PHOTOSHOP
WTF

a
short
guide
to using
photoshop
for political
posters

v0.1

by

radical
design school

WHY PHOTOSHOP?

Photoshop is a powerful tool for digital image editing and graphic design.

One of the main differences between Photoshop and MS Paint or MS Word is the control that Photoshop gives you to work with separate LAYERS.

You can have a file with anywhere from 1 to well over 100 layers.

In addition, you have a wide range of TOOLS and ADJUSTMENTS at your disposal to edit the content of your layers and create exciting combinations.

Because it offers so many possibilities, Photoshop definitely has a bit of learning curve at first.

However, one of the nice things about Photoshop's complexity is that there are often many ways to go about doing the same thing.

Fact: The inside of this unfolded zine shows what an actual Photoshop document looks like and highlights some of the key areas to familiarize yourself with

WHERE DO I GET IT?

Free 30-day trial

Photoshop, and in fact the whole set of Adobe Creative Suite programs (Illustrator, InDesign, Dreamweaver, etc) is available for a free 30-day trial, after which it asks you to provide a serial number:

www.adobe.com/go/tryphotoshop

What is a serial number?

A serial number is included with software you purchase, or more fashionably, found surreptitiously on the internet, perhaps on popular torrent sites like:

www.thepiratebay.se and www.demonoid.me

Are there alternatives?

Yes, one free, open source alternative to Photoshop (with similar but not all of the same features) is called GIMP and is available for download at:

www.gimp.org

LET'S MAKE A POSTER!

INSPIRATION

Social movements have a long history of using posters to promote collective organizing (events, demonstrations) and to express political ideas.

Every design starts with a moment of inspiration – something clicks – if only an urge to try something out, and the rest of the process unfolds from there.

Some folks collect examples of striking images, effective designs, and interesting textures. But you can always sketch and seek out new ideas for each project.

Finding images online

Creative Commons Media Search
http://search.creativecommons.org

Rini Templeton Image Library
http://riniart.org

Free Clip Art Database
http://etc.usf.edu/clipart

Picking an image

Pay attention to image resolution. Digital images are made of little dots called pixels, so the more pixels, the bigger you can make your image.

We'll start with an image of a hated politician: MP Jason Kenney, Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism, a.k.a. the Minister of Censorship and Deportation.

http://tiny.cc/jasonkenney

You can use the same image or pick your own.

Our goal is to make a very simple poster to raise awareness about the racist and exclusionary policies of the Canadian government.

CREATING A
NEW DOCUMENT

Open Photoshop

FILE > NEW
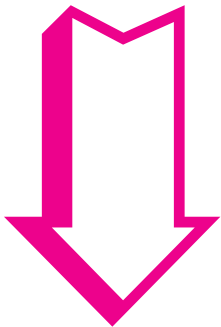
Preset: U.S. Paper
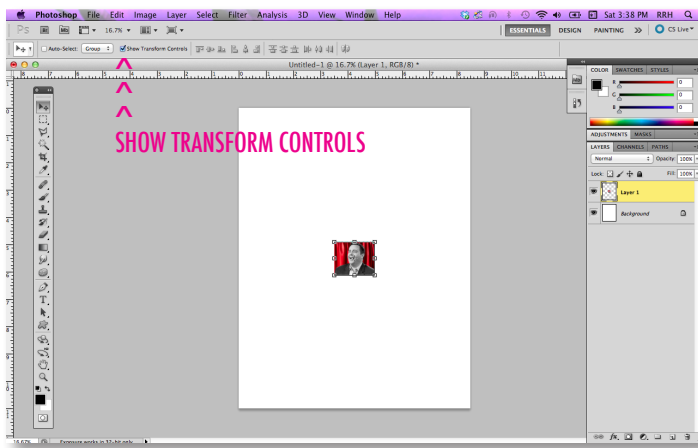Size: Letter
Width: 8.5 (inches)
Height: 11 (inches)
Resolution 300 (pixels/inch)

Note: 300 pixels/inch or dots per inch (dpi) is appropriate for printing. 72 dpi is standard for displaying images on computer monitors. A popular alternative to letter format is tabloid (11x17 inches)

WORKING WITH
IMAGES & TYPE

fun continues
on the inside
of this
unfolded
zine

SHOW TRANSFORM CONTROLS

CHECKMARK BUTTON

JASON KENNEY

WORKING WITH IMAGES

Open Image in Web Browser
EDIT > COPY

Switch Back to Photoshop Document
EDIT > PASTE

Uh oh! The image we picked is pretty small, we'll have to use our bag of tricks.

Click the MOVE TOOL on the Toolbar

Click SHOW TRANSFORM CONTROLS on the 2nd column from the top of the page

Hold the SHIFT key and drag from the top left corner of the image to the left page edge

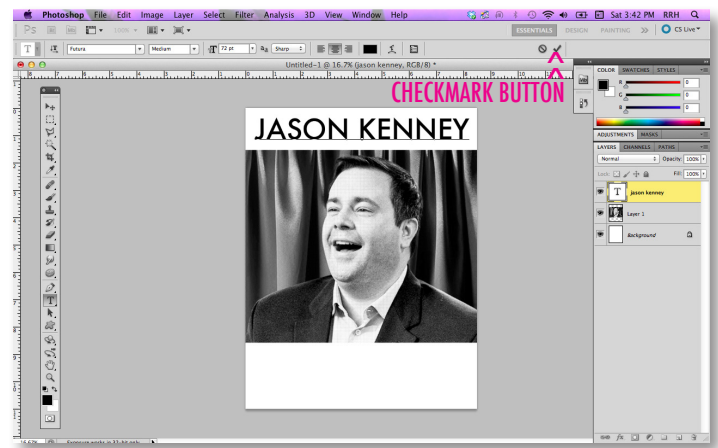Repeat process for right page edge, bringing image flush to both edges

Click the CHECKMARK button to commit to the changes you made

The image is giving us a nice frame to place our type, but at this size the image will come out fuzzy. With Photoshop we can use a FILTER to stylize the image.

Make sure the Image Layer on the Layers Panel is selected
FILTER > FILTER GALLERY > SKETCH > HALFTONE PATTERN

Note: The Halftone Pattern uses the foreground & background colours that you have selected (black, white). You can change these to change the effect.

WORKING WITH TYPE

Click the TYPE TOOL on the Toolbar

Click on the screen where you want text to begin appearing and type!

You can adjust the font face, style, size, and alignment on the 2nd column from the top of the page, or more with WINDOW > CHARACTER

Click the CHECKMARK button to commit to the changes you made

Want to try something a little more fancy? Let's try some LAYER STYLES.

Select a type layer on the layers panel

Double click on the layer, aiming for the blank area

A LAYER STYLE menu should appear
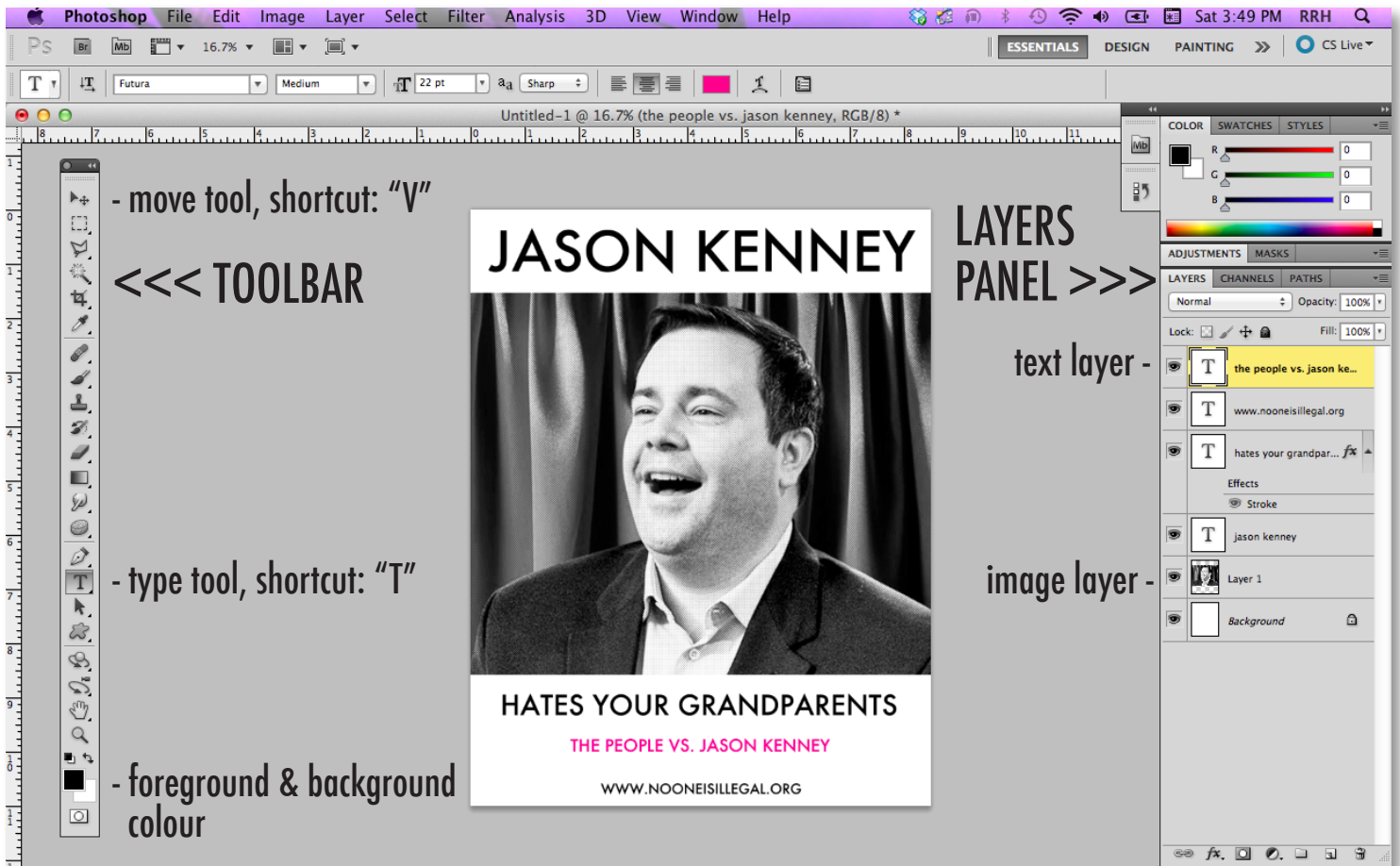STROKE > SIZE: 10 > COLOUR: RED

Liked it better before? You can toggle the the LAYER STYLE on/off by clicking on the eye icon under the layer. Or to undo permanently: EDIT > UNDO. And for time travel (making more than one undo): WINDOW > HISTORY

Finding free fonts online

www.dafont.com
www.losttype.com
and on the previously mentioned torrent sites

- move tool, shortcut: "V"

<<< TOOLBAR

- type tool, shortcut: "T"

- foreground & background colour

LAYERS PANEL >>>

text layer -

image layer -

JASON KENNEY

HATES YOUR GRANDPARENTS

THE PEOPLE VS. JASON KENNEY

WWW.NOONEISILLEGAL.ORG

Pro Tip: Visit tiny.cc/radicaldesignschool for a breakdown of Photoshop tools on the TOOLBAR

FINDING A SENSE OF HARMONY

Design is a process of balancing all of the elements on a page, including unused space. As activist designers, we have another responsbility: our decisions also have to reflect our politics.

SAVING & PRINTING

Saving for future editing

Save your file as a .PSD file, also known as a Photoshop file. This is your original, and you can edit it any time.

FILE > SAVE > FORMAT > PHOTOSHOP

Saving for print

You can save another version of your file as .PDF, a printer-friendly format that does not require Photoshop to open. There are options to compress the image for a smaller file size.

FILE > SAVE AS > FORMAT > PHOTOSHOP PDF > HIGH QUALITY PRINT

Saving for web

Smaller file sizes are much better for the web. You generally would want to save your file as a .JPG image.

FILE > SAVE FOR WEB & DEVICES

FURTHER RESOURCES

Where else can you learn WTF is up with Photoshop?

Help menu

If you're ever wondering where a command is, you can start typing its name in the search bar under the Help menu and it will locate it for you.

Google the shit out of it

If you're trying to figure out how to do something, someone else has probably had the exact same question, and had it answered by a pro already.

Video tutorials

Lifehacker (free), PSDtuts (mostly), and Lynda (some) have great online video tutorials, from basic intros to advanced techniques.

http://tiny.cc/lifehacker
http://tiny.cc/psdtutsplus
http://tiny.cc/lyndapsd

www.radicaldesignschool.net
please send feedback to
radicaldesignschool@gmail.com