Perfectly Personal Word Art
Artistic Letter Mask Base – Photoshop
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[TOU](#)

There are so many different kinds of elements that can be considered word art. Up to this point in the class, we have covered more traditional paper pieces. But now, for the remainder of this class, we're going to look at creating word art with a more artistic flair.

The first kind of word art we are going to focus on is creating big letter masks. These masks can be used for so many different things.

You can clip photos to them:

Or you can clip papers to them,

And use them as titles:
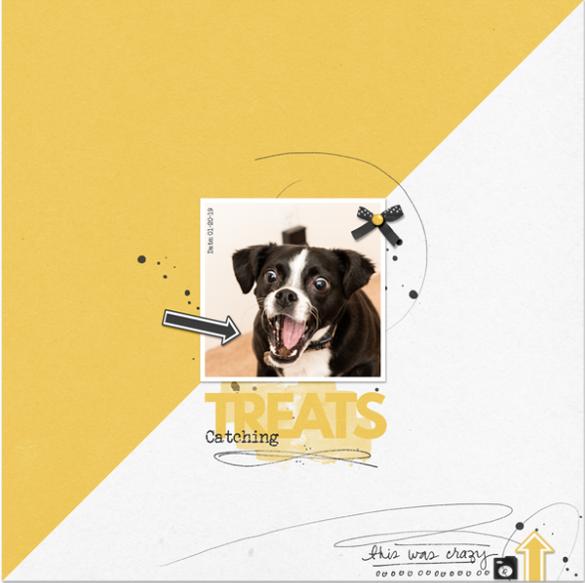
Or instead of titles, you can use them as decorative accents:

Another thing you can do is use them as an anchor for a main cluster or photo:

In this lesson, we're going to learn how to create the basic form of the big letter mask and in the following lessons, we'll cover how to add to this basic mask to make it more artistic in nature. So, let's jump over to PS and get started creating!

Step One: Prepare the Workspace

- I've already created a new document that is 7 inches wide by 5 inches high at 300ppi with a white background.
- Press the letter D to reset the Color Chips to the default of black over white.

Step Two: Find an Appropriate Font

- Before we get started making the mask, you're going to need to find the right font in order for this technique to work. You're going to need to use a very bold font that is large and somewhat blocky in nature. I've decided to use the **League Spartan** font which is a free font you can find at the Font Squirrel website.
- If you need help with downloading and installing that font, Font Squirrel has wonderful instructions on their website here: https://www.fontsquirrel.com/help Make sure you download and follow the set of instructions for the computer you're using.

Step Three: Create the Big Letter Mask

- Get the Horizontal Type Tool.
- In the Tool Options, set the Font to League Spartan (or something similar), the Size to 175pts, and the Alignment to Center.
- On the document, click once and type one word that you wish to use. I'm using the word SADIE in all caps. Click the checkmark to commit.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Window > Character to open the Character panel.
- Set the Tracking to -110. Once the Tracking is changed, close the Character panel.

Before we move on to the rest of the tutorial, let's talk a little bit about font size, caps or no caps, and tracking. The settings I just used worked for this word and this font specifically. But, if you're using a different font or even just a different word from me, you might need to adjust the Font Size, the Tracking, and whether you use all caps or not.

You see, because this is a mask, I would normally want all of the letters touching each other without any space in between. But for my word, Sadie, in all caps, I had to leave just the smallest space between the capital I and the capital E in order for the I to even be discernible. Without leaving that space, the letter I disappears.

Also, your mask may work better for some words and less great for others. It's all in the combination of letters. If you don't have an issue with your word, like I do with my letter I disappearing, then feel free to reduce your Tracking a little bit more so the letters are closer together. Just make sure each letter is still discernible.

One last note about caps or no caps. Let me show you quickly, one thing that can happen with overlapping letters. It's a bit of a pet peeve of mine when this happens. I'm not sure why it happens but I'm guessing it has something to do with how the designer of the font puts the font together. Either way, you'll want to be watching for this because it won't work very well for the technique we're doing here. So, using the same League Spartan font, I'm going to Shift click below my word and type the same word Sadie in all lower case letters.

As you can see, where the e overlaps the i, instead of it being black on black, it's now showing the outline of the overlap with white. I'm not sure why this font only does this with the lower case letters but it does. However, be aware that some fonts do this for all of the letters. If the font you're using does this, change to a different font. Ok, let me delete this extra layer and let's get on with the tutorial.

- Get the Move tool.
- Press Ctrl A (Mac: Cmd A) to Select All.
- In the Tool Options, click on the Align Horizontal Centers icon and the Align Vertical Centers icon.
- Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.

<u>Step Four: Save As</u>

- Now, your basic big letter mask is ready to be saved. Save this is Artistic-Letter-Mask-Base.psd in a folder called Big Letter Masks. The folder, Big Letter Masks should be located within your Custom Word Art folder that you created at the beginning of the class.

Now remember, if the word or font you're trying to use isn't giving you the results you want, don't get frustrated. Try a different font or a different word. Play around with the tracking, the font size, caps or no caps, etc. Just make sure the letters are bold and easily readable.

Credits:
Nature Photo: Jenifer Juris
Kits: APP My Camera by Anna Aspnes, Encouragement by Cottage Arts, Slightly Off by Dawn by Design
Fonts: League Spartan Bold, Veteran Typewriter, Bollivia Rosilla Script, Aura Blue