Piskel Guide

Piskel is a very beginner friendly and easy to use site for making pixel art and animations. There are a limited selection of tools, but there are enough resources to make pretty complex artwork.

It is very easy to figure out how to use the site on your own through experimentation. This guide is just for people who are completely new to using Piskel or art applications in general and would like an in depth tour of the application.
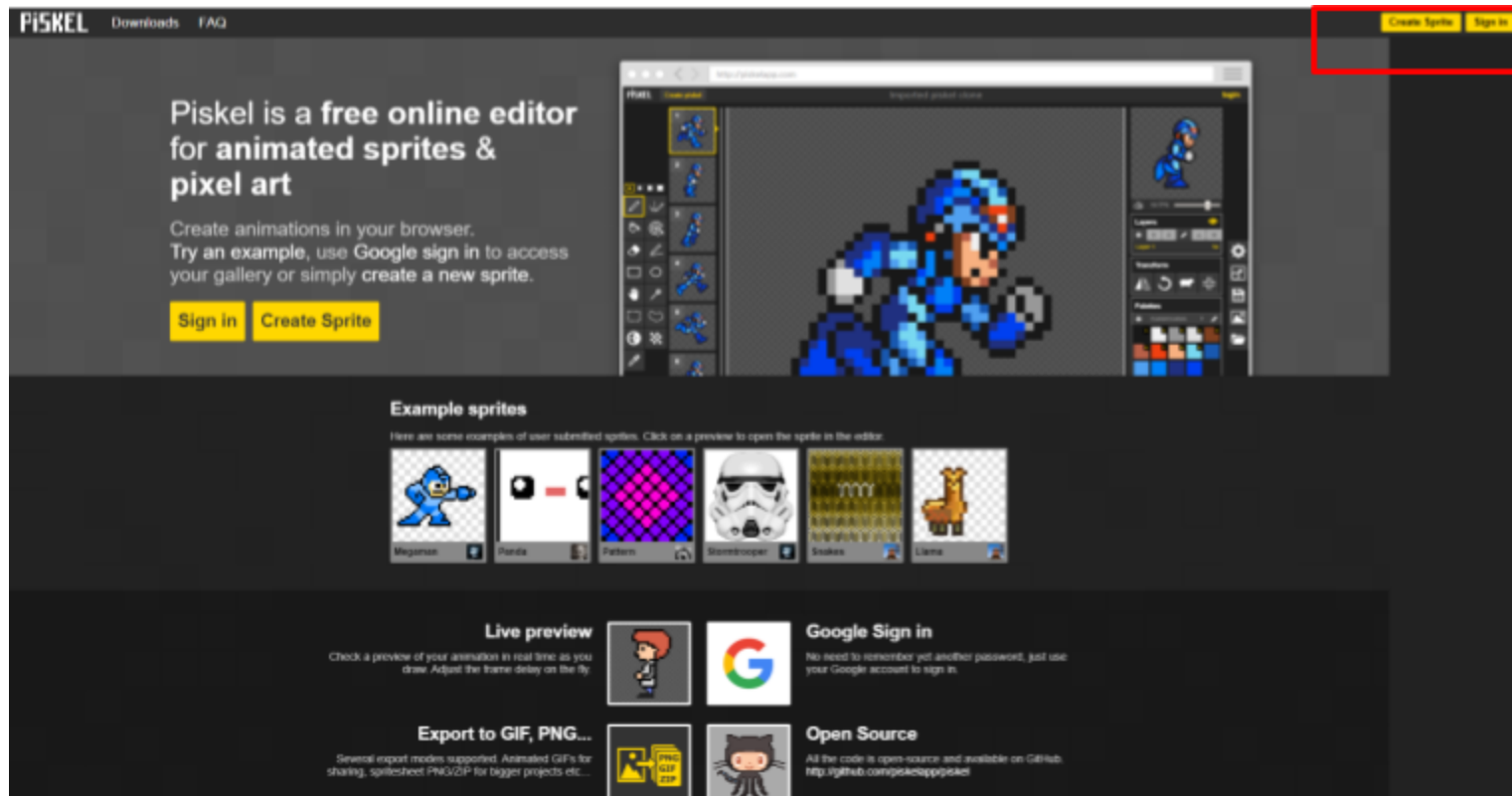
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If there is anything you want added to this guide, message Aaron Lin on discord.

Starting Piskel

To access Piskel, search up "piskel" on Google or go to piskelapp.com. Once you go on the site, you will see this page:

Figure 1

On the top right corner of *Figure 1*, there are two options: 1) **Create Sprite** and 2) **Sign In**.

1. **Create Sprite**: If you do not want to make an account on Piskel, you can simply begin making a sprite. When you are done, you can save it onto your computer.
2. **Sign In**: You can make a Piskel account with your Google account. Feel free to use any Google account or make a new one. The benefits of having an account is that you can save every sprite you made in a gallery.

Exploring the Gallery

When you sign into your Piskel account, you will be directed to the page **My Gallery** which is where you can access everything. **My Gallery** will display all works that you have created. Hovering over a sprite will play the animation you made if you made one.
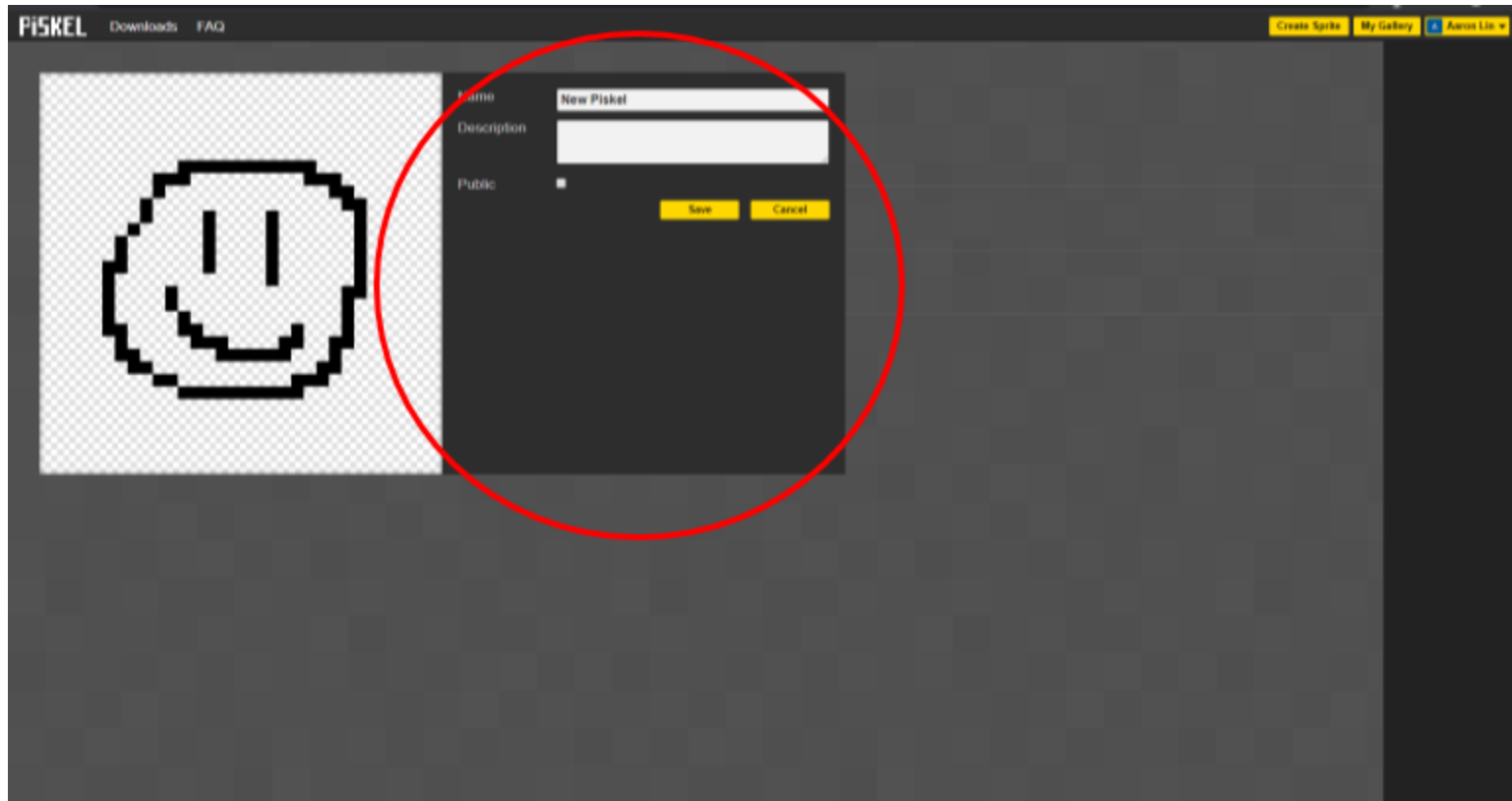

Figure 2

Clicking a sprite will lead to a page shown in *Figure 3* with four options: 1) **Edit Info**, 2) **Edit Sprite**, 3) **Clone**, and 4) **Delete**.
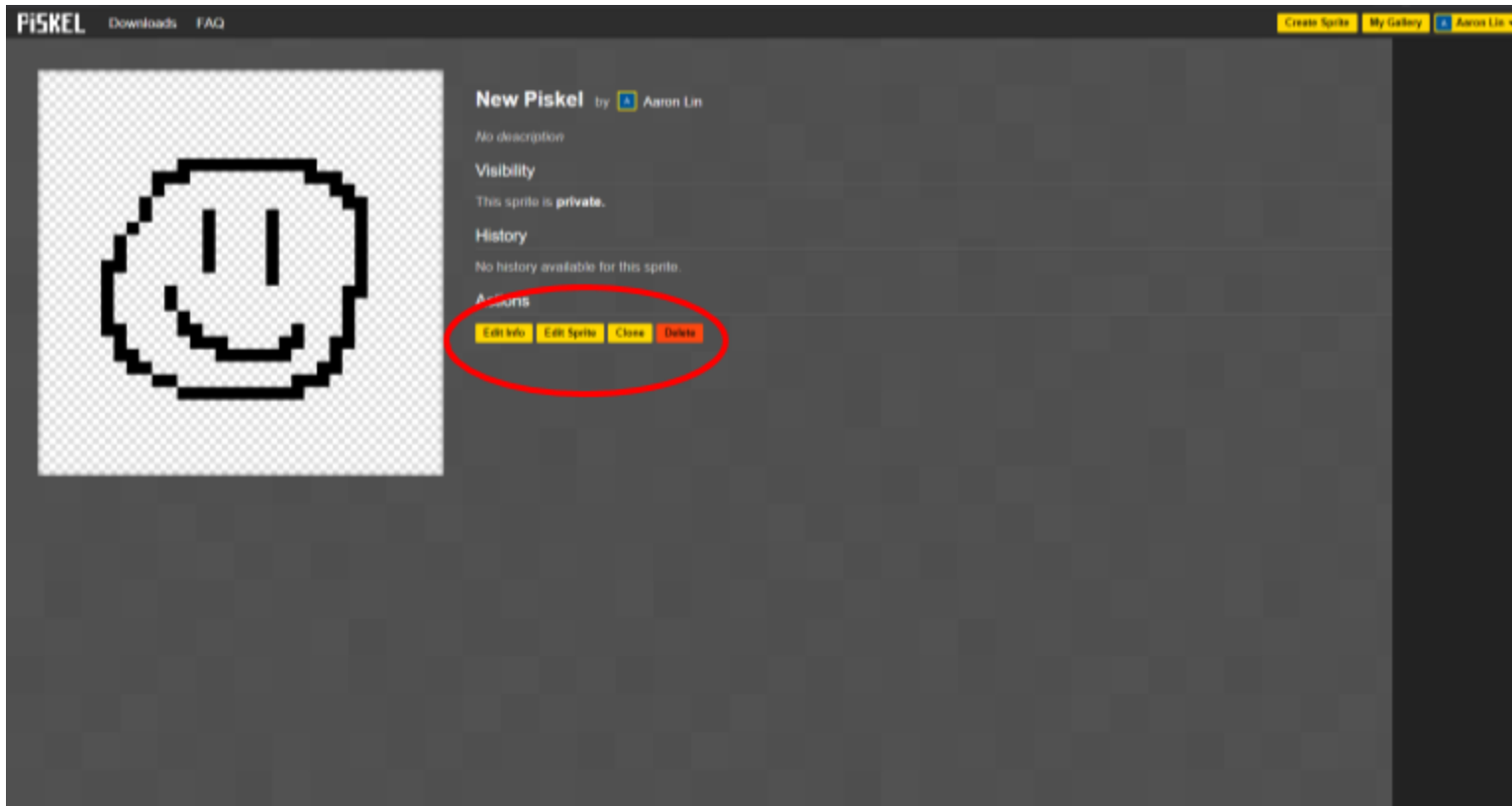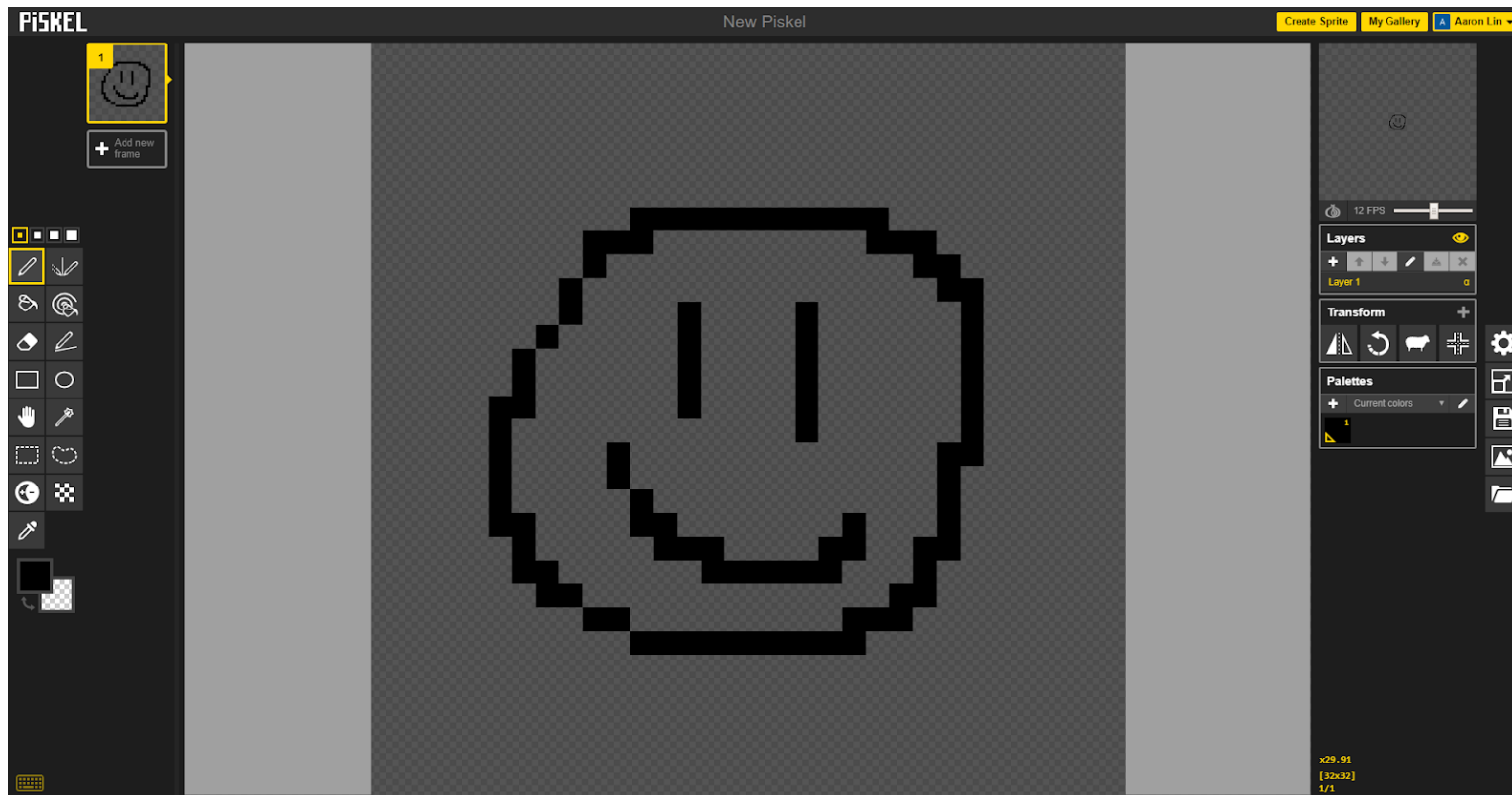

Figure 3

1. Clicking **Edit Info** will bring up a menu like *Figure 4*:

Figure 4

Here you can edit the title and description of the sprite. By default all your creations are private and you can check the box next to **Public** to manually set the sprite to public viewing.
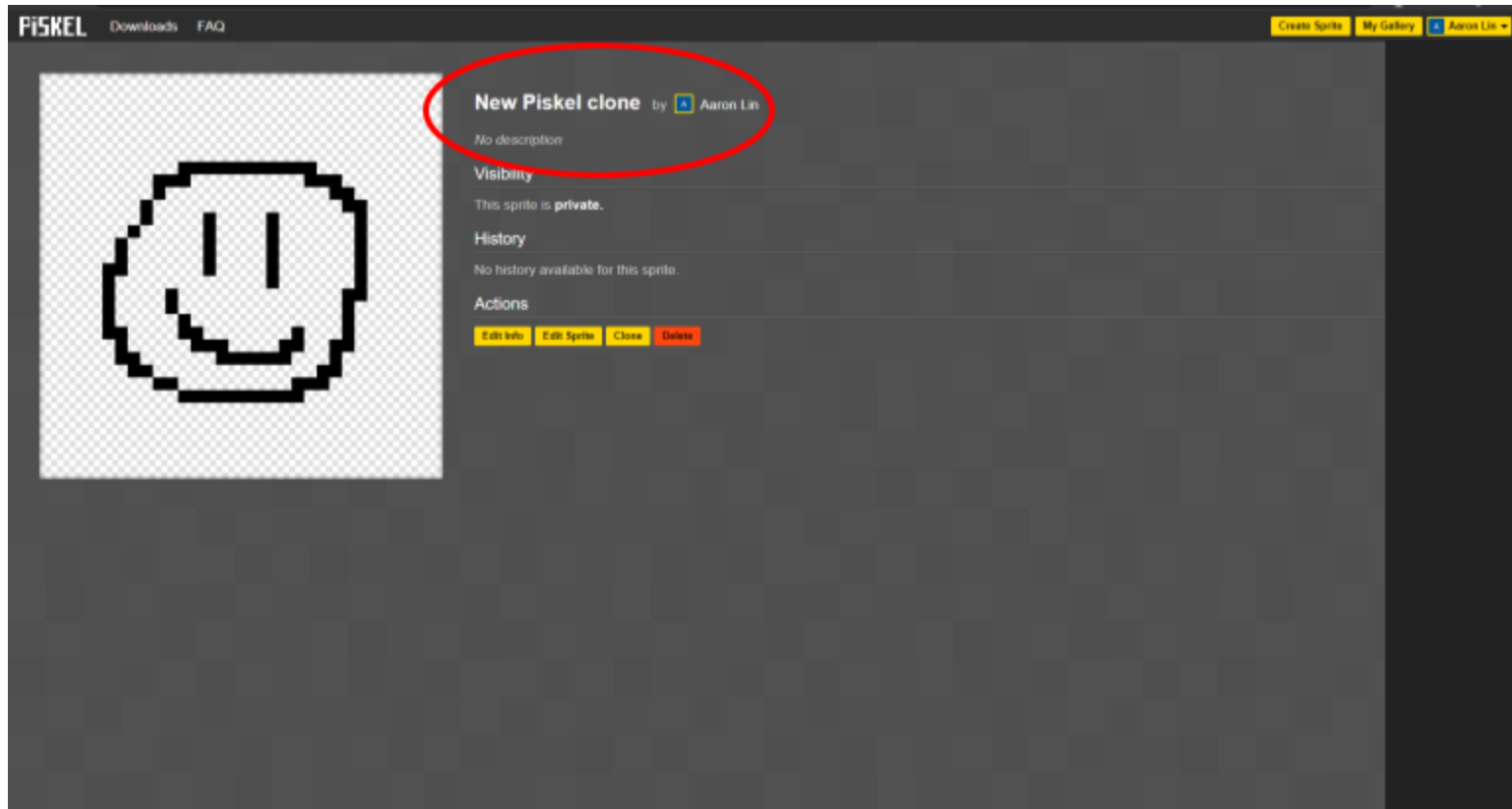
2. Clicking **Edit Sprite** will bring you to *Figure 5*, the same sprite editing page as **Create Sprite**:

Figure 5

Your work will be in the same state that you last left it.

3. Clicking **Clone** will create an exact copy of your sprite and rename it as "<name> clone".

Figure 6

This is particularly useful if you want to make several things from the same image or if you want to experiment with copy.

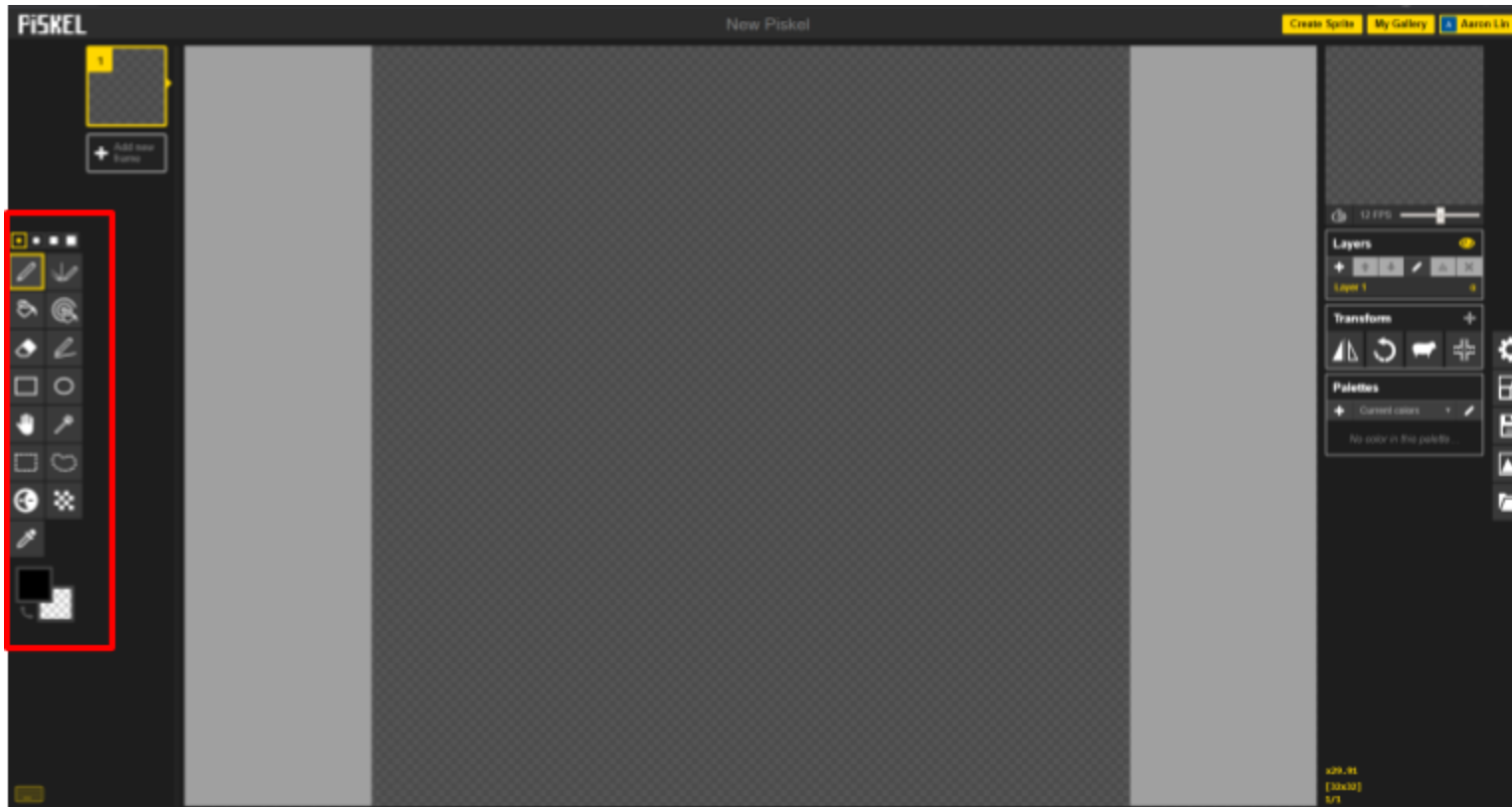4. Clicking **Delete** will delete the sprite.

Creating and Editing Sprites

When you press Create Sprite at the top right or Edit Sprite in the gallery you will be taken to an editing page that looks like *Figure 7*:
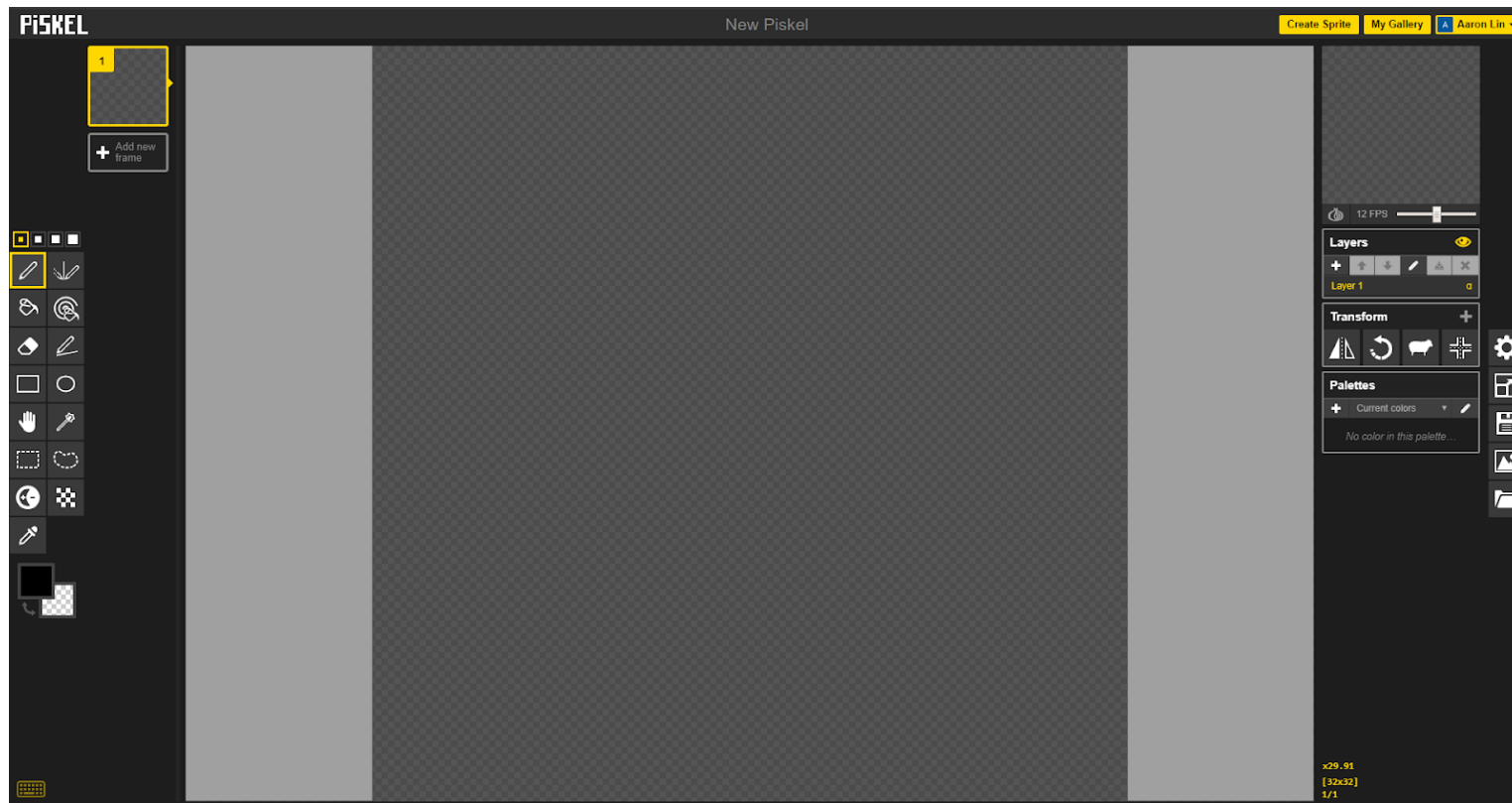
Figure 7

The tool bar on the far left (***Figure 8)*** will contain most of the tools that you will use to create your sprite.
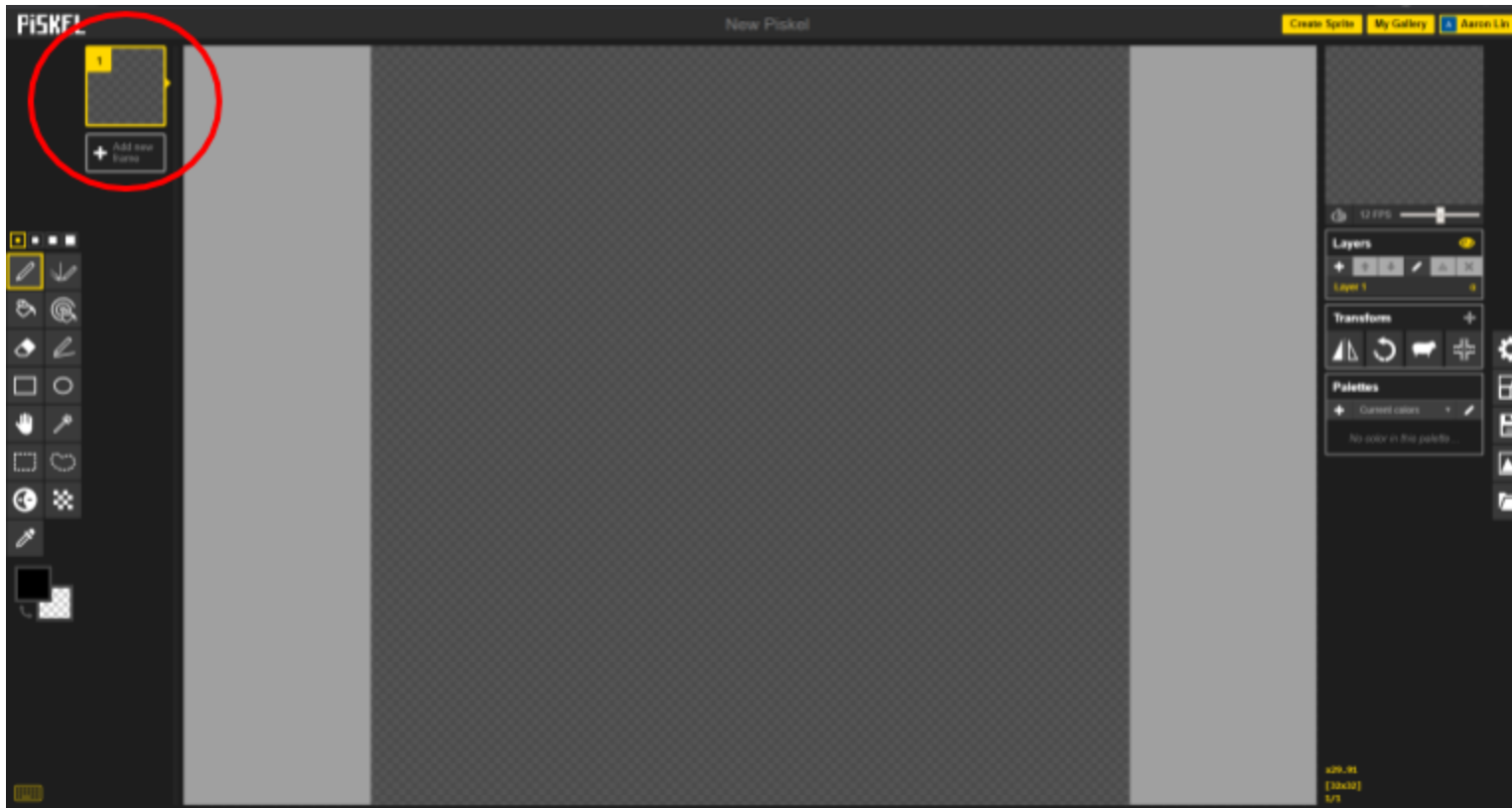

Figure 8

Clicking the squares on top of the toolbar allows you to change the tip size of your pen by pixels (1x1, 2x2, 3x3, 4x4). Hovering over each tool will tell you what the tool does as well as the hot keys for them (if you do not wish to manually click to use a tool every time). Going from left to right and down:

1. **Pen Tool:** Clicking on a pixel will fill in the square with the current color selected.
2. **Vertical Mirror Pen:** The program will mirror whatever you do according to an axis. By default the axis is vertical, ctrl will make a horizontal axis and shift will make both a horizontal and vertical axis.
3. **Paint Bucket Tool:** Clicking on a pixel will fill in an area with the current color selected.
4. Paint all Pixels of the Same Color: Clicking on a pixel will color all pixels of the same color with the current color.
5. **Eraser:** Clicking on a pixel will erase the color of the pixel.
6. **Stroke Tool:** Clicking, holding, then dragging will create a straight line from the original pixel that you clicked on. Letting go draws the line.
7. **Rectangle Tool:** Clicking, holding, then dragging creates a rectangle, holding shift creates a square. Letting go draws the rectangle.
8. **Circle Tool:** Clicking, holding, then dragging creates a/n circle/oval, holding shift creates a circle. Letting go draws the circle/oval.
9. **Move Tool:** Clicking, holding, then dragging moves an image. Holding ctrl applies to all layers, holding shift applies to all frames, alt wraps canvas borders.
10. **Shape Selection:** Clicking highlights the selected shape. Ctrl-c copies, ctrl-v pastes. Clicking, holding, then dragging while holding shift moves the shape.
11. **Rectangle Selection:** Clicking, holding, then dragging will select an area. Ctrl-c copies, ctrl-v pastes. Clicking, holding, then dragging while holding shift moves the selected.
12. **Lasso Selection:** Clicking, holding, then dragging will select an area. Ctrl-c copies, ctrl-v pastes. Clicking, holding, then dragging while holding shift moves the selected.
13. **Lighten:** Clicking on a pixel will lighten the color. Holding ctrl darkens. Holding shift will apply the effect only once on a pixel.
14. **Dithering Tool:** Dithers area.
15. **Color Picker:** Clicking on a pixel will select the color of the pixel as the current color.

The square with the one in the top left corner represents all the frames currently existing.

Figure 9

Clicking **Add new frame** will add a new frame to the timeline. With multiple frames, you can click, hold, and drag a frame to reposition it in the timeline.

Hovering over the frame will cause a little copy symbol to appear at the bottom right of the box as seen in *Figure 10*.
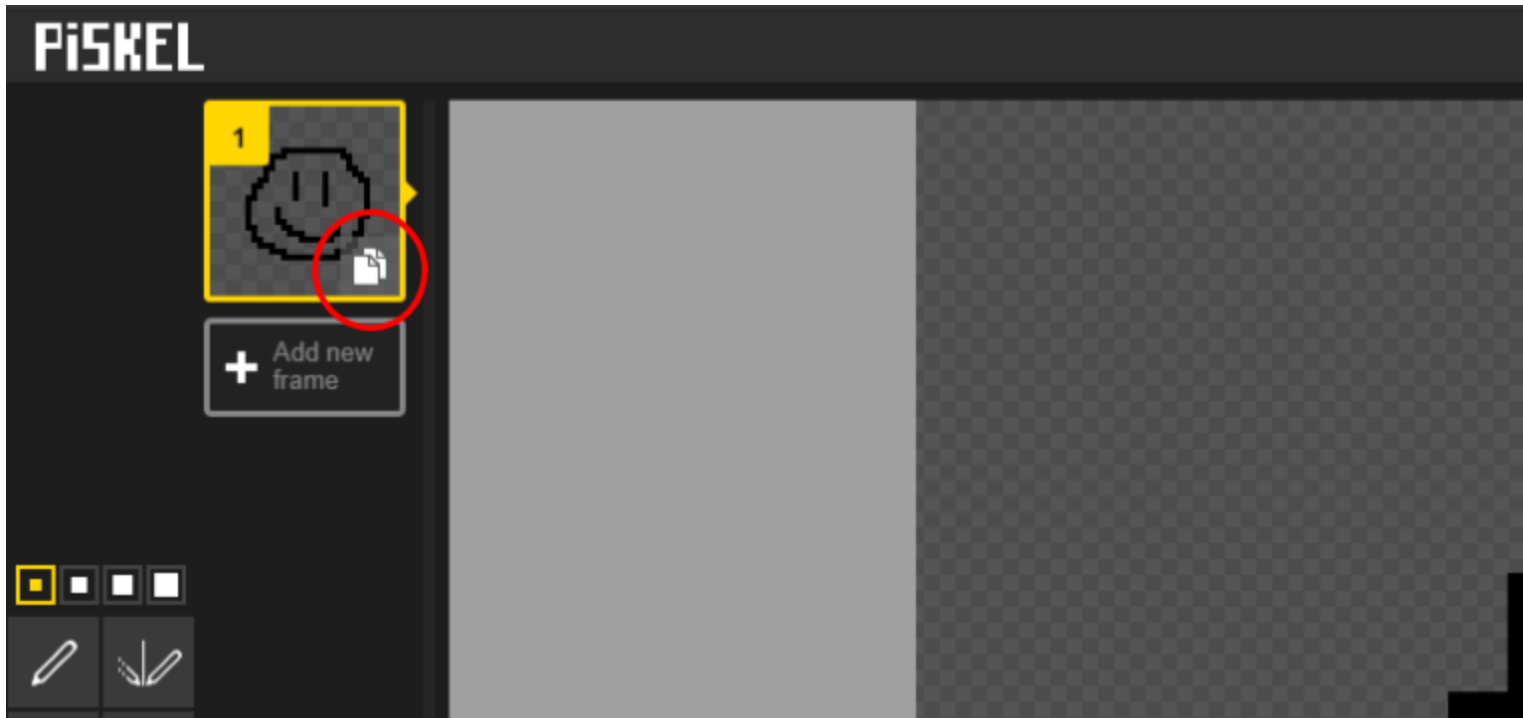
Figure 10

Clicking the **Copy** symbol lets you create a copy of the frame. This is particularly useful when needing to modify a small portion of an image since you don't need to re-draw anything.
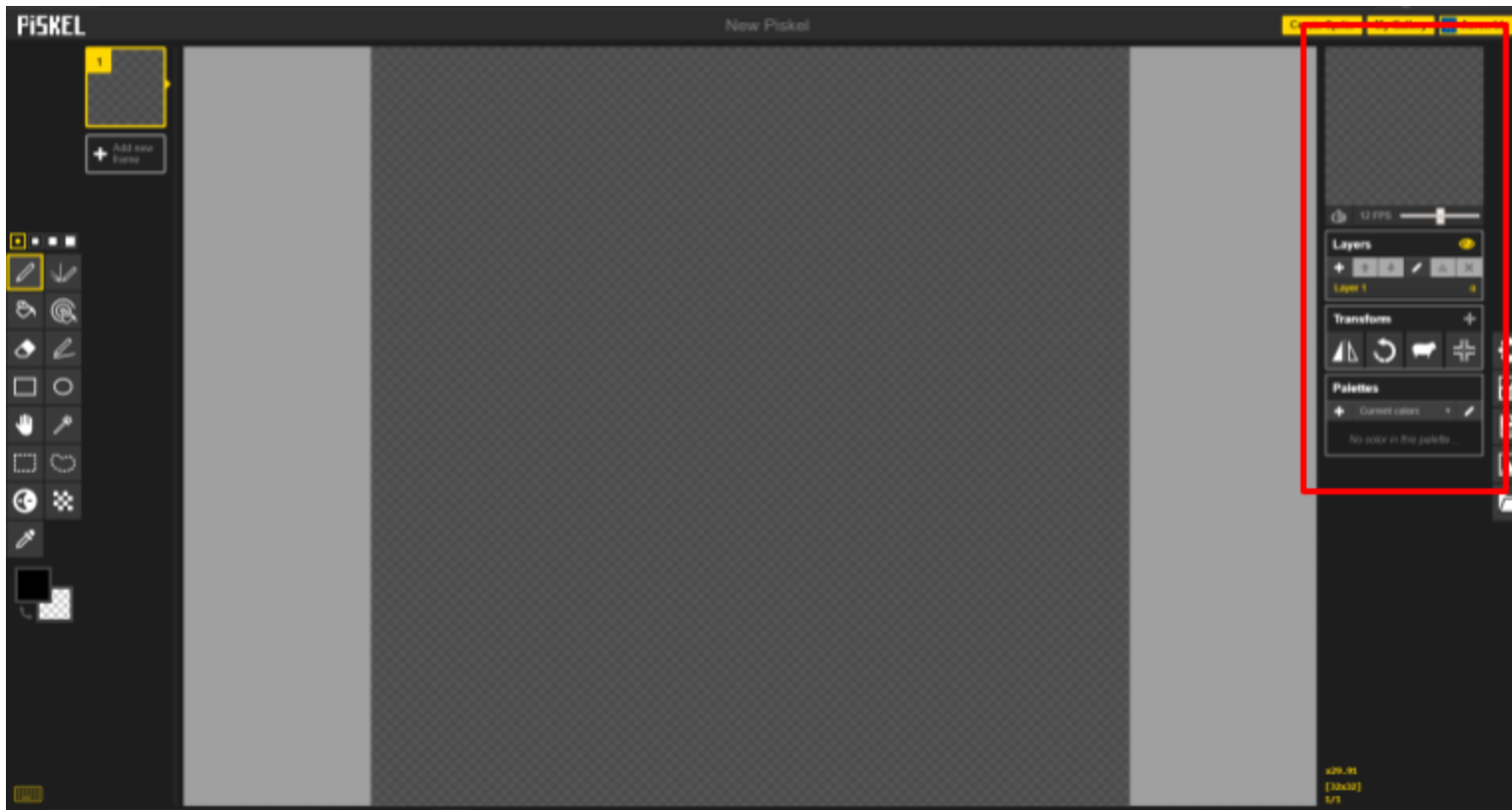
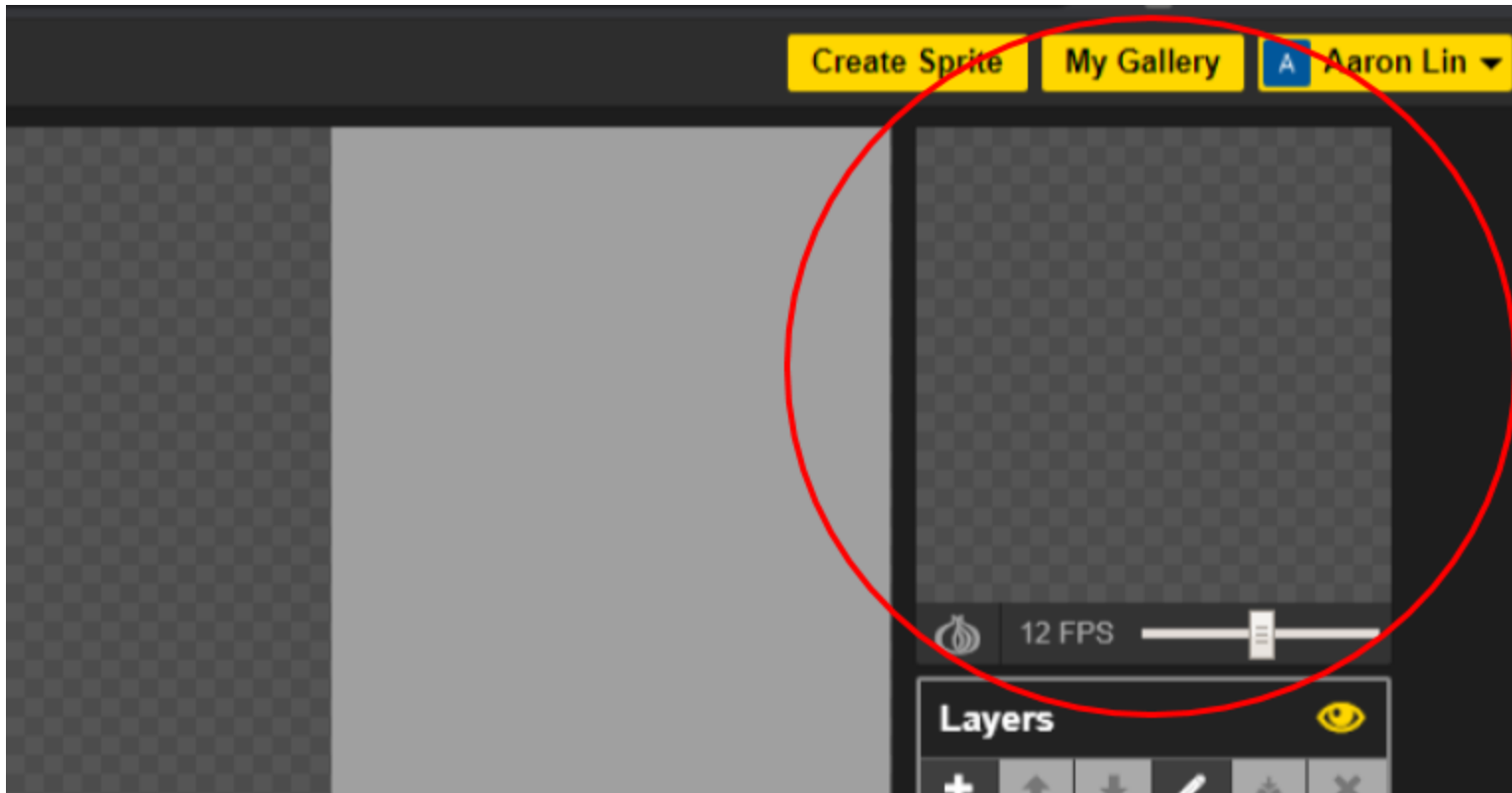The main work area will be the big gray square at the center of the page (*Figure 11*).
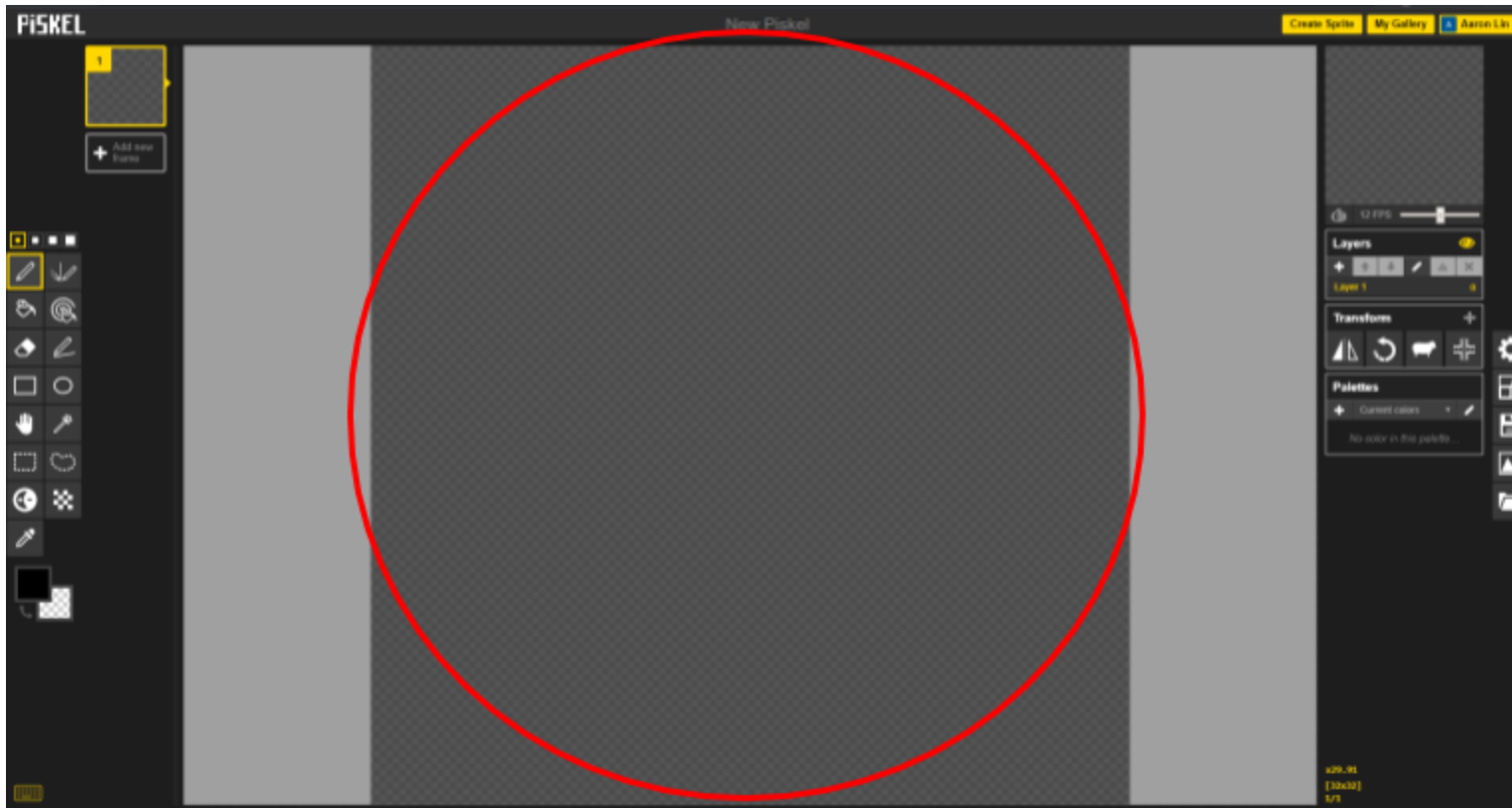
Figure 11

Scrolling lets you zoom in and out of the work space.

The toolbar on the right side of the page (*Figure 12)* lets you modify the work space.
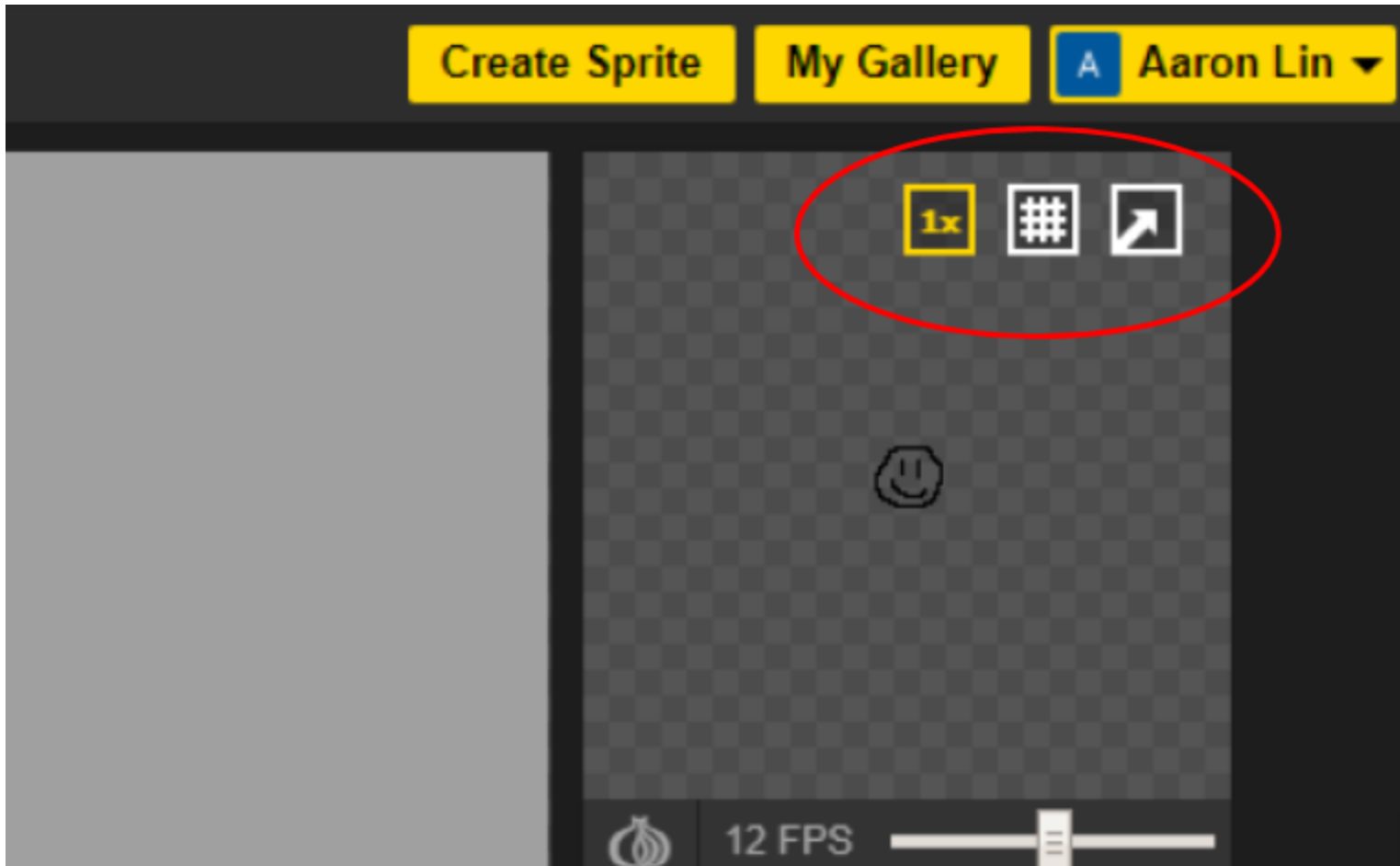

Figure 12

The small gray box (*Figure 13*) is a previewing area where your sprite will show up.

Figure 13

If you made an animation, the viewing area will play the animation. Clicking the **Onion** symbol at the bottom left will turn on onions. What this means is that the program will automatically create a ghost image of the previous frame, allowing you to reference it as you draw the current one. The little bar next to **FPS** allows you to adjust the frames per second play rate of your animation.

Hovering over the gray box will reveal more tools (*Figure 14*).

Figure 14

Hovering the **1x** box will give you options to view the preview at sizes **1x**, **6x**, and **Full**. Pressing the **Grid** box will turn on grids where every colored pixel will have their edges highlighted in white. Pressing the **Arrow** box will expand the preview for a better view.

The layers toolbar lets you edit the layers of your sprite (*Figure 15*).
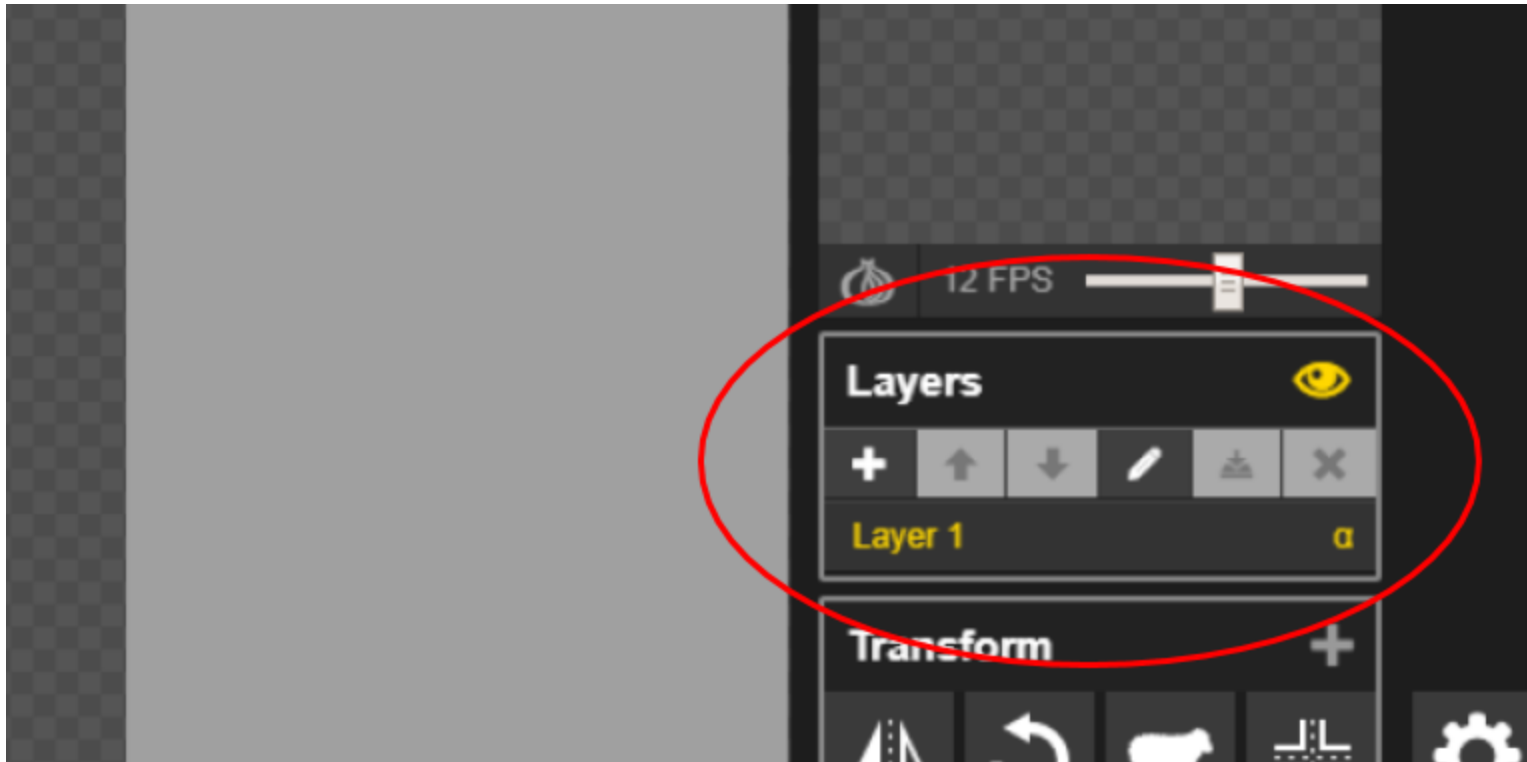
Figure 15

1. **Preview All Layers (Eye)**: Control whether or not you see the current layer (making layers invisible if you wish to declutter the viewing area).
2. **Create a Layer (+)**: Add a new layer on top of the current one.
3. **Move Layer Up/Down (Arrows)**: Move the layer either up or down.
4. **Edit Layer name (Pencil)**: Edit the layer name.
5. **Merge With Layer Below (Arrow to Plane)**: Merge the current layer to the one below to form one single layer.
6. **Delete Selected Layer (X)**: Delete the selected layer.

The transform toolbar (*Figure 16*) lets you easily manipulate your sprite.
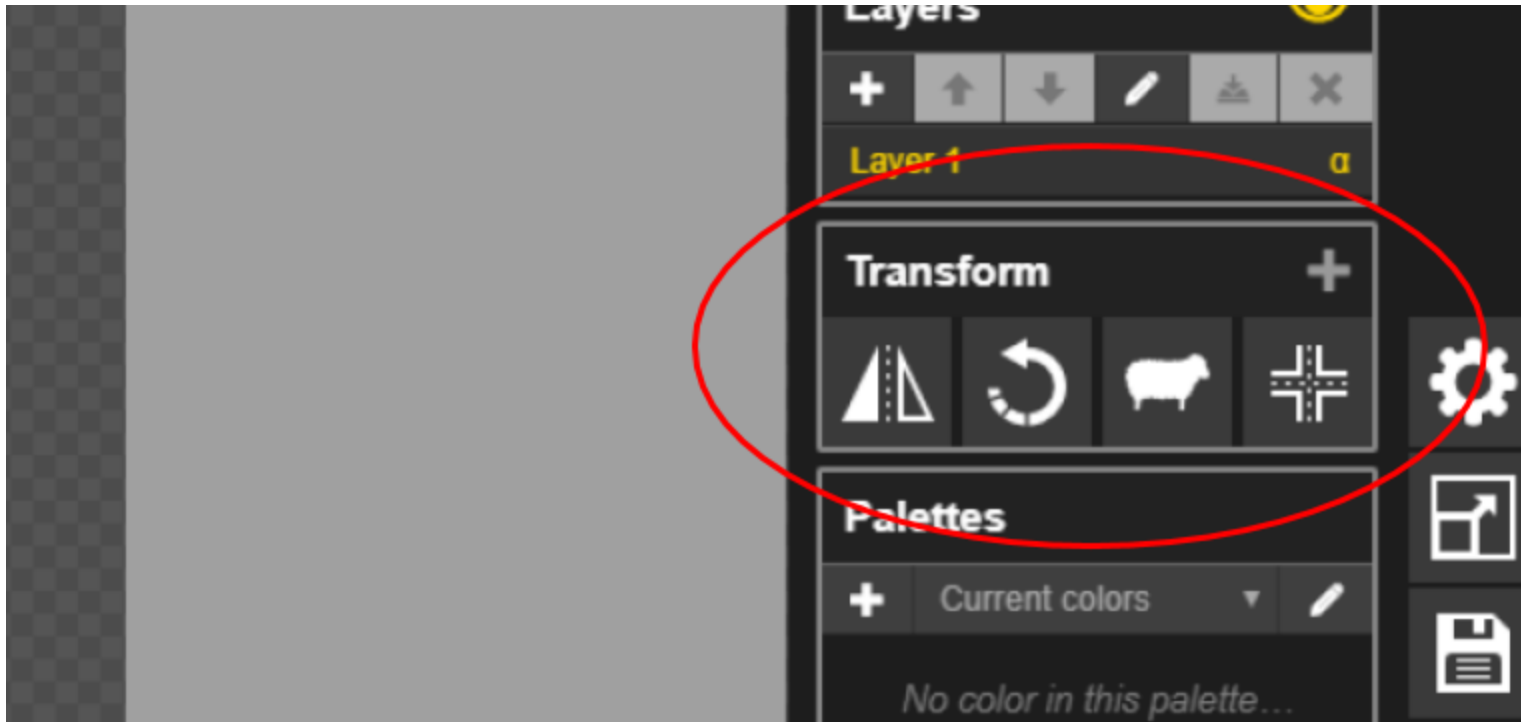
Figure 16

1. **Flip Vertically (Triangle)**: Mirror your sprite vertically.
   a. **Holding Alt**: Horizontally.
2. **Counter Clockwise Rotation (Curved Arrow)**: Rotate your sprite.
   a. **Holding Alt**: Counter clockwise.
3. **Clone Current Layer to All Frames (Cow)**: Clone the layer to all frames.
4. **Align Image to Center (Crossroads)**: Align your sprite to the center of the work area.

For **Flip Vertically, Counter Clockwise Rotation,** and **Align Image to Center:**
1. **Holding Ctrl**: Apply to all layers.
2. **Holding Shift**: Apply to all Frames.

The palettes toolbar (*Figure 17*) lets you manage the colors that you will or are using.
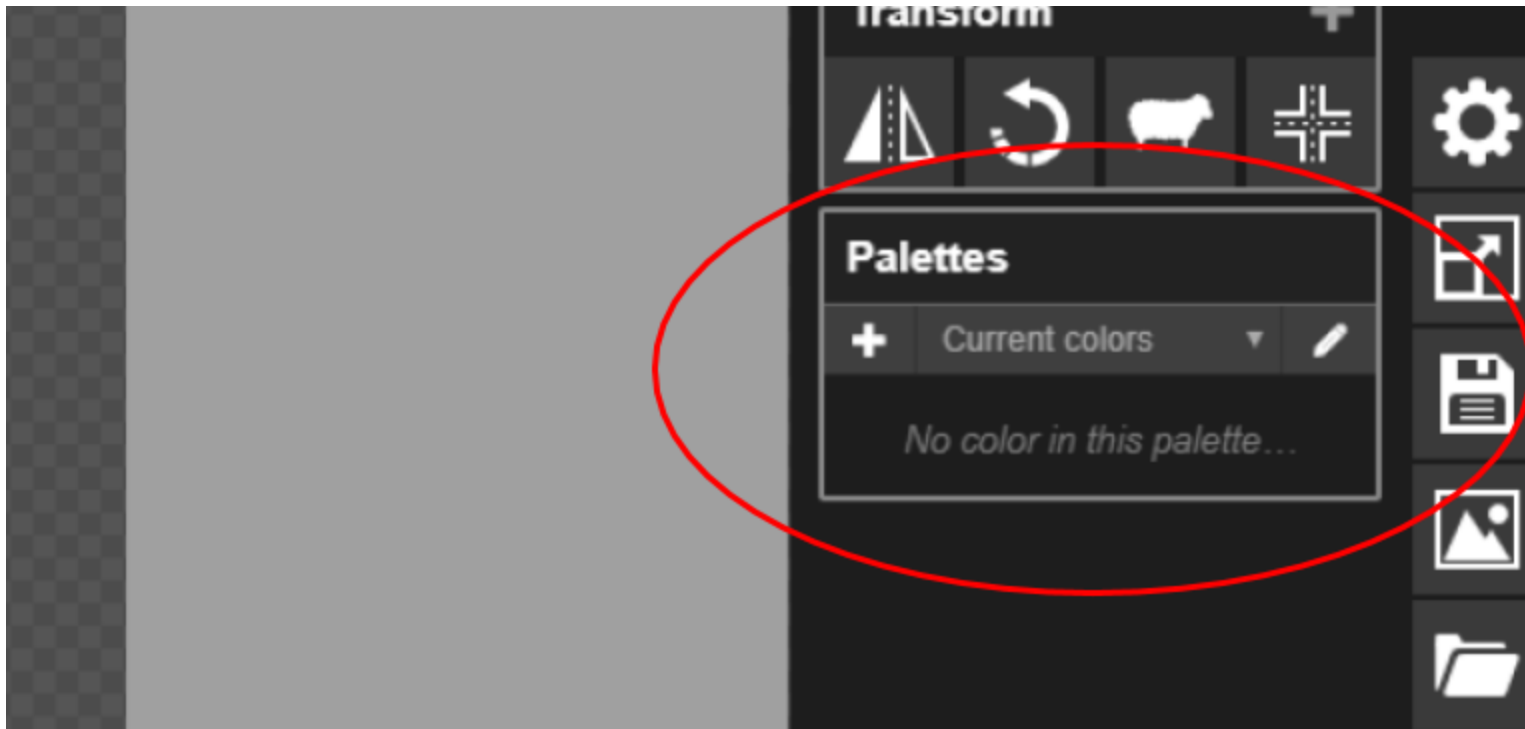
Figure 17

1. **Create a New Palette (+)**: Create a new palette along with naming the palette.
2. **Palette Selection (Current Colors)**: Manage and switch between palettes. By default the "Current colors" palette will automatically add any colors that you are currently using as well as remove any that are no longer used.
3. **Manage This Palette (Pencil)**: Edit the current palette and add and remove colors that you plan to use. When there are colors in the palette, you can click on each color box to select and use the color.

Managing Files

The toolbar on the far right (***Figure 18***) allows you to save, download, and manage your files and settings.
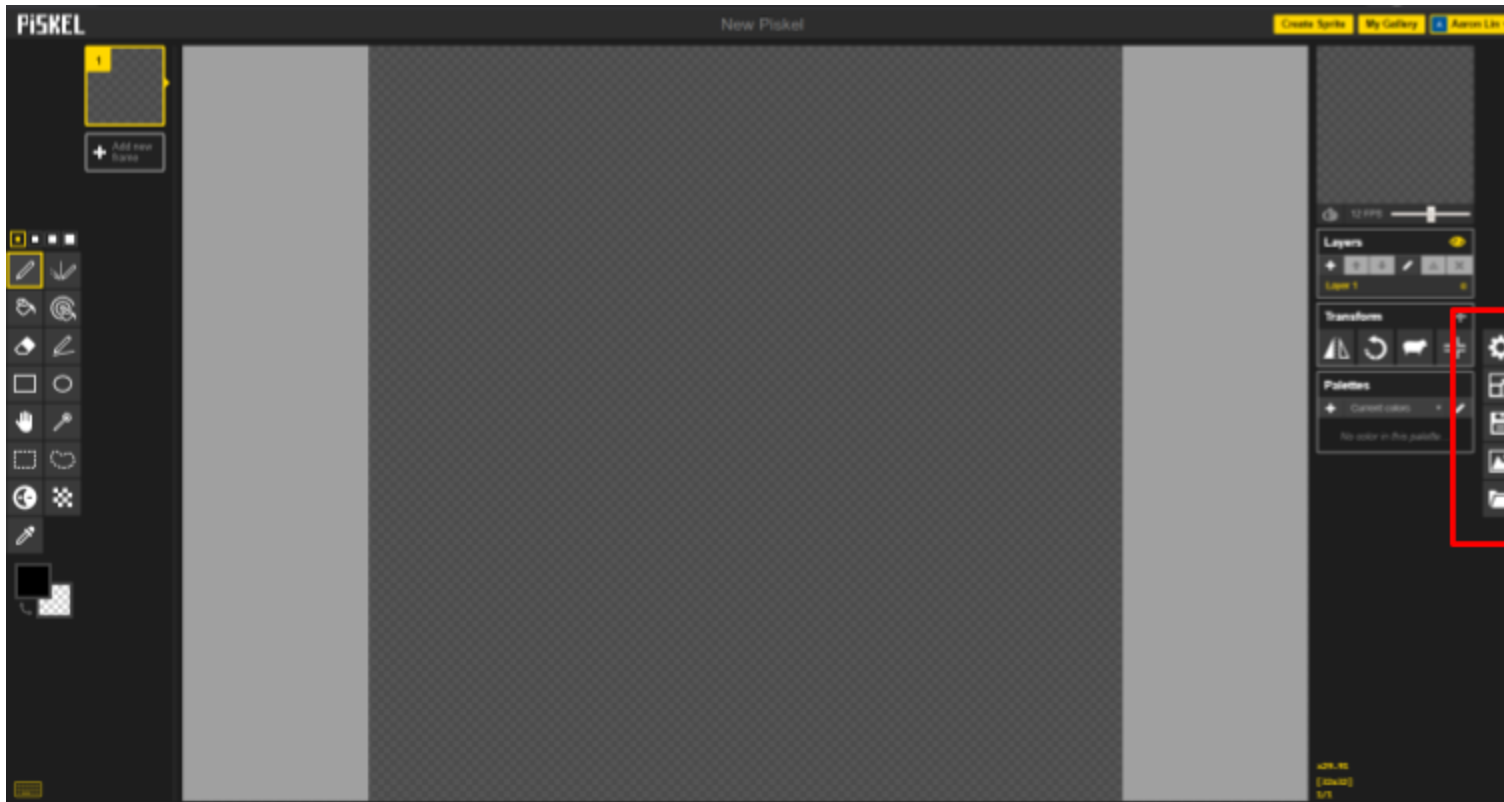
Figure 18

1. **Settings**: Allows you to modify your canvas settings such as color, gridlines, and opacity.
2. **Resize**: Adjusts your canvas size based on pixel dimensions and ratios.
3. **Save**: Lets you edit the title of your sprite and gives you multiple options for saving your sprite in your account or on your computer.
4. **Export**: Lets you scale your sprite as well as options for exporting your file.
5. **Import**: Lets you import different images into Piskel.