Character Design

Tony Scarlatos
What makes a good character?

• Credibility
  – The character should have dimensionality, should be complex enough to be interesting
  – If the character is based on a real-life role, such as a doctor, lawyer, athlete, etc., then solid research into those professions needs to be done
  – The character should evolve throughout the narrative

• Appeal
  – The audience should identify with the character, and care about their outcomes
Character’s Backstory

• Introduces the character to the audience, and reveals the motivations, skills, and conflicts of the character

• Helps the audience to buy into the narrative and the character’s role in it
Building a character

• Attributes
  – Functional: how the character behaves
  – Cosmetic: how the character looks

• Good characters have a simplified design
  – Emphasis on big shapes and lines of motion
  – Exaggeration of personality (eyes, mouth)
Simple shapes, action lines, emphasis
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Great characters need good research
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Reference, proportions

Leonardo Da Vinci

Baris Tan
Istanbul 2006
Reference, proportions
Reference, proportions
Reference, proportions
Reference, proportions

Human's height is usually 7-8 heads tall
Reference, proportions
Obtain reference
Create a Character Sheet
Research Backstory

The Collection

Armor for a Member of the Barberini Family

Date: ca. 1623-30
Geography: Milan
Culture: Italian, Milan
Medium: Steel, engraved, gilt, and encrusted with silver
Dimensions: Wt., 34 lb. 8 oz. (15.65 kg)
Classification: Armor for Man-3/4 Armor
Credit Line: George F. Baker Fund, 1926
Accession Number: 26.210

On view in Gallery 371
Create a Character Sheet
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This armor is a deluxe version of a typical cuarassier’s armor, worn by heavy cavalry armed with sword and pistols. Its rich ornament and light weight, however, indicate that it was designed primarily for ceremonial use and as a symbol of martial status.

The pierced and chased decoration is characteristic of elaborate Milanese armor of the early seventeenth century. The designs include numerous crowned ovals enclosing bees, the badge of the Barbaria, one of Rome’s most powerful families. The Barbaria rose to prominence, wealth, and power with the election of Matteo Barbaria as Pope Urban VIII in 1623. Presumably, this armor was made for the ranking secular member of the family, either Carlo (1562–1615) or his son Tadeo (1613–1647). The pope’s brother, Carlo, was general of the papal armies and duke of Montemorone from 1633 and prince of Palestrina from 1639. Tadeo succeeded to his father’s titles and offices in 1639.
Create from scratch...

You've got a million bad drawings in you; you better get started.

- Chuck Jones
Student Character Sketch
Student Character Sketch
Pixar Character Sketch
Disney Character Sketch
Marvel Superhero Model Sheet

Character Design: 180° View

Front View:

Side View:

Back View: