

UltraPaint© Deneba Systems, Inc. Lea Bromley

When I volunteered to review UltraPaint, I had visions of the old paint programs we used to use when the Macintosh was an infant. This review would be easy, fun and not take long at all. I would tell you all what a delightful bit of play it was, probably perfect for children and simple tasks. Boy! Was I wrong!!

UltraPaint is anything but a lightweight. It has powerful drawing tools (revealing its relationship to Canvas™). It uses 256 colors if you have an 8-bit color card; and there is an extension for editing gray-scale images. The vital statistics are that UltraPaint requires 2 *high-density* floppy drives or a floppy and hard disk. System 6.02 is specified. (The compatibility checker included with the System 7.0 disks indicated that UltraPaint is “Mostly compatible”; the upgrade list in the July issue of MacUser indicated that Deneba would be issuing the upgrade in “August 1991.”) Minimum memory requirements are 1 meg of RAM for black and white and 2.5 megabytes for color, with some features requiring more. The Application is 754k and the folder with the tutorial and other goodies is a whopping 2.3 megs.

There are three parts to the tutorial: Painting and Drawing, Painting in Color, and Gray-scale Editing. If you are familiar with other painting and drawing packages, you will have no trouble working with these. However, you might be surprised at the level of sophistication in such a modestly priced application. The tools are pictured in “floating” windows that can be lengthened, widened and moved around. Many of these tools have multiplex windows that pop out or can be double-clicked to show additional attributes or dialog boxes. In addition to the standard tools is a collection of “External Tools.”

standard toolbox and external toolbox here

There are three layers, paint, draw and composite. The paint layer is pixel-defined (bitmapped) with each pixel 8 bits deep, giving you 256 possible shades per pixel (pixmap). The draw layers contain independent, object-oriented, mathematically defined graphic elements called draw objects. In other words, the shape is defined by an equation. With UltraPaint, you can also work in a composite layer using bitmaps, pixmaps and draw objects on a single layer. This layer takes just a bit more patience and care. The Layer Manager dialog box assists in controlling and manipulating the various layers of your illustration. You can name, rename, and set characteristics and designate resolution parameters.

One other feature of UltraPaint I would like to point out is that it lets you customize the program in many ways. The Tools Folder contains tools, filters and effects which, coupled with the “Open Architecture,” creates a special set of controls that appear in the External Tools window, the Options menu and the Effects menu. In the basic package the following are included:

- Cube
- Auto Trace
- Blotter Pen
- Impressionist
- Masking
- Luminance
- Chalk
- Charcoal
- Dropper
- Color Manager
- Contrast
- Grid
- Gradient Fill Bucket
- Gray Scale Manager
- Fuzz Lasso Edges
- Magic Wand
- Multigon
- Quill Pen
- Rubber Stamp
- Fingertip Smear
- Star
- Three Color Airbrush
- Water Droplet
- Sharpen & Blur

You may be familiar with some of these and many are self-explanatory; however, I will touch on a few especially nice ones. You can **Auto Trace** to a polygon, a smooth polygon or a Bézier curve. The tolerances can be tightly controlled. The **Blotter pen**,

Chalk and **Charcoal** are for special effects. The **Dropper** tool changes the default foreground or background color to the color under the tip of the dropper when you click a color with it. The **Fingertip** tool smudges colors or shades by diffusing them over a larger area. This tool can be configured to control pressure (amount of color), smear spread type and timing (speed of flow). The **Fuzzy Lasso Edges**, the **Sharpen & Blur** tool, the **Impressionist** tool and the **Luminance** tool all allow manipulation of an object by fuzzing edges, blurring an entire image, creating a mosaic effect, lightening or darkening .

When I started the review of UltraPaint, I called our own AMUG Graphic Artist, Tom Rubarth. He suggested I spend some time with the Magic Wand and the Masking Tool as they were, in his estimation, really powerful. These are controls used in Photoshop™ and ColorStudio™ for manipulating images and they work in much the same manner in UltraPaint.

The **Magic Wand** can be configured to pick out contiguous areas of colors or shades, all matches of a color or range of colors and work in conjunction with the Mask Tool to select only those portions outside of the masked area. The desired percentage to select a range of shades can be set depending on the active color palette—exact, transparency (omit areas that do not match but are enclosed by areas that do), cumulative (if you want the previously selected colors to be part of the colors to look for), allow background, touch only, enclosed trace (colors touched or enclosed by the path). There are three selection modes: Standard is the mode described above, Additive allows multiple selection with each choice being added to the selection, and Subtractive allows removal of a part of a selection.

The **Masking** tool allows you to protect a portion of a paint object or layer from effects or tools that you may be applying to other areas of the same paint object or layer. You create a mask from any of the Lasso tools, the Marquee tool or the Magic Wand tool. The masked can be inverted to mask previously unmasked areas, converted into a lasso selection and saved to/loaded from disk.

The UltraPaint tutorial was easy to follow and the manual concise and well written. Working with the drawing tools was almost exactly like working with Canvas™ which I reviewed in the February *AMUG News*. Although Canvas had a great deal more to offer over all, UltraPaint definitely has some of the best features of its big brother.

The color capabilities allow for the creation of complex full-color illustrations. However, when working in this mode, I found it to be extremely slow. But that is to be expected in full color. Tom Rubarth and I wondered about output in color. The file formats for saving illustrations are MacPaint™, PICT, Startup Screen, TIFF and UltraPaint. When I checked with Micrographix in Tempe, they indicated that output would present no problems. They would convert the file from TIFF to PostScript and output on their color equipment or slides. I did not have the opportunity to take a file to a Service Bureau for grey-scale output, but assume that they would have no difficulty with a TIFF file.

So! To close. When you consider the price (\$199 list, \$125 street), UltraPaint is a real bargain. Tom showed me a few illustrations he had done and they were very impressive. After we investigated the output possibilities, we both came to the same conclusion. This little guy is a big featured program. Unless you are looking for certain

special illustration features, such as PostScript, or need a really high end application, take a good look at UltraPaint. Heck! Take a good look at it anyway. You might be surprised.