Affinity Designer Tutorial
FOR WINDOWS

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In this tutorial, we will cover the basics of Symbols and how to use them. Once you understand the concept, you can create some very interesting graphics.

SYMBOLS

LET'S GET STARTED

This is a **Beginner +** tutorial that assumes you know where to find the various tools and commands.

A symbol is an intelligent object that can be placed repeatedly in your document. Editing any one of these symbols on the page will automatically and instantly update all instances of that symbol (from the Help file).
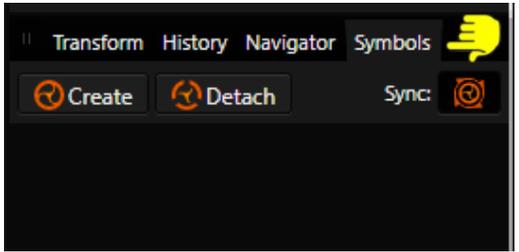
Basically, when you create an object and add it to the Symbols tab. You can use this object many times over. The beauty comes in when you want to change the color of the objects. When using Symbols, you only need to change ONE image and all the rest will auto change.

This is perfect for changing the colors of buttons on a large website. You can change them all by changing only one.

SETTING UP

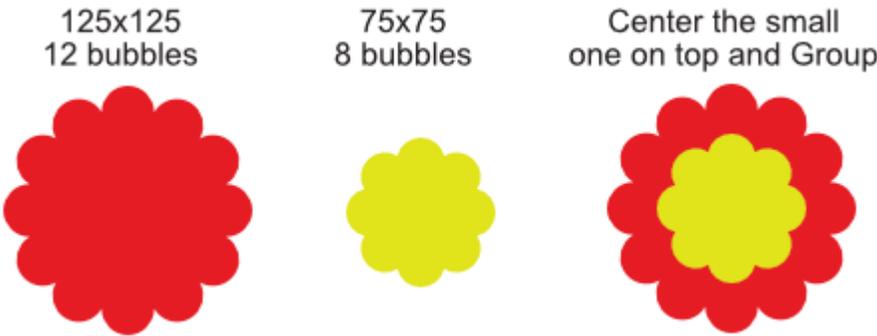Open a new image, 600x600 px or so, white background.

On the main menu, select **View\Studios\Symbols** to open the **Symbols** tab.
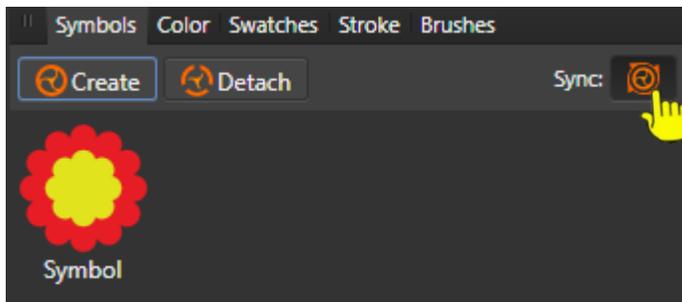
MAKING A SYMBOL

The easiest way to learn something is to do it yourself so let's make an object and use it to create a symbol.

Use the **Cloud** tool preset and draw out a red and a yellow cloud in the sizes below.

125x125
12 bubbles

75x75
8 bubbles

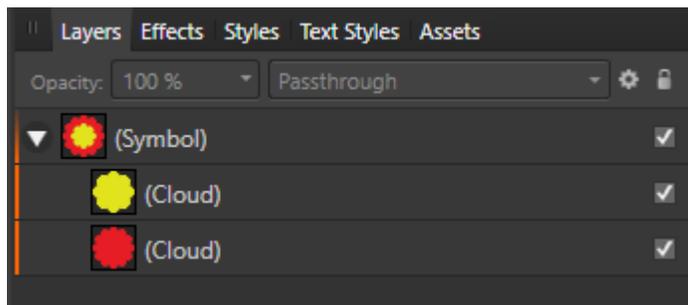Center the small
one on top and Group

Make sure your grouped object is selected, then click the **Create** button on the **Symbols** tab. You will see your new symbol. It will stay there until you delete it. You can even delete the original object but the object in the Symbols tab will still be there.

Make sure the **Sync** button is turned on. This causes all objects that are symbols to update when any given symbol is changed.

Look in your Layers tab and notice the small orange line on the left side of each layer. That orange line is to indicate that this object is a symbol.

Now let's take a look at how this works. Drag enough copies out of the **Symbols** tab to make a total of 5 objects. Line them up like those pictured below.
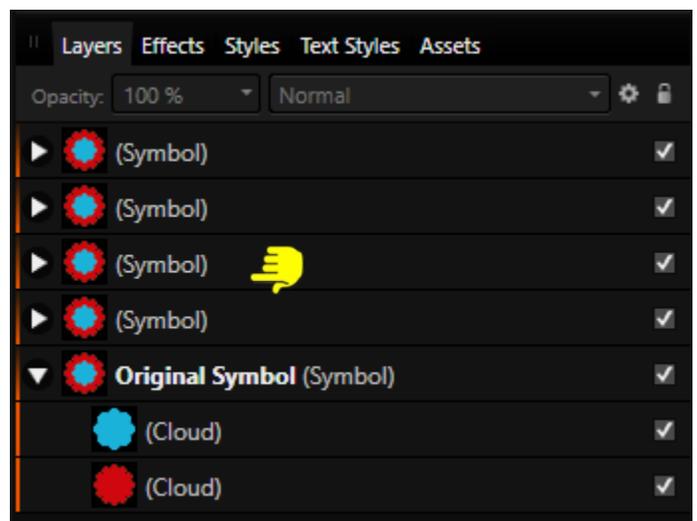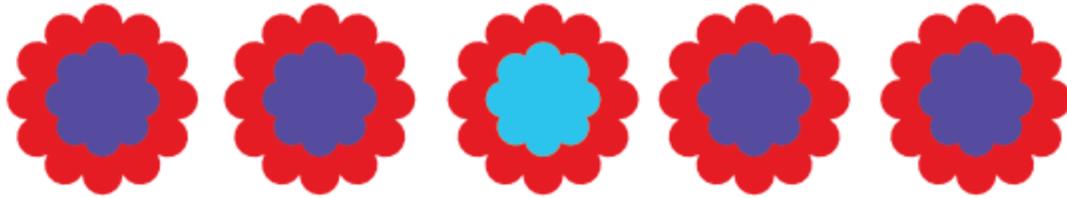

Note: *In this tutorial, we will always use the last Symbol layer to make changes. However, you can select any layer you want. It's easier to manage when always using the same layer.*

In the **Layers** tab, click the last yellow cloud and change the color to aqua. Look at what happened. You only changed one object, but the color was changed on all of the shapes. Whatever you do to one will have the same effect on all the others.
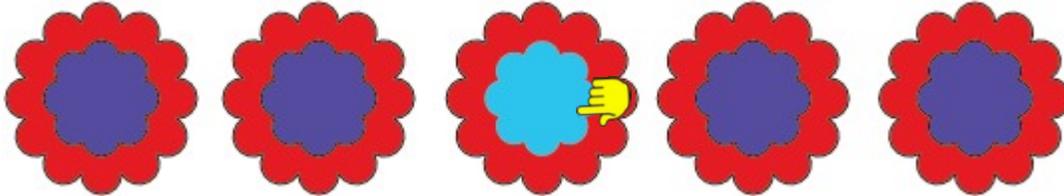
In the **Layers** tab, find the middle third Symbol and click on the aqua cloud layer, then click **Detach** on the **Symbols** tab. Notice that it no longer has an orange line on the right side of the layer because it is no longer a symbol.

Click on the last aqua cloud in the **Layers** tab and change that color to purple. Notice the detached cloud did not change colors.
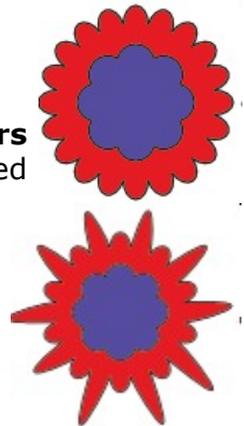
In the **Layers** tab, select the last red and purple clouds. Set the **Stroke** color to black and the **Stroke** width to 1 pt.

Once again, all of the clouds but the detached one have a stroke showing.

Let's change the shape of the red clouds. Select the last red cloud in the **Layers** tab and inrease the number of bubbles to 20. Notice all the red clouds changed too. Select the last red cloud once again and **Convert to Curves**. In the Layers tab, it now says **Curves** instead of **Cloud**.

Using the **Node** tool, click on the red cloud and edit every other node by puling it outward. See how easy it would be to change if you're doing a lot of icons? This is only a few of the many things you can do to an object when it is also a symbol. Just for fun, apply an effect and a style to the last red and purple clouds.

Arrange your 5 images as shown below. They sort of look like they're holding hands.

Hold down the **Shift** key and select the last two layers. These are our original layers. Drag the handle on the bounding box around in a circle. Your images should be rotating. The bounding box kind of spoils the image, especially if you want to create a video. To hide the bouning box, click the "**Hide Selection While Dragging**" icon on the Context toolbar.

Experiment with changing textures, effects, colors, gradients and stroke widths until you are comfortable with using Symbols and that you understand how to use them.

We'll do something much more fun on the next page. Save your image now if you wish to keep it.
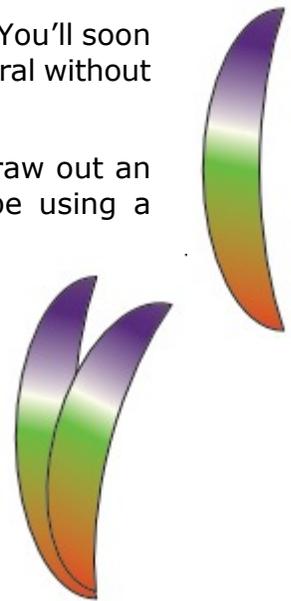
SPIRAL FROM SYMBOL

Now, were going to create a beautiful spiral using a Symbol as our base. You'll soon understand why we're using a symbol because we know we can make a spiral without using Symbols.
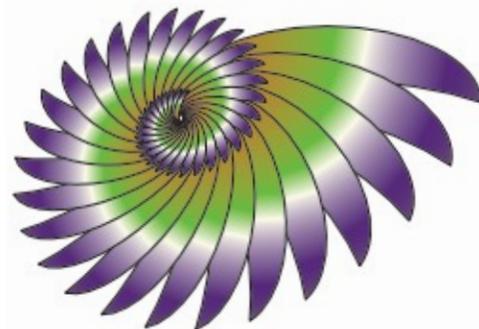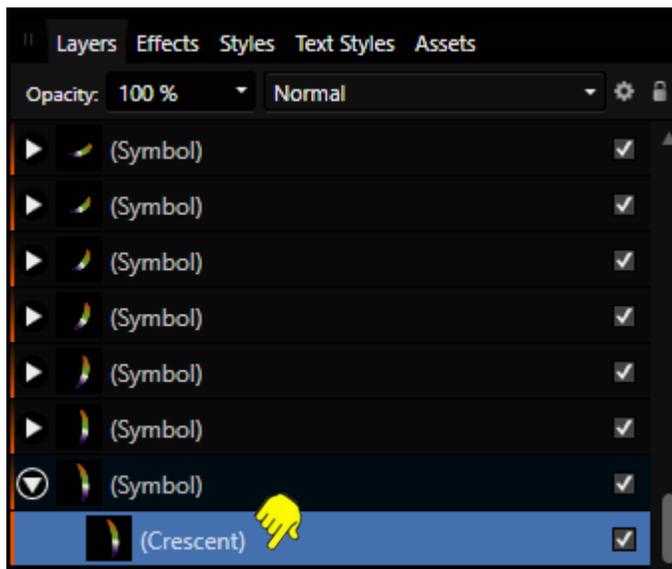
Open a new image, 600x600 or so. Use the **Crescent** tool preset to draw out an image about 100x200 pixels. Take some time and color your shape using a gradient. Try putting at least 3 colors in your gradient. Add a **Stroke** about 1pt in size.

Create a **Symbol** with your new shape. Hold down the CTRL key and click ONCE on your image in the workspace. This will create a duplicate image. Move the top image down slightly and to the right while matching up the bottom points.
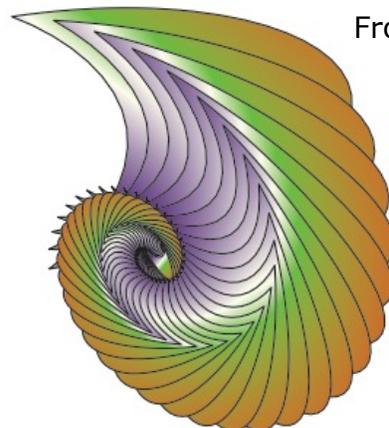
Hold down the CTRL button and press the letter J as many times as you wish until you like your image.

This is my result but we're not done yet! In the **Layers** tab, scroll down to the very last crescent and click to select. This will place a bounding box on your image. Pull the handle on the bounding box and all of the symbols will follow the cursor.   You can pull the bounding box to make the image longer. You can even re-color your spiral by duplicating it, then editing the last layers to change the colors.

These two shapes are

From the same image.

Have fun making spirals!!

Enjoy!