

AI Art Styles & Workflows: SD and Flux Guide

February 5, 2026 · by Mark Bartlett

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Quick Answer: Every major art style is achievable locally with the right combination of base model, LoRAs, and prompting. For photorealism: Juggernaut XL or RealVisXL V5 on SDXL. For anime: Illustrious XL or Animate XL 4.0. For oil painting: SDXL with ClassipointXL LoRA. For concept art: DreamShaper XL. For speed and prompt accuracy: Flux.1 Dev with style LoRAs. Stack 2-3 LoRAs at 0.5-0.8 weight each for best results. ComfyUI is the better tool for style experimentation (25-60% faster, lower VRAM). Start on CivitAI sorted by 'Most Downloaded' to find quality models, and always download .safetensors format.

 **More on this topic:** [ComfyUI vs Automatic1111 vs Fooocus](#) · [Flux Locally: Complete Guide](#) · [Stable Diffusion Locally](#) · [VRAM Requirements Guide](#) · [Planning Tool](#)

You have a GPU, you've installed ComfyUI or A1111, you've generated some images. They look... fine. Generic. Maybe a bit like stock photos that went through a blender. You know the tools can do better because you've seen the artwork people post online. But how do they get those specific styles?

The answer is always the same three things: the right base model, the right LoRAs, and the right prompting technique. This guide covers how to achieve specific art styles locally – from photorealism to pixel art – with concrete model names, LoRA recommendations, example prompts, and the settings that make each style work.

Pick Your Base Model First

Your base model determines 70% of the output style. LoRAs and prompting handle the rest. Here's what matters in early 2026.

Base Model	Best For	VRAM	Resolution	Ecosystem
SDXL	Everything – the all-rounder	8GB min, 12GB comfortable	1024x1024	Massive – thousands of checkpoints and LoRAs
Flux.1 Dev			1024x1024+	Growing fast – natural language prompts

Base Model	Best For	VRAM	Resolution	Ecosystem
	Photorealism, text in images, prompt accuracy	12GB min (quantized), 24GB full		
SD 1.5	Speed, batch work, 4-8GB GPUs	4GB min	512x512	Enormous – 15,000+ CivitAI models
Illustrious XL	Anime, illustration	8GB min, 12GB comfortable	Up to 1536x1536	Best anime model; Danbooru character recognition
Pony V6 XL	Stylized art, anime, cartoon	8GB min, 12GB comfortable	1024x1024	Huge LoRA ecosystem

If you're starting fresh: Use SDXL with Juggernaut XL as your first checkpoint. It handles most styles well, has the most community support, and runs on 8GB VRAM with optimizations. Move to Flux when you want better prompt adherence and have 12GB+ VRAM.

If you care about anime: Skip generic SDXL and go straight to Illustrious XL 1.0 or Animate XL 4.0. They're trained specifically on anime data and recognize Danbooru characters out of the box.

Style-by-Style Guide

Photorealistic

The most popular style and the one that benefits most from the right checkpoint.

Best setup:

- **SDXL:** Juggernaut XL v10 or RealVisXL V5.0
- **Flux:** Flux.1 Dev with UltraRealistic LoRA
- **SD 1.5:** Realistic Vision v5.1

What makes it work:

Photorealism lives and dies on specificity. Vague prompts get generic output. Camera details, lighting terms, and deliberate imperfections push the image from "CGI render" to "photograph."

Example prompt (SDXL / Juggernaut XL):

Portrait of a 30-year-old man, salt-and-pepper beard, wearing a worn leather jacket, standing on a rain-soaked city street at night, neon signs reflecting in puddles, shallow depth of field, shot on Canon EOS R5 85mm lens, golden hour, film grain, skin pores visible, photorealistic, 8K UHD, RAW photo

Negative prompt:

worst quality, low quality, blurry, cartoon, anime, illustration, painting, oversaturated, plastic skin, symmetrical face, CGI

Settings: CFG 5-7 (SDXL), 3.0-3.8 (Flux) · DPM++ 2M Karras · 28-35 steps

Key tricks:

- Specify a real camera and lens: "Canon EOS R5 85mm" or "Fuji X-T5 35mm"
- Add imperfections: "skin pores", "flyaway hair", "subtle wrinkles", "freckles"
- Lighting matters more than anything else: "golden hour", "overcast diffused light", "single key light from above"
- Flux doesn't use negative prompts – put all quality direction in the positive prompt

Anime / Manga

The deepest ecosystem in local image generation. More community models and LoRAs exist for anime than any other style.

Best setup:

- **SDXL:** Illustrious XL 1.0 or Animate XL 4.0
- **SD 1.5:** Anything V5 or AbyssOrangeMix3
- **Flux:** Flux.1 Dev with Dark Katana LoRA (20K+ likes on CivitAI)

What makes it work:

Anime models are trained on Danbooru-tagged data, so they respond to tag-style prompting rather than natural language. Order matters – subject tags first, quality tags last.

Example prompt (Illustrious XL):

1girl, long silver hair, red eyes, school uniform, looking at viewer, cherry blossoms, outdoor, spring, wind, hair flowing, smile, masterpiece, best quality, absurdres

Negative prompt:

worst quality, low quality, realistic, photo, 3d render, western, bad anatomy, extra fingers, blurry

Settings: CFG 3-6 (SDXL anime) · Euler a (ancestral) · 25-40 steps

Key tricks:

- Use Danbooru tag format: `1girl, blue_hair, school_uniform`
- End with quality tags: `masterpiece, best quality, absurdres`
- Euler a sampler is the community standard for anime – it adds variety that suits the style
- Illustrious XL supports up to 1536x1536 natively, which is a significant advantage over other SDXL checkpoints
- For Flux anime: use natural language instead of tags – “an anime girl with silver hair standing under cherry blossoms”

Oil Painting / Classical Art

Surprisingly achievable with a single LoRA. The key is combining a style LoRA with material-specific prompting.

Best setup:

- **SDXL:** Any base checkpoint + ClassipeintXL v2.1 LoRA (weight 0.7-1.0)
- **Flux:** Flux.1 Dev with Mucha or impressionist style LoRAs
- **SD 1.5:** DreamShaper 8 handles painterly styles natively

Example prompt (SDXL + ClassipeintXL):

oil painting of a Venetian canal at sunset, gondolas on still water, warm light reflecting off ancient buildings, thick impasto brushstrokes, oil on canvas, visible canvas texture, rich color palette, museum quality

Negative prompt:

photo, realistic, modern, digital, smooth, blurry, low quality, anime, cartoon

Settings: CFG 6-8 (SDXL) · DPM++ 2M Karras · 30-40 steps · LoRA weight 0.7-1.0

Key tricks:

- Material descriptors sell the style: “thick impasto brushstrokes”, “visible canvas texture”, “oil on canvas”
- Reference art movements for tone: “impressionist” gets loose brushwork, “baroque” gets dramatic lighting
- DPM++ SDE Karras sampler produces the most detailed results for painterly styles (slower but worth it for final renders)
- Too-high CFG kills the painterly softness — stay under 8

Concept Art / Digital Illustration

The “Artstation look” — dramatic lighting, fantastical subjects, polished digital painting style.

Best setup:

- **SDXL:** DreamShaper XL Lightning
- **SD 1.5:** DreamShaper 8 (the gold standard for years)
- **Flux:** Flux.1 Dev works well with natural language concept art prompts

Example prompt (DreamShaper XL):

concept art, a massive floating citadel above a storm-ravaged ocean, bioluminescent towers, flying ships in the distance, dramatic sunset lighting, epic composition, highly detailed, digital painting, artstation, sharp focus

Negative prompt:

photo, realistic, blurry, low quality, simple, flat colors, amateur, sketch

Settings: CFG 5-8 (SDXL) · DPM++ 2M Karras · 25-35 steps · CLIP skip 2 (for DreamShaper)

Key tricks:

- “concept art” and “artstation” are powerful style anchors — they steer the output toward polished digital illustration
- “Epic composition” and “cinematic” consistently improve framing
- DreamShaper XL Lightning uses fewer steps (6-8) for faster iteration at slightly lower quality

- DreamShaper natively handles fantasy, sci-fi, and surreal subjects better than photorealism-focused checkpoints
-

Pixel Art

Charming, retro, and shockingly easy to achieve with the right LoRA.

Best setup:

- **SDXL:** Base checkpoint + Pixel Art XL v1.1 LoRA (by nerijs)
- **SD 1.5:** Base checkpoint + 8bitdiffuser 64x LoRA
- **Illustrious:** Pixel Art Style LoRA

Example prompt (SDXL + Pixel Art XL):

```
pixel art, 16-bit RPG style, a knight standing at a dungeon entrance, torchlight casting orange glow, dark stone walls, treasure chest nearby, limited color palette, retro game aesthetic, clean pixels
```

Negative prompt:

```
blurry, anti-aliasing, smooth, photorealistic, 3d render, gradient, high resolution
```

Settings: CFG 1.5 (with Pixel Art XL) or 7-9 (SD 1.5) · Euler a · 8 steps (Pixel Art XL) or 20-28 steps (SD 1.5) · LoRA weight 0.85-1.25

Key tricks:

- Pixel Art XL uses unusually low CFG (1.5) and steps (8) — follow the LoRA author's recommendations
 - Specify resolution era: "16-bit", "8-bit", "Game Boy", "SNES RPG"
 - "limited color palette" and "clean pixels" push the output toward authentic pixel art rather than downscaled photos
 - Negative "anti-aliasing" prevents smooth edges that ruin the pixel aesthetic
-

Watercolor

Soft, organic, and surprisingly hard to get right without a LoRA. The base models default to either too crisp or too muddy.

Best setup:

- **SDXL:** Base checkpoint + watercolor LoRA (multiple options on CivitAI)
- **SD 1.5:** Base checkpoint + watercolor LoRA by fladdict (HuggingFace)
- **Flux:** Natural language prompting works reasonably well without LoRAs

Example prompt:

watercolor painting of a Japanese garden in spring, cherry blossom tree over a koi pond, soft edges, wet-on-wet technique, paint bleeds into white paper, visible paper texture, delicate brushwork, pastel tones

Negative prompt:

photo, realistic, digital, sharp edges, high contrast, dark, heavy saturation, 3d render

Settings: CFG 5-7 · DPM++ 2M Karras · 25-35 steps · LoRA weight 0.5-0.8

Key tricks:

- “white paper background” and “visible paper texture” sell the watercolor illusion
- “wet-on-wet technique” and “paint bleeds” create the characteristic softness
- Lower LoRA weights (0.5-0.7) often look more natural than full strength
- Lower CFG preserves the organic, flowing quality – high CFG makes watercolors look rigid

Comic Book / Graphic Novel

Bold lines, high contrast, dramatic compositions.

Best setup:

- **SDXL:** Base checkpoint + Eldritch Comics v1.2 LoRA or Comic Book Style SDXL LoRA
- **SD 1.5:** Base checkpoint + comic-specific LoRAs

Example prompt (SDXL + Eldritch Comics):

comic book art, graphic novel illustration, a detective in a noir alley, rain-soaked trench coat, neon signs, bold ink outlines, dramatic shadows, halftone dots, high saturation, dynamic angle

Negative prompt:

photo, realistic, soft, pastel, blurry, low contrast, anime, watercolor

Settings: CFG 6-8 · Euler a · 25-35 steps · LoRA weight 0.7-1.0

Key tricks:

- “bold ink outlines” and “halftone dots” are the defining visual elements
- “dynamic angle” improves composition for comic panels
- Eldritch Comics LoRA works best with non-anime SDXL checkpoints – try it with Juggernaut or DreamShaper as the base
- For Marvel/DC aesthetics: add “American superhero comic, vivid colors”
- For indie/noir: add “black and white, heavy shadows, cross-hatching”

Fantasy Art

Epic scope, mythical subjects, dramatic lighting.

Best setup:

- **SDXL:** DreamShaper XL (built for this)
- **Any base:** Velvet’s Mythic Fantasy Styles LoRA (available for Flux, Pony, and Illustrious)
- **SD 1.5:** DreamShaper 8

Example prompt:

epic fantasy art, a dragon perched on a crumbling mountain fortress, storm clouds boiling overhead, lightning illuminating ancient ruins, magical runes glowing on stone pillars, highly detailed, dramatic lighting, digital painting, sharp focus

Settings: CFG 5-8 · DPM++ SDE Karras (quality) or DPM++ 2M Karras (faster) · 28-40 steps

Key tricks:

- DreamShaper was purpose-built for fantasy – it understands “mythical”, “ethereal”, “ancient” better than photorealism checkpoints
- “highly detailed” + “sharp focus” prevents the dreamy softness that plagues fantasy prompts
- Reference fantasy art legends in style LoRAs: “Frazetta”, “Boris Vallejo”, “Brom”
- DPM++ SDE Karras produces the richest detail for fantasy scenes

Minimalist / Vector

Clean lines, flat colors, geometric shapes. This is one of the few styles where negative prompts do most of the work.

Best setup:

- **SDXL:** Base checkpoint, no LoRA needed
- **Flux:** Natural language works well for clean geometric output

Example prompt:

```
minimalist vector illustration of a mountain landscape, flat design, clean lines, limited color palette of 5 colors, geometric shapes, simple composition, no gradients, adobe illustrator style
```

Negative prompt (critical for this style):

```
photorealistic, 3d render, shadow, gradient, texture, complex, busy, noisy, detailed, organic shapes, painterly
```

Settings: CFG 7-10 (higher CFG enforces cleaner shapes) · DPM++ 2M Karras · 20-30 steps

Key tricks:

- The negative prompt matters more than the positive for minimalism – you’re fighting the model’s default tendency toward detail
- “limited color palette of X colors” gives surprisingly good results
- Higher CFG (8-10) helps enforce the flat, clean aesthetic
- For logos: “minimalist vector logo, simple icon, white background, single shape”

LoRAs: The Style Multiplier

LoRAs are small files (10-200MB) that modify a base model’s behavior without replacing it. Think of them as style plugins – you keep your checkpoint and layer LoRAs on top.

How to Use Them

In A1111: Add to your prompt: `<lora:classipeintxl:0.8>`

In ComfyUI: Add a LoRA Loader node between your checkpoint loader and the sampler. Set the filename and strength.

How to Stack Multiple LoRAs

This is where things get powerful – and where things can go wrong.

LoRAs Stacked	Weight Per LoRA	Result
1	0.7-1.0	Clean, strong style influence
2	0.5-0.8	Good – two compatible styles blend well
3	0.4-0.7	Usable – start watching for conflicts
4+	0.3-0.5	Diminishing returns – LoRAs fight each other

The practical limit is 2-3 LoRAs. Beyond that, style LoRAs pull color science in opposite directions, character LoRAs override each other's features, and quality drops. If you need a complex style, find one LoRA that covers it rather than stacking five.

Weight strategies that work:

- **Two LoRAs:** Split 0.6/0.4 or 0.7/0.3 – give the primary style higher weight
- **Three LoRAs:** Split roughly 0.5/0.3/0.2 – one dominant, two subtle
- **Rule of thumb:** Keep total combined weights near 1.0

Example stack (SDXL): ClassipeintXL (oil painting, weight 0.7) + a character LoRA (weight 0.4) = oil painting portrait of a specific character.

Where to Find LoRAs

Source	What It Offers
CivitAI (civitai.com)	Largest library. Sort by "Most Downloaded" and filter by your base model. Check example images and trigger words.
HuggingFace	Official repos, research-grade models. More technical, fewer community reviews.

Safety note: Always download `.safetensors` format, not `.ckpt`. The safetensors format cannot contain executable code. Checkpoint files (`.ckpt`) can.

Recommended Style LoRAs by Category

Style	LoRA Name	Base Model	Notes
Photorealism	UltraRealistic LoRA Project v2	Flux	Dynamic poses, DSLR quality
Photorealism	Realism Engine	SDXL	Enhances any SDXL checkpoint
Anime	PHM v3	Illustrious XL	Most popular anime style pack
Anime	Dark Katana	Flux	20K+ CivitAI likes, atmospheric
Oil painting	ClassipeintXL v2.1	SDXL	Most consistent painterly LoRA
Pixel art	Pixel Art XL v1.1	SDXL	By nerijs, also on HuggingFace
Pixel art	8bitdiffuser 64x v4.0	SD 1.5	Retro game perfection
Comic	Eldritch Comics v1.2	SDXL	Bold outlines, sci-fi elements
Fantasy	Velvet's Mythic Fantasy	Flux/Pony/ Illustrious	Cross-platform style pack
Watercolor	Watercolor by fladdict	SD 1.5	Trained on public domain paintings
Detail boost	Extreme Detailer	Flux	Adds fine detail to any Flux output

How Flux LoRAs Differ from SD LoRAs

	SD/SDXL LoRA	Flux LoRA
Architecture	U-Net	Transformer (flow matching)
Training images needed	70-200	25-30
Training steps	3,000-5,000	500-1,000
Prompt style	Booru tags or keywords	Natural language
File size	10-200MB typical	Similar but growing
Ecosystem maturity	Very mature	Growing fast

The biggest practical difference: Flux LoRAs respond to natural language descriptions rather than tag-based prompts. You write “an oil painting in the style of Monet” instead of `<lora:monet_style:0.8>, oil painting, impressionist`.

Prompting: The Technique That Costs Nothing

No matter what model or LoRA you're using, prompt structure determines output quality.

The Universal Prompt Formula

For SD 1.5 / SDXL:

```
[Subject], [Style/Medium], [Details], [Setting], [Lighting],
[Composition], [Quality Tags]
```

For Flux:

```
A [detailed description of scene and subject] in [style].
[Lighting and mood]. [Compositional details]. [Technical quality].
```

Flux understands full sentences. SD models respond better to comma-separated tags and keywords. Use the format that matches your model.

Negative Prompts: What Actually Works

The universal foundation (SD 1.5 / SDXL):

```
worst quality, low quality, lowres, blurry, distorted, jpeg artifacts,
bad anatomy, extra limbs, deformed
```

Then add style-specific exclusions:

- **For photorealism:** add `cartoon, anime, illustration, painting, CGI`
- **For anime:** add `realistic, photo, 3d render, western`
- **For oil painting:** add `photo, digital, modern, smooth`

Common mistake: Overloading negatives. Listing 50 exclusions confuses the model and causes blurry, incoherent output. Keep it focused — 10-15 terms covering the things you actually don't want.

Advanced technique: Textual inversion embeddings like **EasyNegative** and **bad-prompt-v2** pack thousands of trained negative concepts into a single trigger word. Install once, add `EasyNegative` to your negative prompt, and skip the long lists.

Flux does not use negative prompts. Quality is controlled entirely through the positive prompt and guidance scale. Write “high quality, sharp focus, detailed” in the positive rather than trying to exclude problems.

CFG Scale: The Style Dial

CFG (Classifier-Free Guidance) controls how strictly the model follows your prompt. Higher = more literal, lower = more creative.

Style	SD 1.5	SDXL	Flux Guidance
Photorealism	7-10	5-7	3.0-3.8
Anime	5-7	3-6	3.0-3.5
Oil painting	6-9	5-8	3.0-3.5
Concept art	7-11	5-8	3.0-4.0
Pixel art	7-9	1.5*	3.0
Watercolor	5-7	5-6	3.0
Minimalist	7-10	6-9	3.5-4.0

*Pixel Art XL LoRA uses atypically low CFG – follow the LoRA author’s settings.

The rule: Soft, organic styles (watercolor, painterly) want lower CFG. Hard, precise styles (minimalist, pixel art, photorealism) want higher CFG. Going above 10 on any style usually introduces artifacts.

Sampler Selection

Sampler	Best For	Why
DPM++ 2M Karras	Default for everything	Fast, high quality, predictable
DPM++ SDE Karras	Final renders, maximum detail	Slower but richest output
Euler a	Anime, creative styles	Adds variation, never fully converges
Euler	Comparison testing	Converges reliably, good for X/Y plots

The distinction that matters: Ancestral samplers (Euler a, DPM++ 2S a) add randomness each step – images never fully stabilize, which creates variety. Non-ancestral samplers (DPM++ 2M, Euler) converge to a stable result, which is better for consistent photorealism. Use ancestral for creative exploration, non-ancestral for reproducible results.

ComfyUI Workflows for Style Control

[ComfyUI](#) is the better tool for style experimentation. It's 25-60% faster than A1111, uses ~14% less VRAM, and the node-based workflow lets you chain complex style operations.

Essential Nodes for Style Work

Install these via ComfyUI Manager:

Node Pack	What It Does
IPAdapter Plus	Style transfer from reference images – the most powerful style tool available
Efficiency Nodes	X/Y plots, LoRA stacking, workflow optimization
Impact Pack	Face enhancement, detail enhancement
ControlNet Aux	Pose detection, depth maps, edge detection, line art extraction
WAS Node Suite	Image processing utilities

The Style Transfer Workflow (IPAdapter)

IPAdapter lets you feed a reference image and apply its style to new generations. This is the most powerful style control technique available locally.

1. Load your base checkpoint
2. Add an IPAdapter node – load `ip-adapter-plus_sdxl_vit-h.safetensors`
3. Feed a reference image (an oil painting, a photo, an anime screenshot)
4. Connect to your KSampler
5. IPAdapter extracts the visual style and applies it to whatever you prompt

Combine IPAdapter (for style) with ControlNet (for structure) in the same workflow: IPAdapter controls how it looks, ControlNet controls what it looks like.

The Style Comparison Workflow (X/Y Plot)

Use the Efficiency Nodes X/Y Plot to systematically test style combinations:

- **X axis:** Different checkpoints (Juggernaut, DreamShaper, RealVisXL)
- **Y axis:** Different LoRAs or LoRA weights (0.4, 0.6, 0.8, 1.0)

- **Result:** A grid showing every combination

This is how you find your best style setup without generating 50 images manually. One workflow, one prompt, a grid of every combination.

A1111 Alternatives

A1111 (or Forge) works well for straightforward generation:

- **X/Y/Z Plot** built into the interface – same grid comparison, different UI
- **ControlNet extension** – same structural control capabilities
- **Tag Autocomplete** extension – invaluable for anime-style Danbooru tag prompting
- **Styles feature** – save prompt + negative prompt combos as named presets
- **Regional Prompter** – control different image regions with different prompts

A1111's advantage: simpler interface for single-image generation and quick prompt testing. ComfyUI's advantage: complex multi-step workflows, batch comparison, and lower resource usage.

What Each VRAM Tier Can Produce

4-8GB VRAM

SD 1.5 at full speed. Every style, every checkpoint, every LoRA in the SD 1.5 ecosystem. At 512x512 resolution, generating in ~1-2 seconds per image on modern cards.

SDXL with optimizations. 1024x1024 works on 8GB with xFormers and VAE tiling enabled. Slower than 12GB but fully functional. LoRA stacking limited to 1-2.

Flux (quantized). GGUF Q4/Q5 Flux fits in 8GB via SD Forge. Quality loss from quantization is visible but still impressive for the VRAM. FLUX.2 Klein 4B (January 2026) was designed for this tier.

Best styles at this tier: Anime on SD 1.5 (Anything V5), photorealism on SD 1.5 (Realistic Vision), pixel art on SD 1.5 (8bitdiffuser).

12GB VRAM

SDXL comfortably. Full resolution with refiner, ControlNet, and IPAdapter running simultaneously. 2-3 LoRAs stacked without issues.

Flux quantized (FP8/INT8). Good quality, minor quantization artifacts. Natural language prompting and text-in-images work well.

Best styles at this tier: Everything that works on SDXL – this is the sweet spot for style experimentation. Photorealism (Juggernaut XL), anime (Illustrious XL), concept art (DreamShaper XL), all LoRA styles.

16GB VRAM

Flux near full quality. FP8 quantized Flux with room for LoRAs and ControlNet. Complex ComfyUI workflows with multiple nodes.

SDXL with everything. No compromises. Stack 3-4 LoRAs, run full refiner pipelines, upscale in the same workflow.

24GB VRAM

Everything at full quality. Flux.1 Dev at FP16 with no quantization. FLUX.2 Klein 9B. Complex multi-model workflows. Flux LoRA training. This is the “no compromises” tier for image generation.

For specific GPU recommendations, see our [VRAM requirements guide](#) and [24GB VRAM guide](#).

Building Your Personal Style Library

Once you’ve found styles you like, organize them so you can reproduce and iterate.

Organize Your Files

```
models/  
  checkpoints/  
    sdxl/  
      juggernaut-xl-v10.safetensors  
      dreamshaper-xl.safetensors  
      illustrious-xl-v10.safetensors  
    flux/  
      flux1-dev-Q5.gguf  
  loras/  
    sdxl/  
      style/  
        classipeintxl-v21.safetensors  
        pixel-art-xl-v11.safetensors
```

```

    eldritch-comics-v12.safetensors
  character/
  concept/
flux/
  style/
    dark-katana.safetensors
    ultra-realistic.safetensors

```

Group by base model first, then by purpose. You don't want to accidentally load an SD 1.5 LoRA on an SDXL checkpoint – it won't crash, but the results will be terrible.

Save Everything

ComfyUI: Every workflow saves as a `.json` file. Create a `workflows/` folder organized by style:

```

workflows/
  photorealism-juggernaut.json
  anime-illustrious.json
  oil-painting-classipaint.json
  pixel-art-retro.json

```

A1111: Generation parameters are embedded in every PNG by default. Use the PNG Info tab to reload exact settings from any image you've generated. Save your best prompt/negative combos as named Styles for quick reuse.

Test Systematically

Don't generate one image and decide a style "doesn't work." Run an X/Y plot:

1. Pick one prompt that represents your target style
2. Test across 3-5 checkpoints (X axis) at 3-4 CFG values (Y axis)
3. Find the best checkpoint/CFG combo
4. Test 3-4 samplers against that combo
5. Add LoRAs one at a time, testing weight ranges 0.4-1.0
6. Document winning combinations

This takes 20 minutes and saves hours of trial-and-error across future sessions.

Community Resources

CivitAI (civitai.com)

The largest hub for checkpoints, LoRAs, textual inversions, and embeddings. Filter by base model (SD 1.5, SDXL, Flux, Illustrious, Pony), sort by “Most Downloaded” or “Highest Rated.” Every model page shows example images, trigger words, and recommended settings.

Navigation tips: Check download count and reviews before downloading. Read the trigger words in the model description – many LoRAs require specific keywords to activate. NSFW content exists; use account filter settings.

Reddit

- **r/StableDiffusion** (~884K members) – general discussion, workflow sharing, troubleshooting
- **r/comfyui** (~148K members) – ComfyUI-specific workflows and custom nodes

Notable Creators to Follow

- **Lykon** – DreamShaper series
- **SG161222** – RealVisXL series
- **RunDiffusion** – Juggernaut XL
- **cagliostrolab** – Animate XL
- **nerijs** – Pixel Art XL LoRA

The Bottom Line

Every art style you’ve seen in AI-generated images is reproducible locally. The formula is always the same: pick the right base model for your style category, add one or two focused LoRAs, write prompts with specific style anchors and material descriptors, and dial in your CFG and sampler.

Start with one style. Get good at it. Build a workflow you can reproduce instantly. Then expand. The difference between “someone who uses Stable Diffusion” and “someone who makes great art with Stable Diffusion” is usually just knowing which combination of checkpoint, LoRA, and prompt settings produces the specific look they’re after.

You have the models. You have the LoRAs. You have the hardware. Now go make something cool.

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Source: <https://insiderllm.com/guides/ai-art-styles-workflows-guide/>

Free guides for running AI locally