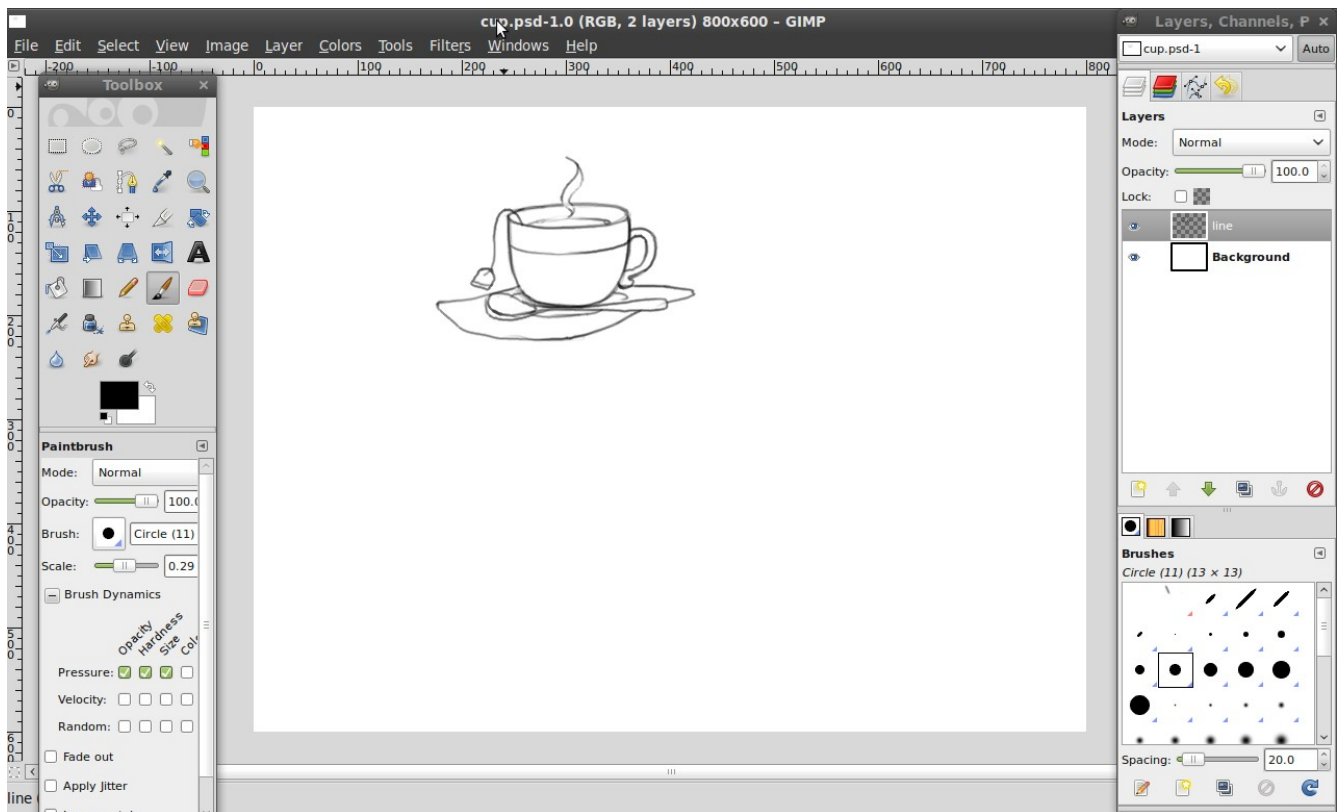


Making Smilies in GIMP

Posted by Iko on July 10, 2010

This a mini-tutorial on drawing smilies for forums, blogs, etc. It's only one of many ways to do it, but it's simple enough and hopefully will get you started. I'll be using [GIMP](#) for this, but you can substitute it with your favourite image editor. Any editor that has drawing tools (paintbrush, fill, colour picker), layers, crop, resize, transparency and PNG export will do. Onwards!

1. Create a new file with a white background. Add a new layer and draw the smilie with the **pencil** or **paintbrush** tool. Here I've outlined a teacup with a small (scale: 0.29) round brush.



2. Fill the background layer with a colour in a medium shade (I used blue) to make it easier to see any gaps in colouring later. Add a new layer and begin blocking in the areas behind or beneath other shapes. For example, the napkin is underneath the cup and spoon, so it is coloured in first.



3. On a new layer, pick a colour a few shades darker than the napkin's base colour (the medium shade) and add in the areas in shadow. In this case the smilie assumes there is soft lighting coming from the top right of the drawing area, throwing the left side of the napkin in the cup's shadow. Repeat for the darkest areas, i.e. the base of the cup.



4. Repeat for the other parts of the smilie, starting with a base colour on a new layer then adding darker and lighter colours in a separate layer.



Darker shades of blue

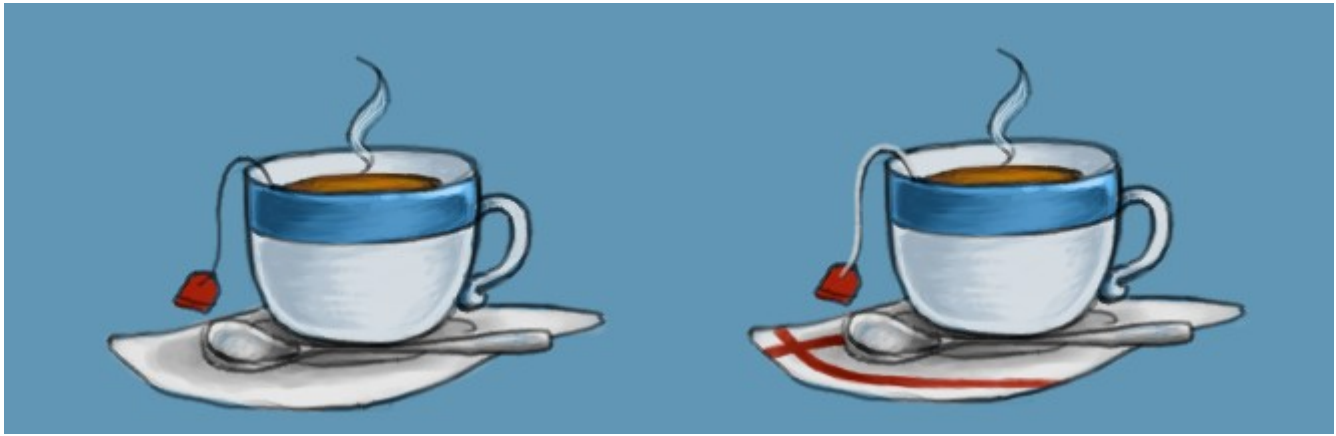
Lighter area at the left
and right edges of the
cup



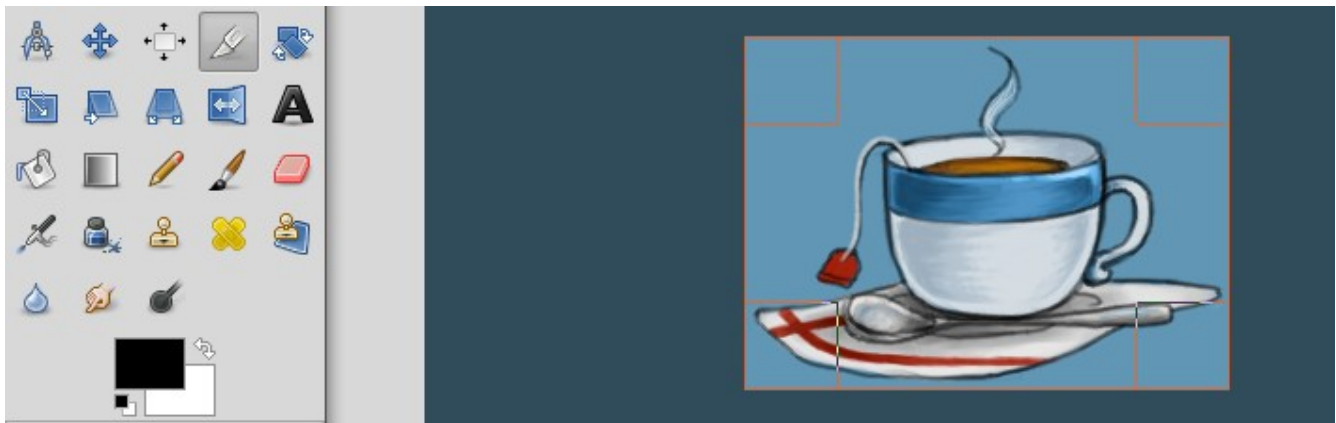
Add highlights



5. Don't forget to put any extra last-minute details you want to include on a separate layer.



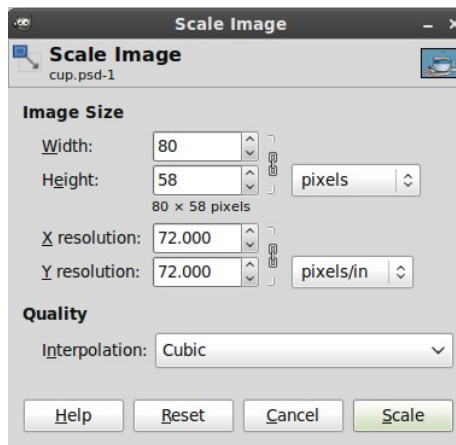
6. When you're done colouring, use the **crop** tool to draw a rectangular selection, leaving 2-3 pixels of space around the smilie. Click inside the selection or press Enter to crop the excess canvas.



7. Turn off the background layer's visibility, leaving the background transparent.



8. Now to resize the smilie. Go to **Image > Scale Image...** and scale it down to a size small enough without losing too much detail.



9. Time to save and export. Save the image as a PSD or GIMP native file first, so you can adjust things later if needed, then head to **File > Save a Copy...** and type in the name of the smilie followed by the .png extension. GIMP will warn about PNG being unable to handle layers – click **Export** anyway. In the next window, leave the settings in their defaults and hit **Save**. That's it, have fun making new smilies!

