Color sketch tutorial using Gimp 2.10 & G'mic 2.90

(actions in tutorial are written in red, when remembered)

Welcome. This tutorial will take you through few easy steps in Gimp & G'mic. The aim is to create a rough color sketch from a photo. Original is once again from pexels.com. I've deliberately chosen a hard photo with a flat background to show the pitfalls of the process. It was cropped to include only the model, and resized to 1080px height.

Step 1. Duplicate layer (Ctrl+Shft+D). Filters→Noise→CIE Ich Noise.
Dulling 7, Lightness 8, Chroma 10, Hue 3. These figures work most of the time, you just need a light visible noise effect. If you don't see noise, raise the lightness to 10-12.
If you're working with a grainy or noisy source, you can skip this step. Click OK.
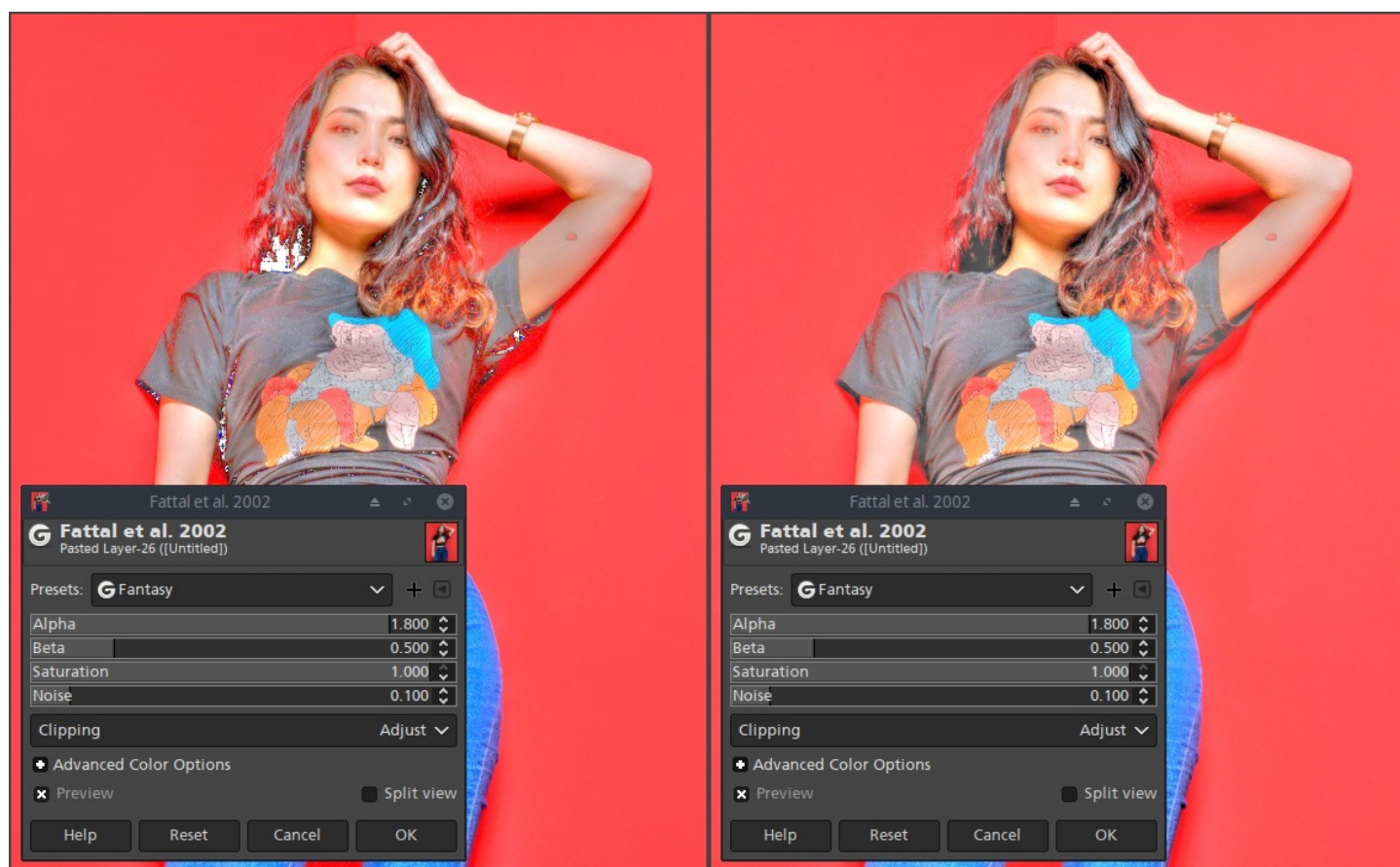
Step 2. Colors→Exposure. Black Level -0.001. Click OK. (explained in step 3)

Step 3. Colors→Tone Mapping→Fattal et al 2002.
This image shows why I removed 100% black pixels in previous step. On left without step 2. The filter converts black pixels to white. Step 2 is a fix, but sometimes you get completely white image having red vertical stripes no matter what you do. I've had to duplicate the image sometimes to get it working.
My "Fattal Fantasy" settings are: Alpha 1.8, Beta 0.5, Saturation 1.0, Noise 0.1 (0.03-0.25 is mostly good). You can play to see how it affects the image.

Step 4. Filters→G'mic→Artistic/Graphic Boost. Now we'll see what the noise step did. You get that swirly smudgy background. All the settings are readable in fullscreen view, but I list them anyway for convenience. None of the steps are skipped.

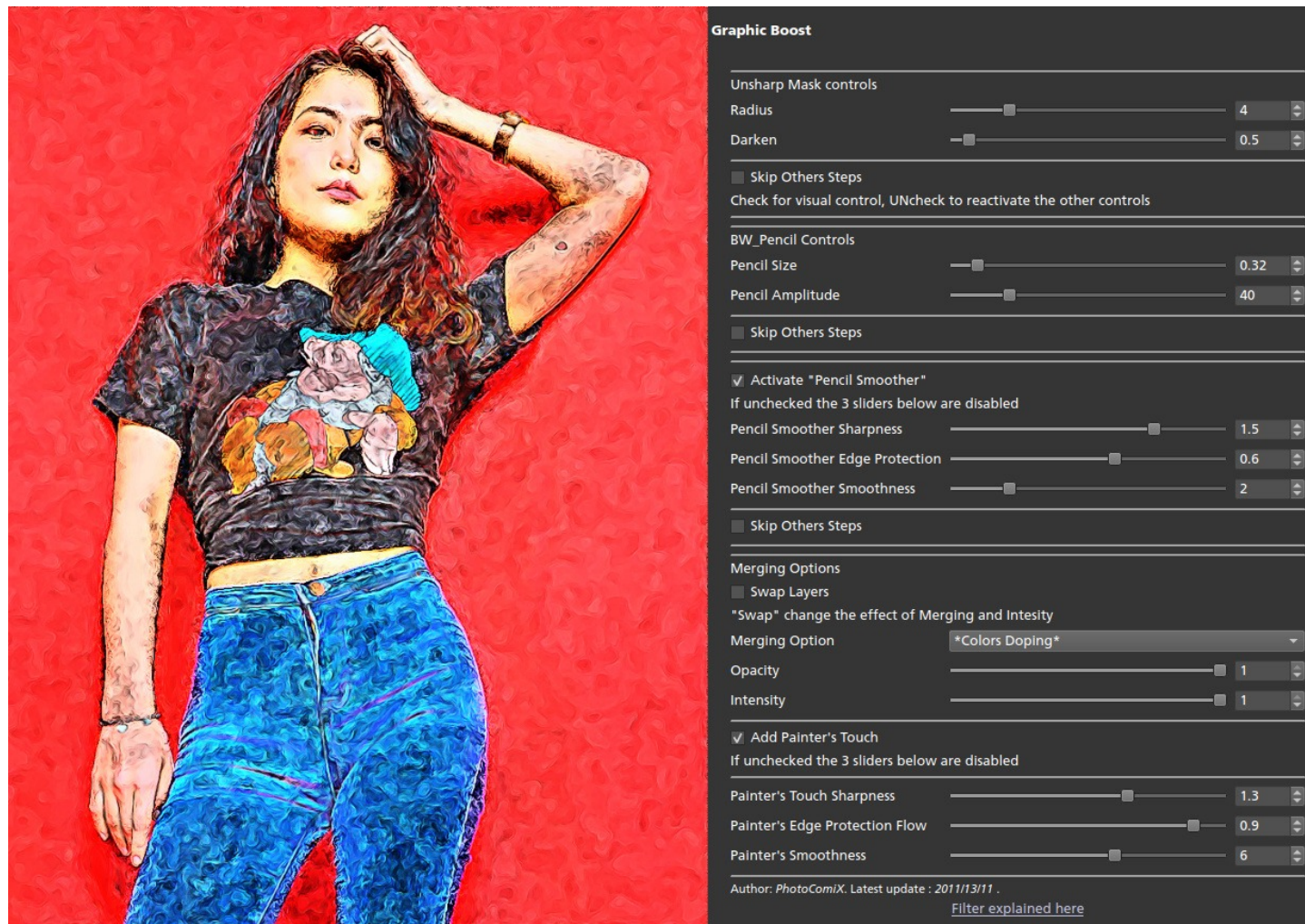Unsharp Mask Controls: Radius 4, Darken 0.5
BW Pencil controls: Pencil size 0.32, Pencil Amplitude 40.
Activate Pencil Smoother: Yes
Smoother Sharpness 1.5, Edge Protection 0.6, Smoother Smoothness 2.
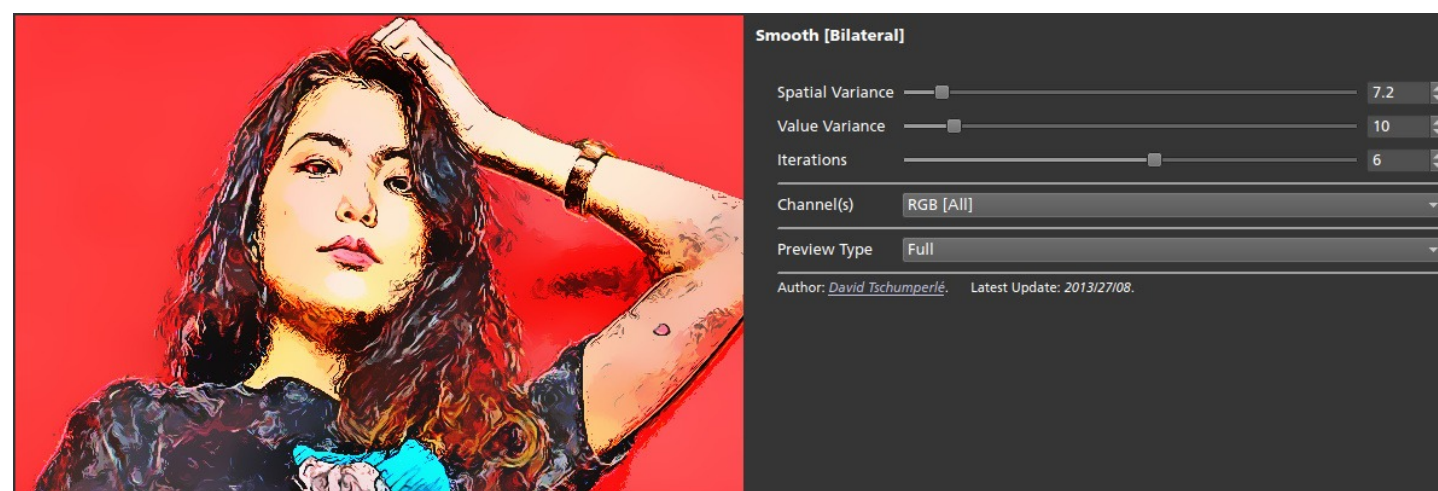Merging Options: Swap Layers: No, *Colors Doping*, Opacity 1, Intensity 1.
Touch Sharpness 1.3, Edge Protection Flow 0.9, Smoothness 6.

Step 5. Duplicate (Ctrl+Shft+D) this layer 2 times. Return to the first copy layer.
G'mic→Repair/Smooth [Bilateral]. This step smears and simplifies the color structure.
Spatial Variance 7.2, Value variance 10, Iterations 6, Channel(s) RGB [All].

Linear RGB [All] can also be used. That'll create a slightly different version. Paler and flatter, but RGB [All] suits better for this, I don't like some spots in the BG.

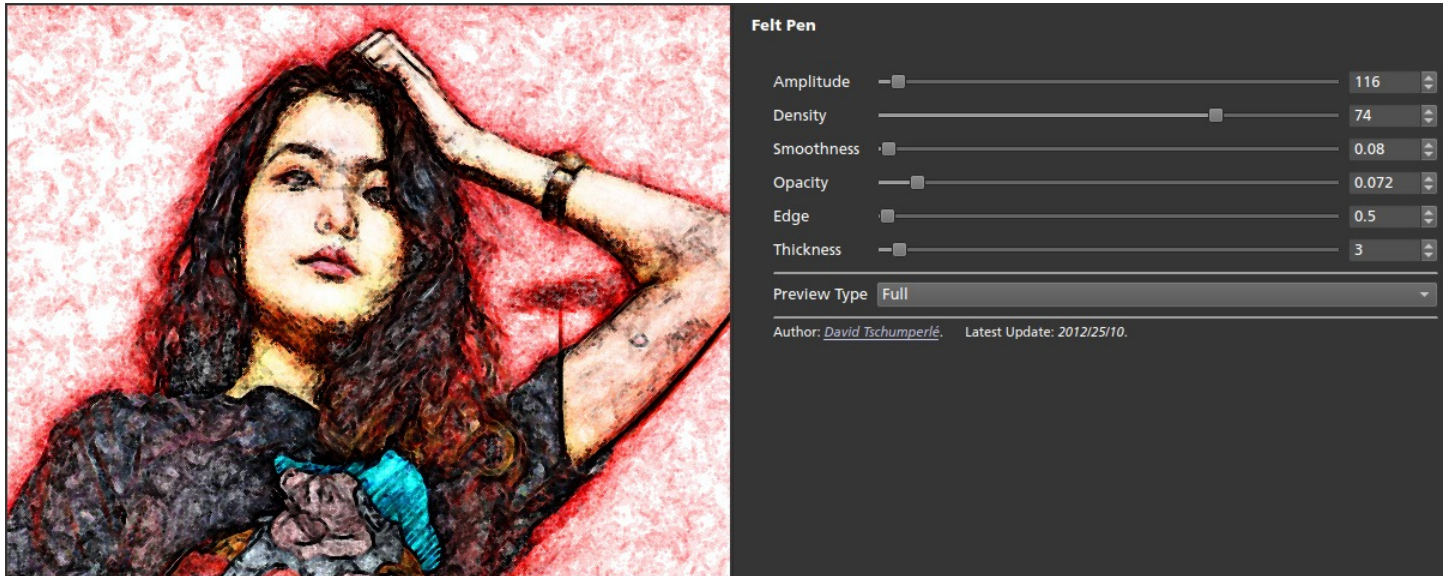Step 6. Go to the top layer, second copy of the Graphic Boost layer.
G'mic→Artistic/Felt Pen.
I've created few custom presets, this set works well on various images:
Amplitude 116, Density 74, Smoothness 0.08, Opacity 0.100, Edge 0.5, Thickness 3.
I am changing usually opacity depending on image. Around 0.07 looks good in this.
Sometimes I also increase edge. Change layer mode to Darken Only.

That's about it. I'm satisfied and won't apply engrave filter to this workflow ;)

The background was particularly hard in this image and was left without the sketch effect. I don't want to change the original workflow for this tutorial because these settings work most of the time using images that have diverse backgrounds.

Thus, I am adding an alternate method. The process is quicker, and the result will be dramatically different. This method creates a fancy background, but it's more unpredictable. If you see colors flying all around after the first step the outcome should turn out nice.

In the alternate version, you skip the preprocessing steps 1 & 2. Duplicate original (Ctrl+Shft+D) and use Colors→Tone Mapping→Stress. Radius: 160, Samples: 12, Iterations: 5-16 (left img). Lower iteration equals more noise. Was there yellow in the original background? Didn't see but now there is :D.

Duplicate layer (Ctrl+Shft+D). The Graphics Boost (step 4) is identical, but in the merging options replace Colors Doping with Graphix or Comix Colors. (used in right img)

Follow the steps 5 & 6 from the original.
If you want grungier look than mine, change the figures in step 5 to: Spatial Variance 4, Value Variance 8-10, Iterations 3-4 and Channel(s): Linear RGB [All].
In step 6, pay attention to the opacity again. It needs a higher value for this lighter image. Trying to save paper….

There's so much more but I can't add all ideas in this tutorial. If you caught something sketchy or got confused post in the Gimp Art topic or drop a PM ;)
And your own outcome(s) of course.
Happy gimping, hope you had fun for a second.