

Faux 1960s Fanzine Process

This document's intended to outline the process I developed in the mid-2010s to produce artwork pages with the look and feel of fanzines created in the 1960s and 1970s when mimeography was a standard way of creating such publications for (reasonably) inexpensive distribution.

Background

Since most of you who are ever going to see this are friends of Taral's, I think the best place to begin the whole thing is to mention that he, and his period fanzines, were my inspiration. I started producing and sharing artwork semi-seriously at the beginning of the 90s when I was studying animation in college. Somewhere along the line, Taral took notice of my artwork and I was summoned to an audience at his apartment. I was already aware of his artwork and self-published booklets, so for me it was impressive and a little flattering to be invited down to meet him and talk shop.

In the course of getting to know one another, Taral passed along to me at some point about a half a dozen leftover copies of his fanzines from the 1970s. The charms for me were both the 'from a different age' items themselves and the opinions expressed in them from back at a time when he was just starting out. I held onto them for a long time, but a couple of moves seem to have lost them to me. Still, I never forgot them and I did a little research online looking for other examples, and decided to try my hand at doing something like capturing the look by more modern, less messy, less frustrating means. And this was the process I came up with.

Art Prep

So let's say, for whatever reason, I've decided the image below is the one I want to turn into a faux woodcut and place in a faked-up 1970-era fanzine. For what it's worth, this character is Clarke "8Ball" Waterdown, an anthropomorphic border col-lie.



There's a lot of colour information here that, obviously, wouldn't be able to make the leap into a mimeoed fanzine. I decided what would have been important to me, at the time, would have been to keep the shading information that conveys volume and contour. Since I do my shading on layers separate from the flat colours, this is an easy thing to separate out. So preparing this drawing for the process basically entails exporting three images from it: the background itself, the shading information on 8Ball, and the linework that defines him.

Opening the source file with all the layers in Clip Studio Paint is the first step.

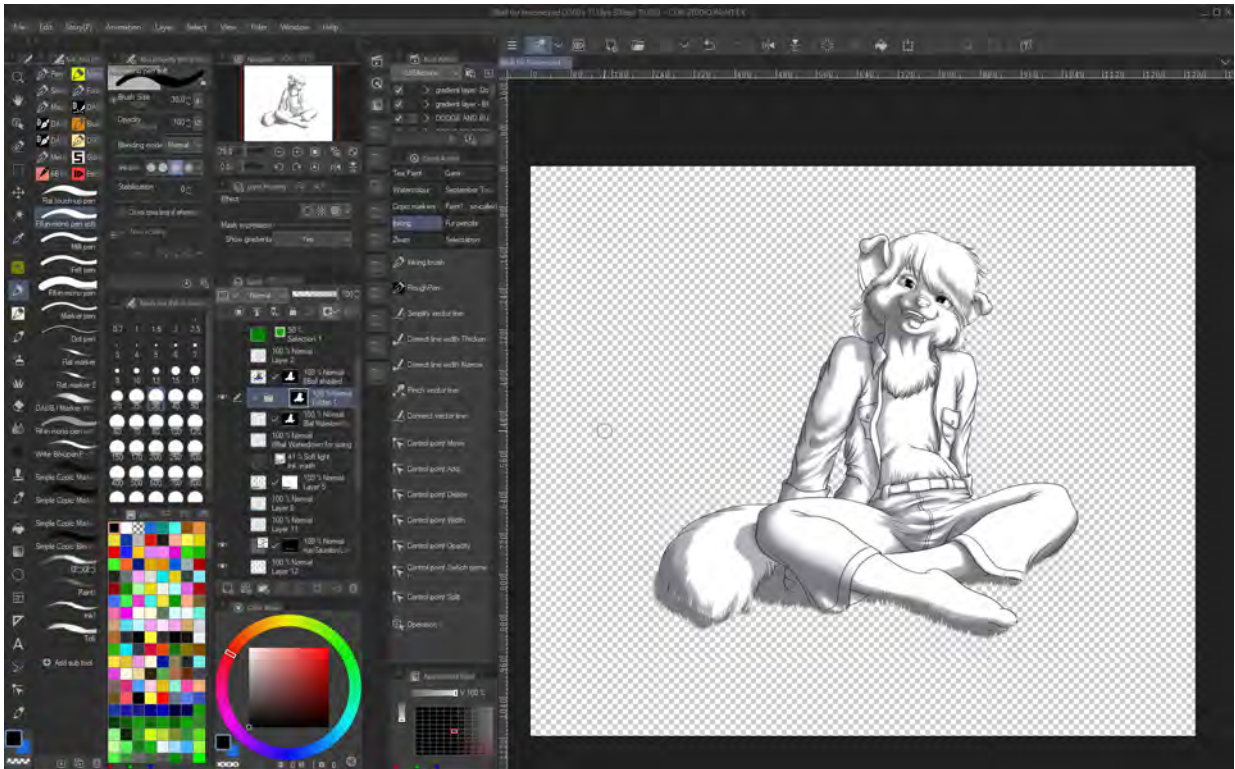


Next, cropping the image to just what I actually want to convert, and then resizing it down to 1300 pixels or so across the longest edge. This is the size that I've learned through trial and error seems to yield the best results with the processes that have to be applied to the artwork to get the look of the woodcut style.

At this point, I usually start working with a copy of the file so I don't risk permanently changing or damaging the original if anything goes wrong.



Since the figure's colour information really can't be portrayed in mimeoed fanzine (at least, not believably), I discard it by duplicating the flats and filling them with white. I have to fill the pupils in again, but otherwise, the figure is essentially just a white shape onto which the shading information is applied. These layers are copied and pasted into a separate document, which is then saved in Photoshop format to be opened and used in that application later.

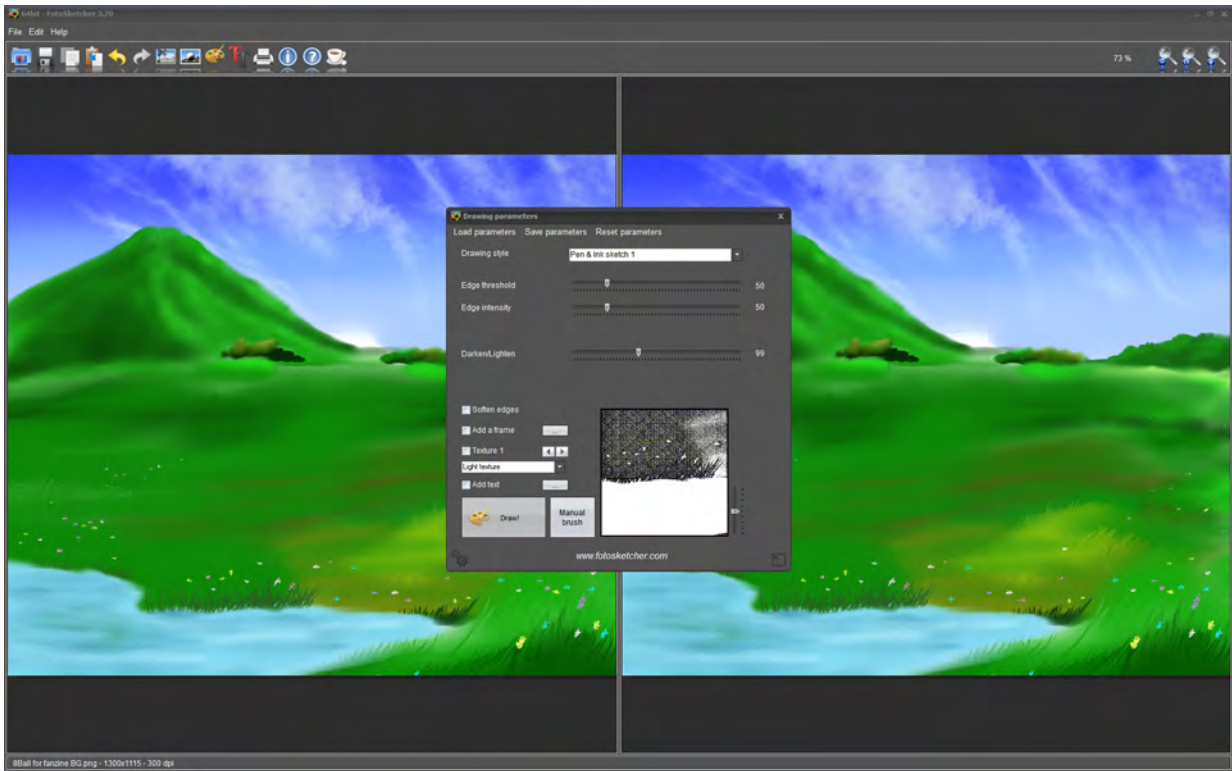


Everything is hidden except the layers that make up the background. These are exported as a PNG for processing in FotoSketcher later.



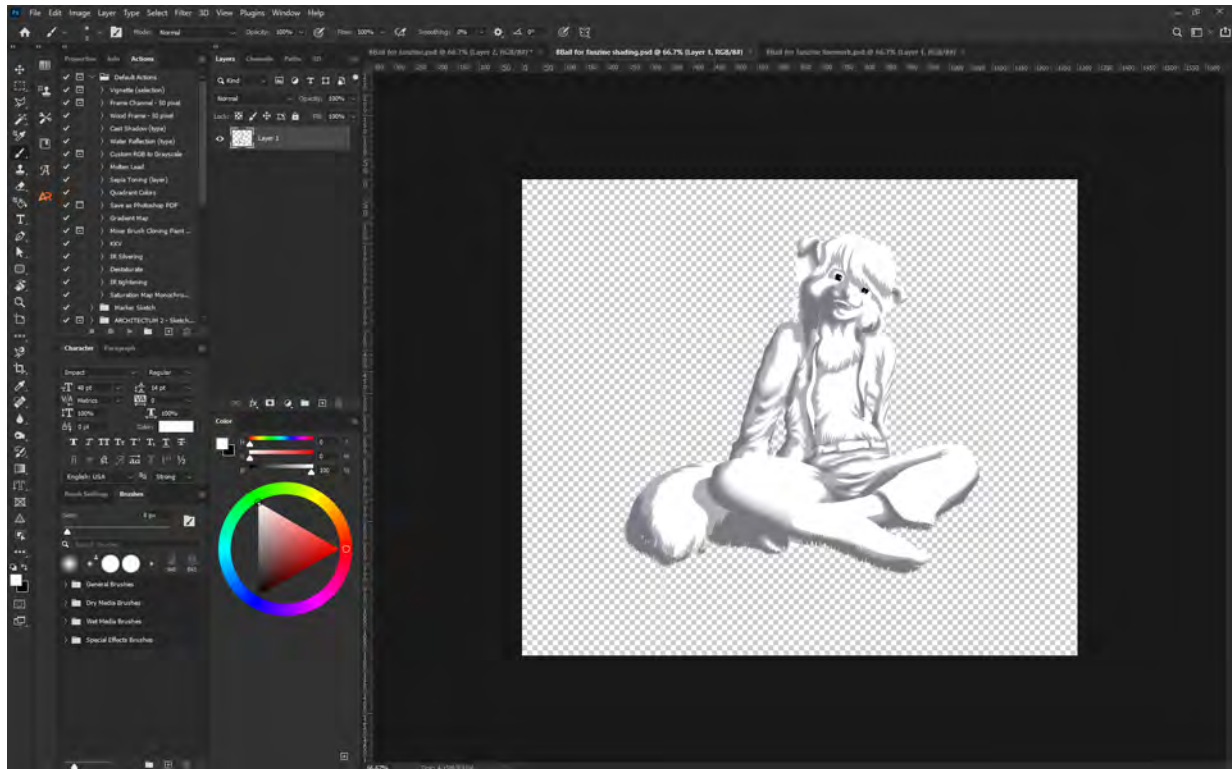
Creating the Woodcut Images: Background

The background is opened in an application called FotoSketcher, and the **Drawing Style** *Pen & Ink sketch 1* is applied to the artwork, which is then exported as a PNG with a different name. The **Darken/Lighten** slider value often has to be adjusted in order to achieve the proper balance and get the desired output. This new file will be brought into Photoshop for compositing later.



Creating the Woodcut Images: Figure

The Photoshop document containing 8Ball's shading and linework information is opened in Photoshop now. The linework layer is turned off and flattened duplicate file showing just the white fill and shading information is created and saved.



Creating the Woodcut Images: Figure

Likewise, another duplicate document showing only 8Ball's linework is created and saved. The reason this has to be done is that if the woodcut process is run on a figure including its linework, the linework is converted as part of the process and gets lost as simply more of the woodcut shadow effect. It has to be preserved so it can be reintroduced to the result at the end of the process.



A set of actions called Super Engraver is opened, and **Style 1 Medium** is applied to the flattened figure shading layer, producing the woodcut look. The file is saved.

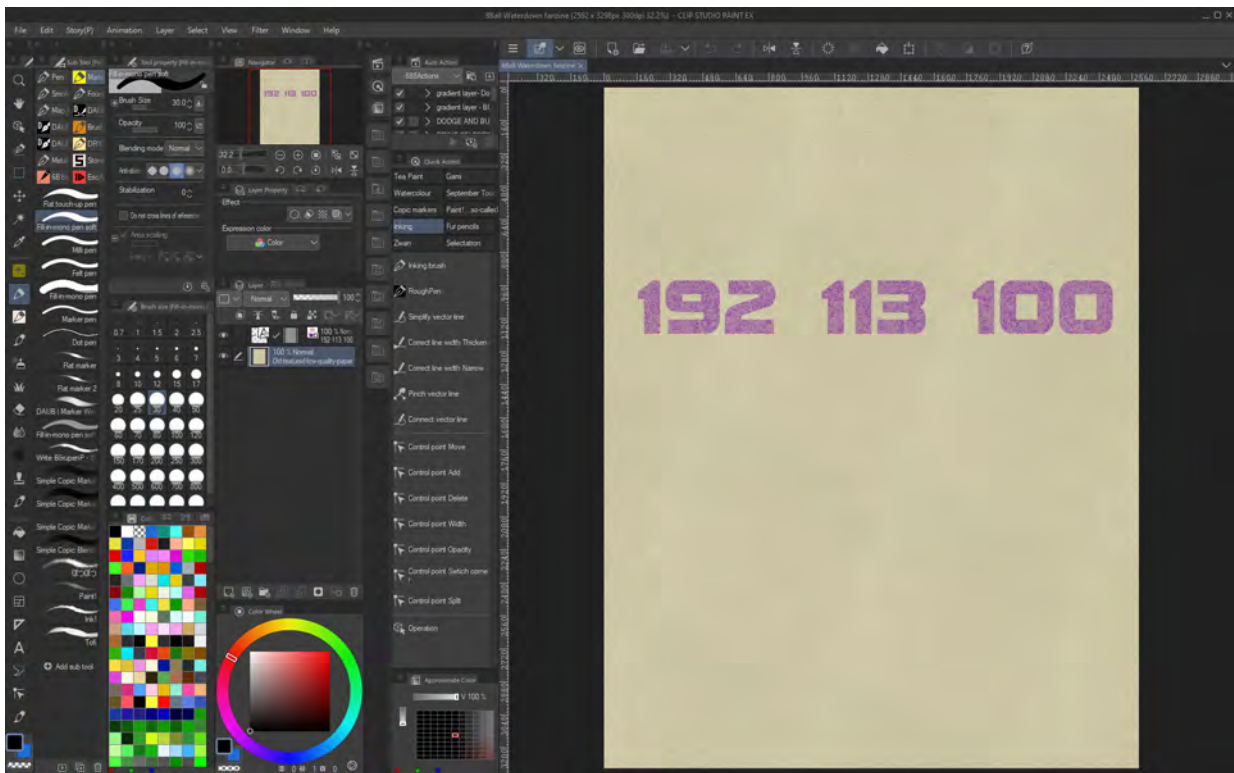
The linework layer, preserved in the other file, is then copied and pasted into place over the woodcut, giving the character definition. Working at this resolution, the woodcut effect tends to closely match the penciled outlines of the figure, so the overall effect is that of something drawn with the same implement for both the linework outlining the character and the crosshatching that shades him.

This file is now saved and also exported as a PNG for compositing in Clip Studio Paint.

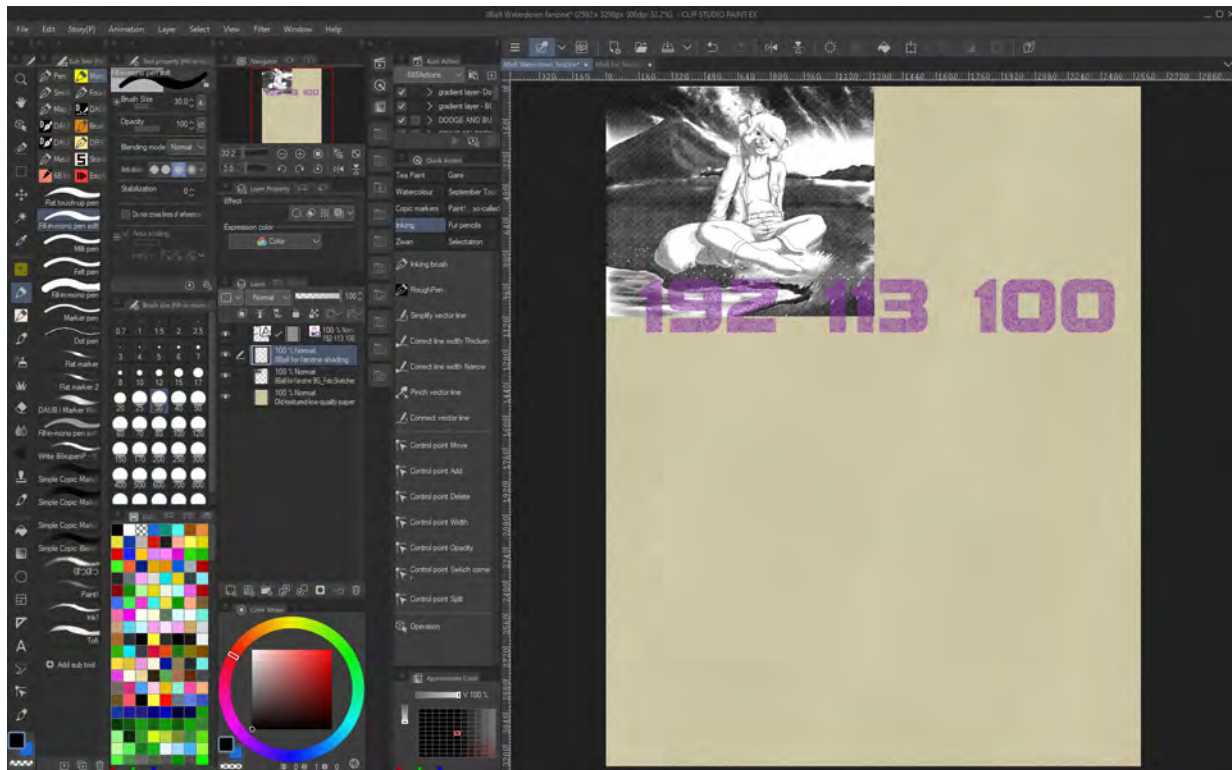


Compositing the Layers in Clip Studio Paint

Back to Clip Studio Paint again for compositing these separate files. I have a template I use for this that includes scanned manila paper that serves as the pages of the magazine. As well, there is sample layer that includes both the colour settings for a typical purple mimeo stencil and the masking that gives it the partial-absorption distressed look.



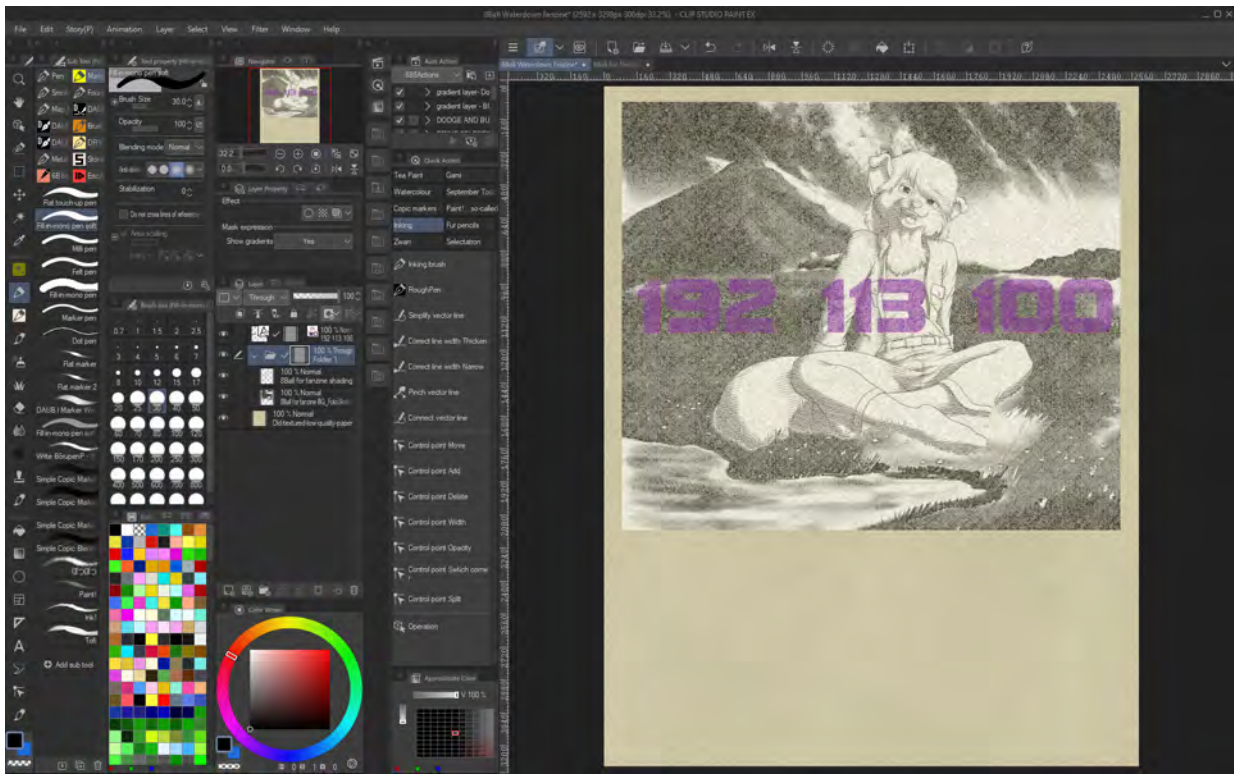
The Photoshop document with the figure and the PNG of the background are opened and composited. Since they're the same size, they typically match up exactly. These are then copied as two separate layers and pasted into the template.



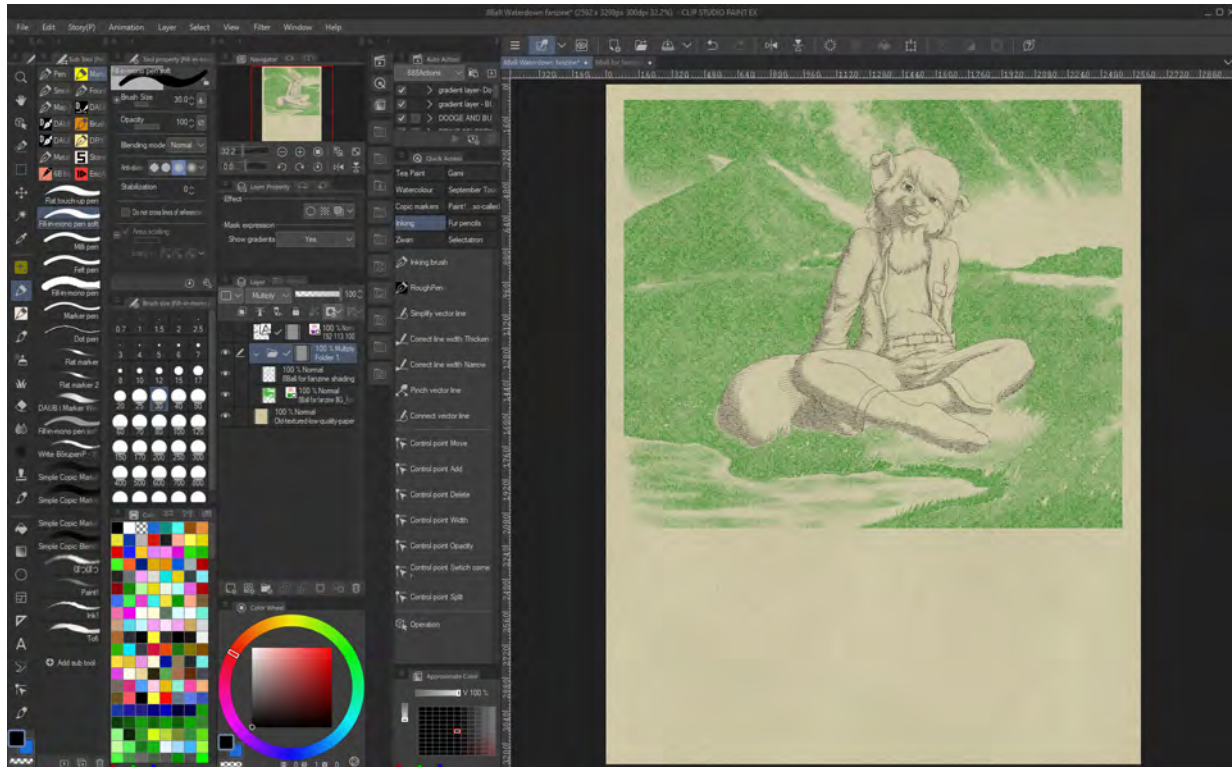
Compositing the Layers in Clip Studio Paint

These two layers are then drag-resized to suit the dimensions required; typically, the width of the page. Since we're looking for a fairly distressed effect in the first place, it really doesn't matter in this case that I'm working from small to large. In fact, the resulting loss of crispness may even enhance the illusion a bit.

A folder is created and these two layers are moved into it. The layer itself set to *Multiply*, causing the white areas to appear transparent to the background, and the mask on the sample layer is made into an active selection and then applied to the artwork folder, giving a non-destructive distressed look to both the background and the figure.



Different colours can now be applied to different aspects of the artwork. Since 8Ball and his background are on separate layers, a different colour can be applied to each. A layer in Clip Studio Paint has a property called **Layer Color** that can be toggled on and off. When it's on, you can apply any single colour you want to that layer and all aspects of it will take on that colour. (This is non-destructive and can be tweaked, completely changed, or turned off altogether.) In this case, I decided to make the background green, but to keep a basic black for 8Ball himself. The idea here is to suggest the person creating the fanzine did a couple of separate stencil runs; one of a green stencil for his background, and one of a black stencil for the figure.



Compositing the Layers in Clip Studio Paint

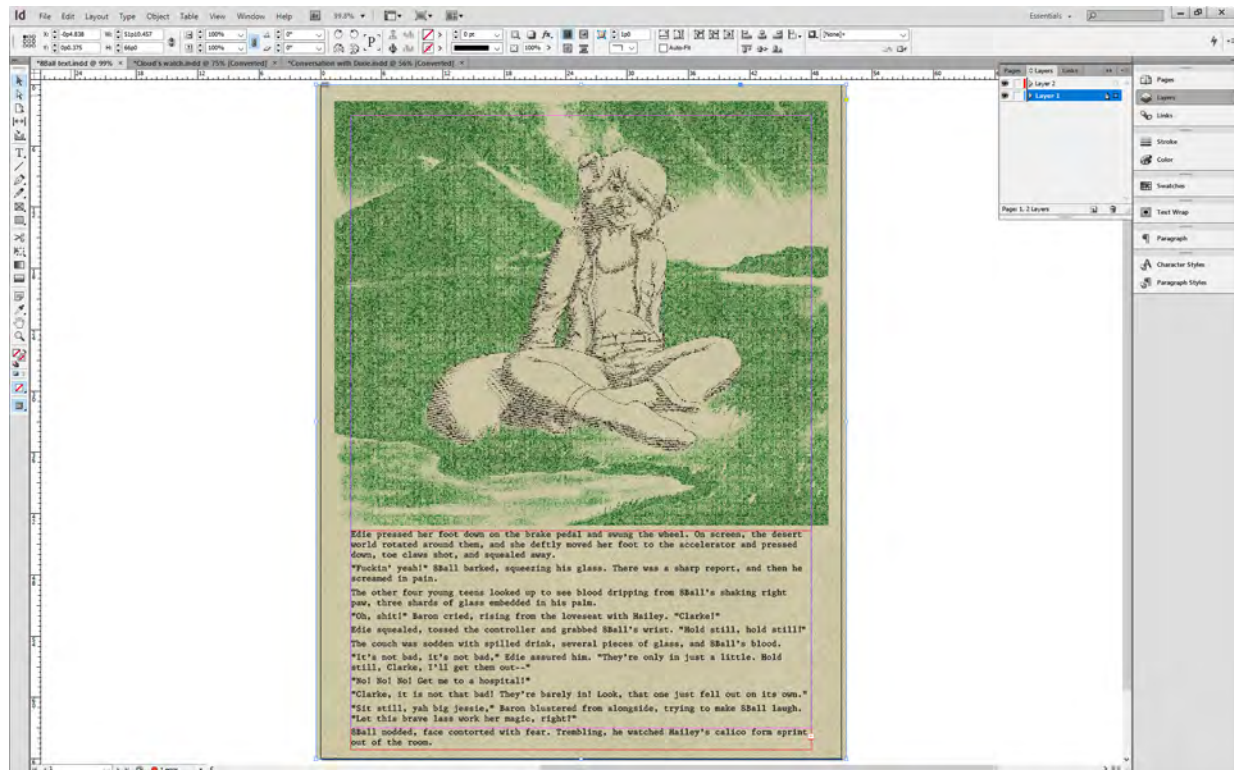
As a last pass, I decided to apply a Tonal Correction layer to the folder to darken, and thus strengthen, the artwork a little.

Now the document is saved, and PNG version is exported to be used as a guide for setting the text in InDesign.



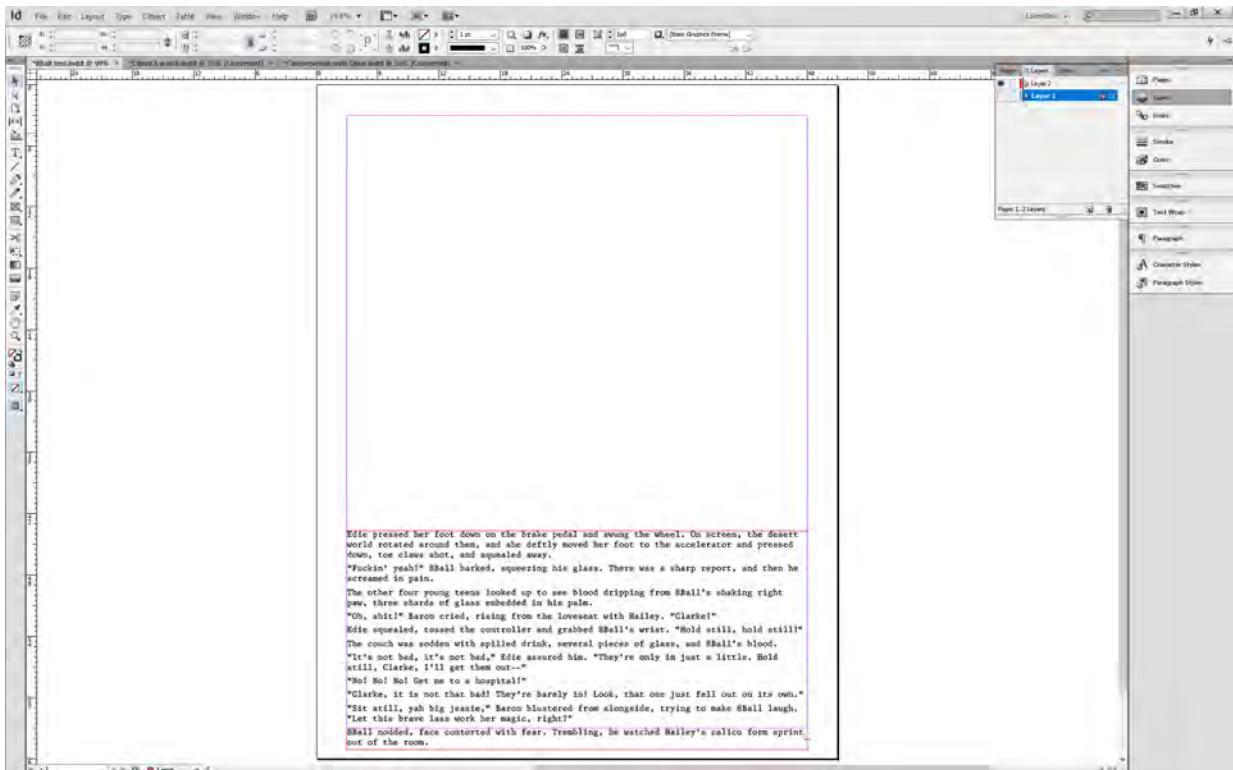
Setting the Text in InDesign

The next step in the process is to open InDesign and create a new document for setting the text. The easiest way to do this is to import the composited page and resize it to fit the document page so I have a solid idea of exactly how much room I have to work with and where the text column needs to be. To give the text the look of having been stencilled using an old standard typewriter, I've chosen a monospaced font called King designed to give the impression of typewritten text.



Setting the Text in InDesign

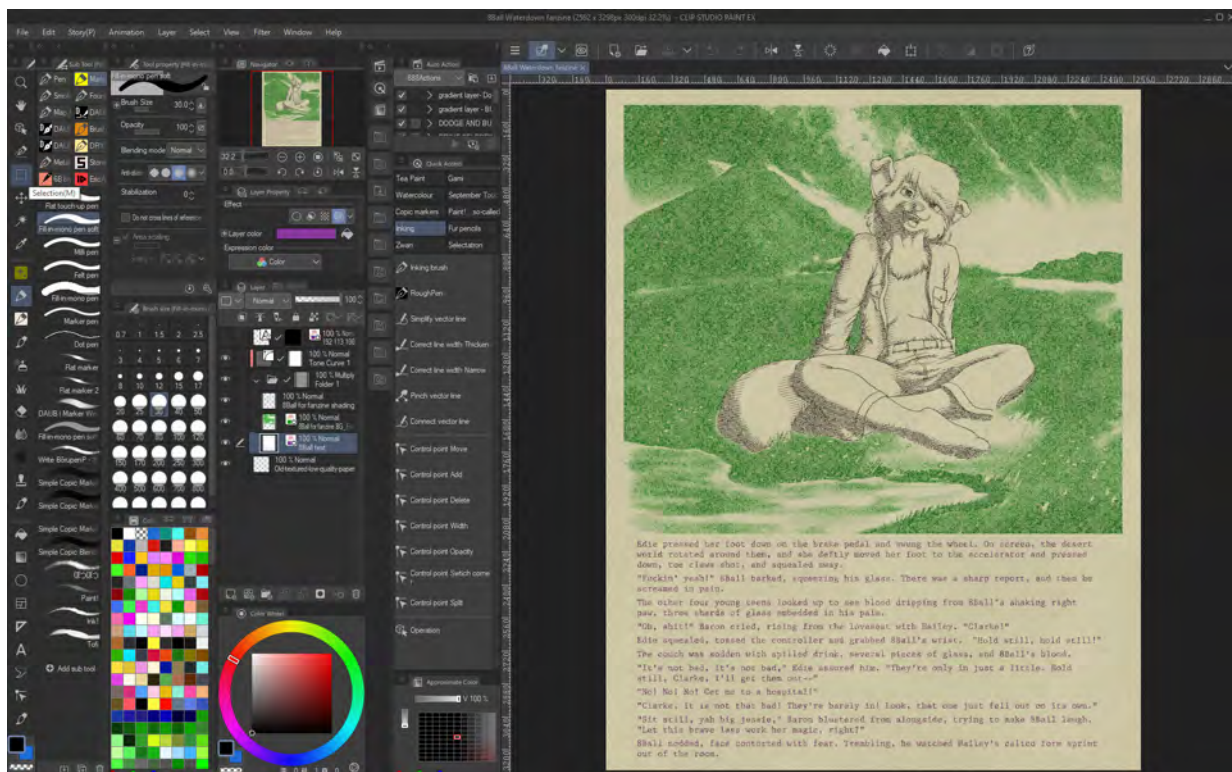
The next step is to turn off the graphics layer being used as a guide and export the text to a PNG that can be imported into Clip Studio Paint and used as a layer in the compositing document.



Compositing the Text in Clip Studio Paint

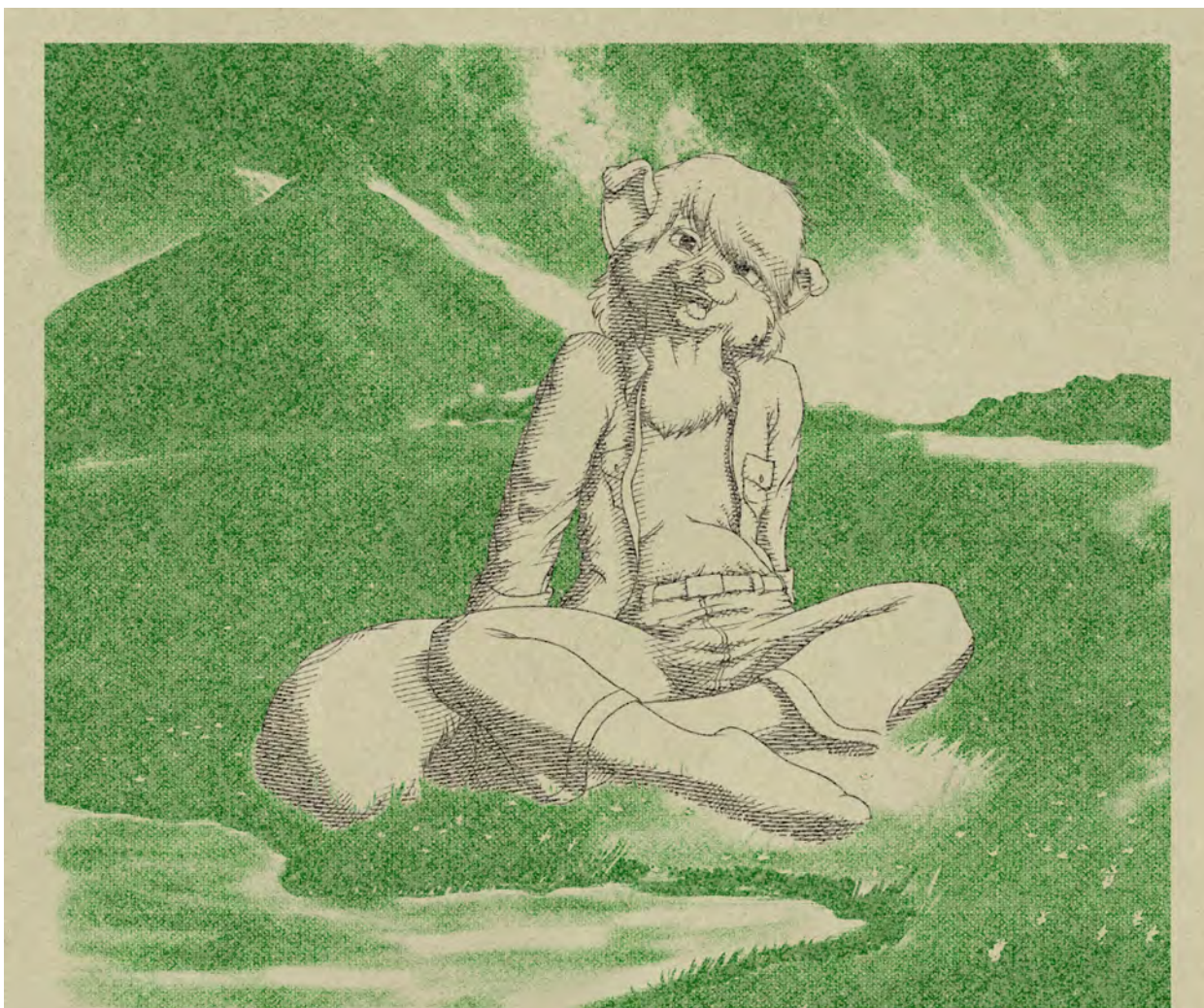
Back to Clip Studio Paint one last time. The last step in the process involves opening the text exported as a PNG and placing it as a layer in the folder containing the artwork, where *Multiply* and the distress making get applied to it automatically. It's moved to the bottom of the stack so that it doesn't overlay either the background or the character. This time I set the layer colour to the RGB values from the sample layer that approximate the old purple mimeograph sheets that we all got in school; reputedly favoured because they were the ones that you got the most prints out. Seems as good a reason as any to go with it.

The document being completed, the layered source file is saved, and a flattened PNG version of the artwork is then exported for addition as a page in the faux 1970s fanzine.



The Completed Project

And the final page, exported as a PNG, looks like this.



Eddie pressed her foot down on the brake pedal and swung the wheel. On screen, the desert world rotated around them, and she deftly moved her foot to the accelerator and pressed down, toe claws shot, and squealed away.

"Fuckin' yeah!" 8Ball barked, squeezing his glass. There was a sharp report, and then he screamed in pain.

The other four young teens looked up to see blood dripping from 8Ball's shaking right paw, three shards of glass embedded in his palm.

"Oh, shit!" Baron cried, rising from the loveseat with Hailey. "Clarke!"

Eddie squealed, tossed the controller and grabbed 8Ball's wrist. "Hold still, hold still!"

The couch was sodden with spilled drink, several pieces of glass, and 8Ball's blood.

"It's not bad, it's not bad," Eddie assured him. "They're only in just a little. Hold still, Clarke, I'll get them out--"

"No! No! No! Get me to a hospital!"

"Clarke, it is not that bad! They're barely in! Look, that one just fell out on its own."

"Sit still, yah big jessie," Baron blustered from alongside, trying to make 8Ball laugh.

"Let this brave lass work her magic, right?"

8Ball nodded, face contorted with fear. Trembling, he watched Hailey's calico form sprint out of the room.