Concept Artbook:
Team Sparks, Blast Off!

A Major Qualifying Project
Submitted to the faculty of
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in Interactive Media and Game Development

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Abstract

Team Sparks, Blast-Off! Is a concept artbook containing development drawings, paintings, and writing for a fictional animated television series that illustrates the adventures of a young boy who dreams of being a hero as he grows to learn what being a hero truly means. Through the narrative development of the characters Jet and Elise's, a wide range of professionally viable concept art was created exploring numerous locations and themes representative of a robust animated television series with commercial potential. The primary objective of this Major Qualifying Project (MQP) was to create a catalog of quality professional concept art evoking the feeling of watching Saturday-morning cartoons for the publication into a physical concept artbook that displays the growth and skills of the MQP team as professional artists. The following report documents, to the best of the MQP team's ability, the total development process of the concept artbook including the conceptual themes, technical aspects and challenges met during the book's creation.

Acknowledgements

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1 - Introduction

The following section of the report will discuss the project's vision and concept, how they were formed, why the project takes the form of a concept artbook, as well as what the project's design pillars and goals are.

1.1 Project Vision

The goal of this project was to create an 80-page artbook to serve as a pitch for a theoretical animated television series inspired by Saturday-morning cartoons from the early 2000's. The story is about an energetic boy named Jet who goes on a journey to save various worlds from the threat of the mysterious Doctor and learns that being a hero is more than just "beating the bad guys." The project shows the true capabilities of seemingly childish mediums like cartoons and their ability to convey positive messages and feelings through simple but exciting stories of heroic adventures, especially in this current day and age where people are constantly under pressure and could use a form of temporary escapism to destress.

1.2 Project Concept

The project was inspired by one team member's exposure to cartoons since his childhood, alongside with their exposure to concept artbooks that show the design process of various prominent games and animated series, all the way from the most basic rough sketches, redesigns and reiterations of one abstract concept to finalized illustrations that convey the feelings that a production team wants to tell their audience via visual arts. The visual design process from these books are fascinating to the team, and the concept of creating an artbook of their own was inspired, where they can document the process in which a dream world comes alive (Bacher, 2008).

1.2.1 Concept Artbook

Concept art is a visual art form used to communicate a concept in films, video games, animation, comic books, and other forms of media. It involves world-building artwork used to inspire the development of media goods (*Concept Art – Everything You Need To Know*, n.d.). The team decided to create a concept artbook because they are important to the production of an

animated series. Unlike the often solitary endeavors of painting and illustration, the production of an animated series is the result of larger creative processes, where a group of artists explore all visual possibilities, do research, and try to come up with as many interesting ideas as possible while working with complete artistic freedom (Bacher, 2008). The team wanted to explore this creative aspect because it allowed us to showcase every step of our thought process from rough, pencil sketches to digital drawings that convey the feelings and themes of the artbook clearly, and the project demonstrated how a creative series' core concepts can survive despite varied aesthetics from different artists in different times of the creative process (Sorenson & Forster, 2015), like how artbooks such as *Transformers Animated: The Allspark Almanac* included some of the earliest concepts of the show that visually look nothing like the final product, but accurately tells the core value of the series' development.

1.2.2 Background

Before art production could begin, the team established the fictional worlds and background that the artbook would explore. Establishing this background early is crucial to reinforcing the vision of the project and creating an exciting adventure story that discusses the true meanings and values of Saturday-morning cartoons and seemingly childish concepts of becoming a hero.

The team finalized the artbook's fictional background by settling on a collection of fictional worlds where the main characters' adventures take place, including a robot metropolis where citizens are divided into classes by their robotic functions; a fantasy world where the main characters must fight villains lurking in the shadows instead of being in plain sight; a high-octane tournament featuring dangerous races and challenges; a Wild West town in need of a leader against dangerous enemies; and finally a fortress in the dark emptiness of space where the heroes put a stop to the final villain once and for all.

These seemingly wild and unique worlds and backgrounds are all inspired by the team's favorite shows, games and media franchises they grew up with, such as the Transformers series and various Western films and video games. For example, in *Transformers Animated: The Allspark Almanac* the writers of the animated show talked about how backgrounds can shape the story and character in an artbook. The artbook covers how the main character of *Transformers*

Animated, Optimus Prime, went through drastically different backgrounds and worlds that shaped the story and the animated show into something memorable and inspiring. He was initially on the robot planet Cybertron, consigned to menial tasks like repairing facilities in a futuristic planet in outer space. However, that specific background led him and his team into confronting their deadliest adversaries and crash-landing into planet Earth, which is a drastically different background than Cybertron. However, it gave the main characters more moments to shine where they kicked off their story of defending the people of Earth from all kinds of threats throughout the episodes, and protecting their most precious item from their enemies (Sorenson & Forster, 2015). The way *Transformers Animated* uses its fictional worlds to tie the art, narrative and characters together served as a guide to our project's goal, which is to create an artbook that could lead to the development of an animated show like it.

Through these media series' backgrounds, there have been memorable stories of characters overcoming their hardships and tales that remind audiences the value of simple themes like courage, hope and believing in the indomitable human spirit, which are all themes that a Saturday-morning cartoon-inspired artbook like this project wish to convey. Furthermore, as it was covered in *Dream Worlds: Production Design for Animation*, good concept art development should be visually engaging and interesting storywise (Bacher, 2008). The team nailed down these unique visual backgrounds first and foremost to make sure the artbook has a stage to tell an interesting story.

1.2.3 Conveyed Message

Every type of media series conveys a message, regardless of its form, medium or target audience. The team wanted to convey the values and importance of Saturday-morning cartoons. Some of the team members grew up with cartoons that have distinctive, stylized art, and a lot of these shows can convey simple yet positive themes such as courage, bravery and never giving up in the face of danger, which is why these seemingly juvenile forms of media are actually more than what they seem to be. These themes can be invaluable, or even magical, to their audiences.

This artbook conveys cartoons' ability to resonate with audiences of all ages without making itself heavy, extremely thought-provoking or deep, but rather through the usage of clear and easy-to-identify visuals to portray fantastic adventures, as well as clear and understandable

themes such as teamwork, hope and courage, which all allow the audience to see themselves in these stories and become encouraged and inspired in front of a TV, especially after a long, tiring and mundane day. As Gina O'Melia's book Japanese Influence on American Children's Television: Transforming Saturday Morning emphasizes, Saturday morning cartoons from across the world all have the ability to "resonate with a wide audience and evoke a response across the entire spectrum of viewers in a way other series could not" (O'Melia, 2019).

O'Melia uses Mighty Morphin Power Rangers as an example: "A small child could watch it for the large animal robots that came together and transformed into a robot man. A young boy could watch it not just for the large robots but also for the martial arts fights. A teenager could watch it for these reasons but also for the high school drama. A girl could watch it for any of those reasons, the romance plot or even simply because there were two female characters on the program that were treated as equal and as powerful as the male characters" (O'Melia, 2019). Saturday-morning cartoons prove that a media series doesn't have to be heavy, deep or thought provoking to provide a positive influence to its viewers. Sometimes it's important to remember that a simple but earnest story with cartoon visuals and encouraging themes is what it takes to remind a kid in front of a screen one important thing after facing all the hardships and adversities in life: They're not alone, and life can be a wonderful adventure if they let it be. In short, the team wants to convey this artbook project as a learning experience to help create something that holds simple but important values and influences to a wide range of audience through artwork that portray action-packed exciting adventures, stylized character styling, the growth of characters that can be relatable to children in front of the TV, and the magic of Saturday-morning cartoons.

1.3 Design Pillars

The term "pillars" is commonly used in the development of creative works, especially within games and artistic creations. During the early stages of design, a developer will be working on answering questions like "What is the game?" (Pears, 2017), or in this project's case, "What is the artbook?" This is the part where solidifying design pillars comes into play. According to Max Pear's article Design Pillars - The Core of Your Game, the process of finding design pillars is to think about the 3-5 main elements or emotions a game is trying to explore and make the players feel (Pears, 2017).

The team defined three pillars of important design elements and emotional themes that we followed throughout the art creation process: 2000s cartoons-inspired, justice beats evil, and what it means to be a hero.

The first pillar, 2000s cartoons-inspired, focuses on the visual design, which is to solidify the project's art style. The team's goal was to create artwork with striking stylization, whether it was through the usage of exaggerated character proportions, sharp edges, strong shape language or dynamic action shots that are all integral to an action-packed, exciting adventure story. A lot of these design elements can be seen in many cartoons that aired in the 2000s, such as *Teen Titans*, *Ben 10,* and *Transformers Animated* which was mentioned as a great inspiration to the project.

Figure 1.1 - Poster of Transformers Animated by Cartoon Network

The second pillar, justice beats evil, is a common theme found in cartoon stories. This tried-and-true formula is what makes many cartoon series' audiences keep watching the show. On one hand, it might be trite and predictable to know the good guys are going to win in a cartoon, but a good cartoon series such as *Transformers Animated* presents its audiences with set pieces that make them doubt this theme through creating a problematic main cast that each have their own quirks: such as Optimus Prime who was "unable to flourish" in any promising groups, Ratchet who is described as a "grumpy 'ol tinkerer" and Bumblebee who "jumps the gun and gets in over his head" on an episodic basis (Sorenson & Forster, 2015) then immediately pitting them against enemies that are way out of their league like the Decepticons, a ruthless faction of

villain military-grade Transformers who almost conquered the main cast's home world. Yet, despite the seemingly great difference in power between the good and evil, the show sticks with the theme of justice triumphing by showing all the characters' growth throughout episodes and the challenges, sacrifices and hardships they had to endure to reach their seemingly predetermined victory. In this case, the pillar of justice beats evil makes a cartoon series memorable and inspiring to the audiences, showing that nothing is impossible as long as someone works hard towards their goal.

The last pillar, what it means to be a hero, is a more personal emotional pillar that the team applied to the artbook's writing and themes. Many cartoons, books and game series try to tackle stories featuring a hero's journey, which is a story structure where a hero goes on a quest or adventure to achieve a goal, and has to overcome obstacles and fears, before ultimately returning home transformed ("The Hero's Journey: 12 Steps to a Classic Story Structure," 2023). However, stories like this focus more on what the journey is rather than what makes someone a hero, the team wanted to focus on the latter. The artbook illustrates the story of a protagonist with a solemn goal of becoming a hero, but only having a simple understanding of what it means to be one, and through his adventures and interactions with people his viewpoint of being a hero would grow and mature. This pillar highlighted the growth of not only the artbook's protagonist, but also audiences who grew up with these cartoons since they were kids, gradually learning that being a hero is more than just beating the bad guys and looking cool.

1.4 Audience Experience Goals

When it comes to audience experience goals, the team wanted to show the audience the joy of art forms like Saturday-morning cartoons through simple but stylized art, exciting and action-packed stories and scenes of adventure, and that even a seemingly juvenile form of media can bring important positive values to its viewers. By showcasing the creative works as an artbook that archives every step of the process, the team demonstrated our creative pipeline and growth as artists throughout the project's development cycle.

1.5 Target Audience and Public Intent

The target audience of this artbook project includes but not limited to fans of video games and cartoons from the 2000s, other artists who are interested in creating artwork based on the characters, environments and scenes featured in the artbook, as well as animation and game studios in need of concept and storyboard artists. This artbook's public intent is to create a book of reference materials for a potential animated show, comic series or video game.

With these target audiences and intents in mind, the artbook is structured with artwork that focus more on conveying information, whether it's through three-point turnaround sheets of important characters, overview and closeup concepts of various environments or scenes depicting characters' actions, antics and personalities.

2 - Background Research

Before and during the creation of this concept artbook, the team researched what an ideal concept artbook's content and format are, the thematic and visual characteristics of other cartoons and video games that serve as influences and pillars to the project's artwork, and lastly the influences Saturday-morning cartoons have on the audiences' mental health through positive themes and messages that the project should learn from.

2.1 Concept Artbooks

This following section will cover three of the artbooks the team referenced as research materials for reasons such as their formatting, presentation, and art style that influenced the art itself and the page layout design of our final product.

2.1.1 Transformers Animated: The Allspark Almanac

Transformers Animated, as mentioned before in Section 1 of this report, is a great inspiration to this MQP in terms of art style, conveyed messages and theming. The official artbook of the series, named The Allspark Almanac, would prove to be a great help to this project too. Aside from including all the design processes such as he earliest conceptions of the series' characters where some changed more than others compared to the final show (Sorenson &

Forster, 2015),and all the character and environment reference artwork used for the production team from rough sketches to final illustrations, which all served as strong basis for what this MQP needs to look like; the artbook's writing in particular greatly influenced the final book. The authors of *Transformers Animated: The Allspark Almanac*, Jim Sorenson and Bill Forster, decided to make all the writing elements of the artbook look like commentary from characters in the animated show. For example, in *The Allspark Almanac*, when introducing a character such as Optimus Prime, instead of having design choice notes being the notes of someone from the production team, the notes take form of the commentary from Ultra Magnus, one of Optimus Prime's superiors in the show, and his understanding of the latter's personality traits, arsenal, past experiences and his respect towards him. This design choice greatly improves immersion for whoever's reading the artbook. When reading concept art of an animated series, the reader is essentially seeing a fleshed out fictional world and society unfolding in front of their own eyes, and there are no better ways to have it all being narrated by characters who live in that world. As a result, while keeping designer commentary in the final artbook, the MQP team focused on describing every art piece from the point of view of the main characters in order to make the artbook sound like both a concept art collection and a journal from the characters themselves.

CHAPTER 1: AUTOBOTS

OPTIMUS PRIME

Some bots are built great, others have greatness thrust upon them. After proving unable to flourish in the Elite Guard, Optimus Prime was consigned to the unglamorous duty of spacebridge repair. It was in this capacity that he found himself protecting our race's most precious cargo, the AllSpark, from the deadliest adversary imaginable, the malevolent Megatron. This unlikely hero managed to defeat Megatron, but crash-landed on the planet Earth. He made peaceful contact with the organic natives there and proceeded to defend them and the AllSpark from Decepticon aggression.

I have been fortunate enough to witness Optimus Prime's leadership in battle first hand. Though rough around the edges, he is a bot of courage, strategic thinking, determination, judgment and loyalty. Possessing a keenly developed sense of integrity, he stands by his principles even when it is inconvenient to do so.

Optimus is equipped with a variety of tools to help him accomplish his aims. His solitarium Ultra-Axe has a laser blade, a plasma rocket, and an extendable handle, and he wields it expertly. He utilizes his built-in grapplers with pinpoint precision, and is armed with a bolocannon to incapacitate enemies without causing them undue harm. He transforms into a truck designed for combating out-of-control combustion, and can replace his trailer for specialized missions. –*Ultra Magnus*

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2.1.2 The Legend of Korra: The Art of the Animated Series

The Legend of Korra is an animated action fantasy series produced by Nickelodeon, featuring the adventures of its titular protagonist through four visually distinguishable nations. During one of the MQP team's page layout research meetings, one of the team members used the series' official artbook as an example of artwork arrangement order. *The Legend of Korra*'s artbook has all the artwork categorized based on what chapter and arc of the animated show they were developed for, with chapter one being the early development of the show and including artwork of all the main characters and a few environment draft, then from chapter two onward, each chapter of the artbook corresponds to a chapter in the show, then characters and environment art would appear based on their chronological order of appearance in the show. As a matter of fact, the artbook itself is also divided into four books based on the show's four seasons, and the book the MQP team researched on is one of the four volumes that showcases art from the development period of *Korra* through the finale of Book 1 (DiMartino et al., 2013). This artbook gave the MQP team a direction to how artwork should be arranged, and as a result all the characters and environments would appear in the final product based on the progression of the written story for the artbook.

Figure 2.2 - Pages from The Legend of Korra: The Art of the Animated Series, Book 01, Air

2.1.3 Mega Man Battle Network Official Complete Works

Mega Man Battle Network is a video game series created and published by Japanese video game company Capcom, with a strong science fiction visual and narrative theme focusing on subjects including robotics, computers and networking technology as well as people who use it for good or evil. This would prove to be a strong reference for the early stages of the artbook MQP, since the protagonists of the story are designed to solve their problems and challenges through the right use of technology from an advanced fictional organization. Furthermore, the art style and drawn subjects shown in the series' official artbook serve as great references for the artbook's visual designs and atmosphere. In terms of visual art, *Mega Man Battle Network* has a very strong stylization, where characters appear in either futuristic sci-fi outfits or outfits from the real world, and are designed to fit in a cartoon series by having distinctive shape languages, color schemes, poses and expressions to showcase their personalities and powers. These elements would prove useful to guide the MQP team on what the project's art style would look like. For example, for one of the protagonists of the game, MegaMan.EXE, the artists would emphasize his ability to change fighting styles by giving each style a different color scheme, then decide which part would be the main focus of each style, i.e, the arm for the Guts Style, the shield for the Shield Style (Capcom, 2011), as seen in the image below. In the MQP team's artbook project, characters would be given a similar design philosophy where a main character who solves problems with brute force is given a distinct robotic fist for fighting, and a main character who is known for calmness and finesse in battle would be constructed with sharp angles and a cold color scheme.

Figure 2.3 - Page Excerpt from Mega Man Battle Network Official Complete Works

2.2 Creative Influence from Animated Shows and Games

For the project's background research, the team researched different video game and animation series/titles that served as creative influences to the artbook MQP's thematic and visual characteristics, such as having positive uplifting messages, simple but action-packed and dynamic visuals, and adventures taking place in entertaining worlds and scenarios.

2.2.1 Transformers Animated

Figure 2.4 - Assortment of different character designs from Transformers Animated: The Allspark Almanac

Besides being a great influence to the artbook's format, content and structure, *Transformers Animated* served as a great creative influence to the MQP for many reasons, but especially for its simple but dynamic and expressive character art. According to the animated show's art director and lead character designer Derrick J. Wyatt, the direction of this 2000's adaptation of the original 1984 *Transformers* is to make the classic characters more "human" with expressive faces that could show emotion, and allow people to relate to these characters not just as giant war machines, but as actual characters with personalities (Sorenson & Forster, 2015). This design philosophy can be seen in the official artbook too, through the fact that all the

Transformers and human characters have designs that don't overly rely on details, but instead use varying physical proportions, silhouettes and shape languages, and their distinctive expressions to tell the viewer what their characteristics are more efficiently than any amount of textual evidence. Thanks to the influence from *Transformers Animated,* the concept artwork featuring characters in the MQP all strived to emphasize exaggeration of character silhouettes, distinctive visual features and expressions.

Figure 2.5 - Early character expression concepts for the artbook project

2.2.2 Sonic Adventure 2

Figure 2.6 - In-game screenshot of Sonic Adventure 2's opening stage, City Escape

Sonic Adventure 2 is an action adventure game that served as a creative influence to this project in terms of presenting the audience with entertaining worlds and adventure scenarios and a main character with a distinct personality. As a video game, Sonic Adventure 2 offers blazing speed, fresh visuals and a big dose of attitude (Iizuka, 2001). The game itself revolves around the protagonist, Sonic the Hedgehog, alongside his friends and rivals to save the world from planet-ending level of threats, while Sonic travels through levels and stages that could take place in anywhere from snowboarding down the streets of San Francisco, because of the production team being particularly inspired by the scenery of San Francisco where the studio resided (Iizuka, 2001), or military facilities to ancient pyramid ruins and an abandoned space colony, as seen in stages like City Escape, Metal Harbor, Pyramid Cave and Final Rush (Sega, 2001). In short, Sonic Adventure 2's creative team were bold enough to illustrate stages with drastically different themes and aesthetics, yet were still able to tie them all together for the player to blast through all of them at breakneck speed while being in the shoes of a carefree hedgehog with an attitude unlike any others.

Sonic the Hedgehog's distinct personality in the game is another notable creative influence to the artbook project. In Sonic Adventure 2, Sonic can be summed up with very few words and phrases, which are carefree, fearless, confident and following his own heart. In his own words, "What you see is what you get! Just a guy that loves adventure!" (Sega, 2001). One second in the game, he could be escaping from military forces chasing him down for a crime he didn't commit, and in another second he could be challenging his dangerous look-alike in a race against time itself. Most importantly, no matter how dire the situation or how dangerous the challenge, Sonic does everything with a smile and a can-do attitude. This dare-to-be-stupid confidence is the exact type of positive message a Saturday-morning cartoon can convey to its audience, and it is the exact personality the team would apply to one of the artbook's main characters, Jet Sparks, as someone who's carefree, confident and dares to take the next big step in life despite not knowing where it leads.
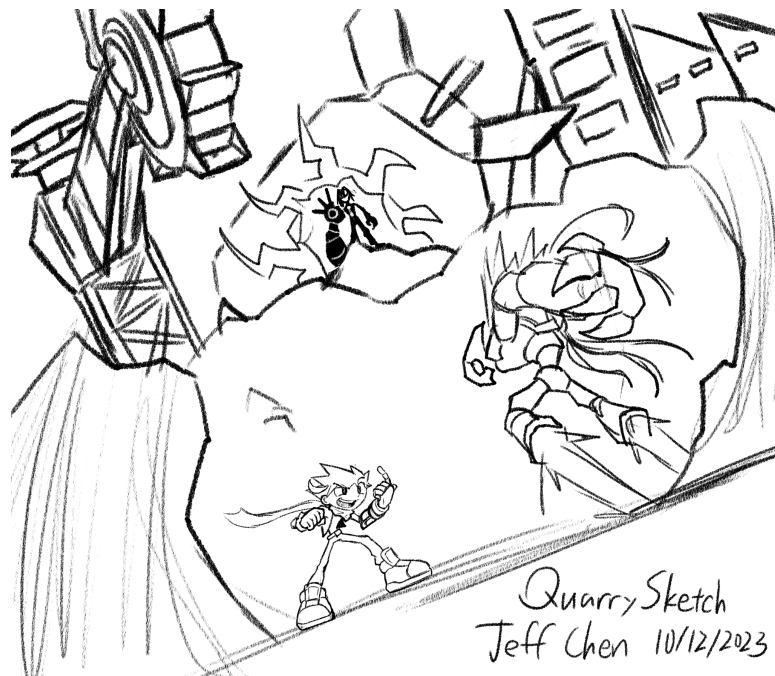
Figure 2.7 - Early environment concept sketch of the MQP portraying Jet Sparks laughing in the face of danger

2.3 Why Saturday-Morning Cartoons?

In the current day and age, media creators and studios tend to create animations for a much older age group, namely adults and those who are about to be. As audiences of animations grew, so did the desire for content that catered to a more mature demographic (Mario, 2023). Due to this shift in paradigm, themes of cartoons and animations turned more unnecessarily complicated, more cynical and tended to overly rely on shock value and gratuitous content, sacrificing substance for sensationalism (Mario, 2023). Meanwhile, cartoons aimed at people of all ages are overlooked by both creators and audiences, being deemed juvenile and lacking substance. The team wanted to disprove that misconception, and show that childrens' cartoons are just as valuable because of the important themes and positive messages they represent and reinforce.

2.3.1 Coming of Age

Growing up from a kid to being a teenager then adult is an often confusing, difficult and sometimes painful process that every individual must go through. Oftentimes, fiction such as novels, comics and cartoons can shed light on how a person should go through this stage in life when they need to understand the concept of growing up and the troubles that come with it. Kids growing up are dependent on others: their parents, caregivers, friends, siblings, teachers, etc (Public Libraries Singapore, 2022). When growing up, these relationships will be often tested, and kids will inevitably experience relationships that get stronger as people grow up, and the heartbreak that comes with people drifting apart with age. Growing up means taking the hard-to-swallow pills, such as responsibilities, realizing the world isn't just black and white, moments where one's youthful hope and energy get tested, etc. However, in mediums like cartoons, many characters grow and interact with each other not unlike the kids in front of the screen, whether it's the bonds and friendships as teammates and fellow heroes, or awkward first signs of romantic feelings as teenagers between the characters in the 2003 Cartoon Network series *Teen Titans*, or the growth of Simon from the anime *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann* as he overcomes grief of losing his beloved big brother and coming back twice as strong after realizing people might be gone but never forgotten. As a result, the audiences get to explore all the what-ifs of messy human relationships in the imaginary world of fiction, and those of us who have had strained relationships or traumatic events while growing up might even take comfort in the affirmation that relationships are hard, and that we're not alone in navigating them (Public Libraries Singapore, 2022). In short, this artbook MQP wants to capture cartoons' abilities of telling coming-of-age stories with visuals, narratives and characters that are simplistic and memorable without being overly complicated.

2.3.2 Escapism

Escapism is one of the biggest values of Saturday-morning cartoons. To many people, they can be an escape from stress from the unpredictability of real life, as cartoons often provide a "pleasant and safe environment where we don't need to worry about anything going wrong or anyone judging us for our decisions or actions" (Carpenter, 2023) according to Destiny Carpenter's blog article *Escaping Through Cartoons Can Help With Depression and Anxiety*. This statement is very much true, when taking into account how cartoons can even foster

empathy among viewers by teaching them about different cultures and lifestyles through their storylines and characters (Carpenter, 2023). For example, *Avatar: The Last Airbender* showcases different fictional nations inspired by real-life countries in East Asia, while exploring how every nation and its citizen's special abilities can shape their culture and the very world they live in, demonstrating the full extent of the creators' imagination to the viewers. All these aforementioned things offer the viewers an idea of endless possibilities within the world, whether fictional or real. The MQP team valued the sense of escapism Saturday-morning cartoons can offer, and sought to evoke it in the worlds of the story.

2.3.3 Reinforcing Positivity

The most important facet of Saturday-morning cartoons is their ability to reinforce positivity. In this day and age, people are often stressed out from all the nuanced unpredictability in life, whether it's work, school or human interactions. It is for this reason, any form of media that can reinforce the simple, pure idea of positivity is extremely valuable, especially the medium of cartoons and animations. For some of the MQP team members, they would go back to watching cartoons whenever they've hit a roadblock in life, and need a boost in morale. It is always good to be reminded that there is still good and hope in this world after all the disappointments big and small in life, whether it's through hearing Optimus Prime in the original *Transformers* telling both his friend to "hang on to your dreams, the future is built on dreams" (Marks, 1985) or through hearing Kamina's nonsensical but encouraging "don't believe in yourself, believe in the me that believes in you" (Imaishi, 2007) in *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*; these seemingly corny yet undeniably encouraging words not only offered a brief moment of escapism to the viewer, but also served as a reminder for the viewer to carry on, remember the positive things life can bring, and get back out there to the real world with newfound confidence. This artbook MQP strives to recapture a Saturday-morning cartoon's capabilities of reinforcing positivity through simple but memorable messages, characters that remain hopeful and live by their words of encouragement, and themes of optimism like community order, friendship, family, teamwork, that good always wins over evil, and that the sun will always come out tomorrow (Sherman, 2017).
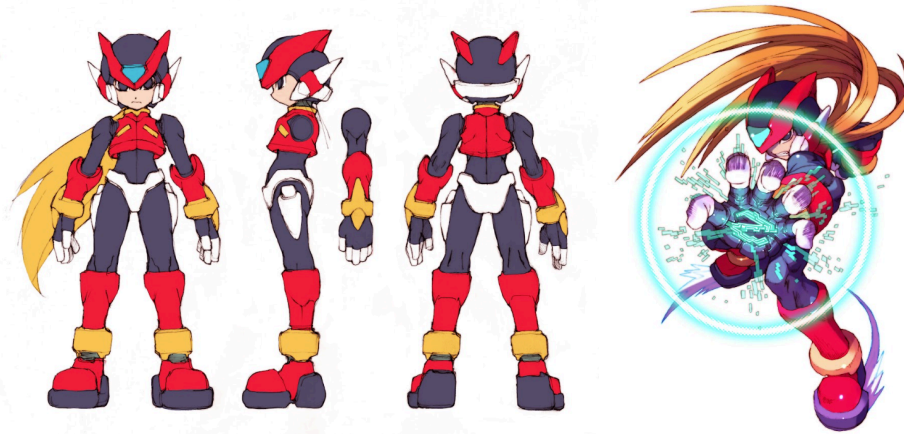
3 - Art

This section of the report will cover the research and creative process for all the types of artwork presented in the MQP's final product, alongside with how the art reinforces the project's context and themes, and our efforts in trying to match each other's art styles and work pipelines.

3.1 Art Style Research

Research is a crucial first step before working on any visual development project. As it was summarized in *Dream Worlds: Production Design for Animation*, this initial process includes the search for a style to fit the story, in all areas: background, characters, color, composition and editing. It also includes the research and concept-design based on possible stylistic directions (Bacher, 2008). When it came to initial research on the project's general art style, character, worlds and environments, and scene compositions are the three main areas in need of research. During Spring 2023, the MQP team members used concept art pieces of video games from the 2000's as character style references when it comes to proportions, levels of detail, exaggeration and stylization, and the amount of emphasis on dynamic character action; while the MQP team members used both fictional media franchises' environment concept art and photos from real life environments for all the worlds and environments that would be drawn in the artbook.

3.1.1 Character Style Research

For character style research, the images the team found as inspirations all fall under very specific criteria to fulfill the project's goal: Characters need to prioritize exaggeration and stylization over excessive visual details to make them easy to identify but also memorable; their faces, limbs, hands and feet are more exaggerated to not only fit the style of 2000's Saturday-morning cartoons, but also make them appear more dynamic when performing dynamic, near acrobatic actions during fight scenes or scenes portraying the main cast in another high-octane adventure. The two main video game series that inspired the artbook's character designs are Capcom's Mega Man series and Sega's Sonic the Hedgehog series.

Figure 3.1 - Character concepts and illustrations for Capcom's Mega Man Zero and Mega Man ZX series
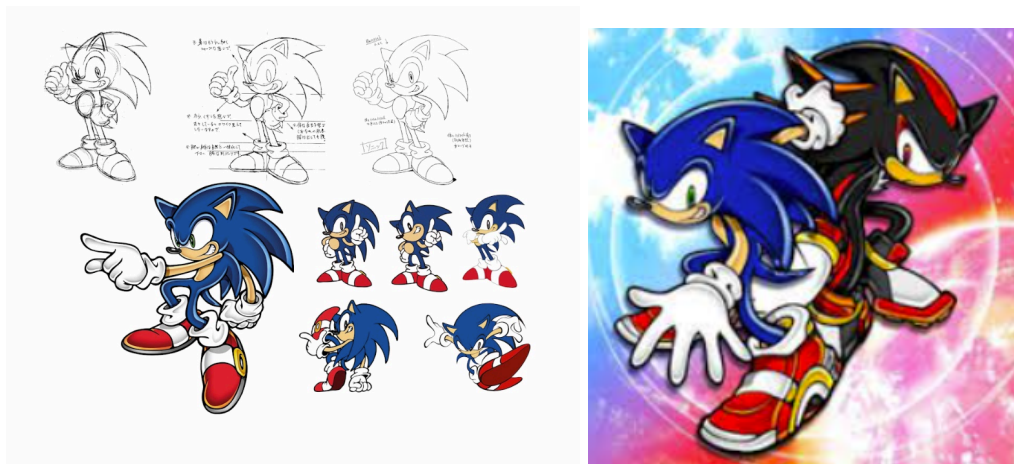
Figure 3.2 - Character concepts and illustrations for Sega's Sonic Adventure and Sonic Adventure 2

As seen above, these character designs all fit the criteria for the artbook's character stylization with their stylized proportions, limited reliance on excessive details, and great focus on character facial elements. Thanks to research from the art of video game franchises mentioned above, the MQP team had a solid understanding of what a character needs to look like.

Figure 3.3 - Final character designs for the protagonists and antagonists of the artbook MQP

3.1.2 Worlds and Environments Research

Out of all the art style research work done, worlds and environment were the most difficult and in-depth things to research about. In this artbook project, there are four visually and

thematically different worlds and environments, including: A futuristic robot city where most of the bombastic actions take place; a fantasy world inspired by 1920's United States architecture where more grim and subtle threats await; a collection of high-stake space arenas such as a trap-filled race track, a floating jungle arena and an underground fight cage that are all about the visual tension; and lastly a Wild West town amidst the deserts and canyons where the team wanted to emphasize one of the main characters as a lone ranger. This difference in themes means every world needs its own visual approach via set pieces, color schemes and compositions to make them stand out as entertaining stages where the characters' adventures and actions take place. For example, the visual approach is different in a thriller theme and in a comedy theme. "Dramatic lights and shadows, together with more night-time scenes will dominate in a thriller theme, while a comedy or adventure theme is much lighter and colorful" (Bacher, 2008).

For this very reason, the research images the MQP team found for different worlds used both fictional media concept art and real-life photos that match the very specific themes, lighting, shadows, perspectives, color schemes and set pieces of the four worlds in the artbook. For an example of fictional concept art used as research, the Robot City environment used references from video game series like *Sonic the Hedgehog* and *Final Fantasy* to figure out the color schemes and assets. Midgar from *Final Fantasy 7* is an circular, industrialized city with bright lights, towering buildings in the center and different social classes divided into sectors, and these very elements would influence the Robot City environment's overview in the artbook project, especially the circular structure and division of classes into sectors. Stardust Speedway from *Sonic CD* and its rendition for *Sonic Generations* portrayed bright lights, futuristic buildings and a dangerous, intense color scheme of bright neon, purple and pink which also inspired the Robot City's lighting whenever an action scene is taking place.
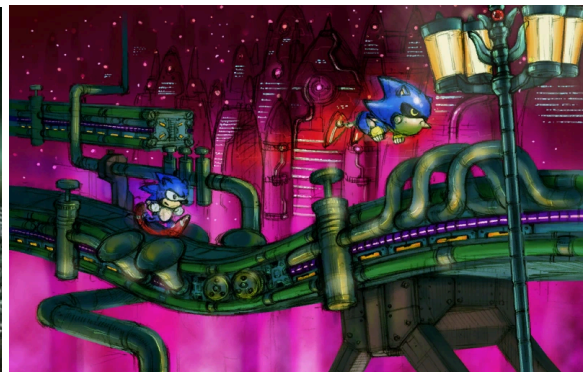
Figure 3.4 - Left: the environment overview of Midgar from Final Fantasy 7; Right: Concept art of Stardust Speedway for Sonic Generations
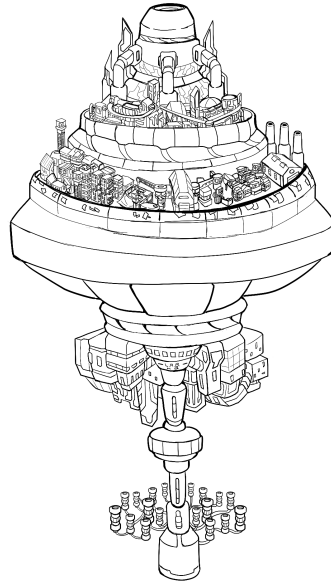
Figure 3.5 - Top: Environment overview of the Robot City in the artbook; Bottom: environment closeup composition & color concept of the Robot City

Photographs and other images of places in real-life were critical research material. The Fantasy City benefitted the most from this research because it drew heavy inspiration from the Art Deco and Gothic architectural styles.
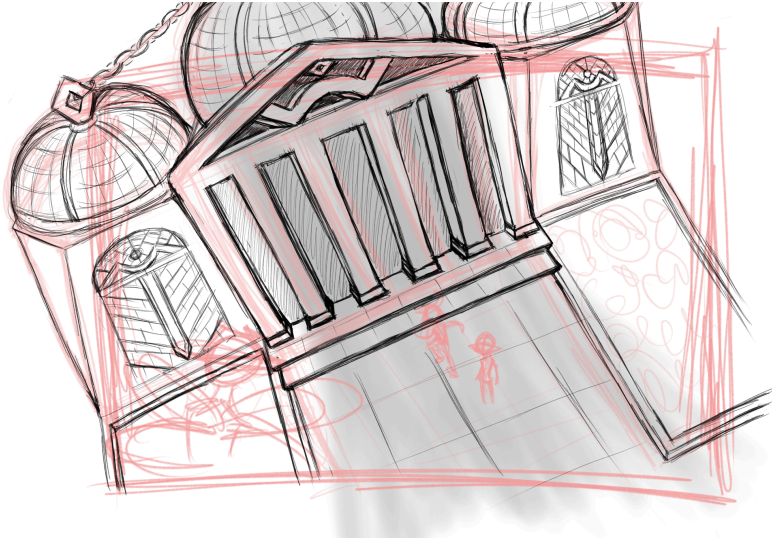
Figure 3.6 - Fantasy City Closeup Sketch
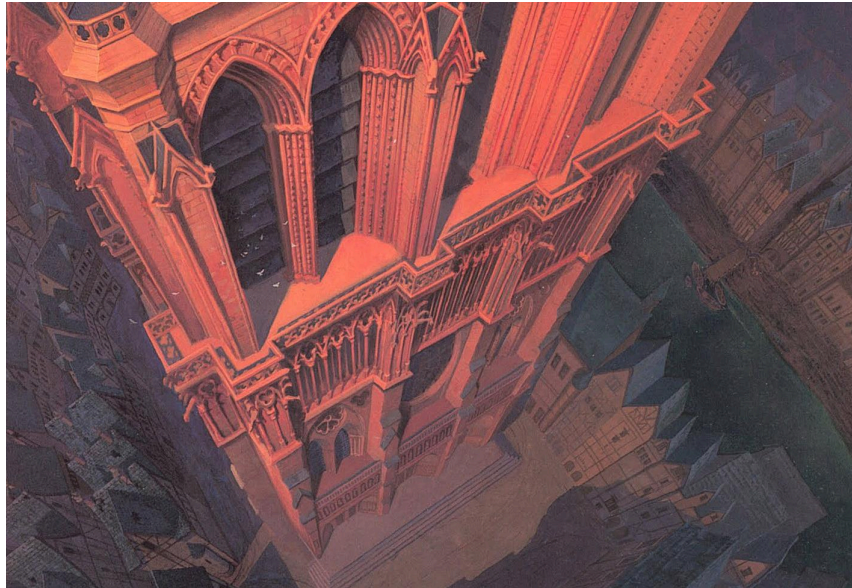
Figure 3.7 - Illustration of Notre Dame used for reference

Figure 3.8 - Photo of the Milan Cathedral used for reference
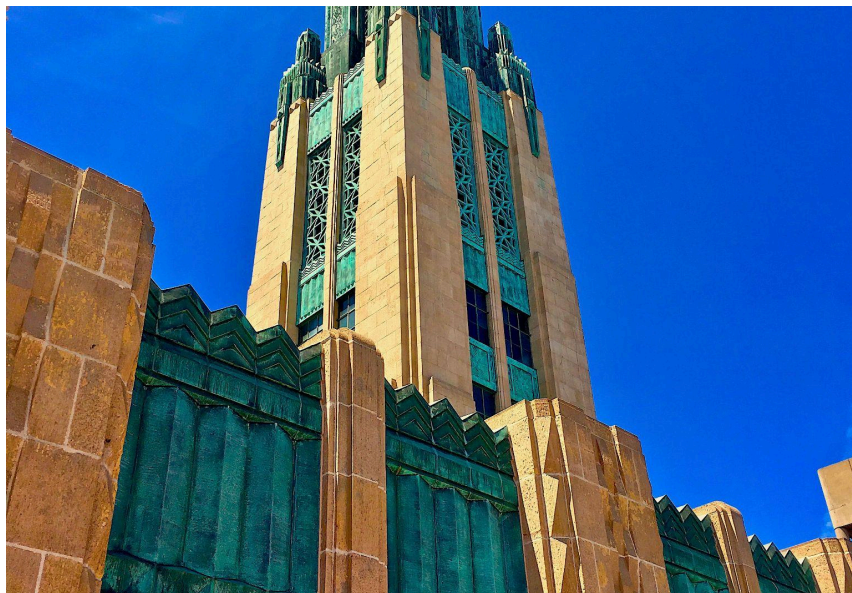
Figure 3.9 - Photo of the Bullocks Wilshire Building used for reference

Figure 3.10 - Photo of the Chrysler Building used for reference

3.1.3 Scene Composition Research

Composition, according to *Dream Worlds: Production Design for Animation,* is the harmonious combination of shapes and movement within a field that creates an interesting imaginative world for the audience (Bacher, 2008). With that said, for all the environment closeup scenes in the artbook, the research was done to make sure every character, pose and set piece don't interfere with each other, combine into exciting scenarios that represent the media genre this artbook pays homage to. For example, the main research point of the Death Racetrack was to find concept art compositions that can portray different stylized outlandish vehicles catching up to each other in a frantic chase while taking place in a dilapidated arena and recreating action scenes from the *Mad Max* movie series. Thanks to the research images the MQP team found, the final scene composition for the Death Race Track was clear in its context, characters and props involved.

Figure 3.11 - Top two: Concept art from video game series Rage; Bottom: Concept art for the movie Death Race
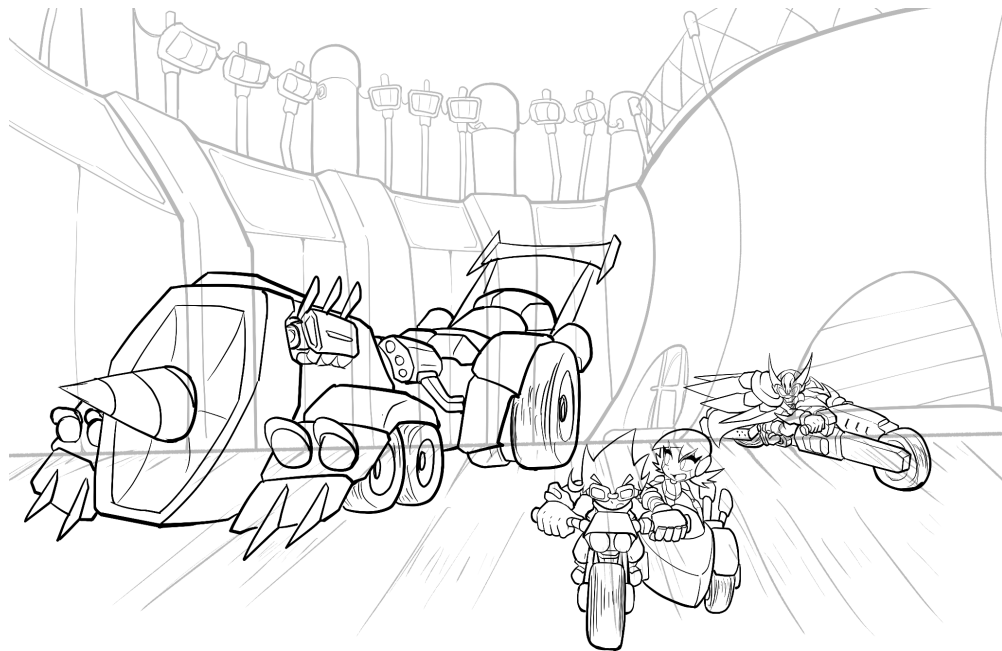
Figure 3.12 - Concept art for the Death Race Track in the final artbook

3.2 Technical Process

This subsection will cover the art creation pipeline, the software and tools used and the way they affected the final artbook.

3.2.1 Traditional to Digital

For the creation of most pieces in the artbook, the MQP team started by drafting a rough pencil sketch on a physical sketchbook to nail the base structure and composition of characters and environments.
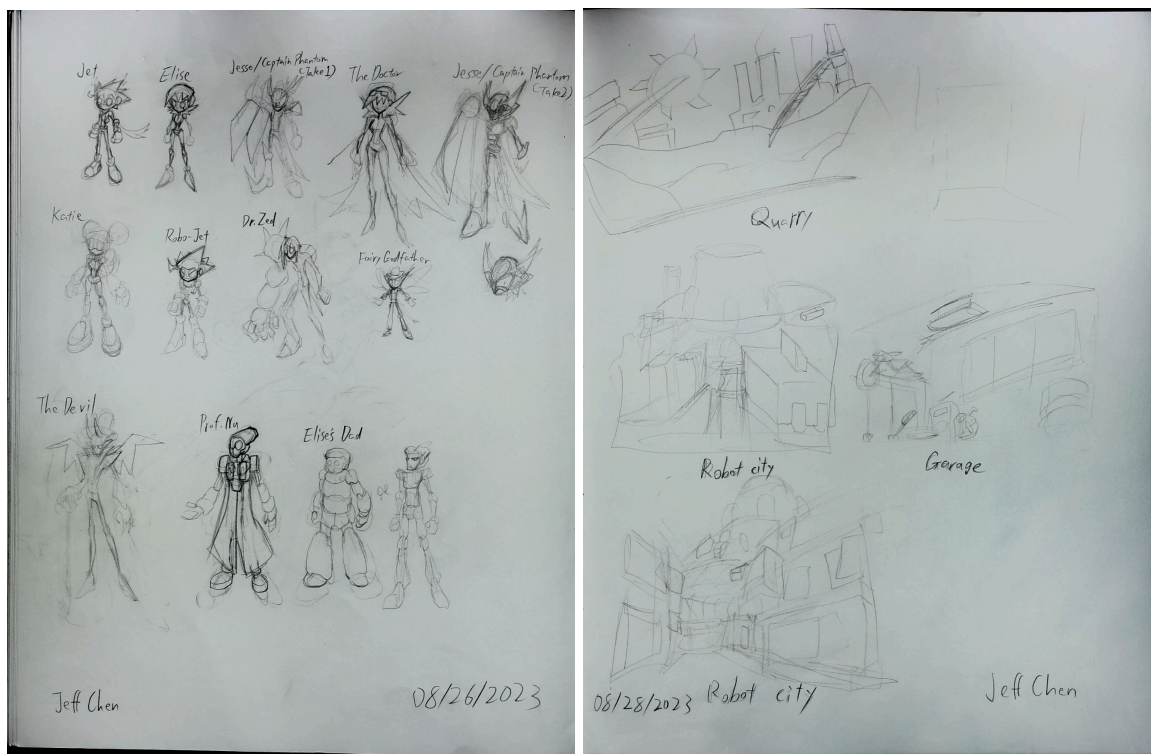
Figure 3.12 - Early character and environment concept sketches

Once the direction of each art piece is decided through the pencil sketches, the art would then be made in digital drawing and imaging softwares such as *Clip Studio Paint* and *Adobe Photoshop* for second passes, cleanup lineart, and finalized art piece with colors included.
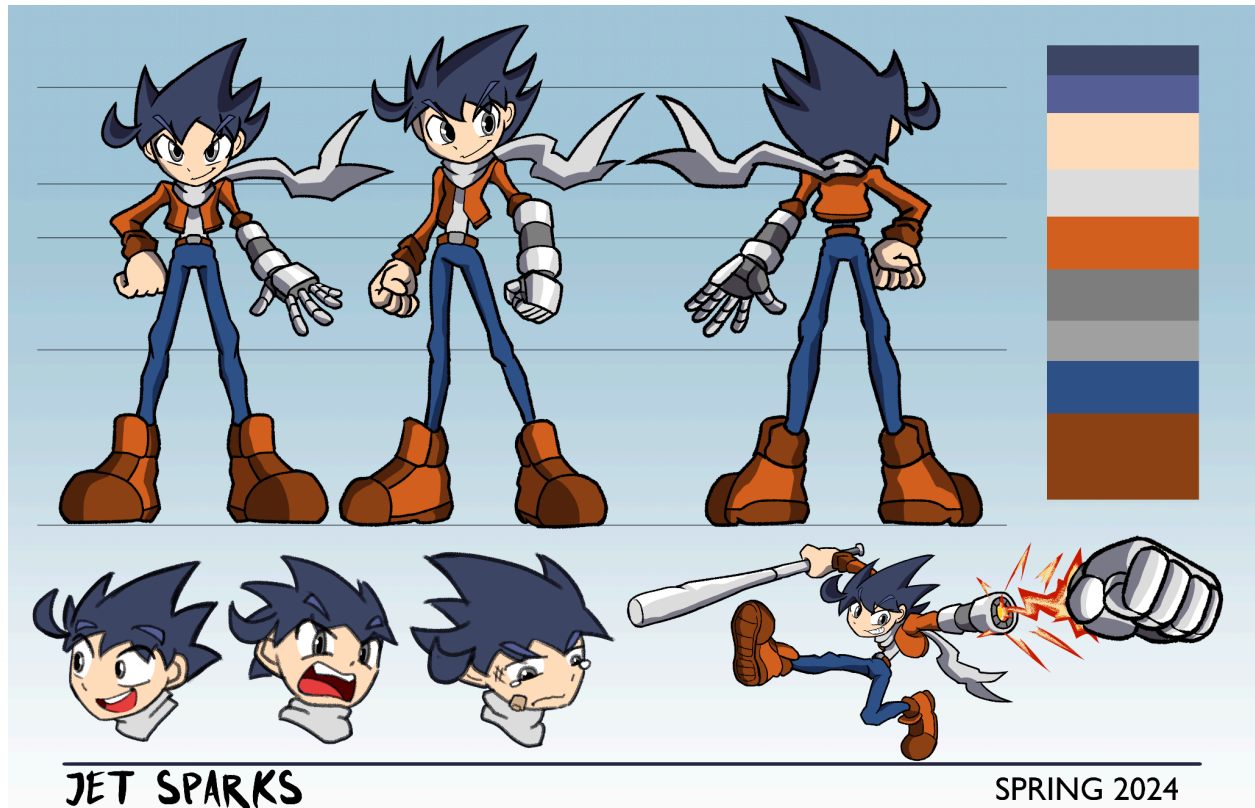
Figure 3.13 - Character Sheet for Jet Sparks

3.2.2 Process effect on look

As mentioned in section 3.1, the artbook's visual style evoked those from 2000's cartoons, where most concepts were drawn with technical drafting pencils and scenes within the animation were completed on animation cels: celluloid sheets that artists would draw and color hand-drawn animation frames on before rendering them into the final product (Adobe, n.d.). In order to recreate the styles, specific textured brushes were imported into the digital art softwares to give characters and environments a hand-drawn scratchiness. For example, the Pencil R brush provided by *Clip Studio Paint* can replicate the process of analog drawing and was designed to resemble the brush used by an artist with the alias Redjuice (Clip Studio Paint Official, 2018).

3.3 Context

For the final subsection of the art section, it is important to convey how narrative themes and technical objectives are reinforced and met through the art style that was decided for the project.

The narrative theme of this artbook project is direct and simple: To create a concept art collection for a potential cartoon series, and to make a cartoon series that shows the joy of seeing characters grow up through overcoming challenges and exciting adventures, the magic of something visually simplistic but has a dynamic energy that could not be captured by the average live-action shows or movies, and the cheesy but eternal themes like "justice beating evil" or "the sun will come out tomorrow" (Sherman, 2017). Cartoons can be more than "only for kids" and can inspire people, and the art style serves to reinforce that belief.

These narrative themes were reinforced through the art style thanks to most of the art pieces being portrayals of the main characters facing challenges head-on, alongside with all the dynamic action happening in them and the character stylization choices mentioned in section 3.1.1.

The team wanted to improve our skills in drawing environments and props, which directly lead to attempts at drawing environment overviews and closeup scenes, the amount of research done revolving them mentioned in sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, and having them taking up a majority of the artbook. The team used this project to prove our ability to create artwork required for the visual development of an animated series, ranging from character to environment reference sheets and sketches. For most animated productions, sometimes it takes five or more years from the first ideas to the finished product (Bacher, 2008), and the team and Lead Artist handled a majority of concept art creation needed for the very basis of an animated series within a school year, as shown in the finalized artbook, which has over sixty pages of concept art.

4 - Writing
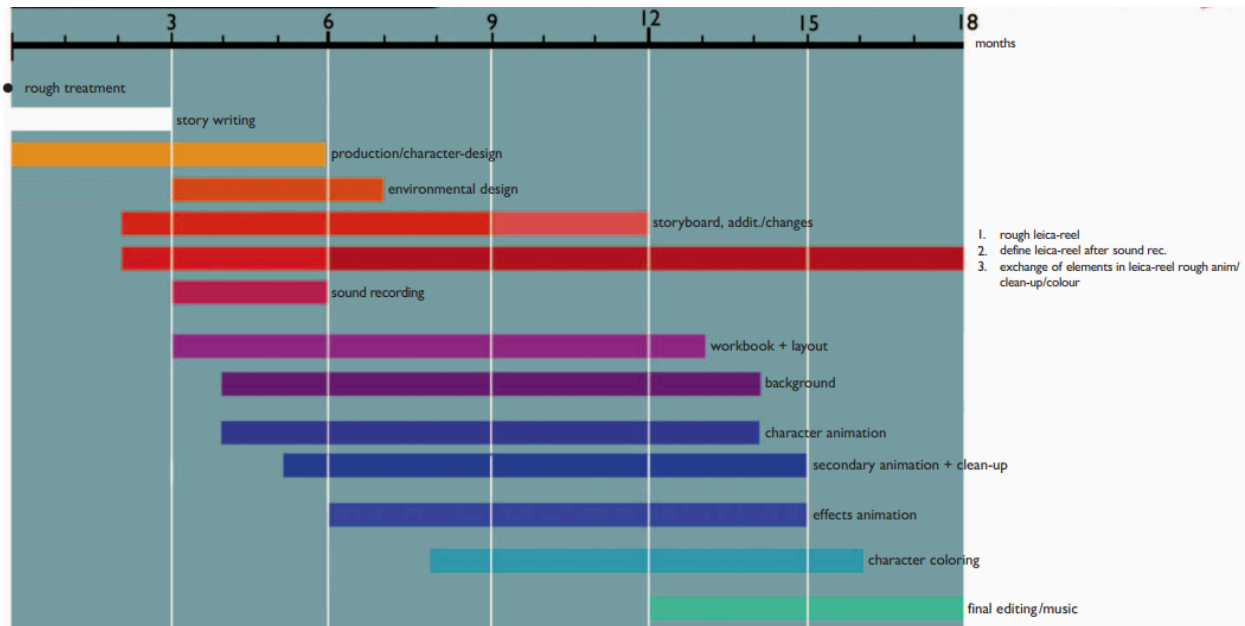
Figure 4.1 - Production timeline graph from Dream Worlds: Production Design for Animation

In order to create any complex media project, the script comes first (Bacher, 2008). A production team needs to put story events in each world/setting so that the context, theme and composition of every piece can be decided. Having story events and plot points helps with deciding what kind of development the main characters go through, and what events or challenges they will encounter. As a result, the MQP team enlisted the help of Alex Mintz, an IMGD Writing major who would create a story flow and outline document during the project's pre-production phase, which helped us solidify the story and the sequence of different art pieces throughout the artbook when the project entered production. Alex's involvement in the project cannot be understated, as they helped organize the MQP team's originally sporadic, unorganized character and world ideas, then pieced them together into a story that could actually fit as a potential cartoon series.

This section covers the MQP team's process of writing a story script for the artbook, where Alex helped us turning rough storyline and plot points into a cohesive story, and some of the main characters and villains were given consideration on their character development throughout the story in order to express certain characteristics and narrative themes.

4.1 Initial Meetings

The initial writing meetings between the MQP team and Alex started in Spring 2023. The main goals of the meetings were to solidify the tone of the story based on established art style goals of creating a positive Saturday-morning cartoon, so it was quickly decided that the writing of the story itself would be initially lighthearted and focusing on the main characters working together and protecting their world from various threats in a heroic fashion, then once the main characters encounter more dangerous villains and harder challenges in other worlds, their partnership, resolve and skills would be tested. Lastly, in order to reinstate the themes of hope and justice beating evil, the main cast would stand back up from their challenges, grow up from their immature selves and put a satisfying end to their adventure by saving the world.

With the general tone of the story settled, Alex soon got to writing story events for all the worlds in the artbook mentioned in section 3.1.2 of the report. Before getting to the actual writing for this artbook for a theoretical cartoon, the team was fully aware that cartoon and animation writers are more descriptive than writers on live action projects. In live action, it's up to the director to interpret what the action will look like and how the characters will act, whereas, in an animation, the writers put in all those details (*Writer (Also Known as Scriptwriter) in the Animation Industry*, n.d.). Therefore for scriptwriting in this artbook project, Alex was able to write out not only plot points, but also descriptive character actions that could be interpreted by the MQP team once they get to art creation, which helped out in the long run.

Ep. 1 Robot Gang
- Jet passes through the portal and is directed by Nu to lay low as they'll send someone to get him
- Jet finds an alleyway to hang out in, is messing around with his arm. This attracts the unwanted attention of the robot gang.
- The robot gang's interest is piqued by Jet as they think he is an upper class citizen and they figured they could use him to get some money.
- They ask him to come with them, but he refuses, they attack.
- As the fight goes on world building and character backstory is revealed
  - Gang is extorting citizens
  - They think Jet is a higher model
- A child wanders in the alleyway, the gang use it to threaten jet into cooperating.
- Jet pretends to give in, then rebels. He tries to escape with the child but they get cornered again.
- Jet tries to do something stupid as another distraction
- The child uses it as a chance to run away
- A gang member notices and is about to attack the child but
- Elise drops in (says something cool but also makes fun of Jet)

Figure 4.2 - Excerpt from one of Alex's story writing documents made in Spring 2023

4.2 Character Development

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, the main characters and villains were given consideration on their character development throughout the story in order to express certain characteristics and narrative themes, which the MQP team hoped to tell through the artbook. In the following subsections, the report will cover the two main characters and the main villain of the artbook's story, their profile, and their character development throughout the story, which are all elements that will help in defining their behavior and reactions in different situations (Daisie Team, 2023).

4.2.1 Jet
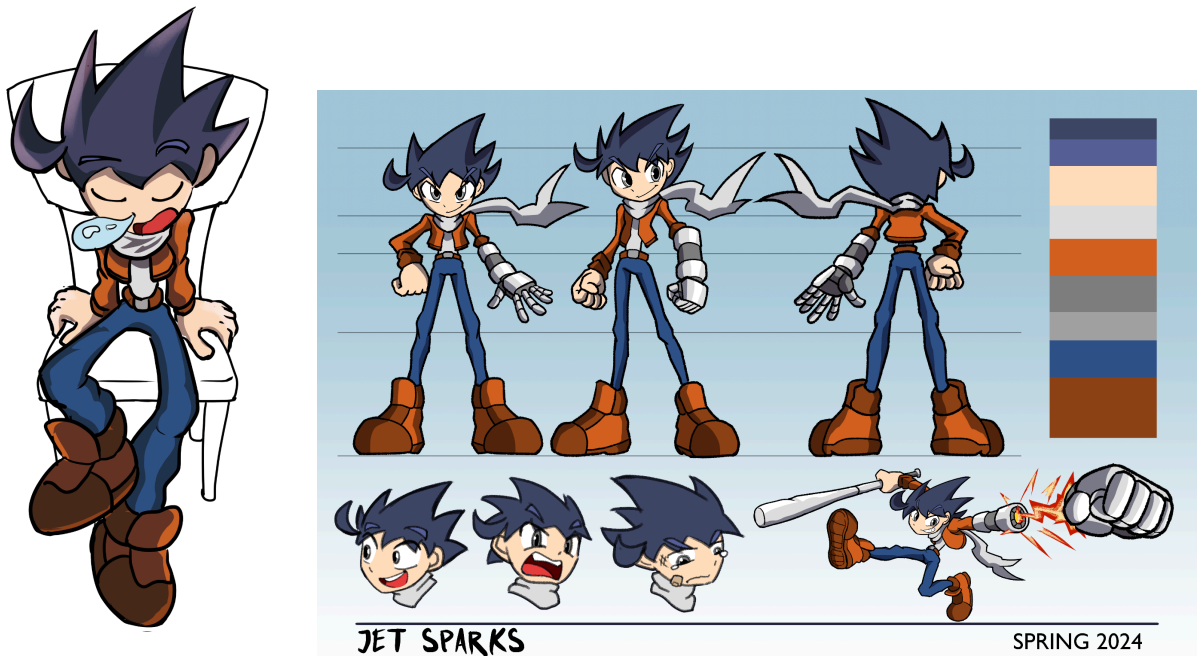
Figure 4.3 - Jet sleeping in a chair and *Jet's finalized character sheet*

Every story needs a protagonist, and when it comes to an adventure-themed cartoon story, the team decided to make a protagonist that would have these specific characteristics: Energetic, positive, hotheaded and naive, but he should also have the quality of never giving up in the face of hardships and be able to learn from every footstep in his journey. He's a "hot-blooded" character who's burningly passionate about everything that he does, and gives his all in absolutely everything, regardless of the task (TV Tropes, n.d.). With these characteristics in mind

mixed with visual elements of our favorite games and cartoons' protagonists, namely Kabuto Koji from *Mazinger Z* and Sonic from the *Sonic the Hedgehog* series, Jet Sparks was created.

In section 2.3.1 of the paper, the team emphasized coming-of-age as an important factor to Saturday-morning cartoons, and it being one of the main narrative themes of the artbook. Jet's story is where that idea of coming-of-age shows. In this concept artbook's storyline, he is the one who initiates all the adventures with his eagerness and his dreams of being a hero. He dreams to embark on adventures, going to various places, and make a name for himself as a hero who saves the world. However, Jet would end up realizing there is more to the hero's journey than being cool and defeating enemies after plot events where his naive, hotheaded personality gets the better of him and costs him the things he needed to protect or fails the things that he originally set out to do. To resolve this, Jet would have to sit back and reflect on his ordeal, then emerge transformed after surviving it by realizing the growth he needs ("The Hero's Journey: 12 Steps to a Classic Story Structure," 2023). In short, he's a reflection of kids watching these Saturday-morning cartoons, eager to unravel all the wonders and excitements, but could use a bit of slowing down to learn about the world they're witnessing.
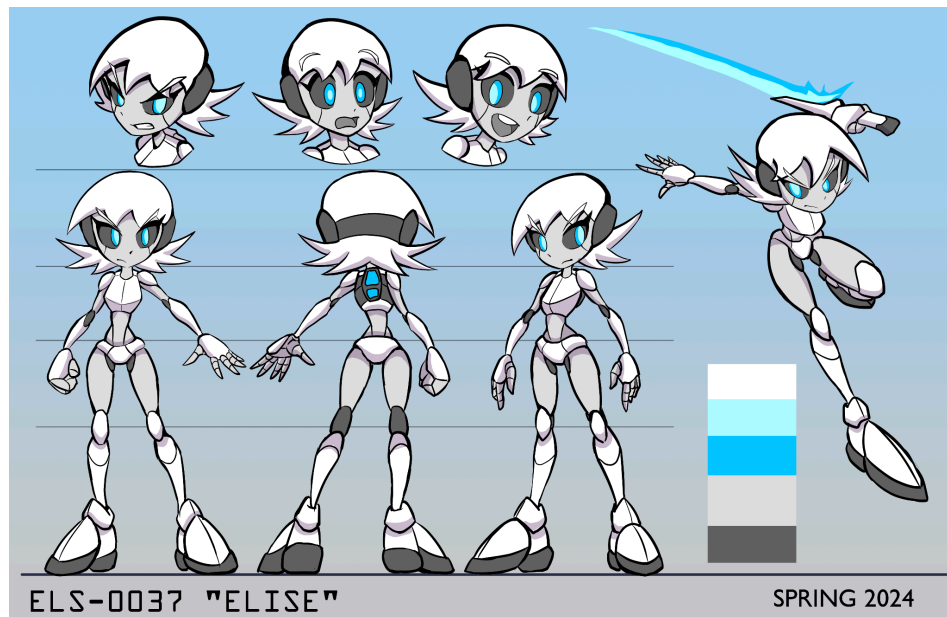
4.2.2 Elise

Figure 4.4 - Finalized character reference sheet for Elise

When there are two main characters in any story, in many cases they should compensate or contrast each other's personality and traits, which allows them to learn and grow from each other, as well as creating entertaining team dynamics. For example, there are usually two main Riders in the *Kamen Rider* series. In the 1971 *Kamen Rider* TV show, Kamen Rider 1 is someone aware of the burdens and sacrifices of being a hero, and constantly feels isolated as a person due to his lone warrior personality; while Kamen Rider 2 is someone who oozes with confidence and charisma, clearly cut from the same cloth as Kamen Rider 1 when it comes to peace and justice, while letting go of all his emotional baggage (Alex, 2023). The two Kamen Riders would end up compensating each other's personalities, and their partnership would grow stronger thanks to it.

Someone hyperactive and energetic like Jet Sparks could benefit from a teammate who's calm, collected, and can give him guidance and pointers as a mentor, or even as a sibling-like figure. Elise was created to be that teammate. She's a high-tech, high-powered sentient robot with all the aforementioned personality traits, an arsenal of deadly weapons and gadgets, alongside with the identity of someone who's seasoned and experienced in protecting the robot city she lives in as one of its "heroes".

Elise serves as a foil to Jet. Instead of being naive and hotheaded, she's experienced, calm and collected while also having a strong sense of responsibility as a hero. The two of them bicker and argue often due to their contrasting personalities, but because of their shared goal and sense of justice, they form a vitriolic friendship and partnership that would help them go through their entire adventure story (TV Tropes, n.d.). Elise barely shows any emotions so that others around her don't have to worry about her, but deeply cares about all her friends and those around her; since being a hero means Elise knows the possibility and dangers of her friends being harmed by the things she's trying to protect them from. Having the aforementioned personality traits makes Elise an important member of the protagonist's team, as she is the voice of reason and the person to guide her less experienced "sidekick" as a mentor when needed to. Elise represents kids who are eagering to grow up, and in a rush to do so. Her strong sense of responsibility over leisure represents how some kids want to give up summer break for a summer job, wanting to have their own car by the age of 16 and their own life figured out by the age of 18 (Pentolino, 2023). As for her character development in the story, it would be her gradual acknowledgement of the

importance of teamwork, the fact that nobody needs to take the weight of the world all by themselves, and it's OK to need help from others and take things slowly.

4.2.3 Captain Phantom

Figure 4.5 - Final character reference sheet for Captain Phantom

In many Saturday-morning cartoons and adventure stories, there is always a "rival" or "frenemy" character for the protagonists who is the second person the show revolves around. This character can either be with or against the protagonist—thus sometimes pulling double duty as a major antagonist or rival to the protagonist (TV Tropes, n.d.). They show up whenever they feel appropriate, giving the protagonists a challenge or a hurdle that they must surpass if they want to advance or improve, making the heroes go through a hard time and tug at the audience's heartstrings, then leaving without any elaboration once they feel the heroes have grown after their issued challenges. They often present themselves as someone shrouded in mystery, making the protagonists, and the audience to an extent ask: "Who is this guy? What do they want? Why are they constantly in our way? What's with their stupid mask? And most importantly, why can't we beat them?" Notable examples of such kinds of deuteragonists include Meta Knight from the *Kirby* video game series, Red X from the 2005 *Teen Titans* animated series, or Kid the Thief from the *Detective Conan* series. These rival characters choose to use the protagonists' skill levels to motivate themselves to do better, go farther, or think smarter, rather than becoming partners (The Spinning Pen, 2017).

With all the aforementioned purposes of a rival deuteragonist, Captain Phantom is designed to fulfill those purposes. In the artbook's story, Captain Phantom leads a roving band of space pirates, and seems to be hired by, or working with The Doctor, the main villain of the story, as he constantly gets in the way of Jet and Elise to challenge them. Little is known about the Captain himself, other than his trademark metal mask, his armored cape that holds numerous lethal weapons, a relentless, persistent and reserved personality, and a fierce strength in combat to match. In his numerous run-ins with Jet, Elise and their team, Captain Phantom could've sealed the deal and finished them off, but he would retreat every time he deems the protagonists have "burned this week's lesson in their memory".

4.2.4 The Doctor
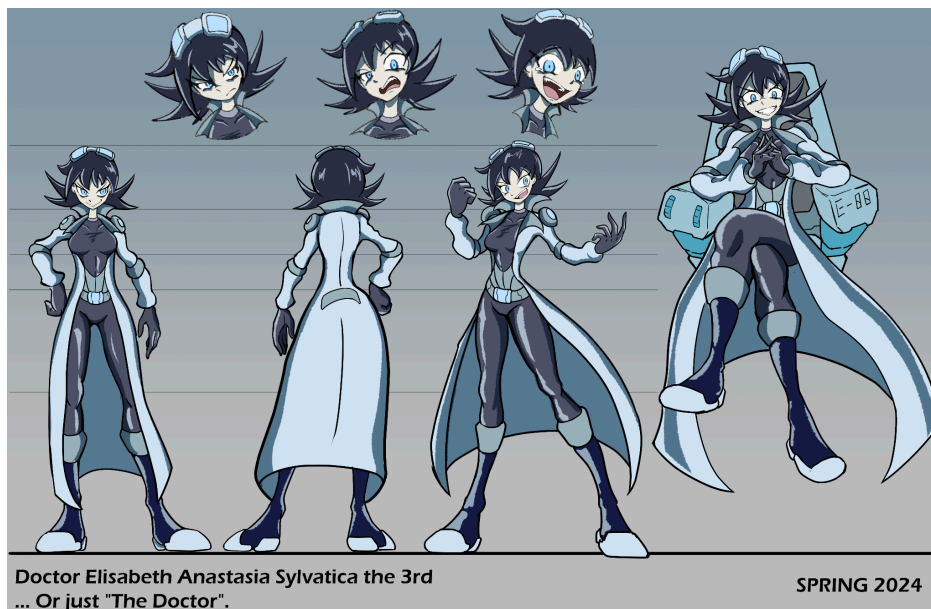
Figure 4.6 - Final character reference sheet for The Doctor

The design goal of The Doctor is extremely straightforward and clear. She is the imposing, menacing final villain the story's heroes must defeat at the end, and she should be a direct reflection of the heroes' greatest weaknesses and an antithesis of what they stand for. This design goal would then be reflected through The Doctor's identity and views on the protagonists. She is designed to be the actual creator of one of the protagonists, Elise, and sees her as nothing more than one of the many machines she's invented, and is destined to be under her control without autonomy. This viewpoint of hers would serve to directly challenge Elise's idea of

"doing the right thing rather than following any form of predestination". The Doctor sees the other protagonist, Jet, as nothing but a nuisance, or "negligible factor" due to him being only a kid that just showed up out of nowhere, which would challenge Jet's goal of proving himself as a hero.

The Doctor is an antithesis to everything Jet and his friends stand for, as well as everything cartoons as a medium stand for. She's the opposite of many themes that are held dear in Saturday Morning Cartoons. Instead of believing in the abstract but important concepts, like the values of cartoons mentioned in section 2.3 and its subsections, The Doctor only sees cold, hard logic and the inherent flaws of all the worlds in the story, and only wishes to wipe the slate clean and rebuild it in her own image. The Doctor operates within the Death Fortress, and is accompanied by an army of combat robots, doomsday weapons and various other inventions created by her own hands to fuel her goal of ruling the universe. She only believes in her own scientific creations, and is a massive control freak thanks to her ego and genius. The Doctor is the final ordeal that the protagonist must defeat, or in Hero's Journey terms, a roadblock for the heroes' way back to the ordinary world and a danger that arises on the road back from the Inmost Cave ("The Hero's Journey: 12 Steps to a Classic Story Structure," 2023).

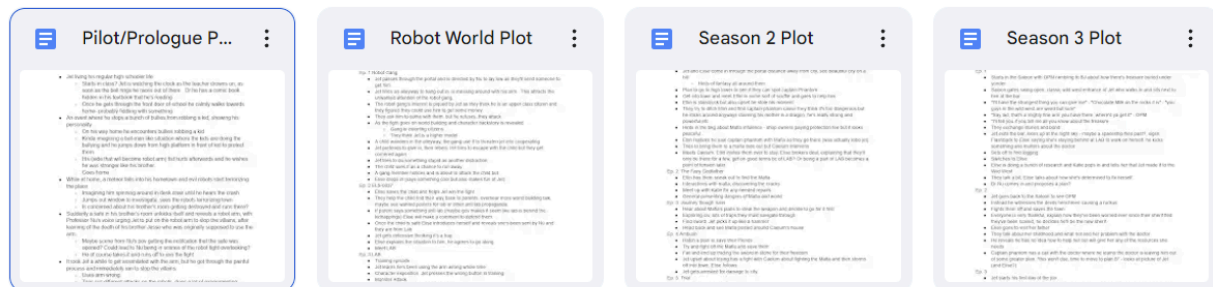## 4.3 Serialization

Figure 4.7 - Plot points and story events in the artbook organized into seasons and episodes by Alex

Alex took the lead in piecing all the character profiles, plot points and events together and organize them in an episodic and seasonal order, where every world is its own subsequent season, and every major plot point an episode. With the serialization, the MQP team better

understood what artwork need to be done and how they will be organized based on the research done on *The Legend of Korra* artbook in subsection 2.1.2.

4.4 Narrative Finalization

After solidifying the artbook's story atmosphere, narrative themes, character development and context, and the seasonal serialization structure, a final outline of the story was established:

The artbook's story would focus on the protagonists Jet and Elise and their adventure across four different worlds to save the universe from The Doctor's plans of destroying and rebuilding it herself, as the former learns the burdens and meanings of being a hero and grows from overconfident to humble and responsible, and the latter learns to open herself up to her allies more. The first world, being the Robot City, is where the protagonists begin their first steps of the whole "hero" business, taking down all the misused robots and machinery created by The Doctor's lackeys, and the protagonists would begin to think they're getting the hang of things. The second world, being Fantasy City, is where the protagonists would have to fight a mafia group working under the shadows, learning that there are things that can't be solved through only fighting and looking cool in front of the camera. The third world, being the Space Pirate Arenas, is where the protagonists' teamwork are truly challenged by their rival Captain Phantom, and ultimately decide to split up to regroup as better versions of themselves in the future. The fourth world, being the Wild West, is where the main character Jet learns to work on his own and growing up from making mistakes that he could've fixed if he was with his team, but also learning that being a hero is about making tough choices and being there no matter what. Lastly, the final showdown would take place in The Doctor's home base as the dramatic finish to the adventure story.

5 - Pre-Production

C and D Terms of 2023 marked the beginning of the project. The team spent this time discussing what the project would entail and recruiting advisors and additional students.

5.2 MQP Pitch Day

Before the team began formal work on the Artbook, we pitched it for approval. The process required a slideshow with the name of the project, any additional roles we needed, and our names and contact information.

The team created an art piece that showcased our vision for the project and showed off our main characters and the worlds they explore. We landed on the idea of the worlds and their respective major characters being reflected in shattered glass in the background while our two protagonists strike an action pose in the foreground. After the linework was done and we moved on to coloring, we color-coded the glass shards of each world and leaned into those colors to make each one distinct from the others.

When the team designed the slide, we realized we needed to rearrange artwork elements to fit everything on the slide along with the important information. We reconstructed the artwork so it was condensed horizontally. We then used a black background so that the art would stand out from the other elements and added a teal gradient to the top and bottom edges to add some visual interest that wouldn't compete with the artwork. We chose a font with a sci-fi/futuristic aesthetic to make it look like something that could show up in the Robot City world.

Figure 5.1 - MQP Pitch Slide

After MQP Pitch day, our project was greenlit by IMGD faculty. We had hoped to recruit an additional artist and a Layout Editor, but we were unsuccessful. The two of us are skilled artists, and I had some experience with Adobe InDesign, so we were confident we could complete the artbook on our own.

5.3 D Term 2023

Pre-Production kicked into full swing in D Term of 2023 when Alex joined the team to write the story of the artbook. The theme of Pre-Production was ensuring our creations would match our vision. For Alex, this meant writing the story in a format fit for television. For me, this meant learning Jeff's artstyle so that the team would produce stylistically consistent artwork.

5.3.1 Production Management

the team had weekly meetings with Alex throughout D-Term as he fleshed out the story further. He took notes on our feedback on his work, as well as any thoughts that came to his mind during our meetings. We occasionally met to discuss details such as overarching themes and timelines of events.

5.3.2 Writing

Alex asked us for basic information about the characters in the story. The resulting document was a list of every character by name that listed a defining feature, a line they would say, any background information about them, and a drawing of them, if possible. We also wrote additional information to supplement the foundation. This included a more detailed physical description, their social situation, and their mental state.

By the end of D-Term, Alex had written a detailed synopsis of the story broken down by episode. Season 1 begins with a prologue episode where Jet answers the call to adventure and follows his journey in the Robot City as he learns how to work as a team with Elise and the two confront Mr. Zed, the main antagonist of the season. Season 2 combines the stories of the Fantasy City and the Space Pirate Olympics, seeing the pair grow as a team before Elise's insecurities and Jet's hot-headedness cause the team to split. Season 3 opens with that dynamic as Jet goes to the Wild West to help the people there on his own, and the season ends with Jet and Elise reuniting and then confronting The Doctor in the series finale.

5.4 A Term 2023

A Term marked the beginning of Production. The team began creating the art that would go into the artbook and then created drafts of the book itself. Our goal was to have a draft we could display at Protofest so that we could collect feedback we could use to improve the artbook.

5.4.1 Organization

As the team began work on the artbook, we needed the means to keep track of the work we had done and what we needed to do.

"Scrum is a lightweight framework that helps people, teams and organizations generate value through adaptive solutions for complex problems," (Schwaber and Sutherland, 2020). The team adapted the system to suit the project's needs by sizing the tasks needed to complete the work. We used t-shirt sizes to label the tasks by the amount of time we expected them to take:

Small - Tasks that could be completed in less than a day

Medium - Tasks that required 1-2 days to complete

Large - Tasks that required a full week to complete

The team held a meeting early in A Term to discuss the tasks necessary to complete the project. We sized our tasks, and made attempts at a production schedule, but we struggled to come up with a detailed schedule we could refer to easily. The team made the decision to bring Camille Prats on board as a dedicated production manager. She created a detailed production schedule for the year and a task log to keep track of works in progress and works implemented into the book.
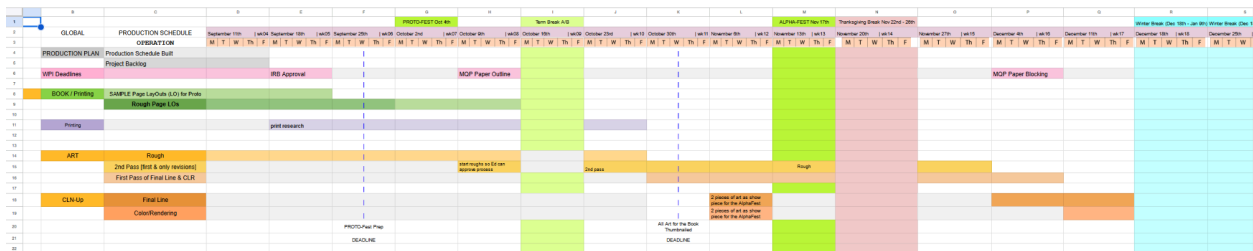

Figure 5.2 - Production schedule created by Camille Prats

Figure 5.3 - Project task log created by Camille Prats

5.5 Protofest

Before the team could conduct any survey, we had to complete research training and submit our plans to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to review. We devised a plan to collect anonymous feedback from attendees at IMGD-sponsored events like Protofest and Alphafest that we could then use to improve our artbook.

5.5.1 Feedback

The team displayed a draft of our artbook at Protofest, however, the IRB's approval came a little too late. Attendees at Protofest still volunteered feedback and we used it to improve the artbook. They found the layout easy to follow, and found Professor Nu, Captain Phantom, and Mr. Zed to be strong characters. Jet, Robo-Jet, and The Doctor needed more work in their designs. The Space Pirate Ship and Robot City stood out as strong environments, while the Wild West was singled out as the weakest environment.

6 - Production

The production process of any media requires multiple steps from a team of artists and designers. For example, in a film, "the production designer comes up with the "look" of the film with the director giving them a direction of where to go while limiting them to a budget and a timeframe" (Bacher, 2008). Afterwards, a team of artists and painters are required to translate all the ideas for the final product. In short, a feature film is "the team effort of up to sixty artists in the department" (Bacher, 2008).

Art production begins with the artists creating thumbnail sketches drawn either traditionally or digitally, refining them in multiple passes until cleaned up lineart versions are created. The same artist may render the art in full color or pass it along to another artist. As art was completed, the Layout Editor added them to the artbook via *Adobe InDesign*, a graphic

design software used for creating digital magazines, eBooks, posters, and interactive PDFs (Adobe, n.d.).

6.1 Art

This subsection will cover the art creation pipelines that took place during the MQP's production, and changes in the creation process that occurred starting B-term of 2023, as well as how specific changes affected finalized artwork designs.

6.1.1 Changes in Art Creation Process (title needs change)

During A-term of 2023, the team wanted to finish the majority of each art piece's creation process steps in one sprint to meet deadlines. We would try and complete every step from thumbnail pencil sketches to digital rough sketches and cleanup in one continuous sprint. Both MQP team members were working under this pipeline. However, this hindered the overall quality of art pieces produced for the sake of quantity.
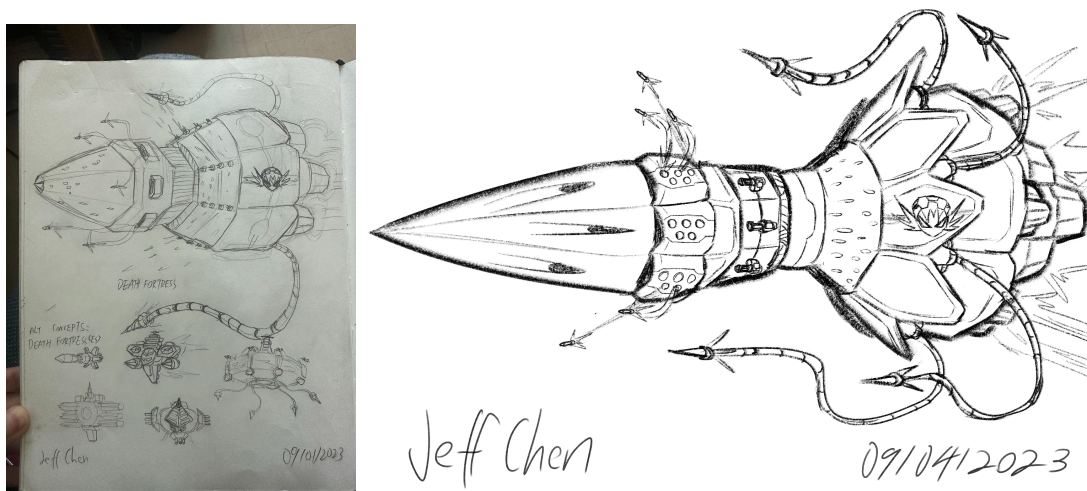
Figure 6.1 - Pencil & digital sketch of the Death Fortress environment's overview

During advisor meetings in A-term, we were advised to change our art creation process. Despite the quantity of sketches produced within one term, the quality of them were all relatively unrefined because little to no time for feedback was given between each step of an art piece's creation. The advisors noticed that the art team members' skills and specialized talents were not used to their full extent with both members doing the same tasks instead of specializing.

the team enacted the final change to the production process in B Term. Jeff Chen handled the rough sketches, layout, composition concepts and cleanups all within digital drawing softwares and Alistair Gilmour covered the coloring and rendering process afterwards. Instead of having one art piece's entire process finished per sprint, we decided to have every artwork finished as thumbnails, then receive feedback and move on to the next phase all at a time and receive feedback before the final phase.

6.1.2 How Change in Process Affected Designs

The aforementioned change in art creation pipeline affected the production of the whole artbook project in the long run. First of all, the initial approach of finishing thumbnails, rough sketches and cleanups in one sprint ensured the artwork quantity, but lacked quality since no time window was given for the artists to reevaluate their own works or receive feedback from the advisors. By changing the creation pipeline, the art team took things much slowly during each phase, as they weren't pressured to have every artwork finished or polished as soon as possible, but were encouraged to spend more time revising and solidifying concepts while receiving much more feedback from advisors. This allowed us to sit back and go over designs that were rushed in A-term with a clearer goal and understanding. For example, the initial character sheet for one of the main characters featured him in an A-pose, which is normally used for references in 3D modeling and considered the industry standard. However, after receiving the advisors' feedback that a character reference sheet for an animated series needs to have them in standing poses that reflect their personality better, we created more different versions of the same character sheet that not only fine-tuned the character's poses to match the original design goal, but also fixed up proportions and general shapes to make them look more striking.
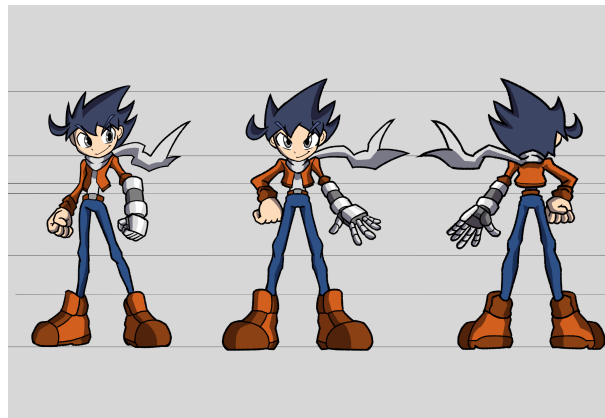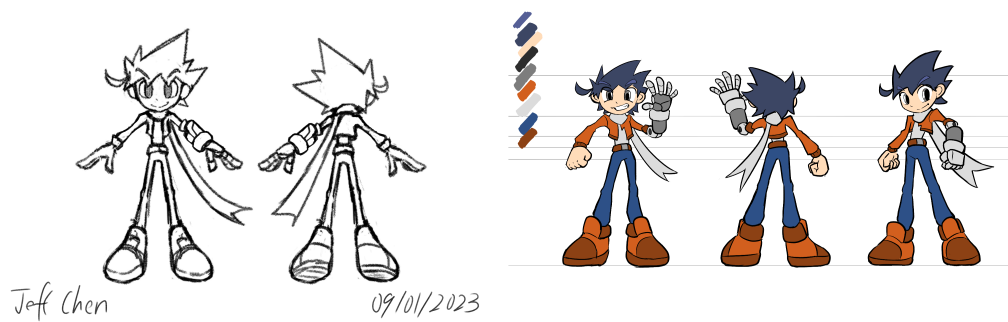
Figure 6.2 - From top left to bottom: Different passes of Jet Sparks' character turnaround sheet from A-term, B-term and C-term.

6.2 Layout

When beginning to design the book, the MQP team envisioned pages that looked like they could be on a high-tech computer screen in L.A.B. Initial designs used rectangles with opposite corners trimmed to lend the book a sci-fi feel. The former Layout Editor ran with that design element and used it for everything, from name cards, to textboxes, and even the page numbers and a frame tracing the page margins. As the artbook grew, this initial layout draft couldn't fulfill the vision of the project. The team decided it was necessary to bring Alex Mintz back as a Layout Editor so that the former editor could focus on art once again.
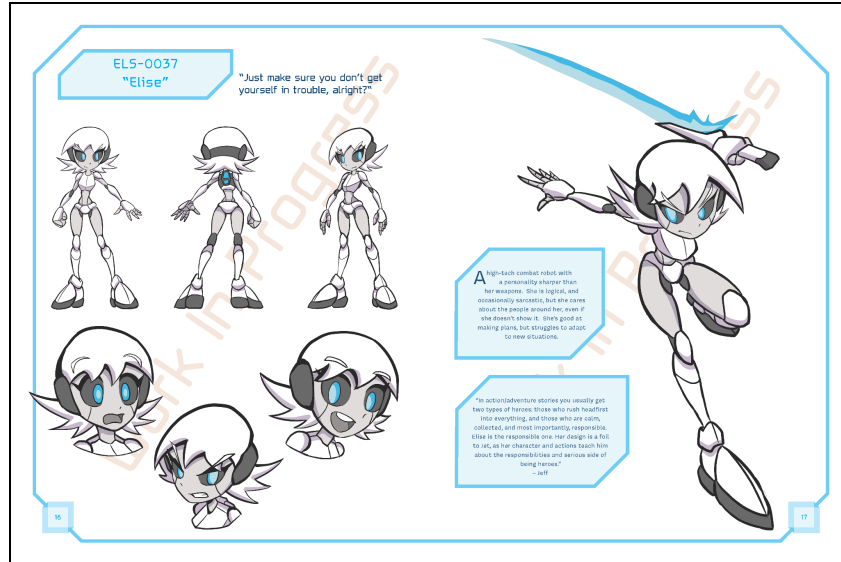
Figure 6.3 - Initial draft of page layout

When Alex took over as the new Layout Editor, the team re-evaluated our design goals. We decided the book should feel like something Jet put together, like a diary or a scrapbook he put together after the adventure came to a close. We also wanted to keep any text to bite-sized chunks so that the art could take up most of the space and so that we didn't overload a reader with too much.

Normally when designing any book, using as few typefaces as possible is ideal, but we decided to break that rule so that the commentary on each page would look as though the protagonists had written it themselves. We also organized the pages the way the characters would organize them. For example, Jet's page is haphazardly organized with some artwork tilted at an angle, while Elise's page is neatly organized. We chose fonts that they collectively think match each character the most so that they resemble their handwriting in a notebook. For example, the main character Jet's font is haphazard-looking, just like the way someone of his personality would write, while the other main character Elise's font is clean and readable, matching her personality. The large areas of empty space were filled with simple doodles to tie the pages together and solidify the effect that Jet wrote the book as a diary.
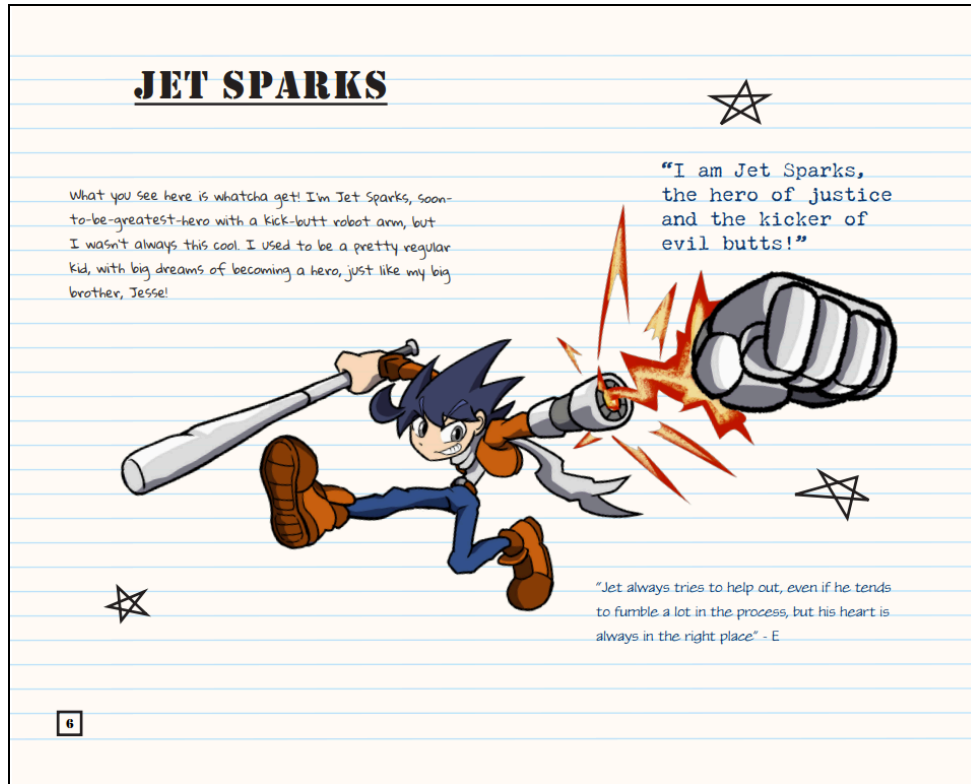
Figure 6.4 - Sample Page from the Artbook's Final Layout

6.3 Alphafest

The draft of the artbook that was printed for Alphafest was 37 pages long and had some new roughs and some refined work. The MQP team had a QR code displayed that linked to a digital version of the book. The survey was conducted using Google Forms, but a plugin we used didn't work as intended, and so they had to create a workaround during the event. As a result, we only got 18 responses.

6.3.1 Survey Questions

We created a survey we could use to gather useful feedback. The main questions of the survey are as follows:

1. How familiar are you with artbooks (Scale from one "Not familiar at all" to eight "Extremely Familiar")?

    This question gave us an idea of how familiar survey respondents were with artbooks. Low scores would suggest that respondents were unfamiliar with artbooks, while high scores would suggest that respondents were familiar with how artbooks are typically structured.

2. How easy is it to follow the layout of this artbook (Scale from one "Extremely Difficult" to eight "Extremely Easy")?

    The responses to this question told us how well the book is organized. Low scores would suggest that our artbook was too cluttered or poorly organized, while high scores would indicate a well-organized book people could easily read.

3. How much of the text did you read (Scale from one "None of it" to eight "All of it")?

    This question told us how much survey respondents engaged with our artbook.High scores would suggest that people fully engaged with the story of the book. Low scores could suggest that people were uninterested in the story or that our layout was too difficult to read, but it could also suggest that people simply didn't have enough time to read everything.

4. How much of the text did you want to read (Scale from one "None of it" to eight "All of it")?

    This question helped us analyze low scores from the previous question. Low scores would confirm that people were uninterested in the story, while high scores would confirm that people were interested in the story, but didn't feel like they had enough time to read everything.

5. What is your favorite part of this story (Free Response)?

    Responses helped us identify strong elements of the story. A consensus among the answers would suggest a strong element we could use as a guide to strengthen

weaker parts. A lack of consensus could mean that the story overall is well written, or that no part of it stood out as particularly great. A lack of specific details could suggest a general lack of details, or that people didn't read the story carefully enough to describe anything in detail.

6. What is your least favorite part of this story (Free Response)?

As a follow-up to the previous question, this one helped us identify weaker elements of the story that needed more work. A consensus among the answers would point to a clear weakness in the story, while a lack of consensus could mean that the story overall is weak, or that nothing in the story stood out as particularly weak. A lack of specific details could suggest a general lack of details, or that people didn't read the story carefully enough to describe anything in detail.

7. Does this story remind you of a book, movie, video game, or other IP? If yes, which one (Yes or No, with a free response box next to "Yes")?

We asked this question to find out if our work strongly resembled a work that already exists. The results could also point out whether or not we were clinging too strongly to our inspirations.

8. Which character has the strongest design (Free Response)?

Responses helped us identify well-designed characters. A consensus among the answers would indicate a clear favorite who could help pull weaker characters in the right direction. A lack of a consensus could indicate that all the characters were well-designed, or that none of them stood out as particularly strong.

9. Which character has the weakest design (Free Response)?

This question served as a follow up to the previous one and could help us identify characters most in need of further revisions. A consensus among the answers would indicate a character who needed revision the most. A lack of any

consensus could indicate that all the characters need revision, or that none of them stood out as particularly weak.

10. Which environment has the strongest design (Free Response)?

Like the same question about characters, this question helped us identify an environment that was especially memorable or well-designed. A consensus among the answers would indicate that one environment that stood out above the rest and could be used as a guide for the rest. A lack of consensus could indicate that all of the environments were well-designed, or that none of them stood out as particularly strong.

11. Which environment has the weakest design (Free Response)?

As the follow-up to the previous question, this one helped us identify environments that most needed revision. A consensus among the answers would indicate an environment most in need of revision. A lack of consensus could indicate that all of the environments need reworking, or that none of them stood out as particularly weak.

12. Do you find this concept entertaining (Yes or No)?

This question told us whether or not we were successful in creating a compelling story. "Yes" would indicate that we were successful, while "No" would indicate that we needed to rework the idea from the ground up.

13. If an animated series based on this artbook was produced, would you watch it (Yes or No)?

This was a follow-up to the previous question and helped us gauge interest in the concept if we ever decide to pitch it as a series.

14. Which format do you prefer for an artbook (Print, Digital PDF, Both, or Neither)?

This question helped us determine if it was worth putting effort into printing a more finalized version of the artbook or making a digital copy widely available.

15. What do you believe is a reasonable price for an artbook of the size and scale displayed at our table (Less than $10, Greater than $50, or ranges of $10 increments in between)?

> This question helped us compare our work to other available works. Responses comparable to other books on the market of the same size as ours was when it was displayed would tell us that our work demonstrated skill.

16. Anything else you would like to share (Free Response)?

> This question allowed respondents to share thoughts that couldn't be easily shared as responses to any of the previous questions.

6.3.2 Feedback
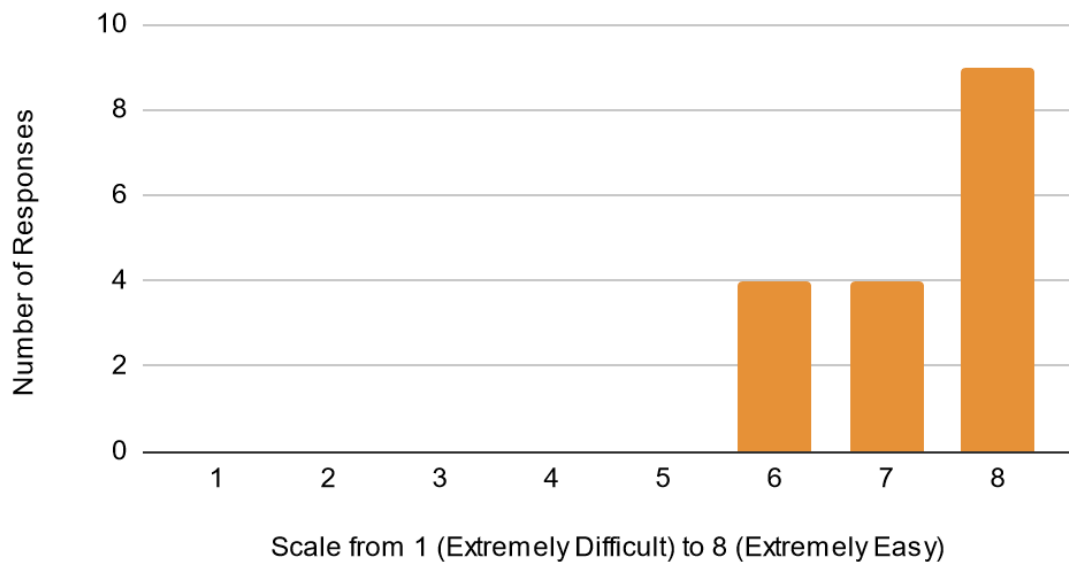
Figure 6.5 - Graphed Responses from Alphafest for How Easy is It to Follow the Layout of this Art Book

Respondents agreed that our layout was still easy to read.

How much of the text did you read?

How much of the text did you want to read?
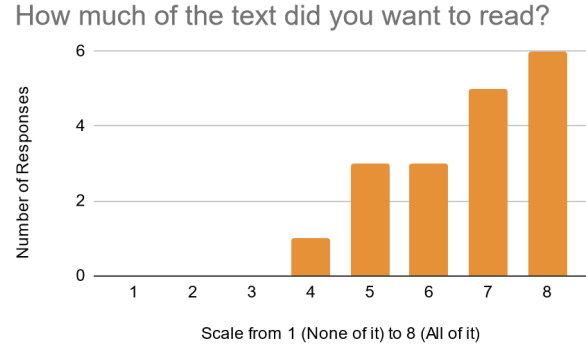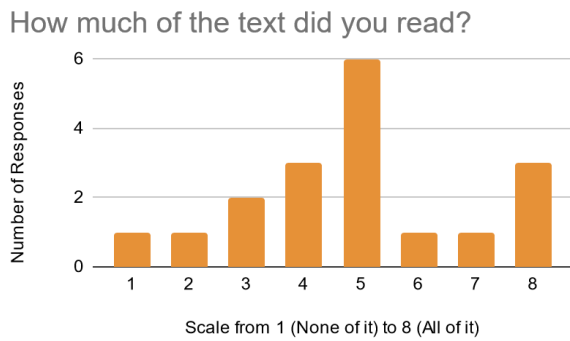
Figures 6.6 and 6.7 - Graphed Responses from Alphafest for How Much of the Text Did You Read & How Much of the Text Did You Want to Read

With more text in the book, respondents reported reading varying amounts of it, but as Figure 6.3 suggests, this was likely due to a lack of time at the event.

Does this story remind you of a book, movie, video game, or other IP?
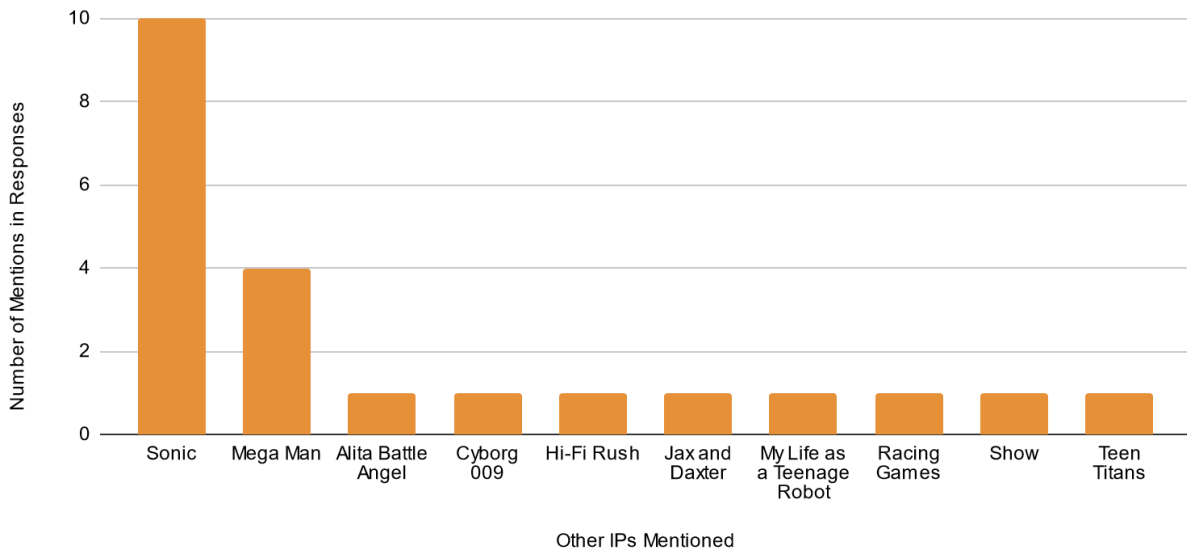
Figure 6.8 - Graphed Responses from Alphafest for Does this Story Remind You of a Book, Movie, Video Game, or Other IP

[Inclined to cut this, too]
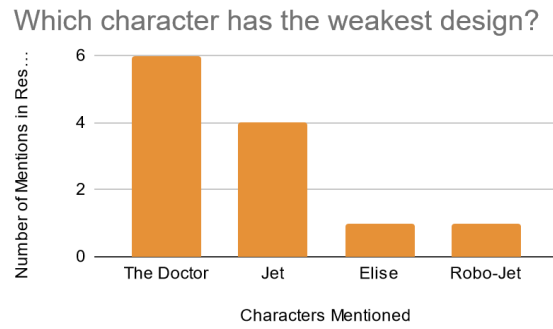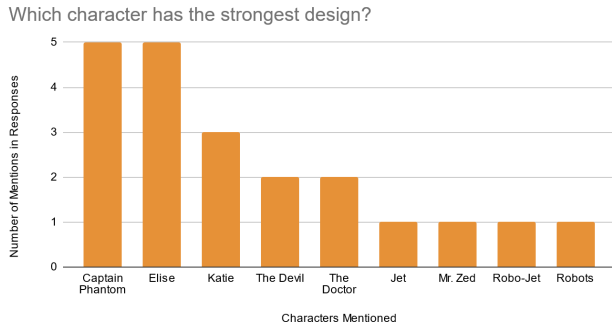
Figures 6.9 and 6.10 - Graphed Response from Alphafest for Which Character Has the Strongest/Weakest Design

Captain Phantom remained one of the strongest character designs, and Elise rose through the rankings. Mr. Zed fell in the rankings, and Professor Nu is entirely absent. The Doctor was clearly singled out as the weakest character with Jet in second place.
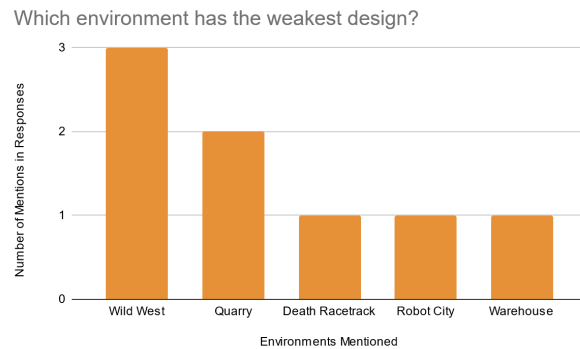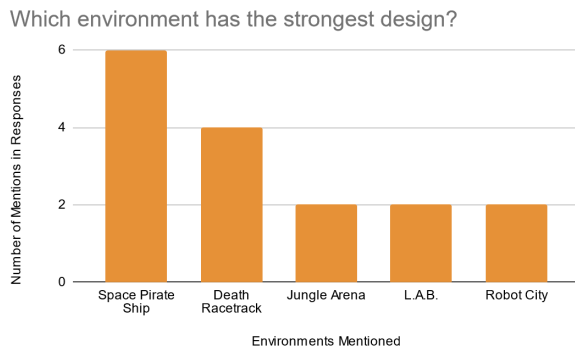
Figures 6.11 and 6.12 - Graphed Responses from Alphafest for Which Environment Has the Strongest/Weakest Design

The Space Pirate Ship remained the strongest environment, but the Death racetrack took second place. The Wild West remained the weakest environment piece.

6.3 Management

Management was one of the biggest challenges the MQP team had to tackle throughout the project's production. During the project's beginning in A-Term, the MQP team had to spend the first two weeks setting up a work schedule alongside important deadlines, which took over time that could've been used to focus on art creation. As a result, the MQP team enlisted help from IMGD BA student Camille Prats as project manager, and she assisted with creating a more

refined project management system, ensuring team communication being on point, and helped correct processes and methods that went wrong in the project. This section will cover all the management-related actions and changes we experienced.

6.3.1 Adjustments to Management System

Starting at the beginning of A-Term 2024, the MQP project would enter production, where the two MQP team members would start creating rough concepts and thumbnail sketches for the project. However, the startup of our MQP was rough, since we were able to spend one to two days per week to put time into drawing for the project, and once the project entered week 2, it was clear to all of us that a production flow chart was needed to decide what actual workflow needs to be like, what the deadlines for specific stretch goals for the artbook are: namely finishing artwork, arranging them into a book layout, and finally turning everything into a printed hardcover copy. However, due to a relatively small team size, it took the MQP team more than a week to finally decide what the production schedule is with the help of one of the advisors Professor Adryen Gonzalez. As a result, we only had a production schedule in week 2 of A-Term with stretch goal deadlines, but the art pieces' individual deadlines were still relatively unclear. In these two weeks, we realized that we needed a producer/manager to help with time management to keep the art team on schedule.

The team enlisted the help of IMGD BA student Camille Prats as the project's manager and producer in the middle of A-Term through ISP credit. Camille's help in this project is tremendous, as she helped scheduling out artwork backlog and priorities, regularly checked in with every team member on their work done, as well as dividing every art task by their pipeline steps, where major art tasks would go through the whole creative process from thumbnail to final render, while smaller art tasks would go from thumbnails to rough, storyboard-esque sketches. Most importantly, Camille helped with sharing art tasks with the MQP team members and strengthening communication between team members and advisors.

6.3.2 Team Communication

To strengthen communication between the MQP & ISP members and our advisors and communication between every individual team member, Camille set up a weekly check-in reminder in our Discord server, where it would be posted every Wednesday, then every team

member would report on what they have done in their first half of the week and what remains to be done before the next meeting. This keeps every team member and advisor in the loop and more informed, and would prove to improve our productivity.

6.3.3 Leadership

Aside from Camille's contributions to project management, another crucial facet of this MQP project's management is MQP team member Jeff Chen's involvement in art direction and project vision leadership. Throughout his undergraduate experience, Jeff has only taken artist positions in team-based projects that solely focus on art creation while following an art lead's guidance and orders, and this MQP would be his first time taking the position of art lead.

This role required team member Jeff to not only focus on art creation, but it also required him to convey the design goals, purposes and art creation techniques used for the project's characters and environments to other team members. This proved to be a challenge at first, but having weekly feedback meetings with both advisors and all team members present as well as communication via Discord helped us spend extra time in communicating with each other before moving on to the individual art creation tasks.

Being an art lead also means I would have to push, motivate and assist the team members whenever they are stuck or behind on their individual art tasks. This initially proved difficult as it was my first time taking over a leading position, let alone taking on an assertive attitude when there were cases where some team members would put off their tasks for an extended period of time. This issue was resolved through the help of the project advisors and Camille during C-term where they decided to have the advisors meet every project member individually, which both showed the art lead what to do and made sure all team members understand their position and role in the project.

In conclusion, the role of art lead and project vision lead taught me the importance of communicating with other artists in a creative media project while also having a strong leading presence instead of remaining silent to only focus on one's own individual tasks to make sure all team members are doing their work efficiently.

6.3.4 Course Correction

In response to the difficulties of the art team maintaining a consistent production schedule and workflow, Camille decided to make a new timeline document based on each individual term to see what tasks need to be taken care of for every week, as well as what major milestones have to be completed in the long run.

The term-based schedule Camille has created includes sections of important deadlines (rough page layout created, printing research deadline, etc.), estimated dates for finished phases of each drawing, and subgroups of each one, namely major characters that are fully colored with three-point turnaround sheets, an action pose and expression sheets, minor characters that only need a single action pose or three-quarter view, environment overviews of major environments, and environment closeups. With this schedule, the team had a stronger sense of urgency to finish specific milestones on time, which shows through the fact that our progress in B-Term and C-Term greatly exceeds that of A-Term.

6.4 Winter Planning

Right before C-term of 2024, the team reevaluated the artwork that needed to be produced and cut to reach the minimum viable product, and plans of changing the structures of weekly meetings were being mentioned before the semester began.

6.5 C-Term Work

For C-term, the team worked on applying numerous changes that needed to be applied once the Spring semester starts: Changing the structure of advisor meetings, solidifying art creation pipelines to ensure the minimal viable product is reached and start researching on the final artbook print, strengthening team cohesion through one-on-one meetings, and getting ready for post-production.

6.5.1 Feedback Session

As mentioned in section 6.3.2, Camille took charge of planning out meetings, which include weekly management feedback meetings with MQP advisor Professor Adryen Gonzalez,

weekly art feedback meetings with advisor Professor Edward Gutierrez, as well as weekly check-ins for all the MQP and ISP members.

The management and art feedback happened all in a single one hour-long meeting, but we soon found out that we wanted to dedicate more time on art feedback without having management check-ins in the way. As a result, Camille and Professor Gonzalez planned out having a one hour meeting dedicated to management and progress check-in, then another one hour meeting dedicated to nothing but art feedback. From this point forward, each team member would adjust their workflow, schedule as well as their artwork pieces done each week according to the feedback before the next meeting, then move on to a different task.

Having a dedicated 1-hour block of art feedback allowed Professor Gutierrez to give more detailed advice and feedback without worrying about time restraints and other important meeting goals not being met, and it would also give the advisors more artwork to look over for us to know which artwork they can move onto. This allowed the MQP team members to be able to move on with more artwork creation pipeline steps, and increased efficiency.

6.5.2 Process Standardization

The art creation process changes mentioned in section 6.1 and its subsections were implemented in B-term 2023, but was only fully standardized in C-term 2024 since during B-term the MQP team focused more on creating artwork at a pace that would allow them to have enough pieces to show during Alphafest 2023.

In the timeline and schedule document finalized by Camille in C-term, Camille discussed with the artists of the team and separated every artwork into different phases of one pipeline: Thumbnails where the basic composition of a character or environment piece is staged out; roughs where the basic shapes, details and layouts are roughly created; feedback from advisors after those steps in case if any changes or revisions need to be made for our artwork to look better; clean-up process where the rough sketches are turned into lineart with increasing amounts of detail and colors; revisions where the advisors would make sure there are no mistakes within the pieces; and finally the final version of an artwork.

6.5.3 Team Cohesion

At the beginning of C-term 2024, it was brought up that our efficiency and dedication towards the MQP have been at varying levels, and if the team didn't address the issue, it would be detrimental to the project. The project's advisors set up one-on-one meetings with all the MQP team members to remind them of the work that needed to be done, along with planning out what kind of help or assistance is needed for team members who were struggling. The one-on-one meetings improved team cohesion, and the artwork produced in C-term exceeded prior terms in terms of both quality and quantity.

6.6 Post-Production Planning

At the end of C-term, the advisors suggested MQP team members to shift their focus from art creation towards post-production, research, and work that had to be done in order to have a printed version of the artbook with all the artwork created included, alongside with Alex's writing works mentioned in section 4 of the report in order to have a professional-level physical artbook that can be presented in numerous WPI IMGD-related events.

7 - Post-Production

This section will cover the post-production process of the MQP project, the final graphic design and page layout works that were done alongside with print research done for the final deliverable artbook, which all started during the middle of C-term 2024.

7.1 Management Adjustment for Post-Production

At the middle of C-term 2024, the team had to readjust project management for post-production, as Camille Prats would end her ISP credit as project manager starting D-term. We met with Camille one last time before the end of C-term to establish what specific works need to be done during her absence, namely reassigning roles to MQP team members, and bringing in additional team members for post-production.

7.2 Post-Production Logistics

This section will cover the print research process that was meant to start in A & B term but moved on to C & D Term due to the art creation, graphic design and page layout process only finishing up in C-term.

7.2.1 Print Research

One of our goals for this MQP project was to have the artbook printed in hardcover or paperback formats for us to present at events such as PAX East in late March and WPI IMGD's Showfest event in early May.

For the first step of printing research, the team looked into existing artbooks for references in elements such as printing service options, as well as page size and numbers. Starting off, we looked at the concept artbook Grithjord created by past WPI IMGD alum Janelle Knight. Janelle used a brief funding campaign on the website Kickstarter for her artbook printing costs, and had the book printed in hardcover with 8 by 10 inches vertical pages and 91 pages of content. This data gave us an initial estimated size and format for the book, which is a hardcover book with around 80 pages of content and a size of 8 by 10 inches.

One other artbook we looked into for both graphic layout and print research is the artbook for the animated movie *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. During C-term, we integrated all the current artwork into the originally planned vertical format, but found a roadblock in the process. Most of the artwork created, including both character action poses and environment concepts, are in a horizontal format as they were created in 17 by 11 inch canvases. As a result, many artwork had to be shrunk in order to fit in the actual page, which reduces the artbook's overall clarity. During a C-Term page layout meeting, project manager Camille Prats suggested following the printing format of the *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* artbook, since it uses a horizontal format to accommodate all of its more horizontal artwork. As a result, the artbook's PDF document is in a horizontal 10 by 8 inches size.

One last thing we focused on during print research is the color profile of artwork. According to our advisors, while most digital art software has RGB color profiles by default, they need to be switched to a CMYK color profile since it's a color profile tailored for artwork that's meant to be printed physically.

The end goal of the printed book itself aligns with the end goal of the graphic design/page layout, which is to create a physical artbook that resembles the kid protagonist's notebook, and has visually readable artwork in CMYK color profile. In terms of copies printed, one coil-binded copy was printed and showcased in PAX East 2024, and we are planning on having 3 copies for the purpose of demoing in IMGD Showfest.

7.2.2 Preparation for PAX East

For test prints, the team looked into four printing services for hardcover and paperback options. For paperback prints in preparation of March 21-24th's WPI PAX East booth demo, we contacted the printing service Alphagraphics in Worcester, Massachusetts for paperback options. The company asked us for the book's size, page number and copies needed via email, which they have responded with specifications, and a coil bind test print was successfully sent and presented at the WPI PAX East booth for demo.

For hardcover prints, we spent an advisor meeting to look at three hardcover printing service websites: Blurb, BookBaby and Shutterfly. All three of them are online printing services for self-created hardcover books, but we ultimately planned to use Blurb once our PDF is ready, since it has the exact book size we need, which is a horizontal 10 by 8 inches book format. Finally, we used Alphagraphics Worcester for paperback test prints as well as the final print due to limited budget and the convenient geographic location.

8 - Retrospection

After over three terms of the entire MQP process, there are a few things that I have done well as an artist and a group project lead, but there are also plenty of things that I could have done better.

Starting off on the art creation side of the project, as the person who's responsible for the initial concept process for most of, if not all the art pieces, I gave myself a strict schedule of drawing for two hours each workday so that I could efficiently meet project goals and deadlines. This allowed me to have over 60 pages of artbook content drawn, which closely meets the original stretch goal of having 80 pages of content for the book. However, this work routine wasn't applied until B-term of 2023, and I was working at a much slower pace in A-term because

of classes and still struggling with setting up schedules and deadlines for the MQP. As a result, most of the artwork I've done are only in a lineart state without any colors applied.

I also did a good job in terms of learning new art skills that I have not gotten to practice as much while creating concept art for environment and scene compositions. Before this project, most of my artwork were limited to characters without any environments, scenes or backgrounds applied to them. However, because of the concept artbook's nature as a tool of reference, I had to try and create complete environments and scene compositions. Despite it being my first time doing so, I pushed myself to try new creative processes and new creative subjects. However, I did not get to learn every new art skill I'd like to gain from this project, like coloring and rendering for environments and concept art. Throughout the limited time of this project, I find myself spending most of my time on drafting concept sketches and fixating on making cleaned up lineart for all the characters and environments, giving myself much less time and opportunity to try out new coloring methods, which is still an ability I must be acquainted to if I were to pursue a career in 2D art creation for different media forms such as games and animation.

Last but not the least, the biggest thing I felt I could have done better is managing and leading projects. Throughout my college undergraduate studies, I have only taken artist and designer roles in group projects, making this MQP my first time taking on the role of a project lead and art lead. As a result, I needed help from both my advisors and our manager Camille Prats for project management and keeping track of every group member's progress, which took away a lot of our time in A-term that could have been dedicated to art creation. Being a project lead also requires one to be more assertive to keep the team running at full efficiency, but I was not very acquainted with taking on this position in a project. Because of this, I was much too lenient to the MQP team, and did not give them the push needed when efficiency is low.

- Jeff Chen

At the beginning and end of the project, I was able to focus on creating art and it worked well. I knew exactly what I had to do and how long it would take to do it. When I was coloring in environments, I was able to apply concepts I learned in theatrical design to my digital art.

As the member of the team with experience in all parts of the process, the page layout was originally my task, but I am not nearly as experienced with layout as I am with art. When the project grew big enough to demand page layout, I was pulled away from my strengths in art

to put the book together, and I was quickly overwhelmed by the scale and unfamiliarity of the tasks at hand. Eventually, we brought Alex in to do the page layouts, and even though I still had a hand in the tasks, it was far more manageable, though the help came later than would have been ideal.

Next time I need to be more aware of what I'm able to do so that I don't take on too much at once and underperform as a result. I should take more time than I did to clearly define my tasks and the time it would take to complete, especially when those tasks are unfamiliar. When I was struggling, I should have recognized that there was a problem sooner and asked for help instead of hoping it would go away on its own.

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Appendix A - Character Profiles

Character Template

Character Sketch:

Base:
- Name or title, pronouns, apparent age
- Salient feature - *the most important fact about the character, be it a feature, abilities, role, etc.*
- Character line - *summary of their personality, whatever captures that: likes/dislikes, clothing, a dialogue line, habits, etc.*
- What's their story - *Not a story but the bit of background, identity, or motivation that colors who they are and the choices they make*

Three Dimensions:
- · Physical Description: Most important things about their appearance
- · Social Situation: Who are the people/groups around the character and define them
- · Mental State: What's going on inside, loves hates, anxieties etc, closely tied to motivation

Relationship map

Major Characters

Note: As a general baseline, none of the characters will resort to murder for any reason. This baseline is open to reconsideration if the death of one character opens up new story threads that are more interesting than existing threads where they are alive.

Jet Sparks:

Unofficial theme song: *Trouble-Shooting Star* from Yakuza 0
Character Sketch:
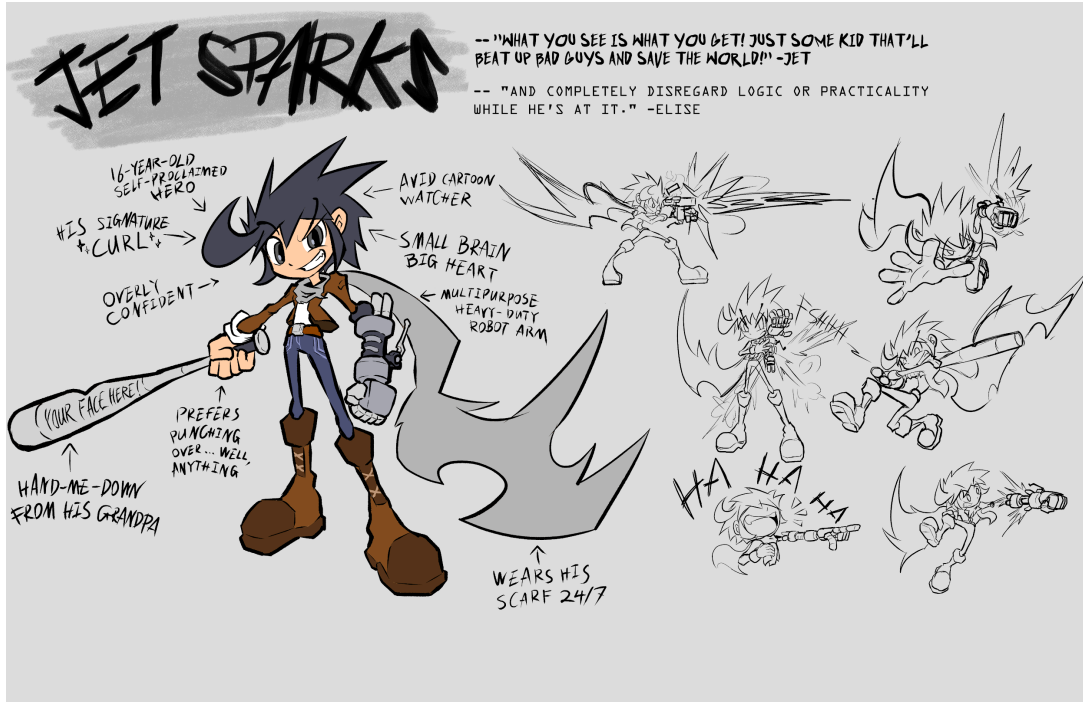
Base:

- He/him, 16
- Physically resilient and punches really hard, very stubborn
- "Perk up those ears and listen well, cuz I am Jet Sparks, the hero of justice and the kicker of evil butts!"
- Still a kid at heart, wants to prove he can be a hero and do big things to make his brother proud. Believes firmly in justice (defeating the bad guys), and doesn't like seeing people cry (will try to fix the problem even if that's not necessarily what the person wants or needs in the moment).

Three Dimensions:

- 5'3" tall, has a robot arm, wears a worn leather jacket and a grey scarf from Jesse. Black hair is messy, and has a curly strand that sticks out on his right.
- His brother, Jesse (who's not around anymore), Epsilon Squad (Elise, Katie, Professor Nu).
- Hotheaded & has a big ego, loves cartoons and junk food and daydreaming and following his instincts, hates bullies and vegetables and pollen, afraid of losing people.

ELS-0037 (Elise):

Unofficial theme song: *Battle with Metal Sonic (US ver.)* from Sonic Forces
Character Sketch:

ELS-0037 "ELISE"

-- "L.A.B. multiversal-peacekeeping special operative, Epsilon-Squad field leader, unit ELS-0037, codename Elise, commencing operation." -Elise

-- "HOW DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THAT?! AND WAIT A MINUTE! I THOUGHT WE AGREED THAT I'M THE FIELD LEADER!!" --JET

HIGH-DEXTERITY COMBAT ROBOT →

CAN SHOOT EYE LASERS → (BUT REFUSES TO DO IT)

EQUIPPED WITH GOD-KNOWS-HOW-MANY GADGETS & WEAPONS

VALUES LOGIC, PATIENCE & DISCIPLINE →

PERPETUAL LACK OF FACIAL EXPRESSION

STRONG SENSE → OF RESPONSIBILITY

VARIABLE-OUTPUT STUN BLADE (SHE MADE IT HERSELF)

ACTUALLY A → TSUNDERE

← PROFESSIONAL VIGILANTE

Base:

- She/her, 18
- A cutting-edge robot with a limitless power supply
- "Jet, no. We're waiting until the others arrive so don't do anything stupi- and he's gone."
- Grew up in the Robot world with no memory of The Doctor. Became a L.A.B. agent after being helped by them. Feels a strong sense of responsibility to make sure her strengths and powers don't hurt people.

Three Dimensions:

- Sleek grey and white metal armor, fully equipped with gadgets.
- The mayor of the Robot City (her adoptive dad) who went berserk, L.A.B, Epsilon Squad (Jet, Katie, Professor Nu).
- Has a logical, occasionally passive-aggressive and sarcastic personality, and cares a lot about the people around her (she just doesn't show it too much). Loves her family and friends, listening to emo music, and being the smartest person in the room, hates anything that threatens her family and anything that isn't logical, afraid of losing people and losing control over her power, hopes for peace and quiet (a world that doesn't need heroes). Likes to plan things out before executing them, and has trouble making decisions which is her one fatal weakness.

Captain Phantom (Jesse Sparks):

Unofficial theme song: *Skull Heart Arrives* from Mobile Suit Crossbone Gundam/SD Gundam G Generations

Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/him, 23
- Has an outwardly terrifying presence, but is actually quite pleasant to be around.
- "Enough, Godfather. Accept your defeat with grace, honor, and dignity. You know full well the consequences if you don't."
- Former Police Detective, believes in justice (as in protecting people), not afraid of self-sacrifice. Sees a lot of terrible things in his line of work and doesn't want it to reach innocent people, especially his little brother, Jet. Joins The Doctor by making a deal where if he works for her, she promises to keep his home world & family out of her plans. Sometimes the end justifies the means, but he will never place undue burdens on anyone (i.e. might have to conquer a planet, but will ensure that the people there are well taken care of).

Three Dimensions:
- Heavy armor (giant metal cape and mask), robot leg, wears a skull insignia that represents his crew. Long black hair is a little rough, and a curly strand sticks out on his left, though the strand is usually hidden under his hat.
- Social Situation: Who are the people/groups around the character and define them
- Loves his younger brother (Jet) and his crew, hates meaningless destruction and lack of honor, afraid of Jet getting caught up in the conflict with The Doctor,

hopes The Doctor will back down from her plans of her own accord. Also has been secretly planning to stop The Doctor himself if necessary.

Doctor Elisabeth Artemisia Sylvatica II (The Doctor):

Unofficial theme song: *Shockwave's Theme* from Transformers Devastation
Character Sketch:

Doctor Elisabeth
Artemisia Sylvatica II
(or just THE DOCTOR)
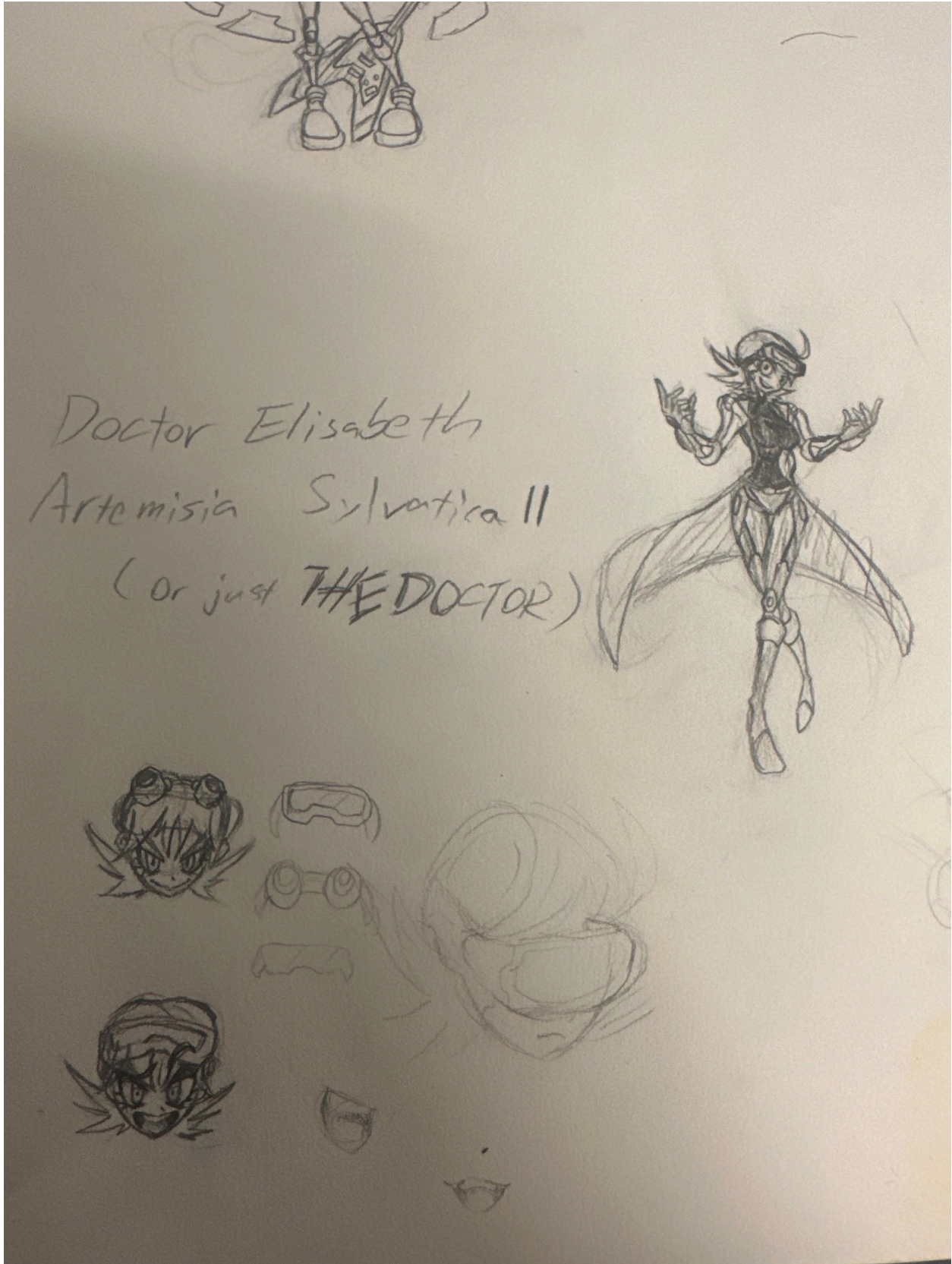
Base:

- She/her, 38
- Incredibly smart and knows how to weaponize that.
- "Fear no longer. When the Galaxy is in my hands, I will ensure that every variable and every uncertainty is stamped out."
- Wants to take over the galaxy because she thinks she will be the perfect ruler and it will also give her control over vast amounts of resources that will further her personal research projects. She built Elise as a proof of concept for an immortal body and released her into the galaxy to see where her flaws are so that she can build an improved model later.

Three Dimensions:
- Wears a lab coat, covered in cybernetics. Haircut is the same as Elise's
- Jesse/Captain Phantom is closest in the present and nudging her away from her more extreme plans, her past is TBD by any of us.
- Loves being the smartest person in the room and seeing her enemies struggle and science in general, hates not being in control and anyone who lacks ambition, afraid of mortality and being forgotten in history.

Robot Planet

KT-0013 (Katie):

Unofficial theme song: *The Disaster of Passion* from Guilty Gear Strive
Character Sketch:

KT-0013 "KATIE"

Base:
- She/Her, 15
- Genius engineer, mechanic & hacker, knows her way with machines, gizmos & computers. Has a childlike and outwardly cheerful attitude.
- "Needless to say, the only thing between our world and certain doom is the two of you! No pressure though, I'll be giving you all the firepower you need!"
- The mission operator & mechanic for Jet and Elise. Gives the gang support from the sidelines. Always tries to cheer up her team and look on the bright side of things.

Three Dimensions:

· A lot of her body parts were damaged then repaired with enhanced robot parts made by Professor Nu (eyes, hair, right arm, right leg, waist), and she always has a computer attached to her belt. (P.S.: That guitar of hers also works as a hacking tool.)

· Best friend of Elise, used to be on field missions with her until an accident involving a robot gang that forced her to stay in the sidelines. Sees Professor Nu as her mentor, and sees Jet as someone to play with because of their shared childish attitude.

· Loves cracking jokes, tinkering, rock & roll, jamming out on her guitar, and goofing around with Jet & Elise. Hates the robot gangs terrorizing the city's slums, and anything that threatens her friends. Afraid of not being able to help anyone.

Professor Nu:

Unofficial theme song: *Title Screen Music* from Kirby Planet Robobot
Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/Him, 45
- A brilliant and patient robot scientist who values logic over anything, and dedicates his life to ensuring that L.A.B. and its technology makes everyone's lives better. The team dad.
- "Never forget why we're doing any of this–it's for a better tomorrow."
- One of the 26 lead scientists of L.A.B. He's in charge of the Epsilon Squad, which is the only squad in L.A.B. that consists of only teenagers.

Three Dimensions:

·   Wears a monocle and a metal-plated robe 24/7. Has his robot brain displayed under a glass cranium just to make a statement on how smart he is.

·   Respects his 25 lead scientist colleagues although they would bicker sometimes. Sees the Epsilon Squad (Jet, Elise & Katie) as his own children.

·   Loves inventing, doing weekly newspaper puzzles, any kind of calculations, and being the smartest person in the room. Hates the current government of the Robot City that refuses to change for the better, Mr.Z, who's responsible for all the mayhem in his world, having his peace and quiet interrupted, and stupid people. Sometimes suffers from imposter syndrome and is afraid of running out of ideas.

Mr. Z:

Unofficial theme song: *E.G.G.M.A.N.* from Sonic Adventure 2
Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/Him, 30
- Egotistical mad scientist who is obsessed with playing god and creating bio-mechanical life forms. Believes that a fusion of man and machine is the ultimate evolution of life itself.
- "They say no one has ever succeeded in playing god, well, I'm here to prove all of them wrong!"
- One of The Doctor's underlings who's sent to take over the Robot World and find the rumored infinite energy source. Utilizes a dangerous and volatile biometal to turn robots and machines into bio-mechanical monsters that cause mass destruction.

Three Dimensions:

·   Half man, half machine. Has a big glowing biometal heart and a sinister smile.

·   Obedient to the Doctor since she allows him to perform all of his crazy experiments as long as he does her biddings. Sees L.A.B. as a big thorn on his side, but is particularly fascinated by the combat data from Jet, who is the prime example of a

biomechanical human in his view. Views every robot in the Robot World as nothing but lab rats.

· Loves himself, his twisted experiments, watching his bio-metal creations wreak havoc, obsessed with the Robot City's power plant that holds the secret to infinite power and playing god. Hates anything that meddles with his plans (especially L.A.B.), hates Captain Phantom out of pure jealousy.

Robo-Jet:

Unofficial theme song: *What I'm Made of* from Sonic Heroes
Character Sketch:
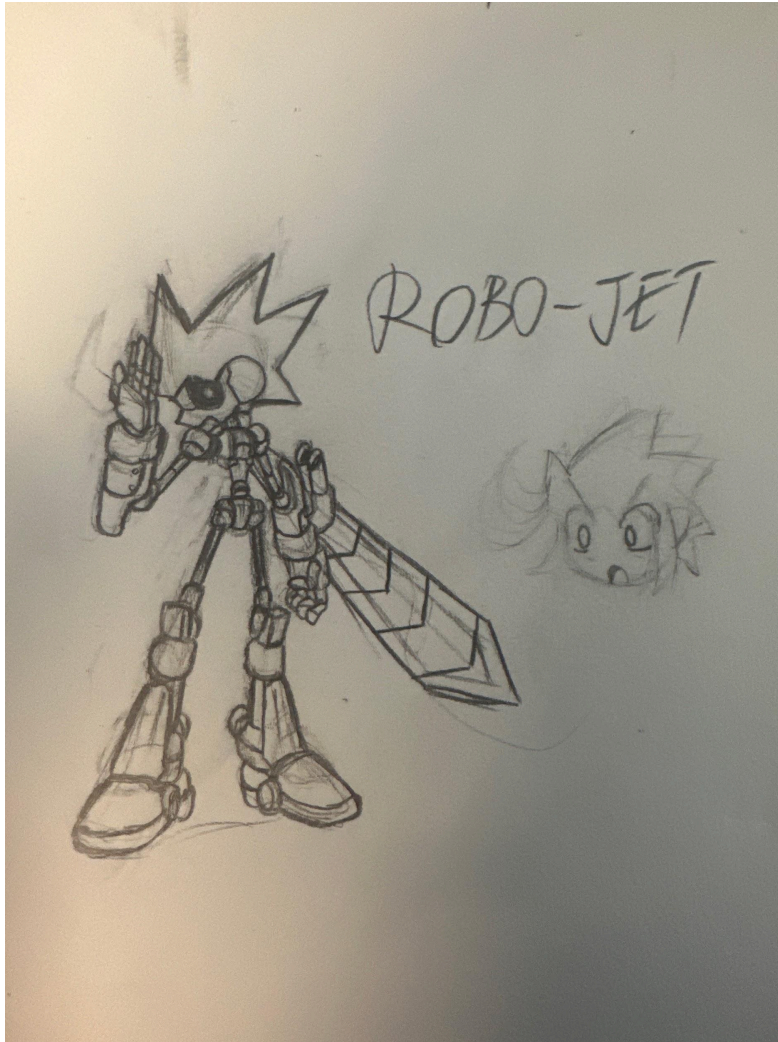
Base:
- He/Him, 16 (technically less than a year old)

- A killer robot programmed with a strong determination to prove he is the better & real Jet. Shares the same personality with the kid himself, meaning he's also hotheaded, childish, stubborn and hates taking orders.
- "Long time no see, my loathsome copy!"
- Created by Mr.Z to be Jet's robot doppelganger and defeat him once and for all.

Three Dimensions:

· A robot version of Jet with a cold robotic glare in his eyes. He's equipped with deadly weapons from head to toe, and has every weapon, gadget and ability that Jet has.

· Sees Mr.Z, his creator, as a nuisance since all he ever does to him is bossing him around. Has a deep-seated sense of rivalry with Jet due to his programming (the two of them tend to go on absurd "arms races"). Likes to flex in front of Elise to prove how cool he is and rub it in Jet's face. Would see Captain Phantom as his true friend in the future since he encourages him to live his own life and find his own way.

· Loves proving he's better than Jet, flexing his abilities, watching cartoons, and fighting in general. Hates being bossed around and taking orders, and constantly refuses to admit the truth that he's only created to be like someone else.

Mayor:

Unofficial theme song: *Dr.Robotnik (US version)* from Sonic CD
Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/him, 50
- Salient feature - *the most important fact about the character, be it a feature, abilities, role, etc.*
- Character line - *summary of their personality, whatever captures that: likes/dislikes, clothing, a dialogue line, habits, etc.*
- Ruler of the Robot City who's possessed by Mr.Z's biometal, and Elise's adoptive father. Obedient to Mr.Z and utilizes his resources to carry out his "master's" orders.

Three Dimensions:

· Soulless eyes, trapped inside a twisted machine that keeps the biometal infused in him running at peak efficiency.

· Obeys Mr.Z completely since his mind is being controlled by him. Loves his daughter more than anything before being taken over. Despite being controlled, his love for his city remains, just in a twisted, more control-freak manner.

· Inside his head, the mayor is a complete puppet forced to carry out Mr.Z's orders. However, every once in a while something in his mind would fight back.

Fantasy World

Caelum Gladiolus:

Unofficial theme song: Professor Layton More Puzzles Live
Character Sketch:

Base:
- She/her, 3,000?
- Big dragon with beautiful scales
- "As much as it pains me to see the Fairy Godfather get away with doing as he pleases, I'm no longer the same dragon who fought the calamity of the past."
- Hero of dragons who successfully battled certain ruin unleashed by an ancient civilization. Helped people through the aftermath, and continues to live near the city so she can come to their aid when people need her most. Confronted the Fairy Godfather after he took control of the city, but was unable to fight him alone, and couldn't continue without risking Etlin's safety. She believes in freedom and wants to do everything she can to protect it, but Etlin is now more important to her than her values.

Three Dimensions:
- A large dragon with pink and periwinkle scales resembling the sky both during the day and at night (need to do a color sketch of her to confirm).
- Heralded as a hero by the general population in the ancient past, became their hope in the present. Has an adopted son (Etlin).
- Loves Etlin and people and freedom, hates tyrants, afraid of losing Etlin.

Etlin Elatior (name open to change):

Character Sketch:

Base:
- he/him, 10

- Bright hair, patches of scales on his body, and sometimes dragon wings
- "I'm the hero of this city, stealing back what rightfully belongs to the people!"
- Adopted by Caelum when he was a baby. Is growing up carefree, and when he found out about the plight of the cityfolk, he wanted to help them out regardless of whether they want it or not.

Three Dimensions:
- Bright hair like a lit candle. Has a few patches of scales on his body, and is capable of transforming into something halfway between person and dragon. When transformed, his body is covered in scales, and he has a pair of dragon wings on his back and a serpentine tail.
- Lives with his mom (Caelum), but is otherwise a social outcast
- Loves his mom and fairy tales about heroes triumphing over evil, hates people doing bad things, afraid of being separated from his mom.

The Fairy Godfather:

Unofficial theme song: Professor Layton A Strange Story
Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/him, 80
- A tiny fairy with way too much power for his size
- "By the way, how is your son, Gladiolus? … It seems you understand now, so let's strike a deal, shall we? Why don't you run home and forget about this city, and I'll see to it that you and the boy may live out the rest of your days in peace."
- Inherited an ancient artifact with incredible power and used it to take control of the city with The Doctor's help. In return, he learned his own artifact is just one of a set and is now looking for the rest to help The Doctor with her plans.

Three Dimensions:
- Tiny, like a Disney fairy. Has short white hair and wears a suit and fedora. His wings are an iridescent white.
- One of The Doctor's underlings, has a whole mafia family under his direct control and city officials under his indirect control. Throws lavish Gatsby-style parties for the upper class in the city.
- Loves getting what he wants and indulging in luxury

Left-Hand-Man:

Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/him, 37
- Always looks aloof
- "..."
- Despite appearances, he's incredibly attentive to his surroundings and never forgets anything within earshot.

Three Dimensions:
- Big bald guy with little blue pixie wings on his back. Wears a suit and fedora.
- Treated like a bodyguard or another crony by the Fairy Godfather. Is very close to his twin.
- Loves his twin, hates when people charge into things without listening first.

Right-Hand-Man:

Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/him, 37
- Always looks like he's about to punch something
- "Listen up. We got a new target tonight. The plan is to grab 'em while they're out fishin' an' bring 'em back to the boss."
- Even though he never says a word around the Fairy Godfather, he's actually the one passing his orders on to the rest of the mob and coming up with detailed instructions on how to carry out those orders.

Three Dimensions:
- Left Hand's twin. Also bald, but has pink wings instead of blue.
- Treated like a bodyguard or another crony by the Fairy Godfather. Is very close to his twin.
- Loves his twin, hates it when people disrespect him or his twin or the Fairy Godfather.

Space Pirate Olympics

Captain Scaleface:

Unofficial theme song: *Theme of Saigo* from Yakuza 4
Character Sketch:

Base:
- They/them, 25
- Cunning, stealthy and patient. If the word "commando" has a shape or form, it'd look like Captain Scaleface.
- "And now, the hunter… Becomes the hunted."
- Leader of the Lizard Pirates hailing from the Jungle Planet. Excels in obstacle courses, and experienced in survival skills, designed the Deadly Triathlon course of the Space Pirate Olympics. One of the many space pirates participating in the tournament for the grand prize–Key to a giant doomsday fortress. Speaks in an Australian accent.

Three Dimensions:
·   Slim and gecko-like, and has a tail that's much longer than their body which helps them traverse obstacles. Wields a bunch of survival tools, a pair of submachine guns and a bowie knife. Wears a crocodile dundee hat.

·   Rules their crew with strong discipline & places great trust in them, and together they work in perfect sync like ninjas. Thinks Captain Speedboy lacks composure and Captain Bonecrusher lacks elegance. Sees the friction between Jet & Elise during the Triathlon and exploits Jet's weaknesses of low awareness of his surroundings and his lack of agility. They view Captain Phantom as a friend to hang around & have drinks with every once in a while.

·   They love striking fear into their enemies while being unseen like The Predator, love to outsmart their opponents, and love big game hunts. Hate people who think they're smart but actually aren't, hate people who talk too much.

Captain Speedboy:

Character Sketch:

Base:

- He/him, 19
- Obsessed with vehicles and all sorts of high-speed death machines. Plunders high-end supercars from all over the galaxy.
- "Faster faster faster faster!! Nobody can outrun the Speedboy!!"
- Leader of the Speedyboys Pirates. He's a genius mechanic when it comes to all sorts of vehicles, and a dangerous, reckless driver. Designed the Hi-Octane Death Race for the Space Pirate Olympics. Wants the key to the giant space fortress just so he could place it in his garage of plundered supercars/ships.

Three Dimensions:

· His armored suit is equipped with engines, fire-spewing exhaust pipes and a pair of wheels on his feet. Wears a specialized gas mask that muffles his voice and makes him look like he's breathing out smoke all the time.

· Him and the Speedyboys Pirates are all very simple people, and share a common obsession (and a same brain cell) with fast cars and crushing their opponents in a race. Sees the friction between Jet & Elise and exploits Elise's lack of experience in car races, reliance of logic over instincts and her difficulty of making choices, which could be detrimental in high-octane death races, where instincts matter more than anything.

· Loves fast cars, demolition derby, wrecking opponents in car races, showboating and taunting people. Hates thinking, people who speak too much, smart people and especially hates being treated like a little kid by all the other space pirate captains.

Captain Bonecrusher:

Character Sketch:

Base:
- She/her, 26
- Lives for the thrill of combat, a master of close-quarter combat and a famous martial arts champion across the galaxy.
- "Save your cheap talks for later, let's do this!"
- Hothead captain of the Burning Fist Pirates. She and her crew travels across the galaxy, work as soldiers of fortune and fight tournament contestants to hone their fighting skills and prove they're the strongest fighters ever. She designed the Cage Fight Death Battles for the Space Pirate Olympics. She joins the games not for the prize, but for the fight itself.

Three Dimensions:

·   Has a pair of custom-made, high-power mechanical gauntlets that makes Jet's robot arm look like a Fisher-Price toy. Has long, unkempt hair and a ragged outfit. Also has a battle-hungry look in her eyes and a pro-wrestler-like showman personality in fights.

·   Her crew are all aspiring martial artists who respect her and want to learn to be stronger from her, and she respects her crew's attitude. Views the other space pirate captains as worthy opponents, especially Captain Phantom since they share a strong sense of honor. Senses the strength of Jet & Elise that's still untapped due to their frictions.

·   Loves fighting, honor, honing her skills and finding new worthy opponents. Hates cheap tricks, weaklings, and cowards.

Wild West

The Devil:

Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/him, looks 40
- The name says it all. He's the guy that makes shady deals with people, summons demons, lost a fiddle battle in Georgia and comes from the fiery depths of the underworld. "Ohohoho! It's a beautiful day for some mischief."
- Plans to take over the Wild West world with his demon army to turn it into a giant factory for fueling the giant flying fortress buried beneath it

Three Dimensions:

·   Slim, red, has a pair of horns and two pairs of bat-like wings, also wears a top hat & a tuxedo.

·   His demon underlings do all of his biddings so he treats them with a smidgen of love and respect (he remembers the names of every underling), and he sees everyone around him as either pesky pests or temporary allies that he can exploit later for his own benefits.

·   Loves being in control, showboating, making deals with people, and playing dirty. Hates anything and anyone that dares to oppose him or challenge his pride.

Demon Underlings:

Character Sketch:

Base:
- They/them (since there's thousands of them), ranging from 20~50 years old
- Share a few physical features as the devil (red skin, horns), but other than that their looks vary a lot.
- Obedient to The Devil, whether they like it or not. They're the staple "cartoon goons" and they goof around a lot. (slacking on the job, extorting locals, etc)
- They're all created by The Devil with his own devil magic (or asexual reproduction because he's The Devil and he can do whatever he wants), and appointed with various jobs ranging from workers, bodyguards to any other profession you can think of.

Three Dimensions:
- · Physical Description: Most important things about their appearance
- · Social Situation: Who are the people/groups around the character and define them
- · Mental State: What's going on inside, loves hates, anxieties etc, closely tied to motivation

Bartender Jonah:

Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/him, 36
- Sharply dressed, wears a blue bow tie and has a toothpick in his mouth all the time.
- "Folks in this saloon are either running to or away from something. So, what's your story, lil' boy?"
- Bartender of the town saloon. Knows the area like the back of his hand, and has seen all sorts of things happening around town, good or bad.

Three Dimensions:
- · Looks strong enough to bench press a cow, and has stubble on his face.
- · The townspeople see him as an acquaintance to talk or whine (mostly whine) to. Sees the new sheriff (Jet) as a naive young boy who's caught up in messes too big for his own good.
- · Loves peace and quiet, and hates anything that disturbs his peaceful life. He's also a very good listener.

Old Prospector McGunn:

Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/him, 67
- Constantly rambles some kind of nonsense about gold, but is wiser than he looks.
- "Woo-wee! This town just loves to chew newcomers up n' spit 'em out!"
- The looney local prospector who's on a constant search for anything remotely related to gold and treasure.

Three Dimensions:
- · Has a big white beard and an oversized hat. Picture skinny Santa Claus.
- · Is friends with everyone in town because of his happy-go-lucky personality and his abundance of life wisdom. Bickers with Jet a lot the moment he comes to town and takes up the role of Sheriff. Helps fight off The Devil's underlings in town a lot.
- · Loves going to the wilds for treasure, hates The Devil and his forces for destroying the land he lives in.

Ex-Sheriff Weasley:
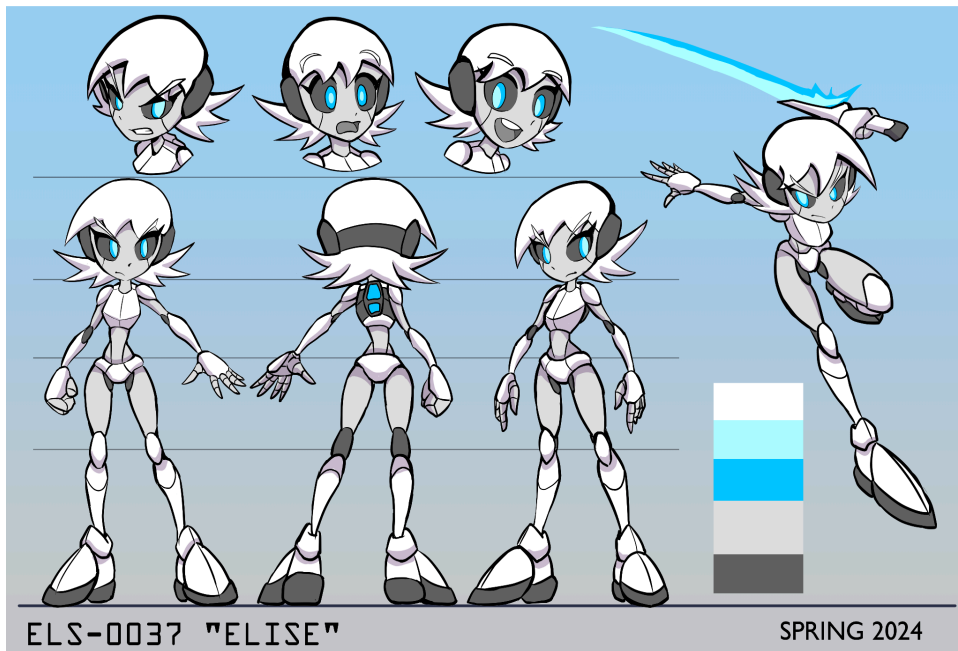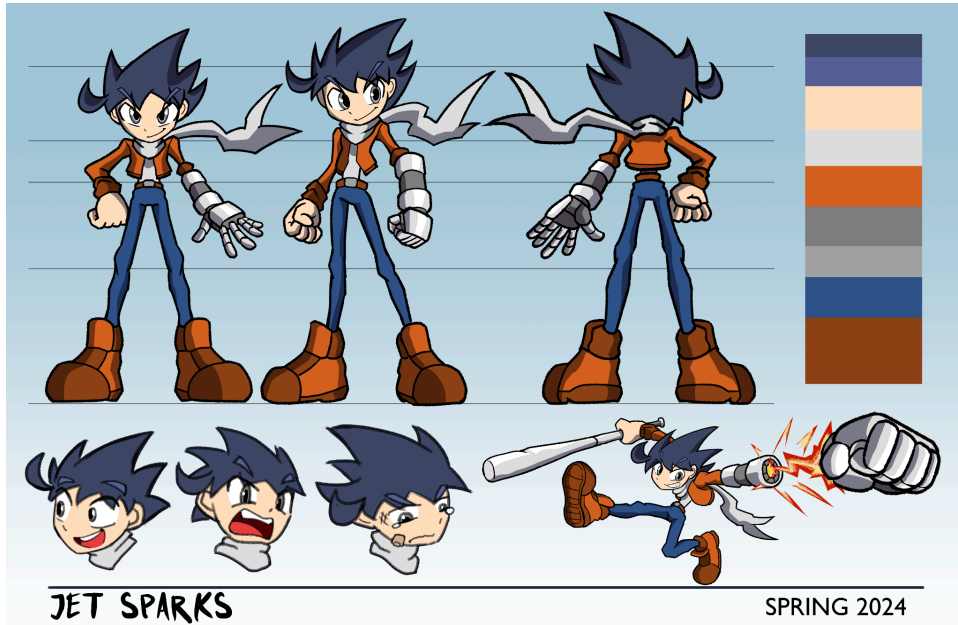
Character Sketch:

Base:
- He/him, 27
- The sharpshooter sheriff of the town who quit and joined The Devil purely out of fear.
- "Sorry bud, but I don't make the rules here! I just follow whoever's the big shot."
- Firmly believes in the philosophy of siding with whoever's the strongest and cares about his own life more than anything.
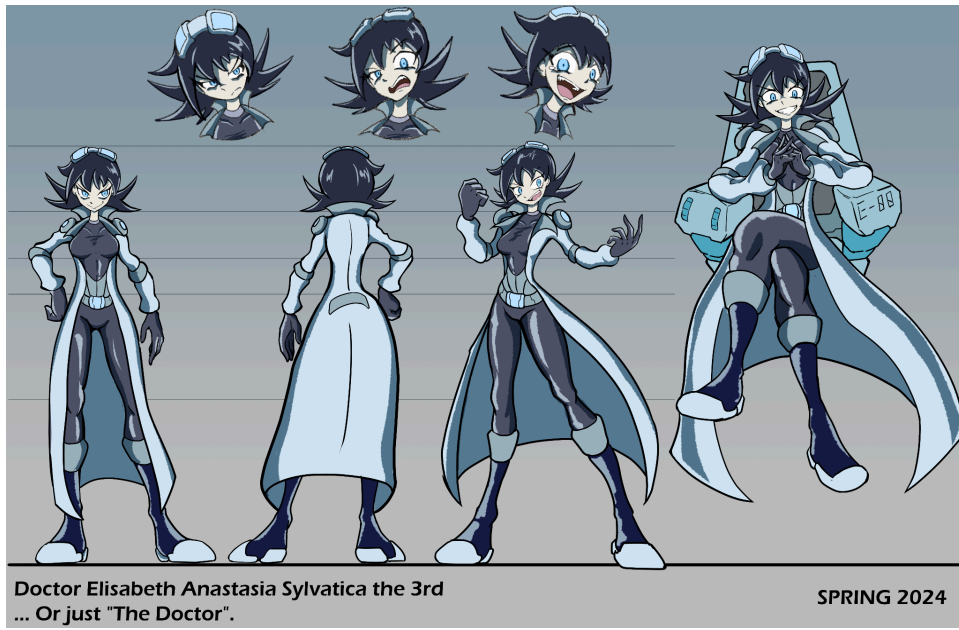
Three Dimensions:
- · Lanky, has long and unkempt hair, and wears a bullet-ridden cowboy hat.
- · Fears The Devil so much that he decides to obey his orders so that he doesn't get on his bad side. Secretly feels ashamed for abandoning his town. After his encounters with Jet (and Elise later), he'd learn to be brave and join the right side.

·   Constantly anxious, loves being alive in the cruel wild west & running away from things. Hates Jet at first since he's the polar opposite of him and he thinks the kid is just some cocky goofball who's gonna get himself killed.

Appendix B - Character Sheets

JET SPARKS   SPRING 2024

ELS-0037 "ELISE"   SPRING 2024

CAPTAIN PHANTOM   SPRING 2024

Doctor Elisabeth Anastasia Sylvatica the 3rd
... Or just "The Doctor".   SPRING 2024

Appendix C - Sample Survey

Informed Consent

Please read this <u>informed consent form</u> before proceeding with the survey.

☐ By checking this box, you acknowledge that you have been informed about and agree to participate in this survey.

Block 1

How familiar are you with art books?

◯ 1 (Not familiar at all)   ◯ 2   ◯ 3   ◯ 4   ◯ 5   ◯ 6   ◯ 7   ◯ 8 (Extremely Familiar)

How easy is it to follow the layout of this art book?

1 (Extremely Difficult)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (Extremely Easy)
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

How much of the text did you read?

1 (None of it)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (All of it)
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

How much of the text did you want to read?

1 (None of it)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (All of it)
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

What is your favorite part of this story?

What is your least favorite part of this story?

Does this story remind you of a book, movie, video game, or other IP?

◯ Yes (Which one?) [   ]

◯ No

Which character has the strongest design?

Which character has the weakest design?

Which environment has the strongest design?

Which environment has the weakest design?

[text field]

Do you find this concept entertaining?

O Yes

O No

If an animated series based on this art book was produced, would you watch it?
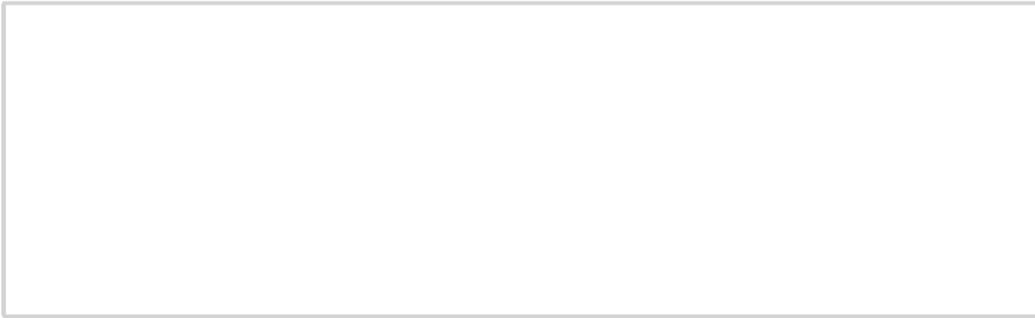
O Yes

O No

Which format do you prefer for an art book?

O Print

O Digital PDF

O Both

O Neither

What do you believe is a reasonable price for an art book of the size and scale displayed at our table?

O Less than $10

O $10 - $20

O $20 - $30

O $30 - $40

O $40 - $50

O Greater than $50

Anything else you would like to share?

This is the end of the survey. Click the button to proceed to submit your responses.

Powered by Qualtrics

95

Appendix D - Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent for Participating in the Concept Art Book Survey

Introduction

      You are being asked to provide feedback on a project. Before you agree, however, you must be fully informed about the purpose of the project, the procedures to be followed, and any benefits, risks or discomfort that you may experience as a result of your participation. This form presents information about the project so that you may make a fully informed decision regarding your participation.

Project Purpose

      The purpose of this project is to create a concept art book for a potential animated series.

Procedures to be followed

      You are currently being asked to fill out an online survey that should take no more than 10 minutes of your time. None of the questions are required, so you may answer as many questions as you are comfortable with and skip any you feel uncomfortable answering. Should you change your mind about participating in the survey, you may choose not to submit your responses and they will not be recorded.

Risks and Benefits in Participation

      There are no foreseeable risks to this survey that would be greater than minimal. In the event any survey questions cause any level of discomfort, participants may refrain from answering those questions or choose to no longer participate in the survey.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

      The data collected will be anonymous. Records of your participation in this survey will be held confidential so far as permitted by law. However, the study investigators, the sponsor or its designee and, under certain circumstances, the Worcester Polytechnic Institute Institutional Review Board (WPI IRB) will be able to inspect and have access to confidential data that identify you by name. Any publication or presentation of the data will not identify you.

Participation in this Research is Voluntary

      Your refusal to participate will not result in any penalty to you or any loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. You may decide to stop participating in the survey at any time without penalty or loss of other benefits. The project investigators retain the right to cancel or postpone the project at any time they see fit.