Vexy **Lines**

USER MANUAL

Vexy Lines User Manual

Version 0.98, 27.06.2025

www.vexy.art

Introduction

Welcome!

Get ready to transform your creative vision into stunning vector artwork!

Whether you're illustrating, designing, or exploring digital art, Vexy Lines helps you turn raster images (like photos or bitmaps) into expressive vector designs with remarkable control and artistic flair.

Think of Vexy Lines as your bridge from pixel-based images to scalable, editable vector graphics.

What Makes Vexy Lines Special?

Vexy Lines offers a unique approach to vector creation, focusing on transforming images using sophisticated line and shape fills. Key features include:

- **Expressive Line Effects:** Create beautiful engraving and hatching effects with precise control over line density, direction, and style.
- **Unique Textures:** Generate patterns using text, fractals, and organic wave structures.
- **Intelligent Tracing:** Convert bitmap images into clean, scalable vector paths automatically.
- **Customizable Style:** Develop your signature look with highly adjustable fills, strokes, and effects.
- **Flexible Output:** Export production-ready vector files (SVG, PDF, EPS) and raster images (PNG, JPEG) for print, web, and other design applications.

Getting Started

Getting Started

This guide will walk you through everything you need to know to master Vexy Lines - from basic setup to advanced techniques. The intuitive interface makes it easy to get started, while powerful features give you room to grow and experiment.

When you first launch the application, an interactive **Intro Tour** will guide you through essential features and tools to help you get started. You'll learn how to make the most of Vexy Lines to create your own designs.

You can always revisit this tour later by selecting **Help > Intro Tour** from the menu.

Your Creative Journey Begins

Ready to unleash your creativity? Let's begin exploring the possibilities with Vexy Lines.

We're excited to see what you'll create!

Before You Begin

Ensure your computer meets these **system requirements**:

- **Mac**: macOS 10.14 (Mojave) or newer.
- **Windows**: Windows 8.1 or later.

  Memory: Minimum 4GB RAM.

  Internet: Required for initial setup.

Installation

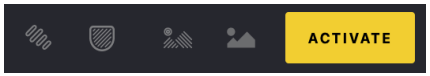
Follow these steps to download and install Vexy Lines:

1. Visit https://www.vexy.art.
2. Click the **TRY FREE** button and select your operating system.
3. Double-click the downloaded installer filed and follow the on-screen instructions.
4. After installation, launch **Vexy Lines** by clicking its icon in Applications folder.

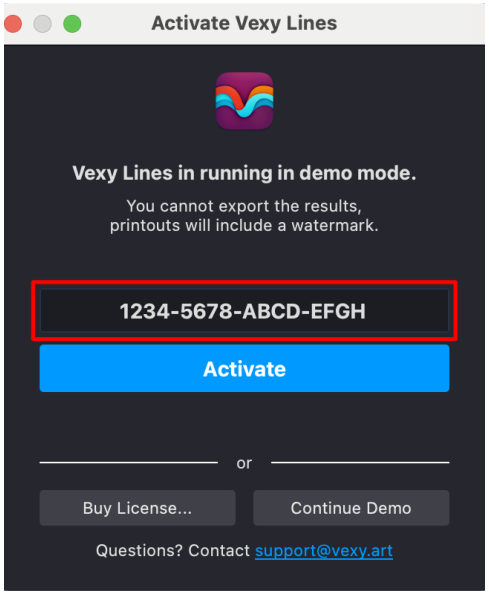
Activation

Activate Vexy Lines upon first launch:

The activation window appears automatically, or click **ACTIVATE** in the top-right corner.



Enter the serial number from your purchase confirmation email.

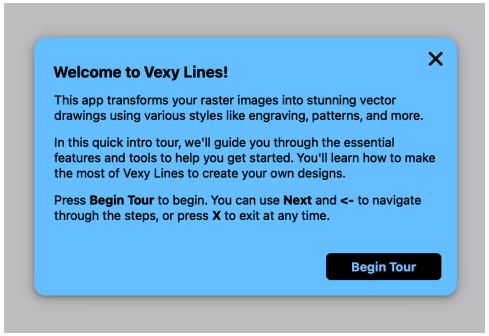


Click **Activate** to finish.

No license yet?
Click **Continue Demo** *to explore Vexy Lines in trial mode.*

Intro Tour

An interactive Intro Tour starts automatically upon first launch:



This tour introduces essential features:

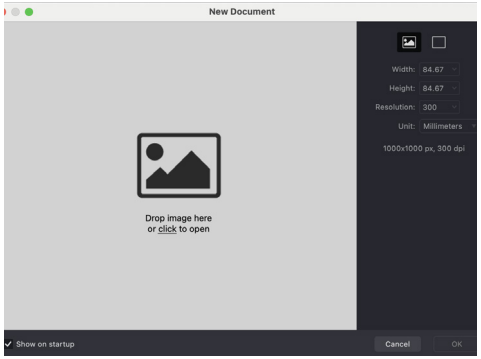
- **Toolbar**: Main tools for creating and editing.
- **Editor Tools**: Tools like Meter, Pencil, and Transform.
- **Masking Tools**: Shape and refine artwork.
- **Layers Panel**: Organize document structure.
- **Properties Panel**: Customize fills, colors, and settings.
- **View Controls**: Toggle visibility of fills and images.

Navigate the tour using **Next**, **Back**, or press X to exit.

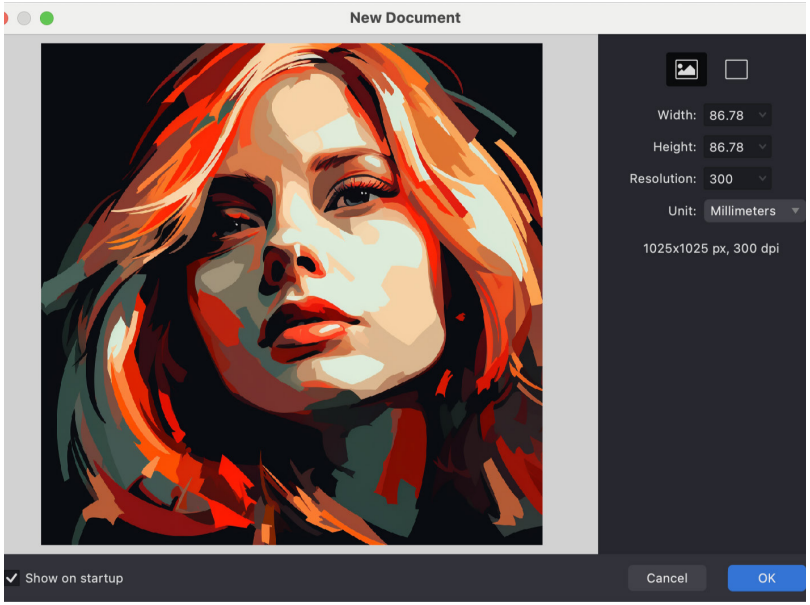
Access it anytime via **Help > Intro Tour**.

Create Your First Document

1. Select **File > New** in the main menu

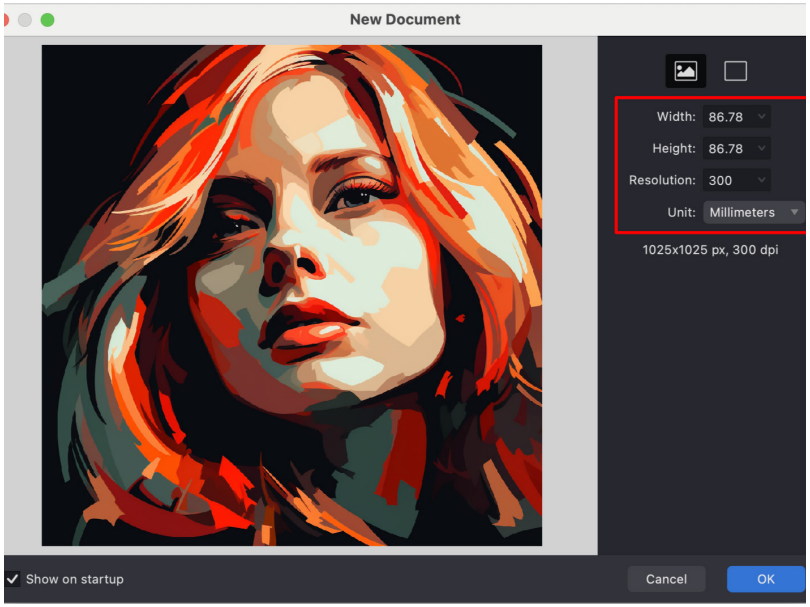


2. Drag and drop your inspiration image into the window.



Download sample images on www.vexy.art

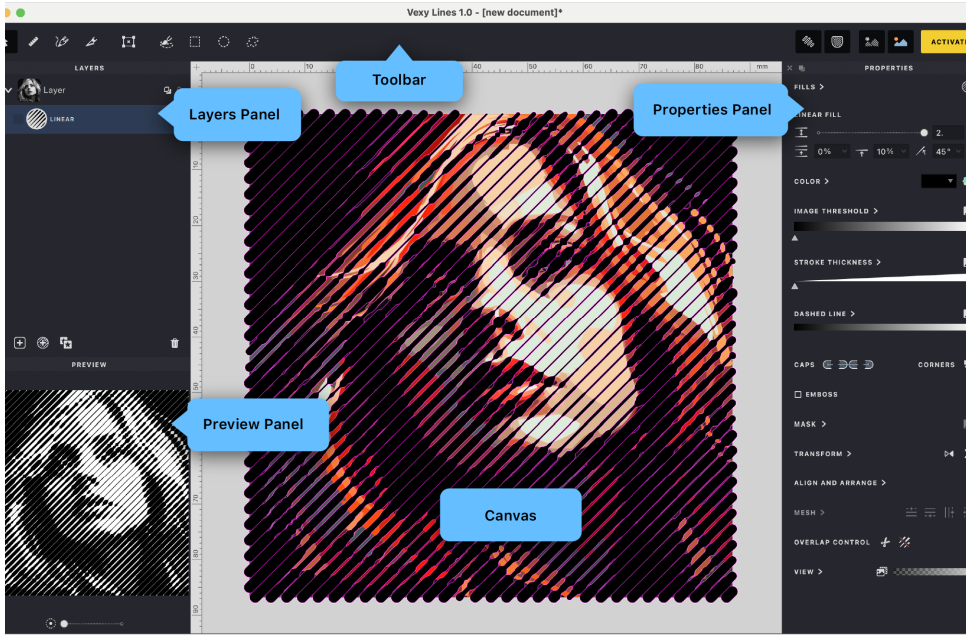
3. Adjust document size if needed.



4. Click **OK** to start creating!

Workspace Overview

Familiarize yourself with the layout:



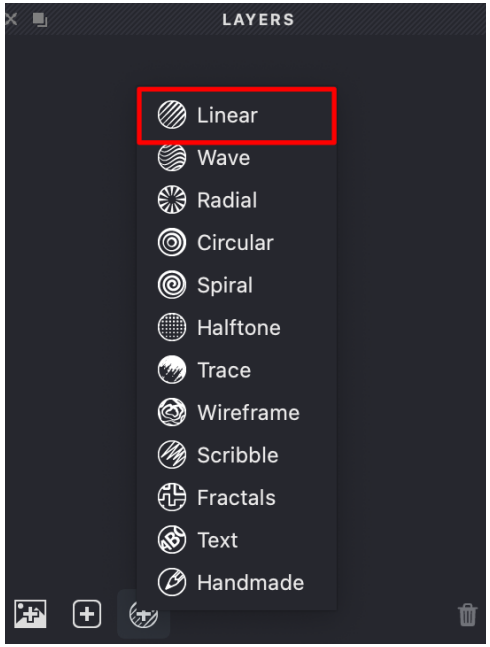
- **Canvas**: Your main drawing area.
- **Tools Panel**: Essential tools for vector art.
- **Properties Panel**: Adjust details of selected items.
- **Layers Panel**: Organize artwork layers.
- **Preview Panel**: Real-time artwork preview.

Navigation Tips:

- **Zoom**: ⌘+ / ⌘- (Mac) or Ctrl+ / Ctrl- (Windows).
- **Pan**: Hold **spacebar** and drag.
- **Reset View**: Double-click the **Hand** tool.

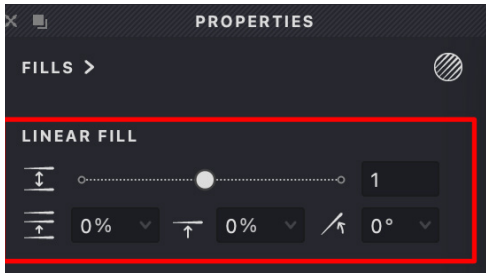
Create Your First Fill

- A fill is a pattern of lines forming your artwork.
- Select **Fill > New > Linear** for straight lines or **Wave** for curves.
- Or click “+Fill” in the Layers panel.



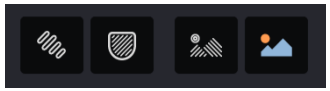
Experiment with Fill Properties

- Use sliders in the Properties panel to adjust interval, angle, and thickness.
- Watch your artwork update instantly.



Switch Between Views

- Use view controls to compare your vector art with the original image.
- Adjust image opacity to check progress.



Save Your Work

- Regularly save using ⌘S (Mac) or Ctrl+S (Windows).
- Projects save as .lines files.

Helpful Tips

- Start with simple images like silhouettes or outlines.
- Frequently use Preview mode.
- Experiment with different fill types.
- Regularly save your work, despite automatic backups.
- Visit our community forum for support.

Need Help?

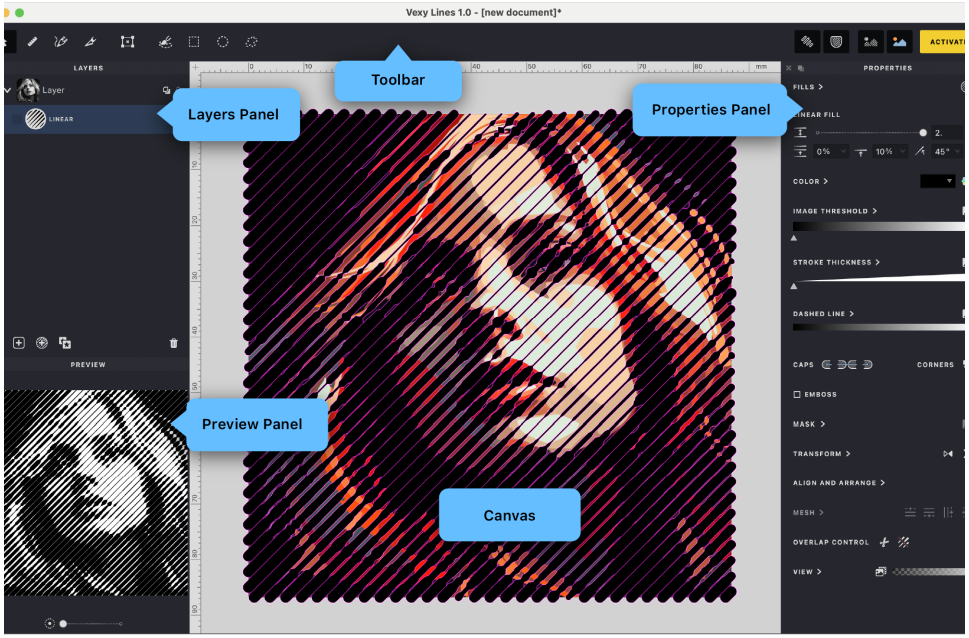
We're here to assist:

- **Documentation**: Access via **Help > User Manual**.
- **Tutorials**: Beginner-friendly videos at [website].
- **Support**: Contact our team at [email].
- **Community**: Join discussions in our forum.

Ready to create something amazing? Let's explore more features in the following sections!

Interface Overview

Vexy Lines converts raster images into beautiful vector artwork. This guide introduces the main interface elements to help you start creating quickly.



Main Canvas

Your primary workspace for visualizing and editing artwork.

Essential Navigation

Navigate your canvas effortlessly with these shortcuts:

- Z: Zoom in toward cursor.
- X: Zoom out.
- ⌘+ / ⌘- (Mac) or Ctrl+ / Ctrl- (Windows): Quick zoom.
- ⌘+2: Zoom to selected area.
- ⌘+3: Fit artwork to screen.
- Option/Alt + **Mouse Wheel** or trackpad pinch: Dynamic zoom adjustment.
- Space + **Drag**: Pan across canvas.
- ⌘+Space: Dynamic zoom or frame zoom on specific areas.

Toolbar

Quick access to essential drawing and editing tools.

Editor Tools

Editor Tool (V): Select, move, and modify objects and nodes.

Meter Tool (R): Measure distances and angles.

Pencil Tool (P): Draw freehand strokes.

Knife Tool (K): Split and edit curves and paths.

Transform Tool (T): Scale, rotate, and precisely adjust objects.

Masking Tools

Brush Tool (B): Paint masks freehand with adjustable brush size.

Rectangle Tool (I): Create rectangular masks, including perfect squares.

Ellipse Tool (O): Draw circular or oval masks.

Freeform Tool (S): Create custom shapes or auto-detect complex areas.

Refresh Options

Auto Refresh: Automatically update artwork as you work.

Refresh Fill: Quickly update the current fill.

Refresh All: Update all fills simultaneously.

Use commands in Window > Toolbar menu to display Refresh, Undo, and Zoom buttons.

Undo & Redo

Undo (⌘/^+Z): Step backward through actions.

Redo: **(⌘/^+Z)** Restore previously undone actions.

Zoom Commands

Zoom in: Magnify view for detailed editing.

Zoom out: Reduce magnification to view more artwork.

Zoom to Selected: Frame selected objects automatically.

Zoom to Actual Size: Display artwork at 100% scale.

View Controls

Highlight Edges: Enhance edge visibility for easier editing.

Show Masks: Display mask boundaries clearly.

Show Fills: Toggle visibility of vector fills.

Show Images: Show or hide reference images.

Panels

Vexy Lines includes several panels for detailed control:

- **Properties**: Adjust fills, colors, masks, and effects precisely.
- **Layers**: Organize layers for structured and editable projects.
- **History**: Track and manage recent actions.
- **Preview**: Instantly preview artwork.
- **Help**: Contextual information about tools and features.

Menu System

Access all features through logically grouped menus:

- **File**: Create, open, save, import, export
- **Edit**: Standard editing commands and preferences
- **View**: Workspace and viewing options
- **Layer**: Manage layers, groups, masks
- **Fill**: Create and modify vector fills
- **Tools**: Drawing and editing tools
- **Window**: Panel visibility and arrangement
- **Help**: Documentation, tutorials, Intro Tour

Interactive Tour

Access the interactive Intro Tour anytime via **Help > Intro Tour**. This guided tour highlights key features, helping you quickly master the basics.

Document Structure Overview

Vexy Lines documents are built from several key components that work together to create your artwork. This introduction explains these essential elements and how they interact.

Layers

A layer is the building block of every document—like a transparent sheet where your artwork lives. Each layer can contain:

- **Fills:** The vector artwork itself, created in various styles.
- **Mask:** A stencil that controls which parts of your fills are visible.
- **Mesh:** An optional grid that helps reshape fills (not available for all fill types).

Layers are essential—every document must have at least one layer with fills to create exportable artwork.

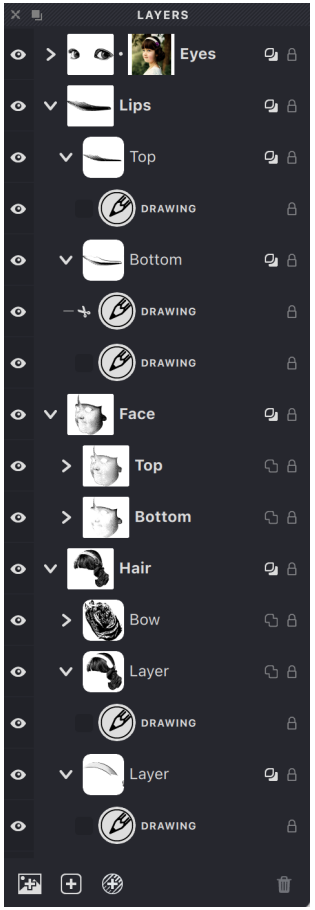
Groups

Groups help organize your work by bundling layers together. Think of them as folders in your computer that can contain:

- Multiple **layers** with your artwork
- Other **groups** (sub-groups) for more organization
- A **source image** that guides your fills

Groups are especially useful for complex projects, allowing you to:

- Toggle **visibility** of multiple layers at once
- **Move** related elements together
- **Apply changes** to several layers simultaneously



Source Images

Source images serve as references for your vector artwork. They guide how your fills look but don't appear in the final exported work.

How source images work:

- Every document has a **main source image** (even if it appears empty).
- Each **group** can have its own source image.
- If a group doesn't have a source image, it uses its **parent group's image**.
- You can use **various file formats** including `PNG`, `JPEG`, `SVG`, and `PDF`.

Source images help you transform raster images into vector art or use vector files as guides for your designs.

How Everything Works Together

These components combine to create a complete Vexy Lines document:

- The simplest document may have just one layer with fills.
- More complex documents use groups to organize multiple layers.
- Source images guide how your fills appear within their respective groups.
- Masks determine which parts of the fills are visible in each layer.

Remember these basics:

1. At least one layer with fills is required for a valid document.
2. Groups are optional but helpful for organization.
3. Source images guide your work but don't appear in the final artwork.
4. A layer's mask affects all fills within that layer.

The next sections will explore each of these components in more detail.

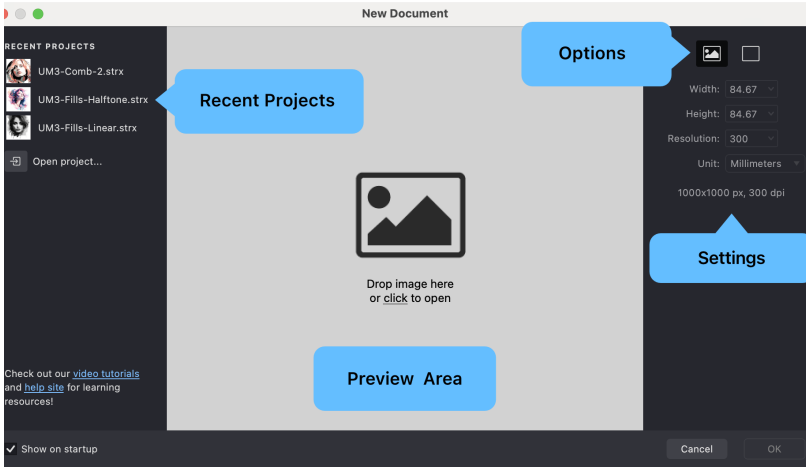
Your First Artwork

Create New Document

Creating a new document in Vexy Lines is the first step in bringing your vector art ideas to life. Let's walk through this process step by step!

The New Document Dialog

1. Click **File > New** from the top menu (Shortcut: **⌘+N** on macOS / **Ctrl+N** on Windows)



2. The **New Document** dialog will appear, showing you:

- A **Preview Area** showing the initial state of your document.
- Access to **Recent Projects** for quickly opening previous work.
- **Settings** to configure the new document's properties.
- Two primary **Options**, selectable in the top-right corner:

  Image icon: Start with a source image as a reference (recommended).

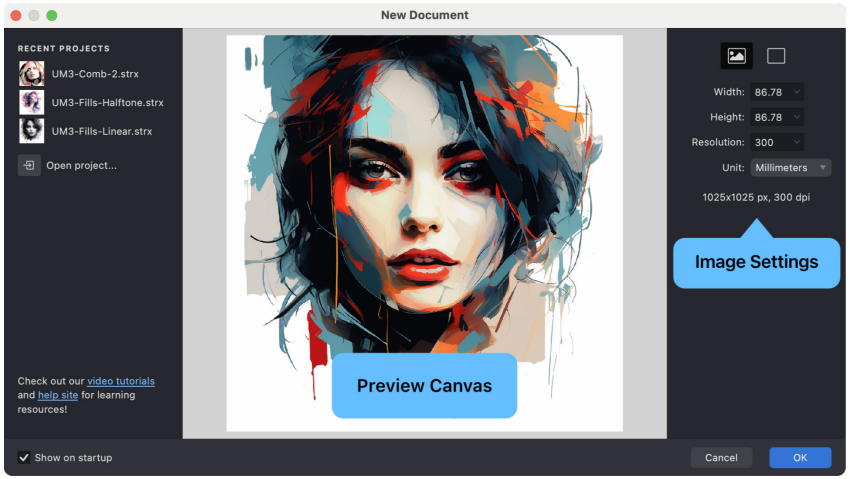
  Empty canvas icon: Start with a blank document.

Set Up Your Document

When creating a new document, you'll need to configure a few settings to get started. Let's look at the key options:

Using a Reference Image

Many Vexy Lines projects begin with a **source image** (like a photo or illustration) that serves as a guide for vector creation.



1. **To add a source image**:

- Click the **Image icon** (top-right) to browse and select an image file from your computer, OR
- **Drag an image file** from your computer directly onto the preview area or the Vexy Lines application icon.
- If you **copied your image** from any other image-editing app, click the Paste from Clipboard button in the bottom of the Preview Canvas to insert the image.

2. The selected image appears in the preview window.
3. The document dimensions update automatically to match the image size.

You may find some royalty-free sample images at this site: gallery.vexy.art

Photos with clear outlines or silhouettes work best when you're starting out. Think portraits, simple objects, or landscapes with distinctive features.

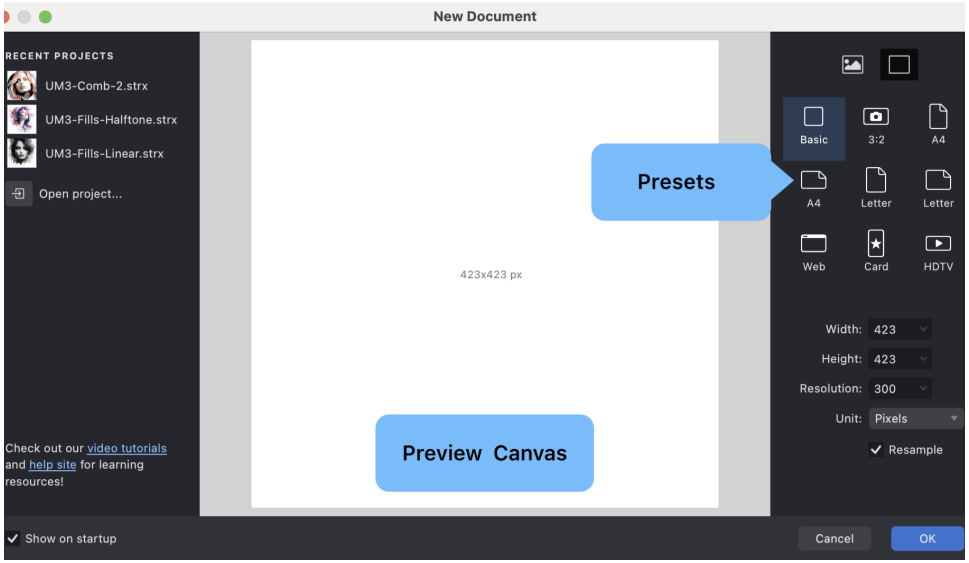
Starting with a Blank Canvas

If you prefer to create vector artwork without a reference image:

1. Click the **Empty canvas icon** in the top-right corner of the dialog.
2. Select a **Preset Size** or define **custom dimensions** in the settings area.
3. The preview will display a blank canvas based on your chosen size and its dimensions.

Choosing the Right Size

Vexy Lines provides standard presets to simplify setup for common uses:



Built-in Presets

- **Basic**: Square format, suitable for profile pictures or icons.
- **3:2**: Standard photographic aspect ratio.
- **A4**: International standard paper size for print.
- **Letter**: US standard paper size for print.
- **Web**: Optimized dimensions for screen and web graphics.
- **Card**: Common greeting card dimensions.
- **HDTV**: Standard 16:9 high-definition video format.

Custom Sizes

You can also define specific dimensions:

- Enter values directly into the **Width** and **Height** fields.
- Select the desired measurement **Units**: Pixels (px), Millimeters (mm), or Inches (in).
- The preview updates to reflect your custom size.

Understanding Resolution (dpi)

Resolution (measured in Dots Per Inch or dpi) affects the detail level of the *source image* displayed on your canvas. Your final *vector artwork* remains perfectly scalable regardless of this setting.

- **300 dpi:** Recommended for high-quality print output.
- **150 dpi:** Suitable for large-format prints viewed from a distance.
- **96 dpi:** Standard resolution for web and screen display.

Higher dpi values provide a more detailed view of your source image but may use more system resources.

Additional Features

The **New Document** dialog includes conveniences to streamline your workflow:

- Quickly **reopen** projects from the **Recent Projects** list.
- Your **last used settings** are often remembered for faster setup.
- **Links** may be provided for accessing help resources or tutorials.
- An option to show or hide this dialog on startup might be available in **Preferences**.

Once your document is configured, click **OK** to open the workspace and begin creating.

Opening An Existing Document

Vexy Lines makes it easy to resume work on your saved projects. This section covers how to open your existing documents.

Opening Saved Documents

You can open saved Vexy Lines (`.lines`) documents using several methods:

- Choose **File > Open** from the main menu (**⌘+O** on macOS / **^+O** on Windows). Then, browse to and select your file.
- **Double-click** a `.lines` file directly in your system's file manager (Finder on macOS, File Explorer on Windows).
- **Drag and drop** a `.lines` file onto the Vexy Lines application icon or into an open Vexy Lines window.

You may find some royalty-free sample projects at this site: gallery.vexy.art

The `.lines` file format is native to Vexy Lines and contains all your project data, including layers, fills, masks, settings, and any embedded source images.

Accessing Recent Documents

To quickly reopen projects you've worked on recently:

1. Go to **File > Recent Files** in the main menu.
2. A list of your most recently opened documents will appear.
3. Select the desired file name from the list to open it.
4. You can clear this list by choosing the **Clear Menu** option at the bottom, if available.

With your document open, you're ready to continue creating. The following sections explain how to add fills, manage layers and build your vector artwork.

An asterisk (*) next to a document's name in the window title indicates that it has unsaved changes. If you attempt to close a document with unsaved modifications, Vexy Lines will prompt you to save your changes before closing.

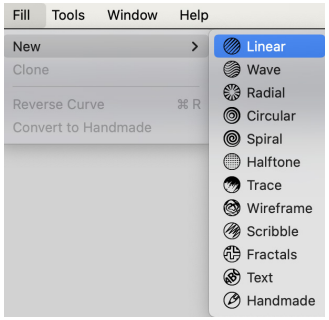
Adding A Fill

In Vexy Lines, a **Fill** is the core mechanism that transforms your source image into vector artwork. Fills generate patterns of vector lines or shapes based on the image's details, with each fill type offering a distinct artistic style.

How to Add a Fill

You can add a new Fill to your document in several ways:

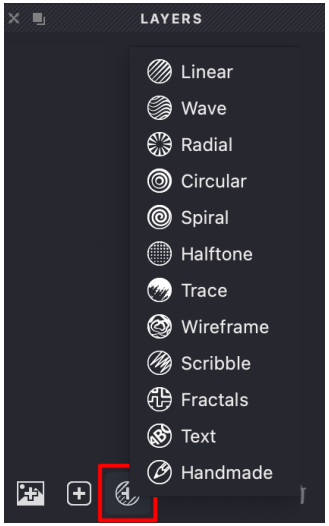
Using the Main Menu



1. Navigate to **Fill > New** in the main menu bar.
2. A dropdown list will display the available fill types.
3. Select the desired fill type.
4. The new fill will be added to the currently selected layer (or a new layer if none is selected) and appear in the **Layers Panel**.

Using the Layers Panel

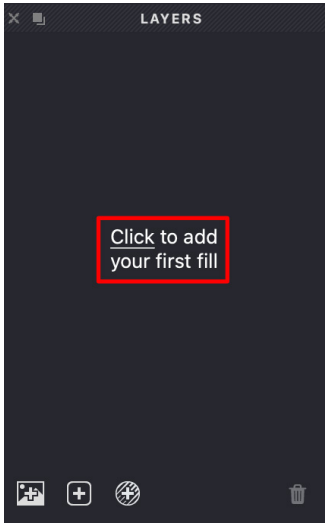
1. Locate the **Layers Panel** (typically on the side of the work-space).
2. Click the **Add new fill** button (marked with a **+** icon) at the bottom of the panel.
3. Choose the desired fill type from the pop-up menu.
4. The fill will be added to the selected layer in your document.



In a New Document

If your document is currently empty:

1. A prompt like **“Click to add your first fill”** may appear in the **Layers Panel**.
2. Click this prompt to open the fill type selection menu.
3. Select a fill type to add it to a new layer.



Overview of Fill Types

Vexy Lines offers a range of fill types, each producing a different visual effect:

Basic Fills

 **Linear**: Generates straight, parallel lines. Suitable for clean, engraving-style effects.

 **Wave**: Creates parallel, wavy lines, adding a sense of flow or organic texture.

 **Radial**: Produces lines radiating from a central point, useful for emphasizing focus.

 **Circular**: Generates concentric circles, ideal for rounded forms or textures.

Artistic Fills

 **Spiral**: Creates a continuous spiral pattern originating from a center point.

 **Halftone**: Simulates traditional halftone printing using dots or shapes of varying size.

 **Trace**: Automatically detects and outlines shapes based on the source image's tonal values.

 **Wireframe**: Generates a network of lines connecting points based on the image, creating a structural look.

Expressive Fills

Scribble: Produces lines resembling hand-drawn scribbles for a sketchy effect.

Fractals: Uses fractal algorithms (like Peano curves) to create intricate, space-filling patterns.

Text: Uses text characters, mapped along paths, to represent the image tones.

Handmade: Allows you to draw or import custom vector paths to use as fill elements.

The **Linear** *and* **Wave** *fill types are excellent starting points for learning how fills interact with source images and properties.*

Customizing Fill Properties

Once a fill is added, you can adjust its appearance using the **Properties Panel**:

1. Select the fill you want to modify by clicking its name in the **Layers Panel**.
2. Locate the **Properties Panel** (usually positioned on the right side of the workspace).

3. The panel displays settings specific to the selected fill type.
4. Adjust parameters like: **Interval:** Controls the spacing between lines or elements. **Angle:** Sets the orientation or direction of the fill pattern. **Thickness:** Adjusts the width of the lines or strokes. *(Other settings specific to the fill type will also be available.)*
5. Changes are reflected on the Canvas in real-time, allowing you to see the immediate effect of your adjustments.

Working with Fills: Key Points

- **Start Focused:** Begin by experimenting with a single fill type to understand its behavior and settings.
- **Adjust Gradually:** Small modifications to properties like interval, thickness, or angle can significantly alter the result.
- **Layer Fills:** Combine multiple fills on different layers (or sometimes the same layer) to create more complex and textured artwork.
- **Reset Option:** Look for reset buttons (to the right of manyindividual settings) in the Properties Panel to revert adjustments if needed.
- **Save Variations:** If you achieve a result you like, consider saving a version of your document (**File > Save As...**) before making further significant changes.

Common Questions

Why doesn't my fill appear correctly?

This can happen if the source image is very complex or lacks contrast. Try using a simpler image initially. Also, check the fill's **Interval**, **Thickness**, and **Image Threshold** settings in the Properties Panel, as extreme values can sometimes produce unexpected results.

How can I increase the detail in my artwork?

Reducing the **Interval** setting generally creates more lines and finer detail. For outlining shapes accurately, the **Trace** fill type might be effective. Experimenting with **Stroke Thickness** linked to image tone can also add detail.

Is it possible to use multiple fill types in one project?

Yes, combining different fill types, sometimes on separate layers, is a common technique for achieving rich and sophisticated vector illustrations in Vexy Lines.

Now that you understand how to add and customize fills, the next step is learning about properties common to most fills. The following sections will delve into settings like color, stroke appearance, and image interaction.

Fill Properties

When you work with Fills in Vexy Lines, the **Properties Panel** provides extensive control over their appearance and behavior. Fills are the core elements that generate vector artwork based on your source image, and their properties allow for precise adjustments to achieve the desired style.

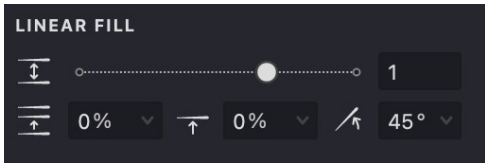
Fill Properties Overview

Each Fill type has a unique set of parameters, but many properties are common across different types. These settings control aspects like color, line appearance, interaction with the source image, and special effects.

Adjusting these settings allows for a wide range of effects, from subtle shading to bold linework.

Using Linear Fill as an Example

This guide uses the Linear Fill type to illustrate common properties. **Linear Fill** generates parallel straight lines, mimicking traditional engraving or hatching. Its versatility makes it suitable for demonstrating fundamental concepts applicable to most fill types.



Key parameters for the fill include:

Interval Sets the spacing between parallel lines. Smaller values create denser patterns; larger values create more open spacing.

Shift Offsets the entire pattern perpendicular to the line direction, useful for positioning or layering fills.

Angle Determines the orientation of the lines.

Color Settings

Fills can derive their color in two primary ways: statically (a single chosen color) or dynamically (based on the underlying source image).

Static Color

When **Static Color** is selected, the entire fill uses a single, uniform color. You can define this color using various tools within the color selection interface:

Color Wheel Visually select hue, saturation, and brightness.

Sliders Panel Precisely define colors using RGB, HSB, or Grayscale values.

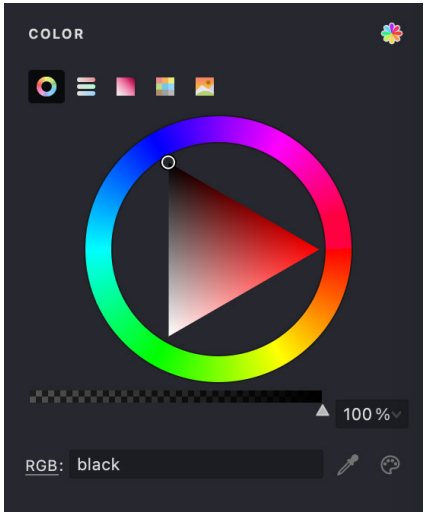
Box Panel Select from a grid of common colors.

Swatches Choose from predefined color palettes (e.g., Standard, Light, Dark, Photoshop).

Picture Panel Load an image to sample colors from it.

Pick Screen Color Sample a color from anywhere on your display.

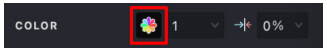
System Color Dialog Access your operating system's native color picker.



You can also adjust the **Opacity** *of the static color to create semi-transparent fills.*

Dynamic Color

When **Dynamic Color** is enabled, the fill samples color information directly from the source image underneath it. This creates a more integrated and varied appearance, adapting to the image's tones.



For fills composed of lines or curves (like Linear or Wave), you can control:

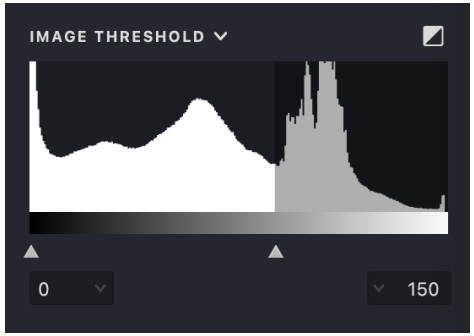
Color segment length Determines how frequently the color is sampled along the line. Shorter segments capture more color variation; longer segments result in smoother transitions.

Color segment length variation Introduces randomness to segment lengths, preventing overly uniform or mechanical patterns.

Dynamic color is often effective for photographic source images or those with rich color gradients. Static color may provide better control for graphic designs or illustrations requiring specific color palettes.

Image Threshold

The **Image Threshold** setting determines which tonal range of the source image influences the fill's generation and appearance (e.g., where lines appear or how thick they are). The threshold is defined on a scale from 0 (pure black) to 255 (pure white).



- The histogram visualizes the tonal distribution of your source image.
- Adjust the minimum (left slider) and maximum (right slider) threshold values to isolate specific brightness ranges.
- For example, setting a lower maximum value focuses the fill on darker areas, while adjusting both sliders can isolate midtones.
- An **Inverted mode** is available, useful when working with light-colored fills on dark backgrounds.

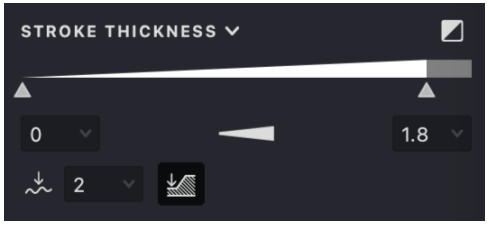
Stroke Properties

These properties control the visual characteristics of the strokes generated by the fill.

Double-click **Thickness Range** *to adjust the available range*

Stroke Thickness

Adjust the thickness of the fill lines or the size of elements in fills like Halftone.



Key controls include:

Thickness Set minimum and maximum thickness values using a combined slider.

Transition Mode Define how thickness varies based on image tone (Linear, emphasizing thicker lines, or emphasizing thinner lines). **Smoothing** Smooths out sharp changes in thickness along a line.

Thickness at Line Breaks Determines if thickness resets to minimum at line breaks or continues from the previous value.

Inverted Mode Reverses the thickness mapping, making lines thicker in lighter areas (useful for light-colored strokes).

Dashed Lines

Dashed lines can be used effectively for textures, suggesting movement, or creating stylized, hand-drawn looks.

Create dashed or dotted line patterns instead of solid lines.

Parameters include:

Threshold Controls which tonal range of the image triggers the dashed effect.

Dash Length Set minimum and maximum lengths for the dashes.

Gap Length Set minimum and maximum lengths for the spaces between dashes.

Inverted Mode Reverses the threshold mapping, suitable for light-colored strokes.

Line Caps and Joins

Define the appearance of line endings (caps) and corners where line segments meet (joins).

Options allow customization of:

Start/End Caps Choose Flat, Round, or Triangle shapes for the beginning and end of lines. The Triangle cap includes a length parameter for adjusting sharpness.

Intermediate Caps (for Dashes) Flat or Round.

Join Style Choose Bevel (flattened corner) or Round for how segments connect.

Triangle caps with adjustable length can be particularly useful for rendering elements like hair or grass.

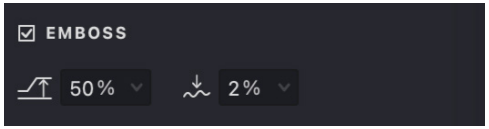
Special Effects

These optional effects add depth and refinement to your fills.

Embossing can enhance textures, portraits, and graphic elements by adding subtle or pronounced depth.

Emboss Effect

Simulates a raised (embossed) or recessed (debossed) appearance on the fill lines, adding a sense of dimension.

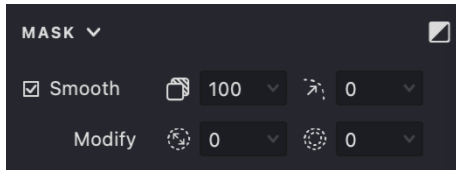


Height Controls the intensity of the effect (positive for raised, negative for recessed).

Smoothness Adjusts the softness of the transition for the effect.

Smooth Mask

This property relates to the Layer's mask, not the Fill itself, but is often relevant when considering the Fill's final appearance.

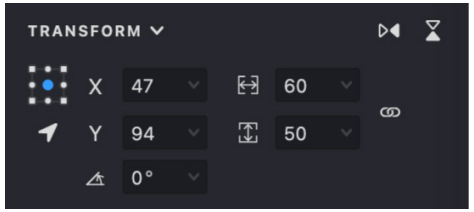


When enabled on the Layer's mask properties, **Smooth Mask** softens the mask edges, allowing for feathered transitions and blending between layers. Adjust Opacity and Feather radius for desired results.

Transform and Positioning

These properties apply to the Layer or Group containing the Fill, affecting its overall placement and scale.

Standard transformation tools allow you to move, resize, rotate, and skew the selected object (Layer or Group). A dedicated **Transform** panel provides precise numerical control over these operations, using reference points for accuracy.



Combining Properties

The true potential of Vexy Lines emerges when combining various fill properties creatively. Experimenting with different combinations is key to developing unique styles.

Consider combinations like:

- Dynamic Color + Variable Stroke Thickness + Emboss for nuanced portraits.
- Dashed Lines + Triangle Caps + specific Image Threshold for stylized illustrations.
- Static Color + Smooth Mask (on the Layer) for subtle background textures.

By mastering these properties, you gain fine-grained control over your vector artwork. Refer to specific articles for detailed explanations of properties unique to each Fill type.

Adding A Mask

In Vexy Lines, a **Mask** controls the visibility of the Fills within a Layer. It acts like a stencil, defining precisely where the artwork on that layer appears or is hidden. Each Layer can have one mask associated with it.

How to Add a Mask

To add or modify a mask for a specific Layer:

1. Select the target Layer in the **Layers Panel**.
2. Choose one of the mask creation tools from the **Toolbar**:
   - **Brush** (**B**): Paint mask areas freehand.
   - **Rectangle** (**I**): Define rectangular mask areas.
   - **Ellipse** (**O**): Define elliptical or circular mask areas.
   - **Freeform** (**S**): Draw custom mask shapes.
3. Use the selected tool on the Canvas to define the mask area.

Mask Creation Methods

Masks can be created using two primary approaches:

- **Manual Drawing:** Use the Brush, Rectangle, Ellipse, or Freeform tools to draw shapes directly, defining the visible areas.
- **Auto-Detection (Shape Tools):** The Rectangle, Ellipse, and Freeform tools include an intelligent auto-detection feature. Clicking on distinct shapes or tonal areas in your source image will automatically generate a corresponding mask shape.

Using Auto-Detection Modifiers:

When using the auto-detection feature of the Rectangle, Ellipse, or Freeform tools:

- **Click:** Detects a shape and *adds* it to the existing mask area.
- **Alt+Click** (or **⌥Option+Click** on macOS): Detects a shape and *subtracts* it from the existing mask area.

The following sections provide detailed instructions on using each specific mask creation tool effectively.

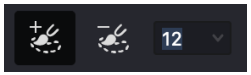
Mask Editing

Vexy Lines provides several tools specifically designed for creating and refining masks. Masks define the visible areas of a layer's fills, acting like stencils. Understanding each tool helps you achieve precise control over your artwork.

Brush Tool (B)

Ideal for freehand mask painting and detailed adjustments.

When the Brush tool is active, additional controls appear in the **Toolbar** allowing you to switch between adding to the mask (painting white) and removing from the mask (painting black/erasing).



Paint Mask (Add Mode)

With the "Add" mode selected, click and drag to paint white areas onto the mask, revealing the layer's content where you paint.

Erase Mask (Remove Mode)

Select the "Remove" mode in the Toolbar, then click and drag to paint black areas, concealing the layer's content.
> Alternatively, you can quickly erase *while in Add mode* by holding down **Alt** (Windows) or ⌥**Option** (macOS) as you drag.

Draw Straight Lines

Hold ⇧**Shift** and click between two points to create a straight brush stroke segment on the mask. Dragging with ⇧**Shift** held down constrains painting to perfectly horizontal or vertical directions.

Adjust Brush Size

Modify the **Size** value in the Brush tool's options within the **Toolbar**. - Interactively resize the brush cursor by holding **Ctrl** and dragging the mouse

Rectangle Tool (I)

⬚ Efficient for creating rectangular or square mask areas.

Draw Rectangle Click and drag to add new rectangular area to the mask.

Draw Square Hold ⇧**Shift** while dragging to constrain the shape to a perfect square.

Draw from Center Hold **Alt** (or ⌥**Option**) while dragging to draw the rectangle outwards from the starting click point.

Auto-Detect Click once on a distinct rectangular shape in the source image to attempt automatic mask creation (replaces current mask).

Subtract from Mask Hold **Alt** (or ⌥**Option**) and click (auto-detect) or drag to remove a rectangular area from the existing mask.

Ellipse Tool (O)

◌ Suitable for creating elliptical or circular mask areas.

Draw Ellipse Click and drag to add an elliptical area to the mask.

Draw Circle Hold ⇧**Shift** while dragging to constrain the shape to a perfect circle.

Draw from Center Hold **Alt** (or ⌥**Option**) while dragging to draw the ellipse outwards from the starting click point.

Auto-Detect Click once on a distinct circular or elliptical shape in the source image to attempt automatic mask creation (replaces current mask).

Subtract from Mask Hold **Alt** (or ⌥**Option**) and click (auto-detect) or drag to remove an elliptical area from the existing mask.

Freeform Tool (S)

Best for drawing custom mask shapes or tracing complex contours.

Draw Custom Shape Click and drag to draw a freehand shape and add it to the mask. The shape closes automatically when you release the mouse button.

Auto-Detect Click once on a distinct object or area in the source image to attempt automatic shape detection (replaces current mask).

Subtract from Mask Hold **Alt** (or ⌥**Option**) and click (auto-detect) or drag to remove a custom shape from the existing mask.

Edit Tool (V)

Provides precise vector editing capabilities for mask contours and nodes (points).

Working with Mask Contours (Paths)

Select Contour Click directly on a mask contour line to select it.

Select Multiple Contours Hold ⇧**Shift** while clicking to select additional contours.

Select All Contours Use ⌘**+A** (macOS) or **Ctrl+A** (Windows) when the Edit tool is active and focused on the mask.

Move Contours Drag selected contours to reposition them on the canvas.

Editing Nodes (Points on Contours)

Select Node Click on a node (square or circle point on the contour) to select it.

Select Multiple Nodes

- Hold ⇧**Shift** while clicking nodes.
- Click and drag a rectangular selection box around the desired nodes.
- Hold **Alt** (or ⌘**Option**) and drag to draw a freeform lasso selection around nodes.

Select All Nodes on Contour Select a contour first, then use ⌘**+A** (macOS) or **Ctrl+A** (Windows).

Adjust Shape Drag selected nodes to modify the contour's shape. Bezier handles may appear for adjusting curve segments (drag the handles to change curvature).

Mask Editing Tips

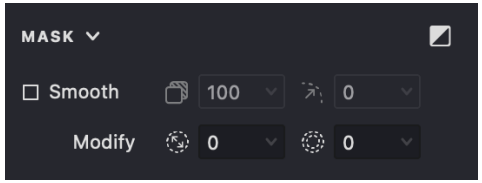
- **Improve Visibility:** Temporarily hide the layer's fills (using the **Show Fills** toggle in the toolbar or View menu) to see the mask contours more clearly during editing.
- **Use Highlights:** Ensure **Highlight Edges** or **Show Masks** options are enabled in the view controls (toolbar or View menu) to better visualize selected contours and nodes.
- **Combine Tools:** Use different tools for different tasks (e.g., Freeform for initial shape, Edit tool for refinement).
- **Remember Function:** White areas of the mask reveal the fill; black areas hide it.

Further sections will discuss advanced mask properties and techniques for refining mask appearance and behavior.

Mask Properties

Masks control the visibility of Fills within a Layer. Vexy Lines provides several options in the **Properties Panel** to refine how your masks look and behave.

To access these settings, select the Layer containing the mask in the **Layers Panel**, then locate and expand the **MASK** section in the **Properties Panel**.



Invert

This option instantly reverses the mask, swapping the visible and hiddenareas. It’s useful for quickly creating negative space effects or inverting complex mask shapes without needing to redraw them.

Smooth Mode

Enable **Smooth** mode to activate properties for creating soft-edged, blended mask effects. This mode differs from the default sharp-edged vector masks and allows for feathered transitions and transparency. Keep Smooth Mode disabled if you need crisp, precise vector edges.

Opacity (Requires Smooth Mode)

When Smooth Mode is active, **Opacity** controls the overall transparency of the mask effect. Adjust this setting to blend layers naturally, create subtle overlays, or make the masked area partially see-through. Lower values increase transparency.

Feather (Requires Smooth Mode)

Also available only in Smooth Mode, **Feather** softens the mask’s edges by blurring the boundary over a specified distance (radius). Use higher values to create gentle, gradual transitions, perfect for natural-looking blends, vignettes, or soft-focus effects at the mask edge.

Modify

This section offers tools to adjust the shape or edge of your vector mask without redrawing it entirely.

Expand / Contract

Use this property to uniformly resize the mask boundary. Enter a positive value to **Expand** the mask area outward, or a negative value to **Contract** (shrink) it inward. This is useful for fine-tuning the overall coverage or creating consistent offsets.

Edge to Stroke

This converts the mask's boundary line into a visible stroke effect centered along the edge. You can typically adjust the width of this generated stroke, allowing you to create outlines around masked shapes or generate border elements based on the mask.

Note: Remember that **Opacity** and **Feather** require **Smooth Mode** to be enabled. For standard, sharp-edged vector masks, leave Smooth Mode disabled.

Units of Measurement

Vexy Lines allows you to work with different units of measurement depending on your project's requirements.

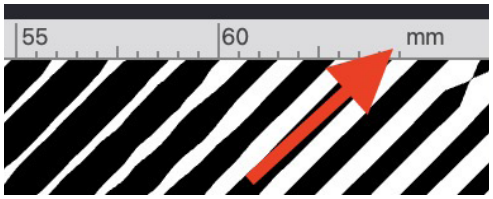
You can choose from:

- **Pixels (px):** Ideal for screen-based design (web graphics, UI elements).
- **Millimeters (mm):** Commonly used for print design, especially with metric standards (e.g., A4 paper).
- **Inches (in):** Used for print design, particularly with US standards (e.g., Letter paper).
- **Points (pt):** Often used in typography and print design (1 point = 1/72 inch).

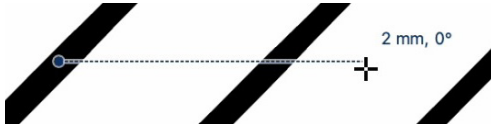
Where Units Are Applied

The selected unit of measurement affects various parts of the Vexy Lines interface and workflow:

- **Parameter Input:** Values for properties like size, position, stroke thickness, and fill intervals are entered and displayed in the chosen unit.
- **Rulers:** If visible, the workspace rulers display increments based on the selected unit, aiding alignment.



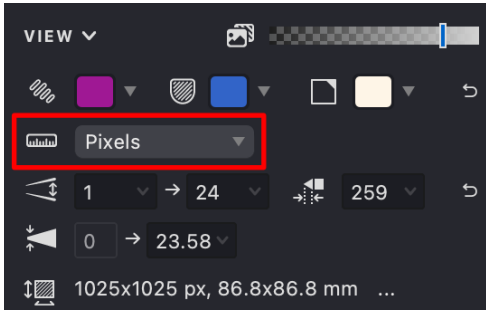
- **Meter Tool:** Measurements taken with the Meter tool are reported in the selected unit.



Changing the Unit of Measurement

You can change the active unit for your current document easily:

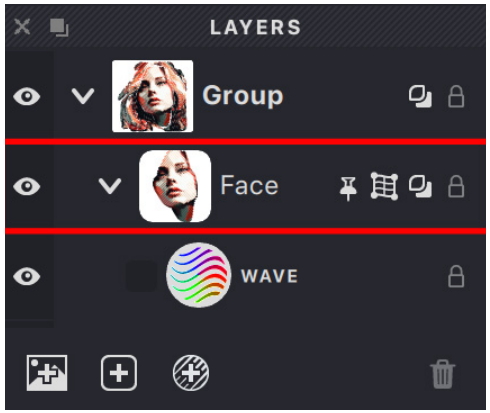
1. Open the **Properties Panel**.
2. Scroll to locate the **VIEW** section (at the bottom of the properties list).
3. Find the **Units** setting (or similar label).
4. Select your desired unit from the dropdown menu.



The interface elements and relevant property values will update immediately to reflect the newly selected unit.

Adding A Layer

Layers are fundamental organizational tools in Vexy Lines, acting like transparent sheets stacked on top of each other. Each layer serves as a container for parts of your artwork, holding the Fills that create the visuals and optionally a Mask to control visibility. Using layers helps you manage complex designs, work on elements independently, and control the stacking order of your artwork.



A single layer typically contains:

- **Fills:** One or more Fill objects that generate the vector artwork.
- **Mask:** An optional mask defining which parts of the layer's Fills are visible.
- **Mesh:** An optional grid used for distorting the layer's Fills (not applicable to all Fill types, e.g., Trace, Handmade).

When to Use New Layers

Creating new layers is beneficial when you need to:

- Apply different Fill types or styles to distinct parts of your design (e.g., separate layers for skin, hair, and clothing in a portrait).
- Isolate elements for easier editing without affecting other parts of the artwork.
- Organize complex compositions logically.
- Control the front-to-back arrangement of overlapping elements.

Adding a New Layer

You can add a new layer to your document using these methods:

- Click the **Add New Layer** button (icon: ⊕) in the **Layers Panel**.
- Choose **Layer > New > Layer** from the main menu.
- If the document is empty, adding the first Fill will automatically create a new layer to contain it.

The new layer will appear in the **Layers Panel**. You can **double-click** its default name (e.g., “Layer 1”) to **rename** it descriptively.

Managing Layers

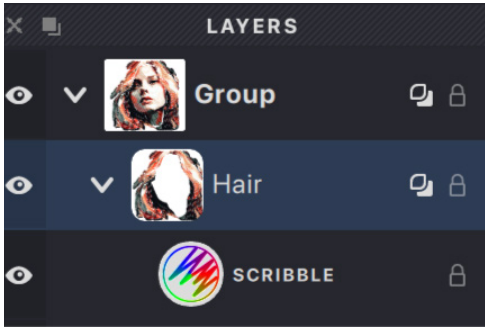
The **Layers Panel** provides controls for managing individual layers:

Visibility

- Click the **Eye icon** (👁) next to a layer's name to toggle its visibility on the Canvas.
- Hiding layers helps you focus on specific parts of your design.
- Hidden layers are typically excluded from final exports.

Selection

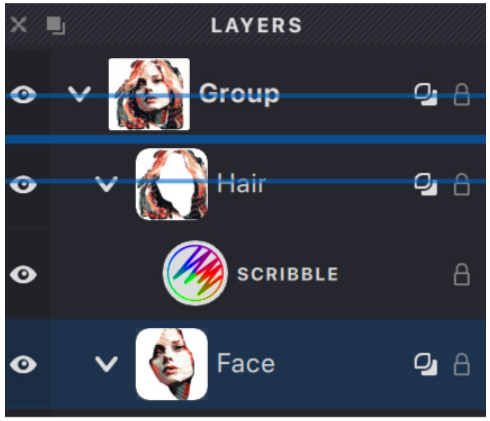
- Click on a layer's name or row in the **Layers Panel** to select it.



- The selected layer is usually highlighted.
- Many tools and properties only affect the currently selected layer.

Arrangement (Stacking Order)

- Click and drag a layer up or down within the **Layers Panel** list to change its stacking position.



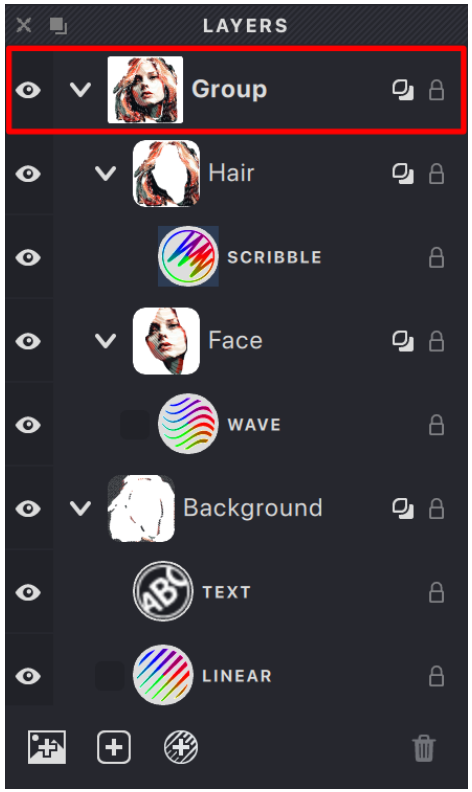
- Layers higher in the list appear in front of layers lower in the list on the Canvas.
- Use arrangement to control how elements overlap in your artwork.

  Since each layer functions independently, you can freely experiment with Fills, Masks, and properties on one layer without altering the content of others.

Sources And Groups

As your projects become more complex, **Groups** provide a powerful way to organize your document structure in Vexy Lines. Similar to folders on your computer, Groups act as containers that can hold multiple Layers, other Groups (creating nested structures or sub-groups), and even their own dedicated **Source Image**.

Using Groups helps keep your **Layers Panel** tidy and allows you to manage related parts of your artwork collectively.



Creating Groups

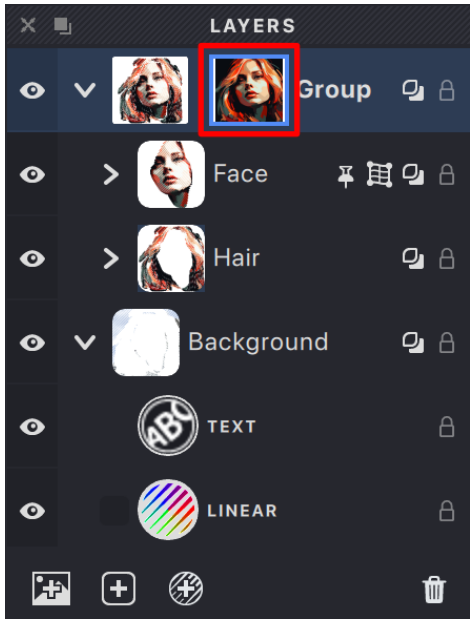
There are several ways to create a Group:

- Click the **New Group** button in the **Layers Panel**.
- Choose **Layer > New > Group** from the main menu.
- Select one or more Layers or existing Groups in the Layers Panel and use the shortcut ⌘ + G (macOS) or Ctrl + G (Windows).

Using Source Images with Groups

A key feature of Groups is that each can have its own **Source Image**. This image serves as the reference for calculating Fill properties (like dynamic color or thickness variations) for all Layers contained within that Group and its sub-groups.

- **Purpose:** Source Images guide the appearance of Fills but are not part of the final exported artwork.
- **File Types:** You can use standard raster images (PNG, JPEG, TIFF) or vector files (SVG, PDF) as Source Images.



Adding and Managing Source Images in Groups

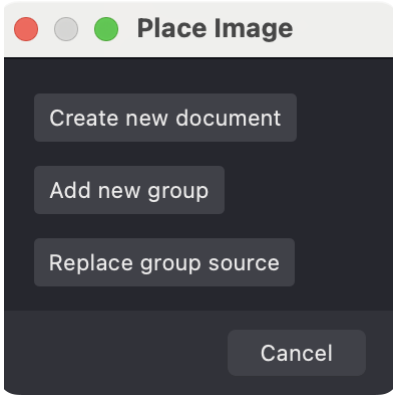
You can assign or change a Group's Source Image using these methods:

Via Menu:

1. Select the target Group in the **Layers Panel**.
2. Choose **Layer > Add Source** (to add) or **Layer > Replace Source** (to replace).
3. Select your desired image file.
4. An interface may appear allowing you to position and scale the image relative to the document canvas. Adjust as needed and press ⏎ Enter to confirm.

Via Drag and Drop:

1. Drag an image file from your computer directly onto the Vexy Lines application window.
2. A dialog will appear. Choose an option like **Add as Source to New Group** or **Add/Replace Source in Selected Group**.
3. Position and scale the image if prompted, then press ⏎ Enter.



Managing Existing Source Images:

- **Select:** Click the small image icon next to the Group name in the Layers Panel to select the Source Image itself.
- **Transform:** Once selected, you can usually resize or reposition the Source Image on the canvas using standard transform controls.
- **Remove:** With the Source Image selected (by clicking its icon in the Layers Panel), press the **Delete** or **Backspace** key, or use the Delete button in the Layers Panel.

Organizational Benefits of Groups

Beyond managing Source Images, Groups enhance project organization:

- **Hierarchy:** Nest Groups within other Groups to create logical structures for complex designs (e.g., a “Character” group containing “Head” and “Body” sub-groups).
- **Visibility Control:** Toggle the visibility of an entire Group (and all its contents) using the Eye icon in the Layers Panel.
- **Bulk Operations:** Select a Group to apply transformations (move, scale, rotate) or other actions to all contained Layers simultaneously.
- **Easy Reordering:** Drag and drop Layers or sub-groups into or out of different parent Groups in the Layers Panel.

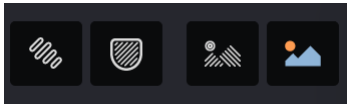
Effectively using Groups and their associated Source Images is crucial for maintaining clarity and efficiency in complex Vexy Lines projects.

Document View Options

Vexy Lines provides several options to customize how your document and artwork are displayed during the creation process. Adjusting these settings can help you focus on specific elements, improve editing accuracy, and tailor the workspace to your preference.

Toolbar View Controls

The main **Toolbar** includes quick-access buttons to toggle the visibility of key elements:



Highlight Edges When enabled, enhances the visibility of selected Fills or Mask contours, making them easier to identify and edit.

Show Masks Toggles the visibility of Mask boundaries and Mesh grid lines on the Canvas.

Show Fills Toggles the visibility of all generated Fill artwork on the Canvas. Turn this off to focus solely on Masks or Source Images.

Show Source Toggles the visibility of any Source Images associated with the document or active Group.

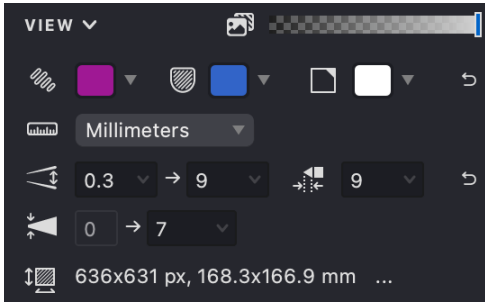
View Menu

The **View** option in the main menu bar provides access to a broader range of display settings, including:

- Zoom level controls and navigation commands.
- Options to show or hide specific user interface panels (like Properties, Layers, etc.).
- Settings for the workspace background color.
- Manual refresh commands and rendering quality options (if applicable).

Properties Panel (View Section)

The **Properties Panel** contains a dedicated **VIEW** section offering more granular control over display elements:



Source Image Opacity

Adjust the transparency level of the visible Source Image.

Visual Highlights

Customize the colors used to highlight selected Fill edges and Mask boundaries for better visibility against your artwork.

Background Color

Set a custom background color for the canvas area, which can be helpful for contrast when working with specific image or fill colors.

Remember that all view settings other than **Background Color** *only affect the display while you are working in Vexy Lines. They do not alter the content or appearance of your final exported files.*

Saving Your Work

Regularly saving your Vexy Lines project is crucial to prevent losing progress. While Vexy Lines includes auto-save features for protection against unexpected interruptions, frequent manual saving remains the best practice.

Standard Saving

Vexy Lines saves projects in its native `.lines` file format. This format preserves all your document information, including layers, groups, fills, masks, settings, and source images.

- **Save:** To save your current changes, choose **File > Save** from the main menu, or use the keyboard shortcut (**⌘+S** on macOS / **Ctrl+S** on Windows).
- **Save As:** To save a new version of your project under a different name or location, choose **File > Save As...**, or use shortcut (**⌘+⇧+S** on macOS / **Ctrl+Shift+S** on Windows).

  When saving a document for the first time, you will be prompted to enter a filename and select a location on your computer.

Automatic Safety Features

Vexy Lines incorporates features designed to help protect your work automatically:

Auto Save

Periodically, Vexy Lines automatically saves a temporary recovery file in the background. If the application closes unexpectedly (due to a crash or power outage), it will attempt to recover your work from this file the next time you launch it. You can enable this feature and configure the saving interval in **Preferences > Autosave**.

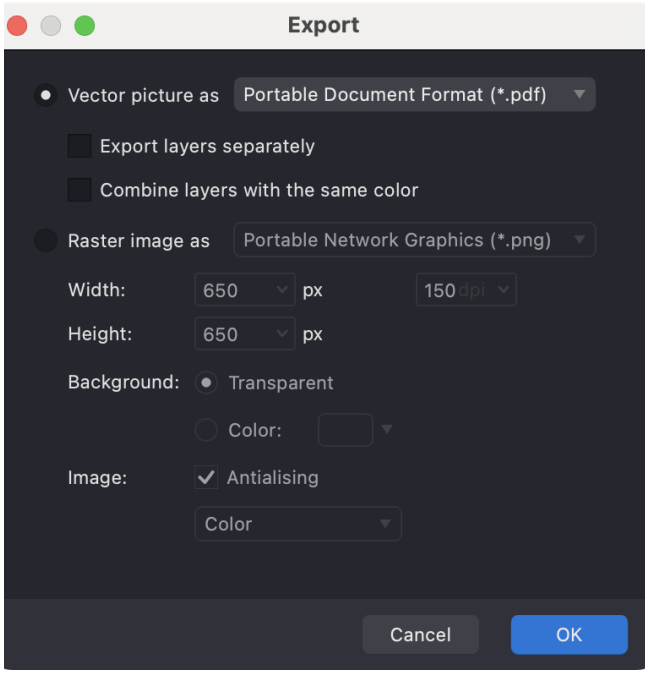
Backup Copies

When enabled, Vexy Lines creates a backup copy of the *previous* version each time you manually save your document. These backup files usually have a `.~lines` extension (or similar) and are stored alongside your original project file. This provides a way to revert to an earlier saved state if needed. This feature can usually be toggled on or off in **Preferences > Save**.

While auto-save and backups provide a safety net, manually saving your work frequently using ***File > Save*** *(**⌘/Ctrl+S**) is the most reliable way to ensure your latest changes are preserved, especially before making significant edits or closing the application.*

Exporting The Artwork

When your project is complete, you can export it into various file formats suitable for use in other applications, printing, web display, or further editing. Vexy Lines offers options for exporting both scalable vector graphics and fixed-size raster images.



Vector Export

Vector formats preserve the mathematical descriptions of your artwork, allowing it to be scaled infinitely without losing quality. They are ideal for logos, illustrations intended for print, and designs that may need resizing.

Common vector export formats include:

- **SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics):** A widely supported standard for web graphics and interoperability between vector editing applications.
- **PDF (Portable Document Format):** Excellent for sharing documents and high-quality printing, preserving vector data and layout.
- **EPS (Encapsulated PostScript):** A legacy format often used in professional print workflows.

Vector Export Options

When exporting to vector formats (SVG, PDF, EPS), Vexy Lines provides options to control how the document structure is saved in the output file. Select the option that best fits your intended use:

The availability and specific behavior of these export options depend on the capabilities of the chosen vector format (SVG, PDF, or EPS). Review the settings during the export process to ensure the output matches your requirements.

Export Layers Separately

This option preserves the layer structure from your Vexy Lines document within the exported file, representing layers as native layers or groups where the format supports it (e.g., SVG). Select this when you need to maintain layer organization for continued editing in other vector software (like Adobe Illustrator, Affinity Designer, Inkscape). If this option is **off**, Vexy Lines will combine all visible layers into a single layer or group in the exported file. The visual appearance is maintained, but the original Vexy Lines layer structure is discarded. Choose this for final delivery or when layer separation is not required in the destination application.

Combine layers with the same color

This option organizes the exported artwork based on shared colors, grouping all elements of the same color together. This method is specifically designed for workflows requiring color separation, such as screen printing or vinyl cutting.

Raster Export

Raster (or bitmap) formats represent artwork as a grid of pixels. They are suitable for web images, photographs, and situations where scalability is not the primary concern. Common raster export formats include:

- **PNG (Portable Network Graphics):** Loseless format which supports transparency, making it ideal for web graphics or overlays.
- **JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group):** Offers good compression for smaller file sizes, suitable for photographs on the web (does not support transparency).

Raster Export Options

When exporting to raster formats, you can control:

- **Dimensions:** Set the exact width and height in pixels.
- **Color Mode:** Choose between color or grayscale output.
- **Transparency:** Configure transparency options for formats like PNG.
- **Background Color:** Select a background color if transparency is not used or supported.

The Export Process

To export your artwork:

1. Choose **File > Export** from the main menu.
2. In the export dialog, choose whether you need vector or raster result and select the desired output **Format** (e.g., SVG, PNG, PDF, PNG or JPG).
3. Configure any available **Export Settings** specific to the chosen format (e.g., dimensions, layer handling, quality).
4. Choose a **Destination** folder and enter a **Filename** for the exported file.
5. Click **Export** to generate the file.

Exporting functionality requires an activated, licensed version of Vexy Lines. Trial or demo versions may allow you to preview export options but might restrict saving the final output files.

Clipboard Operations

For quick transfers to other vector editing applica
tions (like Adobe Illustrator or Affinity Designer), Vexy Lines may support copying artwork directly to the system clipboard.

- Select the desired elements or layers in Vexy Lines.
- Use the **Edit > Copy** command (⌘Cmd/^Ctrl + C).
- Switch to the other application and use its **Paste** command (⌘/Ctrl + V).

This method often preserves the vector nature of the artwork, allowing for further editing in the destination application. Compatibility may vary depending on the applications involved.

Contents

Vexy Lines User Manual

Vexy Lines offers a unique approach to vector creation, focusing on transforming images using sophisticated line and shape fills. Key features include:

- **Expressive Line Effects:** Create beautiful engraving and hatching effects with precise control over line density, direction, and style.
- **Unique Textures:** Generate patterns using text, fractals, and organic wave structures.
- **Intelligent Tracing:** Convert bitmap images into clean, scalable vector paths automatically.
- **Customizable Style:** Develop your signature look with highly adjustable fills, strokes, and effects.
- **Flexible Output:** Export production-ready vector files (SVG, PDF, EPS) and raster images (PNG, JPEG) for print, web, and other design applications.

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