

GIMP Comics Picture Tutorial

Requirements: GIMP 2.10, G'micQT 2.74+

Note. Menu entries and keyboard shortcuts are written in **RED** for convenience.

Step 1.

Open your image. I'm hoping for a smirky female face, because nothing beats evil babe villains right? Alright, the image for this tutorial should be around 1200x900 or something like that. It's not carved in stone or that strict, but some filters we are going to use are size-dependent and yield different results if you're using same figures with different sized images.

Duplicate the original layer, (**Ctrl + Shift + D**).

The first filter though, is automatic and not necessary. It wasn't applied on this example, but this has become a habit for me as of lately.

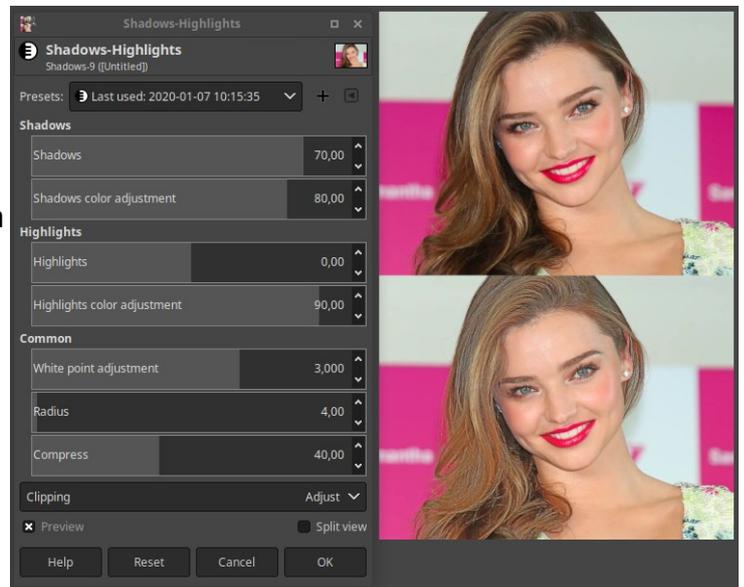
Colors/Auto/White Balance. If you don't see any change in the picture, it had a perfect white balance.

Step 2.

Colors/Shadows-Highlights... using the following settings.

The idea is to get rid of large dark areas in the image and bring more details into view.

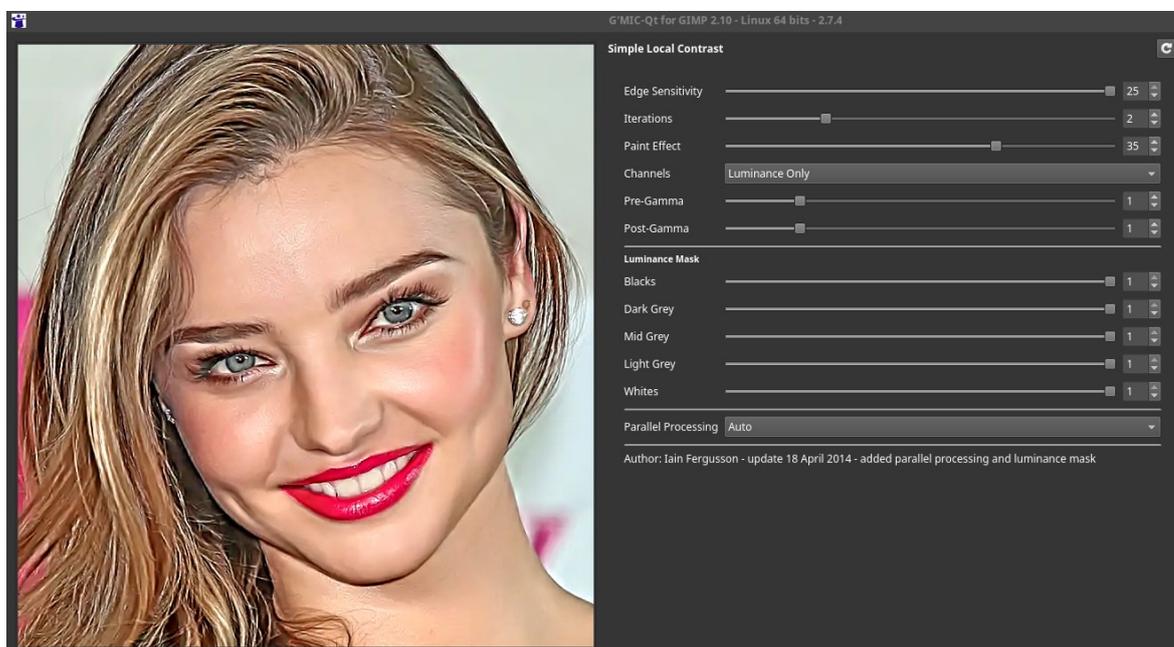
Duplicate layer for next step (**Ctrl + Shift + D**).



Step 3.

G'mic filter to boost the detail even further. **Filters/G'mic QT/Details/Simple Local Contrast**.

I find the following settings pretty good. Edge Sensitivity 25, Iterations 2, Paint Effect 35 – 50.

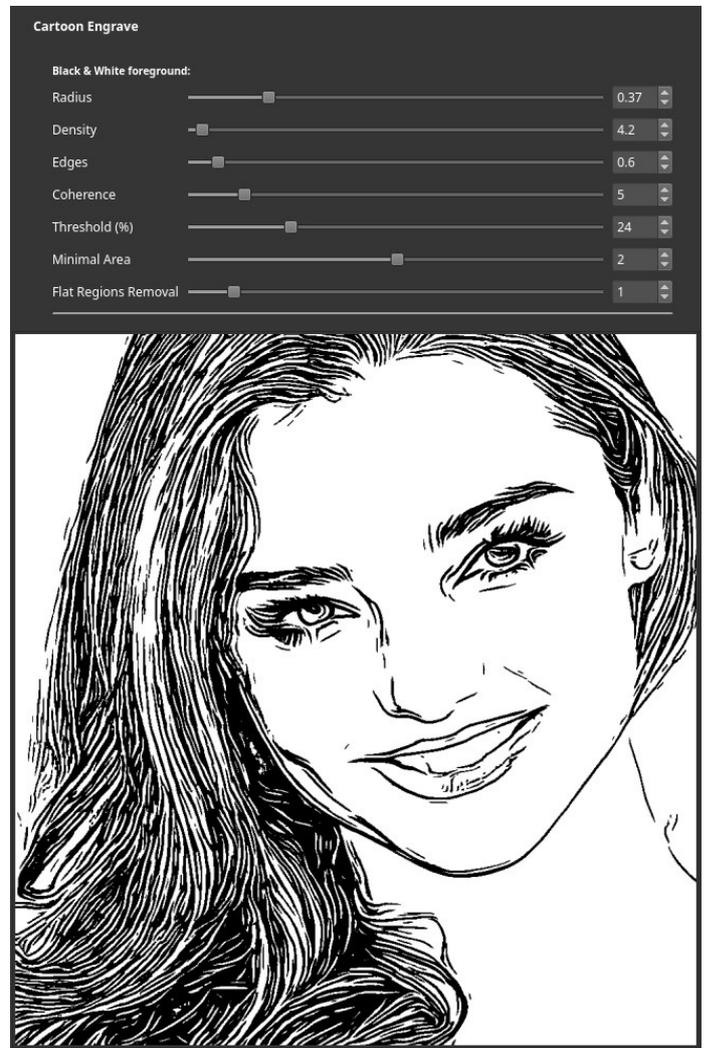
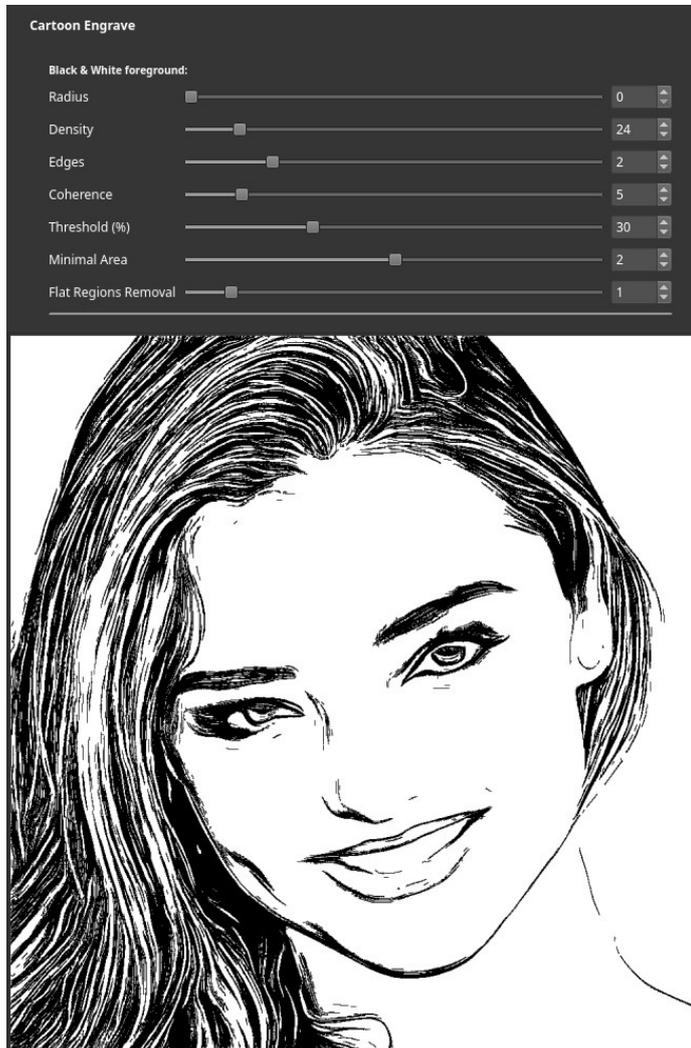


Duplicate the layer, if you want to do multiple tests with the Engrave filter.

Step 4.

This, and I must add it is awesome filter because of the variety, does the line art for our image. If you didn't happen to close G'mic with OK in the previous step, but used APPLY you can go straight inside G'mic to: Black & White/Engrave. Otherwise launch G'mic again from the menu.

It all depends what kind of line art you wish to have. I've already saved multiple presets for myself, so these are directional settings and you will want to make your own changes. The first one, in my opinion looks a bit like some standard comics style, drawn with thin markers. I remember seeing lot similarly drawn comics in the 1980s. But, it will look nice only after adding colors, and maybe newsprint if you like that effect. I'm not gonna go high with Radius. If you do, without lowering density you'll end up with a draft-like image on low radius and a stencil image with high radius. I'm also lowering Edges, take a look what happened to the eye lashes. Also bit lower Threshold, not changing Coherence in this exploration, it has huge effects in the artistic style of the outcome.



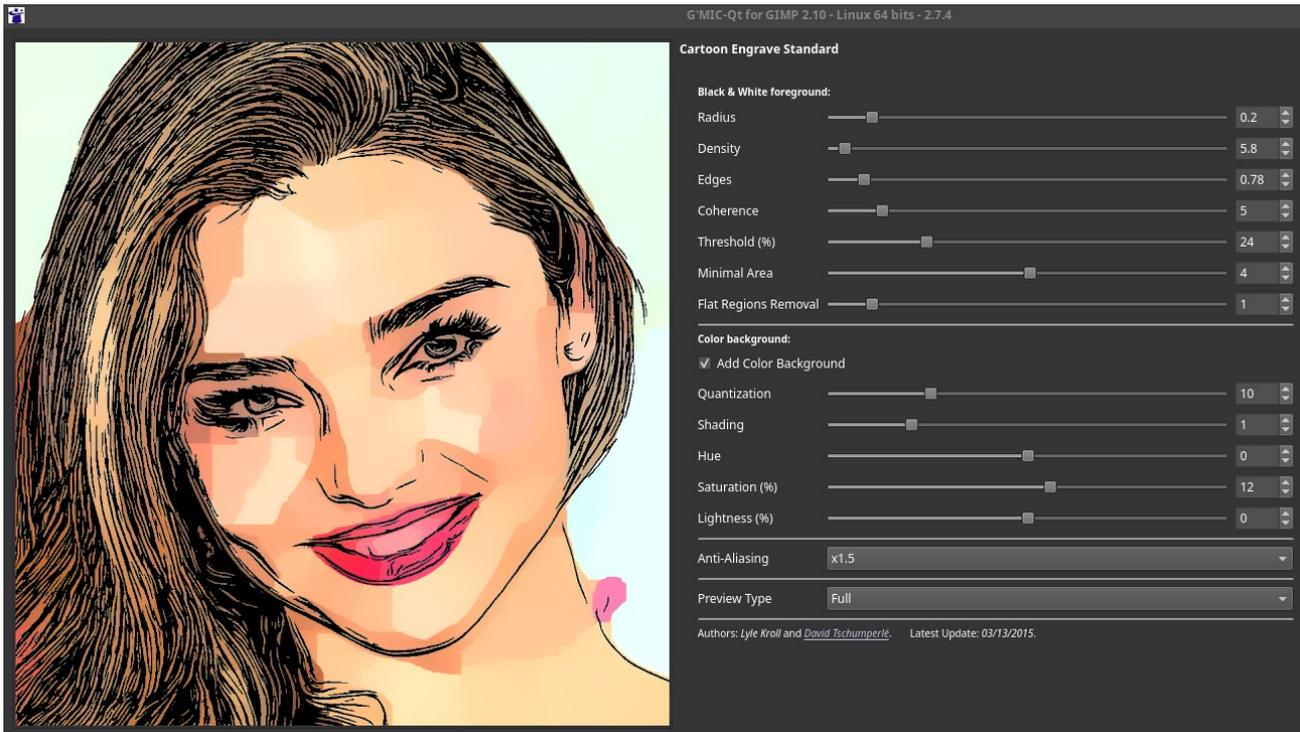
That's it. You can see that Minimal Area and Flat Regions Removal were also kept low. Flat Regions Removal can be useful if you want to...remove flat regions! But I noticed that it cuts some of the lines I don't want it to touch. That's one of the reasons for the Shadows-Highlights trick in the beginning. A matter of stylistic taste, and like said earlier you can tweak these settings for all eternity if you have plateful of mega-sandwiches and 5 liters of...water on your Gimp altar.

For this style I'd also keep Minimal Area down at 2-6. If you raise it from 2 up to 4 or 5, you can get rid of the smallest ink plots in the face and hair.

I'm using the second image for the rest of the tutorial, the coloring. This won't be such long process if you'll be somewhat satisfied for what you get. You can get quite far in my opinion without having to brush for an hour. This is the first method, it's bit simpler than starting from scratch with the b/w lineart, and picking colors from image. That wouldn't be such time-consuming either, if you decided to color hair with one color, face with one color etc.

Step 5.

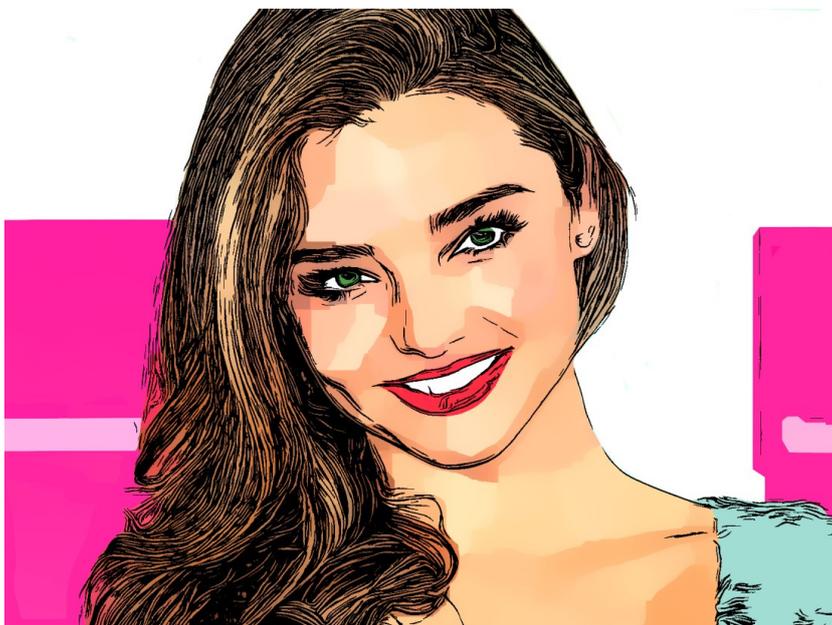
GOTO Step 4. And this time, use the "Add color Background". Voilà! You have lineart and colors on separate layers. The lineart layer will be in Darken Only blend mode. I changed the mode to Multiply, you can also use **Colors/Color to Alpha** to get rid of the white. The hair looks quite alright if you want to keep the shading, and you maybe want to, because it gives that certain comic image feeling. So it shall be, but we have to fix the face...I feel really sorry for saying that in this case, some of the surroundings and add colors.



You can do this in two ways. On new empty layer, or duplicate the background layer you got and do your work there. I recommend the latter anyway, because you might want to smudge some areas. You could in fact, go and smudge a lot over the face to make it fit with the hair, if you're a wizard with the smudge tool. And fix edge areas. I just don't like that approach with the skin. I will use it carefully on the hair though.

Easy things: brush white over teeth, eye-balls, and squeeze that pink pimple off her neck.

Then color the background, pick the color it is or use white or use a color that you think fits with rest of the image. Do the pink boxes and the dress piece on the shoulder. I'm just picking colors on-the-fly for this tut, if you create a palette from the image you'll finish it in half the time I do and the colors will be constant.

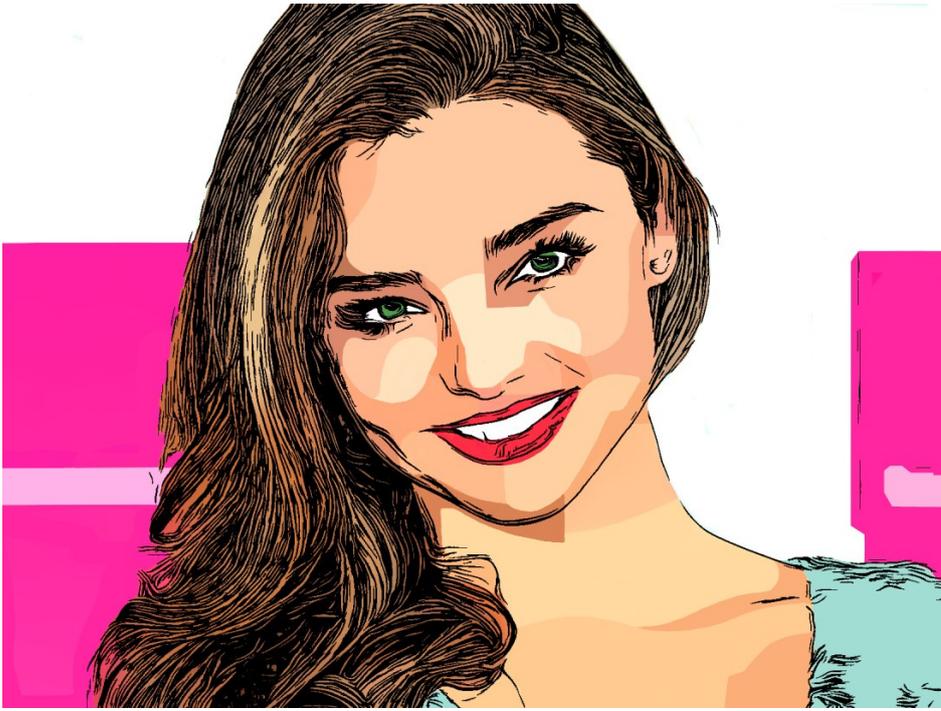


My advice with brushing is, release your inner artist and if you come up with unique ideas, just go for it. There are no rules in the universe where you are the creator.

So here is the image after edits mentioned above. Boxes were done using lasso selection. Picked green from the lower part of dress.

With only the skin left. I look at the image, the shades and try to think it like it was made of boxes or something like that. In some places, where it's hard to distinct the colors I'll just use either one and drop off the other color. So that it still would have, at least some depth. Remember, you can use single color.

Final versions. This got out of hand....simple version is below.



Add a newsprint of canvas, what ever you want. There's also extra version in the .xcf file. Just shows that you can do so much with the Engrave filter.

