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ART BY: REIQ

DIGITAL PAINTING

MIND-BLOWING MANGA

TAKE YOUR ANIME AND MANGA PAINTING STYLE TECHNIQUES TO THE NEXT LEVEL

If you are a digital anime artist who wants to improve your painting style, then this tutorial is for you. In it, you will consider creating, colouring, and applying lighting effects through layers to enhance your characters and paintings.

One of the biggest advantages to using Photoshop for your anime paintings is the ability to control all aspects of your illustrations. This is key to a more effective painting experience – it gives the artist the ability to control, change and experiment with different results, which is ultimately vital in the anime world, where having your own style and voice is a must.

In this tutorial, you will learn to improve your line art quality, prepare and save selections, add colours to your character based on the traditional anime cel-shading style, while using new techniques such as layer styles, blending modes and soft brushes to create better and more colourful transitions that will enhance your lighting and shading effects. These will increase your repertoire of techniques and they will improve your current style. You will also explore the development of the background and how it can create a foundation for producing a powerful and emotional response to the overall artwork.



OUR EXPERT

**REINALDO QUINTERO
AKA REIQ**

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A freelance digital artist in love with anime and manga art style, Reiq has experimented with multiple styles over the years, designing appealing characters and illustrations for clients around the world.

[@reiq](https://twitter.com/reiq)

SOURCE FILES

Online you will find some of the Photoshop brushes as well as some of the original sketches that this illustration came from. Visit <http://blog.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/tutorial-files>

BUILD A FANTASY SCENE

IMPORT THE BACKGROUND IMAGE AND ADD LIGHTING EFFECTS

01 THE CONCEPT

For this illustration, the concept was to create a typical anime illustration that is all about being cute and magical. The main points here are the design of her dress, with some influences of the Lolita fashion, shoujo magical girls like *Sailor Moon* or *Madoka Magica*, and keeping in mind the concept of floating and flying in the air. Rough sketches of the different ideas can be found in the tutorial files online.



02 CLEAN LINE ART

Create a new layer on top of the sketch and reduce the Opacity of the sketch layer to 10%, then start drawing on the new layer. For a smoother line, duplicate the line art layer and go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and set it at 0.9 pixels. Set it to Darken blend mode and reduce Opacity to 30-50%.

03 ORGANISE THE LAYERS

During the main steps, the completed line art must be the top layer at all times. Set the line art layer to Multiply and for safety, duplicate this layer and hide it. To avoid mistakes, lock the layer by clicking on the Lock icon. Any extra layers must be created under the line art layer.

WORK IN PROGRESS

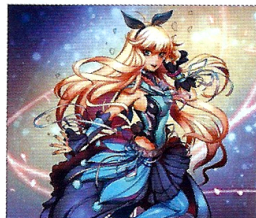
FROM SKETCH TO BREATHTAKING ARTWORK



Progress 1: Draw the sketch



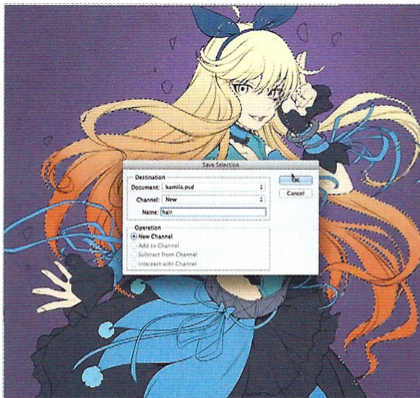
Progress 2: Colour the line art



Progress 3: Add final details

■ QUICK TIP

While working on filling the layers, it's quite important to take the time to explore different colour variations and possibilities of the character. Think about the personality of your character, goals and their background story and how all these things can be translated into colours.



04 | USE SELECTIONS FOR FLAT COLOURS
The first step to building the colouring process is to add flat colours to the parts of the characters. Separate the hair, skin, costume and details on different layers. First, use the Magic Wand tool to select the areas you want to colour quickly. A helpful trick is, having selected all the areas, go to Select>Modify>Expand and set it to 3px. This way the selection will expand and sit on the line art, creating a better selection shape. Pick the desired colour and fill the selection by going to Edit>Fill.

05 | SAVE THE SELECTIONS
To have quick access to different parts of the painting, save the selections for later use. For this, hold Cmd/Ctrl+Shift, then click on the layers to create an overall selection of pixels. Then go to Select>Save Selection and give a name to the selection to keep the selections organised. Repeat this process for the hair, dress, ribbons, skin and the final selection that includes all the sections of the flat colours plus the line art. This will come in handy at a later stage in the tutorial.

06 | SUBTRACT SELECTIONS FOR COLOUR
To start adding volume to the flat colours for the first step of shading, Cmd/Ctrl-click on the layers that have flat colours and with that selection live, create a new layer on top. Using the Lasso tool with Opt/Alt, subtract the areas where the light hits, leaving shadow areas selected. Remember to hold Opt/Alt to subtract from and Shift to add to the selection. The trick here is to have in mind where the light will fall and which areas will be in shadows.



07 | FILL THE SELECTIONS
Once the selection is done, create a new layer and set the blending mode to Multiply. Then, select the same colour of the flat colour layer and use a large, soft brush to fill the selected areas. However, to vary the colour of the shadow areas, go to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation or press Cmd/Ctrl+U, then use the Hue and Saturation sliders to adjust the colour so that they seem much more appealing.

08 | SOFTEN THE EDGES
To have a better transition that avoids hard edges, bring back the original selection by using Cmd/Ctrl-click on the layer below where the flat colour is. Then, select the layer above and go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and set it to 3.6px. This will soften the edges inside the selection only. It is fine to play with how much blur you want according to the area you are painting.

USE CEL SHADING AS A BASE

USE GRADIENTS AND SOFT BRUSHES FOR BETTER COLOUR TRANSITIONS



09 | SET THE STAGE FOR COLOURING
Cel shading is a technique used to paint anime cels to create traditional animation. It creates depth by using a limited number of flat colors, which is the base for you to colour your illustration. Since you're not limited in terms of colour, you can take this style to the next level, following these steps.

001 | Clean up the art
This process can take up a lot of time, especially if your desired look is clean and sharp, so be prepared

002 | Save the selections
Cleaning up and creating the selections at the start will save time and come in handy in the later steps

003 | Choose a colour scheme
Select character colours in preparation for the next few steps that involve colouring and adding detail



12 | INCLUDE GLOWING PARTICLES
For the particles and glowing effects, use different brushes with textures to create the specks and lines. The trick here is, on the blending options, Ctrl/right-click on the layer where the particles and lines are drawn, then select Blending Options>Outer Glow and set the blend mode to Vivid Light. Next, set the colour of the glow to blue, with the Spread at 0% and the Size set to 80px. Create as many layers as needed for this particular effect and vary the colour of the glow by tweaking the settings.



10 | OVERALL SHADING
To add more atmosphere to the colour, create a new layer and set it to Multiply on top of the colours. Select the flat colour layer selection by Cmd/Ctrl-clicking on the layer. Go back to the new layer and use a soft airbrush with Size set to 450px and then shade the areas where a softer transition is desired. This will create the effect of overall lighting – always remember the main light source location as it defines the highlights and shadows.



11 | THE BACKGROUND
For the background, use the same large, soft airbrush and play with different tones, from cool to warm, to create a focus on the character. Think about blues, yellows and reds while playing with the warm and cool colors. Backlighting the character can provide good ideas for other lighting options, while it also adds more depth to the artwork by introducing darker cool tones in the corners and lighter warm tones in the centre.



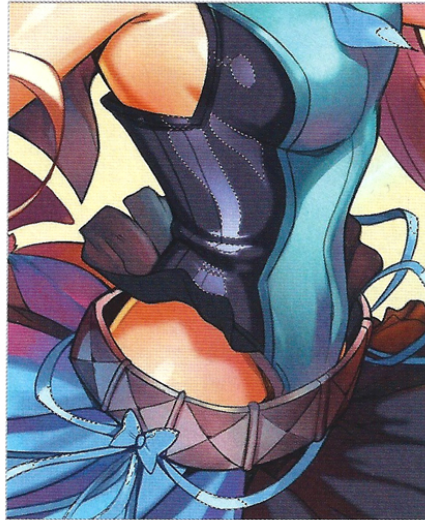
13 | ANIMATE FACE DETAILS
Take time to add details to the face as this brings life to the drawing. By doing a bit of work on the face, you will dictate the mood of the rest of the colours. At this point, take a break from the selections and move on to the painting side of the illustration, using a variety flat brushes and airbrushes to work on the lips, eyes and nose shape. From this step, it's easy to quickly move on as the colour scheme and overall feeling of the character has been established.

INTRODUCE NEW COLOURS

USE SOFT BRUSHES IN THE OVERLAY MODE FOR MORE CONTRAST



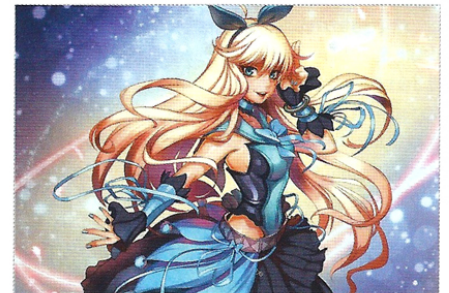
14 MAKE COLOURFUL SHADOWS Add other colours to the shadows. Like in nature, shadows are not black, nor simply a darker tone of the local colour. Other elements surrounding the shadows will affect their colour. In this case, purples and blues add balance and they make the neighbouring colours more vibrant. Think about colour harmony and how the shadows are affected by the bouncing lights around the character.



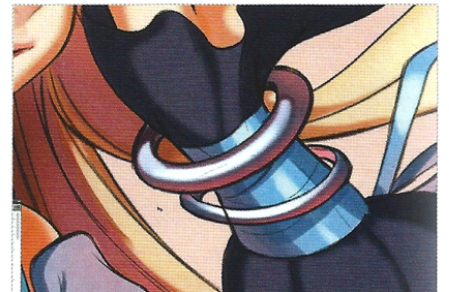
15 ADD HIGHLIGHTS For the highlights, create a new layer on top of the colouring layers, then set the blending mode to Overlay and choose a light color – close to white, but not totally white. Play with different brushes to create different effects and shapes for highlights. Use the Lasso tool to create a selection for the highlights as this gives us more control over the shape and the definition of the highlights.



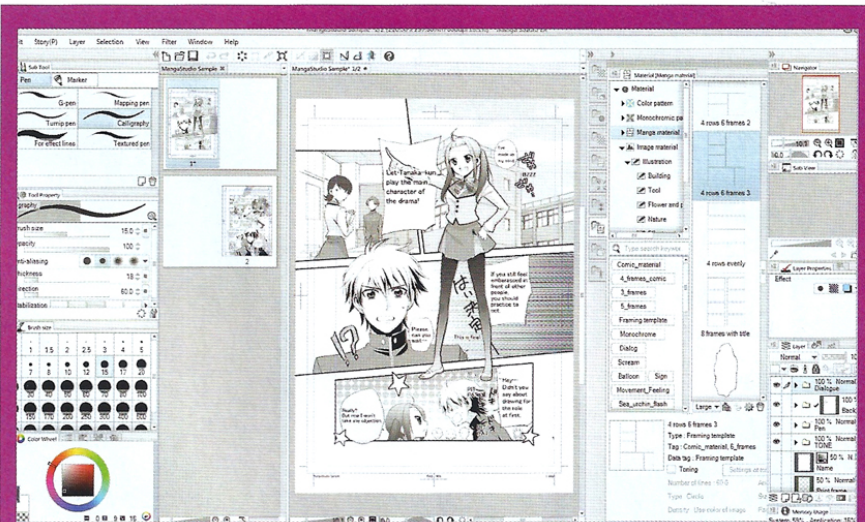
16 INCLUDE MORE HIGHLIGHTS Vary the intensity of your highlights by reducing the Opacity to match the material quality. Not all highlights need the same intensity, so think about the material type and look for reference images. It's possible to create different material highlights by duplicating the same layer and adding blur, filters or lowering the opacity – many different effects can be achieved through experimentation.



17 MERGE COMPLETED LAYERS As this requires a fair amount of layers, try merging them together, especially the ones that are complete. Merge the flat colours, shadows, and soft shadow layers together. To do this, hold Shift, click on the layers you want to merge and press Cmd/Ctrl+E. This will merge the layers while keeping the blending effect applied. As the selections were saved at the beginning, they can be loaded at any time.



18 PAINT THE BRACELETS Using a soft airbrush, begin with the creation of small accessories by painting the light, the shadows and bouncing lights on the same layer. Since the general lighting of the overall illustration has already been established, you can skip the layering process to create the shading. It's good to use the layers as well as having the confidence to do the painting work on the same layer.



COMIC-CREATION SOFTWARE

Whether you are a professional comic illustrator looking to become the next Dave Gibbon, or just a hobbyist looking to develop your skill set, the Manga Studio range of comic creation software is without a doubt the very best in its field.

Delivering powerful features for every manga and comic artist, Manga Studio includes a large suite of drawing and illustration tools including pens, pencils, erasers, rulers, pattern brushes and

selection tools. Experience the incredible sensation of drawing on paper, while working digitally with the pressure-sensitive feature, which is ideal for pen and tablet support.

Choose from Manga Studio 5 EX, designed for the serious comic or graphic artists looking to create multi-page projects for publishing, or Manga Studio 5 that provides all the tools and tips you could possibly need to get started in manga and comic illustration.



19 COLOUR THE BRACELETS

To change and add colours to the bracelets, create a new layer and add in the selection of the already rendered bracelets. Then, fill the layers with the desired colours or paint them freehand with a textured brush or soft-edge brush. Set the blending mode to Multiply, as this will transfer the colours to the layer below. By using this process, colours can be changed at any time, which is useful if corrections are needed. To reduce the layer count, merge the layers once the desired result has been achieved.



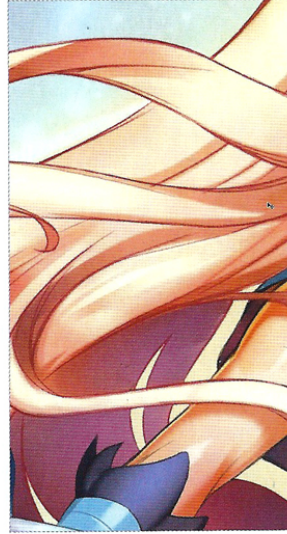
23 WORK OUT DETAILS

For the final steps of the painting, start adding the finishing details, such as hard highlights around the character, painting the nails, adding the extra details to the background and increasing the contrast by going to Image > Adjustments > Levels and adjusting the Shadow and Highlight Input levels. Create a new layer on top of all the other layers and paint over the top of the line art for extra specks. Always take the time to double-check that the line art colour has been changed in the right places and that any unwanted marks have been removed.



20 CREATE QUICK SHADOW SHAPES

For the ribbons you want to create the illusion of being in mid-air and away from the character. Instead of painting the shadows one by one, use a shortcut for this by creating a duplicate of the ribbons layer, Ctrl/ right-clicking on this layer and going to Blending Options > Drop Shadow. There, change the Opacity and the colour of the shadow to match those of the illustration. It's also possible to click and drag around the casted shadows on the artwork so you can place it where it fits better.



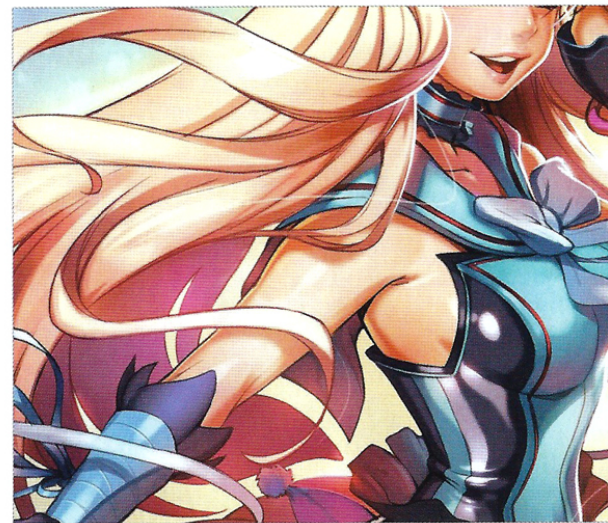
21 GIVE COLOUR TO THE LINE ART

Once the painting is around 80 per cent complete, you'll want to change the colour of the black line art. Duplicate and hide the line art to keep a security copy, then go back to the line art layer and with the Lasso tool, select the lines that you want to change. Then go to Image > Adjustments > Hue/ Saturation, check the Colorize box and drag the Lightness bar between 25 to 30%. Increase the Saturation to 50 and move the Hue slider to match the colour of the line art to the painted layer.



22 HIGHLIGHT THE HAIR

For this step, draw a selection for the highlight shape using the Lasso Tool and draw the highlights following the volume and mass of the hair. Create a new layer and set the blending mode to Overlay, and using white or yellow colours, paint the highlights with a soft-edge brush. Paint any other highlights freehand, such as the individual hair strands and other areas where the light will hit. Use a Gaussian Blur to soften the edges – the sharper the highlight edges are, the more reflective the material will appear to be.



24 ADD IN THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Last of all, add a glow effect that will blend your character and the background together. This step is left until last because it's necessary to have the image flattened, as all layers are needed to create the proper effect. To do this, create a new layer on top of the merged image, set the blending mode to Overlay and use a large, soft brush to add subtle strokes into the gaps between the character and the background. If you want to be a little more creative, have a go at mixing up the colours of the glow.

■ LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS JACKPOT

Once you have all the artwork complete, duplicate the artwork layer and try your luck with the Levels menu. Go to Image > Adjustments > Layers and click the Auto option, which will try to find the best adjustment for your image. Sometimes it can give you results that really enhance your image, so play with the Opacity and blending modes to see what else you can come up with.