CDQ
CHARACTER DESIGN QUARTERLY

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ISSUE 03 PREVIEW

Image © Matt Howorth

WELCOME TO *CHARACTER DESIGN QUARTERLY 03*!

Clearly illustrating the personality of a character is one of the most important tasks a character designer needs to complete for their design to be successful. Throughout this issue you will see many ways in which this task can be performed; be that through color, texture, shape, or pose.

In his tutorial, David Ardinaryas Lojaya translates calm and friendly personality traits into his fantasy character design, while Alberto Camara discusses how he makes non-human characters appear more human in their expression. Ida Hem builds a sense of disappointment into her character to create a cohesive story, and Almu Redondo shows how she uses standard practices from other disciplines, such as psychology and method acting, to innovate her design choices. In doing so she presents new ways of understanding and depicting the personality of her character. Happy reading!

ANNIE MOSS
EDITOR

Image © David Ardinaryas Lojaya

CONTENTS

This page: *Mimi the girl*
All images © Anna Cattish

Growing up in the USSR, Anna Cattish developed a love of drawing and cartoons but there was limited access to a diverse range of comics for her to explore at the time. However, as American and Japanese media became more accessible and Anna discovered the power of sharing her work online, a world of possibilities opened up to her. Now Anna is known for her striking, attitude-filled characters of edgy, fashion-orientated young women. As the creator of this issue's incredible cover image, we speak to Anna about the biggest influences on her distinctive style, and her animation collaboration with Stas Bashkatov and the music producer Sasha DZA.

BEHIND THE COVER ART:
ANNA CATTISH

Hi Anna, thanks for letting us interview you for *CDQ*. Can you tell the readers a little about yourself and give us some insight into your career so far?

Hi! Thanks for having me. I always loved to draw. As a kid I attended a local art school (similar to an extra-curricular activity class) and I would spend my nights drawing my favorite cartoon characters like Disney's *Chip 'n Dale*. But it didn't occur to me that this could be a job. I even spent a year in medical college before I suddenly realized I should try a creative field. I applied to study graphic design instead. I felt that the most exciting class at university was book illustration and I found myself enjoying drawing again just like when I was a kid.

When I discovered the internet I started posting my illustrations on a small local forum, then I started a blog and a DeviantArt account. It was thanks to this online activity that I got my first freelance commissions. Many years later, Facebook – and more recently Instagram – helped me to get discovered by customers worldwide. Truly, I did nothing but draw the things I liked and post them on the internet just like everyone else.

Can you tell us a little about where you are from and how that inspires your art and character designs?

I was born in the USSR. Like all kids I loved cartoons but in my early childhood I could only watch Soviet animation. Besides a few
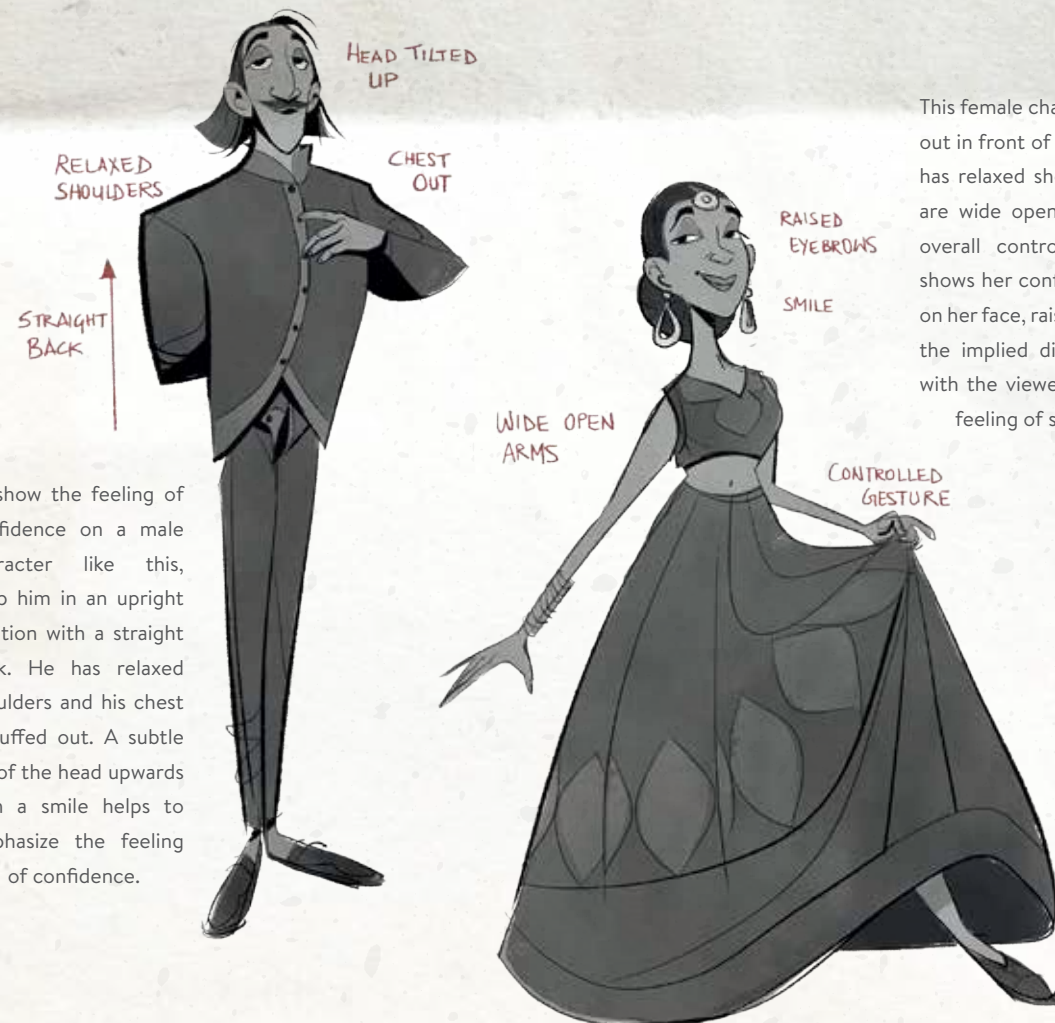
BASHFUL AND CONFIDENT CHARACTERS

Varun Nair

This tutorial illustrates how to show confidence and embarrassment on male, female, and animal characters. Aspects such as the subtleties in posing a character, showing expression through body language, and creating facial expressions, are the focus of this lesson. The artworks are made digitally in Photoshop using a Wacom tablet.

The orangutan here is super confident. He has a relaxed, comfortable pose with a wide open gesture. The arms are held behind the neck to emphasize his relaxed state of mind. He is enjoying the attention.

EYE CONTACT

COMFORTABLE

WIDE OPEN GESTURE

SNACK

HEAD TILTED UP

RELAXED SHOULDERS

CHEST OUT

STRAIGHT BACK

To show the feeling of confidence on a male character like this, keep him in an upright position with a straight back. He has relaxed shoulders and his chest is puffed out. A subtle tilt of the head upwards with a smile helps to emphasize the feeling of confidence.

RAISED EYEBROWS
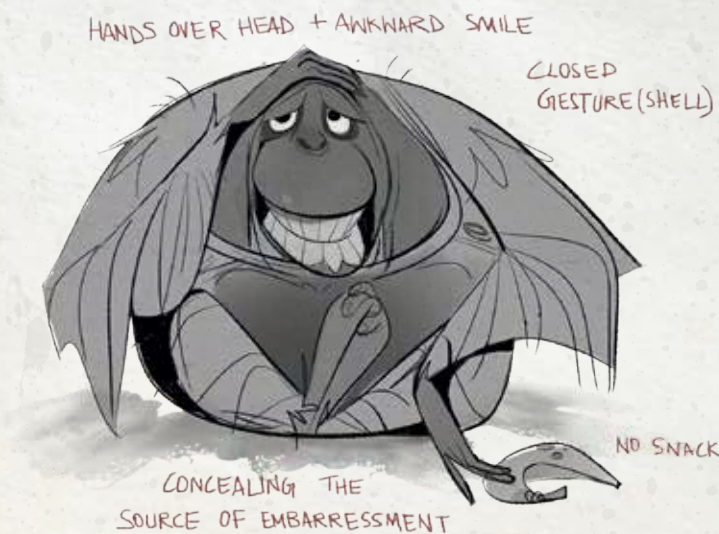
SMILE

WIDE OPEN ARMS

CONTROLLED GESTURE

This female character is stepping out in front of her audience. She has relaxed shoulders, her arms are wide open, and she has an overall controlled pose which shows her confidence. The smile on her face, raised eyebrows, and the implied direct eye contact with the viewer emphasizes this feeling of self-assurance.

RAISED SHOULDERS

BENT BACK

ARMS WRAPPED CLOSELY

Now, this character is facing away from the audience and does not want to be seen. Her hands are held close to her body for reassurance, and her shoulders are raised as she tries to hide her face which shows how embarrassed she is.

FACE TILTED DOWN

SLOUCHING

WORRIED EYEBROWS + BITING LIPS
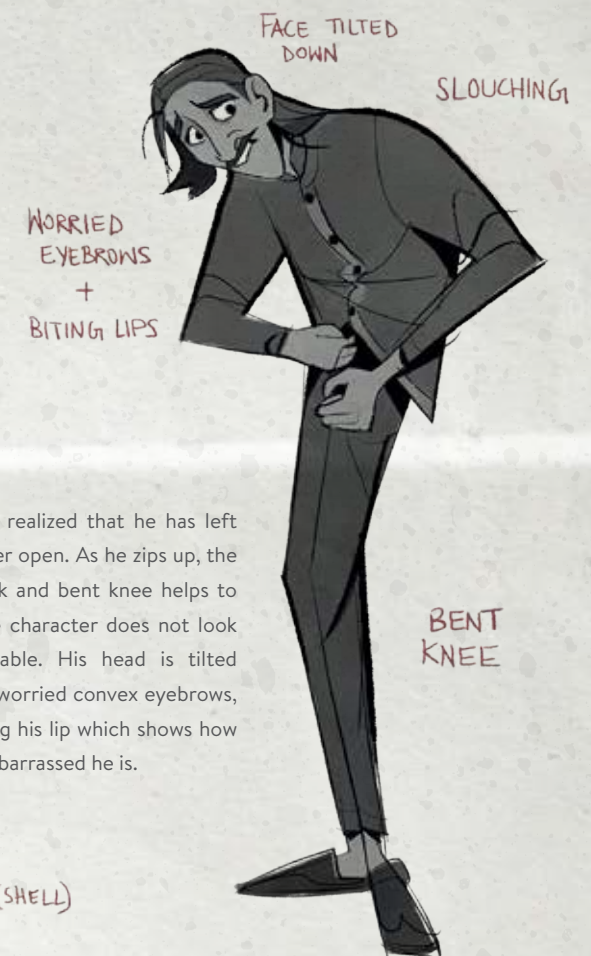
BENT KNEE

This chap has realized that he has left his pants zipper open. As he zips up, the slouching back and bent knee helps to show that the character does not look very comfortable. His head is tilted down, he has worried convex eyebrows, and he is biting his lip which shows how embarrassed he is.

HANDS OVER HEAD + AWKWARD SMILE

CLOSED GESTURE (SHELL)

CONCEALING THE SOURCE OF EMBARRESSMENT

NO SNACK

The orangutan has realized the previous awkward placement of his banana snack. Embarrassed, he does not want to be seen; hence the silhouette of his pose is almost like an egg or shell. The hand on top of the head is a bit dramatic but works well with his clown-like personality. With his other hand he tries to conceal the banana, the source of his embarrassment. Mortified, he does not want his snack anymore!
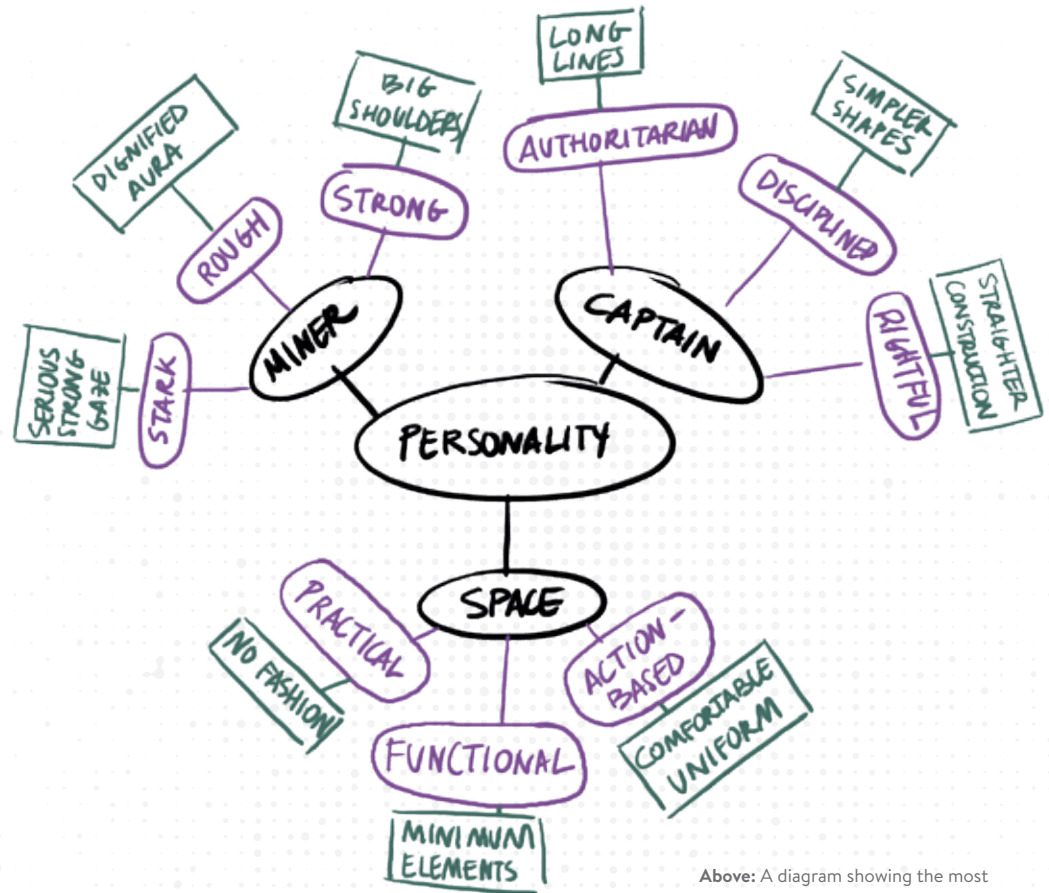
DRIFTING FREE IN SPACE

ALMU REDONDO

She just wants to connect, with anyone. Almost a year of drifting free in the Pariah asteroid belt, and not one commuter... until now. The transmission alarm sounds, waking her. She lurches from her captain's chair and peers at the forward screen, then her comms. Is she seeing this correct? She rubs sleep from her eyes and runs her hands through long, black hair, tying it up out of her face. "Another mining class?" she smiles, beams. "Finally!" She stands and pulls up the zip of her mining uniform, the Corps Mining logo half-torn from her breast. Trousers hang slightly loose from malnutrition. Barefoot had been the choice footwear option for months. She breathes in and tries to look casual as she gives the order to open video transmission. The forward screen connects. It's like staring at a mirror. **Narrative by Adam J. Smith**

In this tutorial you will encounter one of the most challenging and exciting scenarios for a character designer: to design from a narrative brief! This is the best opportunity to bring extra depth to your characters through subtleties, several layers of psyche, and fascinating back stories. For this reason, every small detail counts and the challenge to make a solid, relatable, and "living" character is the most difficult but interesting part of it.

To help you achieve this, I recommend you print and hang by your desk the wonderful Walt Stanchfield mantra: "Draw ideas, not things; action, not poses; gestures, not anatomical structures." To communicate the greatest amount of story and personality, with the fewest number of lines, should be your objective, and this is what we will aim to do in this tutorial. I will go through different techniques that will help you achieve this, starting with rough maps of ideas and thumbnails in pencil, going through ink drawings and digital retouches, to the final color and presentation in Photoshop. Are you ready? Let's dive in!

EXTRACTING FROM THE BRIEF

To start with, and to get you into the creative mindset, highlight the main words from the brief. Start writing or creating thumbnails of the ideas, sensations, or feelings these concepts create in you. Those first minutes with the text are fundamental so read through it with a notebook by your side to catch the first ideas and thumbnails. It also helps a lot, if possible, to capture your initial ideas while relaxed (in your favorite café for example) and to read the text slowly. The best ideas come in this state of relaxed attention.

In this case, I choose three keywords from the narrative: "miner," "captain," and "space." From these keywords are several concepts that I want to associate with them (which I note in purple) and thoughts of how I would translate those ideas into practical visual concepts for the design (which I note in green).

ALPHA STATE ▶

Picasso said, "Inspiration exists, but it has to find you working." What if we could actually switch inspiration on and focus it every time that we need to? Actually, studies of our brain waves have found we can!

It has been shown that our brain has five frequency states and one of them, the Alpha state, is the best one for creative work. When our brain is relaxed, it is also more focused. The amazing news is that we can trigger this state of mind with music, meditation, or breathing (and coffee always helps!). I practice this every day and it makes me considerably more effective, productive, and creative. I encourage you to research it and get the most out of it!

MEET THE ARTIST
DANIEL ISLES

The comic illustrator talks about his art, how a year-long drawing challenge affected his practice, and the positive impact moving to Japan has had on his work.

CREATE A DISAPPOINTED GORILLA

IDA HEM

In this article my aim is to make an in-depth character design tutorial, and explain parts of a design that you may not even know you are looking for. I have five randomly generated words to work from: "gorilla," "ninja," "disappointed," "hat," and "purple." Using these words as a starting point I will guide you from the very first sketch to the finished product as I touch on every technique I find important as a designer. I work digitally using Adobe Photoshop CC and, as a freelancer who is constantly on the move, the main tool I use is a portable 16" Wacom Studio Pro.
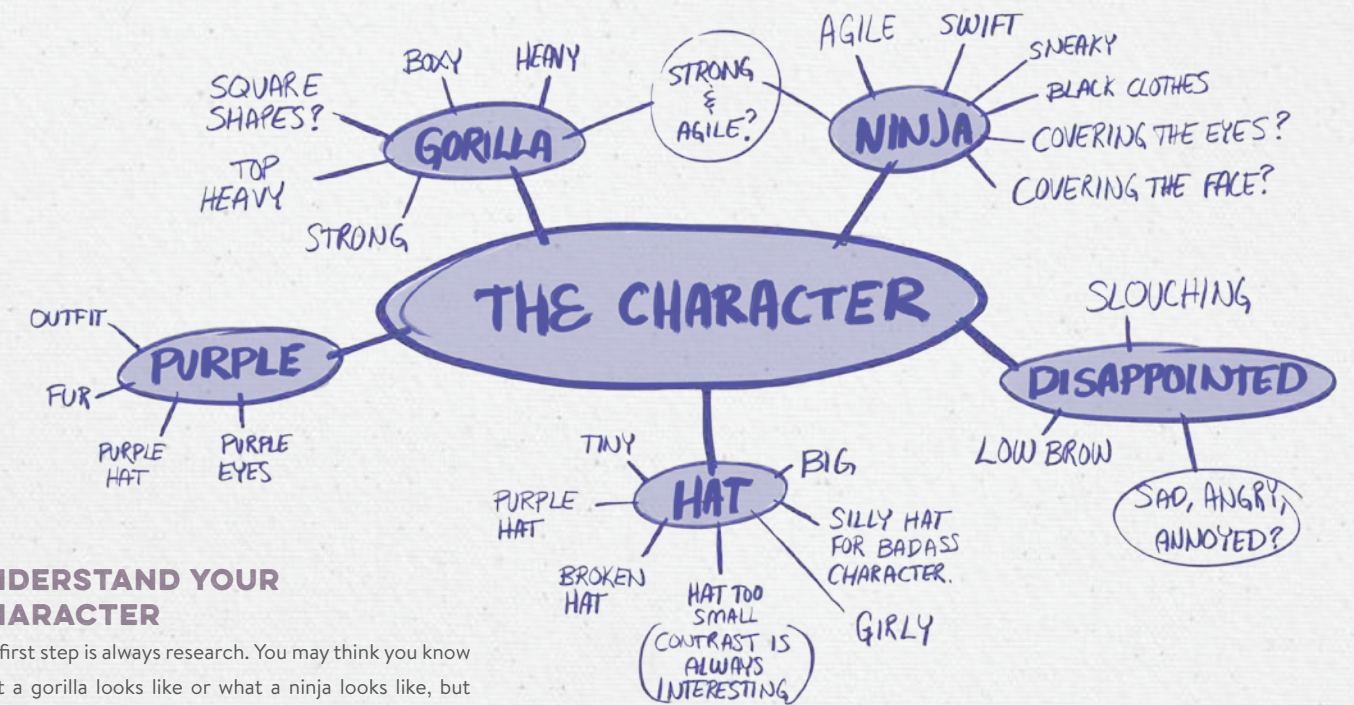
UNDERSTAND YOUR CHARACTER

The first step is always research. You may think you know what a gorilla looks like or what a ninja looks like, but you might be surprised by the new things you discover while researching. Furthermore, people can tell when something does not look the way it should. Note down your initial ideas for the character then search for images that will support these. Research will often help you to expand upon those original thoughts.

You should also take a look at what other artists are doing. It is okay to take some inspiration from your favorite designers because it helps you develop your own personal style. Collect the images you find inspiring and derive your choices from that.

THUMBNAILS

An empty canvas can render even the most talented artist intimidated. It can be scary to start creating thumbnails, because in many ways it is the most personal and honest step of the design process. Every single artist makes thumbnails differently, which can make you question whether or not your way of doing it is correct.

As long as you are getting your ideas down and putting your pencil to the paper, or stylus to the screen, you are doing it correctly. This is the phase where you will make your best work and your worst work. Both of which will help you grow as an artist.

Top: Create a chart of the keywords related to the character for a better overall view

Right: Draw initial thumbnails of possible body shapes for your character
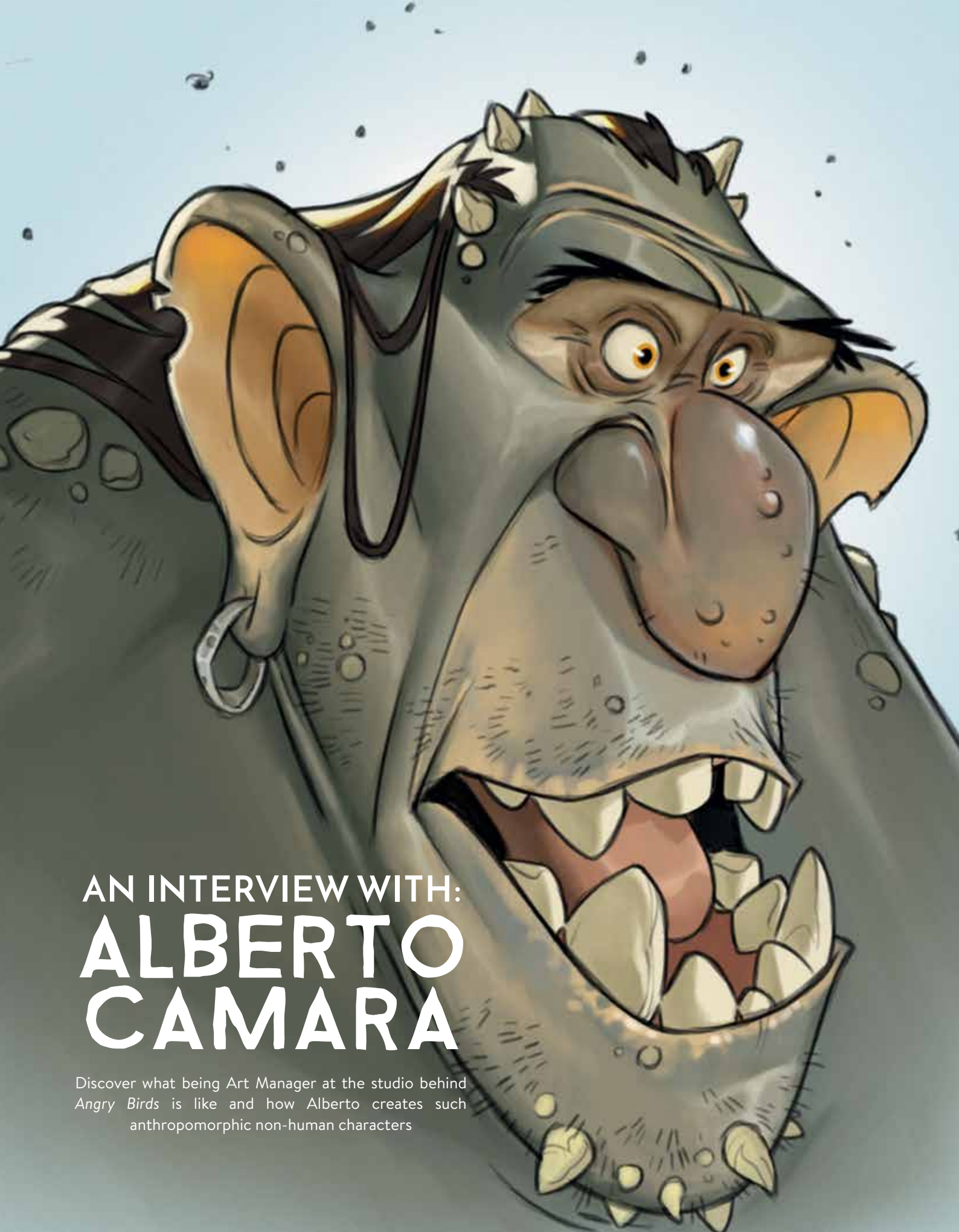
AN INTERVIEW WITH:
ALBERTO CAMARA

Discover what being Art Manager at the studio behind *Angry Birds* is like and how Alberto creates such anthropomorphic non-human characters

A law graduate, Alberto Camara didn't believe he could make a career out of his art until his wife convinced him otherwise. The self-taught artist moved from his home in Spain to Finland, where he now leads a team of artists at *Angry Birds* developer Rovio Entertainment. Alberto espouses the value of a good portfolio, discusses the ins-and-outs of working at the mammoth games publisher, and explains how to create good art for mobile games through an ever-evolving art-style.

HI ALBERTO, THANKS VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO CHAT TO US! PLEASE CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF?

Thank you for inviting me! I am a thirty-three-year-old Spanish artist from Malaga, a coastal city in the south of Spain. As long as I can remember, I have always loved drawing and especially creating all kinds of different characters, though I did not pursue a career as an artist at first. I just believed that it was going to be impossible to achieve. I studied law at university, but did not want to practice it for a living.

Opposite page: *Gentle giant*

This page: *Escolopendra* is a design of a creature Alberto has always been terrified of

All images © Alberto Camara

FREELANCE ILLUSTRATOR AND DESIGNER GUILLAUME POUX LIVES IN SPAIN WHERE HE WORKS FOR CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHERS AND INTERNATIONAL GAME AND ANIMATION STUDIOS. IN HIS FREE TIME HE LOVES DRAWING CUTE BUT BADASS PINUPS.

GALLERY

In every issue we hope to inspire you with superb character designs and character-based artwork from a selection of talented professional artists. This issue features work by:
Sébastien Le Divenah | Guillaume "El Gunto" Poux | Benson Shum

Guillaume "El Gunto" Poux | instagram.com/elgunto | © El Gunto

EDUCATION PROFILE:
ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

Find out what makes their MA Animation program one of the top rated in the world

Established in 1837 and named by the QS World University Rankings as the top university in the world to study art and design, the Royal College of Art (RCA) in London, UK has a long-standing reputation for nurturing creative excellence. As part of the school of communication, the two-year full-time postgraduate program in animation has evolved with the development of the industry and is now divided into three distinct pathways: Documentary Animation, Experimental Animation, and Narrative Animation. In this issue Dr Birgitta Hosea, the head of RCA's MA Animation program, discusses the three specialist pathways offered through the program, what they look for in an applicant, and what sets the animation program at RCA apart from other courses.

Hi Birgitta, thank you for taking the time to speak to us! Please could you tell us a bit about yourself and your role at the Royal College of Art (RCA)?
Thanks for inviting me for interview! My role at RCA is to lead the direction of the animation program, make sure that what we teach is current, develop animation-related research projects, and to be responsible for organizing the delivery of all of this. In order to keep the program up-to-date, I also make sure that I get feedback from different areas of the animation discipline; from those working in the industry, academia, and experimental practices.

My own work is very experimental and research-based, but I have previously worked commercially and have an interest in all kinds of animation. My personal work ranges from short films, video installation, and animated performance art through to drawing on paper.

As an Adobe Certified Expert, I previously freelanced for Adobe as Senior Presentation Artist and organizer of Adobe Inspired Media networking events. This was in combination with being the course director of the MA Character Animation program at Central Saint Martins, where I gained a PhD in "Animation as Performance" and conducted research into character animation.

This page: The animation *Inner House* by Yuriko Ogawa depicts a girl who believes she is the cause of her mother's struggle

Opposite page: In Patrick O'Mahony's stop motion animation *Under The Weather* this character, Ed, discovers a secret room which brings about a life changing decision

Dr Birgitta Hosea
Head of Animation

All images © Royal College of Art

AN INTERVIEW WITH:
PETER HAN

We discover how teaching and sharing his process has helped
Peter develop his own skills, and learn about the creation of
his first comic *The Blacksmith*

BALANCING DESIGN NEEDS AND ARTISTRY

Isadora Zeferino

Developing a character is a project-oriented activity, and the link between art and design is often clouded by the demands and necessities of each field. Having some level of organization in your process will help when approaching this task. Here are some tips to help jumpstart your design process and find a balance between the different needs required of your design!

Taking into consideration how the face can be one of the most telling features of a character, the area around it is also important. Interesting hair shapes can often be used to frame the face and boost, or lessen, the appeal of that particular area.

Several popular cartoons have their uniqueness attributed to a piece of clothing, a weapon, or another singular prop. If they carry it with them at all times, it will probably foreshadow some importance in their story.

Few things express as much personality as the way your character interacts with the world. Drawing some key poses is helpful when getting your message across about their personality and habits.

To avoid ending up with a plain-looking character, try to add some detail that is mischievous or out of place in the design. For example, this old lady has a perpetual plotting grin.
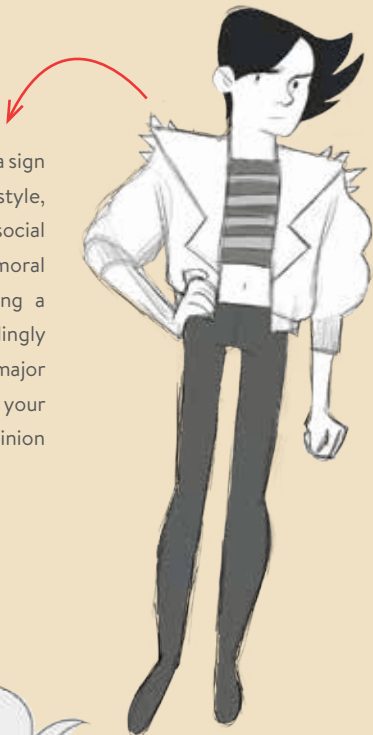
Clothes are often a sign of someone's lifestyle, personal taste, social rank, and even moral values! So, dressing a character accordingly might have a major role in directing your audience's first opinion of them.

Shapes are the building blocks of design, and it is always refreshing to find a show, game, or comic in which the vast amount of possibilities are explored. Chubby and muscular characters should exist too!

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER ▶

While developing a character, it is crucial to consider how much the viewer should know and what they need to be able to learn from the character's appearance alone. As a character designer you are working to convey a visual narrative; the main goal is often learning how to manipulate a design to work in your favor.

A strong design will have subtleties that can be explained later in the narrative and clear details that will capture the audience enough that they will search for more information about the character. The design process is a game of gathering the information that is truly necessary and using it to your advantage.

All images © Isadora Zeferino

KIND AND FRIENDLY WARRIOR

DAVID ARDINARYAS LOJAYA

Characters are one of the most important elements in film projects, especially for animated features, and therefore character design is a very crucial subject for every animated film. Characters are often the first thing we see in a film so they must be distinct in some way to make the viewers interested and willing to watch them.

In this tutorial, I am going to discuss character design for film animation, and how to make a stylized character based on a real-life person. Thank you to my concept artist friend Pablo Carpio (who makes awesome environments) for being the willing subject for this tutorial. Throughout this tutorial I will be using a Wacom Bamboo to create all my works.
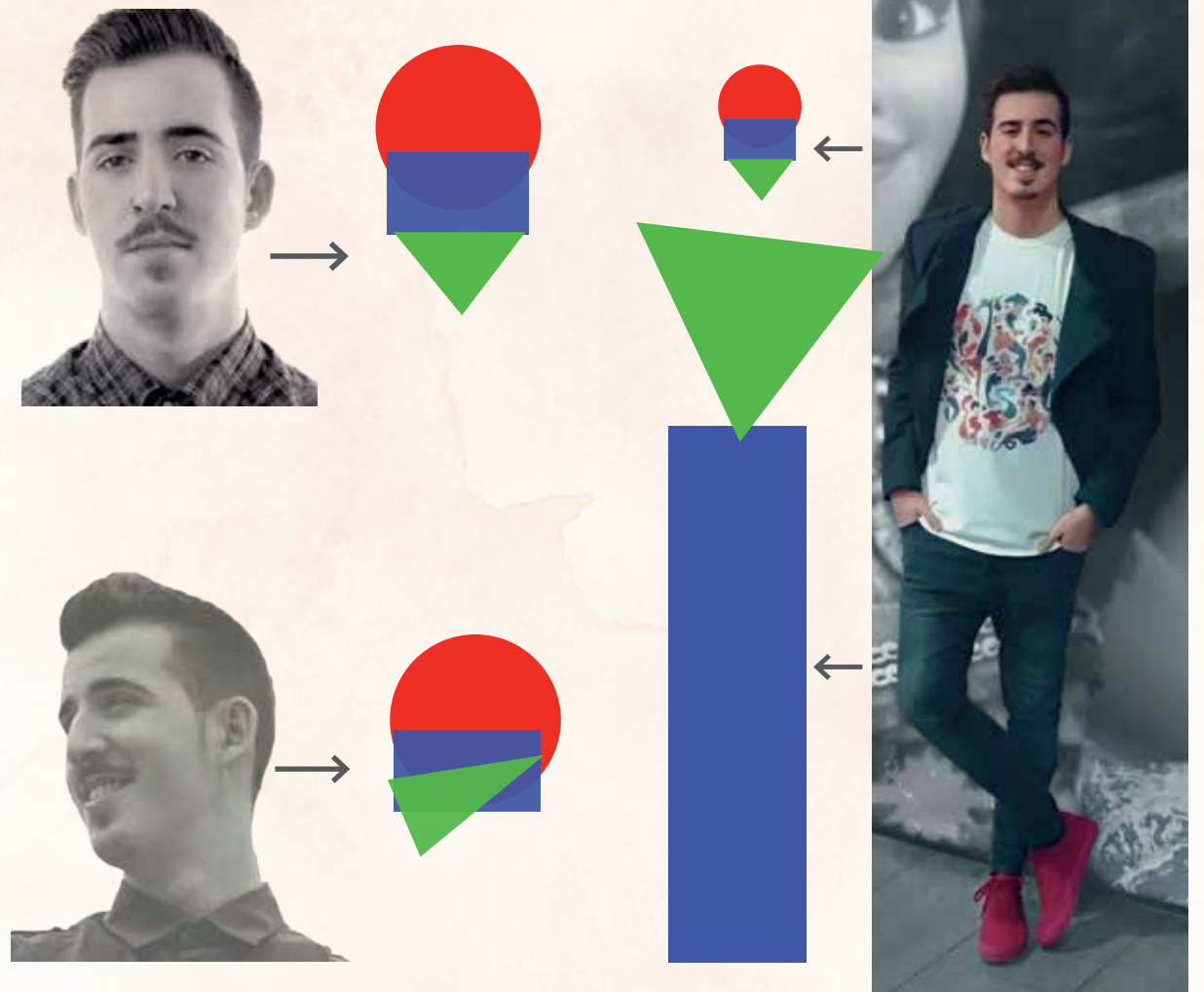
BASIC SHAPES

The first step when creating a new character is to reference the basic shapes and any foundational designs that exist for the figure. Circles, rectangles, and triangles, are the most common basic shapes to use.

For this tutorial, we have Pablo, who has a very unique face and body structure. His physical construction can be broken down into different parts using basic shapes. His head consists of a circle, a rectangle, and a triangle. His body is very lean and tall, so it can be grouped as a rectangle. Adding a triangle as well makes the basic body structure more interesting.

This page: Break the figure down into basic shapes

Model: Pablo Carpio

CONTRIBUTORS

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A character designer, illustrator, and recent Sheridan College graduate; Izzy's clients include Warner Bros., Nickelodeon, and Guru Studio.

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Originally from Spain, Alberto Camara now works in Helsinki, Finland as the Lead Game Artist for Rovio Entertainment.

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Anna is a comic artist and character designer for animation, who creates distinctive female characters with attitude.

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Peter has worked in the entertainment industry for over a decade, shows artwork in galleries, and teaches sketching and design.

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Ida is a character designer and visual storyteller. She has worked for DreamWorks TV, Nickelodeon, and Universal Pictures.

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Birgitta is an artist and curator who works in expanded animation, and is currently Head of Animation at the Royal College of Art.

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ISADORA ZEFERINO
Animator at Combo Estúdio
instagram.com/imzeferino

Isadora is an animator whose work revolves around pop culture, colorful compositions, flowers, and fabricating wonder.