

E-EX - Behind the Scenes of Chihayafuru

Source: [Crunchyroll](#)

Translator:

Editor:

Timer:

QC:

(Please feel free to edit the speaker names if incomplete or inaccurate. Names are handled on a best-effort basis depending on the info on the source file. Dialogue is left as is.)

[00:02] ---

Chihayafuru tells the story of Chihaya,

[00:05] ---

a high school girl who dreams of
becoming the Queen of Karuta,

[00:08] ---

a traditional Japanese card game.

[00:10] ---

She forms the karuta club in school

[00:12] ---

and together with
her two childhood friends,

[00:15] ---

Their journey begins.

[00:19] ---

Everyone here

[00:21] ---

is a karuta lover
through and through!

[00:26] ---

I'm Toshio Nakatani of Nippon TV.

[00:29] ---

I'm the producer for Chihayafuru.

[00:33] ---

Television network producers are in
charge of the broadcast time slot,

[00:40] ---

funding, making necessary adjustments,

[00:45] ---

decisions involving the original
work, and rights to the title,

[00:49] ---

as well as the production side and staffing.

[00:55] ---

All of that is my job as the producer.

[01:02] ---

Um... How does this work?

[01:05] ---

Line up 25 cards in 3 rows.

[01:09] ---

When the first verse
of a poem is read,

[01:11] ---

you grab the card
with the second verse.

[01:14] ---

My name is Morio Asaka. I've been
directing Chihayafuru since season 1.

[01:19] ---

These are the episode 1 storyboards...
well, half of the episode.

[01:24] ---

I draw them myself, as the director,

[01:30] ---

but I can't do them all myself, so it's
divided up among some other staff, too.

[01:37] ---

And when they're finished, I check
them and make revisions as needed.

[01:44] ---

Well, the storyboards are sort of
like the blueprint for the episode.

[01:50] ---

They indicate how the scenes should
be acted out, using these layouts.

[01:54] ---

They indicate how the scenes should
be acted out, using these layouts.

[01:57] ---

We have the layout of the overall image,

[01:59] ---

camerawork directions, acting directions...

[02:02] ---

And these are the lines.

[02:03] ---

And this also indicates how
many seconds each cut is.

[02:08] ---

Of course, the final video

won't look exactly like this,

[02:12] ---

but the animators create the art,
layouts, and key frames,

[02:17] ---

which are then cleaned up for the final
product. Same for the backgrounds.

[02:22] ---

I doubt we'll ever
see each other again.

[02:28] ---

Why?

[02:31] ---

As long as we have karuta,

[02:33] ---

we'll see each other again, right?

[02:40] ---

As long as we keep playing,
we'll see each other again!

[02:42] ---

I just know it!

[02:44] ---

Doing this job, I've gotten
all kinds of questions,

[02:51] ---

and I wonder how many people realize that ultimately
it's still just people drawing with pencils.

[02:57] ---

That's one thing that doesn't
change with digital.

[03:00] ---

I don't think so.

[03:01] ---

But working on Chihayafuru 3, we do have some
people who work primarily in digital now...

[03:09] ---

The thing is, it doesn't look as good.

[03:12] ---

It doesn't?

[03:14] ---

Yeah. I think so.

[03:15] ---

Lines that are drawn digitally... granted,
individual execution is a factor, too,

[03:23] ---

but it still doesn't look as good as when
Hamada or Imamura do it with a pencil.

[03:28] ---

You mentioned Hamada, you've been teamed with him a lot, right?

[03:34] ---

That's true, yes.

[03:36] ---

That was the case on Sakura and Nana.

[03:39] ---

Is there a part of you that prefers to always work with him?

[03:43] ---

There are other talented artists out there,

[03:45] ---

but Hamada is an amazing artist, and can work quickly,

[03:56] ---

I'm Kunihiro Hamada.

[03:58] ---

My job is to do final artistic revisions on the video.

[04:08] ---

We start with what's called storyboards.

[04:15] ---

Directions for what we should do are written on these.

[04:19] ---

Like here, in shot 280...

[04:22] ---

This is how Chihaya's face is drawn.

[04:24] ---

The key animator consults with the producer

[04:27] ---

about how to create the art based on this.

[04:30] ---

And this is the resulting drawing.

[04:32] ---

Then we trace over that to make the animation.

[04:36] ---

We scan this, then add colors and backgrounds,

[04:40] ---

Then we check it over within the video,

[04:45] ---

and if there's anything that needs revision, it comes back to me,

[04:50] ---

and I fix it.

[04:57] ---

Why do they use those two cards?

[04:59] ---

Well, because...

[05:01] ---

I can understand

"The fall paddy shacks,"

[05:04] ---

since Emperor Tenji wrote it and

he's enshrined at Omi Jingu.

[05:06] ---

Yeah, and "May the scarlet..."

[05:07] ---

The first characters in its first and second
verse form "meijin," the word for "Master."

[05:14] ---

This contains a cut of
animation from the opening.

[05:18] ---

So it's got the layouts, the
key frames, the animation...

[05:22] ---

So it's got the layouts, the
key frames, the animation...

[05:24] ---

Here's the timing sheet.

[05:26] ---

And how much footage does this cover?

[05:28] ---

Six seconds worth.

[05:29] ---

So this much art for
six seconds of footage?

[05:30] ---

So this much art for
six seconds of footage?

[05:34] ---

That's right.

[05:35] ---

And here's the storyboard.

[05:38] ---

So this is what gives you the outline?

[05:41] ---

From the moment Chihaya
sends the karuta flying,

[05:45] ---

the camera turns around her face...

[05:49] ---

the camera turns around her face...

[05:51] ---

We put a lot of effort into that.

[05:55] ---

Here we have the poses...

[06:02] ---

And the white pages you see here
were done by our key animators,

[06:09] ---

while the blue ones were done by our
animation director, Hamada, at my direction.

[06:14] ---

And based on that Hamada, does the art.

[06:18] ---

Once that's done, we've got the layout.

[06:22] ---

Then, based on that...

[06:24] ---

We have the key frames.

[06:31] ---

It's really something.

[06:32] ---

So these are the frames
for the key animation.

[06:35] ---

In terms of the timing sheet...

[06:37] ---

This is where the key frames are.

[06:39] ---

The ones you can see that have
circles. Those are all key frames.

[06:45] ---

And you'll see some with dots,

[06:49] ---

those are where we'll have animators handle
the in-between frames for those sections.

[06:58] ---

And once all the animation is
drawn up, we get this chunk here.

[07:01] ---

And once all the animation is
drawn up, we get this chunk here.

[07:06] ---

Something unique is that the eyes are
being done on a separate set of cels.

[07:15] ---

And the reason we're doing that is to make the hair transparent.

[07:21] ---

So we have the eyes done separately and then layer them, and they're visible through the hair.

[07:22] ---

So we have the eyes done separately and then layer them, and they're visible through the hair.

[07:27] ---

It's a gorgeous cut of animation.

[07:29] ---

It is.

[07:30] ---

And you can see here, the cards in front of Chihaya...

[07:33] ---

Those will be done in 3D, and animated.

[07:36] ---

Based on the layout, we'll have a CG animator handle that part,

[07:42] ---

and, ultimately, it's all composited together for the final product.

[07:45] ---

And this is just for the movement in the foreground, of Chihaya and these people,

[07:49] ---

without the actual background, right?

[07:52] ---

That's right.

[07:54] ---

And then at the very end of the process, it's all put together.

[07:57] ---

Right.

[08:03] ---

And you did the storyboard for this part, right?'

[08:06] ---

Right, I drew that.

[08:07] ---

So this is his art.

[08:10] ---

And when you draw it, you're anticipating the eyes being done on a different layer, right?

[08:17] ---

That's right, yes.

[08:18] ---

So then based on that, comes the art from the key artists, that you give direction on...

[08:24] ---

Hamada does the corrections on that, and then comes the in-between animation,

[08:29] ---

and then another corrective pass.

[08:30] ---

All those people for six seconds of footage.

[08:34] ---

That's a good point.

[08:36] ---

Karuta is a traditional Japanese card game

[08:39] ---

which involves 3 people:
The reader and the two players.

[08:43] ---

The reader reads from an old Japanese waka poem

[08:46] ---

from a collection of poems called "Ogura Hyakunin Isshu."

[08:50] ---

While the reader reads the poem, on the ground there are cards

[08:53] ---

called "torifuda" which has the finishing phrases of the said poems written.

[08:56] ---

called "torifuda" which has the finishing phrases of the said poems written.

[08:57] ---

Now, while the reader is reading the poems,

[09:00] ---

The players must search quickly the torifudas and literally

[09:04] ---

slap away the cards that corresponds with the final phrase of the poem.

[09:09] ---

The world of karuta is just really interesting.

[09:12] ---

And it's a setting that didn't
have a lot of notoriety.

[09:16] ---

So depicting that in an anime for the first
time, raising its profile in the world,

[09:22] ---

and being able to depict the kind of depths it
has was a fascinating part about working on it.

[09:29] ---

Right.

[09:30] ---

And when we went to first check out
karuta competitions for Chihayafuru,

[09:36] ---

there weren't a lot of players,
or people in the audience.

[09:39] ---

But then thanks to Chihaya, a lot
more people are participating, right?

[09:44] ---

Well, the original manga
is a big factor there, too,

[09:46] ---

Of course.

[09:47] ---

But when the anime started airing, the amount of people
competing at the high school level really jumped.

[09:52] ---

Right?

[09:53] ---

It's pretty remarkable how much
has changed from when we started.

[09:55] ---

Yeah, you're right about that.

[09:58] ---

They might call me greedy...

[10:00] ---

But the title of Queen is
what I've been striving for.

[10:04] ---

After I heard you say...

[10:07] ---

Yeah, y'know, I don't think either of us
approached it being as simple just a karuta story.

[10:15] ---

I don't even think the readers of the

manga think that it's just a karuta manga.

[10:23] ---

There are elements of romance
at the core, and human drama,

[10:29] ---

along with sort of a down to
Earth self-improvement element.

[10:34] ---

And the fact that it takes place
in the world of karuta is just

[10:40] ---

the stage that it plays out on. I think
that's part of the reason people like it.

[10:46] ---

When we went to Omi Jingu, one thing
that really stuck in my memory...

[10:49] ---

I remember that.

[10:51] ---

There was a player who was
crying when they lost.

[10:56] ---

Just collapsed while crying...

[11:01] ---

and that drove home to me how karuta is the
embodiment of your whole life for these people.

[11:05] ---

I think that goes for Chihayafuru
too, the romance is through karuta,

[11:08] ---

the self improvement is through karuta,

[11:10] ---

karuta is how everything is expressed.

[11:13] ---

So getting the depiction of karuta right is a
big part in the entire story coming together.

[11:19] ---

Like how when Sumire is trying to romance
Taichi, karuta is her path to doing it.

[11:27] ---

While it brings me no joy...

[11:33] ---

I-I took a card...

[11:37] ---

My first card.

[11:39] ---

That was great, Kana-chan!

[11:40] ---

Nice job!

[11:42] ---

I'm so happy!

[11:44] ---

Well, our goal now is to improve
the quality as much as possible,

[11:52] ---

so even at this moment, we're
working our hardest on retakes.

[12:00] ---

We're doing our best to create a
product worthy of showing to you,

[12:05] ---

so I hope you'll look forward to seeing it.

[12:11] ---

Arata, I have people
to play with now.

[12:16] ---

I'm not alone.

[12:18] ---

I'm helping to pass on
what you passed to me.

Revision #1

Created 2024-01-20 07:59:44 UTC by whimsee

Updated 2024-01-20 07:59:44 UTC by whimsee