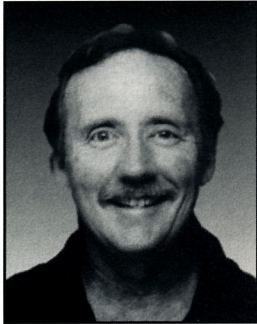


TYPE f/x



Here are more dazzling



Type f/x from master



sign craftsman,

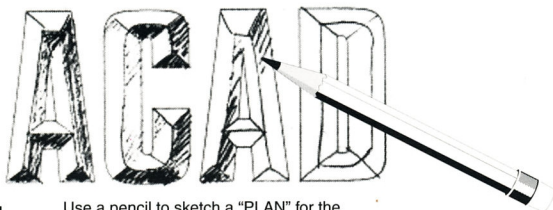


Bill Mogensen

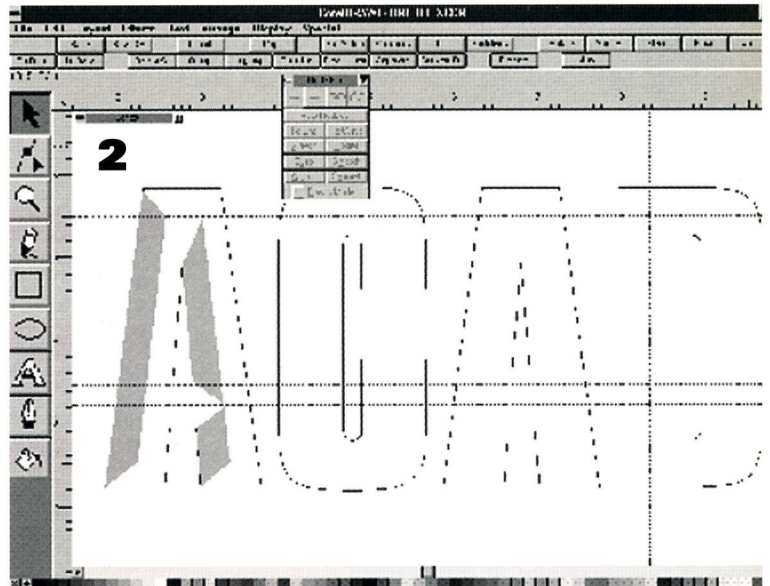
Prismatic Lettering

Prismatic (or convex) lettering has a unique quality that most people find very appealing. While not as easy to create as some of the other effects discussed in these articles, the result is worth the effort. The creation of prismatic lettering can be quite time consuming, so keep that in mind when you select a project using this effect.

Each letter should look three dimensional with the center-line of the letter higher than the edges, and each surface (facet) sloping from the center to the edges. There should be an obvious source of illumination in order to provide consistent, striking con-



1 Use a pencil to sketch a "PLAN" for the constructed prismatic lettering facets.



trast and shading for each of the letter's facets.

When constructing prismatic letters, your task is to basically redraw various parts of each letter to create the different facets. A good way to begin is to enter your text, as in Step 1 of Figure 4. Then, print it out with No Fill, and a .003 Outline. Now, with a pencil (yes, one of those), sketch the center lines, facets, and shading until you're satisfied.

See Figure 1. This will provide a "map" for the actual construction of the prismatic letter's individual facets. When you begin to actually draw the facets for the lettering in CorelDRAW, it is useful to set up some guidelines for help in maintaining consistency. See Figure 2.

The alphabet shown in Figure 3, gives an example of a two-color prismatic letter, with the highlights on the top and left, and



Light Source

A B C D E F G

3

H I J K L M N

O P Q R S T

U V W X Y Z

Use these examples for help in determining the shape, size and angle of the facets.

the shaded portions on the bottom and right sides. Use this figure as a guide for visualizing how to apply the shading to your project. Another good model that I've recently discovered for help in visualizing how different prismatic letters actually look is the McDonalds Restaurant primary identification sign. Observing (and making notes) about how the light strikes these letters is very useful in visualizing how your own lettering project should be shaded.

Prismatic lettering shouldn't be restricted to sans serif typefaces. Serif and Casual typefaces can also benefit from this technique.

Now, let's look at the steps shown in Figure 4. (Button 1=the left button if you use a right-handed mouse.)

Step 1. Set the copy: ACAD; Fill: White, No Outline; Size: ~ 80pt.

Step 2. Construct the facets for the left side. Use the border of the letter and construct each facet individually. Zoom in very close to the first letter. Use the Pencil Bezier tool. Start at the lower left, click button 1, move the mouse to the middle of the left stroke of the A, and slightly up from the baseline, click button 1. Move the mouse to a point near the top of the letter, and still in the middle of the left stroke of the A, click button 1.

Move the mouse to the upper left corner of the A, click button 1, move the mouse back to the starting point at the lower left side of the A, click button 1. You should have just constructed a closed curve object with 4 nodes. Construct the left facet of the right stroke of the A in a similar fashion. This object should have 7 nodes. Combine the first and second object, and give them a Yellow (or 30% Black) Fill with No Outline.

Step 3. Construct the facets for the right side. When done, Combine, and fill with Orange (or 60% Black) with No Outline.

Step 4. Construct the facets for the bottoms of the letter. Com-

4 Prismatic Lettering

Step 1
Plain/Boring Headline text with a 100% White fill and Hairline Black Outline.

Step 2
Left facets. Yellow (or 30% Black) fill with no outline.

Step 3
Right side facets. Orange (or 60% Black) fill with no outline.

Step 4
Lower facets. Red (or 80% Black) fill with no outline.

Step 5
Add: (a) Black filled 1-step outside Contour, or (b) Thick Black outline (behind fill) to the White filled lettering (Step 1).

bine each object, and fill with Red (of 80% Black) with No Outline.

Step 5. Add a 1-step (.05 in) Outside Contour (Black) to the White filled original text. Note that the areas of the original text, that were not covered by the objects constructed in the above steps act as the top facets of the completed letter. Use the Shape tool to correct any obvious problems with the individual facets, and when you are satisfied, Select all the objects making up the "A" and Group them. Now, go on to the next letter. It should be obvious that in this example, only the A, C, and D need to be constructed. The second "A" can be copied and moved to the proper position.

When constructing facets for curved parts of letters, use short straight line segments to construct the object. (Click, Click... etc). Then select the nodes for the curved parts, Double-click, and when the Node Edit Menu appears, change to Curves. Use the shape tool to bend the lines of the facet to fit the curve of the letter.

When selecting colors for your prismatic lettering, try to use various shades of the same color, such as: White, Light Blue, Medium Blue, Dark Blue; White, Pink, Red, Dark Red; White, Yellow, Orange, Red, etc.

It's too bad that there isn't a "magic button" for creating prismatic lettering, so until then...

(CorelDRAW 5, 6...10?) just remember good things take time, have a *plan*, and take it slowly. Remember to save your work frequently, use Undo when necessary and have fun.

Three Dimensional Extruded Contour Lettering

This effect will help you create interesting "sculpted" lettering.

The final effect is achieved by using the various options in the Extrusion drop down menu to manipulate the individual Contoured objects that are created in the first steps. The basic procedure involves applying a Contour or Contours to some text. Then Separating, then Ungrouping the

5 Extruded Contours

1. *acad*

2. *acad*

3. *acad*

4. *acad*

5. *acad*

5a. *acad*

6. *acad*

7. *acad*

EXTRUDE
Small Back
Extrude Depth=3

Small Back
Extrude Depth=12

SEE FIG.-7 for other EXTRUSION settings

EXTRUDE
Small Back
Extrude Depth=1
Vertical Offset=450

EXTRUDE
Small Back, Extrude Depth=2
Horizontal=-20°, Vertical=70°
Light Source and Shading to your desire.

TYPEfx

individual Contours. At this point you have a number of options available; you can Combine the first Contour with the original text to create an Object Outline, then use Extrude to apply whatever effect you find appealing. See Figure 5, Step 7.

Try varying the 3D Rotations, Colors, Lighting, Extrusion depth, etc. See Figure 5, Step 6. Save your work frequently, use the clipboard for copies, etc. Don't hesitate to experiment with other settings and/or ideas you may have on your own. Remember, most things in CorelDRAW can be achieved in more ways than one. In most cases the correct way to achieve an effect is whatever way works best for you.

Let's take a look at the steps in figure 6. For this example, use Wireframe mode during the initial steps.

1. Enter the following: A C A D, Swiss Inserat, 86 pt. White Fill, No Outline.

2. Apply a Contour to the text. Outside Offset: 0.05 in; Steps=1; Fill=White; Outline=Black.

After the Contour is achieved. Separate the Contour, click button 1 off the page, click on any outer line of the Contour (status line should indicate: Group of 1 Object on Layer 1), select Ungroup. Select both the text and the Contour, and Copy to the Clipboard, or use the Numeric + key to make a copy, then Move, or Nudge the copy out of the way. (This is your insurance copy, in case things go wrong. Also now would be a good time to save the file.)

3. To prepare for the two examples identified with the Number 6, we'll need to modify the Contour by removing the text. Don't

delete the text, just Move (or Nudge) it out of the way.

4. The result of the previous step should equal the two objects shown in this step. The original text, and the Contour outline with no text.

5. Now, Nudge or Move both objects back into alignment with each other. (The result should look like the original Contour as in Step 2—the difference being, both the text and the Contour are separate objects.)

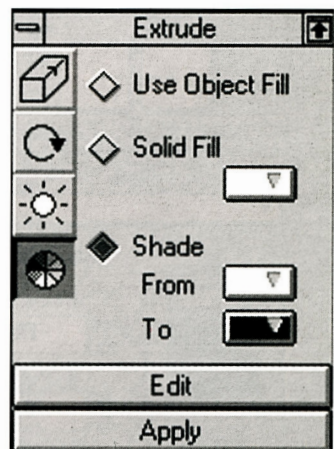
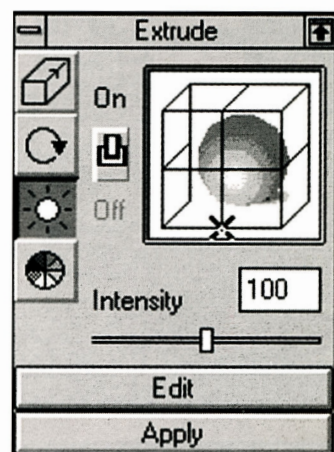
5a. This example creates the outline contour as an individual object. (The centers of the lettering are missing, as shown by the angled black rectangle in back.) This object can be extruded as in Step 7. To create the outline contour: Convert the text to curves. Break Apart the text. Select each "text" object and Combine with each other. Then, Combine the "text" with the Contour outline. This should create the closed object outline as shown in step 5a.

6. Now the fun begins! Select the contoured object, and open the Extrusion drop down menu.

Each object will be extruded separately but, with basically the same settings. The only difference being the depth of the extrusions. Usually, the front object looks best with a shallower depth than the back object. Start with the back object, play around with rotations, coloring, lighting, etc. Don't make too many changes at once. Try a change, then apply it. When you're happy with the extrusion of the back object, select the front object, select Edit in the Extrusion drop down menu, and try changing only the depth of the extrusion before selecting Apply. In order to achieve the proper visual perspective, it may be necessary

to move the front object slightly. In the Figure 5, Step 6 example the front object was moved slightly vertical. Remember to apply any changes made to both objects. Figure 6 gives shows Extrude Color, and Light Source examples.

I hope I haven't lost anyone along the way. In future issues of CORELATION, we'll look at a couple of different ways to create chrome lettering effects, more extrusions, some suggestions for improving the appearance of extruded lettering with heavy outlines, and a quick look at some well-known effects such as neon glow, and embossed lettering.



You may remember Bill as Corel 1992 Design Contest winner and intrepid creator of large signs (V.2, 2: 10-13)

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