes that behave much like watercolor brushes, but can add a more opaque feel to the painting. They have textured edges, can be transparent, and will multiply color the more glazes you apply. These are also great to use in highlight areas to show texture of a surface.
- The airbrush: A much smoother controlled brush - just like in life, the airbrush will coat over the surface with smooth color and can touch up unwanted effects or imperfections in the painted surface. The airbrush is also great in creating core shadows and highlights.
- Detail brushes: For even finer details, a very small airbrush will work well in creating detailed highlights, wet texture, hair, feathers etc.

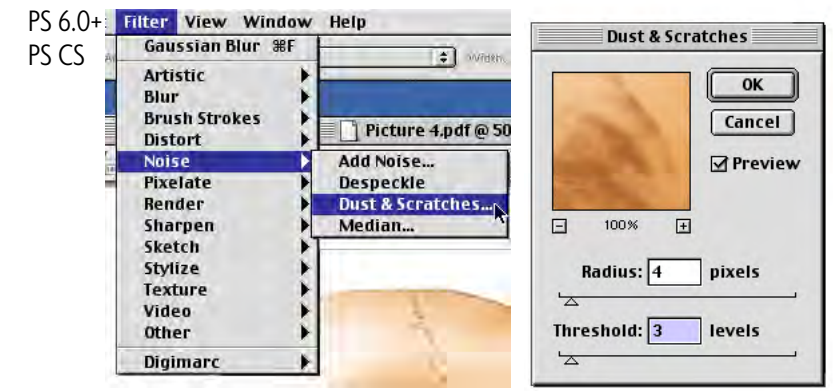
Tools



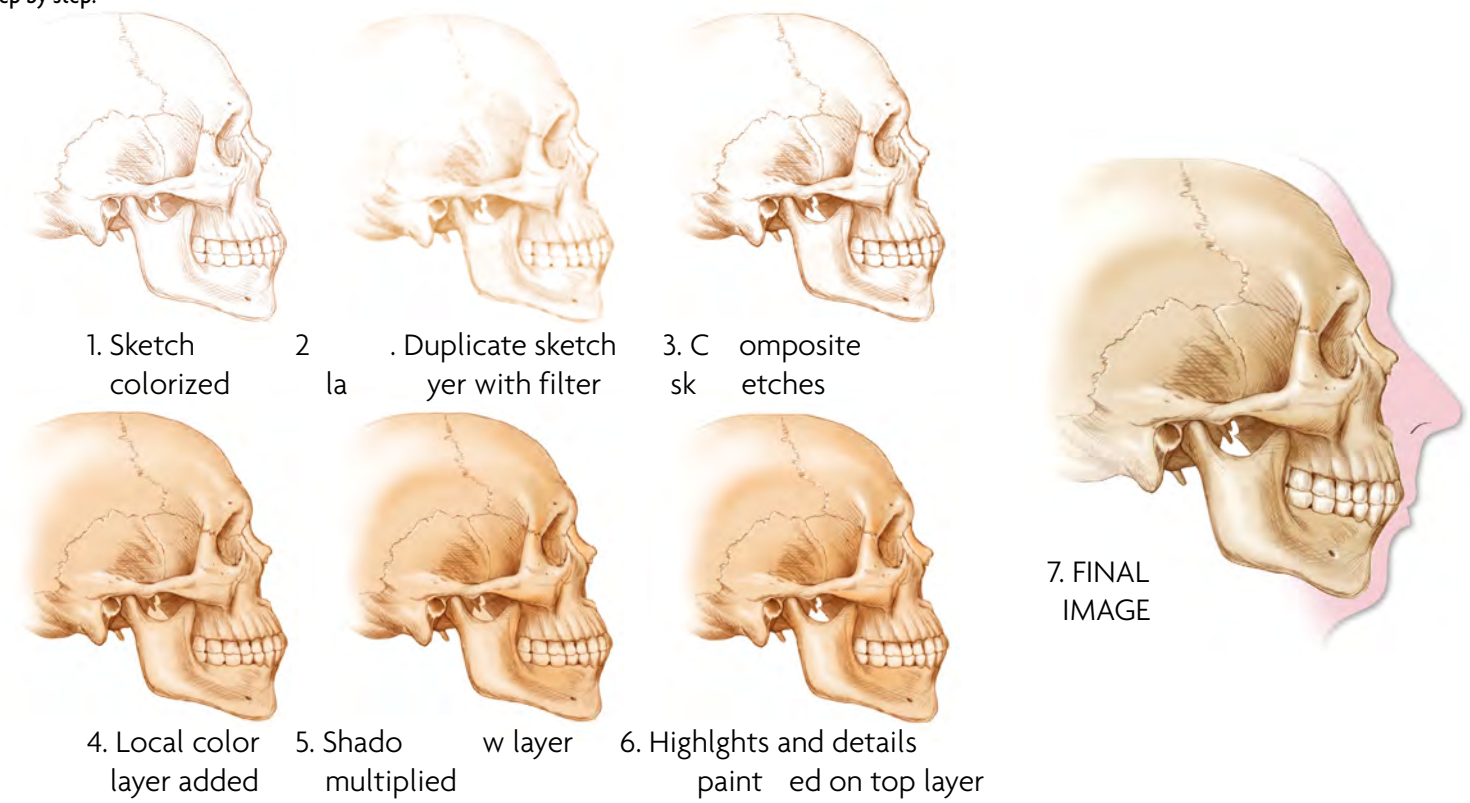
Layers



Filters



Step by step:



Brushes

