

waiting for the train

Tony Nguyen

My artwork titled 'waiting for the train' depicts a girl sitting on a bench, waiting for a train. The scenery and environment in the artwork came from my interest in Shimonada Station in Japan; its location overlooking the beach and sea inspired my personal emotion of nostalgia. I studied the works of digital artists, Sam Yang (SamDoesArts) and Makoto Shinkai, to help guide me throughout my piece.

I drew/painted digitally using a tablet. I used a combination of round and flat brushes to lay down sketches and large shapes and colours. I also used blur and rake tools in specific sections, like the cirrus clouds and the character, respectively. After envisioning and experimenting with several lighting scenarios, I settled on an hour before sunset as I didn't want dominating sunset colours as they would detract from the story. Although, I did not choose midday as I wanted to retain shadows, therefore adding contrast to the piece. I naturally had leading lines through the train station and the addition of the comet in the sky.

The main portion of shading and highlights consisted of laying down the base colour, then using either the area select tool or a flat brush to add the shading/highlight definition. I found this to be the common style and technique of Sam Yang. However, the clouds required closer attention. I first established the shape of the clouds with a large round brush, then used a smudge tool to add texture to the edges. I then used progressively darker tones and shades to introduce shadows; I replicated my texturing process on the darker colours too.

I tried to use more saturated colours as they would best convey the positive, nostalgic emotions. My style was primarily inspired from Sam Yang. He uses a simplified style, whilst also portraying realistic lighting which I really admire. Another common aspect within his artworks is the portrayal of characters in environment. I pushed this idea with the girl in the middle of the scene as it allows the viewer to better connect with my artwork, pushing the important emotion of nostalgia. The story of the artwork is also a common scenario for most, with the scenery simply pushing the idea of nostalgia.

Although the story of waiting for a train does not connect with me on a personal level, I thought this idea would resonate with others. However, I added and defined several distinct aspects to the piece, like the comet and clouds, that personally resonated with me. I've always loved the appearance of clouds that all stemmed their massive sense of scale of presence in the background. I love comets, and seeing Makoto Shinkai's *Your Name* really exacerbated it. I added it to my piece as it adds a magical sense of nostalgia, similarly to *Your Name*.

Overall, I am satisfied with my artwork, 'waiting for the train'. It manages to achieve my goal of conveying nostalgia through my stylised techniques. The bright colours and setting accentuate this notion. To improve, I need to improve my technique and refinement; this can be most seen in the concrete floor of the train station. Excluding that point, I am proud of my rendering of the clouds and character which are the most important aspects to me.