



XARAXONE.COM TUTORIAL TRANSCRIPT

July 2012 Tutorial transcript

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This transcript is not verbatim, but it's what Gary used during the filming of the tutorial.

One of the things that can make a designer wince is after we've paid for photography, we discover something in the photo is the wrong color. One of the remedies to this is Xara Designer version 8's color replace and erase tool. Open Bucket of squirt guns.xar, and let's begin a recoloring adventure by selected, and then changing the large orange water pistol's color.

With the image selected, choose the Color Select/Erase tool from the photo tools group on the toolbar. Your mission here is to tag the water pistol's color—to do this, you click over the pistol with the tool. A black circle marks where you've clicked, and pixels beneath the marker with a specific hue are selected for changing, or hiding. On the Infobar, you have a drop-down where you can choose the display color of the targeted hue in the image, choose a checkered pattern, or no indication...I'm using checkered here.

Only once in a great while will you come across a photo that has one solid hue in an area, such as the orange water pistol. To be fair, this image is not the best to be edited with the Color Select tool, but play along with me here to see how it works. You click additional markers to erase other similar hues. You also have the option to increase the size of the marker, thus increasing the hue sample area to hide or replace. You can also reposition a placed marker, and increase the color tolerance using the Infobar slider.

I'm going to show you an alternative retouching method in a moment, but let's continue here. The selection is about as good as possible here. The next step to recoloring is to click the mask button and the reddish tint appears over areas that are protected from

editing. Choose the Enhance photo tool from the photo tools group, and then as soon as you make an adjustment, the mask will disappear and you're modifying the area you targeted. Aside from any brightness modification, the real payoff to the Color Select feature is the Set Photo Hue feature on the Infobar, made up of an Intensity slider, and a hue slider. Here you can see some dramatic color changes, but the water pistol has too many different colors in it to make a clean edge selection here. Additionally, other areas that have a little orange in them are partially selected, which is unwanted.

So for this image, an alternative editing method is needed. Let's work on the red alligator water pistol just to mix things up in this tutorial. First, choose the Freehand brush tool from the pen group on the toolbar, and make sure tracing mode is enabled on the Infobar. Slowly and with some deliberation, trace around the alligator shape. Okay, this *could* be a crocodile, but that's irrelephant. Toggle to the Hand tool by pressing the spacebar if needed, then release to return to the brush tool...Now don't expect your shape to be flawless...just close it and then use the Shape tool to work on some of the nodes after you've drawn the path shape. Once you have a tight-fitting path, select it and the photo, and then choose Arrange, Combine Shapes, Slice shapes. I have the Arrange menu docked on the interface here for quick access.

Apparently, you've removed the alligator water pistol from the background, but actually, you've just hidden part of the background, and I'll show you how to restore it now. Move the alligator shape away from the background hole, and then Press Escape to deselect everything, select the image, and then choose the Shape Editor tool. Select the nodes around the hole in the photo, and then press Backspace. The image is restored, life is good. If you have an outline around the duplicate alligator, remove it now.

You could use the Set Photo Hue feature to recolor the water pistol, but let's explore the Light and Dark Contone feature instead. Open the Color Editor, and then scroll the drop-down light for Light Contone. The color you choose now governs the lighter tones in the selection, so make this color white.

Now choose Dark Contone, and to make the alligator a different hue, choose a medium dark green on the Color Editor. The alligator looks a little washed out and this is a brightness, not a hue problem. So open the Levels Brightness dialog on the photo tools flyout. Here's a short lesson in what the Levels box does to selections.

The Black Point slider only moves to the right, and it makes the darkest areas of a selection darker. The gammal, or midpoint slider, can make midtones in your selection lighter or darker, and can produce effects that look like you're changing the contrast of an image. The White Point slider only goes to the left, which increases the brightness of this area.

The Output levels sliders toward the bottom of the box decrease the black and white points, and they're useful to lessen the contrast of images intended for offset printing.

So, back to the pale green alligator: try dragging the Black point slider to the right, and when the shadow areas look rich, drag the white point slider to the left until the alligator has the same sort of snap and contrast as the red original does. If you feel the green gator lacks color intensity still, try using the Color Editor, the Dark Contone selection, and adjusting the green so it's darker and more saturated.

To integrate the duplicate into the scene, a slight shadow around it will help. With the Shadow tool, click the Wall Shadow button on the Infobar, and then click the Glow button. What this does it first create a black shadow, and then the glow setting distributes the shadow around the outline of the shape. Use the Transparency and Blur sliders to make the shadow dense and a little soft.

Finally, with the Selector tool, rotate the green gator and move it, so it doesn't look like a cookie cutter copy of the original. There: I think the casual observer would be hard pressed to notice the photo trickery in this example.

Ready for more?

The Clone tool in Xara Designer is yet another way to duplicate an image area. Open Tic Tac Toe.xar and your assignment will be to replace the ohs in the image with clones of the Xes.

Choose the Clone tool from the photo tools group. Your cursor will look like, and behave like the Freehand Brush tool—draw a moderately tight selection around the oh at top left in the image. When your cursor meets your beginning point, the area is surrounded by arrows. You could scale the selection with these arrows, but don't, that's not the goal here. You want to drag inside the selection area, to move a copy of the image to the interior of the selection. Drag down and left to clone the neighboring X. Nope, this looks too much like a duplicate; instead, drag *up* and left to duplicate the middle, far right X. By default, there's 3 pixels' worth of Feathering around a clone, but you might want more. Keep the Clone tool selected, and then crank the Feather amount up on the Infobar. When you deselect the Clone tool, the image apparently becomes whole and no further modification of the cloned area is apparent. I'll show you how to adjust clones in a moment, though.

Let's take a crack at replacing the center oh now. Use the Clone tool exactly as you did before, drag down and left to duplicate the far right, center X, and yep, this looks repetitious, bear with me and let's explore here...I'm feathering the selection, now let's say the selection you drew has something wrong with it. With the Clone still selected,

choose the Shape Editor tool. It's not visually obvious and you might want to go to low view quality on the Infobar, but yes indeed, there's a shape around the clone with control points you can edit.

Here's another fun thing to discover with clone shapes. Open the Page and Layer Gallery. Press F10. Now if you open Layer 1 and drill down the list, you can select the Clone Bitmap, and with it selected, click the Show Rotation handles button on the Infobar, and then make this clone X look less like its neighbors.

You keep this up and I believe whoever has the Xes is soon going to win the game. If you've had fun and learned something about image retouching this month, more's the good and tune in next month for part II, right here at the...

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