



• YOUSEF IKHREIS •

PART- 1



MAKING OF **MATROUK**

BY • YOUSEF IKHREIS •

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MAKING OF
MATROUK

THINK DEFINE CONNECT

Introduction Pipeline

First: Pre Production

Ideas and Questions
Concepts and Story
The Storyboard
Character design

- Gathering information and data
- Character Profile (Matrouk)
- The Physical extension
- The Psychological extension
- Characterization

Model Level
Animation Level
Sound Level

Model level:

- 1- Formal (Silhouette) Stage
 - THE BODY
 - THE FACE

Second: Production

Modeling
Low poly modeling
UV Mapping
Checking the Model
High poly modeling

- 2- Muscles Stage
Matrouk Anatomy
Matrouk muscle sculpting
Killing the symmetry
- 3- Fats Stage
- 4- Skins and wrinkles stage
- 5- Veins stage
- 6- Scratches and Cuts Stage
- 7- Identification Marks Stage :

Model Study:
ZBrush Output:
Back to XSI:
Posing:
Back to ZBrush
Camera
Analyzing the pose and camera view
The Rule of thirds
The leading eye
Rendering in ZBrush

Third: Post Productions

Compositing in Photoshop
Attentions Priority
Compositing

- First: The Background
- Second: The Character
- Third: Light and Mood
- Fourth: Retouching

Final Judgment
Summary
Thanks

PART- 1



Designed by Yousef Ikhreis

MAKING OF
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Softimage XSI, ZBrush, Photoshop

HOW TO THINK? HOW TO DEFINE? HOW TO CONNECT?

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Hi everybody, my name is Yousef Ikhreis from Jordan. 30 years old, self-taught artist, I am working as Art Director since 2003. Also I am doing a lot of freelance work, In this massive tutorial I will share my knowledge and experience trying to represent in depth tutorial about the character logic of Matrouk. Hoping to get your pleasure and satisfaction,

Introduction

Matrouk is an Arabic word that means the abandoned, he was created to be one of the main characters for my short movie (Vacancies for Creatures/beginning of 2009) which is a trailer for my other short (FANCY PLANET/2010).

Creating Matrouk process is based on my own work pipeline for my short movies, so I will try to concentrate my demonstration of this making of for creating Matrouk as 3D static image. And what is related to him.

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Pipeline

My pipeline work is divided to three main parts,

- Pre Production.
- Production.
- Post Production.

First: Pre Production

Ideas and Questions:

We can't create something without knowing what the THING...without something is its nothing and we can't create NO THING, so what can we do?

In this case we act naturally by asking QUESTIONS.

QUESTIONS is superior tool for our minds, it's pushing our minds to inspire, search, find out the answers and bring the knowledge and information's, it's the most creative tool in the human brain, the more you ask, the more you think and the more your intelligence, this is why the intelligence levels in the human brain is the highest for the Children's... and they don't stop asking...

Concepts and Story:

Concept starts from the Story, the idea is the story core, and this is why the idea is the value that every story based on. Once the story is selected and approved for productions, it will be translated to Screenplay and Storyboard.

The Storyboard:

Storyboard plays important role in the Pre-Production structure, because it supports and represents the story image for the visual eye, also it separates the story to the sound part (dialogue, music, sound effects...) from the visual part (characters, environments, backgrounds ...).And makes the Productions easy to deal with.

Matrouk is our character that we need to create his conceptual image, it belong to the visual part which is the Character Designer responsibility.

Character design:

- Gathering information and data

Before the Character Designer start designing, he had a lot of questions that need to be answered to start storming the design ideas in his brain, this why he receive a document called Character Profile which contains a brief discretion for the main character. Off course he will do his researches. And he could ask more questions, where most of the answers will be found in the story.

Character Profile **MATROUK**

Information

Name: Matrouk Occupation: None
Age: 35 Years Tall: 248 cm
Mode: Tragedian, Miserable, Passionate.
Mentality: Slow understanding, His Gift is speaking with birds.
Likes: He likes to spend his time feeding the birds, climbing the high places, trees, mountains,...
Dislike: He hate the dark and to be lonely.
Notes: He has strong, balanced and sharp muscles, different scratches at his body a deep feeling in pride and integrity



Character Profile (Matrouk)

As we can see that the Profile of Matrouk has provide us with good knowledge in Tow extensions, The Physical extension and The Psychological extension. So the Character Designer has got an important answer for his questions. By connecting this data he can start extracting and concluding new information and answers, so the character image will be clear to him.

1- The Physical Extension:

248 cm means that he is a giant man, strong and sharp muscles. because he likes climbing he should have a big strong fest, forearms, calves, and shaped abs. he is hairless with shaped body this will make us consider that he have a glittering and thin skin, and when we said:" thin skin" we should remember his veins. His body has different scratches, means that he has been through lots of dangerous circumstances in his life, and he is a very good fighter. He hates the darkness, means that he has no activities at night, so he won't go to utilize the darkness for hunting and killing like evil creatures and monsters... etc.

2- The Psychological Extension:

His name is Matrouk which means in Arabic the abandoned, Tragedy, means that if he would talk about something it could be a tragedy case, accident and lots of old sad stories. Assured that he is Passionate, when we said Passionate, means that he could probably cry at any case. this is the way he is faithful, So he spend his time in good purposes like feeding birds, Climbing Heights, means that he try to discover his life by realizing where he is living every day, it's like watching his life from outside himself to get better view, maybe he could find why he is abandoned when he was a baby, He Hates Loneliness, means that he is a social character and friendly ... etc.

• Notice how easy was to find a lot of the connections and new logical results from few words. This is How the Character Designer should think to produce the best illustration for the character.

- Characterization

After gathering required information we are going to study and discuss how we can characterize, translating all the adjectives and attributes which we concluded from the Physical extension and the Psychological extension as visual image. How we can make the audience feels that Matrouk is a strong character. How we can show him huge, sad and faithful. How we can reflect his feeling and emotions through his face or body.

Characterization is the nature of this character.

What is the Structure of the Characterization?

In my opinion, this Structure is based on one or more of these three levels:

- 1- Model Level:** it shows how much this character can tell through his body expressions, how much we can understand and observe its nature. (This level includes the material).
* I can use classical drawing or any 2D or 3D still images as example.
- 2- Animation Level:** it symbolizes the character acts, feelings, moods, reaction, the way he is thinking, and his confidence...
* I can use the old Hollywood movies and the old cartoon animations, which was without sound narration or dialogue as an example. Also it could be stop motion, 2D or 3D animation.
- 3- Sound Level:** it's the character sound, the way he speaks, laughs, curse, cry, scream... All of these sound expressions will give us the assumption about the character nature; it could be also music or sound effects that accompany this character presence.

• In this making of, I am going to characterize Matrouk and design his visual concept at the Model level only. Excepting the material.

MAKING OF MATROUK

THINK DEFINE CONNECT

Through my characterization at the model level I divide it to seven stages, starting from the biggest parts to the smallest parts, the stages are:

Model level:

- 1- Formal (Silhouette) Stage.
- 2- Muscles Stage.
- 3- Fats Stage.
- 4- Skin and wrinkles Stage.
- 5- Veins Stage.
- 6- Scratches and Cuts Stage.
- 7- Marks of Identification Stage.

When I start the Characterizing Matrouk at the model level, it was liner proces. This is mean that I can't start the skin stage before the muscle stage or adding my identification marks before skin stage, so it should be liner process from 1-7.

1- Formal (Silhouette) Stage

I consider this is the main base for the characterization at all levels and stages. By looking at this finished stage the audience could guess and tell the most important description, these are (male, female, monster, freak, alien, dragon, animal, bird, lizard...).

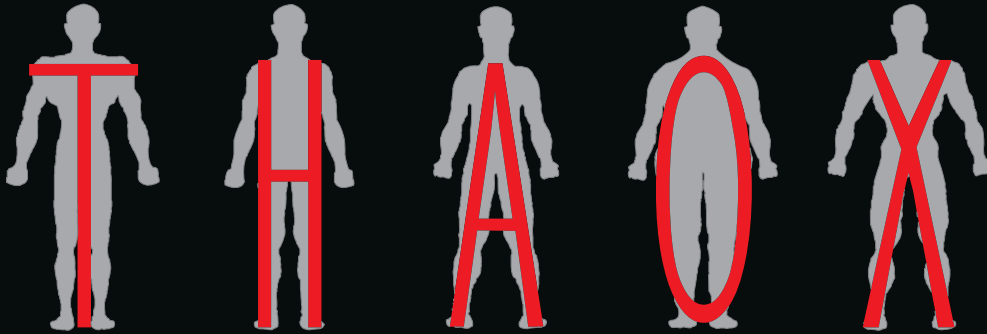
For the formal stage I separated it for two parts, Body Part and Face part.

The Body

For Matrouk I have concluded that he is strong giant human, who lives alone. Also I assumed that he has the same human body structure, with some exaggerations to show him as giant. Let's take a look at the reference which I create for "The Standard Human Body Forms" and named it THAOX, for easy to remember.

Human Body Forms

- T H A O X -



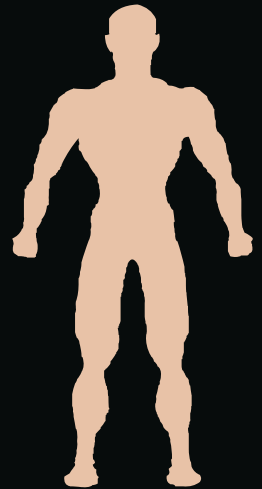
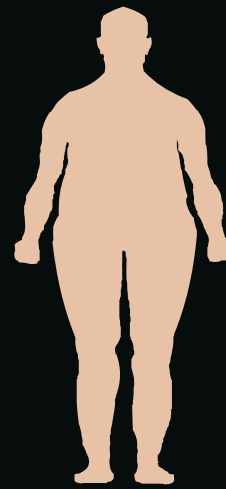
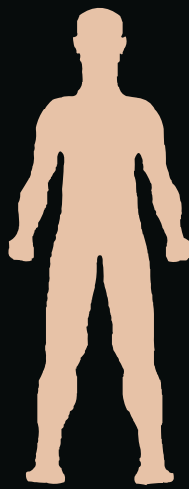
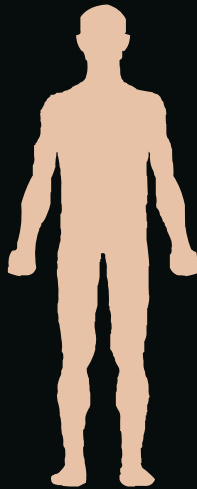
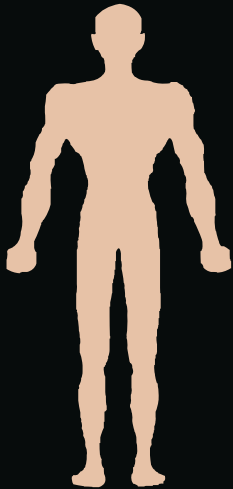
T

H

A

O

X



UPPER PART

Wide and strong
Shoulders
Strong Hands
Flat Chest

MIDDEL PART

Thin waste

LOWER PART

Tall and thin legs

- Most of the strength in his upper part.

UPPER PART

Medium Shoulders
Medium Hands
Medium Chest

MIDDEL PART

Medium to big waste

LOWER PART

Medium legs

- Most of the strength distributed to his body parts

UPPER PART

Weak and thin
Shoulders
Weak small Hands
Weak Chest

MIDDEL PART

Medium waste

LOWER PART

Strong big legs

- Most of the strength in his lower part

UPPER PART

Weak and thin
Shoulders
Weak small Hands
Weak Chest

MIDDEL PART

Big fat waste

LOWER PART

Weak legs

- Most of the strength in his Middle part

UPPER PART

Strong Shoulders
Strong Hands
Big wide Chest

MIDDEL PART

Medium to small waste

LOWER PART

Strong big legs

- Most of the strength in his upper and lower parts

MAKING OF MATROUK

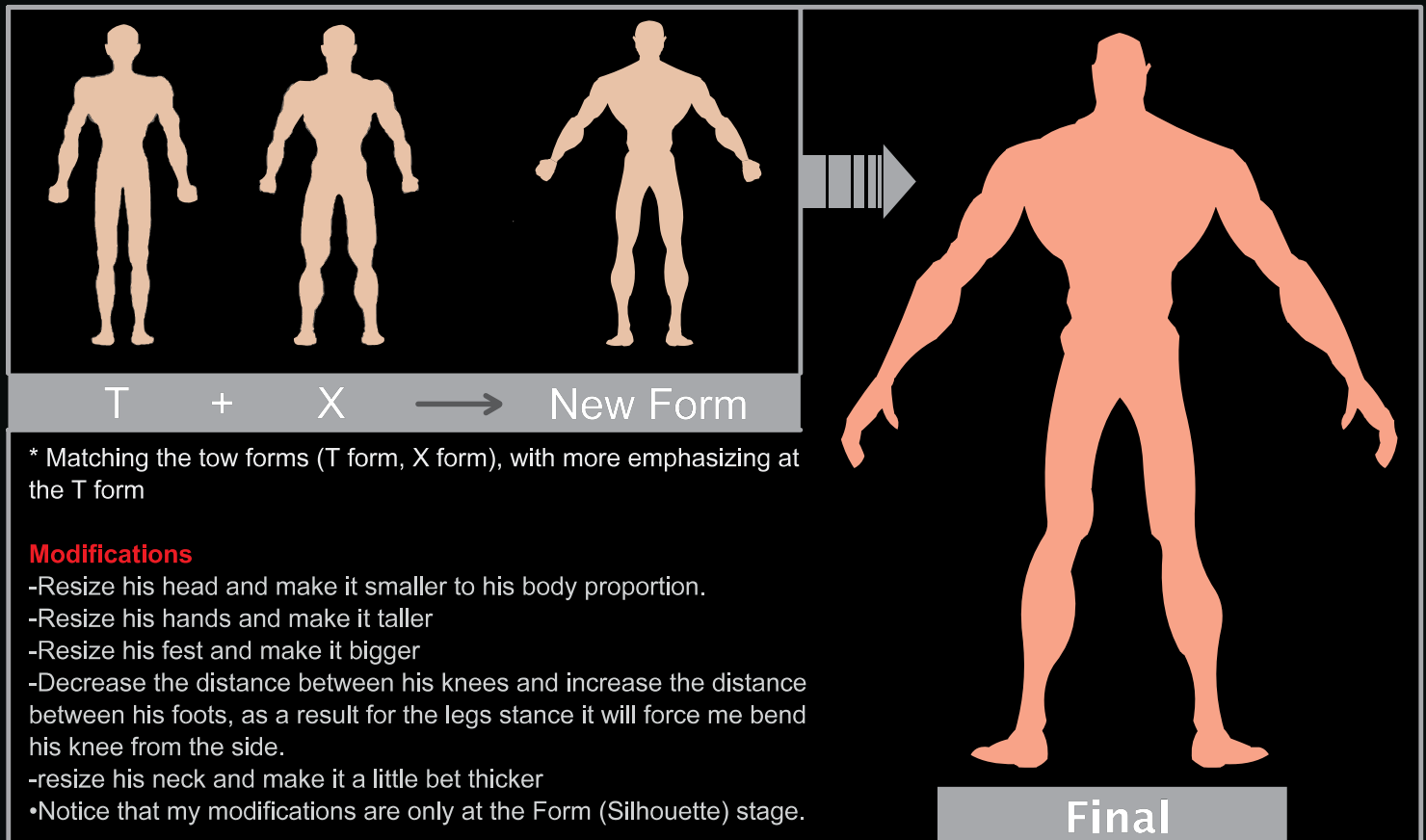
THINK DEFINE CONNECT

By matching Matrouk profile (Physically and Psychologically) we discovered that suitable form is to match the tow forms (T form, X form), with more emphasizing to the T form .and with a few modifications and enhancements it will look great.

To make him look more tall and giant, there are my modifications:

- Resize his head and make it smaller to his body proportion.
- Resize his hands and make it taller
- Resize his fists and make it bigger
- Decrease the distance between his knees and increase the distance between his foots, as a result for the legs stance it will force me to bend his knee from the side.
- resize his neck and make it a little bet thicker

- Notice that my modifications are only at the formal (Silhouette) stage.
- When we are working at the body we can emphasize more at the Physical Extension.



The Face

Characterizing the face requires a very good knowledge in reading the face proportions and their meaning, this is very important skill to make your character face reflects its nature, so when we saw character face, we can judge about this character, by saying that it looks brave, villainous, stupid, coward, educated, fair, loyal,... with the face we can emphasize and reflect more at the Psychological Extension.

MAKING OF MATROUK

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Let's take a look how I had characterized Matrouk, how I tried to give the impressions directly at his face, and how I try to employ every description at his face, also notice the great integrations between Matrouk body and his face to come up with the final image for him at the formal Stage.



Thinking Area
Lucky Area
Physical Strength Area

Balanced Head



Thinking Area
Lucky Area
Physical Strength Area

Matrouk Head

Curved to down and confined, bad thinking and logic

Big bulge, this means that he has excellent intuition; this could be as compensation for his bad thinking area.

His nose is crooked up; meaning that he is stubborn and bullheaded.

Big jaw, strong body

This for the masculinity

Curved to down, and bad thinking.

Big wrinkles, it's a usual place for this wrinkles, we notice it as old, fat or huge persons



Side View Study

Small brain size, not clever

Big ears, good hearing sense

Big wide nose, healthy lung, healthy blood

Wide nose hole, healthy lung

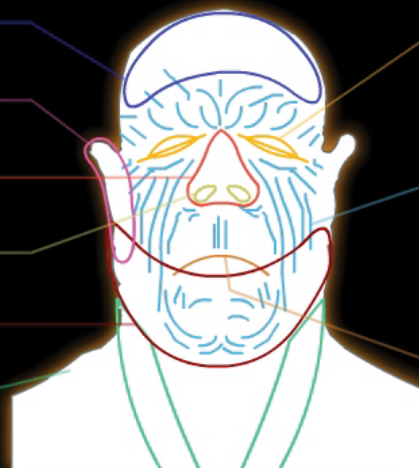
Big wide jaw, strong body

Strong muscle neck

Non obsession eyes, The eye line is down from outside the eye and directing to the ear, this is suitable for tragedy persons.

Lots of wrinkles, this fit the old people, miserable tragedian persons. Or it could be hereditary, Also I wanted to give fearful look but inside him he is friendly and good person.

His mouth line is curved up, this fit the tragedian persons.



Front View Study

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- For the next Model Levels, I am going to talk about it in the Production Part, so I can concentrate more in depth samples.

Second: Production

The production process start after finishing the whole visual concept image (Storyboard, concept designs, sculptures, character Profiles, environments, color style, lighting, image compositions, resources and references...). And rebuild all those concepts that based on the storyboard sequence to come up with new better output quality that matches all the technical production standard aspects and technology.

Modeling

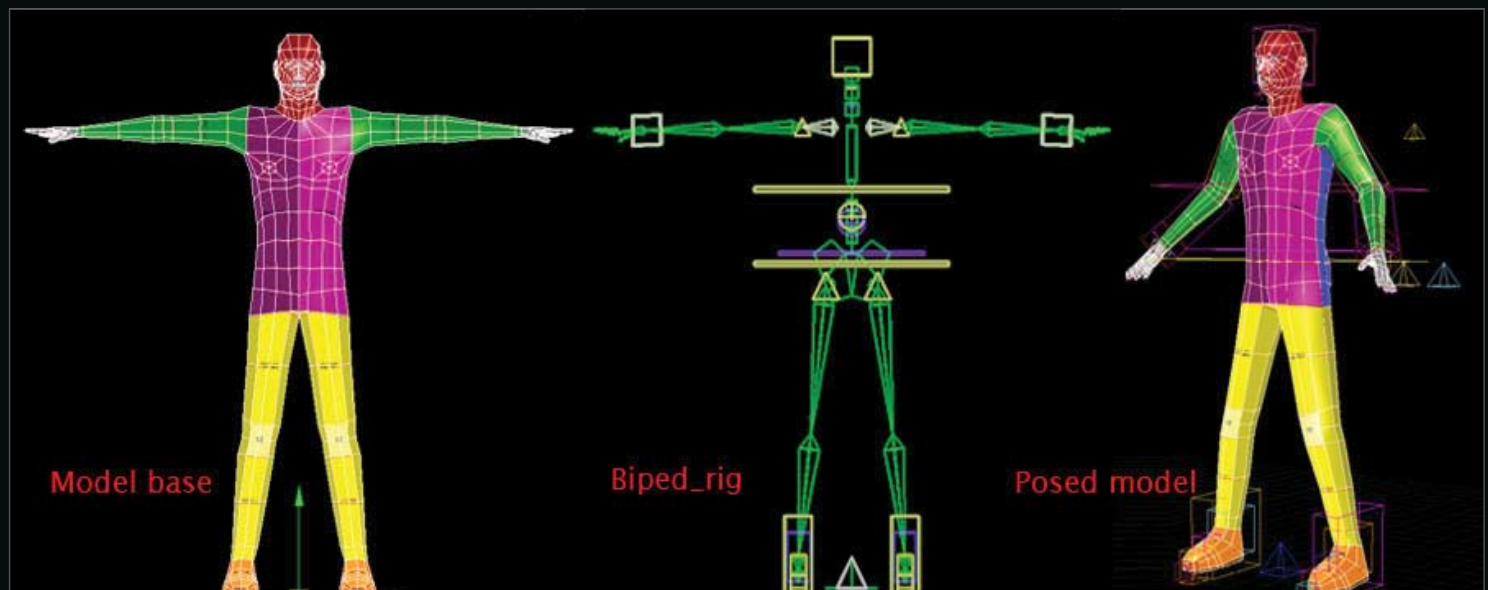
There are three different classes for modeling:

- **Low poly modeling:** it shows the formal stage (the Silhouette).
- **Medium poly modeling:** it shows the formal stage, the muscle stage and the fat stage.
- **High poly modeling:** it shows all stages.

Low poly modeling

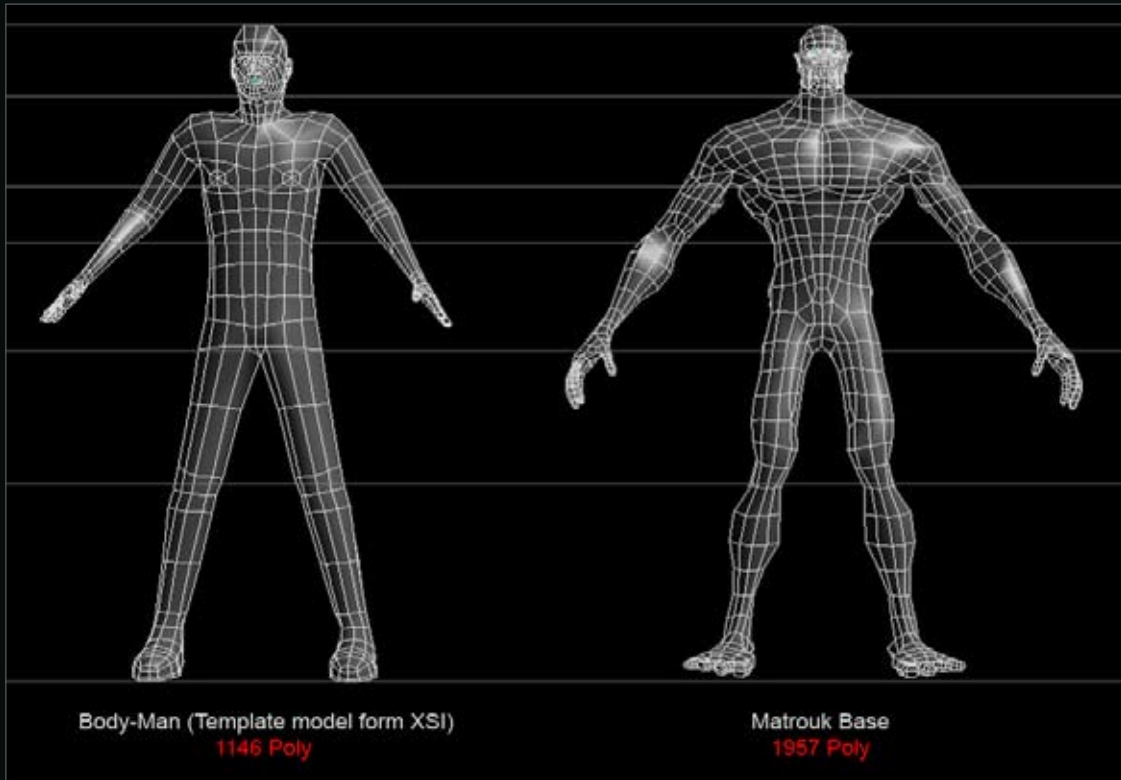
For modeling Matrouk I used Softimage XSI and ZBrush. I started with XSI by creating body-man Template (for saving time), and then create Biped_Rig to rig and pose the character as I want, after finishing the pose, I freeze the model and delete the rig, then I start manipulating by adding more edges and polygons, scaling and resizing the proportions based on the Silhouette stage which we created before.

When I was satisfied with the result, I start to fix the edge looping to come up with reasonable model base, and then I select all right side polygon and delete it, and fixed the outside edges by reset its pivot point and duplicate symmetry.



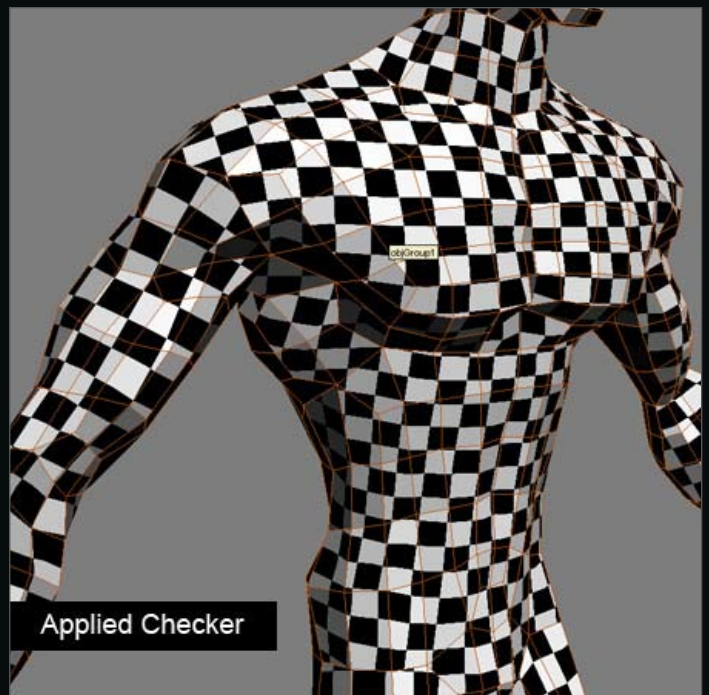
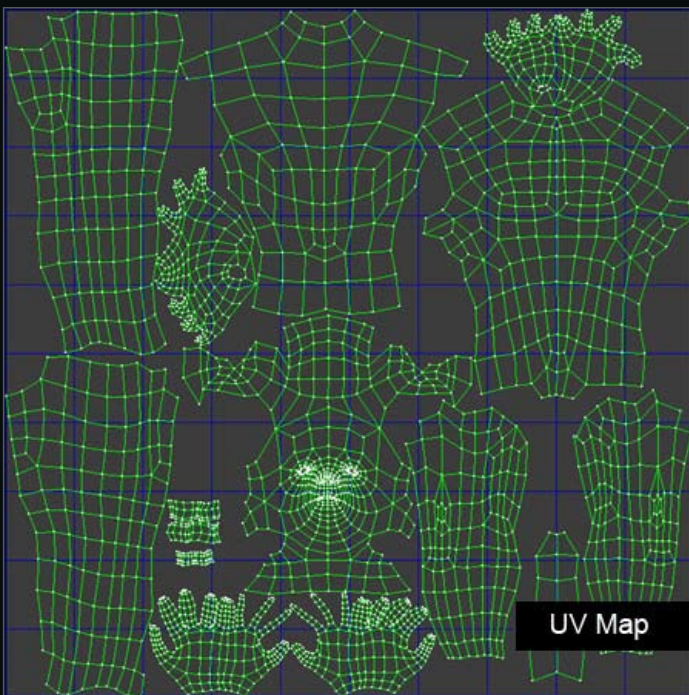
MAKING OF MATROUK

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UV Mapping

XSI Texture Editor (UV Map Editor) is great but I prefer to use the Pelting Map in 3DsMax its fast and powerful, I exported my model as .obj, imported it to 3DsMax, converted it to Editable Poly and applied the Unwrap UVW to Pelt map the UVs.



After wrapping the UVs, I applied the checker material to examine and fix the UV parts proportion.

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Tips for UV Mapping

- Start to distribute the UV parts from the biggest.
- Try to use every pixel on the UV space.
- Keep your UV parts readable, like: this is the head, this is right leg, this is the left hand...
- Complete your UV parts.
- Big number of UV parts is not good, also one UV part for Matrouk model is not good, because this will distort the UVs.
- Fix any Overlapping edges.
- Align your UV parts horizontally or vertically, this will make it easier for painting in Photoshop.
- You may discover some modeling problems like Triangles, N-gons (more than four edges), and this is a chance to fix it.
- After finishing the UV work Freeze (Convert to editable poly in 3DsMax) your model, this will save or bake your UVs



Checking the Model

I can't consider my model finished until it passes through the checking list, it's to guarantee that the model is ready for the next processes, displacement painting, enveloping, Animation and Rendering.

There are the main points in my check list:

- 1- Checking the Edge loops.
- 2- Checking the Normal's.
- 3- Checking and fixing any extra vertices or N-gons.
- 4- Checking any over laping edges in UVs.
- 5- Checking that all UV parts are inside the UV area.
- 6- Checking model scale (this is important for Mental Ray rendering issues like, GI, FG)
- 7- Checking and resetting the pivot point to the right place COG (Center of the Gravity).
- 8- Freezing all model modifiers.
- 9- Freezing all Transformation.
- 10- Saving the model in a new version, with suitable name.

High poly modeling

As we mentioned before the high poly modeling process will cover all Modeling level that will reflect the Matrouk characterization, and here we will cover this stages,

2- Muscles Stage

Before we start sculpting with ZBrush, let's talk about the relation between characterizing and sculpturing.

Sculpturing is deformation or manipulation for the raw (dead) shape to be converted to a knowledgeable shape or symbol or character, if we take deep look at the description we will find it similar to the characterization identification. And we can consider the sculpting as strong tool for characterization process in the Modeling level.

- It's important to deal with sculpting as tool to describe and tell the details, more than a process or technique, if we understand and implement this concept we will notice excellent enhancement at our sculpting quality output.

Before we sculpt Matrouk we will need:

Character description: character profile and concept design

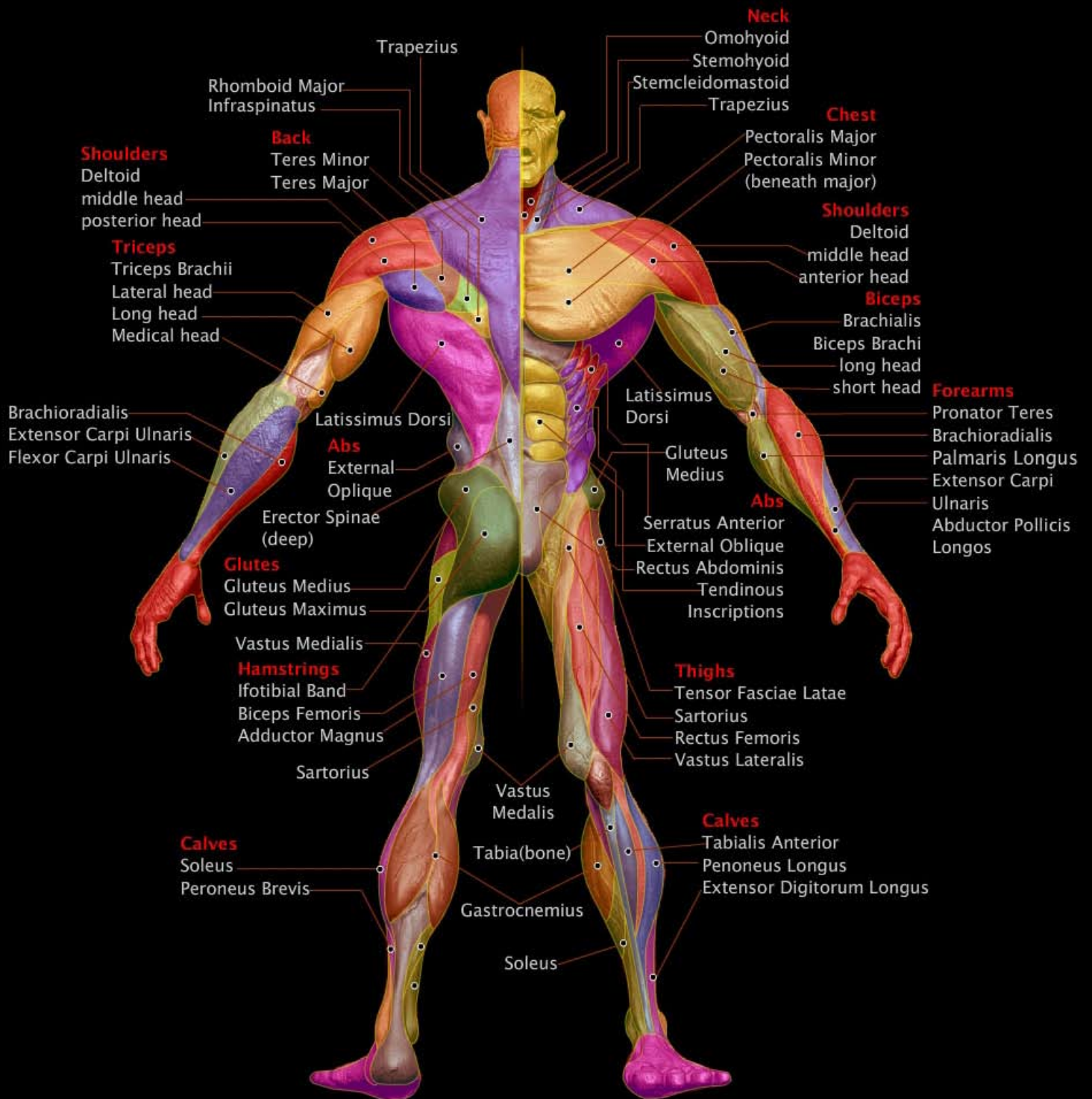
Raw material: our low poly model (represent the Silhouette)

Ideal construction standards: Anatomy (Structure System) for organics

We have created our character profile and the low poly model. Now we will talk about the Human Muscles Anatomy.

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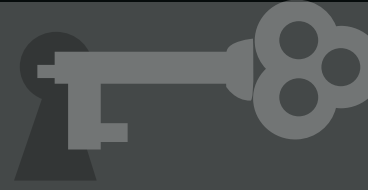
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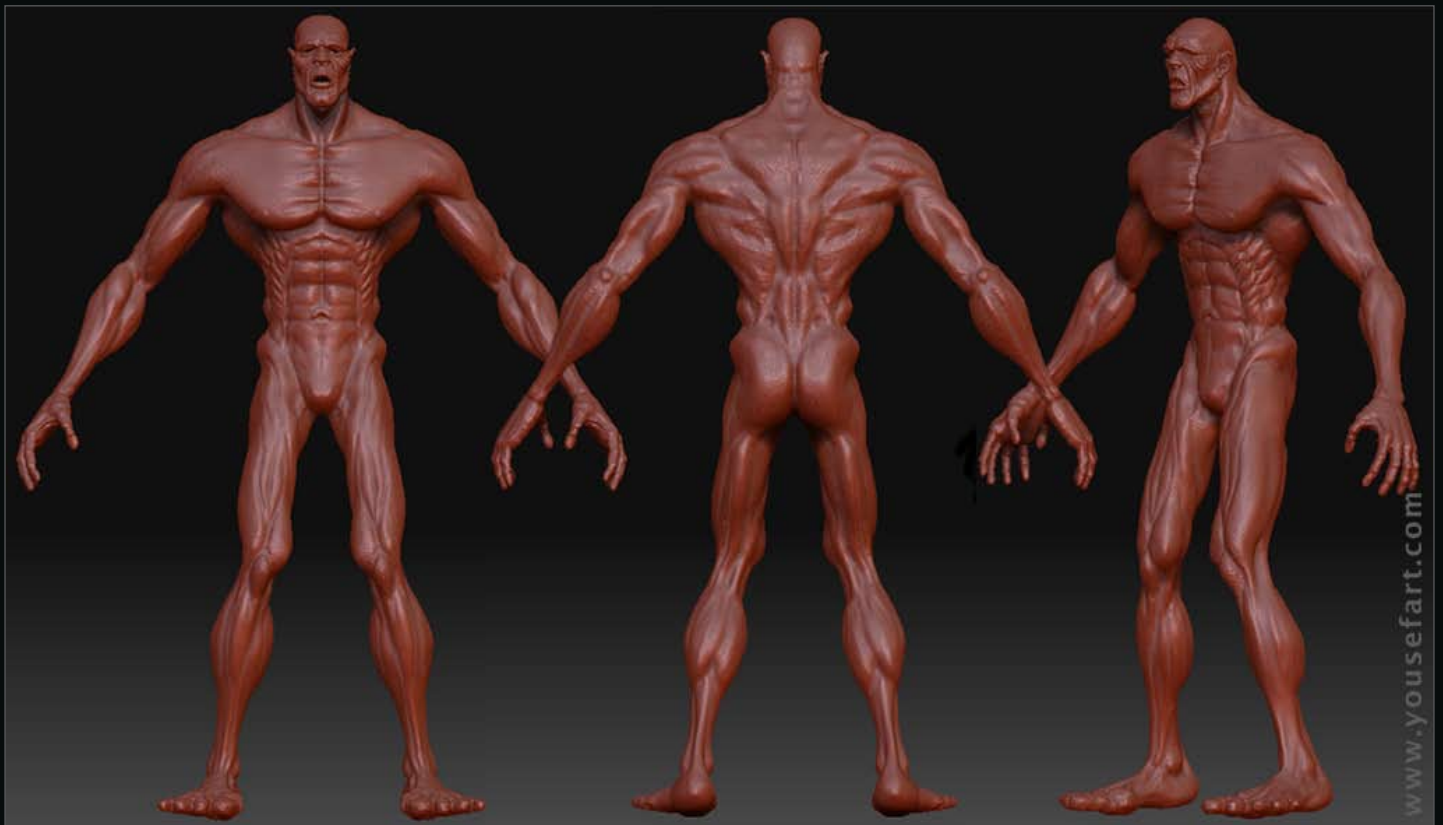
THINK DEFINE CONNECT

Tips to understand better the Human Muscles Anatomy:

- Good Knowledge of the Human skeleton is basic required for:
 - * Creating balanced proportions for the body.
 - * Clear understanding for joints dynamics and types.
 - * Knowledge of muscles stretches mechanism.
- Understanding the Muscles rolls and implementation.
- Every muscle is shaped to employ the best dynamic results.
- Dealing with the body as a groups, will make understanding and remembrance easier such as: Triceps group (three muscles), Shoulders group (three muscles), Quadriceps (thighs) group (four muscles).
- Try to study the biggest groups, starting from the group that you like.
- At the beginning, don't involve in muscles naming, these names are sophisticated and hard to remember. They could slow your ambition dawn.
- Try to sketch, trace and color the anatomy illustration many times.
- Every human being has the same muscles. Differences are between their scales and proportions.
- Refer in your search to Bodybuilding Magazines where you will be inspired quickly.



Remember: being professional at the Human Anatomy will help you very much to invent and produce more reasonable character designs for aliens, creatures, freaks, Monsters....



MAKING OF MATROUK

THINK DEFINE CONNECT



Killing the symmetry

Symmetry is typical word in the dictionary, in real world there is no symmetry. And this is one of the reasons that make things look in harmony, things are being and arranged as curved lines which makes simplicity and relaxation.

When we asked to distinguish the natural shape from the industrial, our eyes will start unconsciously looking and searching at the symmetry. Killing the symmetry gives your model it's live.

The nice thing in this process is that there are no rolls. And you can move, rotate, bulge, skew... as you like where ever you like. And keep in mind the most believable models which have different slight manipulations.

Tips for killing the symmetry process

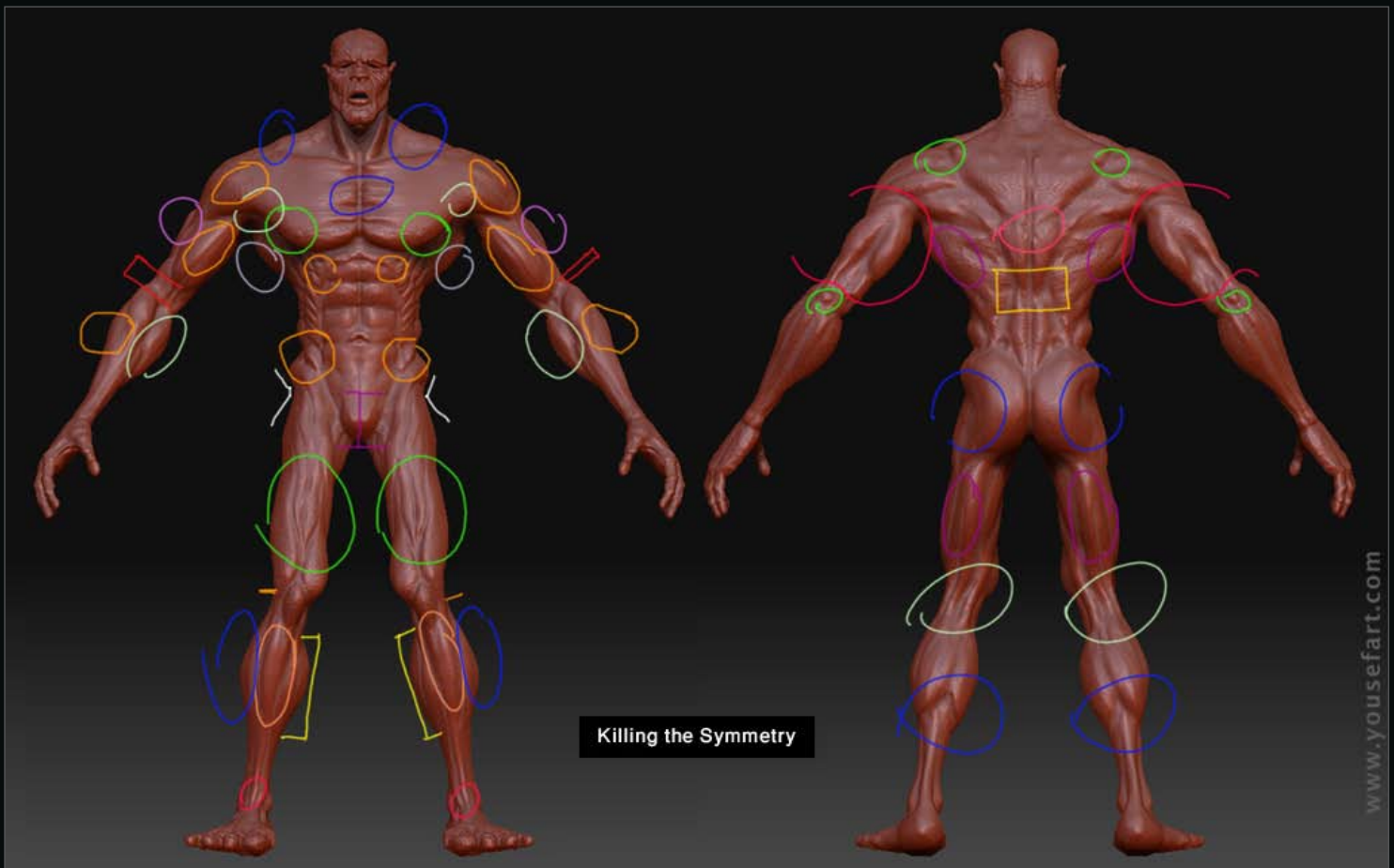
- Beware to consider the weight and balance of the model if you exaggerate in the killing symmetry.
- This process is applied also at the final stages (skins, vines, scratches and cuts)

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MAKING OF MATROUK

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3- Fats Stage

In general, every organic body that contains muscles contains Fats. This is a vital source for Muscles and the brain performance.... And here are the main points for fat value (from the Character Designer point view):

- The body uses fats as reserves for extra energy.
- Fats are placed to store water.
- The body uses fats as shield in different areas to cover its organs.
- Fats used as temperature isolator.

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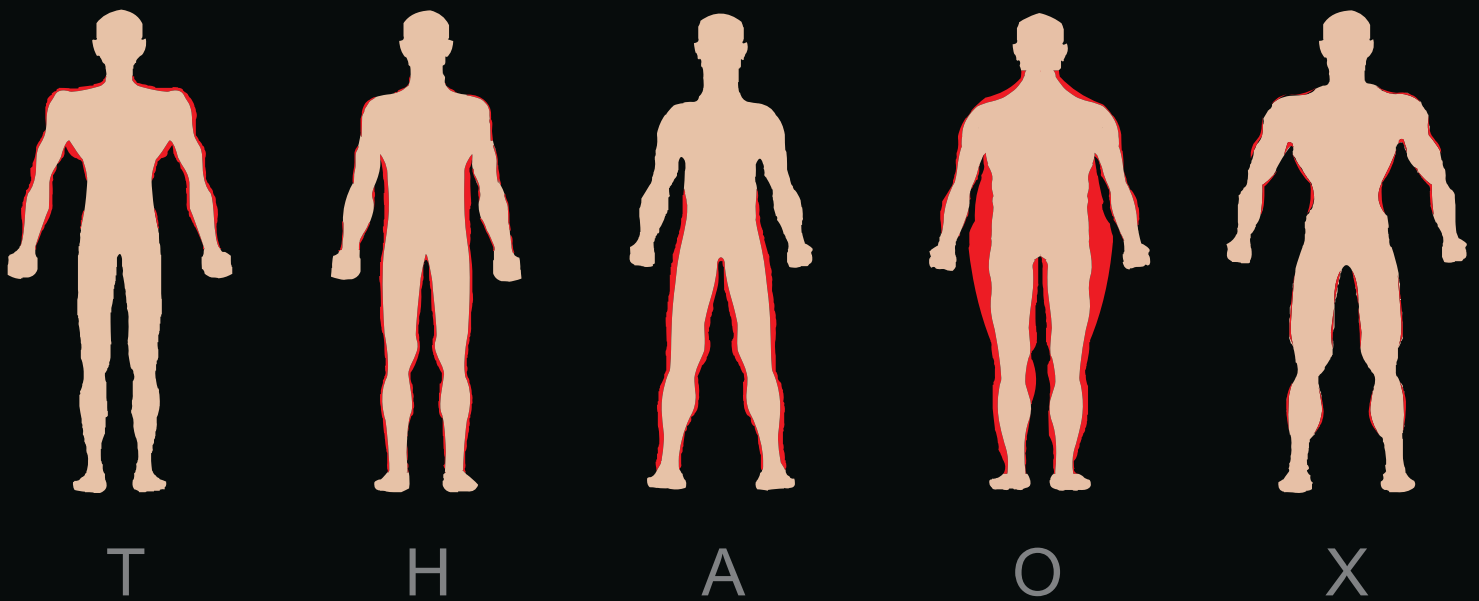
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Based on the character nature and external environments for every kind of these characters, it could have a different type of its fat system; wither its birds or mammals or fishes...

For example; the fat system for the penguin is different from the pear fat system.

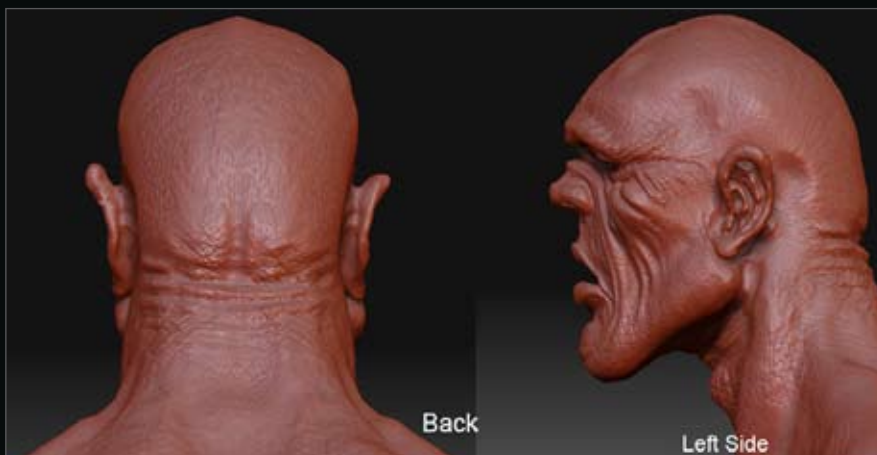
For human being we can apply the roll of THAOX, by using ideal body form or by mixing different two forms or more, and concluding where fats accumulations could be.

Fats Distribution at THAOX



Notice: The red color represents the fats

For Matrouk body, I tried to show him -based on his profile- with his strong shredded muscles and without fats, the only area which I considered for his body was behind his neck, because it helps to make him look like giant.



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MAKING OF MATROUK

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4- Skins and wrinkles stage

Before adding and stamping the alpha brushes on muscles, I start observing and splitting the body to different parts based on the body part nature. And I can't stamp the whole body using the same alpha brush, or intensity. this is important to produce believable results.

Here are some of the body parts that we should consider

For skin:

- On The Joints
- Around the joints
- The hidden areas such as the armpit
- Sole of the foot
- Palm of the hand
- Watercourse contains thin wax layer (underneath eyes, mouth, and nose.)
- The contact areas
- The Fatty areas
- Choosing the suitable stamp shape with appropriate area.

For wrinkles:

- The wrinkle lines are walking together with muscles curves.
- The wrinkle thickness depends on the fatty layer underneath the skin.

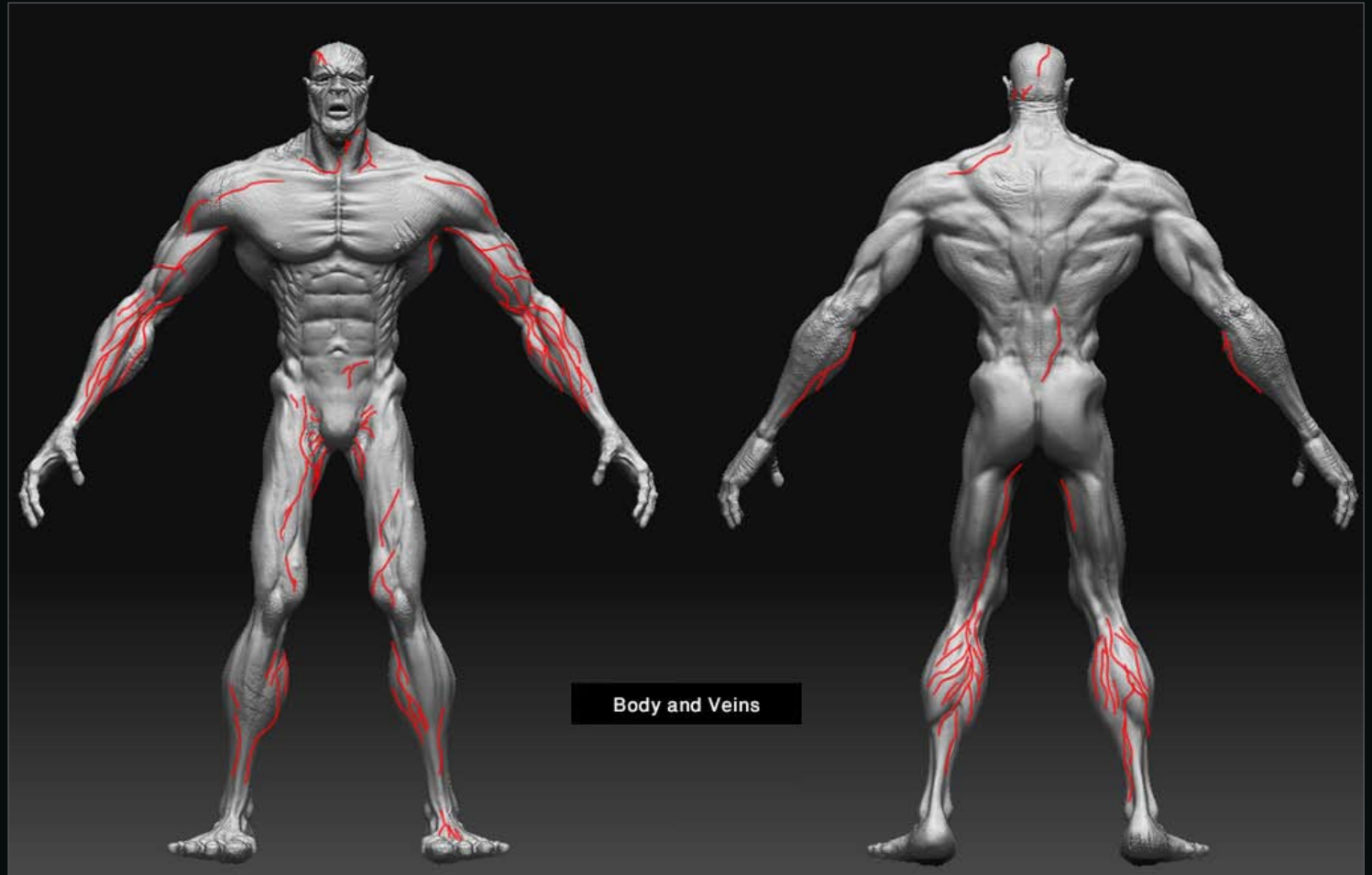


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5- Veins stage

Sculpting Veins is marvelous touches that awards and reflects the seriousness of the model look. Most of the visible veins are in the front inner side of the character; this is for the protection of these veins from side effect contacts. (Thanks god).



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MAKING OF MATROUK

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Tips for using veins:

- Using the veins design could help to expose different characters such as the masculinity, savagery, insanity, madness...
- Don't sculpt the veins over the fatty organs.
- Us the veins only for male mammals, not for human female or bird or fishes...
- Sculpt and design the veins based on the body nature.
- Don't exaggerate the veins number and thickness. Unless you want the savagery, insanity, madness looks.



6- Scratches and Cuts Stage

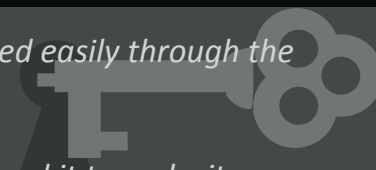
The main concept for using the Scratches and Cuts at the character model is to tell the martial history or the injuries history (wither it was serious injury or simple scratch). This will give the audiences strong impression about the character past, and we can judge easily when we watch characters fights in games or movies.

For Matrouk I made different scratches at his body because it will help to represent his heartbreaking past. He was abandoned and lonely since his early age, he has to sacrifice his life to secure the food and stay alive, and also he is living in abandon old village that turned to forest filled with creatures and predators that he was fighting for self-defense or for food.



Tips for using Scratches and cuts:

- Choose reasonable places for your scratches like the places that could be reached easily through the direct contacts of fighting or accident.
- Avoid sculpting the scratches at the hidden areas.
- Aware that when you sculpt big scratches at the part to make a little bulge around it to make it more believable. Also this bulge could affect on the Silhouette.
- If the scratches are in conjunctions with the muscle line direction, it should be stretched and flat.
- The scratch color could tell wither it old, new, deep, and thin injuries.



MAKING OF MATROUK

THINK DEFINE CONNECT

7- Identification Marks; Stage :

I like this stage of sculpting; it's easy, fast, and efficient. It leaves a positive impression for reality of the model.

The difference between this stage and killing symmetry process is that the killing symmetry process is concentrating on the overall body to make you believe.

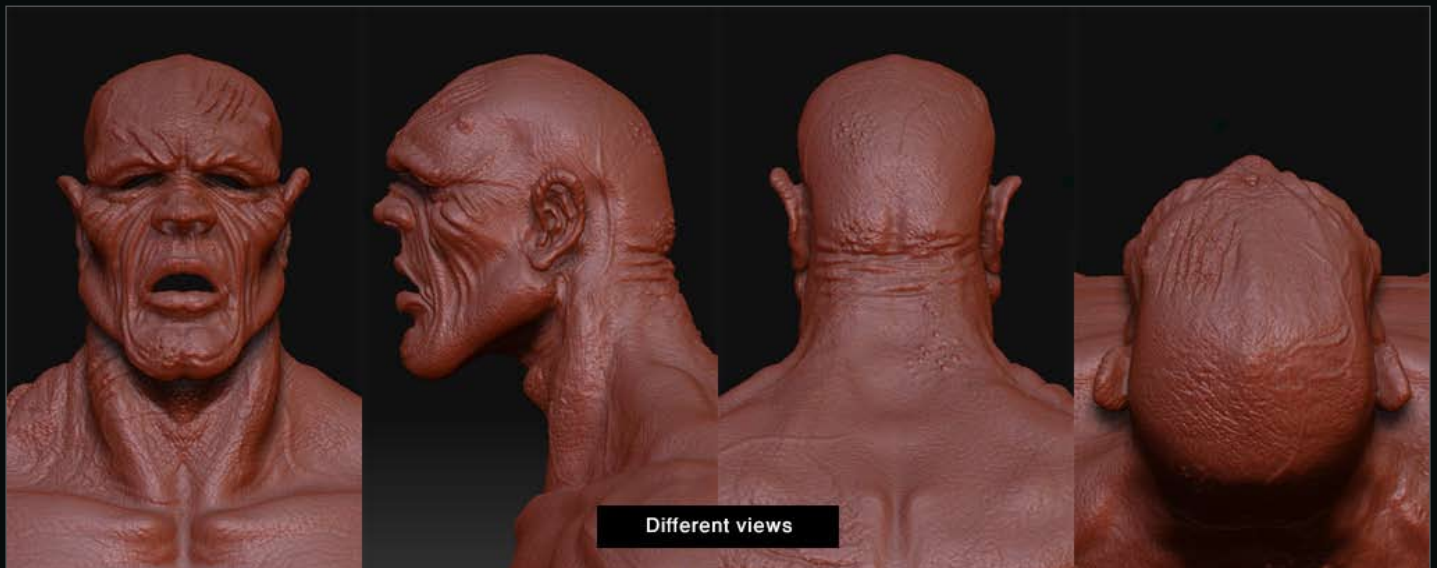
This stage is certain believable, motivate your eyes to look more and check better. It helps us to distinguish, guess the right side from the left in different poses or shots.

Catching the audience eyes to this marks and pushed him to look better and examine more is sign for the success creation.

Remember: We can use skin, wrinkles, veins, scratches and cuts as Marks of identification.



- Kindly, take a look at the head.



MAKING OF MATROUK

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Model Study:

After finishing the sculpture of Matrouk, I start studying, checking and testing the model to find out if there are any required extra minor modifications. Checking the model techniques is based on discovering the exaggerated parts, surface topography, scratches.... By one or more of these techniques:

1- Changing the light setting.

- This is accurate techniques that will help to view the model and study the surface topography.

2- Applying different materials.

- This is accurate techniques that will help to view the model and study the surface topography.

3- Printing lots of screenshots in different scales, poses and angels.

- By passing all screenshots in Photoshop and start flipping indifferent directions, scaling, rotating, and distorting.... This technique will help to study the model proportion and to find any exaggeration easily. This technique is widely used by the Concept Artist.



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ZBrush Output:

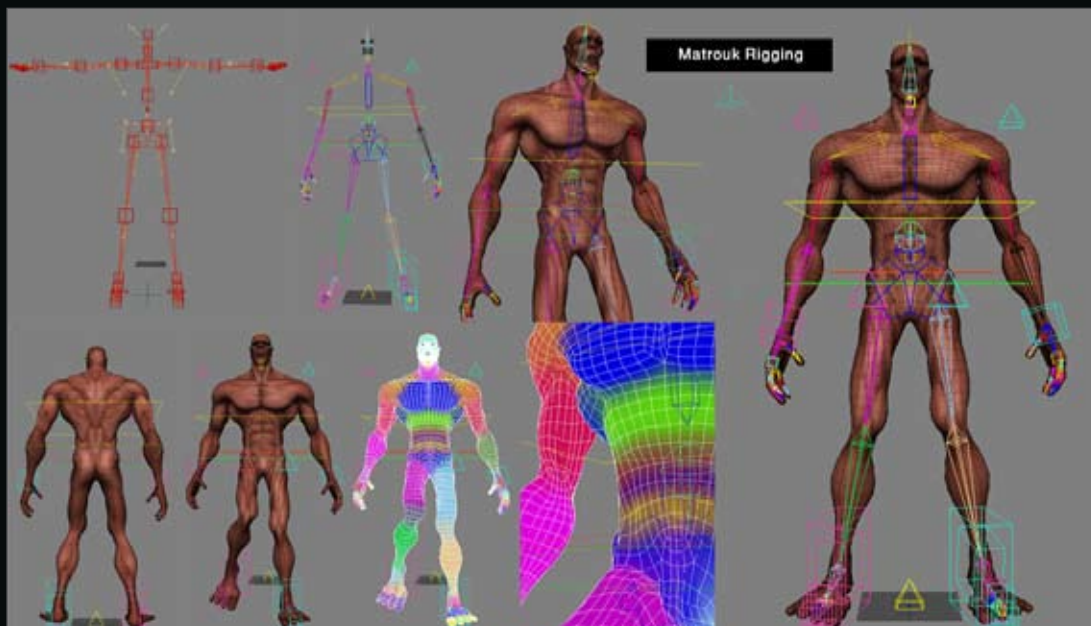
When I finished my modifications at Matrouk sculpture, I start extracting the required models and maps which was sculpted or painted in ZBrush.

Here are the main outputs that we use ZBrush for:

- 1- The Polygon base (for the animation I use the subdivision level two-7828 polygon).
- 2- The Displacement Map (2-4k. 16-32 pit).
- 3- The Normal Map.
- 4- The Cavity Map.
- 5- The Baked Map.
- 6- The Color Map.
- 7- The Specular Map.
- 8- The Translucency Map.

Back to XSI:

- **Importing and checking:** I imported the polygon base for Matrouk into XSI and start checking polygons, UVs and testing all ZBrush outputs to make sure everything is correct.
- **Creating the rig:** I create Biped-Guide, fixed it to fit it to my character and create my rig from the Biped-Guide, added the jaw bone, parented it to the head effectors, enveloped it and started the weight painting on the left side, then I created my symmetry map to mirror the weight on the right side.
- **Testing the weights:** by creating major movements for bones, joint and start capturing the animations from different views and studying the weights.
- **Killing the weighting symmetry:** I start killing the symmetry for weights, to let the body move in organic way.
- **creating new model:** after finishing the envelop step, I make sure that everything is correct. Create new model and name it (matrouk_md1), then export it for the posing and animation.



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Posing:

This is a magnificent step for our characterization. Posing is the dominance spirit that steels our passion unconsciously, it's the body language that tells what feeling is inside the character, tongue can tell a lies but the body cant.

How can we choose the perfect poses for our character?

The answer could be little confusing because we have different roles that we should consider. Here are the main points:

Study your character

Study the physiology, psychology, past, nature, mood...of your character.

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Choosing the right pose

Choose the right pose

Sometimes there could be more than one pose as an option which you can choose. Try to choose the closer pose, for example there are lots of different poses which could show the anger feeling, but which one you choose?

Choose complete poses

Select the perfect time when your character is in a complete stance (pick your time)

Body part integration

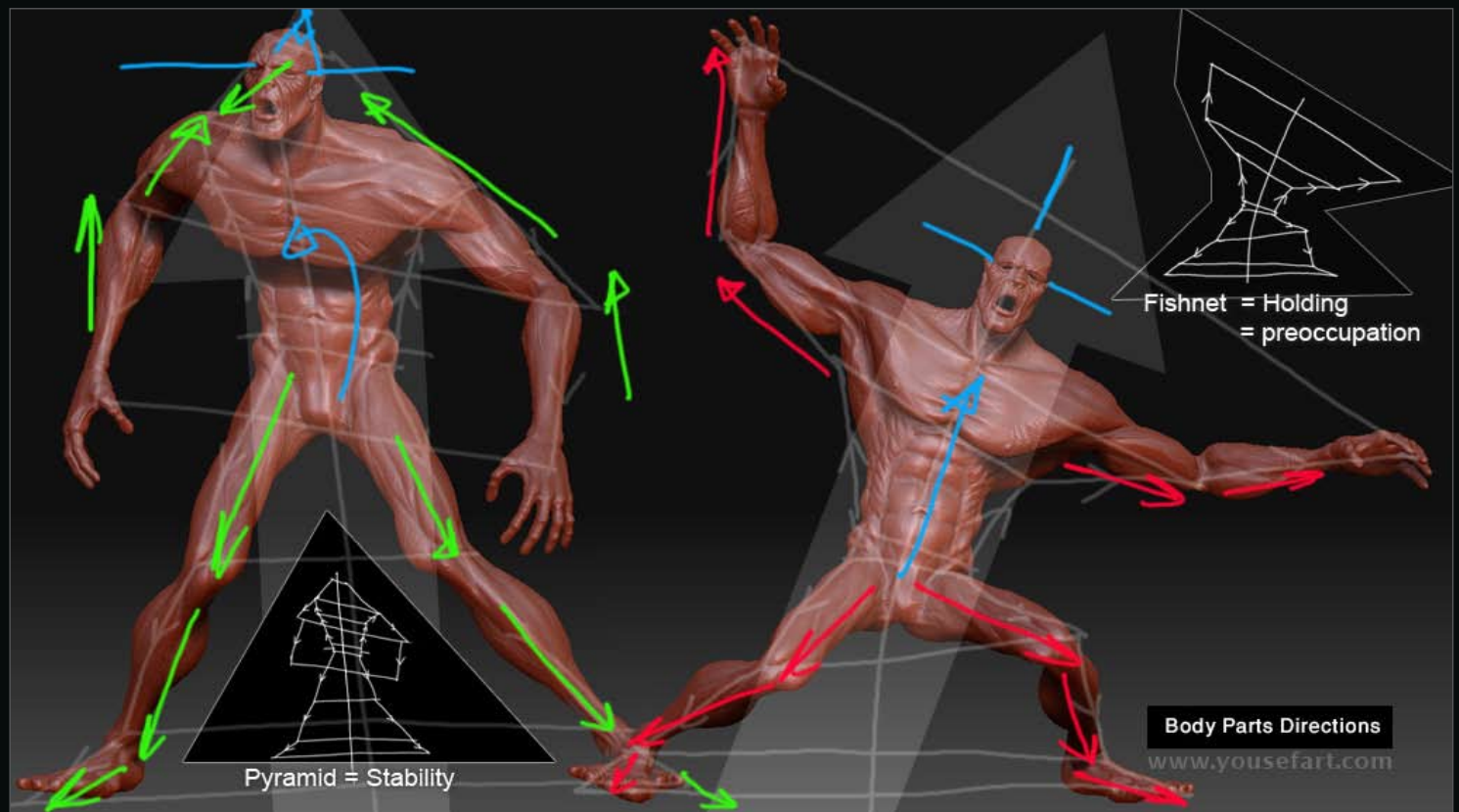
Posing is not limited to the body, it's for everything related to the character. His face expression with body stance, the upper part with lower part...

Timing

Sometimes the body language speaks before, or within, or after the tongue. Some poses should be completed within the character dialogue. Others should be completed before or after the dialogue. It depends on the character nature, pose, dialogue and the story.

Directions

Study the different body part directions, where the right knee is directed, left knee, foot heels, waist, shoulders, elbows, wrists, fingers, forehead, eyes...? This is very important.



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Reincarnation

Try to reincarnate the character role in the story. This will help you more to react and observe the acting roles better. Also it will make you part of the story.

Balloon water (anticipation)

When we pushed our finger into the balloon water, we will notice that its shape has changed and other parts were moved spontaneously to keep the balance. This is similar to the human body, because Most of the human body is contains from water (more then 75%).

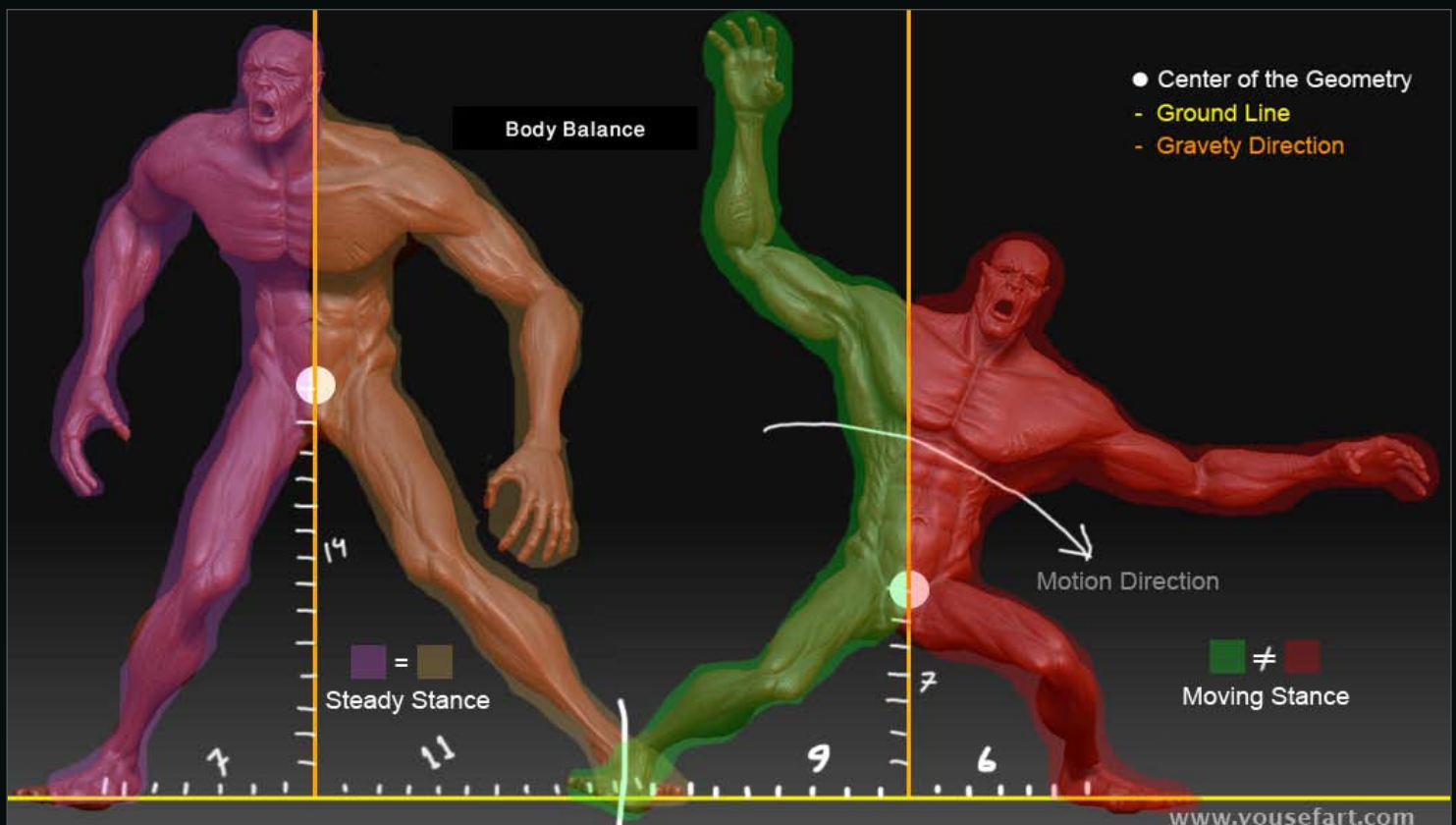
When the character will move his right leg, other parts like shoulders, waist, left hand... will move spontaneously. Animators call that anticipation.

Emotions

The lowest emotional levels, when the body parts are close together such as: thinking, reading, writing, crying. On the contrary, the highest emotional levels, when the body parts are directing away from the center of geometry such as: screaming, fighting, running...

Weight and Balance

This is what makes us believe in the character as a life. Without weight and balance we cannot reflect a real emotions or logic in the characterization.



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Tips: The Balance Line

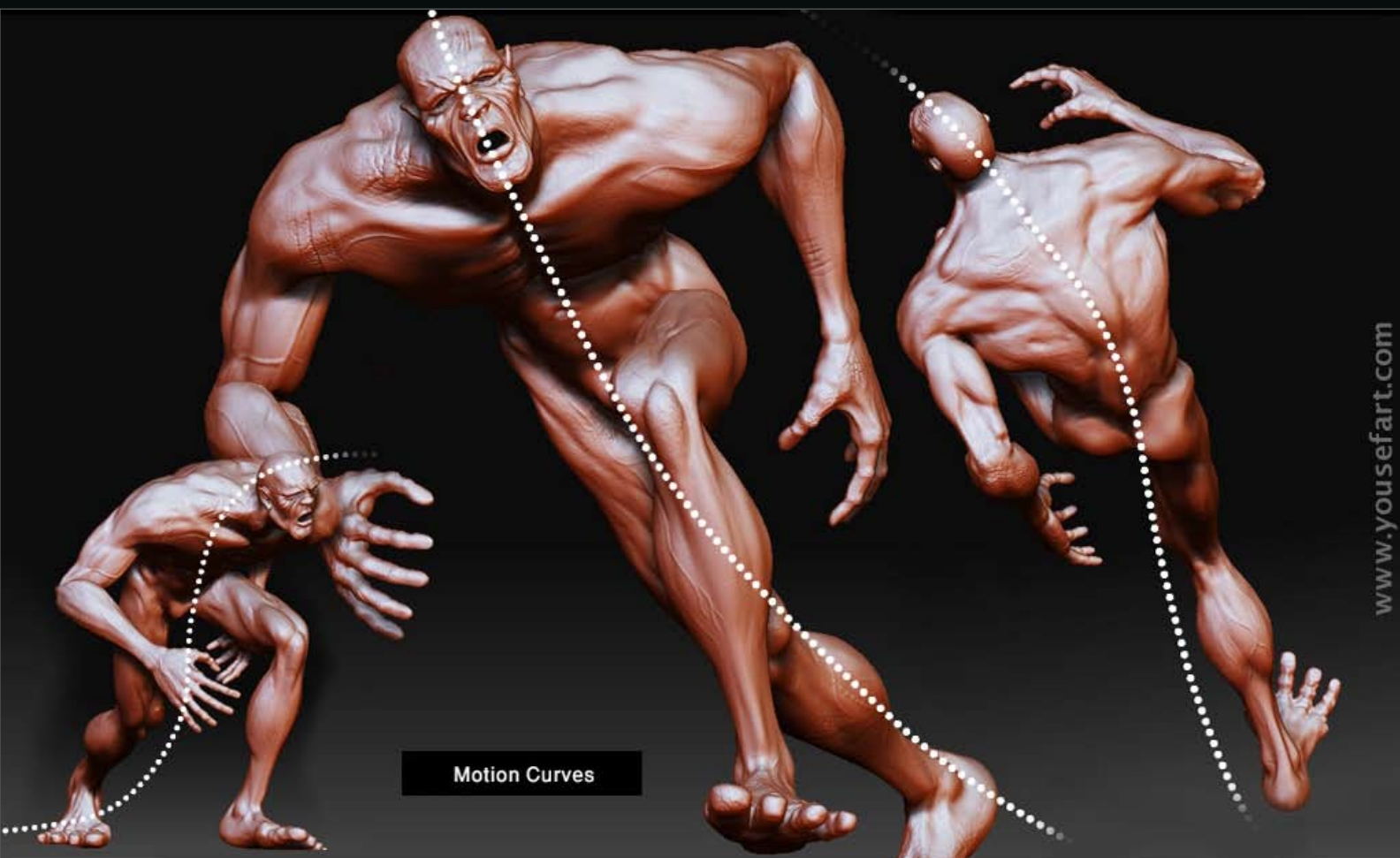
- How to define the balance line?

Weight is depends on the gravity strength for the body mass. Every body mass has a center of the geometry (center of the weight). If we draw visual line intersect columnar center of the geometry with ground line, the balance line will be defined. It will divide the body for two pieces.

* You should consider balancing from views, front and side.

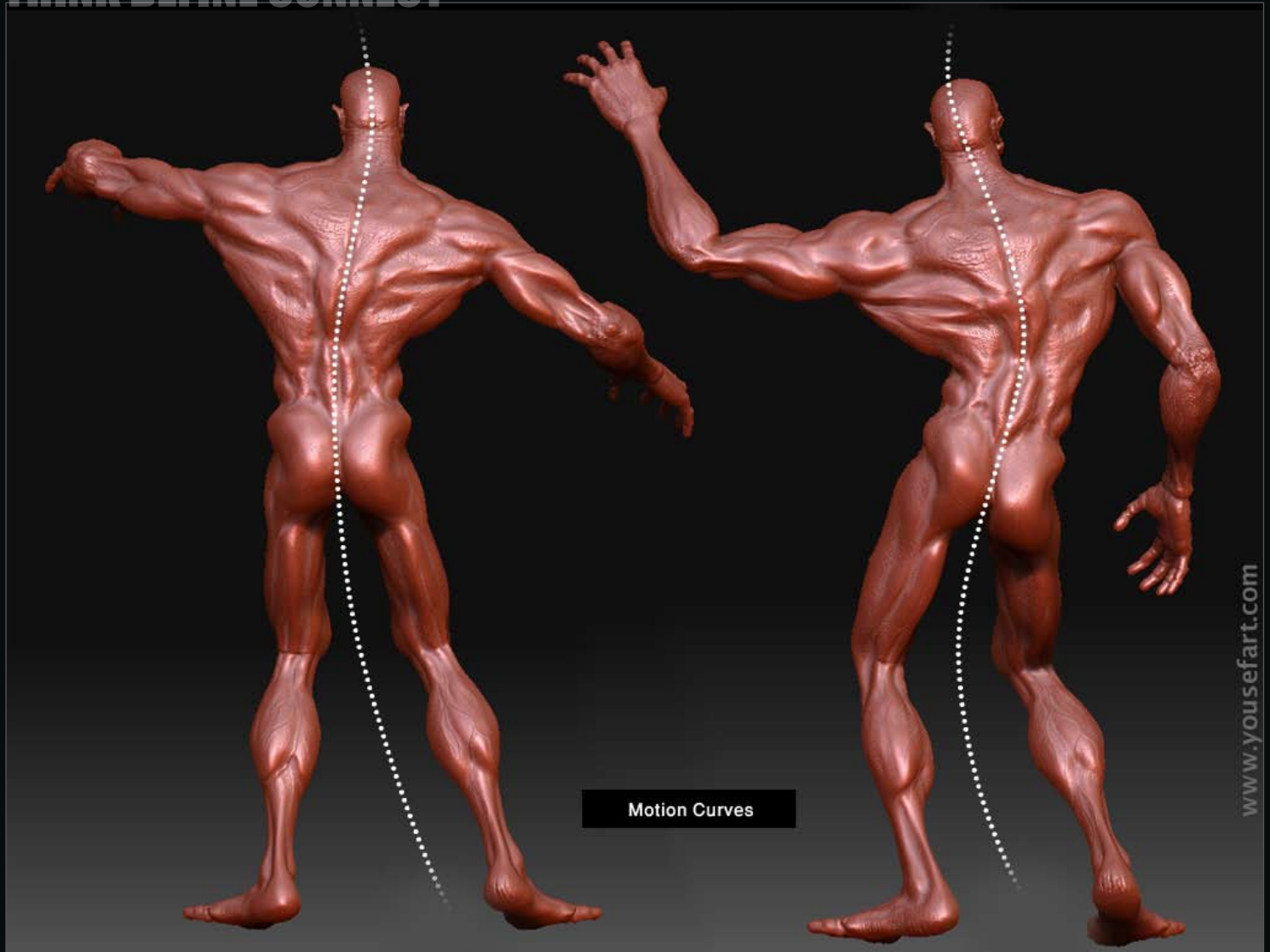
Motion Curves

If you want your character poses full of life and movements, you should take care of the motion curves. Take a look at the below demonstration images and you shall be able to define your own curves.



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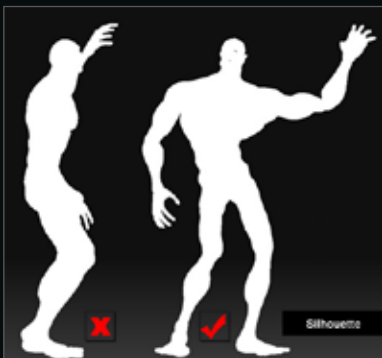


Tip:

Cartoon animations (the most dynamic animation) use this technique most widely with more exaggeration.

Silhouette

The main purpose of using the silhouette is to separate the layers by increasing contrast between these layers. Another purpose is to facilitate describing objects and characters by posing and viewing the best angle that could give better understanding for its nature.



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After finishing the posing works for Matrouk at different key frames in XSI, I exported these poses as a several obj files.

* Because Matrouk is one of my characters that I am working on for my upcoming short movie which is in the animation stage, also my lighting rigs and HDR setup was not created yet. I will go back to render by ZBrush and composite in Photoshop.

Back to ZBrush

I imported one of the obj poses into ZBrush, applied the alpha map as displacement map and start to modify the joints areas and few muscles depending on the postures.

Tips: Applying the alpha map as a displacement map

- 1- Import the obj pose (it should be the similar number of polygons and UVs)
- 2- Divide the model to the same subdivision level in the sculpting process.
- 3- Import the Alpha map (from the Alpha tab)
- 4- Flip the Alpha map vertically
- 5- Enter the Alpha depth factor number in the intensity
- 6- Apply the displacement alpha button



Camera

Choosing the right view

To choose the right view for Matrouk, I asked myself; What I want to say about Matrouk? What is the most remarkable property in his character? I looked back to his story and find it, the answer was easy ...it's his pride and honor. His life was miserable and hard, despite of that he still a good man, and nobody teaches him what is the pride or honor. But he senses a deep feeling in pride, honor and integrity.

My friend Matrouk was born with pride.

How can I show his pride clearly for all people?

Let us leave Matrouk to take the pose that he likes.

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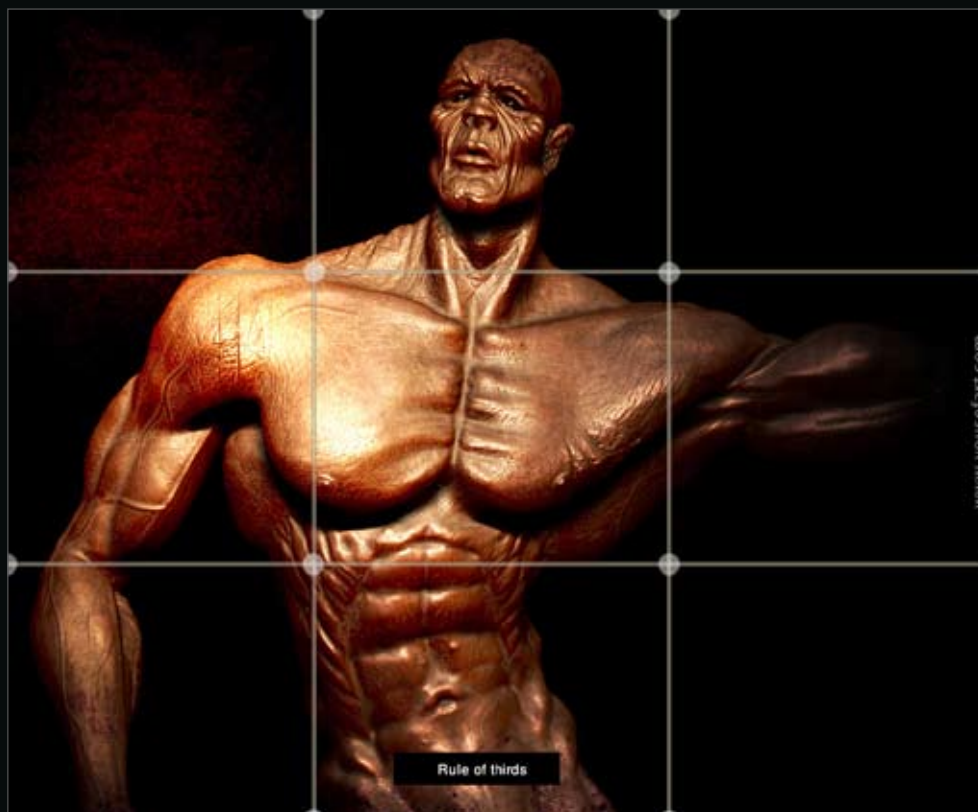
Analyzing the pose and camera view

- He shows us his front upper body. If you want to show someone your pride, don't show your back or the lower part.
- He curved his body to create a very nice "emotional" motion curve. This shows his confidence and pride.
- He reveals his wide chest, abdominals, and shoulders... this is an open pose and it reflects his confidence, it's like saying that I have nothing to be afraid of, I am strong.
- His body is relaxed and in spite of this, muscles are showing their beauty and strength.
- The light are focused at his right chest and shoulder, it's like showing his shield
- The light is directing from the left to the right, its matching the reading direction in the English language, which will relax the eyes.
- His wrists and legs are hidden in the dark, it's like he is expanding from all sides.
- The face is directed to the sky, like he is watching his dreams from the heaven window.
- His eyes and face are mixed with sad feelings. We can see the past in the faces but we can't see the future.
- His private parts should be hidden.
- The bronze color is great for this pose.

The scene type for this shoot was mixed between the full shot and the medium shot, which gives us the ability to show his statues and to look close to the audients for better relations

The Rule of thirds

Before rendering our image we should consider the rule of thirds for the camera.



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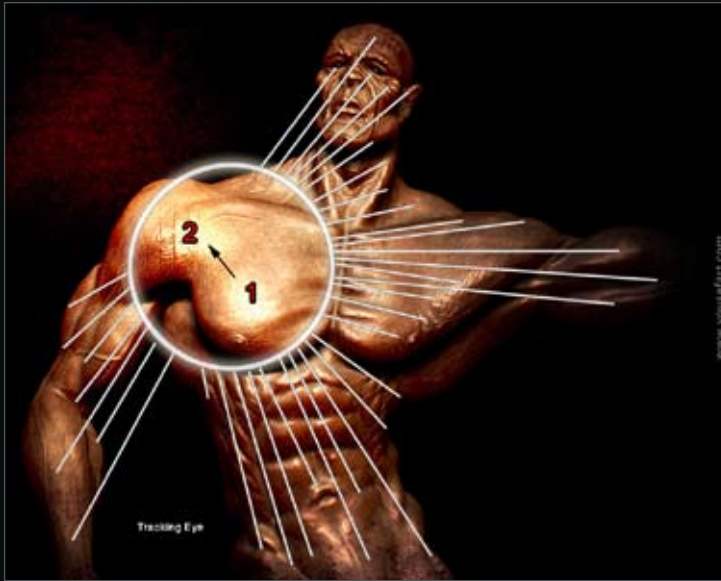
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The leading eye

I called it the eye tracking. It's important to study the audience eye about the parts that will pay the eye attention including the priority of these parts. This tracking is very vital for me to tell and arrange my ideas for the story.



Tips:

- I discovered that the negative image will help me to find the lighted areas. And it worked.
- Light is not the only the dominion element in the art works for the eye tracking, there are different standard elements for the dominion rolls.

Rendering in ZBrush

The rendering is simple, easy, and fast work in ZBrush.

After repairing the view that I was happy with, I rendered my image at the default setting and choose the best from the rendering tab without changing any sitting. Then I printed my screenshot and paste it in Photoshop.

Also I applied other material (Flat Color) to the model from ZBrush and griped my screen shot to use it at Photoshop as alpha mask (I will call it alpha screenshot).

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THINK DEFINE CONNECT



Third: Post Productions

Because our making of is based on producing a static image, there is no need to talk about all the Post Production process, we can shortly compose it.

Compositing in Photoshop

Attention Prioritys

When I wanted to create the background, I was interested to make it simple without any strong details or motions in texture that could steal the eye directly. Also I wanted it to be dark to concentrate directly to the shining light at the right shoulder.

Compositing

First: The Background

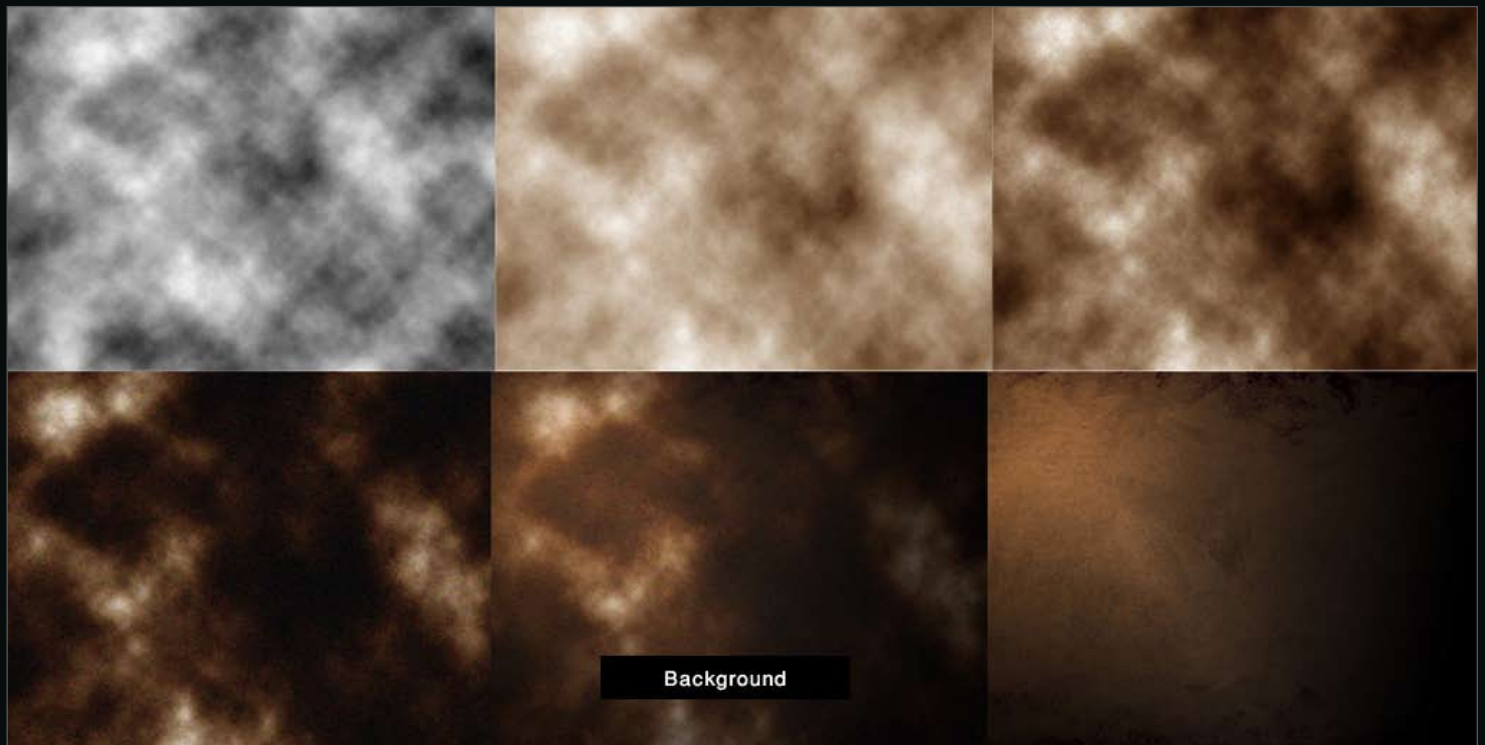
- 1- Creating new files at Photoshop with high resolution.
- 2- Applying the cloud, noise, blur filters.
- 3- Cropping the convenient area.
- 4- Placing the background behind Matrouk screenshot.
- 5- Changing the background color to the brownish.

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Second: The Character

- 1- Placing the alpha screenshot over the colored screenshot.
- 2- Filling the eyes and mouth with white color for alpha screenshot.
- 3- Applying blur filter to smooth the edges at alpha screenshots.
- 4- With magic wand tool I select the white color. And invert the selection.
- 5- Hiding the alpha layer. Select the color layer and delete the selected area.
- 6- Saving the selection.
- 7- Starting to fix and modify the pose, using the liquify filter.
- 8- Duplicating the layer.
- 9- Starting to make different steps of color correction, increasing the contrast, different masks, blend moods...etc.

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Third: Light and Mood

These are the most important features for the Compositor work. To present any intelligent work result, you have to study your lighting very well. Also keep in your mind that the compositing light is the only feature that will tie your layers to be presented as one perfect layer.

My technique at this stage is smaller to the previous stage; the difference is that, I look to the previous stage as pure technical (layers, lots of blends, gradient blends, masks...). In this stage as one image, light, mood impression, story...

Tips:

- *Lighting is the first purport means that concluded before any action in the scene.*
- *Lighting is a strong tool that supports the story telling. It should reflect all story or action meanings.*
- *Lighting should reveal the scene mood, happiness, pessimism, boredom, horror...*

Fourth: Retouches

After checking the light, I find that I need to add little enhancements and touches like:

- 1- Adding the glossiness to the eyes makes it look right.
- 2- Hiding his hands and legs with darkness.
- 3- Covering his private area.
- 4- Adding another foreground as simple effect in front of his left leg to add more depth to the image.

Final Judgment

Once the work has published, we start to pry hoping to get the audience attention and interest. It is the big harvest. As artists and directors we are always trying to implement every aspect, logic and science that could enforce the output to be better, faster and easier to the audience.

Every artwork has a message, philosophy, and story, to cultivate or to entertain. We should not forget that we are working to produce our artworks for the entertainments industry. It's not only for a self satisfactions, it's for the audience satisfactions...don't be selfish.

MAKING OF MATROUK

THINK DEFINE CONNECT

Summary

In this making of I talked briefly about a lot of things that we can't find in other tutorials, where my concentration was about,

how to think?

How to define?

How to connect?

I hope you've enjoyed and found it helpful.

Thank you all and good luck

Special thanks to Ms. Maha Esweh for supporting and checking the language.



• YOUSEF IKHREIS •

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