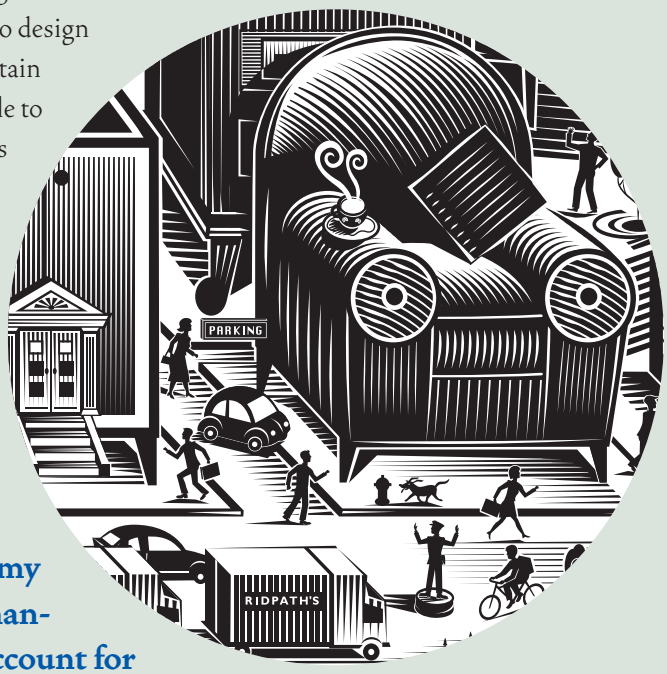
The Project

Ridpath's Fine Furniture of Toronto, Canada, needed a new look. The company has worked with Panton for more than 15 years for all of their design, illustration, and advertising needs. They asked Panton to give a new look to the image that had been a part of their identity since the early 1900s. Ridpath's wanted to create an upscale image that would continue to serve their mature clientele while embracing a younger group. Because Panton creates many different types of designs for the client, he was commissioned to create a logo, as well as imagery that could be applied to multiple uses. "The client wanted something with a whole range of elements from which we could pull segments and apply different images for different purposes." Panton was to design the project as a single piece that would contain various images. Those images had to be able to stand alone and be suitable for various uses of the company brand, such as packaging, point-of-purchase material, newspaper and magazine advertising, billboard displays, corporate identity documents, and multimedia.



"Coloring is what I like best about Illustrator. It's like using my first coloring book. If it could manage my assignments, sort and account for my time on a project, do my billing, and collect on overdue invoices, I think you might have perfection."

—DOUG PANTON

The Steps

Step 1: Creating the concept. Panton always begins a new concept by developing pencil sketches. He often has two stages for developing the initial concept. The first stage is finalizing three to five rough sketches, which he selects from 10 to 20 pencil drawings. The second stage is meeting with the client to discuss the sketches and finalize the direction and the design. Ridpath's chose one of the roughs (**Figure 15**) and Panton went to work right away, completing the entire project in one week.

Step 2: Creating a template. Panton scanned the rough drawing and placed it on a new Illustrator art board. He created a template layer and used the default value of 50% for the Dim Images setting (**Figure 16**).

Step 3: Drawing the central image. Throughout the drawing, Panton used geometric shapes that he reshaped and manipulated by adjusting strokes or using Pathfinder effects. The first object he drew was the chair. He wanted to create a woodcut effect with strong contrast in the design. He drew circles and rectangles over the template and modified them

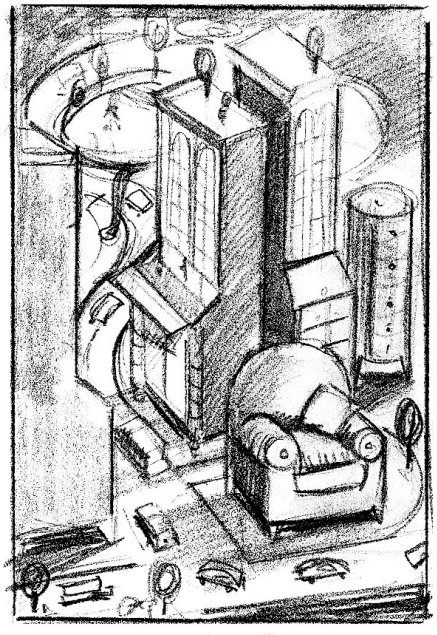


Figure 15

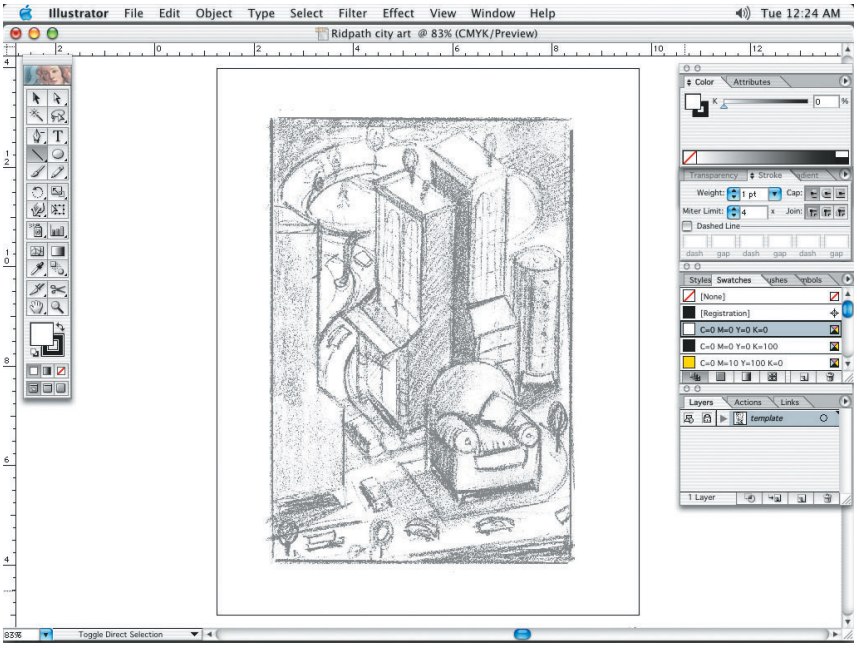


Figure 16

with the Pen tool and the Pathfinder effects. He modified rectangular objects by eliminating points, averaging paths, and joining points. He duplicated the lines on the chair surface and joined end points to create single paths that could be filled. By holding the Option (or Alt) key down and dragging, he duplicated a shape. To join the end points he used Control or Command-J (Object › Path › Join). After he created additional objects, he grouped them to make them easier to select and move around the art board (**Figure 17**).

Step 4: Creating the perspective. Panton developed the perspective for the drawing from the chair object. He doesn't create a vanishing point and align objects to guides. Instead, he uses more of a look-and-feel approach, placing individual objects adjacent to each other, keeping the overall perspective in mind. He may duplicate paths and drag a path to obtain the same perspective or he may just illustrate freehand while paying attention to the perspective view (**Figure 18**). After creating the chair, he drew the streets around it. He would later segment the lines used for the streets with the Pathfinder palette as he placed objects in front of these lines, using the Minus Back Pathfinder command.

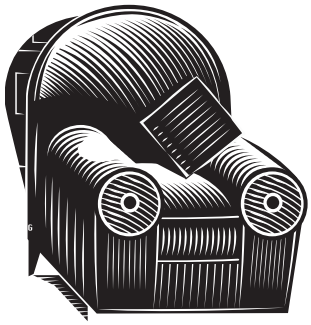


Figure 17

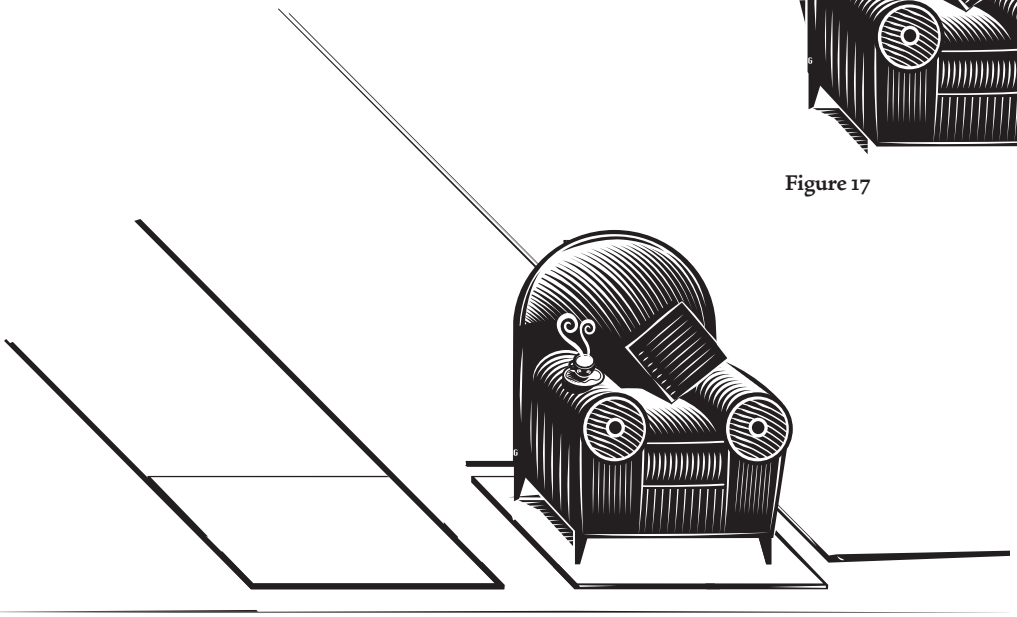


Figure 18

Step 5: Modifying the drawing. "Modifying designs really depends on the client. In some cases, I have complete artistic freedom. In other cases, I need to develop tight comps and stick religiously to the original design with little or no deviation. Fortunately with Ridpath's, they pretty much go along with whatever I do. As I worked on the piece, the two tall towers appearing behind the chair didn't feel right (**Figure 19**). I played with the design a little and modified it as I went along." Panton again created geometric shapes and aligned the sides to the perspective he had created for the chair and sidewalks (**Figure 20**).

Step 6: Creating the logo. What evolved out of the drawing was an image—the dresser—that Ridpath's adopted as their logo. He created the dresser by, again, first drawing geometric shapes and modifying rectangles and circles to obtain the right dimension and perspective. Panton duplicated the drawers by holding the Option (or Alt) key and shift-dragging new copies (**Figure 21**). He pulled the final image out of the drawing and included it in the client's identity package (**Figure 22**).

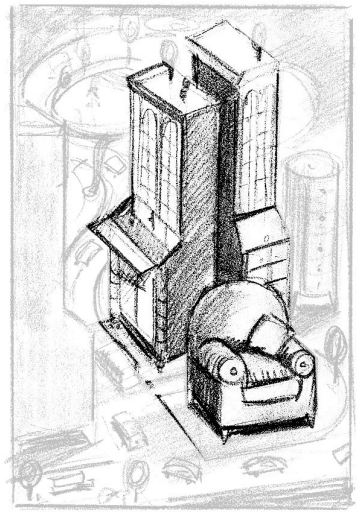


Figure 19

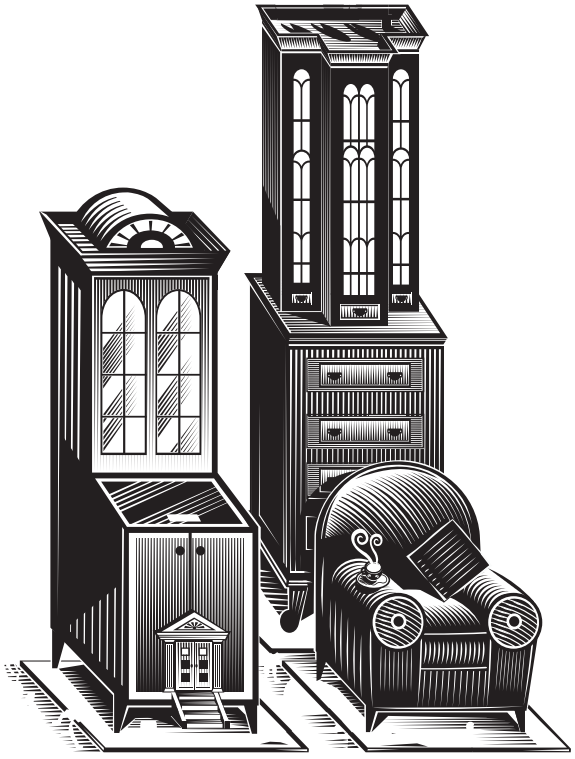


Figure 20

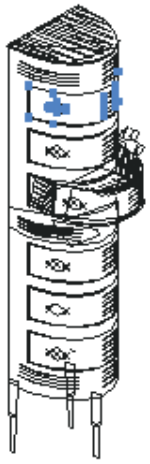


Figure 21

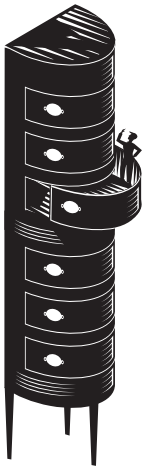


Figure 22

Step 7: Drawing the background elements and icons. For objects in the background, he followed the same process of creating geometric shapes and duplicating the shapes to create the background buildings. He added the sky lights, helicopter, and other background symbols to communicate the message that "we've been here for a long time, but we're not above having some fun with what we do." Panton added a humorous side to the piece with the background elements and the icons assembled in the foreground. He created some symbols in the drawing and copied some from other artwork he had on hand. The final piece (**Figure 24**) has won many awards and Ridpath's is delighted with the new look. They have used assorted objects from the design for various advertising campaigns—some of which appear here in the Gallery section.

Figure 24 New Look

Figure 23a Old Logo

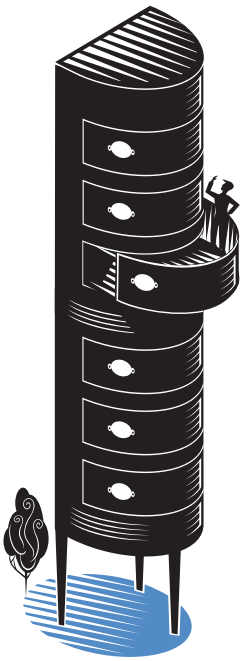
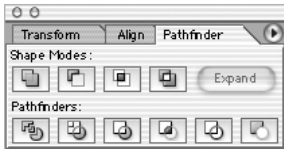
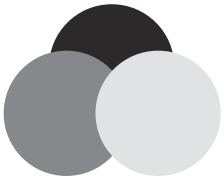


Figure 23b New Logo





Original

Add

Subtract

Intersect

Exclude

Using the Pathfinder Effects

The Pathfinder palette offers many commands that allow you to add, subtract, intersect, divide, crop, and otherwise manipulate multiple paths. The Pathfinder commands let you easily start out with simple paths and create complex paths and shapes that would be time-consuming and tedious to create manually.

The Pathfinder palette is divided into two sections—Shape Modes and Pathfinders. The Shape Modes let you create and modify compound shapes, which are comprised of two or more paths, compound paths, groups, blends, envelopes, warps, text, or other compound shapes that interact to create a new editable shape. The Pathfinders, on the other hand, are designed to combine paths. Compound paths are made of two or more paths that interact to create a new editable path.

In the Shape Modes section you will find the following commands:

Add to shape area. Combines all selected shapes into a single shape. It deletes all overlapping areas. The shape is then filled and stroked with the fill and stroke from the top-most shape.

Subtract from shape area. Removes the front-most shape from the back-most shape.

Intersect shape areas. Keeps the overlapping areas of selected shapes and hides the non-overlapping areas from view.

Exclude overlapping shape areas. Retains non-overlapping areas and makes overlapping areas transparent. When there's an even number of objects overlapping, the overlap is transparent. When there's an odd number of objects, the overlap is filled.

In the Pathfinders section you will find these commands:

Divide. Breaks overlapping objects into separate objects.

Trim. Removes any areas of a filled object that are hidden. Removes strokes and doesn't merge objects of the same color.

Merge. Removes any areas of a filled object that are hidden. Removes strokes and merges overlapping paths filled with the same color.

Crop. Uses the front-most object to crop all other objects in a selection. Removes any strokes.

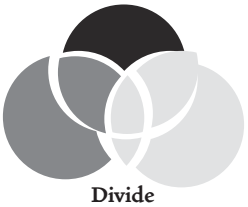
Outline. Breaks objects into separate line segments with no fill colors. Instead, it colors the strokes with the old fill color.

Minus Back. Removes the rear-most objects from the front-most object. The opposite of Subtract.

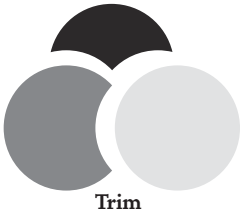
A final command, Trap, is in the Pathfinder palette pop-up menu. Trap allows you to overlap shapes slightly to avoid gaps in the printing process. Note: When you use Trap, be certain to check with your service center or print shop to be certain they want Trap included in the file. If your vendor provides trapping when the file is printed, they won't want you to trap your artwork. Trapping a trapped file can present problems when separating color.

All of the commands in the Shape Modes section of the palette produce shapes that are *live*. This means compound shapes are still editable and you can also *release* (undo) a Pathfinder command by choosing Release Compound Shapes from the palette pop-up menu. You can still select the original, individual shapes within the compound shape with the Direct Selection or Group Selection tools. The Expand command flattens the compound shape into a single path, thereby converting the live shapes into *dead* ones—shapes that cannot be released or edited.

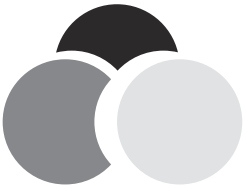
Note that you will also find the above Pathfinder commands, along with Hard Mix and Soft Mix, under the Effects menu. You can Hard Mix and Soft Mix colors in areas that overlap. The commands under the Effects menu change the appearance of an object without changing the underlying structure of the object itself. You can apply them to groups of objects, layers, and type rather than simple shapes.



Divide

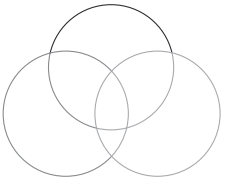


Trim



Merge

Crop



Outline

Minus Back