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Fundamental Knowledge behind Creation of Concept Art

Abstract

This study is focused on the transformation of scientific knowledge into pieces of art and design for further usage in science-fiction and fantasy-based games and movies. There are several problems related to concept art and one of them is relevant sources. In order to create a new world on the base of a story and concept, it is essential to fully understand the idea of designed objects from within and to recreate them into new design through fundamental artistic skills. The understanding of fundamental art skills is a must for the creation of a believable picture using one's own imagination. Therefore, we discuss their role, how to use them and how to choose the right form for our cause. We try to merge knowledge, experience, tips and tricks from different artists and renowned artistic books in order to create a better picture for young creatives and scientists to understand the basic thinking and processes behind the creation of concept art and building new worlds to be used in movies and digital games. In Slovakia, the current state of knowledge related to this type of art is very weak, although there are currently small signs of progress

in the connection of traditional art schools and universities focusing digital art for video games. The main purpose of this text therefore lies in reflecting on the fundamental theory behind the creation of concept art.

Key words

Building Worlds. Concept Art. Creation. Design. Digital Games. Imagination. Movies.

Introduction

Concept art is a phenomenon of the 20th and 21st century that naturally evolved from the need to carefully design immersive worlds for entertainment industry products such as cartoons, movies, video games, comics, etc.¹ Being able to edit a piece of art and reuse it as a form of asset in the larger context was a breakthrough in artistic freedom and evolution of new media

¹ See: MAGO, Z.: Fake-Vertising and Mobile Games: Case Study of 'Pull the Pin' Ads. In *Communication Today*, 2020, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 132-147; RADOŠINSKÁ, J., KVETANOVÁ, Z., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: To Thrive Means to Entertain: The Nature of Today's Media Industries. In *Communication Today*, 2020, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 4-21; HUDÍKOVÁ, Z., PRAVDOVÁ, H.: Establishment of Procedures in the Creation of Extended Multimedia News Report. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2020, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 125-140.

and art history². The evolution of the digital game and movie industry's need to visually differentiate between several projects created a new kind of art profession called concept art. A concept artist is a highly trained type of artist, whose main focus lies in using visual tools to further elaborate a larger written concept. Their task should be fulfilled mainly in the pre-production phase and consists of design solving techniques used to create every piece that is needed to create a new world, hence the term "world-building". Due to the scale and various types of visualised objects, concept artists may specialise in character design, environment design, or hard-surface design and also in a specific genre, theme or even style. The key element lies in the deep understanding of both science and art, because artists are usually tasked to create design solutions for a fictional world with different history, culture, timeline, habitat, physical conditions, lore, anatomy, etc.³. Even though the creation of fictional and immersive worlds is undeniably fascinating, final concepts are hardly ever acknowledged and appreciated by the public due to non-disclosure agreements and very strict copyright policies. It is the intention of this study to uncover some of the uniqueness and rules of this art. Since the creation of concept art is a very specific subject that is not really known in the field of media and communication, we

² SOLARSKI, C.: *Drawing Basics and Video Game Art*. New York : Watson-Guptill, 2012, p. 29.

³ URSCHER, J.: What Is Concept Art? In *The Ultimate Concept Art Career Guide*. Worcester : 3Dtotal Publishing, 2017, p. 10.

offer a qualitative study. Our approach is based on a critical analysis of available literature and practical experience shared by well-known artists. The relevance of the chosen information is crucial. Our aim is to discuss the whole process of creating concept art in a comprehensible manner in order to address a variety of readers, scholars and artists alike. Therefore, some of the presented information is obtained throughout years of our own experience in art education and art practice with the ambition to understand the thinking behind the processes. The study works with inductive reasoning, as we approach the topic on the basis of logical steps commonly used in the process of creating concept art. However, we intend to build up a foundation of information, not a step-by-step manual.

1 High Concept and Story-Based Concept

When we approach the initial development of any media project, our intention should reflect the emotional experience we want our audience to feel. For this purpose, we should explain the high concept, which serves as a summary of the design's intentions. It could be derived from a story-based concept⁴. A story-based concept must include basic information about the story, setting and characters. It also serves the purpose of world-building as "a database", involving as much additional information as possible; such as what happened

⁴ SOLARSKI, C.: *Drawing Basics and Video Game Art*. New York : Watson-Guptill, 2012, p. 302.

before and will happen after our main story. It is very important to find similarities with the real world, because designs like these evolve from culture. There are several key elements that help design worlds, namely: time, environment and character possibilities. Time refers to the evolutionary state of culture and history; the environment defines conditions and, therefore, the way of life; and character possibilities outline the potential extent of influence that our characters (might) have on the world itself. Once we have our basic information, the concept art takes the shape of a puzzle with an emphasis on hierarchy. And thus, we must start by designing key elements that further affect lesser elements. A good start for a concept artist is to find as many reference points from the real world as possible. This leads towards the creation of mood boards and reference boards that are initially discussed with the creator of the written concept, the art director or with the whole team of concept artists or other artists working on the project⁵. This is a very important initial step necessary in order to set the right inspiration points. There is yet another crucial part when working with references, because even though a concept artist must come up with new design solutions, it is very important for the design to correspond with the audience's associations of the real world⁶. We can simply think about it like advancing the initial idea, for instance, the idea of

⁵ YU, D.: *The Production Process*. In *The Ultimate Concept Art Career Guide*. Worcester : 3Dtotal Publishing, 2017, p. 18.

⁶ NELSON, M. A.: *Fantasy World-Building*. New York : Dover publications, 2019, pp. 1-3.

transportation. People must first discover the core idea and later on the advancement of the idea. We can start with transportation by foot, horse transportation that leads us to horse-drawn carriages, after that it is possible to create an automobile, a plane or a train, even a space ship, warp travelling, teleportation, etc. What is most important is that every new concept, which is supported by the initial idea and is already acknowledged by the audience, serves as a new reference point letting us push the boundaries of imagination. This ultimately fulfils the main task which is to bring the author's story/concept to life. For instance, the director Peter Jackson commented on the work of the concept artist Alan Lee, which could be seen within *The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy (Figure 1)⁷ by saying: "Alan Lee's artwork has a beauty and lyricism about it. His art captured what I hoped to capture with the films"⁸.



Figure 1: Example of traditional concept art by Alan Lee (escape from Moria, The Lord of the Rings). Source: LEE, A.: *The Lord of the Rings Sketchbook*. New York : HarperCollins Publishers, 2005, p. 67.

⁷ LEE, A.: *The Lord of the Rings Sketchbook*. New York : HarperCollins Publishers, 2005, p. 67.

⁸ LEE, A.: *The Lord of the Rings Sketchbook*. New York : HarperCollins Publishers, 2005.

2 Fundamentals and Technical Skills

The fundamental skill set is an ever-recurring topic in the spheres of concept art and illustration, especially because of the skillset and high quality of work that these professions require. The fundamental skills of an author must be as advanced as possible; their talents should involve both creativity and design thinking. For the aspiring artists it is the core of their future career, which is why we analyse the thinking behind each and every fundamental art skill. This approach should guide the reader and the possible author towards a better understanding of the basic process and ideation behind the creation of concept art on the basis of a written concept. One of the essential requirements one must possess in order to start a career as a concept artist is the technical possibility of being able to start and finish the project. The term "industry standard" plays a huge role in forming young creative individuals. It is a set of skills and software one must acquire and master in order to successfully follow the industry's course and to be able to continue their career. The ability to use different software tools and techniques plays a key role, ensuring effectivity in such a quality-driven and fast production environment as the creative industry. Therefore, over past few years, there has been the on-going need for progressively expanding skill sets. A mixture of 2D and 3D techniques has become the standard in terms of software solutions like Adobe Photoshop, Substance Painter, Autodesk Maya, Blender or Zbrush. There are also different approaches like 2D and 3D bashing, modelling and painting

over, texturing or usage of game engines. The usage of VR in the pipeline and its ability to quickly acquire believability, camera view and action is relatively new but also considerably important⁹. But there is yet another skillset that must be mentioned; the traditional mastery of skills like drawing, painting and sculpting, because it teaches us how to understand and use digital media¹⁰. We already know that the ultimate goal of concept art creation is bringing a story to life, but to do so, we have to undergo processes that help us achieve details as fast as possible. This is what mainly differentiates this process of creation from more traditional approaches, even though at the end of the day concept art may include all traits of the traditional approach with the author's input (Figure 2).



Figure 2: An example of concept art for Assassin's Creed by Craig Mullins with the looks of traditional painting.

⁹ Level Up! Session 80 with JAMA JURABAEV. Released on 11th June 2017. [online]. [2021-10-14]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XzT0i6AWPg&ab_channel=LevelUp%21>.

¹⁰ URSCHER, J.: Professional Tools. In *The Ultimate Concept Art Career Guide*. Worcester : 3Dtotal Publishing, 2017, p. 27.

Source: MULLINS, C.: *Assassin's Creed Concept Art*. [online]. [2021-10-14]. Available at: <<http://www.goodbrush.com/hbmvif9fid2igvg7fvb5z6gtvk7gb6>>.

2.1 Dissociating Knowledge (Design and Anatomy)

When creating functional solutions of designs, one must understand how to acquire knowledge and transform it into unique designs. Concept artists are acknowledged for their ability to design anything required whilst maintaining believable and functional looks. The artist has to go through a lot of research material for each and every specific solution – concept and while doing so, they have to create their own mental library of visual and informational value of the researched subject for future use¹¹. Thus, we get the answer to the question of how can artist come up with design solutions so fast and this is also the reason why senior artists are valued so much in the industry. The progress consists of a basic idea-driven understanding of the subject, its purpose and functionality. When studying any given task, we undergo the process of deconstructing it into elements and then we try to understand how each part complements another. This process is giving us space to design different forms while maintaining the already mentioned informational, technical and visual believability, forming them into a piece of art. When designing hard

¹¹ SOLARSKI, C.: *Drawing Basics and Video Game Art*. New York : Watson-Guptill, 2012, pp. 308-310.

surface objects or a character, we can still find similarities in deconstruction. We can refer to these as cuts when we deconstruct any form into basic shapes and then we slice it into the base form of the given object. This is a must because the creation of a 3D space illusion in a 2D design can be very tricky and it is important that all parts of the design are "bulletproof" in terms of proportions. The simple basic shape is later carefully detailed in all sorts of small parts which provide the sense of reality (Figure 3). It is always appropriate to create the overall shape first that refers to proportions and overall readability; after that we create a 3D form with depth and later, we proceed by detailing the whole object. When creating different solutions for the same concept, artists usually use a technique called "thumbnailing" (Figure 4). This term refers to the fast-sketching technique where the author is trying to create as many design variations as possible in a short time; therefore, the artist scales down the size, diminishes details and creates sketches as big as a thumbnail. Such sketches put aside all unnecessary details and focus on the whole object or environment and its shapes-readability¹².

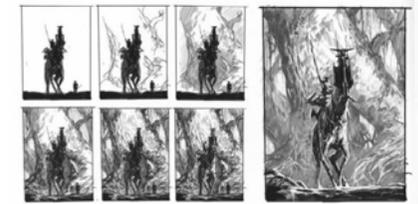


Figure 3: Progression from shape to details.

Source: DESCHAMBAULT, M.: *Project 77*. Quebec : Artstation Media, 2017.

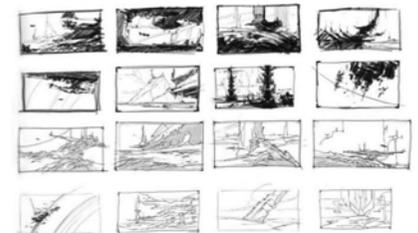


Figure 4: Approaching a concept through thumbnailing.

Source: DESCHAMBAULT, M.: *Project 77*. Quebec : Artstation Media, 2017.

2.2 Impact of Composition and Perspective for Narrative Purpose

We can easily say that composition impacts all kinds of art, because it helps to uncover the idea behind creation and constructs the importance of individual elements. In visual arts that are highly dependent on realism, composition must be intertwined with perspective in order to create a functional, yet appealing view of the picture. When used in concept art/illustration associated with movies or video games, composition must often obtain a wide range of information about the world, via which we create the picture. This can often lead to complications while the artist can easily "lose themselves" in the

¹² ROBERTSON, S.: *How To: Drawing and Sketching Objects and Environments from Your Imagination*. Los Angeles : Design Studio Press, 2013, pp. 123-132.

subject of interest. The importance of the elements can be established thanks to questions about the key part of telling that particular story. We can refer to them as primary elements. On the other hand, the secondary elements help us with the setting, design, or allow us to elevate the overall mood of the picture. These are bound to help communicate ideas, but never overwhelm the primary elements telling the story¹³. Once we realise how we can tell the story, we must create story-driven composition sketches that communicate narrative, but also are functional in terms of perspective. For these, artists usually use a 1-, 2- or 3-point perspective. Choosing one of them can also cause a problem. Adding more points can help build up the depth or mood of the picture, but the information we create must provide the right view. The camera view for concept art or illustration is another key element that we must consider wisely. Its angle and positioning can tell us what kind of perspective we should use. What is even most important, **camera angle and composition must fit the needs of storytelling. We strive to choose the best option for the audience to understand and relate to the story as much as possible.**

When working with perspective, points of perspective are mainly used as construction points for the creation of the main scene and objects in it. These points tell us about the rotation and depth of objects or scene, but they also

impact the way we read a picture. This means that a row of objects at the same angle can create the depth of the picture and they also draw the eye of the viewer into the perspective point, creating a sort of “hypnotic circle”. This commonly happens in the case of 1-point perspective, because the perspective point is located inside our canvas. The 1-point perspective is used in frontal view and it is very strong when focusing on a single object or elements with equal importance or informational value. In contrast, the 2-point perspective is commonly used when depicting a wider context inside the scene. Because we see additional angles of our objects, we also create much more sense of depth in the picture. This leads to a bigger immersive experience for the viewer, as well as to the establishment of a narrative value between an object/a character and the environment. This type of perspective goes very well with the environment, especially with urban sceneries. It gives us the possibility of including more focal points inside our canvas, creating a connection between them along the viewing angle. Both 1- and 2-point perspectives are usually used when height is not that important. The 3-point perspective is mainly used when we want to strengthen the height and dynamic composition. It creates natural distortion when we tilt the camera view up or down, providing a stronger sense of height and different viewing mood. As the dimension of height creates depth and immersion, compositions using this type of perspective could create

more “sensual” viewing experience¹⁴. We can see the basic qualities and usage of 1-, 2- and 3-point perspectives below (Figure 5).

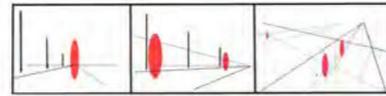


Figure 5: Basic visual description of 1-, 2- and 3-point perspective usage.

Source: Own processing, 2021.

2.3 Values of Light and Shadow

Once our scene is set up in terms of strong narrative composition and perspective, we are ready to apply lighting conditions that should help us strengthen the points of focal interest and mood by the usage of contrast. The basic idea behind the logic of lighting is that every living creature is captivated by it, and the same applies to people. We learn how to use the light to enforce its illuminative effect, to strengthen the idea and its impact on the viewer. Its distribution is as important as its position and angle. Lighting serves as a communicative channel for viewing realism to apply. It must strengthen the shapes of primary storytelling elements with contrast by illuminating the key parts, but also distribute just enough light to have secondary elements displayed and to strengthen the context around primary elements. The term “values” possesses a strong meaning for every creative individual that has ever acquired feedback. It basically refers to the grayscale value of lighting distribution through image. Basically, distribution of

14 Ibid., pp. 24-27.

light and usage of soft/hard edges (focus) serve as a guide through storytelling and three-dimensional visualisation while referring to focal points. Therefore, values of light and shadow must help communicate the story, but also allows understanding of how its environment works and what is the best way to portray it. When setting up a source of light before shading, it is appropriate to create a visual reference by simply drawing a circle of certain height and adding a pointer as a straight line. Height refers to the time of day and pointer refers to its angle. Because light travels in straight lines, setting up the basic lighting could be easy. What we must also account for is that light tends to bounce off objects or even sky and atmosphere, which also illuminates our objects in our shadowed areas, creating ambient occlusion effects and the feeling of plasticity. To put it simply, when using light to strengthen the shape of our design, we use lighter shapes in front of darker or vice versa, being aware of the global illumination. This usage of contrast in the scene strengthens its readability and the portrayed story¹⁵.

2.4 Colour and Mood

The colouring part is unnecessary in terms of design or story, but it influences the mood and feelings of the viewer. It is the “bread and butter” of creating emotional impact on the audience which is primarily escalated in stylised visualisation. The reason why this happens lies in

15 GURNEY, J.: *Color and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter*. Kansas City : Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2010, pp. 48-50.

the usage of colour limitations and the psychology behind it. There is a very wide range of colour depth based on the relationship between saturation and values of light, which gives us too many possibilities. The difference between the real world and carefully chosen colours picked by artists is the reduction of unnecessary colour noise with no meaning that leaves only easily readable choices supporting the initial mood and storytelling. Desaturation and saturation or amount of light with the right pick of colour could visualise emotions, time of the day, seasons, ground level, drama, relationship, environment and overall mood, etc. Emotional colouring is the best way to describe the whole process, and the preferred way to understand it is to analyse colour expressions in stylised animated movies. Movies like these use the clearest way possible to describe the story and mood through fundamental art skills and psychology. Another important aspect lies in studying real colours of the everyday environment. It is known that throughout history, artists, especially landscape artists, used to analyse their subjects while taking everyday walks, carefully watching colours and shapes. The impact of physical laws on nature served as a very important set of reference points allowing them to create their own compositions from their imagination¹⁶.

16 GURNEY, J.: *Color and Light: A Guide for the Realist Painter*. Kansas City : Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2010, p. 210.

2.5 The Initial Approach

When creating concept art, we must always respect our concept assignment and project specifications. These also help us in terms of choosing the right technique. There are several that have evolved from traditional approaches and those that stand above them. Sketching is the fastest way to visually express the idea and to approach ideas, whether by using digital or traditional tools. As for concept art, the most important thing is to create visual solutions from which production teams can acquire information and recreate them as a final asset. Since projects are evolving in scale and ambition, these initial ideas must evolve from basic into creative and ambitious designs that look as polished and stunning as possible. The level of detail, design quality, storytelling and mood becomes very important when creating the overall look of the key scenes and settings. Because the production scheme is fast and ruthless, the whole process needs to speed up¹⁷. Therefore, a mixture of processes has become standard in the production pipeline and new techniques have been created – e.g., photobashing, kitbashing (usage of readymade photos and 3D assets), painting over 3D base, usage of textures, software generating landscape, 3D scans, motion capture, animation database, game engines and virtual reality. Every artist could have a different approach to the

17 RETZ, Z.: *Expectation and Workload*. In *The Ultimate Concept Art Career Guide*. Worcester : 3Dtotal Publishing, 2017, p. 16.

13 MATEU-MESTRE, M.: *Framed Ink: Drawing and Composition for Visual Storyteller*. Culver City : Design Studio Press, 2010, pp. 14-15.

techniques as well as to ideas; however, the basic process and mental approach to the overall idea are fixed. When creating **environment design**, it always helps to establish a ground plan from the top view to clarify the basic communications between natural and man-made elements like foliage, terrain, roads and bridges, buildings or any important element of the concept and its connection to culture. Then we need to consider sketch possibilities, angles with the thought of how to create an interesting place. When creating **hard surface** design, we start with the basic information and idea that builds up the overall look. Its functionality, usage, type, properties, components and design inspiration is drawn from real life. The main importance lies in functionality and believability; the design must serve its purpose and yet remain eye-catching. With **character design** it is always good to focus on the nature of the character and put the little pieces of people the artist knows together. Small details, expressions and the overall mood can create a very likeable character for the audience to connect with. When choosing the basic shape of the character, we can think of these things and connect them with physical gestures and overall body movement and posture. A good place to start is to look at body archetypes of people. When thinking about designing anything particular, it is always good to rely on basic shape psychology and know how people read them. We can associate curves with softness and life, rectangles with strength and safety or edgy shapes with danger. Furthermore, the design of

things naturally evolves from their functionality and designers often seek inspiration in nature, as they always have.

3 Creation of Specific Types of Concept Art

In the previous chapter, we discussed usage of fundamental art skills when approaching a written concept. Since visual art is very hard to master and commission requirements must meet the highest quality standards possible, artists have developed their own specialisations even when approaching concept art. Therefore, career opportunities include specific concept art jobs such as character designer, environment designer and hard-surface designer. These are the three basic concept art divisions we will discuss further. But before we do so, we should understand the basic skill that every creator must master, and it is observation. It is even more important in concept art, because the analysed data must align with their visual representation. This means that artists should conduct a study of their lifestyle, as well as observe and reproduce their everyday visual experience¹⁸.

3.1 Hard-Surface Design

Hard-surface design is actually the designation of man-made inventions. Invention and design are associated with the cultural and scientific progress of a depicted civilisation, which satisfies its material needs. If

¹⁸ LILLY, E.: *The Big Bad World of Concept Art for Video Games: How To Start Your Career as a Concept Artist*. Los Angeles : Design Studio Press, 2015, p. 32.

we want to approach hard-surface design, we must acknowledge the purpose, evolution of the core idea and scientific possibilities based on civilisation's progress. When we look at an invention as it is, it starts with basic ideas supporting each other and evolving into more complex ideas. When we approach concept design as it is, it usually takes the actual invention and dissolves it first, so the artist can recreate it to work differently or look different. However, it must always maintain its functionality. Hard-surface design is also very often approached through thumbnailing. What is an absolute necessity is understanding the connection between shapes and mechanics of the designed object.



Figure 6: An example of created hard-surface design of weapons, based on a concept.

Source: Own processing, 2021.

3.2 Character Design

When approaching the design of characters, it is crucial to understand what differentiates one human being from another. Through psychology we can easily find some archetypes of characters, which automatically outline their visual resemblance. These archetypes function thanks to the connection between a character and their nature, habits, profession, health, social status, etc. When depicting such characters, artists have learned to create some visual indicators – shapes, posture and gesture, facial expression or costumes that automatically visually “tag” these characters in

the mind of the audience. It is really important to understand characters throughout the story, because that is what allows us to perceive their unique character traits and differences. Therefore, when we have our initial written concept, we have to try to find out what is the story within the story. We analyse the past, present and future of the story and we try to ask ourselves how it actually affects the character. We must take into consideration everything – places, people, events, the main story, nature and the ability to react to these factors. Once we understand our character's motives and who they truly are, we may start to connect this information with our visual memory and similarities with the people we know. An analysis of these small behavioural details plays a huge role in this part, because this observational talent helps us create authentic yet fictional characters people can relate to¹⁹.



Figure 7: An example of created characters based on their specific roles and game design.

Source: Own processing, 2021.

3.3 Environment Design

Although people naturally incline to characters, there can be no story without the context. The environment plays this role naturally, because characters primarily assimilate and behave based on

¹⁹ MATEU-MESTRE, M.: *Framed Ink: Drawing and Composition for Visual Storyteller*. Culver City : Design Studio Press, 2010, pp. 96-105.

their surroundings. Everything is incorporated and functions through surroundings and, therefore, the artist must fully understand them. But what if we have to create an environment that is nothing common, nothing that we are used to in our everyday world, like nothing we have ever seen? We must always draw inspiration from the physical world, because if we did not possess core knowledge about how our world actually works, we would not be able to depict a different world accurately. Again, science plays the key role. What we can be certain about is that every concept artist has a substantial knowledge base including different kinds of scientific specialisations, because thanks to this they are able to answer the “what if...” questions in a satisfying and comprehensible manner. Ultimately, this gives them the ability to create believable fiction.

When creating environment, it is necessary to start by answering the basic questions about cosmic relation, biotopes, weather, physics, chemistry, geology, fauna and flora. After that, we need to establish a ground plan where we try to logically connect nature with man-made communications, architecture, impact of cultural and scientific progress, etc. What comes next is the impact of our history and the base story of the concept. Once done with that, we can start to build up our environment in the way that mostly supports designing and planning and that is the line-drawing and basic shading (2 – 4 tones). We must understand that environment influences the inhabitants and vice versa; it ultimately creates a specific culture throughout

time. A commonly used strategy when approaching such fictional environments is based on references to our own cultural differences appearing in different biotopes – the problems, choices, ways of living, cultural disparities, which are related to the biotope itself²⁰.



Figure 8: An example of environment concept art.

Source: Own processing, 2021.

Conclusion

While studying our topic – concept art, we realised that there is enormous interest in the practical aspects of its production or in the exploration of career opportunities within the creative industries, but academic reflections on concept art are rather scarce. The field of digital games theory provides a welcome breakthrough, but the aspect of game content design is still dealt with mostly during online courses and across non-academic grounds²¹. Therefore, there are not enough related informational sources that would qualify as scholarly literature. Yet, there is relevant data to be found, scattered in various art books, online courses and professional

²⁰ NELSON, M. A.: *Fantasy World-Building*. New York : Dover Publications, 2019, pp. 9-15.

²¹ ŠVECOVÁ, M.: Location-Based Games as a Method of Teaching Seniors in the Field of Digital Technologies. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 61-71.

interviews. One can also learn a lot through self-improvement, as a practising artist. We understand that in order to create a relevant set of knowledge it is necessary to delve into both the world of art and scholarly circles. Chris SolarSKI's work is a rarely seen example of how to cross the boundaries between the spheres of art and academia²². We are given this specific opportunity that cannot be ignored. Therefore, this study aspires to serve as a summary of the most important information a creator should have in mind when dealing with fundamentals related to concept art. We have also created art pieces related to the topic to show practical examples of concept art. These are artistic representations of an indie game project which is currently in development. We intend to further study the impact of artistic imagination on the project in its pre-production phase. What we have realised so far is that in order to fully understand progressive media such as digital games, scholars must also understand the creative processes behind the visual building of a new reality depicted by these media. What we intend to create is a body of knowledge that would connect media and artistic theory, which should ultimately improve the understanding, application and value of concept art in digital games theory and art schools. This text is, therefore, based on a connection merging artistic skills obtained from literature focused on concept art, illustration, design and art skills,

various courses, online interviews and self-improvement throughout years of study. It relates to the previous article called *Concept Art: The Essential Part of Visual Pre-Production in the Entertainment Industry*²³ that provides the core information about concept art as an art form. Following the same line of thought, we underline the need to explore vital information on concept art and deepen its understanding with regard to the process of its creation.

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²³ See also: ENGLER, M., TRNKA, A.: *Concept Art: The Essential Part of Visual Pre-Production in the Entertainment Industry*. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 112-123.

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Profile of the Authors

Martin Engler is an illustrator, concept artist, indie game developer and a teacher. He earned his Master's degree in Illustration at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. He aims to cross the boundaries separating game-related art and academic inquiry, as well as to create unique game projects. As an artist he covers a wide variety of techniques related to both traditional and digital media. He also works as a lecturer and mentor interested in various educational programmes and events and is a co-founder of the magazine called Pomimo, which focuses on comics.

Andrej Trnka specialises in data processing and data analysis. In his research, he focuses on advanced methods of data processing and their implementation into various scientific disciplines. He works as an Associate Professor at the Department of Digital Games, Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. In the field of digital games theory, he is interested in education through digital games in all age categories and environments. As a former player of 8-bit games on the PMD 85 computer, he is interested in their history as well.