About Okuha

Okuha.com is an online hub with the mission of helping beginner anime artists to find their inner artistic voice, art style, and to help them overcome creative blocks by offering valuable techniques and tips. I am here to help you with your anime art journey.
5 Must-Read Tips For Digital Art Beginner
When we see other artist’s posting more than awesome looking drawings online, we can only wonder how on earth I can ever achieve the same results.

Believe in yourself and your abilities and skills. You can get those same results, and you can even get better results. But how, you may ask? You see, no one was born with this special artist gift, gift that makes them super awesome painters and masters in art.

Nope.

All of them, you and me, we all have to work hard to achieve results. Every one of those great artists you see online, every one of them started from somewhere, and believe me, when I say, NONE of them could paint masterpieces the moment they held the paintbrush, pencil or digital pen.

They learned through time and countless trials and errors, they studied art and drew constantly, you should too. That way, you will get better and better. You just have to start. Why not now?
You see this awesome painting with perfect proportions, facial expressions, and scenery. That painter must be one awesome talent and virtuosity on what he/she does.

Nope again.

There are only a few individuals in the world who can truly draw and paint, for example, realistic humans from the back of their heads. Of course, there are those masters. The world is so big, and the artistic skills are so massive there just has to be those people. It’s a rule.

However, the rest of us have to rely on references. And before you judge me, just think about it. Doesn’t it seem slightly impossible to remember what certain objects look like, precisely, and exactly? And, I mean exactly. For example, you are drawing a rose. Yes, you can draw that from your memory, sure.

Wouldn’t you agree that the rose could look better if it would have a real-world reference behind it? I bet it would look better if you would use reference while drawing a rose. Don’t be ashamed to use reference images. We all use those; just accept it and, more importantly, embrace it.
Not every art software is fit for everything, and I suggest you do some research before you choose one over another as a quick analysis for you. The biggest art software would be Adobe Photoshop (obviously), Corel Painter, and Autodesk SketchBook.

This is just my observation.

While we might say Photoshop is widely used and most liked among artists. I still found a better software for my needs, and it’s called Clip Studio Paint. I could not do art without that software. Without delving into the software, I just have to mention that line art is the easiest to do with that software. What you should do, is try to search for information on different art software and think about the art you want to produce and if it’s achievable with that selected software.

If I were to do paintings, I would use Corel Painter as it’s just phenomenal for those oily like paintings. Photoshop is kind of the best software to use for final touches for your drawings. It just has the best image editing features you can find. But for anime art, Clip Studio Paint is the best of the breed!

Do thorough research before you buy any art software for yourself.
#4 Observe When You Are The Most Creative

That is possibly one of the most important tips I can give you. Have you ever felt like you are not in the mood to draw, or you don’t feel like drawing? Or maybe you would just like to do everything else than create a new drawing. Yeah. That is a lack of motivation right there.

Procrastination perhaps?

How to know when you are ready to draw? Have you felt like you have to draw something, or you just have to get this idea of yours out to the canvas, or you have this urge to create something new? That is the creative juice flowing in your body.

That is the feeling of inspiration. You are inspired to draw.

What I have observed in myself is that I am most creative late at night. I surely don’t know why it is so, but it just is. You should observe yourself and see at what time of the day you feel like you want to create something. Draw a new artwork and just feel the creativity in you.
#5 Study Constantly And Draw Even More

The way you can improve your skills in art is by studying drawings and drawing. That’s it! There is no shortcut to success as they say. However, what is crucial is that you have an art source which you can use to improve yourself.

There are plenty of sites that offer art advice, Youtube, DeviantArt, Artstation, Pixiv, Okuha.com :P When I started drawing, I was desperate to find that one place to provide me with what I needed. That is the reason I created Okuha.

To create a place that gives you those tips & tricks, easy to follow tutorials, and also the resources to use and study to improve your skills in art, especially in anime art. The way I got better at drawing was that I studied other artists, I looked at their line art, the way they colored drawings. I also studied composition and object placement.

What we have to remember is that, even though you study as much as you do. You won’t get better unless you actually draw. So my advice would be that you should draw as much as you can and have the time to it.

You will get better when you just put time and effort into your drawings.
Checklist

Line art takes time. It is something you have to put time into. And when you take your time with it. You will slowly see the results. You have more consistent line art and something that shows you have put effort into. I have gathered here 5 things that you should think while drawing your line art.

These focus points will make your line art that much better. Hopefully, this checklist will give you new thoughts and also help you take focus when drawing line art.

#1 If an object is fragile you can make the line art non-continuous. This will look like the edge is so sharp and fragile that it is not even visible.

#2 Increase width of the line art when you want to emphasize or separate some elements in your drawing. This will also attract viewers attention. So use it carefully.

#3 When an image has lots of details. Do make sure you use very small brush to draw the line art. With a smaller line art brush you are able to differentiate elements more easily.

#4 Use thicker line art when you are placing something in the shadow. So if you are planning to cast a shadow to some element. Make sure there is a correct width line art to back it up.

#5 When an object is closer to the viewer. You can draw a wider line art if you so choose to. This is not necessary but if you want to tell the viewer about something being close. Widen the line art.
52 Essential Tips For Anime Artists
1. Take small steps at a time. Don’t rush. Art is made with patience. By rushing into things, you get nothing useful done.

2. If the light source is warm, use cold shadow colors and vice versa.

3. If you shade with one color, make sure that there is enough contrast between the shade and the base colors.

4. Practice makes a master. Nothing is achieved with cheating.

5. Don’t give up on a drawing. When it feels like there is an impossible wall in front of you. Remember that with the time, you can overcome that wall. That drawing might very well become your masterpiece in time.

6. If you feel that your drawing is not looking good, it could be down to your color choices. Change the colors and see if it gets any better. Sometimes colors can create unexpected results. As good as in bad.

7. Values play an essential part in the drawing. Always check values by creating a black color canvas and changing that to color layer mode. This way, you can check if the elements in your drawing are distinct enough from each other.

8. Composition comes to play when you want to guide the viewers’ eyes to a specific point of interest. With composition, you can direct and influence the viewer in interesting ways.

9. Make a plan for the whole year and theme it up. I for e.g., I made a year where my goal was to improve my anime style. One was where I focused on getting better at drawing etc. That way, you focus on only that. At the end of the year, look back and be amazed at how much you have improved.

10. One can have multiple art styles. Don’t be afraid to experiment and try new things every now and then.
11. Search for your inner artistic voice. It might take time, but eventually, you will find a style that resonates with you more than others. Look for that feeling.

12. Hard work pays off but only with time. This applies more than ever to drawing. You only get better at drawing if you do the work.

13. Learning techniques take time, but you can shorten that time by learning from someone else who is further in the journey than you are.

14. Line art: Vary line width to make more lines more exciting and to give life to the drawing.

15. While you might not feel like drawing, you should always know that you are still a creative person.

16. Anime art is not easy to master. Find your style and experiment. In time you will find the one thing for you. That style and voice that represents your inner self.

17. Nothing comes free in life. For you to gain a new skill, you have to work hard for it, and in time you can be confident in the skill you have honed over the years.

18. A few of the most critical things in anime art is eyes and hair. Put effort into those.

19. Foreshortening: Vision that someone is reaching out to you with his/her hand, and the body stays at the same place. You see the hand bigger than the rest of the body. That is foreshortening in short (pun intended).

20. Avoid using pure black or pure white. You rarely (read never) see those in real life, so why should you use those in your drawings?
21. Try out different color schemes before deciding the final color palette. No reason to stick with the first color palette that comes to your mind. There might be better schemes when you look for those.

22. Drawing is about being creative. Rules only hinder your creativity. Break the rules and be creative on your own terms.

23. Hair is one of the most important parts of good anime art. Hair tells about the character’s personality. Make sure the hair gives through the personality of the character.

24. Use different brushes to get different results. Textured brushes give you lively lines. When using non-textured brushes, you get this graphical or cel shaded output. Think through which effect you are aiming for.

25. Putting your artwork out there for everyone to see might be a scary thought. Think about what the world misses out if you decide not to show your work? We need imagination in the world, and you can be one of the givers.

26. Jack of all trades is a master of none. Aim to be a master at one technique or skill first and then move on to the next one.

27. Drawing anime eyes are not always easy, but you should make sure that when you do draw those, put effort into them. Eyes are one of the essential elements in anime as they give away the emotion the character has.

28. When you feel your drawing is complete. Leave it to your folder for a few days, and if after a few days you still don’t see anything that should be improved, then your artwork is complete.

29. Sometimes progress is hard to spot. So look back and see your previous works down the road. From the past years all the way to the beginning, if possible. Compare and be proud.

30. When you feel like nothing good comes to the canvas. Head outside and get some fresh air. Forget drawing for a while, and when you are ready. Start drawing again.
31. A blank canvas is your enemy and opportunity. Blank canvas gives your mind freedom but can also create an emptiness to your mind. Fill your mind and then fill your canvas. Or fill your canvas and then fill your mind.

32. Use stabilization features when possible when doing line art. This way, you will always have clean and precise line art. Stabilization might not be a feature in your art software. It might be time to change that software to some other like Clip Studio Paint (best anime art software ever).

33. Always compare yourself to the best in the industry. If you want to grow as an artist, you have to be in a constant improvement mode, and you can check your progress by comparing your art against the best.

34. If your drawings look dull, you can try and see if you notice the reason for it. An easy way to do just that is to place your image against someone else’s drawing you admire. Compare the images and see what your image lacks. Then you know what you need to do differently next time.

35. When you are just beginning and still finding your voice in art. Don’t feel discouraged if it takes time. Finding your artistic voice might take a while, but when you get there, you will feel good, and you start to progress very fast.

36. Remember that canvas settings do matter when you want to produce quality illustrations and drawings. Higher-resolution guarantees good print quality. So, remember to up the image size to around 8000 x 9000px and resolution to at least 300 to 600 dpi/ppi.

37. Practice makes you a better artist. Hard work emphasizes the results.

38. Even though drawing fast is sometimes nice to have. That speed can also sometimes hinder the quality of your work. Balance speed and efficiency with quality. This makes your artwork shine.

39. Take a break. Sometimes it is just better to do anything else than to draw. Your mind can rest from the creative strain it might have. Take a walk. Go outside, play games, watch an anime. Instead of drawing, rest your mind a bit.
40. Draw what comes to your mind. Don’t try to evolve those into a finalized image. Let your imagination flow. Sometimes it’s best to leave work unfinished in your mind and fill in the blanks while you progress through your image.

41. Zoom in when you want to draw details. But when doing that, have another view of the drawing available in zoom out mode. This way, you can see whether that detail you just added really made any difference.

42. Add details to places where you want the viewer to watch and leave the areas unfinished where you don’t want the viewer to watch.

43. Add bright spots of color where you want to guide your viewers’ eyes. Brightly saturated colors draw attention when the muted colors in the surroundings don’t get so much attention.

44. Use muted colors when drawing anime landscapes to get that semi-realistic vision across. Usually, we choose to draw with a too saturated color palette; this might not be a good idea with anime sceneries.

45. Gradually drawing line art gives you more control over the lines. Whereas a one continuous and confident line gives you one smooth line for handling those long lines, e.g., when drawing hair.

46. When shading, use a light background color layer and, for e.g., a light purple color on multiply layer mode to really speed up your shading process.

47. When shading, concentrate on the volume. Try to get those shapes defined with well-placed shadows and lights.

48. When coloring, it is easier to start with muted/greyish colors. Increasing saturation, later on, is so much easier than doing the other way around.

49. Zoom in and out when drawing. When zoomed out, you can see the whole structure of the drawing more clearly. When zoomed in, you can draw very detailed lines or color a specific area more accurately.
50. If you feel like your artworks suck or that you are not good enough. There are two ways to move on, quit, or get better and trust me; you don’t want to quit. Quitters will never be winners.

51. Practicing every now and then gives you that freedom for your mind. Not every piece you create has to be finalized with some deep thought and meaning.

52. You are an artist if you decide to be one.
Thanks For Reading!

Okuha