

# Hurdles of a „Photoshop Guy“

I'm an illustrator who mainly uses Photoshop for painting/assembling/retouching and other Adobe products for print production. With Adobe not really doing anything innovative for illustrators over the last few years, it's time to turn to other programs with better options. After trying several programs, Krita is amongst the ones with the best chances to take that spot. However transitioning isn't as smooth as expected and every program lacks some important features that stand in opposition to a better painting experience. In the end the pros have to win over the cons. Unfortunately the situation isn't that clear with Krita right now and I feel the cons still have the upper hand. After having some threads in the forum that unfortunately went off topic in the end, I decided to clearly flesh out my thoughts for (hopefully) a better presentation of my thoughts. So here are some hurdles that I encountered while trying Krita as a painting software.

## ① The Eraser Tool

### The Issue

The brush and the eraser are the most used tools for an illustrator. So being able access them easily and to switch between them quickly is very important. Basically that's not an issue in Krita. However at the moment, the eraser (including its shortcut) is linked to the brush. This might work in some cases, but very often this might not be the case. For example, when I paint with a fine pencil or some other very characteristic brush (grass, sparkles, birds ...), I want a big junky (classical) eraser to erase areas that I'm not happy about or that I like to soften by using a low-transparency eraser. At the moment I would have to go to the Brush Presets and pick a special eraser manually and afterwards pick the brush again. And when those two brushes are separated in the list, this gets even more complicated. Over the day, this involves a lot of movement of the painting hand while the non-painting hand is on the keyboard (or in my case the Wacom Remote) and can't handle that task.

### The Proposal

On top of the eraser switch as it is right now, introduce a dedicated eraser button in the toolbar (image on the right). It's purpose is merely to memorize and switch brushes - this should not affect the resource management or the brush engine and even the eraser switch will be as always.

### The Function

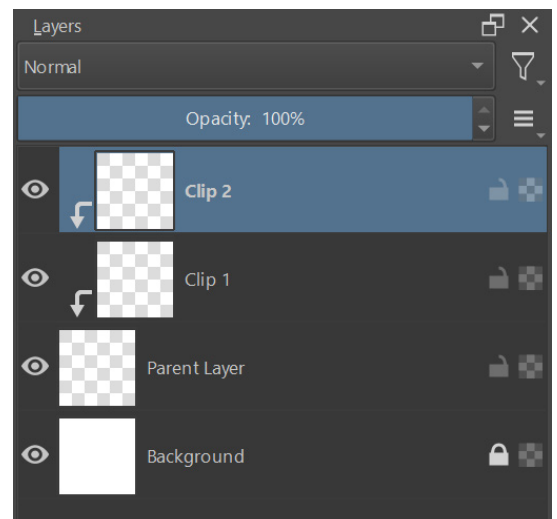
The last used eraser and non-eraser have to be memorized. When the eraser tool is selected (by either clicking it or using a shortcut) this means, that this memorized eraser brush is selected. Whenever the brush tool is selected the memorized non-eraser should be selected. Likewise, when an eraser is selected from the brush presets AND the brush tool is active, the tool should be switched to the eraser icon. And the other way around, when a brush is selected AND the eraser tool is active in the toolbar, the tool should switch back to the brush. To avoid confusion, the other tools that use a brush preset (Line, Rectangle etc.) should not be exited when switching to a brush or eraser preset. However, the brush/eraser that was switched to could be memorized (this has to be tested for functionality and might be optional).



## ② Clipping Masks

### The Issue

In Photoshop, clipping masks are introduced quite well. Visually they are easy to spot and they are above the parent layer as they should be. They also can be easily activated by ALT-clicking between two layers. In Krita however, there are a few issues. The "Inherit Alpha" toggle by itself doesn't do anything, unless its layer is put into a group. This not only takes several actions, it also creates extra layers that should not be necessary. And then the clipping mask is below its parent (in this case it's a group layer) which also is rather confusing - as now I have sort of two parents - one above in the form of a group and one below in the form of the actual parent layer. And as this is a group now just for the purpose of



being able to function as a clipping mask, it visually rivals actual groups that server a logistical purpose. And as of now alpha masks are looking like groups as well, which results in a lot of visual noise.

In addition, this layer structure cuts off the compatibility to Photoshop which is working in that manner. Opening a PSD file in either application becomes quite problematic that way.

### The Proposal

Not much to propose except to take a look at how Photoshop deals with clipping mask and take this as an inspiration. This would be a rather significant adaption but one that will be an improvement visually but also functionally that will not only serve users coming from Photoshop.

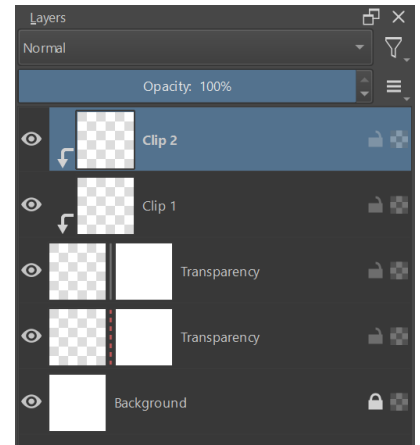
## ③ Transparency Mask

### The Issue

This is quite similar to the previous issue, but not as severe. Again, taking a look at Photoshop, it's visually better integrated there. With the mask thumbnail being shown next to the layer thumbnail, we have a strong visual connection between those two and a good visual separation from groups as well. In Krita it looks like another kind of group which is not ideal. Users always have to refer to the small icons next to the layer thumbnails to decode the purpose of individual group layers.

### The Proposal

Well. Again - looking at other programs as an inspiration is a start. Once the mask thumbnail is next to the layer thumbnail, and with the clipping mask being dealt with as well, visually the groups stand out much better and visually it's much easier to navigate longer layer trees.



## A Comparison (Krita - Left, Proposal - Right)

