# Photo Background Removal in PHOTO-PAINT

This tutorial will demonstrate two methods for removing the background of a photo: the **Cutout Lab** and the **Smart Selection** mask tool.

Background Removal with the Cutout Lab

In our first example, we want to put the dog's face on a different background image, so we need to remove everything else.


Go to **Image** > **Cutout Lab**. When using the **Cutout Lab**, the first step is to trace around the area you want to keep. The **Highlighter** tool is active by default, and you can adjust the settings for **Nib Size**, **Highlight Color** and **Fill Color**.
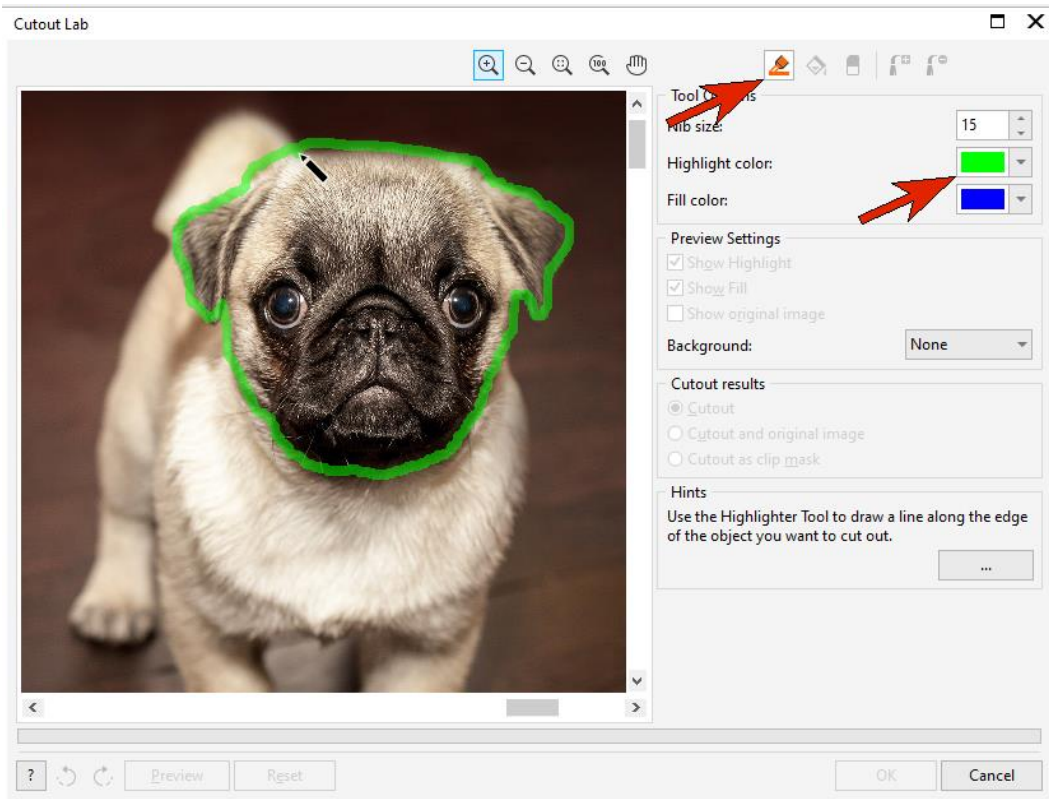
After tracing a closed loop, the next step is to choose which area to keep - inside or outside the highlighted area. Activate the **Inside Fill** tool and click inside the area you traced.
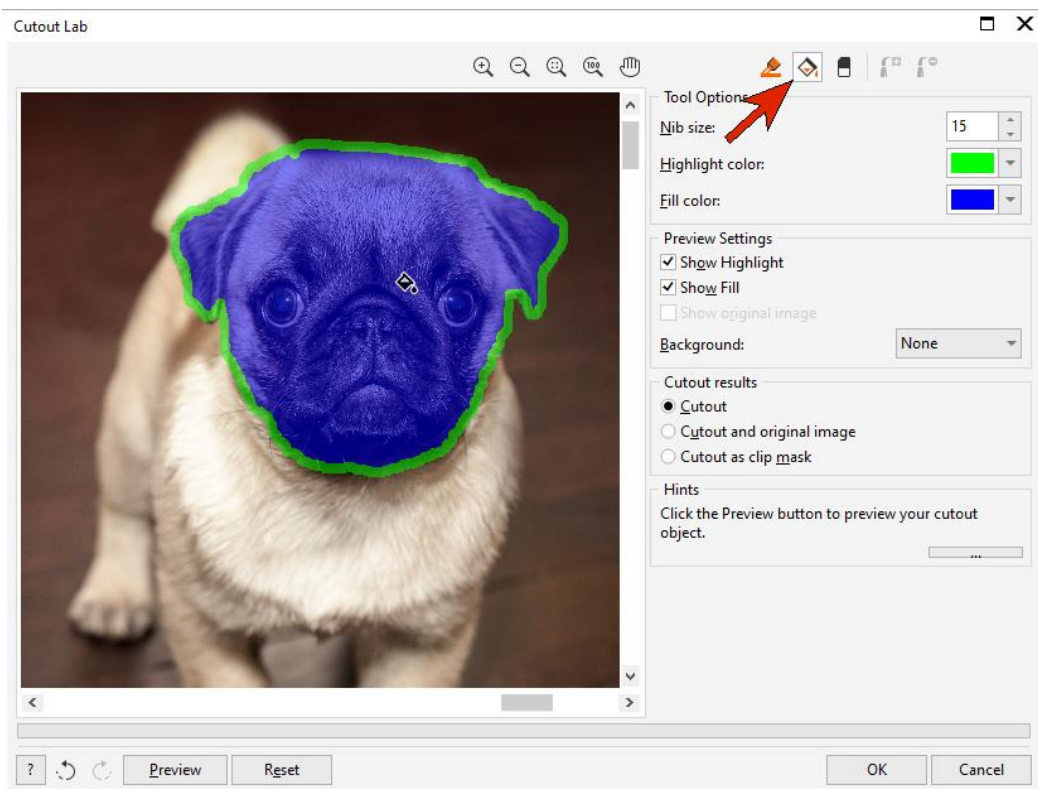
You can click the **Preview** button to check the results so far and zoom in to see more detail. From the **Background** dropdown list, you can choose to add a **Grayscale**, **Black matte** or **White matte** background, which can make it easier to see the cutout results.
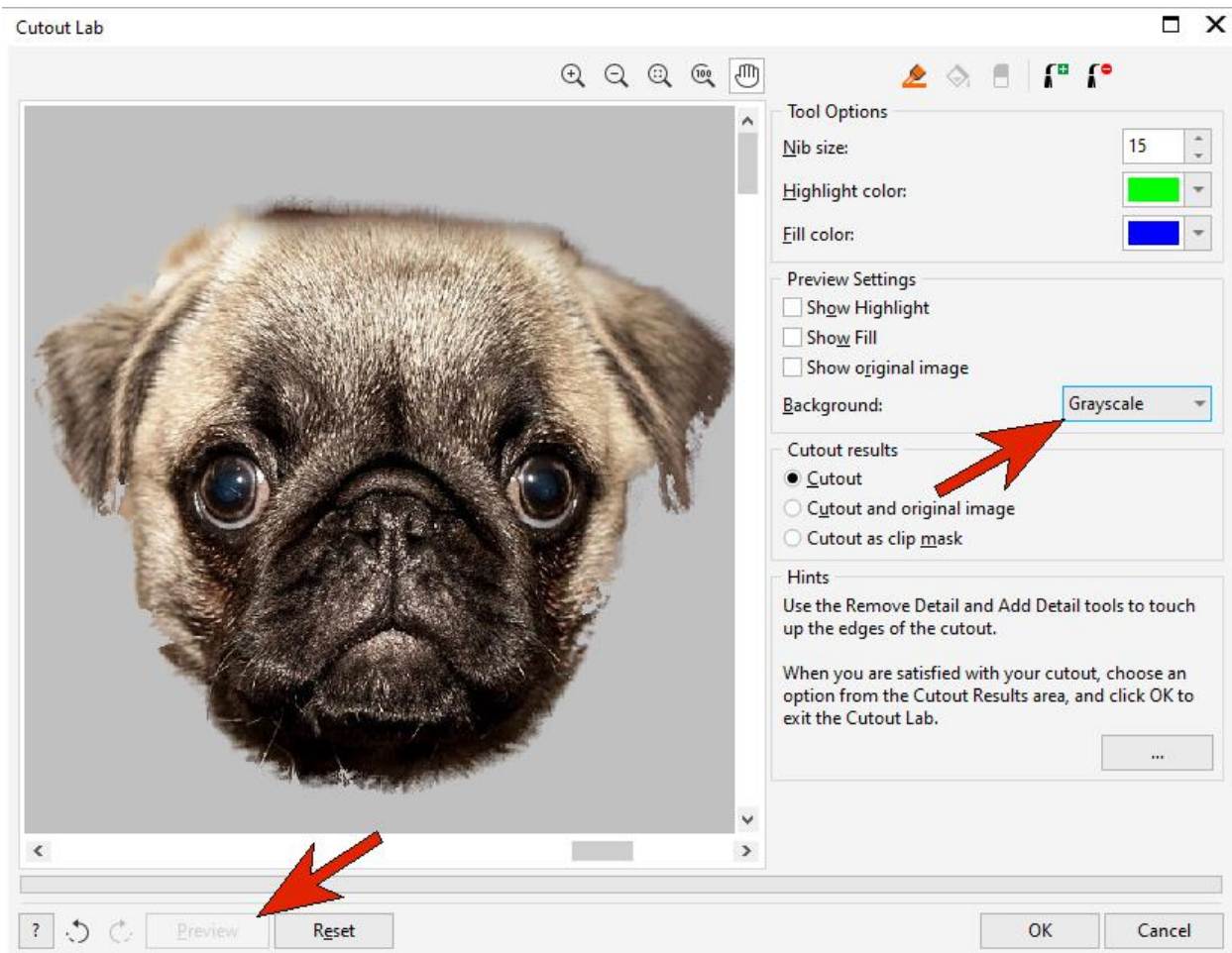
Once you have clicked on the **Preview** button, the **Add Detail** and **Remove Detail** tools become available at the top of the window. You can adjust the **Nib Size** of the tool and use it to refine your cutout to add or remove any bits.

TIP: If you have the **Add Detail** tool activated, using your right mouse button will switch to the **Remove Detail** tool, and vice versa. This is a quicker way to switch between adding and removing detail from your cutout.
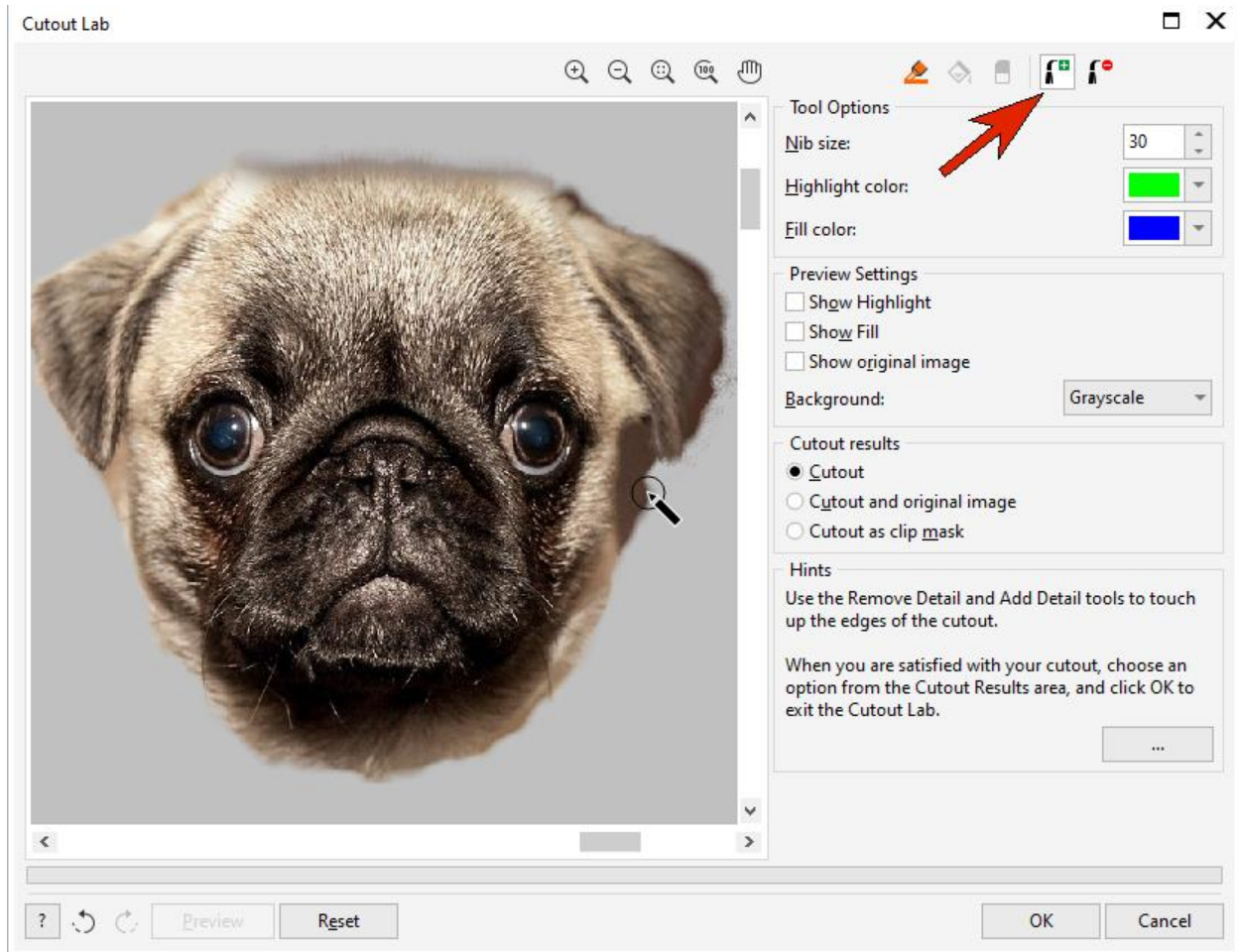
Once you have finalized your cutout, you can choose the **Cutout results**:

- **Cutout** creates an object from your cutout and discards the original image.

- **Cutout and original image** creates an object from your cutout and preserves the original image.

- **Cutout as clip mask** creates a clip mask from the cutout. The clip mask is attached to the original image and can viewed in the **Objects** docker.
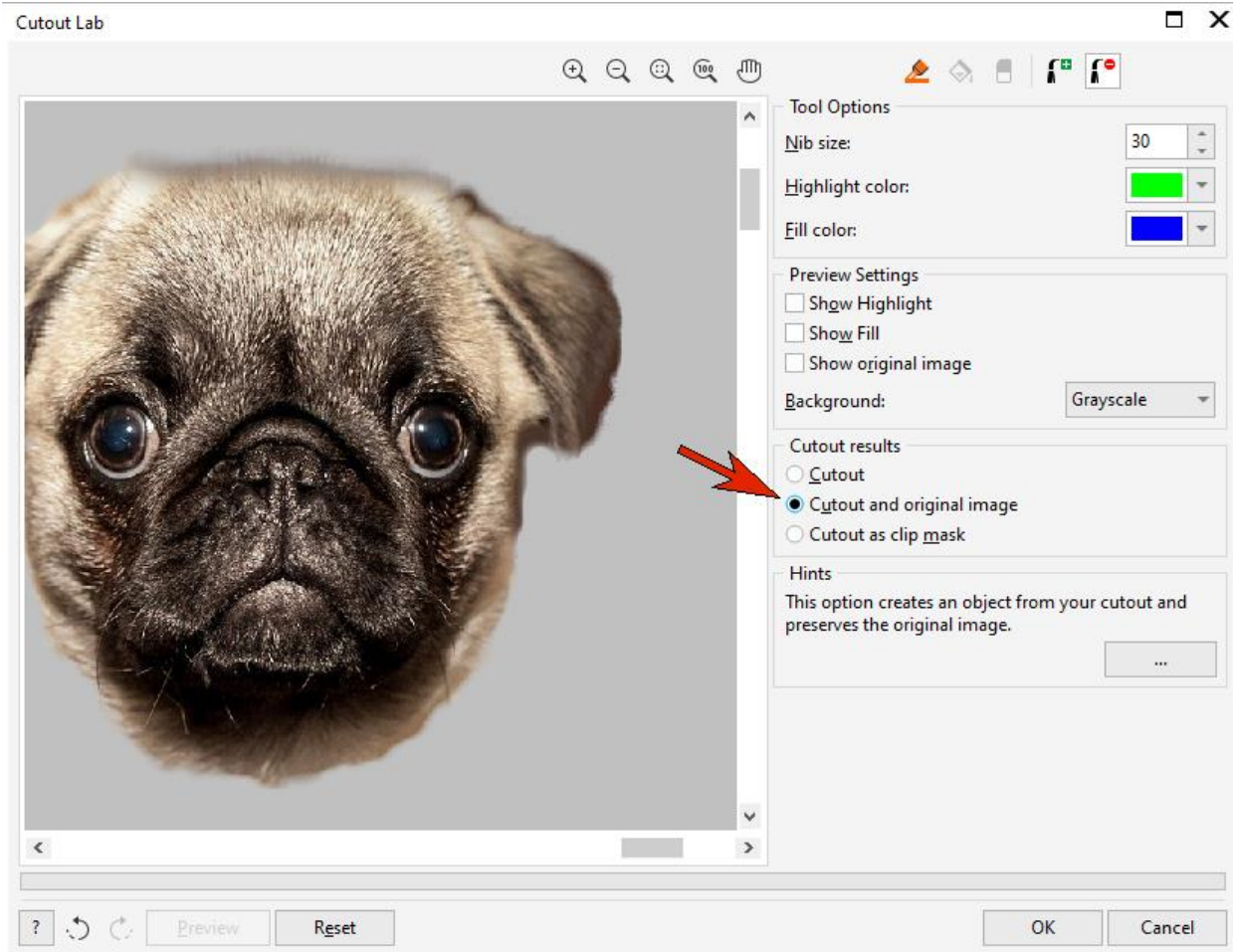
After you have selected the **Cutout results** option you want, click **OK**. In this example we chose **Cutout and original image**, so now in the **Objects** docker there are two objects: **Object 1** which is the cutout, and **Background** which is the original photo. Click the **Eye** icon to hide the background.
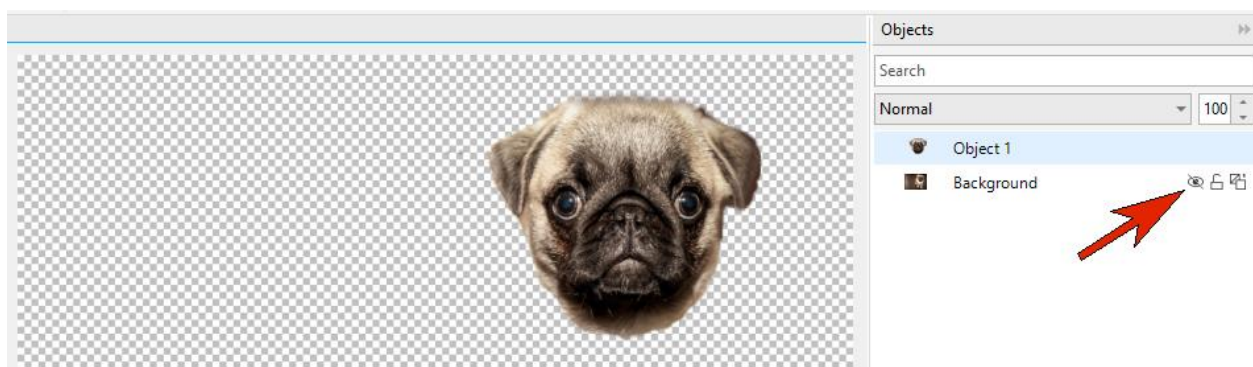
To add a new background, use **File** > **Import** to bring in the background image. In the **Objects** docker, drag the imported photo (called **Background 2**) below the **Object 1** cutout layer. Use the **Pick** tool to resize and reposition the new background image and cutout as needed.
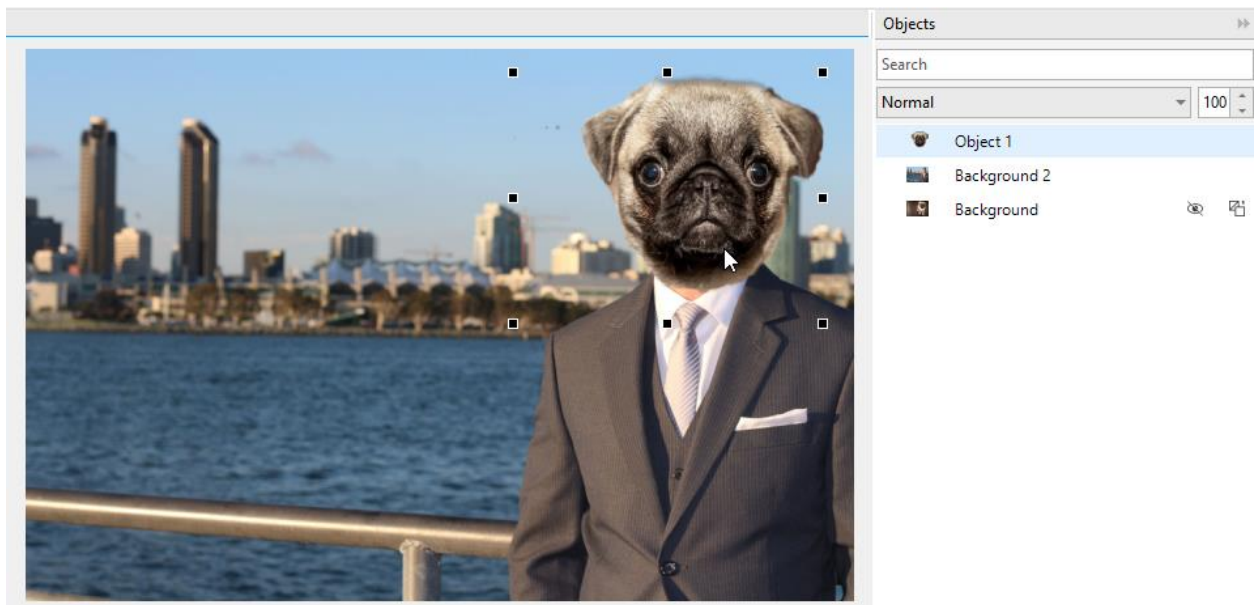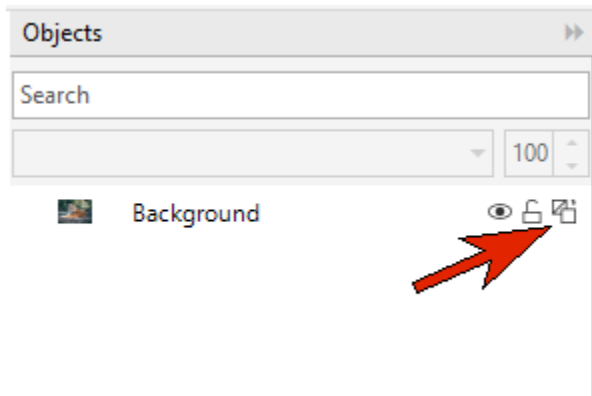

Background Removal with Masking

For the second example, we want to cut out the tiger in this photo and place it on a new background.

When you open an image in PHOTO-PAINT it will be a background layer and some editing tools can't be applied to backgrounds. So in the **Objects** docker, click the **Create Object from Background** icon to make the background into an object.


There are a number of different mask tools but for this example we are using the **Smart Selection Mask**, which is new in PHOTO-PAINT 2020.
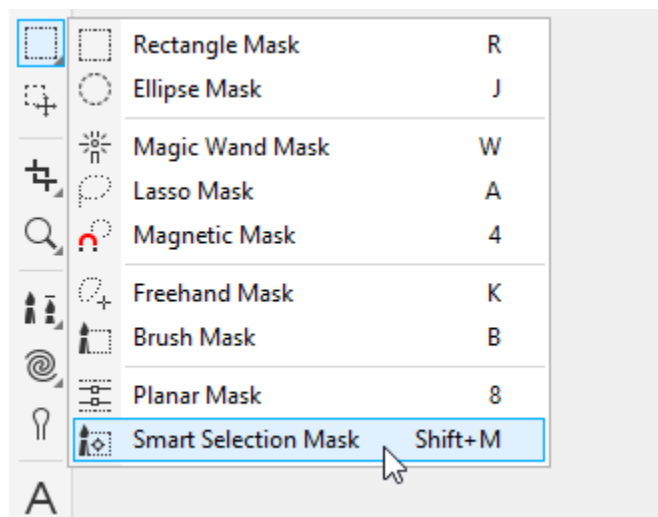
Once you activate the **Smart Selection Mask** tool, there will be some options available on the interactive **Property Bar** along the top.

Click on the **Normal mode** button and adjust the **Nib size** if desired. To define the initial area, click and drag your mouse within the tiger . . .
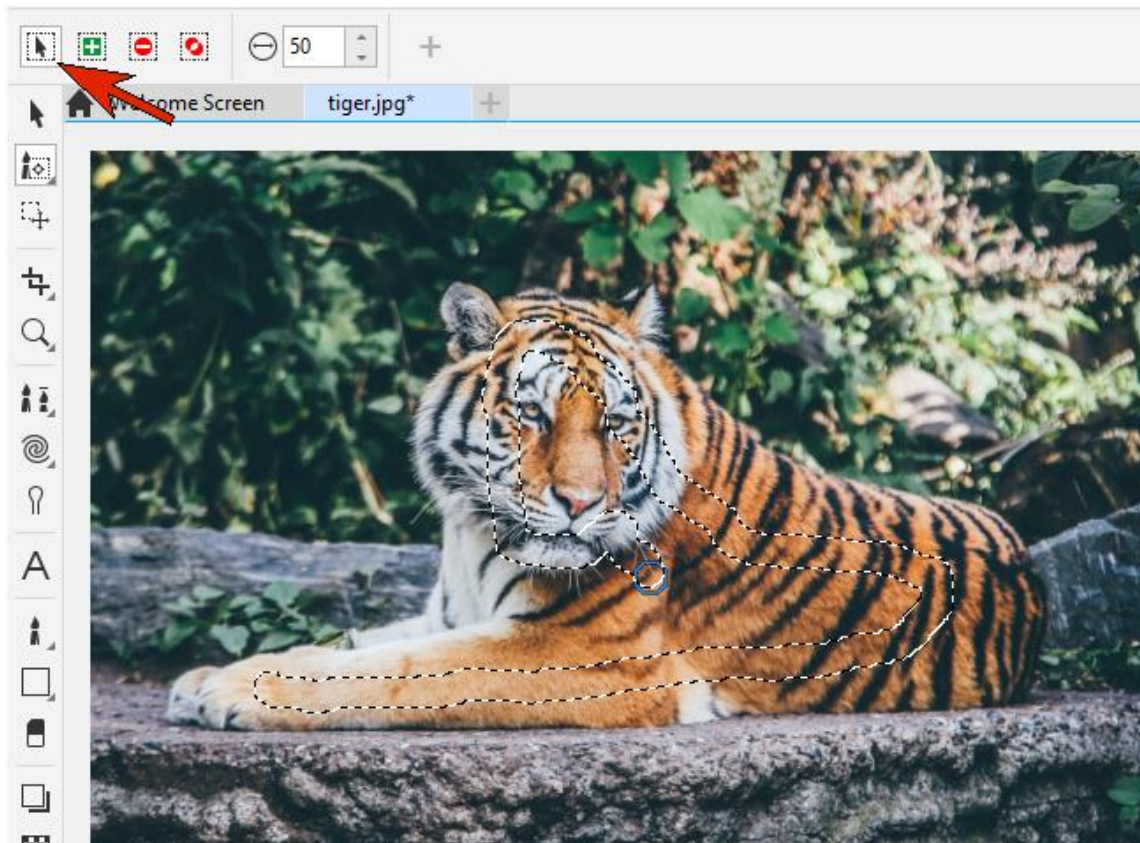
. . . and when you release your mouse button, the mask area will expand to select just about the entire tiger.

To add any bits that weren't included, switch to **Additive mode** on the **Property Bar**, or hold down the **Shift** key while clicking or dragging with your mouse. If you accidentally select any parts of the background, switch to **Subtractive mode** or hold down the **Ctrl** key while clicking and dragging to remove them.

TIP: hold down the **Alt** key while dragging with your mouse key to resize the nib as you are working.

Once your mask selection is complete to your liking, you can adjust the mask border by going to **Mask** > **Mask Outline** > **Feather**. Adding a small amount of **Inside** feather will soften the edges to help it blend better. In the **Feather** dialog box, click the **Preview** icon to see what the results will look like.
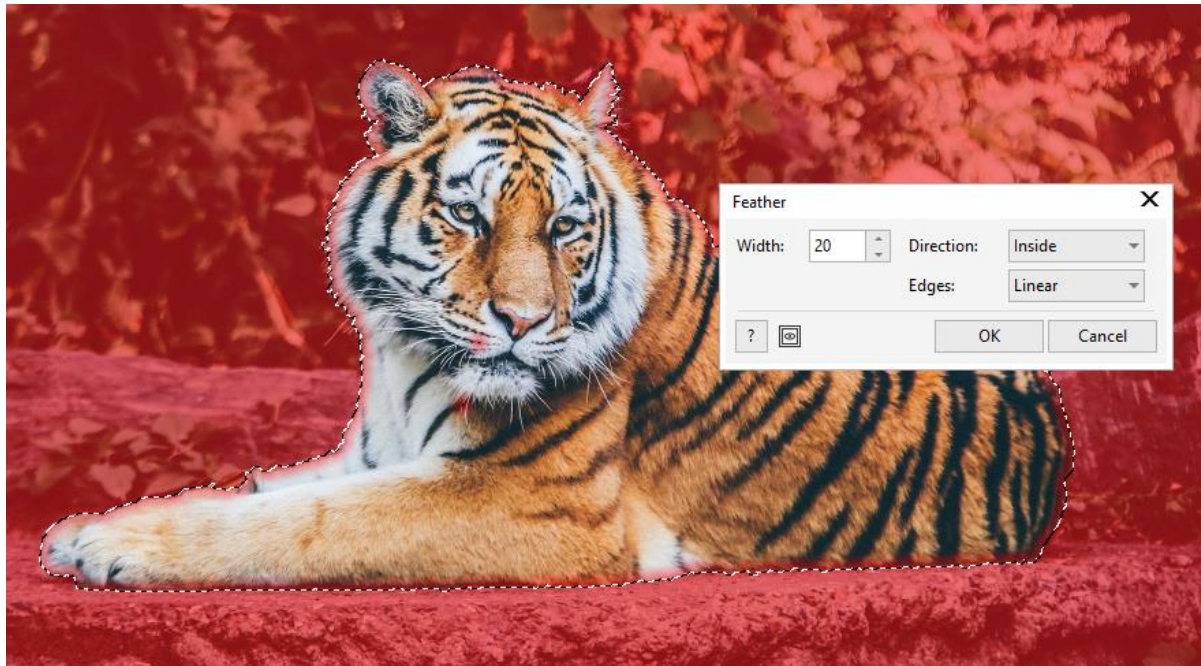
The area inside the mask is what would be removed when you use **Ctrl** + **X** to cut out the image. You can see this when you go to **Mask** > **Mask Overlay** - the red area is what will be kept. Since we want to remove the background, which is outside the mask area, we need to invert the mask by going to **Mask** > **Invert Mask**. Now the mask overlay shows that the tiger will be kept, and the background will be removed when we press **Ctrl** + **X**.

Press **Ctrl** + **X** and the background is removed.

To place the tiger onto a new background, you can import the background image into the tiger image as we did with the previous example. Drag the background layer below the tiger layer in the **Objects** docker and use the **Pick** tool to resize and reposition as needed.

Another way is to open your new background as a new file and use **Ctrl** + **C** to copy the tiger, then **Ctrl** + **V** to paste the tiger onto the new background. Again, use the **Pick** tool to resize and reposition as needed.