

# Creative Essentials Graphic Suite

by Vance Bennett



The Creative Essentials Graphic Suite is an amazing value, five graphic applications plus fonts. Several months back I had received an e-mail from Allume Systems who put this suite together. They were offering it for \$130 (I think you can find it in the mail order catalogs for \$150). Since I already had earlier versions of the Corel programs I was very interested in getting the newer versions for OSX. I couldn't believe my good fortune when my member raffle ticket was called out—after six or seven people had gotten to choose before me and Creative Essentials was still there.

Creative Essentials Graphic Suite is packaged by Allume Systems. Included on the CD are five graphic programs which consist of: Corel PHOTO PAINT® 11, Corel DRAW® 11, Corel TRACE® 11, DAZ® Bryce® 5 and Toon Boom Studio® Express. Also included are twenty-four fonts from Bitstream®.

This collection of graphic tools is meant for those who may not have the higher end programs but still have a need or desire to produce creative projects for print or the internet and are limited by their word processing programs. This collection would be a great addition to anyone's graphics arsenal. The system requirements if you're considering buying Creative Essentials are: Mac OS 10.1 or higher; 128mb RAM; CD ROM drive; a video card with at least 8mb of video RAM and support for 24 bit color at a resolution of 1024x768 or higher (this includes most Macs with a G3 or better processor except; 233–333mhz iMacs; clamshell iBooks; Wallstreet PowerBooks; and beige G3's using the stock video card)

Support for all the graphics programs looks pretty thorough. There are built-in 'Help,' 'Read Me,' or 'User Guide,' along with free web support, links to forums and if needed optional pay support. All of the programs include tutorials that you can use to learn and get a better feel for each program.

The tutorials were my main source for reviewing each of the five programs. Now I will attempt to give an overview and my impression of each of these programs. Starting with CorelDRAW®.

**CorelDRAW®** is a vector-based drawing and graphic design program. There are four tutorials 'Workspace Tour,' 'Creating a logo,' 'Working with a layout,' and 'Creating a rollover button.'

The Workspace Tour shows you the basics of working with CorelDRAW®. The things you learn are working with:

- toolbox
- property bar
- flyouts
- Docker windows and palettes
- mouse commands
- Help

The 'Creating a logo' tour takes you through the process of creating a logo and the things you learn are;

- draw lines and shapes
- add color to objects
- duplicate objects
- rotate objects
- mirror objects
- import images from another file
- fit text to a path
- use the Artistic media tool presets

'Working with a layout' This tutorial introduces the layout and organization tools in CorelDRAW. Using these tools you are able to produce any kind of project, whether it is an advertisement, newsletter, logo, poster, or any kind of artwork.

Doing this tutorial, you create an advertisement for the logo in the previous tutorial. You create some of the design elements and text, and also learn how to import images and text.

The things you learn how to do are:

- create backgrounds
  - use guidelines and snapping options
  - create frames
  - import images
  - use the PowerClip tool
  - apply preset drop shadows
  - work with artistic text
  - import and format paragraph text
  - apply alignment options
- 'Creating a rollover button'

In this tutorial, you learn to create a rollover button that changes its appearance when you click or point to it. You'll learn how to:

- apply rollover effects to buttons
- apply transparencies to objects
- change objects' colors
- work with drop shadows
- preview rollover effects
- export rollover buttons to the

Macromedia Flash (SWF) format

CorelDRAW to me seems very similar with many of the same capabilities of higher end drawing programs. When I was exploring CorelDRAW on my own, the text tool in particular interested me. With the text tool you can easily stretch and shrink a block of text shaping it any way you want. There are even preset shapes to apply the text to. This is a big deal to me because on occasion I get artwork or logos that have been created in this way and need to clean-up or recreate them. Unfortunately I haven't been able to easily recreate them in my drawing program.

**Corel PHOTO-PAINT**, is a bit-map image-editing application that lets you retouch existing photos or create original graphics. There are four tutorials: 'Workspace Tour,' 'Correcting Images,' 'Retouching Images,' and 'Masking Images.'

What the Work Space tutorial covers: In this tutorial, you use the tools provided by Corel PHOTO-PAINT to create a Web page banner. You save the final project as a GIF file with a transparent background.

This tutorial introduces you to the workspace of Corel PHOTO-PAINT. The appli-

cation window contains elements that help you access the tools and commands you need to view and edit images. Application commands are accessible through the menu bar, toolbox, property bar, toolbars, or Docker windows/palettes.

As you practice creating a Web page banner, you learn how to use the following tools:

- menu bar
- toolbox
- flyouts
- property bar
- Docker windows/palettes
- Help

#### Correcting images

In this tutorial, you'll learn how to perform basic image corrections to a scanned photo.

What you learn during this tutorial:

- rotate an image
- crop image edges
- fix damaged areas
- adjust image tone
- correct color
- apply the Smart blur filter
- apply the Unsharp mask filter

'Retouching Images' in this tutorial, you learn how to retouch a scanned image, to make it suitable for emailing.

What you learn during this tutorial:

- align and crop an image
- remove red-eye from an image
- adjust image color and tone
- save to a new file format

'Masking Images' in this tutorial, you learn how to protect part of an image by creating a mask. You do this by first defining a rough outline of an object and then fine-tuning your mask. When you apply a blurring effect to the image, you see how the masked portion of the object remains unchanged.

You learn how to:

- mask images
- modify masks
- invert masks
- apply effects to masked images

PHOTO-PAINT is similar to high end imaging programs. It seems to have all the needed tools to work with images. Including: red-eye removal, image stitching for panoramas, image slicing for faster image loading to the web, making rollovers for web pages and a cutout tool to quickly mask complex objects. There are even tools for some movie editing.

One of the things I liked was the real-time text editing tool. You can type right on the image and when choosing a font, as you scroll down the text changes to that font.

**CorelTRACE®** enables you to easily and quickly trace bitmap images and convert them to vector images.

No tutorials came with this program, there is a 'Help' guide. What CorelTRACE can be used for is, turning scanned images into scalable vector art, making your own scalable clip-art, and turning a photo into a drawing.

There are eight options for tracing, which are: Outline-produces a vector graphic that closely resembles the bitmap.

Advanced Outline-This option lets you specify advanced outline trace options.

Centerline-produces a line drawing.

Centerline Outline-produces an outlined line drawing. The centerline options don't work on grayscale images, they need to be converted to bitmap.

Sketch produces a vector graphic that contains crossing lines that create a cross hatch effect.

Mosaic produces a vector graphic that consists of an array of symmetrical tiles. The color of each tile is determined by the average color of the bitmap in that area.

3D Mosaic-produces a vector graphic that consists of an array of three-dimensional symmetrical tiles. The color of each tile is determined by the average color of the bitmap in that area.

Woodcut-produces a vector graphic that contains lines of varying width, depending on the intensity of the bitmap at any given point.

**DAZ® Bryce® 5** enables you to create realistic 3D landscapes and animations. This is powerful and complex program that will take time to master, but doing the tutorials will get you started. The one thing I didn't like about using the tutorials is you can't switch back and forth between the program and tutorial. I ended up printing out the tutorial.



Some of the new features are:

Enhanced Intuitive Interface - handy palettes allow quick navigation and editing

New Tree Lab - create and incorporate realistic trees into landscapes

Enhanced Sky Lab - control the appearance and attributes of sky effects

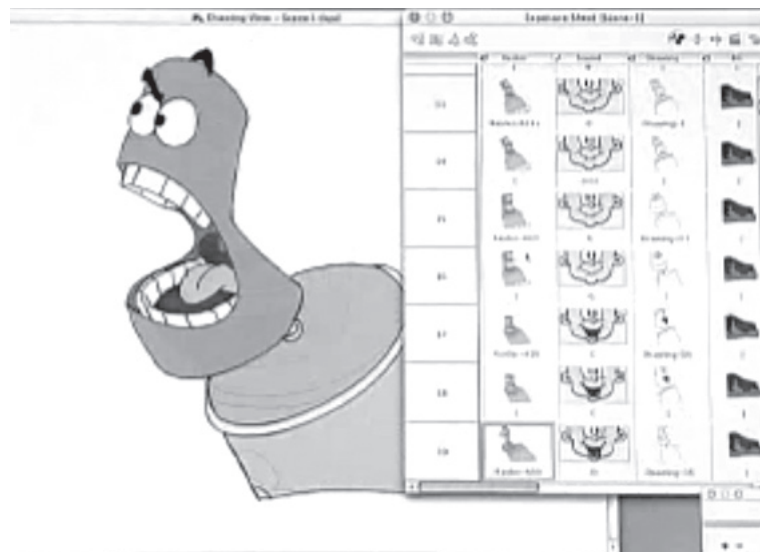
Meatballs - create organic shapes which render faster

New Network Rendering - render across a network, saving time and money

#### toon Boom Studio TM Express

is a great easy to use 2D animation program. This version has some limitations that the upgrade version is capable of. You won't be able to export your creations to QuickTime. You are able to draw in real-time and combine

2d drawings with live action. This is a fun and easy program to use. It would be a perfect program for making web animations or just amusing yourself making cartoons.



*Toon Boom Studio TM Express...It would be a perfect program for making web animations or just amusing yourself making cartoons.*

#### Bitstream® Fonts

There are twenty-four fonts in Post Script and Open Type versions. They are mostly display or decorative fonts.