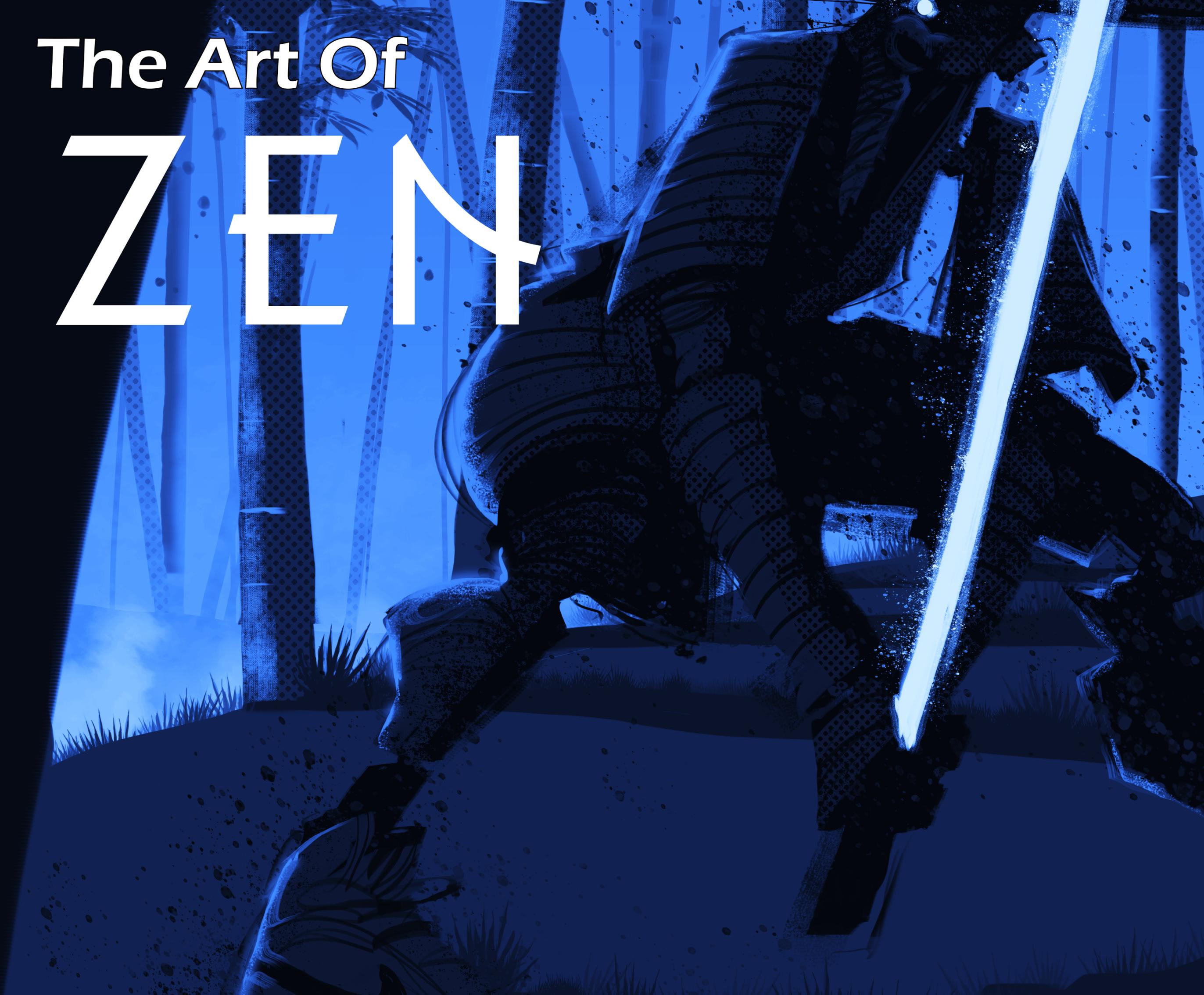


The Art Of ZEN



The Art of Zen

Seth Erwin

Story Lead, Animation Lead

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Rigging Lead, FX Lead

Leo Martinez

Pipeline Lead, Environment Lead

Mabel Perez

Concept Art Lead, Co-Story Lead, Co-Pipeline Lead, Co-Look Dev Lead

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Angel Le

Environment Modeling Lead

Abigail Dunker

Lighting Lead

Jon Sullivan

Sound Lead



Made by: Mabel

ZEN SHORT STORYBOARD 2023

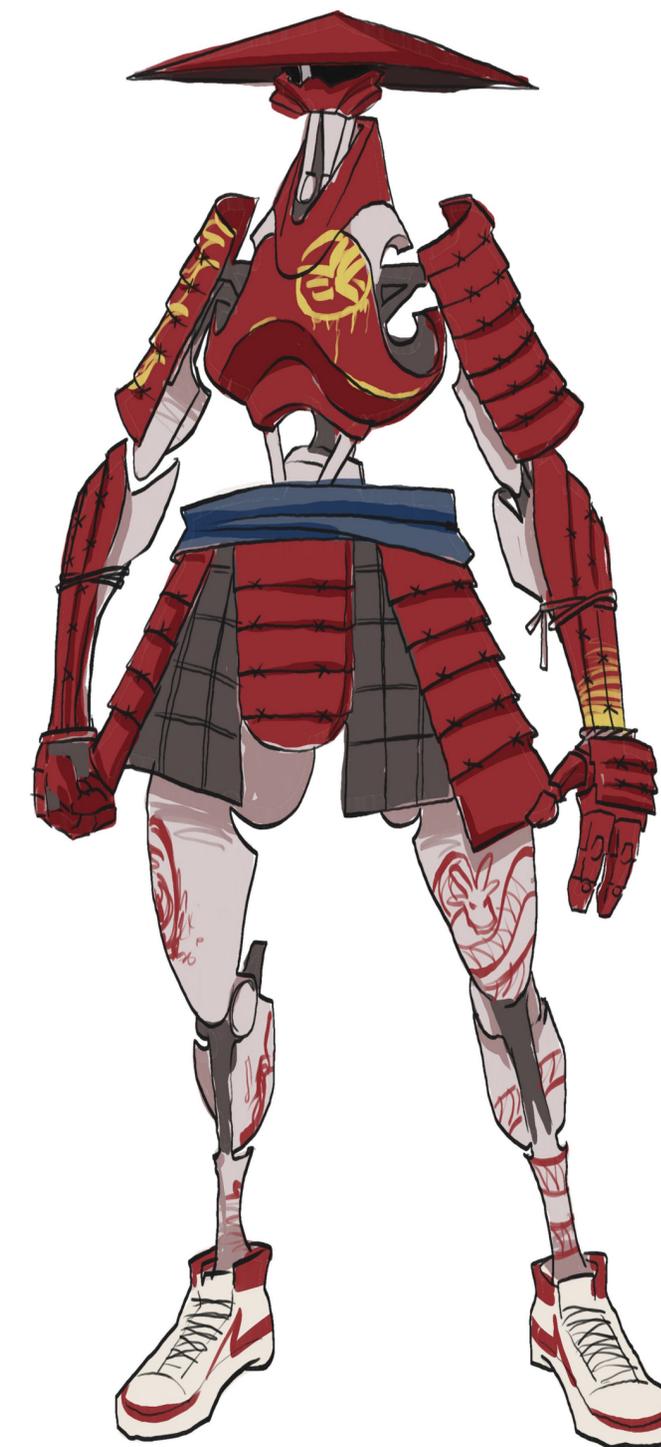
Character

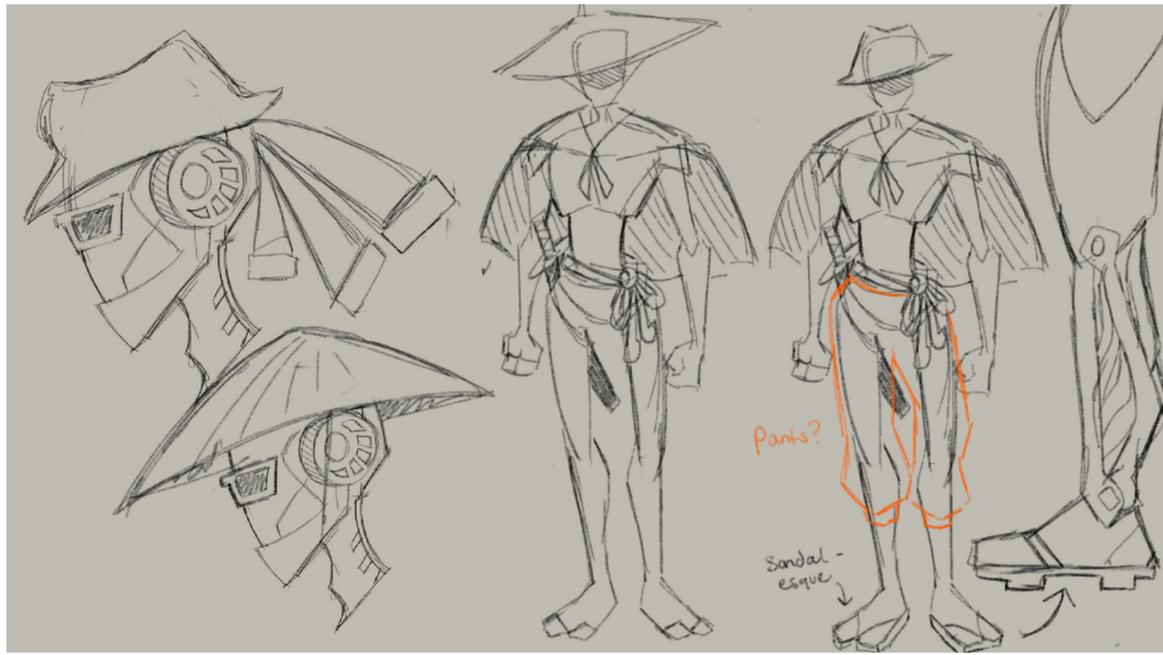
Sam The Samurai

Our main character is a mecha samurai that frequently visits a quiet bamboo forest to jam out and slice bamboo. His design is inspired by the graffiti and clothing of both traditional Edo-period samurai and 90's Hip-Hop culture.

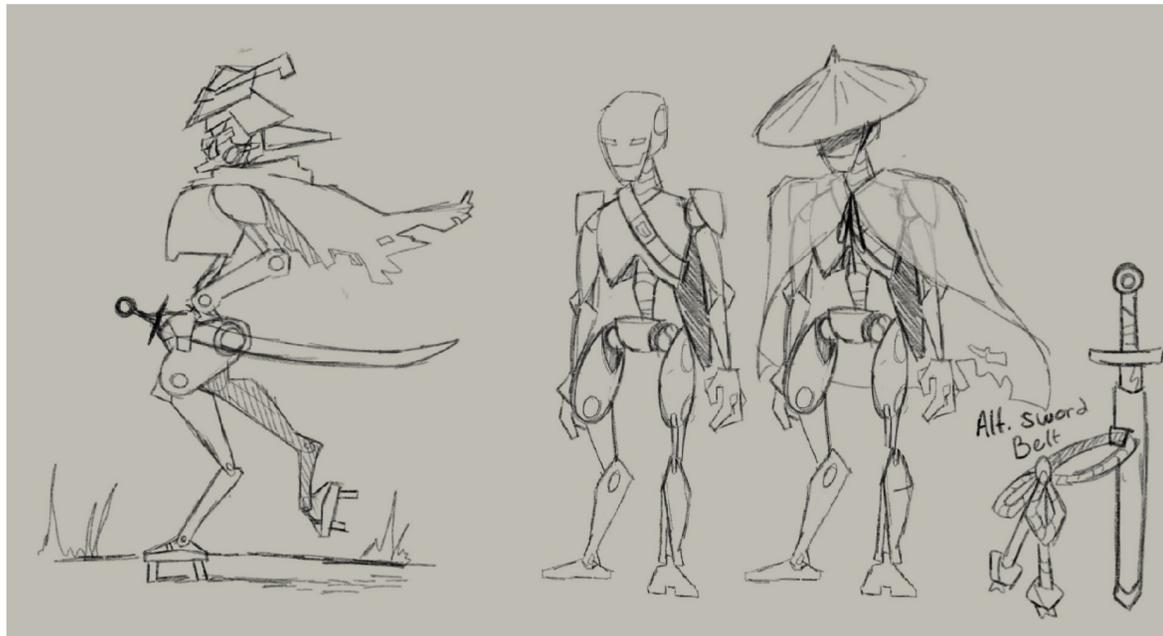
Sam is a youthful, energetic robot that frequently retreats to a bamboo forest to practice his routines alongside Japanese Hip-Hop fusion music. Sam adorned his metal with spray paint and tattoos inspired by Japanese clans and motifs, and his sneakers have dragon decals along the side.

Made by: Seth





Made by: Mabel



First Samurai Concepts

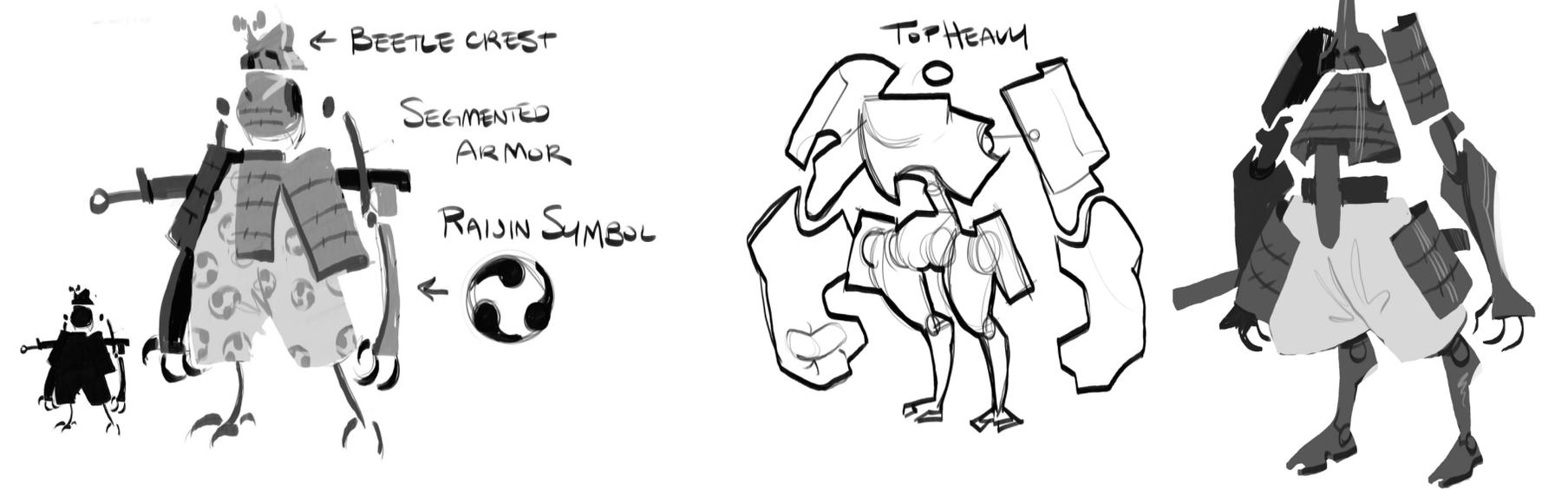
Sam's first designs toyed with the ideas of quadripedal legs, capes, and a rope belt. We also considered dressing Same in pants and traditional Japanese sandals. His music player was originally shown through a dial on the side of his head, which was later replaced with a player in his arm. Sam's original main themes were mecha, 90's hip hop, and insects. After experimentation with a combination of these concepts, Sam settled as a youthful mecha samurai inspired by hip hop culture.

First Samurai Concepts

Sam went through plenty of shape language explorations. Our 2D artists experimented with top heavy (shown middle below) and bottom heavy silhouettes through clothing and armor. This set of concept art leans into the mecha aspect of our character. Accompanying the mecha choice was heavy mechanical design research, covering everything from joint designs to power sources.

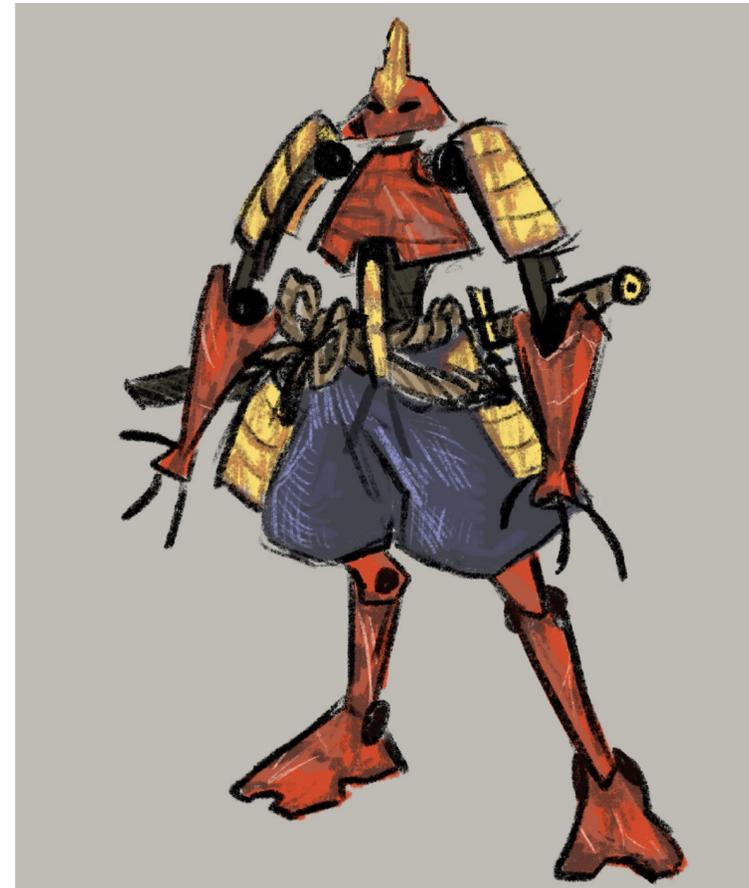


Made by: Seth

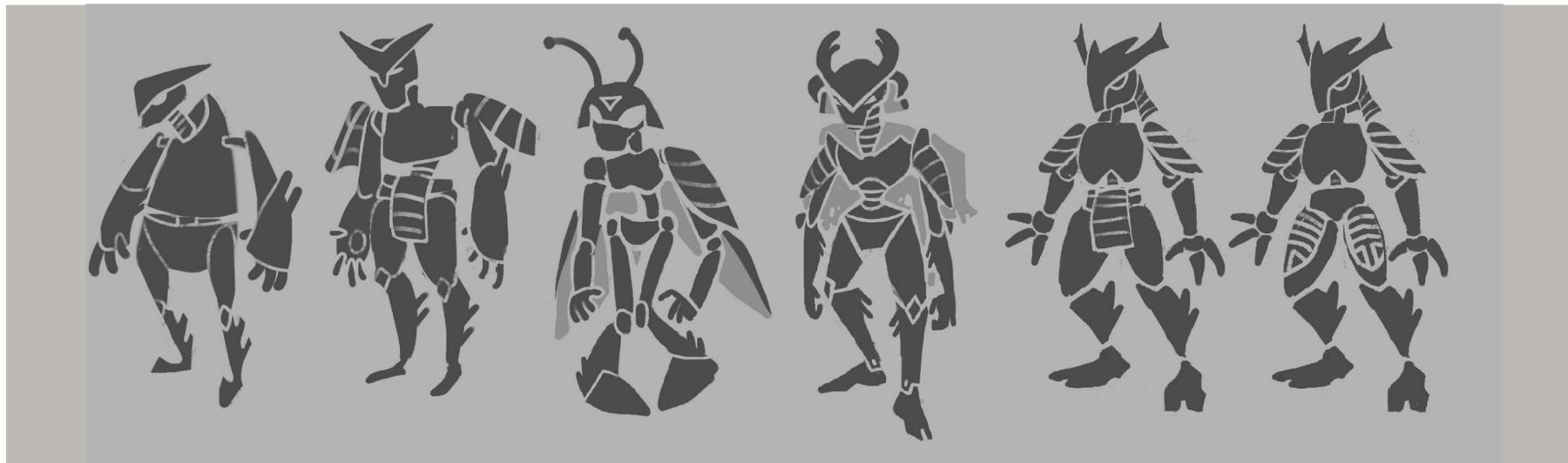


First Samurai Concepts

Sam was originally driven by insect elements, pulling inspiration from beetles and mantises for his armor and build. While we scrapped this aspect in the final design, we kept his graffiti and sneakers. Along with the mechanical design research, Our team also did research on Japanese and samurai culture, armor design, as well as old school hip hop culture. Our project emphasized a balance between cultural sensitivity and unique robot design.



Made by: Mabel



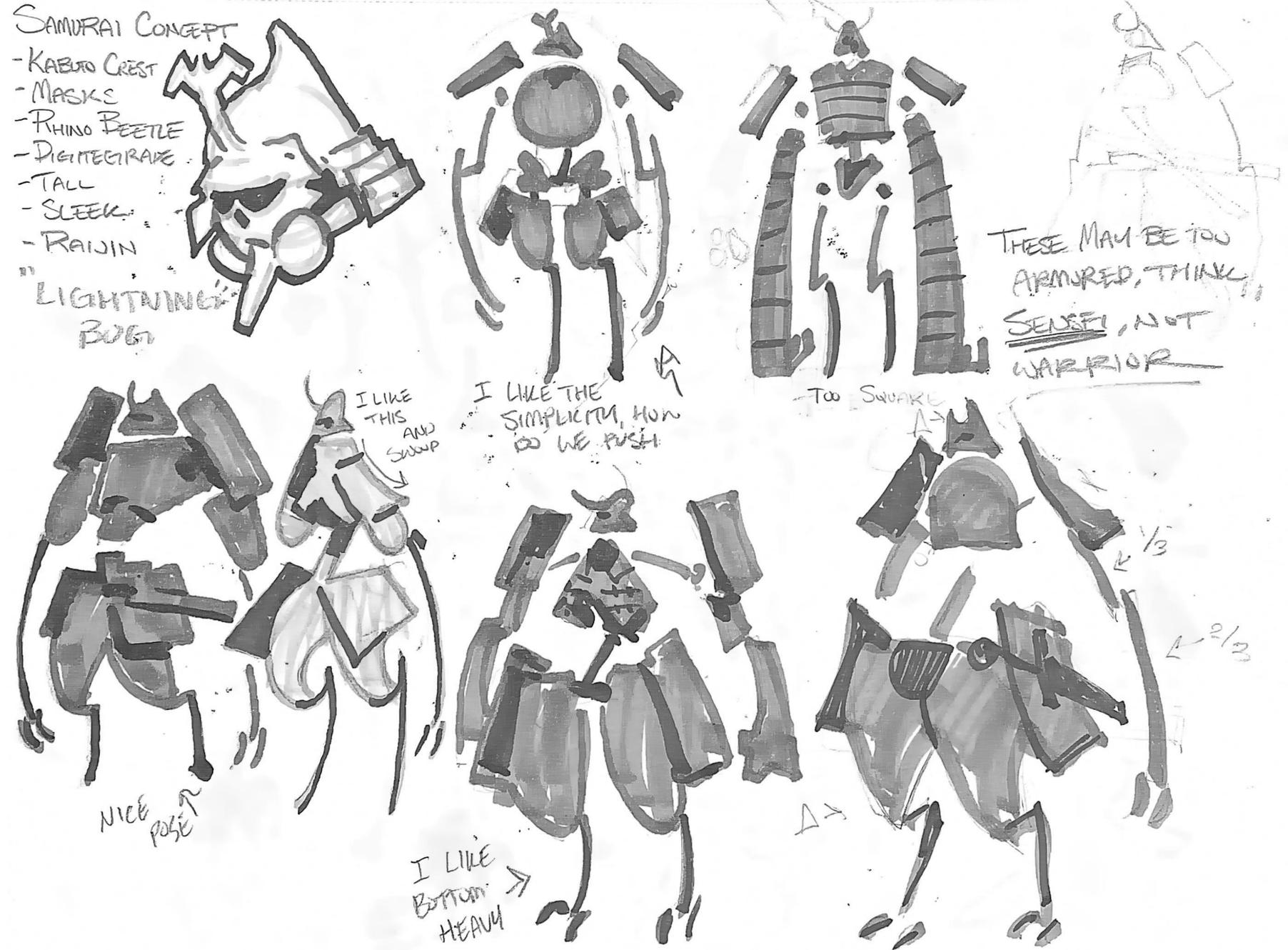
Samurai No Ret Silhouettes



SAMURAI CONCEPT

- KABUTO CREST
- MASKS
- RHINO BEETLE
- DIGITECIRAVE
- TALL
- SLEEK
- RAJIN

"LIGHTNING"
BUG



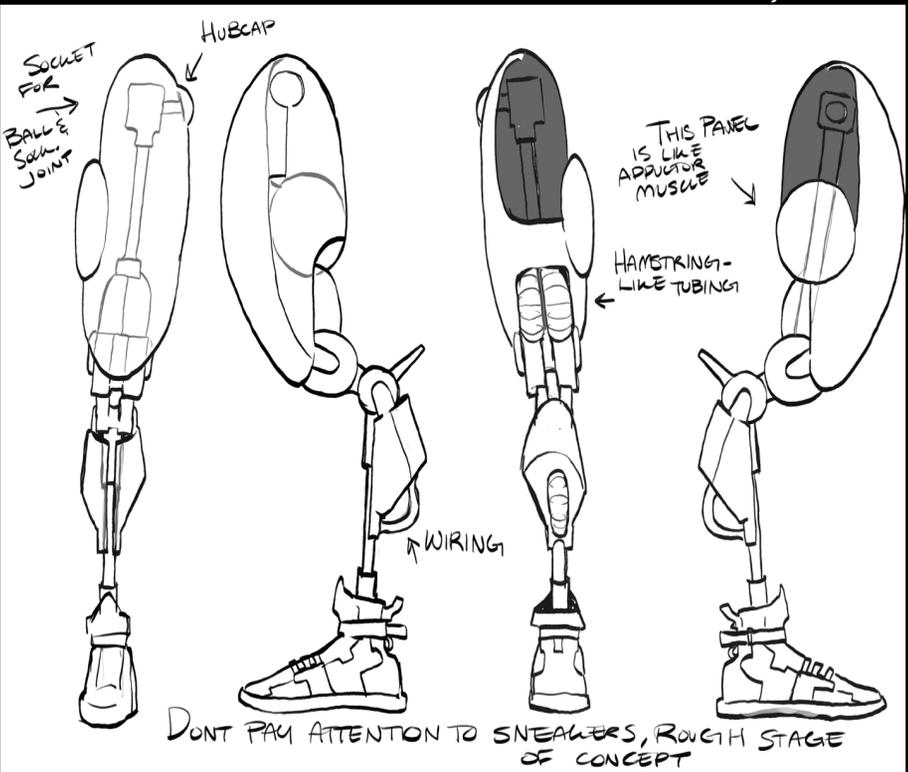
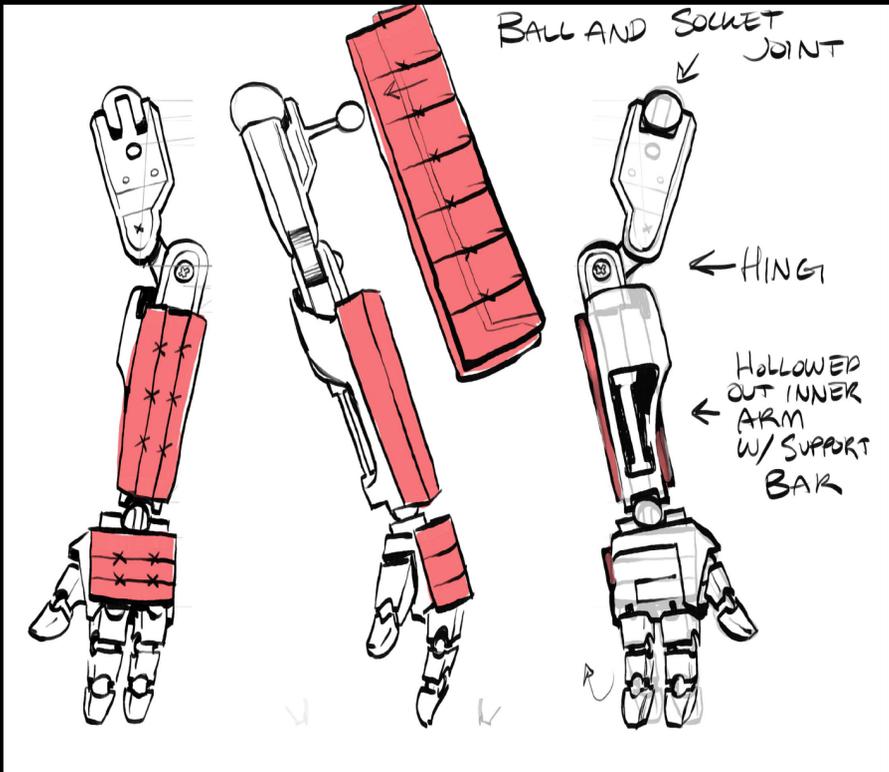
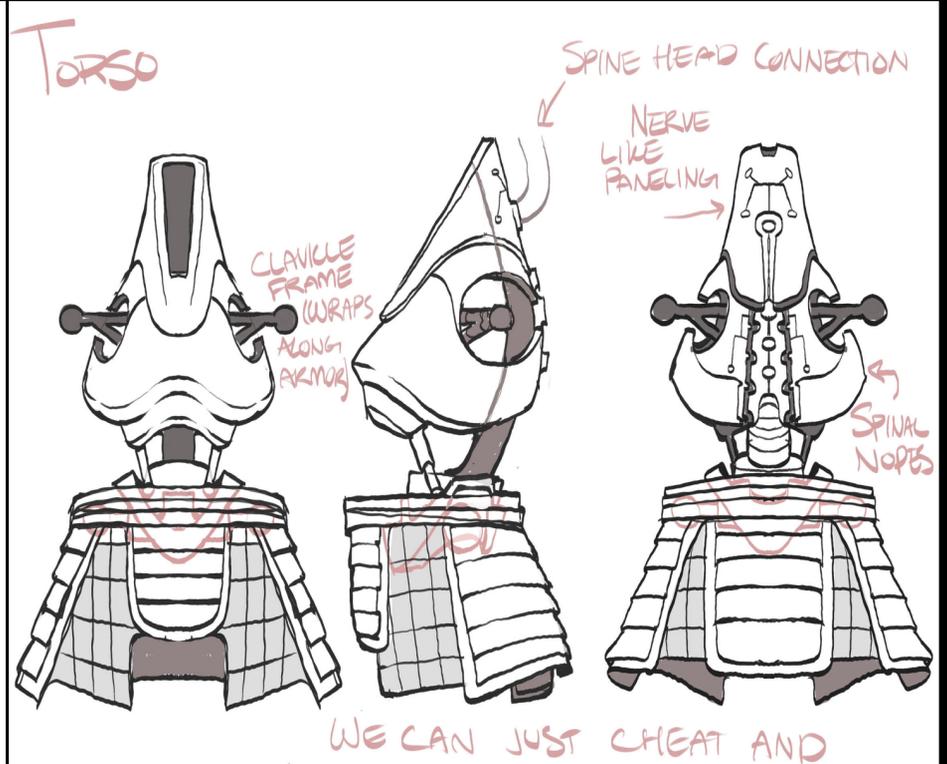
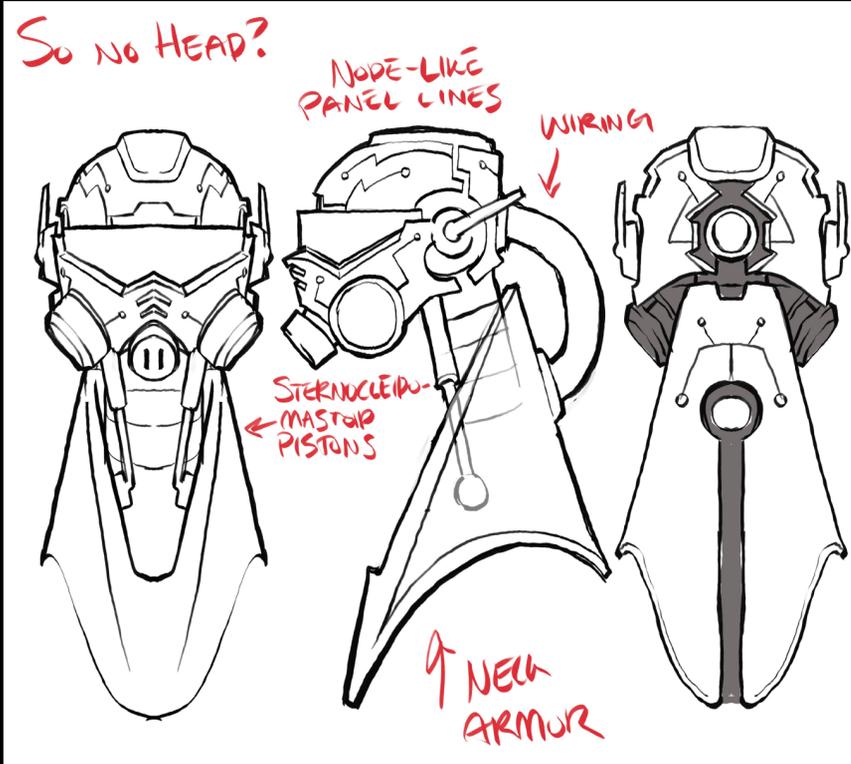
Samurai Blueprints



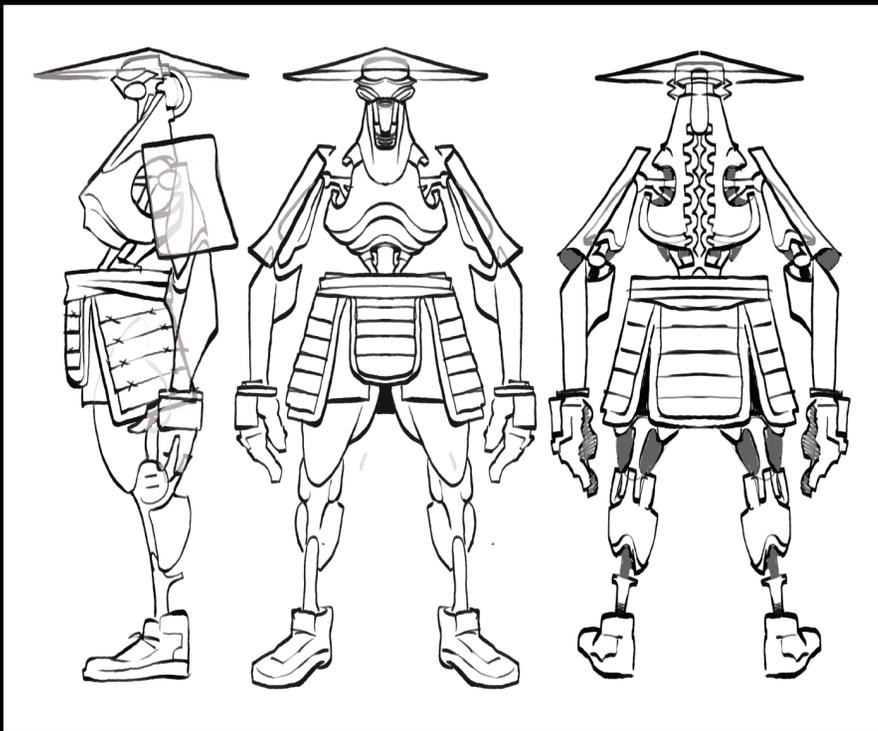
After finalizing Sam's design, blueprints were created for our character modeler, going in depth into the character's build, with mechanics in mind, better preparing the modelers, rigging artists, as well as our team of animators for a successful short film. Sam's mechanical design was heavily driven by our concept artist's passion for mechs, as well as our team's mechanical design research. To the right is the Taira Clan decal graffitied on



Made by: Seth



Made by: Seth



Made by: Seth

Samurai Turnaround

Sam stands tall at a hefty 7ft, with an athletic build designed to stay light on his feet. To the left is his turnaround sheet, showing off the complexities in his design.

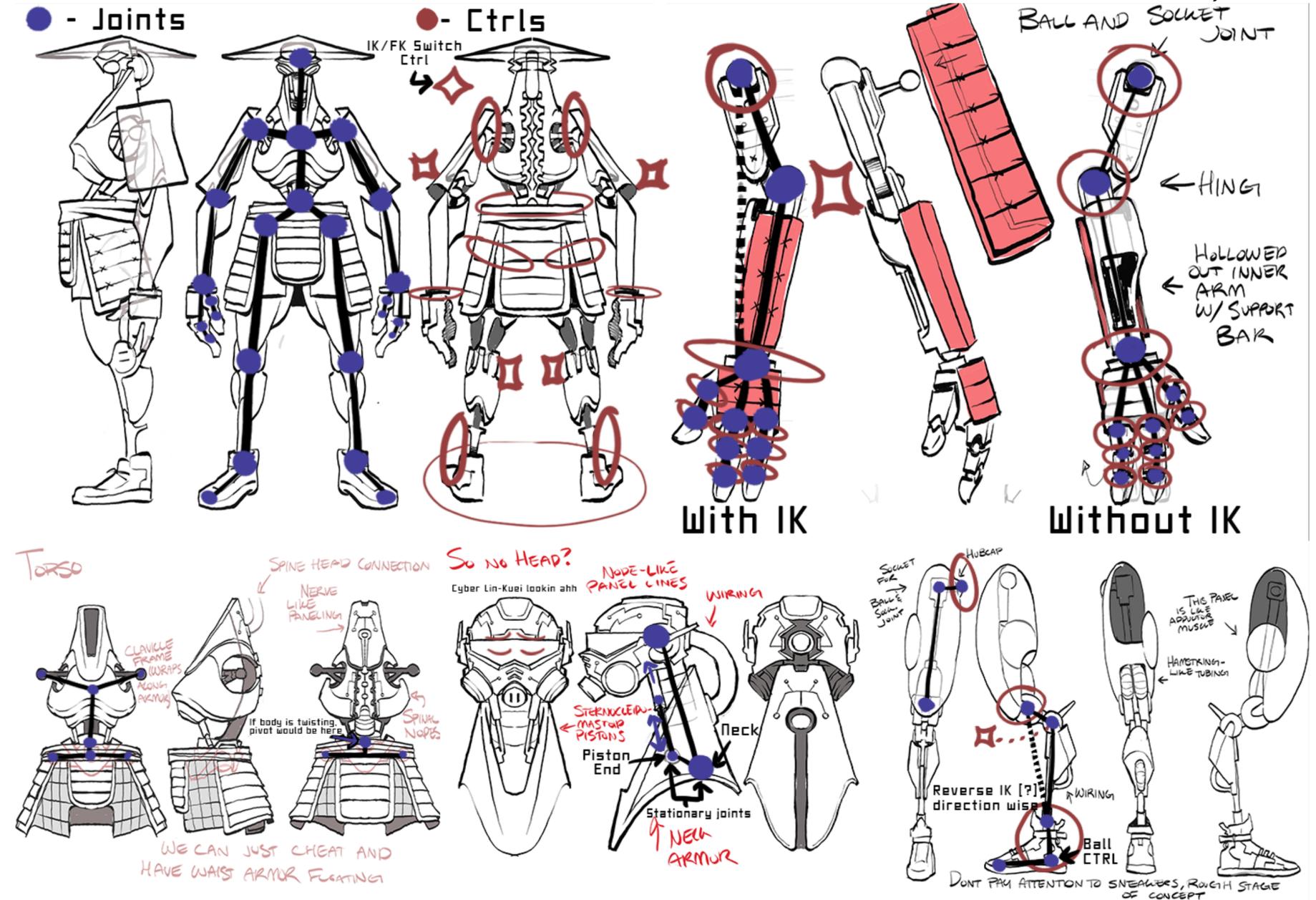


Samurai Callout

Sam is decked out in painted metal armor, a cloth sash and porcelain skin. He also rocks a bamboo hat and Nike Blazers on his feet. His chest symbol, shown on the right page, is sprayed onto his body, as well as his dragon tattoos along his legs.

Samurai Rigging Annotation

Below is Sam's diagram for rigging.



Environment



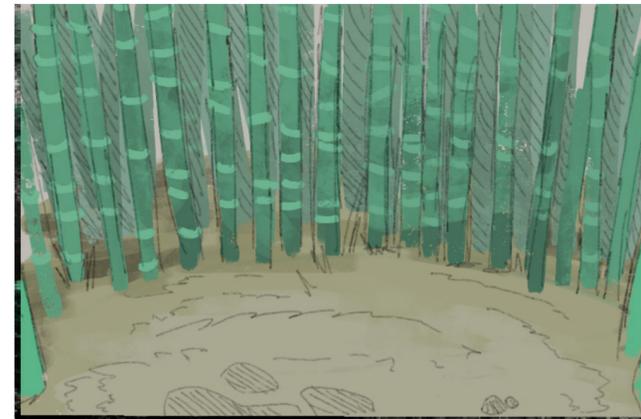
Environment Art

Our environment was modeled after Japanese bamboo forests, Shinto shrines, and zen gardens. We wanted to create a nighttime space that was eerily calm and would be a perfect place to tune out in. Zen gardens and forests inspired our glade, where Sam's routine takes place.

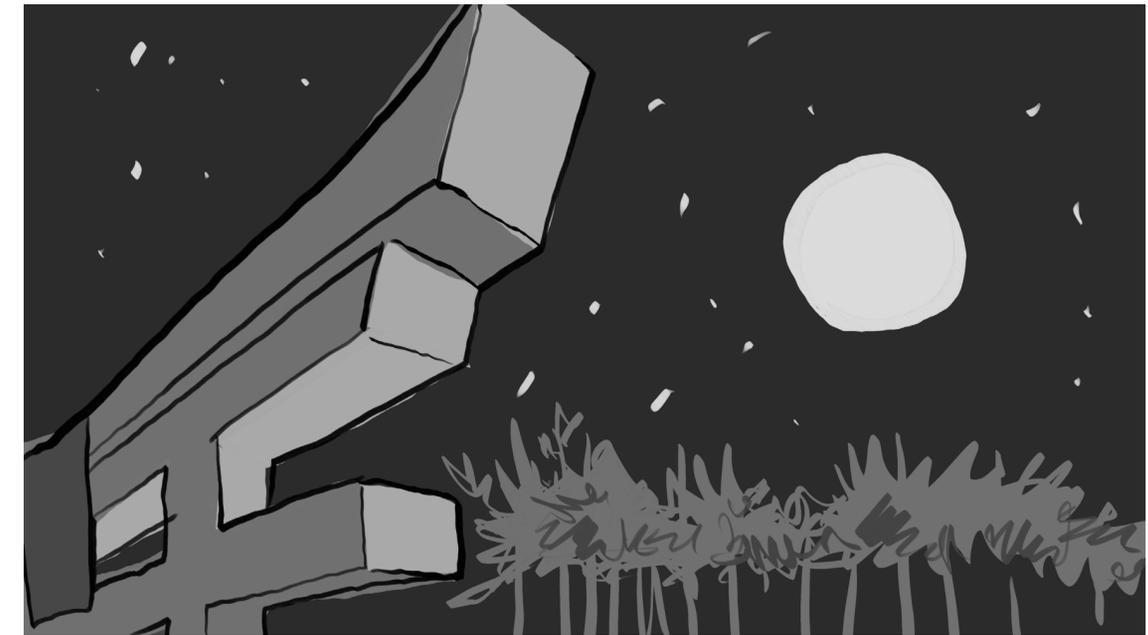
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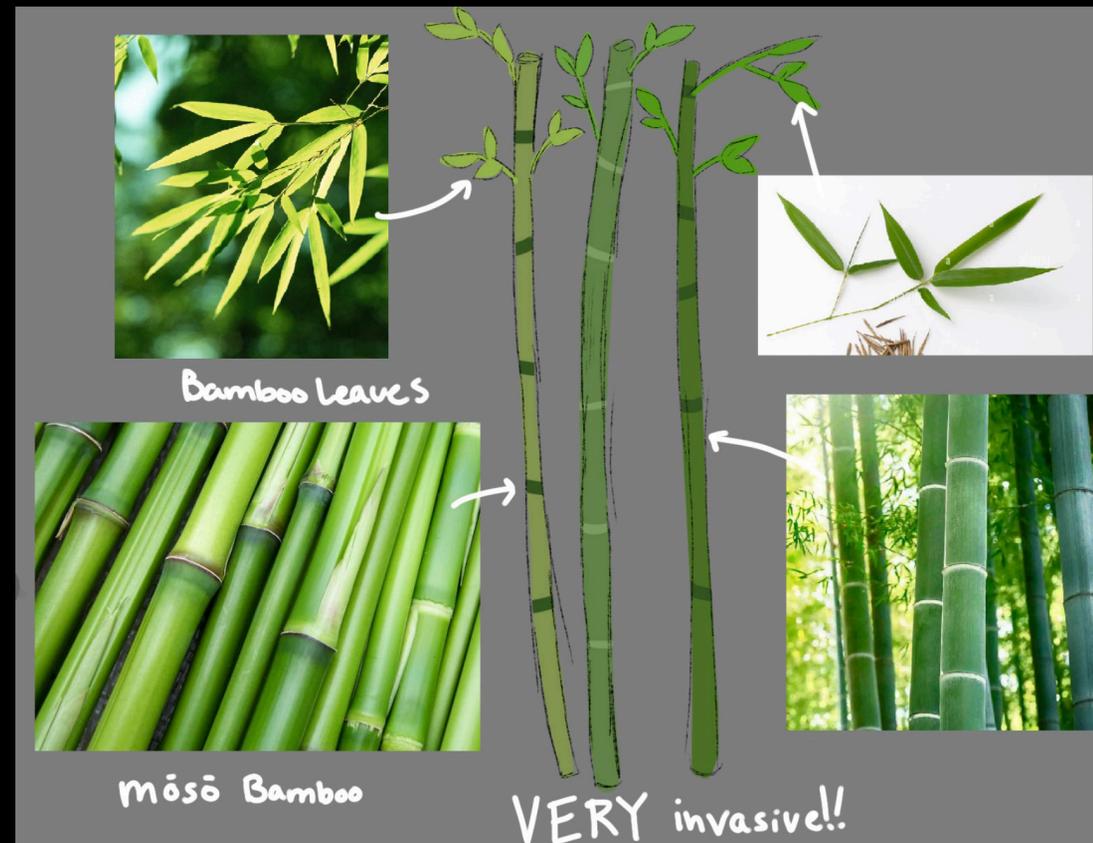
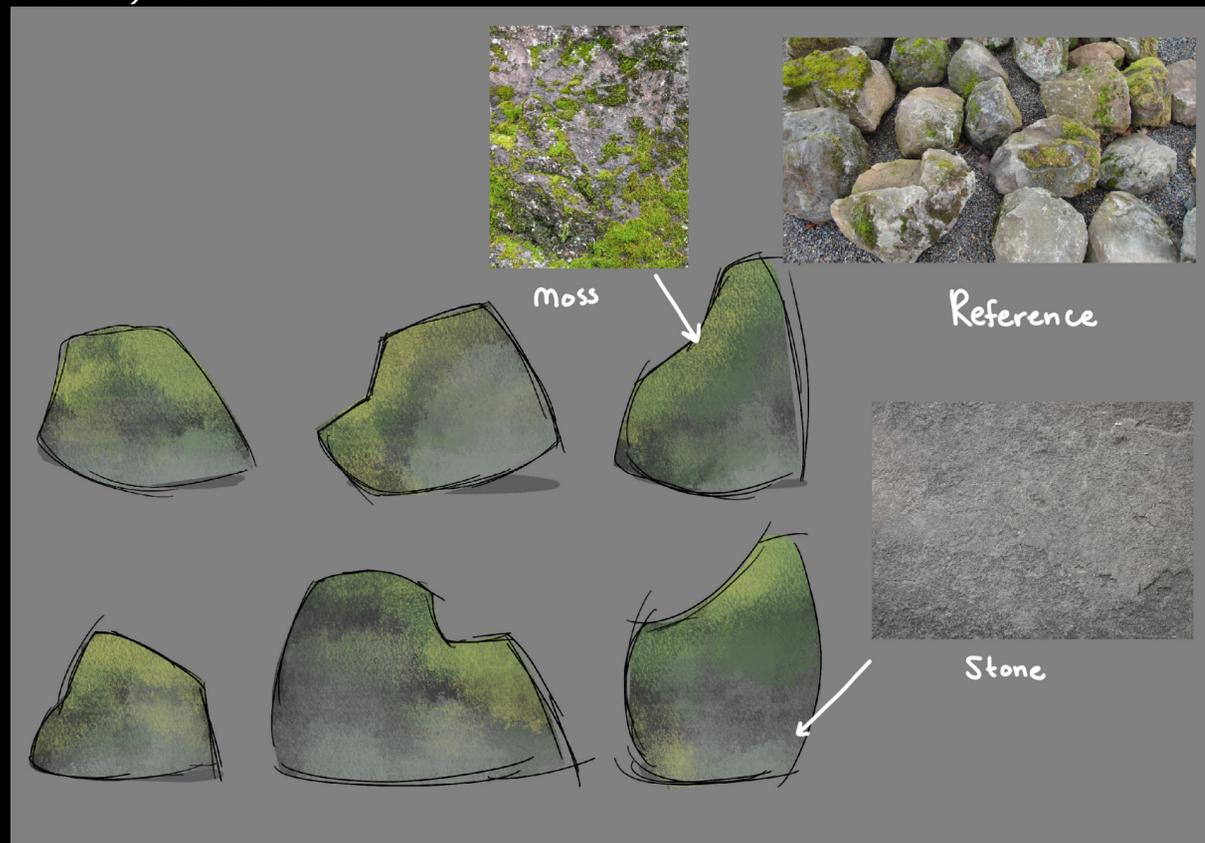
Made by: Seth



Environment Prop Callouts

Shown are the boulder callout sheet (left), bamboo stalk callout sheet (middle), and water fountain callout sheet (right). The environment was created to be very peaceful, inviting, and quiet - zen, even.

Made by: Mabel

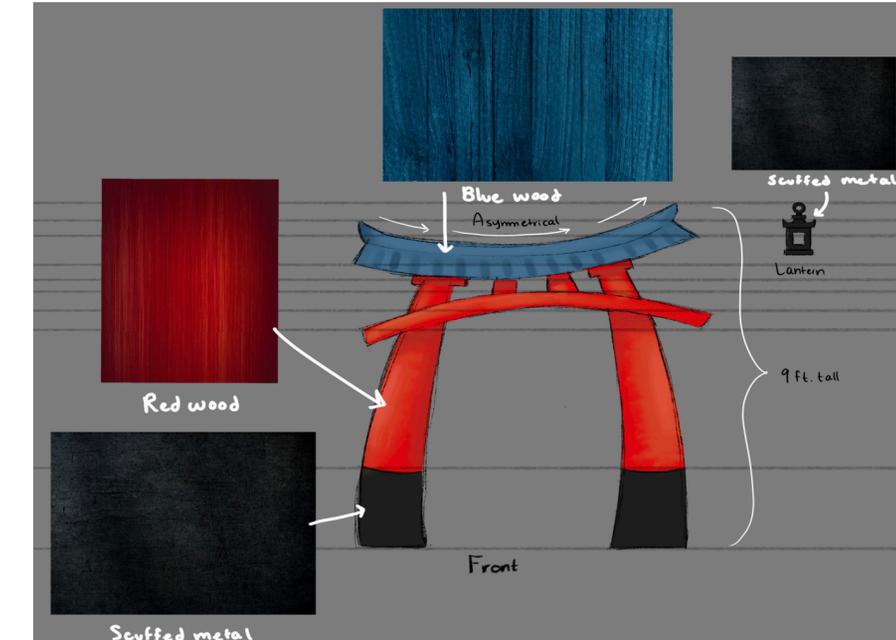
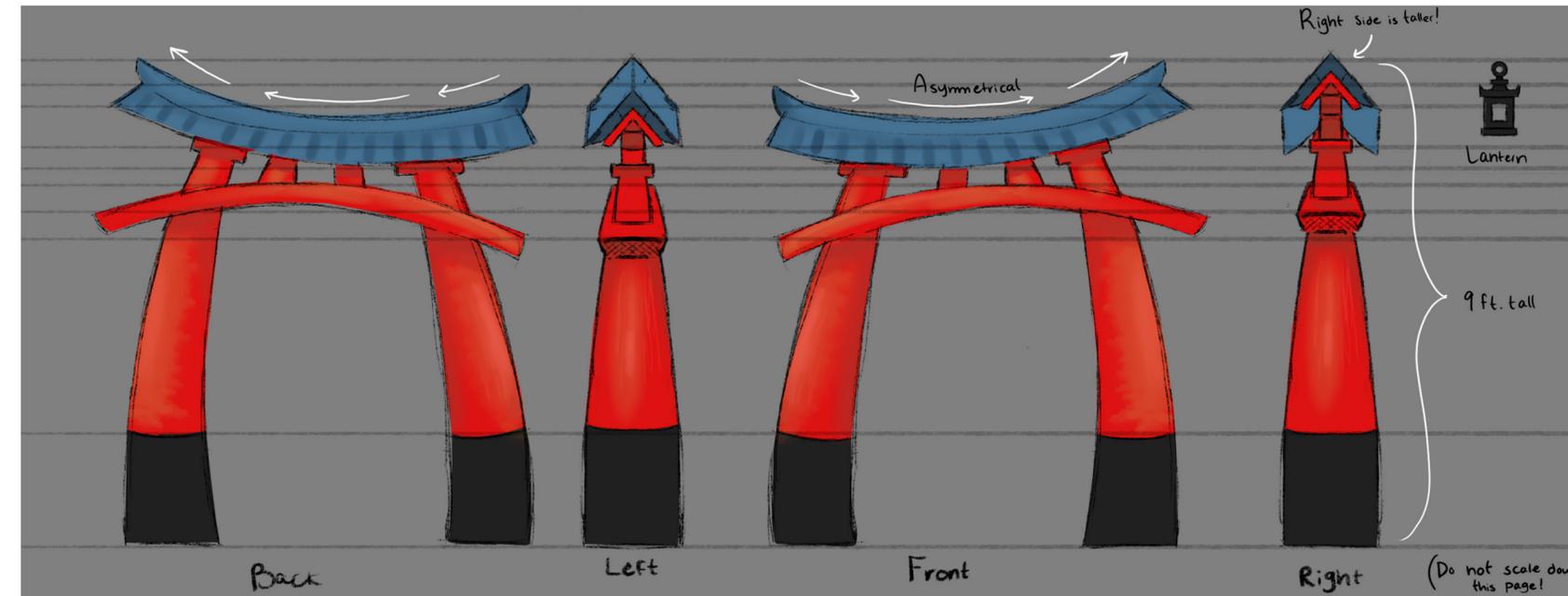
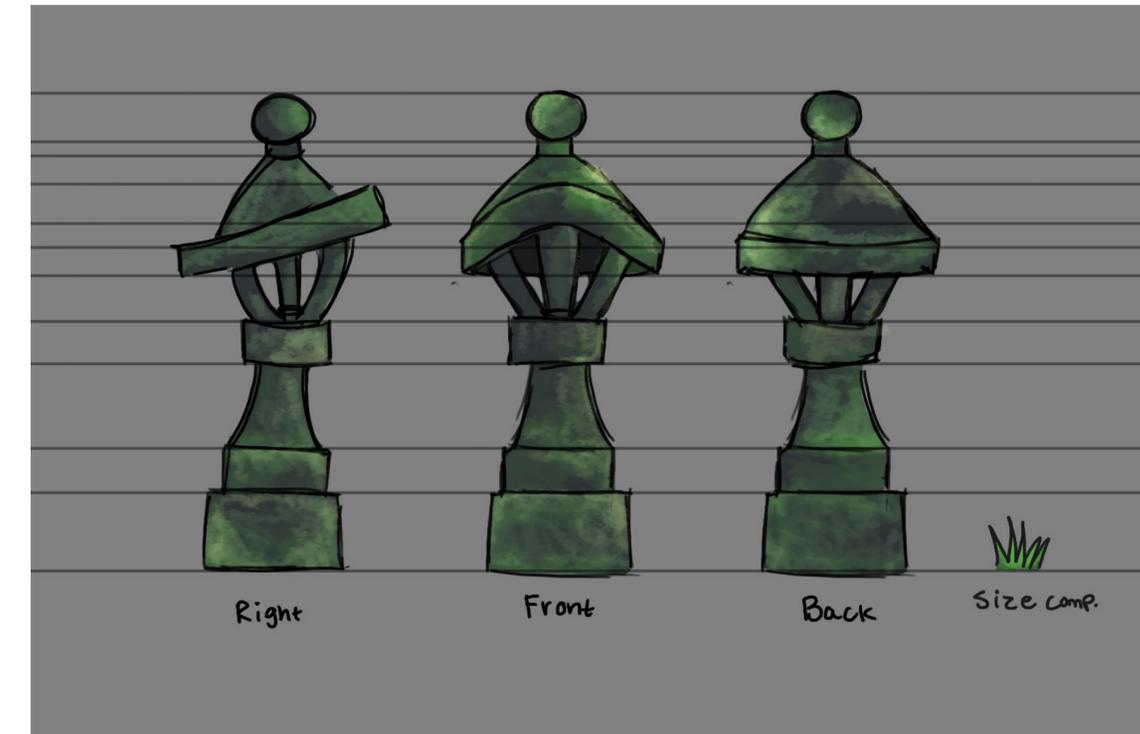


Made by: Mabel



Environment Props

The komainu statue (upper middle) was originally designed after traditional ones, which are meant to stand as guardians against evil. Ours shifted into a mecha - stone design after Sam's redesign. The toros (upper right) and torii gate (below) maintained their traditional design to keep contrast between a realistic environment and robotic character. Our torii lanterns light up the pathway through the gateway and circle around the edge of the glade. Below is a torii shape exploration (bottom left), torii turnaround (bottom middle), and a torii callout sheet (bottom right).



Previous Katana Callout

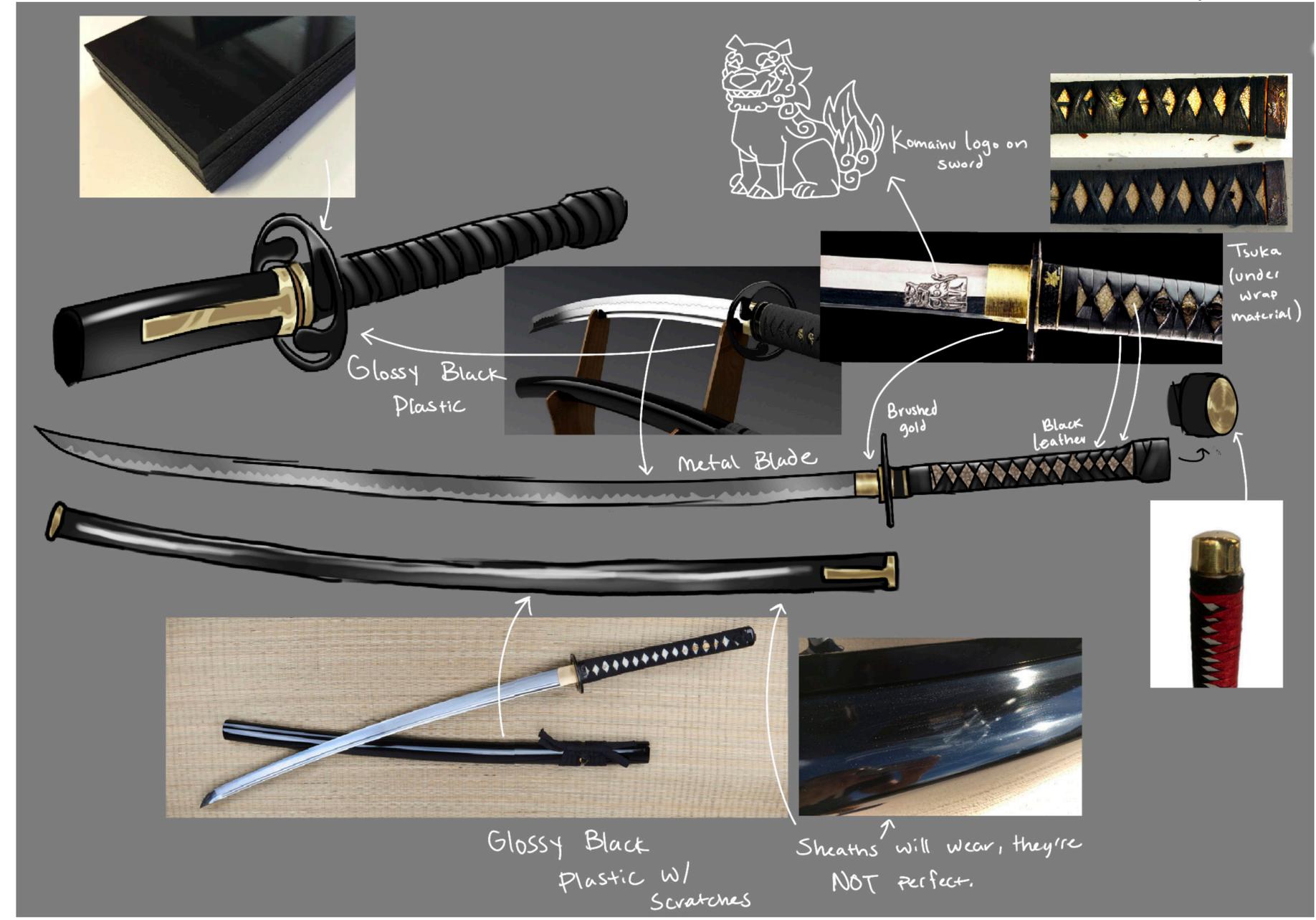
The initial katana is made of red metal, leather wrap, and a spray painted black blade. The sheath design was panelled and riveted, with prongs along the bottom inspired by praying mantis arms. There was previously rope details on the sheath to match Sam's sash, which was later replaced with cloth tied around his waist.

His new katana design, shown on the right, features a simpler color palette - black, silver, and gold. This redesign came after our finalized Sam dropped the insect aspects in favor of a sleeker, younger, feel.



Redesigned Katana Callout

Made by: Mabel





Look Development



Katana

is well-loved and worn down, made of metal, black leather and black plastic. At the base of the blade is an engraving of a Komainu dog logo and a layer of brushed gold. It's complete with a painted metal hilt guard with the raisin symbol. Sam's sword is also accompanied by a black plastic sheath scattered with scratches and scuffs - earned through his many cutting routines in the bamboo forest.

Modeled by: Mabel
Textured by: Mary

Komainu

The komainu statue was sculpted, topologized, and baked in Nomad. They were surfaced in Substance Painter using real overgrown komainu statue stone as references. Moss was also surfaced in the crevices of the stone.

Modeled by:
Mabel
Textured by:
Mabel





Modeled by: Mabel
Textured by: Mary

Bamboo

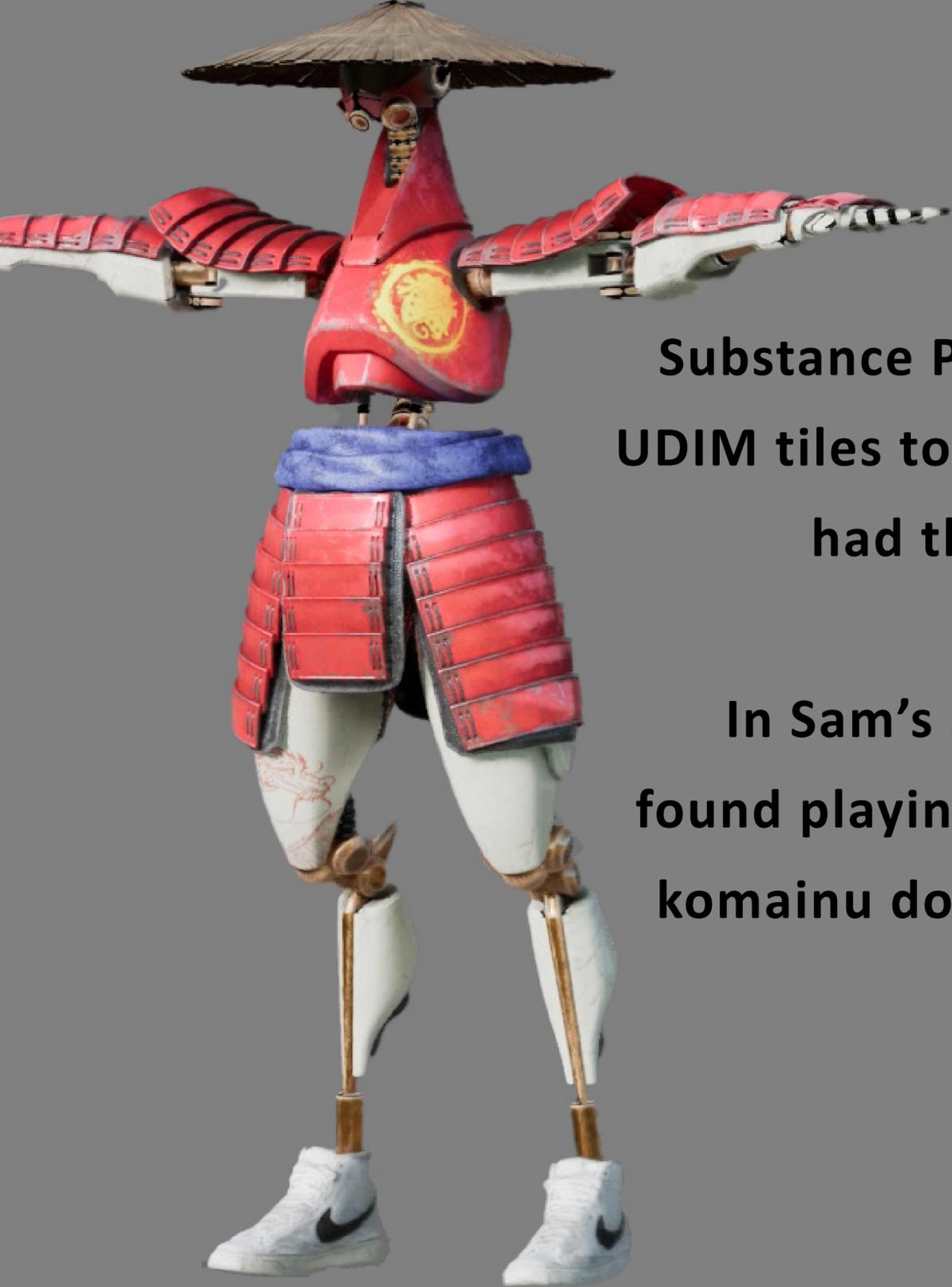
The bamboo stalks were surfaced separately for several bamboo models. Our surfacing lead changed hues between models for variety in our environment. Macro details include scratches and vertical stalk rinding. These models, as well as the foliage, are given a subsurface profile created in Unreal Engine to provide subsurface scattering in the moonlight.

Toro Lantern

Our toro lanterns were initially surfaced with a lighter stone and are now darker. They have light moss growing alongside the bottom, with visible wear in the stone's edges and large faces from sun and element exposure. The toros are accompanied by a flame effect built in Niagara, Unreal Engine's built-in FX system.

Modeled by: Mabel
Textured by: Mabel





Samurai

Sam was made in Substance Painter, with about 20 UDIM tiles to ensure our character had the best look possible.

In Sam's spare time, he can be found playing tug-of-war with the komainu dogs or maintaining the bamboo forest.

*Modeled by: Manny
Textured by: Mabel*

Torii

The torii was also surfaced in Substance Painter. The paper in the lanterns have subsurface applied in Unreal Engine, and there's an emissive flame effect inside the lanterns.

*Modeled by: Leyo
Textured by: Mary*

