

Corel® Painter™ Brush-ology: Brush Library Organization

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In this installment we are going to examine Painter's brush library organization. We'll venture outside of Painter and into the operating system's world of directories, files, and folders. For some, this is a walk in the park; for others, it can be a deep, dark forest of unknowns. If you want full control over your brush libraries, it is necessary to temporarily leave Painter's confines to perform some outside work.

Painter IX Brush Library Organization

Prior to Painter 7, all of Painter's brushes were kept in a *single file* (Mac: Painter Brushes / Win: Painter.BRS). This single file methodology made it difficult to move individual variants from one system to another. If the Painter Brush file became corrupted, all of the contained variants could be lost.

Painter 7 introduced the individual *XML-based variant file*. This structure has several advantages. Foremost, the XML file format is cross-platform. This enables translation-free transfer of variants between Windows and Mac users. Secondly, it makes it easier to manage variants utilizing the operating system's file and folder hierarchy structure. The *Painter Brushes* folder is contained within the *Brushes* folder, which is in turn contained within the *Corel Painter IX* folder. These folders must be named exactly as shown, and must be nested into the folder hierarchy described here:

Master Library Hierarchy:

Mac:

Applications > Corel Painter IX > Brushes > Painter Brushes

Windows:

Program Files > Corel > Corel Painter IX > Brushes > Painter Brushes

The Brushes Folder

The *Brushes* folder is used to organize and access additional brush libraries. For example, the *Painter Brushes* folder is contained within the *Brushes* folder.

The Brush Library Folder

The *Painter Brushes* folder is an example of a *brush library*. The *Painter IX CD* also includes several additional brush libraries (Calligraphic Brushes, Nature Brushes, Fun Brushes, etc.). These libraries, as well as any brush libraries either found on the web or created by the user, must be placed in the *Brushes* folder in order to be opened in Painter (via the *Load Brush Library* command in the *Brush Selector Bar's palette menu*).

The Category Folder

A brush library folder contains *Category* folders. For example, the *Painter Brushes* library folder contains the *Acrylics*, *Airbrushes*, *Artists*, *Artists' Oils*, *Blenders*, etc. category folders. These folders represent the content found in the *Brush Selector Bar's Category pop-up menu*.

The Category Icon

In both the *List* and *Thumbnail* views, the *Brush Category pop-up menu* (Brush Selector Bar) displays an iconic representation of the category's medium. For example, the *Airbrushes Category* is represented by an icon of a traditional airbrush. This icon is stored as a 30x30 pixel JPG file. This category icon .JPG file must share the same name as the category folder it represents. The category icon is located along with its associated *Category* folder within the designated brush library folder. For example, both the *Airbrushes category folder* and its associated *Airbrushes.jpg icon file* must be located within the *Painter Brushes* folder.

Note: Depending on the file viewing preferences of a Windows system, the Category Icon .JPG files in a Brush Library folder may not appear with the .jpg file extension.

The Variant File

The *XML-based variant files* are stored in the *Category* folder. Some variants additionally require a same-named *JPG file*. For example, the *Chalk category's Square Chalk.xml file* requires the *Square Chalk.jpg file* in order to properly load in Painter. An in-depth discussion of Variants can be found in the *Anatomy of a Variant* installment. Any variant added to Painter must be placed in a *Category* folder along with the

variant's *same-named .JPG file* (if there is one); otherwise, Painter will not be able to load it.

Hierarchy:

Corel Painter IX > Brushes > [library folder] > [category folder + category icon] > [variantFile.xml + variantFile.jpg]

The Multi-User Environment: Master & User Brush Libraries

Both the Windows and Mac OS X operating systems have evolved to include multi-user environments. Each user has a unique log-on account that is maintained separately by the OS. On an individual computer, each unique logged-in Painter user can modify and create his own brush variants. The OS maintains each user's modified or created variants via separate user libraries. All user settings are saved to a local user library folder; when Corel Painter starts, it recalls these user settings rather than the application settings.

A major implication of individual user libraries is that there are actually *two separate brush variant storage locations* per user. The previously described brush libraries located within the *Corel Painter IX* application folder can be considered master brush libraries. When the variants accessed from the Master brush libraries are modified, or when a new variant is created, the new variant data is saved in the local user's brush library folder. As a result, the master library in the application folder remains untouched. All variant changes and additions are saved in the local user brush library.

User Library Hierarchy:

Mac:

Users > [username] > Library > Application Support > Corel > Corel Painter IX

Windows:

Documents and Settings > [username] > Application Data > Corel > Corel Painter IX

Knowledge Is Power

For the activities of customizing, reorganizing, or sharing your Painter brush variants, it is essential that you understand how Painter's brush folder and file hierarchy is organized. Strewn about the web, there are numerous tales of users unable to successfully add a new brush or library to their copy of Painter. The key to brush variant and library addition is understanding Painter's brush organization. I highly recommend that you take the time to navigate through your system's *Window Ex-*

plorer (Win) or *Finder* (Mac) and become comfortable with locating your *Master* and *User* brush libraries. For convenience's sake, I've added an alias of my user brush library in my master brush library and vice-versa. This enables me to quickly move from one to the other when necessary.

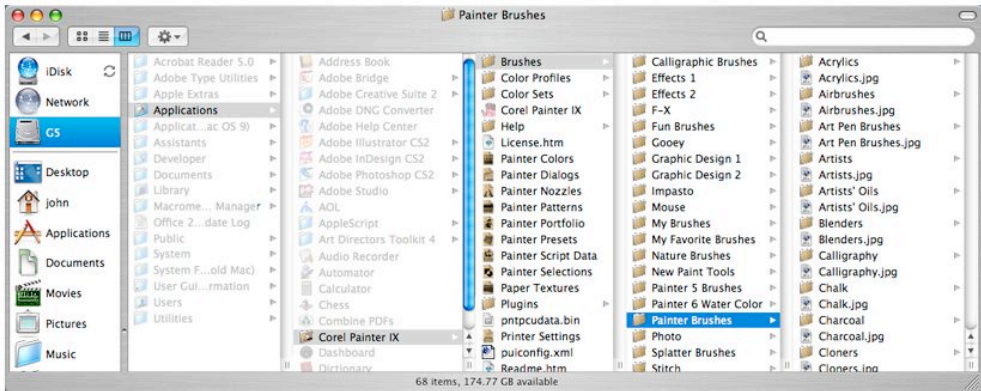
Viva la Painter!

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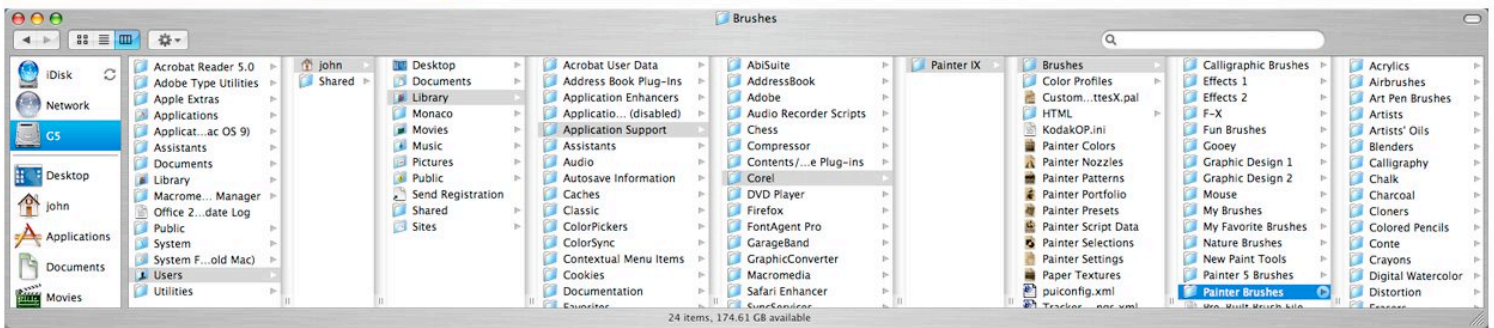
Brush Library Organization in Corel® Painter™

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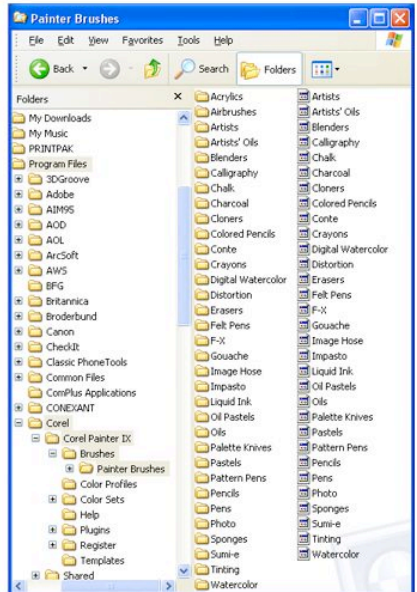
Macintosh Master Brush Library Finder View



Macintosh User Brush Library Finder View



Windows Master Brush Library Windows Explorer View



Windows User Brush Library Windows Explorer View

