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Department of Media and Advertisement Design

Concept Art for the Fairy Tale “The Tsarevna Frog”

Undergraduate thesis

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this graduation project is the process of creating concept art.

Concept art is used to illustrate ideas and define the visual direction of a project. The latter can be a video game, animation, movie, comic book or any other visual entertainment project. During the pre-production, a stage before the production process, concept artist gathers references and explores different solutions for the designs. During this stage the ideas are generated, worked out, refined and sometimes abandoned until the visual direction of the project is finally established.

The first chapter of this theoretical part explains what concept art is, how it gained its popularity, where it is used and what are the tools that professional artists use for their work. The next chapter of this work analyses the production process and its steps, key points to consider when developing characters and environments, and the overall rules of successful design. The final chapter demonstrates how the rules and techniques described in previous chapters can be applied during the process of creating concept art for a fairy tale.

The reason for choosing this topic is my previous encounter with the concept art work and my goal to work in a visual entertainment industry as a concept artist, where I would be able to use the knowledge I gained while researching for this graduation project.

The goal of this work is to analyse the purpose of concept art and its role in the entertainment industry, the techniques used by professional concept artists and requirements for a successful design.

For the practical part of this graduation project I created original concept art that is based on my interpretation of the Russian fairy tale “The Tsarevna Frog”. This includes designing the main characters and some of the locations where the story takes place. The goal is to go through the process of creating concept art and present possible design solutions as a result. The project is based on general worldbuilding and the potential final medium is open.

This work can be useful for artists that are interested in getting into entertainment industry that is constantly in demand for great talents.

1. CONCEPT ART

Concept art is an art form used to illustrate an idea and create the visual direction of a project that can be a video game, animation, movie, comic book or any other visual entertainment project. Concept artists gather references and explore many solutions for the designs. During this pre-production stage concept artists lay the foundation of the project by suggesting ideas that capture its visual feel and act as references for production team throughout the creative process.

The term “concept art” was used for the first time in 1930’s by Disney during the production of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Ghez, 2015). This term is often confused with “conceptual art”, which is an art movement and has little to do with “concept art” as we know it. Sometimes “concept art” can be referred to as visual development, concept design or just design sketches, but over the last 20 years the terms “concept art” and “concept artist” have become the industry standard.

Concept art has gained a lot of attention due to several big factors, which are art books, comic conventions and social media platforms. Art books showcase the work done behind the scenes of public’s favourite entertainment projects and have become a part of popular culture. They also serve as a source of inspiration and are an important educational medium for people interested in creative careers by giving an idea of the design process and the amount of pre-production work done behind the development of a movie or a video game. Comic conventions have attracted a wide audience exposing it to all kinds of art, including concept art. Companies and individual artists are self-promoting using social media platforms to spread their artwork or release half-finished pieces of art to get fans excited about upcoming projects. Overall concept art has become an important marketing tool for the companies. All of these factors combined have greatly contributed to the rise of awareness of concept art and its importance. (Ballesteros, 2017)

1.1 Key Industries

Concept art is widely used in visual entertainment industries, where pre-production is required to lay the foundation of the project and determine its visual feel. Such project can be a movie, animation, comic book, video game or any other project that relies on visuals.

One of the great examples of concept art done for a big project is John Mollo's work for *Star Wars* (1977) and *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980). John Mollo was the costume designer as he was a British military uniform expert and had written a number of well-researched books on the subject. He designed a full range of military costumes as well as countless alien civilian costumes (Appendix 1. John Mollo's sketch). Even though by today's standards his drawing skills would be considered weak, he won the 1978 Academy Awards for Costume Design as a proof of great designing skills. (Branch, 2018)

Maciej Kuciara is another well-known concept artist, who has worked for a number of high-profile companies and clients over the years, including Crytek (*Crysis* series), CD Project (*Cyberpunk 2077*), Blur (*Halo 4*'s launch trailer) and Naughty Dog (*The Last of Us*) (Plunkett, 2014).

Maciej states that working in a studio environment one has to remember that they are a part of a team and video games require a huge team effort. An artist has to remember that something that looks good on canvas might not necessarily translate that well into a 3D model or an animation. Maciej treats concept art as a visual representation of what things might look like and use it as reference material for the art director or production designer to help him create the visual language of the game. (Kuciara, 2015)

According to Maciej, there are not many differences between illustrating for video games, films or any other project as the level of details is always based on a particular project and assignment. Some projects that are in production require more detailed work, while projects that are in exploration phase need more loose sketch work. To stay relevant in the entertainment industry artists have to know how to do both. (Appendix 2. Concept art for Captain America: Civil War by Maciej Kuciara) (Kuciara, 2015)

As films are generally oriented towards building physical things there is much more attention to scale and functionality than in other types of projects. (Kuciara, 2015)

According to John Pearl, design director and one of the founders of Gunfire Games, there are some key skills that are considered crucial for a good concept artist:

1. ability to explore a wide variety of ideas or styles
2. successfully working with a variety of people including those who are not versed in art

3. designing environments that explore a wide range of styles and explore specific moods
4. doing paintings that demonstrate a wide range of techniques from classical to stylized
5. understanding the composition, colour theory, and visual story telling
6. ability to create prop and building designs including developmental sketches. (Pearl, 2017, pp. 41-42)

1.2 Tools and mediums

Concept artist can use a range of tools for creating sketches that can be divided into two mediums and they are traditional and digital mediums. Traditional medium includes such tools as pen, marker, graphite or coloured pencil, gouache and many more, while digital medium consists of various 2D and 3D graphic software. Artist can choose tools that suit best for their project and experiment with different techniques.

With the rise of digital era artists started to turn to digital tools for drawing and painting. It is also required by the studios to have an extensive knowledge of graphics software and have skills to use them daily to produce art for the project. The shift of medium towards digital can be explained by constantly evolving technology and the high effectiveness of the new tools. This is why nowadays professional concept artists are expected to have high technical skills in drawing, painting or 3D sculpting.

1.2.1 Traditional medium

Scott Robertson, an American concept artist, suggests experimenting with different tools. He starts with a light grey Copic marker to loosely sketch the forms and block out big silhouettes or add guidelines before laying down the finished line work with a ballpoint pen. To render the sketch, it is best to scan it and render it on a computer using any editing software. (Robertson, 2013, p. 116)

Graphite is a very flexible medium as it can easily be smudged while drawing with a pad or a smudging stub, enabling an artist to play with the value changes and discover new forms within the shifting values. To refine a sketch done with graphite, artist can finish it with line work. (Robertson, 2013, p. 192)

Coloured pencils, like graphite pencils, can smudge, so in order to lay down gradations it is best to use a side of the pencil, but they do not erase easily, therefore a smooth touch is required. It is not recommended to use markers over colour pencils, as they are wax-based. Good results can be achieved with the two if all of the marker work is done first, followed by the coloured pencils. (Robertson, 2013, p. 193)

Brush pen is a versatile tool that makes it possible to draw very thick to very thin lines in black ink. It requires practise to use skilfully, and since every line is a pure black, it is very difficult to explore before committing to the line. Using this pen forces thought and pre-visualization of the lines before they are drawn. (Robertson, 2013, p. 197)

There are many ways to experiment with the traditional mediums – mixing different kinds of tools like pen and marker or pencil and gouache, and studying how they lay down on a smooth, rough, textured or toned paper. This helps a concept artist to find unique combinations and develop new techniques.

1.2.2 Digital medium

Digital painting has adapted all the traditional methods and added new possibilities and techniques like photobashing, layers and a possibility to quickly modify an artwork in a non-destructive way.

Digital medium offers a whole new range of tools and techniques for creating illustrations and concept art and makes it possible to manipulate drawings in a way that cannot be done traditionally. It is less time-consuming and easier to make big changes in illustration when using digital software for the work instead of traditional mediums.

Graphics software can be classified into two categories: 2D and 3D graphics programs. 2D artists and designers often use 3D software for their work (Appendix 3. Combining 2D and 3D for concept art by Mike Luard), because it can be used for creating 3D scene that artist can rotate in different directions to find the best camera angle and paint over it. It can also be used to create all kinds of objects like plants, buildings, vehicles and spaceships to edit into the illustration or create different poses for the characters.

Creating different compositions, camera angles, perspective and lighting scenarios with 3D objects can give new ideas to take to the 2D illustration. Another approach is to create

digital 3D models and take pictures from different angles and lighting to use as a reference to draw from. (Garner, 2019)

Character artist Baj Singh states that blocking out an idea in 3D using programs such as Sketch Up and Zbrush is commonly used by the environment artists as it allows them to quickly block out environments and architecture and then sketch over them from different angles without worrying about doing the perspective freehand. The same goes for using photographs as a base for illustrating characters or landscapes. Clarity is very important for a concept artist and supplementing concept art with additional tools is a great way to speed up the workflow. (Singh, 2017)

2. PRODUCTION PROCESS

Before the production studio begins to work on the animation, movie, video game or comic book, concept artist lays the foundation of the project by suggesting ideas that capture its visual feel and act as references for the production team through the creative process.

The process starts with a director, studio or a creative person who has an idea for a project. Usually they take some time to refine the idea, collect references and make their own sketches. After that they bring on the concept artist who helps to visualize and refine their ideas or completely rework them.

The earlier point in any project's development is often referred to as pre-production and it is a stage when the ideas are still being worked out. During this time, ideas are generated, refined, abandoned, and this is repeated until the direction is established. The creation and discovery done by concept artists is the most important part of pre-production for a game, movie or any other visual entertainment project. (Pearl, 2017, p. 43)

After a first portion of concepts are done, some of them are approved to full-on illustrations where the focus is on mood, execution and composition. These illustrations are used to establish the visual direction and tone of the project to the whole team of developers. Functionality and feasibility of ideas take a backseat in favour of generating a beautiful image that the audience can get excited about. These ideas evolve and grow over the course of the project's development and give a starting point for the rest of the art team while finished illustrations help secure funding for production. (Pearl, 2017, p. 44)

Concept art should emphasize clarity and functionality of the design. Elaborate rendering can be sacrificed for simple colours with basic highlights and shadows. Instead of showcasing a character in a dynamic pose from one angle, characters would be in a more neutral pose and showcased from multiple angles. A concept artist can also include thumbnails of basic poses, so the animation team gets a better understanding of how the character should stand and move. (Singh, 2017)

2.1 Visual Storytelling

Visual story telling is a term that is often associated with film production; however, it plays an important role in video games, comic books and many more. In regard to movies, visual story telling refers to the composition of the scene as well as the elements that appear in that scene. The scene and its details give viewer information about a location, character, or an event purely through its visuals. The composition and elements of a character concept describe their history, personality, and the overall feel without the use of any words. The same is true for environments; the details applied to a scene will describe such things as its condition, purpose, location, and more. (Pearl, 2017, pp. 46-47)

As a concept artist, sometimes the backstory of a character or location is provided, while sometimes it is left open. As part of the creative process in creating a concept, it is important to think about the shape language of a given asset, its colour makeup, and things like the application of wear and damage. These are just a few of the traits that can help to inform the viewer of the story of a given piece. (Pearl, 2017, p. 47)

2.2 Character Design Process

Character design is a field of concept art that concerns the creation of characters. According to Bryan Tillman (Tillman, 2011, pp. 4-6) what makes a successful character design is the combination of story, narrative, archetypes, shapes, silhouettes and aesthetics. This combination gives life to the character in order to convince the audience and make them relate to the character. (João Ramos da Silva Filho, 2016)

There are several ways to approach a character design process. Seegmiller (Seegmiller, 2007) presents a process composed of five steps:

1. Problem identification
2. Analysis and simplification of the problem in which ideas are generated
3. Choosing the best ideas
4. Drawing the character
5. Evaluating the results

The steps applied in the process may vary from artist to artist and change according to the project.

Bryan Tillman (Tillman, 2011) describes character design as a combination of such elements as psychological and the physical aspects of the character and the story revolving around it. Character design is separated into archetypes, story, originality, shapes and forms, aesthetics and the wow factor. Considering the target audience as well as using references are important to create a memorable and relatable character design.

It is important to remember that character design refers to an idea instead of a style or aesthetic. Some character artists use the cartoon art style to demonstrate emotions more clearly in characters, because cartoon style is based on exaggerating expressions and features. (João Ramos da Silva Filho, 2016)

In order to create a character whose design is coherent, consistent and matches the purpose of a project, an artist must consider physical and conceptual aspects of the project. Physical aspects are related to the work environment and technological limitations. Conceptual aspects relate to story, audience, art style and such abstract aspects that concern the product. (João Ramos da Silva Filho, 2016)

2.2.2 Silhouettes and Shapes

Initial character design starts with research, brainstorming of ideas, exploration of proportions, clothing and bigger shapes before working on details like facial expression and textures.

Ida Hem states that basing a design on basic shapes helps to create a contrast between and within the characters. Basic shapes will also create more recognizable aspects to the design, making it easier for the audience to understand and remember the character. (Hem, 2017, p. 42)

It is important to focus on character's silhouette. It should be easily readable and clear as it communicates important details about the design. The silhouette is defined only by its shape as it does not include colour or small details. An empty space around a character which is known as negative space plays an important role in making a character's silhouette easily recognizable by the audience.

Every shape needs to be readable as effectiveness of information is not dependent on the details, but the readability of shapes. Designs must be exaggerated and simplified, with clear silhouettes working harmoniously. (Serrano, 2018)

2.2.3 Character's Attributes

An attribute of a character refers to its characteristics. An artist has to keep in mind how the character is going to perform and behave in the story. Designing a character, keeping the above things in mind, will add more life to the character. (Phani Tetali, 2018)

Some of the basic things that an artist needs to know about the character that he is creating are age, moods and behaviour patterns. Knowing this information and using it accordingly helps to make audience connect with the character. (Phani Tetali, 2018)

2.2.4 Costume Design

Creating costumes for a character requires a lot of research, as there are many questions to answer before beginning the designing process. Costumes play an important role in the characters' concepts. Outlining a character's story helps coming up with the design and sets its visual direction. Moodboards also help to create a feel of a character. When starting with doing sketches, an artist needs to pose a character so that the costume is clearly shown, while paying attention to the folds in the fabric. Ideas can come from different types of materials, so it is recommended to explore different variations, colours and textures. Repeating motifs and design elements help to maintain a sense of consistency of the character's costume. (Gerrard, 2018)

2.2.5 Character Poses

For demonstrating character's design it is best to draw a character in a simple, fairly relaxed and neutral pose while maintaining personality. This helps with clarity as opposed to a pose that is so dynamic that it masks out important elements of the character due to overlapping body parts. Concept artists often do additional thumbnail poses, highlighting key animations that the character might have, to help other artists and animators to understand the personality of the character as well as how they should move or behave. (Singh, 2017)

There are several things an artist should know before drawing a character in different poses and gestures:

1. How the character responds to various situations
2. How he poses himself
3. What gestures he makes to convey an action.

Knowing as many details as possible about the character helps to add small nuances while drawing him in a pose. A small change in gesture can speak a lot about the character's actions. (Phani Tetali, 2018)

2.3 Environment Design

Environment design is a field of concept art that is focused on designing an environment.

The big part in the process of designing an environment is based on research. The designer needs to find a way to design the history and story of an environment that personifies and supports the personalities in it. This creates the believability of a world. (Serrano, 2018)

It is important to use references, when painting an environment with such elements as recognizable architecture or believable landscape. Finding the right photos and references is a big part of the work. Having the right elements to compose with saves time and makes the work more efficient. (Lacoste, 2018)

In environment concept art every picture should have a story or a specific goal. The aim of the picture is to focus the audience's attention on the most important element whether it is some kind of architectural structure, entrance of a cave or a mountain pass. The viewer has to get a general idea about the environment, so while creating a design the artist needs to keep in mind relative sizes of objects and define the focus point by arranging rhythms and creating a contrast in shades to guide the viewer's eyes. (Shamykina, 2017)

Adding some characters to the scene not only enhances the sense of scale for the viewer, but also gives a sense of storytelling (Lacoste, 2018). There are many ways to create a sense of story and give objects a history like adding cracks to the statue, bones

before the entrance to the cave, footprints on the road, birds flying in the sky and so on. Adding small elements like this to the scenes brings it to life and makes it believable to the viewer.

When it comes to colouring, colour and material are closely connected in concept art: in order to avoid confusion different materials are often created in easily distinguishable colours and shades, so the audience can quickly tell what environment they are dealing with (Shamykina, 2017).

2.3.1 Composition

Composition does not simply describe an arrangement of forms and shapes, but it also includes perspective, value, staging and colour arranged harmoniously to tell the story or idea more efficiently (Appendix 4. Composition of Armand Serrano's illustration).

Perspective is defined by the placement of the camera and what type of lens is being used. It has a strong psychological effect on viewer's perception. Various camera placements of the same environment give different viewer perceptions as the viewpoint is the audience's eyes. Value translates the application of lighting. Staging is the arrangement of various elements in the canvas using the combination of shapes, sizes, overlaps, creating depth, dimension and balance. Colour is the harmony of palettes and temperatures. (Serrano, 2018)

Improper use of composition results in an audience's selective perception, which means that the audience has different interpretations of the story or idea. With the proper use of visual aesthetics, the compositional choices become intentional and directional towards intended perception. (Serrano, 2018)

2.3.2 Values and Thumbnail Sketching

Values are important in environment design as they establish lighting, depth and mood. Artists refer to values as the lightness or darkness of a colour. Every colour has a corresponding value and its lightness or darkness depends on the amount of lighting applied to it. There are three important rules of value:

1. The area that is the brightest or has the highest contrast is usually the focal point

2. Value creates an illusion of three-dimensional form by showing the surfaces being hit by light and the surface under the shadows

3. Value creates the illusion of depth. (Serrano, 2018)

Using values while sketching environments is the best way to create depth, as it creates atmospheric perspective. Value contrast in the thumbnail sketches makes them feel more realistic. (Robertson, 2013, p. 112)

Thumbnails are quick small-sized sketches that need to be a small size and require no detail, only arrangements of shapes and values. John Lovett proposes the method that starts with massing areas of similar tone together, then arranging these massed shapes to form an interesting composition. An artist then uses other shapes to lead in to and balance the focal point (Appendix 5. John Lovette's thumbnail sketches). This process provides a solid foundation for an illustration. (Lovett, 2017)

3. THE PROJECT

The practical part of this graduation project is creating original concept art that is based on my interpretation of the Russian fairy tale “The Tsarevna Frog”. This includes designing the main characters and some of the locations where the story takes place. The goal is to go through the process of creating concept art and present possible design solutions as a result. The project is based on general world building and the potential final medium is open.

For the earliest stage of design process I chose traditional tools like brush pen and a liner, as they feel more natural to do quick sketches with and it is easier to control the thickness of a line using brush pen. Additionally, it is not as easy to erase a wrong shape or a line and fix it as it is in a digital program. It made me think twice before drawing a line and made me work more carefully while considering the aspects of the design. After the sketches were done I continued my work using digital software that enabled me to experiment freely with tools, textures, colour and so on.

The story provides vital information that gives depth to the characters and defines their motivations. Throughout the story the characters gain experience and discover valuable information that helps to achieve their goals. (João Ramos da Silva Filho, 2016)

The tale about a princess frog has many versions with different origins, so I decided to go with the Russian version for several reasons. Firstly, the tale “The Tsarevna Frog” is familiar to me since childhood, as I have read it from the books many times and seen several animated films based on this story about Ivan Tsarevich and Vasilisa the Wise. Secondly, I am personally very interested in Slavic mythology and folklore, as there are many peculiar and unique characters as the old witch Baba Yaga, an evil wizard Koschei, a dragon Zmei Gorynich and many more.

3.1 Research and inspiration

Before starting to work on the designs, I began collecting information and references that would help me visualize the characters and the world they are living in. I was inspired by illustrations from the Russian fairy tale books from my bookshelf that I had since early

childhood. They included illustrations made by Boris Fedyushkin, Ivan Bilibin and Stanislav Kovalyov.

The references were found on the internet using platforms like Pinterest that include a great number of images on various topics. Collecting photos and pictures for my project as references helped me to create moodboards for the main characters and also to decide on the feel of the project and its visual tone.

I ended up choosing a fairy tale that has the Russian origin for the project. The Russian culture is very rich with all the customs, traditions, folklore and costumes, so my personal goal was to give a Slavic feel to my work, even though I was free to experiment with the setting and time period of the story within this project.

3.2 Slavic folklore

Slavic folklore forms one of the richest and most diverse mythologies in the world. Slavic stories are different to tales from other cultures, as Slavic folklore is focused on individual human traits unlike typical Western European stories, that are often based on wars of competing ideologies. (Allison, 2018)

Although appearances of Slavic folklore in popular media are rare, it is finding its home in the medium of video games. The most popular example is *The Witcher* game series that are based on Andrzej Sapkowski's novels, that are populated with creatures, monsters and spirits from Slavic folklore (Appendix 6. Promotional art for "*The Witcher 3*"). (Allison, 2018)

Dr David Waldron, a lecturer in history and anthropology at Federation University, explains: "[Slavic tales] have a distinct ideological difference to Western science fiction and fantasy. Battles between good and evil, and opposing ideologies in general, are seen as inherently destructive. You find the ultimate values being placed on the immediate kindness, integrity and compassion to those around you. Ideologies tend to suppress that for the 'greater good'." (Allison, 2018)

3.3 Story

The fairy tale starts with the tsar ordering his sons to shoot an arrow and find their bride where the arrow lands. The tsar's youngest son Ivan's arrow was picked by a frog, a future Ivan's bride, who turns into beautiful and intelligent princess at night, named Vasilisa. The tsar assigns several tasks for sons' brides and Vasilisa completes all of them successfully using her magical powers. After the final test, a dance at the tsar's banquet, Ivan burns the frog's skin and loses Vasilisa for his impatience. Ivan then goes on a journey to find and rescue Vasilisa. In the forest he meets a witch Baba Yaga living in a hut that stands on two chicken legs. Yaga is impressed by Ivan's spirit and decides to help him. She tells that Koschei the Immortal, an evil wizard and father of Vasilisa, is holding his bride captive and explains how he can save her.

3.4 Characters

There are several characters that appear in the story and the ones that I decided to design are Ivan Tsarevich, Vasilisa the Wise and Baba Yaga (Appendix 7. Character design).

The design process began by drawing the silhouettes of the characters and exploring different solutions. Each character is different and has distinctive features that make the characters unique. It was important to keep contrast between them and make them easily recognizable. During the process I paid a lot of attention to the costume design of the characters, as it is supposed to reflect characters' inner nature and their role in the story.

After the number of silhouettes was done (Appendix 8. Characters' silhouettes), I selected the ones that suited the characters the most and continued working on them. I edited the silhouettes adding more details by placing tracing paper over them and sketched several options for the interior details with a liner. So, several versions of the design per silhouette were made. After that I scanned the drawings and started editing the designs in Photoshop, drawing and painting over their silhouettes, trying to find suitable colours and textures for the clothing. When the desired colours and textures of the fabric were in place, I started rendering the designs by adding shadows and highlights to give them a more finished look.

3.4.1 Ivan Tsarevich

Ivan Tsarevich is the youngest sibling, son of the tsar, who is the main hero of the story. Unlike his older brothers, Ivan does not seek wealth, he resigns his fate and obeys his father to marry a frog. He has to pass difficult trials to find and save Vasilisa. Considering the fact that Ivan is an archer and he uses his bow several times during the story, my goal was to make him look agile, swift and skilful with his bow. His clothes need to be practical for the travels and include the pieces of armour for the protection. Also, the design of the clothes has to hint at Ivan's belonging to the royal family. Overall, Ivan's character design needs to be appealing and also relatable to the audience as he is the hero of the story.

Ivan's costume is mainly black with rich golden ornaments and some red elements like belt and scarf. He wears a pauldron made of dark metal on his right shoulder to protect him while he is aiming with his bow which also has some golden carving. By the first look of him it is clear that Ivan is ambitious and fiery man who comes from royal family.

3.4.2 Vasilisa the Wise

Vasilisa the Wise, Koschei's daughter and a powerful sorceress, is a kind, gentle and beautiful young girl. In the story she is turned into a frog as a punishment for her clever wits by Koschei, which gave me a strong direction for her design. I wanted her to look like a magical fairy and her design to reflect her kind and innocent, but at the same time strong nature. I used bright colours for her costume and added elements that resemble a frog which was a must. Her hair is covered as the symbol of her submission to her father Koschei. The loose light blue clothes and cold metal elements successfully portray Vasilisa's delicate and powerful nature.

3.4.3 Baba Yaga

In the original story Baba Yaga is an old witch that lives in a hut that has two chicken legs. Even though Baba Yaga is usually portrayed as a villain in the Russian folklore, this time Yaga plays a positive role in the Ivan's journey to save Vasilisa. For this project I decided to alter her character a little more and make her seem more like a mysterious shaman or a

healer who keeps peace in the forest. As I decided to abandon the original concept of Yaga being an old evil witch, I made her look younger and more approachable, leaving a pagan feel to her design. Yaga's shoulders are covered by big scarf and amulets and her eyes are hidden by the beads hanging from the hood. This creates a mystery around this character.

3.5 Landscapes and architecture

For this project I was free to experiment with the setting of the story and the world the characters are living in. Most Russian fairy tales take place in Kievan Rus', but since my goal is to show the process of creating the design of the environment, I do not have to stick to the original version and can alter it in the process.

I created the designs of the tsar's castle surrounded by the city (Appendix 9. The castle) and Baba Yaga's hut in the forest (Appendix 10. Baba Yaga's hut).

3.5.1 Castle

I began the process by gathering the references for the city castle and inspirational images. When the ideas of the environment were defined, I started sketching and doing thumbnails. For this task I decided to use a different technique from what I used when designing the characters. I started by making an abstract digital collage combining various textures and brush strokes. During this stage the image can be cropped, duplicated, mixed with other pictures or photos. In the digital format this method is limitless. In the process different shapes and textures start to emerge that can resemble familiar objects and outlines. This is the time when smaller details can be added to define those objects.

I started the illustration working with only black and white, so all my attentions was paid towards making the values right (Appendix 11. Work in progress). As the castle is the focal point of the composition, the area around it has the highest contrast of values. The bridge leads viewer's eyes to the castle that appears as a large architectural structure with massive dome on the main building and towers with onion domes built around it. The griffin statue that holds the bridge acts as a symbol of city's history and mythology.

3.5.2 Baba Yaga's Hut

Yaga's hut is her home, a place, where she spends her time casting spells, brewing magical potions and performing rituals. The hut should resemble Yaga's nature, so before I started designing her home, I had to finish designing her character. Originally, Baba Yaga's hut is described as standing on two chicken legs somewhere deep in the forest. I believe that these chicken legs are a very unique element and I wanted to keep them in the designs.

The design process started with doing silhouettes of the hut. I experimented with shapes by stretching the proportions, making the design either angular or round and then analysed how these changes influenced the perception of the design. I explored different directions for the architecture, contrasting organic shapes with artificial ones.

After the sketches were done I moved onto painting the hut digitally. As Yaga's concept shows her as a young and friendly witch, her house is supposed to reflect that. I chose lively colours for the hut to create a warm and relaxed atmosphere around it, and added small details, like a bucket and pagan wreath above the door, to give it more life.

3.6 Result

The goal of the creative project was creating design solutions for the main characters of the Russian fairy tale "The Tsarevna Frog", Ivan Tsarevitch, Vasilisa the Wise and Baba Yaga, and also some of the locations where the story takes place, tsar's castle in the capital city and Yaga's hut in the forest. The designing process started by collecting references and moodboards, exploring silhouettes and shapes. After choosing the most suitable silhouettes, the work on the characteristic features of the designs continued. As the result, the designs of the characters and environments were made. The goal of the project as well as the goal of each individual design has been achieved. The designs successfully portray the nature of the characters and moods of the environments.

CONCLUSION

This work researches the process of creating concept art. Concept art is an art form that is used to illustrate an idea and establish the visual direction and tone of the project, that can be a video game, movie, animation or comic book. The result of this graduation project is concept designs for the main characters and locations of the fairy tale “The Tsarevna Frog”.

The designs of the characters and environments were based on previous research, reading books and articles on concept art creation and its fundamentals, gathering references and exploring different techniques.

The theoretical part of the graduation projects analyzes the purpose of concept art, its role in the entertainment industry, the techniques used by professional concept artists and requirements for making a successful design.

For the practical part of this graduation project I created original concept art that is based on my interpretation of the Russian fairy tale “The Tsarevna Frog”. That included designing the main characters, Ivan Tsarevitch, Vasilisa the Wise and Baba Yaga, and also some of the locations where the story takes place – tsar’s castle in the capital city and Yaga’s hut in the forest. The goal of the project was to go through the process of creating concept art and present possible design solutions as a result. The designs successfully portray the nature of the characters and moods of the environments. The goal of the graduation project has been reached.

This work may be found useful by many aspiring artists that are interested in getting into visual entertainment industry that is constantly in demand for great talents.

SUMMARY / RESÜMEE

Concept art “Konn-tsaaritar” muinasjutule

Juhendaja: Edgar Juhkov

Minu lõputöö teema on *concept art* ja selle loomise protsess. *Concept art*’iks loetakse sellist meelelahutustööstuse kunsti, mille peaesmärgiks on disaini ja idee illustreerimine teiste kunstnike ja meeskonnaliikmete jaoks. Sisuliselt on tegemist visuaalse projekti (näidend, mängufilm, arvutimäng, koomiks vms) disainieskiisidega. *Concept art* suunab projekti üldist visuaalset poolt ja annab konkreetset lähtematerjali projekti tootmismeeskonnale (nt 3D-mudeldajad, kostümeerijad, lavakunstnikud jm).

Minu loomingulise projekti tulemuseks on vene muinasjutu “Konn-tsaaritar” peamiste tegelaste ja asukohtade kujundused. Disainiprotsessi aluseks oli sellele eelnev uurimistöö – raamatute ja artiklite lugemine *concept art*’i loomisest ja selle põhimõtetest, inspiratsioonimaterjali kogumine ning erinevate joonistamise ja maalimise tehnikate uurimine.

Antud teemavaliku põhjuseks on minu eelnev tööalane kokkupuude *concept art*’iga ja eesmärk töötada kunstnikuna meelelahutustööstuses, kus saaksin kasutada teadmisi, mida lõputöö valmimise käigus omandasin.

Lõputöö teoreetiline osa analüüsib *concept art*’i eesmäärke, selle rolli visuaalses meelelahutustööstuses, professionaalsete kunstnike kasutatavaid meetodeid ja nõudeid eduka kujunduse loomiseks.

Lõputöö praktiline osa oli *concept art*’i loomine “Konn-tsaaritar” muinasjutule, mis hõlmas peamiste tegelaste ja keskkondade kujundamist. Projekti eesmärk oli läbida *concept art*’i loomise protsess ja selle tulemusena esitada mitmeid disainilahenduste versioone.

Antud töö võib olla kasulik kõigile kunstnikele, kellel on huvi *concept art*’i vastu ning kes soovivad arendada oma teadmisi ja oskusi antud valdkonnas.

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APPENDICES

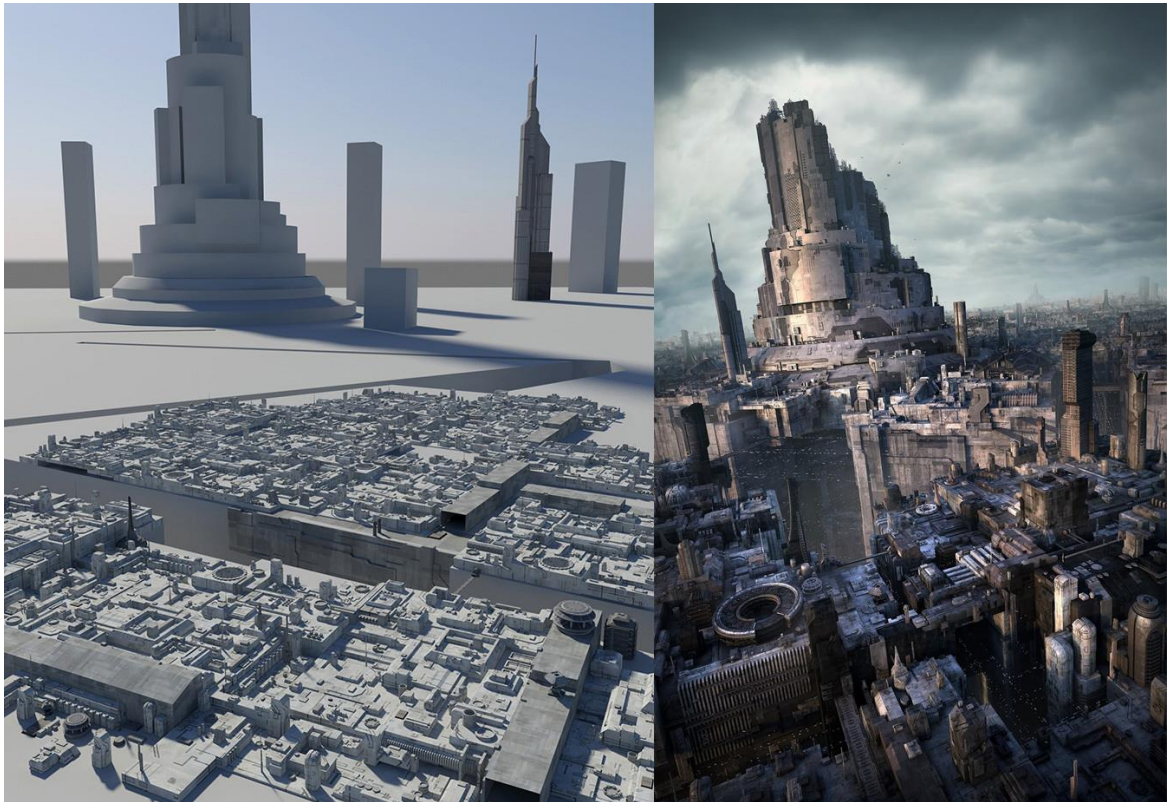
Appendix 1. John Mollo's sketch



Appendix 2. Concept art for Captain America: Civil War by Maciej Kuciara



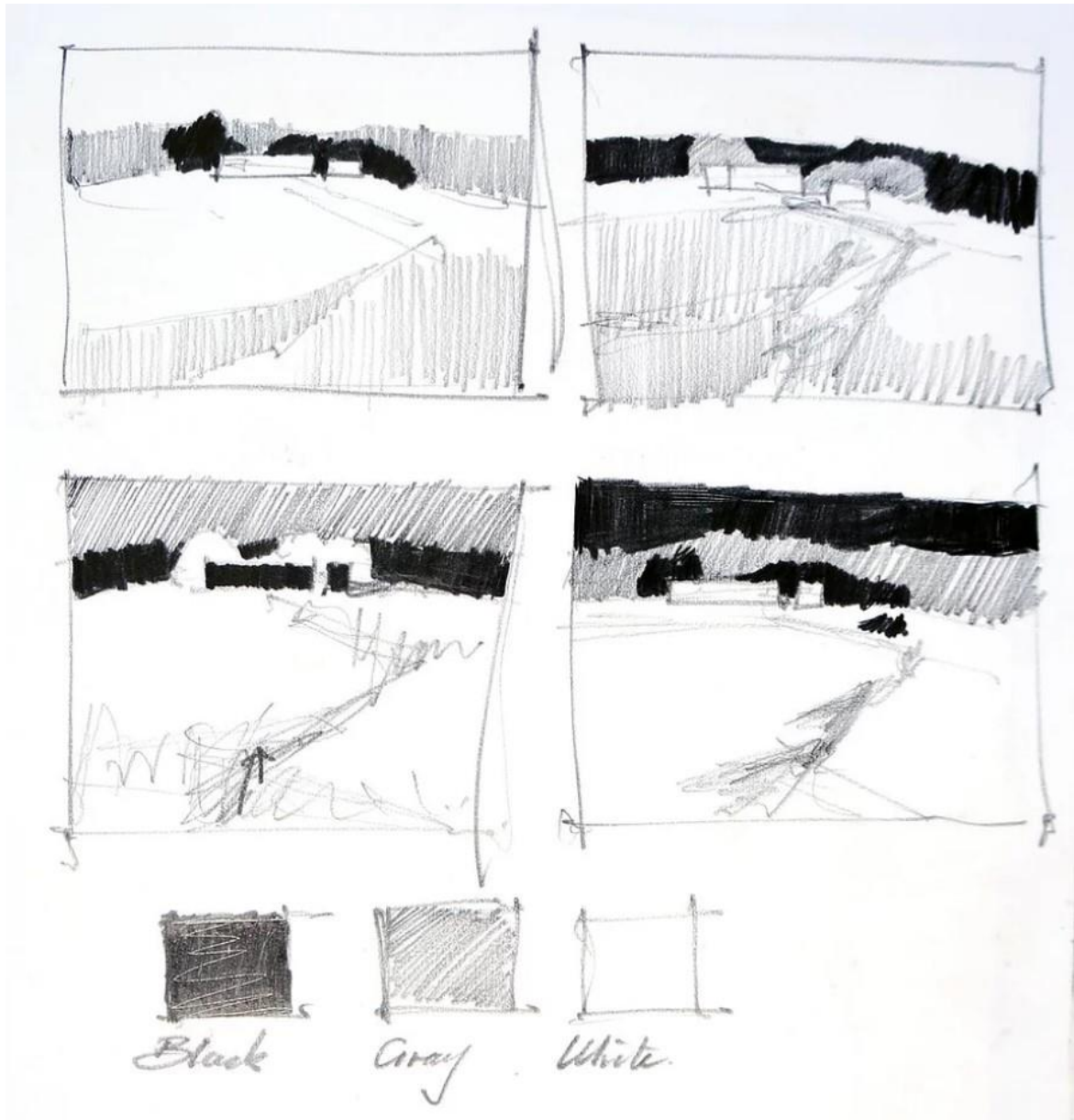
Appendix 3. Combining 2D and 3D for concept art by Mike Luard



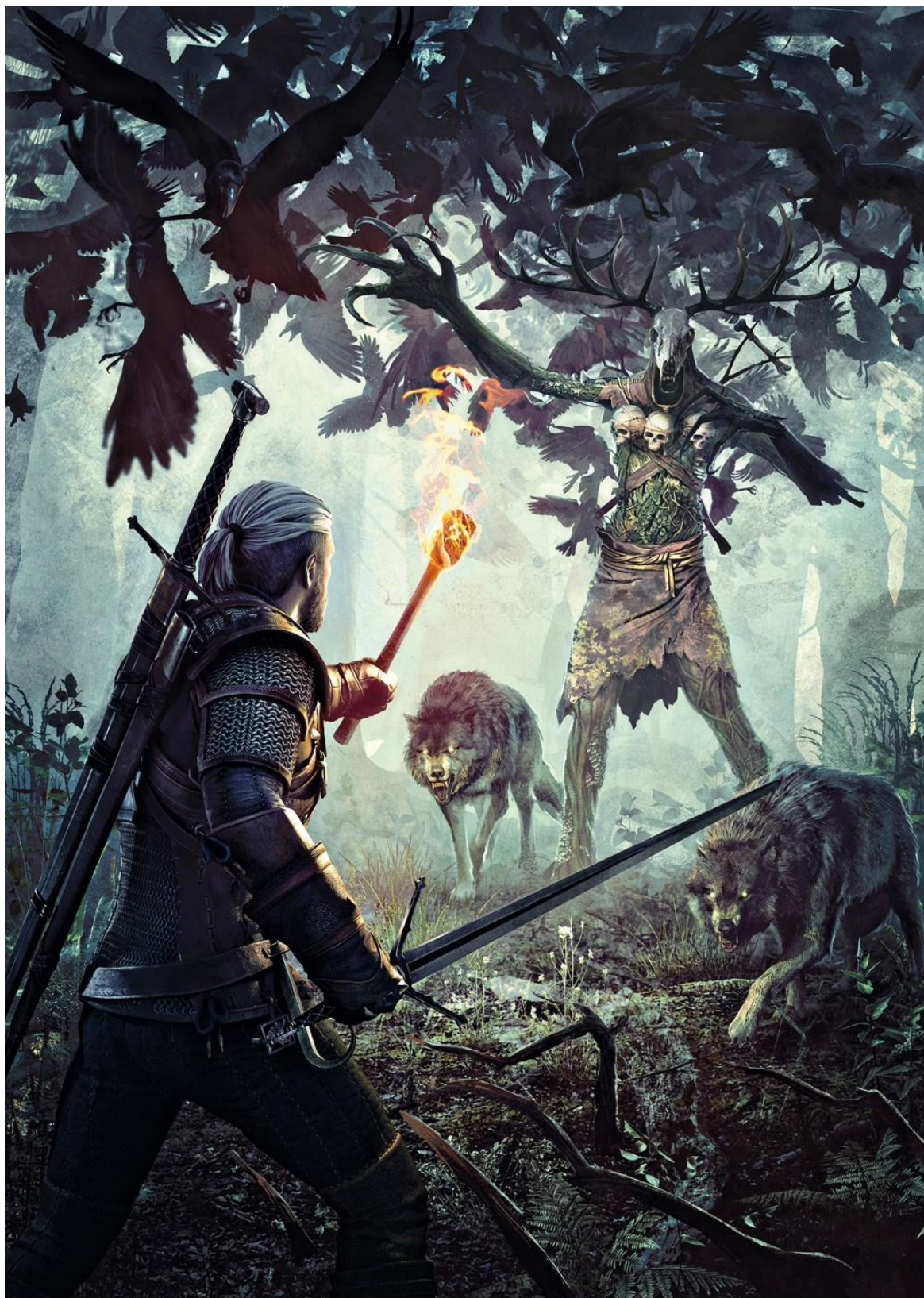
Appendix 4. Composition of Armand Serrano's illustration



Appendix 5. John Lovette's thumbnail sketches



Appendix 6. Promotional art for “*The Witcher 3*”



Appendix 7. Character design



Appendix 8. Characters' silhouettes



Appendix 9. The castle



Appendix 10. Baba Yaga's hut



Appendix 11. Work in progress

