GIMP: Work environment. Open and save images

Approximate duration: 1 session

Objectives:

- •Get familiar with the GIMP framework.
- •Identify the main elements of the user interface.
- •Learn to customize the environment to our liking.
- •Locate the program's help system.
- •Manage images: open, close, save and export.

1.GIMP

GIMP(Gnu Image Manipulation Program: GNU Project Image Manipulation Program) is a full-featured professional application for image processing. It is mainly oriented to treat and manipulate images, allowing retouching, transforming and editing with endless possibilities. Although it is not specifically designed for drawing –for that it is advisable to use vector drawing programs such as Inkscape–, it allows many more possibilities than other simple editors such as KPaint.

Last but not least, it is an application licensed under the GPL (General Public License), which gives users several basic freedoms, including the possibility of making the copies of the program that we want/need.
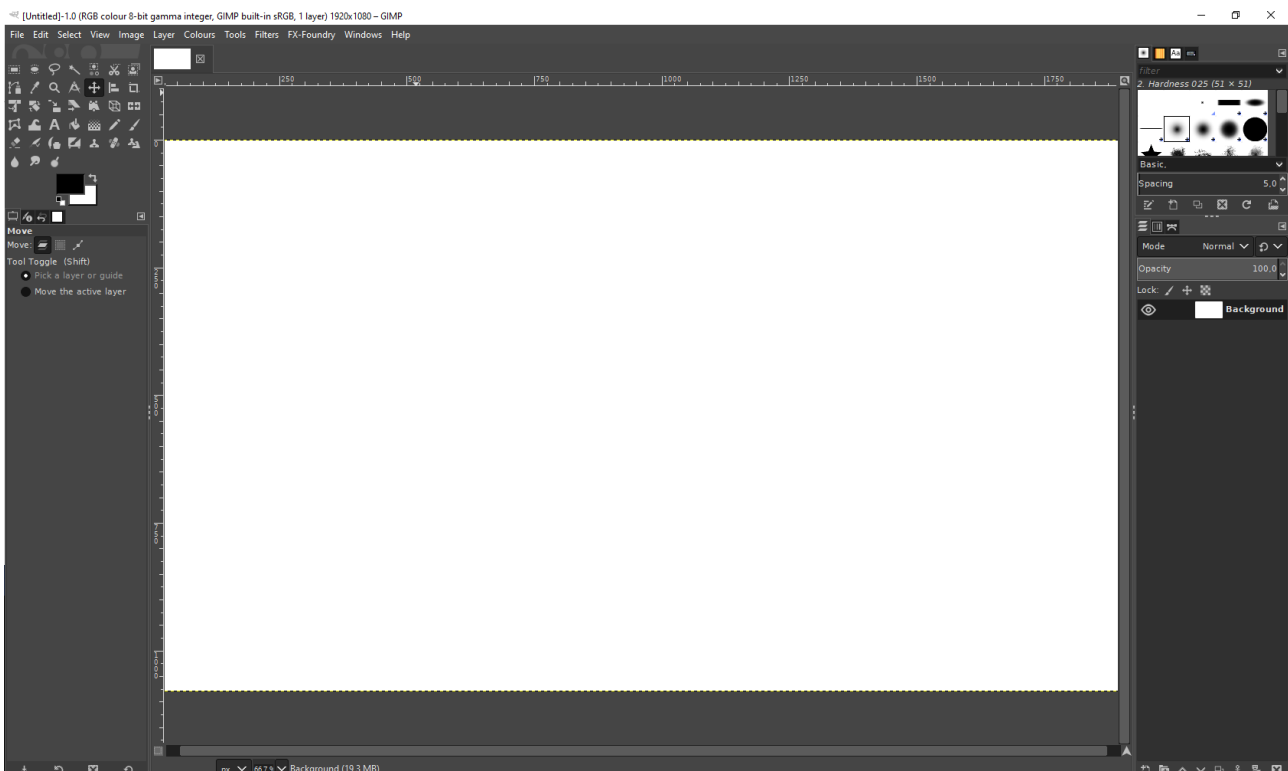
2. Work windows

Once GIMP is open we will see three windows. It's really a single window, the image window titled "GNU Image Manipulation Program" and two sorts of window-simulating panels called "Toolbox" and "Layers, Channels, Paths, Undo-Brushes, Patterns, Gradients.

2.1. Image window

This window shows the typical menu at the top with the program options, with the usual File, Edit...Help. This is where the image we are working with will be displayed.

2.2. Toolbox

In it we find the following elements (from top to bottom):

1. The selection, drawing and transformation tools.

2. The foreground and background colours. The foreground colour is the colour we paint with when using a painting tool. By default the colour black is selected. The background colour is the one that shows us the colour that the "paper" on which we are going to paint will have.

The double arrow in the form of an angle allows us to switch the background colour to the foreground colour and vice versa. If throughout a job, we have changed the background and foreground colours and we want to return to the initial ones (black on white) we only have to click on the "black on white" squares that we have in the lower left part.

3. At the bottom, the options of the chosen tool, which change each time we choose a different one. In the image we can see how the options of the airbrush tool appear, which is the one selected at the top, in the selection, drawing and transformation tools area.

2.3. Windows, Channels, Paths, Undo

This is the third window that appears when starting the program. They are one of the three key elements of the GIMP interface. These are special tools that GIMP offers us and that are grouped into what it calls Dialogues. They help us work with layers and offer a good number of additional utilities. The main dialogues are:

- **Layers dialogue.** With it we can create layers and modify all their properties.

- **Channels Dialogue.** Allows you to use the different channels and RGB colours.

- **History Dialogue.** If during the work we have made a mistake or, on the contrary, we regret a previous action, this dialogue will allow us to go back to correct or eliminate it.
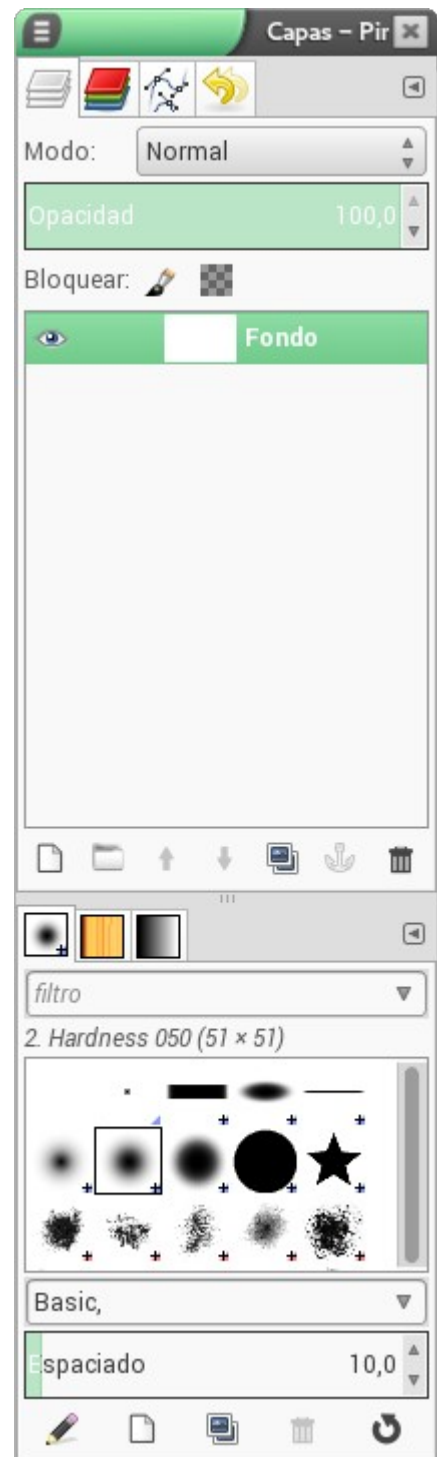
2.4. Export

This option allows you to save the image in different digital formats, which are different from GIMP's own. The saved image can be viewed directly from the operating system's file explorer, since these formats do not require any additional program to be viewed. Soon we will see the different types of images and their use.

Practical example (just for reference, you don't have to do it)

We select **File → Export as** and the window shown below will appear