Perfectly Personal Word Art
Artistic Letter Mask Variation 1 – Photoshop
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[TOU](#)

Step One: Prepare the Workspace

- Open the Artistic-Letter-Mask-Base.psd file.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Image > Duplicate to create a duplicate of this file. We want to keep the Base file intact so we're making sure to work with a copy. Click OK.
- In the downloads for this section of the class, you can find a small number of PNG paint files I've included for you to use. You are going to need those files downloaded and unzipped in order to be able to follow along with this lesson.
- Ok, so now that we've created a copy of our base file and have the paint PNG files ready, let's get started on the fun stuff. This first variation I'm going to show you is very easy to do while also adding a large amount of visual impact.

Step Two: Update the Type

- Before we add any paint to this mask, I first need to update my word I'm using. So to do that, in the Layers panel, double click on the thumbnail of the type layer to activate the type on the Artistic Letter Mask Base document.
- Now type the word you wish to use. I'm using the word NATURE in all caps. If you want to copy me exactly, you can, as I've also provided the same photo I'm using in this lesson in the downloads.
- Click the checkmark to commit.

- As you can see, the word no longer fits within the bounds of the document. But that's ok, as we're about to fix that.
- Get the Horizontal Type tool.
- In the Tool Options, set the Size to 125pts.
- 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.

Step Three: Add the Paint

- Open the file called Paint-01.png.
- Get the move tool.
- In the Tool Options, make sure Auto Select Layer is unchecked.
- On the document, while holding down the Shift key, click and drag the paint-01 file onto your base copy document.
- In the Layers panel, drag the paint layer below the type layer.

- Press Ctrl T (Mac: Cmd T) to get the Transform options.
- At this point, you may need to resize your document smaller so that you can see the Transform handles so to do that, press Ctrl 0 (Mac: Cmd 0).
- On the document, while holding down the Alt Key (Mac: Opt key) click and drag from a corner handle to make the paint layer smaller. I'm going to size it down until the transform box fits to the document edges. Then, click the checkmark to commit.
- Now you can resize your document back up to size by pressing Ctrl + (Mac: Cmd +) a few times.

Step Four: Save As

- Once your paint layer is positioned how you want it, in the layers panel, click on the Background layer and drag it to the trash.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Image > Trim.
- In the dialog box, set the Based On to Transparent Pixels, and set the Trim Away to all four options of Top, Bottom, Left, and Right. Click OK.

- Now in the Menu Bar, choose File > Save As and save this file with a unique name as a .PNG file type in the same folder as the Base .PSD file. This will create a flat, transparent version of this mask for you to use on your projects. I recommend giving the flat version a unique name that uses the word you used in the mask. For example, I'm naming this flat PNG file Nature-Letter-Mask.PNG.

- Now don't close this file just yet. I ALSO recommend saving this file as a PSD layered file. There may be times that you want to make the paint a different color from the type and you may also want to change the word you used which is something you can't do with a PNG file. So in the Menu Bar, choose File > Save As and save this file as a PSD file for future customization. I'm going to save it as Artistic-Letter-Mask-Paint-V1.PSD.

Step Five: Use in a Project

Now that we've saved the mask, let me show you how to clip a photo to it.

- In the downloads for this lesson, I've included a photo of mine for you to practice with. Download and Unzip the files for this lesson and open the file called Nature Photo by Jenifer Juris.jpg.
- On top of having the photo open and ready, I've also already opened the Nature-Letter-Mask.PNG file we just saved a minute ago. We do not need the layered file for this step so the flat PNG file will work nicely for us.
- So we don't accidentally save over this black PNG file, let's create a duplicate. To do that, in the Menu Bar, choose Image > Duplicate to create a copy. Click OK.
- Close the original Nature-Letter-Mask.PNG file.
- Go back to the Photo document.
- Get the Move tool.
- On the document, while holding down the Shift key, click and drag the photo on to the Nature-Letter-Mask-copy.png document.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Create Clipping Mask.
- Press Ctrl T (Mac: Cmd T) to get the Transform options.
- You might need to press Ctrl 0 (Mac: Cmd 0) to resize the document so that you can see the corner handles.
- While holding down the Alt key, click and drag on a corner handle to make the photo smaller. I'm dragging mine in until the bounding box is just inside the left and right document edges.
- Click the checkmark to commit.
- You might also need to resize the document back up to size by pressing Ctrl + (Mac: Cmd +) a few times.
- Now on the document, while holding down the Shift key, click and drag the photo up until the bee and flower are visible inside the letters U and R.

- To transfer this to a different project document, press Ctrl A (Mac: Cmd A) to Select All.
- Press Shift Ctrl C (Mac: Shift Cmd C) to copy all of the layers.
- Go to your current project document and press Ctrl V (Mac: Cmd V) to Paste.

So here is our layer mask with the photo clipped to it. I really like how this first variation turned out!

And here is how I used this first variation in a project. I made a digital scrapbook page using more photos from the same nature walk. I really love how the photo clipped to our mask completes the trio of pictures while also helping to tell a story.

Credits:
Letter Mask: Jenifer Juris
Page & Photos: Jenifer Juris
Kit: Summer Fields by Natali Designs
Fonts: Amberlight, Veteran Typewriter