

Adobe Illustrator 5.0

A Designer's Toolbox



Recently I cleaned out an old trunk that I got in college to house all my old drafting tools — tools that I used to create mechanicals, mock-ups, and clean black and white line art. The T-square, ruling pen, compass set, adjustable triangle, technical pen set, electric eraser and eraser guide, flexible curve, French curve set, drafting dots, and circle template set were a reminder of just how much I've come to rely on the Macintosh as a replacement for all that equipment. I haven't used my traditional tools much since the Mac came along, especially since I've learned to use Adobe Illustrator. I've been using Illustrator since version 1.1, and with the release of 5.0 the folks at Adobe have added some important new features that, quite possibly, will end up replacing even more of my traditional tools before long.

can be re-sized to suit your style of working. The page size has finally been expanded to as large as 120 inches square, and — at last! — users can create and edit artwork in Preview mode, a feature Aldus FreeHand users have enjoyed for years. And, also like FreeHand, Illustrator now supports multiple levels of Undo and Redo.

Magical Time-Saving Filters

Illustrator 5.0 has some new filters that can save hours in drawing and editing time. Compared to the way certain things had to be drawn previously, these new features border on the miraculous! The Pathfinder filter may be the most powerful of these, with thirteen choices for merging and uniting shapes. Now users

can Unite overlapping shapes with just one click of the mouse — no more trying to line up points manually. One shape can be used to crop another, and colors of two objects can be blended where they meet to create a transparent effect. Some of the choices in the Objects filter are just as great — notably Offset Path, which you can use to uniformly enlarge a shape based on its outline path; and Outline Stroked Path, which turns a stroked path into a shape. Other filters give the user more precise color controls, the ability to export and find text, a group of user-defineable shapes like stars and polygons that Illustrator can create, and some fun distortion and stylizing tools which can give your drawing a random, hand drawn look.

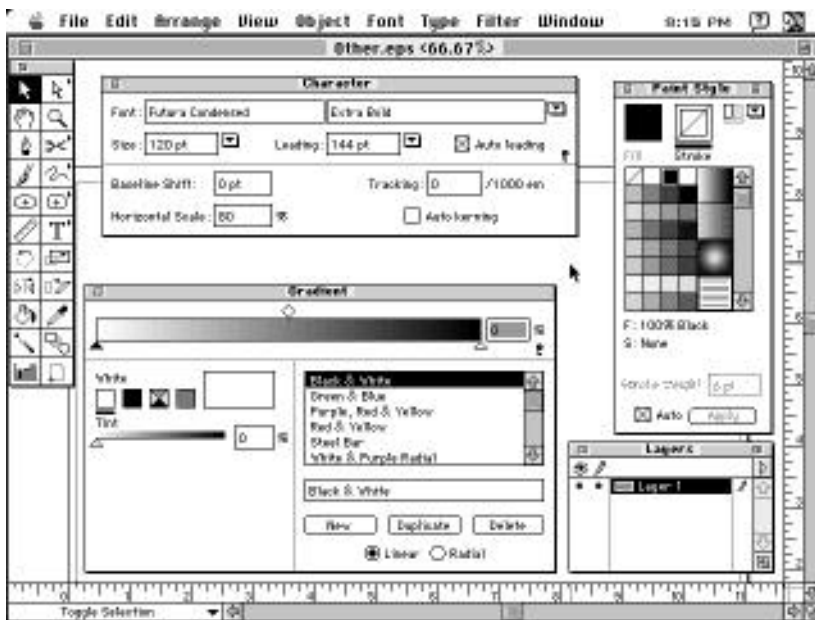
Graceful Gradients and Colors

Previously, the only way Illustrator users could gain a gradient effect was through a blend simulation, which wasn't exactly the most intuitive approach. With the release of 5.0, the procedure for creating great looking gradients is much improved. Custom gradients (or custom colors) can now be created by using sliders, and the new Gradient Vector tool allows you to specify the location, angle, and spread

of the gradient by just clicking and dragging. The whole approach to color in Illustrator 5.0 is much more intuitive — it has more of a painterly feel. The new paintbrush tool (which includes support for a pressure-sensitive tablet) is a good example. With it you draw out a line and Illustrator converts the line to an object automatically. The user can specify the width of the line or have it mimic the effects of a calligraphy pen. Colors can be "picked up" with the new paint dropper tool or selected in the Paint Style palette.

Text Handling

Illustrator's tools for manipulating text were always okay, but now Adobe has added a few new features, most notably the Character



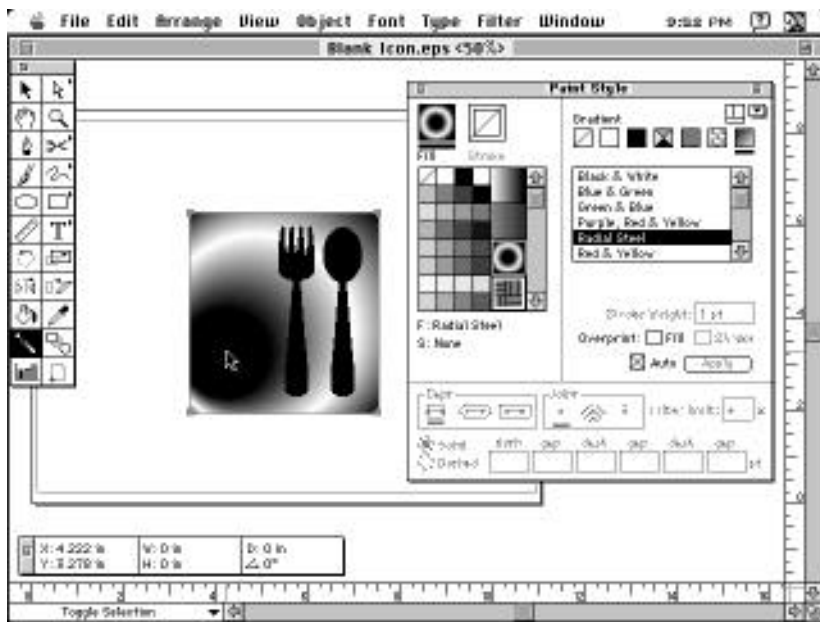
Palettes Illustrator 5.0's new floating palettes offer the user new control and flexibility.

Notable Differences from 3.2

Illustrator 5.0 is radically different from its predecessor, 3.2 — so much so that it has the look and feel of a completely new program. The first indication came during installation — 5.0 comes on seven disks! (Adobe has generously included 40 fonts and version 3.6 of ATM with the program.) The most important differences come in the form of new features, however; and 5.0 is packed with them. Adobe has now taken the Photoshop-proven idea of plug-in filters to Illustrator, which means that the program will accept extra modules that bring more features to the user. Illustrator now has a layers palette, which organizes an unlimited number of layers in a document. Most of the annoying dialog boxes that faced the user when modifying artwork in 3.2 have been replaced with wonderful floating palettes, some of which

continued →

Illustrator 5.0 (continued)



Gradients You can change the origin and depth of a radial (or a linear) gradient by clicking and dragging with the gradient vector tool.

and Paragraph floating palettes. Between those two palettes, you have all of Illustrator's typographic controls — font, size, spacing, hyphenation, justification, baseline shift, auto kerning, and more — available anytime they're needed, and the new command Horizontal Scale will automatically fit a headline into a desired space. The keyboard shortcuts for kerning in 5.0 are different from 3.2 — but they makes more sense now (Option-Left Arrow, Option-Right Arrow). I know Illustrator isn't designed to be a word

processor, but I've always wished for tab controls in the program. Alas, no such luck with this release.

A Few Nitpicky Complaints

The program is great, but these are a few minor things I've noticed: 1) There is still no Revert command. I find this useful in other programs. 2) Now the Save command is never grayed out — even immediately after a save! 3) Now if you want to type in a percentage or angle while using the Rotate, Scale, Shear, or Reflect tool, you must hold down the Option key while clicking the tool, as in FreeHand and previous versions of Illustrator. I liked the way 3.2 had extended versions of those tools available in the toolbox.

Overall, I'm Impressed

With this release of Illustrator, Adobe has finally caught up with and zoomed right by Aldus FreeHand. When I saw the new time-saving features that were included with 5.0, it made me glad that I rely on Illustrator more than any other program to get my work done. Looks like it may be time to pack up those paints now!

by Brooks Greene

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Adobe Systems, Inc.
1585 Charleston Road, P.O. Box 7900
Mountain View, CA 94039
(800) 833-6687
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Deluxe CD-ROM Upgrade

The Deluxe CD-ROM Edition includes many valuable extras, such as tips from the Adobe Technical Library, digital movies in which Adobe Illustrator experts demonstrate tricks and techniques and show how to use the new features. The Deluxe CD version also includes Adobe Separator, 80 typefaces, Type On Call, Adobe Collector's Edition 1 and 2, and samples from third-party clip art.

Adobe Acrobat Reader is included, along with online versions of the Illustrator manual and tech notes. The latest version of Adobe's Level 2 PostScript printer guarantees speedy and accurate printouts. There are also demo versions of several Adobe programs.

At right is one example of the third-party clip art: Camcorder by Oswego Company.





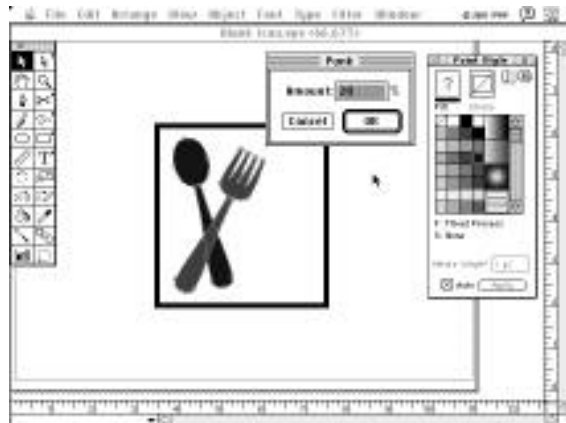
Pathfinder 1 Here I'm combining two shapes with the Pathfinder/Unite filter in a drawing of a key. Shown in artwork mode.



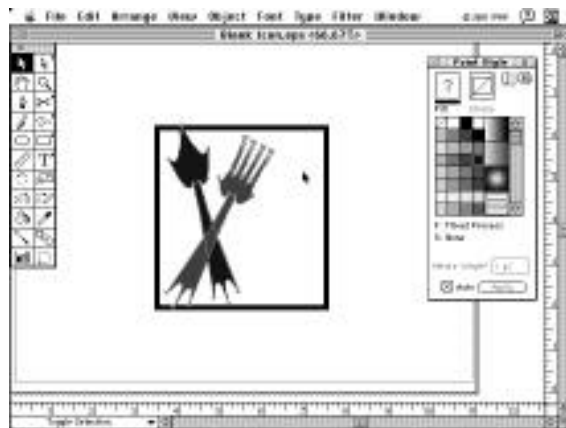
Pathfinder 2 After Uniting. It's amazing how simple this tedious task has become.



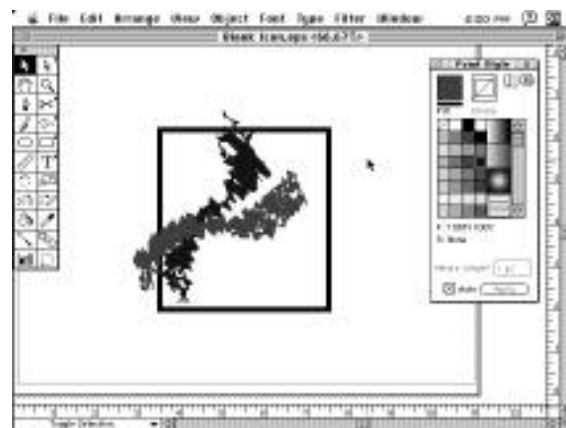
Pathfinder 3 The finished artwork in Preview mode. I used a mask to crop the "Do Not Disturb" sign inside the frame.



Punk 1 Illustrator 5.0 has several fun filters you can use to give your artwork a hand-generated look. Here the fork and spoon are about to be punked.



Punk 2 After punking, the fork and spoon take on a rather pointed appearance.



Punk 3 The fork and spoon are barely recognizable after a few rounds of punking, twirling and roughening.