CorelDRAW®
GRAPHICS SUITE

Are you transitioning from Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Illustrator to the CorelDRAW Graphics Suite but want to continue working in an environment that is comfortable and familiar to you? In this tutorial we will be replicating some of the most common tasks facing an Adobe Photoshop user, in Corel PHOTO-PAINT – making the transition from one application to the other easy. Graphic Designer, Teacher, CorelDRAW Master Ariel Garaza Diaz provides some hints for working with both programs.

## Working with Photoshop files in CorelDRAW® Graphics Suite

by Ariel Garaza Diaz

In this tutorial we will be covering some of the most common tasks facing an Adobe Photoshop user who is transitioning to Corel® PHOTO-PAINT™. CorelDRAW and Corel PHOTO-PAINT and Adobe Illustrator/Photoshop have many similarities and share some basic drawing and design capabilities, which makes it easy to move from one application to the other.

Have you been using Photoshop for a long time? If the answer is "Yes", you will probably want to continue working in an environment that is comfortable and familiar to you. Some users believe that transitioning to CorelDRAW means having to learn a program from scratch, or will mean a drastic change in the way they work. But the good news is that this is not necessary; you can continue working as usual, and even better.

Moreover, you can work with both programs at the same time if you wish. CorelDRAW and Photoshop are good friends. Here we will provide some hints about how to work with both programs. Let's start with one of the basic and most frequent problems: removing the background from an image. Let's use as an example the image if an apple.

How do you remove the background image in Photoshop in preparation for bringing it in to CorelDRAW? There are several ways of doing this, of course. For example, you can select the apple, and save the selection as channel (**Select** > **Save Selection...** > **select New Channel**). That's all!

Now, save the image as a .TIF file (note: some file formats such as JPG do not support transparent backgrounds), then import the image into CorelDRAW using the command **File** > **Import** (**Ctrl**+**I**).
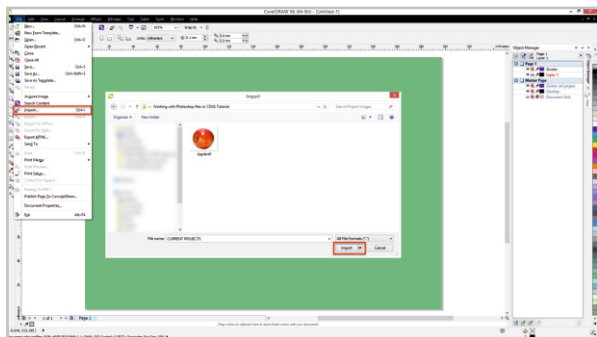

The Apple will have a transparent background. Fast and easy!
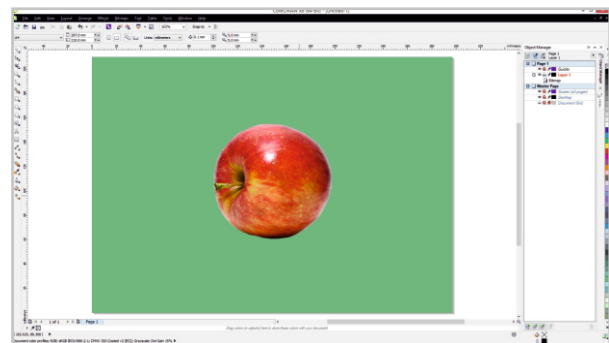
We can also use an alternative method. In Adobe Photoshop instead of saving the selection, create a new layer with transparent background then save the image in the PSD format. That's all! Go back to CorelDRAW and choose the command **File** > **Import** (**Ctrl**+**I**) and select the .PSD file. CorelDRAW will recognize the transparent background.

Some Photoshop users prefer to use a Path (a vector mask) for this purpose. Again, this is no problem, if you already have an image with a saved Path or if you want to create a new one (by saving a selection as a Working Path) just go to: **File** > **Export** > **Paths to Illustrator**.

Now, go back to CorelDRAW and import (**File** > **Import**), the saved path. The result will be an object without fill and without outline (and therefore invisible). But after importing it, and while the object is selected, choose any color on the Color Palette with the right mouse button to add a new outline.
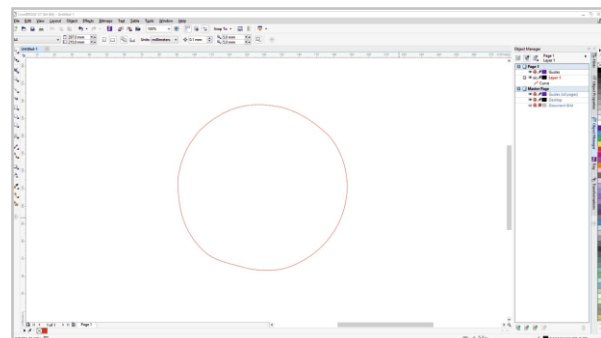
If you've already deselected it, you can easily reselect it by pressing the tab key. Sometimes the new object is part of a "group", so you should first "ungroup" it (**Ctrl**+**U**).

Now, import the apple image, the original JPG or a new file after correcting the image with Photoshop. Go to the **Effects** menu and select: **Powerclip** > **Place Inside Frame**. An arrow cursor will appears. Click on the border of the path that you imported before, and the apple will be placed automatically inside the powerclip.
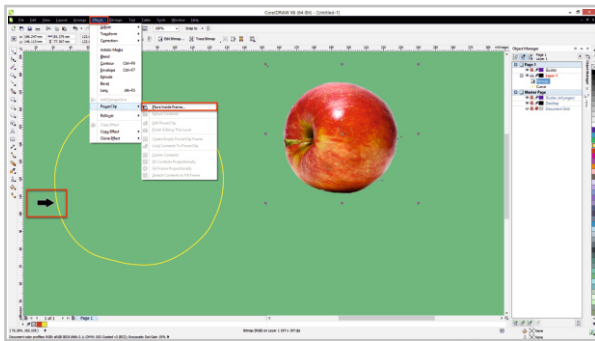

A powerclip is not exactly the same as a "**mask**" in Illustrator, but it can be used in a similar way.

By default, the image should be centered within the powerclip. If the image is not in the correct position, you can reposition it (**Alt**+**click**), or you can edit the powerclip contents (**Ctrl**+**click** on the powerclip, or right-click the powerclip and choose "**Edit Powerclip...**") then move and/or resize the apple to fit within the border.
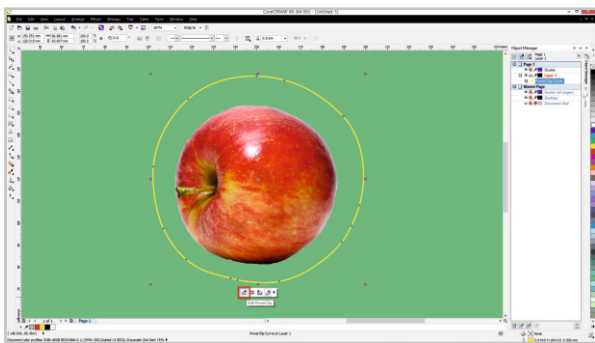

To return to the drawing page, click on "**Stop editing contents**".
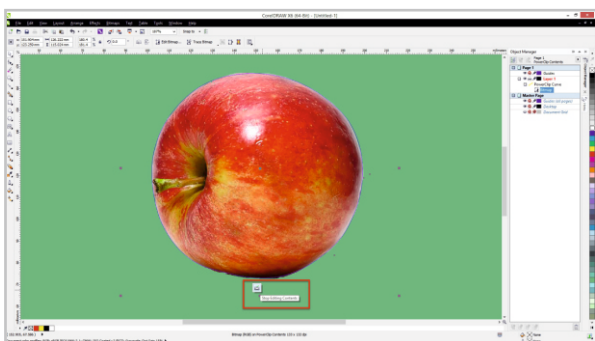
The difference between this last method and the previous two, is that the edge in this case is a vector object. You can use the **Shape Tool** (**F10**) to correct or modify the object, add an outline, or any other effect you want to it.

All three methods allow you to add a Drop Shadow, a Transparency (if you use Powerclip remember to apply the transparency to the image, not to the container object), and a lot of other effects
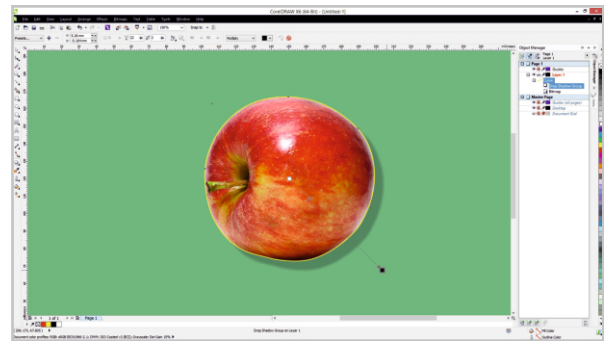

But... do you need to use Photoshop at all if you can create a transparent background from within CorelDRAW? Not necessarily. CorelDRAW provides several tools for creating the same results.

Let's look at three of these: Import the apple image in CorelDRAW using the command: **File** > **Import**, and with the right mouse-button choose "**Edit bitmap...**". This will then open the image with Corel PHOTO-PAINT.
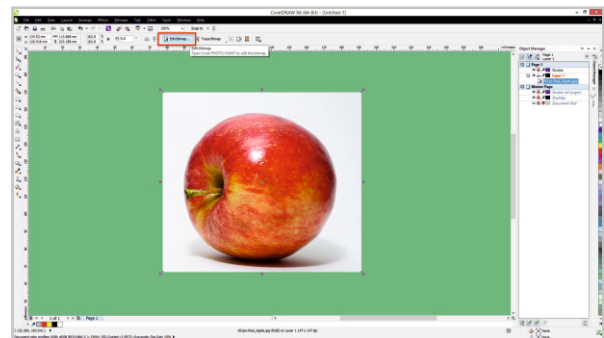
Corel PHOTO-PAINT is an image editor, similar in many aspects to Photoshop, but of course are also differences. The second tool in the **Toolbox** is a set of "selection" tools (hold the small black triangle next to the **Rectangle Mask tool** and you will see a fly-out menu with several other masking tools). The selection tools are called "Masks". These tools perform a similar function to the **Marquee** tools in Adobe Photoshop. There is a **Rectangle Mask tool**, **Ellipse Mask**, **Freehand Mask**, **Magic Wand Mask**, **Brush Mask**, etc. and in the **Properties Bar** settings you can choose to add or subtract from the selection, etc.
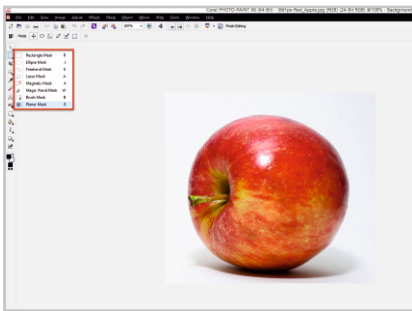

The "Layers" here are called **Objects**. Despite these differences in names, you will soon feel at ease, but if remembering the command names in the Corel PHOTO-PAINT menus is inconvenient for you, well, there is a solution for everything. Go to **Tools** > **Options** > **Workspace**, and choose the **Adobe Photoshop** workspace.
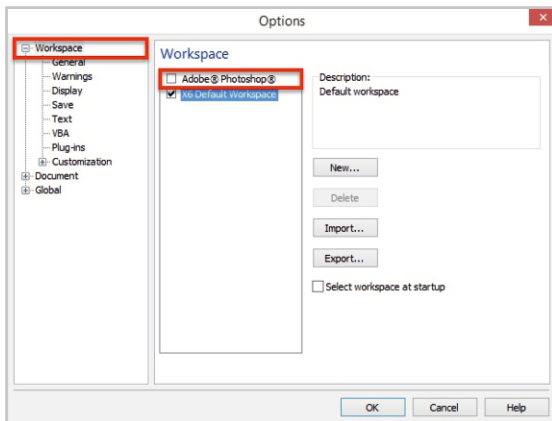
In an instant the program is organized in a way very similar to Photoshop, which will make it easier to use and learn.
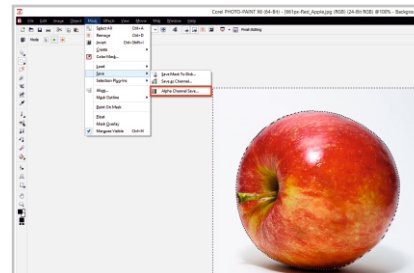
To create a transparent background, we can use a similar method as in Photoshop.

Select the image with the Mask tools, for example the **Magic Wand tool**, to select the background. Since we want to select the apple, go to the "**Mask**" menu (remember, Mask = Select), and choose "**Invert**" (**Mask** > **Invert** or, **CTRL**+**SHIFT**+**I**).
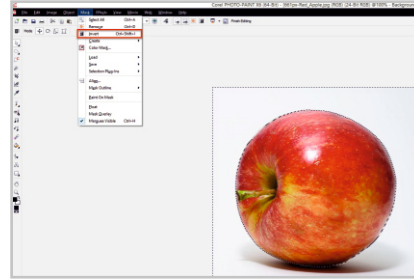

That's all. Close PHOTO-PAINT, and when the program prompts you to save the file, choose 'Yes'. The image will return to CorelDRAW with transparent a background.

And yes, you can also save the selection in PHOTO-PAINT as an Alpha Channel from within the **Mask** menu (**Mask** > **Save** > **Alpha Channel Save...**), then save the image as a .CPT file (the native file format of Corel PHOTO-PAINT), .TIF, .PSD, etc. for later use.


But there are more ways to create a transparent background with CorelDRAW. Choose whichever way is best for you, relative to your workflow as a designer - and also which is relative to the image. If the image has a uniform background (white, for example), when you select the image choose "**Color Mask**" from the **Mask menu**. Then, using the **Eyedropper tool** in the **Color Mask dialog box**, you can select the background color, increase the tolerance, and remove the background color.
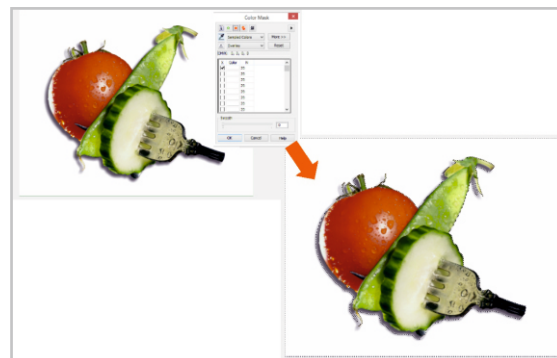
Here is another method of removing the background in CorelDRAW: Using the **Shape tool** (**Toolbox** > **Shape tool**) or (**F10**), select the bitmap and move the nodes of the image. Nodes can be added, deleted, converted to segments, to curves or to straight segments... you can reshape the border as you need in a few steps!
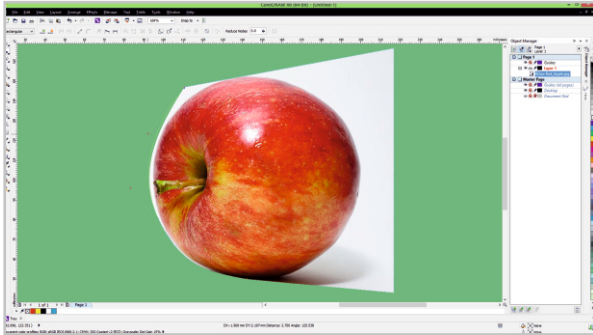
Here is a final method I'd like to show you. You can draw an outline around the image with the **Pen tool** (**F5**), although there are several other types of drawing tools available. But perhaps don't want to draw manually a path manually? Select the image and choose "**Trace Bitmap**" on the **Property Bar** (or right-click on the object and choose a tracing method). Choose "**Remove Background**" while tracing the image. To remove the background entirely, check the box "**Remove color from entire image**". If the background consists of more than one color, select the "**Specify Color**" button and holding down the **Shift-key**, use the **Eyedropper tool** to remove all areas of the background.
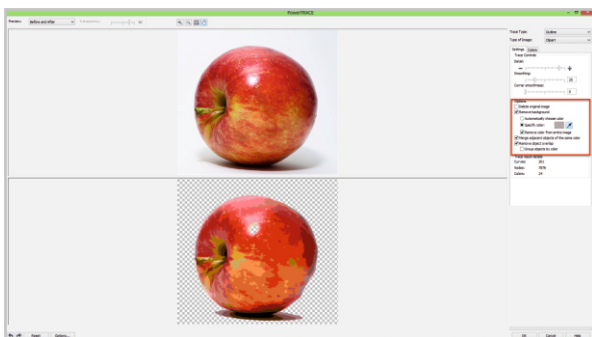
Now, selecting the traced objects, go to the **Arrange menu** > **Shaping** > **Boundary**.
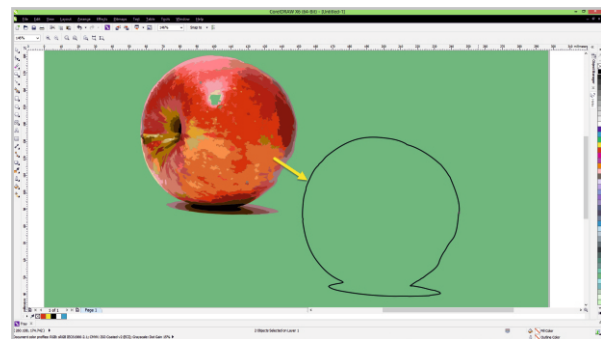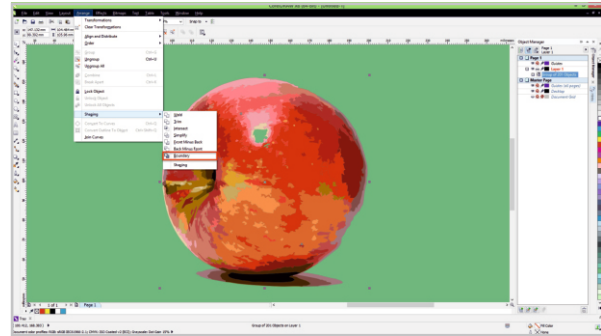
This will give you the outline of the image, and you can use this as a container for powerclipping images into. (**Effects** > **PowerClip** > **Place Inside Frame...**)

As you can see, as an Adobe Photoshop user, you can continue working as you did before, until you become familiar with the new tools of CorelDRAW. You will find many tools similar to those that you are accustomed to working with ... and more. You can use the same color settings in both programs to get the exact result you want (in CorelDRAW see: **Tools** > **Color Management**). But most importantly, you can feel confident in the knowledge that CorelDRAW is a safe choice for you to achieve your creative and professional goals