

21D

# MASTERING DIGITAL DRAWING



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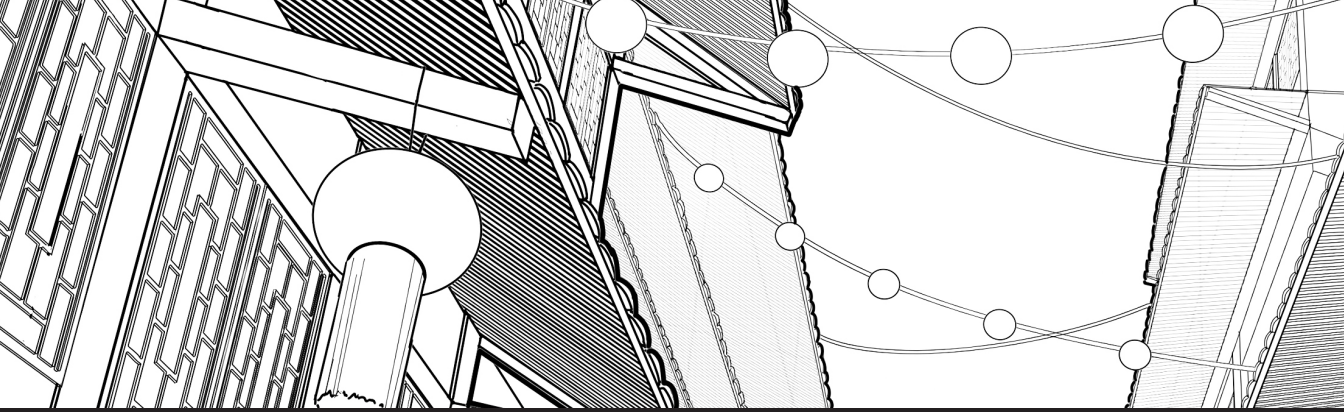


# MASTERING DIGITAL DRAWING

LEARN FROM THE PROS

2Ddraw





# 21Draw

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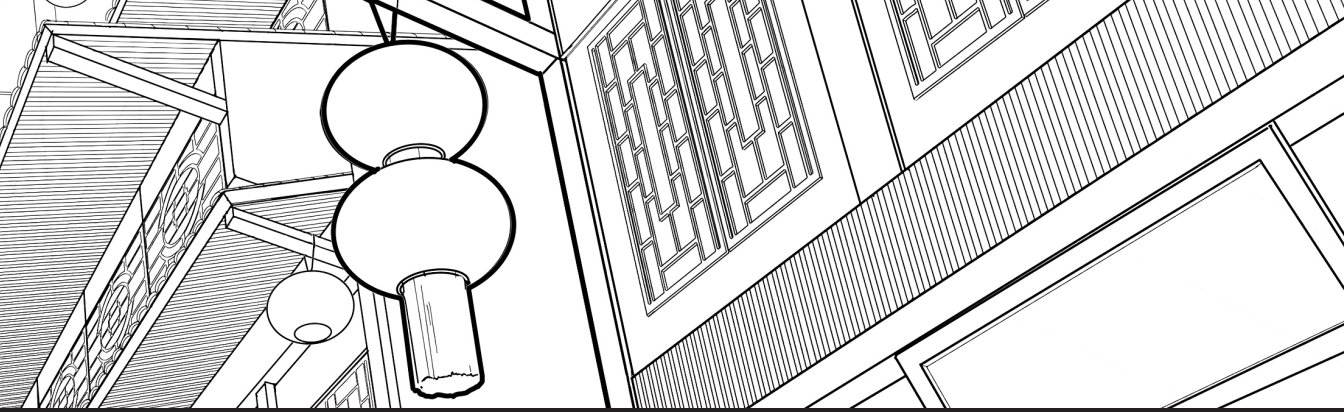
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**For beginners, students, and masters**

# THANK YOU

## TO OUR SUPPORTERS:

*A HUGE thank you to all the incredible Kickstarter backers who have funded us over the years! This book would not exist if it wasn't for you. Thank you so much for your support, input, and patience.*

## TO ALL THE ARTISTS:

Frank Calicó  
Andrea Cofrancesco  
Ginevra Grigolo  
Simone Grünewald  
Linnea Kikuchi  
Erika Wiseman  
Xiaofan Zhang

*Thank you all so much for contributing to this book! It would not have happened without your support and your help in spreading the word. It was a pleasure to work with you all.*

## INTRODUCTION

**T**hank you for purchasing 21 Draw's *Mastering Digital Drawing!* This adds another book to our growing library, which includes the hugely popular *Illustrator's Guidebook* series. As with our other books, the chapters in this volume were created along with a set of video courses. You will have the option to check out the videos too.

You'll gain insight into the digital techniques of some of the most popular illustrators and animators working in the industry today. They will show you their unique methods for creating awesome images and how to go about achieving your own artistic goals, no matter if you are a budding artist or a seasoned pro!

We have worked diligently to condense the artists' long years of training and professional experiences into this new volume featuring digital designers. In *Mastering Digital Drawing*, you'll get to compare the artistry and insights of seven top industry artists from companies like Disney, Marvel, Columbia Records, Scholastic, and more.

You'll also learn how they approach concepts from basics of digital software and hardware, color techniques, fantasy and horror character creation, to scene design, and loads more.



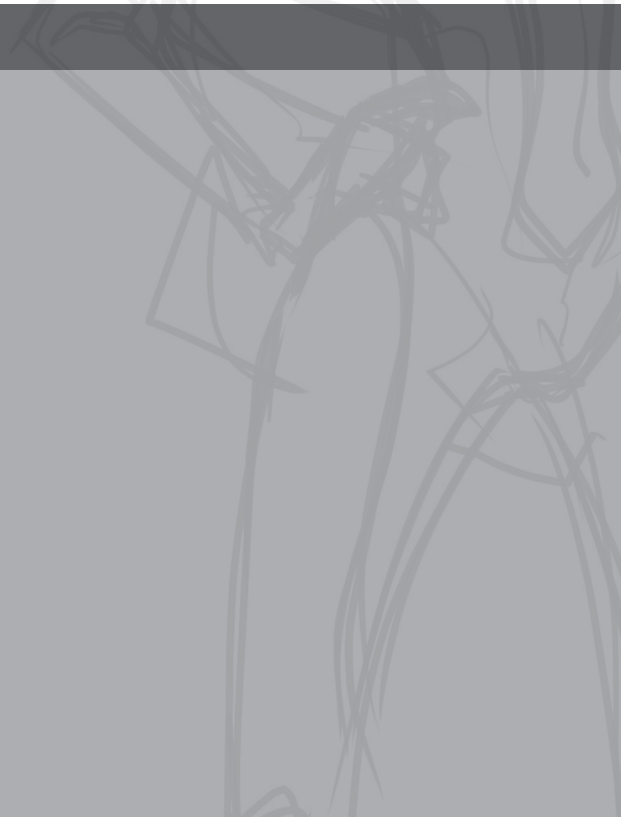
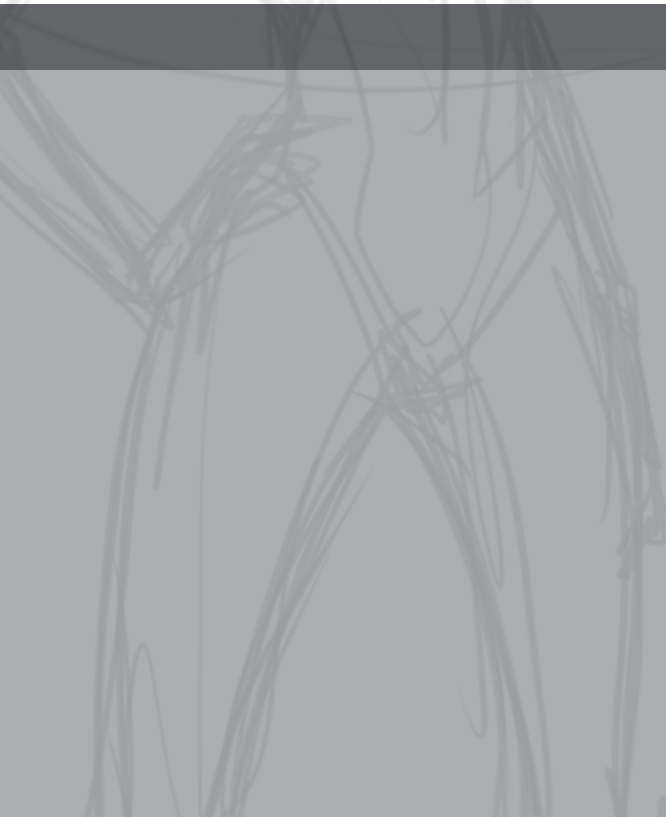
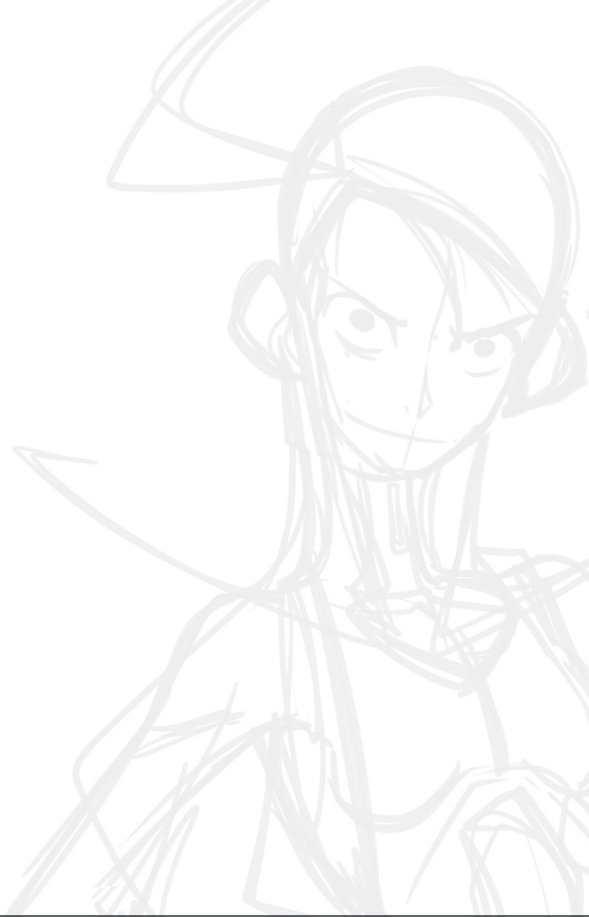
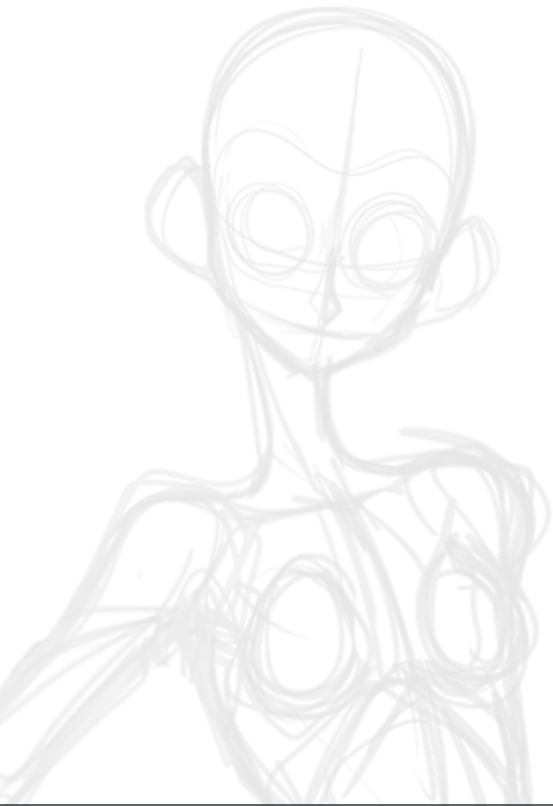
## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**F**eel free to read the book from start to finish in its entirety or just randomly browse its pages to check out some amazing artwork. Alternatively, you can look up the specific artistic areas you are interested in exploring in the contents section. If you're interested in learning more about a particular artist, you can skip directly to his/her pages or biography.

A corresponding video course was created along with each book chapter. At the end of each chapter, you will see that there is a QR Code. To check out the corresponding video course, open the camera on your phone and scan the QR Code. This code will take you to our website where you can watch the art course. Please note that you will have to subscribe to watch the course. If you already have an active subscription, then you can watch all the courses without extra cost.

It's important to note that there was a sincere effort to keep the artists' own words and actions as close as possible to what they submitted. This is important as it allows you to get an understanding of the exact process each artist goes through when completing an image from start to finish. Some artists use roughs, proportion lines, and other guides when drawing, and others start with clean lines and adjust as they go. In most cases, the artists followed the briefs exactly, but in some instances, they provided additions or minimizations that were even better than the original briefs. When this occurred, the artist's version was chosen over the original brief.

We hope that you enjoy the chapters and videos in this volume, and that they will help you to reach your artistic goals along the way. *So read on and have fun!*





# 1



## **INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL DRAWING**

**FRANK CALICÓ**



# INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL DRAWING

WITH FRANK CALICÓ

**D**o you dream about being a digital artist but have very little time?

**This chapter is for you!**

Here I share how I became a professional award-winning artist, without attending art school, all the while balancing my new art career and a demanding full-time job.

I also go over what you need (and what you *don't*) to begin your artistic journey—including what I consider to be the most efficient and effective digital drawing tools.

While this is not a character design tutorial, I do use the character drawing process to illustrate how to use digital tools quickly and efficiently, integrating these tools into the creative process, so it's easier to understand.

These lessons are not about turning your drawing process into a cold, sterile, and mechanical practice. It's quite the opposite! My logic is simple: you learn better by doing. When you have the right tools and techniques, you will draw more often—and *faster*. The more you draw, the more you learn, and the more you learn, the more you will enjoy drawing. By the end of this chapter, I'm confident you'll be ready to start your own journey as a digital artist!



## LESSON 1: GETTING STARTED

### TABLETS

**Let's begin with the biggest (and most expensive)**

**question:** *Do I need a graphic tablet to start drawing digital characters? And if so, which one?* The short answer is **YES!** To create digital art, it is important to have a tablet. But, you don't need an expensive tablet. The following is my advice on tablets:

- Any graphic tablet you can afford will work to start out in digital drawing. I've used an inexpensive \$80 tablet for most of my career. In the last year, I purchased a tablet for around \$300.
- If you already have an iPad that can be a good option as well, as iPads are convenient and portable. Their cons can be smaller size, higher price, and some technical limitations.
- Graphic tablets made for drawing come in two options: screened or screenless that connects to a screened device.
- The vast majority of drawing applications are available for all platforms.
- Tablets with a lot of features and buttons are not necessary. You won't use a lot of features to get started (or even at a professional level).

Basically to begin drawing digitally, use what is affordable. So please don't worry about it—get any device with a pen and start drawing!



### TABLET OPTIONS

TYPE	PROS	CONS
<b>iPad</b>	Convenient, portable, <i>may already have one!</i>	Small size, higher cost, some technical limits
<b>Screenless</b>	More affordable, portable, have similar functionality to screened tablets	Can take time to adjust to looking at screen while drawing, instead of at your hand—not a big issue (I've used one of these tablets for many years)
<b>Screened</b>	Advantage of drawing directly on screen, can have greater comfort and control	Cost is much higher based on screen size (starting at \$250 to thousands of dollars), not as portable



## SOFTWARE

Next, let's review the software I consider best for digital drawing. I've used several different programs in my career, and I can guarantee after you learn one, you automatically know how to use the others. They have very similar features and tools. Photoshop and Clip Studio Paint Pro are two well-known options. For this tutorial, you can use any software you like—my suggestion is Clip Studio Paint Pro. They have a premium version called Clip Studio Paint EX, but I don't find the added features necessary. For my two-dimensional comic style, the Pro version works perfectly well and the cost difference is significant (\$50 and \$220, respectively). You can download a trial version to test before purchase.

## HARDWARE

Even a basic tablet or computer can run drawing software like Clip Studio Paint, especially if your drawing style doesn't use a lot of layers. I think, however, that it is important to have a keyboard at hand for utilizing the software shortcut keys, which we review in detail later in this section.

## CANVAS SIZE

Before drawing on a tablet, you will create a new canvas in the software. Any preset size can work for practice, but for artwork you want to consider resolution as well as the height and width of your canvas. The minimum standard resolution for printing is 300 dpi/ppi (dots per inch/pixels per inch). Larger canvas sizes increase file size, which takes up more storage space and may slow down your processing speed. I typically work with a preset size A4 at 600 dpi. This is a good resolution that allows flexibility when I reproduce artwork.

It is important to understand, while you can easily change canvas height and width at any time, increasing the dpi is not as simple. After a drawing is in process, increasing the dpi will enlarge your image, but to do this the software adds pixels. As a result, your drawing can look jagged or blurry at the edges between color changes and in line work. This is called pixelation and can be noticeable on the screen as well as in print.

Therefore, when you create artwork for reproduction, be sure to use a dpi setting high enough to avoid the need to enlarge your image. Note that reducing an image is not an issue and can even sharpen line work and details.

## TOOL SHORTCUTS

Now that you are ready to start drawing, I want to share the importance of **Shortcuts** for an efficient digital workflow. Shortcuts make drawing easier and faster, which means you can learn to draw more quickly. Shortcuts are keys or key combinations that quickly select tools or functions in your software. Such as the **P** key to select the **Pen** tool. On the following pages are lists of tool shortcuts for Clip Studio Paint; other drawing programs have shortcuts too. As a digital artist, you will use these tools hundreds or even thousands of times. So, saving time with shortcuts will greatly increase your speed during the digital drawing process.

**EXERCISE 1:** Create a new canvas and create some doodles using the **Pen** and the **Eraser** tools. Try using the shortcuts instead of icons. Play around with other tools, but don't worry if you don't understand how they all work.

## TOOL SWITCH

Press and hold down key to switch tools

TOOL AFTER SWITCH	KEY
Zoom	/
Move (Hand)	H
Move (Rotate)	R
Operation (Object)	O
Operation (Select layer)	D
Operation (Light table)	L
Operation (Edit timeline)	L
Move layer	K
Selection	M
Auto select	W
Eyedropper	I
Pen	P
Pencil	P
Brush	B
Airbrush	B
Decoration	B
Eraser	E
Blend	J
Fill	G
Gradient	G
Figure	U
Frame border	U
Ruler	U
Text	T
Balloon	T
Correct line/Remove dust	Y

## FILE MENU

MENU ITEM	KEYS
New	Ctrl + N
Open	Ctrl + O
Close	Ctrl + W
Save	Ctrl + S
Save as	Shift + Alt + S Ctrl + Shift + S Ctrl + Alt + S
Print	Ctrl + P
Preferences (Windows)	Ctrl + K
Shortcut settings (Windows)	Ctrl + Shift + Alt + K
Modifier key settings (Windows)	Ctrl + Shift + Alt + Y
Quit (Windows)	Ctrl + Q

## EDIT MENU

MENU ITEM	KEYS
Undo	Ctrl + Z
Redo	Ctrl + Y, Ctrl + Shift + Z
Cut	Ctrl + X, F2
Copy	Ctrl + C, F3
Paste	Ctrl + V, F4
Paste into position	Ctrl + Shift + V
Delete	Del, Backspace
Delete outside selection	Shift + Del, Shift + Backspace
Fill	Alt + Del, Alt + Backspace
Hue/Saturation/Luminosity	Ctrl + U
Reverse gradient	Ctrl + I
Transform [Scale/Rotate]	Ctrl + T
Transform [Free Transform]	Ctrl + Shift + T

# CLIP STUDIO PAINT SHORTCUTS

## LAYER MENU

MENU ITEM	KEYS
New raster layer	Ctrl + Shift + N
Create folder, insert layer	Ctrl + G
Ungroup layer folder	Ctrl + Shift + G
Clip to layer below	Ctrl + Alt + G
Merge with layer below	Ctrl + E
Merge selected layers	Shift + Alt + E
Merge visible layers	Ctrl + Shift + E
Change selected layer (above)	Alt + ]
Change selected layer (below)	Alt + [

## SELECTION MENU

MENU ITEM	KEYS
Select all	Ctrl + A
Deselect	Ctrl + D
Reselect	Ctrl + Shift + D
Invert selected area	Ctrl + Shift + I, Shift + F7

## VIEW MENU

MENU ITEM	KEYS
Zoom in	Ctrl and +
Zoom out	Ctrl and -
100%	Ctrl + alt + 0
Fit to screen	Ctrl + 0
Reset display	Ctrl + @
Ruler	Ctrl + r
Snap to ruler	Ctrl + 1
Snap to special ruler	Ctrl + 2
Snap to grid	Ctrl + 3
Change special ruler snap	Ctrl + 4

## WINDOW MENU

MENU ITEM	KEYS	
Canvas	Next canvas	Ctrl + Tab
	Previous canvas	Ctrl + Shift + Tab
Show/hide all palettes	Tab	
Hide title bar/menu bar	Shift + Tab	

## BRUSH SIZE PALETTE

OPERATION ITEM	KEYS
Select smaller preset than current	[
Select larger preset than current	]

## DRAWING COLOR

OPERATION ITEM	KEYS
Switch main and sub colors	X
Switch drawing and transparent colors	C

## TOOL PROPERTY PALETTE

OPERATION ITEM	KEYS	
Ink	Reduce opacity	Ctrl + [
	Increase opacity	Ctrl + ]
Brush tip	Reduce density	Ctrl + Shift + O
	Increase density	Ctrl + Shift + P
Spray effect	Reduce density	Ctrl + Shift + K
	Increase density	Ctrl + Shift + L
Reference	On/off of referring	0

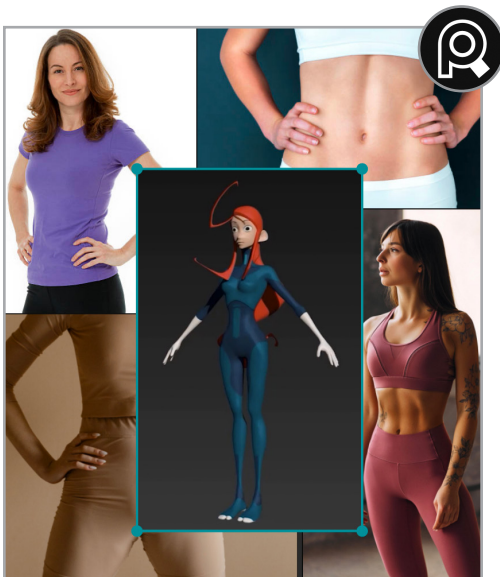
**PRO TIP:** View shortcuts by hovering over a tool icon, or you can go to *File > Shortcut Settings*, to view, customize, and create shortcuts.

## LESSON 2: REFERENCES

### ORGANIZING REFERENCES

Using visual references is a first step in learning how to draw—and *an essential one!* It is important as an artist to have image libraries containing different character types, body poses, clothing, and accessories. I mainly use three sites to search for reference images: Google, Instagram, and Pinterest. All three work in a similar way—simply enter your search terms and go from there.

*However, what do you do with all the images you find?* I use PureRef software, which creates an easily accessible screen on my desktop to gather and save image libraries. The cost is donation-based, so an affordable option if you want to give it a try (PureRef.com). Below is a screen grab of online references saved in PureRef. For my character image at center, I took a screen grab of a video, then saved it to PureRef.



PureRef is a simple software for gathering, organizing, and saving references.

### TRACING REFERENCES

Tracing references as a learning exercise is beneficial, however, tracing references *correctly* is key to getting the most from this practice. Below are two ways to trace a reference. On the left, I'm simply outlining the shapes, but at right I use the reference to learn about body structure, line of action in the pose, and anatomical forms. This will help me understand the correct proportions, perspective, and volume, so I can become better at drawing.

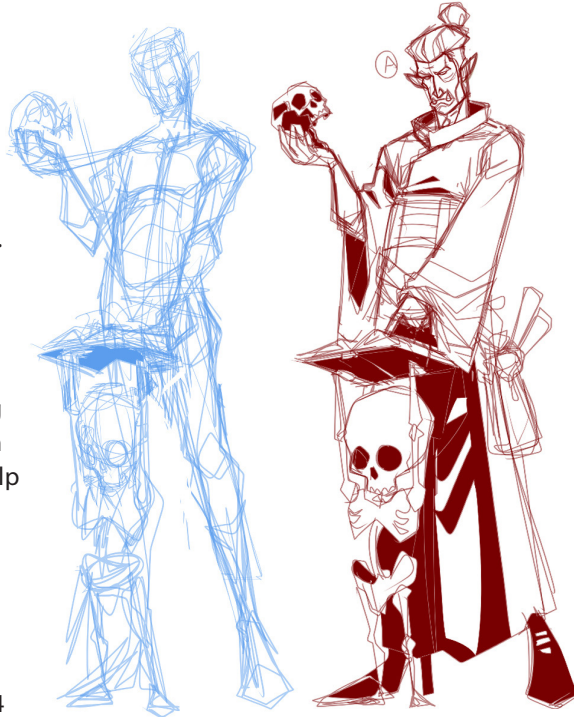


#### EXERCISE 2:

1. Create a reference library for your character—you can try PureRef to organize images. I recommend drawing a human-like character, but you can draw a monster, animal, or alien . . . *anything you like!*
2. Trace some of your references using the *Pen* tool in your drawing software. If you feel a little lost, don't worry—move on to the next lesson and return to this exercise.

## LESSON 3: SKETCHING

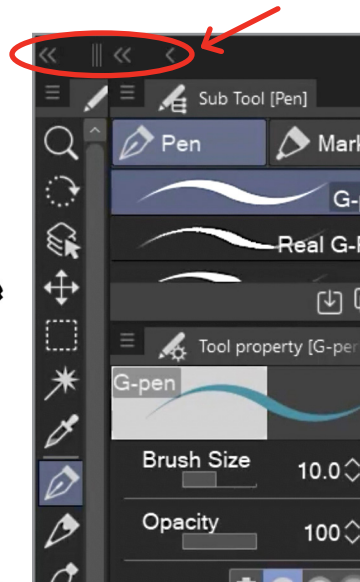
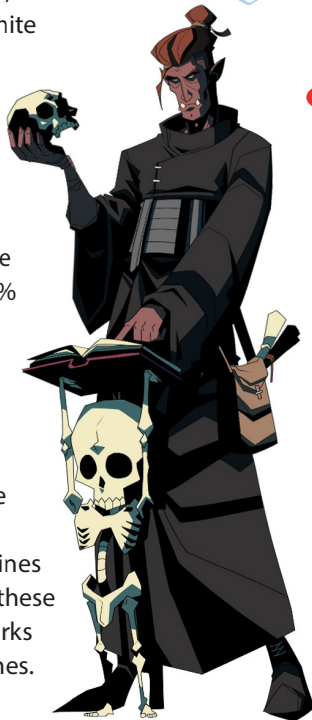
Sketching can seem a bit boring when compared to a finished drawing with all the vibrant colors and lighting effects. Naturally we want to move as quickly as possible to the polished drawing stage to see our completed design. But sketching is actually the most critical step in the drawing process. A sketch is the foundation for your drawing. As with a house, it doesn't matter how strong the walls are, or how lovely the paint looks, if the foundation is bad the house will fall. Here are examples of my sketches, along with the finished illustration. Sketches are an *invisible* structure working underneath to help us build a successful character design.



### CANVAS AND INTERFACE

Before starting a sketch, we need to create a canvas. Since I am planning a character drawing, I start with a vertical canvas, size A4 at 600 dpi. I keep the background white for now, but the color can be easily changed later on if I want.

When you start drawing using digital software, it is common to feel overwhelmed by all the tool menus and program windows. Please know that you will likely only use 20% of the tools available. So it can be helpful to focus your desktop view on the tools you need. The rest can be collapsed, moved, or closed to optimize the interface so it works well for you. Window panels collapse by clicking arrows, and the sidebars minimize or expand by moving the lines at their borders. I suggest adjusting these windows and menus to see what works best as you work on character sketches.



Menus can collapse or move in the software interface.



## BRUSHES

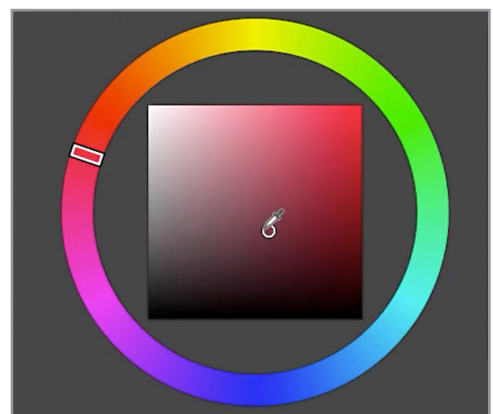
All drawing programs offer a wide variety of brushes and painting tools. Most are pressure sensitive, which means the look of the brushstroke can change depending on pen pressure. There are spectacular brush options that imitate traditional mediums beautifully, like watercolor, chalk, and airbrush. Some people think all you need is the perfect brush to help you draw better, but this is not true. All you need to start drawing is a simple round brush. As an example, I will draw my entire character using a simple round brush. This will help me teach basic settings, such as **Brush Size**, **Opacity**, and **Color**. When I am ready to paint a drawing, I use the same brush, just a larger size to fill in more area. There are a couple of options in brush settings I want to draw your attention to:

- **Anti-aliasing:** Adjusts the smoothing effect on the edge of brushstrokes.
- **Stabilization:** Allows you to draw with more stable lines; very helpful for drawing digitally.

I suggest experimenting with these settings to see what works best for your drawing style. The **Eraser** settings are similar. I set my eraser using the same settings as my brush, a hard solid round, then I change the size as needed.

## ROUGH SKETCHES

Now we are ready to draw our first character sketches, focusing on proportions and the line of action. I like to sketch using a blue or red line color—this is helpful later in the inking stage so my black ink lines stand out from the sketch. You can choose any color you like and easily change colors by opening **Color Settings** or by clicking the current paint color in the toolbar. The **Hue Circle** selection tool pops up, and you can move the **Color Picker** to select a different color. I like to sketch using a lower brush opacity setting, 50% or 60%, so I can build lines up as I sketch.



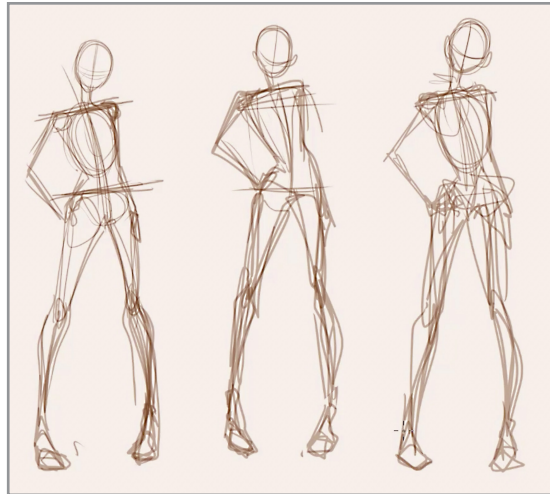
During the sketching process, I keep my references open and refer to them continuously. This helps me draw a line of action, perspective, and correct anatomy. This is a good time to review tools I use throughout the sketching process. The first is the undo shortcut: **Control + Z** (**Command + Z** on Mac). It is normal to use this hundreds of times to remove and change lines. Next is flipping canvas view: **View Menu > Rotate/Invert > Flip Horizontal**, or the shortcut key **F**. This allows you to check for flaws from a new angle. It is surprising how many errors come to light using this technique. I often **Rotate** my canvas to draw strokes from a more comfortable position. This can be done using the **Move** tool or the shortcut key **R**.

A rough sketch is not detailed and should take under five minutes to complete. I think it works best to quickly draw two to three rough sketches, then pick your favorite and move on to the next step.

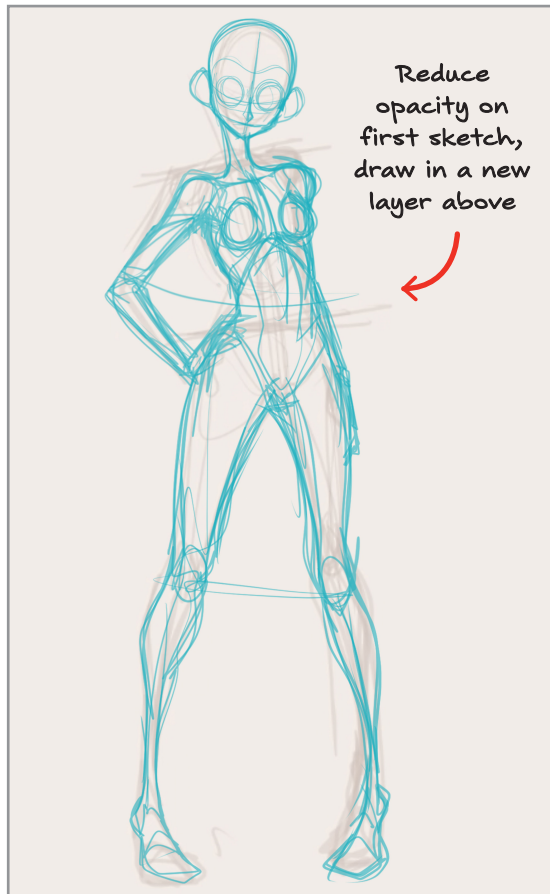
### EXERCISE 3:

1. Create a new canvas and trace three to five references using any brush you want.
2. Draw at least three rough sketches of your character, then pick your favorite to use in the next step.

**SECOND SKETCH:** For our next sketch, create a new layer from the layer panel, or press **Control + Shift + N**. Anything drawn in this new layer will not affect the first sketch layer below—this is helpful as we make corrections. We can easily turn a layer on and off using the eye icon in the layer panel. I like to reduce opacity of the first sketch as I draw my second sketch in a different color. This time I focus on volume



Rough sketches like these should be very quick, taking five minutes or less for each.



Second sketch drawn in a new layer above the first.

and perspective, being sure to check my references. A simplified human anatomy model can be useful at this stage (easy to find online). But don't worry too much about getting your anatomy perfect—that takes time to learn and will improve with practice and study.

**EXERCISE 4:** Create a second, more detailed sketch in a layer above your chosen rough sketch. Focus this time on volume and perspective.

## CLEANING SKETCH LINES

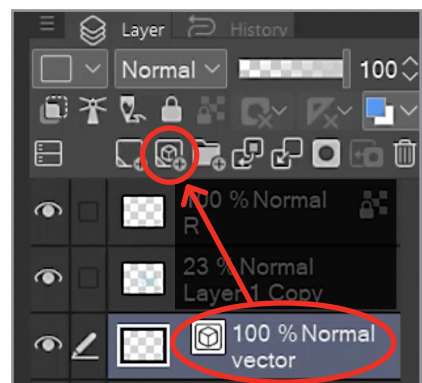
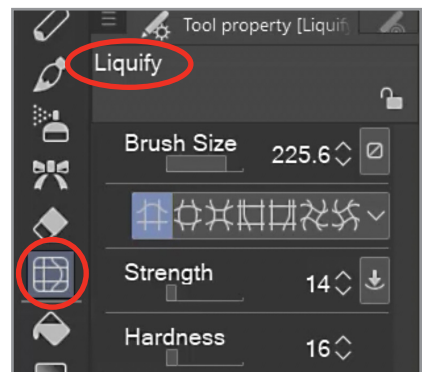
Once your rough sketch is working, it's time to clean up line work and prepare for inking. A powerful tool for adjusting sketches is **Liquify** that allows you to manipulate an image in various ways: push, inflate, shrink, rotate, but I typically only use push. **Liquify** speeds up the process by gradually making line adjustments so we can avoid the time-consuming task of erasing and redrawing. I continue to check my references during this clean-up phase. I think it is best, especially for beginners, to draw characters in tight-fitting bodysuits or as nudes. This will allow you to focus on learning the correct body structures and anatomy for your character.

**THIRD SKETCH:** This final sketch is a good time to introduce another way to draw and edit lines in Clip Studio Paint by using a new type of layer—a **Vector Layer**. I think you'll like how quickly these lines can be adjusted. Vectors are easier to edit because they are made from mathematical line segments. Rasterized lines are made of many small pixels, so to edit them each pixel needs to be fully erased and redrawn. Vector lines can be moved and adjusted quickly and cleanly, which saves time while drawing, editing, and erasing.

Delete or turn off the first sketch layer, leaving only the second sketch visible. Add a new layer, but this time choose **Vector Layer** in the **Layer** panel. Note: Vector layers can be converted to raster layers in order to use pixel-based tools (like **Liquify**), but make a copy of your vector layer, since this change is not reversible.



I start my third sketch by working on the facial features and expressions.



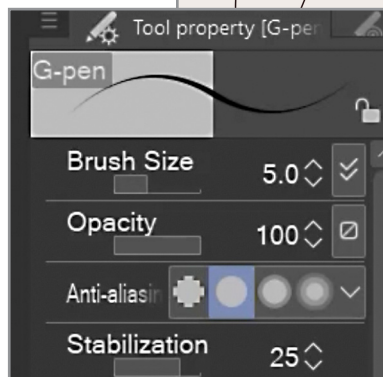
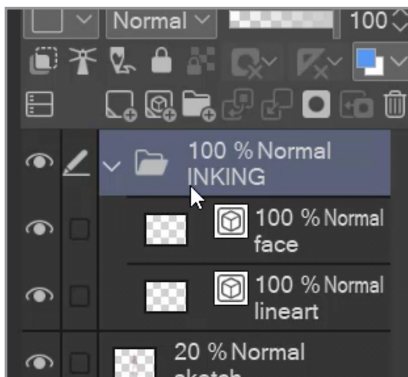
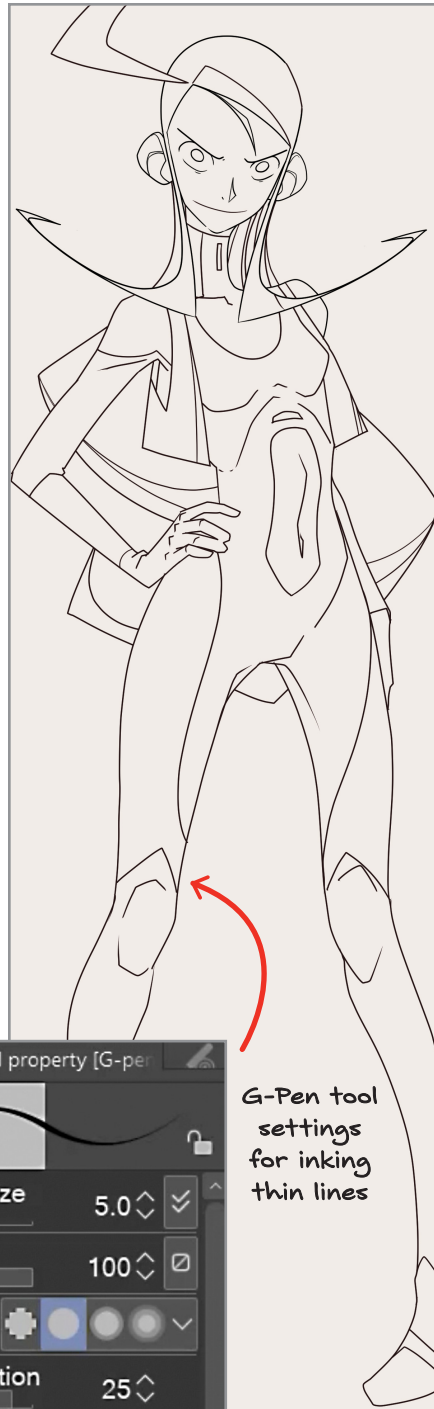
**EXERCISE 5:** Draw a final sketch and clean up the line work by applying tools you've learned. Try **Liquify** and **Vector** layers to see how they can save time at this clean-up step.

## LESSON 4: INKING

Inking consists of using a solid color to define the outer and inner lines of a drawing. There are many techniques for inking characters. I suggest you start by analyzing the line work of your favorite artists. You can practice by tracing designs to determine the brush sizes needed to create various inking styles. I'll share my inking process, then you can adjust to suit your style preferences.

Here are my inked character and typical brush settings. My inking style is simple—thin black lines made with the same round G-pen used for sketching. I prefer to ink using a **Vector Layer** for the same reasons as the final sketch: the lines are easier to adjust, which saves a lot of time. Here are some tips to use during inking:

- Lower the opacity on the final sketch layer (I use 20% opacity).
- Create a new **Vector Layer** above the sketch layer.
- Zoom in, flip, and rotate the canvas to view and draw at a more comfortable angle. I do this frequently while drawing.
- You can save time adjusting lines using the **Pinch Vector Line** tool and **Vector Eraser**. I suggest trying both of these vector tools to see how they can save you time drawing and inking.
- Use separate layers for different areas of the body and face. You can group into folders (image below) or merge layers after finishing the line art.

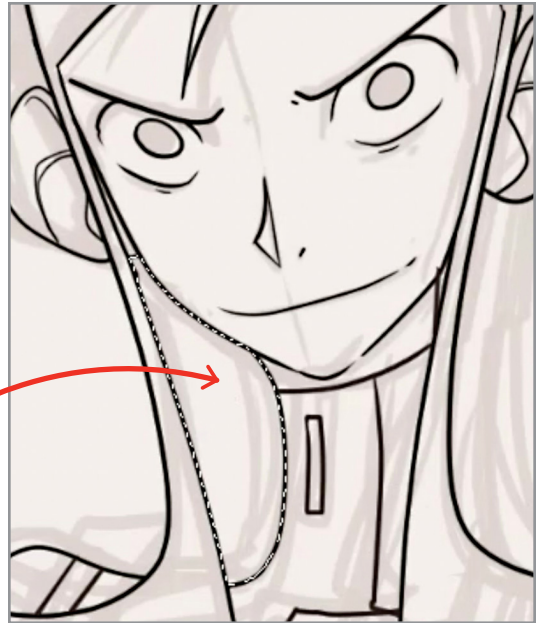
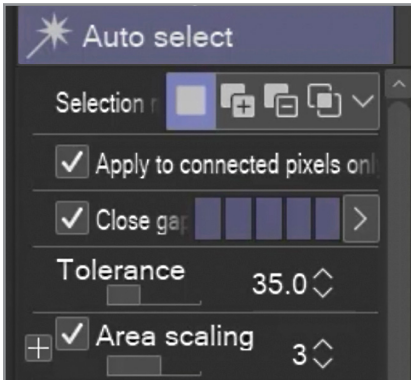


G-Pen tool settings for inking thin lines



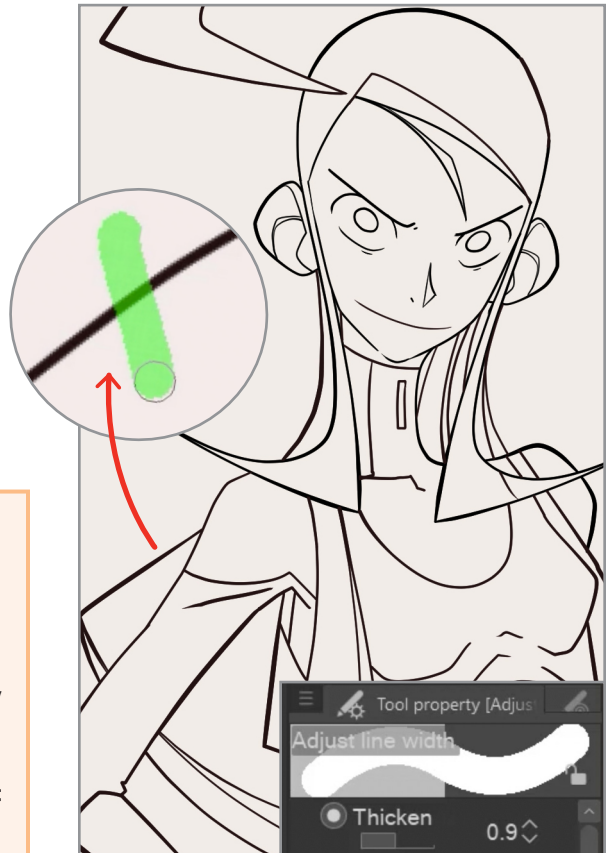
## AUTO SELECT

The **Auto Select** tool allows you to make quick, clean lines within enclosed selection areas. This can work inside already drawn selection areas where you want to add lines without drawing over other lines (image at right). Or you can use this tool to select the negative space (outer area of the canvas), so you can draw around your character without drawing over already completed line work.



## ADJUST LINE WIDTH

Another reason to use vector layers for inking is the **Adjust Line Width** tool, located in the **Correct Line** menu. This tool works like a brush—as you “paint” over lines, they grow thicker. You can quickly add variation to line width; this is useful to emphasize certain areas and add visual impact.



### EXERCISE 6:

1. Analyze inking styles by studying references, and trace a few to get a feel for the brush (size, shape, opacity) needed for similar results.
2. Ink the line art for your character by applying the tools and techniques covered in this lesson.
3. Try *Adjust Line Width* to add interest and variation to your line work.



## LESSON 5: COLORING

Adding color to our characters is much faster because of all the vector line work completed in previous lessons. We have a few time-saving tools to use during coloring. The **Fill** tool (paint bucket) is perfect for adding flat color quickly. You can click and drag the **Fill** tool to keep painting inside multiple areas with closed lines (top image). It is important to use the **Area Scaling Setting** so the color will run slightly beyond the black line edges. This way you won't have white areas where the painted colors meet black ink lines.

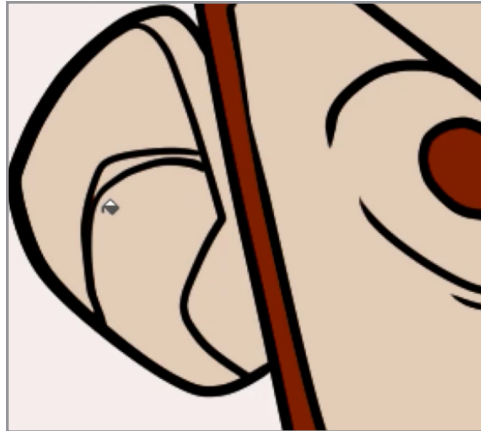
The **Auto Select** tool is a big help for making quick color changes without repainting. If you want to change a specific color, use **Auto Select** and uncheck **Apply to Connected Pixels**. Now you can select all areas of the same color and change them at once (middle image).

### SHADING

I add shadows using tools you've already learned, along with a few helpful settings. First, I add a new layer above my color layer. I use **Clip to Layer Below**, which keeps any shadow layer painting inside the areas already painted on my layer below. This basically helps so I do not color outside the lines. I also set the shadow layer **Blending Mode to Multiply**, efficiently blending shadows over other colors in my drawing. I typically lower the shadow layer opacity to 30% to 40%. An easy way to adjust the shadow color is by using **Hue/Saturation/Luminosity** menu, **Control + U**.

### FINISHED CHARACTER

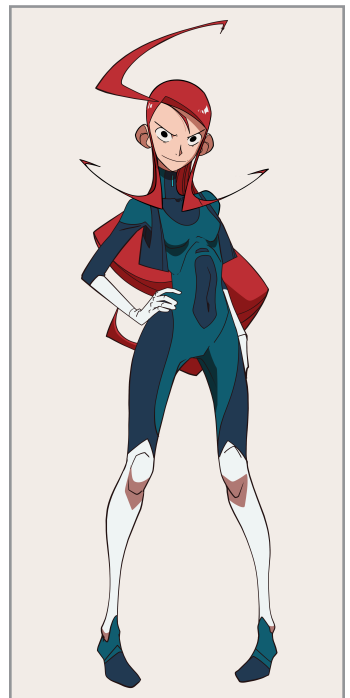
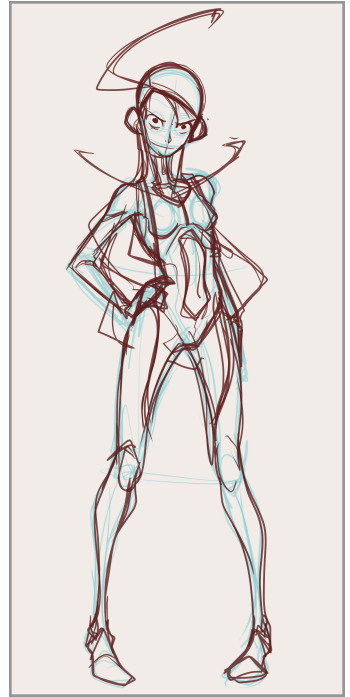
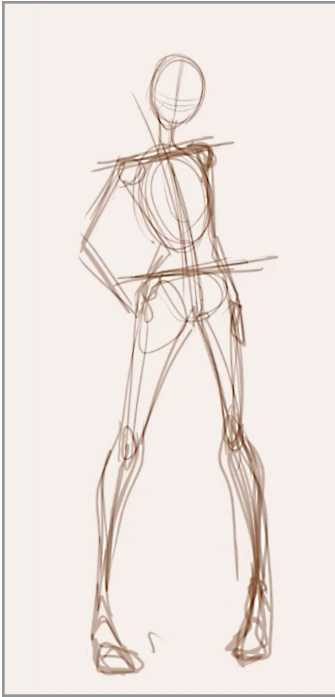
You can see the full process step by step on the following page, and at the end of the chapter is my finished drawing. I hope you enjoyed this introduction to digital drawing techniques, and that you use these skills to draw more, **so you can learn more, and have more fun drawing!**



**Top:** **Fill** tool can quickly paint multiple areas.

**Center:** **Auto Select** is helpful for changing colors.

**Bottom:** **Multiply** used on a separate shadow layer.





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**2**

**INTRODUCTION TO  
DIGITAL COLORING**

**FEEFAL**





# INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL COLORING

WITH FEEFAL (LINNEA KIKUCHI)

**W**ant to draw digitally but find yourself intimidated by the overwhelming options? It can be difficult to navigate the endless sea of choices in devices, software, brushes, and settings. Especially when, as a beginner, even the process of sketching on a screen feels awkward, leaving you longing for the texture of paper.

That is why for this chapter we start traditionally, using a paper and pencil sketch. This provides us a base drawing to work from, which can be less intimidating than starting on a blank screen. *I think the resulting artwork looks cool too*—a blend of digital and traditional in one illustration.



I have a background in both digital and traditional mediums. These days I'm best known for my digital art, but I spent most of my career avoiding it like the plague! I thought it was too difficult and felt overwhelmed by the countless options in brushes and software features. I made several attempts over the years to learn digital drawing, and failed each time until

it finally clicked. I found success by using the techniques I'm about to explain to you. I'll show you how to apply digital coloring techniques to hand-drawn sketches *without* compromising your original line work. So, if you've ever wished to embark on a digital art journey—I'm here to share tips and tricks that helped me find success in this expansive medium.

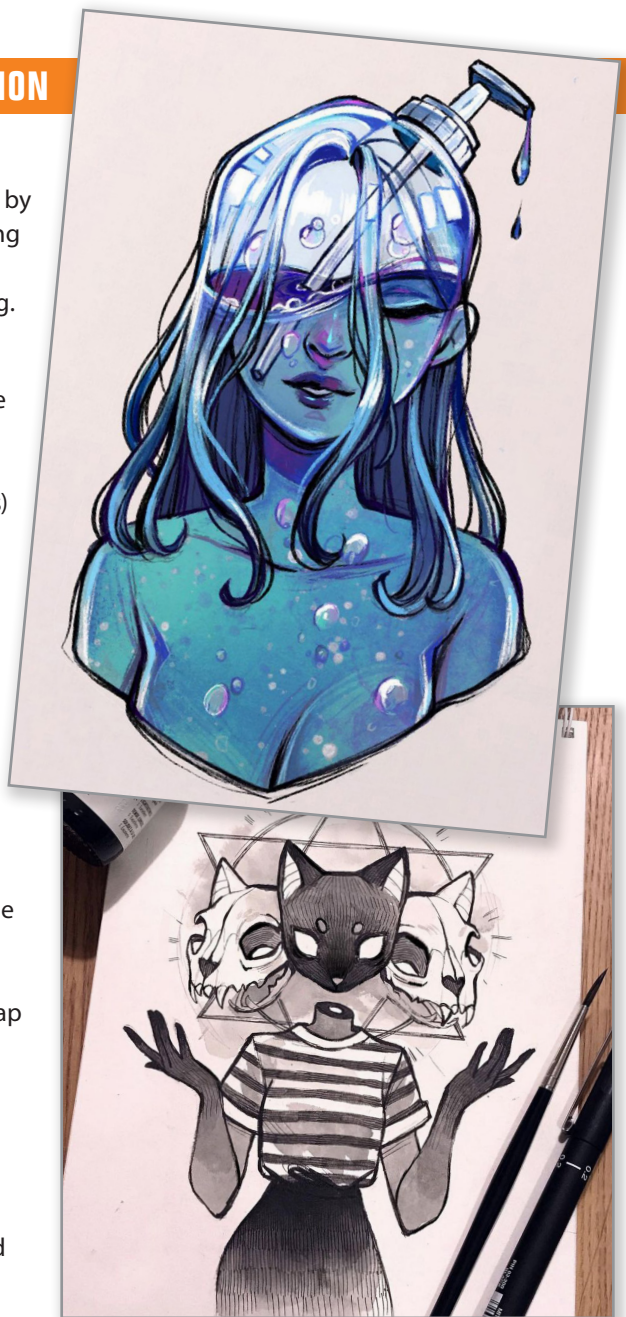
## LESSON 1: FINDING INSPIRATION

Let's start off by brainstorming what to draw. Inspiration can be difficult to come by at times, which is why I often start drawing sessions by browsing Pinterest until something strikes me as cool and exciting.

Your idea doesn't need to be completely original—so don't put too much pressure on yourself! Instead, focus on putting your own unique spin on a concept. I used to get stuck for days (or even weeks) trying to think of the “perfect” idea . . . something deep, thought provoking, and beautiful. After I finally got an idea, I'd be too intimidated to draw it on paper. I simply didn't feel skilled enough to execute my concept. When I finally did manage to draw an idea, I'd often be disappointed because it didn't look as good on paper as it had in my mind.

This is a common problem for artists—the feeling that things never quite turn out as well as they look in our mind's eye. We strive to improve in order to lessen the gap between our vision and the execution. *Don't let this hold you back from drawing!*

Once I accepted this fact, I became more comfortable with drawing out my ideas, even when they ended up looking “bad” compared to my vision. I soon discovered this helped me become more efficient at generating concepts—new ideas were starting to surface more easily and frequently. Like every aspect of making art, creativity is a learned skill that comes from practice. I like to say: **ideas are cheap and meant to be spent.** The more you practice and draw your ideas, the easier they will come to you!



**EXERCISE 1:** Brainstorm concepts for your drawing but don't stress about the “perfect” idea. Have fun and let your creativity flow. If you feel stuck, sketch what you already feel comfortable drawing and try adding a new element, border, or trait inspired by nature.



## LESSON 2: SKETCHING

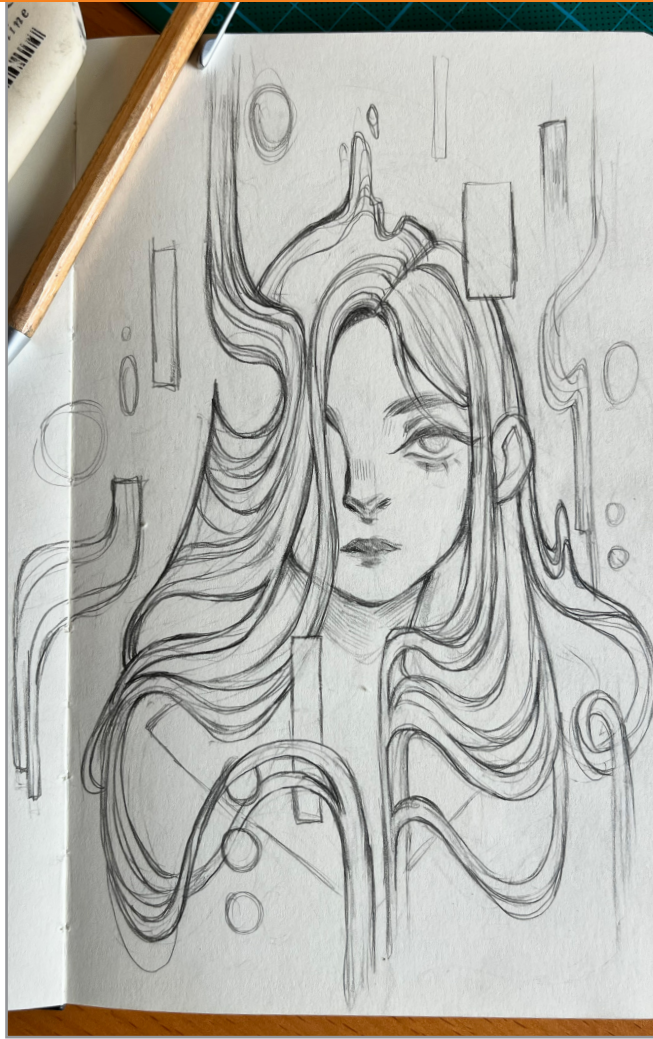
For sketching, I prefer a paper with a smooth surface, because it allows me to draw finer details. Rough paper can provide good structure and texture to drawings, but it also retains more graphite from the pencil which can make rendering a bit tedious.

This example is drawn on a Moleskine sketchbook, (5 x 8.25 inches), using two mechanical pencil sizes (0.5mm and 0.3mm). I use 0.5mm for sketching because I like a fine line. To draw in even higher detail, such as the eyes or strands of hair, I use the 0.3mm.

I always have a kneadable eraser close at hand—a *really fantastic tool!* You can blot it on areas of a drawing to lighten marks by only partially picking up the graphite. After I've finished a rough sketch, I often use a kneadable eraser to blot the entire drawing. Then I revise the sketch using firmer, more decisive line work. These new darker lines will be visible once the piece has been finished, so I strive to keep it as neat as possible.

Another eraser I like to use is a nifty pen style—it's retractable and has a fine tip, so it's handy when you need to erase out fine details.

**EXERCISE 2:** Create a paper and pencil sketch of your concept using your favorite traditional drawing tools.



**SKETCHING TOOLS:** Moleskine sketchbook and white graphite eraser, kneadable eraser, and fine tip retractable eraser, and mechanical pencils (0.5mm and 0.3mm).



## LESSON 3: DIGITIZING A SKETCH

Now it's time to photograph our sketch and prepare it for a digital transformation. This is optional, but I like to add some pizzazz to the background. I think it adds another layer of cuteness to my designs. I'll forage for leaves or flowers to place around my sketch, or maybe a few crystals if I don't feel like going outside. Placing a sheet of pretty, aesthetically pleasing paper behind the drawing can be a nice touch too.

I often photograph sketches with my iPad—it's convenient to take the photo directly on the device I'm using to paint on. It's also easy to take a photo with your phone, then transfer it into Procreate. Photos of a sketch are typically darker than the original and need adjustment. Colors can be too warm or cool depending on the lighting where they were taken.

I edit directly in Procreate or use a free app like MOLDIV or Snapseed. For this example, I first adjust **White Balance** to cool down the image and neutralize warmer tones. My sketch is grayscale, so I don't want the photo to be colorful. Yellow in the sketch will show and affect my color work. I decrease **Saturation** and increase **Contrast** to make the lines stand out well since we want them to show in the final piece.

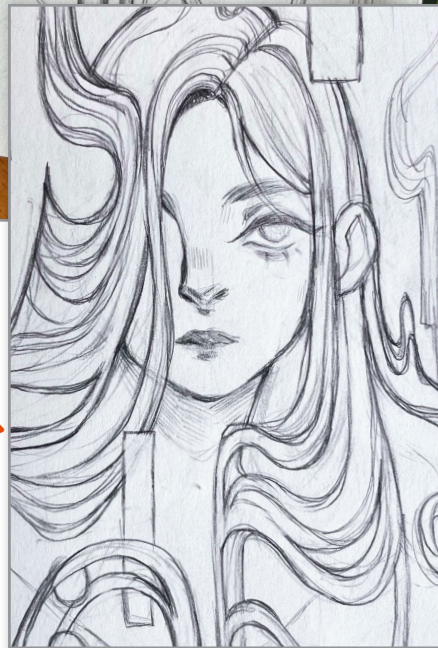
**EXERCISE 3:** Take a photo of your sketch and, if needed, prepare it for color by using editing tools.



Before editing



After editing



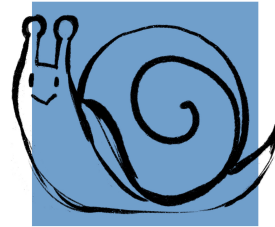
## LESSON 4: ADDING COLOR

**Now for the fun part—painting digitally!** We want our sketch to remain visible throughout the coloring process. To do this, open the **Layers** panel in Procreate, select the sketch layer. You'll see a small letter **N** next to the checkmark, tap on it and a list of **Blend Modes** will expand. Scroll up to select **Multiply** and the letter changes to **M** indicating the **Blend Mode** is set to **Multiply** (see below). Your sketch will now remain visible as you paint on layers beneath it. You'll also see an **Opacity** slider, and leave this set at **Max** (100%). Now we can add layers below the sketch layer for each area we want to color, such as skin, hair, etc.

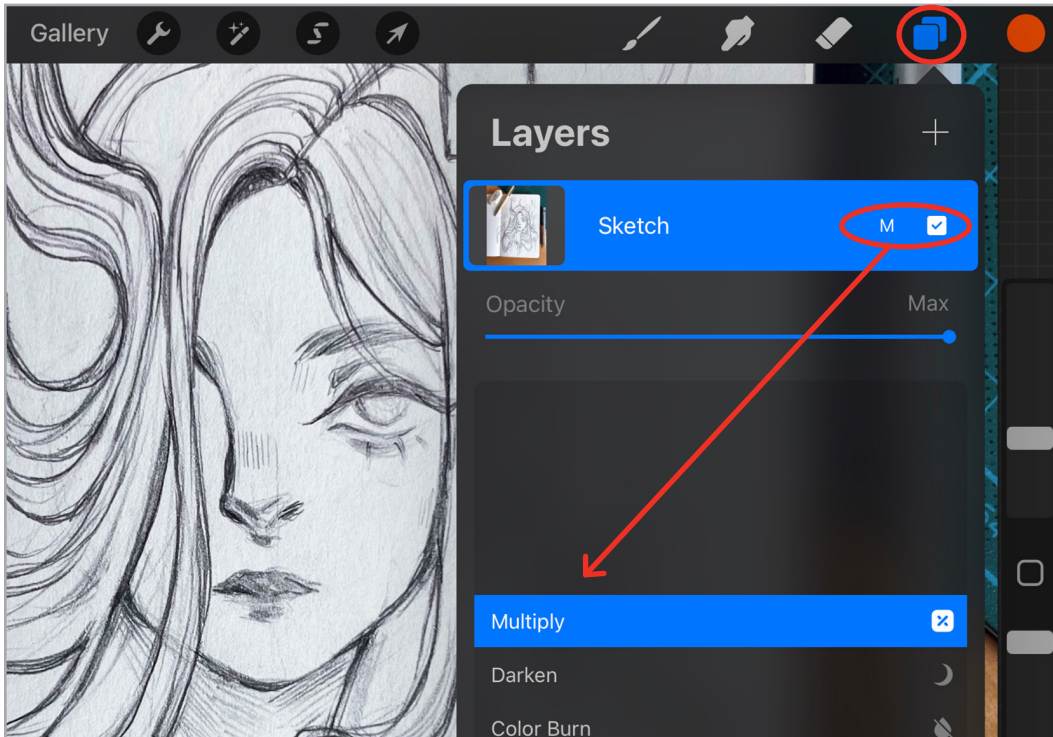
When it comes to creating a color palette, I like to play with different colors to see what works best with the design. I prefer to use one main color, such as blue, then add an accent color, like red for details. Sticking to a limited number of colors helps avoid the final illustration looking cluttered. I find a limitation also helps me discover ways to add depth and variation to my colors.



Color layer set to Normal



Color layer set to Multiply

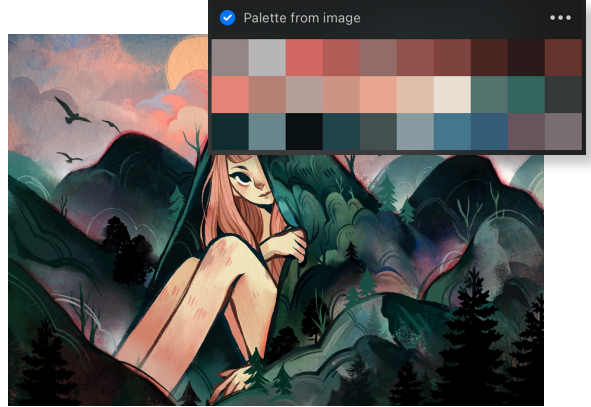


**Multiply** setting in Procreate projects a layer over the layers beneath it, allowing my sketch to be visible throughout the painting process.





My painting above uses a limited palette, variations of blue with a pop of gold.

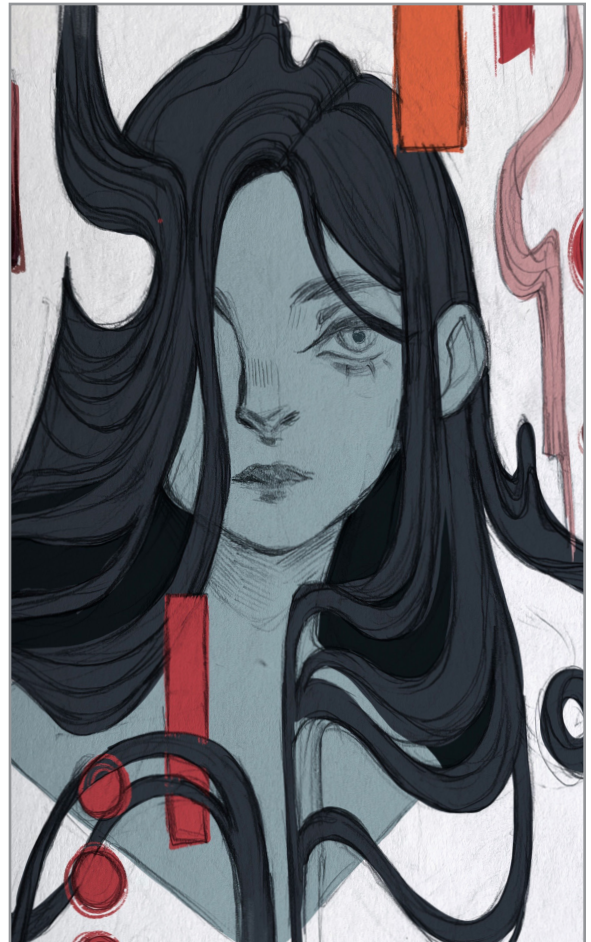


Above shows a palette generated using one of my illustrations in the Procreate *Palettes* menu.

If you're struggling to create a color palette, Procreate has a neat feature to help. Select **Color** in the navigation menu and the **Palettes** window will pop up. Click on the + icon to open a list of options for generating new palettes. To generate using an image, the choices include: **New from photos** or **file**, and **camera** to take a new photo. Now you can sample color from any illustration or photograph you like—Procreate will create the color palette for you!

For painting my base colors, I use a basic **Studio Pen Brush** located in Procreate under the **Brush Library > Inking** menu. I draw a line around all the areas of skin, then use the **Color Fill** tool to automatically fill color inside my outline. Before using **Color Fill**, be sure the outline is completely closed, because if you don't, it will fill the entire layer!

**EXERCISE 4:** Create a color palette for your design, then start painting in base color. Set blending mode on your color layers to **Multiply** and place them above the sketch.



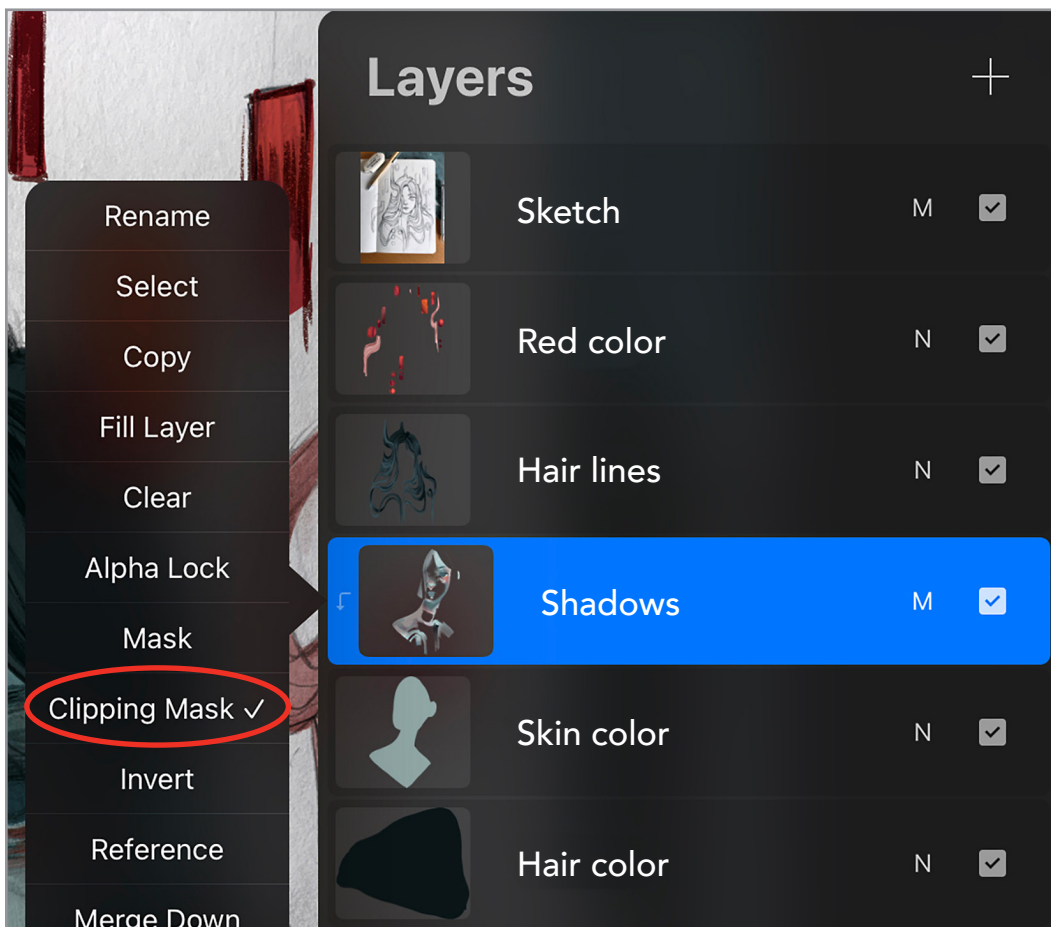
Base colors applied using a **Studio Pen Brush** and **Color Fill**.

## LESSON 5: ADDING DIMENSION

Once the base colors are blocked in, I'm ready to add shadows and dimensional line work. Before painting, I add a **Clipping Mask** layer above the base colors. This keeps my new paint strokes within the boundary of the base color. I set this new layer to **Multiply**, which helps the shading automatically blend well with the established base colors. I add shadows to the left side of the face, around her neck, and on her nose (see next page).

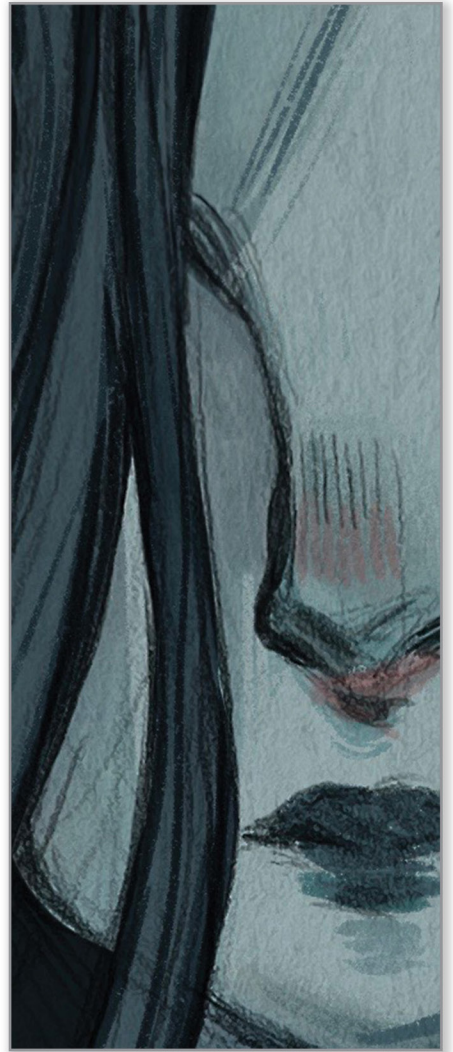
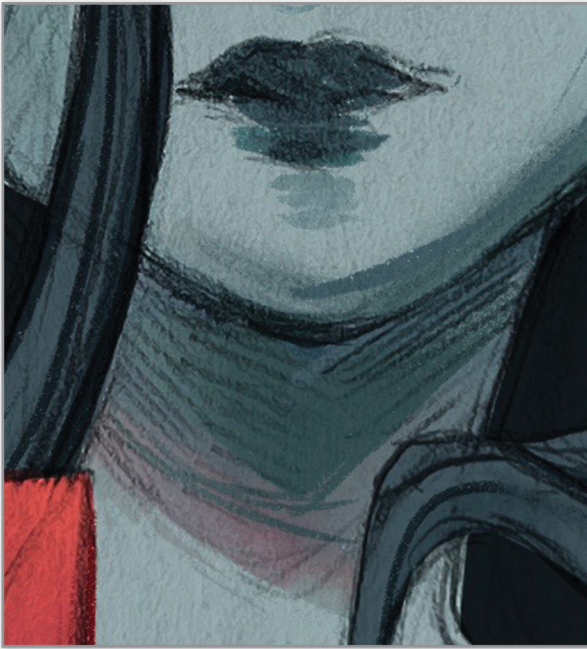
Since my accent color is red, I want to add in pops of red to the shadows and line work as well to give the illustration more color variation and add interest.

**PRO TIP:** To easily paint inside the shape of your base colors, clip a new layer to the base color layer, creating a mask for your shadows.



The **Clipping Mask** keeps paint strokes within the shape of the clipped layer below. This is a great way to add detail while coloring within the lines!





I add pops of my accent color red to add color variation and interest.

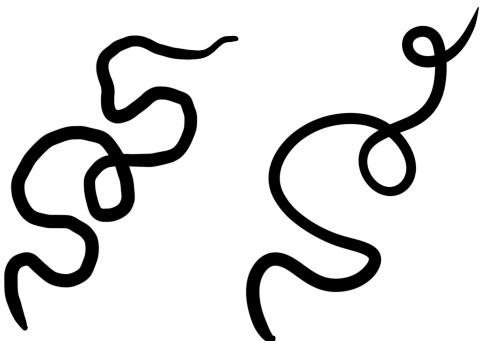


## BRUSHES

Now is a great time to introduce you to my favorite brushes. I'll start with the **Dry Ink** brush, located in the Procreate **Brush Library** window under **Inking**. I use this brush for practically everything. It has a rough texture, a nice line weight, and works equally well for line work or coloring—so it's versatile too. I also use the **Shale** brush a lot, which you can find under **Calligraphy**. This brush offers smooth lines and texture. The **6B Pencil** brush is also a favorite and is located in **Sketching**.

All of the brushes used in these lessons are default brushes that come with the Procreate program download. When it comes to brushes, I think it's best to keep things simple. It can easily become overwhelming when you're faced with endless brush options, finding it difficult to know which to choose. When you find a brush you're comfortable using, it's completely fine to use the same brush for line work as well as shadow and coloring.

Once you've found a brush you like drawing with, try altering the **Stabilization** setting. Click on the brush name to open the **Brush Studio** window. Stabilization is key for drawing line art, because it removes that jittery look that can otherwise plague you. I typically stick with the 30% setting.



STABILIZATION 0%

STABILIZATION 30%



Let's recap—so far we added base colors and simple shadows, so now it's time to spice things up a bit with enhancements. I like to mark the edge of shadow areas using darker lines. These harsh lines are called "terminator lines" and act as a transition zone between light and shadow. The darker area of shadow begins directly after the terminator line ends. This technique is commonly taught in figure drawing because the lines are useful for conveying form. Adding a darker band to a highlight edge separates the lighting more clearly to give a better sense of shape and volume. I find it aesthetically pleasing too!

If you want to get creative, try adding a terminator line in a contrasting color. I marked the edges in the image above with pink. Since an ambient pink light is already present, it still looks pretty natural.

**EXERCISE 5:** Add dimension using the shadow and line work techniques covered in this lesson. Try out new brushes to find your own favorites.



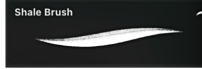
# Favorite brushes!

## Preinstalled with Procreate

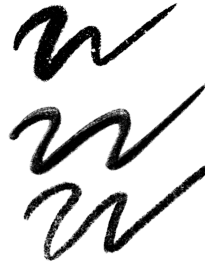
**DRY INK**



**SHALE BRUSH**



**6B PENCIL**

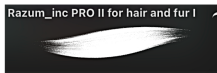


## Bought

**Soft Noise** from  
Brush Pack Pro II,  
by Ilya Tuljakov



**Hair and Fur** from  
Brush Pack Pro II,  
by Ilya Tuljakov



Great for  
blending



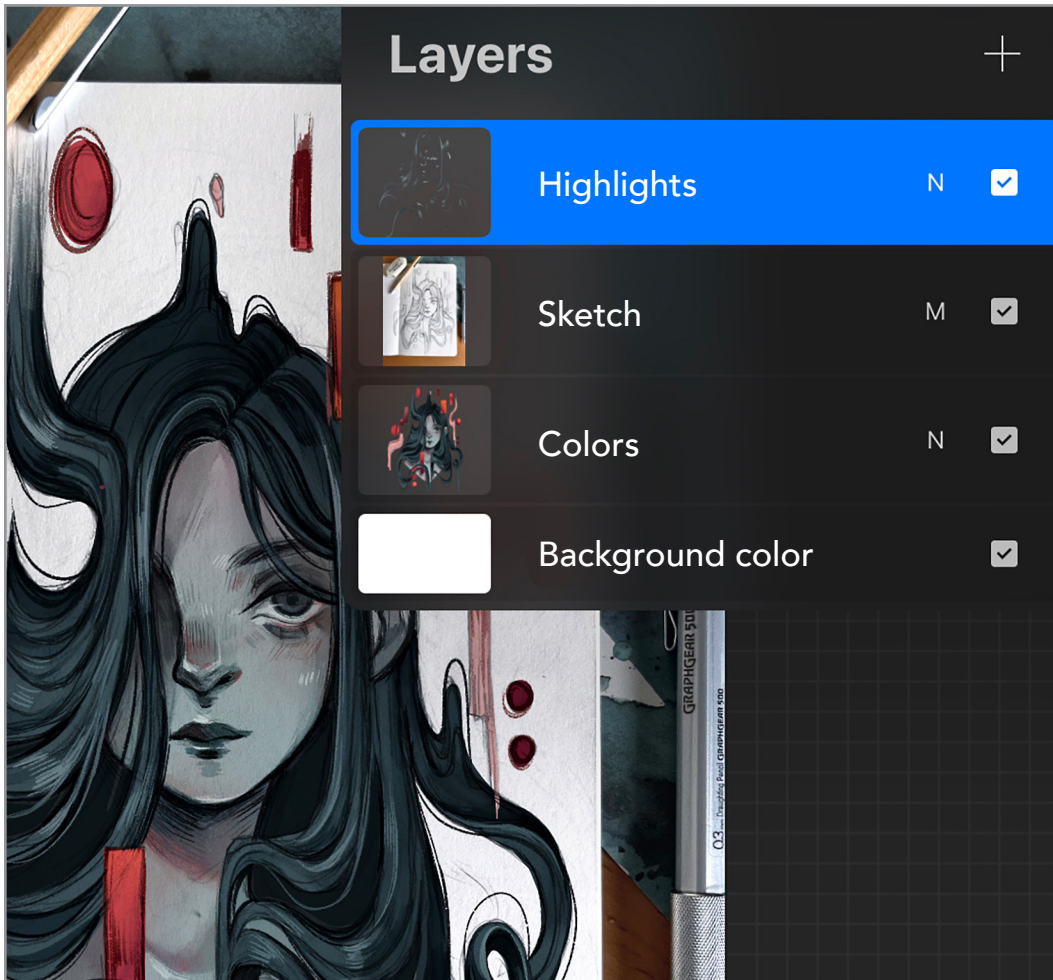
I like brushes with texture, so most of my favorites have a sketch-like quality to them.

## LESSON 6: FINAL DETAILS

**We've arrived at our final lesson!** This is my favorite step on any drawing, because this is when we truly get to see all our hard work come to life. It always amazes me what a touch of highlights, a few thicker lines, and accent colors can do for a piece of art.

First, I work on the highlights by placing a new layer at the very top, above the sketch layer. I don't want the highlight colors muddied by the sketch lines.

I use the **Dry Ink** brush to paint highlights on the tip and bridge of the nose, apples on the cheeks, inner corners of the eyes, and the top of the cupid's bow above the lips. Basically, paint highlights on any areas of the face that protrude or shine due to moisture. If you feel unsure of where to place your highlights—it's hair, nose, cheek, and a bit on the lips! You really can't go wrong following that, and it adds a nice liveliness to any portrait!



Add the highlight layer at the top so the color isn't affected by the other layers.

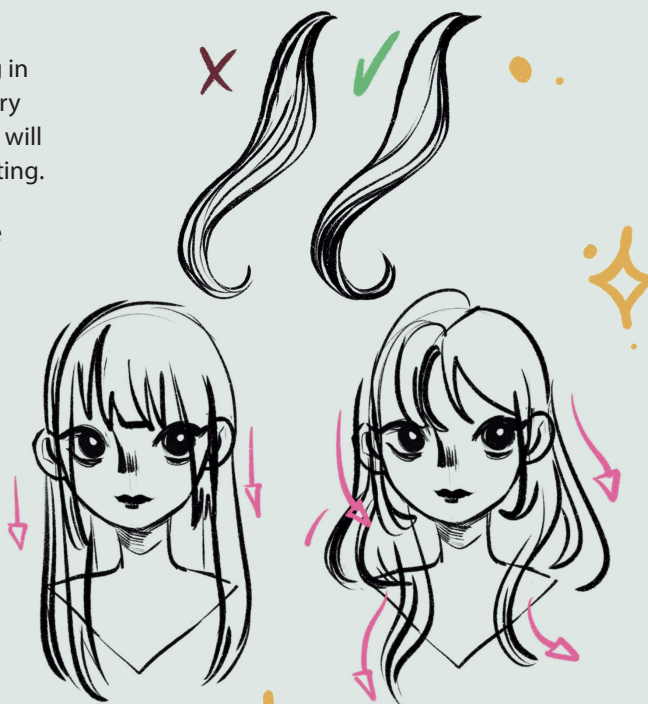
## HAIR TUTORIAL

### STRAIGHT OR WAVY HAIR

When I draw hair, I keep one main thing in mind—to have the thickness of lines vary throughout the entire head of hair. This will help keep the hair dynamic and interesting.

I also like to draw hair starting from one side of a strand, then following a path across the strand to the other side (top right). I continue drawing lines that move from one side of the strand to the other and they end in a nice spiral together. This makes the hair appear more flowing and gives the hair strands better variation and thickness compared to drawing strands next to one another.

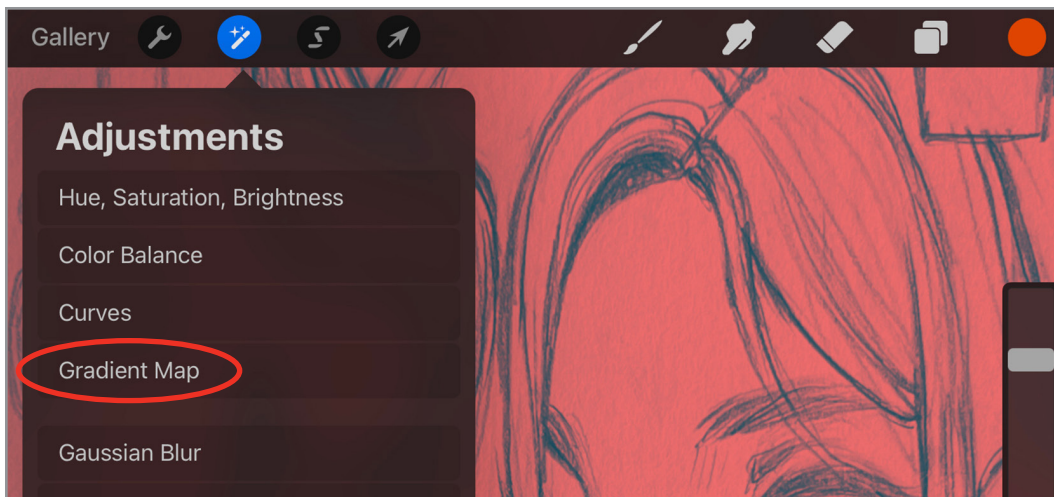
If you draw all strands of hair falling straight down, the end result looks flat. You'll get a more natural and voluminous looking result if you draw strands falling in different directions—some framing the face and others curling away.



### COILY HAIR

When it comes to drawing coily hair, I like to divide it into larger shapes. Then I layer locks of hair drawn in a drill shape onto each other. I have a base layer of dark curls that's set at the very back, and I add lighter colored drill curls on top of the base layer. Then I add some highlights and shadows to the front curls to make them pop!





If I want to spice up my colors a bit, I play around with **Gradient Map** found under the **Adjustments** menu (see above). This will recolor your layer, and you can adjust the intensity based on how much you want the colors affected.

Sometimes I want to accentuate highlights further and add a glow effect. To do this, I go into **Adjustments** and use the **Bloom** function. This setting blurs the edges of your colors, giving them a nice glow.

When I want to add texture to a layer, I create a **Clipping Mask** layer, fill in with a lighter color, then set **Blend Mode** on the clipped layer to **Multiply**, and then try out the **Noise** setting that's under **Adjustments**. This results in a grainy finish that you can easily adjust to your preferences.

If you want to introduce texture and further imitate the look of traditional art, you can upload a photo of textured paper to use as a top layer and set it to **Multiply**. This adds a paper texture to the entire piece bringing the design together and working as a noise effect. Remember to play with the opacity of this texture layer to see what works best.

Another treatment I often use as a final touch is a **Vignette**. Create a new layer and fill it with a light color, then set the layer to **Multiply**. Next, you erase everything in the middle using a soft airbrush, leaving the edges of the illustration slightly darker. This increases the depth in your piece, and pulls a viewer's eye to the center. It also is a useful tool when you find the edges of your drawing are competing for attention with the rest of the illustration.

**And that brings us to the end of our tutorial!** I hope you gained some good techniques and tips, so by the end you feel much less intimidated by all these digital tools. Maybe some of these techniques now feel similar enough to traditional tools, so that you feel digital isn't all that different from drawing with a pen and paper!

**EXERCISE 6: Finish your drawing with highlights, adding any textures and special treatments to see if they can bring another level to your design.**

**Remember to sign, save, and share your new artwork!**





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END OF SAMPLE

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