EZ-Animator User Guide

v0.9.8.5

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1. Getting Started

EZ-Animator is a simple yet intuitive tool designed for animation enthusiasts of all ages. Whether you're crafting mesmerizing animations from scratch or fine-tuning existing sprite sheets, images, or animations, EZ-Animator simplifies the process without compromising on creative control.

EZ-Animator is meant to work in tandem with your favorite image editor as it is aimed at animation layering and compilation.

EZ-Animator workflow:

i. Arrange layers as desired;
ii. Import images and sprite sheets into the layers
iii. Perform light touchups or modifications as needed
iv. Export to desired format

System Requirements

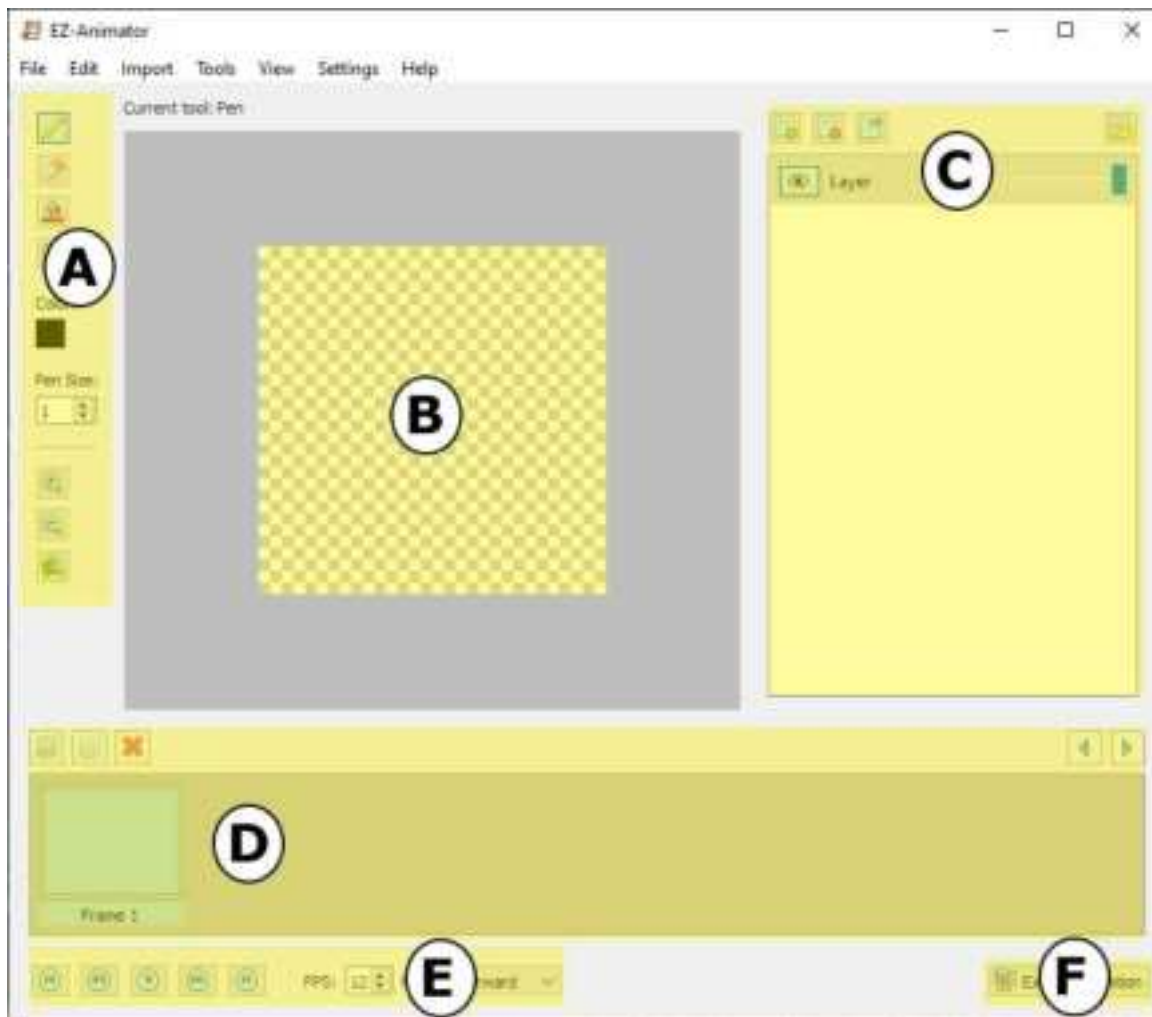- Operating System: Windows 10
- RAM: 8gb

First Launch

Upon launching EZ-Animator for the first time, a new project will automatically be created with default settings.
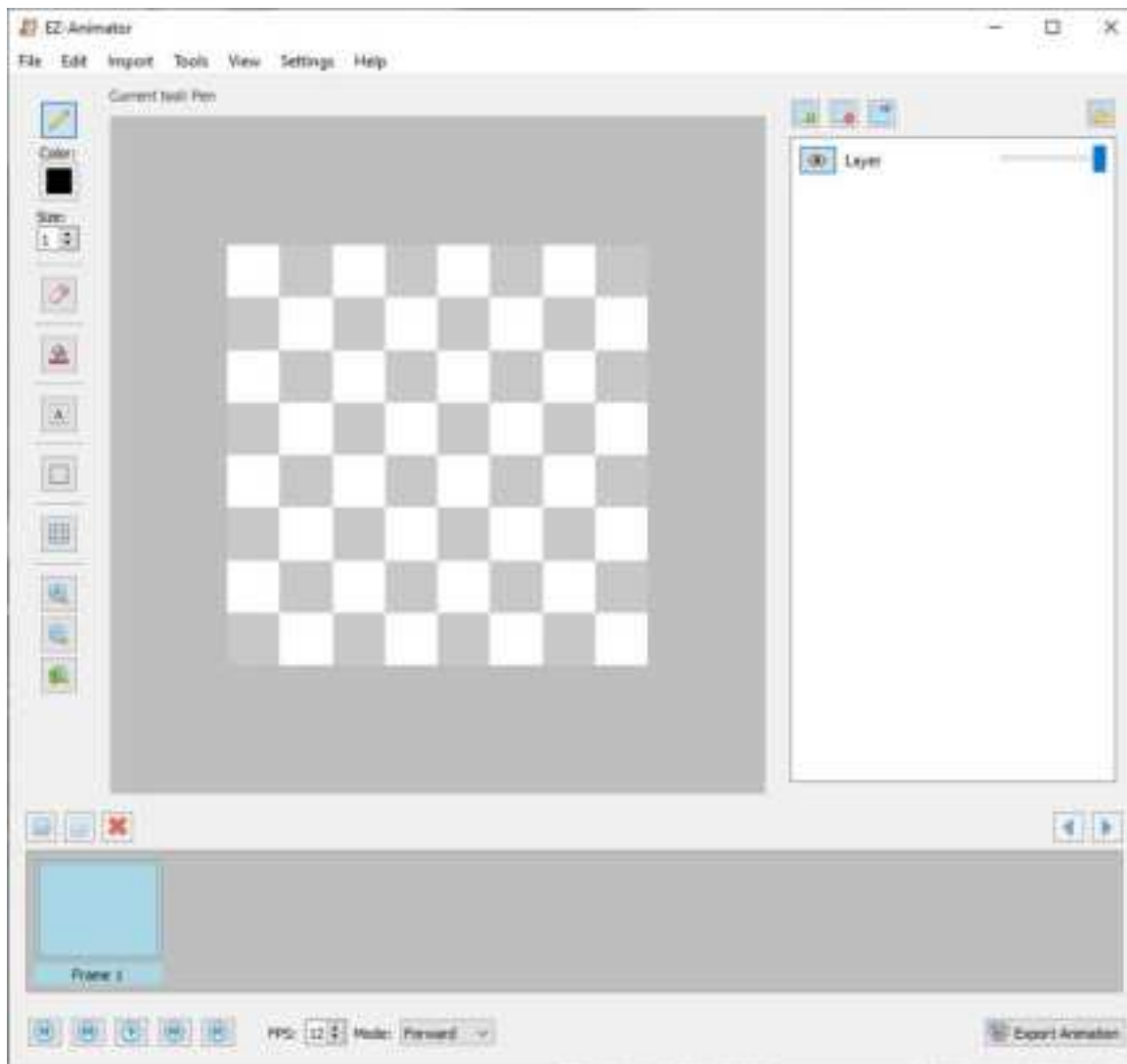
2. Interface Overview

The EZ-Animator interface consists of several key areas:

- A - Tool Panel
- B - Canvas
- C - Layer Panel
- D - Timeline
- E - Playback controls
- F - Export

3. Tools & Options

Drawing Tools:

- Pen/Pencil (Ctrl+Alt+B): Used for freehand drawing.
  - Adjust Color
  - Adjust pen size
- Eraser (Ctrl+Alt+E): Erases parts of the image.
  - Adjust size
- Fill (Ctrl+Alt+F): Fills contiguous areas with the selected color.
  - Adjust Color
- Select (Ctrl+Alt+S): Selects and manipulates drawn areas.
  - Can be dragged
  - Can be moved using (Ctrl+Arrow key)
- Text (Ctrl+Alt+T): Insert text.
  - Click a drag to place
  - Double click a text on a layer to modify it
- Grid toggle: Turn grid on or off, customize the grid in the canvas settings menu.
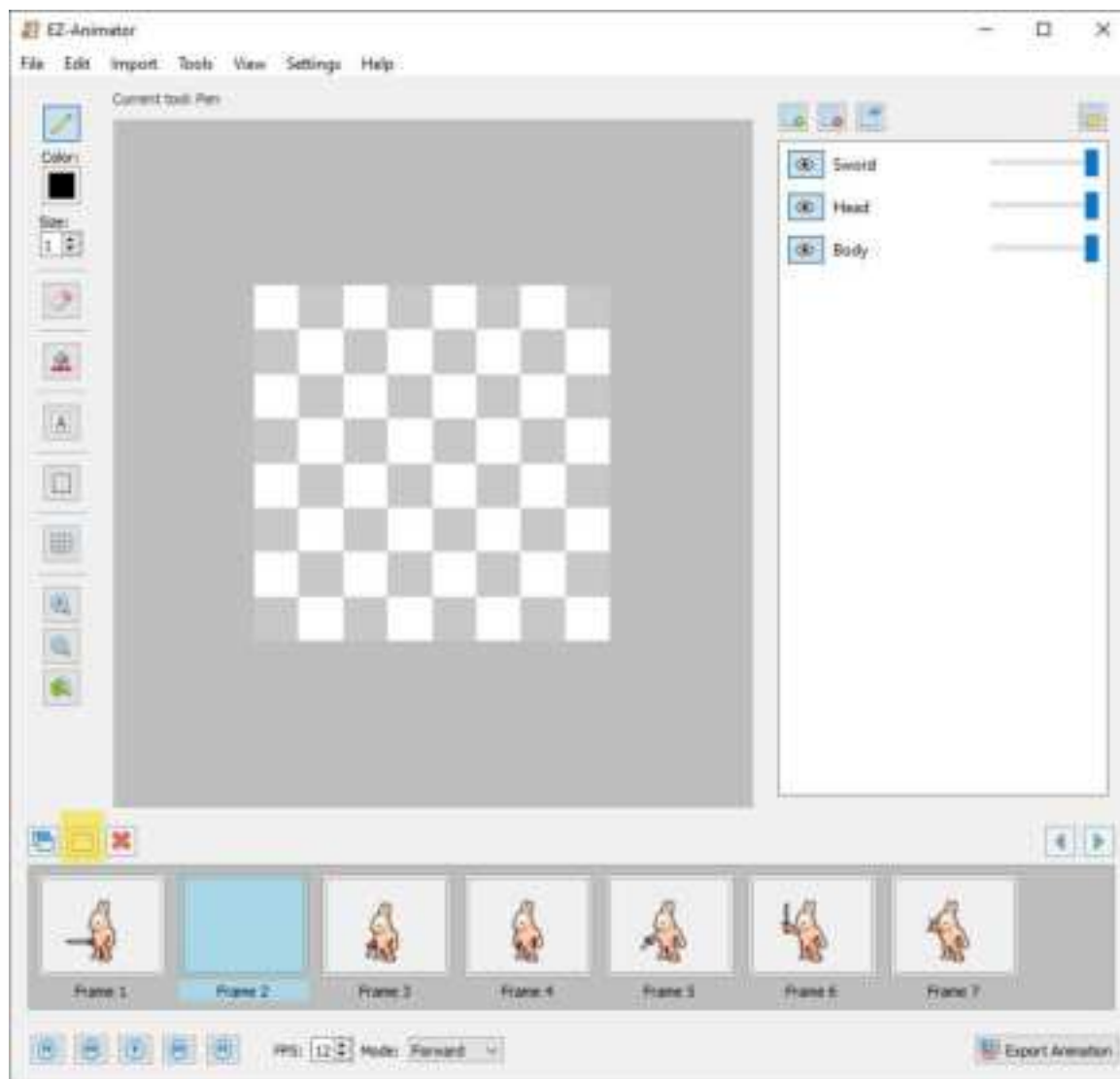 - Customize grid cell size

◦ Customize grid color

View Options:

- Zoom In (Ctrl++)
- Zoom Out (Ctrl+-)
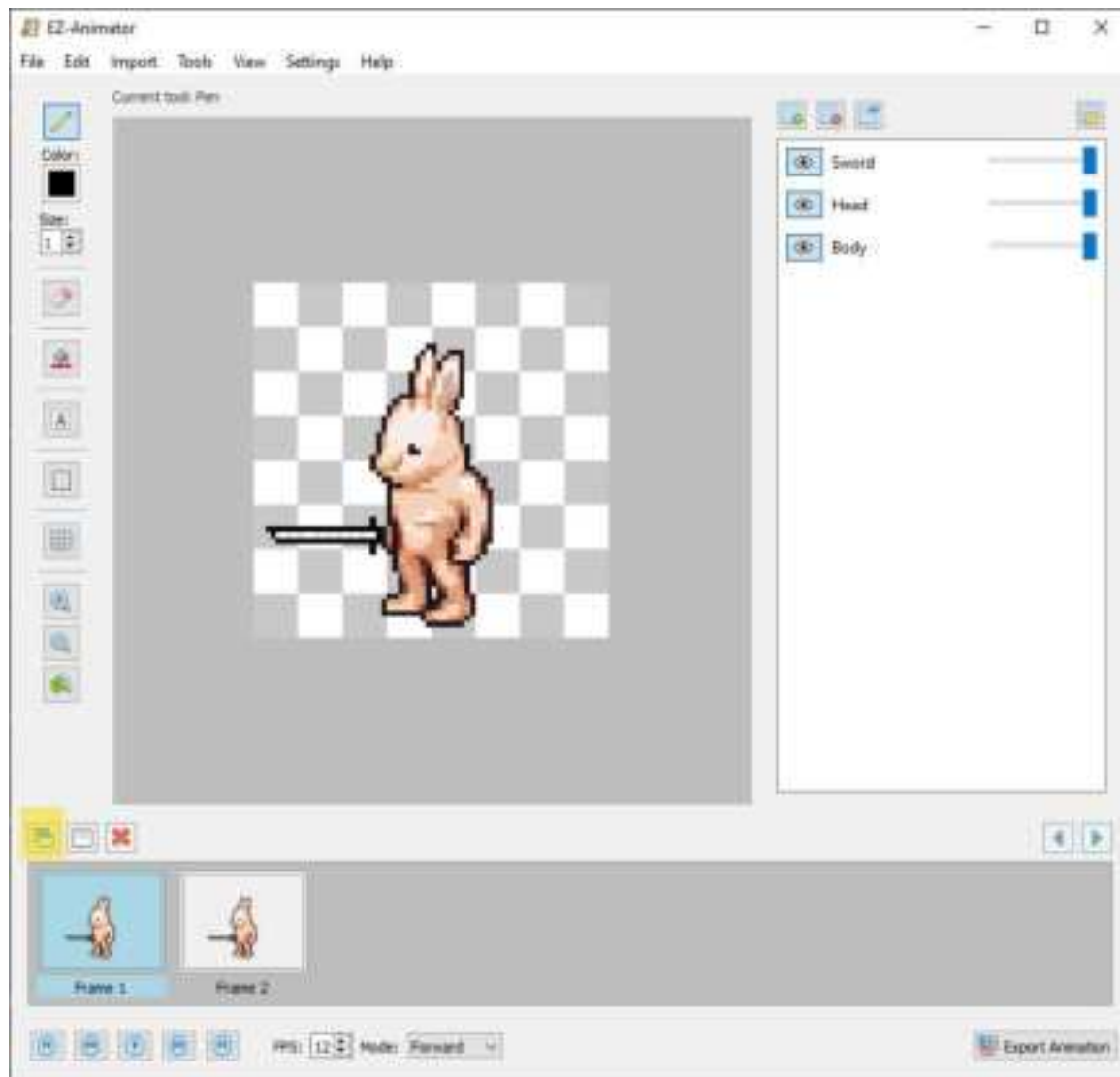- Reset Zoom (Ctrl+0)

4. Working with Frames
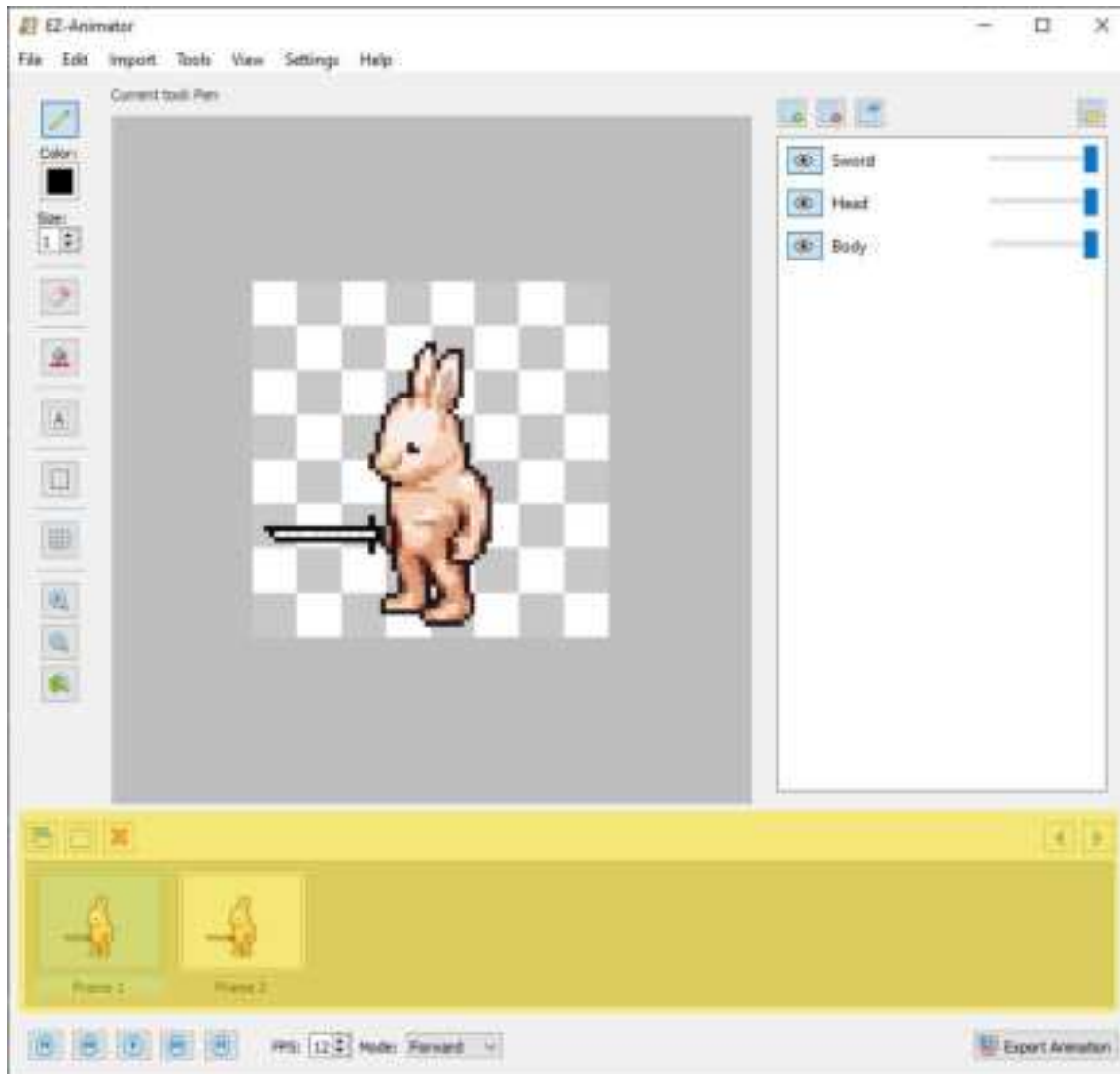
Frame Operations:

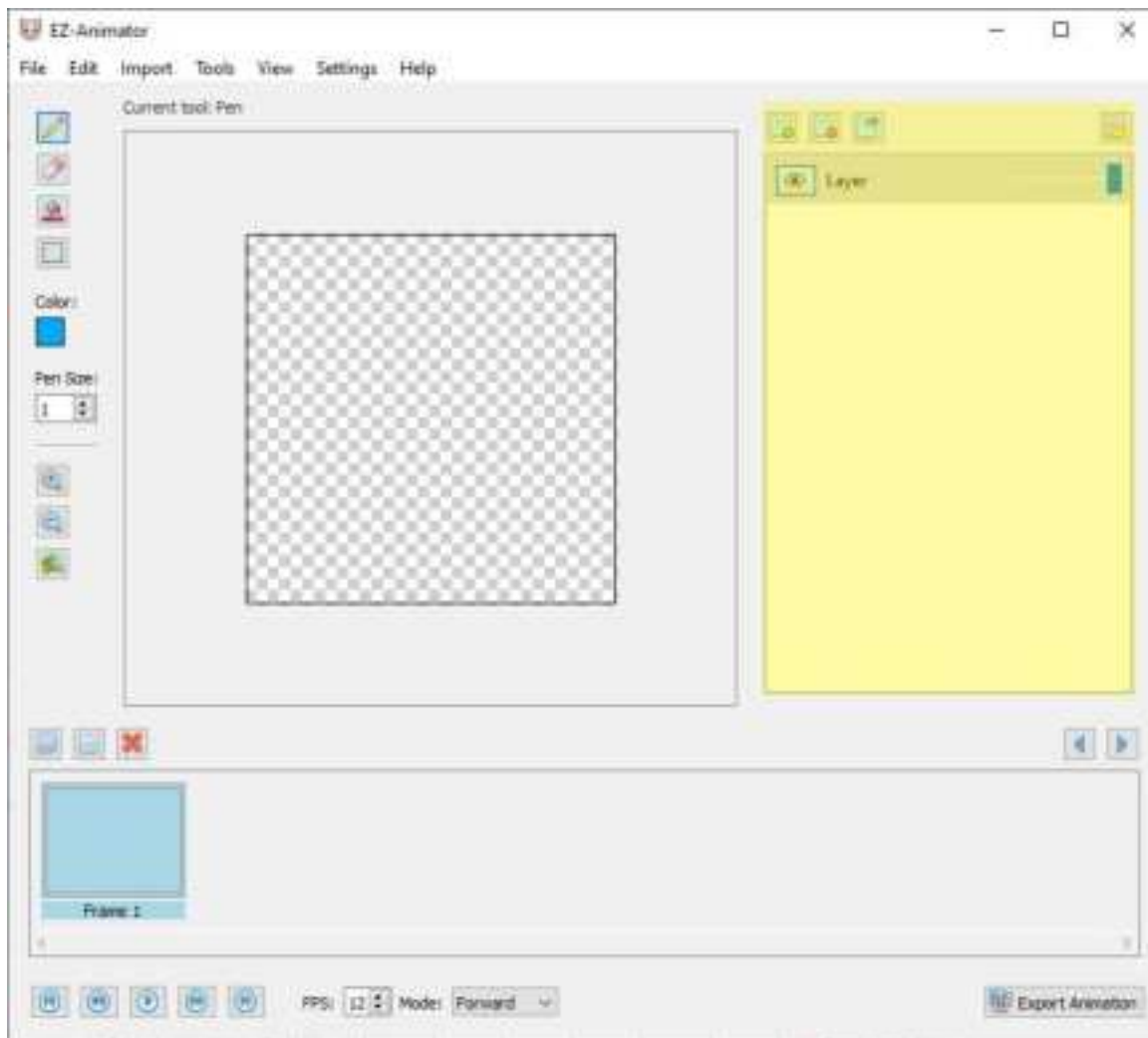- Add Blank Frame: Create a blank frame for the animation after the selected frame.

- Clone Frame: Duplicate the selected frame.

- Delete Frame: Remove the selected frame.
- Navigate Frames: Move between existing frames quickly.

5. Layer Management

Layer Features:

- Add/Remove Layers: Add or delete layers as needed.
  - New layers are added to the top of the layer list
- Extend Layer: Extends the selected layer content into the next frame if one exists or creates a new frame and clones the layer.
- Adjust Opacity: Modify the opacity of individual layers. Layer opacity is exported in the file output.
- Show/Hide Layers: Control the visibility of layers. Layer visibility is not exported in the file output.
- Rename Layers: Keep layers organized with custom names by double clicking the layer in the list.
- Reorder Layers: Change the stacking order of layers by dragging.
  - The higher a layer in the list, the more in the foregorund it is.
  - The lower a layer in the list, the more in the background it is.

6. Animation Playback
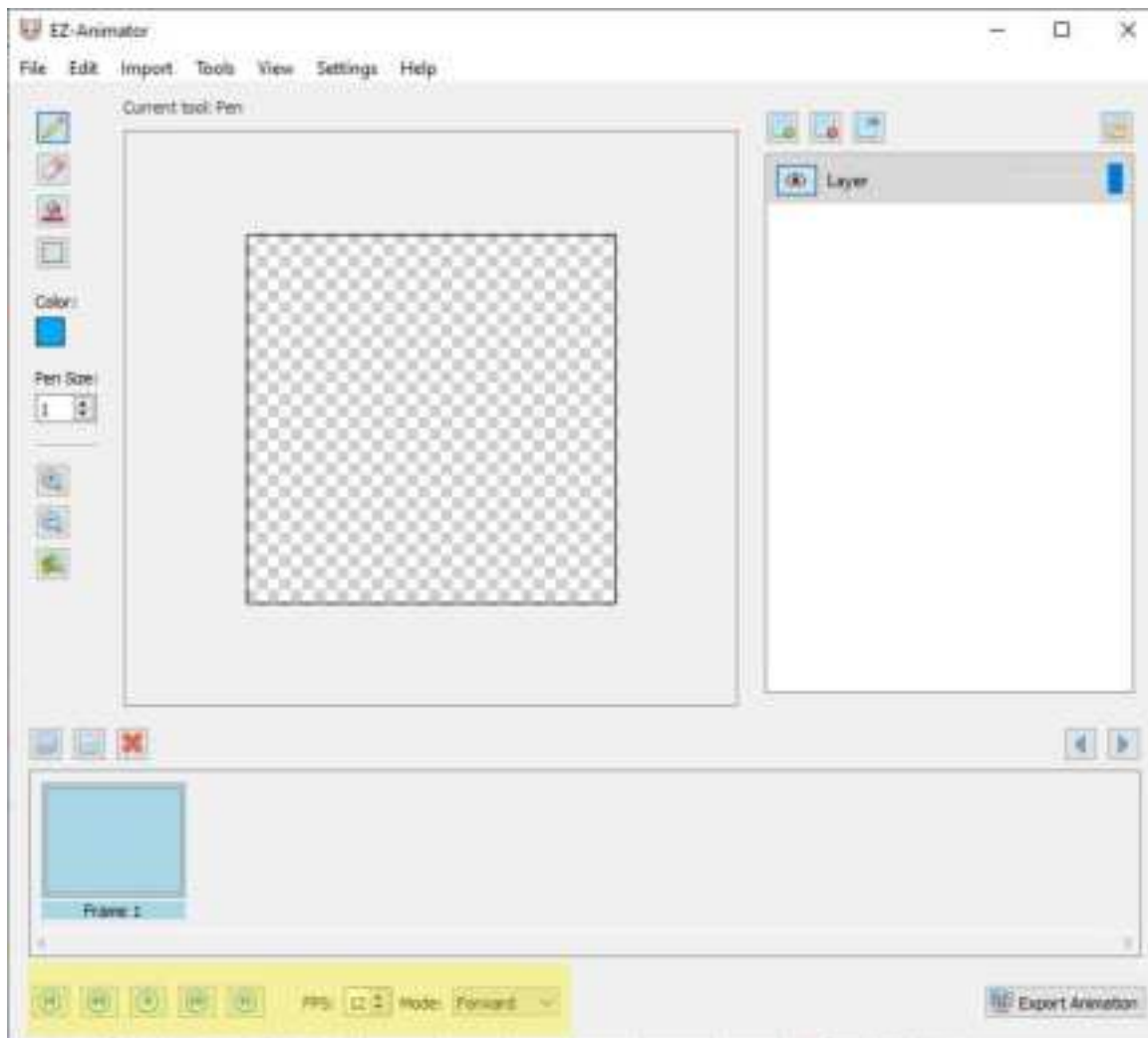
Animation Controls:

- Play/Pause Animation: Start or stop the animation playback.
- Playback Speed: Control the animations' frames per second (FPS).
- Playback Mode: Preview the animation.
- Frame Navigation: Quickly jump to the start or end of your animation.

7. File Operations

Project Management:

- New Project (Ctrl+N): Create a new project.
- Open Project (Ctrl+O): Open an existing project.
- Save Project (Ctrl+S): Save current project.
- Save As (Ctrl+Shift+S): Save a copy of the project with a new name.
- Export Animation (Ctrl+I): Export your animation to various formats.

Supported File Formats:

- Project Files: .eza (EZ-Animator Project)
- Import Formats: PNG, GIF, JPG, JPEG, WEBP, BMP
- Export Formats: PNG, GIF, WEBP, MP4

8. Settings & Preferences
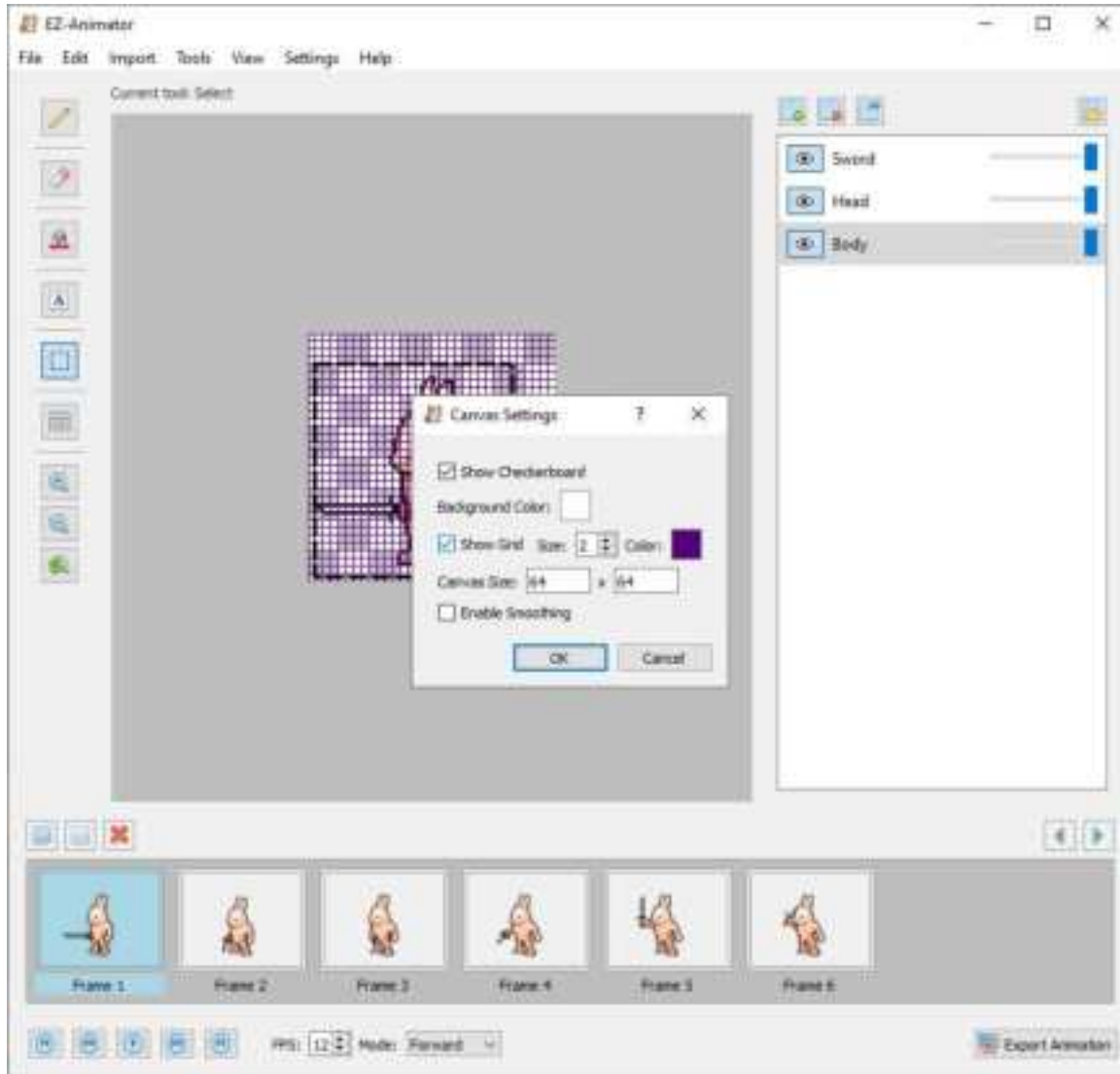
Canvas Settings:

- Canvas dimensions: Width and height of the editable canvas.
- Grid properties and color: Adjust grid visibility, size, and color.
- Background color: Adjust the canvas color as desired; this is cosmetic and does not impact exported content.
- Enable or disable smoothing: Turn smoothing on or off.

9. Tips

Use layers to your advantage by placing individual animation components into separate layers. This allows for better fine-tune control for customizing your project.

Import to Layer

Importing a static image to a layer will offer to shrink or crop the imported image.

Importing a sprite sheet to a layer will allow you to configure dimensions of the imported content such as the specific starting rows and columns and ending rows and columns as well as any padding.
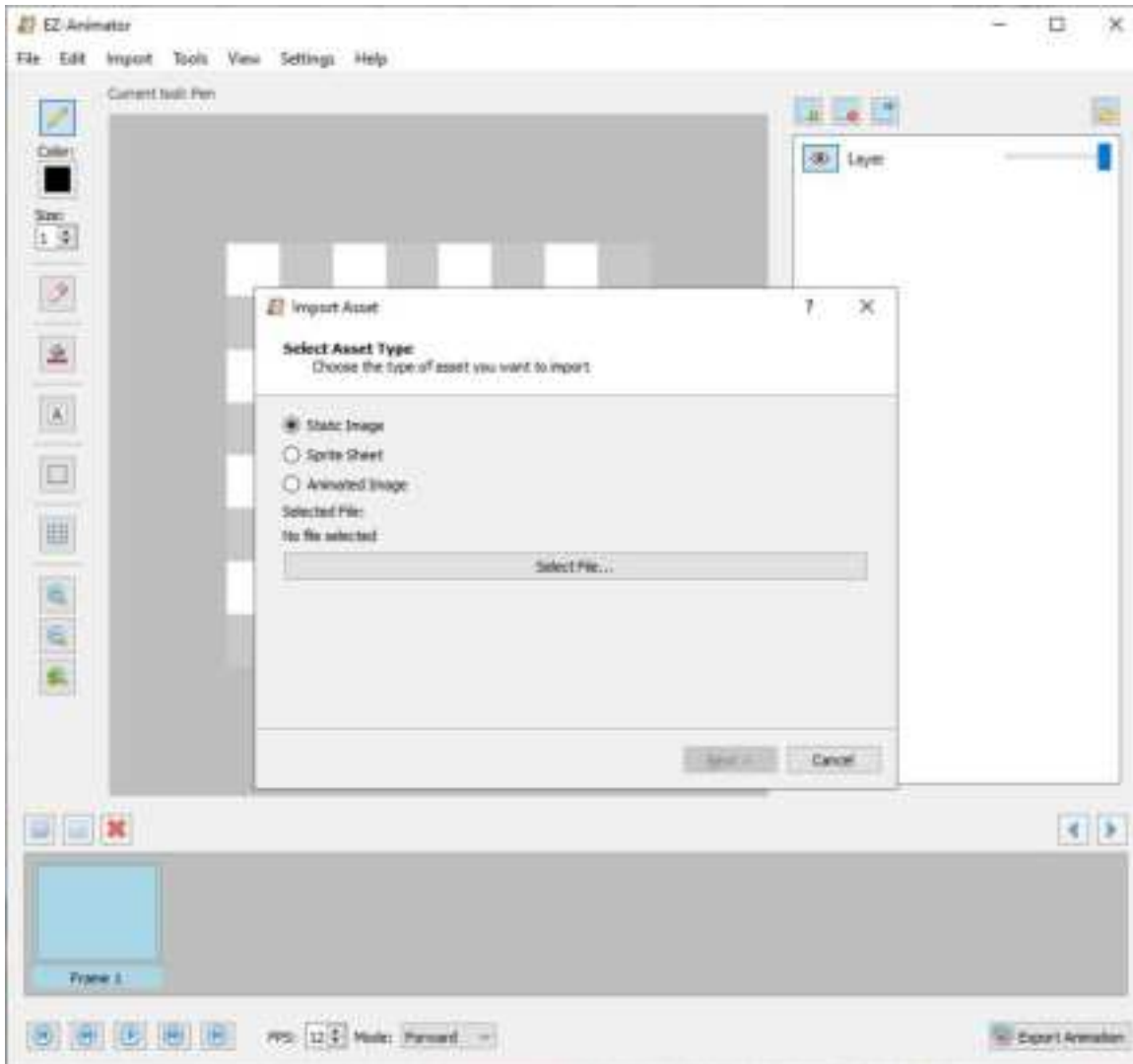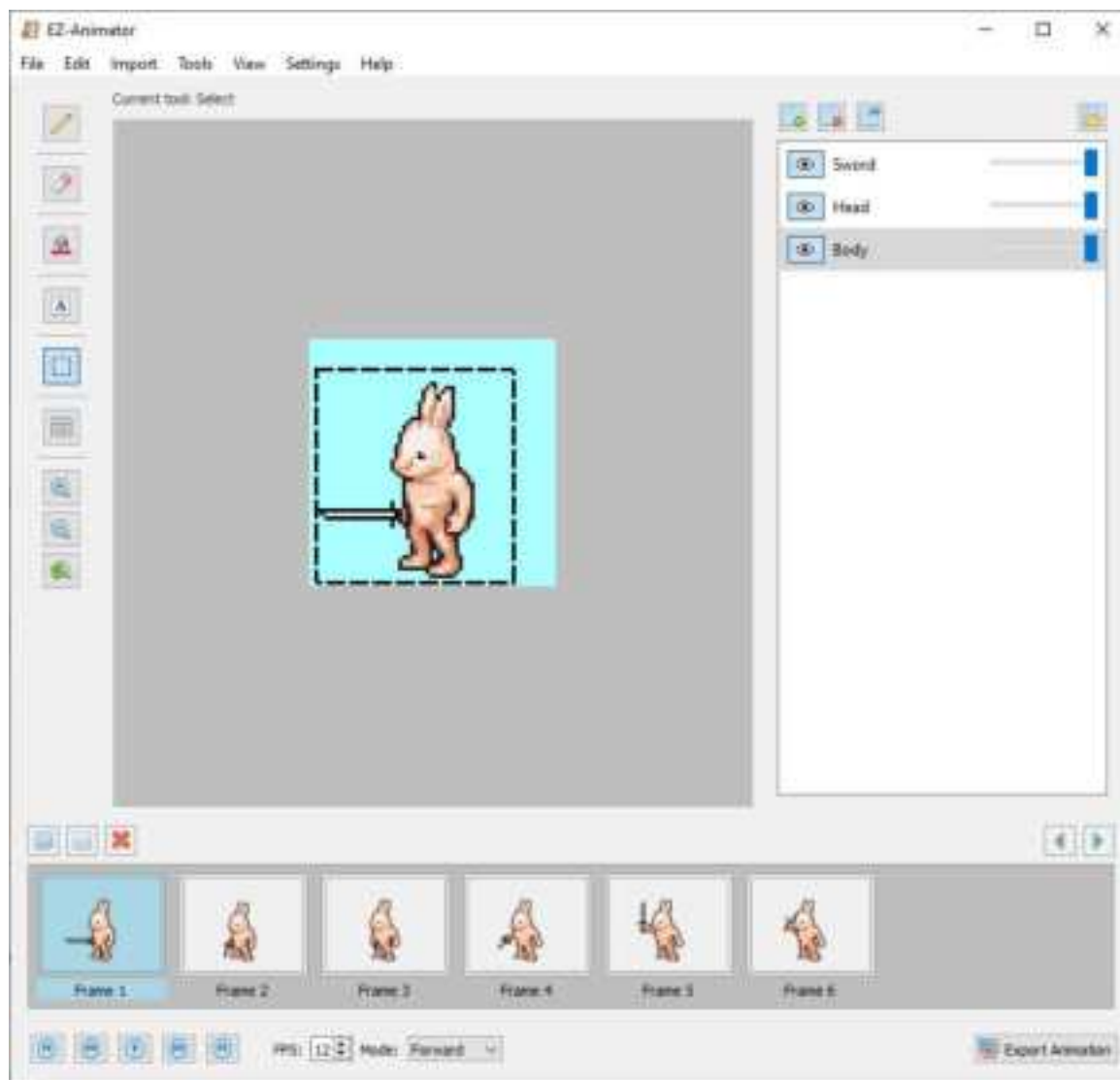

Moving a Selection

Using the selector tool, layer content can be moved by:

- dragging it by using the mouse
- or by pressing (CTRL+Arrow key). For example pressing CTRL+(the UP arrow key) would shift the selection up 1 pixel.

This allows for precise pixel placement of selections.

Color Palette Management

In the color window, custom colors can be saved for reuse by selecting a custom color box, choosing a color, and then clicking "Add to Custom Colors."
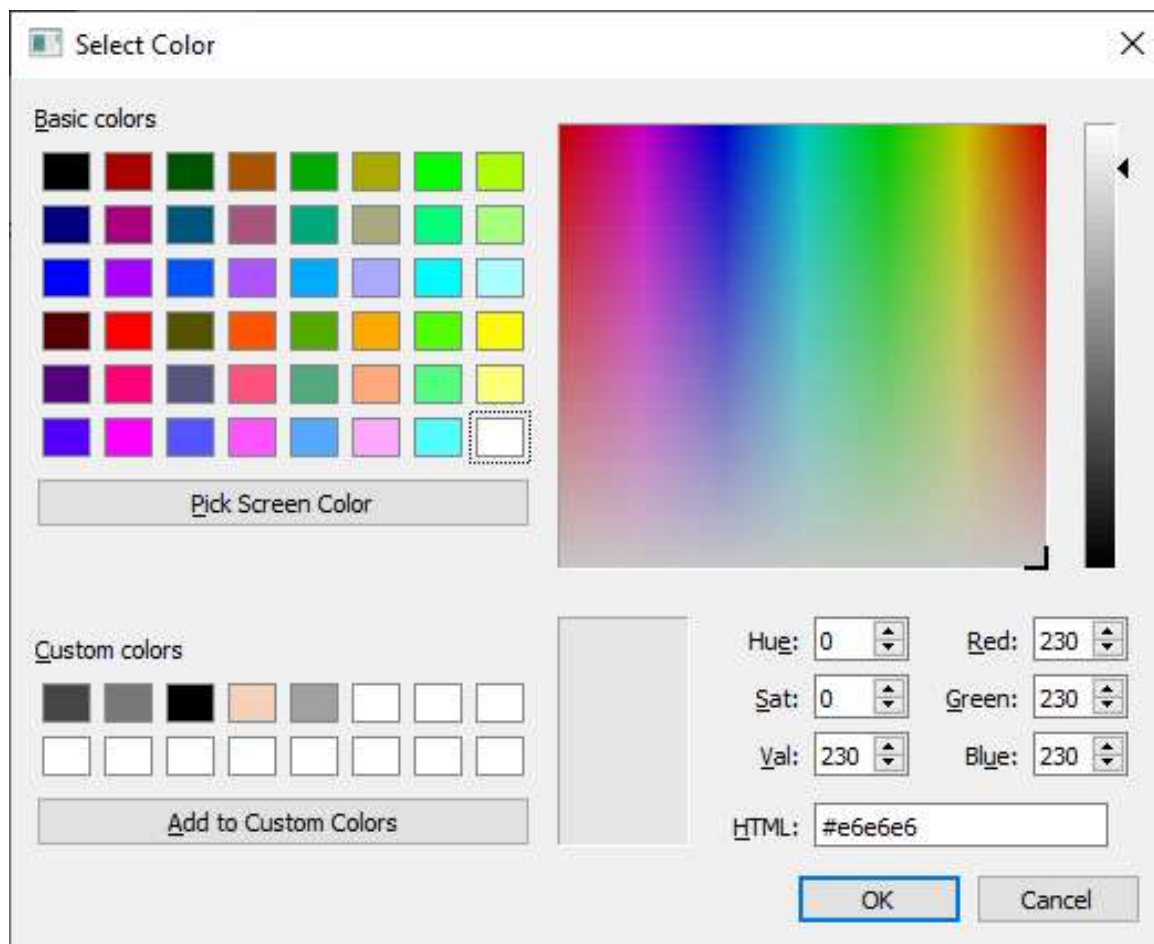
By following this guide, you should be well-equipped to start creating amazing animations with EZ-Animator. Happy animating!