





→ ILLUSTRATOR

FROM SKETCH TO SCREEN

In his first *Computer Arts* tutorial, TechVector's Reggie Gilbert shows you a quick and simple way to create a stylised spray-can illustration from a simple sketch or photograph using a range of tools in *Illustrator*

ON THE CD

You'll find everything you need to complete this tutorial in the folder named Tutorial\Vector's on this issue's CD.

TIME NEEDED

1-2 hours

INFO

 TechVector's Reggie Gilbert produces vector and traditional illustrations for top clients around the world, including Monster Cable Products, Hertz Rentals, M-Publication, CMYK Book, The Royal Magazine/KDU, and countless others. You can find out more at www.techvector.com.

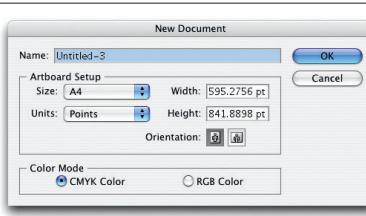
→ One of the great things about working digitally is the flexibility it affords you. There are so many options to undo and redo parts and layers that it's easy to knock out quick variations to appease a demanding client. The trouble for many of us is that it's still quicker to do the thinking on paper.

Have you ever wondered how to create vector images from something you doodled in a sketchbook? If you have, then you only need a pencil (or camera), your computer, and a little patience to convert any photo or drawing into vector art in *Illustrator*. Even the most novice user will be well on the way to creating stylised images from illustrations or photographs in no time.

This tutorial will show you a simple and fast way to create a basic technical illustration using a sketch as a guide. You'll find that this way of working is not only quicker than working from a blank canvas, but will also make you think carefully about using *Illustrator*'s tools, helping you to choose the most suitable one for the job. And because this is *Illustrator* you'll be creating an image that can be re-factored easily, so the colours and scale can be changed at your discretion.

In this example I've chosen to use an image of a spray can. However, you can use a similar process to convert any image into stylised vector art. The basic principles will be the same, but you can draw your own lines and choose your own subject matter and colour palette.

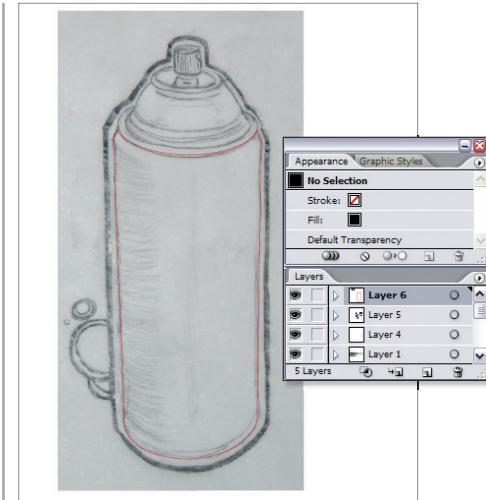
Tutorial and illustration by Reggie Gilbert
www.techvector.com



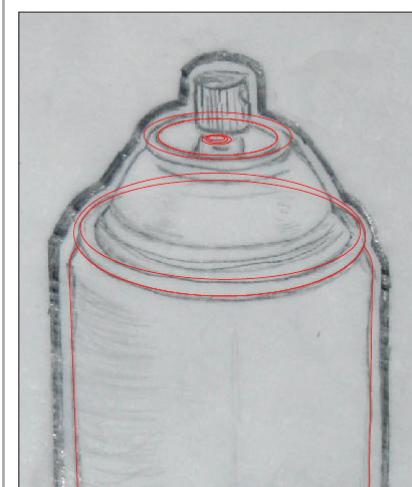
1 Start by either opening the Sketch.jpg file, which is provided on this issue's CD, or, if you want to really test yourself, try sketching or taking a picture of a spray can that you can work with from scratch.



2 Create a new document in *Illustrator* and choose Edit→Place to import the artwork you want to use. The file should appear on Layer1. Rename this layer as Art, so that you can identify it easily when you come to the later stages.



3 In the Layers palette, create a new layer and name it Can. Then, using the Pen tool, trace the outline of the body of the can. The sketch isn't perfect, so use your judgment when trying to follow the outline.

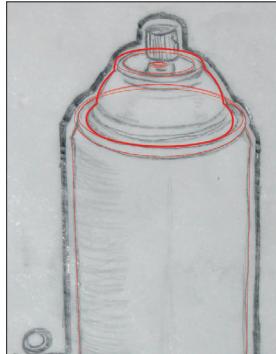


4 Again start a new layer in the same way as before, and call this one Bottom. Create a series of ellipses using the Ellipse tool for the metal at the top of the can. When you've done this you can line them up with your illustration or photograph. →

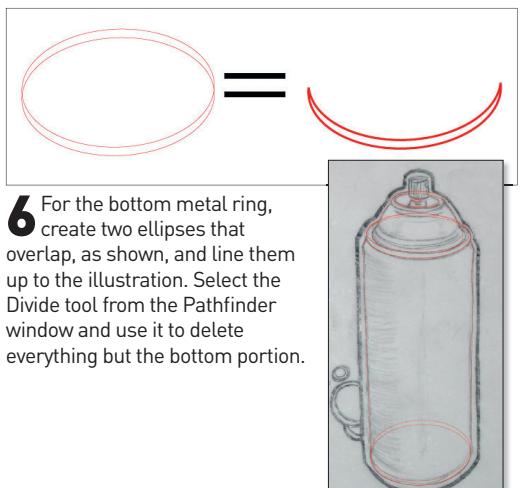


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5 Create another layer in the Layers palette and name it Top. Again, using the Ellipse tool, form a series of concentric ellipses and match them to the top portion of the can using either your illustration or photograph as a guide.



6 For the bottom metal ring, create two ellipses that overlap, as shown, and line them up to the illustration. Select the Divide tool from the Pathfinder window and use it to delete everything but the bottom portion.

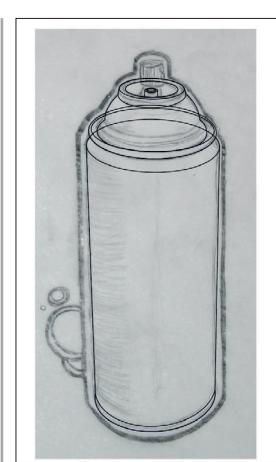


METAL EFFECTS

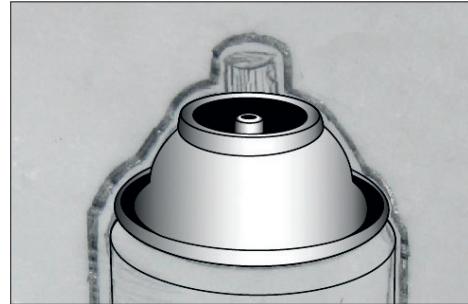
When using gradients for textures such as metal, where you want a consistent shine or highlight for the metal and paint, make a few gradient swatches from one gradient and just change the colours you sample from. This will make sure everything stays consistent.

SNIP AND TUCK

Copy and Paste the ellipse that your path is going to run into, snip it using the Pathfinder at both junctions where you want it to meet, and use it for that area. This will make everything run smoothly together.



7 By this stage you should have a similar result to the image above. If there is anything missing, just make the appropriate changes at this time, as you'll be able to make further changes later. At this point it is essential that you save your work.



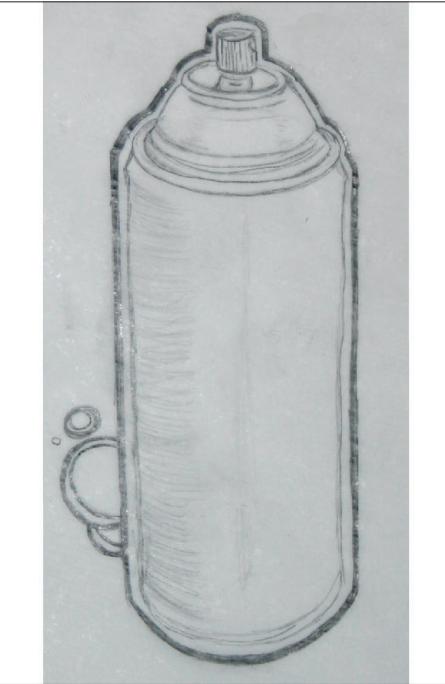
8 With the basic outline in place, it's time to apply some colour to the illustration. Start at the top and colour the inner ellipses black and the outer ones with a three-point gradient of dark grey/white/dark grey. Set the Hex values to 454545, FFFFFF and 454545.



9 Colour the body of the can using a Linear Gradient Fill from pale blue to black. For the example shown here, a Hex of 000000/00578A/000000 was applied. This colour combination should instantly create the effect of polished metal.



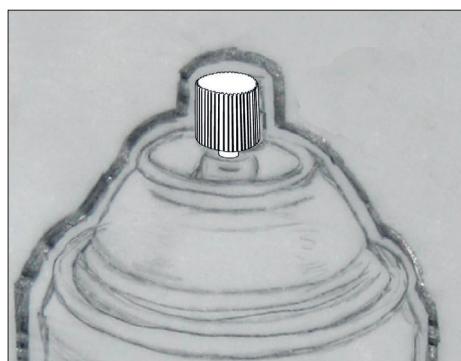
10 Now for the ring at the top of the can body. This should be coloured black (000000) and the Opacity should be set to 35 per cent. This will create the illusion of a shadow at the top of the can.



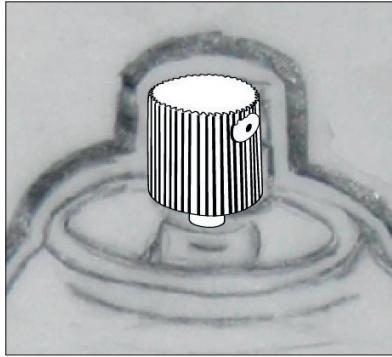
11 Now hide all layers but your original Art layer. Start another new layer and name it Cap.



12 For the spray nozzle (cap), just trace along the sketched lines of your illustration or photograph until you manage to find an outline that you're happy with.



13 Now draw vertical lines up and down the cap so that they roughly line up to the cap ridges.



14 Draw the tip with a few slight ridges on the top to give it an authentic appearance and place it slightly off towards the right side of the cap.



15 Turn all your layers back on and make sure everything lines up correctly. In this example I had to nudge the cap over a few pixels to the left. Compare your image to the one here and take the opportunity to make any adjustments where necessary.



17 Copy and Paste the can body and move it to a clean part of the artboard. Next use the Direct Selection tool to grab just the top points and drag them down to the top of the art you wish to cover your can with. Repeat this step with the bottom points.



18 Now bring the can body layer to the front, making it the top layer. Use **Ctrl+Shift+]** [PC] or **Apple+Shift+]** [Mac] on the graphic that's going to be used on the can. When you've done this, use **Object→Envelope Distort→MakeWithTopObject**.



16 Make another layer, named Graphic. Import the graphic you want to use on the can. You can use just about anything here, but I prefer to use a vector graphic so I can edit it if I wish. A logo has been provided on this issue's CD, so use that if you wish.

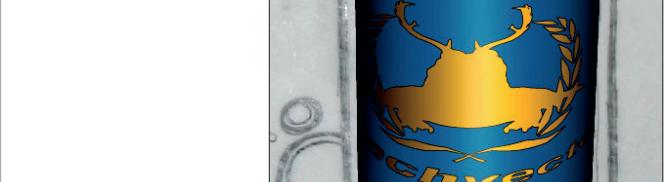


19 Position the graphic on the can and make it bigger or smaller as needed so that the edges match up. Zoom in to ensure that this looks good close up. Now Expand the graphic (**Object→Expand**), select the stroke and fill in the dialog box.



20 Choose Gradient Fill to fill the graphic with colour. Choose black for both sides and a different colour for the centre. This example uses FFBC13 for the body. This ensures it maintains the illusion of the edges disappearing into the shadow of the can, adding depth.

21 To add the shine down the centre of the can, create an ellipse and stretch it out until it becomes long and skinny. This will give the impression of light being reflected from the object. To do this, choose **Effect→GaussianBlur**, set the blur to 15 and the Opacity to 60 per cent.



22 Delete the layer you started with and create a layer named Shadow. Move this to the bottom of the layer stack and turn the can on its side. Copy the can and Paste it on to the Shadow layer. Use **D** to add the default colours of white with a black stroke. Select **Shift+X** to change this, then use Merge from the Pathfinder palette and fill it with a white-to-black gradient, getting lighter towards the top. Set a Gaussian Blur at 15 and sheer it on a 45-degree angle. **arts**

© ELLIPSES SAVE TIME

Use Copy and Paste for the ellipses to save some time and also to keep everything in the correct perspective. There will be many places in most illustrations where you'll find that this technique will come in handy.