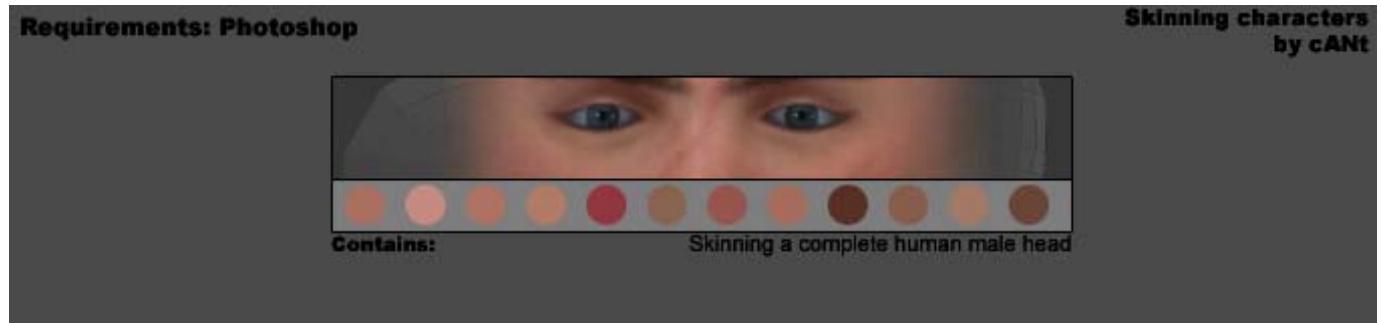


Texturing Workshop:

Creating a photo-realistic human face

By **cANt** (as posted in CGTalk.com Forum)



Since I am currently working on a realistic skin for a low-polygon character, I thought it might be a good idea to share the progress and to sum it up into a tutorial. Many people still have problems with drawing a quite realistic looking head, and so this tutorial maybe will help out. I have been skinning characters for some time now and liked to share this technique with you, maybe you will find it useful.

This is not a tutorial for bloody beginners, I won't describe every layer I place, or the exact settings of the tools. Generally I make a new layer for every step I do. Try to be a bit individual.

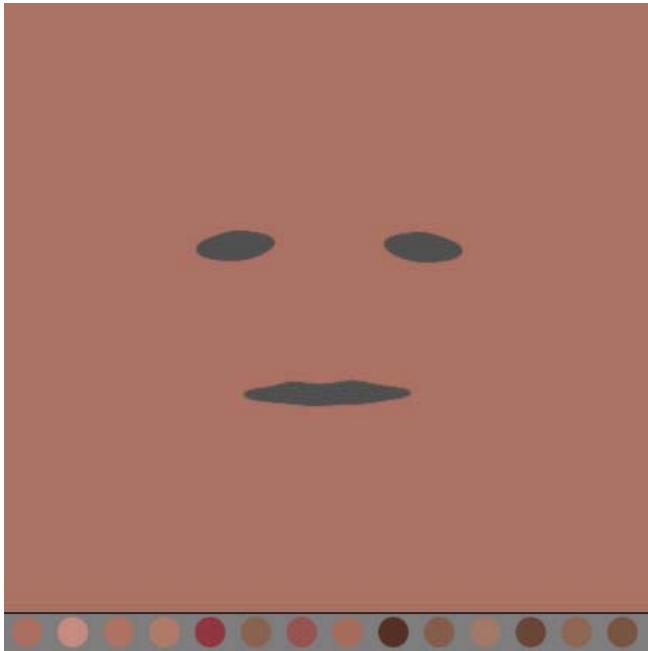
I learnt a lot of technique by looking on other skins from famous artists, this might be a beginning download some skins and look how they might have been doing this.

Requirements:

- A version of Photoshop (7.0 recommended)
- Some basic experience, e.g. how to handle tools
- Be able to create your own layers
- maybe some skill

Part 1.

Setting up the skin and drawing a half-shaved beard and chin



1. The very first step is to create a palette that we will use for our head. I created this one that I included in my image in order to pick them every time I need. Then it is quite important to get a fitting background color. I decided for RGB (172 114 100) and filled the whole image with it. Now take a close look to your unwrapped mesh in order to see where are important things such as the eyes and the mouth. I made some quick selections and added a superior layer to fill these with a good visible color. First step is done now.



2. Now it's already getting a bit difficult. We now take a quite lake and low opacity pencil and create a general shape of the whole face. Remember to make the forehead in brighter colors than the chin for example. Also the eye sockets need to be in some brighter colors while the cheeks need to be some kind of reddish. I also

decided to do a half-shaved beard. You maybe need to spend some time with this because it's quite important for the following steps. Now a quite useful trick. In order to make the skin look a bit irregular and meaty, create a new layer select the whole image and press 'q'. You are now in the selection mode and can paint your selection. When you press 'q' again he creates the selection you have just painted. Well before pressing 'q' again we first need to create our selection. Go to the pixelate-filters and choose Mezzotint. Don't frighten now because the whole image is kind of reddish looking we will soon change it. Ok now press q again and you have a quite cool selection. Now we simply need to reverse the selection and fill it with a reddish color. Play around with the opacity of the layer now till you get your desired result.



3. In this first step of the tutorial I will only care for the chin and the beard. Other steps will follow soon. Choose a darker brown out of your palette and care for the chin. Remember to do darken the parts quite a lot that are just below the chin. For the first step of the beard we simply paint with some kind of brownish looking color around the cheeks. Now you need to be a bit individual. You need to develop an idea of where the beard will be, also be creative with picking the desired pencils. We won't always use the default pencil but also look around for others. Looks ok so far? Then just follow with the next step.



4. This step is quite simple, just select your burn and dodge tools and play around a bit on the chin and the

throat, till you get the desired result. I took quite a lot effort in defining the area around the chin to make it look more 3-dimensional. When finished follow the next step.



5. After finishing you duplicate the whole layer and go to the layer options. Copy both layer into another, it will look quite over-saturated now. So just decrease the saturation of the second layer and play around with the opacity. Try to give the beard more style now. Remember that the hairy effect comes through the combination of blurry parts and stoppy ones. I tried to work with more stoppy brushes on the borders of the beard and make it more blurry in the centers. Just take you time till you are satisfied.



6. Now just give the beard and chin more definition. I selected the burn and dodge tool on quite a little brush size and low opacity and added a little more contrast to some parts. Also add some skin tones right above the skin to boost the half-shaved look.

Part 2

Here is described how you mainly get the skin look more meaty and how to improve the beard and create a fitting mouth.



7. No let's work a bit on his forehead. Since it is a bit protruding we need to make it brighter. I also worked around on the areas around his eyes and his cheek and redefined his eyes. There is nothing much to say on this step because it is just upgrades on the stuff I said before.



8. This step is quite simple, too but took a bit of time. I redefined the color of his beard in order to make it look more realistic. Just keep watching und see what has changed. These steps here are only showing little progress, I mostly call it "adapting". It's just that everything harmonizes together quite well.

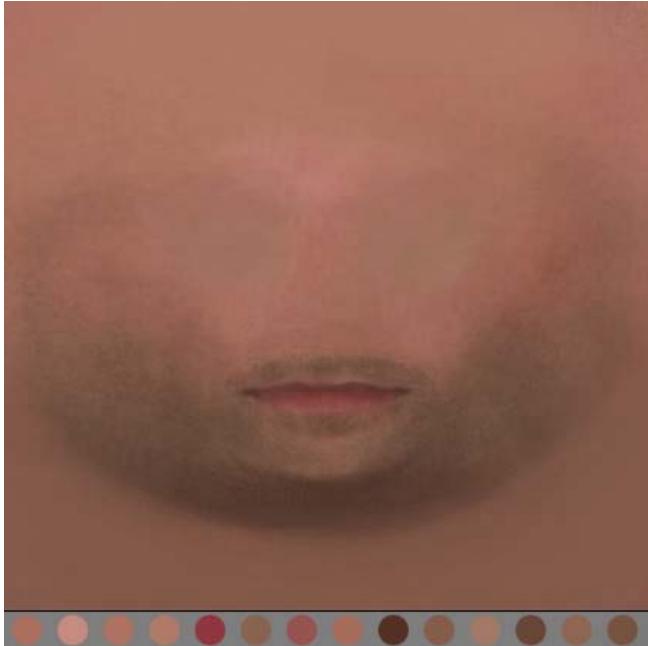


9. Now lets work a bit on the mouth. While the mouth itself is quite simple to do it needs a little time to get it fitting well with the skin surrounding it. For doing this it good to erase the edges of the mouth with a little eraser brush. Finally make the skin around the mouth look much more bright. I added a lot more detail to the skin by using the same method I described in step two (the thing with the 'q'), try it out in out till you are satisfied in order to go forward.

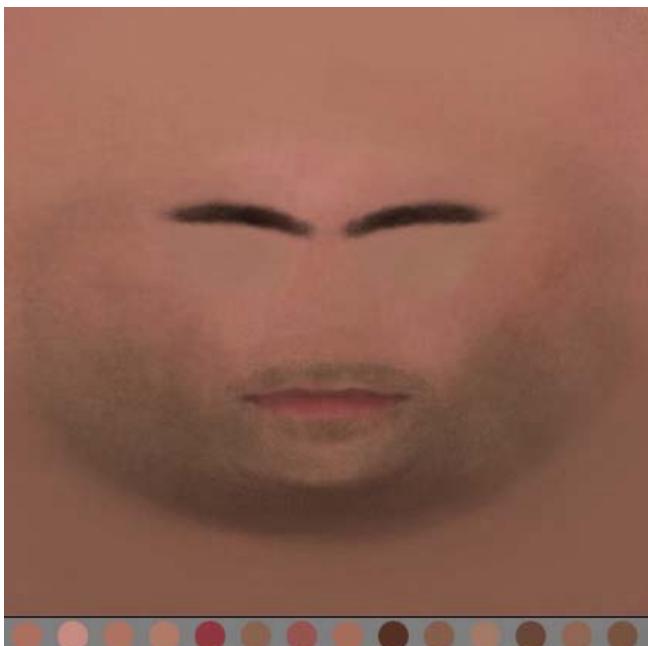
In step 9 I described how I added this meaty look to the skin. Of cause there are many other possibilities, too. One of the most simple ones is to take a look at Google and search for some skin references there. When you found some just lay them above your skin and copy them together. The image might look quite over-saturated now, because Photoshop adds together both saturations. You may now need to desaturate the whole image now until you have your former skin color, but now you should have some nice details in the skin, too. Feel free to repeat this step as often you want with different images, but also take care for that you image does not contain too much details and so looks too rough. Never exaggerate with details and just place them where they are necessary. Ok now let's just go on with the mouth and the beard that is still too inconspicuous.



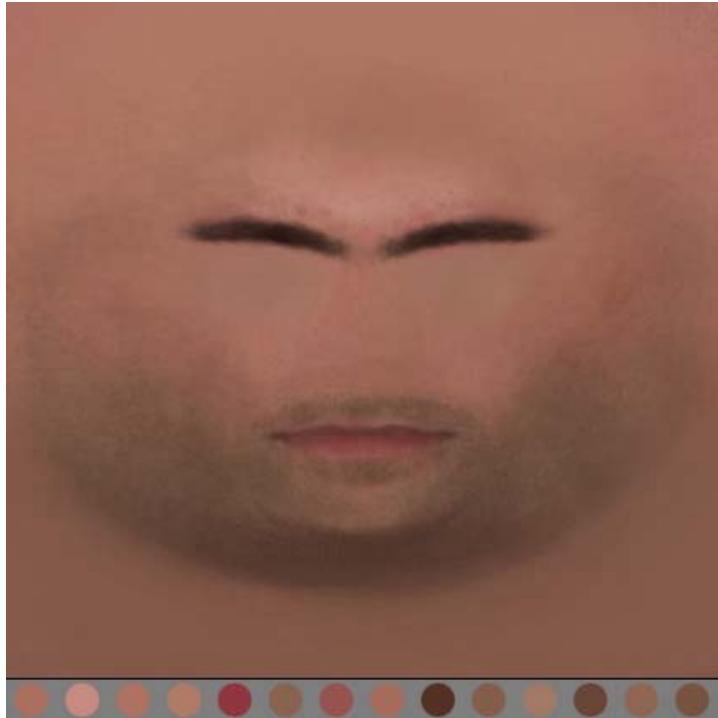
12. In this step I overworked the region around the mouth once again. In the step before it still looked kind of stucked up. Just notice that the reddish color of the mouth blures over in the skin color and this is what I did here. Take the blur tool and blur out the edges of the mouth a bit. Notice that I added a fine line of skin color right above the upper lip because the hair normally doesn't reach this point. To make the lip a bit more glossy like I took the burn and dodge tool and made the mouth a bit darker on the sides and a bit brighter in some areas. Then move over to the chin. I made it a bit darker right below the lips in order to achieve a 3dimensional look.



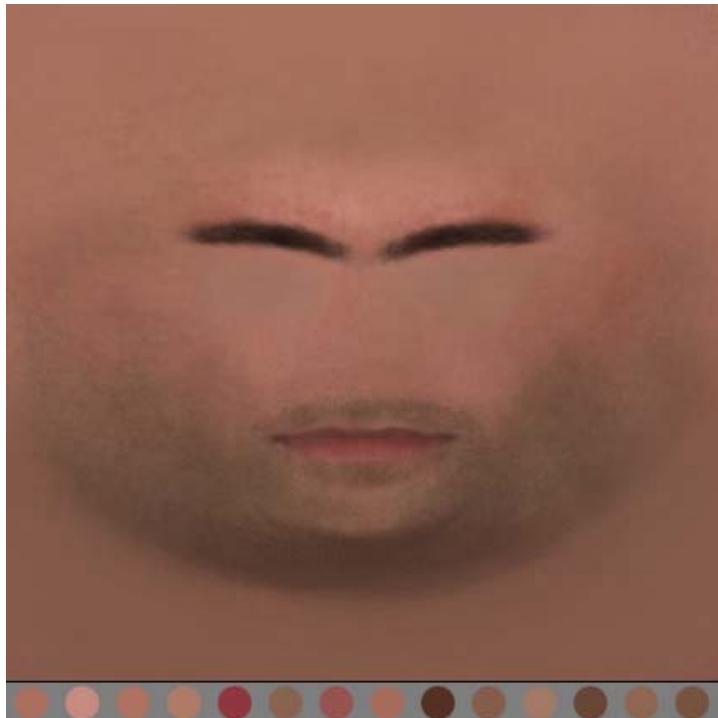
11. This step looks impressive but is quite simple. In order to make the beard look more powerful I just duplicated the whole layer. Now again choose copy together. You will see that he almost only doubles the saturation of the beard because the other parts are still quite non-saturated. Decrease the saturation a bit and play around a bit with the eraser to make the whole beard look more fitting. Adjust the brightness of the lips. Remember that around mouth, nose and eyes the skin always looks a bit more reddish and greenish, so I redid this with a fine pencil. The chin and mouth is now more or less ready, we will see if we need to adjust it later or not. The following parts get a little more difficult because you need some real drawing talent to do a good job on the nose, eyebrows and eyes itself. I try to make quite a lot steps so you are able to follow it.



12. Ok next step, quite simple. For the eyebrows we make a new layer and add two black brushstrokes. Take the smudge tool with a little opacity and a very little size (about 1-2 pixels) and start working on the edges to achieve a hairy effect. Still remember that the hairy effect comes through fine lines and blurry parts. When you finished take the eraser with a very low opacity and erase the eyebrows in some parts a bit so that they look more 3 dimensional. When your result looks like in the picture above, move over to the next step.

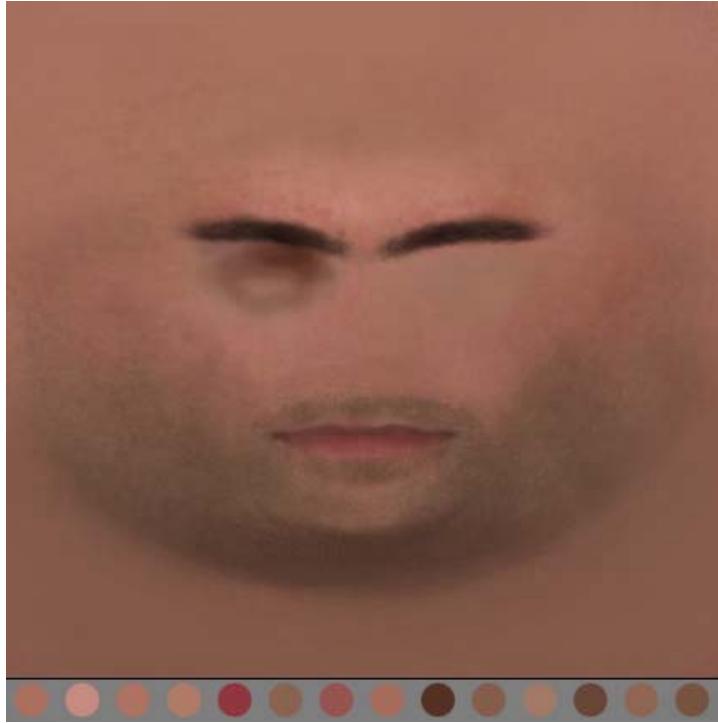


13. Now let's work a bit around on the forehead. As I said the human skin is often a bit reddish around eyebrows, mouth and nose, so let's just try it out. Take a little red pencil and start working on the skin parts above the eyebrows. I furthermore tried to achieve a quite pimply skin and did some spots by using the 'q' trick like explained before. Because the chin itself is often a bit sweaty I made it a bit brighter to achieve a little wet look. Take you some time for this step, it's not too easy.

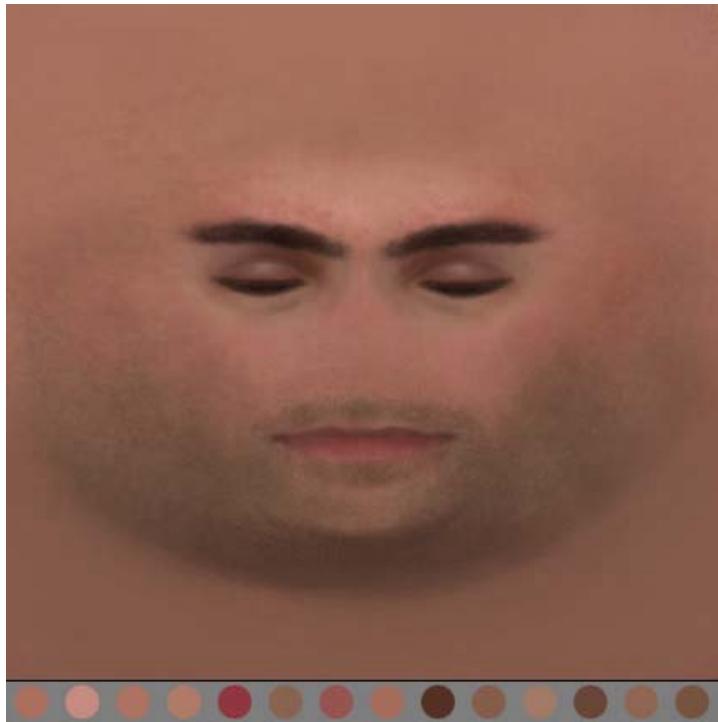


14. Because I thought the forehead is perhaps a little too white looking I took a red pencil and painted over

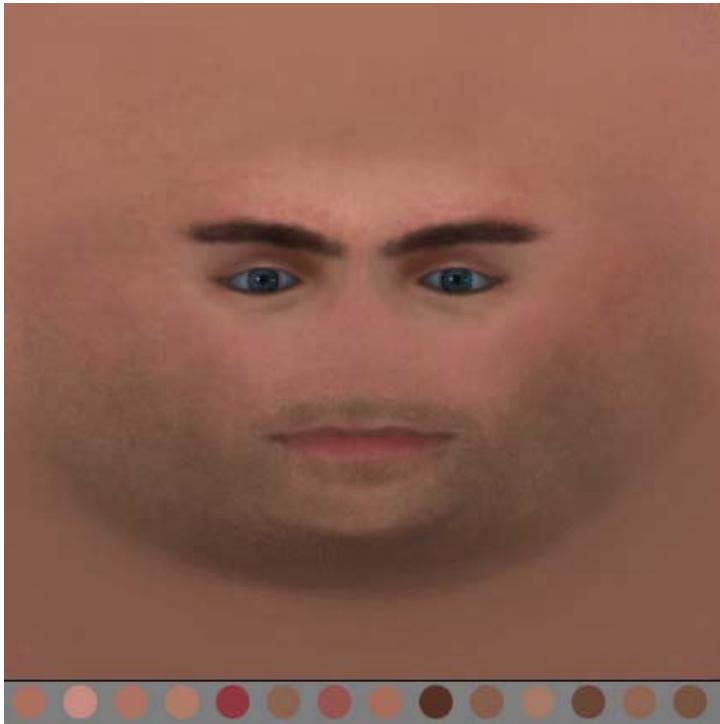
the think in order to have it a little more reddish looking. I outlines the spots with a little red pencil again and then blurred some of them away to get a permanent skin. When you are satisfied, go on to the next step.



15. Now let's start with the eyes. This is a quite difficult step so I split it up in two images. First of all we need the eye moles get done. Use a larger brownish pencil to achieve some depth. Remember that we will use a greenish pencil around the eyes for more realism. When you did both you should be finished soon and able to move over to the next step.



16. Now let's do the eyelids. We create two separate layers and paint the eyelids on them. Remember that there are a lot of folds around the eyes and that the eyes. I'm not absolutely finished with the eyes and will care for them later.

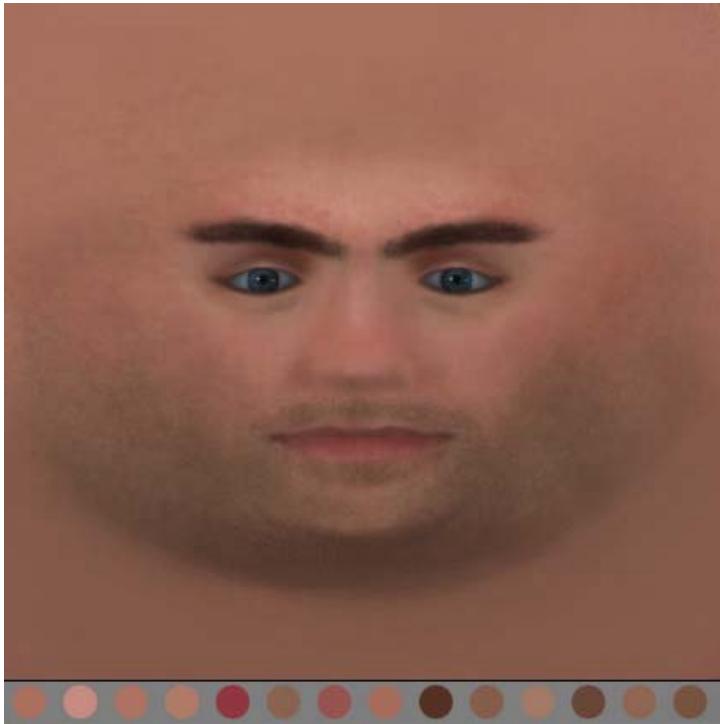


This step is very simple. Search for a good looking iris picture in the web an cut it out. When you finished you can add blur away the edges so that it is more fitting to the rest. Work it out a bit with the burn and dodge tool to achieve a 3 dimensional look.

The next steps will contain only a few steps because I will soon run out of web space if I continue this way :/



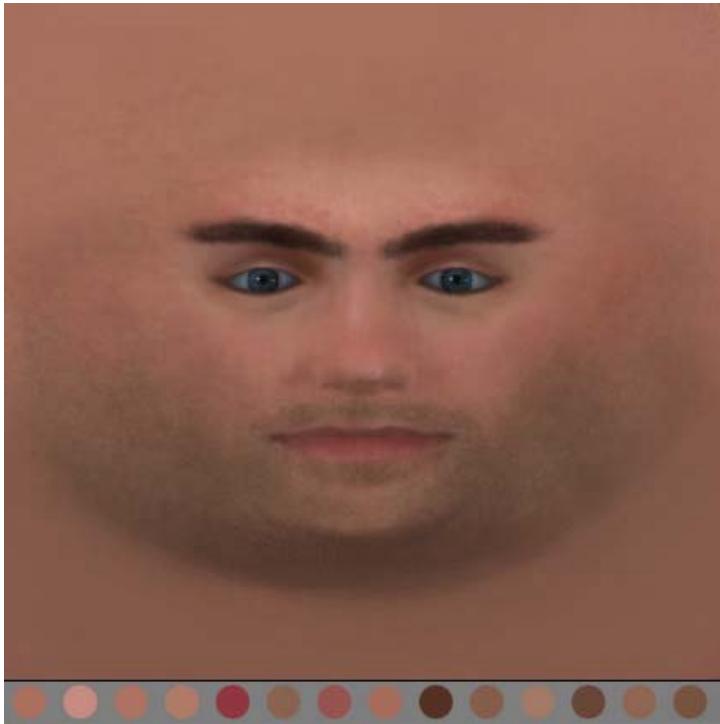
18. Ok let's begin with the nose. This is perhaps the most difficult part of the whole head. I split it up in quite a lot steps so that you can see the progress. First we create some blurry shapes in a separate layer to see where will be shadows and highlights. Below the nose and on the sides of it will be a bit darker and on top of it will be quite bright in order to achieve a realistic 3dimensional look.



19. Just go on like this but this time use a little finer pencil to already create a general shape. There is not much to say about this, just move on like you did in step 18.



20. Ok now quite simple. Because we have added a new layer for the nose we can just erase away the over painted parts on the eyes and the cheeks. That's why we painted the nose on a complete new layer. Don't forget this, because you will have a lot of work to do if you painted it right on the background layer.



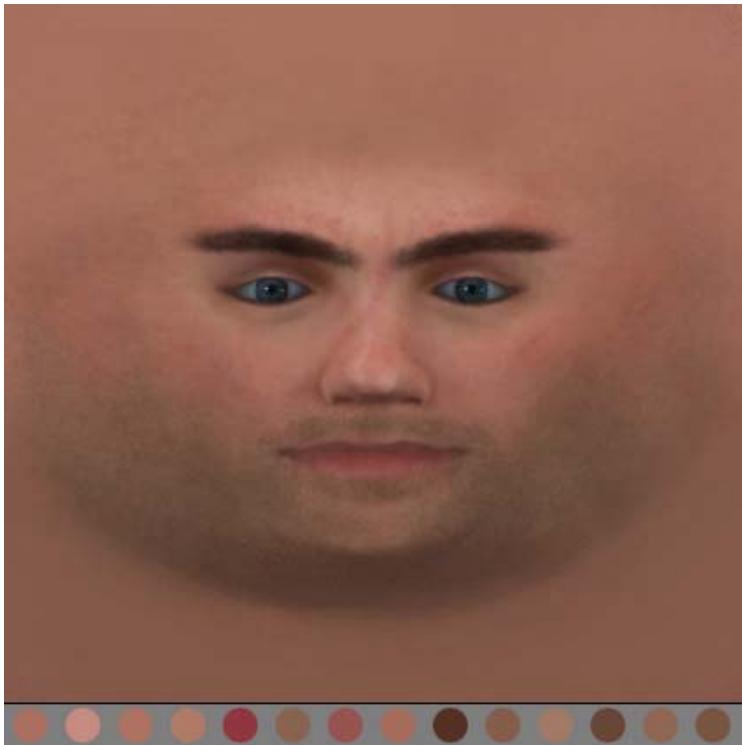
21. Ok now let's move over to the peak of the nose. Add a new layer and paint it over with a harder brownish pencil. Now use your smudge too to give it a shape. The nostrils are quite simple. Like before, create a new layer and paint some simple spots on it. Again choose the smudge tool to shape them a bit.



22. Let's care a bit for the nose wings. For that we take a harder very small reddish pencil and outline them a bit to give them shape.



23. Now just duplicate the already existing some times to make the whole thing look sharper and have more contrast. After merging all layers together I took the burn and dodge tools to create some glossy looking highlights on the top of the nose.



24. This is the last step now, just merge all layers together and add some further details such as scars and screams. Congratulations, you are finished now 😊



25. Just cut it out and apply it on your model and get happy.

Hope this was helpful

Check out my upcoming tutorials as well 😊