

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Rotoscoping with Photoshop

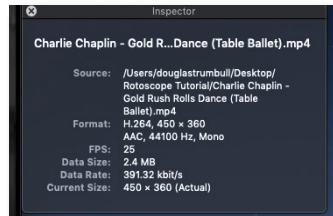


The process of Rotoscoping allows you to draw on or trace over video footage to create a hand-drawn animation

To begin, we want to identify the pixel size and shape of the video source we will be using to animate. If your final animation is to be of a pre-determined size (1920 x 1080, for example) you would want to create a new version of your video at that size, to properly fit.

If you are on a Mac, you can open the video file in quicktime and from the top menu menu choose Window>Show Movie Inspector.

A window will open, providing you with details about your video file. In this case, we see that the video file is 450 x 360 pixels.



We can choose to create a new version of this file for our animation, or go with this size. In our case, we will go with this size.

Next we will set up our Photoshop project.

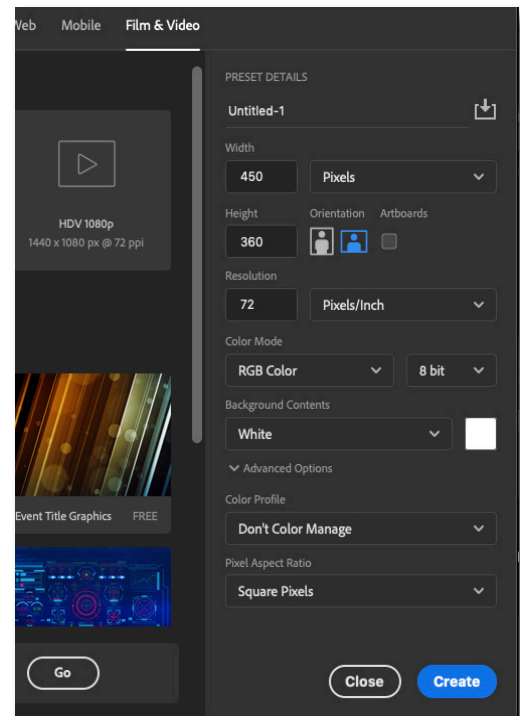
Open Photoshop, and choose to **Create a New Film & Video** project.



Under the preset details, enter the pixel Width and Height we are using. As we learned from our Movie Inspector, we want to create a project that is 450 pixels in Width and 360 pixels in Height.

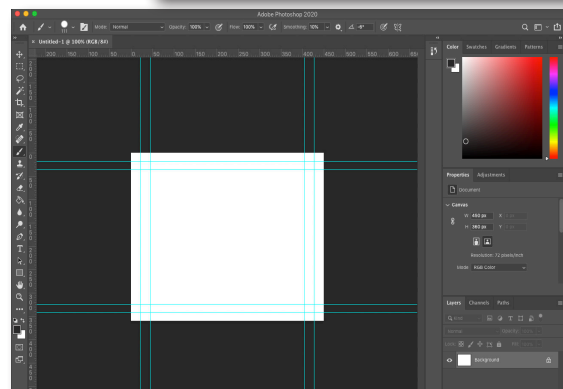
You can leave the rest of the settings as they are, unless you would prefer a different background color upon which to work (the default is white).

Click the **Create** button at the bottom.



Your Photoshop project workspace will open, ready to begin work.

This is a good time to **name** your project and **save** it someplace safe.



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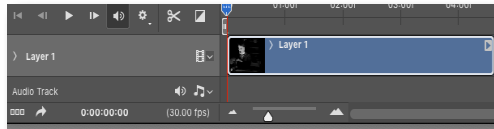
As we will be working with video, we want to be able to see and work with the video linearly. To do that, go to the top menu and choose **Window>Timeline**

A timeline will appear at the bottom of your Photoshop workspace- and this is where we will be able to work with our video layers frame by frame.

Next, we will bring in the video file we will be using as the reference for our rotoscoping.

From the top menu select **Layer>Video Layers>New Video Layer from File...** and navigate to the file you wish to rotoscope.

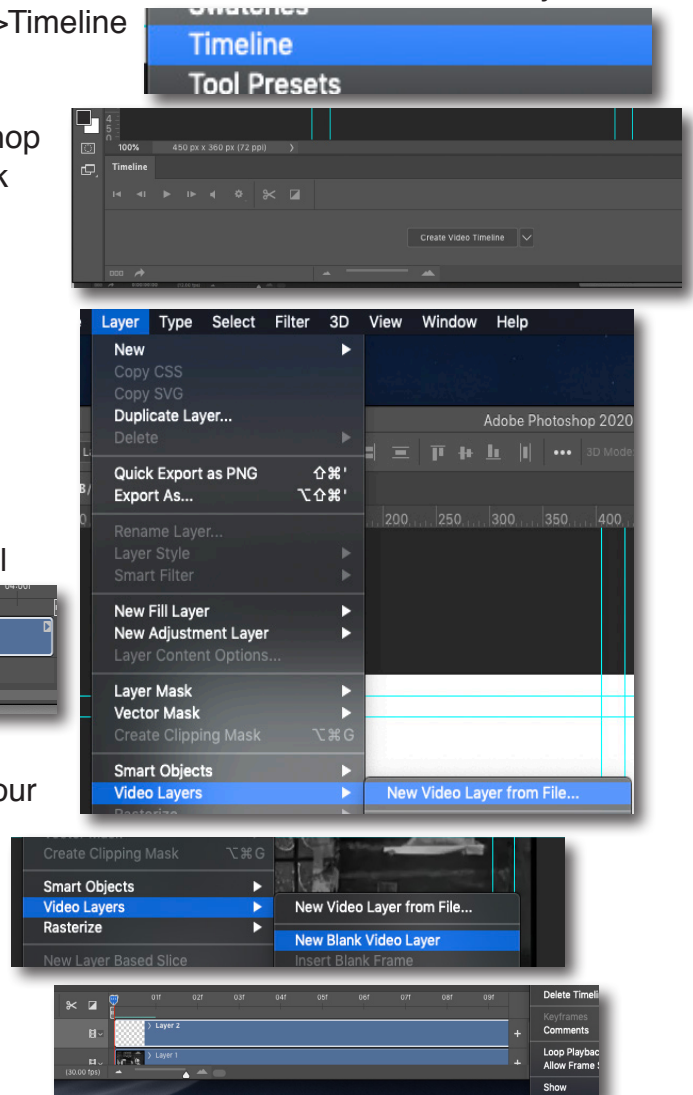
Your video will appear in your layers window, as well as in your timeline.



Next, we will create a new layer upon which to do your rotoscope work.

From the top menu select **Layer>Video Layers>New Blank Video Layer**

A new video later will appear in your Layers window and your timeline, above your previous video layer.



It is upon this new layer we create our hand-drawn rotoscope animation. Make sure it is this layer that is selected and active, for your work.

Now, to select the tool we will use to hand-draw our work. In the Tool Bar, clicking on the lower right-hand corner of the Brush Tool. Here you will find options (pencil, for example)- in our case, we will use the Brush Tool.

With your Brush Tool active, you can right-click (or from the top menu select **Window>Brushes**) to dial in the size and hardness of your brush.



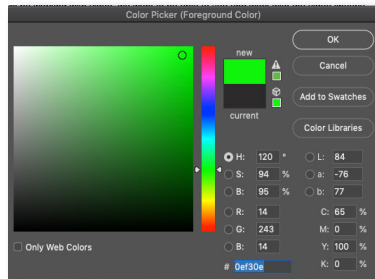
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To select a brush paint color, click on the Foreground Color swatch (at the bottom of your tool pane)



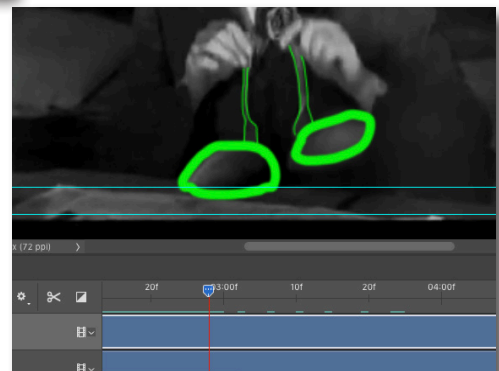
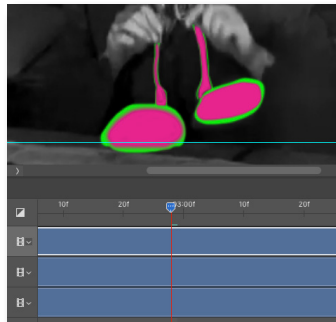
and in the window that opens choose a color you would like to work with.

With your empty video layer selected, advance frame by frame and begin drawing.

Use the blank video layers to your advantage.

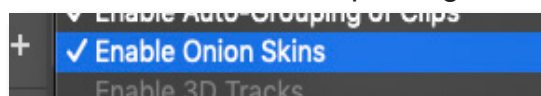
You could use the first layer to create an outline, and the new blank video layer for color fill.

Clearly these are basic examples- use your imagination and go wild!

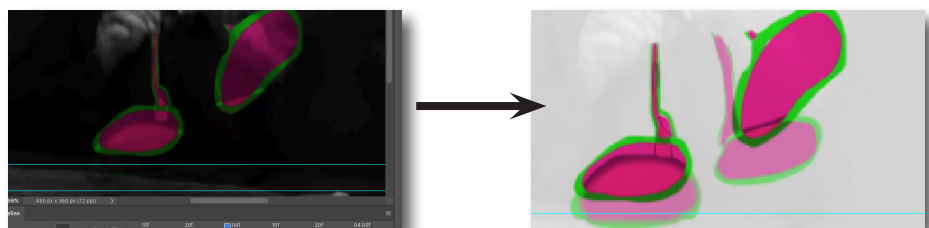


There is also an option to use Onion Skinning- so that you are able to see a shadow of previously drawn frames while creating your next frame.

To turn on Onion Skinning, select the Timeline menu on the top far right of the timeline and click on Enable Onion Skins.



Sometimes this is challenging when the video file is dark- having two superimposed images at the same time makes it difficult to see. Remember that each of these are individually controlled layers- it might be helpful to decrease the opacity of certain layers (or turn them off entirely) to be able to see the onion skinning more easily.



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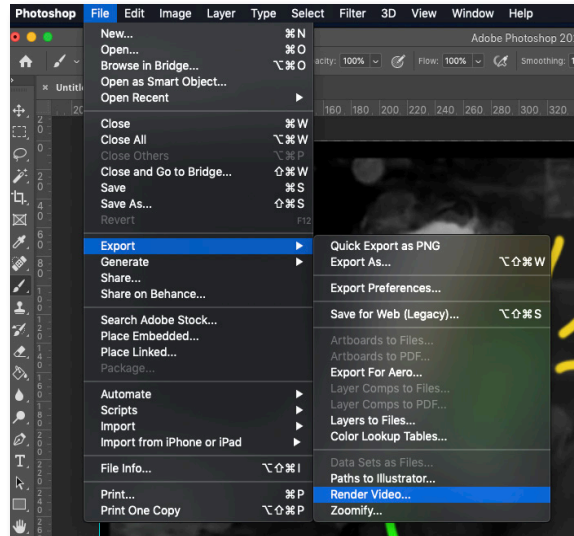
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Once you have completed your rotoscope work, it's time to export it as a video file.

From the top menu,
select **File>Export>Render Video...**



In the Render Video window that opens,

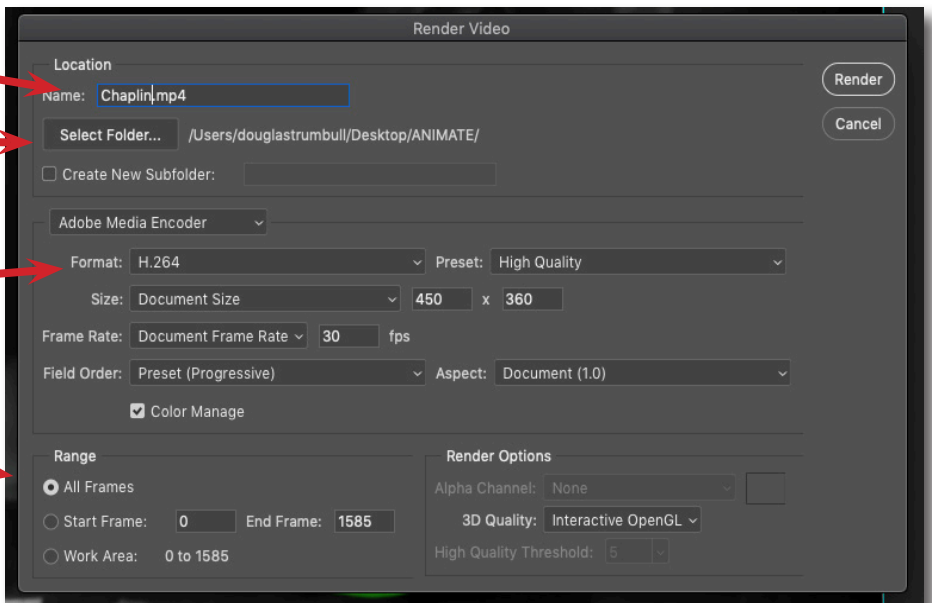
Name your file,

choose a location to save
your file to,

select a video format
(H.264/High Quality
is advised),

make sure that you are rendering
All Frames,

and click on the **Render** button
at the top right of the window



You can now review your exported rotoscoped movie!