# Introduction: A Word From the Author

This is a tutorial chronicling the last 3 years of doing art via sketch and then in Photoshop. I have used various tutorials to give me some insight into how to produce my art at a reasonable quantity.

Through this time, I have been quite adamant about finding a style and method that works for me. That is why I urge you to take this tutorial at face value and use it as a mere springboard for your own style to come forward.

I would like to thank Al Mackey for his wonderful tutorial and to Youlanda for helping me to learn better color techniques. I now feel that I can achieve better quality art not only because of my own creativity and drive, but because of you guys.

# Phase A: Making the Original Sketch Blue

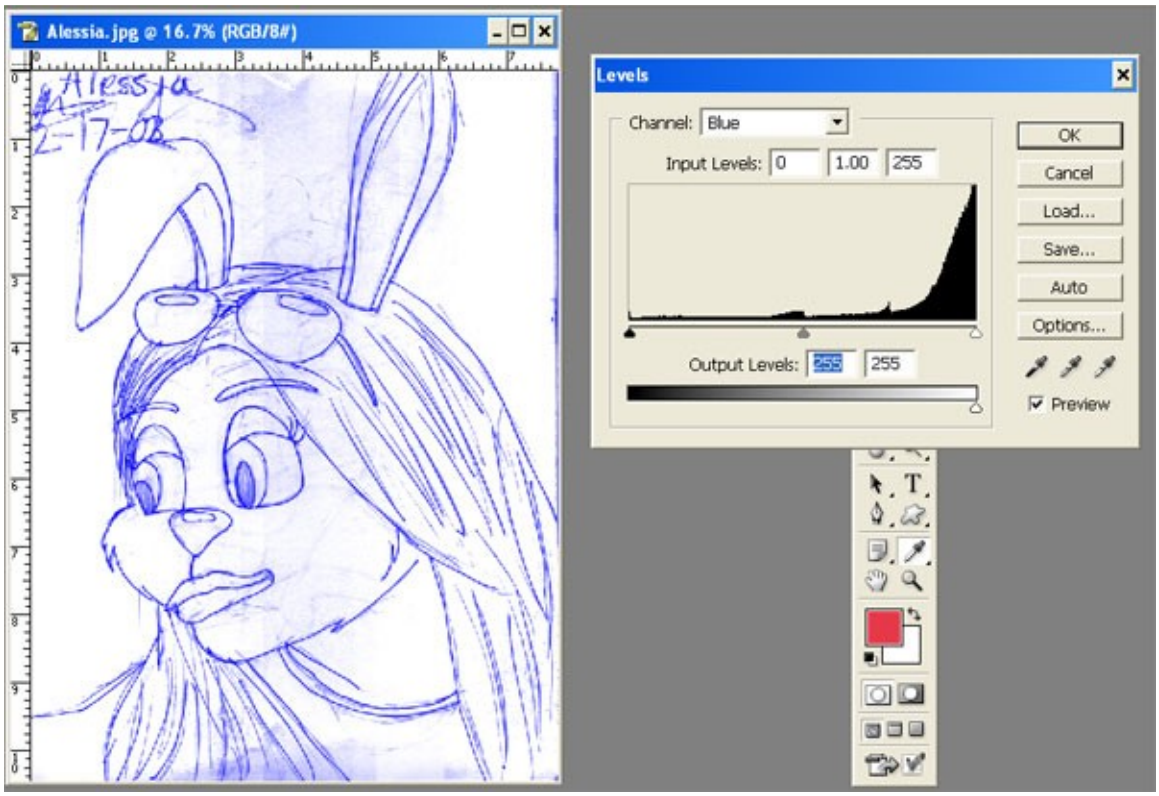
The first question one would wonder is why the heck are we making the sketch blue? Well, we want to distinguish the original sketch from the clean and final line art we will be producing.

Step 1: Open the Image

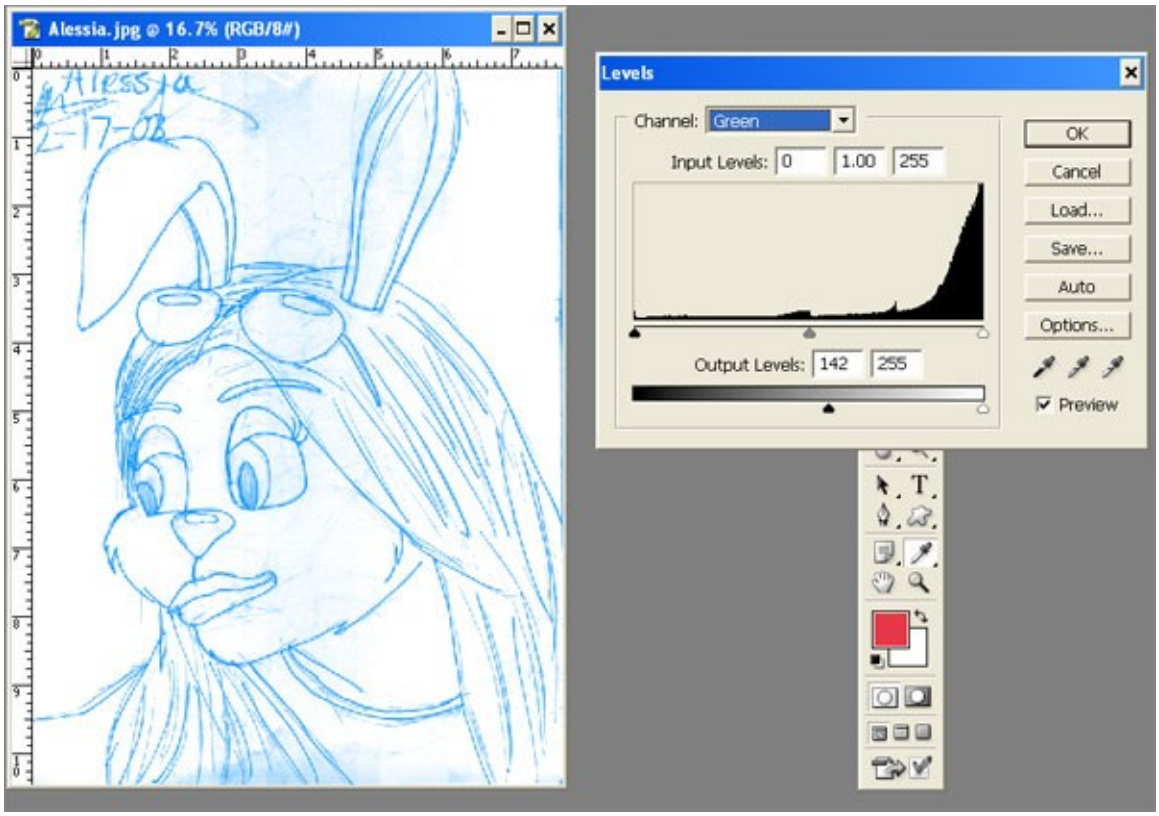
Sample Image

Step 2:  I prefer the RGB setting vs CMYK for drawings.  If you haven't already, go to Image> Mode... to change to RGB color.

Step 3: Bring up the Levels Editor.  Image> Adjust> Levels. In the drop down menu you should select the Blue Channel specifically.  You will want to create a light blue, so grab the dark output arrow in the lower left and drag it as far as right as you can.




Selecting the green channel, drag the dark output arrow half way up. You may need to drag it up farther if you wish to achieve a lighter shade. Even changing into the red channel and upping the dark input there might be a good idea.

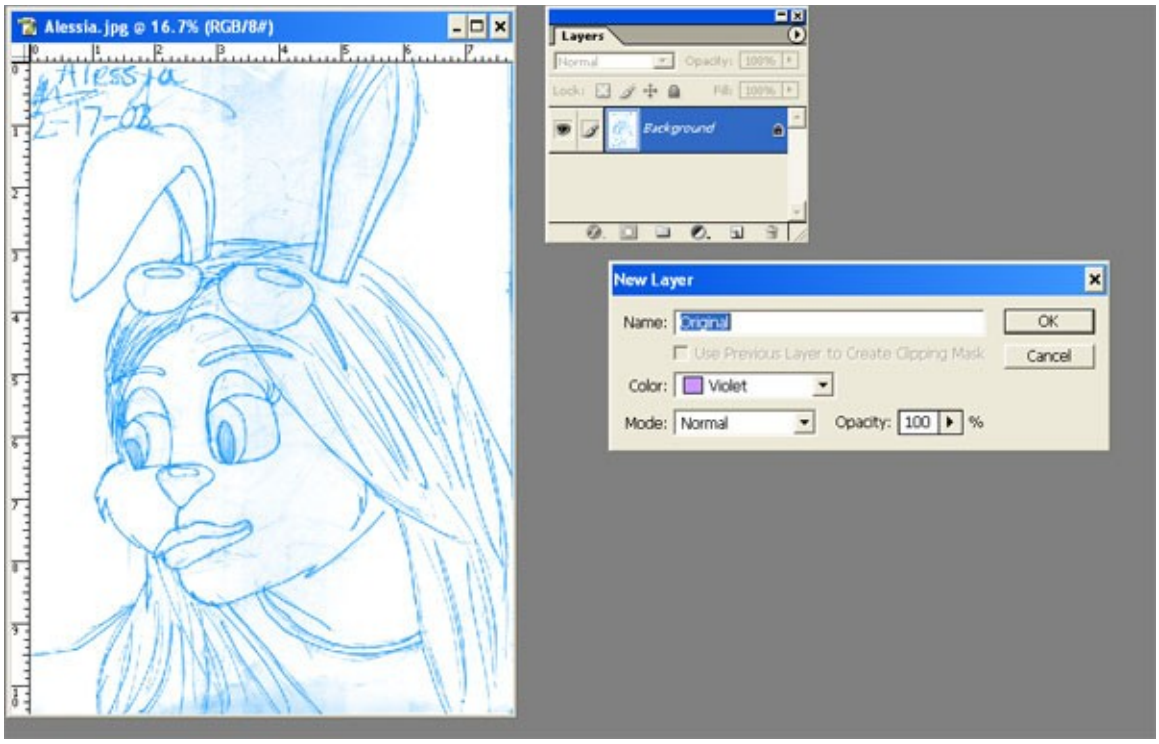



It should pretty much look like this. This will be included in a layer which will be drawn over. We will cover that in the next phase.

## Phase B: Layering

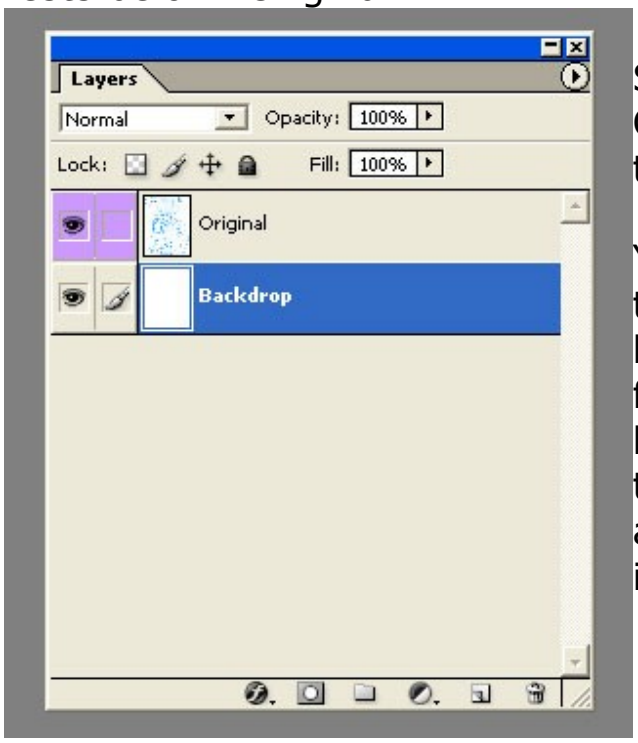
Hopefully you understand how layers work in Photoshop. Basically the idea is that you want to isolate the sketch from the line art you will produce. As of now, your sketch is in the background. Later on, you will acquire many layers as you start coloring. That is why it is best to develop good layer naming habits now.

Step 1: Start by opening the layers palette. Double click on the "background" layer. Rename it "Original".




You may wish to use a color indicator on your layers in the palette to keep better track as the amount of layers increases.

Step 2: Layer>Duplicate Layer....  In the dialog box, type "Backdrop".  In the Layers palette, drag "Backdrop" so it rests below "Original".




Step 3: Edit> Fill... Choose "white" as the color to fill it in with.

Your layers should look like this, the "backdrop" layer beneath the sketch and filled in with white.  We will be adding another layer in the next phase which lays at the very top of the image palette and will

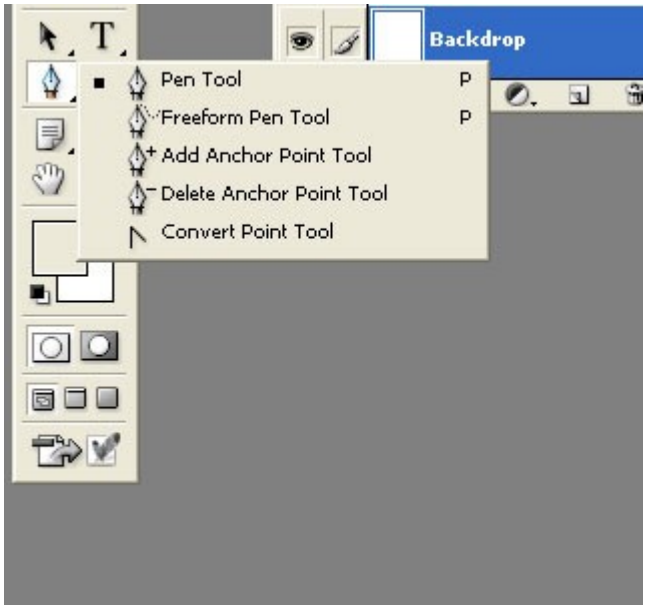
contain the new lines.

*****SAVE YOUR WORK!*****

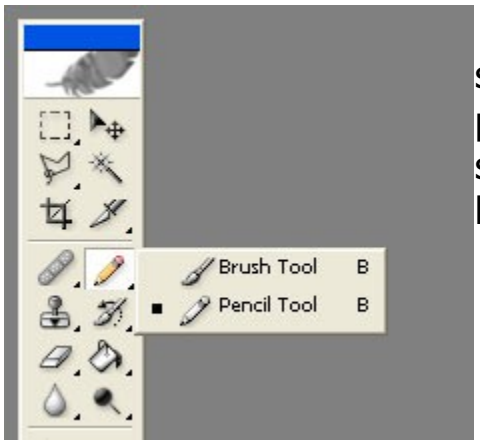
## Phase C: Inking in New Lines

The purpose of inking digitally is that you have a lot more control over your lines and can alter them in anyway you wish without countless erasing. Inking in this manner gives you good insight to how paths and brushes work.

We will be concerned with 2 main tools for now. They are as follows:



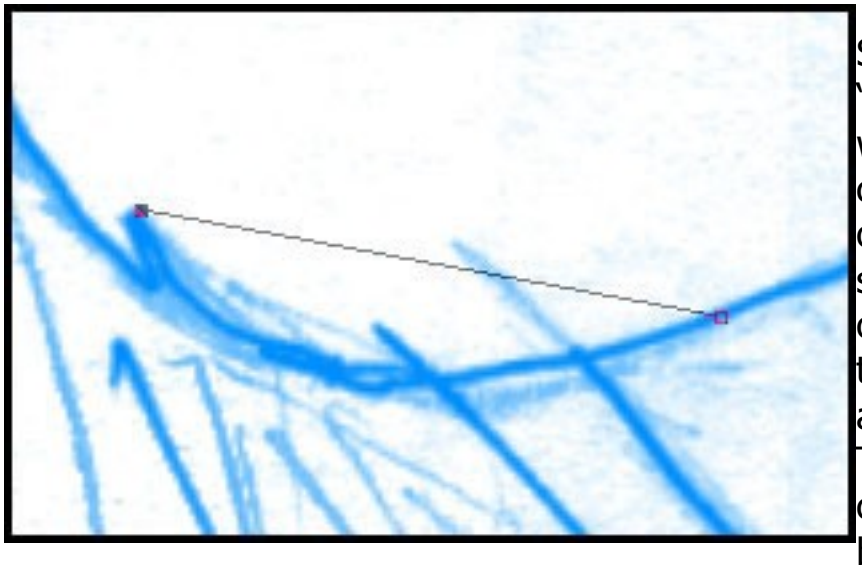

1. Paths Tool. This is the tool used to create all the lines. Paths are vector created lines. You may find this as an easier way to refine curves. In a vector system, anchor points define the start and end of a line or curve and can be altered later.



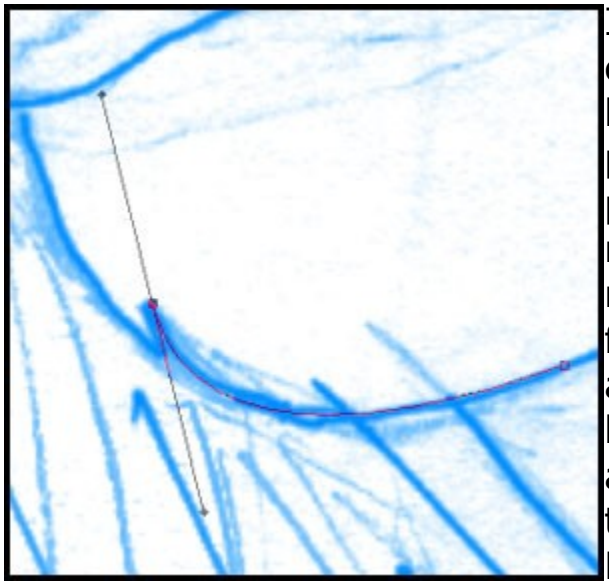

2. Pencil/Paintbrush Tool. For stroking lines I recommend using a pencil versus a brush so you get a solid line instead of one with blurred edges.

Okay...moving on!

Step 1: Create a New Layer Titled "Lines" and place it above the "Original" layer. You might want to lock the other 2 layers while you are inking.

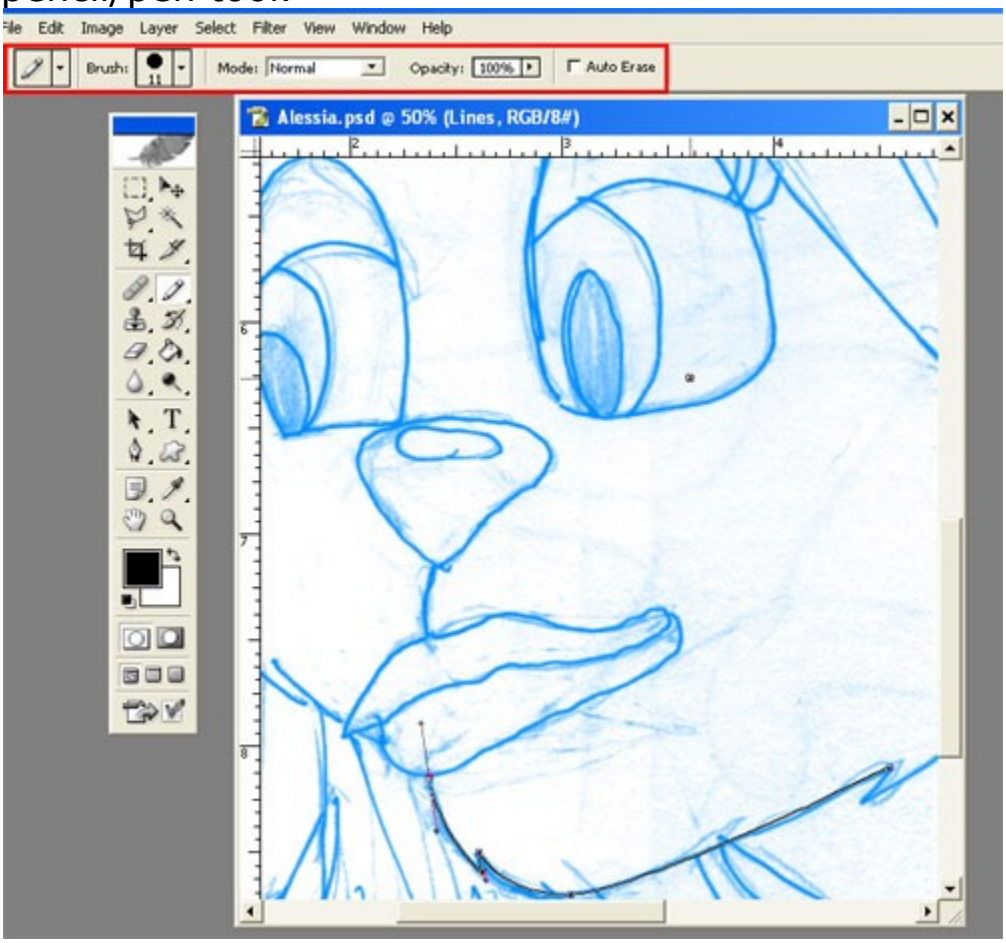


Step 2: With "Lines" as the working layer, create a vector over your sketch. Click at one point and then click another point. The paths will create a line between the 2 anchor points.



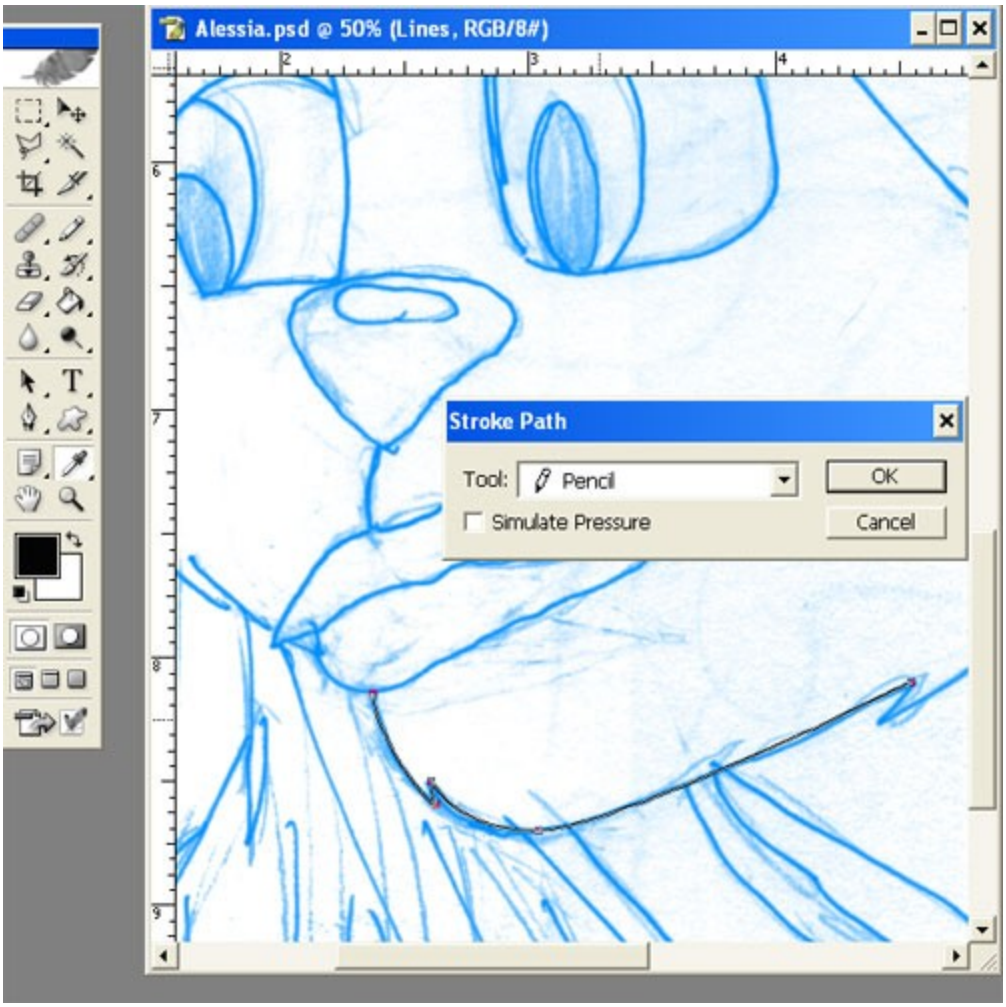
If you had wished to create a curved line like this one, hold down the mouse upon placing the second anchor point. You should be able to move your mouse and manipulate the curve in any fashion you like. Curves can always be refined later by holding the mouse on the anchor point and changing the trajectory of the curve. Remember, you can always press the "delete" key to remove an anchor and/or right click on the paths in the tool bar and select the "delete anchor" tool, clicking on the point you wish to delete.

Step 3:  Once you have a line as perfect as you like, click on the pencil/pen tool.




The options should display at the top of the Photoshop Window.  Clicking on the Pencil icon will let you alternate between the pen and pencil tool.  The next item determines the brush size and style.  You can set the mode and opacity as well but for this activity, it is not so important.

Step 4: Now that you have the appropriate brush, (as you can see, I chose to use a pencil with a brush size of 11) you will need to stroke the path.  Select the paths tool again and right click on the path in the image and choose "stroke path...".




Select the tool you wish to stroke it with. Of course you will want to use the brush you have just chosen so choose the pen or pencil tool.

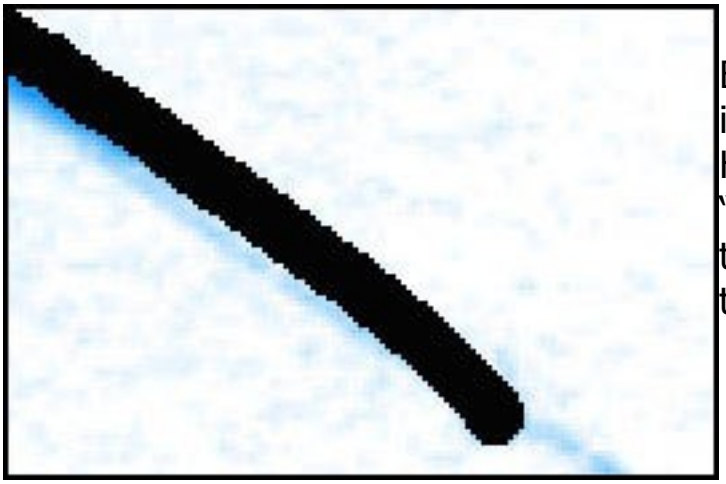
Step 5: Now that the path is stroked, you no longer need the path. Press "delete" and the path will completely disappear.

*****SAVE YOUR WORK!*****

This process will continue until your entire drawing has new lines drawn from the paths. I cannot stress this enough but, **SAVE YOUR WORK AS YOU GO!!!**

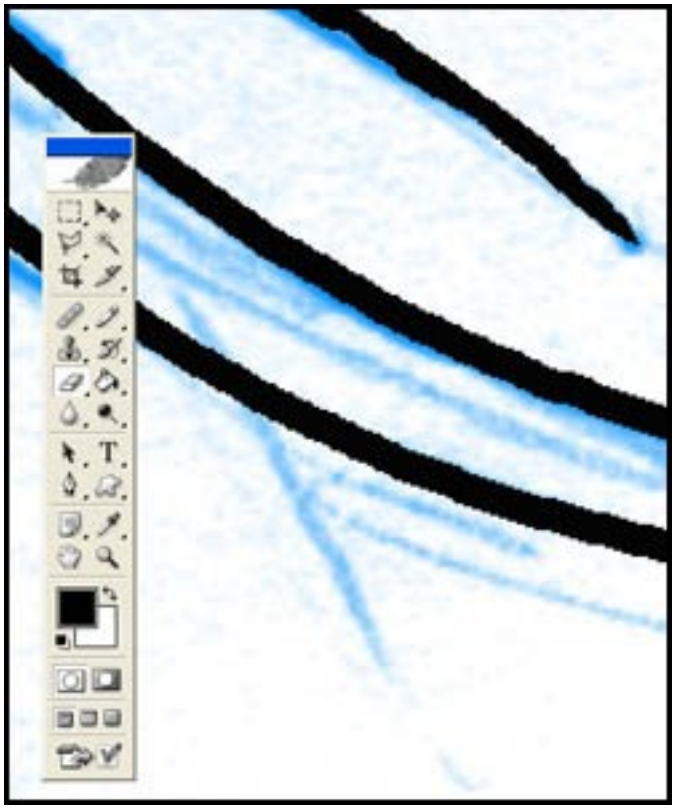
# Phase D: Line Cleanup

Now that you have drawn all the lines, it is time to do some cleaning up. Sure you could leave the lines as is. However, if you "taper" the edges, you may get the drawing to look less stiff in the line art.



Before Taper: Leaving it as is is just fine. However it looks too "cookie-cutter" despite the fact you did do this digitally.

Tapering the lines: This is how that same line looks tapered. I think it gives the line some character, don't you?



# Phase E: Coloring

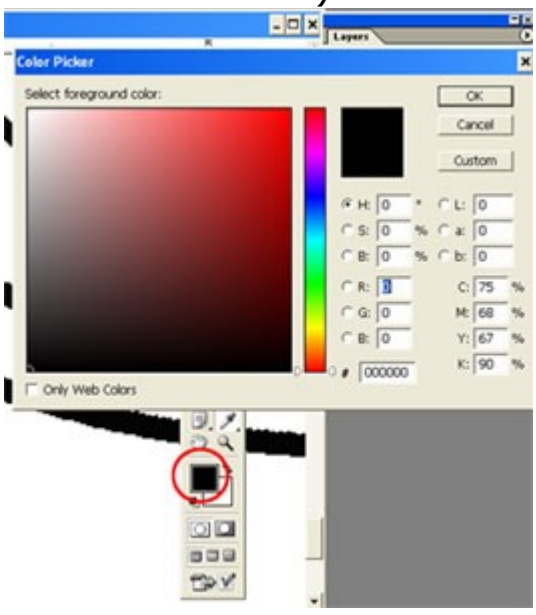
At this point it is not necessary to keep the layer containing the original sketch. Discard it if you are like me and don't want to be confused with extra unnecessary layers. This is the point where layers are going to come into play.

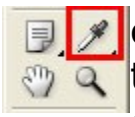
Step 1: Add another layer. It should be placed between the "lines" and "backdrop" layer. This layer will be named to the appropriate thing that you wish to color first. In my example, I will name the layer "shirt". Upon doing that, select the "lines" layer again for the next step.

Step 2: I used the magic wand tool and clicked on all components of the shirt. The magic wand tool selects pixels based on their color similarities. Be sure that you have contiguous and anti-aliased checked. In this case, the white from the "background" layer shows through the line art. Since it is all white, it is going to select everything, as long as the lines have completely closed things up. If they haven't, you would notice selections where you don't want them.

Step 3: Select a color. You may do so by either:

a) Opening up the swatches (Window>Swatches) and selecting a color from there.
b) Clicking on the palette in the bottom part of the tool bar, which will bring up the color picker. You then have a wide variety of every hue you could want.

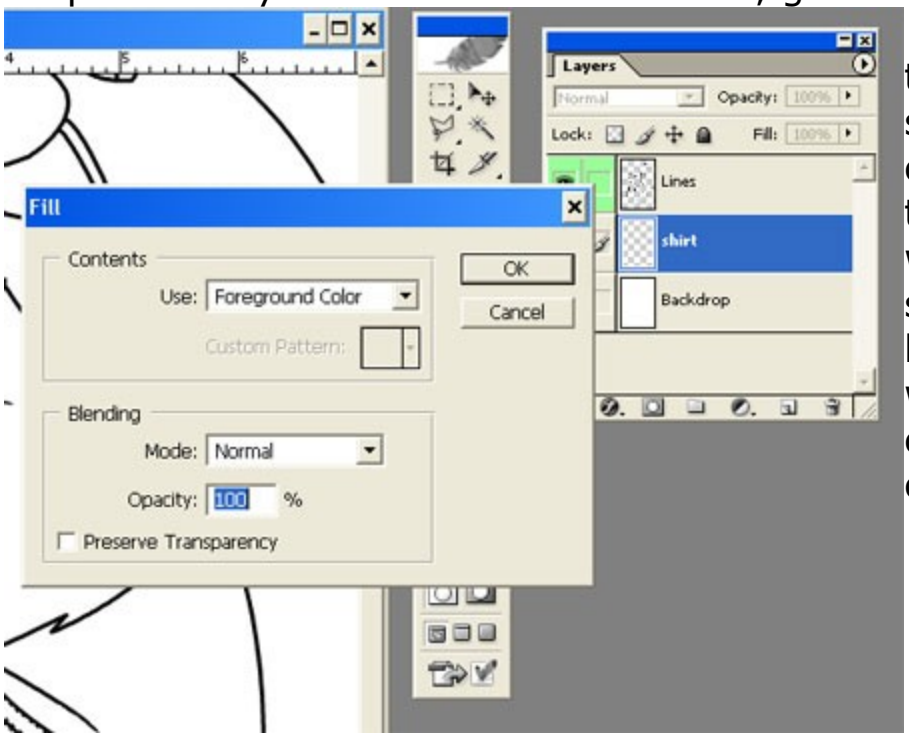


c) Using the eye dropper tool and selecting the color from any other

image you might be working with.

Step 4: With your chosen color selected, go to Edit>Fill...




Upon using these settings and clicking "ok", the area in which you selected will be colored with your color of choice.

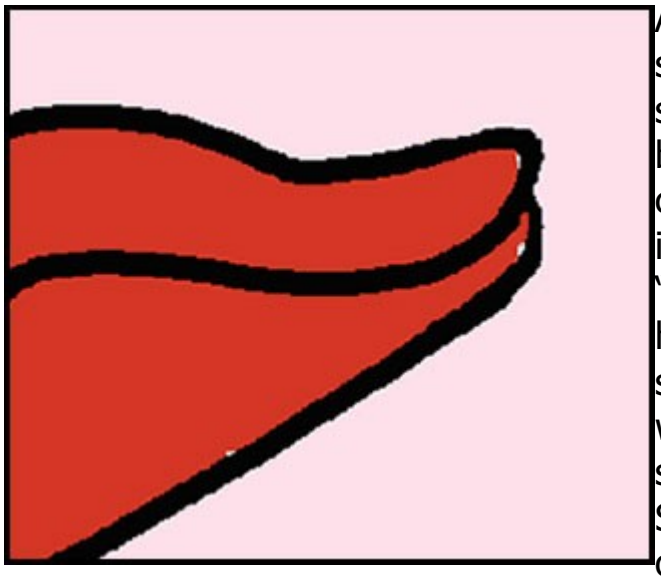
Step 5: Click back on the "lines" layer to select the next region(s) and repeat Steps 2 through 4. Continue to color your image, adding a new layer between the "backdrop" and "lines" layer for each component of the body (i.e. "hair", "eyes", "pupils", "pants", etc...). **SAVE YOUR WORK ALONG THE WAY!!** I don't color the background only because I use the "backdrop" as the layer to either paste in a background from another document or create one of my own without affecting the other foreground elements.

(Finished Image Below)

Adobe Photoshop
File Edit Image Layer Select Filter View Window Help
Brush:
Mode: Block
Opacity:
Flow:
Erase to History
12.5%
Doc: 23.1M/67.9M
Click and drag to erase to background color. Use Shift, Alt, and Ctrl for additional options.

## Phase F: Color Cleanup

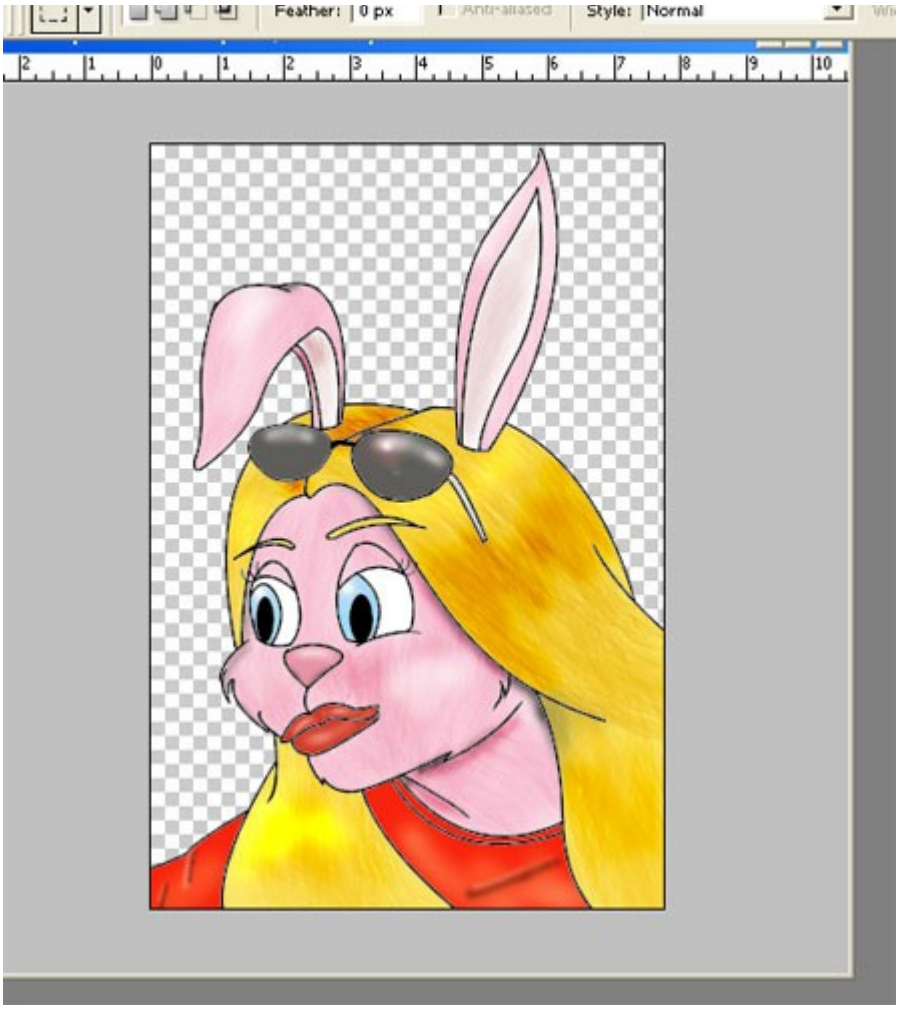
It looks done,doesn't it.....



As you can see, there are some spots on the lip that seem to have missed being selected when choosing that region. This is another reason the "backdrop" layer comes in handy—you can color it some crazy color to see where the gaps are that show this color through. Since the line art will overlay the colored layers, it is possible to fix this by going into the "lip" layer, selecting the lip color with the eyedropper and then penciling in where the gaps appear. This kind of thing is very common and you find yourself in the tedious task of checking your drawing close up for gaps such as this.

## CONCLUSION:

This tutorial was designed to teach you the basics of digitally improving your sketch, producing layers for various regions of your drawing, and producing flat colored images.




This is my final product.  I think that everyone has the potential to take my tutorial and make their art stand out using their own unique style in textures and shading.

Tips:

1. Remember where the light is to guide you on how to create shading and light
2. The dodge and burn tools are your friend...
...and most of all
3. Don't be afraid to try something new, there is always Ctrl+Z (Undo) if you feel it doesn't look right.

HAPPY CREATING!