



Storm Redesign Process

🕒 09/16/2013

📌 process



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This is my entry to Project Rooftop's [Storm redesign contest](#). And this is also an annotated collection of snapshots from the creative process behind it.

The Task

When I design characters and their outfits I always think about what the outfit tells us about the character. Where is the character from and where now? How does she relate to herself and others? What is it she does? For this redesign, I had three things I wanted to accomplish:

1. Connect her to her heritage from Kenya and her upbringing in Egypt.
2. Work out her punk style in reference to her early appearances and to the outcast-youth-mentality behind the X-Men comics.
3. Add functionality to her outfit that correlates with her mutant power (weather manipulation).

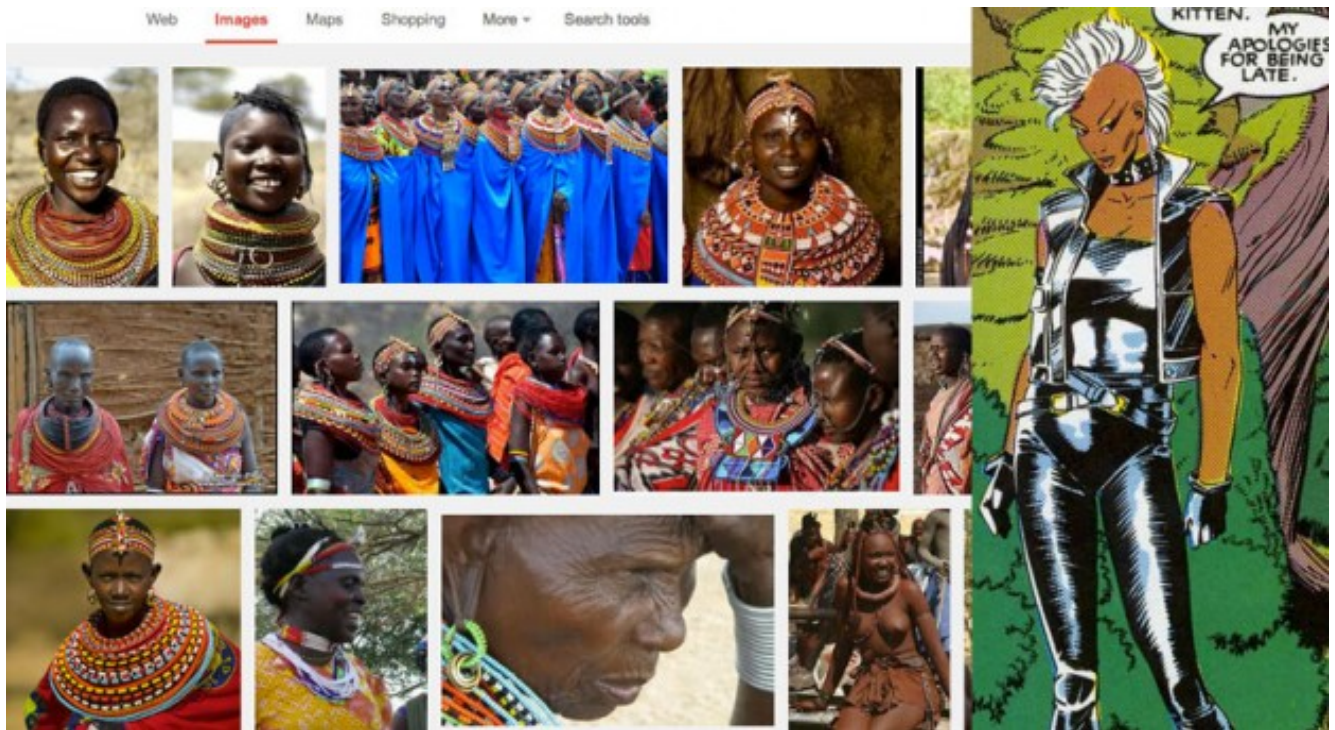
...and all this in less than 4 hours, since the deadline was approaching fast.

Research

Now it was time to gather some references. So I picked something appropriate from [SenshiStock](#) (Highly recommended stock source and FREE!) for the pose and researched black photo models to get some ideas about a very feminine, beautiful and also distinctively african look for her face. Also looking into Kenyan traditions I decided to play around with facial paint, accessories and found confirmation for going with a partially shaved head. Finally I googled some photos of the bust of Nefertiti (which I was able to see in a local museum here in Berlin) for some ideas on eye make up.



from l to r: SenshiStock, Shai'la Yvonne, Alek Wek



left: google search for “kenya tribe women”, right: Storm in her days as “Mohawk Storm” © Marvel Comics

Sketching

I would have loved to go into more detail in my research but the clock was ticking. Only 3.5 hours left and I needed to get to start painting. I imported the SenshiStock pose into Photoshop, sloppily cut and pasted the head of Alek Wek onto the image, turned the image to grayscale and started sketching right onto a new layer on top of everything. Here are the quick sketches and corrections I made in grayscale and the final color sketch:













Painting

Less than 2 hours left on the clock, but I was happy with my sketch. I directly painted over the sketch – in grayscale again – before adding colors. Accessories and other details were added once the character painting was colored and in the final step I added some lightning effects, which are simply taken from photographs.

To save time with the pearls and beads, I prepared a layer effect – set to *drop shadow* – and tweaked the settings in a way, that it draws a soft outline around whatever I would paint into that layer. Then I simply build a Photoshop brush, that draws dotted lines, picked some fancy colors for the dots and the layer effect would take care of the rest. The time ran out to be more thorough with the beads and pearls – which unfortunately shows in close ups.

With only minutes left before the deadline closes, I decided to do two little sketches to explain the functionality of the unwrapping costume – which turns into one of those flying squirrel wing suits – and the Kirby-esk tattoo, that works as a conductor for thunderbolts to give her more control over the lightnings she conjures up.









Anjin
AnHot

LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR
TATTOO

GUIDES ELECTRICITY
TO HANDS AND CAN
STORE IT FOR A
LIMITED TIME.



COSTUME UNWRAPS INTO WING SUIT.

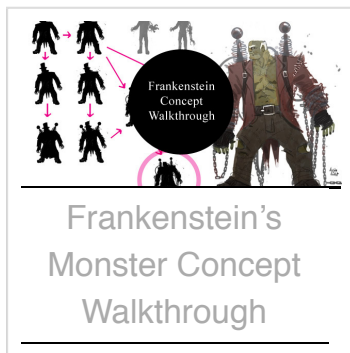


2 minutes left, email sent, phewww, done.

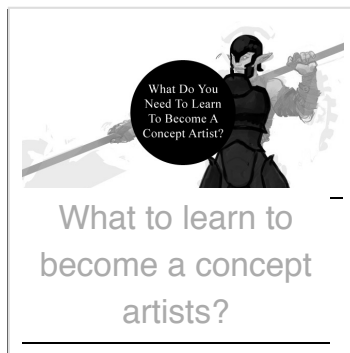
Thanks for your attention,
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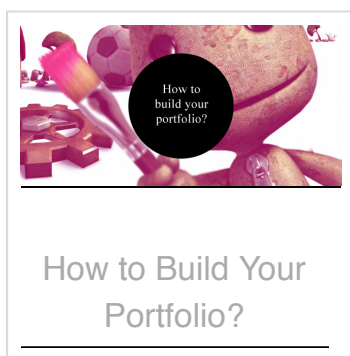
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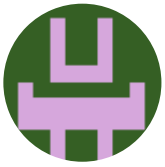
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2 Comments



KarenD

12/24/2013 at 2:03 am

For Ghod's Sake submit your Storm Redesign to Marvel – it needs to go mainstream!

Good statement on how you did the redesign!



aoikiwi

10/18/2013 at 6:56 am

Whoa, given that time limit, I think you did an amazing job of coming up with a cool design that hits all three of those initial listed goals! As an aspiring game artist it's always interesting and edifying to see how more experienced people approach/break down concept art tasks and keep things efficient when racing deadlines (heh). Thanks very much for posting!

(whoops, browser's hanging– hope this doesn't get double posted)