



CHARACTER DESIGN QUARTERLY

**ISSUE 01  
PREVIEW**





Image © Shaun Bryant

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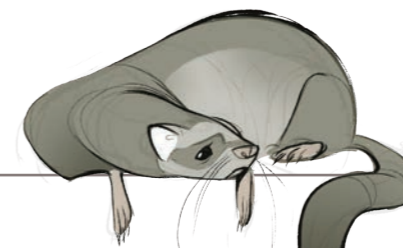
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## WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF CDQ!

Character design is a vibrant, exciting enterprise demanding invention, dedication, and a healthy measure of courage. It's a practice that is challenging but also deeply rewarding, bringing simple ideas or complex narratives to life. At the end of your pencil, nib, brush, or stylus there are unending possibilities to what you can create. The same brief can be interpreted in numerous ways; two collaborating artists can take wildly differing approaches to the same material, and mistakes can sometimes cause the most revolutionary developments. It is about time a magazine existed for professional character designers to share their experience with others, amalgamating the varied techniques and styles seen in the industry today in an engaging, informative format you can savor. I hope you find within these pages plenty to love and learn. Enjoy!

**ANNIE MOSS**  
**EDITOR**



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Shaun Bryant shows how he creates a friendly monster that exudes happiness

Images © Lois van Baarle





## USE LIFE EXPERIENCES

DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM EVENTS AND PEOPLE IN OUR OWN LIVES BRINGS HONESTY TO A DESIGN. THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCES WE ALL HAVE FROM OUR PAST PROVIDE A DEEP WELL OF POSSIBILITIES THAT HAVE LIKELY NEVER BEEN EXPLORED BEFORE.

# CREATUREBOX®



GREG BALDWIN

## MEET THE GUYS AT CREATUREBOX

CreatureBox is the incredible result of a creative partnership between artists Greg Baldwin and Dave Guertin. Beginning with a blog exploring character design, the duo has been creating ingenious characters and bizarre monsters for more than ten years now. In that time they've published three books of their creations, *SHRED: Volumes 1 and 2* and *The Monster Volume* artbook. Their work, inspired by the classic Sunday comics they read as children, captures a joyful anarchy and playfulness which has won them a league of fans. They also have a long-standing relationship with Insomniac Games working on the popular *Ratchet & Clank* PlayStation series.

Take an exclusive look at the intricate process stages of the awesome *Character Design Quarterly 01* cover artwork *Sirens*, and get tips on designing like the experts! Dave and Greg share their advice on what makes a character memorable, how they identify good ideas, and how using real-life experiences can improve a piece.



DAVE GUERTIN

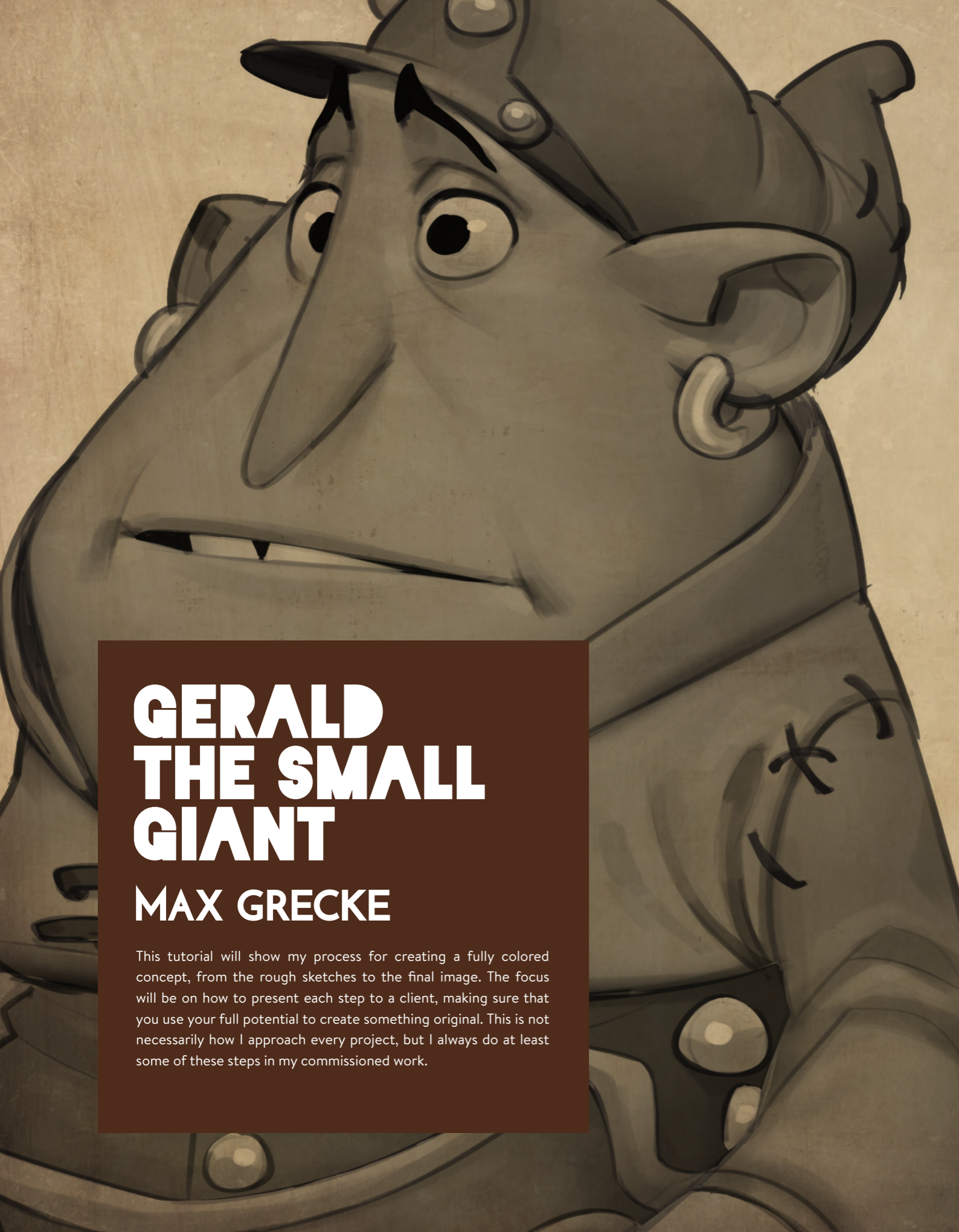


## MEET THE ARTIST: AMANDA JOLLY

It was, unusually, an international economic crisis which inadvertently spurred Amanda Jolly into pursuing an exciting career in animation. Although a character designer has a challenging job, it is a role that Amanda truly loves, and as a result she has been able to achieve her dream of seeing her characters reach the big screen. Having worked for top studios such as Sony Pictures Animation and Warner Animation Group, Amanda shares with us her best advice on how to break into the industry, how you can develop your own style, and explains what she loves most about being a character designer for animation.







# GERALD THE SMALL GIANT

## MAX GRECKE

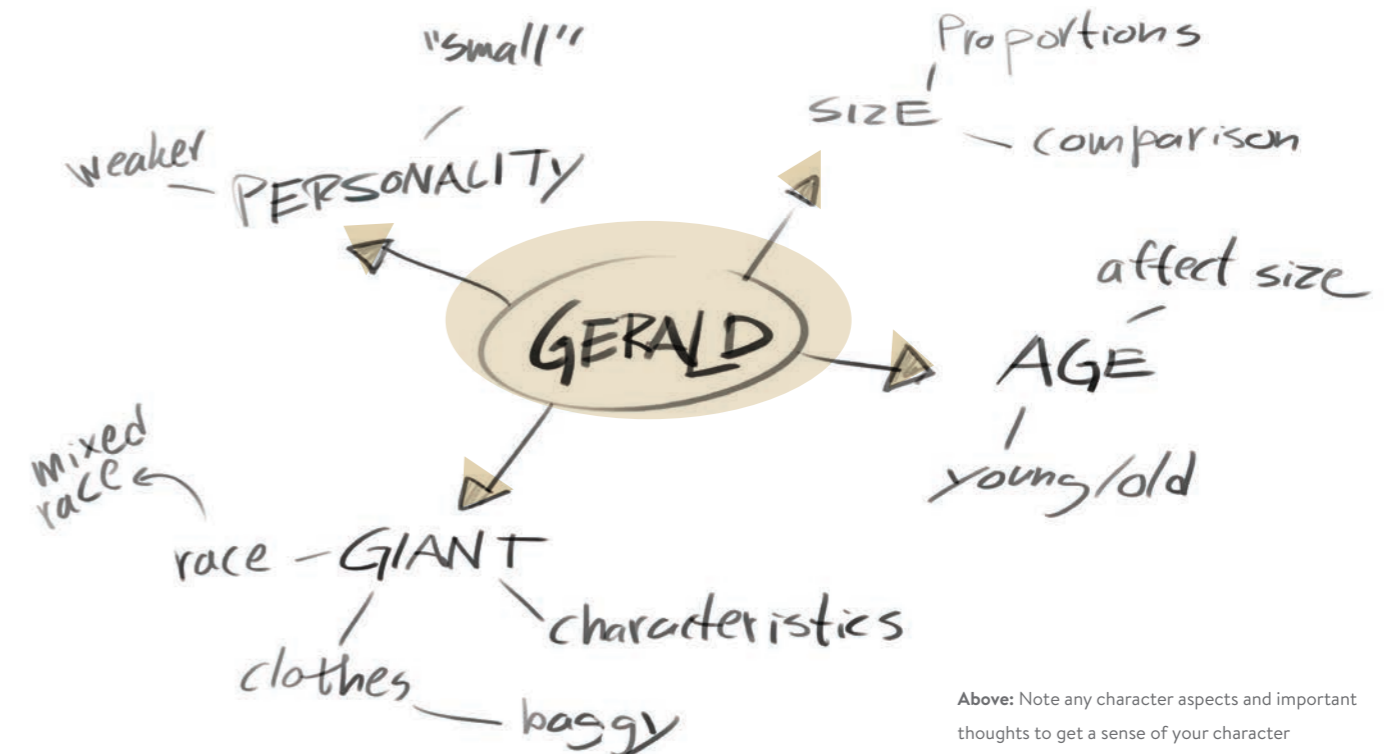
This tutorial will show my process for creating a fully colored concept, from the rough sketches to the final image. The focus will be on how to present each step to a client, making sure that you use your full potential to create something original. This is not necessarily how I approach every project, but I always do at least some of these steps in my commissioned work.

For this design I was given the following narrative to base my concept on:

*Being small had its limitations. For instance, Gerald couldn't reach things that your everyday giant could. Of course, they didn't call themselves giants, no. But size is relative; Gerald for example was a giant compared to the ants, though in numbers they slightly scared him, and like now, he wanted nothing more than to get as far away from them as possible. Knocking on the door hadn't worked, and now the ants were getting closer. He looked up; the doorbell was too far away. Luckily, within his baggy clothing he was able to hide all sorts of things, like an extendable poking stick. But even that wasn't long enough! He took off his hat and rummaged inside and found a rope. He could hear the rapid scuttling of the ants nearing the door, smelling the apple pie inside no doubt! He lassooed the rope and flung it high, over the handle, yelping with joy at his success. Just as one ant was about to tickle the soles of his boots, he pulled himself up, up, high enough to stretch his poking stick and ring the doorbell. "Let me in!" he shouted.*

### DEFINING CHARACTER ASPECTS

Write down the most vital parts of the character, and any of your own ideas that might affect your design choices. I do not usually write these things down, but it can be really helpful to do so. By noting important aspects of your character, you can come up with new things that may make an impact on your design decisions.



Above: Note any character aspects and important thoughts to get a sense of your character



# EXAGGERATING EMOTIONS

Lois van Baarle



## EXCITED OR JOYFUL

The main thing I keep in mind when drawing someone showing a positive emotion is that they have an open attitude, with direct eye contact and with their face turned towards the viewer (or another character they are interacting with). Excitement is indicated by energy and anticipation, which can be expressed by showing movement in hands and hair for example, or through wide open eyes, and of course a big smile!

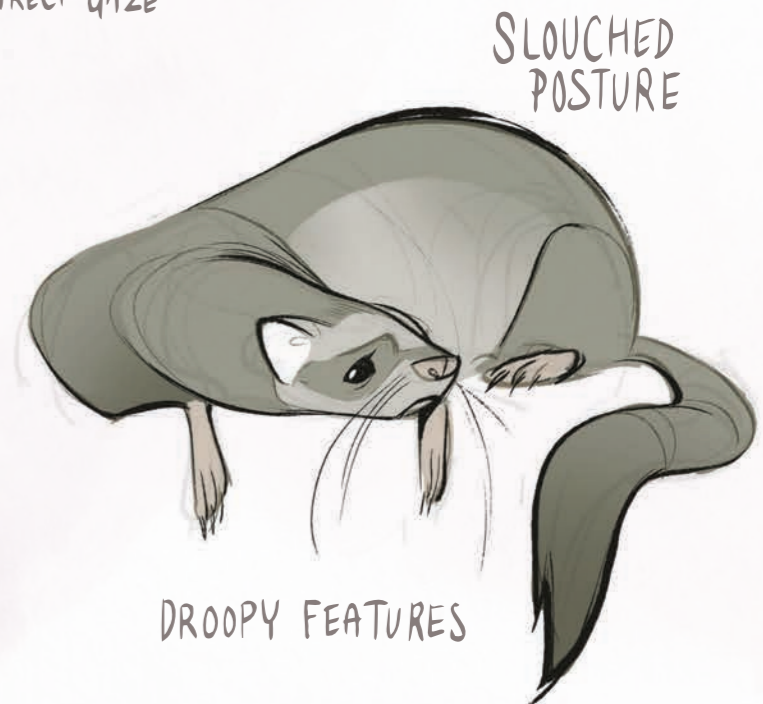
Showing expression in an animal can be tricky since animals don't tend to show emotions in the same way people do. A good way to work around that is to play with the corners of the mouth – in this case, upturned into a smile. It also helps to show an open posture with the chest exposed, which is something animals usually tend to do when they feel safe and happy.



## SAD OR DEPRESSED

When showing sadness, especially a downcast type of sadness, people tend to divert eye contact and tilt the head downwards. Shoulders tend to be slouched, and this can be accentuated by taking other elements – like clothing and hair – and making them appear slouched and heavy as well.

The slouching technique works especially well for animals, where you can draw whiskers, ears, a tail, or feet in a droopy manner. You can also take elements of the animal's design, like its fur pattern, to give the animal some eyebrows. This will help to make the face more expressive.



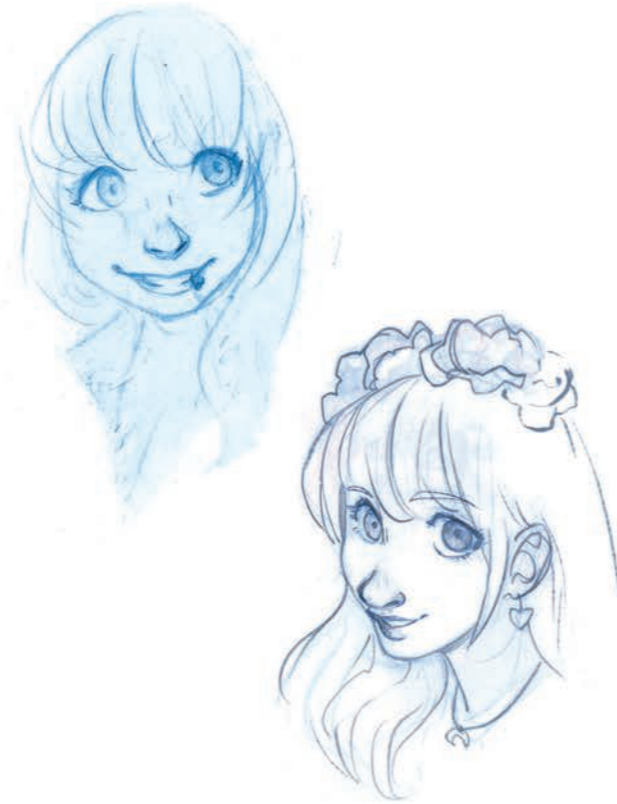




# CAPTURING A CHARACTER'S ESSENCE

SIMONE GRÜNEWALD

In this article I will show you how to stylize real people for a character design. We will start off with several loose studies of the subject in a sketchbook, using colored pencils by Col-Erase. From there I will scan all the sketches and demonstrate how to play around with the scans in Photoshop, using my Cintiq. When I have settled on a final idea, I will then paint on top of the original thumbnail to create the final design.



## Analysis of the subject

When stylizing real people, it is really important to start off with an analysis of the subject. I choose to stylize Olga "AsuRocks" Andriyenko, an artist friend of mine, because she is quite an outstanding character in real life. You can check out some of her work at [www.instagram.com/asurelle](http://www.instagram.com/asurelle).

I collect photos from her Instagram page to create a collage I can keep open for reference while I am sketching her portrait. When sketching, I try to distill her main facial features, which for me are her lush hair, slightly downward slanting eyes and nose, and her oval-shaped face.

**Above:** Keep a reference collage of the subject open while sketching

**Model:** Olga Andriyenko

**Right:** Portrait studies focusing on stylizing the most outstanding features







**JAMES A. CASTILLO IS AN ART DIRECTOR AND CHARACTER DESIGNER FOR PROJECTS RANGING FROM FEATURE FILMS AND TV PRODUCTIONS, TO VIRTUAL REALITY. HE LOVES SPICY FOOD, MANGOS, AND COLLABORATING WITH CREATIVE PEOPLE!**



# STUDIO PROFILE: BLUE ZOO

Discover what goes on behind-the-scenes of London-based multi-BAFTA-winning CG character animation studio Blue Zoo. We speak to the studio's Co-Founder and Executive Producer, Tom Box, about his experiences setting up an ambitious creative business, and how the studio is continuing to develop. Blue Zoo Concept Artist Izzy Burton also shares her experiences at the studio and offers advice for future animators...



Hi Tom, thanks for taking the time to chat to us about your studio. Can you tell us about how the studio began and how it has evolved over the years?

While studying computer animation at Bournemouth University, a few classmates and I, preparing to step into the big wide world, thought it would be fun to go it alone and start our own company!

We started making short animations in a tiny garage (every company starts in a garage, right?) and we've carefully grown the studio into a 130-strong multi-BAFTA-winning studio creating its own TV show properties. But we have much bigger ambitions; we currently have a few films that are in development, and are also making our own games and virtual reality (VR) experiences.



Wow, starting a company from scratch is an amazing achievement! How did you even know where to start? What advice would you give to yourself now?

The honest answer is we didn't know where to start! But that was part of the fun, and has been ever since. Even sixteen years later everyone is still learning and figuring things out. That never ends and it goes hand-in-hand with being creative and experimenting.

As for advice, I would say networking is everything; never stop going out and meeting new people. You make your own luck through random chances, and those will only pop up if you get out there!

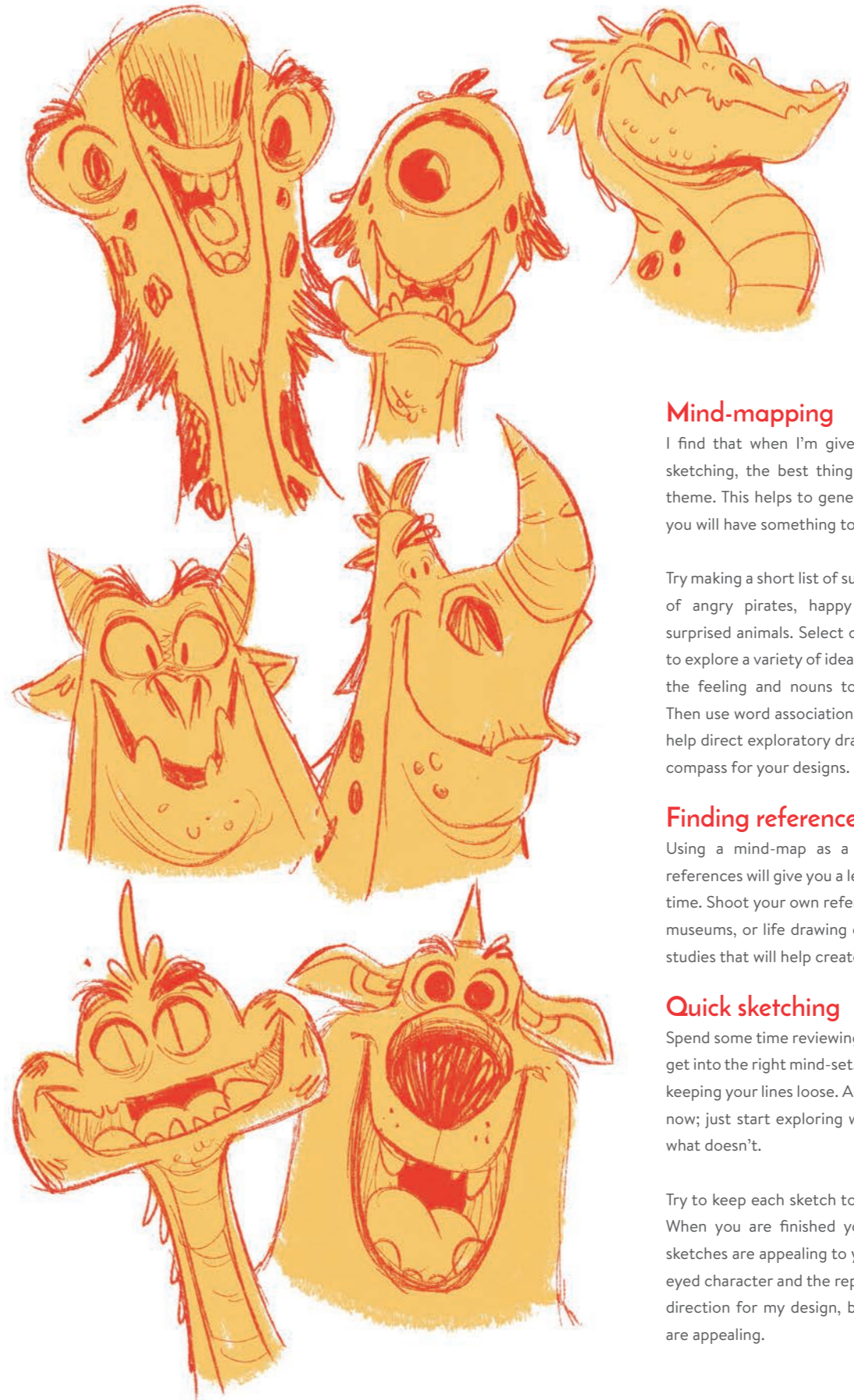
**Left:** *More Stuff* was Blue Zoo's Christmas short in 2015. It was a parody of an animated musical, featuring naked elves!

**Right:** A still from *Daddy Christmas*, a mixed-media animated short

All images © Blue Zoo Productions Ltd.







Opposite page: Differentiate between words that need different types of reference

Left: Create quick sketches to empty your visual library

### Mind-mapping

I find that when I'm given an open topic, or if I'm free-sketching, the best thing to do is impose a boundary or theme. This helps to generate usable ideas quickly because you will have something to throw your ideas against.

Try making a short list of subjects for the theme and emotion of angry pirates, happy monsters, confused aliens, or surprised animals. Select one and try to create a mind-map to explore a variety of ideas using text. Use verbs to describe the feeling and nouns to describe the character theme. Then use word association to create a web of ideas that can help direct exploratory drawing, and save time by creating a compass for your designs.

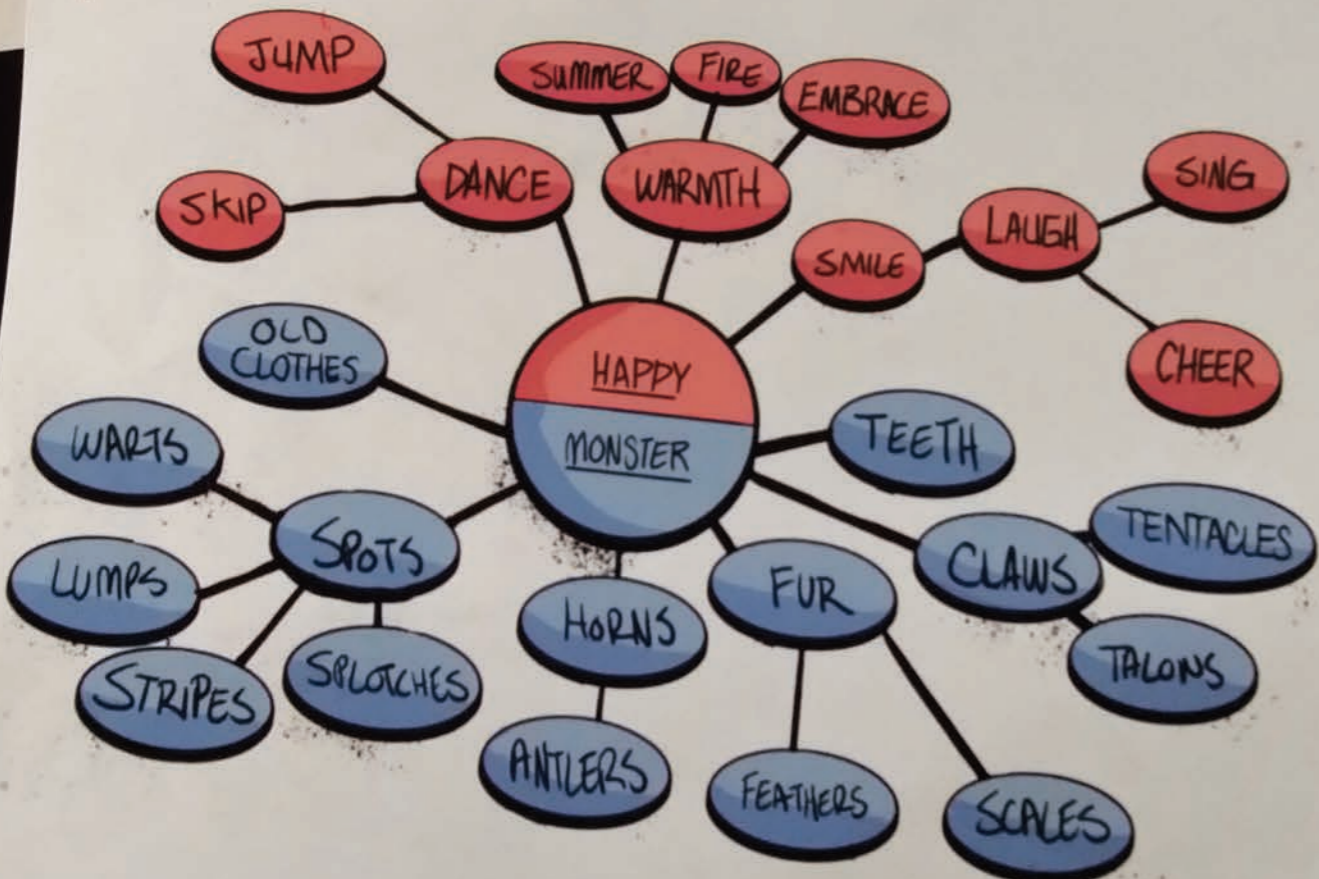
### Finding references

Using a mind-map as a shopping list in your hunt for references will give you a less ambiguous target and save you time. Shoot your own references when possible. Go to zoos, museums, or life drawing classes to shoot photos and draw studies that will help create more detailed designs.

### Quick sketching

Spend some time reviewing your references and the story to get into the right mind-set. Start sketching some quick ideas, keeping your lines loose. Amazing drawings are not the focus now; just start exploring what works for this character and what doesn't.

Try to keep each sketch to one or two minutes at the most. When you are finished you can see what aspects of the sketches are appealing to you. At this point, I know the one-eyed character and the reptilian characters are not the right direction for my design, but the furry, rounded characters are appealing.





# CONTRIBUTORS

## LOIS VAN BAARLE (LOISH)

Digital Artist & Animator  
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Lois has been drawing since she could hold a pencil. Her past clients include Psyop, Sony, and Guerrilla Games.

## GREG BALDWIN

Co-Founder of CreatureBox  
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Greg began inventing characters as a child, tinkering in a workshop. He is now one half of the amazing creative duo CreatureBox.

## BRETT BEAN

Designer & Illustrator  
brettbean.com



Brett has finally found a way to make stuff up for a living. He has worked on feature films, TV, games, and comic books.

## RANDY BISHOP

Character Designer & Illustrator  
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Randy loves that character design can be used as a storytelling tool. His clients include DreamWorks TV and Axis Animation.

## TOM BOX

Co-Founder/Executive Producer  
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Tom co-founded Blue Zoo, an award-winning animation studio, with university friends. The studio now employs 130 talented people.

## SHAUN BRYANT

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Shaun is a character designer working in sunny LA. His clients include Nickelodeon, Warner Bros., and DreamWorks TV.

## AVNER GELLER

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A Ringling College of Art and Design graduate, Avner works for DreamWorks on projects like *Mr. Peabody & Sherman* and *Trolls*.

## MAX GRECKE

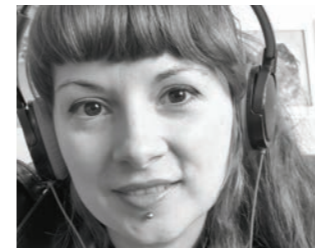
2D Character Artist  
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Max is a popular freelance character artist based in Sweden. His past clients include Riot Games and Blizzard Entertainment.

## SIMONE GRÜNEWALD

Head of Art at Daedalic  
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Simone joined games company Daedalic Entertainment in 2008 when it was only very small. She still loves working there as Head of Art.

## DAVE GUERTIN

Co-Founder of CreatureBox  
creaturebox.com



Inspired by *Calvin and Hobbes*, Dave always wanted to be a cartoonist. He is now one half of the creative duo CreatureBox.

## AMANDA JOLLY

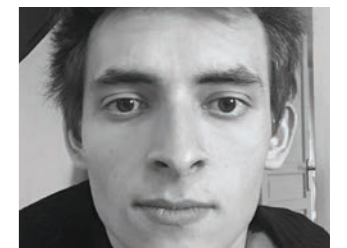
Animation Character Designer  
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With an early love of animation Amanda has forged a career with top studios including Warner Animation Group and Disney TVA.

## TRISTAN POULAIN

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Up-and-coming character designer Tristan is in his third year at Gobelins school, where he is developing his passion for animation.



*Character Design Quarterly* is a lively, creative magazine bringing inspiration, expert insights, and leading techniques to professional illustrators, artists, and character design enthusiasts worldwide.

Issue 01 is packed full of tutorials, advice, and inspiration from top industry professionals including Brett Bean, Lois van Baarle (Loish), and Max Grecke. Look behind the scenes at award-winning animation studio Blue Zoo, learn how Simone Grünewald creates a stylized character inspired by a real person, and gain invaluable tips from the artists behind the cover art, CreatureBox. *Character Design Quarterly* has everything the budding artist or designer needs to improve their workflow and designs!



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