

# Deneba Canvas 8

The power of  
illustration and  
photo editing in  
one program

Text and Photos by Jack and Sue Drafa

Graphic illustrators and photo editors have long relied upon separate software programs for editing their creative works. Each felt that their choice of software uniquely served their purposes, so it was always a challenge when it came time to combine the two art forms. There were compromises involved because one file always had to be converted, and inevitably, there was some tradeoff in quality.

Nowadays, there's a fine line between the graphic artist and the photographer, and the need for an all-in-one program is a must. Thankfully, software has evolved and there are now programs like Deneba's Canvas 8 that combine the power of illustration and photo editing in one program.

The Canvas editing window looks very much like that of any other image-editing program. It features a floating toolbox, pulldown menus, and a docking bar that provides access to hundreds of editing tools. That is where the similarity stops though. Since the program works on both illustration and

photos, it requires a different method for setting up editing screens and importing files.

Deneba's solution was to create a blank background image, or canvas, when you first start. You can then add photos or illustrations to the canvas by either placing with the file menu, or pasting with the edit menu. Each added image becomes a layer that can be edited separately.

If you are familiar with other image-editing programs like Adobe Photoshop, it may take some time locating similar tools and editing controls in Canvas 8; they're all there, you just need to familiarize yourself with their locations.

Starting with the floating toolbox on the editing screen, you will see that many of the icons in the toolbox have small wedges that expand to provide more editing tools. Simply touch these wedges to select a new tool, or you can drag it onto the screen and create an additional floating toolbox with the expanded tools. If you find that you often use these expanded tools,

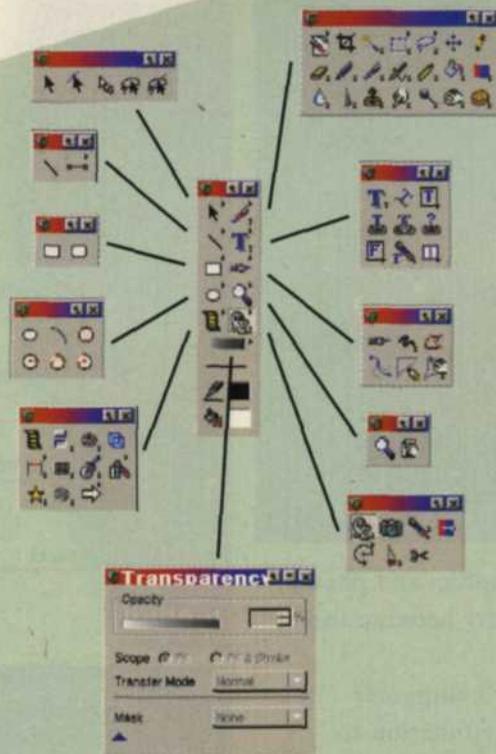


This shot is the result of applying the "Oil Painting" filter to the entire image.

you can use the “dock all palettes” command found in the pulldown menu. When you close a toolbox, it will attach itself to the docking bar at the top of the screen. This is a great way to customize your workspace with your favorite tools.

This brings us to the tools themselves. Since the program works with both illustrations and photos, you will find many more editing tools than with conventional photo-editing software. There are so many in fact, that it may be a little overwhelming for the novice user. Fortunately, Deneba has included several PDF files on the install CD to provide both summary and in-depth explanations of the tools. There is also a very extensive help program to guide.

The best way to understand all the tools is to load an image, and then try each pulldown menu at the top of the edit screen and the docking bar. From there, you can go to the floating toolbox and put your cursor over each icon to



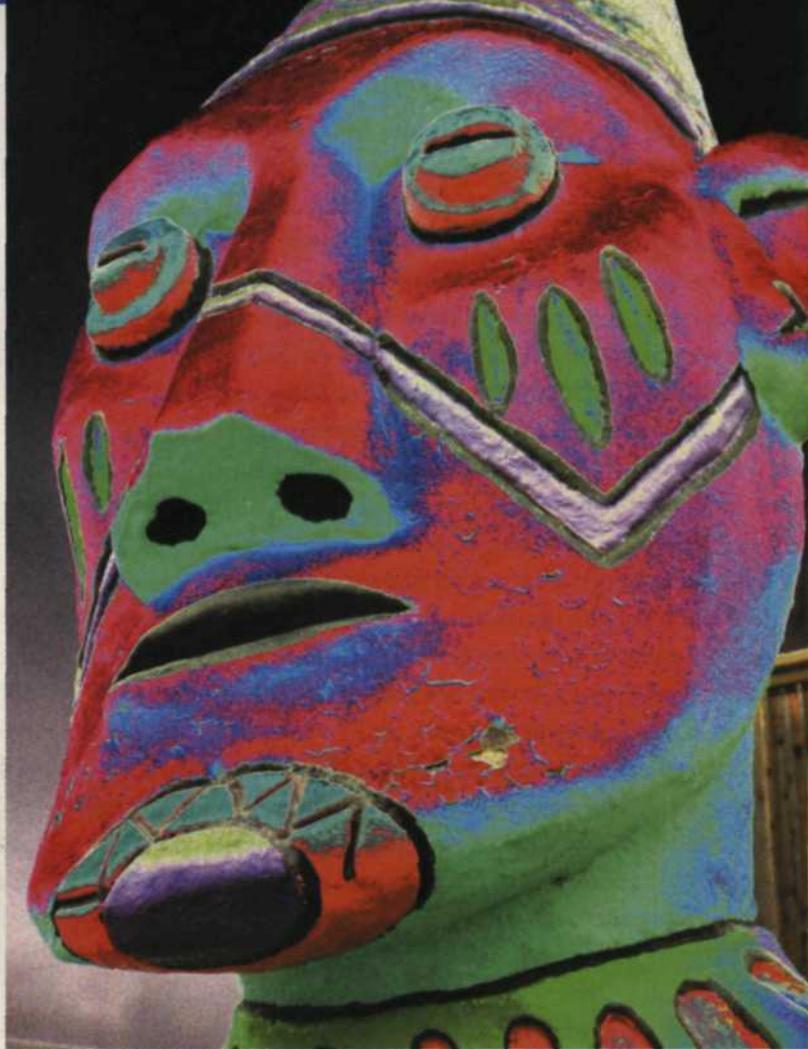
Canvas 8 offers a broad array of editing tools. An extensive help program will get you started.

view its information panel. As with most editing programs, the pulldown menus are primarily used to make changes to the entire image or layer, while toolbox tools are used to work on specific portions of an image. Typical tools in the pulldown menus include color balance, exposure, gamma, image size, color mode, cropping, and filter effects.

The most interesting feature of Canvas 8 is that you can apply photo effects to both photos and graphic illustrations with a feature called Sprite Effects. If you want to apply filter effects to a photographic layer, go the filter pulldown menu, select either a Canvas filter or one of many third-party Adobe Photoshop plug-in filters and apply it to the image.

If the layer is a graphic illustration, simply select that layer, go to the Object >Sprite Effects pulldown menu and filters that can be used on graphics will be listed. For example, drop shadows and blending effects can be applied

**Below:** This colorful image is an original scan of a photograph shot for a recent Agfa Vista film test report. **Right:** The solarize filter was applied to the entire image to create an interesting and even more colorful shot.





to both graphic and photo layers. Since graphics and photos are treated equally, no conversion is necessary between the two art types.

If an image becomes too large for your computer's memory allocations, you can use the proxy function to reduce the size of the working file. This command will maintain a high resolution version on the hard disk of the smaller working file. When you are done editing, the proxy version will update the high resolution version stored on the hard disk.

Another unusual feature of Canvas 8 is its lens effects. You first create a basic shape like an oval or rectangle, and then convert it to a lens using the Object>Sprite Effects>Convert to Lens function. With the Sprite Effects menu you can then select any point on the canvas and a similar image will be placed in the lens. You can then size the lens, move the lens, and use the zoom function to enlarge any of the Sprite Effects applied to the lens. More lenses can be added around the main canvas to provide various zoomed effects.

Canvas 8 has an extensive clipart library located on the docker bar at the top of the editing screen. When selected, a library of small thumbnails will help you locate the graphic images you want to drag and drop onto the main screen. The actual images are located on one of three CDs that must be loaded to allow you direct image access. There is also a subject directory located at the bottom of the thumbnail library to help you fine-tune your selections. If you are using several pieces of clipart, you may have to keep switching CDs to find the right image.

We anticipate that future versions of Canvas will include DVDs featuring the entire clipart library for easier access.

Since Canvas 8 easily handles both graphic art and photos, it is only logical that Deneba designed it to create and export Web pages. Text, graphics, photos, and animation can all be easily selected and arranged into a Web-page design. A slicer tool and menu will help you create the best table setup for the fastest and most efficient loading. You can even edit in pixel mode so you can view the edited images at 72 dpi, and still maintain a higher resolution file.

When you are finished, you can then select Save for Web to load a Web wizard. This small menu will help you create all the necessary requirements for a Web-page file that can then



## Nature Stock Photos



Above Left and Center: An original low-contrast image, and the same shot enhanced using the contrast and level editor controls.  
Above: Canvas 8 lets you create attractive Web pages with ease.

Right: Black-and-white line art can be created from color images by using Canvas 8's pull-down menu for threshold adjustment.



be quickly posted to your site.

Canvas 8 can import more than 60 different types of graphic and photo formats, and export more than 30 types. It can even import, edit, and export Adobe PDF file formats for use in documents or on the Internet. Canvas 8 is available for \$399.95 in a boxed version or \$349.95 for the download version. It is compatible with Windows 95/98, ME, 2000, NT 4.0 and XP or Mac OS X or OS 9 versions.

Canvas 8 is a powerhouse program with enormous creative potential. The key to its successful use is spending time with practice images, tutorials, and reading the user's guide. With a little practice, you will find that the program will quickly become an invaluable tool in your digital darkroom. For more information, visit Deneba's website at [www.deneba.com](http://www.deneba.com), or call 305/596-5644. ■