Create a New Drawing

In the Gallery, tap the + button in the top left corner, or tap “Start from Scratch”.

You’ll start with one project, but you can have as many projects with as many drawings as you like. Swipe left and right in the Gallery to switch projects.

Customize Your Tools

On the Canvas, your tool wheel has eight favorite tool slots.

You can configure each tool slot with its own brush, size, opacity, smoothness, and color. Tap the active tool for options, or use the inner wheel to switch between presets.

You can draw with pens and pencils, COPIC markers, watercolors, and more, just like on a normal sheet of paper. But this one is special.

Navigate the Canvas

Your canvas is infinite, so you’ll need a way to move around: use two fingers to zoom, pan and rotate. If you have an Apple Pencil, you can set up separate actions for your fingers in Settings, like panning with one finger while your Apple Pencil draws.

Rearrange Your Workspace

All of the menus on the Canvas can be rearranged. To pick one up, give it a tap+hold. You’ll see a map pop down with various alignment options available - choose one and let go.

If you want to pick up the tool wheel, be sure to grab it from the outside ring as the other rings have other shortcuts assigned to them. The tool wheel can be moved to several regions on screen, and can even turn into a more classic-style toolbar if you place it on the left or right sides.

You can also hide the menus by swiping them outwards, once to hide the labels for more space, and again to hide the whole interface.
Adjust Anything

Once you have a selection, try a pinch or spread gesture to resize and rotate the selection. Or, grab a single handle and pull to stretch in one direction or another. If you tap one of the corner handles first and then pull it will distort. Tap two handles and move one or two fingers to skew and warp in perspective. Your fingers are in control.

You can also change the selection’s line weight, color, smoothness, and more. Try tapping a new tool in the tool wheel while something is selected, or adjust the size or opacity slider to make changes.

The selection popups are also a handy way to manipulate. You can make a duplicate of the selection, copy it to your clipboard, delete it entirely, filter the selection or limit the scale and rotate behaviors described above.

Make a Selection

Concepts is special because every stroke you draw is actually a series of data points called vectors. You can pick up and manipulate these strokes in many ways, but it all starts with a selection.

To select something, just tap-and-hold it with your finger. This works for strokes, stroke groups, images, text, and even eraser strokes. You can select multiple things at once (add or remove from the selection) by hovering over them and tapping the screen with another finger.

You can also Lasso multiple items at once, or use the Color Picker to quickly grab an on-screen color -- these options are at the bottom of the screen once you’ve initiated the tap+hold. It should become second nature after you’ve tried it a few times.

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Working with Layers

Layers are a great way to organize your drawing or achieve a specific effect. There are three special things you should know about Layers in Concepts:

1) Layers are basically infinite. Strokes are stored and filtered like data in Concepts, and not constricted by texture size like in pixel-based apps. Use as many as you like.

2) Layers can be managed automatically (by tool) or manually. You can toggle between them from the Layers menu. Automatic is the default and switches between layers each time you switch tools. If you switch to Eraser (really a freeform masking tool), it will stay in the layer you were using last.

3) You can quickly isolate layers with Focus Mode - just scrub your finger over the eyeballs in the layers panel, or double tap a layer to focus on it. This is really helpful when the drawing is visually busy or when you want to select something inside a specific layer.

The Object Library

Some drawings are freeform exploration and others are plans that require structure and moving pieces. If you use something more than a few times, and certainly across drawings, it’s a good idea to make an object.

Objects are just groups of strokes that have been dragged into the Import panel for reuse. We’ve made a few dozen packs of our own for learning / work / fun, available in the Market tab of the Import menu (tap Import then More to access it). To create your own packs, go to the My Objects tab, then tap “New Pack”. Back on canvas, drag any selection into the menu to make an object. These are synced across your devices.

Precision Tools

Concepts is designed to bridge the gaps between the physical world and the digital one. So in addition to stylistic brushes, there’s also a sense of space and scale.

You can toggle these options in the Precision menu and through the Settings panel. Grids, Measure and Scale, various Snap options, plus Shape Guides that let you draw straight lines, curves or angles with (or without) measured sizes.

Tip! There are several ways to draw straight lines: try setting pen smoothing to 100%, or use the Line shape from the Shapes object pack and stretch it out with your fingers.

Setting Scale

By default, Concepts is set to real-world scale. If you draw a line 1” / 2.54cm long, it’ll be exactly that (called 1:1), no matter what device you’re on. If you’re drawing an architectural or landscape plan, you might need something like 1:50, where 1cm = 50cm. You can change that scale in Settings.

Importing a Photo

When you want to draw on an image, pick up reference colors, or make a mood board, you’ll need to import into the canvas.

On iOS11, it’s as easy as dragging between apps. In Safari, for example, tap+hold an image, then with another finger, swipe up from the bottom of the screen to show the dock, find and tap Concepts, open a drawing, then drop it in.

Or, try the More button on the Import menu.
The Import tab has a number of familiar places and ways to import, including your device’s photo library, various cloud libraries, and a collection of your most recent imports to save you time.

**Exporting Your Work**

We like to think of Concepts as a next-generation technology — all the freedom and style of traditional methods with the power and flexibility that digital offers. However, there are many older, still-useful formats that we support in order to make your workflow fast and efficient. Formats like SVG, DXF, PSD, PDF, and more, along with their various options can be accessed from the Export menu. At the end of the process, you’ll see popular locations like Instagram, your printer, cloud services, and other apps for an open workflow.

**Sharing Assets**

In Concepts 5, we introduced a new service for creative teams that reduces friction when working with a common set of assets — both objects and color palettes to start.

To share something with someone, tap+hold the pack or palette in their configuration screens and choose the “Share” option. There you’ll get a direct share link you can copy/paste to anyone.

When they open the link, they’ll be asked if they want to “subscribe” to the pack. Any changes you make will appear automatically, instantly to the shared pack on their device. More detail is available on that share screen.

**Accounts & Syncing**

Also new in Concepts 5 are proper accounts. It’s free to sign up, and includes the benefit of syncing preferences, color palettes, object packs and other purchases across devices. Drawing sync via iCloud is coming soon. You can sign up an account via the profile pic button in the Gallery.

**So Many Options**

Some of these features are available under different in-app purchases, like the Essentials, Make Your Own Objects, Object Market packs, or PDF Import/Export. You can get them all with the Easy Everything option, which also gives you access to special services and team workflows like Live Asset Sharing.

Your support makes it possible for us to add new features every 4-6 weeks, and we’re excited to show you what’s in store for the future.

**Be Part of the Community**

Keep learning and get up to speed quickly with our active and diverse design community. Learn tips and tricks, find daily inspiration and encouragement, and get feedback on your latest projects. Look for us @ConceptsApp or email us directly at concepts@tophatch.com.

Happy creating!

The Concepts Team @ TopHatch