

Dollface effect



Imperfect screenshot of the finished dollface effect

Disclaimer: This is not one of those tutorials where you can make an exact copy of the tutorial writer's outcome. The technique for making dollfaces cannot be automatised completely with a script (though i'm sure you can automatise some of the steps), it always requires you to use your own judgement and put down some work and patience on the corrections. If you prefer the "press-the-button" kind of tutorials and techniques this one probably isn't for you. This doesn't mean it's difficult or in any way advanced to turn a face into a dollface, it's actually very simple, but it's just not something you do by way of typing in exact settings in a filter.

General advice: At times, when doing the scaling and perspective transformation in this tutorial, the layers will go outside the image boundaries. I recommend you to do an "Image" -> "Fit canvas to layers" in those situations, it helps a lot to see what you're doing.

I had to divide the tutorial in two parts because of file size. Here's the contents of both parts:

Part 1

1. Finding the right basic image
2. Preparing the image for the transformations
3. The actual transformations

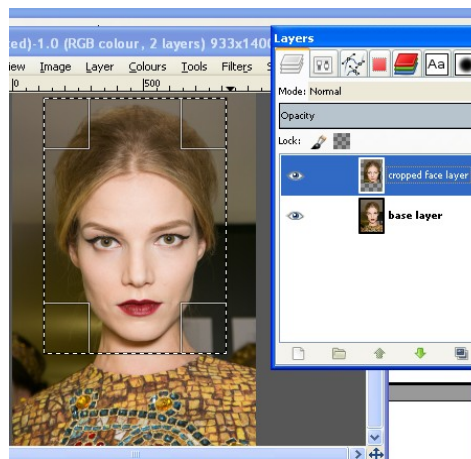
Part 2

4. Corrective work and special effects
5. Putting a head on a body

1. This technique places special requirements on the base image. To begin with, it needs to be fairly large and clear. The process is messy and you easily get problems with pixellation and other artefacts, so start with a quality image. The technique also requires a "mug shot", that is a full front view of the face. No three quarter profiles or anything. If the head is tilted at an angle sideways you can fix that, but if the face you want is slightly turned away you need to choose another image. Also, hands or hair or other objects partly covering the face will cause problems, so avoid those. Likewise avoid images where the top of the head or the sides are cropped off. Here's my image, an easy one!

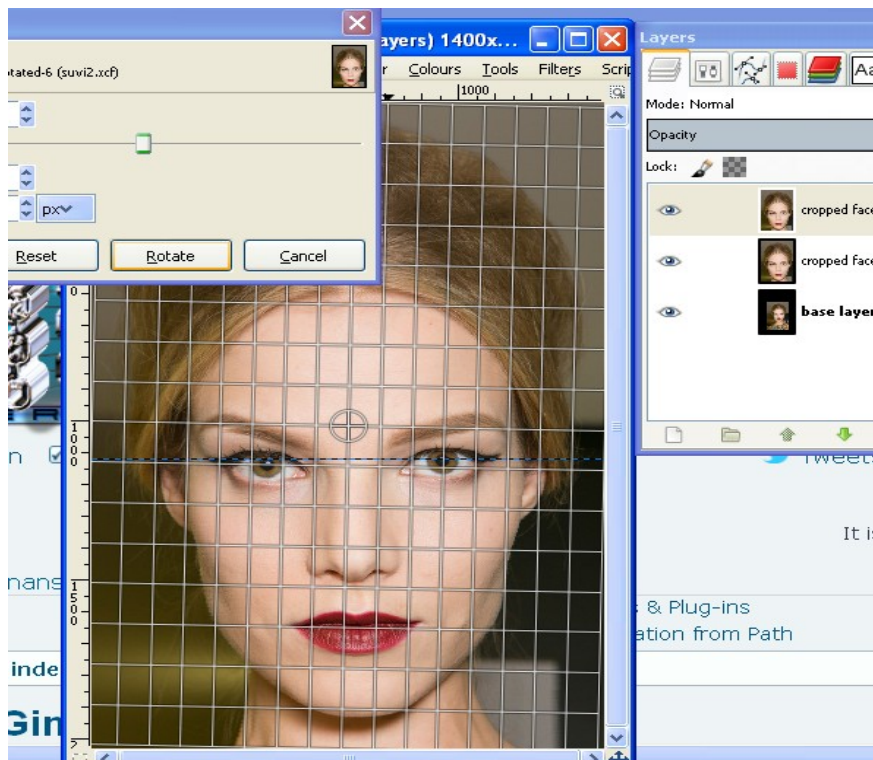


2. Now you have a good base image and you will start by preparing it a bit. To begin with, duplicate the layer, rectangle select the whole of the head down to where the neck and

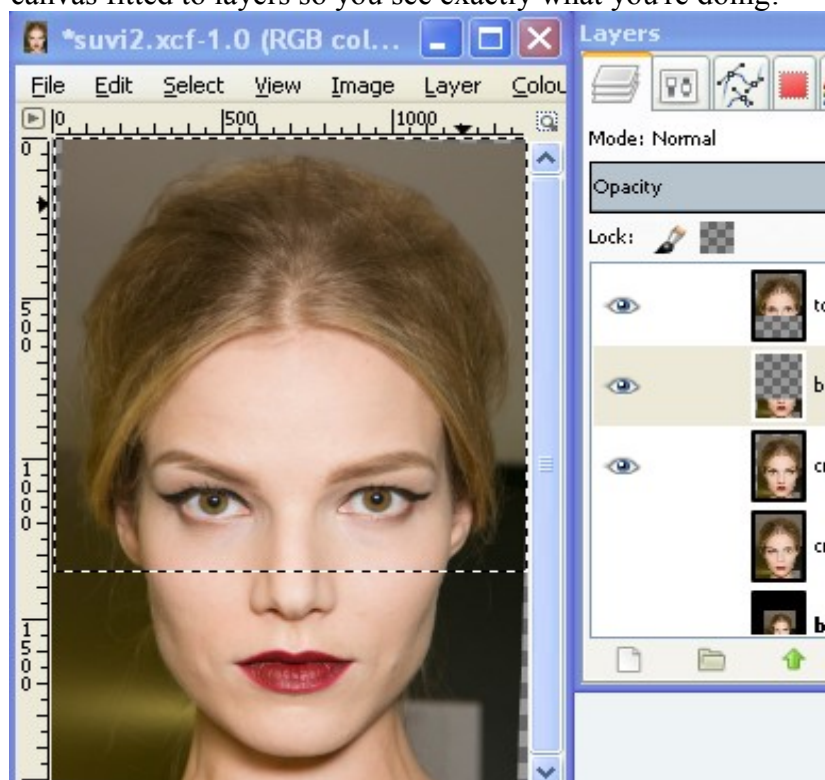


shoulders meet and then crop layer to selection.

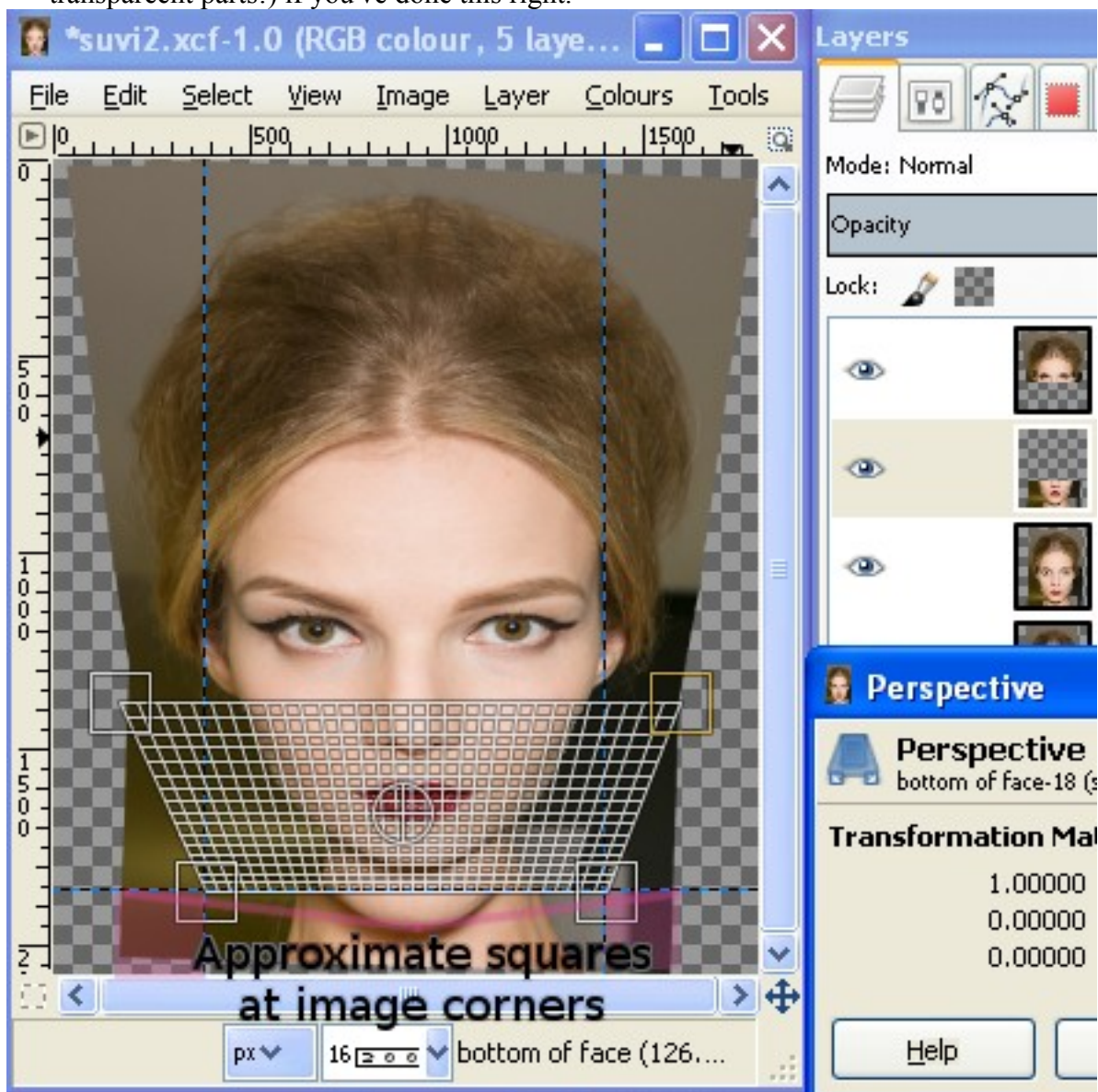
You can turn off the visibility of the base layer, so it doesn't distract you. Upscale the new layer to double size. Make a horizontal guide that goes straight through the outer corner of the right eye, if the guide passes straight through both eyes and through the outer corner of the left eye, your base image is straight and won't need to be rotated, if the guide goes above or below the outer corner of the left eye you need to duplicate the layer and rotate the layer copy until the guide passes through both the outer corners of both eyes.



You can turn off the visibility of the original upscaled layer, but you'll be needing it as a guide later, so don't delete it. Now make another rectangular selection that includes the top of the head down to the middle of the nose, duplicate the layer and crop the new layer copy to selection but don't turn off the selection. Duplicate the uncropped layer again and delete the selection. This gives you three visible layers: One layer with the top of the head, one layer with the bottom of the head, and one with the whole head. On the layer with the bottom of the head, autocrop the layer so that you truly only have the bottom of the face, otherwise the perspective transformations we will perform will go wrong. Again, it helps to have your canvas fitted to layers so you see exactly what you're doing!

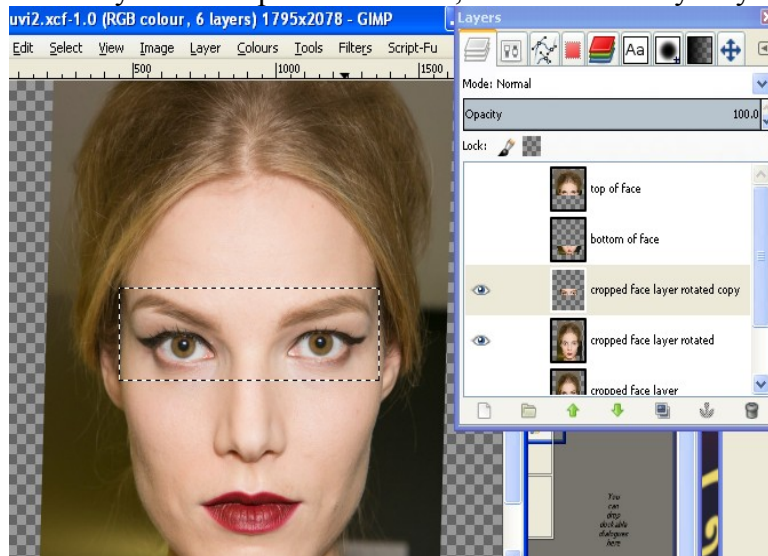


3. Start with the layer with the top of the head. Pick the perspective tool and click the layer. If you're on 2.8 you will get a transformation grid and you can use that. Drag you upper right corner out by the length of two boxes in the grid and then do the same thing for the upper left corner. If you're on 2.6 you won't get the grid and you will have to just drag the two upper corners straight out about 75 pixels. If you want a more dramatic transformation you should undo the transformation (the perspective transformations are messy, so never do more than one on each layer) and try again, dragging the corners out further. We're making a doll's face here, and they are top heavy! Just make sure not to slant the corners upwards or downwards, drag them straight out. When the top of the head is done, move on the bottom part. This will be a bit trickier. Start by setting out some guides for the transformation: one horizontal guide right between the chin and the lower lip first. Then two vertical guides, one on each side of the face, at approximately the same distance from the image edges as your horizontal guide is from the bottom edge of the layer. The guides should form two approximate squares in the bottom corners of the image the visible part of the image, not the transparent parts!) if you've done this right.

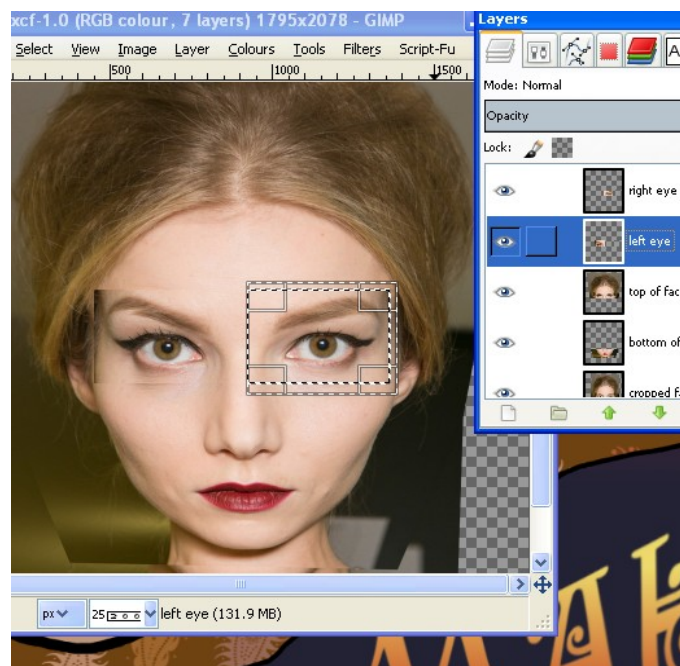


Now click on the layer, still with the perspective tool on, and drag the two bottom corners of the layer to the points where the horizontal and vertical guides meet, that is, drag the left corner of the layer to the point where the left side vertical guide meets the horizontal guide, and then do the corresponding thing on the right side. That's the shape of the face done! You

may have a visible seam where the two layers meet, but leave that for now and we will do some corrective work later. For now, we will make the eyes bigger. Go back to the layer where you had the whole face upscaled. Make a rectangular selection around the eyes, include the eye brows and a little bit of skin below the eyes, but not too much on the sides. Now duplicate the layer and crop it to selection, then move the eye layer to the top.

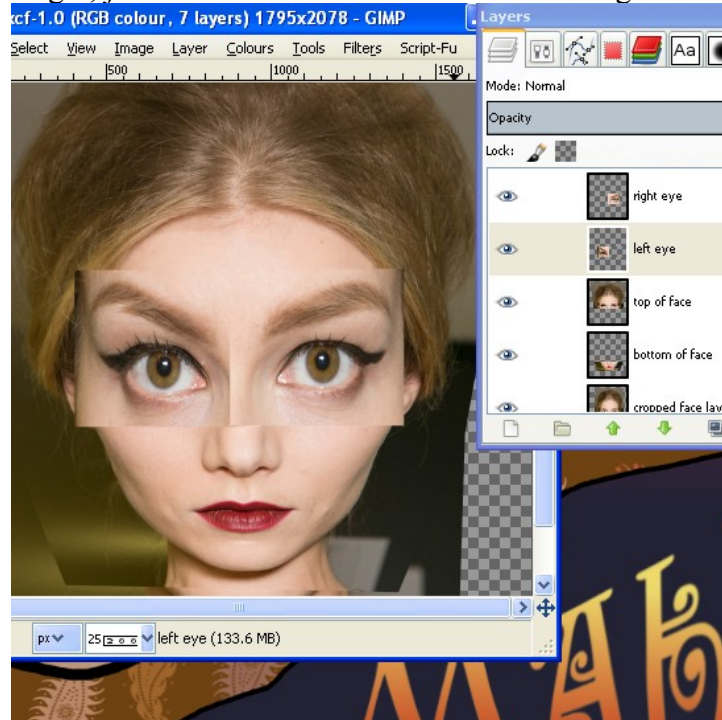


We will split the layer in two, so make a rectangular selection from right between the eyes and including the whole right part of the layer, duplicate the layer and crop to selection, leave the selection on and go back to the uncropped eye layer and press delete. Do an autocrop of the left eye layer, otherwise you will get the scaling wrong.

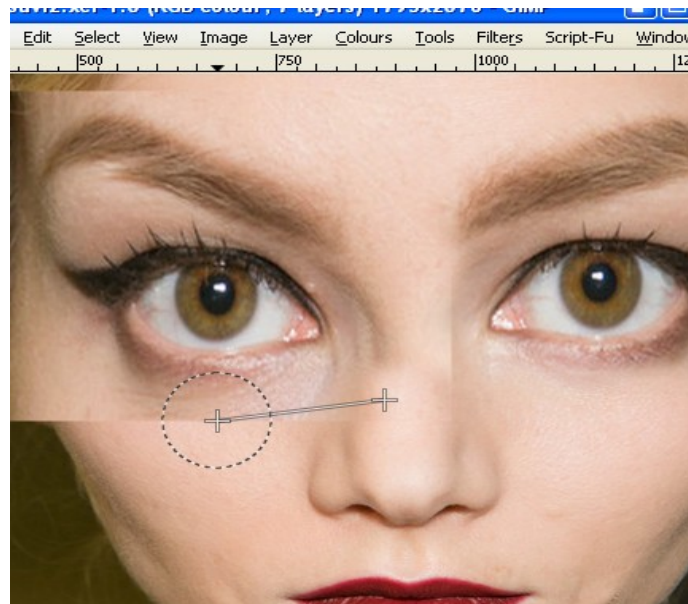


We will scale the eye layers now. How you want to rescale them depends on taste and on what your base image looks like, but here's the settings I start with: upscale each eye layer by 150 height and 120 width. The eye rescaling is difficult to give exact instructions on, because a lot of things need to be taken into consideration. For example, upscaling by 150 px might give a too pixellated and/or blurry result. To some extent you can fix the blur later on, but too much blur and pixellation is not good, so that means you will have to undo and make a less dramatic upscale. Also, minor irregularities in eye size and eye shape are normal in human faces and in natural size they don't bother us. But upscaled to this size they can

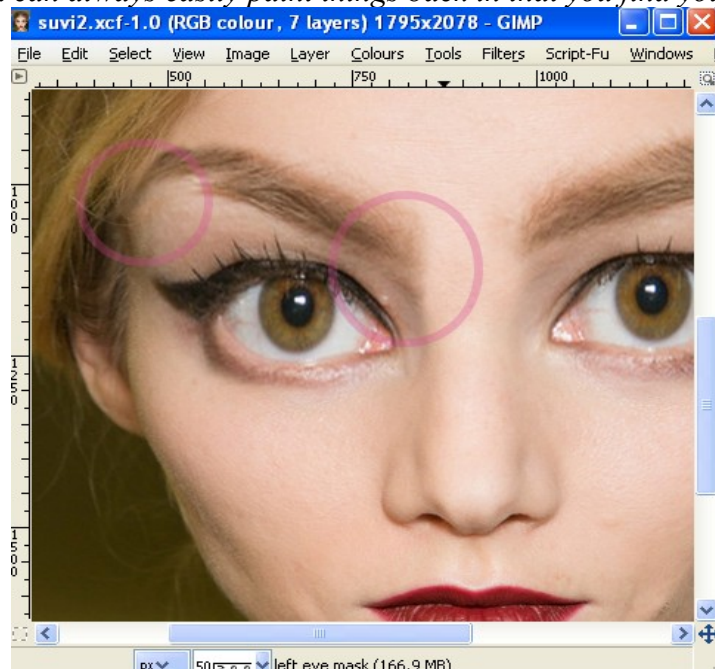
look very disturbing! Fix a size difference by rescaling the eyes differently. Irregularities in shape are harder, if you're good friends with the iwarp filter you could fix it that way, if you're not you might want to rescale less dramatically. My ratio for rescaling is 5/10 height to 2/10 width. I do it that way because on dolls we usually get big, round eyes and human eyes are usually oblong, with height far smaller than width. But of course this also affects the irregularities in size and shape in the original image, so playing around with ratio might help too. If the quality of your base image is good enough you can upscale to as much as 200% on the height, just make sure that the width isn't too big for the face you have.



We will need to give both eye layers a white layer mask, so we can mask off the parts we don't want. First, make both layers image size, then add the white layer masks. What you want to mask off and what you want to keep is always down to your own tastes and preferences and to what best fits your image. I usually find myself masking off all the parts of the nose on the eye layers, as well as anything outside the outer corners of the eyes, so that's where I start. It's usually easiest to turn off the visibility of the left eye layer when you work on the right eye layer and vice versa, since the two layers overlap a bit. I paint out the parts I don't want with the hardest of the three soft brushes, then i use a soft smudge brush on the layer mask to make the transitions smoother. I usually keep the rescaled eyebrows, but sometimes it looks better with the original eyebrows and sometimes I combine them, masking off the rescaled eyebrows only partly. This takes a bit more work, and i often use a bristle brush both for painting and smudging when I do that. Sometimes, (especially with pictures of older persons, where there are a lot of wrinkles around the eyes) I mask off all the skin below the lower eye lashes on both eyes, but sometimes that gives a visible seam. If smudging on the layer mask doesn't fix that, I paint some of the skin back in and that usually helps. While you work, zoom in and zoom out now and then to see both the full scale result of your changes and the impression they give when viewed from a distance. Occasionally you find you will need to move the eye layers about a bit, if they now look to closely set or too far apart.



I'm drawing this stroke on the layer mask – no need to be afraid of big, bold strokes when you work on the mask since you can always easily paint things back in that you find you need.



On my image, I had two main problem areas on the left eye layer, where I had to do a lot of smudging on the layer mask to make the transitions smooth. These problem areas are quite typically where there is a lot of shadow and where hair, jewellery, hats or other objects partly cover the layers. I ended up using a bristle brush to smudge on the layer mask where the hair was and a soft brush with opacity pulled down to 50% at the nose bridge/eye cavity area.

Move on to part 2!