PaintShop Pro Tutorials

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Software :   PaintShop Pro X5

Earlier versions can be used

Title :   Shape Tool - Making and Editing Shapes

Level :   Beginner/Intermediate

Description :

Making shapes is one thing, but editing and adding other shapes with cut outs is another.

This simple tutorial explains how to create a shape, edit and add other shapes as a cut out. The shape can then be saved as a Preset Shape or PSPTube if colour is added. Let's begin!

There are three workspaces in PaintShop Pro X4, Manage, Adjust and Edit. For this tutorial you will be using Edit.

1. To give a solid background for easy viewing, open a white Raster image size 400x400.

2. Select foreground colour to black. Background colour grey.

    Change the Width value on the Tool Options palette to 2.

The Options Palette opens and displays settings and automatically changes depending what tool is selected.

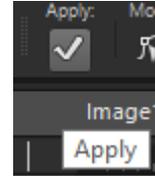3. From the Toolbar, choose the Rectangle Tool.
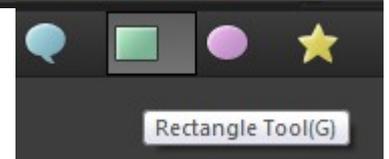
For the moment, we have the Rectangle Tool, so the Options Palette will reflect settings for that.

a: Presets allows you to save your drawings to the Presets
        Folder on your hard drive. They will show in the
        Category list as a Preset with the name given.
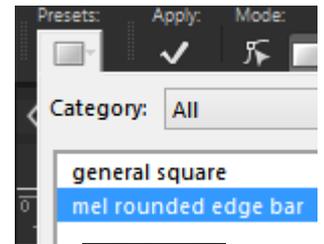
b: Apply is the button to click when all editing is complete.

c: Mode: After drawing the shape click
        Edit Mode, the shape will show a number
        of nodes for editing. See the corner
        nodes, grab one of those and push, the square can
        become a n oval or circle or square with rounded edges.

Move corner nodes across or down
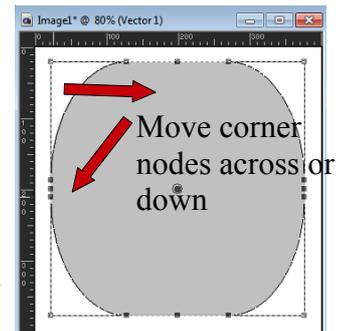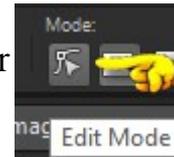
d: The two icons that look like a rectangle and square
        are just that. When the Rectangle tool is selected,
        choose on of these shapes to determine if you want to
   draw a rectangle or square.

e: Two tick boxes, Show nodes and create on a Vector. If
        drawing it is always best to have show nodes ticked. If create on a Vector is
        ticked, then the drawing will be an editable Vector layer drawing. If this is
        unticked, the drawing will be on a Raster layer and therefore uneditable.
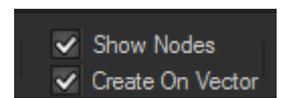
f: The next set are Horizontal, Vertical, Left, Top, Width
        and Height. These are for you to manually apply
        settings exactly where you wish the shape to be drawn, also the height and
        width. Say you draw the shape and wish to nudge it over to the right, you can
        either use the up/down/left/right keys; you must change to the Pick Tool for
        this or the setting for left - increase to move right and decrease to go left.

g: The remaining settings are Line Style, Width, Anti-alias, Join and Mitre limit.
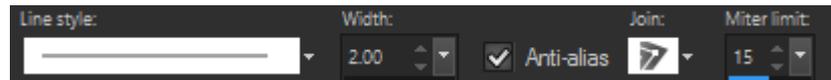
You may wish to apply a fancy outline to your shape, in this case you choose one from the drop down window before drawing, also the Width that determines the thickness of the border from the foreground materials colour. Always apply Anti-alias as this gives smoother shapes. Join is for a particular corner you want to have.


If you want a nice sharp, clean edge then keep to the first Join. The box Mitre limit with 15 is the default limit the join will go. To change the limit increase the value up or down to decrease. However, I always keep mine to 15. For Joins 2 and 3, this box becomes greyed out.

4. To draw the rectangle, on the Options Tool bar, select the Square. Tick Show Nodes, create on a Vector, Line style normal straight line with a width of 2. Anti-alias ticked and Join on the first one with Mitre limit set at 15.

5. Draw out the square shape which will be placed on its own Vector layer. On the Layers Palette, click the + sign. This opens the Vector layer showing another layer that is a Rectangle image shape called New Rectangle.   Keep these layers open.

6. On the canvas, Right Click on the rectangle drawn and Convert to Path. Convert to Path can also be accessed by clicking on Objects on the Menu bar.
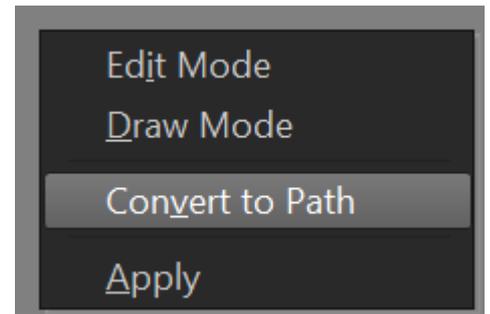
Why do we convert the shape to a Path?   By converting the Vector to an Object Path, it can be fully edited as if it had been drawn with the Pen tool.

7. Change to the Pick Tool, tap the square shape in the workspace then on the Tool Options bar, click on the first icon - Centre in Canvas under Position on canvas. The shape should now be in the centre of the canvas.

8. Select the Star tool and draw a shape in the centre of the square. To line it up centrally, select the Pick tool, click on the star in the layers palette, then just as you did to centralise the square, do the same for the star.

9. Right click on the star and Convert to Path.

10. Change to the Pen Tool, right click on the star and select Edit, Select All.
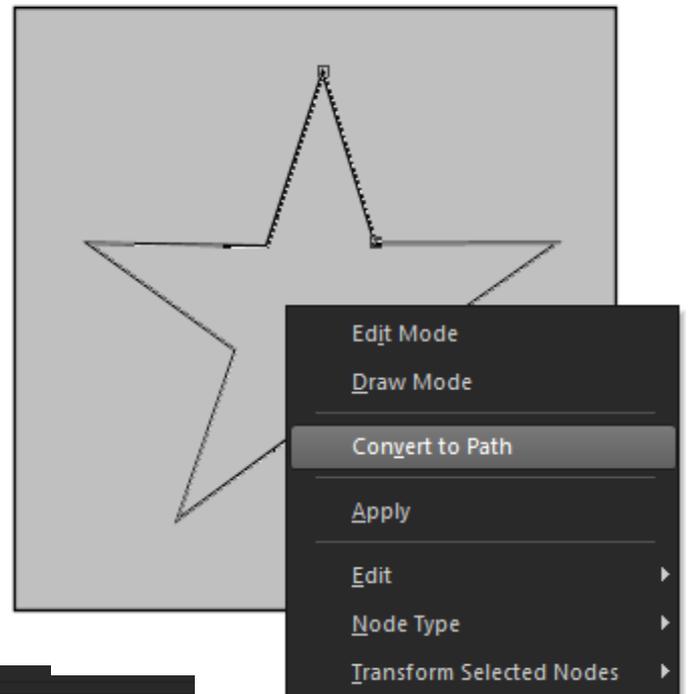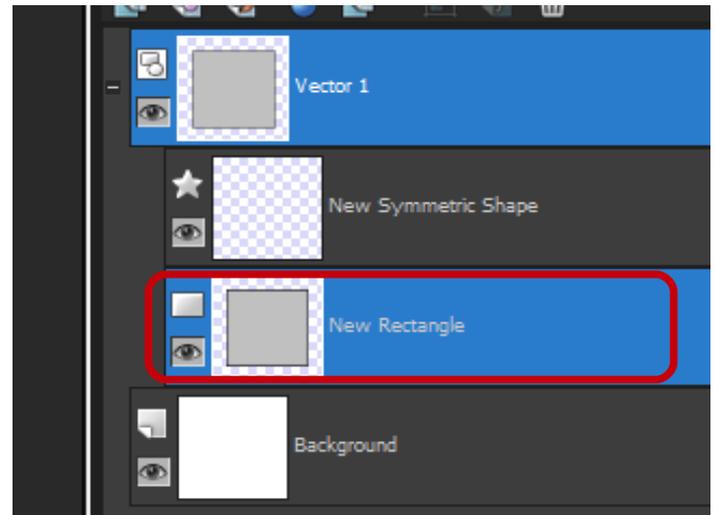
11. Right click, Edit again but this time select Reverse Contour.

12. Right Click, Edit, Cut.   Look in the Layers palette and you will see the New Symmetric
Shape has disappeared from the layer because we 'cut it'.

13. On the Layers palette, select the layer
New Rectangle and highlight it.

14. Go to the canvas, right click, Edit, and

Paste. (Remember you are pasting on the New Rectangle and not New Symmetric Shape, ie: start
layer).   Your image should now resemble my image below. The white showing through is the
white Background. Close the eye on the background layer and the star and background of the
square will be transparent.
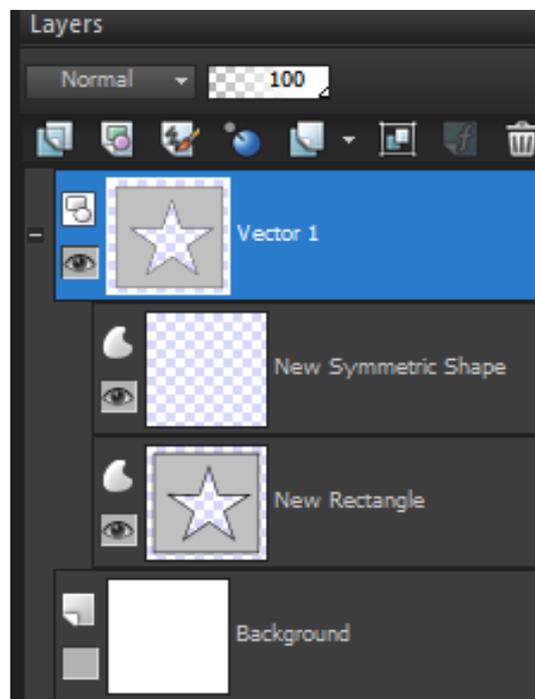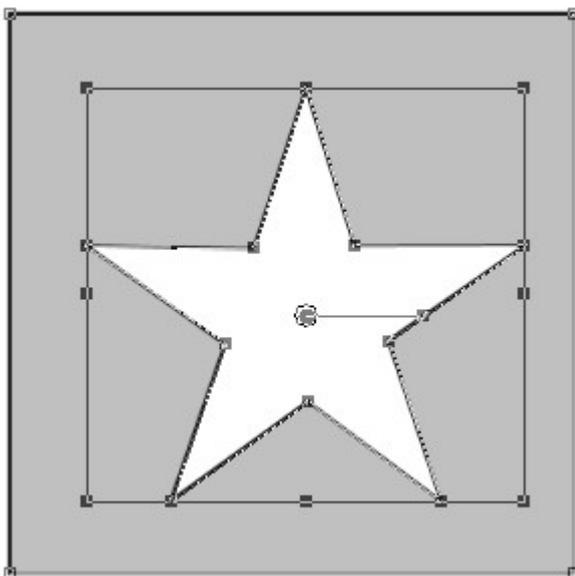
15.   Delete the following layers New Symmetric Shape and Background as shown above.

16. You are now left with two layers, Vector 1 and New Rectangle. Rename the New Rectangle shape on the Layers palette. Square Star. You can do this from within the layers by clicking on the name then retyping a new name, or, double click on the layer, the Vector Property window opens, add the name. From this palette you can change the stroke and fill colours together with the width and line style.

16.   These can be change from here, now. Let's change the fill to purple and stroke to yellow with a stroke width of 10. Click OK.

17. Close the Vector layers and click the Apply tick box. This graphic is now complete, but what can I do with it, you may ask?

    Pretty frames can be designed this way drawn on a larger scale. Add a pattern for the background and place an image within the star or whatever other shape you draw.
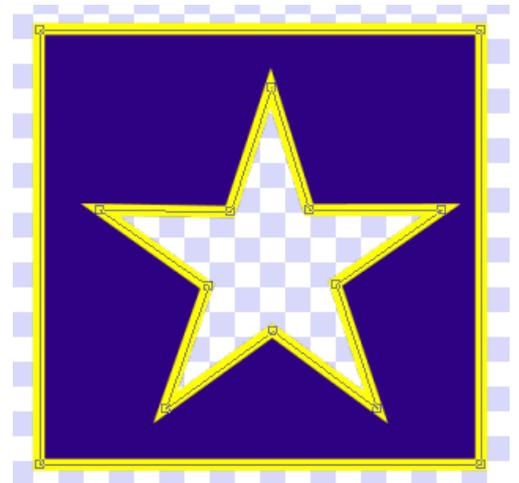
17. Save it as a Preset Shape there are two ways you can do this. The first one is, go to File, Export, Shape. When the dialogue window opens type in the name Square Star and click OK. This image is now saved as an editable preset shape.
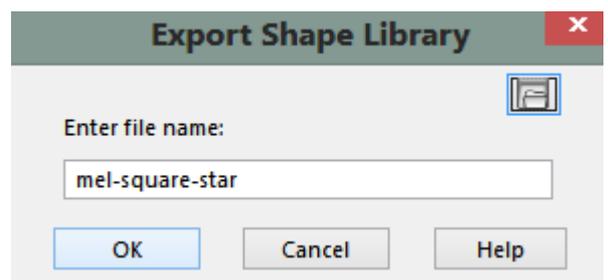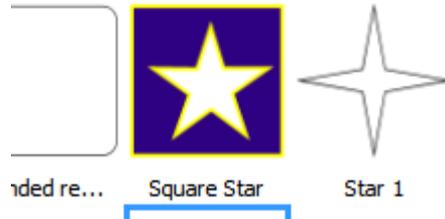
18. Another way is to open the Presets Category, click on the Save icon, give your file a name and click OK.
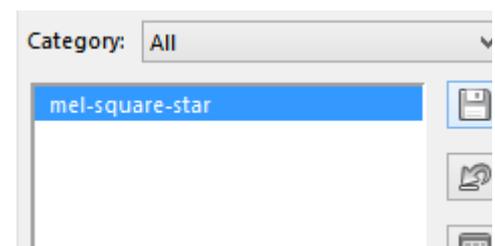
The shape is now safely saved into your custom Preset Shapes folder. How about making use of it?

19. Open a new white Raster canvas. Select the Preset Shape Tool from the Toolbar. Open the Presets Category list and the Preset Shape you created will be listed. Click on it.

19. You can draw small, medium or large shapes. By having Retain style the shape will draw the colours it was created with. Untick Retain style, select a foreground and background colour of choice and the colours will be different, as you see on the image on the right. I chose a red for fill/background and blue for stroke/foreground.
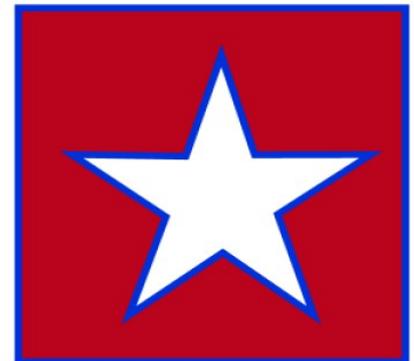
Try creating several shapes, saving them as presets and use as a pretty frame.

You may like to try the tutorial creating a shape from a Raster image.... <u>Raster to Vector</u>

This concludes this tutorial. I hope you have enjoyed it and learned a little more about the shape tool and editing.