

# Gray Hodgkinson



**Massey University**

COLLEGE OF CREATIVE ARTS

Toi Rauwharangi

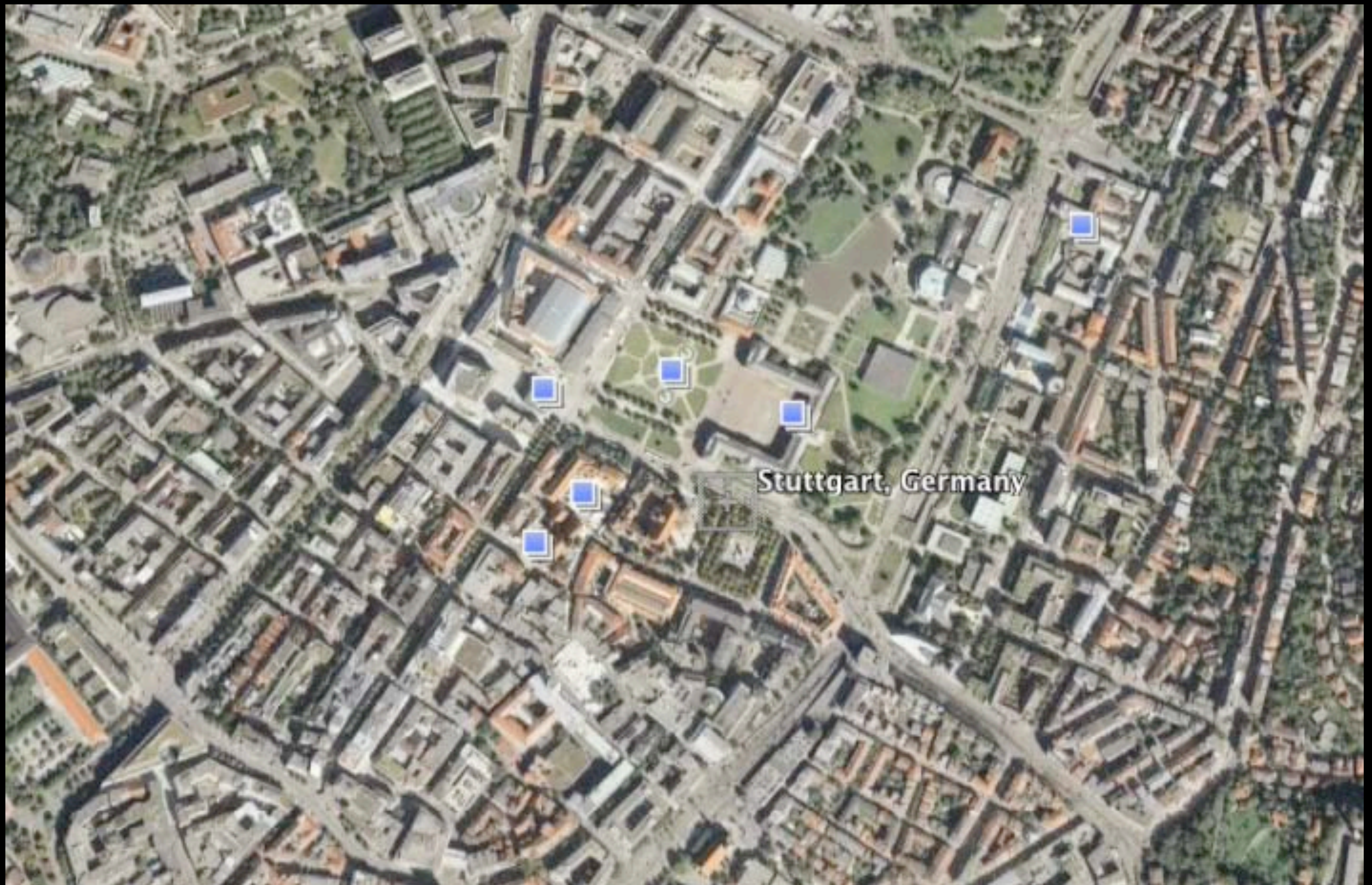
WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND



New Zealand

The farthest civilised place  
from Germany





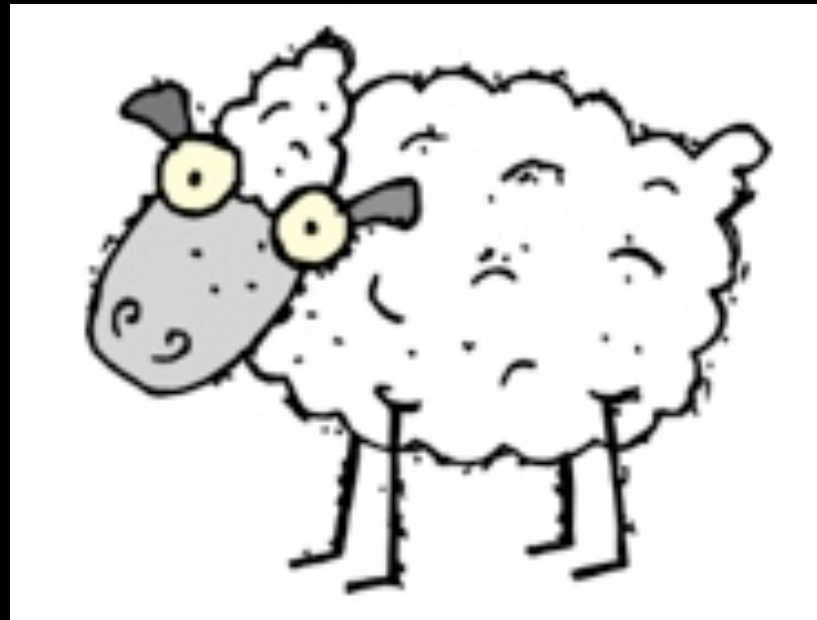






4 million people

40 million sheep



# British-based colony



# Home of the Kiwi





# Home of The Lord of the Rings





# Massey University College of Creative Arts





# Massey University College of Creative Arts





We have well behaved students ....





# We have exhibitions





# College of Creative Arts (CoCA)

- Bachelor of Design: Hons
- Master of Design: Visual Communication
- PHD
- Study-Exchanges with Germany, Singapore, others ...



# General -> Specific

Yr 1

Yr 2

Yr 3

Yr 4 - Hons

Masters



General Visual  
Communication

Specialist  
study  
eg:  
Animation



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Massey University. Digital Media > **Exposure** 2007. Welcome to **Exposure** 2007. All of these students are Visual Communication Design majors, most of whom are ...

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## Welcome to Exposure 2007

All of these students are Visual Communication Design majors, most of whom are specialising in Digital Media. Though the students all have individual areas of expertise, the final form of the project is dictated by the nature of their specific research questions. As you will see from the examples, this results in a wide variety of work, and reflects the creative investigative nature of the Design School.

Choose an area below or see work from other years [2008](#), [2006](#), [2005](#), [2004](#).

### Animation



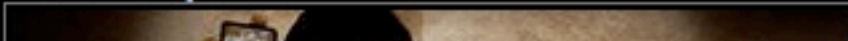
### Digital Video



### Interactivity



### Motion Graphics

[Digital Media](#) > Exposure 2008

## Welcome to Exposure 2008

All of these students are Visual Communication Design majors, most of whom are specialising in Digital Media. Though the students all have individual areas of expertise, the final form of the project is dictated by the nature of their specific research questions. As you will see from the examples, this results in a wide variety of work, and reflects the creative investigative nature of the Design School.

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### Animation



See work from other years: [2008](#) | [2007](#) | [2006](#) | [2005](#) | [2004](#)



# Research-informed

## *What does this mean?*

Creative work inspired and informed by a researched topic.

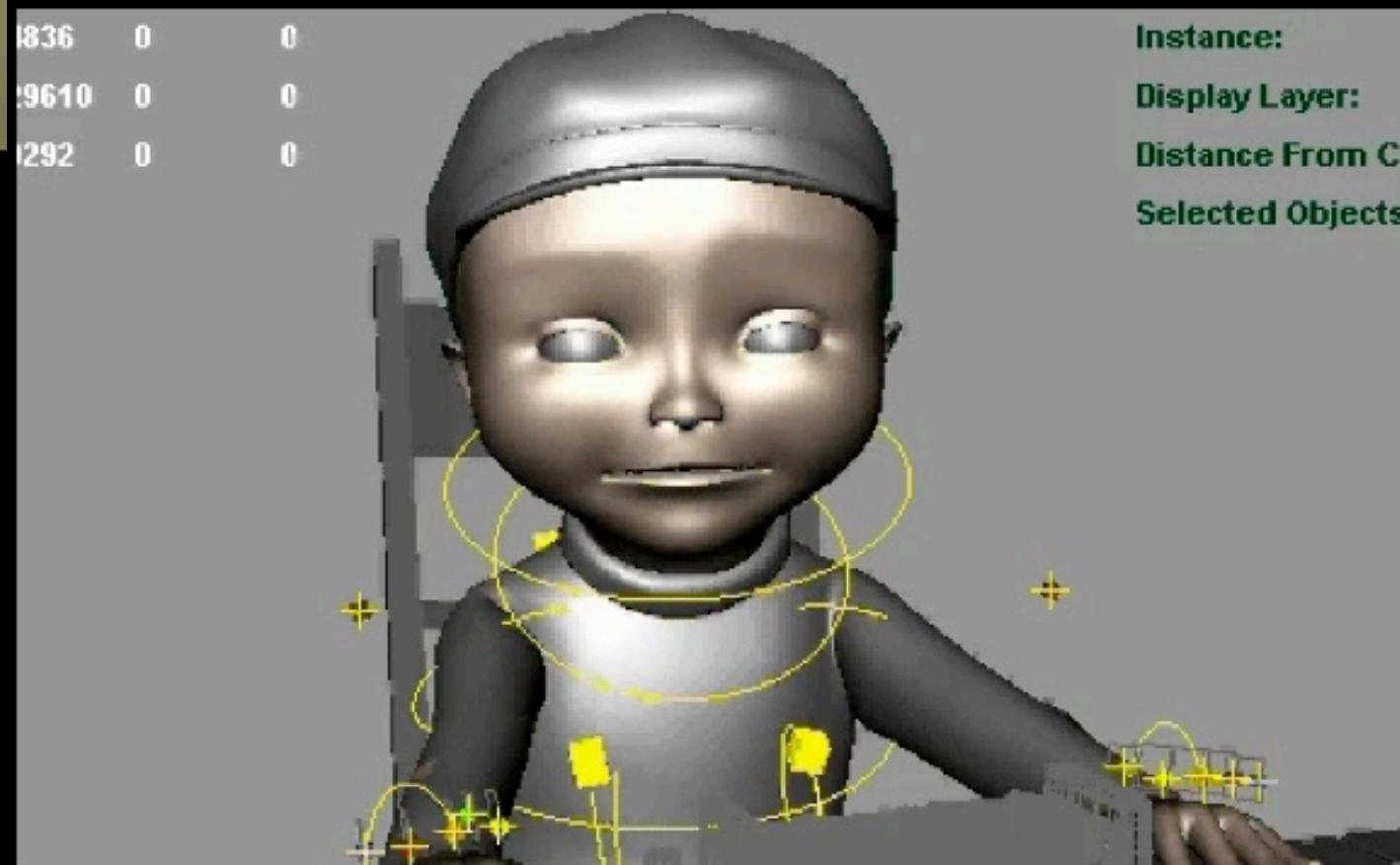
## *Why do it?*

Provides meaning, objectives, context, and leads into researched-based post-graduate study.



## Research ...

*Through Design* : Discovery through doing  
*For Design* : Gaining required knowledge  
*Into Design* : Analyse the medium

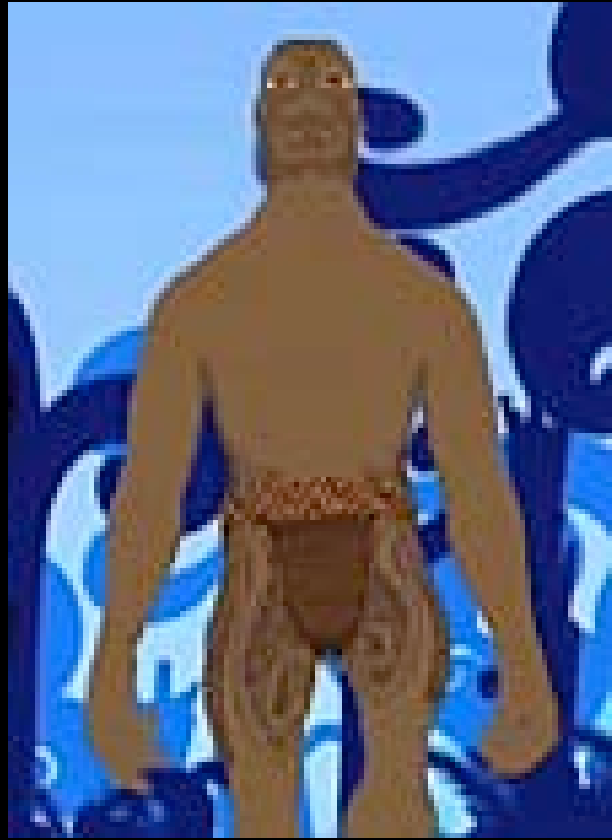




***Does it work?***

*Usually.*





Traditional legend retold in a modern context so as to reach a wider audience.



The background is a solid dark blue color. Overlaid on this are several large, organic, and flowing shapes in a lighter shade of blue. These shapes resemble stylized waves, smoke, or perhaps the petals of a flower, creating a sense of movement and depth. The shapes are layered, with some appearing more prominent than others.

# Hatupatu

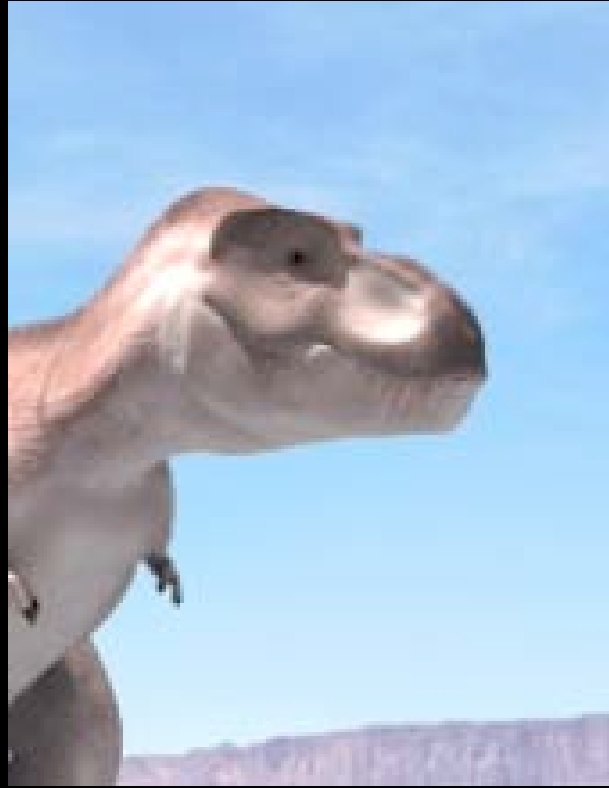




The personal relationship children are starting to have with their computers, and how this may affect their emotional and intellectual education.







If dinosaurs are the ancestors of birds, perhaps their behaviours would be more like birds .... eg ...

... a seagull.







# COMIC BOOK CHARACTER TRANSLATION

## avoiding the Uncanny Valley



## Central Proposition

To design and create two characters (inspired by an existing comic book) which avoid "The Uncanny Valley" and evoke positive emotional response when translated into three dimensions. To further bridge "The Uncanny Valley" by using two dimensional techniques in the three dimensional realm, which will also help showcase the aesthetic styles of comic books and strengthen the relationship between the comic and its film counterpart.

## Background

Comic book movies have been around since Superman in 1978, since then we have seen hits (Spiderman) and misses (Electra) but one thing has stayed constant; they are all live-action films. By using live-action the audience misses out on one of the aspects which make comic books; the visual style. An obvious solution is to use animation, in the ever going quest for perfection it was inevitable for animation to delve into the replication of realistic human beings. But is the replication of humans in animated movies worth the effort? Why not just use film?

Realistic animated movies such as Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within, unveiled a major flaw with such a film, characters with imperfections in appearance evoke a negative emotional response from the audience and in some cases look eerier. This was due to a theory named The Uncanny valley, theorised by Masahiro Mori a Japanese roboticist. Mori suggests there is an area between a stylized and a realistic character where a negative response from the audience is evident. This is why characters are best stylised. Using the uncanny valley to target the amount of stylisation is safer and allows the maximum amount of empathy from an audience while avoiding the pitfalls of realism. Two dimensional animations are not affected by the uncanny valley due to the tendency to be hand made or visibly created. If applied to three dimensions, two dimensional techniques can help to bridge the uncanny valley.

## Production

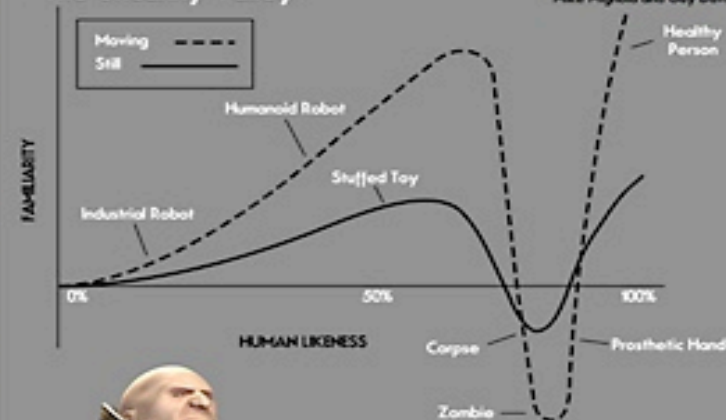
Design and create two characters based on an existing comic book called "Hellboy". These two characters have been sent from Hell, to earth in search of Hellboy (an existing character). One of the characters will be human; his name is Necrosis, meaning dead tissue. The other will be a humanoid creature; his name is Asherah, meaning god that walks on water. Both characters will be designed in the aesthetic of the comic, to simulate the same translation required for any existing comic book character.

Produce an animated clip (30-60 seconds) showing the introduction of my two new characters.

## Influences

My influences for this project came both from 2D and 3D works. My main comic book aesthetic in which I would translate was Mike Mignola/Guy Davis' B.P.R.D. comic. Originally I looked at Mike Mignola's Hellboy aesthetic however this would be almost impossible to translate into 3D without using toon shading. My 3D influences came from the animated short Fallen Art and an MTV animation; Code Hunters. These animations both used a hand made 2D type of aesthetic. Pen strokes and layers of color and black overlays are very visible which gives the aesthetic a very 2D/3D feel.

## The Uncanny Valley



The Uncanny Valley is a principle of robotics concerning the emotional response of humans to robots and other non-human entities. It is a theory by Doctor Masahiro Mori in 1970; The Uncanny Valley is concerned with the emotional response of humans to entities which take on human qualities. Dr Mori suggests that the closer a character gets to being almost real; the less empathetic response is from humans. From his findings he created a graph plotting the amount of empathy towards a character versus the human likeness. This shows a large "Valley" where human response is extremely negative.

## Character Designs



Necrosis

Species - Human  
Sex - Male  
Age - 42  
Height - 6'1"  
Attributes - Paranormalist, Poisons specialist



Asherah

Species - Demon/God  
Sex - Male  
Age - Unknown  
Height - 4'2"  
Attributes - Echoplasm abilities  
Asherah - meaning - God that walks on water. Born half Devil, half water God. Asherah has never been accepted by hell due to the joining of the two species (Demon and God).

Asherah has abilities beyond his predecessors, abilities that have never been seen in a demon before. He has the ability to project an internal being; some say it is his water God's spirit fighting to remain a separate entity. Banished from ever returning to hell, Asherah was traded to the Nazi. Sent to earth to join a team hit men, working under the name 'Silver Crown'. The trade is, Asherah for the blood of Hellboy. All members undertaking this task will be bound to Asherah until their job is done. The two man team of Necrosis and his paranormal companion Asherah has been given this seemingly easy task.

## Low Poly Character Models



Silver Crown Symbol



## High Poly Character Sculpts



## Facial Blendshapes

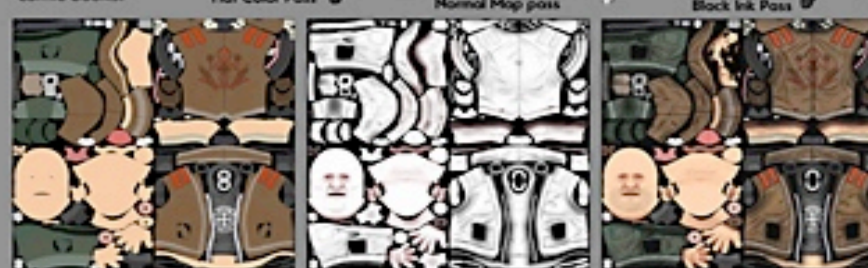


Using Maya to first create a low poly model and then from that I created a high poly sculpt using Skymatter's Beta application Mudbox. Mudbox allowed me to achieve higher levels of detail. However in the final stages of the production I found the displacement maps produced to be problematic in terms of visual results and render times. The final product does not include any high poly displacement unfortunately.

MUDBOX

## Texturing

This was one of the most important stages in order to achieve a comic book aesthetic. I did this by using a layered method, in the final texture there is at least two distinguishable layers much like comic books.



## Animatic

The scene is set in an underground level of a storage facility where the B.P.R.D. are in the process of constructing the levels restricted area's. Necrosis and Asherah enter from the elevator and end up killing a welder who was just about to leave for the day. I wanted to create a scenario where both Necrosis and Asherah have a switch between emotions. I did this by making them try to better each others moves. Necrosis being the bad ass he is, doesn't want to play Asherah's games. However Asherah is trying to prove that he is not just a worthless appendage. While Necrosis just wants to find Hellboy and get Asherah out of his life.

## Shot Progression



Animatic Paintover



Layout



Final Shot

## Selection of Final Shots

