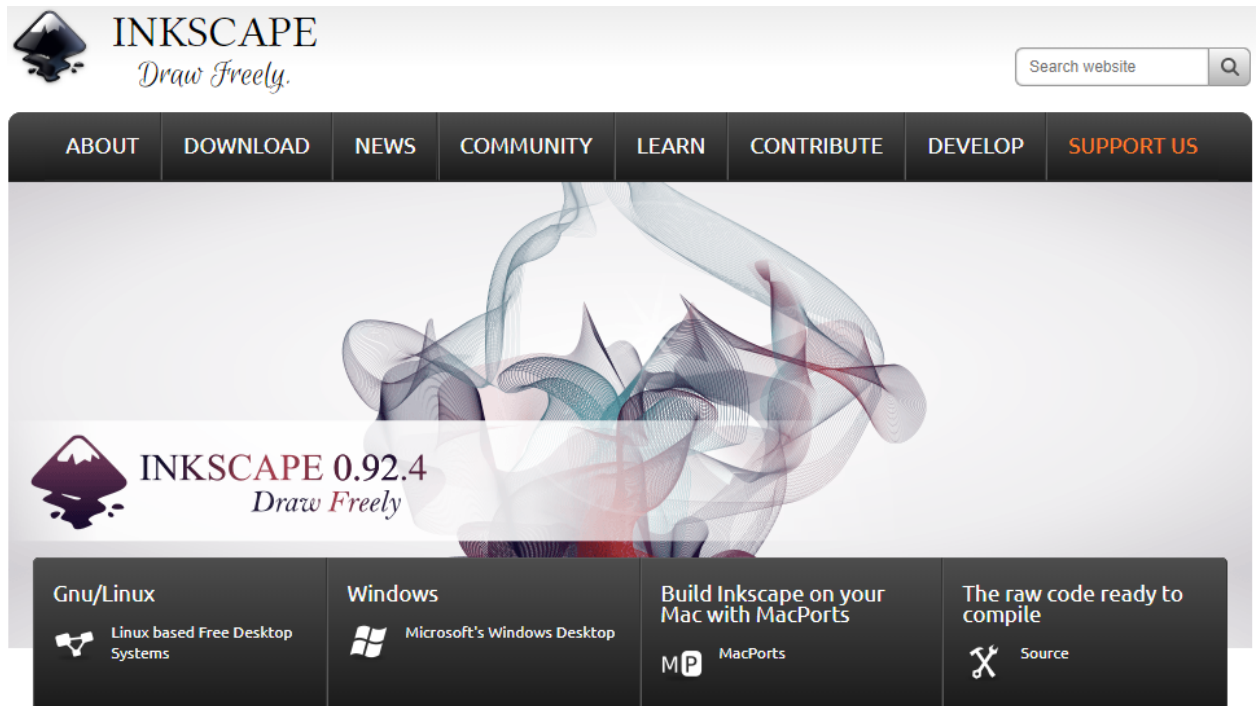
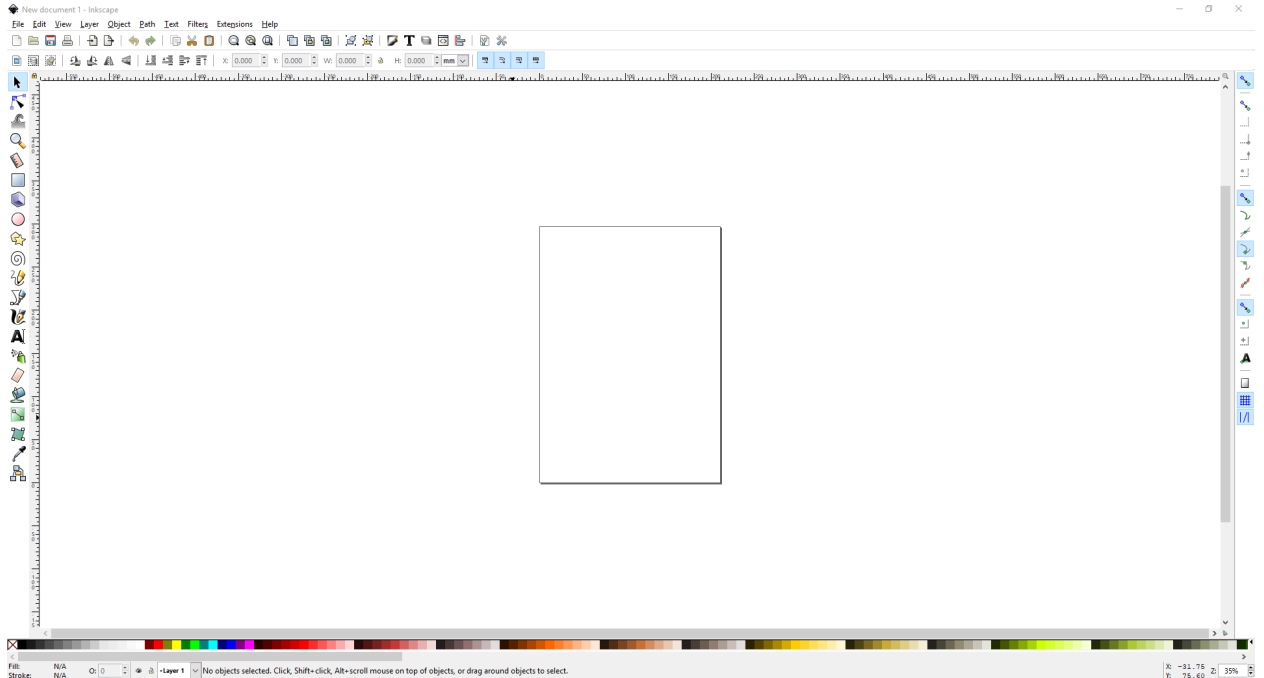


Let's make some simple graphics with Inkscape!! Oh my gosh

1. Download and install the latest version of Inkscape from <https://inkscape.org> (this tutorial uses 0.92.4: <https://inkscape.org/release/inkscape-0.92.4/>)

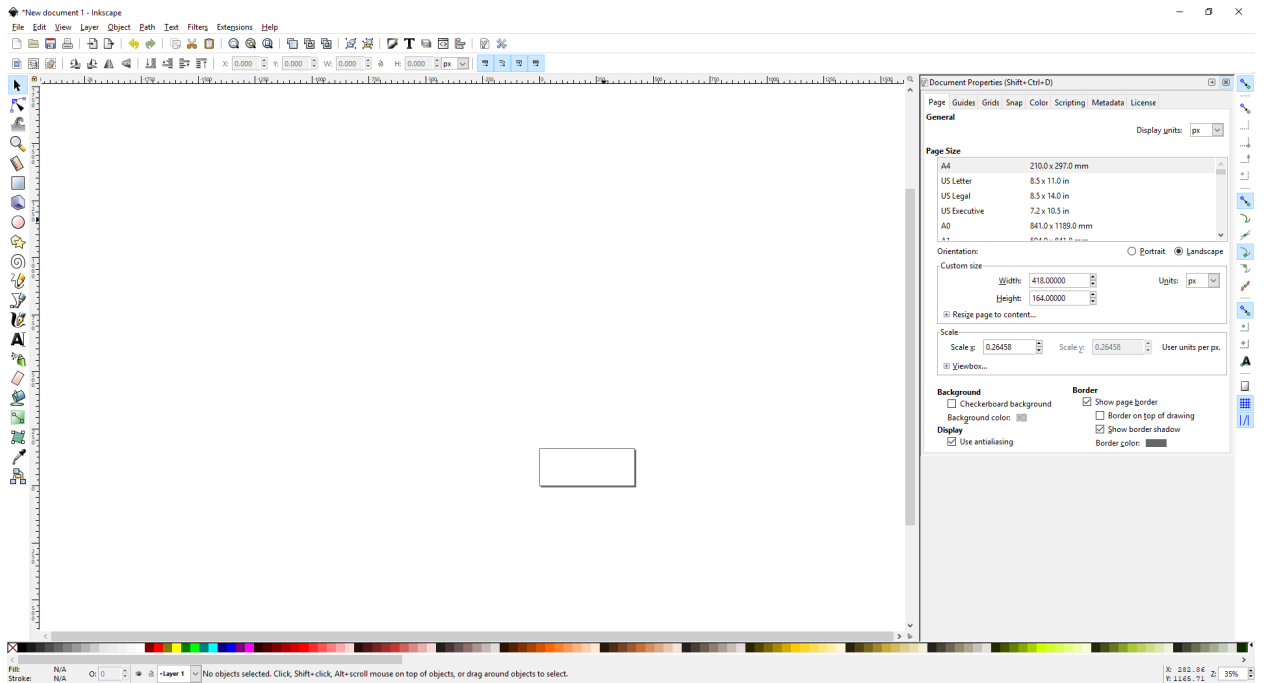


2. Start it up and check out the interface:

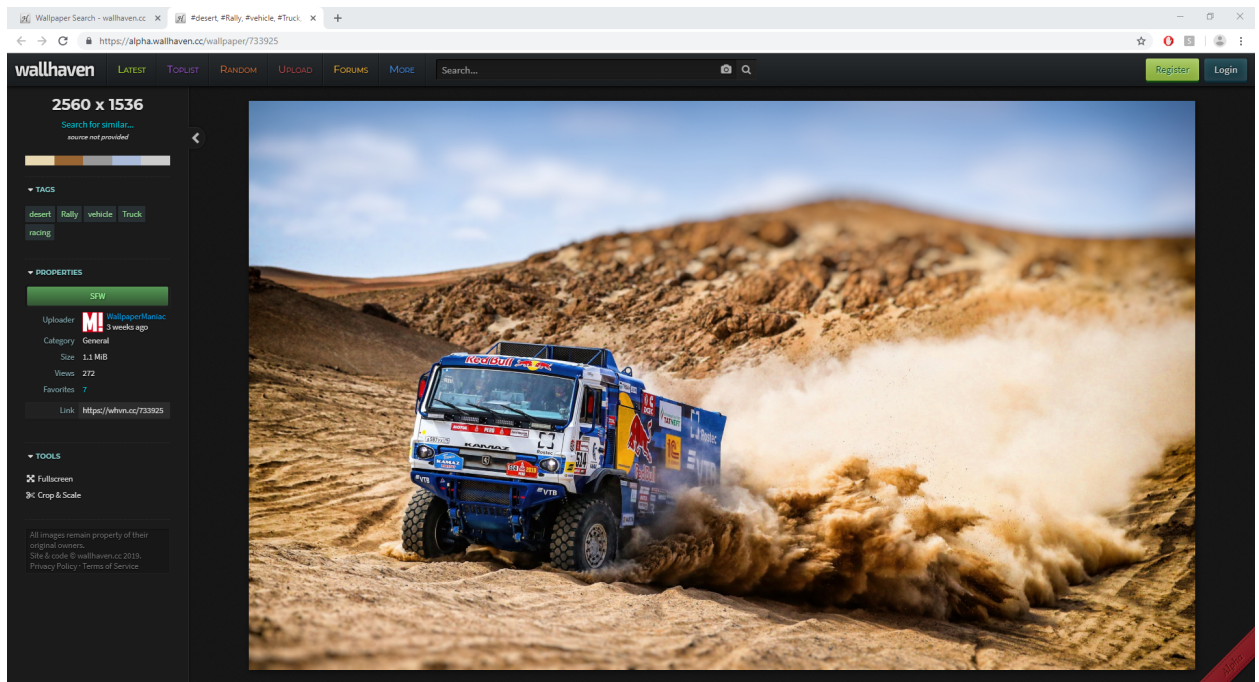


You can see the toolbox on the left side, snapping options on the right, menus at the top, popular operations just below the menus, current tool options underneath that, color palettes on the bottom, layer info to the bottom left, zoom and current coordinates to the bottom right.

- Let's get our base resolution sorted out. Open the Document Properties dock (Shift+Ctrl+D) and change all units to px and the size to 418x164 (the ITG banner “standard”).

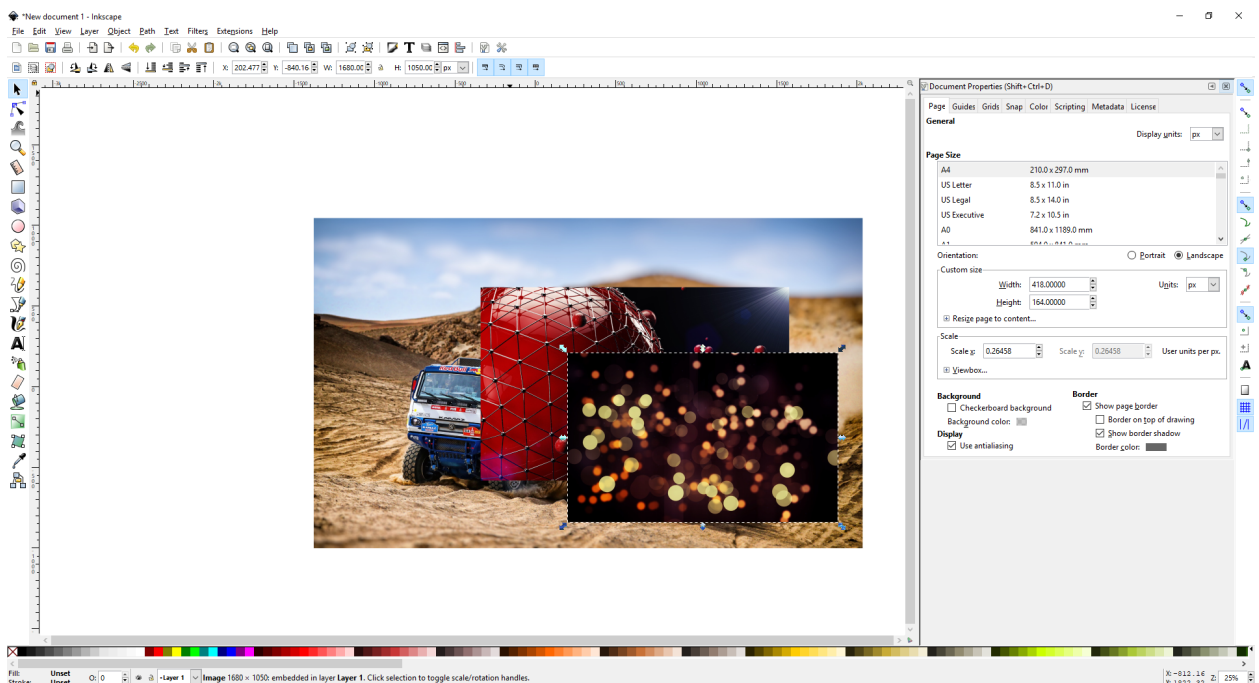


4. Now I'm on wallhaven.cc looking for neat base images. I searched for "desert bus" and got this gorgeous specimen.

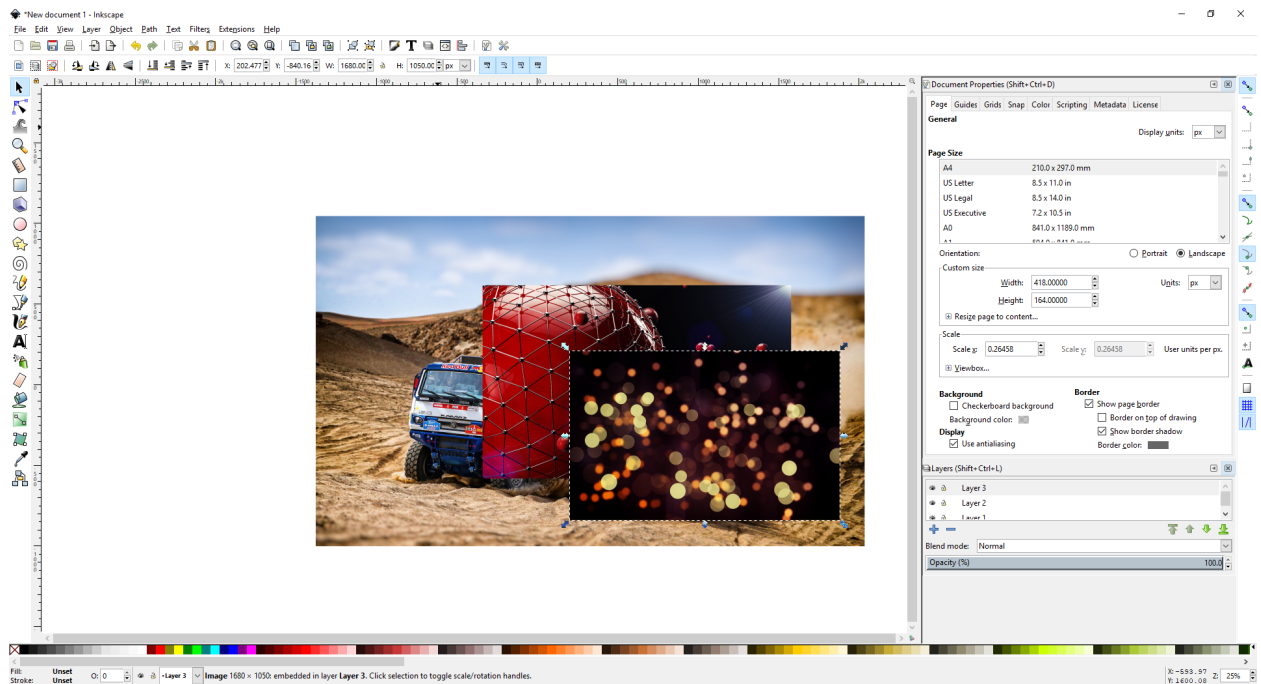


Other good sites for backdrop source images include Freeimages (<https://www.freeimages.com/>) and Pexels (<https://www.pexels.com/>).

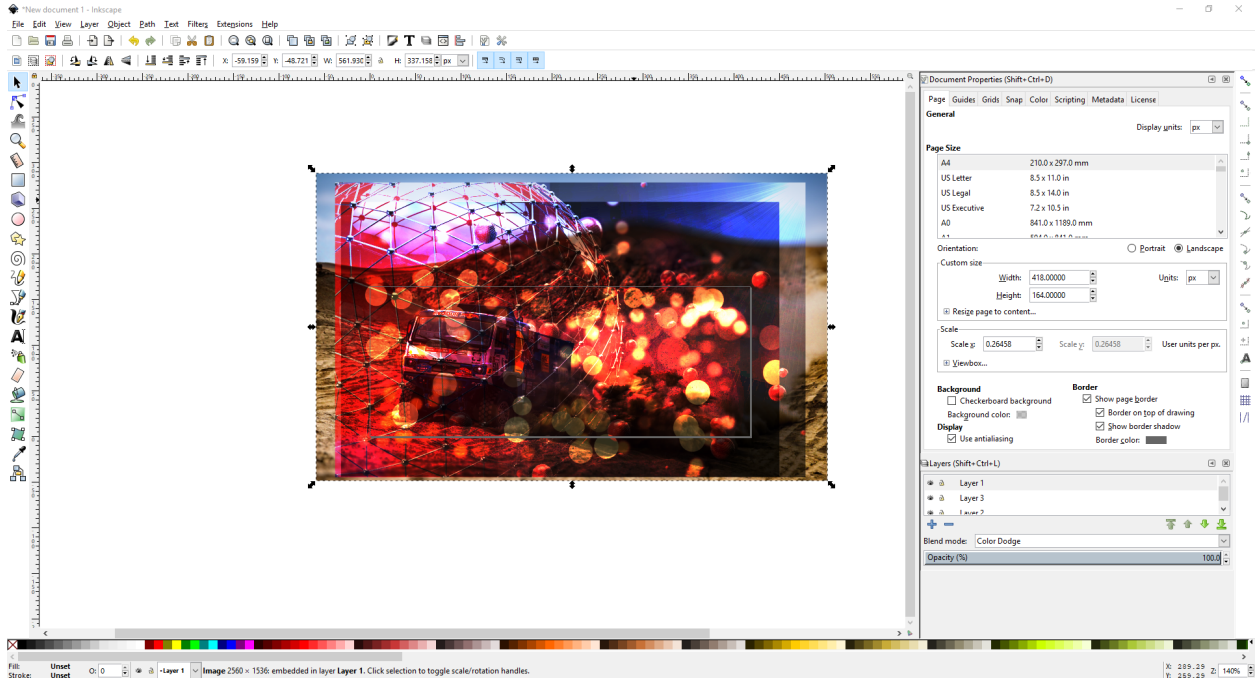
5. I'll open this and a couple other lovely images into my drawing by choosing File → Import (Ctrl+I).



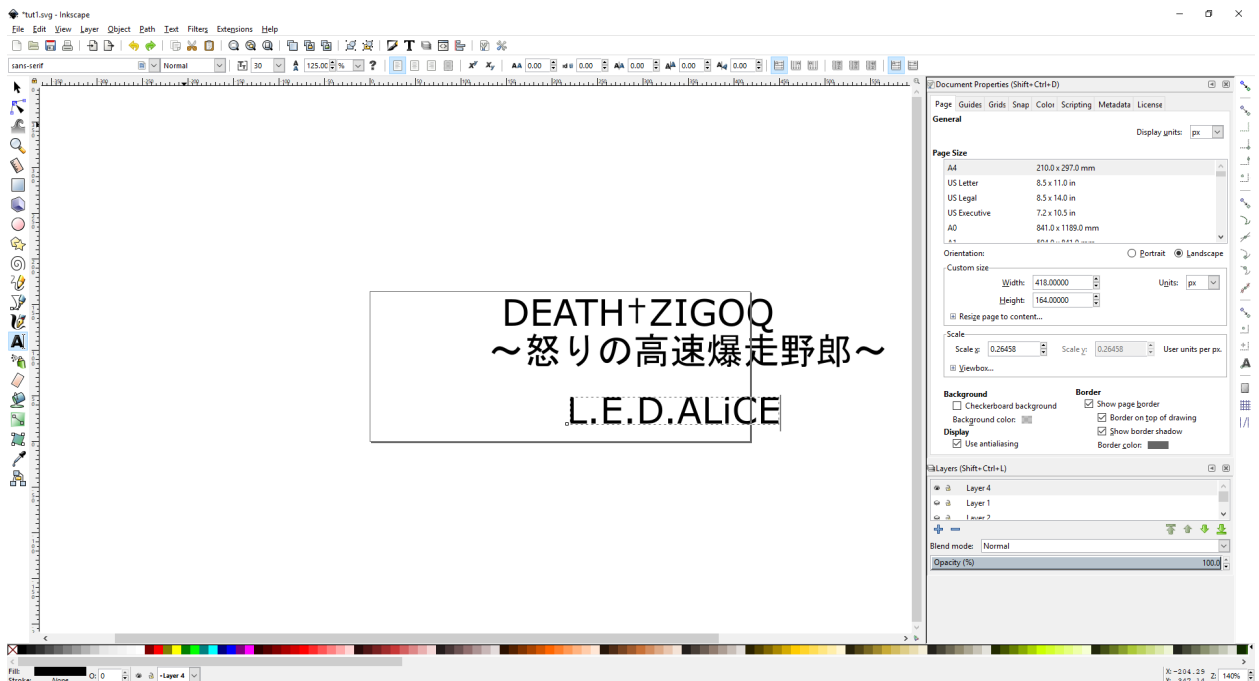
6. I open the Layers dock (Shift+Ctrl+L) and add three layers using the + button. Then I right-click each image, select Move to layer..., and send the top two images to layers 2 and 3.



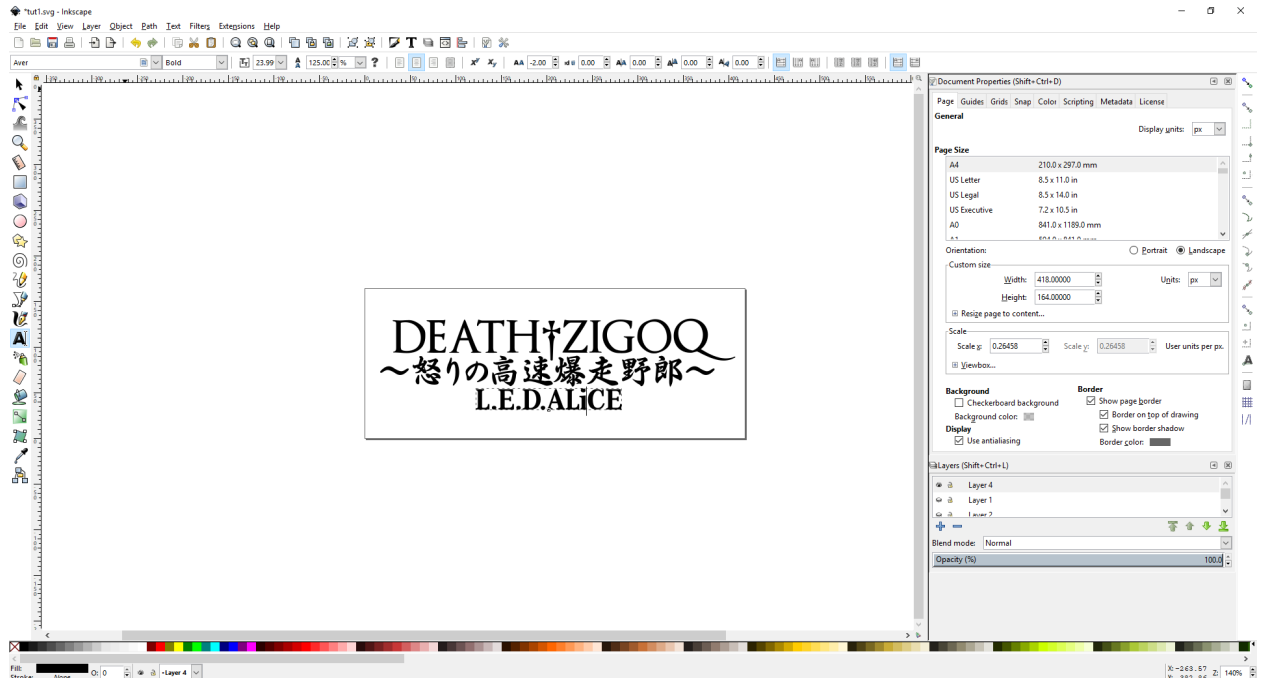
7. I zoom in (Ctrl+scroll wheel or lower-right corner of full screen). Then I use layer visibility (eye icon next to each layer's name), layer resizing (handles on each corner of the image while holding down Ctrl to preserve aspect ratio), layer reordering (drag/drop layers above or below each other) and layer blending/opacity ("Blend mode:" in Layers dock) to compose the images into a backdrop. This is all about experimentation. I also checked "Border on top of drawing" in the Document Properties so I could see where things would line up.



8. SAVE, BINCH!! Ctrl+S to save over, Shift+Ctrl+S to save as. Save as frequently as you remember, because you def don't want to forget for too long.
9. Text Time™. Add a new layer and use the Text tool (A| on the left bar) to type the name of your song title. Repeat for artist, subtitle, etc. I've turned off all the backdrop layers temporarily to show what's going on.

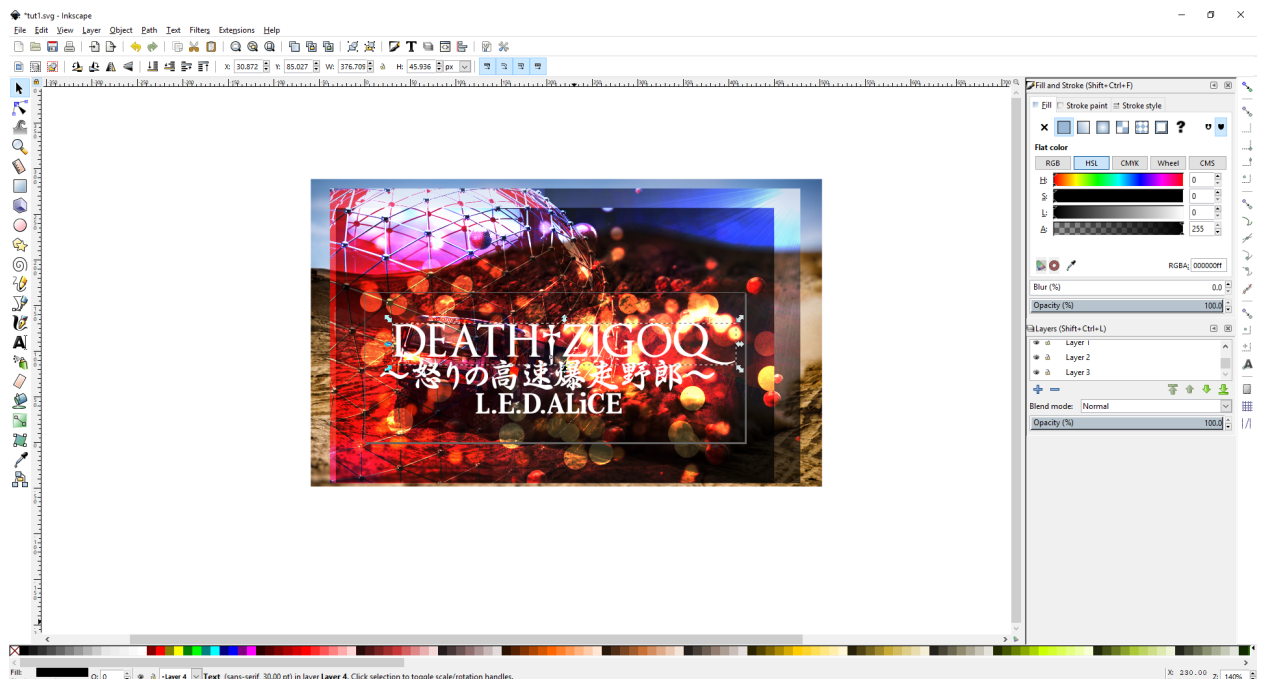


10. Notice the tool options bar at the top is now populated with text options. Change the font family, size, line height, alignment, kerning, etc. on selected characters, to your satisfaction. Remember, everything has to fit *comfortably* in that banner box.



If you want a larger variety of fonts than the Windows defaults, try dafont (<https://www.dafont.com>) and Free Japanese Fonts (<https://www.freejapanesefont.com/>).

11. Open the Fill and Stroke dock (Shift+Ctrl+F) and change the text colors. Start with white, just so they show up on the dark backdrop a bit.



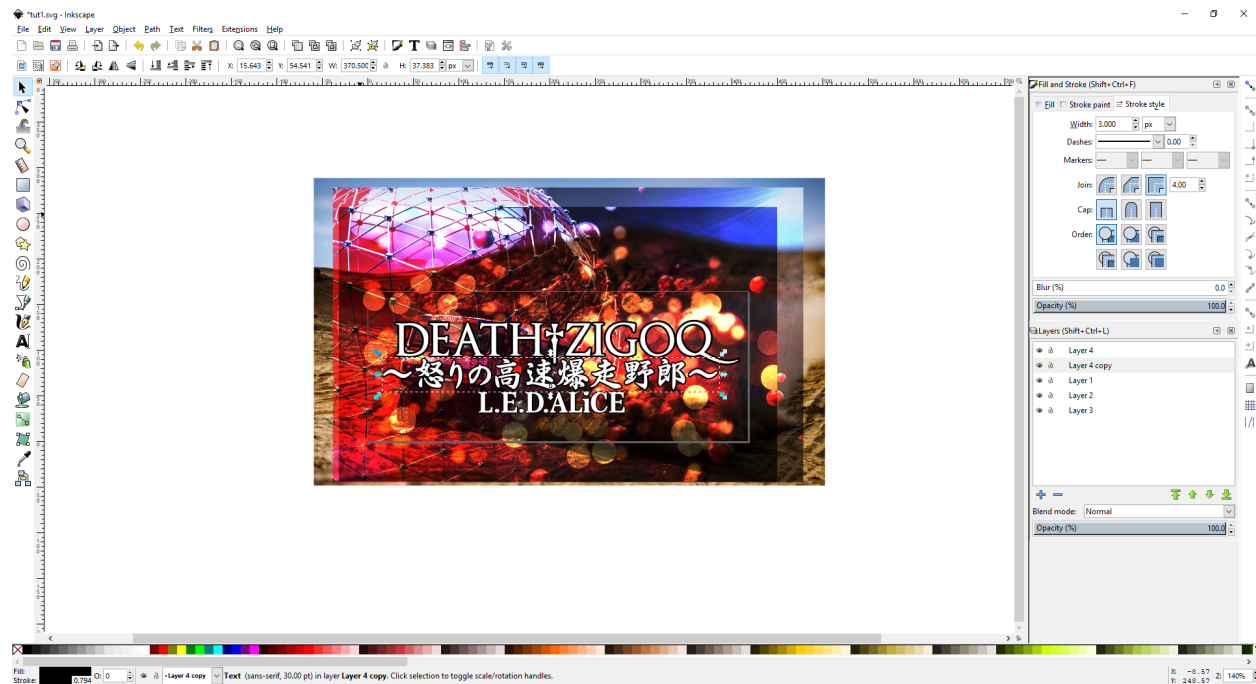
12. REMEMBER TO SAVE. Now some basic operations to make text pop.

13. Add borders around text!

Duplicate the whole layer (right-click → Duplicate Current Layer)

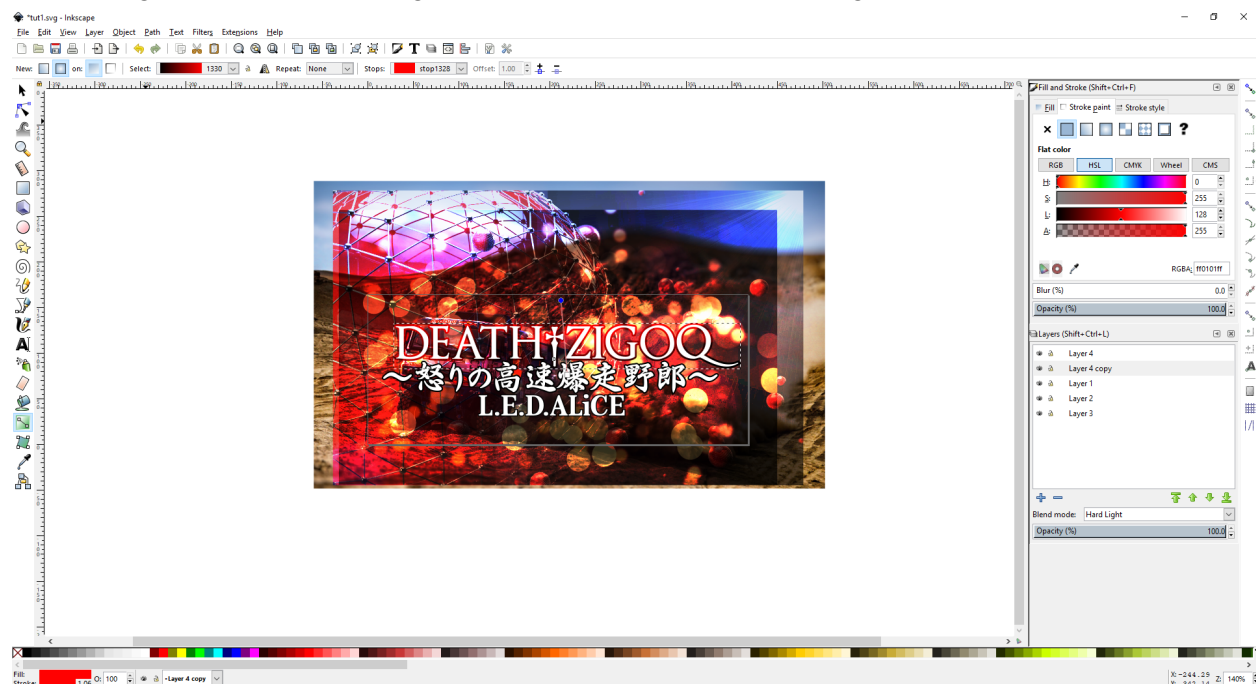
- a. Move copy underneath original

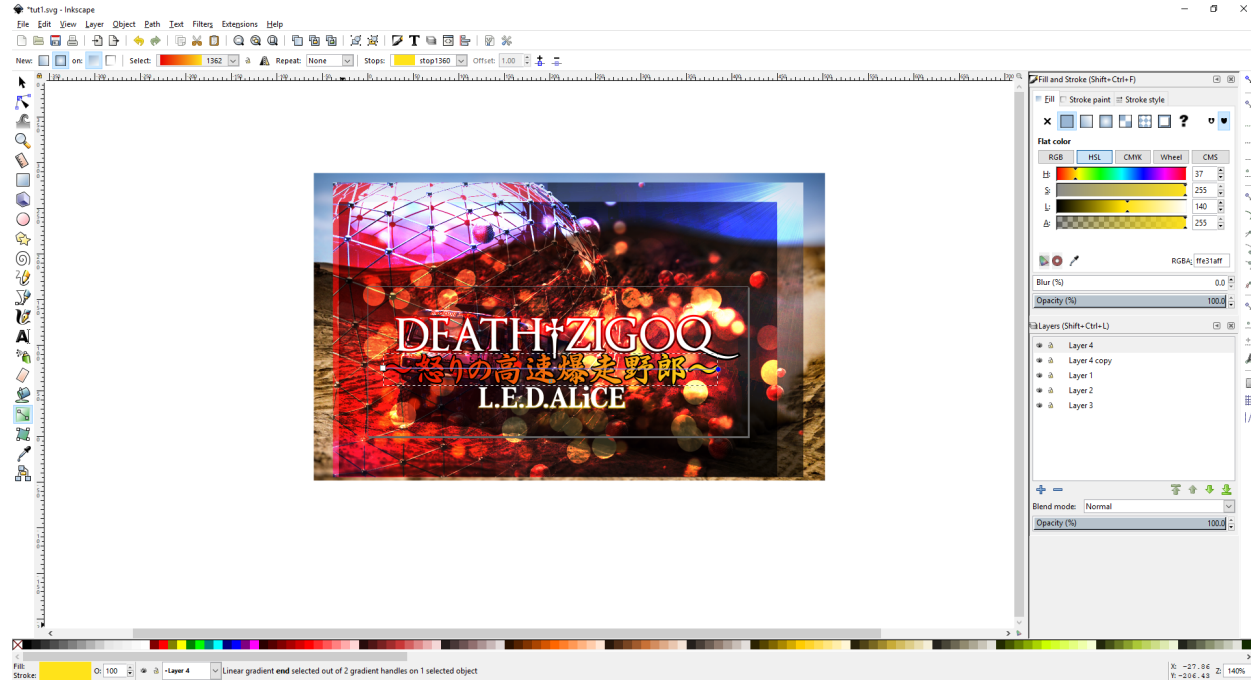
- b. Select each text and change the “stroke paint” and “stroke style” from the Fill and Stroke dock. You want it to be visible and a few pixels wide.



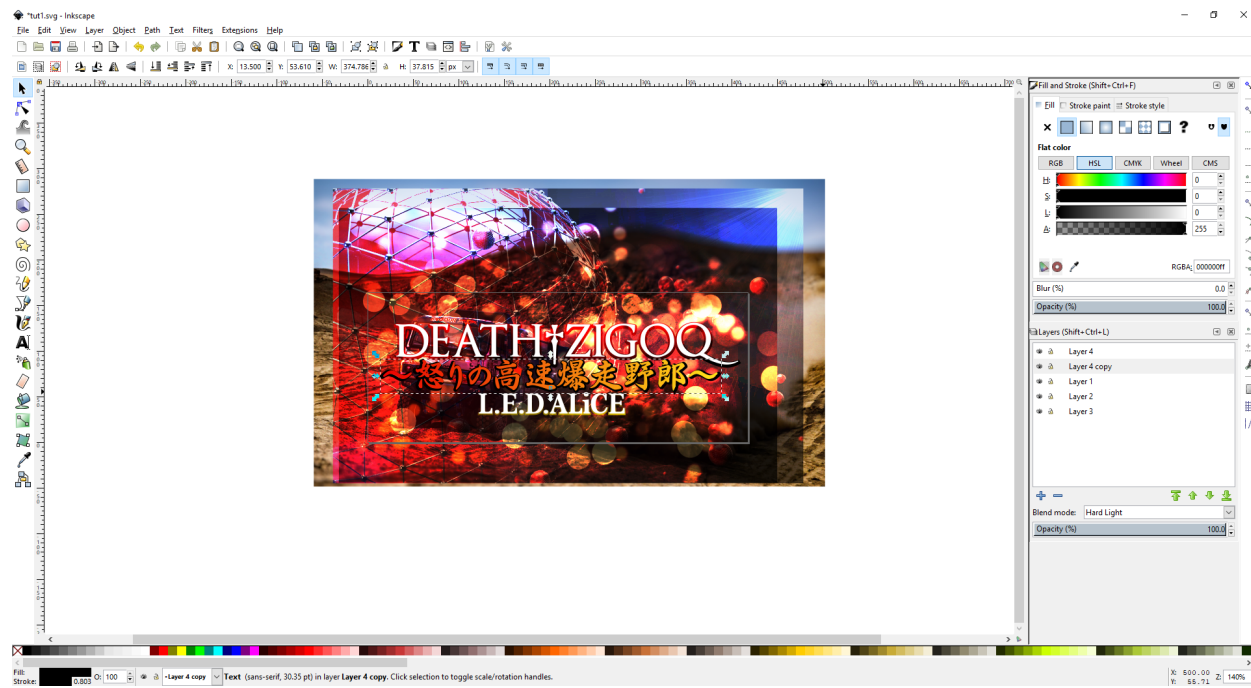
14. Use gradient colors on text or borders!

- a. Choose the second fill style in the “stroke paint” tab on the Fill and Stroke dock
- b. Use the “Create and Edit Gradients” (Ctrl+F1) tool from the toolbar on the left to view the gradient.
- c. Select each gradient terminal / end, and change the color as desired.
- d. Move the gradient terminals to get the desired direction of shading.





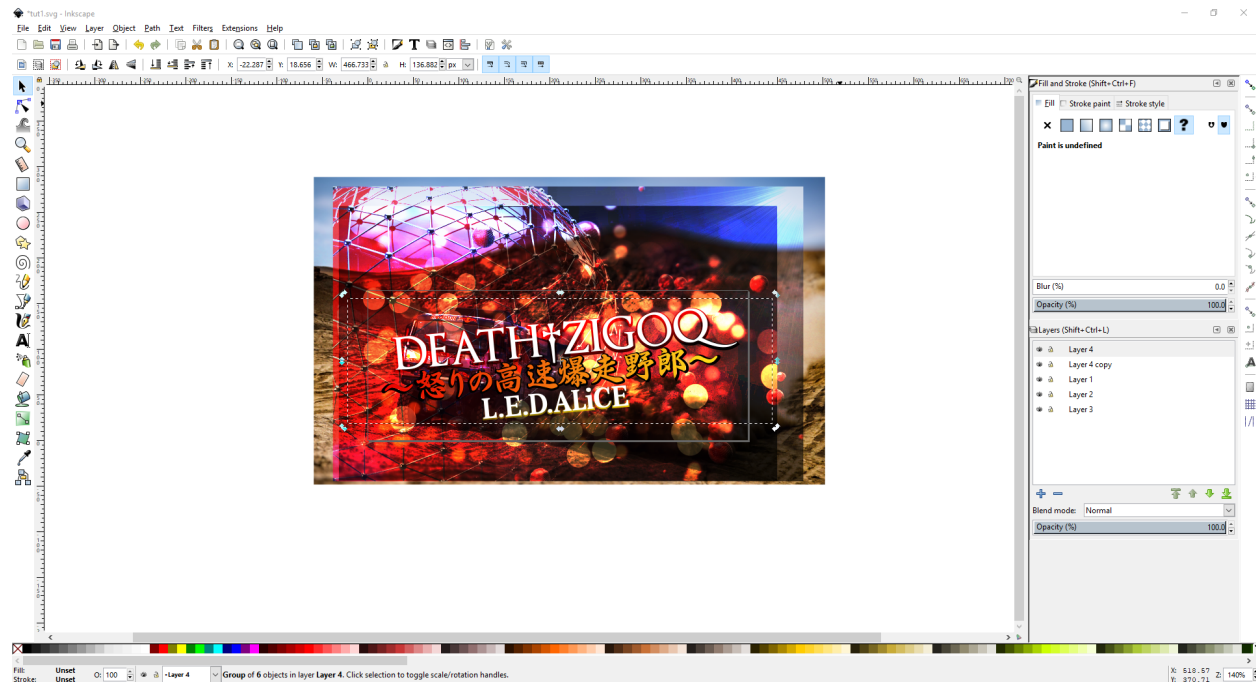
15. Move or scale borders around to give an impression of depth!



a.

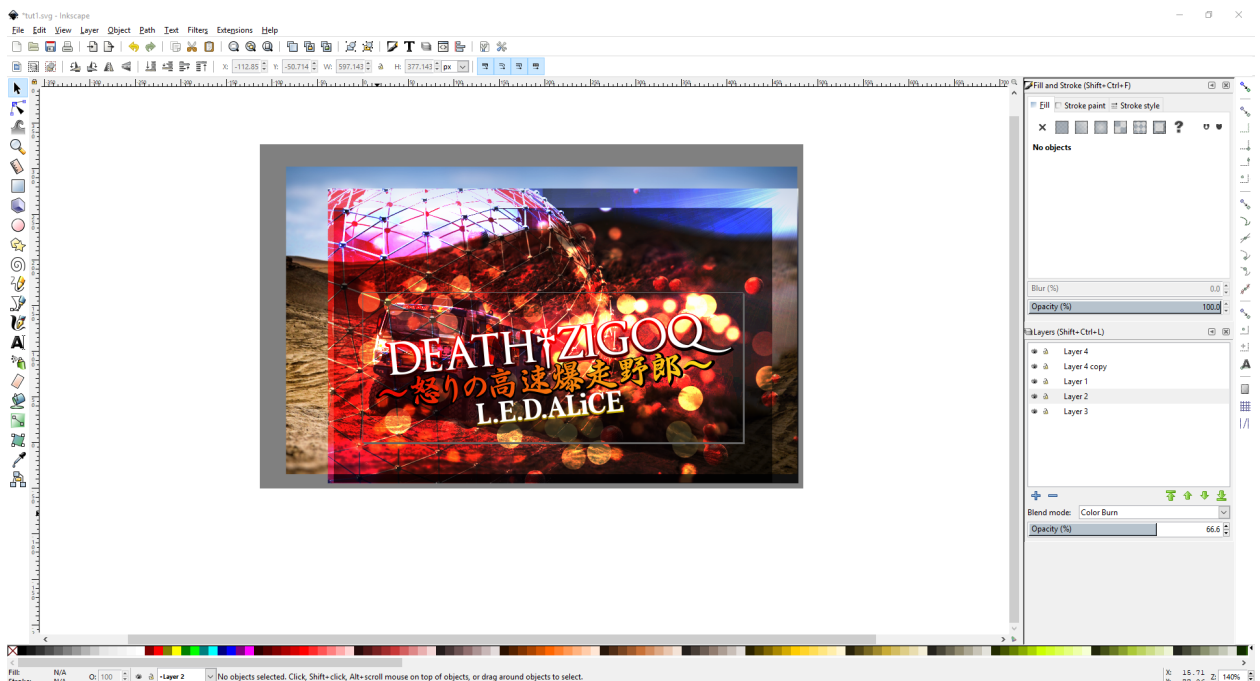
16. Rotate the text!

- Select all text items by select-dragging a rectangle around them.
- Press Ctrl+G to group together the items.
- Click the group again so the corner handles point around the bounding box rather than in/out of it.
- Rotate as desired (but rarely more than six degrees either direction).
- If you want, ungroup the items with Shift+Ctrl+G.

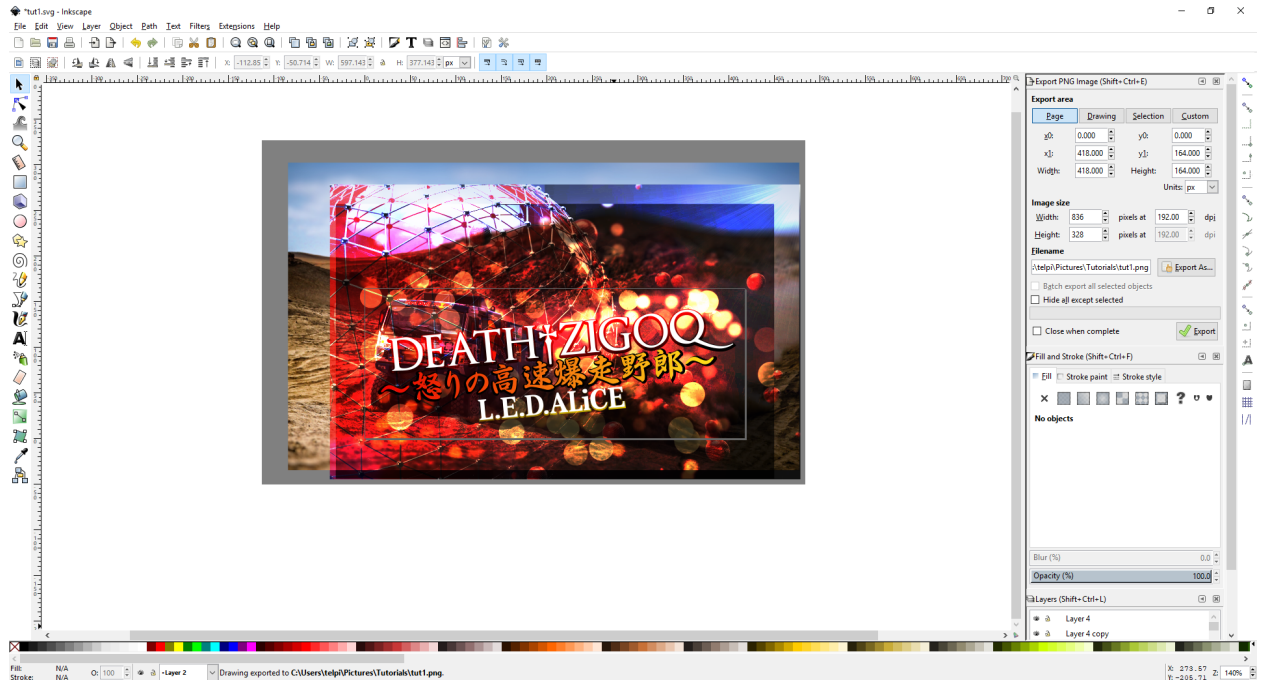


17. SAVE AGAIN, Y'ALL.

18. Fine-tune the banner until you're satisfied. I shifted the backdrop composition and changed the blending modes of the layers, and added a grey rectangle in the text border layer to correct a blending bug.



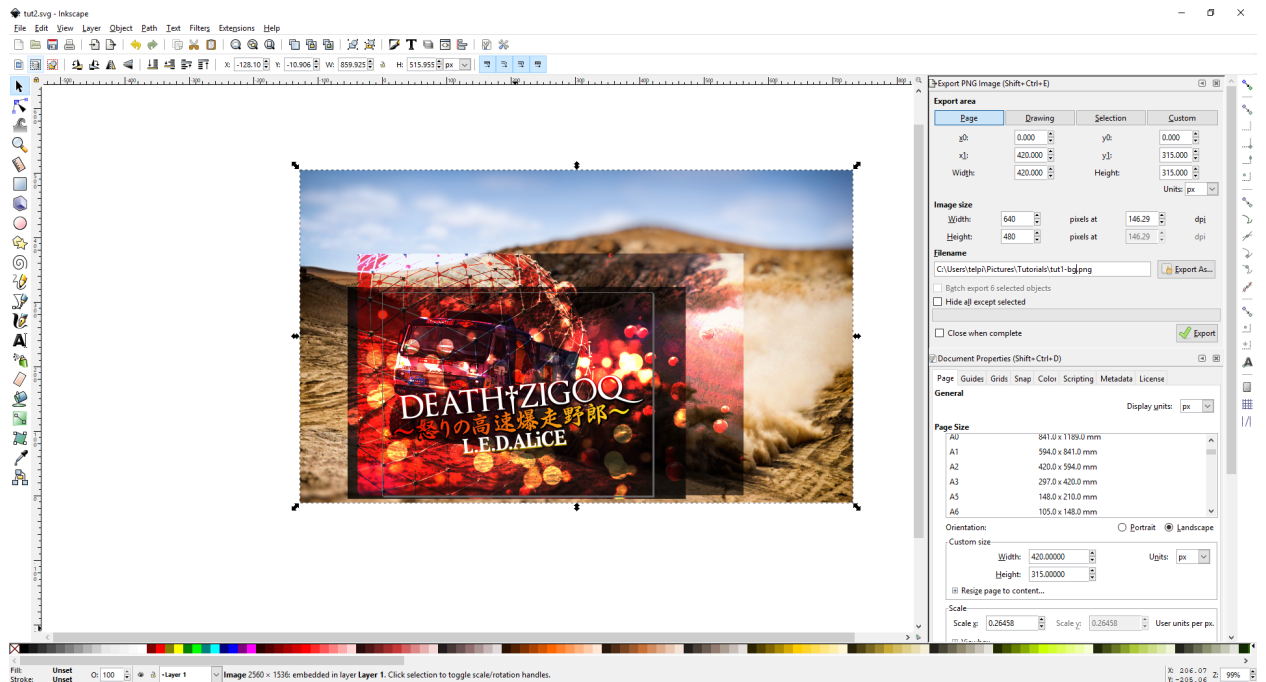
19. Open up the Export Image dock (Shift+Ctrl+E). Select "Page" as the export area, and ensure that the bounding coordinates are correct. Change the image size to 836 by 328 pixels (double-res is good for stepmania). Ensure that the Filename field is filled appropriately, then press Export.



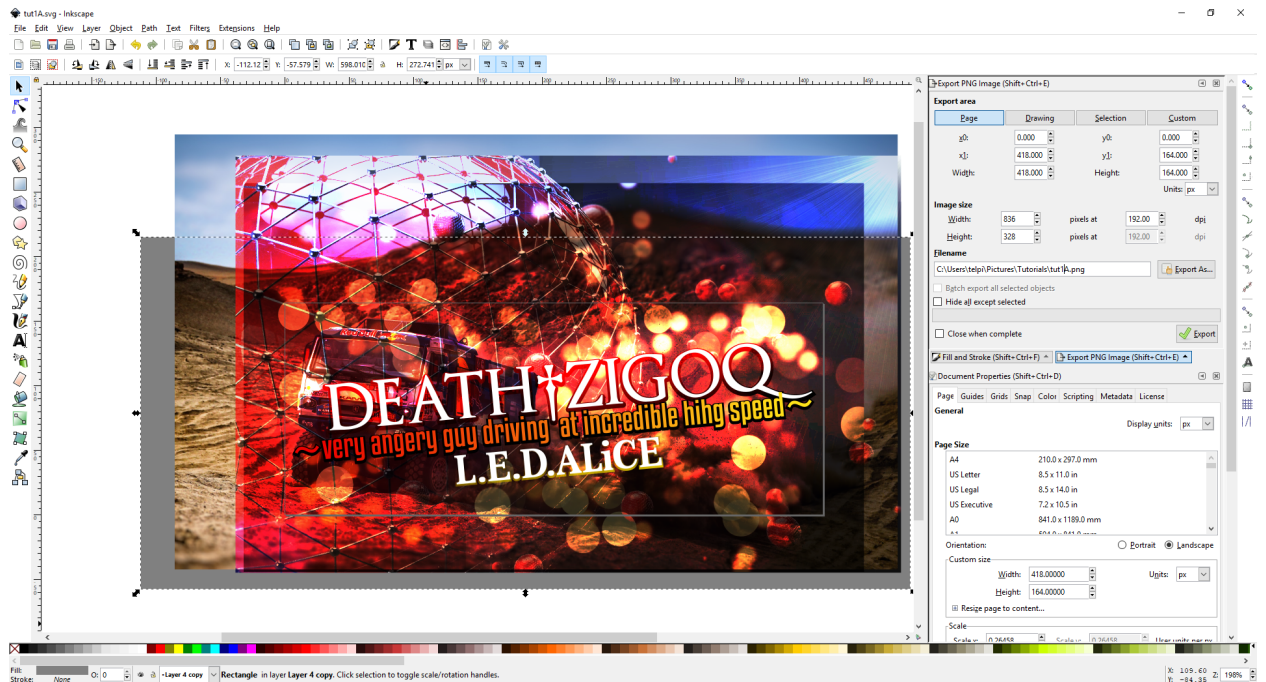
20. And, uh, that's basically it!



21. To make the rest of the graphic set, you can change the region of interest with the Document Properties dialog, and export various sizes as required.



22. It's also not hard to modify the text, since nothing in Inkscape is rasterized until it has to be.



23. There's plenty of other bells and whistles and cool effects in Inkscape, so explore around a bit! I didn't touch on drawing primitives, anything in the Filters menu, image masking, etc.