The PCLinuxOS magazine

December, 2018

Graphics Special Edition

Vol. 1 2012 - 2014

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Welcome From The Assistant Editor

I love computer graphics! I used drawing programs in Windows, but never used Photoshop or Corel Draw much because they cost so much. Since I switched to PCLinuxOS in 2006, I have been playing with GIMP and Inkscape, and have learned a bit more. I'm still far from an expert, but I have learned a few tricks. This magazine started having a regular monthly article on GIMP or Inkscape in July, 2012. I have learned a lot about both programs since then, and I hope you have, too.

GIMP is a wonderful program for editing photos, but it does many more things than just edit photos. We have created buttons, fire, planets and decorative text in addition to editing and improving our photos. We have also created custom borders with a quick mask and colorized our photos with the layer mask.

Inkscape is a wonderful drawing program in its own right. We've made decorative patterns and worked with different shapes. We have also learned how to do a tracing and create a paisley design, along with designing holiday wallpapers and Jack-O-Lanterns. I'm sure, however, that we have only scratched the surface on our knowledge of either program.

Several months ago, both parnote and I had requests to compile the graphics tutorials into a special edition. Several people thought that they would enjoy some of the tutorials if they were all together, especially the ones that spanned more than one magazine issue.

So, here they are, and I hope you enjoy them. This special edition includes all the graphics tutorials from July, 2012 through December, 2014. Our plans were to do an annual compilation of the graphics tutorials, and we were planning another graphics special edition for 2016, filled with the 2015 tutorials, but life intervened. Soon we'll have another compilation with at least 2015 and 2016.

Until then, have fun and keep on creating your own graphics!

The PCLinuxOS Magazine

Created with Scribus

The PCLinuxOS magazine

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The PCLinuxOS Magazine is a monthly online publication containing PCLinuxOS-related materials. It is published primarily for members of the PCLinuxOS community. The magazine staff is comprised of volunteers from the PCLinuxOS community.

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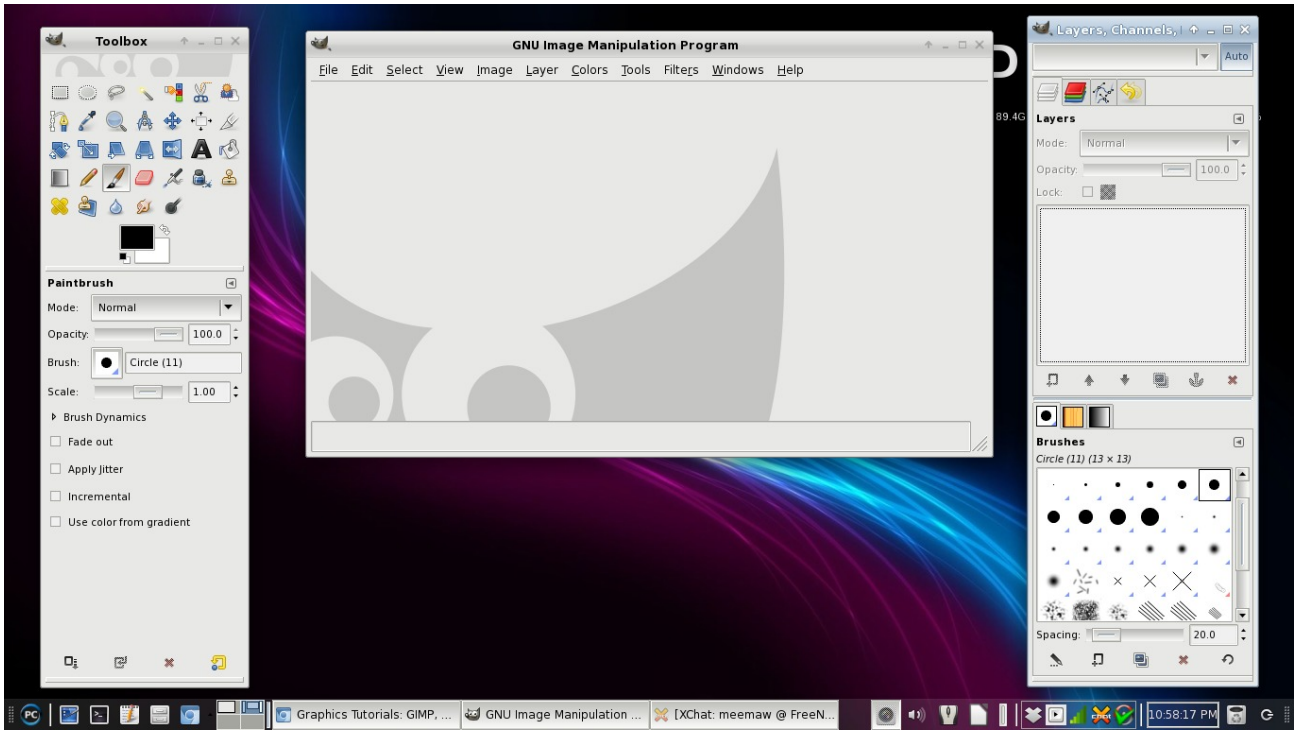
GIMP Tutorial: Exploring The Toolbox

by Meemaw

I've been using GIMP since I started using Linux. While I can do most of what I want to do fairly easily, GIMP contains many options that I haven't used much. In these articles, I will try to explain a little about GIMP and how to use it.

GIMP, of course, stands for Gnu Image Manipulation Program. The website is http://www.gimp.org/. It can be found in most any distro's repository and PCLinuxOS is no exception. It can also be installed in Mac and Windows, so I use it at work in Win7, as well as at home with PCLinuxOS.

When you open it, you are shown three windows as shown below:



While many of our graphics programs are displayed all in one window, Gimp has had them separate for years. GIMP 2.8 has been released now. It has a single window display, but has the option of leaving the windows separate. I really like the separate windows, because I can arrange the them the way I want them. However, it hasn't made it to our repos yet, so be patient – GIMP 2.6 works very well.

The window on the left of the screen is your main toolbox. The tools there are the ones you will use the most. For each tool, there is a corresponding config section, so the bottom of that window will change depending on the tool chosen at the top. The area at the top of the toolbox (where you see Wilber, the Gimp critter's eyes and nose) is the **Drop Target** area. If you have a file manager open too, you can drag the item you want to work on to this area and it will open in Gimp.

Going across the rows in order, the tools are as follows:

Rectangle Select - You can designate a rectangular area and manipulate it.
Elliptical Select - Create a circular or elliptical area and manipulate it.
Freehand Select - Create an irregular-shaped area by clicking your mouse along the outside of the area. Very handy!
Continuous Region Select - This selects connected areas.
Color Select - Selects areas of similar color.
Intelligent Scissors (Select from image) - Selects along an edge ….

Foreground Select - You can use this for cutting items out of photographs... complicated tool.
Path Tool - You can use this to create a path, which you can then edit
Color Picker - If you want to exactly duplicate a color in a picture, choose this tool and click on the color. You can use the selected color to edit your drawing.
Zoom - You can see your work close-up with the Zoom tool.
Measure Tool - Measures distances in your drawing.
Move Tool - Click on this to move your object into place.

Align - You can choose 2 or more objects or layers and align them
Crop - You can crop an image. Click and drag for your area, then press enter to crop.
Rotate - Clicking on this tool will let you rotate your object.
Scale - To resize your drawing or object
Shear - To skew an object. (Example: You can change a square to a diamond.)
Perspective - You can apply perspective to a 2 dimensional image to make it look more 3D.

Flip - Used to flip your object horizontally or vertically
Text Tool - To add text to your creation
Bucket Fill - To add one color to a large area
Gradient Fill - To create a gradient in your object
Pencil - Draws thin lines, like a pencil line, but not smooth. Works better for very small objects where the pixels have to be in exactly the right spot.
Paintbrush - This tool draws smoother lines than the pencil, and this is probably the most used tool.

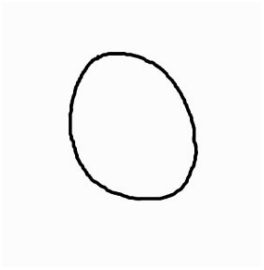
Eraser - Erases the color from your image. Actually, it changes whatever you stroke to transparency, so it can also be used as a paint tool.
Airbrush - Paints like an airbrush, using a spray or fuzzy effect rather than a solid line.
Ink Tool - Draws lines more like a calligraphy pen.
Clone Tool - Use this to clone parts of an image.
Healing Tool - This will heal small blemishes in photos.
Perspective Clone - Advanced tool for cloning something into the image which may not look as it looks now (like cloning a face so it looks like it's a picture on the wall).

Blur/Sharpen - Softens or sharpens colored edges and blends colors together.
Smudge - Drawing with this through two colors will cause the colors to blend, although maybe not the way you want.
Dodge/Burn - Can make an area darker or lighter.

The window on the right contains the **Layers, Channels, Paths** and **Undo** tools, and we will use that as well, but I will cover it separately, in an upcoming article.

OK, let's experiment. Your center window contains all your menus (and all of your tools can be accessed from here as well). Click on **File > New**. You will see a window for a new image. Here you should designate the size of your image, and in Advanced Options, whether the background should be white, black or transparent. I clicked on the dropdown and selected 800 px x 600 px, then opened the Advanced Options and selected white, and clicked OK.

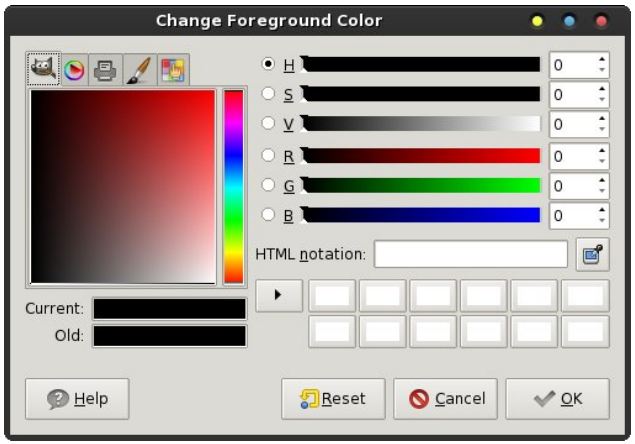
Select either the paintbrush or pencil, and draw a circle. Play with it a little bit just to get the feel of the tool. It doesn't have to be a perfect circle.



Playing more with your brush tool, make a face on your circle. Since some of us aren't artists (myself included!), your face will look different from mine. Getting the feel of the tool, you can make several strokes. If you make one you don't like, you can go to Edit > Undo, or press <CTRL> + <Z> to remove the stroke. If you use the keystroke CTRL-Z, you can hold down CTRL and press the Z as many times as you wish to remove as many strokes as you need.

Sooner or later you'll have to save your file. Just as with other programs, go to File > Save as... and name your file, then designate a location in which to save it so you can find it again. The default file format for Gimp is .xcf, which is designed to save all your layers while you are working on your creation. You can save your finished product as any number of image types, such as *.jpg or *.png.

Lets add some color to our drawing. From the toolbox, you will see a color swatch (the black & white rectangles underneath the tools). Click on the swatch and the Edit Foreground or Edit Background color window will open. From here you can choose whatever color you want to use. The default foreground color is black and the default background color is white.



You will have several tabs in your window (top left corner). On the first tab, you will see the default color square (probably in shades of red & black) with a rainbow-colored vertical bar to the right of it. To the right of that you will see six horizontal bars of color with letters next to them. Those letters are for the following words, which are color settings you can adjust:

Hue: This is the color you want. You should probably click it in the vertical bar first, then all the other settings will display the color you are working with.

Saturation: This is how pale a color is (I think of it as how much of the color used). The slider will make it more or less intense.

Value: I think of this as how light or dark a color is, but Gimp's glossary says it is how much light is emitted by a color.

Red, Blue & Green: These are the colors that will be mixed for everything you do. Each individual slider can be adjusted separately to produce just the right color. To the right of each slider is a blank containing a number. Each color can be described with a series of numbers from 0 to 255 (0,0,0 is black and 255,255,255 is white. All other colors are in between.) If you have the numerical code for the perfect color, you can adjust the numbers in these blanks. If you are deciding on a color, each slider can be adjusted individually.

In addition, all colors can also be described with a 6-digit hexidecimal code. (000000 is black and ffffff is white. One shade of purple is 430da9.) If you know the code for your perfect color, you can enter it in the space provided in this window. (Also called HTML notation)

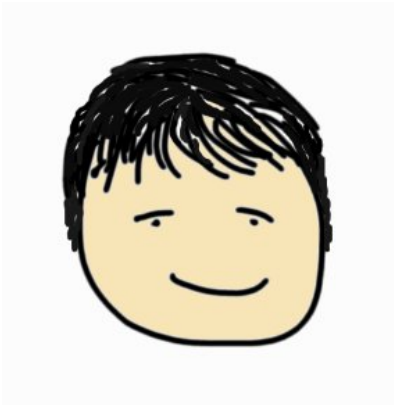
One of the tabs will have a printer on it and be the **CYMK**, referring to the printer colors Cyan, Magenta, Yellow & Black. This is not really supported in Gimp so they don't describe it much, but it is apparently to adjust your colors according to the cartridge colors of your printer. That would have been a great idea with one of my older printers - it printed everything several shades too dark.

One tab will have a paintbrush on it and it is the **Watercolor** wheel. It gives you a color square and you click the color you want. The more times you click, the more intense the color will be.

One tab will have the "color wheel" on it (also called the **Triangle Selector**). It is the multi-colored circle around a multi-colored triangle. Click the color (Hue) you want in the circle, then drag the white ring into the interior of the triangle to adjust Saturation and Value.

The **Palette** tab will have a grid of the colors contained in the color palette being used by Gimp. You can choose one of those, and go back to the first tab and edit your color there.

I use the first tab and the color wheel the most. Click on the vertical bar between yellow and orange. Looking at the horizontal bars to the right, you can adjust your color until it is an approximate skin tone, whatever color you want to make the face. The color will show in a bar underneath the color square or wheel. You can keep adjusting until you get it just right. There are also small swatches that will save up a record of the last 12 colors you used. Click OK, then choose the Bucket Fill tool and click inside your face. Your drawing should now have a skin-tone color in it. If you don't like the color after all, press your <CTRL> + <Z> to undo it, then go to your color window and adjust your color again.



NOTE: The **Undo** function keeps track of everything you do so you can click undo over and over to remove lots of things. HOWEVER, once you save your drawing, all the undo history is gone, so make sure it is the way you want it before you save it and close down Gimp.

Play with this a little, and have some fun! Next month we'll learn more about the interface and then add more to our drawing.

A magazine just isn't a magazine without articles to fill the pages.

If you have article ideas, or if you would like to contribute articles to the PCLinuxOS Magazine, send an email to:
pclinuxos.mag@gmail.com

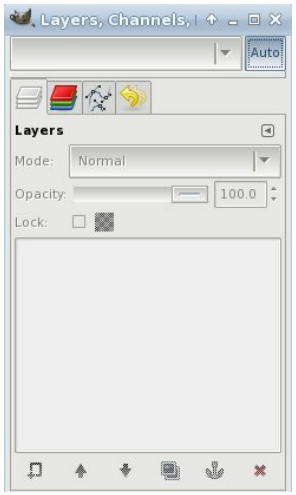
We are interested in general articles about Linux, and (of course), articles specific to PCLinuxOS.

GIMP Tutorial: Using Layers

by Meemaw

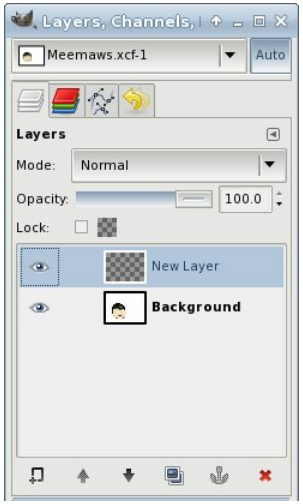
Last time we learned about the toolbox and the color chooser in Gimp, and started a drawing. Mine is shown below.

However, we never talked about the tools in the right-hand window. If you haven't closed that window, the first thing you will see is the Layers toolbox.



When I first started using the Gimp, I didn't use layers, but as I've learned more about Gimp, I have found that layers are very useful. You can use as many layers as you want to make your drawing, and reorder the layers any way you desire. Using different techniques on the layers can make your finished product look different than it would if it was all on one layer. Also, when one layer is finished the way you want it, you can do whatever you want to another layer without disturbing anything else. The tools across the bottom of the window are, from left to right, New Layer, Raise Selected Layer, Lower Selected Layer, Duplicate Layer, Anchor Layer and Delete Layer.

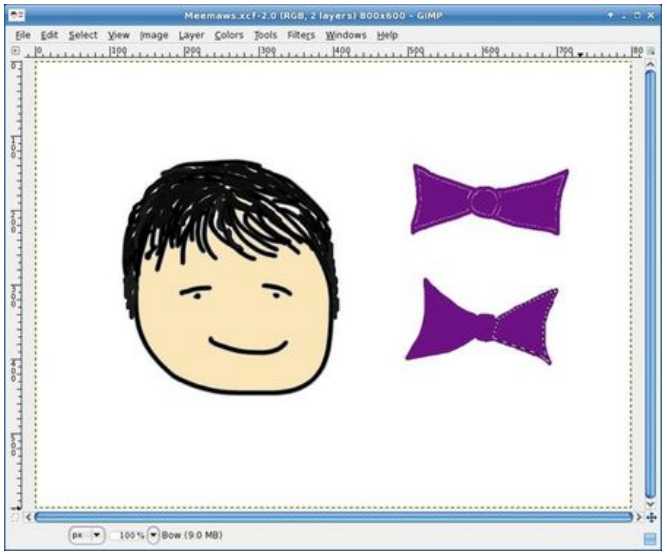
When you started your drawing, it had only one layer (called Background). In the layers window, click the New Layer button (the button at bottom left that looks like a piece of paper with the plus sign on one corner). A window will appear asking you to name your layer, designate how big you want it and whether you want it white, black or transparent (choose transparent because you want the face to show through). If you don't give it a new name, a new entry, called New Layer, will appear in the list above the Background. You'll notice now that many of the tools I just named are active.



You may also notice that your drawing appears in the Background icon in the Layers window. This is done to help you stay organized, so you can choose the correct layer when you want to work on another one. If you didn't name your layer before you created it, you can right-click and choose "Edit Layer Attributes" from the menu, and rename it with a more meaningful name. Let's name it "Bow".

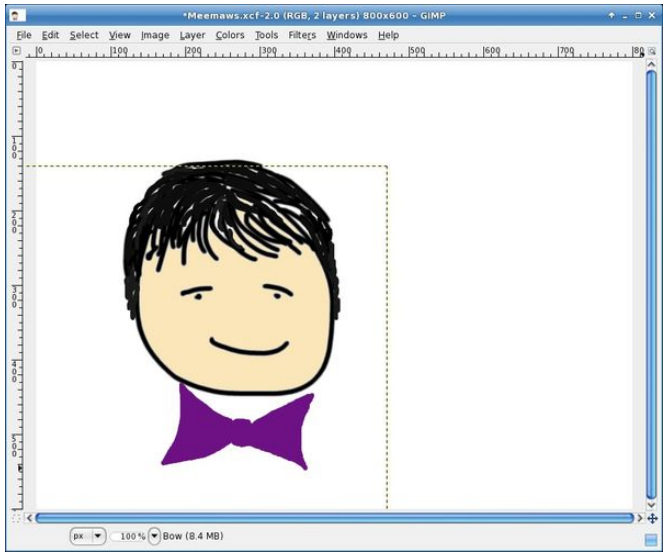
Choose a color you like and draw a bow on this layer. If your "person" is a man, it can be a bow-tie, and if it's a girl, you could put it in her hair. It's your drawing, so do whatever you want. You can even put it out to one side of the face, as we can move it around later.

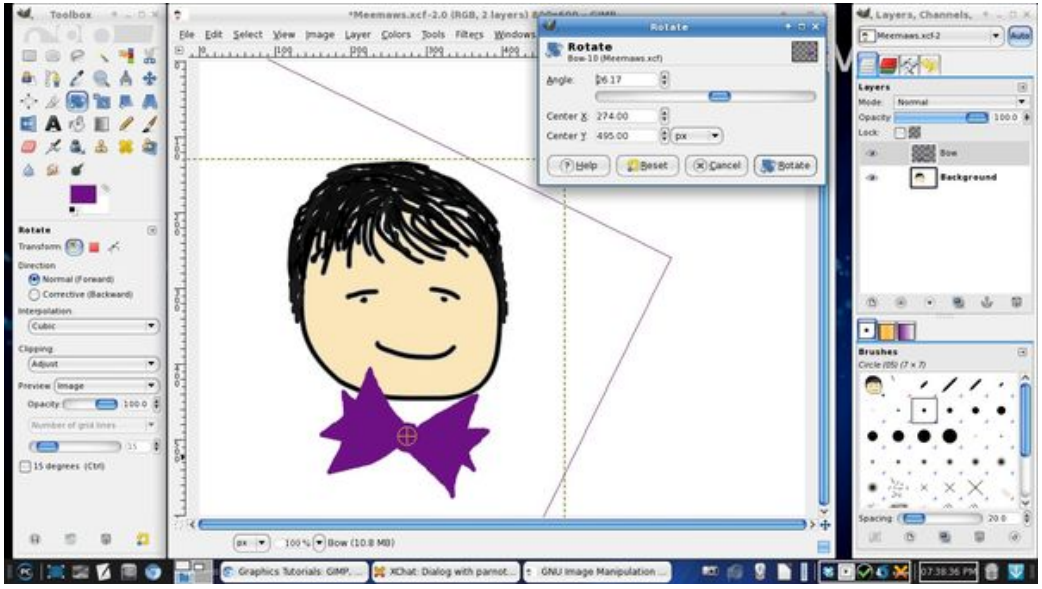
Now, instead of choosing the bucket fill, we're going to do something a little different. Bucket fill often leaves unfilled areas. Choose the Free Select tool (looks like a lasso) and trace around one part of your bow. Click inside the colored line you already made and make segments until you have closed your curve. Every place you click will leave a small circle. But when your curve is closed, it will look like a moving dotted line instead. Now choose your bucket fill and fill your bow. Click on the color you have already drawn and then click inside. It should fill properly. Looking at the shot below, you can see the difference. The top was bucket fill only - the bottom is bucket fill after the free select. After this, I will outline the top bow with the Rectangle Select tool and delete that one because I don't want it.



Since we have our bow on another layer, we can rotate it or move it anywhere we want. Using the Move tool (4-pointed arrow) and putting your cursor on the bow, you can move the layer around as you

wish. I put mine below my face. You can see the layer boundary on the drawing.





Sometimes you want things rotated. I want the bow in a different position, so I'm going to choose the Rotate tool (looks like 2 sheets of paper with curved arrows around them). When you click on it and then on the bow, a window will pop up with the rotate tools. You will see a circle with a plus sign inside. That is the rotation axis, and you should click and drag it to wherever you want as the center of rotation. I dragged mine to the center of the bow, then in the rotation window, clicked the arrow next to the degrees to change the angle of the bows. As the degrees get larger your bow will rotate clockwise, and the larger negative degrees will rotate counter-clockwise. Rotate it however you want it, then click "Rotate" in the tool window (below). Before and after views will show up, which is why my bow now looks like it has four points on each end.

When you get it the way you want it, choose another tool to keep the Rotate tool window from popping up again. Make sure you save your drawing when you have it as you want it.

I should note that this particular rotation method is different than the method you would use to rotate a picture. It can be used, but the rotation commands under the "Transform" menu item are easier to rotate an entire image.

Next time, we'll add more to our drawing.

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PCLinuxOS.it Italy

PCLinuxOS Polskie Centrum Poland

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PCLinuxOS Brazil

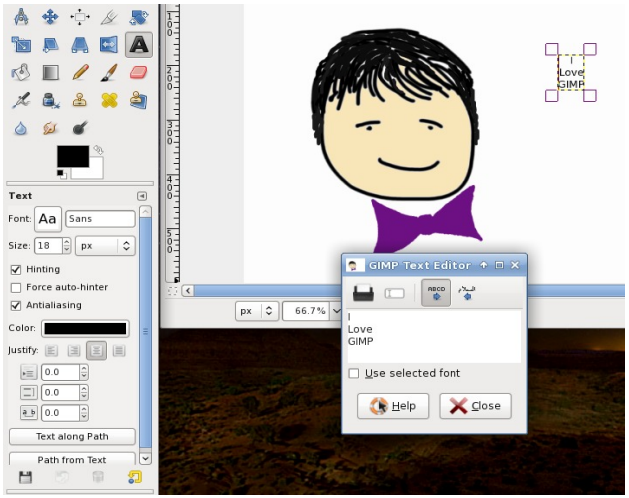
GIMP Tutorial: Adding Text

by Meemaw

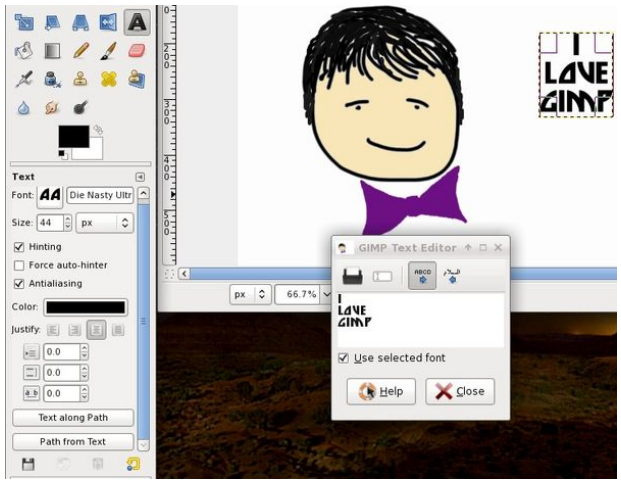
So far we've learned a little about the layout of the Gimp, and used some of the tools to draw a face and a bow. Let's experiment a little more.

You may wonder what is going on with the Bow layer because we can see the edge of it on our drawing. That is because that layer is selected at the moment. When you choose or create another layer, that line won't show.

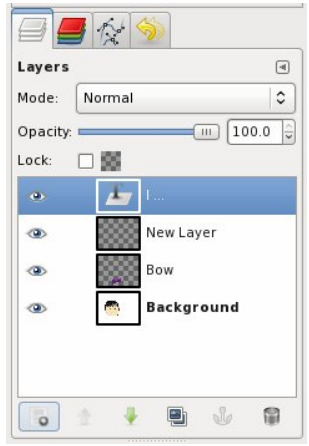
Let's create another layer named "Text" (you can rename it or leave it as "New Layer"). Make it transparent as well, so we can see our drawing through it. Click on the Text tool, and you will see another window pop up. It is the text editor window and, working together with the toolbox window, it contains anything you might want to use to edit text in your image. In the text editor box, you should type the text you want. I typed, "I Love GIMP" in the box. Notice that I spaced it the way I want it as well (with each word on its own line). In the tool box are the text formatting tools (font, size, color, alignment, etc) so you can make it look however you want.



I chose the font called Die Nasty, size 44, black, centered. If you check the box "Use selected font" in the text editor box, you'll be able to see what it looks like in the editor. This is good if you want to try different fonts.



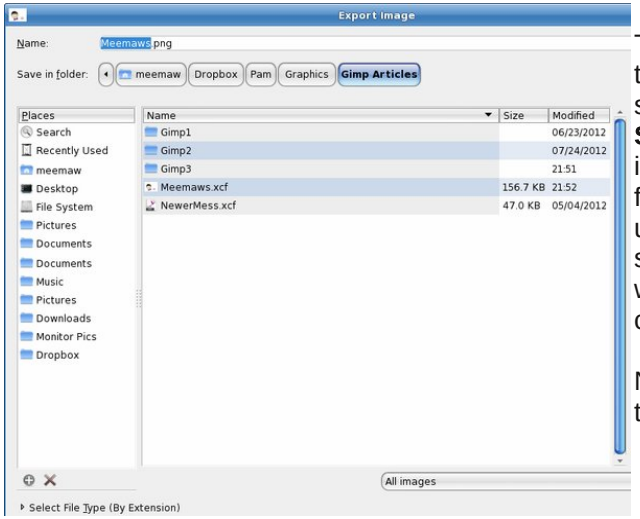
Notice in your layers window that your text is not on the layer you created, but rather it is "Floating" above it. Until you are finished editing your text, it will remain as a Floating layer.



Let's do something different to our text. Right-click on the floating layer in your layer window and choose **Alpha to Selection**. You will now see that your letters of text are outlined with dotted lines. Click on the gradient tool in the toolbox and pick one of the gradients there. (I picked dark blue to light blue.) Click on one side of your text and drag to the other side. The gradient you picked should be inside the text outlines now. If you click in the top left corner and go to bottom right, your gradient will be diagonal. If you don't like it you can press <CTRL> + <Z> to undo it and try something else. After I chose the blue, I changed it to a tropical gradient.

When you have it colored the way you want it, go to **Select > None** in the menu. This will change your floating text to an image file, which can be moved to any place you want in your drawing.

All this time, you have been saving your creation as a Gimp native .xcf file. This is good, because it preserves the layers for you so you can make changes to any of them. So what do you do if you have your drawing finished and you want to post it on the Internet as a .jpg or a .png file? With the new version of Gimp, the **File** menu is a little different. **Save...** means save your drawing as an .xcf file. **Save As...** means save it as an .xcf file (still) but with a different file name. If you want to save it as a .png file (or any of the other recognized file formats), you will have to **Export** your drawing. It is easy, though: go to **File > Export...** and edit the entries that are there >>>>



The folder location can be changed, but will probably be the same folder that your .xcf file is in. The program will assign the same name to this file as the name of the .xcf file you've been editing, but that can be changed as well. In the drop-down at the right side of the window, you will see all the file formats you can use. I use .png and .jpg most of the time, but use what you want. You will probably get at least one window with options. I generally use the defaults that are there. You will now have your basic file to edit however you want, and also an image file you can insert into another document, use as wallpaper, or print.

The new version of Gimp has the single window display. You simply Click on **Windows > Single Window Mode**. When it is checked, your windows are fused together. When you uncheck it, the sections are separate. You should choose whatever mode you are most comfortable with.

Next time we'll explore more tools.

The PCLinuxOS Magazine

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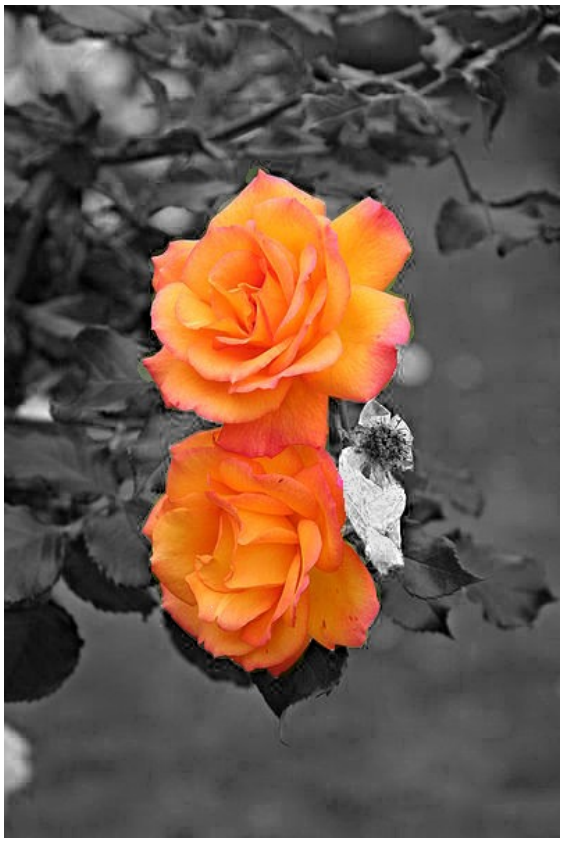
GIMP Tutorial: Layer Mask

by Meemaw

One of the first tutorials I ever did was one from the Linux Graphics Users Forum. One of the members posted several neat ways to manipulate a photo and I'm going to share this one with you. I used a photo of flowers and did a Layer Mask. It creates an effect like the one shown below:

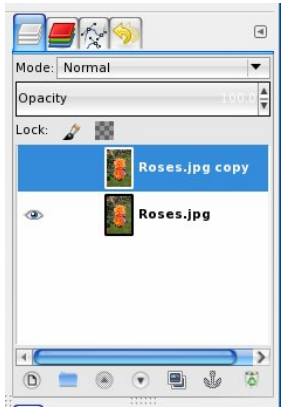


Choose a photo and open the image up in the Gimp. I chose this one (center top):

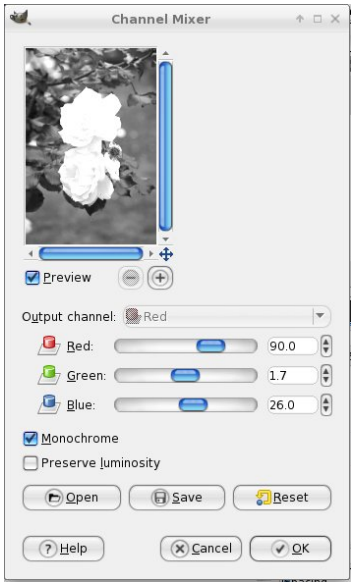
Next, create a copy of the background layer by clicking on **Copy Layer** in the layer tools.

You can name your new layer something else if you want by right clicking the new layer and selecting **Edit Layer Attributes**... and change the layer name to mask or something else.

First, make the new layer invisible by clicking on the eye next to the layers thumbnail and name. When you click on it, the eye disappears.



Now click on the original layer, so that it's highlighted, which means that it's the layer you're working on. We're going to make this layer black and white. You can use the **Desaturate** tool, but it will have better detail with the **Channel mixer** (Colors -> Components -> Channel mixer).



To get a B&W image, click the **Monochrome** checkbox. Now start moving the Red, Blue and Green controls back and forth and you'll notice that lower values make the image darker (or underexposed) and higher values make the image brighter (overexposed). The values to use have to be found by experimenting. There probably is a scientific explanation on how to do this, but play around with different settings and then see what you get. Every image is different so there isn't a setting that will give good results on all images. On this photo I had to be careful not to have Red or Green too high since it would make parts of the flower

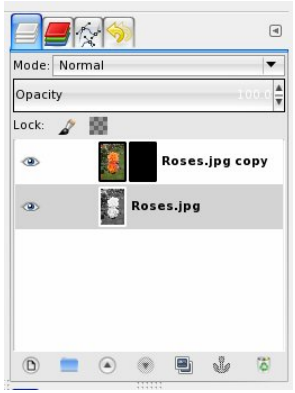
overexposed (too white, loss of detail). After clicking OK, I get this.

Finally, to really make the image 'pop' we need to use the **Unsharp mask** (Filters -> Enchance -> Unsharp mask) filter, that sharpens the image and also adds some contrast. The settings I used here are Radius 4.2, Amount .51, and Threshold 5. The screenshot doesn't really show it, but the detail in the flower was better after the Unsharp mask than before.

Now click the eye again on the mask layer (the background copy we created), and also click on the layer so it's highlighted. You should now see the colored variant of the image again.

In the toolbar click **Layer->Mask->Add Layer Mask** in the pop-up window click **Black** (full transparency) and then click **Add**.

You should now see this in your **Layers, Channels**... window: >>>



...and the image will be all black and white.

Now, we will start painting the color back. Make sure the mask layer is highlighted in the **Layers, Channels**... window. Make sure the mask itself (the black box in the layers toolbox) is highlighted. It will have a white frame.

Now select the **Pencil** tool.

Since the layer mask is black you must paint with white to get the original color back. The image at right has white as the **Foreground color**

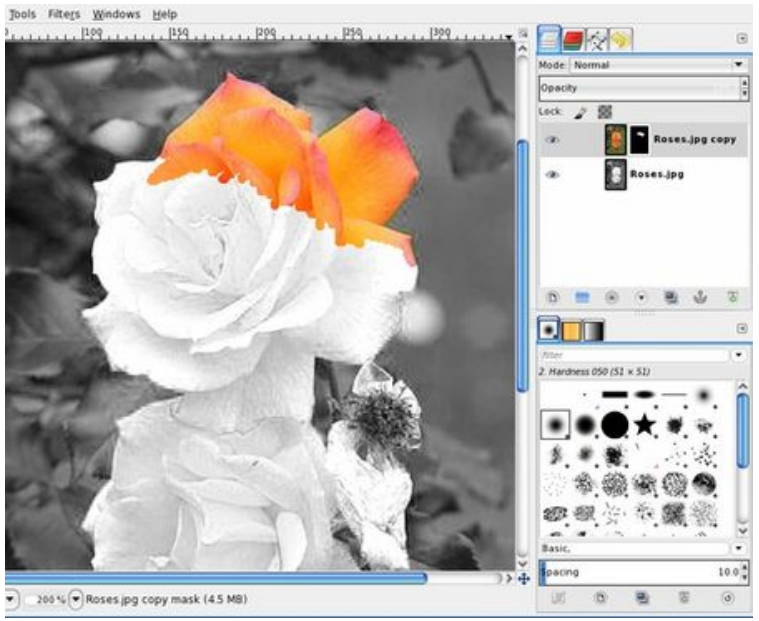
Using the pencil tool start painting the part of the image you want in color. >>>

Change the size of the brush to have better control: a bigger brush for the middle parts and a smaller brush for finer ends of the petals. I changed the size of my pencil to 5 until I got the edges established. Use <Ctrl> + Z to undo it if you go outside the 'lines'. I've learned to make short strokes until I get the edges outlined so I won't have so much to redo if I stray outside the area I'm changing. Zooming in on the image also helps. You can use **View... Zoom** and change the zoom or hold down <Ctrl> on the keyboard and scroll the mouse wheel forward.

When you have it the way you want it, right-click the mask layer and select **Apply layer mask** then right-click the same layer again and select **Merge down**, then **Export** to a picture file.

You're done!!!

My thanks to conholster on the Linux Graphics Users Forum for the two tuts I used.
http://linuxgraphicsusers.com/forum/?topic=505.0
http://linuxgraphicsusers.com/forum/index.php?topic=565.0



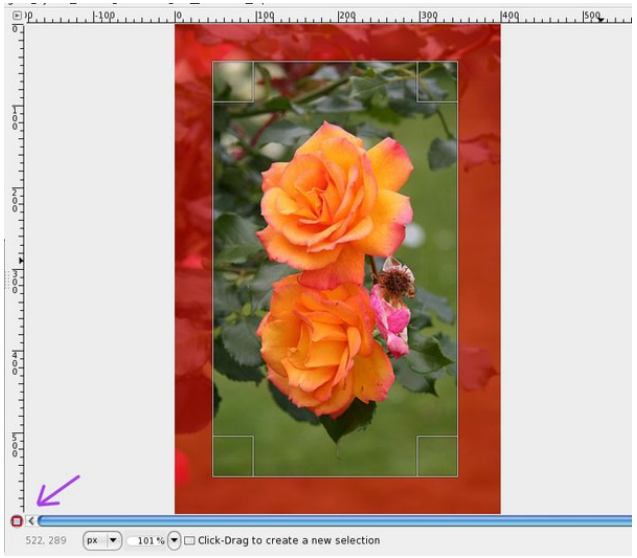
GIMP Tutorial: Quick Mask

by Meemaw

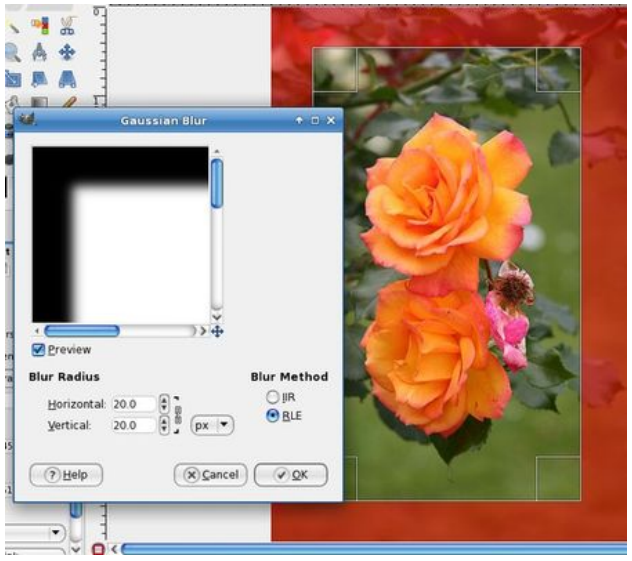
I came across a cool tutorial the other day, and it's a really easy way to customize a photo with a custom edge.

This takes advantage of the **Quick Mask** button at the bottom left of your work area. You should open the photo you want to use. I'm using the same rose photo that I used last time. After your photo is open, use the rectangle select to draw a border around your photo.

Now, click the **Quick Mask** button at the bottom left of your workspace. A red frame will appear on the outside of the rectangle you drew.



Next, choose **Filters > Blur > Gaussian Blur**. A configuration window will pop up. I set the blur radius to 20, but set it however you want. The higher the number, the more blur you will have. Click OK.



Now, click the **Quick Mask** button again. The red frame will disappear and the border you drew will change to a dotted line. Go to **Select > Invert**. This changes your selection to the frame around the outside of the photo. Now, choose **Edit > Fill with BG** color. Unless you have been using Gimp and changed the background color to something else, your background color should be white.

Export your drawing and save it as a picture file. You're finished!

There are other filters you can use. I have included three other photos below with the filters used to create them. If you want to do something different with a photo, one of these treatments may be just what you need. Feel free to experiment with other filters to see what you get. By the way, I put a two pixel border on each to illustrate a frame (using a different program!), but you don't have to do that.

Noise - used **Noise > Spread** (15 or 20)

Waves - used **Distorts > Waves** (45), then **Blur > Gaussian Blur**

Whirl - used **Distorts > Whirl & Pinch**, then **Noise > Spread**

Have fun!

Open Source Initiative
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LINUX FORUM

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by RobNJ, running e18, on May 16, 2014.

GIMP Tutorial: Using The Clone Tool

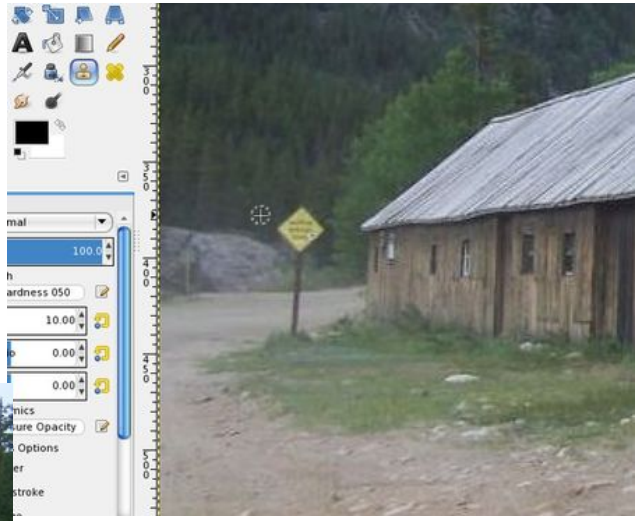
by Meemaw

Sometimes you take what you think is the perfect photo, but then you'll see that if just one little item wasn't there, the photo would be even better. But, how do you remove an item from a photo?

Removing unwanted objects from your photo may seem a little daunting, but the following method was fairly easy for me. My vacation last summer was riding 4-wheelers in Colorado. We went to one town called St. Elmo. The old buildings were beautiful, but one photo had a traffic sign I wanted to remove. I thought my photo would look much better without it, so I decided to edit it out of this photo rather than cropping it out because I wanted the road in the photo. We are going to do that using the Clone Tool.

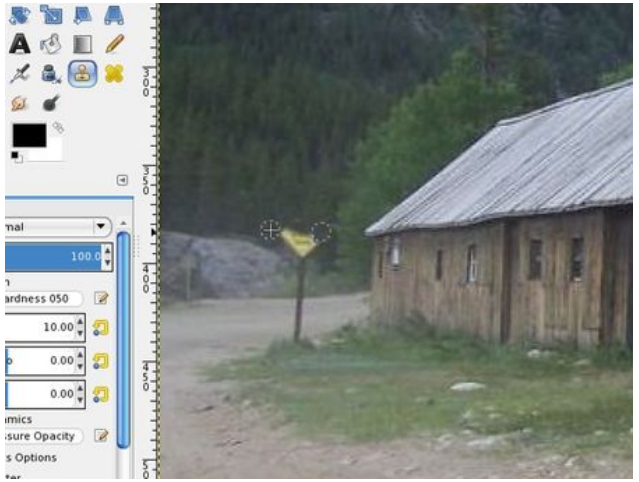
Start by opening the image you want to change. You should always make a copy of your original photo and edit the copy, or at least create a copy of your background layer by right clicking on the background in your Layers Panel and selecting "Duplicate".

Choose the Clone tool stamp from the Tools panel. In the brushes area, choosing a bigger brush will clone a bigger area. Hold down <CTRL> with the Clone Tool selected, and click anywhere in your image to sample that area. I clicked on the trees just to the side of the sign I want to cover in order to make the result blend in with the background. A plus sign will appear in your area, meaning that you have a "sample area" to use. Feel free to zoom in as necessary on the area you are editing, in order to do a better job.



Now, paint carefully over the item you want to delete. The sample area you grabbed with the clone tool should cover up that item. When you paint, your sample area indicator moves with your cursor and the area you want to change should be painted with the sample area. You should make short strokes and proceed carefully to get the desired effect (top right).

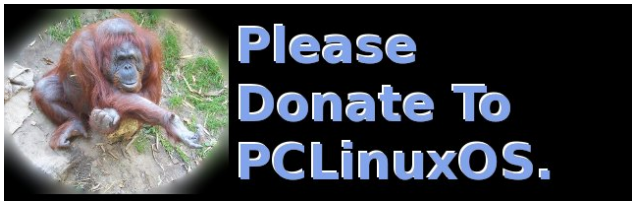
You can change brush size and hardness by right-clicking in your image. If the sample area doesn't



match the area around one of the items you want to remove, you can always choose another in the same manner. In this photo I had to choose three different samples: one for the background behind the sign, one for the vegetation behind the top of the post, and one for the part of the road behind the bottom of the post. You can see now that the picture looks better without the sign in it.

While this was a minor change, many photos can be "cleaned up" in this manner. In the bottom photo below, I removed the electric line above and transformer to the left of the building.

What a great tool! With a little practice, you'll find yourself removing unwanted elements from your images in no time, too.



Screenshot Showcase

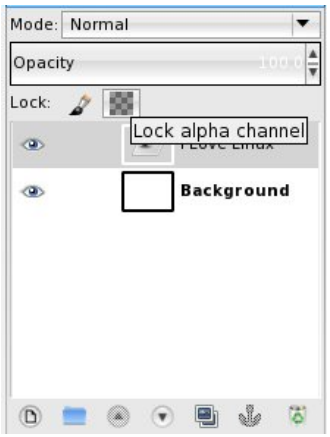
Posted by LKJ, running Openbox, on June 24, 2014.

GIMP Tutorial: Creating A Text Reflection

by Meemaw

We see text reflections all the time. I think they are pretty neat, and I always wondered how it was done. This tutorial will show you a simple text reflection.

Open a new image (I made mine 400x300), select the **Text** tool from the Tools Dialog, choose your font and type in a word. If you want, you can rename the Text layer to Main Text or it will end up being named using the text you typed. In the layer dialog tick the **Lock Alpha Channel**.

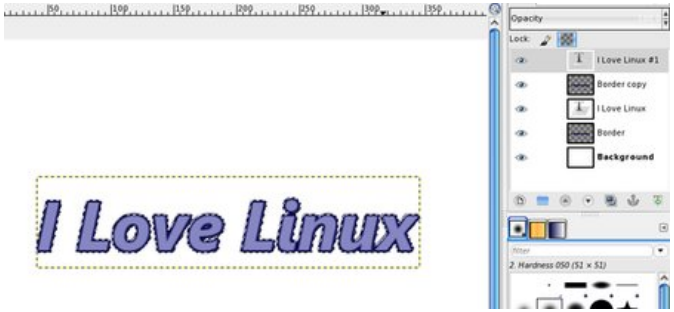


We want to put a border around our text. In creating smooth outlines, we want to use the text as a guide.... to do this, right-click on the **Main** text layer and select **Alpha to Selection**.

Then go to **Select > Grow** to access the Grow Selection dialog or you can right-click on top of the Text and in the menu click on **Select > Grow**. I added 2px for the Grow Selection.

Click on **Create New Layer**, name it **Border** and fill it with a darker color using the **Bucket Fill Tool**, then place it behind the Main Text layer to become a border.

Now we want to create the reflection effect. First, right-click on the Border Layer and in the menu click on **Duplicate Layer**. Move the layer on top of the Main text layer by clicking the up arrow in the Layers Dialog box. Do the same for the for the Main text layer and move it on top of the border Copy layer.

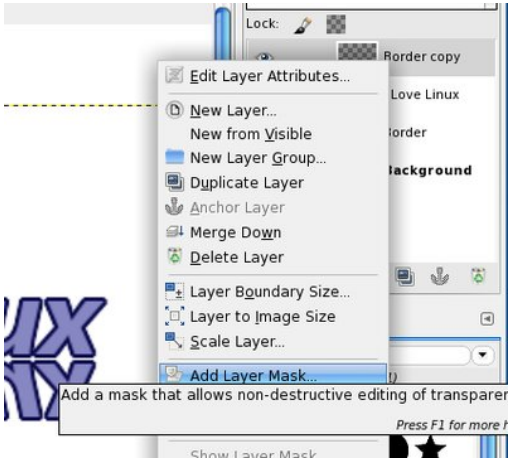


Now merge the two new duplicated layers by right-clicking on on the Main Text Copy layer and in the menu click on **Merge Down**. Now rename the layer Reflection.

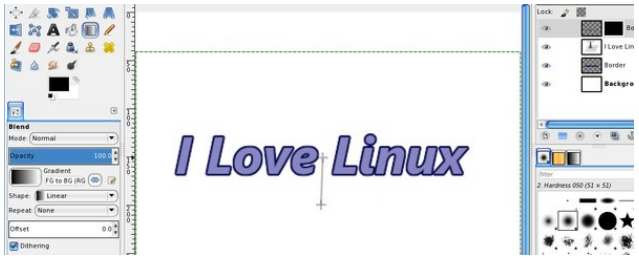
Before we do anything else, de-select any selected layer by going to **Select > None**. We want to be working with only the reflection layer, and this makes sure nothing else is selected.

Using the **Move** tool, place the the new duplicated text logo image below the original text logo. Choose the **Flip** tool, make sure it's on Vertical mode, then drag upwards to finally flip it, or select **Layer > Transform > Flip Vertically**. Make sure they are lined up the way you want them.

Right-click on the Reflection layer and in the menu click on **Add Layer Mask**, selecting **Black Full Transparency**, and then click **Add**. Your reflection will disappear.



Grab the **Blend** tool and select the **FG to BG (RGB) Gradient** and apply it to the reflection from bottom to top. Make sure your foreground color is black and the background color is white.

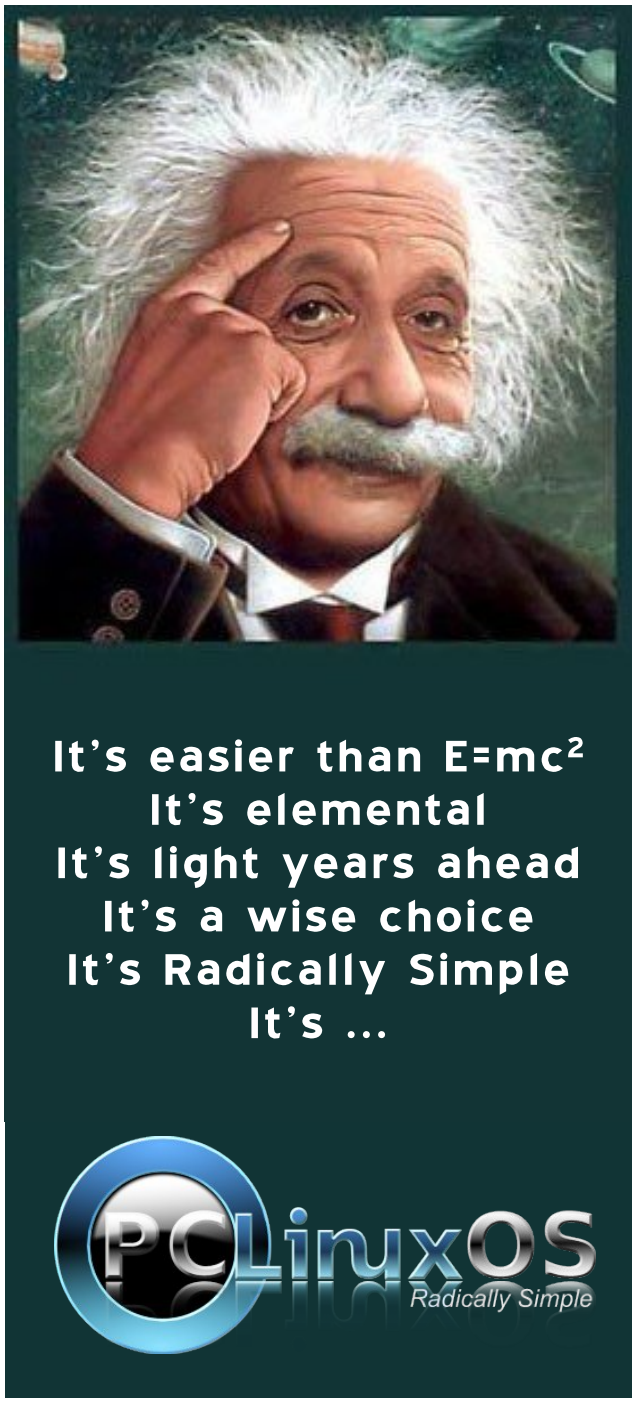


Where you start and end your gradient determines the visibility of your reflection. Starting at the bottom of your reflection text and going to the middle of your main text results in a bigger reflection (below, left). Starting in the middle of the reflection text and going to the top of your main text results in a much smaller visible reflection (below, right).

Experiment with it until you get what you want (remember **<CTRL> + Z** is the key combination for **Undo**). When you get your reflection the length you want it, you can always play with the transparency of that layer to make the reflection lighter.

This can be as simple or fancy as you want. Make sure your Main Text editing is finished before you do the reflection.

Have fun!



GIMP Tutorial: Colorizing A Photo

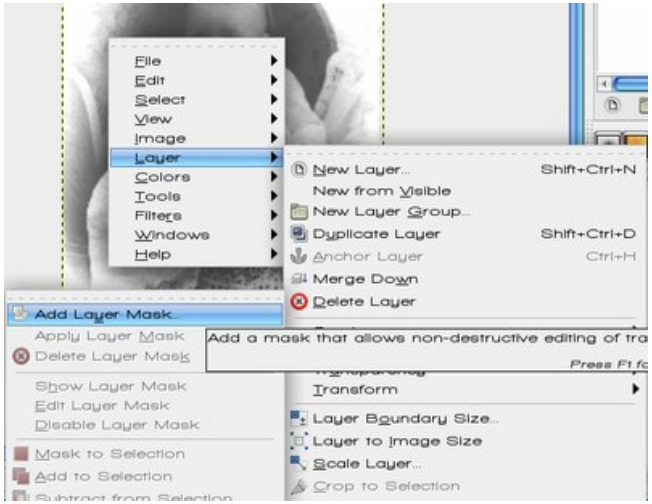
by Meemaw

I have several old photographs of my grandparents. One of my favorites is a shot of my grandmother as an infant. I have always wondered what that photo would have looked like if color photography had been available in 1893. I have scanned and saved this photo to try to colorize it.

The first thing I am going to do with it is to open a copy of the photo in Gimp so I still have the original. This way if I mess up, I won't have to re-scan. In addition, I am going to make a copy of that layer, so I will still have the original I opened and can delete any layer that's messed up. You may try a lot of options on this project, and having a copy of a layer is one way to be able to undo something you did that didn't turn out as you wanted it. Remember, you can always use the undo key combination **<CTRL> + Z**.

It's also a good idea to give each layer an appropriate name to make things less confusing during this project, since there will be several layers.

Next, you should right click on the image and create a layer mask (**Layer > Mask > Add Layer Mask**)



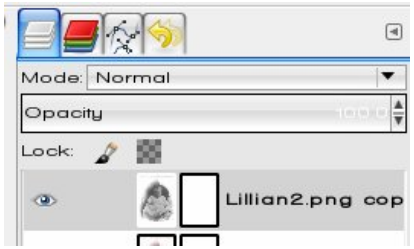
Set the background as white.

Make a copy of this layer as well. Then you will need to make sure that the image is not in Grayscale mode. Go to **Image > Mode > RGB** and set the mode to RGB.

Now go to colors and select **Colorize**. Color Balance or Hue-Saturation could be used as well, but we'll colorize this one.

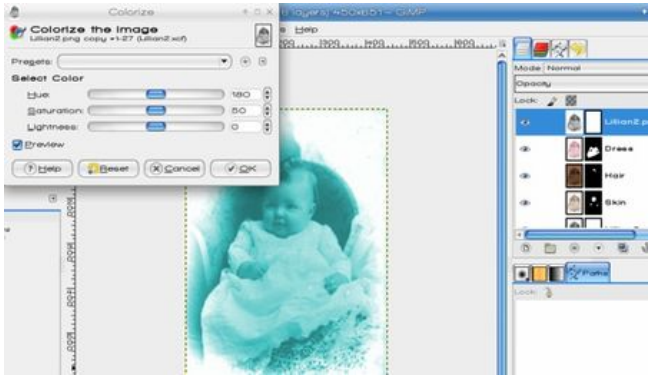
For the Colorize dialog to actually come up, we need to make sure our image is selected and not the layer mask (below). The image is on the left and layer mask is on the right and when either is chosen, it is outlined in white. The image is chosen here (next page, top).

With Color Balance or Colorize, we will now want to try to get the image to be same color of the object



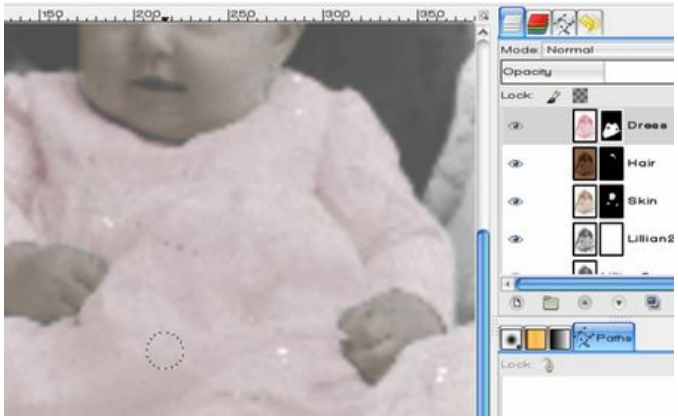
we want to color. I started with the skin. I made sure I created a copy of the image and layer mask I could use specifically for the skin.

When you choose Colorize, your photo will change to a bluish/turquoise. Adjust the hue until you find the color you like. Below are the the screens that I adjusted to do the blanket in light blue.



After you have the color you want, you will now need to select the layer mask by clicking on it. Now go to **Colors > Invert** to invert the colors. Once the colors are inverted, it will look like the original without any color.

Next I used paint brush, selected the white color and painted. You can use the selection tool, outline the object you are colorizing, then fill it with white, but using the paintbrush is easier. As we did on the other layer mask, you can outline with a smaller brush, then fill in with a larger one.



Once you have that layer the way you want it, create a new copy and repeat the process for another portion of the photo. For my next layer I did the dress.

Keep on repeating the process for every object that is a different color. It can be quite tedious but it's fun. I ended up doing the skin, hair and dress and decided against doing the blanket. ---->

Don't worry too much about getting the colors exact. Changing the colors later is quite easy. If you decide you want to go back and change a color, just select the layer and go back to colorize (make sure the layer mask is NOT selected).

After you do all the layers, you can go back and adjust the opacity on the layers to make it look a bit more natural and not over saturated.

Once you adjust the opacity on the layers, you are done! Export your photo. As a finishing touch, I opened the finished photo and took out the white spots (blemishes on the original photo) using the **Clone** tool, like we did the road sign a couple of months ago.

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The PCLinuxOS magazine

GIMP Tutorial: Create a Shiny Button

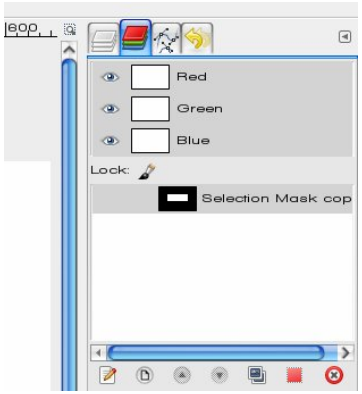
by Meemaw

We've all seen those shiny buttons that people make, so now we're going to make one.

Start a new project, 640 x 400 with a white background. If your project has some other color background, you can always change it by choosing white on your color palette, and using the bucket fill tool.

Choose the rectangle select tool and draw a rectangle. In your tool options below, check **Rounded Corners**. A slide will appear, allowing you to set the amount you want rounded. I set mine around 25.

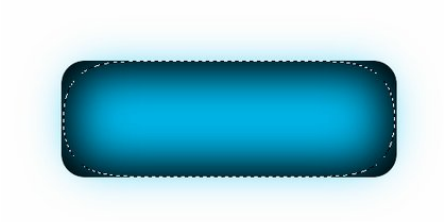
We want to save this item, because we will use it again. Go to the **Select** menu and choose **Save to Channel**. We haven't really talked about Channels yet, but are used to designate the colors in an image, and also any selection masks that may be used. Our drawing has no color yet, but we have selected and saved a rectangle, so it is saved there.



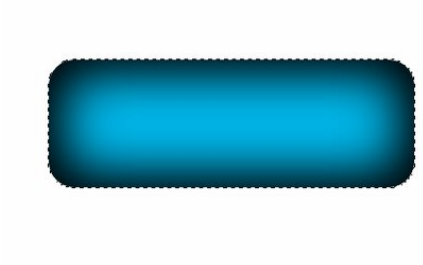
Next, we want to add a layer. Make sure **Transparency** is selected in your add layer dialog. With the new layer selected, bucket fill your rectangle with black. Notice the rectangle is the only thing that gets filled. Save your project as Button.xcf

Now add another transparent layer. On this one, choose ***Select > Feather***. You want to choose your feather setting to be the same as the height of your rectangle, so if your rectangle is 90 pixels tall, make your feather setting 90 pixels as well. Mine will be 100 pixels. Notice that this outline is a little different.

Now, bucket fill your drawing with a color you like. I used a teal blue (00c0f5). If you make it darker your button will be darker. Notice your fill now is blurry around the edges. That's the feathering. However, look at your drawing, and you will notice that the feathering extends beyond the edges of your original rectangle. Let's get rid of that.

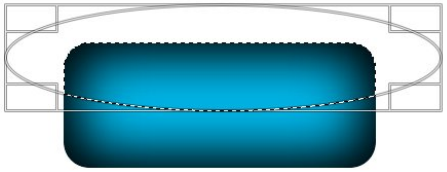


Make sure your color layer is selected, then go to the Channels tab and select the rectangle you saved. Click the red button at the bottom of the tab. (When you hover your mouse over the button, it will say, "Replace the selection with this channel.") Now the dotted lines that surround the selection are around the original rectangle. However, we want to delete everything outside that rectangle. Make sure you go back to your Layers tab and the colored layer is selected, then click on **Select > Invert**. This will choose everything except your rectangle. NOW, press your Delete key, and the outer color will disappear.

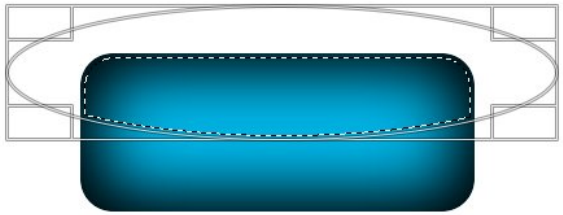


Go back and click **Select > Invert** again, since we are working on the button itself.

Now we want to make our button shiny. First we want to choose the ellipse select tool. Start your mouse to the left and above our button, and end up to the right about centered. Hold down the **<CTRL>** and **<Shift>** keys while you draw it. This will select the intersection of the two figures (see the dotted line?)



Next, choose **Select > Shrink** to shrink the selection you just drew. When the settings box appears, choose to shrink by 3 pixels. Notice that the dotted line is now inside the button.



This will be the shiny part. Click on your color chooser to make the foreground white, then click on the **Blend**, or Gradient, tool. Choose the gradient **FG** (Foreground) **to Transparent**. Create another transparent layer, choose your Gradient tool, hold down the **<CTRL>** key to make your gradient straight, and draw a line from above your button to about halfway between your selection and the bottom of the button. (You can probably play with the gradient and get it the way you like it.) Clicking on **Select > None** removes all your selection lines so you can see what it looks like so far. If you like what you've done since you saved last, save your work.

Now, let's put some text on our button. Choose the text tool, formatting your font, size and color in the text tool options on the bottom left. I think the tool's appearance has changed since we did text earlier. Your text box will appear wherever you click similar to a rectangle select. Enlarging the box and clicking in it will allow you to type your text. When you have the text typed and formatted correctly, change to the Move tool to position your text box.

We want to move our shiny layer OVER our text as well, so click on the shiny layer (here Layer #2) and then the up arrow at the bottom of the layers tab to raise the shiny layer to the top. I've already moved mine.

You should have saved everything while you were working on it. While I was working on mine, I decided I wanted the text larger and in a different font. Simply click on the text layer, click on the Text tool, highlight your text and change the font and size. You may have to reposition it so it's centered again, but that's easily done by clicking on the Move tool.

I also made a smaller button that I can use for the menu button on my panel.

Have fun!

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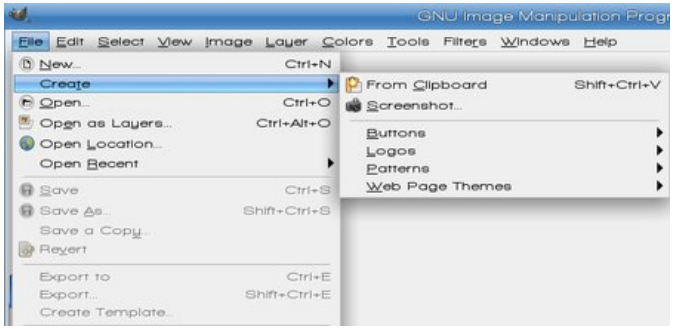
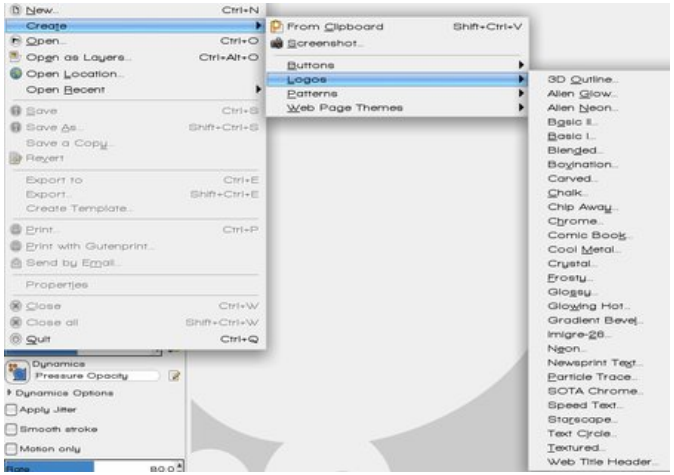
GIMP Tutorial: Exploring The Create Menu

by Meemaw

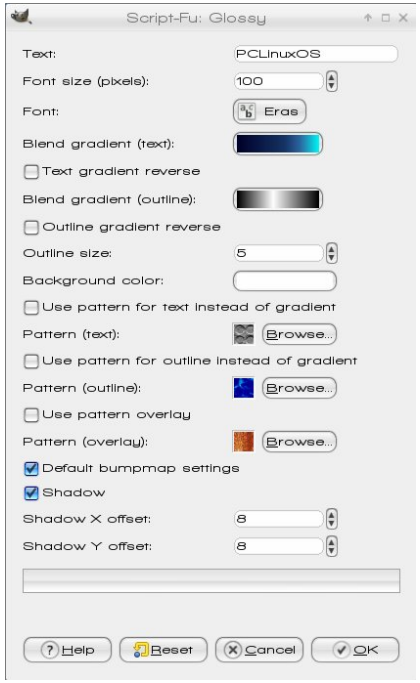
I've been using Gimp for quite a while, and haD never noticed a section in the **File** menu. It says '**Create**' and in it are several already-configured items that you can make in just a few minutes.



Let's play a little. After opening Gimp, click on **File > Create > Logos**. You will see many options.

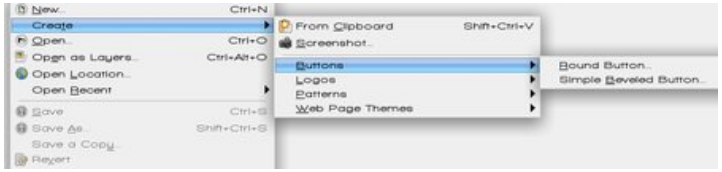


Let's do a Glossy logo. Choose **Glossy** from the list and you will see this window (center, top):

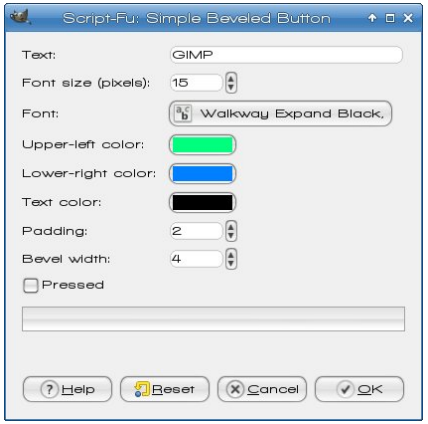


This window contains all the configuration items you need. You can change the text, font and size, along with the gradient you want to use for the text (Deep Sea or Caribbean Blues) and outline (Brushed Aluminum) plus the color for the background (Dark Blue). You can experiment with many of the settings, including using patterns for the text or outline, or even overlaying the whole thing with a pattern. Make as many as you want and save the ones you really like.

Now, let's do a button. Click on **File > Create > Button**.



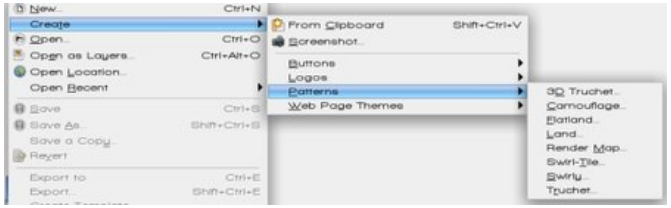
There aren't as many choices. Let's do a simple beveled button. The only way to increase the size of your button is to change the font size. The ones below are 63 pixels wide and 24 pixels tall with the font size 15.



I changed the upper left to purple and the lower right to dark blue (my colors of preference). After I made one, I changed the text color to white. Then I made a third and clicked the "Pressed" check box. This one looks like a button after I have clicked on it.

As always, experiment with colors and settings to get just what you want.

Another section in the create menu is **Create > Pattern**.



I chose Camouflage

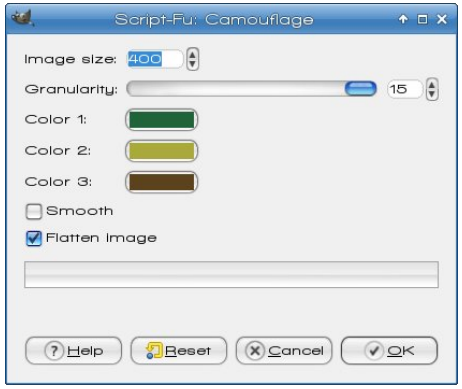
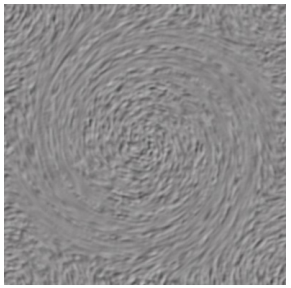


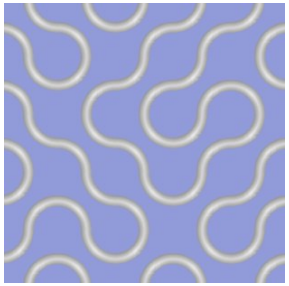
Image size is how many pixels on each side, so with 400, it will be a 400 x 400 square. Granularity is how much detail to camo has. In the image below, the left side's sample has granularity of 2, and the right side's is 15.

As you can see, there are 3 colors to set. The 'Smooth' checkbox puts a blur into your camouflage and the 'Flatten' checkbox merges all the layers together.

The Create menu has many different items you can try. Another couple of patterns are below:

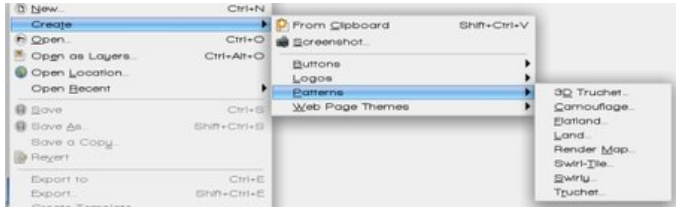


Swirly Tile



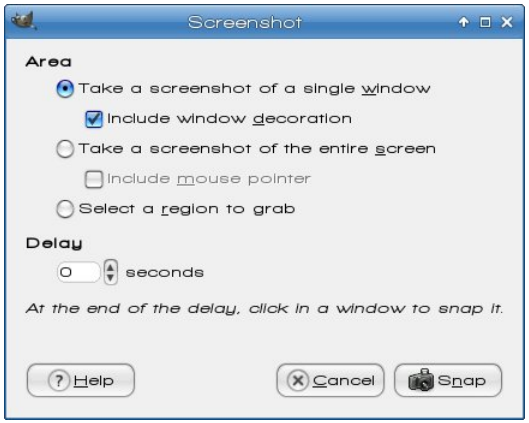
3D Truchet

You can also design items for web pages, including arrows, bullets, buttons, headings and Hrules (horizontal rule, which can be used as a border or divider) in two different patterns:



Arrows for the two patterns are shown below on the tabs in Gimp. The design on the left is called Alien Glow, and the one on the right is called Beveled Pattern.

Two other items are at the top of this menu. The first, **Create from Clipboard**, places clipboard contents directly into Gimp so you can work on it. The second is **Create from Screenshot**. Choosing it gives you the following window:



You can configure your screenshot method (window, screen or region) and any delay you want, click Snap, then the screenshot is imported into Gimp for you to manipulate.

We've had some fun with the Create menu. Its ready-made configurations are nice if you need to design something quickly, like a button or a pattern.

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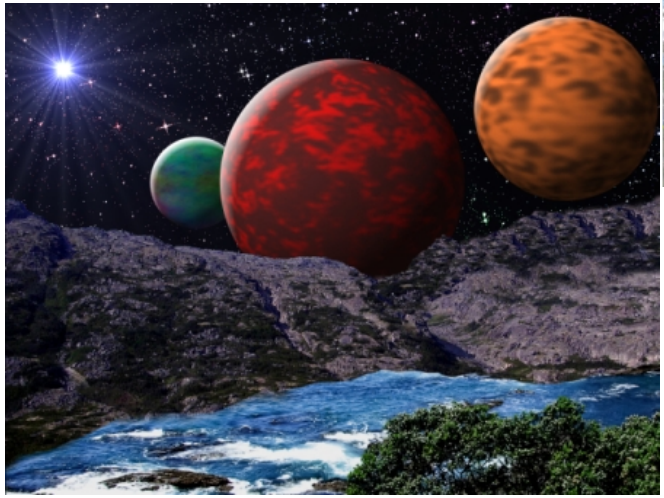
GIMP Tutorial: Create Your Own Alien World

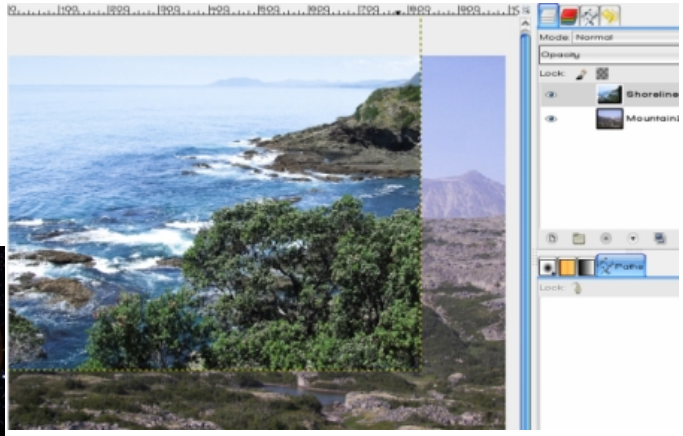
by Meemaw

I was sent a cool tutorial the other day. It's got several useful manipulation methods in it and I'm going to share it. When you are finished, you'll have something similar to this:



This a three part process: editing the land, creating the starry sky and then the planets.

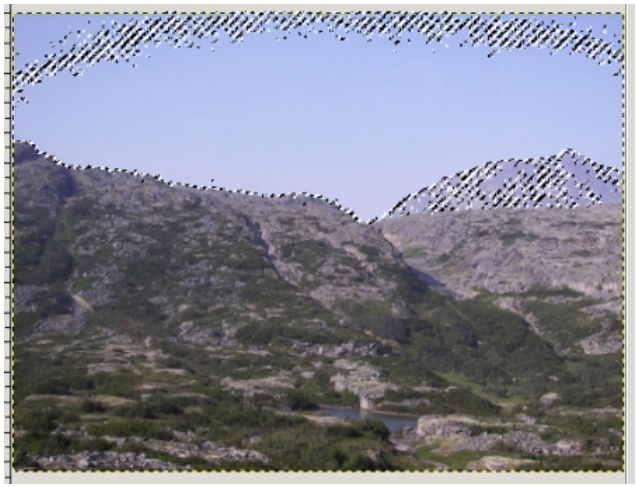
The first thing I did was find a couple of photographs: one of mountains and one of the seashore. Opening Gimp, you need to click **File > Open as Layers**.... and navigate to the folder where you saved your photographs. Choose them by clicking the first and then pressing the <CTRL> key while you click on the other. (Remember, multiple select uses <CTRL> or <Shift> depending on how many you are selecting.) I moved one layer so you could see them both (center, top), but you don't have to do that.



I'm first going to add an alpha channel to each layer so we can make part of each transparent. Right-click on each layer and choose "**Add Alpha Channel**".

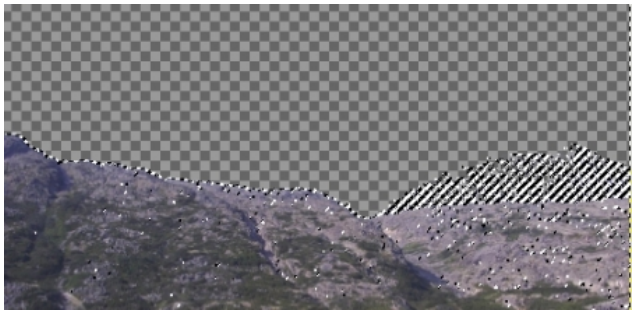
Now I will put the mountain layer on top and "turn off" the water layer by clicking the eye to the left of it in the layers tab.

I just want to use the mountains, so I'm going to choose the select by color tool and click on the sky.



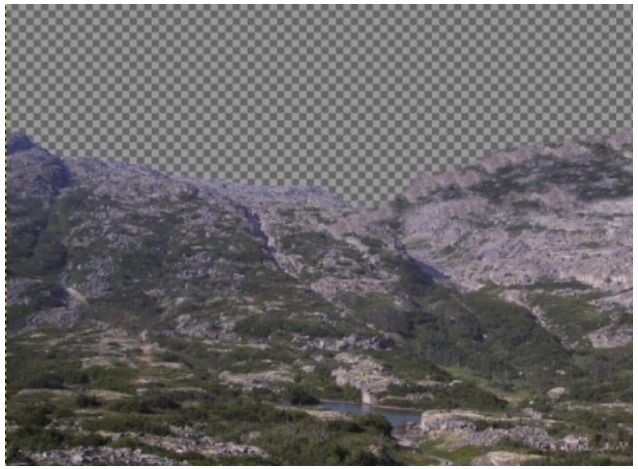
See all the dots inside the sky? I don't want that. Sometimes the selection doesn't include all the area you would like it to. A way to remedy that is to set the threshold up a bit and click again. (Threshold is in the Select by Color tool options at bottom left.) Keep doing that until your sky is outlined and all the other dots, if there are any, are outside it.

Now choose your eraser, using a hard brush, and erase the sky. Be careful next to any similar colored mountain you want to use. In mine, the mountain in the background is too hazy for me, so if I erase part of it, I'm not going to worry, because I'm going to clone another mountain into that spot.



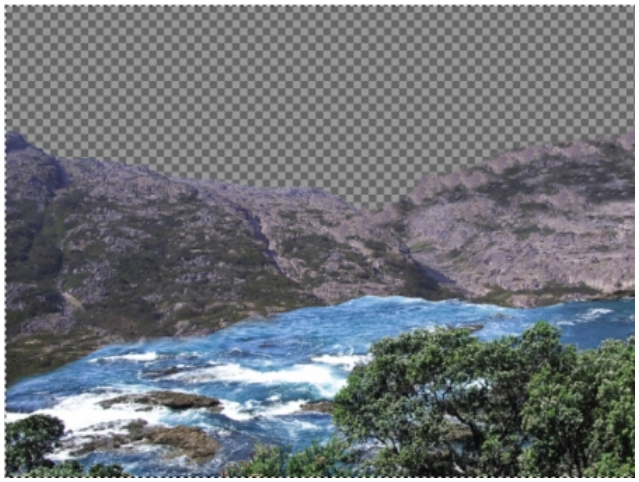
Click **Select > None** to remove your selection. That turns off all the moving dotted lines.

With the clone tool, we'll use the same technique we used for taking the road sign out of a photo, except this time we will pick a piece of the existing mountain (using a soft brush), hold **<CTRL>**, and brush across it. Then go to the place you want a mountain and paint there. If it doesn't turn out the way you want it the first time you can always undo part of it (**<CTRL> + Z**) and try again. Save your work if you are satisfied (Remember, saving as a Gimp xcf file deletes your undo history, so only save it when you are happy with what you have done.)



Now we can make the water layer visible again by clicking the eye icon on that layer. Move it to the top, too. What I want to do is stack these layers so it looks like there is a cove or lake with hills around it, so we're going to erase the sky and part of the water.

To be able to see what we are doing in relation to the bottom, mountain layer, set the Opacity on this layer to about 50%. Using a hard brush, start erasing the top layer until you like the way it looks. When you get part of your water erased and want to see what you are doing, you can set the opacity back up and finish your erasing. You can also move your layers around on the page to get the effect you want as well. I moved the water layer down to show more mountains.

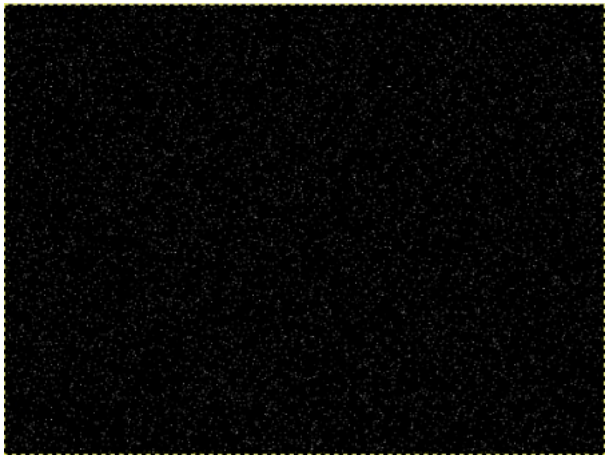


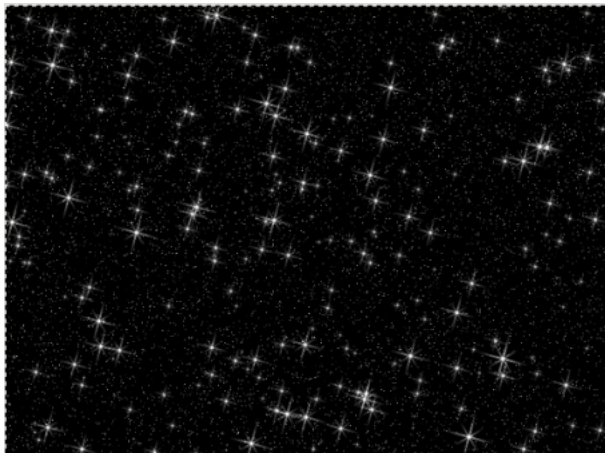
If you are happy with your work up to now, right-click on the top layer and choose Merge Down, then save your work.

Let's do the sky now. First, make the mountain/water layer invisible for now. Then, in the Layers dialog, click on Create New Layer. Choose **Fill with Foreground Color** (since we haven't changed anything, your foreground color should be black). On this layer, click **Filters > Noise > HSV Noise**. In the configuration box that pops up, move the Value slider all the way to the right, then click OK (top, right).

We want a little variety, so click on **Filters > Light & Shadow > Sparkle**. Leave the settings as they are and click OK (center, right).

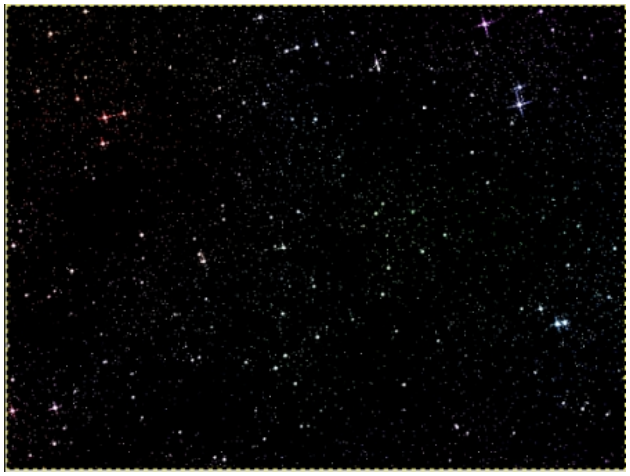
However, this is a little too sparkly for my taste, so Create a New Layer (black). In the new layer, choose **Filters > Render > Clouds > Difference Clouds**. Then, in the Layer dialog, change the mode of this layer from **Normal** to **Burn** (bottom, right).





Now your stars look more varied. Merge these three layers.

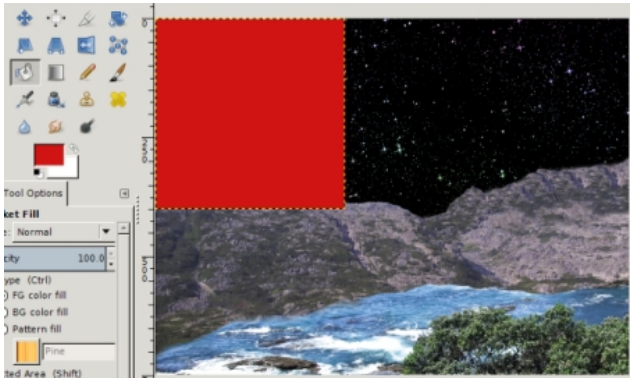
We want to add a little color to the stars, so create a new black layer. Click **Filters > Render > Clouds > Plasma**. Then change your layer mode to **Dodge**.



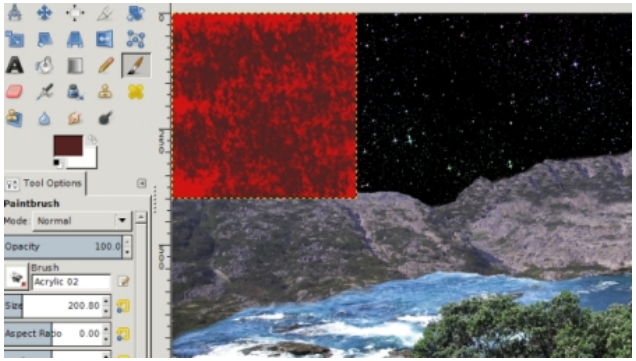
You should study your layer a bit before you proceed. The top is going to be visible, but not the bottom. You can flip your layer using the Flip tool if you wish. Make sure it is set on Vertical before you click on your layer to flip it. Right click and Anchor layer if needed. Now you can "turn on" your land layer and bring it to the front.

An alien world wouldn't be complete without some nearby planets!

Create a new layer, but make it square, and a little more than half the height of your project on each side. My drawing is about 750 pixels, so I'm going to make this new layer a 400 pixel square. Pick a red color and bucket fill it.

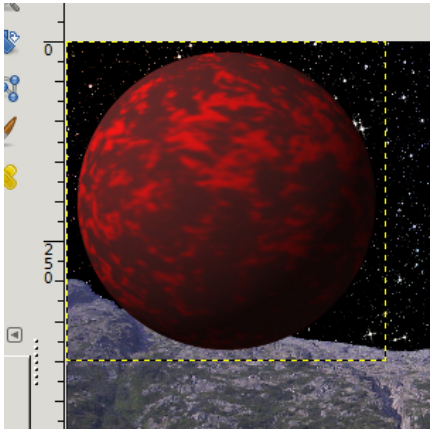


Now choose the paintbrush. Change it to another brush style, like acrylic (I chose acrylic02). Choose a brown color, increase the size of your brush to 150 or 200 and paint inside your layer. Don't cover all the red, though.



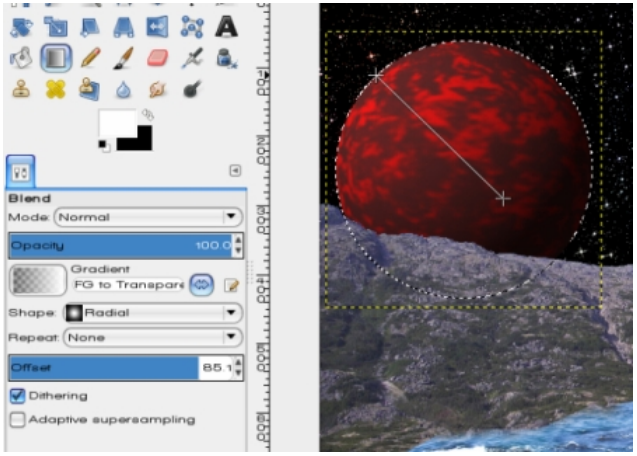
Now we are going to make it into a sphere. Click on **Filters > Map > Map Object**. We'll change some of these settings:

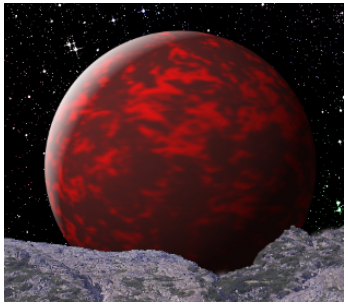
Main Window: Uncheck Show wireframe and check Show preview live.
General Tab: Choose Map to Sphere and check Transparent Background.
Light Tab: Change from Point Light to Directional Light. This removes that small light reflection as our light source will be farther away.
Materials Tab: Change Ambient to 0.20 and Specular to 0.00. This darkens our sphere a bit.
Orientation Tab: Change the Position Slider for Z to 0.90000. This makes our sphere larger.
Click OK.



Using the Move tool, you can move it anywhere you want it, and move the layer down under the land layer so it looks farther away.

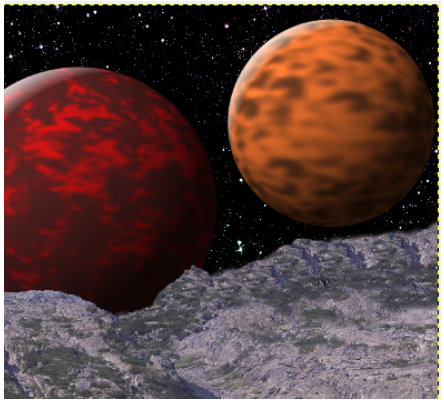
Before we finish with this layer, we want to add some light to one side of it to give our picture the feeling of a light source. With your planet layer selected, right-click in the layer tab and choose **Alpha to Selection**. This chooses only the planet. Select the Blend tool, then choose as your gradient FG to Transparent with the foreground white and the transparent on the left. Also, choose a radial gradient, because we want the white around the edge of the planet, and change the offset to 85. Starting from just below and to the right of the center of your planet, hold and drag your mouse pointer up and left to just outside the planet (next page, top left).



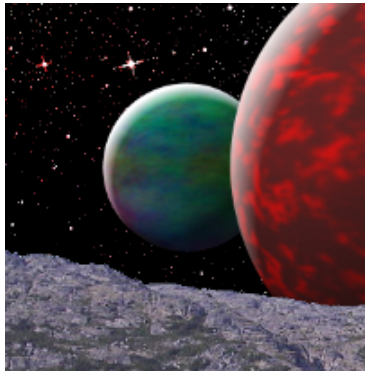


Cool, huh? Click **Select > None** to unselect everything.

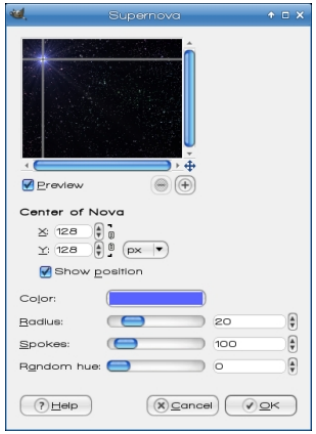
Now I'm going to make another planet a little smaller than the first. I made my new layer 300 x 300, filled it with an orange, then using a brown, clicked over it with a different brush (I used one called Galaxy). Since you have already made a sphere, all you need to do is choose **Filters > Repeat Map Object**. All the settings are already there, so just click OK. Alpha to Selection, as before, then choose your blend tool and add your light.



Let's make one more planet, smaller than either of the other two (150 x 150 in a new layer). Instead of painting it, Click on **Filters > Render >Clouds > Plasma**. Now, click on Filters, but go to Recently Used, and choose Map Object. then Alpha to Selection again, and choose your blend tool and add your light.



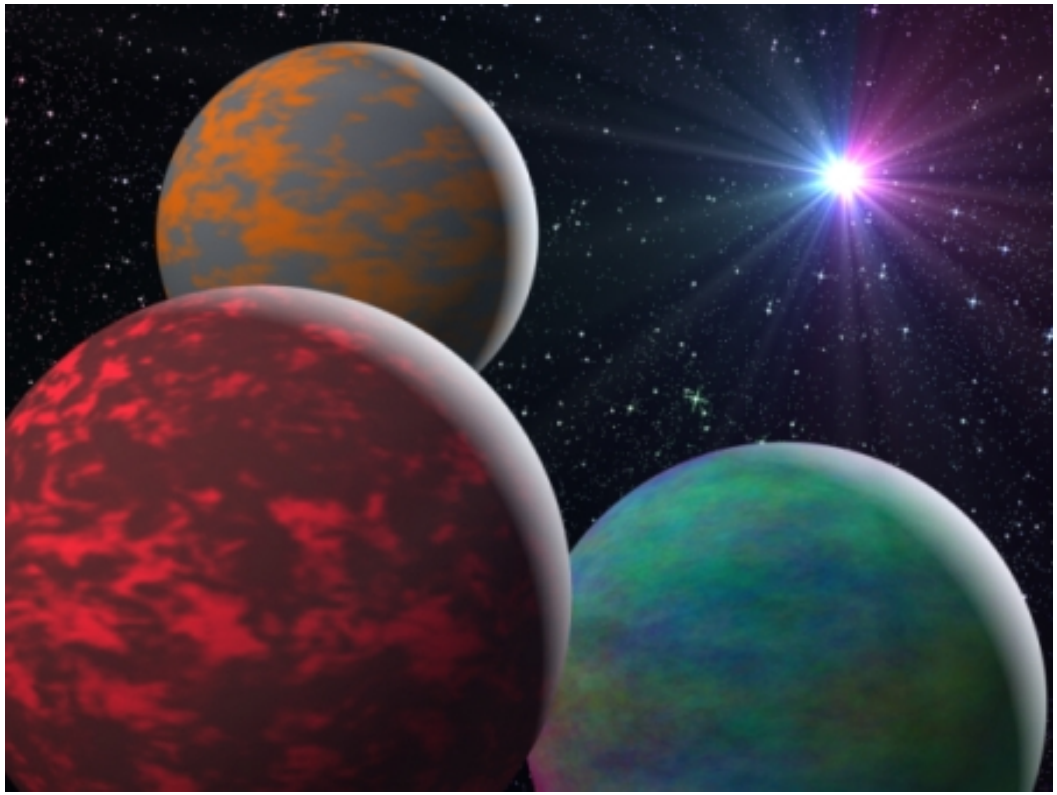
Let's make it a little more alien. Choose your land layer, click on **Colors > Brightness & Contrast**, and set the color down and the contrast up to change the colors a bit. When you are satisfied with your work, save. If you are sure you are finished you can merge all your layers by choosing **Image > Flatten Image**.



As a final feature in our project, let's put one supernova in our picture. Click **Filters > Light & Shadow > Supernova.**

The crosshairs show where it will be on your picture, and you can make it as bright and as big or small as you want by changing the color, radius and number of spokes. I left the defaults.

If you don't want to mess with the photographs, you can just make the sky and the planets, which is fun, too. Experiment with different settings & colors and see what you get!



GIMP Tutorial: Masks Explained

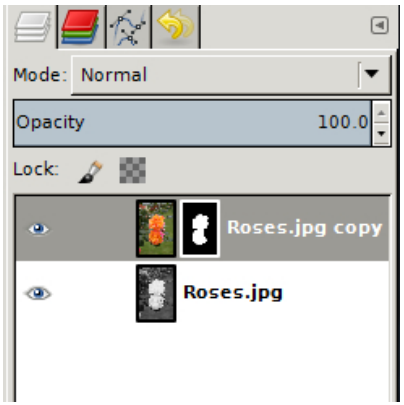
by Meemaw

We've used masks in several of our projects. Sometimes it's hard to understand exactly what a mask does, so I'm going to try to explain it in this article.

A mask is a layer you can add to your project to affect certain parts of it. However, instead of being another layer, the mask is attached to a layer and affects the pixels on that layer. It's used to block or show the pixels on the layer it is part of, so your project is changed in some way.

Basically, a white mask makes your layer show, but allows you to "cover" part of it to show what's underneath, and a black mask makes your layer transparent, so you see the next layer down, while allowing you to "uncover" any part you want visible.

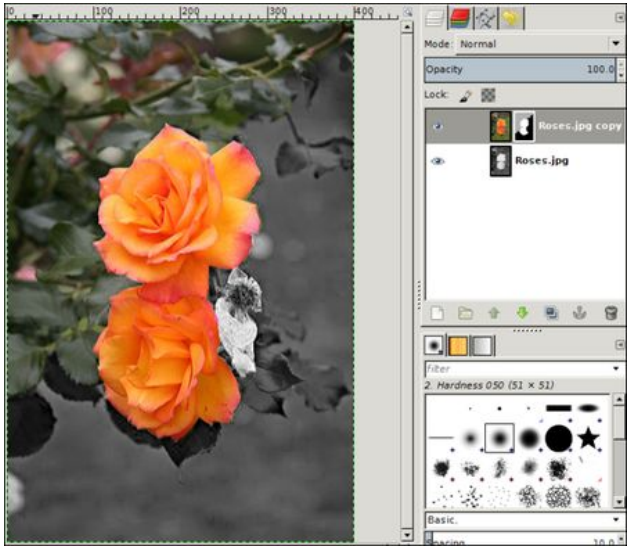
When we did the layer mask on the flower photo, we created two layers, made the bottom layer grayscale, and configured the mask on the color layer to be black, which blocked out the color. Painting a black layer mask with white makes those pixels transparent, so we could see the color in that layer. It just blocks out the layer it's attached to, so we could still see the grayscale layer on the rest of the photo. This resulted in our flower showing as color and the rest of the photo as grayscale.



On the infant photograph, we also made the layer mask black. Painting with white makes the mask transparent and the color in that layer shows through. That's also why we had to make several layers, each with its own color. Each layer mask brings out the color we configured on that layer in the areas we painted, while leaving the rest grayscale.

If you have a color and a greyscale layer, you can put a white layer mask on the color layer and paint with black to make the greyscale show through. On the example below, I did just that.

One thing we haven't tried is using a shade of gray. If you paint on a layer mask with 50% gray, then that portion of your layer will be 50% transparent. In the example below, I chose a 65% gray and painted the leaves above and to the left of the rose. You can see that there is color there, but it is not as bright as the rose. Notice the layer section on the right. The layer mask now shows the areas painted with white and gray on it besides the black part of the mask.



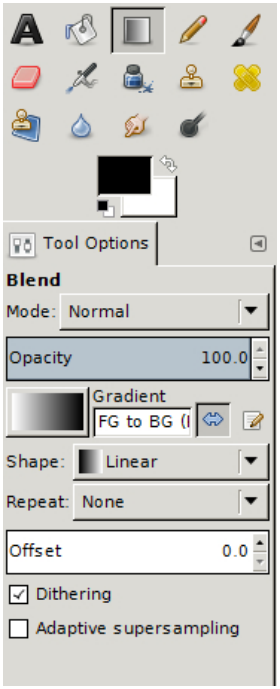
With the right photo and a little imagination, you can make a very dramatic image!

Let's try something else. I loaded this photo into Gimp:

In Gimp, I did the following:

Duplicate Layer, then using the bottom layer, click **Color > Desaturate**. Add a **Layer Mask** to the color layer.

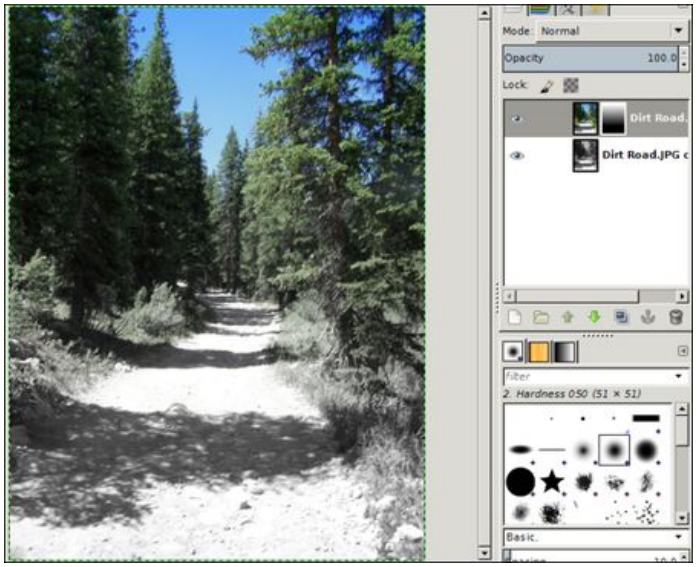
With the layer mask chosen, Blend with a BG to FG gradient (BG is background white on the left of the button, FG is foreground black on the right).



Starting with the top of the photo, click and drag to about two thirds of the way to the bottom of the photo.

------>

Now we see that the top of the photo is still in color, but the gradient in the layer mask slowly changes the color to grayscale as you get lower in the photo. You can see what is unmasked so the color shows through and what is not. You can make either the color or the grayscale as big or small as you want simply by changing where the gradient starts and ends. The farther down you start makes more color and less grayscale in the photo. If you want color at the bottom, simply start at the bottom of the photo and drag upwards.



Experiment with your photo to get the effect you want. To prevent overwriting – and possibly losing the only copy of your photo – it's best to always work on a **copy** of your original image.

Linux Training
Courses & Classes
BeginLinux.com

THE LINUX FOUNDATION

Linux Forums

LinuxQuestions.org

LXDE
by PCLinuxOS

Visit Us On IRC

- Launch your favorite IRC Chat Client software (xchat, pidgin, kopete, etc.)
- Go to freenode.net
- Type "/join #pclosmag" (without the quotes)

GIMP Tutorial: Tree Silhouette in Sunset, Part 1

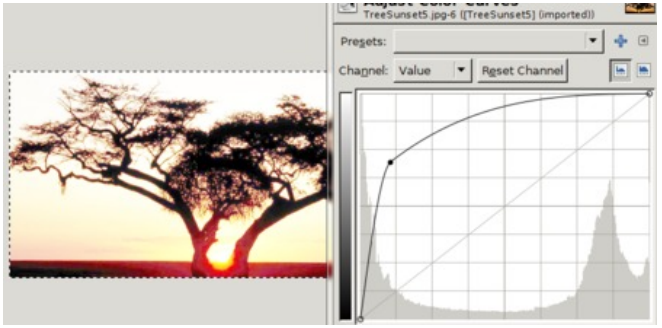
by Meemaw

This month we will make a silhouette of a tree using Gimp, then next month we will put a sunset behind it using Inkscape. I was sent this tutorial and it looked really fun. You can use one of your own photos or download one from a free site, making sure it is legal to use it. I downloaded five from Google Images, and then looked at them together to see which one I wanted to use.

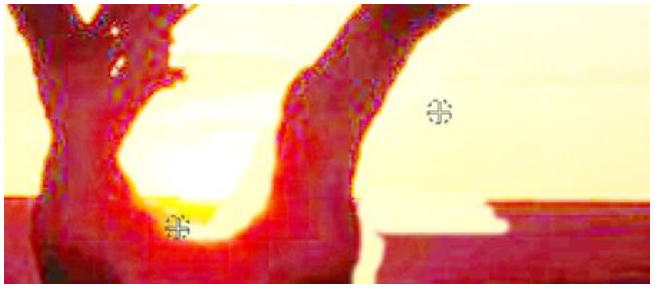
When you find the photo you want to use, open it in Gimp. I think I want to use the one at bottom right.

Crop the photo down to only the tree. Yes, my Gimp workspace has a grey background.

Now we will start adjusting the color, so click **Colors > Curves**. You will get a graph with a diagonal line in it. While watching your photo, adjust the color curve (the diagonal line) so the color is disappearing. You will have to grab it with your mouse and move the line up and to the left.



There are several methods that will remove the background but let's use the **Clone** tool. Clone everything you don't want the same color as the sky so you only see the tree. Notice that I have some sunlight in the center of mine. I will want to clone that as well.



Now that I'm finished cloning you can see what I have left. I know it looks a little red, but we'll fix that soon.

Now, click on **Colors > Brightness-Contrast**. Change the Brightness and Contrast up by moving the sliders to the right. Increasing the brightness make the background lighter and increasing the contrast will make the tree darker. Keep an eye on your tree, though, because just sliding everything clear to the right may cause you to lose the detail in your tree. Mess with it a bit and discover the settings that look best to you. Every photo is different too, so my settings probably won't work for your photo.

Click on **Image > Mode** and change it from RGB to Greyscale.

Notice that part of my tree is grey and not black. Now we will go back to **Colors > Brightness-Contrast** and adjust again. This time we will adjust the brightness down, and the contrast up. Make the brightness -100, and the contrast 110. There's your silhouette (center, top).

Sometimes we can sharpen our image just a bit. Click on **Filters > Enhance > Sharpen** and see if it helps, because sometimes it doesn't. It didn't make any difference on mine.

Save your tree, and then export it as a picture file. I usually use .png or .jpg.

We finish this project with Inkscape on page 64.

PCLinuxOS

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While Driving.

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GIMP Tutorial: Fixing a Photo

by Meemaw

Not all the photos we have are in perfect condition, especially older photos of parents or grandparents. My cousin and I have shared many photos of family members, and many of those photos are not in the greatest shape. Many are torn or cracked. If you can scan and save these photos to your computer, Gimp can help you do a good job of fixing them.

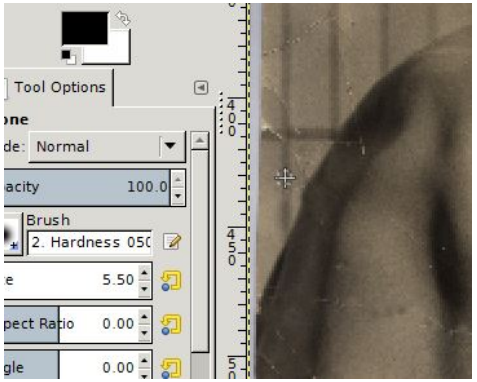
I have this photo that is cracked and too dark in places;

I would like to fix the cracks and even out the color. Find a photo you would like to fix and we'll get to it.

Opening it in Gimp, the first thing you should do is choose **File > Save a copy**. Name it whatever you wish and allow it to be saved with the .xcf file extension. This way you will still have your original photo just in case something happens to your work.

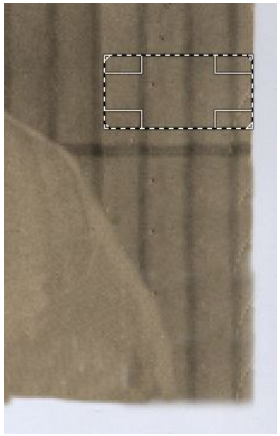
Fixing the cracks will be done with the **Clone** tool, which looks like a date stamper to me.

Click on the Clone tool, choose a place in your photo you want to fix and, holding down the **<CTRL>** key, click on a spot nearby that is the same color and texture you want to use to fix the crack. If necessary, zoom into your drawing to see your work more clearly. Also, depending on what you need to clone, adjust the size of your brush. I'm working on the background, which has darker lines every so often, so I made my brush 5.5 px wide. The circle with the + inside is the indication that my clone area has been selected.



You will want to use small strokes and go slowly. Also, you will want to change your clone sample as many times as necessary to match the area you are fixing. I have to change several times because the background is a light color with darker lines, and different areas of the photo are different shades of those colors.

While I am at it, I've decided to try to reconstruct the bottom right corner of the photo, which has torn off. For the background, I have chosen to copy an area of the existing background and place it into the missing corner. I used the crop tool and outlined an area, clicking **<CTRL> + C** (Copy) and then **<CTRL> + V** (Paste), and then moving each pasted piece into position down the right side of the photo.



The tear on the corner also cut off part of her arm, so, using the clone tool again, I *very slowly* put the same colors as her blouse into the photo, changing my clone selection where it needed to be lighter or darker. I can always go back and put in more detail, but I'm happy with it at the moment. Any time you are happy with the work you have done up to that point, you should save your work. Remember, if you clone in a color and it looks wrong, you can always use **<CTRL> + Z** (Undo)

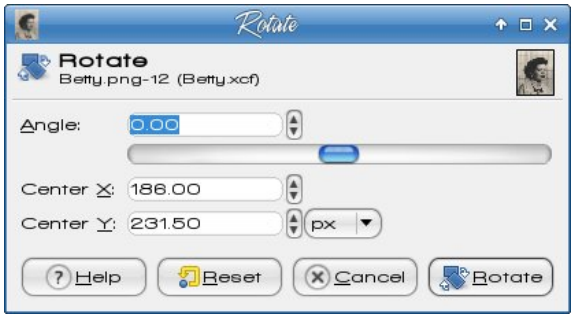
Once you get everything cloned to your satisfaction and save your photo, you can lighten the color a little by choosing **Color > Brightness - Contrast**. The Color menu has several color tools, but we can start here.

You can slide the sliders in the center, or click on the up & down arrows at the right. I choose the arrows because the sliders are not as easy for me to control and I always go too far. The good thing about the arrows is that you can go up or down one number at a time, and stop when you think you have it right. I ended up setting the brightness up to around 72 and the contrast up to about 22, but your photo may need different settings. When you get what you think you want, click OK.

This doesn't look right yet. One trick you can use is to Undo your editing using **<CTRL> + Z** and then Redo it using **<CTRL> + Y**. Toggling back & forth will give you an opportunity to see the original in comparison to your work, and decide what you need to do next. I don't think it's quite sharp enough, so I'm going to set the contrast up a bit.

I like this one, so I saved it. Feel free to keep adjusting your photo until it looks right to you, then save it.

The next thing I'm going to do is rotate my photo. It looks like it was placed in the scanner crooked. Click on the **Rotation** tool, then click in the center of the photo. You will get a Rotate window, and a grid will appear over your photo. Using the arrow keys will help you rotate your photo until it's correct (mine only needed a few degrees). When you are finished, click OK. You can always open it again if you decide that you need to change it.



Last, I'm going to crop the ragged edges out of it. Using the **Rectangle Select** tool, draw a rectangle around the photo and the choose **Image > Crop to Selection**. When you have it rotated and cropped to your liking, save your work. You can always keep the .xcf file to work on it further, but you can also Export your photo to an image file (png, jpg or whatever you want). Remember, if you click "Save", your photo is saved as a Gimp .xcf file. If you want to save it as anything else, you should click "Export…", then choose the format you want (next page, top left).

One other item is the color of the photo. This photo has a sepia tone to it. Some of the tone may be intentional by the original photographer and some may simply be yellowing because of age. You may wish to reduce the sepia tone using **Colors > Hue-Saturation**. This will change it to more of a black & white photo. Here is the photo with the saturation adjusted by -50 (next page, bottom left).

As always, it is your creation, so you can change it as much or as little as you want. When it looks good to you, and you think it's finished, then you should save it and/or export it.

We've seen that just a few tools in Gimp's toolbox will help us "restore" a photo, or at least repair one. I'm sure that your photo album will look wonderful very soon.

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Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Stephen!, running KDE, on July 16, 2014.

GIMP Tutorial: Editing an Image

by Meemaw

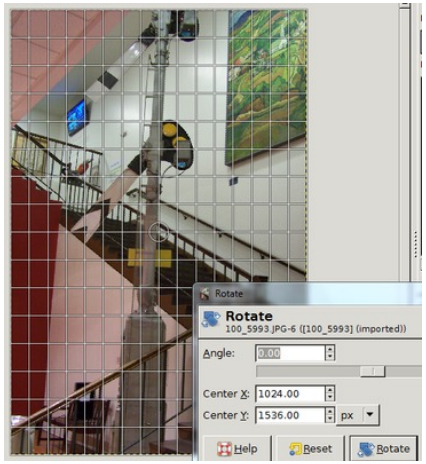
We've made bunches of pretty things with GIMP! We've also done a little bit of photo editing, but I know there are more tips to editing digital photos than the ones I've covered already. When a digital photo is opened for the first time, even expert photographers will do something to improve the shot. From Chapter 10 of the GIMP Manual, *"Most commonly the things that you want to do to clean up an imperfect photo are of four types: improving the composition; improving the colors; improving the sharpness; and removing artifacts or other undesirable elements of the image."*

Let's look at some things we can do to improve our photographs. I will follow the four topics listed in the GIMP Manual's Intro to Chapter 10 above. I have a folder of photos from a recent trip to edit. I am going to copy all of them into a sub-folder called Originals before I start, just in case I really mess one up! Also, remember, anything you do to a photo can be undone just by pressing **<CTRL> + Z** or clicking on **Edit > Undo**. Make sure you have your photo the way you want it before you save.

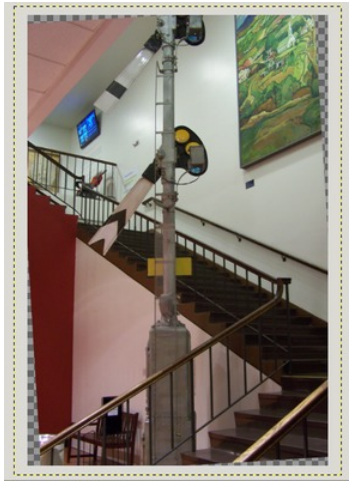
Improving Composition

No matter how hard you try, sometimes you just haven't held your camera absolutely level. If you are scanning a photo for saving, you haven't placed it in the scanner straight. Rotating your image will remedy that error. GIMP's rotate tool looks like this:

When you click on it, then click inside your photo, you will find your photo covered with a grid, and the rotate window will appear.

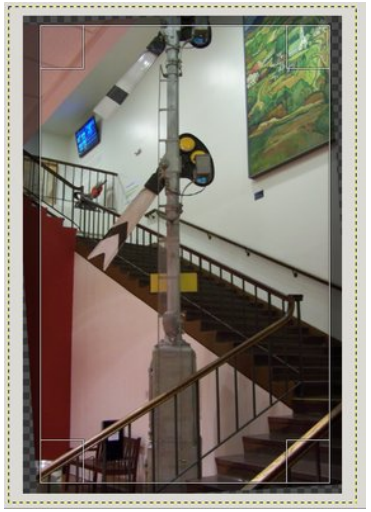


If you need to rotate clockwise, you should click the up arrow next to the angle, and if you are going counterclockwise, the down arrow should be clicked. You can do it by hand with your mouse, of course, but this is much more precise. A tip is to rotate a bit, then click OK to see how you did. Clicking in the center of your photo will replace the grid squarely and you can see if you have it rotated enough (or too much!) I rotated this photo -2.00 degrees, then another -1.5 degrees. I wanted the signpost to be straight, and I wasn't happy with it the first time. I clicked the photo a third time, and the signpost was straight, so I canceled out of that window. To keep from accidentally starting the rotate tool again, I chose some other tool.



Notice that the edges of the photo now have some transparent sections. That's because Gimp rotated the photo, but there wasn't anything to place in those corners. One option is to crop the photo.

Choose the Rectangle Select tool and draw a rectangle around your desired area. Click on **Image > Crop to Selection** and everything outside the rectangle will be eliminated. Another cropping tool is the actual Crop tool. Your cursor will change to a cross and you will be able to draw a rectangle around the area you want to keep, then press Enter or click on your selection.



On either tool, you are able to adjust the sides of you rectangle before you actually crop your photo, just in case your rectangle isn't quite where you want it.

(This photo is of the entrance to the Miniature Railroad Museum at Balboa Park in San Diego, CA.)

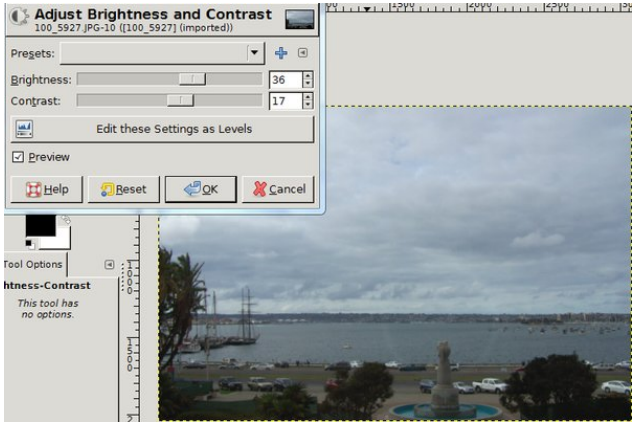
LINUX FORUM

Improving Colors

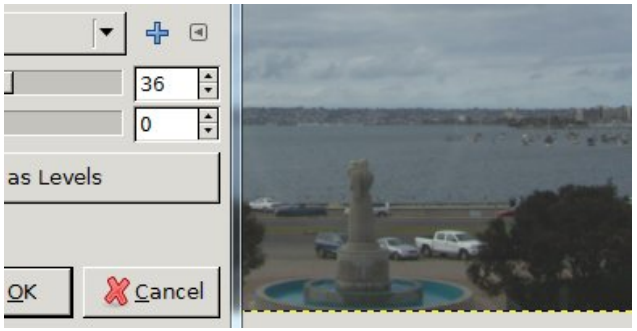
Exposure Problems

Heaven knows I'm not a perfect photographer! Most of us aren't, so we take loads of photos and then weed out the bad ones, leaving us with the ones that are most promising. Sometimes a photo will be really good, except that it's just a bit dark. We'll want to do a little color correction on that. The easiest tool to use is the Brightness-Contrast tool. You can slide the sliders or use the up and down arrows, which will be easier if you only have to adjust a little bit.

I have a few photos that are just a bit dark, so I will open one in GIMP and choose **Colors > Brightness-Contrast**. A window will open that shows sliders for brightness and contrast. You will also see a checkbox that says "Preview." Make sure it is checked. As you slide the sliders or use the up & down arrows next to the values, your photo will reflect the change.



If you are tempted to use only the brightness setting, I should warn you that some of your photos will look washed out or way too light if you don't adjust the contrast as well. See the difference at center top:

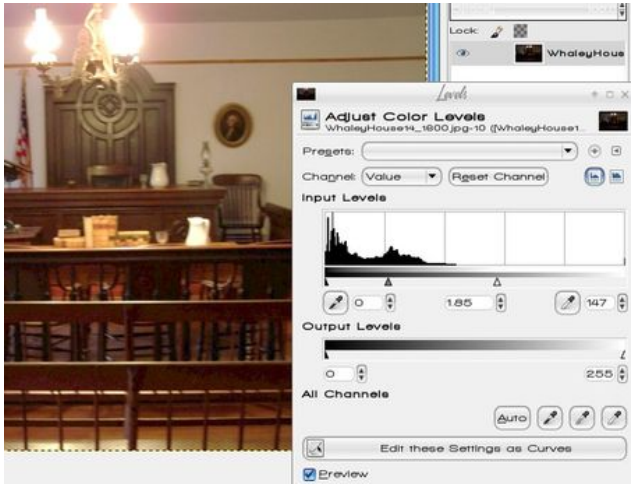


(This is a photo of part of the bay in San Diego, CA.)

The Levels tool is another tool that can help you adjust your highlights and shadows. I opened this picture. It turned out really dark when I took it, and after I used the Brightness-Contrast tool on it, I got this result:

I said it was really dark! Then I chose **Colors > Levels**. When the window appears, there are three arrows below the histogram, one at each end and one in the center. Adjusting the arrows below the histogram, I was able to lighten the photo up considerably (top, right).

Please be aware that large adjustments here will not only lighten the photo, but add noise. However, a slightly noisy photo where you can actually see Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Sally is better than a dark photo where you cannot (center, right).



This is a photo of one of the rooms in Whaley House at Old Town, in San Diego, CA.

Adjusting Sharpness

I don't know about you, but I can't always hold absolutely still while taking a photo, and it come out a bit blurry. Many of those aren't repairable, but sometimes a blurry photo can be helped with a couple of tools. One is **Filters > Enhance >**

Unsharp Mask, and it might be able to reduce some of the blur.

Before

After

Something else that might help is **Filters > Enhance > Despeckle**. With both tools, you need to play with the settings until you get the result you want. Be very careful here, adjusting only a bit at a time, as over-sharpening looks glaring and artificial.

If it seems too sharp, then you might try **Filters > Blur**. Sometimes a photo will look better if it is softened a bit.

Removing Unwanted Objects

I have taken a photo in the rain before. Then, when I look at it, the rain detracts from the photo quality, of course. Using **Filters > Enhance > Despeckle** may be able to remedy that. Here, I took the photo through a dirty windshield… despeckle didn't take everything out, but it looks better (right).

We have already learned how to remove unwanted items in a photo using the **Clone** tool, which will help fix the photo above, too. The **Healing** tool should work as well. There is also the **Resynthesizer** plugin available for Gimp, but it isn't included in the default Gimp installation. You can install it from the repo through Synaptic.

Many photos have the dreaded red eye effect. To remove it, use **Filters > Enhance > Red Eye Remover**. You need to outline the area you want to change with the lasso or ellipse select tool first.

Another method is to choose a brush (paintbrush tool) with soft edges, and size it a tiny bit larger than the red you want to remove, then paint a dark color into the red. If it doesn't look right, use **<CTRL> + Z** to undo it, and try again.

Wow! We've covered a lot of tips. I am sure that your photos will be even more beautiful now!

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GIMP Tutorial: Fire

by Meemaw

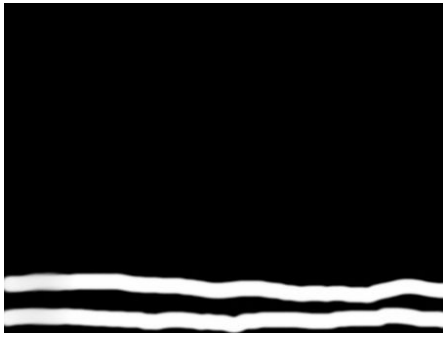
When we were working on the July 2013 issue of the magazine, parnote asked me if I could create a fire effect for the cover. So, I went looking for tutorials, and found some. Two of the following are for creating flames across the bottom of a wallpaper. The third is for creating a very realistic looking explosion.

Creating Flames

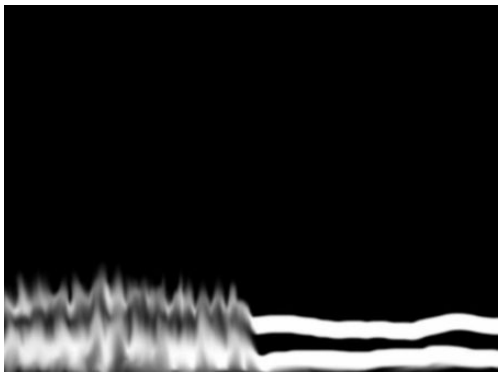
This method will create flames that have a kind of "crackle" effect.

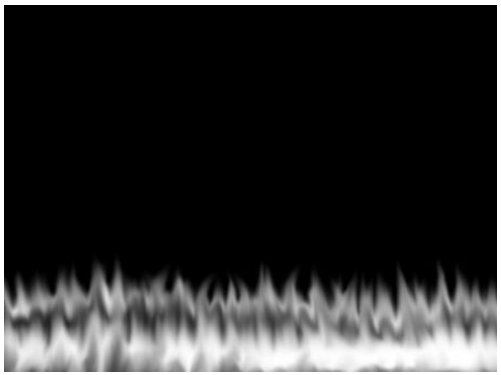
Create a new file with a black background. (**File > New** and clicking Advanced Options, and then Fill with foreground color). If for some reason you get something other than black, you can always choose black as your color and use your bucket fill tool.

Click on the color palette and change the foreground color to white. Select the paintbrush icon. Paint a white horizontal stripe just above the bottom of the canvas. It doesn't need to be perfectly straight. Paint a second stripe 50 pixels above the first. This stripe doesn't need to be perfectly straight either. (I can't draw a straight line most of the time, anyway!)

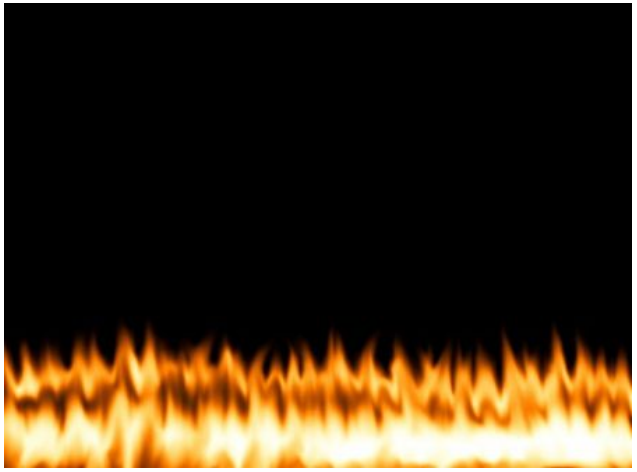


Choose the smudge tool. (It looks like a hand with an outstretched index finger.) Click on the bottom stripe and draw your mouse up past the second stripe. This creates what looks like a black and white flame. Repeat this process along the stripes until the white stripes are no longer visible. It might take a while.





Select **Color > Color Balanc**e. Set both the Shadows and Midtones so that Red equals 100, Green is 25 and Blue is -25. Set the Highlights so that Red is 100, Green is 0 and Blue is -100. This turns the black and white flames into red and yellow flames.

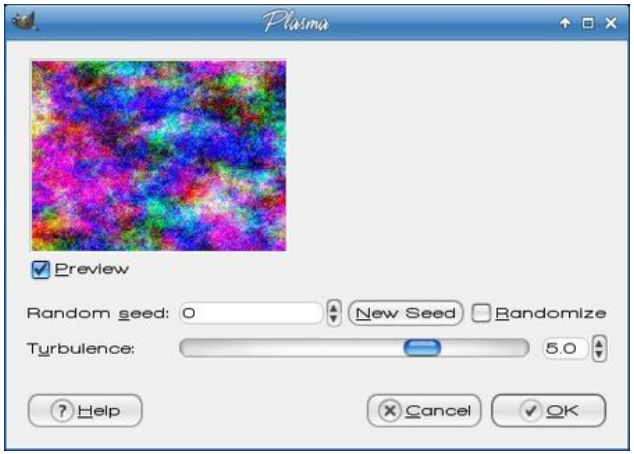


Creating the Crackle

Now we want to give it a sort of crackle effect. Click **Layer > New Layer**. Click OK without changing the default settings. Select **Filter > Render > Clouds > Solid Noise**. Set X to 13 and Y to 7. Click OK.

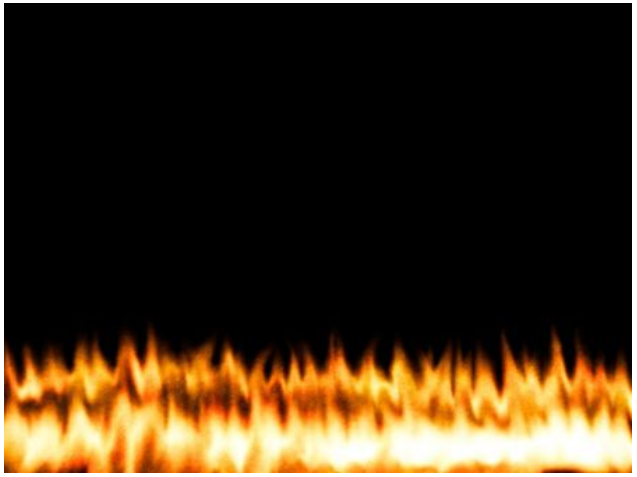
Set the layer's mode to **Overlay**. You can do this from the Layers window on the right side of the screen. Mode is a drop down box near the top of the window.

Create another layer by clicking **Layer > New Layer**. Click on **Filters > Render > Clouds > Plasma**. Set Turbulence to 5 and then click OK (next page, top left).



Select **Colors > Desaturate**, and then OK.

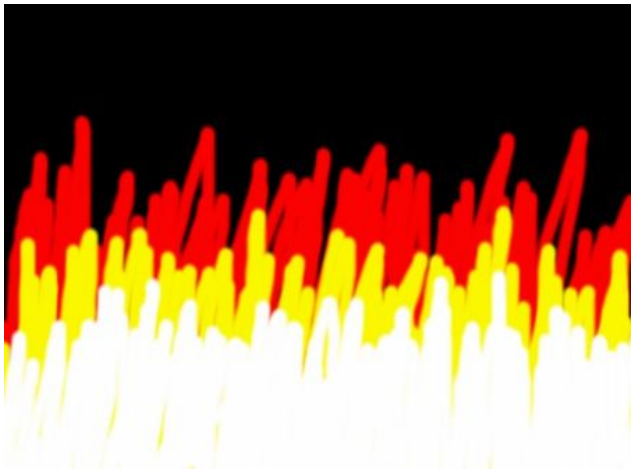
Set the this layer's Mode to **Overlay** as well. You now have a fire with a crackle effect.



Another Flame Method

Create a new file filled with black, and create a new transparent layer.

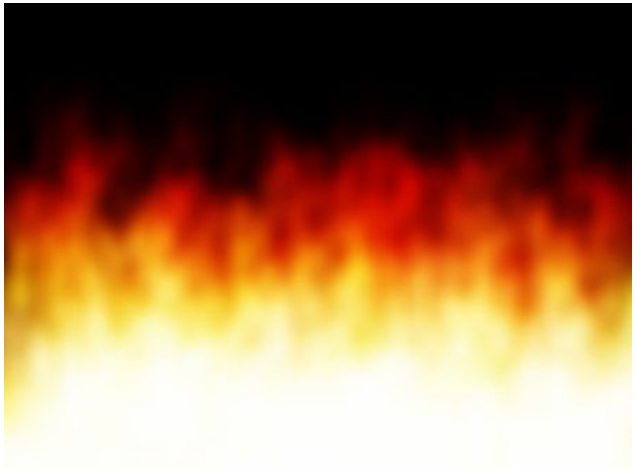
The fire will be made with 3 colors, red, yellow, and white. Using a red color, draw the basic shape of the fire. Do the same with yellow, making sure some red is still showing. Repeat with white. Your drawing should look similar to the screen below.



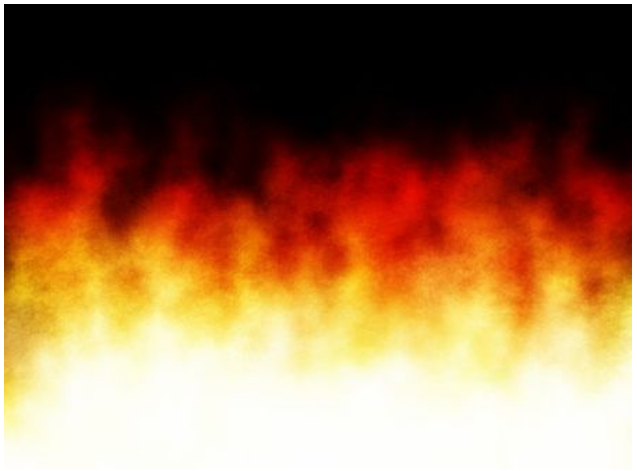
Right now, the fire looks really primitive. Click on **Filters-->Blur-->Gaussian Blur**. Set Vertical and Horizontal to 100. You should now see something similar to the image below.

It looks better but still doesn't look realistic. Create a new transparent layer and go to **Filters > Render > Clouds > Solid Noise**. Set the X-Value to 13 and the Y-Value to 7. Duplicate the layer with the clouds. Set both cloud layers' Mode to **Overlay**.

It should now look like this:



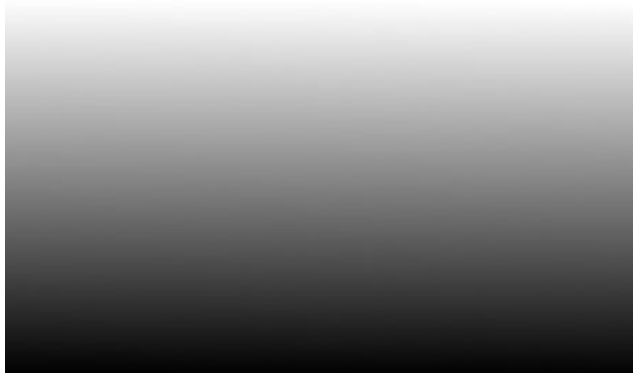
Create a new transparent layer. Go to **Filters > Render > Clouds > Plasma**. Set the Turbulence=5 and click OK. Now go to **Layers > Colors > Desaturate**. Set this cloud layer's options to **Overlay**, too.



If you want edit the fire a little more, you can just go to **Filters > Distort > IWarp**. Play around with it to get what you like. I didn't do anything in IWarp.

An explosion effect.

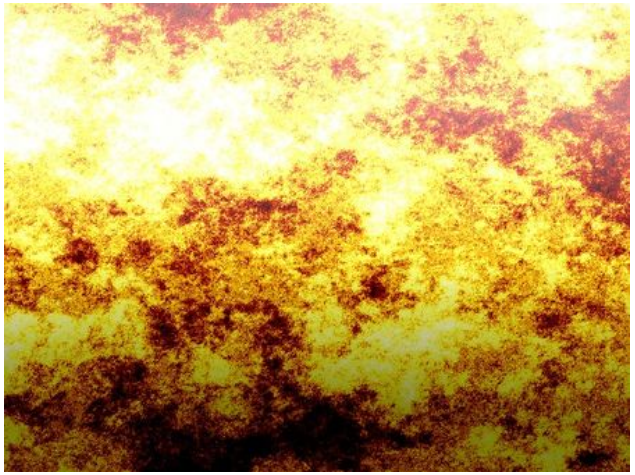
Open a new file whatever size you want. Fill it with a gradient (black to white), making sure at least 1/4 of your page is white. The white will be the brightest part of your fire.



Create a new layer (transparent) and and click on **Filters > Render > Clouds > Plasma**, and set the Turbulence to 6. Find the plasma pattern that you like by repeatedly clicking **New Seed**. Set the layer mode to **Grain Merge**.

Desaturate this layer, then click **Colors > Color Balance**, and make sure the Preserve Luminosity box is checked. While you have that window open, also adjust the Shadows/Midtones/Highlights color levels until you get the desired look of your fire. The following settings look pretty good: Shadows: 88, -65, -56 / Midtones: 71, 35, -49 / Highlights: 91, 87, -5)

Merge ALL layers down, then select **Blur > Selective Gaussian Blur**. Set Blur Radius at: 25 and Max Delta at: 50. You're done!



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GIMP Tutorial: Frozen Text

by Meemaw

This tutorial was sent to me a year or so ago, and I thought it was fun. We have done text in GIMP before but this one is a different effect and uses a combination of some skills you already have.

Opening GIMP, create a new 1600 x 1200 canvas with a black background. Click on the text tool, change the foreground color to white, change the text size to 400 px, and type your text. I wrote PCLinuxOS the first time on a bigger canvas, as you see above, but I wrote Linux this time. Choose the Move tool, and move your text to the center of the canvas.

Now, right click the text layer, and choose **Alpha to Selection** to select the text only. Choose **Select > Feather**. In the window that appears, change the number to 10% of your font size, in this case, 40 points.

What we are trying to do is make the text look like ice with the inside clear and the outside frosty. It will be rounded text rather than having sharp corners (center, top).

"Turn off" text layer by clicking on the little eye to the left of it in the Layers window. Create a new transparent layer on top. Using the bucket fill tool, check **Fill Whole Selection** in the tool settings and fill the text with white.

Now use the **Select by Color** tool. Click in the background. Notice that the selection lines are farther out from the letters now.

The background is selected now, so go to **Select > Invert** to select the text. Using the bucket fill again, fill this text with white.

Duplicate this layer, then turn off the original. Select the text layer, and choose **Alpha to Selection**. Then go to **Select > Feather** again. If the feather box is still set to 40 px, click OK.

Select the top layer (mine says "Layer copy") and press Delete. Go to **Select > None** to deselect everything.

If you haven't saved your file, you should do it now.

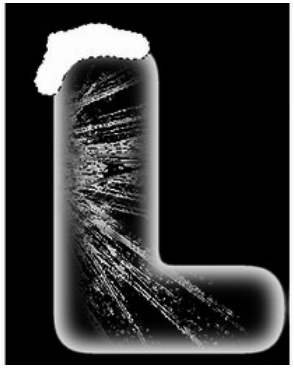
We have the text now, so let's put some ice crystals into it. Create a new transparent layer, check that your foreground color is still white and then select **Filters > Render > Nature > Flame**. In the window

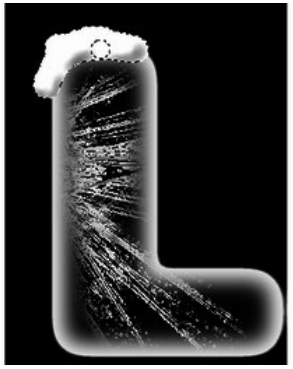
that opens, slide the brightness clear to the right. Click the Edit button at the top, then choose **Bent** from the dropdown in the edit window. Click on the randomize button several times to find a pattern you like. then click OK. (This filter takes a few seconds.) Now click on **Filters > Edge-Detect > Sobel**, then click OK. You'll notice your nice white pattern has changed to black so go to **Colors > Invert**.

We don't want all of that but we are going to clone part of it to make our text look frozen. Find a spot you want to use, then click on the clone tool. Make it the same size as your text with a soft brush. **<CTRL> + click** on the pattern that you want to clone. Turn off that layer and choose the Layer copy. Using smooth strokes, paint your pattern into your letters. It seems to look best if you start in the middle of the letter and stroke up and down without making many short strokes. Make sure you have saved your work (center, top).

Let's add some snow! Add a new, transparent layer on the top. Using the **Lasso** tool, draw an irregular shape on the top of a letter, then bucket fill the shape with white (center, left side).

While your shape is selected, change the foreground color to black, and change to the **Airbrush** tool. Set the opacity of the tool to around 50%, and use a little bigger brush, even bigger than the one you see in the photo below. Put some shading at the bottom of your snow shape (above, right side).

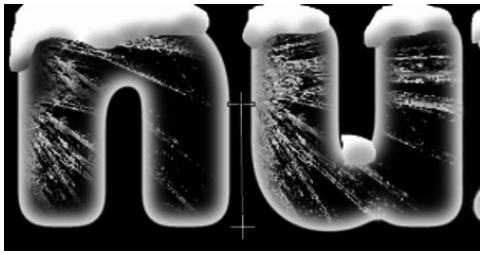




Repeat your snow shapes on each letter. We are to this point now (right, top). Make sure to save your work.

While it looks cool this way, it needs a different background. Click on the black background, most likely the bottom layer. In the toolbox, choose the

Gradient tool. In the tool settings, make sure the **FG to BG** gradient is set, and that your background is set again to white. Change the foreground to a nice blue. The color I used was 485bbc, but you should use whatever looks good to you. (As you saw, the one at the beginning of the article used a darker blue.) Click and drag your mouse straight down from the approximate center of the letter to the bottom.



This illustrates the path of the gradient tool. When you get finished, the text looks like it is sitting on a surface of ice or snow. I added a border to clarify the edges of the drawing, but that's up to you.

We need snowflakes as well. Add a new layer at the top filled with black. Go to **Filters > Noise > HSV Noise**. In the window that appears, slide the Value slider clear to the right, and click OK. Now, choose **Filters > Light and Shadow > Sparkle**. In that window, change the **Spike Points** slider to 10. Then, in your Layers window, change the **Mode** from **Normal** to **Screen**. Wow!

Save your work and export your creation.

THE LINUX FOUNDATION

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Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Ika, running Xfce, on September 24, 2014.

GIMP Tutorial: An "Out-Of-The-Frame" Effect

by Meemaw

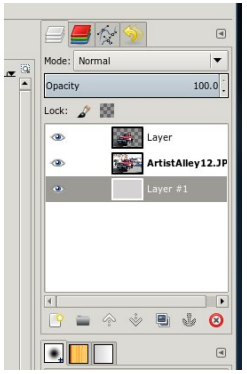
I saw this tutorial a while ago and thought it was interesting. Your finished product gives the effect of your subject emerging from a photo.

You want to start with a photo of something that is moving toward you. Since I went to a parade recently, I have several photos of trucks and cars taken from the front. For this you will also need an

image of a picture frame. I downloaded a framed painting image from Wikimedia Commons and cut the photo out, leaving the frame. You can also make a picture frame using the method from my earlier tutorial in Inkscape. Now you are ready.

Open your photo in GIMP. You can resize it to approximately the size you want your finished image to be. Using the lasso tool, outline the object you want to bring out of your photo. In mine, it is the red truck in the foreground. I grabbed part of the shadow, too.

While that is selected, click **<CTRL> + C** (Copy), but before you paste it, create a new, transparent layer and paste it there (**<CTRL> + V**). Also, create a new layer filled with a light grey (or whatever background color you think might look good) and send that layer to the bottom.



Select your layer which contains the original photo, and open the photo frame graphic. Copy and paste the photo frame onto your original photo, resizing if necessary. This might be a good time to save your project.

Still on that layer, click on the **Perspective** tool, then click on your picture. The perspective tool will cover it with gridlines.

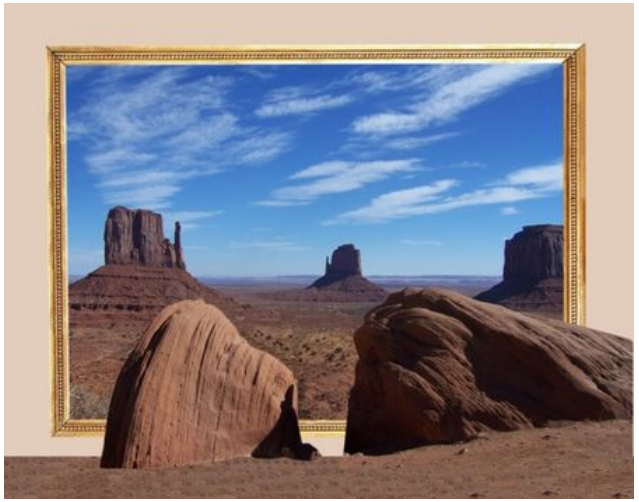
I am going to grab the left side of my photo and move it in, making that side of the photo look like it is farther away. You might have to move it around a bit to make it look like you want it, but until you click **Transform** in the window that pops up, you will be able to manipulate it. If you click Transform, and discover you don't like it, you can always undo it (**<CTRL> + Z**). Don't let it fool you either. As you move your photo, you will see the image in its original position behind the one you are moving. When you click **Transform**, it will disappear (next page, top left).

Check your project carefully as you may have to move your out of bounds layer a bit to cover the original photo of the same thing. I had to move the truck a bit to cover the other image in the original. It might even be necessary to clone background colors

over something that you can't cover. If your lasso tool was off at all, you might just use the eraser tool (in one spot in mine, I erased a bit of background I had selected by mistake to make the front end of the truck look smoother).

You might need to crop your photo if you moved the one level around very much. Save your work, merge your levels down and export your project to your preferred graphics format (center, top).

This one (center) was fun, too, but gives a little different effect. I went to Monument Valley in 2012 and took the original photo. I just moved the rocks and the ground outside the frame.



I have also seen this wallpaper (right), which is also very interesting. I downloaded it from deviantart.com. I'm sure it was made in much the same manner. Deviantart has several similar designs.

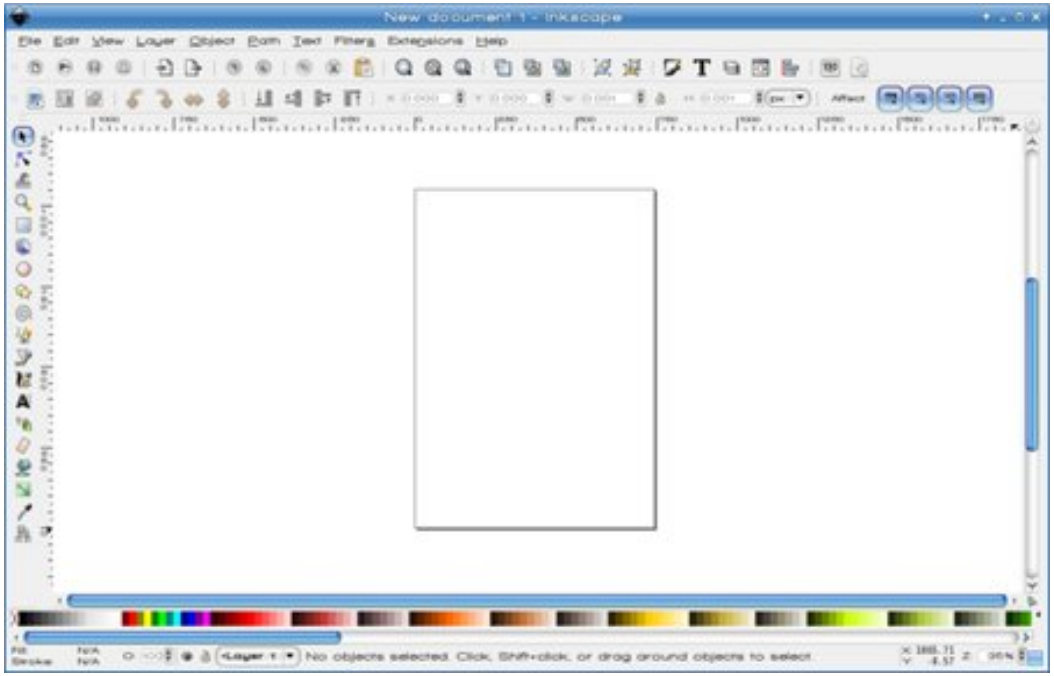
Let your imagination go, and I'm sure you can make something wonderful!

The PCLinuxOS Magazine

Created with Scribus

Inkscape: Getting Started

by Meemaw



While we have enjoyed creating many wonderful things with GIMP, you should know that GIMP is not the only graphics program to use. GIMP is primarily for editing photos. Inkscape is a great program for creating images from scratch.

While that sounds daunting, it really isn't too hard. With a little practice, you can make some really nice images. I have done much more with Inkscape than I ever could with a pencil and paper. I'm far from being an artist, but with the Inkscape program to help, things come out much better.

Let's take a look at the basic window and see what's there.

When you open Inkscape for the first time, you get the window as shown above. You already have a new document in your work area, and rulers across the top and down the left side. You can change your preferences to show or hide any number of tools as you want.

Across the top we see the **Menu Bar** with the items File, Edit View, Layer, Object, Path, Text, Filters, Extensions and Help. Many of the items can be accessed elsewhere, and we'll see that soon.

Under the menu bar is the **Commands Bar**, which has many of the most used tools. The first eleven default tools here are New, Open, Save, Print, Import, Export, Undo, Redo, Copy, Cut & Paste.

The rest of the tools are used together with the tools at the left side of the window, or to help you navigate your project, and need a little explanation.

The next three look like magnifying glasses with boxes inside. These are zoom tools: from left to right, they are 'Zoom to fit Selection in Window', Zoom to fit Drawing in Window' and 'Zoom to fit Page in Window'. They are an easy way to zoom in and out conveniently between the whole page and any selection you are working on. These are also accessible from the menu bar under **View > Zoom**.

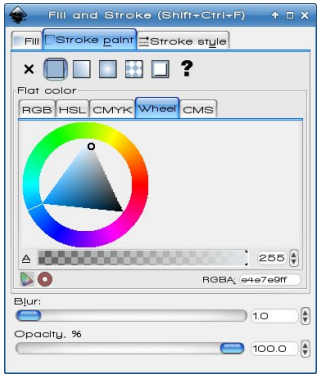
The next three look like two overlapping sheets of paper with one blank, one with a closed lock and one with an open lock. These are 'Duplicate the selected Object', 'Create a Clone of the Selected Object that is Linked to the Original' and 'Cut the selected Clone's Links to their originals'. These are used to duplicate or clone something you are making, in case you need more than one of the same thing (like stars or flowers). If you duplicate your object, you can make different changes to it than are made on the original. If you clone your object, the changes you make to the original also are made on the clone. This is handy if you need two objects exactly alike except for color, for example. If you have cloned the original, you can make all the changes, then use the third button to cut the connection between the two, then change the color on one of them. These items are also available from the menu bar under **Edit > Duplicate** or **Edit > Clone**.

The next two look like a circle and rectangle with black dots around them. The one on the left is 'Group Selected Objects' and the one on the right is 'Ungroup Selected Objects'. In some of your creations, you will want to group certain objects together to make your finished project. These buttons are very handy to group them, and also to ungroup them again if you find you need to undo something. These are available from the menu bar under **Object > Group** and **Object > Ungroup**.

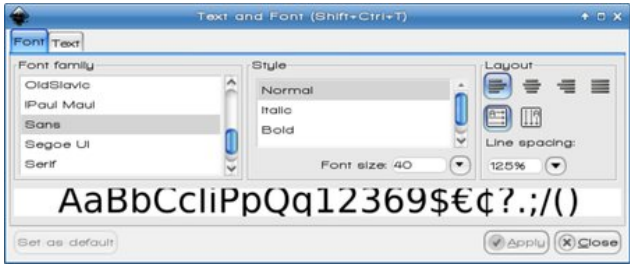
The last seven tools are probably the most

used on this bar. From left to right, they are Fill & Stroke, Text Configuration, Layers, Edit XML Tree, Align & Distribute, Inkscape Settings and Edit Document Properties. Each of these tools, when clicked, brings up a separate window, so we'll look at them.

Fill & Stroke - This is the tool you use to put color inside most objects and borders on the outside. If I draw a rectangle, Stroke is the border and Fill is the inside color. I can change the inside color by clicking the Fill tab and choosing color, gradient or pattern. I can change the border by clicking the Stroke tab and choosing color, gradient or pattern. In the example below, I have drawn a rectangle, filled it with a blue color, and made the stroke black, then clicked Stroke Style and changed the stroke size to 5 pixels. You can do loads of variations just using the Fill & Stroke dialog. You can open it from the menu bar under **Object > Fill and Stroke**.

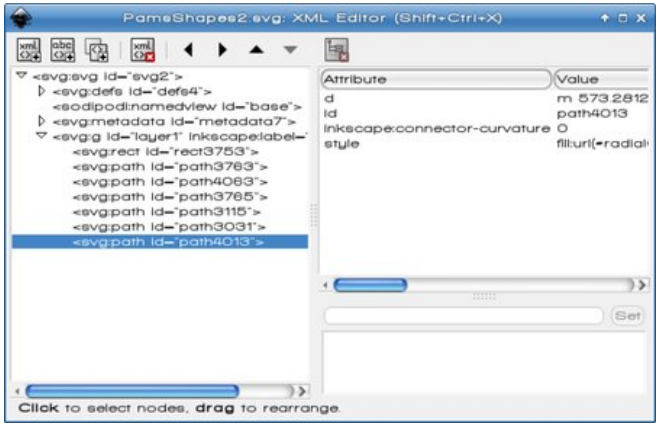


Text Configuration - Any time you put text onto a project, you will use this tool, because it is where you change the font settings for the text you have. This works in cooperation with the Text tool on the left side of the window. You choose the text tool at left and then, after you've typed the text you want, open this tool (center, top) to configure the text you have written, or even alter your text. The menu bar has a **Text** section which contains this tool.

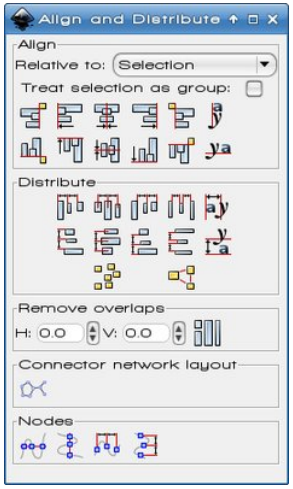


Layers - Just as in many other programs (like LibreOffice Draw, Scribus and GIMP), the Layers tool is very useful in creating your project. You can create your artwork on one layer, your background on one layer, and your text on another. This keeps things organized and also can help you keep from moving things that shouldn't be moved. If you are sure of your background, you can put it in the bottom layer and lock the layer, and you won't ever move your background until you unlock it again. This leaves you free to work with your other objects . The Layers tool is also available from the menu bar under **Layer**. The buttons are the same as we saw in Gimp: clicking the eye hides the layer, and clicking the lock closed locks the layer so nothing on that layer can be changed.

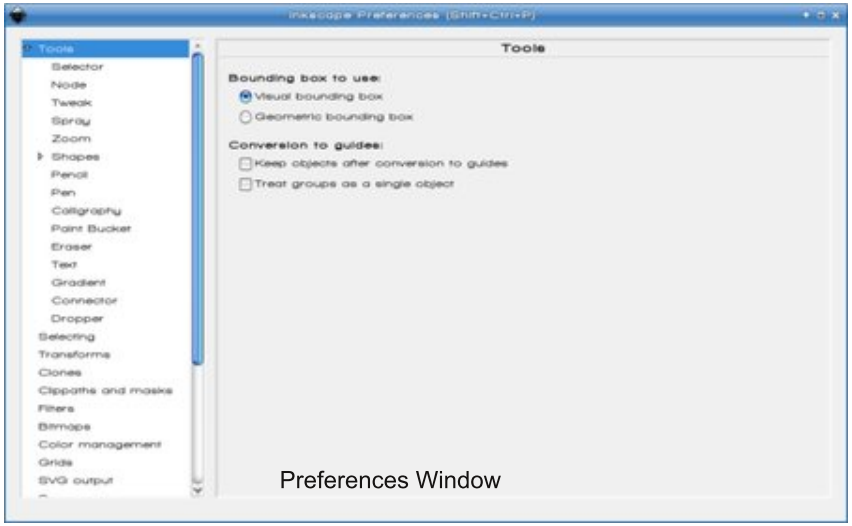
Edit XML Tree - Each Inkscape drawing you make has a text description which is saved in the drawing's file format of .svg. Each object you add has a descriptive name and is listed in this text file. Clicking on the descriptive name gives you a whole list of parameters for that object (size, color, location on the page, etc.) The more complex your object gets, the larger this file becomes. Even though I've never done it, the drawing can be altered by simply altering the file. I tried it, though, by duplicating an entry in an XML file which represented a circle I had drawn. I ended up with 2 identical circles. If you understand it well enough, you could probably edit a whole drawing this way. It is also accessible from Edit > XML Editor.



Align & Distribute - If you have an object that you want to center on the page, this is the tool you grab. It's also in the menu bar under **Object**. Clicking on your object, you can click any of the align buttons and center it. Choosing two objects, you can center them, line them up by their borders or, in the case of the distribute section, spread them evenly across the page.

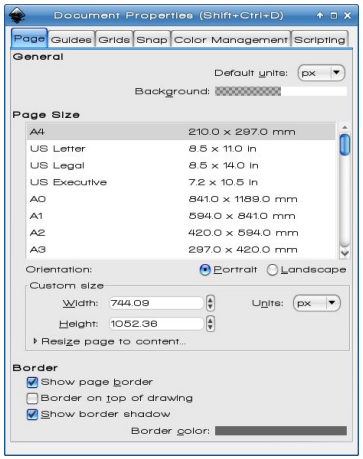


Inkscape Preferences - This is a quick and handy button to access your preferences window. You can also find it under the **File** menu.



Preferences Window

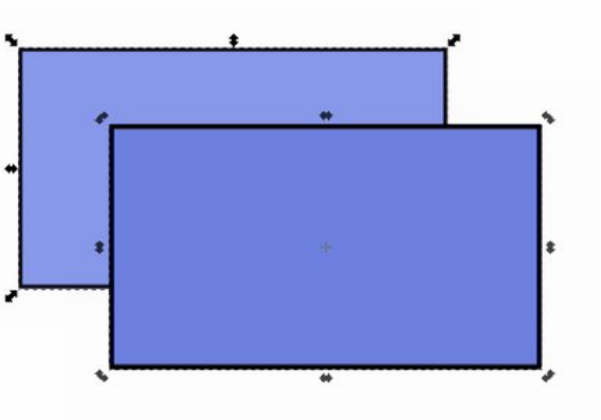
Document Properties - Each document you create is different. This tool allows you the opportunity to edit the properties of that document, setting orientation, margins, page size and even whether you have gridlines or guides enabled. It is also located in the **File** menu.



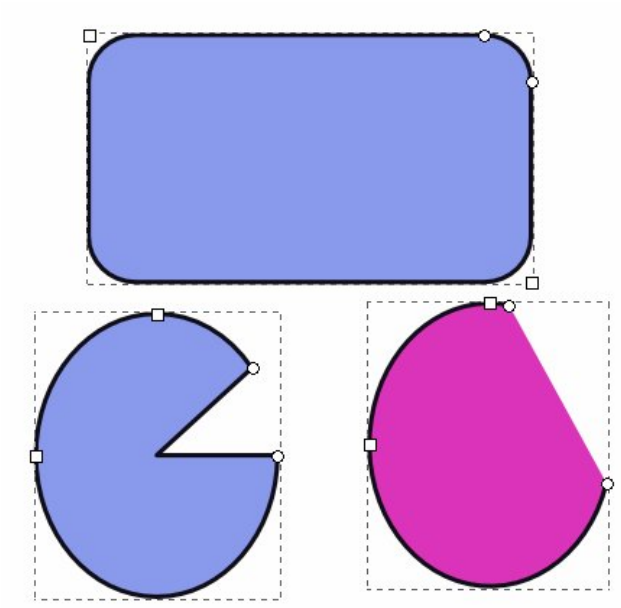
Just in case you haven't noticed, every time you hover your mouse over a tool, you get a tooltip with the description of the tool **and also** the keyboard shortcut for that tool. So if you hover over Fill & Stroke, the shortcut is **<Shift> + <CTRL> + F**. Now you have three ways to get that tool. Use whichever is easiest for you. Oh, by the way, the **Undo** command, which is under **Edit > Undo** is **<CTRL> + Z** here, just like in several other programs we have used.

Now let's look at the left side of the window. Your tools are here, and everything you want to make can be done with these tools. In addition, the third toolbar will change depending on what tool you are using. The tools are as follows;

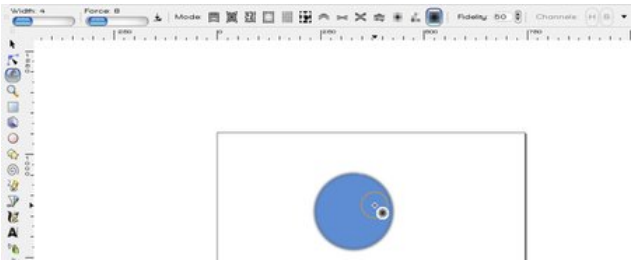
Selection Tool - This is the arrow we all know so well. It selects an object with a single click. You will see arrows at the corners of the object's frame, pointing outward, which you can use to resize your object. If you click once more, your arrows will change direction and you can rotate your object. These arrows are called 'handles', and allow you to edit your object in a certain way.



Nodes Tool - When you have an object selected and click on the Nodes tool, your handles will change to small squares and circles, and you will be able to manipulate your object even more. One of the first things you can do is move the circles at top right and it will make rounded corners on your rectangle. When you grab the small circle on an ellipse, you will get either a pie-shaped object (with a piece cut out!) or an arc (where your stroke doesn't go all the way around). The left-hand object was the result of pulling the node handle with the mouse pointer inside the circle, while the arc was made by pulling with it outside. Be prepared for the ellipse to flicker a bit while you are working. The nodes tool is very useful for all your objects.



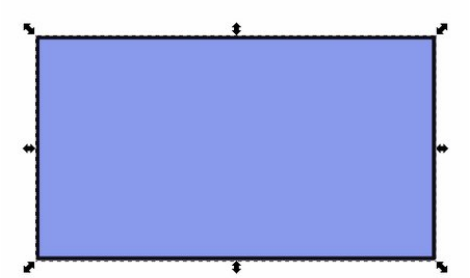
Tweak Tool - The Tweak tool allows you to change your object - blur, move, enlarge, and several other changes. Hovering your mouse over the tools will tell you what each does. Truthfully, I haven't used it much yet, but the tool below is the blur tool.



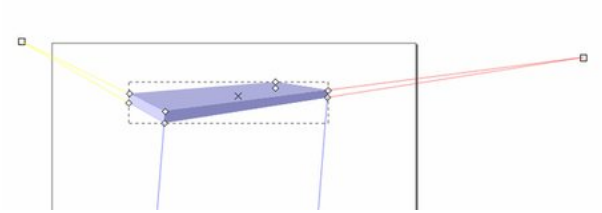
Zoom Tool - Hey, here's another way to zoom into and out of your drawing! Choosing this tool turns your mouse cursor to a magnifying glass with a plus

sign in it. Left-clicking in your object zooms in: right-clicking in your object zooms back out. You can also use your scroll wheel - but hold the <CTRL> key while you use it.

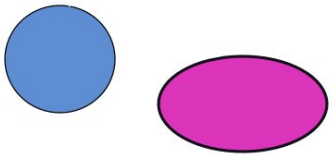
Rectangle Tool - Any rectangle you draw will be done with the rectangle tool. You can place your mouse pointer on the page, click and drag to make your rectangle. If you hold down the <CTRL> key, your rectangle will snap to one of several preset dimension ratios. In the toolbar above the page, you will see boxes you can fill to set the dimensions and location you desire.



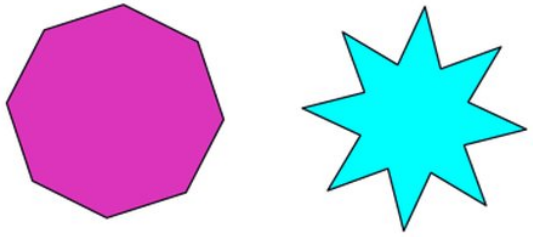
3D Box Tool - This is a tool that will allow you to draw 3 dimensional solids. The box is drawn in perspective, and to manipulate it, you must also move the axes that appear. You will need to experiment with this a bit.



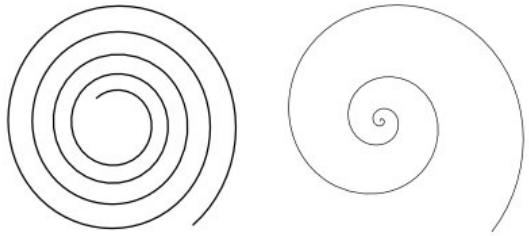
Ellipse Tool - This tool draws ellipses and circles. If you hold down the <CTRL> key as you drag your mouse, you will draw a perfect circle.



Star Tool - If your desired object has three or more sides, use this tool. With the accompanying toolbar at the top, you can choose whether it will be a polygon or a star, and configure the number of corners you want in your object. If it is a star, you can set the spoke ratio as well (the smaller the number, the more 'pointy' your star is and as the number approaches 1, your star approaches the appearance of a circle). Both examples below have 8 corners, and the star has a spoke ratio of .5. As long as your tool is selected you can change the appearance of your polygon or star, adding more corners or changing the spoke ratio.

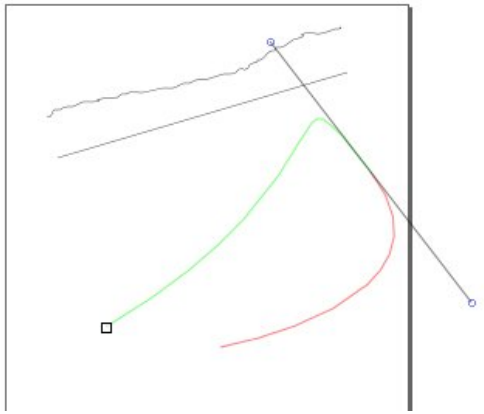


Spiral Tool - The Spiral Tool does just what it says: it draws spirals. The toolbar has three settings: Turns, Divergence, and Inner Radius. Turns designates how many times your line curls around. Divergence is how much farther apart the outer lines are than the inner, and Inner Radius is the radius of the open area inside the spiral. The spiral on the left is 9 turns, divergence of 2 and inner radius of .5. The spiral on the right is 5 turns, divergence of 4 and inner radius of .25. Again, if your tool is still chosen you can change the spiral you just drew to your wishes.

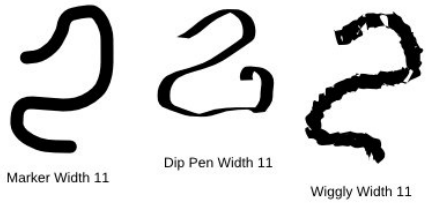


Pencil Tool - The pencil allows you to draw freehand lines on your page. While this is good sometimes, the tool also shows any shake your mouse might have, so if you want an absolutely straight line, you need the pen tool.

Pen Tool - The pen tool is for Bezier curves and straight lines. A bezier curve is drawn with control points which allow you to edit your curve. Below are three lines: the top was drawn with the pencil, the second was drawn with the pen and the curve is a bezier being drawn. The tools shown above your page will allow you to draw what you want. You can actually draw a spiral using this tool and the node tool, but the spiral tool is easier and faster.

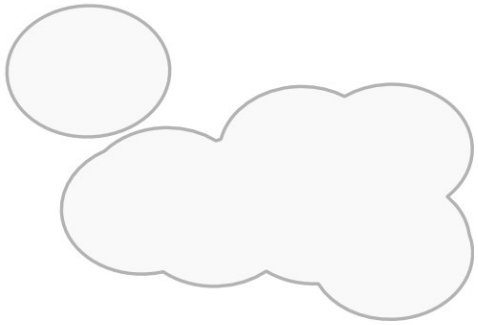


Calligraphy Tool - This is another pen-type tool, but here you can draw calligraphy-type lines with it. The tool settings above your page will change the appearance of your line. You have 6 pre-configured tools, plus a 'No Preset'. The tool can make some interesting variations in lines drawn.

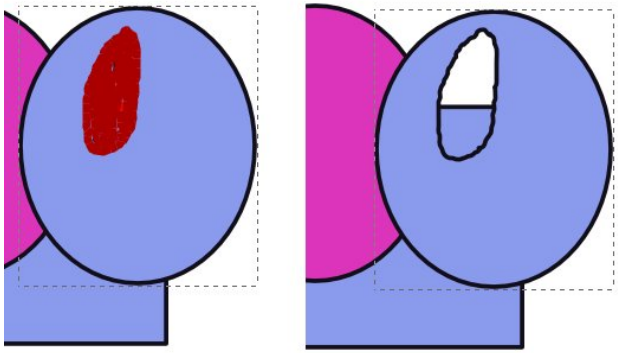


Text Tool - This is the tool which allows you to enter your text. Choose it, then click on your page and you will get a cursor. Type your text, then click the text button at the top to change the font and size. Your text is also displayed there and you can change it, just in case of a typo or any other correction you might wish to make.

Spray Tool - Spray is an interesting tool. It has three settings: 'Spray copies of the selected object', 'Spray clones of the selected object', or 'Spray objects in a single path'. Remember, if you make a copy, each of the objects can be edited independently, and if you make a clone all edits on the original affect all the clones until you unlink them. If you spray objects in a single path, you get an extension of the object you used, all enclosed within the same stroke. One example of this is using an ellipse to make a cloud. In the example, the ellipse on the left is the original, and the cloud on the right was what I got when I copied the ellipse, then sprayed in a single path.

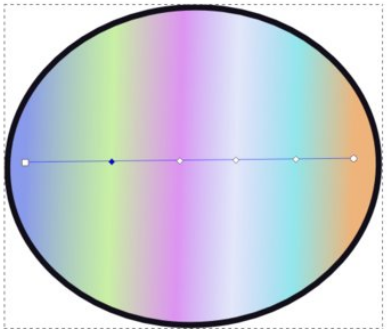


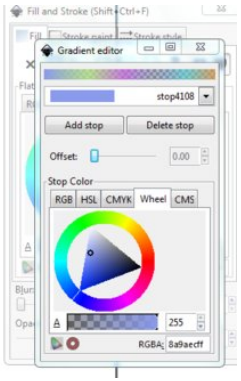
Eraser Tool - This tool looks like most other eraser tools: like a little pink eraser. Choose the object you want to erase, then choose the erase tool. The toolbar at the top will display a fill and stroke color and you will see it while you are erasing, which is kind of unnerving, but it will be fine. As soon as you lift your finger off the mouse, whatever you erased will be gone. If you don't choose an object, then all objects under your mouse pointer will be erased (center, top).



Bucket Fill Tool - I think all bucket fill tools are the same! Choose a color, click in the area you want to fill, and there it is.

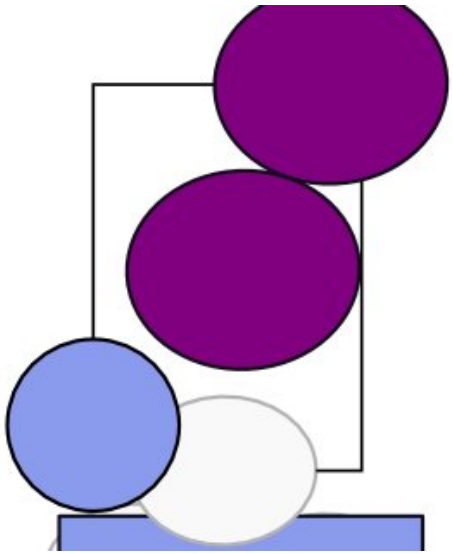
Gradient Tool - The Gradient tool works together with Fill & Stroke to make gradients. Choosing a gradient in Fill & Stroke results in a simple gradient of the last color you chose: that color to transparent. However, clicking on the gradient tool allows you to see which direction your gradient is going, change it if desired, and allows you to edit your gradient for a different effect. You can add Stops, as they are called, and change the color at every stop while in Edit Gradient. You can then arrange your stops to get your desired effect.





Dropper Tool - The Dropper tool is an easy way to choose a color for fill on an object. Say you have two objects that you want the exact same color. Choose the one you want to change, then choose the dropper tool and click in the one with the correct color, and your selected object will be filled with that color.

Connector Tool - With the Connector tool, you can draw lines between objects. As you arrange the objects, the lines stay between them instead of just staying in one place. This is useful for flowcharts or any other instance where you need a line between two objects. The settings allow you to ignore or route your connector around an object if you don't want to include it in your connected group. The lines below were drawn to connect three of the ellipses, while routing around the center one. Connectors are strokes, so you can go into Fill & Stroke and edit the design of your connector (wider line, dotted line, etc.)

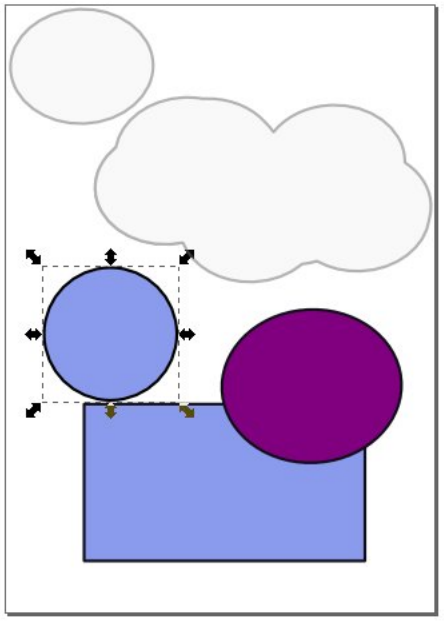


These tools are fun to play with! You might choose a few and get a feel for how they work. This is also a good time to look at the bottom of the window. It looks pretty and all, with the color palette there, but actually, the bottom of this window has a wealth of information.

This display actually tells you about your selection. On the left side it says Fill and Stroke, and they both have colors. You can use this to change the fill and stroke in your object if you wish. Clicking on a color will change the fill to that color, and Shift-click will change the stroke. These are the colors of my circle selected below. Just to the right of the Stroke color is the number 5. I used the same settings to draw the ellipse below that I did to draw the rectangle earlier, and my stroke size was 5 pixels. (I have obviously changed the Fill since then.) There is a right-click menu there with a few standard sizes, so you can set your stroke size there, or even remove it if you wish. Next to that is a box that says 100. That is Opacity, which can be set here and also in the Fill & Stroke tool window. Next to that, there is the 'eye' you can click to make your layer invisible and the lock you can click to lock your layer so it can't be changed. In the center, it says, "Ellipse in layer Layer 1". It looks like they have repeated the word layer, but I think of it as "Ellipse in the layer Named Layer 1", so if you name your layer something else, the line will make perfect sense. You will also see some helpful text just to the right. Since we selected the ellipse with our selection tool, it is telling us that if we click again, we can toggle to tool to the rotation handles. To the right of that we get an X and Y location. This tells you where your mouse pointer is at any given time. Last on the end, the percentage shown tells you how much you have zoomed into your drawing.

I know it seems like a ton of information, but we can make sense out of it soon. Notice that Inkscape is designed to provide several ways of doing any task, so if you want to use a certain method (menu bars) and your friend does things differently (keyboard shortcuts), you can both enjoy Inkscape.

Next time we'll start a project.



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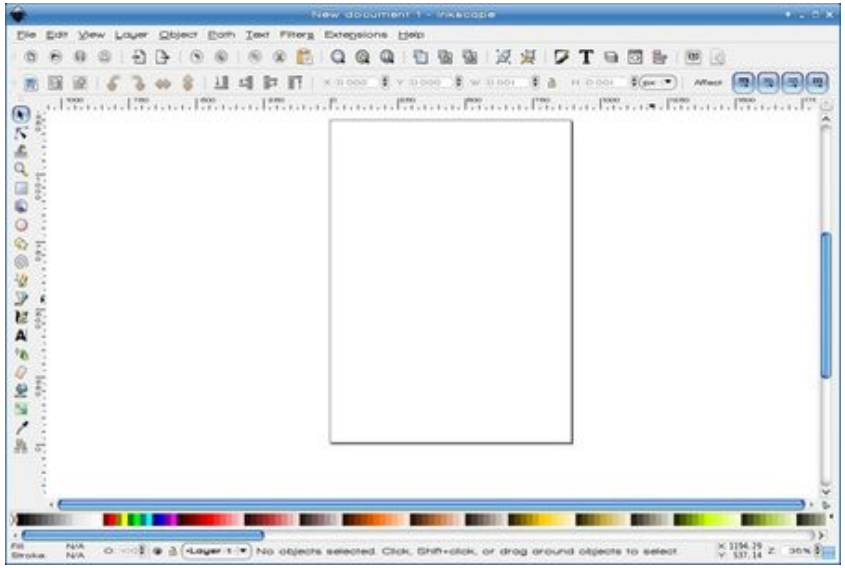
Inkscape: Starting Your First Project

by Meemaw

We have gotten familiar with the Inkscape window and some of the tools. Let's make something!

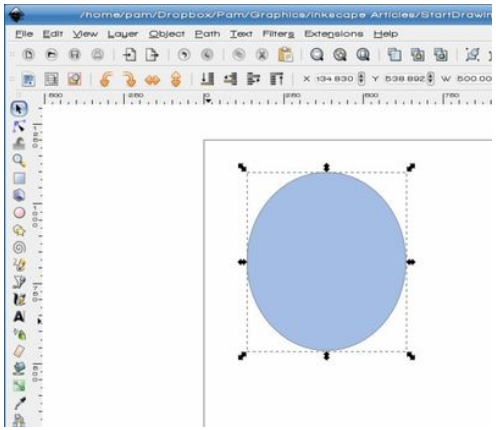
If you already have Inkscape open, you have a new page. Click on the **Document Properties** button (the last one on the right in the Command Bar). In the window, change the page orientation to **Portrait**, then change width to 900 px and height to 1200 px to make it a custom size. If it is not checked, check **Show Page Border** at the bottom of the window. I have also checked **Show Border Shadow**, but you don't have to check that one. The border helps me see the edges of my page. I think that's default anyway. Remember, after you get accustomed to things you can set them up as you desire.

Close that window and you should see this:

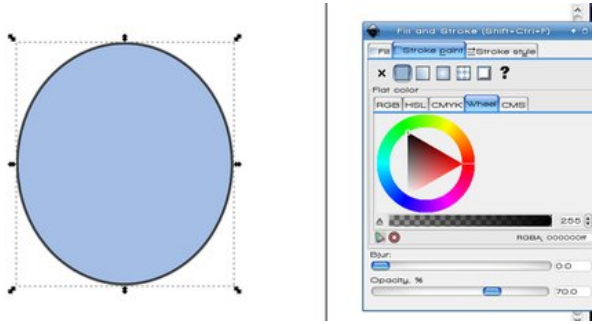


Notice that the rulers are across the top and up the left side. Also notice that the left side ruler counts up from the bottom of the page. Page location measurements in Inkscape start from the bottom left. Now we have plenty of room to work.

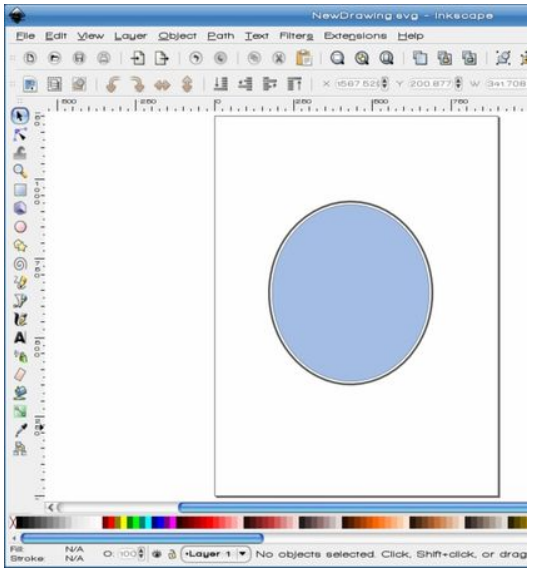
OK, let's draw. Choose the ellipse, then click and drag your mouse. Click on a color in the pallette down at the bottom of the window, and your ellipse should now be filled with that color. Holding **<Shift>** and clicking a color will make the Stroke (Border) that color, and probably 1 or 2 pixels wide. You can right click the number and make the Stroke 2 if it is another size. I chose a blue for fill.



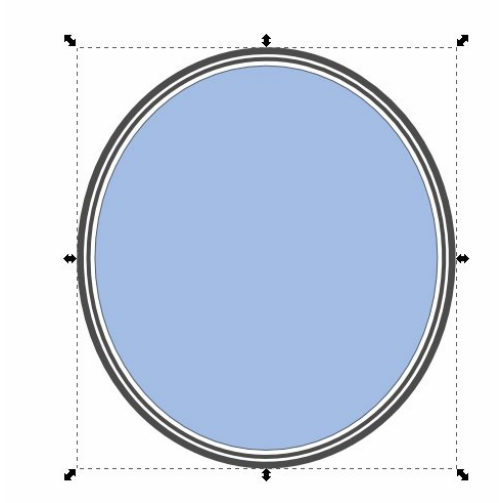
We're going to make a simple picture in a frame. Click on **Edit > Duplicate** or use the keys **<CTRL> + D**. You won't see it right away because it is the same as the ellipse you have. Click on the **Fill & Stroke** button in the Command bar at top, and your Fill & Stroke Window will appear. Change the fill on this new ellipse to none by clicking the button with the X (at the top of the fill & stroke window above the color wheel, or in the palette at the bottom), and change the stroke to 6 (top, right).



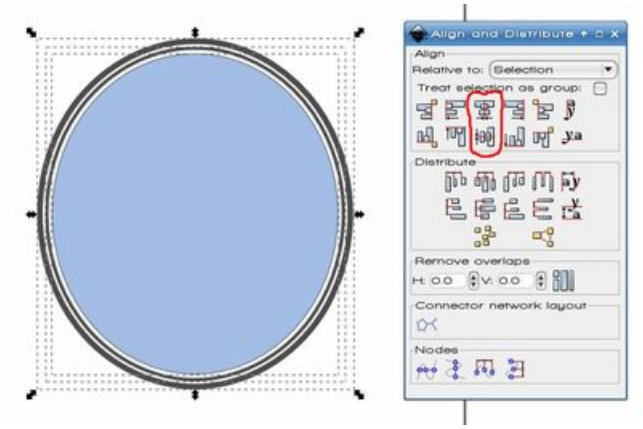
Now we are going to make this ellipse bigger. Click on **Path > Outset** or **<CTRL> +)**. Your ellipse will enlarge by 2 pixels, which is the program default. You can do the same command or Key combination as many times as you want to enlarge the ellipse until it is outside the blue ellipse. Mine looks like this:



Now do the same thing again (duplicate and enlarge), only this time make our stroke width 15 (next page, top).

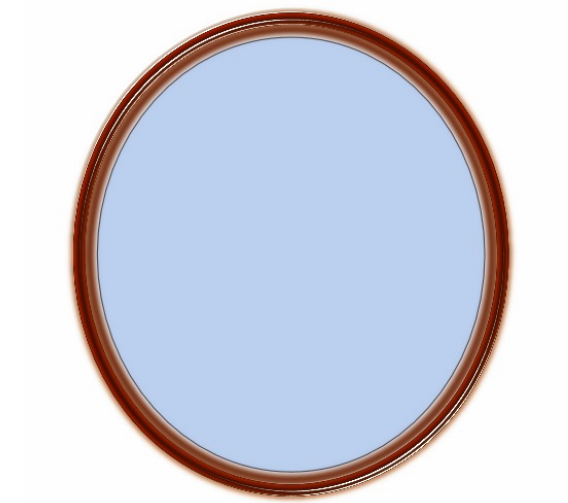


Before we go any farther, let's make sure everything is lined up correctly. Position your mouse out from the drawing, then click and drag a rectangle around it. This will select everything inside the box you draw. Then click on the **Align & Distribute** button in the command bar. Click on both **Center Vertically** and **Center Horizontally** to make sure everything is centered.



Click on the Fill & Stroke tool at top. When the window pops up, choose the inner stroke. Change the color to a brown color and the opacity to 100 using the slider at the bottom, then click on **Filters > Blurs > Fancy Blur.**

Now click on the outer stroke. change it to a similar brown color, the opacity to 100, and make sure the stroke size is still 15. Go back to **Filters** and this time choose **Bevels > Dark Glass**. Your image should now look similar to the following:

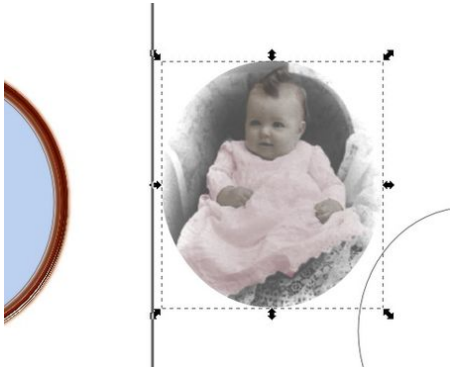


I have opened a copy of the photo I colorized earlier. I want to put it inside the frame. Since it is saved as a png, you will need to Import it (**File > Import**). When you have chosen your photo to import, you will be asked if you want to Embed or Link the photo. Embedding adds the file to your project, and will make your file bigger. Linking will link the file to your project without increasing the size, but if you save your project to another location, you will have to save any linked files there too. I usually embed anything I import so it is all there together.

This photo is rectangular and I want it to be oval, so we're going to make it oval. You can place your photo off to the side of the main project so we can edit it. Click on the ellipse in the center of your

project and choose **Edit > Duplicate** (or **<CTRL> + D**). Click on the duplicate and move it over by your photo. Change the Fill to None, and the Stroke size to 2. If one of the items is smaller, size each until both objects are close to the same. My photo is taller, which is OK, but I need it to be at least as wide as the ellipse. Holding the <CTRL> as I size will preserve the aspect ratio of the photo.

Before we proceed, click on the ellipse and duplicate it, then set it aside for later use. We're going to use the Clip tool. Click on the ellipse FIRST, then hold down <Shift> and click on the photo. That selects the photo without de-selecting the ellipse. Go to **Object > Clip > Set**. When you do that, your two items should be cropped to the inside of the ellipse.



I'm going to place the ellipse I just set aside over the photo for a border. You can select them both, like we just did, then center them both ways.

You can Group these so you won't have to align them again. I selected my ellipse, made sure the opacity was 100% and changed the blur to 1 before I grouped. It just softened the border.

You can move the photo into your frame, but I like the blue color and I'm going to resize my photo just a bit so a little of the blue is visible around the photo.

To preserve the aspect ratio of the photo, I will hold down **<CTRL>**. Before we do anything else, click on your photo or ellipse with the color in it and duplicate it once more. Slide it to the side of your project. After that, you should select everything by drawing a box around it all, or by clicking on the selection buttons at the left end of the second tool bar. The one that looks like a stack of papers and says "Select all objects in all visible and unlocked layers" is the one you want. Hold down **<Shift>** and deselect the ellipse we just created and stored to the side of our drawing. Then use your **Align & Distribute** tool to center everything else one more time. If you are satisfied with your work so far, you can also group everything so you don't have to align it any more. You should also be saving your work (bottom, left).

OK, let's do one more thing with that extra ellipse. Most picture frames have glass on the front to protect the photo. Let's give the impression of a glass front. Make the fill on that ellipse a **Linear Gradient**, and the Stroke size a 1, just so you can see your edge. Using your **Fill & Stroke** window, click on linear gradient in the fill tab, and make it white. Your ellipse will immediately change so it's white on one side and transparent on the other side. We're going to change that. Click on **Edit**... in that window, and you will see another window pop up. Also, go to your left side toolbar and click on the **Gradient** button (towards the bottom). You should now see a line crossing your ellipse that has a small square on one end and a small circle on the other. These are called **Stops**. We are going to add a few more. In the newest window, click on the Add Stop button five times. Each time you click, you should see another small square appear on the line. Five clicks, five squares. They will not be evenly spaced across the line, so you should click & drag them, one at a time, until they are closer to evenly spaced. It doesn't have to be perfect, though, since light and shadow makes things look uneven at times.

In your Edit box, there is a drop-down with the stops numbered. One at a time, choose every other stop, and slide the color slider below the color wheel towards transparent. It will look similar to this:

If there is too much white when you finish you can always go back to your **Fill & Stroke** window and set the opacity down to 45% or so. Experiment with your gradient until you get it the way you want it. When you are satisfied with that you can group everything together and save.

As one last thing, let's choose **Filters > Shadows & Glows > Drop Shadow**. We will get another configuration window. It asks for Blur Radius, Opacity, and Horizontal and Vertical Offset. I think the default is 4 px, 30% opacity and 3 px for each offset. I left the defaults. The buttons at bottom are Apply and Close. When you click Apply, the drop shadow will be added where you configured it. If you don't think the shadow is pronounced enough, click Apply again. (I think I clicked twice.) The worst that can happen is that you get too much and have to undo it (**<CTRL> + Z**). Do it the way you like it. It is, after all, YOUR creation (next page).

After you save it, you can export a bitmap from the file menu and save it as a png, jpg, or other image file.

It's really amazing what you can do with several copies of the same ellipse and a photo. I'm sure with a little experimentation, you can make any number of wonderful items.

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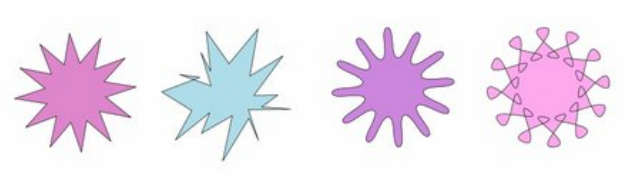
Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Taco.22, running Openbox, on October 15, 2014.

Inkscape Tutorial: Fun With Shapes

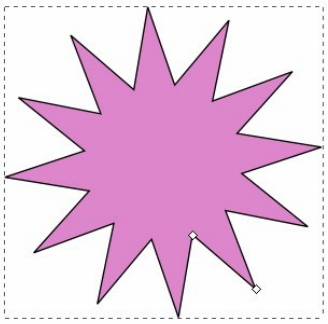
by Meemaw

Messing around with some of the tools in Inkscape can be fun! I started with a simple 12 point star (below, left) and made so many other designs.



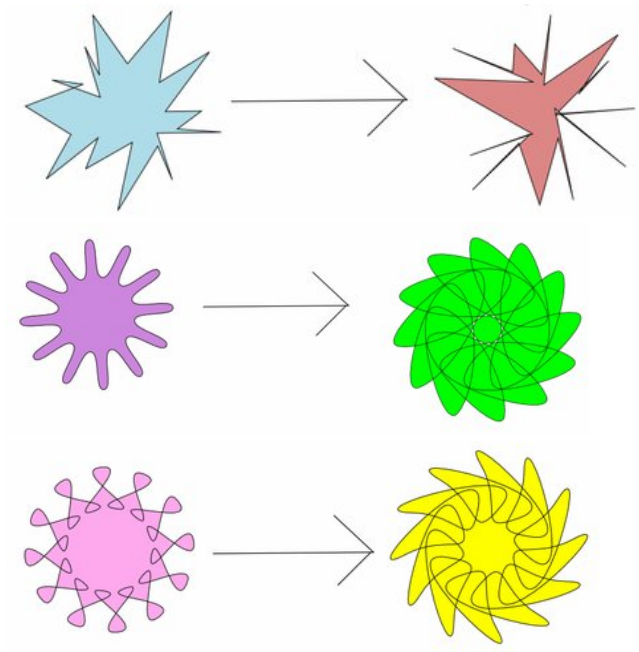
All of these started out with the Spoke Ratio 0.5, Rounded 0.0, Randomized 0.0 (left end), then I changed the settings for different effects. The second from the left is Spoke Ratio 0.5, Rounded 0.0 Randomized 0.25.The third one is Spoke Ratio 0.5, Rounded 0.25, Randomized 0.0. You can put negative readings on Rounded or Randomize and it will result in other effects. The fourth one has Rounded setting of -0.75.

Another thing you can do is grab one of the handles you see when you select your shape and click on the Nodes tool.

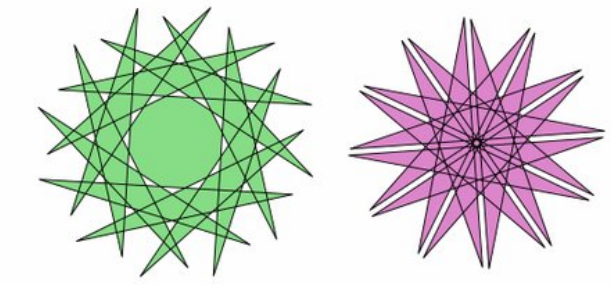


You can see in the example that there is a “handle” or “Node” on one of the outer points and another on one of the inner points. Grabbing the outer handle and moving it can change the direction of your spokes (center). The one at right is the result of grabbing the inner handle and moving it across the star until it crosses the other sides.

Here are more examples of moving handles/nodes:

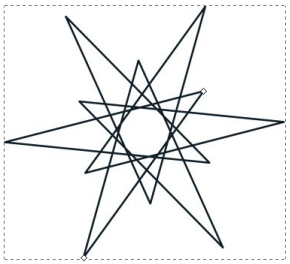


Believe it or not, both of these were made with the same 12 point star, just by moving the inner node (top right):

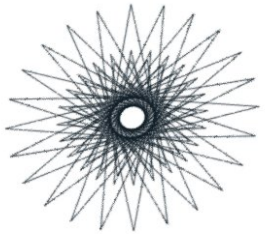


Where am I going with this?

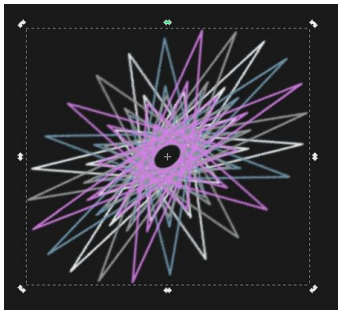
Using just a few of the shapes I showed here, I made a wallpaper. On this one I started with a six-point star and then moved the nodes until I had this:



Duplicating and rotating can give you the starburst (next page, top).



While I was duplicating, I also changed the colors to pink, blue & grey. I also used the rotate handles to change the starburst so it wasn't exactly round, but more elliptical. (The side arrows will skew the object, while the corner arrows will rotate the object around the plus sign, which is in the center, but can be moved.)



Then, I put a dark blue background behind everything so I could see the lighter colors. Actually, I put the dark blue background on it's own layer, so I wouldn't move the background while selecting something else.

After that, I duplicated the starburst at least twice and made them all huge, then moved them so the center of the starburst was in the bottom left corner. On those duplicates I set the blur up (like 4 or 5) and the opacity down (like 50%) so they are not as visible. I added a circle in the center of the top starburst to make it more the same color instead of having a dark center. To do that, I changed the blur and opacity of the circle until it was similar to the starburst, then grouped them.

On that starburst, I made sure the blur was less (like 1) and used **Filter > Bevels > Stained Glass** to make it shiny. Then I added one more of the basic stars on top, then put another dark blue rectangle at opacity 60% on top so everything looks a little darker. You should save each time you are happy with your work, and if you are closing your drawing. When you get it just right, save it again, then use the **File > Export Bitmap**. Since part of your drawing is outside the page border, you want to export the page instead of the drawing (choose the appropriate button from the top of the export window).

You can experiment all you want. Some projects are just for fun and even though you use very few items or even commands, you can still come up with something you like. If you design something you think you will use a lot, duplicate it and set it to the side of your page. Also, you can do something interesting with any shape. One of the first Inkscape projects I did was to transcribe Sproggy's Glass Panel Tutorial from the video he made. In it, he used mostly rectangles to get his effect.

Have fun!

A magazine just isn't a magazine without articles to fill the pages.

If you have article ideas, or if you would like to contribute articles to the PCLinuxOS Magazine, send an email to:
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We are interested in general articles about Linux, and (of course), articles specific to PCLinuxOS.

Inkscape Tutorial: A Torn Paper Effect

by Meemaw

If you are like me, you want all your projects to look crisp and perfect, even around the edges. However, sometimes you may want a “weathered” effect on something you are creating. I scrapbook a bit - gotta chronicle the growth of my grandchildren, and make sure past memories are recorded for the future. Sometimes your design calls for a more antique effect. This tutorial is to give the effect of torn paper on the edge of a printed photo.

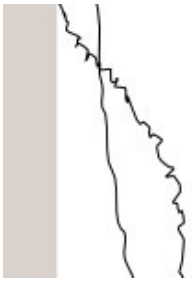
Scan and save your photo. Open Inkscape and import your photo. As it has been repeated many times, *always work on a copy* so you don’t lose your original, but once it is imported into Inkscape, you are working on a copy, so your original will remain unchanged.

Before you do anything, create a rectangle the same size as your photo. Remember, when your photo is chosen, the dimensions are in the bar above your project. Just create a rectangle and change the dimensions to the same height and width as your photo. Make the Fill Black and Stroke none. Put it to the side to use later.

Using the pencil tool, draw a box around your photo, cutting across the corners or sides where you want the edges to look torn. Draw a second one, and overlap the line on the first box, so they are kind of wavy back & forth. On my photo, the top right and bottom left corners are going to be frayed the most. Notice my lines cross in a few places (center, top).

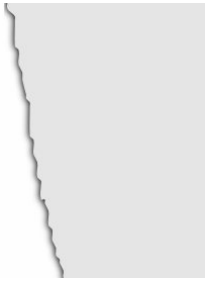
The next step will be done to both lines. We want to make our curves more jagged, so it will look like a rougher tear. Choose both lines, then click **Extensions > Modify Path > Add Nodes**. You will

be asked whether you want to add by segment length or segment number. Choose segment length and change that to 5 px. Click **Apply**, then **Close**. Then, with the same line chosen, click on **Extensions > Modify Path > Jitter Nodes**. You will be asked about displacement. I put 2 px in each space and left the rest alone. Click **Apply**, then **Close**. In the example below I have only done one of them so you can see the difference.



We are going to use one of these lines to “cut off” part of our photo. Choose one of the lines and duplicate it, setting the duplicate aside. (We’ll do enough duplicates here that you can probably use the keystroke **<CTRL> + D** faster than you can click on **Edit > Duplicate**.) Choose the same line that you just duplicated, and then the photo (hold the Shift key to choose the photo), click on **Object > Clip > Set**. Any corners outside the line should now be gone.

Using the same line you just used, change the fill to black and the stroke to none. Set the blur on it to 0.5, and send it down behind the original. Duplicate it, and on the duplicate, change the fill to something similar to your photo’s border, and change the stroke to none. Align those two with the lighter one on top, and slide them under your photo with the lines matched up. That is going to give a little shadow to the torn border of the photo. These three objects can be grouped so you don’t have to line them up over and over.



Just as a reminder, the Selection toolbar, just above your project, is

activated when your Selection tool, or cursor is chosen. It has the Levels buttons, so you can stack things in a certain order. From left to right, you can Lower to Bottom, Lower One Level, Raise One Level, or Raise to Top. We'll use these many times while we're working on this project.

Many photos have two layers of paper, and when they tear, the layers tear in different spots. Using the second line you created will give this effect. Duplicate your photo, and the line, and slide the line off to the side. Using this line and photo duplicate, click **Object > Clip > Set** again to cut off the corners in different spots. Slide it back over the photo you did earlier. Then, click on the line duplicate you just made, set the fill to something just a bit lighter than the photo border, and the stroke to none. Duplicate it again, and on the duplicate, set the fill to black, stroke to none, and set the blur to 0.5. Line these two up with the black underneath and group them, then send them to the bottom. Then slide them behind the photo where you want them. You can group these as well.

Now you need to position these photos directly over each other. I should be fairly easy with some of the corners cut off, but you probably need to zoom in on your edges and use your arrow keys to move a pixel at a time.

Position the black rectangle you created earlier over the photo and make sure everything is lined up. Using your cursor only, click and drag around the edges of your project to select everything, then click on **Object > Clip > Set** again. Your photo should now have straight sides again except for the torn parts and the torn parts should look like they have a little shadow around the edges..

Some of this may have been a bit difficult, and I hope your photo came out the way you wanted it. As with anything, practice helps.

This torn paper effect can be used other places too. Your only limit is your imagination!

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Inkscape: ms_meme & the Holiday Tree

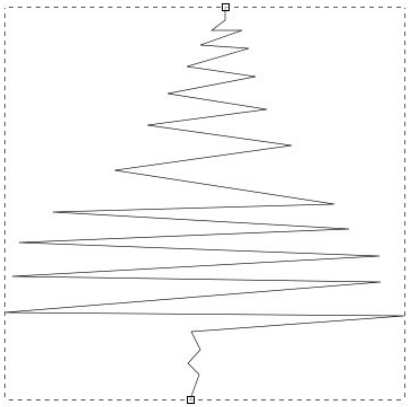
by Meemaw

A couple of years ago, ms_meme and I entered a holiday wallpaper contest on the Linux Graphics Users Forum. We both used Inkscape to design our wallpapers, and ms_meme won first prize!

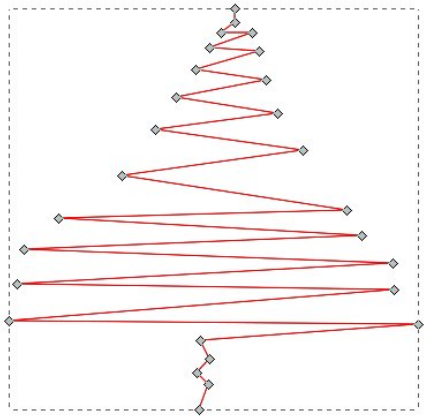
When I asked her how she did that beautiful wallpaper, she said that she had gotten the idea from a Christmas card she'd seen, and opened up Inkscape to see what she could do.

The first thing you should do is the tree. Opening Inkscape, choose your "paper" size (for a wallpaper, I choose 1600 x 1200). Selecting the **Bezier** tool, make a zig-zag set of lines, clicking every time you want your line to change direction (center, top).

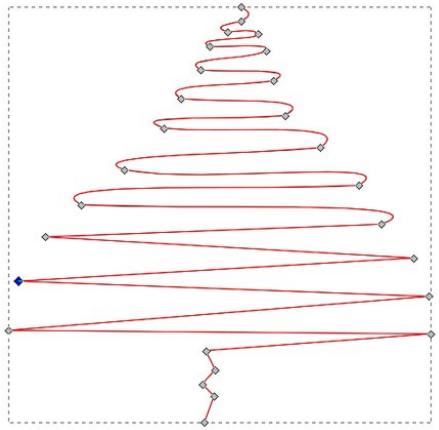
When you get something you like, right-click to end the drawing process. Your line should be green when you have clicked to change direction, and red until you click the next time, and black (or whatever



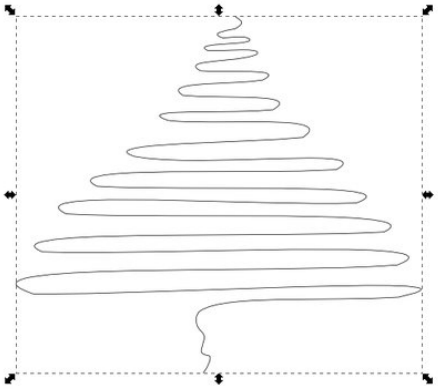
your stroke color is) when it's finished. Then click on the **Nodes** tool (at the left side under the cursor arrow). Now your selected tree should be red again, with a node at each corner.



We're going to mess with these a bit. If you click on the node (the little square on the end), you can lengthen and shorten the lines and move them up and down, space them out, whatever you want. If you click on the red lines between the nodes, you can curve the lines a bit. You should move and curve until you get the nodes arranged the way you want your tree to look. I have clicked on the upper line just inside each node, and dragged out to make the curves.



Click on your cursor tool every so often and see what your curve looks like, then go back and move your line and nodes until you have what you want. This would also be a good time to save your work in svg format. You can name it "Tree" or whatever.

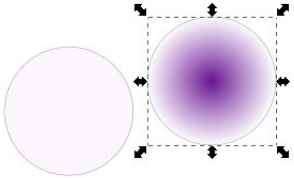


When you are satisfied and your file is saved, select the tree you just created, and duplicate it (**Edit > Duplicate** or **<CTRL> + D**). When you duplicate an object, the new one is created in the exact same spot as the one you have. If you notice anything, you might notice that the colors of your object are deeper. The duplicate is selected, so grab it with your mouse and move it around a bit until you like how it looks. You can enlarge it a bit by grabbing the arrow on one of the corners or sides and pulling out. You can reverse it. You can even go back to the nodes tool and move it a little more.

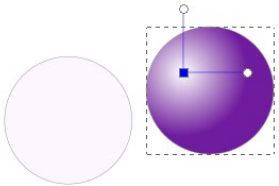
When you are satisfied, use your cursor to select both objects. From outside them, click and drag a large rectangular area. The rectangle should disappear, and both of your curves should be selected. Click on **Object > Group** or click the **Grouping** tool in the toolbar above. You can also press **<CTRL> + G**. If you are satisfied, save your work.

The good thing about saving in the svg format is that it is all saved as data, so you can still go back and change things (even a font if you have text) after you have saved a drawing. Anything can be changed in the svg file. When you are finished, you should export your work in a different file type. I usually export to a png file, but there are many file extensions you can use. The exported file can't be changed, but you will still have the svg file in case you want to try something different.

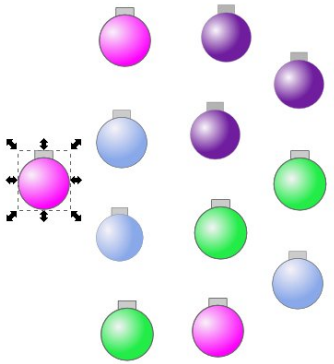
You can move your tree to the side of your page while we do the decorations. Let's do the colored balls first. Click on your **Circle** tool, hold down the **<CTRL>** button, and click & drag a circle. Remember, we held down the <CTRL> key to make our circle perfectly round. If you like ovals, then make them oval. Choose your fill color and, if you want to, choose a hairline gray stroke. They will be small enough that the stroke won't be visible. Duplicate the circle. On the duplicate, change your fill to white, and send it to the bottom. On your colored circle, change your fill to a round gradient.



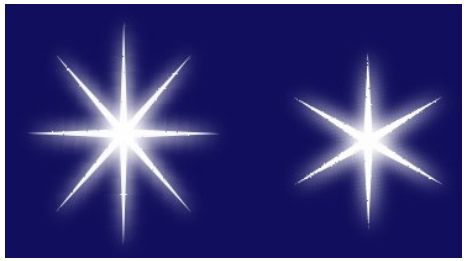
We need to edit this a bit. In your **Fill & Stroke** window, click on Edit. You will get a new window where you can change your gradient around. Click on one of the gradients in the drop-down, and slide the indicators in the lower slider to the other end. Choose the other gradient and slide those to the other end as well, then close the window. In the left side tool bar, click on the gradient tool. You will see the gradient lines on your circle. Click on the one in the center and drag it up and to the left to change the highlight on your circle.



Select both circles and center them both ways. Next, draw a small rectangle at the top of the circles. It should have a grey fill and a dark grey or black stroke. This is the addition at the top where the hanger is attached. It needs to be behind the circles, and centered at the top. When you get them placed and are happy with your work, group them to make one decoration. You can duplicate it as well. In fact you should make a couple of duplicates and ungroup them long enough to change the fill color, unless you want them all the same color. Don't forget to regroup them.



We can also make stars to help our tree shine. I have put a dark blue background on my page so I can see the stars. A blue rectangle the same size as your page will work. Make a couple of stars, one of them a six-point star and one of them an 8-point star, both with a spoke ratio of .1, filled with white and no stroke. Click on **Filters > Shadows and Glows > Glow** to make your star more "shimmery". I applied that filter twice on many of the stars.



You can manipulate your stars with the handles, rotating and stretching them out so they aren't all exactly alike. You can also go back and create stars with more points if you wish. Make lots of duplicates, and arrange them on your tree as you desire. You can even make a larger star to go on top.

As a bit of accent, select your blue background, and change the color to a radial gradient. The default is blue in the center extending to transparent on the outside, but it might look better if you edited your gradient so the blue is outside and the transparent is in the center. It doesn't even have to be totally transparent. Click on your gradient tool and change the handles as below to make your highlight a little less circular. You can make it as big or small as you want.

Save your work, then export your picture. The good thing about Inkscape is that you can always go back and change it if you decide you want it a little different.

As you can see, my tree is designed basically the same as ms_meme's but turned out differently (her decorations are all smaller, for one thing). Remember though, that it is your creation, not someone else's, so it is up to you to decide how it looks. I'm sure your design will be wonderful!

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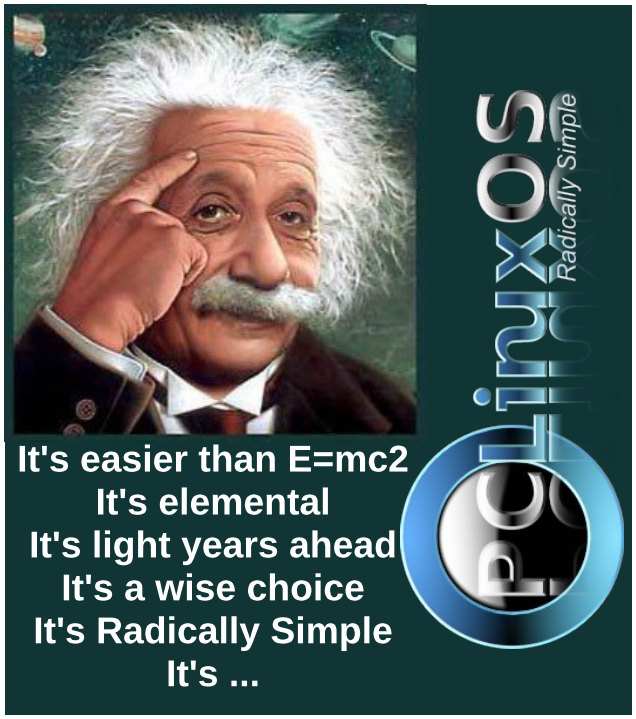
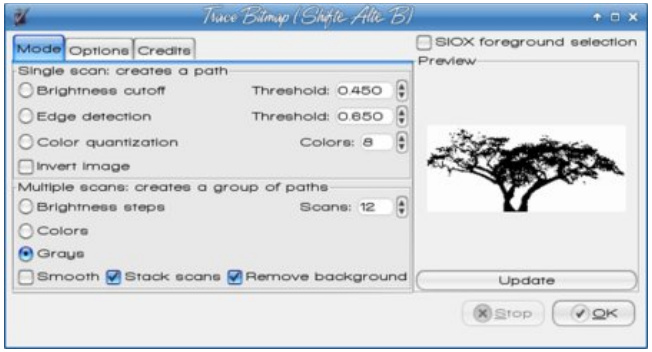


Inkscape: Tree Silhouette in Sunset, Part 2

by Meemaw

In the first part of this article on page 31, we made our tree into a silhouette. We started this project in GIMP, but now we are going to use Inkscape to finish it.

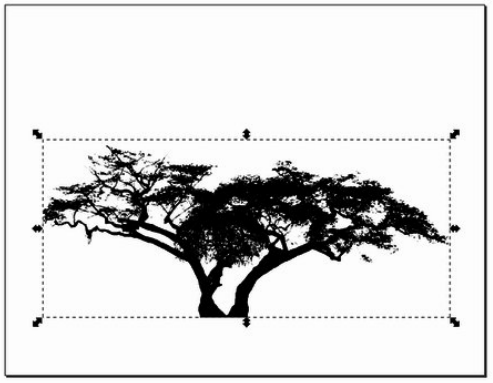
Load your tree into Inkscape. You will always get a window asking if you want to Link or embed the image. With this project it doesn't matter. We are going to do a bitmap trace of the tree. We can use the original image file if we wish, but I also want to experiment. A bitmap trace will enable us to manipulate our drawing easier and do more things with it while keeping the file size smaller. Click on **Path > Trace Bitmap**. The window that opens will have several items from which to choose.



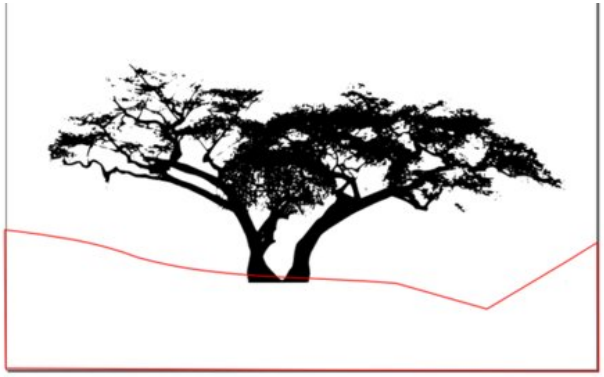
You want to make sure that "Grays" is checked, along with the "Remove Background" checkbox. You can set the number of scans, which will show up as layers in different shades of gray, from 5 to 15. I used 12. Click OK. Inkscape is going to trace over the original drawing we loaded. Depending on your computer hardware, this might take a bit. Just as duplicating an object puts the duplicate on top of the original, Trace bitmap does the same. Click away from your object, and then select it again. Look at the status bar at the bottom. If it says "Group of xx objects" (xx is however many scans you selected), move that to the side. You'll see your tree still there where it was. Click on that one and delete it. Choose your group you moved a minute ago, and click **Object > Ungroup** or just click on the Ungroup button in the upper toolbar. Now move your scans apart so you can see them all.

Using your cursor and drawing a box around them to select them all, change the fill on all of them to black. You might see some that ended up with more detail. Pick the one that looks the best to you. I saw a couple that seemed to have more detail, so I chose one of them. You can move the rest off to the side or delete them. If you just move them off to the side, you can try this tutorial later with another tree.

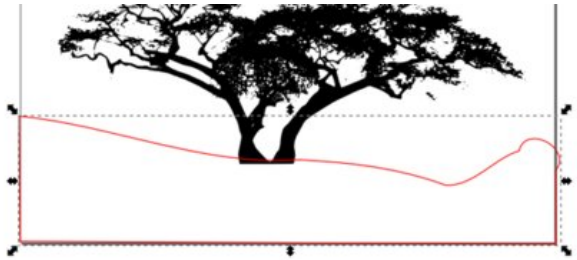
Place your tree on your drawing where you think it should be located. If you are happy with your work, save your project as a .svg file.



Let's add the ground under the tree. Using the **Bezier Curve and Straight Lines (Pen)** tool, draw the ground however you want it to look. Make sure you click many times and make it the general shape of that you want. With this tool, you should draw a closed curve, even if you have to follow the edges of the page, because you are going to want to fill it with black to match your tree. Don't worry if it doesn't look the way you want it right away - we can remedy that as well. I made my stroke red, so you can see it.



Now we will smooth out our curve. You can click **Path > Simplify**, or use the keystroke for Simplify **<CTRL> + L**, which is much easier. Use this keystroke until your land curve looks relatively smooth.



Then click on the Node Editing Tool and finish editing the land. You can pull the nodes or the curves in between until you have it as you want. You can go back and forth between the node tool and the selection tool to see what needs work. Make sure you also square off the corners at the sides and bottom. Add a fill (and I changed my stroke to black as well). When you are satisfied, save your work.

Now we have our tree and ground silhouettes mostly finished. Let's work on our sunset. The first thing you want to do is create a rectangle the same size as your page. Using the **Rectangle / Square Tool**, draw a rectangle. It will be filled with whatever color you used for fill last, and will cover your tree and ground, because all new objects are created on top of everything else. Edit your rectangle's dimensions so that it is the same size as your page, the using the **Levels** icons above your workspace, send that

rectangle to the bottom of your drawing. You might want to fill it with something besides black so you can see what you're doing. We're going to change it soon anyway.

If you don't have the **Fill and Stroke** window open yet, you need it open to set the colors and edit the sunset gradient. Remember the icon in the top row of tools that looks like part of a square with a paintbrush across it. Clicking on it will open the window. If your screen is large enough, you can move your project to the left and put the Fill and Stroke window on the right and see everything you need.

With the Fill tab selected, click on the **Radial Gradient** button. (It's the square at the top that has the round highlight in the center.) When you click on it, your fill will change to a round area in the center of your drawing. In the left side toolbar, pick the **Gradient** tool near the bottom. Now you will see an L-shaped line in your drawing with circles and diamonds on it. this will allow us to edit this gradient until it looks the way we want. The first thing you want to do is reverse the gradient that's there and add some color. Click on the square in the center and change it to a yellow or gold that reminds you of a sunset. The click on one of the circles at the edge and choose a dark blue or gray. Also, since sunset is usually down on the horizon, you want to move your gradient down lower and lengthen the gradient handles to widen the gradient. You can see what I have now:

While you might think this looks pretty good as it is, we need to add a little more color. Most sunsets have several colors. Double-click on one of the blue gradient lines, and a small diamond should appear in each of the lines. Every time you double-click, another diamond will appear. Each added diamond allows us to add another gradient color. Be careful, though, to double-click over the line in the sky, because double-clicking over your tree or land will create a gradient on one of them. You can create as many as you wish, but I have done only three for now. You can also click on a diamond and move it up or down the gradient line to space them closer together or farther apart.

If your center gradient is a brighter yellow or orange, you want to add a darker colors as you get farther

away from the sunset. Click on the diamond that is closest to the sunset and add a darker yellow or orange.

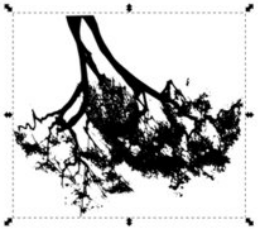
While I have been adding gradients, I have also moved my gradient around and extended the bottom gradient out so the sunset looks more elliptical than circular. You can also put a gradient right up close to the square in the center and put in a brighter yellow, in case you want your sun to still be up a bit. When you are satisfied, save your work.

Remember, you can make it as bright or dark as you like - it's your project. So far, mine looks like this:

However, I decided that if the sun hadn't completely set yet, the sky would be a lot brighter. So I removed one of the diamonds and spread the colors out a bit. By the way, the way to remove one of the diamonds is to click on the gradient icon in the Fill & Stroke window, click on **Edit Gradient**, find the one you want to remove in the drop-down list, and choose **Delete Stop**. Now my project looks like this:

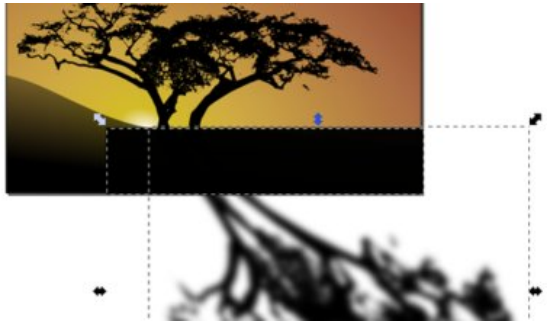
We could stop here, but we could also do a couple more things to make our picture look more realistic. The first thing is to put a little gradient on the ground to make a little highlight. Select your ground and choose **Linear Gradient** from the icons. The program will default and show a side-to-side gradient. We are going to edit that. Click on the gradient tool at left, then move your gradient handles so the lighter color is at the top of your ground and the darker color is at the bottom of your picture. Move the handles until you get what you want. Mine looks like this:

If the sun is going down the tree will cast a shadow, so the last thing I'm going to do is add a shadow. Start by selecting your tree and making a duplicate of it (**<CTRL> + D** or **Edit > Duplicate**). Remember, the program puts the duplicate directly on top of the original. Grab it and move it off to the side. To make the shadow, you need to do a vertical flip on the photo, then stretch it and/or rotate it so it looks the way you think a shadow might look at that time of day. With the sun so low in the sky, your shadow will be rather long, and in the opposite direction from the sunset.



When you get it stretched as you like, place it at the bottom of your original tree, making sure they line up. You may have to zoom in on the tree truck and work on the stretch and rotate a bit.

Before I do anything else, I'm going to blur the shadow a bit, choosing a blur of 2 or 3 from the Stroke & Fill window.



As you see, the shadow extends far out of the picture. I want to get rid of all the excess tree. Choosing the Square & Rectangle tool we drew the background box with, draw a rectangle over the part of the tree you want to keep. Changing to the Selection arrow, select the tree, then holding the shift key down, select the rectangle you just drew.

Now, click on **Object > Clip > Set** and you should have only that part of the shadow that's in your drawing, and the rest should be invisible. Now my drawing looks like this:

Summary

Wow! We've learned quite a few things this time! We have a great tree with the sunset behind it, and we've learned a little bit about bitmap trace and vector drawings. If you made your drawing with the sun farther down, and darker sky at the top, you can also go back in and create a few stars, like we did a couple of months ago for a holiday tree, and scatter them in the darkest part of your sky. When you are satisfied with your work and have saved it, you should also export the drawing to png or jpg.

One great thing about a vector file (svg) is that you can go in and change almost anything in the drawing even after you have saved it. That way you can have different versions of the same design, as long as you don't delete your svg file. Want your gradient brighter or your sunset in a different spot? Change it. Want the land different or the tree smaller? You can change it. Even after you've exported a bitmap of your finished drawing, you can go back and change the svg file again to try something different. Remember, it's your project, and it's finished when you decide it's finished.

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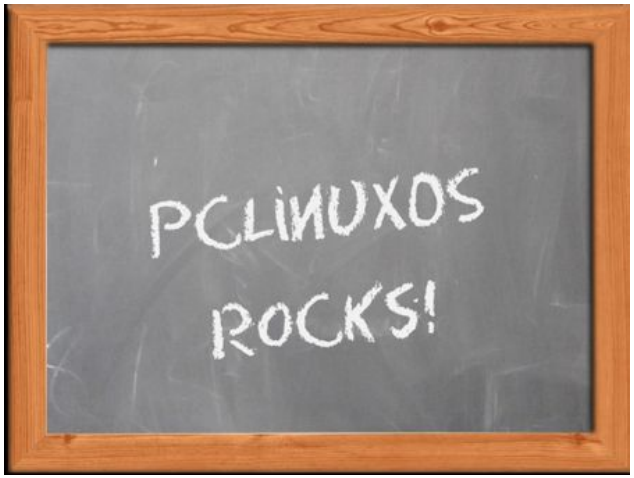
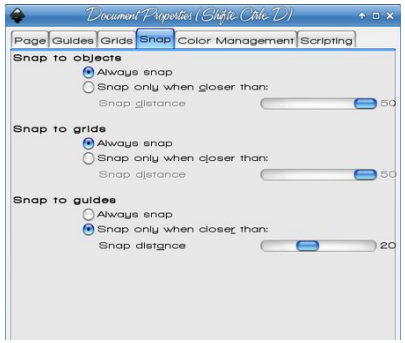
Inkscape Tutorial: Make a Chalkboard

by Meemaw

In an earlier article, we made an oval picture frame with ellipses and applied a filter to make it look a little more like a wood frame. This time we're going to make a rectangular wood frame with a chalkboard inside. I used a wood and a chalkboard graphic, and a font called Eraser, but there are also several fonts that look like chalk that you could use.



Opening Inkscape, you will already have a blank sheet. It doesn't need to be very big, so go to **File > Document Properties** and change the size to 640 x 480 (landscape). While you are there, make sure that on the **Snap** tab, **Snap to Object** and **Snap to Grid** are checked.

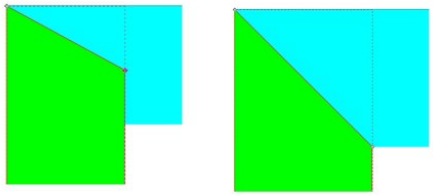


Also, go into your Inkscape Preferences. In the list at the side, towards the bottom of the list, choose **Steps**, and make sure the setting for "Rotation snaps every ___ degrees" says 15.

OK, so let's get started on the frame. Draw two rectangles on your page, one of them 640 x 40 and the other 40 x 480. The long one will go at the top of the page and the long one down the left side. Make sure the **Stroke** is set to none on both of these. Making them each a different **Fill** color will help you to see what you are doing. We're going to end up with wood-grain anyway.

You want to select each of these rectangles and click **Path > Object to Path**. We're going to move a node on each.

Starting in the top left corner, choose the left side rectangle with your **Nodes** tool. Grab the node on the top right corner and pull it down until it is even with the bottom of the top rectangle. Shown below, I have pulled it partway down on the left and finished on the right.

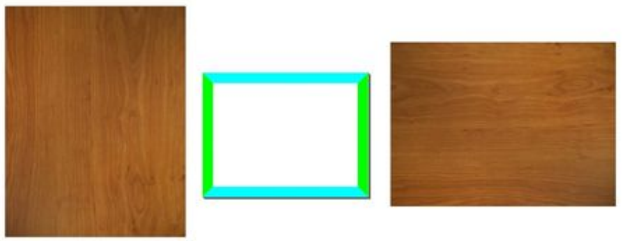


Now choose the top rectangle and do the same, making a mitered corner there.

Choose your left side rectangle and duplicate it. Move the duplicate to the right side and flip it. Your corner is already done there but not on that end of the top rectangle, so do that one. Then duplicate the top rectangle and flip and move it to the bottom. Do any corners that aren't done yet. When we are finished both ends of all rectangles should have the mitered corners. Try to make sure they match up: if you have a white space in between the objects, there will be a white space between the corner pieces of your frame.

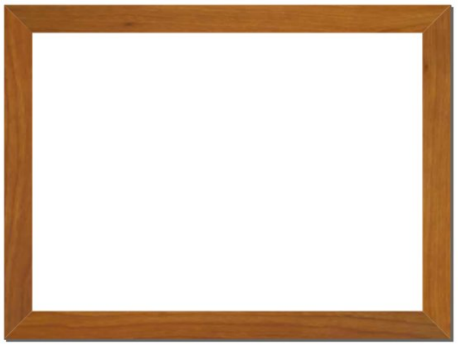
We're going to add the wood texture now. Choose your top and bottom rectangles (above, the blue ones) and group them. Do the same with the left and right ones (green above). Import the wood texture graphic into your drawing, and make a duplicate of it. Rotate the duplicate 90 degrees. Now it should look like this (next page, top left):

Position the horizontal wood texture behind your frame and deselect it by clicking somewhere else in the window. Select the top and bottom grouped rectangles, hold down the **<Shift>** key and select



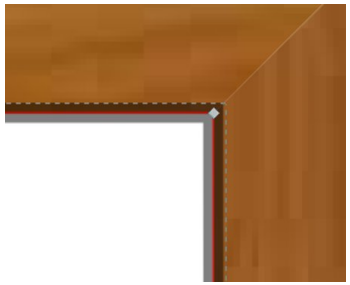
the wood texture. Now click on **Object > Clip > Set**. Your wood texture should now be visible in your top and bottom. Do the same thing for the left and right group. Remember to select the frame before the texture.

Now we have a nice wooden frame for our chalkboard.



OK, before we put anything in our frame, let's give it a little depth. Using your Bezier tool, draw a line inside the frame from the top left corner to the top right corner, then from there to the bottom right corner, right along the edge of the frame. Make the stroke 3 px wide and try to make sure it is centered, covering both the frame and the white inside. You can always set your transparency down to about 50% so you can see, then set it back up to 100% (center, top).

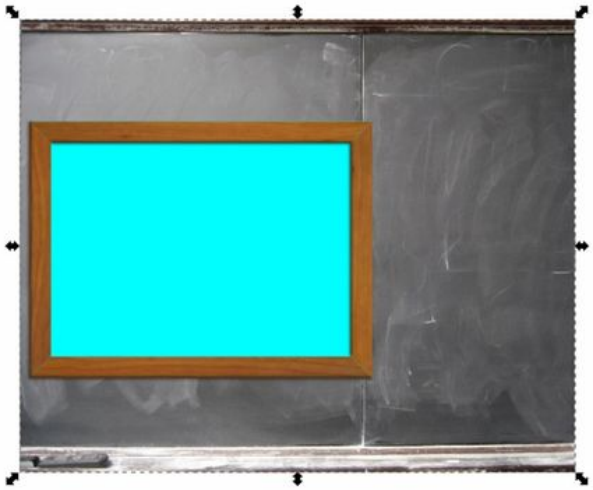
Also, make sure that the ends of your lines stop a little short of the frame edge. Make sure your opacity is set back to 100%, then change your blur to 1. You will get a nice shadow on two sides of your frame that will give the illusion of depth.



Using the other two sides of your frame, but on the outside of the frame, do the same thing again.

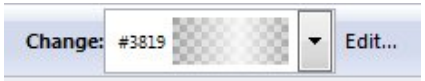
Let's add the chalkboard. Draw a rectangle the same size as your drawing (640 x 480). Make the fill any color you want with no stroke. Slip it behind the frame. Now, import the chalkboard graphic. It's large so you will have to resize it. Make sure it's still big enough that whatever you put into the frame looks the way you want it to look. There is a seam in the graphic you might want to leave out of your project (top, right).

Just as before, click on the rectangle, then on the chalkboard, then click **Object > Clip > Set** (right).



We're almost finished but let's do one more thing for depth. Using your Bezier tool again, draw another line on the inside of the frame on the other two sides (left & bottom). Make that line white, stroke size 1. Zoom in to get it just on the edge of your frame, but not all the way to either corner. In your Fill & Stroke window, change the color to a radial gradient. Click on the Gradient tool and drag the corner handle to a spot outside and to the bottom left corner of the frame. In your toolbar, you will see the gradient. Click the edit button on the right and add a stop (next page, top left).

You then want to edit your gradient so it shows a little white on the two edges but not all along both sides of the frame. My gradient looks like this in the toolbar:

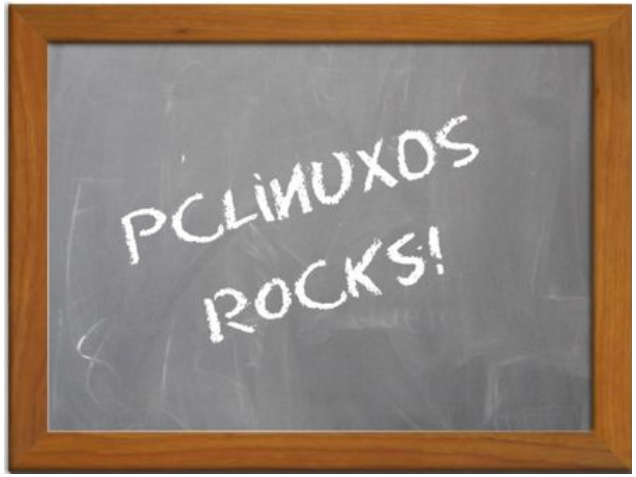


But yours could look however you want.

The last thing is to write on our chalkboard. A tutorial I read says you can design your own filter to make text look like chalk, but I opted to use the Eraser font.

Click on the text tool at left and then click where you want to write. Type whatever you want, then highlight the word(s) you typed. Click on the text toolbox in the top toolbar, and a window will pop up. This is the Text Formatting window. Change your font, size, alignment and spacing here. When you get it the way you want it, you can Apply and Close that window.

Now, if you select the text with your cursor, you can rotate the text if you like, or leave it straight. You can also make it a bit bigger, too. Save your work when you are satisfied, and export your project (center, top).



Here's another version with the font Chalkboard:

This one was fun! With different graphics, you can make a white board and use a blue marker, or make just the frame for your favorite photo. The possibilities are endless!

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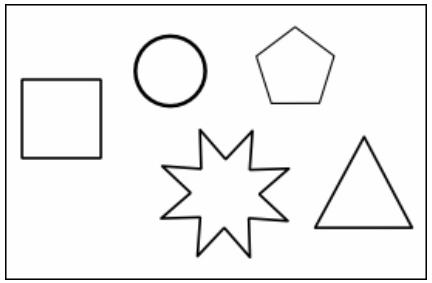
Inkscape Tutorial: Decorative Patterns

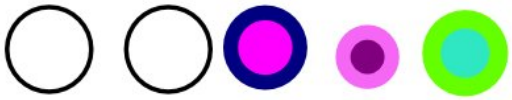
by Meemaw

Sometimes when you are creating a project in Inkscape, you have a need for some little repeating pattern to use. You can create those yourself.

Next month we will start a project that will use some of these patterns. Let's make them now. In this project we will be moving nodes to make the shapes we want from the ones we can draw. Starting a new drawing in Inkscape, use the toolbox at left to draw some basic shapes: square, triangle and circle. Also, draw an 8-pointed star and a pentagon. We'll edit these and develop some more designs.



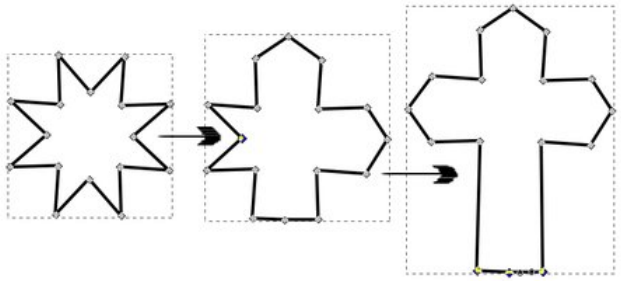
We can make many other shapes and designs with just these five basics.Let's start with the circle. Just by duplicating, resizing and filling with different colors we can make several different "beads". Choose the circle and make the stroke about 10 and change it to another color. Then fill it with a different color. They can be similar colors or contrasting colors, and whatever colors you want.



The triangle can be manipulated the same way, increasing the stroke and filling with something different. Remember, the beauty of saving this as an Inkscape svg file is that you can go back next year and change all of these… changing color, size, combination and how they are grouped.

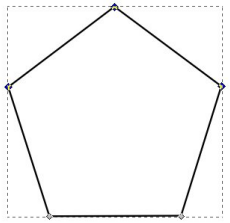
One of my combinations has been to duplicate the triangle, change the stroke to none and the fill to red, and place a white circle inside.

You can reshape these as well, by manipulating the nodes. We used the nodes to reshape our object on the holiday tree a while back. One thing I did using an 8-pointed star was to pull out some of the nodes and create a cross. The first thing you do after selecting your star is to click **Path > Object to Path**, then select the **Nodes** tool. Pull 3 nodes out of the center to about the same distance, then pull the fourth node out even with the two next to it. Those three nodes we will select together and lengthen for the bottom of the cross. Select one node, then, holding down the shift key, select each of the others. (You can also use your mouse to draw a rectangle around only those three nodes and they will be selected as well.) Placing your mouse pointer (with the nodes tool activated, it will be a long arrowhead) on the center node, pull down. All three nodes should move down together.



Leave it as it is, fill it with color or black, or whatever you want. If you haven't saved any of this yet, you probably should. I just named mine BasicShapes.svg.

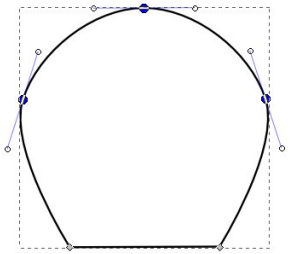
One of the good things about nodes is that they can be manipulated in many ways. Besides grabbing the handle and pulling it somewhere else, the lines themselves can be stretched or rounded. Let's use the pentagon to make something like a leaf. Duplicate your pentagon and move it over to an open spot. Click on **Path > Object to Path**, then click on the Nodes tool, and select the top three nodes but using your mouse to "draw" a rectangle around them.



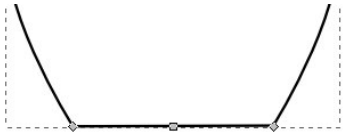
In the Nodes toolbar just above your page, two of the tools look like this:

When you hover your mouse, one tooltip should say "Make selected nodes smooth" and the other should say "Make selected nodes Auto-Smooth". Clicking on the auto-smooth tool will change your pentagon so the top three lines are now curved.

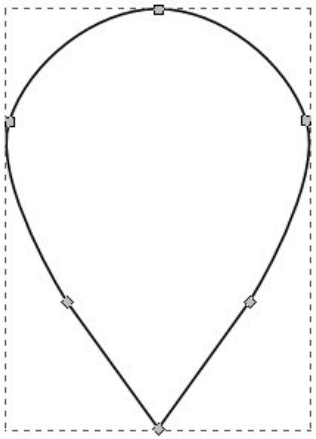
I don't know about you, but my hand is occasionally shaky, so this is a really handy tool to have when you are trying to smooth out a curve you have made. Select the nodes around it and click the Auto-Smooth tool.



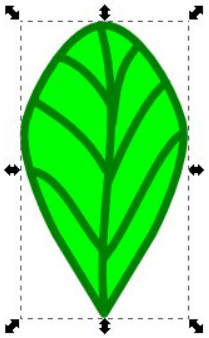
Clicking outside your object will deselect all the nodes, and we can then pull it a little differently. Some leaves are longer and have more of a point where they connect to the stem, so select the bottom two nodes, and click the Add Node tool.



Grab the center node and pull down until your leaf looks right to you.



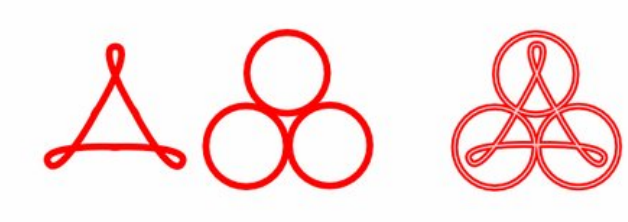
Clicking back on the selection tool, you can resize and change the width or length. You can also stay with the Nodes tool and pull nodes (or the line segments in between) until it looks the way you want it to look. If you want it to look more like an actual leaf, lines can be drawn inside to represent the veins. Those can be curved as well.



Experiment with your lines: curves will be different depending on where you grab the line. If you grab it in the center, the curve will be fairly symmetrical from the center to the outside, but if you grab closer to one of the ends, it will look a bit different. Play with them until you get what you want. Remember that as long as the file is an svg, you can always change it, and if you move something and don't like it, you can always undo it with **<CTRL> + Z**.

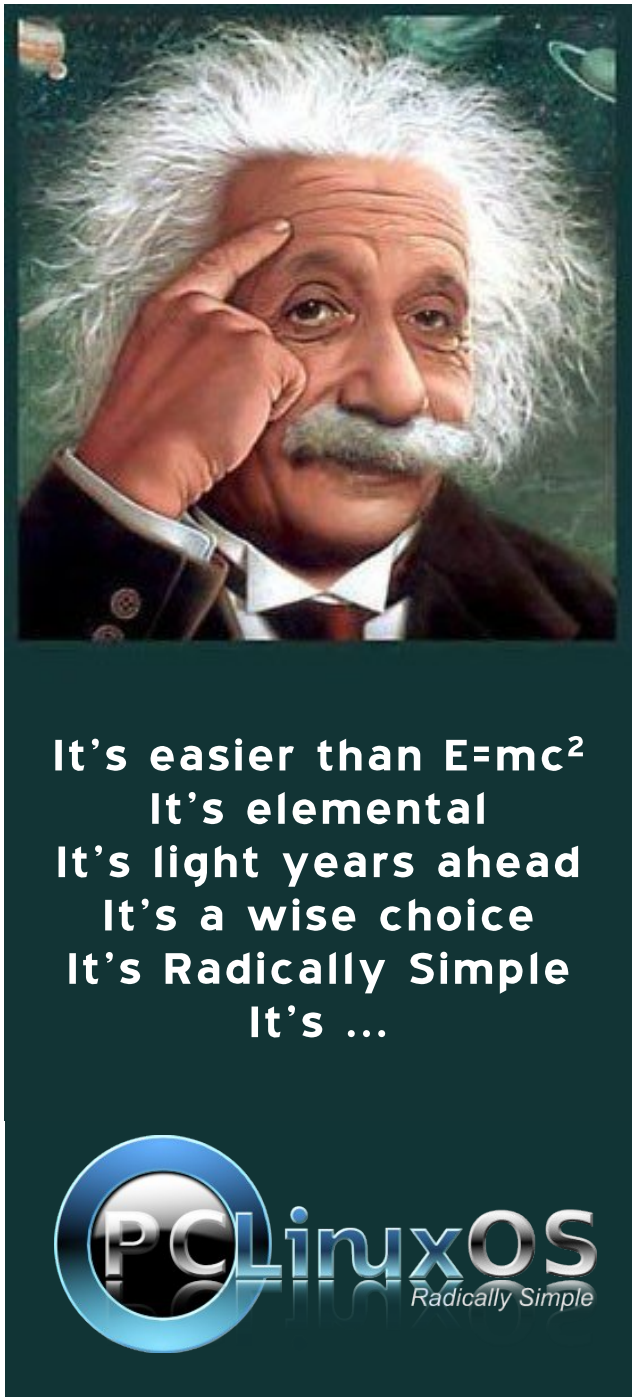
Yes, I realize I could have started with a hexagon instead of a pentagon and wouldn't have had to add a node, but the more tools we know about, the better, right?

Another combination is something that may look familiar, appearing on the cover of the February 2014 PCLinuxOS Magazine. Using three circles, I combined them with a triangle that I altered with the settings Spoke Ratio 0.300 and Rounded -0.360. I then made the stroke red and size 3 and arranged them this way:



The white lines in the third figure resulted from duplicating the combination figure, changing the stroke to 1 and changing the color to white. All objects were then grouped.

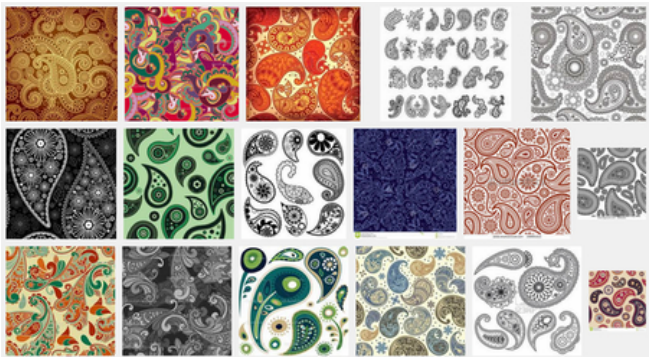
Play with these shapes yourself. I'm sure you can come up with other useful patterns. Next month we'll put them to work.



Inkscape Tutorial: Create a Paisley Pattern, Part One

by Meemaw

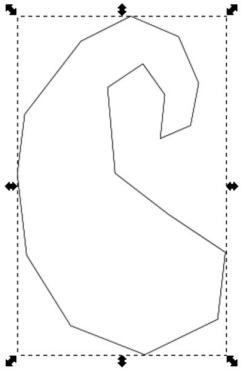
I grew up in the 1960's, and sometimes we wore some pretty wild stuff. One of my high school friends, very talented artistically, painted her yellow car with hundreds of paisley patterns on our last school day before graduation. Go to Google, search for paisley, and you can find tons of patterns!



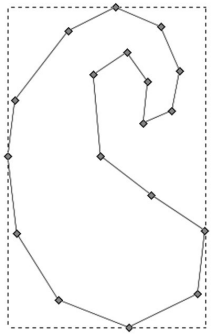
This sort of pattern seems to be making a comeback. I've found it on everything from clothing to tablecloths and from tablet and phone covers to tattoos. As you can see, this is basically a curved teardrop pattern with a lot of extra patterns inside it to make it fancier. How can we make one of these? We can use Inkscape.

Last month we made several small patterns to use in a project, and we will use some of them now to make our paisley. We will start drawing the teardrop using the Bezier tool. Then we will "pretty it up" with the small patterns we made last month. Let's make one similar to this one:

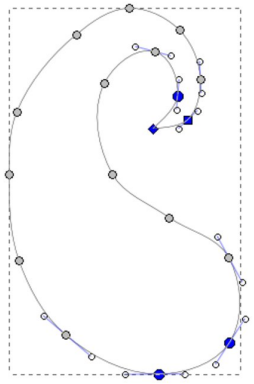
(Wow! I don't want to have to place all those little circles by hand!) Don't worry, we'll use a different method. Let's draw our teardrop first. Open a page in Inkscape and choose your **Bezier** tool. Using that tool, make a kind of teardrop shape, clicking with your mouse at least 10 or 12 times. That will give us nodes to use to manipulate our shape. Set the stroke black or gray, and the fill white.



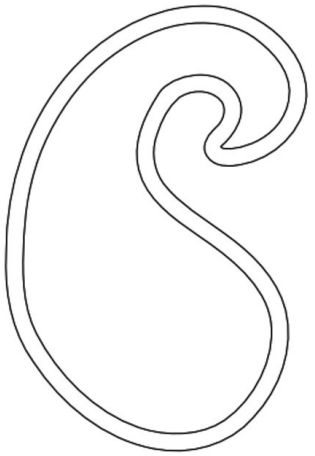
When we were making our basic shapes, we used the Auto-Smooth tool to round off our leaf. This time we want to smooth out this teardrop, so select all of your nodes by drawing a frame around them with the Node tool, BUT, before you hit Auto-Smooth, press Shift and de-select the node on the very end. We want it to have a point on it.



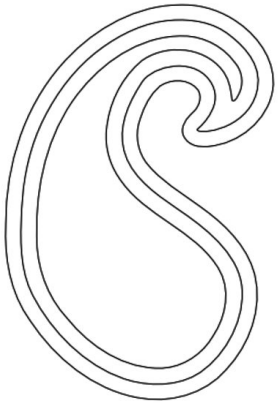
Now click Auto-Smooth. Each of your line sections will become rounded and the curve will be much smoother. You may still feel like adjusting a few of the nodes separately. Go ahead! It's your project. I adjusted some of them in the example below.



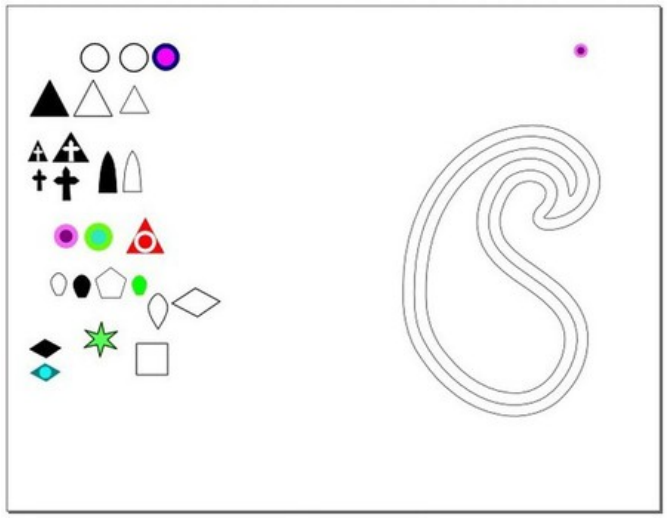
Now, instead of trying to draw another one of these, we are going to duplicate this one and adjust the size. Click on your object and duplicate it. Remember that the duplicate is placed directly on top of the original, and it is now selected. Click on **Path > Outset** to increase the size of your object, or press **<CTRL> +)**. Each time you press it, your new curve will grow a bit. My preferences are set to 2 px, and we want it 20 px bigger all the way around, so we should do this ten times. You can use the menu, but the keyboard shortcut is much quicker!



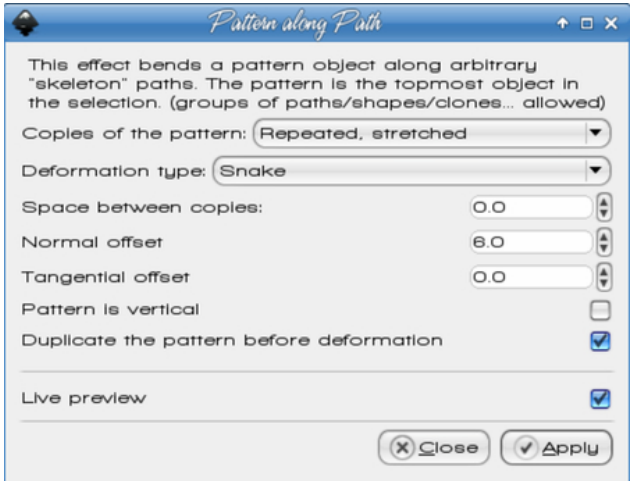
Now, choose the original object and duplicate it again. This time use the **Path > Inset** menu item or **<CTRL> + (**. This one will shrink inside of the original so you will have three separate curves.



Now we want to place some decorations on our object. Remember those decorative patterns we made last month? Import them into your new project. It's easier to import the svg file so changes can be made to them if necessary. After you import it, you should click on Ungroup so you can move each of them around freely.



Now we are going to decorate our curves. Notice that I have duplicated and resized one of the circular shapes and it is on my page above my paisley curve. Click on the circular shape and, holding the **<Shift>** key, click on the outer curve. Now click on **Extensions > Generate from Path > Pattern along Path**. The following window will appear:



The following options are available, and I will explain each:

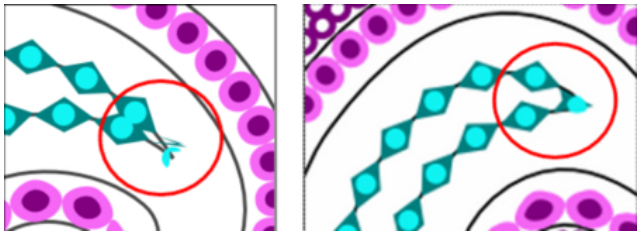
Single; Repeated; Single, stretched or Repeated, stretched - This choice determines how the objects are arranged around your path. Single means that only a single copy is used, while repeated means that (obviously) the pattern is repeated all around the path. Stretched means that the pattern is stretched around whatever curve you use.

Snake or Ribbon - Snake means that the copies are arranged in a flat manner, while ribbon means that they have a bit of perspective to them. Depending on your project, you may need the ribbon setting instead, but we're using Snake here.

Space between copies - You can set your group of objects to be spaced out, or touching at the edges. This will require a number setting. A setting of zero lets them touch, while a setting of 3 pixels will space them out 3 pixels.

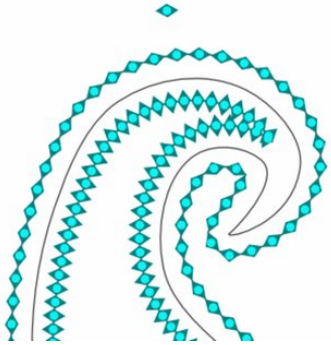
Normal Offset - This will set your group of objects directly on your curve, but setting the offset with a positive or negative number can set them inside or outside your curve.

Tangential Offset - This setting has the effect of moving your objects sideways on your curve, which can be helpful if you see a corner where your objects seem to have a result you don't like. For example, my diamond might show up as on the left, but shifting it a bit would give the result on the right.



Each pattern is different, so you would have to play with the settings to get what you want. If making the setting positive doesn't seem to work, try a negative setting.

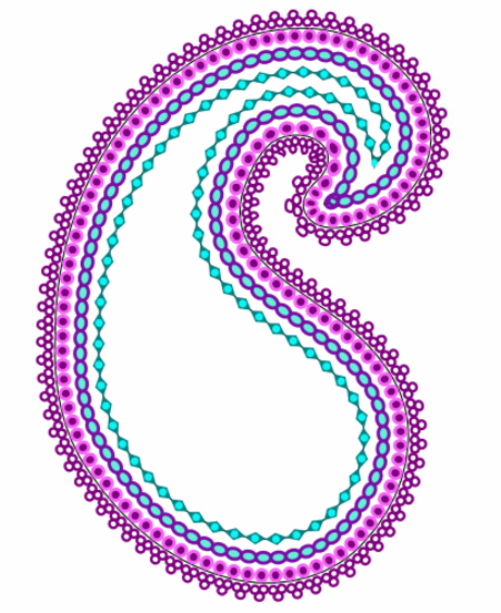
Pattern is vertical - I haven't used this except to experiment, but I found that it orients all of the objects at a 90 degree angle. I had my diamond shape oriented "longways", but when I checked the box, the extension oriented the diamonds with the short edges touching. In the example below, the outer line results if Vertical isn't checked, and the inside line results if it is checked.



Duplicate pattern before deformation - Duplicates the original pattern you are using before you close the window. If it isn't checked, the single pattern above the project will be deleted. It might be OK to leave it unchecked, but it's always nice to have a copy of the pattern until you are completely finished with your project.

Live Preview - Lets you see your choices as you alter them. If you change one of the number settings, you move to another settings box before you see the change.

In the example (next page, top left), the pink & purple circles and the outside purple circle combination were added to the outermost curve, the blue & purple ellipses were added to the next curve inside, then the diamonds were added to the innermost curve.



The settings are as follows:
All are Repeated, stretched ... Snake, then for the Space Between Copies, Normal Offset and Tangential Offset settings;

- 1st; 0, 6, 0 (6 for offset put it inside the curve I used)
- 2nd; 1,-8,0 (-8 for offset put it outside the curve)
- 3rd; 0, 0, 0 then tangential of 2.5 (to fix the corner)
- 4th: 0, 0, 0

All have Duplicate pattern before deformation checked. Make sure you have saved your work.

This is a good start! I'm sure your selected patterns and colors are very different from mine, although I made a couple of different colored patterns. Next month we will finish this design.

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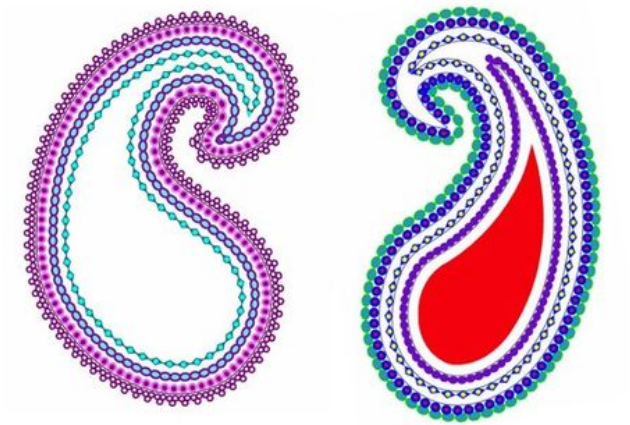
Screenshot Showcase

Posted by cypher, running Mate, on November 12, 2014.

Inkscape Tutorial: Create a Paisley Pattern, Part Two

by Meemaw

Last month, we started a paisley pattern using our decorative patterns created the month before. I did a different colored paisley as well.

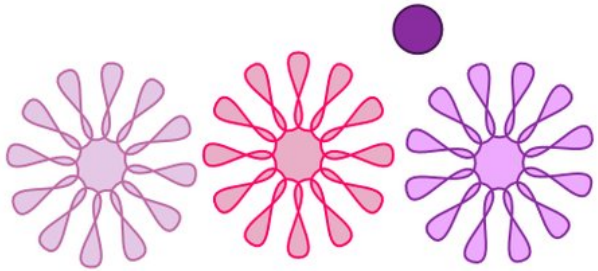


Let's take the original on the left and add a bit more to it. Click on the innermost curve. You will find that all you can select is the objects along that curve, so since you have them selected, press your right or left arrow key five or six times (remember how many times you pressed). This will move the objects over enough that you can choose the curve itself. Choose the curve and duplicate it as we're going to make another. Click **<CTRL> + (** nine or ten times to make the duplicate smaller. Now, click on your objects that you just moved and press the opposite arrow key to move them back into place.

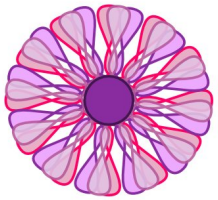
Now choose the duplicate curve you just made. This one we're going to fill rather than putting a pattern on it. Choose a color that looks good with the rest of your project and fill your curve. If you want, you can choose another color and make it the stroke color. I used the purple and pink I've been using, and the pink stroke was size four.

Many times, a paisley design will have some sort of flower motif in the center. I am going to make a flower using the star tool. With the following settings:

12 corners, spoke ratio .25, rounded .45 - duplicating twice and setting fill and stroke different on each, plus a circle for the center,



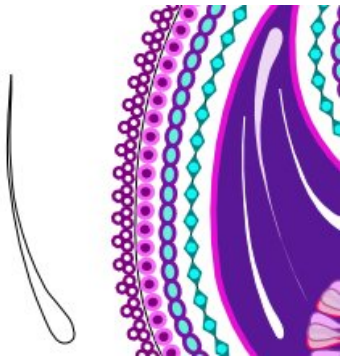
I made this object. You will have to rotate two of the flowers so the petals will all show instead of being stacked right on top of each other.



I made this flower lighter because the object I'm going to place it on is darker. I then placed it in the object we made at the start of this article. My paisley now looks like this:

If you don't like that particular pattern, feel free to design one of your own, or search for something you like among the millions of free clipart objects on the web.

I like this, but I want to put in some accent strokes. Once again, using my Bezier tool, I drew a curve but this time it looks more long and pointed. Again choosing **Path > Object** to path, I used the node tool and auto-smooth to make it the way I wanted it. This one is only accent strokes, so it's going to be smaller. I duplicated it three times, then changed the fill and stroke for each.



These can be flipped and rotated whichever way you want them to be placed into your pattern. I'm finished

with mine, but you can certainly do whatever you want to yours, adding smaller flowers or some other accent shape. Your choices are up to you. You might also group it all, selecting your whole pattern by drawing a rectangle around everything with your mouse, and clicking on the **Group** tool. You can also export it in an image format, such as .jpg or .png. Mine now looks like this:

Wow! We learned several tools this time! I'm sure your paisley pattern is wonderful! It might be fun to show everyone else what you've made. I'm going to put mine up as a wallpaper, and post it in the desktop screenshot section of the forum. I'd like to see yours as well. You don't have to leave it your wallpaper if you don't want to… just long enough to take a screenie. Here's mine, but I posted it, too.

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Screenshot Showcase

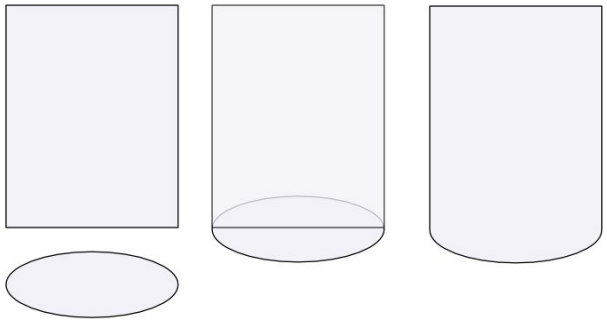
Posted by OnlyHuman, running e17, on December 18, 2014.

Inkscape Tutorial: Create A Candle

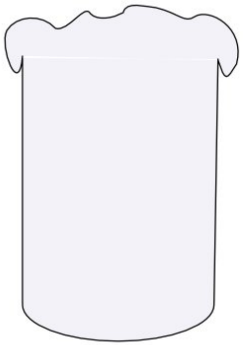
by Meemaw

Some of us like to make wallpapers for the holidays. I saw a tutorial about creating a candle, and I thought it would be a great project to do before the holiday season starts, so we might use it in one of our wallpapers. Opening Inkscape, use whatever size page you want. The default is A4, Portrait oriented, so I'll probably open Document Properties from the File menu, and change it to Letter, Landscape oriented. The choice is up to you.

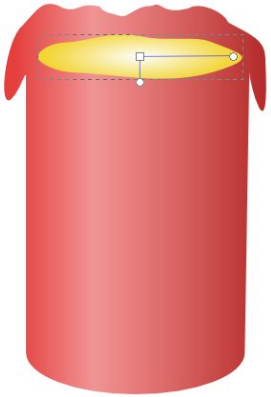
To draw the basic candle, you can use the pen tool, or you can create a rectangle and an ellipse and choose **Path > Union** to combine them. If you do that you will have to create extra nodes across the top and pull them out to make the part of the candle that is melted down. It's just a decision between making the separate items, merging them and pulling nodes … or drawing the whole thing by hand with the pen tool.



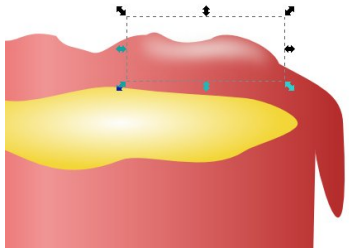
Let's fill it with color. Open your fill and stroke window, and fill your object with your desired color. Mine will be an orange shade. Set the stroke to **None**. I'm going to add a linear gradient in the center to look like a highlight.



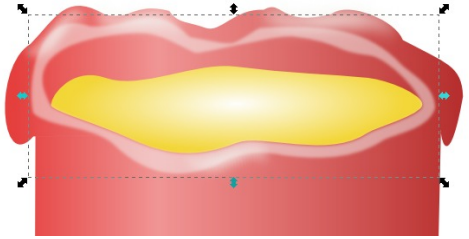
Using the Pen tool, draw an irregular elliptical shape. This will be the top of the candle. Fill the shape with a radial gradient, lighter in the center. When the candle is lit, the center is the brightest, so make it very close to white.



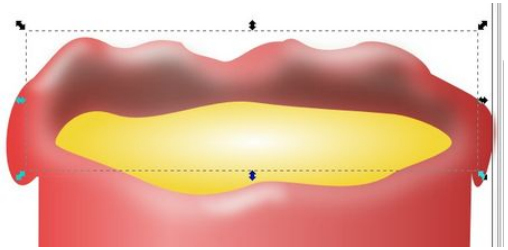
Let's highlight the top so it looks more like the wax has melted down and fallen over. At the top-front, draw an elongated irregular ellipse shape, just below the edge. Blur it, then apply a white to transparent radial gradient. Do several around the edges.



Let's add a highlight to help define the shape of the lip. We will add one highlight going all the way around. Draw a ring, and then draw an inner ring on top of it. Select both rings and choose **Path > Difference**. Set it to a semi-transparent white and Blur it.

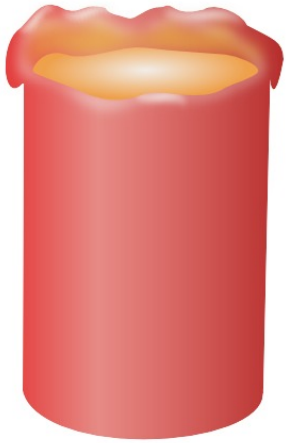


Now we want to show the inside of the candle as brighter because it is lit, so we'll add a highlight on the inside of the lip. Draw a shape that looks as if it curves around the back of the candle. Slide it under the inside ellipse that we drew first, then blur the inner highlight.

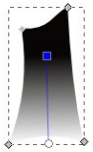


Apply a radial gradient going from a bit lighter than your candle to transparent. Extend the gradient handles beyond the bounds of the object. So far, mine looks like this (next page, top left):

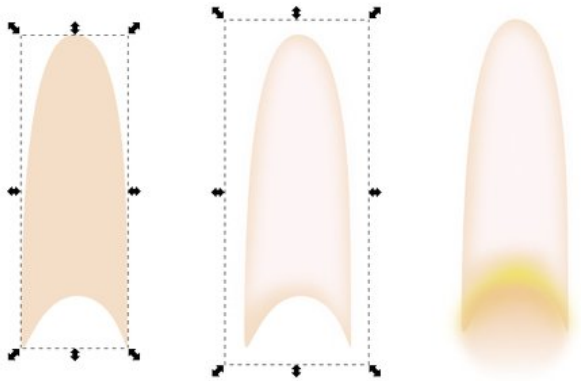
I'm sure you can see other edits I have made in my progress…. changing the color of the center to a little darker one, and shortening the amount that the wax has dripped. Most of that is personal preference, so you draw yours however you wish.



Now we can work on the flame. Every lit candle has a pool of wax at the bottom of the wick, so let's do that first. Draw an ellipse in the top-center, color it yellow-orange, and give it some blur. Draw the wick. You can start with a black rectangle, but flare the edges a bit to make it look uneven. Change the fill to a black to yellow gradient, top to bottom.



The flame will take a bit of work. Start off drawing a sort of ellipse with a dent in the bottom (looks kind of like a fingernail to me). Make the fill a solid, fleshy color (left). Draw a little different shape on top of it, leaving the bottom of the first shape visible. Fill the top shape with white and blur it (center). Draw a flat arrowhead-like shape at the bottom of the flame. Fill it with yellow and blur it. Draw a circle at the bottom of the flame and blur it. Apply a peach to transparent gradient, running top to bottom (right). Select all parts and group them.



Place it on top of your wick. Now, mine looks like this:

I did a couple of things to mine after this. I am going to put a dark background behind my candle. However, many of the gradients I have been using have been transparent in places. I'm sure there is a professional way to keep the background from showing through, but the easiest way I have found is to duplicate the candle base, change the fill to solid white or something close, and send it to the bottom of the drawing. I also added tiny a bit of shade on the front of my candle to simulate a shadow from the wax that is dripping over the front.

Now we will add a background. Draw a rectangle on your page and send it to the bottom of the drawing. Mine will be a dark blue to transparent linear gradient, top to bottom. I made it mostly dark blue with the transparent showing only toward the bottom. Then I added a shadow at the bottom of the candle. Since it's your drawing, you can do as much or as little of this as you desire. Mine now looks like this (top, right):

You can always dress up your candle by designing a base or platter to put it on, or putting some sort of floral design around the bottom. I remember ms_meme making a candle like this and drawing poinsettia leaves around the bottom for a Christmas wallpaper.

It's your project – do what you want, and personalize your creation!

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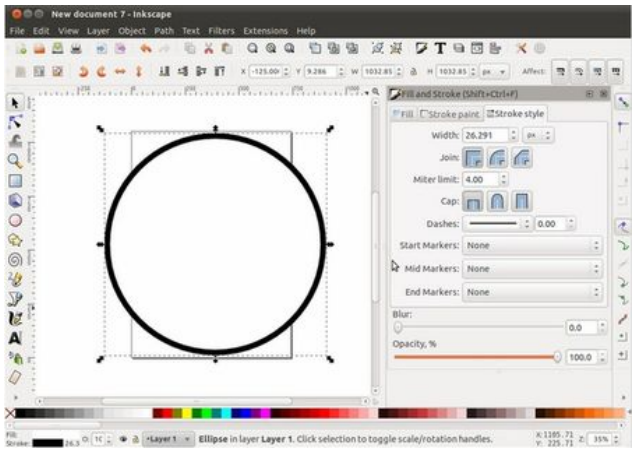
- Type "/join #pclosmag" (without the quotes)

Inkscape Tutorial: Reinventing The Wheel

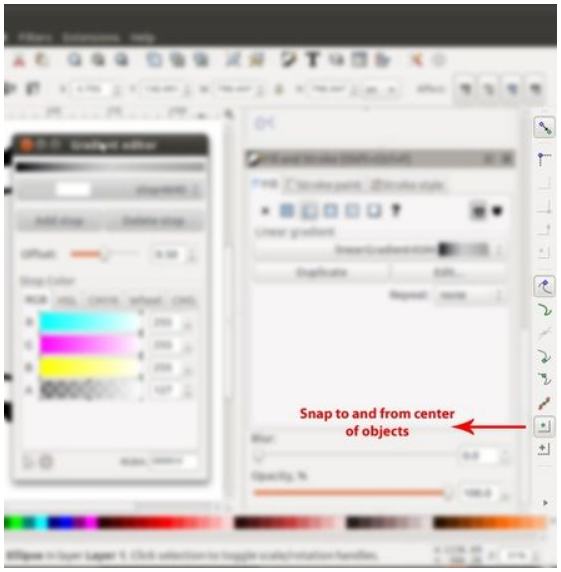
by Khadis

An alternative of graphic design software, Inkscape is quite powerful, like CorelDraw, including the ability to make a vector based graphics illustration. Several years ago, when I studied graphic design, I made a wheel illustration using CorelDraw as one of my 'basic' exercises. Now, I will make the same wheel using Inkscape.

1. Open up Inkscape. Create a circle with the *ellipse* tool. The size absolutely depends on your taste, while the fill color is white and the stroke color is black, with any thickness you desire.



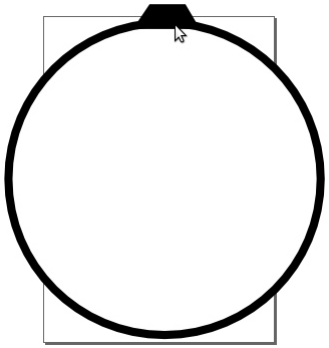
2. Ensure that the *snap* option is active (can be accessed under **View** menu). Please also activate "*snap from and to center of objects*" option as illustrated below:



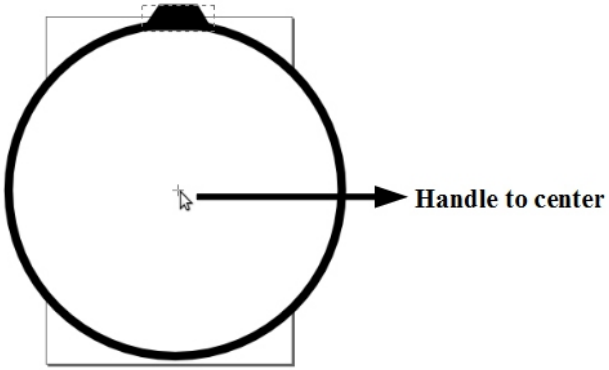
3. After that, create a rectangle (fill color: black, stroke color: black or no stroke is also OK). Convert it into a *path*. This rectangle will be transformed into a trapezoid. Select this rectangle and choose Path - Object to Path menu (Shift + Ctrl + C). You can use the "*edit path by node*" tool (F2) to modify this rectangle into a trapezoid by dragging in the handles in the top right and top left corner.

4. Place this trapezoid above the circle. For a clear view, take a look at the picture at top right:

5. After that, activate the Transform panel (Shift + Ctrl + M). Double click the trapezoid until its handles turn into rotation handles. Pick the midpoint of the trapezoid (with "+" sign). Drag it to the center of your

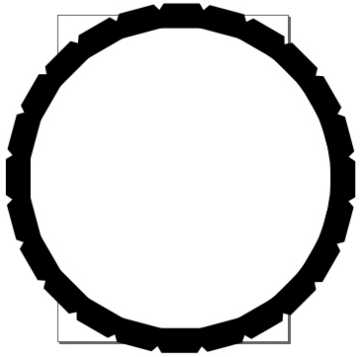


circle. If you have activated the "snap from and to center of objects," it will show you a red-cross sign saying "Handle to center." Now, put your "+" sign on a place where it says "Handle to center." The "+" sign is your trapezoid's axis that is moved to the circle's axis. If the axis of your trapezoid is not moved to the circle's axis, when the trapezoid is rotated, it will rotate to itself. While if the axis is moved to the circle's axis, when the trapezoid is rotated, it will rotate to the circle.



6. Now, choose *rotate* menu in your **Transform** panel and type 15 in Angle box. Duplicate the trapezoid by pressing Ctrl + D and followed

by pressing "Apply" in your **Transform** panel. Do it several times until your new trapezoids round the circle.



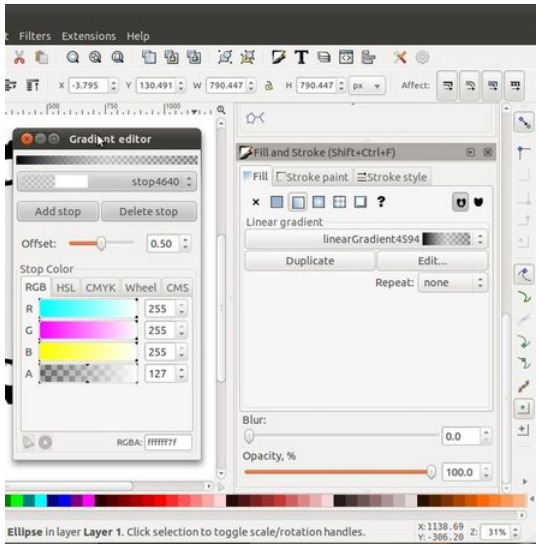
7. The next step is creating the inner circle. You can do this by pressing Ctrl + D on the previous circle to duplicate and then resize it. We can resize it by dragging in the top right handle and pressing Shift + Ctrl to make it keep on its proportional shape.

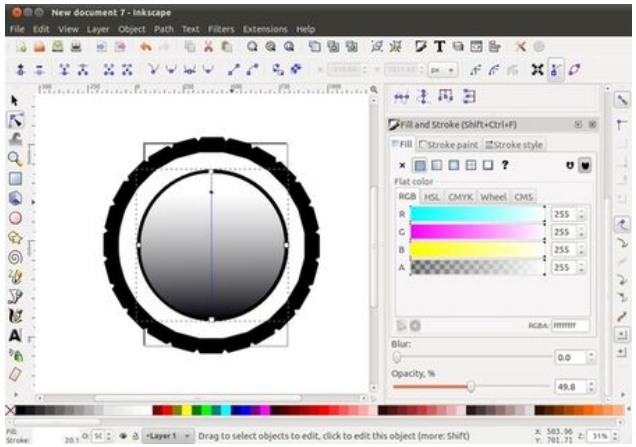
8. Color this second circle with black-to-white gradient by opening up **Fill and Stroke** panel (Shift + Ctrl + F), and then choose **Fill - Linear Gradient** followed by choosing **Edit**. In your **Gradient Editor**, you can choose the gradient color by pressing **Add Stop** button and slide the slider on each color box: R (Red), G (Green), B (Blue), and A (Alpha / Opacity) as shown at center top.

9. Press F2 on your keyboard to activate **Edit path by nodes** function. With this tool, you can change the direction of your gradient. ------>

10. Do the same steps as described in step 7 to step 9 to create 2 other circles so that the final result will be like this (top right):

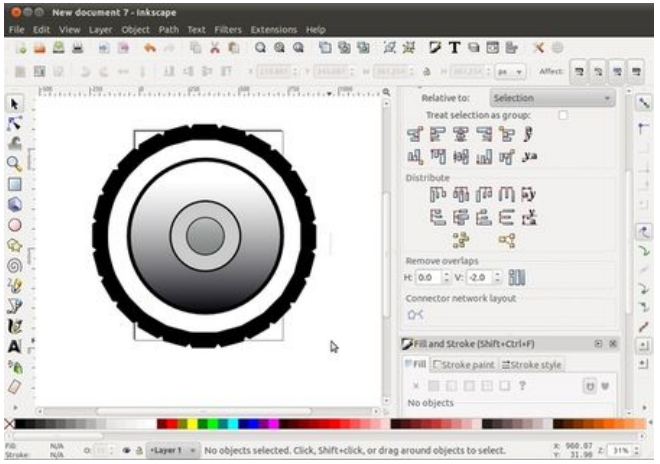
11. The final step is creating smaller circles as decoration. So, create a small circle (the size is up to you). Color it with white and no stroke, and put it close to the stroke of the second (big) circle.





12. Repeat step #5 and #6. Duplicate and rotate the small circle. Give 30 as new value in your Angle box in **Transform** panel, tab **Rotation**.

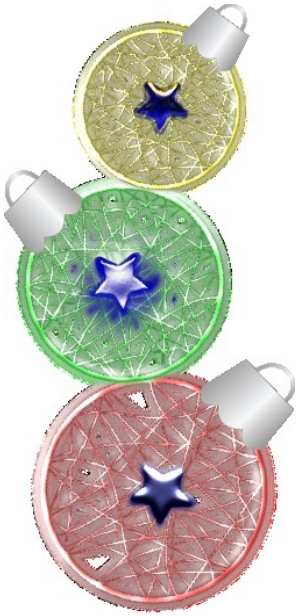
13. The final result will be similar to the picture at right (the gradient may vary depending on the color and direction you choose).



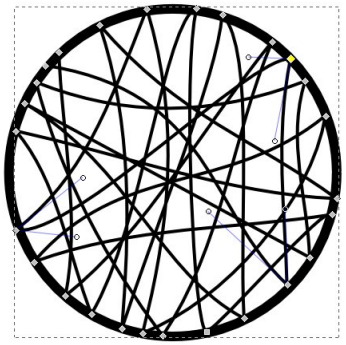
Inkscape Tutorial: Holiday Wallpaper

by Meemaw

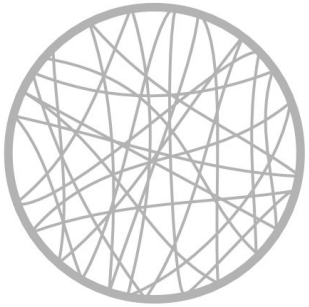
It's early yet, but most of us like to celebrate some sort of winter holiday. If you like to put up decorations and send cards, you might have fun with this project, and we're doing it early enough that you can practice. I send Christmas cards every year. I saw something with a snowman/snowball theme, so I thought I would try it for my cards. It would also make a nice holiday wallpaper. We can make a snowman or decorative balls. These look like they were made from wire.



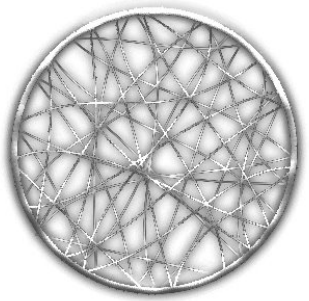
Open Inkscape, and start by making a circle. Using your bezier tool, draw many lines across your circle to make it look like it is made of wire. Using **Path > Object to Path** on each line, select your Nodes tool and put a little curve in each of your lines (center, top).



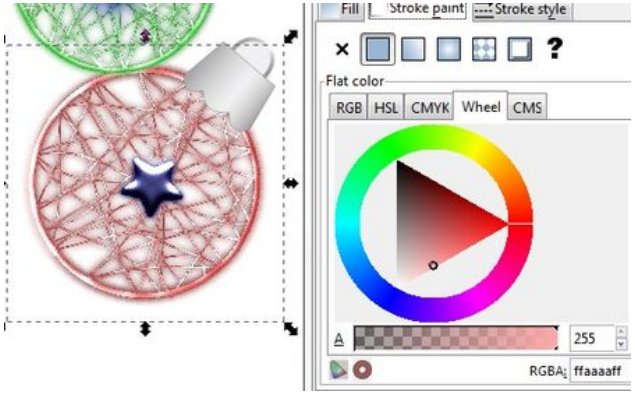
When you have it the way you want it, select all lines and the circle by drawing a box around them with your cursor, and then Group them. Change the color to a light grey.



With your group selected, click on **Filters > Bevels > Glowing Metal**. Your group will turn a shiny silver color.

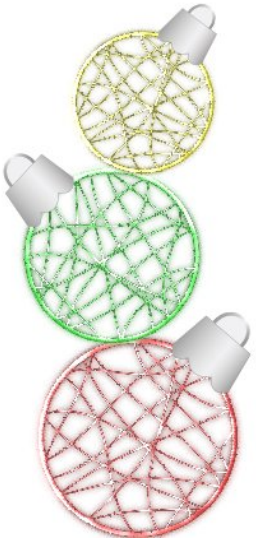


You can also make them different colors! I have found that you need to use a lighter color to start, because the glowing metal filter will darken the color somewhat. You will probably have to experiment with the colors to get what you want. With this one I used a pink, but the glowing metal filter made it a bit darker.



I used the colored ones for the decorative balls, and the silver ones for the snowman, duplicating, resizing and rotating the first circle and then stacking them.

For the ball hangers, I drew a square with a linear gradient fill, grey and white, to give it some highlight. I kept a very thin dark grey stroke to define the shape a bit. Choosing **Path > Object to Path**, I added two nodes to one side of the square, and then moved things around until it was narrower at the top with a scalloped edge at the bottom, like many of those hangers have. Then, I made a circle (no fill and 5 px stroke with a grey to white gradient) and covered a little over half of it with a rectangle. I then chose **Object > Clip > Set** to only use part of the circle. Rotating them into position, I combined the two shapes for a ball hanger, grouped them and placed them on the edges of the wire balls (next page, top left).



If you want, you can create colored stars, make them shiny with the glowing metal filter and place them on the wire balls, as shown at the beginning of this article.

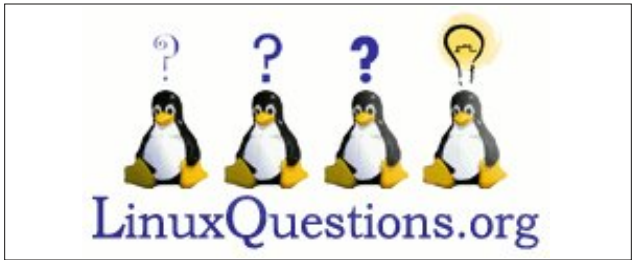
The snowman requires a bit more work. Most of it is creating the desired shapes (coal pieces for eyes, mouth, and buttons, a triangle for the nose, lines for arms, and irregular rectangles for the scarf). I used black hexagons for the eyes, mouth and buttons, pulling the nodes on the eyes and mouth so they look like irregular pieces of coal. The nose was an orange triangle with the nodes pulled on it to make it irregular. The scarf is three red rectangles that I made irregular and merged with **Path > Union**. The nose, buttons, arms and scarf were also made metallic with the **Glowing Metal** filter that we used on the wire circles. The eyes, mouth and mittens are black with a white blur to highlight them a bit.

The hat is done the same way as the wire circles. I drew three rectangles, different sizes, to represent the top brim and band of the hat. The top and brim were done with the wire-look, and the band was filled with a solid color. When I had them done, I grouped them and then used the glowing metal filter.

When you get them all finished and arranged as you want them, group and export your selection. If you want something moved, just ungroup them and make your change, then regroup them. There will be two versions of my snowman because I moved one of his arms.

Here is my snowman, but yours will probably look different:

After that, you can use Inkscape to create a holiday wallpaper or greeting cards from either of your creations.



Inkscape Tutorial: Tracing A Logo

by Khadis

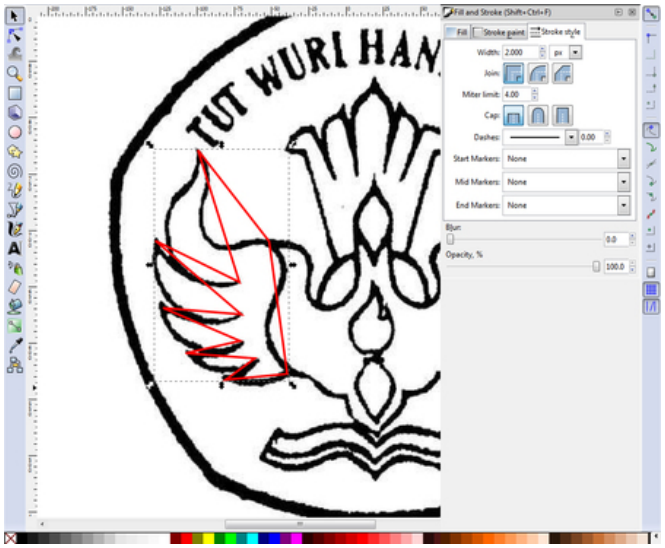
On some occasions, I often help people to create or to re-create a logo they have. Mostly, they come with a bitmap logo (a scanned draft of logo) or come with low-resolution bitmap image. They often need a new logo that can be used or manipulated for later use. In brief, they need a vector format of a logo, which can be easily made using Inkscape.

The tutorial below will show you how to trace random simple logo I picked from my logo collection.

Step One: To trace a logo, we need the **Bezier Tool (Shift + F6)**. Then, after this tool is in your hand, now draw a continuous line starting from point "A" to point "B".

Step Two: If your default line is hard to see, you can zoom the screen to get better view. You can also raise the stroke width and change the stroke color. For now, I changed the stroke width into 2 px and red as the color. We can always turn its color back into its original one, of course.

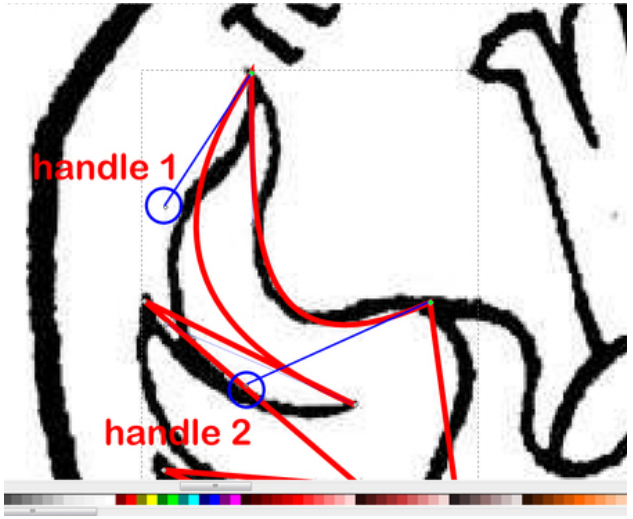
Step Three: Keep drawing the line by clicking on each corner until you get as pictured below (in the end, click on the starting point to close the curve/path):



Step Four: Using **"Edit path by nodes" tool (F2)**, you can manipulate the path into desired shape (e.g. bend the straight line into a curved one).

Step Five: Using this tool, pull the middle part of the line. You will also get two handles which can be lifted up and down to bend the line. If you find the nodes you have are not enough, you can always add the nodes by double clicking your mouse on the path (top, right).

Step Six: After all parts have been bent, you can continue to another part. For the logo I traced here, I have a pair of symmetric wings, so I do not need to trace the remaining wing part, but later I can copy and flip it instead. In the picture below, I traced the middle part of my logo using 3 px-stroked blue curve so you can spot the difference.



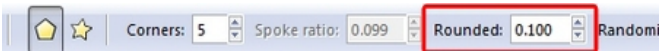
Step Seven: Using **"Edit path by nodes" tool (F2)**, you can bend the line following the original path (logo). The final touch will be like this:

Step Eight: Do the same steps for other parts. Now, let's insert text, as in the original logo. Using the **Text tool (F8)**, type the text. I use Times New Roman 32 pt. Your font size may be different from mine because of the size of the overall picture.

Step Nine: Next, let's create a path as we will put the text on a path. For the path, I use an ellipse. To ensure that the text will flow on the path correctly, I drew an ellipse right under the original text to measure the required size. Look at the 4 px-stroked green ellipse at center top:

Step Ten: After you get the right size of your path (your ellipse), now put the text on it. Select your text and your ellipse, then go to the **Text > Put on path** menu. Your text will be placed on the ellipse. You might need to make some minor adjustments so that the text position fits your needs. After your text is positioned to your satisfaction, you can remove the ellipse.

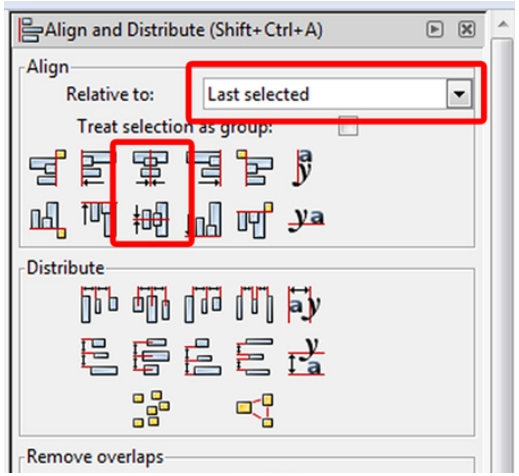
Step Eleven: Finally, it's time to put a pentagon shape as the background. Please group all the objects first. After that, create a black-stroked pentagon (no fill color) using **Stars and Polygon Tool (*)**. Adjust the size as you need and set the rounded into 0.100.



Step Twelve: You can then adjust the shape of this pentagon by converting it into path **(Path – Object to path menu or press Shift + Ctrl + C)** and re-shape it using **"Edit path by nodes" tool (F2).**

Step Thirteen: Now, align the grouped objects with the pentagon. Make them centered horizontally and vertically (right, top).

That's all. Now, you can trace any logo you want only by using Bezier curves.



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Inkscape Tutorial: Sunset With Stars

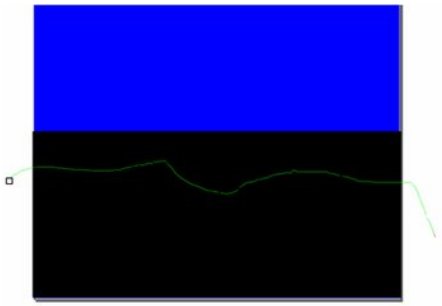
by Meemaw

We did a sunset project earlier, but the stars in this one use a different process, so we'll do it anyway. This month's magazine cover was made using this same method.

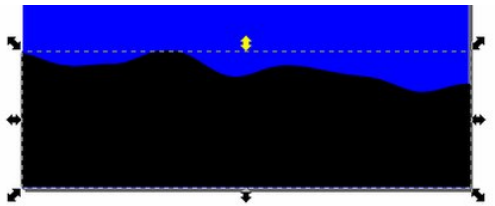
For this project I downloaded a free clipart image (the elephants) and will export that into the project pretty soon.

With Inkscape open, start a new drawing. I used US Letter size in portrait orientation (990 px tall and 765 px wide). Create a rectangle the same size as your page, with no stroke and blue fill (just so it's visible, because later we will change it). Create another rectangle the same width as your page and about 1/3 the height, filled with black.

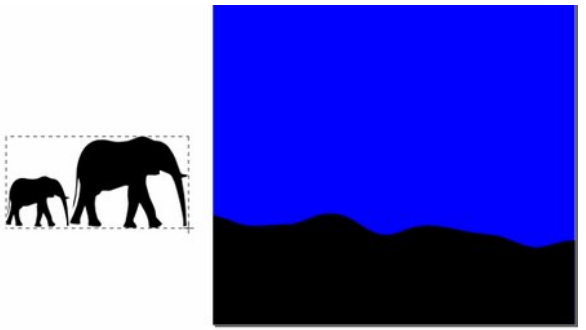
Using the **Pencil** tool, draw an uneven shape across the black rectangle and around the bottom of your page, connecting back to itself. This will make the land.



With your irregular shape chosen, hold down **<SHIFT>** and select your black rectangle. Go to **Object > Clip > Set** to form your ground silhouette.



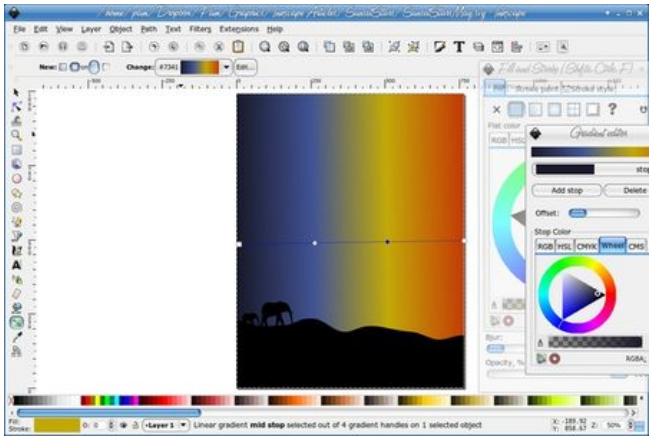
At this point, I imported the silhouette clipart, resized it and placed it into the picture. Now would be a good time to save your work.



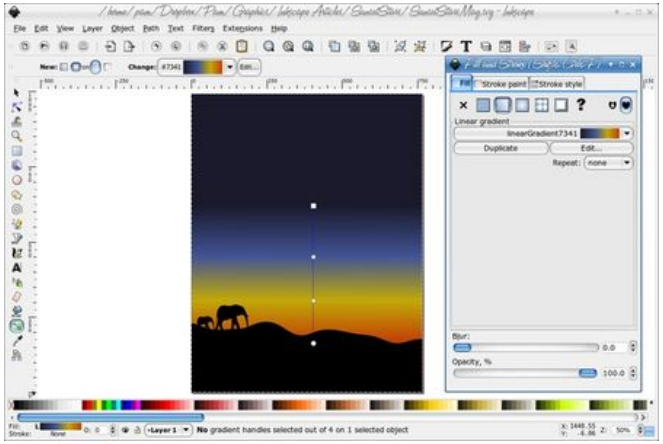
Now, we will work on the sky. Since the sun is setting, we'll need to illustrate this with a gradient. Click on your blue rectangle, make sure you have your **Properties** window open, and change the fill from solid color to linear gradient. In the properties window, click on **Edit**, then click on the **Add Stop** button twice so you can make four colors. From top to bottom it will be dark blue (so dark it's almost black), a lighter blue, yellow and orange. When you get your colors set, close the gradient editor and click on the **Gradient** tool at the left side of the program window. You can choose whatever colors

look good to you, but the colors I used in the image below are as follows;

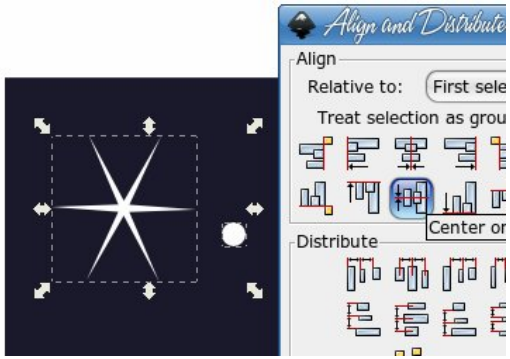
dark blue 1a1a2cff, blue 425495ff, yellow c2a908ff and orange c33b06ff



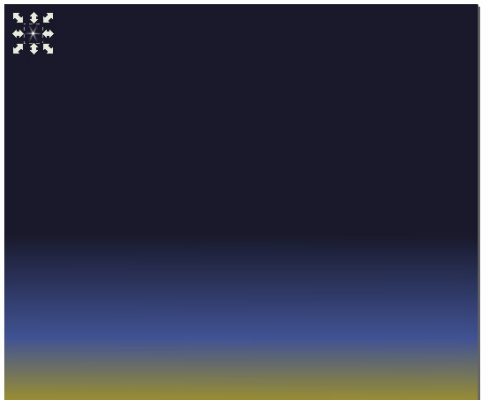
You will want the dark blue at the top, so grab the handle at the left and move it to the center of your picture towards the top. Then grab the handle on the other end and move it towards the bottom of the picture. Mine is below. You can move the handles wherever they look good to you. When you get it the way you want it, save your work.



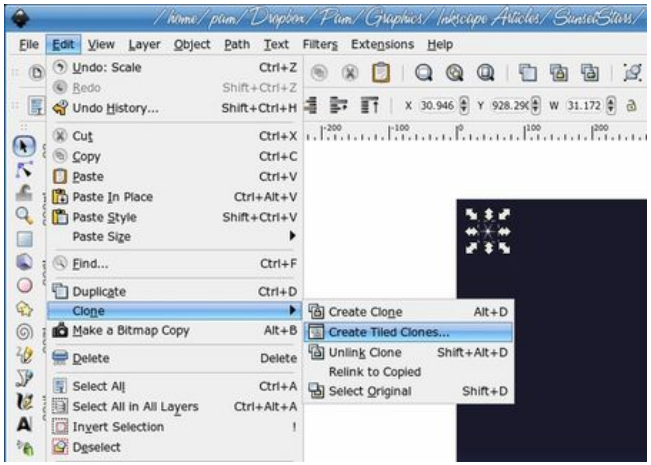
It's time to do the stars. Rather than duplicate them a hundred times and then have to move and resize them all, we're going to use a different command. First, though, we have to make one star. Using the **Star/Pentagon** tool at the left of your screen, create a star you want to use. I did a six-pointed star with a small circle in the center. I did it by creating the star, six-pointed with the spoke ratio around .08, then the circle, and made sure the fill was white on both (and no stroke). Then I selected them both and, using the **Align and Distribute** tool, centered them both ways, then grouped them.

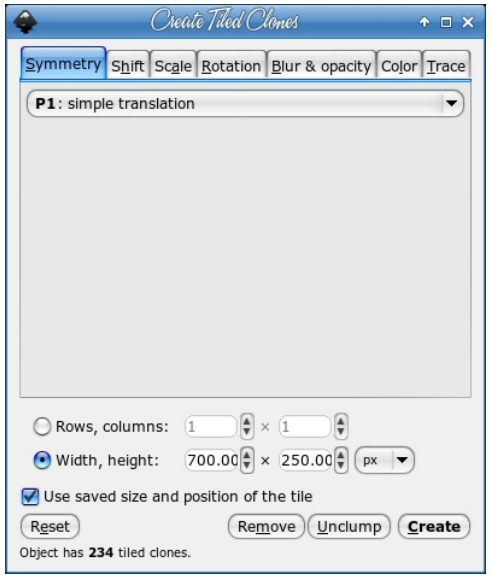


When yours is created, change the blur to 5, and reduce the size of the star, placing it near the top left corner of your picture. Save your work.



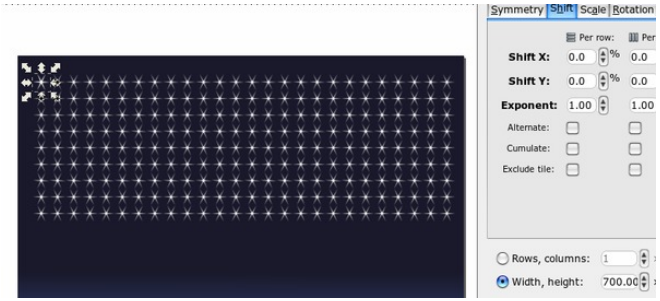
Now we are going to make a bunch of stars. With your star still selected, click on **Edit > Clone > Create Tiled Clones**. A window with many tabs will appear.



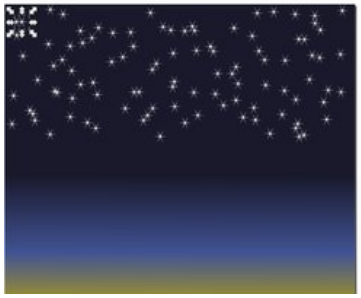


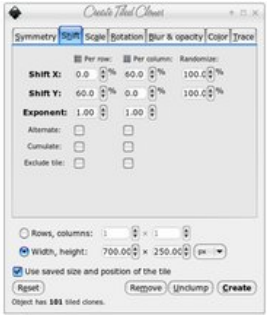
Each of these tabs will affect your group now, depending on the settings. I will give you the settings I used, but I will try to explain a bit along the way.

In the first tab, **Symmetry**, we want to designate how we want them to be spread. The default is **P1: Simple translatio**n, and I'm going to use that. Other choices are possible. Then below, we need to indicate how big our group of clones will be. We can use columns and rows of clones or we can use a width and height measurement. I will use a width of 700 and a height of 250. Notice at the bottom of the window we see three buttons: **Remove, Unclump** and **Create**. With those three buttons we will be able to change our settings and see the results very easily. If we click **Create** now, with no other settings, this is what we will get:

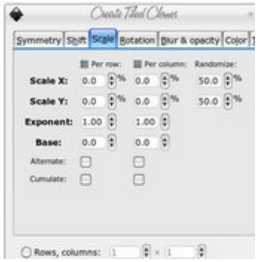


At this point all our stars are exactly alike and are lined up like soldiers in formation, and not like real stars at all. Click **Remove**. Next, we will change some numbers in the **Shift** tab. I am going to change **Shift X - Per column** to 60%, then **Shift Y - Per row** to 60%, then make both **Randomize** settings 100%. Clicking **Create** again, I get this:

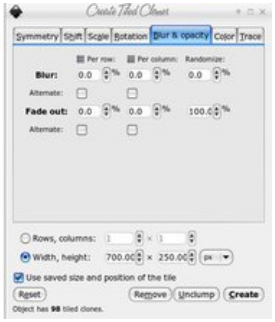




Well, that's better. It looks more like a random scattering of stars. If you don't like the one that appears, you can always click **Remove** and then click **Create** again, and the **Randomize** setting will make it look different. However, all the stars are the same size and brightness, so we will have to do something about that, so go to the **Scale** tab, and set both **Randomize** settings to 50%.



Let's do one more thing. Click the **Blur and Opacity** tab, and set **Fadeout - Randomize** to 100%.



When you get it the way you want it, close the **Create Tiled Clones** window. As a last thought, if you think your stars are still too bright for a sunset, you could click back in the **Fill & Stroke** window and set the opacity down to your liking. Save your work, then export your page.

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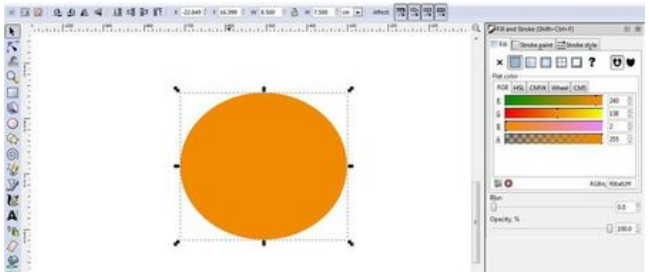
Inkscape Tutorial: Smiling Jack-O-Lantern

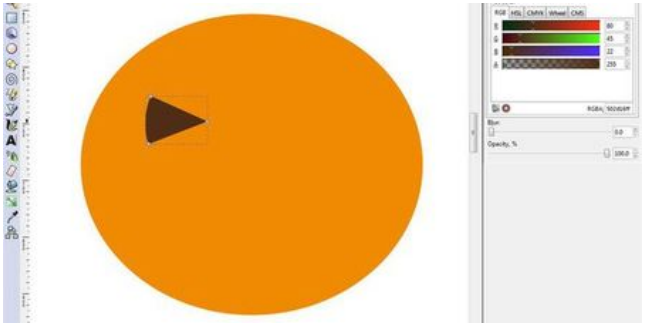
by Khadis

Halloween will quickly arrive to knock at our door. Most people in my country don't celebrate it, actually. But I am interested in participating in cheering up this moment, at least, by helping some Inkscape newbies to create a simple Halloween mascot: Jack-O-Lantern.

Step One: Open up your Inkscape and create an ellipse. I used 8.5 cm x 7.5 cm in size. You may use your own size, of course. Give it fill color R: 240, G: 138, B: 2, A: 255, and no outline.



Step Two: Now, create a triangle using **Stars and Polygons** tool (regular polygon with 3 corners). Give it fill color R: 80, G: 45, and B: 22 without an outline. Resize it to meet your needs.

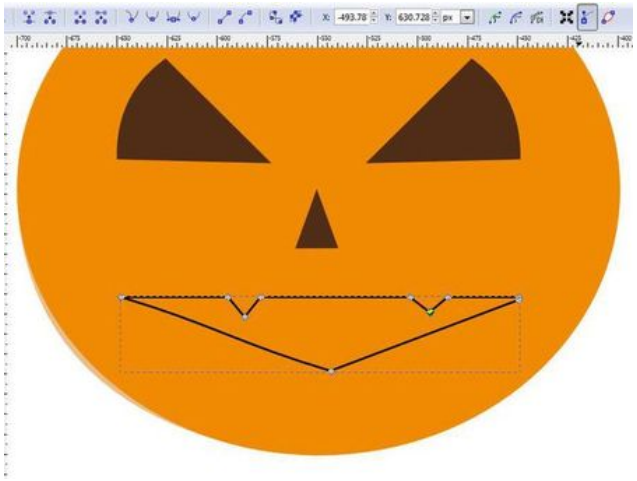


Step Three: Convert it into "path" by accessing menu **Path – Object to Path (Shift+Ctrl+C)**. Later, don't forget to make the left side into a curve using **Curve tool (F2)**. Duplicate this triangle using **Ctrl + D**, flip it horizontally, and put it in the right side.

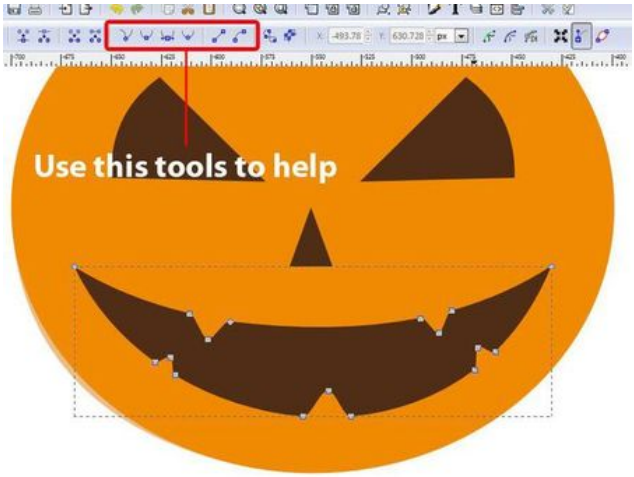
Step Four: Make another triangle and make it smaller. We will use it as the "nose" of the pumpkin. You can duplicate one of the previous triangles and rotate it.

Step Five: Now, create the mouth using **Bezier tool (Shift + F6)**, and modify it using **Curve tool (F2)**. You can click on any part of "the mouth" to add more nodes. Those nodes then should be modified as the teeth. See the picture below:

Step Six: Keep using the **Curve Tool (F2)** to get the perfect shape. You may need to resize. Make the curve smoother or symmetric.

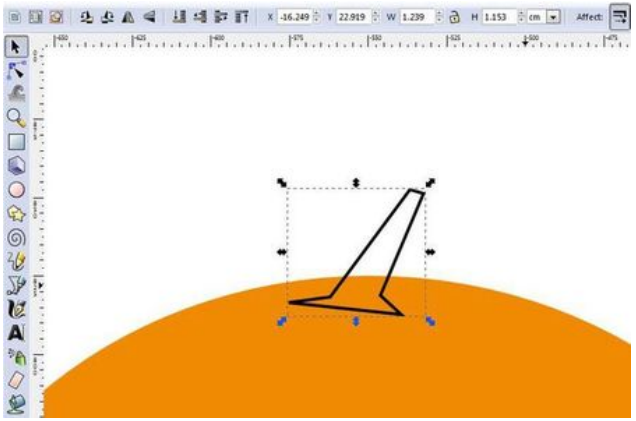


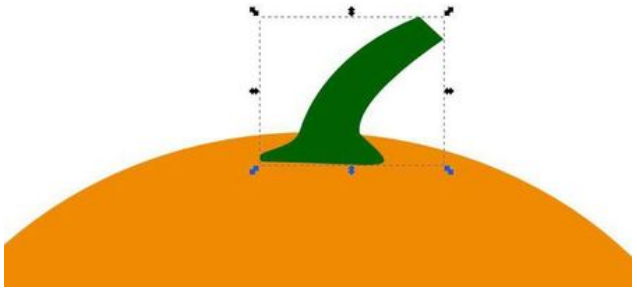
Step Seven: Give it the same color as the eyes and nose.



Step Eight: Now, create the stem. You can always rely on the Bezier tool for this part. Create the stem

using any shape, add more nodes, and bend it. Give it color R: 0, G: 97, B: 0, A: 255, and no stroke/outline.





Step Nine: Now, we need to create the shadow to give lighting effect. You can duplicate the great orange ellipse and by using **Curve tool (F2)**, and then you can modify the ellipse. Don't forget to convert it into path before using **Curve tool (F2)**, and change the color into R: 169, G: 91, B: 11, and A: 120 or 200. You can set the Alpha value (A) lower or higher to get nicer effect. And you can also locate the shadow under the eyes and mouth by pressing Page Down button on your keyboard.

Step Ten: For the final "touch," put some text under the Jack-O-Lantern. I used "Grunt Reaper" font. You may want to find your own "scary" font.

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Inkscape Tutorial: How To Create Puzzle Pieces

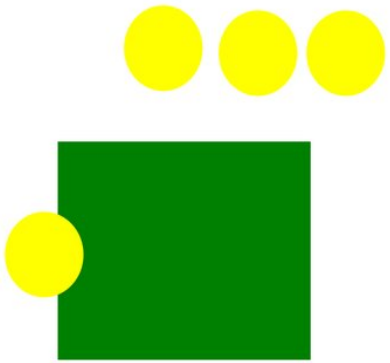
by Khadis

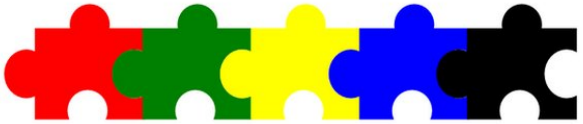
Do you like playing with puzzles? I do. What about making a puzzle and then challenging your friends to solve it? It might be fun and entertaining. So, in this tutorial, I would like to show you how to make simple puzzle pieces.

1. Open up your Inkscape and create a rectangle of any size and any color. Convert it into a path from **Path > Object to path** (**Shift + Ctrl + C**).

2. Create a circle (or an ellipse). You can make it any size and any color, but I recommend you to create a circle that is smaller than your rectangle. Duplicate the circle three times using **Ctrl + D** until you finally get four circles. In the illustration, I have a green rectangle and yellow circles without stroke.

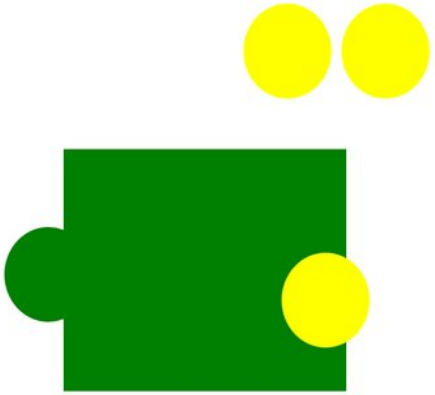
3. Put one circle on the left part of the rectangle. You may place it randomly. This means you do not need to put the circle perfectly vertically "justified" to the rectangle. But please note, that if you want to make this puzzle playable, you may want to consider to "justify" the circle into "center on vertical axis". The same height of rectangle with the same puzzle's "hole" position will fit each other.





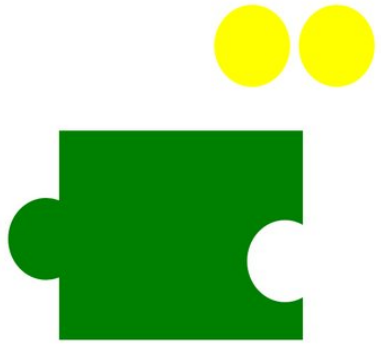
4. Do a "union" operation by selecting the circle, hold down your **Shift** button, then click on the rectangle. Press **Ctrl + +** or access the union function from the **Path > Union** menu.

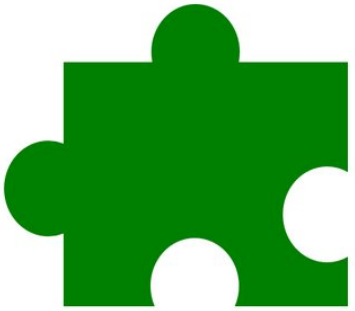
5. Now, put the second circle on the right part of the rectangle. Place the circle so that its bigger part is inside of the rectangle.

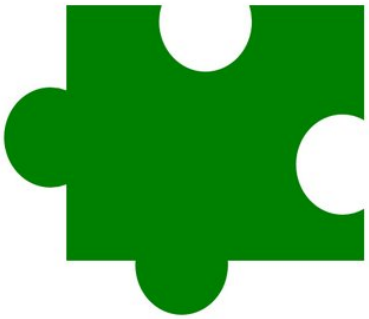


6. Do a "difference" operation by selecting the circle hold down your **Shift** button, then click on the rectangle. Press **Ctrl + -** or access this function from the **Path > Difference** menu. Now, your rectangle should look like this (right, top):

7. Repeat steps four through six, by putting the third and fourth circles on the top and bottom part of the rectangle. The final result may look like either of these (center and bottom right):

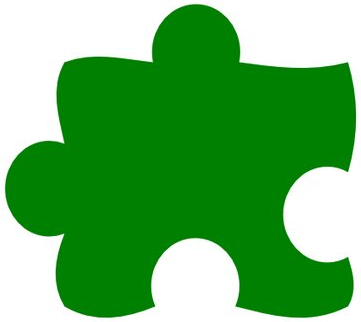






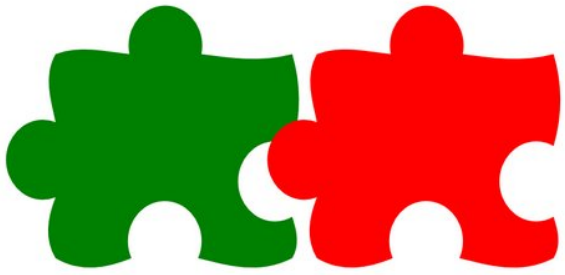
8. Of course, you can explore the way you place the circles to produce cooler pieces of puzzle.

9. To give a “final touch”, you can convert the puzzle into curve and modify it into smoother shape. You can use **Edit path by nodes** tool (**F2**) and use the available modifying tools or modify your nodes manually.

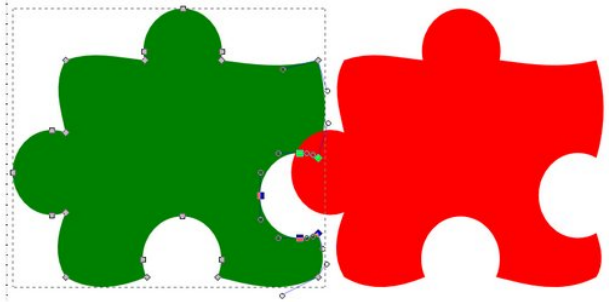


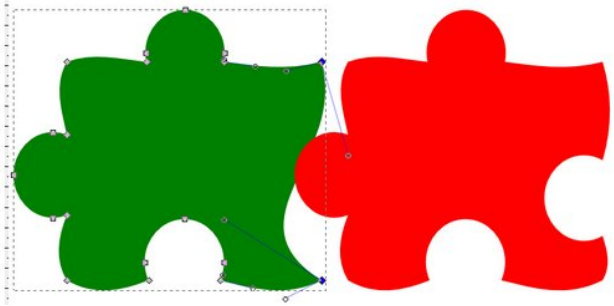
10. As I mentioned in step three, to make these pieces of puzzle playable, you should create the same “distance” of circles placement and flat rectangle. But, if your imagination flies further and you want to create a curved puzzle, as in the step nine above, then you should totally modify the other pieces of your puzzle.

11. Duplicate your curved puzzle piece, then place the new piece close to the first one. Hold the **Ctrl** button while moving your object so that it can move straight. By using **Edit path by nodes** tool (**F2**), adjust the size or even the position of your first puzzle's hole and puffed part.



12. Or you can do this simple trick: select the first puzzle, and then remove the right hole's nodes and return the curved side into a flat side.





13. Put them “stuck to” each other, then do the “difference” operation. Your second puzzle will be removed. Duplicate (**Ctrl + D**) the first puzzle again, and stick the second one to it. Give them different colors (top, right).

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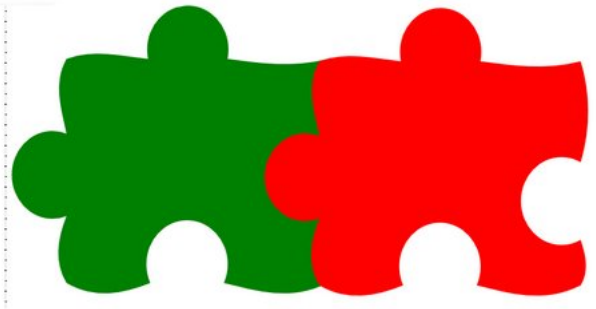
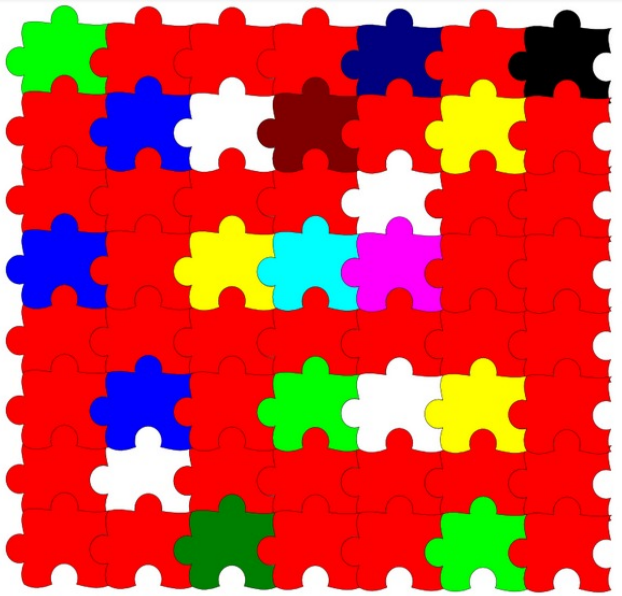


14. Now, it's your turn, to create your own your very own puzzle creation.



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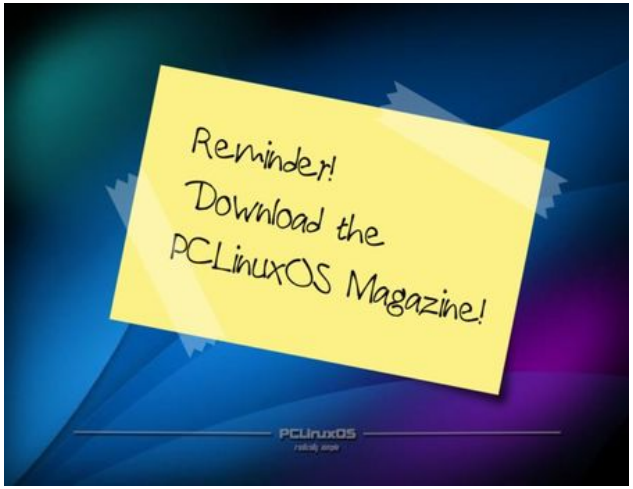
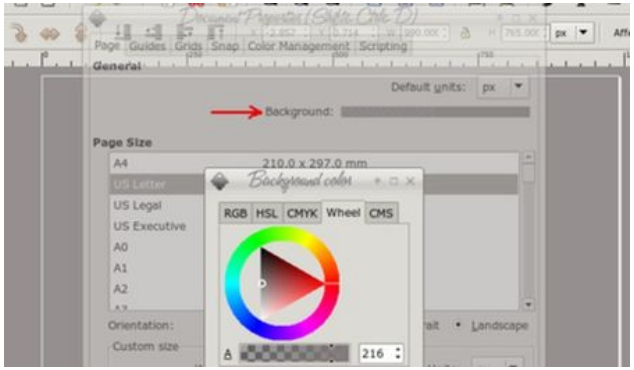
Inkscape Tutorial: Taped Note

by Meemaw

This one is pretty easy. It resembles a note taped to a surface with clear tape.



Open Inkscape and set your document properties. I used a letter sized page, in landscape orientation. It seems to be easier if you change your background from white to something a bit darker so you can see what you're doing. In **Document Properties**, one of the choices is background color. From the Document

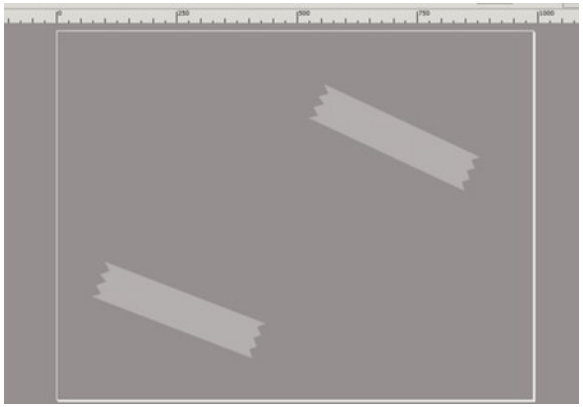


Properties window, click on the colored line behind the word Background, and the small window will appear (bottom, left):

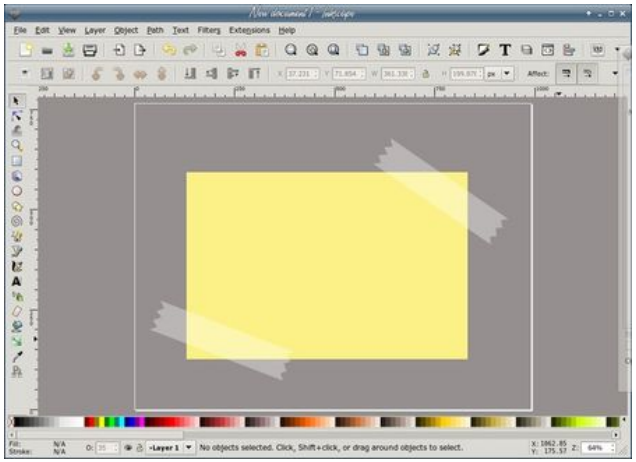
I changed mine to a medium grey. It will be easier to see what I'm doing.

Next, draw a rectangle, white fill and no stroke. In the **Path** menu, click **Object to Path** while your rectangle is selected. Change to the **Paths tool** (second from the top at left). On each end of your rectangle add five nodes by double-clicking on the end line five different times. Grab alternating nodes and move them inward to create a "cut tape" effect at each end. Don't worry, it doesn't have to be perfect, and you can add more if you wish.

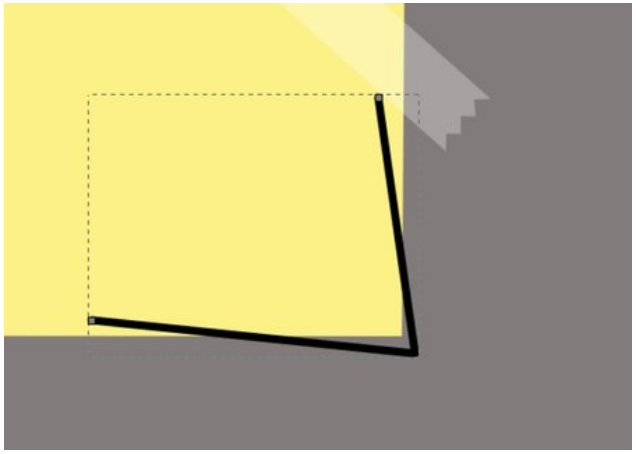
When you get your "tape" the way you want it, go to **Properties** and set the opacity down to 30 or 35, or whatever looks good to you. Resize it (depending on how big you made it when you started), then duplicate it and separate the two.



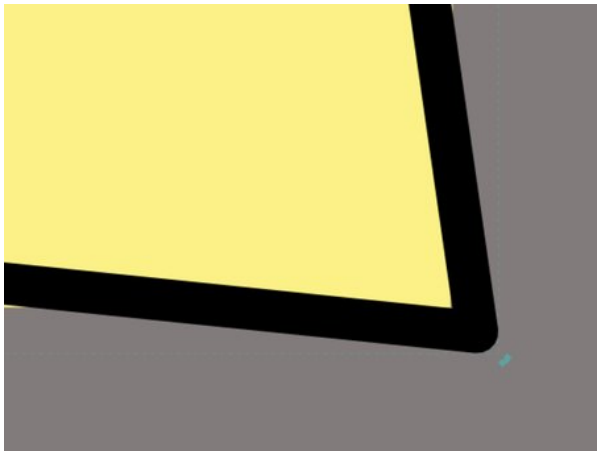
Create a new rectangle for the note itself. I made mine yellow, but you can make it any color you want. You can arrange your tape pieces now, or wait until you are finished.



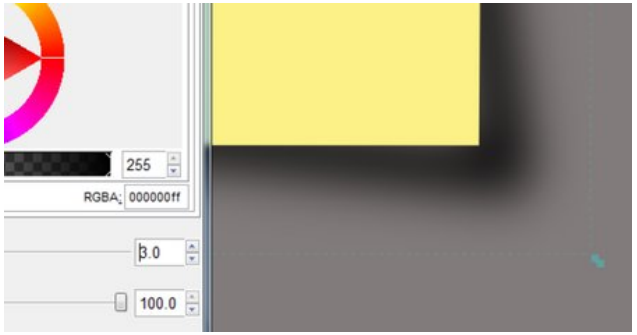
Not all pieces of paper are wrinkle free, so let's put in a shadow that makes it look like the paper is curling a bit at one side. Using your **Bezier** tool with the width set about 10, draw a line similar to the one shown below.



Zoom in on your corner and move the line up to the corner of the paper.



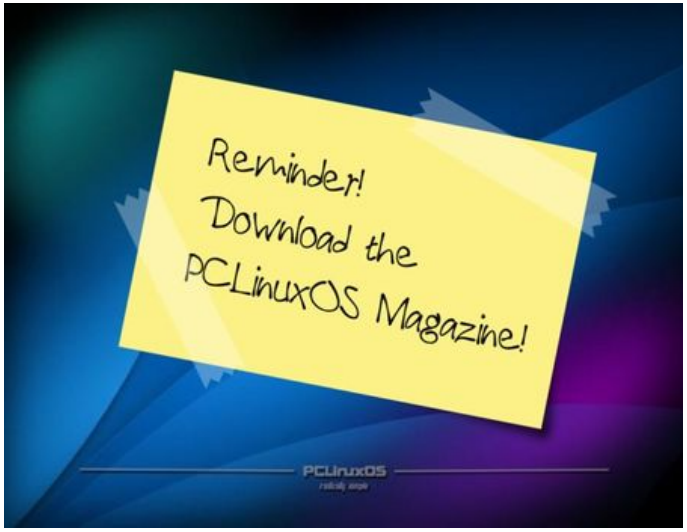
Send the line underneath the paper, and set the **Blur** at 5.



The bigger the shadow you want/need, the longer and less angled you should make your lines.

Now we want to do our note. Click on the **Text** tool at left, click on the yellow "paper" where you want your note and type. Now click on the **Text Formatting tool** at the top of your window and format the text. I used a font called !Paul Maul, but you should use whatever you like (center, top). Save your work.

From here, you can personalize your project. You can change the background back to white and save just the note and tape or do something different. I angled my note and tape pieces a bit, and then put one of our favorite wallpapers behind it. Remember to make sure your tape pieces have been moved above all other items so they show as being over both the paper and the writing. Save your work and export your project.



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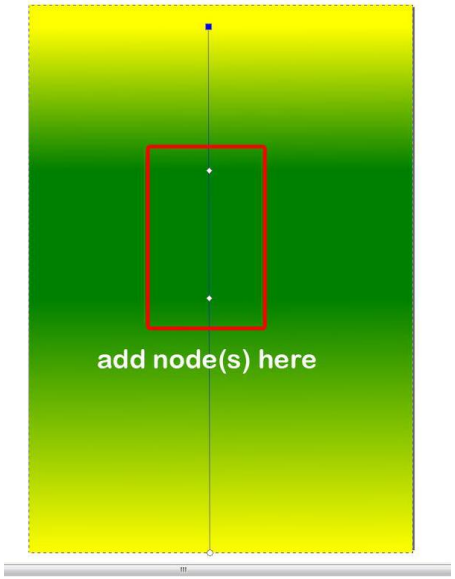
Inkscape Tutorial: Design Your Own Paper

by Khadis

At the very beginning stage of learning graphic design, I learned to design a piece of writing paper from a “how-to” book for kids. It was fun, although the book was really intended for elementary students or kids of that age. And now, I will show you about what I learned. Then you can practice it both for yourself and your kids (if any) or the kids around you.

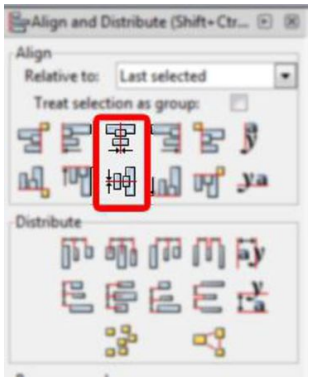
• Open up your Inkscape and create a rectangle width= 21 cm height= 29.7 cm (A4 size) or any size that you like.

• Use the **Gradient Tool** and drag it from the top to the bottom of your rectangle. Click on the top handle (the box shape) and click on the yellow color on your color pallet. Add one or two more nodes by double-clicking the gradient line to create a yellow-to-green gradient.

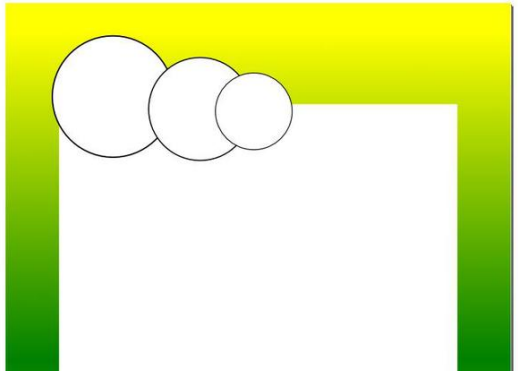


• Click on that new node(s), and choose 'green' as the color. You can move the new node(s) to create a better, smoother gradient.

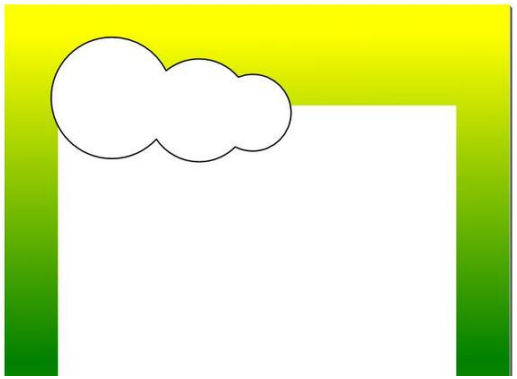
• Create another rectangle and fill it with ‘white’ color. I used width = 16.5 cm and height = 24 cm. Place it in the middle of previous rectangle using **Align and Distribute.**



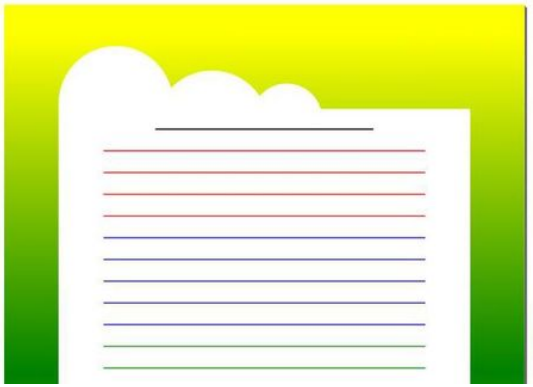
• Create some circles, fill them with ‘white’ color, without stroke, and place them on top of the white rectangle. See the picture below. In the picture, I still have black strokes. It’s only to describe that I created the circles. Of course, later, they can be easily removed.



• If you wish, you may group or unify those circles with the rectangle using **Path > Union**. Don’t forget to remove the stroke if you still have it.



• Create some lines and arrange them like in the picture below. You may color them too. I used 1.50 px as the line width.



• Finally, you can put text or images to decorate your design. I used some PNG images that were taken randomly from Google (next page, top left).

• This design can be used as a photo frame too. You can also set the gradient as much as you like. If you

plan to teach basic Inkscape to your child or children around you, this simple tutorial will fit your needs.

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Screenshot Showcase

Posted by R86, running LXDE, on January 18, 2015.