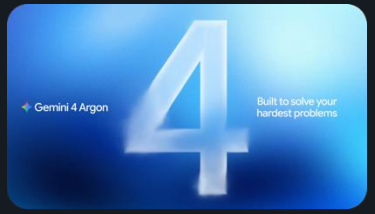
WEEK 06 · Monday, October 19, 2026

Illustration: Style Development & img2img

Start from your own drawing. Then workshop your midterm.

Since we last met.

AI got smarter this week, and the bigger questions were about who owns it and who benefits.



SEP 30 · GOOGLE

Google releases Gemini 4 Argon.

Google's new frontier model targets coding and cyber defense. Developers and businesses got access Oct 13.



OCT 6 · OPENAI

OpenAI's AI solves old math problems.

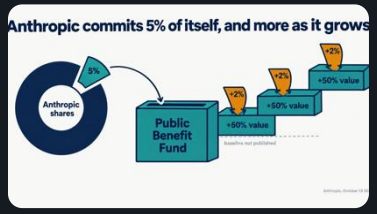
It claimed results on 372 open problems. Many are still being checked, and mathematicians are excited and nervous.



OCT 12 · DISNEY

Disney buys Character.AI's assets.

After Character.AI filed for bankruptcy, Disney offered $20M for its IP and is hiring most of its staff.



OCT 18 · ANTHROPIC

Anthropic pledges 5% to a public fund.

Pending stockholder approval, the fund could support nonprofits and help workers affected by AI.

How did the homework go?

Your brand system and your slop poster, posted to Notion.

THE SYSTEM

Is it one brand?

- Cover the logo on your mockups. Can you still tell?
- What would someone else have to ask you before using it?

THE SLOP POSTER

What did you fix first?

- Did you redesign it with prompts or by hand? Why?
- Should the people who saw it have been told it was AI?

Two years ago, AI couldn't draw the same character twice.

Pages from my children's book *The Unstoppable Friendship of Olivia and Finn*, illustrated with text-to-image prompts in 2024.









- **Every prompt started from zero:** the characters changed look from page to page and rarely appeared in the same frame.
- **No way to lock a character or a style:** the only fix was to regenerate and hope.

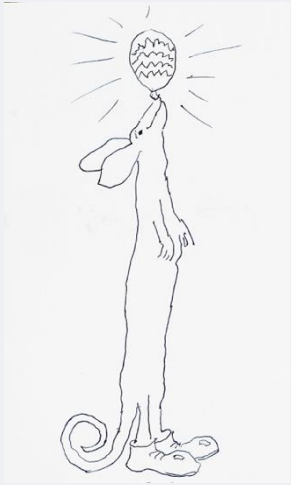
IMG2IMG
Your drawing goes in first.

The model works on top of you, not instead of you.

Same prompt, plus a sketch and one instruction.

"Children's picture-book illustration of Noodle, a tall, skinny cream-colored dog standing upright on his back legs, nose pointed up, balancing an egg on the tip of his nose. One long floppy brown ear, a tail that curls into a spiral, oversized orange-red sneakers with white laces. The egg is pale blue with yellow zigzag stripes, with small motion lines around it."

Prompt only



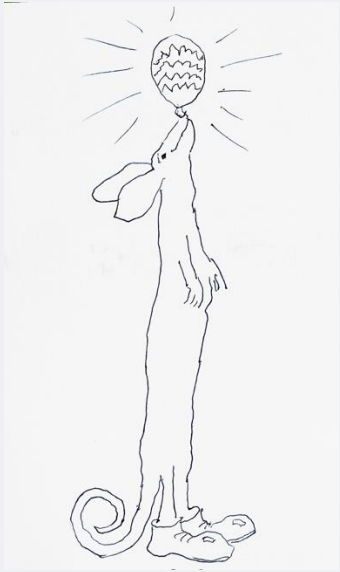
"Use my sketch for the pose, proportions and composition. Keep my line work and only add color, shading and texture. Children's picture-book illustration of Noodle, a tall, skinny cream-colored dog standing upright on his back legs, nose pointed up, balancing an egg on the tip of his nose. One long floppy brown ear, a tail that curls into a spiral, oversized orange-red sneakers with white laces. The egg is pale blue with yellow zigzag stripes, with small motion lines around it."

Sketch + prompt (the added instruction is in bold)

ChatGPT: text in, or drawing in.



Prompt only



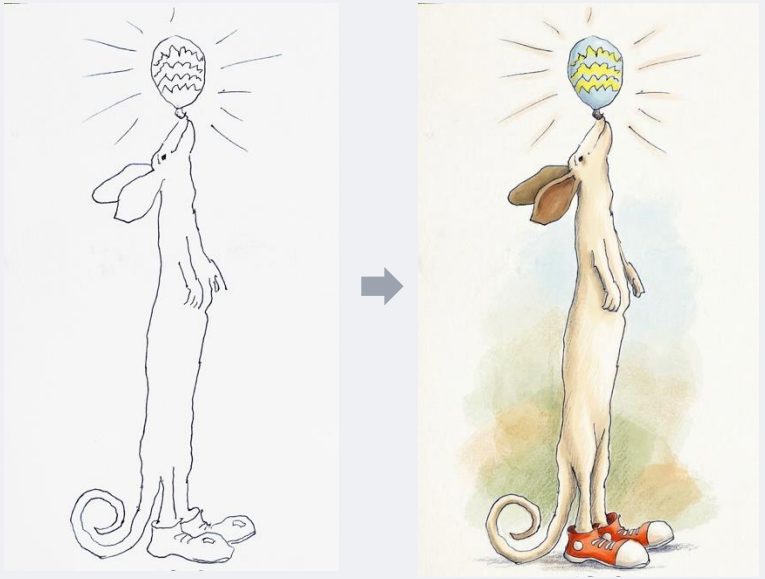


Sketch + prompt

Gemini: text in, or drawing in.



Prompt only

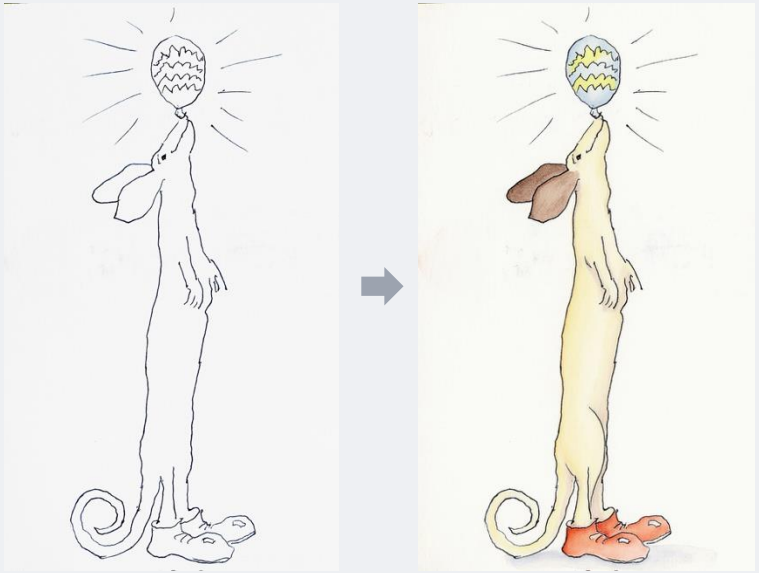


Sketch + prompt

Adobe Firefly: text in, or drawing in.

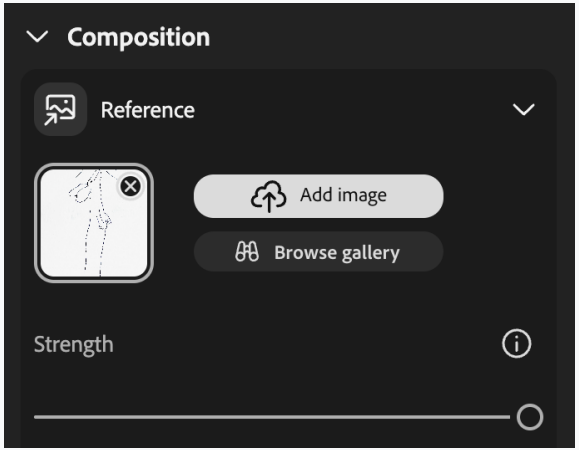


Prompt only



Sketch + prompt

Adobe Firefly: Composition Strength



Where to find it
Composition > Reference > Strength

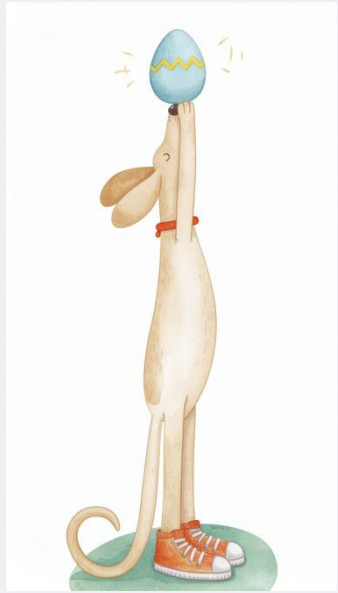
Model: Firefly Image 4 Ultra.
Not yet available in Firefly Image 5.



High

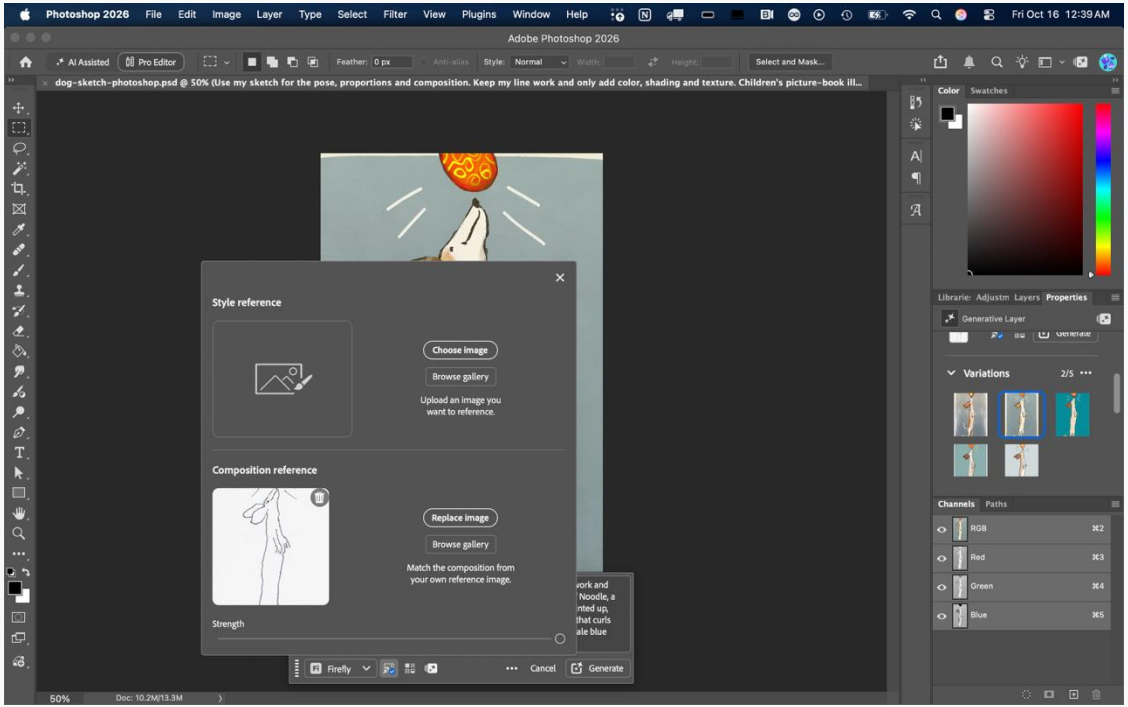


Medium



Low

Photoshop: the same references, inside your file.



Photoshop 2026: Generate Image with a Style reference and a Composition reference

Same controls: attach your sketch as a Composition reference and set its Strength, as in Firefly on the web.

Stays in your file: the result lands as a Generative Layer above the sketch, with variations to pick from.

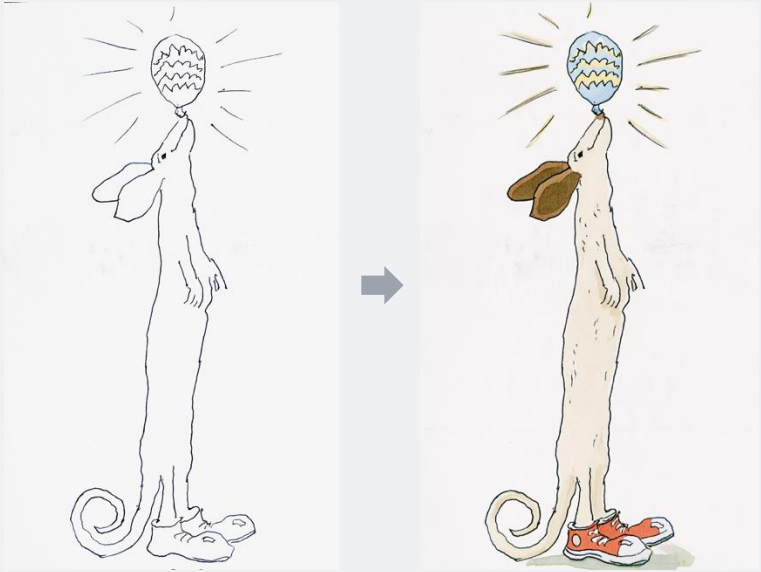
Finish by hand: paint over, mask or fix details on the same canvas.

Model: Firefly Image 3.
Image 4 is not yet available in Photoshop.

Midjourney: text in, or drawing in.

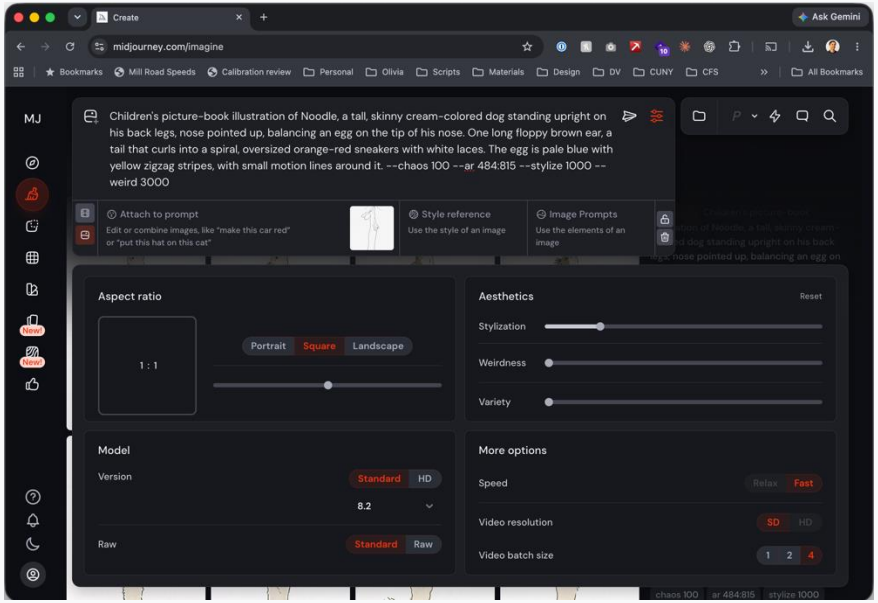


Prompt only



Sketch + prompt

Midjourney: more settings to steer the result.



Settings panel: aspect ratio, model version and a slider for each aesthetic parameter



On any result: Vary subtle or Vary strong

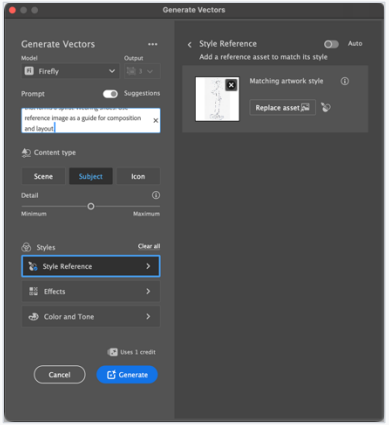
Stylization (--stylize): how much of Midjourney's own look takes over

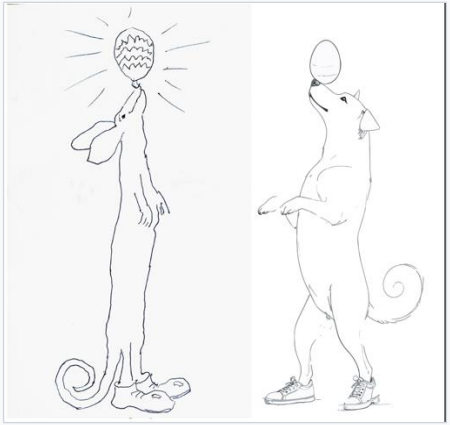
Weirdness (--weird): how unusual the result gets

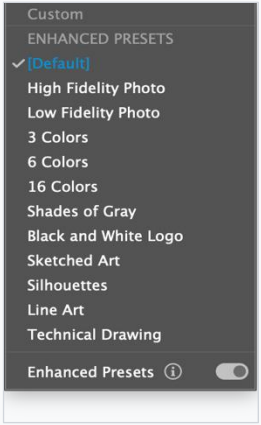
Variety (--chaos): how different the four results are

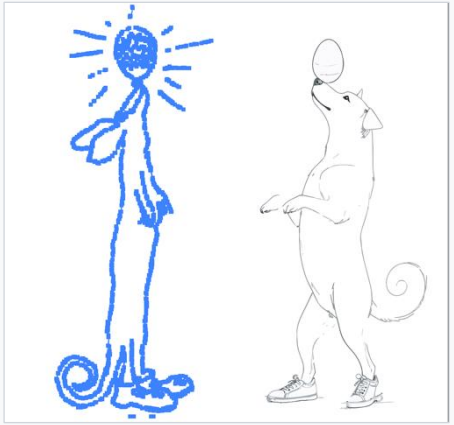
Vary subtle / strong: rerun close to, or far from, a result you like

Illustrator: a reference sets style, not composition.









Generate Vectors: a reference image sets the style only. The result ignores Noodle's pose and proportions, so it can't follow your composition.

Image Trace: turns any raster image into vectors. Presets run from Line Art to 16 Colors, and results vary a lot with the source image.

STYLE
A name in a prompt isn't a style.

You can use images as style references in addition to language

Borrowed & public domain, or developed.





Borrowed

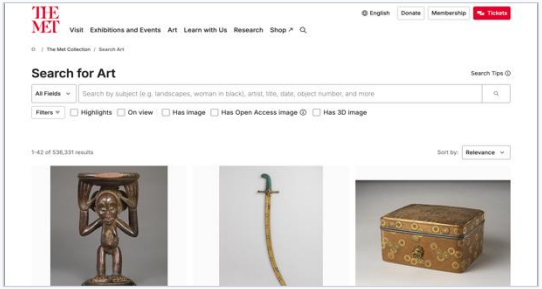




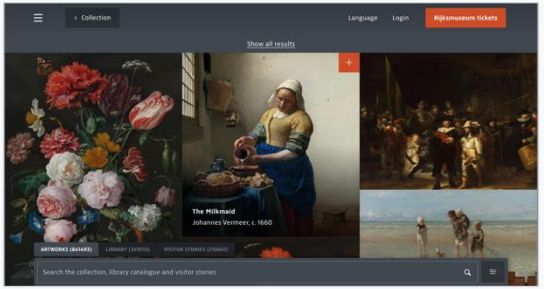
Developed



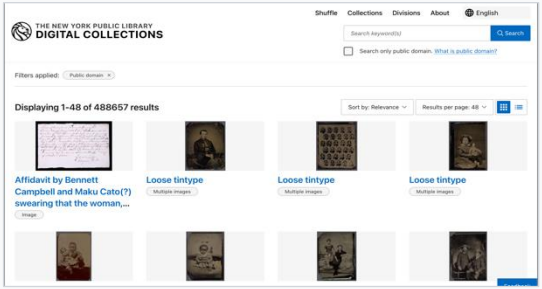
Where to find public domain style references.



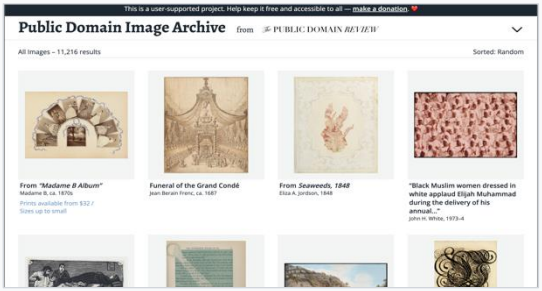
The Met Collection
metmuseum.org/art/collection



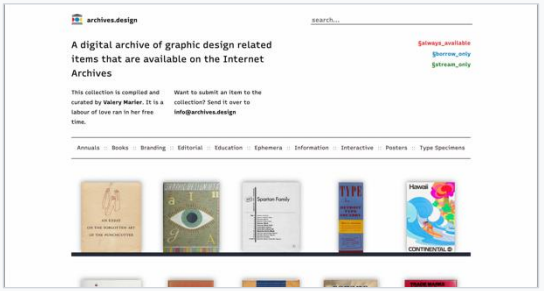
Rijksmuseum
rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection



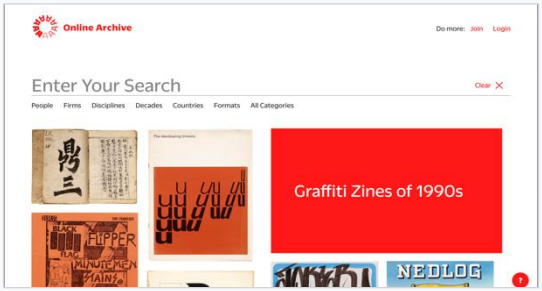
NYPL Digital Collections
digitalcollections.nypl.org



Public Domain Image Archive
pdimagearchive.org



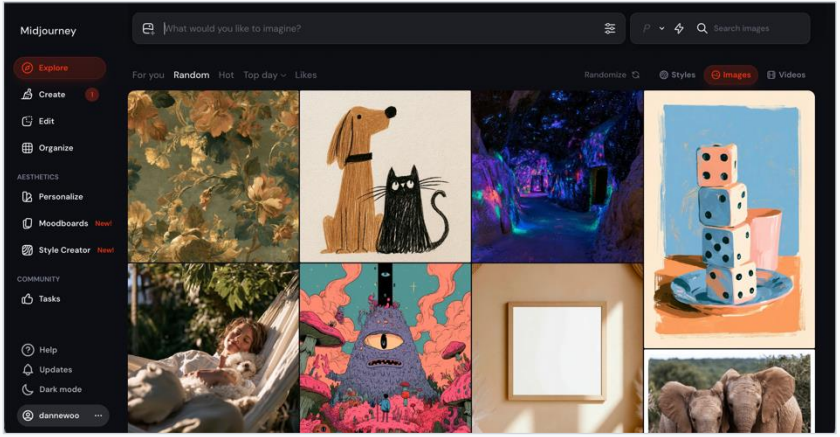
archives.design
archives.design



Letterform Archive
oa.letterformarchive.org

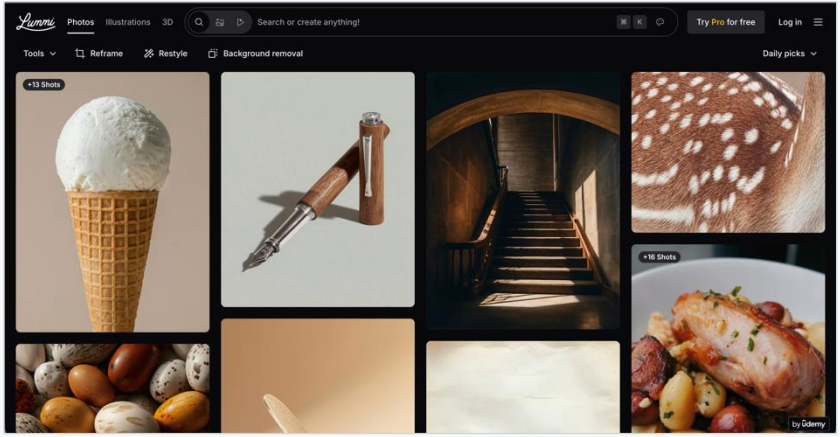
Filter for public domain or Open Access on museum sites.

AI image galleries show the prompts behind the work.



Midjourney Explore midjourney.com/explore

Community images you can sort by Random, Hot or Top. Open one to see the prompt and settings behind it.



Lummi lummi.ai

Free AI-generated photos, illustrations and 3D, searchable by subject, with tools to reframe and restyle.

Study a prompt to learn how it was built. Then write your own.

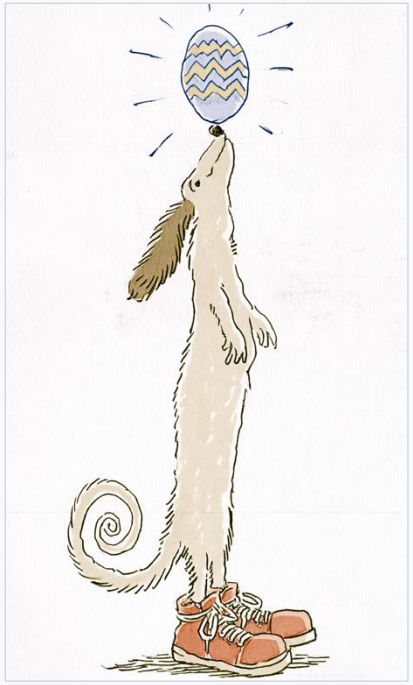
Influence or imitation? Who would you have to credit?

Ask it about your piece, not in principle. It's this week's noticing task.

CHARACTERS
Same character, every picture.

What illustrators need most, and where models drift.

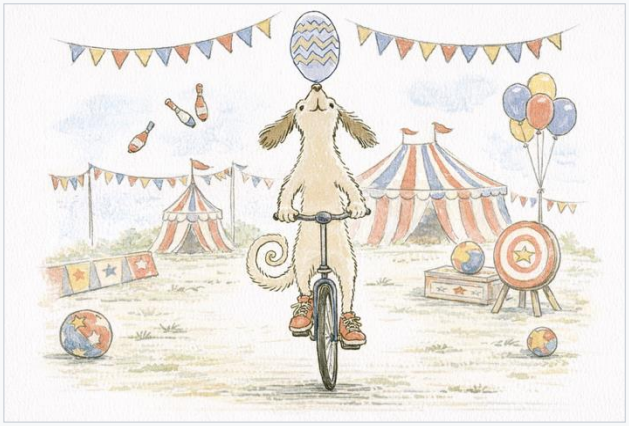
Where characters drift.



Original



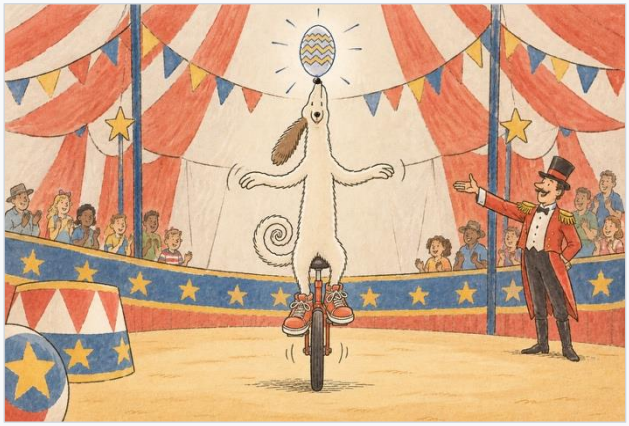




ChatGPT Image 1.5 Looks up, muted sneakers



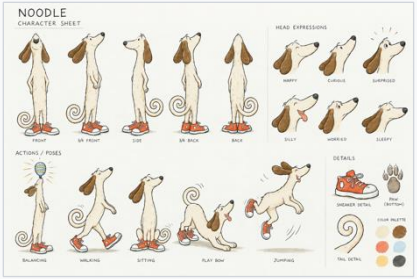




ChatGPT Image 2.5 New face, bright red sneakers

Draw a turnaround first. Then hold the model to it.

Holding a character.



Character sheet



Scene



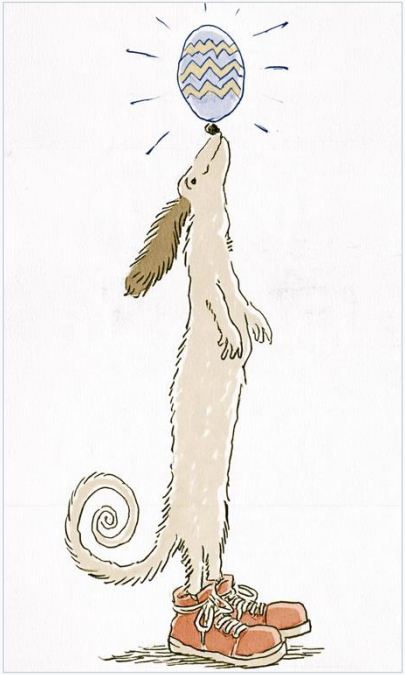
Result Noodle placed in the scene with the character sheet as reference

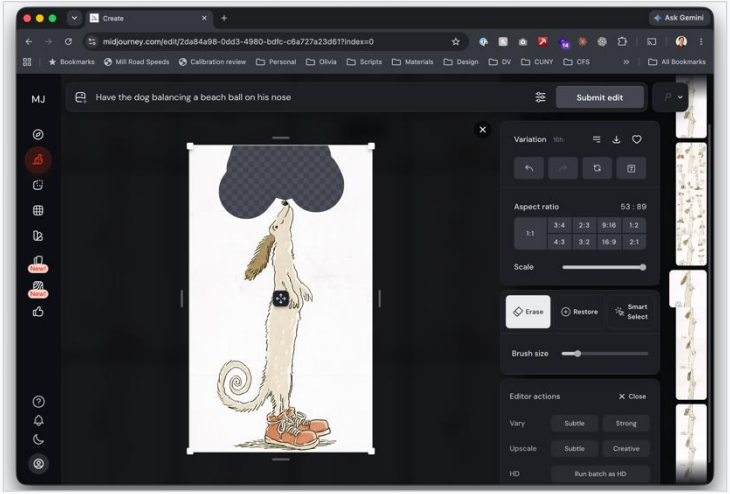
Your turnaround is the reference. A description isn't enough.

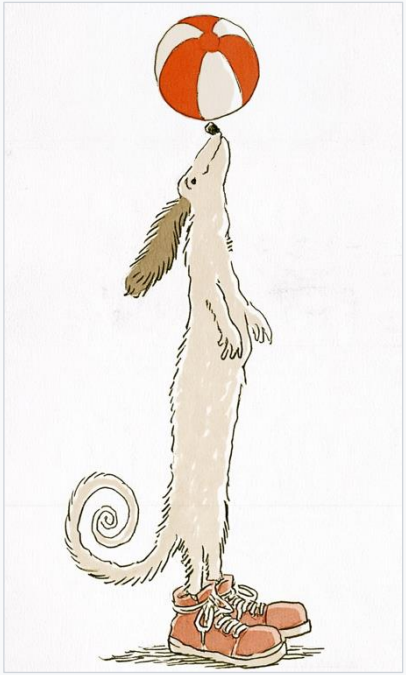
EDITING
Fix the part.
Keep the rest.

Inpainting and outpainting, on your own picture.

Inpainting in Midjourney.







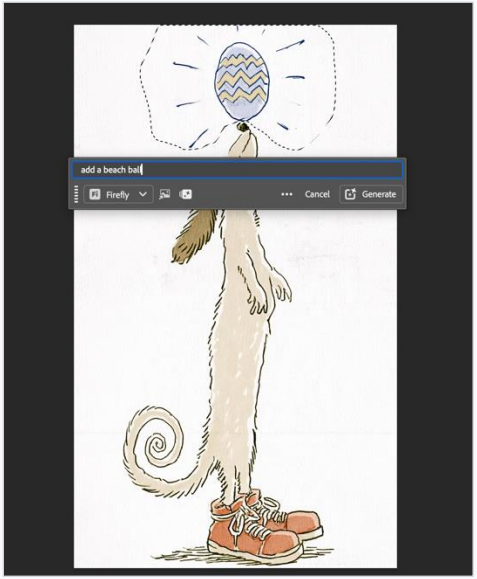
Original

Erase and prompt Midjourney editor

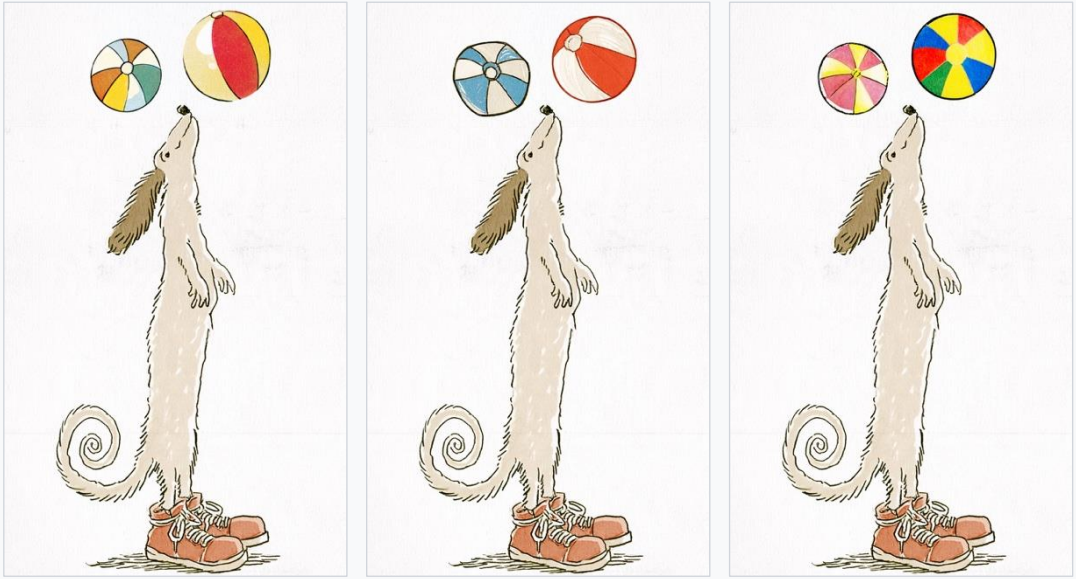
Result

Erase only the egg, then describe what goes there: “a beach ball on his nose.”

Inpainting in Photoshop.



Select and prompt Generative Fill



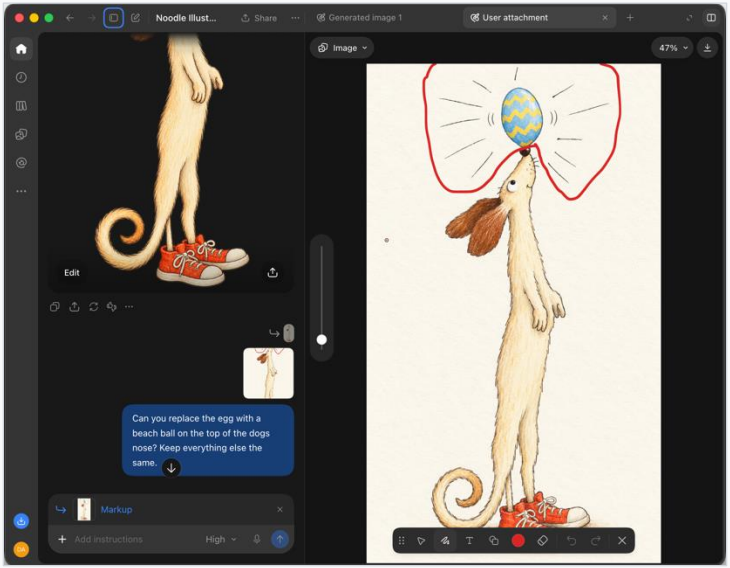
Results Three variations

Same idea, weaker result: two balls each time, none on his nose.

Inpainting in ChatGPT.



Original



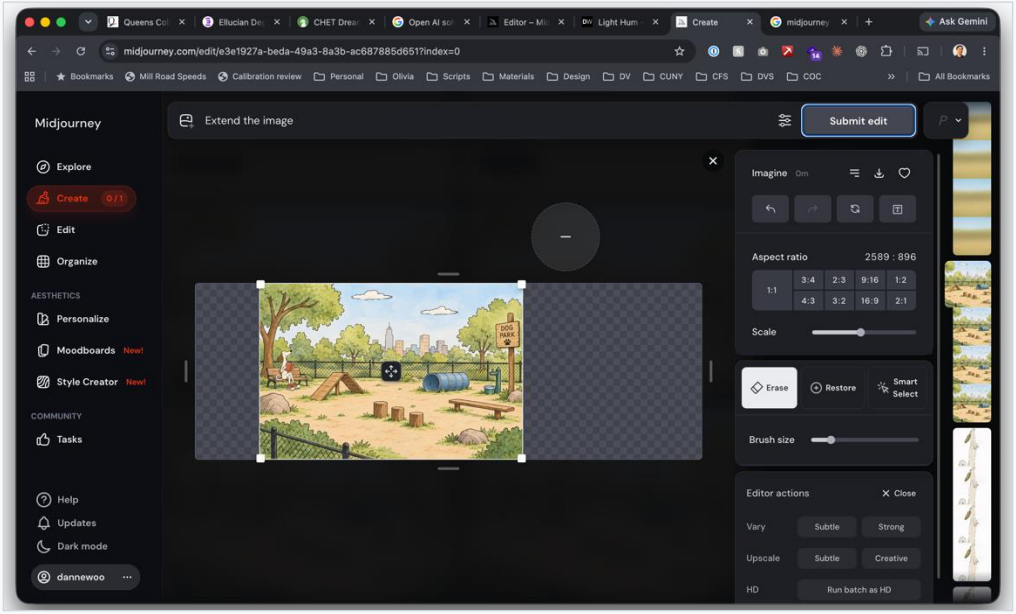
Mark up and prompt ChatGPT image editor



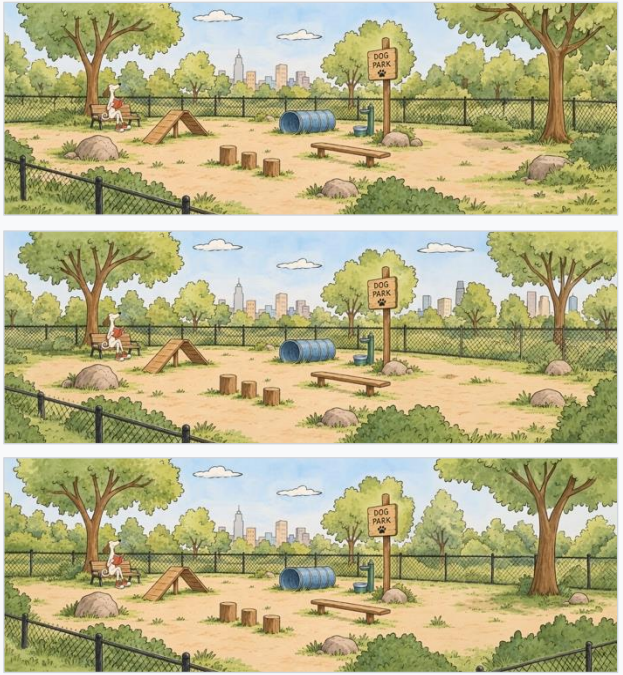
Result

Circle the egg, then ask in plain words: “replace the egg with a beach ball.”

Outpainting.



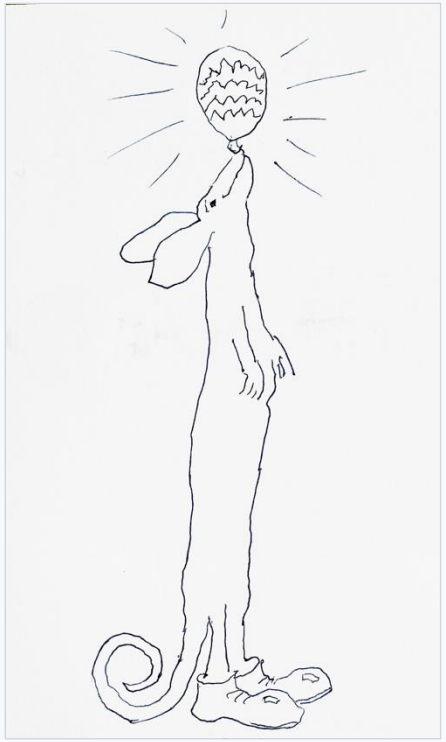
Extend the canvas Midjourney editor



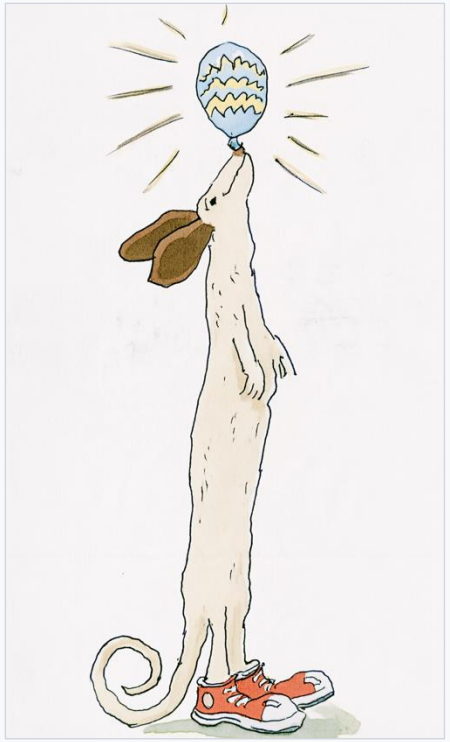
Results Three wider versions

Most image models can do this now. Check the new edges as if someone else drew them.

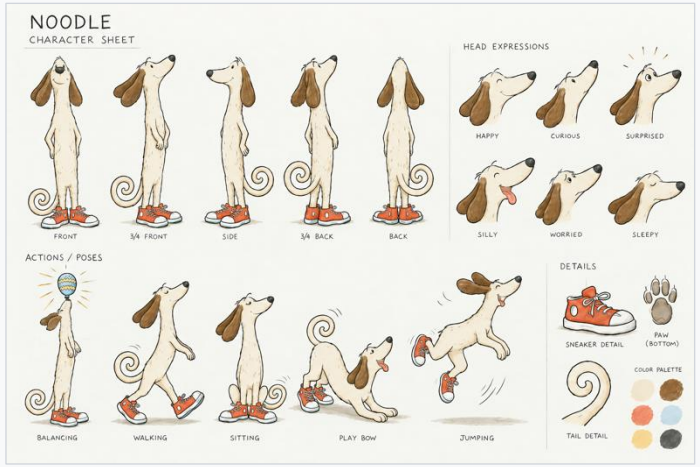
Sketch to finished piece.



1 Sketch



2 Render



3 Character sheet



4 Scene



5 Noodle in the scene

MIDTERM
One week
to go.

Write your brief. Leave with a plan you can finish.

Midterm Workshop

Brief, feedback, build

The whole lab goes to your midterm. Write first, then groups of three, then work time.

1. Write 3 sentences: what you're making, who it's for, what problem it solves. Read them to your group.
2. Show what you have so far, and the Discover and Define pages of your process book.
3. Ask the group what they would cut. Then cut one thing.
4. Use the rest of the lab to build. Ask for help while you work.
5. Before you leave, write what you will finish each day until you present on Monday, October 26 (5 minutes, about your decisions).