

## *Fortune Shikari*

### **874973X**

What does utopia cost, and who pays the price? In *Fortune Shikari*, I examine how inequality, narcissism and perpetual modification warp the society we seek into the heterotopia we achieve. *Fortune Shikari* is my original, digitally illustrated, cyberpunk graphic novel I have created. It features a group of young adults, collecting and restoring ancient, supernatural artifacts. Their home, the Citadel, is an island of gleaming skyscrapers, speeding traffic and bustling markets. Outside is nature. Between is a jumble of abandoned ruins, consumed by mutant greenery, toxic spills and rust. An ever-shifting borderland where conflicting visions of utopia and dystopia meet.

For my body of work I have included four pages of the novel, including the volume's cover, displayed in print and mounted on foamcore. Inequality has persisted throughout human history. We each conceptualise our ideal society as a loose collage of desires and biases, without counting the cost or contradictions. My series illustrates a possible future. I began working with the idea of science-fiction, depicting organic life with inorganic qualities. I look at how humanity is changing. Like a toddler with a gun, much of that change is now, or soon will be, under our immature control.

Most works of science-fiction have an esoteric motive under the glamour; the moral implication of change poses a philosophical 'what if?', beneath the future-tech scenery. I gravitated to the famous work of Caravaggio, *Narcissus*, 1599. *Narcissus*, doomed to self obsession, paralyzed by perfectionism. Robert Valley uses Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus* to underpin his animated short *ZIMA BLUE*. Drawing on this approach, I used *Narcissus* as a narrative base, from which to depict our future. In building these environments I modified the design elements of *Cassandre* and *Robert Valley*. Consistent line, shape, depth, and color elements, establish the expressive nature of each background. I chose my stylistic balance of softer/rounded shape language with smooth, fully opaque, tapered line quality. Combining the shape language of *Steven Universe* and *Mike Yamada*, I created environments with sci-fi themes without harsh angles and corners to distract from the protagonists. In keeping with the cyberpunk genre, my art is drawn digitally, using clean, bold linework.

I exclusively used photoshop/adobe software and my dell laptop and stylus hardware. Based on the texture-high art-deco pieces of *Robert Valley* and *Cassandre*, the shading has a smooth gradient/blend. Rounded shapes depict organic elements, and straight lines for inorganic elements. To combine these styles effectively, I looked for another inspiration. In his novel *PTSD*, *Guillaume Singelin* shows that hyper-realism is not needed to create a raw, real-world visual narrative.

After receiving my own CPTSD diagnosis, I found it cathartic to convey these themes through traditionally 'cartoonish' characters. In *Gareth Davis*' work, detail is put into weapons, cargo, and other sci-fi thematic elements. In contrast, figures were simple and reusable. In practice, the thin line "necessary detail" design of these characters work well for storyboarding graphic novels