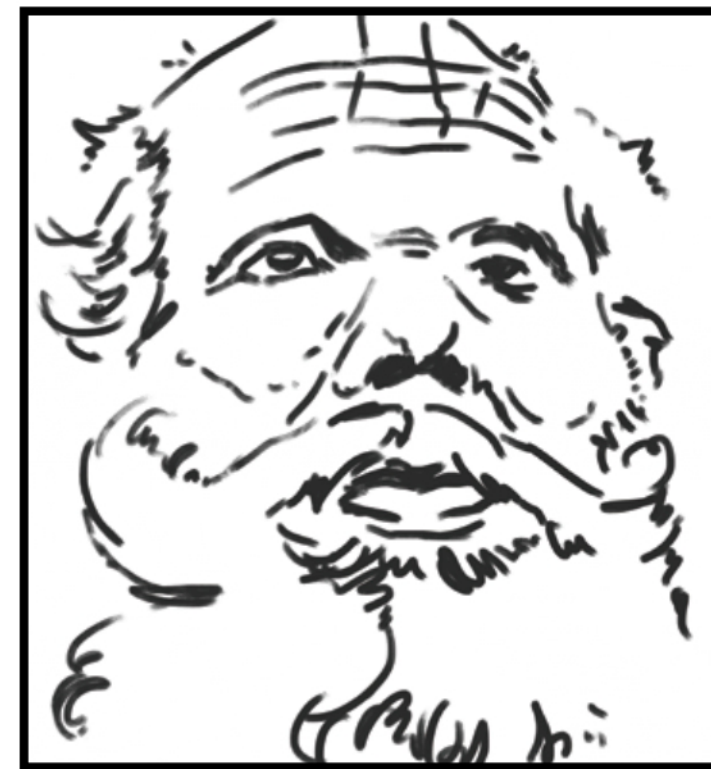




# PHOTOSHOP FACES

*Gone are the days of drawing portraits using pencils and brushes. Digital is the new canvas and Photoshop is the new tool. Digital Illustrator, **Vivek Nag** is fascinated by 'Sadhus' and here he takes us through the making of a portrait using Photoshop.*



**01** The first step is to make a rough patchy sketch of the character. It's best to do this using a chalk brush or special Photoshop brushes which are meant to replicate a traditional look on the digital canvas. The lines mostly trace the shadows and/or contours of the face as seen in the image.



A freelance illustrator by profession, **Vivek Nag** is based in Mumbai and is currently studying Fine Arts from Rachna Sansad. With a diploma in digital painting from FX School, Andheri, he has since then worked as Business Illustrator, Graphic Designer, Concept Artist and Comic Book Colourist. With a strong passion for portraits and comic characters, he wishes to become a tutor of digital painting and concept art as well as a renowned figure in the comic book industry.





**02** Taking the rough sketch as the base, the next step is to start making line art. This is made using the pressure sensitive round hard brush to create thin and to the point lines. Detailing is important in this step. Building upon the rough chalky sketch is beneficial. When satisfied, hide the sketch layer to proceed.



**04** Taking the previous step forward, it's now all about concentrating on detailing. Smaller brush strokes are employed as well as the colours being used are more varied. Notice how the freedoms of the strokes have become a little more restricted here. The line art acts as guiding points and this is the stage where it is put to most use.

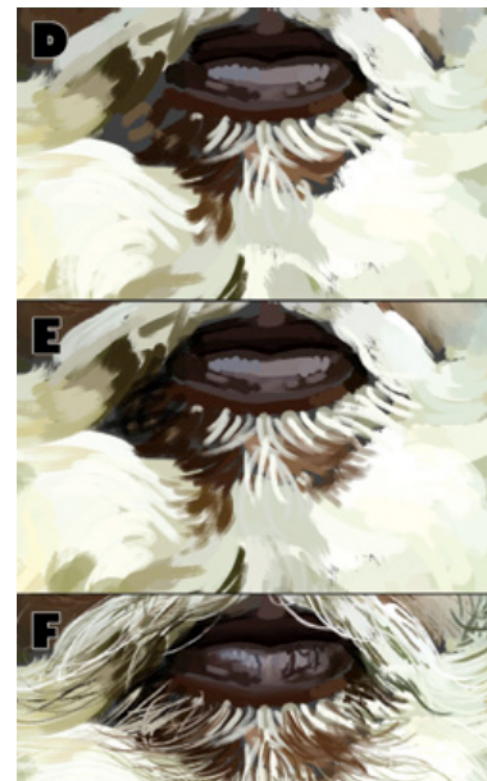
★★ Depending on the intricacy of colours in a photograph, it's advisable to make a palette of 5 to 8 colours while performing a digital sketch ★★



**03** The next step is to start with the colours. Irrespective of the colours being used in the portrait, it's best to dim down the background. This offers contrast and a better understanding of how bright the colours that are being used in the painting actually are. The next step is to make a palette of colours using the original image. Depending on the intricacy of colors in a photograph, it's advisable to make a palette of 5 to 8 colors. In this case, a palette of six colours was used. It's best to select colours in such a way that for any other shade or tint you require, one's able to create that using a combination of the set colours in the palette. As seen above, start filling the composition with patchwork. Using flats helps launch into the fray of the painting.



**05** Minute details start from here. The eyes are the most important part of a portrait. A lot can be conveyed from the eyes. For the most natural look, one needs to make the eyes detailed and relatable. The blending of the strokes also starts from this step. As is evident in the image, a certain level of 'rawness' is maintained with every stroke rather than applying a smooth blend. Keeping hints of patches provides a natural feel, especially on the skin. Also, one needs to keep the sheen of the eye in mind that is executed with a simple brush stroke, keeping minimal blending. The more striking the sheen, the better the eye tends to look.



**06** The next step is replicating the previous steps with the lips and beard. Here, treat lips the same way skin near the eyes was treated. The beard however forms a rather tricky part of the portrait. The beard is mainly just brush strokes with hardly any blending at all. The direction and the thickness of each stroke matters. For example, the brushes below the lip and at the origin of the beard are thick, whereas the strokes in the beard are rather fine.



**09** This step is called 'The Haze'. This is where the focal points and edges are merged into the background. For example, the yellow ochre on the forehead is transformed into a form of smoke (haze) which drifts away from the head. This is still done using fine art brushes. Along with that, more horizontal strokes have been pulled around the beard and hair. These strokes are pulled in about 30% opacity and serve to blend the edges till the background looks like a part of the subject itself.



**07** The prior two steps are repeated on the remaining parts of face. The sides of the face are left undone because it will add on to the next steps. There are still many strokes on the face which are strongly patchy and look undone. However this adds to the composition. The parts of any illustration with the most amount of detail and/or contrast attracts attention first; in this case, the eyes.



**08** Once the face is done, this is where one needs to start working on the background. Against the already set dull gray background, start putting horizontal strokes with fine art brushes. The colours used are part of the portrait itself – reds, yellows and whites. This enables the background to compliment the main subject of the painting and establishes a flow to the composition. But also remember not to steal the focus from the subject by using colors that are too vibrant.



**10** The last and final step is to add a layer mask. This is where curves are applied to the artwork. This is where contrast is also added to the painting. This helps the shades to pop out and there is a lot more depth than there was before ←