

# Creating Tiles

## Guide to creating tiles in RMVX-Ace style

### Part 4: Shading

Part 4 will be covering the basics of shading, techniques for shading when painting and will briefly touch on how filters should be used.

#### Outline

##### 4.1 - Light and Shadows

4.1.1 Light source in RMVX-Ace RTP

4.1.2 Shadows in RMVX-Ace RTP

##### 4.2 - Painting Techniques

4.2.1 Layering colors

4.2.2 Tips and Tricks

##### 4.3 - Using Filters

Although this tutorial focuses on shading in the RTP style, it's a good idea to look at a few general shading tutorials. Understanding how different light sources would affect shading can help you in both custom art and in creating atmospheric lighting for maps.

### 4.1 Light and Shadows

Before we begin, it's important to mention that there are occasional inconsistencies in the RTP when it comes to the light source and the shadows. RTP is often created by multiple artists, and though all tiles match well together, there are sometimes small personal differences.

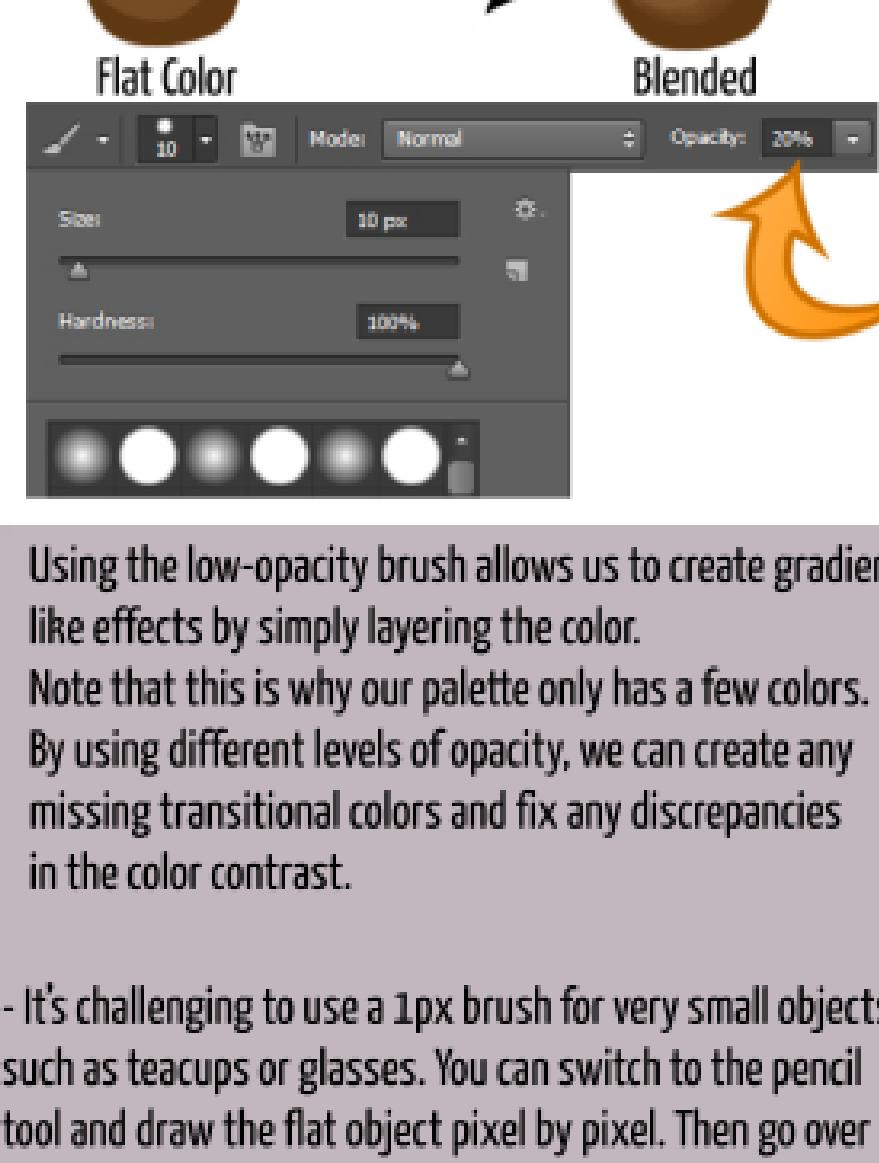
These differences are very minor, and usually mostly visible to artists who are working on emulating the RTP style.

With this in mind, you will want to reference RTP frequently until you feel comfortable with the style. If you have a tile that's similar in shape or function, you can use it as a base of comparison for your own work.

#### Light Source

The light source in RMVX-Ace RTP is in the upper left.

Sometimes it is slightly to the front of the object, and other times, it's directly in the center upper left.



#### Exercise:

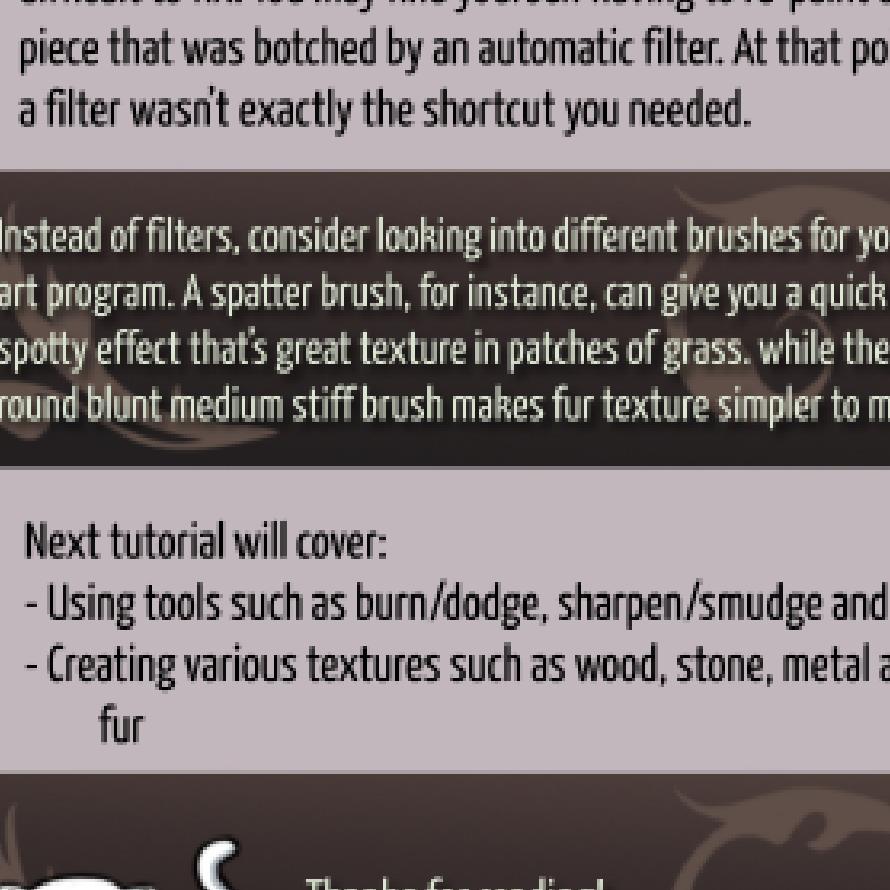
Take various tiles from the RTP and try to replicate their shadows. Which objects have shadows cut or removed by the 32x32 pixel grid?

### 4.2 Painting Techniques

Painting is done through a process of layering - in other words, colors and shapes are drawn on top of each other. This is a little different from other forms of art where you block off areas of color.

#### Layering Colors

There are two main ways to layer colors in painting. The middle color approach has the artist paint a base "middle" color, then apply the dark shadow and light highlight over it in appropriate places.



- Make the basic shape and fill it with your middle color.

- Add the shadow, following the upper left light source.

- Add the second shadow (or object outline).

- Add the first highlight, making sure you cover a good-sized area.

- Add the small spot of the brightest highlight.

The second approach is the dark-to-light, where the artist starts with the darkest color and works up to the lightest.

Note that this is why our palette only has a few colors. By using different levels of opacity, we can create any missing transitional colors and fix any discrepancies in the color contrast.

- It's challenging to use a 1px brush for very small objects such as teacups or glasses. You can switch to the pencil tool and draw the flat object pixel by pixel. Then go over it with 1px brush to soften the look:



You can also draw the object at a larger scale, then shrink it down.

Drawing on a larger scale is useful for small objects that have a lot of detail - such as delicate flowers, paintings, and other decorations.

- Test your tiles against a map. This is the best way to spot any issues that need to be fixed:



When I'm experimenting with shading or texture, I make use of Photoshop's layers - different layers for shadows and highlights. That way, if I make a mistake, I can erase it easily without having to recreate the entire tile.

### 4.3 Using Filters

The first and most important rule about filters is that you should avoid them while you're still learning to paint - and also avoid them as much as you can even when you're comfortable with painting.

There's three main reasons for this:

1) When you're learning to paint, filters provide you with shortcuts that can prevent you from learning basics of shading and texture. Their use can set you up with some bad habits that are hard to break down the line.

2) Creating everything manually (texture, shading, etc) makes you faster at painting. With enough practice, you become fast enough for filters to no longer be a real shortcut.

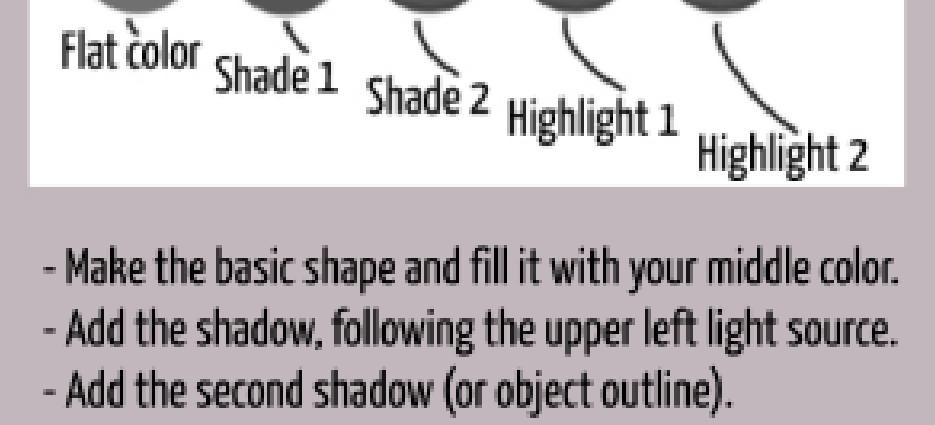
3) You want to have control over your painting. Filters are not always smart about what they do and they can be difficult to fix. You may find yourself having to re-paint a piece that was botched by an automatic filter. At that point, a filter wasn't exactly the shortcut you needed.

Instead of filters, consider looking into different brushes for your art program. A spatter brush, for instance, can give you a quick spotty effect that's great texture in patches of grass. While the round blunt medium stiff brush makes for texture simpler to make.

Next tutorial will cover:

- Using tools such as burn/dodge, sharpen/smudge and blur

- Creating various textures such as wood, stone, metal and fur



Thanks for reading!

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