

Gimp

MAGAZINE



ISSN: 1929-6894

DIGITAL VERSION



DESIGN
CONCEPTS

TYPE EFFECTS MASTER
CLASS BY STEVE CZAJKA

Exercise: Getting Started for Calligraphers and
Illustrators Using GIMP and/or Inkscape



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to Issue #9 of GIMP Magazine! We are pleased to announce Richard Buchanan II as our new Editor. Richard edited this issue of GIMP Magazine and is also working on upcoming issues. In addition to being a GNU/Linux user, Richard is also a fine-art photographer whose work spans the abstract, landscape, and documentary genres. You can view his portfolio at <http://richardbuchananii.com>, and follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/rbiiphotography>. I'm happy to welcome Richard, and look forward to building this great magazine with him on the team.

We have a lot in store for you in this issue of GIMP Magazine. This month is devoted to teaching you about design, and provides hands-on training for applying type effects to a print or digital layout. This issue will allow you to create attractive designs for both amateur and professional pursuits, and covers design concepts and creating type effects. To get you started, I've included a basic exercise called "Getting Started for Calligraphers and Illustrators."

Creating "type effects" was what first attracted me to GIMP. I have studied calligraphy for over 30 years, and turned to GIMP when I transitioned into the digital environment. My artistic background has influenced my work in graphic design, infographics, desktop publishing, and even professional cartography and visualization.

While my profession strongly emphasizes data analysis, it also has a great need for attractive and understandable data presentation. Design has always been intuitive for me, but I've recently enrolled in more formal design training, and want to share some of this training with you here.

I think that the most important aspect of graphic arts, illustration, and photography is design. A master calligrapher taught me that an artwork's overall layout and design will trump the quality of its individual elements. A lacking composition will overshadow the

work's elements, no matter how perfect. Conversely, a strong composition can distract from imperfect elements with highlighted or emphasized subjects, moods, and themes.

Understanding the importance of design has dramatically changed my artistic approach. I would suggest that it's more important to learn about design principles than software features. This is why I foster teaching photography, illustration, and design techniques along with software tips and features within GIMP Magazine.

The team at GIMP Magazine proudly presents Issue #9. If you are not already doing so, please follow us on Twitter, Google+, Issuu, or by email subscription. Also, tell a friend about GIMP and GIMP Magazine and kindly tweet or blog about us to help spread the word.

Enjoy!



Cheers
Steve

<http://twitter.com/steveczajka>
<http://flickr.com/steveczajka>



ABOUT THE COVER

The cover image "s" is a logo I developed a few years back to represent my calligraphic and design works. I used a Pilot Parallel Calligraphy pen, and royal-blue Pelikan ink on white bond paper to create the original. The article titled, "Exercise: Getting Started for Calligraphers and Illustrators" shows how you can create your own logo using GIMP.

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DESIGN CONCEPTS

By Steve Czajka, Edited by Richard Buchanan II

Book and magazine covers, movie and TV titles, video game artwork, posters, and other media combine stunning design and amazing type effects to create attraction and visual appeal. Design concepts like visual weight, color, form, contrast, and harmony apply to all creative works. Designers also apply digital effects like Color, Ridges, Letterpress, Metal, and others to draw attention to their work, and to maximize interest and excitement.

TYPICAL APPLICATIONS OF DESIGN AND TYPE EFFECTS

- **BOOK JACKETS, MAGAZINES, AND NEWSPAPERS**
- **TELEVISION AND CINEMATIC TITLE SCREENS**
- **PRINTED AND ONLINE ADVERTISEMENTS**
- **COMMERCIALS, BILLBOARDS, AND SIGNS**
- **BUSINESS LOGOS**
- **PRESENTATION SLIDES**
- **PRINTED STATIONARY AND BROCHURES**
- **WEBSITES**
- **CD & DVD JACKETS**
- **CERTIFICATES**
- **CALENDARS, GREETING CARDS, AND POST CARDS**
- **DIGITAL WALLPAPERS**
- **POSTERS AND WALL ART**
- **VIDEO GAME ARTWORK**
- **MURALS**
- **SHOW CARDS**
- **MENUS**
- **MONOGRAMS, SIGNATURES, AND RUBBER STAMPS**
- **POETRY AND SCRIPTURE**

This issue will show you digital techniques using free and open-source software (such as GIMP and Inkscape). These techniques can also be accomplished in proprietary software (such as Adobe PhotoShop, Illustrator, InDesign, Premiere, and others), as the tools are very similar.

As a designer, you only have a split second to attract an audience to your product or brand. You may have created an amazing book cover, but that cover is competing with hundreds of other covers on a traditional store shelf, and with thousands in a digital store. This competition and abundance of choice is why, as a designer, you need an edge over rival designers. This issue will help provide that edge by illustrating an array of design concepts and techniques in a step-by-step methodology. Let's get started!

WHAT IS DESIGN, AND WHAT IS GRAPHIC DESIGN?

One definition I've heard is that graphic design is the arrangement of photos, text, and objects on a page. I think this definition downplays the craft as a whole, and the skill that goes into graphic design—much like saying that race car driving is pressing pedals and turning a steering wheel. Everyone knows that racing is far more complex than this, and involves strategy, experience, and becoming attuned with the road and vehicle.

Graphic design, in my opinion, is about conveying a message that attracts, captivates, and influences an audience to act. Attracts is critical because much of graphic design coincides with selling or informing. Captivates is just as important, as the audience needs to continue though the design to learn more about the product. Lastly, an influential design is critical because the audience must act on the call to action, which may encompass buying a product, learning about a particular cause, or changing attitudes and behaviours.

Since more people have access to graphic design software than ever before, the playing field for graphic designers has radically changed. Anyone can take a graphic design course, but it takes years to grasp the concepts utilized within solid designs. Design is also an art form that, like any talent, will develop with practice and time.

I can't stress enough how important it is to keep a creative portfolio of your work. Graphic design is a competitive and continually evolving field, with most large companies housing design departments, or routinely contracting creative services, in order to produce video, web, and other multimedia projects. Keeping a portfolio will not only help you track your progress, but will also provide material for you to present to professional outlets.

TIP: SPEND TIME LOOKING

VISIT A NEARBY BOOK OR VIDEO STORE AND LOOK AT THE VARIETY OF COVER ART. THIS WILL GIVE YOU A MULTITUDE OF GRAPHIC DESIGN EXAMPLES FROM DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS AND GENRES. OVER TIME, YOU WILL START TO LOOK AT THESE DIFFERENTLY—YOU WILL START TO LOOK AT THESE:

- **FROM A CONSTRUCTION PERSPECTIVE (HOW WAS THIS DESIGN BUILT?)**
- **FROM A CONTENT PERSPECTIVE (WHAT MESSAGE IS CONVEYED AND WHY?)**
- **FROM A DESIGN PERSPECTIVE (WHAT DESIGN ELEMENTS WERE USED AND WHY?)**
- **FROM A BIG-PICTURE PERSPECTIVE (HOW WELL DOES THE DESIGN FIT WITH THE SUBJECT MATTER? HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE DESIGN OVERALL?)**

VIEWING OTHER DESIGNS IS ALSO A GREAT WAY TO INSPIRE YOURSELF, AND BREAK ANY CREATIVE BLOCKS YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED.

THE PAGE

Before we get into design concepts, let's first talk about the page. The page is important because it defines your working space. Page in this sense doesn't refer to paper, but to websites, presentation slides, book covers, and even large format roll posters. Not all pages are alike, but they're all a defining aspect of the work they contain.

THE GOAL OF EFFECTIVE DESIGN

You must visually communicate your message in a small amount of time. This means the visual must be interesting and evocative for the intended message to be grasped, made meaningful, and acted upon. The following highly effective design concepts can be applied to help achieve this goal. I'm going to apply these concepts to my works (which concentrate on the presentation of type, and type effects), but they equally apply to photography, video, and other forms of visual media.

The six concepts listed below are derived from Eugene Metcalf's Calligraphy & Lettering Design. This book introduced me to the design concepts of size, weight, form, direction, colour, and texture. Once I learned these, my creative appreciation of calligraphy exploded and pushed beyond just pen and ink. These design concepts have stayed with me since, which shows how universal they are. These six concepts that apply to calligraphy & lettering design also apply in all other graphic design areas.

SIZE

Using a variation of letter and object sizes in your designs will draw and maintain a viewer's attention. Consider newspaper headlines and old manuscripts with very large drop caps, where the abundant visual contrast attracts and engages the reader. A variety of size will also dictate the flow of your design and increase readability. If you present readers with too many equally sized words, they will grow frustrated with struggling to derive significance, and will eventually abandon your work.

Exemplars: Mozart, Salem

Mozart - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/9079219123/>

Salem - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/14008892571/>

TIP: DESIGN WITHOUT A PAGE

NOW THAT WE'VE COVERED THE PAGE, TRY TO AVOID THINKING OF ITS BOUNDARIES WHEN STARTING A NEW DESIGN. YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH THIS IN INKSCAPE THROUGH FILE > DOCUMENT PROPERTIES > UNCHECK SHOW PAGE BORDER. THIS DESIGN APPROACH IS THE PREFERRED METHOD FOR DESIGNING LOGOS. WORK UP YOUR DESIGN FIRST, AND CONSIDER THE OUTPUT SIZE(S) AS A LAST STEP. INKSCAPE IS EXCELLENT FOR THIS, AS YOU CAN DESIGN FOR SEVERAL DIMENSIONS (FOR EXAMPLE, A WEBSITE CONTAINER, BUSINESS CARD, POSTER, AND ETCETERA). SIMPLY RESET YOUR PAGE FOR EACH DESIGN USING DOCUMENT PROPERTIES > FIT PAGE TO OBJECT. THIS DESIGN APPROACH IS NOT APPLICABLE IN GIMP, WHICH OPERATES ON A RASTER INSTEAD OF VECTOR PARADIGM, AND REQUIRES IMAGE OR PAGE DIMENSIONS FROM THE START.



WEIGHT

A variation of weight in your lettering will emphasize key messages and ideas—the heavier the weight, the greater the emphasis. Weight will also help set the tone of the piece (for example, if you want your design's message to be inviting, agreeable, authoritative, accommodating, etcetera). Much like size, avoid all words on the page having the same weight.

Exemplars: Serenity Now

Serenity Now - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/14503402233/>

FORM

Form is all about the shape of the letter or design, and will greatly influence the genre of the piece. Some pieces have a light and elegant form while others will have an aggressive Gothic form, with many variations in between. Form helps set the mood of the piece by providing stylistic flair and personality.

Exemplars: Happy Easter, Letters Interacting

Happy Easter - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/6910763662/>

Letters Interacting - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/6969738365/>

DIRECTION

Using direction in your design breaks the monotony of horizontal text. It adds visual impact, sculpts your composition, and can be used to direct a viewer's attention.

Exemplars: Amber, Breaking Repetition, Green Broccoli, Aaron Tyree

Amber - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/6036905042/>

Breaking Repetition -

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/14698296211/>

Green Broccoli - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/4277840936/>

Aaron Tyree - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/15794980171/>



COLOR

Using color is an easy way to create emphasis and alter the tone of the piece. Color can unify the diverse elements of your work into a coherent message, and complements letter hierarchy and organization. My preference is to use fewer colors rather than more; for Gothic calligraphy, I prefer to design with white on black, and use red for an accent or secondary line of text.

Exemplars: Resident Evil, In the Beginning

Resident Evil - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/9060150535/>

In The Beginning - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/5560987447/>

TEXTURE

Texture is the easiest way to trigger a viewer's sense of touch. Texture can impart a tactile feel (real or imagined) to your work, which creates a perception of heightened significance.

Exemplars: Temple of the Dogs, Vikings, Oktoberfest, October, In The Beginning

Temple of the Dogs - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/5001886534/>

Vikings - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/14097878174/>

Oktoberfest - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/15478134765/>

October - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/8084556131/>

In The Beginning (Texture) -

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/5581071616/>

CONTRAST

Contrast in size, weight, color, direction, and texture is the easiest way to draw and maintain attention. When you think of a caution sign, the word “caution” is done in a large and heavy font, while the secondary text is much smaller. When combined with ample negative space, contrast can be used to create a bold, direct, and personal message. Think of a stop sign and the immediacy and simplicity of its message, and you'll understand the power of size, weight, and color can be.

Snow White - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/8754340528/>



NEGATIVE SPACE

Negative space is the art of nothing. Negative space allows the art to breathe, much like taking a pause before the next sentence, and gives the mind the chance to process and internalize your message. Using more negative space means your piece has less content, but negative space is a form of content in itself, lending sophistication to your work.

Negative space is your friend, your buddy and your pal. I tell this to every designer.

- Who's your friend? Negative space.
- Who's your buddy? Negative space.
- Who's your pal? Negative space.

The concept of negative space is probably the least understood, or least executed, by amateur designers. The reason may be a result of accommodating a client who is trying to fit all of the content on the page. In this case, show your client alternative designs that convey more through a less cluttered approach.

Exemplar: Love

Love - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/steveczajka/6857914739/>

These are just a few of my favourite design concepts. ■



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EXERCISE: GETTING STARTED FOR CALLIGRAPHERS AND ILLUSTRATORS USING GIMP AND/OR INKSCAPE

By Steve Czajka, Edited by Richard Buchanan II

With a basic knowledge of GIMP and Inkscape, the following workflow will prepare you for digitizing your calligraphy or illustrations. These steps assume that your calligraphy or illustrations are done on white paper, using any colour ink. These steps can be applied to other paper and ink combinations, but it takes more experience to achieve the same results.

A large, stylized cursive word, likely 'calligraphy', rendered in a dark, textured ink on a white background. The letters are thick and have a rough, hand-drawn appearance, with varying line weights and some ink bleed-through or texture visible.

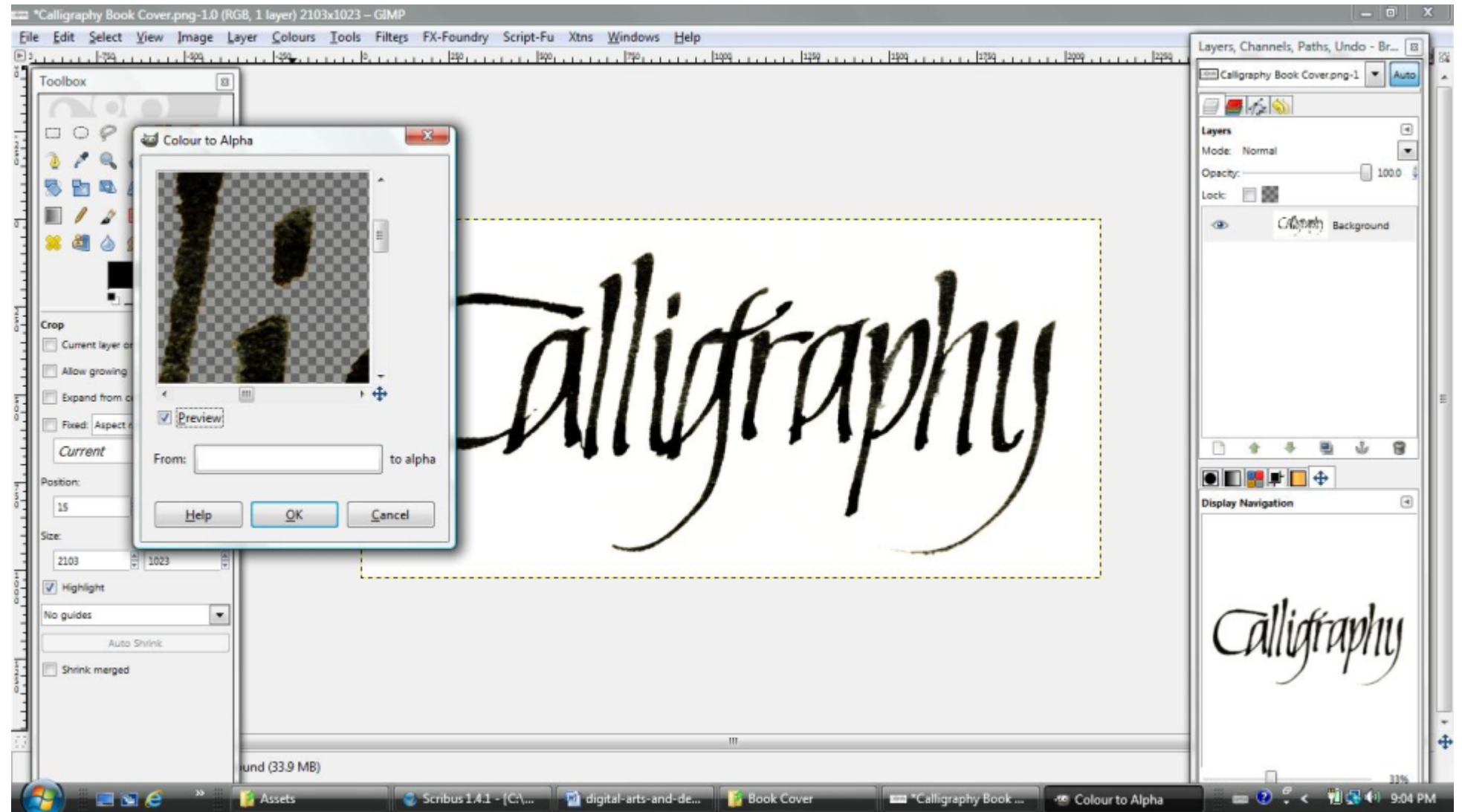
STEP 1 - SCAN YOUR WORK

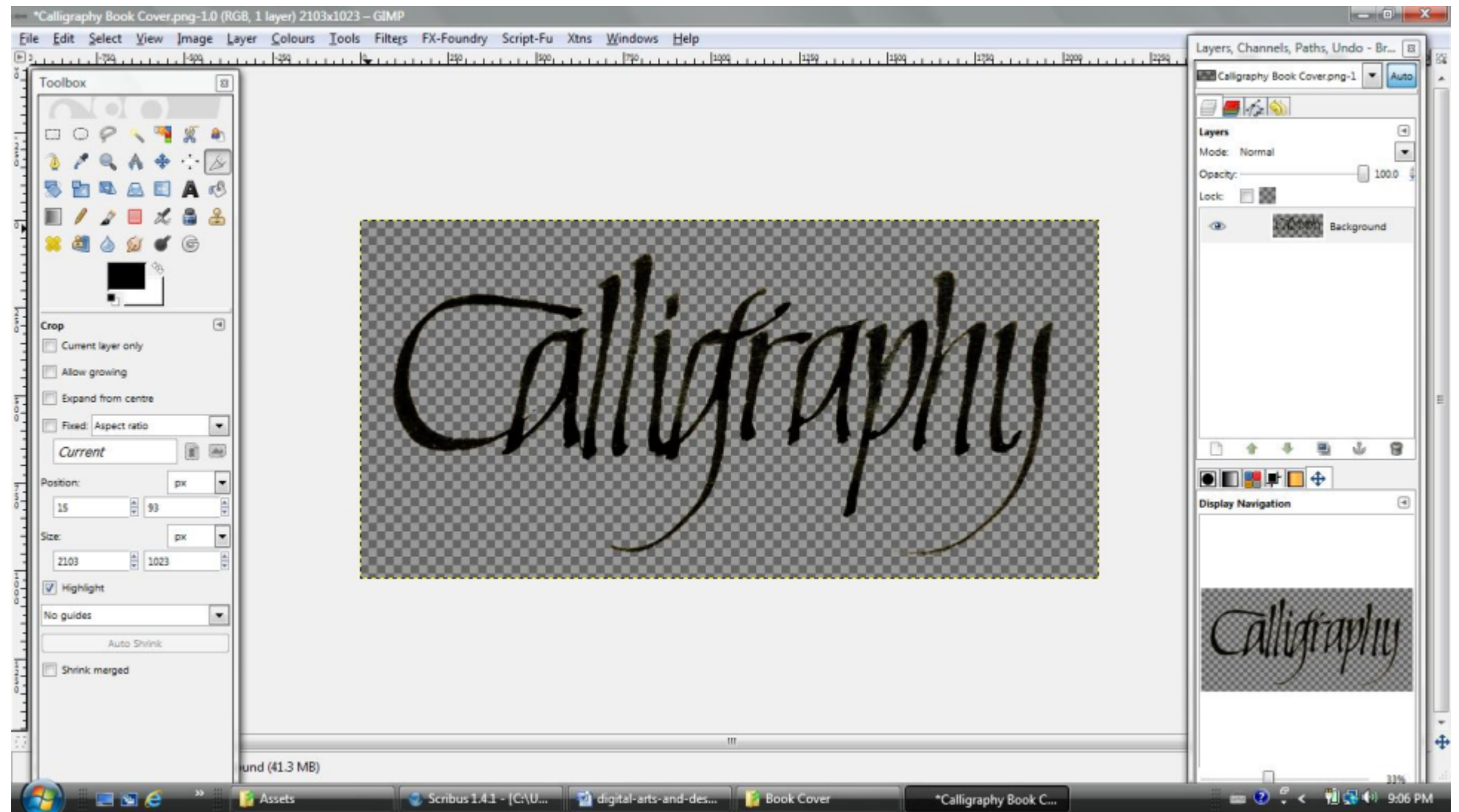
For best results, I recommend scanning your work with a flatbed scanner. A resolution of 300 DPI is adequate, depending on your work's output size. If you have very small calligraphy or illustrations, consider scanning those at 600 DPI or higher to extract every minute detail. Lastly, I recommend scanning your works to the TIFF file format, which is lossless (it won't produce compression artefacts or lose quality by being moved around on your system, unlike JPEGs), and will yield the best quality for calligraphy and illustrations.



STEP 2A - LIFT THE WORK FROM THE BACKGROUND (USING GIMP)

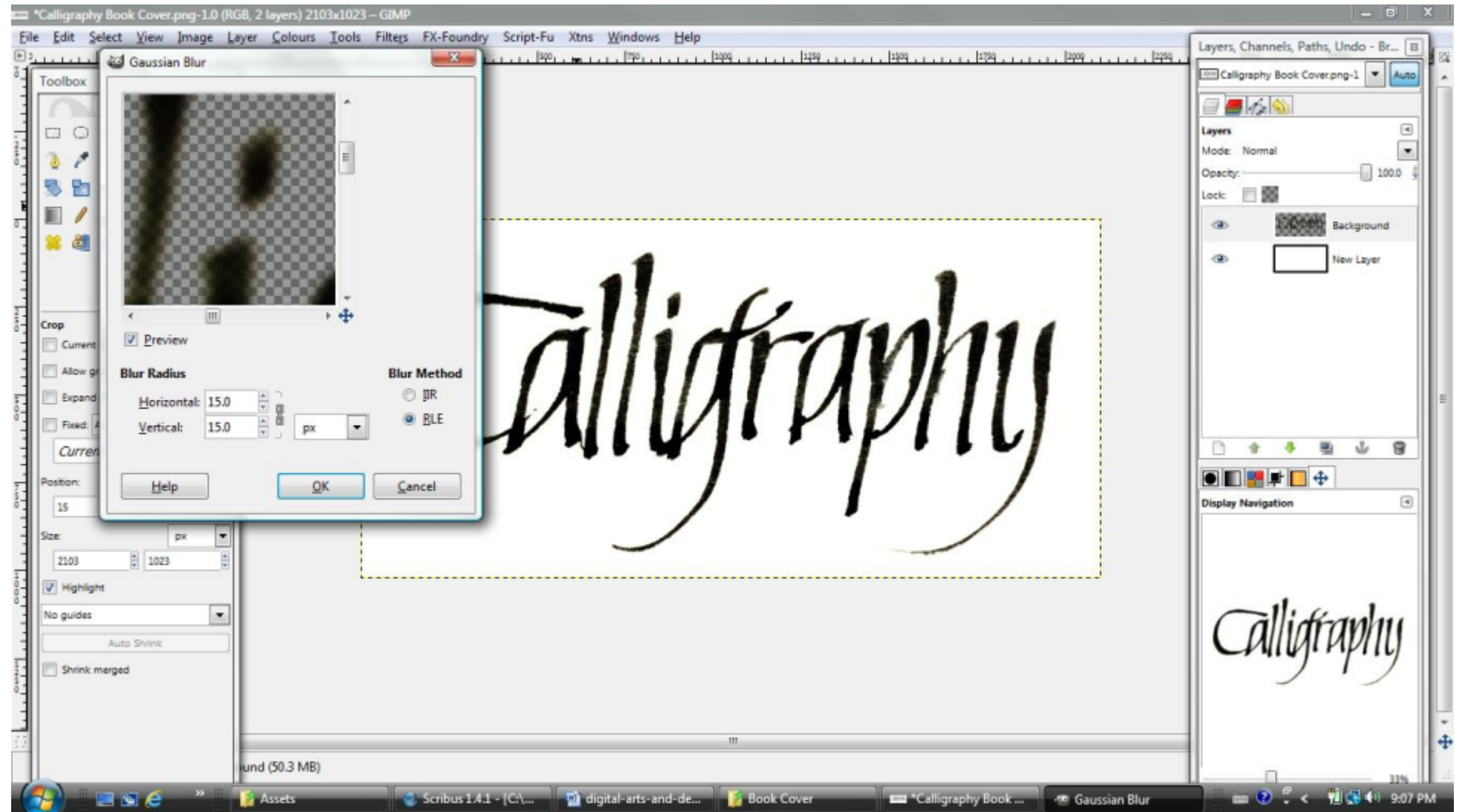
Open your TIFF file in GIMP. Use Colors > Color to alpha. Assuming your page is white, select the white color and click OK. Doing this will make everything on your image transparent except your artwork. Your work can now be transposed to any color background, and can also have digital effects applied to it.

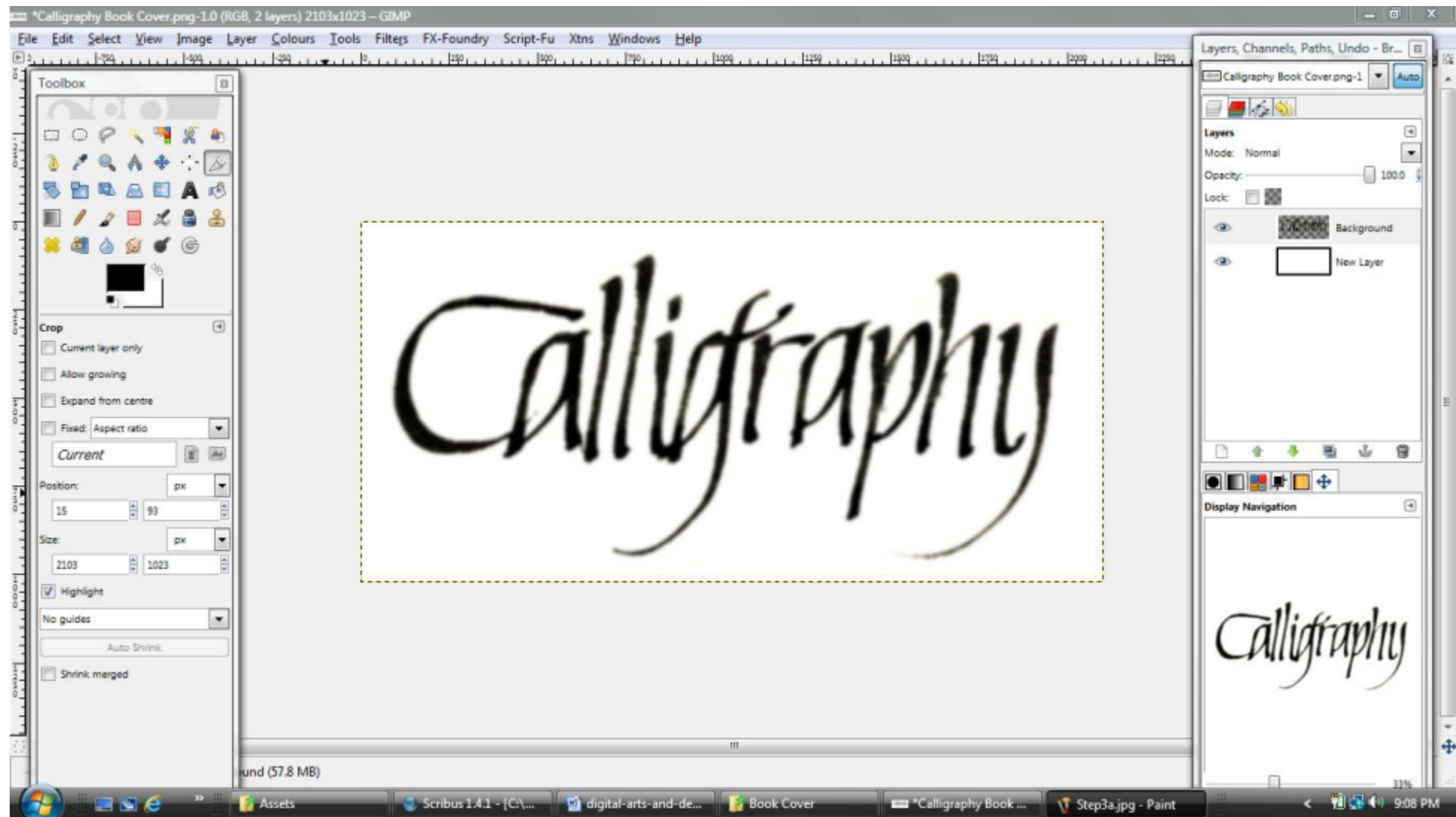




STEP 3A - APPLYING FILTERS (USING GIMP)

Let's start by applying the Gaussian blur filter. Click on your artwork layer, then click Filters > Blur > Gaussian blur, adjust the blur amount to your liking, and click OK. This will blur your selected area to simulate depth, and emphasize the areas left sharp. This same technique can be applied to several built-in filters, and any filters downloaded and installed from <http://registry.gimp.org>.





STEP 2B - VECTORIZE (OR TRACE) YOUR WORK (USING INKSCAPE)

In Inkscape, open your TIF file created in step 1, and click Path > Trace bitmap. Adjust the Brightness cut off threshold to a higher number (like 0.8) and click update. This will show you a thumbnail preview of the trace.

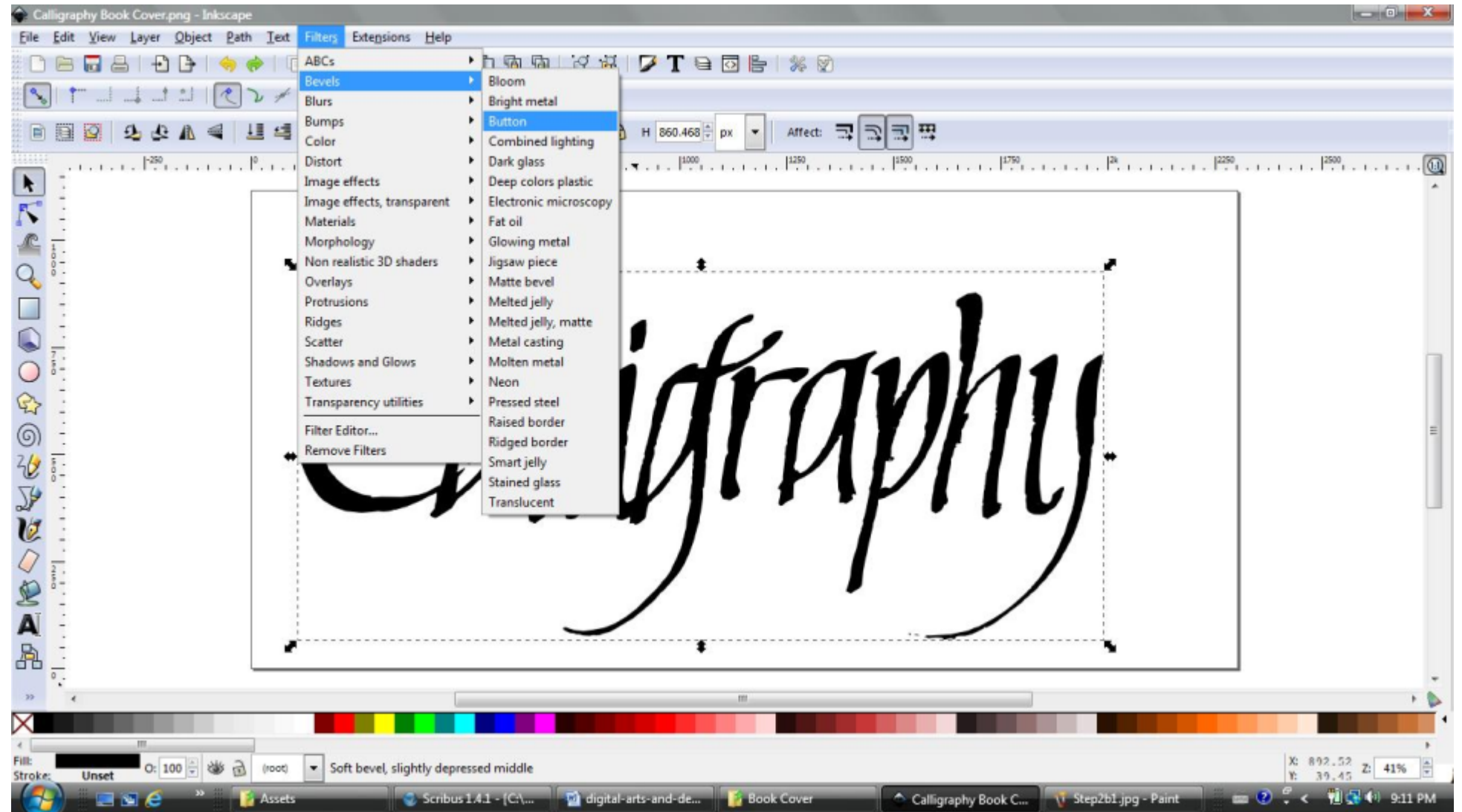
Experiment with this setting as you see fit and click OK to trace your work. Once complete, you'll see a vector representation of your artwork or illustration.



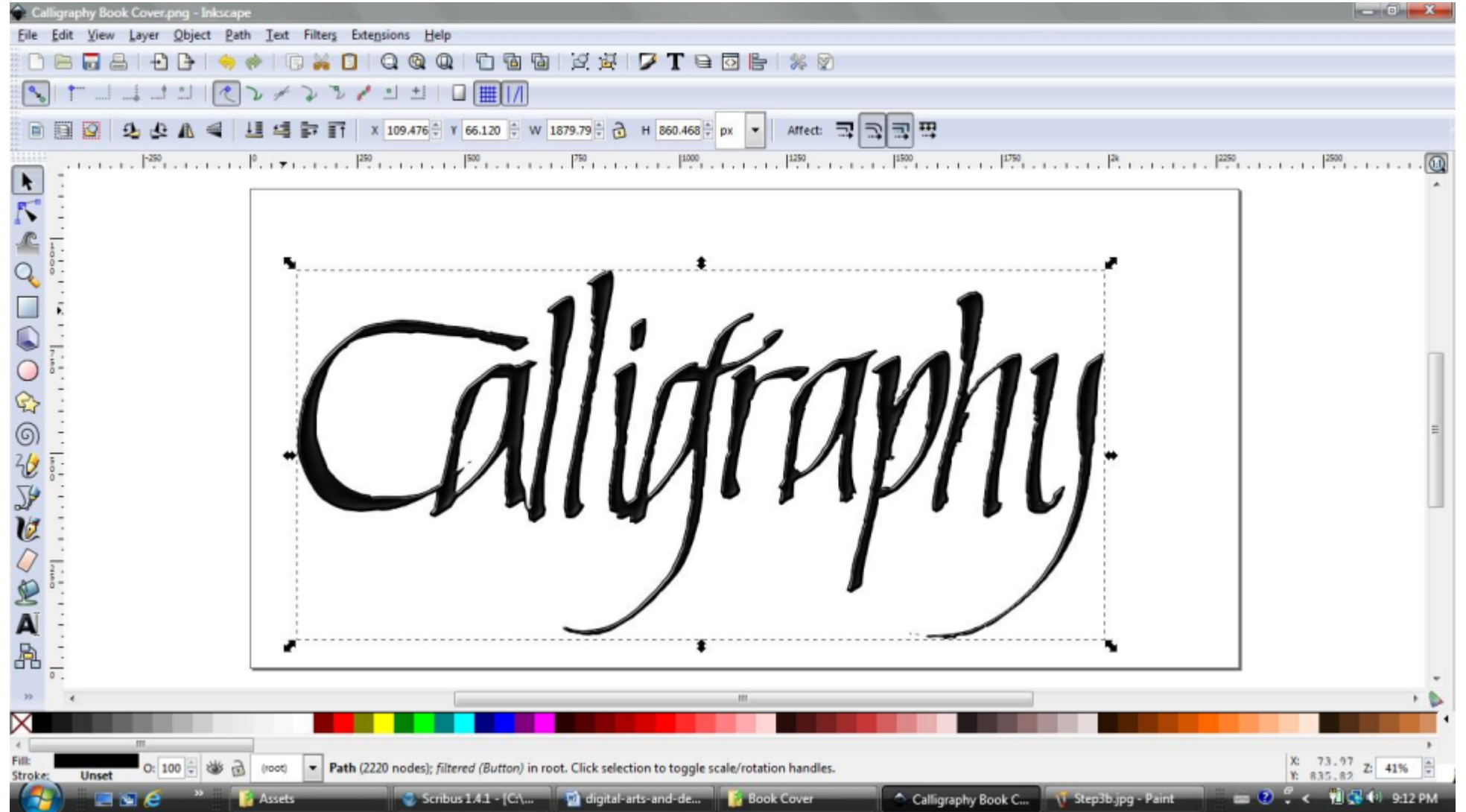
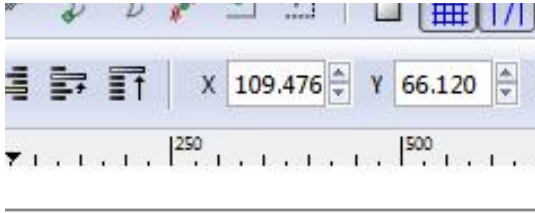


STEP 3B - APPLY AN ARRAY OF AMAZING FILTERS (USING INKSCAPE)

Click on your vector object from step 2b, and then click Filters > Bevels > Button to see what the button effect looks like. It provides a raised edge around your calligraphy or illustration, which also simulates depth, and creates a sharp visual separation between the subject and its background. Feel free to explore the multitude of filters at this point. If a certain filter doesn't suit your work, you can undo it and try something else by clicking the back button.



At this point, your artwork should be in a digital format that is suitable for modification and display, whether digital or print. You are now free to work in the full digital effects environment shared between GIMP, Inkscape, and Scribus. ■



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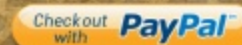
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SPECIAL FEATURES: STEVE CZAJKA, THE MANAGING EDITOR OF GIMP MAGAZINE, PROVIDES A REVIEW OF SELF-PUBLISHING A MAGAZINE. STEVE SHARES THE PUBLISHING WORKFLOW PROCEDURES THAT GIMP MAGAZINE UTILIZES FOR EACH ISSUE OF THE PUBLICATION. TYPOGRAPHY STYLE GUIDES AND SEVERAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS TO CREATING A CLEAN AND APPEALING MAGAZINE LAYOUT.



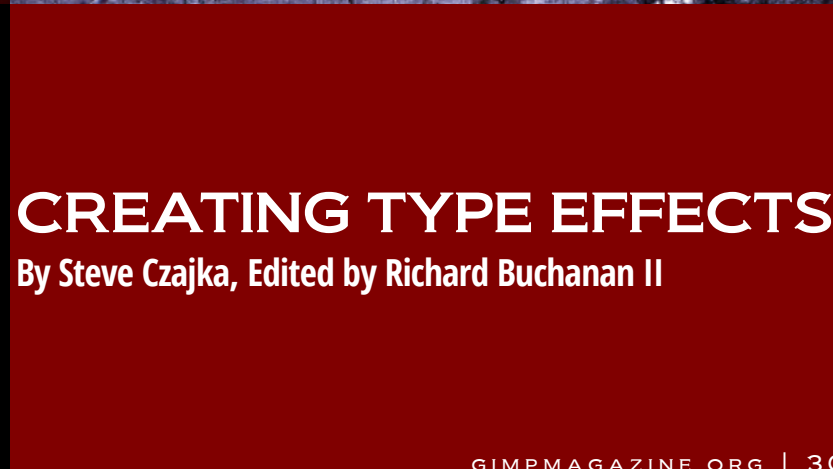
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EXAMPLES OF TYPE EFFECTS:

VECTOR

COLORIZED

METAL

DECOR / BEVEL

BUTTON

JEWELLERY

STITCHING / CLOTH

LETTERPRESS

DISTRESSED

TEXTURE

PHOTOGRAPHIC

ADVANCED COLORS

VIGNETTE

SHADOW BOX

OUTLINE

SHADOWS

PAINTED

2.5 D

COLOR/PATTERN FADE

WATERMARK / OPACITY

Here are just a few examples of using type effects creatively. I used open-source software (namely GIMP and Inkscape) to create these.

I plan to cover all of these step-by-step in a full-length master class, but only have space to cover one in this magazine. The type effect I'll cover is called Metal, and is a very popular effect that can be applied to your regular fonts or to Designer Type (coming soon).

This effect can be achieved in GIMP and Inkscape. I find that Inkscape does a beautiful job of creating metallic type effects with a bevelled edge, and that GIMP renders stunning results through filters and alternative techniques. This article will explore both in detail, and assumes a basic knowledge of GIMP and Inkscape.

INKSCAPE

To achieve this effect in Inkscape:

- Prepare your font or designer type
- Select the object
- Click Filter > Ridges > Refractive gel a (or b, depending on your needs)

Alternatively use Filters > Bevels > Hot oil, or any of the following:

Glowing metal
Metal casting
Pressed steel

Jewellery can also have a metallic look, but is covered separately under Filters > Materials > Enamel jewellery.

You can also add a small drop shadow to make your design leap off the page. For this effect, I prefer the user interface and simplicity of Inkscape over GIMP. If using a font, Inkscape works in a somewhat non-destructive manner (similar to

Inkscape - Refractive gel a



Inkscape - Refractive gel a using Designer Type



Inkscape - Enamel Jewellery



USING THESE
METHODS, YOU CAN
ACHIEVE ABOUT 15
DIFFERENT METALLIC
TYPE EFFECTS AND
SEVERAL THOUSAND
VARIANTS.

Adobe Illustrator), which means you can change the letters without affecting the original data.

To remove the effects, select the text object and click Filter > Remove filter.

GIMP

You have a few more options for achieving a metallic filter in GIMP. The easiest method is to:

- Add a text layer using the Text tool.
- Click the text layer to make sure it is active
- Click Filters > Alpha to logo > Steel, or choose from approximately five additional metallic filters.

Unfortunately, this is a destructive operation, meaning that you'll need to undo and re-execute this filter if you change the text in any way, so remember the filter's settings.

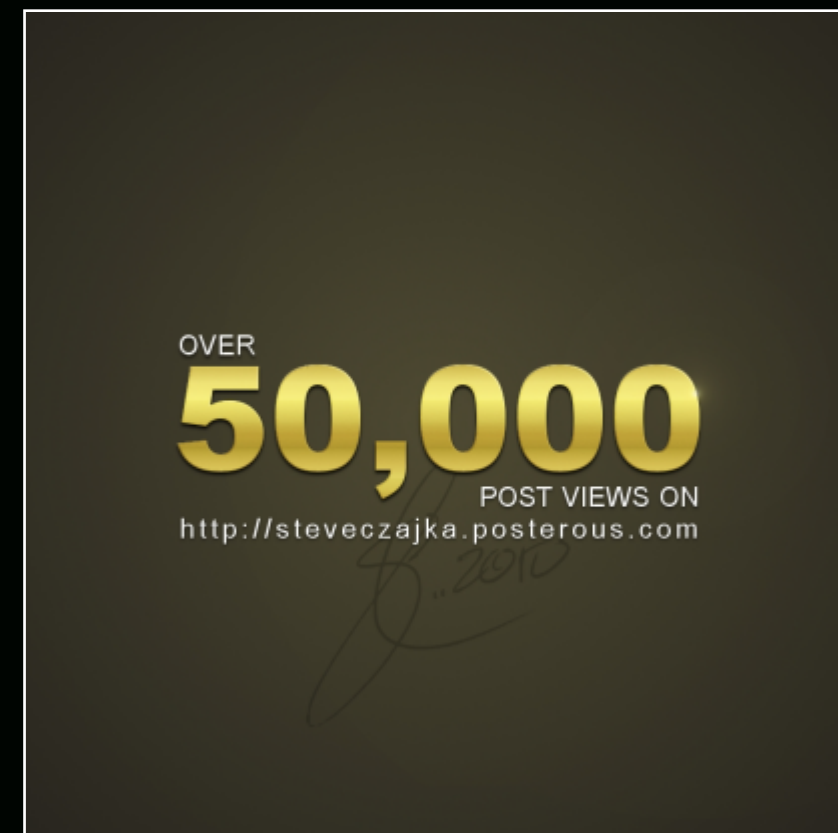
Another way of achieving a metallic look in GIMP (which I find looks much better than the filter) is using a Gradient.

- Create some text using the Text tool
- Right click on the text layer and use Alpha to selection. This will select just the text.
- Click on the Blend tool, then click the gradient drop down and select a metallic gradient like brushed aluminum.
- Finally click and drag the Gradient tool over the outline of the selected text. This will render the letters with a metallic finish.

While the lettering selection is still active, you can add a bevel to the letters by clicking Filters > Decor > Add bevel. This will produce a raised letter effect that looks very impressive when combined with a drop shadow.

In this issue we covered different design concepts, how to get started using GIMP and / or Inkscape as an illustrator or calligrapher, and we introduced you to the world of digital type effects. ■

GIMP - Gradient Tool Method



LEARN

Gothic Fraktur

CALLIGRAPHY & LETTERING
BY STEVE CZAJKA

VIDEO BASED
TRAINING COURSE

Gothic Fraktur (c) 2014



Steve Czajka Calligraphy

Running Time: 5hrs 21min Approx

Language: English

Skill Level: Beginner to Advanced

Platform: Windows, Mac, Linux & More

File Format: HD Video 1920x1080 MP4, 35 Files Approx 9GB total - Quick Time, VLC, AVC, Default Android player and more

Gothic Calligraphy eBook: Includes a 67 Page PDF Format 8.5" x 14" printable version as well as an interactive version for mobile phones / tablets etc.

Special Features:

- 45+ min of calligraphy materials and how to care for them (pens, etc.)
- 3 hrs of calligraphy demonstrations with full voice over instruction
- "The Making of the Twenty Third Psalm" Calligraphy piece
- Samples of the Gothic typeface developed for use in: Adobe PS, AI, ID, GIMP, Inkscape, Scribus or other digital arts software
- Various calligraphy templates and more
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