

Practitioner's Statement

Nexus

Silvio Francisco

My first practical focused on comic book design, specifying in the areas of graphic design and illustration. The brief required me to design a themed collection of four superheroes and one villain. The themes I explored were Ancient Roman Gods and Science. I concentrated on the Gods Minerva, Jupiter and Pluto. Three characters were influenced by each God (Aegis, Starborn, Samael). The other two characters were influenced by Science, specifically the fields of chemistry and physics (Free-Fall, Velocity). A comic book publishing company, comic cover and trading cards also needed to be created. These drew inspiration from existing covers and several practitioners, such as Jim Lee, Jack Kirby and Frank Miller.

Miller's designs included brutally intense images, profound grittiness and raw emotion. This helped me locate the right balance of emotion that lied within a character's face and body. However, Kirby's work was more retro, often relying on bright colours and shadows. Lee was my biggest inspiration. His work is incredibly detailed and dynamic instilling a strong sense of movement, and a sense of realism. From these influences, I was able to amalgamate several ideas and combine the philosophies of each designer. One issue that was experienced during the early stages of the folio was that without a theme to base my characters on, it was impossible to picture successful concepts and an effective final resolution. However, this was soon fixed.

I then researched the three Gods chosen to influence my designs. I studied information that included the God's significant symbols, appearance and beliefs. This assisted me in understanding each God and how I could create my characters. The same process was repeated for studying Chemistry and Physics. This was a more complicated task, however, existing knowledge of these fields was useful. This development period enabled me to accurately create various costumes and personas for each God and Science in my initial concept stages. For each character, I designed outfits with these ideas in mind. After creating initial concepts, I examined friends and other comic book publishers in the target audience, which was both genders aged between 15 and 25 years, to help enhance my designs. I questioned the visual effectiveness of each character and was able to successfully improve. It is evident that the characters share similar body configurations. For example, strong jaw lines and cheekbones. This helps to exaggerate the level of power held by each character, and emphasises humanity within the characters.

My final outcome was a comic book cover, titled *Nexus: Origins*, and five trading cards, both of which featured all five characters. It was imperative that the cover was effectual and able to tell a story without actually providing any plot. A simplistic approach was taken for the cover and trading cards, which further accentuates the philosophies of the practitioners who were studied. I believe that my folio and final outcome meets the parameters of the design brief as I successfully reflected all three gods and science in the character designs and cover. The designs are aesthetically and visually suited to the current trends and styles of our contemporary world.