

Road to Krita 5: Animation Next

Hey Krita people.

One of the silver linings of 2020 for me has been having the chance to work with Eoin on a new development project with the goal of bringing Krita's animation tools to the next level for Krita 5!

With the release of Krita 3.0 back in May 2016 came a slew of features and improvements including brand new tools for traditional animation which quite literally brought a new dimension to what was possible with Krita and quickly became one of our most popular features! The foundation was solid and Krita 3.0 did for animation what past versions did for drawing, painting and illustration: provided a powerful, free, open source and community-driven tool for artists everywhere.

But that was just the beginning of our animation adventure. So, at the start of March this year we began a project to take what Krita's animation tools can do, refine them where possible, and build up from there.

Our first step was to gather information from bug reports, feature requests and task board discussions. While this info has been useful for figuring out what we should do and in what order, we figured it was important to cast a wider net by reaching out to as many users as possible for feedback. To do that, we put together an anonymous "Animation Feedback Survey", asking our users to give us a frank assessment of how our tools stack up for their workflow. Over 200 users filled out the survey with others posting detailed write-ups with a ton of suggestions and feature requests. So, now that we're starting down the road to 5.0, I want to share a summary of the results:

[=====SURVEY SUMMARY=====]

What stands out is just how diverse Krita animators are in terms of their relationship to the medium, their workflow and the features they want. Other things, like reliance on almost all digital tools and concern about the industry moving towards "software as a service" business models were pretty much unanimous! I think this tells us that, while there is absolutely more to be done to meet the workflow needs of animators of different levels (from absolute beginners to studio professionals) and styles, we're definitely on the right track: our community believes in our free and open source development model and cares about their ability to truly own and control their creative tools.

So, over the last few months we've been busy fixing bugs, making changes and adding features with the wants and needs of our animators in mind. Some managed to sneak into the recently released Krita 4.3, as well as 4.4, but the bulk of this project (and much more) is planned to release along with our next major version, Krita 5:

The updated **Animation Timeline Docker** gives you all the controls you need in one place, with tons of little features and quality-of-life improvements. There's a new **layer filter widget** with text search and simple controls for navigating large projects. **Clone frames** allow you to easily reuse existing keyframes throughout your animation, synchronizing changes across frames or even creating simple cycles. A second **AutoKey** mode for blank frames makes animating even faster and easier. New rendering options, like **unique frames** mode, **render from compositions**, and **WebM**. A new **isolate active group** mode, for focusing on one chunk of layers at a time. As well as a bunch of things hidden below the surface (like a **refactor of Krita's animation backend**, new useful **hotkey actions**, **caching improvements** and **bug fixes**) with much more to come by the time Krita 5.0 hits, *even beyond animation!*

Since everything we do is open to the public it's kind of impossible to tease things, but as a little sneak peek, here's a recent screenshot showing our newly revamped Animation Workspace:

[=====RECENT UI SHOT=====]

Can you spot some changes? ...I hope so!

Anyway, before I wrap up I want to bring us back to where we started. Without getting too heavy, it's been a rough year for us all--with some people having it much worse than others. As such, I feel very lucky to be able to work on something as meaningful as Krita right now, and I hope that creating art (with Krita or any other tool, for that matter) is something that helps to bring you happiness during these extraordinarily tough times.

I also want to say that being free, open source and community-driven, Krita's users are the lifeblood of the project. Be it chipping in to the development fund, contributing code and documentation changes, or submitting quality feedback and bug reports, Krita relies on the support of users like you to be able to make progress. Without our community, Krita simply wouldn't be what it is today and progress would grind to a halt. Likewise, as our community continues to grow and more people get involved, there are few limits to what we can build together.

Thanks and stay tuned for more Krita updates. :)

Emmet