Sticker Sequences for natural brush effects
by Juz

Prerequisites: AR3 Studio Pro
You will need to be familiar with the basics of sticker creation. The best resource you have for learning about stickers is your AR3 Studio Pro manual.
If you're too lazy to read the manual, AR3 Studio Pro user Judith_Tramayne has created a video tutorial which will outline some of the basics involved in creating stickers available here:-
http://www2.ambientdesign.com/forums...ad.php?t=24794

Sticker Sequences for natural brush effects

One problem of using a singular sticker as a sticker spray is that even when using the Spray Variation parameters to vary it (e.g. rotate, scale and colour), after a while it starts to appear monotonous. One stamp, which is repeating over and over with only slight variation. Our eyes are not fooled and the resulting image starts to look computer generated.

To create a far more natural look to the sticker spray brush, it is preferable to make a sequence of images and have the sticker spray brush reference that sequence.
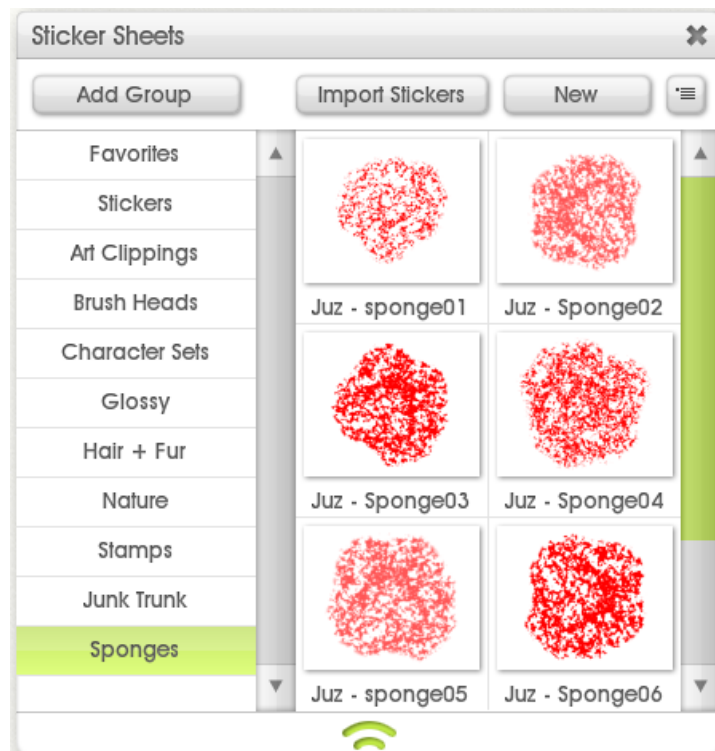
In the image below I have six separate sponge stickers that I want to combine into a sequence sticker spray. These images can be anything you want just make sure that they are of similar width and height.
I have provided these files for download if you would like to follow along by trying it out:-
http://www2.ambientdesign.com/forums/showthread.php?t=25364

Instructions for installing downloaded .stk files can be found here:-
http://www2.ambientdesign.com/forums...4&postcount=17

SETTING UP STICKERS ON A GRID:-

A sticker sequence is simply a series of stickers that wraps and repeats.
Eg.' First sticker, second sticker, third sticker….. Nth sticker' (the Nth value is the total number of stickers in your sequence), then repeats, back to First sticker again and on and on.
We need to keep this return from the last sticker to the first in mind when setting up our sticker grid as it becomes an important factor in how our stickers are spaced from each other.

Your sticker grid can be any number of rows and columns which will be determined by how many stickers you want in your total sequence.
If I have 3 stickers for a sequence then my grid will be 1 row with 3 columns. (technically it could also be 3 rows and 1 column but our monitors have a horizontal emphasis so working with more width than height is better)
If I have 9 stickers for a sequence then my grid will consist of 3 rows and 3 columns.
In the example we are working with there are 6 stickers so we will be making a grid that has 2 rows and 3 columns (horizontal emphasis)
We will also need to allow for spacing between the stickers as they cannot be touching each other.
There are many software packages that contain grids that can make this process more precise but for our purposes we are going to do it simply and more importantly quickly in AR3 Studio Pro, using the ruler as the width of the spacing.

Place your first sticker (Juz - Sponge01) on the canvas toward the top left, leave some space above and left (see first image below)
From the stencils dialog, choose the rulers section and grab a ruler.
Grab the green end of the ruler, hold shift and rotate it until it runs vertically.
Align the ruler with the right side of the art in the sticker as in the following image.
Right-click(windows) ctrl-click(Mac) on the placed sticker and choose 'Sticker Shadow'. Set the radius and opacity to 0%. Click OK (image two)
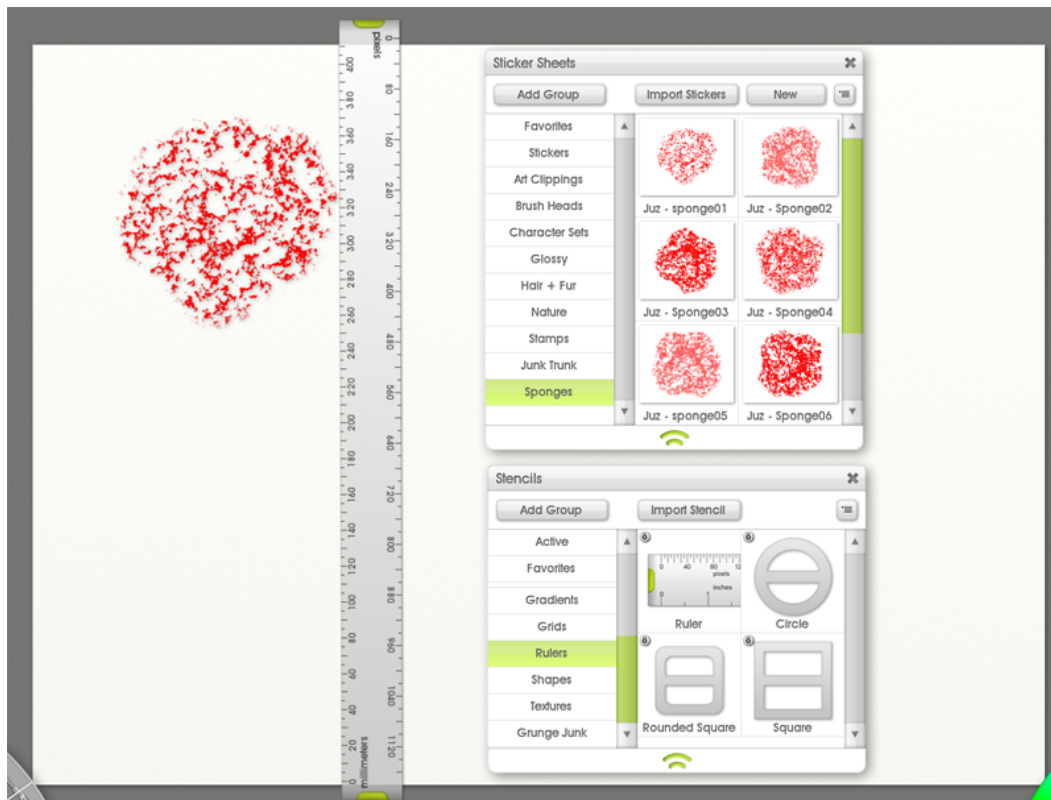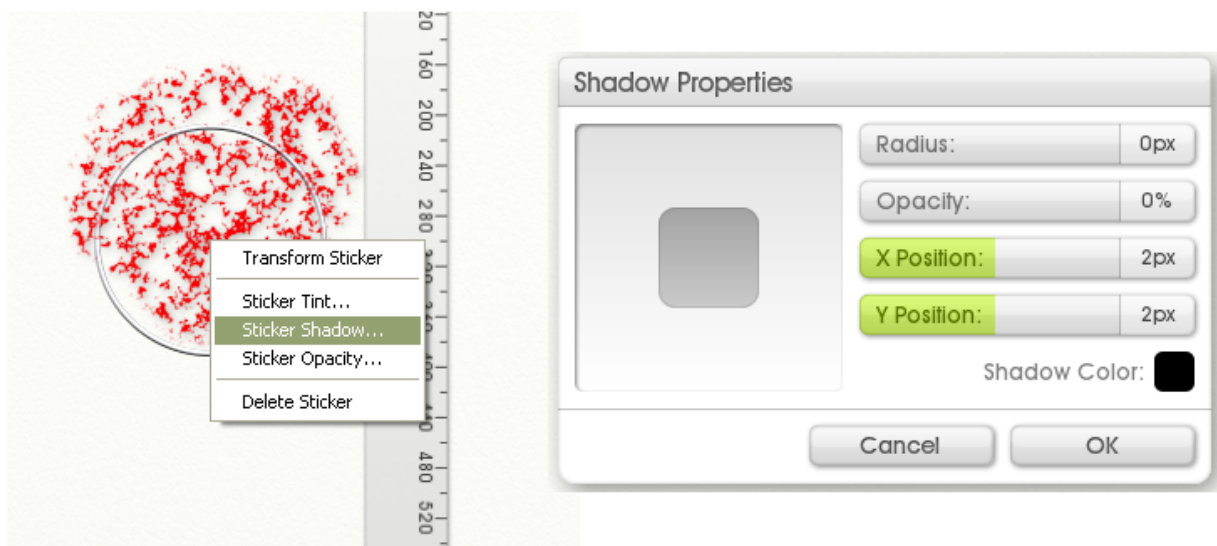
Leaving the placed ruler where it is, grab a second ruler from the stencils dialog and line it horizontally with the bottom of the artwork in the sticker. Hold shift and extend it to the lengths of your canvas.
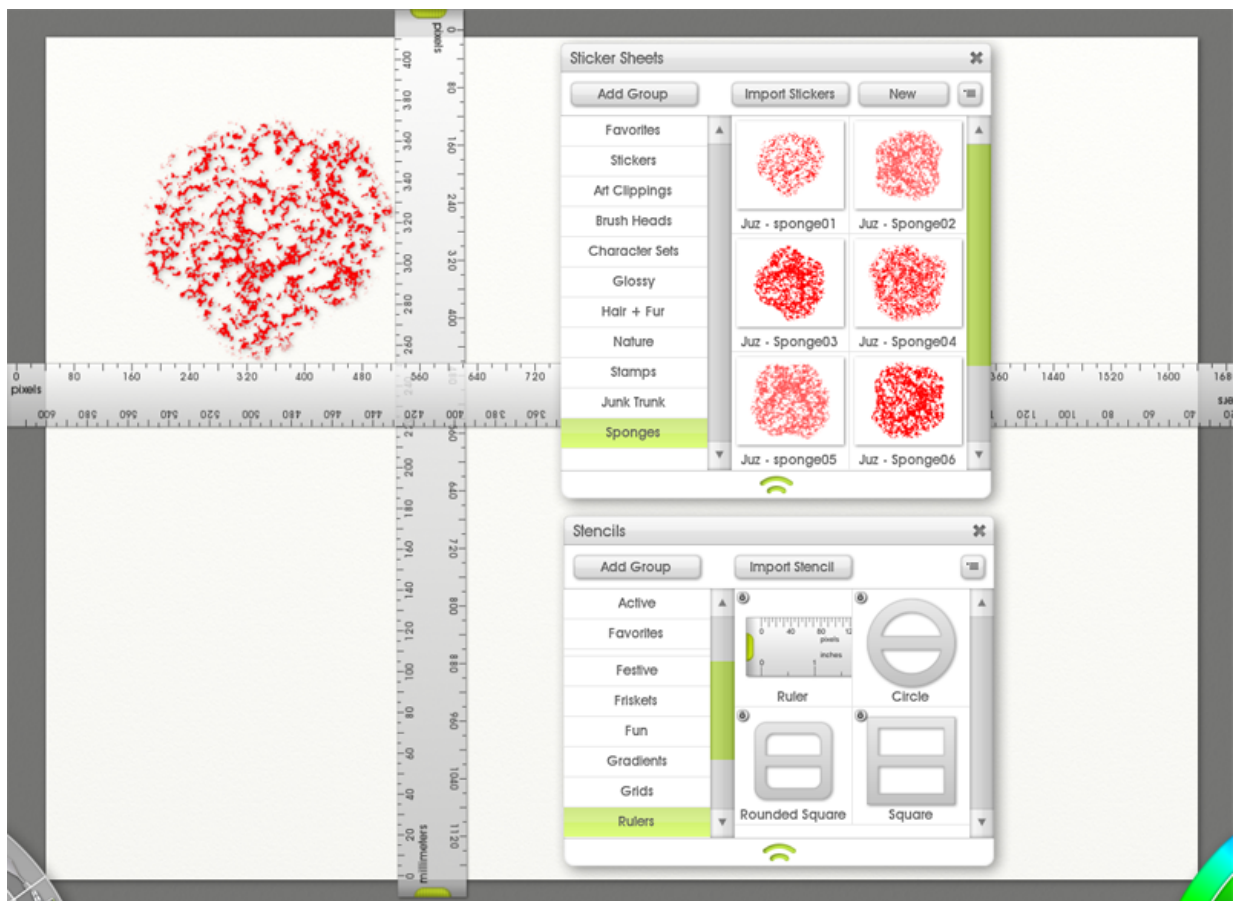
Place your second sticker (Juz - Sponge02) so that the artwork aligns left and bottom with the two rulers as in the following image.
Click outside the transformation gizmo to deselect it.
Right-click(win) or ctrl-click(Mac) on the placed sticker and choose 'Sticker Shadow'. Set the radius and opacity to 0%.
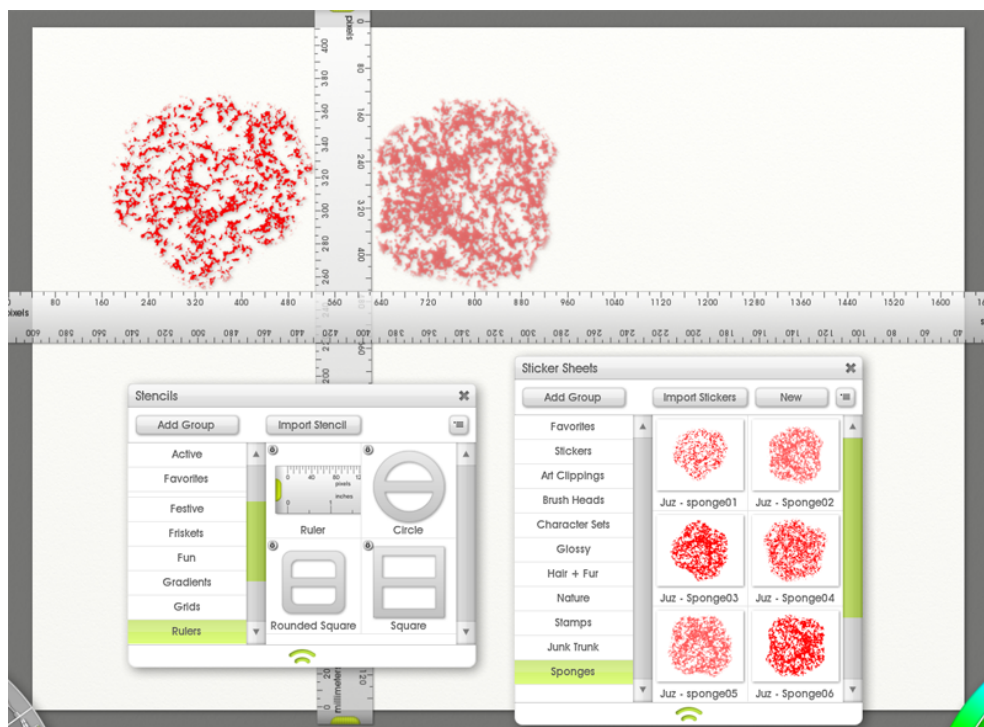

We now have the spacing alignment in place to be able to place Sticker 4 (Juz - Sponge04) and sticker 5 (Juz - Sponge05)
Be sure to select the sticker shadow settings for each sticker and set the radius and opacity to 0%.
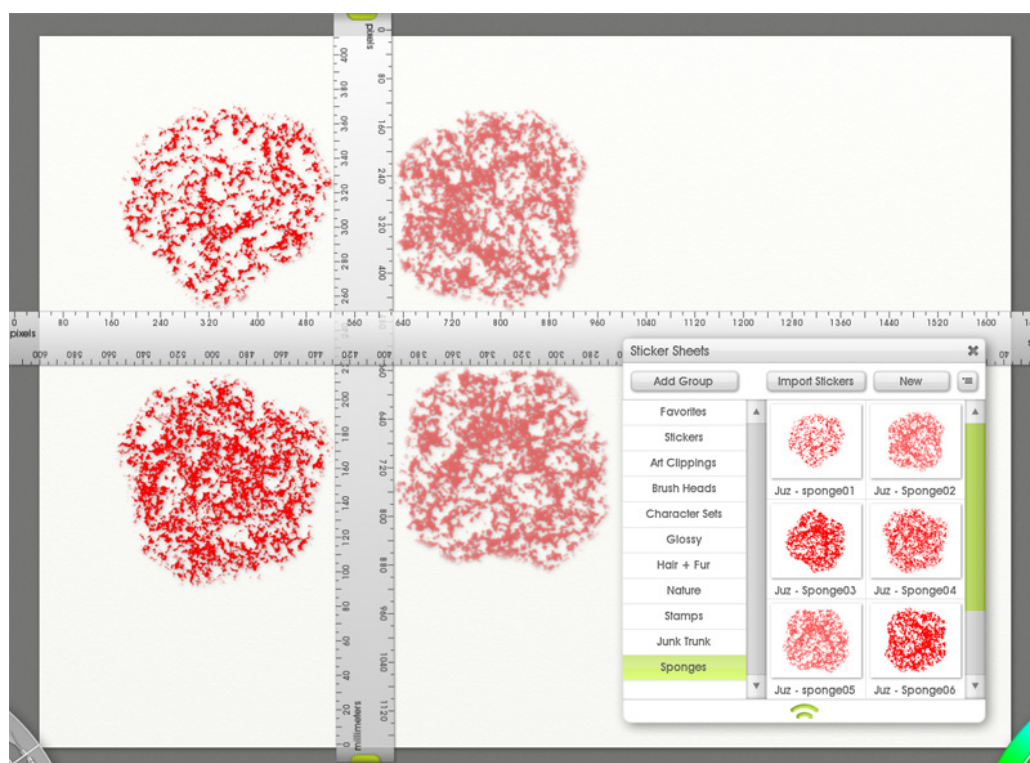
Now we can grab a new ruler and line it up with the right hand side of the artwork in stickers 2 and 4 (second column). Use shift as you rotate the ruler to vertical so that it constrains to a perfect angle.
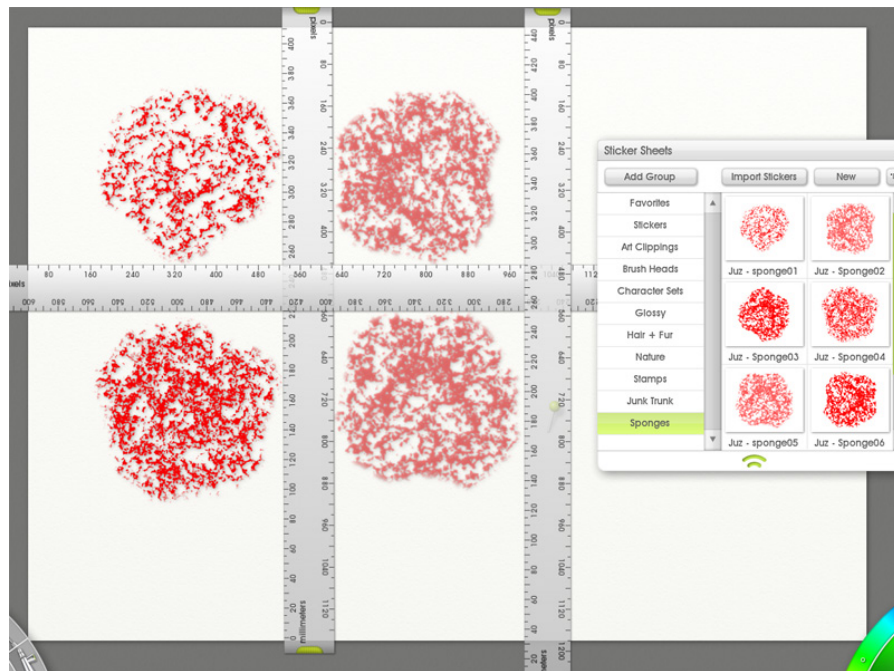

Notice that our sticker 2 isn't quite as wide as sticker 4. We can centre it easily.
As layers stack from the bottom of our layers palette one on top of the other, we will need to select the second sticker layer up from the bottom of the canvas. This is the second sticker we placed. Click this layer to select it.
Grab the Transform tool from the palette and click the 2nd sticker in the first row to highlight its transform box. (see image below)
Use the Right-Arrow key on your keyboard to move the sticker one pixel at a time to the right, or use Shift with the Right-Arrow key to move the sticker 10 pixels at a time to the right. Centre the sticker in the space between the two vertical rulers
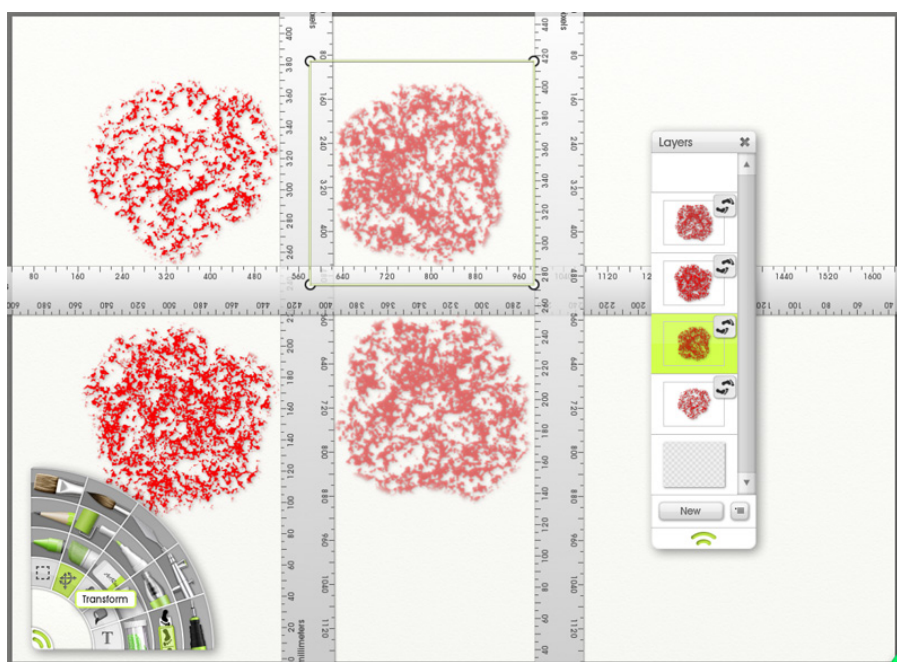
We can now go ahead and place our final 2 stickers (Juz-Sponge03 and Juz-Sponge06). Once again you will need to select the 'Sticker Shadow' from the menu when you right-click(win) /ctrl-click (Mac) on the sticker and set the radius and opacity to 0%.
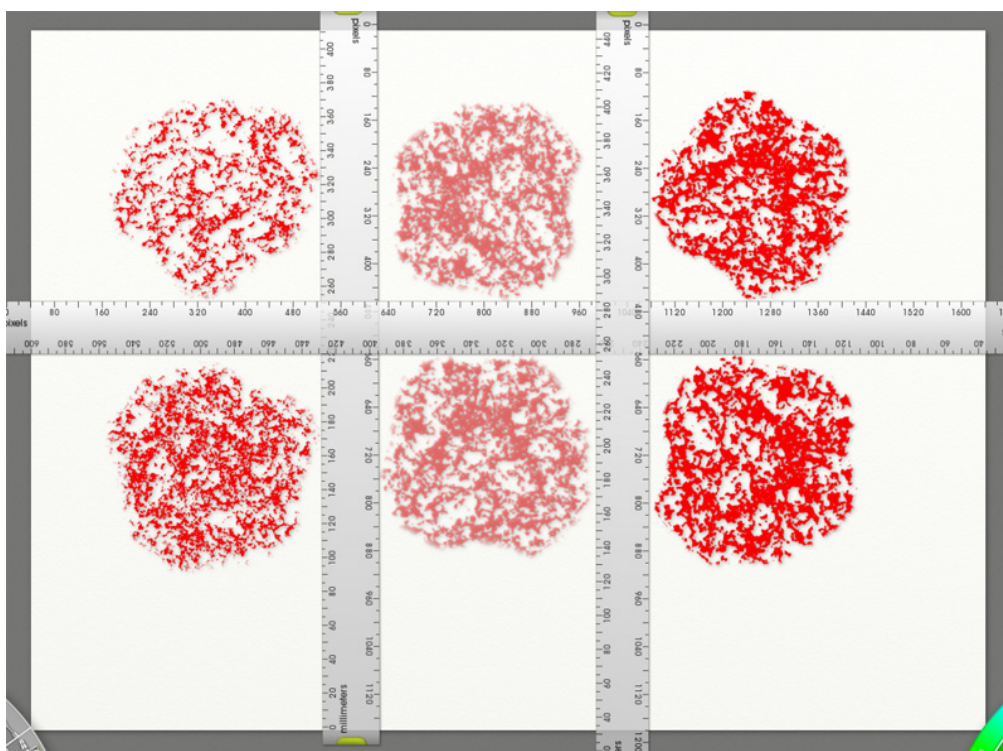

Now that all our stickers are placed we can go ahead and merge them all into one single layer. Choose the top layer in the stack, right click and select 'Merge Layer Down'. Continue to do this until all 6 stickers are in a single layer.
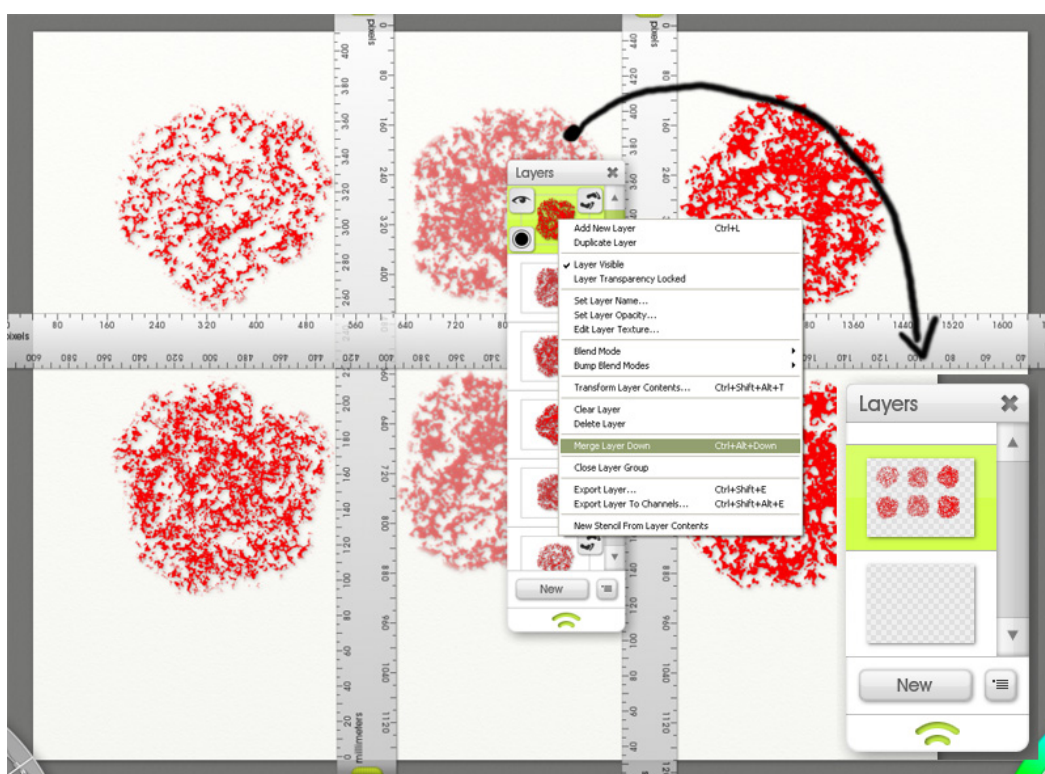
When we create our spacing for the far left and for the far right we need to keep in mind that stickers wrap around in order to repeat. A good way to think of this is if I took a flat sheet of stickers and wrapped them around a cylinder.

We therefore need to make the spacing on the far left and far right a half ruler measurement. One half ruler on the left and one half ruler on the right will result in a single ruler width between our beginning and our ending stickers.
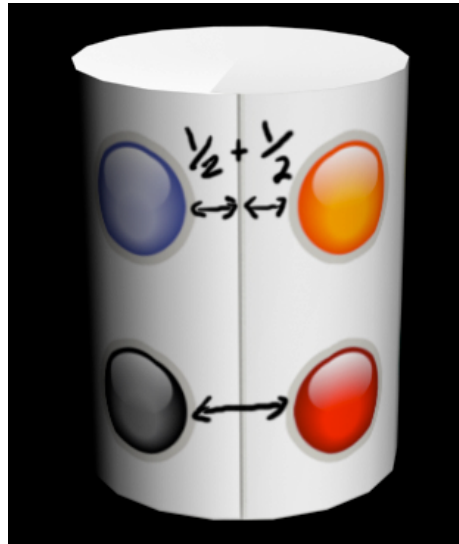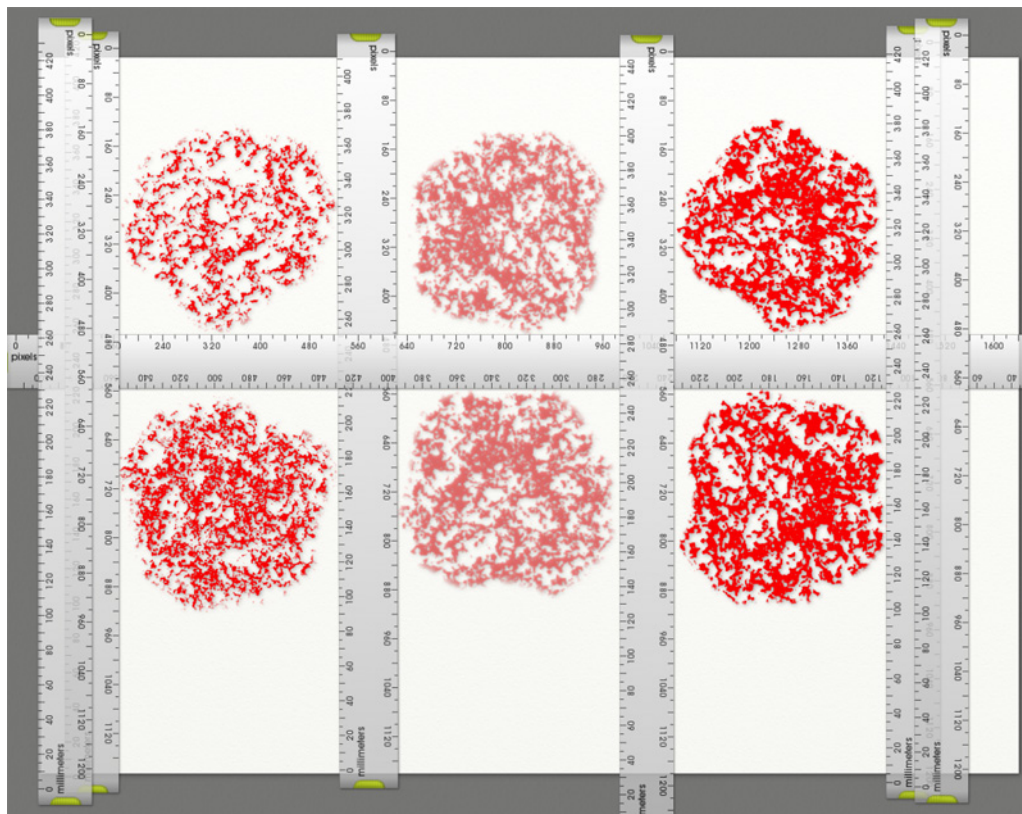

To do this we are going to continue to be lazy (not measure) and place out rulers.
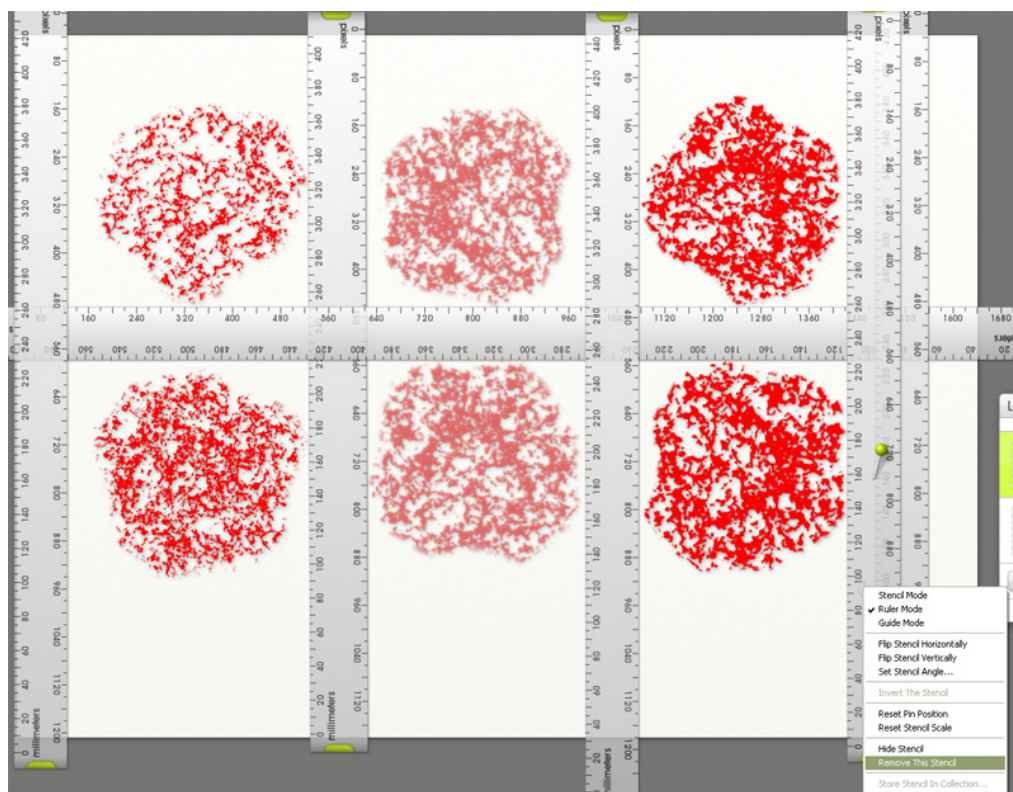Align a vertical ruler to the left side of the 1st column.
Align a vertical ruler to the right side of the 3rd column.
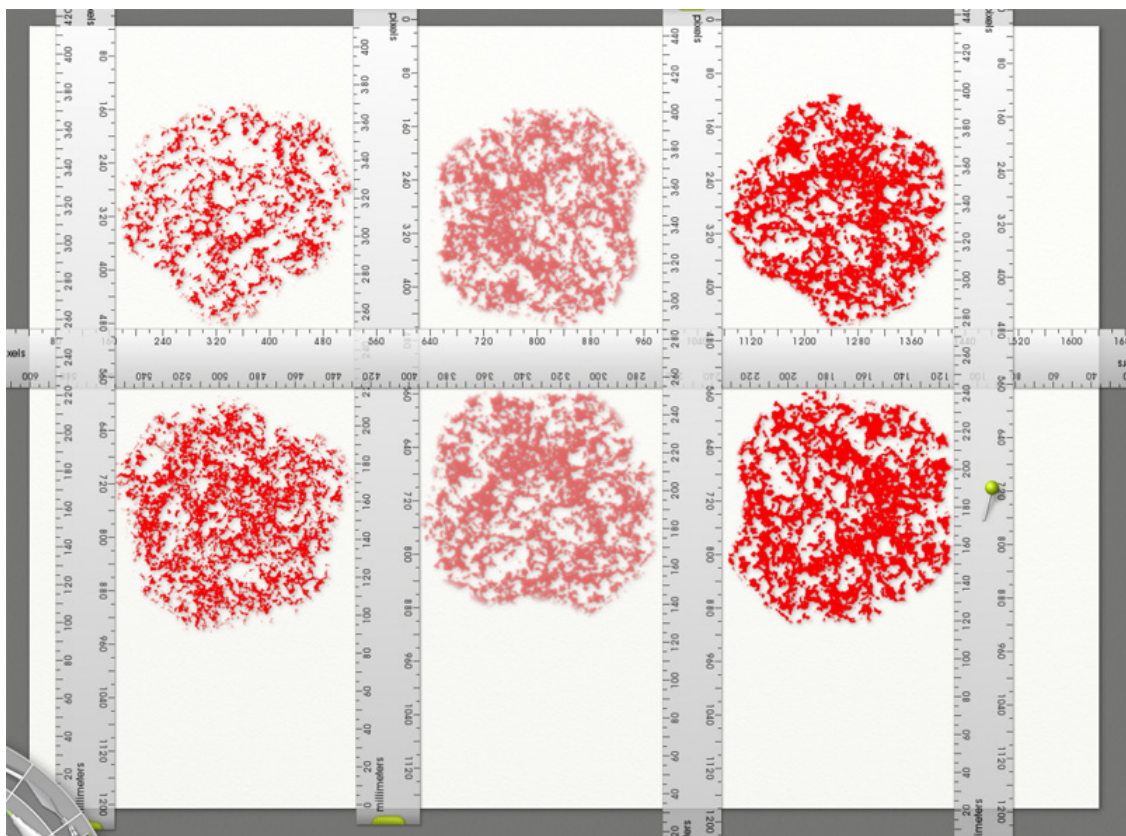
Grab two more rulers and overlay them so that they intersect the middle of the green grabber ends of the two rulers you just placed (see image)

Right-click and Remove the two inner rulers closer to the stickers

We are now left with a half ruler gap between the outer rulers and the sticker columns and are ready to crop our sticker sheet.

Because the sequence does not run vertically we do not need to measure for the top and bottom of the rows, we can just eyeball some breathing space here.

Grab the selection tool from the tool palette and make sure that your settings for it are set to rectangle.

Line up your cursor with the inner edge of the far left ruler and drag to the inner edge of the far right ruler. Allow your selection to have a little bit of room at the top and bottom of the sticker rows. (see image)
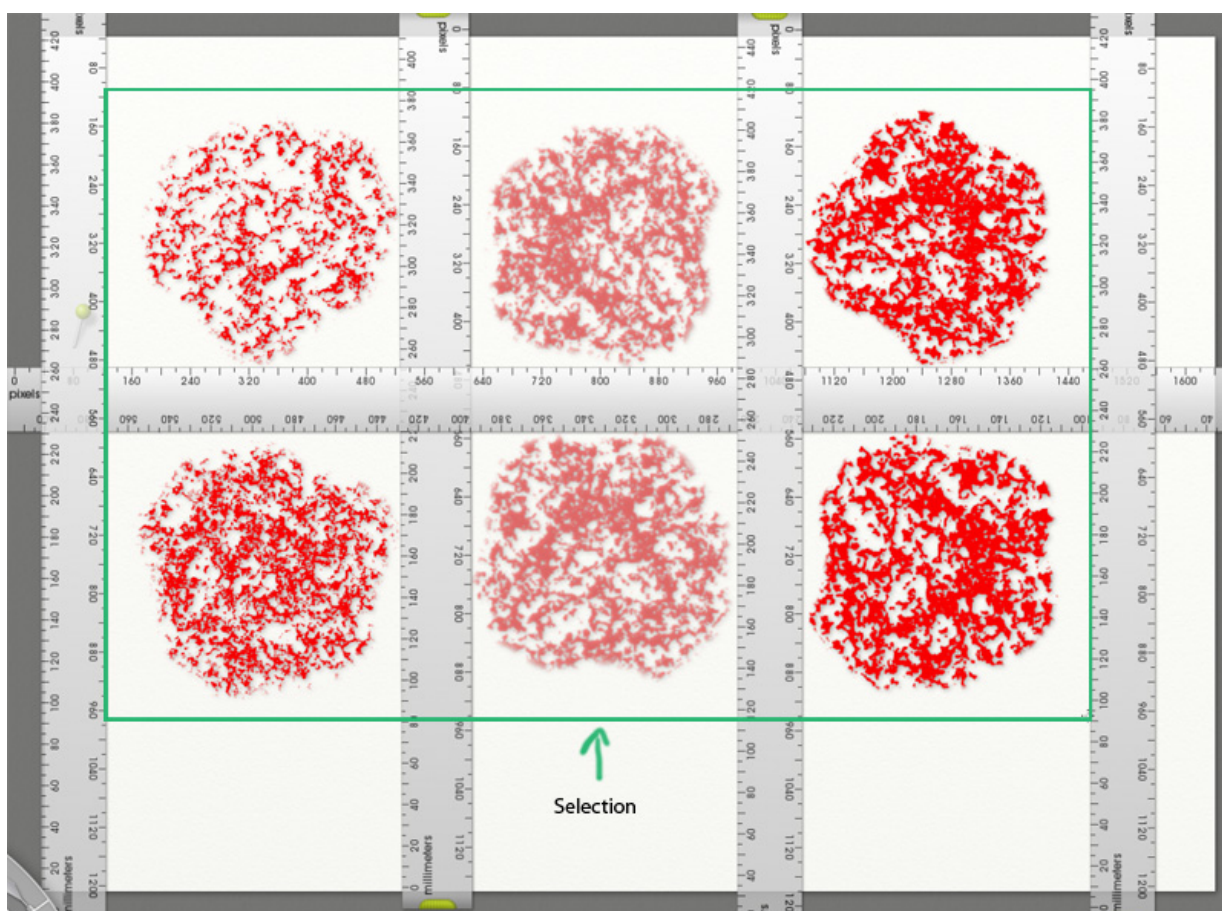
From the Edit menu select 'Crop to Selection'.

In the layer palette right-click the layer with all 6 stickers and choose 'Export Layer'

Save the file as a .png (eg. Multisponge.png)

We are now ready to import and setup our sticker sequence in the sticker palette.

Click open the sticker panel if you don't have it open already and hit the 'New' button.

Under lower layer, click the open cell area under Colour (you can also click the '...' in the circle next to colour), choose your Multisponge.png file

Set the columns to 3 and the rows to 2. Notice the grid appear on the left hand image as you do this. This is why our spacing was important.

Name the new sticker sequence at the top and click OK.
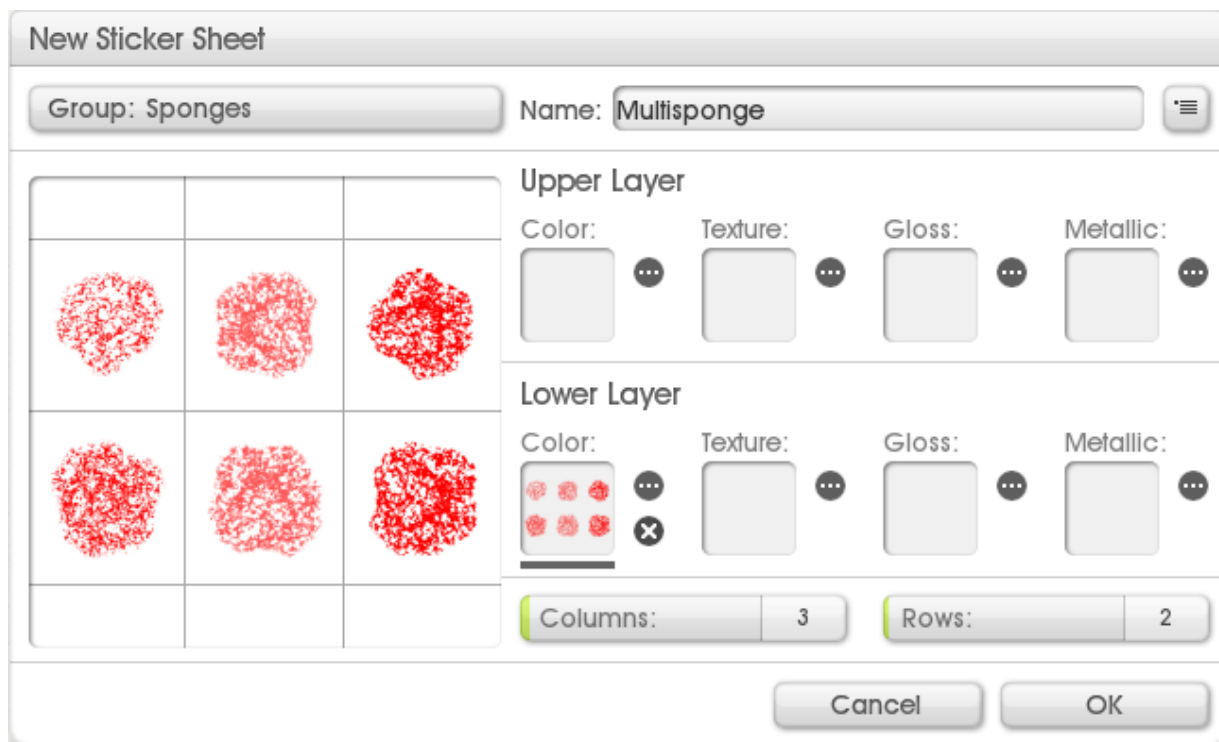
From the file menu open a new file. You do not have to save your current canvas as we've already exported out the .png file that we needed.

Choose the sticker spray tool.

Open the settings panel

Click the sheet button and set it to the Multisponge sticker sheet you just created.

Turn Shadow off.

Click the variations panel and from the menu choose 'Setup for object spray'

Clear the 'Offset' value

Set the 'Rotation' value that is there already to 100

Set the scale value that is already there to 100

Choose a colour from the colour palette

Paint your canvas.