



ILLUSTRATION & IMAGE EDITING

Gimp Lighting effects

Michael J Hammel uses Quick Masks and layers to scare your kids into showing up for parents' evening.

**LAST
TIME**

Working with shadows and perspective, I showed you how to create 3D packaging. If you missed the issue, call 0870 8374773 or +44 1858 438795 for overseas orders.

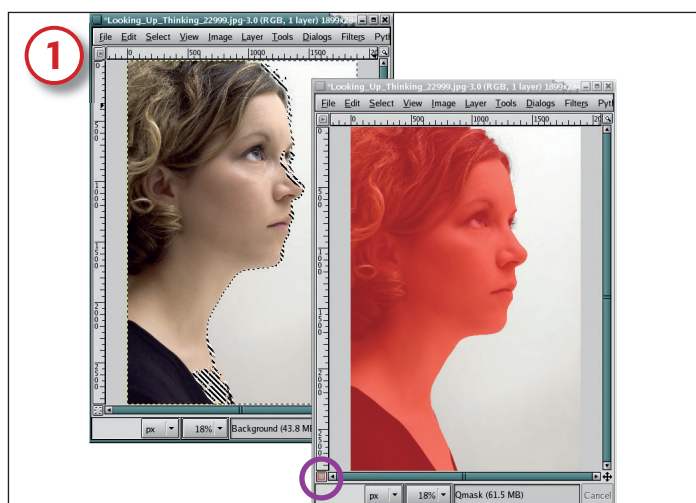


I love the movies. Movies touch us. They make us smile. They make us laugh. They make us cry. They take us on an emotional rollercoaster that television can never provide. Interestingly enough, this is exactly the same effect that our teenage kids have on us (if you're a teenage kid, well, now you know where our best ideas in parenthood come from). So we could have no better combination for creating this month's *Gimp* tutorial: a movie poster-themed invitation for parents' night (that's parents' evening, UK readers) at the local high school.

The movie poster style itself is well suited to just about any event: a school play, Thursday's special at Rocko's Bar and Grill, even the Curmudgeon family garage sale. What you get from a movie poster is something flashy to catch a member of your target audience. The movie poster tells a story without giving away the ending; it invites participation – and you want as many people participating as you can, whether it be for the latest

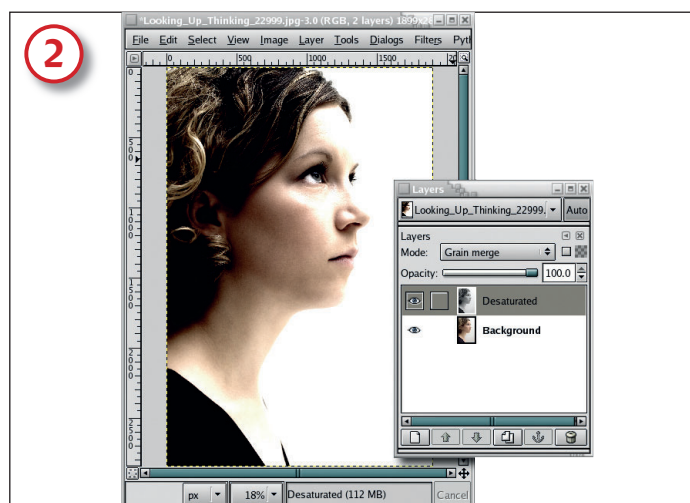
techno-thriller or the latest lunch special. In this tutorial we'll be working to put a sci-fi/horror spin on a poster, something akin to a First Contact between two species – parents and students. Our primary goal is to shine an eerie light upon the face of a student at night, suggesting the student coming in contact with a higher power. Information about the event will be displayed at the bottom of the poster like credits for the movie.

As for the *Gimp* techniques needed, we'll use Quick Masks, transforms on path-generated selections and coloured layers to produce a gold light cast from above in the scene. Stock imagery will help this project. As regular readers will know, my favourite site is BigStockPhoto.com, where good, high-resolution photos can be downloaded for about \$1. I've chosen a stock image of a young woman that was sized for print resolution at 1,900x2,850 pixels at 300 dpi. Note: to find this same image, go to the Photo Search page on BigStockPhoto.com and use the image ID 22999.



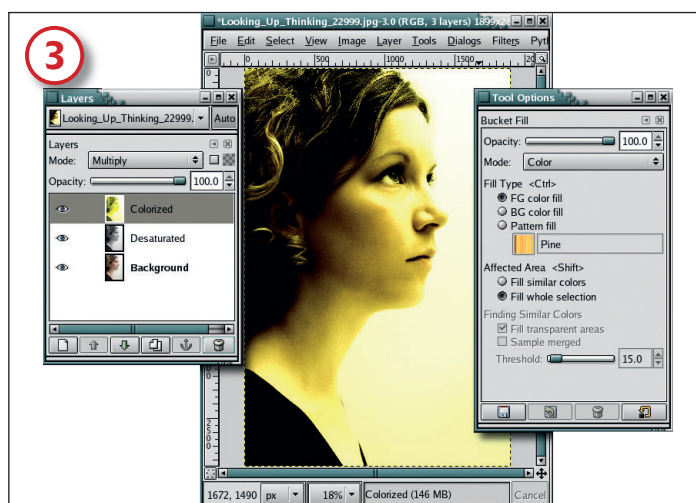
Isolate the background

Starting with the student image, let's change the background to black. Use the Fuzzy Select tool to make a selection of the white area. Because the white background is nearly uniform, Fuzzy Select grabs most of the white and some of the girl with only a few clicks. The selection is converted to a Quick Mask (click on the button in the lower left of the canvas window, outlined in red in the second image). Quick Masks allow you to paint with soft brushes in white or black to clean up the selection. Click on the Quick Mask button again to convert from the mask back to the selection, then feather the selection (Select > Feather) by 10 pixels. In previous tutorials I used fairly small feather amounts, but larger values are used with print-sized images.



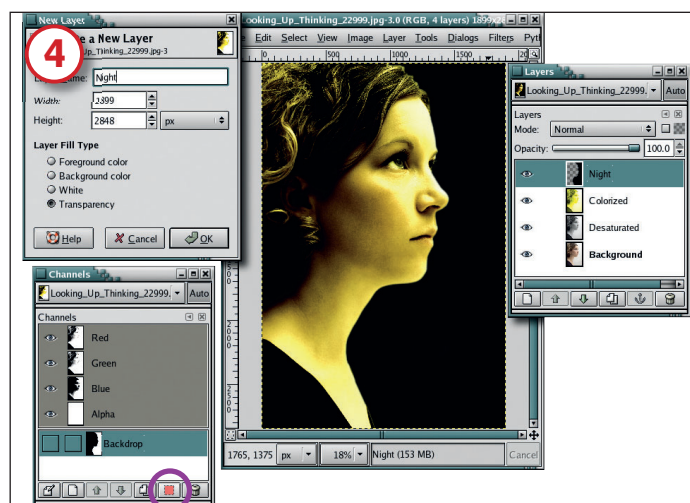
Desaturate

Now we'll drain some of the colour from the girl's face. Save the selection to a channel (Select > Save To Channel) and in the Channels dialog, name the channel 'Backdrop'. In the canvas window, turn off the selection by typing Ctrl+Shift+A. Saving a selection to a channel will change the active drawable to the new channel, so click on the original layer in the Layers dialog to make it the active drawable once again. Duplicate the layer (Layer > Duplicate Layer) and click on its name to change it to 'Desaturated'. Desaturate this duplicate layer (Layer > Colors-Desaturate) and set the Desaturated layer's mode to Grain Merge. This has the effect of enhancing the contrast in the image, which is what you'd expect from lighting coming from in front of the subject at night.



Add a golden layer

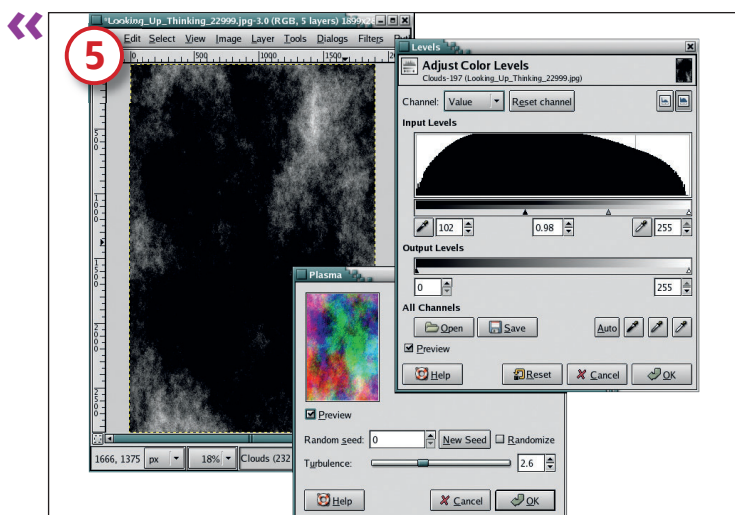
Duplicate the Desaturated layer and name this new layer 'Colorized'. Click on the Foreground Color box in the Toolbox to open the Change Foreground Color dialog. In the HTML field type FCF000 – you'll find that this is a golden yellow colour. Click on OK to apply this change. Select the Bucket Fill tool from the Toolbox and in the Tool Options dialog, set the Mode to Color. Select the entire layer (Select > All), then click in the canvas window to colourize the new layer. Make sure the Layer mode for this layer is set to Multiply. This will apply the gold colouring to the student and darken her image a bit.



A dark backdrop

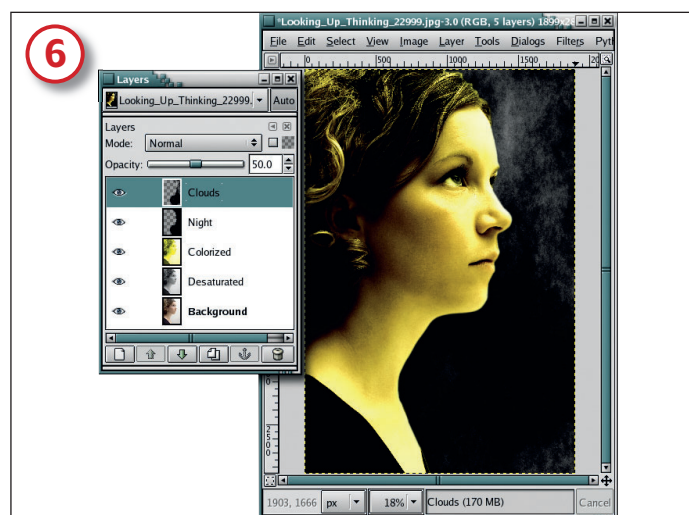
OK, now click on the Colorized layer in the Layers dialog to make it the active layer. Add a transparent layer (Layer > New) to the top of the layer stack and click on the layer name to change it to 'Night'. Now we need to retrieve the selection from the Backdrop channel by opening the Channels dialog (Dialogs > Channels), clicking on that channel and pressing the Channel To Selection button at the bottom of the dialog (the red square at the bottom of the Channels dialog as shown in this image). Click on the Night layer in the Layers dialog to make it active. Grow the selection by 3 pixels (Select > Grow) and feather (again) by 10 pixels. Type the letter D in the canvas window to set the foreground colour to black, then drag the foreground colour into the selection.





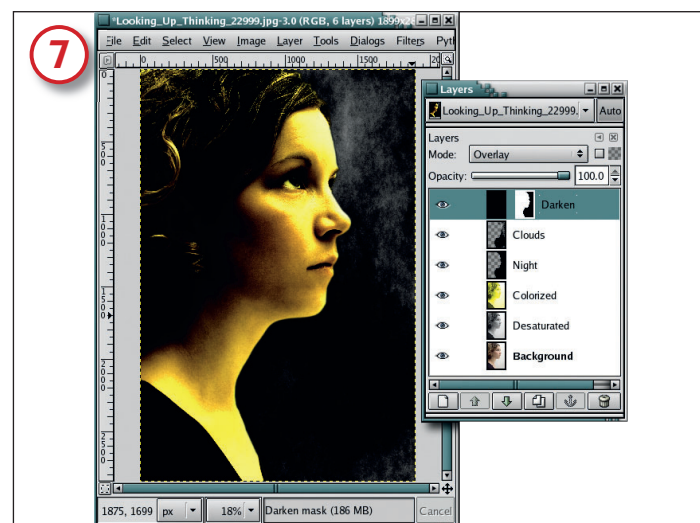
Smoke effect

A pure black background is a bit boring so let's add a small amount of smoke. Here's how: add a transparent layer and name it 'Clouds'. Open the Plasma filter (Filters > Render > Clouds > Plasma), set the turbulence to 2.6 and click on OK to apply it to the layer. Desaturate the layer (Layer > Colors > Desaturate) then adjust the levels (Layer > Colors > Levels) to reduce the amount of visible smoke. We need the smoke in the upper right quadrant of the layer, so if necessary use the Flip tool from the Toolbox to place the best part of the cloud rendering on the right side of the image.



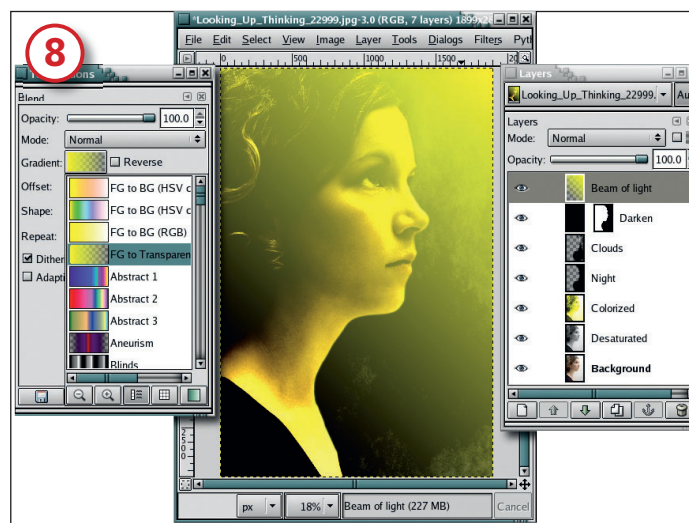
Check the smoke

Retrieve the saved selection called Backdrop again. Make sure to click on the Clouds layer in the Layers dialog to make it active after retrieving the saved selection. Invert the selection (Select > Invert) and feather it by 10 pixels, then type Ctrl+X in the canvas to cut the selection from the cloud layer. If the smoke is too bright, reduce the opacity for the Clouds layer as shown in this image.



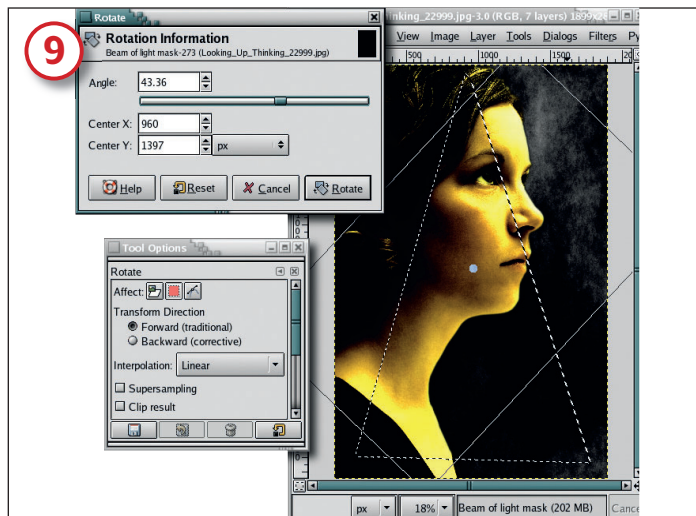
Darken the face

Despite our having darkened the image with the Colorized layer, the student is still too light. A layer needs to be added to darken her up a bit. Type D in the Canvas again to make sure the Foreground colour has been reset to black. After adding a new layer (Layer > New) and naming it 'Darken', fill the layer with black by dragging the Foreground colour box from the Toolbox into the canvas window. Add a white layer mask (Layer > Masks > Add Layer Mask). Retrieve the saved Backdrop selection once again, and feather it by 10. Click on the Darken layer's mask to make it active, then fill the selection with black. Set the layer blend mode for the Darken layer to Overlay then clear the selection (Ctrl+Shift+A).



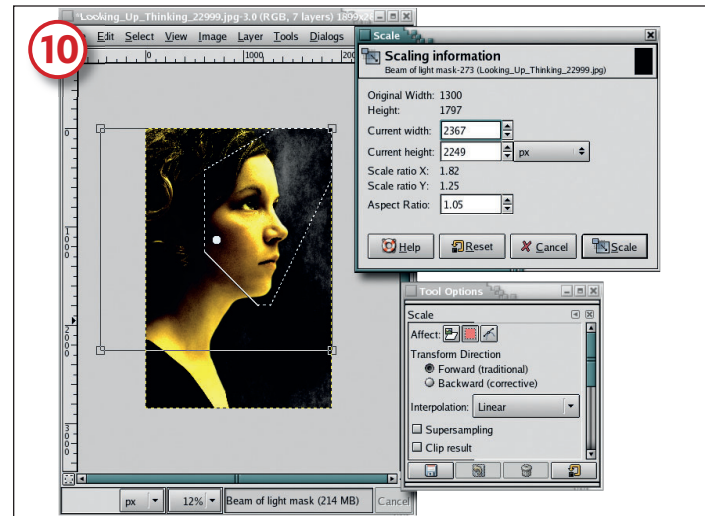
A light source

Next comes the beam of light from above. To start it off, add a transparent layer to the top of the layer stack and call it 'Beam of light'. Click on the Foreground Color box to edit the colour and set the HTML field to FCF00, the same yellow-orange that we used before. Click OK to apply the colour change to the Foreground Color box in the Toolbox. Now select the Blend tool from the Toolbox, and in the Tool Options dialog set the Gradient to FG To Transparent. Drag in the canvas from the upper right corner through the girl's eyes to the back of her neck. This applies a yellow glow from the upper right, but the beam still needs to be focused.



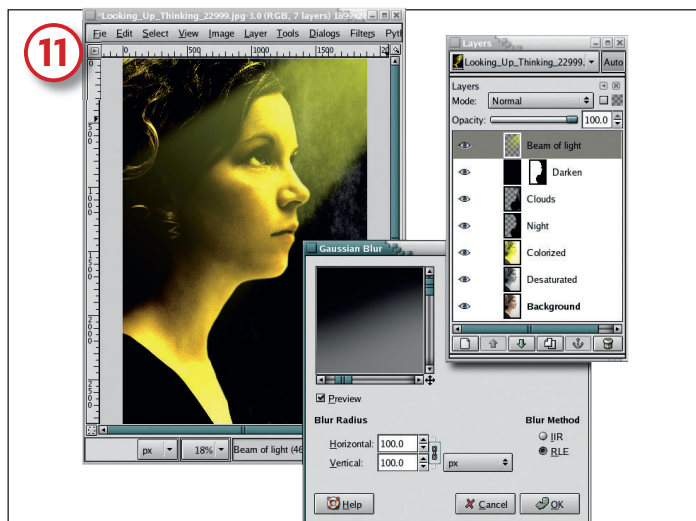
Set up the light beam

Add a black layer mask to the Beam of Light layer. Use the Paths tool from the Toolbox to create a triangle with three control points. Then, in the Tool Options dialog, convert the path to a selection by clicking on Create Selection From Path. Select the Rotate tool from the Toolbox and in the Tool Options dialog next to the Affect heading, click on the Transform Selection button (the middle button of the three buttons at the top of that dialog). Click in the canvas and use the Angle slider bar in the Rotation Information dialog to rotate the outline of the selection clockwise about 45 degrees. Click on the Rotate button to apply the rotation of the selection.



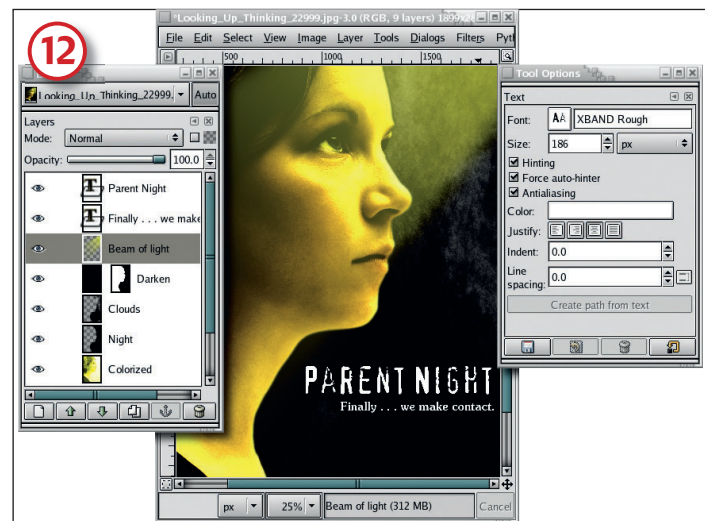
Shape the selection

Select the Move tool from the Toolbox. Hold down the Alt key (you may need to hold down the Shift key too, depending on how your Linux desktop is configured) and drag the selection up and to the right. With the Scale tool selected from the Toolbox, go to the Tool Options dialog and set the Affect heading to Transform Selection, then click in the canvas. This will cause the scale outline to appear with its four drag points. Grab the lower left drag point and drag to the left and down. Click on OK in the Scaling Information Dialog to apply the change.



Direct the light beam

It's coming on, but to finish it, with the Beam of Light layer mask still active in the Layers dialog type the letters D and X in the canvas to set the Foreground colour to white. Select the Blend tool from the Toolbox and in the Tool Options set the Gradient to FG To Transparent. Drag in the canvas from the upper right through the centre of the selection to the lower left, then clear the selection (Ctrl+Shift+A). Blur the mask (Filters > Blur > Gaussian Blur) by 100 pixels. If you find that the beam is too large, apply the Layer Mask (Layer > Mask > Apply Layer Mask), use the Scale or Perspective tools and reposition the layer manually. Reduce the opacity if the light is too bright.



Finish off with text

Select the Text Tool from the Toolbox and reset the Foreground to white with D and X as before. Choose an appropriate font in the Tool Options dialog – I've used XBAND Rough set to 140 pixels for the title and Soutane Ultra-Light for the tagline. Both are positioned, right-aligned, in the lower right of the canvas. Use the Text tool to add other credits for the event. A black screen is added behind the white text so the words stand out more clearly. And you're done.

One final note: when you zoom out so you can see the full image, it can cause the text to appear jagged. To get a better view of the text as it will appear in print, zoom in (View > Zoom In) a few times, as shown here. [LXF](http://www.linuxformat.co.uk)

NEXT MONTH
We'll use gradients to create a fairly simple but dramatic reflective glass effect.