

COMD 3413

Character Design

Illustrating Complex and Original Characters

Professor Sara Gómez Woolley | COMD | NYCCT | BKNY



WELCOME

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Fridays and by appointment

Email for appointment

CLIC [LINK](#) on **CLASS SITE**

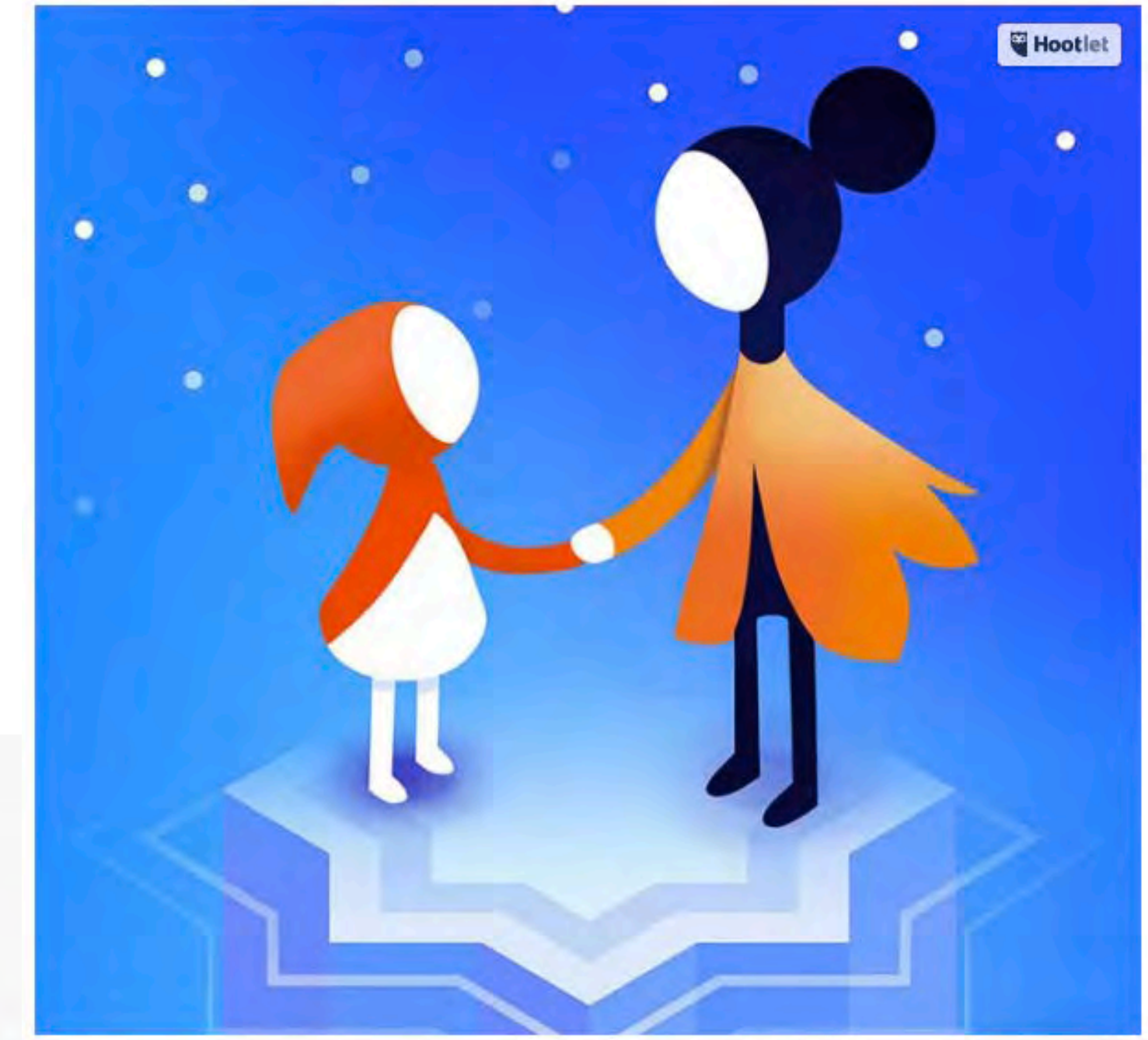
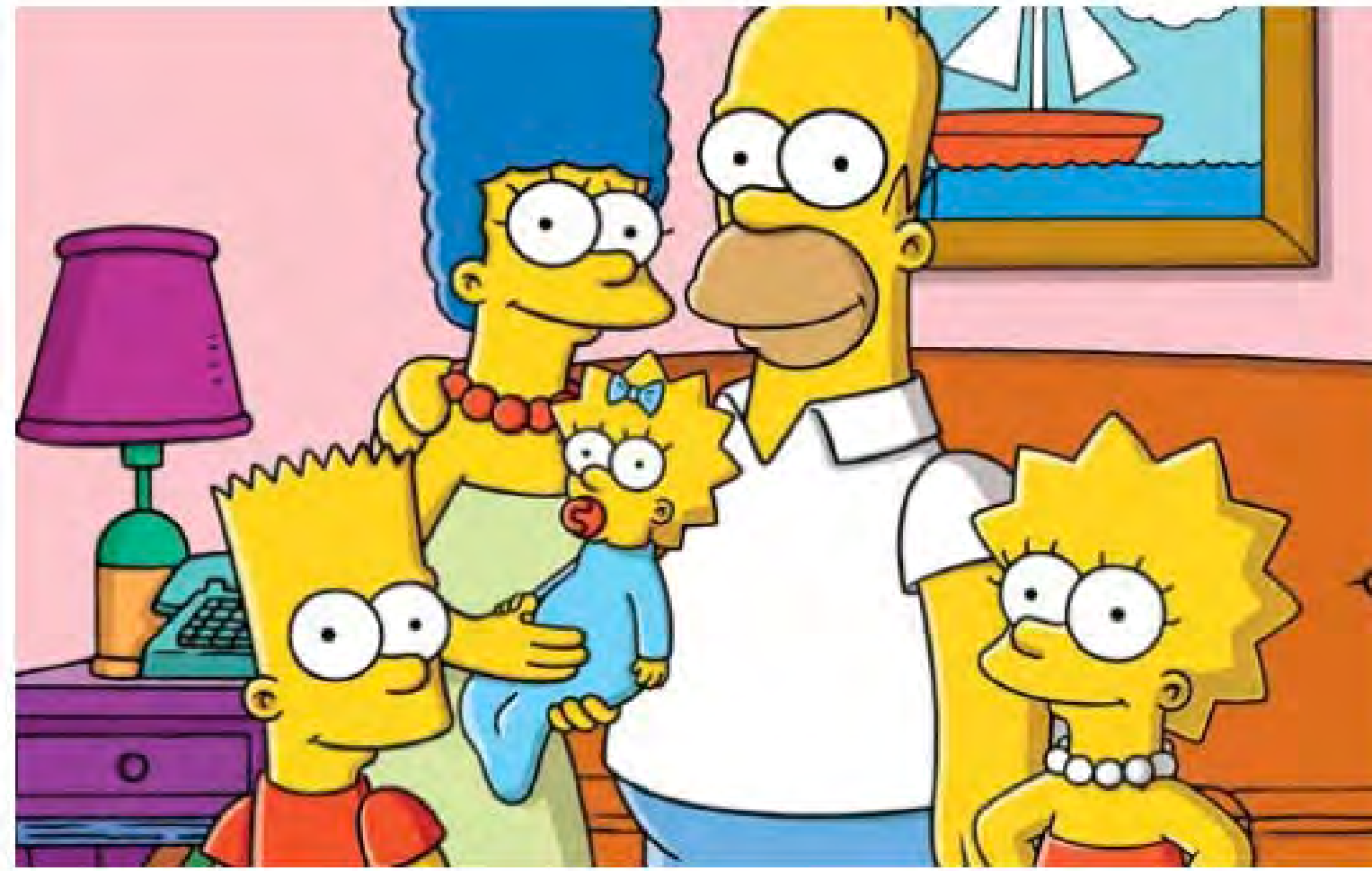






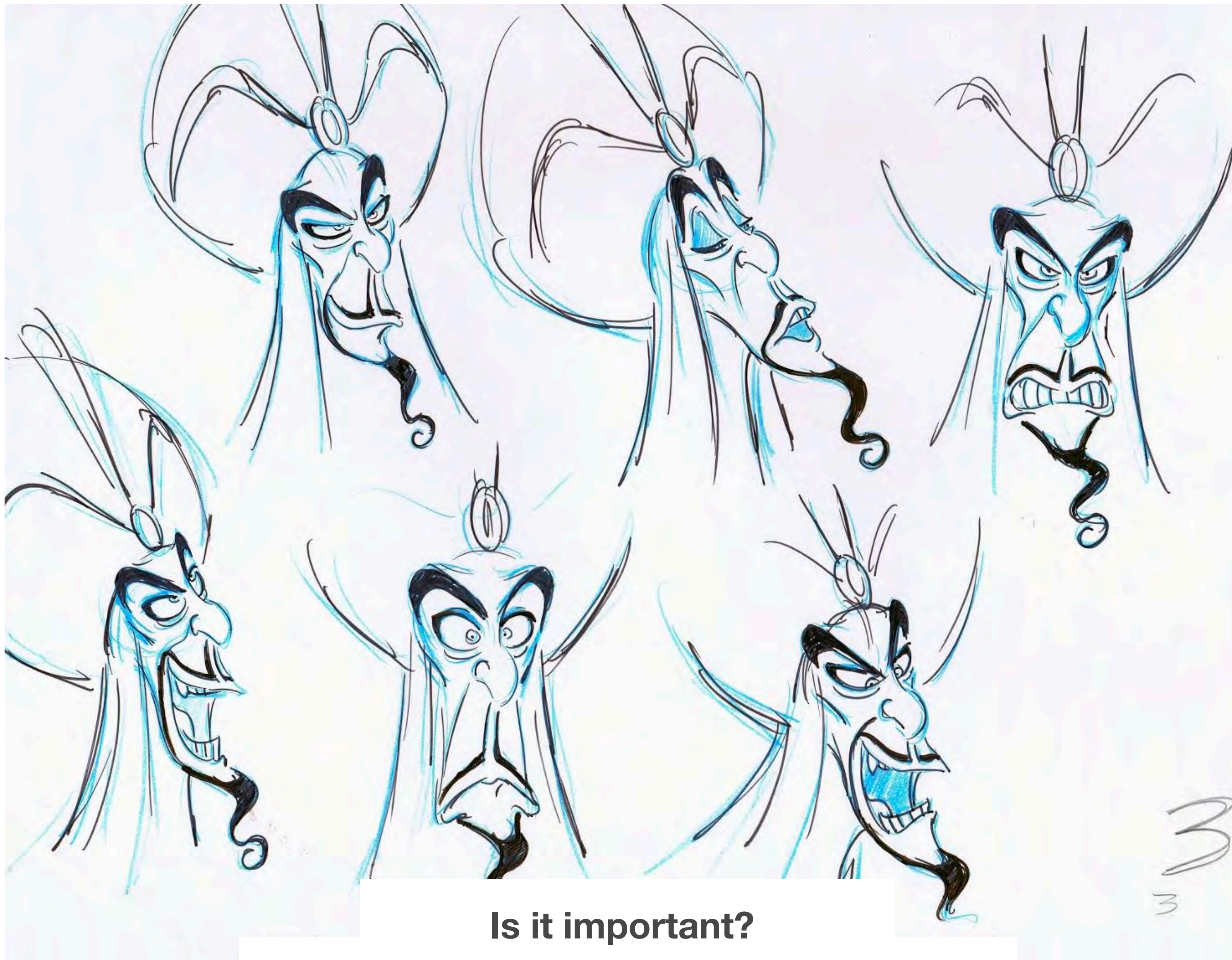
What is Character Design?

Where do we see Character Design?



Where do we see Character Design?

E E W E E



Is it important?





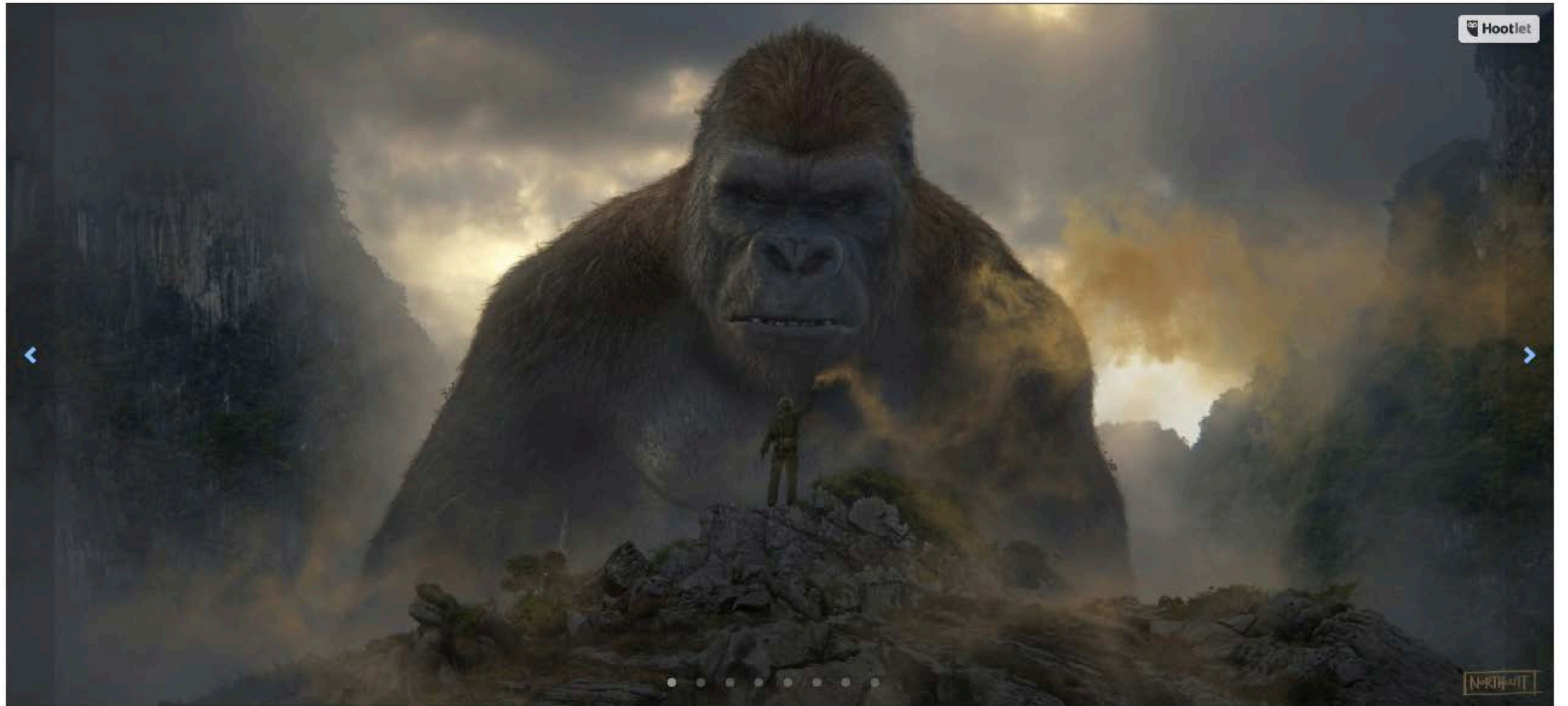
Diversity is incredibly important for designing characters.

Look at all these different shapes, sizes, colors...

And they're all human!



Can I actually make a living doing this?



ILM art department

Can you actually make a living working as a concept artist? YES!
But how hard are you willing to work?



Do I have to know how to draw well to do it?

**Drawing is hard, and it takes time,
especially if you want to be good.**



Why keep a Sketchbook?

- **Observe Daily Life.** Inspiration is all around us
- **Develop your Drawing skills**
- **Practice wherever and whenever you feel it**
- **Draw and write for yourself not for a class**
- **Jot down ideas as they come to you**

BUT PROFESSOR, I'm a digital artist. Isn't keeping a paper bound a waste of time, sketchbook old fashioned, etc?

screams inside

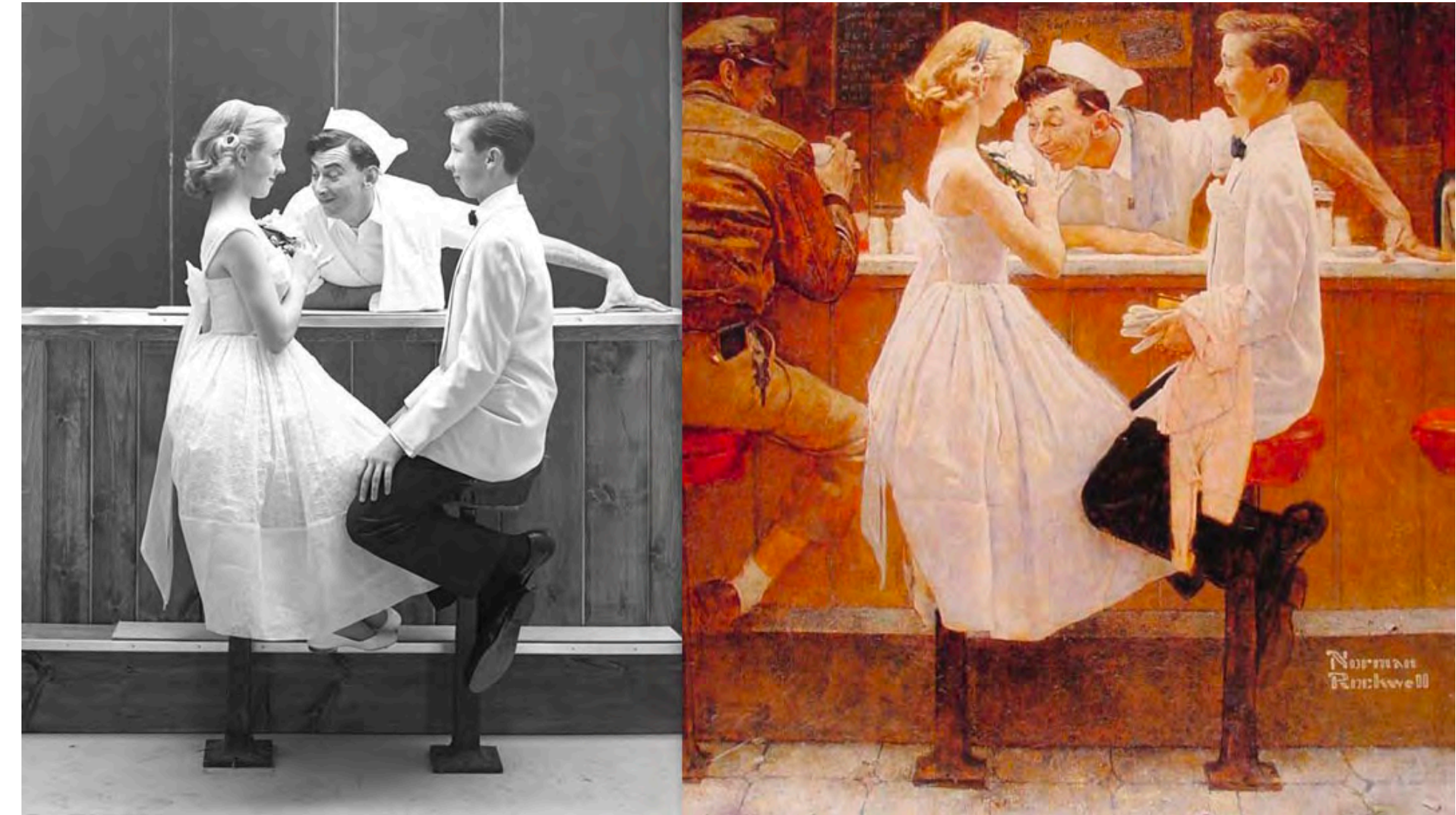
NO. Absolutely not. You'll develop those drawing skills faster and you'll make more creative leaps by keeping a sketchbook.

AND you'll learn to OBSERVE. You cant design characters unless you observe characters!

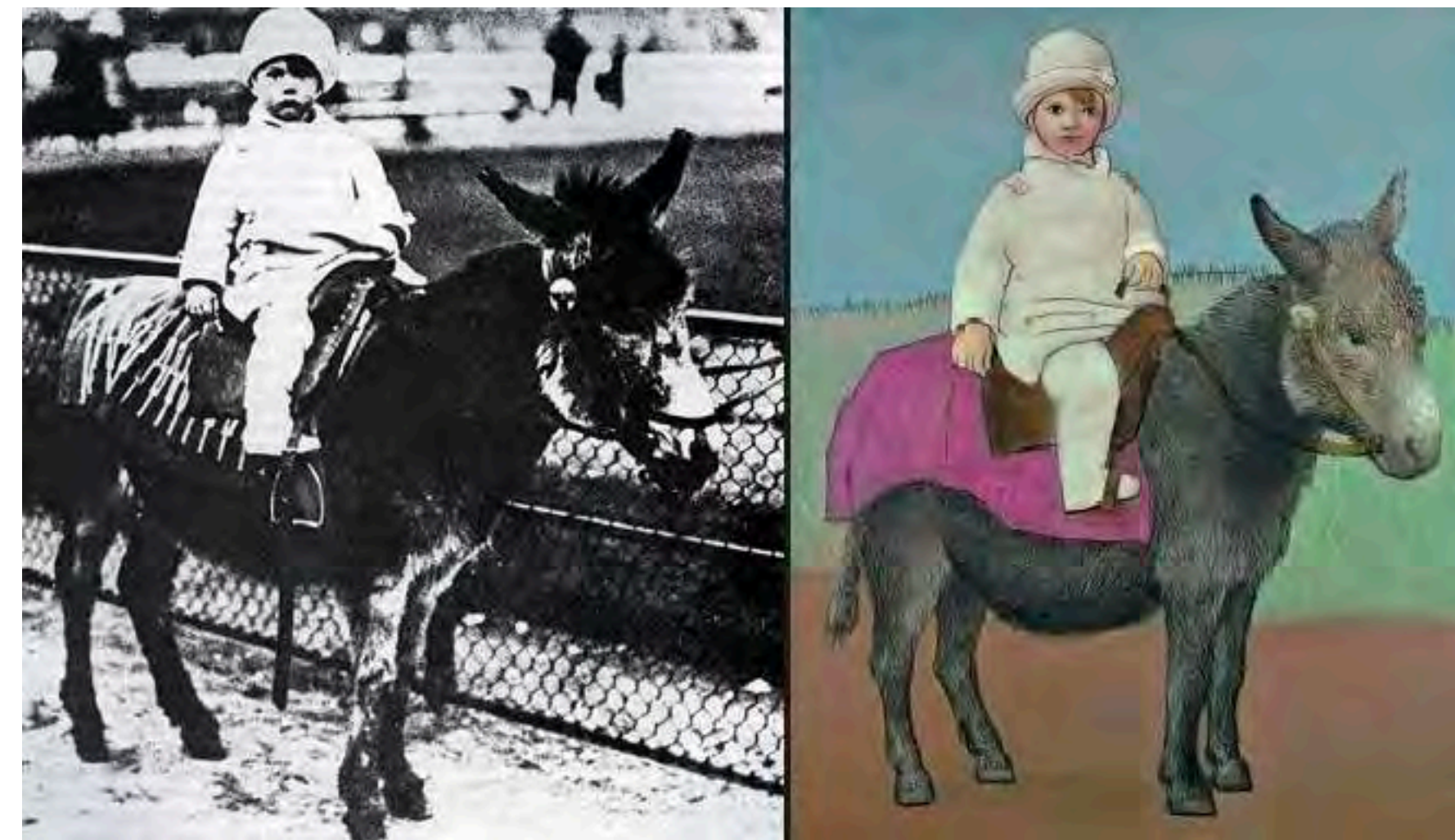
Should I Use Reference?

YES. Always.*

- *Yes. Always use reference.*
- Like most things associated with image-making, and drawing in particular, Character Design starts with an underlying structure, which a stylistic finish is applied to: a sketch is turned into a finished piece.
- Character Design is more than just drawing faces and bodies, it means designing the **WHOLE** character.
- Just like each of you, what your character looks like is only a part of who that character is.
- *Until you don't need it anymore. People who can draw things well without reference do so because they've already drawn those things hundreds of times.



Norman Rockwell



Pablo Picasso

Can You Draw a Skull Without Reference?

Kim Jung Gi can... because he's drawn a ton of skulls from reference



Want to draw something well
without reference?

DRAW IT A MILLION TIMES!

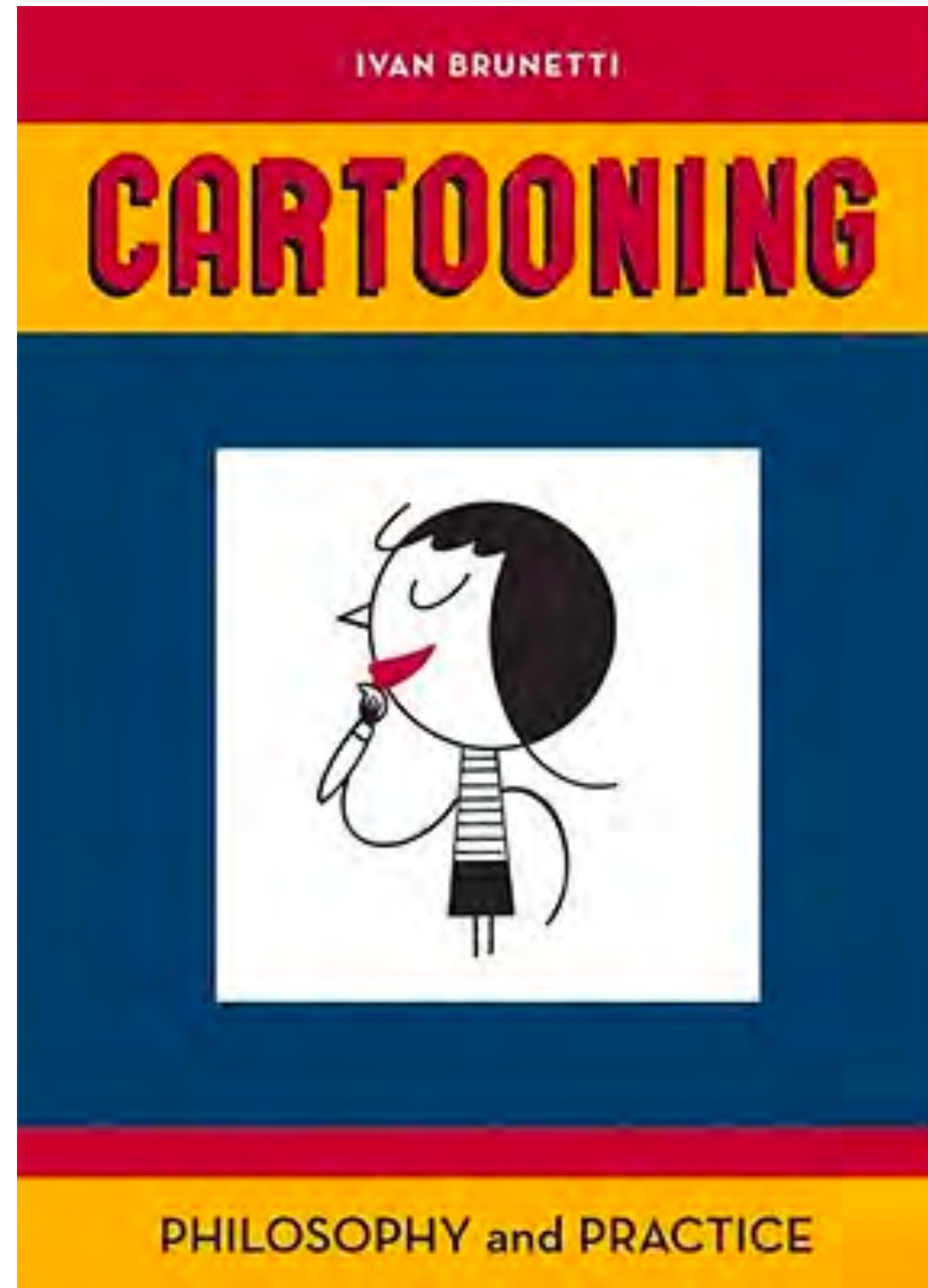
POOF! No more reference.

Are there other skills important to being a character designer?

Abstraction and Style

Drawing Fast, Drawing Details, Drawing From Memory

- Pick a subject, could be anything. Like a dog, or a truck, or a helicopter, or a self portrait, or a tree house.
- Grab a sheet of paper and divide it into 6 even sections.
- When the timer starts you have 4 minutes to draw your subject in one of the sections.
- When it beeps again you start another drawing in the second section, but this time you only have 2 minutes to draw it.
- Then do it in 1 minute. Then 30 seconds. Then 15 seconds. And finally 5 seconds.
- Now compare your drawings.
- It's a great exercise for getting faster and better at drawing. A side benefit is that it lays a foundation for you to find your individual style.
- [8-minute drawing challenge](#)
- [Ivan Brunetti's amazing book](#)



What Should I expect in this course??

- **Syllabus**
 - **Course Topics**
 - **Projects**
 - **Sharing Work**
 - **Grading**
-
- **AND What's a HYBRID??**



Class Format

- **Class will be held synchronously each week via ZOOM**
- **Course work and additional Materials will always be available on the course site**
- **Be prepared to work in class and share your work every time we meet**
- **Two sessions will be held in person , once at the beginning of the semester , once at the end**

OUR FIRST IN PERSON CLASS WILL BE FRIDAY SEPT 17th

- We will be meeting at the AM
- You will need to register ahead of time
- Let's all do it during the long class break!



What to Expect

Activities

- **Warm Ups and Drawing Prompts**
 - **Discussion**
 - **Critique and/or Sketchbook Share**
 - **Lectures and Demos**
 - **LAB TIME**
 - **Review Assignments and Expectations for Next Week's Class**
 - **Wrap Up**
-
- **Assignments are due on the white board at the start of class.**
 - **You'll get at least 1 break during class time.**
 - **During LAB TIME you'll work independently on projects and post to the whiteboard your Work in Progress for help and critique.**



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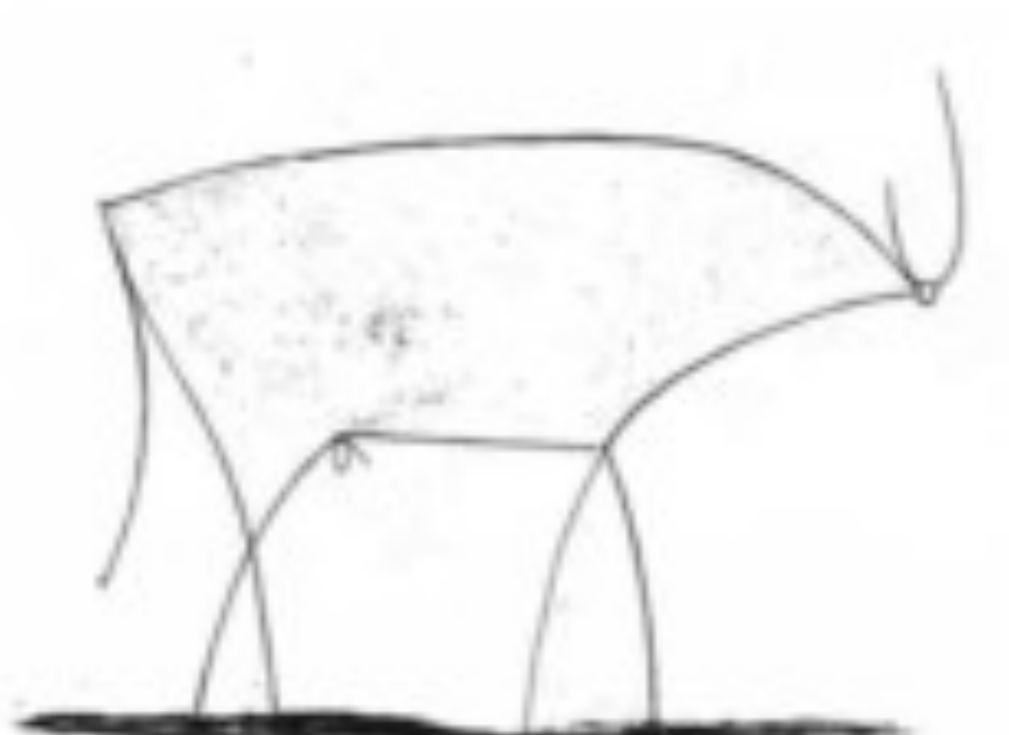
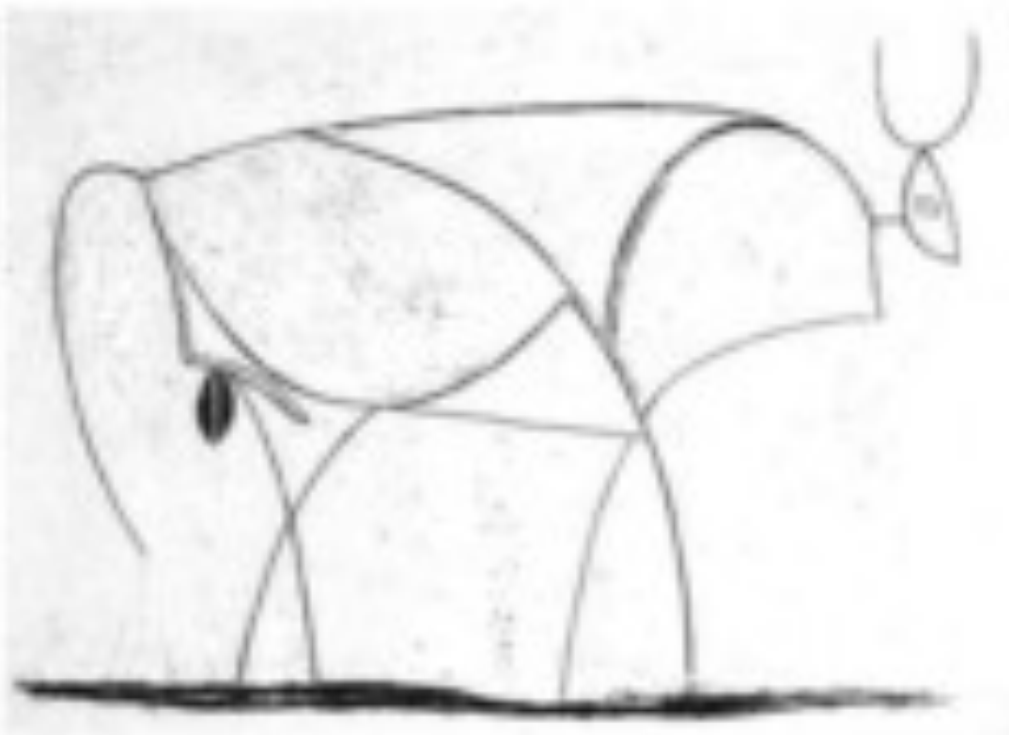
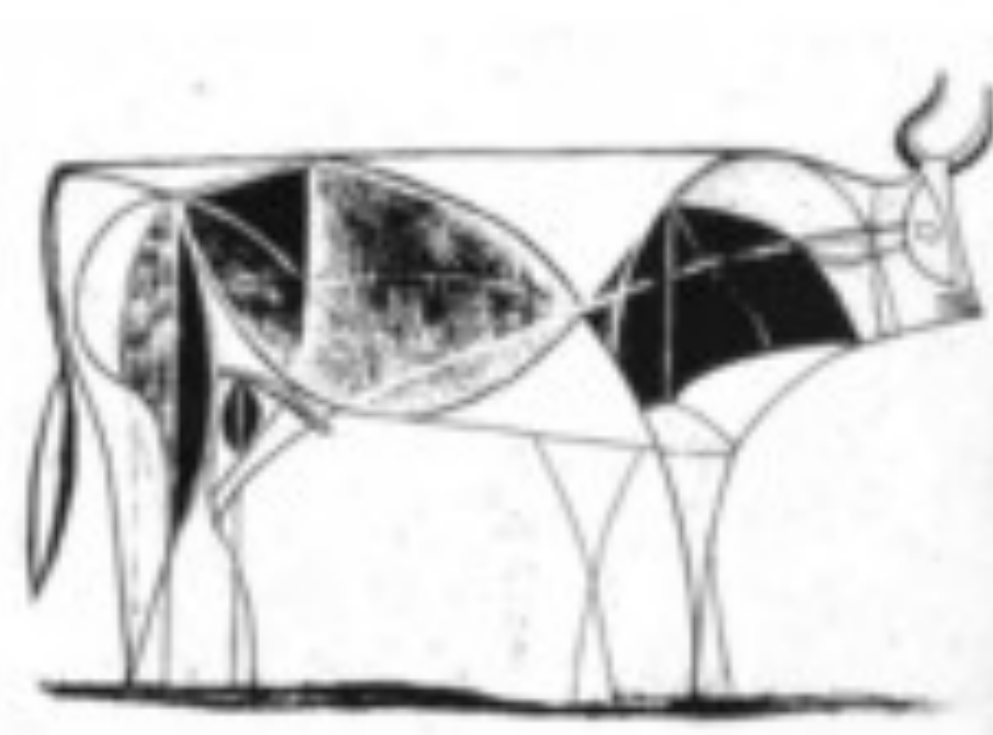
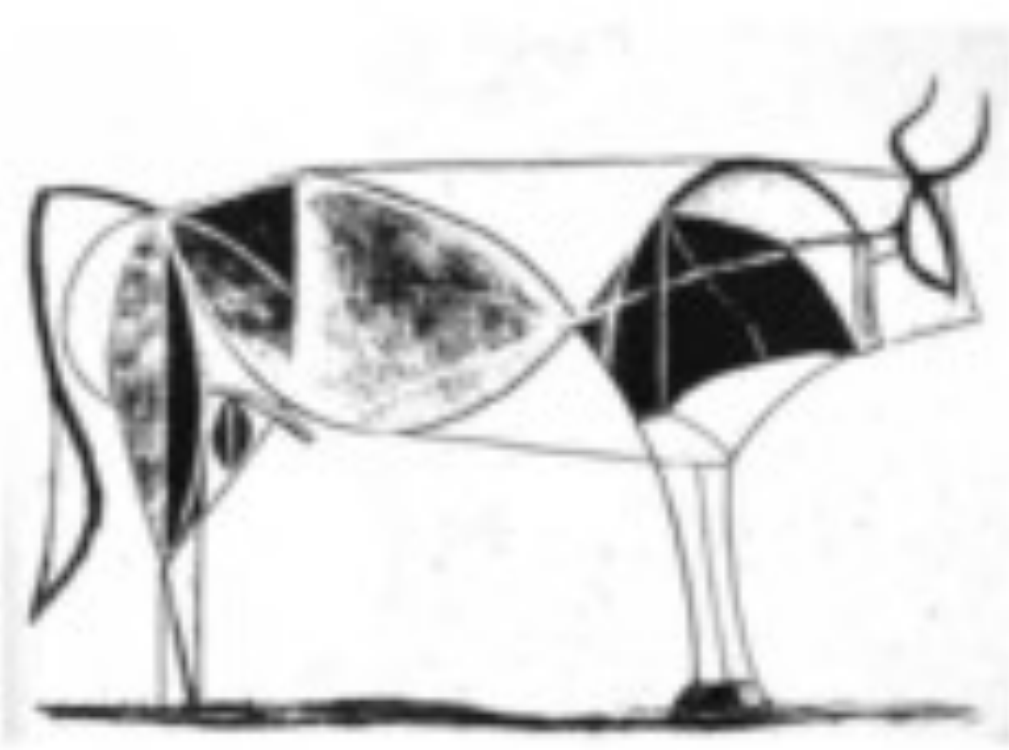
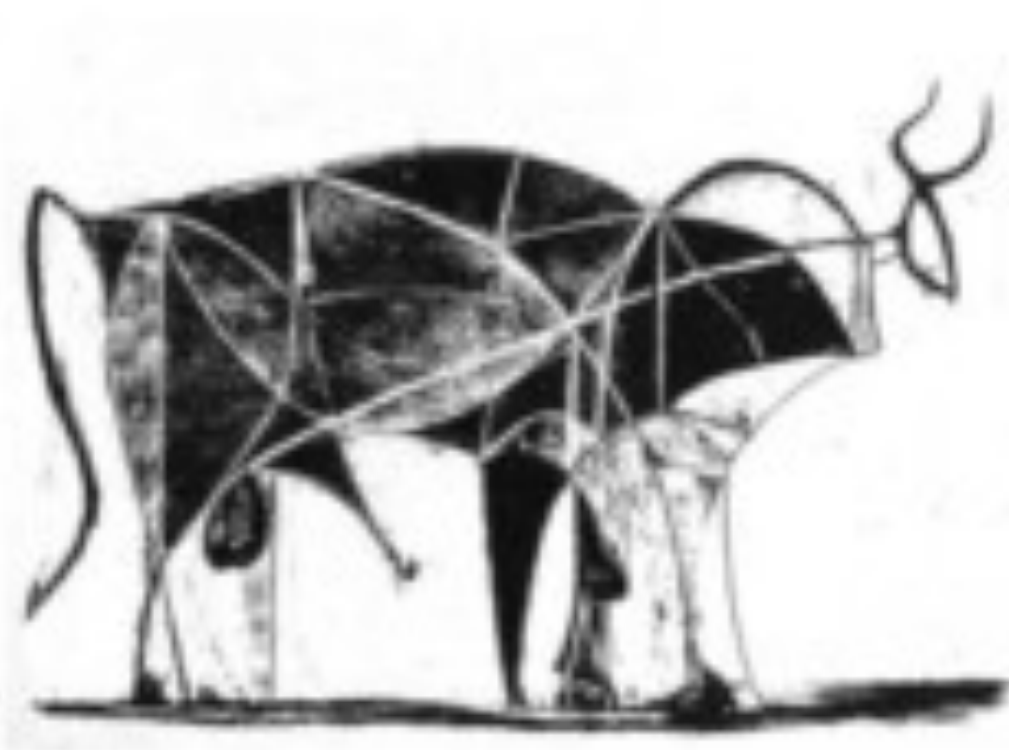
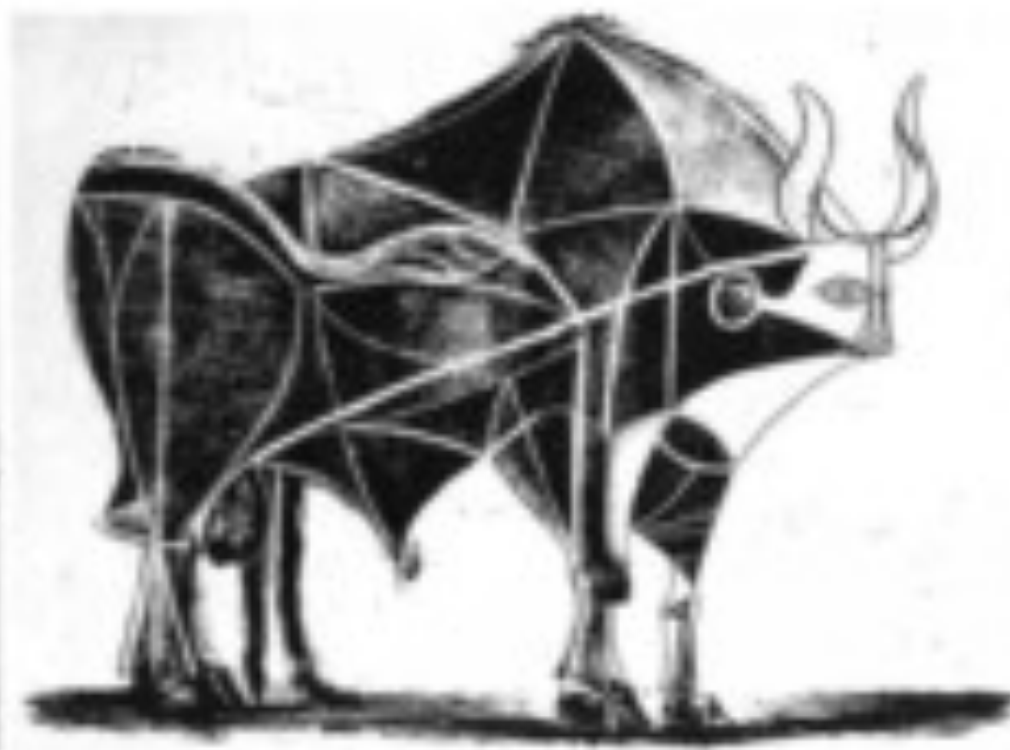
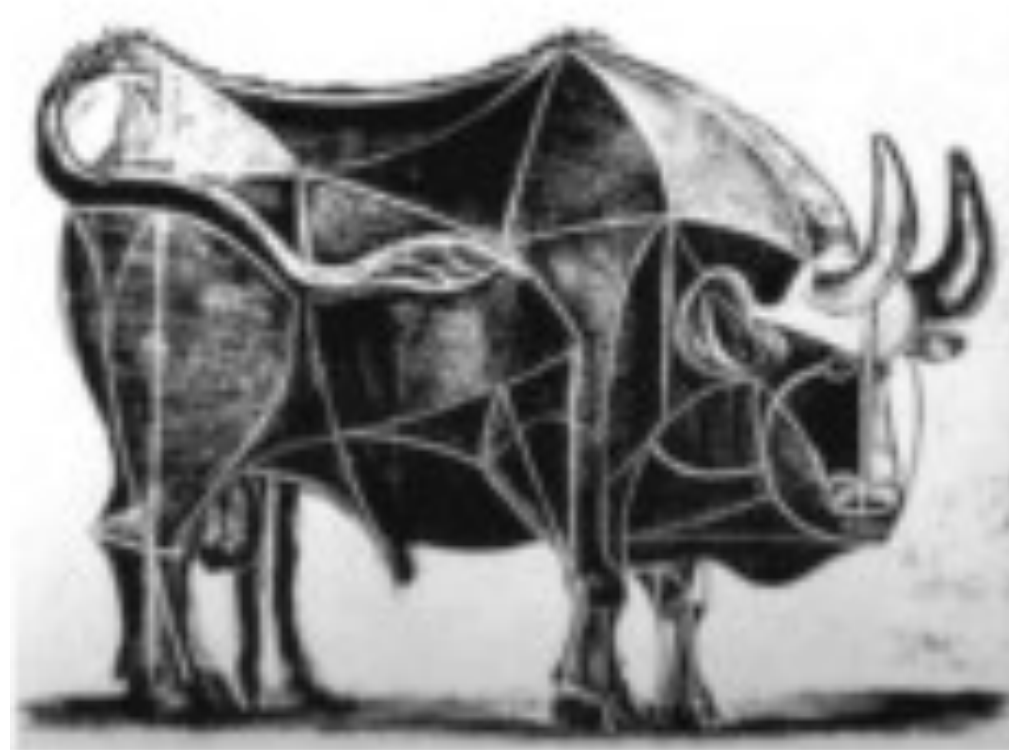
What's on the course site?

Lets talk Supplies!



Simplicity of Form and Design by Shape

ما یس: ۱۰۷



Character Design: Form and Personality

First impressions are everything!

Overall shape can say a lot about who a character is to your viewer.



We have instinctive reactions towards shape based on our sense of touch and real life experiences. Rounded shapes tend to be soft or safe, while angular shapes make us feel cautious.

Therefore overall shape tends to *imply character traits*.

THE BASIC SHAPES



CIRCLES

Circular shapes or soft shapes read as the friendliest. Circular shapes in nature have a tendency to be harmless, so they make us predisposed to like the round character.

SQUARES

Square-like shapes communicate strength, stability, and confidence. They often depict steadfast characters who are dependable, like Wreck-it-Ralph.

TRIANGLES

Triangles are composed of diagonal angular lines. They are the most dynamic of the three shapes. This shape is often the basis for bad guys or villains, as the shape form is easily made to appear sinister and communicate aggression.

Character Design of Pixar's *UP*



CARL is a grouchy, stubborn old man who wants to stay put, and his solid and static manner is revealed in his square-like shape.

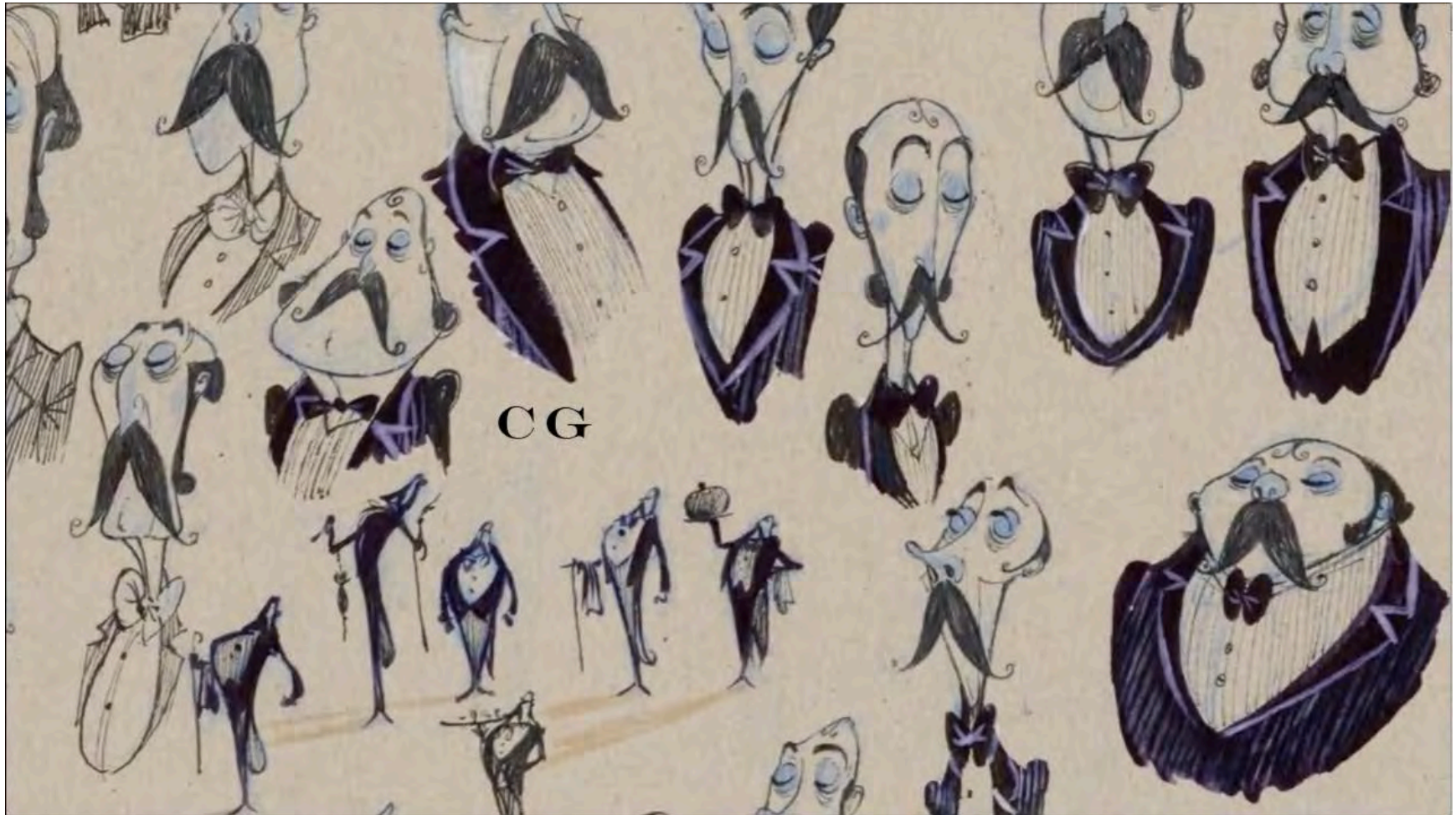
Charles Muntz, Carl's adversary, has a much more angular design. We can see this in his head, shoes and cane. When silhouetted we can easily recognize that his major shape is triangular.

Alpha, Muntz' dog, has a hostile appearance.

Dug has obviously friendly appearance.

The two dogs appearance differences are a triangle shape versus a circular one.

TRIAL AND ERROR



Our designs are strengthened by multiple iterations. This is vital when designing characters. Start loosely and quickly!



Once you have a basic form, try changing proportions, exaggerating shapes, simplifying where you can.



CB Maudeline Everglot

Finis Everglot

CG