Adobe® InDesign® CS/CS2 Tips & Tricks

The Big Picture

Sears is known more for its traditional merchandise than for its "trendy" advertisements. However, holiday "Wish Big" ads from Sears utilized a trendy single-image mosaic with a twist. Using InDesign's Step and Repeat and Compound Paths features along with the Rotate tool makes a big impression with just a little effort.

STEP 1: Using the Rectangle Frame tool, draw a single rectangle. In the example, the rectangle is 4 x 5 picas. To make a rectangle a specific size, select the rectangle frame with the Selection tool and enter the width and height in the Control palette.

STEP 2: Select the rectangle frame with the Selection tool and open the Stroke palette. Apply a 1 pt. stroke weight. If the stroke is not Black, open the Swatches palette and select the Black swatch for the stroke. To check that the stroke weight and color is correct, click on the Preview button in the Tool palette.

STEP 3: Instead of manually copying, pasting and positioning a couple dozen identical frames, select the rectangular frame with the Selection tool and go to Edit > Step and Repeat. Enter into the Step and Repeat dialog box:

Repeat Count: 8
Horizontal Offset: 4p3 (the width of the rectangular frame plus 3 points for internal spacing)
Vertical Offset: 0

There should now be a total of nine identical rectangular frames with 3 points between each.

STEP 4: Use the Selection tool and while holding the Shift key, click on all nine of the rectangular frames to select them. Again go to Edit > Step and Repeat. Enter into the Step and Repeat dialog box:

Repeat Count: 5
Horizontal Offset: 0
Vertical Offset: 5p3 (the height of the rectangular frame plus 3 points for internal spacing)

You should have a total of 54 identical rectangular frames with 3 points between each.

STEP 5: Now comes the fun part. Hold the Shift key and randomly select several of the rectangular frames with the Selection tool. Go to Tool palette and double-click on the Rotate tool. This opens the tool's options. Enter -1˚ for the Angle. Select additional rectangular frames and rotate some -1˚. Rotate additional frames 2˚, -2˚ and 3˚. Use the Selection tool to adjust the individual placement of the frames. It is critical the frames do not overlap.

STEP 5: Use the Selection tool and select all of the frames. Go to Object > Compound Paths > Make. The individual frames will now act as a single frame. Use the File > Place command or Herff Jones Image In to place the image. To reposition the image within the compound path, click on the image with the Direct Selection tool.

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