

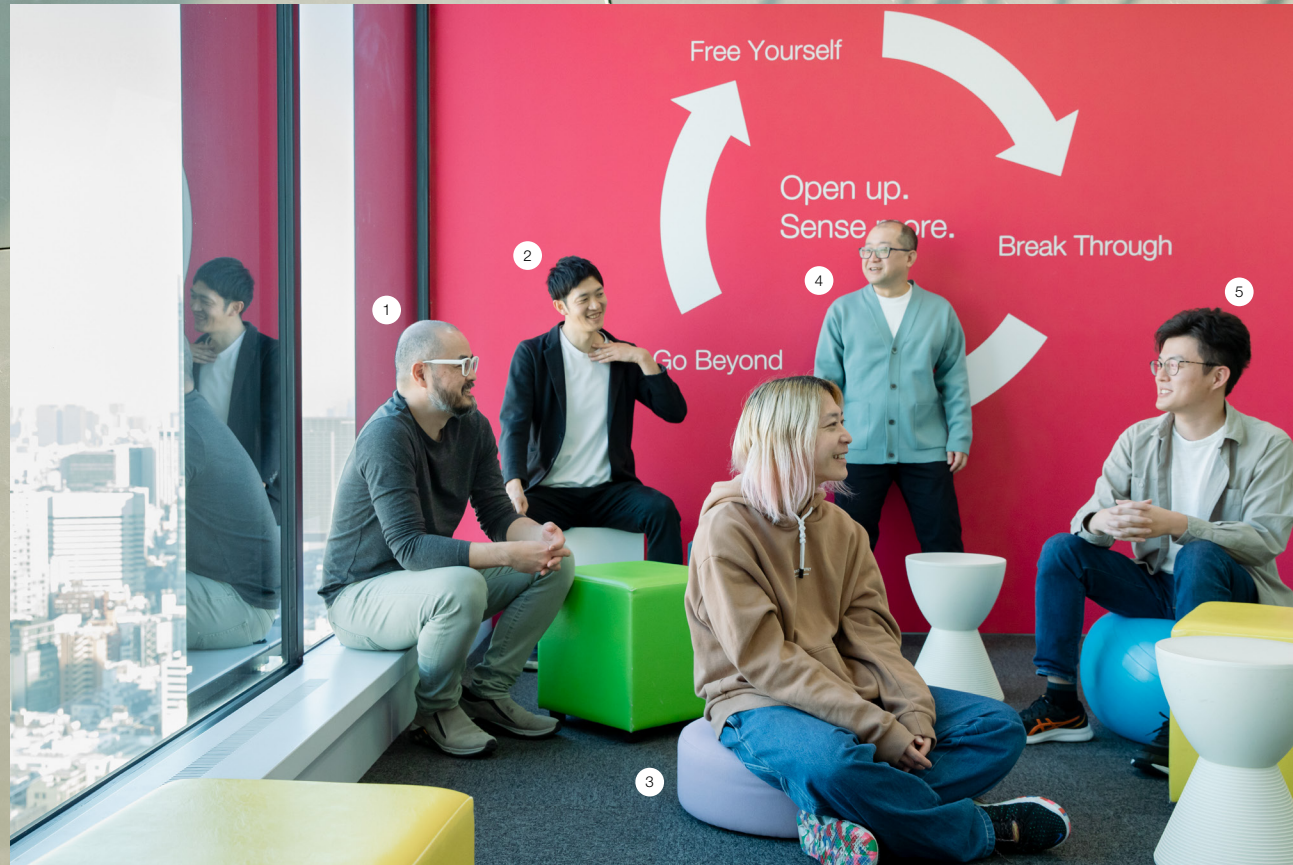


for  
**creators**

**Delivering immersive experience in  
which creators can draw freely**

Wacom team members strive day in day out to provide creative professionals with exceptional digital pen experiences via the company's solutions such as the Wacom® Cintiq® Pro 27 and other products.





# CROSSTALK

## How the ETC Team demonstrated a new approach to product development

Innovation requires bringing together minds that are often working apart from each other. This is the idea behind the ETC Team, a new systematic approach to idea generation that Wacom is implementing. The development of the Wacom Cintiq Pro 27 serves as a good model for how this approach has transformed the company.

### 1. Naoya NISHIZAWA

Director of Design  
Technology & Experience

Nishizawa joined Wacom in 2012, where he has primarily worked as a designer for consumer products such as styli, smart pads, and pen tablets. As part of the Wacom Cintiq Pro 27 ETC Team, he served for a product and package design.

### 2. Hiroaki Shiokawa

Manager  
Enterprise and Design Education Group  
Creative Business Unit

Shiokawa started out his job at Wacom in B2C sales activities with retail stores in 2007. After getting involved with solution sales activities, he moved to the current group where he engages in B2B sales activities while working as a member of the ETC team. He directly listens to feedback from customers and delivers it within the company.

### 3. Bunta Tauchi

Expert  
Technology & Experience

Tauchi joined Wacom in 2018, starting in a team developing circuitry for pen displays. He brought both an engineer's perspective and a user's perspective to the ETC Team. He is also creating artwork for events, including those organized by Wacom.

### 4. Tatsunori Kato

Senior Manager  
Software Engineering

Kato joined Wacom in 2017. He develops firmware for pen tablets while working as a member of the ETC team. Drawing on previous experience in developing entertainment robots and embedded OS for devices, he has been constantly researching for the best methods and systems to support creative activities.

### 5. Kentaro Matsumoto

Technical Support Senior Specialist  
JPAP Customer Engagement

Matsumoto joined Wacom in 2013. He was first involved in sales activities for enterprises and retail stores. Currently, he works at the Wacom Call Center and joins the ETC team. Serving as a relay point both internally and externally, he plays the role of collecting a wide range of feedback from customers, so the company can reflect it in its products.

## A new approach to product development

The product development process that Wacom has adopted in recent years is led by a task force composed of team members from departments all across the company. They are known as the Extended Core Team, or the ETC Team for short. Each member brings with them knowledge and experience accumulated from working in various specialized fields; the task force's mission is to incorporate their combined knowledge and experience into the development of a single product. Members continue working in their respective departments while participating in the ETC Team project. Not all product developments require this kind of framework, but ETC Teams are spearheading an increasing share of Wacom projects every year.

Wacom established the ETC Team process to better align themselves with the latest trends in product developments. While products are rapidly commoditized,

consumers have shifted their focus on the "experiences that can only be obtained through those products." No longer can they satisfy their customers simply by adding more features to our products. The fact that customers have shifted to seeking "specific experiences" through "material possessions" has fundamentally transformed the process of product development. Establishing the ETC Team process was a necessary initiative for meeting the needs of the times.

## Developing the best Wacom product to date

On Oct. 12, 2022, Wacom launched the Wacom Cintiq Pro 27 pen displays. This new flagship model was developed by an ETC Team. Development began in December 2019, just before the world was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic. Wacom President and CEO Nobutaka Ide (Nobu) announced that an ETC Team would be developing this



The Wacom Cintiq Pro 27 is a flagship pen display that offers breakthrough performance for inspired creativity. It features a refined design that incorporates feedback from Wacom's diverse professional user base, as well as an intuitive interface that allows one's creativity to flow freely. Together, these features provide an environment in which it is easy to immerse in your work.





new product so they could provide creators and artists with the best digital pen experience in the world. In other words: to properly reflect the valuable feedback of Wacom users in their products, Wacom needed to completely change the way they used to do things.

Known at the time only by its codename, the Wacom Cintiq Pro 27 project began with the assembly of a task force composed of five team members best suited for the task who were coincidentally from five different Wacom departments. It was a diverse team in which no two members had the same professional background. This ETC Team was led by Bunta Tauchi, a Wacom user from even before joining the company who still uses Wacom products in his creative endeavors. His reason for joining the task force was simple: as a creative type, there was nothing more he wanted to do than help create Wacom's best product yet.

Product design was handled by Naoya Nishizawa. He still remembers what Ide told him at the start of the project: "You have nothing to lose." That was when he realized this project would demand much more than the usual development process.

Another task force member was Hiroaki Shiokawa, who handles corporate clients at the Creative Business Unit. "By getting involved from the start, I was able to describe the qualities this product would require in plain words instead of rattling out features and specifications," he says. "That's a unique strength you develop when you're out there talking to clients every day about the product itself instead of about what individual creators or artists can do with it."

Kentaro Matsumoto, who receives user feedback on a daily basis as a member of the technical support team, also provided valuable insight to the project. He is known to take initiative—he once compiled user feedback and their issues into a report that he submitted directly to Ide himself, even when he wasn't specifically asked to do so. "Joining the ETC Team was a chance for me to learn something new," he says. "Deepening my knowledge of Wacom technology can only help in my everyday work."

Finally, there was Tatsunori Kato, who joined the task force in the middle of the project to fill a position that required software expertise. The first thing he did was to look through the minutes of every discussion the team had held to date. "I wanted to know what this project meant to each member and where they were coming from," he says. "That gave me insight into the kinds of things I often don't get to see in my regular work."

### Evidence to back every choice

"In the past, I felt that cooperation wasn't very smooth between the planning departments, which decide on new product concepts, and the design and development departments," says Tauchi. "As a result, it was difficult to translate user and development team feedback into product features and their benefits—something that should be done on a continuous basis." Often, features were incorporated into a product simply because they were trendy, irrespective of whether they met user

needs.

For the Wacom Cintiq Pro 27, product planning involved a thorough attempt to understand the user's perspective. The work force repeatedly discussed what it was that their users were really seeking in their products. Wacom products are sold around the world, which means the same product is used in a variety of places by a variety of people. This can make it difficult to know exactly who the product is intended for. To allay their doubts, the ETC Team formed a clear goal: they would each approach the project with a specific user in mind—someone they know—and create a product that would make that user happy. After all, nobody wants a product that is made for everyone. Working under this common goal "helped us create a really unconventional product," says Nishizawa. The accompanying Wacom Pro Pen 3—a digital pen with customizable grip thickness, weight, and center of balance—also incorporates valuable information gathered by listening to actual users and observing them use the product.

Members of the ETC Team say they were given complete freedom in commenting on the project's direction during discussions. There were no constraints to speak of; just a general understanding that discussions should focus on three pillars—"stability," "immersive," and "amplifying"—to prevent talks from going all over the place. The fact is that one's perspective on product development varies depending on the work one does every day. The varying opinions served as a catalyst for unexpected developments throughout the project. Not being experts on product



development also helped the task force members view the process with clear eyes. They were able to consider even the most minute aspects without being bound to practice or precedent and back up their opinions with objective evidence so anyone—expert or not—could be able to understand their rationale. This approach helped refine the product to a point where "we could all explain every feature of the completed Wacom Cintiq Pro 27 in precise detail," says Shiokawa.

Giving shape to an idea requires a close relationship with the engineers. Although the ETC Team included some members who were not technologically fluent—and who initially had difficulty following all the technical jargon—"we listened carefully to every explanation and little by little increased our vocabulary," says Matsumoto. "From a certain point, we were able to discuss the project at the same level as a seasoned engineer." The fact is, every member of the ETC Team was chosen because they were as passionate as engineers about creating a product that users would truly love.

The Wacom Cintiq Pro 27 was "a real technological challenge," according to Kato. "The final product is an amalgamation of so many new things we attempted during the project." It is also the product of passionate debate and discussion between people who have a deep love for creating products. The completed Wacom Cintiq Pro 27 has received rave reviews all around the world. Even the overseas team—which had some very frank discussions with the ETC Team over the course of the project—has been very happy with the product.

### Transforming the corporate culture

How will the use of ETC Teams transform product development at Wacom? According to Tauchi, one change it has already brought about is the growing company-wide resolve to develop products from the user's perspective. User feedback tends to be subjective—for example, wanting to draw without shakiness or wanting a pen that marks the screen exactly as the user intends. As a result, it used to be difficult to reflect this feedback in Wacom's technology. One thing the ETC Team for the Wacom Cintiq Pro

27 project consciously attempted was to "translate" this subjective feedback into technical jargon. If such a practice were to take root throughout the company, product development at Wacom could evolve by bounds. Already, user-based trial events have become an increasing priority for the company. The members of the next ETC Teams are also benefiting from the knowledge left behind by their predecessors, who approached this experimental undertaking without being bound to the past and by repeatedly taking on new challenges.

On reflecting on the Wacom Cintiq Pro 27, Tauchi says he feels there were some things the task force could have pushed for more. However, that simply means there is room for growth in the ETC Team approach. What worked this time around has been given shape, and that will help the next project attain an even higher level of quality. Each of the new ETC Teams that have since been established are now writing their own small stories in which they bring together their minds and passions to create another well-loved product.

### The starting point of a new journey



#### Faik KARAAGLU

Executive Vice President  
Branded Business

It is very powerful to listen to the feedback of our customers. The Wacom Cintiq Pro 27 is only the starting point of our journey to develop creative professional value propositions with the contribution of creative professionals. Our rigorous path forward to combine technology, customer perspective and experience does make the difference for future innovations.





## CREATIVE MINDS

The creators who utilize Wacom products

Wacom has always supported the endeavors of creators around the world. Here are seven prominent creators who give their honest feedback on the experience of using Wacom products.

### GEMI

#### A high-quality and stress-free creation process

The first words out of the mouth of Gemi are: "This model is very good—practically perfection." An illustrator who works in a variety of fields such as book design, Gemi has earned a large fan following for his artwork, which exhibits a distinctive visual style and an attention to detail that one might associate more with analog art tools.

Gemi has only been using the Wacom® Cintiq® Pro 27 for a few months, but every day he recognizes the difference it has made.

"What really appealed to me was the size of the screen," he says. "The device is more compact overall, but the screen size remains the same as previous models. I love how easy it is to create high-quality art on it. When you're painting on canvas, you'll sometimes step back to see how it's going overall. I think it's important to do the same with digital art, but it's tricky if the screen is too small."

Having received a growing number of advertising commissions in recent years, Gemi has seen the benefit of a large screen in this line of work as well. Ads are often printed in large format—such as on a poster—so it is important to maintain a high standard of quality. "If it looks off when blown up, it will of course not get the job done," he says. "For that reason, I'm grateful for the large screen—it allows me to examine my work in detail."

Gemi adds, "It's uncomfortable to use a pen when the nib is too far from the liquid crystal layer of the screen because it looks like the drawing is floating on the glass layer above. But that doesn't happen at all with this product. Also, the pen is light, comfortable to hold, and doesn't need charging, so I like it a lot."



### GEMI

Gemi is an illustrator whose works include book designs and corporate ads. He has supplied illustrations for *New Japanese*, a textbook published by Tokyo Shoseki; *Gakuhi no Eru*, a scholarship program run by the Japanese Cabinet Office; the university preparatory school Yoyogi Seminar; Nara Shika Train, a deer-themed train wrap for Kinki Nippon Railway; and the Pokémon Trading Card Game. His illustrated books include the art collection *Rain Piles Up in the Silvers of Night* and the *Otome no Hondana* series.

### STUDIO COLORIDO

#### "What more could you ask for."

The name of Studio Colorido comes from the Portuguese for "colorful," a fitting name for an animation studio that has produced many imaginative films over the years, including *Drifting Home*, *A Whisker Away*, and *Penguin Highway*. Colorido's director of animation is Hiroyasu Ishida, who is known for his long-time use of Wacom pen tablets in the creation of his films.

So, what impression does the Wacom® Cintiq® Pro 27 leave on such a preeminent creator of Japanese animation? Ishida's response is simple: "I couldn't ask for anything more."

"The 27-inch screen is nice because it allows me to simultaneously display the animation layers in a vertical panel and the timeline in a horizontal panel," he explains. "I pass files back and forth with many different people in my role as director, which means I handle a huge volume of information. I have to keep track of the progress of a variety of tasks, such as animation direction and production, while also adding drawings as necessary. The large screen helps me properly multitask."

Ishida is especially happy with the new Wacom Pro Pen 3. The tradition of drawing with paper and pencil is deeply rooted in the animation industry, so many animators still prefer a thin pen. "The Wacom Pro Pen 3 is even thinner than the Wacom Pro Pen Slim," says Ishida. "I appreciate that it's slim and light enough to feel like you're drawing with a pencil. The tip of the pen is also sharply angled, which is good for drawing when the tablet is on a flat surface—like when I'm sketching."



### Hiroyasu Ishida

Hiroyasu Ishida is the animation director at Studio Colorido. Ishida first found fame with the independent film *Fumiko's Confession*, which was released in 2009 while he was still at university. His first Studio Colorido production, the short film *Sonny Boy & Dewdrop Girl*, was released in 2013. *Penguin Highway*, his first feature film, was named Animation of the Year at the 2018 Japan Academy Film Prize. His latest film, *Drifting Home*, was released in 2022.



## CREATIVE MINDS



### Phillip Boutte Jr.

from [US](#)

Concept Artist

Phillip Boutté Jr. is a concept artist from the United States who has designed costumes for Black Panther and other Marvel films, as well as for singers such as Madonna.

He says, "I choose Wacom products because the quality is better; they just have more experience making tablets. They align themselves with artists and actually listen to us to understand our needs. My initial impression of the Wacom Cintiq Pro 27 is that the sensitivity of the screen is way better. It feels so natural, as if I'm drawing on paper. I also like being able to change the weight of the pen. It feels like a very professional tool that is intuitive to use."



### Massimo Borrelli

from [ITALY](#)

Industrial Automobile Designer

Italdesign, a prestigious automobile design company, has put many famous cars and consumer products out into the world. The company's senior designer, Massimo Borrelli, refers to himself as a proud, early adopter of Wacom.

"When it comes to the rendering of automobile designs, I have personally witnessed the transition from traditional drawing—with marker pencils and pastels—to the digital age with the arrival of the first Intuos tablet," he says. "I equipped myself with a Cintiq Companion and a Wacom MobileStudio Pro, and I am currently exploring the potential of the new Wacom® Cintiq® Pro 27. I appreciate the dimensions of both the large screen and the small stand, which fits onto smaller desks without sacrificing the solidity of earlier models."



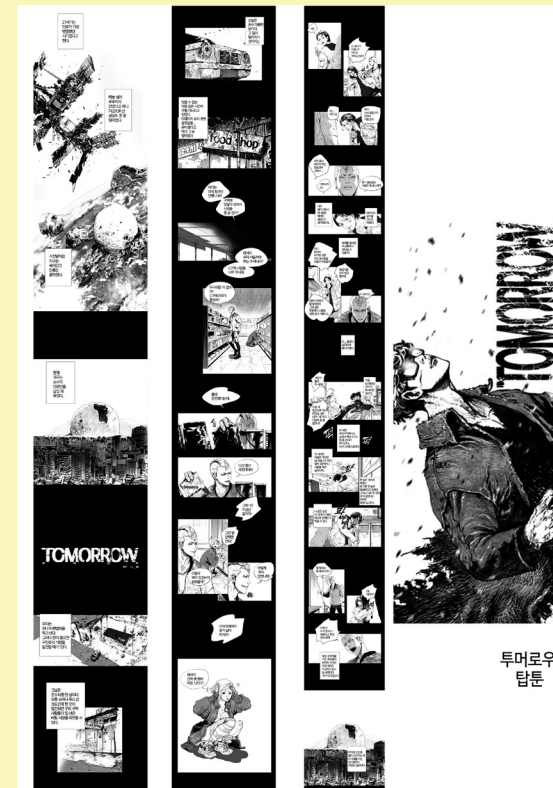
### Tony Washington

from [US](#)

Artist & Music Producer

Tony Washington is a multi-talented concept artist, illustrator, and music producer who works in a variety of fields such as comics, video games, and feature films.

"I build my music and art concepts using both analog and digital tools to enable endless creations," he says. "The sketches I draw and the wavelengths in my music both give me a sense of scale and style and help me understand how they fit into the environments I envision. As my music and digital art bring a new world into being, it is my Wacom devices that keep the creative process seamless and allow me to immerse myself in audio and visual content."



### Kang Gyoung Hun

from [SOUTH KOREA](#)

Webtoon Artist

Kang Gyoung Hun is an artist at Kenaz, a South Korean platform for the digital comics and webcomics known as webtoons. At Kenaz, some 400 artists are creating webtoons by various production process and offering webtoon IP in South Korea and abroad, with high-quality artwork.

"I have been using Wacom's products, including the Intuos, Cintiq 21UX, Cintiq 22HD, and Wacom Cintiq Pro 32, for more than 15 years," says Kang. "Wacom products are set apart by the impressive sensitivity of their pens to pressure, which is especially important to me because I am exacting when it comes to the lines of the brush strokes in my work. I stick with Wacom because they allow me to control the pressure of the pen delicately and sensitively."

### Raj Khatri

from [INDIA](#)

Poster Artist

Raj Khatri is a film and TV poster artist from Mumbai. As one of the most active artists in the industry, he has worked on a wide variety of creative endeavors and even spoke at a TEDx event.

"I have been using Wacom products since June 2010," says Khatri. "I remember it vividly. I was saving up to buy a Wacom tablet, but my girlfriend (now my wife) gifted me an Intuos 4 tablet for my birthday. My world just changed overnight. Later, I bought the Cintiq 27QHD as well. The strength of Wacom products is their extreme durability and stability and also that they open your imagination to endless possibilities."

