

## A GIMP TUTORIAL

### 3 Layers

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In the previous chapter, Edit, we saw how to resize an image, how to airbrush imperfections and how to capture images from the screen. Now we get started on layers and see how to create a collage by merging separate images into one.

#### 3.1 Introduction

You start with a background layer, which is opaque - you cannot see through it. Then you add several transparent layers, each containing an image. You position the images so that you get the required layout. Finally, you merge the layers into one.

A collage is a collection of images pasted into a single image.

from these:



to this:



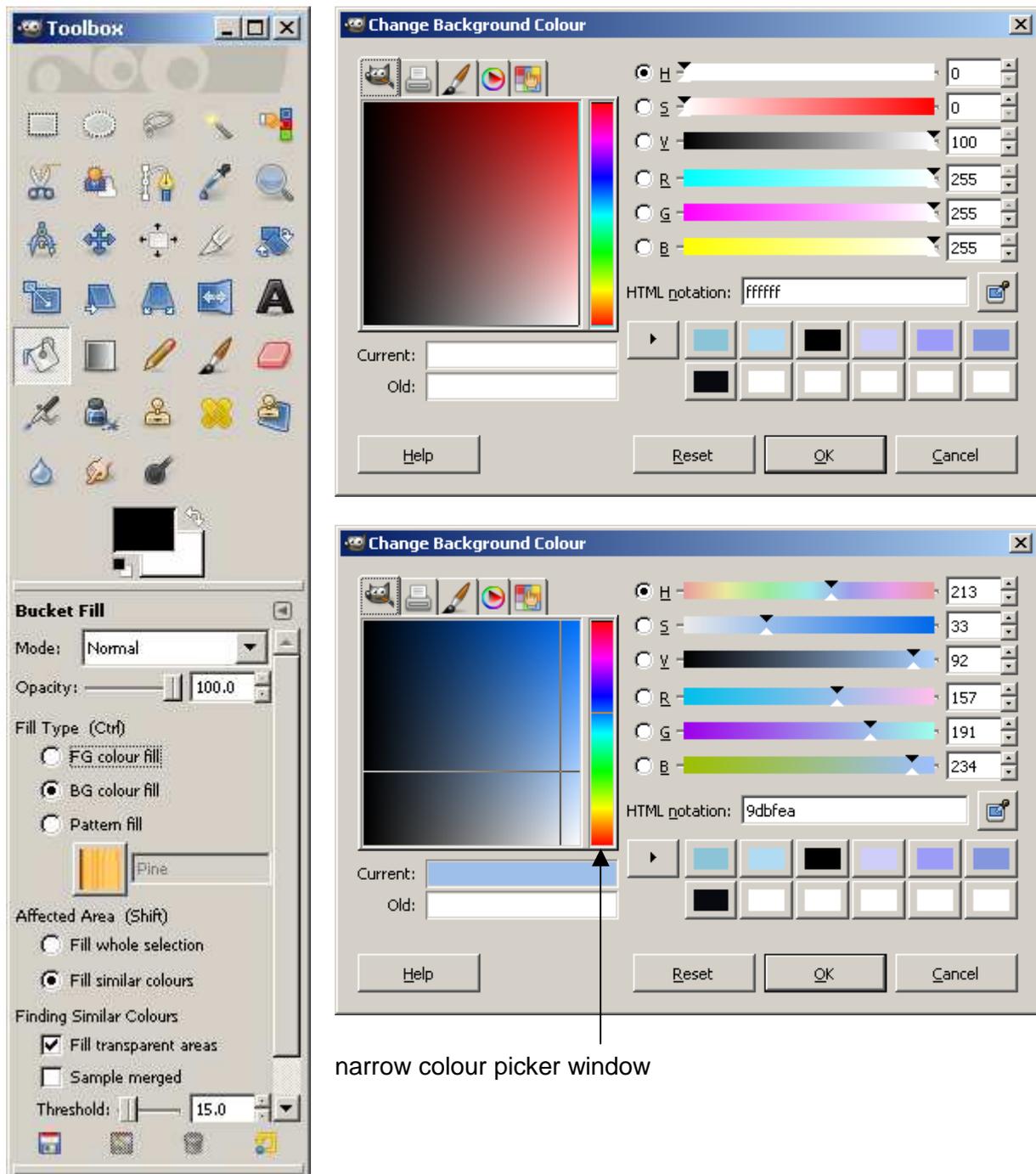
### 3.2 Background Layer

We choose a background of light blue since it makes a good contrast with the reddish-brown colour of the horses.

*set up*

1. start GIMP. Choose File, New, and set a new image with Width = 640 px, height = 400 px. Save as collage.xcf

*fix background colour*





*prepare image*

1. with the collage still open, open the central horse image: choose File, Open, and immediately save as centrehorse.xcf
2. open the ellipse selection tool: choose Tools, Selection Tools, Ellipse Select
3. in the ellipse Select window, below the Toolbox window, select Feather Edges and then set Radius = 100.0. A value of 0.0 gives a hard edge. The feather edges occur outside the selection and are affected by the hard edges of the image boundary
4. click on the horse image and, holding the mouse button down, drag out an ellipse, taking care to avoid the image boundaries if you can
5. choose Image, Crop to Selection
6. resize the image: now, the collage is 640 px wide, 400 px high. So we want the central horse image to be about 200 px wide, and less than 350 px high. Choose Image, Scale Image. Check chain linking Width with Height is closed - click on it if it is open. Set Width = 200 px and press enter key. Check Width and Height dimensions; if satisfactory, choose Scale

*copy image*

7. choose Edit, Copy
8. make layer named centre on the collage the active layer: click on it in the Layers window
9. choose Edit, Paste. The copied image is shown in a floating layer: we need to anchor it. Choose Layer, Anchor Layer. The oval image of the horse, with blurred edges, should now be seen on the collage.

*tidy up*

10. we have finished with the single horse image so we close it to minimise clutter
11. save the collage image to preserve the changes made so far: choose File, Save, and replace the original

**3.4 Position an Image in a Layer**

We see how to adjust the position of images in their layers.

1. place the image of the pair of horses, prepared as shown above, onto a new layer named left in the collage. We end up with the pair of horses appearing directly above the image of the single horse; we need to move the pair to the left
2. choose Tools, Transform Tools, Move
3. drag the pair of horses image to the left
4. resize the layer: choose Layer, Layer to Image Size

### 3.5 Duplicate a Layer

1. with the left layer active, choose Layer, Duplicate Layer. A new layer named copy of left is shown in the Layers, Channels, Path... window
2. rename the layer: double click on the layer's name (copy of left) , replace with the new name, right.
3. drag the pair of horses image from the left to the right
4. resize the layer: choose Layer, Layer to Image Size

*reverse an image*

We have a pair of horses facing right. We want the same pair of horses facing left. So:

1. choose Tools, Transform Tools, Flip
2. on the Flip window, under the Toolbox window, select Horizontal. Click on the image to reverse it
3. save the collage.

### 3.6 Flatten Layers

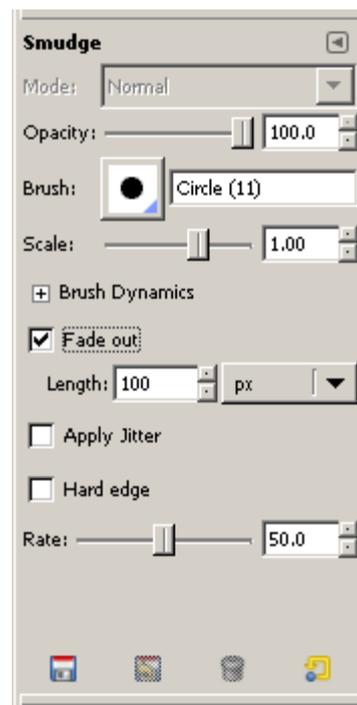
We flatten the layers into one to minimise on image size without compromising quality too much.

1. choose File, Save As
2. provide a suitable file name e.g. collage.jpg
3. choose Export, Save, File, Close

### 3.7 Smudge

Finally, we remove the hard edges above the horse's heads. The smudge tool uses the current brush to smudge the boundary between two colours.

1. open collage.jpg
2. select a brush: Circle (11 ) (13 x 13) will do nicely
3. choose Tools, Paint Tools, Smudge
4. on the Smudge window, just below the Tools window, select Fade out
5. drag the brush over the sharp edges above the horses heads to smudge the boundary
6. finally, sharpen the image and save.



## Exercises

1. create a collage containing at least eight images of your choice.

## Bibliography

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