

ArtRage 2.5 Quick-Start Guide.

Introduction.



This file contains a quick start tutorial that shows you around some of the main features in ArtRage 2.5. It requires the full version of the product, as many of the features used are not available in the free version.

This quick start works best if you're using a graphics tablet or Tablet PC that supports pressure. You can still use a mouse, just play with the Pressure Dial if you find your strokes look too harsh or light.

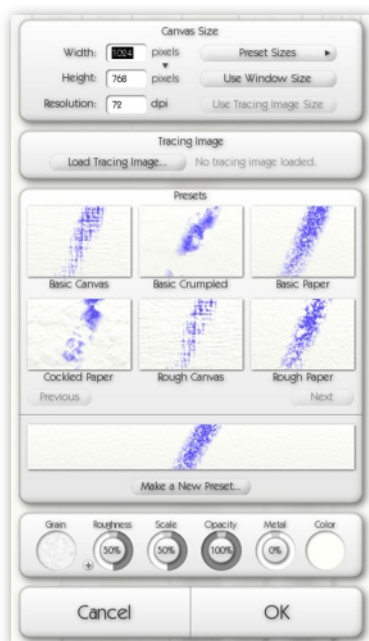
If you want more tips and tricks on using ArtRage, visit the ArtRage website online at www.artrage.com and check out the forum!

Step 1: Our Painting.

We're going to use one of the tracing images that come with ArtRage 2 to produce a painting. Tracing images give you a handy reference for painting and if, like me, you're not an experienced artist they can give you a bit of a boost and make it easier to produce something that looks good.

First of all, open up ArtRage. We want to use a tracing paper as a reference and the easiest way to get the canvas the right size for this is to create a new painting.

In the File Menu, select 'New Painting...'. This opens the New Painting panel.

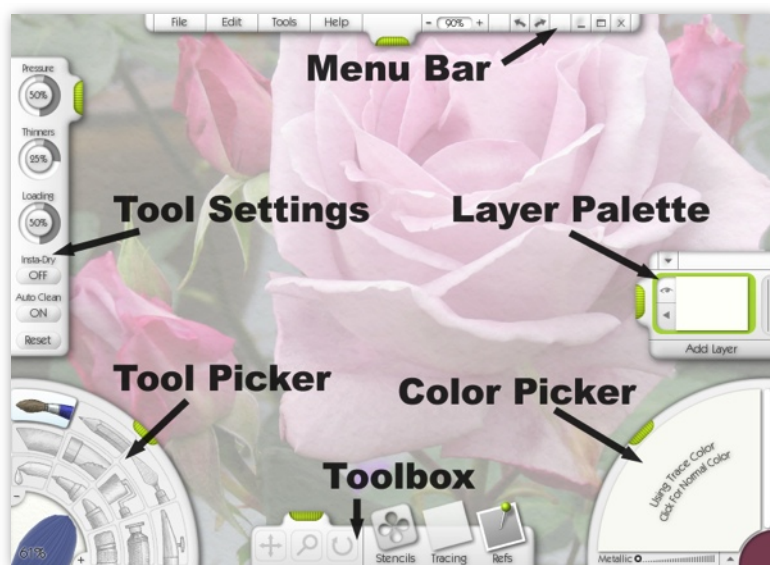


The panel you get looks pretty complex, but don't worry, we'll start simply. Click the 'Load Tracing Image' button near the top. This opens a file open dialog. Locate the folder this Quick Start document was in and you should see a file called 'blue moon rose.jpg'. Select this file as your Tracing Image.

Now, back in the New Painting dialog, click the 'Use Tracing Image Size' button near the top of the New File dialog, and your new painting will be set to the size of the tracing image.

Just click the OK button now, and the new painting will be created.

Step 2: Getting Started.



When the painting appears, it looks pretty good. That's because the Tracing Image has been projected on to the canvas for you so that you can use it as a reference. Take a look at the bottom right corner of the window. You'll see the Color Picker has popped up a notice telling you that Trace Color is being used. That means that ArtRage is going to pick your colors for you as you paint, based on what's in the Tracing Image where you're painting.



If your painting is too large for the window, there are a number of things you can do. If ArtRage isn't in full screen mode, click the little window icon on the menu bar.

That makes ArtRage fill the screen and gives you a bit more space.



Select the Zoom Tool, and click/drag on the canvas to change its size to fit the window. Find a size that fits and you're good to go. If at any time you want to get it back to normal, just hit the D key and it will reset itself.

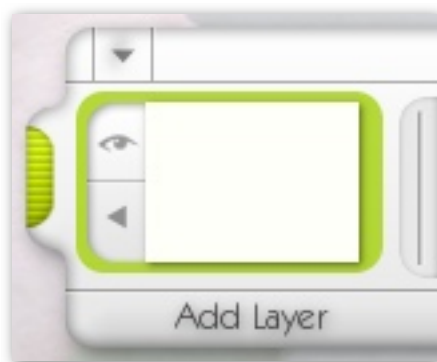
Here's another handy tip: If you want all of the panels to slide out of the way, just hit the Tab key. You can press it again to bring them back. As you paint, panels will vanish out of the way when your brush gets close to them.

Now that we're set up, we can get right in to painting.

Step 3: Outlines.

We want to put in some outlines as a guide, but thinking ahead here we don't want them to be painted over by our paint strokes. ArtRage lets you add Layers to your painting. Think of Layers as transparent sheets that you can paint on and lay on top of each other. So, we can make sure our outlines are safe from other painting by adding them to their own layer.

To add a layer, click the 'Add Layer' button at the bottom of the Layer panel.



When you click this, a second sheet of paper will appear on top of the one that's in there currently. The new sheet will have light grey checkers in it, those are just there to let you know that the new sheet is transparent, they won't appear in your painting.

The green outline now surrounds the new Layer, meaning it is selected and any paint applied will be placed on it.



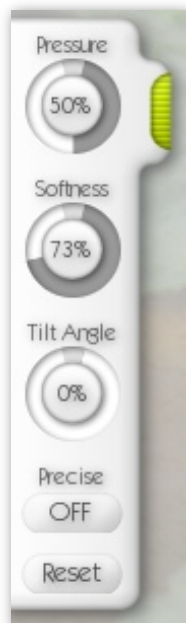
Select the Pencil tool from the Tool Picker at the bottom left of the window.

The pencil will appear grey until you point at it and click it. When it lights up like this, it has been selected and drawing on the canvas will use the pencil tool.



Because we're outlining, we want to work with black. ArtRage is currently selecting colors for us based on the tracing image. To select Black we need to turn that feature off, so click the color picker where it says 'Click for Normal Color' and you'll be able to select your colors again.

Choose black by sliding the slider on the right of the color picker all the way down. that slider controls how 'bright' the colour is. At the bottom, you'll always have black.



For outlining, we want to use a nice dark pencil. ArtRage 2 lets you change the properties of your tools, so we're going to create a big, soft pencil like a 6B. In the Tool Controls panel on the left edge of the screen you'll see the following controls.

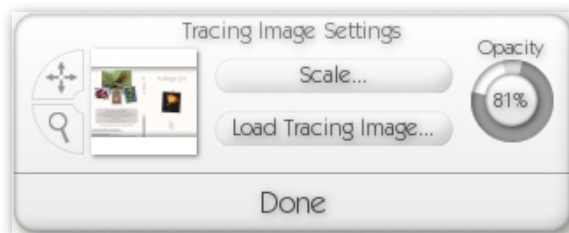
Set Pressure to 50%, this is the standard value for pressure when you're using a graphics tablet. If you're using a mouse you might find you need to adjust this dial if the pencil strokes look wrong. Don't worry, if you make a stroke that looks bad just select Undo from the Edit Menu.

Set the Softness of the pencil to 75%. Softer pencils make darker strokes, the lead breaks up more easily. We want these strokes to be pretty visible. Using the Size Control in the tool picker, set the size of the pencil to 30%, that makes it nice and big.

Now go to your painting and start to outline the petals of the big rose. Ignore the smaller rose buds, just focus on the big one. Sketch naturally, just treat it like a pencil and paper and you'll get much better results. Don't worry about not being precise (who said art had to be precise?), just draw outlines where you see them in the Tracing Image.

Tip: If you feel that ArtRage is running slowly, you might just be seeing the pencil stroke 'lag behind' the cursor. Don't worry, this isn't a slowdown, it's just the way ArtRage tracs what you're doing with the tool to make things more realistic! When you raise the mouse button the stroke will catch up immediately. ArtRage works best if you just sketch naturally.

You might find that the Tracing Image isn't quite clear enough for you to see all the lines. We can solve this by making the Tracing Image more visible. From the Menu Bar, select the Tools Menu, then from the Tracing Options menu item select 'Edit Tracing Image...'.



This brings up the Tracing Controls. Locate the Opacity dial and turn the value up to 75%. You'll find that you can see the rose more easily and although your pencil strokes look a bit paler, they'll be just as strong as before when we remove the Tracing Image later. Press 'Done' and you can return to painting.



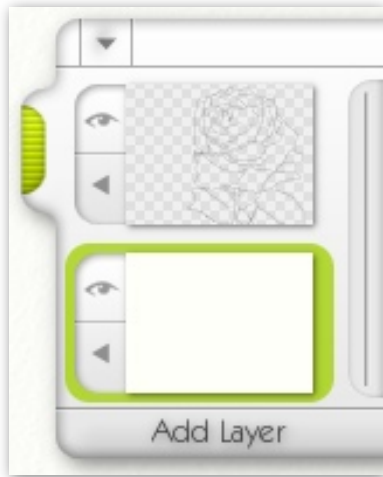
Finish off the outlining by sketching around some of the big leaves beneath the rose, and the stalk that attaches to it.

As a quick test to see how it's going to look without the tracing image, press T, the tracing image vanishes and you can see the outlines on their own. Leave the tracing image off for now, we're going to do the next bit using our outlines as a guide. In the best tradition of art tutorials, here's how it should sort of look about now.

It looks pretty rough, but that's fine, we're just using these lines as a guide.

Step 4: Color Blocking.

Outlines are okay, but we want some color (and some paint!). We're going to block in the big color areas using the Paint Roller tool. There are a couple of things we need to do first though.



First of all, we need to select the bottom layer so that we can edit it.

The Layers Panel sits on the right hand edge of the screen. You should have two Layers in there now: The pencil sketch Layer and the flat Background layer that has your paper color.

Click the bottom-most Layer to select it. You can tell it's selected when it has a green outline as indicated in the image to the left.

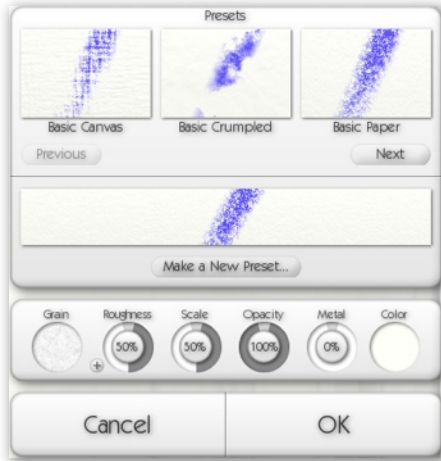


We've been sketching on pretty mundane paper so far, so let's change our canvas to make it a bit more interesting. There's an arrow next to the bottom layer you just clicked, click it to get the Layer Controls up.

This panel gives you access to all the basic properties of your Layer. Usually, you won't need to worry about any settings in here except the name if you want to give the Layer a name, and perhaps the Opacity if you want to fade it out.

Beneath the three settings at the top is a list of all the options for your current Layer.

Right now, we want to change the settings of the Paper the Layer is made out of. Select 'Edit Paper Settings...' from the bottom of the list. This will open up the Paper Settings Panel, which contains all the controls for the Paper we're using.



We're just going to use a preset paper type at the moment. The presets are located in the big block with all the little previews.

Find the 'Cockled Paper' preset.

If you don't see it, you may need to press the Next button to see the next page of presets. Click once on the Cockled Paper preview then press the OK button.



Your canvas changes, because you've just told it that it's made out of a different type of paper.

You can see the difference in the appearance of the paper by looking closely. The paper is now crumpled, and when you paint on it you'll see that the paint behaves as if there was a rough sheet beneath it rather than the smooth paper we started with.

You can change the nature of the paper any time you like, just go and edit the Paper Settings.

We don't want to paint on the canvas directly, so let's add another new layer. Click the New Layer button again and a new empty layer appears above the one you just changed.



Right, on to the painting! Select the Paint Roller from the Tool Picker.

We want to use a fairly small roller, so make sure its size is set to 28% in the Size Control on the Tool Picker. The settings in its Tool Controls Panel (Pressure, Thinners, and Loading) should all be set to 50%.



Now click the Menu Button on the Color Picker. Select 'Choose Colors From Tracing Image' so that we don't have to worry about what colors are being applied.



Start to apply the roller around the inside of the pencil lines. Don't worry about going over them, they are on the Layer above so any paint you apply is actually going *under* them.

The goal here is to fill in the rose. Paint lightly so that the paint is applied thickly. The Paint Roller can actually squeeze paint off the canvas if you press really hard, so don't set pressure too high or push too hard while painting.

Apply a bit more pressure here and there and you'll see the texture of the paper coming through.



Work with lots of strokes, don't be afraid to go over the edges, this is going to be a busy painting, and the more strokes you apply, the more different colors you'll get in your rose. Try to fill in the big blocks that you outlined and rub back and forth a bit if you want to blend the colors as you go.

When you're done with the rose, do the same for the leaves (but not the stalk you outlined, that's too narrow). Eventually, you'll have something that looks a bit like this.

Don't worry about the edges or even the shapes, you're just creating the basic color for the rose.

Now let's add some detail to the painting!

Step 5: Detail.



Add a new layer using the New Layer button. You'll see it appear in your Layers Palette. Now select the Paint Brush from the Tool Picker.

The Paint Brush applies oils to your canvas, and can be used for finer work than the Roller.

We want to do some detailed work so set the brush to 21% size using the Size Control in the Tool Picker. Make sure it's set to 50% Pressure in the Tool Controls Panel, 50% Thinners (we don't want it too thin), and set the Loading value to 25% because we don't want to do huge paint strokes at this point. Make sure Insta-Dry is set to OFF, and Auto Clean is also set to OFF. Those last two settings are to make sure the paint feels nice and wet when we use it.



What we want to do now is add a bit of detail to the painting. We're going to do this by using the oil brush to paint the edges of each of the areas we outlined. Again, don't be shy with the paint, don't paint too slowly, just get in there and apply strokes around the edge of the different areas. You'll generally find that the color being applied (which is still being selected from the tracing image automatically) isn't the color of the paint roller stroke below, that's good because we want some variance.



In the preview above, I painted around the edge of a petal and ended up with quite strong lines. You can smear paint around when you've applied it, or after even, so if you find something looks a bit too obvious, just drag back and forth over the stroke a bit and it'll blend. Because you're painting on a Layer, it won't blend with the roller color, we don't want it to though so that's okay.

When you're done with the petals, do the same with the leaves then use the brush to sketch in the stalk we left before. You should end up with something a bit like this.

Step 6: Background.

So now we have a rose on an empty page. Let's add a background to it. To keep a feeling of harmony, we will create a background using colors from the tracing image itself. To do this, we're going to use colors that have been previously sampled from the image and stored in the Color Samples panel.



To open the Color Samples panel, locate the Tools Menu at the top, click it and select 'Show Color Samples Panel'. This causes the panel to appear. You can also press 'S' to show or hide the panel.

When the panel appears, there are no color samples in it, this is because it's for storing colors we want to use in the current painting. But you can load a set of samples from disk by clicking the menu arrow at the top of the panel and selecting 'Load Colors..'

Select 'Load Colors...'. and a file picker should open inside the ArtRage 'Colors' folder. Inside there, you'll see some files containing custom colors. We've already created one for the rose image, so load 'Blue Moon Rose.col'. If you don't see that file, just navigate to the folder this tutorial file was in and you'll find a copy of the colors there to load.



When you load the colors, the panel fills up with small 'pots' that contain all the colors that were stored for this image.

If it doesn't look like the image to the left, just click the button at the top of the panel with the three small 'pots'. These colors haven't been given names so it's easier just to view them without the name visible.

We're going to use the greens at the top of the panel.

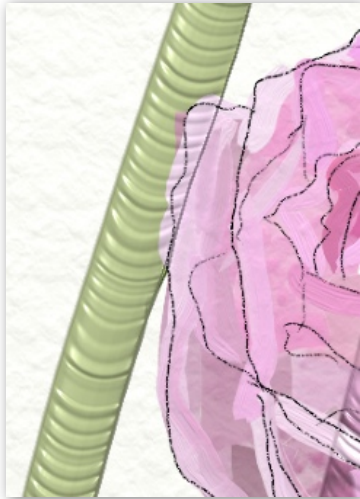


To make a background we're going to lay down some thick streaks of paint and smear them. To lay down the paint we need to use the Paint Tube. Select the Paint Tube from the Tool Picker.

Make sure the size is set to 100% in the Size Control in the Tool Picker.

Click the 'Click For Normal Color' message in the Color Picker so that ArtRage is no longer choosing your colors for you, and select the bottom Layer from the Layer Panel. The bottom layer has nothing on it currently.

We're going to put some big stripes of thick paint down on the canvas, then blend them together. When you first do this, it's going to look really strange because you'll see the lumpiness of the stripes through the rest of your paint but don't worry, we're going to smooth it down. This is why Layers are useful, even if the paint we apply underneath is lumpy, we can still flatten it out without damaging the paint on the Layers above.



In the Color Samples panel, click the lightest of the shades of green at the top. Now draw a stroke with it, starting at the top of the canvas and dragging it all the way to the bottom. Do this toward the left hand side of the canvas.

Add two more strokes of that color in different areas on the canvas, always dragging from the top to the bottom so that you have 3 vertical strokes spaced out over the canvas.

You don't need to be accurate here (you're probably fed up of hearing that by now!), as we're going to smear the strokes around to flatten them out and blend their colors together. So just go wild with the paint!



Next, select another one of the green shades from the Color Swatches Pane and repeat the process to add another 3 strokes.

Finally, select a third shade and repeat.

You should end up with something a bit like the image to the left, with lumpy strokes of paint running vertically down the canvas. The lumps show through, but we're going to fix that now.



This is the really fun bit! We need to smear all of those strokes of paint around to flatten them out and blend them together in to a smooth series of colors.

Select the Palette Knife from the Tool Picker and make sure it's set to use 100% size in the Size Control, and set its pressure to 50% in the Tool Controls Pane.



To blend the lines of paint together we make long strokes left and right over the canvas with the palette knife. You'll probably need to run the palette knife back and forth a few times in one area before you start sliding it down to the next.

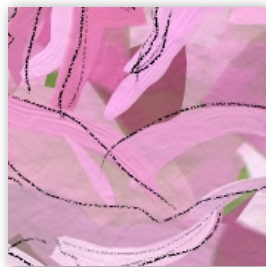
Notice that the colors blend as you smear. If you start the knife stroke on a darker color, more of that will spread over the lighter ones.

Don't worry if you don't like the result the first time, you can just select Undo from the Edit menu (or press Ctrl/Cmd + Z) if you want the stroke to be undone, and you can try again.



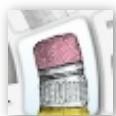
Work your way down the canvas blending the tube strokes together. If you stroke over them and can still see the ridges of the stroke, press a bit harder or go back over them, it doesn't matter how many times you do this, just blend the color and flatten them out.

When you're finished, you should end up with something a bit like this. The look will vary based on how you smeared the tube strokes.

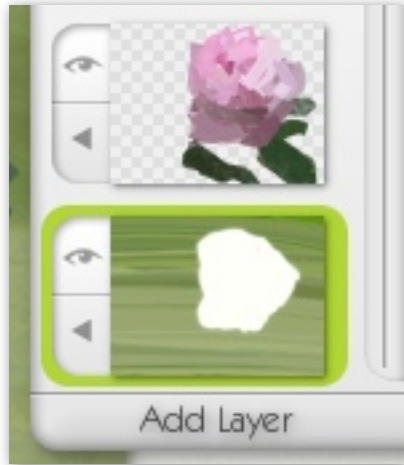


Now here's a tip: In my version of the file there were some places where the green background color was visible through the painted strokes of the rose.

We don't want the painting to look as if we've painted it on to different layers (that's our little secret) so we're going to remove that green.



Select the Eraser from the Tool Picker, make sure it's set to 100% size and set the Softness value to 100% in the Tool Controls Pane. This gives us a large eraser with a nice, soft edge.



With the background Layer still selected, use the eraser to erase under the area of the rose. Because we're still on the bottom Layer, you won't erase the rose itself, just the paint underneath it.

Don't erase too far out, you don't want to delete any of the paint outside the body of the rose, just run the eraser round to make a 'hole' so that the rose doesn't have any of your background underneath it.

Now there won't be any green visible through the rose, and we can move on.

Step 7: Finishing Touches.

We're going to do two last things to our painting before we call it done: Add a bit of depth to the image using the Airbrush, and crop the canvas down so that the rose is centered on the image.



Using the Airbrush, we are going to outline the rose with a slight shadow. Select the Airbrush tool from the Tool Picker and set it to 80% size. Make sure Autoflow is ON in the Tool Controls Pane, and set Tilt Angle and Taper Length to 0%.

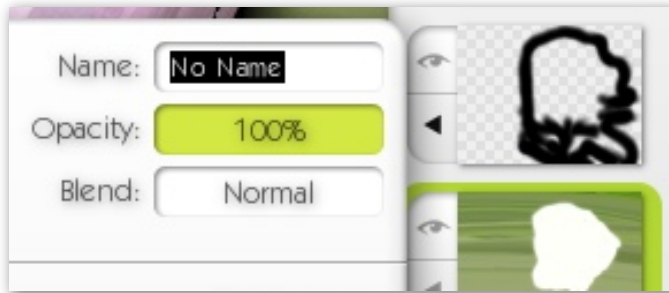
Set the color in the Color Picker to black by dragging the brightness slider down.

With the background Layer still selected, clic the 'Add Layer' button. A new layer is added above the background and below the first rose Layer. This new Layer is empty.



With the new Layer selected, use the Airbrush to draw an outline around the rose. Let the stroke go half under the rose, so we're just seeing a black halo. Because 'Autoflow' is ON, the Airbrush sprays paint even when we're not moving, so try to draw the outline fairly loosely, don't worry if it doesn't look too smooth.

You'll end up with something a bit like this. Terrible, isn't it! Fortunately, we can improve the situation by fading the line out slightly using the Opacity control for the Layer.



Click the arrow next to the Layer you just added paint to. You'll get the Layer Information panel. At the top of this there is an item labelled 'Opacity'. This is used to control how opaque the Layer is. By adjusting this control we can fade out the contents of a Layer without changing the paint directly.

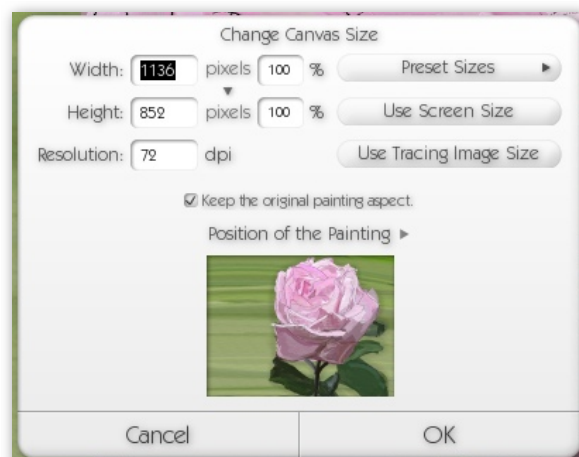


By clicking and dragging in the green bar next to Opacity (where it says '100%') you can change the opacity. Every time you release the mouse, the painting will update to show the new setting.

Set the dial to around 20% and click OK. you may need to adjust that value depending on how much paint you applied with your Airbrush.

The layer is now faded out and you end up with something more subtle like this. The outline is just a hint rather than anything solid because we're just trying to give the image a bit more depth.

Finally, the rose is a bit too far to the right so we want to clip a bit off the canvas. To do that, go to the Edit Menu and select 'Resize the Canvas'. This opens up the Resize Panel.



The Resize Panel is used to change the size of the canvas without changing the size of its contents. So when we're done, the Rose will be the same size it was, but we will have clipped away some of the empty space to the left of it.

Because we want to change the shape of the canvas (we want to make it a square, not a longer rectangle) we have to make sure the 'Keep the original painting aspect' check box is *not* ticked. If that's ticked, any change we make to the width will also change the

height, and we don't want that. Then, enter 852 in the Width pixels box. Press Tab to let the panel know you want that to be the new number and you'll see the preview at the bottom of the panel change in size.

Position of the Painting



Unfortunately, our clipping of the canvas looks to have cut off part of the rose! Don't worry, nothing is fixed yet and we can adjust that here before we apply.

Just click and drag in that little preview and you can move the contents around. Drag the rose to the left so that it's fully visible on the new canvas.

Position of the Painting



The mini-preview shows us what our painting is going to look like when we press OK. Dragging the contents around in there just tells ArtRage which parts of the painting you want to keep when you slice off the edges.

Press OK to accept the changes and ArtRage will clip the canvas.

As a final thought, if you don't like the look of the pencil lines on top of your paint, you can just go to the Layer Palette and click the eye icon next to the pencils Layer. That will turn the Layer off, making it invisible without deleting its contents. You can always turn it on again later if you prefer.

Step 8: Finished!



Congratulations, you've just produced a painting in ArtRage!

If you want to send it to your friends, there's one more thing that you need to know about how ArtRage works.

ArtRage painting files (created when you use 'Save Painting..' in the File menu) contain lots of information specific to ArtRage. Features such as the lumpiness and wetness of paint aren't stored in other formats, and applications that display images such as JPEG won't necessarily understand those features. This means that if you want to send an ArtRage Painting to a friend, the best bet is to Export it in a different format.

In the File menu you will find 'Export As Image...'. This option allows you to save a *copy* of your painting as a normal image file. When you Export a painting, your original painting remains intact and you can still open it again at any time and access the Layers, the smearing paint etc. but a second copy is saved in a 'flat' format that can be understood by other image applications.

When you select 'Export As Image...', you will be prompted to choose a file name and a file format. The file formats available vary depending on which Operating System you are using, but they contain standard formats such as JPEG, BMP, PSD, and PNG that are understood by other applications. To create a small image, save as JPEG. To create a higher quality image, save as PNG.

Please never use Export to save your work in progress, always make sure you save a Painting file for your project using 'Save Painting' in the File menu. Export should only be used when you want to create a copy to share with someone.

Thanks For Painting!

This Quick Start guide has given a basic overview of some of the features in ArtRage, and how the product works. There are many more features to explore, such as Metallic Paint, Glitter, Stencils, and Reference images. ArtRage is all about playing with paint and working naturally, so don't be afraid to get in there and try stuff out to see what happens. If it doesn't end up looking good, there's always Undo, and at least you haven't just ruined an expensive canvas!

Enjoy painting, and thanks for using ArtRage!