



iStockphoto/Susan Murtaugh

iPad masterpieces

An iPad or iPhone is much more than just a high-tech gadget, it can produce stunning works of art. **Alex Thomas** unpacks his sketchbook and delves into the world of iPad paintings

Finger painting is no longer just for kids. There is a growing community of online artists who use the iPad and iPhone to create exciting and vibrant artwork using just their fingers. Thanks to programs like *Brushes* and *SketchBook Pro*, there's also an ever-growing community of 'finger painters' on social networking sites such as Flickr and Facebook, where they upload artwork straight from their iPads or iPhones to share with the world. You can even see videos of how they have put the

paintings together. Meanwhile, professional painters and illustrators – such as renowned British artist David Hockney and comic-book legend Jim Lee – are joining in the fun by using the iPad and iPhone to create fantastic works of art and sharing them with friends and fans. Even highbrow US magazine *The New Yorker* featured a cover painting, created on the iPhone, by illustrator Jorge Colombo.

Over the next four pages, we'll introduce some of the iPad artists who are making a name for themselves. >>



Stef Kardos
stefsketches.blogspot.com

Disney animator Stef Kardos is one of the true pioneers of finger painting on the iPhone. His 50s' diner images, inspired by his native California, were some of the first to appear online and show off the power of the *Brushes* app. He tells us, "I love painting and sketching on location; the light here in Southern California, the sunsets and the city views of LA at night from the mountains are superb; but painting a sunset live as the sun goes down is very challenging with traditional media. The iPhone came in handy for me, as it gave me the opportunity to be spontaneous; and most of all, it enabled me to paint outdoors, not from a photo in my studio."

As for his next step, Stef says he is looking forward to getting an iPad, having seen what his colleagues at Disney have started doing with it already.

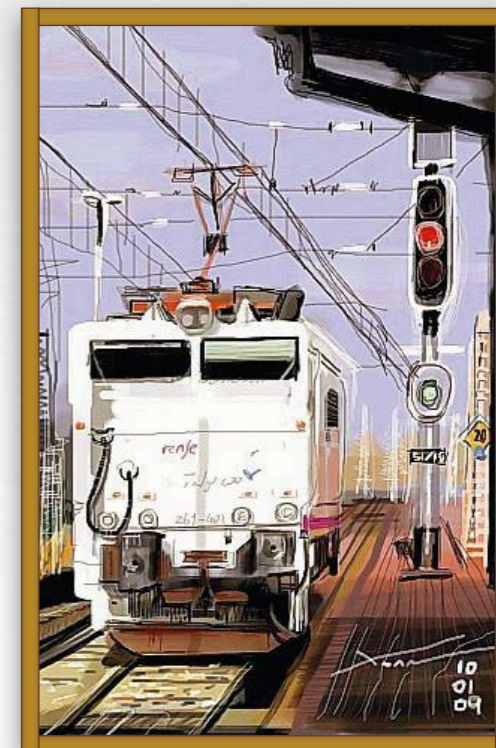


Goro Fujita
www.area-56.de

Animator and concept artist Goro Fujita has been painting with *Brushes* on the iPhone since it was launched. Graduating from finger painting to using a Pogo stylus, he was quick to upgrade to the iPad as soon as it was unveiled. "I loved the feel of [the iPad] and the software packages like *Brushes* and *Sketchbook Pro* were a lot more responsive and faster than on the iPhone. I didn't hesitate a second to get myself an iPad."

Goro uses both *Brushes* and *Sketchbook Pro* on his iPad. "*Brushes* is the faster tool, and since I'm in direct contact with the creator I can give him feedback and it doesn't take long until he implements new features. I also like the simple interface, and the tools are easy to reach. Every action gets recorded and you can play it back instantly or export it to your Mac and watch your painting process. You can even play it back at a higher resolution without quality loss, which is an amazing feature. Although in *Brushes* you can't draw dots yet." When asked about the difference between painting on the iPad and a more traditional way of working, he says the best thing is "the possibility to undo your actions and transform your layers."

As for how he views the future of painting on the iPad, he says: "The iPad has a really nice size and I love painting on it. This is the first generation and the applications are getting better and better. The hardware still needs some improvement, like pressure sensitivity, but that's only a matter of time. I think the iPad is perfect as a digital portable sketchbook."



Xoan Baltar
xoanbaltar.blogspot.com

Self-taught Spanish painter Xoan Baltar believes he is continuing the tradition of Spanish masters by releasing his iPhone paintings to the world via Flickr and YouTube. As well as helping to develop the second incarnation of *Brushes* alongside its creator Steve Sprang, Xoan was one of the first iPhone artists to upload videos of his paintings to YouTube to show off his techniques to the world. "The drawings are very diverse; they can take 20 minutes to do or even two hours." The YouTube videos were a direct response to online fans speculating about whether his paintings were retouched photographs, as well as to show how quickly he could create such stunning pieces of art.

When asked what his next step with his artwork is going to be, he says: "Currently I'm preparing an exhibition of paintings done on my iPhone. I can print on canvas and the results are amazing."



Susan Murtaugh
www.fingerpainted.it

Retired artist Susan Murtaugh is the co-author of finger-painting website www.fingerpainted.it and is one of the leading lights in the finger-painting community. "The Flickr community is host to so much unbelievable talent, it is hard not to be inspired and encouraged to do better work," she says. She herself was inspired by Disney artist Stef Kardos (see artist above) to pick up an iPhone, and then an iPad, as she embarked on what she refers to as her new 'iCareer', using *Brushes* and *SketchBook* to create some stunning paintings.

When asked what the future holds for iPad painters, she says: "My iPad is the most cherished piece of equipment I own today. It fits in my purse and so it's not a problem carrying it around and using it at a moment's notice. I have literally "handed off" my aging MacBook Pro and do not feel the need to replace it. In fact I look forward to the iPad's future development; can one with a camera and full printing capability be far off?"

When asked whether painting on the iPad will prove to be a short-lived fad, she says: "I have been teaching all the sixth-grade classes in my county about art on digital devices and the enthusiasm - and how fast the kids pick up the apps and use them - shows me that the need and want is there. The iPad is also considerably less expensive than I originally thought it would be, so I think they'll be around for a long time to come."

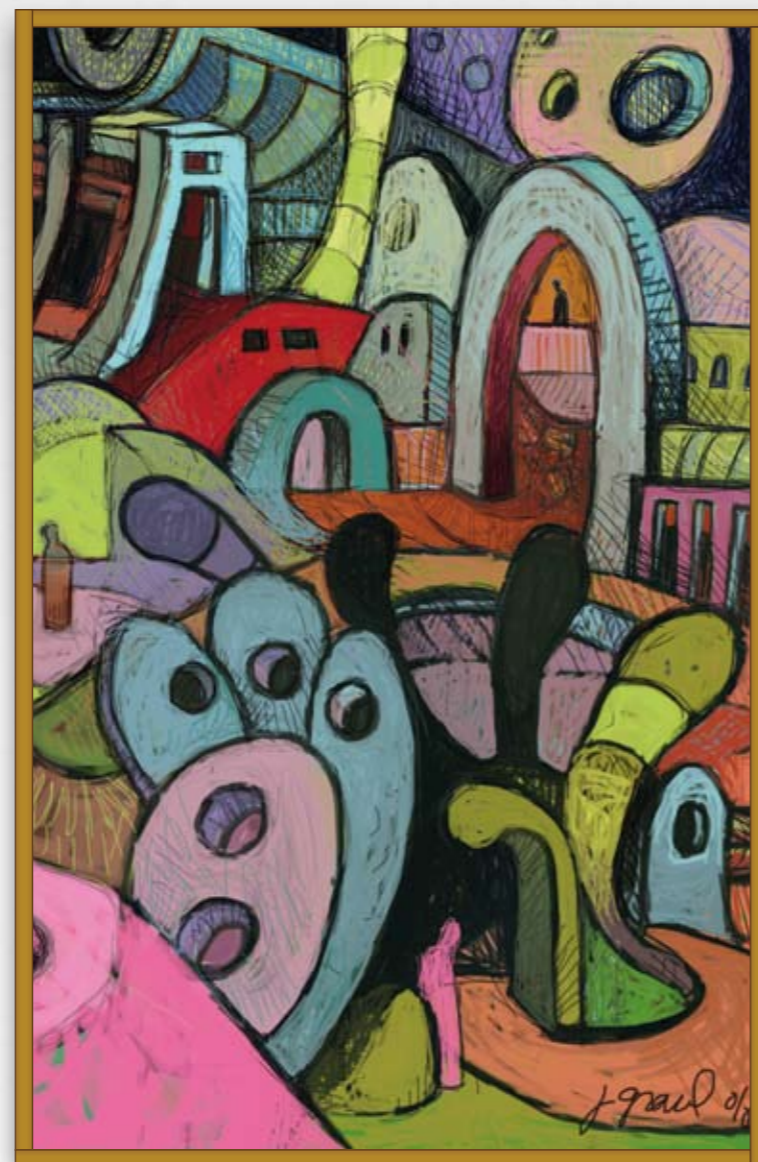




 Corliss Blakely
www.artistinvermont.com

Vermont-based painter Corliss Blakely got into painting on her iPhone almost by accident. "I was at my studio about a year ago waiting for a panel to arrive for a commission. I had some extra time so I picked up my phone and thought I would try a few painting apps. I immediately knew that I had found a new medium. I bought the iPad the day it came out and had a painting on the internet that night."

"I think the iPad is the new canvas for artists. It will give freedom to artists that have been working in the studio for years. It is so portable, you can take it anywhere and paint on location or display your new works to clients - not to mention send it out to the world with a click of your finger. In the summer I live on an island with only solar power, so the iPad 3G will be perfect to send my art out into the world."



 Jonathan Grauel
www.bluestudioonline.com

Abstract painter Jonathan Grauel had been painting in acrylics and oils for more than 20 years, but it was a freak accident that saw him take up painting on the iPhone. "In 2008, I had an accident with a table saw that left me without an index finger. I'm also unable to bend my middle finger and have limited sensitivity in my thumb. Unfortunately, it was my left hand and I am a lefty. After the accident my wife and friends surprised me with an iPhone. I soon discovered painting and drawing applications."

"For the most part I 'paint' the same on the iPad/iPhone as I do on canvas, but with a lot less clean-up. I begin with an initial sketch to work out the composition, then add in larger shapes for colours or tones. Next, I build on it layer after layer, adding line, colour and shape. I just use my finger - I like the direct interaction with the art and it feels more natural than a stylus. My damaged middle finger doesn't bend, and so it became a great new drawing instrument."

When asked what he would like Apple to improve on the iPad for painters, he admits: "I would love to be able to project from my iPad as I draw. As the touch sensor technology improves, I hope the control and variation of marks in my iPad drawings will increase as well."



 Michael Heald
www.fullyillustrated.com

Animator and games designer Michael Heald is another artist who leapt at the chance to create using an iPad. "As soon as I heard about the iPad I immediately got very excited about the prospect of using it as a portable digital sketchpad. But to my horror, there wasn't going to be a stylus included. 'Finger painting? Apple, are you serious?' I thought. Unsurprisingly, drawing on the iPad with my finger seemed very, very primitive and I was almost ready to give up within 20 minutes, but something made me persevere and I'm glad I did! The essence of being able to carry all your art tools around in one very slim digital device is just fabulous. In my opinion, the iPad will become as essential as the Wacom tablet in time."

"I think my next step is to expand my abilities from a technical standpoint. I'm very rusty at painting due to using vectors for so many years, so my short- and long-term goal is to be able to use this device to create final artwork."



 Fabric Lenny
www.fabriclenny.co.uk

Prolific image-maker Fabric Lenny has been painting with his iPhone for just over a year, after being inspired by pop artist David Hockney. "His images remain some of the most vibrant and inspirational created using the device." A keen fan of the *Brushes* app, Lenny already sees it as an essential part of his image-making toolkit. "It has really developed since the early versions, and is very intuitive to use. The ability to output high-quality, print-ready files via Wi-Fi is a real bonus."

When asked what he sees as the future for the iPhone as a painting device, he says: "For now the iPhone will remain a way for me to create new images, although I do look forward to the release of the iPad in the UK, as I'm keen to explore the benefits that its large screen offers the artist."



 Kevin Barba
www.kevinbarba.com

Character artist and illustrator Kevin Barba bought an iPad on launch day and hasn't stopped sketching since! "Using the iPad has helped give me a chance to take a fresh look at my art and look back and re-teach myself the basics of drawing" he tells us. "I recently began doing gesture drawings and I am working on creating loose storyboards so that I can better communicate stories in my art." When asked how it has changed the way he works he says, "As funny as this is, I still find myself sketching thumbnails out on Post-It notes before I begin a piece on *Brushes*. I will for a majority of sketches use my finger for painting. I recently picked up a Pogo Stylus and the Apple iPad case, which has come in handy creating a more comfortable angle of the screen when I work at my desk. I know some iPad artists use custom-cut gloves to avoid accidentally calling up any multi-touch commands, but I don't think that is entirely necessary yet."

