Perfectly Personal Word Art
Big Letter Mask Variation 1 – Photoshop Transcript
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In this lesson we're going to cover how to take the big letter mask base and give it some artistic flair. In this variation we're going to add some paint to the mask base and then clip a photo to it.

So here I am in Photoshop and I've already opened the artistic letter mask base PSD file. Before you do anything else, in the menu bar, choose image, duplicate to create a copy of this file and then click okay. We want to make sure we keep the base file intact so we're going to make sure we work with the copy. So now we can close the original base file. 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 these files downloaded and unzipped in order to be able to follow along with this lesson. Okay, 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.

Before we add any paint to this mask, I first need to update the word that 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 document. Now type the word that 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. So then once you're done, click the checkmark to commit. As you can see, the word no longer fits within the bounds of the document, but that's okay. We're about to fix that. So get the horizontal type tool. And in the tool options, set the font size to 125 points. And now we can get the move tool, press control A in windows or command A on a Mac to select all. And then in the tool options, click on the align horizontal centers icon and the align vertical centers icon and then press control D in windows or command D on a Mac to de-select.

Now it's time to add the paint. So I've already opened the file called paint zero one dot PNG. Get the move tool and in the tool options make sure auto select layer is unchecked. Then on the document while holding down the shift key, click and drag the paint zero one file onto your base copy document and then let go. Then in the layers panel, drag the paint layer below the type layer. Now press control T in windows or command T on a Mac to get the transform options. And at this point you may need to resize your documents smaller so that you can see the transform handles. So to do that, press control zero in windows or command zero on a Mac.

Now on the document while holding down the alt key in windows or the option key on a Mac, 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 and then you can click the checkmark to commit. Now you may need to resize your document back up to size by pressing control plus in windows or command plus on a Mac a few times.

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. Now in the menu bar, choose image trim and 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 and then click okay. Now in the menu bar, choose file, save as, and save this file with a unique name as a dot PNG file type in the same folder as the base dot 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 that you used in the mask. For example, I'm going to name this flat PNG file, nature letter mask dot PNG. But 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 which stands for variation one dot PSD.

Now that we have saved the mask, let me show you how to clip a photo to it. So first, 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.JPEG. On top of having the photo open and ready, I've also already opened the nature letter mask dot PNG file we just saved a minute ago. We do not need the layered file for this step, so the flat PNG will work nicely for us. And 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 and then in the dialog box, click okay to create a copy. Now go back and close the original nature letter mask PNG file. Now let's go to the photo document and get the move tool. On the document while holding down the shift key, click and drag the photo onto the nature letter mask copy document and then let go.

Now in the menu bar, choose layer, create clipping mask. Press control T in windows or command T on a Mac to get the transform options. And then you'll probably need to press control zero in windows or command zero on a Mac to resize the document so that you can see the transform handles. And while holding down the alt key in windows or the option key on a Mac, click and drag from a corner handle to make the photo smaller. I'm dragging mine in until the bounding box is just inside the left and right edges of the document. And then once you're done, click the checkmark to commit. Now you might also need to resize the document back up to size by pressing control plus in windows or command plus on a Mac a few times. Now on the document, while holding down the shift key, click and drag the photo up until the bee and the flower are visible inside the letters U and R.

Okay, now it's ready to be used in a project. So to transfer this to a different project document, press control A in windows or command A on a Mac to select all. Then you'll press shift control C in windows or shift command C on a Mac to copy all of the layers.

And then you would go to your current project document and press control V in windows or command V on a Mac to paste. So here's 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. In the next lesson, we're going to look at a second variation on the big letter mask. I'll see you there. This is Jenifer Juris with perfectly personal word art.