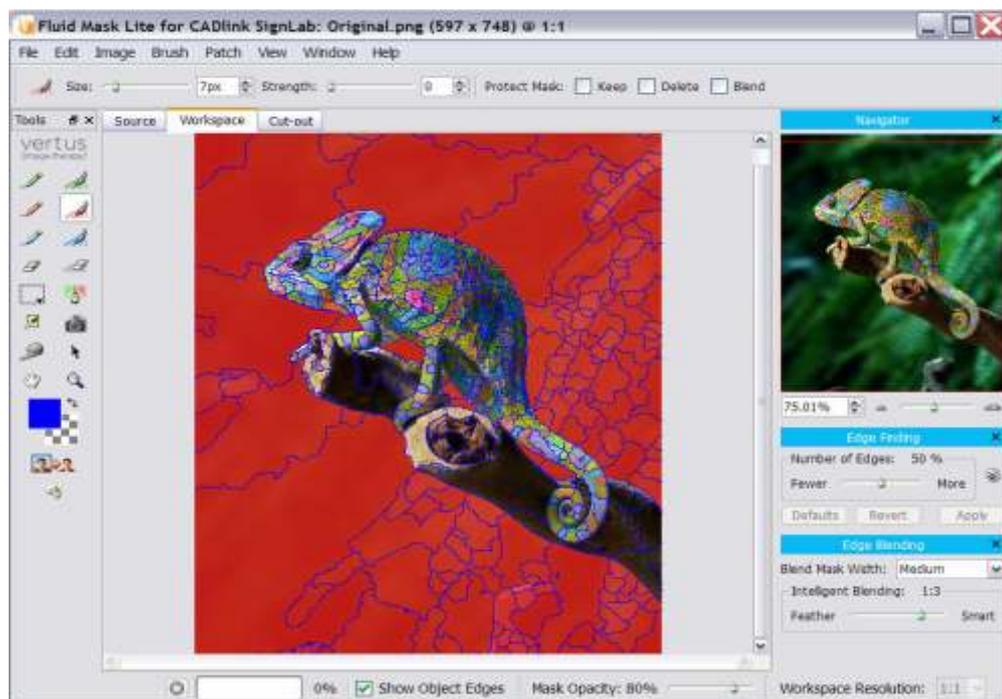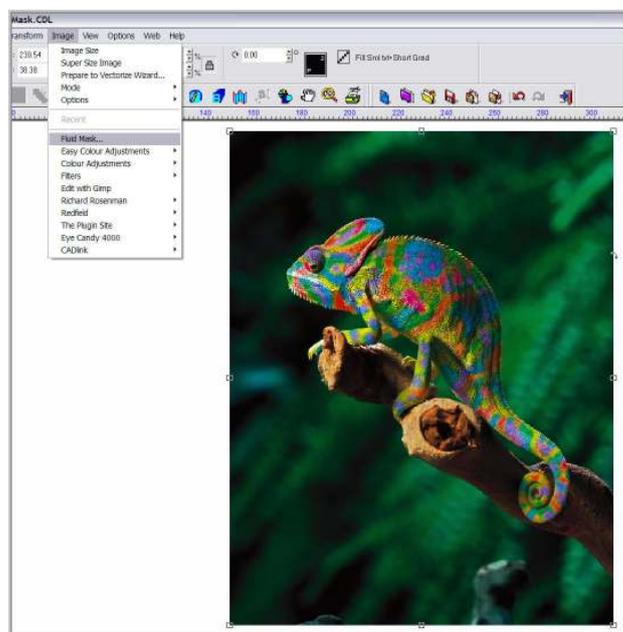# DESIGN *Tutorial*

fluid mask™

Fluid Mask is a fantastic multi award winning plug-in that enables the user to effortlessly remove unwanted backgrounds from full colour images. Fluid Mask is now included with all Signlab 8 Print and Cut packages as a bonus module so in this tutorial we're going to show an example of how simple it is to use and how great the results are from this exciting new Plug-In.
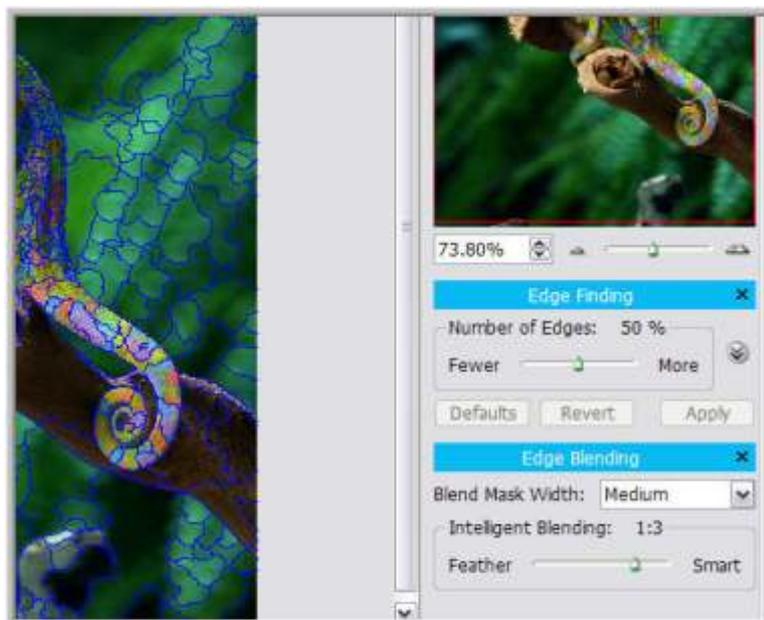

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01

Get Started: In This example, I'll demonstrate how to remove the multi coloured background from this image, so that only the Chameleon is left, then I'll apply a contour path around the outside so a complete decal can be produced. To launch Fluid Mask I must go to the "Image Menu" and select "Fluid Mask"

02

First Steps: When an image is first loaded, Fluid Mask will automatically seek out and define any natural edges within the photo. The number of edges that are automatically detected will largely depend on the image itself but also on where you have the edge finding scale set. The default value is 50% but for your own image, you may achieve a better result by increasing or decreasing this value to suit.

03

Tools: Essentially there are two basic elements we will look at, the areas you want to keep and the areas you want to delete. The main tools used to achieve this are located on the left in the tools pallet. The green tools are used for selecting keep areas and the red tools are for selecting areas to delete.
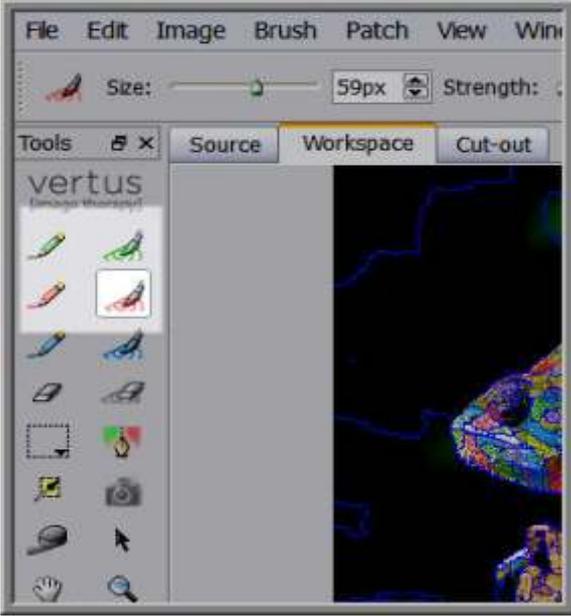
04

Selection: The next task is to fill in the selected areas with "keep Mask" or "Delete Mask" and this can be done with the relevant tools from the pallet. I'll start with the delete mask and to do this I am going to be using a tool called "Delete Local Brush". When any brush is selected, you'll notice some brush properties appear at the top of the screen. Here it's simple to adjust the size of the brush with the sliding scale but it's also possible to do this using the square brackets keys on your keyboard.
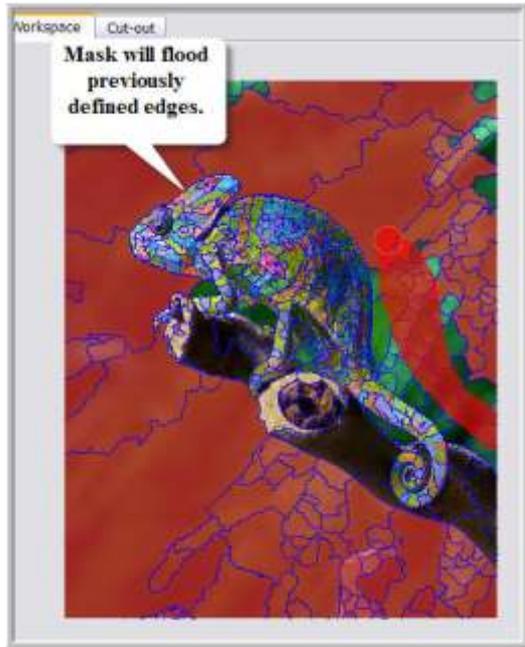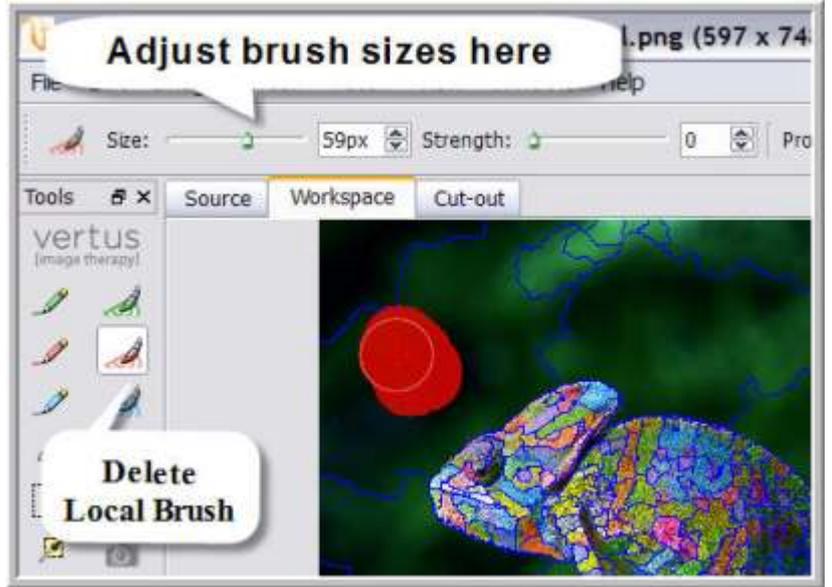
05

Fill In: I am ready to start selecting the areas that I want to get rid of. So with my brush I am will draw a rough line around the outside of the chameleon, making sure I don't touch any part that I want to keep. When I have finished drawing, the areas I selected are automatically flooded with delete Mask. I can go back to any area that have not been flooded and fill those areas.


07

Over Spill: With this final section the delete mask has flooded over part of the image I would like to keep, and this is because this particular edge of the Chameleon was not defined by Fluid Mask when it original searched for the image edges at the beginning. To remedy this I could increase the edge finding Scale; however for this example I am going to manually mark out a keep area using the "Keep Extract Brush".
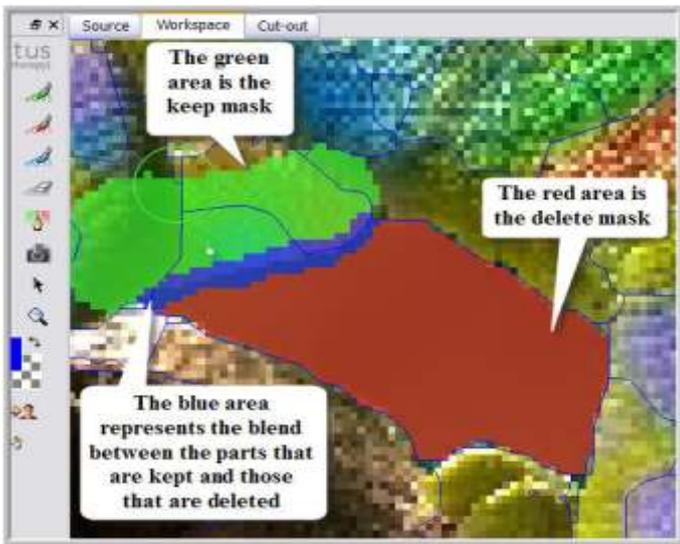

06

Zoon In: There are some inside areas that also need filling so I can use the zoom tools and move in a bit closer and I am also going to reduce my brush size so that I can work on these areas in the same way.
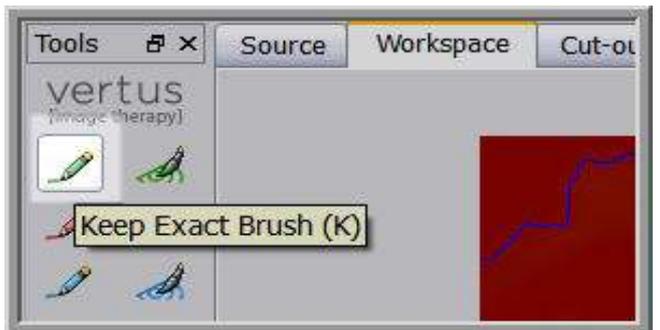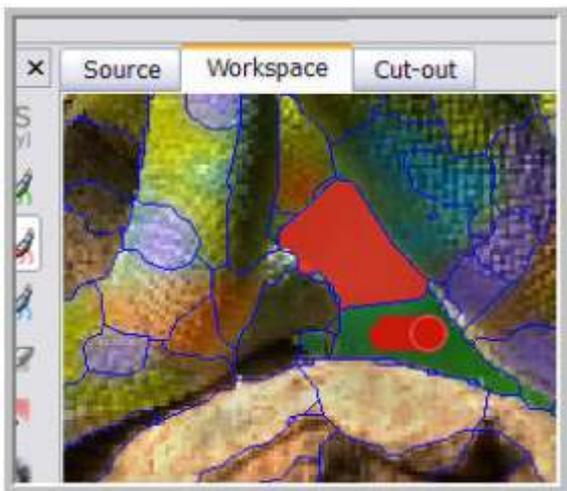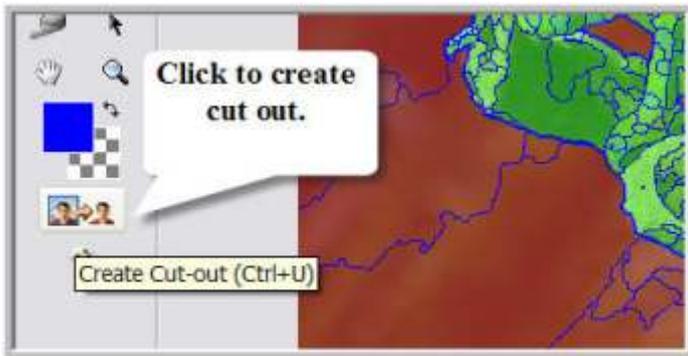

08

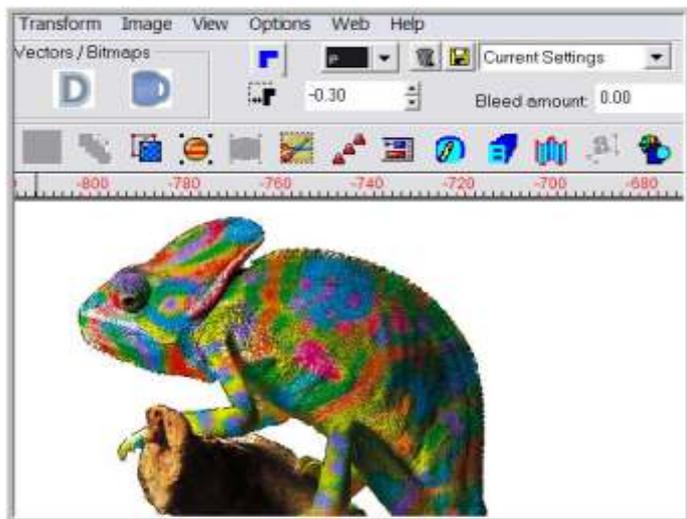**Tool Change:** Select the "Keep Extract Brush" from the tool palette.

09

Paint It Green: Using the new brush, I have simply marked out the area that I want to be kept; this is shown in the picture by the green area. The size and strength of the brush can be adjusted with the brush properties tools and if you make a mistake its simple to undo using the keyboard shortcut "CTRL + Z".
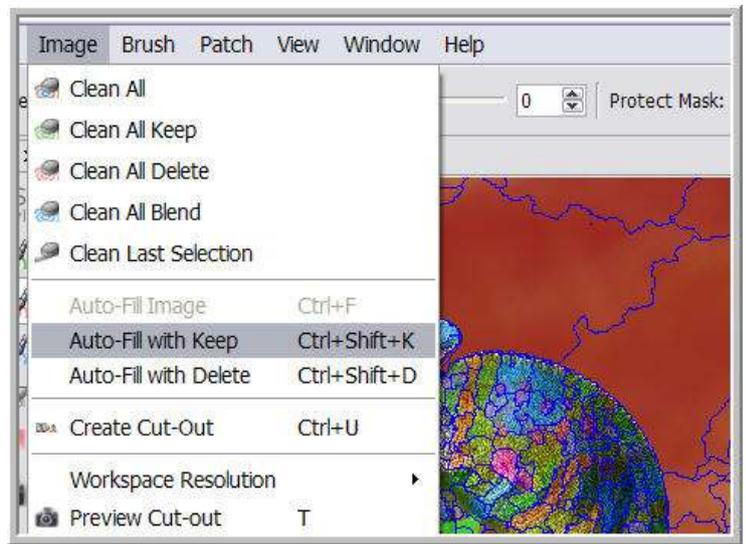

10

Fill With Keep: The image now has delete mask placed in all the areas I want to eliminate so the next task is to highlight and protect the areas I would like to keep. This is a straight forward task and it's achieved by going to the "Image" menu and selecting "Auto fill with keep" Now all the areas that will remain are highlighted green and I can no now perform the cut out.

11

Cut It Out: The finishing step is to click the icon on the left to create the cut out, all of the background will then be removed.

12

Back to Signlab: So that's all the background remove+d, I can now go to the "File" menu and click on "Save and Apply" and the image will be returned to the main Signlab Screen.
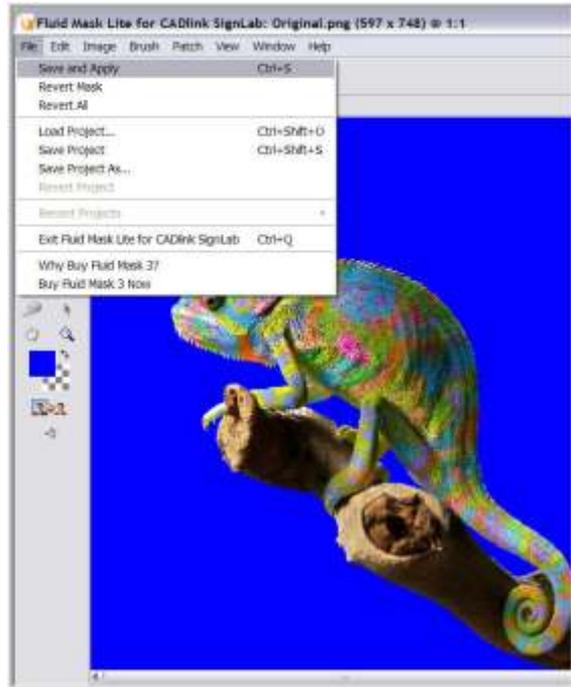

13

Contour Cut: The Image is now back in Signlab and all of the background has been removed. From here it's simple to place the image on a new background or apply a contour cut path. The Contour Cut tool can be found under the "Image" menu and with the messy background gone, applying a path that will accurately fit the chameleon is easy. If you are not familiar with the Signlab's contour cut features, you'll find a full tutorial on Info Source. Check www.cadlink.com for more details. This job can be sent for production.

All done! Fluid Mask provides a simple easy to use alternative to hours of laborious path editing and manual mask creation. Signlab 8 Print and Cut users will benefit from this and other fantastic new plug-inn features that are sure to keep them one step ahead of the competition.