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GENRE IMMERSION

A SENIOR HONORS PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE HONORS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION WITH HONORS

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My work is all about character. No matter the genre, setting, or story, I create interesting characters to fit the world. I tend to stay in the world of fantasy, but that does not mean I cannot explore other settings.

I have always been aware of my circumstances, but in recent years it has become more apparent. I do not want anyone to be unable to see themselves, so I create art that represents the unrepresented. I feel I am finally connecting with my community through my art, like I am changing the default person.

Whether they are coded or not, no matter the race or ethnicity, everyone should see themselves. I am going to get into the animation world and make it so. Children will get to grow up seeing more and more of themselves and the people around them, so much so that it would be normal to see, say, a Hispanic disabled person or a black lesbian.

Normalize minorities. Normalize people.

THE PROJECT

That being said, I took that philosophy into my project. When first being told about the project, I was told that I could create anything I wanted as long as it related to animation. During my years at ECU, I realized I preferred character design over 2D animation. Thus, I chose to create character designs for my project.

Originally, I was going to create an animation around a woman trying on different costumes for a Halloween party. However, time constraints quickly dashed that idea. I wanted the focus to be the character designs, not the animation, so I tried to think of another idea.

I knew I wanted each design to stand out from one another. So, I decided to stop limiting myself to a single genre. Instead, I would make multiple designs each based on a different genre. But I did not just want to create the designs and show the still images. Presentation is very important, especially when it comes to keeping your audience's attention.

The time I had didn't allow me to animate these characters, though. I would be working towards an unfinishable project if I did. Eventually, I came to the idea of creating an animation in Adobe After Effects. The program is a digital visual effects, motion graphics, and compositing application used in our ART 3082 course. The animation would be simple, and replicate the look of a fighting video game.

With the presentation settled, I had to figure out the designs. I wanted each one to be drastically different from one another, which meant that I would need to pick genres significantly different from one another. During this part of the process, I got input from my classmates. The genres chosen were Horror (Slasher), Fantasy, Western, Mystery, and Science Fiction.

The next step was silhouettes, the part of the pipeline where I figure out what the character's general shape would be. What shapes would be a part of their design to make them stand out from the rest? Once the silhouettes were done, I took a few of the silhouettes and expanded upon them. I took them and created rough designs based around them. With those drawn, I got input from my classmates as to which designs stood out the most to them.

I made a decision and picked which ones to finalize. However, I realized I had not made much progress on the video game animation side of things. I took a break from the character designs to focus on the presentation. I created many User Interface ideas, none of which I used. I did end up merging the designs together, resulting in the UI I made for the animation.

The video game select screen animation was finalized, so I moved on to finishing the character designs. I created character turnaround sheets, which is a 360-degree view of the character that is referenced when making 2D/3D models, illustrations, and more. I had to draw each character at multiple angles. For some, I created extra angles not used on the turnaround sheet as I planned to have the characters spin when they were selected in the animation. It was a way to show the turnarounds in an interesting way without creating too much extra work for myself.

CONCLUSION

The animation was finished and the characters were imported into the project. I found a website that had free sound effects and music, which were used in the final animation. In comparison to my classmates, I had finished my project rather early. Thanks to that, I was able to get their critiques and perfect my work.

This project showed me a taste of what would be in store for me as a character designer. A lot of drawing the same thing repeatedly, focusing on the small details, and shape language. I am very happy with the result, and hope my passion for the craft shows through the final animation.

APPENDIX A: GENRE IMMERSION ANIMATION

The supplementary file [Genre Immersion Final Capstone Animation] includes an animation of five character designs being shown in a character select screen.

APPENDIX B: MYSTERY CHARACTER TURNAROUND SHEET

The supplementary file [Mystery turnaround] includes a JPEG image file of a character turnaround sheet.

APPENDIX C: SCI-FI CHARACTER TURNAROUND SHEET

The supplementary file [Sci-fi turnaround] includes a JPEG image file of a character turnaround sheet.

APPENDIX D: FANTASY CHARACTER TURNAROUND SHEET

The supplementary file [Fantasy turnaround] includes a JPEG image file of a character turnaround sheet.

APPENDIX E: WESTERN CHARACTER TURNAROUND SHEET

The supplementary file [Western turnaround] includes a JPEG image file of a character turnaround sheet.

APPENDIX F: SLASHER CHARACTER TURNAROUND SHEET

The supplementary file [Slasher turnaround] includes a JPEG image file of a character turnaround sheet.

