

FANTASY ART IMAGE TUTORIAL

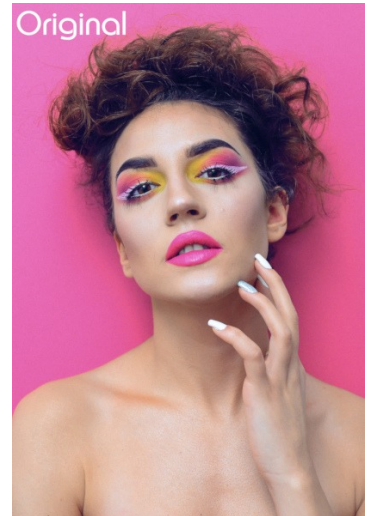
Requirements : Gimp 2.10, G'mic 2.74+. (Menu entries, key combos & specials are written in **red**)

I recommend humans, pets or aliens as the subject for this workflow: portraits, model poses etc. should turn out nice likes of the example. If you get a pleasing result with a landscape image, congratulations. I didn't like how my nature and architecture plays turned out, but the idea was indeed to achieve fantasy art painting, or pin up image look.

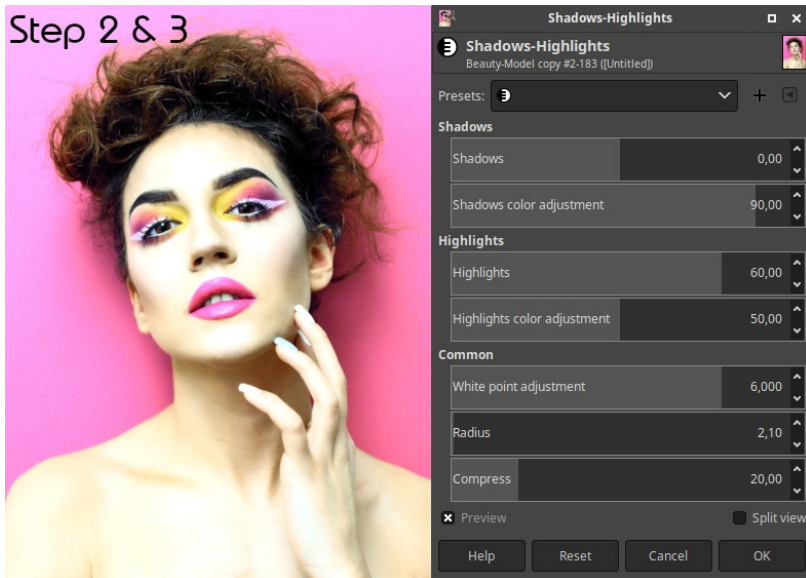
The beginning preparations, steps from 1 to 3 are not always necessary. Sometimes...but I can't definitely say when, you can start out from step 4. Images that have smooth and high contrast gradients tend to expose annoying wavy steps, and if the image has even slightest jpg compression artifacts, there will be square patterns everywhere because of the graphics boost filter. I noticed that so called soap opera glow shots, work often out of the box well. That's the reason for 3rd step. But let me cut the preface yap for now and begin, you can always test both ways to see the difference.

I am using this beauty model from pexels as an example, scaled down to 1200px height. Open your test run image.

Step 1. Duplicate the layer (**Ctrl+Shift+D**). We are going to need one copy of the original for the last step of the tutorial. Everything else can be done consecutively on the copy layer.



Step 2 & 3



Step 2. Apply **Colors: Auto> White Balance**.

Step 3. **Colors: Shadows-Highlights...** using the settings from the screenshot on left.

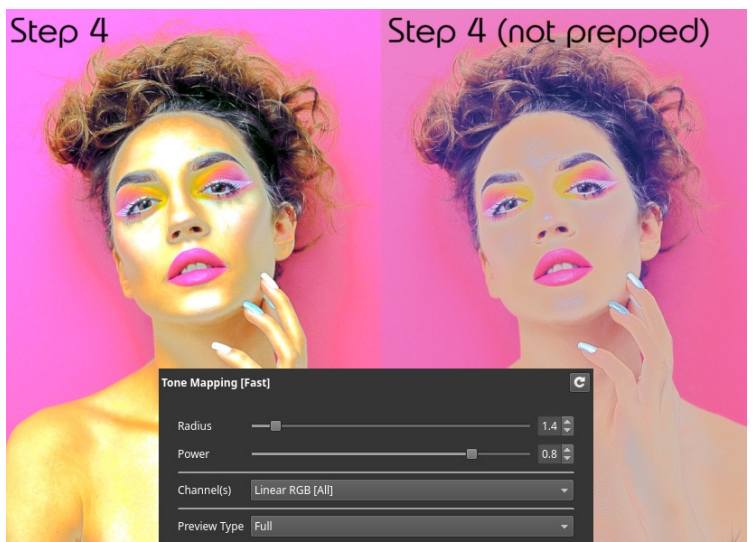
The intention is that slight dream-like glow. You'll see the effect better when playing in Gimp. I tried also **Colors: Exposure** but it just doesn't make the cut for the fine tuning you can have with **Shadows-Highlights...**

Step 4. **Filters: G'mic-Qt... Details> Tone Mapping [fast]**

Take a look at the result. I added a version without the preparing steps for comparison. It's quite obvious the end result would be flat and dull looking if we decided to continue with the unprepared version. I can say before the graphic boost step, which comes next that this will look okay.

Radius: 1.4, Power: 0.8, Channel(s): Linear RGB [All]. Sometimes, rarely **Channel(s): HSL [Lightness]** is a better choice, but my source image was colorful so I'll stick with Linear RGB. **If the model has darker skin color, Channel(s) Lab [Lightness]** is best choice. But keep in mind, the results of this workflow can be sometimes unexpected. Which, we think is only a good thing.

Step 4

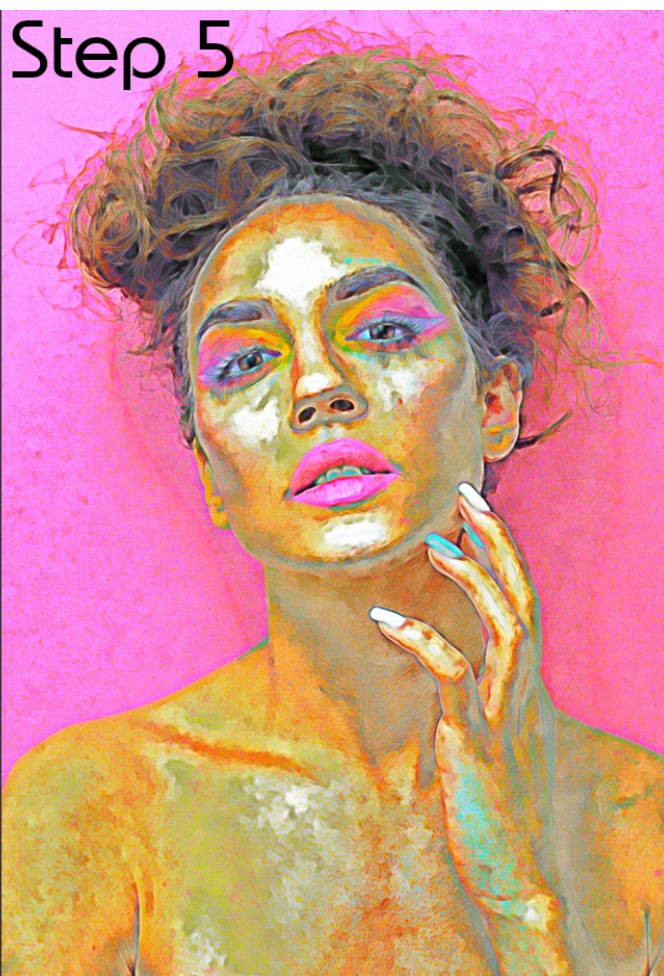
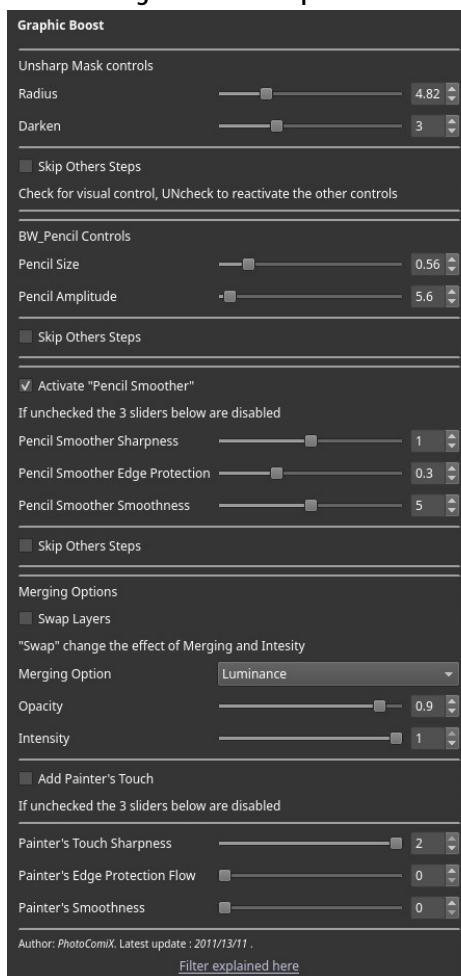


Let's leap to the most significant step of this tutorial...

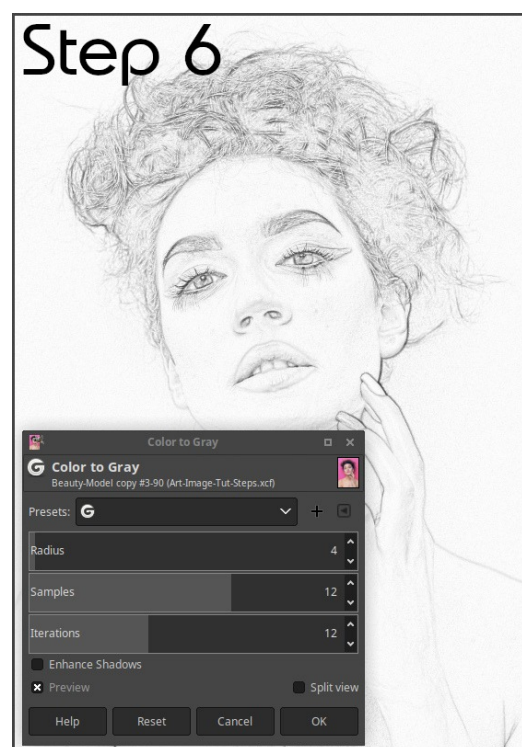
Step 5. **G'mic-Qt...Artistic> Graphic Boost**.

You could play forever with graphic boost, the merging options alone get my head spinning.

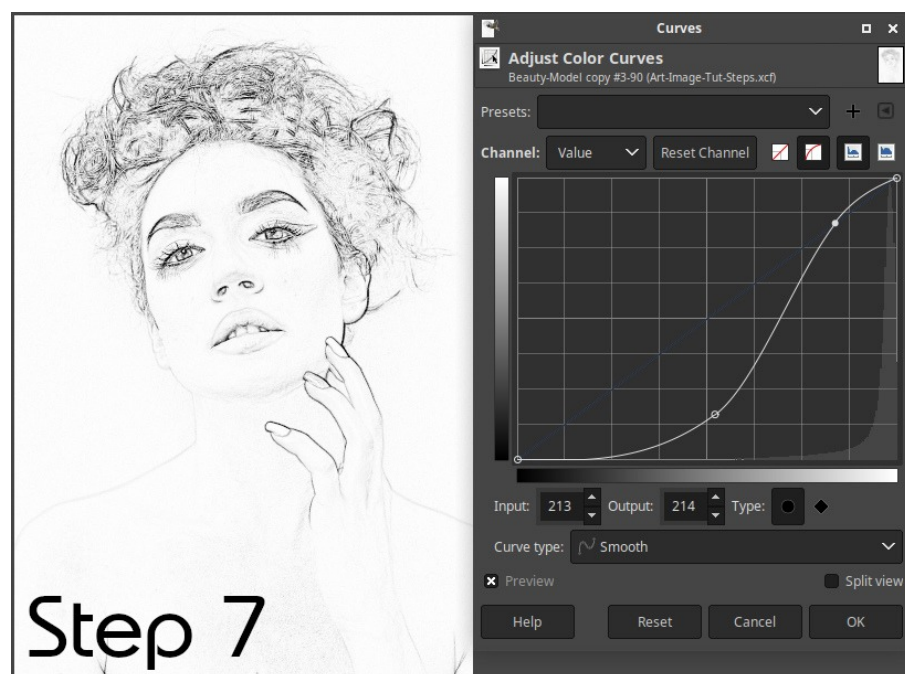
Here are the settings to be used and the result. This looks passable, the colors have that scruffy look, and I managed to ruin her dazzling disco makeup.



Step 6.
I lied, there are 2 steps left, but this is easy. You still have the original on the bottom of layer stack? Good, raise it on the top.
Colors: Desaturate> Color to Gray... Radius: 4, Samples: 12, Iterations: 12.



Step 7. Colors: Curves... Create a smooth contrast curve. Don't go too far or it will turn into b/w threshold. The purpose is to return some edge detail, depth and contrast to the image.



My choice for the blending mode of this adjustment layer is Linear Burn, Opacity 60,0.
You can try any of these darken modes to find what you like or what fits the image you're playing with:
Multiply, Burn, Linear Burn.

