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Innovations Report

Character Design, Development and Presentation.

ABSTRACT **Introduction**

The basis of this project started while developing my Major Project. My Major Project is based upon the idea of the seven deadly sins, whereby the short animation features two characters based on two of the sins; Greed and Envy (shown below)



For this project, I hope to develop my initial concept by designing the remaining five characters based on the other deadly sins, (Anger, Gluttony, Lust, Sloth and Pride) while also developing all seven characters in further detail by adding to their personalities and backgrounds.

I hope to develop the initial idea to further expand the concept to produce an appealing basis for further productions.

Aims and research

My first aim is to produce seven effective and memorable character designs ready to present to professionals or to an audience in an interesting and innovative way.

- I will design the characters by researching and developing an understanding of what makes a successful character design.
- I will produce complete concept art for each of the seven characters.
- After designing the characters I will look into how to effectively present character based concept art in an inventive way.

As a result of the initial concept and developed character designs, I will put together a set of items outlining various details about each character, creating a package that will demonstrate and describe each character in an interesting way.

- I will research how the character design and development process fits into an industrial pipeline by contacting companies that I feel produce successful and imaginative characters for animations.
- Using the feedback and also further research into any other details of the process, I will produce the items that usually accompany a character design such as; turnarounds, dynamic poses, colour schemes and expression drawings.
- I then hope to add to these items by producing for each character:
 - A character background story to add depth to the character
 - A short bio. outlining details of the character
- I hope to find out whether the addition of such elements would aid the presentation of a character or whether they would not be needed to present a character.

Once the above are complete, to add an innovative touch to the presentation of the final seven characters and also a dynamic sense to each of their personalities I hope to produce some kind of illustrated story such as a comic or even an illustrated poem.

- I will research ways of doing this to discover the most effective way to present the characters I will have designed.

I hope to create something that will capture the attention and provoke the minds of a design/animation team to help them get into the character's mind

I also intend for the final product to stand alone to an audience as a piece that could be used to add detail and depth to characters that have already been seen in an animation.

Overall I hope to achieve something that will add to the ordinary method of character design and development. Whether it would be efficient in today's pipeline is a matter I will look into. I will do this after researching how the character creation process currently fits into the industrial pipeline of a production such as a short animation.

I also hope to develop my abilities and understanding of creating concept art and in particular, character design. I hope to use, develop and learn a range of skills and techniques in aspects such as story writing, character design and character development. This project will also provide me with the chance to illustrate and paint my designs using a computer graphics package and graphics tablet, something I feel is essential for me to learn which I haven't had the opportunity to do before.

Main problems

- Aesthetic worries such as how to produce appealing and visually effective characters.
- The Conversion of each of the 7 sins into an empathetic character.
- The way in the final results are presented so that the images are clear yet interesting.
- How to develop effective and efficient designs.
- Choosing the most effective way of expressing the personalities of the characters in a final product.

All of these concerns will be researched in order to find relative solutions.

METHOD

Initial Research and Design

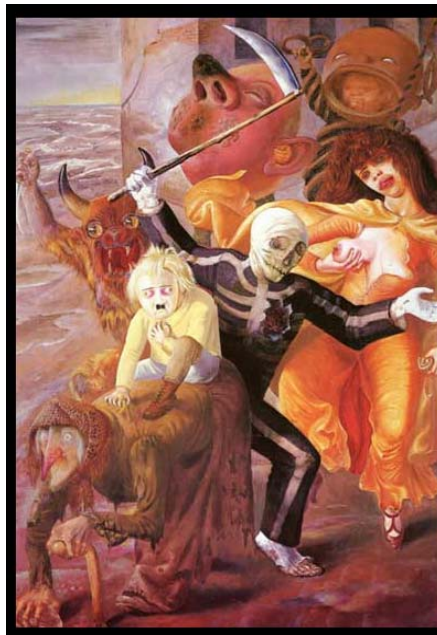
I began my research by looking further into the theory behind the seven deadly sins. Although one of the reasons of choosing to use them as a basis to my project is because of my interest in the concept, I still felt more research was needed.

One site I feel has good information on the sins that I used as my main resource is; <http://www.deadlysins.com/>

I also tried to find out whether the seven deadly sins had been represented in character form previously. I began researching fine artists of the past to begin, discovering that both Hieronymus Bosch, the Dutch northern renaissance painter and Otto Dix, the great German expressionist, had created pieces representing the seven deadly sins. While Bosch's effort remains the more famous, it concentrates on depicting each sin in a scene rather than an individual character:

<http://www.mystudios.com/art/gothic/bosch/bosch-seven-sins.html>

As Otto Dix' piece did depict each sin as a character, it was of more inspiration:



The painting is a symbolic representation of the political situation in Germany at the time when it was painted in 1933 and was created "immediately after the Nazis had removed Dix from his teaching position at the Dresden Art Academy".

"The figure of Sloth (the character in the skeleton costume who holds the scythe, and whose legs and arms form a rough swastika), is prominently featured because the Artist blamed the German people's lack of alarm and concern as a primary reason for the Nazis rise to power."

http://www.luc.edu/faculty/meppers/courses/192_Rationality_Religion_Ethics/documents/dix.html

This in turn led to the death of many, and I feel that the comparison of sloth to being dead is visually an effective one.

Although I wanted to do something different with my character representations of the sins, Dix' symbolic imagery was an inspiring touch which I hoped to include within the appearance of my characters, yet in an alternative way.

Due to the fact that my characters were designed to be used for an animation or similar narrative piece, I wanted their appearance to allow for diverse roles, and therefore include some elements of humour and empathy within their design.

I wanted my characters to have an appearance that may not necessarily depict the relative sin obviously, but with a hint of cleverness or with a twist.

The type of animations I feel that the characters would be suited for would be quite varied, hoping that after their design they could be used in a humorous piece, a serious, meaningful work or even a moral based story.

After initially creating adult characters for my Major project, they were in turn changed to the two more child like characters seen earlier. This I believe was an important decision as it evokes a sense of empathy due to their innocent appearance. And although they represent a sin; something evil they still evoke compassion and empathy.

I therefore decided I would keep a similar style for the remaining characters, designing them as children, which gives their personalities that twist I wanted. For further research I looked at artists who use a similar style to what I wanted for my characters. Artists that I discovered who depict a dark and sometimes macabre style yet with some ingenuity and in cases humour, were:

Jonathon Wayshak

<http://www.scrapbookmanifesto.com/>

Alex Pardee & Robert Bowen

<http://www.eyesuckink.com/>

Rhode Montijo

<http://www.pablosinferno.com/>

They were all greatly inspiring and influential in the initial designing of my characters which I then began to work on.

Further research was carried out into artists and writers who have created child characters in an alternative and original style. I found the following people to be inspiring in this sense:

Tim Burton

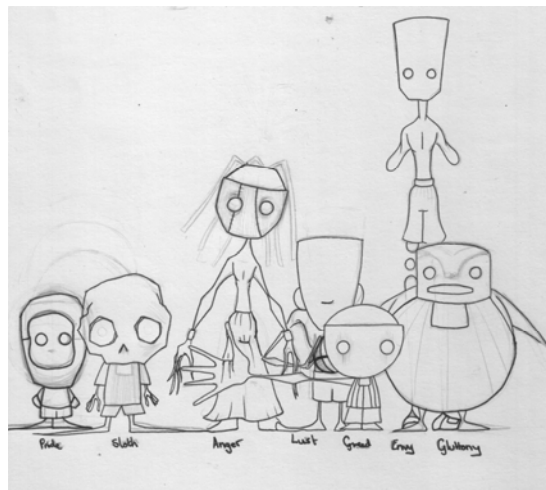
<http://www.timburltoncollective.com/>

Roman Dirge

<http://www.spookyland.com/>

Angus Oblong
<http://www.angusoblong.net/>

I felt I was in a good position after such research to begin putting together a set of characters. After much development and constant alterations I finally decided on a first draft for the characters. Using a simplistic style and trying to keep the group of characters consistent in their style I created the characters shown below:



As can be seen, (besides Greed and Envy) they look quite different from how my final characters turned out.

I realised after creating these characters and doing further research into designing effective characters that my characters were at a good stage in their development, but had to be changed in order to appeal more.

The main reason I decided to use child characters was for their aesthetic appeal and exaggerated proportions. I was not fully exploiting this and felt the characters could be more exaggerated and be made of even more simplistic shapes.

I wanted each character to stand on its own and look interesting, yet when all together the characters would not appear out of place.

After looking at books such as:

‘The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation’ by Ollie Johnston, Frank Thomas

‘The Animator’s Survival Kit’ by Richard Williams

and sites such as:

Building Character by Toby Gard:

http://www.gamasutra.com/features/20000720/gard_pfv.htm

Information about character design:

<http://disneyinformer.com/>

And also looking at successful characters throughout books and television, I learnt a lot about what makes a character more effective and therefore how to improve the early designs I produced.

I realised I needed to base all of the characters on simple shapes. Although some were already based on simple shapes such as circles and squares, in order to keep a consistency between the characters as a group, they all had to have the same level of detail and simplicity.

“The shapes that construct the basic figure of a character help an audience to understand what kind of character it is. Certain shapes have certain connotations to the brain”

Disney Informer

<http://disneyinformer.com/>

In order to create characters that on first viewing have an impact subconsciously, different shapes will evoke certain impressions; using rounded shapes such as circles will give a pleasing impression as a circular shape evokes a soft and gentle emotion. On the contrary, using angular shapes such as triangles will give a sense of aggression and sometimes an evil nature.

The characters that I felt did not fit with the others from my initial designs were ‘Anger’ and ‘Pride’.

I felt Anger looked older than the rest due to his larger body, yet I still wanted him to have some angular shapes to keep his aggressive personality through his appearance. I wanted Pride to have a large head to reflect symbolically his character, yet I wanted him to also be quite naive and innocent so I felt a larger even more exaggerated head would suit him.

With Pride now having such a large head, his shape was too similar to ‘Sloth’, therefore I made sloth’s head less rounded and more abrasive. Sloth was inspired by Otto Dix’s representation of Sloth, yet the personality behind him would turn out to be very different.

I felt Gluttony’s round body suited him, but felt there was something not quite right with his appearance and after trying possible alternatives, I went back to keeping his round body. I decided that his square head gave the wrong image, as square shapes tend to give a strong and reliable impression. I later rounded his head so that his full body gives a rounder shape, so that his torso and head almost form one circle.

I was obviously pleased with the appearance of ‘Greed’ and ‘Envy’ as design work had already taken place previously as part of my Major project for these two characters.

With the majority of the character having round heads, with the exception of Pride, Envy and to a certain degree; Sloth I felt that an edge to Lust’s head shape would add contrast to the group, resulting in the ‘U’ shaped head he has.

Certain design considerations were made to suit their personality and some were made to add depth to their character and relate to their stories, such as Anger’s jacket, Greed’s large hands, Envy’s lack of limbs and also Lust’s lack of eyes. In the end every aspect of their bodies were thought about in some detail before I finally had decided on a final design for each character.

The characters have masks as a symbolic part of their personality as well as part of their story. Symbolically the mask represents the sin that they hide behind their mask, with added purpose and reasoning for the masks in their stories.

I wanted to keep the masks fairly simple, as not to distract from the bodies of the characters, which in themselves aren't greatly complex;

“Good design doesn't necessarily mean that it is complicated or greatly detailed but rather the audience gets a good impression of who the character is and what the purpose is for that character.”

Shigeru Miyamoto, character designer

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shigeru_Miyamoto

It may be effective to design a character in more complexity, yet I feel, for an animation or even any visual story featuring characters that are to express a range of emotions from humour to seriousness, if a character is made up of a simple structure, then it makes the process of expressing the purest emotions more successful. If an animated character contained excess detail in its body or costume, it would cause for extra and needless animation and also distract from the main movement of the character.

For example, if a character wore a hat when there was no real reason behind why the character wore a hat or if the character had a complex muscle system, then these extra details would take extra time to animate, when in fact their movement would not add to the effect of the animation or story.

In advice given on the Disney Informer site, it states:

“When you are drawing concept art or just still drawings for fun, then sure... give your character super elaborate armour and twelve daggers all completely encrusted with jewels, but when you are designing characters for animation sometimes less is more.”

“Think about how much you can get across with the least amount of detail.

Characters that have been condensed into their essence show up better on the screen anyway, so no matter what medium, traditional or computer animation simplify your characters to what they really need to express.”

Disney Informer

<http://disneyinformer.com/>

The majority of the most successful characters in the history of animation were created on such theories and therefore I took note of them when designing my characters.

Also, many successful character designers base their creative approach on such theories:

“I start off designing characters with the simplest basic shape I can come up with. I approach design starting with the general shape to the particular elements. I am constantly thinking about contrast in shapes and angles.”

Stephen Silver, character designer

<http://www.silvertoons.com/silvertoons/>

Another element of character design that is vital to consider, other than simplicity in shapes, is also the contrast in shapes as mentioned above.

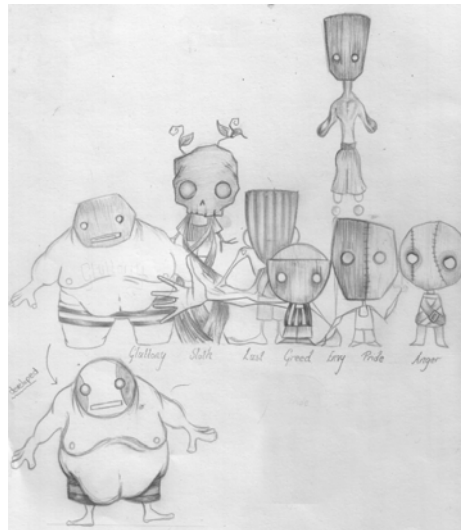
I feel contrast is one of the most important things to consider when designing characters. It has been seen countless times throughout the history of animation and also through acting and comedy duos, where there is a contrast between two characters such as a large, bulky character with a smaller and thin one. It is not very

interesting for an audience to see a group of characters who all have the same shape and build with only slight differences in costume or facial expression.

The most intriguing and exciting character groups, families or duos have good contrast in terms of shape and size to one another. Take most past and present comic duos for instance; it is difficult in reality to find good contrast in the appearance of people and so when it is found, it adds dramatically to the effectiveness of the act. This directly applies to animated characters, whereby even more contrast can be implemented.

After thinking about, and taking into account the ideas above I began making various alterations to my initial designs. Some were changed and then changed back to be more like they were initially and some were altered completely. This is where I decided upon the final look of the characters that would later only encounter slight alterations before ending up with what I finally produced.

This is what they looked like at this stage:



The next stage was to colour the characters, which I also put a lot of thought into. Not only is it necessary to use contrast within the appearance of the characters but every aspect, including colour schemes.

It is useful to know about colour theory when thinking about colour schemes, as certain colours can denote different aspects about a character. It may not be obvious to an audience, but a colour can evoke a feeling subconsciously through what the colour signifies. In general, red gives an impression of warmth or even danger, yellow evokes energy and brightness, and depending on the hue; blue can be cold and dark or a soft and restful colour.

I based the colour schemes of each character on the colour that each of their sin is associated with; Anger is denoted by red, Greed with yellow, Gluttony with orange, Pride with purple, Sloth with a light blue, Lust with a dark/deep blue and Envy of course with green.

Yet I made sure the tones and hues I used worked for each character and kept in mind what each colour evokes in a psychological sense as this can add a hint to a characters personality.

I made sure I didn't use too many colours in each character, as the characters would clash with each other when in a group, so I tried to only use colours that compliment

the main colour of each character, for example; Pride who is mainly purple has a yellowish shirt (yellow being the complementary of purple).

“Colour schemes should be kept bold and within a limited palette. That way the colours begin to symbolize a character, just as blue, grey, and a dash of yellow invoke Batman”

Toby Gard

“You should try and not use every colour in the rainbow on each character; it becomes crowded, tacky and overall confusing. Using colours wisely and with a reason will make characters easier to read and more appealing to your audience.”

Disney Informer

After considering what colours to use, I made sure the group of characters did not appear too bold and multi-coloured when placed in a group by seeing how the different chosen colours appeared when placed together.

After several weekly tutorials, it was agreed that the characters were effective in their appearance and conveyed empathy and emotion which was encouraging. I then began to colour the characters using Photoshop using the colour schemes previously discussed.

I then completed the final coloured turnarounds which have been submitted in order to see clearly (below is a small version of an image containing all of the finalised and coloured characters:



It was the first time I had used my new graphics tablet and painted using a graphics package.

I used a variety of techniques and methods to ‘paint’ the characters, starting by illustrating them in the software with subtle lines and then gradually adding colour and then adding increasing detail. I used tools such as the smudge, blend, clone, burn and dodge tools.

Research into Industry

After designing the characters I had learnt a great deal and once I was at a stage where I was comfortable and pleased with the designs I contacted professional companies

for the next stage of my research and project, which was to look into the industrial pipeline and how character design and presentation fits into a production.

The reasons for doing this was so that I could achieve an understanding of how things are done in industry for my own benefit as I feel it is possible for me to pursue a career in a related field and also discover whether the process could be improved or made more effective. I also felt that if it was possible, professionals could give me some feedback on the characters I had designed.

I contacted some companies I felt produced work that was of a similar style to mine or that I felt used effective and interesting characters, such as Studio AKA who produced a successful short animation named 'Jojo in the stars'.

<http://www.studioaka.co.uk/html/index.html>

I also contacted some freelance designers and illustrators who I felt produced effective work. I received an encouraging response from Jules Langran;

<http://www.jules.net/index.php>

who was kind enough to offer any advice I required on how her design process works and also offered to give some critical advice on the designs I had produced.

I kept in touch with the professionals who were keen to give me advice throughout the project.

I had sent emails to many companies of whom the majority were extremely busy and could not give a full response although they did give some feedback on how their character development process operates.

I initially heard back from Phil Davies, a producer at Astley Baker Davies;

<http://www.astleybakerdavies.com/aboutabd.htm>

Although he was extremely busy he gave some useful ideas about how they conduct the character design and development process:

"We write the synopsis and then an outline, then design the main characters, then make a trailer, and then work up the story line (or story lines if its 52) after all that we take it to the financiers and pitch for the money.

The design process starts on paper and ends with a finished 3 D character turnaround and 2 D model sheet which includes dynamic poses and alternative views of the character."

Phil Davies

It was clear that companies such as Astley Baker Davies spend much time designing the characters before finalising the stories they will appear in.

I was beginning to work on some alternative poses and dynamic images of my characters at this stage which I felt was important. The fact that Astley Baker Davies produce such dynamic images too, clarified this.

Such images of characters will help a team who will go onto model and animate characters, achieve more of an understanding about how the characters will move and convey emotion. I felt it would also be useful to draw up some images of the

characters moving to see if there would be any errors in their design and I also drew some images of their facial expressions.

Although all of the characters wear masks, I felt they could still convey some facial expression through movement and change of the shape of the eye holes in their masks.

By now I had completed at least one dynamic pose for each character which I felt would help me to further complete some dynamic illustrations to illustrate the final product.

I learnt from Jules Langran who I had earlier contacted, that it is important for a character to convey a sense of emotion in a static pose, and if that can be done, then when a character is animated they will in theory come to life even more.

She also stated how she goes about designing and developing characters relative to a set story:

“-I start with an idea for a story and write a brief synopsis that covers the main story line and basic feel and emotion I want to convey with the piece. I also include a brief list of the main characters. Listing character traits at this stage also helps me picture what the characters will look like. Are they mean, happy, sneaky, mad etc. Do they stoop, stomp, skip etc.”

she then goes onto design the characters, after the main story has been set.

After hearing back from Studio AKA, I noticed that different companies go about the design and development of characters differently. Some develop characters before thinking of stories, and some companies will think of a plot or outline a story before even thinking about how the characters will appear.

Therefore I realised that there is great variation in this process of the industrial pipeline.

Creating the Stories

After creating the turnarounds and dynamic poses, I developed a short background story for all seven characters, as I had initially set out to do.

For inspiration, I looked at the artists that I had initially been researching who also went onto produce narrative work for their characters such as Tim Burton and Angus Oblong who created the books;

‘Creepy Susie’ by Angus Oblong

‘The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy’ by Tim Burton

These were both influential in my project and I appreciate both of these artist’s work. Also, the dark and mysterious stories of Edgar Allan Poe were of influence:

<http://bau2.uibk.ac.at/sg/poe/>

The short background stories I went onto write after much thought, outlined a brief description of each of the character’s pasts and how they ended up where they are. The stories are of dark humour to suit the style that I used for the designs.

I went onto send the final character turnarounds for each character and some of the final background stories to the professionals I had kept in contact with, which included Jules Langran and Dermot Flynn and Phil Davies of Studio AKA. I had hoped to learn whether creating such backgrounds would be useful to those involved in the further development and use of characters, and one way of finding out would be directly from professionals.

I received some constructive feedback and some positive responses from those I contacted, of which will be outlined later in the outcomes of the project.

Final product

The final product was to be something that was developed and produced for a variety of reasons. The first reason was for it to aid the understanding of my characters and help to present, not only their appearance in active poses but also their personality when revealed to either professionals or to an audience.

I hoped that the product would stand alone as a piece whether it was seen before or after any animation featuring the characters. I felt it could add background to an animation featuring the characters such as my Major project animation, or even a future animation featuring the characters. Or if it was viewed before any animation had been seen, it would also give an interesting and memorable impression of 7 new characters.

Before I started working on the final product I created a short bio for each of the characters that could be used for similar reasons to the final product, but in a shorter and more concise form. It also helped me to outline the essential details of the characters and have something to look at when trying to think of the stories to base the final product on, as a starting point.

I thought about how to go about producing the final product and whether it should be a series of short comics or a selection of illustrated poems.

I started working on some short comics, but felt that they weren't expressing the twisted and quirky style the initial stories and designs had. I started to research comics that I felt were as close to the style I was trying to get across in my own work, and found the following of some use:

A comic about two children who live with the grim reaper:

<http://rabid-monkeys.com/>

A young girl given the responsibility to run her own shop:

<http://www.gashaponshop.net/>

Comics featuring a young couple to eventually befriend and live with a zombie

<http://www.orneryboy.com/>

A twisted and somewhat disturbing selection of comics, created by Michael Shapiro (I didn't want my work to be as obscene as Shapiro's, but it gave an insight of to how to express dark humour in a comic)

<http://www.bookofsick.com/>

After creating some short, joke based comics featuring most of the characters, I felt that maybe my other idea of creating illustrated poems would express more depth into the personalities my characters.

The comics did give another perspective to their personalities, yet didn't convey the detail I wanted and although they worked as comics I felt a more successful result would be achieved by producing illustrated poems. So I decided to work on the poems, feeling they could evoke more empathy, quirkiness and eccentricity as well as detail. I had noticed Poets and writers such as Edgar Allan Poe and Tim Burton had expressed a similar sense of wittiness within the detailed narrative of a poem before and so I looked further into their work.

Also I felt that due to the way a poem is read and the way it rhymes, it can in itself evoke some humour as well as portray a story. The poems would also contain more words and therefore be closer to the impressions that were shown through the initial background stories.

I started by thinking of some short event stories based on the background stories or something that would communicate the personality and 'sin' of the character. It took time to think about, but I felt that I had seven good starting points for each of the poems.

As I wrote the poems, I illustrated each of the significant verses, completing and illustrating each poem, one at a time.

Once all seven poems had been written and illustrated, I traced the illustrations into Photoshop and began to paint them using similar techniques to those which I had used to colour the final turnarounds. By now I had become quicker at completing the main tasks involved in painting concept art.

I thought that I would experiment with different colouring styles to see how the characters would appear using a different approach. I used a scribble type style for Sloth and a bolder approach for Gluttony and so on.

I felt that it was a good idea to try different approaches, as if the characters were presented to a company, the company would be given more options to how they would like the characters to appear, based on the different colouring styles I had used, which could easily be changed for different characters.

I created some rough textures to apply as a filter to the illustrations of characters such as Pride and created a filter that defined the outlines for the illustrations of Greed. For the illustrations of Envy and Lust I used a similar approach I used for the turnaround images to define more detail and see how such a style would appear in more action based poses.

Once all the poems had been finalised and the illustrations coloured, I had completed the main product of the project.

I later went onto make a short video for each poem that was narrated by a voice over so that anyone reading the poems could have an alternative way of viewing them.

These videos, which have been submitted, work well in depicting the poems in a more interesting way.

Outcomes

Fulfilment of Aims

The main aim of this project, as stated in the abstract, was to create and then develop seven characters after initial research and design work, which I did. Whether the characters are effective and memorable is an opinion of the audience or person

viewing the characters. I feel extremely satisfied with the personalities and personas that I have created and designed as well as the aesthetic appearances of the seven characters. Yet it is important for such a creative and aesthetic based project to be viewed by others in order to gain an idea of how the final product appears to a wider range of people.

The feedback on the character designs was positive, as I mentioned earlier.

It was stated from Jules Langran that

“The designs are great and provoke empathy”

and *“the colours are suitable and the textures are effective”*

And worthy of note was her response to the background stories which I had sent for the characters; ‘Sloth’, ‘Anger’ and ‘Gluttony’ only;

“The stories behind them are well thought out and I love the dark/quirky feel they have”

It was stated that she felt that ‘Anger’ and ‘Sloth’ were the characters that came across most effective. This was an interesting view as these two characters were two of the three that I attached the background stories for when sending her the designs. This could suggest that the background stories are indeed effective in adding depth to a character as well as making the character itself appear more convincing or effective by provoking a new sense of understanding.

I went on to ask others which character they felt was the most effective after showing all seven of the designs, yet only two or three background Stories, to which it seemed those presented with the stories became more appealing.

In reference to the concept and designs themselves, character designer and illustrator Dermot Flynn of Studio AKA stated:

“The idea is very interesting and the characters show good development of the idea”

“The characters appear to be suited for a range of productions from a short script to a feature film.”

and Renato Pecs, production coordinator at Studio AKA responded with the following feedback:

“Your outline appears pretty comprehensive and sounds like a feature film package and such detail may not be suitable for a short animation”

yet he also mentioned:

“this (background stories) would help to prepare stories for a series”

in reference to the background stories and added details I mentioned I was working on, such as the bios and illustrated stories.

Therefore, although Renato Pesci stated that the added elements to my design process were not efficient for a short animation, they would help for preparing stories for a series of animations.

Continuing with the effectiveness of the character’s background stories and other added elements, in summary, it was shown from Jules Langran’s response that they made the characters more appealing and empathetic as also shown from other opinions I gathered. I felt overall from the response I received from animators that sometimes designs on their own do not convey enough emotion. So the addition of backgrounds and the final product I produced, to an animator would provide the understanding needed to understand a character enough to animate it effectively with added knowledge of how it may behave and move.

I believe that the illustrated poems could stand alone as a work in themselves whilst also supporting an animation such as my Major project or help to start new animations, especially the narrated video representation of the poems.

It was suggested that the poems could be published as a short book similar to Tim Burton's Book about Oyster Boy. Although it was merely a suggestive idea, I feel that it was encouraging to hear and gave myself further confidence in the characters I had created.

Whether the creation of such stories would efficiently fit into a pipeline in today's industry is a relative matter. Depending on the company and the production, the stories and images may well be beneficial to help develop further stories or assist a production team's understanding of the characters. On the other hand, for a short animation where not too much understanding of the characters is required, it may be inefficient to spend time on backgrounds for characters that will only be seen for a short time in an animation.

I have developed and learnt many new abilities that will aid my future career. I have learnt a great deal about the aesthetics and theory behind the creation of concept art and design in general.

The research into and implementation of designs, short comics, and illustrating have aided my drawing skills which I feel have not been tested or used in recent years as much as I had hoped. It is extremely important for me to exercise my drawing and creative skills as they are important in communicating ideas effectively and quickly in the animation industry. This project gave me the opportunity to not only use my drawing skills, but improve them and also learn new techniques that combine such skills with computer graphics.

I also learnt a great deal from researching into and working on how to create effective narrative through story writing and creating poems.

One of the most important results of this project was that I was able to become comfortable using a graphics tablet and relative software to improve and develop my visual work.

What I have learnt

- In creating an aesthetic based work it is vitally important to gain feedback from others, especially those with past experience in a related field of work, as in the end it is all about opinion, whether a design is successful.
- I have learnt a vast amount about the theory behind design and concept work, especially related to character design.
- I have learnt more about the industrial pipeline concerning the area of expertise I hope to become proficient at, and learnt that this area of the pipeline (design and development stage) differs from company to company, meaning that new ways of doing tasks can easily be incorporated into the pipeline if they suit the project.
- Also I hoped to improve the current pipeline with my new ideas of how to design and present characters, I feel that the pipeline in respect to character design has already been improved for each company as they implement the methods that suit their productions. Yet there is definitely room for new methods, such as those I have thought about introducing.
- The feedback I have received has taught me new lessons from a professional perspective.

- I have learnt that by creating a product such as the illustrated poems I produced, they can strengthen the appeal of an animation as well as stand alone as something that can be viewed by someone who hasn't seen an animation featuring the same characters. As an example, my Major project will allow an audience to see how some of the characters move and appears in 3D and the products of this project will allow an audience to learn more about the character's past, their personalities and also other events they have encountered.

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Not only can the work I have produced in this project appeal to an audience, but hopefully also to a company. I will definitely hope to continue work on the characters I have created in this project, further expanding the concept as a whole. The methods I have learnt in this project will change the way I go about design work in the future, and depending on the project I can accompany my designs with added depth if required by adding background stories and other such elements if required.

Conclusion

Although the techniques and methods I have developed and learnt are not new on a global scale, their possible incorporation into the development of characters and the animation pipeline maybe a new idea to many companies. The skills I have learnt are also not skills that have never been seen before, but to me they are not only new and interesting but effective and valuable.

I feel that one of the most innovative results of the project is the visual representation of a concept (the seven deadly sins) that has only been visually depicted successfully in fine art, created many centuries ago. The representation of such a concept is something that can teach audiences a great deal through animation, and by using such characters, moral lessons can be depicted subtly within an appealing and engaging story. The versatility of the characters in terms of what they could be used for and depict, is something that I feel is innovative.

Overall, I feel that this project has been personally successful. The project has allowed me to learn more about the industry I hope to enter and has taught me vital skills whilst also providing me with a piece of work I can further develop and pursue.