

Welcome to the Presentation
on
Animation Character Design

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Characters ...

- Add depth to the story and game world
- Aid in the Suspension of Disbelief
- Player's link to the game world





Player Appeal

Believability

Someone/thing to Identify
With





Avatars

- Industry term referring to any protagonist under the player's control
- Avatars need more and better animations, more care and more detail while being designed
- The relationship between player and avatar depends on many factors, including control mechanisms, visual and audio clues, self creation, and many more





Player Designed Avatars

- Most prominent in RPG and online multiplayer games
- Physical design - race, hair, colouring, clothes, attributes...
- Persona - acts like the player's mask while in the game world
- Allow for personal expression, often the best way for players to connect to their avatar

Appearance and Voice



- Preset
 - Skin
 - Hair**
 - Eyes
 - Nose
 - Mouth
 - Jaw / Cheeks
 - Neck / Ears
 - Portrait
 - Voice
- Navigation arrows: left, right, and double arrows for each category.
- Hair
 - Hair Color
 - Eyebrows
 - Eyebrow Color



Name
Elissa Cousland

Previous Next





Game Supplied Avatars

- Connection is dependant on how well defined the designer makes the avatar
- Can be specific, non-specific, or somewhere in between



Non-Specific Avatars

- Avatars that are written as if the player themselves inhabit the world
- Cannot be depicted or described because nothing was specified for them



Game's Hell

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Specific Avatars

- Used when the designers feel limited by having a character that is not specified
- A better sense of belonging, rather than just visiting
- Allows the character to appear on screen
- The player is not the avatar, but still feels emotions related to actions taken by the avatar
- Important for story-based games

Somewhere In Between....





Male and Female Avatars

- Males will play through a game as any avatar, as long as that avatar engages in traditionally male activities
- Generally, males do not identify with their avatars
- Women appreciate the chance to play female avatars, as long as they look somewhat like a real female
- Females see the avatar as an extension of the self and a conduit for self expression





Designing Avatars

- ***FIRST*** decide how you want the player to relate to the avatar you are designing
- Decide on psychological and social details as well as visual details
- How an avatar speaks says a lot about them
 - Gordon Freeman never speaks
 - Mario and Lara Croft speak very little
 - Fang and Ezio speak a lot
- Also need to determine control mechanisms



Control Mechanisms

- Indirect control: the player is a guide and the avatar follows directions, but is not actually controlled

The avatar is instinctively someone else

- Direct control: the player has full control of the avatars movements

The avatar is the player

Visual Appearances

- How a character is drawn has a huge impact on how the player feels about them
- Art-Driven Design
 - Often chosen by visual inclined designers
 - Good if your character does not change over the course of the game
 - Often used when other media is exploited





Body Types

- Humanoids
 - Always have two arms, two legs, one head
 - Body parts and facial features are arranged like a human's
- Non Humanoids
 - Characters that look nothing like humans
 - Animals and slime monsters fall in this category
- Hybrids
 - Have a combination of humanoid and alien qualities





Cartoonlike Qualities

Cool

Tough

Cute

Goofy

Cool

- Never get too upset about things
- Detachment, often with a rebellious attitude
- Often wear sunglasses and slouch when not doing anything
- Clever, witty - often use wits over strength
- Game actions are often fast and focused





Tough

- Exemplify physical aggression
- Often also hyper-sexualized
- Typically male
- Exaggerated height and bulk
- Large, expansive gestures, speak with their fists
- Animations are usually big and abrupt, fast moving and aggressive
- Forward leaning posture



Cute

- Drawn with large eyes and oversized heads
- Rounded features, dress in light colours
- Often personify cheerfulness, with moments of irritation or determination
- Animations often let the characters achieve feats that they would not be able to in real life
- Look innocent and detached



Goofy

- Slightly odd proportions, funny looking
- Behaviour is largely comedic
- Seldom upset about anything for long
- Animations can be comedic, as long as it does not interrupt the player's control





Hyper-Sexualized Characters

- Exaggerating the sexual attributes of an avatar to make them more sexually appealing
- Usually aimed at male teenagers and young men
- Often unrealistic proportions and height
- This also extends to traditional comic book characters
- Cliches, discouraging older players and females
- Often overshadows the other qualities of the game



Expressing Personality

- Clothing, weapons, symbolic objects, names
- Used to uniquely identify a character
- Very crucial for characters, especially when players are required to make snap decisions, i.e. Who should I shoot next?
- Jewellery has a long history of magic, meaning and mysticism
- Distinctive names are also used to set a character apart
- Can also extend to choice of voice actor

Design Rule

Don't add too much detail! Two or three distinctive features is often enough for one character



Colour Palette

- This is especially important for clothing
- Also used to visually set characters apart from everything else
- Colours are chosen to reflect a character's attitudes and emotional temperaments



Sidekicks

- Help explore additional dimensions of the hero character and often used as comic relief
- Some allow for additional actions that a single character could not believably do alone
- Expand the emotional range of the hero by offering a contrast
- Offer the player information that they would not otherwise know

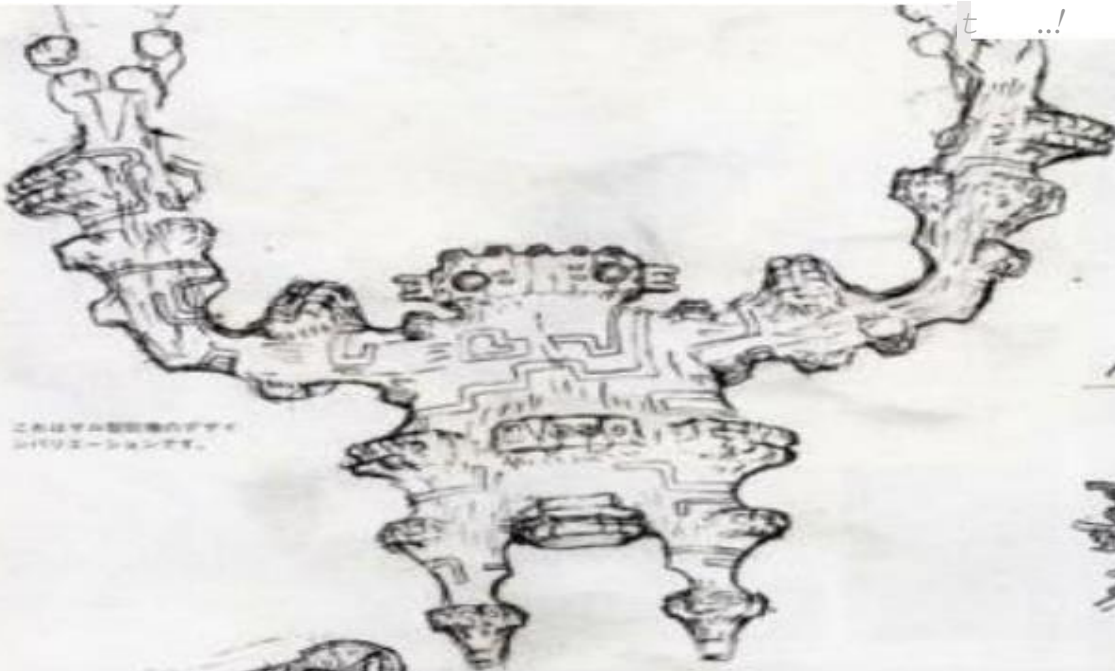


Design Tools

- Concept Art
 - Drawings made in early stages of production to give an idea of what it will look like
 - Used by all departments - art, programming, marketing, audio...

た...!!

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これはその型取物のデザイン
のバリエーションです。



ゾウアインと神んていた型取物のスケッチ
です。火が苦手という鳥獣の仕様
で、翼の型取物のように、アプロに
乗って飛ぶというものをゴツとんですが、
リトライする際に特徴がなくなってしま
ったため、ゴツとんていた型取物です。



この型取物の型取物



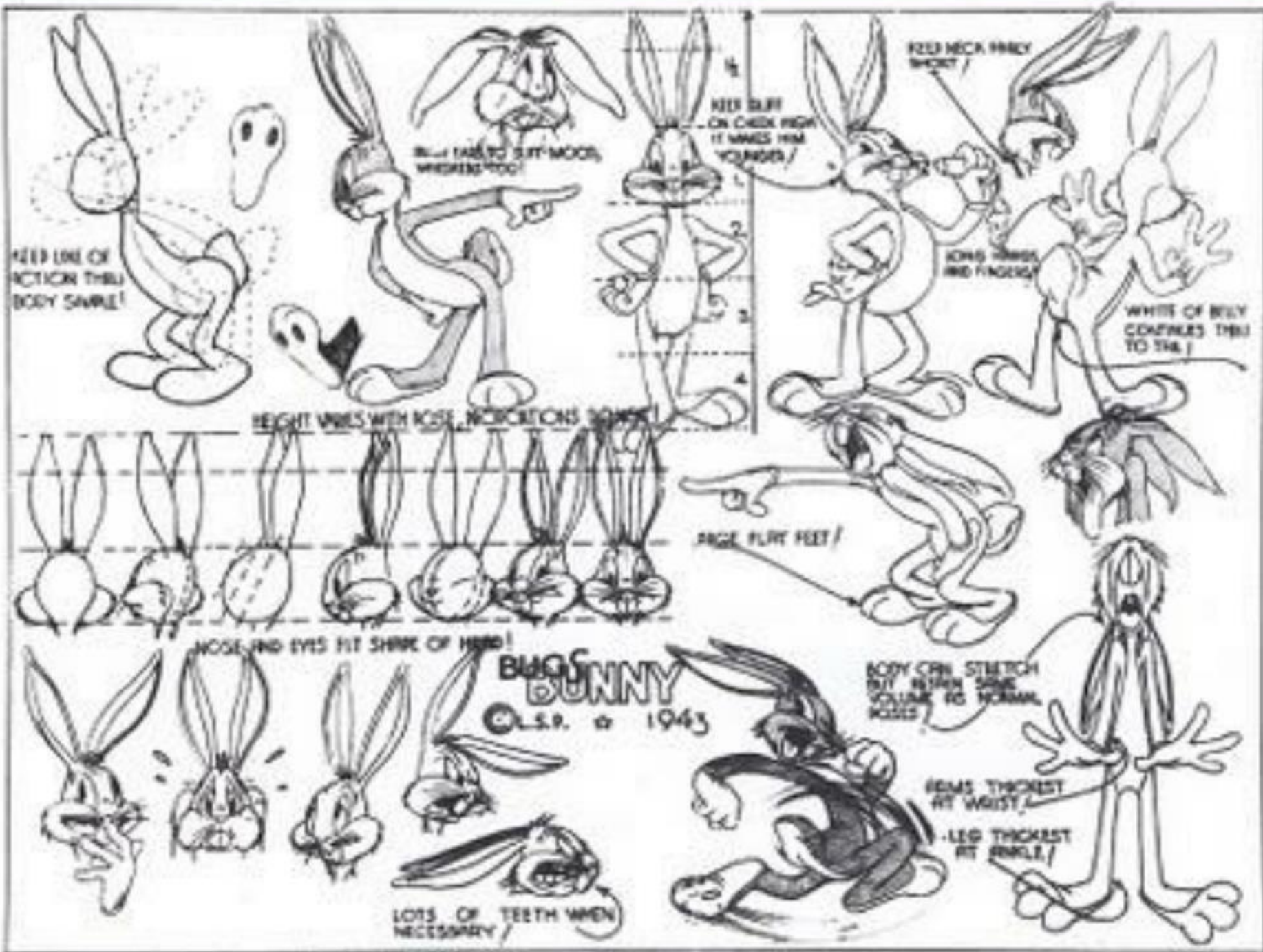
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- **Model Sheets**

- Draws lots of poses for a single character on one page
- Used to represent different emotions and attitudes that may be used in animations
- Allows for comparison to get a better idea of what a character is like



KEEP LINE OF ACTION THRU BODY SWIRL!

BILL TALK TO SUIT MOOD, WHISPER TOO!

KEEP BLUFF ON CHEEK HIGH IT MAKES HIM YOUNGER!

FEEL NECK FINELY SHORT!

LONG FINGERS AND FINGERS!

WHITE OF BELLY CONTRASTS THEM TO THE!

HEIGHT VARIES WITH NOSE, NO PROTRUSION BONES!

MAKE FLUT FEET!

NOSE AND EYES FIT SWIRL OF HEAD!

BUGS BUNNY
© L.S.P. ☆ 1943

BODY CAN STRETCH BUT RETURN SOME VOLUME TO NORMAL, NOSES!

HEMS THICKEST AT WAIST!

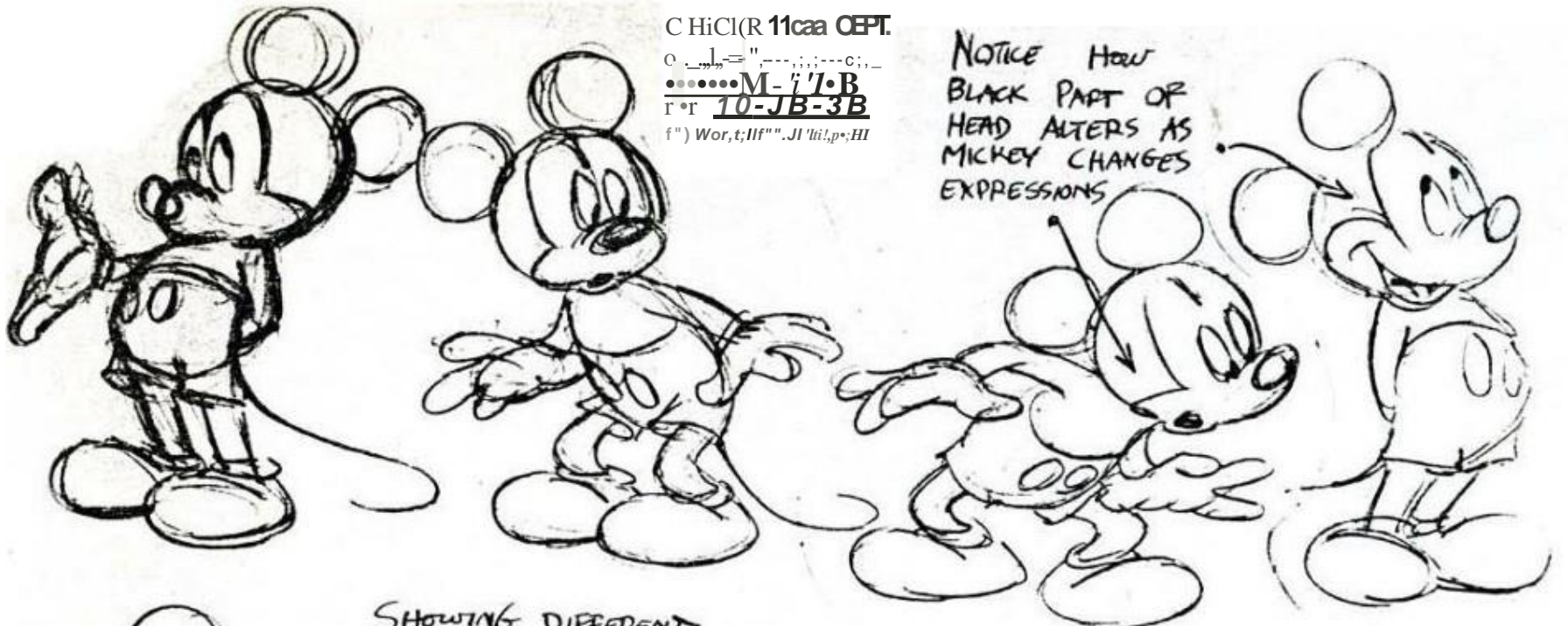
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LOTS OF TEETH WHEN NECESSARY!

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NOTICE HOW
BLACK PART OF
HEAD ALTERS AS
MICKEY CHANGES
EXPRESSIONS



SHOWING DIFFERENT
SHAPES MICKEY'S BODY CAN
ASSUME - STILL CONTAINING
SAME WEIGHT -

LATEST MODELS
OF
MICKEY

MAKE NOSE
DEFINITELY STICK
OUT FROM HEAD -

