

# Silhouette Studio Basics

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Software

[Music]

Fred: [Screen share of a blank page setup for creating in Silhouette Studio] All right, welcome to Silhouette Studios, the software. We're just going to go through a basic overview in this class. This is a basic overview of the Silhouette software program. This is what it looks like on the MAC. If you have a PC, a windows PC, it will look similar. It looks pretty much identical, and it works similarly too, so if you learn from one you should be able to use it on the other and it shouldn't be a problem. Sometimes software for the MAC is way different than for the PC but in the case of the Silhouette Studios it's pretty much the same.

This software is free and available to download off the Silhouette Studios website and so you can download it. Just make sure you download the latest one, whether it's for your MAC or for windows. It's only available for MAC or windows, so unfortunately you do need a MAC laptop or desktop or a windows desktop or laptop. It is not available for tablets or Android or iPad and it is not available for Chrome OS. So, you do need a MAC or PC in order to download it and use it (the software).

You also do need to use this software in order to cut things and send things and to actually use the Silhouette Cameo machine, the cutter machines that you have and buy. Now if you're going to be using the one at the library, obviously you're not going to buy your own, although people do buy their own. You can use the one that we have in the library and when you use the one that we have in the library, you can also use our software and our laptops that are in the library, once the library opens up more fully, that is. [...] Not at this current time but in the future you can always borrow and use while in-house the Silhouette Cameo machine we have at the library, as well as a laptop with the software. But a lot of people, back when we used to be open, they just borrowed the machine, but they brought their own laptop or they brought their own files because they had the software at home. You can use the software without the machine but you do need to use the software in order to use the machine. It's one versus the other.

Now what we have on our library laptops and what most people have is the free version, the Silhouette Studio Basic. So this is what this is. There are advanced versions that cost money but that's not something you really need to do or to use in order to even use the Silhouette Cameo fully. So the free version is more than adequate.

## Chapter 2: Tools within Silhouette Studio Basic

Okay, as you can see here [Fred moves cursor around to the tools panels on the right, left and top of the screen], if you use the software and you're familiar with the software, it is similar to other drawing and painting programs you may have used in the past. Similar types of icons. On the top here, if you've ever used any type of computer program you have the shortcuts to New,

Open, Save, Print, Undo, Redo, Cut, Copy, Paste, Magnification and Move so those are some icons. Towards the left here you have various tools and commands for manipulating and drawing on the image.

The selection tool, a lot of people colloquially just refer to it as the pointer, and then you have edit points tool. If you ever use vector software such as Illustrator or Inkscape or something like that and are used to editing points, you have that option. Then we have the line tool just as it states you can make lines, make curved lines. Then you have the rectangle circle tool, and as you can see here it's rectangles or ovals [Fred creates examples of simple shapes].

And you have a freehand tool, if you need to ever freehand make a design to cut something, you can see that there [Fred freehands a random shape]. And then text [Fred creates a text box]. Probably the one command that people use the most for Silhouette because they want to put text into your file. An eraser...and cut tool if you're going to just cut part of your image out. So that is a brief overview of the tools on the left. Anyone have any questions about that? Should be familiar to most of you, especially if you've ever used any type of drawing software before.

## Chapter 3: Color Meaning

Fred: Now you'll notice that the color is red on here. It's not black or any other color and that's because red signifies that once you send this to the Cameo machine, it's going to actually cut. Red is pretty much the shorthand in vector files for cutting a cut line. Black is just a mark, meaning that it will be printed, but the machine won't actually cut it, and blue doesn't matter for Silhouette software, but for other types of things if you're going to use a laser or something like that usually like a score mark. If you're not going to cut something straight through but just score something that's usually the blue color. Red color usually signifies that something is going to get cut in this case, whether it's plastic, thin vinyl or paper, whatever it might be.

So obviously if it's that color some people ask 'oh can I change the color to something else?' or something like that, and obviously you're not going to make color designs on the Silhouette Studio software, it's just going to be silhouettes. The purpose of this program is not to draw or to edit photos or anything like that. It's to create a design that the Silhouette Cameo machine can then use to cut from a piece of paper or card stock or vinyl. All right, everyone got that? Any questions about the left-hand tools?

## Chapter 4: Page Setup

Fred: All right, so that's the left tools. Towards the right you have the side panels. These are all the icons for the side panels. It starts off with the page setup, and there's other side panels; Pixscan, Fill...Now even though you see colors here it makes no difference in terms of whether or not something is...when your design will be colored, just want to emphasize that point. This is just more for your own visual cue or something like that. A more expanded text tool, text side panel...today we'll be focusing mainly on the page setup panel and then the trace panel because that's what most people use. Most people, and especially in this basic form, they're going to use the page setup trace and possibly the text tools for the side panels. There are

other things that you can do to manipulate the image. You can do a lot of tiling so you don't have to copy and paste you can do a bunch of other tricks and I'll leave that up to you to explore in the future.

All right so here's the page setup. The page setup is actually quite important. Everyone can see that? Sometimes when I share the screen, page setup panel doesn't appear but can everyone see the page setup panel? You can unmute and say yes or do it on the chat.

Attendee: I can.

Attendee 2: Yes.

Fred: Okay all right cool. So you see here, that's the page setup. Now if you're working on photoshop or a drawing program, usually you don't really pay attention much to the page setup until maybe the end or something like that because you're more focused on the actual image itself. If it's for a web, if you're drawing something for a website then it doesn't even matter. You just have to focus on the parameters of the website. But for Silhouette Studio and for the Cameo, the page setup actually is important because you want to get the material to be as close to the size that you're working on because you're going to actually work not just like a virtual image, you're going to work with an actual physical material, be it cardstock or vinyl or whatever it may be. Felt, whatever it may be.

So you want the image, the page size, to be reflective of the size. So if you had an eight by eight piece of card stock, that's what you want to put, eight by eight [Fred writes 8 in the width box and 8 in the height box] and as you can see it changes. You saw now that our working space is now eight by eight. If we were to actually send this to the machine, this would get cut off, so you'd have to adjust it...so the circle here, and then this here [Fred moves the shapes back onto the page]. It would still go, it's not going to give you an error message. It would actually start cutting on the mat, so you'd probably ruin the mat. So that's 8x8. If you were just doing like an office sheet—eight and a half by eleven—you can see that it's eight and a half by eleven. If you prefer working landscape versus portrait you can do that. Change the orientation right here [circles the area with his cursor]. If you buy one of our sheets, our vinyl sheets are a full 12 by 12, so it's 12 by 12.

Attendee 3: How much are the vinyl sheets?

Fred: Vinyl sheets I believe...wow it's been a while. It's the pandemic, I haven't like...it's a good question.

Attendee 3: [laughing] Don't worry about it.

Fred: I think they're a dollar for regular vinyl and a dollar fifty for the sticky vinyl...yes I believe that it is, but don't quote me on that, I gotta re-look all that stuff. I used to know all this stuff on the top of my head, man [laughs].

So yeah, here's my sheet and I'm gonna pretend my thing is ten by eight [types in ten and eight for the page size]. So you want to set your page...now obviously maybe you were working on a piece of paper that has already been cut into a circle or some weird shape, or a hexagon or whatever. Let's just get the closest. Obviously, it doesn't have to be exact, so you know if you

have an oval that's a weird shape that's about 10 inches across, maybe set it comfortably at 11 inches so it's like that. So page size is important.

Cutting mat [points to cutting mat section in page setup], this we don't want you to change because all our cutting mats are 12 by 12. Now if you had your own Cameo machine at home, you bought your own and that you bought your own mats of various different sizes then you could change it here. If you had a 10 by 10 mat or whatever. But we have a 12 by 12 mat, all our mats are 12 by 12. 12 by 12 is the most common mat size because the Cameo can only fit 12 inches. You can find 12 by 24-inch mats that go in lengthwise, but everyone ends up just buying the 12 by 12 mats because why would you buy a 10 by 10 mat right, because you could just use the 12 by 12 mat for 10 by 10 card stock, so it's kind of pointless. So just keep it at 12 by 12.

12 by 24 is next [types it in and shows how the page looks] and you could see that it's just lengthwise, it looks like that. So cutting mats typically are going to either just be 12 by 12 or 12 by 24. They do make smaller ones but people don't buy them, I mean maybe if they're on sale you might buy some for yourself. I'm like what's the point of a small cutting mat when you know you could just do that. All right so just keep that. So you just want to change the page setup. Eight and a half, this is eight by ten. Eight and a half by eleven, eight by eight, eight by ten, whatever it may be. Twelve by twelve. All right, any questions about page setup? It's pretty straightforward, pretty standard.

## Chapter 5: Creating Shapes and Text

Fred: All right, so here are some images and just like with any type of drawing program you can see various things you can do. Once you do the image you can resize it by touching one of these things [Fred grabs the corner of one of the shapes and manipulates the size] you can make it longer, touch by using this, that, by doing that [continues to manipulate shape length and width]...you could even rotate it by hitting this one [clicks on the green circle above the shape to rotate] so you can totally manipulate the image as you see fit. Even the freehand image that you drew yourself, you could manipulate that as well.

Now if you use the tool to make a circle or a square or, I should say an oval or rectangle, it gives you the measurement here [circles the measurement with cursor] so you can see what it would be. So this was 1.6 inches, 2.2, and then you could see here, that's 1.005, 1.1. It'll help you if you're cutting a piece of vinyl and you need some exact specification, like it needs to be exactly one and a half inches wide and an inch tall, then when you design something to be cut, you can use these as guidelines. Same thing for how long, so you can even do that for the text. If you need to edit your text, you can just double click on what you've done and then you can always open up the text side menu and select the different font and size [cycles through several different fonts for the text 'hello'].

Now here's just a tip. If you are deciding on, if you just want to cut a bunch of text out of vinyl or card stock, you just have to remember you want to pick a text that unless you're going really big, this will be cut. The machine is cutting that. So if your font is tiny or it makes the circles very small you're going to have a difficult time when it comes to actually removing your cardstock or your vinyl...[points at part of the 'hello' text that has a very thin and small inner circle for the

letter 'o'] This might be really difficult to remove the 'o' and to carefully remove this little thing, and so that's something to keep in mind when you search for fonts. The more fanciful the font is the more difficult time you will have to actually physically unstick or remove the actual material once you're done cutting it, it goes through the machine. Not saying that you shouldn't do it or you can't do it, but it's something to keep in mind. So if you have fancy calligraphy that will be much more painstaking to remove than like a simple black font. But it might be worth it for you. So any questions so far?

## Chapter 6: Cutting Images, Trace

All right, so one thing that people want to use Silhouette Studio software for and the Cameo, is, not that they draw their own circles and squares, they want to be able to use an image that they have or that they found and convert it and make it into something that they can then use to make a design that can be cut. So if that's the case, and that's usually the case, that's when we use this trace function. So let's open up...you can see me open up a thing so we open it up [Fred opens the Downloads folder and chooses an image] and then I have these flowers set.

So the first thing I'm going to open up is this flower, this fanciful flower. Now it looks cool and it's a cool design, but when we do the tracing you can see that it might present some problems. Actual physical, practical problems when it actually goes through the machine, and you try to actually use it as something to be pulled from the cardstock [the image is a complicated floral pattern]. And also notice that it's black, versus this red [quickly draws a circle to show the red line]. So if I were to save this file and send it to the Silhouette Cameo only the circle will cut because it only cuts things that are red. Anything black won't be cut so this is just nothing. It will not be cut or will not be made when it goes through the actual Cameo machine. If you send it to the printer like if it's just printed on a piece of paper then of course this will actually print out. This will print out too [circles the red circle].

What we will do, we will try and—I'll just make it a little smaller [makes the floral pattern smaller], zoom [zooms in]—all right we will now use the trace setup. We select the trace area which is here [highlights the floral pattern] for the flower and I'm just going to solid fill, and then do the first trace [clicks on Trace in the Trace panel, and moves the original image out of the way to show a red outline of the floral pattern] and now you can see that this got traced. Then if you're done with it, you can just set it aside or even delete it. It won't affect your actual cut but now you can see this.

Now once you've traced it, you can still alter the image. So you can make it bigger or smaller after you trace it if you forget to do that before you trace it. You can do it afterwards. You can see here and so it's traced. Now every time you see here [points his cursor at every red line] it's gonna be cut. It's gonna try cutting it on the machine so something this small like that it might not actually cut successfully, like these tiny circles. This [points at small dots] will completely be lost. This is not salvageable if it cuts through the cardstock or the vinyl. Now this will cut, the circle will cut, but remember you don't want to lose it so you peel the circle and these will be cut. Each of these will individual petals will be its own piece, so you just have to remember that when you remove it and you're gonna glue it somewhere else. So in my opinion, in my case, I would not use this image. I would not use this as a design. It would just be too painstaking to

actually do. I'm not saying that you can't, you could always experiment and try it yourself, but it's not something that would be worth the effort for me.

Now if there is some complex image that you absolutely love and you're willing to give it a try and just painstakingly remove the individual materials after the fact then of course go ahead and do it but it's not something I would do. And you should start practicing on cardstock and not some expensive glittery gold piece of gold-layered foil vinyl or something like that. I would never do it on that especially as a beginner so that's that. I deleted it. But there's other options. We just did this basic trace but if we only wanted the outer edge you choose trace [clicks on trace outer edge and shows that red cut line image] and it just tries to trace the outer edge. It doesn't do the middle things but this is all part of the outer edge, so that's why that looks like that. I don't like this, don't save [Fred clicks don't save and closes the file, then opens a new document for a new image. Cycles through a few flower images and picks a simpler one].

Ah now this is an image I can work with because it's a lot simpler. It's more of a silhouette, which is why it's called Silhouette Studios and the Silhouette Cameo.

Attendee: I have a quick question, can you just repeat, sorry if you've mentioned it, but where are you getting that flower image from? Just off of a google image search?

Fred: Yeah exactly it's just, these are just random things I found, exactly.

Attender: Okay. Got it. Okay.

Fred: In case you were thinking of 'oh you know what I don't want to draw something I want to find something, an art that I either have, or I found' that you could then use the trace bitmap to make into an image that the Silhouette machine can then use. So these are just random things that I found but you can do your own of course.

But just letting you guys know if you actually do use things like random stuff that you find off the internet through your google image search and stuff like that, technically you may not actually have permission to use those. It's a little caveat. Especially if you're going to be making designs that you're gonna sell on Etsy or something like that, that's the definite probably a no-no. But for the purposes of us and you know—I'm not gonna bust you guys if you were to do that—but just letting you know.

All right, I'll use the trace area [selects Trace Area, highlights the image and hits Trace], so there you go. This makes for a much cleaner trace and it will be a lot easier to work with, but keep in mind each of these pieces are going to be its own individual piece, so you got to save these and you got to glue them separately. That's why you use contact taping like...this circle will be cut out, this other circle, these little moon shapes are gonna be cut out, and then this final outer edge will be cut out and then you would have to assemble them yourself, that's what will cut. If you only want the outer edge, you have that option too [traces the outer edge]. There's outer edge.

All right, as you can see here now this only the outer edge. So this is just one solid piece and an actual true silhouette. And as with everything you can always edit it after the fact if you forget to. All right I've tried figuring out this Trace and Detach, I've used it many times. Let me do

that...[Fred selects the flower icon and clicks on Trace and Detach], but it [...] just edits the actual image itself, it doesn't make an actual cuttable image or a cuttable design [the traced line is not red, so is not a cuttable line].

So as you can see here these two things just trace and detach [moves the original icon off of the traced image], I just remove this from there. Neither this or this is actually going to cut, it will not be something that will once you send it to the Cameo. It will not be a cuttable thing. All right, any questions?

## Chapter 7: Saving and Sending Files to the Silhouette Cameo

Okay so now we see at the top these tabs here; Design, Store, Library, Send...pretty much we're gonna be only using the design tab here. The blue and the Send tab, you don't really need to go through the store and library. [Fred opens a browser tab for the Silhouette Store.] Store, obviously, if you want to make an account with the Silhouette company and sign in and then you can visit the store to download designs and things that are ready-made for your Silhouette Cameo so that it can just be cut right away. So that's what the store is.

[Fred goes back to the Silhouette Studios and clicks on 'Library' which opens Silhouette Cloud.] Library is where you store and find designs that you made, and maybe other people have made and shared with you online on the cloud, so it's like a cloud storage type of a thing. You have to make an account, but for our purposes we're going to stay in Design and then we're going to send in the Send.

Send is what you would use if you have your laptop or a desktop connected to an actual Silhouette Cameo machine. And then you press the send button and then it will cut your design from the machine that you have connected to your computer. Now you don't have to bring a laptop or connect the machine to the Silhouette Cameo, you can actually save this design. I'll save it here as a Silhouette Studio v3 file, "Flower 2", and you save that.

You can actually put that on a flash drive and bring it to the library or bring it to someone who has a Silhouette Cameo and the Silhouette Cameo is able to read the flash drive and cut your design from that so you don't actually need the Silhouette Studio software and you don't actually need a laptop or a desktop. You just need the design saved onto a flash drive and then you can bring the flash drive, and the flash drive can be inserted into the Cameo machine itself. So that's always an option, or of course you can connect your laptop directly to the Silhouette Cameo machine via USB and then hit the send button. I don't have the machine with me so nothing is connected so I can't actually hit send, but you can see that that's what is there.

Now, here's an important point. If you have this Silhouette Cameo 1 or 2 you'd have to manually change the size of the razor blade and this is where you get the information. So even if you don't have the Silhouette Cameo actual machine and you just have the software and you're using the the library's machine you would still go to the Send section, the Send blue tab to find out the settings. So for instance, vinyl, matte vinyl, we know that the cut setting is one, so we know that we need to change the razor setting to one, and if we were to choose card

stock...look here the razor setting is at three. All right, and if we were to choose something else, vellum, razor setting is at one and...fabric laser setting is that the razor setting is at three. So it is important that even if you don't have the machine and you're using your library machine that you go to the send tab to find out what the settings should be. So typically it's going to be one for vinyl and three for card stock and those are the two things that we sell at the library. Those are two most common materials, but just in case you are trying to do fabric or something else, that's where you would do that. Let's say you're at the send and you forgot to do something in your design, you can always go back to the design tab and then finish your edit or edit what you've been working on. I know that it might sound simple but some people get kind of worried they hit the send tab and they think that it's done and they're like 'oh my gosh I forgot to add something', no it's perfectly cool you can just go back to the design tab and add it there.

## Chapter 8: Questions

All right we're coming up on the end, it's Q & A, so we're pretty much done with the basics of Silhouette Studio, so do you guys have any questions?

Attendee: Can you cut chipboard with this?

Fred: If it's thin enough. If it's too thick, past like a certain amount of millimeters—I think two millimeters— it will not cut. I don't know if there's an actual setting for chipboard. [Fred searches in the send tab] Yeah, chipboard here, so then you can see the razor blade is at five for chipboard but that's for like thin chipboard. If you have a really thick piece of like cardboard type of a deal then it won't, it just won't work.

Attendee: So more like a cereal box thickness might work on that?

Fred: Hit and miss...it's supposed to work and they claim it works but when we've tried it, it doesn't really work that good. When it gets to be like pretty thick like that. Now you can always maybe, here's a cool thing, we just have the standard blades, the razor blades, for our Cameo but they do sell specialized blades. So you can get a fabric blade for fabric or there could be like a sharp special blade for chipboards and things like that so you are free to bring your own blade and use it on our cameo machines, just remember to take it back home, so that's always an option. We only have the standard blades and the standard blades cut most things and typically vinyl, cardstock, various other things, but if you are working exclusively with fabrics you probably will want to buy a fabric blade, or if you are doing like chipboards you probably want to buy a blade, a sharp blade, specifically designed for thicker materials and chipboards and things like that so that's always an option. Any other questions?

Attendee 2: I have a question and maybe I should not bring up the leading competitor which is Cricut but I was just wondering how a Silhouette compares to a Cricut? If you have any knowledge of Cricut?

Fred: I don't really have that much knowledge. It's similar and I don't care if you bring it up. We're not Cricut salesmans or Silhouette salesman. We just happen to have the Silhouette at

our library. Some libraries have the Cricut and some libraries have both. I'm not super familiar with it. I can't say one is better than the other. I do hear that the Silhouette software is better but that the Cricut is easier to use, but I haven't tested it for myself or done my own research. That's just what other people have told me so I can't really tell you that but if you find a good deal on a Cricut might as well get that if you find a good deal on a Silhouette Cameo then you can get that instead so it's not like a strong recommendation of one versus the other so I'm not a Silhouette salesman or a Cricut salesman, just a librarian and I know some libraries have both though. So any other questions?

Attendee 3: I have a comment. I actually have a Cricut and they seem very similar just from this little demonstration. I was just hoping to get some more ideas on how to design so this is very helpful.

Fred: Yeah, in terms of the cutting and things like that it's there. They're the two leading brands and stuff like that. I know initially Cricut...they marketed Cricut more for consumers and they marketed the Silhouette Cameo for more serious hobbyists and small businesses, but these days they market it to both. They have professional Cricut and then the Cameo they're like 'oh you can buy it for your home!' so...but at first the market was different but now they both market to both segments so that's not even a differentiator anymore. It's a good question and it gets me curious maybe I'm gonna experiment and just see what the Cricut software is like and if it's actually easier to use, which is what I hear but I don't know if that's true. All right, any other questions or comments?

All right if there isn't then, if you want to be certified to use the Silhouette Cameo—and we make certification things for the sewing machine, the cameo, the embroidery machine, things like that, back in the before times before the pandemic—but we can still certify you since you took this class so, you can send me an email. Send me an email with your valid registered library card and I will put the certification note, so back when we open again, then you will be able to check out and use our Silhouette Cameo machines because you're certified. Now if you forget or you don't do that, you can always try to get certified again and do it that way otherwise, you this is one of the benefits. You can feel free to email me and I will make that note and certify you. I mean you don't have to if you just did this for fun or you might have already got the certification but there it is everyone got to see my email address there?

Attendee: Yes.

Fred: All right, so feel free to email me and you can get your certification. All right, any other final questions either on that or certification or anything else?

Attendees: Thank you Fred, I appreciate it. I learned a lot.

Fred: Sure you're welcome, all right.

[Video closes with a "Thank you for watching" end card.]