

Personal introduction

Find out about the students

- Different majors
- Reasons for interest in character design

Character design

- What is character design?
- What is character? – Dictionary.com
 - The combination of qualities or features that distinguish one person, group of thing from another
 - In Literature – descriptive analysis of a particular human virtue or vice as represented in a person or type
 - In Genetics – any trait, function, structure or substance of an organism resulting from effect of one or more genes as modified by the environment
 - In Theater – representing a personality type, especially by emphasizing distinctive traits, as language, mannerisms, physical makeup, etc.
- Character is: virtues and vices, qualities, likes and dislikes, traits, functions, mannerisms, personality, etc
 - May also include social status, occupation, etc
- Think of character design as designing character

Psychology of character design

- What type of personality are they?
- What makes them do what they do?
- Written Character bio
 - Can be useful
 - May also be excessive
 - However deep you delve into a character's psyche should probably be determined by how you plan on using them
 - [Example PDF](#)
- Approach to designing Neil Helm's character
 - He had specific character traits in mind
 - [My process](#)
- Intangible concepts (personality) need to be translated into something tangible (or in this case, visible)
 - The outward appearance of your character should ultimately reflect your character's personality, whether intentionally or not
 - Consider shapes, proportions, predominant features, weight distribution/emotional center, posture, scale, manner of dress and color
- Some times visual concepts will proceed personality
 - Just be careful that personality of some sort is there
- Visual cues can tell half of your story

A starting point

- The human form – what makes it so interesting?
 - Shapes, S-curve, tapering, curves vs. straights, repetition, variation, etc
 - [Examples](#)
 - System of checks and balances
- Basic anatomy and facial structure
- We relate easily to ourselves and look for human features in other things
 - Animals and inanimate objects
 - [Examples](#)
 - It also goes the other way – giving humans animal features tends to dehumanize them and often times, they take on characteristics attributed to those animals
 - [Examples](#)
- Variety in the human form
 - Age, Body type, sex, ethnicity
 - Start paying attention to these sorts of things in people you see or meet
 - Clip images out of magazine or download them off the internet
 - Carry a sketchbook to jot down something you see

Developing your own visual language (style)

- Art is a visual language, a form of communication
 - Some attempts at communicating are more successful than others
 - Draw, draw, draw – builds your visual vocabulary
 - Communicate concisely, yet effectively
 - Artistic prose is unnecessary, even in detailed comps
 - The old illustration vs. photography debate
 - Just keep things simple
- Expose yourself to other artists
 - My influences include:
 - Humberto Ramos, Carlos Meglia, Doug Tennapel, Jamie Hewlett, Ian McCracken, Genndy Tartakovsky and Retro Cartoon Design
 - Look at different genres of art – even some that you’re not too fond of
 - What makes these genres/styles successful?
 - Borrow, take, steal successful elements from other artists and genres
 - Ultimately you will adapt these elements to your own ends
- Create a visual “grab-bag” for yourself
 - Emphasis on drawing from reference, if not life
 - Abstract real-life forms into simplified elements
 - Use visual language of other artists.
 - If somebody else uses successful elements, use them. Chances are they borrowed stuff from other artists too
 - Be careful not to fall into a rut

How I design a character

- Tools of the trade
 - Col-Erase pencils, plastic erasers, smooth paper (even computer paper), markers, brush, crow-quill and ink, super sculpey

- Photoshop, Illustrator, Corel Painter
- Beginning a design
 - Sometimes it begins as a bio, sometimes as a sketch
 - Start with the most important part, whether it be the head or the body
 - Whichever will be used more to convey the most character
 - Loosely drawn, basic shapes – don't commit too much too soon
 - Gradually commit more to the drawing tightening and refining
 - Work general to specific