



CLIP STUDIO
PAINT

Better and Faster: Using Clip Studio Paint To Create Concept Art

Image: Background for OhayoCon



Artist Tan Hui Tian discusses how she uses Clip Studio Paint at Collateral Damage Studios to create concept art.



How long have you been in this profession?

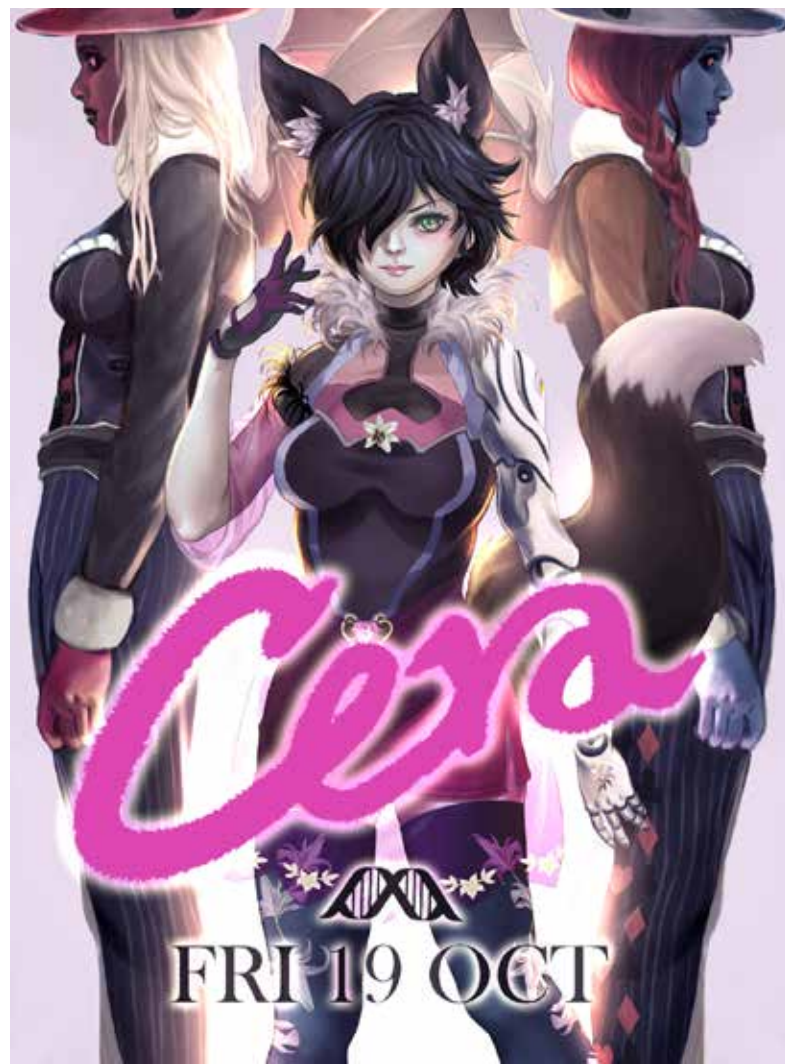
I have been in the industry for 7 years, previously at an indie game studio and currently at CDS.

What are your most important accomplishments?

Before I entered the illustration industry, my art was usually a solipsistic endeavor. Some of my proudest accomplishments were not technical (such as learning how to animate game sprites on the job) but rather more ineffable. They include art direction and drawing the majority of the concept and production art for games such as Aether Captains, or having the opportunity to not only create the key visual for the 10th year anniversary of the Singapore Toy, Game and Comic Convention (STGCC) but also to be a panelist. It was satisfying to see my artwork everywhere at a convention that I had been faithfully attending as a comic fan for years.

What kind of projects do you create concept art for?

At Collateral Damage Studios, I create concept art for board games and visual novels predominantly. Currently, I am creating concepts for a visual novel, Megalomaniacs of Tomorrow.





Environmental art for Megalomaniacs of Tomorrow



Environmental art for Megalomaniacs of Tomorrow



Character concepts for Megalomaniacs of Tomorrow

What's your history with Clip Studio Paint?

When I was an amateur artist, I had worked with the software to create comics back when it was still named Comic Studio. The price point was a lot more affordable than some alternatives. The software has improved tremendously since then, but still retains its price advantage.

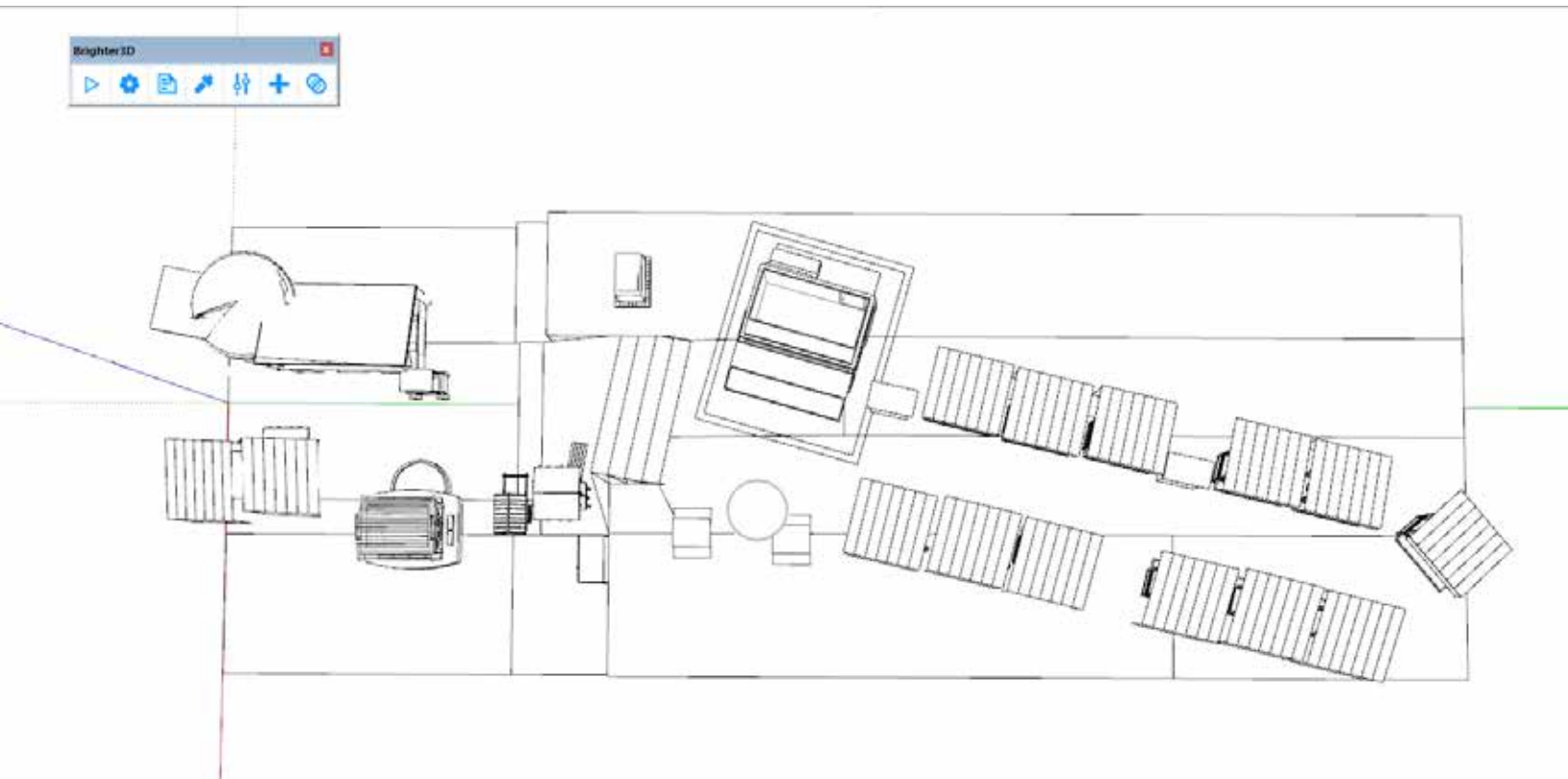


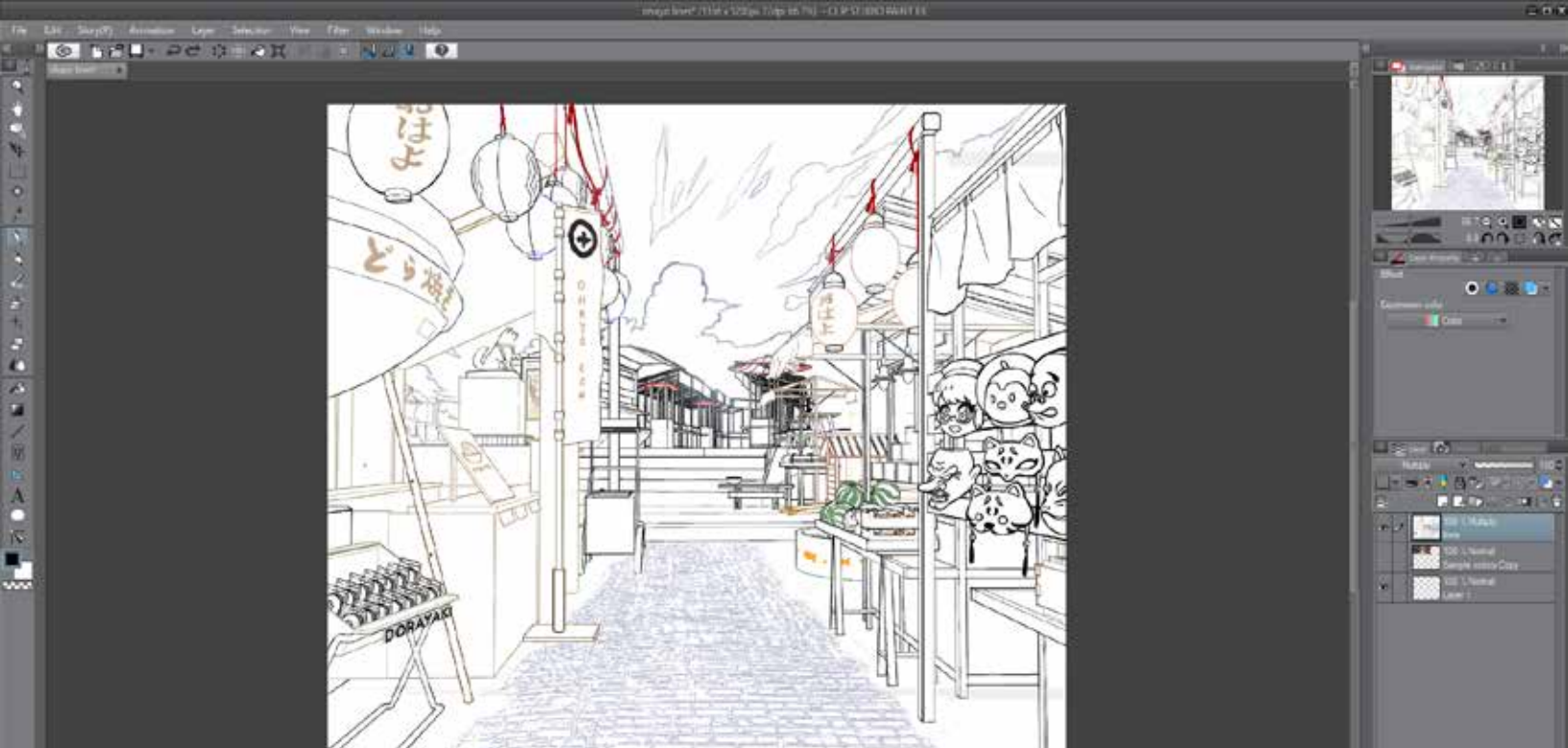
What is your workflow?

My workflow is dependent on the project. For an environmental concept, after I collect references, I draft out some thumbnails with pencil and paper.

I then block in the environment in 3D and use that as a base for lines in Clip Studio Paint. Clip Studio Paint has support for vector layers for line work, which can be useful for high-resolution printing.

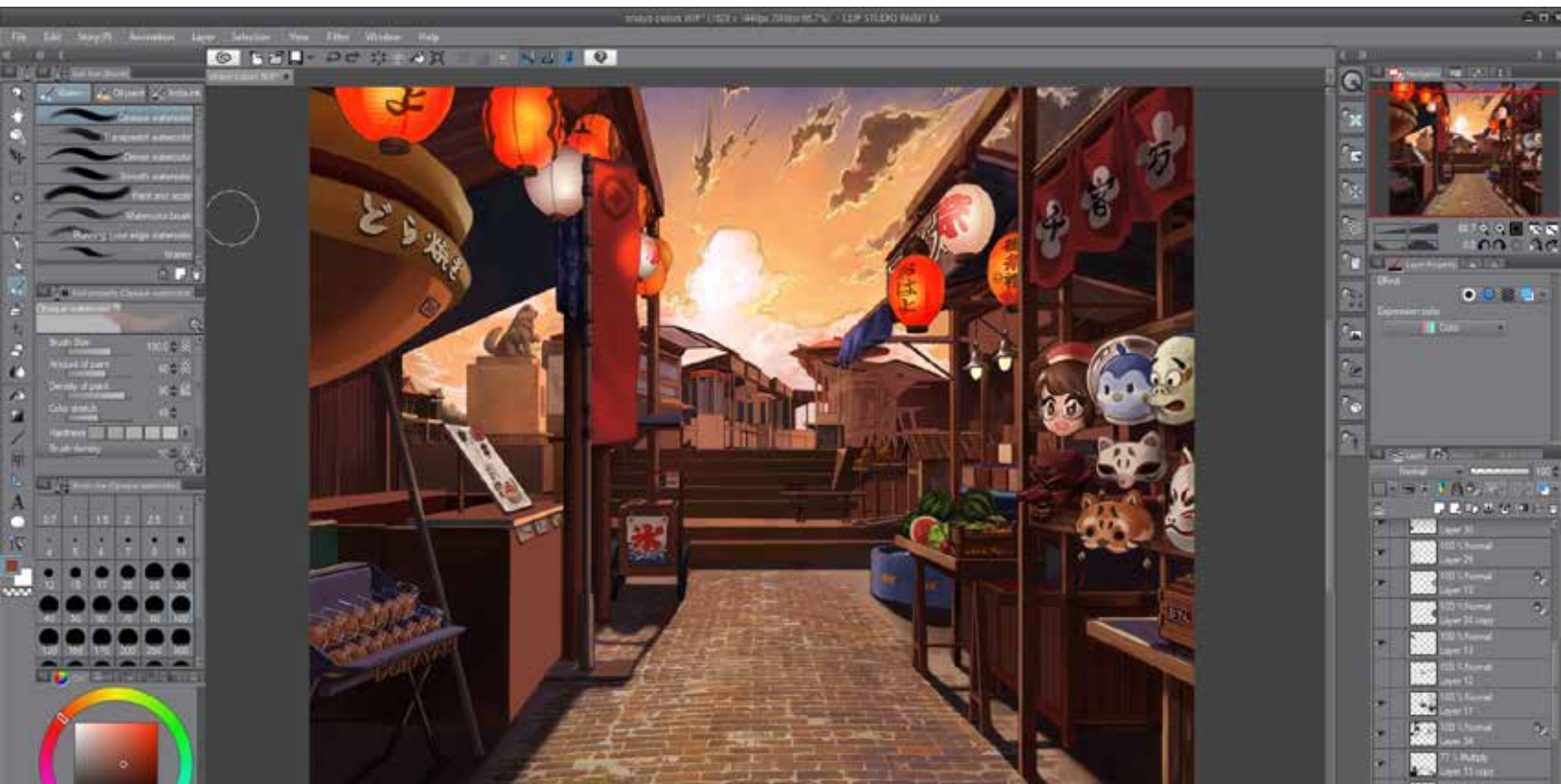
Overview of environment in Google SketchUp





Sketch layer in Clip Studio Paint

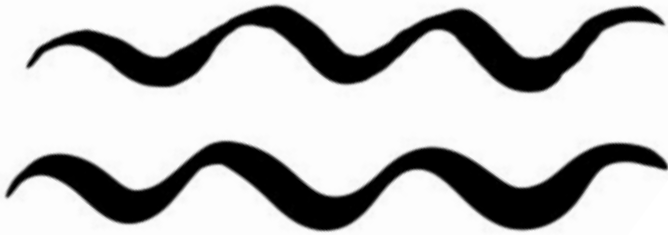
I then do the color flats in Clip Studio Paint, and slowly work on rendering. Afterward, the file is exported as a Photoshop PSD with layers, which allows me to painlessly transition to Photoshop to add effects such as lens flare or post effects.



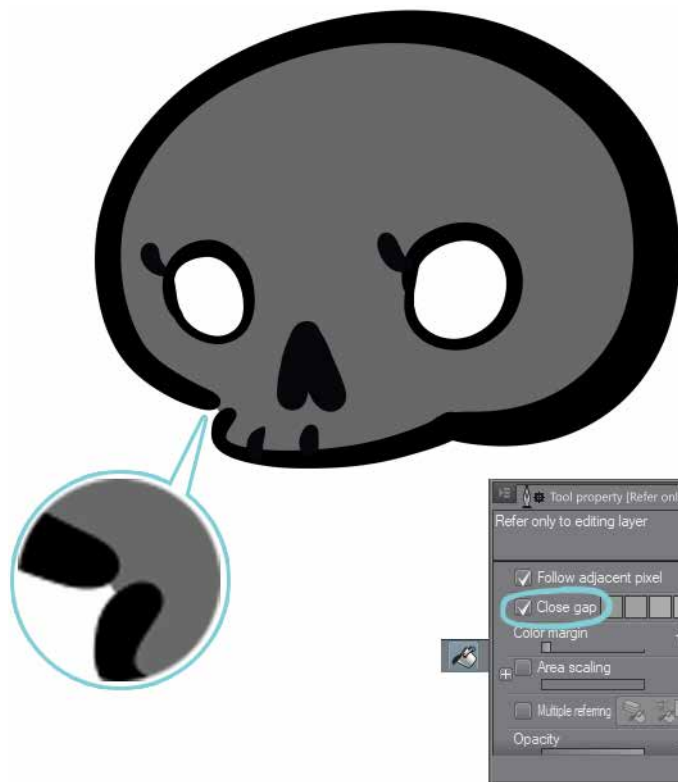
Colors in Clip Studio Paint

What are your favorite features in Clip Studio Paint?

The brush engine in Clip Studio Paint is one of the most sophisticated among similar software. It is more naturalistic than Photoshop and has brush settings like the stabilization level, which is immensely helpful for anyone with motor skills poorer than a surgeon's.



Before and After turning on Brush Stabilization



I also love the coloring features in Clip Studio Paint which allow you to refer to the line layer while you work on a separate color layer, automatically bucket-fill color inside the borders when there are gaps in your lines, and easily create gradients.

Close gap function of Paint Bucket tool

What Clip Studio Paint features allow you to distinguish your concept art?

It's the attention to details that makes creating artworks with Clip Studio Paint unique. For instance, I can adjust vector lines simply by 'pinching' them, or change their line widths with a few clicks. I can create brushes that are highly personalized. In a studio environment, where speed is a necessity, that sort of precise control and efficiency makes concept art done in Clip Studio Paint more polished and allows time for personal flair.



Did you experience any productivity gains in using Clip Studio Paint?

Yes, because of the flexibility of Clip Studio Paint, I can work more efficiently.

Are you more efficient today compared to your production toolset used previously?

When I first started drawing digitally, I was using a mouse and a freeware version of openCanvas. There was a huge amount of productivity gain when I switched to using a Wacom tablet and learned to use software like Clip Studio Paint. I cut down the time I spent on tedious tasks like cleaning up and am able to devote more time to producing quality artworks.

Is it possible to get the same results with other software?

I think it is possible to replicate artwork done in Clip Studio Paint in some other software, but you would need to spend a lot more time. For instance, color blending in Clip Studio Paint is more naturalistic than in Photoshop, and you would have to refine the blending with multiple brushstrokes instead of just one to achieve the same look.

How do you feel about Clip Studio Paint?

I have a sense of pride regarding Clip Studio Paint, because I have used it back when there were only spot colors in the software, and the introduction of full-color support was considered a huge leap. It has gone a long way since then. Besides the software improvements, there are now a lot of resources and tutorials for Clip Studio Paint, and a community surrounding it. It's more than just a powerful tool.

Equipment used

Intel Core i5 CPU with 8GB RAM, Wacom Intuos Pro.

Would you recommend Clip Studio Paint to artists within this industry?

Yes, I'd highly recommend it. The pricing is a steal, and the software is really powerful. For beginning artists, the community is invaluable. Even for artists who have been using other software for years, Clip Studio Paint offers a lot of value that is different from other software.

Do you create your concept art using Clip Studio Paint only?

Depending on the brief, I might also use Google SketchUp and Photoshop in the process.

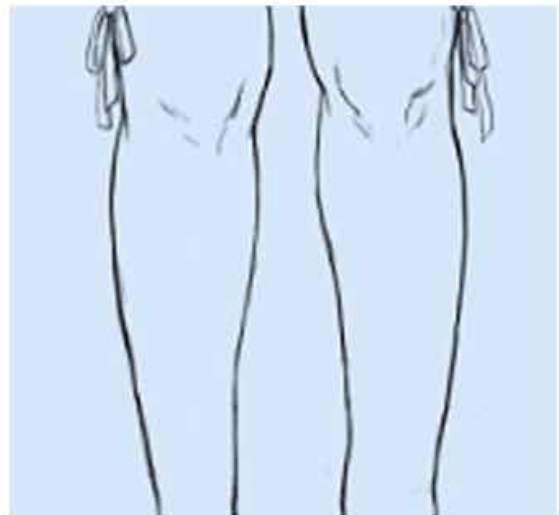
Why did you choose to combine these products?

Each tool has its own advantages. Clip Studio Paint has better line control and tools for illustrators. I use Google SketchUp to for quick environment or prop prototyping, and Photoshop for editing and post-processing.

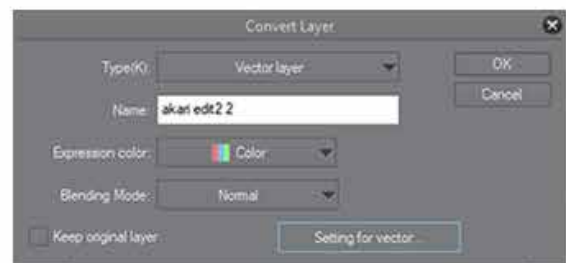
Do you also use other tools such as Photoshop or InDesign for production? What synergetic effects do you gain from incorporating CSP together with other tools in your workflow?

Yes, depending on the project, I use other software such as InDesign, or Photoshop as well. There are many ways in which Clip Studio Paint synergizes with other software. You can import and export Photoshop PSDs without losing layer effects. And if you needed to 'vectorize' your linework in Photoshop for a client who wants an artwork enlarged urgently, it's just a click away in Clip Studio Paint. Or suppose your client wants some comics in the middle of their rulebook. InDesign does not support comic-creation, but you can simply importing comic frames from Clip Studio Paint should you need to send your client or your book layout artist an InDesign file. Having Clip Studio Paint in my toolbox is useful, even when I least expect it.

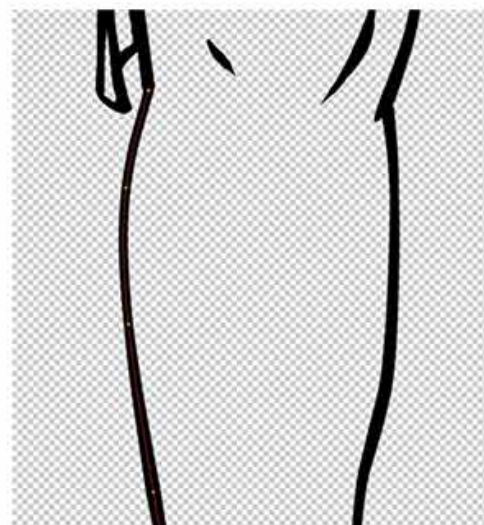
BEFORE



PIXELATED RASTER



AFTER



AUTOMATIC VECTOR

Quotes:

“Clip Studio Paint eliminates the tedious parts of drawing, freeing me to dive straight into the interesting parts of the creative process.”

“Developing concept art in Clip Studio Paint has an incredibly fast turnaround, because of its artist-centric tools.”



About the studio

Originating from a humble doujin circle based in Singapore, Collateral Damage Studios (CDS) has grown to be a professional illustration studio within the industry. We work with local Singaporean talents to provide outstanding visuals for brands and creators all around the world. Some of their most prominent works include the development of Internet Explorer’s Inori Aizawa, key visuals for Anime Expo and New York Comic Con and the anniversary artwork for virtual idols, IA and ONE.



About Tan Hui Tian

Tan is a Senior Illustrator at CDS. Graduating from a graphic design background, her works emphasizes a strong design sense. She is the illustrator for the key visual for Anime Fest @ New York Comic Con’s debut. Outside of work, she enjoys drawing artworks that are a curious mix of whimsical and macabre.



System Requirements

Microsoft Windows 7, 8.1 and 10 (32bit/64bit) or Apple mac OS 10.10, 10.11, 10.12, 10.13 & 10.14 // 300 MB space for application // 2.5 GB space for materials and assets (optional) // Pen tablet or tablet monitor that supports a pressure sensitive stylus. Wacom devices are recommended. // Physical version includes download link to installer // CD/DVD ROM drive (optional) for physical version // Internet connection for license authentication and access to download links.



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