

101 - Intro to Procreate

SLQ Wiki Fabrication Lab 2026/01/14 11:25

101 - Intro to Procreate



Developed by Ellie Dumigan, 2023

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their continuing connection to land and as custodians of stories for millennia. We respectfully acknowledge the land on which we all meet today, and pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging.

Workshop presentation

The Procreate 101 workshop has been created into a slide show for presentation and documentation purposes. Please feel free to download and use the guide and files as per our CC license in the footnote.

Some pages may link to other online workshops, tutorials or guides created at The Edge, you may require the internet to connect and view links.

[Public view - Slides](#)

[Admin view - Slides](#)

Resources

- [Flower Option 1](#)
 - [Flower Option 2](#)
 - [Flower Option 3](#)

Summary

Learn the basics of using Procreate to create sketches, paintings, illustrations and even animations.

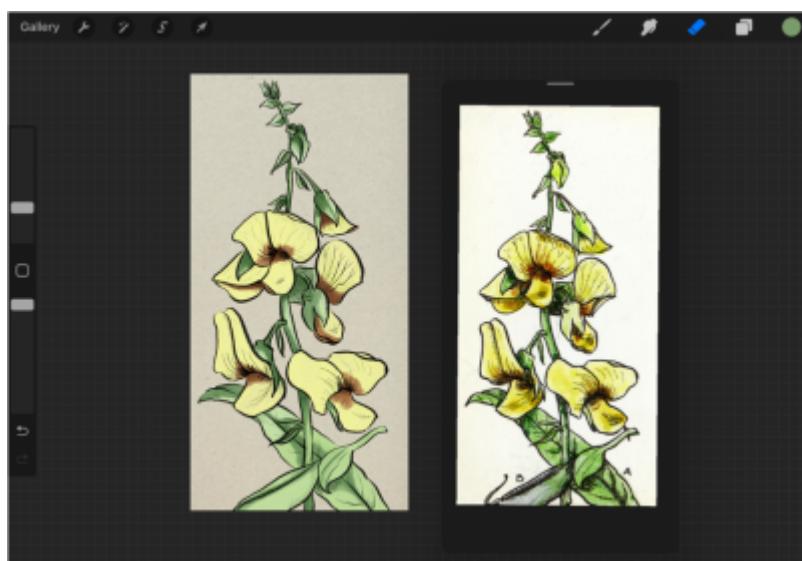
Skills Introduced

- Procreate Gallery Overview /basics
- Interface Overview + Hand gestures
- Creating a Canvas
- Brush options
- Brush Studio
- Introduction to Layers
- Saving and Files + Exporting capabilities

Tools and Preparation

- Hardware required: IPad and Stylus
- Software required: Procreate

Workshop Walkthrough

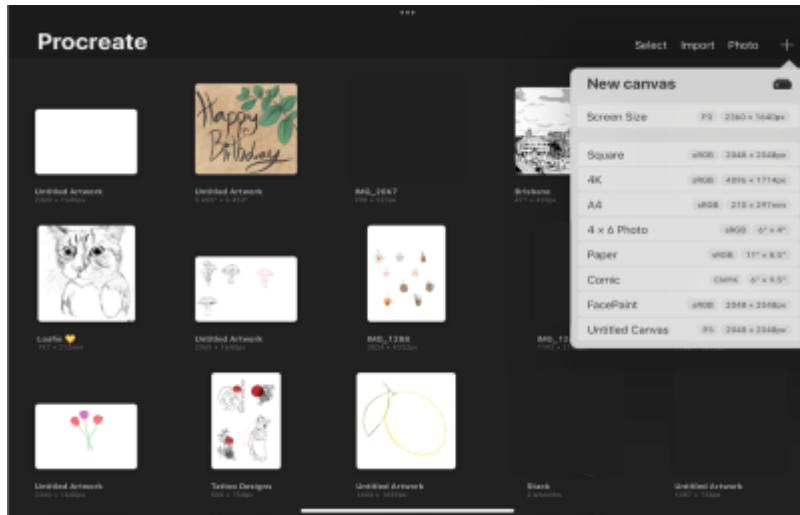


Procreate Gallery Overview/Basics

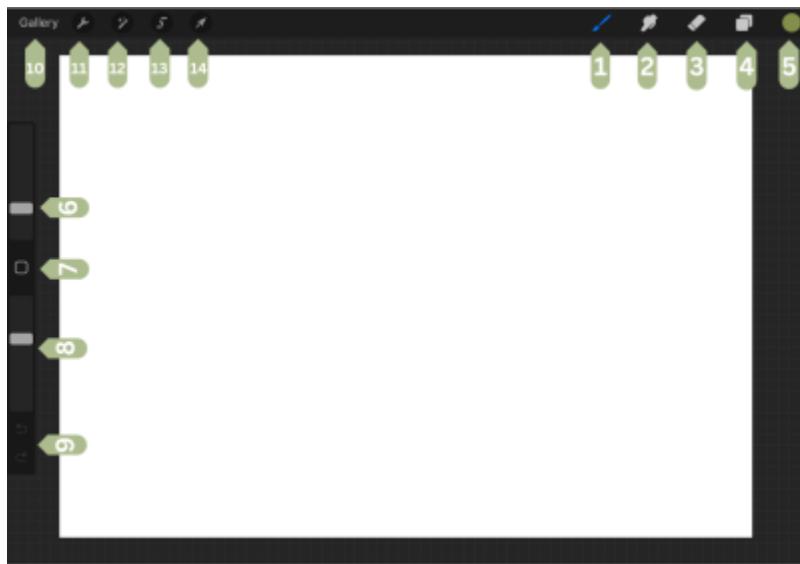
When you first open the Procreate app you will be greeted with the home page or Gallery that stores

your latest artworks. When opening the app for the first time the Gallery will contain some premade sample artworks to demonstrate the app's capabilities.

In the upper right corner, you will see the options for Select, Import, Photo and ‘+’



Interface Overview + Hand gestures



Three sections of the Procreate interface. These three sections can be broken down into

- Painting Tools (Top right of the image),
- Sidebar (left side of image) and
- Editing Tools (top left).

Painting Tools:

- 1. Paint - access the brush library (Procreate automatically comes with hundreds of brushes to choose from) to paint, sketch, ink and more.
- 2. Smudge - Blend and mix colour using the same brushes from the brush library. This tool can

help create a range of effects, textures and looks.

- 3. Erase - Using the same brush library this tool can help remove mistakes and make adjustments to your artwork.
- 4. Layers - Draw on different layers to break up artwork and not disturb aspects you have already done. Layers also let you move, edit, recolour and delete elements without altering other aspects of your work.
- 5. Colour- Select and adjust colours to your desired hue. A colour wheel is also available to select the desired colour. Procreate also has the option of colour palettes that allow one to select colours and create new palettes.

Sidebar:

- 6. Brush Size - Controls the brush size, slide up for a larger brush and down for a smaller meeting. The larger brush size will create a thicker stroke, while a smaller brush tip will achieve a thinner line.
- 7. Modify Button - activities the colour eye dropper. This allows for colour to be picked from a specific area of the canvas (or an imported image). Slide the eyedropper over the desired colour and release it to select the colour.
- 8. Brush Opacity - This controls the opacity of the brush from more transparent to a more solid colour. The slider can be dragged up or down to make changes or hold the slider and move sideways to adjust in smaller increments.
- 9. Undo/Redo arrows - Tapping one arrow will Undo the last action and selecting the other will redo the action. A notification will pop up at the top of the screen each time an undo/redo arrow is pressed. Procreates allows Undos up to 250 actions.

Editing Tools:

- 10. Gallery - This will return you to the homepage/gallery, this feature is covered in the Procreate Gallery Overview /basics section of this walkthrough.
- 11. Actions - Shown as a Wrench icon. The features include inserting a file, a photo, taking a photo, adding text, cutting, copying and copying the whole canvas. Share is also included under this option, allowing canvases to be exported out in different file formats, these can then be shared via email or message or uploaded to social media accounts.
- 12. Adjustments - controls all of your image adjustments, including colour and image filters.
- 13. Selection tool - lets you select various areas of your artwork to modify your image.
- 14. Transformation tool - assists in moving, distorting and scaling the image.

Hand Gestures:

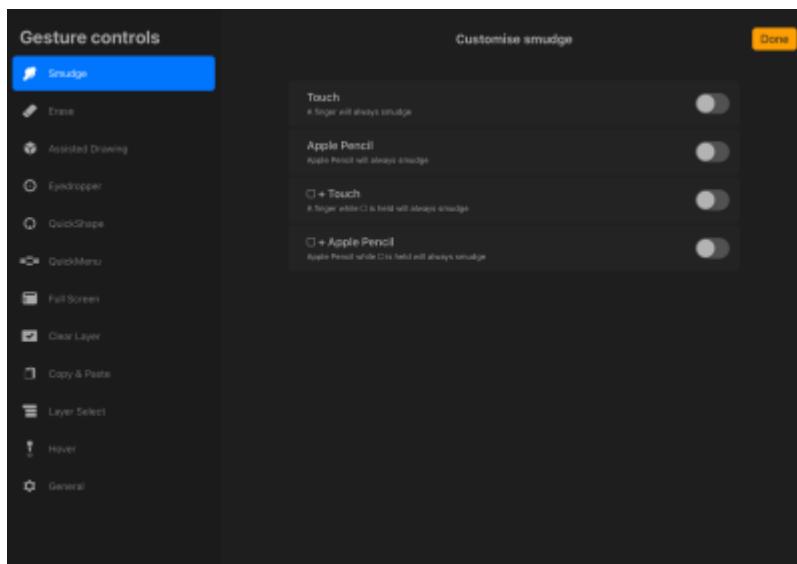
A handy aspect of using the Procreate system on the iPad is the hand gesture options that make it even easier to navigate the interface. Below is a basic list of the available hand gestures that can help speed up your work.

- Pinch to Zoom - using two fingers place them on the canvas and move them together to zoom out or apart to zoom in.
- Pinch-Twist to Rotate - pinch the canvas and twist your fingers in a circular motion to rotate the canvas.
- Quick Pinch to Fit to Screen - Same gesture as Pinch to Zoom but done at a faster rate. Do the same gesture in reverse to return to the previous view.
- Two-Finger Tap to Undo - Tapping two fingers together on the canvas to undo. Rapidly undo a

bunch of actions by holding two fingers.

- Three-Finger Tap to Redo - Tap three fingers together on the canvas to redo. Rapidly redo a bunch of actions by holding three fingers.
- Three-finger Swipe to Cut/Copy/Paste - Swipe three fingers down on the canvas to bring up the Cut/Copy/Paste option menu.
- Four-Finger Tap for Full Screen - tapping four fingers on the screen will enter Full-Screen mode with the interface disappearing. To bring the interface back, four-finger tap again or tap the full-screen button in the top left corner.

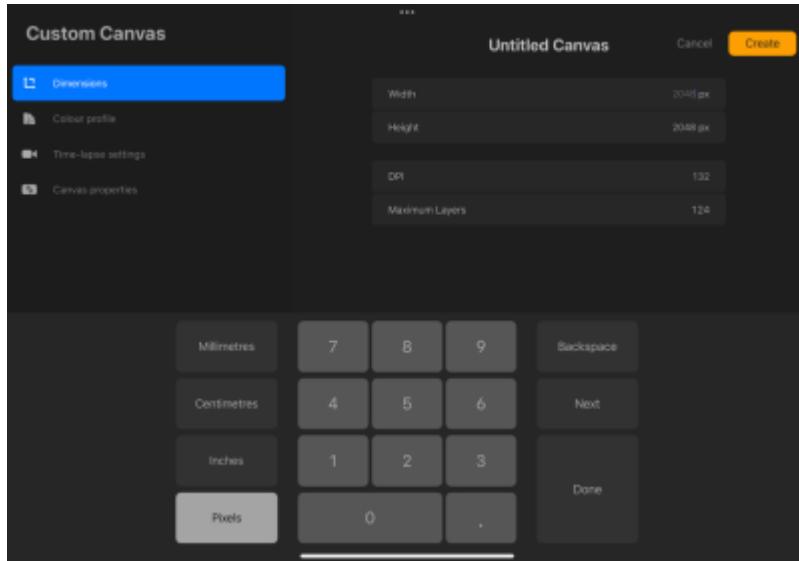
Procreate also has a wide range of Accessibility Gestures and all the gestures can be changed to best suit the user. This can be accessed through the Actions (wrench icon button), then Prefs and Gesture Controls to open the Gesture Controls panel.



Single Touch Gestures are one accessibility option for users with limited hand movements, this can be activated via the iPadOS settings - Procreate and then toggle Single Touch Gestures Companion on. Just as a note the companion will always remain on-screen until it is toggled off.

Creating a Canvas

Now that we have a basic overview of the Procreate Canvas interface, let's create a new canvas to begin working on



- To create a new canvas press on the '+' in the gallery view
- This will open the new canvas options
- You can either choose from the default canvas sizes or you can choose to create a custom canvas size by tapping on the small + canvas button in the right corner.
- Dimensions for the canvas can be in millimetres, centimetres, inches or pixels, choose the size that works best for the project you are creating.
- We will select just a standard A4 paper size to begin.
- DPI or dot per inch can also be selected for the new canvas from this view. The size of the DPI will again depend on what the project has been used for, we will use 300 DPI for now.
- The colour profile can also be selected, it will default to RGB but CMYK is the preferred option for designs that will be printed.
- A cool feature of Procreate that can be seen in the Custom Canvas menu is the Time-Lapse Settings. The app allows users to record and export time-lapse videos of any created artwork. These settings options aid in choosing the quality of the video being exported.
- The last option in this view is Canvas properties, this is where a background colour can be chosen or made transparent. This is not a locked option and changes can be made throughout the project via the layer menu.

Once all these settings have been decided on, hit 'Create' to open our new canvas. Now you should be able to see your canvas in the middle and the Procreate interface around it. This interface can be moved around to best use your needs but we will leave it at the default stage for now.

Let's move on to brushes and start to play around with Procreate's features.

Brush options

With Procreate you can create using an apple pencil or even your finger. Let's go over some of the essential brush options that you have access to.

Overview of the brush options:

- Paint
- Smudge

- Erase

All these options use the same brushes from the brush library with different effects. It's great to play around with these options and see all the ways you could create with them.

To start select the **Brush Tool** and select a brush option from the Brush Library that comes with Procreate, you can also download custom brushes from the internet. Know you can choose other aspects like colour, size and opacity and go wild with your creation.

The **Smudge Tool** works similarly to Paint but works best when there are already other strokes made on the canvas already. The smudge tool can be used again with again brush from the Brush Library and can create various effects. The Smudge Tool allows you to move the pigment around your canvas through blending, smoothing out strokes or mixing colour.

Erase is the option you use when you want to erase an aspect of your artwork. To begin using this tool you can again select the Brush Tool and a brush from the library and then move the brush around the canvas to erase parts of your artwork.

A nice tip with brushes is that the most recent brushes you have used will appear in the top list of the Brush Library under the tab Recent. This can be helpful to return to a brush you were using quickly. You can also pin your favourite brushes by swiping left on the brush in the Recent section and tapping Pin.

Brush Studio

Brush Studio is a menu that allows you to fully customise the pre-made brushes in Procreate, or even create your brush!



To enter the Brush Studio, tap on the brush you would like to edit and this will open the Studio. This interface is divided into three parts: Attributes, Settings and Drawing Pad.

Attributes:

- Contains 12 characteristics of your brush. Shape, gain and size can all be adjusted for the brush here.

Settings:

- The settings are different for each of the 12 characteristics of the brush, you can make heaps of changes such as spacing, jitter, stabilization, tapering and so on.

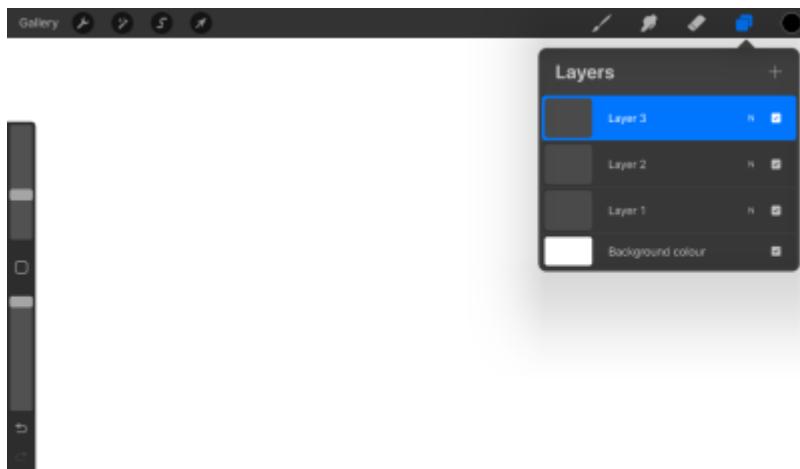
Drawing Pad:

- This allows you to preview and test out the changes been made to your brushes before saving.

An excellent way to test out the differences is to draw shapes and scribbles while adjusting settings to see how it looks.

Let's have a play around with the Brush Studio and see what kinds of things we can create. Draw out a few shapes and squiggles, maybe a dog, have fun with it and see the difference the Brush Studio can make to your artwork.

Introduction to Layers



Layers are super helpful in separating elements of your artwork, allowing you to make changes to one layer on the artwork without affecting the others.

- Layers can be grouped into a folder, copied, pinned and hidden.
- The bottom of the layer menu is the background layer with a colour. This is where the colour for the background can be selected or turned off completely for exporting transparent PNG files.

Saving files and sharing

Saving files: New canvases are always automatically saved into the Procreate gallery. Within this gallery, you can create stacks to help organise your artwork.

- These stacks work similarly to folders and help group items together. Drag and drop artwork on top of each other to create a stack that can be named accordingly.
- Swiping left on a canvas in the gallery menu will open a menu that includes options for sharing, duplicating or deleting. This is an easy quick way to make copies, delete or share your work.

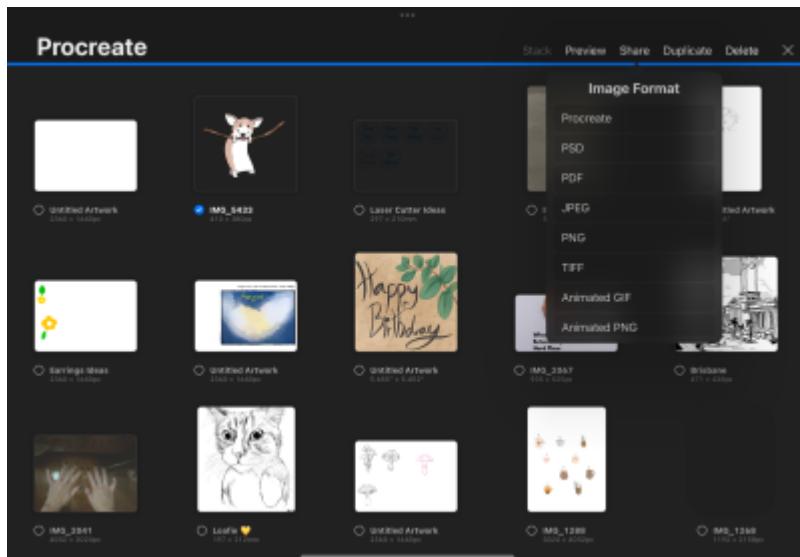
You can also backup your work via a few different methods involving, iCloud Drive or an external hard drive. This can help you access this work if something happens to your device, to save the work simply select the projects to want to save in the gallery area. A drop-down menu will appear and you can choose which file you want to save, you can save them as image files, a Procreate file, Photoshop and pdf files. This gives you a few various ways to back up your work. If the work is a work in progress a good file option would be Procreate or a Photoshop file so it can be opened and worked on later.

Sharing your work:

Procreate has a pretty easy way of sharing your artwork with friends, family or the world. You can share the artwork via the Gallery or the actual project file itself.

Sharing via the Gallery is easy!

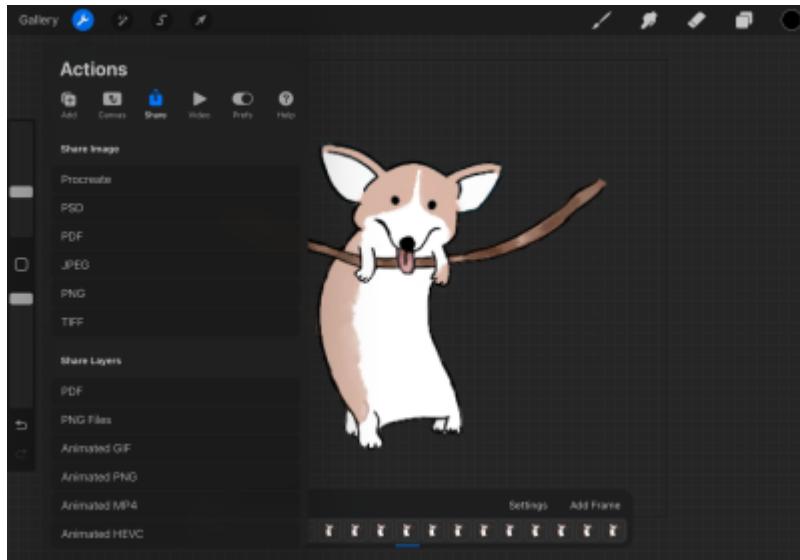
- From the Gallery choose the Select option at the top right-hand corner of the screen
- Then click on the artwork you want to share and click the share option that appears in the menu bar.
- A drop-down menu will appear with all the different file formats so that you can share the artwork. Select which format you would like from this drop-down menu.



Sharing via the project file is also quite easy!

- Click on the Actions tool (wrench icon) and select the third option 'Share' and a drop-down menu will appear.
- Select which file type you would like from the list! There are a few different options to choose from.
- Once Procreate has generated the file, a screen will appear that allows you to choose where to send your file.
- If you select Save Image an image file will be saved in the Photos app of your device.

- or you can share the file via email, messages or social media.



References

Images from the State Library Collection that were used to develop samples and use for tracing.

Entwined: Plant illustrations	https://www.flickr.com/photos/statelibraryqueensland/albums/72157719562665238/
Entwined SLQ Exhibition	https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/entwined
Australian orchids / R. D. Fitzgerald	https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/discovery/fulldisplay?vid=61SLQ_INST:SLQ&tab=all&docid=alma991311844702061&searchScope=SLQ_PCI_EBSCO&context=L&lang=en
Exotic Botany	https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/discovery/fulldisplay?vid=61SLQ_INST:SLQ&tab=all&docid=alma998353154702061&searchScope=SLQ_PCI_EBSCO&context=L&lang=en
A specimen of the botany of New Holland	https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/discovery/fulldisplay?vid=61SLQ_INST:SLQ&tab=all&docid=alma997628024702061&searchScope=SLQ_PCI_EBSCO&context=L&lang=en