

Character Design – Part 1

Holly Arnold

My design brief was to design three highly detailed characters who live in a fantasy setting. Each character was required to be given their own 'character sheet' which would contain a detailed illustration of them as well as a summary of their personality and possible role in a story. The characters were created on the drawing program Paint Tool Sai and then imported into Photoshop where minor edits and colour tweaks could be made. It was important to create the characters side by side to ensure that they were drawn in the same style but contrasted each other enough to not be confused with each other. The target audience outlined in the design brief was individuals aged 15-25, meaning that the characters could contain a high level of detail as the audience would be able to easily comprehend it compared to a younger audience.

Before creating the characters, I researched techniques that character designers frequently used when designing characters. This investigation showed me what techniques were commonly used in successful character designs and how I could apply them to my own. I wanted to create character designs because it has been something I've always been interested in.

The character designer Satoshi Matsuura exaggerates the fundamental shapes of his characters to highlight their meanings. I found that this technique helps to exaggerate the characters personality. Matsuura's work also helped me to understand the importance of interesting body language, as it brought his characters to life.

Noelle Stevenson heavily influenced my method of incorporating a variety of colours into the same design. I was inspired by how she used a variety of facial and body shapes combined with height to differentiate her characters. Stevenson frequently used little details to bring her characters to life, which I carried over into my own.

Designer Michelle Cheng uses the posture of her characters to give them personality. She intentionally used hidden elements and shapes to give her characters a deeper meaning. I was also inspired by how she broke up large areas of colour with patterns and texture.

Dana Terrace's use of colour saturation greatly effects the mood and personality of her character designs. She frequently uses dynamic and expressive body language to bring her designs to life. I was influenced by her subtler methods of using shape language to give her characters personality.

I was inspired by Michelle Czajkowski's use of highly intricate details for their character designs and how they made their characters more interesting. The way that their characters contrasted each other in shape, colour, and theme was incorporated into my own designs.

I believe that I have successfully fulfilled the design brief by designing three characters from a fantasy world. By using a highly detailed and intricate art style, I was able to create something that would be interesting to look at on its own and appeal the target audience.

Comic Design – Part 2

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My design brief was to create a comic featuring characters that I had previously designed in the first practical. The comic would include three fully coloured pages and a front cover. The aim was to create the comic on the drawing program Paint Tool Sai and add the finishing touches on Photoshop. The target audience outlined in the design brief is comprised of 15–20-year-olds of a non-specific gender, meaning that it was important to keep them in mind in order to make a comic that appealed to that group.

The starting point for my design was to research the techniques that designers had used to create comic pages and covers. This investigation allowed me to better understand how short comics are structured and what types of art styles would be most suitable. I knew that I wanted to create a comic because I wanted to incorporate the characters I had previously created into a story. In order to fit with the aesthetic of the characters, I decided to create a fantasy themed comic.

Natasha Allegri heavily influenced my personal aesthetic of incorporating various methods of panel borders into one comic. She expresses emotion through speech bubble shape and font style which is a consideration I adopted. She inspired me to use expressive body language and expressions in my characters.

Luke Pearson's designs utilizes different viewpoints of the characters because he believes this has a strong impact on how the audience perceives them. I adopted this in my comic which helped to animate and express my characters intentions.

Designer Patrick McHale uses minimal words and a less rigid style in his comics. I found that this style was pivotal in making my design unique. I was also inspired by the way he coloured his backgrounds.

The comic artist Michelle Czajkowski taught me techniques to add a magical element to the comic. By experimenting with her rendering and colour methods I was able to create a dynamic glowing and magical element to my comic.

I wanted to create a simple and light-hearted comic design for my characters. The fantasy style of designer Noelle Stevenson inspired me and through researching her methods and techniques I was able to give my comic a lighter mood.

I had previously never created a comic in a digital format, so I had no experience. Despite this, I have many years of experience with digital art. This required me to learn the various aspects involved in comic creation, such as setting out the page and creating a story. A challenge that I came across was setting it the comic out in a way for the story to make sense. This issue required me to make multiple revisions to the layout of my comic.

Overall, I was able to fulfill the design brief by creating a three-page fantasy comic and an adjoining front cover. By using a simple style, I was able to create a light-hearted mood and by incorporating interesting characters, the comic should appeal to the target audience.