Sweedies # 1
ARTRAGE *tutorials*

Henry Ståhle 2010

"Welcome to the world of ArtRage, the easy to use, stylish painting software for Windows and Mac OS X!

With ArtRage you can paint with oils and watercolours, sketch with pencils, spray stickers over your canvas, and much more. Stencils and rulers let you create precise shapes or smooth curves freehand. Tracing and Reference images let you load photos to recreate either by eye or by letting ArtRage select colours for you as you paint. For professional users, ArtRage offers Layers and Layer Groups, Layer Blend Modes compatible with the PSD file format, plug in Filter support and more.

Best of all, ArtRage doesn't force you to learn complex tool settings, it lets you get right down to painting with tools you already know how to use."
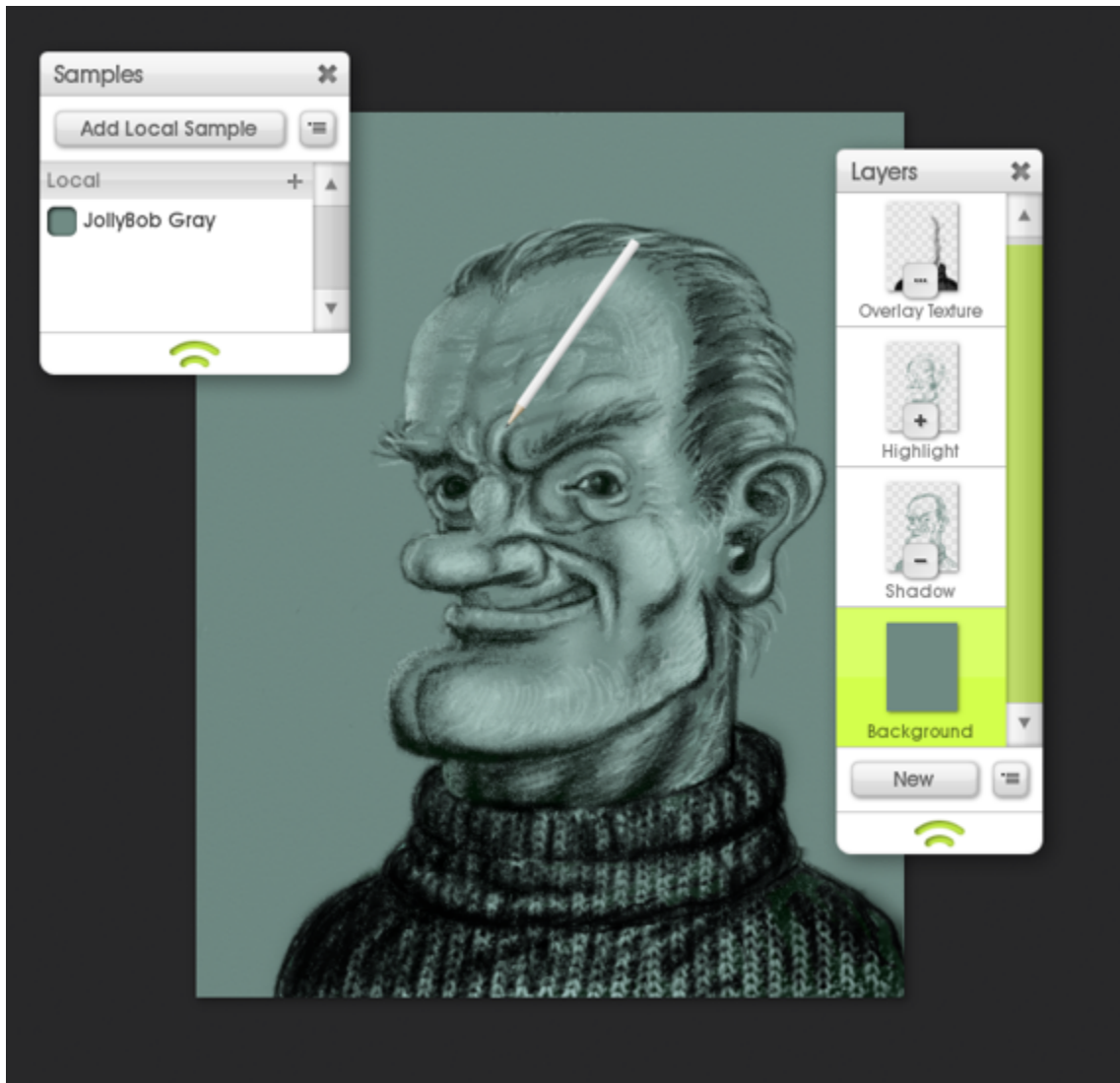
These tutorials are done for you to study and learn from. I hope you will enjoy this excellent program as much as I do and find it as useful in as many aspects as me; as a professional, as Art educator, as a freelance illustrator and hobby artist and just for the absolute fun of it.

http://www.artrage.com

Jolly Bob from Aberdeen

"Jolly Bob was a merry sailor born in Aberdeen". I tried to make a picture out of that old sailor song. The method I used was this:

I used one single colour for both the background and the pencil. If you look at the layers you can see there are some different blending modes. The bottom layer - the canvas - has the Normal blending mode. Next layer where the dark drawing is has the Shadow blending mode. That is why the same pen gives a dark nuance while the Highlight mode gives a light nuance. For this grayscale drawing I used one single colour getting a good grisaille look.

The complicated knitted texture is an imported photo placed on top in the layer stack using the Overlay blending mode.
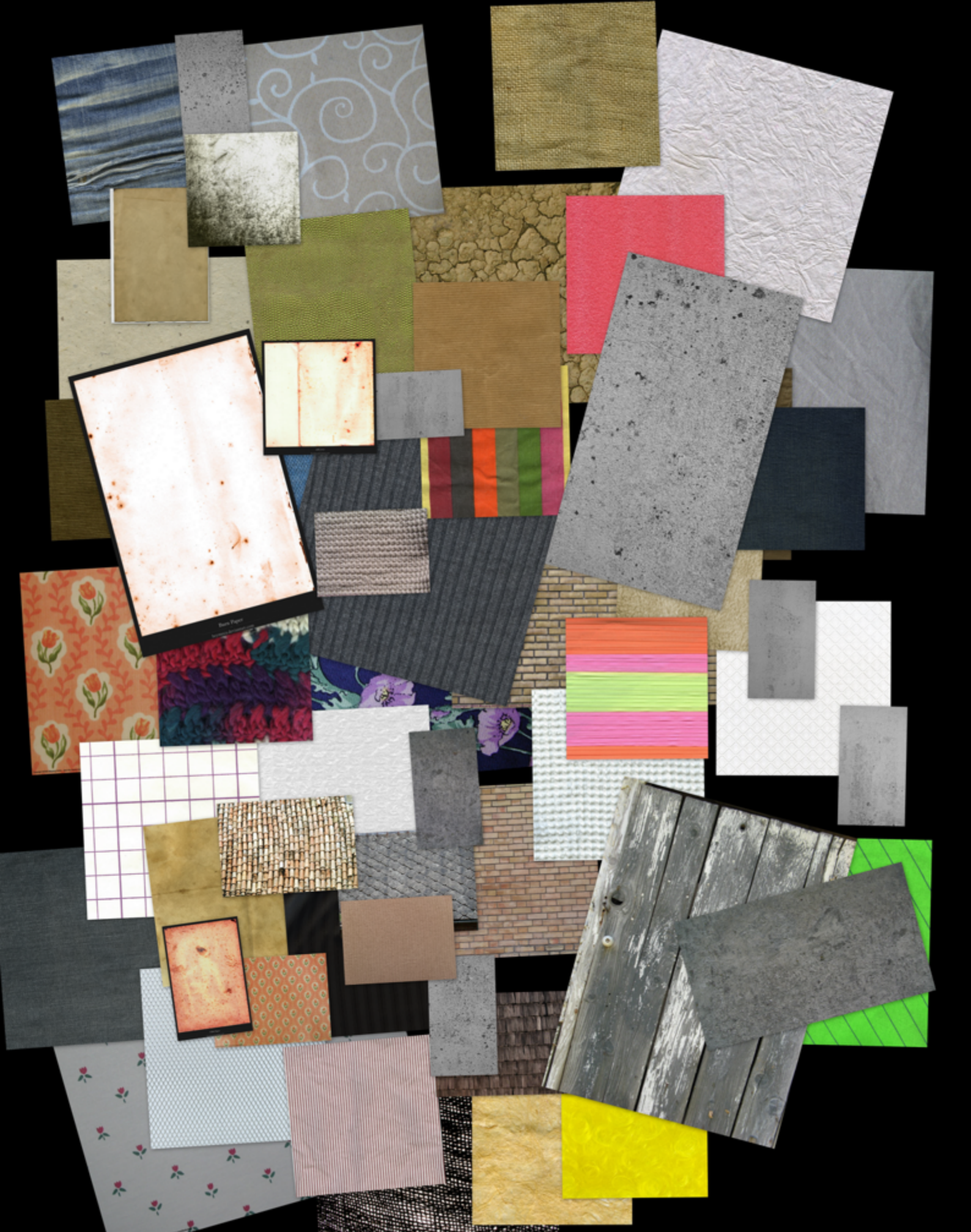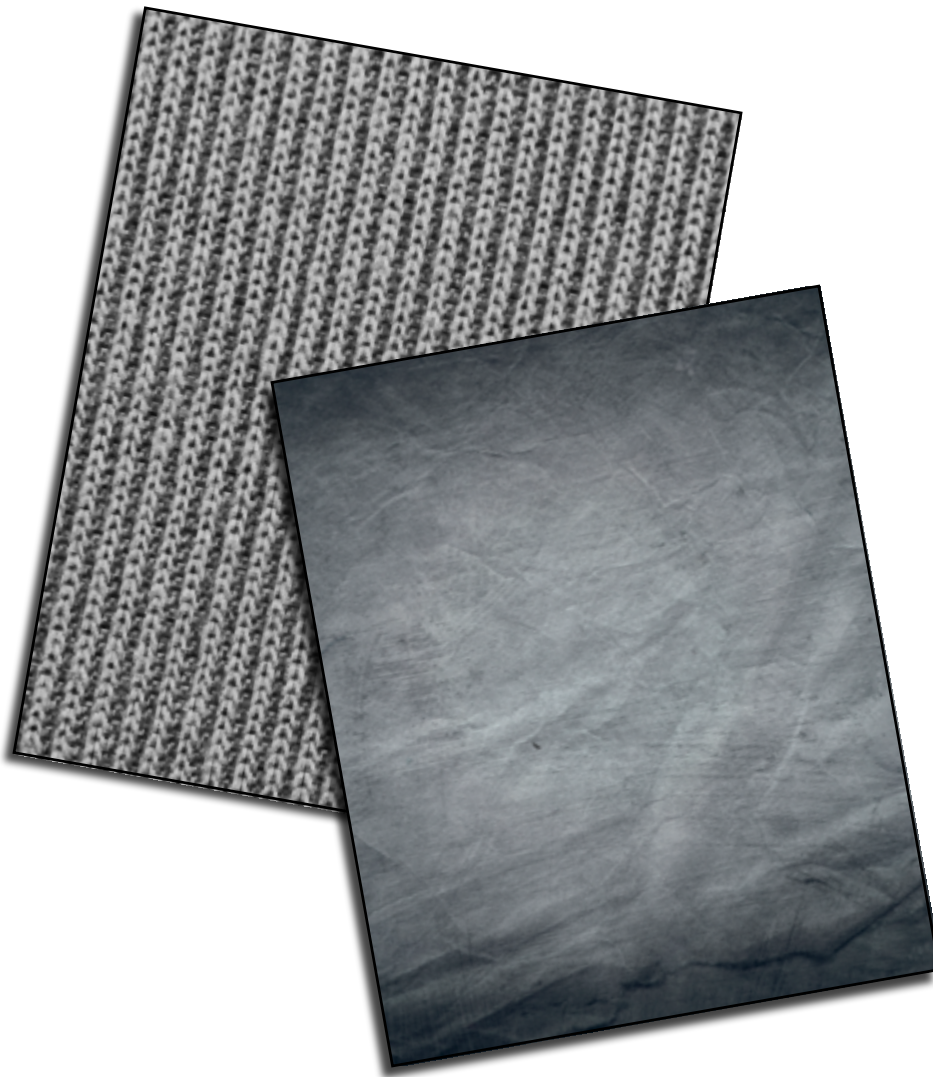
I have a folder in my computer named "photo textures". These are for using in my painting projects. Photo textures gives an extra di-
mension to an image: a collage look. But it can be overdone and
look a bit "computerish" if it is not used carefully. Painterly or grunge textures are my favourites. Some artists make scrap-booking or collage style graphics using nearly only photo tex-tures, it can be fascinating. But I prefer a more subtle use; mak-ing it not look too obviously photographic
. Digital camera texture hunting, searching the Internet, making rub-of drawings (frottage) or splatter paint is something every digital artists must do. It is rewarding. The textures above are both used in this Jolly Bob project.

Four steps of drawing and painting
Jolly Bob:

The first step was sketching the
man from my imagination

I used the computer from beginning
to end but the sketch could of course
be done on paper and scanned. By
using ArtRage from the start there was
much less work.

From time to time the "real"
sketching is the best way to
draw since it can be done anywhere.
Sitting too much in front of the LCD is
no good, one has to get some
variety. Good old graphite and a book
of papers, maybe Moleskin, is one way
to go exploring fantasy.

Next step involves adding high- lights
and some texturing as de- scribed in
the beginning of this chapter. The
method used can be studied by
learning from the old master, Pierre-
Paul Prud'hon among others.

The third step is carried out by adding
one new layer using the
Colour blending method after
merging the two drawing layers
together.

The last step was importing a
texture above the background layer
using the Overlay method.

Jolly Bob was done!

Into the misty.

This a very simple drawing done with the pencil, the crayon and sticker tool using 4 layers. Size of the picture: 30 x 40 cm at 200 dpi.

The bottom layer is the sketch. The pencil size was set to 12 % with 50% pressure. The crayon size varied from about 6 - 30 at 50% pressure and softness. Sticker tool at 100 to 500% size.- The sticker I used was the same as I used on the rook in my 'Lino cutting made easy' tutorial. Paper grain is the default tiny paper grain.

The idea behind this picture was today's weather; suddenly the wind turned southerly from having been northerly and cold for months. The winter has been the longest and hardest in 20 years or so...

It is raining and the snow and ice is melting fast. The countryside I live in is all wrapped misty and dark. But the good mood I get from this first sign of spring had to be drawn as an expression of my mind.

Sticker pattern
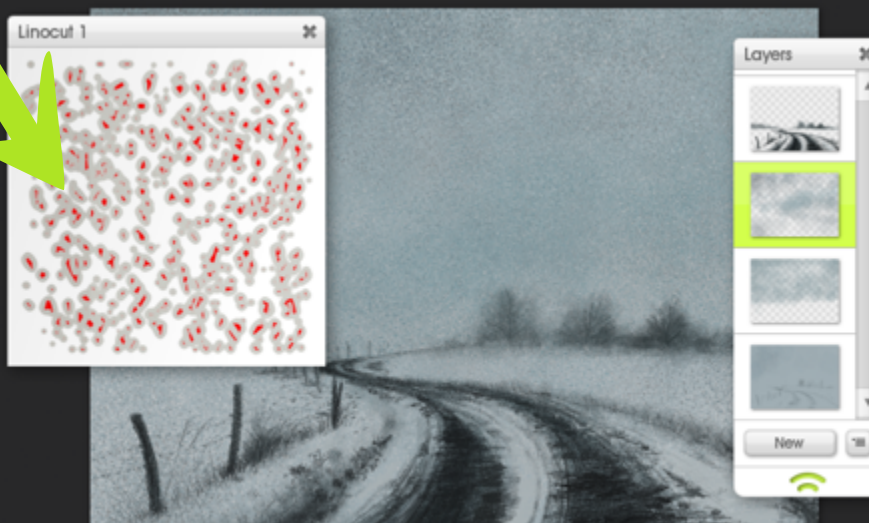
Monochrome Oil painting.

One strength of ArtRage is the simulation of real medium, like the oil paint I have used here. Using a digital tablet, like my Wacom, gives me a feeling of using natural media that no other software offers. This mini tutorial shows how I use ArtRage's paintbrush and the preset "Everlasting Oil", only one size and one blue nuance, to paint a fantasy landscape.

I start by making a rough sketch. As you see I put numbers in each part of the image. They are there just to show the method I use painting monochromatic oils.

The process starts on a 20 x 15 cm 200 dpi bottom layer (canvas) under the sketch. Above the canvas there are 5 more layers with the blend mode set to "Shadow". The layer transparency I ended up with was 60% on each of these 5 layers.

I painted the entire canvas and then, on the next layer, the 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 areas. I went on to the third layer (third from the bottom) and painted number 3, 4, 5 and 6. And so on ..until all areas were painted. Using this method and blending mode, shades of blue are added on top of each other, in a transparent and darkening manner.

The final touch was some dark and light streaks with a narrow brush to make the water look a bit watery. The palette knife added a little tree edge look to the ridges.

I hope you find this method of monochrome painting useful. Making monochrome grayscale paintings this way is a quick and easy way of sketching out concepts.

Try it! It's rewarding!
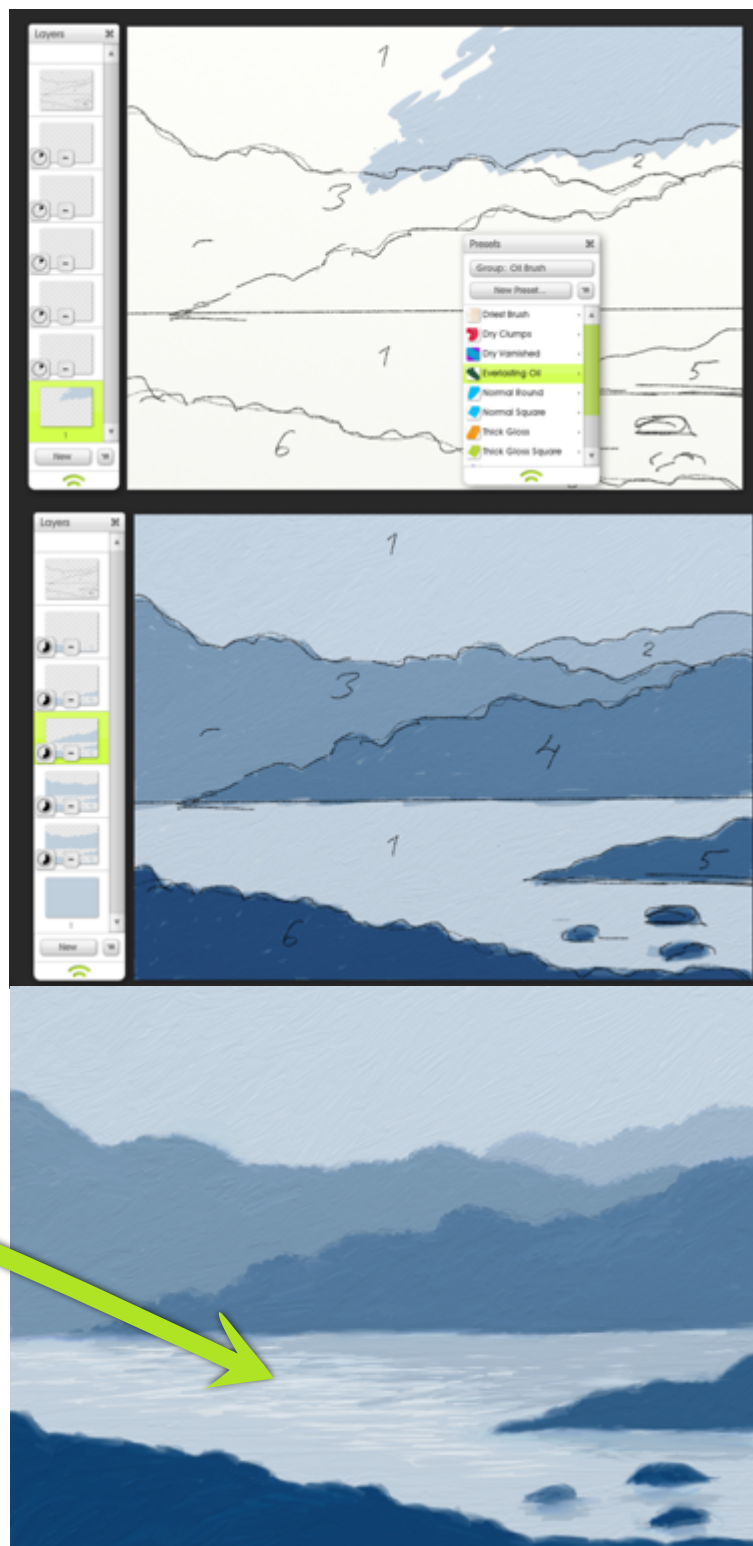
Lino cutting made easy.

Ever since I was a kid I was fascinated by woodcutting. I used plywood, cheap chisels, carvers and smeary oil colours Clapping the print with a spoon on beautiful Japa- nese rice paper. The hands got as black as the print and there was some soap, turpentine and lots of paper towels involved.

The look of the linocut art is still a graphic expression I like very much. I remember being inspired by the German expressionists like Kirchner, Heckel and Pechstein. They still talk to me in a special way although their motifs are a bit narrow and out of date.

By using ArtRage I can imitate the medium and the rough expressive graphic style. The bird in my picture, a rook, has got the same graphic style as the medium, that is why I use it in this digital linocut.

The process starts on a 20 x 15 cm 200 dpi document in ArtRage. The reference image is found on the Internet although I have some good photos of my own of rooks since they are quite common around here where I live.

The initial sketch it not too accurate, it does not have to be. The cut is supposed to be rough! Next step is adding a new layer in "Shadow" blend mode. I fill it with 100% pure black and turn the layer visibility to 80% so I can see the sketch. Using white colour and the Pen tool I "cut" away the contours of the rook. As soon as that is done I turn the layer visibility to 100% since there is no need for the sketch any more. I keep on carving away until the entire bird is done and there are almost no traces left of the black. Still I want the small "uncut" marks to remain, these are the marks that are left while cutting a bit rough. These uncut marks are pleasing to my eyes - a nice texture.
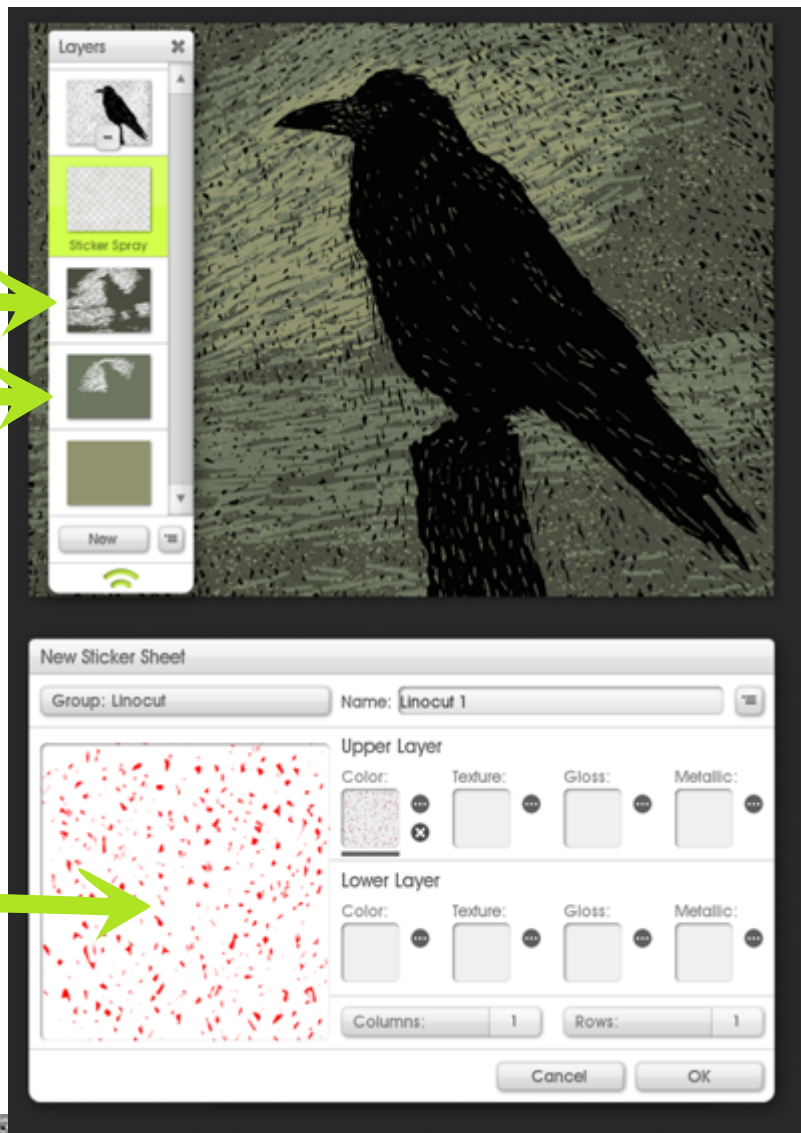
Pen settings:

Pen size: 7

Lino cutting made easy.

On these layers I use the eraser to "cut away" the colour.

Sticker spray pattern

The linocut is completed by adding some discrete and moody colours on layers under the rook. As you might notice there is one layer named "Sticker spray". I made a cut-out-looking sticker spray to make the linocut look even more rough ...because that is the way I like it to look. This is the final look of the lino with a little colder palette, not so moody as the initial one, which was a bit warmer and darker.

I used ArtRage colour adjustment tool to modify the colour tone of the picture.

Line art + colour

The illustration above is for a book of mine. I used this character as a teacherr in the book of teaching Art for kids and teens. He's got the look of Leonardo or a wise man. I have used him for many years as a visual gimmick in my illustrated lesson plans and publications. Here is how I have done it:

After making a rough graphite sketch that I scanned and imported as a tracing image I used the best digital pen tool I know; the ArtRage Ink Pen. I traced my graphite sketch using these settings below.

After the inking I used the Airbrush tool to add the colour.

The oval framing is done by using the stencil below.

The stencil form can be altered by using the alt+shift keys while dragging.

Wild West Style Poster

I always wanted to make a Wild West style poster all since I was a little boy reading those western comics . They were all beautifully hand inked in black and white . ArtRage is not complicated to work with, it's got an artistic approach that appeals to me. So I decided to make this project/tutorial truly ArtRage-ish and skip all the in-depth talk and try to recreate some of that boyhood comic reading feeling, making a crook looking like a crook, the way those comic artist made them. I concentrated on a little grungy and hand painted look. The image base was a photo of myself that I turned into a grim looking oldie. By tracing and tweaking that photo with the excellent pen tool in ArtRage I had a handmade looking drawing in a short time.

(Tip: hit the ctrl+T keys to call up the tracing photo)
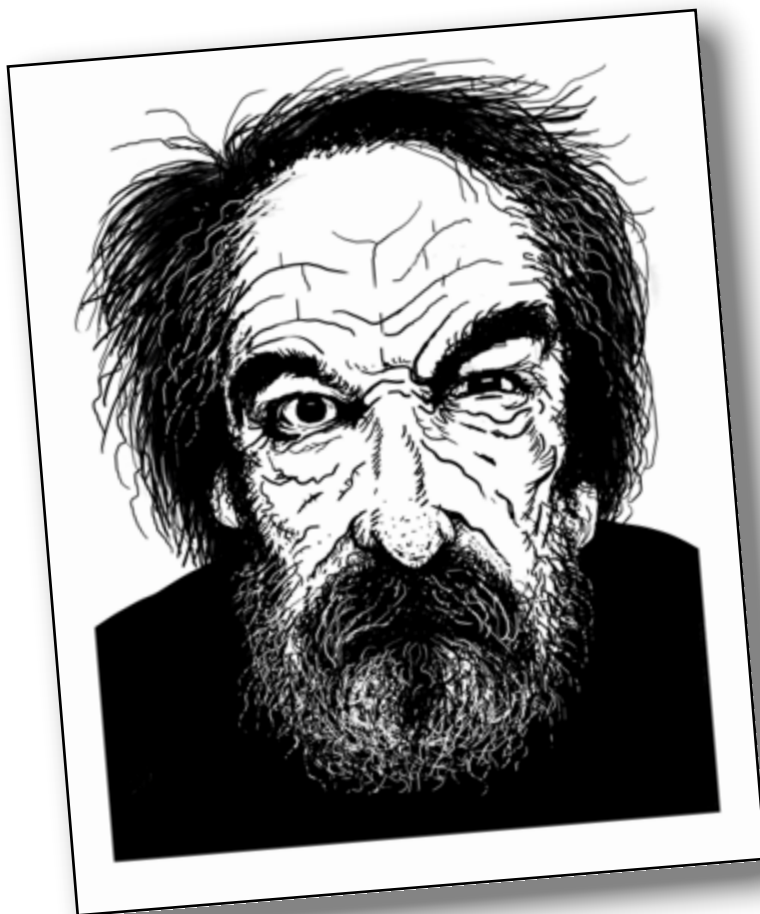
The text was done using ArtRage text tool. The font I used is a freeware western looking type I found by googling. It is called "World Finest", but believe me, there are lots of these wild west looking styled types to find, some commercial very good grungy looking fonts that also would have been great to use.

The poster paper was made by using a worn paper texture that I looked up somewhere on the Internet. There are lots of paper textures out there and if you don't have the luck to find any just wrinkle and fold a paper of your own to get the rightlook.

Use a scanner or a camera to get the paper texture into the computer. Load the paper as a new layer on top of your drawing and use the "overlay" layer blending method to express he texture. By experimenting with the color adjustment tool you can set the look right.

After finishing the portrait drawing and setting the text I started painting the background on a completely new image. The picture base was a photo I shot of an old barn made of wood planks. I did not want a photographic look so I used the photo as a reference and stencil. The stencil was a black and white png file of the woodplanks that I imported on top of a brown color layer.

The sticker tool has become a favorite tool of mine since I can get it to spray crayon drawn looking textures, scribble looking textures, wrinkled cloth looking textures or whatever natural looking texture I like to use. I used some of these stickers to paint through the wood plank stencil. The resulting image was that handmade look I wanted mine to look hand-made.

The strength of ArtRage is making the digital image look natural handmade.

The final touch was when I imported the poster on top of the plank wall. I rotated it slightly ans "tore" the poster by using the eraser and painted a fold with the air brush. The nails were the last thing I did before saving my ptg-file the last time.

The Photo / Stencil I used for plank wall.

The stickers I used for the plank wall painting.

The Winter Tree painting by Sweedie


Winter Tree
by Sweedie

The Winter Tree painting was done to show the steps involved in making a stencil and using a sticker for painting textured areas. The sticker tool and a stencil can be used in various ways and experimenting with them is great fun. One thing to remember is to save all original stickers and stencils in the painting projects folder on your hard drive. One other thing to remember is to use separate layers for all new actions you make and to save your work often, often. If there is a crash of some kind you can always get back to your work. It won't get lost if you remember to save often.
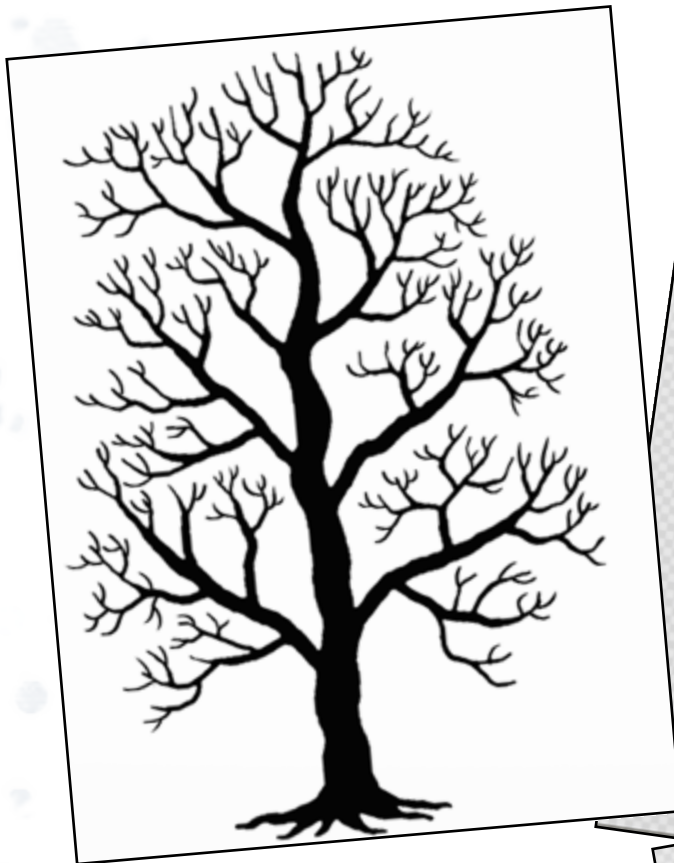
I started by drawing the black tree in order to make a stencil. The final image (still in my head) will consist of several trees all different from each others, so this is just a test. It is really easy turning the drawing into a stencil; click the current layer's menu button "'New Stencil from Layer Contents'' will make it. Right clicking the stencil makes it possible to save the stencil to your disk..

The Oil brush was used for painting the trunk and branches. I like a lot of texture so I used the sticker tool, drawing a crayon pattern on top of the oil painting.
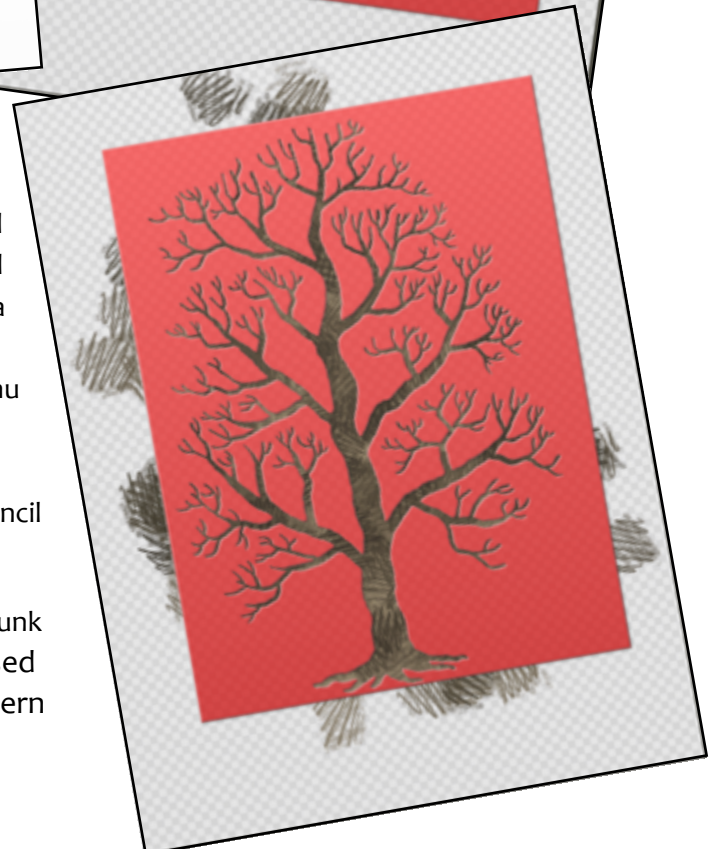
When the tree was all done I went on painting the foreground snow and the background behind the tree using the same sticker.

The new stencil was made the same way as the one before and I used it for separating the ground from the sky and from the rest of the background.

This is the "Krita" sticker image

the new stencil
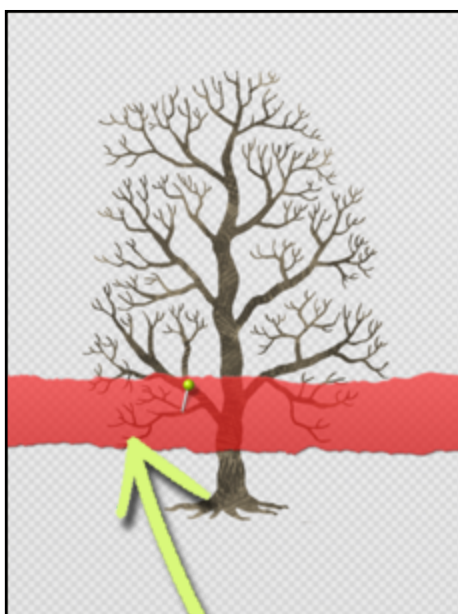
the gradient stencil

I used the gradient stencil for the sky. The snowy sky is almost always darker along the horizon, that is why I wanted to use the gradient stencil. It is hard to paint a slowly toning sky without using a gradient stencil like this. Still using the same "Krita" sticker as before I painted the dark bluish-grey snow clouds.

The chalk tool was used to dot the falling snowflakes.

The snow on the branches was done using the Oil brush.

All images are by Sweedie and are made using ArtRage 3.
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Cutie

This design of the little character "Cutie" is something like the design of a manga type "chibi". It is about making a little boy or, in this case, a little girl, cute and simple.

The design starts on a empty transparent layer with the precise Pencil tool with 30% smoothing. First of all I sketch to circles, one on the top of the other, one for the body one for the head. Next I add the loose sketch of arms and legs and a baseline for the small character to stand on; the ground.

As I sketch along the idea grows and I add details and re-fine the design. Finally I am satisfied and decide to start "inking"

The "inking" is done on a new layer on top of the sketch, still using the same precise Pencil. As the opacity of the sketch layer is turned down to 50% it makes it easier to ink the new layer without being disturbed by the many lines below.

As you can see I corrected and altered some to get the design look as the way I wanted.

I made a new layer and the blend mode was set to "Multiply" for the line art to shine through the Watercolour that I will paint on this new layer.

I use the Watercolour tool on a this single Multiply layer to simulate how the real life watercolour painting on paper is done. That means that the paint is allowed to mix and blend a little and get a little unpredictable in the final result.

The brush I used is the "Unclean Brush" preset, I like that preset the most, it makes the paint look almost real.

A tip: always start painting on a blank "dry" area to get the best result. If you paint inside a "wet" area, that already has some paint added to it, the new paint does not affect as much as it does as painting on the dry part of the canvas.

The last steps before closing this little "how-to-paint- a Cutie" tutorial is to add a background and some texture.

To paint the background: crate a new layer under the multiply layer where you added the watercolour paint. This new layer must be a "Normal" layer, no blending mode selected. Now merge the Multiply layer with the Normal layer.

This action will make the Multiply layer more or less Opaque. Maybe a little transparency will remain, but I think that does not matter.

Add another Multiply layer under the layer that you have painted and paint the sky and the ground. If the sky or ground shines through the Cutie's body or hair, just erase the sky or ground in the layer behind.

By using the "Wet"Palette Knife I blurred the edges of the background paint to make the illusion and feeling really watercolourish..
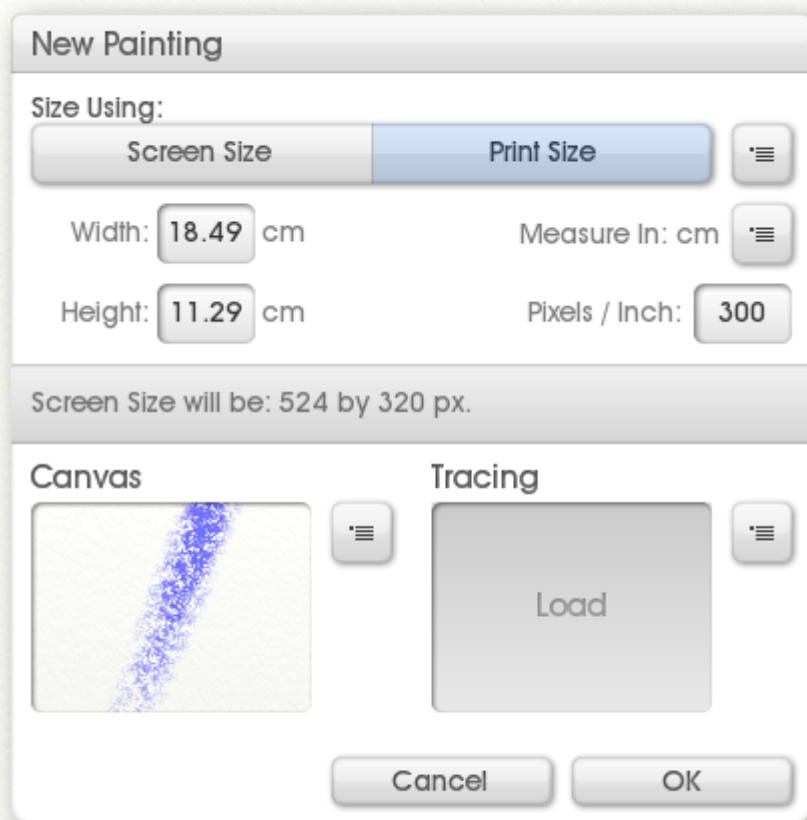
If you haven't done so yet, go to the Canvas setting and add a nice texture to

Calendar 2010 paintings done in ArtRage

For many years I have done calendars using my digital photos. This year, 2009, I decided to make it out of 12 ArtRage paintings and will probably do this from now on . It is fun and it is a good way of showing your art for friends and customers. Eventually there is a chance of selling some, but I have always given them away as a Christmas present.

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

New Painting

Size Using:

| Screen Size | Print Size |

Width: 18.49 cm

Measure In: cm

Height: 11.29 cm

Pixels / Inch: 300

Screen Size will be: 524 by 320 px.
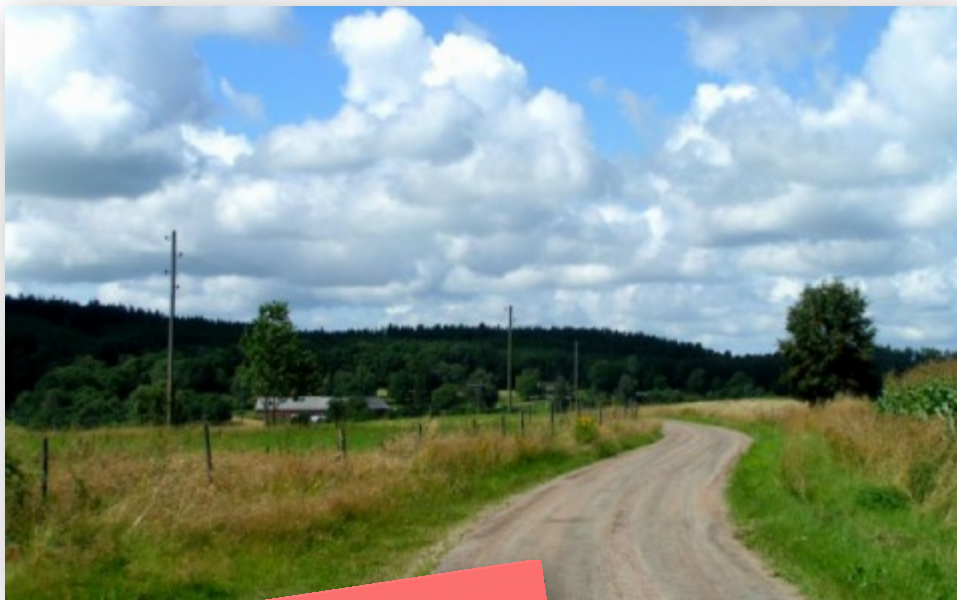
Canvas

Tracing

Load

Cancel | OK

The setup for all paintings was measured from an A 4 standard page, the resolution was set for an average quality printing. For excellent printing maybe 600 dpi would be better. I print my own calendars on a simple inkjet printer that is capable of 2400 dpi printing on special paper. I use a common drawing paper with some grain, not this glossy photographic paper, since I like the feeling and look of the drawing paper, it is a bit more "natural looking" than the photo paper. I have made calendars by printing the photos on glossy and the calendar on drawing paper and mounting the photo prints by hand. That gives a great luxury look to the calendar!

I used Serif Page Plus built-in calendar function and the same software for printing and saving the calendar as a PDF file for distributing it by email or over the Internet.

Pictoris.se

December 2010

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

This is the photo I used for reference and the GPS co-ordinates for the place. It is just above Hovgård golf course outside Varberg, Sweden.

WGS 84:
N 57° 9.307', E 12° 28.954'
WGS 84 - decimal:
57.15511, 12.48257
RT90:
6341458, 1298961
SWEREF99:
6337464, 347728

the stencil

The pattern that made up the sticker that I used for these paintings

The idea behind this calendar was doing the same motif over and over again and varying the mood, weather, time of day and year To make each picture suit each month. The reference photo is one of those S-curved roads that makes my mind wander into the image. My hope was that this nice motif would affect the viewer the same way it does affect me. Roads like this makes my imagination walk away on a country road...

The stencil of the tree was the only stencil I used and the sticker (here in the background) was the only sticker I used to give the pictures that textured look I like so much.

Henry Ståhle 2010.

Pictoris.se

Drawing an eye using the ArtRage 3 Pencil tool.

The Pencil tool in ArtRage 3 is the easiest to handle since it works a lot like an ordinary graphite or colour pencil. Still, there is a little more to discover using this tool. There are just a few settings like Pressure, Softness and Tilt Angle (if you use the "Normal Pencil" not the 'Precise Pencil' which works in another way), but these settings makes a difference. Read the documentation on the Pencil Tool in the ArtRage manual and then follow the steps in developing this simple drawing of an eye. I hope you will learn to master the Pencil a little better.

This tutorial uses a second tool, the Palette Knife, for smearing and softening the Pencil marks. Real artwork does not make it possible to use Palette Knifes on pencil art, but in ArtRage it does, because the Palette Knife works as a Tortillon does. Let's get started!



Using Pencil default setting for sketching

My canvas is just 800 x 600 pixels at 150 dpi, White Canvas Colour and the Grain is the Basic Paper Grain at the default   settings.

The Pencil Tool uses 100% Black, 50% Pressure, 50% Softness and 0% Tilt Angle. Later I changed these settings.

I started by loosely sketching a frontal view of the eye

here I have marked the 4 curves that constructs the eye. One for the eyebrow, one for the crease between the eyebrow and the upper eyelid, one for the upper and one for the lower eyelid. That makes four.

Still using the same Pencil for sketching
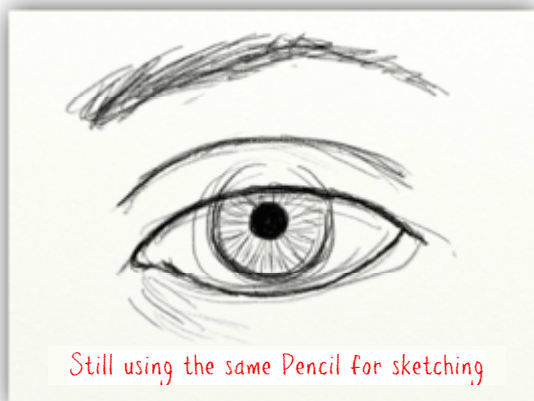
The iris and the pupil are sketched as well as the muscle in the corner of the eye, the caruncle.

I used my imagination constructing this eye, but since I have made a drawing like this before, it was easy.

Using a reference photo or a mirror is useful if you want to be sure of the real look of
an eye.

Drawing an eye using the ArtRage 3 Pencil tool.

Using Pencil at 100% angle for coloring on a layer on top of the sketch.
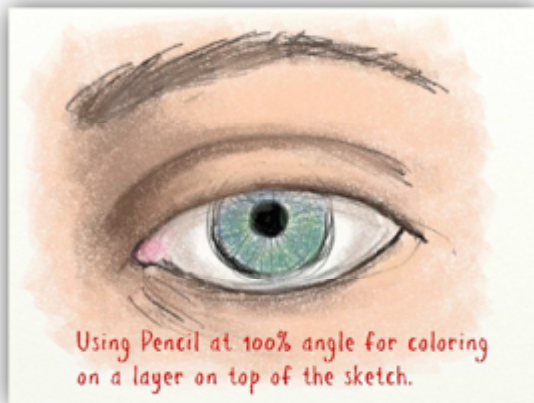
Picking colours for the eye depends on the look of the iris and the skin. Black or brown skin works best with dark brown eyes. The same goes with Asian looking eyes. The Caucasian skin, like my pale Scandinavian, works best with blue or green eyes. I have blue eyes with some streaks of green.

Still using Pencil 100% angle small size Mixing painted areas with flat knife
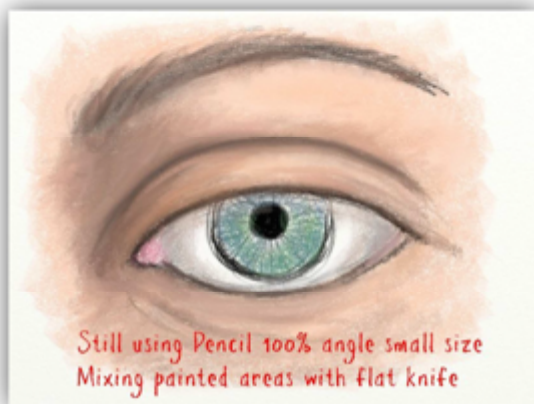
After the rough painting on top of the rough sketch without covering it too much, I soften and smeared the drawing using the "Tortillon". I had to vary the size and pressure until I had the setting of the Tortillon that worked the way I wanted.
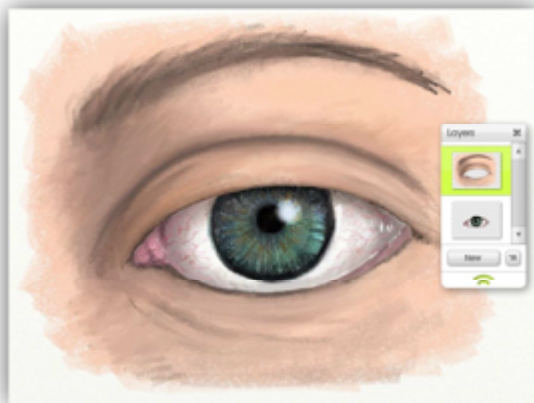
Next step was cutting out the whole eyeball from the rest of the drawing and pasting it on a separate layer. The layers were arranged the way you see, the natural way, skin on top of the eyeball.

The sclera, the "white" of the eyeball was painted a bit off-white using shadows to make the eyeball look as round as possible.

*Working on separate layers for easy painting*
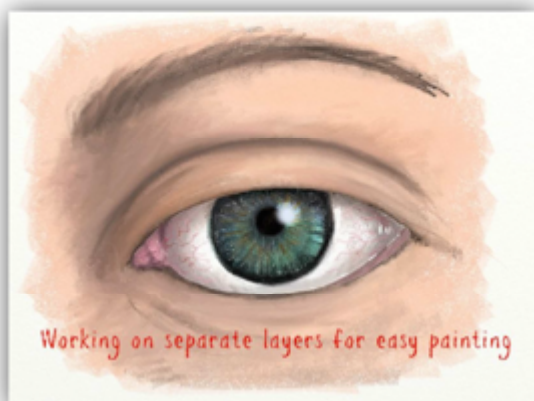
The shadows are under the upper eyelid (if the light comes from above) and in the corners of the eye.

Highlights make the eye shine and look lively, wet and even more round. A photo reference or a mirror makes it easy to study the highlights. These are very important to draw in the right place, or they will look unnatural.

Drawing an eye using the ArtRage 3 Pencil tool.

I used the soft Palette Knife for the wrinkles around the eye.

My eyes are old (over 60) and have wrinkles, creases and veins everywhere. Depending on age these marks are more or less expressed in or around the eyes. I had a look at my eyes and made this drawing look a little like mine using the soft Palette Knife to drag the pixels around a bit.
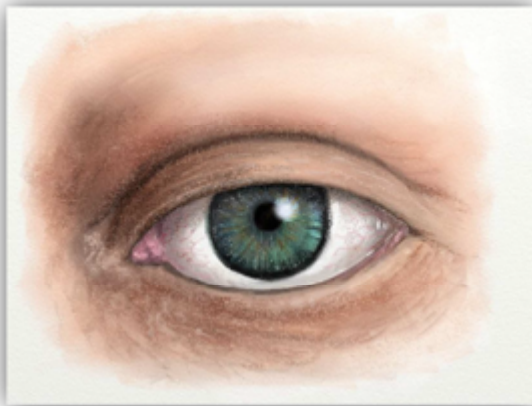
At this stage the eye was almost finished, I just added some shadows and contrast making it look a little more three-dimensional. Here I decided to use the Tortillon with a low pressure "wet" setting to soften the skin a little more. After this there was just one more thing to do...
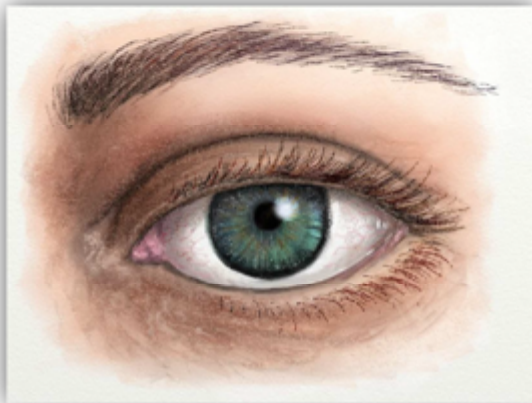
... the hair around the eye. The lashes and the eyebrow had to be drawn. Still I used the pencil but I changed the angle and the size of the tool to make it look right. The canvas was rotated a bit to and fro to make the hairs narrow at the tips.

The eye was done!

This tutorial covered a basic skill of using the Pencil Tool in a creative way. I am sure there is a lot more to discover using the tool but this way I describe it here, I think is very useful and it gives a natural hand drawn look, not too "computerish".

This tutorial also covers one of the basic skills needed to master when you are drawing or painting characters: making an eye look realistic. The eye and the hands are often referred to as the bodily expression of the human soul in art.
So practice and study carefully to find your own technique for making artistic eyes.

A tribute to Andy

I have always been a fan of the great Andy Warhol. He was one of the first computer Artists that I know of. The famous portraits of American idols and flowers etc. Inspired me to do this painting.

The black and white photo was imported into ArtRage and turned into a Stencil. I used the Oil Brush to paint the flowers. I made a Guide out of the Stencil and drew the lines around the flowers. Really Quick and easy Art.!
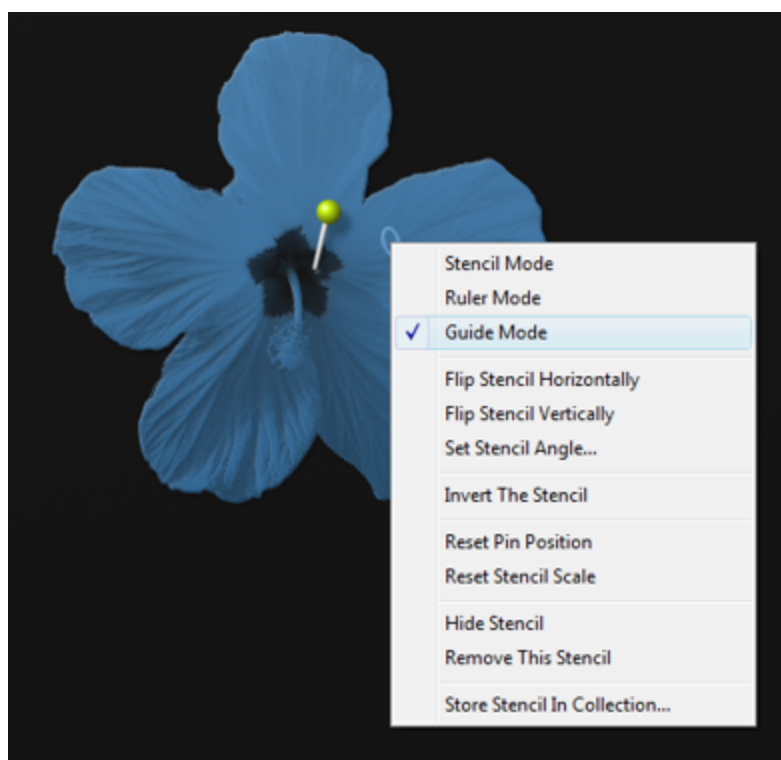
All images are done using ArtRage 3. All images by Henry Ståhle 2010