

Tartu Kõrgkustikool
Meediadisaini osakond

Creation of illustration in dark fantasy genre
Illustratsiooni loomine tumeda fantaasia žanris

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INTRODUCTION

Art has played key role in human society development. In the prehistoric era art in a form of cave paintings was the only communication method where information could be passed to a wider community. In Ancient Greece literature caught up with painting and became the main information media in form of epos, poem and drama. While the middle ages literature was the main influencing force, the paintings remained influenced by the Bible. Only later has painting become a conventional art thanks to such early adopters as Rembrandt and Rubens.

The first rise of illustrations as a painting art form can be attributed to the XIX century. The vast amount of newspapers and print magazines required a large number of illustrations, which could help relay the written information better and act as a sort of marketing tool at the same time. More recently, digital painting and digital illustration in particular rejuvenated this art form for the digital age.

Since digital painting is an emerging art form in which traditional painting techniques such as watercolor, oils, impasto and others are applied using digital tools by means of a computer, software and a digitizing tablet with stylus, it is important to establish base principal for illustration creation that have been developed by traditional artists

The subject of this graduation project is illustration as a form of digital painting art. The relevance of the selected subject is underlined by the fact that digital painting is currently on the rise and professional artist with digital painting skills are in high demand on the market.

The goal of this work is to research what the genre criteria is, how it is separated and defined. Another goal is to research what does the term Dark Fantasy genre encroaches, and single out samples of contemporary Dark Fantasy universes and settings.

The first chapter is a theoretical chapter going to be based around the subject of genre and Dark Fantasy. The author is going to present theoretical definitions for the term genre. Additionally, the author is going to give definition to Dark Fantasy genre.

The second chapter is a theoretical chapter that is going to research basic principles of illustration creation process. The author is going to review the workflow and techniques that are being used by contemporary artist around the world.

1. THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF THE DARK FANTASY GENRE

1.1 Dark fantasy genre

1.1.1 Genre

In order to better understand what the Dark Fantasy genre incorporates, it is necessary to give definition to what the genre itself is. Why it is important to classify and sort different works of art in general.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a Genre from French *genre*, meaning 'kind' or 'sort') is a style, especially in the arts, that involves a particular set of characteristics. It is any form or type of communication in any mode (written, spoken, digital, artistic, etc.) with socially agreed upon conventions developed over time. (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2018)

While any given genre in any given time has a more or less certain common denominators, in a wider historical aspect they change all the time. As technological, political, social and scientific life progresses and constantly develops, the same is true in terms of different genres. Social cultures changes influence the invention of new genres and discontinue the use of old ones.

Different authors try to fuse and merge genres in their respected works in order to fit multiple genres by way of borrowing and recombining these aspects. “Specific genres tend to be easy to recognize intuitively but difficult (if not impossible) to define. Particular features which are characteristic of a genre are not normally unique to it; it is their relative prominence, combination and functions which are distinctive” (Neale 1980, 22-3).

Genre has their roots as an absolute classification system for ancient Greek literature. Poetry (odes, epics, etc.), prose, and performance each had a specific and calculated style that related to the theme of the story. Speech patterns for comedy would not be appropriate for tragedy, and even actors were restricted to their genre under the assumption that a type of person could tell one type of story best.

Daniel Chandler argues that conventional definitions of genres tend to be based on the notion that they constitute particular conventions of content (such as themes or settings) and/or form (including structure and style) which are shared by the texts, which

are regarded as belonging to them. Alternative characterizations will be discussed in due course. The attempt to define particular genres in terms of necessary and sufficient textual properties is sometimes seen as theoretically attractive but it poses many difficulties. For instance, in the case of films, some seem to be aligned with one genre in content and another genre in form. (Chandler, 1997)

Nowadays, genre became a dynamic tool to help categories and label products in such a way that the general public can navigate the unpredictable nature of artistic expression in its tendencies to constantly merge and split. For instance, in literature genre may be determined by technique, tone, content and length. The distinctions between genres and categories are flexible and loosely defined, often with subgroups and subgenres.

1.1.2 Fantasy

According to Amazon online bookshop statistics, the fantasy genre is the fourth most popular genre for the last ten years. Even in the twenty first century, decades after J. R. R. Tolkien books have been published, the trend remains positive. This fact is evidenced by the recent best-selling success status of such works as J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series and more recently George R. R. Martin's Song of Ice and Fire book series. Both followed by cinematic interpretations, introducing even wider audience to the fantasy genre.

The literature works labelled as fantasy use magic and other supernatural elements as the main plot elements both for their theme and setting alike. A variety of magical creatures and magic as binding element are common and play pivotal role in majority of these worlds.

According to Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, an identifying trait of fantasy is the author's reliance on imagination to create narrative elements that do not have to rely on history or nature to be coherent. (James, Mendlesohn, 2012).

“If you start out in a world where vampires or ghosts or magic are treated as a “normal” occurrence by the characters, it’s a fantasy world.” Lucy A. Snyder (2006).

In fantasy genre, an author empowers imagination to come up with characters, plots, and settings that are not possible in surrounding reality. In many cases they directly contradict laws of natural world. This approach differs from realistic fiction in that it has to

closely follow the history and natural laws of reality, where fantasy has none of the above-mentioned limitations.

Fantasy boast with a wide range of subgenres with over twenty listed at Amazon Online book store. The most popular being Fairy Tales and Legends, High Fantasy and more recently Dark Fantasy.

1.1.3 Dark Fantasy

The Dark Fantasy term incorporates both classic fantasy story and pronounced horror element resulting in a distinctive supernatural horror setting. Another technic, heavily utilized in works by such authors as Michael Moorcock and Joe Abercrombie is use anti-heroes or morally ambiguous characters as main antagonists.

In a his *Critical Terms for Science Fiction and Fantasy* (1986), Gary K Wolfe indicates that Dark Fantasy is a term sometimes used interchangeably with Gothic Fantasy.

Another definition by Chris Morgan, which he states in his *Dark Fantasies* book has a more detailed approach and goes beyond simple marketing tag used previously. Rather they perceive it as describing an affect, rather like "horror" itself; and deploy the term to describe the emotional effect certain stories may have on readers. (Morgan, 1989).

For the term Dark Fantasy to be used in conjunction with others it requires a more restricted definition. "In this encyclopedia we define a Dark Fantasy as a tale which incorporates a sense of Horror, but which is clearly Fantasy rather than Supernatural Fiction. Thus Dark Fantasy does not normally embrace tales of Vampires, Werewolves, Satanism, Ghosts or the occult, almost all of which are supernatural fictions (although such tales may contain Dark Fantasy elements, while some Dark Fantasies contain vampires, ghosts, etc. The term can sensibly be used also to describe tales in which the Eucatastrophe normal to most fantasy is reversed – tales in which the Dark Lord is victorious, tales in which the Land, normally an object of desire, and an arena for the working out of a desired Story, is itself an object of horror". (Clute, John and Grant, John. *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (1st UK edition). London: Orbit Books, 1997.)

Two writes are credited with having coined the term "dark fantasy", namely - Charles L. Grant and Karl Edward Wagner, but both present different key aspects of the genre. Charles L. Grant defined his brand of dark fantasy as "a type of horror story in

which humanity is threatened by forces beyond human understanding". A supernatural horror is the main character of his works.

Karl Edward Wagner on the other hand featured an anti-hero as the main character in his numerous dark fantasy and horror stories. "Wagner's first real mark in the business was made with his creation of a blood and thunder immortal named Kane, an anti-hero in a field that came to be known as "dark fantasy" writes Paula Guran in DarkEcho 06.10.03.

In many cases, books label as Dark Fantasy fiction feature stories told from a monster's point of view. In sharp contrast to the classic horror settings, such works as Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Saint-Germain* and Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* present supernatural as the main character.

Brian Stableford argues "dark fantasy" can be usefully defined as subgenre of stories that attempt to "incorporate elements of horror fiction" into the standard formulae of fantasy stories. Stableford also suggests that supernatural horror set primarily in the real world is a form of "contemporary fantasy", whereas supernatural horror set partly or wholly in "secondary worlds" should be described as "dark fantasy" (Stableford, Brian, "Dark Fantasy", in *The A to Z of Fantasy Literature*, (p. 97)).

In its core essence, Dark Fantasy is not a standalone genre, but rather a subgenre of a larger fantasy literature, art, games and cinematic works. It incorporate and builds on darker and frightening themes of fantasy. It also often combines fantasy with elements of horror or has a gloomy, dark atmosphere, a sense of horror and dread with close to none happy endings.

In a more simplistic determination, Dark Fantasy is a mix of traditional elements of the horror genre introduced to the classical fantasy setting. It is a dread filled grim fantasy story inspired by some supernatural force.

1.2 The history of dark fantasy in european culture

The first known literature work that potentially could be associated with the Dark Fantasy genre can be traced back to Ancient Greece with Homer's eight century BC *The Odyssey* epos. It tell a story about the travels of Odysseys, full of supernatural occurrences with a hint of despair and grim atmosphere.

Later in history, such works as Beowulf and Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy* tell a different story about supernatural. The above-mentioned works feature a fantasy setting with a mix of either grim setting in general or lack of happy ending.

The next major milestone in dark fantasy genre development can be attributed to the fourteenth century *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* poem. This epic continued classical tradition laid down in *The Odyssey*. The narrative tells a story of a doomed man struggling to fulfill a duty with no hope of surviving.

In the nineteenth century more recent works of Edgar Allen Poe and Mary Shelley can be labelled as early attempts at dark fantasy settings with books as *The Raven* and *Frankenstein* respectively.

In 1835 the national epic of Finland was published by Elias Lönnrot. His *Kalevala* compiled Finnish folklore and inspired similar work to be made in Estonia. On top of that, this poem has had a major influence on Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* and *The Children of Húrin*. Furthermore, it served as a blueprint for authors like Emil Petaja, Ian Watson and Michael Moorcock.

Half a century later, in 1888, James De Mille came up with *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* novel. This particular work of literature acts as a gap-bridging masterpiece, that links Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and H.P. Lovecraft novels together. This book has introduced the notion of a survivor of an expedition reporting back on a lost continent. It had a major impact on the genre as a whole and is now considered a classical setting of the Dark Fantasy genre.

In 1915 Franz Kafka wrote *Metamorphosis* an influential story of an average bureaucrat who wakes up one day transformed into a bug. This work inspired many writers to get weirder and weirder. Gabriel García Márquez has stated, "I never again slept with my former serenity. The book was Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*...that determined a new direction for my life from its first line, which today is one of the great devices in world literature."

The first specialized fantasy magazine *Der Orchideengarten* was issued in 1919. It became a huge contributor to the success of Dark Fantasy as a standalone genre. Notable writers include: Voltaire, Charles Nodier, Guy de Maupassant, Théophile Gautier, Victor Hugo, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Guillaume Apollinaire. Apuleius, Charles Dickens,

Pushkin, Edgar Allan Poe, Washington Irving, Amelia Edwards, Nathaniel Hawthorne, H. G. Wells, Valery Bryusov and Karel and Josef Capek.

The *Weird Tales* magazine was first issued in 1923. This magazine had pushed the limits of the genre even further in order to shock readers and attract more attention. Notable writers include Robert Bloch, Robert E. Howard, H.P. Lovecraft, Norman Spinrad, and Michael Moorcock, and many more. This magazine was the birthplace of modern Dark Fantasy.

The first true coming of the genre according to Gary C. Hoppenstand came with Gertrude Barrows Bennett (known by the pseudonym Francis Stevens). He specifically underlines that Bennett is "The Woman Who Invented Dark Fantasy" as referenced in the epigraph in her book *Nightmare and Other Tales of Dark Fantasy* by Francis Stevens, 2004.

The term Dark Fantasy itself has appeared only in the second half of twentieth century, when in 1973 there was a literature fantasy and horror fanzine edited by Howard Eugene (Gene) Day (1951-1982).

For the last two decades the Dark Fantasy genre has expanded significantly and it now incorporates a wide variety of works that themselves cover multiple subgenres within the Dark Fantasy theme.

1.3 Examples of the dark fantasy

Dark Fantasy is relatively speaking a young genre. With only a century in development, the majority of stories and settings are borrowed from well-known plots.

The artistic description of a classical Dark Fantasy setting can be summarized as the following: dark flat color tones, lots of dark soft shadows, fuzzy contours and usually blurry detail with heavy composition and negative overall rhythm.

In order to provide a feeling that is usually being projected from a Dark Fantasy novel, the author has compiled a number of key literature, video gaming, comics and movies derived examples.

One such example would be a novel *Alice* by Christina Henry (Appendix 1. *Alice* cover (2015)): "In the hospital, there is a woman. Her hair, once blond, hangs in tangles down her back. She doesn't remember why she's in such a terrible place. Just a tea party long ago, and long ears, and blood... [...] Only something else has escaped with her.

Something dark. Something powerful. And to find the truth, she will have to track this beast to the very heart of the Old City, where the rabbit waits for his Alice.” (Henry, 2015)

Warhammer40K (Appendix 2. Warhammer 40,000: Rogue Trader) is another great example of a perfect merge between art and literature. The universe is rich at the same time with novels and illustrations, as well as video games and movies, all of which present a really menacing and dark perspective of life in the far future.

Forget the power of technology and science, as for so much is already forgotten, only never to be learned again. Forget the promise of progress and understanding, for in the grim dark future there is only war. There is no peace amongst the stars, only an eternity of carnage and slaughter, and the laughter of thirsting gods. (Warhammer 40,000: Rogue Trader, 1987)

Berserk (Appendix 3. Berserk Vol. 1 Cover), a manga and anime franchise written and illustrated by Kentaro Miura debuted in 1989. This franchise is considered to be one of the best Dark Fantasy introductory works.

“His name is Guts, the Black Swordsman, a feared warrior spoken of only in whispers. Bearer of a gigantic sword, an iron hand, and the scars of countless battles and tortures, his flesh is also indelibly marked with The Brand, an unholy symbol that draws the forces of darkness to him and dooms him as their sacrifice. But Guts won't take his fate lying down; he'll cut a crimson swath of carnage through the ranks of the damned - and anyone else foolish enough to oppose him!” (Berserk, Vol. 1, 2003)

One of the masters of Dark Fantasy genre is Guillermo del Toro. This became evident in his academy award winning Pan's Labyrinth movie (Appendix 4. Pan's Labyrinth original sketch by Guillermo del Toro), which he wrote and directed. The move is a perfect example how writer can influence the development process of a given movie thru his illustrations in order to achieve a high quality product with distinctive artistic merits.

“Following a bloody civil war, young Ofelia enters a world of unimaginable cruelty when she moves in with her new stepfather, a tyrannical military officer. Armed with only her imagination, Ofelia discovers a mysterious labyrinth and meets a faun who sets her on a path to saving herself and her ailing mother. But soon, the lines between fantasy and reality begin to blur, and before Ofelia can turn back, she finds herself at the centre of a ferocious battle between good and evil.” (Pan's Labyrinth, 2006)

Andrzej Sapkowski's novels and short stories incorporated in The Witcher series (Appendix 5. The Witcher cover of the first book) draw a feature in-depth "dark" or "mature" themes dealing with sexuality, suicide, depression, fear, anger, greed, lust and other adult topics.

Geralt of Rivia, known also as "White Wolf" and the Butcher of Blaviken, is a witcher. Yet he is no ordinary killer-for-hire. His sole purpose: to destroy the monsters that plague the world. But not everything monstrous-looking is evil and not everything fair is good... and in every fairy tale there is a grain of truth. (Sapkowski, 1986)

The recent demand for a true Dark Fantasy setting in video games has not gone unnoticed. The Dark Souls series (Appendix 6. Dark Souls scene) are notable examples of dark fantasy role-playing action games. It feature an undead protagonist character, malicious enemies and ever present themes of suicide coupled with morally ambiguous actions and depressing storylines set in post-apocalyptic kingdoms.

Long ago during the Age of Ancients, the world was shrouded by grey fog and ruled by dragons. In this time period, a powerful mystic fire known as the First Flame erupts from the earth and brings with it souls, the essence of all life. [...] Over time, the flames begin to fade with the rise of humans, and Gwyn sacrifices himself and his soul to prolong the Age of Fire. With the flame artificially rekindled, the Undead Curse begins to plague humanity, causing certain humans to continually resurrect upon death... (Dark Souls, 2011)

Books by Anne Rice are another example how to take an established and well-known setting and turn it into a bestselling series of Dark Fantasy genre defining masterpieces.

The first issue of a classical Dracula derived Interview with the Vampire came out in 1976 (Appendix 7. Interview with the Vampire cover). But Anne Rice has managed to transform the original plot completely and explore profound philosophical concerns such as the nature of evil, the reality of death, and the limits of human perception of both.

We are in a small room with the vampire, face to face, as he speaks--as he pours out the hypnotic, shocking, moving, and erotically charged confessions of his first two hundred years as one of the living dead. (Interview with the Vampire, 1976)

The horror genre would not be the same if not for one particular author. Howard Phillips Lovecraft is considered a pivotal figure initializing and impending end as means to

drive the story. Apart from drawing inspiration from his nightmares, Lovecraft utilized scientific progress in biology, astronomy, geology and physics in order to question the nature of the human race as insignificant, powerless, and doomed species (Appendix 8. The Call of Cthulhu movie poster).

“Of such great powers or beings there may be conceivably a survival . . . a survival of a hugely remote period when . . . consciousness was manifested, perhaps, in shapes and forms long since withdrawn before the tide of advancing humanity . . . forms of which poetry and legend alone have caught a flying memory and called them gods, monsters, mythical beings of all sorts and kinds. . . .” (The Call of Cthulhu, 1928).

The most well-known example of the Dark Fantasy genre is without a doubt a series of novels by an American author George R. R. Martin. With *A Game of Thrones* (Appendix 9. *A Game of Thrones* original cover), George R. R. Martin has brought together the best the dark fantasy genre has to offer: mystery, intrigue, romance, dragons, magic and adventure. The Martin is not afraid of killing key characters and any plot has a counter ploy, with another plan looming in the background. And all of this, with ever present doom of a grim warning – “The winter is coming...”.

The cold is returning to Winterfell, where summers can last decades and winters a lifetime. A time of conflict has arisen in the Stark family, as they are pulled from the safety of their home into a whirlpool of tragedy, betrayal, assassination, plots and counterplots. Each decision and action carries with it the potential for conflict as several prominent families, comprised of lords, ladies, soldiers, sorcerers, assassins and bastards, are pulled together in the most deadly game of all--the game of thrones. (Martin, 1996)

The popularity of Dark Fantasy genre has significantly increased in last decade thanks to the release of *Game of Thrones* television series drama by Home Box Office (HBO). The first season was launched in 2011 and attracted more than three million average viewers. This is on average two times more popular than established series franchises attracted at the same time.

This popularity attracted additional interest to the books, board games, video games and other media associated with the *Game of Thrones* setting. But there was another major influence directly linked to the show’s popularity growth.

As an indirect influence, this interest attracted major attention to other works set with Dark Fantasy genre at their respected cores. An influx of both new and rereleased

novels, video games featuring grim fantasy setting and television series dramas acts as an additional drive for the discussed genre popularity.

In part playing on a sharp contrast with the previously chart topping classical high fantasy inspired settings, such as *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the new Dark Fantasy genre drew masses of fans across the globe in a very short time.

As a consequence of this newfound interest in the Dark Fantasy genre, the demand for painters familiar with the genre increased. At the same time this demand coincided with the rise of digital painting capabilities of modern personal computer and professional software. All these facts put together underline the importance of illustrator artist that is capable of working in a digital environment with in-depth Dark Fantasy genre knowledge.

2. ILLUSTRATION CREATION PROCESS

2.1 Illustration definition

The origin of the word “illustration” is late Middle English (in the sense ‘illumination; spiritual or intellectual enlightenment’): via Old French from Latin *illustratio(n-)*, from the verb *illustrate*. (Oxford Dictionary Online, 21.05.2018)

Illustrations are an incredibly great tool to relay massive amount of information through an image or a number of images. One of the most famous contemporary illustrators is probably Giorgio Piola (Appendix 10. Giorgio Piola). He has been working with Formula 1 for the last forty years, as a technical journalist and his technical illustration are well known around the world.

An illustration is a visual explanation of a given material be it text, concept or process. It can be utilized in print and digital media. Illustration is used in such formats as poster, flyer, magazine, book, teaching material and hangouts. More recently illustration has established itself as part of the creative process in such areas as animations, movies and video games.

2.2 Illustration creation workflow

The process of creating illustration can be separated in five distinct steps: research, plan, sketch, iteration and final image. In order to tell a story, final illustration usually includes a character or multiple characters, which are put together in an environment. Creating the final image is the last step, after all the pre-process is finished.

2.2.1 Research and analysis

The most important part is to spend enough time on the planning process. From the efficiency and time related expenses editing the final illustration is not time-efficient and the result of the project will suffer.

In order to present a complete image that is going to server as an acceptable illustration for a given story, an illustrator must research the details about the subject. The most simple approach is to write a questionnaire that is going to be filled in together with

the client. One way to analyze the story that a given illustration must present, is to see if it matches the criteria described in *The Tools of Screenwriting* by David Hoffman and Edward Mabley (Hoffman, Mabley, 1993: 23):

1. There is a main character for audience to empathize with.
2. He has a certain goal.
3. This goal is hard to achieve.
4. Story events are supposed to engage the audience emotionally.
5. The ending is satisfying, but not definitely happy.

One of the most important fact that the author or illustrator needs to address - identify the places where the reader feels the need to turn the page. The author can also influence the story with illustrations placing. This will help create the pacing of the book. The number of pages in a print media is an increment of 8 with the 32-page standard. This means that there are 4 to 16 spreads available for text and illustration (Salisbury, 2004).

This structural list can be divided to beginning, middle and payoff. First 3-4 spreads should introduce the characters and describe the problem and the last 1-2 spreads are assigned to payoff. In between these parts the problem should deepen while the character tries to solve it (Pattison, 2013).

2.2.2 Plan

Any illustration should be dominated by character if such is present. According to Nancy Beiman, the first step of character design is analysis and research. A profile should be created for each character to ensure their individuality. The profile must contain future illustration character data: name, sex, age, strengths, weaknesses and facts that had made the characters become who they are and what makes them tick.

Character profiles must underline individual characteristics for a given character. This approach will allow the Illustrator to create true characters empowered by their respected personality.

In order to create better understanding what the final illustration is supposed to be it is highly advisable to create moodboards. The is the next step is the research of what visual cues relate to the facts listed in the profile and looking for similar characteristics in the real world. Collected materials can include famous people's photos, photos of objects that can be associated with the character or any other visualassociations (Beiman, 2007).

2.2.3 Inspiration

Modern software tools help to create collages from collected materials together that are easy to work with. The most popular approach for an illustrator is to create a moodboard - a collage of visual materials that builds the right mood for a place or an object. A separate moodboards must be created for different characters and each location unitized in the narrative.

Since in the previous step it would have been established who the characters are, what characteristics they possess and why are they motivated, it is now possible to conduct thorough research on the real world inspirations. The Internet provides quick access to an almost limitless amount of pictures, paintings, illustrations and other works that might serve as materials for moodboards. Another currently popular technic is to photograph and then compile the photos to a collage moodboard. This not only gives a better perspective on the subject from the illustrator's point of view but also makes future work less dependent on the copyright and incorrect interpretations of the subject conducted by other authors.

2.3 Sketch

The main task of an illustrator is to create strong images of story characters. A good illustration makes characters described in the story more believable and allows for the story to work better as a whole. At the same time illustrations that are used as concept art serve as solid reference points for future development by animators, 3D artists and game designers.

In her book Nancy Beiman states that a character should not definitely be likeable, but it should be appealing, which are not the same things. Appeal also does not mean cuteness. The character is appealing when the reader cares about what might happen to him. The design of an appealing character should be simple, without any details that would stop him from performing required actions. Being aware of the character's actions before designing it is important, because otherwise the design might not be suitable for the story. For instance, it would not be wise to design a character with really short hands and then put him performing acrobatic actions. However, when done consciously, this might be a fun physical limitation that can make the illustration more entertaining (Beiman, 2007:59).

The initial character design process stage mostly relies on intuition of the illustrator coupled with his/her ability to research and analyses the subject. It involves drawing a lot of sketches, presenting them to the author or producer and picking the one that best represents the moodboard. The process of character design has been optimized and divided to several stages to increase the possibility of creating a believable character.

2.3.1 Character design process

A good character design process must start with a silhouette and anatomy peculiar properties sketches. Human brain process information based primarily on these parameters and only after populates the image with fine details.

According to Nancy Beiman, it is important to focus on the construction and individual anatomy rather than shape of separate elements such as eyes or a nose. The character design works best when its proportions are pushed further to being uneven and not anatomical. This creates contrast between body parts and makes the character unique. In addition, silhouette sketches help to achieve good readability. In other words, a n interesting silhouette makes the character more recognizable. Silhouette also shows if the construction of a character is in harmony (Beiman, 2007).

The character concept design is usually presented on a dedicated sheet, with mandatory three views present: front, three-quarter and profile. This approach ensures that the illustrator and other people involved know the character as it also helps to predict how the character would behave in its fictional three-dimensional world. In many cases, it is even mandatory that the illustrator creates a an actual three-dimensional model of a character by using modelling clay. This approach allows for better understanding of the character and more room for further fine details improvement.

Nancy Beiman underlines that even if the design reflects the character's personality, it still might not be interesting. Certain character types are more common than others, so they became a cliché. The best way to avoid this is to be familiar with character design clichés. If the audience can always predict how the character is going to act based on its design, they might get bored quickly. It is always better if there is an element of surprise (Beiman, 2007:70).

The next step is for the illustrator is to learn how to draw character in different situations, so that the character remains recognizable from drawing to drawing. The

illustrator must imagine the situations the character encounters on his way and emotions that he might experience. The information about these emotions must be relayed through pose and action. Every drawing must emphasize character's traits.

2.3.2 Designing multiple settings and characters

One of the hardest task for illustrator to perform when faced with a number of illustrations creation is the question of continuity and overall style. An illustrator must assure that two different locations or characters that act in the same setting, are going to relay the same feeling of the setting's universe in question.

Nancy Beiman continues that characters from the same universe must have some anatomy logic in common, otherwise when being put together, the scene will seem confusing. All characters must look like they belong to the same world, unless there is literally a character from another world (Beiman, 2007: 79).

All characters that belong to the same universe must relay similar properties. The main question that the illustrator must answer is how to underline unique character personalities, while presenting something in common at the same time. The illustrator must constantly compare character sketches on the same page, in order to apply necessary fixed early in the development cycle. As a simple test – characters that are put together on the same image must be easily identified for their uniqueness by an observer who was not involved in the creation process.

The final all characters comparison should be included on the same sheet, with leveled ground point. This size differences should be easily perceivable. This step must be finalized before proceeding further with the illustration creation process.

2.4 Iteration

The process of producing a digital illustration can be compared with making a movie because the rules for creating suspense and rhythm are analogous to all genres of visual storytelling. This kind of function requires a very careful planning, it cannot be created randomly.

During planning process it is essential to determine the content of the illustrations. Illustrations have to correspond to the pacing done in the plot analysis that describes main idea, location, participating characters and events of the story.

Salisbury states that the most important instrument to develop structure and layout for each canvas is to create a storyboard in the form of thumbnail sketches. Storyboard sets the main idea about illustrations displayed in a particular sequence without giving any details. It is highly recommended to produce the whole work as a complete document in order to control rhythm and pacing of the illustrations (Salisbury, 2004: 80).

The degree of clarity of the storyboard is not certainly defined. The storyboard has to attribute as many elements as required for the reader to better understand not only the storyline but also the emotions and background details. Therefore, some works might need a more detailed storyboard.

2.4.1 Balanced composition

The important characteristic of a good storytelling is its balanced composition. Its purpose is to arrange the elements of the illustration in order to make reader emphasize characters. During making the composition, it is vital to bear in mind that the reader is seeing the whole sheet at the same time. People normally read from left to right and from top to bottom. That is why the composition has to be harmonious and well balanced, meaning that pages complete each other and there are no conflicts between proximate pages.

The main guidelines for composition are the rule of thirds and the golden ratio. These guidelines are due to the fact how reader's eyes moves throughout the whole sheet and picture. Following these guidelines while making illustration helps to capture more efficiently reader's attention. In addition, contrast and details are the other features that involve the eye towards the centre of the composition.

Words can also be a part of the composition, especially in picture books. For example, phrases of words can be made larger or smaller, or can be hidden in the background of the image. Generally speaking, everything is allowed if it supports the story and the text remains readable. Most illustrators follow one particular style of illustrations that is followed during the whole work.

The amount of thumbnail sketches is not regulated, however most of them are remade many times. It is advisable to never submit the first sketch even if it seems to be perfect, it is suggested to confirm it by practice.

2.4.2 Composition and storytelling

The illustration must be a piece of professional artwork and what is most important it always be relevant to the surrounding text. When making a digital illustration the most important question to answer is “who or what is this illustration about?” The answer to the question will define its composition, the location of the highest contrast and detail. It is known fact, that the center of the composition has to be only one and other secondary components are lactated near it.

In case of a three-dimensional world, it is advisable to show it from different angles. This kind of an image could be cropped to a single detail or enlarged till entire page. Telling a story demands making series of additional sketches, for example images from different angels in order to understand from which angle the scene would be most spectacular. Such creative approach to digital illustrations can make the reader feel as a part of the scene. (McCloud, 2006:19,161).

Camera angles have a large impact on the viewer perception of the image. For example, if the scene is shown from below, it makes it appear more important or even scary. In contrast, if the scene is placed above the scene, it makes it appear smaller and the viewer can get a strong emotion about it. (McCloud, 2006:20)

There are other methods for making the viewer feel like he is a part of the scene, one of them is by creating depth. The main parameters of depth are overlap, size, fading and position. Variating the sizes of objects can contribute to better perception for the viewer. Overlapping can also help to recognize which element is on the foreground and which one is on the background. (McCloud, 2006:171)

Composition of the illustration can be whether static or dynamic. Usually horizontal lines give a sense of stability, whereas diagonal and vertical lines promote dynamics ad drama. It is quite a difficult task for an illustrator to find a balance between static and dynamics, however it makes an image more attractive. An illustrator can decide according to his style and objectives set how to emphasis the notion of the image.

Typically chase scenes demand more energy and dramatics, descriptive scenes on the other hand are stationary.

Every illustration can be disintegrated into simple shapes and lines, like circles, triangles and squares. Even though viewers do not acknowledge it, different shapes make people feel certain feelings. An illustrator can use this knowledge in order to contribute for reaching the right emotions. The impacts of the shapes affect emotions of the viewer. More detailed information can be found in the book *Picture This: How Pictures Work* by Molly Bang. (Bang, 2008)

2.4.3 Contrast and tone

After the thumbnail sketches are ready, the following stage requires adding toning to the images. Traditionally at this step illustrations are coloured in black and white. Experimenting with tone can help to achieve an outstanding result.

Light and dark areas in the object add complexity to the composition of the illustration and emphasized the contrast. In addition, shadows give more expressiveness to the image and add lines to the overall composition structure. Mastering this technique is very important, as it provides with tools that enable flexible attention area control. Human eye is naturally drawn to the areas with highest contrast, because of this fact shadows in the focal area and secondary shadows must be toned in different levels of contrast.

Tonal sketches help to find balance between positive and negative space. The illustration objects represent the positive space and the empty space surrounding them represent the negative space. The illustrator must concentrate on finding the rhythm of an illustration provided by the above-mentioned positive and negative spaces. Tinted sketches promote achieving a balance between a positive and negative space. The function of negative space is to add clarity to the detail-rich illustration, but in general cases negative space is used to fill-in the spaces among different object.

2.5 Finalizing the prototype

After the storyboard is ready, the next step is to make a three-dimensional model of the work, which is called a dummy. The main reason is that dummy enables to see the complete work entirely as a final draft.

The storyboard does not show how the illustrations will be displayed in the final release. A dummy will show if there is enough contrast between spreads to attract the viewer's attention and motivate him to read further. (Salisbury, 2004: 88)

Very often, after the dummy is ready, the author reviews the storyboard and makes appropriate changes in order to improve the flaws discovered. In case there are many changes to be made, it is advisable to produce a new dummy. If there are rhythm problems, there are methods to correct it (Salisbury, 2004: 82):

- To change the size of the image
- To vary the angles of the viewpoint
- To modify the design of the illustration.

Most used method among them is to change the view angles from one illustration to another, however the change must be reasonable. Therefore, other methods have to be used in order to make images more attractive and interesting. (McCloud, 2006:21)

A canvas that consist of smaller illustrations of different sizes provides room for more information to be relayed through the illustration as a whole. The rhythm is achieved by varying images sizes. This approach helps to create a unique layout for each spread and change the perceived viewpoint complete.

Creating a dummy is usually a very useful stage for the illustrator. Nevertheless, it is better to submit a publisher a few versions of dummy in order to increase the chance to be published.

2.6 Final product

One of the most important characteristics of a final release is the style. It defines the final look and helps to achieve the right emotion. All components of the final illustration including moodboards, character and tonal sketches have to be made in a uniform style. Professional digital artist must possess a wide range of techniques and stiles to meet the demands of the technical assignment for a given image.

2.6.1 Techniques

Each illustrator has to teach himself to work in different technique. This will allow for greater flexibility in work and will allow more creative tools. Papercut or patchwork

illustrations, photographed staged three-dimensional scenes and traditional collage are widespread techniques, that are contently utilized in illustration creation process.

Computer illustration or digital illustration is a form of digital painting technique that implies the use of digital tools to produce images under the direct manipulation of the artist. It should not be mistaken with computer-generated art, as the latter is produced by a computer using mathematical models created by the artist. This technique that is heavily utilized today is the pure digital painting. With the help of computers and sophisticated software it is possible to completely emulate traditional painting work within the digital environment. The downside to this approach is the amount of time and effort it requires. For a commercial projects on a time and/or monetary budget restriction, pure digital illustration painting technique might prove to be unsuitable. Which leads an illustrator to an alternative approach.

Martin Salisbury underlines that the only rule for picking the technique is to use the one that feels right for a particular story. For example, minimalistic linear approach might be the best choice for a humorous picture book and soft toned illustrations can be best suitable for a more poetic story. (Salisbury, 2004: 79).

At the same time, the utilized technique should act as a mean for relaying and underlying the envisioned style of the setting and not act as a feature of the illustration on its own. Traditional techniques such as pencil and watercolor might add more handmade feel to the widespread digital media art.

One of the most popular technique that has found significant following in video gaming and movies industries is Photobashing. It is a technique widely used and demanded in the entertainment industry. The main advantage that this technique provides is the possibility to create digital illustrations in a fast and complete manner. It is a traditional form of collage performed in a digital environment. More often than none it is used to create concept art for video games and movies. The main idea behind this technique is speed, which allows an illustrator to produce more visualization related product in the shortest time possible. It must be underlined that all major video game development studios and movie production companies create the base of their products with this technique.

The third technique is call the matte painting. It is a hybrid approach to the above mentioned techniques where an illustrator takes a 3D model or a photo as a base image and

then adds the necessary artistic layers of information to the illustration. This approach is utilized when an illustrator is required to draw as realistic canvas as possible, while allowing for less time budget allocation.

2.6.2 Stylization

Traditionally an illustrator's authentic style is acknowledged as a stylization. But this approach limits the final image outcome and from the professional point of view there should be no limits for the illustrators' fantasy in depicting objects, characters and the whole setting. As such, stylization should be a flexible tool in the hands of professional digital artist.

Normally, when editor buys the manuscript, then he chooses the illustrator that can produce illustrations with the right style. However, it may appear that the author understands best of all what kind of illustrations are required for this particular work, the editor knows better which illustration style will promote the sales of this work. It is not recommended for the author to collaborate with the illustrator before getting in touch with the publisher, since inappropriate illustrations might be chosen (Pattison, 2013).

Thus, choosing the right illustration style for the work is extremely important. It may occur that the illustrator has a great idea for illustrations, however, it can be realized only in other work. (Salisbury, 2004: 79)

Generally, the style of a set of illustrations for a particular work has to be consistent. Although, it was revealed that the most interesting works have illustrations that change the style during its course. In case of flashbacks, two different styles can be used to emphasize the difference between plot lines. Despite the main guideline, there could be found some works that use a variety of styles.

2.6.3 Polishing

Details are very essential feature of an illustration, since they give more information to characters or events. The details make the work look complete and force the viewer to watch the illustration for a long time.

Another function of details is symbolism. [...] Symbolism can be present at a larger scale, not only in details, but in that case it depends on the original concept of the story (Wellins, 2006: 102). The function of small symbols is to support the concept.

The details can be added already at the stage of storyboard or at the final stage of illustrating. The details adding the personality to the characters make the viewer empathize and feel emotions for the personages. This fact makes the viewer to be more engaged into the scene and the story. Some details, for example a coffee cup can trigger a sense of smell, such objects promote feelings for the viewer and make the perception more personal (McCloud, 2006: 164).

The polishing stage mainly includes adding fine details to the image that the artist is working on. For example, some illustrators prefer to make postproduction image filtering as the very last step. It is only applied when the overall image is ready and all previously discussed steps have been finalized.

At the same time, other famous artist prefer to fine-tune the final image even after the post production filters have been applied. They insisting on putting extra attention to the certain areas of the image manually by hand. This approach is more time consuming but it allows to relay the setting more clearly. On top of that, this technique can help to fix some unintended image artifacts that might have surfaces after post production filter has been applied.

CONCLUSION

Digital painting and illustration as part of it are vital components for contemporary artist. It is no longer enough for an artist to be capable to perform only traditional painting techniques. The ever-growing amount of information exchanged through the Internet requires that an artist is not only capable of performing his task thoroughly, but in a speedy manner as well. On top of that, every industry be it journalism, literature, video games or movies require for the artist to be capable of performing high quality tasks in digital environment. This is especially true for an illustrator as a specialist in the field of visual arts.

In the theoretical part the author has determined the definition for Dark Fantasy genre by researching and reviewing a number of different settings utilizing this popular genre in the first section.

In the second part of theoretical research the author has researched Dark Fantasy genre and reviewed a number of different settings utilizing this popular genre in its settings. This included literature, video games and movies. The author has established that Dark Fantasy genre is currently one of the most in-demand genres, with its' popularity with general public constantly rising.

Another theoretical chapter was dedicated to illustration as a form of digital painting. The author has determined that it is composition, character design and style that are most important and must be utilized to reflect the message of the setting and character description.

The first was performed in the digital painting technique. With the help of computers and sophisticated software it was possible to completely emulate traditional painting work within the digital environment of a personal computer.

The second was performed in the photobash technique. It is a traditional form of collage performed in a digital environment. The author presented how a concept art for video games and movies are made.

The third was performed in the matte painting technique. This is a hybrid approach to the above mentioned techniques where the author has taken a 3D model and a photo as a base image and then added the necessary artistic layers of information to the illustration.

The goals of this graduation work has been reached.

The author considers that the works that have been reviewed in the practical chapter with additional development may serve as a base for a Dark Fantasy inspired setting and have commercial value.

SUMMARY / RESÜMEE

Illustratsiooni loomine tumeda fantaasia žanris

Juhendajad: Raivo Kelomees, Joonas Sildre

Läbi aegade on kunst omanud inimeste elus väga suurt tähtsust. Eelajaloolisel ajal oli ainus viis suuremale massile informatsiooni edastamiseks koopamaalingud. Kui maalikunst Antiik Kreeka kirjandusse jõudis, muutusid värvirohked eeposed, luuletused ja draamad peamiseks teabekandjaks piirkonnas. Keskajal oli ilukirjandus üks suurimaid rahva mõjutajaid, pildid seal sees aga Piiblist. Vaid aastaid hiljem, tänu varastele kasutuselevõtjatele nagu Rembrandt ja Ruben, muutus maalikunst traditsioonilisemaks.

Esimene illustratsioonimaali tõus toimus 19.sajandil. Aina kasvav ajakirjandusmaastik vajas ajakirjadesse ja -lehtedesse suurtes kogustes illustratsioone, mis täitsid lehti, aitasid seda paremini lugeda ja mõista ning töötasid ka reklaami eesmärgil. Viimastel aastakümnetel on digitaalmaal ja –illustratsioon aidanud ajakirjadel ja –lehtedel digiajastuga kaasas käia.

Digitaalmaal on maalikunsti vorm, mis kasutab samu traditsioonilisi võtteid nagu vesivärv või õlimaal, aga neid rakendatakse arvutites, tabletites või muude seadmete vastavates programmides.

Antud lõputöö projekt algas illustratsiooni kui digitaalse kunstivormi uurimisega. Valitud teema on oluline, kuna digitaal on üha levinum kunstivorm ning tööturul on suur nõudlus professionaalsete kunstnike ja graafilised disainerite järgi.

Lõputöö teemaks sai illustratsioon tumeda fantaasiakirjanduse žanris, uurides postmodernistliku fantaasia sub-žanri, mis sisaldab õuduse, gootika ja müstika elemente.

Tööd alustavad kaks peatükki on teoreetilised. Esimene osa analüüsib žanri väljapaistvate autorite töid, annab ülevaate lõputöö autori inspiratsiooniallikatest ning põhjaliku ülevaate joonistamise protsessist. Teine osa teoreetilisest tööst uurib illustratsioonimaali loomise põhiprotsesse. Autor annab ülevaate töövoost ning tehnikast, mida erinevast artistid üle maailma kasutavad.

Lõputöö püstitatud eesmärk - kuidas luua illustratsiooni, et see oleks žanriliselt sobilik, sai täidetud.

Autori arvates võib antud lõputöö teoreetilises ja praktilises osas analüüsitud töödega ning täiendava edasiarendusega saada inspiratsiooniallikaks tumeda fantaasia žanri kirjanikele ja omada kaubanduslikku väärtust.

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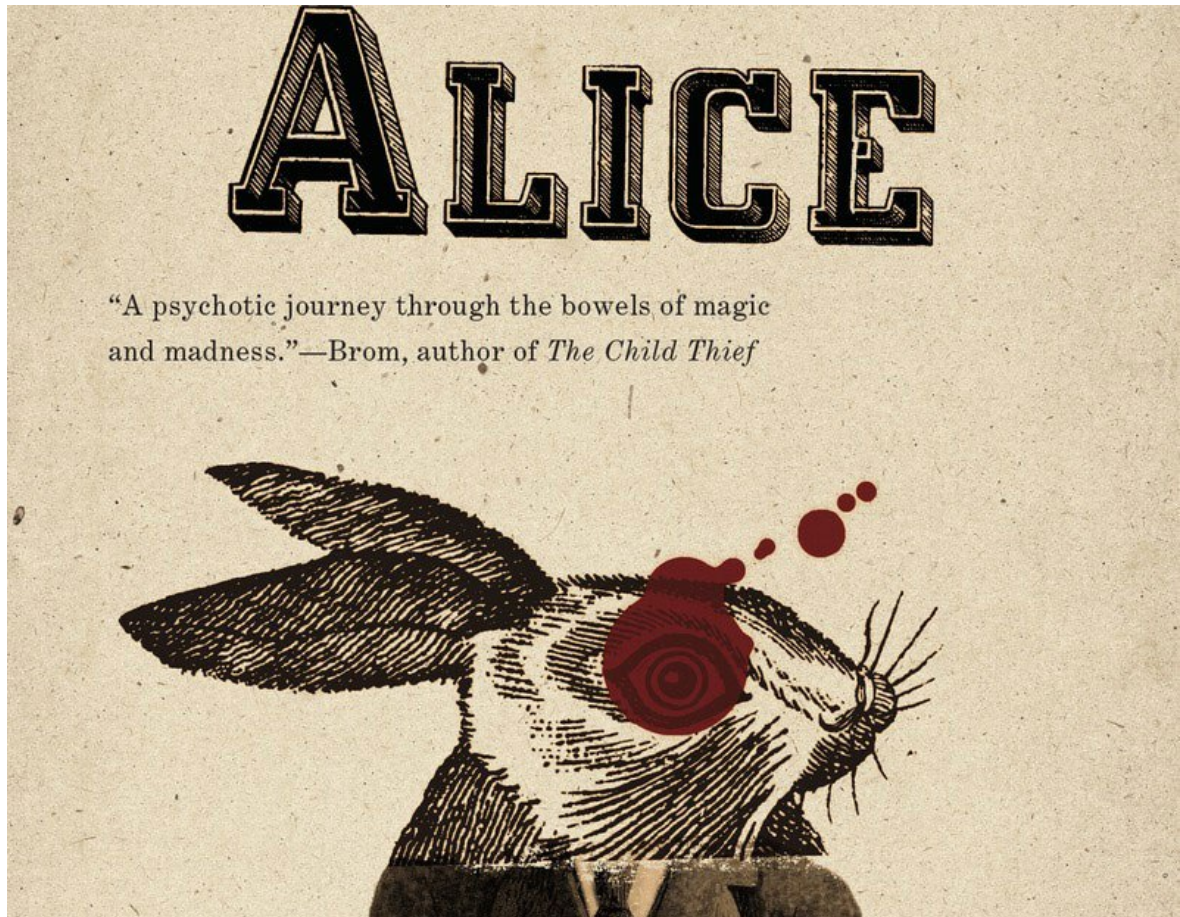
<http://www.darkecho.com/darkecho/features/kew.html> (18.05.2018)

Zine Wiki. Dark Fantasy [WWW]

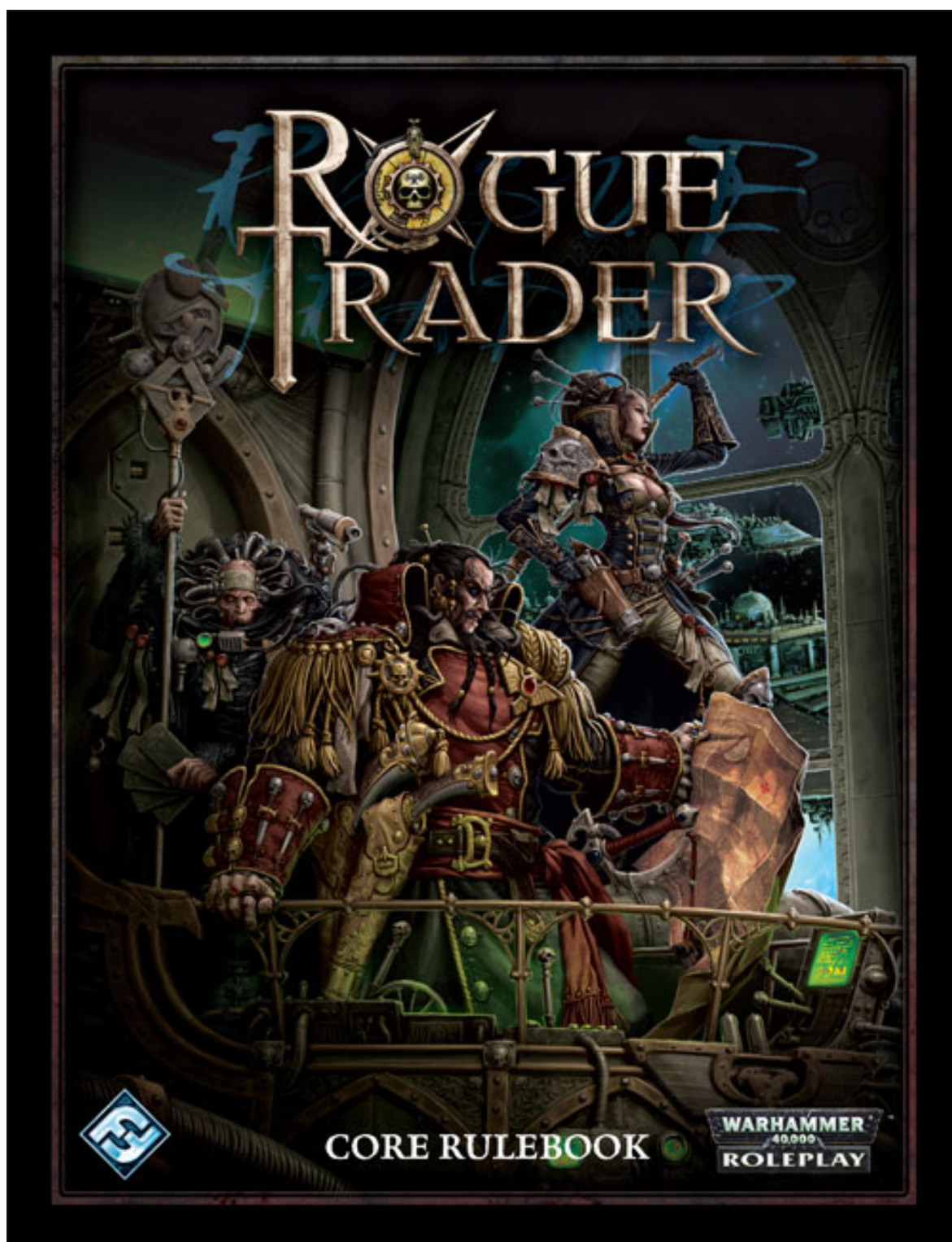
http://www.zinewiki.com/Dark_Fantasy (14.05.2018)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Alice cover (2015)



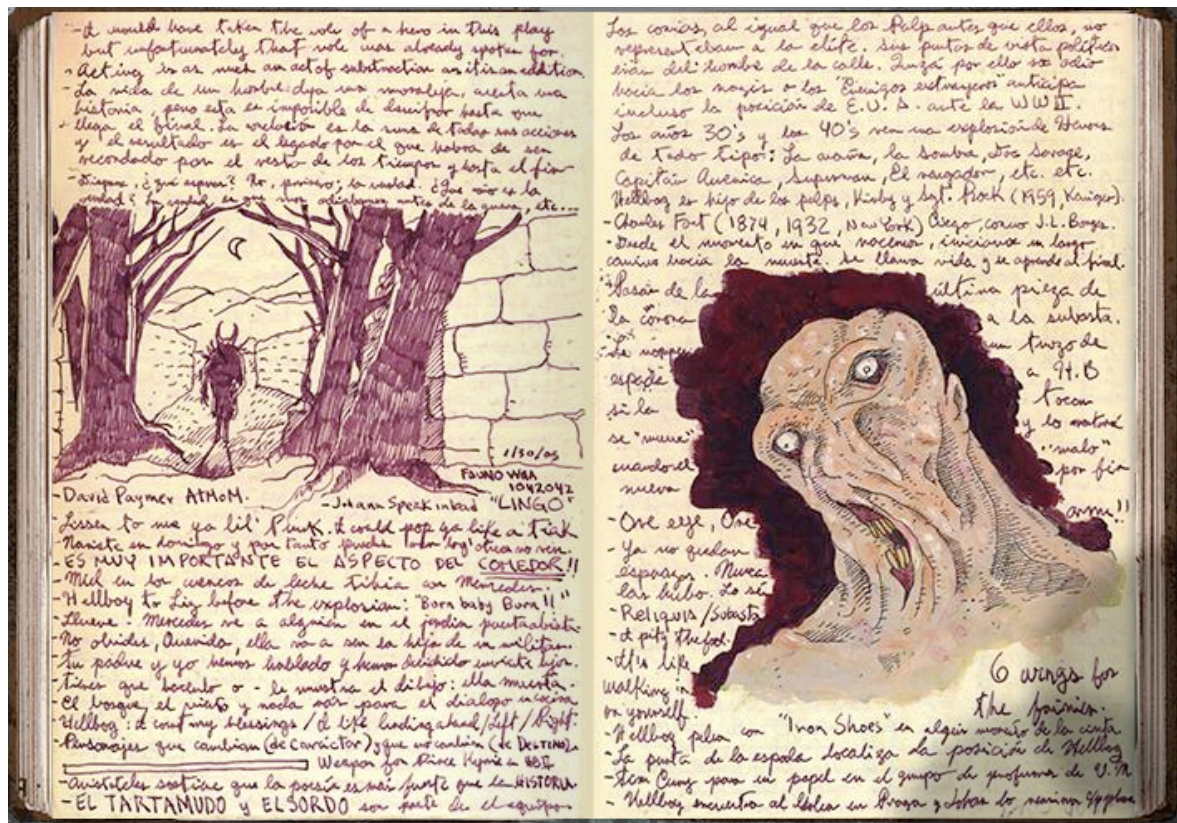
Appendix 2. Warhammer 40,000: Rogue Trader



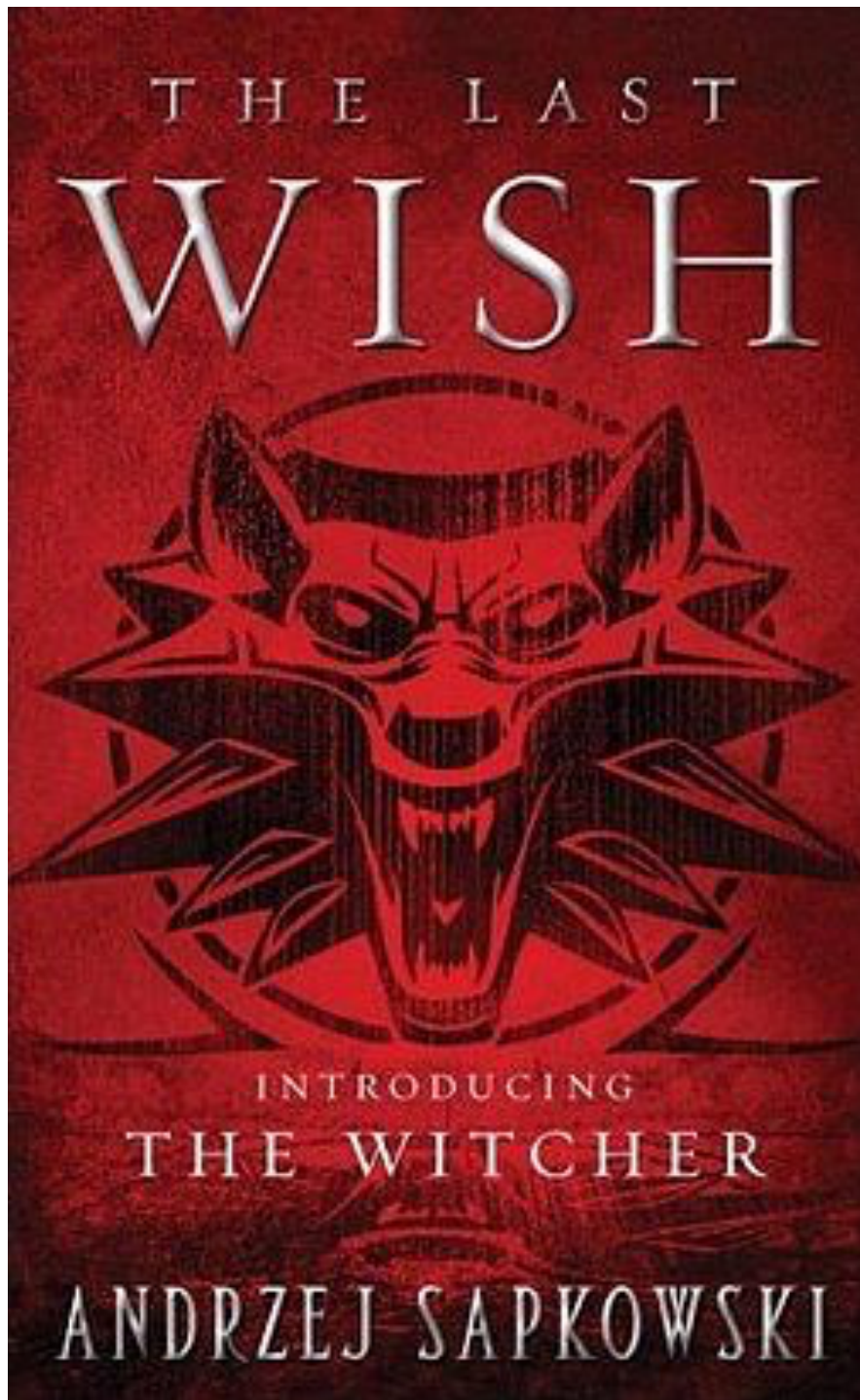
Appendix 3. Berserk Vol. 1 Cover



Appendix 4. Pan's Labyrinth original sketch by Guillermo del Toro



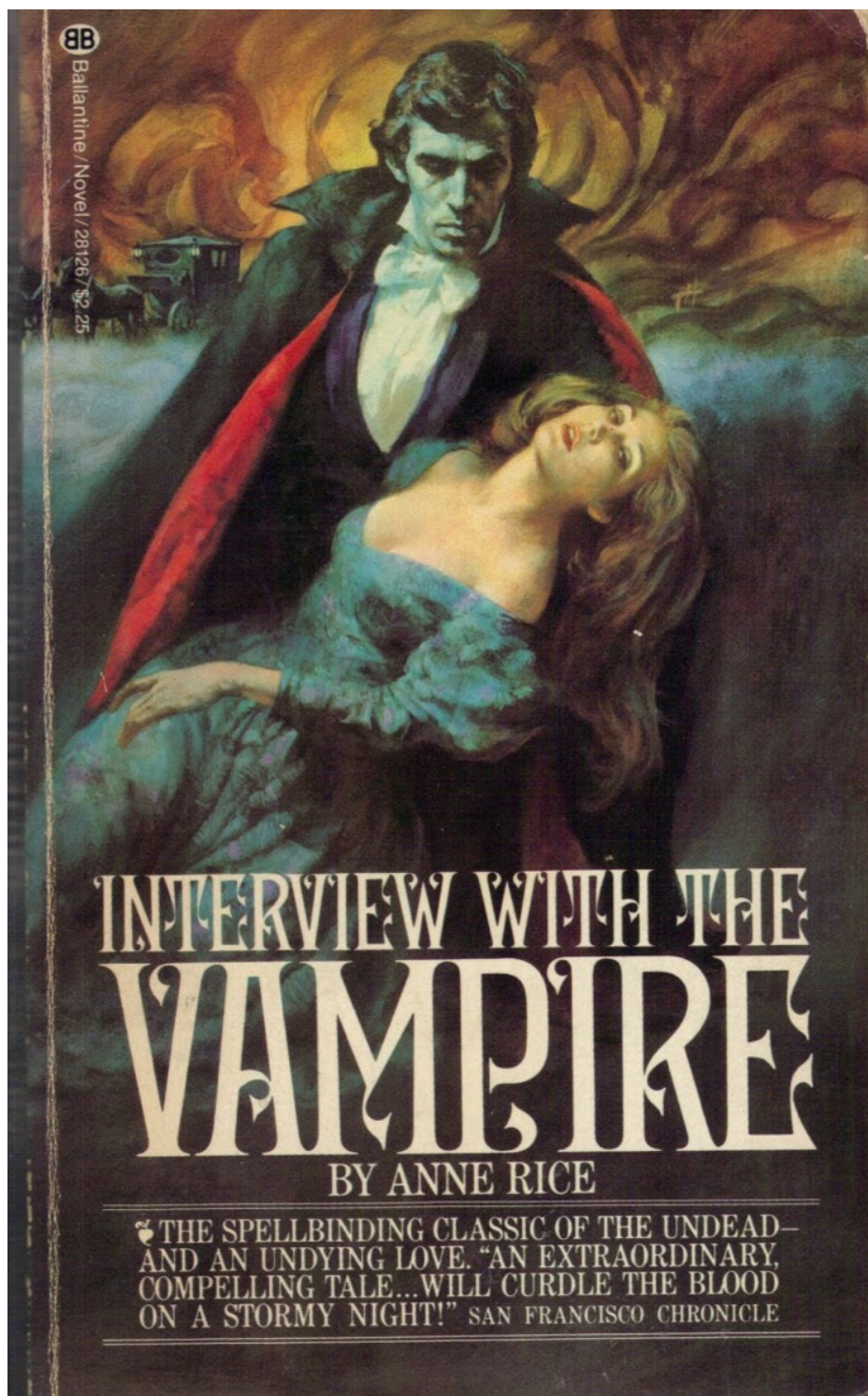
Appendix 5. The Witcher cover of the first book



Appendix 6. Dark Souls scene



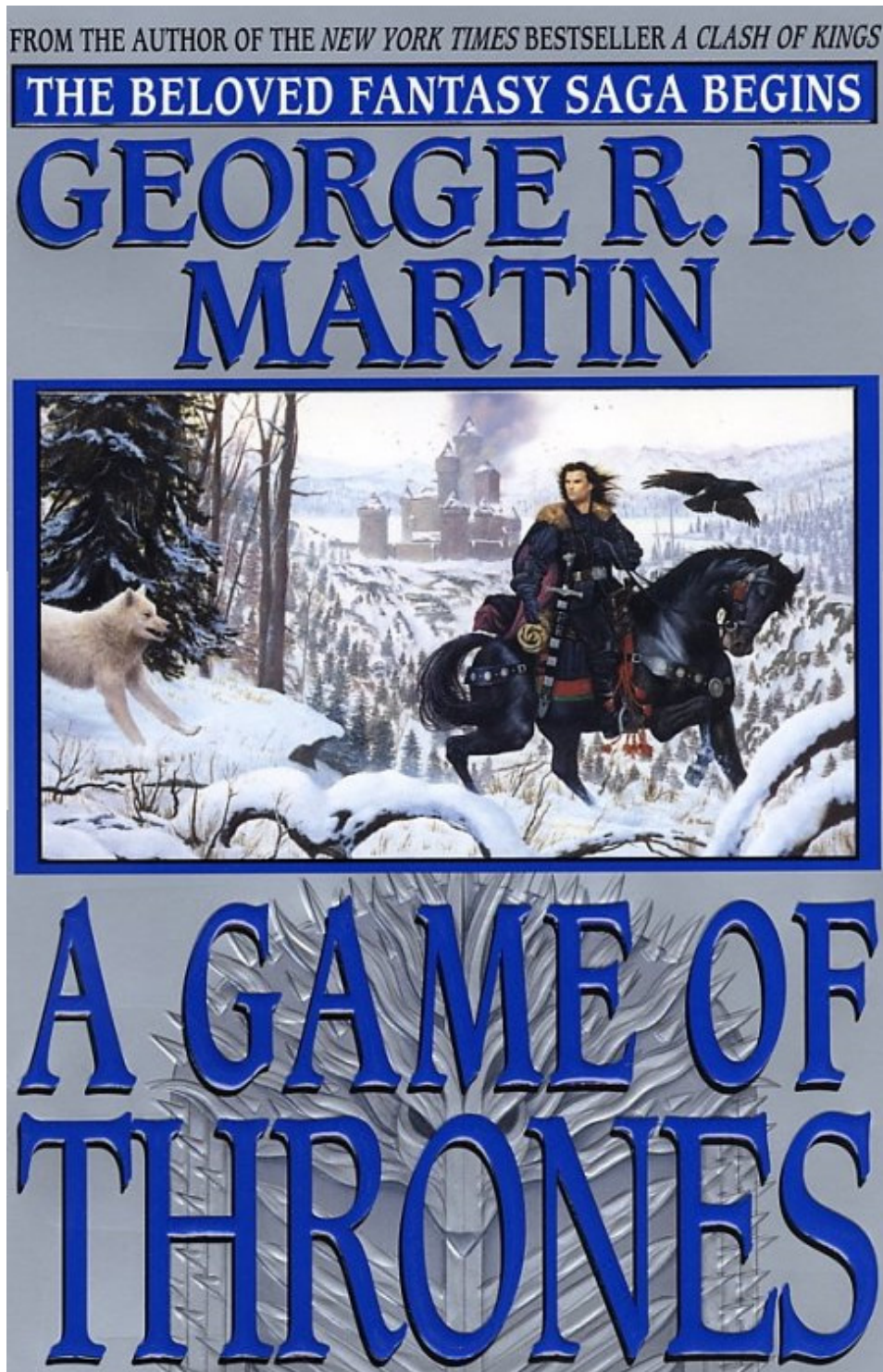
Appendix 7. Interview with the Vampire cover



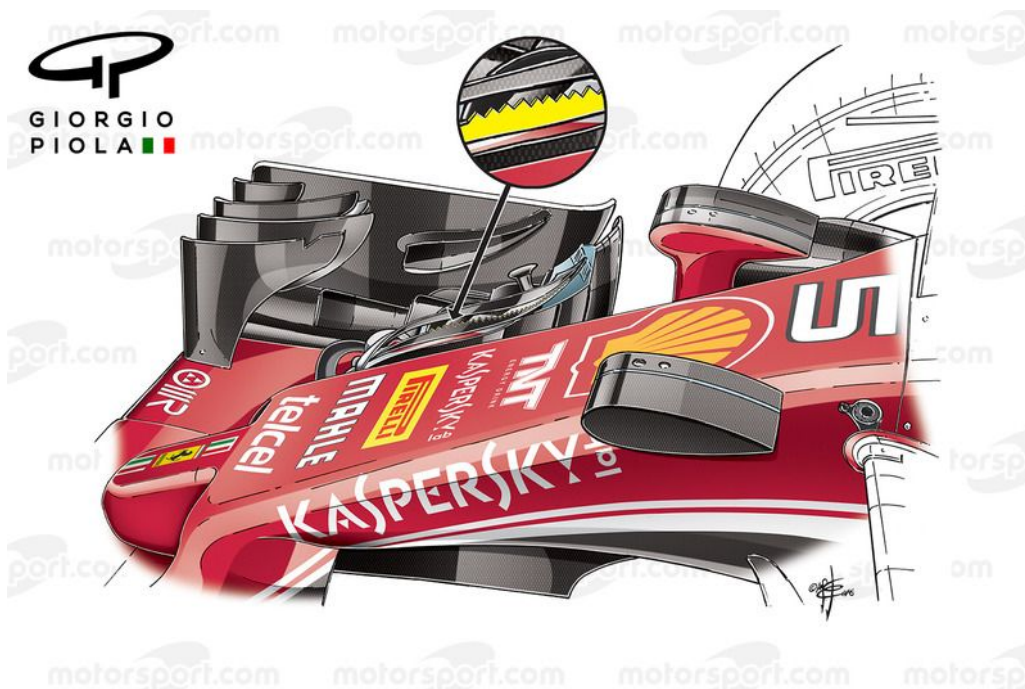
Appendix 8. The Call of Cthulhu movie poster



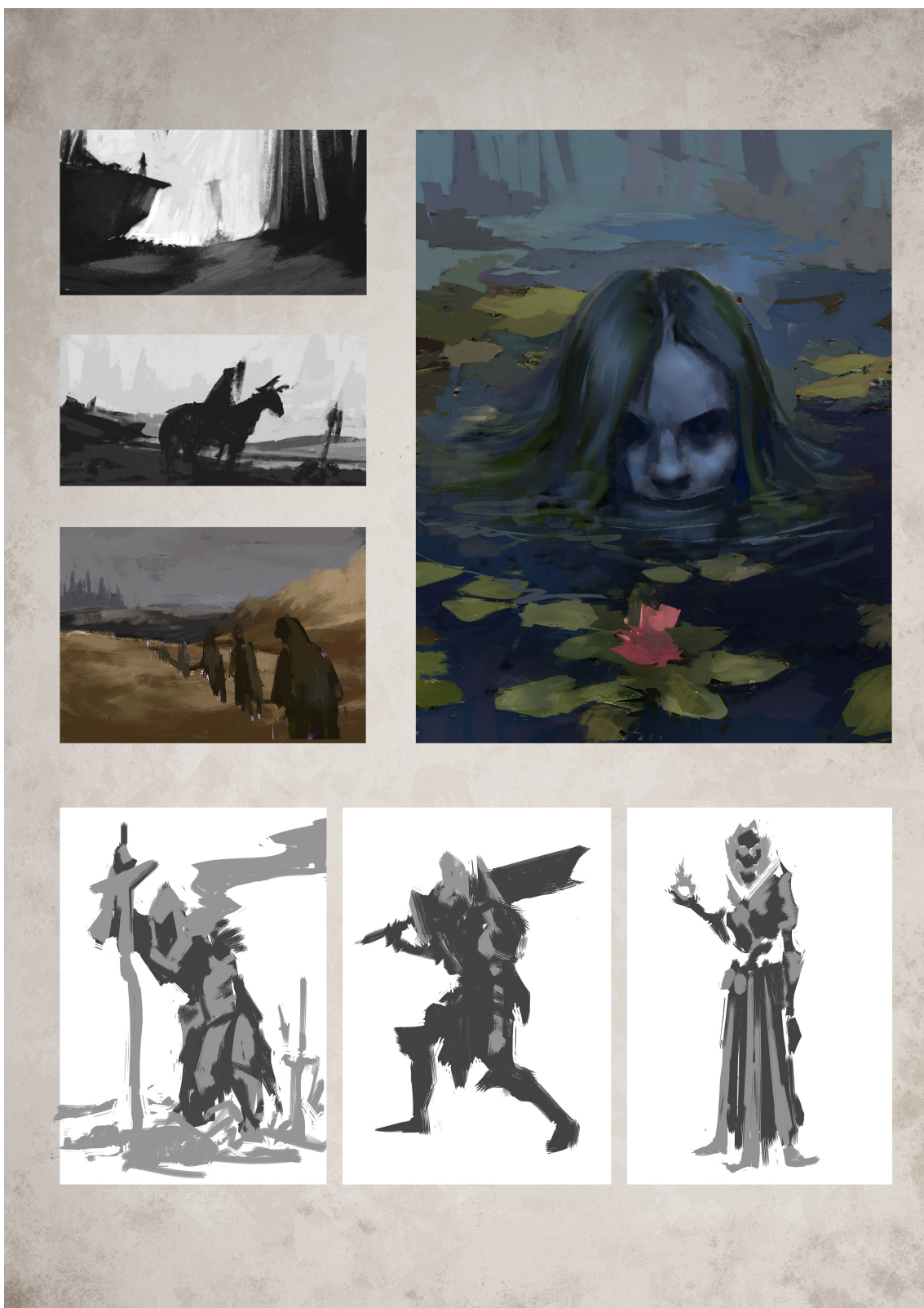
Appendix 9. A Game of Thrones original cover



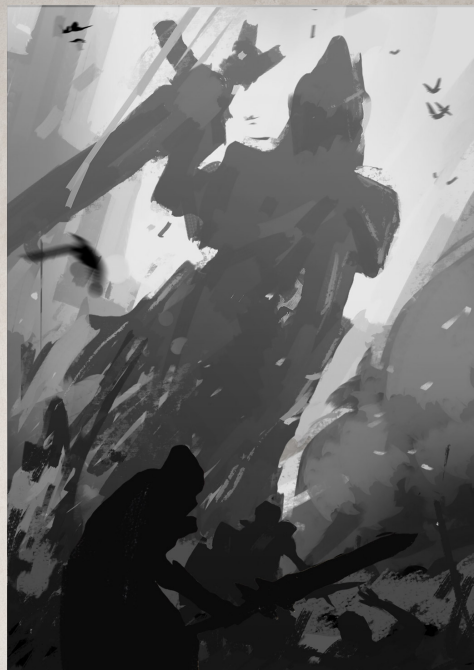
Appendix 10. Giorgio Piola



Appendix 11. Thumbnails, character sketches.



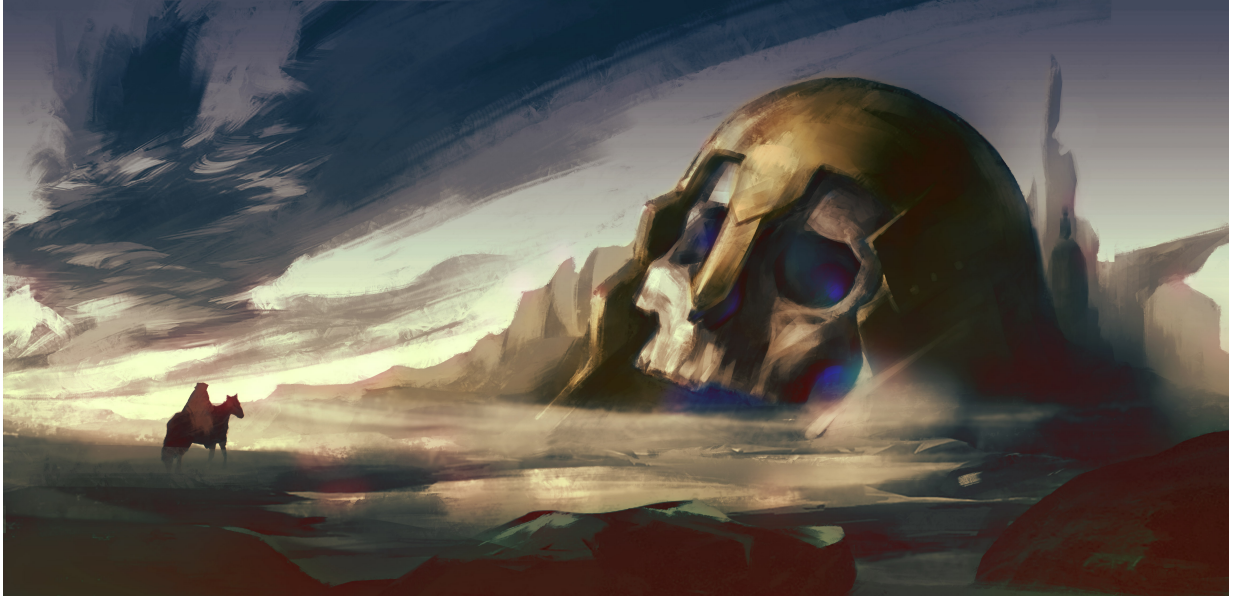
Appendix 12. Work in progress.



Appendix 13. Work in progress.



Appendix 14. Illustration 1. Environment Concept. Matte Painting.



Appendix 15. Illustration 2. Concept art. Photobash technique.



Appendix 16. Illustration 3. Character. Digital painting.

