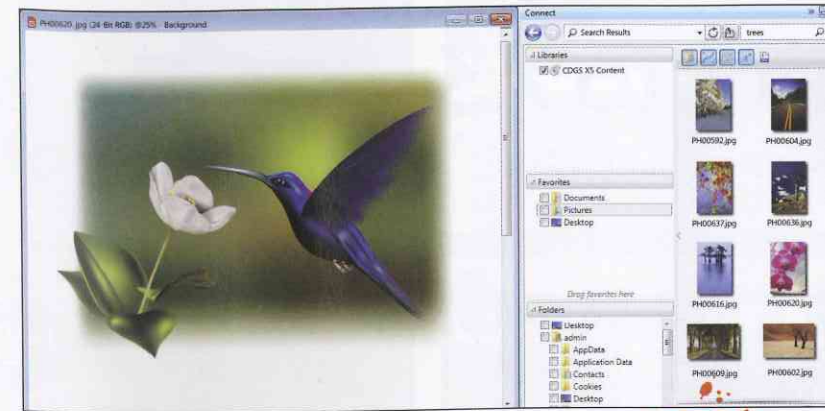




Aleksey Oglushevich's Girl with Rose took over 60 hours to perfect in CorelDRAW.



The Mesh Fill tool can create multicoloured objects with better colour ranges and gradient blends.

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X5

PC ONLY

ALL-IN-ONE The DRAW Graphics Suite is back and beefier than ever

Price £469, £210 for upgrade **Company** Corel **Web** www.corel.com **Contact** 0800 376 9272

Corel's Painter may have the edge when it comes to natural digital painting tools, but for general design and artwork it lacks the popularity of Adobe's Photoshop and other Creative Suite applications.

Unsurprisingly, Corel's keen to redress the balance with its latest product. Indeed, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X5 is a powerful, feature-packed release with everything a digital artist could need... up to a point.

Because DRAW X5 is a suite rather than an application, it's worth running through its components. Draw X5 is the primary application, providing a palette-driven working area for vector drawing, painting and bitmap work. It can also handle page layout functions such as flowing text, pre-flighting tools, and now supports standardised colour profiles for professional output.

Photo-Paint X5 is the image-editing side of DRAW Graphics Suite X5. Here you can quickly fix image problems and finesse tone and curve levels, as well as stack layers and mask out figures from backgrounds.

PowerTRACE X5 was the last part of DRAW Graphics Suite in previous versions, and acts as a bitmap-to-vector conversion tool. Feed in a bitmap, set dither and fidelity options

and you're left with a scalable vector version of the original bitmap.

The final new ingredient is Connect. This acts like Adobe's Bridge and is a fast, cross-application file browser. It works well, too, presenting you with a view of assets that can be dragged onto a canvas. Files can be grouped by projects, and any edits made immediately show up in the dock.

DRAW Graphics Suite is more than competent for everyday painting and design tasks. DRAW X5 itself feels far faster and more stable, while flicking between applications is easy and unobstructed by file sizes or levels of zoom – something previous versions were criticised for.

However, while we're happy to award CorelDRAW Graphics Suite top marks for its value and performance, there remains one hanging point for ImagineFX readers: it's not Painter. And why would it be?

For our money then, DRAW Graphics Suite X5 comes down to choice. If your artwork takes a backseat to professional design and art jobs, you'll love the scope of its features. If you're more of a hobbyist or professional artist used to real-life brushes and inks, Painter remains unrivalled. Either way Corel can be heartily congratulated.

DETAILS

Features

- Vector illustration
- Page layout
- Photo editing
- Bitmap-to-vector tracing
- File browser and library
- Two hours of video tutorials
- Over 2,000 vehicle design templates
- More than 350 professionally designed templates
- More than 10,000 high-quality clipart and digital images
- Enhanced colour functions
- New Mesh Tool features

System Requirements

- Windows Vista (32-bit or 64-bit editions) or Windows XP with Service Pack 2 or later)
- 512MB RAM, 430MB free disk space
- Pentium III, 800MHz CPU or AMD Athlon XP

Rating



ARTIST INTERVIEW

ALEKSEY OGLUSHEVICH

Aleksey reveals why he loves to paint using CorelDRAW X5

What are your favourite CorelDRAW X5 features?

I'm a big fan of the way you can mix vector and bitmap work in a single application. I also appreciate the drawing tools, in particular the gradient and fill effects that help me when I'm creating portraits and paintings.

What type of artwork is DRAW good for?

So many types of works can be created in CorelDRAW. In my advertising work I enjoy using its many text features. Primarily I paint and create my portraits using the vector drawing tools.

What are your favourite tools in the program?

I love how brushes and shapes can be changed quickly, and the range of colour options and gradient tools. These enable me to make far richer paintings than perhaps otherwise, through blending brush colours and layers.

What would you like to see in future versions?

One of the great things about DRAW is that it can be used for many different types of work. I can paint, draw and colour, or use type and even do web design. There's little left that it can't do!

What types of artist would you recommend DRAW X5 to?

I recommend DRAW to all young artists. It's an excellent experimental space, where you can try and fail without caring. The tools are easy to learn, and the tutorials, templates and clip art are always very good to work with.



Aleksey is an artist from Magnitogorsk, Russia, and has been an expert CorelDRAW user since its launch in 1989.

www.vector-portret.net.ru