

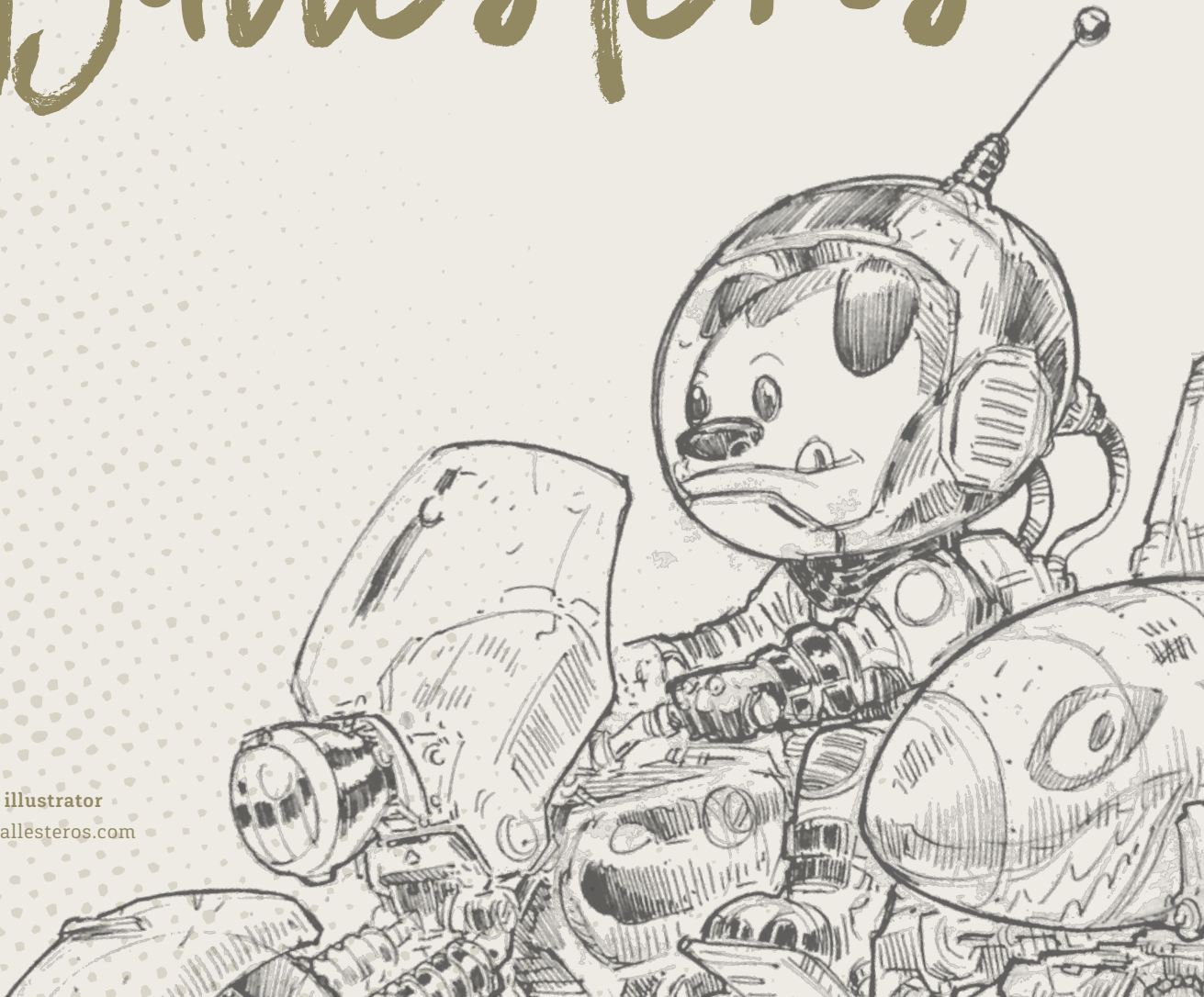


MASTERS OF  
*Sketching*

Patrick Ballesteros & Paride Bertolin

# Patrick Ballesteros

Concept illustrator  
[patrickballesteros.com](http://patrickballesteros.com)





# Torpedo Cycle

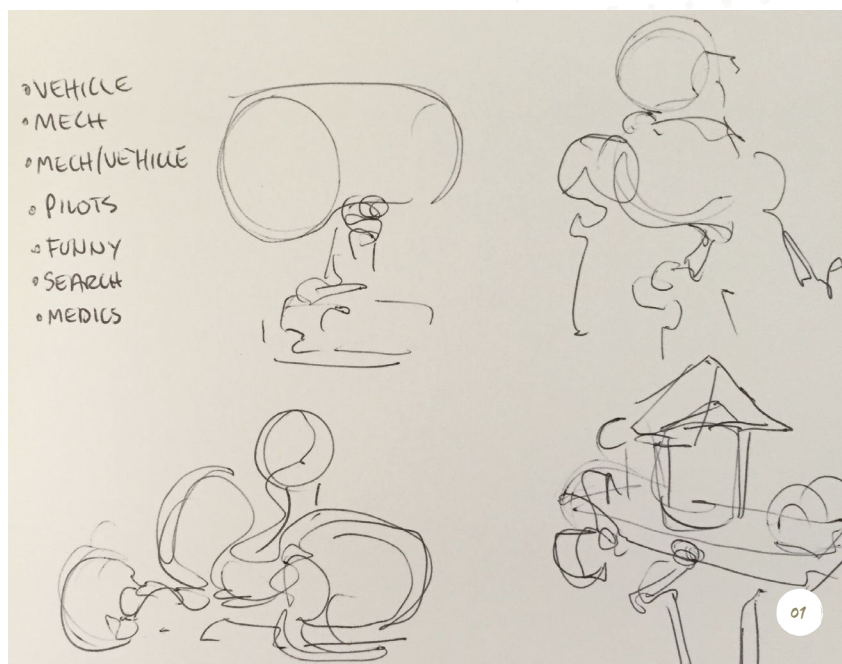
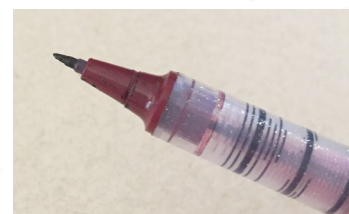
As artists we can become caught up in creating awesome sketches and posting them on social media to get “likes” and positive feedback. This means that we end up drawing the same thing over and over again because it is in our comfort zone and we know that we can come up with something that looks good quite easily. I am going to share with you how I break myself out of this cycle and sketch something new and interesting.

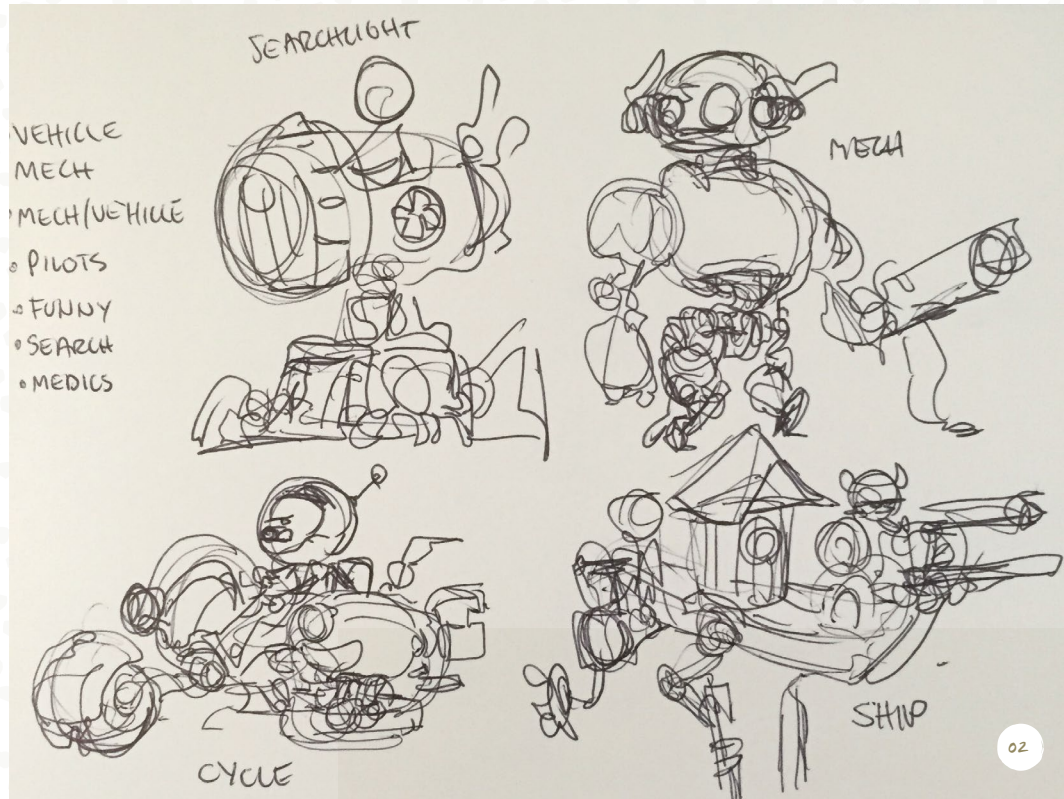
## TOOLS

I use an ideas book and a simple ballpoint pen to work out initial ideas. Once I have a concept I want to turn into a full sketch, I switch over to a toned sketchbook, marker, and ink pen. For this sketch I will be using a W2 Copic Sketch marker to lay down the foundation lines and a Zig Letter pen with red ink. The Zig Letter pen has a fine felt tip that is well suited to my sketching style and helps to keep my line quality under control.

## 01: IDEAS BOOK

A blank page can be quite intimidating, so I often use my ideas book to get my brain going. Normally I do not show this book to anyone so it helps me to explore ideas and have fun without worrying about others seeing it. I usually start out by producing some random scribbles with the ballpoint pen. I do not look to draw anything specific; I simply play around with shapes and think of ways to connect them. Occasionally I already have a vague idea of what I want to draw but usually I just play around with basic forms. This process forces me to do something a little different each time as I proceed to a more polished idea.

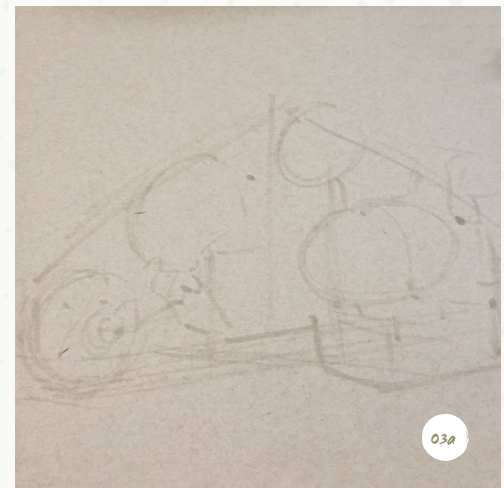




I take a few minutes to look at the shapes and write a few keywords that pop into my head. The keywords vary from project to project but as I like to draw mechs and vehicles (lots of them!) the words are usually associated with these. This part of the process helps me to visualize things in the shapes.

## 02: NAMES

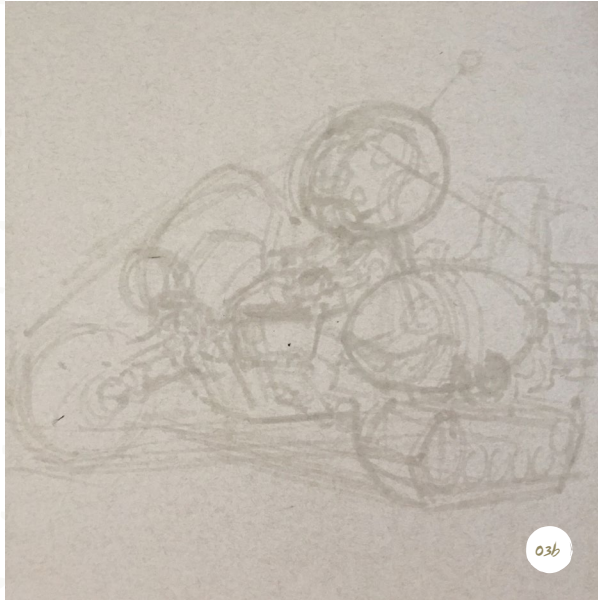
Looking at the shapes and keywords I can see a mech, a couple of bots, and a vehicle. I find that naming things helps to give a sketch personality before I even add the details – from left to right in image 02 these are Medic Mech, Bearbot, Torpedo Cycle, and Viking Shipbot. I spend a bit of time doodling and add smaller shapes and forms to the initial sketches. These initial steps are how my brain tries to organize the ideas and forms before settling on a final sketch. I have decided to use the cycle for the final sketch.





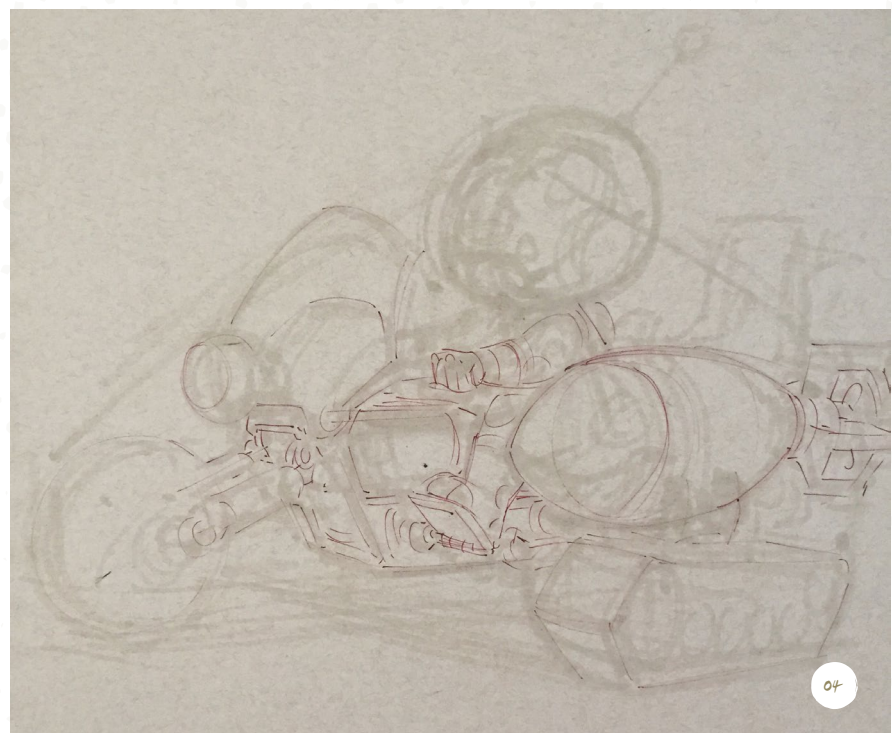
### 03: FOUNDATION

Using the marker I begin to lay down construction lines in a triangular shape. I often draw things with a triangular composition because this allows me to complete the drawing from three outside points that meet in the middle. I set the perspective and the vanishing points off the page. I build up the foundation of the sketch by blocking and defining the overall big shapes of the cycle – it is a cross between a snowmobile and a motorcycle. You can see a very distinct silhouette even in this initial phase. I imagine an anthropomorphic creature riding the cycle so I quickly add in a rough outline of the rider.



### 04: RED INK

With the foundation blocked in I need to decide where to start with the red ink. I make sure I work up my drawing as a whole and try to establish the bigger shapes, such as the body of the bike, how the character is sitting on it, and where the major overlapping forms are going to occur. The biggest overlap is near the back of the bike so I establish this before tackling anything else.

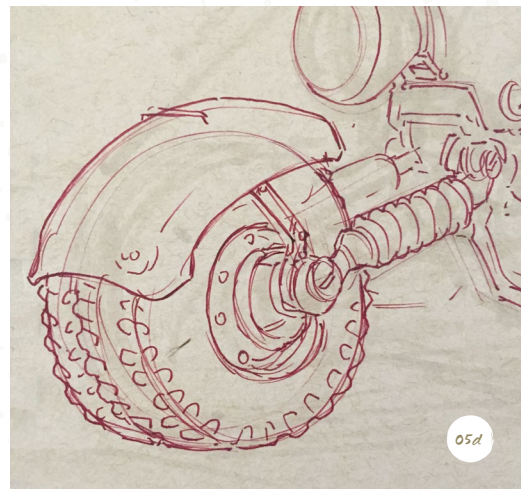
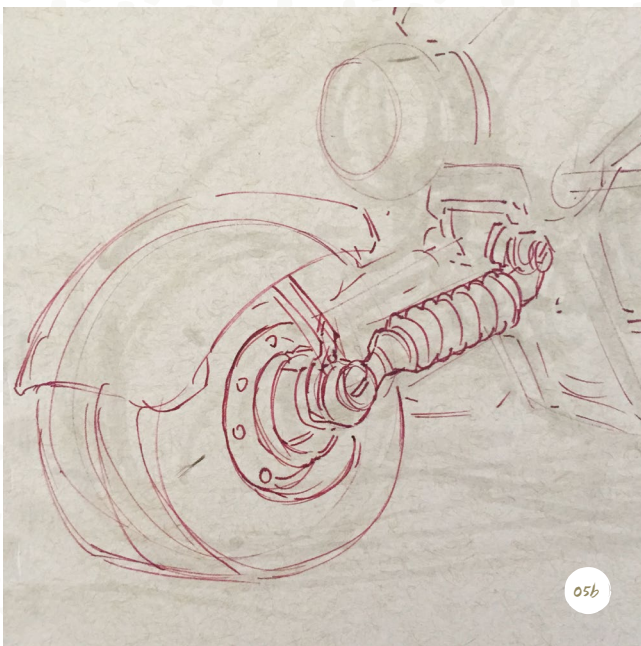
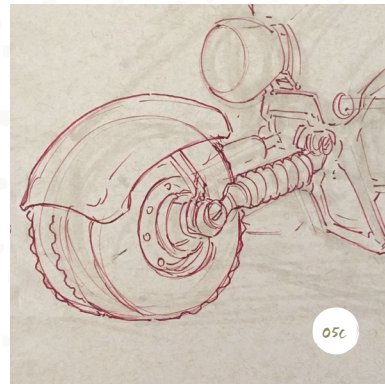
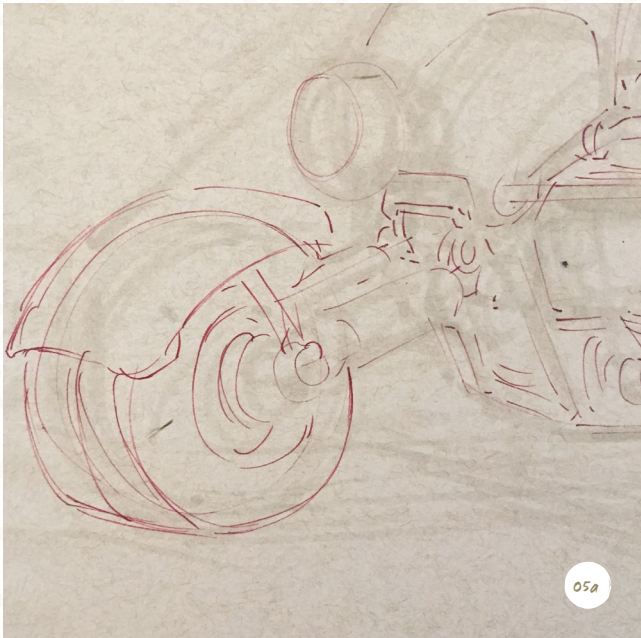


"THESE INITIAL  
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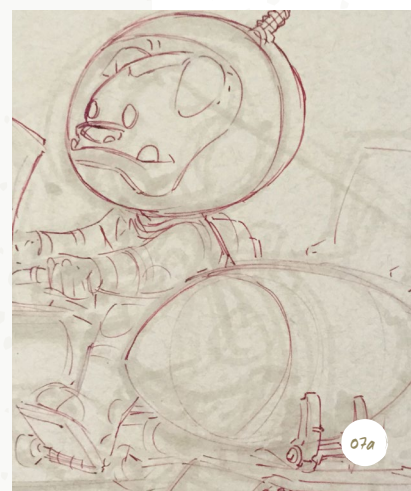
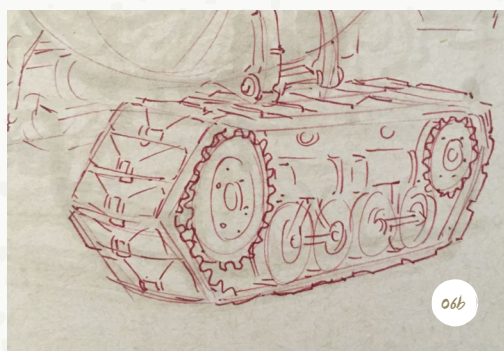
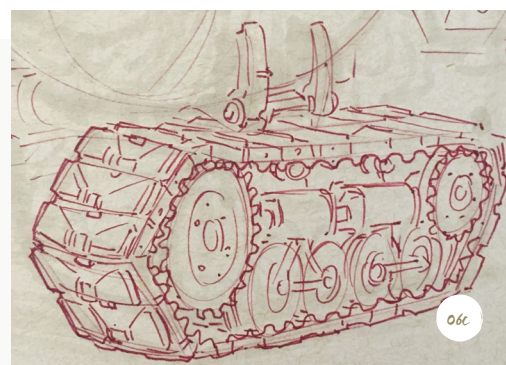
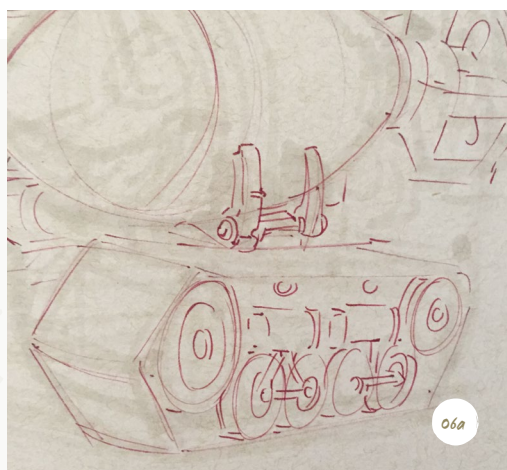
### 05: FRONT WHEEL

For this sketch I want to resolve the front of the cycle as this is the part that will convey “motorcycle” to the viewer at first glance. As I am working with a pen I have to strategize what to draw first so that my lines do not become too crazy. It is also crucial to have pen control so that the drawing does not come overfilled with heavy, dark lines.

The first thing I establish is the connection between the wheel and the body of the bike. Without this the motorcycle would not look functional. I flesh out the wheel and add smaller details such as the tread pattern of the tire. Paying attention to and drawing from real life is very important; that is why I pull a reference from my brain of an old Jeep I drew at a museum. Having a mental reference library is vital because it will help you to become a better designer and not be so reliant on references. It is something that cannot be taught – you just have to go out there and do the drawing to build one for yourself.





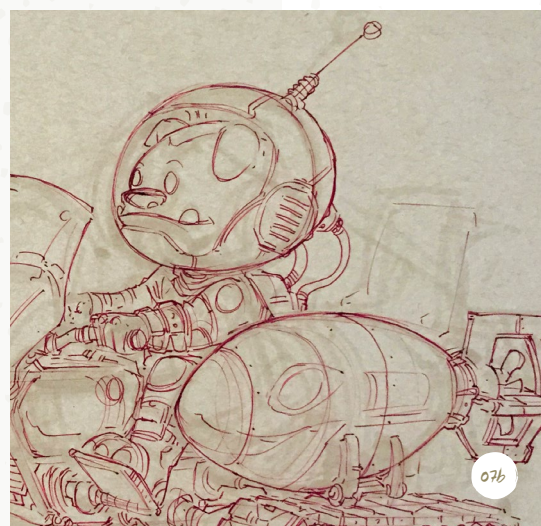


## 06: TANK TREAD

Using simple ellipses, I measure out the tread from front to back. I do this lightly so I have the opportunity to extend or shorten the tread if I want. I also roughly sketch out a torpedo in the classic "Fat Man" bomb shape. This adds extra interest to the piece. I then carve out the internal mechanical components before sketching in individual plates on the front of the tread. Paying attention to how things connect really plays an important role in making something look functional. I use a thicker line to contain the overall tread. Varying the line quality helps prevent the viewer's eye from becoming overwhelmed with too much detail.

## 07: RIDER

The main components of the bike are sketched in so it is now time to work on the rider. The rider is an anthropomorphic creature wearing a spacesuit and helmet. I give him a head with an underbite that resembles a dog, specifically a bulldog. It is time to create some cut lines on the helmet to help show off its surface contour and create the illusion of depth. I also add some tubing to the back of the helmet to give it a fun retro space-pack feel, as well as add texture and detailing to the suit. I also add more detail to the bomb, giving it a shark-like face and further defining its volume and shape.



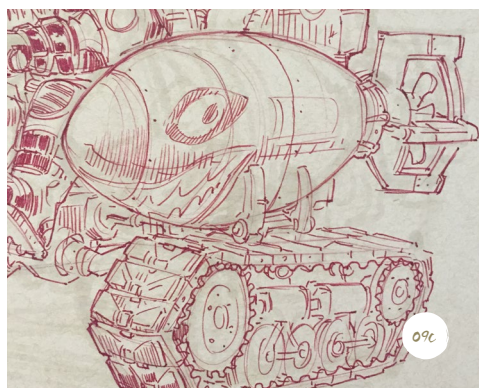
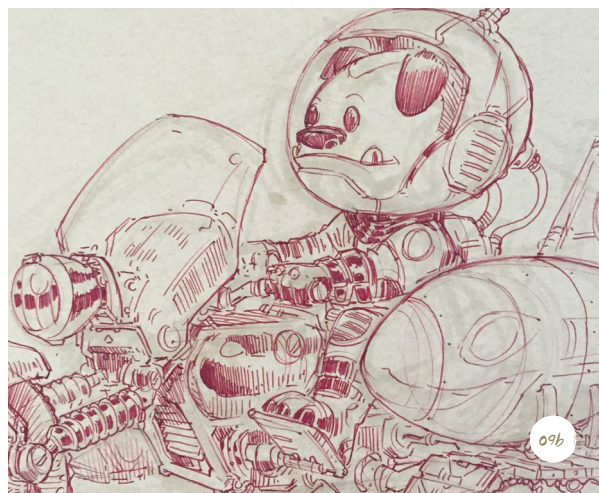
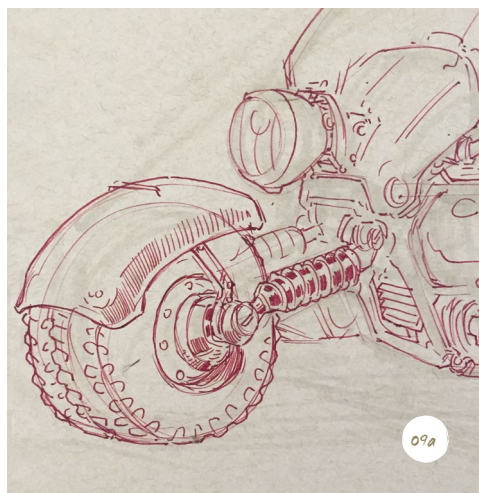
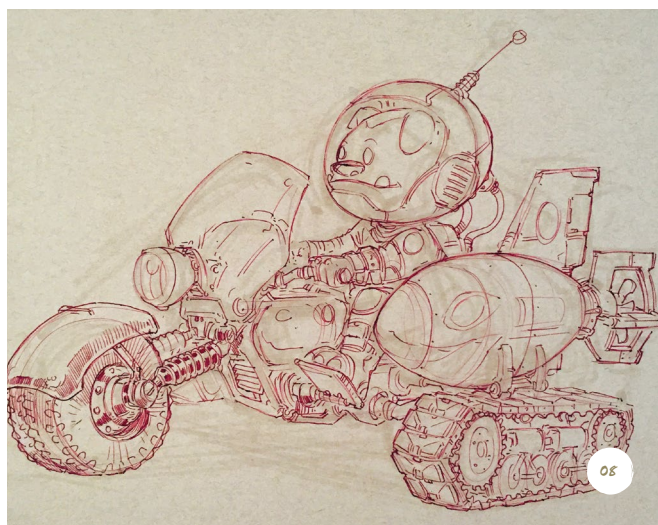


## 08: STEPPING BACK

Before I start the next phase I take a step back to see how all the details are working. I do this to help me gauge where I need to push the line quality and focus the rendering. I notice that I have forgotten to add on the tail fin at the back, so I quickly add this in. I can now start the rendering process.

## 09: RENDERING

The next phase is to start rendering by applying cross-hatching and contrast to certain areas. I start with the front wheel and use hatching to create thickness at the center. I continue by adding contrast to the connective



piece that looks like a spring from the center hubcap to the body of the bike. More hatching is placed on the side and front of the fender to create planes and add volume to the form.

Next I continue with the body of the bike below the handle bars. I map out a highlight by creating a small circular shape and hatch around it. Later I will add a white highlight to it, but for now I will leave the graphic shape there as a reminder to do this. As the character is the main focal point, I start to build and add a lot of contrast to him on his head, hands, feet, and upper body. Strategically placing darker spots in these areas means that the viewer's eyes will be led around the page to the focal point.



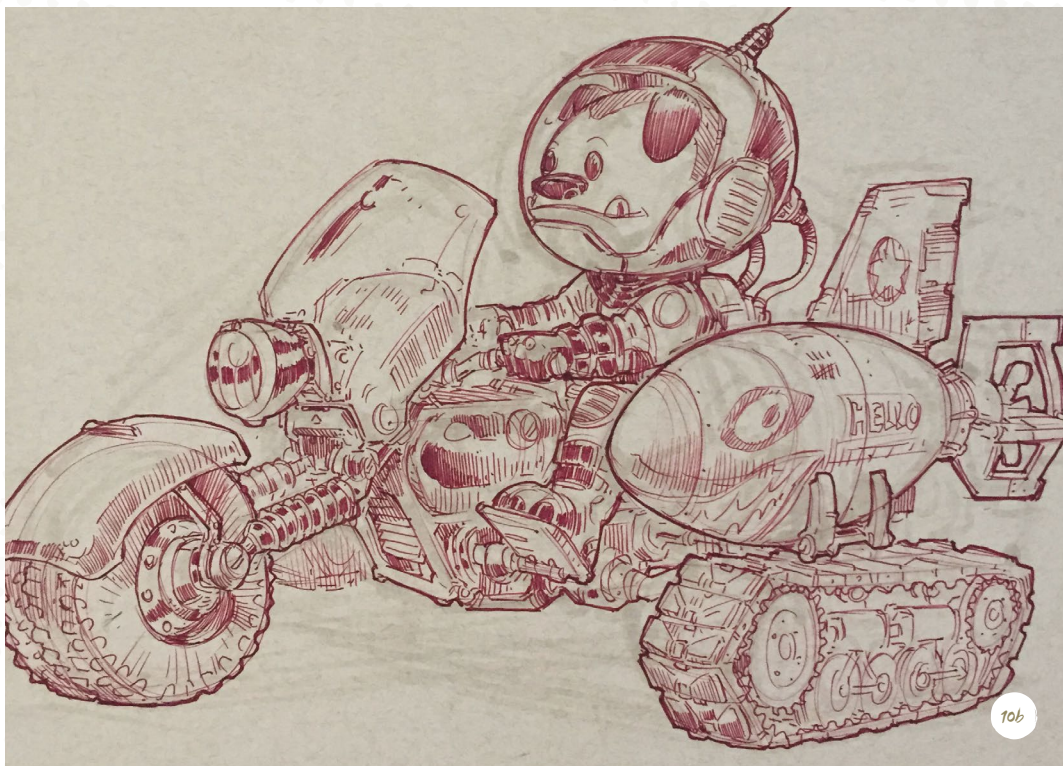
For the tank treads, I add hatching on the bottom of the tread to make it feel heavy and some on the core shadow of the torpedo to help give volume to its form.

### 10: MORE RENDERING

For this step I use an older, used Zig Letter pen as the nib is a bit worn and gives a thicker line. I use this thicker line to control the levels of read so that all the details do not overwhelm the viewer. I start by thickening the contour line of the torpedo. In the image below you can see how the exterior of the torpedo and the tank tread begin to pop forward and the interior details are pushed back. I apply this same process to the wheel, fender, and character. By thickening the line I am telling the viewer that these are the lines I want them to see and the other lines are pushed back and become texture.

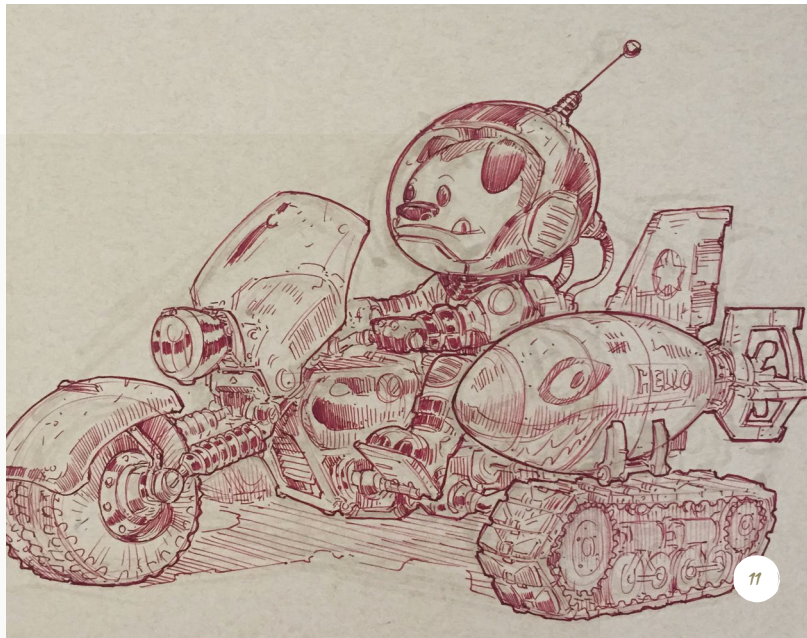


10a



10b





### 11: CAST SHADOW

When I add a cast shadow I do not try to place it exactly; instead I use a graphic shape which will help the vehicle feel grounded. I want the shadow to be simple so I add hatching going in one direction inside the graphic shape. I do not fill it completely as I want to create the illusion of light passing through this area. I also add more shading to the interior of the tank tread details in order to push them further back into the shadows. To give the bike a worn and weathered look I add a bit more hatching on it.

### 12: FINISHING TOUCHES

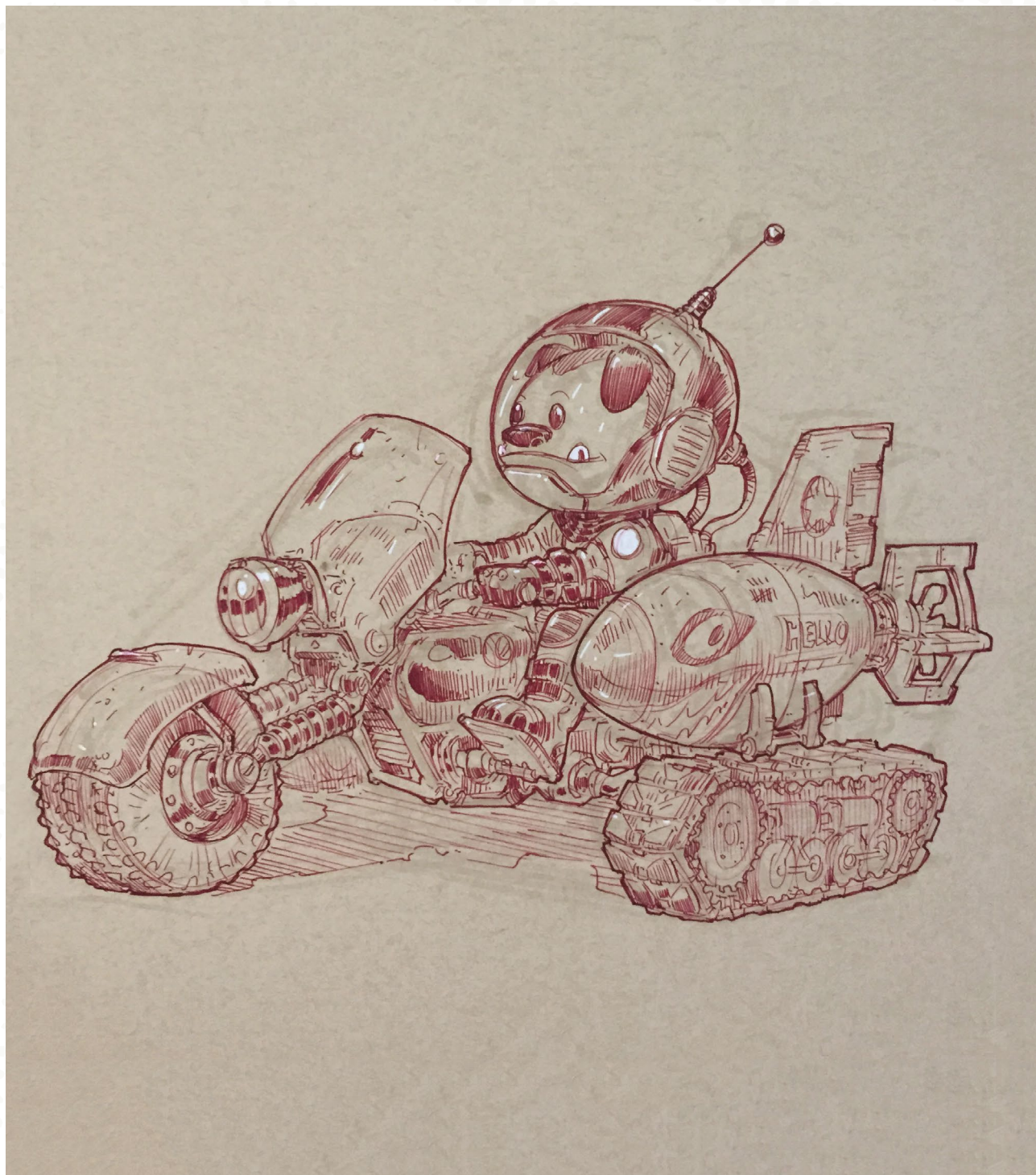
For the finishing touches I will use a white gel pen to add highlights to the image. On the toned paper this works extremely well and adds to the focal point. I am not going to go overboard with it as I mainly want to hit just a few spots, especially in the focal area. If I add too much it will become too busy looking with white marks everywhere. Starting with the head I start building up the white. I hit the eyes, nose, and ears to push the viewer's eye towards the head. I also place white on the helmet and glass to create the illusion of reflection, and add just a few marks on the character and torpedo to balance it out. I also make sure I add white where I have mapped out graphic shapes for reflections and highlights.

### 13: FINAL IMAGE

You can see the final design on the next page. I refrain from adding white highlights anywhere else after the previous step because, again, I want the viewer to know what the main focal point is.





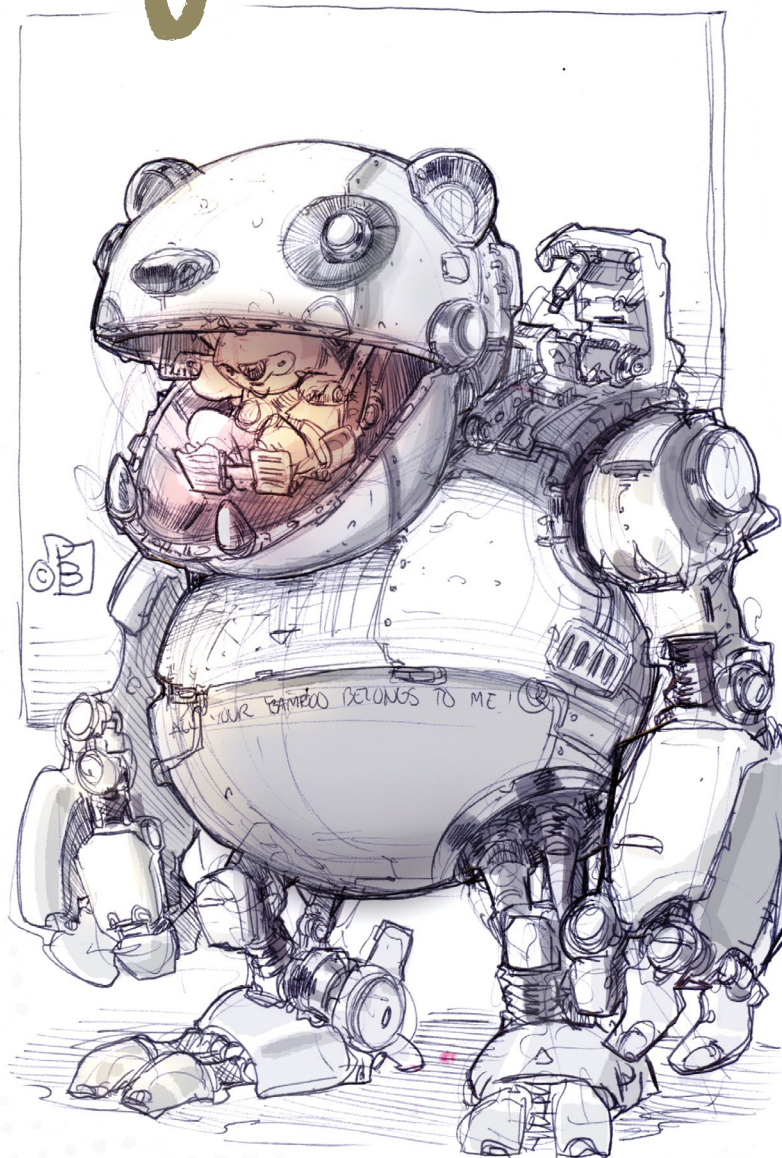


# Showcase Gallery

PATRICK BALLESTEROS

Patrick Ballesteros is an illustrator and designer with a passion for creating art that brings you back to being a kid. Being a product of the eighties, his inspiration stems from his childhood and it is those inspirations that he injects into his illustrations and designs. He strives to have as much fun with his work as humanly possible to create a sense of nostalgia.

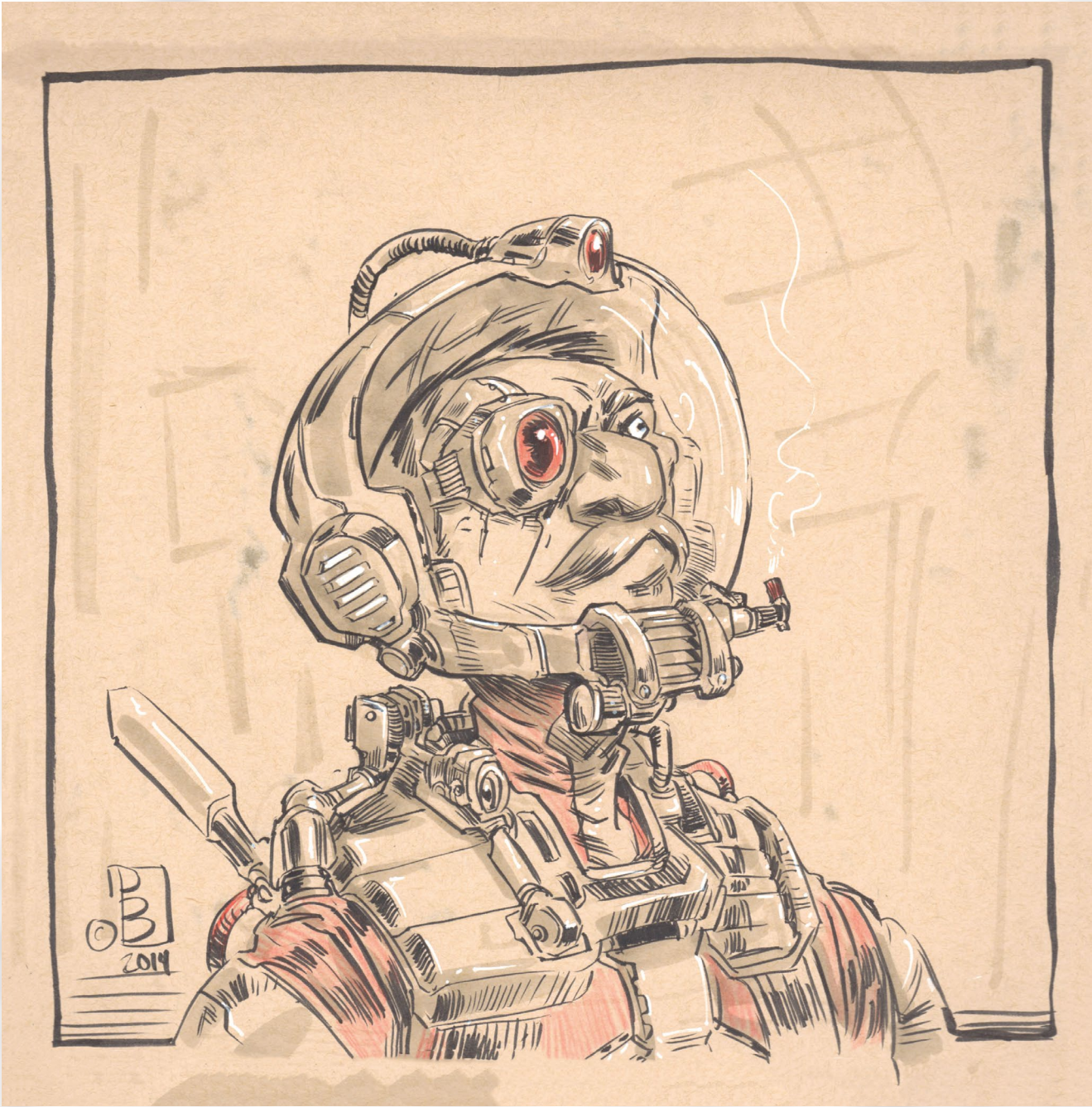
San Diego, California, is where Patrick and his family call home. He works as a freelance illustrator and concept artist for the film, game, and animation industries. He also conducts workshops, guest speaks, and teaches at the Concept Design Academy (Pasadena, California) and the Computer Graphics Master Academy (CGMA). When he is not doing all of the above he likes to relax, travel, watch *The Goonies*, and work on his children's picture books whenever he gets the chance.



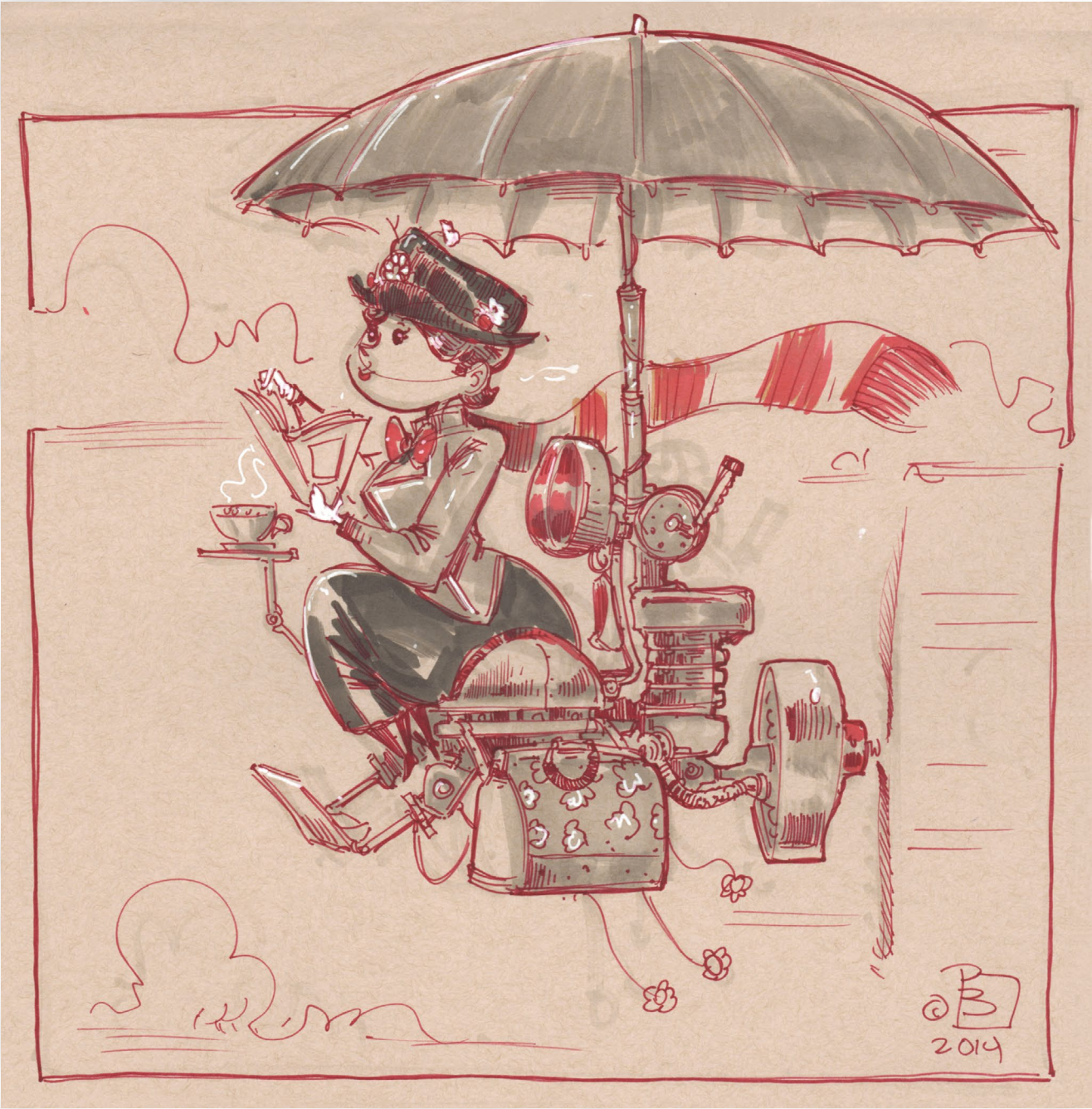








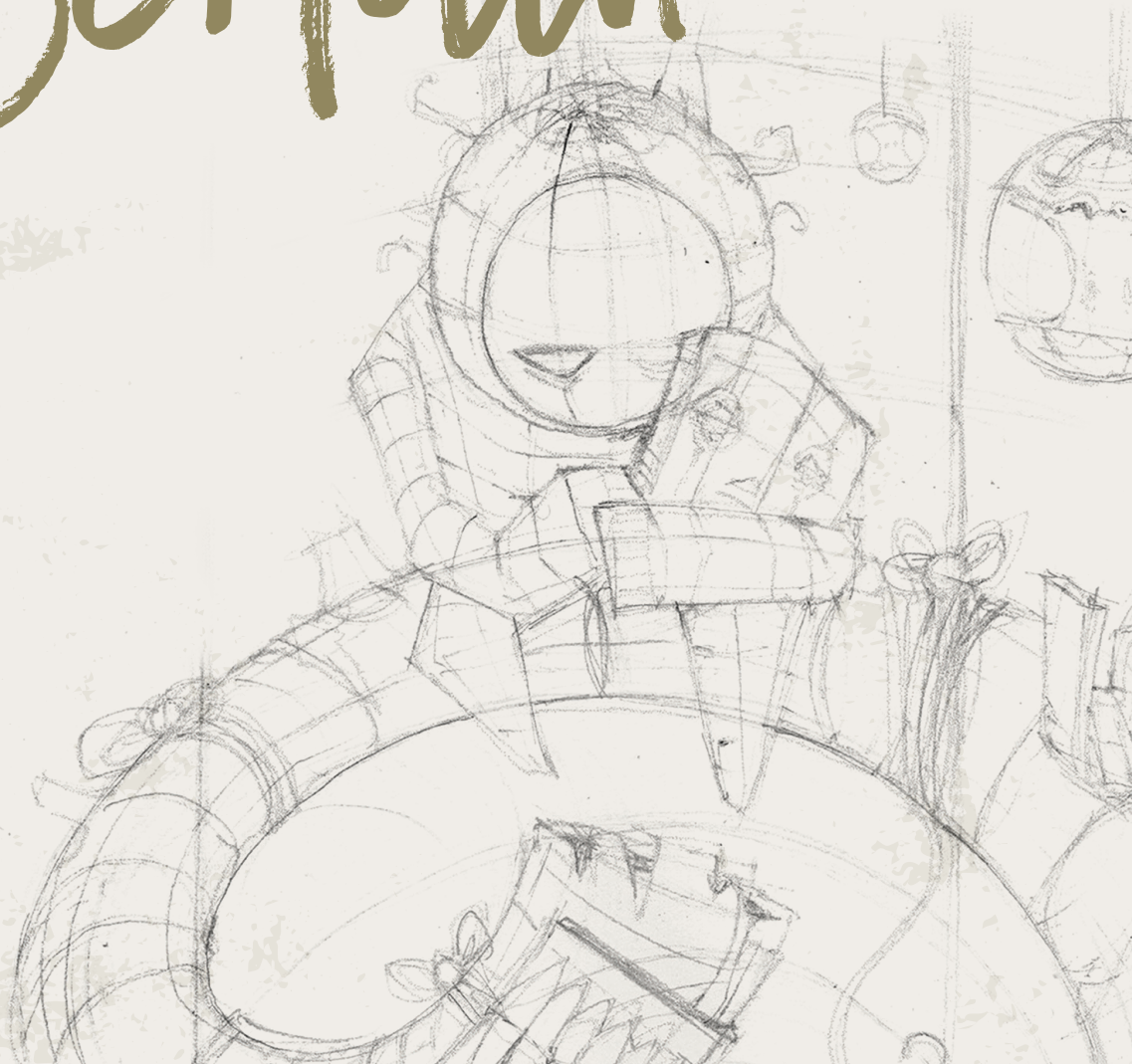






# Paride Bertolin

3D artist  
Illustrator  
Character designer  
[paridebertolin.com](http://paridebertolin.com)





# JAB's Way

In this project I will try to explain all the different steps and processes I follow when creating one of my artworks. My work is in a continuous state of evolution in terms of style and techniques, so this breakdown is a snapshot of my process at this precise moment in time.

## TOOLS

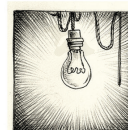
I do not have a large tool kit; I stick to a 0.5 mm mechanical pencil, which is great for drafting light, easily erasable lines. A basic ballpoint pen is a good, cheap tool, perfect for creating patinas and gradients. Faber-Castell PITT artist pens are really useful for my sketching process because they do not smudge when I erase the pencil lines. I use basic paper stock for most of my drawings, except when traveling, when I take a small sketchbook and a few essential tools to note down any ideas that might pop into my head.



## 01: IDEAS AND REFERENCES

I always start by researching the message I want to communicate to the viewer. This might be a couple of words or sentences but I try to focus my work on two or three concepts. This initial step is important because it creates a solid base on which to build the artwork. I like to quickly fix the idea in my mind and understand where my inspiration is leading me. I gather research images that could be inspiration for my sketch; these include everything from photos to sculptures and paintings, even icons and very stylized drawings (image 01a). I think it is important for me to understand a subject in order to stylize it in an effective way.

When I have found suitable references I then search through my personal inventory of sketches and studies (image 01b). I do this to find elements (I call them *loops*) that could fit my subject. Sometimes, if I have a clear idea of what I want to create, I start here and skip the external reference phase.







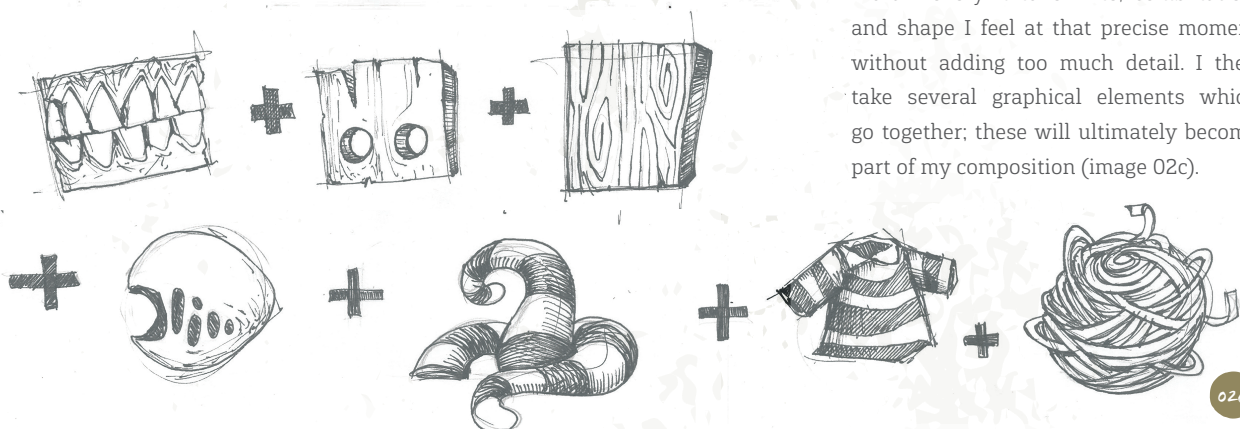
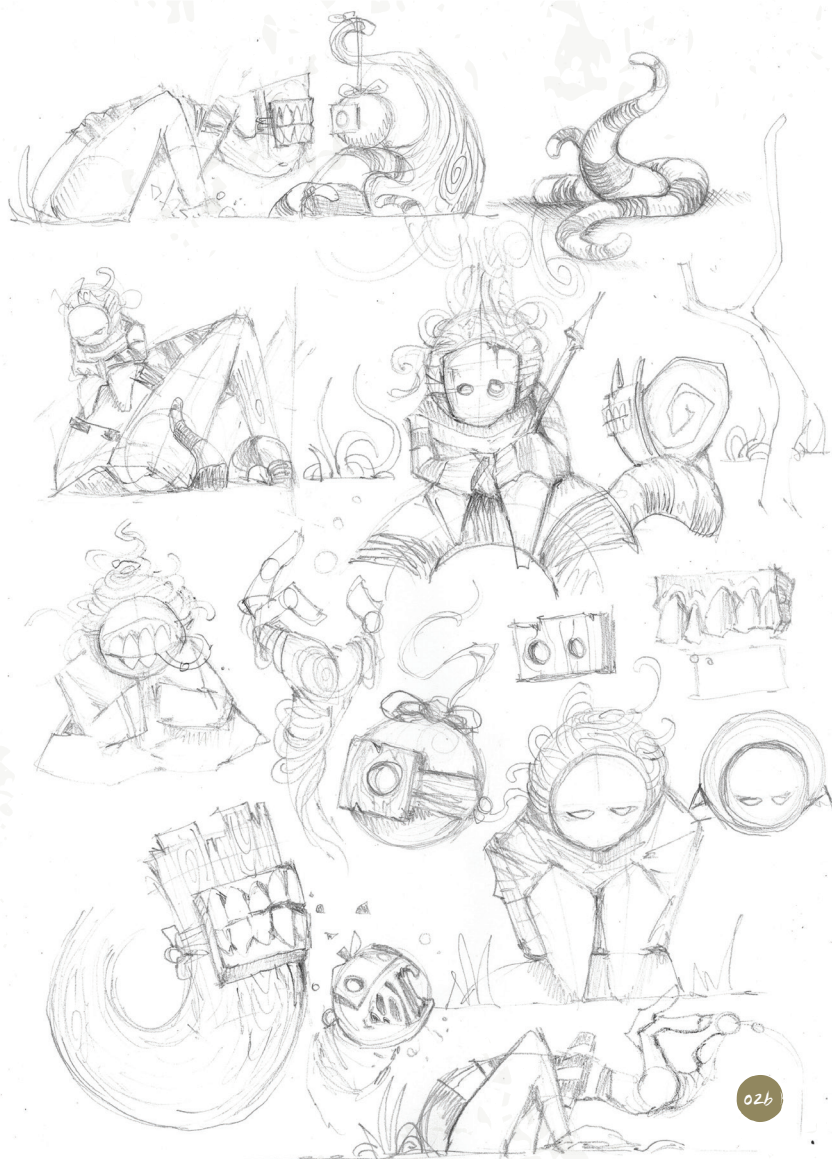


**“THIS IS AN  
INTUITIVE PROCESS  
WHERE MANY OF  
THE SKETCHES ARE  
DRAWN WITHOUT  
ANY CONSCIOUS  
THOUGHT”**

## 02: BRAINSTORMING

After selecting the main *loops* to develop, I create bizarre hybrids by combining and mixing these elements together – these will act as starting points I can use to develop the concept (image 02a). This is an intuitive process where many of the sketches are drawn without any conscious thought. This kind of emotional drawing helps to free the concept from my mind and also get strange, unexpected results that are both interesting and original (image 02b).

I draw every kind of line, combination, and shape I feel at that precise moment without adding too much detail. I then take several graphical elements which go together; these will ultimately become part of my composition (image 02c).

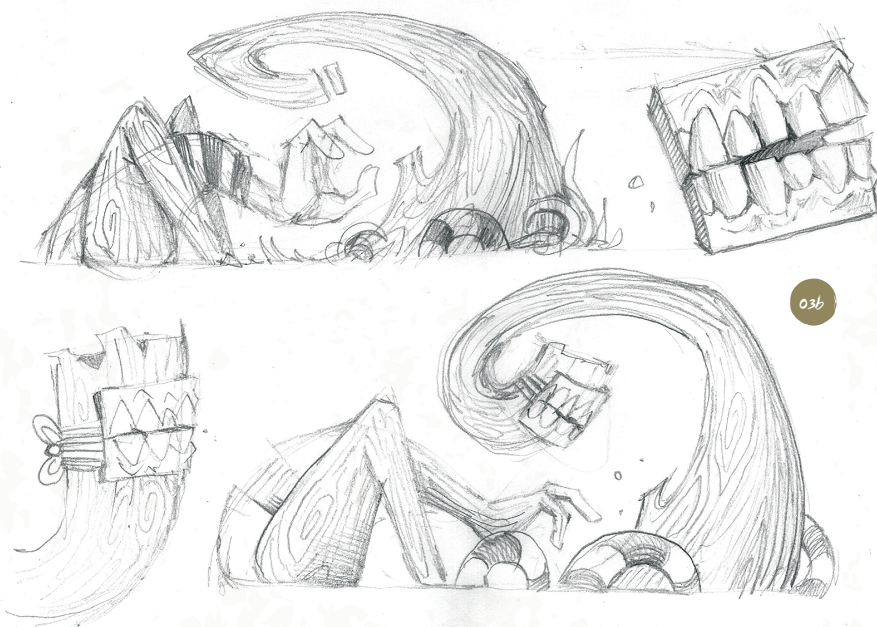






### 03: CHARACTER CONCEPTS

With the basic graphical elements decided I can further study and explore the subjects. I want to find the best possible character design and also polish the appearance. I always keep my research from step 01 at the back of my mind so that I do not stray too far from the initial idea while developing the design of the character. I want the shapes to be clean so I try out several different combinations of elements for each of the characters (images 03a to 03c). Once I have settled on a design I put each of a character's *loops* together to make sure they work in harmony (image 03d).





"I WANT TO  
FIND THE BEST  
POSSIBLE  
CHARACTER  
DESIGN"



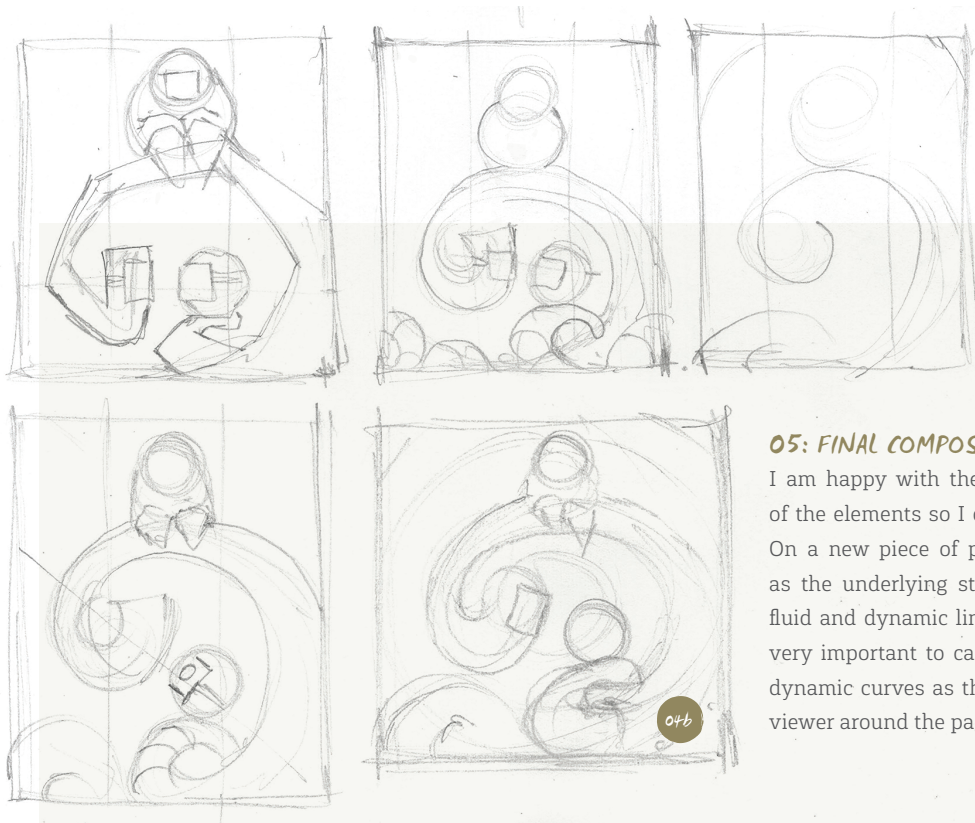
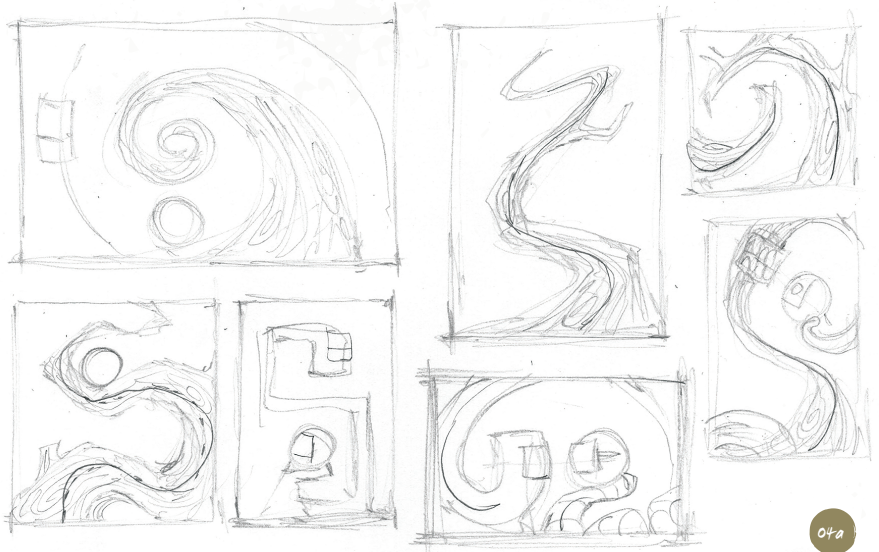
03c

03d

#### 04: COMPOSITION PREVIEW

This step is important because I calibrate the whole geometry to find a pleasing composition. I quickly sketch several thumbnails to find the best fit (image 04a). Once I have the right composition I repeat the process to test out the various possibilities and refine the space and placement of the graphical elements (image 04b). The more I do this the closer I get to a preview of the final piece. I also work out the light and shadow placements.

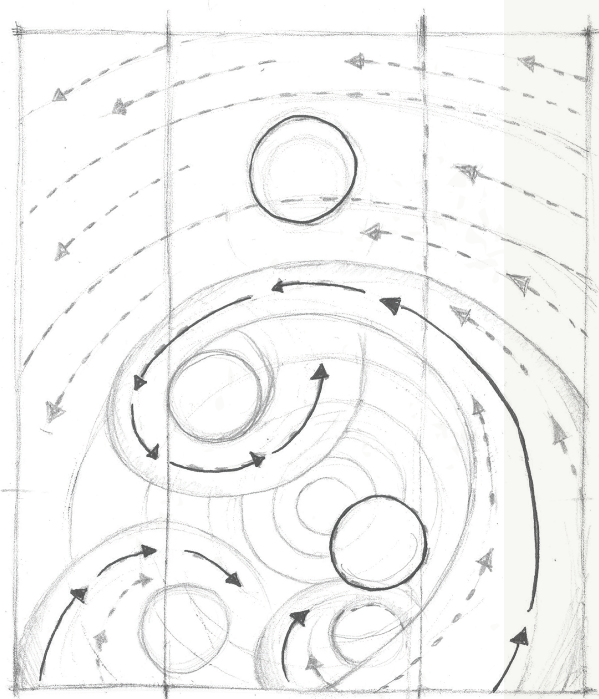
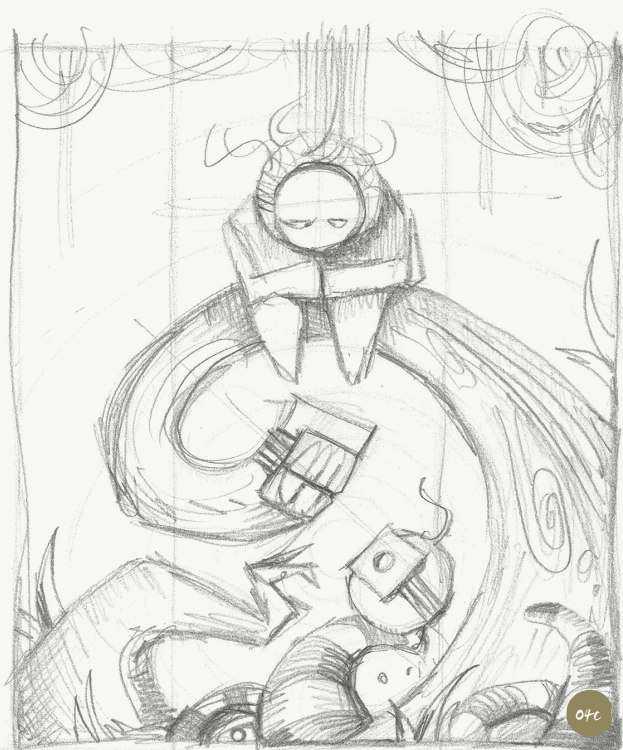
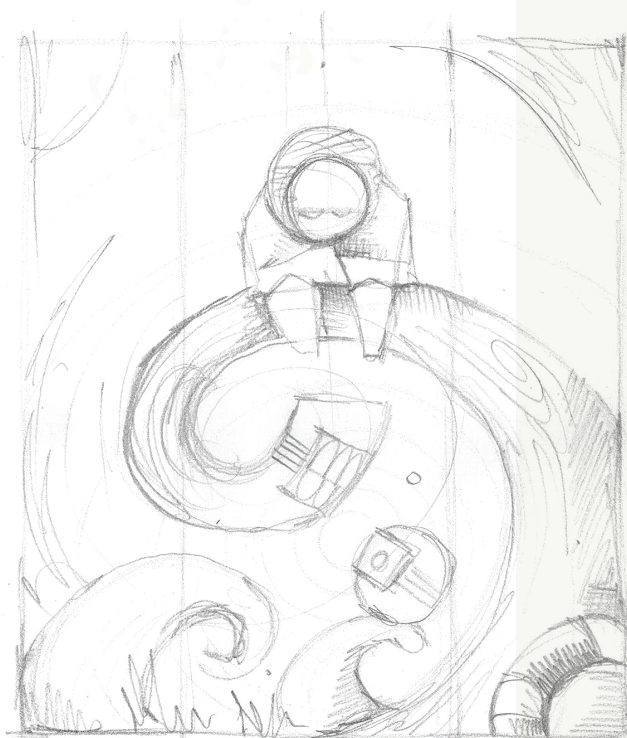
My way of working relies heavily on lots of reiterations so that when I come to the final sketch it will be the best possible sketch. After the single elements have been studied, I try to find how to better fill the space, aiming to develop the whole geometry in a pleasant and well-thought-out composition (image 04c).



#### 05: FINAL COMPOSITION

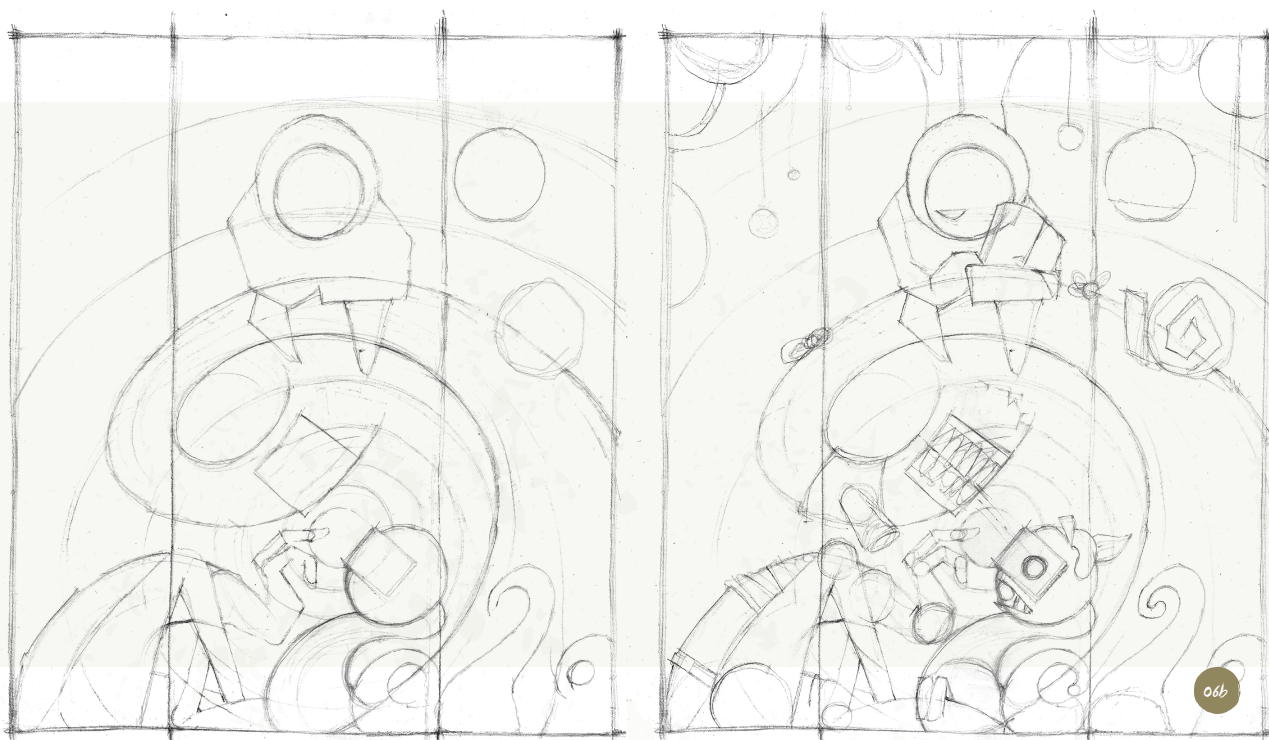
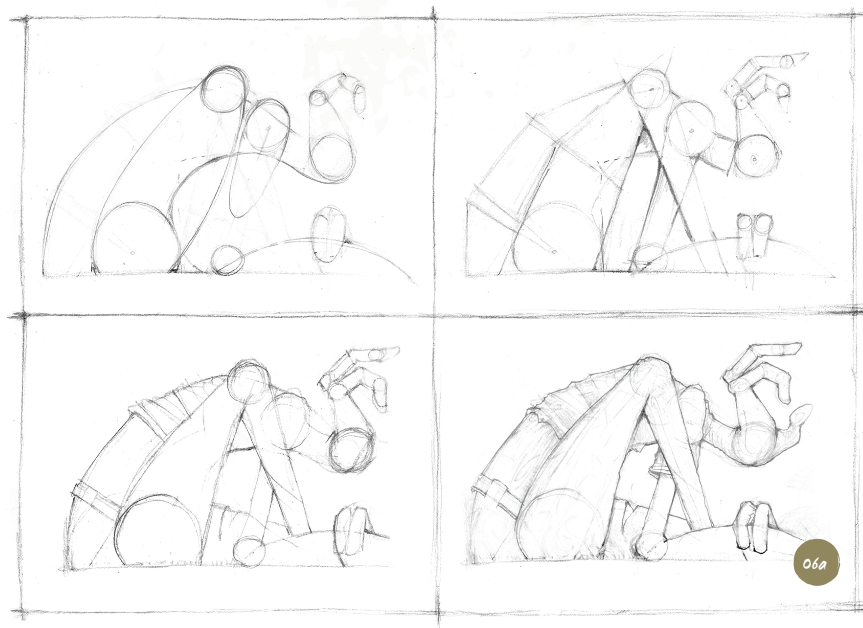
I am happy with the overall composition and placement of the elements so I can begin to work on the final sketch. On a new piece of paper I draw guidelines that will act as the underlying structure of the finished sketch. I use fluid and dynamic lines to add a sense of movement. It is very important to carefully build up the weight lines and dynamic curves as these are what will catch and lead the viewer around the page.



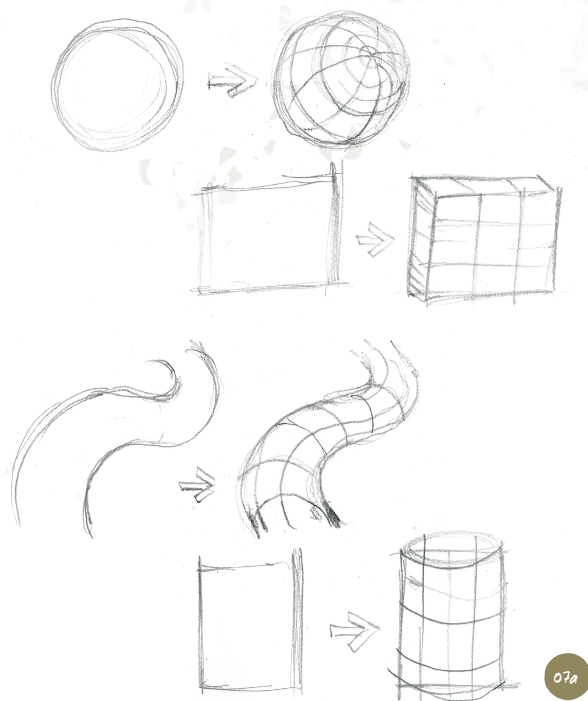


## 06: 2D SHAPES

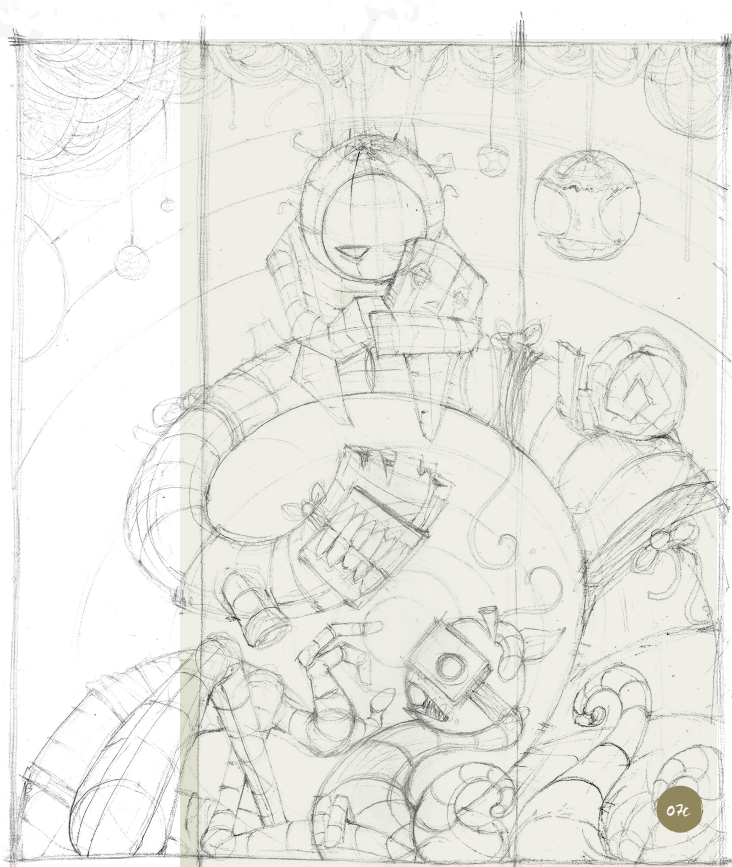
Now it is time to add the characters to the scene. Image 06a shows how I evolve my characters from gestural lines to a finished silhouette using basic 2D shapes. I stick to simple geometric shapes such as circles, squares, and curves. I build up the rest of the scene using this process for each of the main elements. It is important to make sure that everything is in proportion to everything else. I also avoid making the scene overcrowded and therefore difficult to look at in places. I repeat this process for all of the major *loops* of the whole image (image 06b).







07a



07c

### 07: 3D SHAPES

I build on the base 2D shapes to give the subjects volume, so a circle becomes a sphere, and so on (image 07a). It is vital to have a basic understanding of volumes and 3D shapes in order to know where to put additional details or imagine how a surface will react to lighting and where shadows will fall. Fortunately, I can fall back on my CG background to help me with this step. I try to figure out the volumes as mathematical surfaces, which helps me to draw guidelines that describe the object (images 07b and 07c).



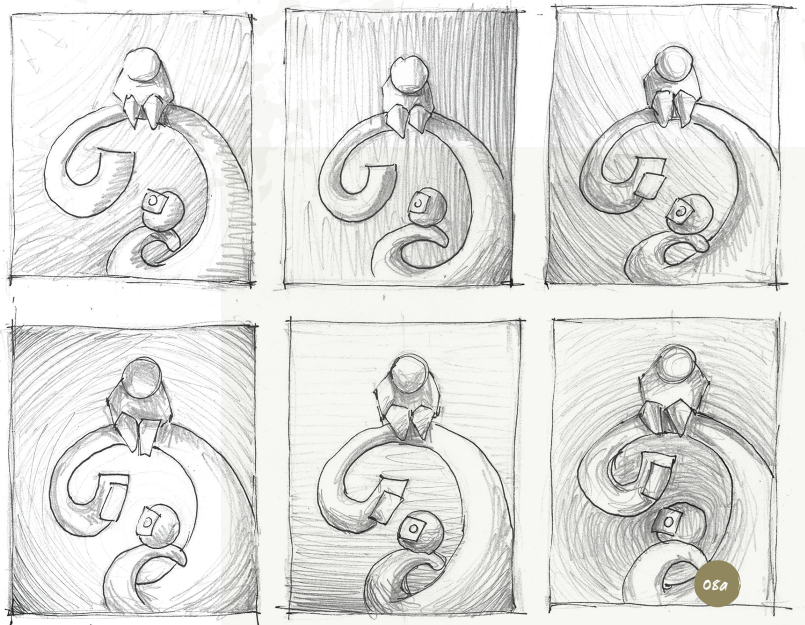
07b



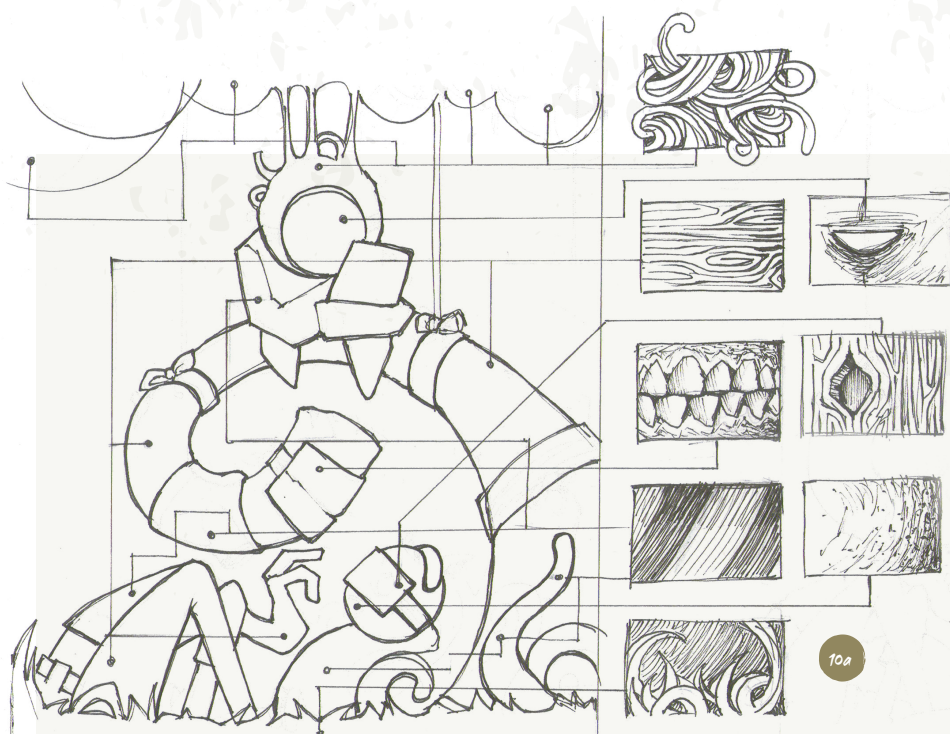
## 08: LIGHTING PREVIEW

With the 3D shapes in place I can test out potential lighting (and consequently shading) ideas. I roughly sketch several copies of the scene and experiment with different lighting solutions and ways to shade the elements. Good lighting is very important to any piece of art as it has the power to change and define the overall feel and tones of an image.

The aim of these experiments is basically to find the best illumination that gives value and highlights to all of the subjects without hiding too much of the sketch in the shaded areas. I want to give the right amount of contrast and emphasis to any future details. I pick the lighting solution that is most suitable (bottom left in image 08a) and reproduce it in the final drawing. I carefully and gradually add details without compromising the impact of the whole sketch (image 08b).







### 09: OUTLINE

Switching to more permanent tools I define the external borders and silhouettes of all the main elements. This is useful for separating the various parts of each element, as well as defining where they are in contact with each other. I add dark occlusion shading to these contact points; these are the darkest areas of shading. This step is also useful for working out what textures to add; I do not want to create areas that are simply condensed grayscale tones.

### 10: TEXTURES

When I add texture to a sketch I have two options: I can make a couple of studies of different materials or I can have a look at my personal reference library. Over the years I have produced lots of material and texture studies which really helps to speed up this part of the process because I can have a look at my library and find a couple of suitable textures that fit a particular element. Once I have chosen the textures and where they go, all that is left to do is to add the patterns to the main sketch and erase the pencil lines.





### 11: BACKGROUND LIGHTING

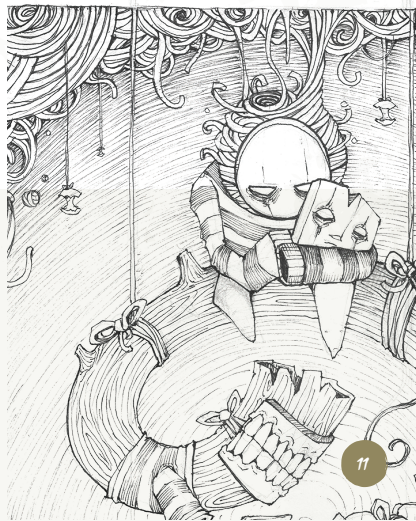
To increase the emotional impact and exaggerate the mood, I add some background lighting. Referring back to the lighting solution I chose in step 08 (in which the light source is at the center of the composition and the edges are much darker), I define a radial gradient by drawing concentric circles. At the edges of the circle, where the shadows are darkest, I keep the circles close together and gradually increase the distance between the circles towards the center where the light source is. Hopefully, when the image is seen from a distance, the viewer will see a sort of smooth transition from dark to light and be drawn to the middle of the page.

### 12: FINAL TOUCHES

Using the lighting preview from step 08 I add more illumination to the surfaces located in the foreground and darken the areas of shadow. Sometimes it can be useful to quickly sketch out the main elements of the scene to practice where you want the highlights and shadows to go and to make sure it looks believable (image 12a). To apply this to the final sketch I draw lines that are thicker and closer together to give the illusion of shading without losing the textures and overall impact of the piece (image 12b). This is one of the most time-consuming and meticulous phases of the whole process; I do not care how long it takes because it is important that I blend all the elements together into one cohesive piece.

### 13: FINISHED PIECE

To finish up I continue adding shading passes by adding very light glazes of ink. This really adds to the depth and punch of the finished artwork, which you can see on the next page.



"GOOD LIGHTING  
IS VERY  
IMPORTANT  
TO ANY PIECE  
OF ART"









# Showcase Gallery

PARIDE BERTOLIN

Paride Bertolin, whose artistic moniker is JAB, is an illustrator and character designer from Busto Arsizio, Italy. He has always been deeply attracted to art and illustration; he finds them far better than words for communicating. For as long as he can remember he has always made drawings and sketches. When he was a teenager he became fascinated with graffiti and started to experiment with this art form.

Paride graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera. He enjoys creating art using traditional and modern techniques; he likes to use media and tools such as markers and enamel on canvas, as well as digital sculpting and painting. His sketching style is a blend of different genres and is mainly inspired by cartoons and graffiti, which is possibly why he likes to draw ridiculous, weird characters that are a combination of the humorous and the grotesque. He achieves a tragic implication through the use of illumination and shading. Paride continually researches and evolves his personal style through each work of art he produces.

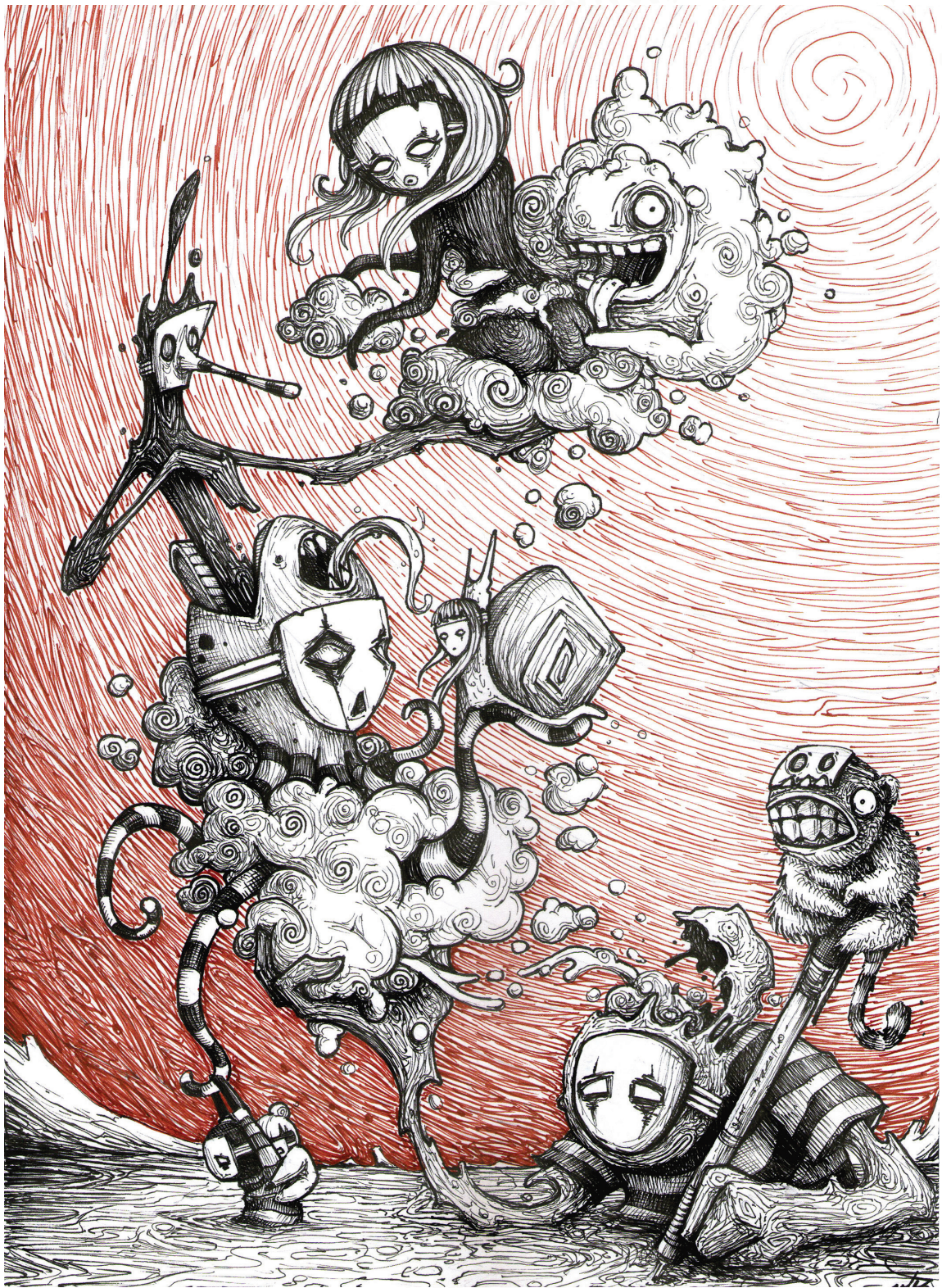




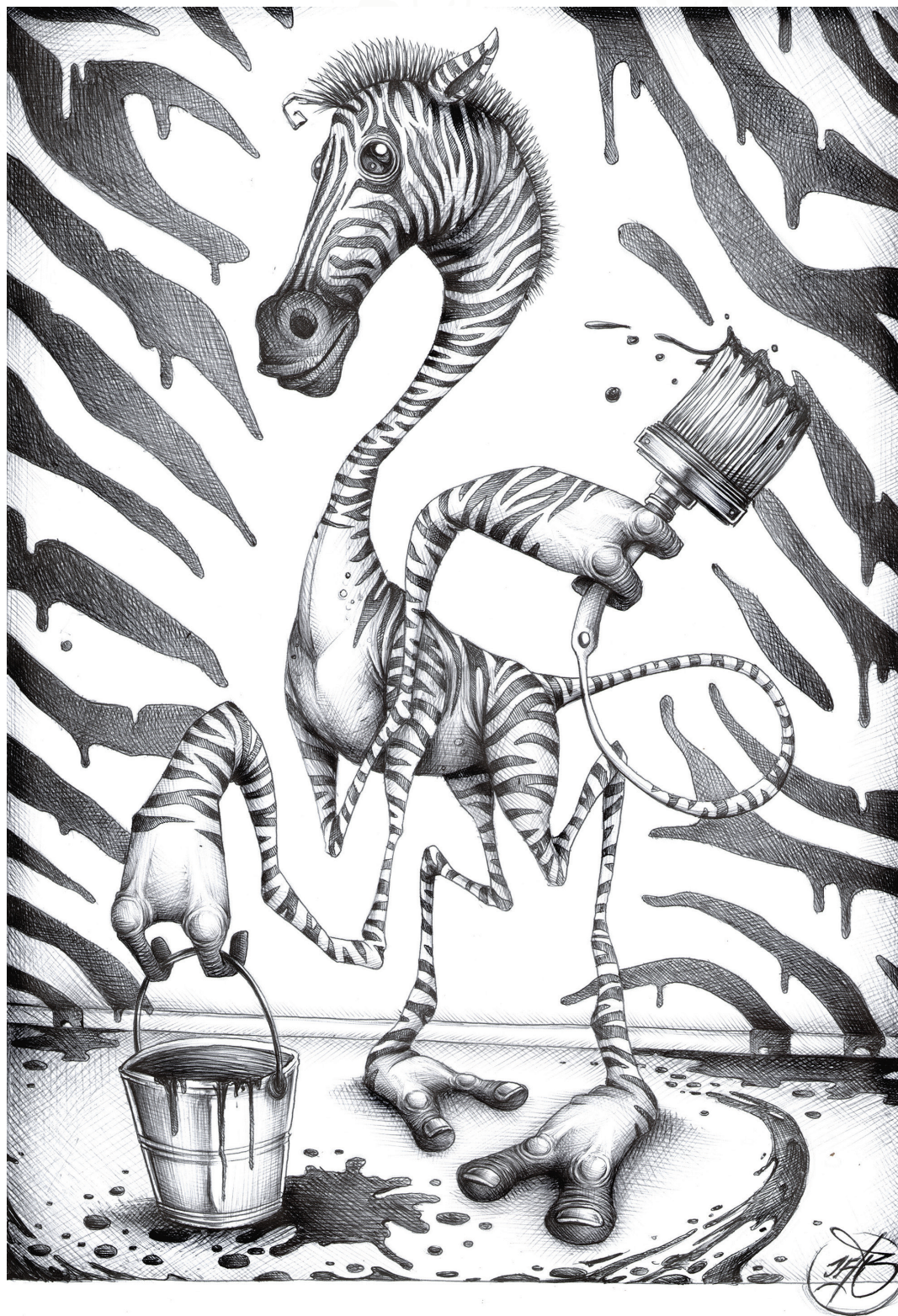
"MY WAY OF WORKING RELIES HEAVILY ON LOTS OF REITERATIONS"



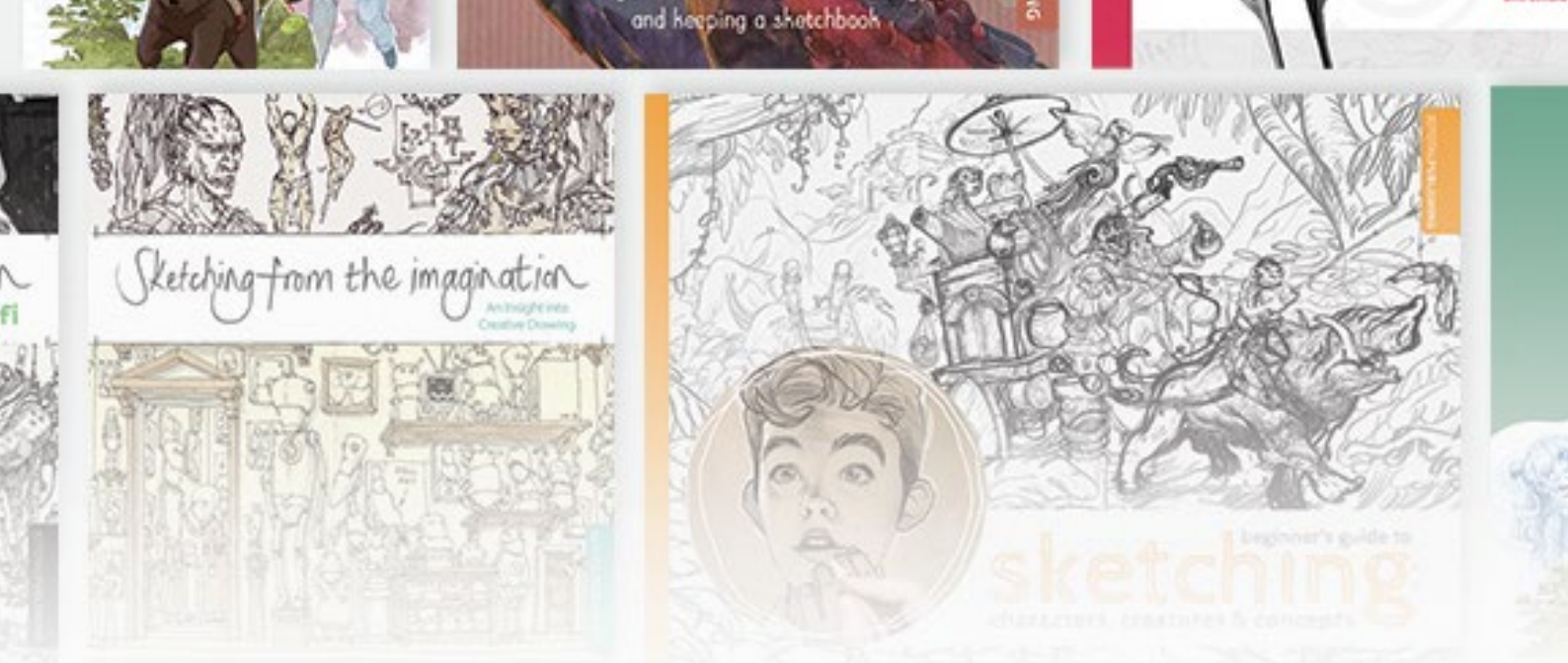












The humble sketch is the foundation of great art, where thoughts and concepts first come to life as an image. The books in our sketching range bring you the chance to see inside an artist's mind and learn more about how and why they sketch.

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