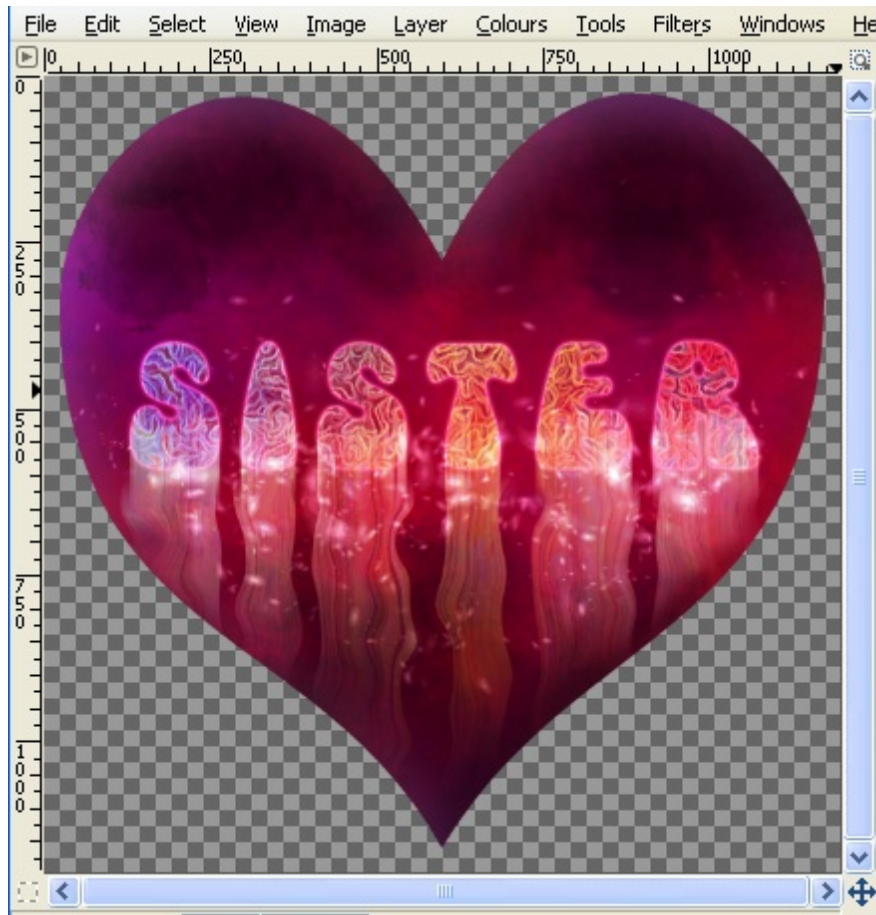


The "Sisterheart effect" with GIMP

Technique and tutorial by AnMal for gimpchat.com



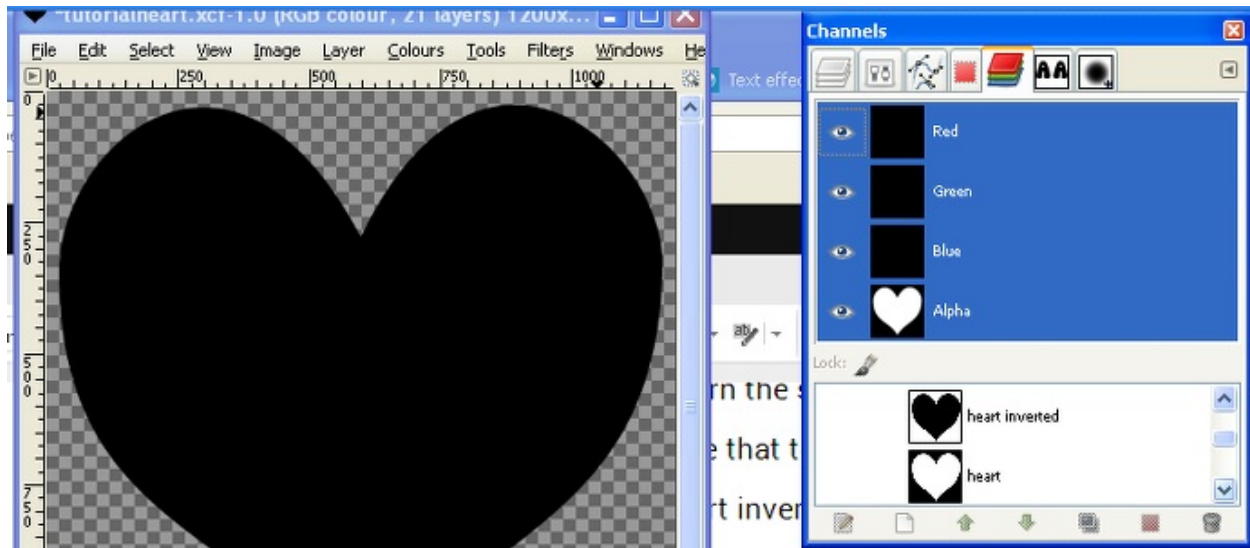
This is a long tutorial with many steps and it requires a lot of work, so be warned! It also requires the G'mic plug-in, and a 2.8 Gimp edition.

I have divided the tutorial into three sections - A,B and C. Each section makes one part of the overall result, for example A makes the heart, B

makes the text effect and C takes care of those little details that just pretty things up. This way, I hope it will be easier for you to make just the parts of the tutorial you're actually interested in and skip the rest - even if some steps in the text section are dependent on some steps in the heart section. Each section has numbered steps. I worked on a 1200 X 1200 px image, at 300 ppi resolution. This is important for when we do things in G'mic or when we set guides at certain points in the image.

A. Making the heart

1. Start off with a black background layer. Now, either load a heartshape you already have on a transparent layer, render a new heartshape in on a transparent background in G'mic, or make a heart shape with the paths tool. The tutorial outcome will look best on a heart shape with normal edges, not fuzzy ones. The heart shape should go all, or almost all, the way out to the top and bottom edges of the image.
2. make a selection of the heart. Now go to the 'selections' menu or the 'selections' tab and save the selections to a channel. This will save you some work in the future. Before you turn the selection off, you can also invert your selection and save that too as a channel.
Name the channels "heart" and "heart inverted".



The channels in the channels tab. Note that in this image i already have a black heart on a transparent background. In your progress so far you don't, you just have a black layer and some heart channels.

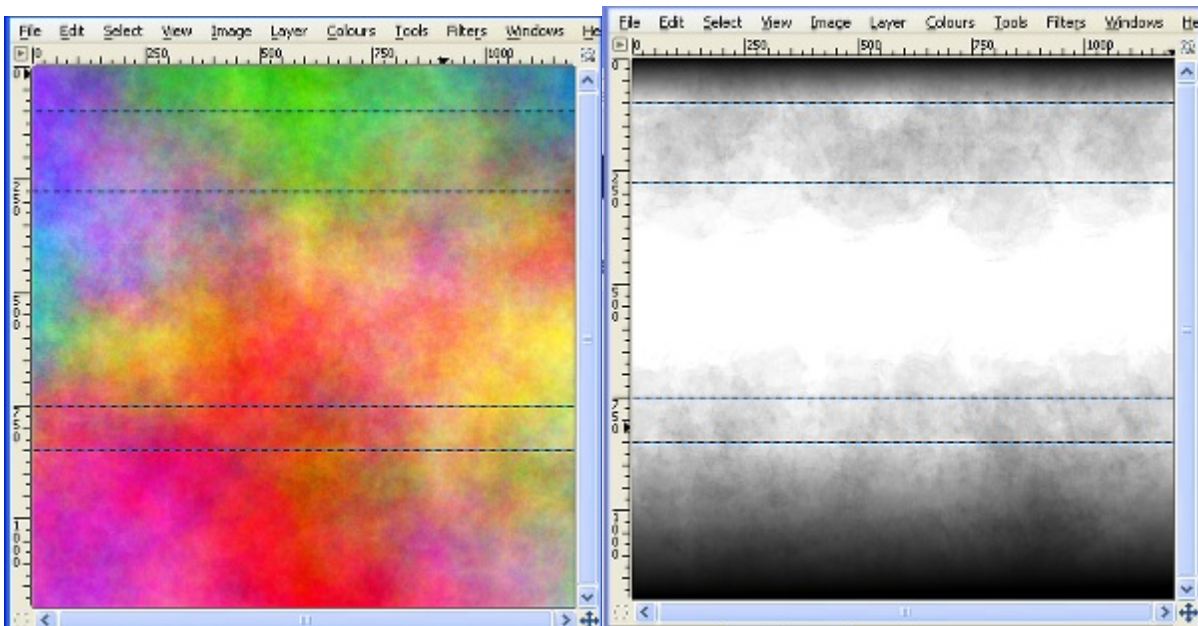
3. Make a new layer above the background layer and name it "Plasma". Render a plasma cloud that's not too dark - something like this:



(seed 3851039698). set the layer mode of the plasma layer to "Overlay"

4. Make a white layer mask on the "Plasma" layer. Now set a horizontal guide on the image, 100 px from the upper edge and one at 275 px from the upper edge. Set two more horizontal guides at 750 px and 850 px. Now we will work in some transparency using the airbrush tool. Select the airbrush. Go to the brushes menu and select the brush called: "Texture hose 03". Lower the opacity on the brush to 80 and set size to 300 px. Make sure your foreground colour is black. Now paint zig-zag strokes with the brush between the top edge of the image and the guide at 275 px, the little cross in

the centre of the brush should go no further down than the guideline. Hold down the shift key as you paint. Put in a few random strokes here and there between the guideline at 275 px and the upper edge. Then do the same kind of painting between the guideline at 750 px and the lower edge. If you want a bit more transparency, you can play around with "Colours" - "Brightness and Contrast". To finish the layer mask off, select the gradient tool. Using the "FG to transparent" gradient, draw a gradient from the very top of the image and down to the guideline at 100 px. Draw another gradient from the bottom edge of the image and up to the guideline at 850 px. Now we have made our first layermask.



The plasma layer with the guides, and the layer mask with the guides.

5. Make a new layer between the background and the plasma layers.

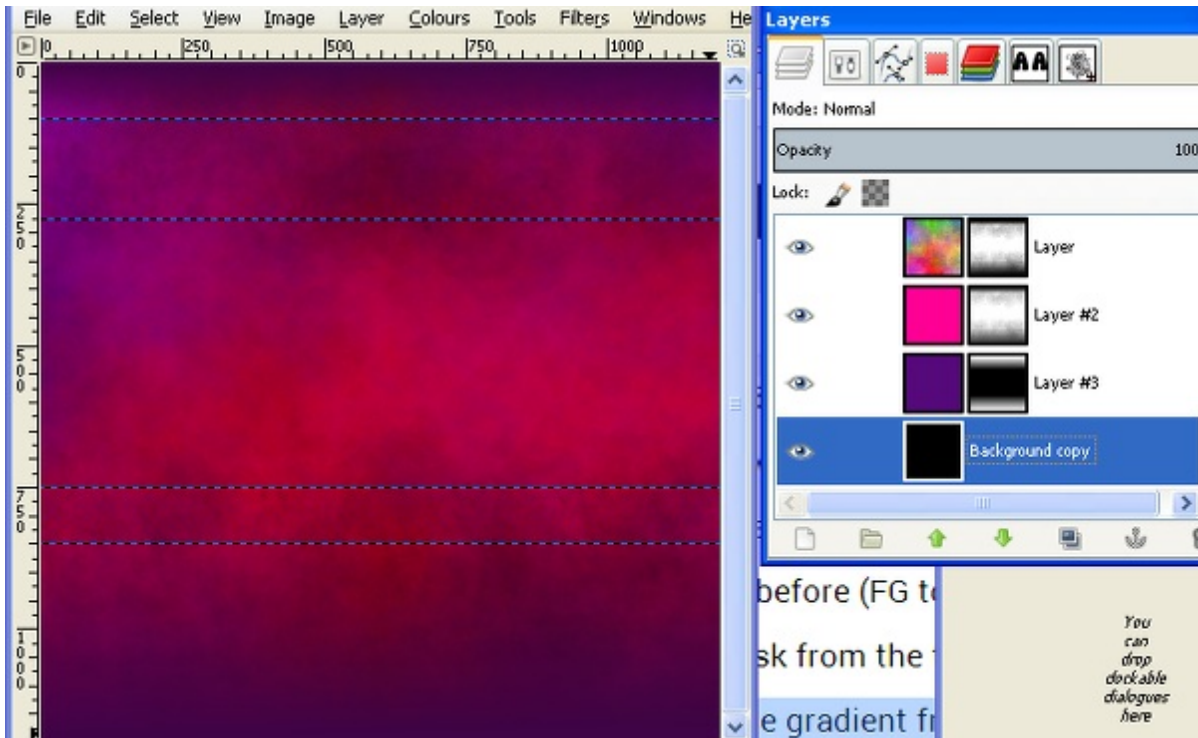
Name the layer "Pink". Fill it with colour ff0094 and turn the opacity down to 50%. We're going to need a layer mask for this layer as well, and we're going to partly steal it from the plasma layer, so go to the plasma layer again and right click the layer. In the menu you get, select "Mask to selection". Now go to selection menu or selection tab again and save the selection to a channel. Name the channel "Random transparency". Now go down to the pink layer again.

Right click the layer and choose "Add layer mask" and in the dialogue box, select "From channel". In the little window next to that option you can scroll between available channels, and your "Random transparency" channel should be first in the list now.

Select that and click "OK". Now go up to the "Colours" menu and choose "Brightness and contrast". Set up the brightness to 50. Now we have made our second layer mask, based on the first.

6. Make a new layer between the black background layer and the pink layer. Name it "Purple" and fill it with colour 55097b. set layer mode to "Lighten only" and turn the opacity down to 50. Add a black layer mask to it. Now use the gradient tool again. Set the FG colour to white and use the same gradient as before (FG to transparent). Draw one gradient on the layer mask from the top edge and down to the guideline at 275 px and one gradient from the bottom edge

and up to the guideline at 750 px.



The layer stack and the result so far.

7. We are done with all the layers we need for the heart, all that remains is to make it look like a heart. First, go through the layers and make any final touch ups you want. For example, if you think the plasma layer needs more transparency, add some black on the layer mask, or if you want a more random transparency on the pink layer throw in some dots with the airbrush on low opacity, both in white and in black. When you're perfectly happy with the look, right click on all the layers one by one and choose "Apply layer mask".

Then right click them all one by one again and add new layer

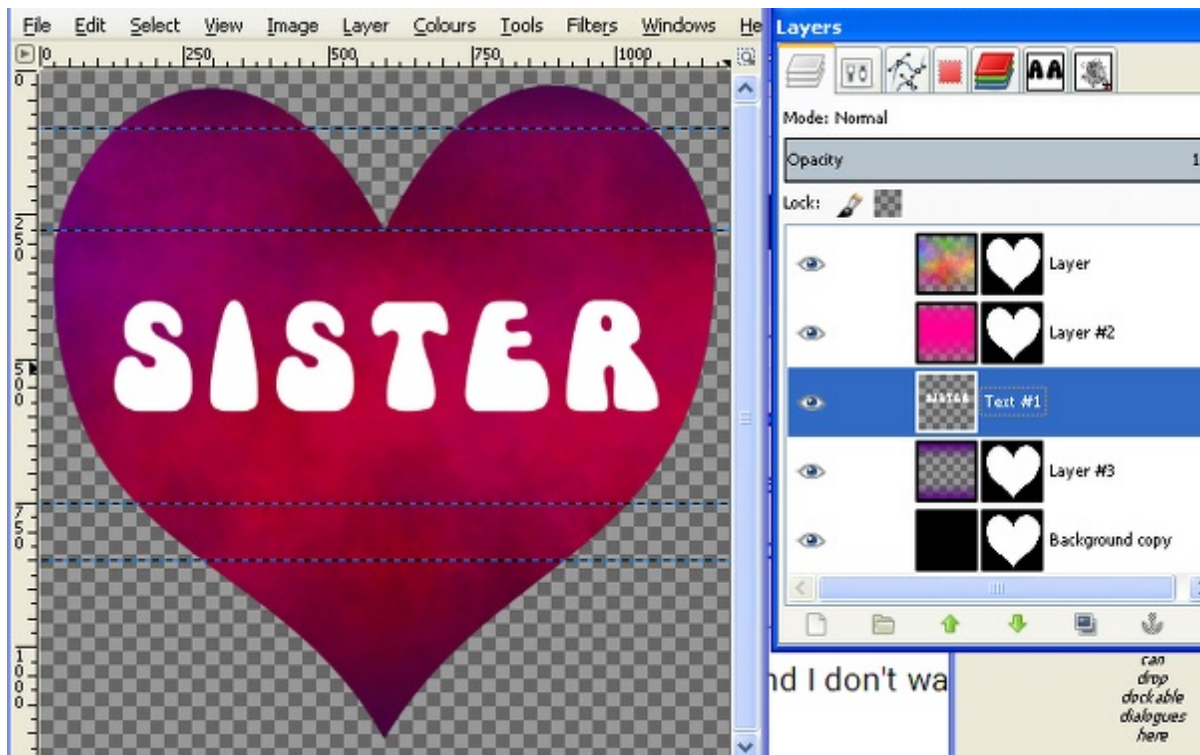
masks. In the dialogue box, select "From channel" and, for all layers, chose the channel called "Heart". Now we're done with the heart, and you should have your heart shape isolated on a transparent background.

B. Making the text effect

1. Begin by choosing the text tool and create a text layer. Choose a fairly bold sans serif font with a reasonably straight lower edge (upper edges may be shaped any which way, you could even use a serified font if you just cut the serifs off the lower edge). I use the font 'mama', which can be downloaded from dafont.com and I have set the spacing to 12 and rescaled the letters a bit to make them higher. None of those things are necessary, I just want to give a hint of what I did in case you want the same type of letters. What is necessary is to center the text in the text box (in tool options, look for the little buttons that show how the text will be placed in the text box, and click the one that says "center"). this is necessary for our next step to work properly.
2. Select the align tool (). Click the text layer once to get four dots in the corners of the text layer, then go to tool options and make

sure "Relative to:" is set to "First item". Click the two arrows that meet by a vertical line - this will center the text layer horizontally relative to your first item, which is the heart, so the text will now be placed in the correct position horizontally.

3. Select the move tool and click the text layer. Now move it up or down with the arrow keys until it's centered vertically between the edges of random transparency on the plasma and pink layers. It sounds more complicated than it is, I'm sure you can see a vague line across the heart where the colour is more intense and saturated - the text should go right in the middle of that line. I move it with the arrow keys instead of the mouse/touchpad because it's already been centered horizontally, and I don't want it to get out of line again.



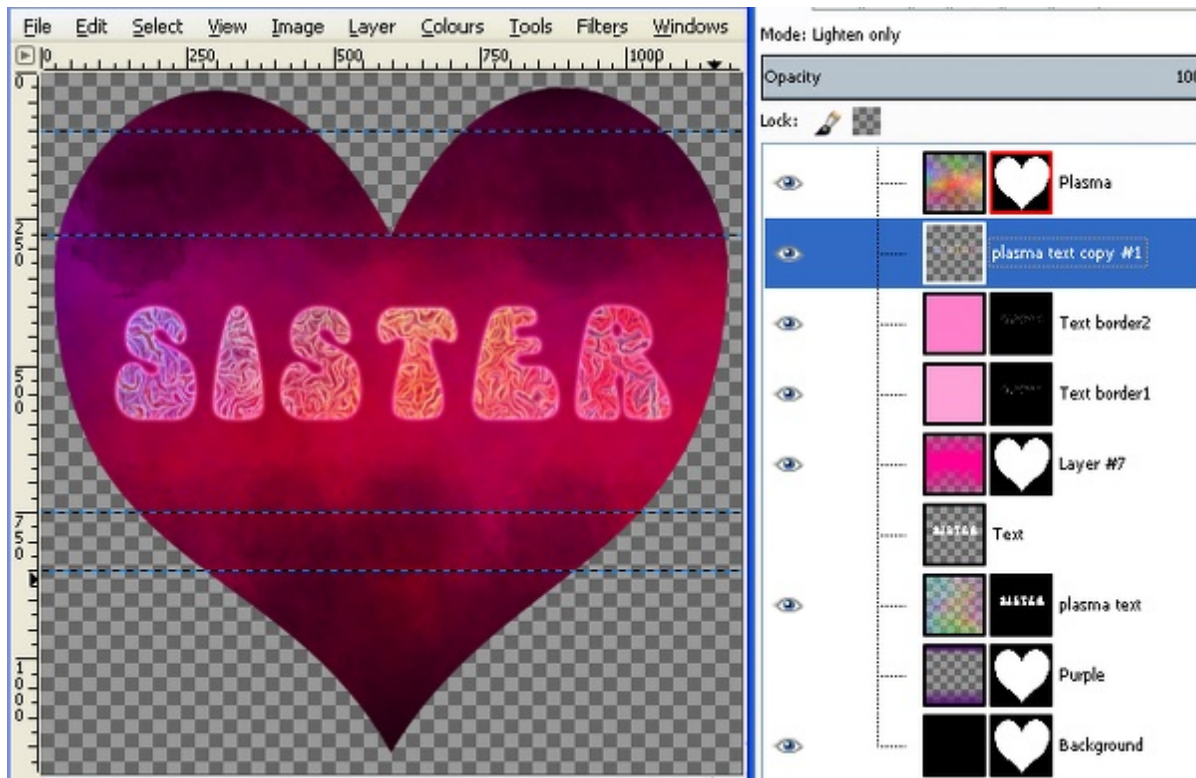
The text layer in place and the layer stack so far.

4. Now you can right click your text layer and make it image size. then right click it again and choose "Alpha to selection". Save the selection to a channel and name the channel "Text". Now you can turn off the visibility of your text layer, even delete it if you like, the necessary information is there anyway, as long as you don't delete the channel.
5. Make a new layer between the purple and pink layers, and name it "Plasma text". Now render a plasma cloud on it, and make sure you get a cloud with a high degree of saturation and colour variation,

but not too dark (if you're too lazy to random it out, just copy this seed into the seed window: 1973939459). Add a layer mask from channel to the layer, using (of course 😊) the channel we called "Text".

6. Now go to G'mic. Make sure the Plasma text layer is still active and go to G'mic - Artistic - Chalk It Up. Run the filter on default settings.
7. Back in Gimp menu, go to "Colours" - "Colour to Alpha" and select black as the colour to take away - make sure you still have the plasma text layer selected, and the actual layer, not the mask.
8. Now make a layer right above the pink layer and name it "Text border 1". Fill the layer with colour ffa2d8 and set the layer mode to "Lighten only". This should give you a light pink heart so far.
9. Go to the channels tab. Select the text channel, right click it and go "Channel to selection". now go to the selection menu or tab and choose "selection to path". turn off the selection. Add a black layer mask to the "Text border 1" layer and stroke the path in white at 3 px width. This should give you the "old" heart back, with a lighter border around the text.

10. Duplicate the last layer and gaussian blur the layer mask by 10 px. Refill the layer with colour ff7fca. Leave the layer mode as it is. Name the layer "Text border 2".
11. Now go back to the plasma text layer and duplicate it. move the duplicate up to right above "Text border 2".Set the layer mode to "Lighten only" and apply the layer mask on this layer.



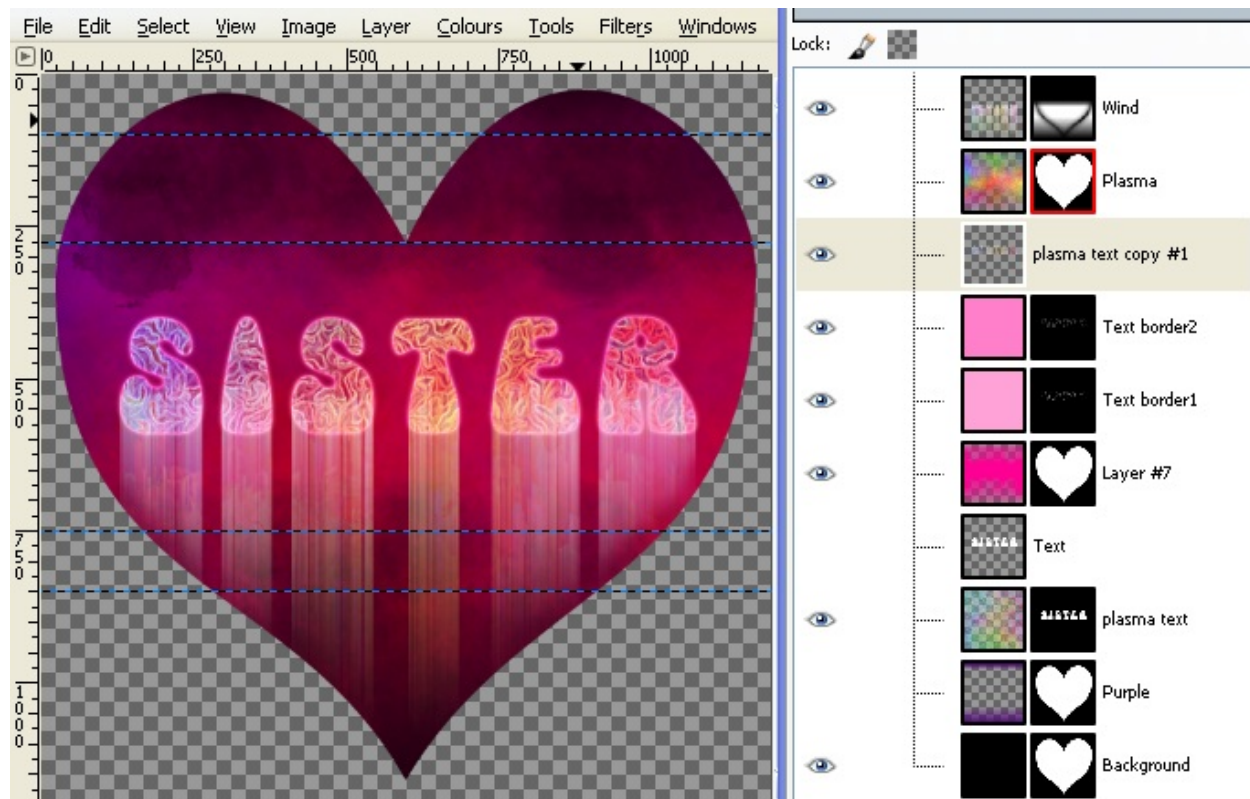
The result and layer stack so far.

12. Duplicate the "Plasma text copy" layer and name the copy "Wind". We're going to cut off about half of the text on this layer,

but we don't want a perfectly straight line across the text, so we're going to use the lasso selection tool. First, select the lasso tool. Put down a first little dot right in the top left corner of your image. Then go on to place another little dot in the top right corner of your image. Go down in a straight line on the right side and place the third dot just to the right of your text, about where the vertical center line of it would be. Draw a jagged, zig-zaggy line across the text to the other side, but don't go too far up and down from the vertical middle of the text while you're drawing. Put down the fourth dot right to the left of your text and connect the dots by clicking the first dot you made. When you have the selection, just click "Delete" and you will have about half the text, with a nicely random upper edge, left on the layer.

13. Now go to G'mic. Under "Deformations", select "Wind". Set "Angle" to 90 and pull "Amplitude" all the way up to 500. Apart from that leave settings as they are and run the filter on the "Wind" layer. With the amplitude set up so high this might take a while to render, so be warned that this is not the quickest of steps! After running, just set the layer opacity down to 75%, leave layer mode as it is.
14. Now add a white layer mask to the "Wind" layer, we're going to

give it some smooth fading. To begin with, make sure black is your FG colour. Then select the gradient tool and the "FG to transparent" in tool options. Draw a gradient from just above your zig-zaggy line to just below it. This gives you a smoother looking transition between the plasma text and the wind layer. Next, start from the lower edge of your image and draw a gradient all the way up to the guide at 750 px. Last, select the airbrush tool. Use the round brush called "Hardness 025" and set size to 300 px. Then go to the channels tab, click on your "Heart" channel and go "Channel to selection". Under "Edit", choose "Stroke selection" (No, you don't need to turn selection into a path for this. Any little irregularities on this stroke are just welcome as they make the stroke more "alive", and using the airbrush with this softness and at this size you certainly don't risk jagged edges :)) and in the dialogue box make sure you tick "With paint tool" and select the airbrush. Before you click okay, just make sure you have the right layer active and the layer mask selected. After you've done this, you should have smooth transitions all around, but if you really want to go pro, you can keep the selection on, set the brush to the round brush called "Hardness 050", size down to 100 px and just run "stroke selection" again. That's the text effect done!



The result and layer stack after the text effect is complete.

C. Just decorating and prettying up

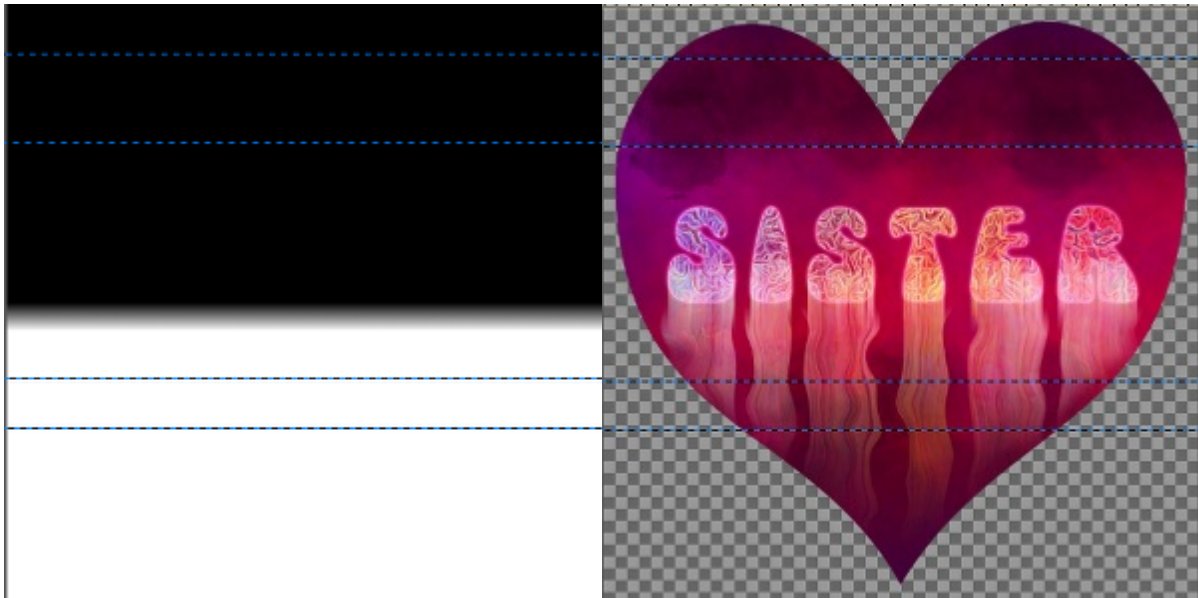
1. Right above the "Plasma" layer, make a "New from visible" layer.

From now on, we will be working with the heart and text as a whole, so if you're annoyed or confused by lots of layers you can delete all layers below this one. I never do, because i frequently find some little detail that I want to go back and change. Instead, I sort up all the layers below this one in one layer group and name the layer group something like "Heart and text". That way the layers list isn't

too long and confusing looking, but I can easily go back and change things later if I want to.

2. Now duplicate your visible, and rename the copy "Waves". Make a selection from your "Hearts" channel again and go to G'mic (make sure the "Waves" layer is the active). Under "Deformations", choose the filter called "Random" - I've used the default settings, but if you want more or less movement in your image, just pull the amplitude slider to your liking. The selection helps the outcome stay inside the borders of your heart shape, but if you don't mind the lower half of your heart looking a bit deformed you don't really need the selection.
3. When the filter has run, you have a randomly rippled version of your heart and text. We're going to mask it off, so that just the part below the text is waved and rippled. Start by making a white layer mask on the layer. Now turn off the visibility of your "Waves" layer, but keep it active, and keep the layer mask selected. Using the gradient tool and the "FG to transparent" gradient, draw a gradient from just at the lower edge of the text and down a little bit, around 50 px. This should give you a smooth transition between the "Waves" and "Visible" layers and you should now have the text

straight and the wind effect randomly waved and rippled.



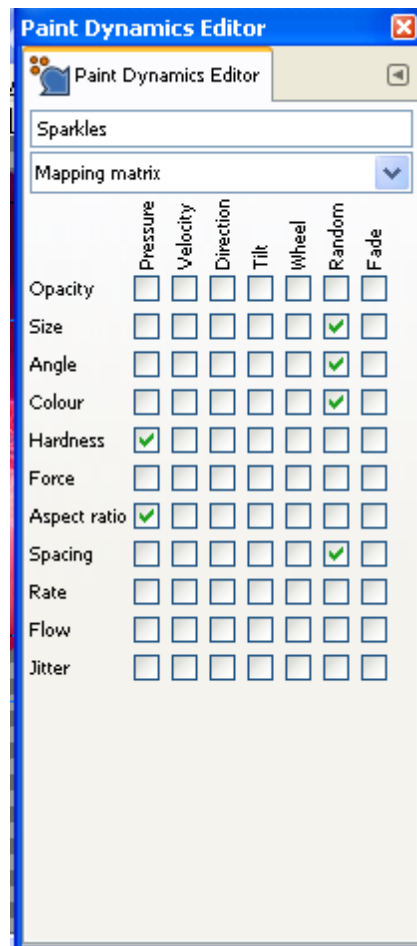
The layer mask for the waves layer and the layer after the mask is done. Note that the gradient itself is very small on the mask, most of the layer will be either fully visible or fully invisible.

4. Now, make a new layer above the other two and name it "Sparkles".

We're going to paint on it using the spark brush that came with Gimp, but we're going to tweak it a bit using brush dynamics.

5. To begin with, select the paintbrush tool and the spark brush. Then go to tool options and in brush dynamics, look for the preset called "Confetti". we're going to make some changes in this dynamic, so first click the dynamics icon (blue arrow with three orange dots) in the lower right corner of the dynamics list. This will open the paint

dynamics list and you can look up "Confetti" in the list and click on the "Duplicate" icon below the list. That will bring up a new window, with a new dynamic called "Confetti copy", you can rename it "Sparkles" so you know what it's for. In the new window you see a matrix with some boxes already ticked. Leave all of them ticked, but also make a tick for random spacing.



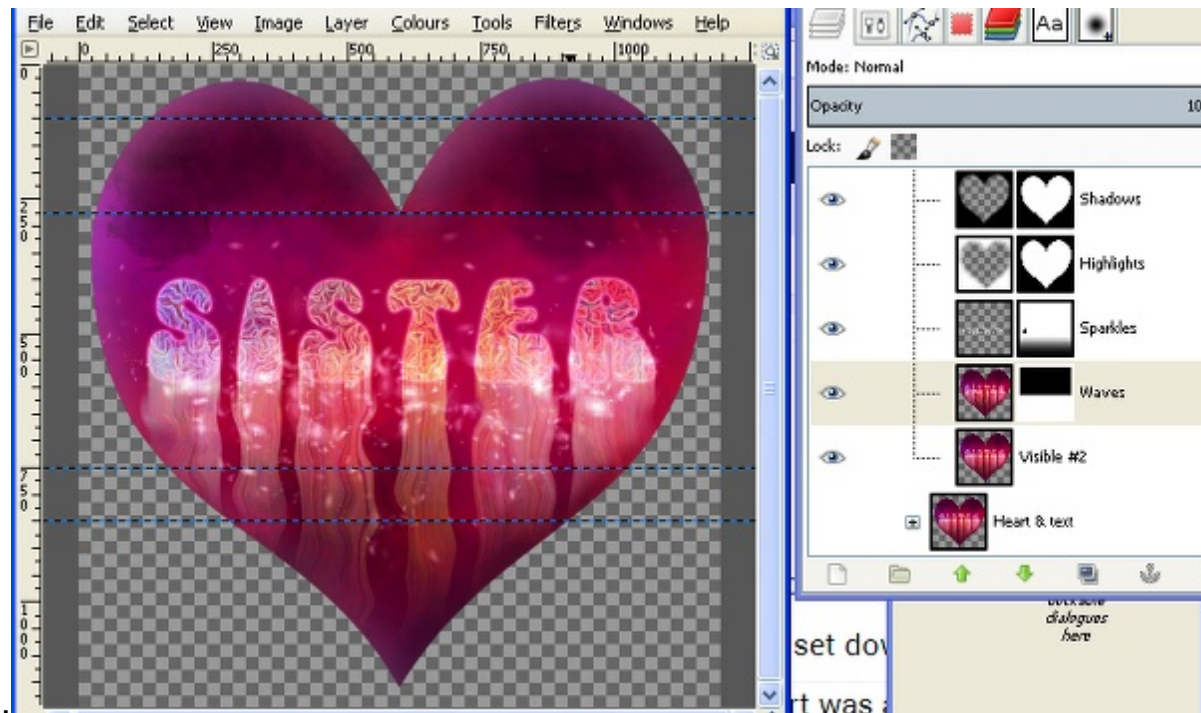
6. Now, set both FG and BG colour to white (this will ensure your sparkles are only painted in white and not in grey or black) and we

can finally start painting. I concentrate my painting in the area around the lower half of the text, and in the triangle formed by the text and the lower part of the heart shape. I try to stay away from the edges a bit, but I'm not too strict with it. I paint some small sparks in the "air" above and around the text too, but I delete anything too big and attention-craving. I place the brush on the text borders and make some sparks there. **There is no automatic way of doing this, since it is a matter of composition and composition is always a matter of judgement and taste.** Just let the brush dynamics do their job, and delete a stroke now and then if you didn't like it. When you're happy with your sparks, just set the layer mode to "Grain merge", and you're done. I've done some addition layer masking to my layer afterwards, because on second thought I didn't like how some sparks got too close to the edges, but there's no need for you to be overly fussy just because I am!

7. Now that the sparks are done, we'll make a very slight hint of volume on the heart. This will take two layers, one for highlights, one for shadow, and quite a bit of layer masking. We'll start with the highlight layer - make a new white layer right above the "Sparkles" layer, name it "Highlights" and add layer mask from channel. This time, choose the "Heart inverted" channel. Gaussian

blur the layer mask by 150 px and then apply layer mask.

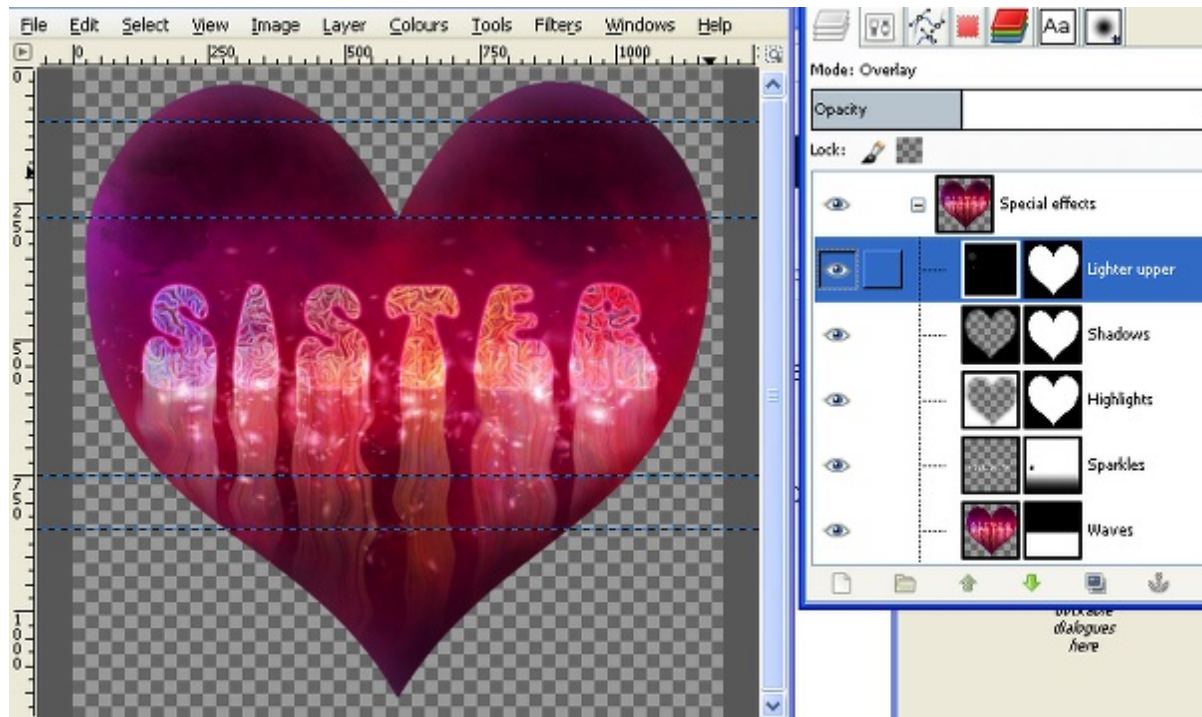
8. After applying the layer mask, go to the layer menu. Under "Transform" choose "Offset" and type in 20 for X and 25 for Y. Now give the layer another layer mask from channel, this time use the "Heart" channel. This should give you some soft, white highlights on the heart. Set the layer mode to "Grain merge" and opacity to 60%.
9. Now make the shadows layer out of a new black layer right above the "Highlights" layer. Name it "Shadows". Add a layer mask from channel using the "Heart inverted" channel. Gaussian blur the layer mask at 75 px and apply layer mask.
10. Offset the "Shadows" layer by typing in -20 for X and -25 for Y. Add a new layer mask from channel, using the "Heart" channel. Set the layer mode to "Overlay" and the opacity to 50%



The result and layer stack as it looks after this step.

11. Only one step remains now: To light up the whole thing! For this, we need a new black layer on top of the stack. Add a layer mask from channel on it using the "heart" channel and set down the opacity to 35% (or thereabouts, if your original heart was a bit dark, set it lower, if it was a bit on the pale side, set it higher). Then set the layer mode to "Overlay" - et voilà! The sparkles are truly sparkling and there's a warm sort of glow around the text. A tip if you think your edges were just dark enough/light enough before, but you still want that glow around the text and sparks: work on the layer mask on the black layer a bit. For example, make a selection from the "Heart" channel, then stroke the selection with a big, soft

paintbrush or the airbrush. Or just paint out or draw gradients to cover just the parts of the layer that get too dark or glowy.



Now you're done! Have a cup of tea and be happy you got out of this jungle...