The Color Palettes in Corel® Painter™

John Derry

Color is a crucial element in the visual vocabulary of the artist. Color expresses emotion. It is paramount that an artist be able to precisely control the color used in an expressive artwork. Corel Painter, as an application that mimics traditional artists' tools, provides the user with multiple methods for accessing and controlling color. This installment describes how to control color in Painter.

The Color Palette: Hue Ring and Saturation Value Triangle

The *Color Palette* is Painter's primary tool for visual selection of color. This palette uses a combination of a hue and saturation/value to visually dial in a desired color. The *Standard Color* palette is comprised of a *Saturation/Value Triangle* encircled by the *Hue Ring.* Each component utilizes the *Color Indicator*—a small movable circle—to indicate the desired hue and saturation/value. The *Small Color* palette (accessed via the Color Palette fly-out menu) alternatively represents the spectrum as a vertical color-graduated rectangle. A color indicator is used to select the desired hue.

The *Hue Ring* visualizes the color continuum making up the spectrum. As the hue indicator is moved along the *Hue Ring,* the *Saturation/Value triangle* updates. The triangle's right corner represents the current full-saturation hue selected on the ring. The upper left corner is *White;* the lower left corner is *Black.* Within the resulting 3-point gradation, any *tint* or *value* of the selected hue can be visually selected. Once a desired tint/shade is dialed in, it can be further refined via adjustment of the *Hue Ring.*

The gradation on the left face of the *Saturation/Value triangle* is a grayscale graduation between *Black* and *White*. By positioning the color indicator along the left face and sliding it up and down, any value of gray is easily accessed. The triangle's upper face is the *Tint* axis; sliding the indicator along this axis selects tints of the current hue. The triangle's lower face is the *Shade* axis; sliding the indicator along this axis selects shades of the current hue. All intermediate value/saturation combinations reside within the the interior of the triangle. As a unit, this interface provides an excellent visual color selection tool.

The Color Palette: Additional Controls

Painter utilizes the concept of *Main* and *Additional* color squares. This differs from Photoshop, which uses a *Foreground/Background* color square combo. Photoshop uses the *Background* color to indicate the canvas color; the *Eraser* will reveal this color when used. Painter instead allows the user to select a *Background* color when a document is created. This color is then saved as a part of the document. The *Background* color can be changed at any time via the Canvas: *Set Paper Color* command.

Painter's *Additional* color is used for defining multicolor brush strokes, two-point gradients, and *Image Hose* effects. A *Color Swap* button (keyboard shortcut: Shift + X) is used to toggle the *Main* and *Additional* colors as needed. This is particularly useful for masking work, in which black and white are used to add/subtract mask elements.

The component color *Values Display* provides a numeric reference for the currently selected color. Clicking on this display toggles the color values between *RGB* and *HSV*.

The *Clone Color Button* (rubber stamp icon) toggles between the *Current Color* (Main Color Square) and the current *Clone Source.* I often refer to this button as a major fulcrum point within Painter. It is this control that can change any current brush into a cloner. Note that not all brushes make useful cloners, but Painter will respect the status of the *Clone Color* button and use whatever clone source is currently selected. When *Clone Color* is enabled, the *Hue Ring* and *Saturation/Value Triangle* are disabled and grayed-out.

The Color Info Palette

The *Color Info* palette is useful for making precise color adjustments. The color components can be set to either *RGB* or *HSV*. Each value can be numerically entered.

The Color Variability Palette

Color Variability is used to impart additional colors into a brush stroke. The effect of *Color Variability* on a stroke varies depending on a brush's *Dab Type*. The *HSV* and *RGB* options provide color component sliders to impart additional color to

applied strokes. As a slider value is increased, the selected color component will be progressively randomized. For example, the *HSV Hue* slider will progressively impart more colors into a stroke as the slider value is increased. The effect of color variability is visualized in the *Main Color Square* as a dithering of the varied colors specified by the *Color Variability* sliders. Optional variable color sources include the *Current Gradation* or *Color Set.*

Color Your World

Depending on your needs, one of these color palettes will almost certainly suit your needs. Go ahead, be colorful and take advantage of these Painter palettes!

Viva la Painter!

John Derry is a pioneer of digital painting and one of the original authors of Corel® Painter™. Since 1985, he has leveraged his background in drawing and painting to advance the look and experience of traditional art-making tools on the computer. John has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Fine Art and is a practicing artist and photographer. He is currently serving as Corel's Painter Ambassador-at-Large. John's Web site is at www.pixlart.com.

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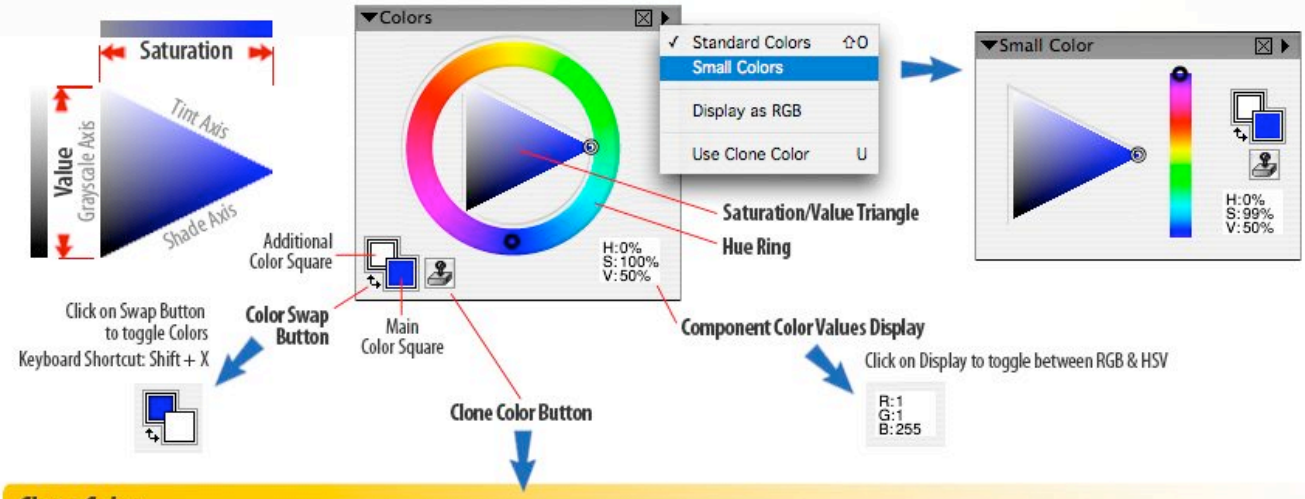
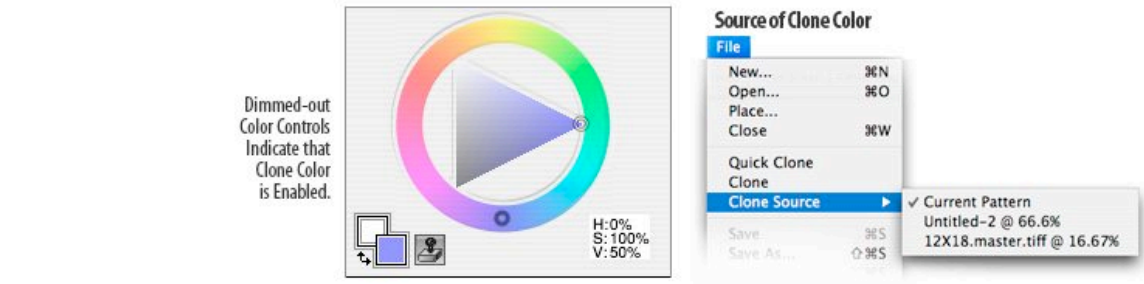
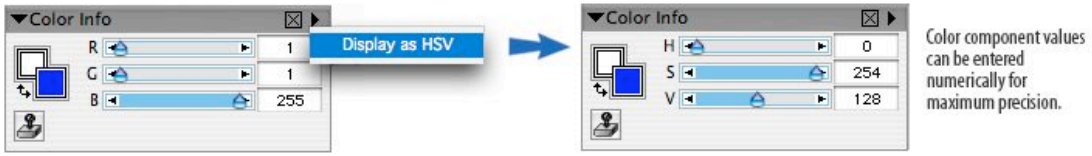
Standard Color Palette



Clone Color



Color Info Palette



Color Variability Palette