5 Great Art Apps for Teachers and Students

With art classes being cut from curricula and budgets being cut across the country, we know it's tough to put together a full arsenal of art supplies (let alone a whole art curriculum). Some schools seem to be trading their traditional art supplies in for more in-class technology, and as we've seen nationwide, tablet computers are being introduced to classrooms at an increasing rate.

So with that in mind, we took an in-depth look at five popular art apps for tablets to help you decide which is right for you and your classroom.

Swipe Up to See Reviews

Artistic Corner (Free; iPad only)
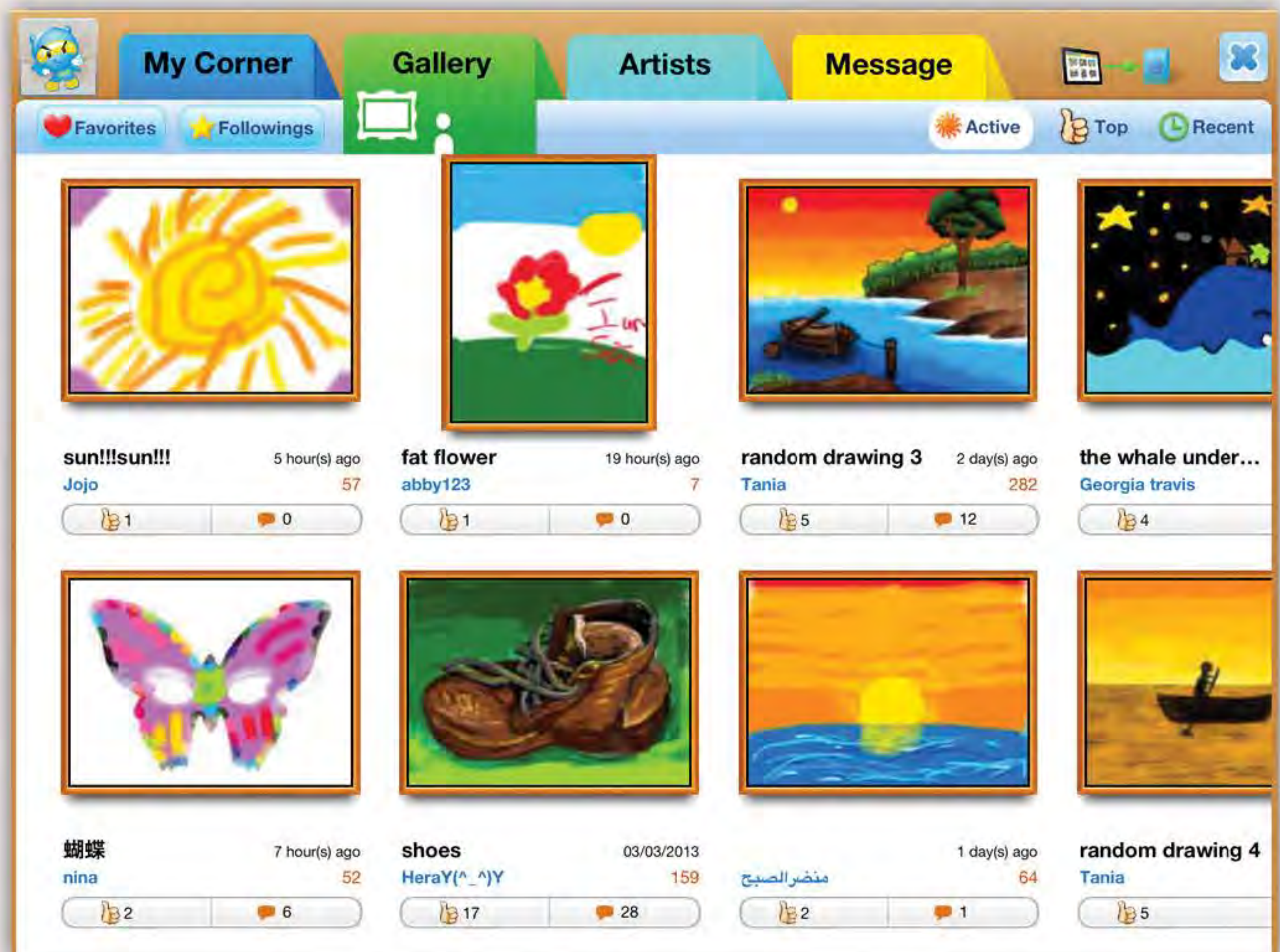
⭐⭐⭐☆☆

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First up is a kid-friendly app called Artist Corner. As you may expect, this app looks and feels like a kids' art app – the menus are kid-oriented (although we wouldn't quite call them simple), the tools are basic and easy to navigate and the interface is relatively intuitive.

Now obviously when you're trying to make an app simple enough for younger children to use, you're going to limit some functionality. This app does a good job of giving the user a variety of tools and possible textures (4 total), although it's missing some functionality the intermediate-to-advanced user may want (like the ability to zoom in and out of a canvas, create different sized canvases, draw in layers, etc.).

This app is free, so we do recommend giving it a try, and other features in this app like the coloring book and mask creator (both of which include optional purchases for added variety) make it versatile for young users. However, we do feel that the missing "layers" in this app limit its potential as even young digital artists should learn to think in layers.

The Artist Corner online gallery lets you share your favorite drawings, and browse what other people from all over the world have shared.

My Corner	Gallery	Artists	Message

❤ Favorites ⭐ Followings   ☀ Active 👍 Top 🕐 Recent

sun!!!sun!!!   5 hour(s) ago
Jojo   57
👍 1   💬 0

fat flower   19 hour(s) ago
abby123   7
👍 1   💬 0

random drawing 3   2 day(s) ago
Tania   282
👍 5   💬 12

the whale under...
Georgia travis
👍 4

蝴蝶   7 hour(s) ago
nina   52
👍 2   💬 6

shoes   03/03/2013
HeraY(^_^)Y   159
👍 17   💬 28

منظرالصبح   1 day(s) ago
  64
👍 2   💬 1

random drawing 4
Tania
👍 5

Paper (Free - In app purchases $8-15; iPad only) ★★★★☆
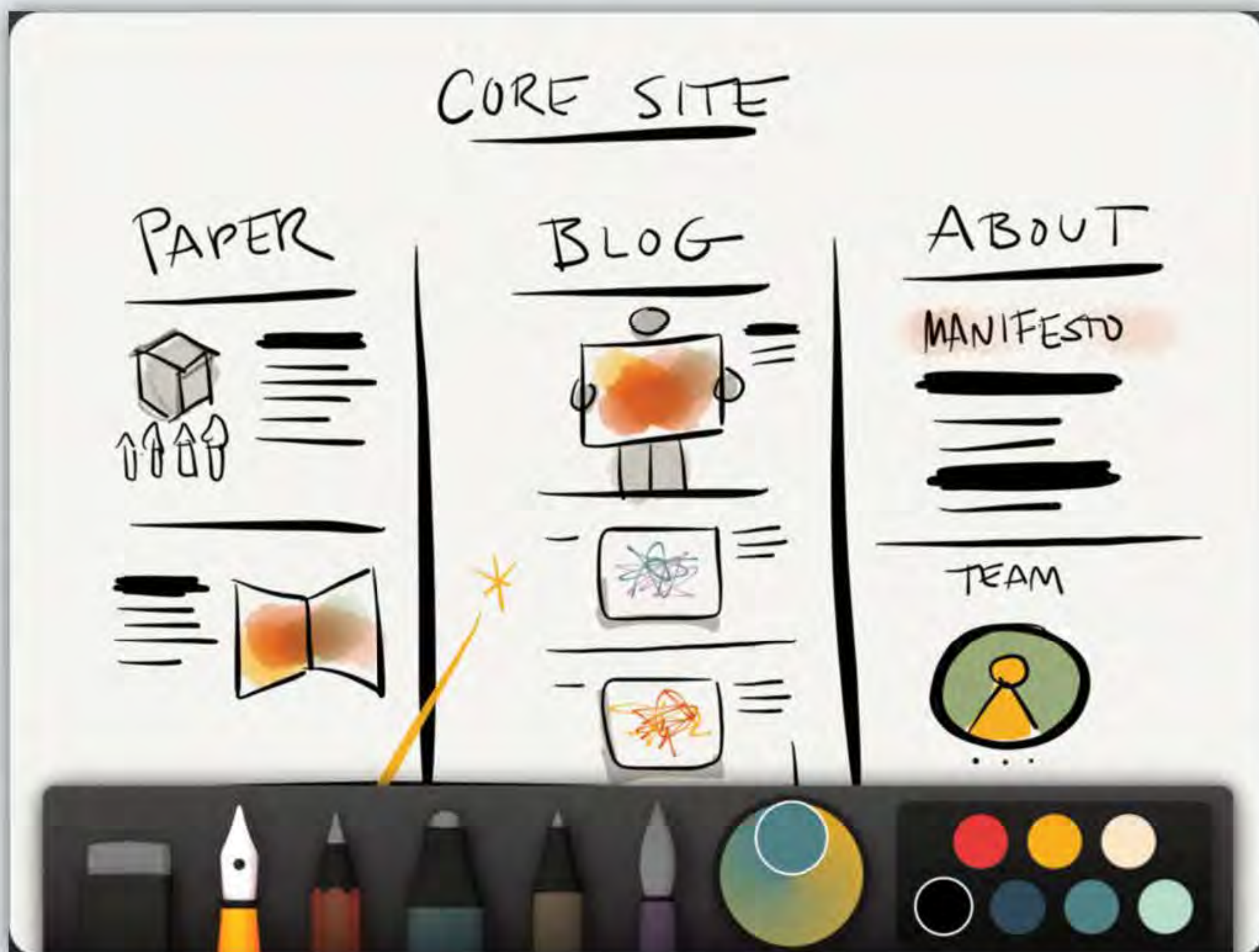
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If you're looking for an app with a simple interface and beautiful brushes, Paper is the app you're looking for. The app itself is "free", but don't let that fool you. If you want any kind of versatility in terms of brushes and colors, you'll need to spend $8-$15.

That said, the line character, responsiveness and simplicity of this app go unmatched. Upon first opening Paper, it's easy to see why Apple named this 2012 App of the Year. We love the ability to create new sketchbooks, surf through old drawings and open up new pages (it really feels like paper!).

This app certainly has its shortcomings, though. The inability to zoom into a drawing seriously limits the user's ability to create detailed, customized drawings. This app is also missing the layers functionality. But if you're looking for a simple app that can turn your iPad into a sketchbook, this one is definitely worth checking out.

Paper turns your iPad into a notebook and then gives you a wide variety of tools to write and sketch with. Just don't expect too many advanced features.

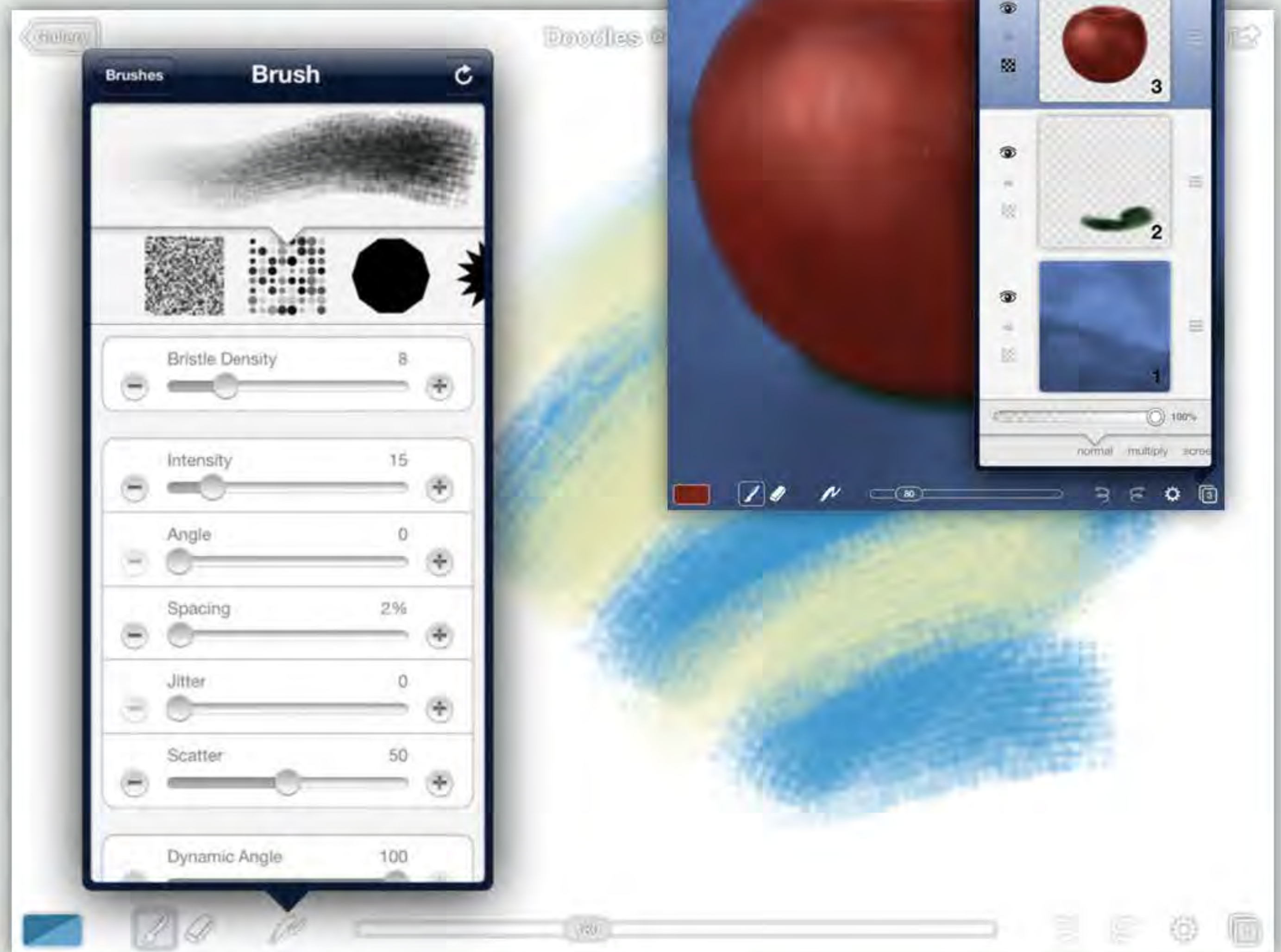# Brushes 3 (Free - In app puchases from $2.99; iPad only) ★★★☆☆

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This is the third iteration of an app called Brushes which was touted early in the life of the iPad as a premium art app. Now cross-generational users are torn as to whether or not Brushes III was actually an upgrade from Brushes I and II. Among the more controversial changes is that in Brushes III, in order to unlock the use of layers, you need to "purchase" the feature for $2.99 – a feature that was free in both previous generations of the app (and even after you purchase the layers feature, you can only work in 4 layers).

Brushes III certainly has the big functionality of a premium art app. However, the interface isn't as intuitive as we think it could be, and some of the actual menu functions seemed to get in the way of actually drawing in the app. The brush customizer is definitely a strength of this app, so if you can get used to the interface, you'll be able to create some great iPad art with this app.

Brushes gives you an amazing variety of options. You can create almost infinite textures, shapes, and sizes for your brush strokes.

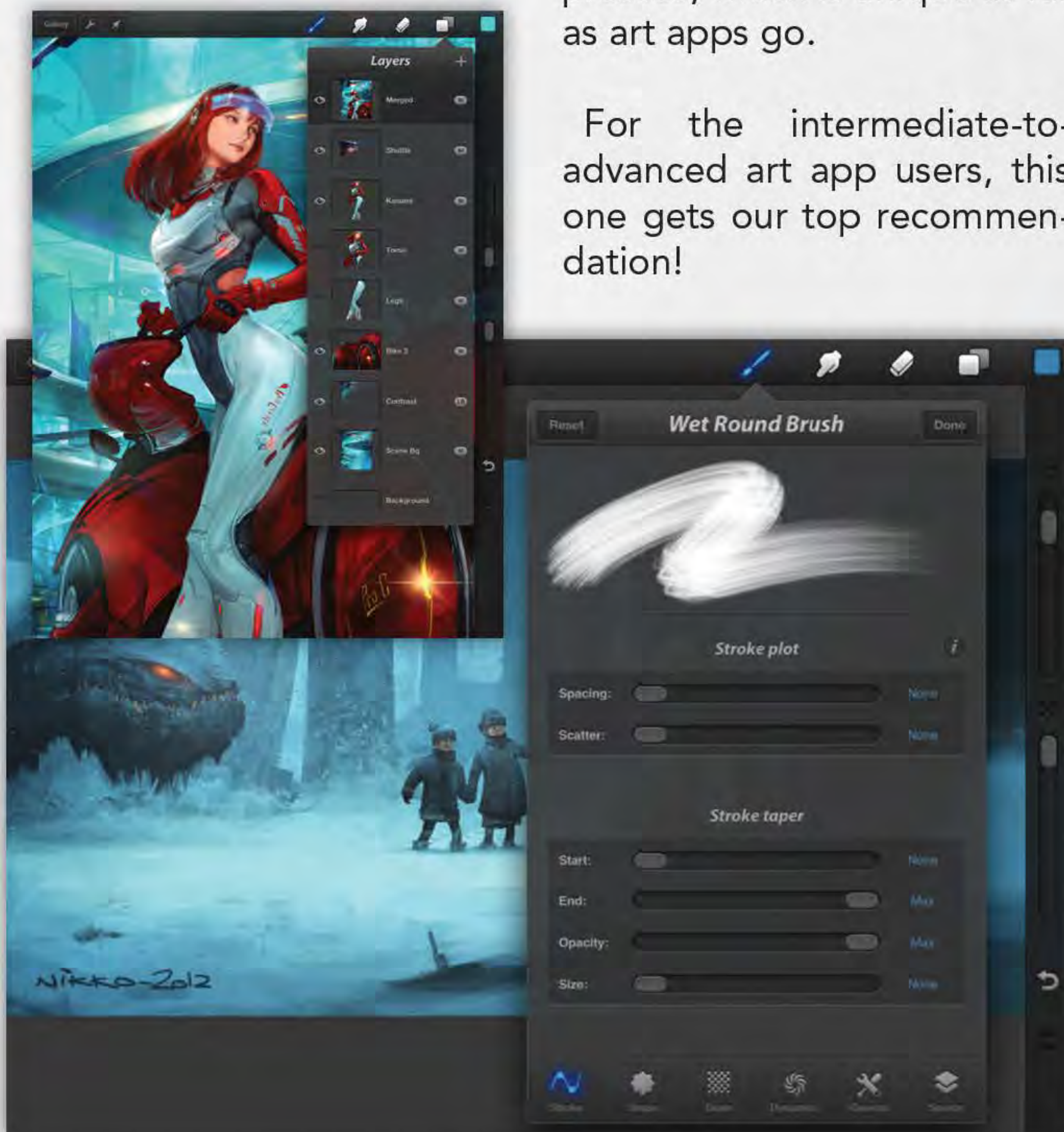# Procreate ($4.99; iPad only)

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

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If you're looking for a full-fledged art app, look no further. For professional designers, Procreate will feel like using a mobile version of Adobe Photoshop. You have access to unlimited layers, highly customizable brushes, huge potential canvases (up to 4000px by 4000 px) and a wide arsenal of visual effects.

Another element of Procreate we love is the simplicity of the interface. While the Procreate toolbox is vast, anyone with experience in an art or drawing program will feel right at home. If you're a user who uses the "undo" option frequently (we sure do!), Procreate also gives you a generous number of "undo" presses, which is unique as far as art apps go.

For the intermediate-to-advanced art app users, this one gets our top recommendation!

Procreate offers you all the tools you need to create almost any image you can imagine—you're limited only by your skills as an artist.

Adobe Ideas ($9.99; iOS)

★★★★★

Tap Here to Download

As you might expect from Adobe, this app really delivers in terms of developing polished, high-quality drawings. The intuitive interface is easy to pick up, and while the menus take up some real estate on the digital canvas, they don't feel obtrusive.

Like Procreate, this app lets you work in layers, which we believe to be crucial in looking for intermediate-to-advanced level art apps. Adobe Ideas simplifies your tool arsenal to 5 different media, and although they aren't as versatile as the brushes you can create with Brushes III or Procreate, you can easily manipulate size and opacity.

The only reason this app received 4 stars instead of 5 is that it's twice the price of Procreate and doesn't seem to deliver added functionality. That said, some users may well prefer the Adobe Ideas interface, so if you're having trouble deciding between the two, check out a couple video tutorials to see the different layouts.

Like Procreate, Adobe offers a lot of functionality. The price is higher, for but Adobe fans won't be disappointed by the results.