

Day Three: Photoshop Loves Artwork!

Ok! So let's have some fun with Photoshop!

There are several 'favorite' ways to use Photoshop. Here are a few...

- Manipulating photos
- Draw and design directly in Photoshop
- Sketch artwork and then scan it into Photoshop
- And finally my favorite method, Painting and then working with a scan of the painting in Photoshop. That's how I created the pattern that you see here:

There's no "right" way to use Photoshop. Each of these methods is just fine...and there isn't one that's better than another. In [Photoshop for Designers](#), Sherry shares countless techniques to help you turn your paintings and sketches into digital artwork. The next workshop starts soon, so you'll want to check it out.

In today's lesson, though, we are going to focus on sketching. When working with original scanned artwork in Photoshop, half the battle is making the sketch as easy to use as possible.

Sketching Paper

If you know that you generally like to scan your sketches, try to use a sketchbook or paper that is solid white and has no texture. Unless you have a specific need for a different style of paper, this will make scanning your sketches easier.

Sherry like the Canson 1557 Drawing Paper. It comes in a 9x12 inch spiral pad and the edge along the spiral binding is perforated, making it very easy to tear away from the pad for scanning. Typing paper is also a great way to draw multiple versions of your image without wasting expensive sketchbook pages.

At Pattern Observer, we also like the Strathmore Visual Journals with Smooth Bristol paper.

In the image, you can see the difference between scanning on watercolor paper with a distinct texture and scanning on smooth paper. I like to use a textural paper when I paint, but I also choose to leave this texture in my digital artwork. Try to use a smooth, less textural paper when sketching and creating a design with smooth lines.

Media

You might want to start your sketches lightly in pencil. That's ok, but make sure that once you ink the sketch you carefully erase the pencil lines. You'll want to keep your paper as clean as possible.

Pay attention to the pen you use as well. You have an amazing number of choices of pen—from tiny to huge and fat to brushes of various lengths. You can see some of my favorites below.

Wide inks and brushes leave great texture but don't always play well in the company of thin strokes in the same image. In the images below, Sherry used a single pen (or two sides of a single pen) on each sample.

Darkness, Weight, and Sketch Size

When you scan your image, the size of the lines on the scan and the size of the scan itself matter. When reducing the size of your scanned image, the pen size and image size become even more critical.

You can see how the darker, thicker lines took reduction better and also remained darker though enlargement. Even when you draw a large light flower and a dark small one, when reduced to the same size the light one is very light and thin. If you put multiple weights in the same image, you can see in the image below how hard it is to find a setting that does justice to all of the lines.

Object Overlap

The final issue to consider as you create your sketch is to decide if any objects in the drawing need to overlap. In the image below, you can see a flower sketch that Sherry drew.

In the original on the left, the flowers overlap the stem, leaving incomplete shapes and lines crossing supposedly solid areas. This makes it difficult to create a design, pattern or concept layout. The solution, if you think about it in advance, is to draw the bottom shape (the leaves and stem) first. Then place tracing paper over the sketch and draw the flower so it matches in size and line weight directly on top of the stem and leaves but on the tracing paper instead.

Another option is to paint the motifs in full, separately, like you see here. Then you can scan them in, cut them out (one of the techniques covered in the [full workshop](#)) and move them around as you wish to create your layout.

Scan Resolution

Scanners work by dividing your image into “samples”. Each sample becomes a pixel in the final scan. The more pixels you have in the final scan, the larger your image. You can calculate the size of the image based either on your scanning resolution or the number of pixels in the image.

Your scanner driver determines how it thinks about size. Some drivers give you choice of “web” or “print” scans. A web scan is usually 72 ppi and the print scan is 300 ppi. If you can choose, always scan at print size.

Scanning at print size is fine, but what happens if you have an original sketch that is about an inch square? Can you make it larger in the scanning process? Yes, within reason. Increasing a sketch from a 1x1 inch original to even 4x4 inches is doable on most scanners. The options they give you for this enlargement, however, will differ.

Scanner software usually lets you set either the scanning resolution or the image enlargement but not both. So, you could scan the 1x1 inch image at 400% enlargement or you could ask to scan the image 1200 ppi (4 times your normal print resolution). Either option should give you an image that is 1200 pixels square rather than the original 300 pixels square.

After the Scan

After you’ve scanned your image you might need to clean it up a bit. In this video, which is just one of the 63 videos in the PFD workshop, Sherry demonstrates how to fix a scan of a flower sketch using levels and the blur tool.

[Please refer to the closed captioning for this video]

Would you like to learn how to replace colors and manipulate your scanned paintings? Join us for [Photoshop for Designers](#). In this workshop, Sherry shares her secrets for removing background images even from something as detailed as this tree photograph. You won’t want to miss it!

We would love to see what you create after watching this video! On Instagram please tag us @patternobserver with #photoshopleve. We will share some of our favorites with the community!