ENVIRONMENT ART — Photoshop & UNREAL ENGINE

Stitch of Hours

This warm, timber-framed attic serves as a grandmother's "Doll Clinic." Bathed in the soft, golden light of late autumn, the space is rich with environmental storytelling: a wooden workbench cluttered with needles, threads, and a vintage sewing machine, surrounded by shelves of dolls awaiting repair, old photographs, and vibrant potted plants. By mending torn plushies, the grandmother figuratively stitches together lost innocence and childhood regrets. This gentle sanctuary shelters lonely toys, preserving every precious memory.

VIDEO： https://youtu.be/XcY4o6WaPkw

TOOLS　Maya · Substance 3D Painter · Unreal 5

Research & Reference

— INSPIRATION

By analyzing the spatial composition and lighting setups of retro artisan workshops, I established the foundational mood for the doll repair cabin. Drawing inspiration from the references' soft, warm-toned indoor lighting, window-adjacent workspaces, and compact structures, I aimed to craft a quiet, story-rich interior. This analytical approach effectively sets the narrative tone for the entire scene, deeply enhancing its environmental storytelling.



Reference: Howl's Moving Castle (2004, Studio Ghibli)



Reference: Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio (2022)

— PROP RESEARCH

To eliminate any sense of sterility and enhance the scene's visual density, I meticulously curated props with strong narrative weight. Functional tools like vintage sewing machines, scissors, and scattered buttons explicitly ground the scene in its handcrafted purpose. Meanwhile, weathered wooden cabinets and woven baskets establish a believable storage logic.



Accentuated by decorative paintings and various doll ornaments, these time-worn assets not only enrich the spatial hierarchy but also deepen the nostalgic atmosphere, ensuring the cabin feels authentically lived-in.

— ATMOSPHERE RESEARCH



FIG. 05 — ART STYLE STUDY, INTERIOR LIGHT

I selected this image as the primary mood reference because its rustic timber architecture and lived-in vintage furnishings perfectly capture a tranquil, nostalgic atmosphere. The soft, hazy volumetric lighting streaming through the doors and windows establishes a gentle visual tone.



FIG. 06 — ART STYLE STUDY, RECLAIMED THEATRE

This warm, time-worn aesthetic aligns flawlessly with the thematic core of the doll clinic: just as the dolls serve as vessels for precious memories, the cozy, aged cabin visually communicates the emotional narrative of mending forgotten objects and preserving the past.

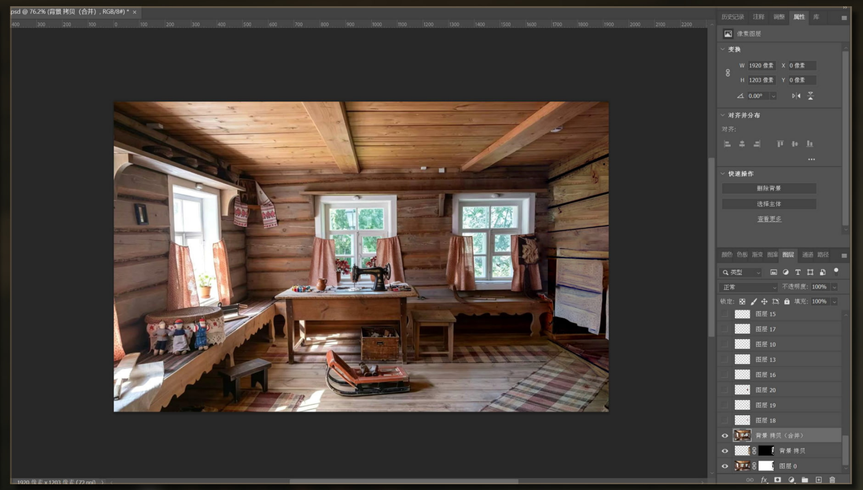
Concept Painting in Photoshop

The concept for the repair room was painted over a photo base in Photoshop. Starting from a shot of a timber interior, I blocked out the cabin's structure, window positions and workbench layout to match the space I planned to build in UE5, then furnished it with cabinets, sewing tools, fabric props and dolls.

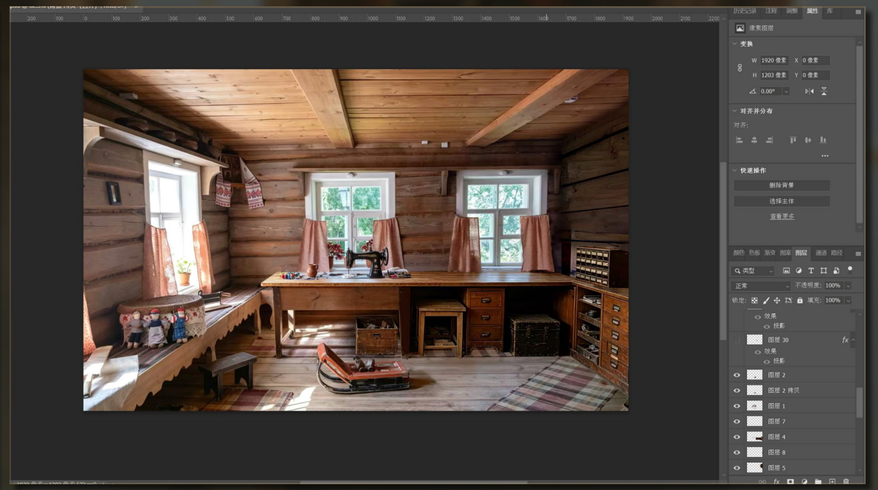
Finally I kept tuning contrast, darkening edges and corners and pushing the window light to build layered lighting. Painting over a photo base locks down layout, prop placement and color mood quickly — and catches composition problems long before the engine build begins.



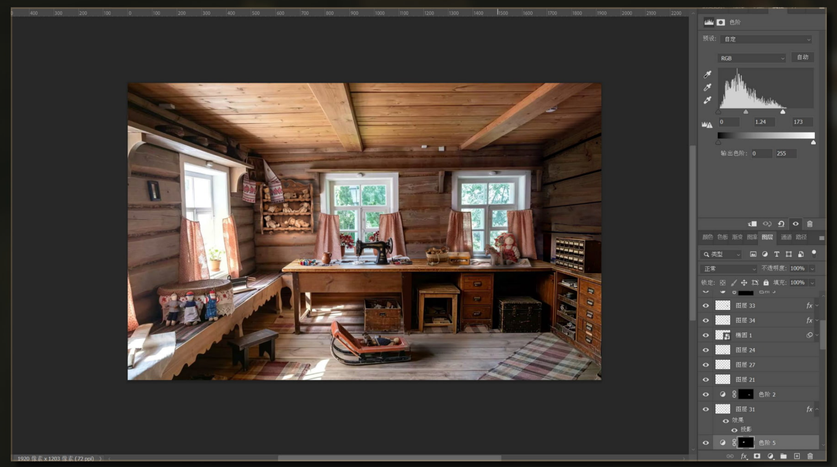
STEP 01 — Base photo



STEP 02 — Blocking the space



STEP 03 — Cabinets & sewing tools



STEP 04 — Dolls & fabric props



STEP 05 — Light pass · Final concept

PROCESS

1 · Photo base
2 · Spatial frame
3 · Furnishing
4 · Detail pass
5 · Light & mood

WIP in Unreal

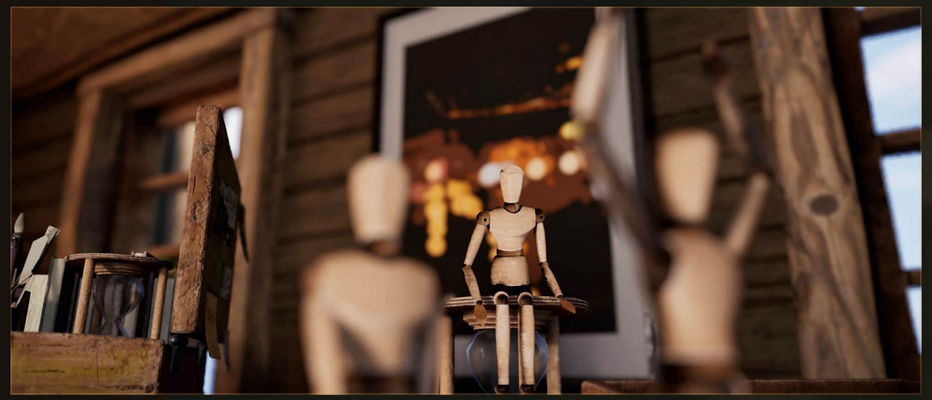
I chose a rustic timber-cabin style — aged wood carries the quiet, tender mood of mending old things and holding memories. The build began with walls, beams, doors and windows, fixing the size of the space and where daylight enters.

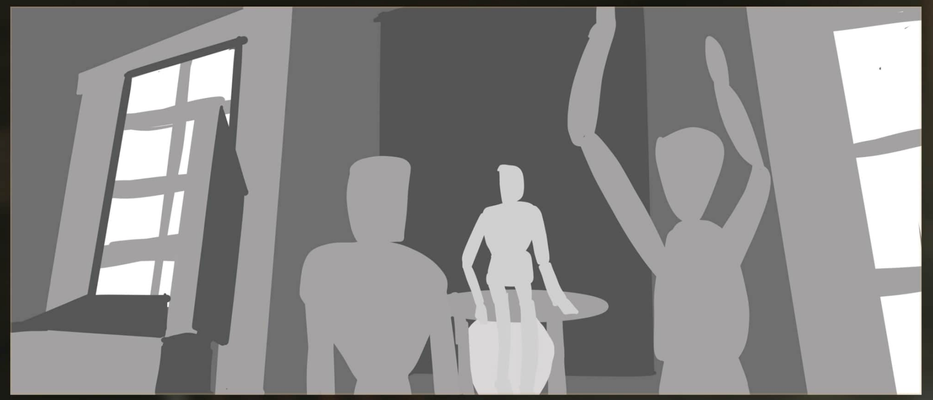
Then came the large furniture — tables, the rocking chair, the repair bench — followed by crates, tools, old dolls and era props such as reading glasses and a radio. A final pass tuned natural and warm interior light for a healing mood.

— WIP 01–13 · SPATIAL FRAME → FURNITURE → DETAILS → LIGHTING



Vertical Slices





SHOT 01 — Close-up · Dolls on the bench

Jointed wooden dolls crowd the workbench, shallow depth of field pulling focus to the central figure. The dolls stand for memories waiting to be mended; the hourglass, old paintings and books speak quietly of passing time.

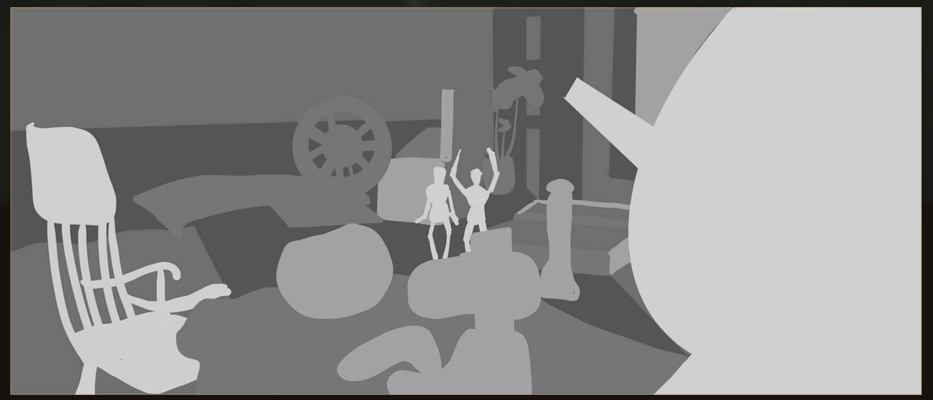




SHOT 02 — Rest corner · Chair & horse

The rest corner beside the bench: an old rocking chair and a childhood rocking horse, with the cuckoo clock and window flowers nearby. Tyndall light through the glass makes the room feel long lived-in — a home, not just a workplace.





SHOT 03 — Framed view · Repair bench

A blurred broken doll frames the right edge, as if we peer in through its eyes, leading the gaze to the bench — sewing machine, posed figures, head molds. The broken doll in front still waits; the finished ones behind have new life.

Vertical Slices





SHOT 04 — Symmetry · Core area

A frontal symmetric composition: two windows mirror each other and the cuckoo clock anchors the wall — a symbol of time and memory. Daylight pours in from both sides, softly lighting the bench and the room's core layout.





SHOT 05 — Wide shot · The whole cabin

A wide master shot of the entire cabin: sloped beam ceiling, rows of daylight windows, the long repair bench and storage shelves — sewing tools, books, crates, plants and framed prints all visible, full of lived-in story.



