

ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR

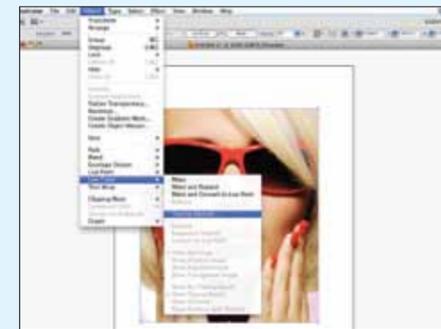
Pop Art Style Illustrations Using Live Paint

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The Live Trace and Live Paint tools in Adobe Illustrator open up a lot of possibilities for graphic manipulation and coloring. From hand done sketches to photos, graphics can be turned into vector items and then manipulated, colored and stylized for whatever need the designer/illustrator may have.

This technique shows an easy method for converting a photo to vector and giving it a posterized, pop-art style. Live Trace and Live Paint are the core tools to accomplish this.

01_ Place the photo you want to “pop art-ify” into Illustrator as an embedded graphic. It’s actually optimal (depending on it not being too small!) to use a lower resolution image, such as a 72DPI photo. Images that are high resolution tend to hold onto too much detail. You want something that Live Trace can give a chunky, posterized appearance to. Once the image has been placed, (with it selected) go to Object>Live Trace>Tracing Options.

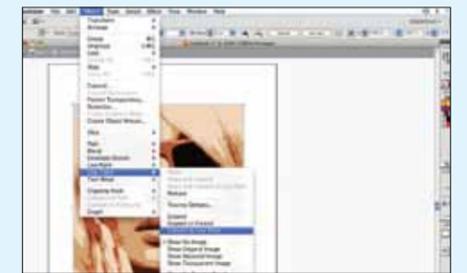


02_ Since as designers we are visual people, I am a huge fan of “preview.” Check this box in the Tracing Options window and move the whole window to one side so you can see how your changes effect the actual image. Remember, one of the great things about Live Trace is that it’s LIVE. Until it’s expanded or converted, you can always select the image and go back into Tracing Options and change things. If you want a black and white high contrast effect, you can choose Black and White for the mode. But for our purposes, we want to select color. I usually use between 5 to 7 colors. More and you make it look less posterized. I usually leave the rest of the settings on the defaults, but again, with preview checked, feel free to explore the options. You might come up with something really unique!



03_ Once you are happy with the look, hit Trace, then with the image still selected, go to Object>Live Trace>Convert to Live Paint. This will turn the image into a Live Paint object, now you are ready to play with color!

04_ There are many excellent premade color palettes in Illustrator. Go to Window>Swatch Libraries to access them. Since I am going for a loud, pop art feel, I chose the “Brights” swatches for this. Select your live paint tool from the tool bar and you’re ready to colorize.



05_ One note, if, while doing your live painting, you have it coloring in areas you don’t want, you might go under Object>Live Paint>Gap Options... and adjust your gap settings.



06_ Use the Live Paint tool to color the various areas quickly and efficiently. You can move between the colors using your arrow keys from your keyboard, which will navigate you through the colors without having to keep going back and clicking on them in the swatch palette. You will see a tiny preview of the color you are using, and the two on either side of it, floating above your cursor.



07_ When you are all finished painting, if you want or need to, you can expand the Live Paint object by choosing Object>Live Paint>Expand. This will turn the Live Paint graphic into a regular, grouped set of vector shapes. Now you can finish your design to create whatever final piece you wish.

