

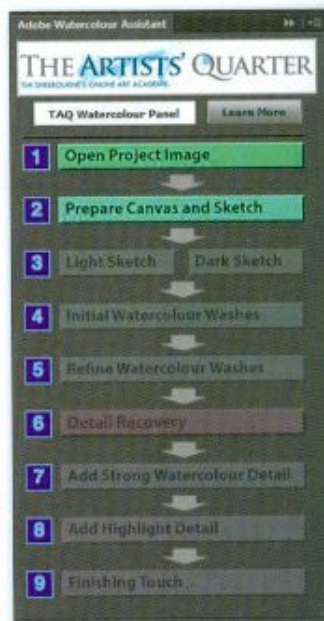
# Watercolour Cloning in Photoshop CS6

Watercolour cloning allows you to make painterly strokes by sourcing them from an existing photo. For Photoshop CS6, artist Tim Shelbourne and Adobe's Russell Brown have devised an excellent method of watercolour cloning that looks convincing and can be achieved with just a little practice. They have incorporated this into a new Adobe Watercolour Assistant panel that you can download for free from the internet (see page 128).



This section covers the basic tools supplied with the Watercolour Assistant. However, if you click on the link to the Artists' Quarter (<http://theartistsquarterblog.com>) in the Watercolour Assistant panel you can study Tim Shelbourne's more advanced techniques online.

Once you've downloaded and installed the Watercolour Assistant panel, it will take you through the process of constructing your watercolour painting from a photograph. With each step you select, it will run a script that automates various stages of the procedure. This means that you can focus on painting and not worry about getting the layers laid out correctly.



### Step 1 ▷

Once you have selected your photo, you'll need to prepare it to get the best result. Go to *Image > Adjustments > Vibrance* and boost the vibrance and saturation levels with the sliders. Make them much higher than you would when editing a photo in the usual way.



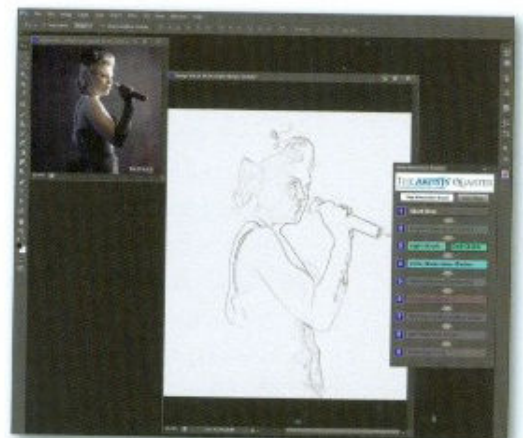
### ◁ Step 2

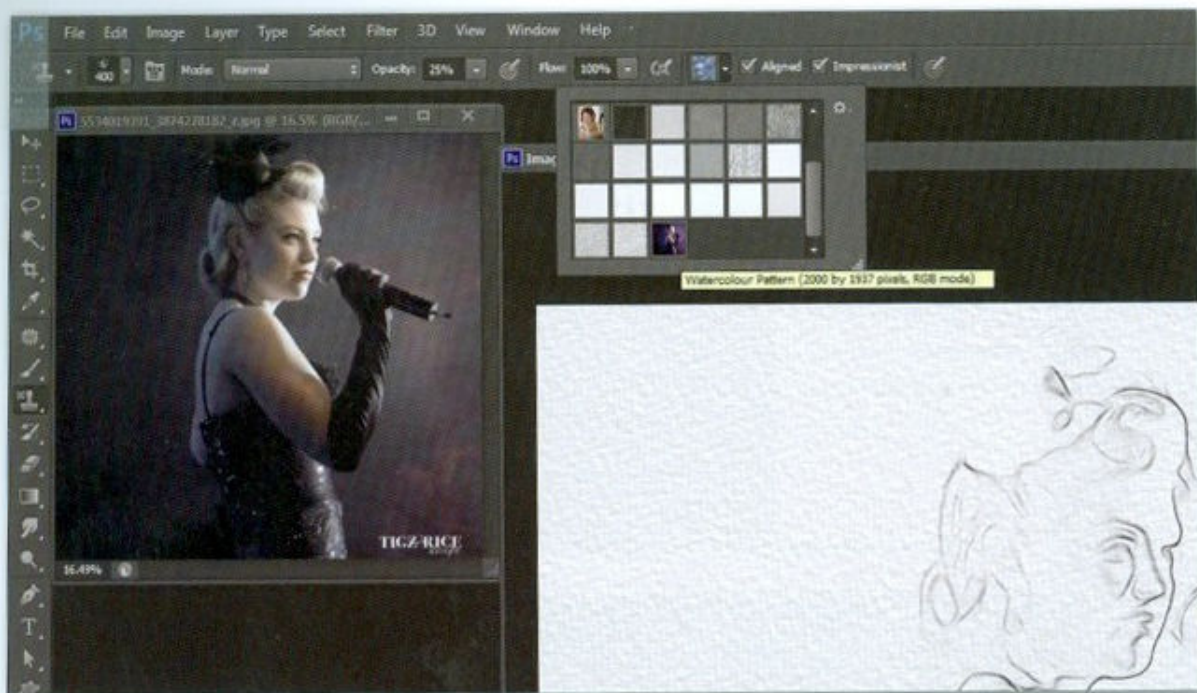
Next go to *Image > Adjustments > Curves* and boost the contrast significantly by dragging up on the point shown in the white area of the 'Curves' dialog box (as indicated in the screenshot). Move the point in the dark area down slightly.



### Step 3 ▷

Now that your photo is prepped, click on Step 2 of the Watercolour Assistant panel. It will prepare your canvas and automatically generate a pencil sketch from your photograph. In Step 3 you can choose between a light or a dark sketch, depending on your needs. The script always creates a light and a dark sketch layer, so if you change your mind later you can just hide or reveal the dark sketch layer in the 'Layers' palette.





#### △ Step 4

Next click Step 4 in the Watercolour Assistant panel, 'Initial Watercolour Washes', to create a clipped vibrance layer (in case you want to edit the vibrance at any point). Then go to the *Pattern Picker* in the *Options Bar* and choose the watercolour pattern of your painting. It will always be the last pattern of the set (the script will have generated it for you automatically).

#### Step 5 ▷

You will find that you now have the *Pattern Stamp Tool* with a custom brush selected. Use this brush to paint loosely in the first layer. It's important to keep your stylus pressed down as you trace out the colours on the page, as the brush has a multiplying effect and will get darker each time you apply it. The *Pattern Stamp Tool* will have the 'Impressionist' option checked; this means you will get a loose interpretation of the colours from the photo beneath, which adds to the watercolour feel.





#### △ Step 6

When you've finished laying down the first wave of colour, switch to the *Smudge Tool*. Using a messy-edged custom brush, smooth out the edges of the paint to make it appear more diffuse, as though it is bleeding out with too much water. It's important to remember that to run the script correctly you must switch back to the *Pattern Stamp Tool* (press S) before moving on to another stage of *Watercolour Assistant*.



#### △ Step 7

By clicking on the next stage of *Watercolour Assistant* you create a new layer and a resized *Pattern Stamp Tool*. You use this for the most important aspect of the image – to build up tone and colour. Remember to leave the areas of strong highlights unpainted to reflect the watercolour style. From this stage on, it's important to reference the original photo for the best effect, so either have it open in your workspace or on a separate monitor if you have one.



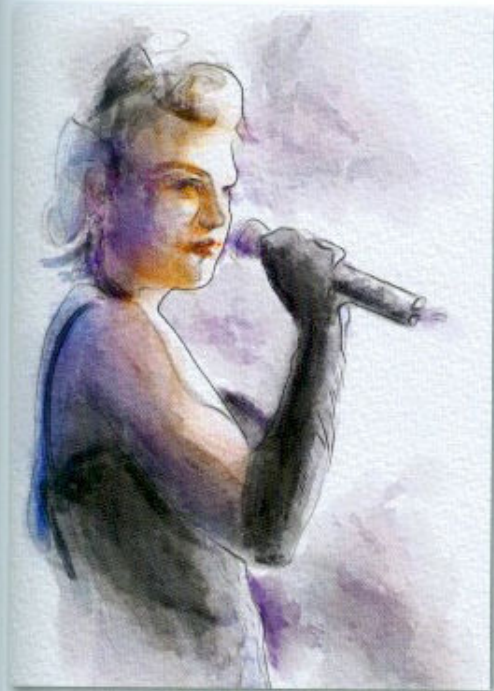
△ **Step 8**

When you have finished painting these larger amounts of shading detail, switch to the *Smudge Tool* again to even out some of the paint. Modify the edges to make the paint bleed outside them a little.

**Step 9** ▷

Now for the 'Detail Recovery' stage, where the brush selected is smaller. It will pick up details from the photo without the 'Impressionist' option selected; this makes it more accurate. Paint over the focal points with fairly small strokes. Then smudge these painting strokes so that the lines are less defined.





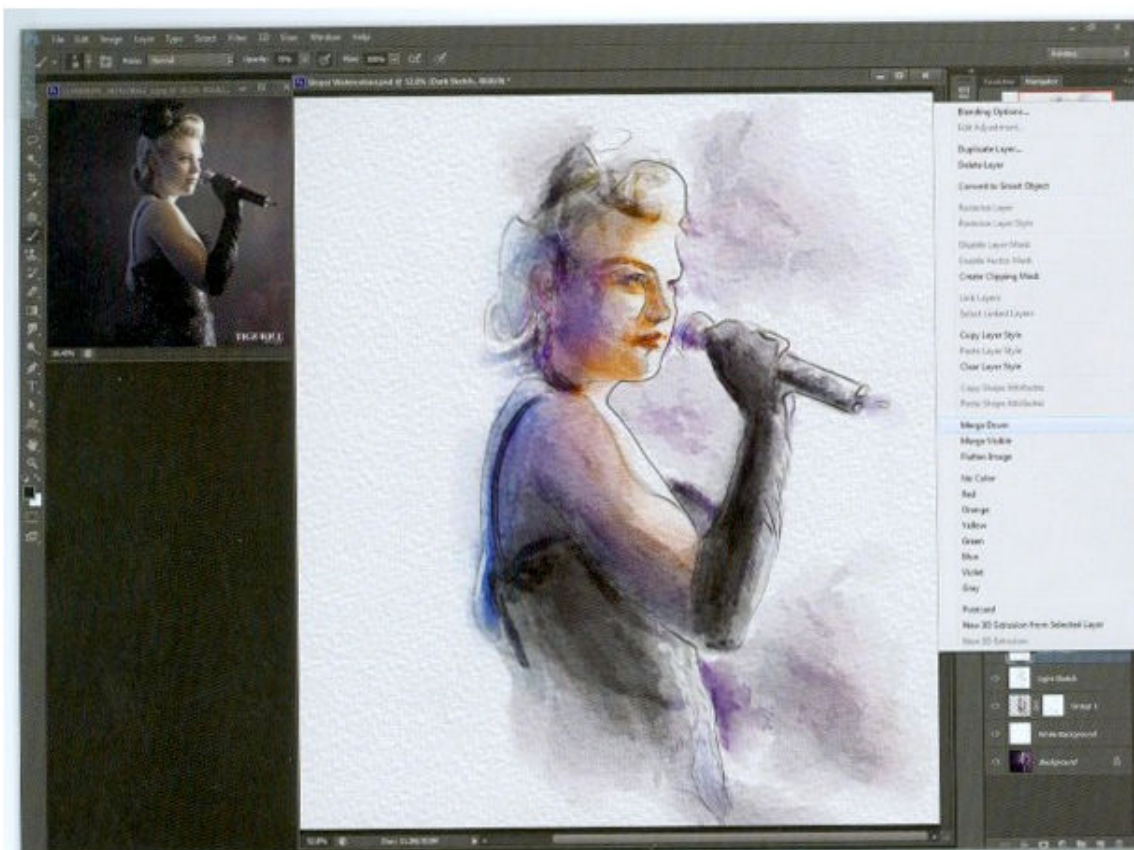
#### ◀ Step 10

This is the 'Strong Watercolour Detail' phase, where the brush you use to clone produces maximum detail, colour and tone. Use it sparingly, and only over the main focal points, or it may damage the watercolour effect.

#### Step 11 ▷

The final painting stage is the 'Add Highlight Detail' section, where the painting layers are merged into one and a layer mask is applied. You're automatically given a texture brush to scratch into the layer mask; this removes the paint and reveals the white paper texture underneath.





### △ Step 12

Before you move on to the final stage of Watercolour Assistant, go to the light and dark sketch layers and unlock them by clicking on the padlock icon. Press **Ctrl + E** to merge them down into a single layer, then press **B** to select a pencil brush and add any lines you need to achieve a more accurate pencil effect.

### Step 13 ▷

Once you have finished adding to the lines, reselect the *Smudge Tool* and use it to fade out sections of the lines. This mimics the way in which graphite dissipates through the repeated application of water.





△ **Step 14**

Reopen Watercolour Assistant and click on Stage 9, 'Finishing Touch', to apply a high pass layer that will sharpen the details and make your painting look crisp.