

SUMMARY – PALAEOART: ILLUSTRATION IN PALAEOLOGY

I have created a thesis on the subject of „Palaeoart: Illustration in Palaeontology” and comprised it of three chapters. In the first chapter I give an overview of the definition and history of „palaeoart“ and palaeontological illustration, by exploring the changes in the medium through the works of influential palaeoartists. In the second chapter I deal with the contemporary situation of palaeontological illustration along with some of the principles and problems characteristic of the medium. In my third chapter I give an overview of the “practical” portion of my thesis, during which I followed the typical process of creating palaeoart based on the lifeforms of prehistoric Estonia.

A science fiction element has been added in the form of timetraveling researchers – this creative liberty is meant to serve as an empathic anchorpoint between the viewer and the environments. The result is a series of four digital paintings comprising of a tunnel in the Ordovician era, some Silurian coral reefs and two representations of the Devonian era encompassing both its’ seabottom and coastal land-life.

The project improved my understanding of perspective and the Palaeozoic era, as well as biological and geological terminology. I found out that I can create my own palaeoart compositions, but also that I lack the necessary knowledge for reconstructing the anatomy of animals or plants based straight on fossil data, thus I had to repeatedly use other peoples’ illustrations as references. Nonetheless I gave my best to verify said illustrations based on the fossils, wherever possible.

I think that the history of palaeontological illustration in Estonia is a topic that ought to be further researched in the future, as the volume of my current thesis project kept me from delving into it.

Nonetheless I feel that I’ve fulfilled the goals I’ve set for myself within the thesis. I believe that the problems I experienced were part of the process and inherent to the ones faced by every palaeoartist.