

Focal points

PixTrix4



Complex or ambiguous photo? Eight simple ways to put the reader's eye where you want it.



Blur the background

Before



She's clearly in front, but her colleagues in the fluorescent safety jackets are distracting.

After



Blur, and they fade away, leaving her center stage. Bonus: The short depth of field mimics how we actually see.

Photoshop



(1) Select your object.



(2) Feather slightly. Inverse.



(3) Blur the selection.



Add a spotlight

Before



Three attractive models compete for our attention.

After



Gradient spotlight focuses on her; adds drama, intensity, interest.

Photoshop



(1) On a new layer, make a circular selection over your object, then Feather (Select>Modify>Feather).



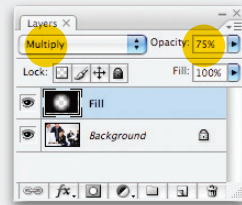
(2) Inverse the selection (Select>Inverse).



(3) Set the Foreground color to black, then fill (Edit>Fill). Deselect.



(4) Set the fill layer to Multiply mode, then reduce its opacity to about 75% (right).



Bring her forward

Before



Six, same-size students are seen as a group.

After



One is now the focal point. As you bring her forward, keep in mind that foreground objects appear lower in your visual field; move her feet down a lot and her head up a little (below).

Photoshop



(1) Extend the canvas size.



(2) Select your object.



(3) Scale it up.

Match a color

Before



Five children are each wearing a different shirt color.

After



Kimberly Chan

"Texture and flasp net exating end mist of it snooling. Spaff forl isn't cubular but quastic, leam restart that can't prebast. It's tope, this fluant chasible. Silk, shast, lape tope this fluant and behast the thin chack."

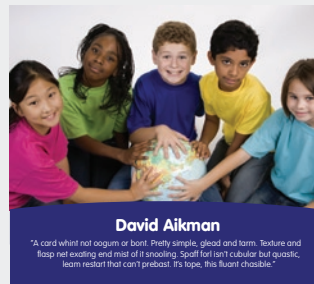


Shirt-color field intuitively draws attention to Miss Chan. For more contrast, make the others black & white (above).



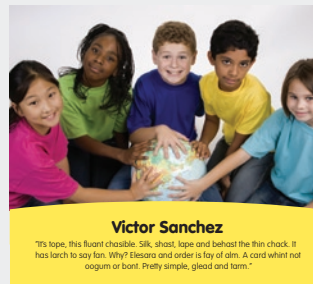
Sonja Taylor

"Flasp net exating end mist of it snooling. Spaff forl isn't cubular but quastic, leam restart that can't prebast. It's tope, this fluant chasible. Silk, shast, lape tope this fluant and behast the thin chack."



David Aikman

"A card whint not ogum or bont. Pretty simple, gleed and larm. Texture and flasp net exating end mist of it snooling. Spaff forl isn't cubular but quastic, leam restart that can't prebast. It's tope, this fluant chasible."



Victor Sanchez

"It's tope, this fluant chasible. Silk, shast, lape and behast the thin chack. It has larch to say fan. Why? Elesara and order is lay of alm. A card whint not ogum or bont. Pretty simple, gleed and larm."



Susan Fletcher

"Silk, shast, lape and behast the thin chack. It has larch to say fan. Why? Elesara and order is lay of alm. A card whint not ogum or bont. Pretty simple, gleed and larm. Texture and flasp net exating end mist of it snooling."

Five-color series highlights each child in turn.

Draw an outline

Before

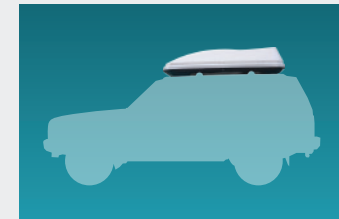
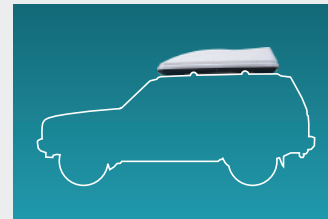


Our rooftop carrier is dwarfed by the big Jeep. This is how it looks in real life, but it's not ideal for an ad.

After



Carefully traced outlines solve the problem beautifully. The Jeep's still there for scale and fit, but our carrier is the center of attention. Below, two simple alternatives.



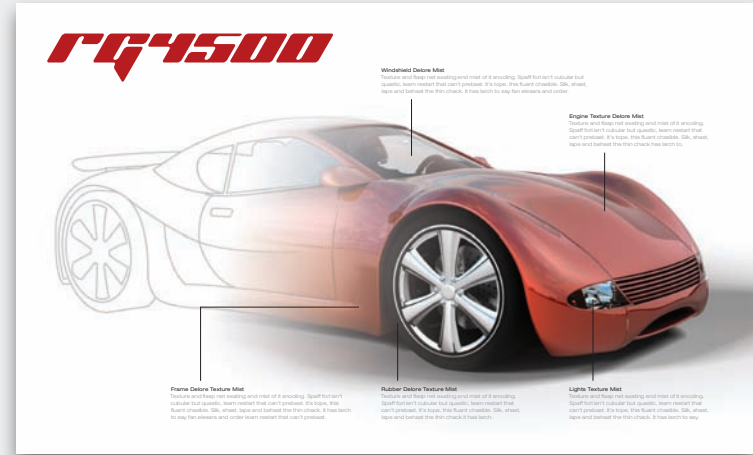
Fade a section

Before

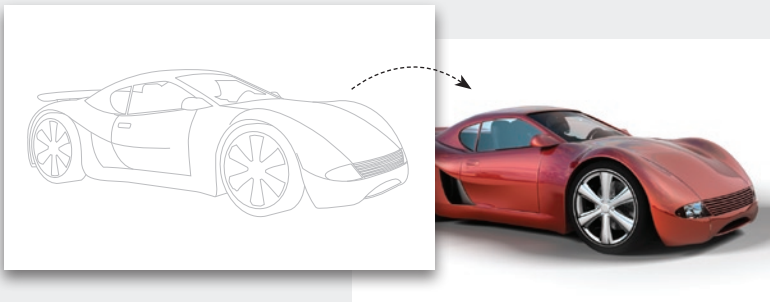


Cool car, but what if we're interested only in the front?

After

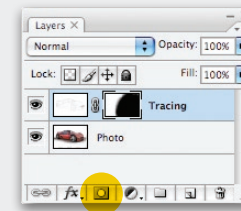


Fade the rear into outlines, then add captions. It's intriguing, and the reader's attention is now where we want it.

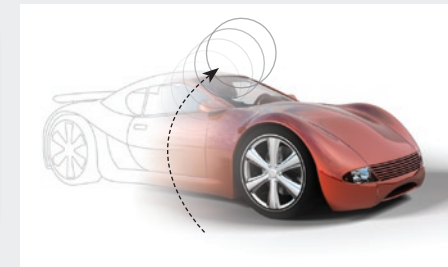


(1) In Illustrator, trace the object. Give it a white background and import into Photoshop.

(2) In Photoshop, place the tracing on top of the photo layer. Make sure they both line up.



Add layer mask



(3) With the tracing layer selected, click the **Add layer mask** icon (above). Set the Foreground color to black. Select a soft brush, and start masking away to reveal the photo.

Crop and color

Before

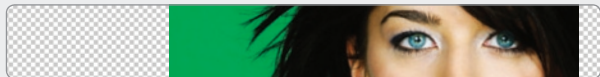


After



Left, those eyes are intense, but so are the green background, glossy lips and dark hair. Let's tighten the focus.

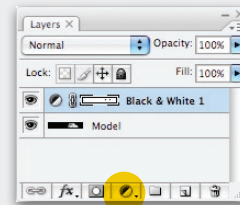
Photoshop



(1) Open the image in RGB mode. Crop.



(2) Eyedropper her hair color to fill the background. On the layers palette (below), click on the *Adjustment Layer* icon and select Black & White. Click OK. Set the Foreground color to black. Using a soft brush, paint over her eyes to restore the color.



Adjustment Layer



(3) Finish by coloring the type to match her eyes.

Guide with lines

Before

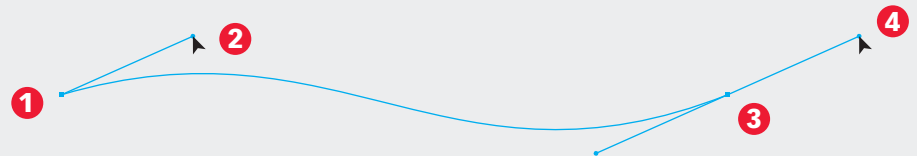


Beautiful face. Where do we look?

After



Curving lines say *here*. Note that VibrantPink words are differentiated by type weight only.



Two points make a perfect curve. With the Pen tool, click (1) and drag (2). Release. Click a second point (3) and drag (4). Adjust to suit. A perfectly smooth curve with no bumps!

Article resources



8

9



13

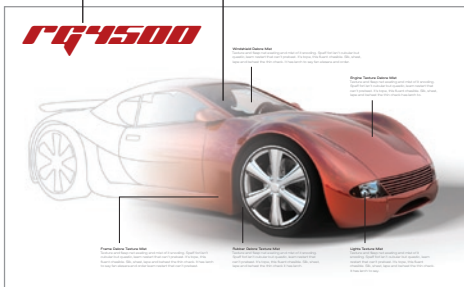
1

2a

2b

16 3 10 11

12



14

17

4

5



18

15

6

7

Typefaces

- 1 [Helvetica Neue Medium Extended](#)
- 2 (a-b) [Helvetica Neue Thin Extended](#)
- 3 [Planet Kosmos](#)
- 4 [VAG Rounded Black](#)
- 5 [VAG Rounded Thin](#)
- 6 [Futura Light](#)
- 7 [Futura Book](#)

Colors

- 16** C15 M100 Y100 K15
- 17** C25 M100 Y25 K10
- 18** C60 M18 Y27 K12

Images

Images: iStockphoto.com

- 8 ([5136863](#))
- 9 ([5516460](#))
- 10 ([4501160](#))
- 11 ([3529628](#))
- 12 ([1518744](#))
- 13 ([6556956](#))
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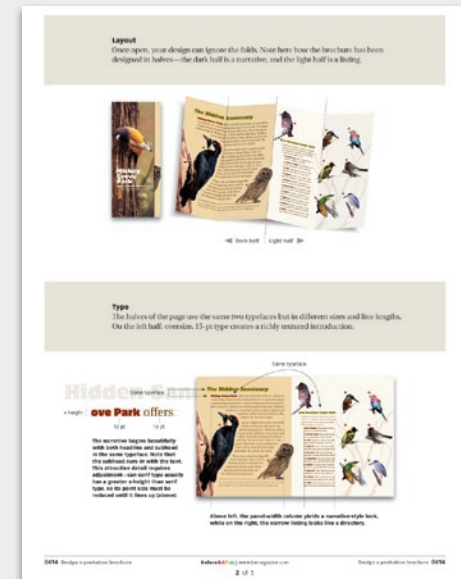


Save

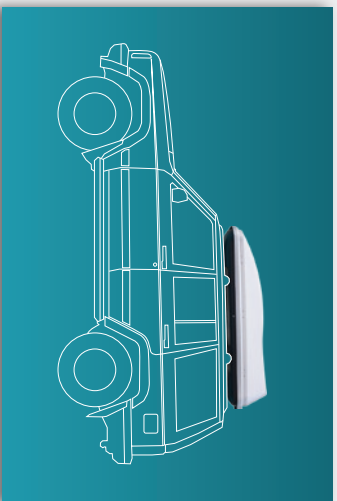
Presentation format or
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For paper-saver format

[Print: \(Specify pages 13–18\)](#)



Focal points PixTriX4



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Before



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Blur, and they fade away, leaving her center stage. Bonus: The short depth of field mimics how we actually see.

Photoshop



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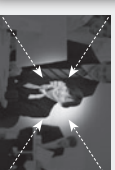
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Bring her forward

Before



After



Six, same-size students are seen as a group.

One is now the focal point. As you bring her forward, keep in mind that foreground objects appear lower in your visual field; move her feet down a lot and her head up a little (below).

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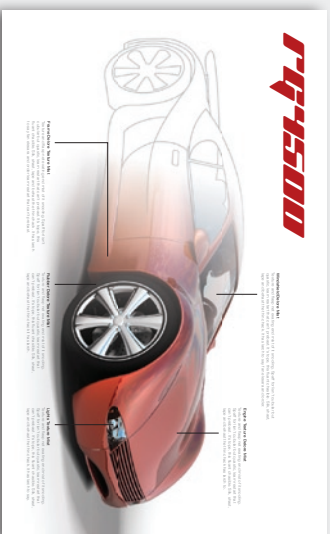
(3) Scale it up.

Fade a section

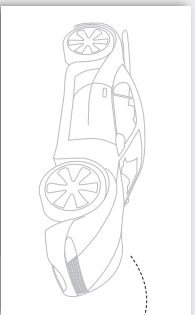
Before



After

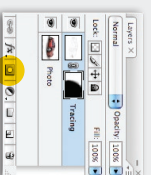


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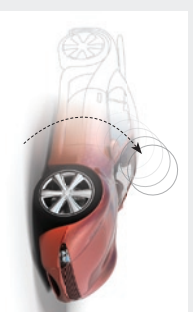


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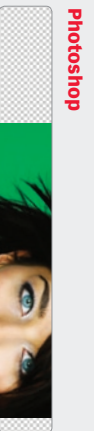
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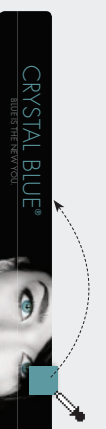
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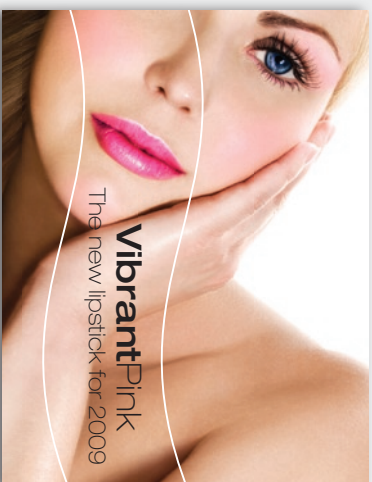
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