

Photoshop According to Me: The Bezier (Pen) Tool

by Ray Campbell

A French Engineer named Bezier (pronounced Bezsee A), developed a tool for designing and drawing technical diagrams with a computers. The tool he created was different from other computer drawing tools because it was based on saving descriptions of lines and shapes instead of maps of pixels. In Adobe Photoshop this is a very useful tool. It can be used to create shapes that tell page layout software to assign transparency. It can also be used to create patterns, masks or drawing.



This lesson is an introduction to the way the Pen Tool works. Because of the way the information the tools creates is stored and used, the tool itself is somewhat different. This is one that requires practice to perfect.

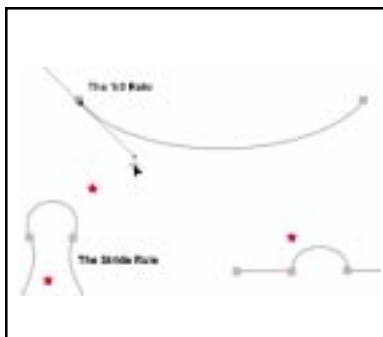
Notice that if the mouse is clicked while the Pen Tool is selected, it created "Anchor Points" with straight lines between. To create a curve, press the mouse and drag. The Handles that stretch out from the Anchor Point are used to create curves and direct the placement of the next point.

In this exercise the spots to place Anchor Points are marked with square while the spot to drag each handle to is marked with a star.

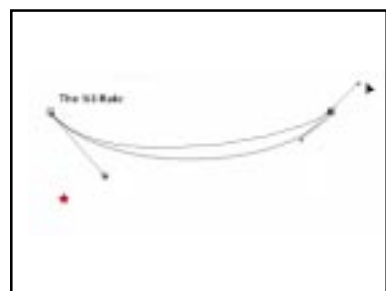
1. Begin by opening the document Rules.psd. Note that this is a Photoshop document with 2 layers. One is the background and the other is a blank layer. Select the Practice layer in the layer palette so that the drawing is done over the background without effecting it.



2. Click on the first box in the first rule (the 1/3 Rule) and drag to the star that is to the lower right. There is no line yet, but by doing this the beginning of the line is defined along with the direction the second line will go in.



3. Click on the second box and drag to the star in the upper left. Notice that dragging down on the first point and then up on the second creates a curve.



4. To deselect, hold the Option and Command keys and click anywhere.

Doing this will turn the cursor into an arrow temporarily.

5. Continue to click and drag to follow the lines of each rule. Notice how the tool behaves, the kind of line that is created by the pattern of clicks and drags the rule demands.

Rules of the Pen Tool



The 1/3 Rule



The Stride Rule



The Bump Rule



The Tangent Rule



The Direction Rule

