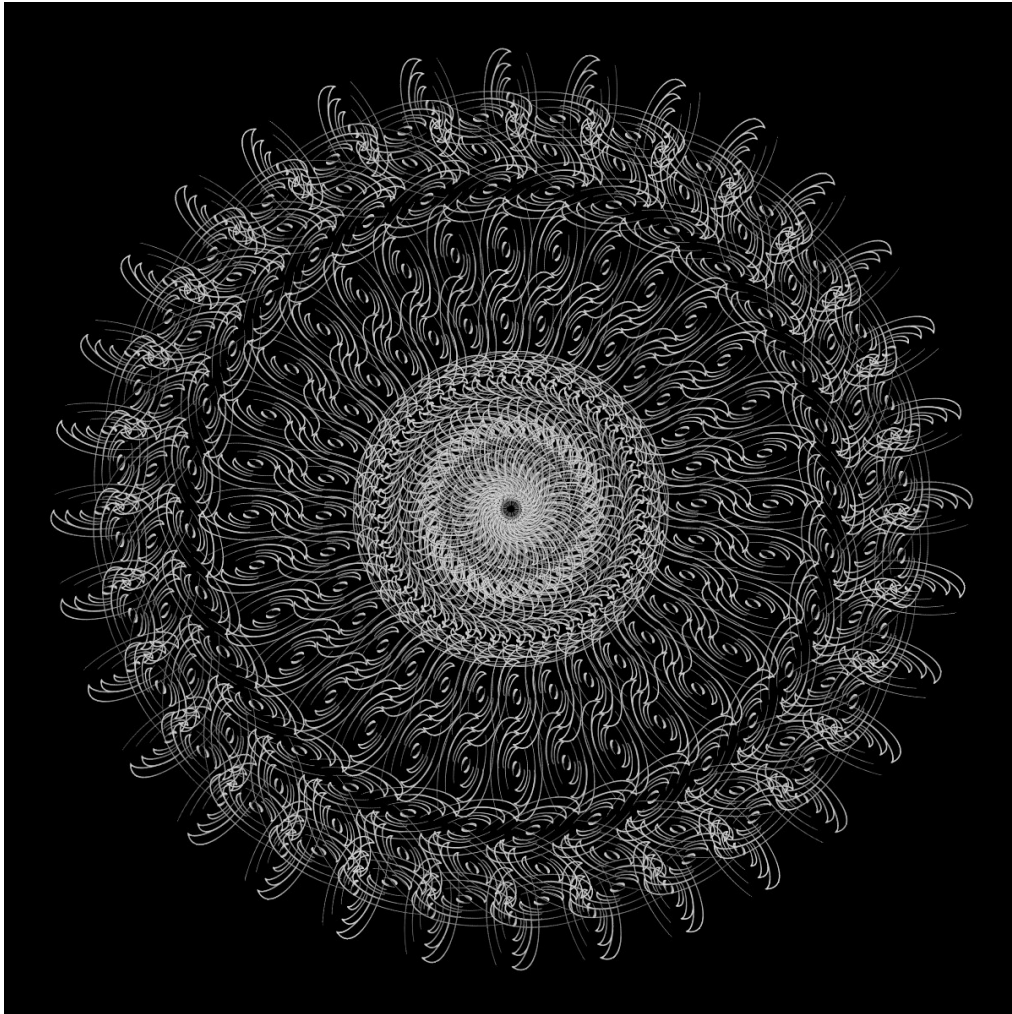


# Create a 'clipboard' brush and then a quick mandala using Symmetry Painting



**by Oldmangrumpy**



# Create a 'clipboard' brush and then a quick mandala using Symmetry Painting

## Introduction

Regular viewers of the 'Hand painted mandalas' thread, created by Erisian at Gimp Chat will know that I am totally addicted to mandalas.

When the thread was initially created, it was based on the use of brushes in conjunction with the GIMP Symmetry Painting function, using the 'mandala' parameter. Unfortunately, at that time, the functionality only appeared to work properly with the standard GIMP brushes (e.g. Hardness 100). My early attempts to use custom made brushes resulted in severely distorted images.

However, recent GIMP updates seem to have corrected these deficiencies and the capability of the Symmetry Painting function is quite amazing. So, I thought I would just show how easy it is to make quick mandala type images using a simple custom brush.

## Objective

This approach demonstrates just one concept, amongst a number of different methods, that can be used to draw mandalas and it can be creatively modified to suit individual needs.

It is not a tutorial per se, but rather a demonstration of what I did and what can be done by you.

The brush created in this approach is one that, depending on brush parameters and dynamics applied, will typically deliver a '*lace doily*' type image reflecting that on the front cover.

My objectives therefore are:

1. To demonstrate a method using simple paths and Ofnuts '[In Betweenner](#)' plug-in to make a custom brush.
2. To demonstrate use of this brush with the [Symmetry Painting](#) tool in mandala mode, to quickly draw a stunning mandala.

## Target audience

Anybody who wants to extend their knowledge of GIMP to learn a new simple process, that can be extended exponentially by creative thinkers.

## Resources

Two key non standard GIMP resources are used in this tutorial, being the [Fade To Fade](#) brush dynamic (my favourite!) and Ofnuts [Path Inbetweenner](#) plug-in. I have therefore included them both in a resources zip file attached to the tutorial post, along with a **starter xcf** file containing the initial layers and paths that produced the end result image.

## Conventions used in this tutorial

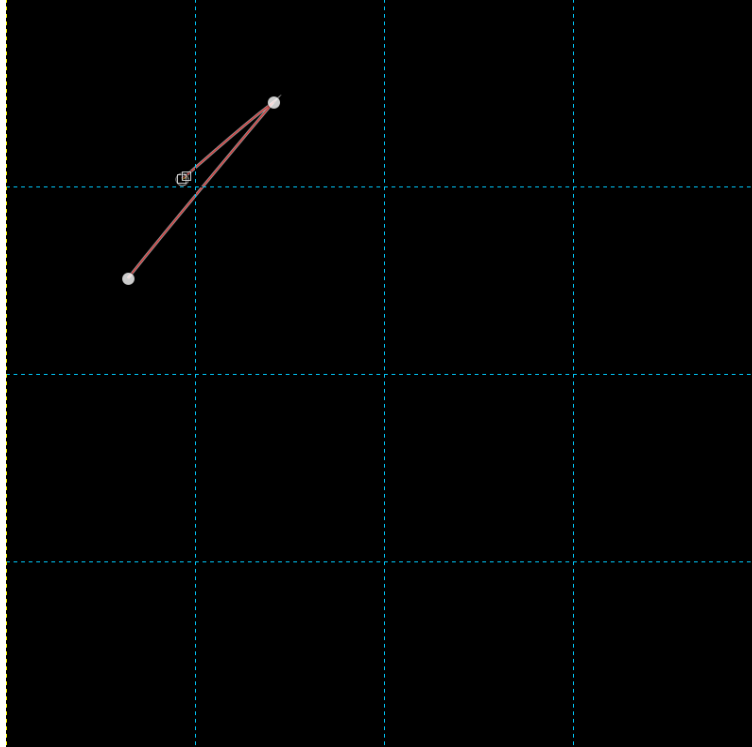
For clarity, certain key elements of GIMP are colour coded, such as:

- GIMP functions accessed using the mouse – [Tools>Paintbrush Tool](#)
- References to the path names will be identified like this – [Path name](#)
- References to the layer names will be identified like this – [Layer Name](#)
- References to plug-ins or scripts - [Tools>Generate intermediate paths](#)
- References to guides - [Guides at 300 pixel intervals](#)

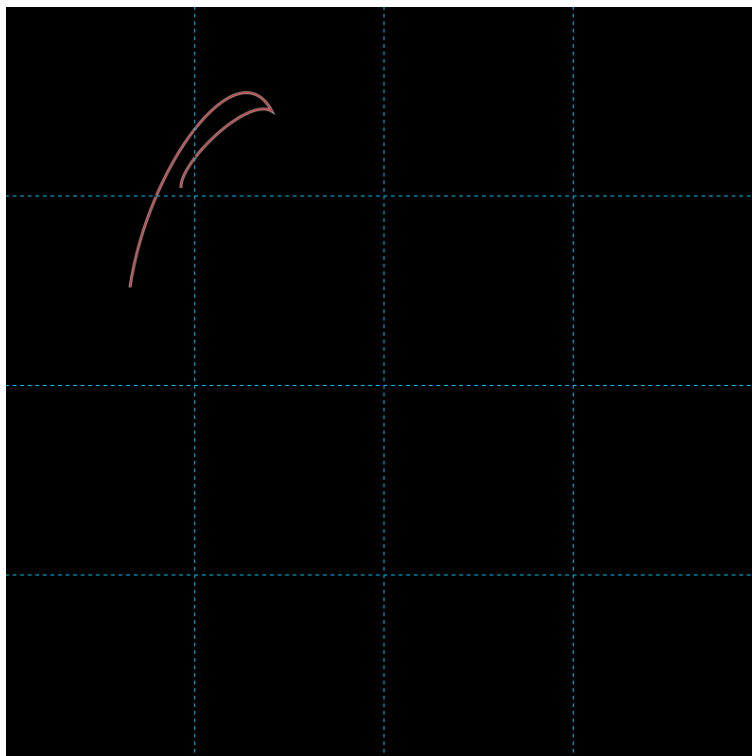
## Create a 'clipboard' brush and then a quick mandala using Symmetry Painting

### My Stepped Approach

1. I opened a new GIMP canvas of 1200 x 1200 pixels with a black background and guides set at 300 pixel intervals both Horizontally and Vertically
2. Selecting the Path Tool in Design mode from the Toolbox, I created a simple path with 3 control points as shown below and named the path path 1

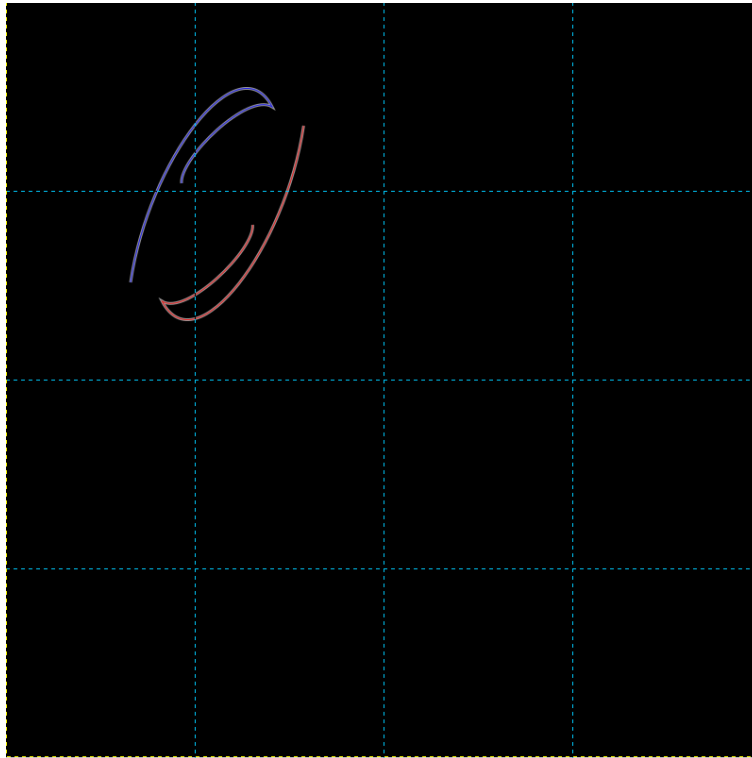


3. Then I dragged the two segments towards the top left of the canvas to create a modified shape like this

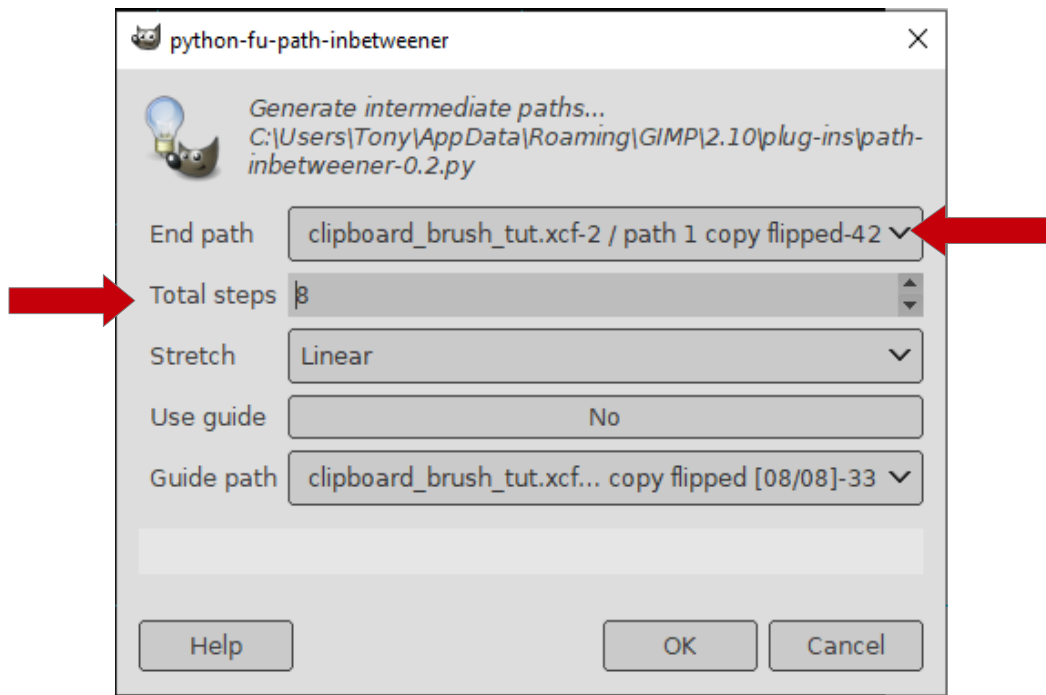


## Create a 'clipboard' brush and then a quick mandala using Symmetry Painting

- Next, I duplicated that path, flipped it both horizontally and vertically, and modified the name to **path 1 copy flipped**. Then with the **Move Tool** and **Path** option selected, I dragged the path slightly lower on the canvas; like this

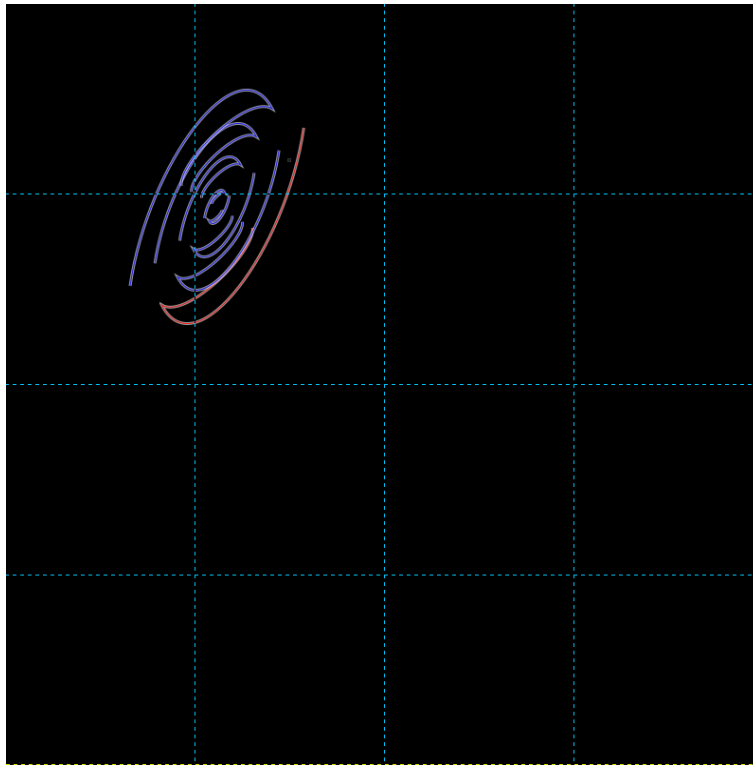


- Next, with path 1 active in the **path dialog** I right clicked and then selected **Tool>Generate intermediate paths** from the menu, which brings up the parameters window in which I entered the following details to generate 8 paths between the active and nominated paths

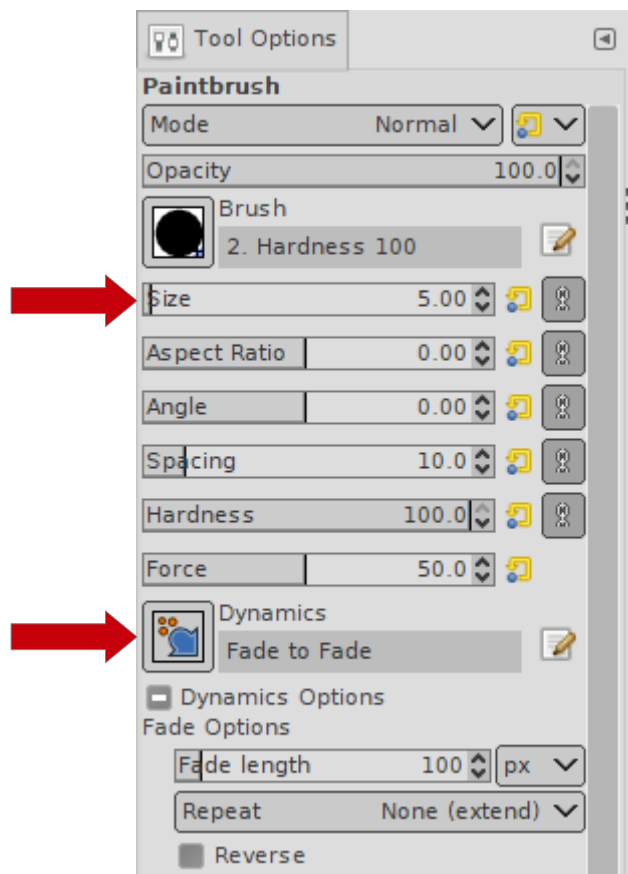


- Which action created theses paths

## Create a 'clipboard' brush and then a quick mandala using Symmetry Painting

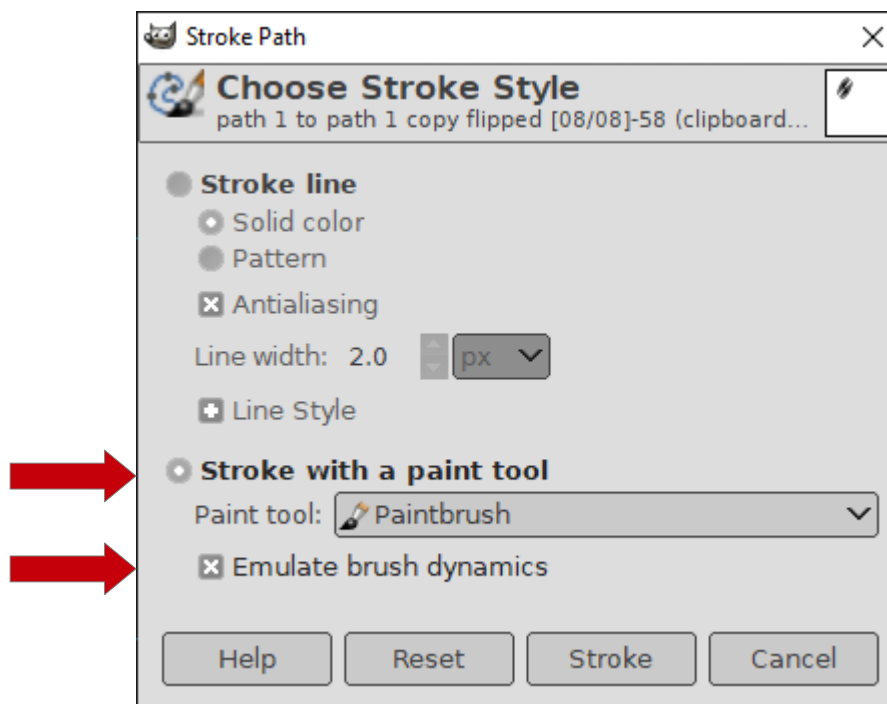


7. The 8 paths created by this plug-in are all individual elements and remain visible, leaving the original 2 paths invisible. My next step was to right click in the [Paths Dialog](#) and select [Merge Visible Paths](#), which delivers a single path for stroking.
8. I chose the [Hardness 100 brush](#) and applied the non standard settings shown below

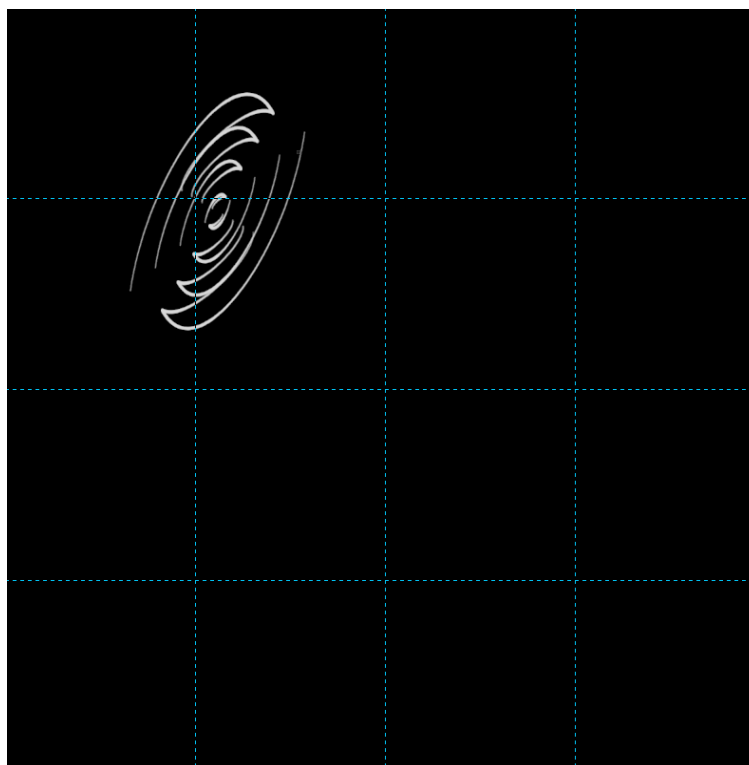


## Create a 'clipboard' brush and then a quick mandala using Symmetry Painting

9. In a new transparent layer, which I named **H100 @5pix space 10 FTF** after the settings, I first chose a **Foreground Colour** of **d8d8d8** then right clicked on the canvas and chose **Edit>Stroke Path** from the menu and then applied the following settings



10. This action produced the following image which will be my brush

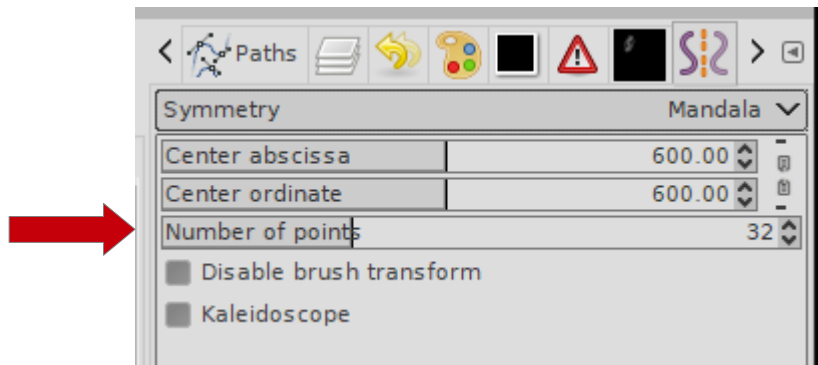


11. On this active layer I right clicked and chose **Alpha to Selection** to select the stroked image. Then I right clicked on the canvas and chose **Edit>Copy**, which sets the clipboard image as the first brush in the **Brushes Dialog**. Clicking that first brush makes it the active **Paintbrush** in

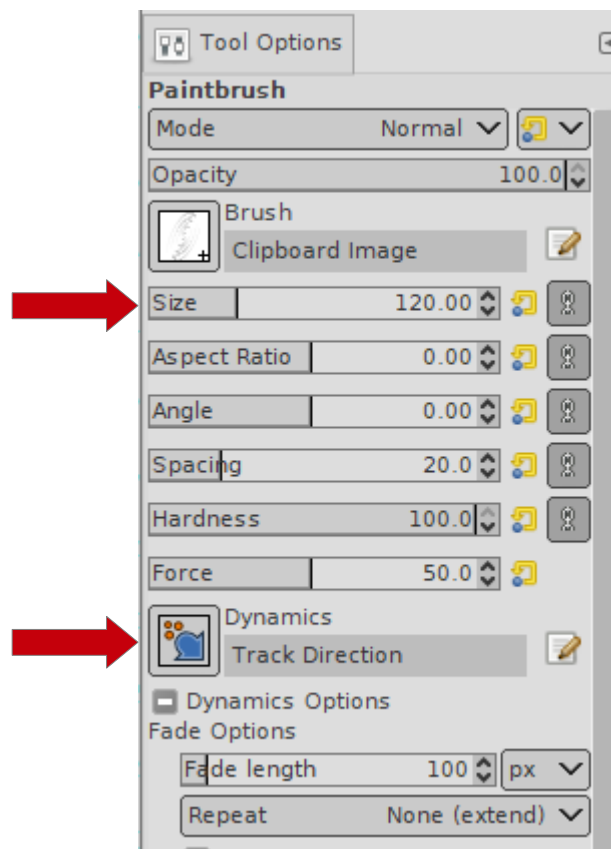
## Create a 'clipboard' brush and then a quick mandala using Symmetry Painting

the [Tool Options](#).

12. If you do not have [Symmetry Painting](#) open, it can be activated from [Windows>Dockable Dialogs>Symmetry Painting](#) and should appear in the same set of dialogs as your layers and paths. In the [Symmetry](#) drop down I selected [Mandala](#) and then applied the parameters below. On activation a white 'cross hair' guide shows up on the canvas identifying both vertical and horizontal centre axes

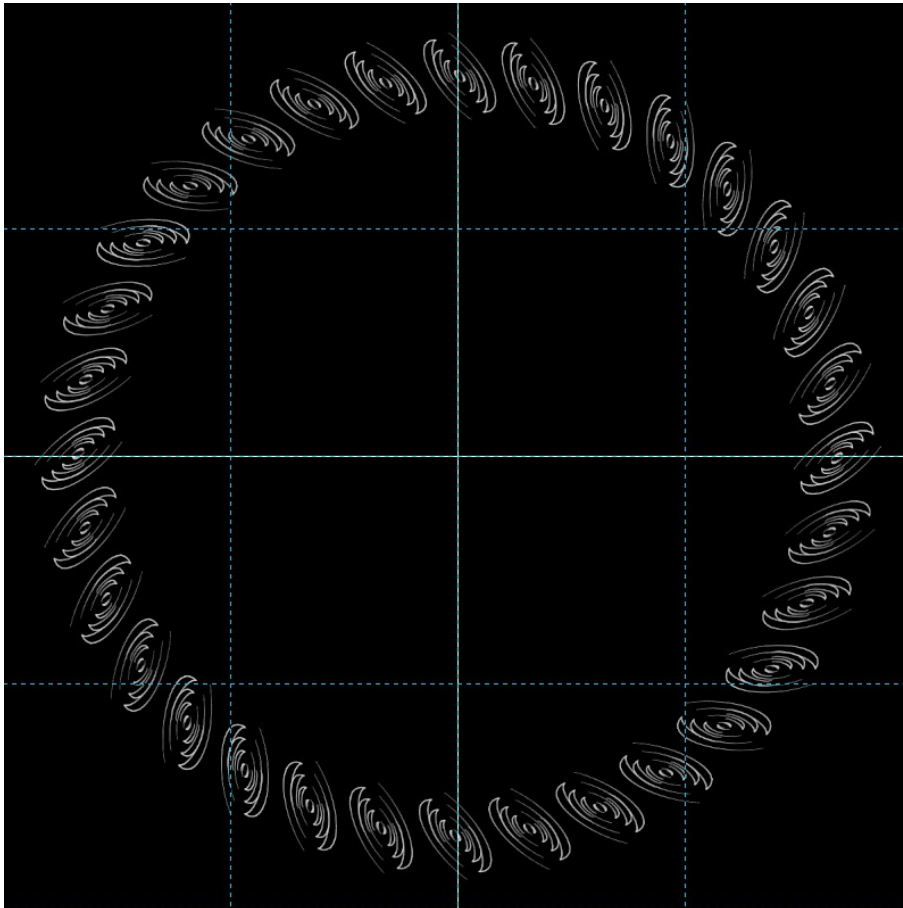


13. Next with the clipboard image brush selected, I applied these parameters

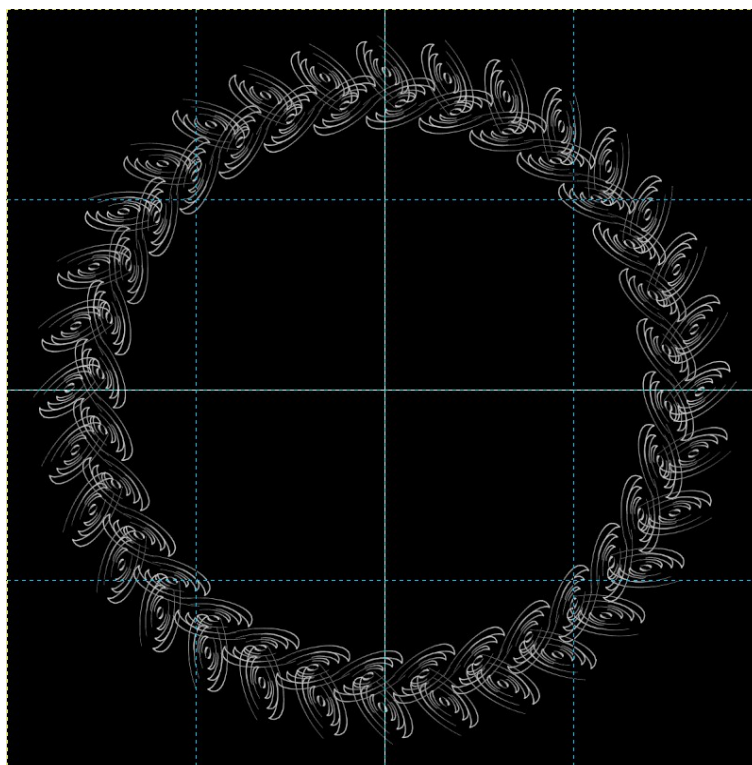


14. Now, with a new transparent layer active, I moved the clipboard brush across the canvas (note it changes direction continually because of that second highlighted parameter above). Then I positioned the brush near the **top centre of the canvas and clicked**, to obtain this first component of the mandala, generated by the [Symmetry Painting](#) function with 32 automatic replications

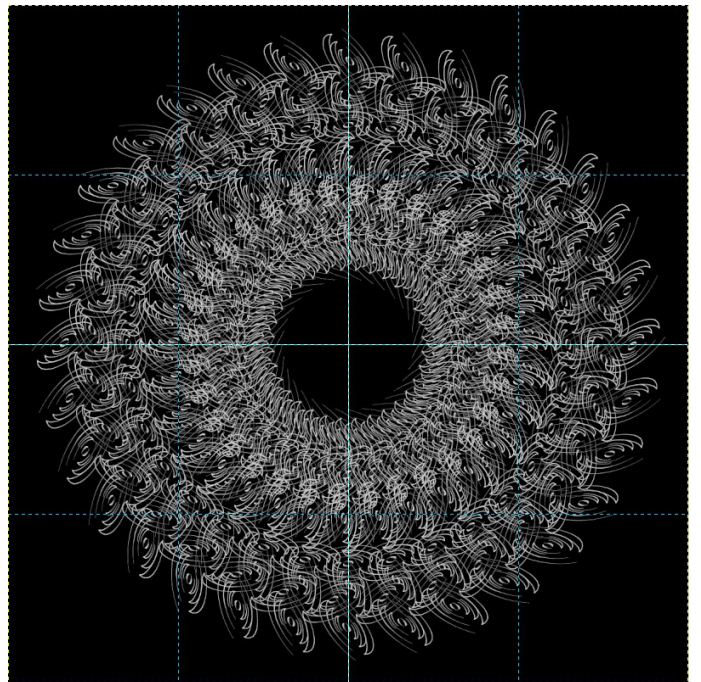
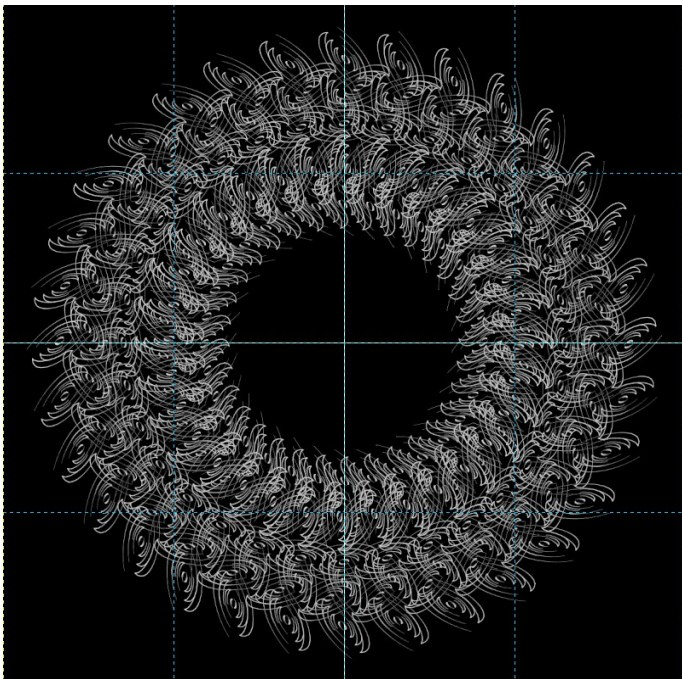
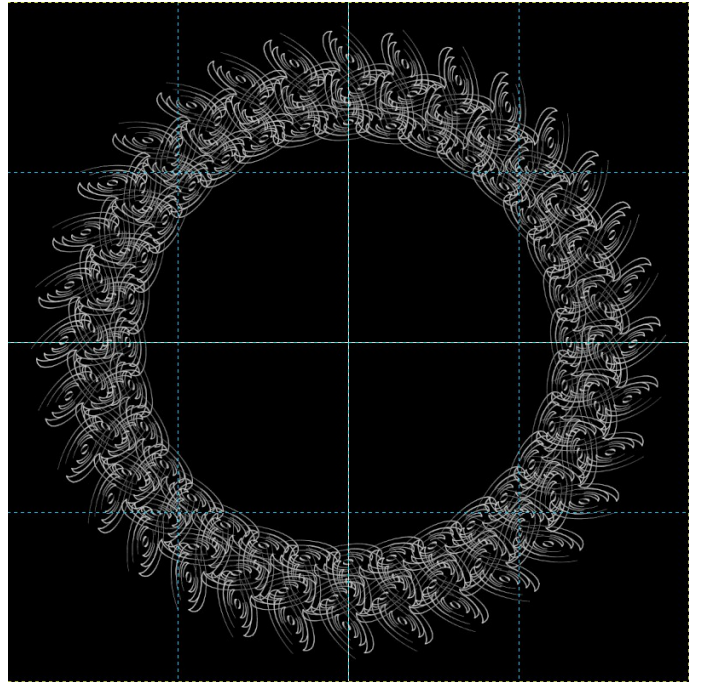
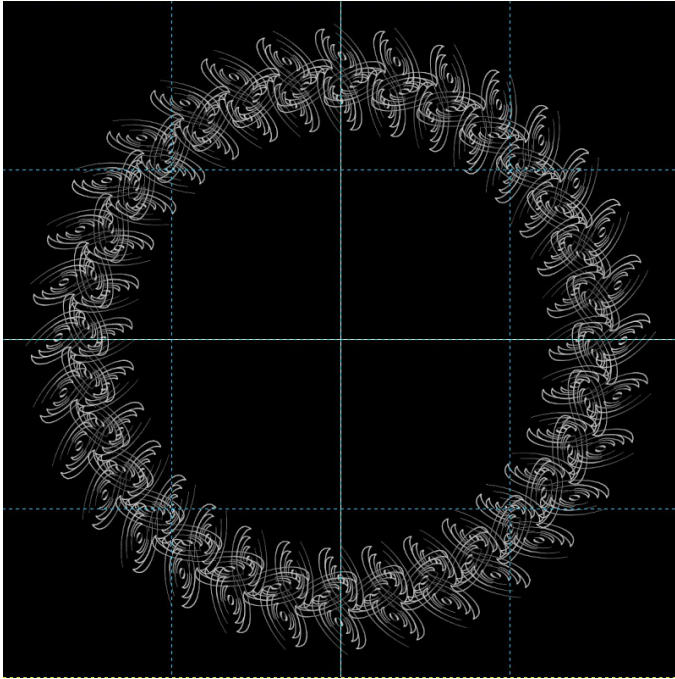
## Create a 'clipboard' brush and then a quick mandala using Symmetry Painting



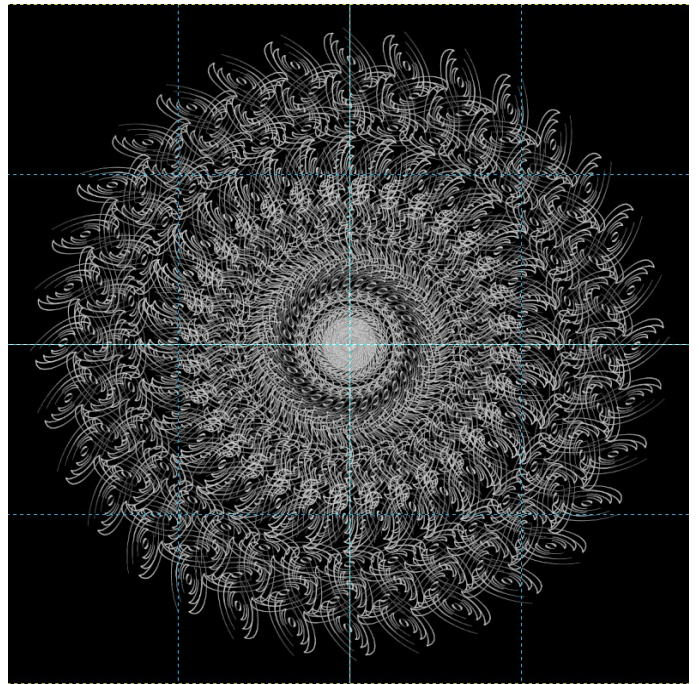
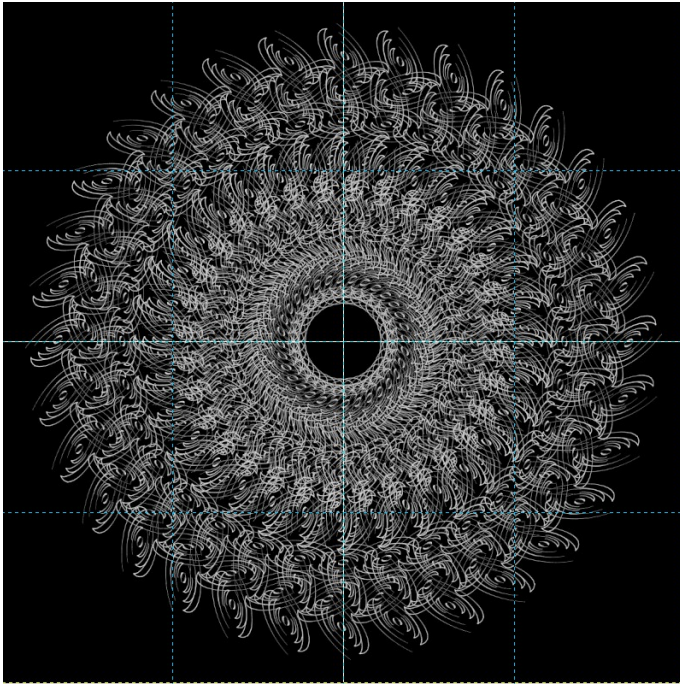
15. Now for seven more iterations I created a new transparent layer, placed the brush just below the layer created in step 14 and also just to one side of the white centre vertical guide, thereby changing the orientation of the brush and clicked. I also varied the distance from previous brush location slightly each time, progressively moving towards the canvas centre. The following sequence of images show the progressive build of the mandala from these actions.



Create a 'clipboard' brush and then a quick mandala using Symmetry Painting



## Create a 'clipboard' brush and then a quick mandala using Symmetry Painting



You will see that this final mandala image is not exactly the same as the image on the front cover, in which I left distinct gaps between each set of symmetry brush strokes.

However, hopefully, the above actions demonstrate what is possible and of course there are unlimited variations to try out, firstly in making the 'custom brush' you wish to use and then in designing the mandala style and content, with say different numbers of symmetry points in the one image.

As with everything in GIMP, experimentation and creative thinking are your credos

