Digital Costume Design
Increase Productivity with Procreate

by Lauren T. Roark
and Eric Abele

In Spring 2018, we found ourselves swamped with overlapping design deadlines. One of the many renderings Eric had to create was for an adaptation of *Turn of the Screw* by Henry James for the University of Maryland Baltimore County Department of Theatre. The project called for textural and moody sketches on a quick deadline. Thankfully, we had both been practicing digital rendering to create high-quality sketches on the go. Even under high pressure to produce, Eric was able to easily render the designs for *Turn of the Screw* in less than a week. The end result made it clear to us that digital rendering is an essential technique.

The transition to digital art can be overwhelming for many designers, even with the advancement of pressure-sensitive tablets and styluses that mimic traditional sketching. One of the best apps we have found to help with this transition is Procreate (currently available only for iPad or iPhone). Using the app's "Clipping Mask" function, you can create spectacular sketches and add realistic textures to your renderings that more clearly communicate your ideas.

Getting started with Procreate

To work in Procreate, you need to understand two major concepts. First, drawing areas must have solid boundaries. This means closed shapes created with solid lines. (To create these, we recommend the technical pen at full opacity). Second, you must understand how layers function. If working in layers is new to you, look for the explanation in the Procreate handbook and online tutorials. When you render digitally, your work exists on separate layers under the line drawing, keeping your rendering lines crisp and visible at all times.

Create your sketch

Start with a drawing. You can create your own using Procreate or you can work from a scanned pencil drawing by using "Blend Modes." (The "Multiply" mode will delete the white paper from your sketch. Consult the Procreate handbook for details.) Whichever method is used, we start by rendering figures twice in Procreate, once in pencil and once in ink. This gives the iPad sketch a "hand-drawn" feel. With the drawing layer set to "Reference" (see Step 1), you will be able to fill in the areas within the sketch with color, keeping the line drawing on top. This allows you to recolor and make changes while keeping the sketch's lines undisturbed. Anyone who has had a blob of watercolor ruin their pencil sketch will appreciate this feature.

Use 'ColorDrop' to fill in sections

Create a new layer underneath your sketch and name the layer appropriately for the area. Ensure that your area has solid unbroken lines that connect completely, creating an enclosed shape. We suggest you divide your drawing into multiple sections and fill them on separate layers. In our example, the vest is broken into four sections: Vest Left Front, Vest Right Front, Vest Right Lapel and Vest Left Lapel (see Step 2).

The "ColorDrop Tool" is activated by a three-part movement or gesture. With the correct layer selected, press your stylus to the "Color" button in the top right corner of your screen, then quickly drag the stylus to the section you wish to fill and release it when the shape fills with color. If your entire screen fills with color, select "Undo" and review the previous steps.

The "ColorDrop Threshold" feature helps overcome broken lines or undefined shapes. This tool is especially useful to costume designers with a loose or gestural style. The "ColorDrop Threshold" tool is activated at the end of the "ColorDrop"

Costumes for Turn of the Screw *at the University of Maryland Baltimore County were created from sketches made with Procreate.*

gesture. Instead of releasing when you arrive at your section, hold the stylus to the canvas, maintaining contact. Moving your stylus to the right and left will automatically engage the "ColorDrop Threshold." You will see the program respond by filling the intended section. Small gaps that remain should be painted in with the technical pen.

Importing your texture

Once your shape is filled, it's time to import the texture for your final rendering. This texture can be any high-quality image, including patterns, fabrics or photos that have been saved to your iPhoto Library. Open the "Actions" menu (wrench icon), select "Import a Photo" and choose the image in your iPhoto Library. After you import your texture, it will appear as a new layer titled "Inserted Image."

The "Transform" menu (arrow icon) will automatically activate, allowing you to adjust texture. The goal in this step is to completely cover the fill created in your "ColorDrop" layer. At this point, you can
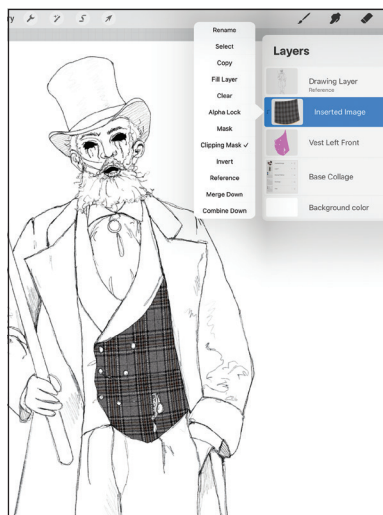
USING 'CLIPPING MASK'
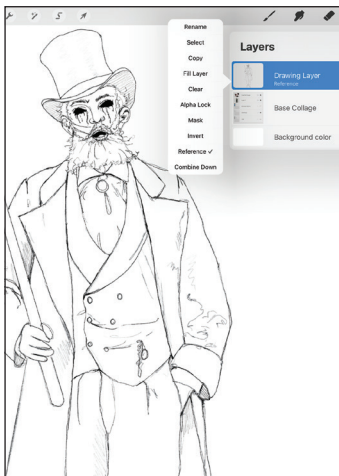
Step 1: *Create a line drawing that is a combined layer of your pencil and ink sketch. Set this layer as "Reference Layer."*

Step 2: *Fill each area on a separate layer using "ColorDrop." Choose different colors for each area.*

Step 3: *Insert a photo of the texture and transform as needed. Once imported and placed, click on the "Inserted Image" layer and choose "Clipping Mask."*

Step 4: *Turn on "Alpha Lock" to add highlight and shadow individually to each layer. Repeat these steps until you have completed the sketch.*

adjust the position and size of the texture. Selecting the "Warp" feature from the "Transformation" toolbar helps you create rounded or three-dimensional surfaces.

Activate 'Clipping Mask' and finish

When you use "Clipping Mask," layers must be in a specific order: the design drawing on top, the texture image under that, and the bounded area on the bottom. Once they are in the correct order, select your image texture, click to open the left-hand menu options, and select "Clipping Mask." Your texture image should trim to the shape of the bounded area underneath it (see Step 3). This will combine the texture image layer with the "ColorDrop" layer. When complete, this single layer containing the texture is perfectly sized to the bounded area and located beneath your design sketch.

Repeat this process of fill, import, "Clipping Mask" and merge until you have filled all of your bounded areas with textures. If you later decide to alter the texture image, insert a new image, reorder your layers (if needed), and re-select "Clipping Mask." Once you have your final texture, you can make it permanent by selecting the image and choosing "Merge Down."

To quickly add highlight and shadow with no additional cleanup, Procreate has another helpful feature. On the layer you wish to enhance, select the layer, open the left-hand side menu and select "Alpha Lock." When "Alpha Lock" is on, the brush strokes and shading that you add will be confined to the bordered area and will not spill into the negative space (see Step 4).

Bottom line

We found a quick solution to our workload when we made the jump to digital design on the iPad. We were able to easily manage the drawing, painting, formatting, scanning and submission of realistic costume sketches via one highly portable device. Although there is a learning curve to the technology, you, too, will eventually gain speed, fluidity and confidence. Be patient and give yourself time to tinker and explore. Soon you will be creating effective and informative digital sketches that keep you producing at the speed of the business. ■

Materials

Apple iPad Air (10.9", Silver, 64 GB, Wi-Fi Only)	$599.00
Apple Care+	103.00
Apple Pencil (2nd Generation)	119.00
Procreate for iPad	9.99
Screen Protector with Paper Texture	14.97
iPad Pro Case	15.99
Total per iPad:	**$861.95**

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To view a video of the process they describe in this story, visit youtu.be/vbODOU9Nr20. For information on their private digital rendering workshops, email them at designwithprocreate@gmail.com.

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