

# Using Illustrator or Freehand to Create Graphics for Flash Import

## Overview

As you have seen drawing in Flash can be a little tricky. Some people prefer to create their artwork in other vector programs and then import them into Flash. In this Tutorial, we'll take a look at the 2 leading vector graphics programs and what they offer for Flash Import.

Illustrator (Adobe Systems, Inc.) and Freehand (Macromedia) have been competing for years for the top spot in vector illustration packages. Both have comparable features that allow you to create sophisticated to complex vector illustrations. Depending on what you learned first, you might tend to lean towards that package. I happened to like Illustrator better than Freehand, especially version 10 which has transparency, and a new Brush feature that's awesome. I used to teach Freehand classes and just found that the interface was cluttered and that the tools felt awkward. That's my own personal view. Freehand MX has just been released (Jan. 11, 2003) and I have to say that its a much better application than what I remembered. With a few new features like Extrude, multiple attributes and others, Freehand MX is looking on the up and up.

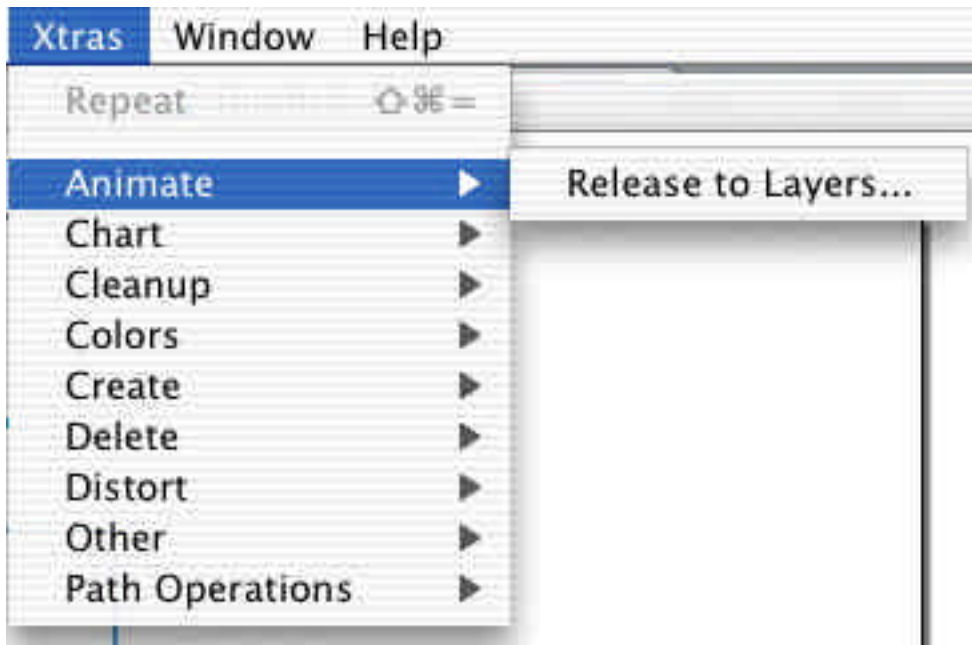
## Freehand

We'll start with Freehand because Freehand is made by the same company that makes Flash and they've done a lot of work lately to integrate the programs in their suite.

### *Creating a Build Effect*

Creating a Build Effect will release the objects into layers in a cumulative sequence. For example, if you created a circle a square and a rectangle on the stage and created a build sequence, one layer would contain the circle. The next layer would contain the circle and the square. The last layer would contain the circle, square, and rectangle.

1. Start by Creating a New Document in Freehand, File > New
2. Use any of the drawing tools, pen tool, polygon, oval, rectangle, etc., to draw something to your liking.
3. Select all of the drawn elements, Edit > Select All or drag a marquee selection around your drawing with the Arrow tool.
4. Group the drawing, Modify > Group.
5. From the Xtras menu choose Animate > Release To Layers. Select the Build Effect from the pop-up menu and click OK. Notice in your Layers panel that each element is placed on its own layer.

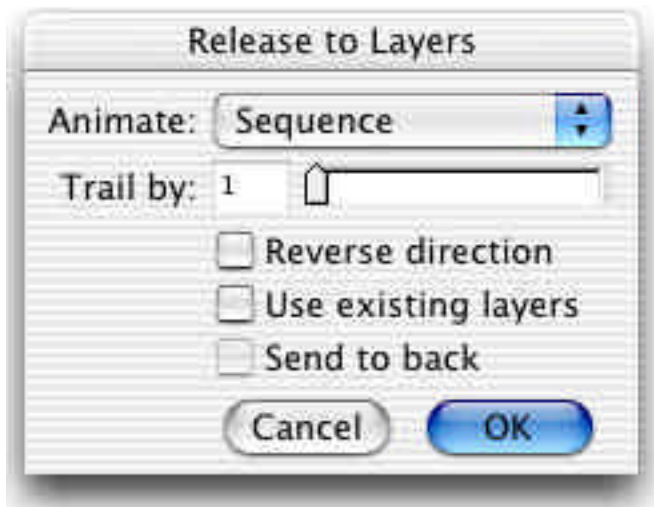


6. To Preview the Build Effect, go to the Window Menu > Movie > Test. You should see a window appear with a set of VCR style buttons in the lower left-hand corner. Click the Play button to see the results of your work. Each element that you drew will build in sequence starting from the first item to the last.
7. From the File Menu choose Export. Set the Type to Macromedia Flash (SWF). Give the file a name and choose a location to save it to. Set the type of animation to Build and click OK.
8. In Flash Create a New Movie, File > New.
9. Insert a New Graphic Symbol, Insert > New Symbol. Set the behavior to Movie Clip and name it build. Click OK.
10. Go to the File Menu to Import. Import the SWF file that was Exported from Freehand. Notice that all Freehand did to create the animation was to put each layer into its own Keyframe.
11. Scrub the Timeline in Flash by dragging the Red Playhead box across the Timeline.

### *Creating a Sequence*

Building a Sequence will release each item to a new layer.

1. Follow the steps above to create an illustration, Release to Layers, and Test.

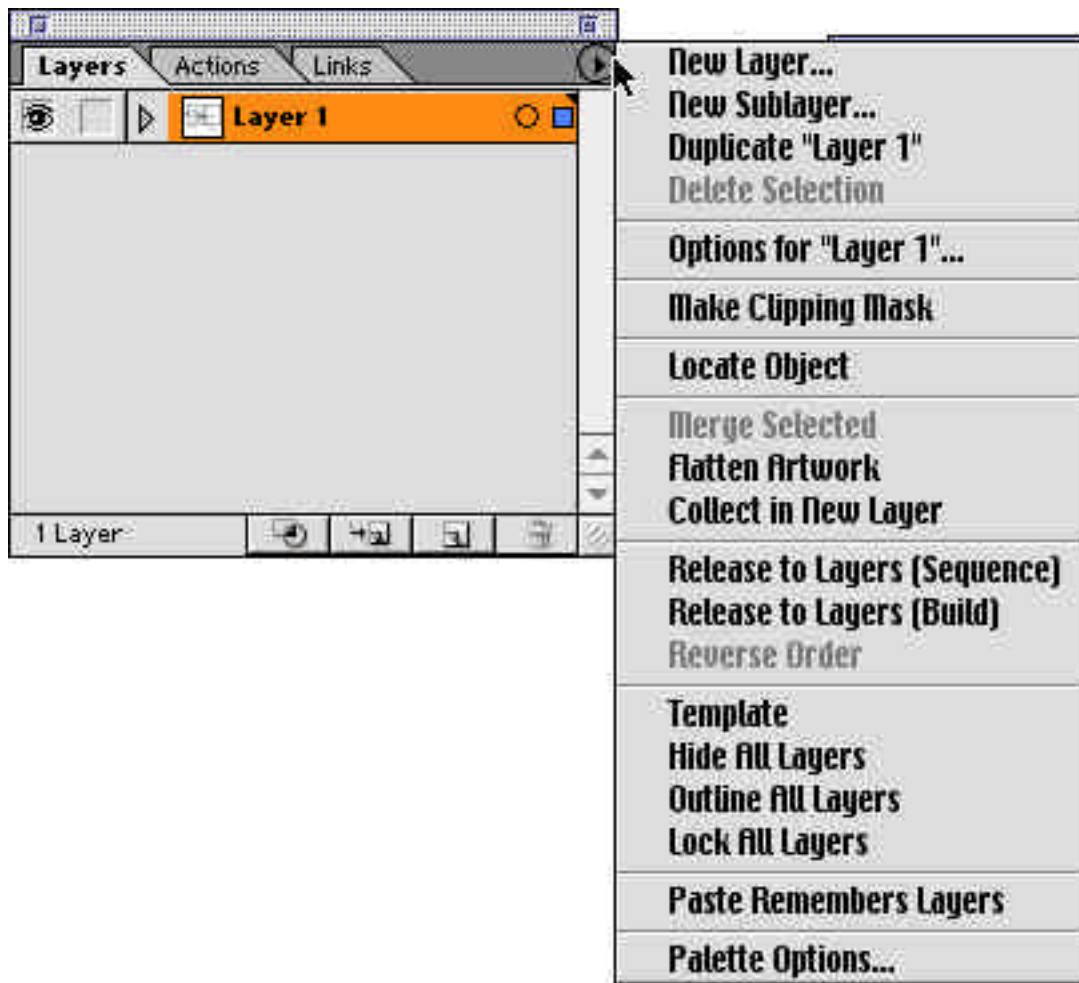


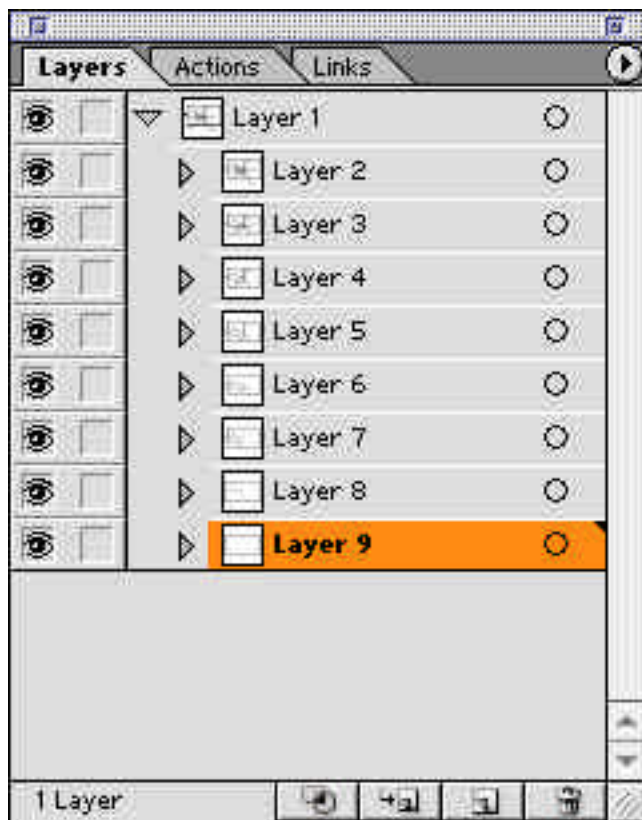
2. From the File Menu choose Export. Set the Type to Macromedia Flash (SWF). Give the file a name and choose a location to save it to. Set the type of animation to Sequence and click OK.
3. In your Flash Movie, Insert a New Symbol, Insert > New Symbol. Set the behavior to Movie Clip and name it sequence. Click OK.
4. Go to the File Menu to Import. Import the SWF file that was Exported from Freehand.
5. Scrub the Timeline in Flash by dragging the Red Playhead box across the top of the Timeline.

## Illustrator

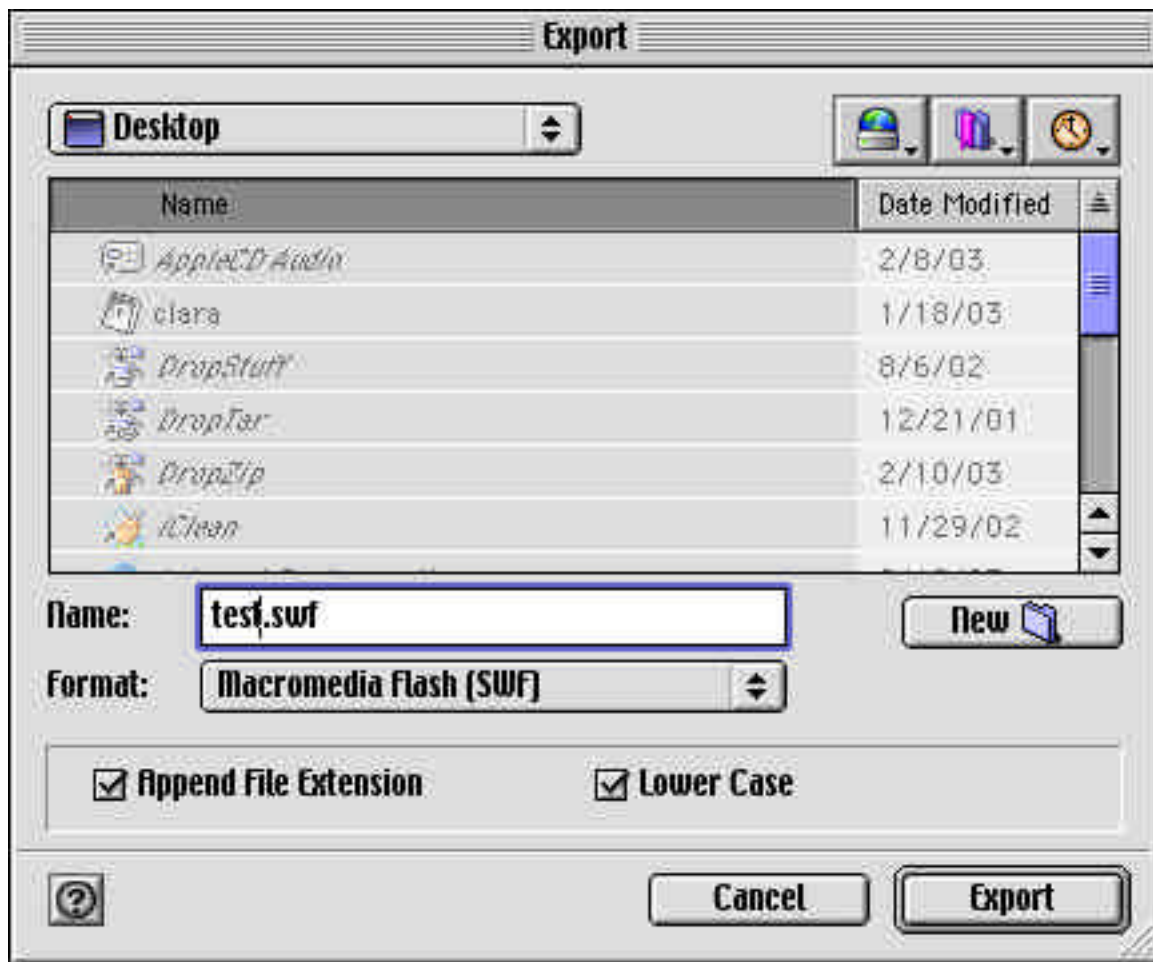
### *Creating a Build Effect*

1. Start with a New Document, File > New. Be sure to check the RGB option in the Color Mode section. Click OK.
2. Use the various tools in Illustrator, polygon, star, swirl, brush, pen, rectangle, and oval in order to create an illustration.
3. Select the entire illustration, Edit > Select All or use a Marquee selection over the entire illustration with the Arrow tool.
4. From the Top right corner of the Layer Palette, click the Options Arrow and choose Release to Layers (Build). Notice that each item is placed on its own sub-layer underneath Layer 1.

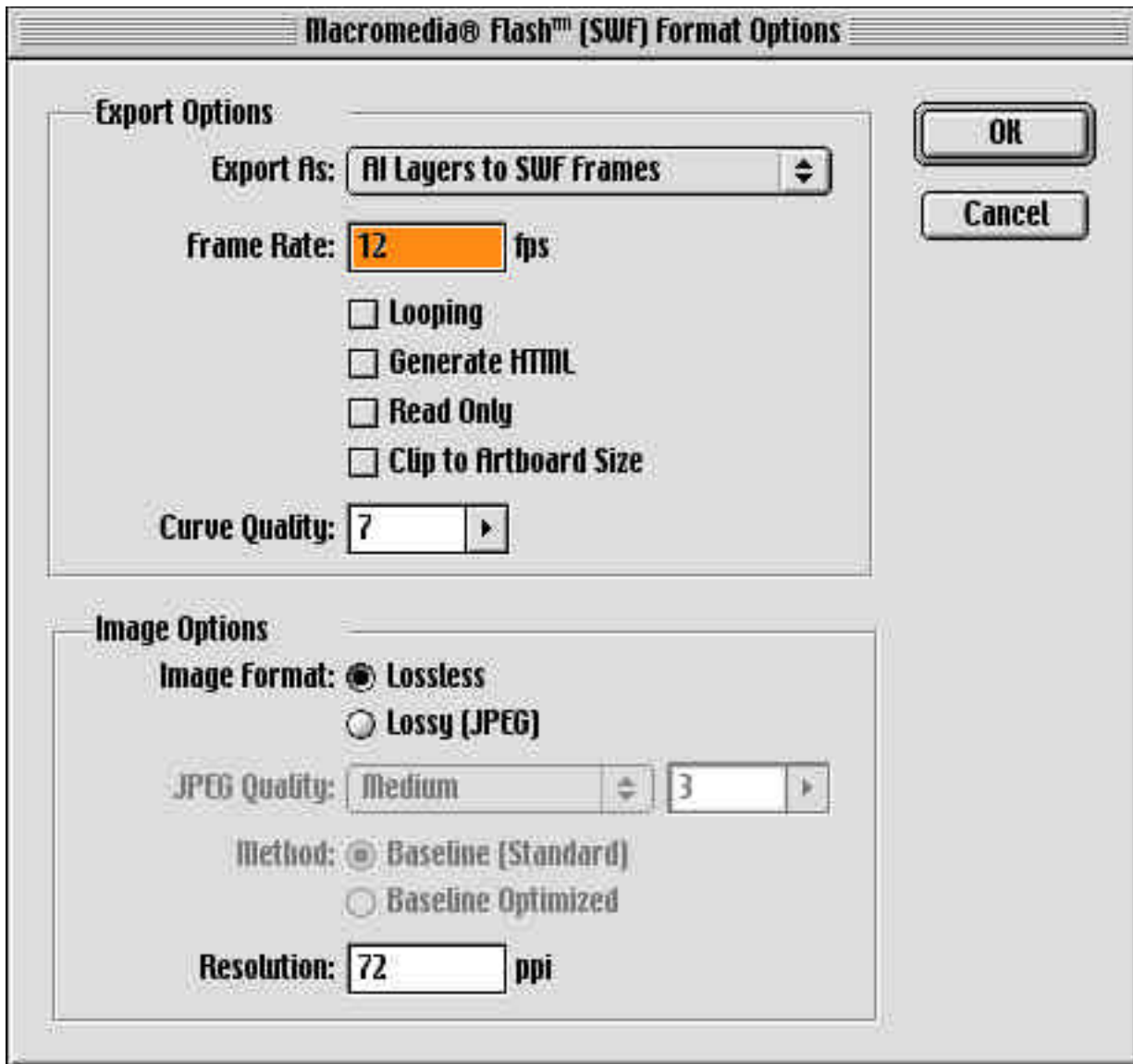




5. From the File Menu choose Export. Set the Format of the file to Macromedia Flash (SWF). Give the File a name and set a location to save it to. Click OK.



6. In the SWF Export dialog box, choose All Layers to Frames from the pop-up. Click OK.



7. In your Flash Movie create a new Movie Clip Symbol, Insert > New Symbol. Set the behavior to Movie Clip. Give it a name and click OK.
8. From the File Menu choose Import. Import the SWF file that was Exported from Illustrator.
9. Scrub the Timeline in Flash by dragging the Red Playhead box across the top of the Timeline.

### Creating a Sequence

1. Follow the Steps above to create artwork in a new Illustrator document.
2. Select the entire Illustration.
3. From the Top right corner of the Layers Palette, click the Options Arrow and choose Release to Layers (Sequence).
10. From the File Menu choose Export. Set the Type of file to Macromedia Flash (SWF). Give the File a name and set a location to save it to. Click OK.

11. In the SWF Export dialog box, choose All Layers to Frames from the pop-up. Click OK.
12. In your Flash Movie create a new Movie Clip Symbol, Insert > New Symbol. Set the behavior to Movie Clip. Give it a name and click OK.
13. From the File Menu choose Import. Import the SWF file that was Exported from Illustrator.
14. Scrub the Timeline in Flash by dragging the Red Playhead box across the top of the Timeline.

### **Finishing Up**

You can, of course, Export your Freehand or Illustrator graphics as static SWF files for use as buttons or interface elements. Simply prepare your artwork and then go to the File menu to Export and Export the file as a SWF file. Then Import it into your Flash Movie.