

Photoshop Tip
Making a Signature Brush Preset
By Joe Holler

Some photographers and or photographic artists like to affix their signature to their work digitally and some prefer to sign them manually. I prefer the former. The easiest method that I have found to accomplish this is to make a brush preset out of my signature. This makes it very quick to affix my signature on my work in the size color and location that I want.

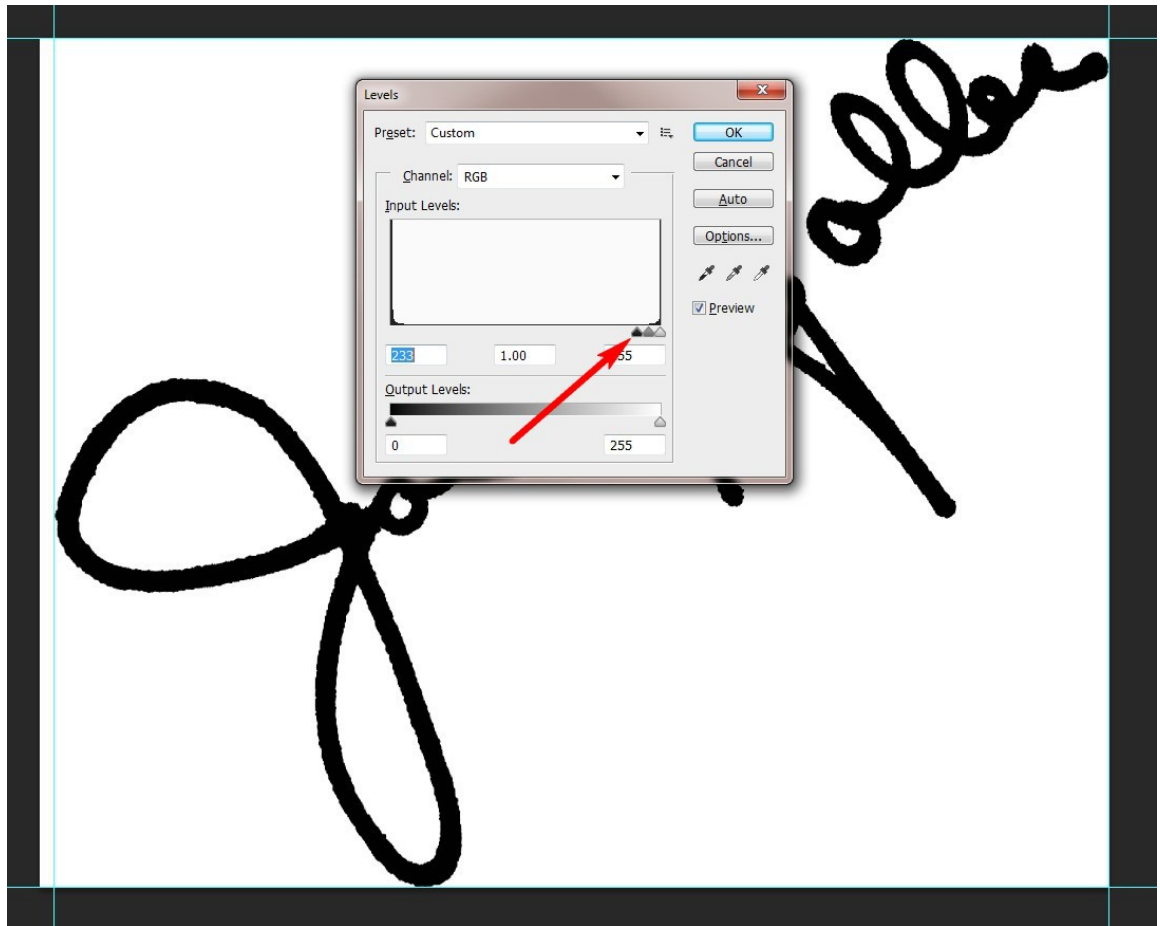
Note before we begin: You will need to be able to see both your Layers palette and your Brushes palette. If you can't see them then click on Window and check the appropriate palettes.

There are 2 ways to create your digital signature:

- Scan your signature.
- Write it in Photoshop, preferably by using a Wacom tablet.

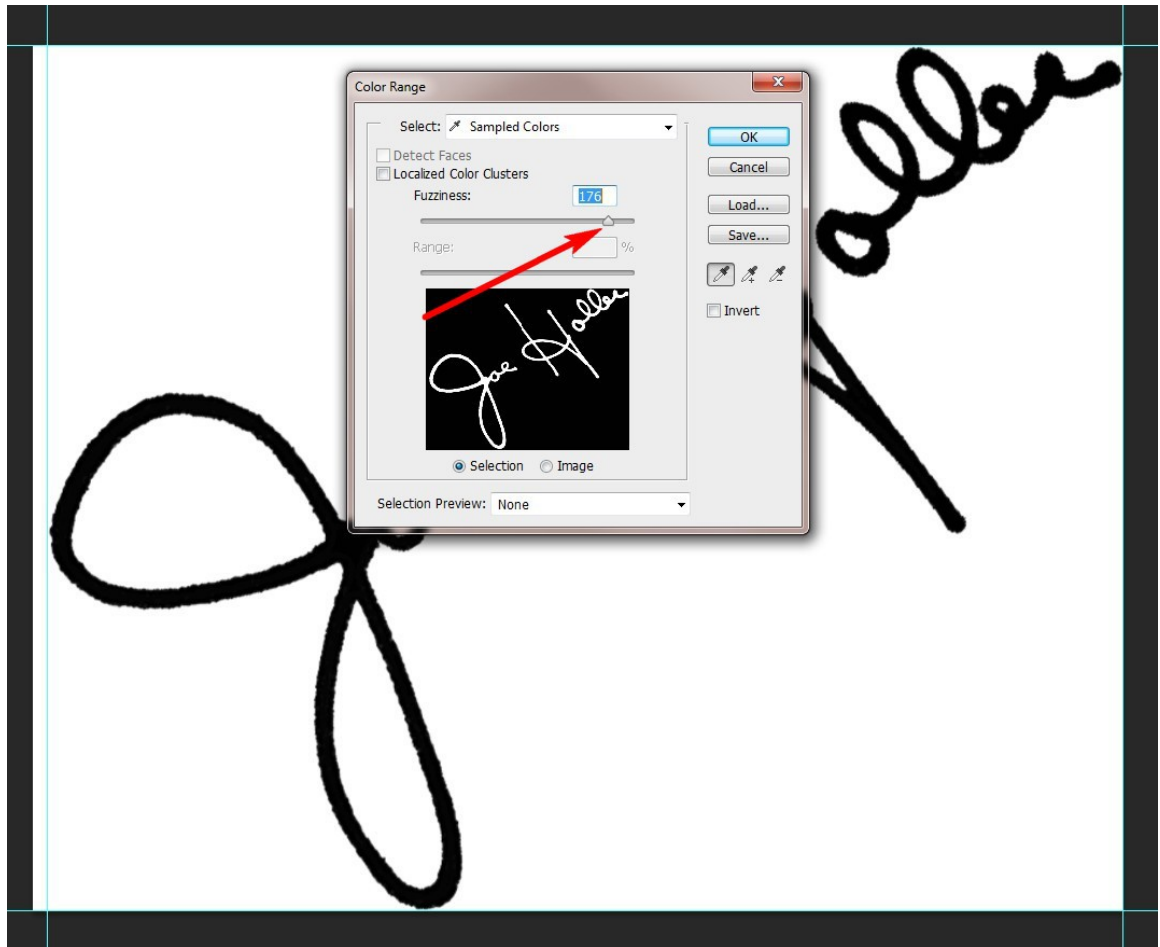
SCAN METHOD

1. Sign a piece of paper with a felt pen because you will be making a selection in Photoshop and it is more difficult to make a selection of a thin line.
2. Scan it into the computer and open the file into Photoshop
3. Do a levels adjustment (Ctrl + L) and move the shadows slider far to the right to make the signature dark black



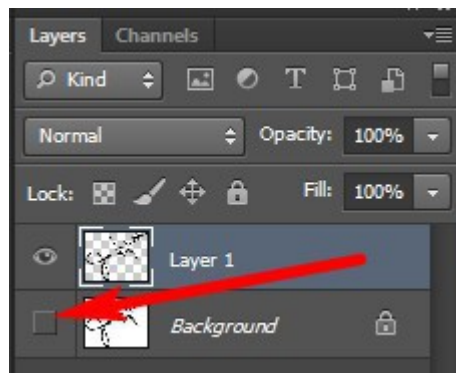
Make the signature dark black with a levels adjustment.

4. Make a selection of the signature by using Color Range (Select | Color Range) and move the fuzziness slider far to the right. This will make a selection of all of the black pixels.



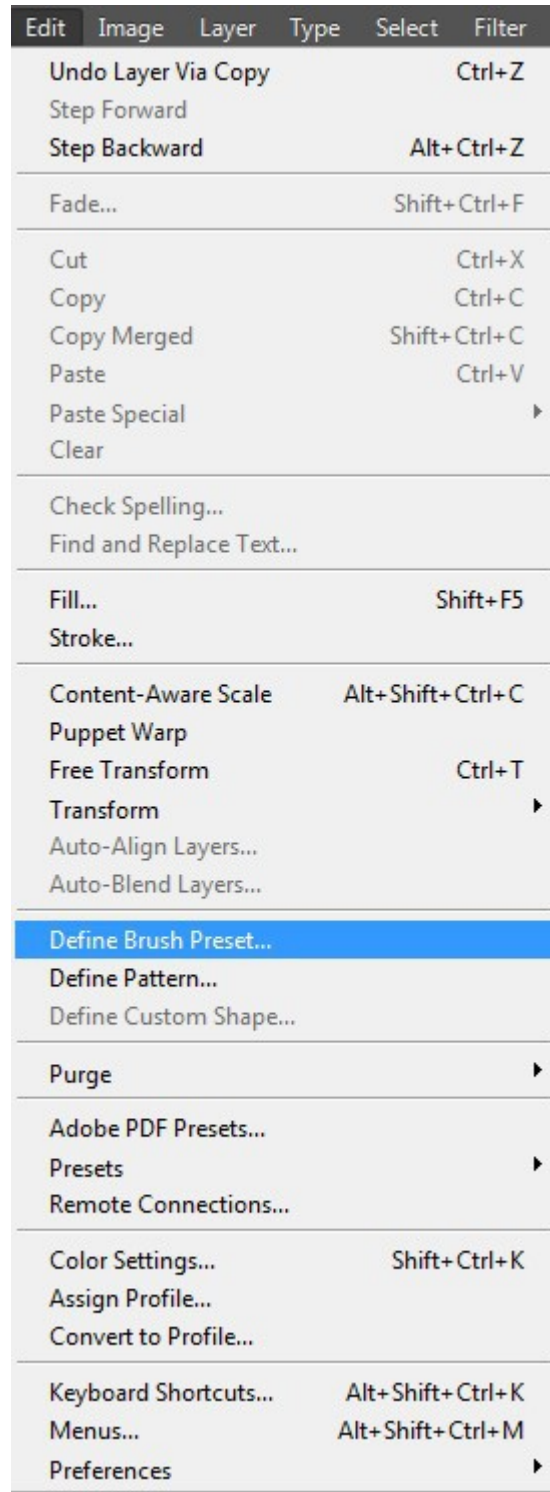
Select the signature with Color Range.

5. Copy the selection onto its own layer by making a duplicate layer (Ctrl + J). Then turn off the background layer by clicking on the eye to the left of the background layer in the layers palette.

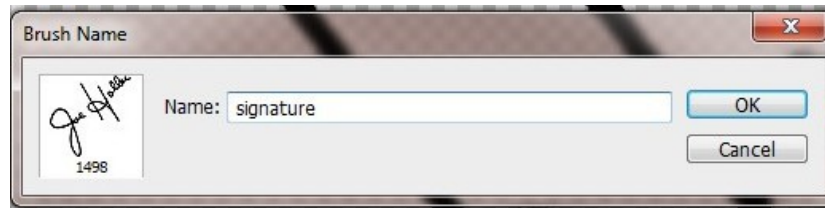


Turn off the background layer.

6. Define the signature as a Brush Preset with File | Define Brush Preset and give your preset a name.



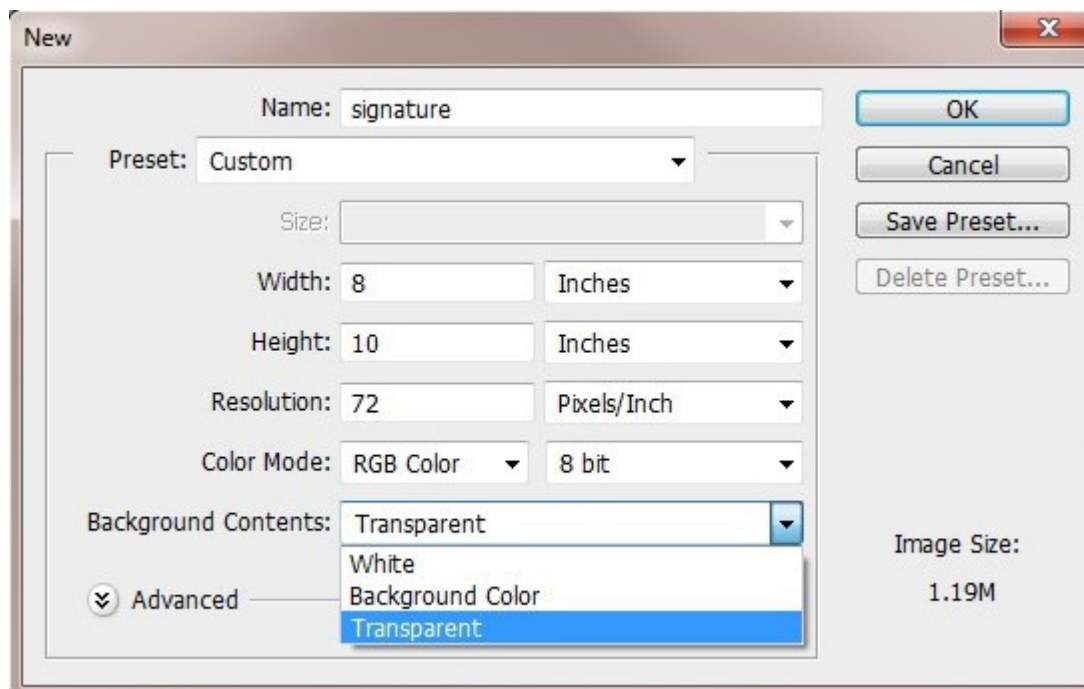
Edit | Define Brush Preset



Name your preset.

WRITING YOUR SIGNATURE METHOD

The scanning method works better than trying to write your signature in Photoshop, whether or not you have a Wacom tablet. But, if you want to try it, start by making a new document (File | New) with a transparent background.



Make a new transparent document.

Choose a small hard brush and sign your name. Good luck! Here I signed my name with the mouse (top) and with the Wacom tablet. I am not skilled enough to make either of them look good.



Writing your name with a mouse or Wacom tablet isn't easy.

If you are able to get a satisfactory signature, then do step number 6 above.

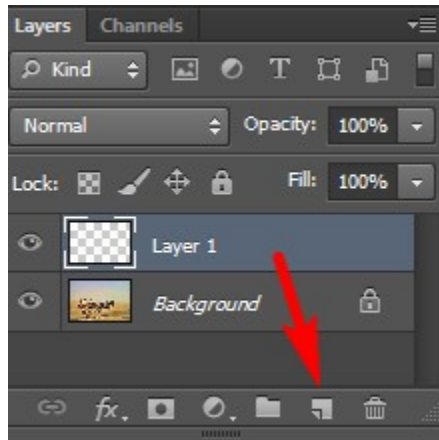
TEXT SIGNATURE

- You can also make a brush preset out of your name in text, although it is not really a signature.
- Start by making a new document with a transparent background, as above.
- Use the text tool to type your name in whatever font you like.
- Do step 6 above.

USING THE PRESET

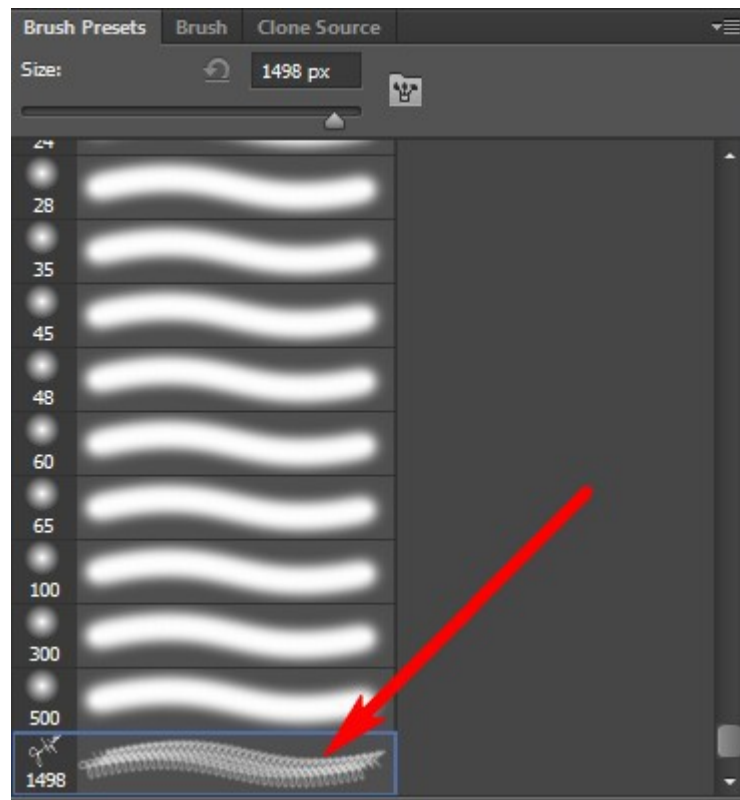
Now that you have a signature brush preset, how do you use it?

- Open a picture to which you want to affix your signature into Photoshop.
- Create a new layer (Layer | New | Layer) by clicking on the New Layer icon on the bottom of the Layers palette.



Make a new layer.

- Select the brush tool (B) and select your signature brush preset from the Brush Presets tab of the Brush palette. New presets are added to the bottom of the list.



Choose your signature preset.

- Resize your brush with the left and right square brackets on your keyboard.
- Select a color for your signature. I recommend choosing a color that is already in your image.
- Then just click and your signature is affixed.

- Lastly, I recommend that you reduce the opacity of the layer to fade out your signature a little so that it doesn't jump off the page. I don't want my signature to detract from the image.



Affix your signature.

It takes a bit of effort to make the signature brush preset but in the long run it saves a lot of time.