



STEPHEN MURRAY

Series Director • Art Director • Visual Development

Animation • Cinematics • Storytelling from script to screen

Creative leadership, from first sketch to final frame.

Director and Art Director working across animation, visual development and cinematics. I shape stories, define the visual direction and lead projects from concept through to final frame.

78 EPISODES DIRECTED
Team Mekbots Animal Rescue
Peacock / NBC

70 EPISODES DIRECTED
**LEGO Friends:
Girls on a Mission**
4 seasons • 2018 - 2021

SELECTED CREDITS

Team Mekbots Animal Rescue
LEGO Friends: Girls on a Mission
Warhammer 40,000: Interrogator
Warhammer 40,000 (9th Edition Cinematic)
Whiteout Survival: Squads
IRE (Game Cinematics)

Series Director, Art Director
Supervising Director
Director (Episodes. 1-3)
Art Director
Director, Art Director
Director



LEGO FRIENDS: GIRLS ON A MISSION

Supervising Director/ Visual Direction • 4 Seasons • **70** EPISODES



As Supervising Director, I worked across the production pipeline with a particular focus on the visual direction of the series. I helped establish the CG look, drove design development, and worked with the team through layout, animation, lighting and final colour.

I personally painted the colour scripts throughout the first two seasons, establishing lighting, atmosphere and visual continuity, and had final approval on the grade before delivery.

Created at the beginning of production, this colour script helped establish the visual language, lighting and colour approach that would carry through all four seasons.



STEPHEN MURRAY

VISUAL DEVELOPMENT

An early painting I did of the Old Town Square. Many of the ideas here carried through into the finished series as the environment evolved. The warm light, cool shadows and exaggerated bounced light helped shape the look we were aiming for.



STEPHEN MURRAY

Material & Ground Study



Exploring how different materials could transition naturally into one another across the environment.

Look Development



Final Environment



Supervising Director · Visual Development

VISUAL DEVELOPMENT

Suburbs

Paintovers and lighting studies I developed to shape the environments and explore how they could work on screen. I worked directly with the CG artists to translate these explorations into the final environments, refining the look, lighting and detail to hit the intended visual target.

Viewport Render



Paintover



Final Render



Observatory

2D colour studies used to establish the palette and atmosphere for different times of day across the series.



Colour Script

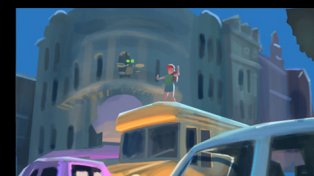
One of many colour scripts I painted for the series, establishing colour, lighting and atmosphere across an episode. The colours closely follow story arcs and dramatic moments, building on the animation to heighten the emotional impact of each scene.



Colour keys painted by Stephen Murray.

COLOUR & LIGHTING DIRECTION

I painted the colour script, created 2D lighting references, and directed the translation of these into the final 3D lighting.



COLOUR & LIGHTING DIRECTION

Selected colour scripts painted for Season 1



STEPHEN MURPHY

Supervising Director Visual Development

COLOUR & LIGHTING DIRECTION

Selected colour scripts painted for Season 1





WARHAMMER

INTERROGATOR

Director | Episodes 1 - 3

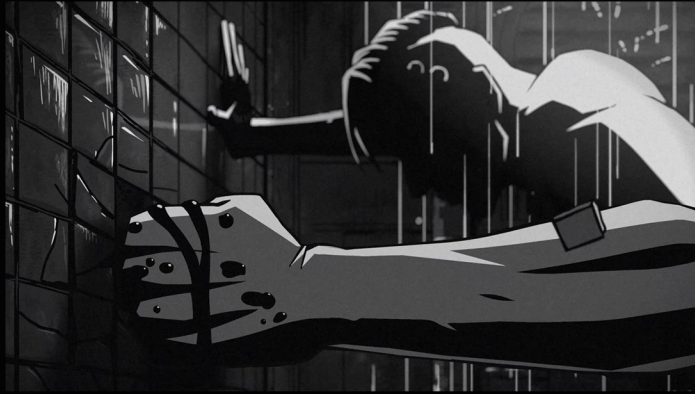


THE PROOF OF CONCEPT

For **Interrogator**, I created the proof of concept for **M2 Animation**, developing a new visual direction for the existing project. I established a gritty, stylised look, then animated and composited the sequence.

My goal with the compositing was to create a filmic look. Using moving cameras, parallax in the backgrounds, convincing reflections, film grain, subtle chromatic aberration and lens distortion to give the impression of the sequence being shot through a real camera lens.

The proof of concept was used to pitch this new visual direction to **Games Workshop** and helped define the look and tone of the series

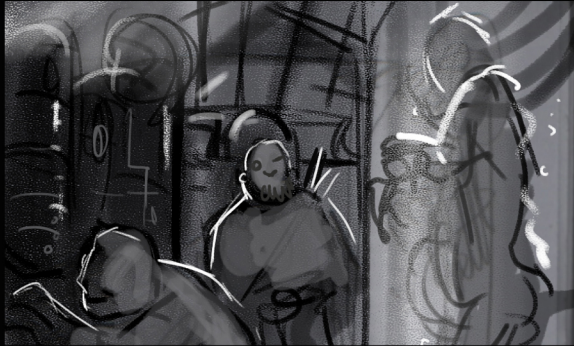


VISUAL DEVELOPMENT



BUILDING THE WORLD

As the visual direction for *Interrogator* developed, I explored the locations and environments through a series of small paintings and studies. These helped establish the atmosphere, lighting and visual language of the world, providing a foundation for the design team to expand upon.



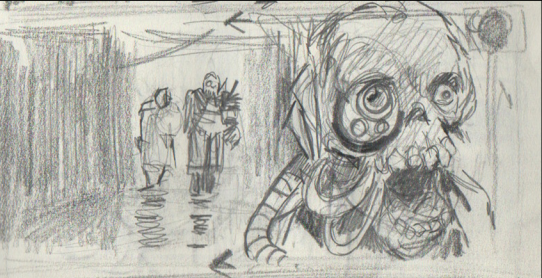
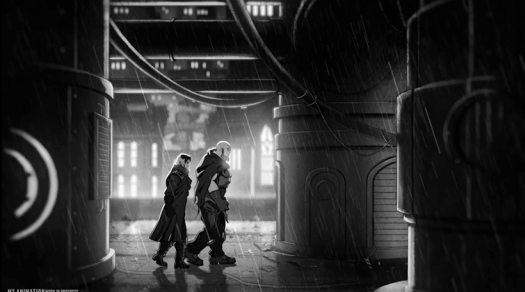
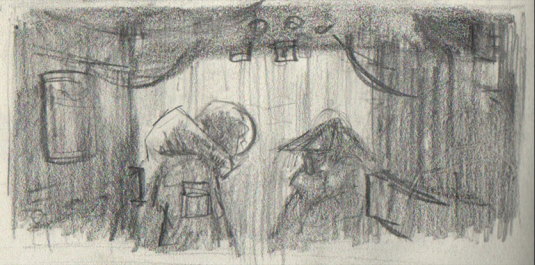
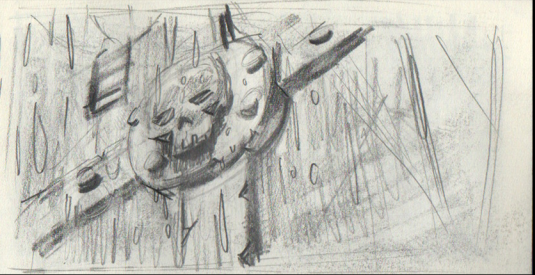
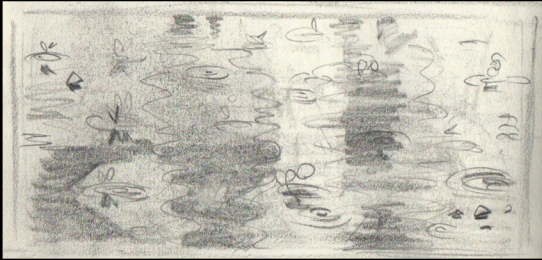
THE DIRECTOR'S SKETCHBOOK

For *Warhammer 40,000: Interrogator*, I produced hundreds of drawings in my sketchbook, exploring composition, staging, cinematography and atmosphere.

These sketches became the foundation for the storyboard artists on the first three episodes and helped establish the visual language of the world.



SKETCH TO SCREEN



TEAM MEKBOTS : ANIMAL RESCUE



Director · Art Director



Visual Development · World Building · Colour Script · Production Direction

TEAM MEKBOTS · ANIMAL RESCUE

DIRECTING A 78-EPISODE SERIES

Team Mekbots: Animal Rescue was an adventure on a huge scale. Across 78 episodes, the characters travelled the world, caring for animals, tackling disasters and finding creative ways to solve problems.

Every episode created new challenges, both for our heroes and for the production team making the show. From tornadoes, volcanoes and whirlpools to forest fires, avalanches and wild terrain, each story brought new worlds, action and FX to the screen

DIRECTOR · ART DIRECTOR

I directed the visual development and production of the series, from early staging and world building through to colour, lighting, FX and final shots.

78

Episodes

M2 Animation
Peacock Kids Jr



Script to Screen · Early Staging Process

Working directly from the script, I personally drew these rough staging concepts to map out key beats, character placement, camera and composition. This allowed me to work through the visual solution early, establishing the staging and environment before the shots moved into production.

SCRIPT

EXT. AMAZON JUNGLE - ROCKY AREA - CONTINUOUS

As the team pursues Zoomie, they come upon a rugged, rock-and-boulder-strewn area. Zoomie bounds up onto one of the boulders and O.S.

MEI-LIN LION
C'mon! She went this way!

6

43

STAGING

GRASS OR WATER (NO INTERACTION)

MORE DISTANCE BETWEEN ROCKS

ROCK

CAMERA / COMPOSITION



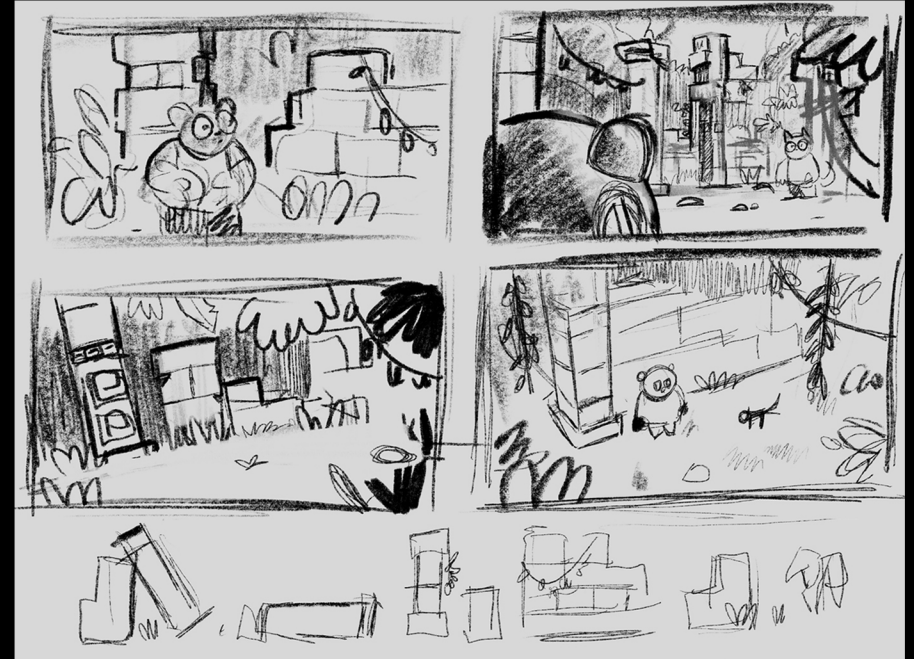
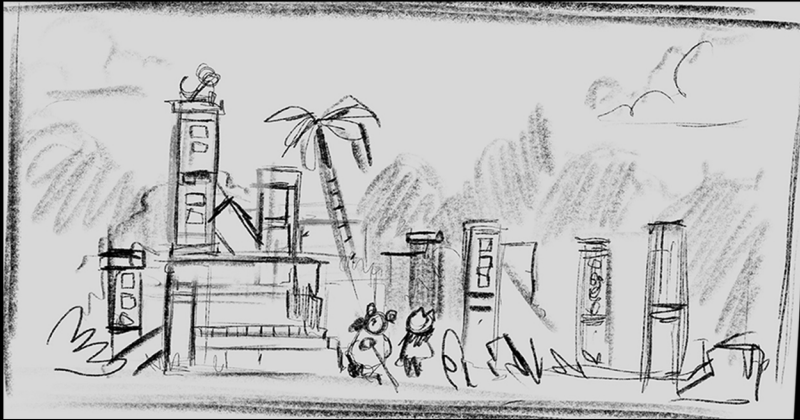
FINAL SHOTS



PRODUCTION-MINDED ASSET DESIGN

Building a varied world from a limited set of reusable elements.

To support a 78-episode series, I designed environments around a small set of modular elements that could be rearranged and dressed to create distinct locations. This gave us greater visual variety while keeping the world practical to build and produce.



Visual Direction · COLOUR, LIGHTING & MOOD ·

Before production began, I painted these early explorations to establish the colour, lighting and atmosphere of the Mekbots world.



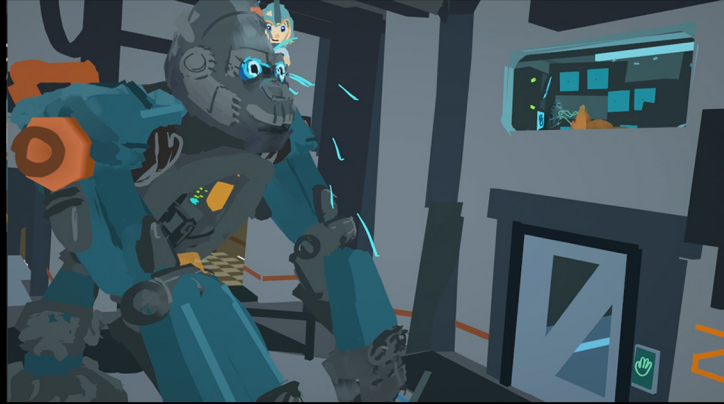
Visual development paintings by Stephen Murray.



Rapid Prototyping in VR

Personally built and designed the first 3D VR explorations for Mekbots using Quill.

Created during the 2D concept stage, these early Quill prototypes explored how the characters, environments, scale and camera might translate into a 3D series.



Colour & Lighting Direction

Episode 201 — establishing key lighting, colour and mood across the story.



Colour keys painted by Stephen Murray.

Colour Script to Screen

Directing light, colour and mood from colour key to final frame.

Colour keys painted by Stephen Murray.



COLOUR KEY



FINAL FRAME



COLOUR KEY



FINAL FRAME



COLOUR KEY



FINAL FRAME



COLOUR KEY



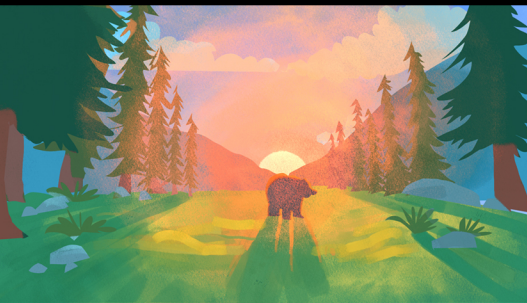
FINAL FRAME



COLOUR KEY



FINAL FRAME



COLOUR KEY



FINAL FRAME

Director's Working Script

Personal notes and thumbnails working through action, staging and composition directly on the script.

Blue Rev. (mm/dd/yy)

8.

Below the Meks we see Rafael in his submarine, with headlights pointing up towards the Meks.

53

RAFAEL
Thank goodness you're here Team Meks! There's a cranky octopus who's messing with passing ships. He's somewhere around, but...



From under the submarine coming out from dark ocean TENTACLES wrap around Rafael's vehicle, unbeknownst to him.

54

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
I haven't seen even a single...



A Giant Pacific Octopus sprays a cloud of black ink at the sub then drags it downward.

55

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
TENTACLE!!

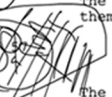
The Meksbots swim as hard as they can through the cloud.

We don't see octopus clearly



MEI-LIN LION
Don't worry Rafael! We're coming!

The Meks are on the chase, with huge strokes they propel themselves after the dwindling sub.



RAFAEL
Ahhhhh!!!



The Meksbots plunge the depths to find a PALE octopus on the ocean floor with its tentacles wrapped around Rafael's sub. The octopus gently taps the sub on a COLLAPSED CAVERN.



RAFAEL
This! Is!... (thoughtfully) very strange...



KAWHI RHINO
Don't worry Rafael, we'll save you.

The four Meks swim toward the submarine. The Octopus has four of its arms wrapped around the sub, the other four are free to play Mek keep-away.



Kawhi dives towards the sub, the octopus easily swats him away.

60

KAWHI RHINO (CONT'D)
Whooooaa!

** DO WE START TALKING THE SUB HERE & THEY INTERRUPT*



9.

Mei-Lin and Mateo simultaneously beeline toward the sub from different directions- without breaking a sweat the octopus uses two different arms to swat the Meks away, sending them spiraling in different directions.

61

MATEO GORILLA/MEI-LIN LION
Ahhhhh!!!



Frost tiptoes on the ocean floor attempting to sneak behind the octopus. A tentacle comes from behind Frost and taps his shoulder.

62

FROST BEAR
Yes, who is it?



A beat as Frost turns to stare at the tentacle.

63

FROST BEAR (CONT'D)
Oh.



The tentacle wraps around Frost's torso and with a flick sends him spinning away in a blur like Taz from Looney Tunes.

64

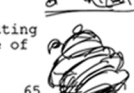
FROST
Wh-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!



With the Frost distraction Mateo is able to dodge a swatting tentacle. He makes it to the sub and attempts to pry one of the four tentacles off.

65

MATEO GORILLA
(strained with effort) come on, come on...



Mateo's whole Mek body shakes with effort as he lifts up one tentacle over his head.

66

MATEO GORILLA (CONT'D)
Yes, finally!



Another tentacle wraps around Mateo's torso and flings him off. The octopus throws all the Meks from one arm to the other. The Meks float by each other as the octopus trades hands.

67

MATEO GORILLA, MEI-LIN LION, KAWHI RHINO, FROST BEAR
Whooooaa!/AHHHH!/Interesting!/Weee!



As the Meks somersault from arm to arm the octopus uses a free arm to spin around in a vertical circular motion creating a small WHIRLPOOL. She grabs each of the Meks and tosses them in.



** OCTOPUS RESSIVE OF SUB*



11.

The Meks attempt to jerk the submarine from the octopus, but she's too quick for them. She jerks the sub back towards the collapsed cavern.

Both sides pull on the sub, it's a tug of war with Rafael as the rope.

The Meks are losing ground.



76

RAFAEL
This octopus is very determined to keep hold, but I don't know why.

77

MEI-LIN LION
We have to pull together. Ready team?

78

MATEO GORILLA/KAWHI RHINO/FROST BEAR
Ready!

79

MEI-LIN LION
Three, two, one, heave!

78

The Meks pull back with all their might. A couple tentacles slip off the sub.

80

FROST BEAR
It's working!

81

MEI-LIN LION
Again, one, two, three heave!

Encouraged the Meks make another great pull. Even more arms slip off the sub this time.

82

MATEO GORILLA
One more pull!

83

MEI-LIN LION
One, two, three-

The octopus lifts up two tentacles and sprays a CLOUD OF BLACK INK.

84

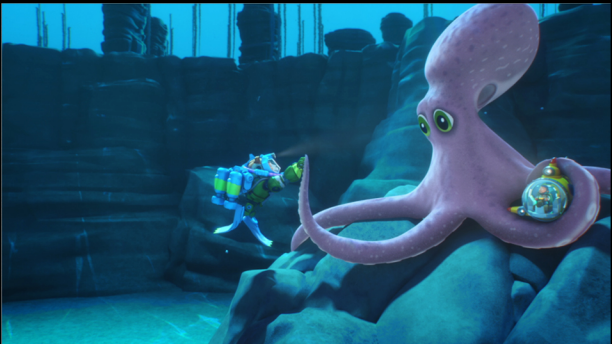
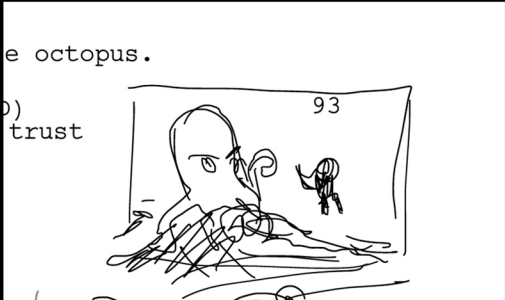
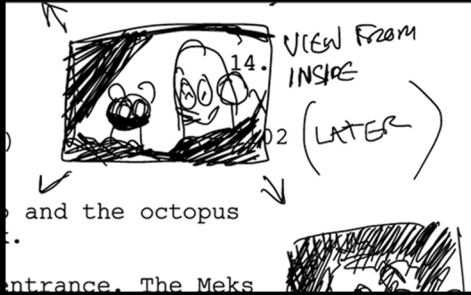
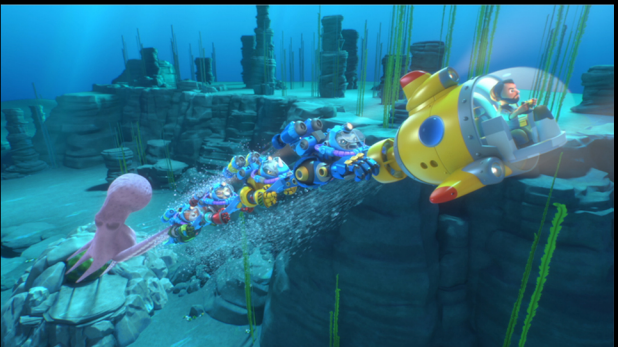
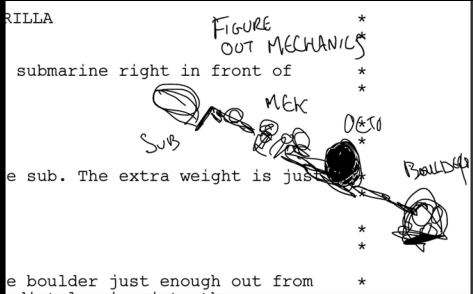
MATEO GORILLA/MEI-LIN LION/KAWHI RHINO/FROST BEAR
Ahhh!!!/I think I still got it!/Me too!/I think it's got me!

The ink cloud begins to dissipate, revealing Kawhi yanking on Frost's legs, while Mei-Lin is pulling from his shoulders. Once they can see again, they let go.



Script Notes to Screen

Selected moments from Episode 203. Director'script notes to final render.







Whiteout Survival: Squads

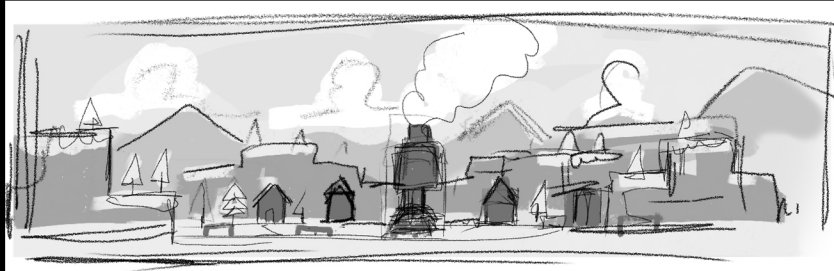
Director · Art Director · Century Games

Originally conceived as a series of shorts expanding the world and characters of [Whiteout Survival](#) beyond the game itself, each piece was designed as fun, slapstick physical comedy - no dialogue, driven entirely by visual storytelling. Every short also had to work natively in both landscape and portrait framing, shaping composition and staging decisions from the earliest boards.

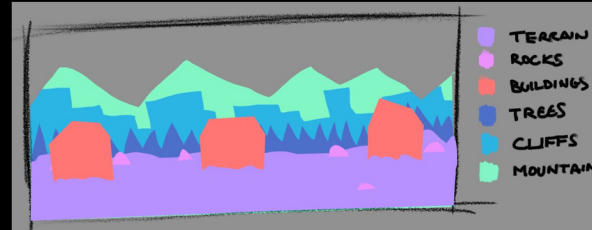
Visual Development

I blocked out the world through a series of rough drawings, establishing the environments, layouts and key elements needed for the story. I considered what would be seen throughout the production, keeping the camera's eyeline and the requirements of each shot in mind. These explorations were then developed into the final environment designs.

TOWN LAYOUT EXPLORATION



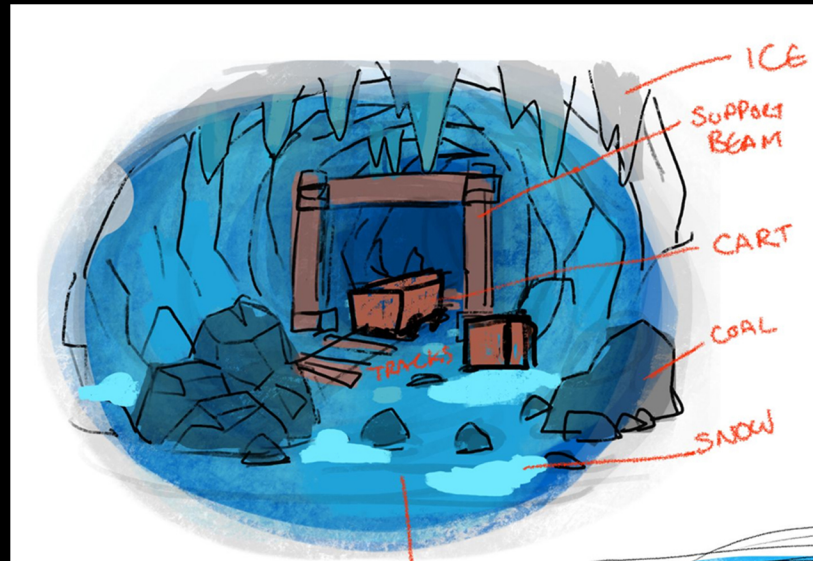
SET ELEMENTS BREAKDOWN



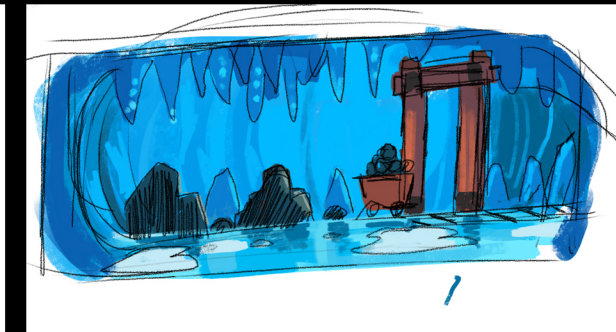
MINE ENTRANCE



MINE INTERIOR



MINE INTERIOR



Visual Development

Surfacing Guide



Surfaces were intentionally kept minimal, using gradients and subtle details. Transitions between elements were supported by modelling details to give the environments a more natural, tangible feel.



Furnace Sketch

Shelter

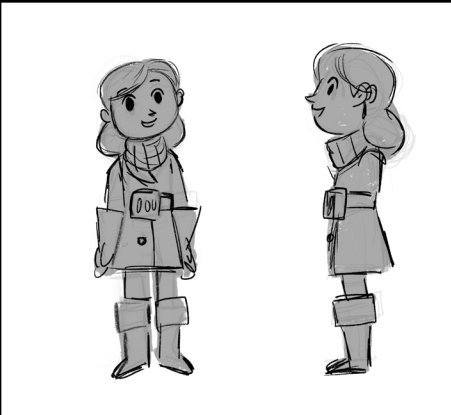


Building designed to have 4 unique sides for variety throughout the town.

Populating the World



A small set of base characters could be reused with different colours and accessories to create variation throughout the town.



Visual Development

Character Design

I redesigned the Whiteout Survival heroes for the animation shorts, bringing a sense of whimsy and playfulness that suited the comedic tone of the stories we were developing.

BAHITI



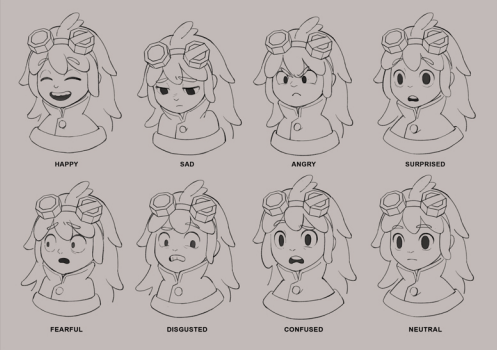
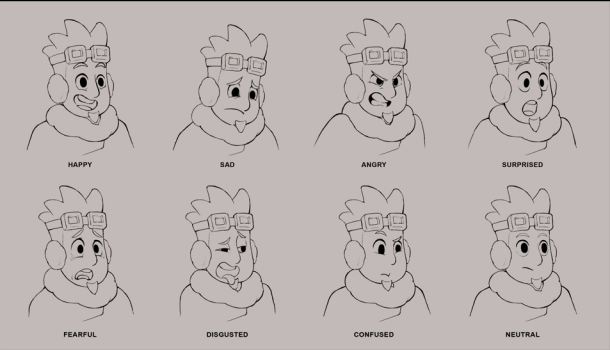
MOLLY



JESSI



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



Additional Expressions developed by the M2 design team

Visual Development

Colour Script · Visual Direction



I developed the colour script to establish the lighting, colour and mood of each sequence, giving the production a clear visual direction from the outset.

Visual Development



VISUAL TARGET

Character design · Colour · Lighting · Tone

I developed this image as the visual target for the redesigned heroes and the overall look of the animation shorts, establishing the character style, colour palette, lighting and tone we were aiming for.



Look Development

Visual direction carried through production

I worked with the team throughout production to refine lighting, colour, atmosphere and environmental detail, using paintovers and visual references to communicate specific changes and maintain the intended look.



SHOT REFINEMENT NOTES

Add refraction on lens to avoid floating spec.
Turn off cast shadow on spec highlight.
Add blue atmospheric fog.
Add additional blue rim light on shadow side.
Add a little more saturation into the wooden shelters.
Add warm glow to the windows of the shelters.



Lighten back wall a little. Darken Icicles hanging from ceiling
Add lamp prop into scene and illuminate
Add a blue rim light

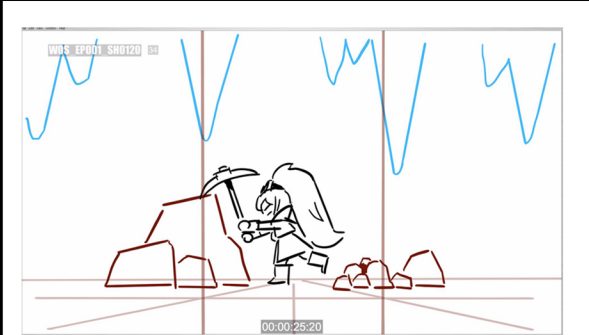


Add some cloud cast shadows
Add a little atmospheric fog.

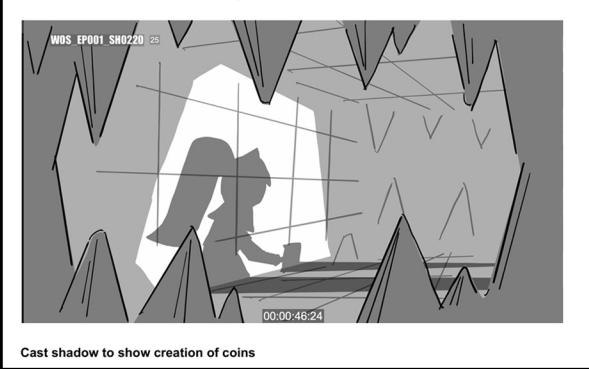
LAYOUT & ANIMATION DIRECTION

Production notes used to communicate staging, camera, performance and visual requirements to the animation team.

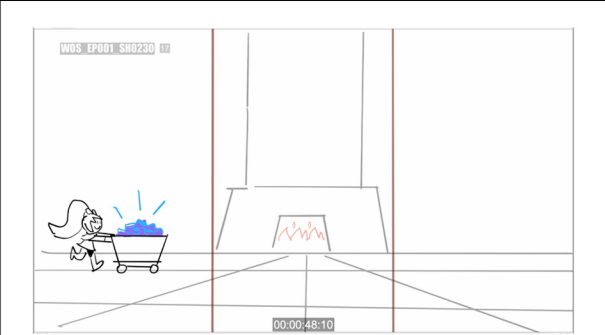
LAYOUT NOTES



May need to separate icicles so we get them into shot.



Cast shadow to show creation of coins

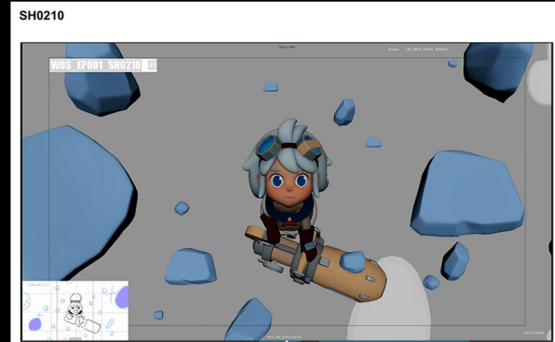


Small Fire burning in Furnace



Will have to adjust shot to accommodate new design

ANIMATION NOTES



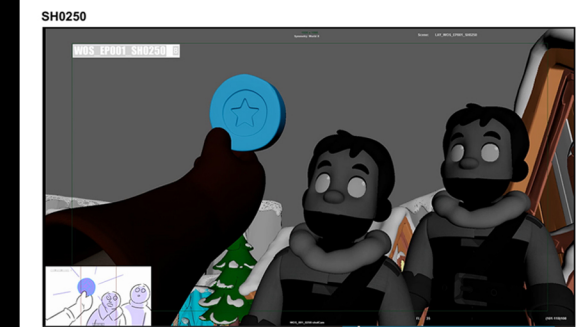
Slow mo shot as ice pieces fall downwards. Molly looking super happy.



Molly rushes excitedly across frame



Shopkeeper still with the same grumpy expression. Reacts with amazement when he sees the ice coins



Villagers equally amazed

FINAL FRAMES



WARHAMMER 40,000 9TH EDITION CINEMATIC

ART DIRECTION

Visual Development · VR Worldbuilding · Colour Script



WORLD BUILDING

RAPID VR PROTOTYPING

When I took on the Art Direction of the Warhammer 40k 9th Edition Cinematic, I saw an opportunity to use Quill in VR as a rapid worldbuilding tool during a tight production schedule.

The Warhammer world is incredibly rich and detailed. I rapidly prototyped the sets over a couple of days, establishing layout, composition, scale and atmosphere so the layout team could hit the ground running with clear environments to work from.

Working in VR allowed me to stand within the environments and develop the spaces with a much clearer understanding of scale and camera possibilities, helping establish the visual language of the world before the sets were developed further by the team.

CATHEDRAL EXTERIOR

VR Set Design

VR Set Design



Final Cinematic



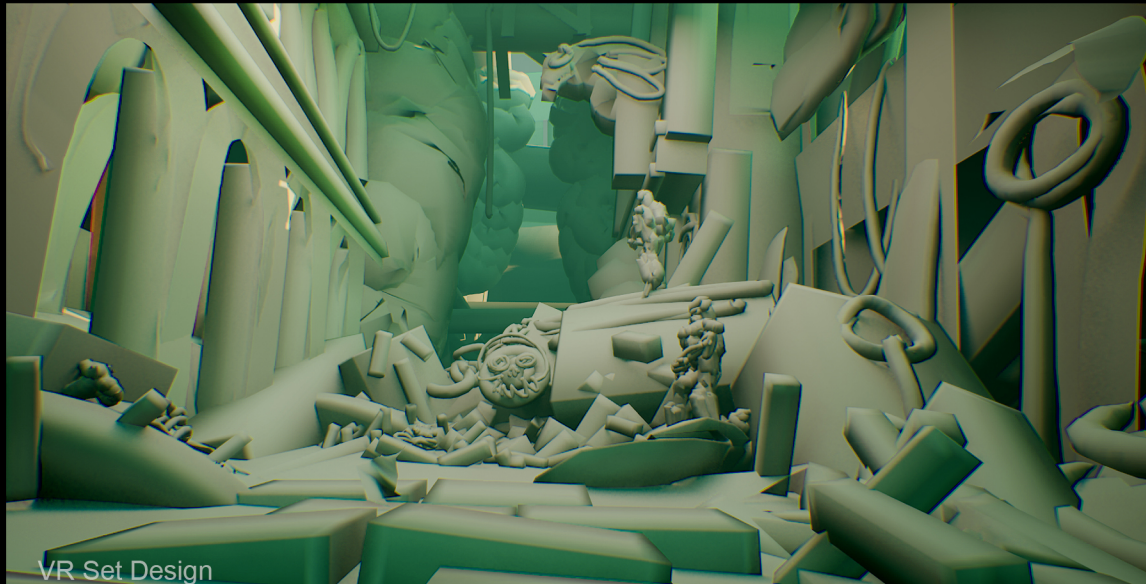
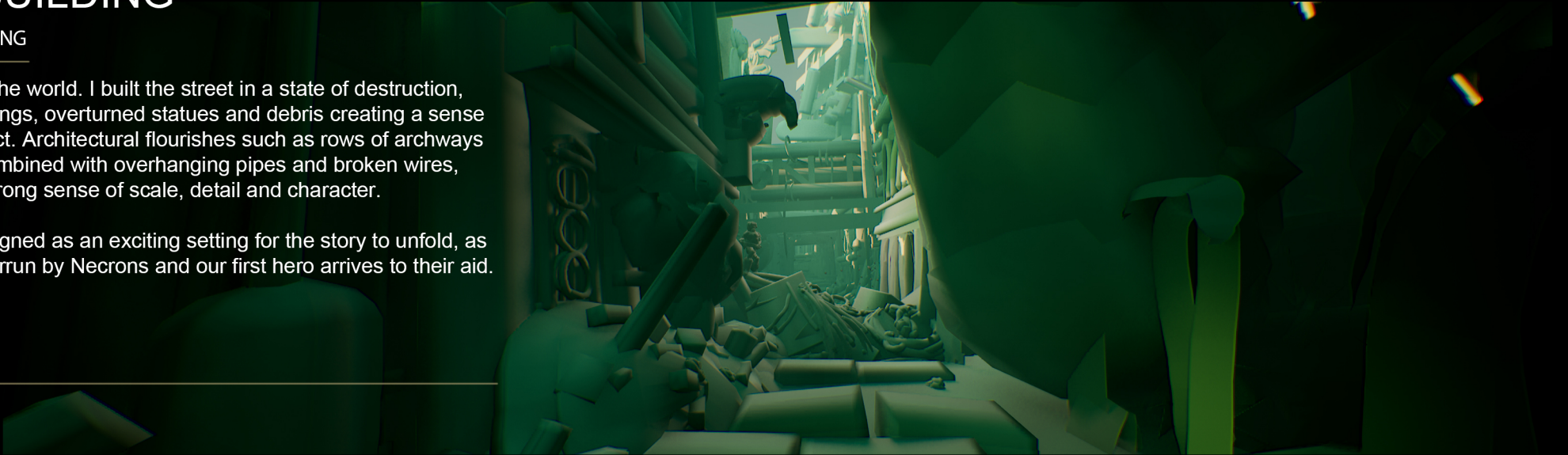
WORLD BUILDING

RAPID VR PROTOTYPING

Our introduction to the world. I built the street in a state of destruction, with damaged buildings, overturned statues and debris creating a sense of history and conflict. Architectural flourishes such as rows of archways and large pillars, combined with overhanging pipes and broken wires, gave the space a strong sense of scale, detail and character.

The space was designed as an exciting setting for the story to unfold, as Guardsmen are overrun by Necrons and our first hero arrives to their aid.

VR Set Design



VR Set Design



Final Cinematic

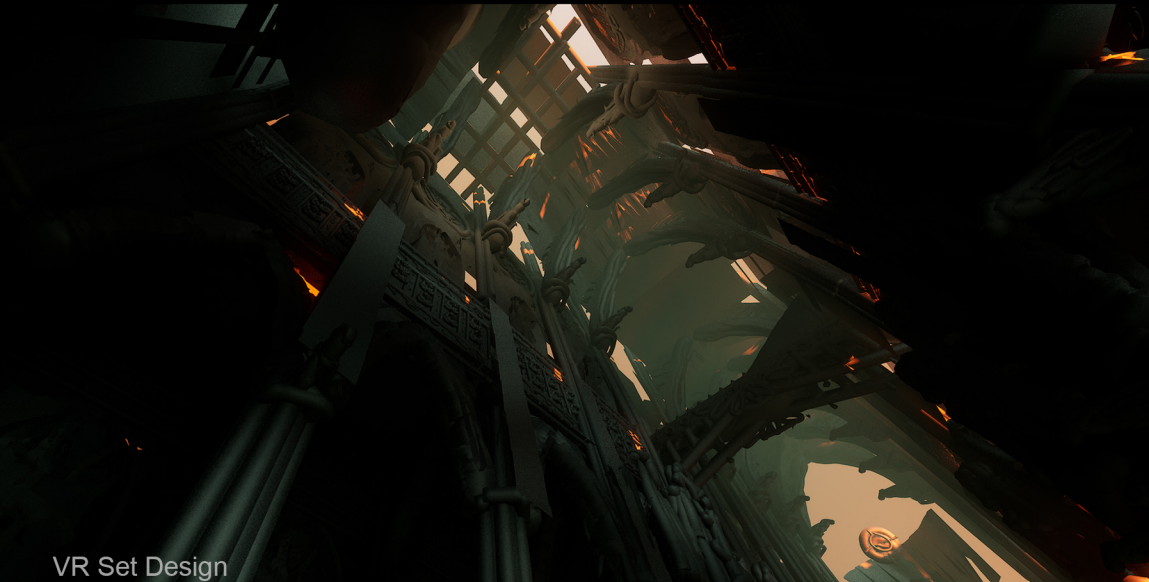
WORLD BUILDING

RAPID VR PROTOTYPING

Working in Quill allowed me to rapidly build this level of architectural complexity directly in 3D. The speed and freedom of the process made it possible to explore scale, composition and detail at a level that would have been impractical through more traditional concept and set-design processes.

I wanted the space to feel immense, ancient and imposing, with the architecture dwarfing the characters. Damaged structures, collapsed surfaces and debris were built into the environment to give the cathedral a sense of age, history and conflict.

VR Set Design



VR Set Design



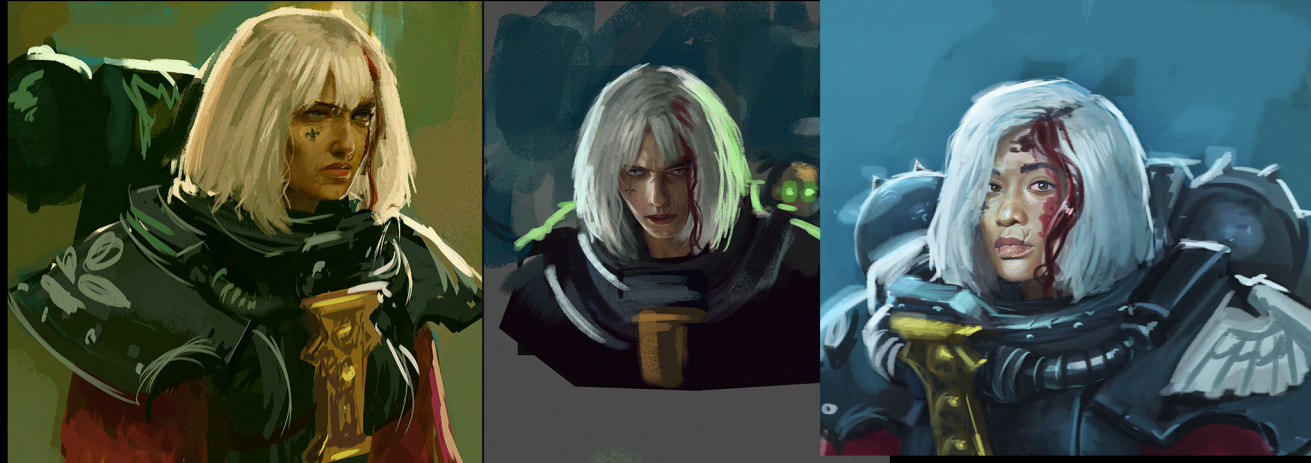
Final Cinematic

CHARACTER DESIGNS

Primaris Captain



Sister of Battle

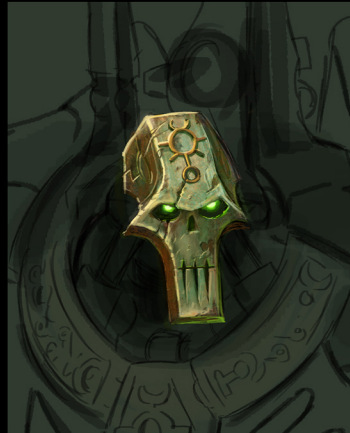


I retained the scarred lip as part of her character design, then added a blood-soaked strand of hair to show the recent impact of the Skorpekh's attack and ground the injury in the moment.

Cadian Guardsmen



Necron Overlord



Necron Warrior

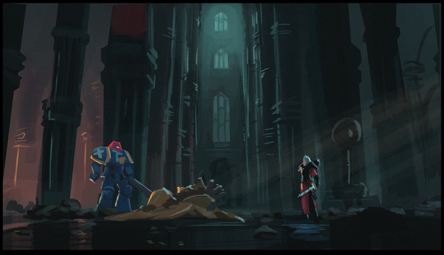
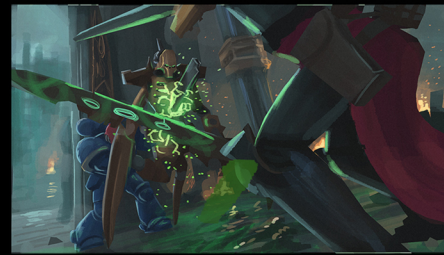
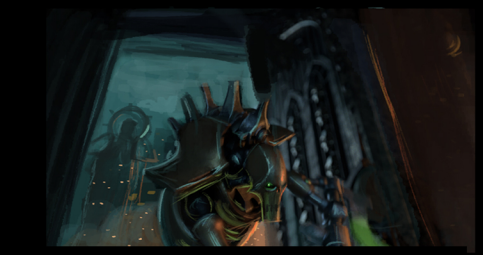
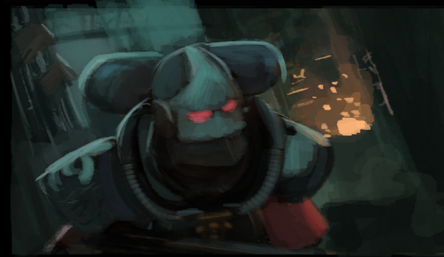
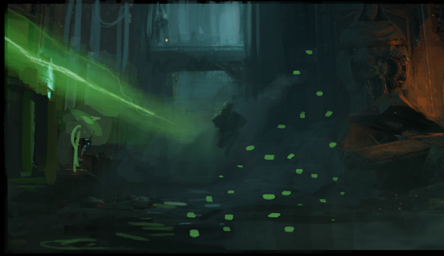


Skorpekh Destroyer



COLOUR SCRIPT

Colour and lighting direction across the full sequence







IRE

a prologue

Real-Time Cinematics - Unreal Engine

DIRECTOR

Three cinematics for the upcoming game release. I oversaw the visual execution from animatic handover through final delivery.

Layout & Blocking · Camera Direction

Animation Direction · Lighting · Colour · FX Direction

THE PROLOGUE



01 The Beach

A mysterious encounter on an empty shoreline. A girl caught in grief is drawn towards a door that leads to another world.



02 The Ritual

Emily restores her father's soul to his body, only to discover a mystery waiting beyond a door.



03 The Monster

Emily encounters a dark force within the artifact, unleashing its power as a monster hell-bent on revenge.

REAL-WORLD REFERENCE

Personal reference captured during production to study the beach environment, materials, water, FX and photographic detail. These observations informed the visual direction and helped establish targets for the final CG shots.

ENVIRONMENT

Beach environment and natural light



WATER / SURFACE

Water, wet sand and surface behaviour



MATERIALS / FX

Surface detail and environmental FX



CHARACTER / LENS

Skin, hair and photographic detail



Colour Script to Final Frame

Directing Mood and Atmosphere

THE RITUAL



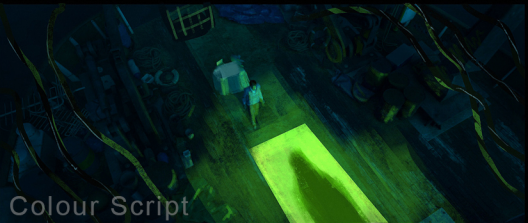
Colour Script



Final Render



THE MONSTER



Colour Script



Colour Script



Final Render

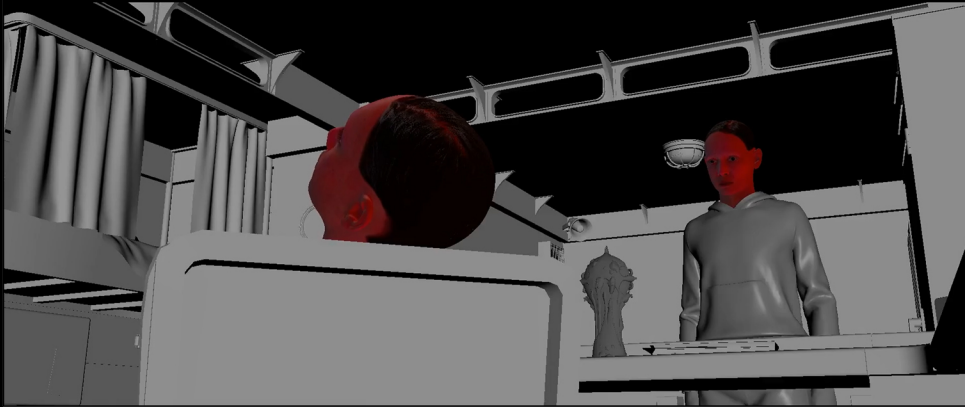


Final Render

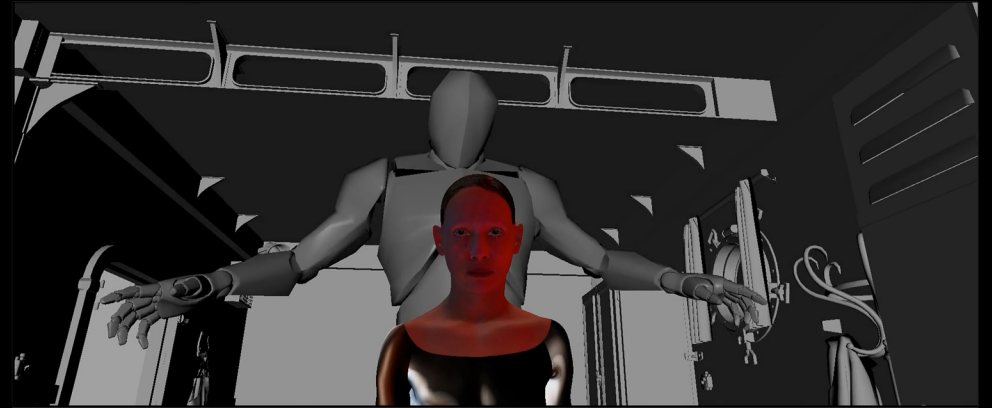


Blocking & Camera Direction

Working from the animatic, I directed staging, blocking, and camera coverage with the layout team, reviewing framing, eyelines, and pacing before a shot moved into animation and lighting.



Blocking Pass



Blocking Pass



Final Unreal Frame



Final Unreal Frame

01 · THE BEACH



02 · THE RITUAL



03 · THE MONSTER



A stylized illustration of a crocodile and a pig in a diner. The crocodile, with green scales and a yellow eye, is on the left, wearing a yellow shirt. The pig, pink and wearing a blue shirt, is on the right, sitting at a table with a burger and a drink. In the background, a dinosaur wearing a blue cap and a plaid shirt is sitting at another table. The scene is set in a diner with windows, framed pictures, and a television.

GET IN TOUCH

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