

Fine art creation

LINEKING



About the author

Dmitry Demidenko (LINEKING) was born in 1986 in the city of Spassk-Dalniy, Russia. Fascinated by drawing since childhood, he found himself working with vector graphics. Having gone from a simple designer in a small provincial printing service to a world-famous artist in just five years, he now teaches numerous master classes about CorelDRAW and organizes vector graphics exhibitions to popularize digital art in the world. LINEKING is officially honored as a CorelDRAW master and participates in all official Corel presentations and events in Russia. He also works with LG, Warner Bros., and other well-known brands as an illustrator. LINEKING is a Goodwill ambassador, using his fame to support the UN agenda to ensure every child's right to health and education, and he works to raise volunteer activity in the Russian Federation.

Fine art creation

One of the main problems for the artist is to find an idea for an illustration. In this case, a broad outlook can help you. Fill your life with creative activities: read books, watch movies from different countries, and listen to more music. Find inspiration by looking at paintings that are a good fit for your art style, and visit exhibitions. Filling your life with all kinds of cultural elements will help you in the search for ideas for your work.

Looking for a theme for this illustration, I came up with the idea to do something extraordinary and at the same time popular: an elven quest (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Elven quest: a vector illustration exclusively drawn by LINEKING for this CorelDRAW tutorial

Originally, I had planned to draw a woman-warrior with a sword (Figure 2). Then I got the idea to draw a samurai girl with a katana, and my wife Katya became the model for this image. In the end, I really liked the idea of an archer on a horse, and it formed the basis of the future image. Developing the idea further, I arrived at the image of an elven woman riding a unicorn (Figure 3).



Figure 2: Initial sketches



Figure 3: A sketch of an elven woman on a unicorn

The sketch was drawn directly in CorelDRAW by using the **Freehand** tool. Alternatively, you can draw a sketch on paper, scan it into CorelDRAW, and then convert the sketch into a vector drawing by using the trace function (click **Trace Bitmap** on the property bar) or tracing it manually with a pen tablet to digitize it. When I sketch, I draw everything with the computer mouse, without

wasting time and money on a variety of devices. As you can see in Figure 3, I originally intended to make the image more dynamic, but later changed my mind. I found the final sketch too aggressive and energetic, and that's not what I wanted, so in the process of drawing I had to soften it. In the end, I gave a more relaxed pose to the unicorn, changed the direction of the wind, and used warm pastel colors.

Tool preferences in CoreDRAW

Apart from the standard **Pick** tool , **Interactive Fill** tool , and **Color Eyedropper** tool , I use the following tools when creating my artworks: **Freehand** tool , **Artistic Media** tool , **Smear** tool , and **Transparency** tool .

Using the **Freehand** tool, I create objects of arbitrary shape, which I layer on top of each other to achieve the look of brushstrokes.

The **Transparency** tool makes shapes transparent (Figure 4). The types of transparencies that I use most often are elliptical, linear, and uniform.

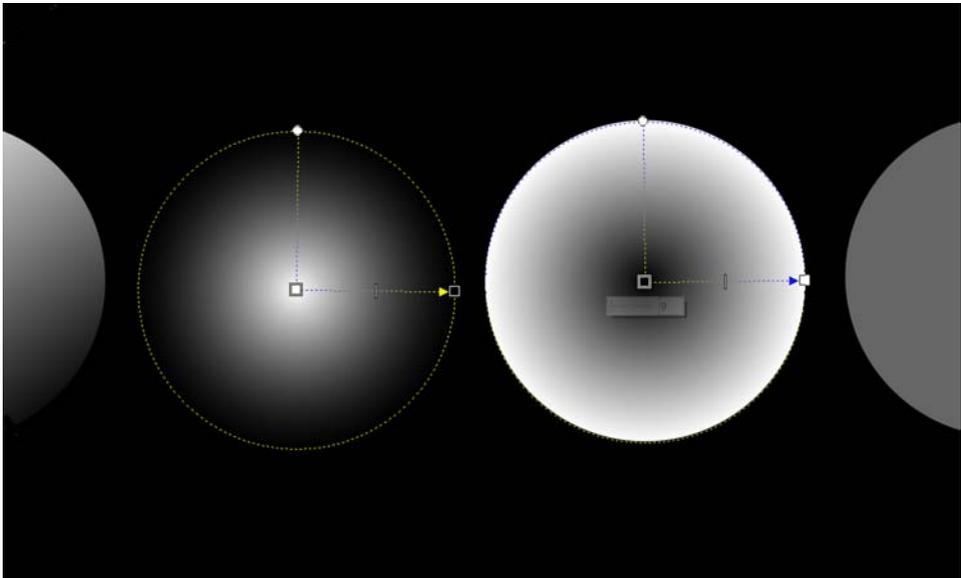


Figure 4: Using the **Transparency** tool

Consider the example of using the **Transparency** tool with the elf's dress (Figure 5). An elliptical fountain transparency helps to better fit into the picture elements of texture, such as the dress pattern. Transparency is committed to the edges from the object's center to achieve a soft blur effect. Linear fountain transparency helps with placing the shadows and highlights on the dress. Uniform transparency is mainly used to create a foundation. You can obtain color density by placing translucent objects on top of one another, which mimics the effect of brushstrokes in bitmap graphics.



Figure 5: Using various transparency effects to create the pattern on the dress

In addition, the **Weld** , **Trim** , and **Intersect**  commands (available from the **Shaping** docker or on the property bar when you select two objects) help in working with the pattern. For

example, if you need to express bright areas or to add shadows, the **Intersect** command is your best assistant (Figure 6). **Weld** can be used to combine parts of the pattern, and **Trim** to crop elements that protrude beyond the borders of the area where they should be located.



Figure 6: Adding highlights and shadows

Cropping with the **Trim** command may not always be suitable for editing object boundaries. When I decided to fix the character's elbow, which was too long, I used the **Smear** tool to reshape it (Figure 7). I chose a big radius for the brush nib size, because I didn't want to spend a lot of time fine-tuning, and performed the editing in one movement.

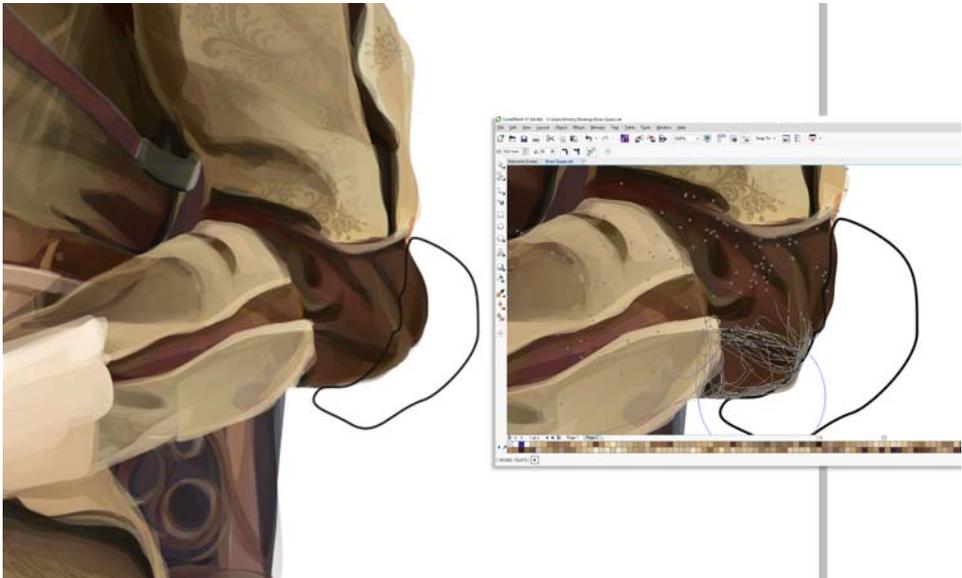


Figure 7: Using the **Smear** tool to reshape the elbow. The black line denotes the editing zone.

Work process

First, I focused on drawing the head. My wife Katya was a model for this illustration, so I used her face for the character (Figure 8). The first step was blocking the main color zones and making them half-transparent (Figure 9). Then I continued with adding more shapes.

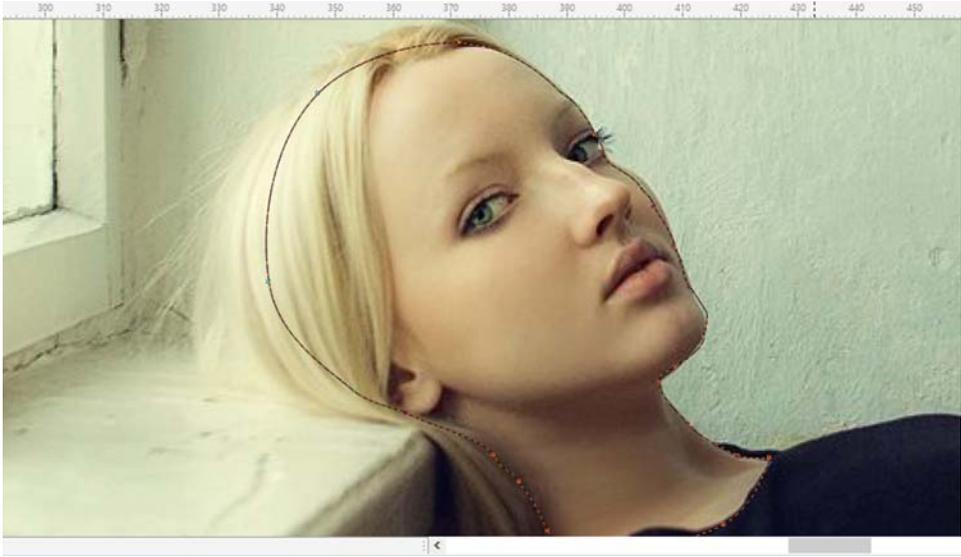


Figure 8: Using a model for the head

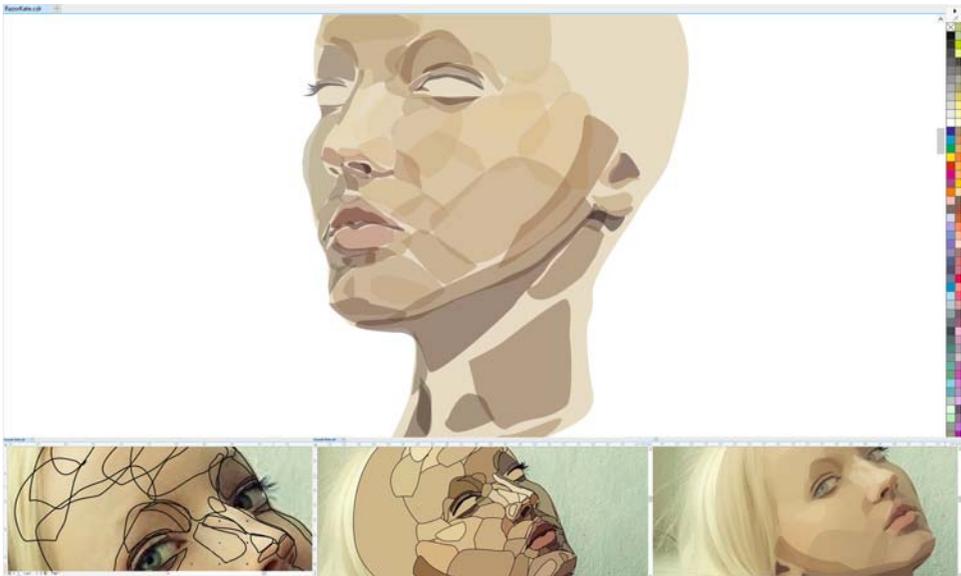


Figure 9: Drawing the head

After working on the foundation, I started to refine the color shades, creating several groups of shapes to make the skin color more natural and soften the colors (Figure 10).

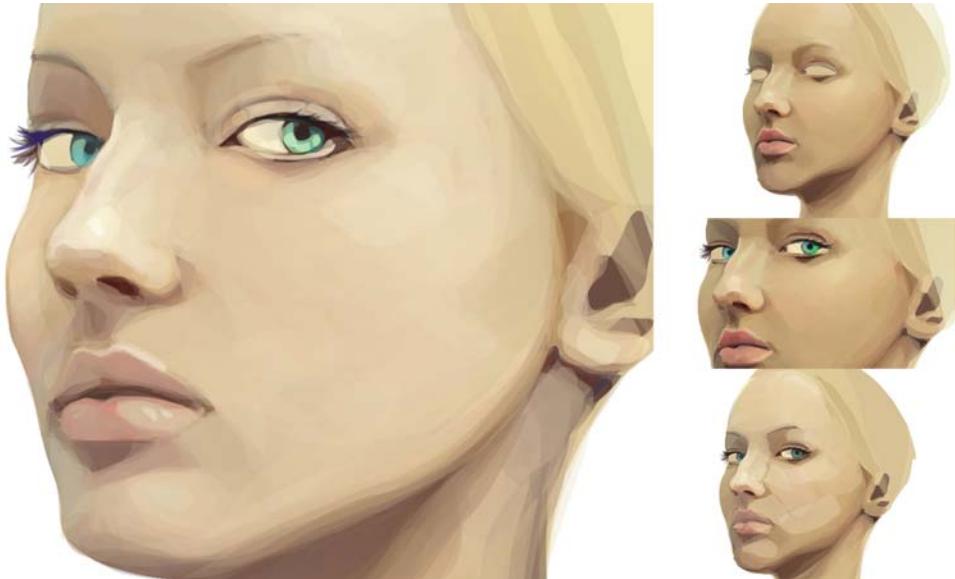


Figure 10: Softening the color shades for a more natural look

When I finished the face, I began drawing the tiara—the jewelry that is located on the elven woman's forehead and hidden under her hair (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Drawing the tiara

The main difficulty when you work on an illustration is the development of unique items such as clothes. I am not a fashion designer, and that's why for clothing elements I look for references, such as a few medieval dresses that I found on the Internet. By combining parts of these real dresses, I was able to create unique and practical clothing, suitable for riding on horseback and for close combat (Figure 12). When drawing any items from your imagination, you should be careful not to go too far with the fantasy. It is not necessary to draw armored bikini, swords that reach a man's height, and stuff that does not make sense in real life or may cause people to laugh.



Figure 12: Creating the clothing

Always pay attention to details in your illustrations. For example, the arrows, the pouch for the bow, and the sword hilt are secondary elements, but their depth of detail is on same level with that of the main character (Figure 13).

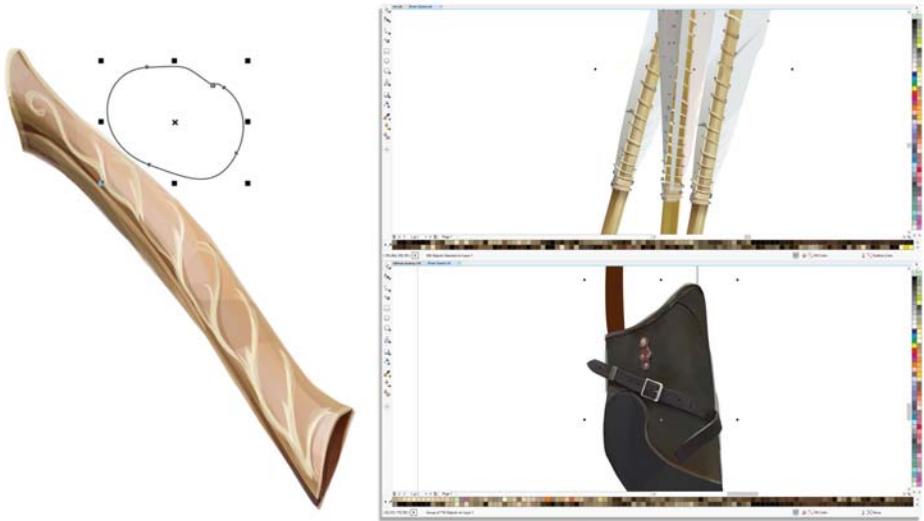


Figure 13: Image details

The creative process is very complicated. Even with a sketch and concept drawings in your head, you cannot draw everything perfectly. The illustration that came from your imagination always evolves in the process of drawing. In this case, the final drawing of the unicorn has changed far from its original concept (Figure 14).

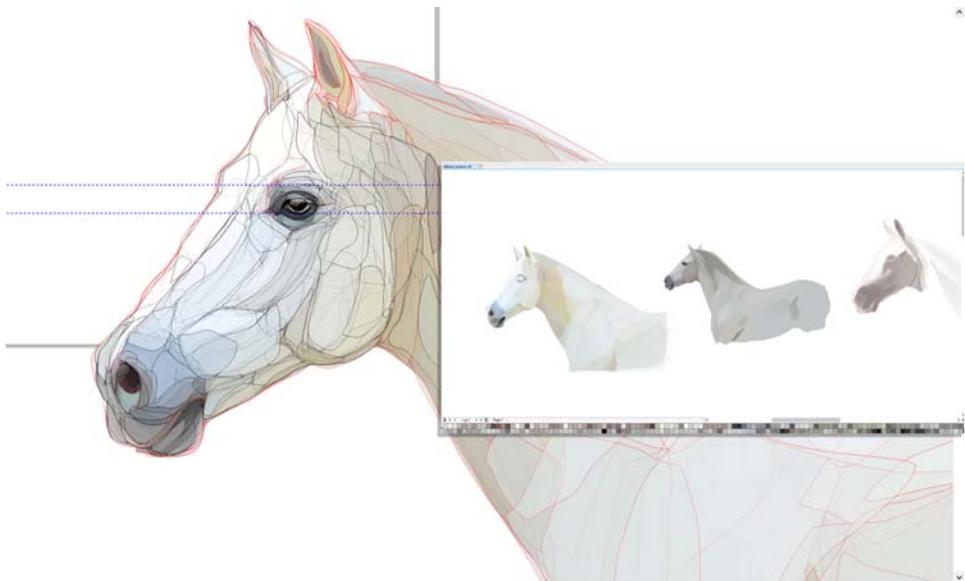


Figure 14: The evolving drawing of the unicorn

The important point here is to work with the unicorn's skin. Special attention should be paid to small hairs, the mane, and shadows (Figure 15).



Figure 15: Details in the drawing of the unicorn

As soon as I finished the work on the main character, I began to draw decorative elements and the background. My personal advice—try to draw all elements with the same level of detail and the same technique. When drawing the flowers and leaves, I used my technique of layering half-transparent shapes (Figure 16).

The biggest challenge in the technique that I use is the embodiment of the illusion that the image was created with a bitmap editor, not a vector software. To create a truly “living” image and to add some volume, so that the character does not resemble a cartoon character, it is necessary to use a large number of shapes. I used the same technique with the archery bag to achieve a realistic effect (Figure 17).



Figure 16: Flower details



Figure 17: Multiple shapes are needed to make every object realistic.

First, you can make a sketch based on your imagination or pushing off from a reference, and then you can start creating shapes that will mimic the brushstrokes of a bitmap. Then, layer by layer, you add new translucent objects of arbitrary shape. Try to avoid using solid objects without a transparency effect on them. Of course, to achieve color density, you need a lot of half-transparent

shapes. Do not forget that, as in traditional painting, you should follow “the rule of the direction of the stroke” to achieve the illusion of using a brush at an angle. Because of that, your image will be more like a bitmap graphic.

I use this technique to get my illustration looking more alive and realistic, in order to break the stereotype of the primitiveness of vector images. This technique allows you to apply all the rules of traditional painting and brushstrokes to vector illustration, and it’s the easiest way to work with vector graphics for artists. Artists who try this unique technique will save time because they won’t need to adapt to new tools or look for new techniques and methods of illustration—they can use their own experience of working with real brushes. Of course, this is the hardest and most time-consuming technique of drawing vector graphics, but if you achieve success with it, your art will absolutely rise to new level.

The same technique was used in creating the character’s face (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Creating a realistic face by overlaying multiple shapes

The Object Manager (**Window ▶ Dockers ▶ Object Manager**) will help when you are working with a variety of shapes and objects in creating large and complex illustrations. If you place a group of objects on their own layer, it will be much easier to edit them later or change their location. To create a new layer, just click the **New Layer** button  in the Object Manager. You can use your own layer names for ease of navigation.

After creating all the necessary objects, such as leaves and trees, I proceeded to work on the background (Figure 19). I filled the background with objects of arbitrary shape and used PowerClip to accommodate all the elements within the required fields.

The illustration is now complete (Figure 20). As you can see, the use of even a small number of tools and features of CorelDRAW allows you to unleash your talent and artistic potential.



Figure 19: Creating the background



Figure 20: The final illustration

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