



KRITA

Starter Guide



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Welcome to Krita

When you start Krita for the first time there will be no canvas or new document open by default. You will be greeted by a welcome screen, which will have option to create a new file or open existing document, see previously opened files, and find more resources prepared by the Krita Community.



Creating a New Document

A new document can be created several ways:

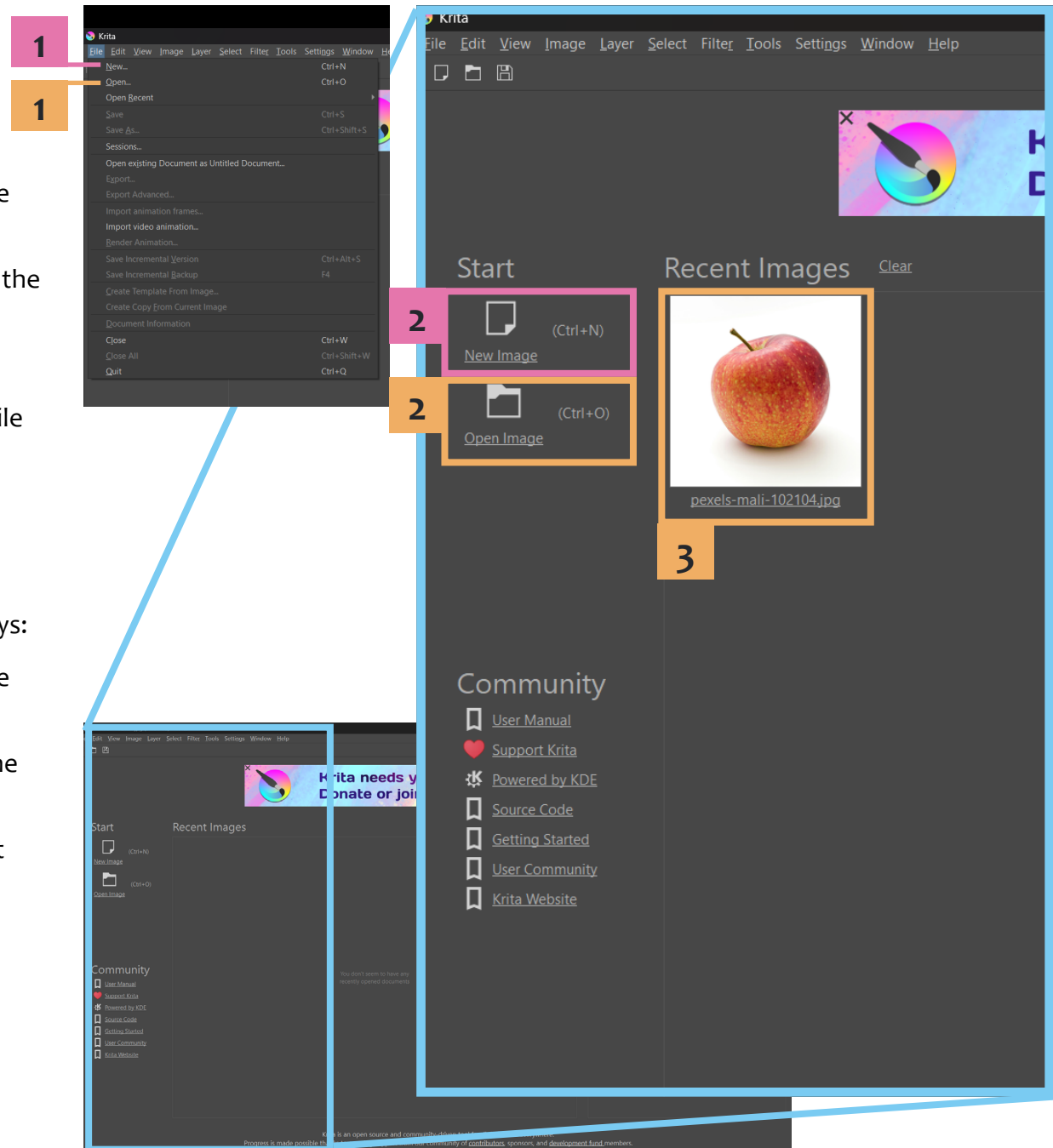
1. Click on File from the application menu at the top. Then click on New.
2. Press the New Image icon on the left side of the home menu
3. Use the shortcut Ctrl + N

A new box will pop up where you can change the file settings before opening a blank canvas.

Opening Files

Similarly, an existing file can be opened several ways:

1. Click on File from the application menu at the top. Then Click on Open
2. Click on the Open Image folder icon under the New Image icon
3. Click on the image or hyperlink under Recent Images in the center of the home screen

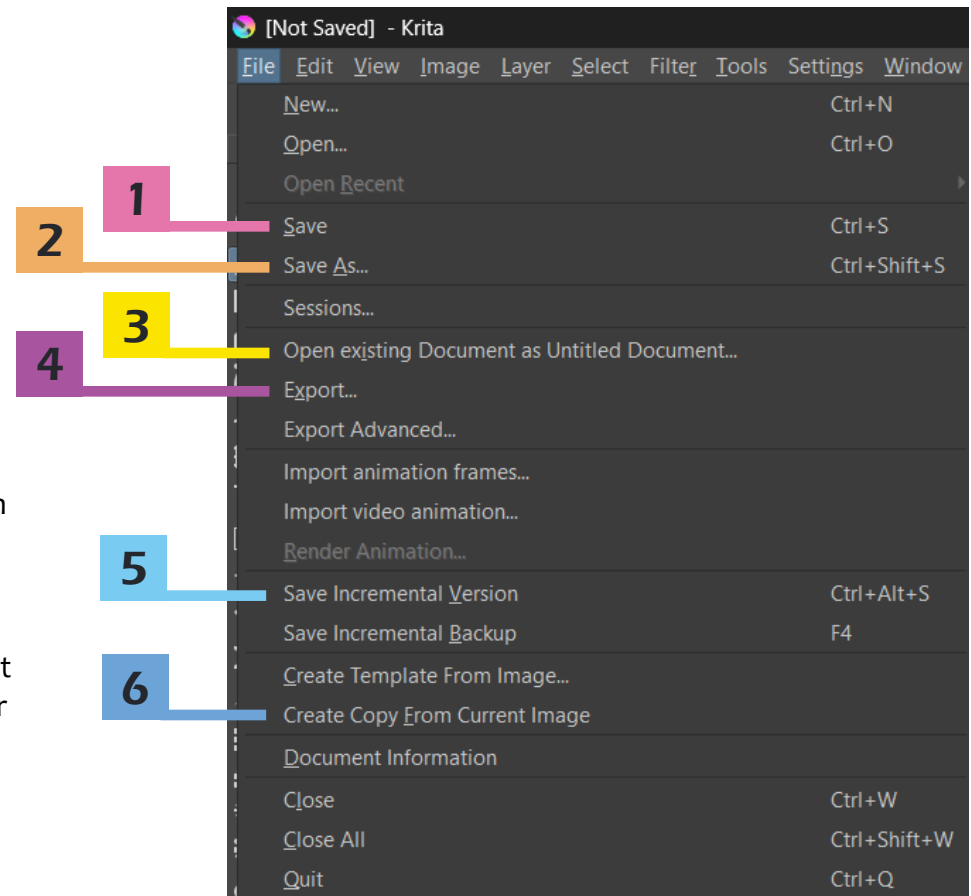


Saving and Exporting

Now, once you have figured out how to draw something in Krita, you may want to save it. The save option is in the same place as it is in all other computer programs: the top-menu of File, and then Save. Select the folder you want to have your drawing, and select the file format you want to use (.kra is Krita's default format, and will save everything). And then hit Save. Some older versions of Krita have a bug and require you to manually type the extension.

If you want to show off your image on the internet, check out the [Saving For The Web](#) tutorial.

1. Save (Ctrl + S):
2. Save as (Ctrl + Shift + S):
3. Open existing document as untitled document: Similar to Open..., however, Save will request you to specify a saving location: you're making a new copy. This is similar to Import... in other programs.
4. Export (Ctrl + E):
5. Save incremental version: Allows you to quickly make a snapshot of the current image by making a new file with a version number added to it.
6. Create copy from current image: Similar to Open existing Document as Untitled Document... but with the currently selected image.

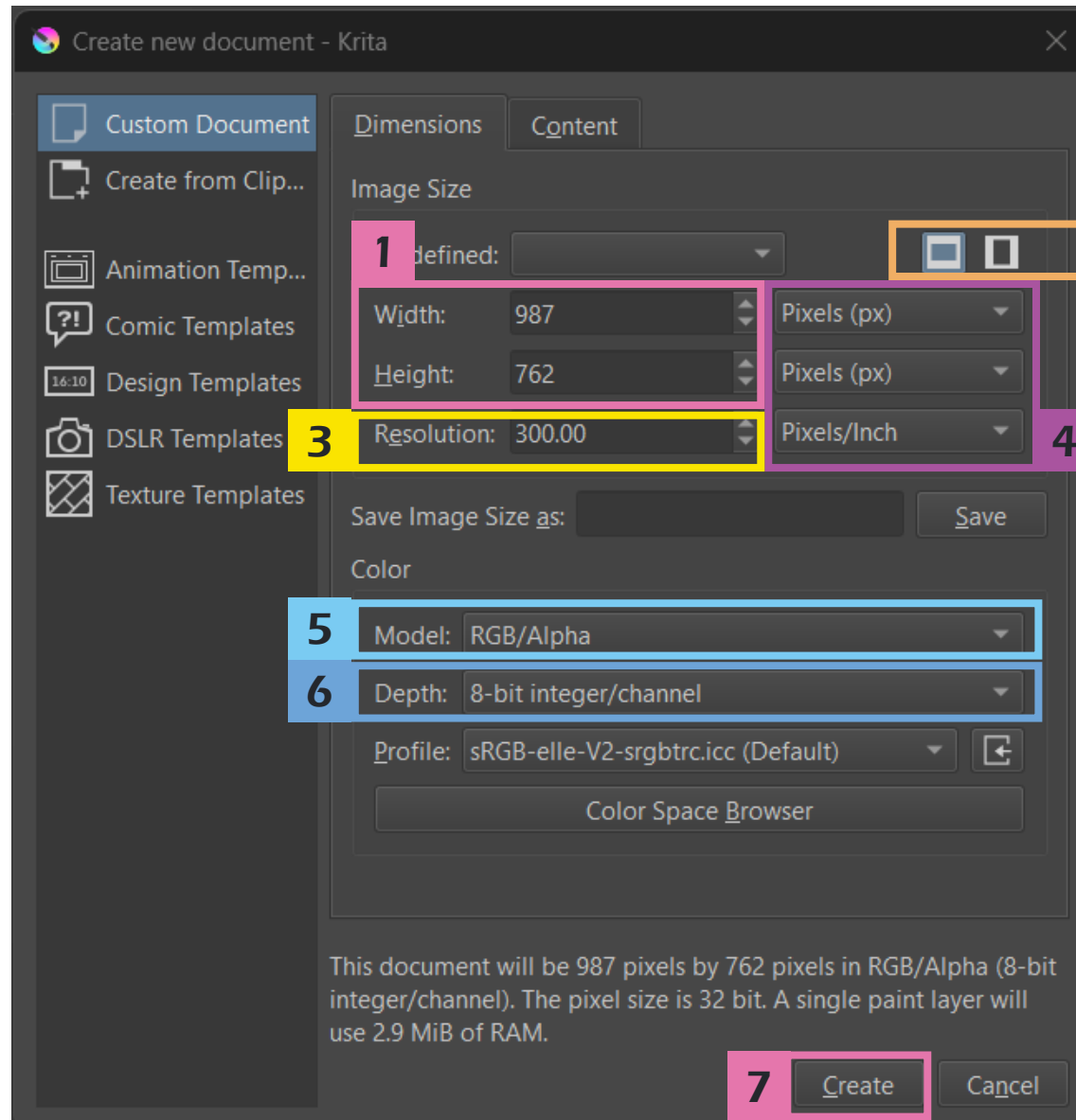


These options are great for people doing production work, who need to switch between files quickly or have backup files in case they do something extreme. Krita also has a file backup system in the form of auto-saves, backup files and crash recovery. You can configure the option for these features in the general settings.

Document Set Up

When opening a new image, the New Document dialog box will open where you can customize the project file's settings. Here are some common settings to customize the document:

1. Set the width and height
2. Quickly set the canvas horizontally or vertically
3. Set the resolution. Larger resolutions will create a file that takes more space but will hold more detail.
4. Change the units that the file will use. This will affect the rulers and other measurements in the document



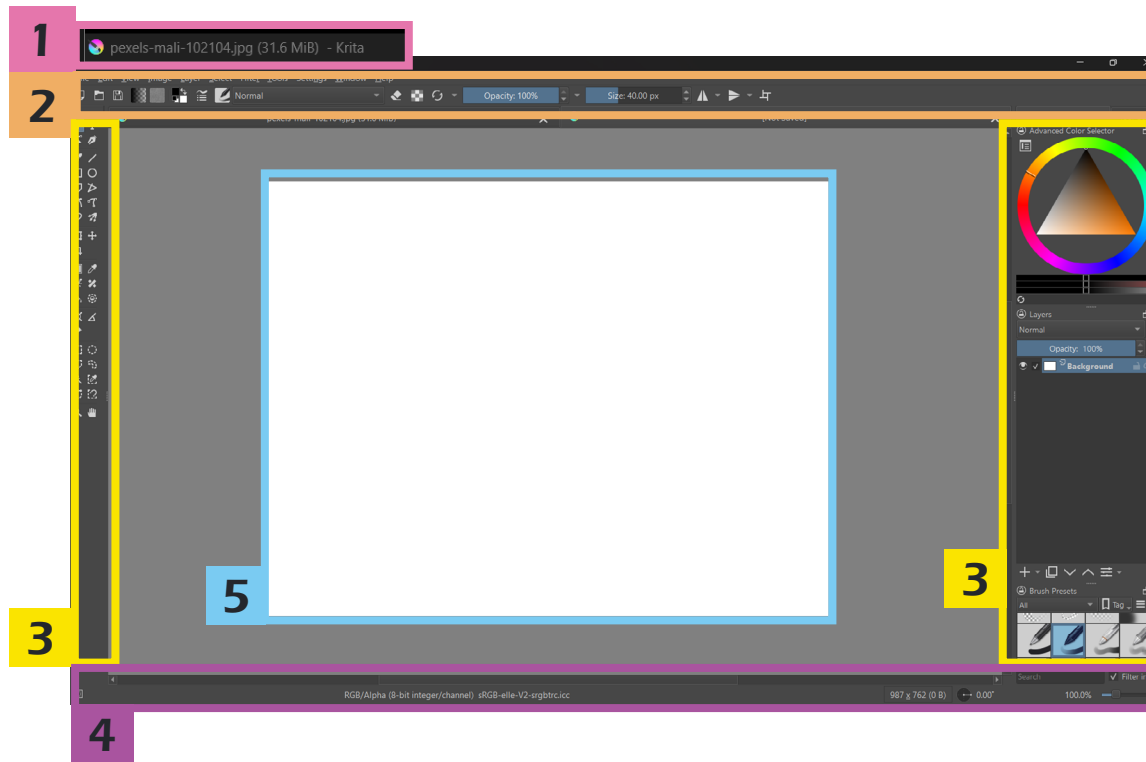
5. Make sure that the color profile is RGB
6. Make sure that the depth is set to 8-bit integer/channel in the color section. For advanced information about the color and color management refer to Colors.
7. Press Enter or the Create button to open a new custom document

Interface Tour

Krita's interface is very flexible and provides an ample choice for the artist to arrange the elements of the workspace. An artist can snap and arrange the elements, much like snapping together Lego blocks. Krita provides a set of construction kit parts in the form of Dockers and Toolbars. Every set of elements can be shown, hidden, moved and rearranged, that lets the artist to easily customize their own user interface experience.

The Krita interface is very malleable and customizable. Let's look at the default settings:

1. Traditional File or action menu found in most windowed applications.
2. Toolbar – This is where you can choose your brushes, set parameters such as opacity and size and other settings.

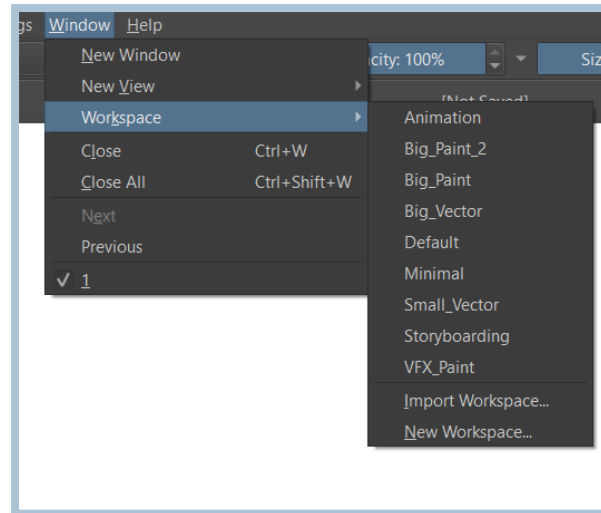


3. Sidebars for the Movable Panels/ Dockers -- In some applications, these are known as Dockable areas. Krita also allows you to dock panels at the top and/or bottom as well.
4. Status Bar – This space shows the preferred mode for showing selection i.e. marching ants or mask mode, your selected brush preset, Color Space, image size and provides a convenient zoom control.
5. Canvas -- The canvas sits in the middle and unlike traditional paper, or even most digital painting applications, Krita provides the artist with a scrolling canvas of infinite size.

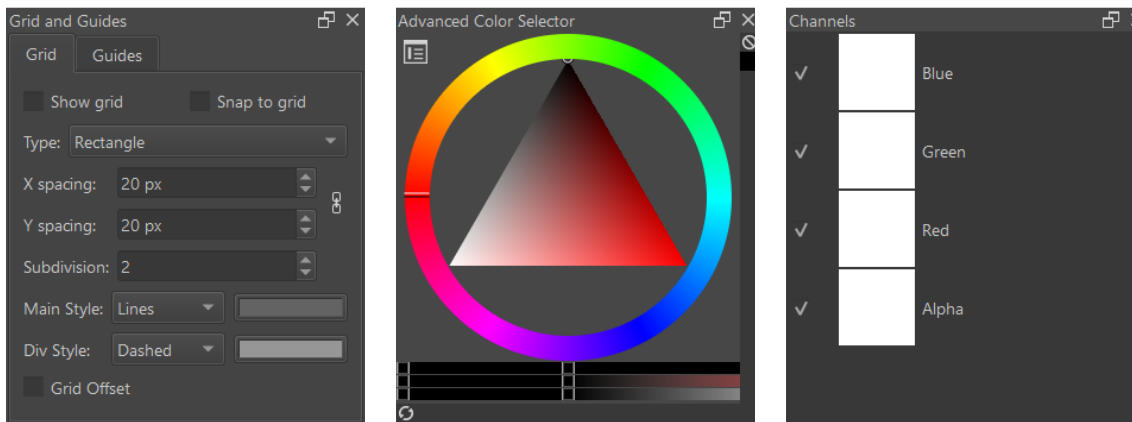
Dockers

Krita subdivides many of its options into functional panels called Dockers (also known as Docks). Dockers are little subwindows in Krita's interface that can be "popped" in and out of their docks at any time to see a greater range of options. They contain useful tools, like the color selector, layer stack, tool options, Color Palette or list of Brush Presets.

Think of them as the painter's palette, or his water, or his brush kit. They can be activated by choosing the Settings menu > Dockers sub-menu (see image to the right). There you will find a long list of available options.



Below are examples of some dockers in Krita.



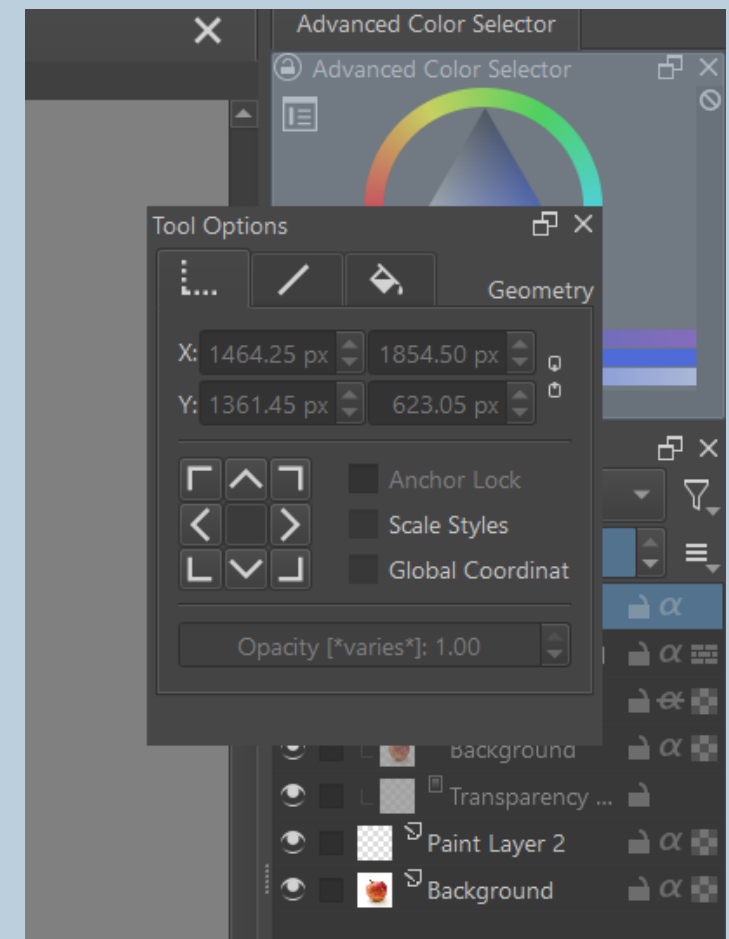
You can arrange the dockers in almost any permutation and combination according to the needs of your workflow, and then save these arrangements as Workspaces.

Using Dockers

Dockers can be removed by clicking the x in the upper-right of the docker-window.

Dockers, as the name implies, can be docked into the main interface. You can do this by dragging the docker to the sides of the canvas (or top or bottom if you prefer).

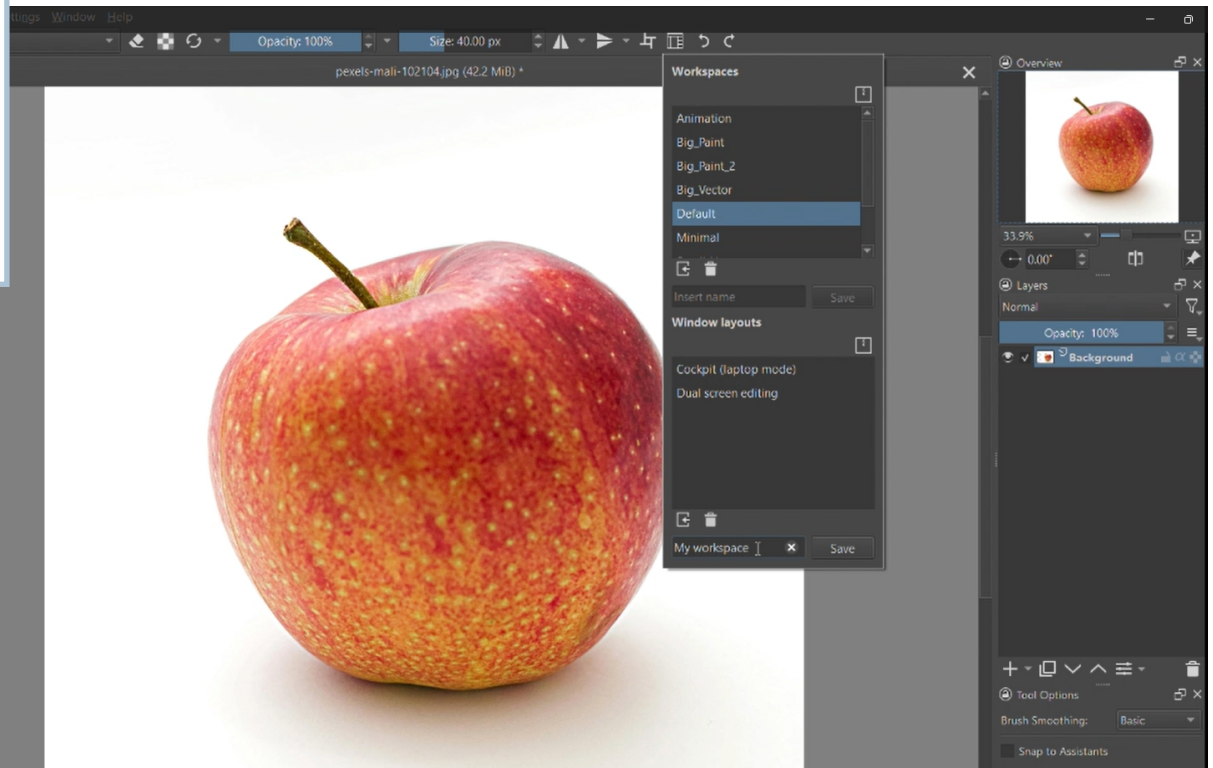
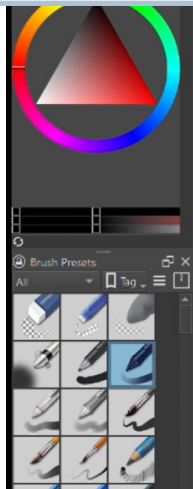
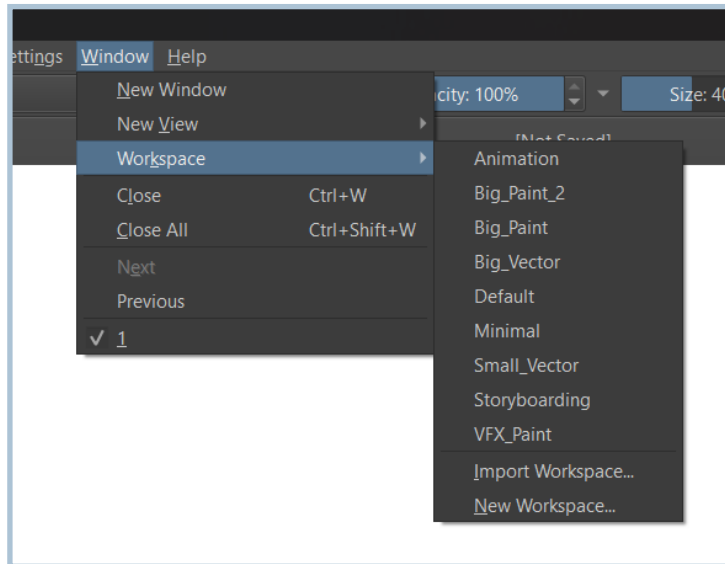
Dockers can be prevented from docking by pressing the Ctrl key before starting to drag the docker.



Workspaces Chooser and Customization

Workspace Chooser

The button on the very right of the Toolbar is the workspace chooser. This allows you to load and save common configurations of the user interface in Krita. There are a few common workspaces that are arranged to highlight specific features such as animation.



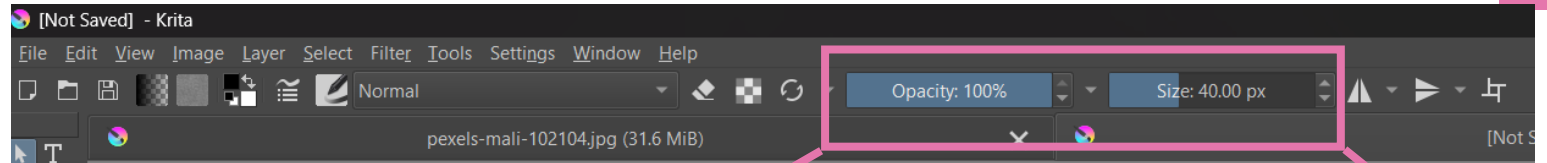
Workspace Customization

In addition to rearranging the dockers according to your preferences, Krita provides and saves your configurations as Workspaces.

First, arrange the dockers to your preference.

Next, open the workspaces drop down. You can save your configuration as a workspace or as a window layout.

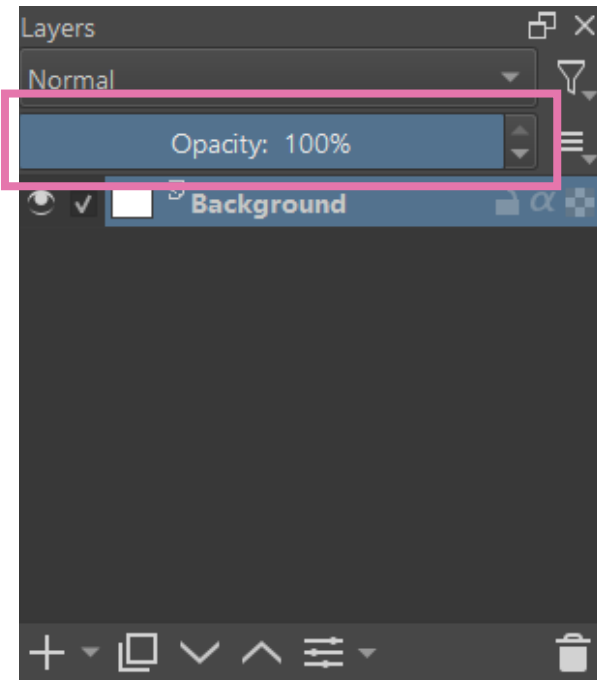
Toolbars



Toolbars are where some important actions and menus are placed so that they are readily and quickly available for the artist while painting.

You can learn more about the Krita Toolbars and how to configure them in over in the Toolbars section of the manual. Putting these to effective use can really speed up the Artist's workflow, especially for users of Tablet-Monitors and Tablet-PCs.

Added in version 5.0: In addition to shortcuts and the toolbar, you can also search and quickly through all actions via the action search bar, which is accessed with Ctrl + Enter.



Sliders

Krita uses these to control values like brush size, opacity, flow, Hue, Saturation, etc. To the left is an example of sliders in Krita.

The total range is represented from left to right and blue bar gives an indication of where in the possible range the current value is. Clicking anywhere, left or right, of that slider will change the current number to something lower (to the left) or higher (to the right).

To input a specific number, hold left or right click on the slider. A number can now be entered directly for even greater precision.

Pressing the Shift key while dragging the slider changes the values at a smaller increment, and pressing the Ctrl key while dragging the slider changes the value in whole numbers or multiples of 5.

Changed in version 5.1: Shift while dragging will now also enable "relative mode", which means that the cursor can be dragged outside the slider area.

Pop-Up Palette

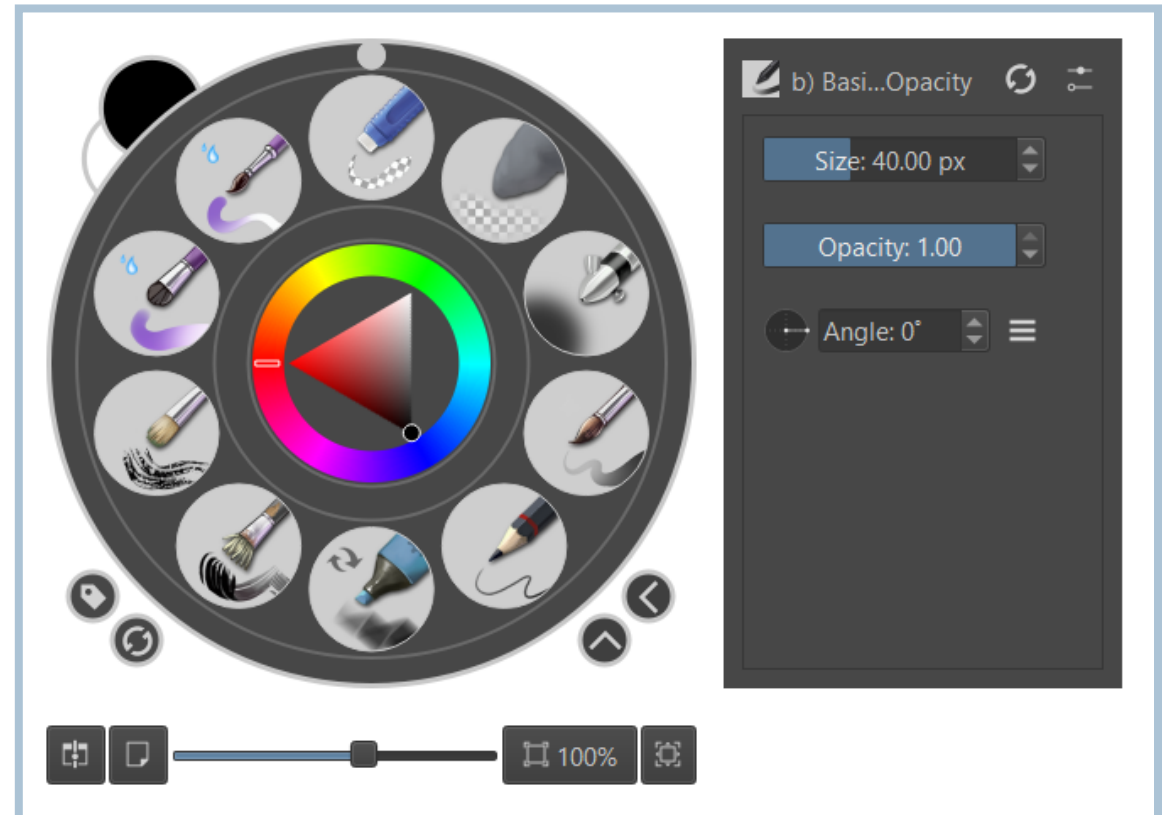
The Pop-up Palette is a feature unique to Krita, designed to increase the productivity of the artist. It is a circular menu for quickly choosing brushes, foreground and background colors, recent colors while painting.

To access the palette, select the brush tool and right click on the canvas. The palette will spawn at the position of the brush tip or cursor.

By tagging your brush presets you can add particular sets of brushes to this palette. For example, if you add some inking brush presets to inking tag you can change the tags to inking in the pop-up palette, and you'll get all the inking brushes in the palette.

You can tag brush presets via the Preset Docker, check out the [resource overview page](#) to know more about tagging in general.

If you call up the pop-up palette again, you can click the tag icon, and select the tag. In fact, you can make multiple tags and switch between them. When you need more than ten presets, go into Settings > Configure Krita... > General > Miscellaneous > Number of Palette Presets and change the number of presets from 10 to something you feel comfortable.



Navigating the Canvas

When you create a new document in Krita for the first time you will see a rectangular white area. This is called a canvas. You can see it in the image below. The area marked by a red rectangle is a canvas.

When you save the painting as JPG, PNG et cetera or take a print out of the painting, only the content inside this area is taken into consideration. Anything beyond it is ignored. Krita does store information beyond this area, you just won't be able to see it. This data is stored in the Layers.

Many of the canvas navigation actions, like rotation, mirroring and zooming have default keys attached to them. You can also find these under View > Zoom, Rotate, and Mirror.

Panning

This can be done through either the scroll wheel, or by holding Space + left click and the directional keys.

Zooming

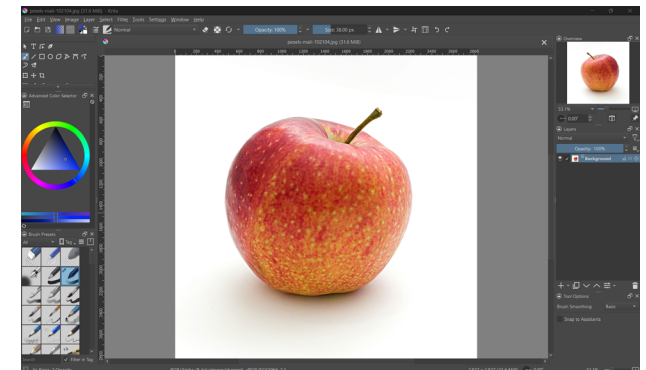
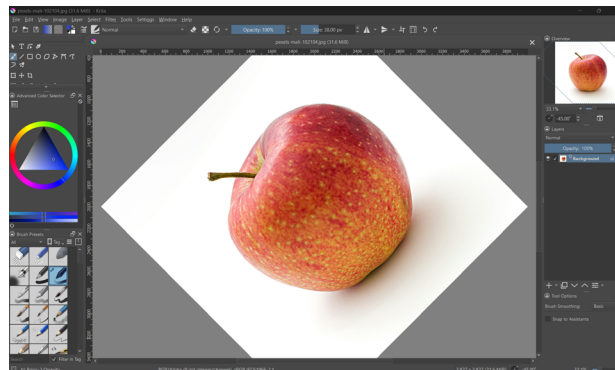
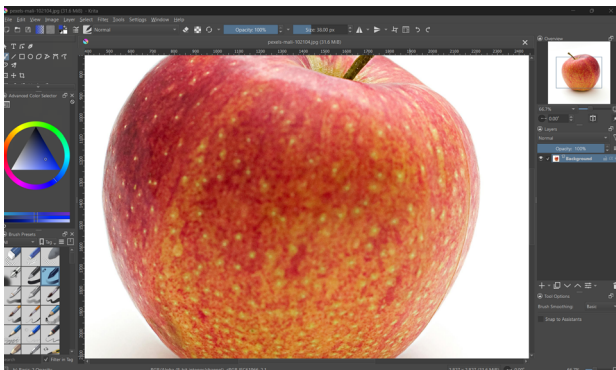
Discrete zooming can be done through + and - keys. Using the Ctrl + Space or Ctrl + scroll wheel shortcuts allows for direct zooming with the stylus

Rotating

You can rotate the canvas without transforming. It can be done with the Ctrl + [shortcut or 4 key and the other way with Ctrl +] shortcut or 6 key. Quick mouse based rotation is done with the Shift + Space and Shift + scroll wheel shortcuts. To reset rotation use the 5 key.

Mirroring

You can mirror the view can be quickly done via M key. Mirroring is a great technique that seasoned digital artists use to quickly review the composition of their work to ensure that it “reads” well, even when flipped horizontally.



Images, Views and Windows

Image

An image is an individual copy of the image that you can open or create via the file dialog. The image contains data regarding layers, color space of image and layers, canvas size and metadata such as creator, date created and DPI et cetera. Because the image is a working copy of the image on the hard drive, you can save many versions of different elements in the image.

Window

If you've used a computer before, you know what windows are: They are big containers for your computer programs.

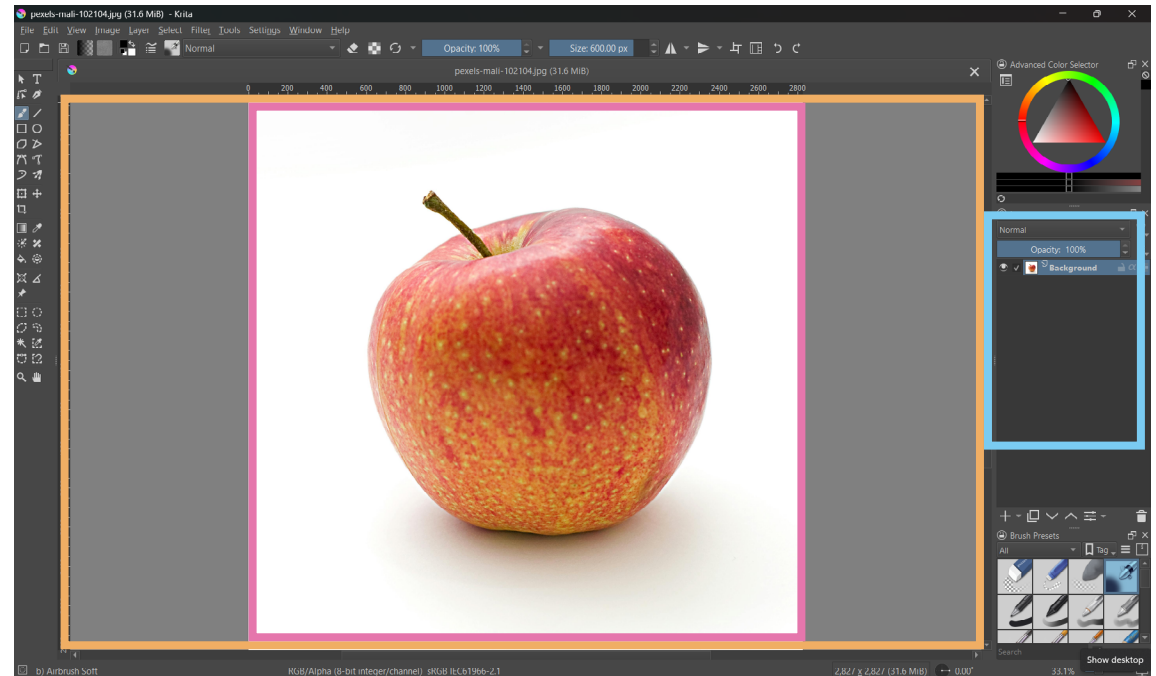
Krita allows you to have multiple windows via Window > New Window. You can then drag this to another monitor for multi-monitor use and switch between them via the Window menu.

View

A view is a window onto your image. Krita allows you to have multiple views, and you can manipulate the view to zoom, rotate and mirror and modify the color of the way you see an image without editing the image itself. This is very useful for artists, as changing the way they view the image is a common way to diagnose some common mistakes, like a drawing which is skewed towards one side. Mirroring with the M key makes such skewing easy to identify.

If you have trouble drawing certain curves you will enjoy using rotation for drawing, and of course, there is zooming in and out for precision and rough work.

Multiple views are possible in Krita via Window > New view > image name. You can switch between them via the Window menu, or the Ctrl + Tab shortcut, or keep them in the same area when subwindow mode is active in the settings, via Window > Tile.



Tools

Tools help you manipulate the image data. The most common one is of course, the freehand brush, which is the default when you open Krita. There are roughly five types of tools in Krita:

Vector Tools

This is the upper row of tools, which are used to edit vectors. Interestingly enough, all paint tools except the freehand brush allow you to draw shapes on the vector layers. The resulting object won't use the brush preset for outline unlike the ones made with paint tools on normal layer.

Paint Tools

These are tools for painting on paint layers. They describe shapes, like rectangles, circles and straight lines, but also freehand paths. These shapes then get used by the Brush engines to make shapes and drawing effects.

Transform Tools





































These are tools that allow you to transform your layer or object on the canvas

Guide Tools

These are tools like grids and assistants.

Selection Tools

Selections allow you to edit a very specific area of the layer you are working on without affecting the others. The selection tools allow you to draw or modify the current selection. This is like using masking-fluids in traditional painting method, but whereas using masking fluids and film is often messy and delicate, selections are far easier to use.

Select Shapes			Text
Edit Shapes			Caligraphy
Freehand Brush			Line
Rectangle			Ellipse
Polygon			Polyline
Bezier Curve			Freehand Path
Dynamic Brush			Multibrush
Transform			Move a Layer
Crop			
Gradient			Sample Color
Colorize Mask			Smart Patch
Fill Bucket			Enclose and Fill
Assistant			Measure
Reference Images			
Rectangular Slection			Elliptical Selection
Polygonal Selection			Freehand Selection
Contiguous Selection			Similar Color Selection
Bezier Curve Selection			Magnetic Curve Selection
Zoom			Pan

Brushes

Now, on the blank white canvas, just left click with your mouse or draw with the pen on a graphic tablet. If everything's correct, you should be able to draw on the canvas! The brush tool should be selected by default when you start Krita, but if for some reason it is not, you can click on the brush icon from the toolbox or use the shortcut (B).

Change brushes in the Brush Presets docker (or on top, press the F6 key to find this one) with all these cute squares with pens and crayons.

If you want to tweak the presets, check the Brush Editor in the toolbar. You can also access the Brush Editor with the F5 key.

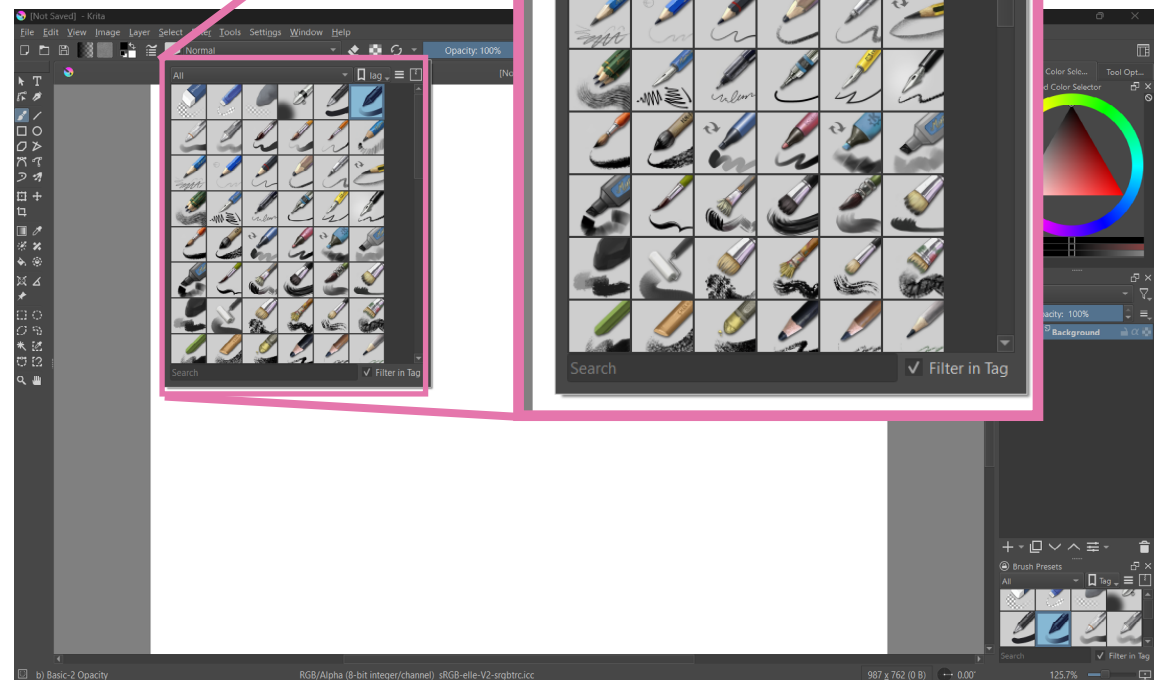
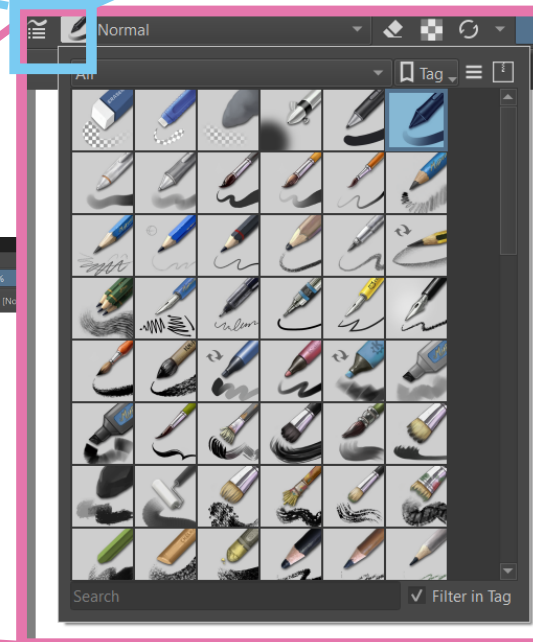
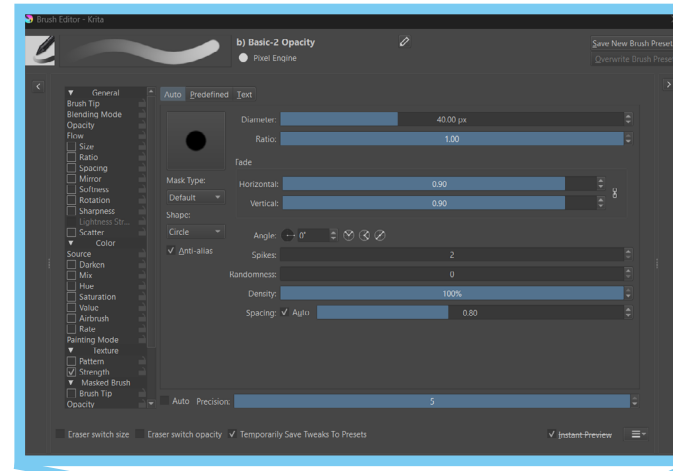
Tick any of the squares to choose a brush, and then draw on the canvas. To change color, click the triangle in the Advanced Color Selector docker.

Brush engines, as mentioned before, take a path and tablet information and add effects to it, making a stroke.

Krita has a LOT of different brushes, all with different effects. There are a lot of cool effects inside Krita's brush engines, so try them all out.

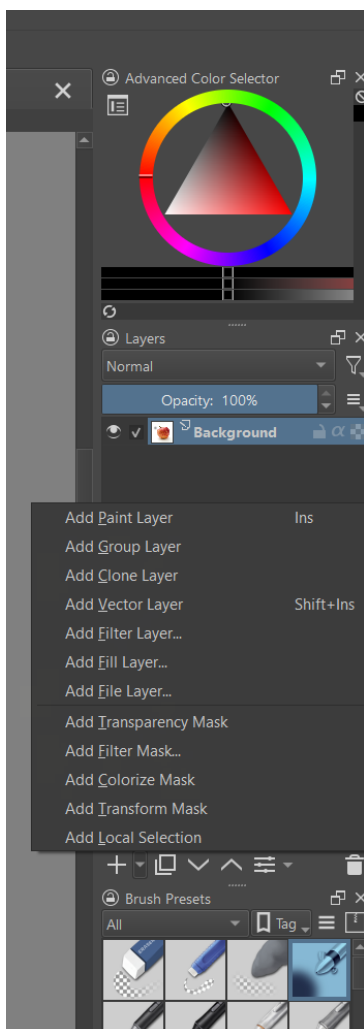
Erasing (E)

There are brush presets for erasing, but it is often faster to use the eraser toggle. By toggling the E key, your current brush switches between erasing and painting. This erasing method works with most of the tools. You can erase using the line tool, rectangle tool, and even the gradient tool.



Layers and Compositing

Like a landscape painter will first paint the sky and then the furthest away elements before slowly working his way to the foreground elements, computers will do the same with all the things you tell them to draw. So, if you tell them to draw a circle after a square on the same spot, the circle will always be drawn later. This is called the Drawing Order.



The layer stack is a way for you to separate elements of a drawing and manipulate the drawing order by showing you which layers are drawn when and allowing you to change the order they are drawn in and also apply all sorts of other effects. This is called Compositing.

This allows you to have line art above the colors, or trees before the mountains, and edit each without affecting the other.

A new layer is created by pressing Insert or by clicking the plus button at the bottom of the layers docker.

Raster and Vector Layers

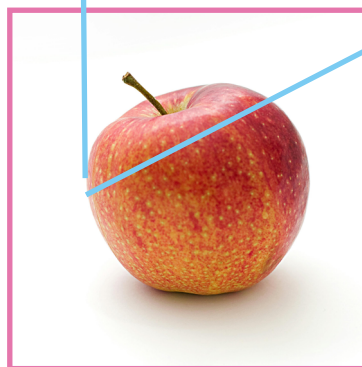
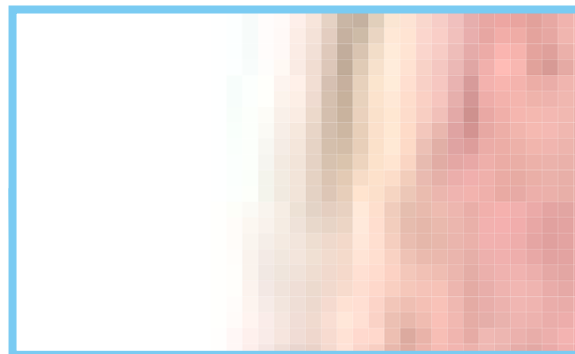
Even though Krita is regarded primarily a raster based application, it has some vector editing capabilities as well. If you are new to digital painting medium, it is necessary that you first get yourself acquainted with the concepts of raster and Vector based images.

In digital imaging, a pixel is the lowest element of an Image. It is basically a grid of points each displaying specific color. Raster editing is manipulating and editing these pixels. For example when you take a 1-pixel brush which is colored black and painting on the white canvas in Krita you are actually changing

the color of the pixel beneath your brush from white to black. When you zoom in and see a brush stroke you can notice many small squares with colors, these are pixels.

In contrast to raster images, vector graphic images are based on mathematical expressions. They are independent of the pixels. For example, when you

draw a rectangle on a vector layer in Krita you are actually drawing paths passing through points that are called nodes, which are located on specific coordinates on the 'x' and 'y' axes. When you re-size or move these points the computer calculates and redraws the path and displays the newly formed shape to you. Hence, you can re-size the vector shape to any extent without any loss in quality. In Krita, everything which is not on a vector layer is raster based.



Types of Layers

Paint Layers

These are raster layers, and the most common and default layer type in Krita, you will be painting on these.

Vector Layers

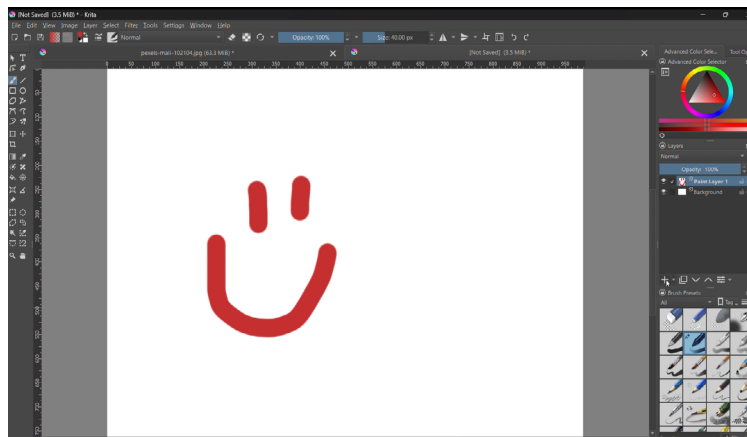
This is a layer type on which you draw vector graphics. Vector graphics are typically more simple than raster graphics and with the benefit that you can deform them with less blurriness.

Group Layers

These allow you to group several layers via drag and drop, so you can organize, move, apply masks and perform other actions on them together.

Fill Layers

These layers are filled with something that Krita can make up on the fly, like colors or patterns.



Clone Layers

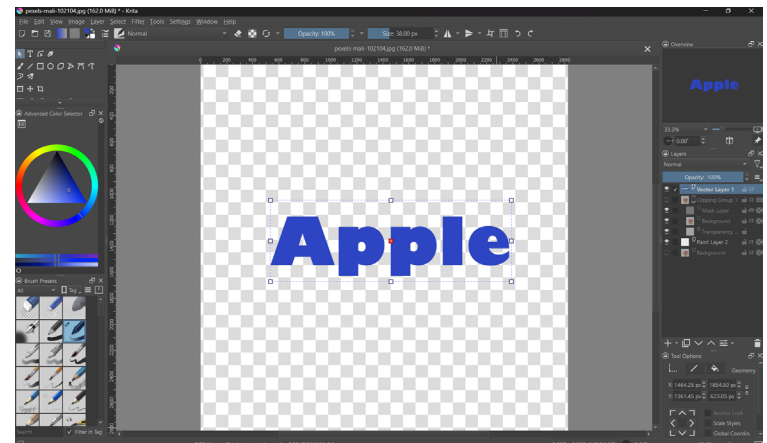
These are copies of the layer you selected when making them. They get updated automatically when changing the original.

Filter/Adjustment Layers

These layers help us to apply some filters which will affect a composite image made from all the layers beneath them.

File Layers

These refer to an existing image outside Krita and update as soon as the outside image updates. Useful for logos and emblems that change a lot.



Creating Clipping Masks

Masks are a type of sub-effect applied to a layer, usually driven by a grayscale image.

The name mask comes from traditional masking fluid and film. You may recall the earlier comparison of selections to traditional masking fluid. Selections too are stored internally as grayscale images, and you can save them as a local selection which is kind of like a mask, or convert them to a transparency mask.

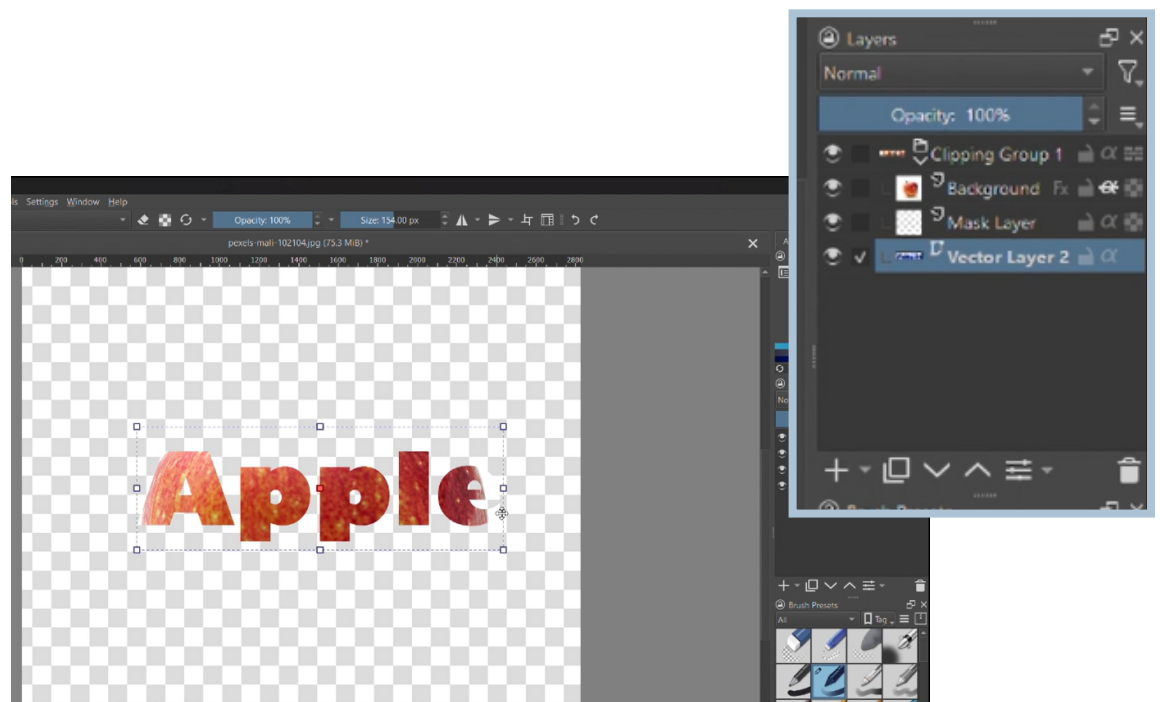
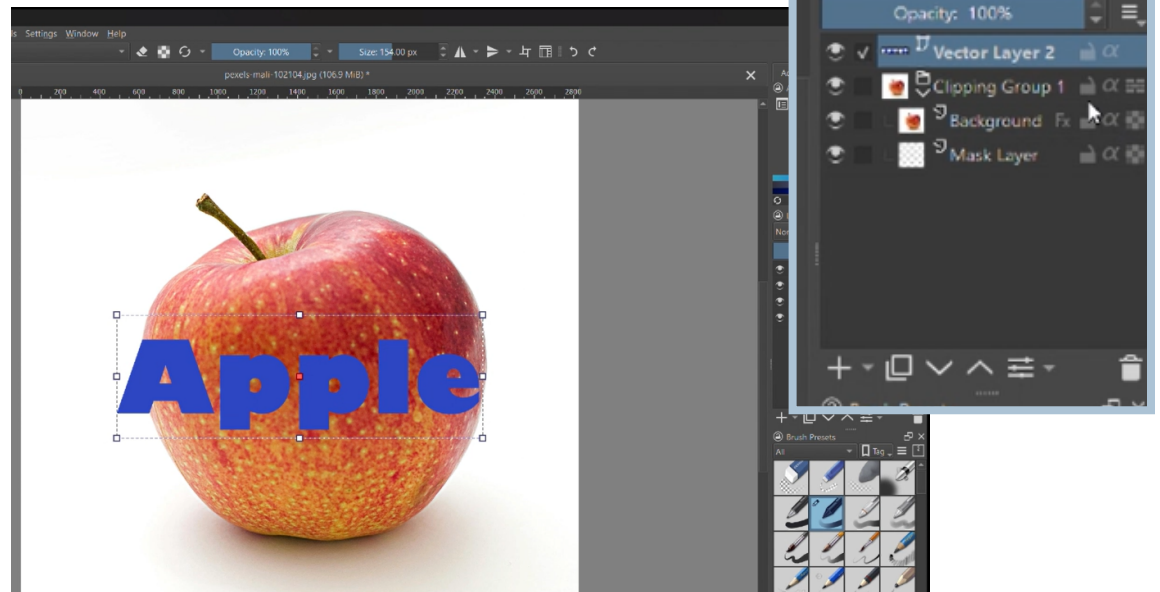
The primary types of mask are Transparency Masks, which allow you to use a grayscale image to determine transparency, where black makes everything transparent and white makes the pixel fully opaque.

You can paint on masks with any of the brushes, or convert a normal paint-layer to a mask. The big benefit of masks is that you can make things transparent without removing the underlying pixels. Furthermore, you can use masks to reveal or hide a whole group layer at once!

Creating a group will also create a mask layer.

Transparency

Transparency refers to the absence of a color in each pixel. Transparency is stored in the same way as colors, meaning that it's also a channel. We usually call this channel the alpha channel or alpha for short. The reason behind this is that the letter 'α' is used to represent it in programming. When a given pixel is completely transparent on all layers, Krita will instead show a checkerboard pattern, like the vector mask to the left



More on Filter Layers

We mentioned earlier that you can do math with colors. But you can also do math with pixels, or groups of pixels or whole layers. In fact, you can make Krita do all sorts of little operations on layers. We call these operations Filters.

Filters can be applied destructively to the layer or as a non-destructive part of the layer stack.

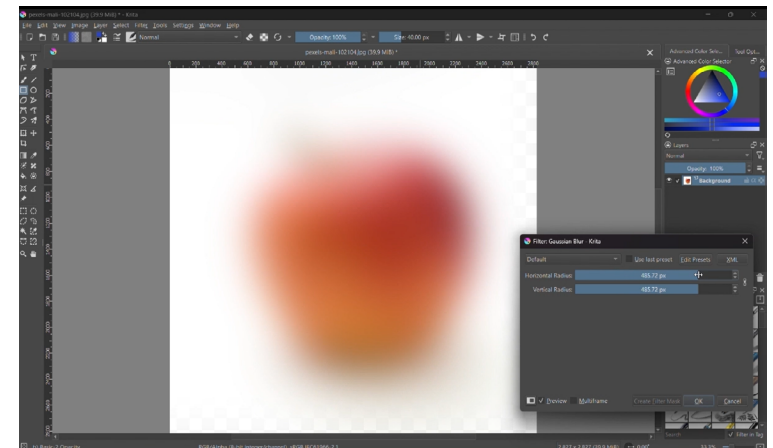
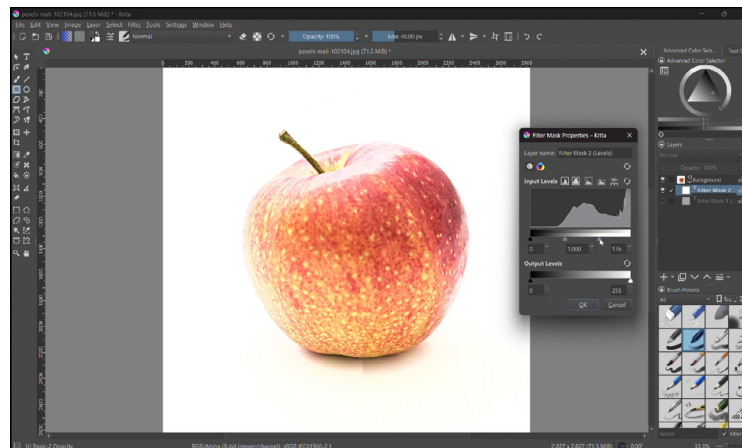
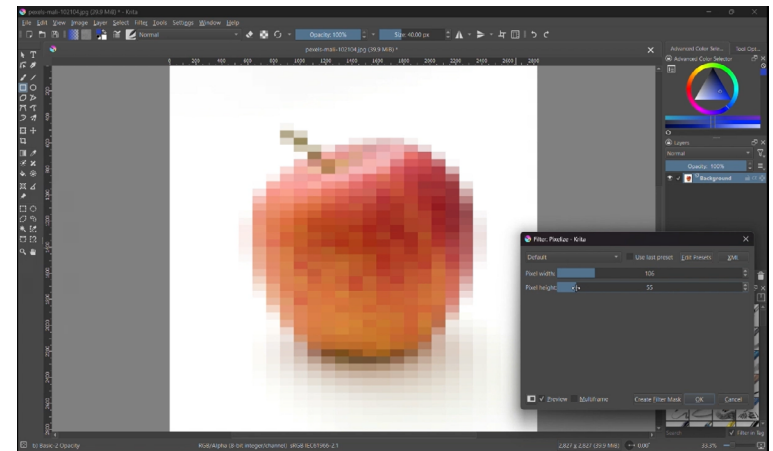
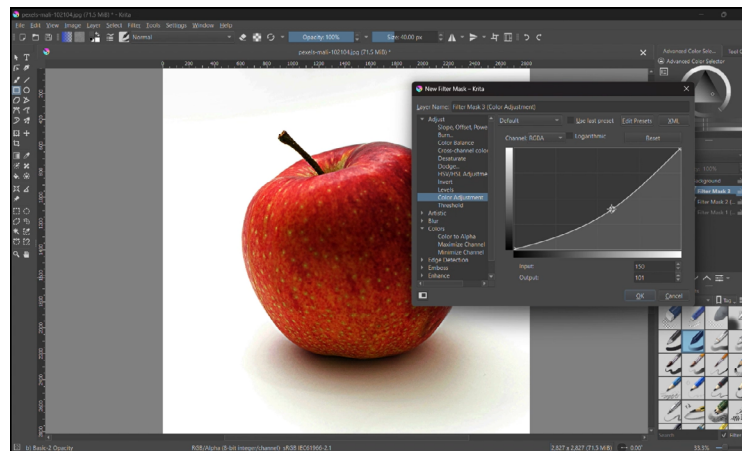
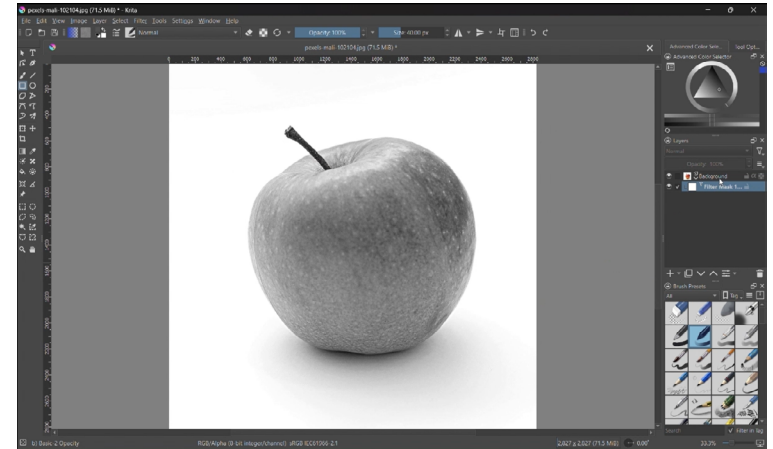
Filter Layers affect all the layers underneath it in the same hierarchy. Transparency and transparency masks on Filter Layers affect where the layer is applied.

Examples of such operations are:

Desaturate: This makes all the pixels turn gray.

Blur: This averages the pixels with their neighbors, which removes sharp contrasts and makes the whole image look blurry.

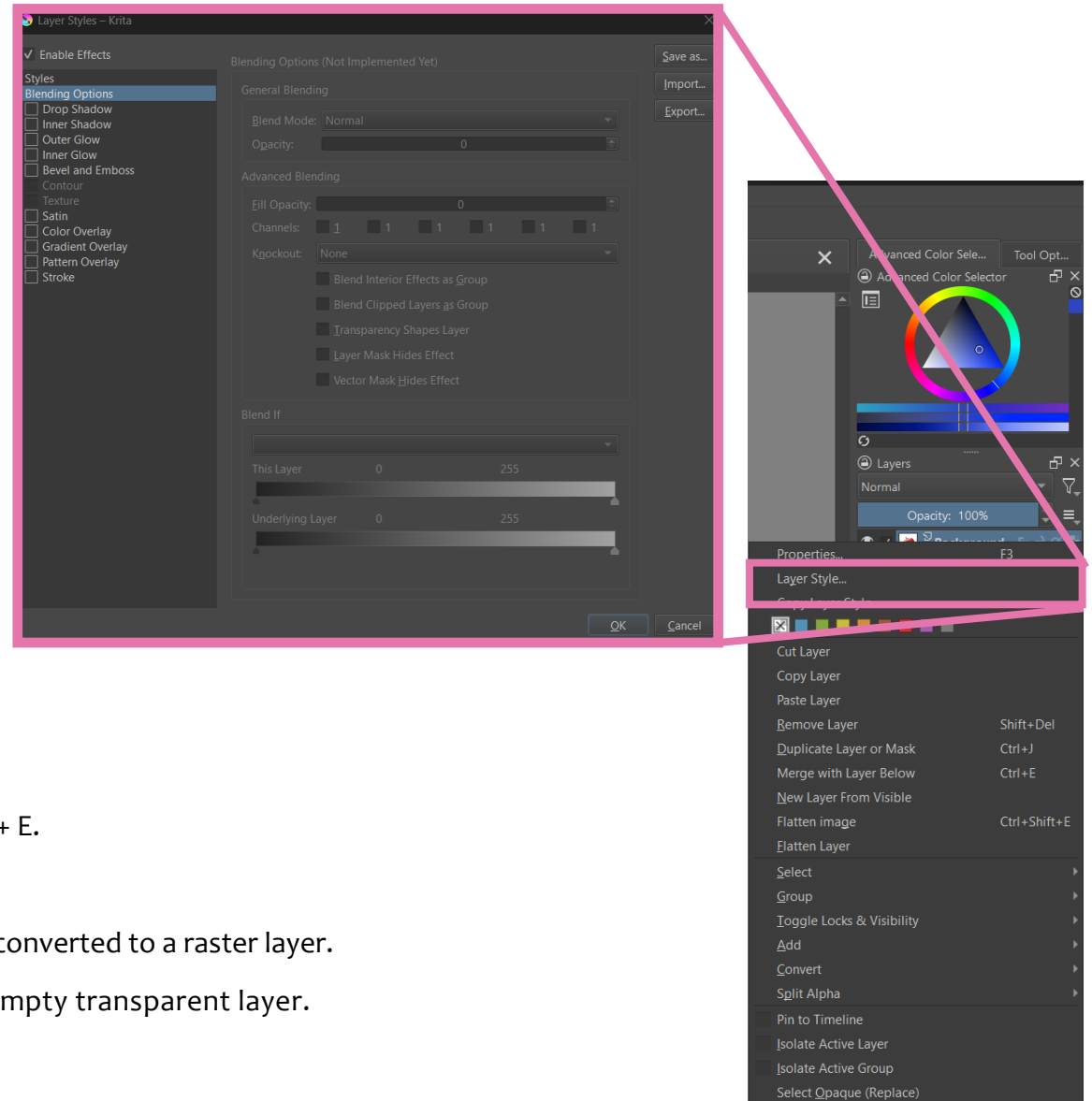
Sharpen: This increases the contrast between pixels that had a pretty high contrast to begin with.



Layer Styles

Layer Effects or Layer Styles are filter masks popularized by Photoshop that are a little faster than regular masks, but not as versatile.

They are available by right-clicking a layer and selecting 'layer style'. A window of all the layer styles and settings will open.



Merging and Flattening Layers

Layers can be merged together into one layer using Ctrl + E.

The top layer will merge with the layer below.

Vector layers can merge with raster layers, but it will be converted to a raster layer.

If the layer below is hidden, it will merge as if it is an empty transparent layer.

Blend Modes

Because colors are stored as numbers you can do math with them. We call this Blending Modes or Compositing Modes.

Blending modes can be done per layer, like in the top image on the right, or per brush stroke, like the bottom image on the right.

Krita has 76 blending modes, each doing slightly different things. Head over to [Blending Modes](#) to learn more.

Normal

The Normal blend mode just averages between colors depending on how transparent the topmost color is.

Addition

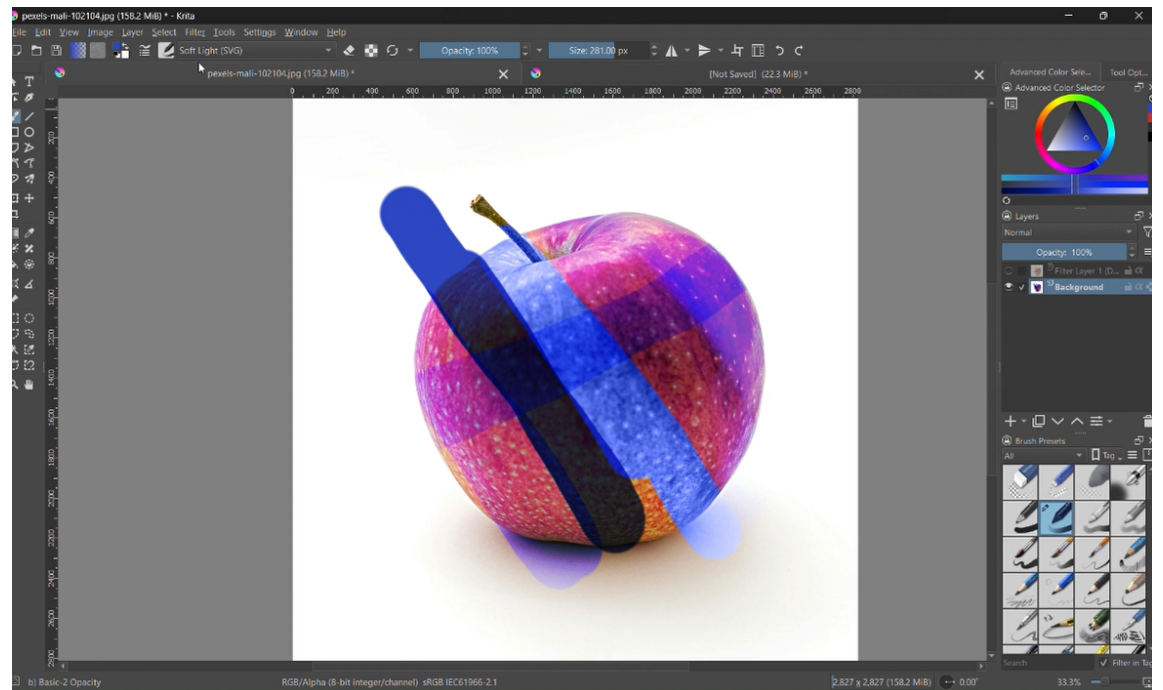
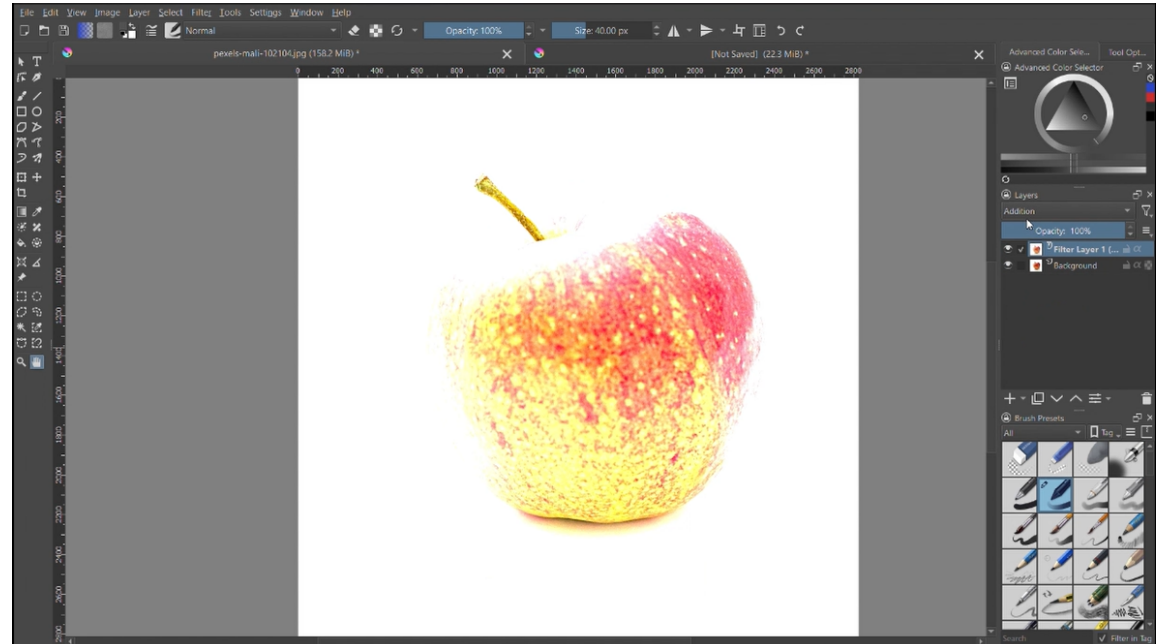
Another common one is Addition, which adds one layer's components to the other, making it perfect for special glow effects.

Multiply

A commonly used blending mode is for example Multiply which multiplies the components, leading to darker colors. This allows you to simulate the subtractive mixing, and thus makes painting shadows much easier.

Erasing (E)

Erasing is a blending mode in Krita. There is no eraser tool, but you can toggle on the brush quickly with the E key to become an eraser. You can also use it on layers. Unlike the other blending modes, this one only affects the alpha channel, making things more transparent.

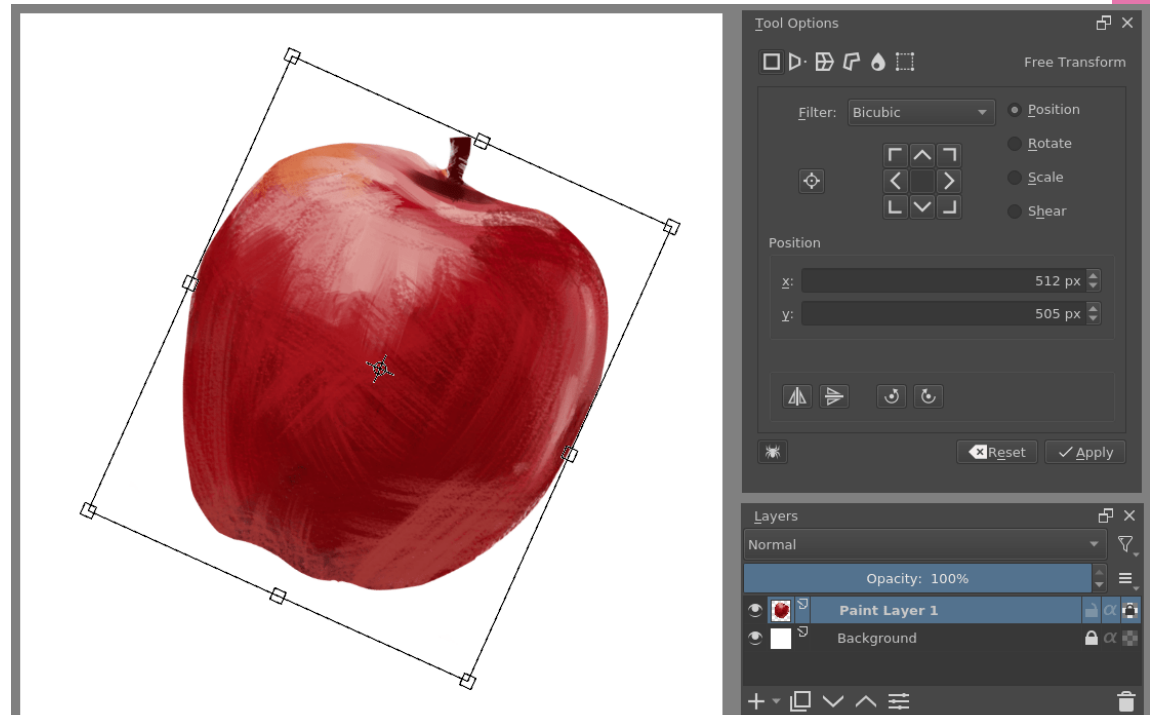


Transformations

Transformations are kind of like filters, in that these are operations done on the pixels of an image. We have a regular image and layer wide transformations in the image and layer top menus, so that you may resize, flip and rotate the whole image.

We also have the Crop Tool, which only affects the canvas size, and the Move Tool which only moves a given layer. However, if you want more control, Krita offers a Transform Tool.

With this tool you can rotate and resize on the canvas, or put it in perspective. Or you can use advanced transform tools, like the warp, cage and liquify, which allow you to transform by drawing custom points or even by pretending it's a transforming brush.



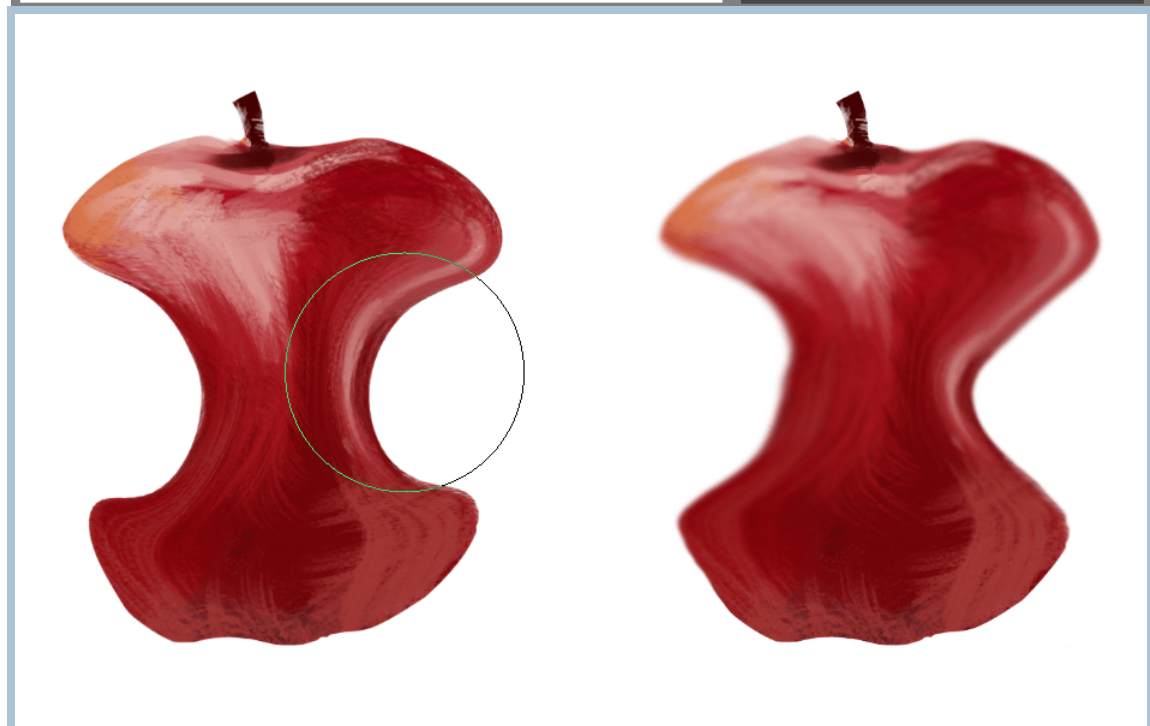
Deform Brush Engine

Like the filter brush engine, Krita also has a Deform Brush Engine, which allows you to transform with a brush. This deform is like a much faster version of the Liquefy transform tool mode, but in exchange, its results are of much lower quality.

Furthermore, you can't apply the deform brush as a non-destructive mask.

Transform Masks

Like filters, transforms can be applied as a non-destructive operation that is part of the layer stack. Unlike filter and transparency masks however, Transform Masks can't be driven by a grayscale image, for technical reasons. You can use transform masks to deform clone and file layers as well.



Grids and Guidelines

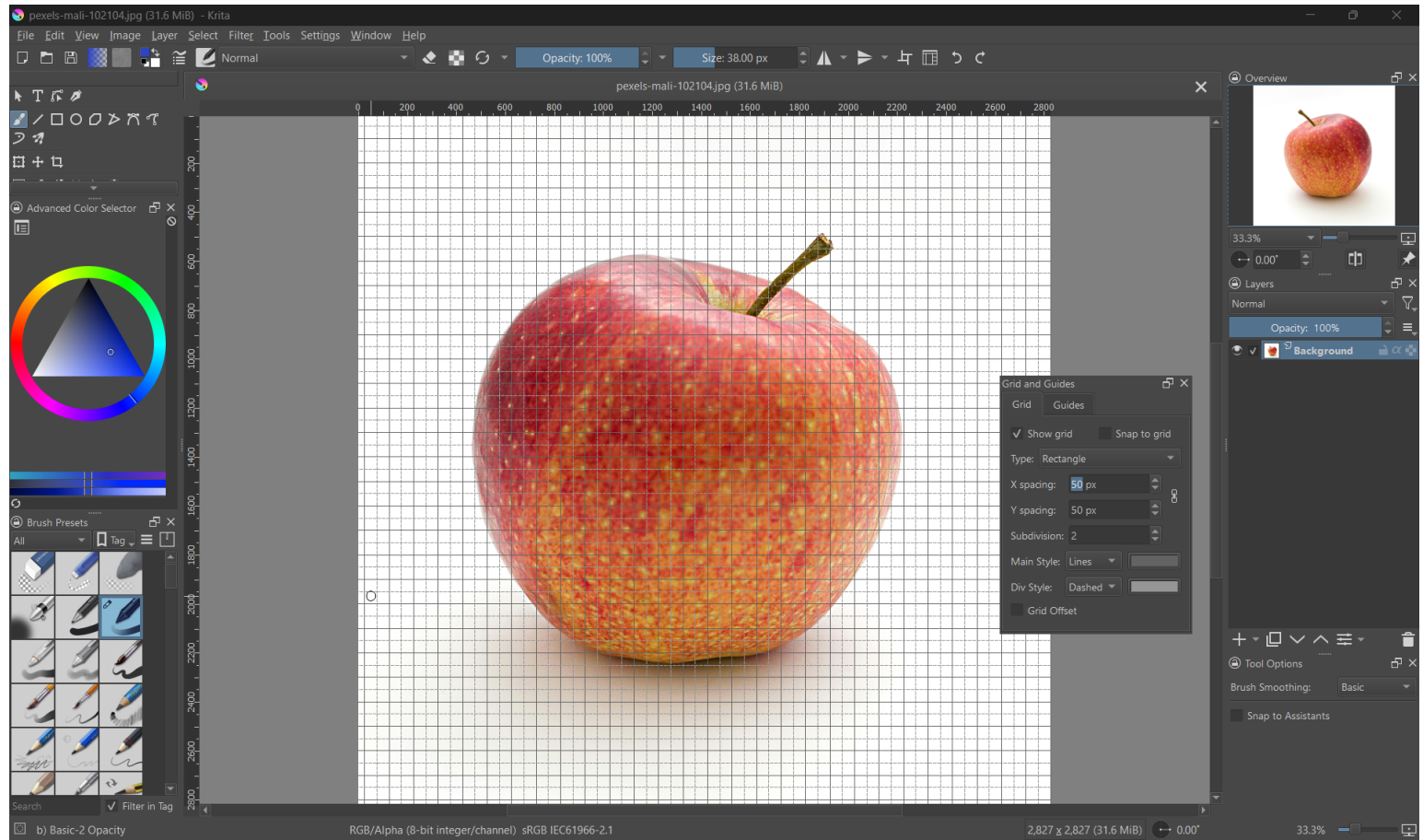
Because you can hardly put a ruler against your tablet to help you draw, the assistants are there to help you draw concentric circles, perspectives, parallel lines and other easily forgotten but tricky to draw details. Krita allows you to snap to these via the tool options as well.

Grids and Guides Docker

A very straightforward guiding tool which shows grids or guiding lines that can be configured.

Snapping

You can snap to all sorts of things. Grids, guides, extensions, orthogonals, image centers and bounding boxes.



Keyboard Shortcuts

You can see all keyboard shortcuts, customize shortcuts, and create new short cuts by going to Settings > Configure Krita > Keyboard Shortcuts

Tools	
Shortcut	Action
B	Freehand Brush Tool
Q	Multi-Brush Tool
T	Move Tool
C	Crop Tool
Ctrl + T	Transform Tool
G	Gradient Tool
E	Eraser Mode
P	Color Select Tool
Ctrl + R	Rectangular Select Tool
J	Elliptical Select Tool
F	Fill Tool
M	Horizontal Mirror Tool

General	
Shortcut	Action
Ctrl + N	New
Ctrl + O	Open
Ctrl + S	Save
Ctrl + Shift + S	Save As
Ctrl + W	Close
Ctrl + Shift + W	Close All
Ctrl + Q	Quit
Ctrl + Z	Undo
Ctrl + Shift + Z	Redo
Ctrl + X	Cut
Ctrl + C	Copy
Ctrl + Shift + C	Copy Merged
Ctrl + V	Paste
Ctrl + Shift + N	Paste into New Image
Ctrl + Shift + R	Paste as Reference Image
Delete	Clear
F1	Krita Handbook

Selections	
Shortcut	Action
Ctrl + A	Select All
Ctrl + Shift + A	Deselect
Ctrl + Shift + D	Reselect
Ctrl + Shift + I	Invert Selection
Ctrl + H	Show/Hide Selection
Ctrl + Shift + J	Cut Selection to New Layer

Navigation and Canvas	
Shortcut	Action
Tab	Show Canvas Only
Ctrl + Shift + F	Full-Screen Mode
Ctrl + + / =	Zoom In
Ctrl + -	Zoom Out
1	Zoom 1:1
2	Zoom to Fit
3	Zoom to Fit Width
Ctrl +] or 6	Rotate Right
Ctrl + [or 4	Rotate Left
5	Rotate Reset

Painting	
B	Freehand Brush Tool
Q	Multi-Brush Tool
[Decrease Brush Size
]	Increase Brush Size
I	Decrease Brush Opacity
O	Increase Brush Opacity
Insert key	New Paint Layer
F2	Rename Current Layer
Page Down key	Activate the Previous Layer
Page Up key	Activate the Next Layer
Ctrl + J	Duplicate Layer
Ctrl + E	Merge Down
Ctrl + Shift + E	Flatten All
Ctrl + G	Create a New Layer Group
Shift + Delete	Remove Layer
Shift + Backspace	Fill with Foreground Colour
Backspace	Fill with Background Colour
X	Switch Foreground and Background Color
D	Reset Foreground Color to Black and Background Color to White
Mouse right-click	Show Pop-Up Color Palette
K	Darken Color
L	Lighten Color
Ctrl + Shift + U	Desaturate
C	Show Common Color
H	Show Color History
Ctrl + B	Color Balance
Ctrl + U	HSV or HSL Adjust
Ctrl + L	Levels
W	Wrap-Around Mode
/	Switch to the Previous Preset