

Benchmark Shot Breakdown

The music-box opening as the first proof shot. Draft, to lock with Igor and Nelson.

— The shot

The music-box opening: 5 to 10 seconds, painterly. Closed box in the crystal palace, lid opens, slow push in until the mirror is nearly full frame. It is the right benchmark because it touches almost everything the pipeline has to do, and a lot of it is already in motion: approved styleframes, a working prompt system, a true-scale 3D blockout with the camera move, first video passes, and a reusable painterly finishing rig in After Effects.

— The plan

STEP	TOOLS	HOURS
1. Lock the scene, refs, and success criteria	Styleframes, face refs, style DNA	2 to 3
2. 3D blockout and camera move	Cinema 4D	4 to 6, mostly done
3. Color-coded viewport renders	C4D viewport	1 to 2
4. Styleframes from the viewport	Nano Banana 2, GPT Image, etc	3 to 4
5. Video passes, multiple takes per model	Seedance, Kling, Veo	4 to 6
6. Painterly finish	After Effects rig, already built	3 to 4
7. Write up the repeatable workflow and costs	Doc	2 to 3

Roughly 20 to 28 hours end to end for a finished, measured shot.

— What it has to prove

Painterly rendering, camera language, refraction and reflection behavior, scale transition, lighting and material language, character consistency inside the mirror, AI workflow repeatability, and the compositing handoff. Character performance is deliberately not part of this shot. That gets its own test, the live-capture pipeline we already mapped out.

— How we measure it

The finished shot gets scored against that list, pass or fail with notes, plus three numbers: cost per usable second, takes generated versus takes kept, and actual hours against this estimate. That scorecard is the evidence feeding the October production-path decision.

— If things break

- **The style will not hold in video:** generate a cleaner pass and push the painterly look entirely in the After Effects finish.
- **First-and-last-frame control fails:** two stitched 5-second beats, or one take with timestamped beats.
- **The character drifts in the mirror:** shrink her presence in this shot and let the dedicated character test carry that question.
- **Coveboard collaboration is not ready in time:** run it on the models directly with shared folders, and keep hardening Coveboard in parallel.
- **A model fails on rights or terms:** swap it. The workflow is model-agnostic on purpose.