



Embracing the polygons

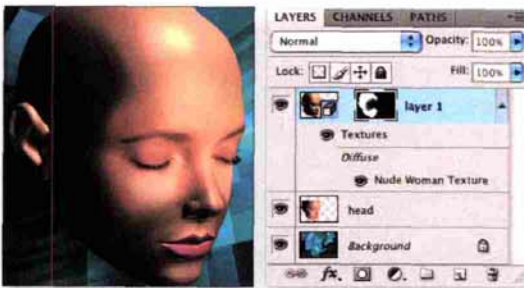
Now that 3D technology has been vastly improved in Photoshop CS4 Extended, it's time to bridge the gap between 2D and 3D in your imagery. Although there's potential to create wonderfully smooth renderings, we'll focus on the 3D planes that make up a model's geometry while creating a multidisciplinary composition.

Just because you're working with 3D elements doesn't mean they need to dominate your composition in terms of subject or style. You can achieve impressive results by combining diverse elements in a unified composition. Photography provides realism that 3D doesn't but 3D objects allow you to emphasize planar divisions and geometry. Adding curved vector elements into the design can contribute to a more organic feel. And introducing alpha channel-based textures will help to lend a tactile feeling to the image overall. Using these elements together with clear intent will result in a composition that greatly surpasses the sum of its parts. Let's begin by opening our first file from the downloadable project folder, working.psd, which contains a Background layer that was rendered in Cinema 4D and an OBJ file imported as a 3D object (Layer 1).

[NAPP members may download the files to follow along with this tutorial from www.photoshopuser.com/members/jun09-downloads.html. All files are for personal use only.]

STEP ONE: Open the download file entitled head.psd, select the Move tool (V), click-and-drag the head image into your working .psd file. Use the Move tool to reposition the head image on the canvas so that both heads line up, then move this new layer (Layer 2) beneath the 3D object in the Layers panel.

STEP TWO: Target the 3D object (Layer 1) in the Layers panel and use the Pen tool to carefully draw a closed path component that surrounds the head, excluding the neck. At the bottom of the Paths panel (Window>Paths), click on the Load Path As a Selection icon. Then in the Layers panel, click on the Add Layer Mask icon to mask the 3D object. Choose the Gradient tool (G) and in the Options Bar, click on the Radial Gradient icon, then from the Gradient Picker choose the Foreground (black) to Transparent gradient. Click on the mask thumbnail and drag a couple of gradients to hide the 3D eyes and forehead, revealing the photographed elements below.

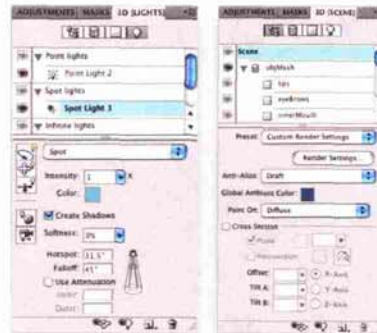


STEP THREE: Duplicate the 3D object by dragging it onto the Create A New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel (Layer 1 copy). With this layer active, open the 3D panel (Window>3D),

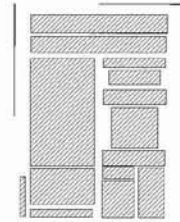
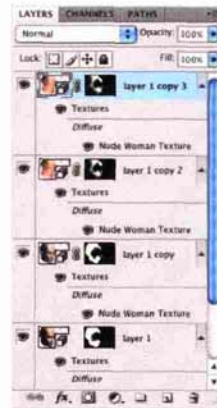
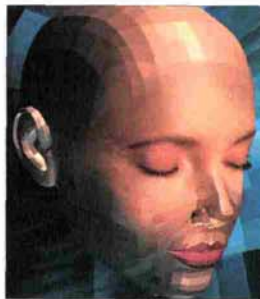
ensure the Filter By: Whole Scene icon at the top of the panel is active, and then click on the Render Settings button. Choose Flat from the Face Style menu to display the 3D planes, and click OK.



Next, click on the Filter By: Lights icon at the top of the 3D panel. Click on the Create a New Light icon at the bottom of the panel and choose New Spot Light. Click on the Color swatch, select a light blue, and click OK. Now click on the Filter By: Whole Scene icon and similarly change the Global Ambient Color to a darker blue.

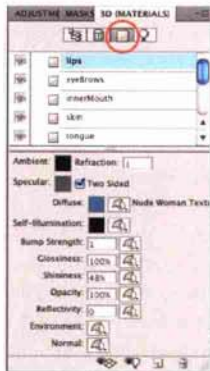
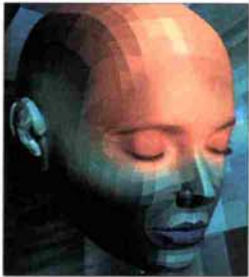


STEP FOUR: Duplicate the 3D object again (Layer 1 copy 2) and then use the same method to add another spotlight to the duplicate layer. This time, specify a flesh color for the light. Use the tools available on the left side of the Lights section of the 3D panel to position your new light to brighten the face. In the Scene section of the 3D panel, change the Global Ambient Color to black. Target this 3D object's mask and edit it further



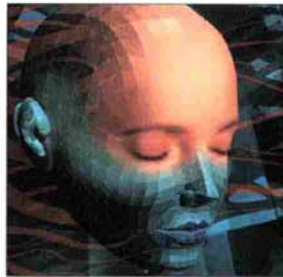
by adding white-to-transparent-radial gradients to reveal, or black-to-transparent gradients to hide more of the 3D object. Duplicate the layer to intensify the effect (Layer 1 copy 3).

STEP FIVE: Select the top layer (Layer 1 copy 3) and then click on the Filter By: Materials icon at the top of the 3D panel. Choose skin from the list and change the Diffuse color to cyan. Then choose her lips from the list and change the Diffuse color of the lips to a darker, less saturated cyan. Target the object's layer mask and edit it as you did before with the radial-gradient technique until you mask this blue effect from her eyes and forehead.



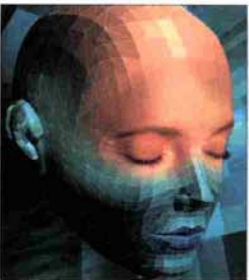
specify a dark blue color, and click OK. Change this layer's blend mode to Multiply, reduce the Opacity, and drag it down in the Layers panel so it sits above the Background.

Duplicate this layer, then double-click on the layer thumbnail to open the Color Picker, switch the color to flesh, and click OK. Now have some fun placing this layer and duplicates in various places in the layer hierarchy. Add and edit masks as necessary. Alter blend modes, opacity, and the actual size of the layer contents as you see fit.



STEP SIX: Duplicate this 3D object as well (Layer 1 copy 4). Click on the Render Settings button in the Filter By: Whole Scene portion of the 3D panel. Uncheck Face Style to disable it and then enable Edge Style by clicking the Enable Line Rendering checkbox. Set the Edge Style to Constant, the Color to light cyan, and the Line Width to 1. Enable Remove Backfaces and Remove Hidden Lines by clicking their checkboxes. Click OK.

Target this duplicate object's mask and edit it to reveal more of this 3D object using the same radial-gradient techniques. In the Layers panel, change the blend mode of the layer to Overlay and then duplicate it (Layer 1 copy 5).



STEP EIGHT: Open the sky.psd file, grab the Move tool, and drag the sky image into your file while holding down the Shift key. Drag it to the top of the layer stack in the Layers panel, change its blend mode to Overlay, and reduce the Opacity to 70%.

In the Channels panel (Window>Channels), click on the Alpha channel that's included and click on the Load Channel As Selection icon. In the Layers panel, with the selection active, click on the Create New Adjustment Layer icon and choose Solid Color. Specify a more saturated flesh color than the one you used previously and change this layer's blend mode to Overlay as well. This little bit of surface texture goes a long way when it comes to unifying the composition. ■



STEP SEVEN: Create a new blank layer (Layer 3) and use the Gradient tool (G) to create a couple of Radial, Foreground to Transparent gradients on her forehead using skin colors sampled from this area with the Eyedropper tool (I). This will better blend the photograph into the model.

In the Paths panel, click on Path 1 (it came embedded with the downloaded file). Then in Layers panel, click on the Create New Adjustment Layer and choose Solid Color. In the dialog,

Derek Lea just finished the second edition of his best-selling book, Creative Photoshop: Digital Illustration and Art Techniques, published by Focal Press. This CS4 iteration boasts a new section dedicated to combining Photoshop with real-world art, alongside a slew of other improvements and updates. Visit CreativePhotoshoptheBook.com for more info.