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CONVEYING CHARACTER PERSONALITY THROUGH ILLUSTRATION

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Abstract

The objective of this thesis was to study what is the most effective way to convey character's personality through illustration. The thesis goes over different aspects of character design and illustration and how those details can be used to one's benefit when illustrating characters.

Research part of this illustration focused on the fundamentals of character design and illustration, and how illustration is used in the video game industry. The production part of this thesis consists of designing a character and creating an illustration of that character, in such manner that it would be fit for a video game. The author was successful in creating a character with a strong personality, and then conveying that to the audience through a finished illustration.

The thesis was successful on its own narrow scale, but the project could be expanded to create more characters from the same world setting and creating a set of character sheets and illustrations. Alternatively the same character could be used, but he would be shown in different situations or at a different parts of his life.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis goes over the fundamentals of character design and character illustration and then how those were used in a practical manner while doing the project. The final product will be a finished character illustration, with multiple variations in composition, colour and posing of the character. The thesis aims to answer the questions of what are the biggest factors that affect the way character is perceived in illustration, what makes the character seem evil or good when the audience gets a very limited view of them and how much character's personality and past experiences affect the way they look and portray themselves.

This thesis focuses on the western understanding of colours, shapes and body language. There are many differences on how these are interpreted all over the world, but the author decided to limit it for the sake of time and simplicity.

The goal of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of what makes a character illustration interesting, inviting and captivating, and how a story can be told just with one piece of artwork. The fundamentals of illustration can be used regardless of the illustration style, and therefore other styles were not used or tested in the process. The illustration style can have big effects on how a character is portrayed, but for the sake of time the style was limited to the authors own semi-realistic style of painting and drawing.

The focus of this thesis is on the illustration process, but as character personality is a major part of character design the author will go over the fundamentals of design before moving on to the illustration fundamentals and process.

2. CHARACTER DESIGN

Character design is the process of creating a character for a specific purpose, be it TV, video games, movies or even product design. This happens through establishing the character's personality and conveying that through physical appearance (Bancroft 2016).

Character creation is a long and difficult process, but there is no one right or correct way to design a character. Understanding the fundamentals of what makes a character memorable makes the process easier and the finished character more polished (Concept Art Empire no year).

Characters work as a vessel for delivering a story to the person who is consuming the media the character is in. However, to do that the character needs to be relatable to the audience. This can be achieved by establishing the characters personality, as it helps to make the character feel more like an actual person. This will be discussed more in detail in the next chapter.

It can be useful for the character designer to create/receive a brief for the character in question. The brief is a list of traits or qualities the character has and what should show in the design. The designer needs to know where the character lives, what is their social rank, where do they work and what is their role in the story. This knowledge allows the designer to give the character visual cues that give away this information to the person who is consuming the media without directly telling them.

2.1. Character personality

Why does the character dress or act the way they do? Why are they insecure about their looks or why do they keep pushing people away? Why do they only wear the bare minimum of clothes to keep them warm? Like in real life, one's past experiences affect the way their personality came to be, as in order to fulfil personal needs, person develops certain personality traits (Parvez 2014).

Best approach to character design is to build the character's backstory, personality and important moments in their life before starting to think how they look, as this results in better and more round up characters (Tillman 2011, 5). It can be useful to even imagine how your character would move, talk or open a door, as all of these aspects tell something about a person and establishing these details will help the designer to create very believable characters.

Character personality is most prominent for the viewer in the characters body language. If a character keeps their hands close to their body, does not look at others and tries to look as small as possible they give off a very different feeling from a character who holds their head up high, gestures a lot with their hands and sits very widely on a chair.

Figure 1. A Micro-Dictionary of Gestures (Eisner 1985)

Body language is often unconscious and intuitive; it gives very in-depth view into the person's emotions and thoughts, as it is very difficult to restrain. Very effective way of showing personality is through non-verbal communication, As Geisler (2019) states:

"Over 90% of communication is non-verbal. So humans are always picking up on messages you consciously or unconsciously send them. An important goal is to make our unconscious gestures as much as possible more conscious."

2.2. Shape & Colour

Shapes are used in design to do various things. They can emphasize, create movement and depth, convey mood and lead the eye to what is important. (Bradley 2010) It is impossible to create designs without any shapes in them, therefore knowing what shapes to use to tell a story with a specific meaning is a very useful skill.

Shapes have more universal meaning than colours (Nikolaeva 2017), as the way colours are perceived depends heavily on the viewers country of origin, their religion and their own personal experiences. Identifying shapes is one of the first skills that humans learn (Smith 2014), which is why it is so instinctual. This is very important information to know when designing characters, because by using basic shapes you can tell a lot about a character without saying a word. A good example of this is look at cartoon characters, as they are often designed to be memorable with simplicity and easy readability in mind, as seen in Figure 2.
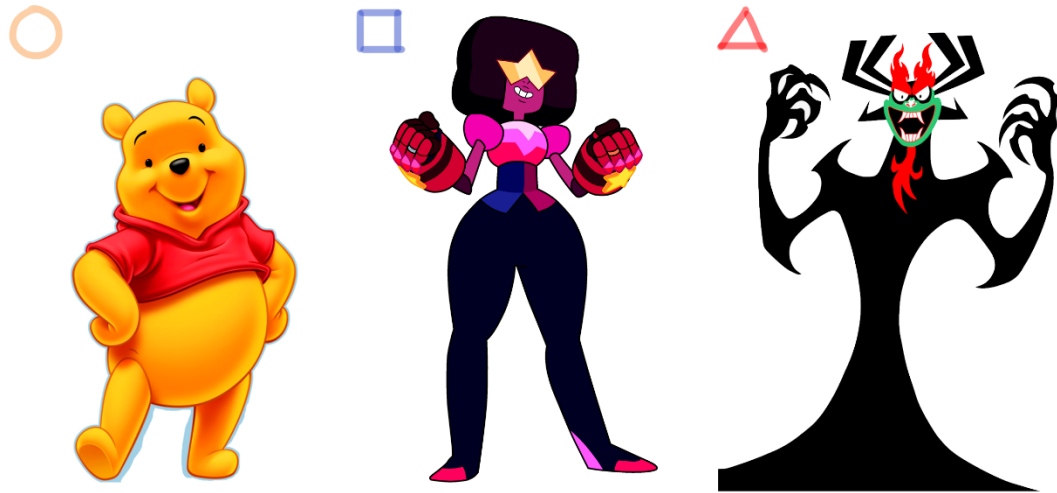

Figure 2. Cartoon characters created out of simple shapes. A.Winnie the Pooh (Walt Disney Productions 1966), b. Garnet from Steven Universe (Cartoon Network 2013) & c. Aku from Samurai Jack (Cartoon Network 2001)

Ovals are friendly, soft and whole. It's also a very cute and childlike shape, that can help to convey the feeling of innocence and softness. Characters on the "good" side of the conflict are often round, to convey the feeling that they are correct and just.

Squares are stable, heavy and consistent. They convey the feeling of reliability, protection and confidence. However it can also give the feeling that the character is stubborn and someone who refuses to change. Square shapes are often used

in characters that are meant to be leaders, guardians and warriors, and is seen as a masculine shape.

Triangular shapes are dangerous, moving, unpredictable and determined, yet they can be stable and hierarchical, depending on how the triangle is positioned.

Characters don't have to be created just out of one shape. It is very intricate to compose a character's silhouette from multiple different shapes that are different sizes, to show different parts of their personality. This way these basic geometrical shapes can be modified in endless ways, always creating new and intriguing characters.

Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
Excitement Strength Love Energy	Confidence Success Bravery Sociability	Creativity Happiness Warmth Cheer	Nature Healing Freshness Quality	Trust Peace Loyalty Competence

Pink	Purple	Brown	Black	White
Compassion Sincerity Sophstication Sweet	Royalty Luxury Spirituality Ambition	Dependable Rugged Trustworthy Simple	Formality Dramatic Sophistication Security	Clean Simplicity Innocence Honest

Figure 3. Color psychology chart (Psychologie India no year)

For a character designer it is important to understand that having endless amount of details in a design will not make it better, and the same principle goes to colours. It is better to pick a maximum of three colours to build your character from, as it keeps the design simpler and easier to read and understand. How to choose these colours however depends on the characters personality and how the character is meant to be perceived (Hauff 2018). Different colours have different associations, and Figure 3 is a very simple presentation of what emotions colours evoke in people on a psychological level.

Warm colours are welcoming, comforting, passionate and positive. They can also be seen as immature and naïve. These colours are also effective in creating a focal point in the design, as they tend to catch the viewer's eye (CGCookie 2013).

Cool colours are seen as reserved, calm and mature. They are seen as calculative and they are associated with nature and the elements associated with it, such as water and vegetation. (Chapman, 2010)

What is important to note is that this is only the Western understanding of colour psychology and depending on the viewers country of origin these meanings might vary.

2.3. The influence of worldbuilding

Worldbuilding doesn't necessarily define a character, but it can give very useful tools to the designer to give hints to the audience of who the character is, where do they come from and what they do. The story's world impacts the characters life, and that will show in the design. For example, weather affects the materials that are used for outfits as well as how many layers people wear. People who live in very hot and dry climate wear very different clothing than people who live where ground remains frozen all year around. People in colder climates need to use furs and other warm materials for them to survive, which also means that they need to hunt in order to acquire these materials. Establishing this creates a whole new level of understanding of the character and what they consider to be important.

When talking about game design related to character creation and worldbuilding, characters are most often used as a lens for the player to experience the world. Each detail and object in a character describes the world the character lives in and is a response to something in the said world. (Wood 2013)

The artist needs to know what is happening in the world the character inhabits to make them feel realistic. Realism in this case means that the character has a life outside of the story that the media is telling the audience. Why this is important is that it makes it easier for the audience to feel closer to the characters and to identify with them.

3. ILLUSTRATION

Illustration art, aka "commercial" art is used to embellish, clarify, or decorate something. It can range from a simple black-and-white cartoon to a full-color billboard and beyond. – American Art Archives

Illustrations can be created with any kind of art medium, and places of use for illustration are limitless. From book covers and product label design to wall murals and websites, illustrations are always present in our everyday lives.

The most common use of illustration is in marketing and advertising, and it dates back to Ancient Egypt where posters where made by hand on papyrus (Illustration History no year). Ever since illustration has been used in marketing, whether it was a sale for everyday products or propaganda for war, as seen in Figures 4-5.

Figure 4. Coffee advertisement (Leyendecker 1941)

Figure 5. War propaganda (Woodburn no year)
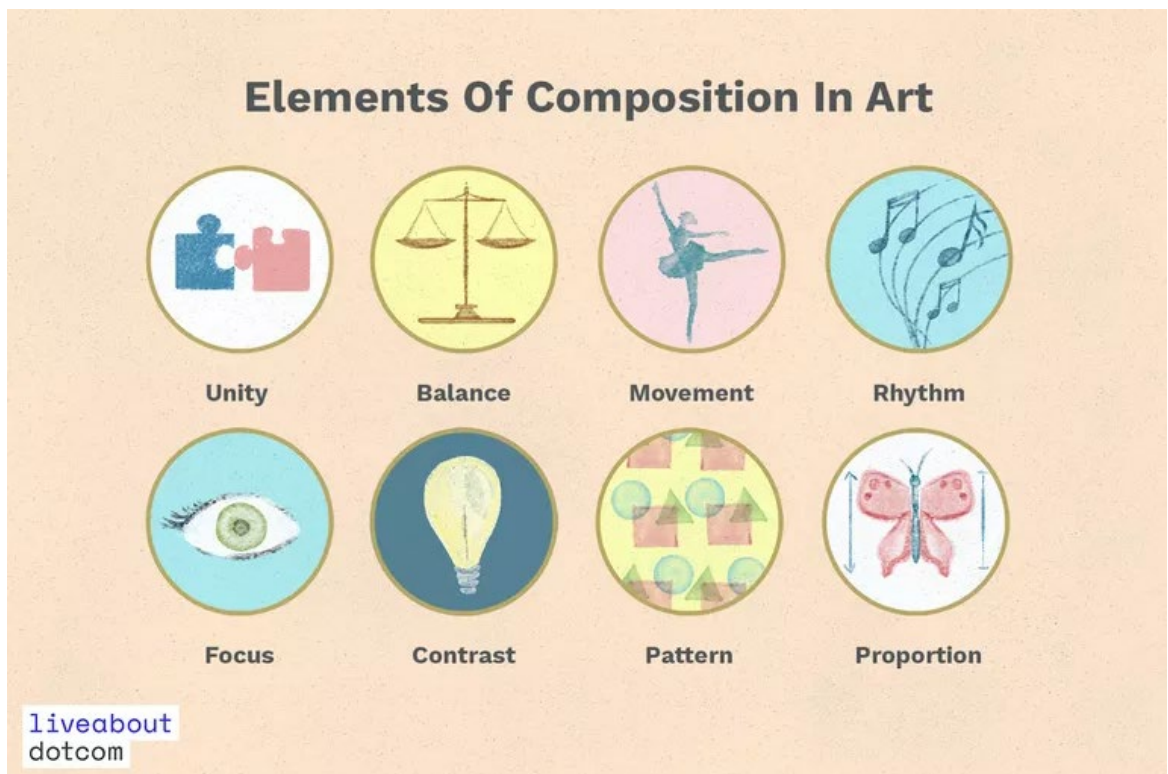
3.1. Fundamentals

Figure 6. Elements of composition illustrated (Liveabout 2019)

There are endless ways to compose and build up a picture from different elements, however to effectively deliver a story and to guide the viewer's eye to what is important is not necessarily simple.

In order to compose a great and impactful image, the artist should be asking themselves these questions.

Unity – Do the elements of the illustration feel like they belong together in the same world or does something stand out because it is different somehow?

Balance – Is the illustration supposed to feel stable or is there a need for other side to be heavier?

Movement – Do the objects in the illustration move and is the movement visible in any way?

Rhythm – Does the illustration have a rhythm to lead the viewer, such as repeating colours or shapes? Does something break the rhythm to draw attention?

Focus – What is the most important part of the picture? What does the artist want the audience to pay most attention to?

Contrast – Are there contrasting elements in the picture? Is there variation in colour, size, texture or values?

Pattern – Is there a repeating element in the picture and what purpose does it serve?

Proportion – Are some elements of the picture larger than others and how does that

Answering these questions forces the artist to think what is happening in the

illustration and why it is happening. It is also very helpful in guiding the artist to establish the focal point of the illustration.

All this considered illustration might seem a very overwhelming task, but it is important to remember that the most important part for the viewer is the illusion of reality, not the reality itself. The characters and worlds that illustrators and designers create are empty and lifeless up until the point they are made seem real, which is the job of the illustrator. (Mateu-Mestre 2010,)

3.2. Composition

Composition is about arranging elements in the pictured scene in a clear, easy-to-read way, and the most important task of an illustration is to tell a story. The story then defines what is the focal point of the image and what are the supporting elements (Ellis & Dos Santos 2019). Another essential point in illustration is that the scene that is illustrated must have a purpose. The goal of the illustrator is to help the audience to understand the narrative, not to steer them away from it.

There are multiple ways to compose a picture, but some of the most important aspects are lightning, staging and framing (Mateu-Mestre 2010, 36).

Light is a very effective way to guide the viewer's eye, as the most contrasting parts of the illustrations are what humans instinctively see first (Figures 7-8). The direction, colour and intensity of the light can create different atmospheres on the picture, and light is important for the audience to be able to clearly see what is happening in the illustration. One object can tell multiple different stories with a good and clever use of lightning (Mateu-Mestre 2010, 19).

Staging is using fundamentals such as colours, light and values to deliver the story the artist wants to tell the audience. The name comes from the mental image of having the picture be an actual stage for the idea that is being illustrated. Fundamentally it is delivering the emotional message of the story, and

it is another word for thumbnailing. (Bucci 2016.)

Framing means positioning elements and shapes on the picture to direct attention to the focal point. These elements can be essentially anything; natural elements such as trees or clouds, darkness or light, architectural elements and even characters (Figures 7-8). (Scott 2019.)

At its core composition is about finding opposites and placing them next to each other to create relationships, then using tools such as light, colour and edges to guide the viewer to the most important part of the picture.

Figure 7. Nathan Hale (N.C. Wyeth 1922)

Figure 8. The Bear Hunter, N.C Wyeth 1909)

3.3. Illustration in video games

The most usual illustrations seen in video games are splash screen pictures. The term splash art originates from the word "splash page", which was first used in comic books (Tie 2019) and later were introduced in websites (Kyrnin 2019). The

purpose of the page was to capture the attention of the reader as well as establish the setting, characters and mood of the story. Splash screens in video games are mostly used while the game is loading (Figure 9-10), and they can in some cases contain some useful information or gameplay tips to the player. At its core it is a way to distract the player from the loading times, which have been increasing as games take so much more memory and require more power from PCs and consoles to run smoothly.
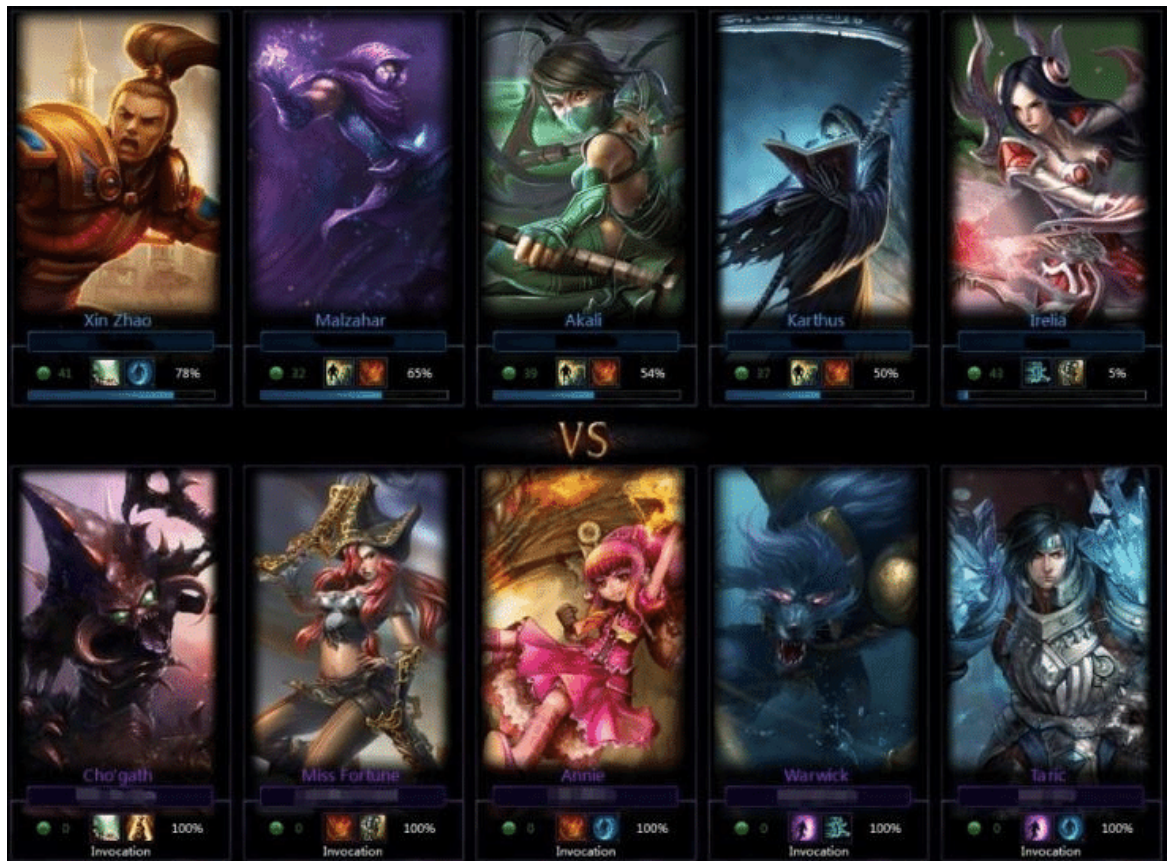

Figure 9. Loading screen from League of Legends, showing character illustrations. (Riot Games 2009)

Figure 10. Loading screen from Guild Wars 2, showing concept art of the loading level (Arenanet 2019)

Illustrations can also be used in-game. Dragon Age: Inquisition (Bioware 2014) uses tarot cards to replace a basic character selection screen. These cards change when the game progresses and the players choices affect how these characters feel about the player character and the world around them. There are multiple different versions for the cards, as Dragon Age: Inquisition is a game where the player needs to make choices that affect the plot of the game.

Figure 11. Tarot Card designs from Dragon Age: Inquisition (Bioware 2014).

Using these designs gives the game a unique feel and is much preferred by players over a plain character selection screen. The illustrations are very appealing, and they have hidden meanings in them, giving hints how the portrayed character feels and what is in store in their future.

Marketing is the most common place to use illustrations on the whole video game industry (Figure 12). Illustrators need to compose eye-catching adverts to sell the game, which is quite a difficult task as most players will see the adverts on social media. The illustrations need to be interesting enough to make the potential future player to stop scrolling and to buy or download the game

Figure 12. Illustrated cover of Control (Remedy Entertainment 2019) for Game Informer (Shanyar 2019).

4. PRODUCTION

4.1. Methods

Thumbnailing is a very important part of the illustration process. By doing multiple small versions of the idea, the artist will be able to see quickly and efficiently what is and what is not working, what the composition of the final piece should be and how the large, overall shapes work together. It also makes the whole process easier and faster, as the artist will not use a lot of time to make detailed sketches when ultimately they end up not using them. When the best thumbnail has been found, then that can be developed and rendered further to make the rendering process easier. (Concept Art Empire no year) There is also the added benefit on working in a small scale; if the image works and is readable in a small scale, it will also work in the bigger scale (Bucci 2016).

In the prototyping phase the process will start with thumbnailing, then on to colour and lightning schemes. At this point the illustration will be not be rendered any further, there will be only necessary elements added.

After being done with the planning, the rendering process will start. This phase consists mostly of using reference material to achieve the best possible finished product. It's beneficial to have references available during all parts of the illustration process, as it makes working faster by eliminating some of the uncertainty during the process. There is no need for the artist to guess how a specific material looks, if there is a photograph of said material next to them.

The programs that were used in the production were Procreate for iPad Pro 12.9 and Adobe Photoshop 2020 for Windows 10. Other tools that were used were Wacom Intuos Pro Medium drawing tablet.

4.2. Kristoffer Aloi

BRIEF: Red-haired entertainer mage, who most of the time hides his true self behind a persona. Very extravagant gestures and appearance.

He travels the land and is basically a wandering jester. He is a talented wizard who uses his magic to tell stories and myths. His performances are magical in every meaning of the word. It's an incredibly beautiful and unforgettable experience, and he is called from far away just to perform in parties and ceremonies. His performance is a mixture between a play and a dance, as he has made himself to be a part of his show. He reacts to the magic as if it was his co-star, and he acts along with it.

He uses a wide variety of different costumes depending on where he is performing; but he always stands out from the crowd. His costumes are very beautifully embroidered with different patterns.

This is still just a public version of Kristoffer. On the other side of the facade he is rather calm, calculative and wise man. He enjoys his time alone and needs the time between his performances to "recharge" his social batteries. He prefers observing rather than taking an active part in conversations and other social situations.

Not many people know this side of him, as he travels and performs alone. Most people just know him as a very charismatic, quick-witted person, who never loses a debate and is very popular among men and women alike. He loves to perform but more than anything but at the same time he dreams of sometimes owning a small cottage in the woods where he would live with his pets.

The reason why Kristoffer started performing can be found in his childhood. Both his parents were very powerful mages and wanted their son to follow in their footsteps. But Kristoffer fell in love with magic because of its beauty and creativity rather than its practical uses, for example in the military. Kristoffer realised he could shape his magic to be different colours, shapes and sizes, and after practising and experimenting he learned how to shape different creatures that he could move as he pleased.

After growing up and really mastering his craft, he ran away from home and his parents and started performing in taverns and bars to earn himself a place to stay the night. Slowly but surely, he kept getting more and more popular, gathering bigger and bigger audiences every time and thus he caught the attention of the higher ups in society. Kings, queens and lords all over the continent wanted to have him perform in their ceremonies, so he started to travel around with a carriage.

His carriage is very plain and goes against his own personal style, but this is because he does not want to be recognized on his travels. He prefers traveling alone, and he often uses the travel time to think of new plays, reading books or just enjoying the nature around him.

Kristoffer lives in a world that is heavily inspired by the Dungeons and Dragons 5th edition (Wizards of the Coast 2014) role-playing game. World is filled with magic, dragons and politics and the sense of adventure is always present. Using an outside inspiration for the worldbuilding helped with the process immensely, as the author has a lot of experience on tabletop RPGs through their personal experience and by consuming related media.

4.3. Character Design

Figure 13. Portrait of Kristoffer Aloi (Tiainen 2020)

The goal of Kristoffer's character design was to make him seem mysterious at first glance, but still make him approachable and intriguing. He might look a bit dangerous which makes your eyes fixate on him, but when inspecting him more closely you can see that he has very friendly and soft features, soft curly ginger hair and under his clothes he is not very muscular or intimidating (Figure 14).

Kristoffer is built from triangles and squares, and combining these shapes created a very sleek looking character who also looks reliable and friendly. There is still some mystery to him, however not in a frightening sense.

Figure 14. Finished design of Kristoffer and a colour palette (Tiainen 2020)

He knows he is good looking, handsome and rich and he wants to show that to other people. The intricate gold embroidery on his jacket tells that he is quite vain as he is ready to use a lot of money to look good.

However the colour gold was not only used in his design to show his wealth. Combining the golden details with the dark navy blue on his coat balances out the design and softens the quite threatening dark palette of the character. The embroidery is full of round and beautiful shapes that have been inspired by nature, which in a way makes the character more approachable.

His clothing style is very extravagant, classy, and beautiful. He is quite gender non-conforming when it comes to clothing and likes to have quite feminine features in his outfits, such as big gowns and flowy sparkly parts. It is also a tactic for him to attract people's attention and notice his presence in the room.

Figure 15. Character costume variations. (Tiainen 2020)

The costume design phase was a time-consuming process. It was very important to find a balance between extravagant and pompous style and practicality. It was inspired heavily by Ludwig XIVs outfits in 1600's, as baroque has a very dramatic flair that was seen fit for the character. The character needed to have a very good range of motion because he would be moving a lot during his performances, while looking beautiful and well groomed. Even if the costume that the character wears would never be 3D-modeled or made in real life, it's still important to consider how the character would wear the costume they are in. This helps to create a sense of reality in a fantasy world filled with magic. Although the author had an idea of what they wanted the finished design to look like, they made multiple different versions of the outfit to explore other options (Figure 15) . The final design ended up being very close to the original idea, still doing research and testing different options helped to simplify the outfit and only keep the essentials in the final design (Figure 14).

4.4. Planning the Illustration

Doing research on the subject, such as reading books and looking at art, gave a better understanding of how the process should go to make the actual painting part easier and faster. The research was done before making the first sketches to give the illustration a good foundation to build on later.

Multiple sketches and thumbnails were made before the final composition was chosen. During this phase the goal is to explore all the different ideas instead of spending too much time perfecting the sketches. The most important part is to get the idea across, as then the best idea can be developed further (Figure 16).
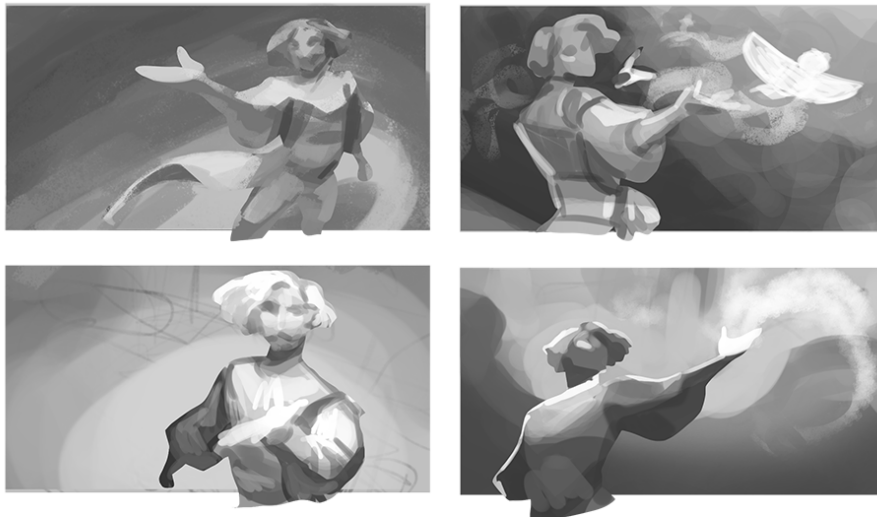

Figure 16: Few of the illustration thumbnails that were not chosen. (Tiainen 2020)

The illustration needed to convey movement, mystique and elegance, but also confidence and professionality. To ensure this round and soft shapes were used to plan the illustration, as seen in Figure 17.
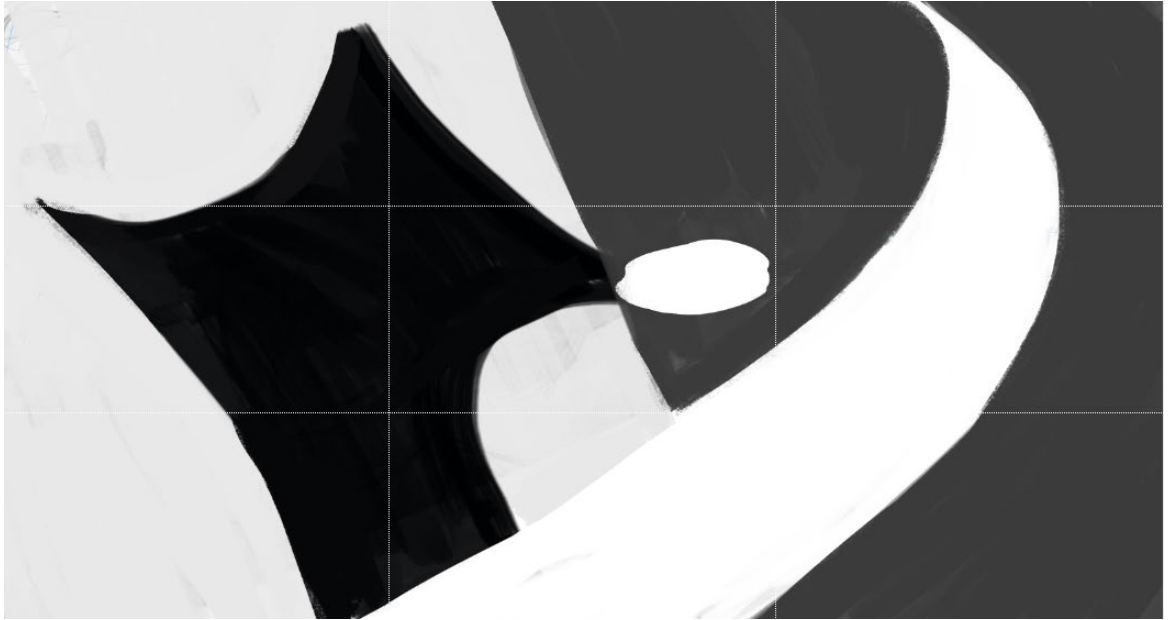
Figure 17. Overall shapes and values illustrated with the rule of thirds (Tiainen 2020)

Trying out different compositions is a time-consuming process, as it was the top priority to introduce the character to the viewers. The audience needed to get a good view on the characters outfit, so the picture could not be framed in a way where the embroidery on the jacket would be hidden. This ruled out many possible character poses and perspectives for the illustration.

Figure 18. Final composition sketch (Tiainen 2020)

The chosen composition conveys the character personality effectively (Figure 18). Kristoffer's face and expression are almost flirting to the audience to capture their interest, however at the same time his face is turned away from the viewer. As if he is trying to lure the audience into watching him and his performance. His body is in a fluid, moving position and he is in the middle of his performance. This is where the character feels comfortable and that can be seen in the body language. Kristoffer's shoulders are pulled back, his chest is puffed, and he is holding his jaw high and his arms are open and inviting. Kristoffer's hands are glowing because he is creating a magical dragon to be his supporting actor.

There were many aspects that needed to be considered while choosing the framing of the illustration. If the character was portrayed from below he would look strong and be the centre of attention, above everyone else and in the spotlight, as if the viewer was watching him from a theatre seat. If the character was portrayed from above the audience would see Kristoffer as if they were the magical creatures he creates. They are such a big and important part of his performances, that he sees that his magic is more important in the play than himself.

However, the meaning of the illustration is to show Kristoffer's performance as that is such and important part of him, so the author chose to portray the character from a slightly below perspective. Kristoffer's showman-persona is flamboyant and charismatic, and that is what should be conveyed to the audience.

Kristoffer can create any kind of creature with his magic, but for the purpose of this illustration the creature is a dragon. Dragons are mythical creatures in every part of the world and illustrating it really gives out the essence of this character, and his profession becomes clear for everyone. Other subjects such as birds or aurora were considered, but a dragon was deemed to be the best option.

Kristoffer's hands glow a bright blue light while he is doing magic, so that had to be considered while planning the lighting of the scene. The main light is behind

the character, but he is also lit up from his hands and from the light that bounces back to him from the floor. Bounce light illuminates his face and it's clear to see, even when it is not lit by the main light source.

Values were tested and decided with a black and white version of the picture. This is a very common practice, as getting rid of the colours helps the artist to see if there is enough contrast between different parts and objects of the illustration. Dream-like soft and airbrushed values and lights were used to emphasize the feeling of Kristoffer's magic; it feels like you're living inside the fairy tale that he is telling you. (Figure 19)

Figure 19. Value study of the illustration (Tiainen 2020)

At this point of the production it was established that the background of the picture is used to emphasize the character, not necessarily be completely accurate. It's an often-used technique in illustration to only show what is necessary and what helps the artist to get the idea across to the viewer, instead of rendering and defining every detail that is in the illustration. This will be explained in more detail in the next chapter.
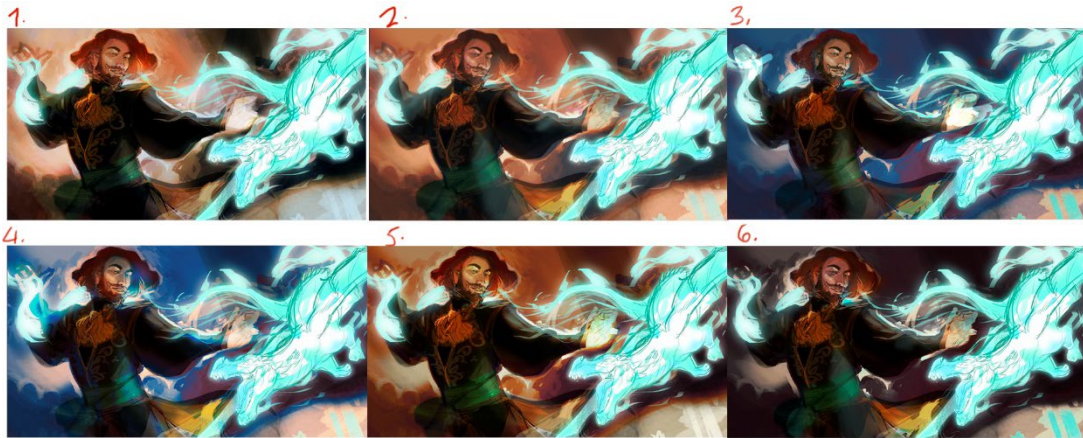
Figure 20. Different colour schemes were tested on the thumbnail (Tiainen 2020)

Different colour schemes were tested on the final thumbnail to see which one would work best to deliver the desired story. The priority in this illustration is showing Kristoffer's very iconic red hair and his light blue magic. These details in mind the final colour scheme became to be a mixture of versions two and six from Figure 20. Blue background would have worked well as a contrasting element for the characters hair, but it made the image slightly too cold and monochromatic, as the magic dragon and Kristoffer's clothes are both a shade of blue as well. The illustration is supposed to feel inviting, therefore a red and purple colour scheme was chosen.

4.5. Rendering

Rendering begins with an anatomical sketch. In this phase the character is stripped down and the focus is shifted to the bones and muscles of the body. The sketch is altered to make sure that the pose is anatomically correct possible for the characters body. In this phase is very important to keep in mind that anatomically correct does not necessarily equal interesting. Often by refining the first sketch too much the image might lose some of its appeal, because the artist focuses too much on the technical aspects and forgets to pay attention to the fluidity and looseness of the sketch, resulting in very stiff and lifeless final painting.

After the first sketches a more refined and detailed sketch is done. At this point the author decided that they would use colour during the rendering process. Some artists prefer working is black and white as then it's easier to get the values correct in the illustration, however often when using this method the final colours can feel very bland and unsaturated. After adding the local colour to the character very rough estimates of light and shadow are painted on the figure. At this phase it's extremely helpful to have the thumbnail next to the actual illustration, to help the artist see where the most important areas of light and shadow are, as seen in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Work in progress picture with the thumbnail as a guideline on top. (Tiainen 2020)

Digital rendering in theory is a rather straight-forward process but learning how to do it effectively and quickly takes years to learn. When rendering the artist refines the sketch and the thumbnail by adding detail and making decisions on where different elements of the illustration will be. There are many different ways to do this but the author decided to use digital painting in this particular illustration.

During the rendering process the author decided to simplify the background but keep the original dreamy feeling, as seen in Figure 19. This was decided after giving more thought to the character as a person; The original idea was to illustrate Kristoffer performing in a beautiful castle with high ceilings and only the

nobility would be able to see him perform there. However Kristoffer performs the same way whether he is in a castle or in a small pub by the side of the road. Therefore, the background was blurred out and filled with more abstract shapes, so that the viewer would not be able to tell specifically where the character is, only that he is inside a building.

When the illustration was almost finished, author decided to change the pose of the character. The character felt quite stiff and lifeless, and the left hand got lost in the illustration. The author decided to move the hand for it to be more visible and to help make the character pose and body language easier to read.

Figure 22. Updated version of the pose and background (Tiainen 2020)

After doing the modifications the illustration was almost done, excluding final details and edits. Adding so called special effects such as glow, coloured filters and blur while finishing the production in Photoshop is a very widely used and effective way to bring out the full potential of the illustration and helps the artist to achieve the desired outcome.

The audience will most likely spend most time looking at the parts of the illustration that are most detailed, therefore it is beneficial for the artist to use most of the rendering time on the face, hands and torso of the character. They are the most expressive parts of a human and those body parts are where

humans instinctively look first to gather information about a person. This is the reason why in the finished illustration both the character's and the dragon's face are the most detailed elements of the illustration (Figure 23).

Figure 23. Finished illustration. (Tiainen 2020)

5.   CONCLUSION

A compelling character illustration is a very tricky and difficult piece of art to achieve. The artist needs to know a lot about the technical aspects of drawing and even psychology, physics and body language. Showing character emotion visually has multiple small nuances that need to be paid attention in order to effectively deliver a story.

The author successfully finished a finalized character design and afterwards an illustration that portrays the character's personality.

The production process was a time-consuming process, but not overly so. The author gained a better understanding of illustration and character design, and why it is so crucial to use most of the production time in planning. Getting to know the character makes the process of illustrating them and conveying that personality to others substantially easier and more effective. However, while establishing a well

thought out sketch and a thumbnail it does not rule out the possibility that the elements in the picture will not work in the finalized picture. Therefore the artist needs to be able to adapt to different situations and be able and willing to change their work.

The author would have benefitted from asking feedback from a wide audience who have no prior relationship or opinion of the author or there art. This would have given the author a better understanding of how the final illustration is understood and if there were some errors that the author did not notice.

This project could be continued by making more illustrations of the character in different situations and showing that way how the character acts. Other option would be to create a cast of characters and create similar kind of illustrations about them, to create a cohesive set of characters that would be ready to use in a video game or a book. Other option is to use the same character but show him in different situations. If one character is the focus of the whole project, the author could show what their life has been from their childhood to this moment.

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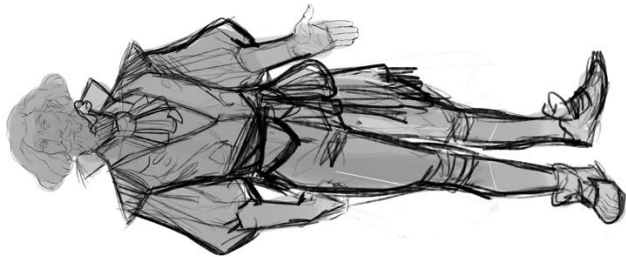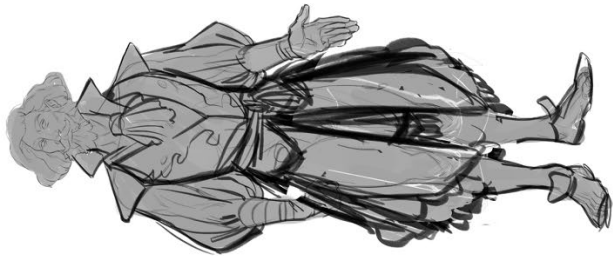
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