

Self-Portrait

TASKS:

- **Design a vector self-portrait. I want it to be you because an artist may take some pains to get their own face right. Be careful with the eyes, they'll draw you in! Enhance what you will, de-emphasize what you want. You have creative license to bring the best face forward.**
- **I need to be able to recognize that the portrait is you! Everything on the page has a relationship to each other—pay attention to all the components of the design, as well as the negative spaces, and make meaningful choices. Nothing should look random or rushed or poorly thought-out. This should be a showcase piece intended to capture attention! Add other elements if you wish. The background may be of your own choosing—but no photographs or pixel information of any kind!**
- **Add a version of your Personal Logo.**
- **Add a QR code that takes one to your Wordpress site when scanned.**
- **Add a custom pattern fill made from your logo or (other custom component)**

STEPS:

- Get a photo of yourself, preferably several so you can pick out one with the most variation of light and shadow; or you may wish to take several poses. Best NOT to choose a shot with your face pointed toward the camera. Much better if your face is turned partially away from the camera—trust me. You really need a hi-rez photo; a lo-rez photo just won't allow you to trace the finer details, like eyes.
- Open it in Photoshop; Image>Mode>Grayscale; Image>Adjustments>Posterize from between 4 and 8 levels, or to taste. (You can also mess with Brightness/Contrast to reduce the detail down to a manageable amount. Simplify the image enough so you can trace it with the Pen Tool, but not so much that it's boring. Take time here to get the right setting.)
- Place into Illustrator as template layer; you will trace on the layer above the template layer.
- Begin to trace using the Pen Tool (or Pencil), or Blob brush. Some folks place the different parts on different layers, or divide by color, or subject (eyes, nose).
- Trace closed paths, and then fill them. No stroke or very thin strokes look best, but you decide. Feel free to overlap images for depth.
- Feel free to Live Trace a background, but a simple Live Trace portrait is not enough. I can tell if you do it!

- Add your logo. Meaningful placement is important! Your logo need not only look good standing alone, it needs to look good in conjunction with the page layout. Let the portrait intuitively lead you to the most efficacious placement.
- Add a QR code that takes one to your Wordpress site when scanned. Google 'QR code generator' and choose from several sites that will let you input a URL that it convert into a QR code that you can download and place into your document. This technology has become increasingly important with the increase of mobile web devices with built-in apps for scanning a code and talking you directly to site for info, coupons, passwords, etc.

NOTES:

WARNING>>KEEP PLACED IMAGES IN THE SAME FOLDER AS YOUR ILLUSTRATOR DOCUMENT! IF YOU LEAVE PLACED IMAGES BEHIND ON SOME COMPUTER DESKTOP, YOU COULD MISPLACE OR LOSE YOUR SOURCE PHOTO, BREAKING THE LINK TO YOUR WORKING AI FILE. KEEP ALL YOUR ASSETS TOGETHER IN THE SAME FOLDER.

- After preparing document to be traced, put it on a template layer and lock it down before you trace it. This can be done when you first place the picture, too.
- You can trace with a light color over a dark background, or vice-versa.
- You can reduce the opacity of an item you are tracing to create greater contrast for easier tracing if Template dimming is inadequate.
- You can make Compound Paths out of smaller closed paths on top of larger ones, by selecting the object, and the hole(s) you want to punch in it, and Object>Compound Path>Make. This allows you to put it on a background and have it show through the negative areas of your design.
- Save a high resolution PDF for printing. That way, you won't have font issues. DON'T GET CAUGHT NOT HAVING THE FONTS YOU NEED AT THE TIME OF PRINTING! If you must print from Illustrator convert your fonts to outlines. (You are not required to add any text beyond the logo)
- Consider shades of a limited palette when colorizing gradations of flesh. Swatches Panel fly-out has a collr choice for flesh tones that you could use 'as-is' or augment on your own. You need not stay within the realm of realistic color. If you wish your skin to be blue, it's okay!
- Google 'Adobe Illustrator Photo Realism' for more techniques—many tutorials exist for vector-izing a portrait, in Illustrator and Photoshop. Since most everything is based on the Pen Tool, which works basically the same in either program, a Photoshop tutorial is more-or-less easily used in Illustrator. Below are some links that contain vector portrait tutorials and more.

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- http://www.creativebush.com/tutorials/mesh_tutorial.php (Not recommended; too much like a photo, but I wanna be fair . . .)
- <http://www.vectorportraits.com/tracing-shapes> (whole body)
- <http://buposters.makeminemarquee.com/POSTERS/posters.html> (Belly Up Posters by Scrojo)
- <http://www.duckywaddles.com/Scripts/prodList.asp?idCategory=111> (Sheppard Fairey stuff)
- <http://vector.tutsplus.com/sessions/vector-portraits/>