Setting a grainy Chalk to expressively change its stroke width in Corel® Painter®

By Cher Threinen-Pendarvis

In this tip, you'll get acquainted with several of the Brush Control panels and learn how to add size expression to an already wonderful brush. The importance of Painter's unique Brush Tracking is also emphasized.
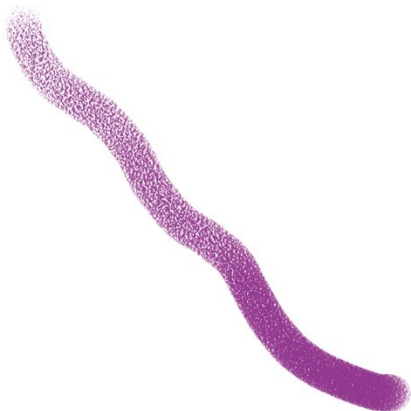
I like to use the Blunt Chalk variant of Chalk & Crayons for roughing in broad areas of color, while revealing rich texture. The brush can lay down opaque color with nice grain over large areas quickly. For linear accents and more detailed strokes, I created a tapered version of the chalk as described below:
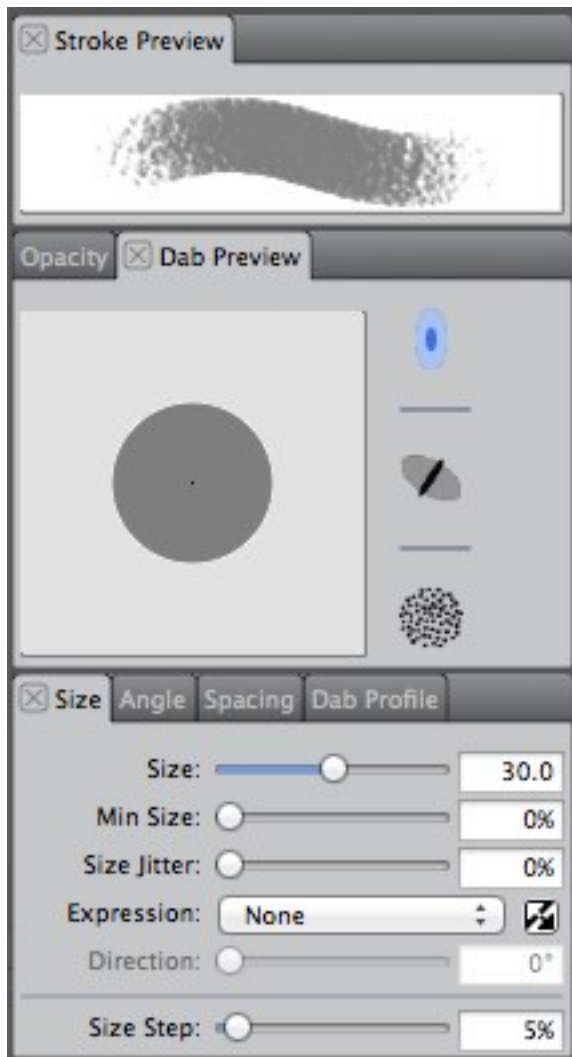
1. **Trying out the Blunt Chalk.**
   Before you try out the Blunt Chalk, it's important to set up the Brush Tracking so you can customize how Corel Painter interprets the input of your stylus, including parameters such as pressure and speed.

   Choose Edit > Preferences > Brush Tracking (Mac OS X users, choose Corel Painter X3, Preferences, Brush Tracking) and make a representative brushstroke in the window.

   Now, select the Blunt Chalk. In the **Brush Selector, choose the Chalk & Crayons category and the Blunt Chalk variant**. Apply varied pressure to your stylus while painting a squiggly brushstroke. As you explore painting your strokes, you'll notice that the default brush expressively reveals more grain when you apply less pressure. This is one of my favorite features of this chalk.

Painting a squiggly stroke with the default Blunt Chalk variant of Chalk
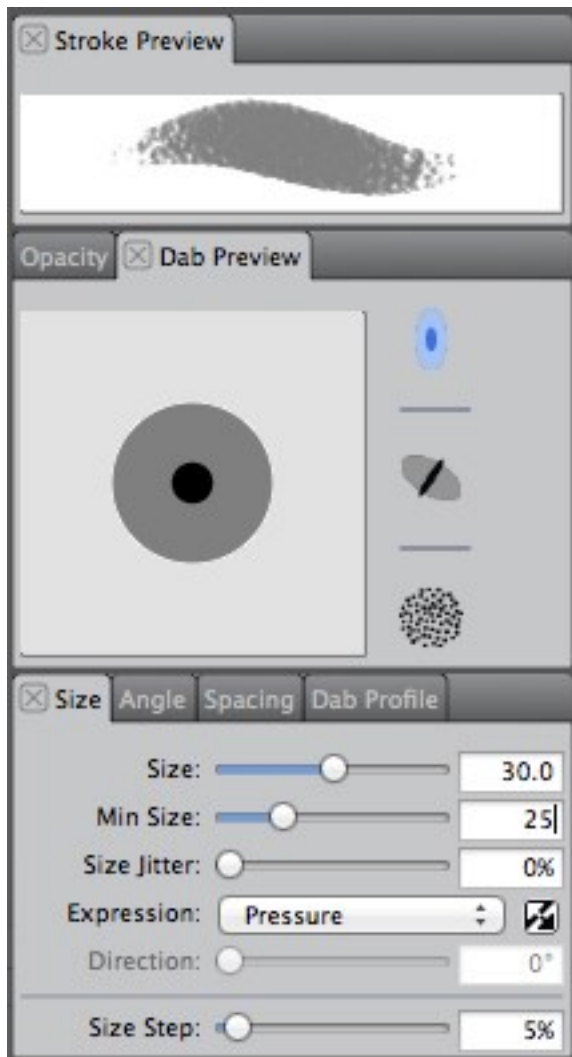

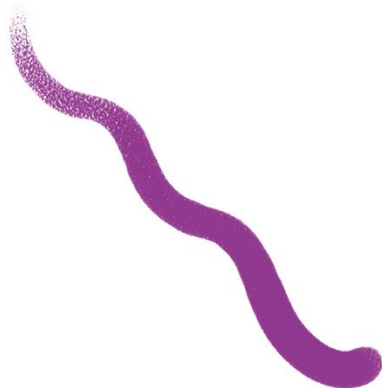*The Stroke Preview, Dab Preview and Size panel settings for the default Blunt Chalk variant of Chalk and Crayons*

2. **Set the brush to change its stroke width.**
   Next, open the Brush Controls by choosing **Window > Brush Controls > Size**. Also, open the **Stroke Preview** and **Dab Preview panels**. In the **Size panel** of the Brush Controls, set the **Min Size to 25%;** then **set the Expression** pop-up menu **to Pressure**. Make another stroke, and you'll see the thickness of the stroke change based on the pressure that you apply to your stylus.

   Let's take a look at the settings in the Brush Controls panels. Notice the change in the **Stroke Preview panel**; now the preview shows the expressive thin-to-thick stroke. In the **Dab Preview** window, with the **Preview Size and Shape button chosen**, the Min Size is represented by the black center of the Dab Preview, and the Max Size is represented by the larger gray circle.

In the Size panel, the Min Size is adjusted and the Expression menu is set to Pressure. Notice the updated thin to thick stroke and dab previews.

Painting a squiggly stroke with the new tapered Chalk

An award-winning artist and author, Cher Threinen-Pendarvis has always worked with traditional art tools. A native Californian, her art is a reflection of the inspiring travels she made with her family around the Pacific Rim—Hawaii, the Philippines, Japan, and Hong King, to name a few. A pioneer in digital art, Cher has created illustrations using the Macintosh computer for nearly three decades. She has been widely recognized for her mastery of Painter, Photoshop and the Wacom pressure-sensitive tablet, and has used these electronic tools since they were first released. Exercising her passion for Painter's artist tools, Cher has worked as a consultant and demo-artist for the developers of Painter. Her artwork has been exhibited worldwide and her articles and art have been published in many books and periodicals. Cher holds a BFA with Highest Honors and Distinction in Art specializing in painting and printmaking, and she is a member of the San Diego -Museum of Art Artist Guild and the Point Loma Artists Association. She has taught Painter and Photoshop workshops around the world, and is principal of the consulting firm Cher Threinen Design. Cher is author of all ten editions of The Painter Wow! Book, and both editions of The Photoshop and Painter Artist Tablet Book, Creative Techniques in Digital Painting. To learn more about Cher please visit her web site at www.pendarvis-studios.com