December 1999
3D-licious Vol. 1
Icon Collection

What's This?

This is pretty much a miscellaneous icon collection, presenting a few themes but not a sole uber-vision. These icons were created so that I could try out a few techniques that I had previously left unexplored (discussed later for those who enjoy essays and personal soul-searching).

I would like to give credit where it is due: Thanks to Copland Icons (http://www.graphicsdesign.org/copland/) one of whose designs was the genesis of inspiration for the 'Factory Icon'. I'd also like to thank the guys at the Iconfactory, whom didn't directly leverage influence upon any of these icons, but whose work I have been scrutinizing at 500% for quite some time, and have therefore been of tremendous influence over-all.

If you have seen very many of my icon collections, you will notice that these icons look quite different than my previous sets. At one time, most icons had a black outline to ensure contrast against varied backgrounds. In the last year or so (especially with the introduction of MacOS 8.5) there has been a migration towards lighter, coloured outlines. This is especially noticeable in the work of the Iconfactory (http://www.iconfactory.com). Compare World of Coland 1 and World of Copland 4 and you will see my point.

I have finally decided to give this a try. You may even be able to guess the order in which I made these icons as the dark outlines disappear and I break my old habit.

I also created these icons solely in Photoshop, using masks and transparencies, and sometimes upward of 30 layers. I have been wary of 32-bit icons, and of using Photoshop, because I don't like the way most 32-bit icons look (my own no exception). I find icons created in this manner to lack contrast, to generally appear 'blurry' (maybe too much anti-aliasing) on the screen, and to all look the same... like photos or larger drawings shrunken to 32x32 pixels. I'm so old fashioned, I still think every pixel has to be placed by hand: The merit or detriment of that pixel contemplated like each leaf on a bonsai tree under the thoughtful gaze of the artists eye and tools. I'm not sure I'm really happy with the finished product here, I'll have to think about it. Regardless, I do not know every pixel in these icons, like I do in my other work. And somehow, that makes a difference.

Now to return to a previous topic: The originality of icons. I think many icons look alike. I find it hard to come up with new ideas, and portray these ideas in an original context, and judging by the work of my fellow iconists, I think they feel similarily. If you catch all the latest releases, you'll notice that sets come in waves: Two or three artists will release sets of similar subject matter in close frequency, likely inspired by each other or simply onto the same idea. We finally have unlimited colours and 8-bit masks, but it hasn't done much to improve the situation. Will larger icon grids help? Maybe but I doubt it. Most likely I think we'll see a rash of popular icons re-released in the new 48x48 format, probably not by the original authors. What a boring time that will be! I don't know what the solution is, but thankfully icon artists aren't running around screaming copyright infringement, threatening lawsuits and using their websites to slander one another. Even some very blatant appropriations of another's work have gone forgiven. Thankfully, we're all mature enough to understand the limitations of our craft, and really try to be original while learning from each other.

So what am I getting at? I'm not sure. I feel that I'm making better icons than ever, but I don't know where I'm going. And sometimes I'm afraid someone will threaten a lawsuit because my cardboard box, frying pan, globe or chainsaw looks too similar to theirs. Yikes. And I bet you thought it was all fun and games... The end.

Legality:

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How to make use of these Mac Icons:
1. You need system 8.5 or higher.
2. Do a "Get Info" (File menu) on the original icon file that you want to use.
3. Click on the icon in the window; choose "Copy" (Edit menu).
4. Close the window, then "Get Info" on destination file/folder/disk.
5. Click on the icon, choose "Paste" (Edit menu).
6. Don't forget to e-mail me and let me know what you think!

Contact:
Gary Gehiere - ggehiere@hotmail.com

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