Color in Your Line Art
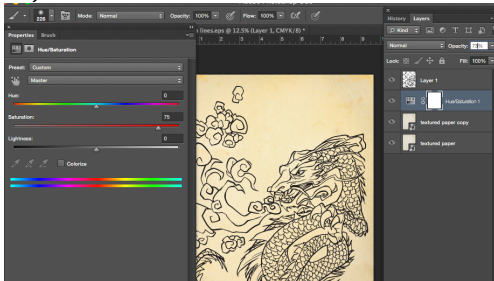

Become a Bush tool master and color in pre-made vector for an Eastern-inspired painting
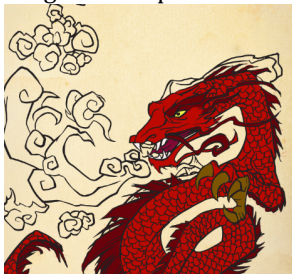
1. Open up a new PSD file with the following settings: 245mm x 310mm, Mode: RGB and Resolution: 300dpi. Open up the "dragon "dragon lines.eps" file (when the rasterize EPS format dialog box appears, click OK).

2. Hit Cmd+A to select the whole canvas (since the background is transparent, you will only copy the line work). Use Cmd+C to copy and then Cmd+V to paste into your PSD file.
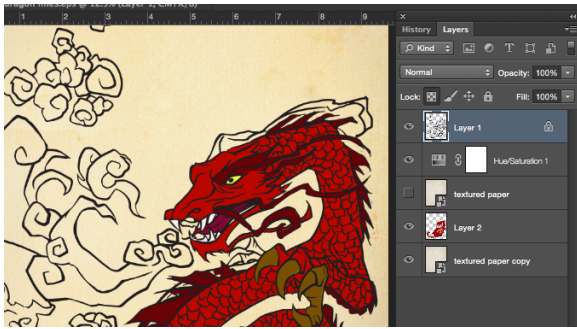

3. Paste "Textured paper.jpeg" beneath the line work and duplicate the layer (Cmd+J) and then apply a Hue/Saturation adjustment. Move the Saturation slider to 75and click OK. Set the layer's blend mode to Multiply at 73% Opacity.

4. Create a new layer between the paper texture layers. Grab the brush tool and use a hard-edged brush to color the dragon. To replicate the ancient oriental feel, we've used desaturated colors with strong reds and blacks.
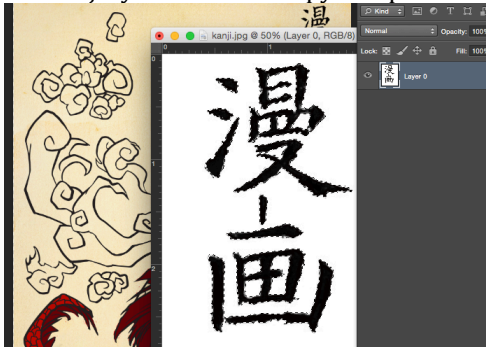

5. Click the lock transparency icon(the chessboard in the Layers palette). With the layer's transparency locked, you can paint only on existing pixels, so there is no need to worry about painting over the lines; you will just recolor the existing lines.
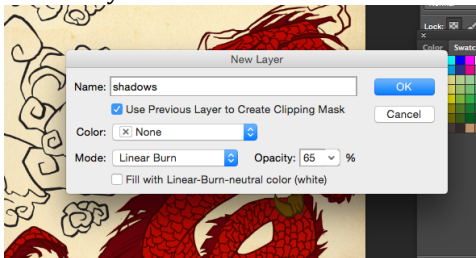
←with the Lines Painted

6. To add the oriental feel, open up "kanji.jpeg" and "Free_Dragon_Tattoo01.eps" and use the Magic Wand tool to select the kanji symbols. Then copy and paste them into your artwork, setting the layer's blend mode to Multiply.
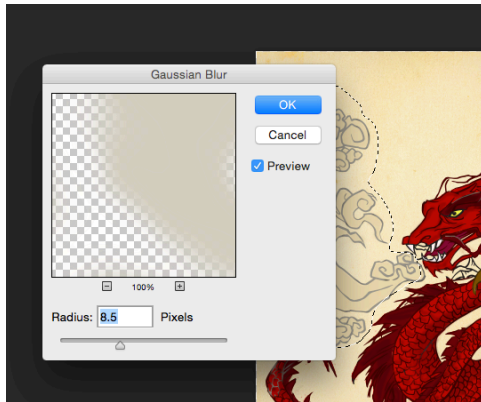

7. Make a swatch with the color values Red:137: Green: 118, Blue: 123. Create a new layer to paint your shading on, setting the mode to Linear Burn and Opacity to 65%. Check the "Use previous layer to create clipping mask" box and click Okay.
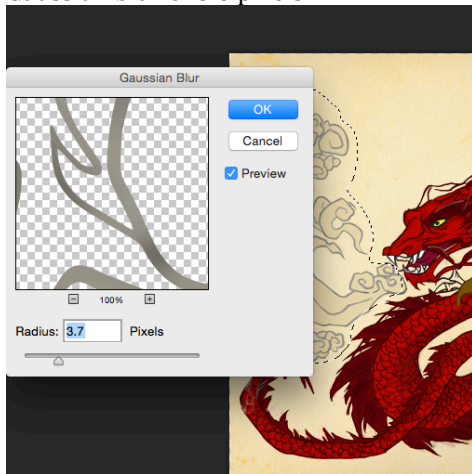

8. Use the airbrush setting to apply shading with just your new color swatch. The Linear Burn layer makes color react with the flat color layer beneath, so you don't have to worry about picking appropriate colors to shade with.
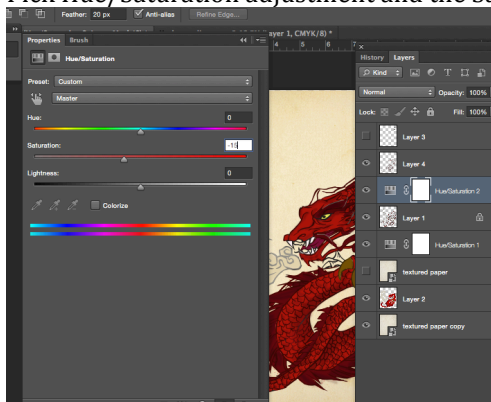

9. Select the Lasso tool and set it to "add to selection" (in the option bar). Draw a selection around both areas of smoke and then go to Filer>Blur>Gaussian blur, setting the Radius to 8.2 pixels. Click Okay to apply.
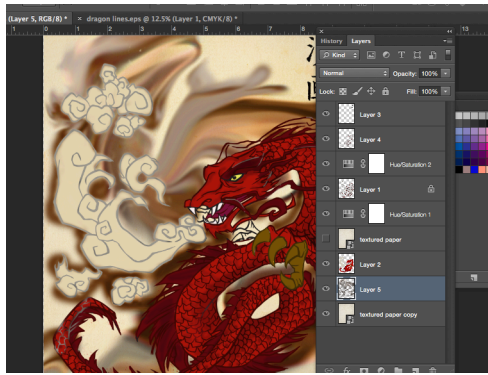
10. Press Cmd+D to deselect the smoke lines and then draw a new Lasso selection around the fire, this applying a Gaussian blur of 3.8 pixels.

11. Click on the mall black and white circle icon at the bottom of the Layers palette to create a new adjustment layer. Pick Hue/Saturation adjustment and the Saturation sider to the left to -15.

12. Create a new layer to paint a dark background and underneath the flat color layer. Use a larger airbrush to paint a variety of dark browns around the dragon.
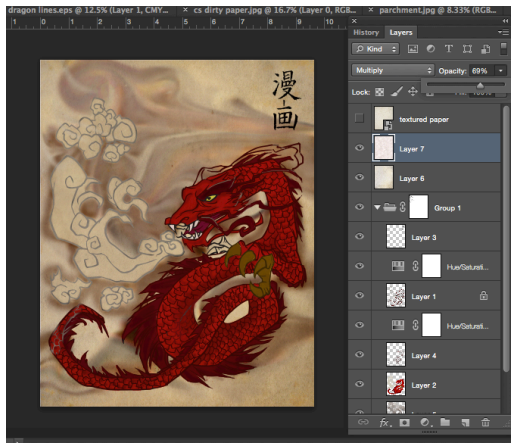
13. Holding down the Shift, click on the lines layer so that all of the dragon layer are highlighted, then group the layers (press cmd+G). Click the circle-in-square icon in the Layers palette to add a layer mask to the layer group.

14. Use your airbrush to pint on the layer mask, hiding areas of the dragon and the background to simulate clouds. Paint the clouds so that they look like they are pointing inwards towards the dragon to strengthen the composition.
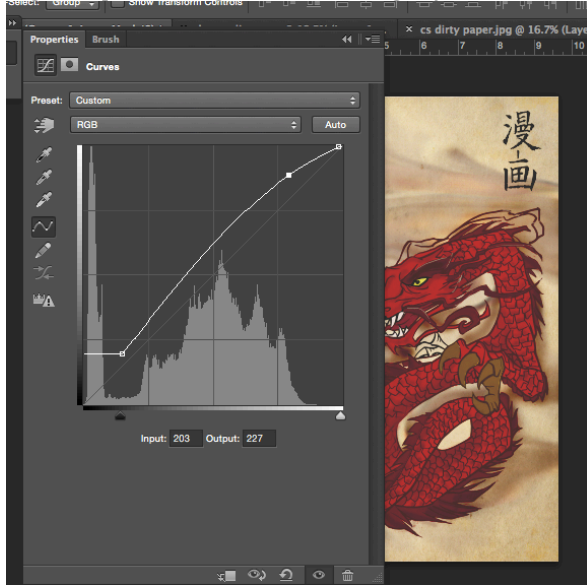

15. For areas where you accidently painted over the dragon, making it out, you can bring it by ctrl-clicking on the flat colors' thumbnails in the Layers palette and shift+ctrl-clicking the lines layers to make a selection of the dragon.

16. Press X to switch between using black and white, and paint the selections of the dragon back in on the layer mask.

17. Open up "CS dirty paper.jpeg" then copy and paste the contents into the top of your image. Change the layer's blend mode to Multiply in the Layers palette so that the texture is visible over the image. Free Transform it (via Cmd+T) to fir the image.

18. Repeat this with "parchment.jpeg" but after setting this texture to Multiply, reduce the Opacity in the Layers palette to 69% and then Free Transform the paper to fit your image to dragging the handles. Adding multiple texture gives the image more variation.

19. To tweak the colors a little, add a Curves adjustment layer. In the properties tab, drag the top-right anchor point higher up to the right. This will slightly wash out the image.

Finished Product