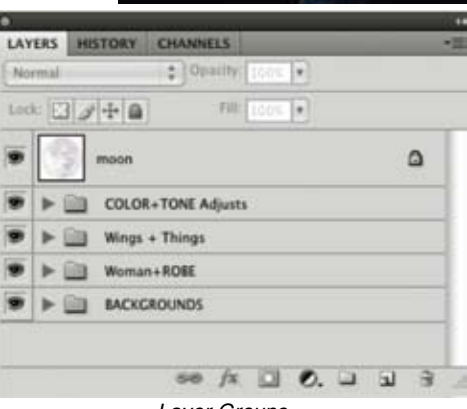
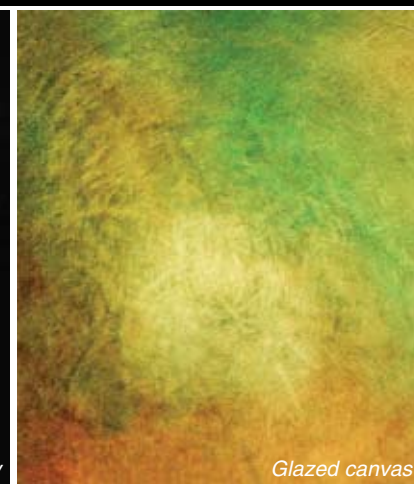
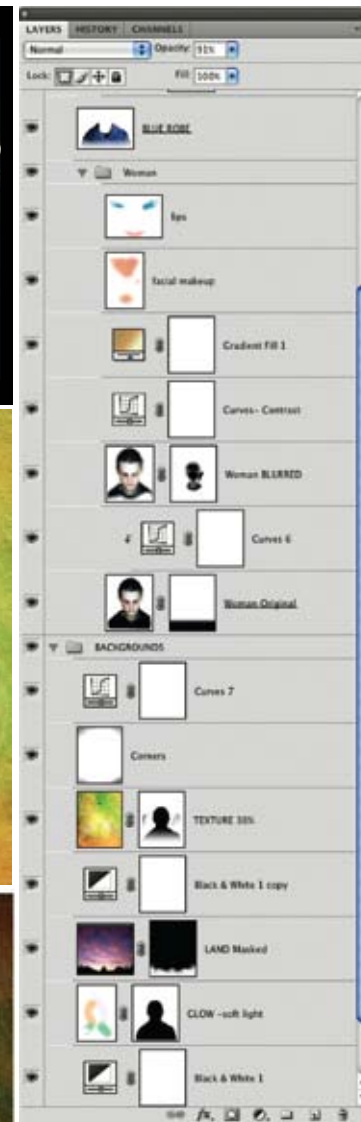
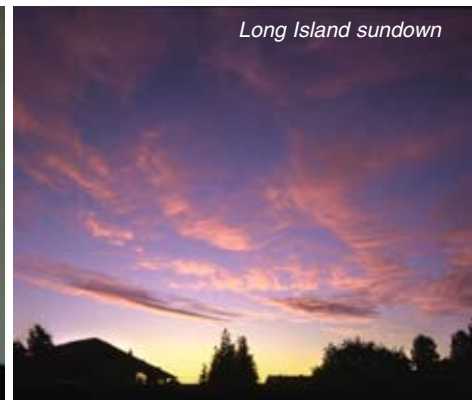
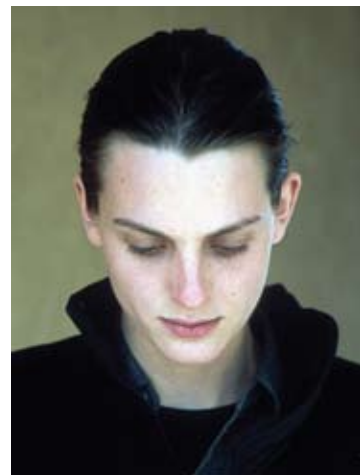


# what's inside?

By Ethan G. Salwen

## David Julian: TRANSFORMATION



Layer Groups

Butterfly wing

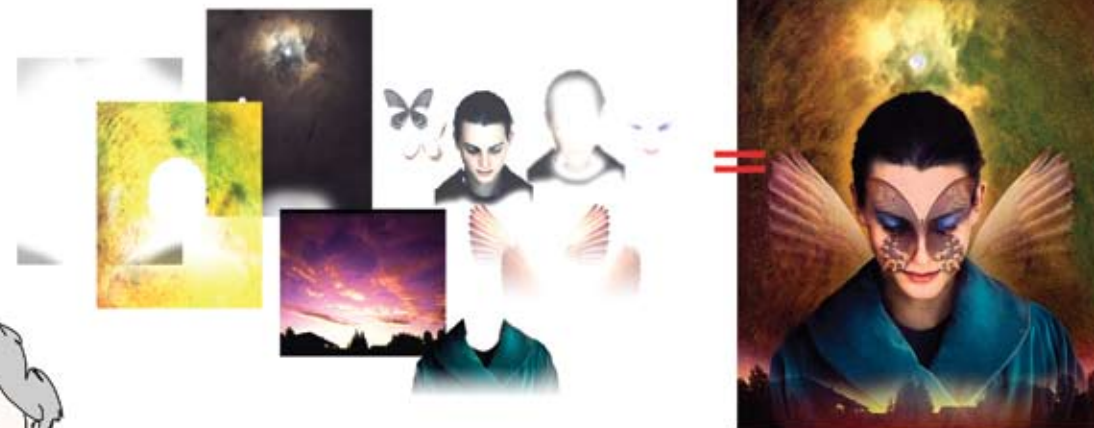
Full moon sky

Glazed canvas

Layer Details

Layers for Transformation

Transformation final



**“Transformation.”** This was the word running through David Julian’s mind as he left a creative support meeting of a group he founded with other artists in Seattle. The challenge: create an image based on this single word. When completed and added to Julian’s online portfolio, the image would be licensed for the book cover of Debra Lynne Katz’s book *Extraordinary Psychic*. “Transformation” is representative both of Julian’s commercial photo illustrations, as well as his fine art work. “Illustration is about planning, and fine art is about discovery,” Julian explains.

“I imagined a woman going through a dream of personal transformation,” Julian says. “I feel that the metamorphosis from cocoon to butterfly is one of the most visible transformations we can hope to witness.” Julian made a rough pencil sketch of a winged woman rising above a town with a full moon above. This was Julian’s planning. His discoveries took place as he worked in Photoshop CS4.

Julian began his composite with a snapshot of a former student. “I liked the simplicity of the hair in the portrait,” he says. “It would

allow me to create more impact with other elements.” After removing the portrait’s background, Julian retouched the woman’s skin and blurred and reduced the opacity of that layer to help diffuse the skin. “I added her ‘makeup layer’ and gave her a beauty that fueled my imagination.”

“I need a familiar grounding element,” Julian thought, adding an image of town at sunset, then other grounding elements: The green-golden textures from a painting and the full moon surrounded by clouds. For each layer Julian made intricate masks to isolate and blend elements. He played with transparency settings, paying careful attention to edges and fades to create “the photographic, yet dream-like feeling I like to convey in my work,” he says.

Other elements appeared in Julian’s imagination as he added and reacted to the combined effect of each layer. He added the im-

age of a single egret wing, then copied and flipped it to create her white wings. Imaging the woman in a blue shawl-collar robe, he photographed a model in one to create the detail. He added it as new layer with a clipped Hue adjustment layer.

The Wacom Cintiq 21 pen display and the Wacom Intuos4 pen tablet were essential for Julian’s process. “The digital pen keeps me in the tactile and fluid mode—the same as when I sketch my ideas with a pencil—and adds precision to all my brushstrokes.”

All main elements in place, Julian spent many hours fine-tuning “Transformation”—an image partly planned, partly discovered. CC

Ethan G. Salwen is an independent photographer and writer based in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He specializes in Latin American cultures, and also covers a wide variety of topics for professional photographers including digital technology, marketing techniques and industry trends. Salwen received his training in photography at Rochester Institute of Technology. Visit his blog at [www.aftercapture.com](http://www.aftercapture.com).