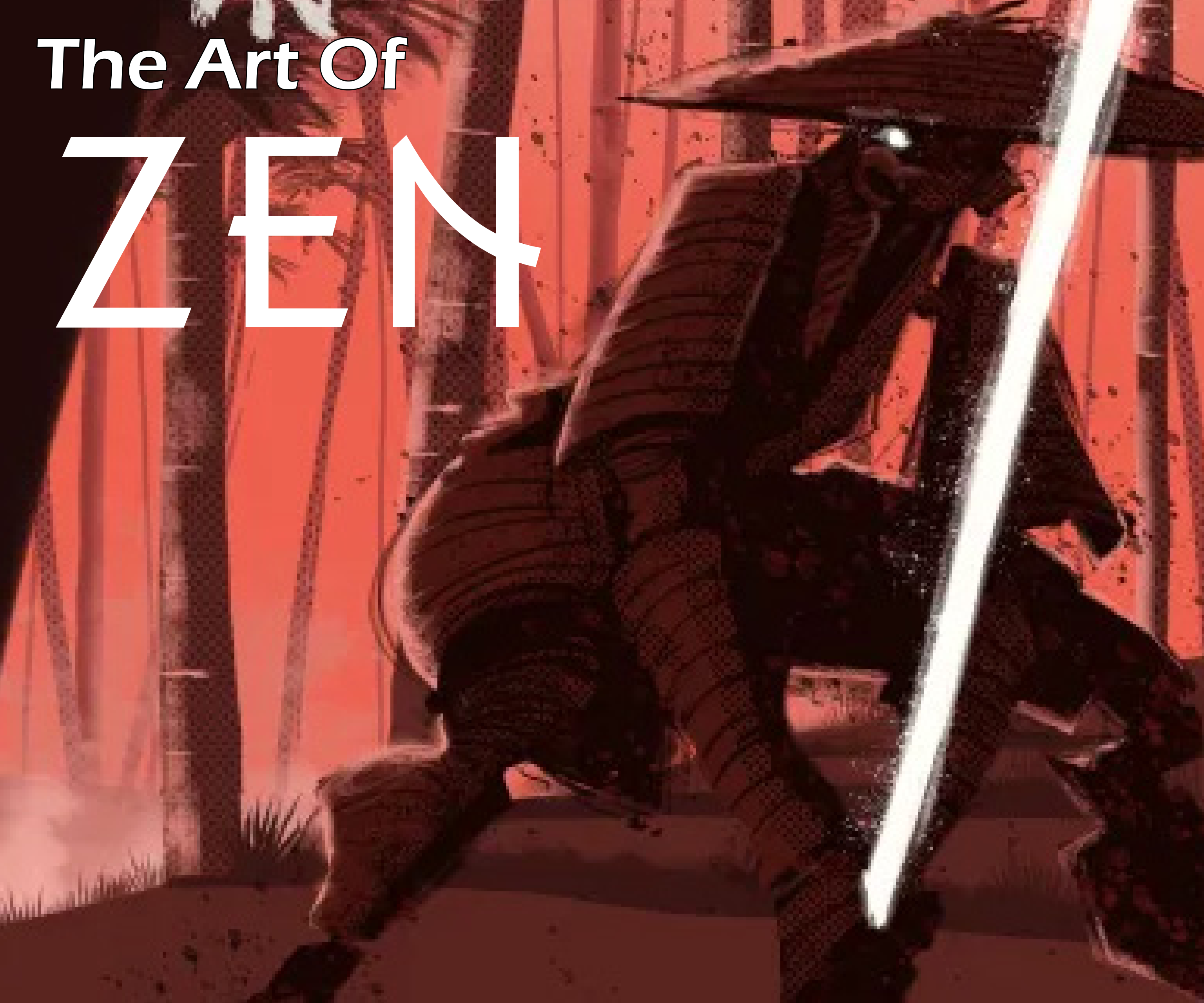


The Art Of

ZEN



The Art of Zen

Seth Erwin

Story Lead, Animation Lead

Jaiden Williams

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

Mary Chen

Co-Project Manager, Surfacing Lead, Look Dev Lead

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Co-Project Manager, Character Modeling Lead, Composition Lead, Rendering Lead

Angel Le

Environment Modeling Lead

Abigail Dunker

Lighting Lead

Jon Sullivan

Sound Lead



Made by: Mabel

ZEN SHORT STORYBOARD 2023

Character

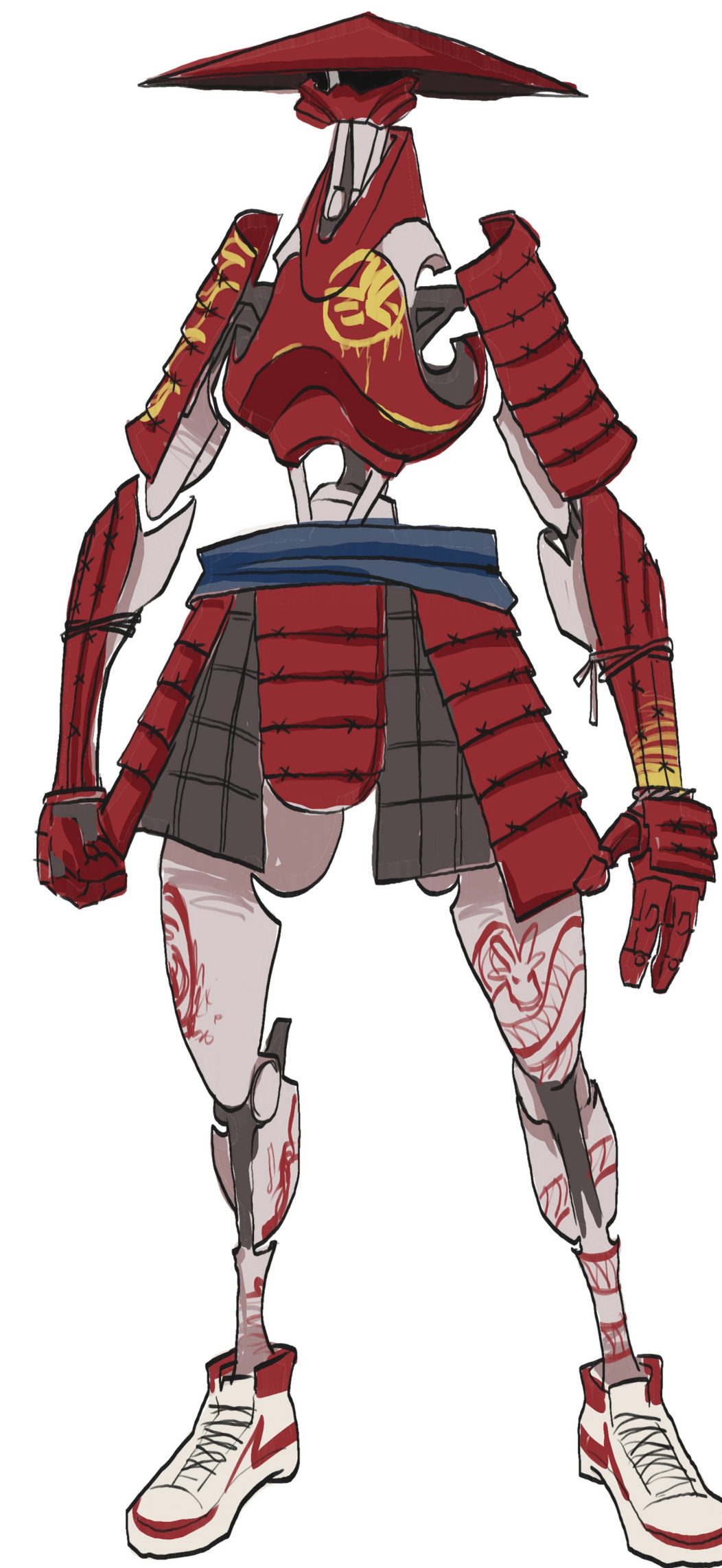
Sam The Samurai

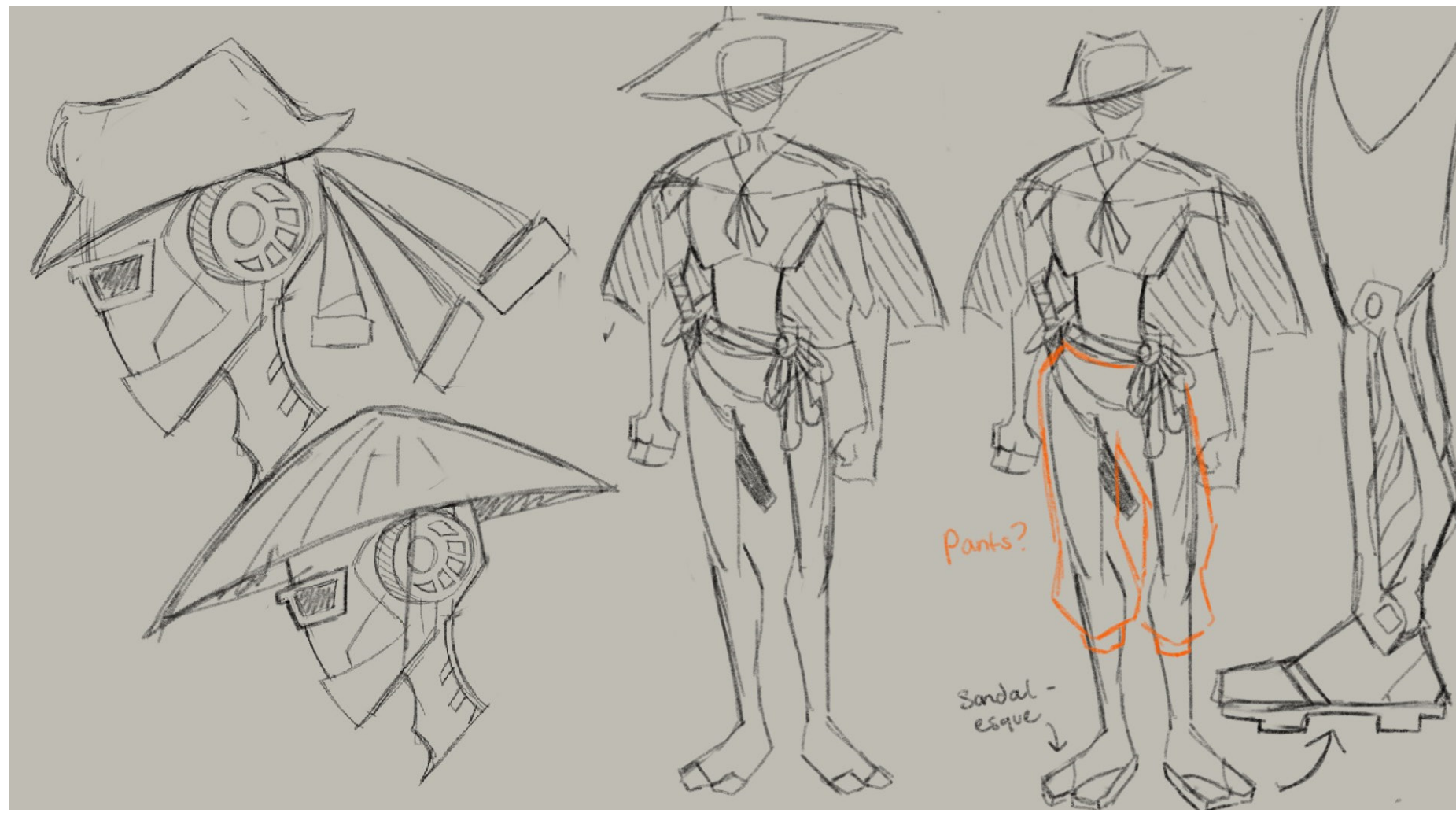
Our main character is a mecha samurai that frequently visits a quiet bamboo forest to jam out and slice bamboo.

His design is inspired by the graffiti and clothing of both traditional Edo-period samurai and 90' s Hip-Hop culture.

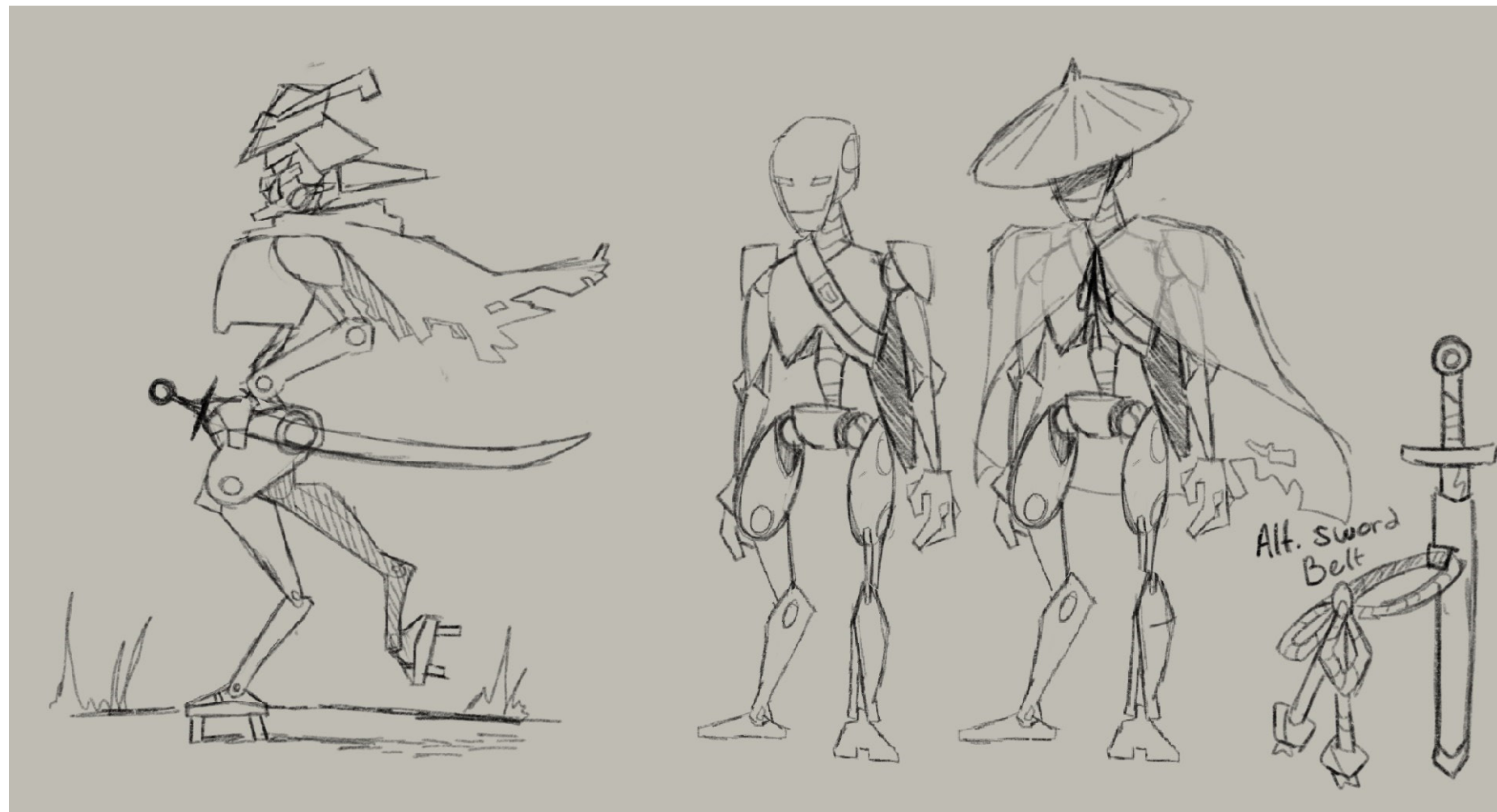
Sam is a youthful, energetic robot that frequently retreats to a bamboo forest to practice his routines alongside Japanese Hip-Hop fusion music. Sam adorned his metal with spray paint and tattoos inspired by Japanese clans and motifs, and his sneakers have dragon decals along the side.

Made by: Seth





Made by: Mabel



First Samurai Concepts

Sam's first designs toyed with the ideas of quadrupedal 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.

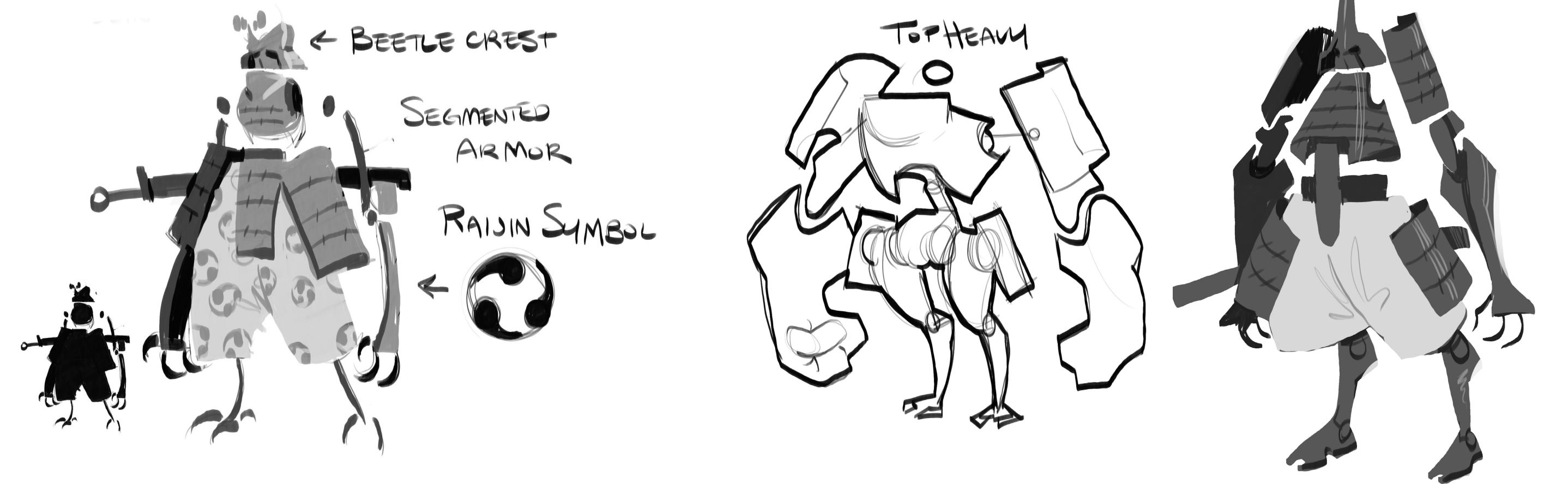
First Samurai Concepts

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

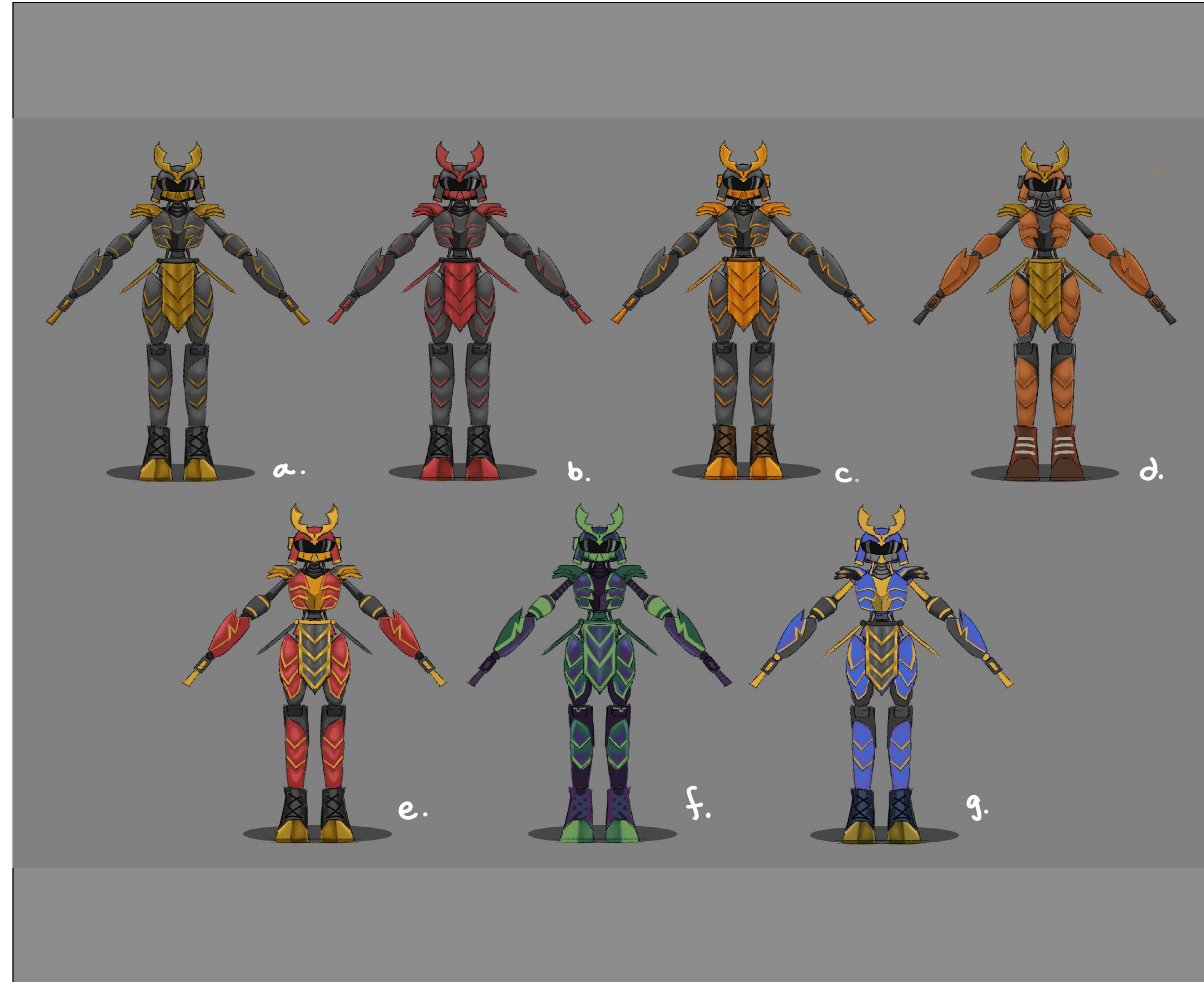


First Samurai Concepts

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



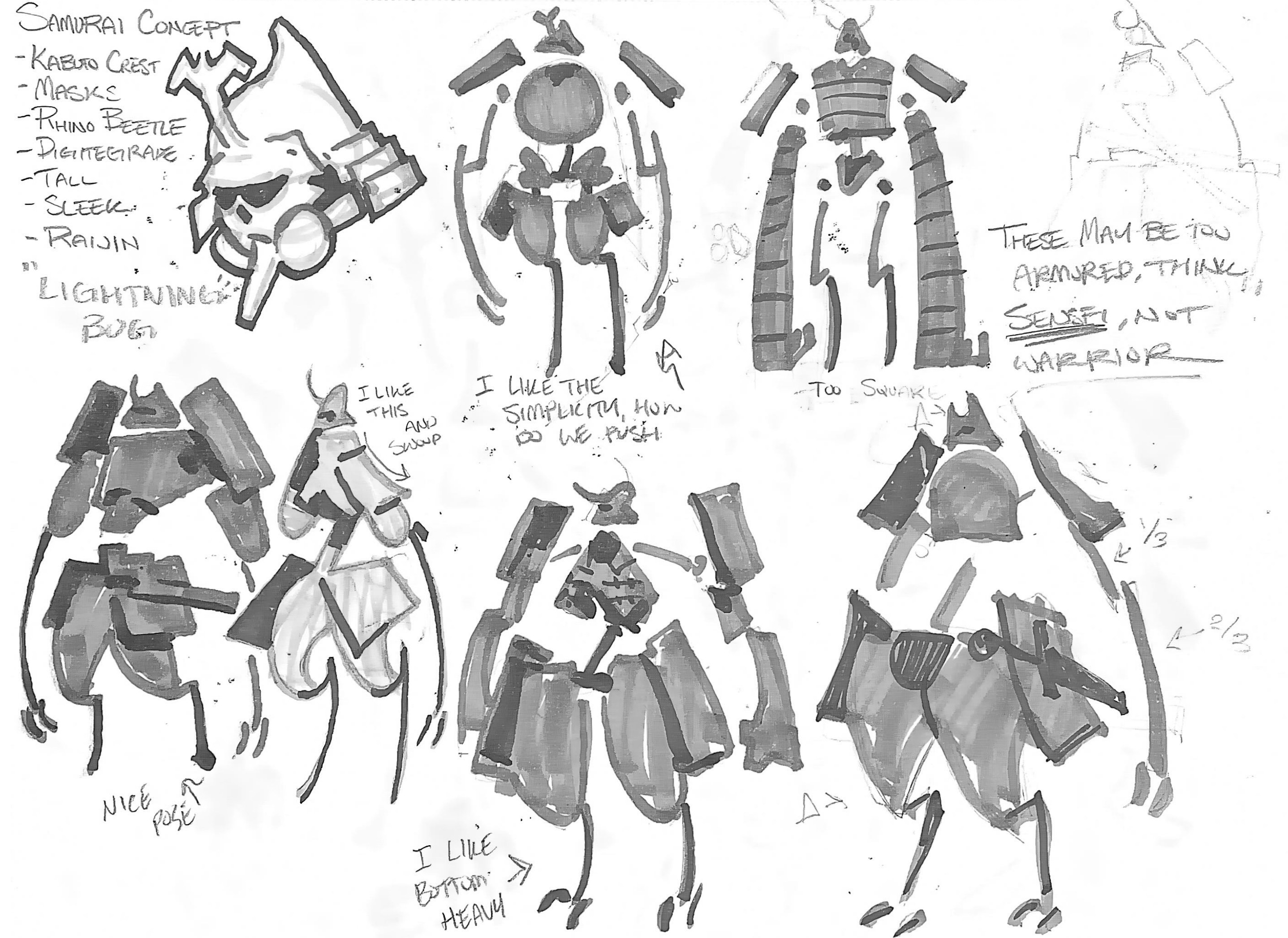
Samurai No Ret Silhouettes



SAMURAI CONCEPT

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

"LIGHTNING"
BUGI



ARMOR = RED
BASE = YELLOW
SPINE = BLACK



SPINAL COLUMN IS INFLATED DEEPEST, THEN BASE FRAME, THAN ARMOR.

THESE BUMPS RISE FROM SPINE

CHORD ATTACHES FROM BACK TO SPINAL TUBING

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 his chest.



Made by: Seth

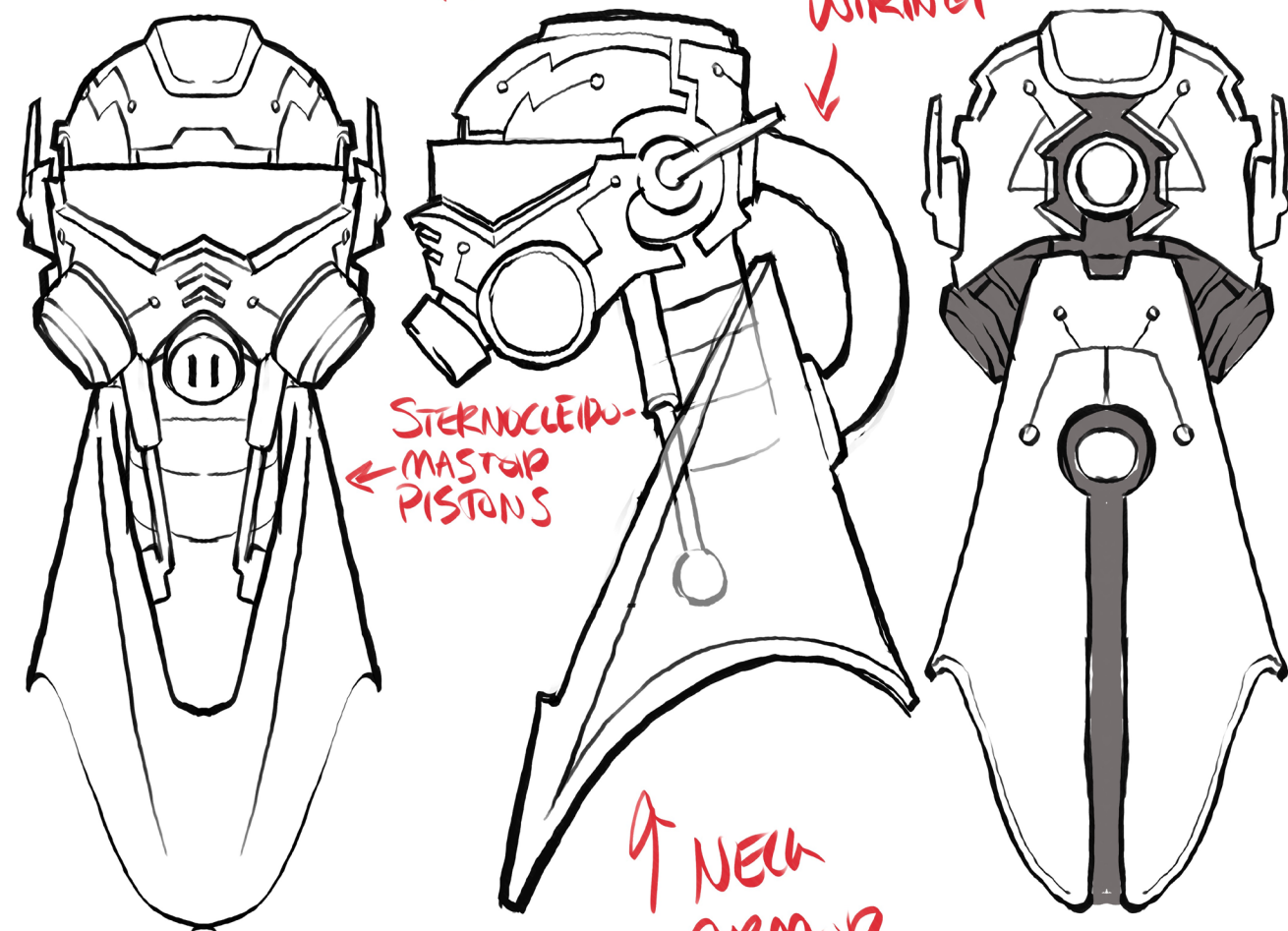
SO NO HEAD?

NODE-LIKE PANEL LINES

WIRING

STERNOCLEIDOMASTOID PISTONS

NEW ARMOR



TORSO

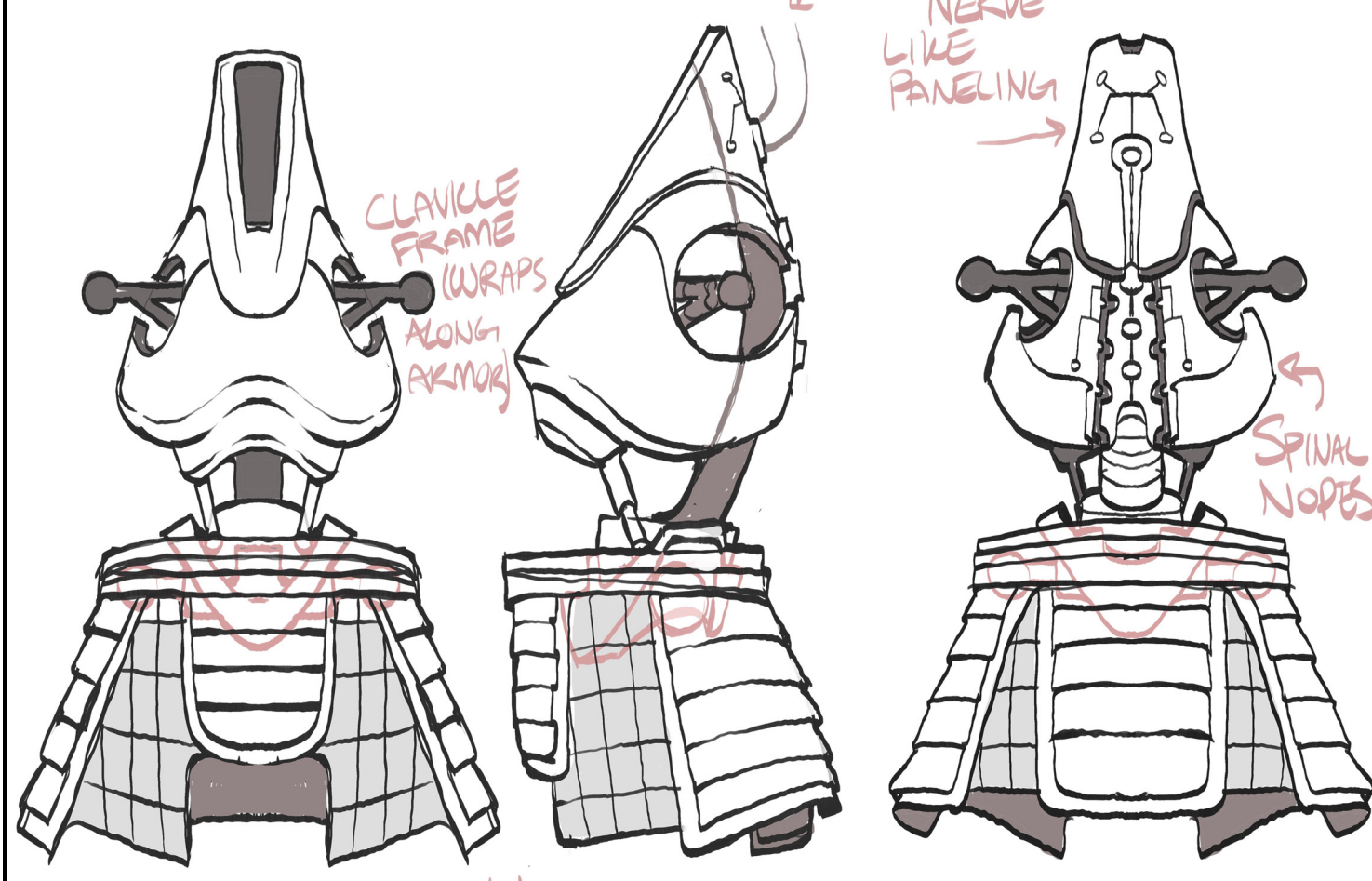
SPINE HEAD CONNECTION

NERVE LIKE PANELING

CLAVICLE FRAME (WRAPS ALONG ARMOR)

SPINAL NODES

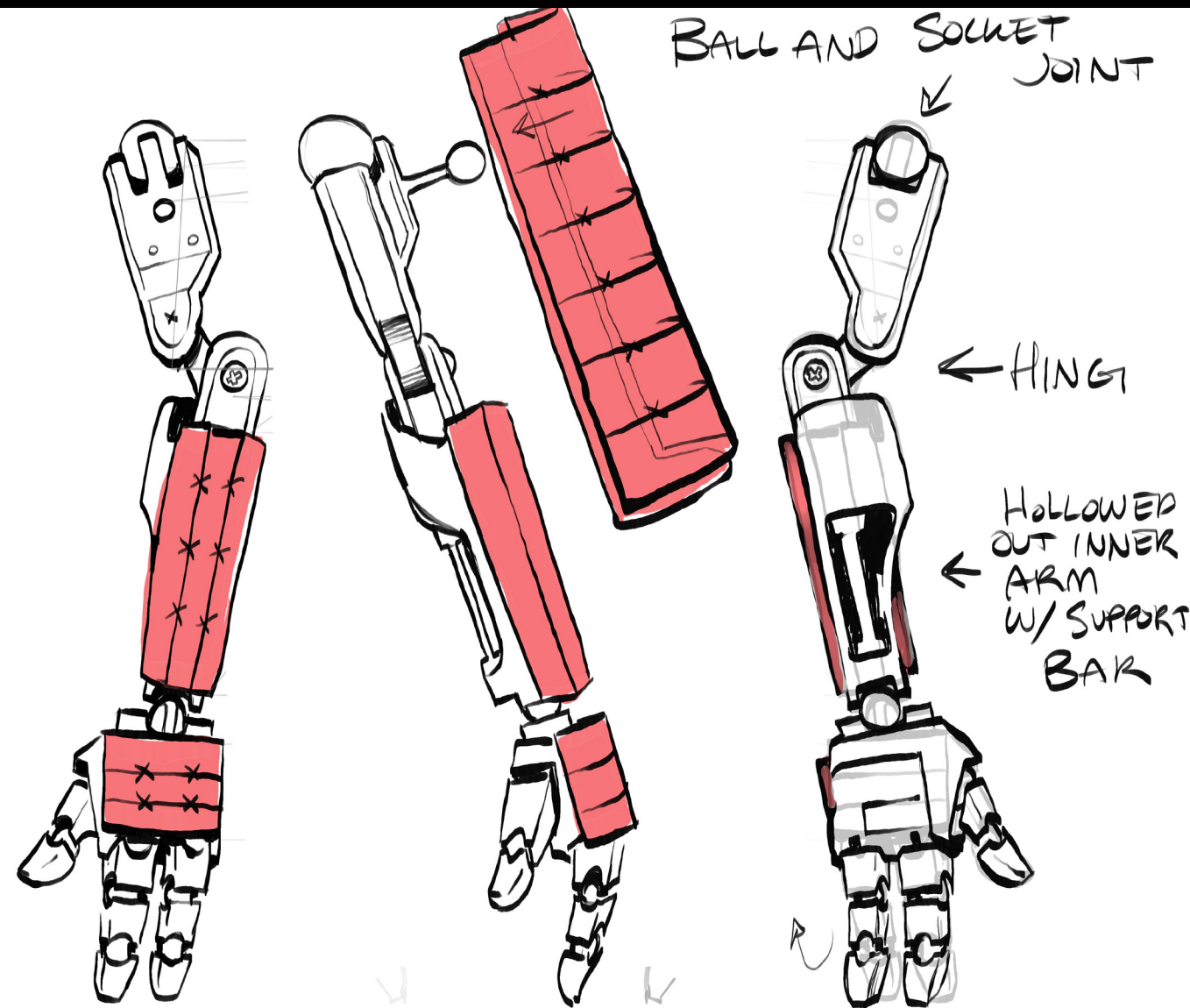
WE CAN JUST CHEAT AND



BALL AND SOCKET JOINT

HINGE

HOLLOWED OUT INNER ARM W/ SUPPORT BAR



SOCKET FOR BALL & SOCKET JOINT

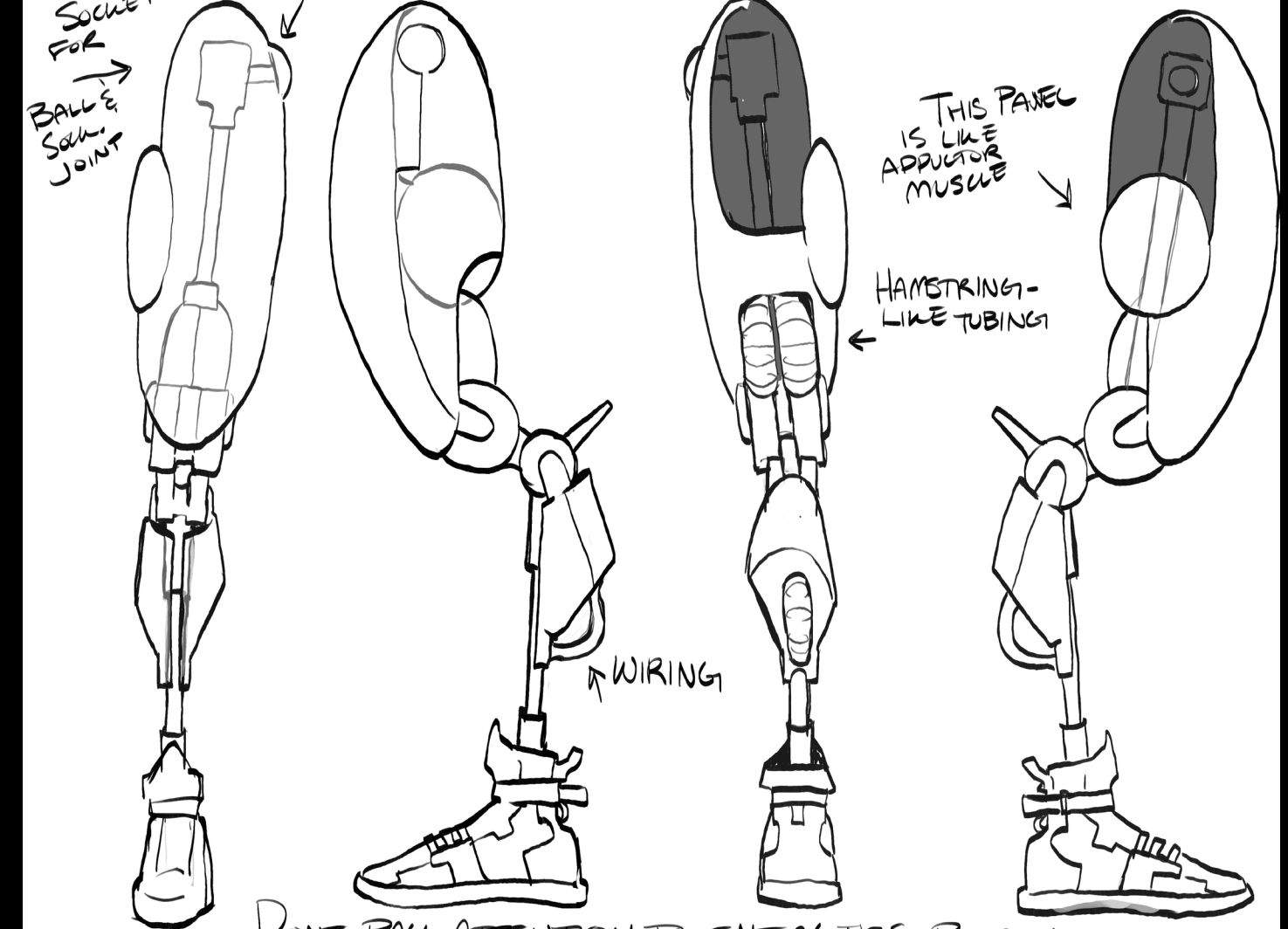
HUBCAP

THIS PANEL IS LIKE ADDUCTOR MUSCLE

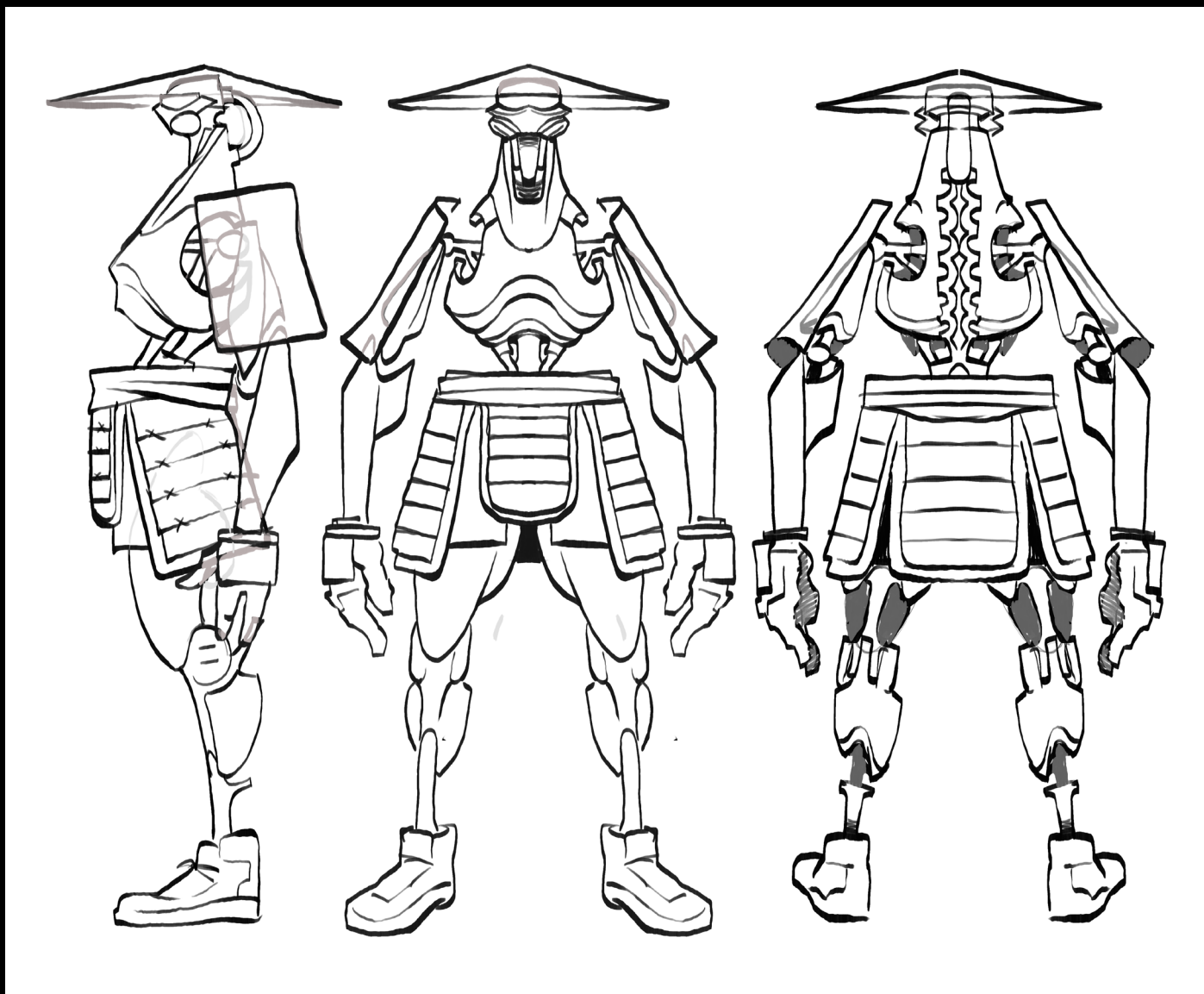
HAMSTRING-LIKE TUBING

WIRING

DONT PAY ATTENTION TO SNEAKERS, ROUGH STAGE OF CONCEPT



Made by: Seth



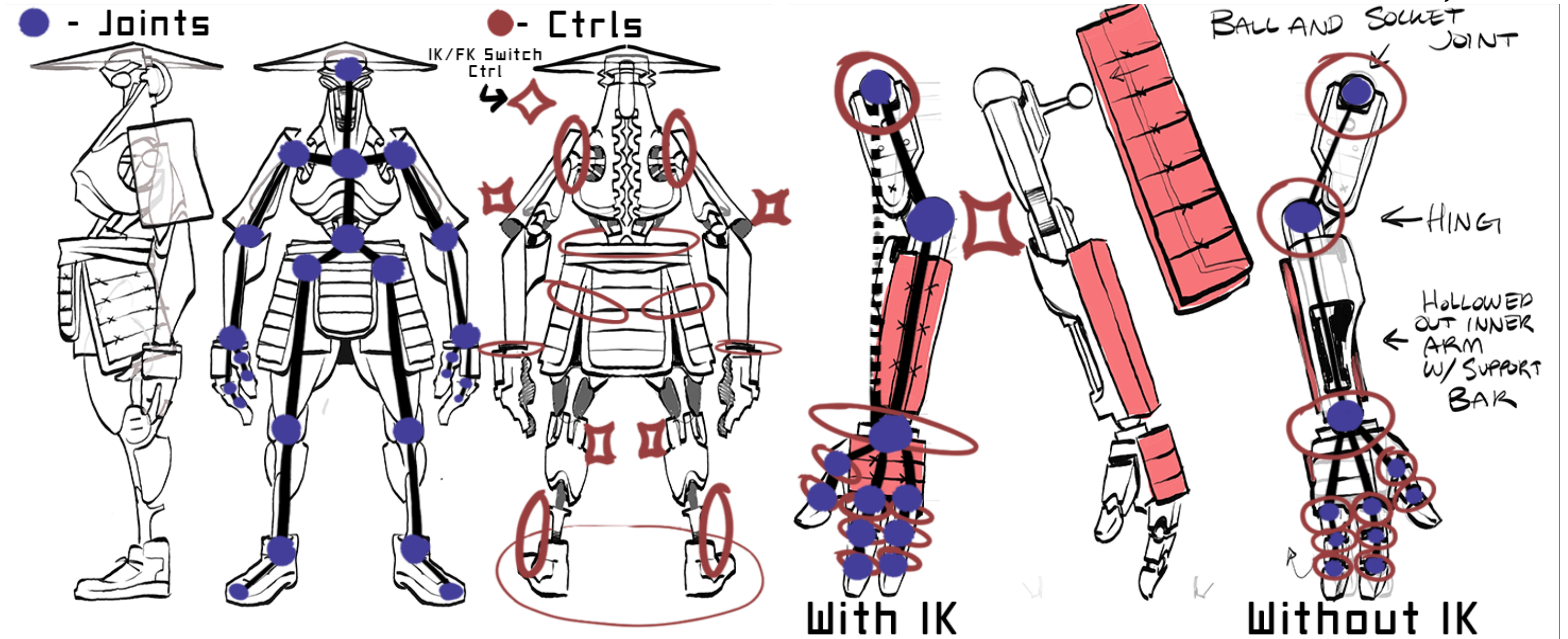
Made by: Seth

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.

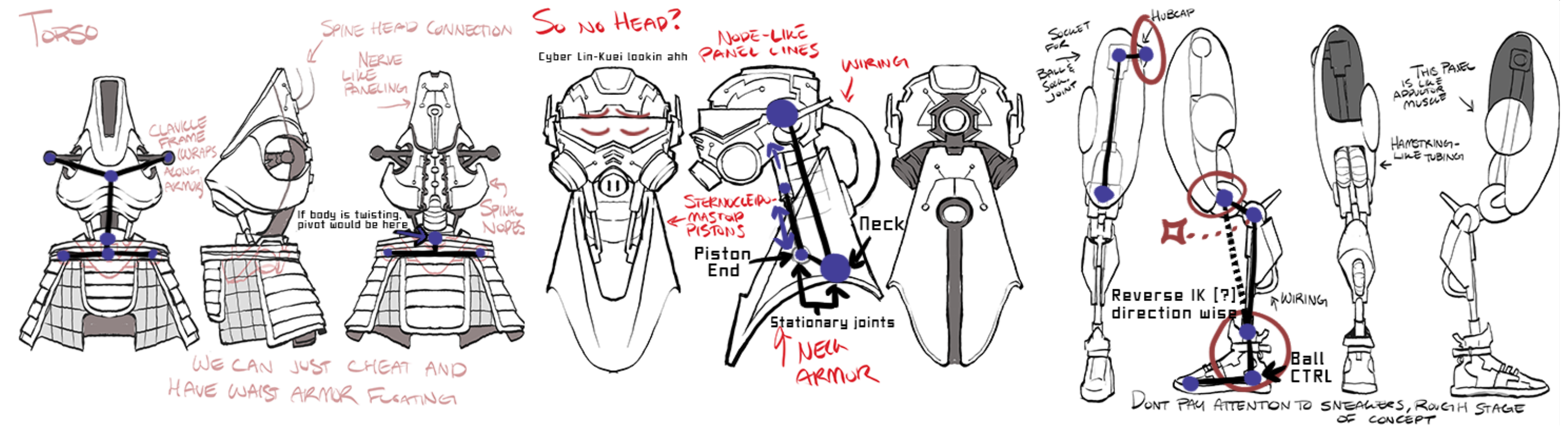
Samurai Rigging Annotation

Below is Sam's diagram for rigging.



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.



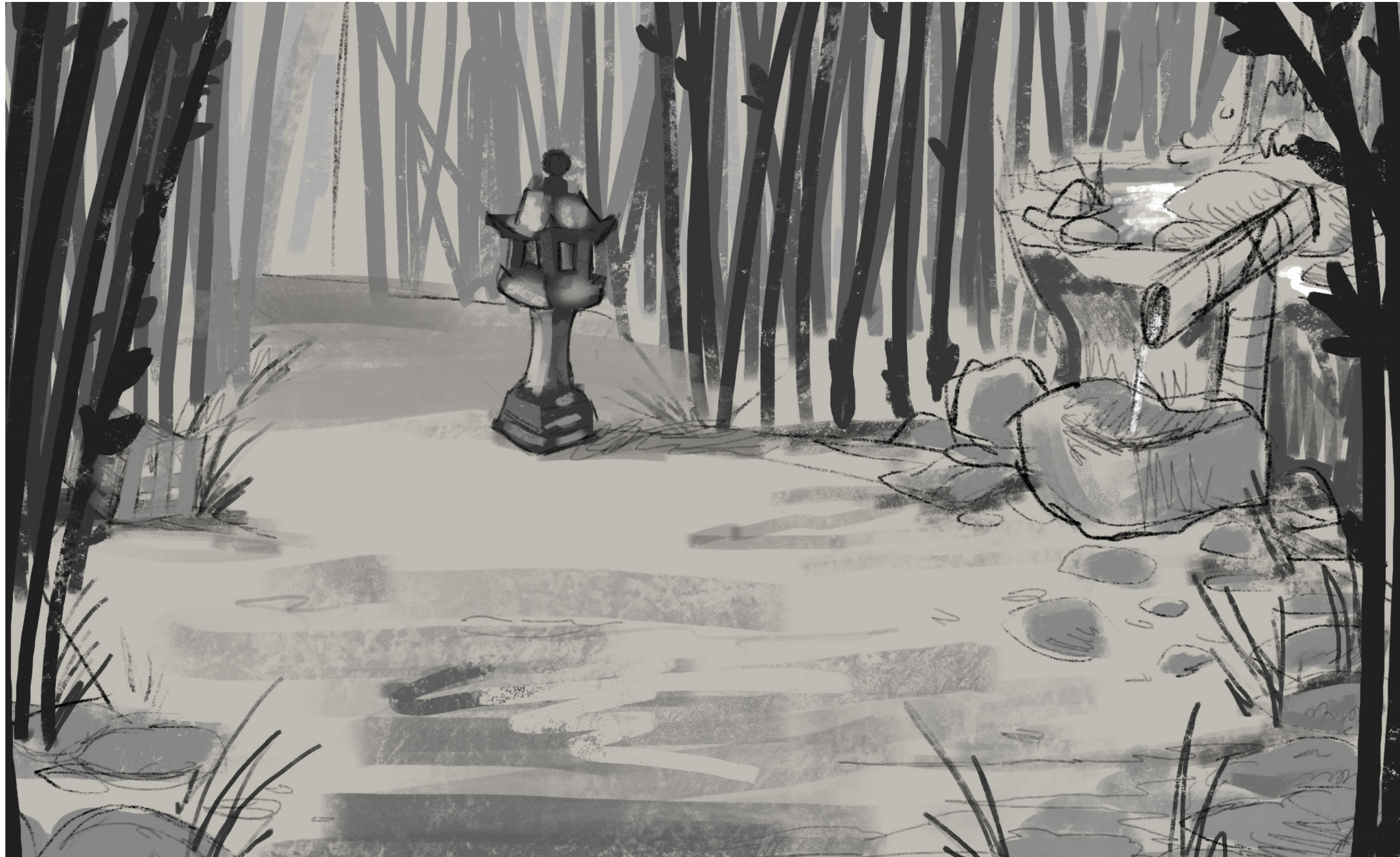
Environment



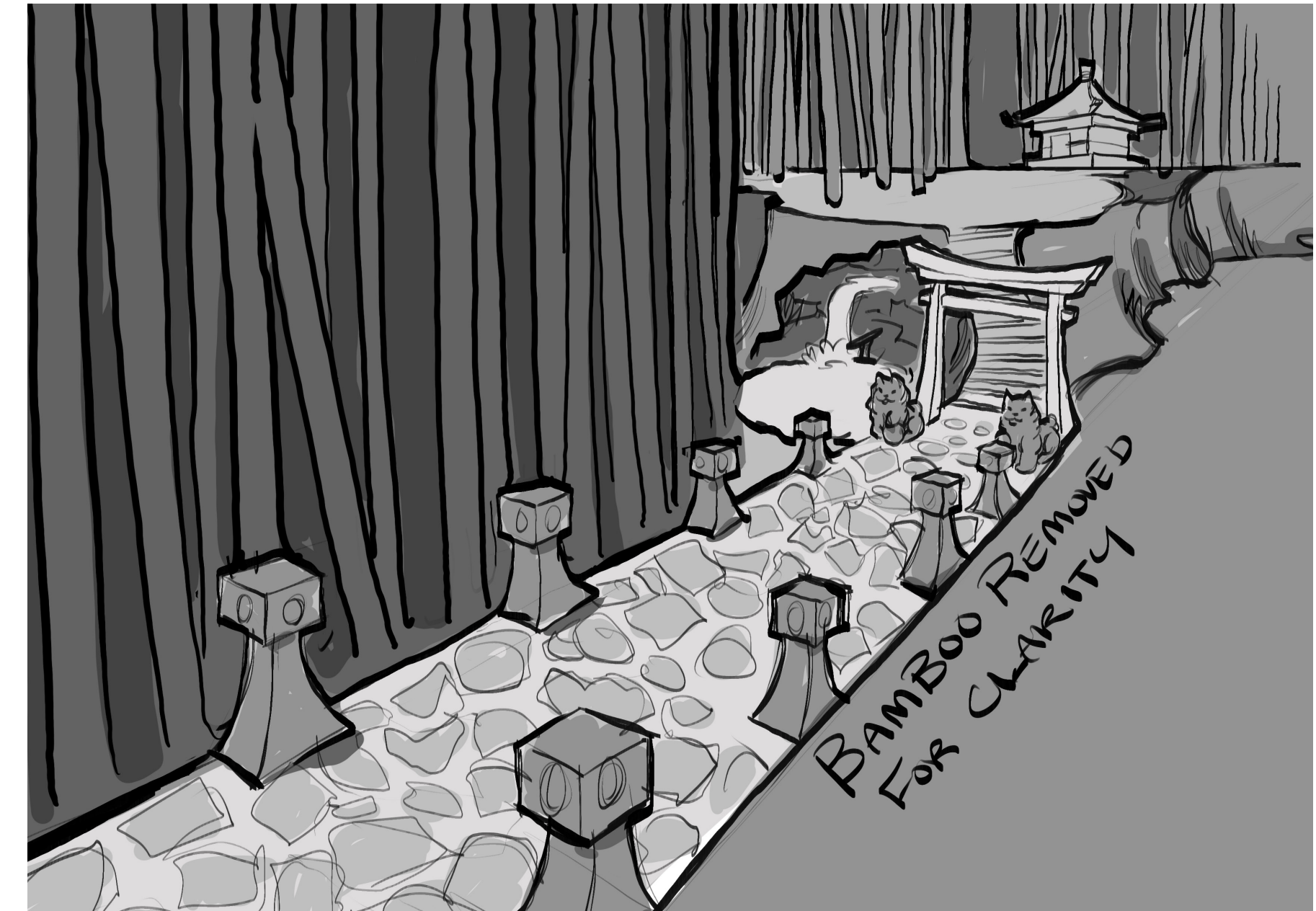
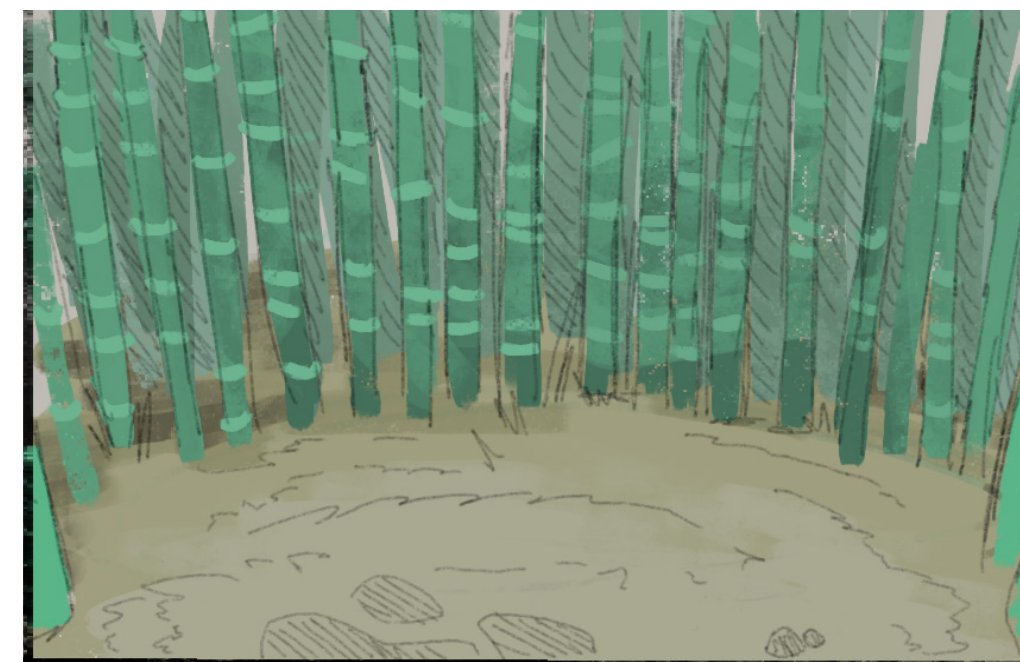
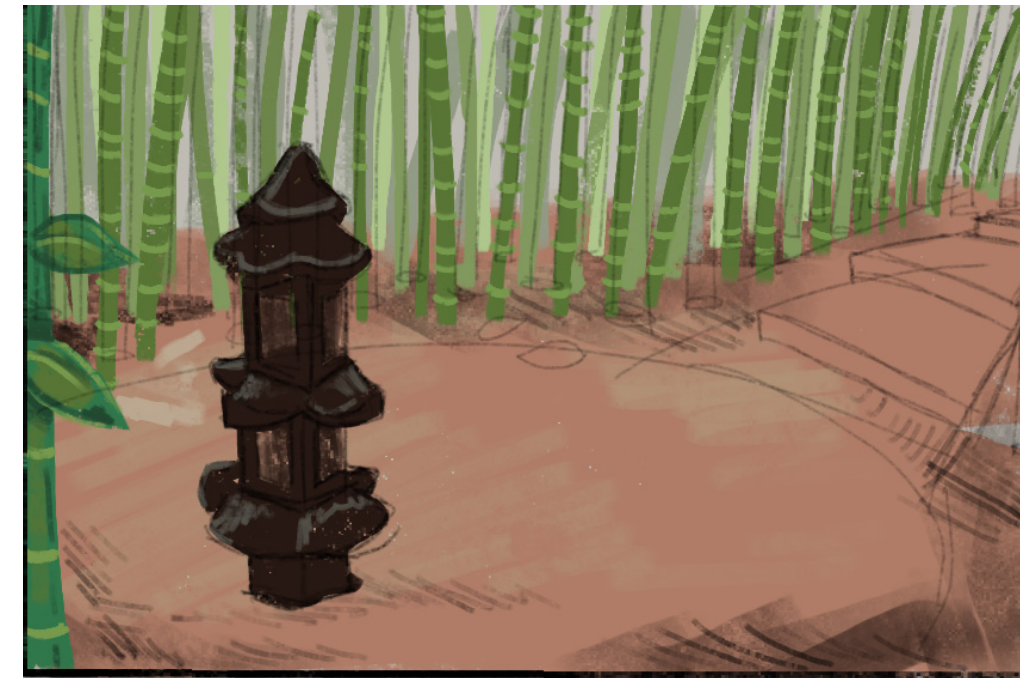
Environment Art

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.

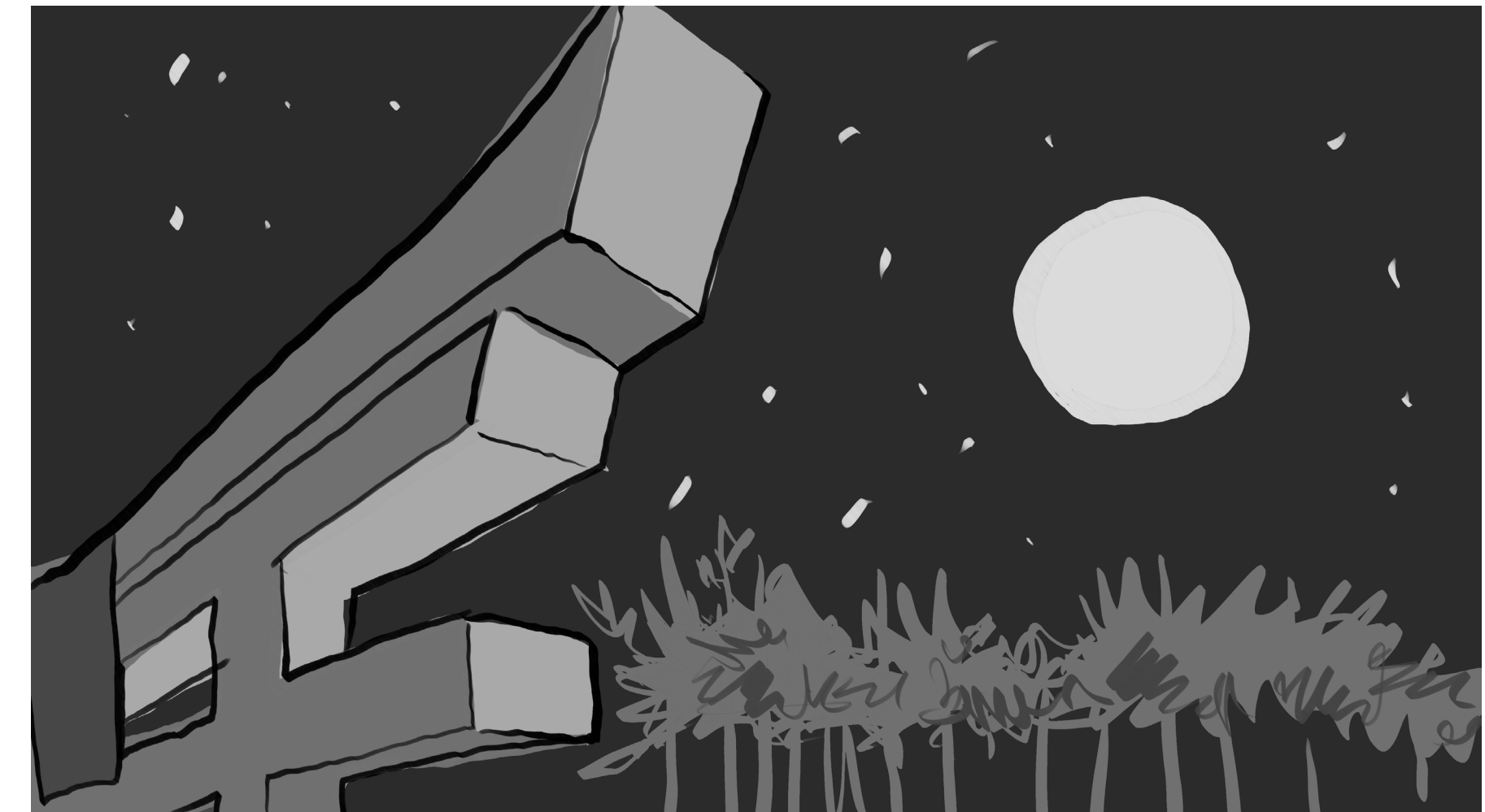
Made by: Mabel



Made by: Mabel



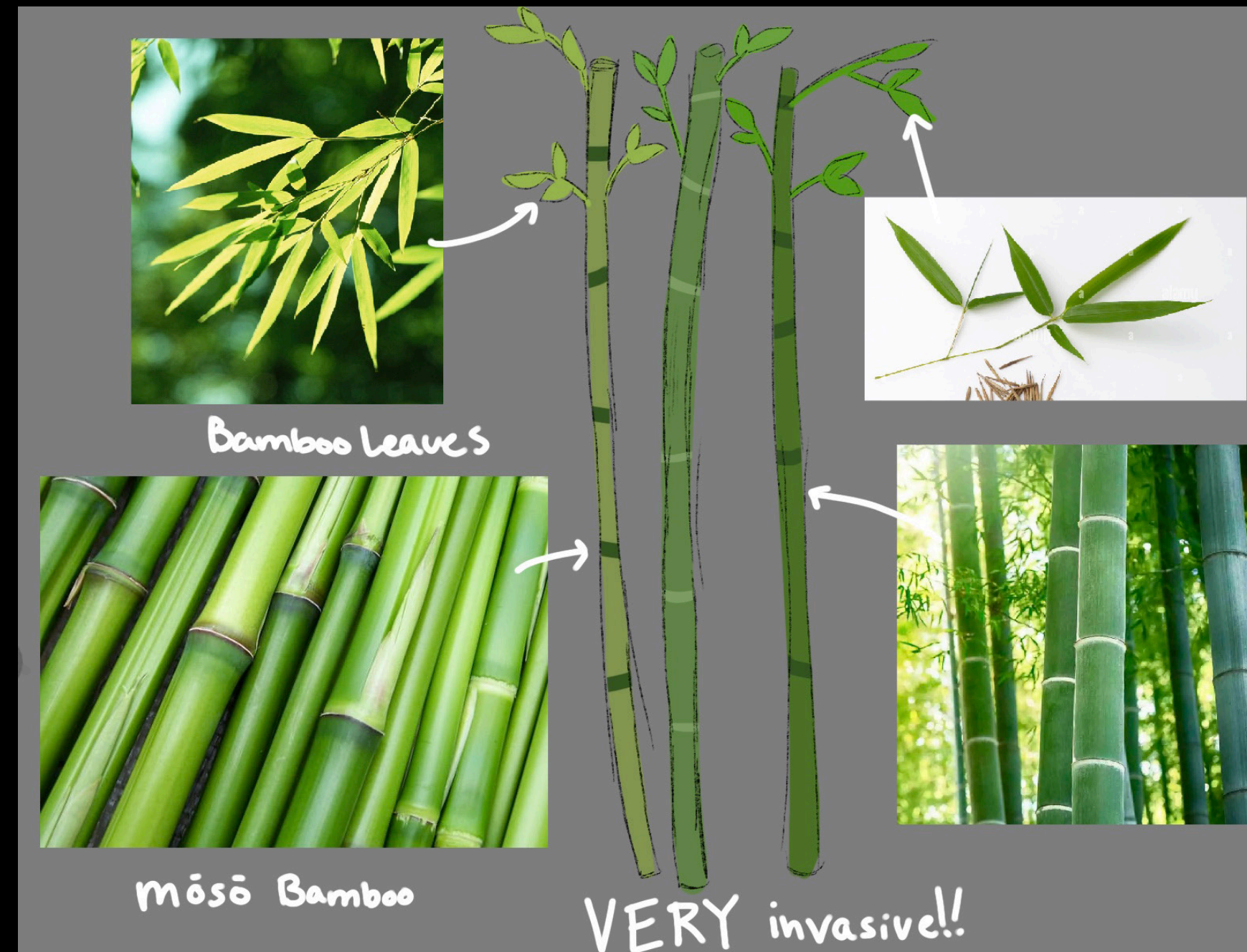
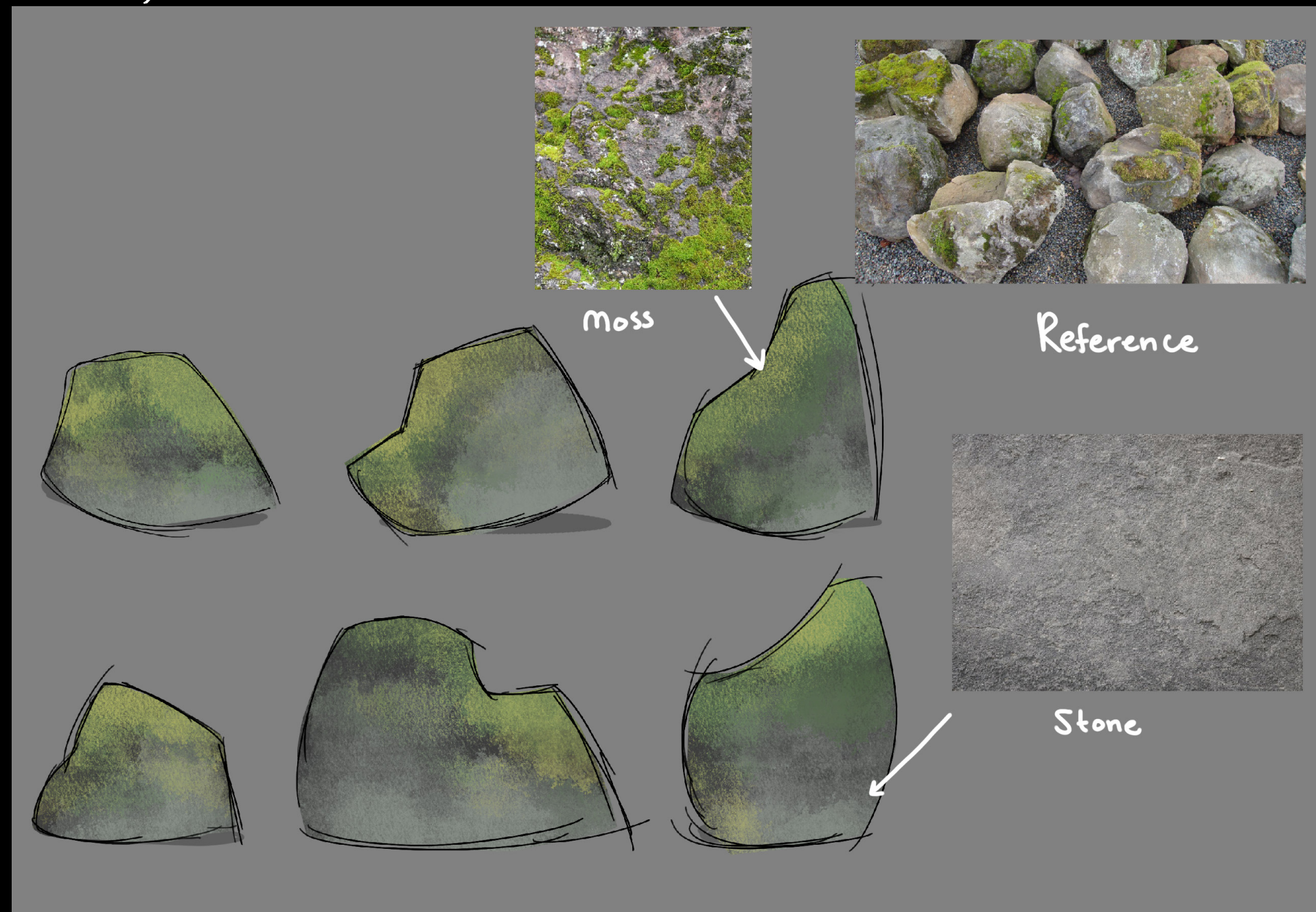
Made by: Seth



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

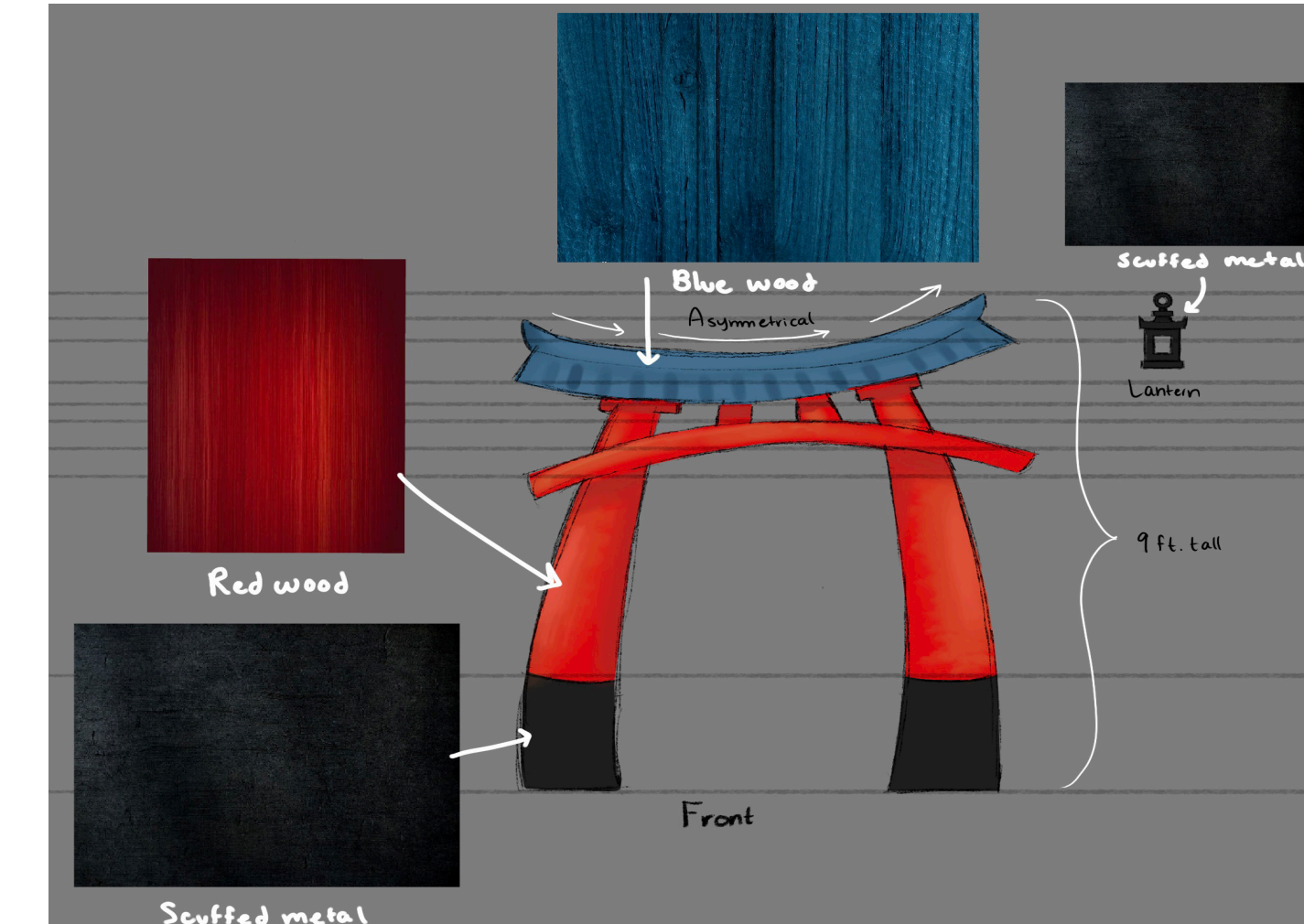
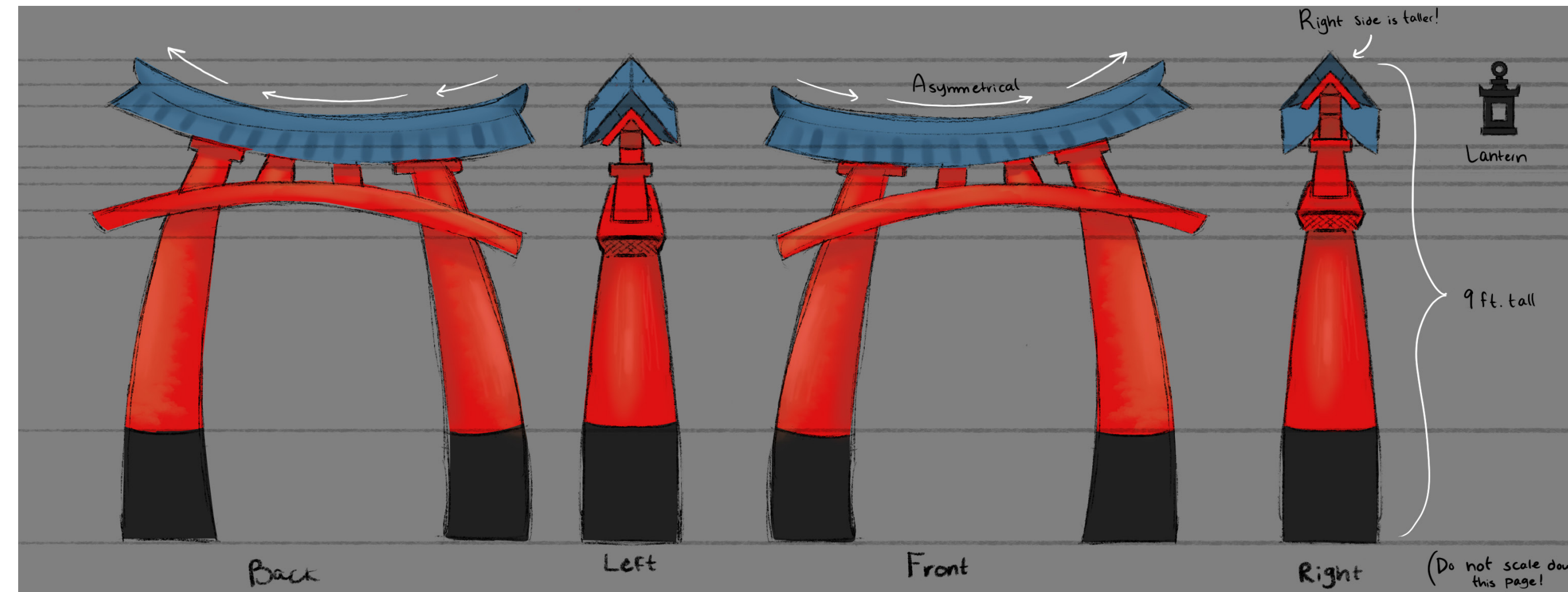
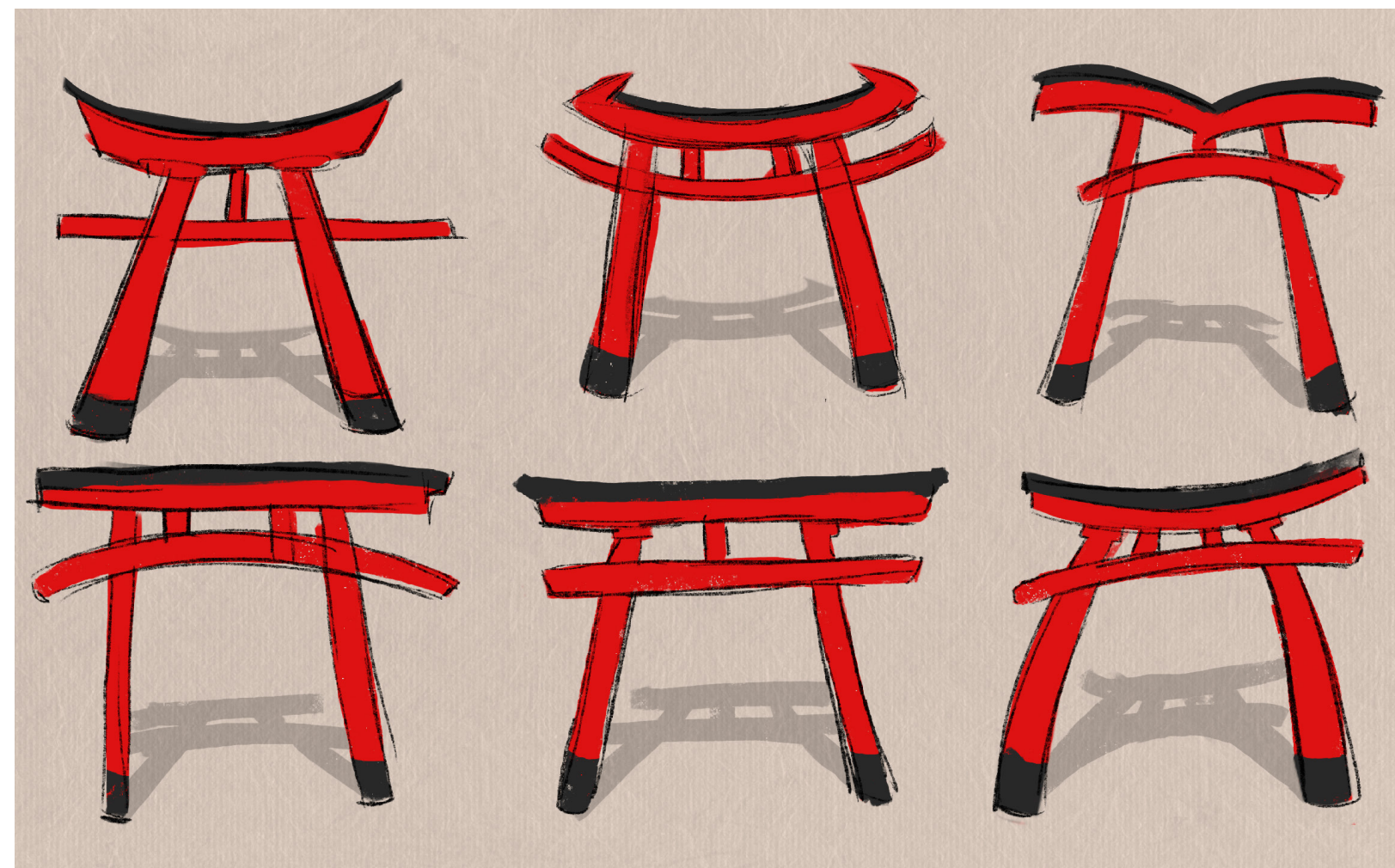
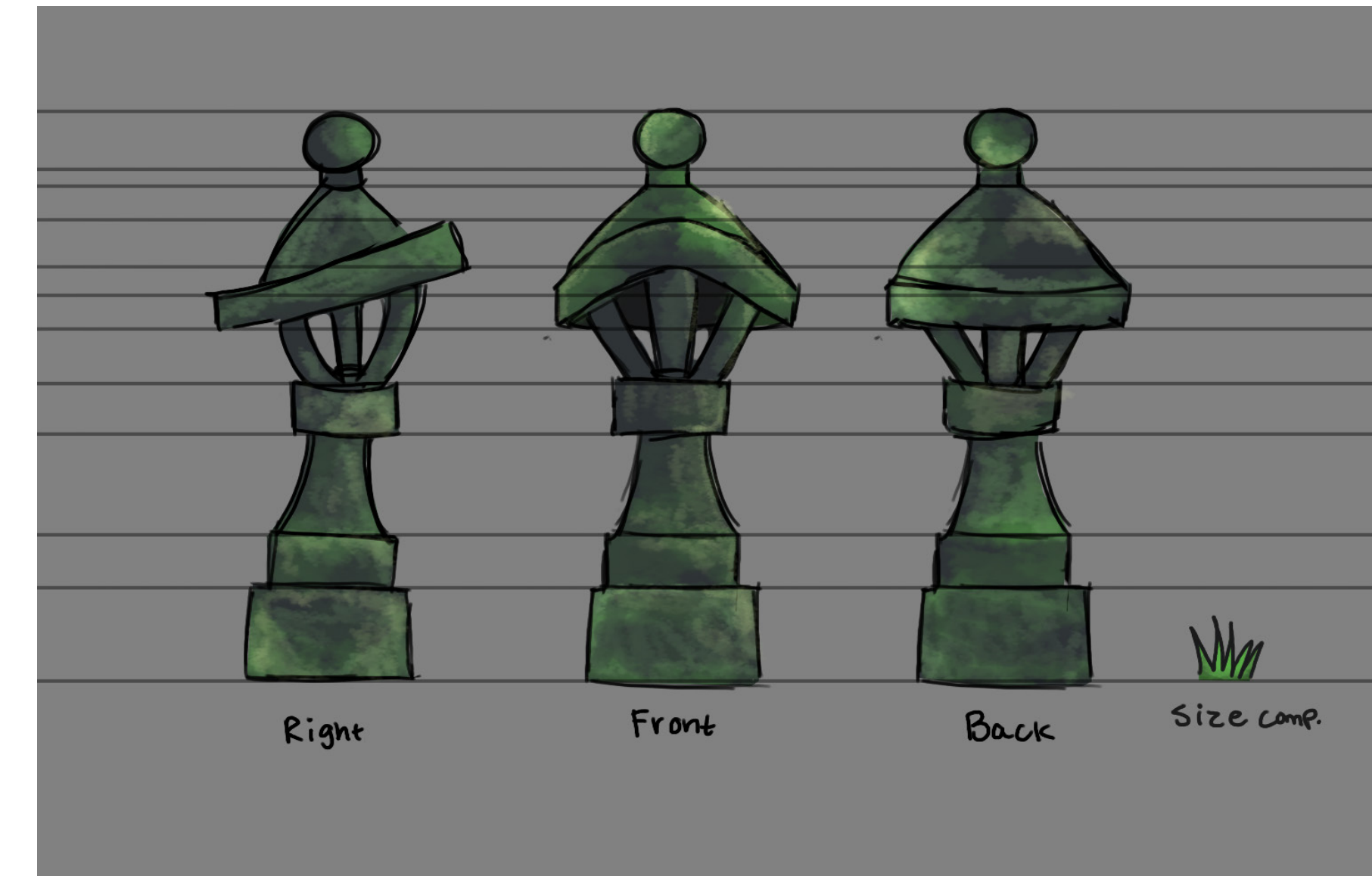


Made by: Mabel



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

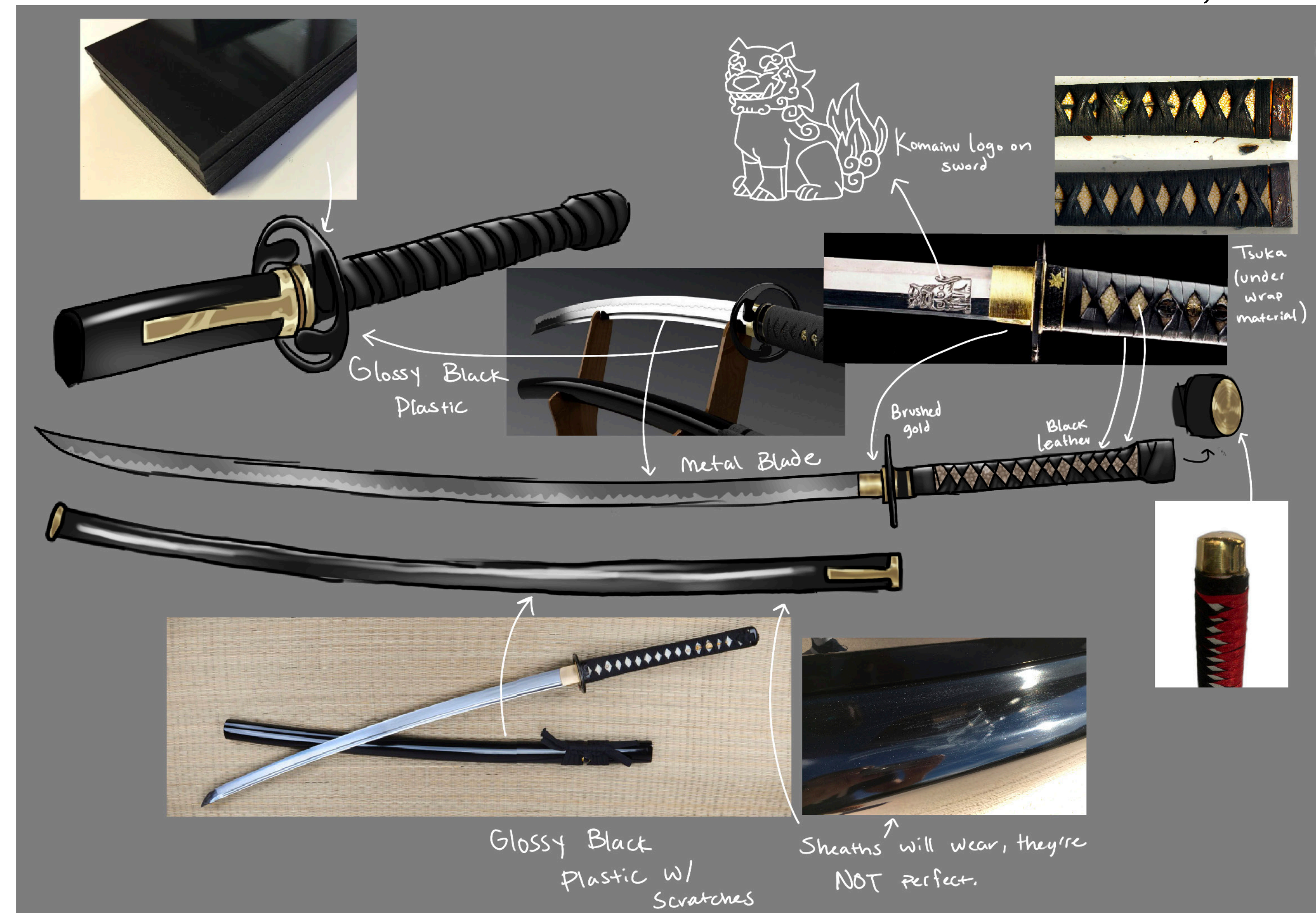
The initial katana is made of red metal, leather wrap, and a spray painted black blade. The sheath design was panelled and riveted, with prongs along the bottom inspired by praying mantis arms. There was previously rope details on the sheath to match Sam's sash, which was later replaced with cloth tied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



The image shows two large, weathered stone lion statues in a dark, forested environment. The statue on the left is shown in profile, facing left, with its mouth open, revealing sharp teeth. The statue on the right is shown from a three-quarter view, facing right, also with its mouth open. Both statues have circular markings with an 'X' on their chests. The background is dark with some green foliage visible on the left. The overall lighting is dim, creating a moody atmosphere.

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 sword 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

