



Chapter Contents

- Exploring the Layer Settings panel
- Animating Layer Effects
- Other general options for layers
- Applying shadows and shades to the layer
- Designing with the Style palette

Enhancing Your Art with the Layer Settings Panel and Style Palette

Learning what is in the Layer Settings panel and Style palette will help when it comes to creating different effects for your drawings and animations. We touched briefly on both of these areas in the previous three chapters. Now we will be taking a closer look at what these panels can do.

Exploring the Layer Settings Panel

Lesson 1

You can access the Layers Settings panel for any layer by simply double-clicking on a layer's name in the Layers panel. You will discover that different layer types contain additional tabs. We will be focusing on the standard settings you will find for all types. As we start creating our animation in the coming chapters, we may reference some of these tabs to achieve certain results.

The following screenshot shows the Layer Settings panel. There's a lot going on here, but don't worry, we'll break down the main parts!

For this exercise, please open the Layer Settings.anime file. This file is available in the code bundle provided with this book. Double-click on the Character bone layer in the Layers panel to open up the Layer Settings panel. We will focus on the key items in the General tab first.

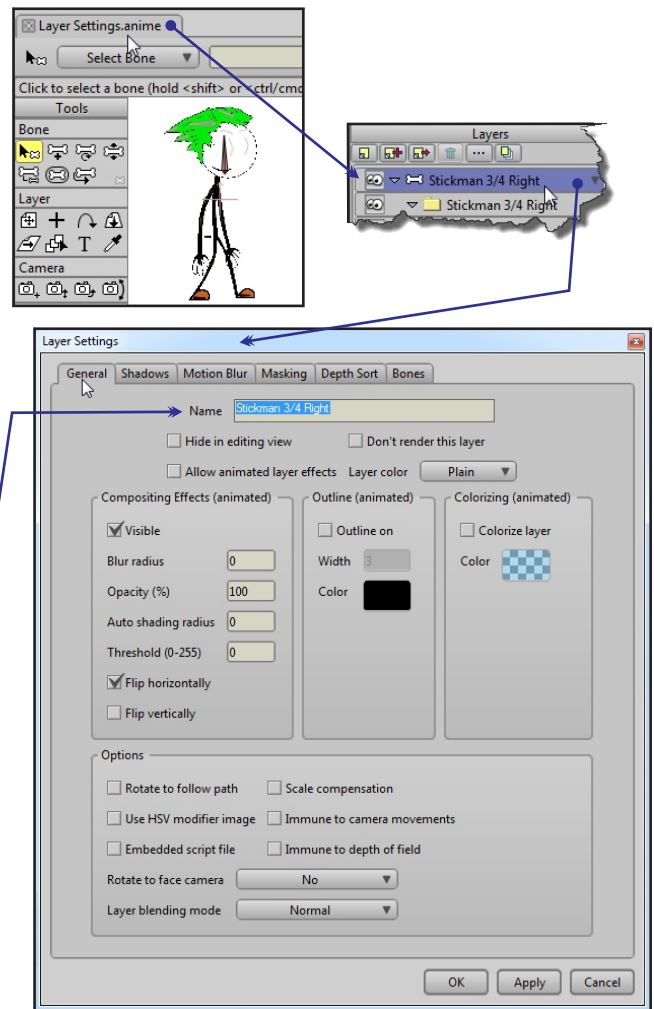
NOTE...

Whenever you make a change in the Layer Settings panel, it's important to either click on OK or Apply. This will ensure that the change you made is applied to the layer. The difference between the two buttons is that OK will close the panel after applying the change while Apply keeps the panel open. We will be using the Apply button more, so we don't have to keep reopening the panel as we view the changes. In some cases, it may be required to use the OK button. A note of this will be made if needed.

The Name field

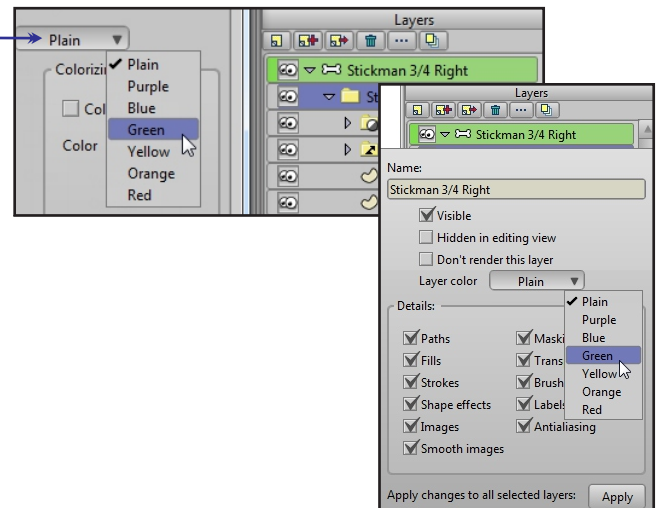
When you create a layer, you have the option to immediately enter a name for it. This is great for organization, especially when a lot of layers come into play. Sometimes though, it may be necessary to change the name of a layer later on. You can do so with the **Name** field. Simply enter the new name of your layer in the field to change the name.

You can also quickly change the name of the layer by clicking on the down arrow next to the layer name on the Layers panel. This will bring up some other quick options you can adjust.



The Layer Color menu

Along with naming your layers for organization, you can also color code them with the Layer color drop-down menu. The layer (in this case, the **Stickman 3/4 Right bone layer**) will then be colored quickly, by selecting the color when working on your document. The color will be applied once you click on **OK** or **Apply** on the Layer Settings panel. You can also use the shortcut we mentioned in the previous chapter, which involves clicking to the left of the hide or show buttons. You can see the Layer color drop-down menu in the following screenshot:

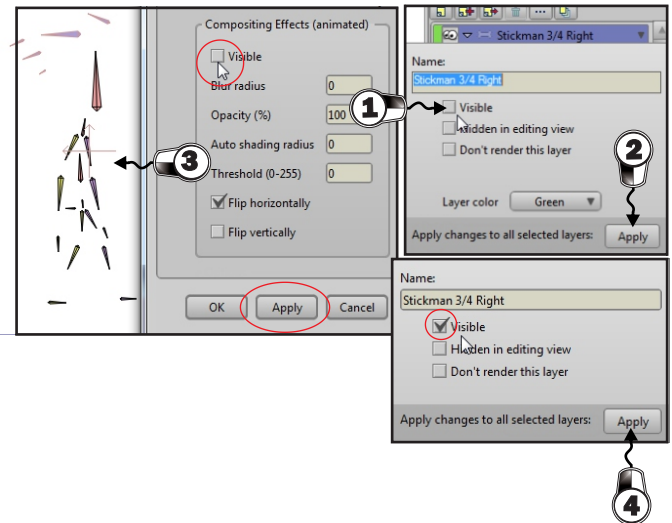


The **Visible** checkbox

Using the **Visible** checkbox, under the **Compositing Effects**(animated group) you can dictate whether the layer is visible in the animation itself, and not just the workspace. This can be useful if you want to hide something from view permanently or for a certain amount of time. The following steps will help you understand the use of the Visible checkbox:

- 1 Click on the Visible **checkbox** to uncheck it.
- 2 Click on **Apply** at the bottom of the panel.
- 3 Notice how the character layer disappears from view.
- 4 Click on the Visible checkbox again (so that it's checked), and then click on **Apply**. This will bring the **Stickman 3/4 Right bone layer** back into view.

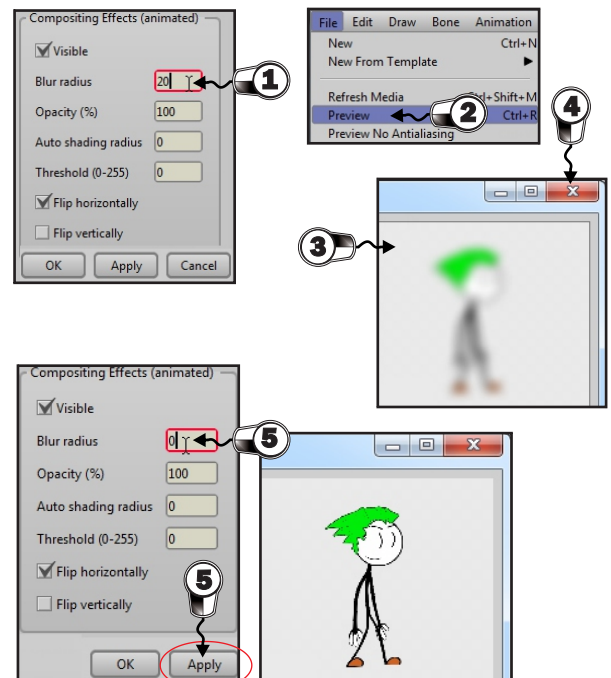
This function is used a lot when you have objects waiting on the sidelines to be brought into action as a scene is taking place. It can help with clutter (and reduce resource needs) and keep those assets visible only when needed.



The **Blur Radius** field

The Blur radius field under the **Compositing Effects**(animated group) allows us to set how blurry a layer looks. This can be useful in instances where you want to create a depth of field effect, or if you need to stylize the layer so that it appears out of focus. The following steps will help you understand the use of the Blur radius field:

- 1 Enter the number **20** and click on **Apply** at the bottom of the panel. The higher this number, the more blurry your layer will appear. The maximum value you can enter is **256**.
- 2 The blur effect will not appear unless we render the document. To do this, go to **File | Preview** (Ctrl + R).
- 3 You should see the character appearing out of focus in the preview window, as shown in the picture(far right).
- 4 Close the preview window.
- 5 Change the Blur radius value back to **0** and click on **Apply**.

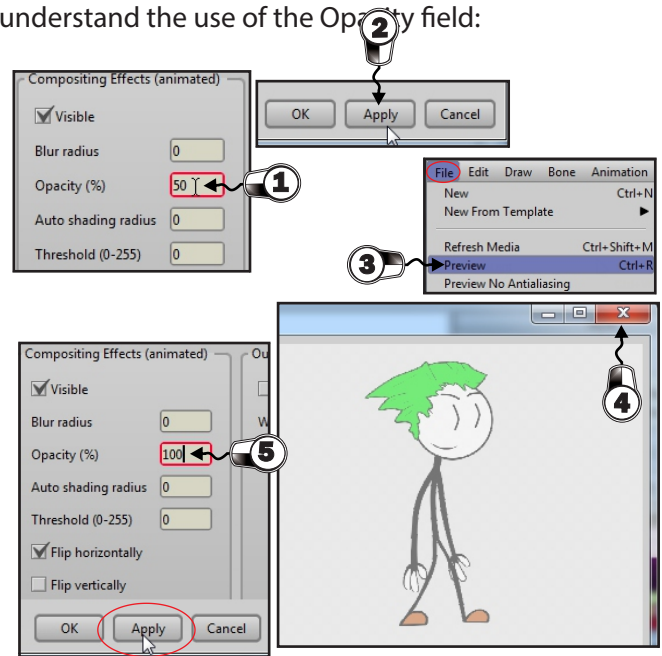


We briefly discussed about the Depth of Field setting in the Project Settings panel back in Chapter 1, Stepping into the World of Animation. While that method allows you to automatically blur objects based on camera distance and position, sometimes it's best to manually blur layers.

The **Opacity** field

Opacity under the **Compositing Effects**(animated group) allows you to set the transparency of the layer you are editing. Perhaps you're looking to create a ghost or a piece of glass. The Opacity setting can help you achieve a more convincing effect. The following steps will help you understand the use of the Opacity field:

- 1 Opacity intensity can be adjusted between 0 and 100. The value 0 will make your layer completely invisible while 100 will make it opaque. Let's enter in **50** for this exercise to set the value in between.
- 2 Click on the **Apply** button at the bottom of the panel.
- 3 Like the blur radius effect, we will not see a change until we preview the current frame. Use the Preview shortcut command (or go to **File | Preview**) to see the result. If you look at the image shown in the picture, we can see through the character. Perhaps he has crossed over to the other side.
- 4 Once you've viewed the preview, close the window and return to **Layer Settings**.
- 5 Change the Opacity value back to 100 and click on the **Apply** button.

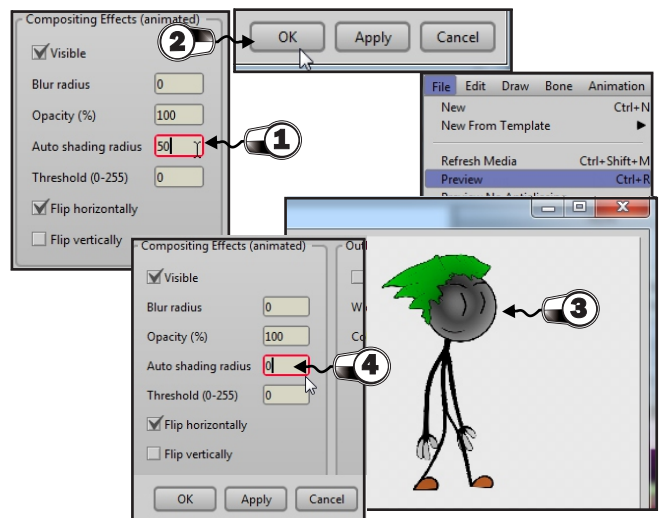


This function is used a lot when you have objects waiting on the sidelines to be brought into action as a scene is taking place. It can help with clutter (and reduce resource needs) and keep those assets visible only when needed.

The **Auto shading radius** field

While you will find most of the robust shading options in the **Shadows** tab (which we'll be learning about shortly), the **Auto shading radius** option under the **Compositing Effects**(animated group) allows you to create a shading effect that goes around your strokes. The following steps will help you understand the use of the Auto shading radius field:

- 1 Enter **50** in the **Auto shading radius** field, as shown in the following screenshot(right).
- 2 Click on **OK** and preview the current frame. This is another layer effect that needs to be rendered before you see it.
- 3 You will notice that the autoshading radius feature creates a softer look for the layer. This is due to the shading effect on the stroke lines. The higher the number, the more blurred the shading will be. You can see the shaded effect surrounding the strokes in the following picture(right).
- 4 You can turn the Auto shading radius field's value back to **0** once you are finished viewing the result.

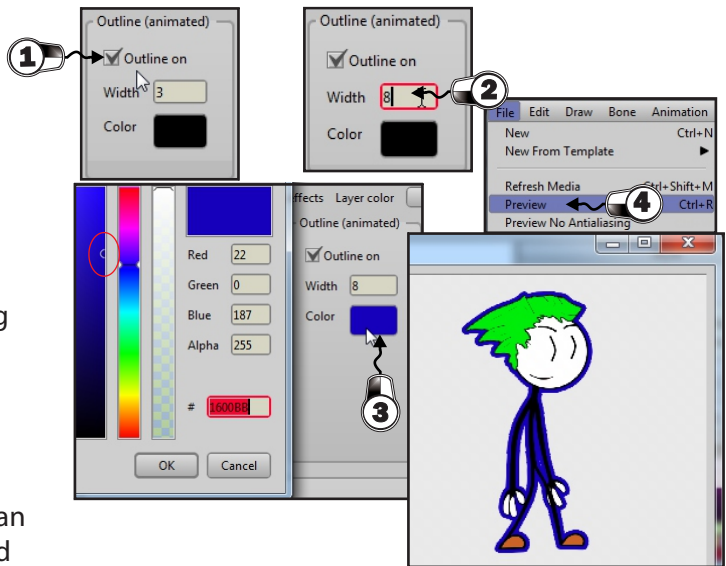


This effect is great if you're looking to do something a little more with your lines. Keep in mind, the lower the number, the more defined the shading area will be.

The **Outline** settings

The outline settings allow you to create an outline that encompasses the selected layer. This is yet another tool for you to use when it comes to stylizing layers. The following steps will help you understand the use of the outline settings.

- 1 Check the **Outline (animated)** box on the right-hand side of your panel.
- 2 You can enter a value for the thickness of the outline; enter **8** on the field provided.
- 3 You can also change the color. Click on the color selector box and choose a **dark blue** color.
- 4 Preview the frame by going to **File | Preview**. Notice how we now have a blue line surrounding the layer, see the picture(right).

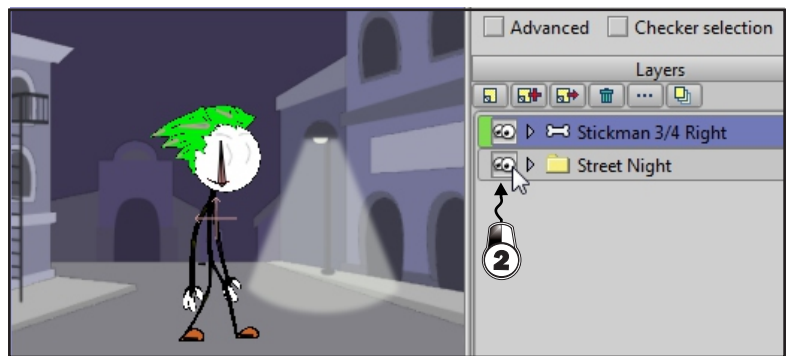
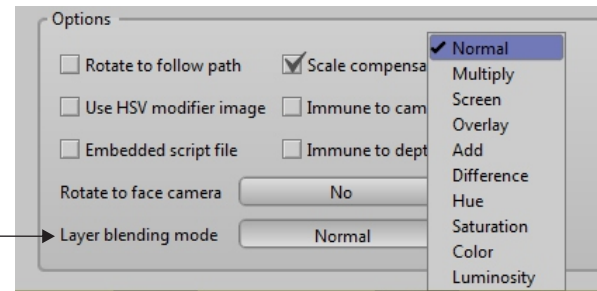


This effect is great if you are looking to create a cut-out look for your animation. It can also be useful, to an extent, if you didn't add stroke lines to your layer and are looking to achieve a similar result quickly.

The **Layer Blending mode** menu

At the bottom of your Layer Settings panel is a drop-down menu named Layer blending mode. You are given a list of different blends you can use for the currently selected layer. These can achieve a variety of effects and rely on at least one more layer in order to work.

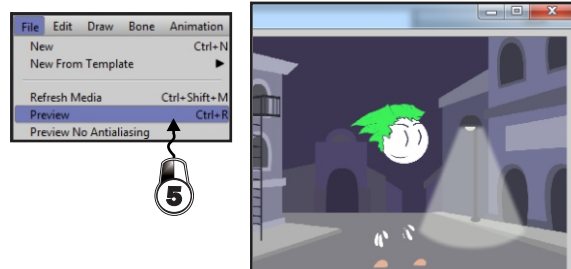
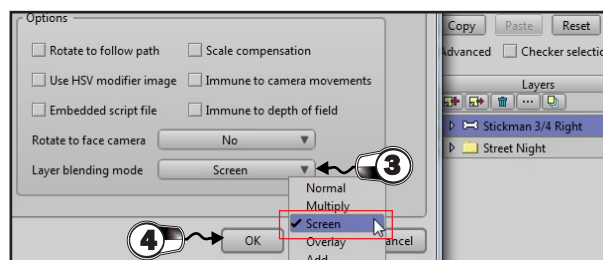
- 1 Import an Anime Studio file named **Street Night.anime** at the SeLS Templates folder.
- 2 Make sure you have the group layer **Street Night** visible, which is listed under your Character layer on the Layers panel. Remember, to make a layer visible, click on the eyeball icon beside the layer name in the Layers panel. The following steps will help you understand the use of the Layer blending mode menu:



- ③ With the **Layer Settings** panel still open (and the **Stickman 3/4 Right bone layer** selected), click on the Layer blending mode drop-down menu and select **Screen** from the list.

- ④ Click on **OK**.

- ⑤ Preview your frame to see the results. This is yet another effect to create a ghostly visual, or perhaps, a way to overlay a color or gradient over a backdrop to enhance the scenery. The choice is yours! You may have the same effect applied to your character, as shown in the following screenshot:



Layer blending modes are widely used in photo and video editing applications. They can also create some neat effects when animating. Each blending mode will have a different effect. You will notice, in this case, that Screen tends to remove all blacks from the layer and creates a transparent effect for the green. These modes also depend on the colors you are using and which layers are involved at the time.

Hint...

Do you want to apply a transparency or blur to multiple layers but don't want to click through each one?

You don't have to! With Anime Studio Pro 10, you can now go to the Layer Settings panel of a specific layer, highlight multiple layers on the Layers panel, and then edit the current layer's settings. Any shared parameters will be applied to all layers. Give it a try!



Enhancing your *Art* with the Layer Settings Panel and Style Palette

Laboratory Activities

Lab 5.1 Enhancing Characters

Lab 5.2 Run Through the Walls

Lab 5.3 Masking Transformation

Chapter 5 Project 1 Ben 10 Transformation

Chapter 5 Project 2 Transformers in Action

Enhancing Characters

Lab Exercise 5.1

Task: Enhanced the characters with effects

Expected Output File: Character to Modification.mp4

Work File: Ben 10.png

- ❶ View the expected output file indicated above.
- ❷ Launch the Anime Studio Application from your desktop.
- ❸ Open the Anime Studio work file **Lab 5.1 Character Modification.anime** located in Chapter 5.
- ❹ The click **File | Import | Image** for **Ben 10.png** located in same chapter.
- ❺ Resize or scale Ben 10 using the Transform layer tool then place it to the right as shown.

Our task here is to enhanced the two characters as discussed in Chapter 5 work text. Let us start with the layer image Ben 10.png.

- ❻ Click the Ben 10.png layer then double-click, on the Layer Settings go to Shadows tab check **Shadow on** checkbox, then use the values below:

Offset = 30;

Blur = 20;

Shadow direction = 180 (degrees)

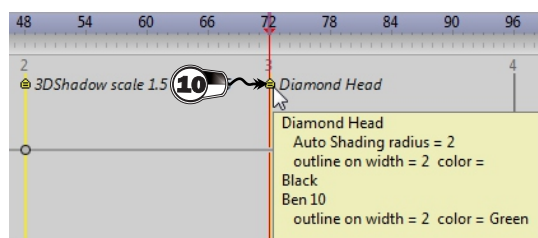
- ❼ Now let us enhance the next character - Diamond Head. Double-click this layer and on the Layer Settings, under the Shadows tab check the Perspective shadow on checkbox under the 3D Shadow group, then enter the values below.

Blur = 5;

Scale = 0.50;

Shear = -1

- ❽ Still on the Layer Settings, turn on the Allow animated layer effects, see snapshot.
- ❾ Follow the instructions in the Timeline, hover the mouse pointer to the yellow small arrow to view the full instruction, as shown.
- ❿ Now add some enhancement on your own. Be sure to save this project file to your folder.



Enhancing your Art with the Layer Settings Panel and Style Palette

Chapter 5

