# InDesign Poster Workshop

Adobe InDesign, the powerful flat media tool, is widely used in the book industry. It also has functions that can handle singular graphic artworks. As an example, we take a closer look at creating a poster within InDesign. Quality of linked media aside, every-thing will be managed within the software. Before one begins with his/her project in InDesign, it is always a good idea to sketch out what s/he wants to do and assemble the graphic raw materials. As one would notice, InDesign is not the perfect software to draw everything from scratch. It replies heavily on linked-in images. Also sign up for our beginner and intermediate InDesign Workshops for InDesign baby steps and other general instructions.
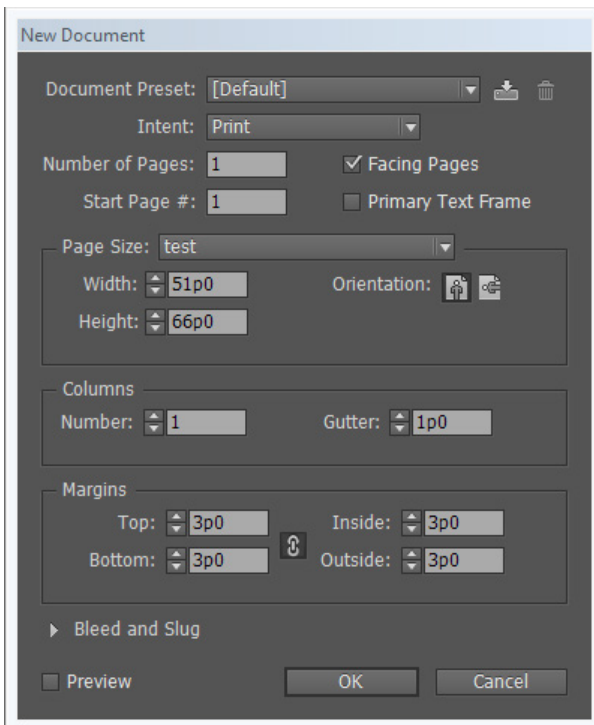
To start the poster, we set up our document. Every time you open an InDesign file you will see this dialogue where you can change the size of the page, the margin sizes, as well as a few other layout options. Our poster is 48" by 36" and it is usually not a readily available preset. We can manually input these dimensions in the width and height parameters. When typing in dimensions you can always add the unit suffix to the numbers and the program would recognize it. So 48 inches should be typed as "*48in*" or '*48"*'.
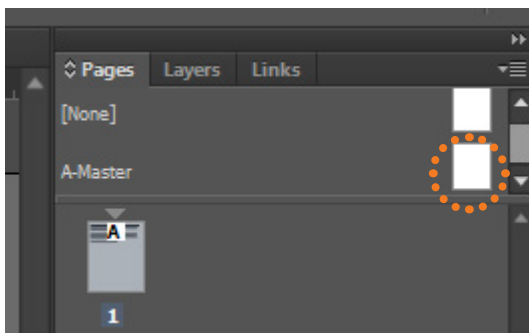
The next step is to set up the master page. This will give you an overall layout that applies to multiple pages. Although it's not critical for our purpose since our poster is only a single page, the use of master page is essential in most InDesign works. Double click on it to start editing. Double click on page 1 to exit out of master page edit.

There are two ways to get this bracket look and note that this is the backdrop to our poster so it should go on "A-Master", or alternatively on a layer. One is to use the pen tool and draw the shapes. The other is to use rectangles and apply the skew option. Click within the ruler strip (ctrl+R) and drag onto canvas will create guide lines. They come in handy when planning a layout.
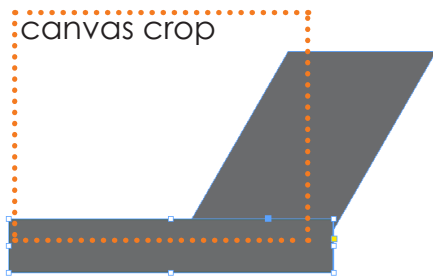
 Pen   Rectangle

 Skew(shear) option

Here we start with a regular rectangle and give it a 30° shear. Then draw the long skinny rectangle to form the shape. We will be drawing outside the canvas and thats ok because anything outside will be cropped when we export end product.

Now we should exit out of A-Master and start putting things on regular page 1

canvas crop

To place linked media, press ctrl+D. Find the image and click anywhere on canvas to place it. Again here the skew option is used to achieve the parallelegram. Notice that image is skewed as well. Hover over the image till you see the double circle like shown here. Click it and you enter into the image editing(editing content rather than the frame). Now change the skew back to 0. While in image editing, you can also scale up the images to meet the frame shape.
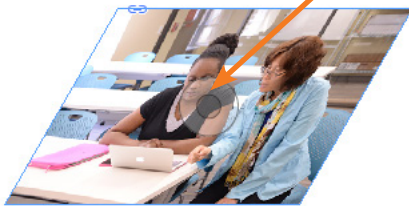
Any placed/linked in media can be re-sized by holding ctrl+shift+click and drag corner anchor of the frame. A tip is that if you have a shape on the master page layout and you drop the linked image on top of that shape, even on a regular page where master page contents are locked, the image is placed within that shape on master layout. This is ususally not what we want so a rule of thumb is to click a little outside the canvas where there is nothing that can function as a host when you place images.

A gradient blend can be achieved by overlapping different placed objects and applying a feather on one of them. Click the feather tool and click-n-drag within a frame to draw how the gradient would go, from opaque to transparent. Always apply the feather on top objects. To re-arrange which object is on top, right click on any object and find "arrange" and select the option you need.

 Gradient feather tool
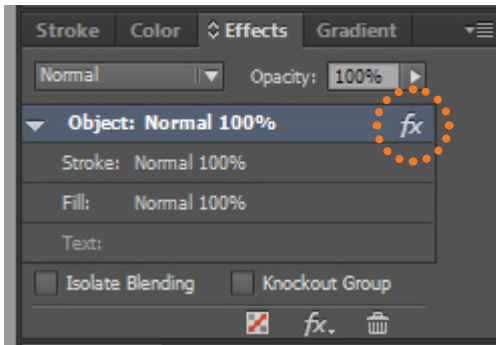
When a frame object with a feather applied is selected, you can see under the effect tab that there is an icon "fx". Double click on it to customize different effects (including specifics on the feather) on the frame object or delete what you have applied. Note that this tab also allows you to change object opacity and blending mode
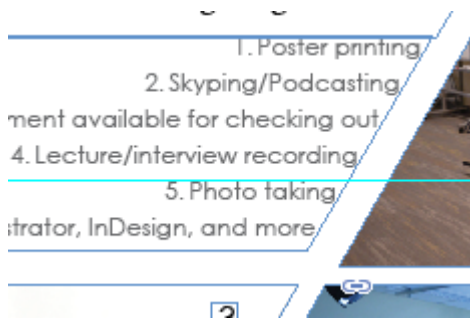
For texts objects, do the same skew options on the box frame but make sure to double-click into the text box to edit the texts, highlight all, and change the text skew to the negative degree of what your object skew is. If the text frame object is skewed 30 degrees, the texts need be -30 degrees, unless the italic look is desirable.
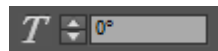
 Text skew(shear)
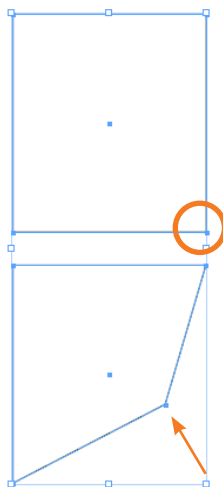
When you want to freely skew a polygon (box frame, text box, or simply color fill shapes), use the direct select tool. This gives you the ability to select one anchor point on a polygon and move it around.

 Direct select

Note that I have put an image (ghosted cameras under the texts)over the gray area set up earlier. The direct select tool is used to manipulate the iamge frame to match the gray area shape. Then the content is set to be blending mode "multiply". This imprints the image onto the gray without compromising its intensity or the gray value. Compare this to simply dialing down the image opacity.
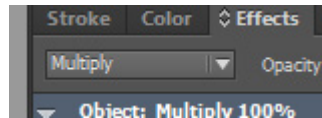
Text wrapping is also common in InDesign. To access its options, turn on the "text wrap" tab under the "window" menu atop the software inerface. In our case, the linked-in image of the owl is in fact a vector work in Adobe Illustrator. This allows InDesign to detect better where the boundaries of the image are.

After you placed the object or image, click to highlight it while you look for options in the text wrap tab so it's actually affecting that object
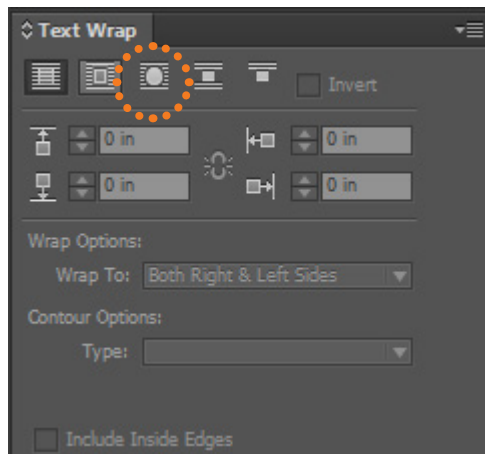
There are a few wrapping options. In our case we want texts to follow the owl shape so choose the third one highlighted here.

When you have a good clean image or vector work like our owl, drop down the menu of "contour options" to "detect edges". This will allow InDesign to interpret where the edges of the image are so texts wrap closely along. The adjustable parameters on this tab further custmize the distance between wrapped text and the edges.