

Art 305: Adobe Fresco App Review

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I learned about Adobe Fresco during my final two years of undergrad, right as the COVID-19 pandemic hit and caused all of my studio classes to go remote. This was also around the time that my senior thesis exhibition was quickly approaching, and I needed to quickly adapt to making art without access to a studio space, and do this while keeping in mind that my show would no longer exist in a physical gallery space. Adobe Fresco became my go-to.

Adobe Fresco is a free program that lends itself to simulating a physical drawing and painting experience in a digital format. There are a variety of both pixel and vector brush styles as well as the ability to work in layers, play with opacity and textures, as well as make and transform selections like you could do in Photoshop, all with the press of a button and following selection menus. It is similar to Procreate, minus the cost to download the app and it is very intuitive to learn to use. There is the option to upgrade the app to unlock more features such as brushes and other tools, and this costs \$9.99 a month.

When deciding between Adobe Fresco and Procreate, I definitely felt more enticed by Adobe Fresco's lesser cost and user-friendly interface. Although I have proficient skills in Adobe suite, I simply just was not in the position time-wise to pay for an application that I had heard had a bit of a learning curve. Once I opened Adobe Fresco, I knew I had made the right decision.

The app provides an initial tour, which definitely helps but in my opinion is not entirely necessary since the app is so easy to navigate. The tools are incredibly straightforward and simple to both find and use. I learned rather quickly after playing around with it a couple times. All the tools such as brushes, erasers, smudge tool, and color picker are on the left hand side of the screen in a tool bar, and each tool displays its label when you tap on it. Most of the tools open up another selection menu where you can quickly find the tool with the desired effect. There is

the ability to also work in layers, which are located on the right hand side of the canvas. From here, you can transform layers or make selections within them using similar pop-up menus and slider bars. For someone who just wants to deal with the basics of digital drawing, I would highly recommend starting here. In fact, this app is so easy to use that my 9-year-old brother who also is interested in art saw me using it and decided to try it for himself and he picked up on it almost immediately. It truly is very intuitive learning and although simple in its functions, provides a great medium for both beginner and advanced artists.

I could definitely see Adobe Fresco serving as a useful tool for students that want to explore digital art, or even as an accommodation for a student that struggles with interacting with physical materials. I know for myself, this app was my saving grace once I lost access to my studio space and usual means of art-making. The app also allows for easy sharing with the quick export function. All files can be saved as PDFs, JPEGs, or PNGs. This can be useful for submitting/uploading work online if necessary.

As mentioned before, my youngest sibling was able to quickly master the program, so I feel confident in saying that this app would be appropriate for middle and high schoolers. The only potential issue is that the student would need access to an iPad ideally, as well as an Apple Pencil for the best experience. However, using your finger is also a possible alternative to a stylus. I know that some schools can provide these devices, but I am aware that this possibility varies from district to district, as well as from school to school. I think Adobe Fresco's greatest advantage is that it could be framed as a gateway program to more advanced tools/functions, as well as other Adobe suite applications. After using this program for over a year, I decided I was

ready to upgrade so I could take advantage of new brush effects, transformation tools, and the ability to open files directly into Photoshop.



my example: digital painting + collage