I was up much too late one night and came up with this idea to push the caricature a little further. So I played around in the animation panel in Photoshop and ended up with this Bobble Head. This is good for a laugh, and actually teaches you some great Photoshop animation techniques. Have fun with this! You may want to use a full body image and animate something different, such as the tongue sticking out, or the eyes closing, along with the head bob. Or how about an arm waving up and down, or the body moving along the background and out of the frame. Use your imagination... this is easy!

creating a caricature

1. Prep a Portrait: Choose an image with a simple background for easier selecting. Size the image to fit your blog width.. about 600 pixels wide. Edit the image as desired and hit Cmd J to copy the layer.

2. Liquify: In Photoshop, go to Filter - Liquify. Use the Warp, Pucker and Bloat tools in the left panel to stretch and animate facial features. Then copy the layer.

3. Define edges: Go to Filter>Other>High Pass. Adjust the radius as desired (about 3). Change the layer blend mode to Hard Light for some sharpening. Then merge all layers into a new layer on top: Shift-Option-Cmd E.

4. Smooth skin: Go to Filter>Stylize>Diffuse (Choose Anisotropic). Go to Image > Image Rotation > 90 CW. Go to Filter>Stylize>Diffuse. Then rotate the image back 90 CCW.

5. Sharpen & Blur: Go to Filter > Sharpen > Smart Sharpen. Choose something like Radius: 5 and Threshh0ld 15. Then go to Blur>Surface Blur and set the threshhold to 15 and Radius to 5.

6. Background Layer: Create a new document the same size as your portrait. Add a gradient background, then perhaps cloud textures or other desired effects. You may want to add burned edges and/or a nice highlight area in the center.

7. Select Body: Select the neck and body with the Quick Selection tool, then go to Select>Refine Edge to clean up the edges. Copy and paste this selection to the background image you just created. Now use the Move tool (V) while holding shift to make it much smaller...no more than half the size of your background.

8. Select Head: Select the head and refine the edge, then move it on top of your small body. Now you will need to use your Clone stamp and Mask to get a good transition blend between the neck and head. You may want to tilt the head to one side. Save the .psd in case you want to edit your caricature.

CARYN ESPLIN | 9.27.12
Original Image by Zach Cooper

Now the Bobble Head animation starts.... Most of the previous tutorial came from a former Digital Imaging student, and Photographics Society President, Ryan Kristjanson.. thanks, Ryan! The rest is where I just tried things on my own...

bobble head animation

1. Create layers: You should have three layers: Background, Body; Head. Select the background and body layers, then right click and choose Merge Layers. Hit Cmd J to make a copy of the Head layer. Command-Click (Control-Click on a PC) the layer thumbnail to select the head. Then use the Move tool to tilt the head in the opposite direction. Now you should have three layers: a background with body layer; a left head tilt layer, and a right head tilt layer. Save this as a .psd with a new name. Now you should have two different .psds, for flexible future editing.

OPTIONS: Of course you can do any kind of change between the two layers. It does not have to be a head tilt. It could be an arm moving. Or the body moving along the background. Get creative!

2. Animation: Go to Window>Animation to open the animation panel. Click the rectangle icon (with three frames in it) at the bottom right to switch the view to Frames. It should say 10 sec. under the frame you have. Double click that and choose .5 or 1 second, or your desired speed. Also, change your loop option under the first frame from "once" to "forever." Be sure you hide middle layer to get just one head in this frame. Then hit the New Frame icon that looks like a page turning.. next to the trash. Hide the top layer, so you see the other head tilt. Then hit the play button under these frames and see if you get a two-frame bobble head animation. If so, save this .psd.

3. Animated GIF file: Go to File>Save for Web, then save this as a .gif file. The animation will not play until you insert it into your blog, but be cautious to follow these tips:

4. Blog display: Open a new post or page. Hit the Insert/Upload image icon as normal and browse for your .gif file. Be sure you insert the full size or the animation won't play! If you choose Large, or any size that changes the original size, it breaks the motion. Hit Preview to check for the movement and you should be done! If it does not work repeat the last four steps and be careful to follow each step closely.

I can't wait to see yours! By the way, this does not have to be a self-portrait, and it would be fun to try it on a pet.