

Twenty years since its initial release, Painter is what it is today with large thanks to the influence of John Derry, who, back in the “old” Fractal Design days, alongside Painter co-creators Mark Zimmer and the late Tom Hedges, worked on generating a mind-boggling array of wonderful virtual brushes for artists to use. These brushes ranged from excellent emulations of the look and feel of Natural Media, such as chinks, acrylics and oils, through to brushes that defy any “traditional” media label, such as the variants *modern art in a can* and *Uncle Wiggly!* Thank you, John, for all the great brushes you created and for kindly sharing your stories with us here on PaintboxJ.

Some the great brushes of the past are no longer included in the default set of brushes you see when you first install Painter, though some are included on the extras that come with Painter. In my various “*Jeremy Favcs*” brush categories I have included a few of my favorite old variants as well as a few that have been customized by myself and other artists. It is important to acknowledge John Derry's historic role in creating many of these Painter “golden oldies” and fascinating to hear his own personal insights, stories and background to these brushes. Read on and enjoy John's stories behind the some of the great legacy brushes. Please note that some of the brush variants he mentions are no longer situated in the brush categories mentioned. ~ Jeremy Sutton

John's Magical Mystery Brush Tour

By John Derry, co-creator of Painter



Portrait of John Derry created by Jeremy Sutton in 1992 using Fractal Design Painter

Artists Palette Knife

This was an early iteration of creating palette knife-type effects. Eventually, we came up with the Palette Knife dab to do this more efficiently.

Big Wet Luscious

This brush came out of the period we were expanding the Liquid Method. I wanted to get a brush that felt "wet". After a bunch of experimentation, I hit upon this variant and the name Big Wet Luscious came out of the blue.

Disco Fuzz

Drizzle

Fingerpaint

Retro Dots

These were created by an artist at Hallmark in Kansas City. I wish I could remember his name, but it is lost to the sands of time.

Paint Splatter

This was a Captured Dab brush I created to simulate paint drips. The Captured Dab is confined to a single graphic for the dab, so I used random Size and Angle to make the one dab look a bit more varied.

Sable Chisel Tip Water

This variant is an example of a pre-Static Bristle brush concept. The brush dab is a handmade grouping of individual brush "hairs". Soon after this, we developed the Static Bristle, which enables dynamic adjustment of the "hairs".

Uncle Wiggly

Watery

Wood

I developed these along the same lines as "Trees & Leaves", which was a brush add-on we sold around Painter 2. These brushes exploit Captured Dabs.

Oils Category

Smeary Round

Smeary Flat

Smeary Bristle Spray

It was with these brushes that I came up with inverting Bleed's pressure (Well). Combined with a low Saturation value and normal pressure, the result is that these brushes pick up and smear underlying color with lighter pressure, and transition to applying the current color with heavier pressure.

Artists' Category

Impressionist

I wanted to create a brush that had some of the characteristics of a short stroke. When I turned up Jitter to vary the position of the applied dabs, Impressionist was born.

Blenders Category

Runny

Smear

Smudge

I added these to expand the look of blending beyond Just Add Water.

Distortion Category

Hurricane

Turbulence

Several of the brushes in this category take advantage of the Plug-in Methods. These methods enable behaviors not possible with the other methods (they are also of no use on a layer with no color on it). Hurricane and Turbulence apply fractal-like disturbances to existing pixel imagery.

Pens Category

Scratchboard Tool

Mark and I had been playing around with scratchboard (a clay coated illustration board covered with black ink and a finepoint stylus with which to remove the ink layer, revealing the underlying white). We wanted a very fine point to simulate this. The original version used the Circular Method. Later, I replaced it with the Rendered Method, which produces a stroke with even finer control. It actually uses sub-pixel sampling to create very fine lines.

Sponges Category

Sponge

I created this Captured Dab variant to replicate the look of paint applied to a surface with a sponge charged with wet paint. This style of texturing was popular in the 50's and 60's.