Discovering the 3D Artist Within:
A War for the Overworld Story

Patrick Hore

This talk

My journey to becoming a 3D character artist for games

- What problems I faced
- How I learned to develop
- Sources of inspiration and useful tools

Take away points on how to;

- Develop 3D skills and stay motivated
- Work with people more effectively
- The importance of looking after yourself

About Me

- Brightrock Games
  - 3D Character Artist:
    - **War for the Overworld**
  - 3D Character Artist and Art Director:
    - **Upcoming project**
- Skatanic Studios
  - 3D Character Artist:
    - **Living the Deal**

Finding my direction

I love

- Sculpting **creatures**
- Creating content for games
- Developing and **refining ideas** with people
- Understanding how **colour** can be used effectively

Finding my direction

- **Scott Campbell** (art director/artist for Psychonauts and Brutal Legend)
- **Regrets** not paying attention to
  - **Colour theory class**
  - **Art history**
    - Didn't apply to him/interest him
      - This hurt him as an artist later on
- I was put off **art** in school
  - Surprise history of art test

- The point
  - It's **easy to feel discouraged**
  - It's **easy to bite off more than you can chew**
- Balance
  - Discovering what **excites you** and **engages you**,
  - But **not dismiss areas** that don't make sense or don't seem significant immediately

Scott Campbell

Scott Campbell, Illustrator/Video Game Art Director/Comic book Artist | DePaul VAS

Finding my direction

- University
  - Exposure to a variety of disciplines
    - Exploring **generalist** VS **specialist**
      - Small projects/teams
        - Typically more of a generalist
      - Bigger projects/teams
        - Typically more of a specialist
      - In between
        - **T-shaped skills model**

  - Learning the **pipeline**
    - Good to have understanding of **other areas**
    - How each step informs the next
      - Animation/rigging/lighting/design
    - Better **communication** (better language/key terms)
    - Better **development**

Generalist

Specialist

Finding my direction

- Mentorship/peers/community
  - Motivation
  - Inspiration
  - Jealousy

- Knowing about people
  - Ahead of our own development
  - In alternative disciplines
    - **Motivated** to improve
- Being inspired
  - Possibilities as artist
  - Career directions

- **Online**
  - ZBrush Central
  - CG Society
  - Polycount
  - Mod DB (War for the Overworld)

Mike Knowland

  - The Last of Us
  - Just Cause 3 and 4
  - Gears of War
  - Avengers: Endgame

Finding my direction

- Developing a **critical eye** for
  - Effective asset creation
  - Identifying problem areas
    - Achieved by
      - **Exposure/collecting** good art
      - **Analysing** our own work

- Learning to work with people
  - My lessons in group work (**trust**)
    - Knowing people's skills and interests
    - Allowing people to motivate themselves
    - Feeling **challenged**, not over burdened
    - Feeling **directed**, not ordered

- Looking after health (**physical**/**mental**)
  - Inform creativity
  - Allow us to perform at our best
  - Collaborate better
  - **Enjoy ourselves**

- Mistakes
  - Energy drink
  - Long hours inside on my own
  - Chicken Nugget Club

- Changes
  - Moderating caffeine and sugar
  - Socialising
  - Exercise

War for the Overworld

2013-2015

War for the Overworld

Positives

- Working towards a **goal**
    - Motivation
- Problem solving on our own
    - Learning by doing
- Learning to **communicate** in difficult circumstances
    - Online communication
    - Different time zones
- Having **constraints** to follow and work around
   - Industry Experience

Negatives

- Working in a **bubble** without professional support
    - Mistakes were made
- The quality of work was not being **monitored** effectively

War for the Overworld

- Level of Detail
  - A lecturer explained the temptation to **over detail** (particularly new artists)
- Example
  - Bafu: Spent a lot of time creating detailed anatomy
  - Only for it to appear at a 10th of the scale I was working on it
- **Swapping** between parts after 10/20/30 minutes
  - Keep things built up evenly
  - Maintain focus
    - It's easy to drift off/lose scope of the bigger picture
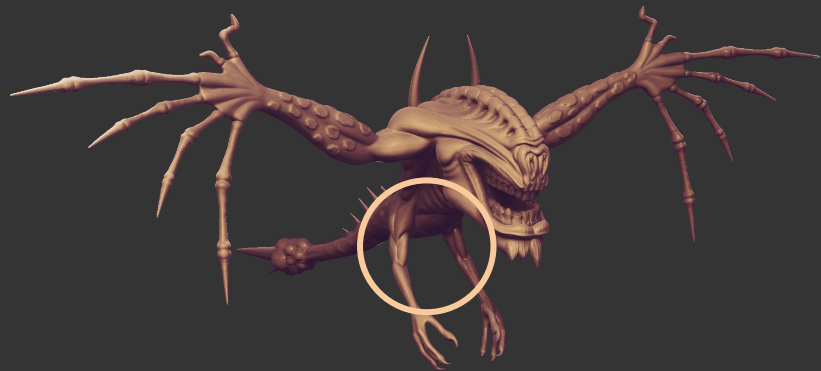
War for the Overworld

- Balancing feedback
    - Some people say not enough detail/some say too much
    - **Subjective** nature of art makes it hard
        - Finding **objective** ways to **critique**
        - Considering and respecting people's skill level and area of expertise

- Main lessons of the project
    - Knowing the restraints/limitations as early as possible (and testing them)
    - Learning to create things quickly and **reusing assets** (like hands)
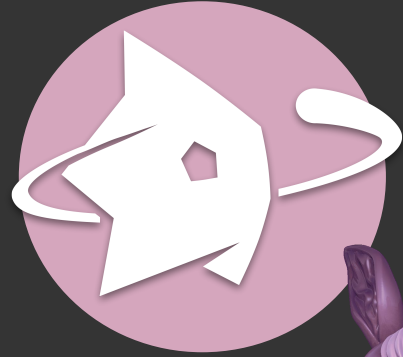
Brightrock Games

- Brightrock Games
  - The team moved into an office in Brighton
  - Art and Design have grown
  - **Improved communication** and **collaboration**
    - More discussion
    - More critiquing ideas

- Personality Test
  - It really highlighted people's different
    - Perspectives
    - Problem solving
   - Approaches to work/life

Brightrock Games

- Lesson: Communicating ideas differently
  - Our language is so fraught with **interpretation**
  - E.g. a slight variation for one person is a much bigger change for someone else
  - Finding **objective** ways for getting people on the same page
    - Reference Images
    - Diagrams
    - Moodboards
    - Suitable terminology
      - Measurements
      - Hue, light value, saturation
  - Feedback
    - **Interpreting**
    - **Empathising**

Brightrock Games

- Interpretation: advantage
  - Artist **interpretation** for **creativity**
- Art test
  - Traditional
  - Sentient
  - Robotic
  - Floating
  - Gemstone
- Give rise to **unique art**

- Looking after the team/**family**
  - Respect
  - Honesty
  - Gratitude
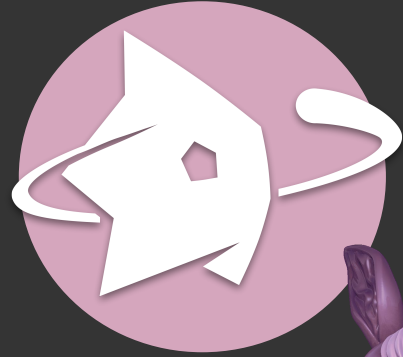
Training others

- Biting off more than you can chew VS **sustainability**
  - Level headed ambition/**moderation**
    - **Challenging** yourself but **not overreaching**
      - Find a routine that works for you
  - Managing **tunnel vision** and **flow**
    - Flow: Full **immersion** and **focus**
    - Tunnel vision: **limited scope**
      - Feedback
      - Self reflection
      - Considering alternative approaches
      - Switching tasks
      - Taking breaks
   - **Fresh perspective**

Training others

- Ego
  - Awareness of our own and others
  - Awareness that **critique** is **not personal**
    - If it is, it is the problem of the person giving it
- Overly attached to work
  - From time and effort put in
    - Time away helps
      - More **unbiased** critique

- Quantity and quality
  - **Practice** going through the **whole pipeline** to improve each step
  - Don't spend **all** your time making a masterpiece
  - Improve the **process** more than the **asset**

Tools

- Self analysis
  - Time management - **Jira StopWatch**
- Pintrest
  - **Storing/finding** references
  - Inspiration for developing a 'critical eye'
- .gifs for references
  - Clear communication
    - Animation
    - VFX
  - **ScreenToGif**

- Lifestyle management
  - Having **other interests**
    - **Expand creativity**
    - Give **breathing space** from work
    - Practice balancing and scheduling different parts of life
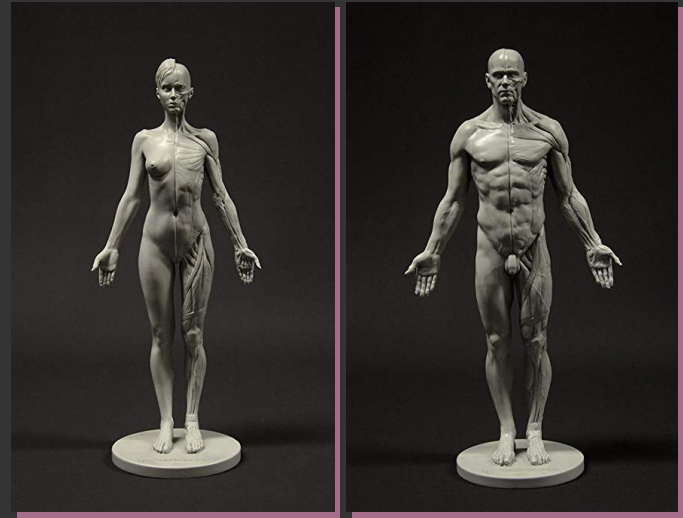
- 3D Total figures
  - Useful reference
  - Be mindful of limitations
  - Body image/relatability
    - Artist: Lucy (**Loukia**) Kyriakidou

Tools

The Creative Brain with David Eagleman

- Phil Tippett
  - Star Wars
  - Indiana Jones
  - Jurassic Park
  - Starship Troopers

- Art folder/Pintrest/PureRef
  - I would collect **references** of artists' work I liked
    - This served as reference material
      - **Colour** theory
      - **Anatomy** study
    - Help develop a critical eye
    - My personal art would amalgamate these ideas
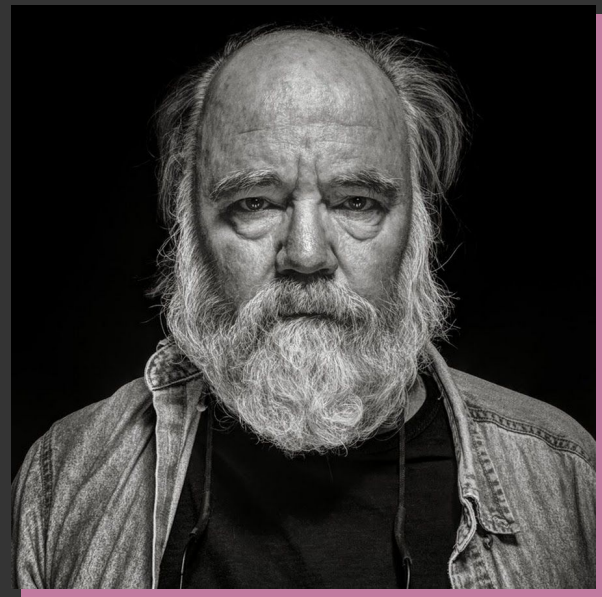
Phil Tippett is an American film director and Oscar and Emmy Award winning visual effects supervisor and producer, who specializes in **creature design**, stop motion and computerized character animation
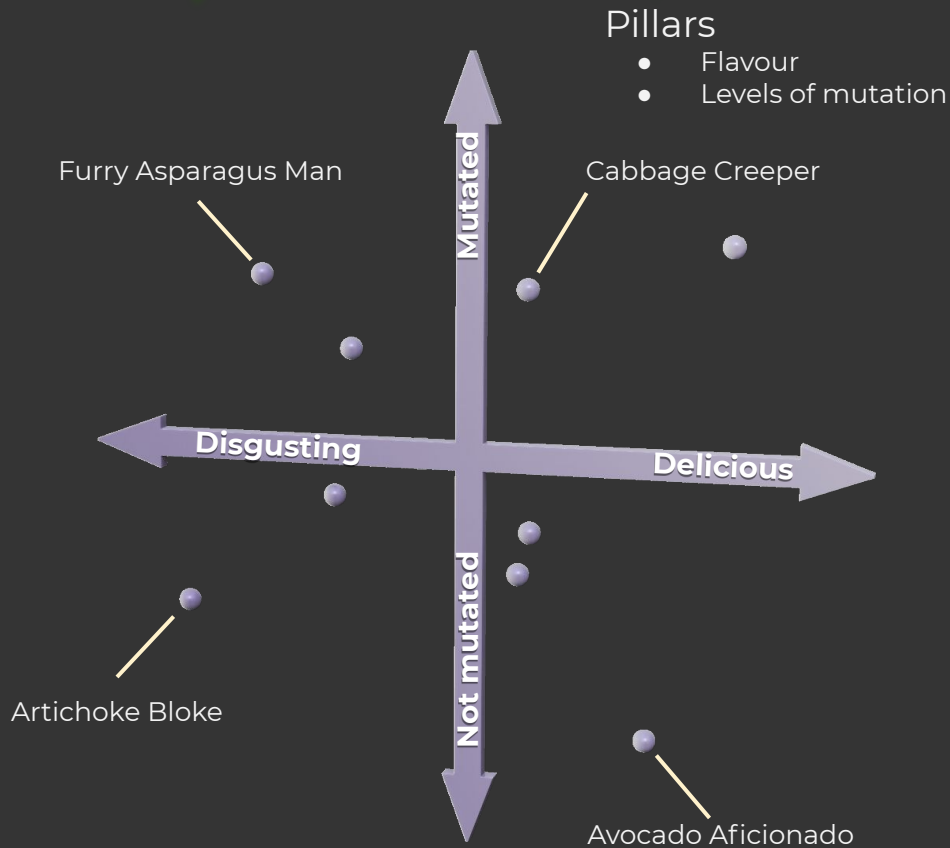
Lessons

- Working with people
- Representing art **objectively**
  - Establishing art **pillars**
  - Accessible **documentation**
    - Help guide art choices
    - Keep **consistency**
    - Decipher between taste and effectiveness

- Character matrix
  - Communicating ideas clearly
  - Establishing limitations of pillars for a game's universe
 - Help to create **variety** and/or **similarity** where intended
  - Identify gaps

VEGETABLE FURY

Pillars
- Flavour
- Levels of mutation

Furry Asparagus Man

Cabbage Creeper

Mutated

Disgusting

Delicious

Not mutated

Artichoke Bloke

Avocado Aficionado

Summary

- Finding my **interests**
  - Helped maintain my development through challenges
- Exposure to **great art/artists**
  - Motivation
  - Developing a **critical eye**
- Being **passionate** VS being **too precious** with work
- Deadlines/milestones
  - Balancing **speed** of development with **quality**

- Being **healthy**
  - Matthew Walker (professor of neuroscience and psychology)
    - Getting seven to nine hours
  - Meditation/mindfulness
    - Paying attention to my **mental** and **physical** state
  - **Talking** to people
  - Awareness of **diet**

    - **Failure** is only **practice** in **disguise**
      - But only if we **learn** from it
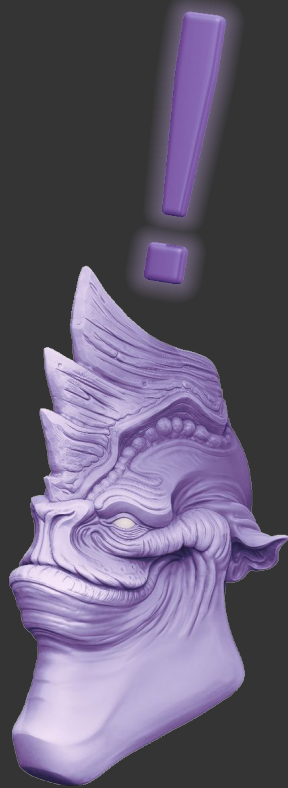
End

- **Blender Guru:** YouTube
- **How To Be Creative: How an Artist Turns Pro:**
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1lTcgSzf0AQ&t=4s
- **The Creative Brain with David Eagleman**
- **Scott Cambell**:
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vg0bR3PqUM8&t=1s
  - (Scott Campbell DePaul VAS)
- My main pipeline:
  - 3Ds Max/Blender
  - 3D Coat
  - Photoshop
  - Quixel
  - ZBrush
- .gifs
  - **ScreenToGif**

Patrick Hore