

GESTURAL MARKS AND TEXTURES

One strategy to overcome the clean, flat look of vector images is by incorporating the grittier marks and textures found in photographs and other raster images. Gestural marks are typically easier to work with than textures, but both can be rendered using the same process.

Gestural Marks

Ideally, these marks should be black on white paper. If your image is in color, you should change the color mode of the image to black-and-white using Photoshop. **Image > Adjustments > Mode > Black and White**.

To **eliminate any unwanted grays**, use one of the following:

- a) Filters > Camera Raw > Target Adjustment Tool > Click and Drag Up (Lighten)/Down (Darken)
- b) Brightness/Contrast adjustment
- c) Dodge/Burn Tool

Once your image is in high contrast black-and-white, resave it as a new version (.TIFF). Then open Illustrator and place it on a new artboard with your vector logo. Select the raster image and either create an outline using the Pen tool or for more complex marks using **Live Trace**.

Live Trace gives images a very recognizable look that carries negative connotations as a tool for the lazy designer. Thus, you must not use it lazily and only with considerations to the limitations of the tool. Know that Live Trace doesn't always work effectively, especially for very complex marks, photographic images, and even some simple textures.

To **effectively use Live Trace**, you should adjust the settings using the Live Trace panel (Window > Live Trace). Then move **Threshold, Paths, and Corners** to improve the tracing results for your image. Typically you will want to enable the options Ignore White and Snap Curves to Lines. You may want to manually adjust the paths created by Live Trace by **Expanding** the live trace using the Expand button in the control bar or under Object > Expand Appearance.

Textures

For textures (such as fabric or surfaces), you should change the color mode as mentioned above then heighten the contrast using **Image > Contrast / Brightness / Exposure**. From there, you can follow the remaining steps above.

Masking

Masking is one of the most effective ways of fusing marks/textures with a pre-existing logo. The two most common are the **Transparency Mask Tool** and the **Clipping Mask Tool**. The transparency mask controls how much one object or image reveals or hides the object behind it. The Clipping Mask is like cropping. It makes only what's inside the top path show through the mask. To access these, click **Window > Transparency** and **Window > Clipping**, respectively.

Bitmapping

You can also turn any raster image into a texture by **bitmapping** it. This changes the image into a pattern of dots or lines. It is used by contemporary graphic designers, particularly for black and white publications or processes like silkscreening. The most visually interesting is likely the **Halftone Screen** (Image > Mode > Bitmap > Halftone Screen). By **changing the Output Resolution, Frequency, Shape, and Angle** creating the screen, your image will look more or less grainy, clear, and recognizable. Note that after you have converted your mode to Bitmap, your layers will be flattened and you won't be able to use any tools to change the image.