

Adobe Illustrator™

for Macintosh®



The Johnee Bee Show



Johnee Bee, founder of the Johnee Bee Show.

For illustrator Johnee Bee, who began his career as an airbrush artist, the biggest advantage of working in the Adobe Illustrator program is that it's so easy to make changes, even when he doesn't want to.

"I'm not a fine artist, so when clients ask for changes, I try to accommodate them," says Bee. "Once I presented a logo with a red background that worked well with the illustration. The client asked to see it in blue, so I did that. Then the client wanted a nautical look. Then a Hawaiian look. I did them all, and in the end, we went back to the red background. Sometimes I wish clients didn't know how easy it is to make changes."

A Natural Progression

Bee started his own illustration business, The Johnee Bee Show, in Costa Mesa, California, in 1988. "Moving from traditional airbrush illustration to working with Adobe Illustrator on an Apple® Macintosh computer was a natural progression for me," he says. "Adobe Illustrator allows me to create the same effects, only faster." An airbrush illustration that used to take three or four days now takes only a day. "And," he says, "the pay is the same."

When he doesn't have existing art to start with, Bee is comfortable drawing directly on the screen in the Adobe Illustrator program using a mouse.



"I usually don't do sketches," he says. "I've become as comfortable with the mouse as I was with a pen."

Kids' Stuff

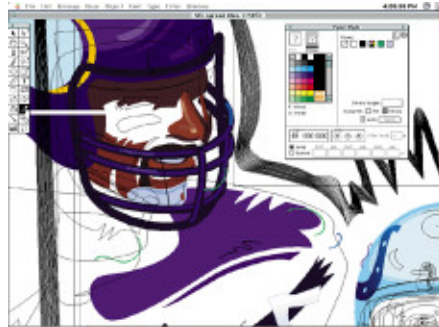
Clients currently using Bee's illustrations include Ingram Micro, NFL Properties, Denny's Restaurants and Disney Adventures. Among the pieces he has illustrated for them are posters, menus, brochures, food boxes, cups and postcards. Many of his illustrations are done to appeal to kids. "In some ways, that's a launching pad because you can have fun. But it's also limiting. I like to do hip-hop, underground-type stuff, which doesn't work well with kids if it's too far out. You need to simplify, even oversimplify for kids."

For Denny's Restaurants, Bee created a Fun Book children's menu—an eight-page, four-color brochure with illustrated stories. "The client wanted a hand-drawn, Disney look for the character in the book, which is a dog. But they didn't have the budget for separations to strip him in throughout the book in different poses. So they faxed me the line art, which I saved as a PICT file, autotraced using Adobe Streamline™ and imported into Adobe Illustrator. I was able to modify the art, color it and save the company a lot of money."

Taking advantage of the new text-handling features of Adobe Illustrator version 5.5, Bee says he's doing more work with type and more page layout in his kids' projects like the Denny's menu. "Now that I don't have to build my own tabs, it's a lot easier to work with body copy. I find that no matter how I rotate or beat up the copy, the tabs stay with it—like a hook in a fish." He also says he finds the new Search and Replace by Font feature to be a timesaver, especially when he's working on a "wacky" poster containing a dozen different faces.

Combining Tools

To create collages, Bee often enhances his Adobe Illustrator artwork with effects he creates using Adobe Dimensions™ and Adobe Photoshop™ software. "I'll start



The Adjust Color feature in Adobe Illustrator was used to handle subtle color changes in an image created for NFL Properties.

using Adobe Illustrator, create and arrange elements, then export an object into Adobe Dimensions to give it a 3D effect before bringing it back into Adobe Illustrator. I'll then export objects into Adobe Photoshop to do distortions and color variations, and bring them back into Adobe Illustrator to add final type."

Bee estimates he spends 20 percent of his time in Adobe Photoshop. "I may scan in a black-and-white Polaroid photo, then manipulate it to get an MTV-like graphic look with a heavy dot pattern and swatches of color. Then I'll bring it back into Adobe Illustrator to create sharp line art." he says.

Using Adobe's design tools in combination allow Bee to create illustrations that would have been difficult, if not impossible, to do using traditional methods. "I now do things I wouldn't have even approached before," he says. "The detail, the gradations, the colors—if I had to cut that out using rubylith and ink it, I'd never do it."

Personal Preferences

Bee has several favorites among Adobe Illustrator features, beginning with the plug-in filters. "I love the Distort and the Free Distort filters, which I use a lot to manipulate typefaces. Then there are the first five Pathfinder filters. I use Divide Fill and Same Fill Color all the time. For example, I'll be working on an illustration that has lots of stars in it, and I'll change them all several times to try out different looks. It's such a timesaver to use that filter."

Another timesaver is his use of the QuickKeys utility to assign key combinations to filters. He says he has QuickKey combinations for three-fourths of the Adobe Illustrator filters. "I don't even think, 'Do I want to distort this?' I just hit Command-Option-f and it's done. I use the filters more readily that way."

Bee has no regrets about leaving behind the world of traditional design tools. "I thank my lucky digital stars for Adobe Illustrator," he says. "I live in this program. It's all I do. I'm in front of the computer 12 hours a day."

The Jonnee Bee Show Systems at-a-Glance

Hardware

Apple Macintosh IIfx with Nexus 55 MHz accelerator, 32 MB RAM, 21-inch monitor, 13-inch monitor to display palettes for Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop, 1 gigabyte hard drive
Apple Macintosh Centris® 610 with 8 MB RAM, 80 MB hard drive
Two Apple LaserWriter® IIf printers
CD-ROM drive
44 MB Syquest drive

Software

Adobe Illustrator
Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Streamline
Adobe Dimensions