Welcome

Welcome to symbol creation guide to **Character Artist 3** (CA3). CA3 is an add-on to ProFantasy's Campaign Cartographer 3 software (CC3) and enables you create attractive full-length portraits of the characters and humanoid monsters in your game.

Introduction

While CA3 already contains thousands of symbols, there can never be enough to satisfy all the myriad needs of role-playing game characters and the monsters they face.

While we at ProFantasy would like to publish more symbols for CA3, that takes time and can cover only so much. The solution is obvious, you could create your own symbols. But how to do that? CA3's bitmap symbols are highly artistic and their setup in the symbol catalogs fairly complex. This guide intends to help with that, by giving you a good look at how we at ProFantasy create the symbols for CA3.

Creating the Bitmaps

CA3 includes a set of naked full figure bitmaps as reference guides for new symbols. Navigate to your CC3 program folder and open the directory /Symbols/CharacterArtist/CA3/BodyParts/temp/.

You will find PNG files for all different body types: normal, strong, thin and dwarves. Thin is used for elves, strong for half-orcs and the normal body type for halflings.

Editing

We now need a bitmap editor program software to create our symbol source. We here use Photoshop®, but you can use any software that allows editing

CHARACTER ARTIST 3

CA3 Essentials Guide

If you are new to Character Artist 3 we highly recommend you work through the CA3 Essentials guide first before creating your own symbols. It is available in the Documentation folder of CC3.

and saving of png files with transparency and – ideally – allows you to work on multiple layers.

Open up the body figure you want to create a symbol for in your editing software. I'll be assuming Photoshop CS6® from here on.

Now comes the difficult part: creating the new artwork. If you are not comfortable with drawing yourself, this can be difficult, but you can always use one of existing CA3 bitmaps as a guide or just modify one a bit. FOr this guide I'm using a simple drawing of a gun that I created myself.

Draw or insert the artwork you want to make into a CA3 symbol on a new layer.

Then move, scale and/or rotate the artwork in such a position that it fits the body figure.

Now we need to remove the parts of the weapon that would be covered by the hand. This step is only necessary for hand-held items, but since this will come up fairly often, I've included it here.

On the body's layer, select the transparent area then invert the selection; this results in the full body being selected. Remove any part of the selected area that doesn't belong to the hand (e.g. the leg in this example). Then delete the selection on the symbol's layer. See the result in the example symbol to the left.

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Copy the layer with the new artwork to the clipboard (ctrl-c), then create a new image and paste the clipboard into it (ctrl-v).

Save the new image as a PNG file under a new folder. I recommend creating your own folder "MyOwnSymbols" or similar under the CC3/Symbols/CharacterArtist/CA3/ folder. That way it is easy to find and can be re-used in other CC3 installations, irrespective of the absolute path.

Varicolor Symbols

You will have noticed that many CA3 symbols contain varicolor areas, even though they are bitmap symbols. To create your own varicolor version, we need to create two new PNG files.

Select the area of your PNG artwork that you want to be varicolor. It's often easiest to use the magic wand selector in Photoshop® to do this, as it can select by color range. Make sure you don't select the black outline of the artwork, if you do the resulting varicolor symbol will have a slightly colored outline, which won't match the rest of the artwork very well.

When you are satisfied with the selection, reduce it to grayscale. Save this version of the PNG file with the same name as the original, just append a vari_01 to the name. For example ColtPeacemaker.png should become ColtPeacemaker vari_01.png.

Now invert the selection and delete it. This will leave only your varicolor area. Apply a 50% transparency to the drawing's layer, then save again, this time with vari_02 at the end of the filename. Again make sure, your bitmap editor preserves the transparency, also don't crop the vari_02 version of the file; it should have

the same dimensions as the vari_01 copy.

You should now have the following three files in your custom folder:

- ColtPeacemaker.png
- ColtPeacemaker vari_01.png
- ColtPeacemaker vari_02.png

Now it's time to switch to CC3 and create our new symbols from the bitmaps.

Importing the Symbols

Open CC3, click Open, choose the file type CC2/CC3 FSC symbol Catalog, and look at the symbol catalogs for CA3 under CC3/Symbols/CharacterArtist/CA3/BodyParts/.

For each racial and body type you'll see a list of 12 catalogs, one each for Head, Torso, Legs, Monsters, Other, 2 Arms, and three for right and left arms. Open the one that corresponds to the figure you used to create the new symbol. For example, I created the Colt Peacemaker for the normal human male figure, placed in the right arm 1 position. The matching catalog is HumanMaleArmsR1. FSC.
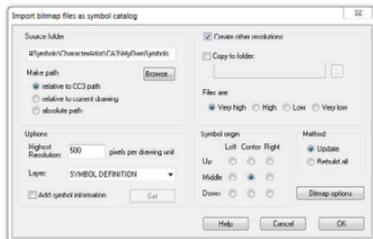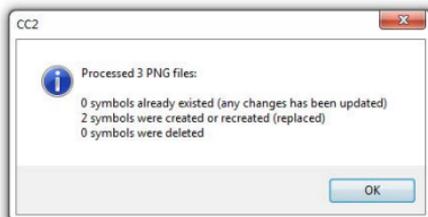
You'll see a blank figure for the normal human male body type, with the right arm highlighted.

From the menu choose Symbols > Import PNGs... to bring the Import bitmap dialog up as seen on the left.

Browse to your MyOwnSymbols catalog with the freshly created PNGs. Set the **Highest Resolution** to 500 pixel per drawing unit. Check "**create other resolutions**" and set the **Symbol Origin** to **Middle/Center**.

Now click **OK** to import the bitmaps. When CC3 is finished it will notify you with a pop-up window, telling you how many PNG files were processed and how many symbols were created.

CC2

Processed 3 PNG files:

0 symbols already existed (any changes has been updated)
2 symbols were created or recreated (replaced)
0 symbols were deleted

OK

Symbols Options

The symbols are now in the catalog, but we do need to adjust them to properly work within CA3.

Open the **Symbol Manager** via the **Symbols** menu. Scroll all the way down to see your new symbols.

Select them both, click **Options** and set them to be a collection with numbers at the end. Also activate **Force Sheet** and set it to ARM RIGHT WEAPON*.

Close the options, select only the "vari" version of the symbol, open the Options again and mark it to be a varicolor symbol.

Now I recommend to rename the symbols to adhere to the CA3 naming convention. This is not strictly necessary, but will prevent problems if you create symbols for multiple body types and arm positions. The two example symbols would be renamed to

• HMR1 Colt Peacemaker 2 and
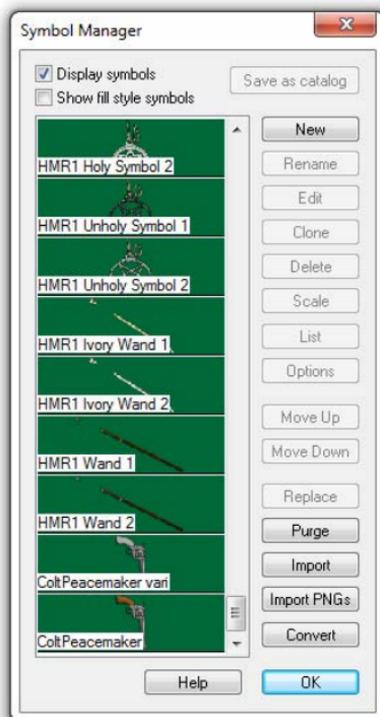
• HMR 1 Colt Peacemaker 1

respectively, and their position in the list switched.

Symbol Position

We are almost done, but if you place the symbol now, you will notice that it is not yet in the correct position on the body.

To correct this, choose **Symdefs to Sheets** from the **Symbols** menu. This will move each symbol definition to its own sheet for easy editing.

Open the **Sheets & Effects** dialog, scroll down all the way to the end and show only the sheets with the new symbols. You will see the new symbols smack in the middle of the human male figure.

Use the Move command to place it in the correct position on the right hand. Make sure you select all the entities for both symbols.

Now return all the symbol definitions to the normal state by choosing **Sheets to Symdefs** from the **Symbols** menu.

Save the catalog. Your new symbols are now available when you create a fresh human mal figure with the right arm position 1.