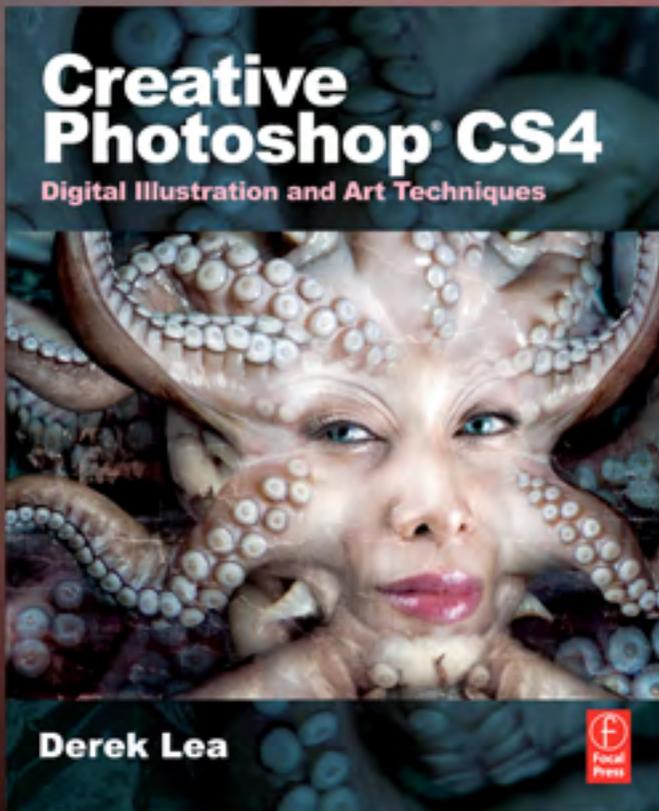


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Creative Photoshop CS4
Lea

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Chapter 5

Tracing Photographs

Creating striking illustrations in Photoshop is easier than you think when you use photography as your starting point. You don't really need any traditional drawing skills; you simply need to understand which tools are right for the task at hand and how to use them to your advantage. All of the details and divisions of color necessary to create a stunning illustration exist in your photography; you just need to recognize the potential within the image and make use of it.

The technique of illustrating over photography revealed in this chapter does involve tracing, but not exact replication. As you define areas with paths, you can simplify, embellish, or sharpen areas of detail as you see fit. However, simplifying and exercising creative license when rendering detail is only part of what makes this image so striking. This style of illustration also owes a lot of its success to the use of color.

Before you begin, try to change your mental framework a little from the norm. This is not an auto trace effect we're creating here. It is an illustration based on a photo. When tracing, do not trace exactly; try to embellish and introduce a nice sharp style to the image. When adding color, make bold decisions. Think about what you'd like to see rather than what you actually see in the existing photograph. Bearing these factors in mind as you work will ensure that your finished illustrations surpass your source photos each and every time.

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The creation of the file and the tools and features used are explained clearly enough for beginners to make their way through this chapter. However, what will present a challenge is the use of tools that require a bit of experience to perfect; mainly the Pen tool and the act of drawing smooth and precise paths.



5

What you'll learn in this chapter

Creative Techniques and Working Methods

Simplify and stylize

By taking some creative license while creating the outlines of the clouds, I was able to give them a sharp, stylized effect. And it was this effect that dictated the overall style of the finished illustration. In general, the curves are smoother than those in the original photograph, and the detail is minimal in comparison. In this chapter, you'll learn to use only the necessary details provided by the original image, thus simplifying it. As you work in this manner, you'll begin to notice that the result of this is a much more striking image than the original, especially when viewing it from a distance.

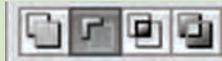


Make bold color decisions

In this illustration, the colors are bright and the divisions are bold. Highlights and shadows are intense and far from realistic. And perhaps the most important of all, colors are chosen not by what is indicated in the original image, but by what works best within the finished illustration. As you work your way through, you'll gain an understanding of how powerful the use of color can be, and how to employ this strong use of color in future works.



Photoshop Tools, Features, and Functions



Path area strategies

Drawing with the Pen tool can prove challenging for some. However, taking your time and working methodically can pay off in the long run. In this chapter, I'll show you a strategy for creating black outline art. You'll create the exterior with a solid fill. Then you'll subtract an area from that to create an outline. Then you'll add in fine details. All of this is achieved via the strategic use of path area operations.



Quick Mask and beyond

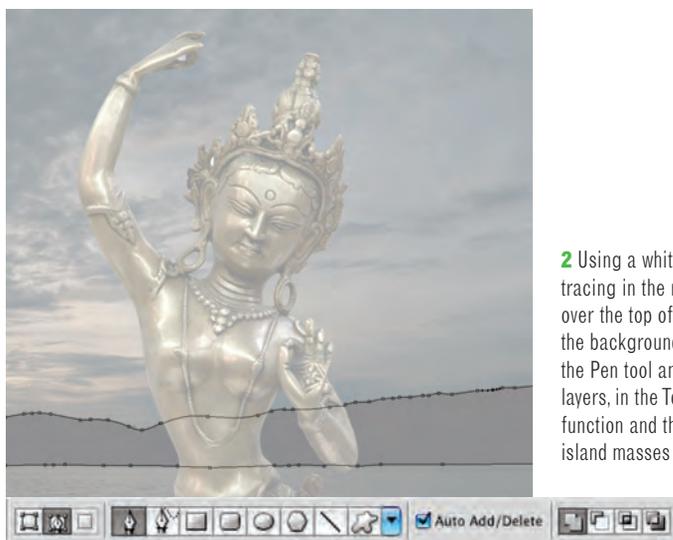
Often thought of as a tool for simply refining selections, you'll be amazed at what you can do to expedite the creation of selections with Quick Mask. Strategic planning when generating selections, combined with underappreciated paint tools, will have you making complex selections from existing resources with ease.



PART ONE: Create a stylized background



1 Open up the starter.jpg file. This is the image we're going to use as the template for our illustration. Generally, it is easier to see what you're doing when tracing, if the image is less intense. Create a new solid color layer by choosing the Solid Color option from the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer pop-up menu at the bottom of the Layers palette. When the picker opens, select white as your color and click OK. Reduce the opacity of your new solid color layer to 50% in the Layers palette.



Project files

All of the files needed to follow along with this chapter and create the featured image are available for download on the accompanying Web site in the project files section. Visit www.creativephotoshopthebook.com.

2 Using a white layer as a translucent overlay is very similar to tracing in the real world by placing onionskin or tracing paper over the top of your picture. It is a nice way to work without the background image becoming visually distracting. Select the Pen tool and ensure that it is set to create paths, not shape layers, in the Tool Options bar. Enable the Add to Path Area function and then draw a closed path component around the island masses in the background.



5

Part One: Drawing and Painting

3 Do not trace every bump that is indicated by the image on the background layer. Create a smooth path that is indicative of the landmasses but simpler. With the path visible, create another solid color layer. Choose black from the picker. Here you can see that by having the path active as we create the solid color layer, the path is converted to a vector mask, which is automatically applied to the solid color layer. After this operation, you'll notice that the Pen tool is now set to create shape layers in the Tool Options bar.



Creating solid color layers

In addition to using the pop-up menu at the bottom of the Layers palette to create a solid color layer, you can use the main menu if that is what you prefer. Simply choose Layer > New Fill Layer > Solid Color from the menu. This is just one example of the numerous features within Photoshop that can be accessed in more than one place within the workspace.

4 In the Tool Options bar, select the Rectangle tool. Ensure that the Create New Shape Layer option is enabled and unclick the Link button so that the existing shape layer is unaffected by what we do next. Then, click on the Color swatch in the Tool Options bar and choose a rather dark blue color from the picker. If you did not deactivate the Link button, the color of the current layer, which contains the landmasses, would've altered. Click and drag at the bottom of the canvas to create a blue shape layer over the water area.

