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45
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ON THE CD

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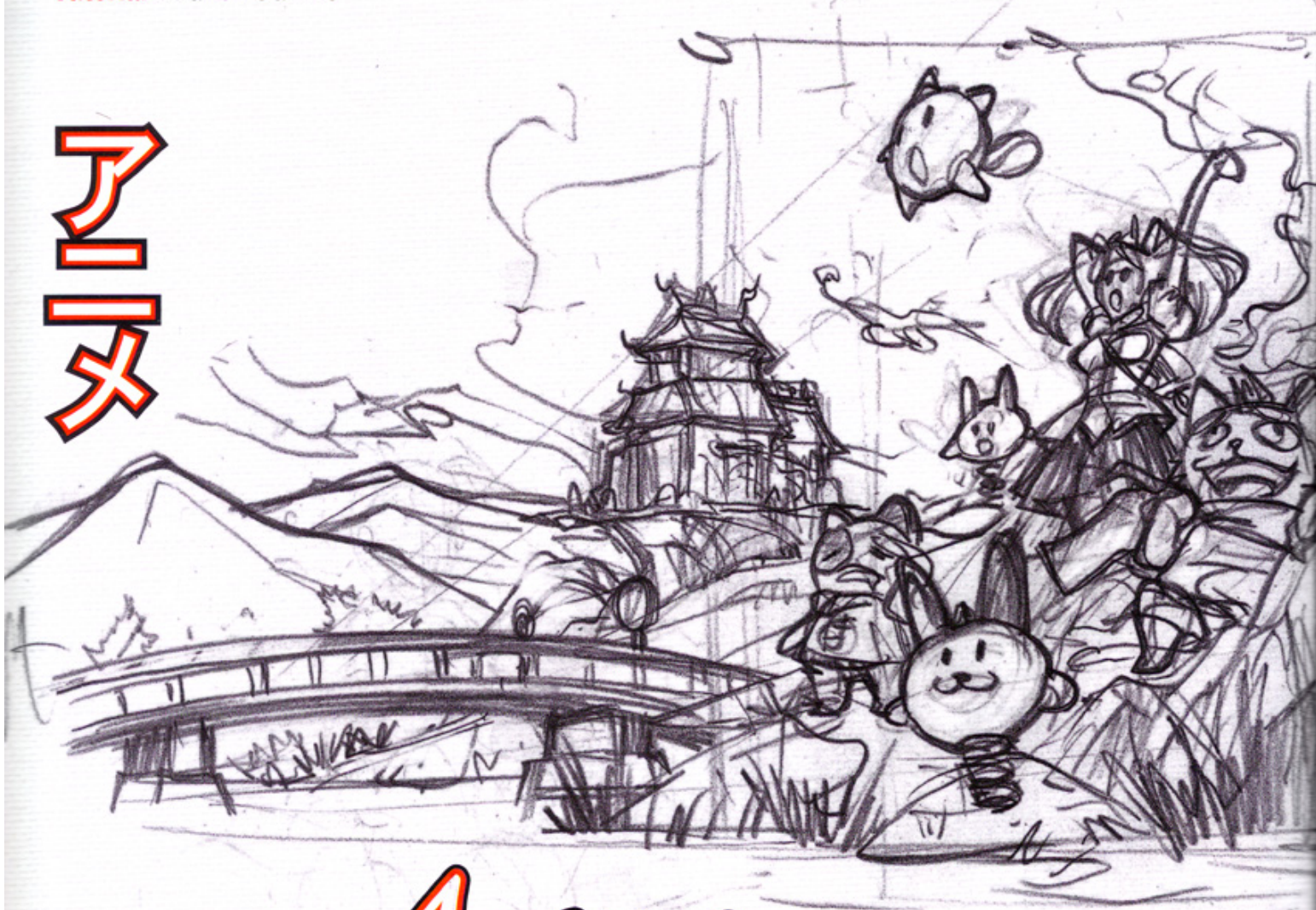- 20 Photos
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アニメ

Paint like: Anime

The Japanese art of anime dates back to the early 20th Century and has gained in popularity East and West ever since, thanks to cartoons for both kids and grown-ups. Here's how it's done

Tutorial info

Artist
Reinaldo Quintero

Time needed
10 hours

Skill level
Intermediate

On the CD
Start file

A nime is the name given to Japanese animations that were started in the early Fifties with the purpose of producing weekly animated series, all having a similar style.

From the beginning anime took off, and it evolved as a unique style led by the famous Tezuka Osamu, who was responsible for animated series such as *Astroboy* and *Black Jack*. Osamu developed techniques that helped greatly in the mass production of anime. As time passed, a new generation of artists started to get involved. With the introduction of computer-generated images the quality of the anime was boosted greatly, adding more colour, lighting effects, 3D backgrounds, and recently the use of textures, increasing the speed of the production process.

Anime has its roots in manga, which is the equal of comics as we know them in the West. Basically, manga is printed in black and white, and it's done by a single author who hires assistants to complete and help with the production. In Japan,

manga is usually serialised in telephone book-size manga magazines, compiling works and stories from different artists. The relationship between manga and anime is strong, as many if not all the anime series are based on popular and successful manga stories.

The anime style has evolved so much that it has some unique characteristics recognisable at first sight: characters have sharp faces, small noses and mouths, and large colourful eyes. The hair is stylised and shaped. The colours, although sometimes unrealistic, tend to match the character's personality. Cute or 'kawaii' animals are also typically found in anime series. Many of these make cute sounds or speak like humans. Some of the most famous creatures in Japan are anime creations Totoro and Pikachu.

The backgrounds are quite elaborate and full of detail, which contrasts with the smoother, simpler characters and other animated objects. This serves as a link between our reality and the world of fantasy that the anime represents.

Go anime!

Get started with this style of Japanese animation

Create your own style

Do your own research into the artists you like most. Look at the key features that define their style, study how they draw and paint the eyes, nose, mouth and hair, and even facial expressions. Don't rush things, as this might lead to frustration. Take time to practise and improve, ask for feedback as much as possible and be ready to receive criticism.

01 **Character and background design** To initiate the illustration, a couple of sketches were drawn showing what the character should look like. We want to portray a colourful character full of energy and movement – a mix of the typical Japanese schoolgirl and a gothic 'loli-girl' clothing style, as well as her cute companions who travel with her through this world of fantasy.

02 **The drawing** Once the main idea is clear, the drawing phase starts. We like to draw this step using traditional media only – a 4B pencil and a B5 size sheet are enough to get the job done. After adding all the details, scan the drawing in at 300dpi in two parts, then assemble it in Painter. Adjust the brightness and contrast until it's good enough for you to trace above it.

03 **The line art** Place the scanned drawing as the background layer, lowering Opacity to 30%, then add a new layer above it, where the clean line art is done using pencils. We used Cover Pencil at 70% Opacity, because it offers clean and sharp line strokes.

04 **Painter tools** Before painting, create a custom palette to store your brushes for easy access by grabbing the icons from the Brush category and dropping them into the work area. We used: Oils: Smeary Round; Pencils: Cover Pencil; Blenders: Just Add Water and Grainy Blender 30; Airbrushes: Soft Airbrush 50; FX: Glow; Erasers: Tapered Eraser and Eraser.
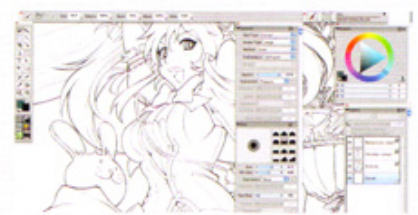
05 **Setting your brushes** Specifically for this illustration, we altered the Oil Brush Smeary Round default settings. Change the Dab Type from Camel Hair to Circular, then in the Size tab select the Watercolor Profile and change Expression from Pressure to None. Save this new variant brush by clicking the fly-out menu in the Brush category, remembering to change the name. In this case it was saved under the name 'Special Smeary Round'.

Anime versus manga

Spot the difference

In general, most people assume that manga and anime are the same thing and that they come only from Japan. But there are various aspects that differentiate them clearly.

Manga is used in Japanese comics and is drawn from top to bottom, right to left. It's done entirely in black and white, using multiple screen tones to create basic tonal effects and shading. It's printed on recycled and cheap paper, due to the amount of work involved and cost of producing it on a weekly and monthly basis.

Anime art is a more detailed and colourful medium, full of movement and action. Because the characters are animated, the use of backgrounds is essential. These are always painted beautifully and in a realistic way to contrast with the characters, which are painted using a limited range of colours.

Nowadays the anime/manga phenomenon has extended around the world, giving artists the chance to explore these mediums and have their own views about what anime and manga truly represent.

"Anime art is more detailed"
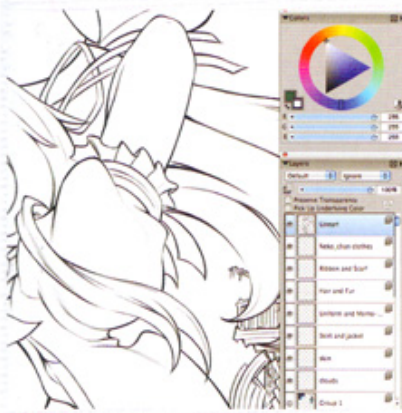
06 Organising layers

Once you have completed the line art, leave the layer in the top of the Layers palette. It can be locked in order to avoid working on it, and more layers can be added below it where the different parts of the drawing will be painted. Remember to name your layers according to what they contain – this will help to speed up your workflow.

07 Block in colours

Fill the background layer with the base colours the illustration will have. These can be adjusted and altered as you work using Effects>Tonal Control>Adjust Colors. Try to add similar elements to the same layer. For instance, for the girl's hair and the fur of the cat, use the Special Smeary Round at 100% Opacity. Don't worry if you paint outside the line art, because the layers will be cleaned up in future steps.

Colour equals personality

In the world of anime the hair colour of your character influences a lot of its personality and attitude. White and grey are usually used for villains, as they are often related to evil and death in Japan. Blue is used for shy, sweet, smart and funny characters, pink and purple for cheerfully cute and childish characters, orange for wild and adventurous characters, and green for down-to-earth and good-hearted characters.
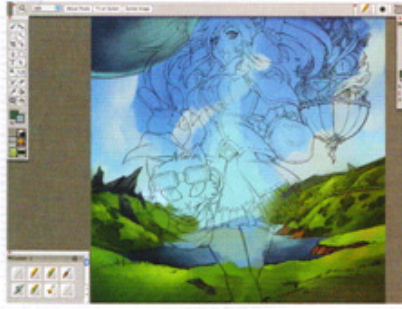
08 Working the background

Paint the background roughly to determine the colour scheme, and then paint the clouds and the moon using the same Smeary Round brush, increasing and decreasing the size of the brush to cover areas quickly. This will help to set the mood of your work. Focus on adding colours and don't try to do any major details at this point.

09 Adding volume

Now that the base colours are sorted out, start adding darker tones. Since we are looking to create an anime feel, keep it to a minimum of two colours. These have to be in the same range of saturation as the base colour. You can blend these colours using some pressure on your pen, as well as using the Just Add Water blender.

10 Choosing the right colours

Repeat the previous step for both the character and the pets. Try to avoid selecting colours with low saturation, as this will lead to muddy colours and tone down the mood of the illustration. Choosing an analogous colour scheme of saturated tones and increasing or decreasing its lightness will help you to solve this.

11 Paint the hovering castle

Again, add a base colour and two darker tones to paint the castle. This one is made of metal, therefore a sharp contrast between light and dark is necessary. Keep in mind the main light source, which is placed in the top left corner of the drawing, then add some highlights and reflected sky colours to create a nice shiny effect.

12 Filling the core shadows

Once the main colours of the character are done, take time to redefine and add more details to clothing and hair. Using the Airbrush and a greyish colour, fill the darker areas. Be gentle while using this tool. Try to balance the amount of colour applied, as you want a subtle effect. Use the Just Add Water blender between 40 and 60% Opacity to blend the colours.
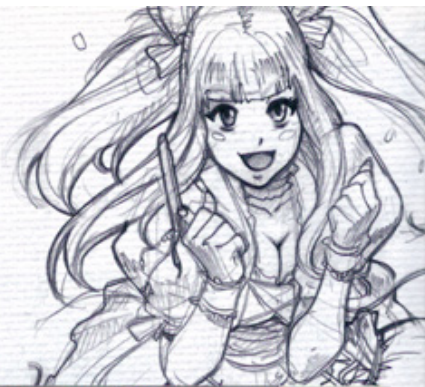
Redefine the background and characters
Polish your anime composition

Kawaii creatures

There is no doubt that the creatures have to be cute and lively. Try to base your design on your favourite animals. Keep them simple: they could be cute little blobs with funny ears and small eyes, or they can be fully clothed to give them more personality and a friendlier look.

13 Paint the moon Photos from different planets and the moon can be indispensable as reference. First turn off all the coloured layers and paint the moon with the Soft Airbrush 50 to then add details such as craters and cracks. Also add some complementary colours to the surface in order to make it more realistic and harmonious.
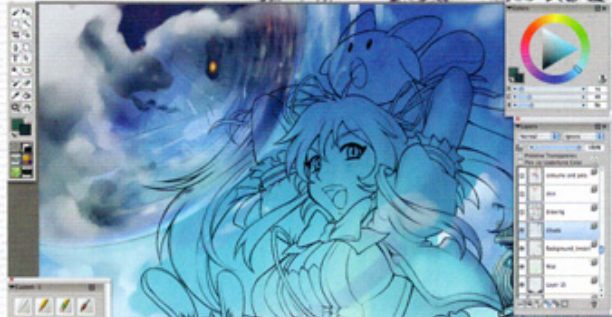
14 Paint the clouds Use photos as reference for the clouds, trying to emulate all the variations and shapes as much as you can. To produce a convincing cloud, add a new layer between the background layer and the character's layers, then uncheck Pick Up Underlying Color in the Layers palette if you had it selected. Using the Special Smeary Round brush at 10% Opacity, start painting the clouds.

15 Block in Neko-chan To paint the cat – we'll call him Neko-chan ('friendly cat') – use primary colours to black in major tones. Movies such as *My Neighbour Totoro* and *The Cat Returns* from Studio Ghibli are great to watch for inspiration when designing anime characters based on animals.

16 Clean your artwork At this point you might want to add more details and clean your layers. Hit the Polygonal Selection tool, trace the excess paint that's outside the line art and delete it by pressing Ctrl+X (PC) or Cmd+X (Mac), or you can use the Tapered Eraser 30 and do it freehand.
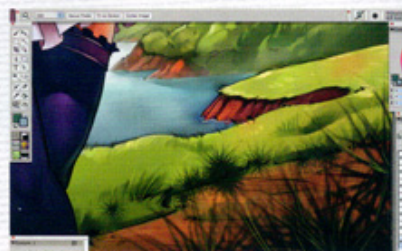
17 Background details Time to go back and add more details to the background using the Special Smeary Round brush and the Airbrush with Size between 4 and 8 pixels to simulate the grass by creating streaks. Colour the soil where the figure is standing, and use the Grainy blender 30 to add texture to the ground. Use references as much as possible in order to get a more natural result.

Borrowed colours

Having in mind which colours to use for your characters before starting is a good idea. There are colours that combine very well using an analogous colour harmony. Red hair could have tones of yellow and purple to make it more attractive and colourful, and it's even better if you add borrowed colours from its surroundings to denote shine.
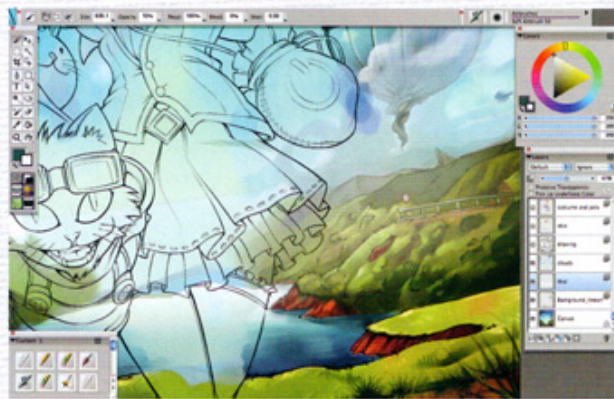
18 Atmospheric effects One way to consolidate and integrate the sky with the mountains is to add a new layer. Increase the Size of the Airbrush to the maximum and paint through the horizon line where the mountains end and the sky begins, then reduce the Opacity of this layer to between 35% and 45%. This will create the illusion of distance and contrast between the character and the background.

19 Paint the face Having the colours already chosen for the face, we start painting her eyes using a complementary colour to her hair, which has red and purple tones. Also paint the shadow cast from her hair. Keep in mind the main light source and how the shadows should be cast on her face – this is vital to avoid flatness.

Creating anime facial features

Give your characters personality

One of the aspects that makes anime and manga art unique is the wide range of facial expressions. Some are standard, but others rely on exaggeration and are fun to draw.

Smiling This expression is typical when we want to portray cute characters. A relaxed mouth is small and less open; smiles should be wide and show lip definition. Depending on the style of drawing, eyes and eyebrows will be in a neutral position.

Surprise Even though this is the same character, we can see big changes in the size of her eyes. The smaller the irises, the more shocked the expression will be; the eyebrows are raised and also the shape of the eyelash. Note how she's leaning back, indicating the action has just happened.

Exaggerated smile This is far simpler in terms of lines and colouring. The mouth is wide open and exaggerated; the face is more rounded, adding a cute, childish look; the eyebrows are raised but simplified. Don't be afraid to add elements around characters to convey a convincing expression.

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20 Add details to Neko-chan Even though he's a secondary character, Neko-chan has to be as detailed as the main character. It's time to colour the whole character, creating a fur effect with the Cover Pencil to add highlights. Use the Airbrush to colour his eyes and use Just Add Water where necessary to soften the brushwork. Consider the location of your main light source and paint the shadows cast on his face and clothes.

21 Paint the rabbit and Momo-chan The simplified rabbit and Momo-chan at the top are painted with pink and red tones using the Airbrush, keeping the details to a minimum to maintain the anime aspect of them. Use the Special Smeary Round brush to add the colours and blend them with Just Add Water, with Opacity between 20% and 30%.

22 Highlights Adding strong highlights is the key to achieving the look and feel of a typical anime illustration. One important area to fill with highlights is the hair, using the same technique as when detailing the grass. Use an analogous colour harmony to decide the colour of the highlight, and avoid using pure white as it looks less natural. Don't be afraid to try combinations and experiment with them. Duplicate the layer as many times as you want, to compare results.

23 Flatten layers and adjust After cleaning all your layers and making sure all the details are added, save a copy of your work to use in the final phase. Open it and select all the layers of your illustration, press the Layers command and select Drop, then go to the drop-down menu Effects>Tonal Control>Brightness/Contrast and add more contrast to the overall illustration.

24 Special effects This step is one that will bring your illustration to the next level by adding realistic glowing effects. Select the F-X Glow brush and use it at 70% Opacity. Take into account the area where you want to use it, because the colour selected in the colour wheel will affect the result – so if you apply it on a blue area make sure the colour selected is between blue and violet.

25 New colour tones Once the illustration is full of sparkling and shiny effects, it's time to add the final one, which will create a fantasy atmosphere. Create a new layer and add some primary and secondary colours using the Airbrush, then select Overlay as the Composite Method in the Layers palette and reduce Opacity to 80%. And that's it – job done!