



Corporate Flow



Illustration



Image Editing



Automation



Web



Text Effects

Canvas Tips and Techniques



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SpriteLayer Effects: Transparency in Motion

Canvas with SpriteLayer technology makes many effects easier to achieve than ever before. Transfer modes and transparency masks let you blend images, drawing, and text. Everything in your composition stays editable, because transparency effects don't change the original objects. You can always go back and modify shapes and colors without having to start over.

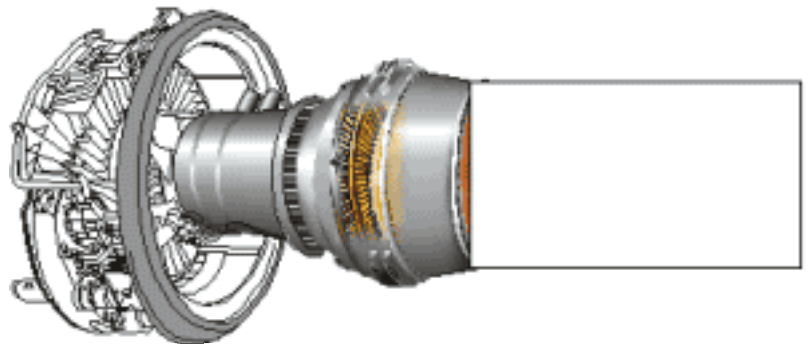
Channel masks let you add subtle, painterly effects to vector objects. In the following pages, we show how transparency can be used to give greater realism to basic vector objects.

Deneba artist Enrique Saldarriaga created the technical drawing of a jet engine using vector objects.

Once the engine illustration was complete, Enrique was ready to add a flaming exhaust plume. He wanted a soft, airbrushed look to contrast with the clean, hard edges of the engine components. He was able to get the effect he wanted with just a single vector object that he brushed with transparency.

Step 1

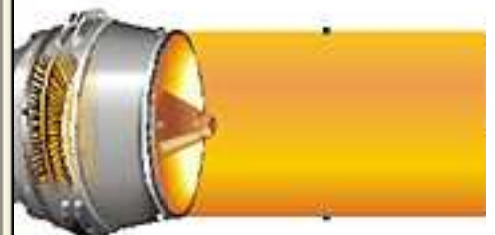
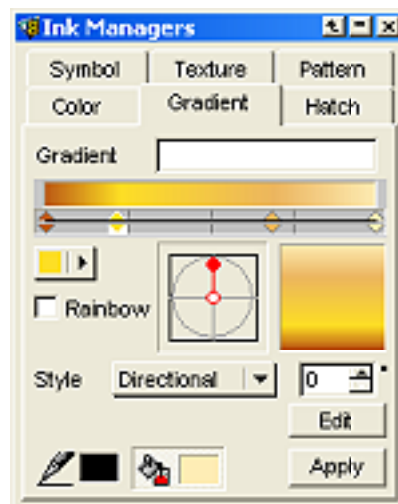
The base object for the jet flame is a vector rectangle that Enrique drew next to the engine nozzle. He moved the rectangle to the back so it would appear to emerge from the nozzle.



Next, Enrique created a gradient ink to fill the rectangle with smooth color bands. In the Inks manager, he made a directional gradient with four colors: darker and lighter orange shades, a dull orange, and a nearly white shade. The diamond-shaped markers in the gradient bar control the position of the colors in the gradient.

Step 2

Enrique applied the gradient ink to the rectangle with the gradient axis at 0 degrees (the red line in the Inks manager is straight up at 0 degrees). This makes the bands of color in the gradient horizontal.



Step 3

With the channel mask in edit mode, you can use any painting tool to modify the channel mask. At first the channel mask is filled with white. When you paint in the mask with dark colors, you brush transparency onto the masked object.

For the jet exhaust flame, Enrique selected the Airbrush tool with a brush size of 19 pixels. In the Brushes palette, he set the Airbrush pressure to less than 20. He made sure to select black for the foreground paint color.

First, to soften the hard edges of the gradient-filled rectangle, Enrique airbrushed along the edges of the channel mask.

As you paint in the channel mask, the rectangle's gradient ink gradually becomes transparent. The transparency reveals the white background, and this softens the shape and colors of the flame.

As you paint in the channel mask, the rectangle's gradient ink gradually becomes transparent. The transparency reveals the white background, and this softens the shape and colors of the flame.



Step 4

If you don't like the effect of any stroke that you paint, just choose Edit > Undo to remove it.

After softening the edges, Enrique painted some very light horizontal strokes near the center of the mask. This added softness and texture inside the flame.



SpriteLayer Effects: Transparency in Motion (Continued)

With just a few brush strokes, Enrique has transformed the rectangle into a plume of flame. Although he didn't use other tools in this illustration, Enrique points out that you can use any painting or image-editing tool to edit a channel mask.



"You might want to use a Gaussian blur to soften the brush strokes in a mask even more," he said. "Or use the Smudge tool to blur the effect by hand."

Enrique also explained how to reverse the transparency effect: change the foreground paint color to white, and paint in the mask to paint out the transparency. "If you find your strokes took off too much, you can change color and paint again to remove transparency from the object."

Step 5

On another part of the jet engine, Enrique used channel masks again to create subtle shading. For example, he drew a vector object in the basic shape of a shadow on the lower engine surface. He added a channel mask, and airbrushed (with black) to fade the edges with transparency, much like he did on the flame object. By softening the edges, he made the shadow blend perfectly into the engine surface.



Step 6

Canvas 6's channel masks give you unprecedented flexibility. They let you paint transparency on objects, and keep the ability to edit the originals, whether they're images, vector objects, or text.



