

Adobe® Illustrator® CS5 How-To Guide

Crowd

by Joel Cocks

Joel is a graphic designer from New Zealand, recently relocated to Melbourne, Australia. After graduating from Massey University with a BDes with Honors in early 2009, he has worked for a number of local and international clients, including Threadless, Dan Deacon, the Dave Matthews Band, and the New Zealand Green Party.

Joel is inspired by tea, supermarkets, and the work of British photographer Martin Parr. He says, "Like every designer, my biggest fantasy is to make record covers, more specifically to make record covers for the Icelandic experimental pop singer Bjork."



“The theme ‘Depth of Expression’ instantly made me think of body language. A person’s subtle facial expression or posture can reveal a great deal about them.”

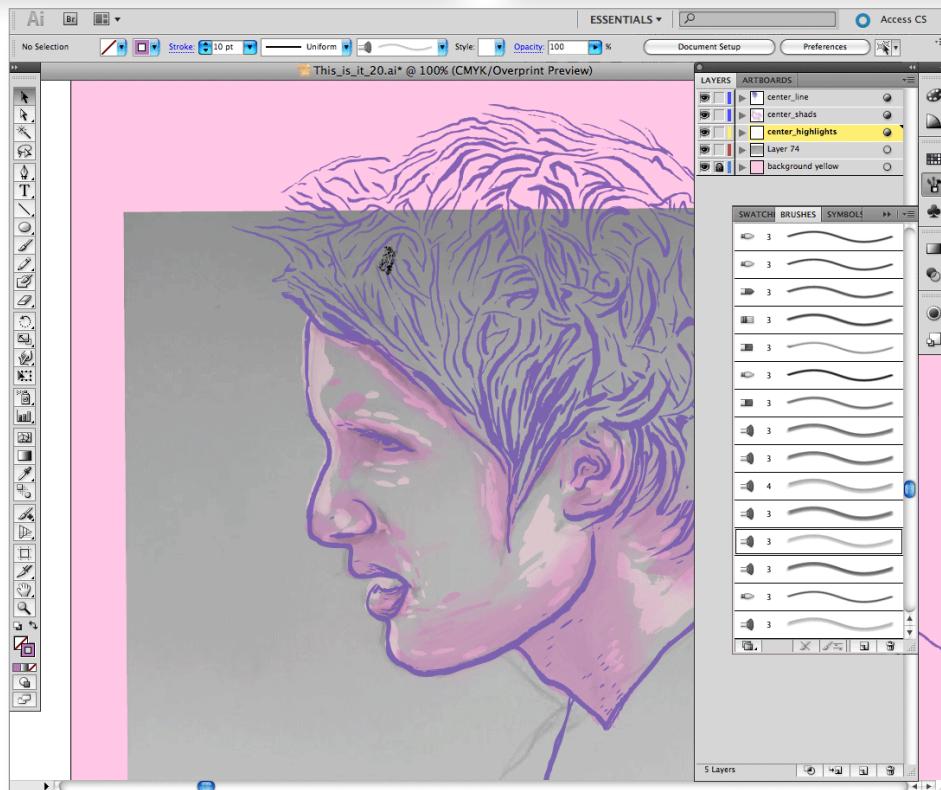
How I work

With my design work, I don't believe in having a fixed style. I use whatever visual style is needed to best realize the concept. Form should always follow function. Nowadays I think a lot more is expected of the designer and you have to be fluent in many different mediums. In the last year my work has included aspects of typographic design, illustration, photography, set design, costume design and sculpture.

The inspiration for *Crowd*

The inspiration for this particular piece came after moving to a big city and noticing the way that, at rush hour, people just melt into crowds and become one big, flowing mass. I was interested in the paradox that people are so physically close yet completely isolated from one another. I used the transparent body as a metaphor for this—our bones being our most internal fundamental structure but at the same time symbolizing anonymity.





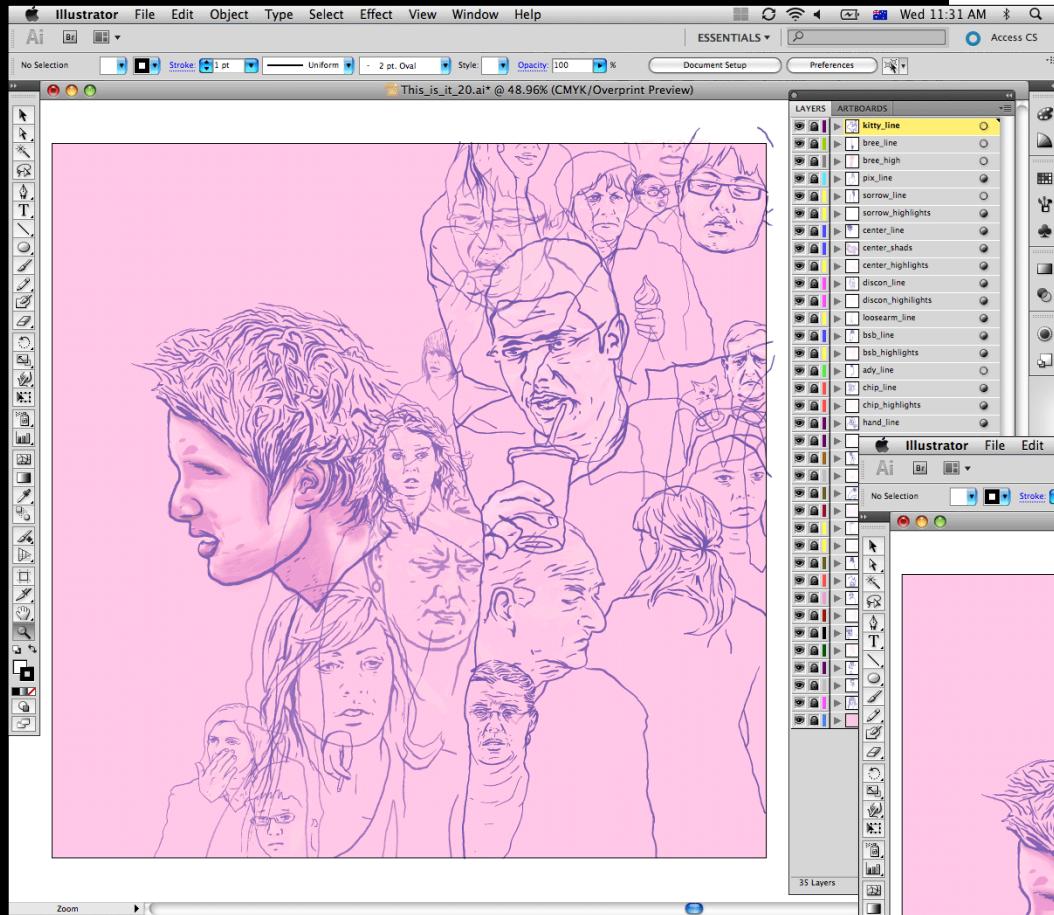
Getting started

I photographed my sketches and imported them into Illustrator. I made a new layer above the image for the line work began "inking" in using the Blob Brush tool. I experimented a lot at this stage and make changes over the original sketch where I needed to.

Beneath the line work I created another layer and, selecting a color slightly darker than the background, I used the Blob Brush tool again to ink in the shadows.

The Bristle Brush

I made a Bristle Brush and used this to soften up the shadows. I next added highlight color and used the Bristle Brush again to get the softness I wanted.

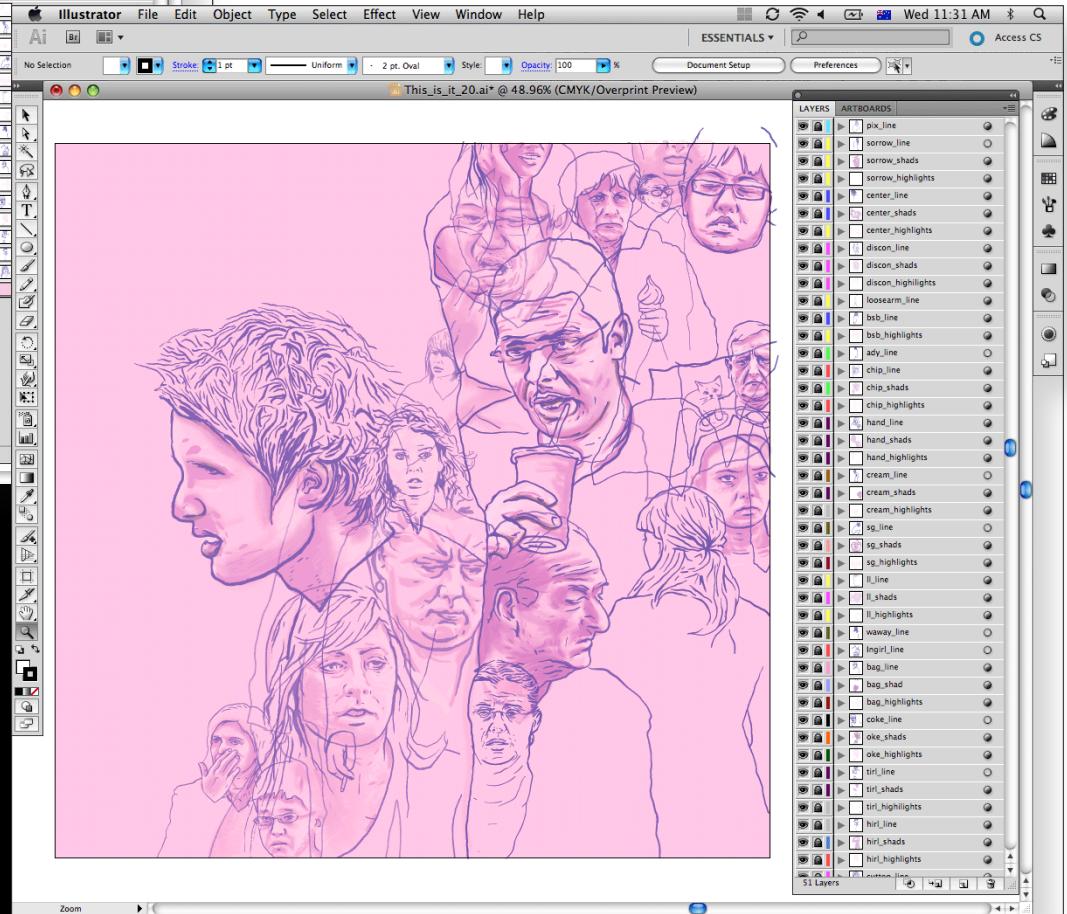


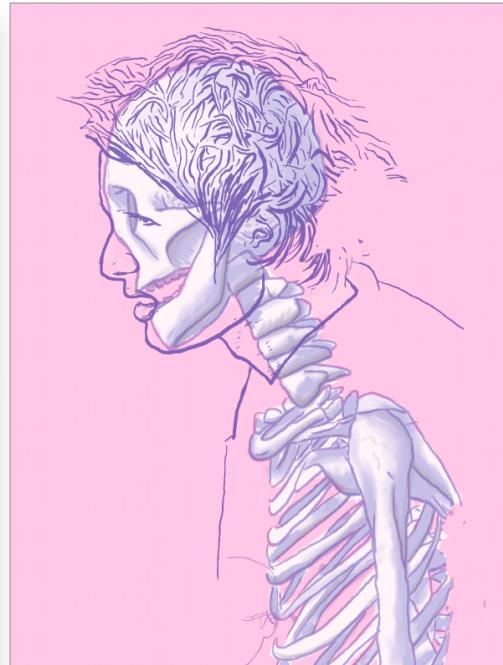
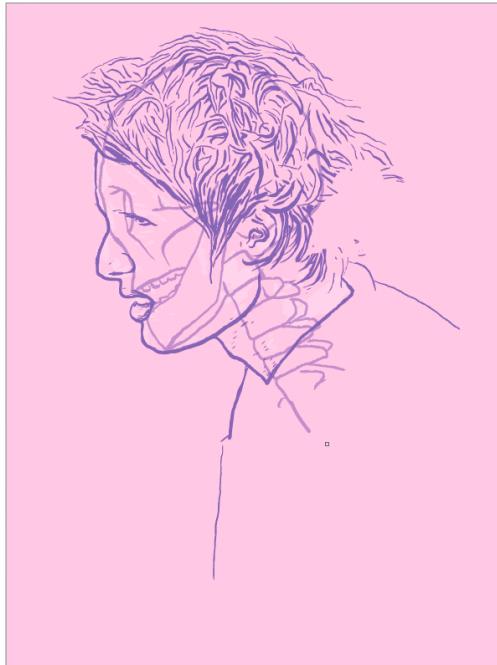
Drawing the crowd

Next, I inked in the lines for all the other faces in the crowd using the same method as for the first face. I built up layer upon layer of these figures so that I could manipulate them easily. I then arranged them into a composition I liked, varying the opacities of the layers to create depth.

I added the shading on the other faces using the Blob Brush tool and the Bristle Brush.

“Body language has especially fascinated me since I moved to Melbourne, where at the busiest time of day people appear to move in swarms. Individuals melt into the crowd and the crowd takes on an expression of its own.”





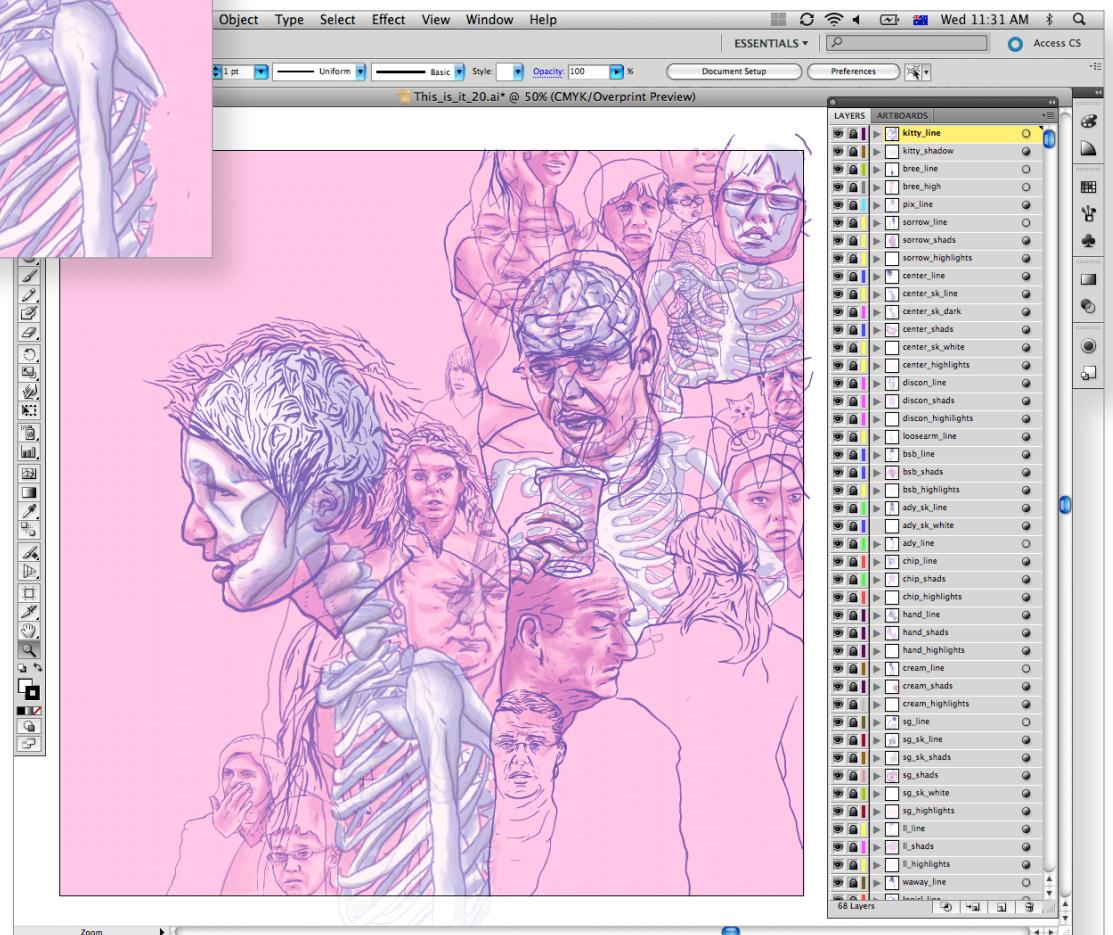
“A big crowd is expressive in many ways, but I wanted to address the opposing elements of intimacy and anonymity when people are so close physically but at the same time completely isolated.”

The skeletons

The next step was to draw in the skeletons, which I did on a slightly transparent layer.

I created a new layer beneath the skeleton line work and filled it with white, then made a layer on top of that and drew in the shadows using the Bristle Brush.

I repeated this for the two other characters where I wanted to have bones showing.

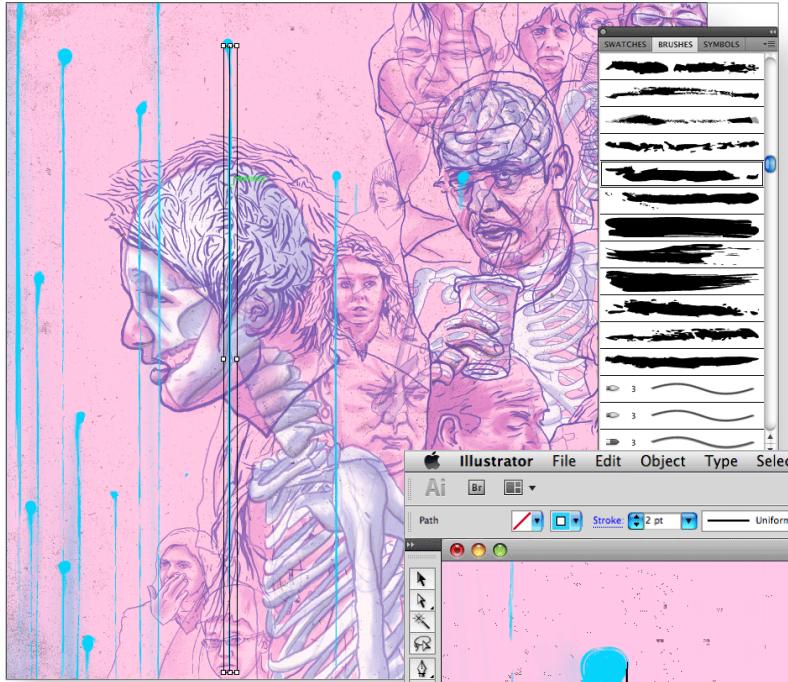


The background

To better emphasize the characters, I outlined two blank areas in the composition, one on the left and one on the bottom right. I filled the areas with a lighter color, to set off the area with the detail.

I wanted a more interesting surface look, so I created a texture in Adobe Photoshop. I imported it into Illustrator, placing it onto the top layer. I set the Blending Mode to Multiply and dropped the opacity of the layer so it was not too overpowering.

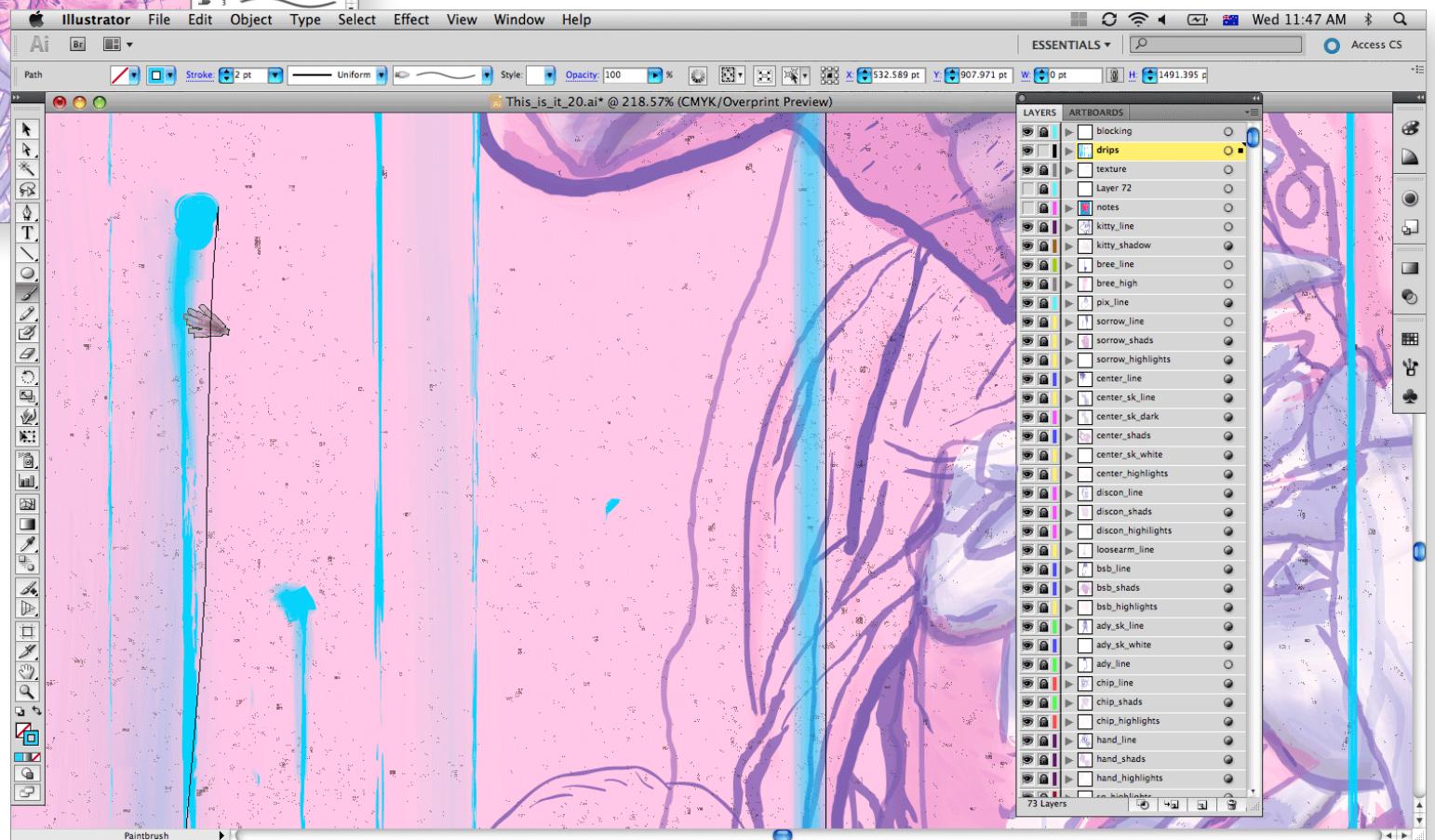
"A crowd of people with their bodies at different levels of transparency is an interesting way to reveal sameness in a mass of individuals."



Finishing with dripping paint

To finish the piece, I created some paint drips in the foreground. I first used the line tool to draw vertical lines. Then, I opened up the painterly set of brushes in the brush library, and applied different brushes to the lines.

I completed the drips by using the Bristle Brush at varying sizes and transparencies to soften up the strokes a bit and to create more depth.



Crowd was commissioned by Adobe and created using Adobe Illustrator CS5.

For more information
Product details:
www.adobe.com/illustrator



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