

Paint a portrait and get creative with brushes

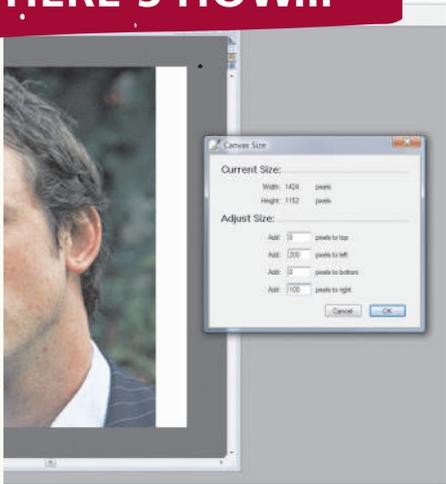
This section is called Advanced, but the title does not reflect the technical complexity of the final picture alone. In some ways, it is less difficult than the Intermediate picture. We have deemed it more difficult because of the personal creative choices we have had to make and which, to a large extent, cause the picture to succeed or fail. In particular, the overall style for the picture and for the brushstrokes, and how to handle the composition and especially the background. There is also a fair amount of free brushing in this image, all over but again, especially in the background. These factors make it more tricky but also ultimately more satisfying. En route, we'll bring in most of the cloning techniques we have covered and a few additional ones as well. Instead of using Watercolor brushes, we will go back to opaque media like Oils and Acrylics and cover brush customisation and how to use the Selection command.



ORIGINAL PHOTO

FINAL CLONED PAINTING

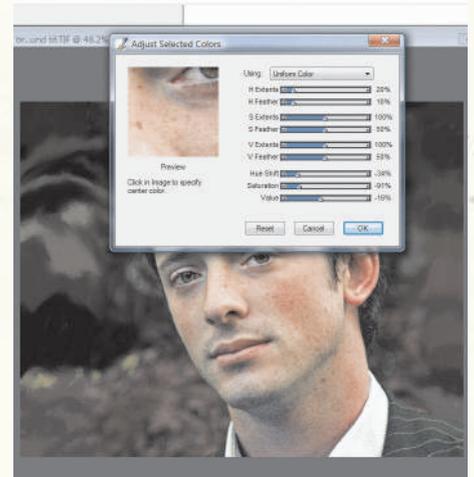
HERE'S HOW...



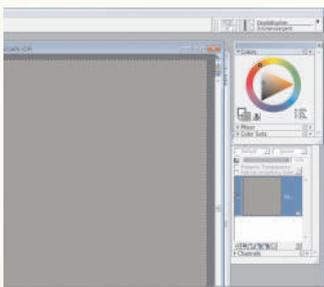
1 Saturation. Open the photo from the Corel's Painter X tutorial page. It's evident that the head in the photo needs some room to breathe, so to begin with, add 200 pixels left and 100 pixels right to produce the canvas dimensions you want. This puts the head slightly off-centre in the frame.



2 Painting in missing background. From the Oils palette, use the Tapered Round Oils 15 brush to roughly continue the existing green background, as well as the patch of pinstripe jacket into the white border areas. Although you probably won't use the green background, it will ensure that the values remain consistent. Increase the Contrast a little to give the image some more energy.

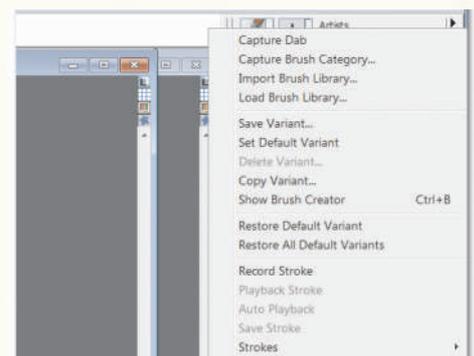
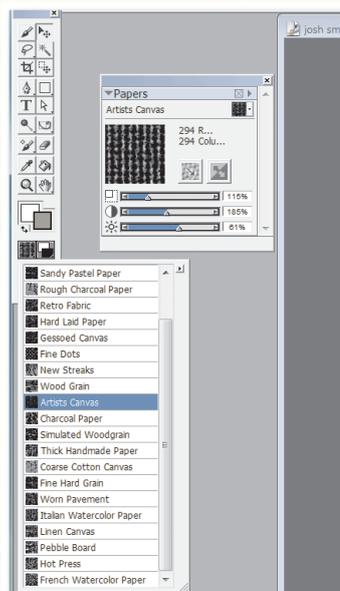


3 Changing the background colour. At this stage, we decided that the green background wasn't going to work for the image. Go to Effects>Adjust Selected Colours and use the Dropper tool to select the green background. Then change H Extents to 20 per cent, H Feather to ten per cent, Hue Shift to -34 per cent, Value to -16 per cent and Saturation to -91 per cent. This gives us a brown background that works better.

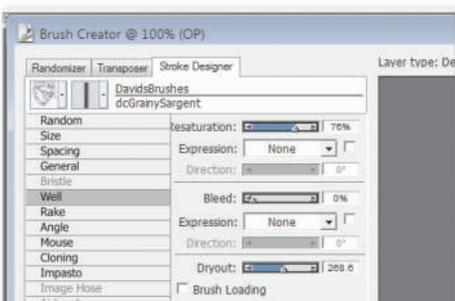


4 Setting up the colour cloning. To set up the colour cloning, head to File and click on Clone. Then follow Select>All, and Edit>Clear. This will create a new 'Clone of Josh...' image, which should be all white. Fill this with a cool brown (H:40 per cent, S: five per cent, V: 55 per cent) using the Fill tool.

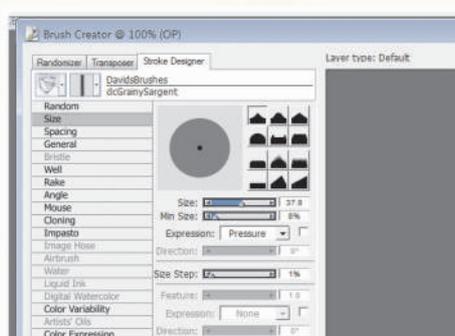
5 Set up the paper. Now you need to set up the paper that will provide the surface texture for the cloned image. Choose Artists' Canvas from the drop-down list of papers accessed from the Papers icon at the bottom of the toolbox. Then launch the Papers palette using the Papers fly-out. This will allow you to see all the paper's parameters and adjust them if you want.



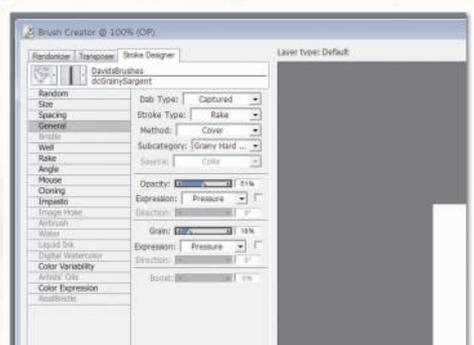
6 Customising the first brush. We're going to use the Artists' Sargent brush to lay down texture onto the painting. This will require some customisation. First, select the Sargent brush in the Artists' brush category. Then open up the Show Brush Creator link, which is accessed from the fly-out arrow to the right of the Brush Selector palette.



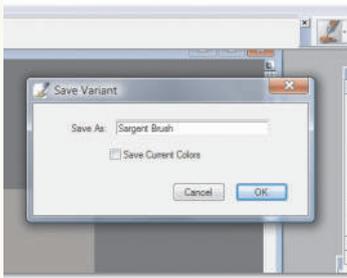
7 Customising the Sargent brush. Select the General category from the list on the left-hand side of the Stroke Designer page in the Brush Creator and make the following changes: Stroke Type set to Rake; Method set to Cover; Sub Category set to Grainy Hard; Expression set to Pressure, and the Grain set to 18 per cent. Remember that the visible paper texture increases as the value set reduces. Aim to use about 16 per cent.



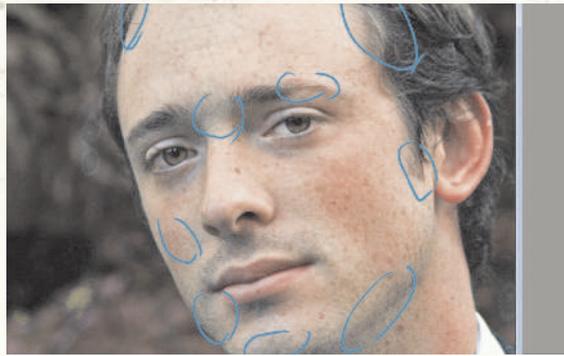
8 Changing the Sargent Brush's Size settings. Select Size from the left of the Stroke Designer page. Change the brush profile to the pointed one top-left, Size to 37.8 per cent, Minimum Size to eight per cent, Expression to Pressure and Size Step to one per cent.



9 Changing the Sargent Brush's Well parameters. Open the Well settings and change Resaturation to 76 per cent, Bleed to 0 per cent, Expression to 0 and Dryout to 268.6. Finally, change Rake to ten and make sure that Impasto, which gives depth to brushstrokes, is turned off.



10 Saving the customised Sargent Brush. You'll need to save the customised brush – it is easy to forget to do this! Open the fly-out menu next to the Brush Selector and click on Save Variant. Name it 'Grainy Sargent' and it will then appear at the bottom of the list of brushes in the Artists' category, without replacing the Sargent brush.



11 Checking value relationships between the face and the plain background. Before you start painting, check how the face will fit in with the brown background. Use the Eye Dropper tool to confirm that the brown for the background matches the tonal value of a number of the background areas. If you want to let the background show through the painted image, you now know where to do this with the correct values.



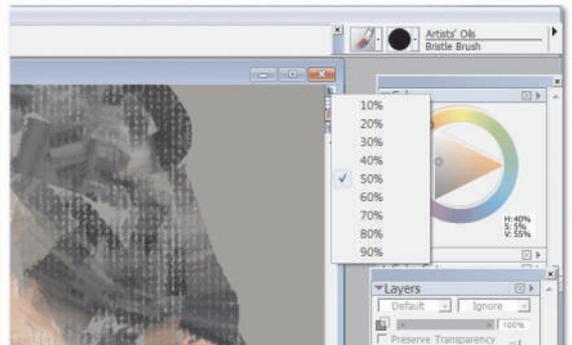
12 Initial brushing with the customised brush. At this stage, make some brushstrokes with the new brush with the original image completely obscured by the brown. This is always a very exciting part of the process as you see the image beginning to emerge. The later stages of restoring the facial features following facial contours using the image in semi-transparent mode is a more technical exercise.

Brush size

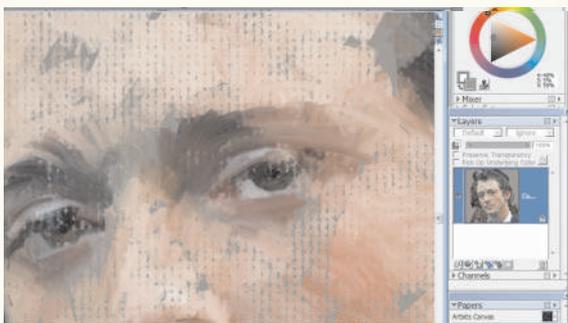
It sounds obvious, but always make sure you pick the correct brush size for the job. In our case, we wanted to keep a loose style so that means picking the largest brush you can get away with. The idea is to give recognisable form without entering into photo-quality sharpness. If you wanted more detail, then obviously go for a smaller brush size. We've given guidelines here, but you may feel more comfortable with a different size.



13 Setting up the Bristle brush. Our aim is to try to keep this portrait loose. To help achieve this, for the next stage of painting, use the Bristle brush in the Artists' Oils category. Use this as it comes, with the following settings: Size: 5.4; Opacity: 79 per cent; Grain: 17 per cent; Viscosity: 50 per cent; Blend: 100 per cent, Wetness: 75.



14 Using the Bristle brush. Open the photo from the The Bristle's brush stroke has a streaky nature to it, its own bristly character. Now, begin to make the brushstrokes follow the contours of the face. This means toggling frequently back and forth between Transparency and Opacity using the Transparency icon. Don't worry too much about detail at this stage.



15 Close-up on the eyes. Even though the image is being cloned, and should in theory replicate exactly what is in the original photography, the marvellous thing about some of the Corel Painter brushes like the Bristle is that they do not deposit paint with photographic precision, but with some randomness. This is crucial to making an image look painted. Eyes should not be painted identically – eyes are not identical, so it is important to paint them with their own character.



16 Developing the picture. Now you need to begin to develop some ideas for the background. Work up some detail too, using a smaller Bristle brush. Make sure that there are a few 'lost edges' where the face and background seem to merge – this helps to integrate them and avoid a stuck-on effect.

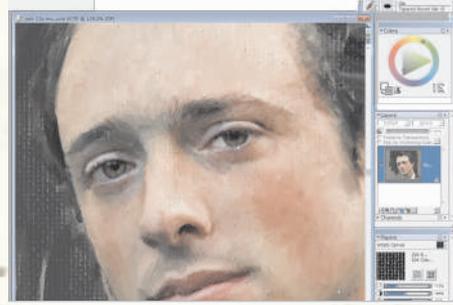




17 More work on the head and background. Using the Grainy Sargent brush again, but with a larger Size (25.3) and Opacity (82 per cent), restore the underpainted brown, letting some of the original photo's dark brown show through to give the background some energy.



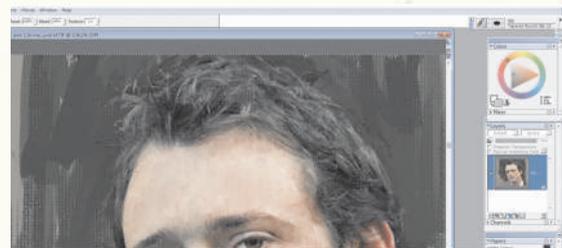
18 Fixing the background. Still using the Grainy Sargent, introduce some blocked-in dark olive into the background. This colour is a darker value of the subject's iris colour. The dark tone helps to model the face by introducing an element of chiaroscuro. Use a Size of 37.8, Opacity of 57 per cent and Grain of 18 per cent. The dark patch is obviously not cloned and its developing shape, tone and colour just works.



19 Bringing back more detail in the face. For the details, first select Oils>Thick Wet Oils 10 (Size: two, Opacity: nine per cent, Resat: ten, Bleed: 65 per cent, Jitter: 0.02. Also check that Impasto is off) to block in the key features. Then use the Tapered Round Oils 15 to restore more precise details, set to a Size of 2.6, an Opacity of 87 per cent, Resat set to 100, Bleed to 83 per cent and Feature set to 2.3.



20 Developing the eyes. You can see that the brushstrokes making up the eyes are adding to the features with streaks and slabs of colour, and not just reproducing the photograph precisely. Now make general strokes with the original photo showing through the transparency. Stay with the largest brush you can. Using very small brushes will quickly remove loose-looking brushstrokes, so stay away from them!



21 Painting the hair. Still using the Tapered Round Oils brush, bring back the hair from the dark brown underpainting. Don't paint all the hairs individually, just those strands that are crucial to getting the illusion of hair. In this case, the hair is tricky because there are not many settled, even areas, but lots of spikes instead. The hair is actually emerging from the dark background which helps to integrate the picture into it.



22 Finishing touches. At this stage, you may decide that the background needs something more. We tried various shapes and colours to create harmonies and interest, but went for a light blue which was complementary for some of the skin colours. It created tension and helped bring alive the background and push forward the face. This is a decision you have to make for yourself – you can't clone it.



23 Final adjustments. To give the picture a little more contrast, follow Select>All, and Edit>Copy>Paste in Place. This will duplicate the first layer. Then change the composite method to Gel and reduce the Opacity of the new layer to six per cent. Under the Photo menu, use a little Dodge and Saturation Add on the irises to reveal them a little more.



24 Finished work. For some last-minute adjustments, add some colour Saturation to the skin (Adjust Selected Colours Sat: 30), and a little sharpening (0.88).

Merge forms

While the focus of this feature is about using photography as the foundation for a painting, don't be afraid to go freestyle! You can achieve very realistic results if you leave the Clone Colour environment and paint in colours over the cloned areas. In our example here, we manually painted in parts of the background to complement the colours in the face. It didn't take great skill, but helped elevate the image beyond a straight clone.



Layer choices

Traditional artists apply layer after layer of paint to build up depth. All you have to do is duplicate a layer and then experiment with the composite methods! These allow you to darken or boost a painting and you can control the effect using the Opacity slider. We used the Gel composite method in this tutorial, but other good ones are Darken, Multiply, Lighten and Screen. It all depends on your painting's colours and the effect you want, so try them out to see what works.