

Manga School


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MANGA STUDIOS
www.sweatdrop.com

SWEATDROP STUDIOS' TIPS AND TRICKS ON CREATING YOUR OWN MANGA-STYLE ART

Calling all budding manga artists out there! Take a seat – the class is starting. Each issue in NED magazine, different artists from Sweatdrop Studios will be taking you through the stages of creating a piece of artwork from pencil sketches, through making pieces, to full pages of manga! Each will be offering real life tips and tricks as creating your own artwork, but also an insight into their own methods and techniques.

This month, we're looking at the wonders of toning – that staple of Japanese manga which can make a comic strip look so professional, and yet seem so complicated to accomplish! But fear not, gentle reader, as Laura Walker, having dealt with toning by hand, now turns her attention to digital toning. In fact, as you will see, toning a comic on your computer is a very easy process!

Pencil of the ready! Class in progress...

7. COMICWORKS

This tutorial mainly focuses on how to use the programme ComicWorks to save comics. This will ensure your comic will look amazing when printed out through a digital printer.



3- HOW TO BEGIN

Open up your clean scan in Comicworks and add a new ink layer. Do this every time you create tone. Using separate layers means it's easier to edit your tones at a later date.



2. POINTS TO CONSIDER

- There are some important factors to consider when beginning the process:
- Your artwork should be scanned as a grayscale file at 300dpi (dots per inch)
- You will then have to adjust the brightness and contrast to get rid of grey bits – make your art as clean as possible for crisp lines, make the ink a solid black. You can touch up details with the pen tool.
- Make sure you lay your page out on a new document that is the correct size. For example, the dimensions for TOCNDROP's Rising Star of Manga competition are 3200 by 4800 pixels. You must tone at the exact printing size – when tone is shrunk, unwanted 'noise' patterns appear, which would spoil all your hard work!
- Be aware of print trim – always leave enough room.
- You can make your own guidelines according to the dimensions you wish to print at.



4- SELECTING THE TONE

Here are the window menus you will need for this project: Ink Layer, Tools, Pen/brush, Tone Selection.

Select the area to be toned with the Automatic Selection tool (any breaks in the line art will have to be filled in with the pen tool). Then, select the tone you wish to use from the drop down menu, and select 'OK' after adjusting where you want it to be placed.

You can also tone sections by using the dotted-line tool to select a square area. When this is filled with tone, erase around the areas where the tone is not required.



SWITCHDROPS STUDIOS

As always, for any further information on techniques or styles used, head over to www.switchdrop.com, where you can check ideas and artwork as well as peruse Switchdrop's own range of original art manga comics. We will also be at plenty of events on this summer, so keep an eye out for those!



LAURA WATTON

Laura has been self-publishing comics since 1994 and was one of the founding members of Switchdrop Studios. Her main series is *Bunheads*, but she also contributes to numerous Switchdrop anthologies and produces other titles.

Laura edited the new Switchdrop book, *Structure*, and is also a part-time professional illustrator. She also writes our favourite Gunguis fashion article – turn to page 108!

8: MORE TIPS

Name your layers for quick and easy reference – be organised to save time.

If you are working on a page that requires a lot of work, save your page in different stages, in case you have to go back to any point.



TABLETS AND PROGRAMMES

To create the comic page, a Wacom Graphics Tablet (A5 size) was used, which is compatible with both Macs and PCs. Graphics tablets come in a vast range of sizes and prices to reflect individual requirements. The pressure sensitivity, accuracy and simplicity are all essential reasons to invest in your own tablet to create more pieces of digital artwork.

Tablets are only currently available for PCs, but there are other digital art programmes which can be used, such as Photoshop and Manga Studio, both of which are available for Apple Macintosh and PC.



8: BEING INTENSE

For dramatic lighting effects, select a white area to stroke, and erase or cut away parts to show striking shadows. This emphasises the intensity of certain areas and is good to use sporadically – think about your light sources, too.

8: X MARKS THE SPOT

Using a black or grey colour in thin, delicate edges and then colour larger areas with black using the fill tool. Mark these areas with an 'X' for reference, not that you'll use the page to fit comfortably on the screen, allowing for easier colouring of the free edges.



8: TIPS

Don't forget to continuously save your files throughout the duration of your project! Learn the shortcut for this. Get into the habit of saving without thinking – just press CTRL + S whenever you are working. It will save a lot of anguish in your daily computing life.

As well as saving, learn what the whole programme offers – filling, image resizing (this makes some errors very easy to spot), zoom in, zoom out – experiment what works best for you!

If a panel is busy with many characters and speech bubbles, use an insensitive and simple patterned background. Too much detail in the background means the reader can't concentrate on what is going on in the foreground.



8: FINISHING

When finished, save your project as a Photoshop file as well as a ComicBook file (.Cbk). Speech bubbles can be placed via Photoshop by opening the saved file and using the 'place' option to create a text block outline to highlight your white bubble. Think carefully about what lettering you will use. Look at free fonts on FontDz.com to give your comic a professional edge!



TIPS AND TIPS

Remember...
300dpi = the best resolution for black and white images.
300dpi to 600dpi = great for colour prints and pictures.
72dpi = perfect for the internet, but not to print (your images will look very pixelated).
ComicWorks can easily be purchased online, via Deluxe.com or Dinkytown.com