



Symphonic

13 inch PERSONAL TELEVISION



MENU

VOLUME

CHANNEL

POWER



ICE BREAKER

*Is Tears of the
Kingdom is an
original game?*



Symphonic

13 inch PERSONAL TELEVISION



MENU

VOLUME

CHANNEL

POWER









Character Design

and their role in games



Symphonic

100% PERSONALITY



MENU

VOLUME

CHANNEL

RECALL



Attendance por favor!



Do it or the mole-men will teach you how to
crochet (it's a special type of hell)



What is Character Design?

Naive

- *Action*: Drawing a picture of the character
- *Goal*: Telling the audience what the character looks like

Accurate

- *Action*: Create the actual character
- *Goal*: Visually presenting behavior, personality, and aesthetic



Character Drawing



Character Design



*Character
Design*

*Character
Drawing*



*When drawing a
character...*

*draw with the character's
behaviors and functions in
mind!!*



ACTIVITY PART 0:

Come up with an idea for a character!

Can be a list of ideas...

Or you can actually try drawing something!

*Try combining an emotion, an action, and
gameplay ideas*

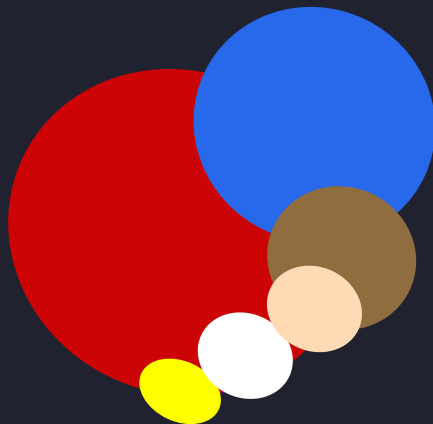


*What makes **Good** Character Design?*

Silhouette



Palette



Exaggeration



Silhouettes



Silhouettes

*Good design means a **recognizable** silhouette...*

*A **recognizable** silhouette...*

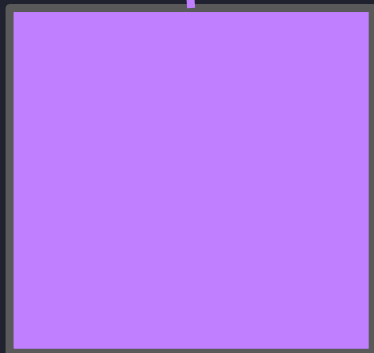
- *uses a **shape language motif***
- *contains 1-2 **unique shapes***



Shape Language

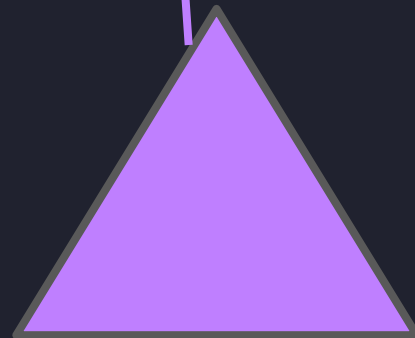
Using *shapes* to show *personality traits*

Sturdy Supportive
Strong Stubborn
Rigid Trustworthy



Soft Squishy
Bouncy Friendly
Happy Fluid

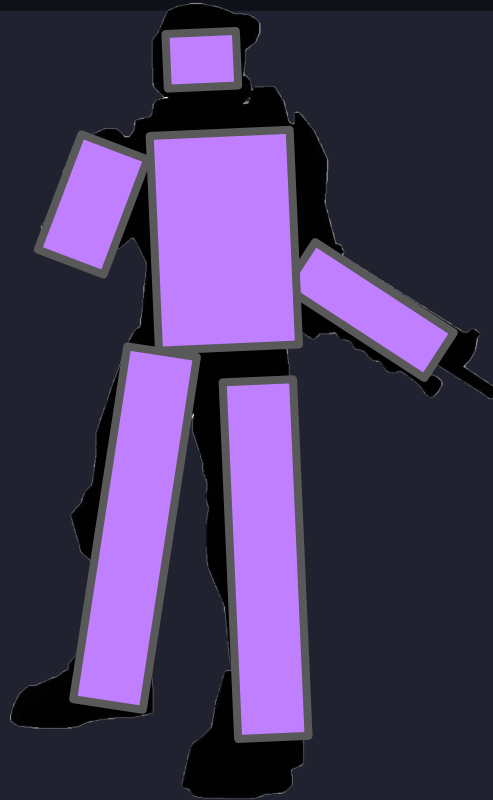
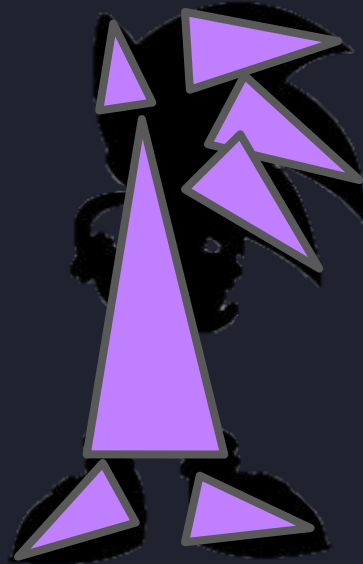
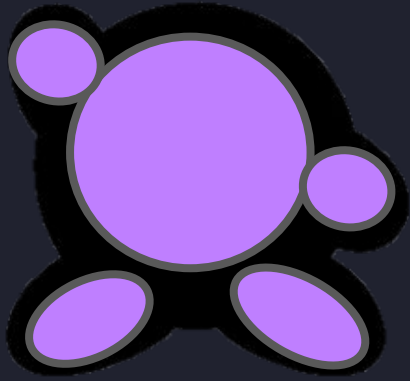
Sharp Dynamic
Intense Directional
Edgy Dangerous



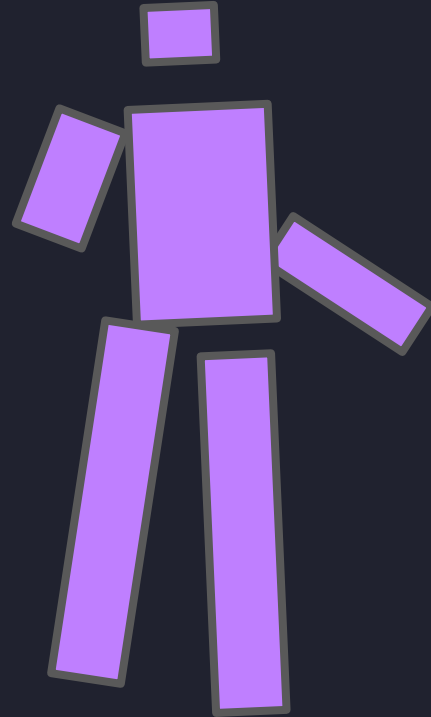
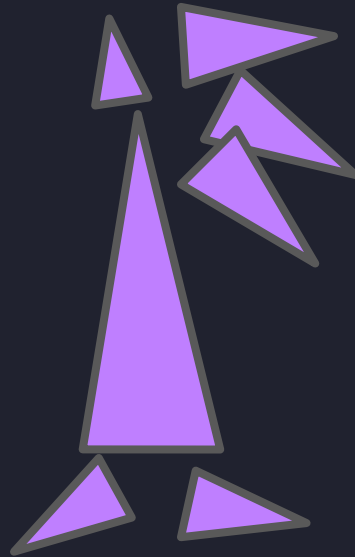
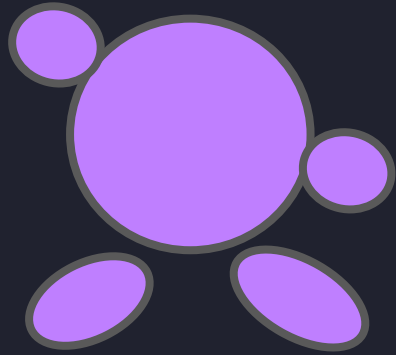
*Good Design uses a **shape motif***



*Good Design uses a **shape motif***



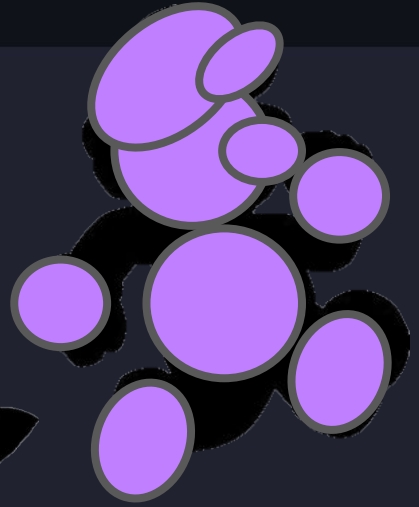
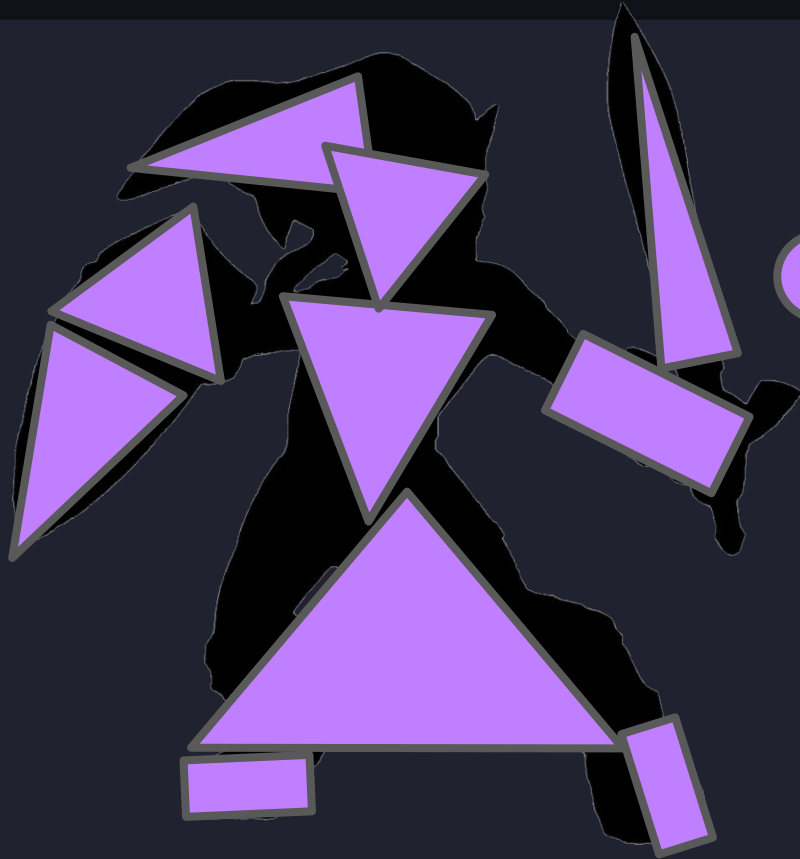
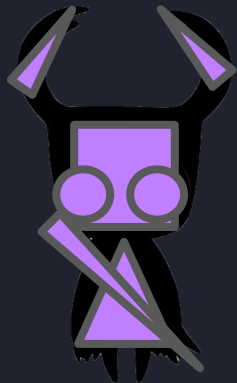
*Good Design uses a **shape motif***



*Good Design uses a **shape motif***

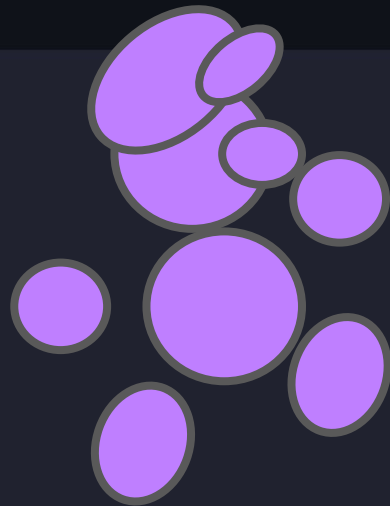
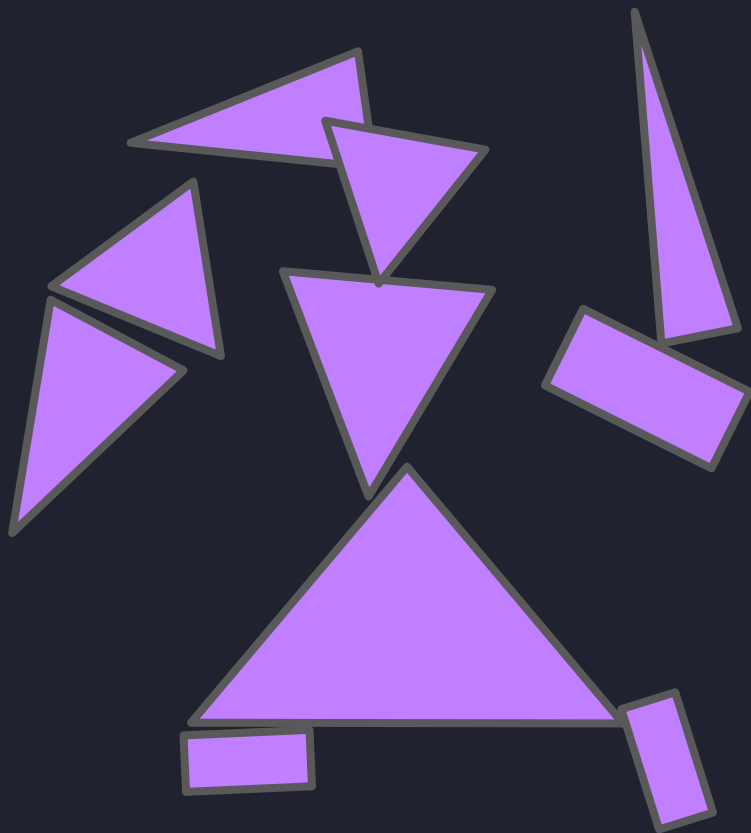
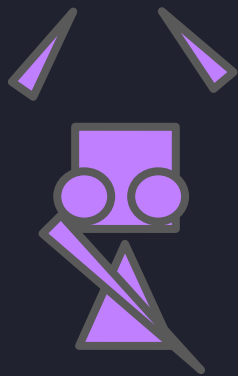


*Good Design uses a **shape motif***



Good Design uses a shape motif

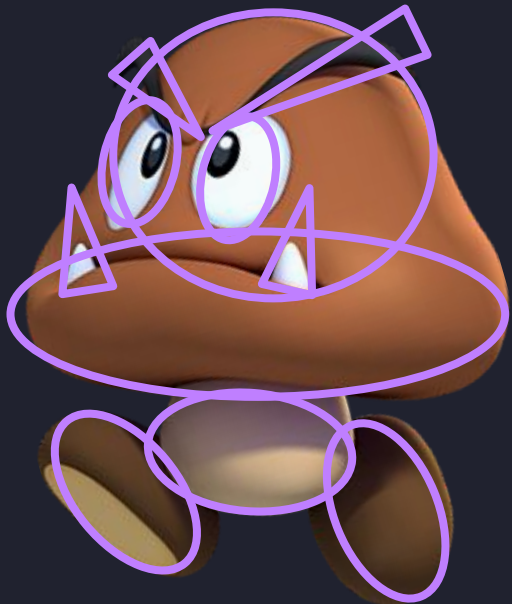
Note how >1 shape can be used!



In-Depth Example:



In-Depth Example:



7/11 shapes: **Circles**

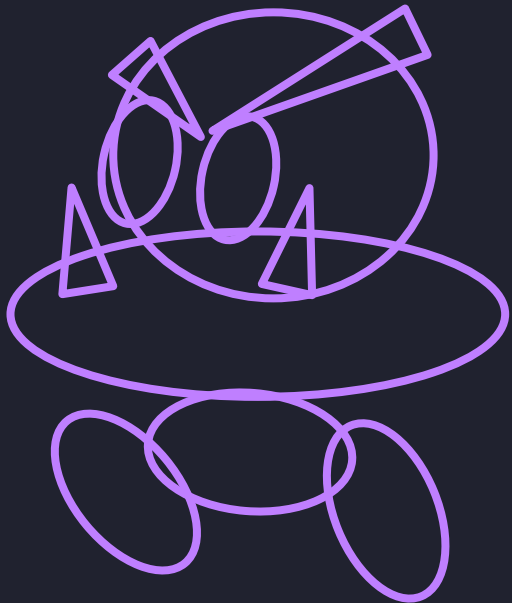
4/11 shapes: **Triangles**

Circles make him cute...

*but TRIANGLES make him
DANGEROUS!*



In-Depth Example:



7/11 shapes: **Circles**

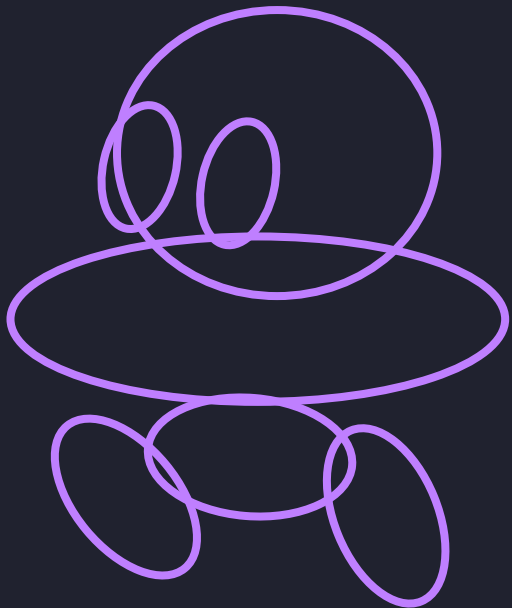
4/11 shapes: **Triangles**

Circles make him cute...

*but TRIANGLES make him
DANGEROUS!*



In-Depth Example:



7/7 shapes: **Circles**

?/? shapes: **amogus**

Circles make him cute...

but TRIANGLES... oh never mind!



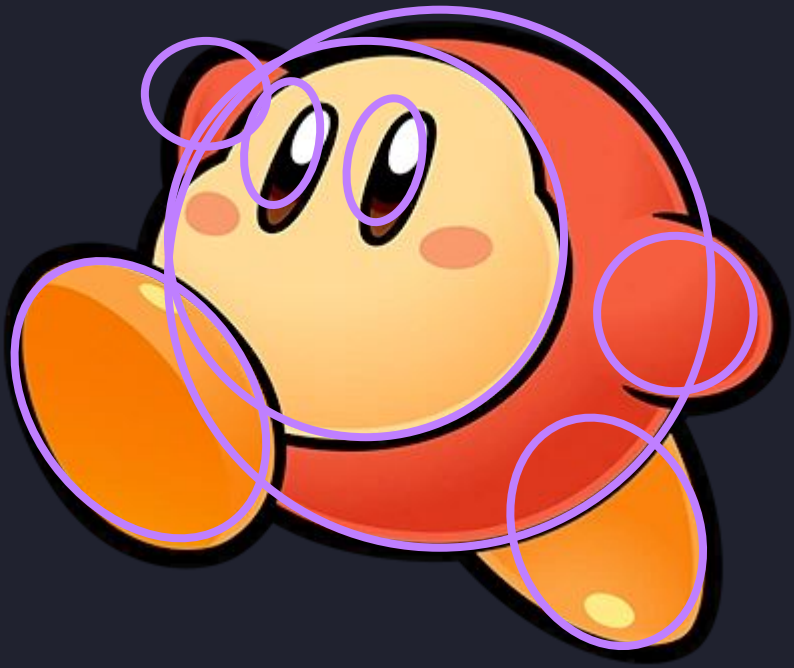
In-Depth Example:



Just changing a few shapes...



In-Depth Example:



*You can get a totally
different character!*



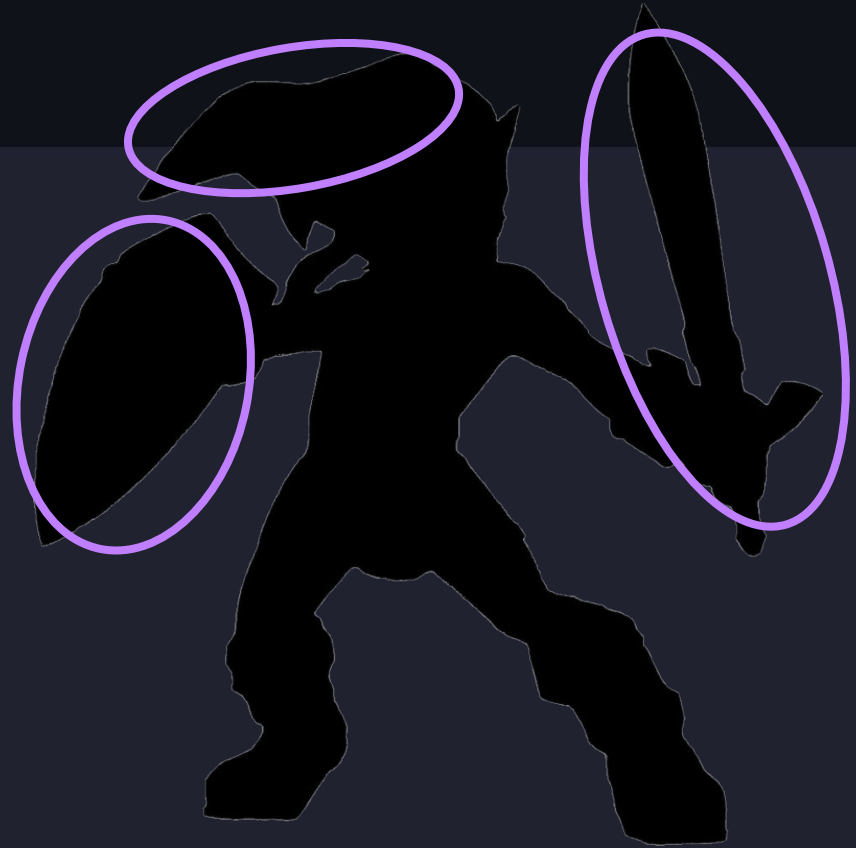
In-Depth Example:



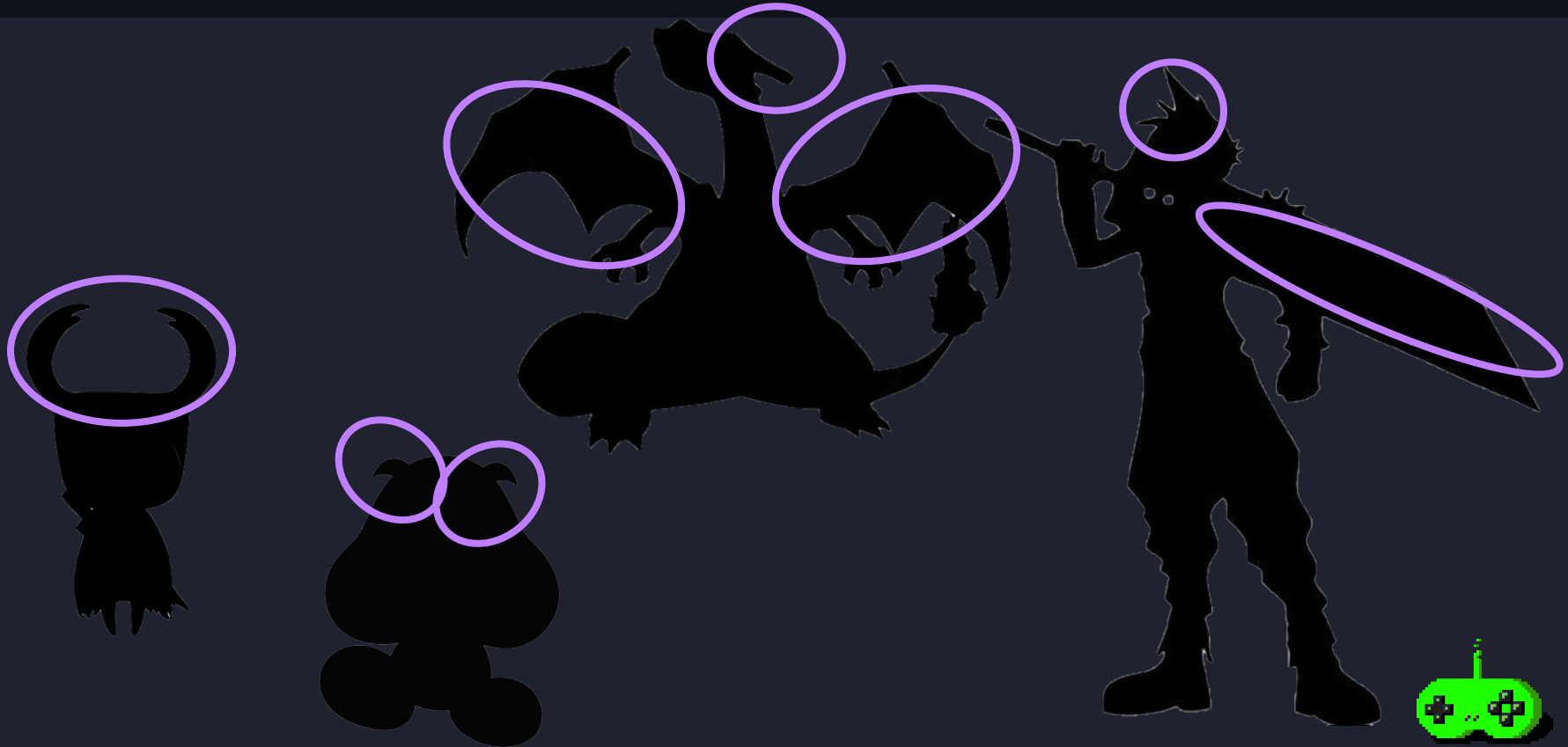
*You can get a totally
different character!*



1-2 Unique Shapes



1-2 Unique Shapes

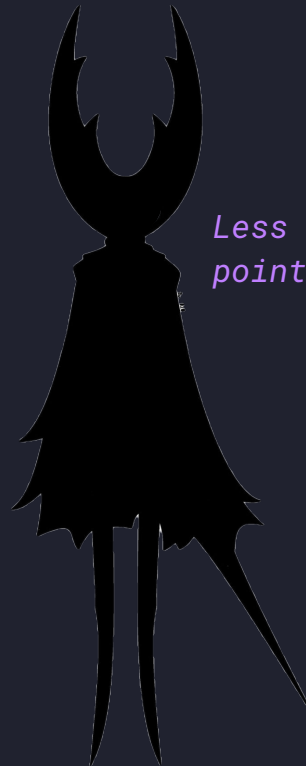


Pro Tip: Use shape properties on each other!

Such as making triangle points more circular!



*More curved points
feels more friendly!*



*Less curved, more angular
points... more scary!*



Pro Tip: Use shape properties on each other!

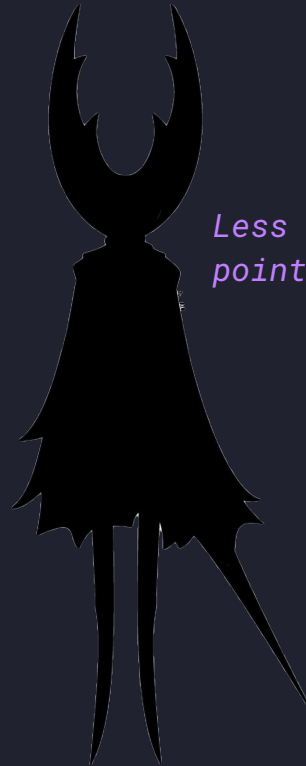
Other examples:

Beveling square edges

Adding edges to circular shapes



*More curved points
feels more friendly!*



*Less curved, more angular
points... more scary!*



Silhouettes Summary

Good silhouettes will...

Employ a shape motif

Contain 1-2 unique shapes





TLDR; they
pass the
“Who’s that
Pokemon?!”
test





TLDR; they
pass the
“Who’s that
Pokemon?!”
test





ACTIVITY PART 1:

Use the rules of silhouettes to start a character design!

- 1) Clear Shape Motif*
- 2) 1-2 Unique Shapes*

Palette



Palettes

Good design means a simple color palette

A simple color palette...

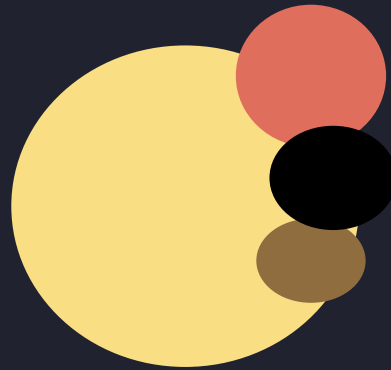
- *uses a color hierarchy*
- *uses color theory to create harmony*
- *showcases a clear theme using color language*



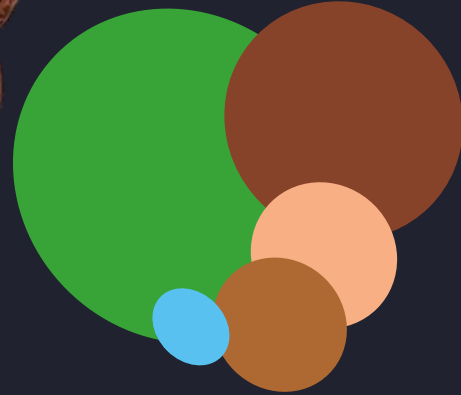
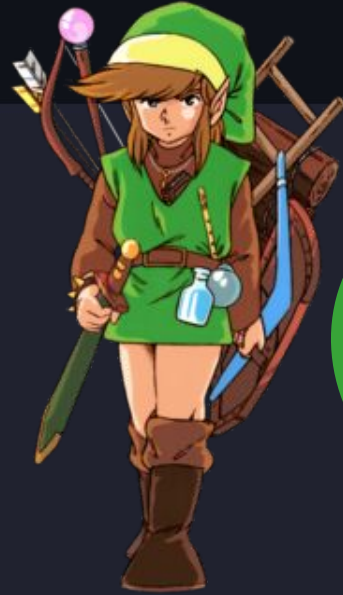
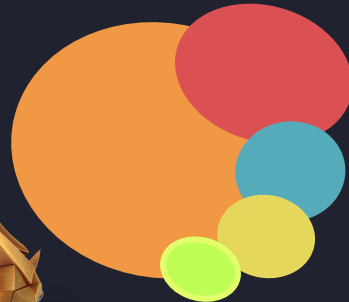
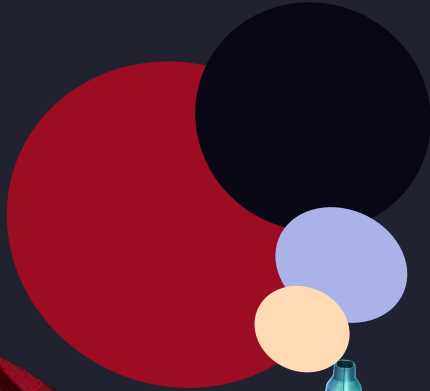
Color Hierarchy

Step 1) Choose a **dominant color**

Step 2) Choose other colors to support



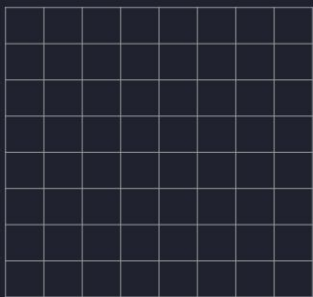
Color Hierarchy



Color Hierarchy (Historical Significance)

Consoles used to have severe color limits

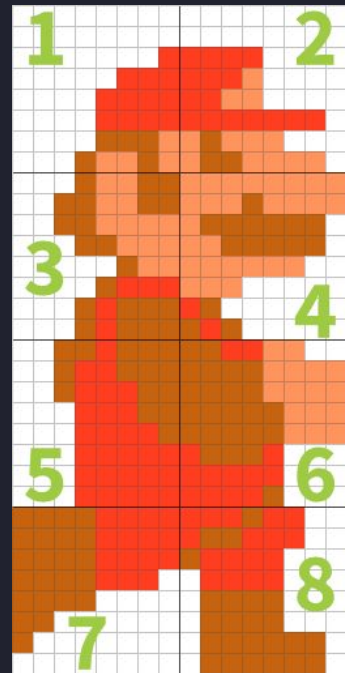
Ex: The NES



Sprites were made in
units of 8x8 grids...

Each grid can
ONLY contain 4
colors

(3 solids, 1
clear)



Color Theory

Color theory is the study of how colors work together and affect emotions

The color wheel, one of the most important maps for an artist



Good designers understand the basics of color theory!



Color Theory

Color theory is the study of how colors work together



Your *primary* colors,

RED

BLUE

YELLOW



Color Theory

Color theory is the study of how colors work together and affect emotions



Your **secondary** colors,

ORANGE

GREEN

PURPLE

(made by mixing 2 primaries!)



Color Theory

Color theory is the study of how colors work together and affect emotions



Your **tertiary** colors

(made by mixing one primary and one secondary)

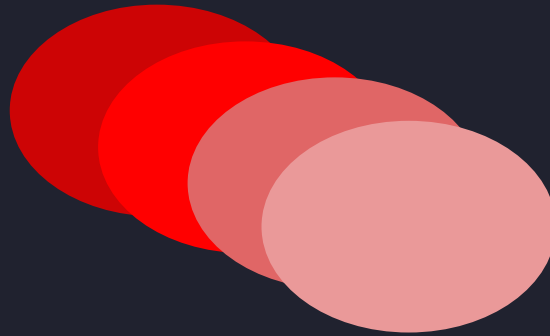


Color Theory

You want to use the relationship between these colors to create a *color harmony*



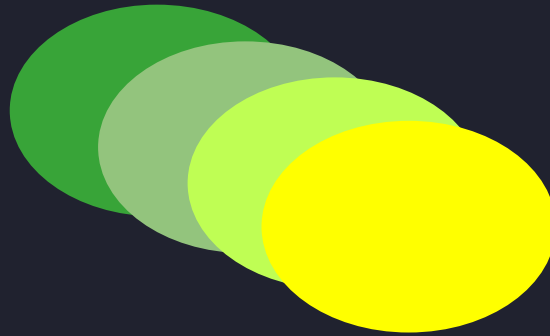
Monochromatic



Color Theory

You want to use the relationship between these colors to create a *color harmony*

Analogous

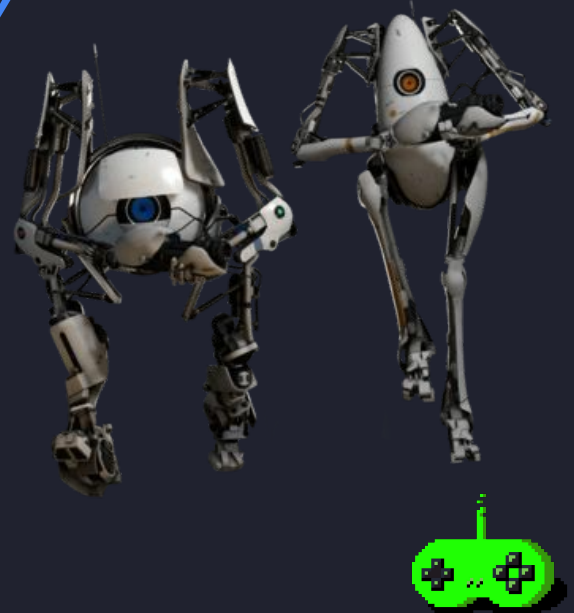


Color Theory

You want to use the relationship between these colors to create a *color harmony*



Complementary

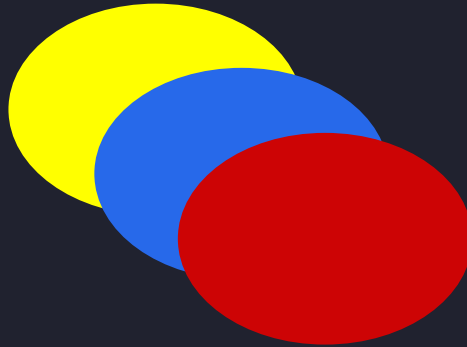


Color Theory

You want to use the relationship between these colors to create a *color harmony*



Triadic



Color Theory

Too many colors can create *color disharmony!*



Chaos!



????



Color Theory

You want to use the relationship between these colors to create a *color harmony*



Color Language/Symbolism

Using the symbolism of colors to give more story!



Passion, Danger, Power

Warmth, Freshness, Creativity

Caution, Energy, Happiness

Nature, Illness, Wealth

Depth, Sadness, Calm

Royalty, Wisdom, Mystery



Color Language/Symbolism

Classic Film Example:



Color Language/Symbolism

Classic Film Example:



A New Hope

Brooding,
greedy,
selfish,
rough exterior,
heart of gold

Symbolized via...

His dark
vest over
his white
shirt



Color Language/Symbolism

Classic Film Example:



Empire Strikes Back

Loyal,
selfless,
dedicated,
kind exterior,
heart of gold

Symbolized via...

Only having his
pure white
shirt at his
most vulnerable
moment



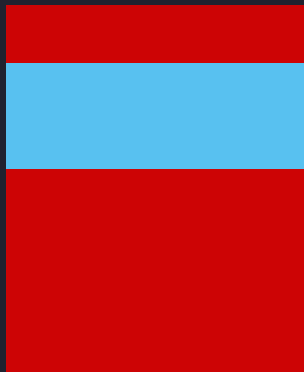
Good Design has Recognizable Colors

You should be able to take your character, turn them into blocks of colors, and still recognize them!



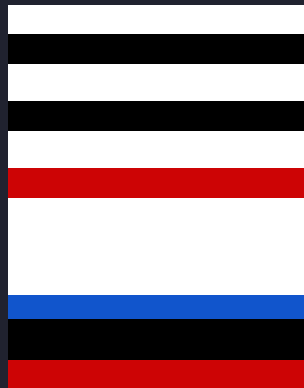
Good Design has Recognizable Colors

You should be able to take your character, turn them into blocks of colors, and still recognize them!



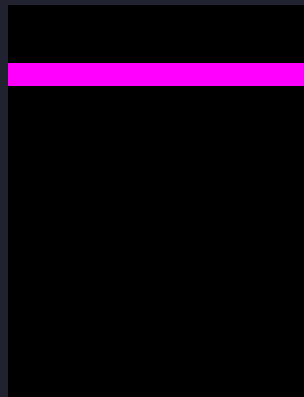
Good Design has Recognizable Colors

You should be able to take your character, turn them into blocks of colors, and still recognize them!



Good Design has Recognizable Colors

You should be able to take your character, turn them into blocks of colors, and still recognize them!



Palette Summary

Good color palettes will...

*Employ a **color hierarchy***

*Use basics of **color harmony***

*Use color to **tell story***



ACTIVITY PART 2:

Use the rules of color to pigment your character!

- 1) Clear color hierarchy*
- 2) Use of theory*
- 3) Use of symbolism*

eXX-aJ-ERr-aSHUN
(*exaggeration*)



Exaggeration

Good design means a **clear exaggeration**

A **clear exaggeration**...

- expands on simple **core concepts**
- uses **poses** to signify character



Core Concepts...

What the core concepts are differ from thing to thing, but a core concept will...

EVOKE EMOTIONAL REACTION



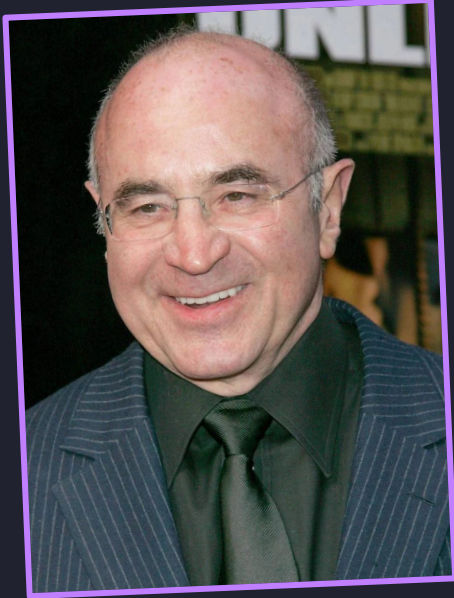
Core Concepts...



A good designer...
is a good observer



Core Concepts...



Core Concepts...



Big nose?

**BIGGER and
ROUNDER**

Fancy mustache?

**BIGGER and
FANCIER**

Portly Stature?

MORE PORTLY



Core Concepts...



Big nose? WHY?

More friendly!

Fancy mustache? WHY?

More identifiable!

Portly Stature? WHY?

More jovial!



Core Concepts...



Angled nose?

MORE ANGEL

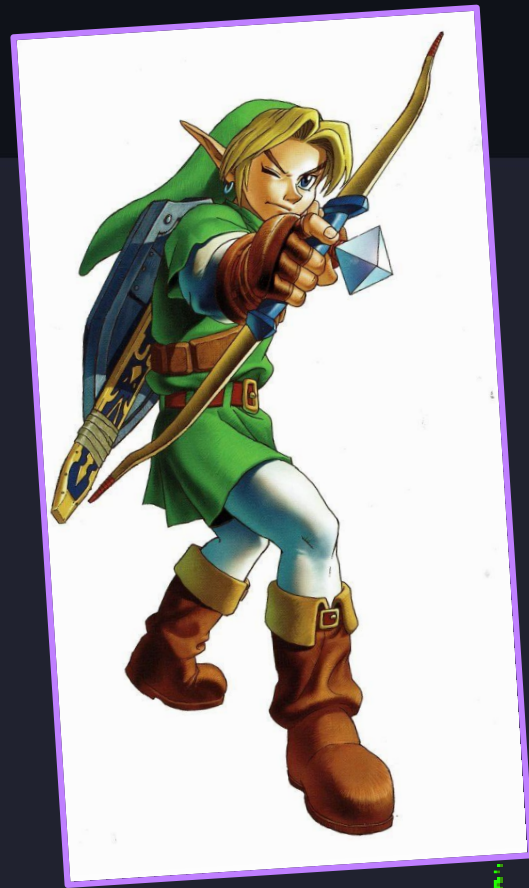
Wistful blonde?

MORE BLONDE,

MORE WIND

Athletic Frame?

MORE ATHLETIC



Core Concepts...



Angled nose? WHY?

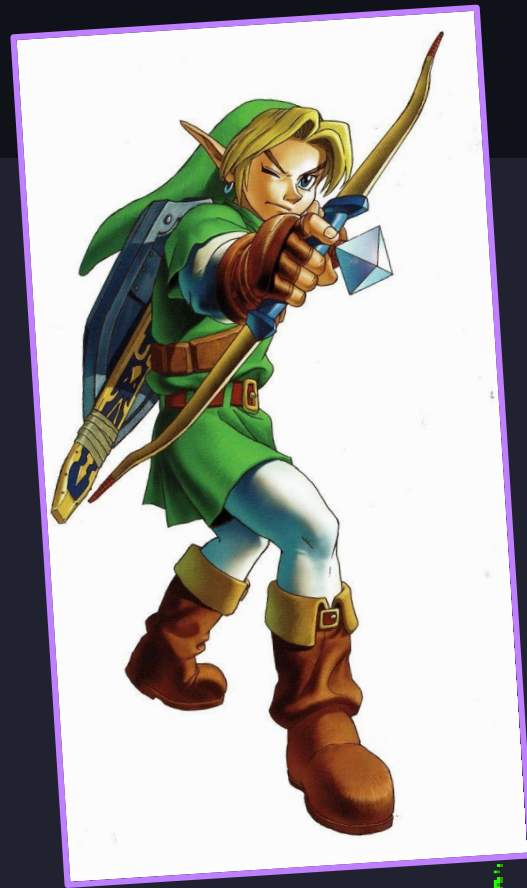
More heroic!

Wistful blonde? WHY?

More youthful!

Athletic Frame? WHY?

More immersion!



Core Concepts...



Chiseled face?

MORE CHISEL

Long braided hair?

LONGER

MORE BRAID

Muscular Stature?

MORE MUSCLE

MORE CAPE



Core Concepts...



Chiseled face? WHY?

More grown!

Long braided hair?

WHY?

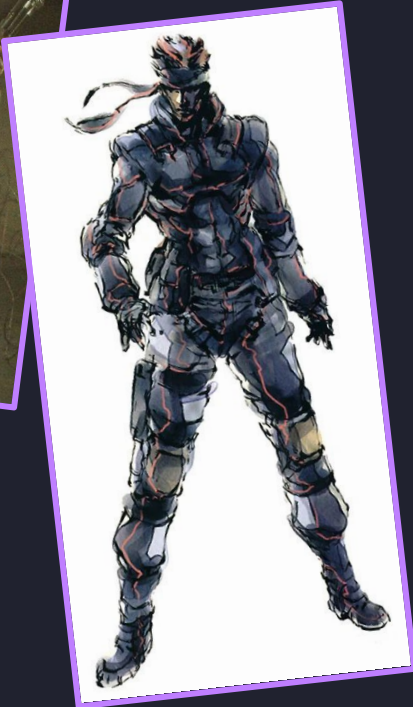
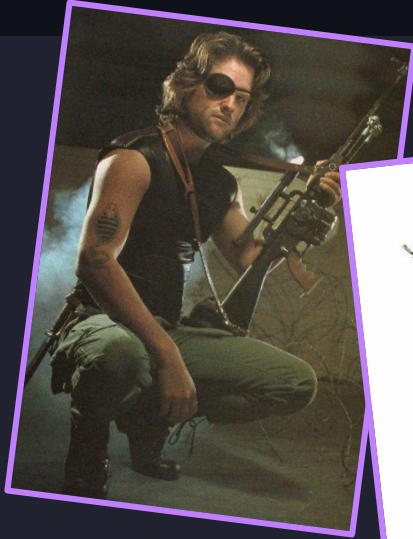
More powerful!

Muscular Stature? WHY?

More dangerous!



Core Concepts...



Core Concepts...



Core Concepts...



Poses!

*Good designs have **clear poses** that enhance a character's personality and function!*



*Good but very
stationary...*



*Ready for
action!*



Poses!

Think of a **keyword** that ties to your character's **gameplay**, and show it through **pose**!

"Sword Fight"

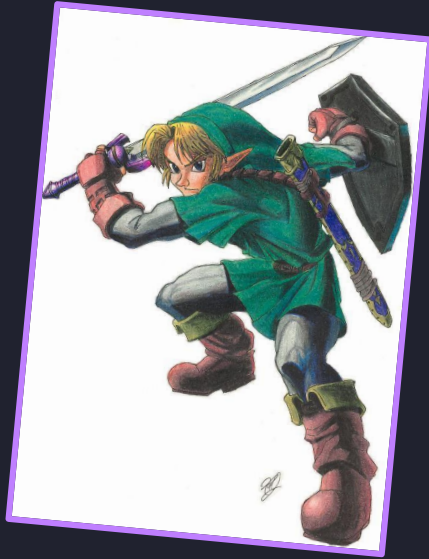


"Running"



Poses!

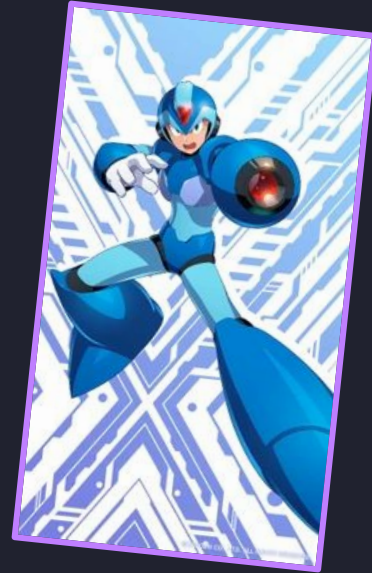
Ask yourself, what does this character do? Show it through pose!



"Swordsman"



"Martial Artist"



"Gunner"



Poses!

Ask yourself, how does this character **feel**? Show it through pose!



"Timid"



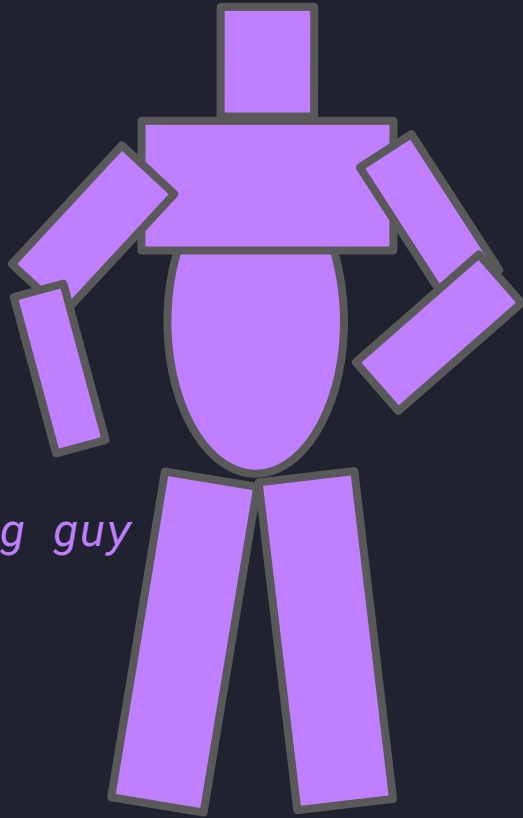
"Dramatic"



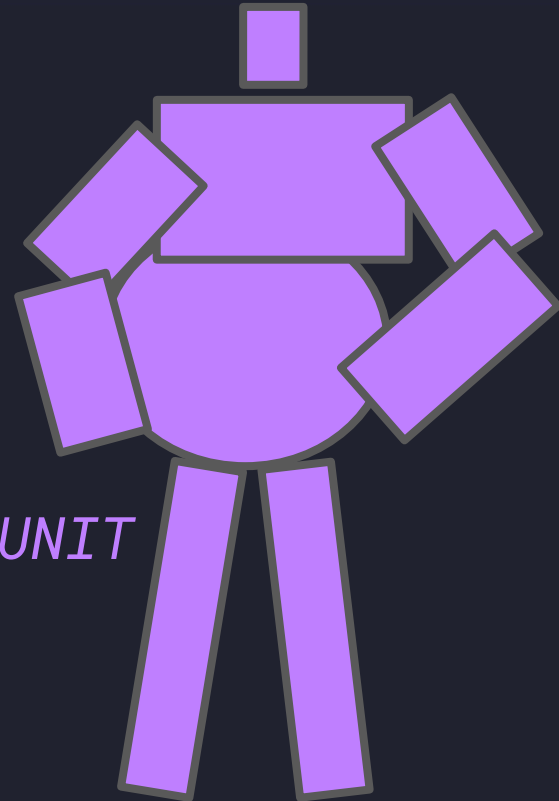
"Energetic"



Pro Tip: Exaggerate shapes to help!



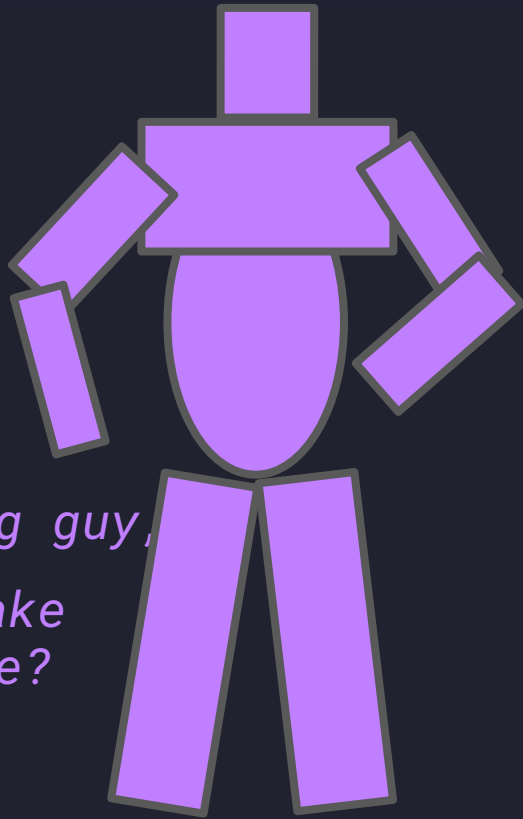
Normal big guy



A MEGA UNIT



Pro Tip: Exaggerate shapes to help!



*Divide into 3
parts:*

HEAD

TORSO

LEGS

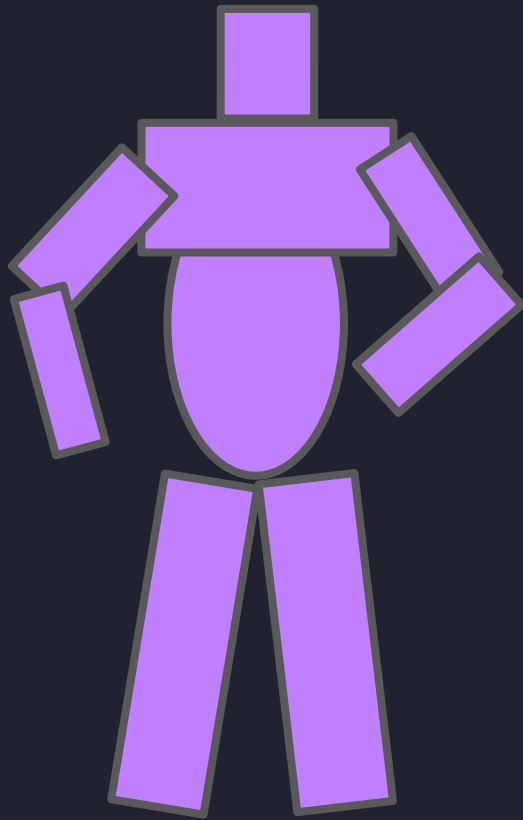
Normal big guy,

*How make
unique?*

*Exaggerate
each part...*



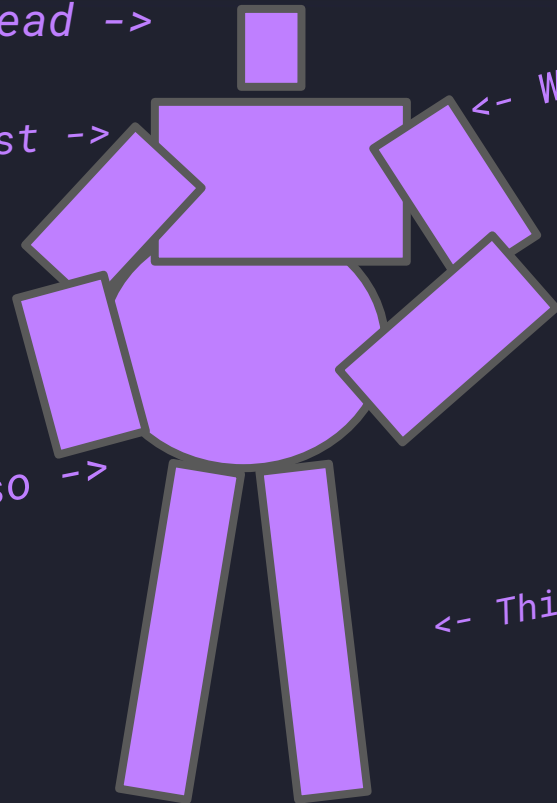
Pro Tip: Exaggerate shapes to help!



Smaller Head ->

Bigger chest ->

BIG torso ->

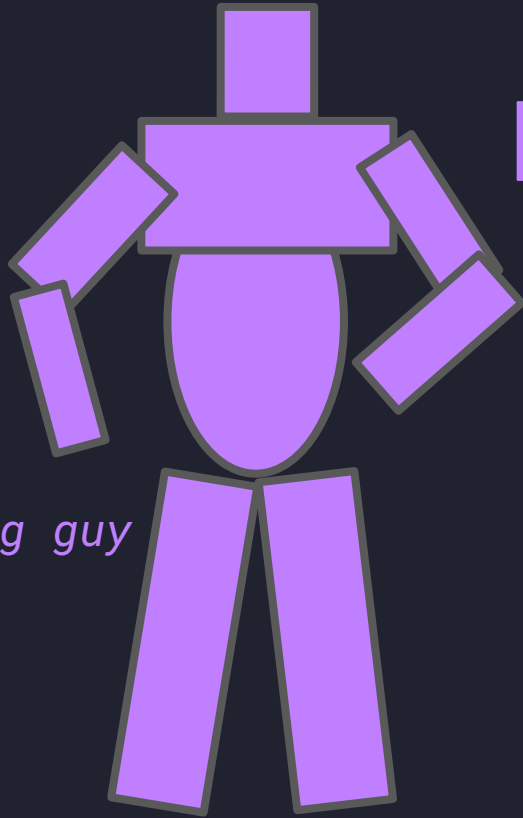


<- Wider arms

<- Thinner legs



Pro Tip: Exaggerate shapes to help!



Normal big guy



A MEGA UNIT



The background is a comic book panel. On the left, a character in a yellow suit is shown from the chest up, with their head tilted back and mouth open as if shouting or exerting effort. On the right, a character in a blue suit with a grey cape is shown from the waist down, in a dynamic pose as if running or jumping. The background features large, stylized blue Japanese characters and yellow motion lines.

ACTIVITY PART 3:

Use the rules of exaggeration to continue your character design!

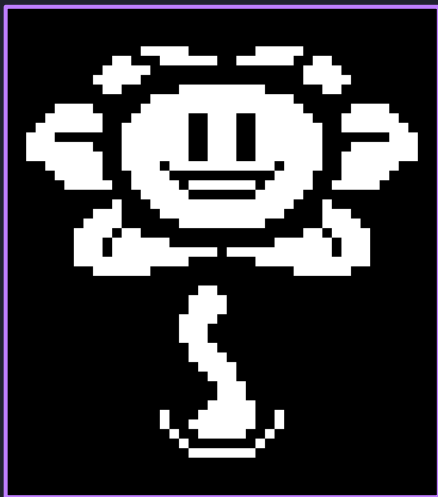
- 1) Exaggerate core features*
- 2) Use real-life inspiration*
- 3) Use a telling pose!*

Final Tips



*Think in terms of the **WHOLE** game!*

Good design is **cohesive** with the rest of the game's style, exceptions should be rare and purposeful



You

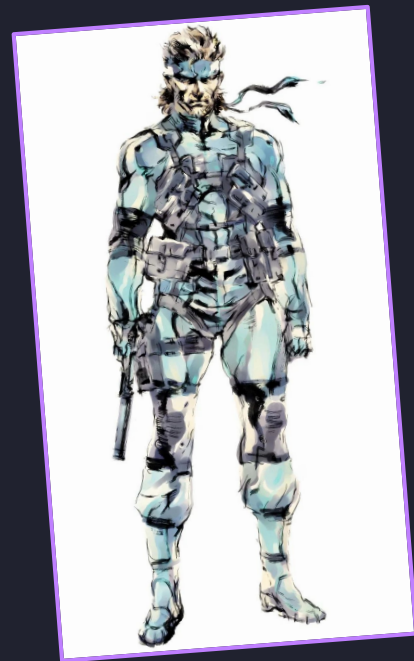


*The guy she says
to not worry about*



Think in terms of the *WHOLE* game!

Super Smash Bros is the BEST example of this

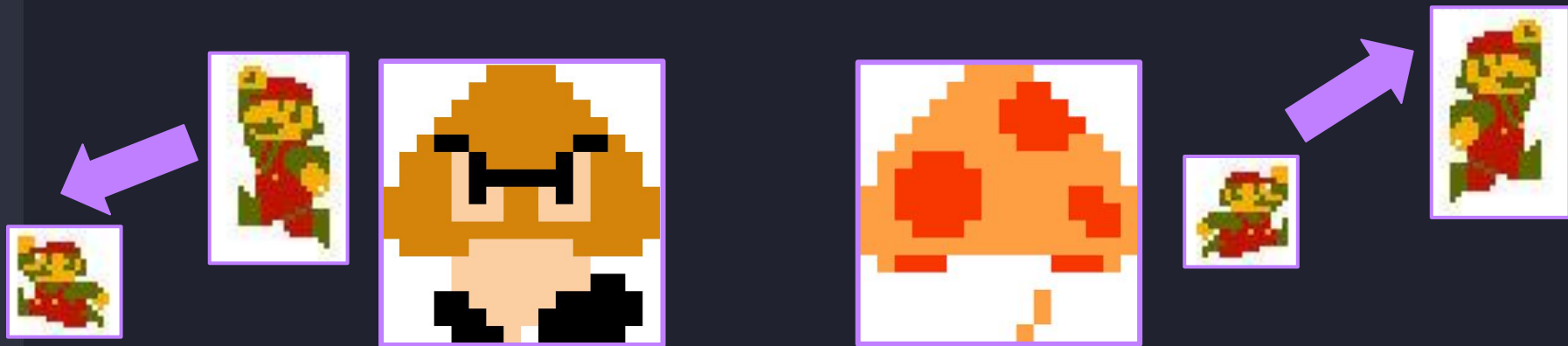


Think in terms of the WHOLE game!



Think in terms of the WHOLE game!

Good design tells a *clear story and function*

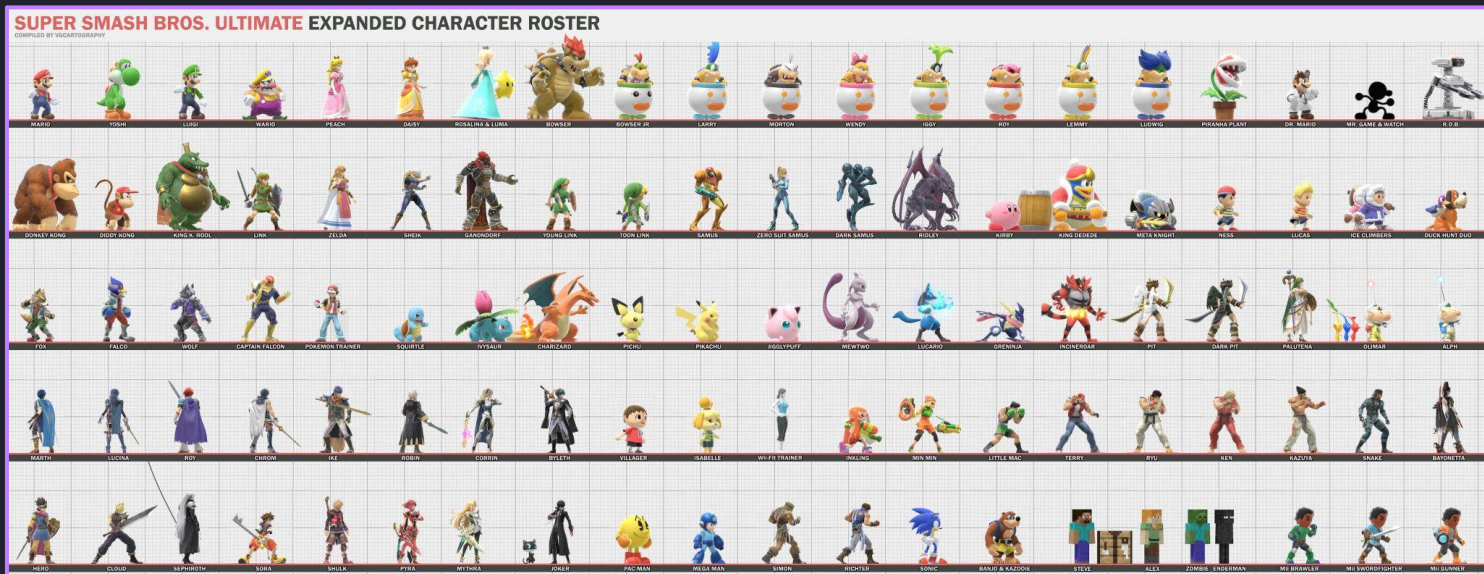


Goomba is supposed to be the opposite of the super mushroom!



Think in terms of the *WHOLE* game!

Have variety in lineups (shapes and heights)! Super Smash Bros is another fantastic example of this



Summary



What makes **Good** Character Design?

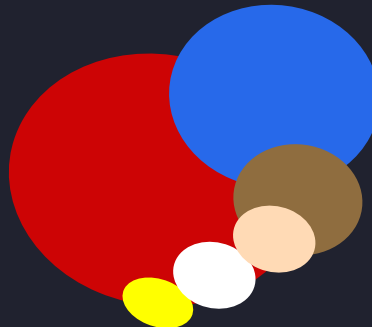
A recognizable **silhouette** that...

- uses a **shape language motif**
- contains 1-2 **unique shapes**



A simple **color palette** that...

- uses a **color hierarchy**
- uses **color theory** to create **harmony**
- showcases a **clear theme** using **color language**



A clear **exaggeration**...

- expands on simple **core concepts**
- uses **poses** to signify character



*What makes **Good** Character Design?*

*Limiting yourself to few shapes, colors,
exaggerations/inspirations*



*What makes **Good** Character Design?*

When the design can visually tell you who that character is



ACTIVITY PART 4:

Finalize your design as much as you can, showcase to others!



Citations

nesdev.org/wiki/Limitations (Art Limitations in Older Games)

waltdisney.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/T%26T_ShapeLang_v9.pdf (Shape Language)

colormatters.com/color-and-design/basic-color-theory (Color Wheel)

interaction-design.org/literature/topics/color-theory (Color Theory)

interaction-design.org/literature/topics/color-symbolism (Color Symbolism)

youtube.com/watch?v=PDjdquhVHU4&list=PLqKCjZ2WsVLS04Zq-JuJzGvhTe10qRSZ5 (Sakurai on Poses and Silhouettes)

youtube.com/watch?v=A6Rbb5sK4nI&list=PLqKCjZ2WsVLS04Zq-JuJzGvhTe10qRSZ5&index=16 (Sakurai on Scale)

youtube.com/watch?v=8wm9ti-qzLM (Good v Bad Character Design)

youtube.com/watch?v=3VQl0scK5HM (Quick Guide to Character Design)

youtube.com/watch?v=euTe191sAWg (Using Inspirations for Design)

youtube.com/watch?v=Bgni0UnuuGo (Quick Guide to Character Design 2)

youtube.com/watch?v=z0Hr2_uX73o (Character Design in Delicious Dungeon's Storytelling)

