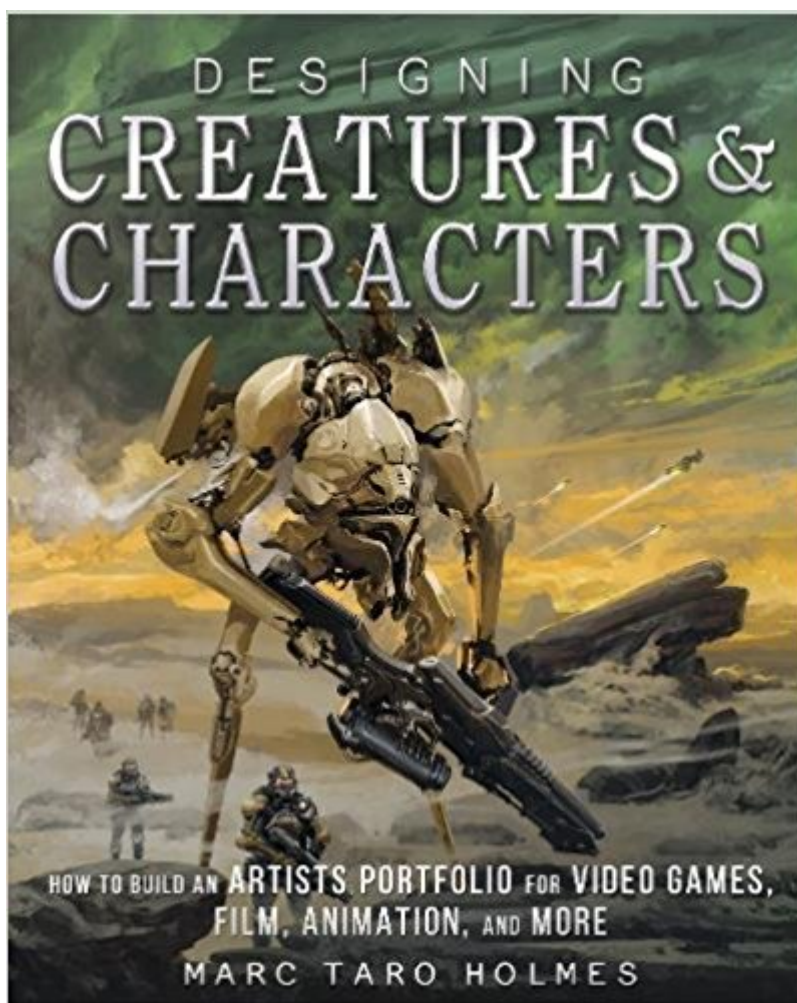


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# Designing Creatures And Characters: How To Build An Artist's Portfolio For Video Games, Film, Animation And More



## Synopsis

All You Need Is a Pencil, Paper and Your Imagination! Ever wondered how you could become a character designer for video games, film or animation? Veteran art director and concept artist Marc Taro Holmes shares proven methods for honing the skills and building the portfolio necessary to become a pro gaming artist. This is the first and only work-at-your-own pace home study program that teaches the crucial insider knowledge needed to break into the entertainment-design industry and develop your own style--all you need are a pencil, paper and your imagination. The projects within this straightforward guide are constructed to help you apply your existing drawing and digital art skills to character design. Or, if you're still working on your skills, it will help you improve while at the same time turning your mind into an idea-generating machine. Unlock the Secrets to Character and Creature Design Follow the creature design process from start to finish: 35 projects are divided into 4 challenge levels, ranging from brainstorming and drawing character blueprints to completing market-ready illustrations. As the levels advance, the projects become more complex. Learn to solve design problems: Every project introduces you to an open-ended fictional assignment inspired by industry experience. Each project has a list of minimum deliverables--the basics to get to the next stage--plus bonus goals. You receive virtual merit badges for each achievement you complete. Think like a pro: Over the 155 possible artistic achievements, you'll be asked to find a solution to every type of conceptual problem you might encounter as a professional creature or character designer. Build your portfolio: Work toward creating an outstanding portfolio. Improve your skills and push yourself to create a fine-tuned presentation that could get you your eventual dream job. "This is a workout for the imagination, a boot camp for creativity." --Marc Taro Holmes

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## Customer Reviews

Marc Taro Holmes, Montreal, Quebec, [citizensketcher.wordpress.com](http://citizensketcher.wordpress.com), has 20+ years as an Art Director and Concept Artist in video games and feature animation with studios such as Microsoft, Electronic Arts, and Disney. Besides video game work he also does urban sketching and authored *The Urban Sketcher* for North Light Books.

I am familiar with the author through his urban sketching blog and book, and have enjoyed his work and generous teaching approach related to that. With a recent interest in imaginative realism, I discovered this book and all I can say is WOW! The book is full of instructional guidance, experiential tips, and great drawings. The gameification of the exercises and the sheer number of projects to do are both amazing and give it value far beyond its cost if you actually devote time to doing them. For a young person looking to get into the art side of the gaming/entertainment industry, this is a fabulous resource. As an older person, I am not career-minded; I just love to draw and am a sci-fi geek, so this book is a fun way to explore imaginative realism more. As a gamer, I can realllllly relate to those achievement medals! I can see this book used equally well as a self-study guide, common reference for drawing club group efforts, or course textbook. Great job, Marc!

Terrific Book! Holmes is a generous teacher and brilliant artist. The book is wonderfully laid out with inspiring exercises for any artist.

This book give the beginning character designer good ideas to use their own creativity.

This is a great book to exercise creativity development and practice. It is fun to use, contains some useful tips, and I'd recommend it to anyone interested in making concept art. This book is not for beginners or people learning the basics of drawing.

High quality print and images, excellent descriptions of process steps and overall development lifecycle. I think the artists true mind and soul is in concept sketching , he is brilliant here, the color

illustrations come across as "Gee the great time was in the idea and drawing,...now I am still stuck having to color it". I think if you asked him would you rather create 1000 pencil drawings or digitally paint 100, he would take the task of 1000 pencil drawings with love, and the task of 100 would just be to earn a living. The author artist is really alive when he sketches and it shows, if he was an octopus he could easily have a pencil drawing going on with each tentacle at the same time.....this guy was born to draw, that comes across clear as a bell, it is a great book for learning about concept design, and helps to differentiate the create buzz of the "idea expressed through drawing" as opposed to the more "pragmatic craftsman aspects of digital coloring". As far as creative imagination he does fall a little bit into the "creatures as a composite morph of animals" school which seems to be common. I think this is a fair observation, there are not a lot of creature concept artists that can cough one up from scratch, so he does trace his imagination inspiration to the world of a lot of recognizable animals as the root source, sometime a little too obvious. This book gets five stars because every aspect of it has a lot of thought to the structure and his game reward system is terrific to help artists get into discipline in a creative way without it seeming like rote work. A well thought out book for conveying the process, techniques, style in an excellent format and presentation style, keeps you interested. Another nice feature is he hits on enough Photoshop tips that are really related to the immediate task at hand, in other words the day to day practical photoshop you need to know to get the job done, so in this context his advice is very hands on a production oriented. The quality is great, it is worth every penny, I don't know him, did not get a free book, nor am I paid for this review, I have a lot of art books and I am very critical, I know a good book when I see one for the right information and right price. My suggestion for the artists next book would be, to leave out the digital painting all together, focus on heads, skulls, creature skulls, anatomy and do an intense volume on heads, expressions, head bones, many animal morph or original, head muscles, horns, capturing emotion in creature and demons etc.....but do this as a large number of images from the creative concept and drawing perspective, getting different angles, and sketch lighting as opposed to digital finished color lighting, in other words creature and characters, drawing galore, 100% focused on heads and head features.....all pencils....the quick creative spirit of the imagination

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