

CSP TIPS FOR WEBTOON DRAWING

By hakei (@hakeism)

This is formatted on a browser

On the phone, it might look weird

This is a collection of settings and tricks I know

If your device blows up following this document, I'm not liable
Feel free to suggest additional shortcuts and tips, and I can add them here

BEFORE YOU START READING

CREDITS

Many thanks to webtoon creators <u>두미두미</u> and <u>백꾸</u> for their YouTube videos

ASSUMPTIONS

- This guide assumes a basic understanding of art & art programs
- Some features will require Clip Studio EX
- SketchUp won't be covered here

FOR DEMONSTRATIONS & COMIC INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

If you want to level up your game, I have a **Coloso online class**: Character-Driven Comics: Self-Pub to Industry

SHORT FAQ - General

Clip Studio Pro or EX?

- Try the free trial versions first.
 - If you're serious about comics, especially for printing, use EX
 - **EX-only features:** include managing multiple pages in one project file, auto-extracting line art from 3D, and exporting multiple pages with one button
 - Clip Studio goes on 40-50% sales around major holidays, including upgrades from Pro to EX

Scroll or traditional format?

- Scroll format for Webtoon or Tapas, as they're scroll platforms
- o If you have **ANY plans to print:** draw in the traditional format
 - Much easier to re-format traditional to scroll than vice versa
 - 1. But always make sure your comic is mobile-friendly
 - a. Majority of modern audiences read from their phones
 - 2. Many creators draw in print format, then create a separate scroll version

Webtoon backgrounds?

- o Use SketchUp, Abler, and Clip Studio assets, Blender or even Sims the game.
- o You can also use <u>Perspective Rulers</u> to help draw your own or edit your photos

• Average number of panels for an episode?

- Contracted professionals: 50+ panels per episode
- o Indie creators can aim for 10-40+ panels, depending on the genre
 - Slice-of-lifes are okay with short episodes. For plot-heavy dramas, you need more
 - **Rule of thumb:** each episode should give something readers can react to, or an important information to digest

• Panelling?

- Study Scott McCloud's Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art
- Analyze successful webtoons/mangas
 - *ex*) to study how to open a series, gather the first chapters of the 5 top-ranking webtoons/mangas of your genre, as well as other genres
 - Analyze what the first dialogue is, how the main character is introduced, how tone and stakes are established, etc.

Drawing takes too long?

- o Prioritize storytelling over detailed art
 - The average reader spends only 1-2 seconds on a panel
- o Focus on drawing faces and hair, as people spend the most time looking at them
 - Draw the big outlines first (ex: hair outline, clothing outline)
 - Add detail lines later when you have time
 - Simplified anime like Mob Psycho 100 is great at capturing visual information
- o <u>Draw smart, not hard</u> & take shortcuts
 - The harsh reality: many readers just want the next episode and will not sympathize if you hurt yourself drawing

SHORT FAQ - Other

How do I build a readership?

 You need to treat Webtoon/Tapas/other platforms as hosting sites and be active in social media promotions

Pay for online advertising?

- o Not recommended, as the results are usually minimal for the cost
 - Learn social media marketing strategies. It takes time and effort, but can lead to amazing (and free!) results

• Slicing panels for uploading?

 Webtoon and Tapas automatically slice images. Clip Studio EX also has an Export Webtoon feature

- HELP! My images look crunchy on the Webtoon app!
 - Export as PNG instead of JPEG
- HELP! My files are too big for Webtoon!
 - <u>Croppy is the best</u> image compressor that doesn't change your colors or trash the quality
- Best time/day to upload?
 - Too many factors, but **consistency is key.** Let your readers know when to expect updates
- Common font/size used?
 - o Anime Ace (I use CC Wild Words)
 - Use a font that is clear and legible.
 - Handwriting is not recommended. But you can use free handwriting-to-font makers instead
 - Size depends on the canvas and DPI settings
 - Take a screenshot of a comic you like, and paste it to your canvas to gauge the size

BRUSH/3D ASSETS

- <u>Clip Studio Assets store</u>: brushes, 3D models, poses, effects, screentones, etc
- Acon3D: SketchUp backgrounds, brushes, 3D models. Geared towards webtoons
- SketchUp: for backgrounds
- Abler: for SketchUp backgrounds (ver1 is discontinued but free; ver2 is paid)
- 3D Warehouse: for building SketchUp assets
- <u>CGTrader</u>: various 3D assets, not all are suitable for CSP
- <u>SnapToon</u>: A separate background software. Some models already on Acon

FONTS

- <u>List of dialogue/SFX fonts used by scanlation groups</u>
- Manga font directory
- Blambot: free and licensed fonts for dialogue and sound effects
- <u>Comicraft</u>: mostly paid fonts
- <u>Google fonts</u>: tons of free licensed fonts

VIDEO GUIDES

- Using and editing SketchUp for webtoon backgrounds
- <u>Using this doc's template in action</u> (this one will help with the <u>Basic Workflow</u> section)
- Improving comic readability
- Using the vector layer for lineart

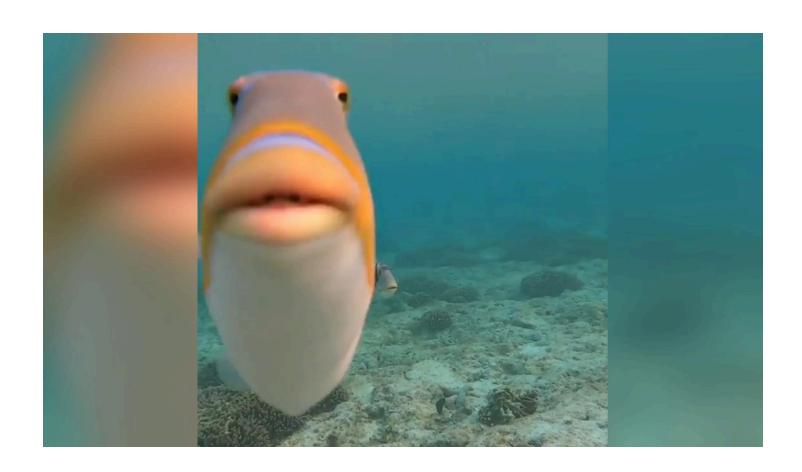
HOW TO DO PROMOTIONS

Using Social Media to Promote Your Comic

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1. GETTING STARTED



CANVAS SET UP

A. TEMPLATE

My webtoon template: assets.clip-studio.com/en-us/detail?id=2208895

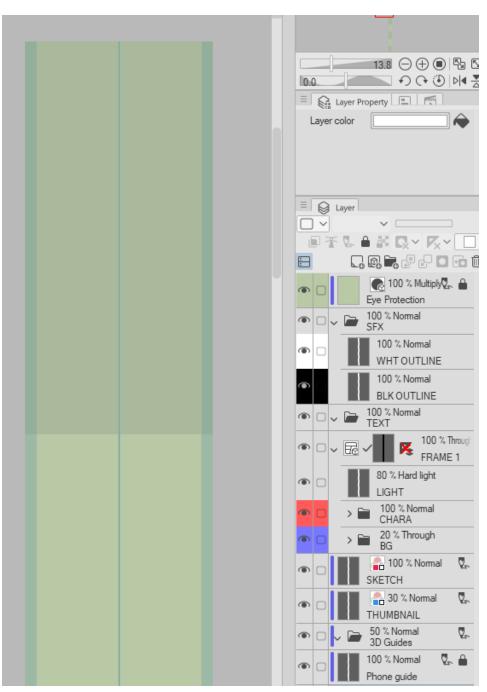
You should modify it as needed. Save a changed template by going to Edit > Register Material > Template

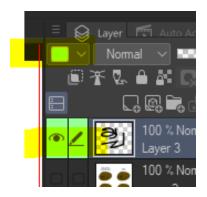
The green layer on top is to **reduce eye strain** while doing lineart

You can turn it off while working on color

Since it's a 'Draft' layer, it won't affect your exported images even when turned on

(will be explained later in the document)





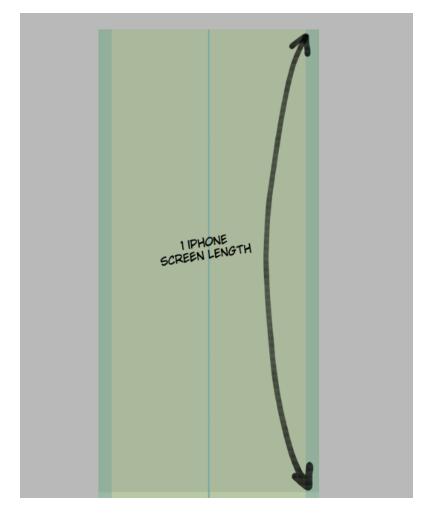
TIP

Important layers can be assigned colors for easy recognition

B. SMARTPHONE SCREEN GUIDES

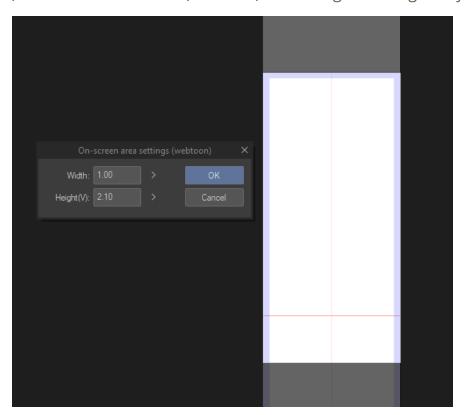
No more than one or two webtoon panels per screen

More than three, panels are too crowded



You can also use CSP's webtoon previewer

(View > On screen area (webtoon) and change the Height to your phone size



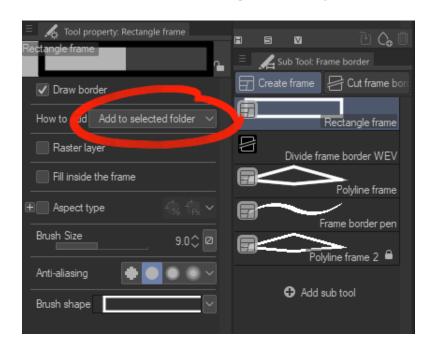
Clip Studio also has <u>Companion</u> <u>Mode</u>, where you can preview a canvas on your phone

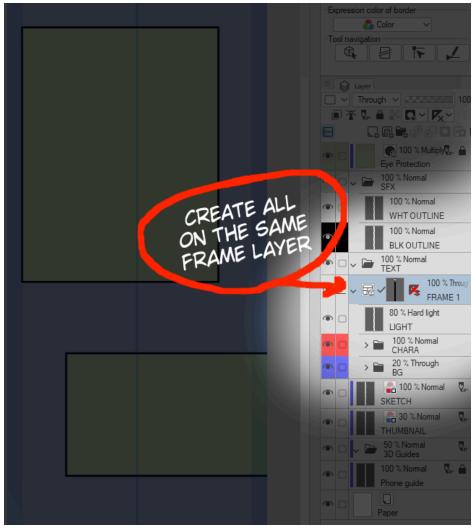
(It rarely works for me though)

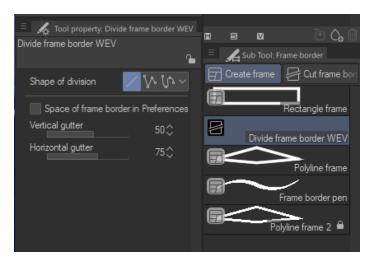


C. FRAME FOLDER

Create the frames on a single frame layer



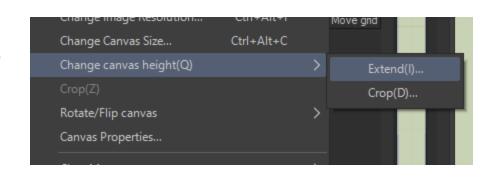


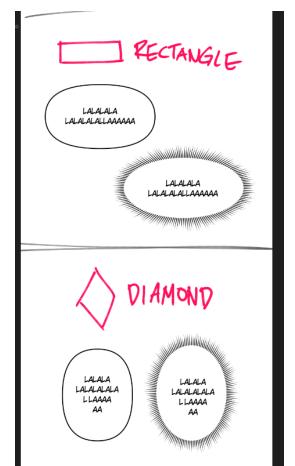


Use cut Frame Border for even spacing between two panels

To **change the space** between the webtoon panels, go to:

Edit > Change Canvas Height > Extend or Crop





D. DIALOGUE BALLOONS

Two styles: diamond shape or rectangle

Don't forget to pad the space around the text, so it doesn't feel choked by the balloons

- No more than 3-4 words per line
- 1-2 sentences per balloon
- Read these **free lettering basic tips**
- In webtoons, keep the balloons from touching the canvas edges

If you create your own balloons, save it as a Material (create an empty text balloon, then drag it to your Materials folder)

Any Materials balloon that gets dragged over text will **automatically center** itself

There are great hand-drawn balloons like <u>this one</u> in the Assets store



NORMAL, SPOKEN DIALOGUE

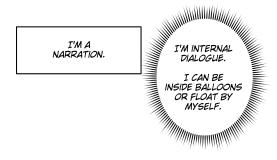


E. DIALOGUE FONTS

List of dialogue/SFX fonts used by scanlation groups

Manga font directory

NARRATION / INTERNAL DIALOGUE



You should differentiate these three **at the minimum**

SOUND EFFECTS



The more lettering styles under your belt,

The better your comic looks



2. LET'S WORK



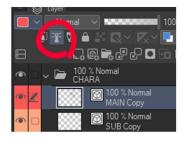
You can download an **old** episode file of mine <u>here (Google Drive)</u>

BASIC WORKFLOW (Quick ver)

Simplify your layers, especially when working with others



1. SET YOUR LINEART LAYER AS 'REFERENCE'





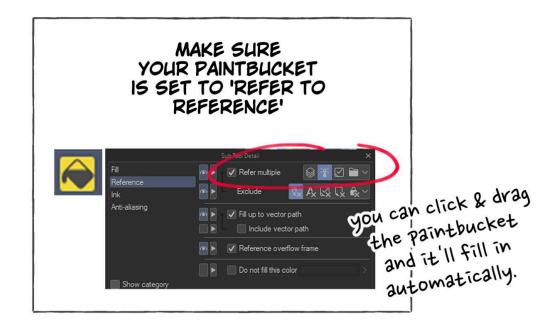
2. FILL IN ALL THE BASE COLORS IN ONE LAYER





3. SHADOWS AND GRADIENTS ON SEPARATE LAYERS.

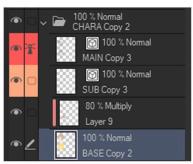


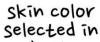


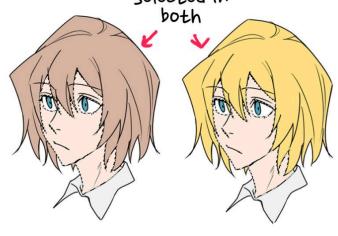




THESE TWO HEADS ARE DRAWN & COLORED ON THE SAME LAYER.





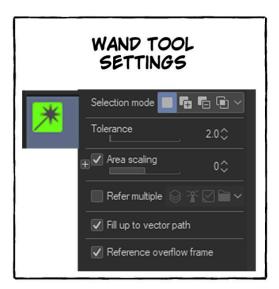


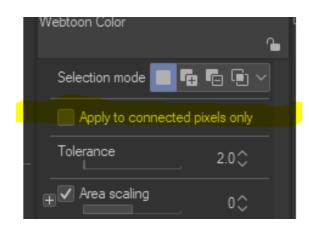
WITH ALL THE BASE COLORS ON ONE LAYER, YOU CAN USE THE 'SELECT BY COLOR WAND.

THIS WILL ALLOW YOU TO SHADE IN GROUPS, USING LESS LAYERS.









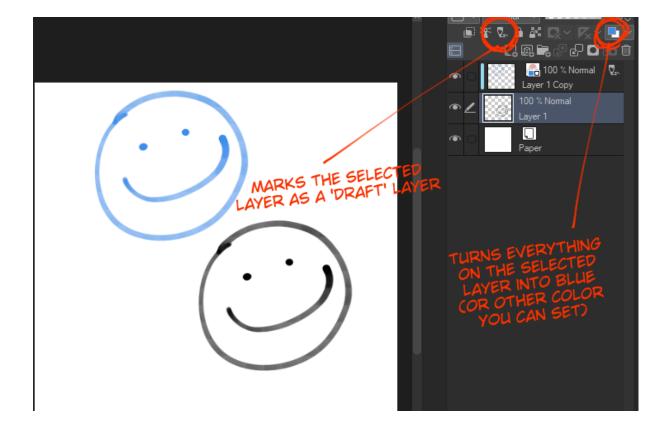
TIP

I forgot to include this menu above, but the highlighted portion is the key

BASIC WORKFLOW (Expanded ver)

A. STORYBOARD/SKETCH LAYER

Toggle the Draft button, so the layer is **ignored** by tools like Fill Bucket and during export

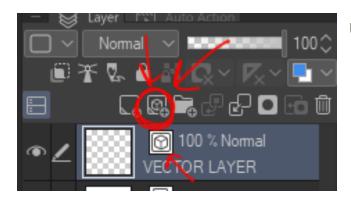


Make sure your paint bucket, color wand, etc. ignore Draft layers

(Also useful to have them ignore Text layers)



B. VECTOR LINEART LAYER

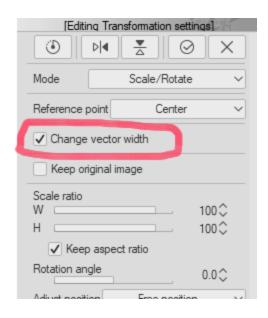


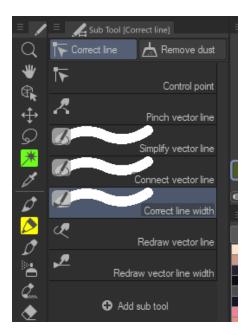
Use vector layers for all lineart

You can adjust the lineart's thickness, size, brush shapes, etc., without killing the quality

(More vector options at the <u>Combine Models and Backgrounds</u> section)

When using Transform, you can change whether you want the width to change, too

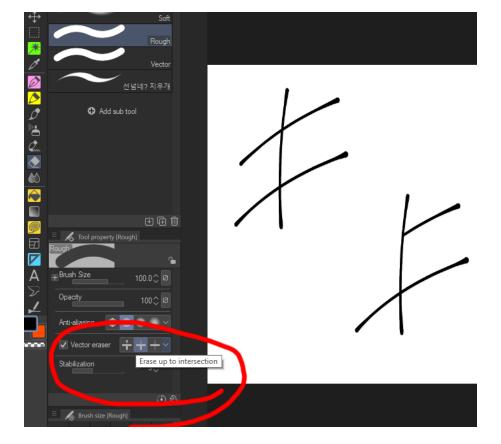


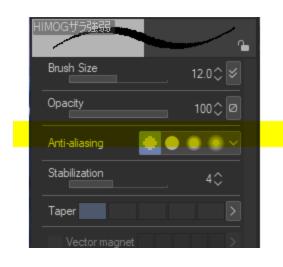


These set of tools can help you manipulate vector lines

Use the Vector Eraser for quick erasing

(ex: one single eraser stroke can delete an entire line)





TIP

Anti-aliasing: weak or strong?

Generally:

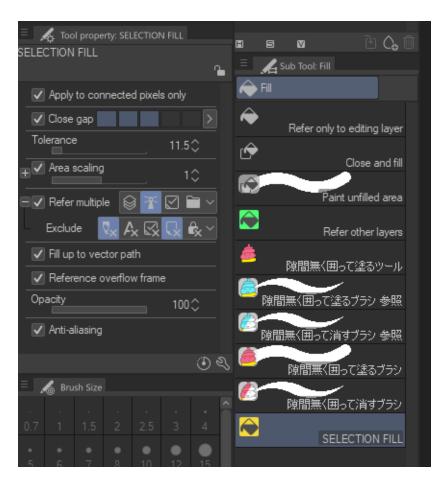
Turn it OFF for printed black/white comics, for crisp lines on paper

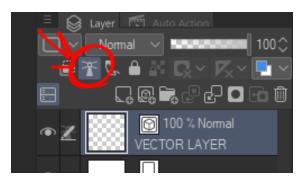
Turn it ON for digital/color comics, to be smoother and easier on the eyes

(But, personal preference should be #1)

C. FLAT BASE COLORS

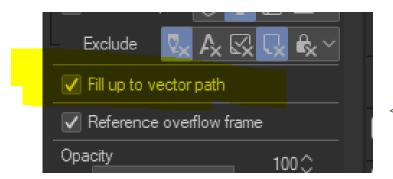
Set your main lineart layer as the **Reference Layer**



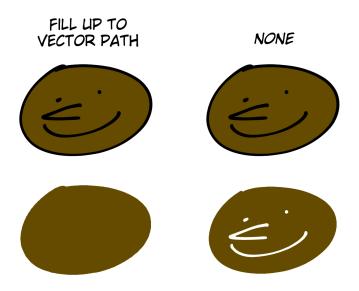


This custom color bucket uses the Reference layer as a guide for where to fill colors

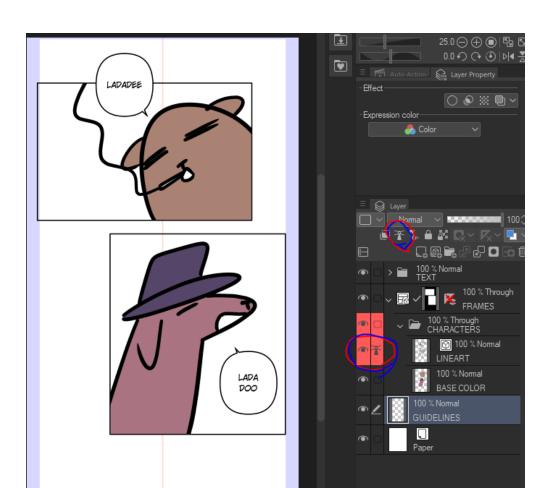
You can also use this famous <u>close and</u> <u>fill tool without gaps</u> tool (the ice cream man)

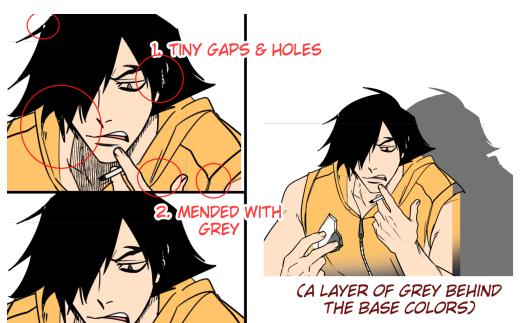


<< an important setting



Paint all the base colors on **one layer**



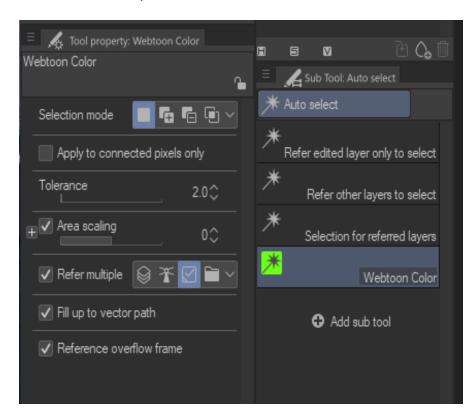


TIP

Tiny gaps in the base colors can usually be "disguised"

if you put dark grey behind them

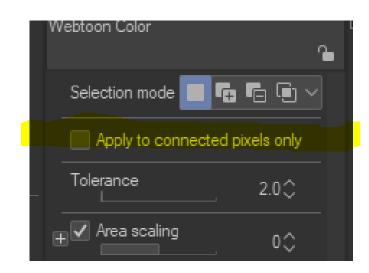
D. SHADOWS/RENDERING



Use a custom Selection Wand to select all of the same color on a layer at once

This means you can do shading for that selected color quickly

(ex: lay down all the shadows for browns; or change the airbrush color for all the reds)



<< an important setting

In general:

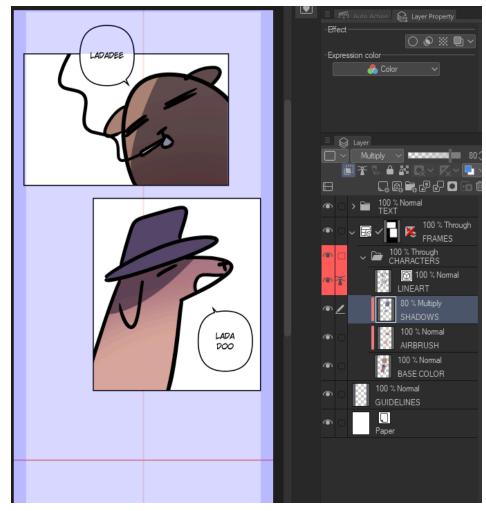
Multiply layer for shading

Screen/Overlay/Hard Light layers for environmental lights

Keep separate layers for airbrush effects, etc

(Clip Studio v2 has a **Shading Assist feature**

It's wonky, but can be used as a starting point)





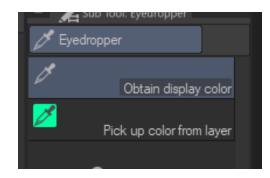
Use the Lasso Fill tool to draw/fill an area quickly, especially for cell-shading

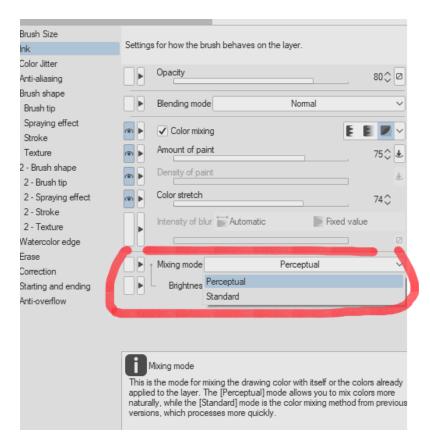
Figure > Direct Draw (or shortcut key 'U')

TIP

Obtain display color: grab colors of what you see on the screen, including any applied effects

Pick up color from layer: allows you to grab the color of a layer

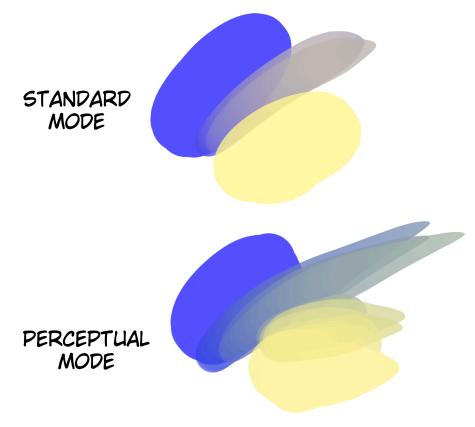




TIP

If you want to mix colors manually, try changing the Mixing Mode to Perceptual

It lets you mix as if you're working with actual paint





TIP

Adding saturation around your shadow/light edges make your art look more dynamic (*Auto-actions like this one can help*)



TIP

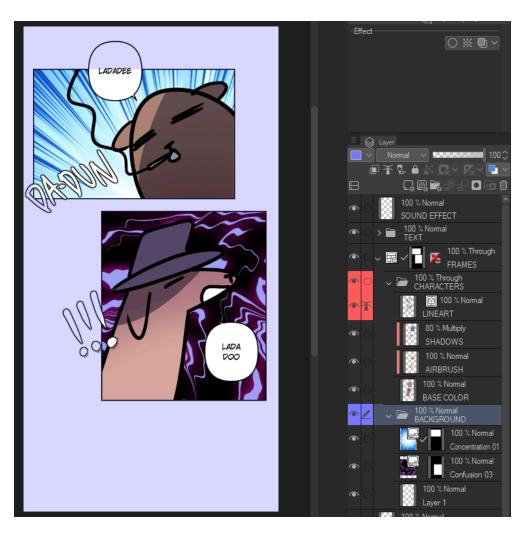
Rendering with shadows as the focus: objects look heavy and solid

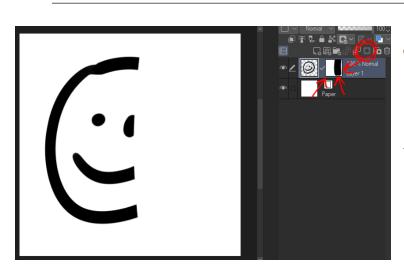
With light: objects look glossy and smooth

E. BACKGROUND

If you're drawing backgrounds, similar principles as above apply

Using **Layer Masks** prevents images from overflowing to other panels





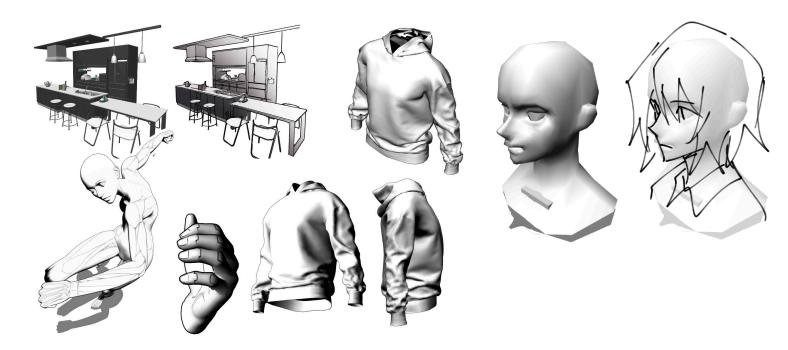
TIP

Layer Masks: "Erases" without actually erasing the image, so you can reverse at any time

3. USE THOSE ASSETS



DRAW SMART, NOT HARD



A. 3D MODELS

Using 3D models cuts down time and saves your long-term health

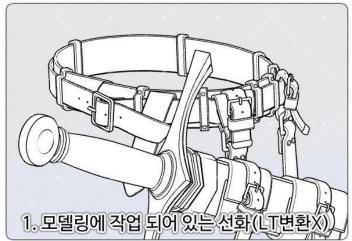
Clip Studio Assets store has tons of assets of all kinds, both free and paid
Acon3D assets are pricey, but high-quality and **geared for webtoons/color comics**



Models like these have built-in with lineart and clean colors

Example: https://www.acon3d.com/en/toon/product/1000017333

- 1. Lineart is part of the 3D model
- 2. Flat colors are also part of the 3D model
- 3. Turn on Shadows Toon Shading setting (more info below)
- 4. Add effects







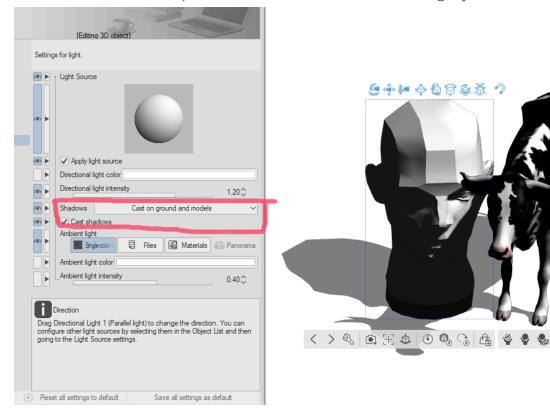




B. 3D SHADOWS

All 3D models have shadows that can be turned on/off

In Clip Studio v3, models' shadows can now interact with other models (*This auto-action* will help extract the shadows as cell-shading layers)



We can change Clip Studio's rendering & physics engine

(not all models are compatible with the physics)



(DEFAULT)



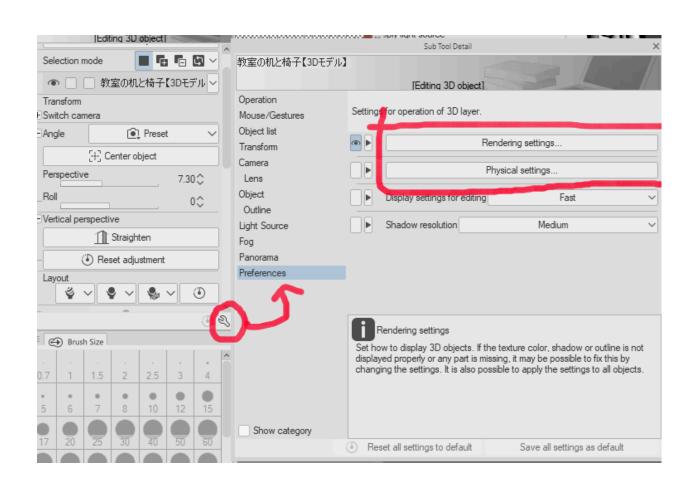
LIGHT SOURCE TURNED OFF



PHONG RENDERING

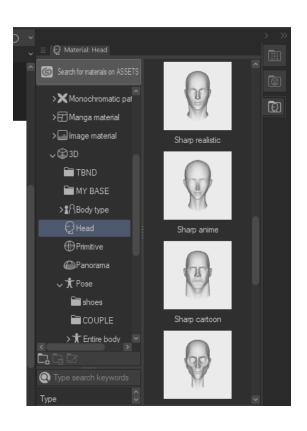


TOON RENDERING

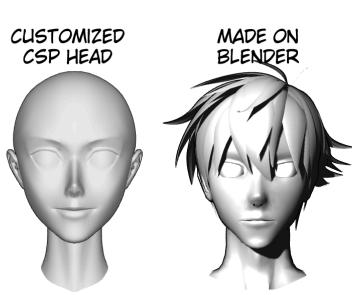


C. 3D HEADS

Clip Studio Ver 2.0 includes customizable heads







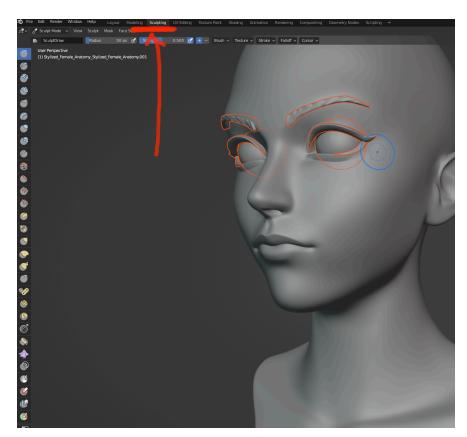
TIP

For heads that fit your style the closest,

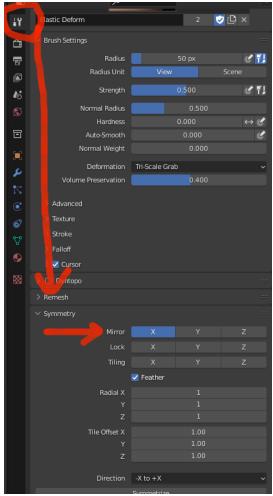
it's best to use 3D programs like <u>Blender</u> (free)

Download a <u>free head on</u> CGTrader

- a. (make sure it's not too high quality, or Clip Studio will lag when you import)
- 2. Open it in Blender. Make sure the head is selected, and switch to the Sculpting tab (at the top)



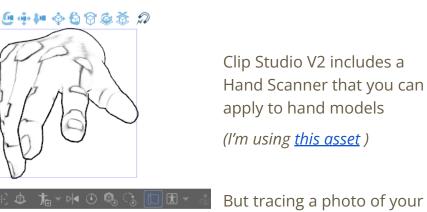
- 3. In the right menu, make sure Symmetry is turned on (if you want a symmetric face)
 - a. Can be turned off when you make asymmetric changes
 - b. If symmetric changes aren't being made, then reposition the model by going back to the Layouts tab (at the top of program)
- 4. When done, save as OBJ, FBX, or GLTF



D. 3D HANDS

own hand is faster and more

accurate



Finger positions can be locked so they don't move

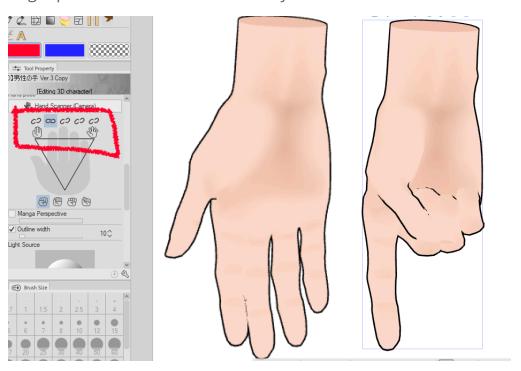
🔏 Tool property: Object

√ Joint angle limit

[Editing 3D character]

02 02 02 02

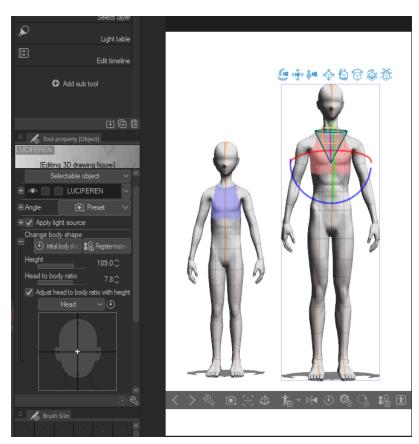
& A 🔀

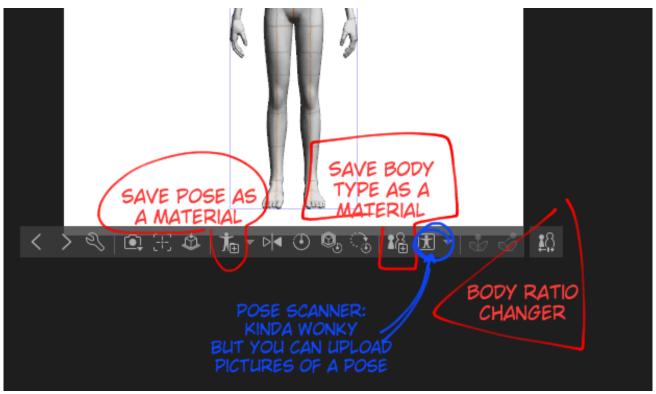


E. 3D BODY

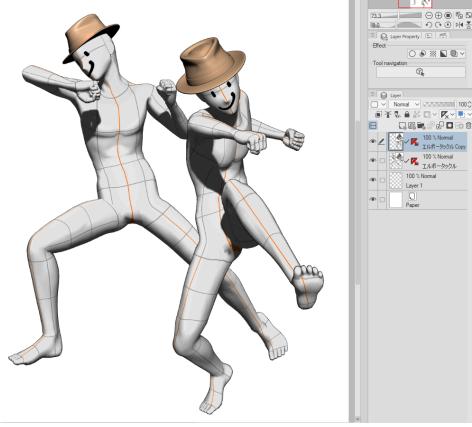
Create your character bases by customizing CSP's base models

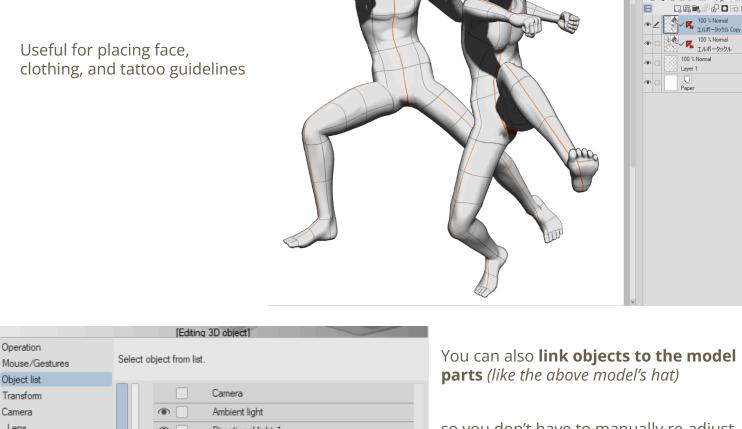
Good for keeping character consistency





Clip Studio v4 lets you draw directly on CSP's base models (more tips here)



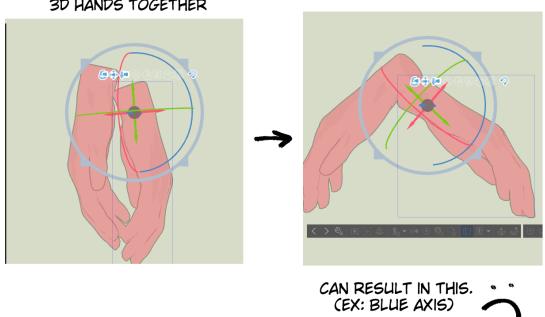


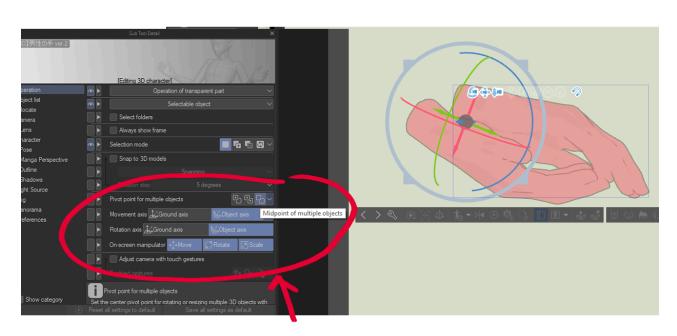
so you don't have to manually re-adjust each time the pose is changed

Click and drag objects inside the body model, and assign an Attachment Point

TIP

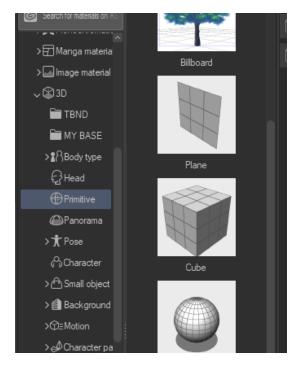
TRYING TO ROTATE THESE 3D HANDS TOGETHER





CHANGED SETTING TO MOVE THE TWO HANDS IN THE SAME ROTATION.

F. TURN 2D INTO 3D



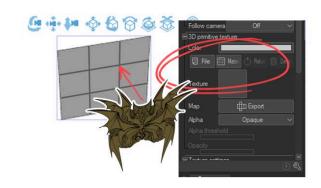
You can drag a 2D image to a base Primitive Shape (or some existing 3D layer) to move it around in a 3D space



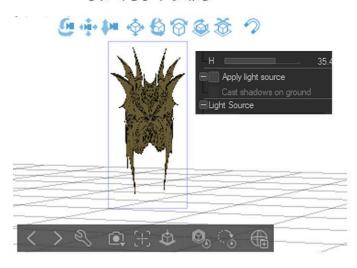
1. DRAW THE THING, SAVE A JPG/PNG (OR AS A CSP MATERIAL)



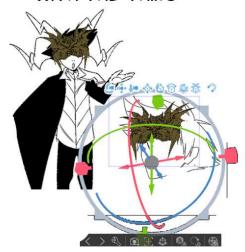
2. OPEN A 3D PRIMITIVE, INSERT IMG OF THE THING

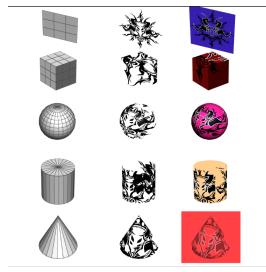


3. THING IS NOW ON A 3D PLANE



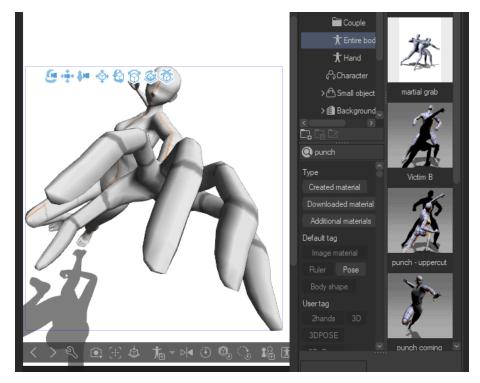
4. DRESS A DUDE WITH THE THING





Other primitive shapes can do this, too

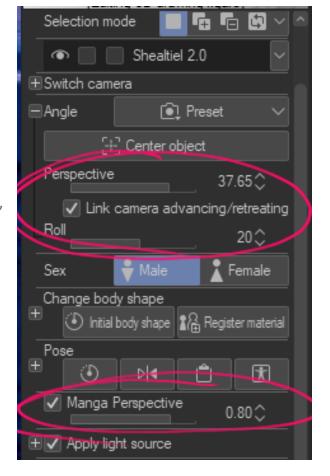
G. 3D ANGLES AND POSES

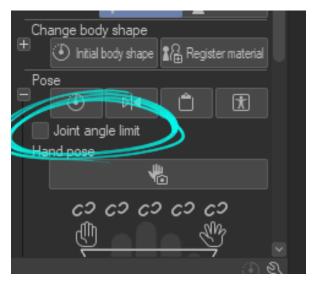


Clip Studio's store is full of free and paid poses

so you don't have to go through the trouble of posing everything from scratch

Dynamic angles can be made with Perspective, Roll, and Manga Perspective





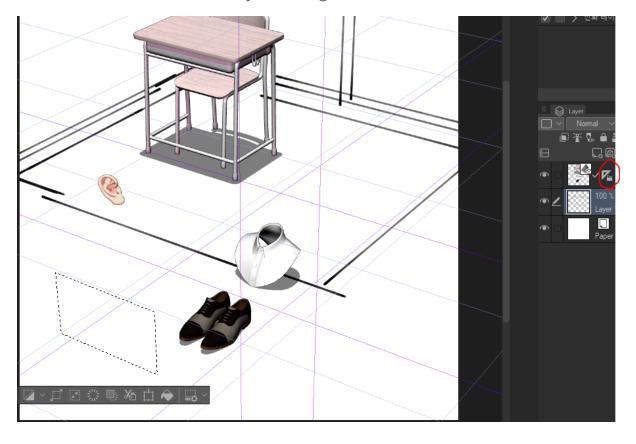
TIP

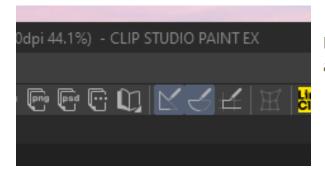
Turn OFF the Joint Angle Limit for easier posing

H. 3D PERSPECTIVE RULERS

Every 3D object comes with Perspective Rulers

- Marquee (shape selection) tools will **automatically change** to fit the perspective while a ruler is on
- To turn off/on the ruler, you can right-click and click Show Ruler

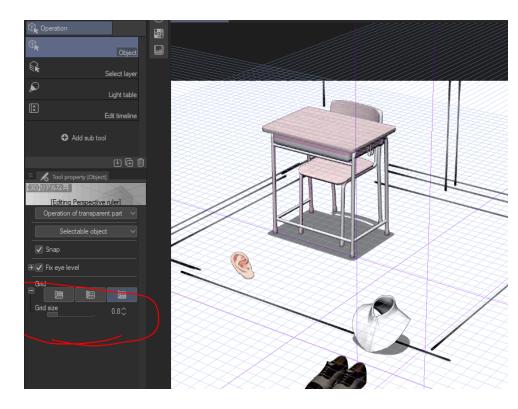




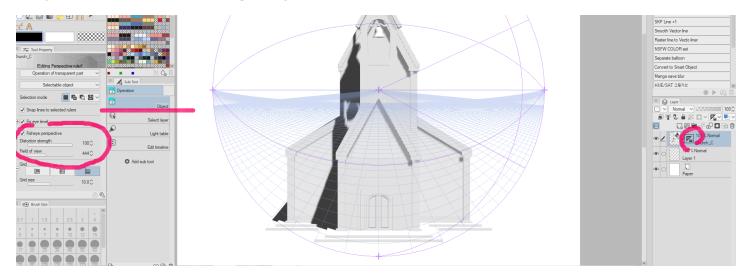
If these icons are turned on, your Brush/Pens will snap to any active rulers

You can also display the ceiling/wall grids and change the grid cell size

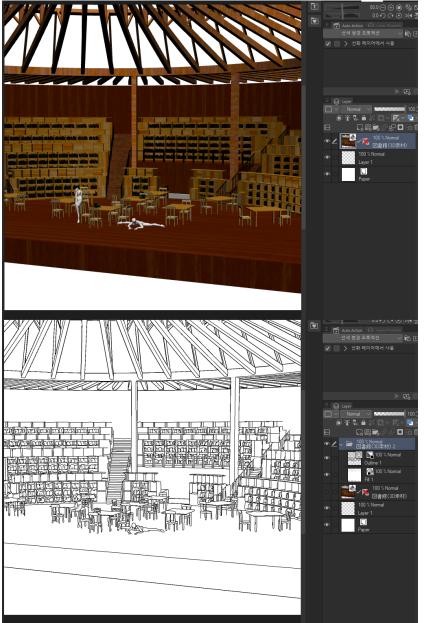
(To access this: select the layer rule icon with the Object tool)



Clip Studio v2 added the Fisheye Perspective option (objects themselves don't change, only the ruler)



I. TURN 3D INTO LINEART



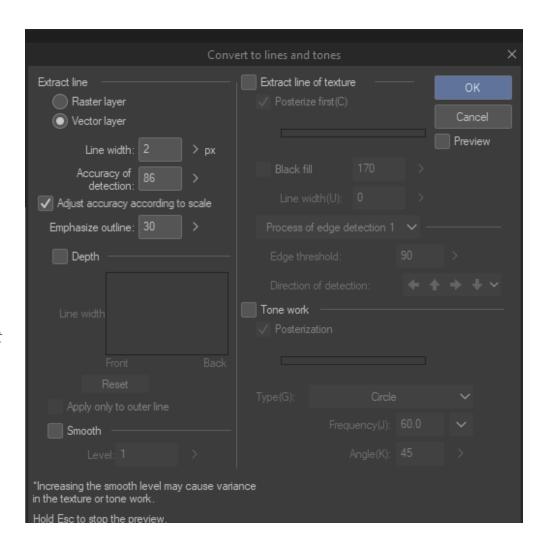
You can add CSP models directly to CSP backgrounds

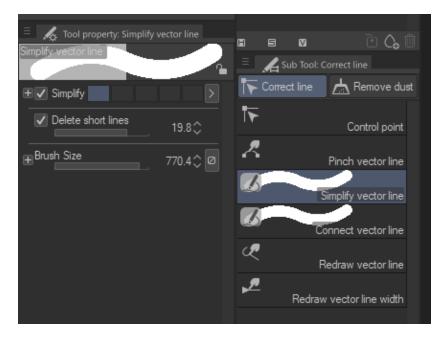
If needed, both the sizes of dolls and background models can be adjusted

Right-click on the 3D Layer, and select Convert to Lines and Tones I typically use this setting:

(Check the Preview box before committing)

(I sometimes turn on Extract Texture and Tone Work, depending on what sort of work I'm doing)





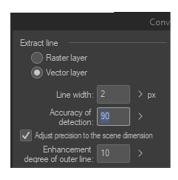
After extraction, use Vector Tools to help smooth or clean the lines

If things still look jagged for your liking, either:

A) change the line's brush

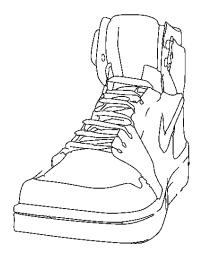
Or B) rasterize the layer and then apply a Smooth filter







ORIGINAL EXTRACTED LINE

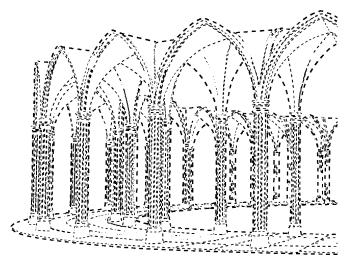


EXPRESSION COLOR: CHANGED "MONOCHROME" TO"COLOR"



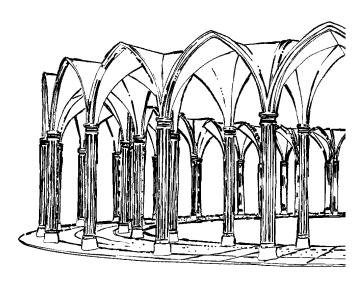


(IF NEEDED)
RASTERIZE
LAYER, AND
US "SMOOTHING"
FILTER



TIP:

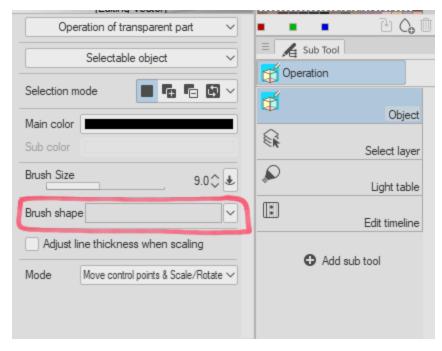
You can change the vector line's brush type to fit your needs

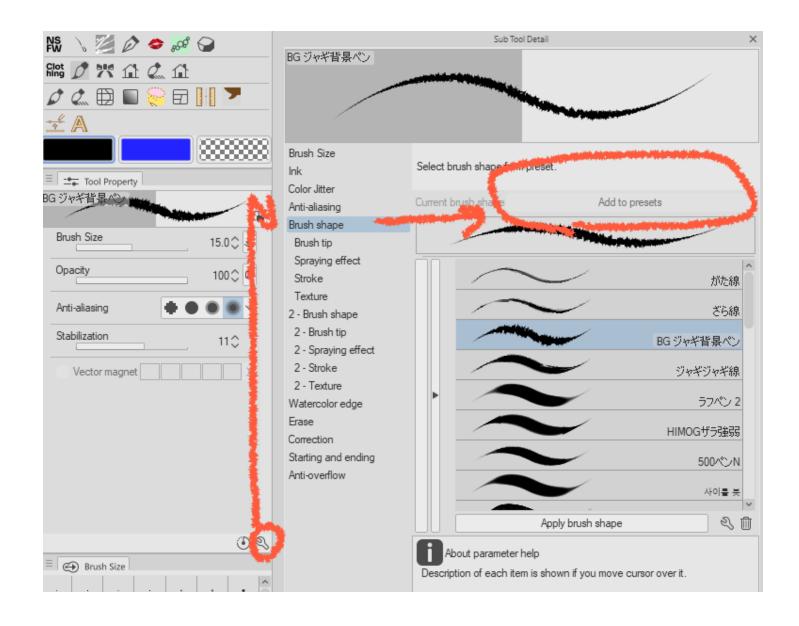


Change via Brush Shape menu

(vector line color can also be changed through Main Color)

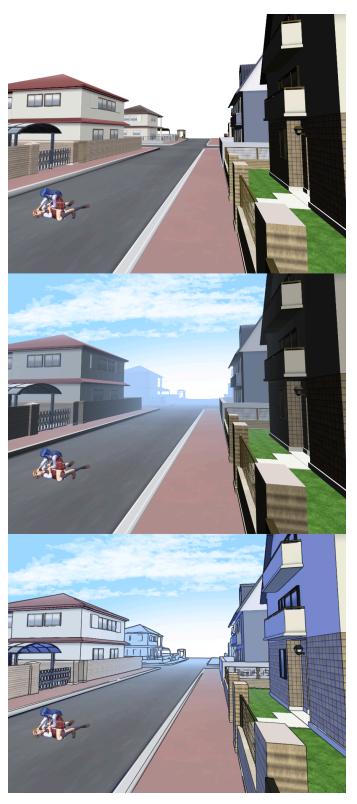
Brush options can be added by:





J. 3D BACKGROUND MODELS

Video Tip: Inma R showcased her editing Clip Studio backgrounds here



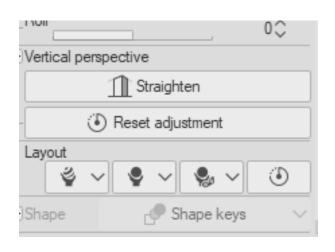
Clip Studio V2 has a Fog option for 3D background assets, so you can apply perspective effects

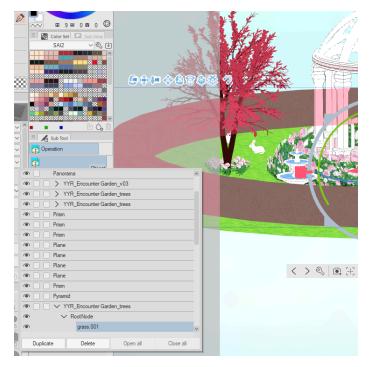
(What I did on the left:

- 1. Base
- 2. Enable Fog, added sky
- 3. Extract Line and Tone (applied shadow)

While changing the camera angle, if the buildings start to look too slanted,

Use the Straighten Vertical Perspective option



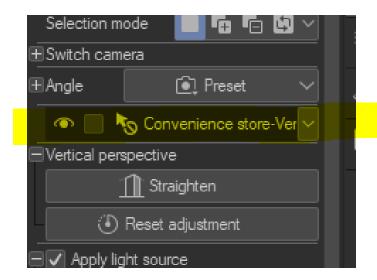


If the model has parts you're allowed to manipulate, you can double-click on a part, and it'll be automatically highlighted in the list

(you'll know it worked if the selected part turns red)

If there's a no-editing-arrow on the model (like the screenshot)

you can usually disable it by simply clicking on the icon



K. CHANGE MOOD WITH GRADIENT MAPS

Gradient Maps can be used to change colors or the atmosphere

(TIP: try setting a gradient map to Multiply, Overlay, or Hard Light

All have different effects)



can change the mood via one click

Very handy, especially if you use it along with SketchUp

(You'll have to label layers beforehand so the auto action can work properly)



L. SAVE FREQUENTLY USED HEADS/POSES/ITEMS

3/4 view to the side is a frequent one

You can draw in advance all the head angles

Video Tip: 66shark showcasing their asset saving process here





4. NO STYLE, NO LIFE



WEBTOON COLORING STYLES

A. SHADING COLOR

ONE SHADOW COLOR, SET TO MULTIPY



ALL SHADOWS COLORPICKED SEPARATELY



ONE SHADOW COLOR, EXCEPT FOR SKIN (ALL IN MULIPLY)



MADE A COPY OF THE BASE COLOR LAYER, AND SET THAT TO MULTIPLY



B. SIMPLIFIED STYLE



NOTES:

GENERAL SHADOWS

INDICATED THROUGH LINEWEIGHT OR

DIAGONAL LINES.

ENVIROMENTAL LIGHT



HEAVY PAPER TEXTURE (OH! MY ASSISTANT STYLE)



NOTES: LINEART BRUSH IS ALSO TEXTURED



LOW OPACITY SHADOWS



TONES AS SHADOW (ON OR OFF STYLE)



NOTES:



NOTES:

MAY USE CELL-SHADING OR TEXTURE BRUSH FOR SHADOWS



C. STRATEGIC COLORING

I rarely render my panels

And rely on gradients and color to carry the mood

This cuts down my production time by a ton

This sort of graphic style works best with thick, bold lineart





D. MATCHING CHARACTER COLORS TO ENVIRONMENT

Pick a mid-tone from the background

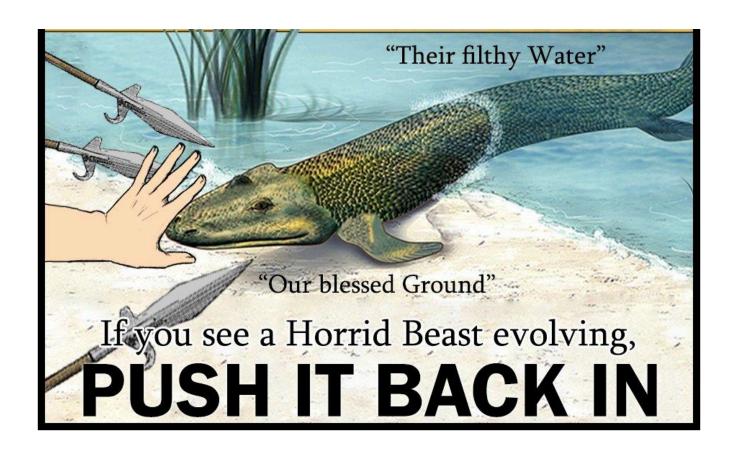
Use the color on **Hard Light and/or Multiply** layer

Using only one can make the colors look flat, so layer them with each other or pair with Overlay layers

Gradient Maps can also be used, with its colors also picked from the background I set them to Multiply



5. MORE CSP TIPS



KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

You can customize your keyboard shortcuts via File > Shortcut Settings

Anything that requires your hand to stretch and strain should be simplified into buttons

(ex: I set my Transform tool shortcut from ctrl+T into keyboard number 2)

SELECTION WAND

- Add to current selection: [shift] + select layer/color
- Subtract from current selection:[alt] + select layer/color

BRUSH

• Change size: [ctrl] + [alt] + drag brush to size

COLOR

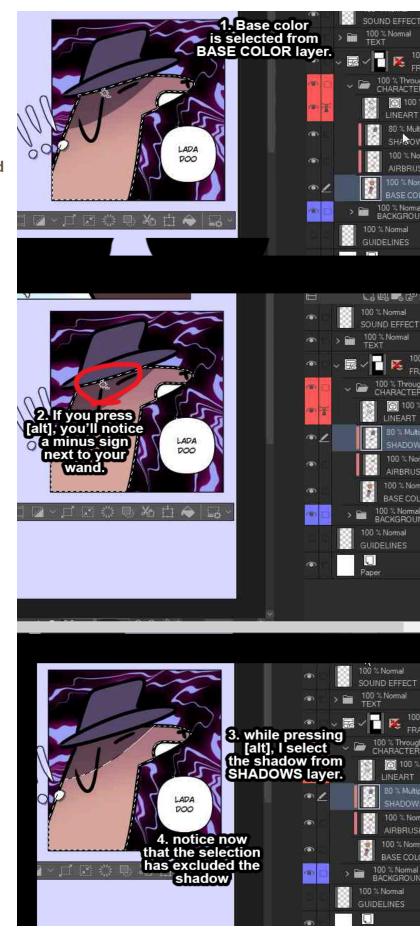
- Switch between foreground and background color: [x]
- Switch between foreground and transparent color: [c]

CANVAS

- Change size: [ctrl] + [alt| + [C]
- Zoom in/out: [ctrl] + mouse wheel
- Move: Space bar

I AYFR

- Hide all other layers except the selected: [alt] + select layer
 - Re-show all layers: [alt] + same layer



- Find what layer something is on: (while using the Move Layer tool) [ctrl] + [shift] + click on thing
- Select all the pixels of a layer: (while on the Wand tool) [ctrl] + click the layer in the Layer window

QUALITY OF LIFE/TOOL ORGANIZATION

NOTE! Once you make changes, you have to manually back up your workspace settings via Cloud Otherwise, the next time you open CSP, it may revert to your last saved settings

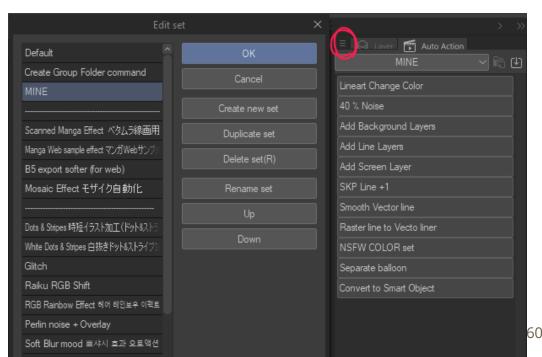
TOP BAR

- Add shortcut buttons for frequently used Menus/ Filters/Auto actions
 - Right click on the header bar > Command Bar Settings
 - Icons can be rearranged via click + drag
 - Customize icons by right click > Icon Settings



AUTO ACTION

- A bit faster/easier to use if you change it to Button Mode
 - o Click on the hamburger menu/ the three lines for Options
- Go to organize, insert empty new sets with —---- as their names





BRUSHES

• Click + Drag brush icons to create "catalogs" of them

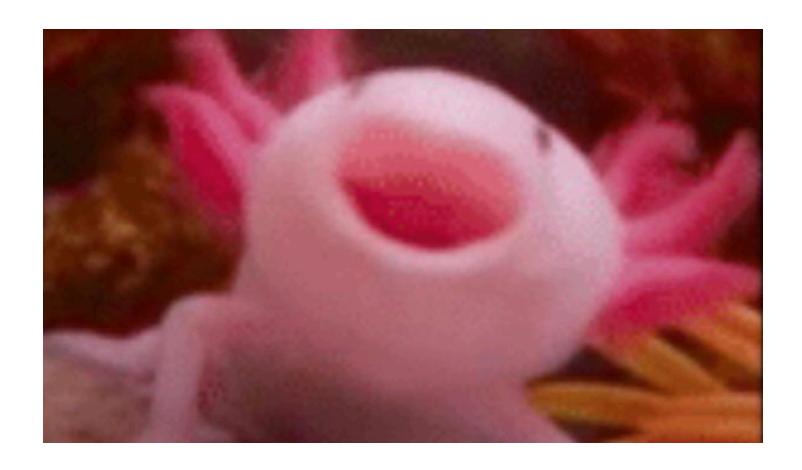
To make a catalog header (such as the "Tree" or "Sky"),

first make a custom icon via a small square canvas, and save it as a JPG/PNG

Then follow the steps in the pic >



6. UPDATE LOG



UPDATE LOG

10/26/2021: Added more info

12/7/2021: Added video section

6/5/2023: Updated Clip Studio V2.0 info and more detailed screenshots. Also more links. Added CSP

Organizing tips section. Added information on 3D. Added Table of Contents

6/13/2023: Added select all pixels in the keyboard shortcuts

6/18/2023: Added color gap mending tip and in FAQ the bit about paying for advertising

6/27/2023: Added tip about moving two 3Ds together

10/24/2023: Added info on 3D section, about Acon's models with lineart built in them. Added links to 66shark and Inma R's youtube videos

3/10/2024: Added info about Abler

4/26/2024: Inserted an image about 3D primitives

10/28/2024: Inserted resources link to Manga Font Directory and list of fonts used by scanlation groups

9/20/2025: Added matching colors to the background section. Updated with new template link. Updated and re-ordered 3D models section. Added strategic coloring section. Edited sentences to be more skimmable.