THE ART OF

HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE






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THE ART OF

HE-MAN AND THE MAST

TERS OF THE UNIVERSE

FOREWORD BY
ALAN OPPENHEIMER

WITH CAPTIONS BY
TIM AND STEVE SEELEY

CHAPTER 4 CAPTIONS BY
JAMES EATOCK

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THE POWER AND THE HONOR FOUNDATION

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I HAVE THE POWER

How did all this happen? I am probably more surprised than anyone else that today, thirty years after *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* began, that wonderful cartoon is a legend. But why?

One of the answers comes to me constantly at the conventions I attend, when some young man (anyone younger than me is a young man) tells me that there was a message at the end of an episode—a moral, if you will—that changed his life. Sometimes it gave this young person the insight and strength to live. I don't mean to sound dramatic when I say this, but time and again, these forty-year-olds tell me that they lived within a dysfunctional family and didn't know how to cope with the family tension, or they were bullied by their playmates and had given up on "life" in the positive way in which we want our children to grow. And then came He-Man with a message for these young people, and it gave them the courage to go on. I find this humbling. Actors do the job, get paid, go home, and never imagine that what they've just recorded has a strong meaning for the viewer.

Now, let me tell you how Skeletor came about. When I met and auditioned for Lou Scheimer and Norm Prescott, they showed me the artwork and storyboard for an episode. Almost immediately I got a sense of the voice I would create for my beloved Skeletor, based on the script and the character's strange-looking face. They liked it and hired me. Originally Skeletor was a total villain, but in the first episode Skeletor had perhaps one insult he hurled at He-Man. Well, my friends, that gave me the clue to ad-lib more insults and make them comedic, and we were off and running. Scheimer loved it and gave me carte blanche to ad-lib (and believe me, an awful lot of those insults wound up on the cutting-room floor), but we had a marvelous time creating those scripts. I can't tell you where that high-pitched laugh came from . . . It just seemed to happen, but we all know it became the signature of Skeletor. Most of the time John Erwin and Linda Gary and I would all record together at Filmation, and that's when the creative process was the richest. But sometimes, for whatever reason (conflict of time, etc.), I would have to record alone, listening to what the others had already done, and then respond in a tone which kept the flow of the scene going, as if we were all in the booth at the same time. You might already know that I also did the voices of Mer-Man, Man-At-Arms, and Cringer, and I recorded all of them at the same time, in essence talking to myself. What fun that was, and if I ever meet any of you, I'd be most delighted to demonstrate for you how I did it.

I've looked at the artwork in this book, and I marvel at the brilliance that's been included here. I hope your imagination is titillated and that you, too, find you can create characters that give you satisfaction, and maybe even a future in the cartoon world.

Ah Ha . . .

ALAN OPPENHEIMER

CHAPTER ONE 1981

THE INVENTION OF A HERO

DEFINITION:

MALE ACTION TOYS ARE THOSE TOYS THAT HAVE FIGURES OF PEOPLE OR MONSTERS, AND VARIOUS KINDS OF EQUIPMENT (ACCESSORIES), SUCH AS VEHICLES, SHIPS, AIRPLANES, BUILDINGS, ETC., THAT ONE USES TO PLAY OUT A STORY

Roger Sweet

August 15, 1979

TO: Distribution

FROM: Ray Wagner

SUBJECT: Category Management Teams

You have been selected as a member of a Category Team. You are about to have a very important role in the development of the 3-Year Business Plan for that category.

To introduce you to the subject of Category Management, our goals and objectives, and how to prepare a Business Plan, I have scheduled an all-day session Thursday, August 23 at the Hacienda Hotel. Your attendance at this session is requested.

Thank you.

RW/pr

Hacienda Hotel
525 No. Sepulveda Blvd.
El Segundo, CA

MALE ACTION

Dave Spears
Jack Beuttell

Roger Sweet

Joe Cannizzaro

Wayne Zenger

Jim Tanikawa

Rich Steele

Pete Pirner

Shel Platt

Lou Freska

P. Pennington

Allan Fine

Thad Brown

These notes and internal memos from the Mattel Male Action Team explore the next big action figure line. After Mattel passed on *Star Wars*, it was clear that a new boys' action line would be needed to compete with it. The brainstorming meeting was held at the Hacienda Hotel in El Segundo, California, which is now across the street from the current Mattel Design Center (at the time, Mattel was located ten miles south in Hawthorne).

CONSULTING TEAM MEMBERS

Advertising/Media.....Mike Lyden, Ellen Fitzpatrick

Marketing Admin./Advise.Pat Feely

Safety.....Pete Davis

Public Relations.....Jack Fox

Retail Service.....Val Eskew

Quality.....Dolfe Lee

Legal.....Mike Weinstock

Finance.....Bill Johns, Paul Rioux

M E M O R A N D U M

December 24, 1981

TO: Male Action Category Team

FROM: Mark Ellis Mark

SUBJECT: GENERIC LICENSED MALE ACTION FIGURE

The purpose of this memo is to begin an investigation into developing a generic Male Action Figure.

BACKGROUND

We have been very successful in applying licenses to Male Action Figures. Sometimes, however, when we find out a film will be a major success its too late for us to tool up an entirely new line. If we had a generic male action license tooled up the lead times and expenses involved in getting into licenses would be a lot less.

RECOMMENDATION

Evaluate the feasibility and financial implications for developing a generic Male Action Figure line.

DISCUSSION

1. Recently after seeing actual film footage it was decided to back the Megaforce license with much more product. Because of the timing we were forced to use the Big Jim line. If we would have had this generic Male Action Figure line in place it would have been a more attractive alternative because of its presumable smaller size and more attractive price point.

2. I would propose the relevant range of sizes to be 3" - 5" for this new figure with 4" being the most likely because of industry standards set with Star Wars.

3. The figure might or might not have some inexpensive action feature incorporated into it.

THE "GOOD GUY" OR HERO ROLE

- A LARGE PART OF THE TIME BOYS SPEND IN FANTASY PLAY REVOLVES AROUND AGRESSION WHILE THEY PROJECT THEIR OWN PERSONALITY INTO THE ROLE OF THE "GOOD GUY" OR HERO.

- MOTHERS BELIEVE THAT THIS IS AN ACCEPTABLE WAY FOR BOYS TO ACT OUT THEIR HOSTILITIES AS LONG AS IT IS ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN THE REALM OF AN UNREAL SITUATION/THEME.

- THE GOOD GUY IS ALWAYS THE FAVORITE; HE IS POWERFUL AND HE IS INEVITABLY THIUMPHANT IN THE END - HE WINS. ABOUT ONE-HALF OF BOYS INDICATE THAT THEY ACTUALLY PROJECT THEMSELVES INTO PLAY, PRETENDING TO BE SOMEONE IN THE PLAY SITUATION.

- IN THE MAJORITY OF THESE CASES, THE BOY IS USUALLY A HUMAN LIKE CHARACTER, EITHER A LEADER OR SOMEONE WITH SPECIAL SUPER HUMAN POWERS. IN MOST CASES HE ALSO HAS WEAPONS OR SUPER STRENGTHS OR IS SCARY.

BOYS ARE ATTRACTED TO STRENGTH, FIERCENESS AND SUPER HUMAN POWERS.

6-11-80

Top "MAF's" of Past + Present

G1 Joe - only MAF on market when introduced. Military a strong theme

Big Jim - Introduced into established MAF category fairly early. Sports a fresh theme. Cadillac figure with strong televisable features

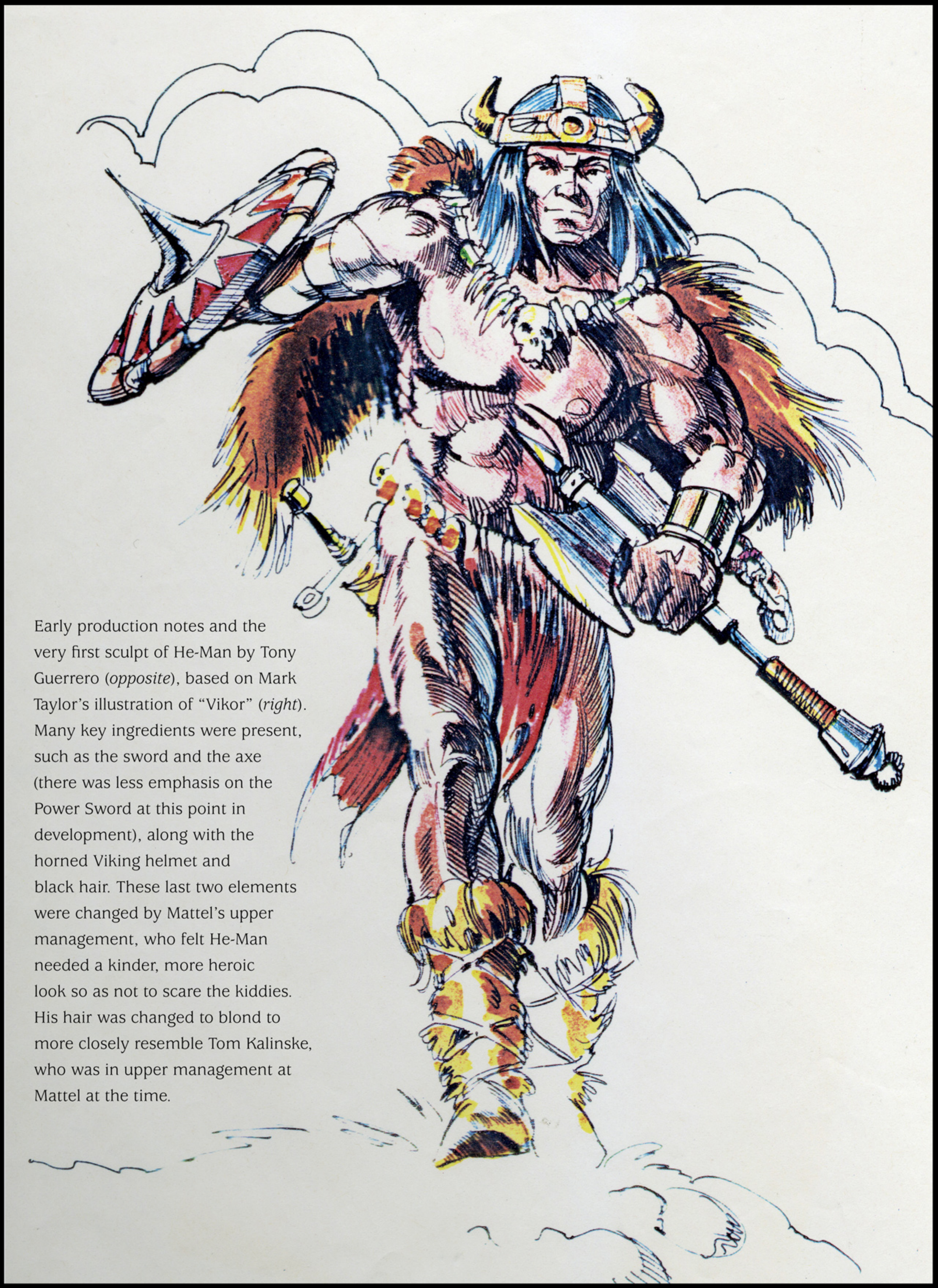
Eval Knieval - Exciting promoted daredevil character tied in with very exciting toys, particularly the motorcycle

Bionic Man - Very popular licensed TV character, the 1st one. Figure had strong theme & good features

Stretch Armstrong - Brand new novelty concept, good play value

Super Heroes - Strong licensed characters from comic books & TV shows & old & new moves





Early production notes and the very first sculpt of He-Man by Tony Guerrero (*opposite*), based on Mark Taylor's illustration of "Vikor" (*right*). Many key ingredients were present, such as the sword and the axe (there was less emphasis on the Power Sword at this point in development), along with the horned Viking helmet and black hair. These last two elements were changed by Mattel's upper management, who felt He-Man needed a kinder, more heroic look so as not to scare the kiddies. His hair was changed to blond to more closely resemble Tom Kalinske, who was in upper management at Mattel at the time.

PAGE 1 OF 1

IDEA DISCLOSURE No Pros. Do

NO. 10247

1. Briefly state the objectives and advantages over other similar ideas.
2. Make sketches showing the essential features of the idea.
3. Briefly describe the operation and construction with reference to the sketches.

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TITLE MAF-"Fantasy Make Believe"

DATE OF CONCEPTION May 22, 1980

It may be time to introduce into the MAF line a new theme of "fantasy Make Believe". The theme would be oriented toward Frizetta type figures possibly combined with parts of Conan, ~~and~~ Flash Gordon and Star Wars. Frizetta type subject matter had no "advanced technology" vehicles and accessories but these can be added within this theme. In addition giants (Shogun size), mid-size and mini figures (1½"-2") can all be combined in this theme and played with together.

CONTRIBUTOR (S) — DATE

Roger H Sweet 6-12-80

Steve Arnyx 6-12-80

WITNESSED & UNDERSTOOD — DATE

1 [signature] 6-12-80

2 [signature] 6-17-80

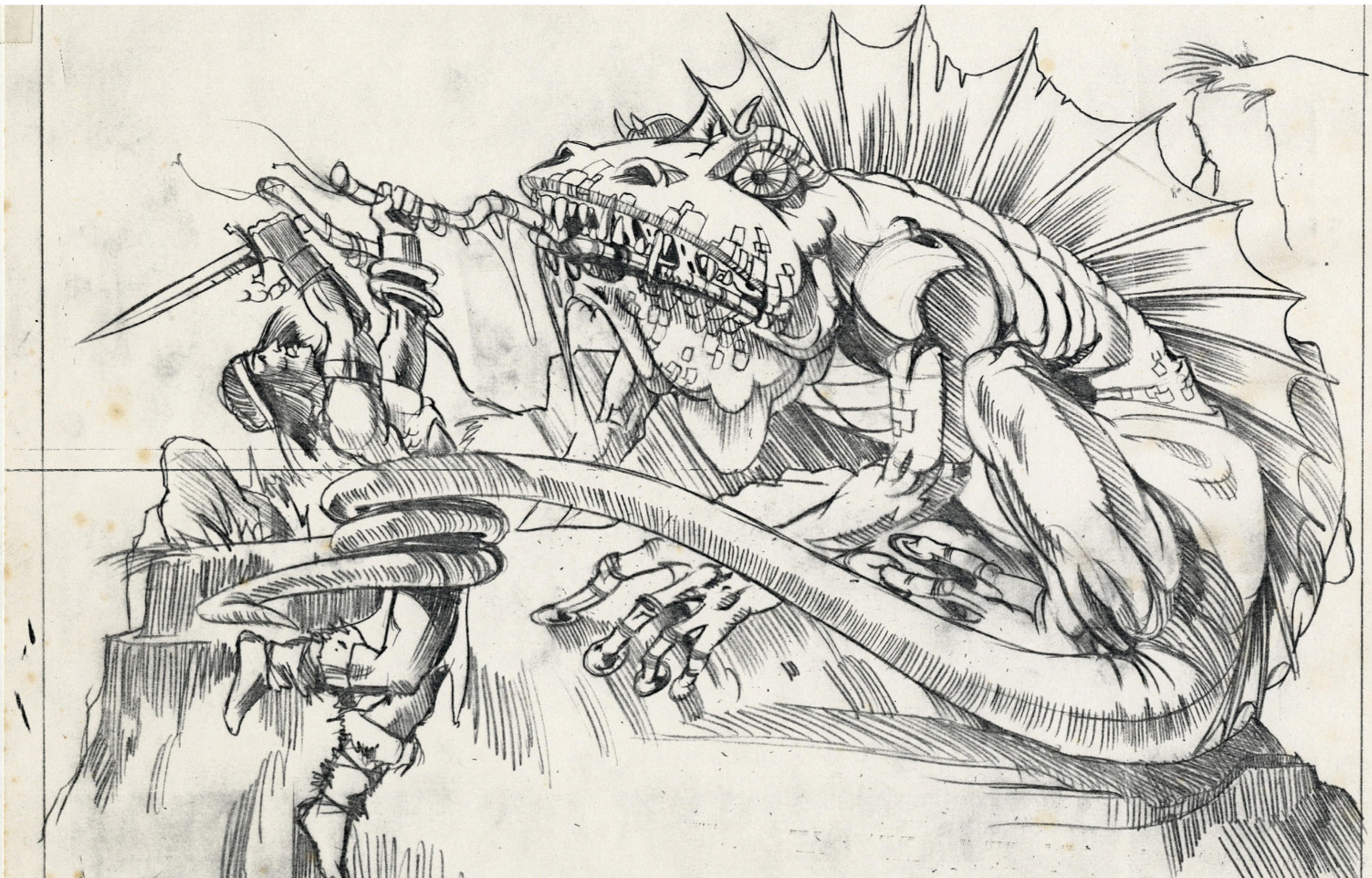
TWO (2) SIGNATURES REQUIRED

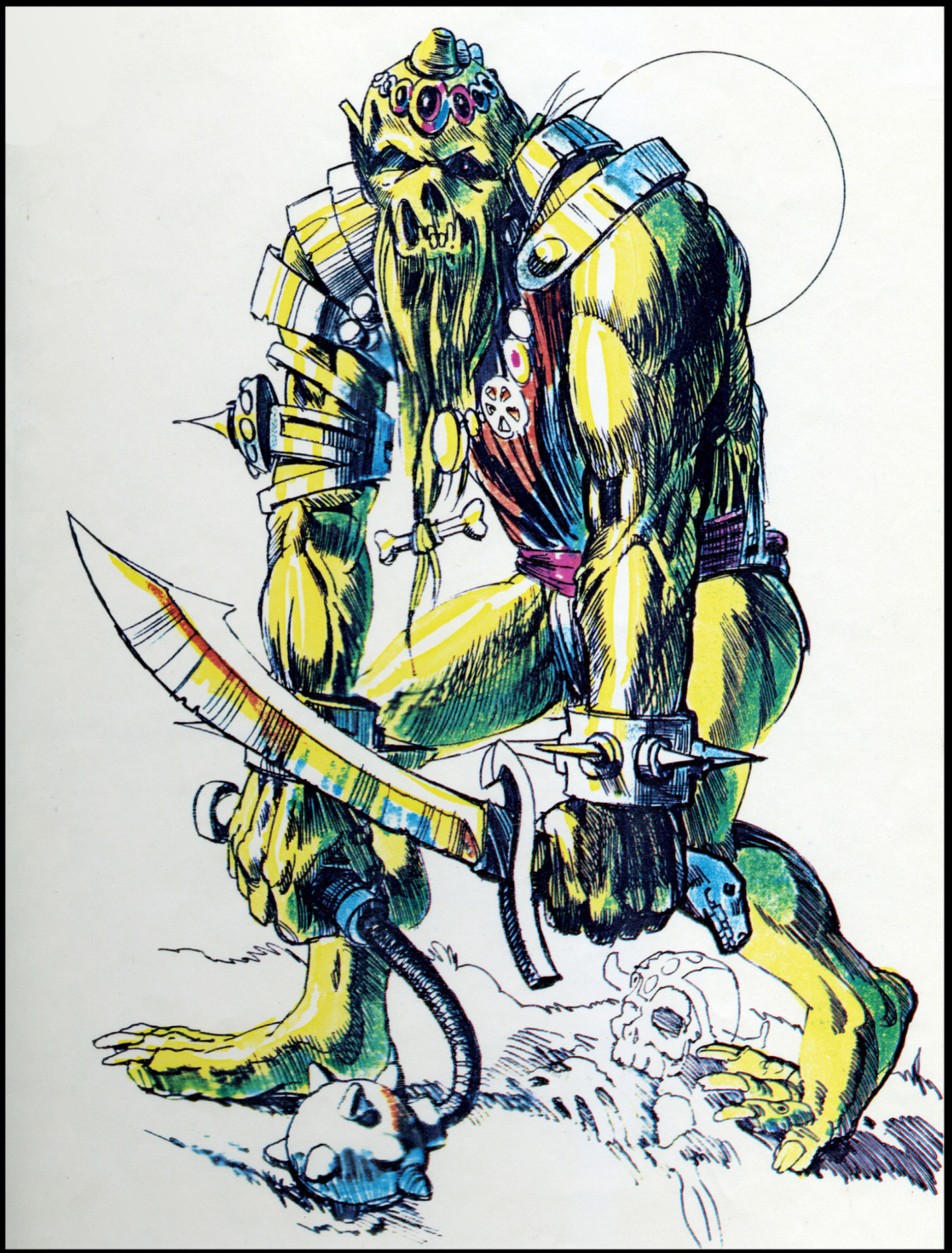
MTL-359-A





Top left and bottom: The most powerful man in the universe was conceptualized numerous times by artist Mark Taylor for Mattel's "Fantasy Make Believe" line. *Top right:* Roger Sweet took existing Big Jim action figures and used modeling clay to turn them into three prototypes, one of which was the axe-wielding barbarian. *Opposite:* Roger Sweet's original notes for the new line, referencing Frazetta, Conan, Flash Gordon, and *Star Wars*.





Two more early concept sketches by Mark Taylor. The green guy with the scimitar was named Demo-Man (as a counterpart to "He-Man," he was the "Demon-Man"), and eventually became Skeletor, and the bearish Red Beast was changed to the more simian Beast Man when the management felt he looked a little too much like Chewbacca. Demo-Man was released as an action figure in 2012 in the Masters of the Universe Classics line. Red Beast has yet to get a figure, but he did appear in the third Classics minicomic, *The Second Ultimate Battleground*, revealing (at least in the Classics canon) that he is the leader of the savage Beast Men army, which may be a slightly different genetic class of Beast Men.

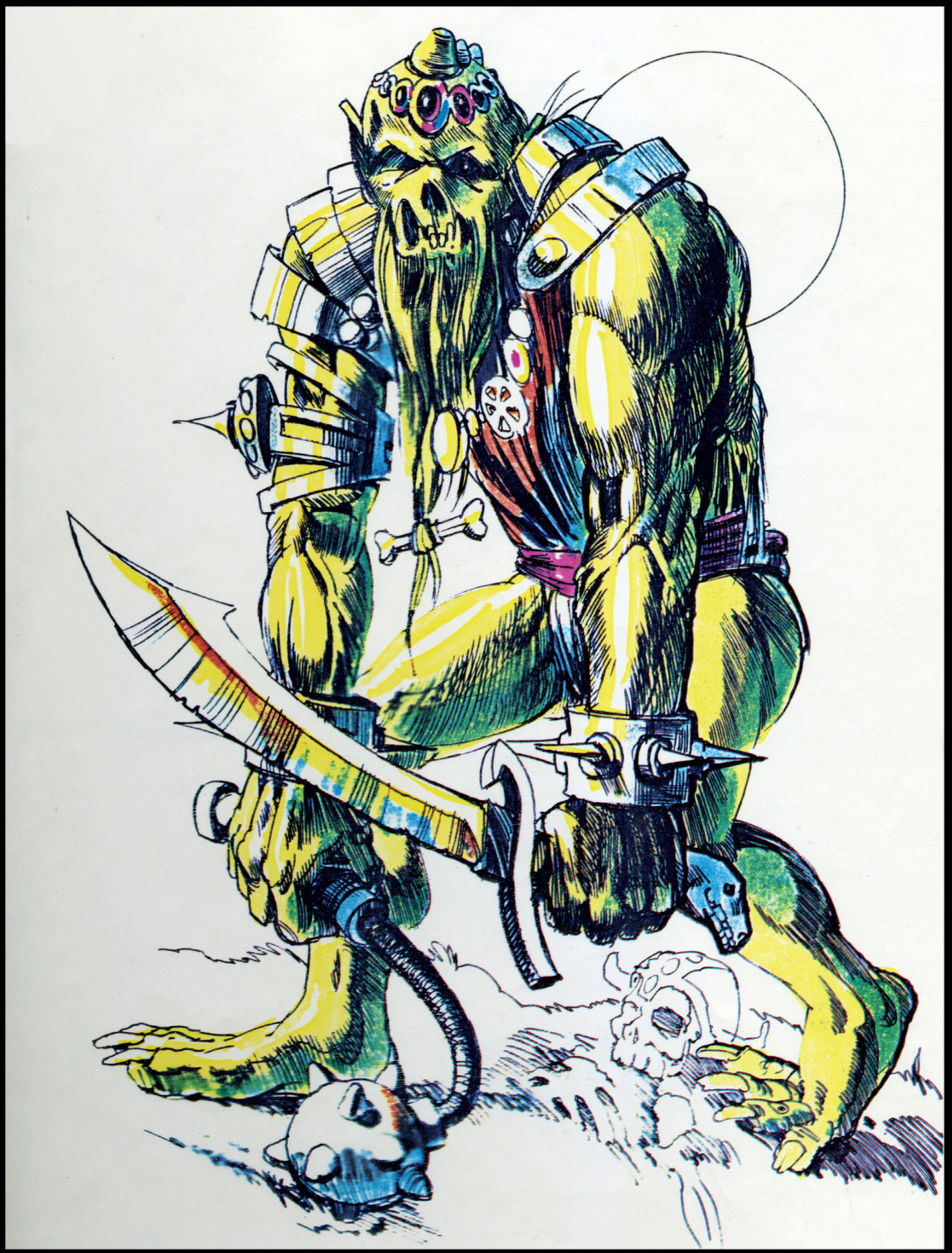


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FIGURE ATTRIBUTES

x Durable, would last along time

x Fun to play with

x Creative, allows my child to use his imagination

x A toy my child has asked for

x Holds my child's interest

Can be played with alone

x Good value for the money

X Can dress in different costumes

x Easy to play with

x Has accessories that can be purchased for it

X Is appropriate for my child's age

x Has arms and legs that bend like real arms and legs

Encourages play with other children

x Is part of a series of figures that can be collected

Other children have the toy

x Has features that make it different from other toys

x Is named after a famous TV movie star or other personality

Has a shooting feature (needs rewording)

x Has human like appearances/features

x Is a price I might pay for that kind of a toy

x Safe to play with

X Has an attractive appearance

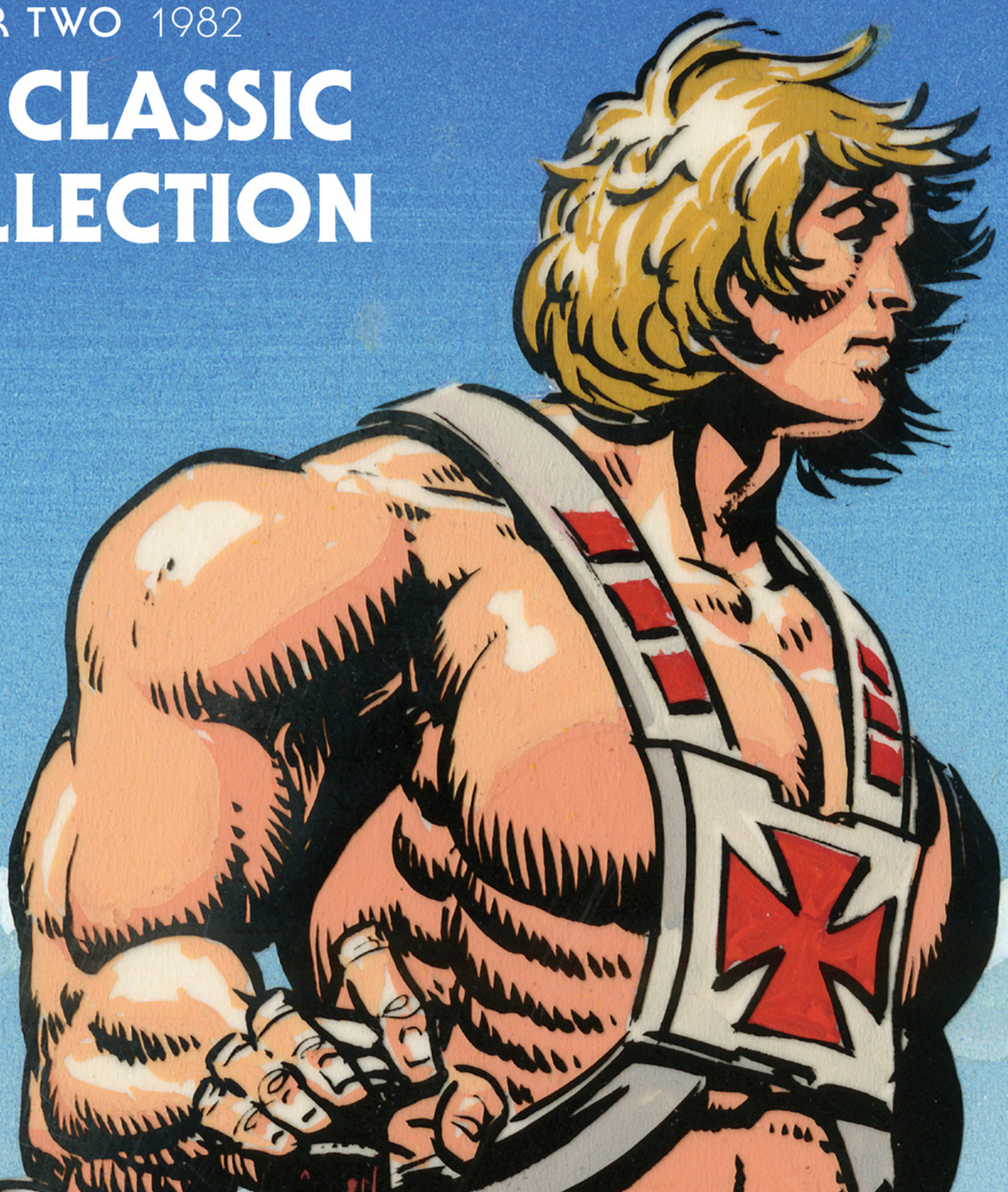
Bright/colorful looking

Liked the size or scale 9-8-80

This page: Early production notes on various figure attributes for the toy line. *Opposite:* This image comes from the card back of the original 1982 He-Man figure. While the original release in 1982 featured the famous "eight-back" watercolors of the first eight figures, later rereleases included original card art, along with a single descriptive sentence. For the Classics line from MattyCollector.com, many of the figures use this vintage art on the backing card's bio and incorporate that single sentence as the final line in the bio.

CHAPTER TWO 1982

THE CLASSIC COLLECTION



CONSULT-TORS, KNOWLEDGEABLE WIZARDS OF *MOTU*

AN INTERVIEW WITH EMILIANO SANTALUCIA, JOSHUA VAN PELT, AND JAMES EATOCK,
FOUNDERS OF THE POWER AND THE HONOR FOUNDATION

How did you go about collecting the amazing pieces of artwork that the Foundation has accumulated?

James: Back in 1997 I was browsing animation newsgroups, as I wanted to own a single piece of art from the *He-Man* cartoon. I purchased a piece featuring He-Man and Orko (from different episodes) on a random background. That first piece ignited my passion for collecting *He-Man* and *She-Ra* animation art. A couple of years later, fellow fan and collector Lee Clevenger contacted me, saying that he had access to the Los Angeles warehouse in which all the Filmation animation art was stored. He was able to browse through the warehouse, choose specific pieces, and purchase them. So, from that moment on, rather than see what random cels appeared online, I was able to select pieces of animation art from my favorite episodes.

Josh: My friend Peter LeRose first introduced me to the art of Masters of the Universe back in 1999. We were at a toy show in New Jersey and a dealer had a bunch of original, hand-drawn Ted Mayer pencils from the vintage MOTU line. Since then the bulk of the vintage artwork that I have been able to preserve was purchased directly from Roger Sweet, former brand manager at Mattel for MOTU. He gave me a call in 2005 and said that he had some artwork that he had saved from destruction dating back to the 1980s. I flew out to Washington State to visit Roger at his home. Over the course of two days, Roger told stories of his time at Mattel and the artists and designers he worked with, and shared the histories for many of the pieces of artwork in the collection. There were over 250 never-before-seen pieces of art and documents!

Emiliano: Personally, until 2008, I hadn't purchased many pieces of original art, other than the occasional animation cel. I was in contact with Josh, and the two of us were trying to figure out the best way to present all of the Mattel artwork he had purchased. It was then that we came up with the idea of The Power and The Honor Foundation: a nonprofit organization that could collect, archive, preserve, and present to the fans original artwork from both the Masters of the Universe and the Princess of Power brands. Given his unmatched knowledge of the cartoons and his animation-artwork collection, James was immediately included in our plans. The idea quickly became bigger than us. We started contacting creators, continuously finding new information and new artwork, whilst making some fascinating discoveries. It was almost as if we were archaeologists!

What was the hardest item to attain? What do you consider to be the prize piece?

Emiliano: I think a better question would be what was the most expensive item! Just kidding. Personally, the experiences of collecting the artwork have been just as important as owning these pieces. For example, one of my favorite memories involves driving up to Lake Garda to meet Claudio Mazzoli and scan the *MOTU* motion picture development artwork he still owns. Other purchases have led to some very special friendships. When Josh and I first met Mark Taylor, he revealed all of the original character B-sheets from 1981! I treasure the friendship I have with him and his wife, Rebecca.

Josh: One of my favorite pieces is the original William George oil on canvas of Dragon Walker that was used for the vintage MOTU Kellogg's poster. This 24 x 36–inch masterpiece is so vibrant and detailed that you can just stare at it for hours. The piece that I enjoy the most is the oversized Eternia play set colored drawing by Ted Mayer. I purchased this long before I met Ted, who later gave us access to his original preliminary pencil sketch to this piece.

James: To be honest, I never really set out to own a specific piece. And when Lee Clevenger was able to provide me with pretty much any piece I wanted, that made collecting a great deal easier! With regards to my most prized possession, I'd say it's a pan cel of He-Man with his sword raised in front of the moon from the classic episode "The Problem with Power" (which you can see in the Filmation section of this very book). Other items that I treasure, such as cels and backgrounds from "House of Shokoti Part 2," may not be all that impressive to others, but they mean a great deal to me!

Emiliano: The physical item that I consider the prize piece in my collection is the original inked last page from the minicomic *King of Castle Grayskull*, by Alfredo Alcala. I have a personal attachment to Alcala, as his artwork contributed a great deal to my love for MOTU.

James: Which reminds me, I own thirty or so pages of original artwork from the 1982 DC *Masters of the Universe* comic book, illustrated by George Tuska and inked by Alcala!

Josh: Most recently, Emiliano and I had the chance to visit with Errol McCarthy. He was a key artist for MOTU from 1982 to 1989, and his portfolio of original card-back art and original style-guide art was a treasure we never even knew existed. He even had the art for unproduced vintage characters, such as He-Ro and Eldor, as well as numerous random characters that no one knew existed!

Why do you think it's important to collect and preserve this work?

Emiliano: A child sees a product on the shelves and wants to own the action figure. That means that the work carried out by the visualizers, the designers, and all the artists involved is essential to the brand. Their work is life giving, from the realization of the figure, to seeing them moving and talking onscreen. Unfortunately, preserving the artwork that went into making He-Man and She-Ra was not considered at the time.

James: Understandably, both Mattel and Filmation could not have foreseen that decades later both He-Man and She-Ra would still be relevant. As a result the artwork was either given back to the artists or (as was the case with Filmation) simply stored in boxes with no real desire to preserve them. Over the years I have seen Filmation animation art treated very poorly and stored in the worst conditions imaginable. In the back of my mind I think this is why I continued to collect the art when (at times) it wasn't financially viable. I wanted to save this artwork from destruction!

Emiliano: We feel it's important to gather what is left, to make sure it's properly preserved and that as many people as possible can see it, study it, and learn its history. We want to celebrate the people involved in the creation and development of He-Man and She-Ra and inform the fans about who these people were and how much they did to shape the toy lines and cartoons that mean so much to us!

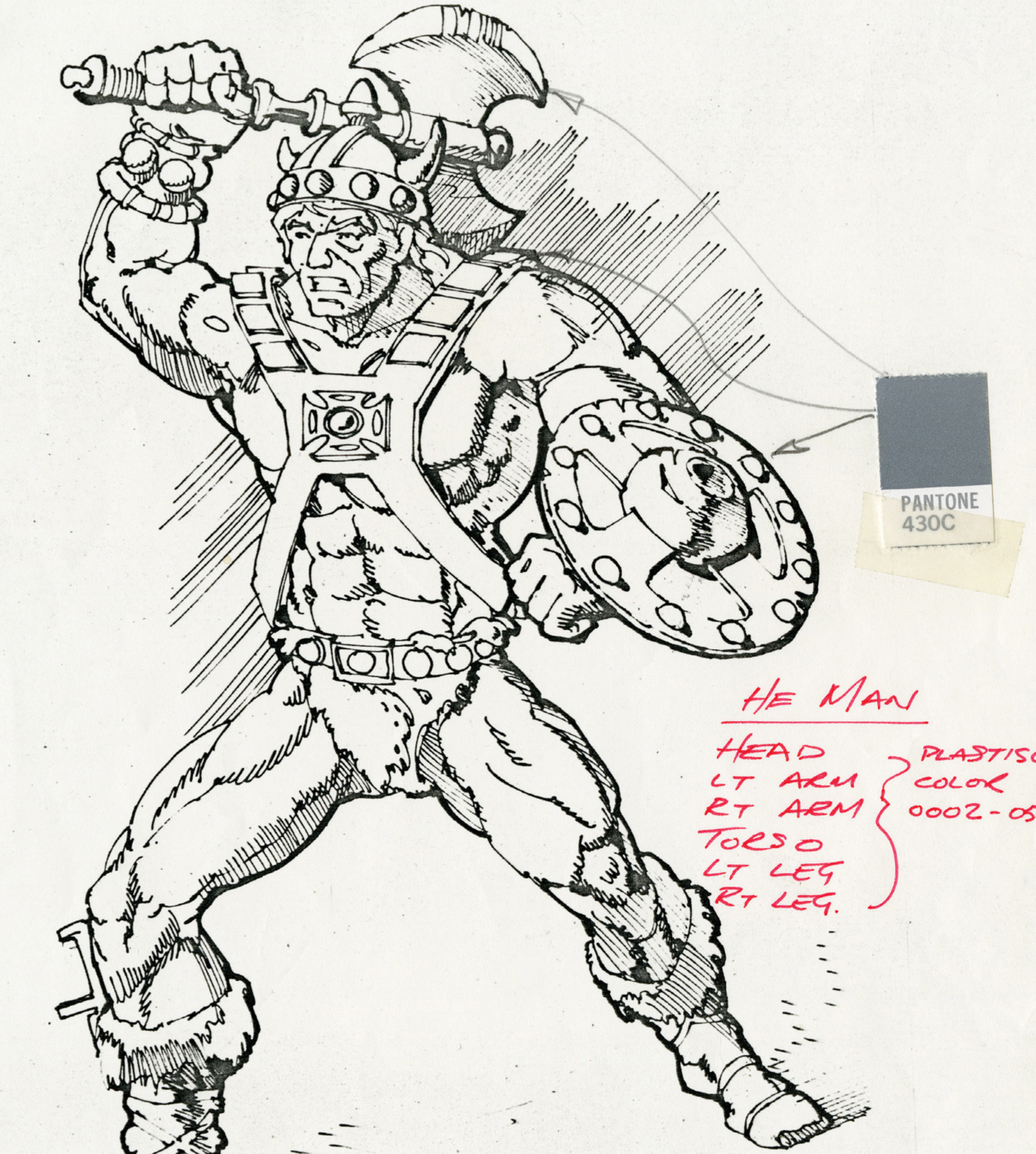
Josh: As Emiliano stated, preserving the artwork is not just about saving a drawing or a painting. For me, it is also about saving the history and preserving the legacy of all of the creators, artists, and designers who worked on this brand. Most of the artists and designers worked in relative obscurity, only known amongst their peers. This fact drives my efforts with the Foundation to continue to recognize these artists who had such an influence on our lives and celebrate their artwork.

Why do you think He-Man has endured these past thirty-plus years? What makes Masters of the Universe so important to this day?

Josh: Masters of the Universe was very influential in my early development, as it seems it was to millions of kids around the world. It was more than a toy and a cartoon. It was a way to connect with our friends, have fun, and learn that doing the right thing does matter. The toys were a perfect complement to the almost daily Filmation cartoons that drove home this message. The playability and variety of toys allowed the battle between good and evil to be fought over and over. Collecting the artwork over the years has only strengthened my appreciation for He-Man and She-Ra. The amount of thought, care, and creativity truly shines through in each piece.

James: The worlds of Eternia and Etheria are so incredibly rich with characters that the stories that have been told from that very first minicomic to this very day continue to capture the imagination of the fans. The wonderful balance between science and sorcery, something that has been apparent in all canons, really struck a chord with children and those that worked on the brand. He-Man and She-Ra have also both endured primarily due to the passionate fan base. One must add that the legacy of the Filmation show has helped a great deal to keep He-Man and She-Ra alive. The heart that Lou Scheimer and the Filmation staff gave those cartoons helped the brand endure during the eighties, to the point where those particular incarnations have become pop-culture icons!

Emiliano: He-Man and She-Ra have a unique combination of archetypal elements, great characters, strong visuals, and thanks to Filmation, high moral standards and a big heart. He-Man is a pure hero. Teela is a strong female lead character; Skeletor is the archetype of the villain; Orko is the child's eyes. Those elements struck children all over the world in a very special way. Those children remained fans of this property for thirty years, committed to their heroes. Whilst the brand itself went through alternating fortune and famine, the fans never gave up hope. All those elements that made it so special at the beginning are still current. I believe that He-Man and She-Ra can still be a big hit with today's audience!



HE MAN

HEAD
LT ARM
RT ARM
TORSO
LT LEG
RT LEG.

} PLASTISOL COLOR 0002-0539

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CONCEPT ART





Opposite: Original concept art of He-Man by Mark Taylor. Note the similarities to Vikor, namely the horned helmet and the battle axe used as his main weapon (rather than the more traditional Power Sword). Also note the sculpted boot knife that was later dropped.

Above: Early concept art by Mark Taylor for Battle Cat. The mold was a reused tiger sculpt from Mattel's Big Jim line, and was also previously used as a panther (or "jungle cat") for Mattel's 1970s Tarzan line.

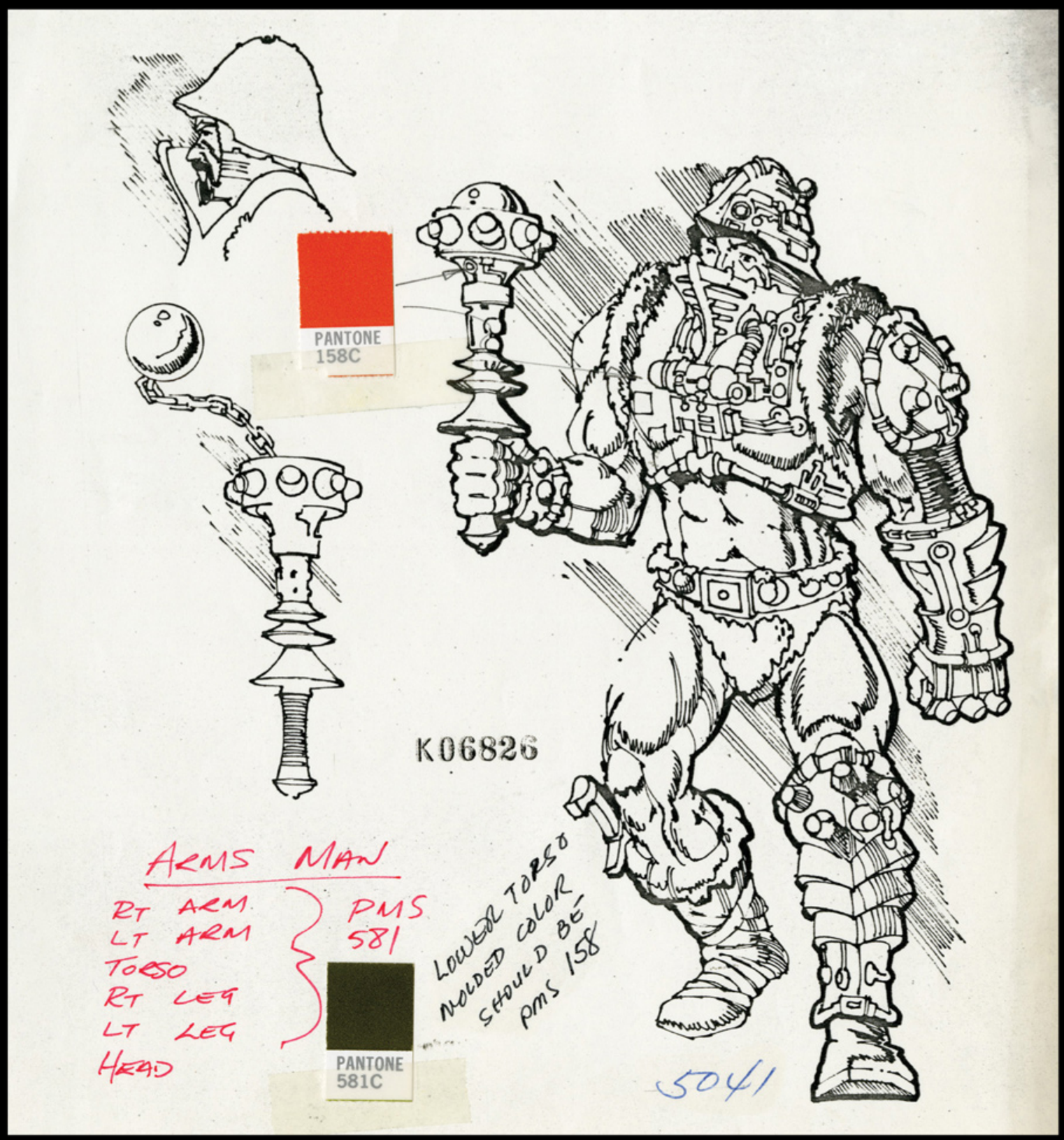
Left: Concept by Mark Taylor of Prince Adam, who originally featured a very flamboyant look. He was originally created to be a separate character from He-Man's secret identity.

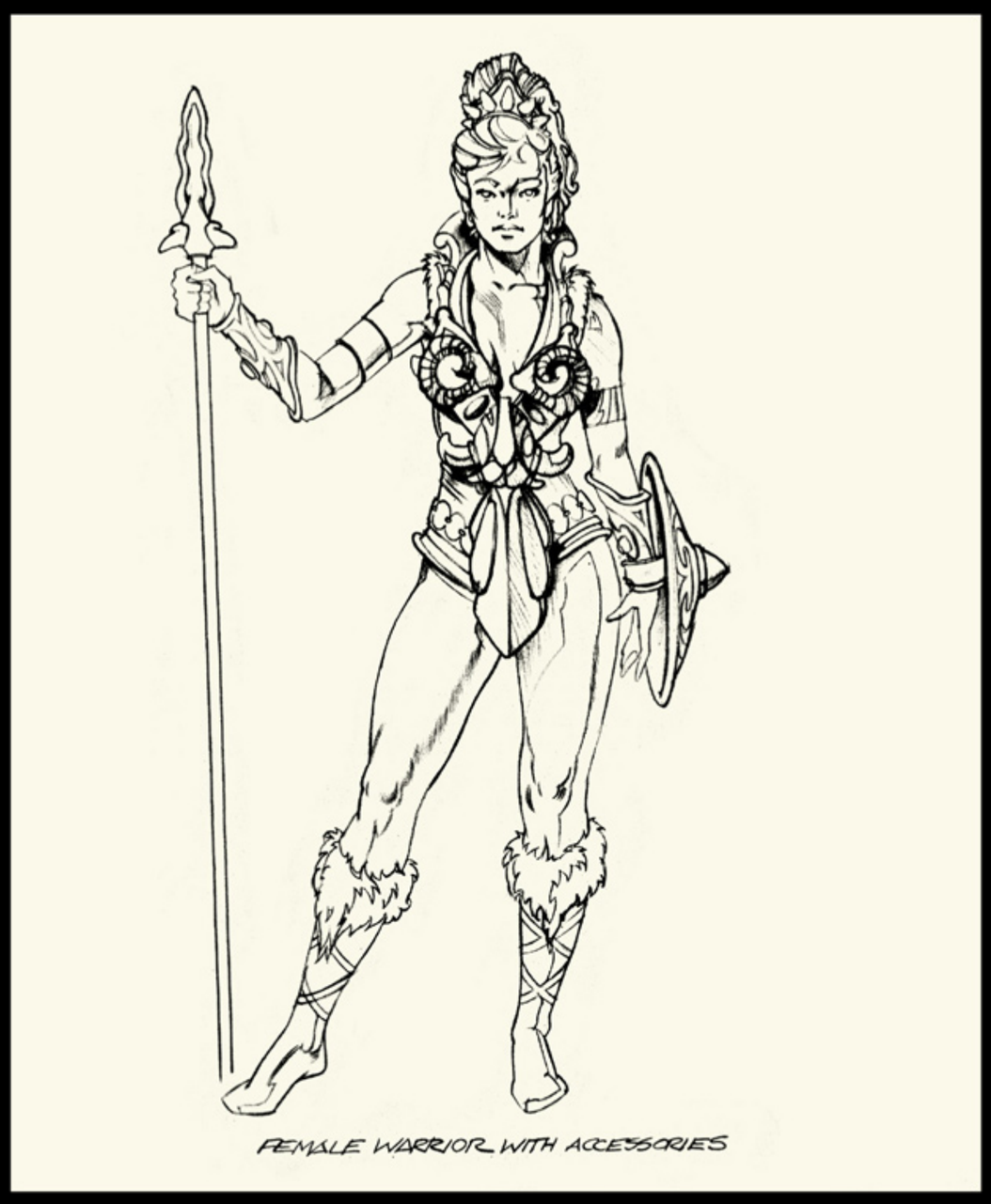
This page: Concept art pieces by Mark Taylor.

Top right: Man-At-Arms's armor and helmet were modeled after Spanish conquistador armor, and originally he had facial hair, which was cut from the toy but added back in for the animated series.

Bottom left: Teela, at the time known as "female warrior," was an addition to the line from Mark Taylor. Originally there were supposed to be two female figures, but one (the Sorceress) was scrapped and replaced by Zodac.

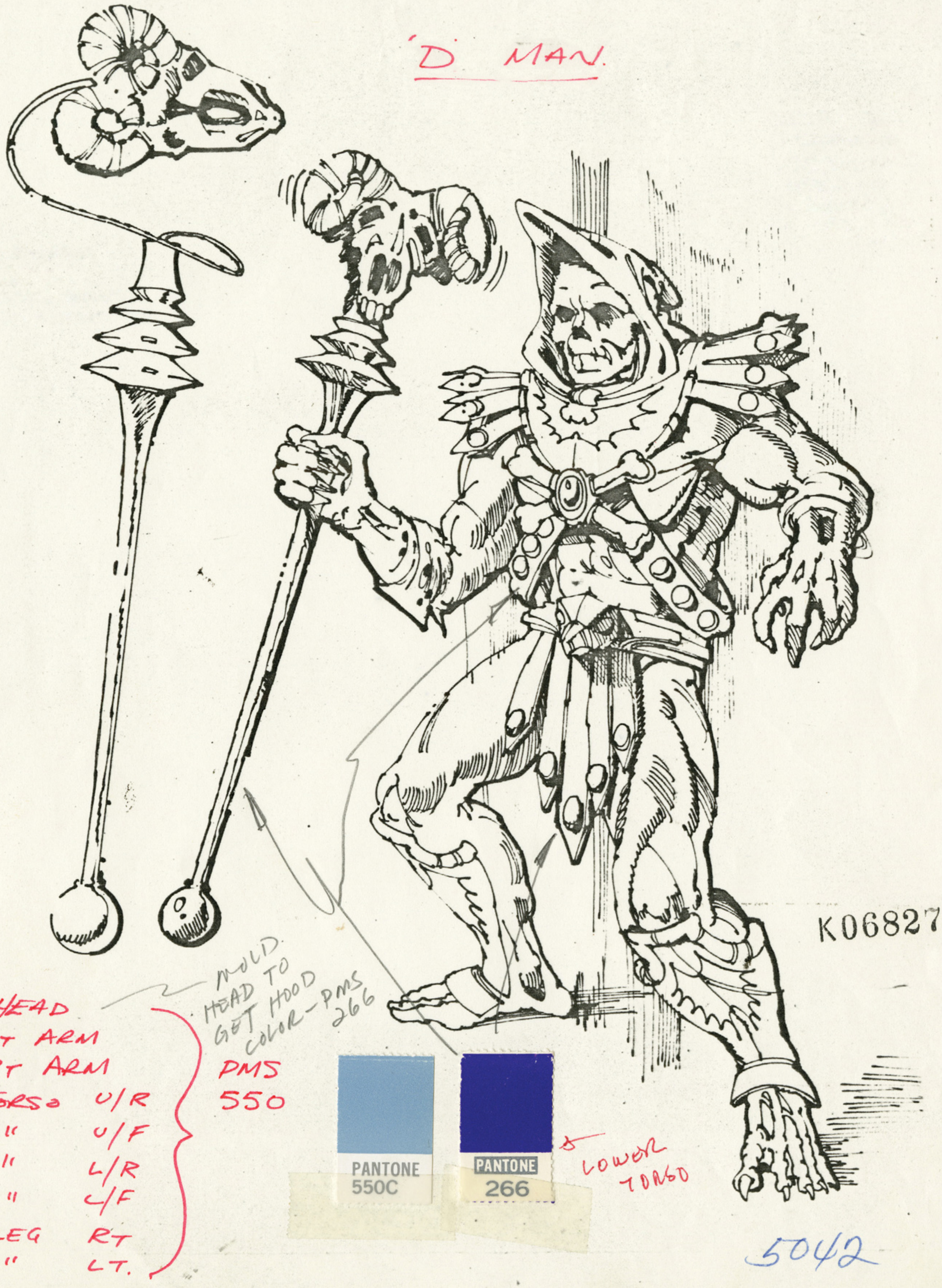
Bottom right: Early concept art by Mark Taylor of the Sorceress (later the Goddess), who was originally envisioned as a separate figure from Teela.







'D MAN.



MOLD.
HEAD TO
GET HOOD
COLOR - PMS
266

HEAD
LT ARM
RT ARM
TORSO U/R
" U/F
" L/R
" L/F
LEG RT
" LT.

PMS
550

PANTONE
550C

PANTONE
266

LOWER
TORSO

K06827

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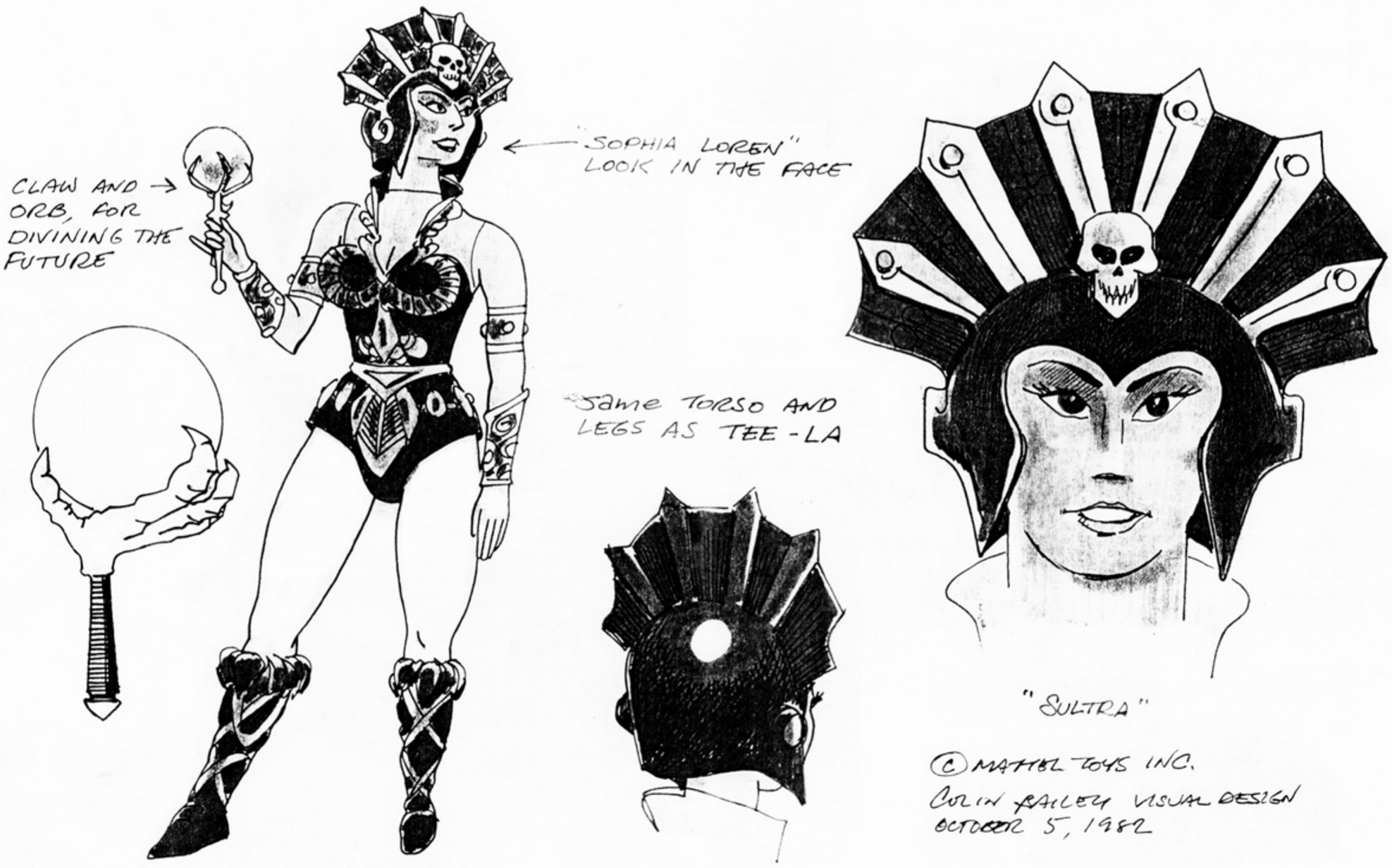
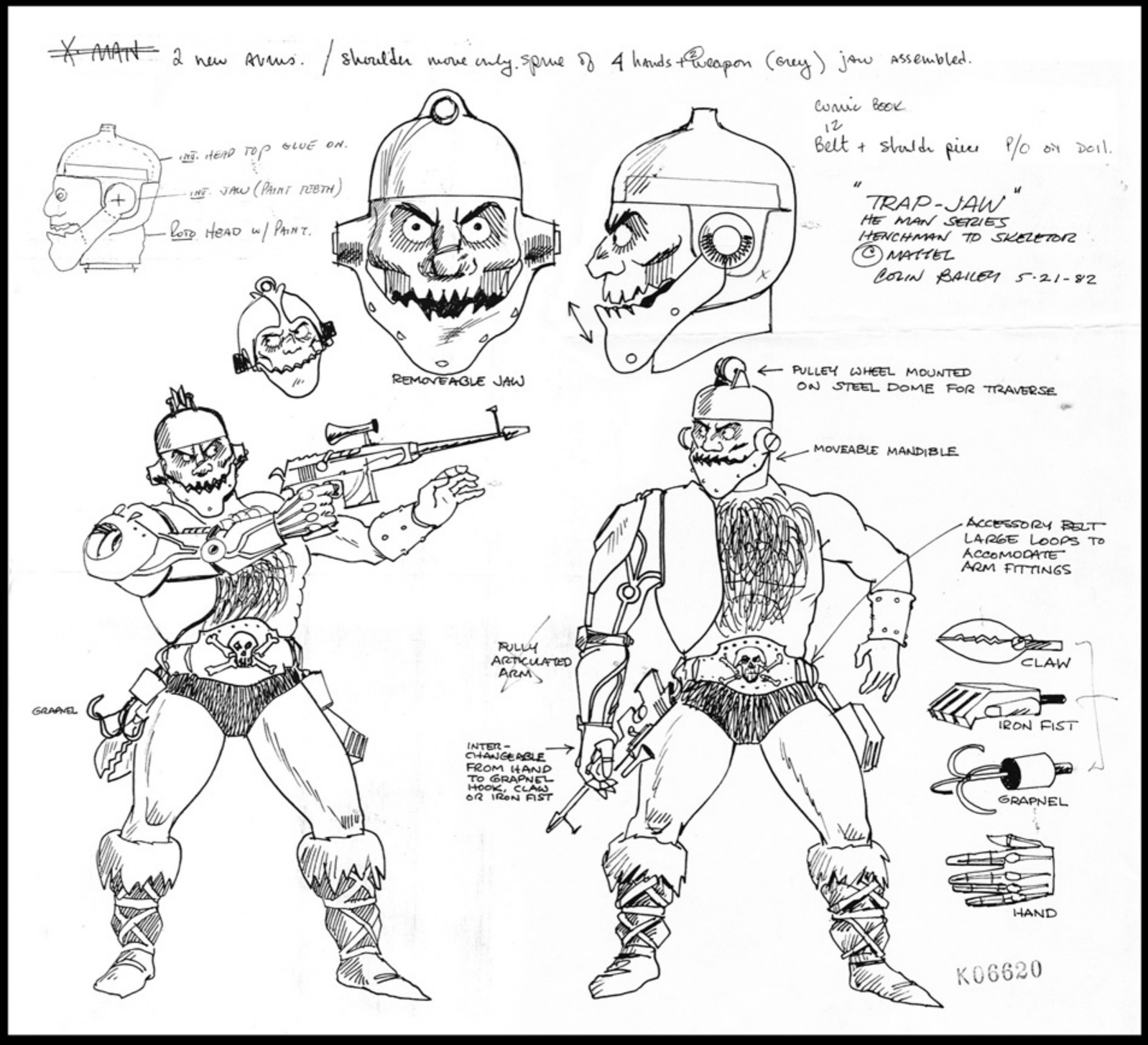
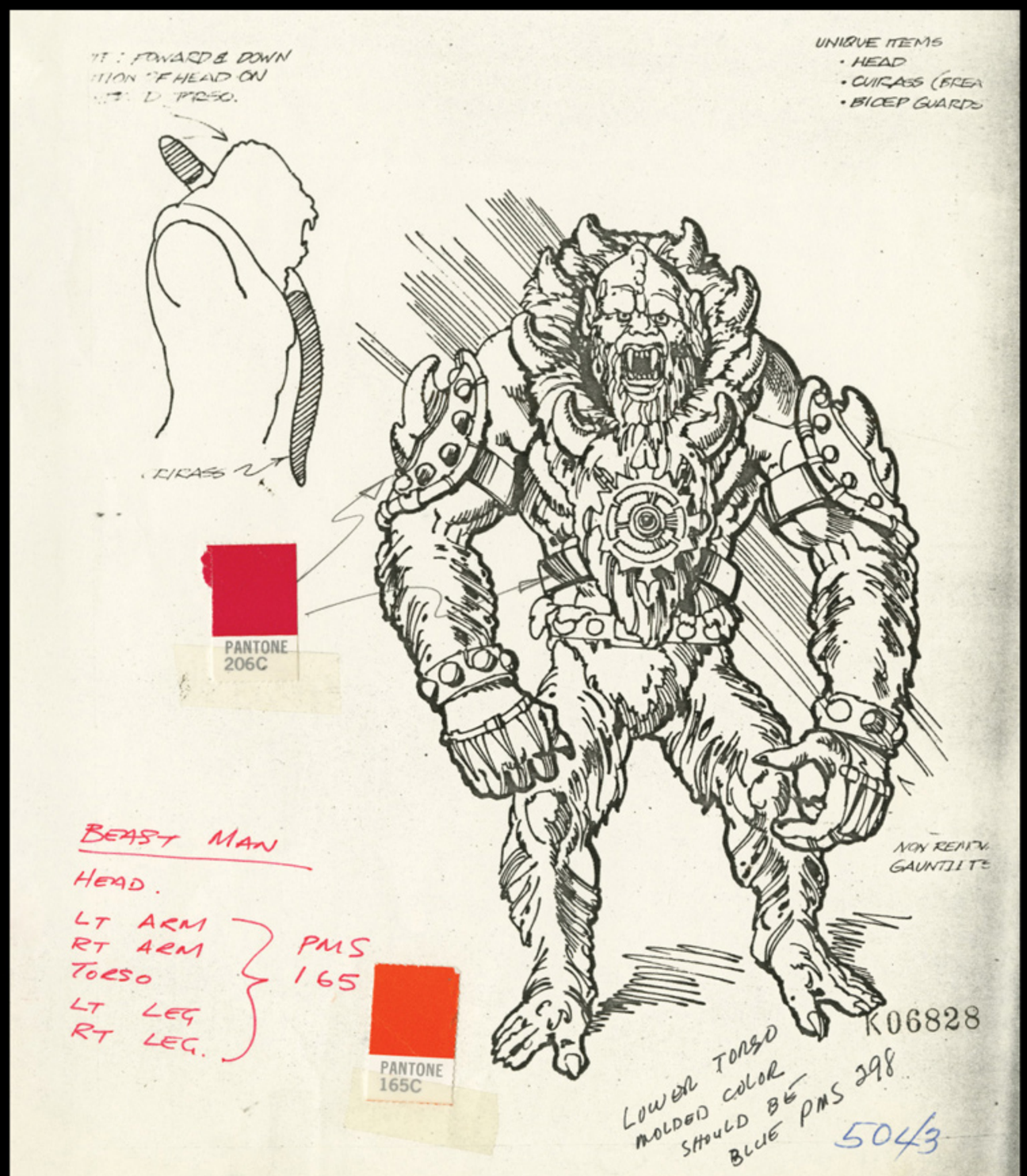
Early version of Skeletor by Mark Taylor. Note the Havoc Staff's action feature, a pop-off skull that was attached via a string.



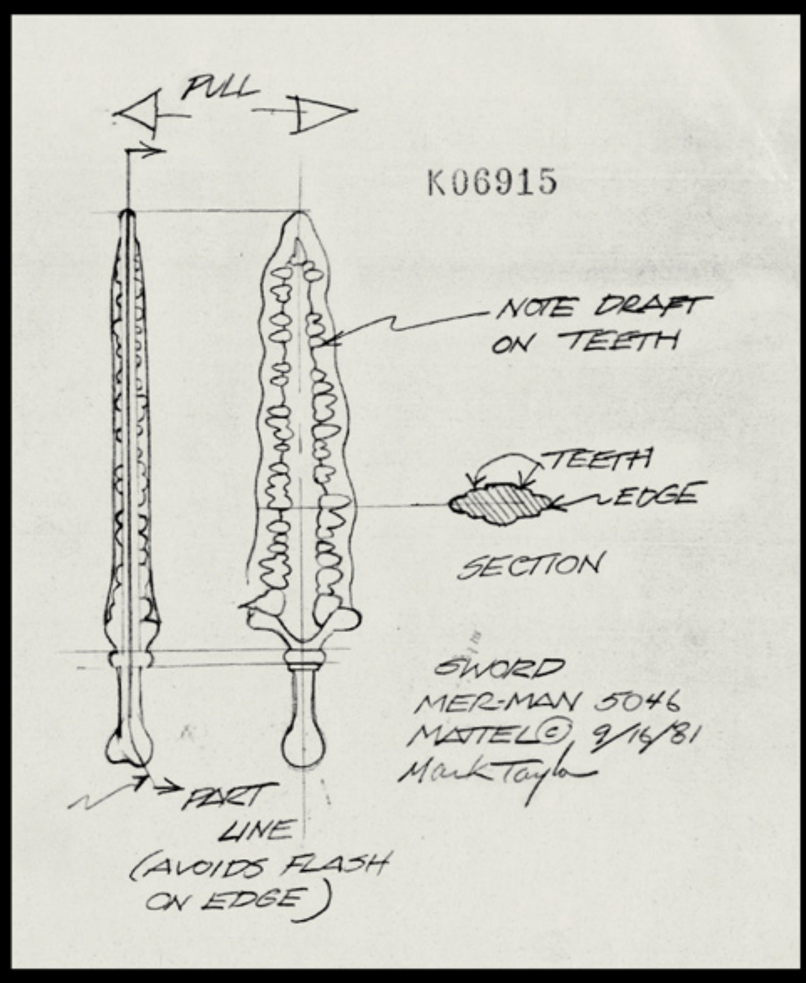
Above: An early version of Evil-Lyn, named "Sultra," by Colin Bailey.

Right: Early concept drawing by Colin Bailey for Trap Jaw, first called "X-Man." An interesting note is that the snapping-jaw feature was recycled from a Big Jim toy prototype called "Iron Jaw" from 1982. Often Mattel designers will reuse concepts that work well from other lines.





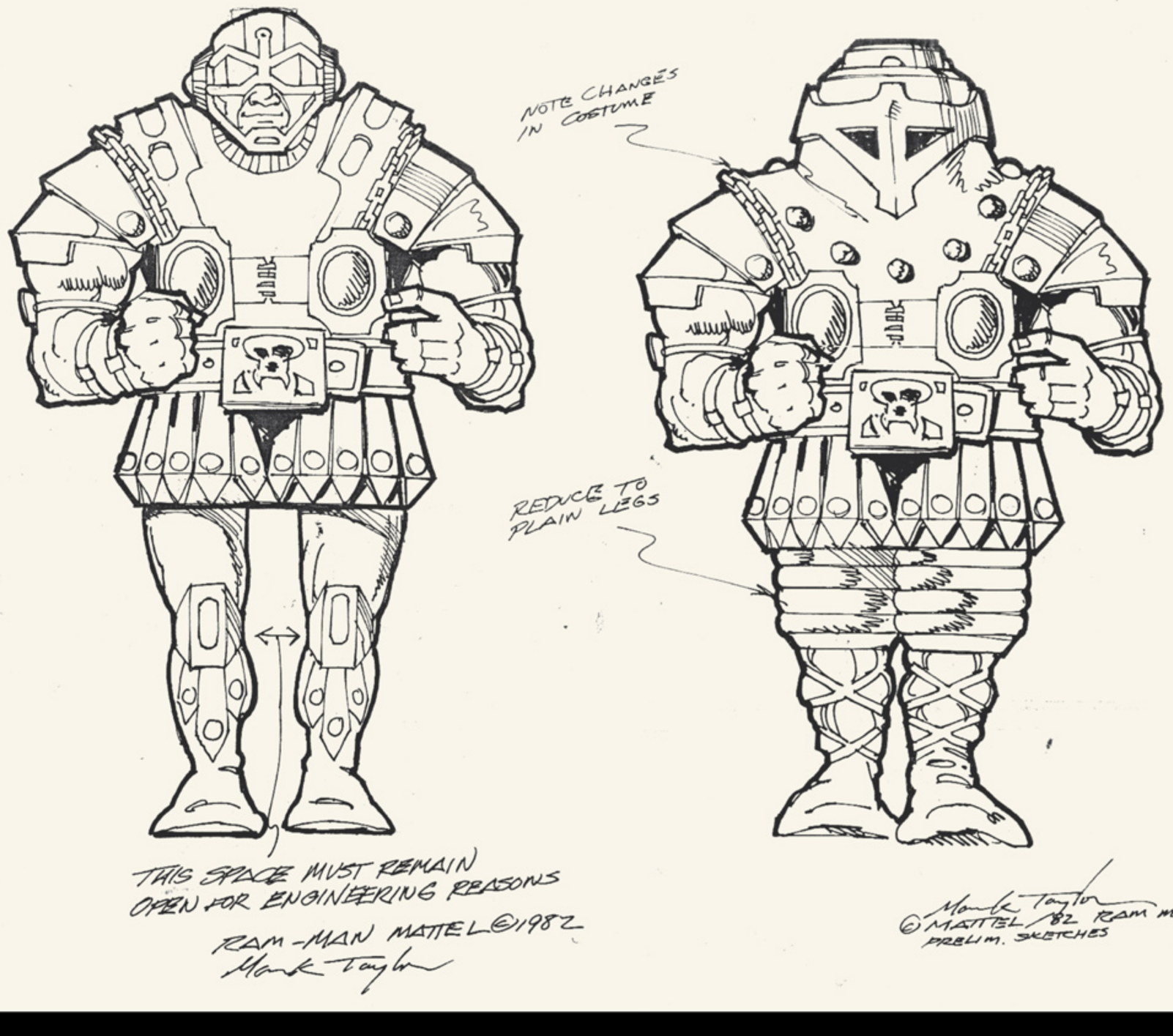


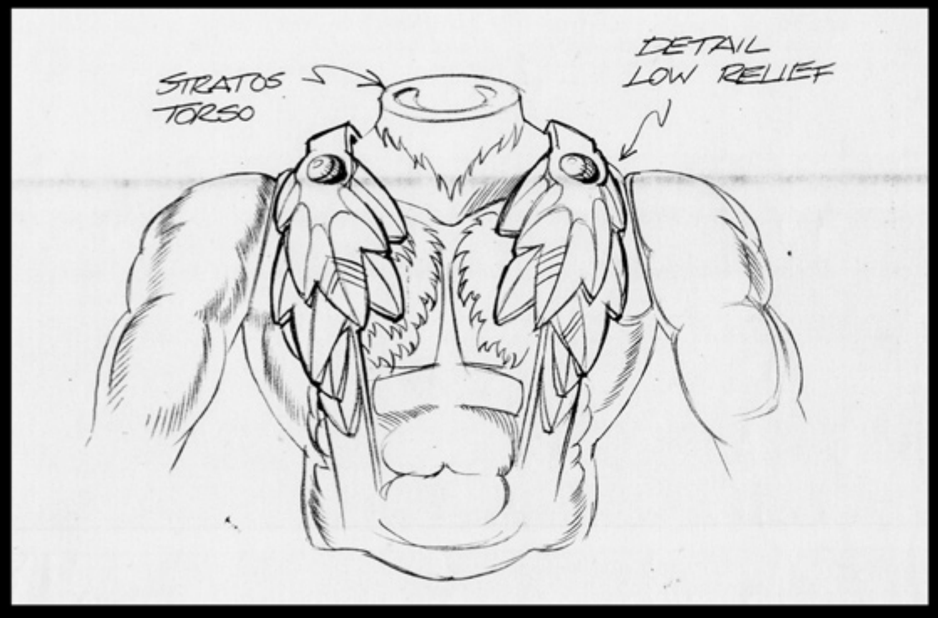




Top left: Early concept art of Beast Man by Mark Taylor.

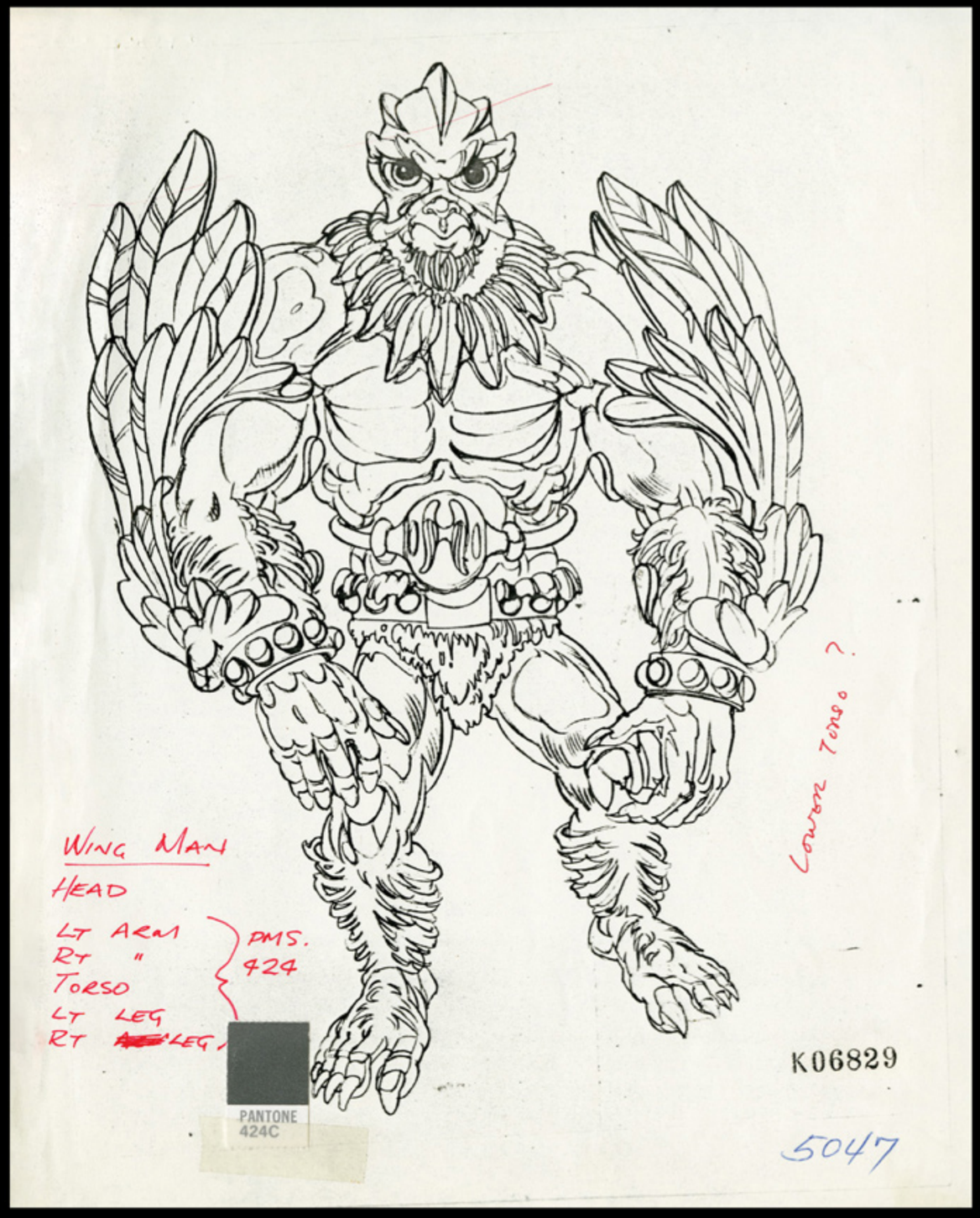
Above and left: Early concept art for Mer-Man by Mark Taylor, along with an early figurine (*top right*).

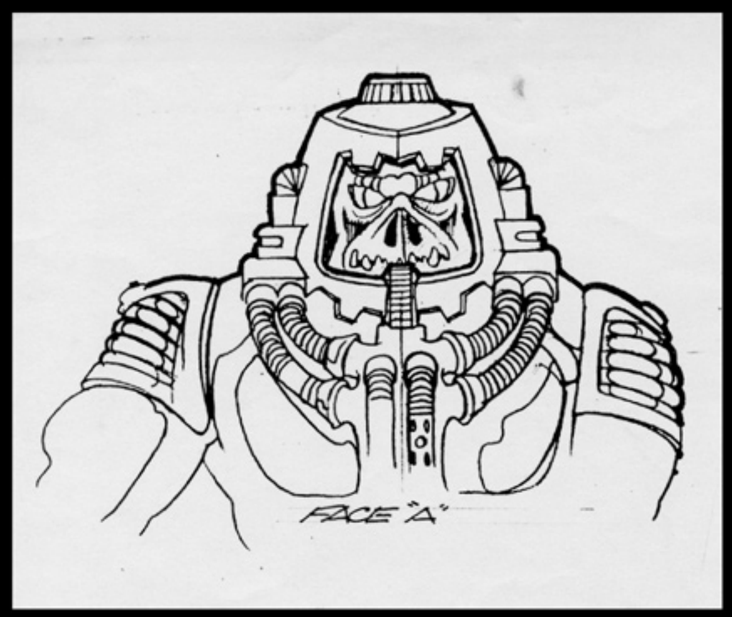




Top: Early Ram Man concepts by Mark Taylor. Note that one concept wears a full face helmet. You can see the influence of Jack Kirby's Fourth World on both Ram Man and Man-E-Faces (*opposite*). Before Mattel started work on the MOTU line, there was a good deal of work done on a proposed Jack Kirby Fourth World toy line licensed from DC.

Bottom: Stratos, or "Wing Man," also had a few parts that got changed in the final figure. The original design appeared in the early minicomics drawn by Alfredo Alcala.

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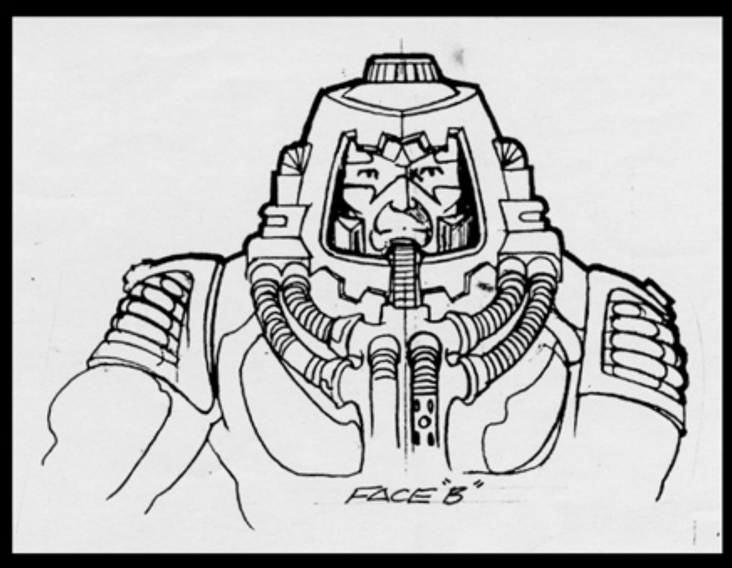
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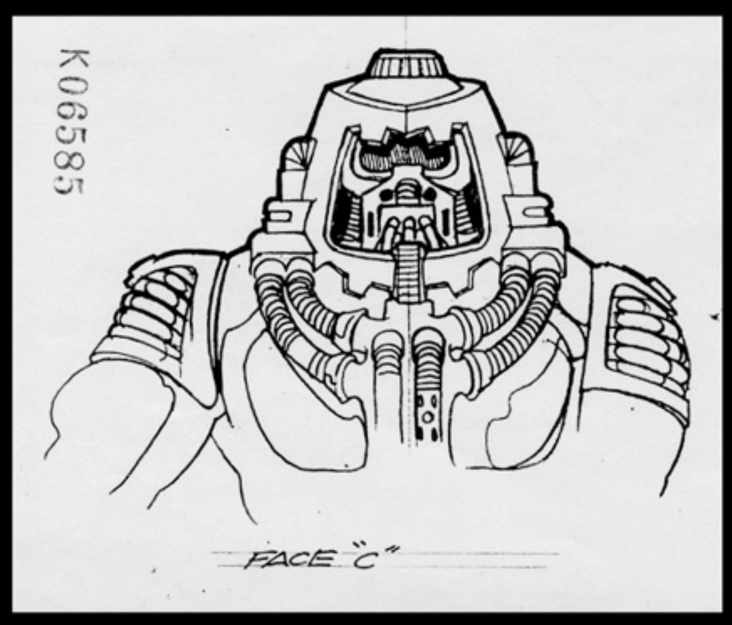
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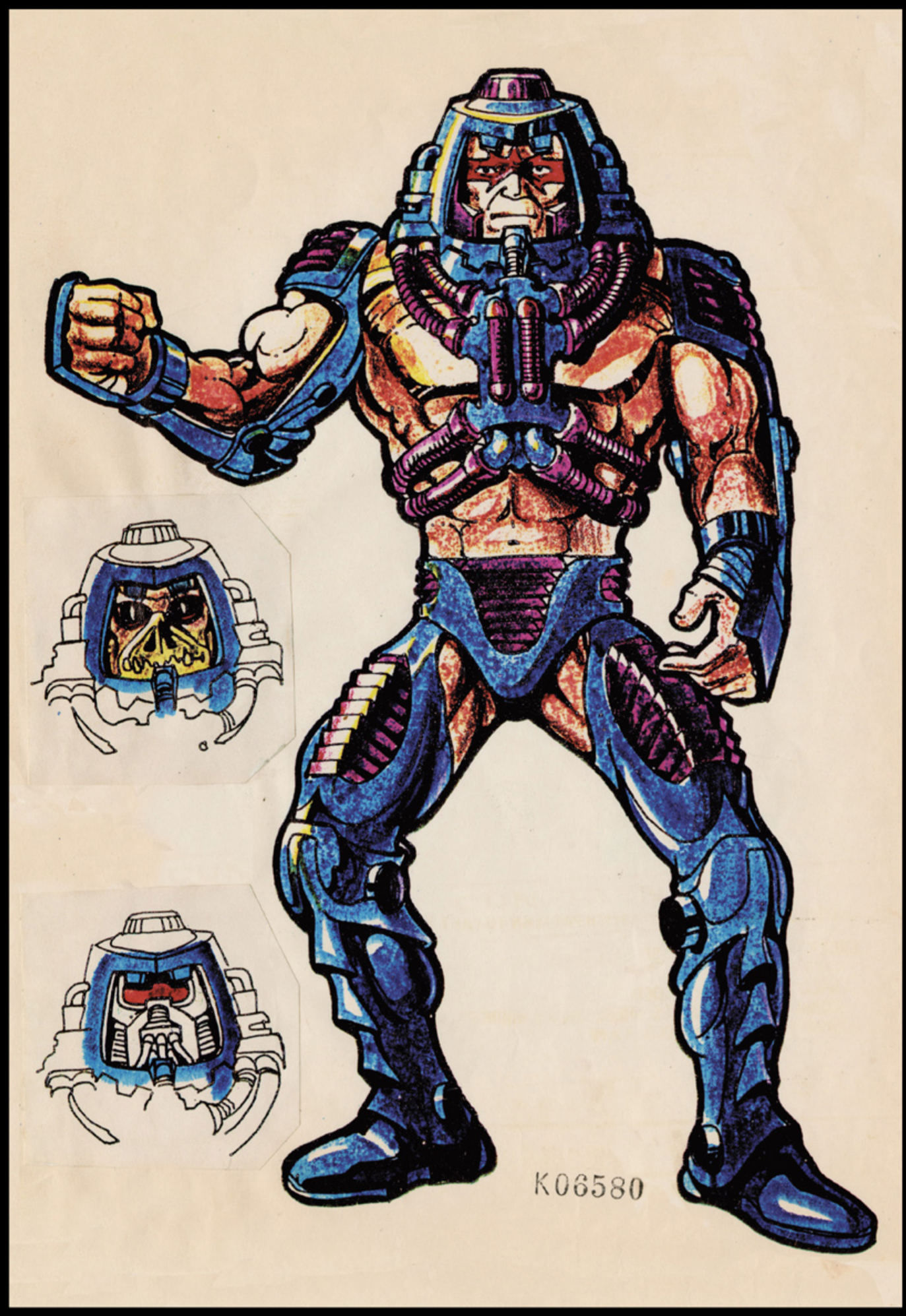
FACE "C"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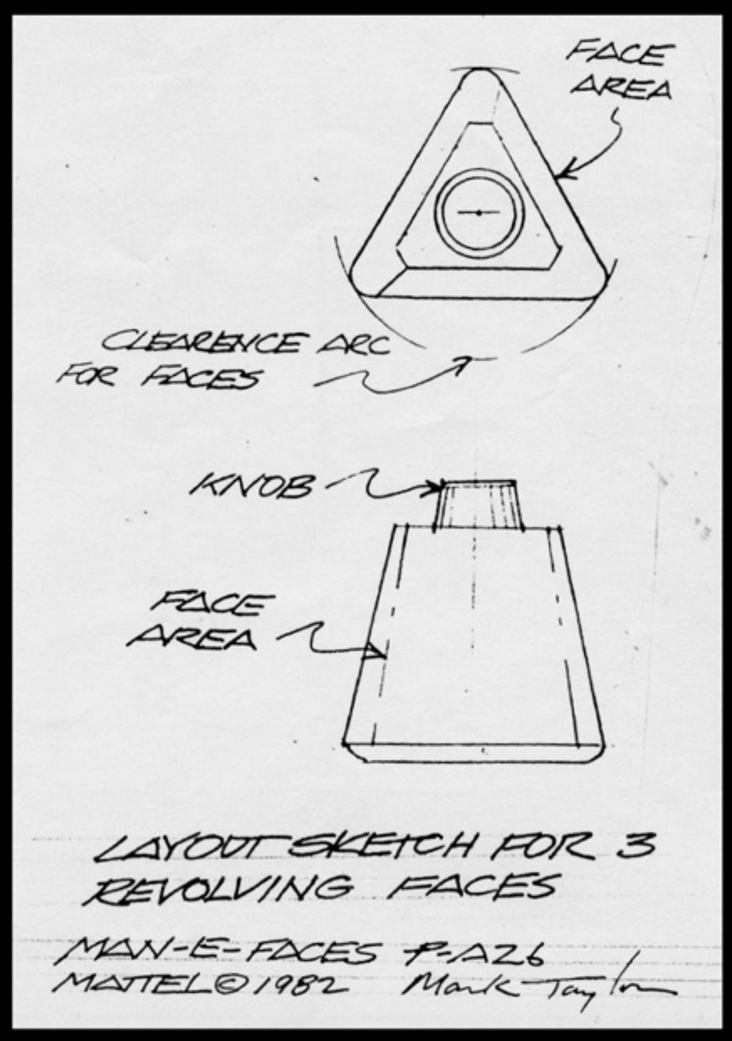
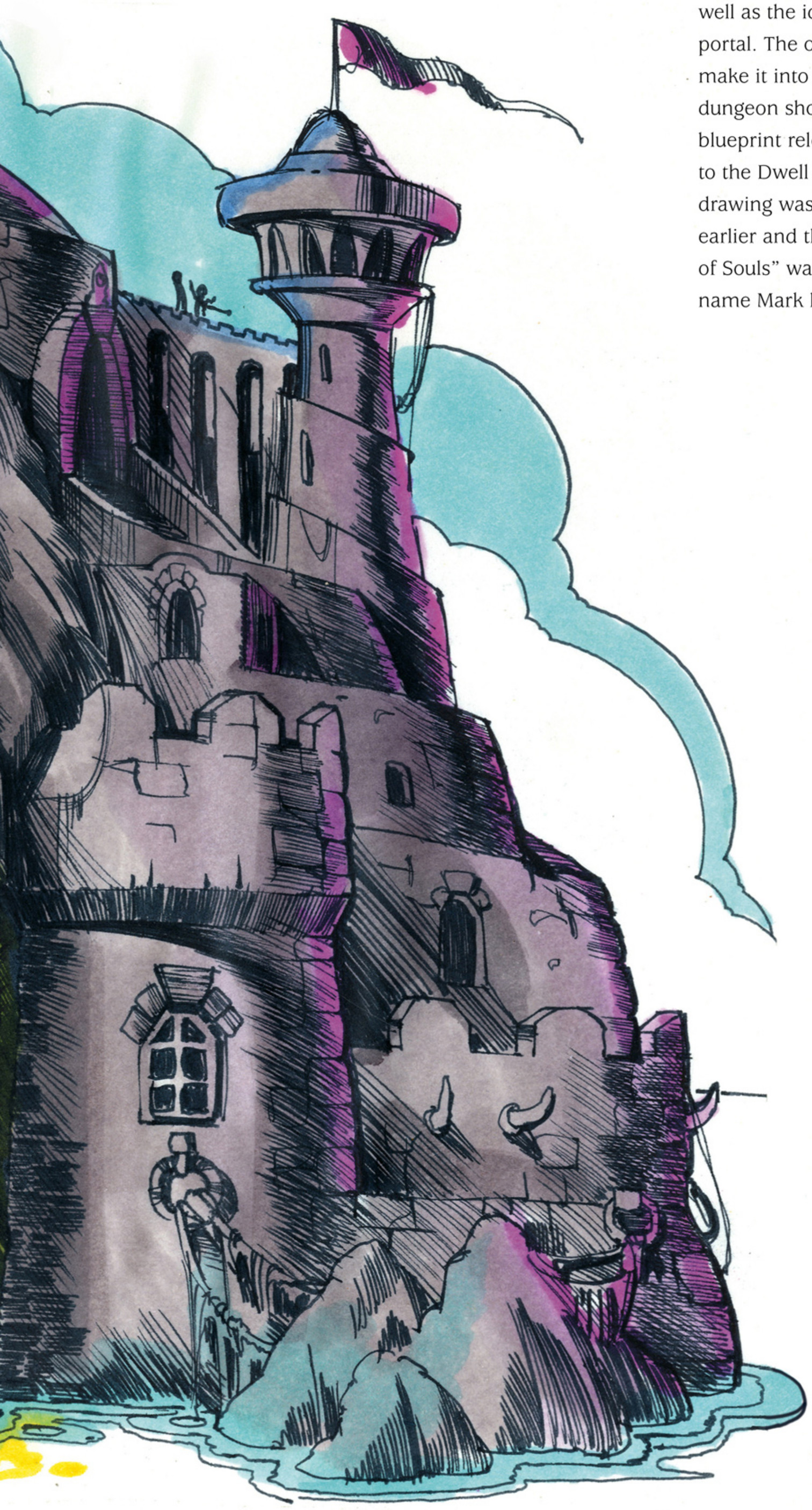

FACE AREA
CLEARENCE ARC FOR FACES
KNOB
FACE AREA
LAYOUT SKETCH FOR 3 REVOLVING FACES
MAN-E-FACES P-A26
MATTEL©1982 Mark Taylor

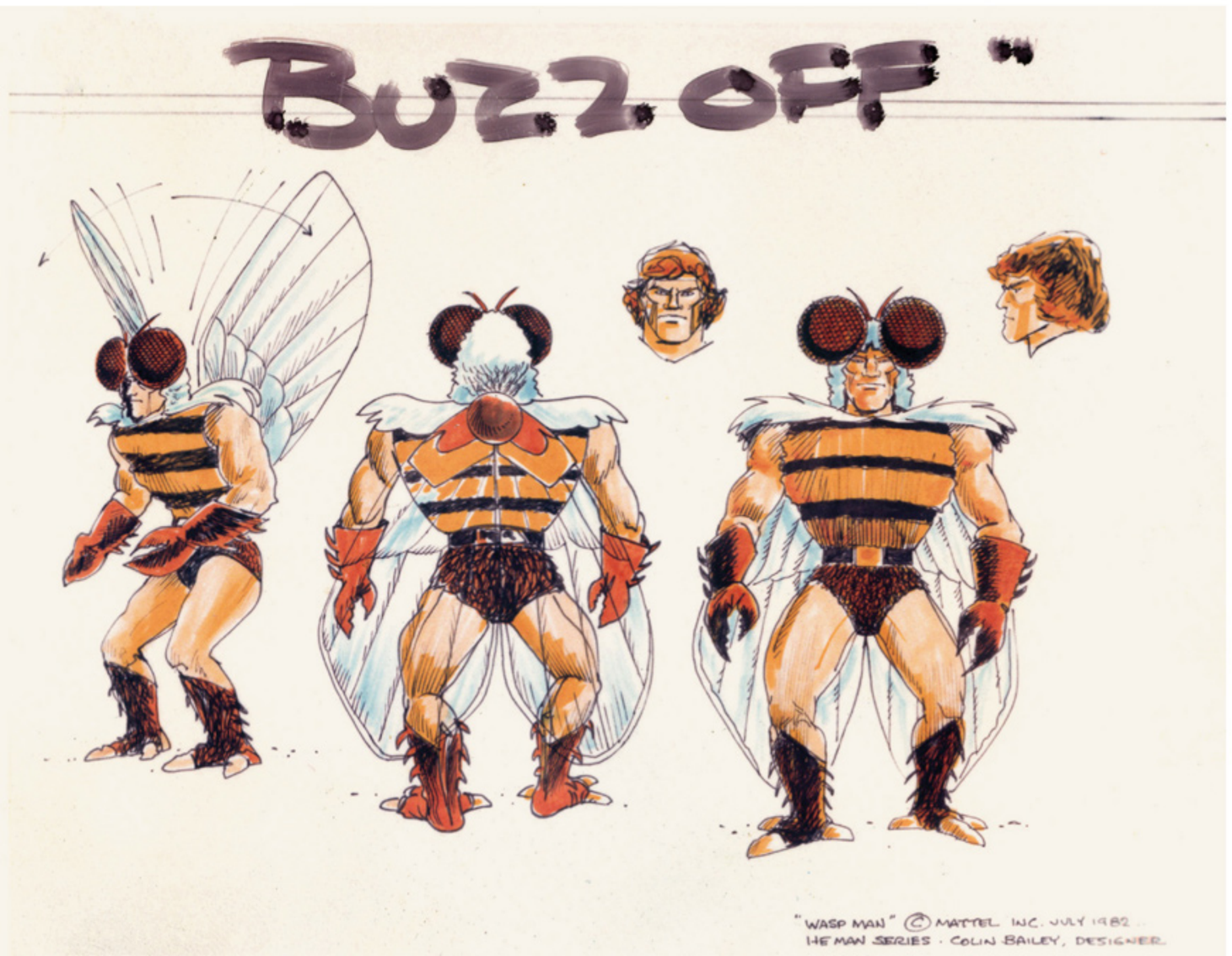




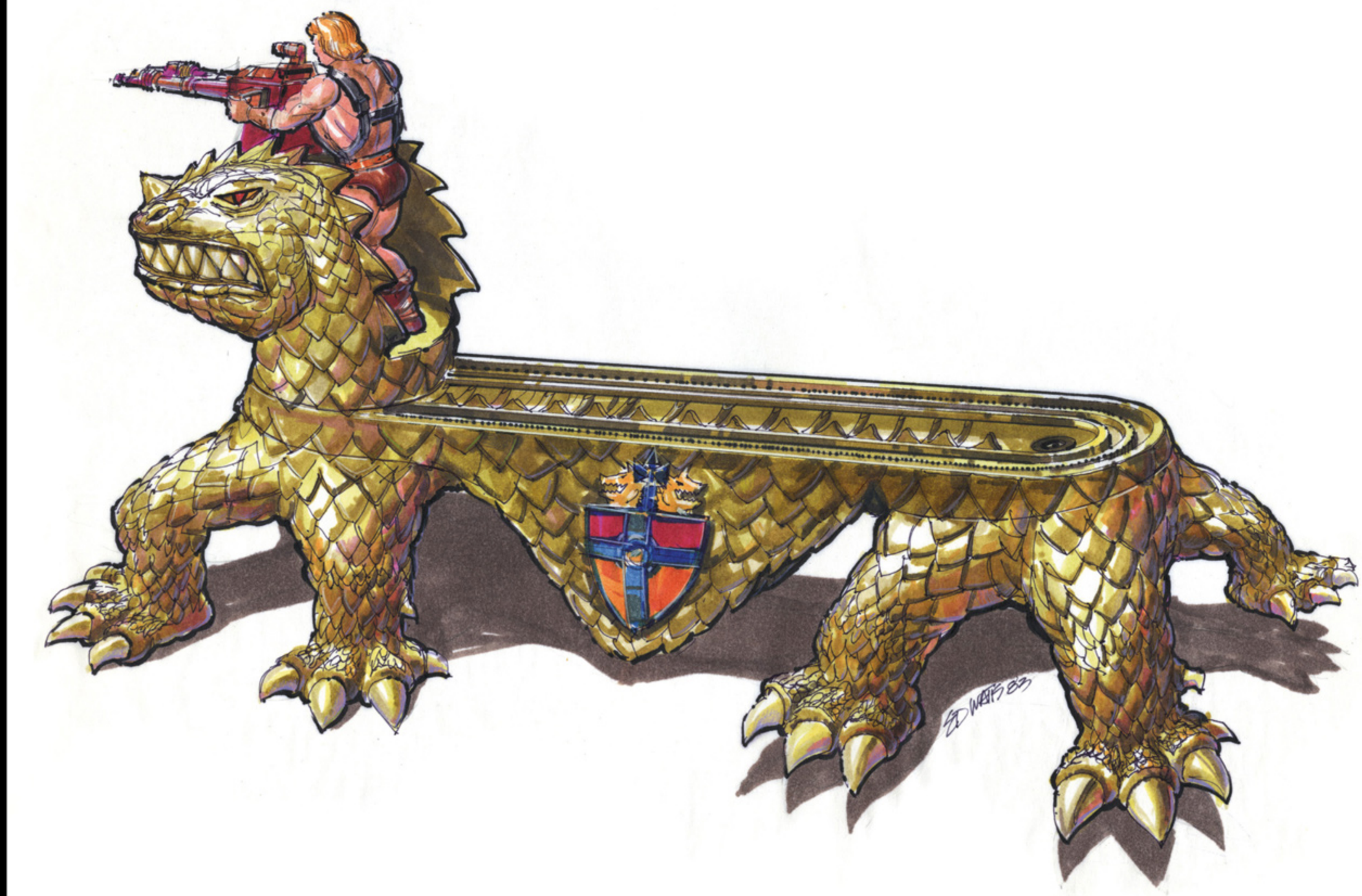


Very early concept sketch by Mark Taylor that was a direct influence for Castle Grayskull, originally called "the Dwell of Souls." This concept introduced the skull-shaped entrance, as well as the idea that the castle sat over an interdimensional portal. The only concept from the Dwell of Souls model to make it into the final toy was the sticker sheet for the castle dungeon showing beasts and monsters crawling out. The castle blueprint released in 2015 named this dungeon grate "Entrance to the Dwell of Souls" as a homage to this original concept. This drawing was not actually created for MOTU, but was created earlier and then incorporated into the line. The name "Dwell of Souls" was not part of the original story line but it was the name Mark had in mind.

Clockwise from top left: Early Eternia play set concept by Ted Mayer (called Mount Eternia), early Megalaser concept by Ted Mayer, early Blast-Attak concept by Mark Jones, and early Buzz-Off concept by Colin Bailey.

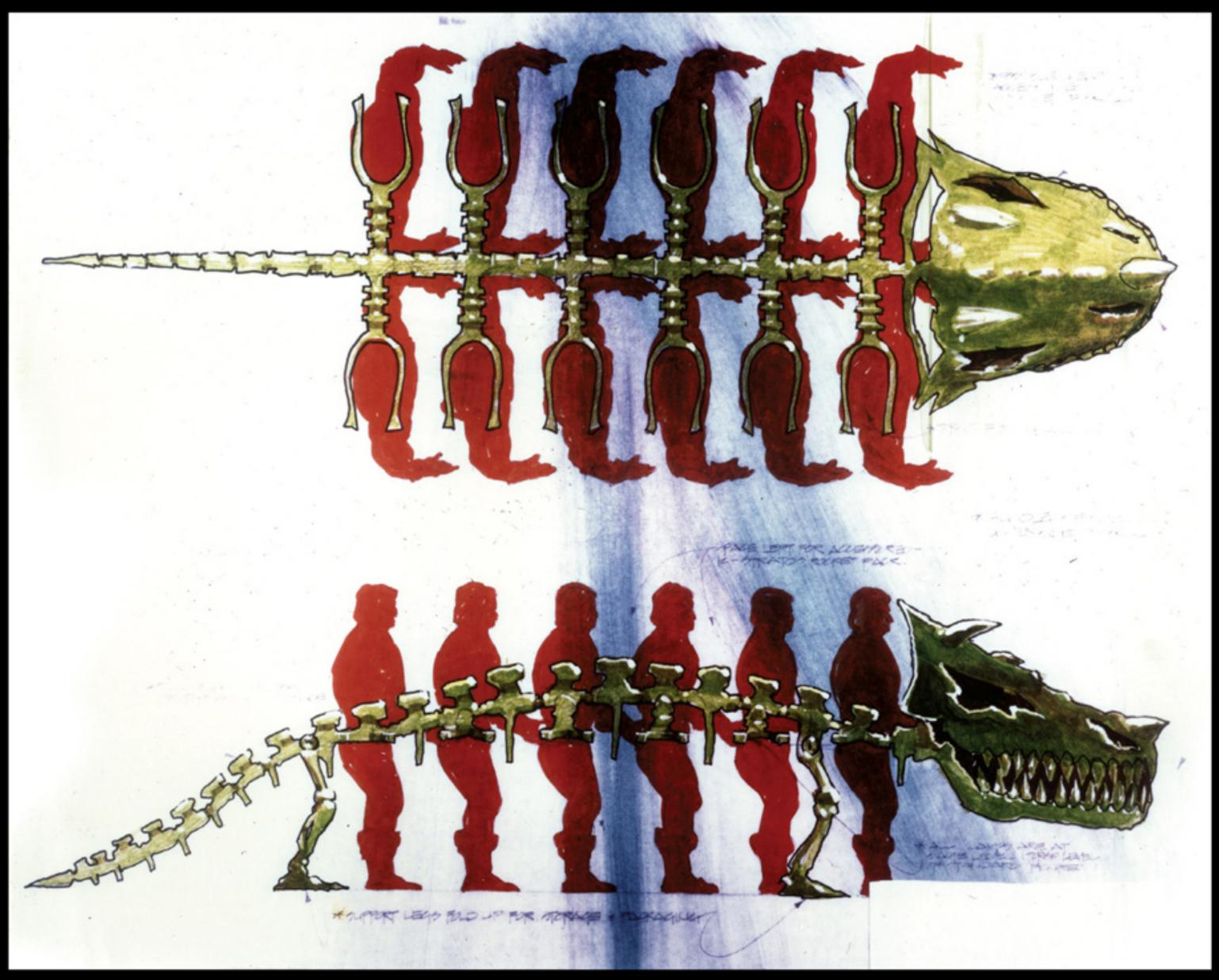


Top: Road Ripper design by Roger Sweet. Note how the plastic clip-on seat was replaced with a seat belt on the final toy.
Bottom: The Ball Buster, an early concept for the Bashasaurus, by Ed Watts.



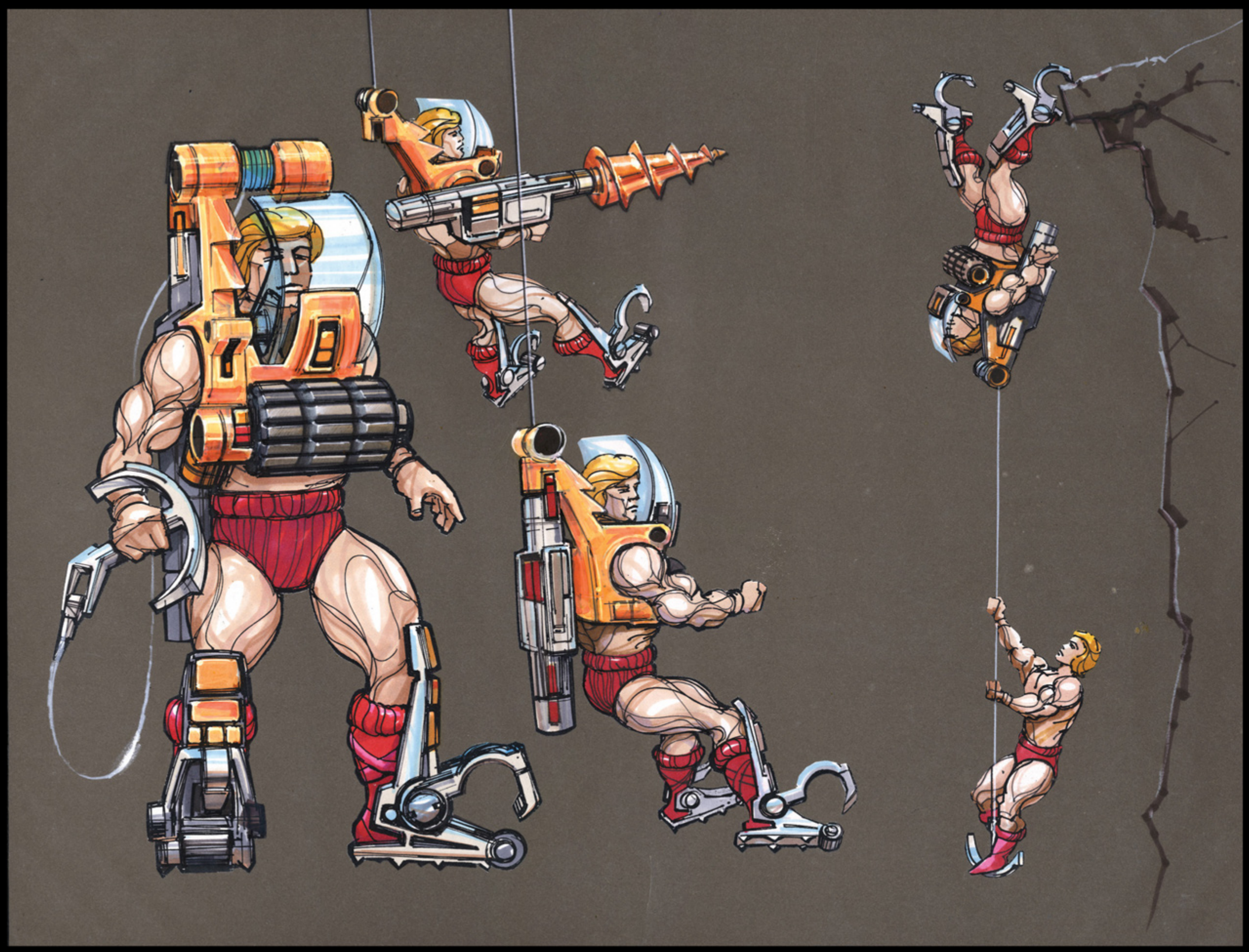
Above: Very early Dragon Walker art which was meant to be a motorized vehicle for the action figures and was much longer than the actual produced toy. *Right:* Battle Bones illustration by Ed Watts, which was meant as a battle transportation device that could carry up to twelve figurines.

Opposite page: Never-produced He-Man and Skeletor toys with spring-loaded actions on their chests, by Ted Mayer (*top*). James McElroy's designs for Cliff Climber, which was released toward the end of the toy line as one of three motorized Power Gear accessories (*bottom*).









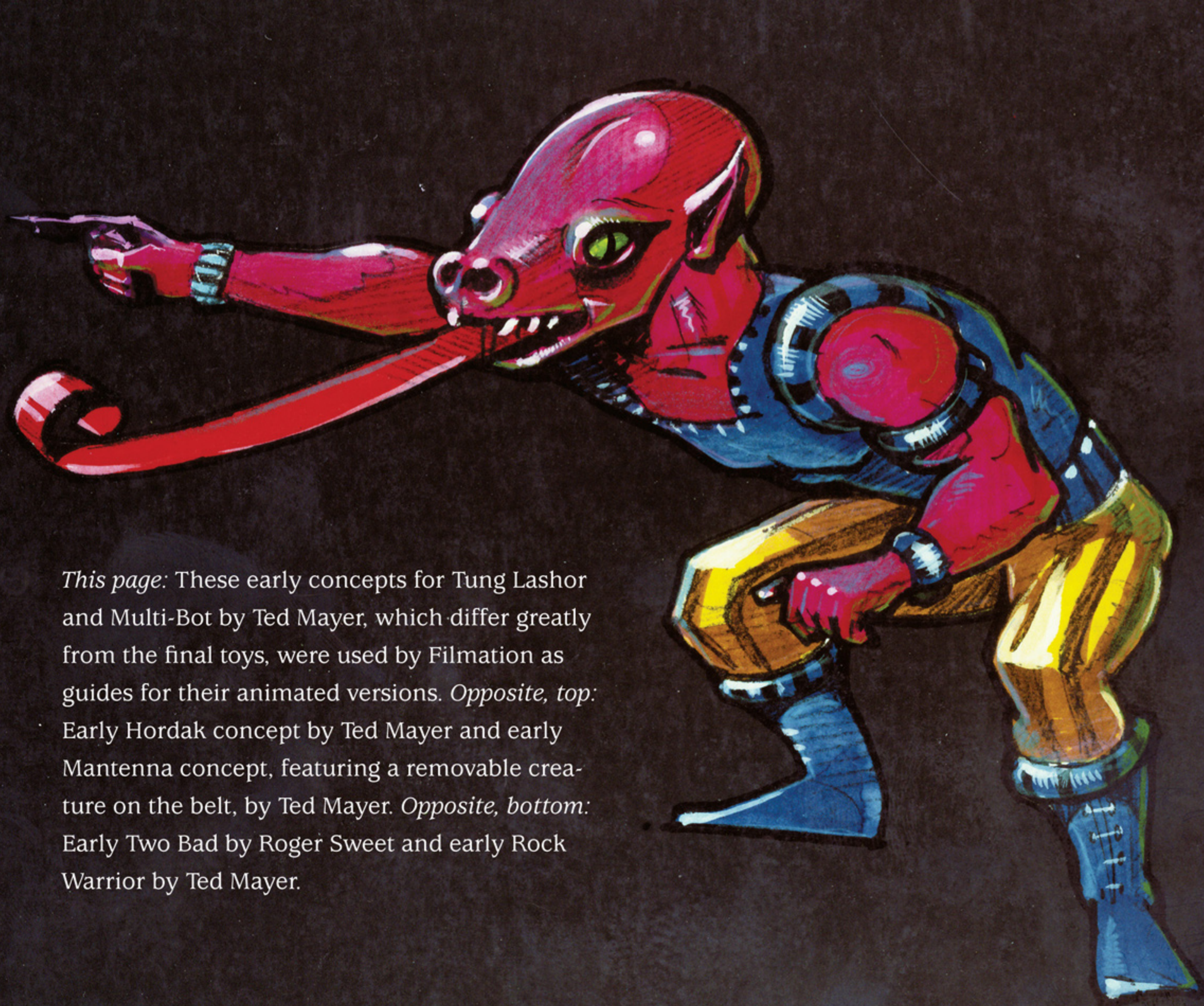
An early design for Sy-Klone by Roger Sweet.
Opposite, bottom: A late Mosquitor design by David Wolfram and a large-headed Sssqueeze design.



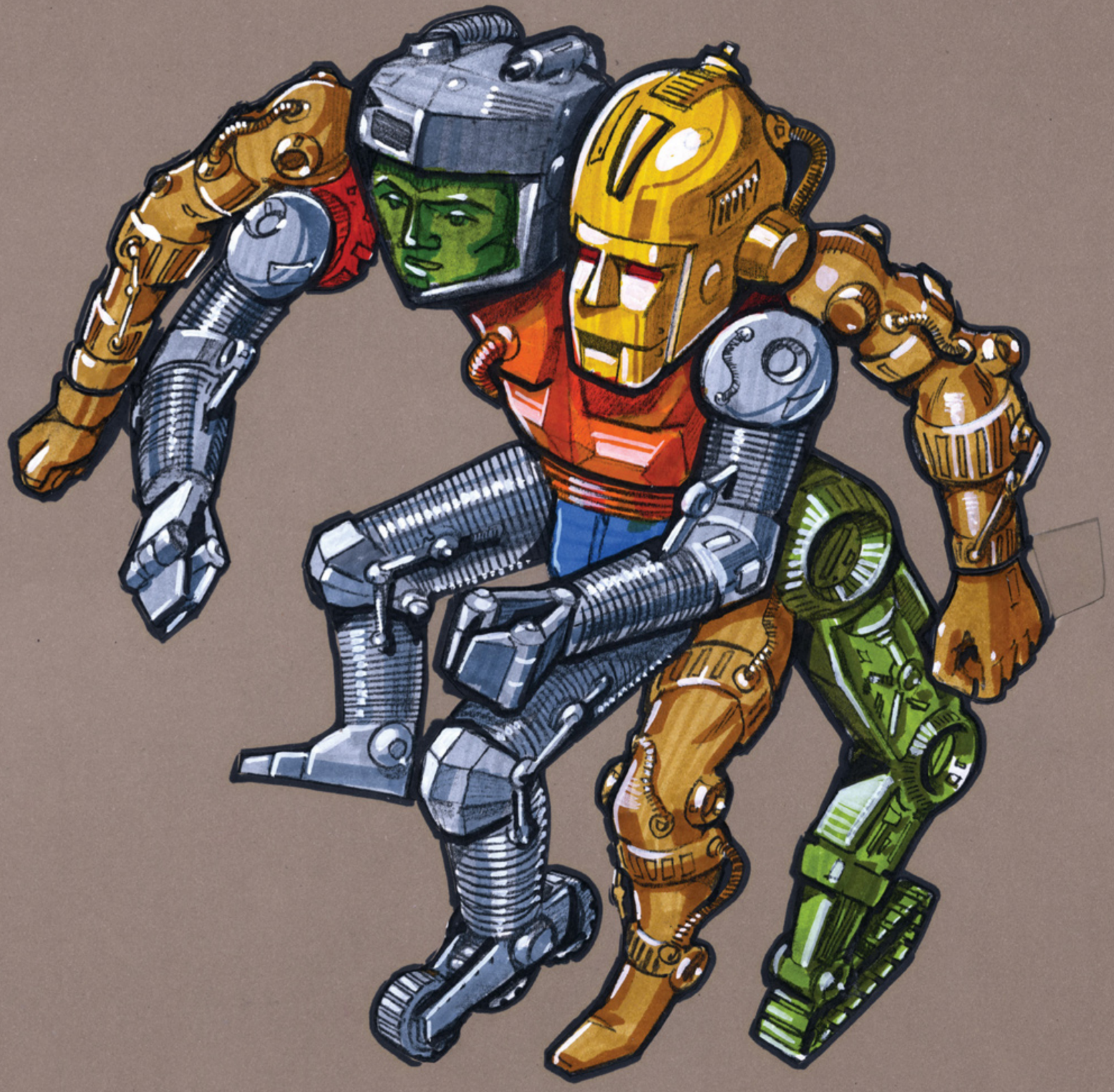
A late design for Tyrantisaurus Rex by David Wolfram. At this stage very little was changed before its release under the Powers of Grayskull banner.

T' REX

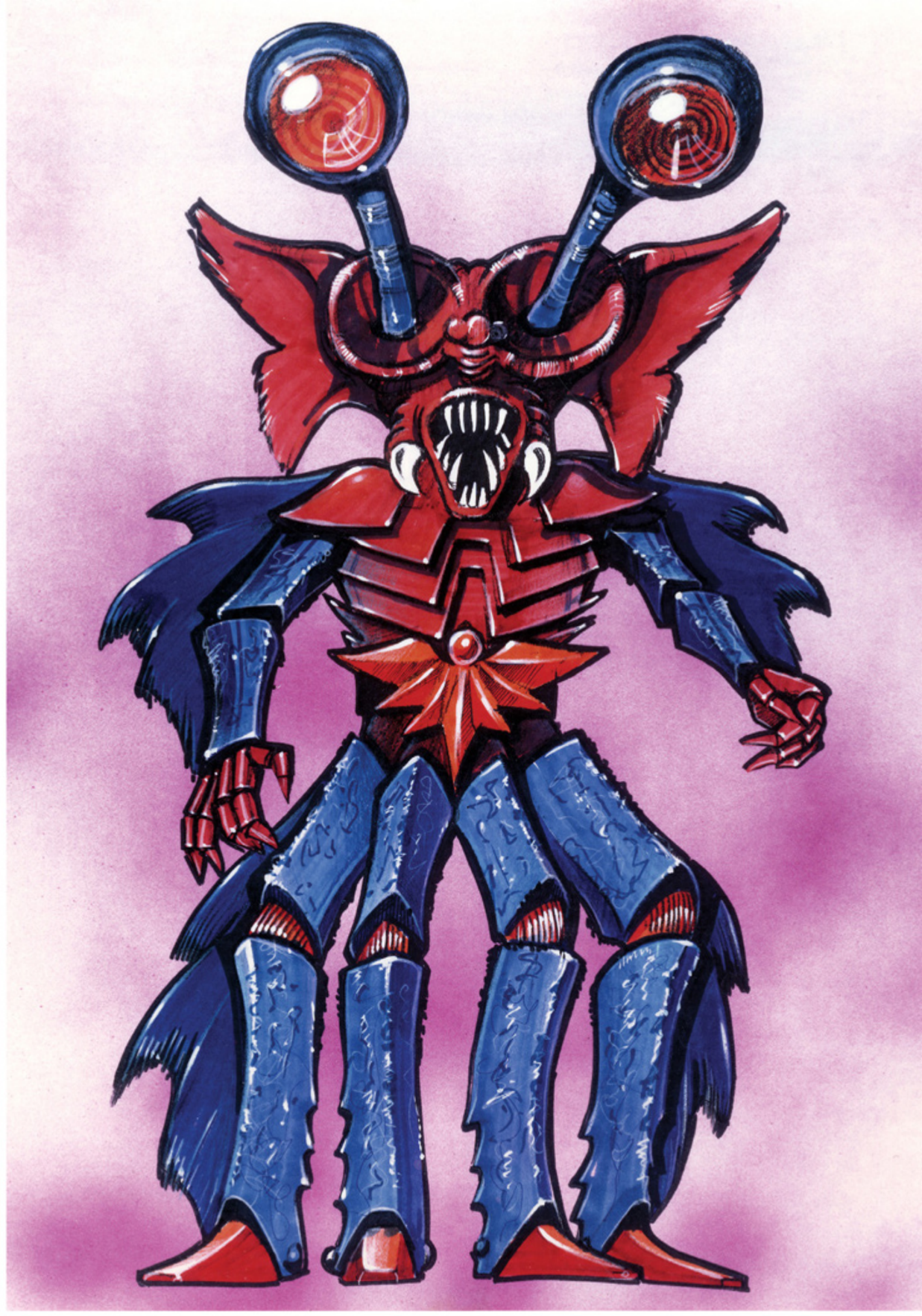
© MATTEL INC 11·21·1985
DRAWN BY DAVID WOLFRAM

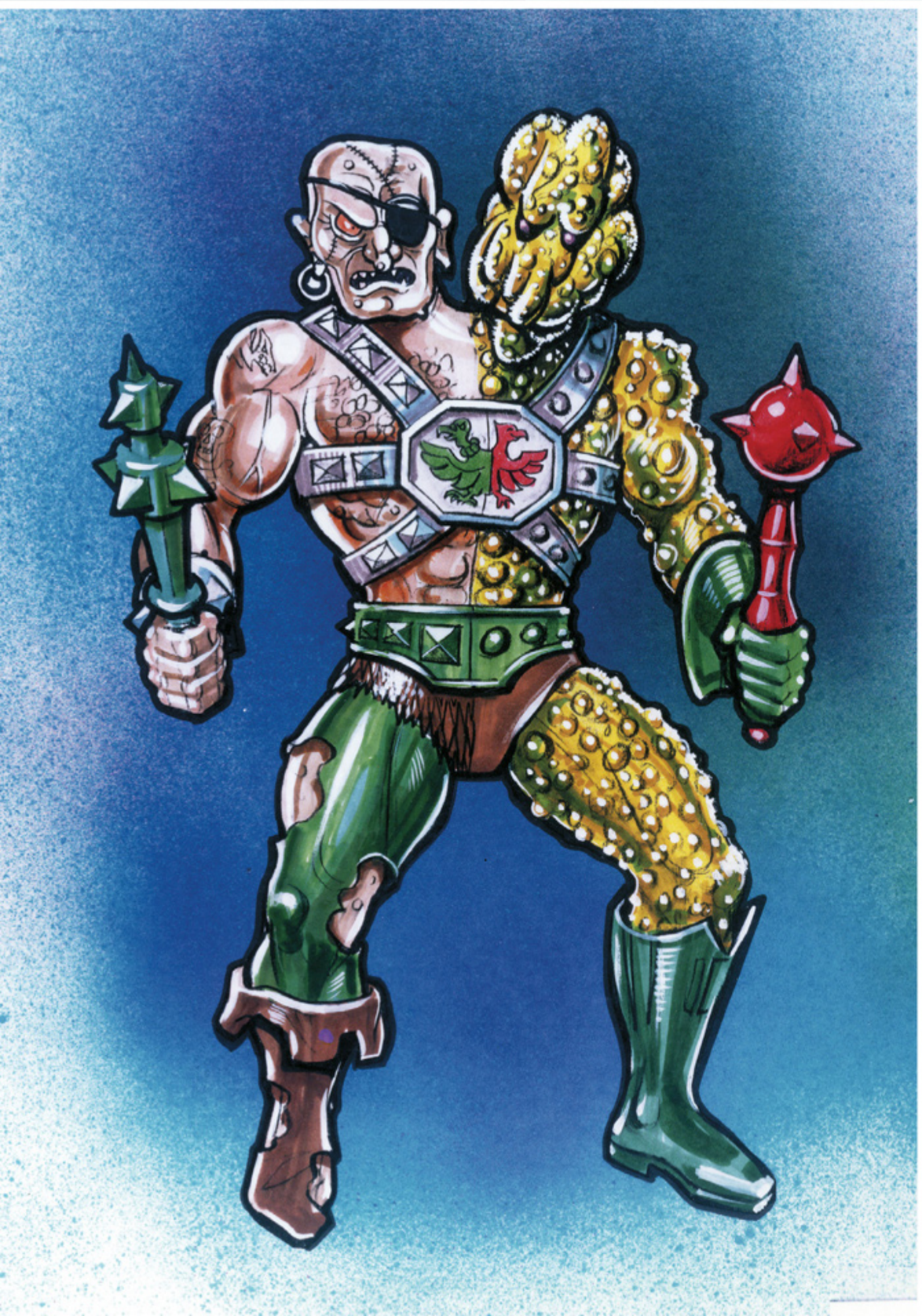


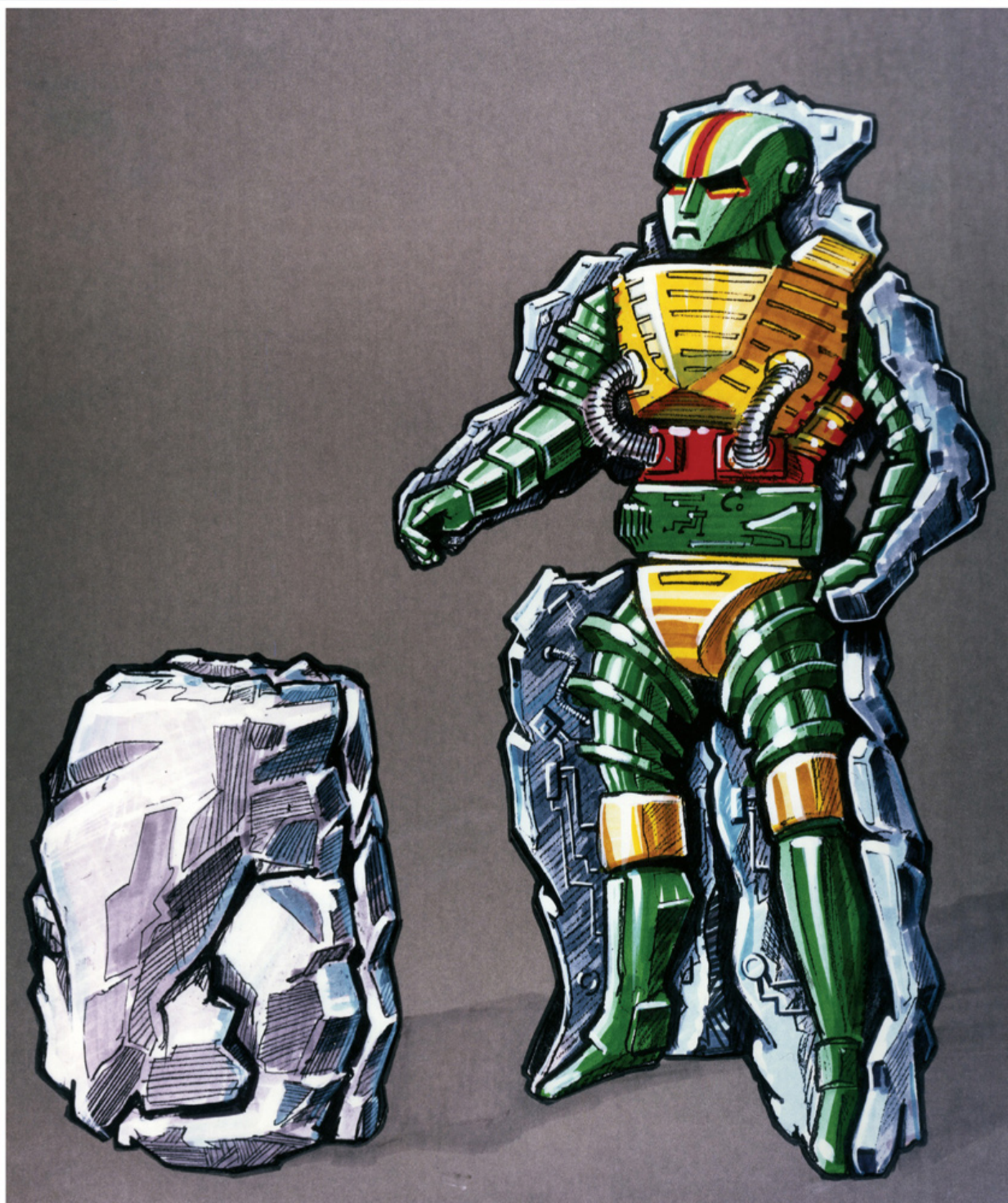
This page: These early concepts for Tung Lashor and Multi-Bot by Ted Mayer, which differ greatly from the final toys, were used by Filmation as guides for their animated versions. *Opposite, top:* Early Hordak concept by Ted Mayer and early Mantenna concept, featuring a removable creature on the belt, by Ted Mayer. *Opposite, bottom:* Early Two Bad by Roger Sweet and early Rock Warrior by Ted Mayer.











Early design for Blast-Attak by Richard Lepik, called Crack-Pot at the time.

Mattel, Inc.

PROJECT NAME: M.O.U. (EVIL FIG.) "CRACK-POT" — PROJECT/TOY NO.: TC-12

ORIGINATOR: RICHARD V. LEPIK — DESIGNER — WITNESS

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Late toy promotion
and production painting for
Twistoid, by Howard Rees.

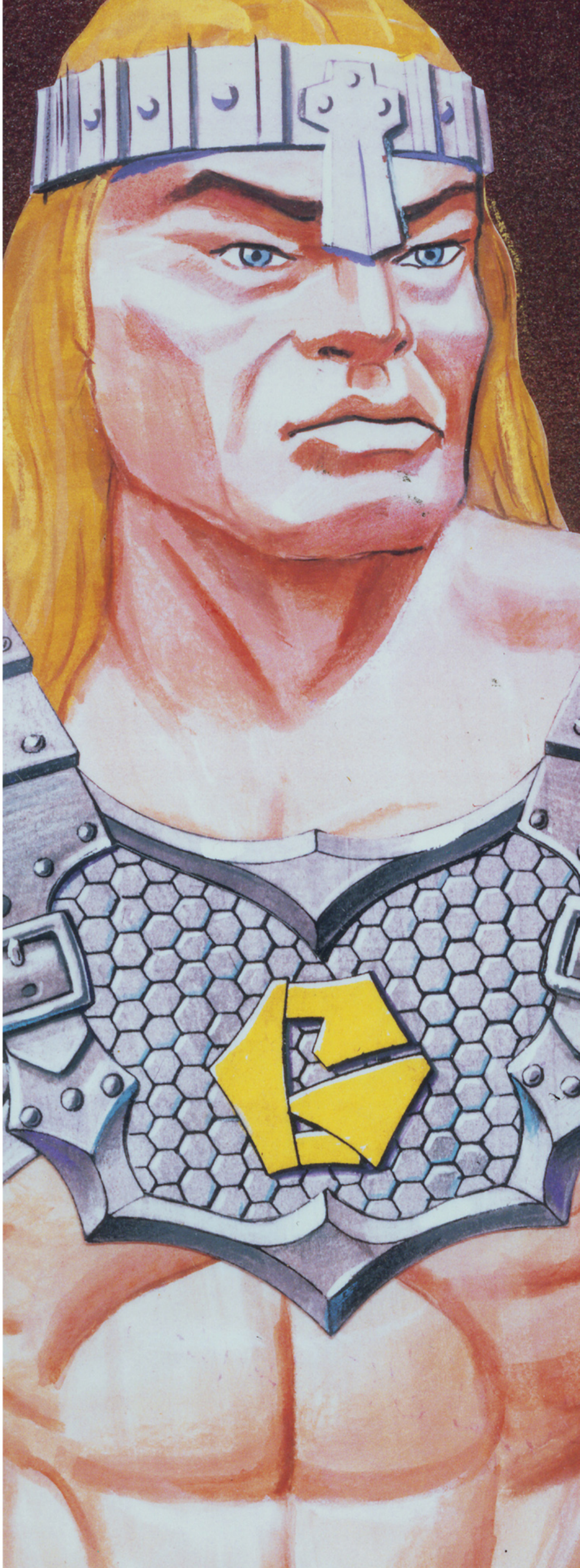
Late toy promotion and production painting for the Sorceress, by P. Dunn.

Another promotion cel showing Buzz-Saw Hordak's hidden chest-action feature.



Working designs for the giants Megator (*above and below*) and Tytus (*right*). Note the similarities between the top design for Megator and Mark Taylor's original design for Demo-Man. The second design is much truer to the final product, except his skin was later changed to green.





PRODUCED TOYS

A hand-painted prototype of the original He-Man action figure, released in 1982.

K06851

The cross-sell packaging illustration of Thunder Punch He-Man, released in wave 4 (1985).



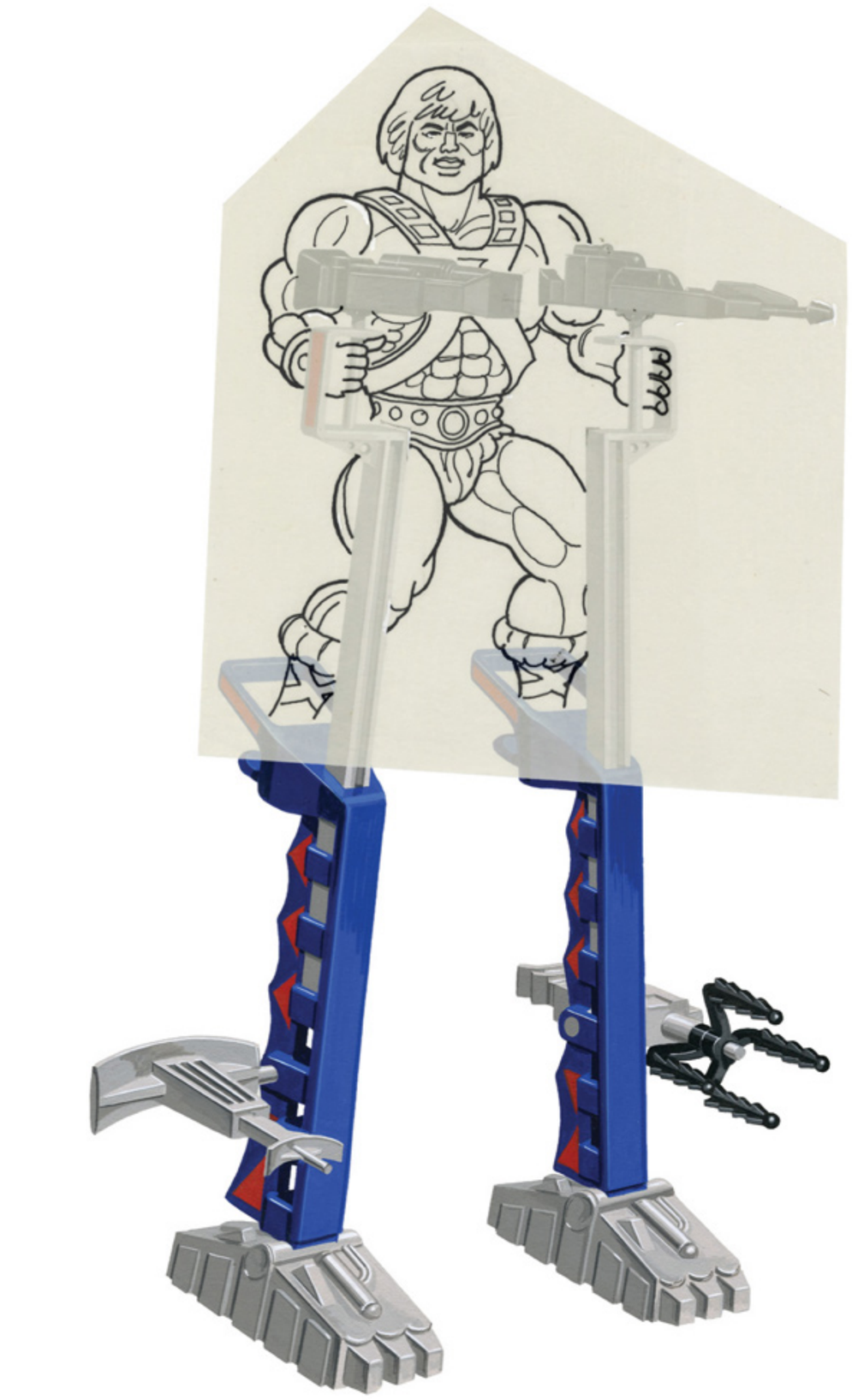
The Battle Armor Skeletor cross-sell packaging illustration. The figure saw release in wave 3 (1984).



Heroic Warriors cross-sell packaging illustrations: *First row, left to right,* Prince Adam (wave 3), Man-At-Arms (1), Stratos (1), Sy-Klone (4), Sorceress (6); *second row,* Ram Man (2), Man-E-Faces (2), Mekaneck (3), Moss Man (4), Fisto (3); *third row,* King Randor (6), Rotar (6), Orko (3), Buzz-Off (3), Rio Blast (5); *fourth row,* Clamp Champ (6), Snout Spout (5), Extendar (5), Stonedar (5), and Rokkon (5).



Evil Warriors, Evil Horde, and Snake Men cross-sell packaging illustrations: *First row, left to right,* Beast Man (wave 1), Tri-Klops (2), Stinkor (4), Webstor (3), Clawful (3); *second row,* Spikor (4), Whiplash (3), Kobra Khan (3), Jitsu (3), Blast-Attak (6); *third row,* Scare Glow (6), Ninjor (6), Hordak (4), Horde Trooper (5), Dragstor (5); *fourth row,* Multi-Bot (5), King Hiss (5), Sssqueeze (6), and Two Bad (4).







Opposite, clockwise from top left: A cross-sell illustration for Stilt Stalkers, released in 1986. Backing-card paintings for Dragon Walker, Cliff Climber, Laser Bolt, and Stridor.

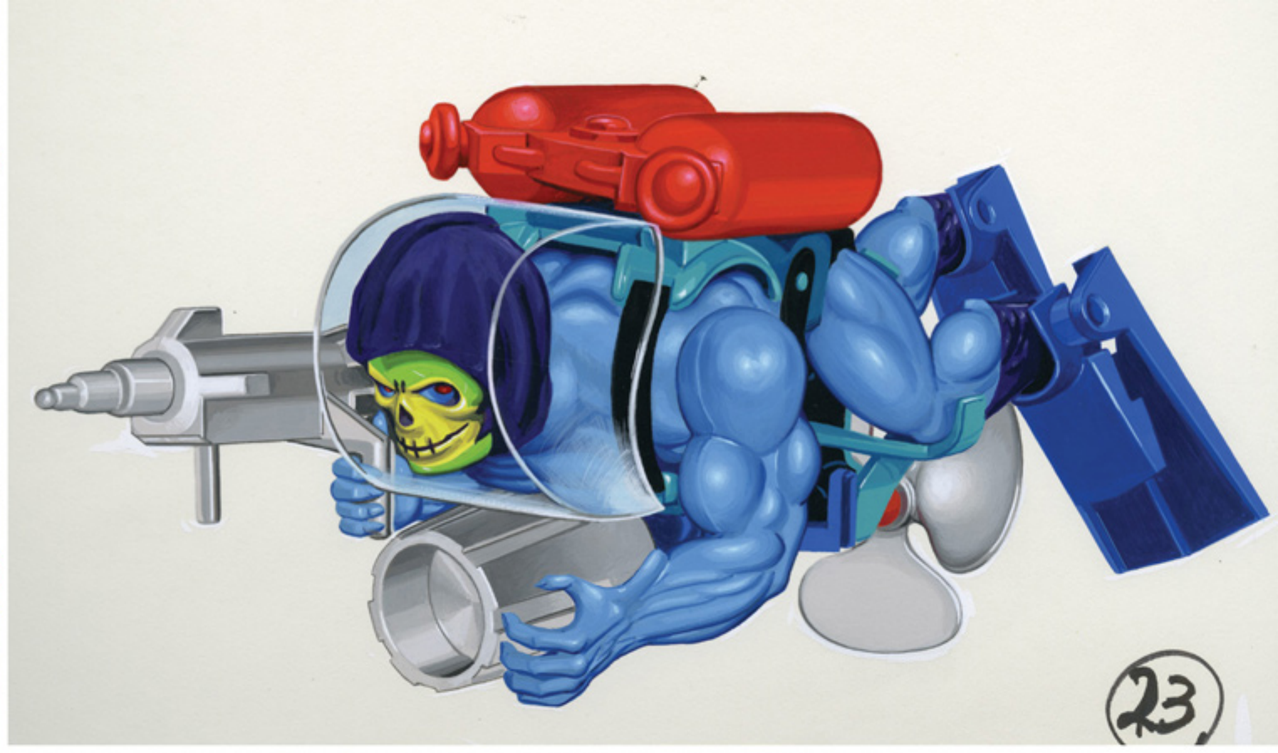
Below: Flying Fists He-Man was released in wave 5 (1986) in celebration of the fifth anniversary of He-Man.



Below: Tyrantisaurus Rex (wave 6) was released under the Powers of Grayskull banner. It was one of the final figures released in the United States in the original MOTU toy line. This cross-sell art shows the Dyna-Drone belly-shooting action.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: Paintings for Terror Claws Skeletor, Scubattack, Mantisaur, and Roton.

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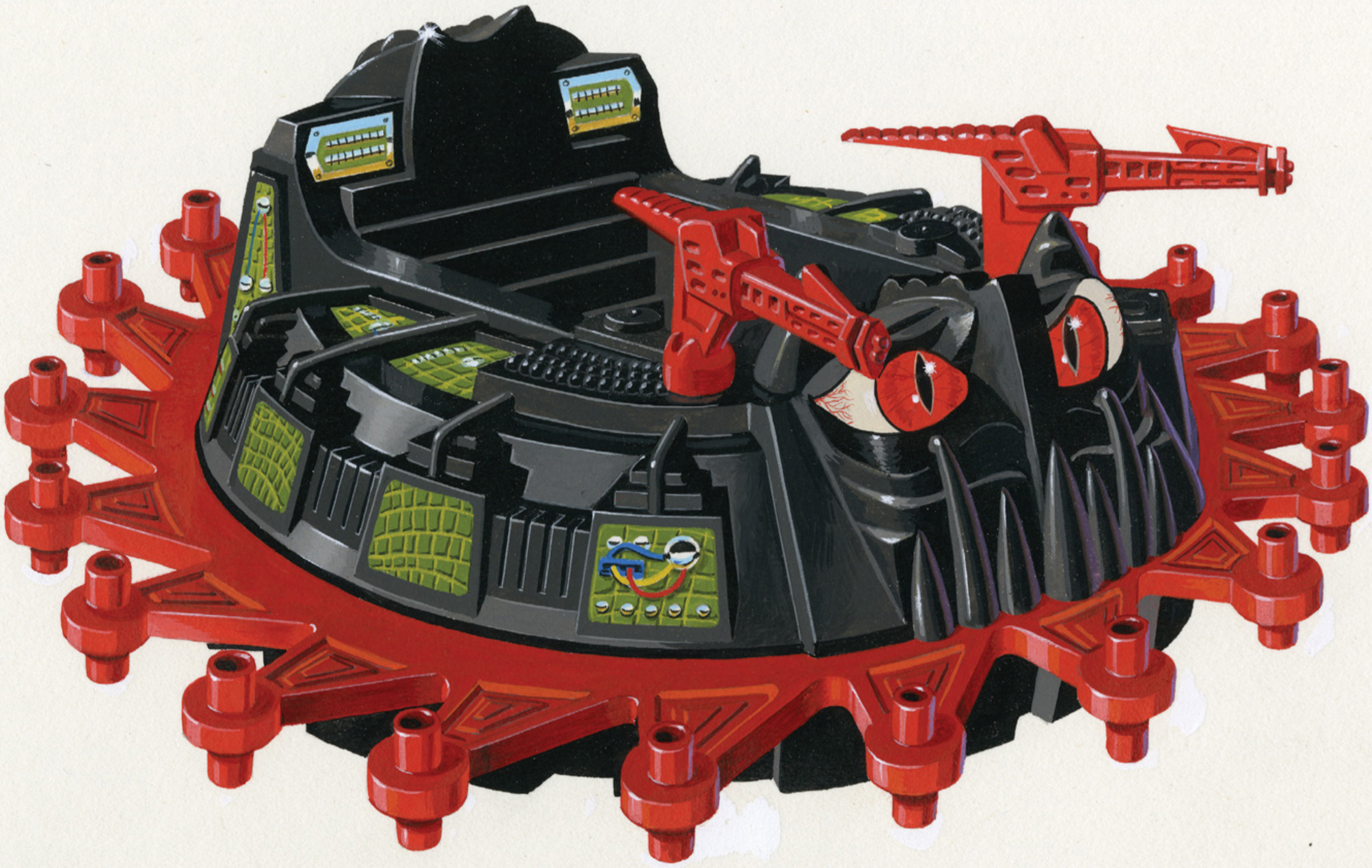


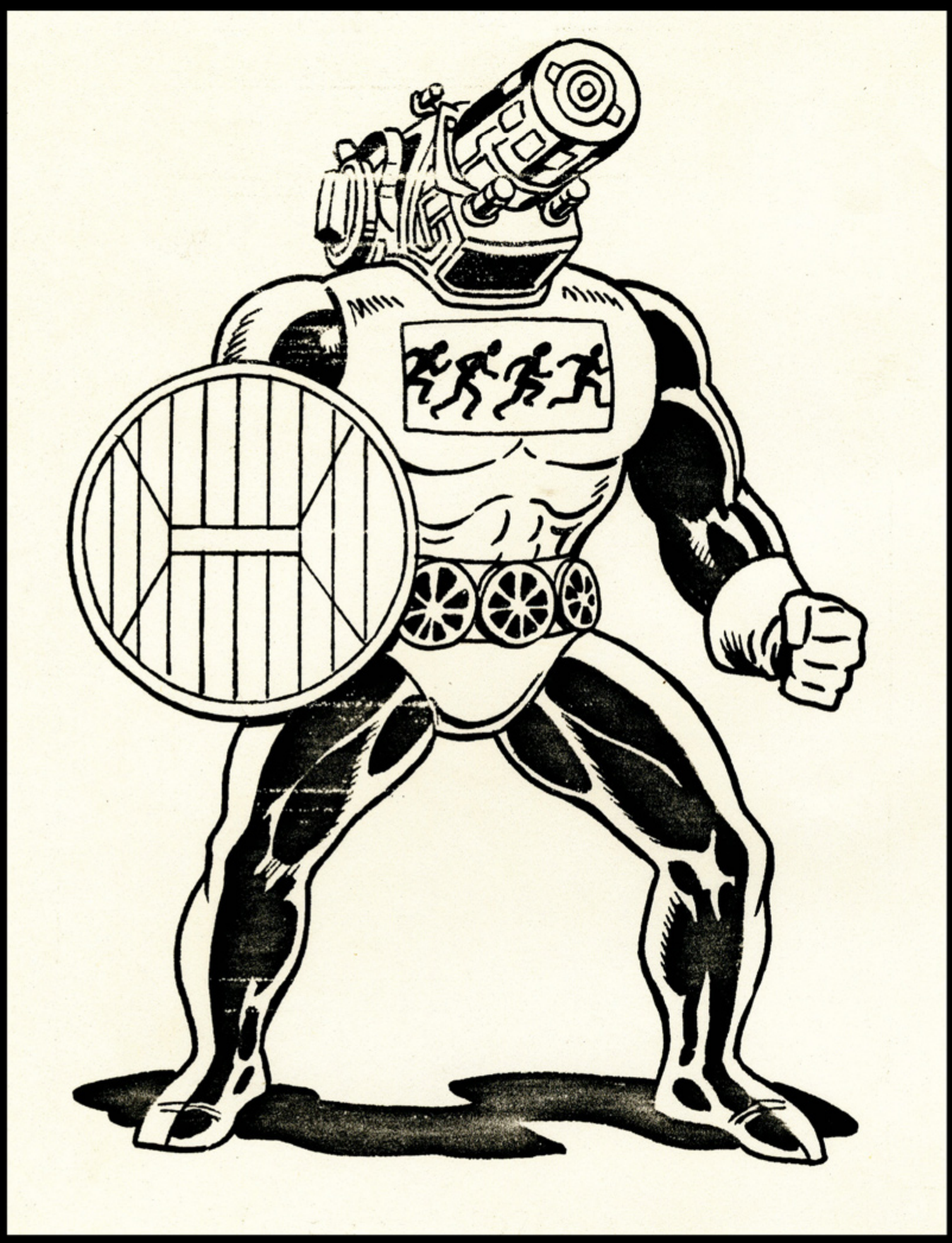


UNPRODUCED TOYS

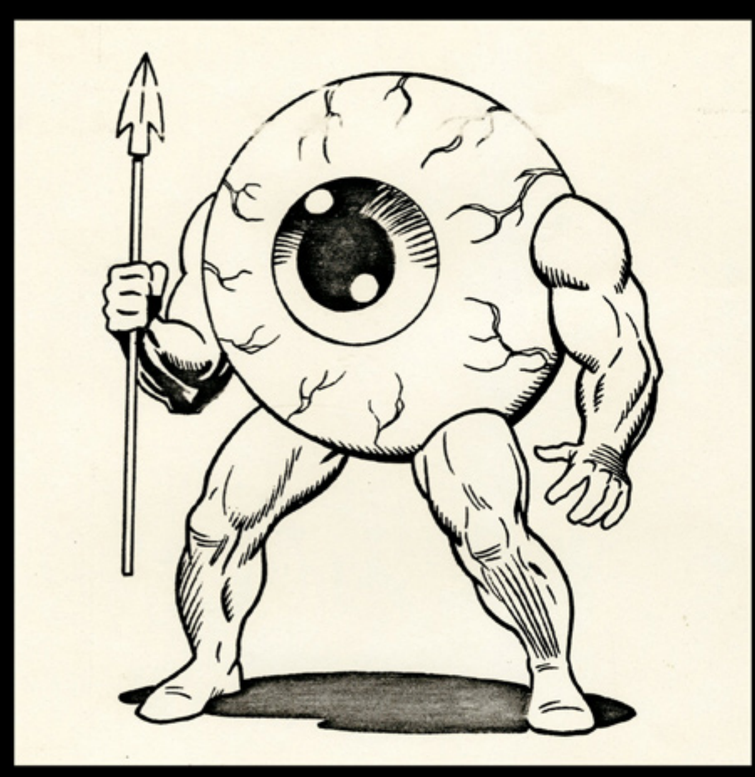


He-Ro was the hero from Mattel's unreleased MOTU prequel line, the Powers of Grayskull. This figure and the Powers of Grayskull initial line were to be released in 1987 but never saw production. He-Ro, who would have anchored the 1987 toy line as He-Man's warrior-magician ancestor, fought in Preternia against King Hiss. He-Ro was finally produced as an action figure in 2009 as a San Diego Comic-Con item for the Classics line. Previously he'd appeared only in shadow in the minicomic *The Powers of Grayskull: The Legend Begins!* and as a prototype in the 1987 Mattel catalog—along with his mentor Eldor, keeper of the book of transformation. Recently a card front for Eldor surfaced, featuring a purple-and-blue color scheme with a large skull illustration. He-Ro's original tag line was "the Most Powerful Wizard in the Universe." "The Heroic Cosmic Warrior" was added in the Classics line.









Create a Character Contest newspaper ad and finalists' entries, redrawn by Bruce Timm.





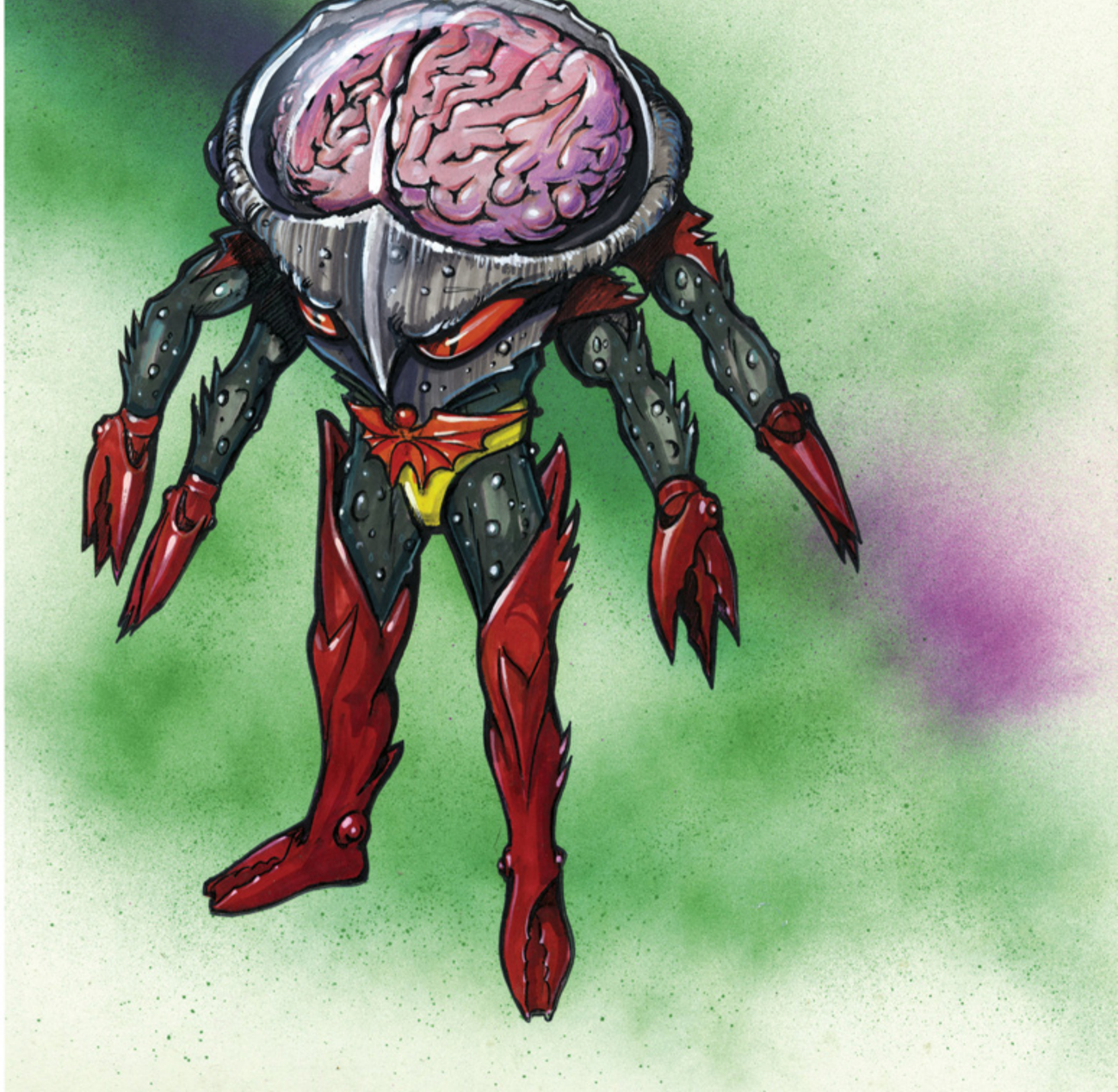
Top: Rotary Man and Big Foot concepts by Ted Mayer. Rotary Man's action feature was later used on Hurricane Hordak.

Bottom: Concept illustration for the Turbosaurus by Ed Watts. The concept evolved into Gigantisaur, whose prototype appeared in the 1987 Mattel retailers catalog.



Concepts for unproduced toys. *This page, clockwise from top:* Inflator by Roger Sweet; Brain by Ted Mayer (this concept led to Mosquitor); and a plant-like character, which led to King Hiss (because of the removable outer shell), by Ted Mayer. *Opposite, clockwise from top left:* Gygor by Mark Taylor (later made as part of the Classics line); Custar, by Mark Taylor; Glob by Roger Sweet; and Master Sorcerer by Alan Tyler.





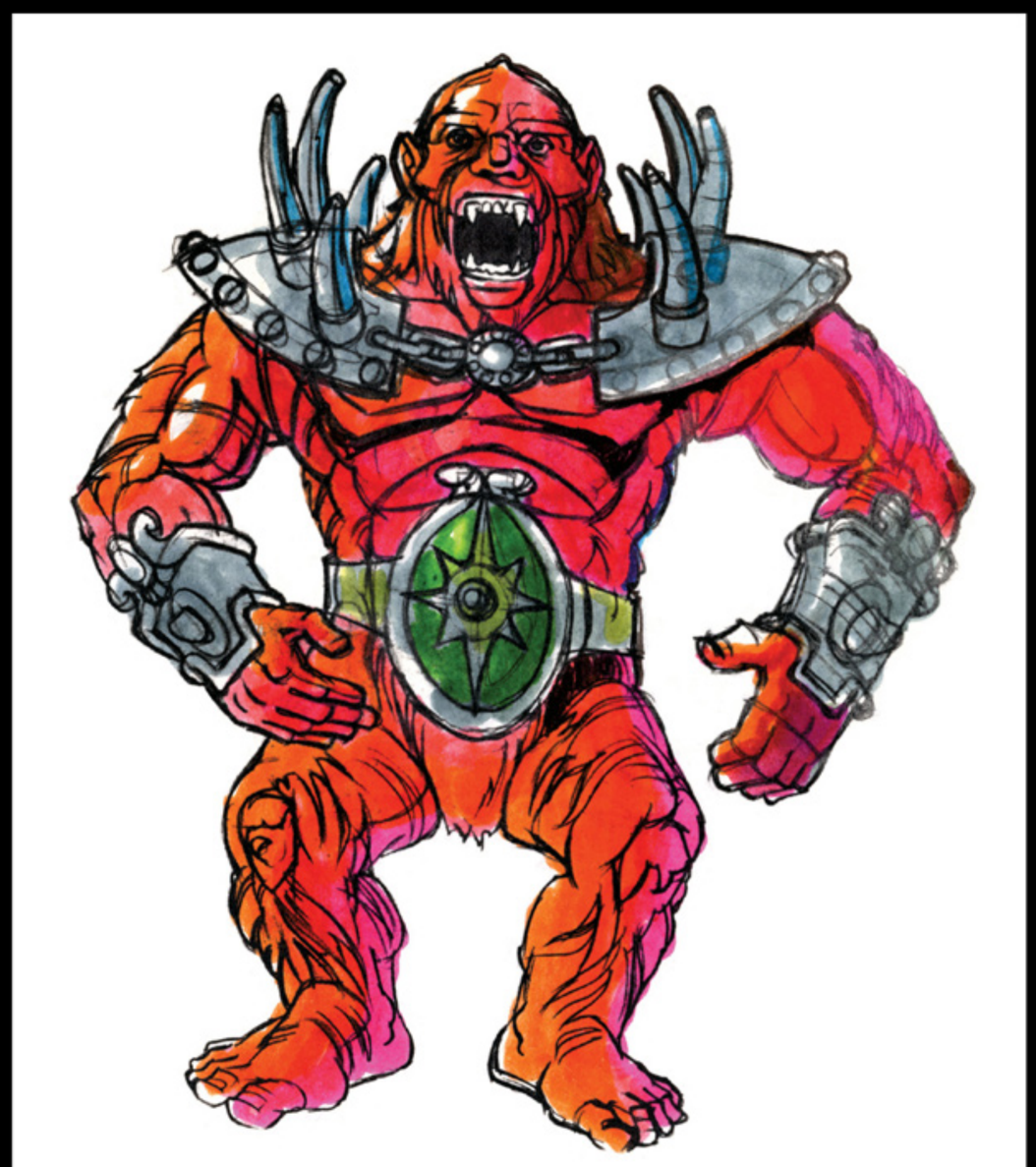
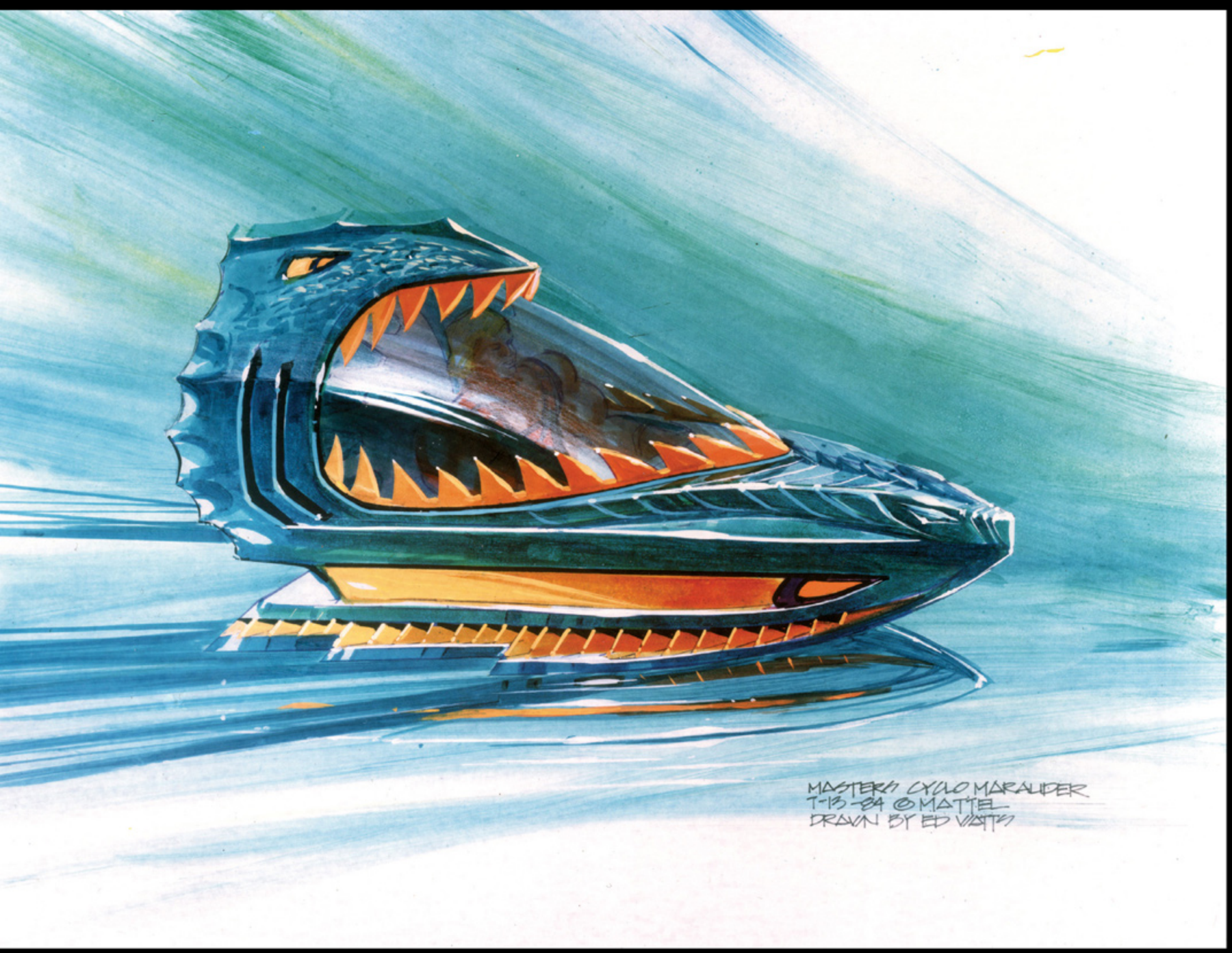





figure_1987 MASTERS SORCERER
ALAN TYCER / ROGER SWEET
© MATTEL INC 9/18/85









Ed Watts, a former designer at Honda, contributed many vehicle designs to the toy line. The large piece shows an unreleased Torton vehicle that could be piloted by five action figures. *Bottom left:* A multiple-head-creature transport for the Evil Warriors by Watts. *Top left:* A water vehicle by Watts.


"TORTON"
ED WATTS
©MATTEL 2-9-84
"TB-11"

PACKAGING ART

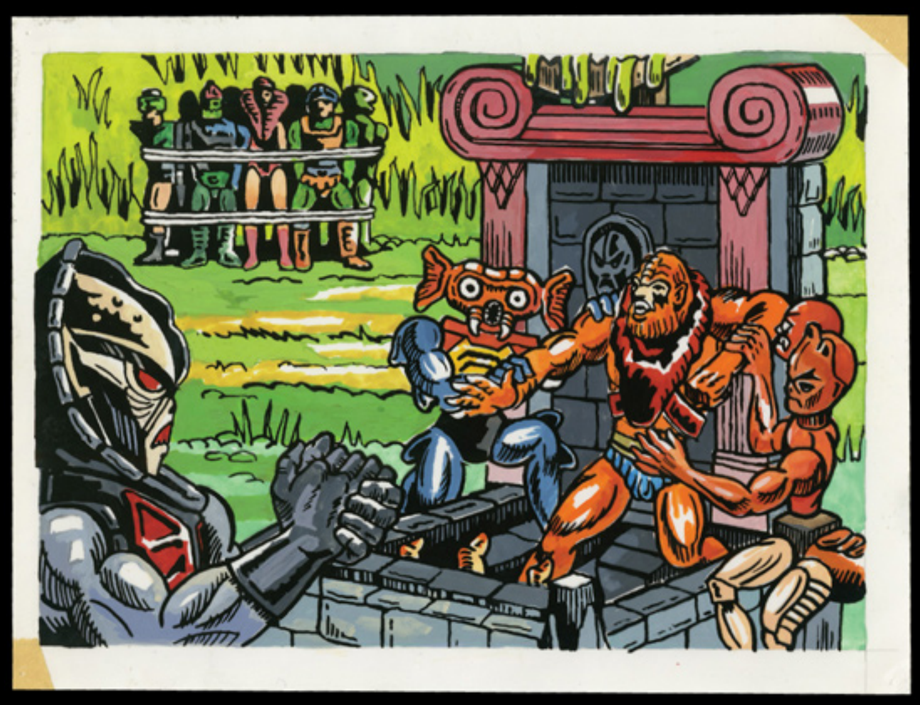
Original package art for Castle Grayskull by Rudy Obrero. Note that Skeletor is placed inside the jaw bridge. At the time this art was created, there was no story line yet, and the artist assumed that the castle belonged to Skeletor, as its entrance mimicked Skeletor's skull face!

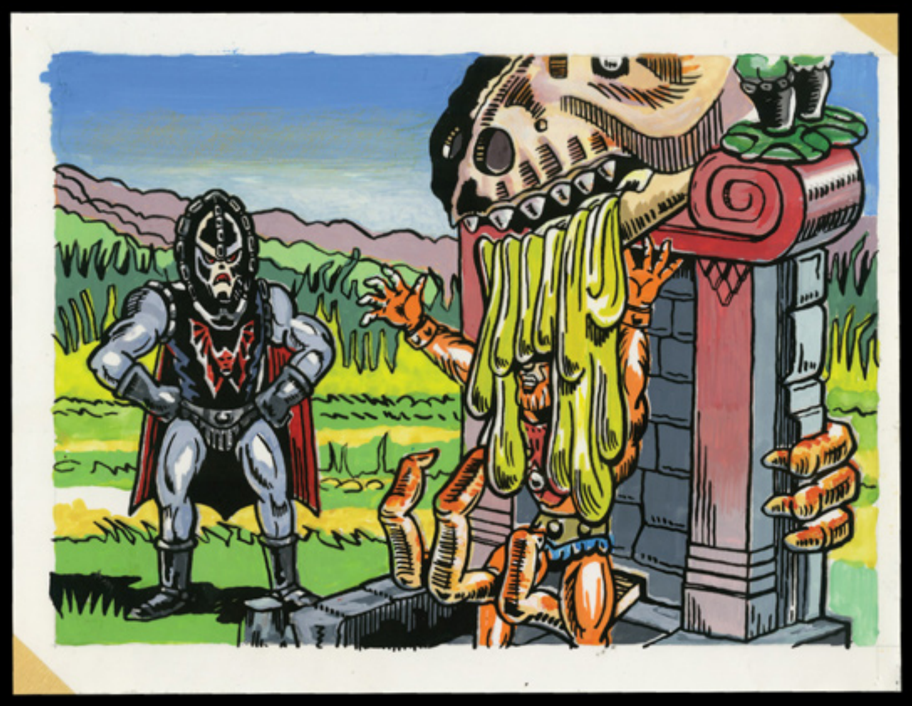




Card-back art introduced in 1983. This art became essential to the Classics line and was used on most of the modern collector figures in the shield art. The top image is card-back art for the Hordak figure, and the bottom illustration by Errol McCarthy, was for the 1983 He-Man figure rerelease.





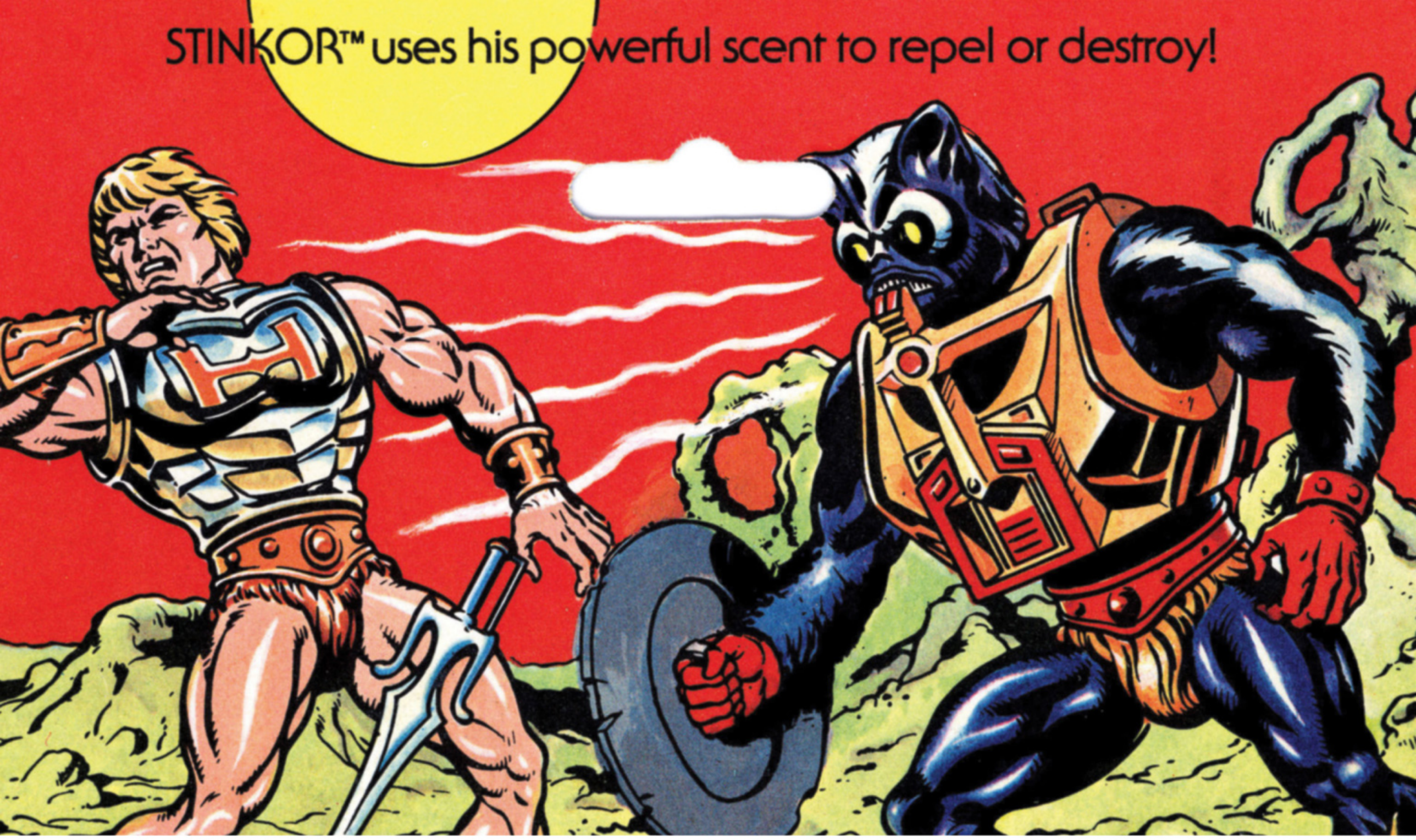






Illustrations from the box back of the Evil Horde's Slime Pit, released in 1986. The illustrations on the left were directions for how to use the pit and the enclosed slime vat. The bottom drawing, showing the zombifying effects of the slime, was not used on the box.

The slime pit, one of the most memorable toys from the vintage era, ended up costing Mattel a lot of money. After Mattel agreed to replace them, many slime-soiled carpets were bought at Mattel's expense in 1984.



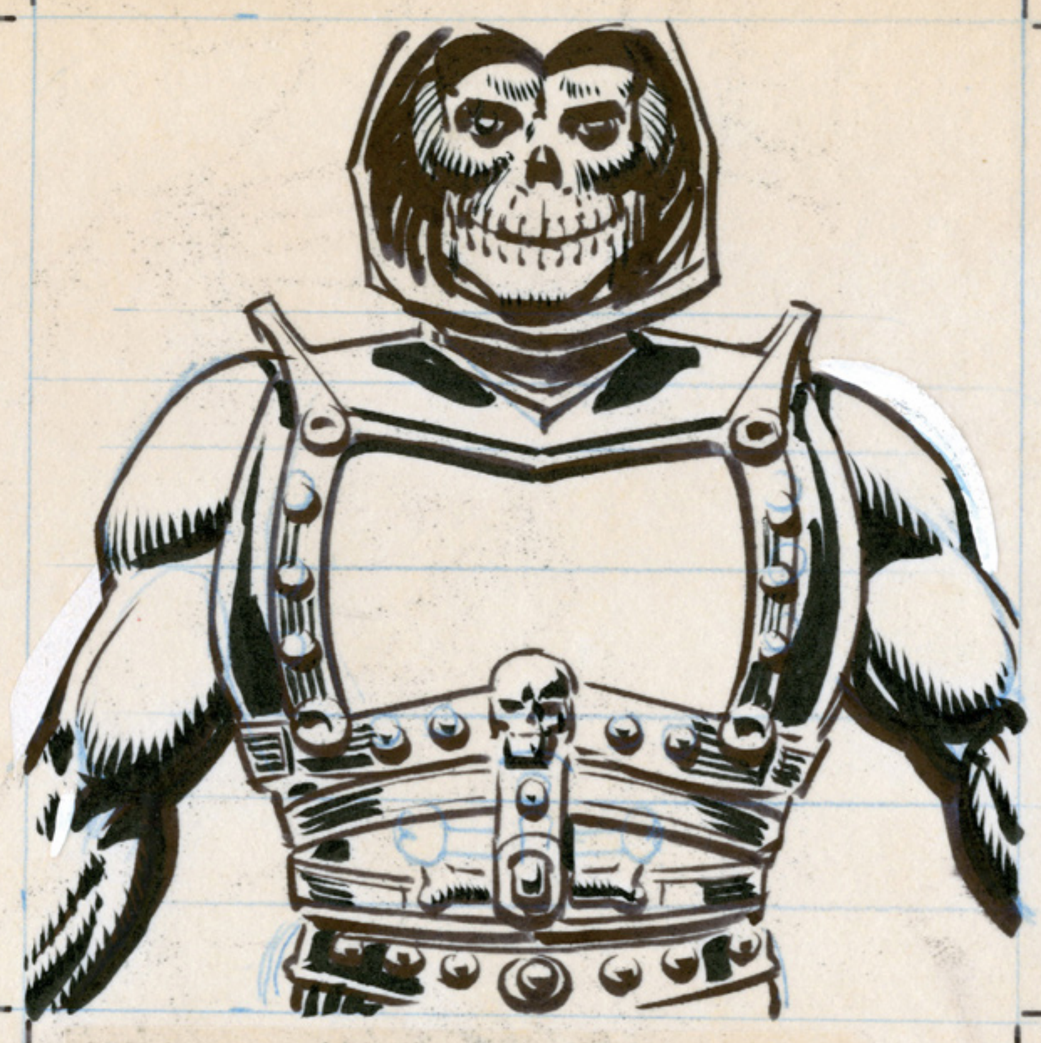
Card-back art by *Rocketeer* creator Dave Stevens, featuring the special features of Stinkor (*above*) and Moss Man (*below*). *Opposite, top to bottom:* Card-back art by Errol McCarthy for Kobra Khan and Terror Claws Skeletor, and instructional illustrations for Battle Armor He-Man and Battle Armor Skeletor.













William George was responsible for much of the vehicle and play set packaging, including the Fright Zone (*opposite*), Bashasaurus and Spydor (*above*), and Laser Bolt (*right*).



Original Snake Mountain art by William George. The Snake Mountain play set, released in 1983, was a rework of a rejected He-Man jungle play set; for this reason it bore little resemblance to the Snake Mountain from the Filmation series.

This page: Original Battle Cat and Zoar/Teela packaging by Rudy Obrero. *Opposite:* Box artwork for Battle Bones by William George, Battle Ram by Ruby Obrero, and Tyrantisaurus Rex.






HILE

Above: William George box artwork for the Battle Armor He-Man and Battle Cat gift set. *Below:* The evil monster vehicle, Land Shark.

HE-MAN™ AND THE POWER SWORD

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE™

CHAPTER THREE 1982

THE CLASSIC MINICOMICS

ILLUSTRATED BOOK WITH PURCHASE

GRAN-TOR, HEROIC WIZARD SCRIBE OF SEQUENTIAL ART

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVEN GRANT, WRITER OF MANY *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* MINICOMICS

What was your first exposure to the art of *The Masters of the Universe*, and what did you think of its blend of sci-fi and fantasy elements? Do you have a favorite image or artist associated with your tenure or with the brand in general?

This is a bit embarrassing. I don't know what issues I wrote anymore; I didn't pay a lot of attention. I don't think I ever even saw an issue while they were coming out. I was the second step in the process. There was a sort of fraternal organization in Los Angeles of comics and animation professionals called CAPS, the Comic Art Professional Society, and I met a guy there named Lee Nordling, who was packing minicomics to put into Mattel toys and asked if I'd be willing to write some. I had then just recently moved to Los Angeles and needed rent money, so I said sure. It all depended on what Mattel decided to do for a new toy in the line that month, since the books mainly existed to introduce toys, whether a new character or vehicle or weapon or whatever. I never had any input into any of that. They simply passed on the characteristics of the character or product, with or without a sketch, through Lee (later I worked with the company directly), and I'd come up with a very simple story, write a full script, and then turn it in. That was usually the end of my participation. I never worked on any of the concepts that I recall; those were all generated in house at Mattel. Later on, they did consult me a little on a few things, like the implied secret origin of Skeletor, but for the most part my job was just stories to order. They were fun to write, but I never felt like I was unbridling my creativity. That wasn't what the job called for.

I had no problem with the sci-fi and fantasy elements. I was used to the milieu. It didn't occur to me it was an unusual step for Mattel, though I knew creating comics to go with action figures was an unusual step.

Did you anticipate the popularity of the brand and its enduring resonance to this day?

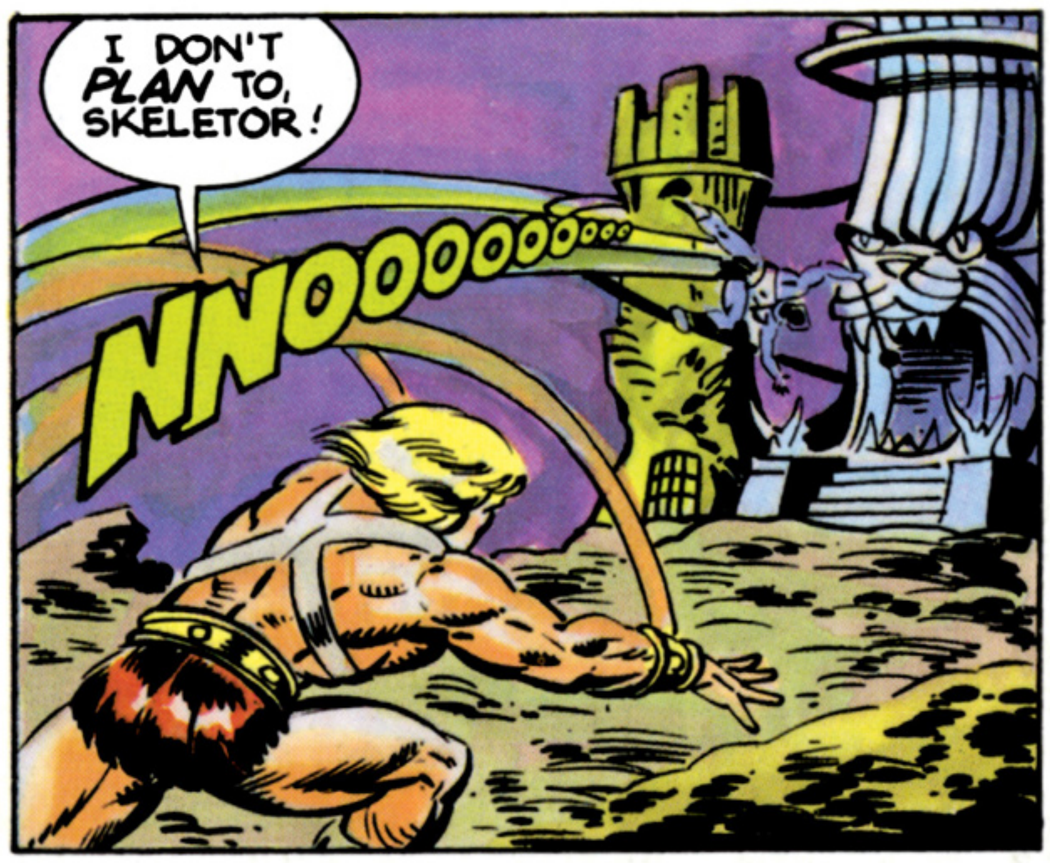
Honestly, I never thought about it then. It was just work. As long as they kept pumping out toys they needed comics for, I kept my rent paid. I certainly never expected to be signing copies nearly thirty years on. I never anticipated anyone even remembering the comics past 1988.

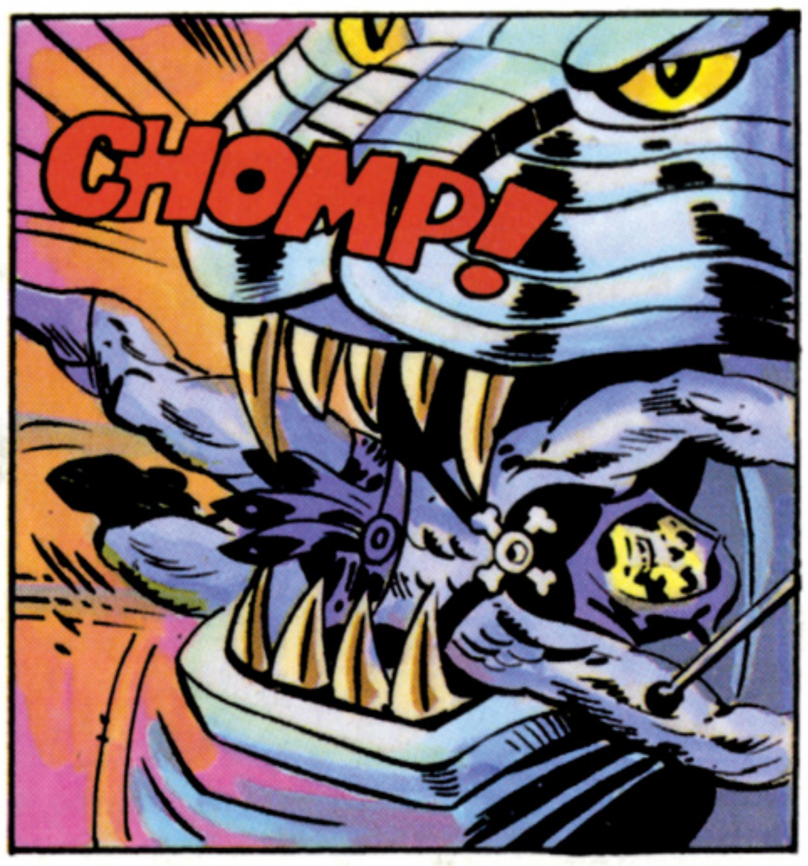
What were the influences you brought to the table?

I don't know. At that point I'd been reading Marvel, DC, and whatever other comics I could get my hands on for around twenty-five years, and a lot of fantasy fiction, particularly writers like Robert E. Howard and Michael Moorcock, for close to twenty years, and I'd been writing comics and other material professionally for pushing ten. I had a passing familiarity with Dungeons and Dragons and similar things that clearly influenced the development of *Masters of the Universe*, so I was comfortable with the material and knew how to attack it—apparently they'd had some problems with some other people with that, but it was never an issue for me—but, as I said, the people I dealt with at Mattel (and I'd love to give the editor a shout-out because he was a great guy, one of my favorite guys I've ever worked with, but I can't remember his name now), they were the main influences because they were the ones molding the material. What I mainly brought to the table was the ability to give them what they wanted, very quickly. Like most places, they were usually operating on the razor's edge of deadlines.

Who was your favorite character to write? What about the design of the world or the character appealed to you?

I barely remember any of them. Skeletor was always fun, as villains usually are, much more fun than He-Man, who, like most truly good-guy heroes, was a bit of a stiff. I naturally tend toward tweener characters, so when I got characters who were apparently bad guys but turned out to be misguided or misinformed instead, those were always entertaining to write. I know there were at least a couple. I prefer to discourage my readers from viewing the world as strictly black and white. That's one reason the "secret origin of Skeletor" story sticks in my mind, because the character involved—Keldor?—sets out with the best of intentions. That's actually the question I get asked the most by *MOTU* fans: did Keldor become Skeletor? The answer is yes, he did. For whatever reason, Mattel wanted to tease that but were never planning to flat out say it. But that was also as much continuity as I was ever aware of in the minicomics. There never was an overarching story. The stories just materialized to fit whatever toy Mattel had developed for the line that week, and the toys were developed to fit marketing decisions, not story arcs.

















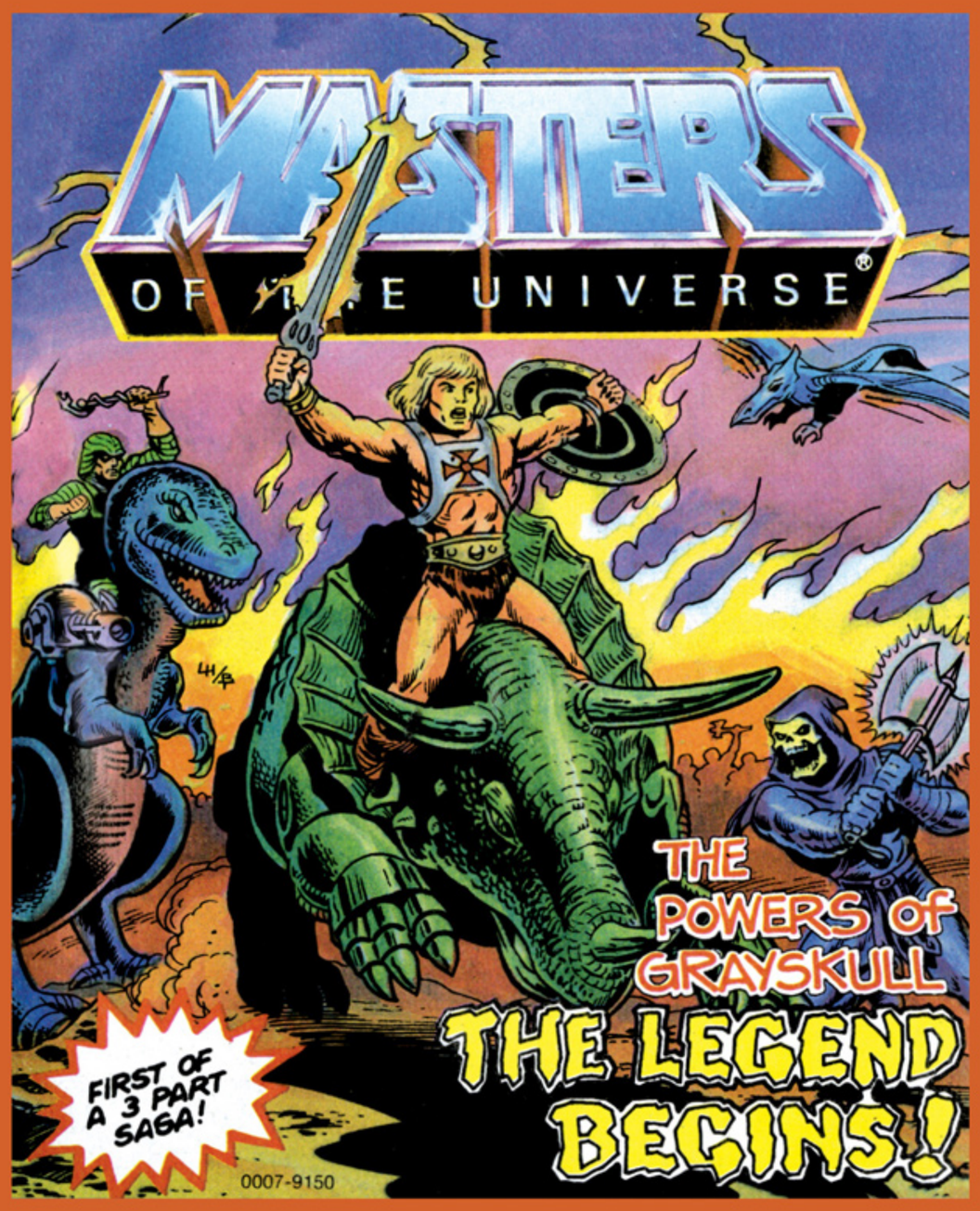
The final page of *The Ultimate Battleground*, the minicomic included with the Eternia play set released in 1986, wave 5. Artwork by Bruce Timm, with colors by Charles Simpson. Note that this minicomic was one of the hardest vintage minis to get, as it was only included with the Eternia play set. The name of the comic would become a key event in the Classics canon, playing out a premise for the greatest battle on Eternia. Skeletor's mysterious disappearance into the jaws of Central Tower is left unexplained!

HU-STONE, MOST VERSATILE ILLUSTRATOR IN THE UNIVERSE

AN INTERVIEW WITH LARRY HOUSTON, ILLUSTRATOR AND ANIMATOR

What do you think you brought to the art of *The Masters of the Universe*?

I think I brought the blend of comic book storytelling and cinematic storyboard influences I had at that time to the He-Man books. I was in my midtwenties, working with Stan Lee at Marvel Productions during the day and He-Man comic books at night. When I got the assignment to draw the He-Man books, I tried to tell the stories with as much action and drama and clarity as I could draw at that time, given the small size the books would be. I tried to make the books as visually entertaining as I could.



What were the influences that you brought to the table?

Jack Kirby, John Buscema, Gil Kane, and Curt Swan were the comic book artist influences. The director Miyazaki had an enormous influence on me on how to tell stories in cinema. Clarity of panel layout, poses, and expressions were what I sought to achieve on each page. I'm nowhere near as good as any of those guys I've mentioned, but I always keep them in mind as a goal to reach for, whenever I draw.

Who was your favorite character to illustrate? What about that particular design appealed to you?

He-Man was my favorite character to draw because he reminded me of Marvel's Hercules, visually. So I got the chance to draw both heroes at the same time.

How much freedom were you given when designing characters that weren't already planned to be toys? Characters such as Geldor, the bad guys in *Slave City*, etc.?

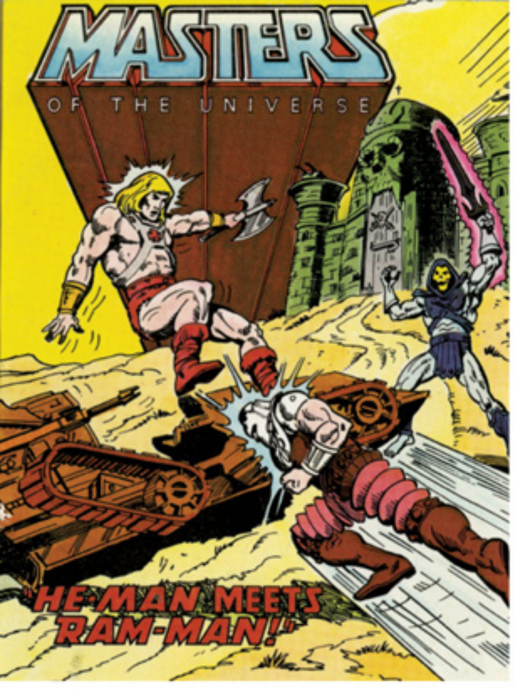
I would always ask for the toy designs before I would begin, since there was a He-Man TV show on the air. Some of these He-Man comics scripts in the eighties were handed out without designs of new characters, which is not the way the toy companies operate today. What I can say is that I channeled the best I could at that time, and my 2B pencils designed them as they moved across the page.

I'm sure you've noticed this from Power-Con, but *MOTU* has really helped define a generation of artists and writers. Why do you think that is? And how, as you were such an integral part of its origin, does that make you feel?

I, along with many of those who worked on He-Man at Filmation, am still quite in awe of how popular and far reaching the series has become. I have spoken with many of my animation friends, and we all agree we are proud to have been able to entertain a generation of kids with heroic adventures the way we had been.

MOTU was a perfect series for its generation and, because it was such a huge success, opened the door for a decade of other shows, such as *G.I. Joe, Transformers,* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.* Without *MOTU*, none of the eighties syndicated adventure cartoons would've happened. I'm glad the stories and art of *MOTU* inspired so many to become artists and storytellers. That means the next generation is ready to create their own new and original *MOTU* concepts.

You asked how does it make me feel to have been an integral part of *MOTU*'s origin. My answer is that I feel proud to have been a part of it from the beginning, to have been able to channel my best art skills into the book and inspire and entertain kids the way I had been earlier in my life. My belief is that if I can pass on that enthusiasm and inspire one young mind to grow up and become an artist or storyteller, then I can claim success.

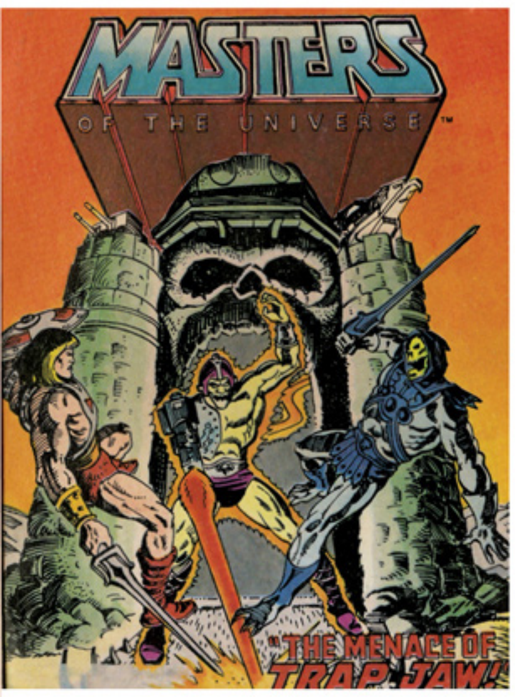


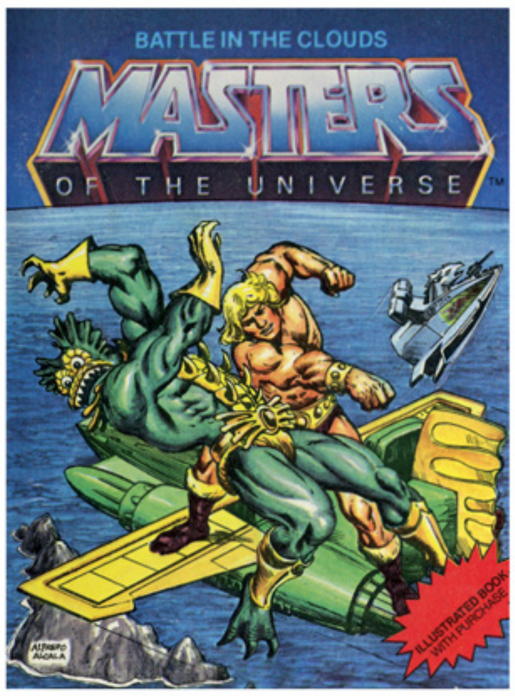




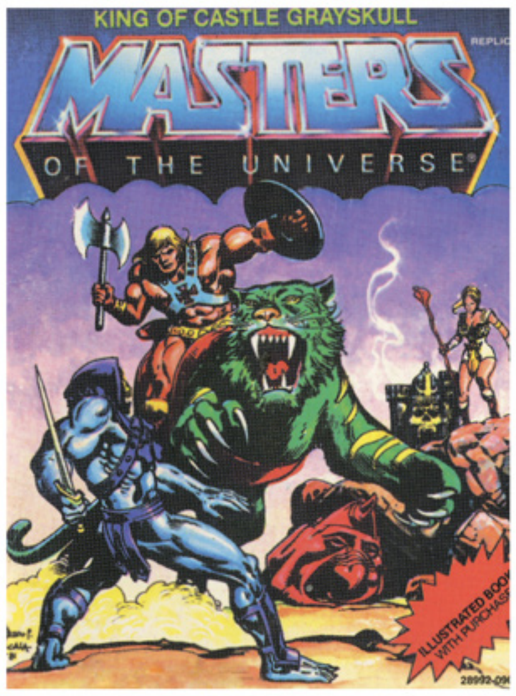


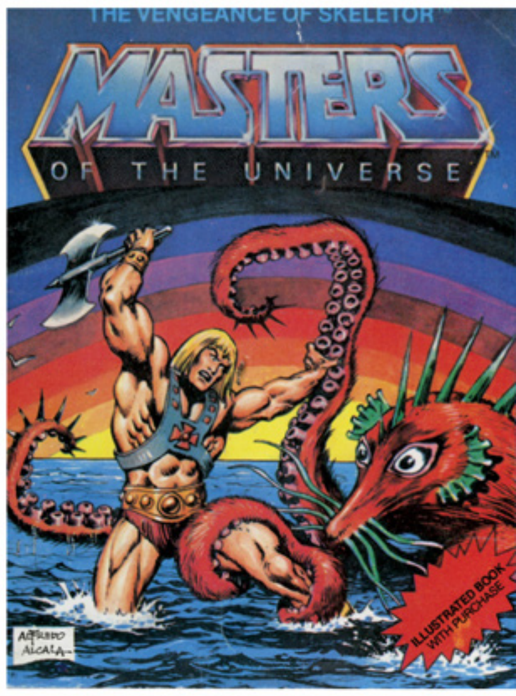










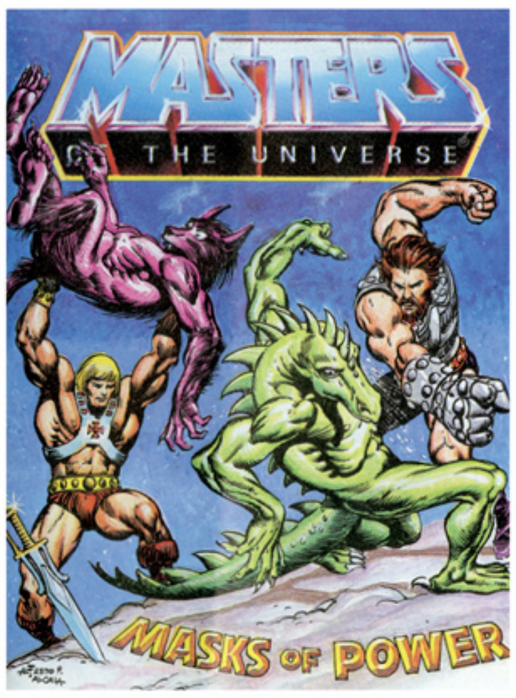


This page: A selection of minicomics. One comic was packaged with each figure. The intent was to familiarize kids with new characters. They featured work from renowned comics and animation artists, like Bruce Timm, Mark Texeira, Larry Houston, and Alfredo Alcala.

Opposite: Cover of *The Legend Begins!*, from the last series of figures. It was one of the last minicomics released before the line was canceled in the United States in 1987. This cover was a direct homage to a painting by Frank Frazetta. Only a sparse outline exists for parts 2 and 3, which was later used as inspiration for a reimagined story of the same name in the 2012 Classics line. Artwork by Larry Houston and Bruce Timm, with colors by Charles Simpson.

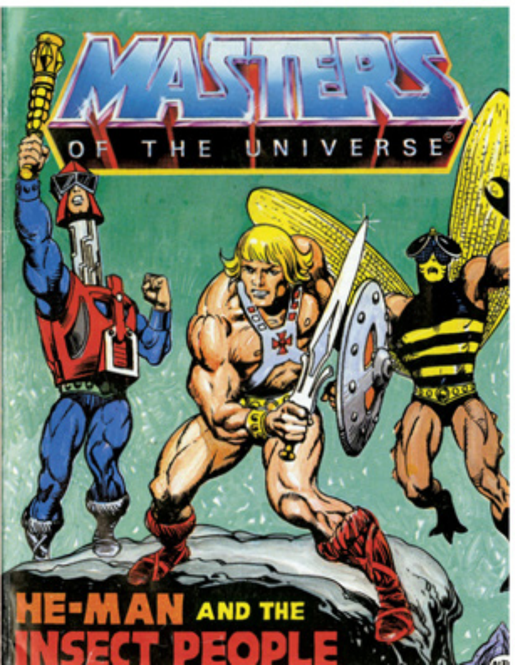






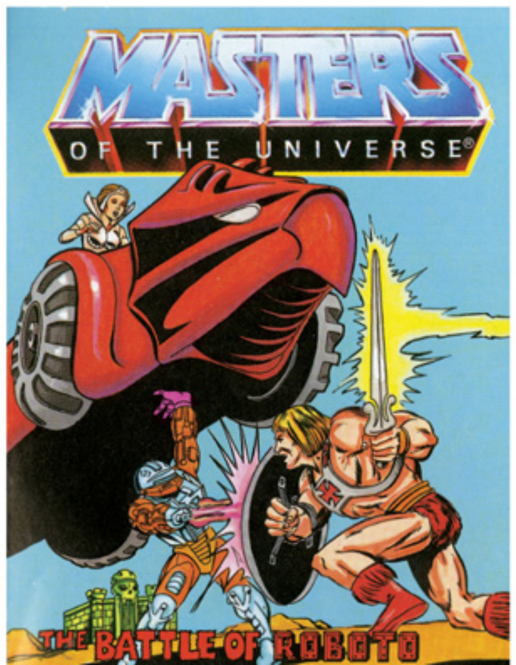


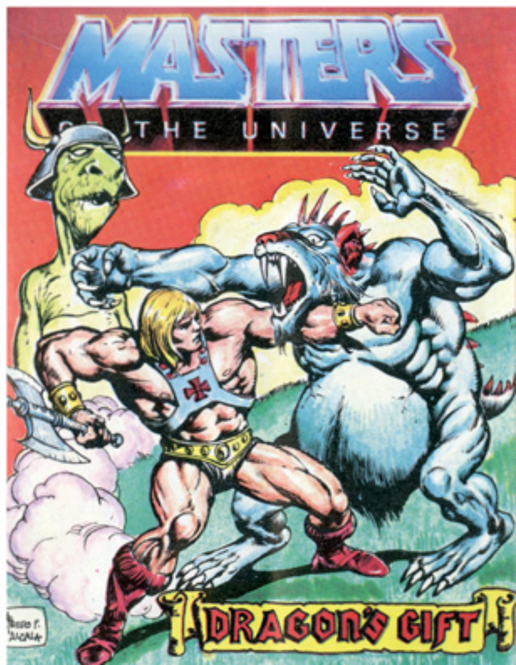








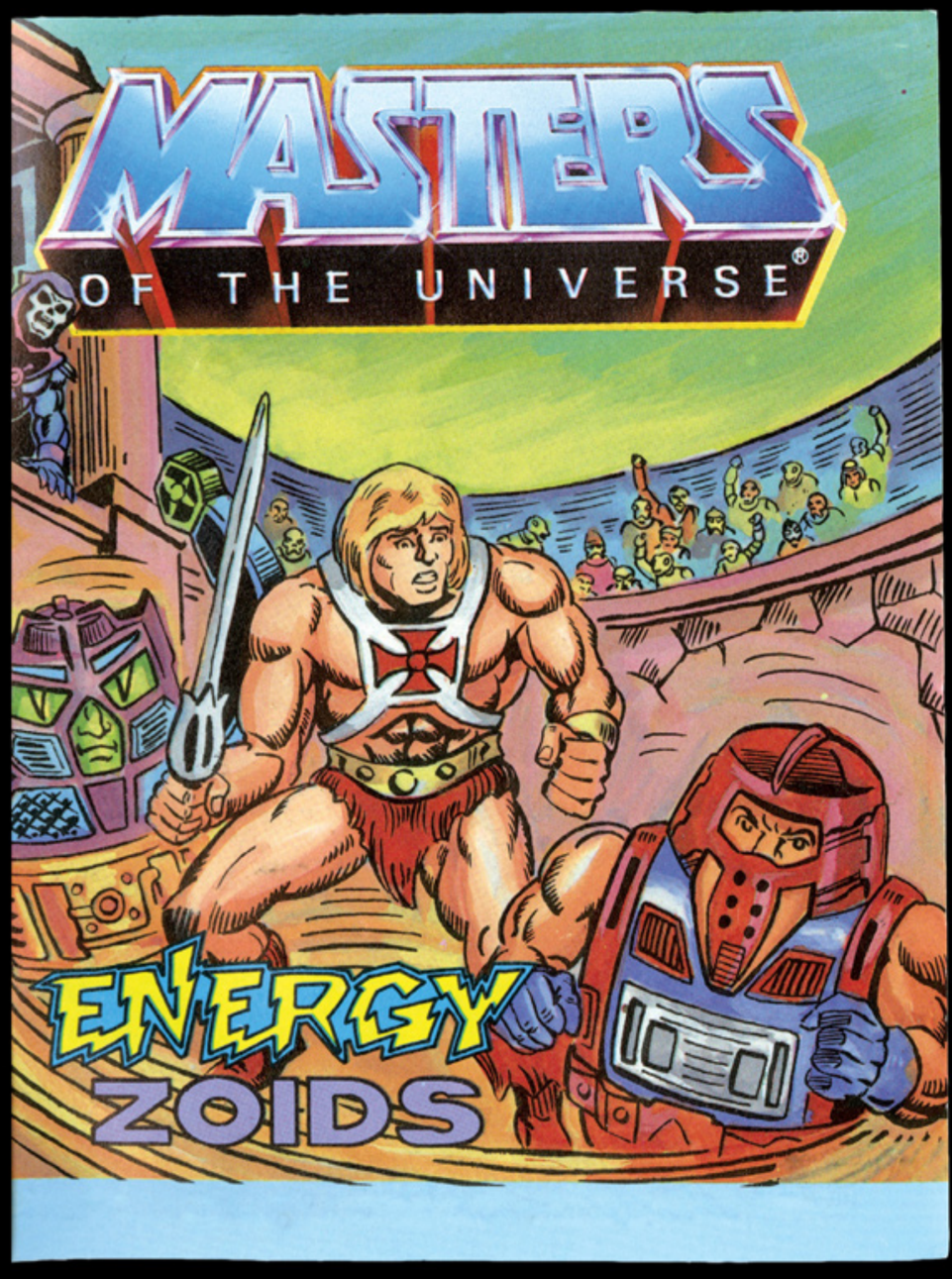






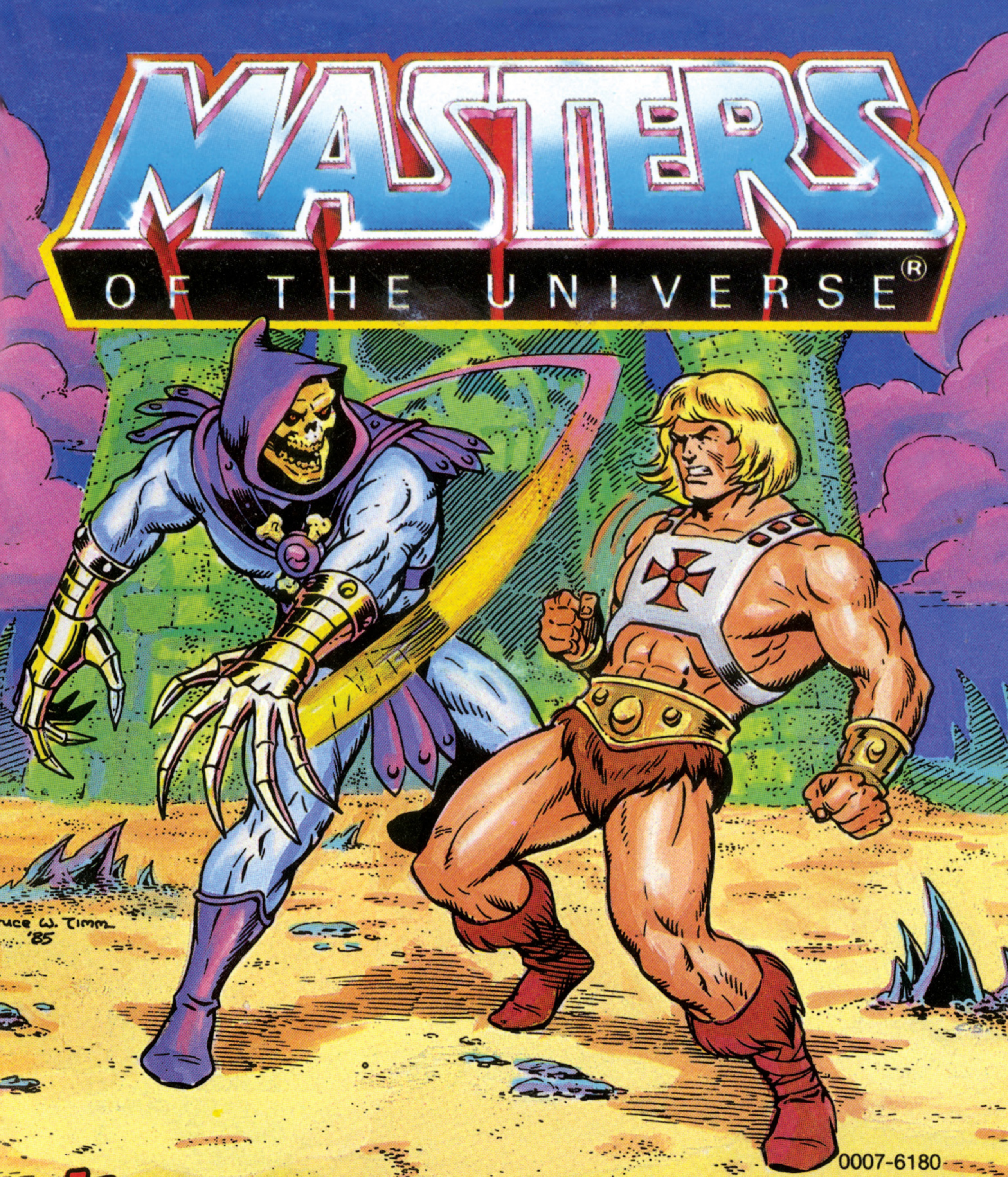






Above: Minicomics that came with Buzz-Saw Hordak and Rotar and Twistoid, both from wave 6. The later minicomics all had a directive from Marketing to include the latest figures and action features. It is very interesting how the minicomics were produced, with the first batch being used to create stories to back up the toy line, the middle batch featuring the adventures of characters not in the toy line (like Lodar and Geldor), and finally the third and fourth batches returning to comics that pushed the latest toys. It was not until the fourth series (1985–1987) that continuity and storytelling really picked up.

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE®



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THE TERROR CLAWS STRIKE!

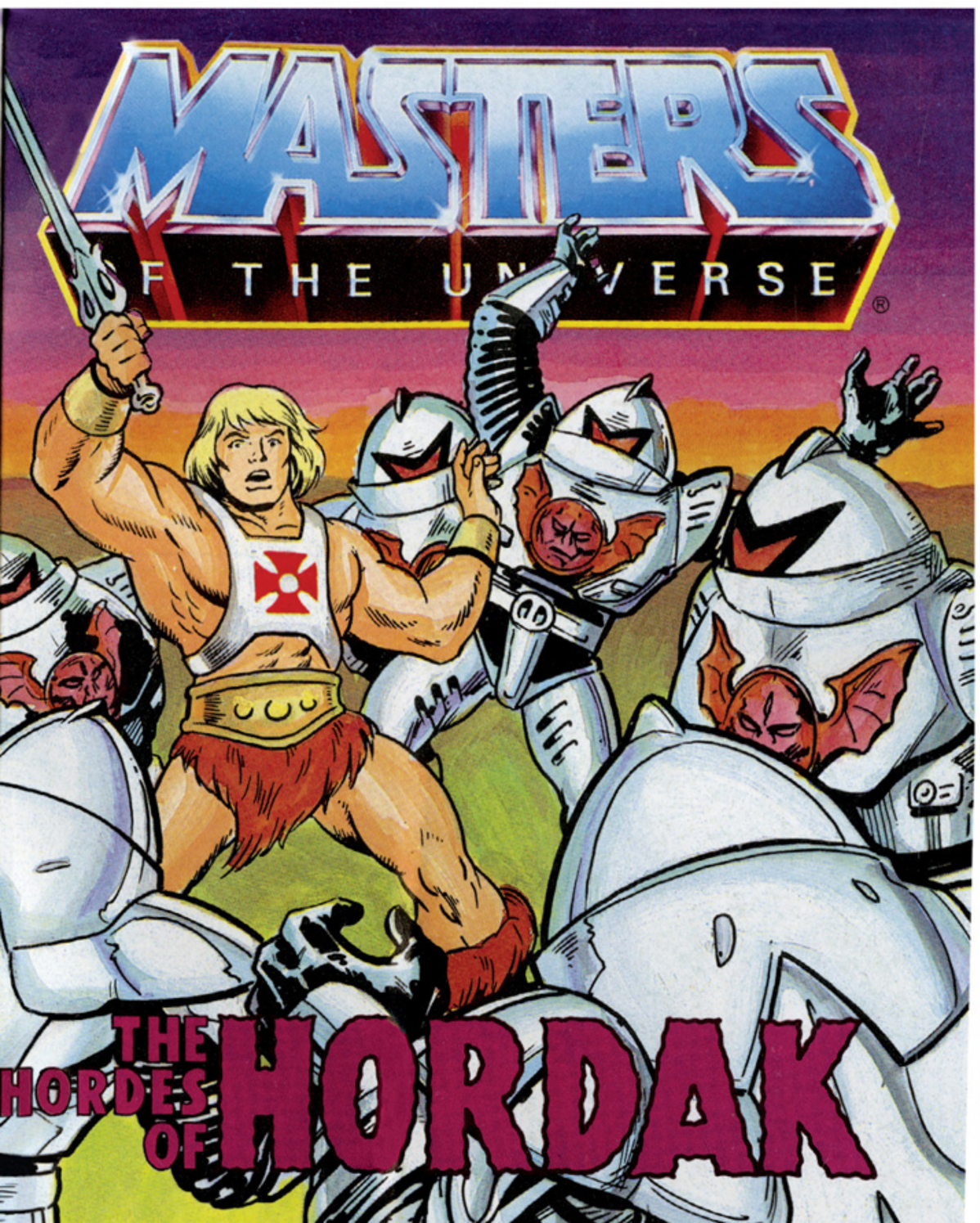

THE FASTEST DRAW
IN THE UNIVERSE!



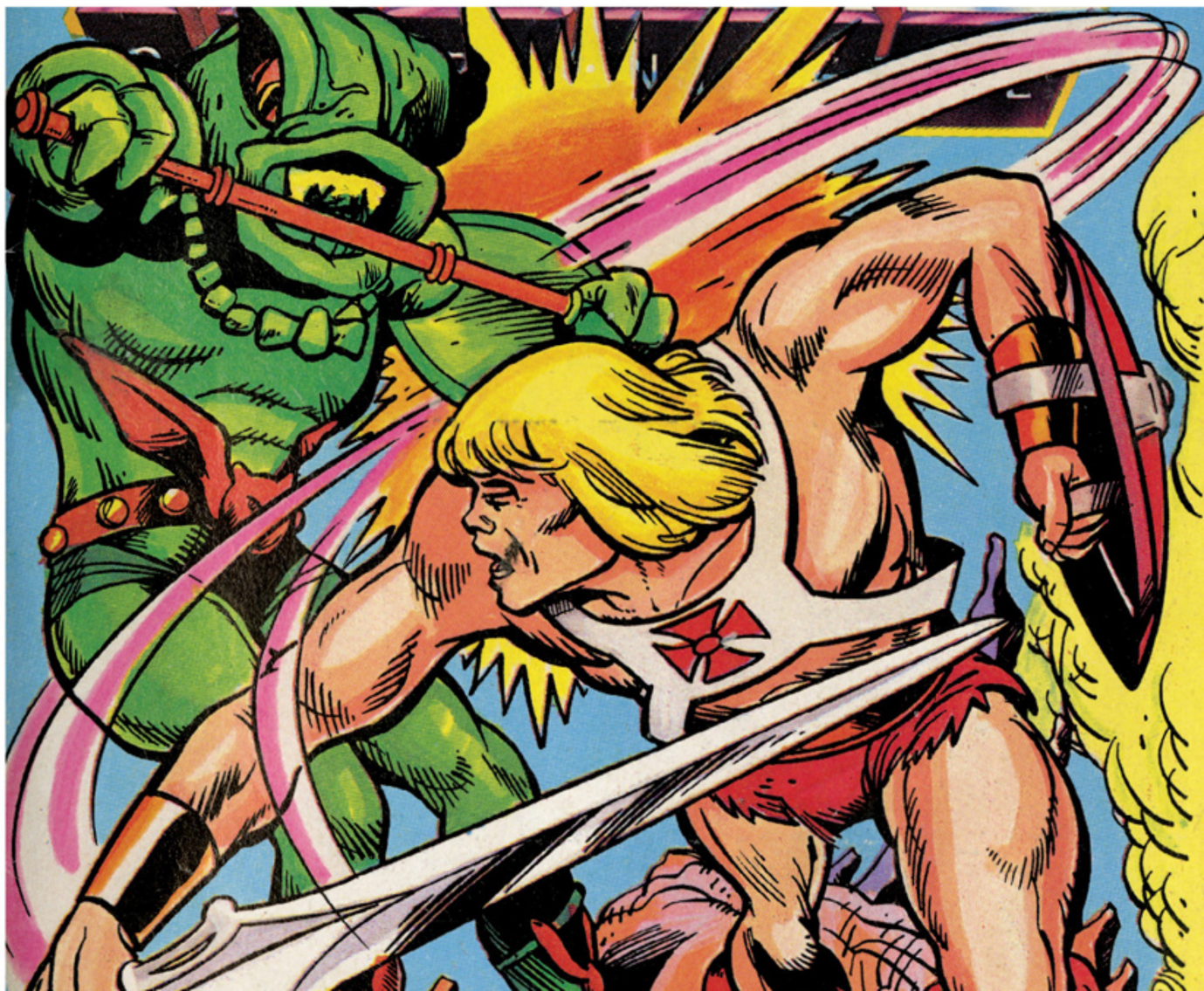




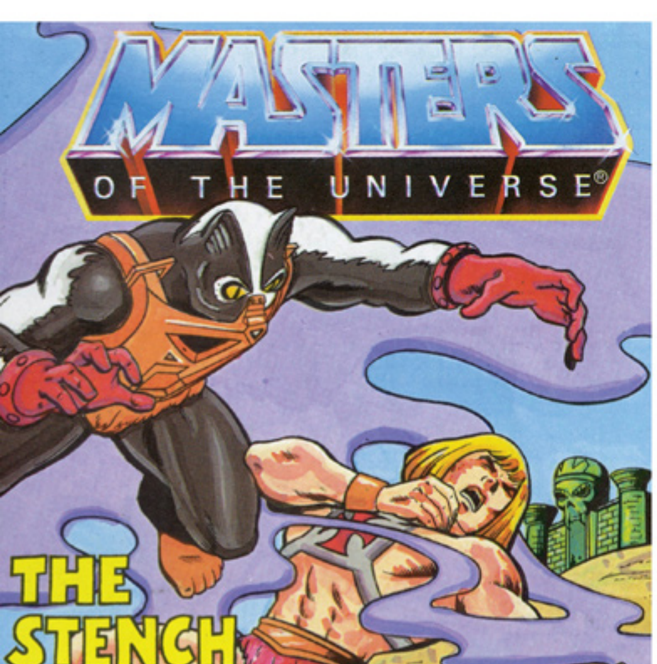




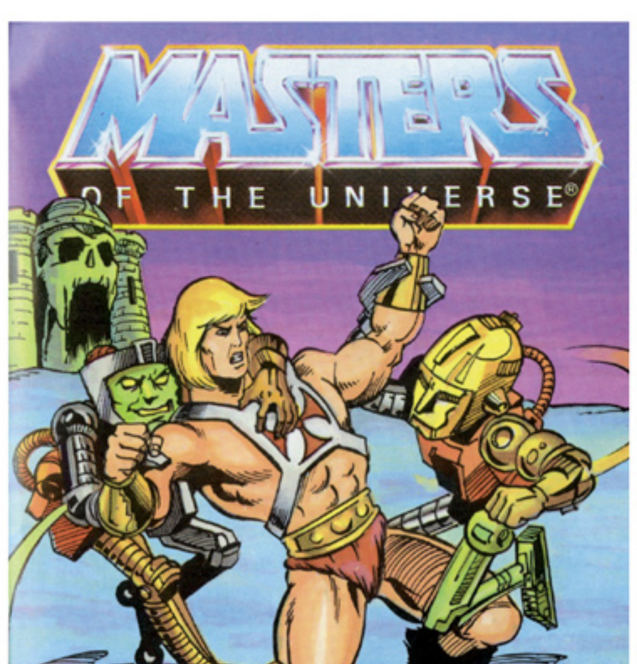
This page: Minicomics from waves 4 and 5, featuring the Horde.
Opposite: High-resolution scan of the original art for the Rio Blast minicomic, wave 5, from 1986.

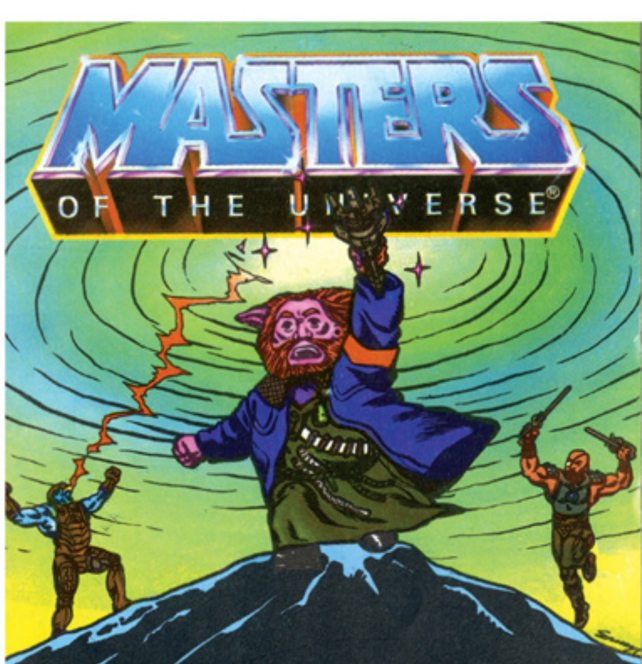


Above: Skeletor's Dragon from 1984 (wave 4). Art by Peter Ledger, with Charles Simpson on colors. *Opposite: Rock People to the Rescue!*, from 1985 (wave 5). Artwork by Larry Houston, with inks by Bruce Timm. *Below:* More mini-comics, representing the end of the third series and the start of the fourth.







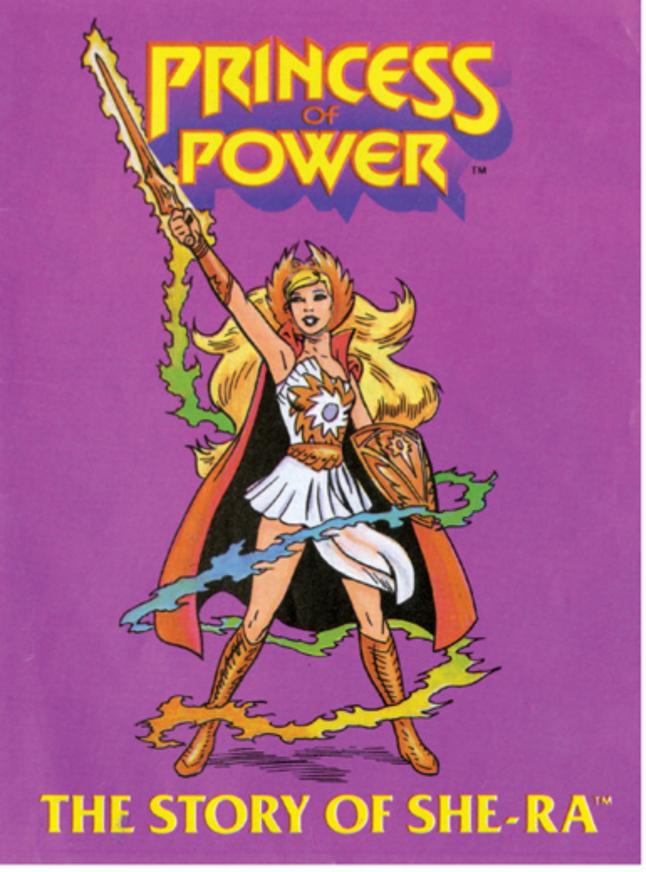


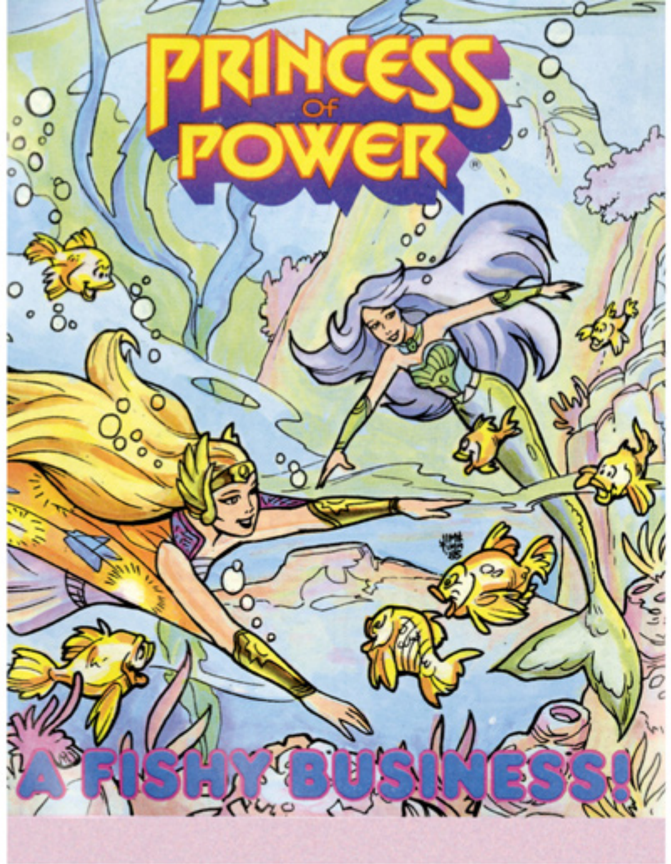
MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE®

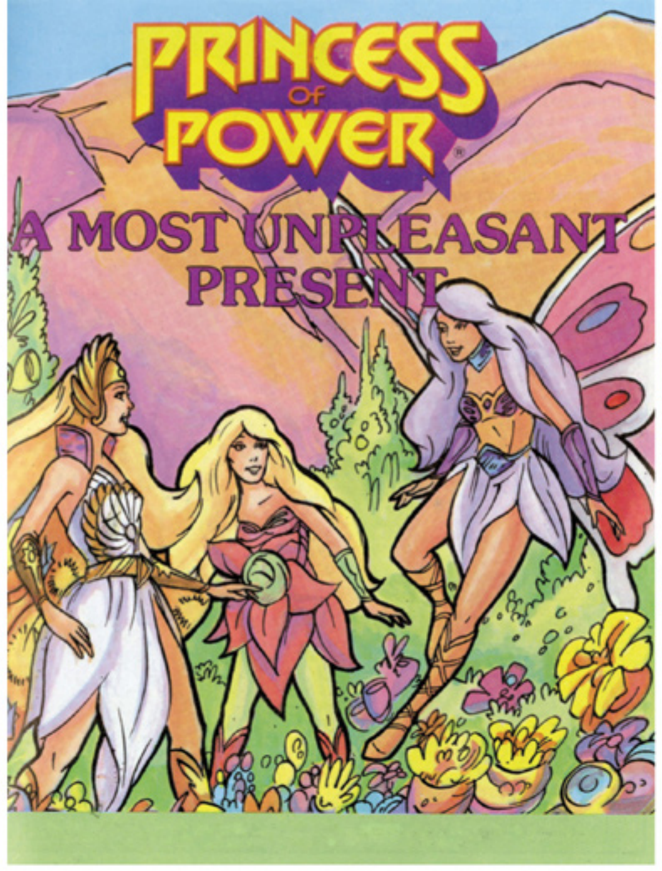
ROCK PEOPLE TO THE RESCUE!

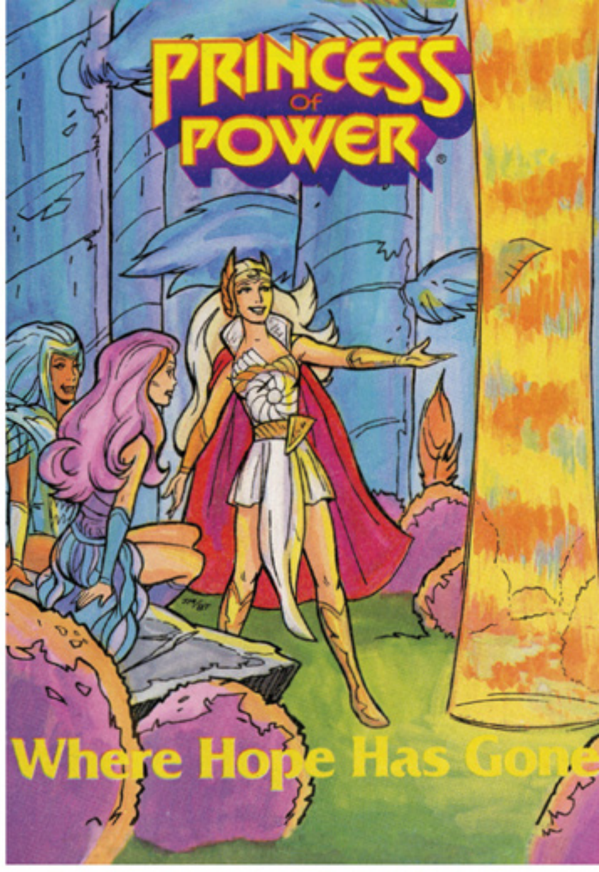
PRINCESS of POWER

DISAPPEARING TREASURES



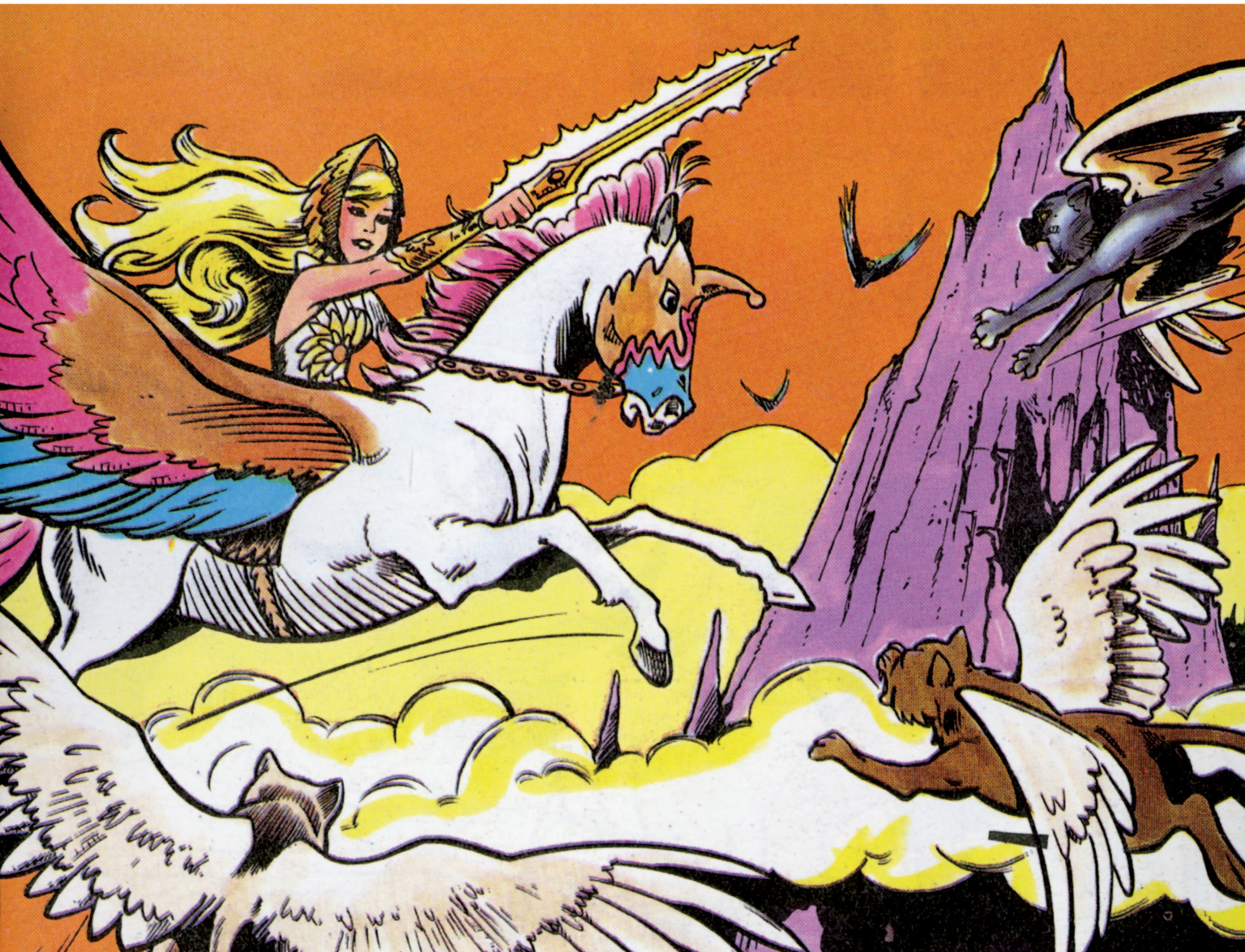




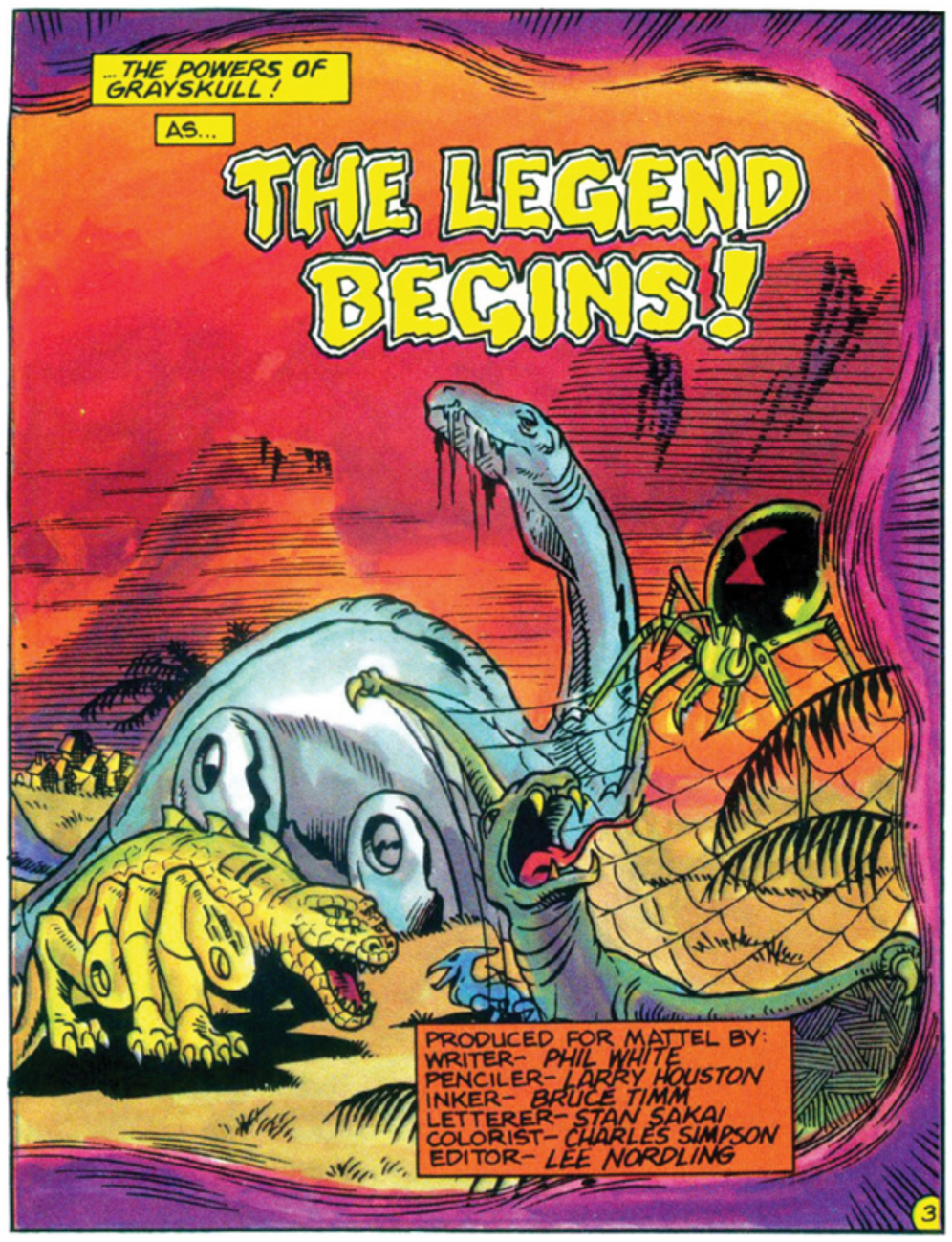


Above: A selection of covers from She-Ra releases. *Opposite:* Cover to *Disappearing Treasures* from 1985. This issue was released in the first series with both Glimmer and Castaspella.

Below: A page from *The Story of She-Ra*. An interesting piece of history about She-Ra is that she was originally to be shown wearing a mask. But in toy-testing, girls preferred her mask flipped around as the winged headdress. Therefore, this is how she was ultimately packaged and depicted in illustrations. This simple change initiated by customer feedback forever altered She-Ra's iconic look, causing her to be designed without a face mask for the Filmation animated series.











Top: A two-page spread from *The Powers of Grayskull: The Legend Begins!* by Phil White and Larry Houston, one of the last vintage minicomics released. *Bottom:* The first two pages from Phil White and Bruce Timm's *The Ultimate Battleground*.



The title page from *The Ultimate Battleground*. This particular minicomic is rare due to the fact it was only packaged with the massive Eternia play set.



The last page of the minicomic *The Legend Begins!*, featuring a disguised He-Man (the Stranger) battling Skeletor in Preternia. The identity of the shadowed figure and the caption in the last panel went unanswered, leaving many kids, such as the authors of this book, deeply traumatized. The shadowed figure is He-Ro. Trauma lifted.

CHAPTER FOUR 1983

THE FILMATION ADVENTURES

CONCEPTS



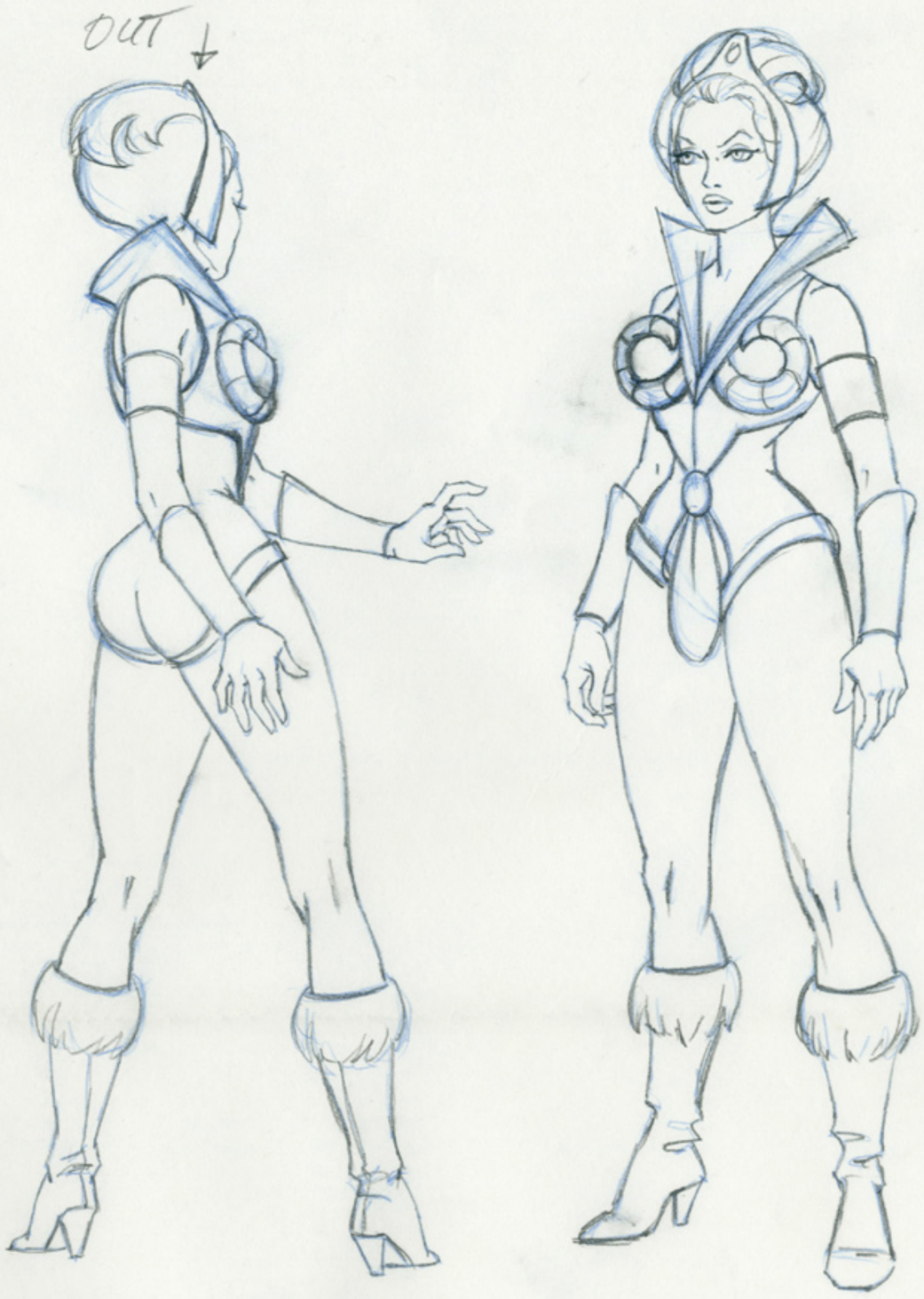
Before a single episode of the series had been animated, a great deal of development work took place. Filmation's first attempt at animating *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* was a commercial for Mattel's Castle Grayskull play set. The level of detail, seen in the production artwork on these pages, was much higher than that of the series. Lou Scheimer, the president of Filmation, had fought hard to keep animation in America, as by 1983, many studios were already beginning to send their work overseas. With the now-legendary sixty-five episodes produced for the first season of *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*, Filmation ensured that the American animation industry would thrive.



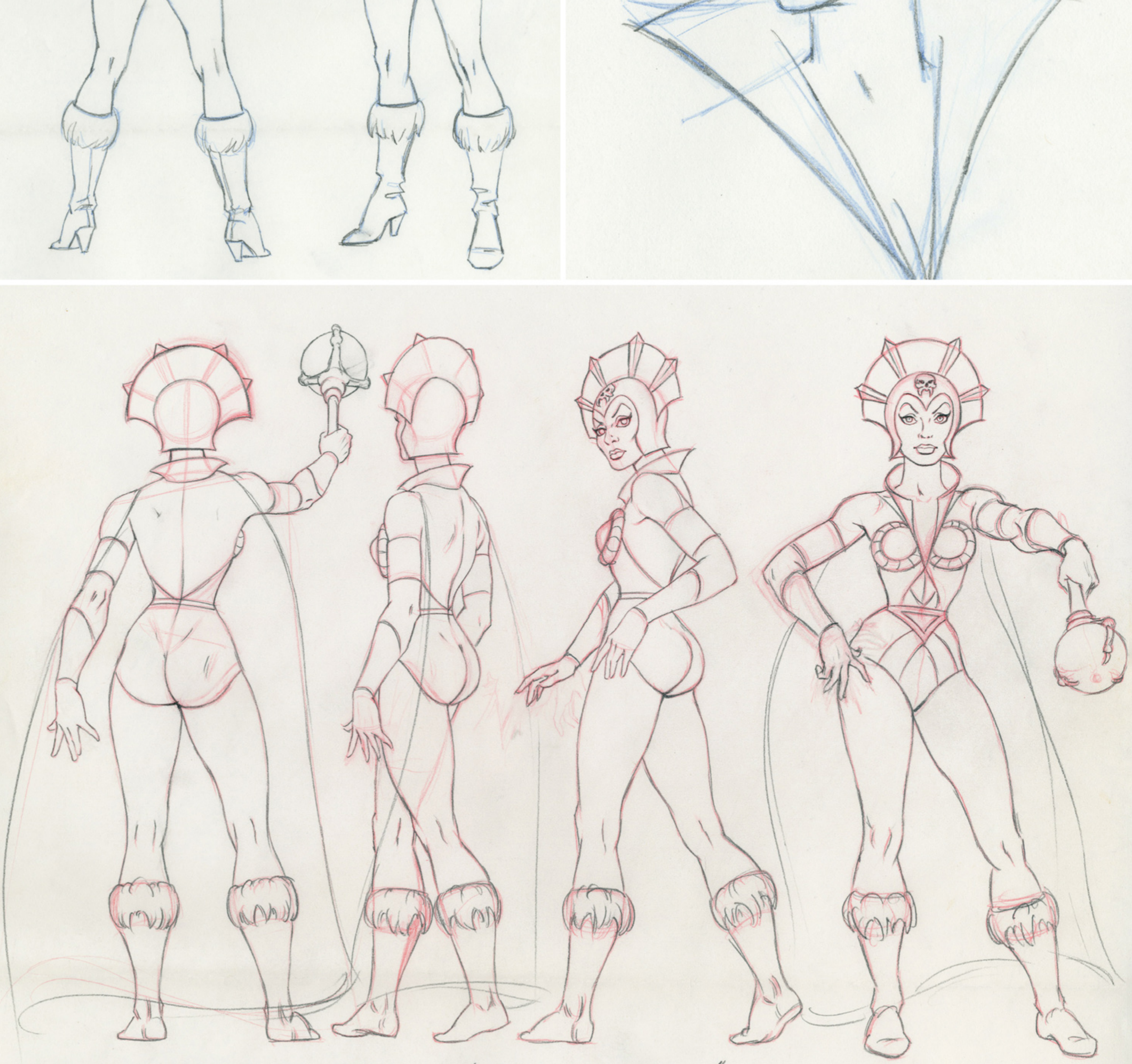




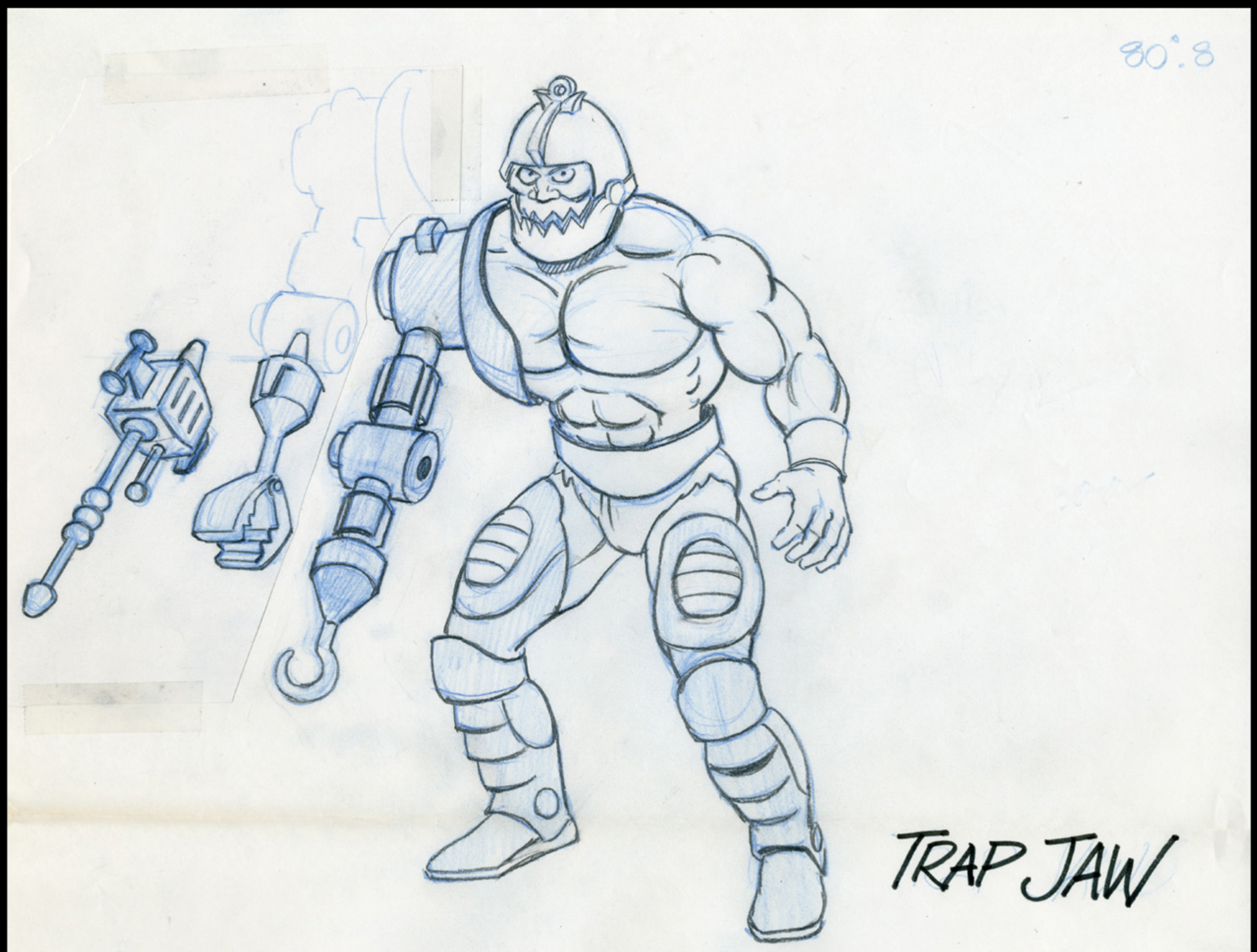
OUT







"EVIL-LYN"



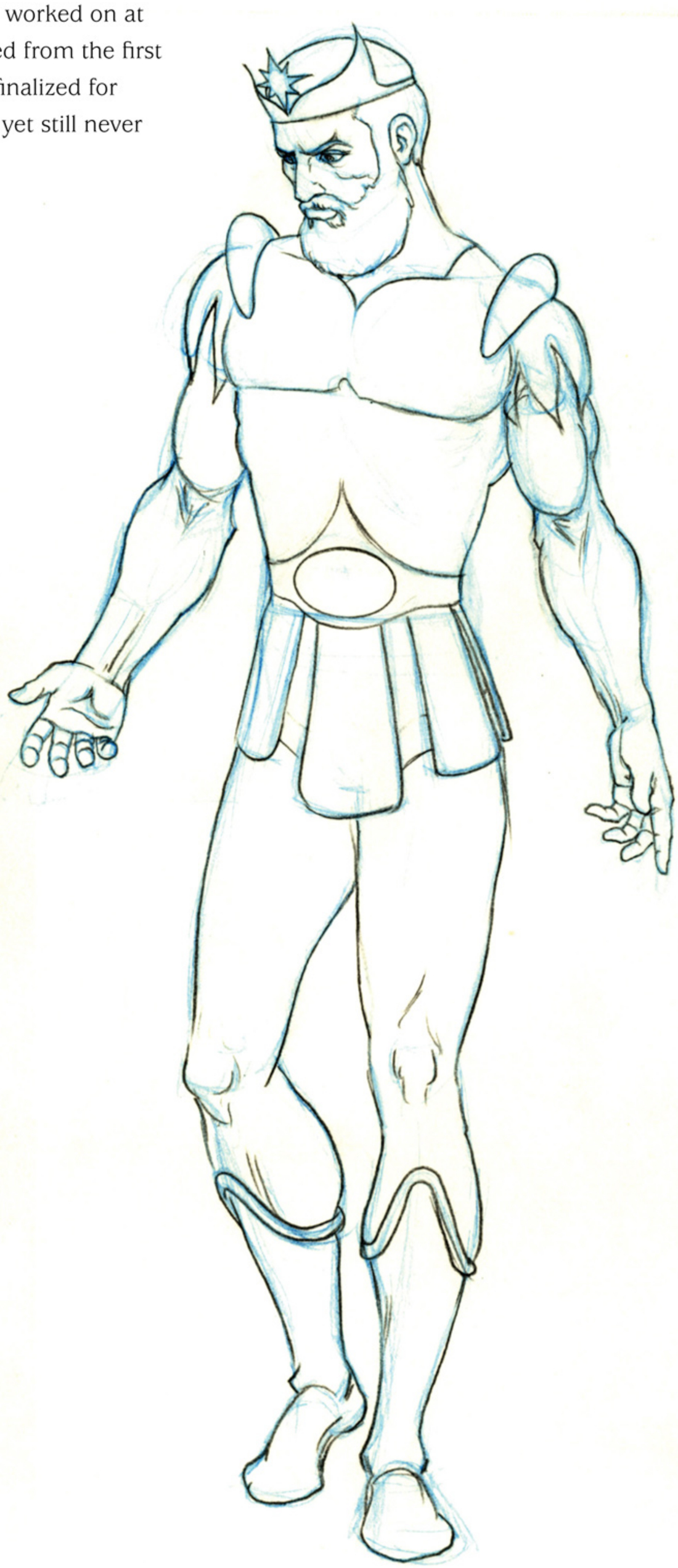


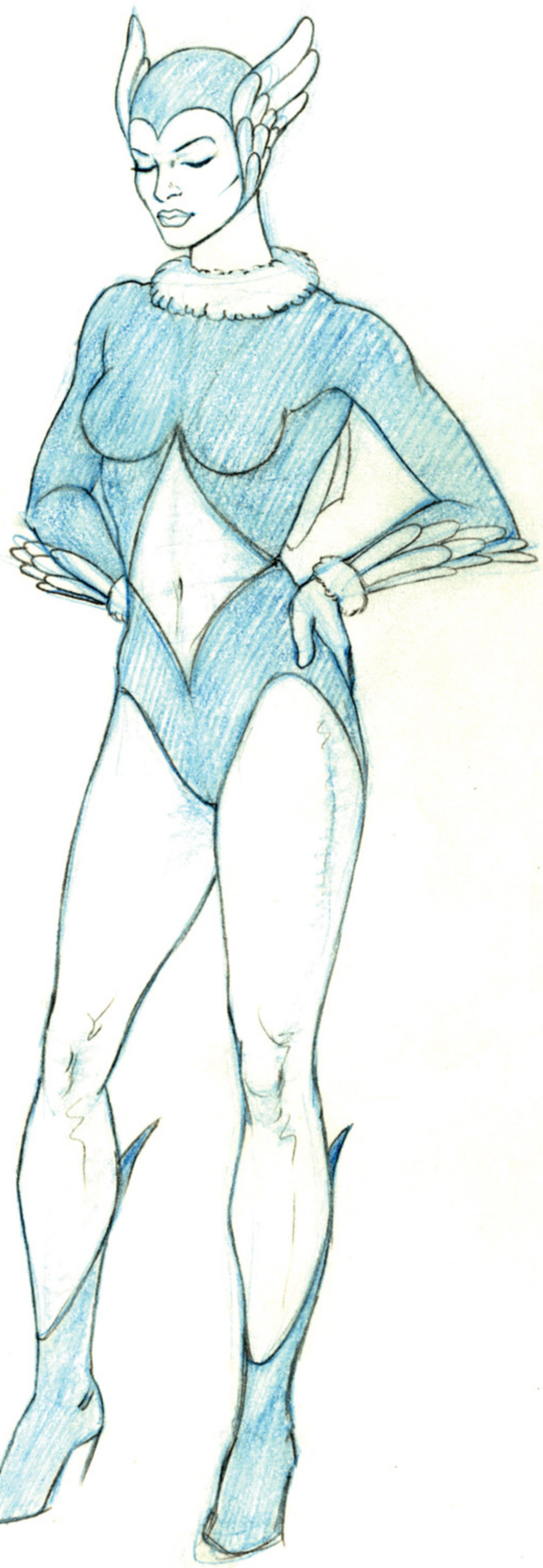
The illustrations seen on these pages show the characters close to their final designs, but some elements would be changed by the time the final character models were approved. Here we can see Beast Man with a different appearance and incredibly shaggy legs. He would later be given boots, which were a great deal easier to animate! Trap Jaw looks much like his action figure, with his original long robotic arm. In the final cartoon model, the robotic arm was shortened, in order to make life easier for the animators. Teela (*opposite, top*) is close to her final model, but her features are much younger. In the illustration of Evil-Lyn we can see that the skull motif is still present on her headpiece. It would be removed, at the eleventh hour, for the cartoon.



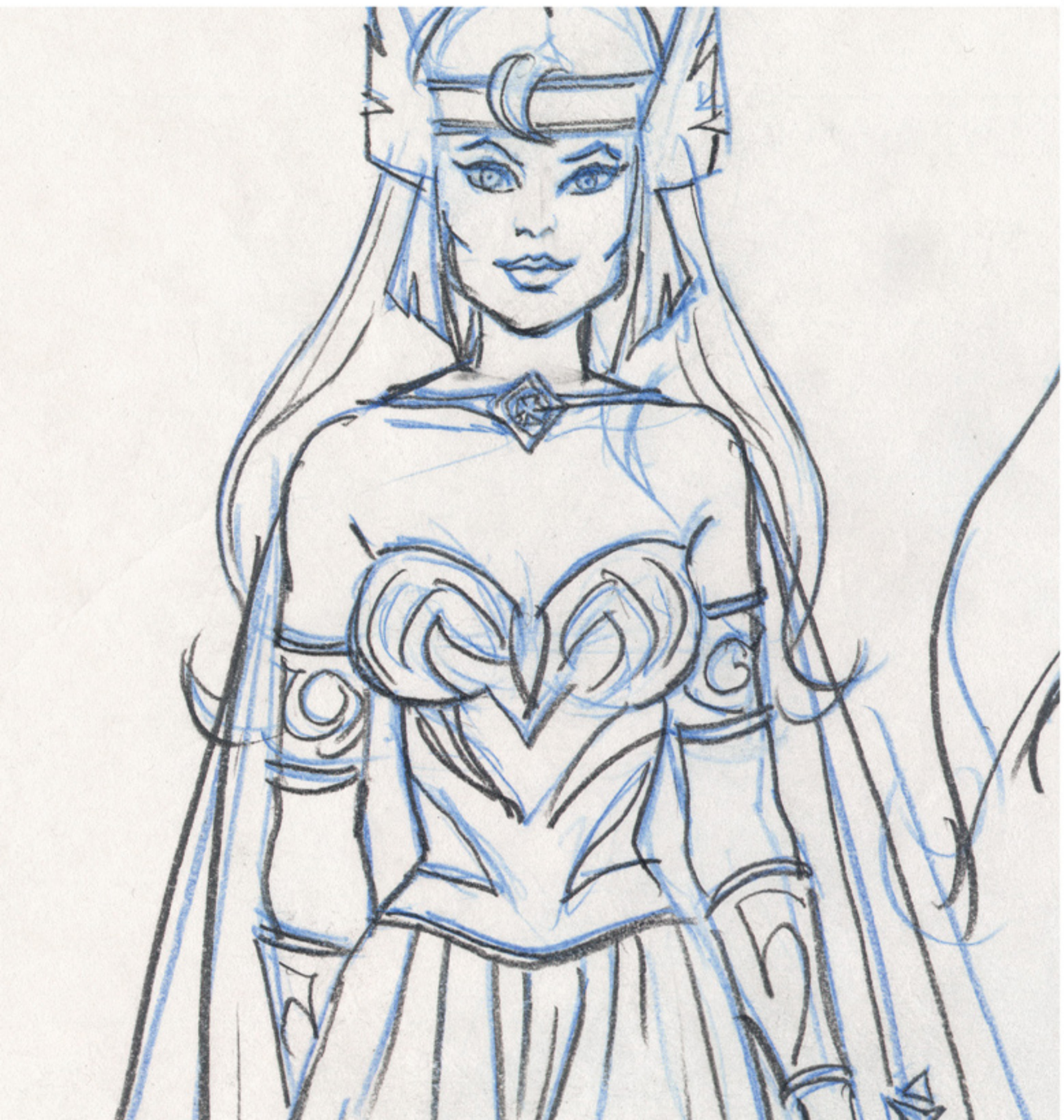
The cartoon featured a wealth of characters. And for each episode in which new characters appeared, many ideas were illustrated. On these pages you can see some abandoned designs for the Fire People, the race of characters that appear in the He-Man episode “The Curse of the Spellstone.”

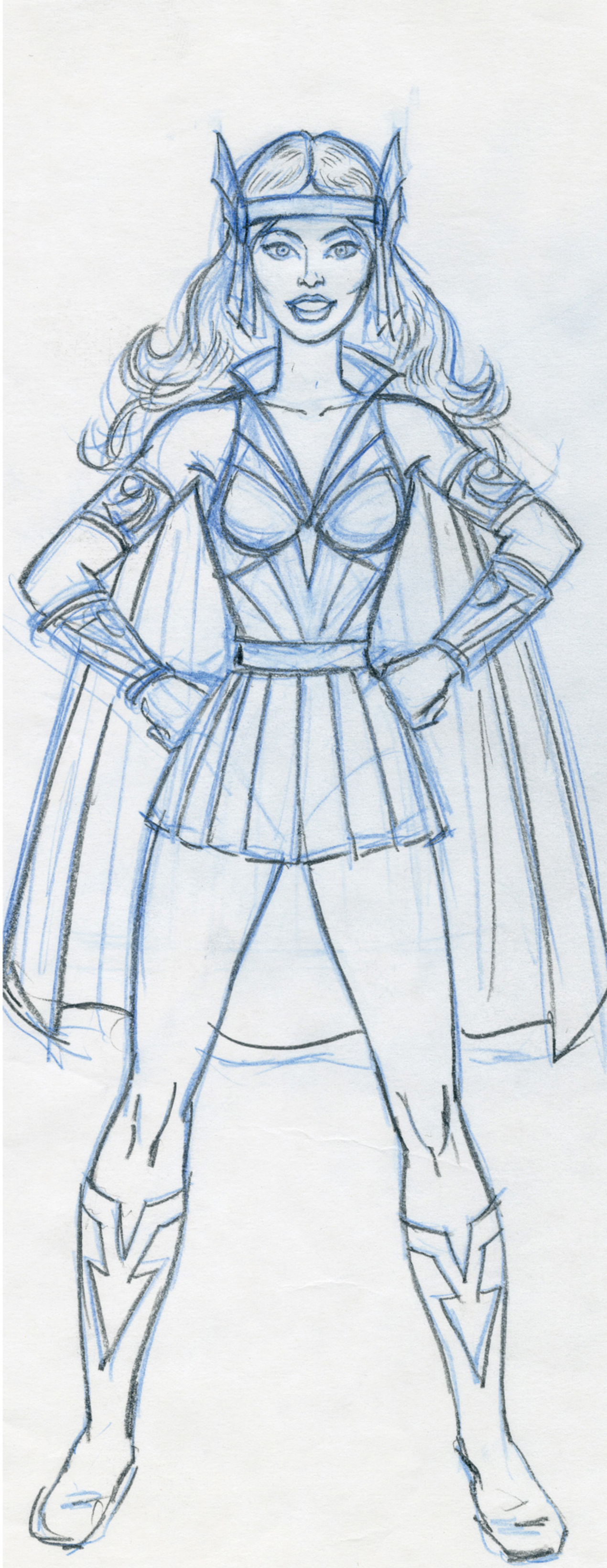
While King Helios and the guards would appear in the episode, by the time the script had been approved, the character of Ceria had been dropped. Due to the fact that many episodes were being worked on at once, characters would come and go as scripts progressed from the first draft to the final draft. There are even some characters, finalized for animation, that appear in the episode model packs, and yet still never appeared in the show!





The amount of character concept artwork for the *She-Ra: Princess of Power* series is staggering! Every member of the main cast, including ones that were abandoned, received many suggested designs, as a team of Filmation artists (working alongside Mattel artists) attempted to determine the look of the characters. Predictably, the design of She-Ra herself was explored more than any other character's. The winged tiara appeared in a lot of She-Ra's designs.

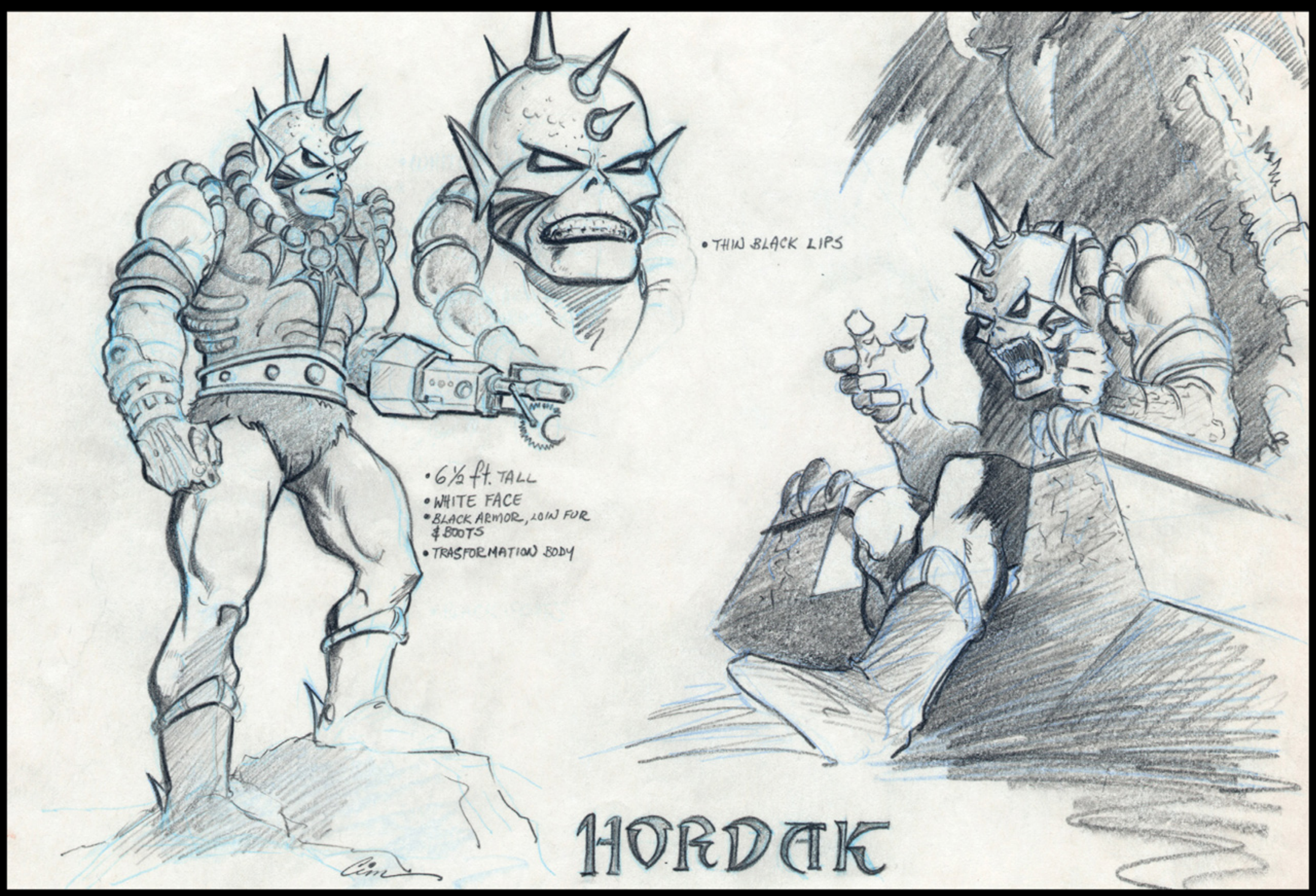




Charles Zembillas was a character designer on *He-Man* (creating characters such as Batros, the Enchantress, and Icer) and effortlessly made the transition to *She-Ra*. His bold, illustrative style was highly visible in the development process of the series. On this page we see his designs for a Horde dictator, a Horde Trooper, and the Princess of Power herself, She-Ra.



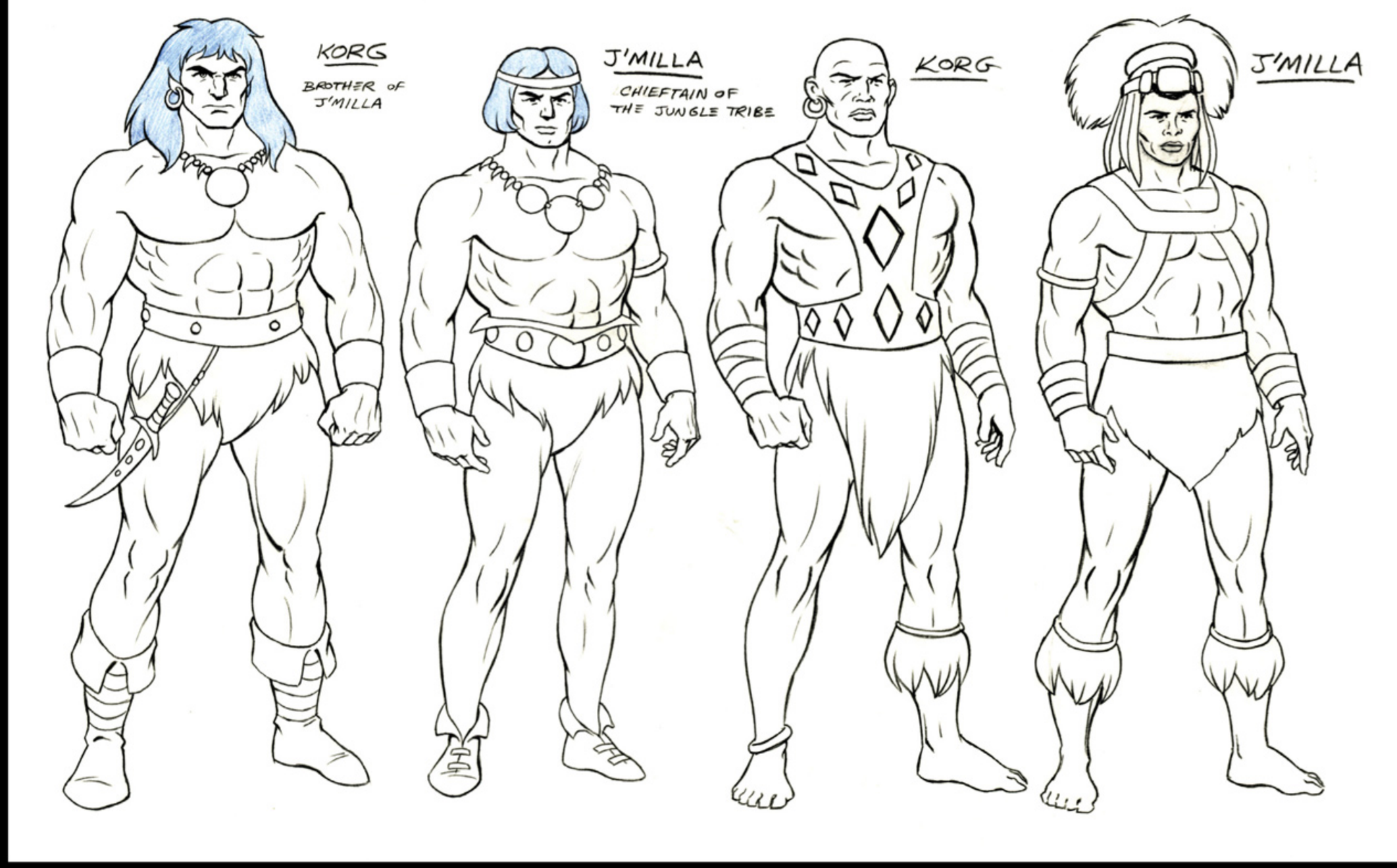




Much like She-Ra, Hordak himself went through numerous designs. Some concepts present him as a man; others have him resembling the Grim Reaper. Hordak's final character design was a mixture of all these elements. Present in many of the illustrations is the cannon at the end of his arm.



As well as working on the *He-Man* and *She-Ra* minicomics, Bruce Timm worked as a layout artist on *He-Man* and a character designer on *She-Ra*. Here are his character designs for a tribe of individuals that appear in the *She-Ra* episode "Jungle Fever." Often his character designs were approved with very few changes.



SHY-MARR, HEROIC GODDESS OF MANY VOICES

AN INTERVIEW WITH ERIKA SCHEIMER, VOICE ACTRESS IN *HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* AND *SHE-RA*, AND DAUGHTER TO LOU SCHEIMER, THE HEAD OF FILMATION

How do you respond to the strong fan base and subculture that *Masters of the Universe* has inspired?

You know, it's one of those things that is a constant amazement. Even now that my father has passed, it still makes us very, very proud. We really put our heart and soul into it, and really cared deeply. Also, we've got some really cool fans. Even when they are kind of nuts, it's a good kind of nuts. And I've heard incredible stories from the fans about how we've changed people's lives, saved people's lives, given them a whole new direction in their life, and I gotta tell you—even when I talk about it right now—it gives me chills that we were able to touch people's lives. My dad was—more than anything else—a people person. A humanitarian. He always put the artist and the audience first. Period. Exclamation point! And for the fans to keep on coming . . . I have to tell you, in his later years—after Filmation got closed down—you know, he couldn't get started back up again because he was such a maverick, so this incredible love from this fan base, really, it made the second half of his life.

And that is one thing I want you all to know out there. What you did for my dad . . . It chokes me up. It really does, and we think we are the luckiest people in the world. And to see the next generation—to see these guys come with their kids, and you get both the dads and their kids all gaga over it—you know, it is such a powerful, unbelievable feeling. We're just honored. Frankly, we are just really honored, because we have these crazy, loyal fans. And the crazier, the better.

It's the gift that keeps giving. I really don't know what to say. It's half my life ago, and it's something that is still giving me so much satisfaction and a sense of purpose. So that's my two cents' worth . . . or maybe even a quarter.

You also did a lot of voice acting, correct?

I did a lot of voices for both *He-Man* and *She-Ra.* I did a lot of ancillary characters in *He-Man* because I came onboard after the fact. I did some reoccurring characters in *She-Ra.* Like Imp. I love little Imp. [*Does Imp voice*]

He was one of my favorite characters. I also directed the voice-over recording sessions. Once I came on full time at Filmation, I casted and directed all of *She-Ra*, and I did the directing of all the second season—the second sixty-five half-hours—of *He-Man*.

I was also involved with the scripts. What can I say, I'm a feminist. I made sure that we didn't have any girls tripping. My dad grew up with two very strong women, so he knew better. But nevertheless, I was involved in the music when *She-Ra* was introduced. They had that little mini movie, *I Have the Power*—I wrote the main title song and sang it. I was all over that show. You know, one of those jacks-of-all-trades. There was a Christmas episode that I wrote, and I sang that song too. I was really all over the place. Once I got in there, I was trouble. I really enjoyed all my work in every capacity with He-Man and She-Ra. It was very exciting and thrilling.

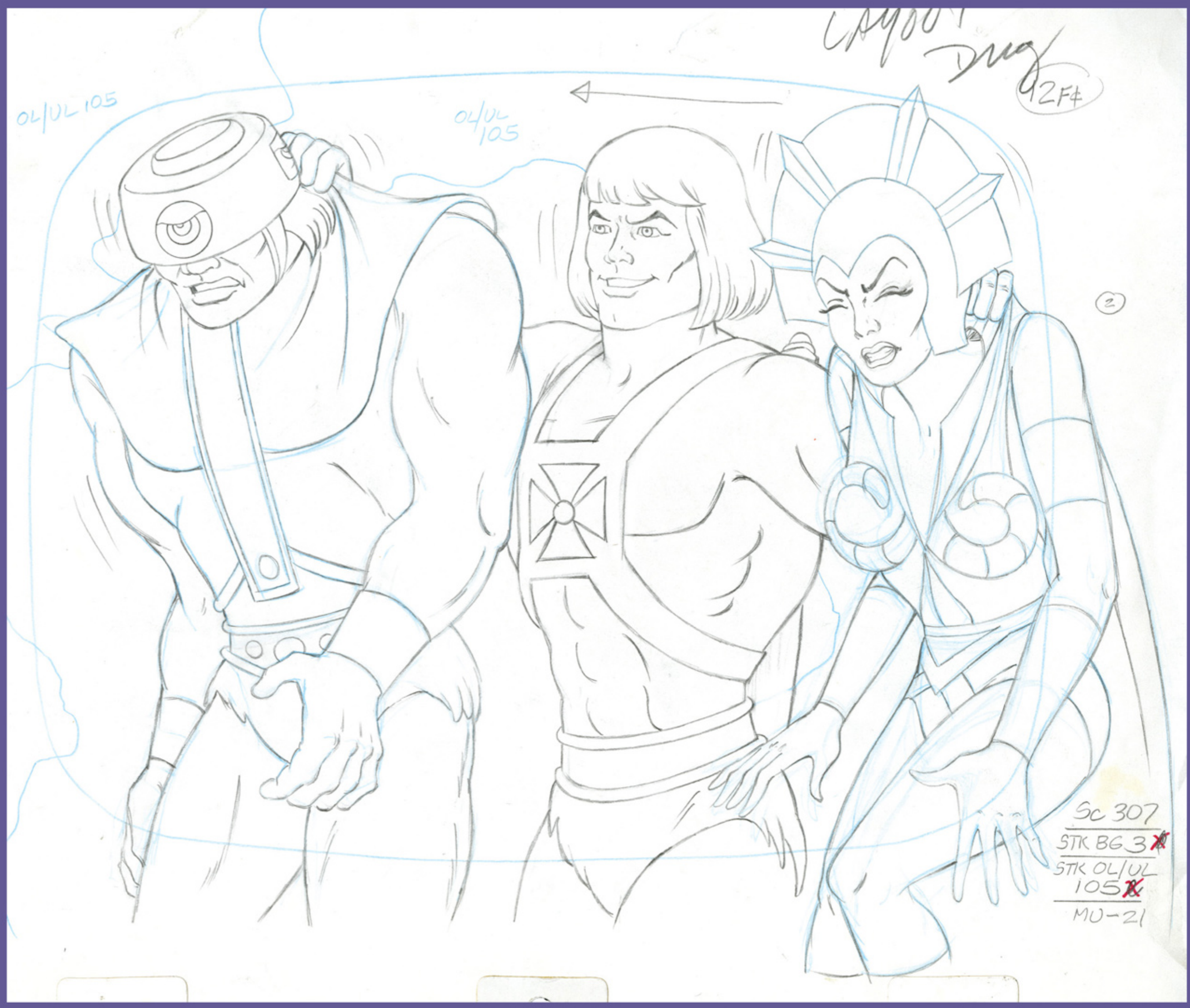
So did you have a favorite *He-Man* and *She-Ra* character? Not just one you voiced, but any character? And why did you respond to that particular character?

With *She-Ra*, I loved Imp. That little bat, always causing havoc. I really enjoyed that, just from a personal standpoint. I really thought there was just so much flavor and fun in all the different characters. It's really hard for me to say, "Oh, this one was absolutely my favorite!" I really can't, but I'm sort of partial to Imp. I voiced him, and he was just a great little pain in the butt. And of course, Orko. My dad voiced Orko. He just loved Orko, too. He really spoke to both of our hearts, and it would be fun because—when I came onboard in the second season—I was directing my dad, and we had a big old hoot doing that. So I guess, sort of the lighter side of characters was more of our bailiwick. We really enjoyed those a lot.

Is there anything else you want to add?

Well, it's important to me that you know my dad's intentions, that he did things his own way by putting the artists and his people first, and that he had the will to make sure that the show wasn't just a half-hour commercial.

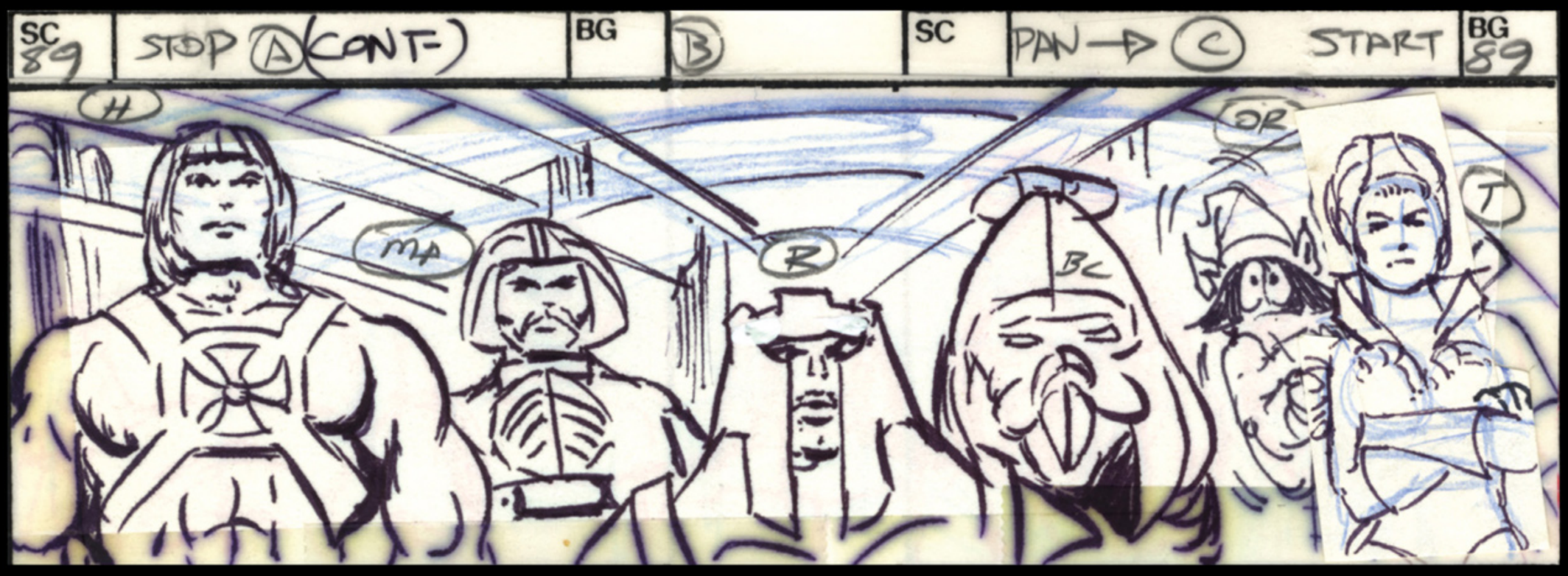
For me, it was really a thrilling thing. On a sort of side note, when *He-Man* was taken overseas for the first time—and they have this thing that happens twice a year was



Cannes where everybody gathers together to look at licenses from different parts of the world—back then Filmation was like the only kid on the block [for animation], and the response from the whole world community was amazing. It was just one of those things that has blown us away from the very beginning. My dad still has a Facebook page for which my partner is the webmaster, and people from around the whole world are still in touch, talking about what is going on with *He-Man* and *She-Ra* and their favorite things from the shows way back when. I think its universal appeal just took us all by surprise, and it's just one of those things that made us so proud. I can't even say that enough, how proud and how touched we were at the same time. To be vindicated in our vision that—gosh darn it—we can produce something that's more than just violence and gore. That can really attract an audience. And here we are, thirty-five years later, still talking about it.

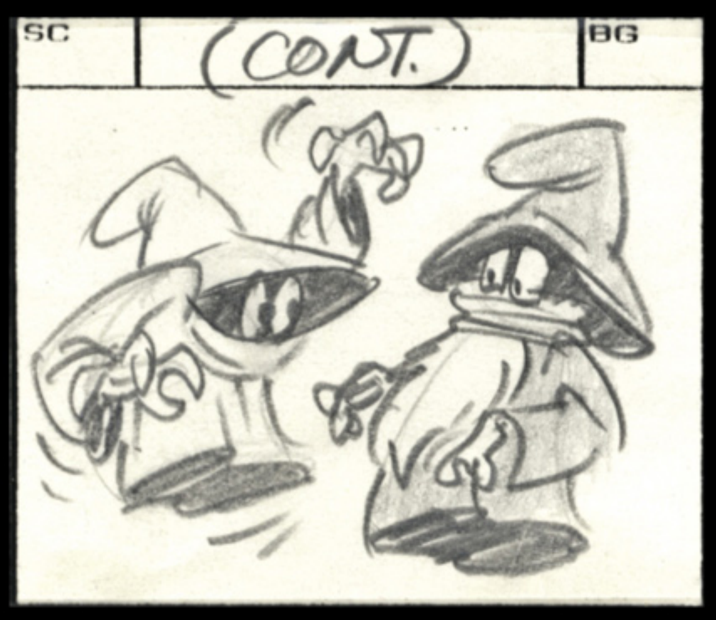
Having action, as opposed to violence. Trying to figure that out was critical. It was critical that we gave kids an alternative to that stuff, and a human way to get out of sticky situations. And you know kids would be so much better served nowadays. It's frightening with what's going on with video games—all the killing and all the violence going on . . . And we wonder why there is so much shooting at schools. From the top down, action—not violence—was always stressed. There were always artists who wanted to push the edge and—you know, sorry, guys—that's just not what this is about. You have to be more creative about how you are going to do these things. And ultimately, I think these thirty five years have borne out the wisdom of that approach.

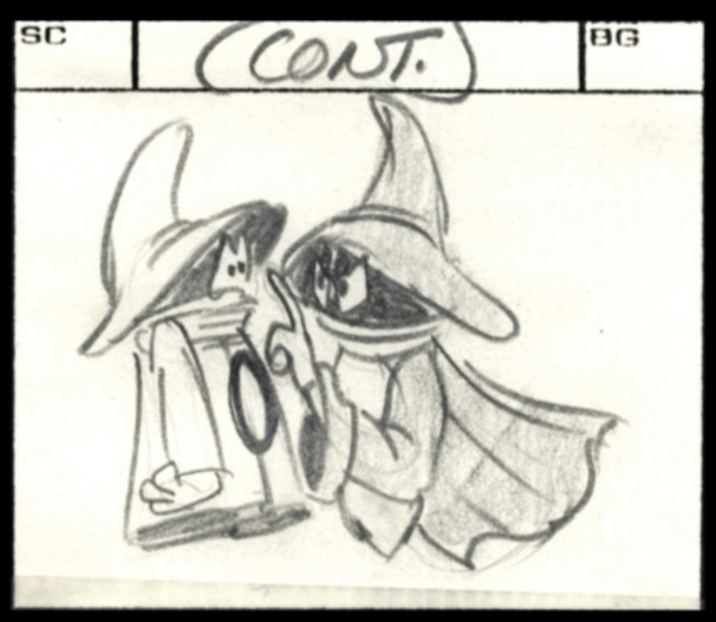
STORYBOARDS



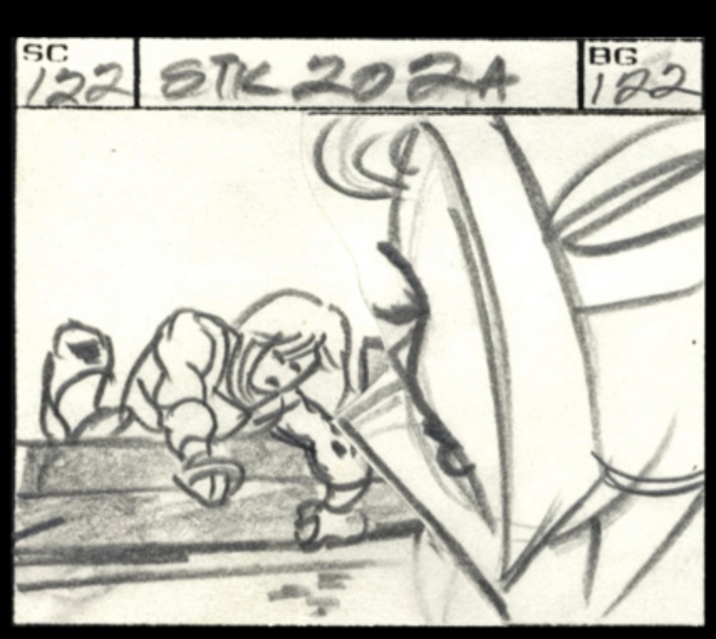
Storyboards are perhaps one of the most important aspects of animation. The artist must read the script and determine how each and every shot should look, as well as dictate where and how the characters should move on the screen. Prior to one single episode being animated, Filmation created a plethora of stock sequences for the main cast. These sequences were used over and over again in order to keep the budget down. Thus, the Filmation storyboard artist would also have to figure out which stock sequences were relevant to each and every scene. During *He-Man* the storyboard artists created a new system called "same/as": if new animation sequences, outside of the stock system, were impressive, they would make a note of them and attempt to use these new pieces of animation, rather than relying on the stock movements. The six storyboard panels to the right showcase Barry Caldwell's expressive artwork on "The Return of Orko's Uncle."

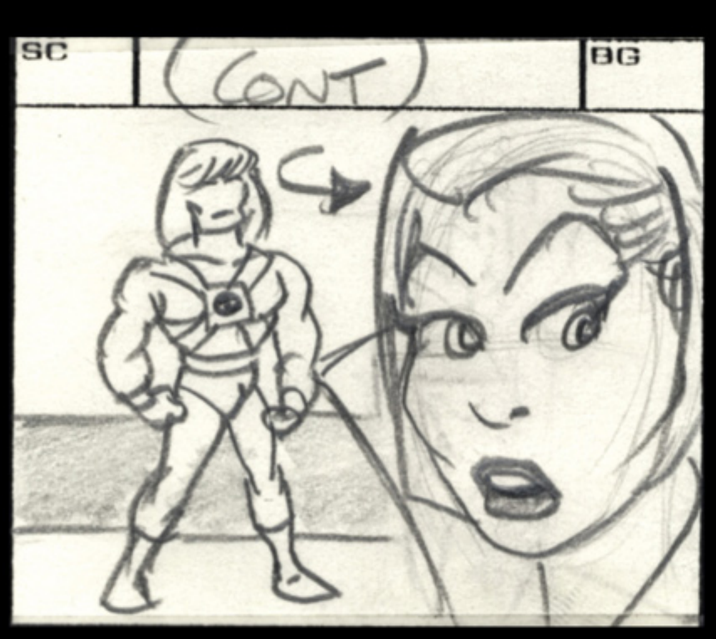


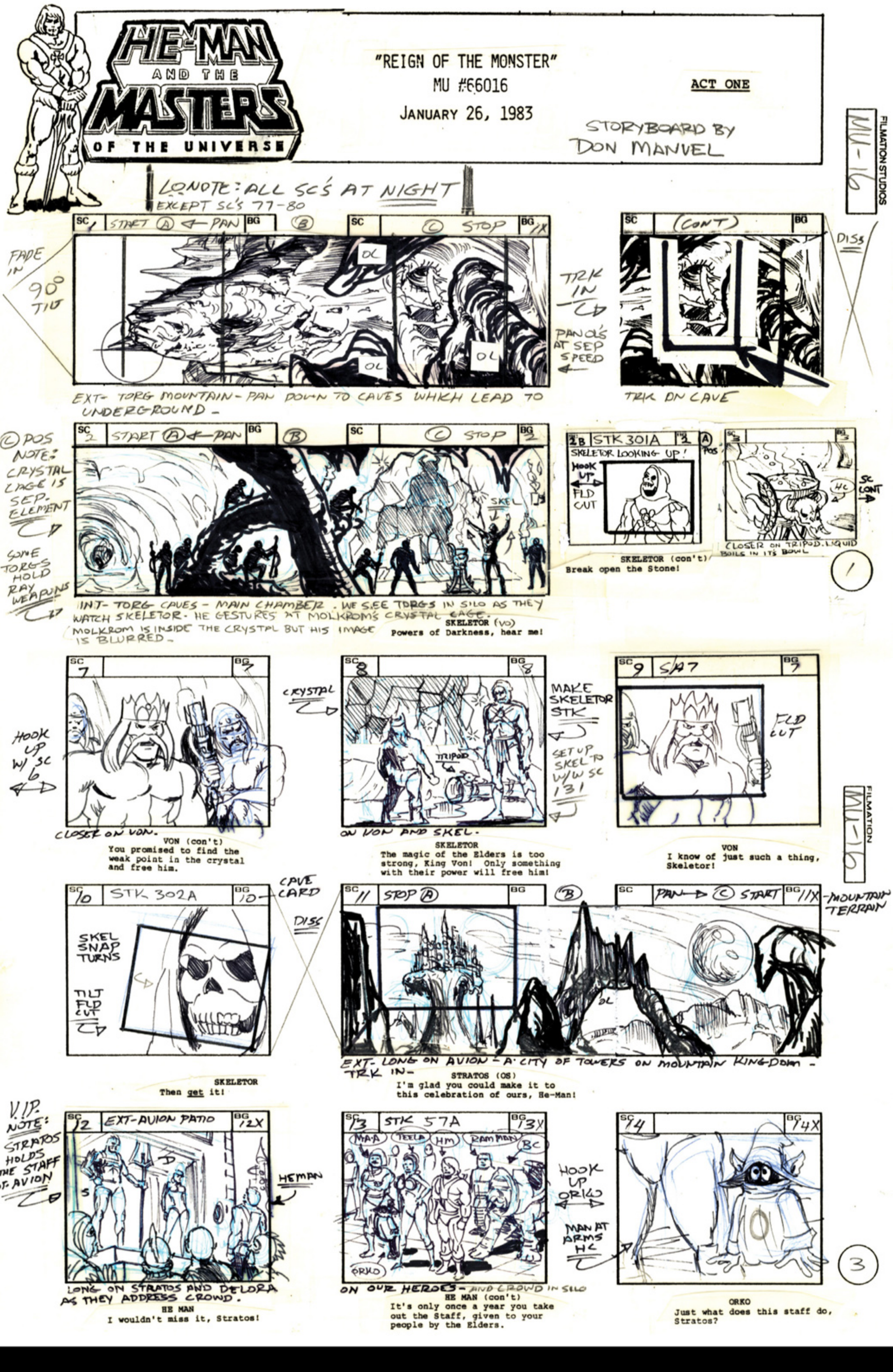








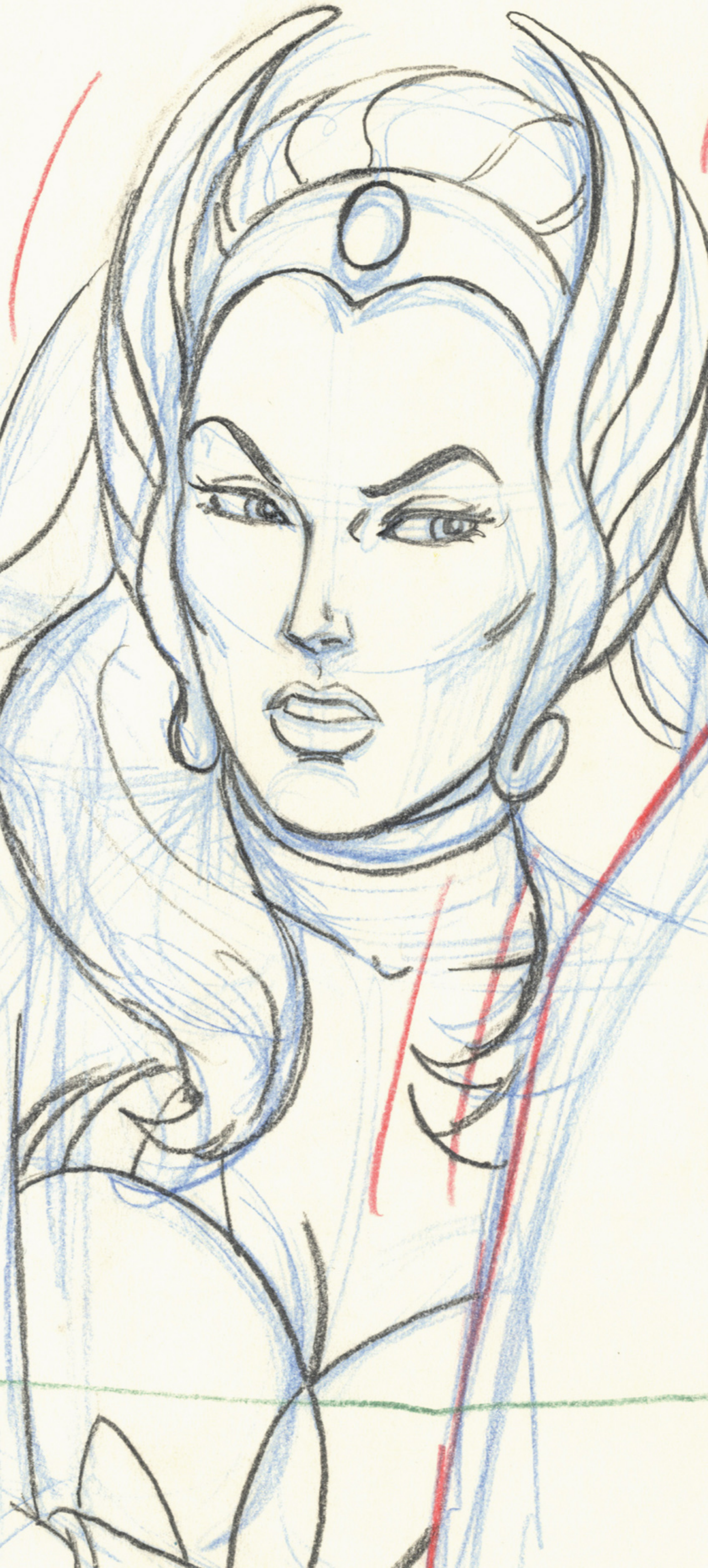




Don Manuel was one of the most accomplished storyboard artists at Filmation. His panels were often incredibly detailed—at times looking like a comic book! During the eighties he worked on many shows, such as *Fat Albert*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Super Powers*, *Defenders of the Earth*, *Ghostbusters*, *The Real Ghostbusters*, and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, to name a few.

LAYOUTS

After the storyboards had been completed, the layout artist would begin to stage the visuals that would appear onscreen, how a character would be framed in a shot, and the basic key movements. The director would often oversee this part of the process. The layout artists did not have to ensure that the characters were on model, although it often aided the process if they were. Once the layout was approved, the animator would use it as a guide to create the actual sequence of movement.



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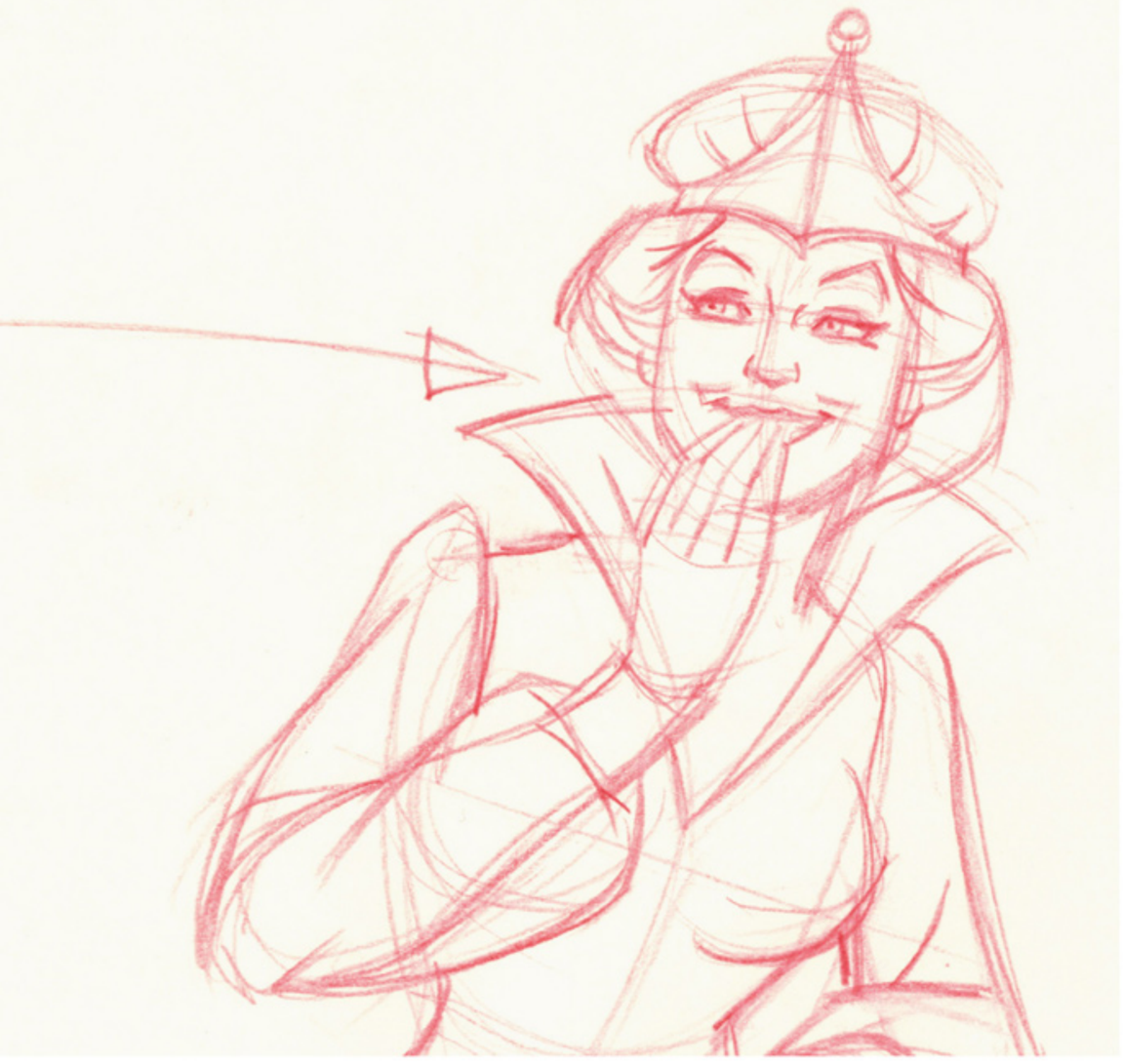
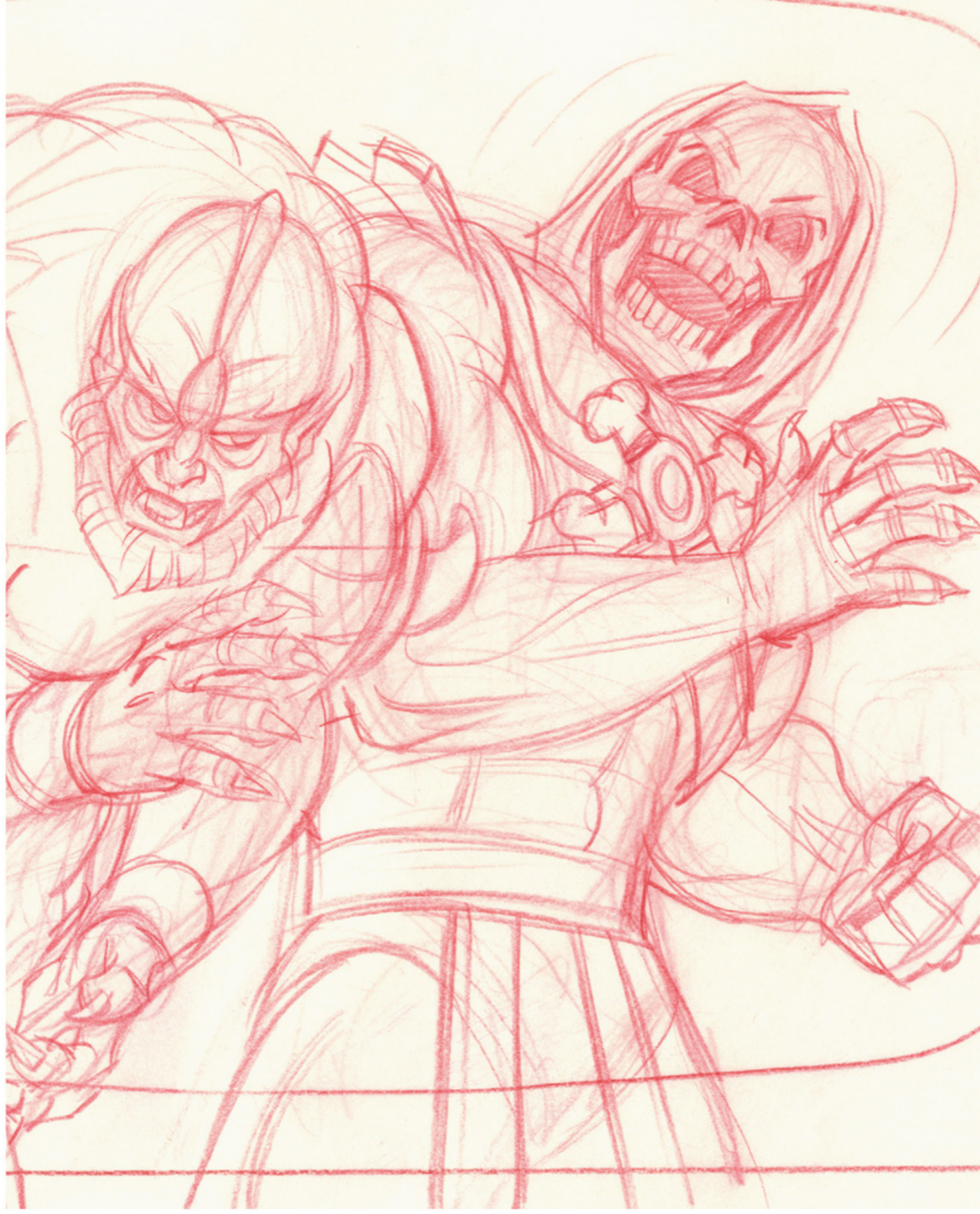
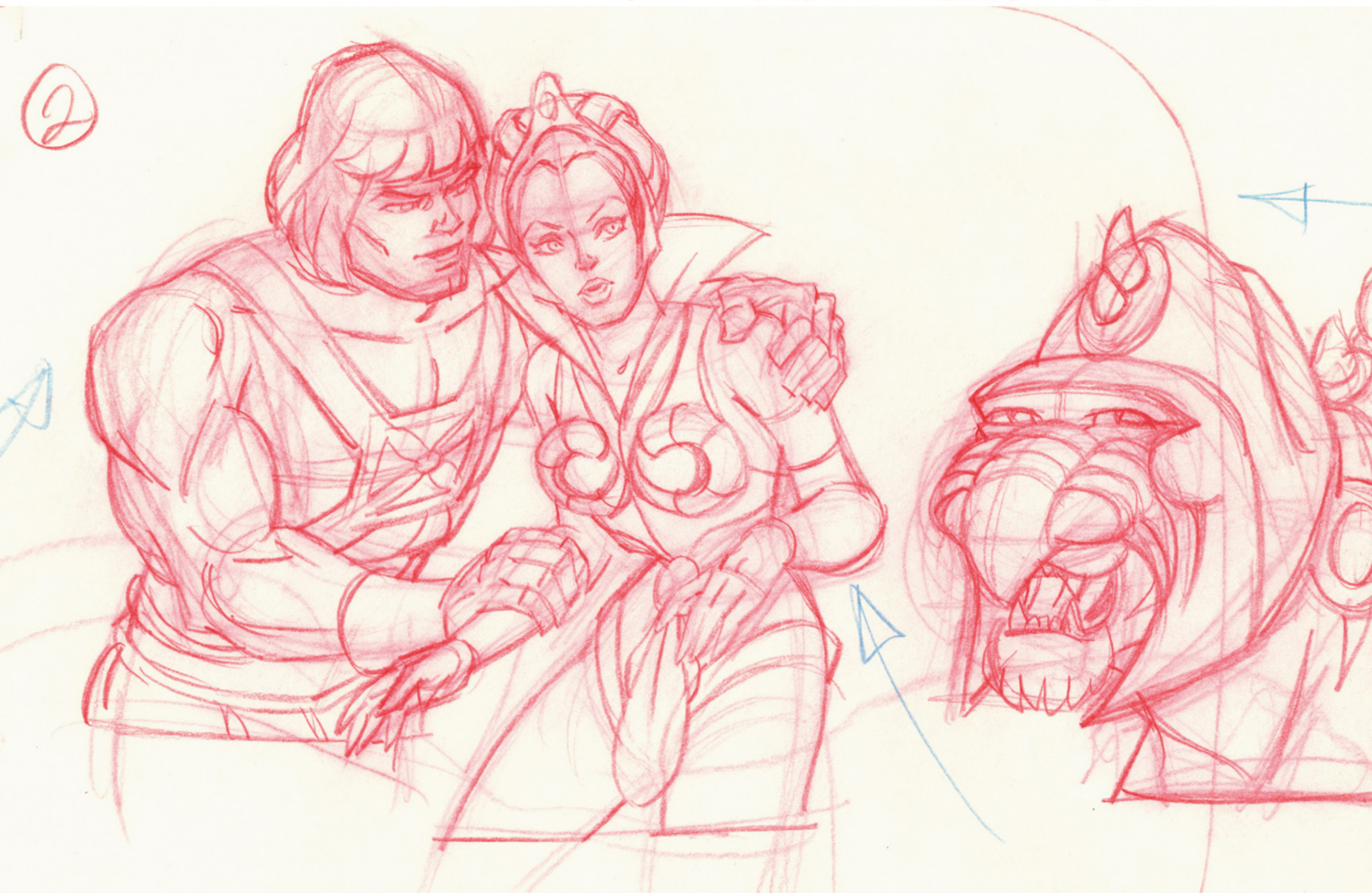




Bob Kline had previously worked at Filmation on a variety of shows. He came back to freelance briefly on *He-Man*. His layouts for the episode "Colossor Awakes" are wonderfully striking, so much so that the entire episode relies on his style of artwork and uses very little stock animation.



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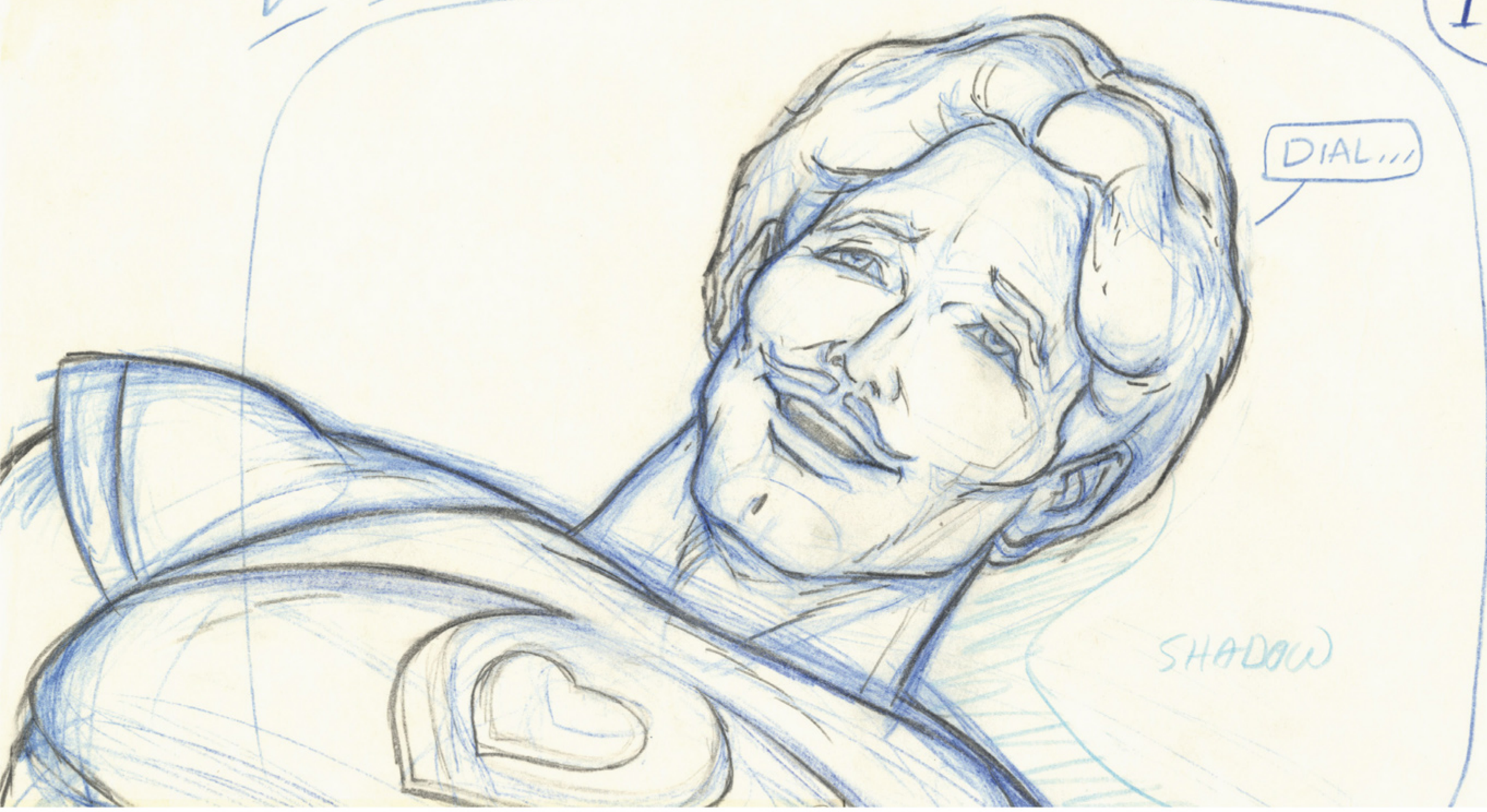


(A)

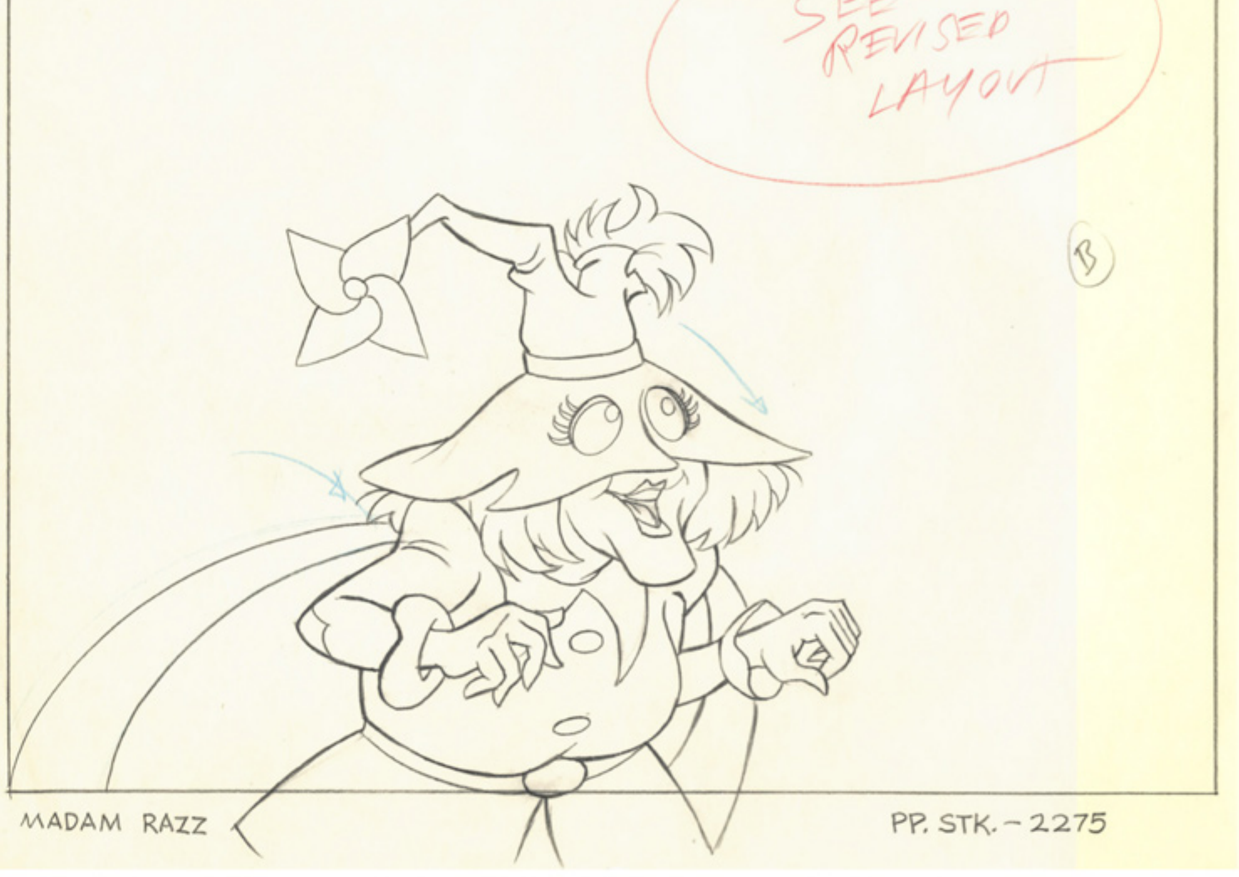


MADAM RAZZ

PP. STK. – 2275

ANTICS DOWN

(B)



MADAM RAZZ

PP. STK. – 2275

LIFTS ARMS OVERHEAD

(C)



MADAM RAZZ

PP. STK. – 2275

CASTS SPELL (MAGIC EFX)

(D)



MADAM RAZZ

PP. STK – 2275



PENCILS

From the layout the animator would create the visuals needed for each and every shot. Occasionally time could be saved by referencing a previous stock sequence. But, believe it or not, a great deal of Filmation's animation for both *He-Man* and *She-Ra* was brand new, even if the movements and positioning of the characters looked similar. During this part of the process, it was up to the animators to keep the characters on model, as Filmation was very insistent that the characters should look the same from shot to shot.



MU79-152

KEY CP



MU79-150 H-1

FINISH KEY CP



MU79-150 H-3

KEY CP



MU79-150 H-9

KEY CP

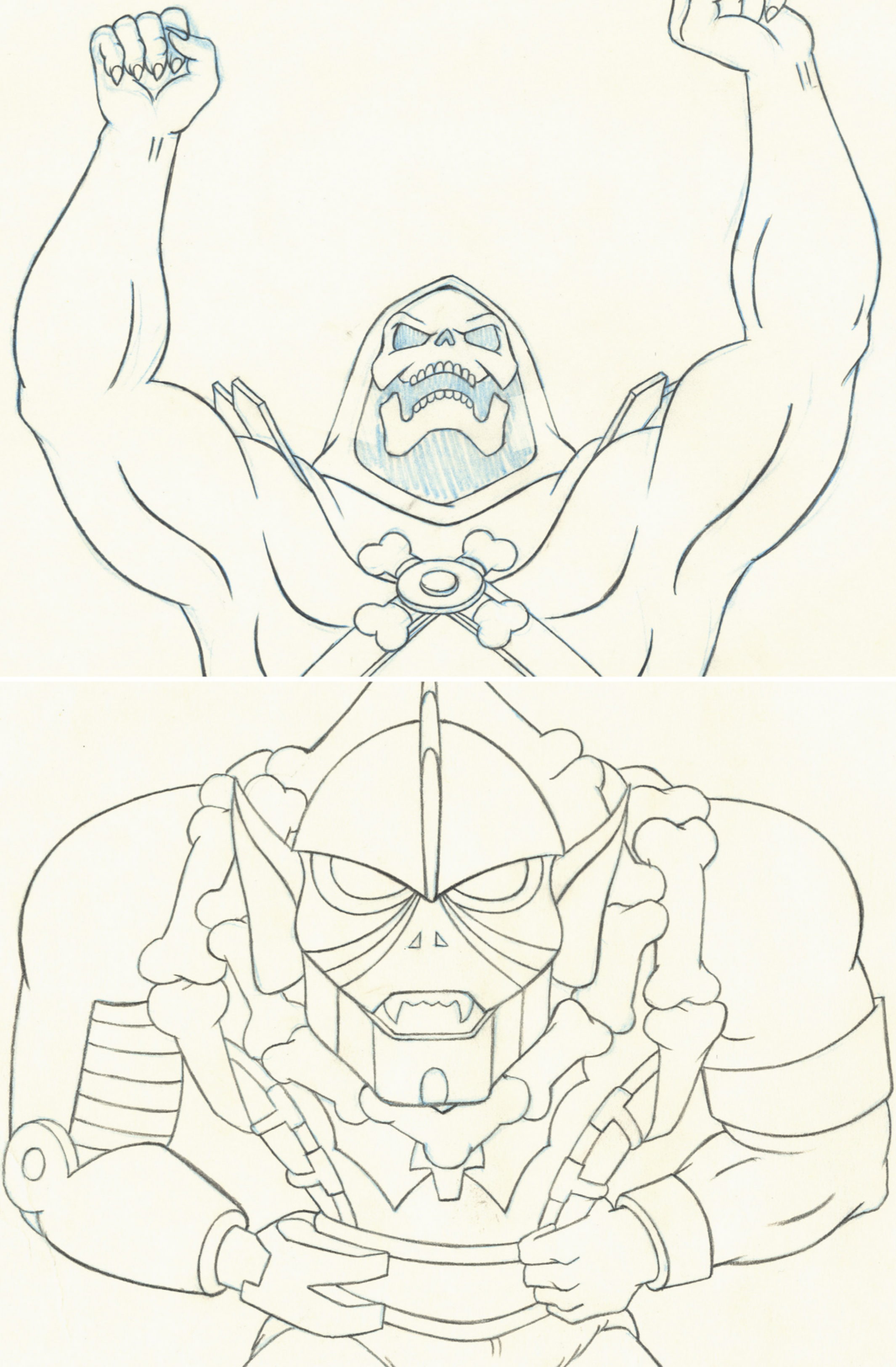


MU79-150 H-9



MU79/SC. 152 H-12













Even though she was one of the most prominent characters in the series, very little animation was created for the Sorceress. As she rarely left Castle Grayskull, many of her movements were simply pulled from the stock animation. Any sequences of her gesturing extravagantly or running past the camera were few and far between. Thus, for collectors, obtaining animation art of the Sorceress can be difficult.

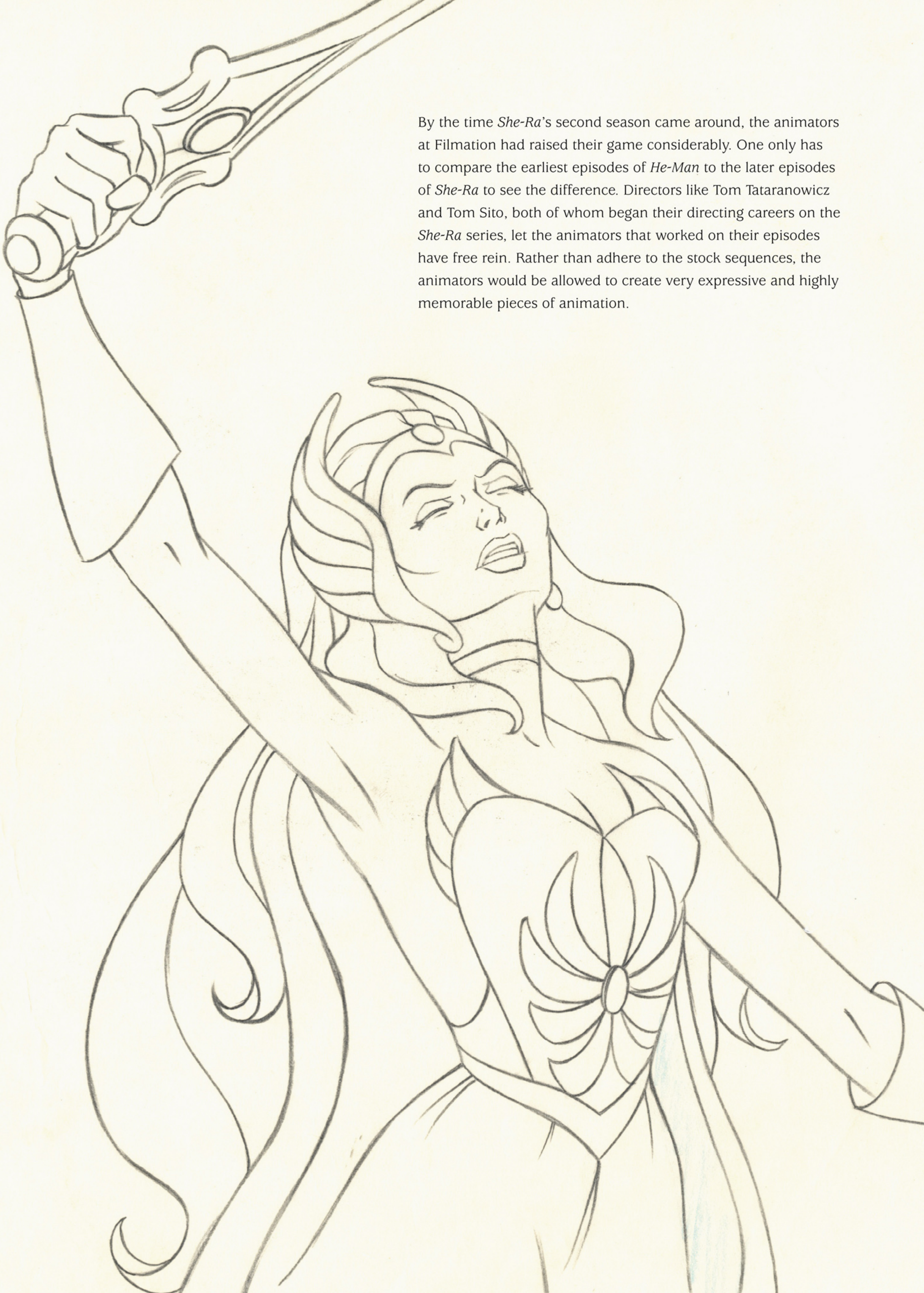






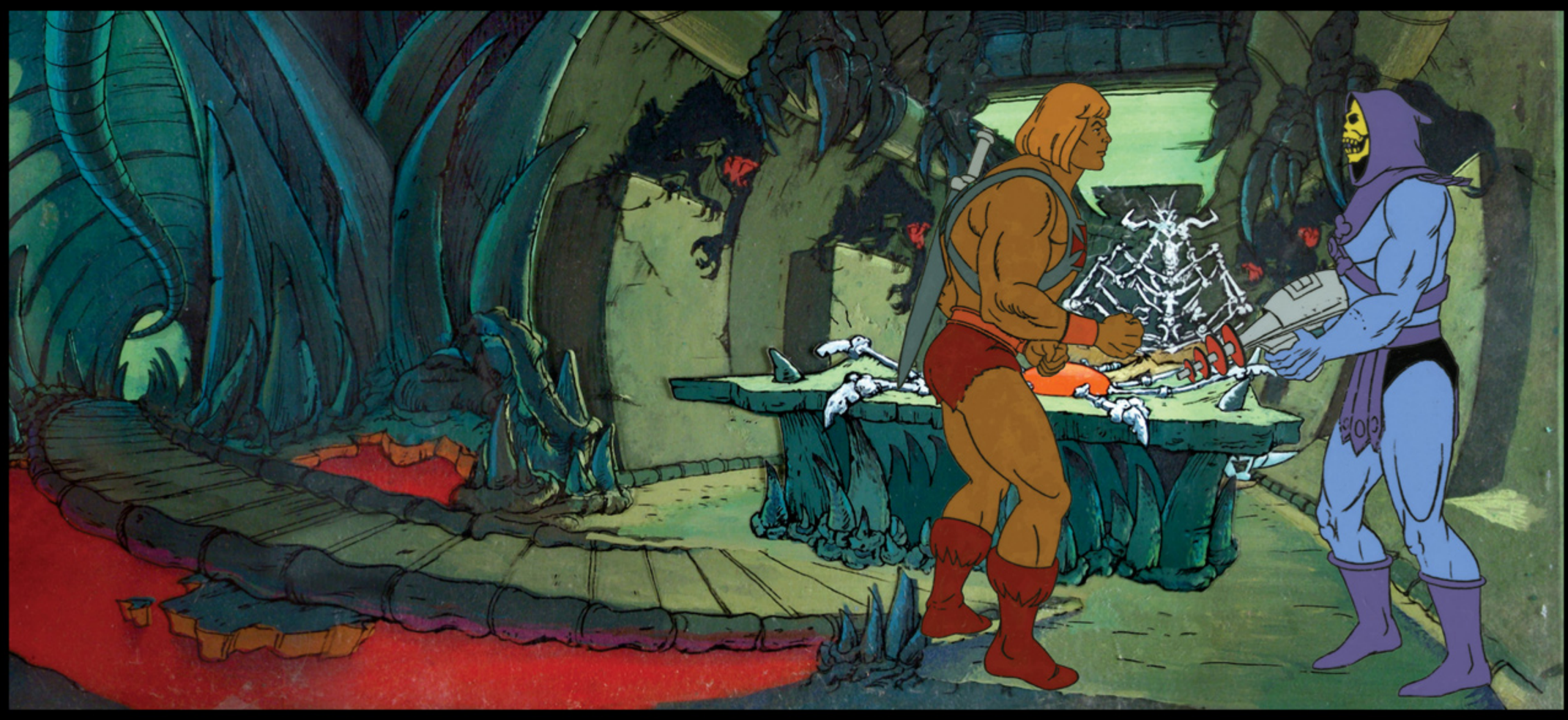


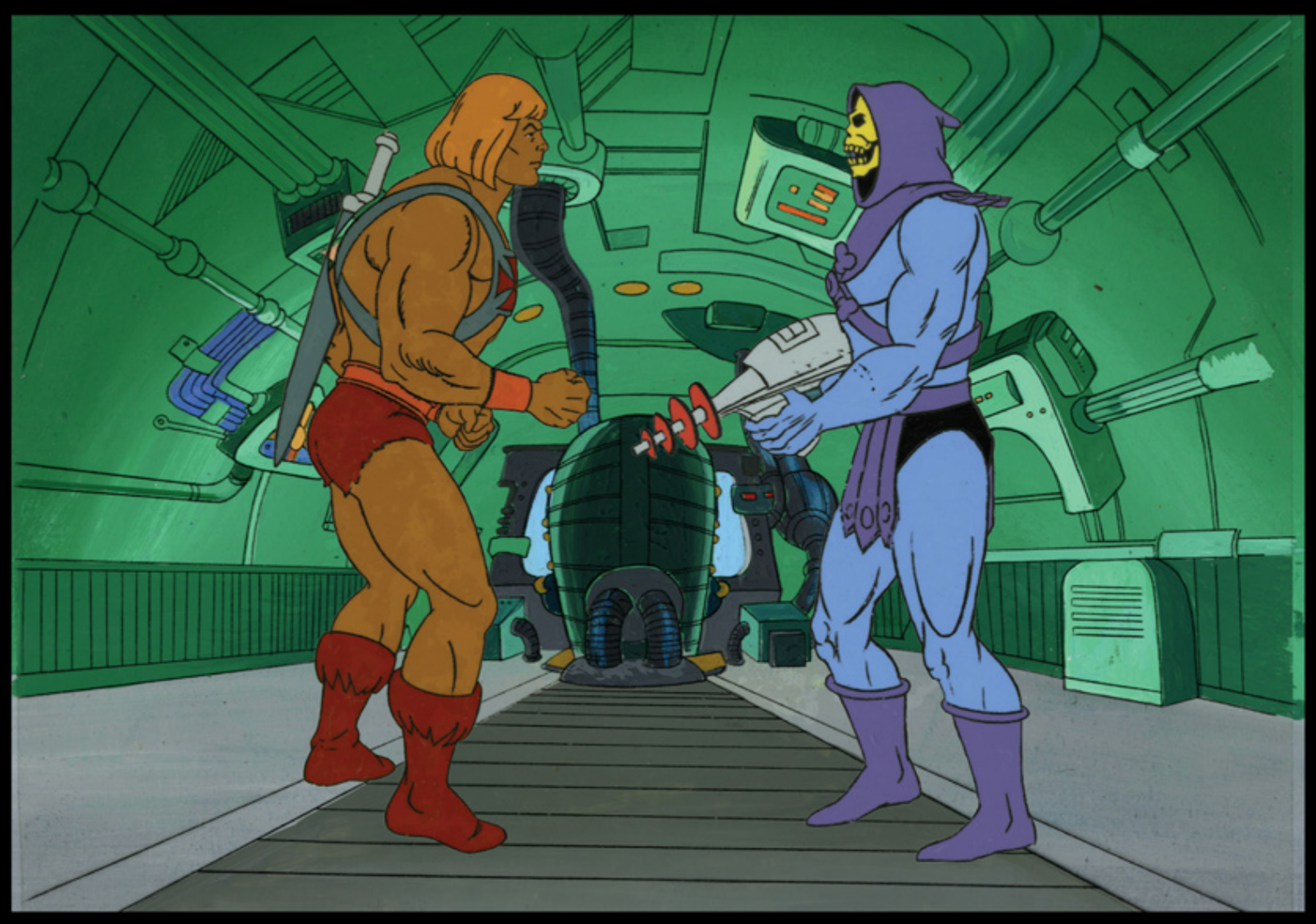
By the time *She-Ra*'s second season came around, the animators at Filmation had raised their game considerably. One only has to compare the earliest episodes of *He-Man* to the later episodes of *She-Ra* to see the difference. Directors like Tom Tataranowicz and Tom Sito, both of whom began their directing careers on the *She-Ra* series, let the animators that worked on their episodes have free rein. Rather than adhere to the stock sequences, the animators would be allowed to create very expressive and highly memorable pieces of animation.



ANIMATION CELS

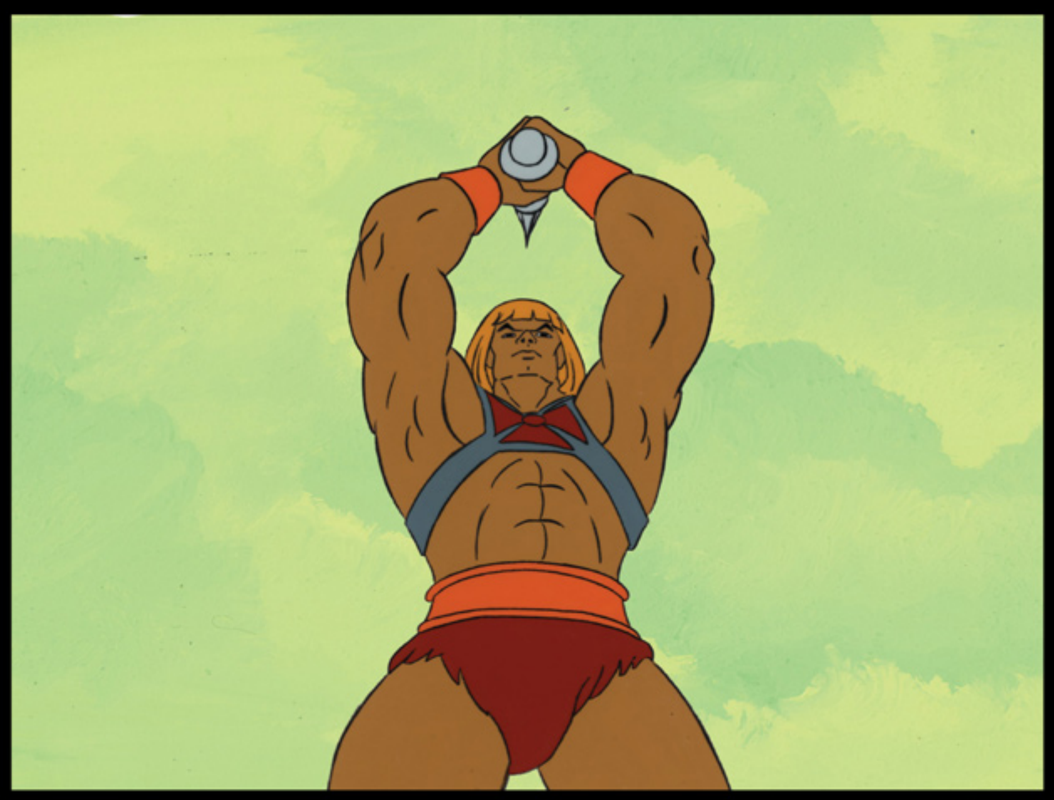
With the line art completed, each and every frame would be transferred to acetate via Xerox. These cels would then be painted (on the reverse side, in order to maintain the line art), placed on backgrounds, and shot under the camera. The high quality of the acetate that Filmation used all those years ago has resulted in many of them, those in the hands of the right collectors, continuing to look as fresh as the day they were produced.





Filmation cels were reused numerous times throughout the series atop hand-painted backgrounds. This enabled directors, with a limited budget on a tight deadline, the ability to have characters and confrontations across many an Eternian (or Etherian) location.















Here is a collection of cels (on various backgrounds) from a variety of episodes. *This page:* He-Man with the Sword of Power raised (stock sequence), Skeletor being as evil as ever (from the *Skeletor's Revenge* special), Man-At-Arms close up (stock sequence), Beast Man walking toward camera (stock sequence), a shocked Teela (from "The Taking of Grayskull"), and Evil-Lyn looking seductive (from *Skeletor's Revenge*).







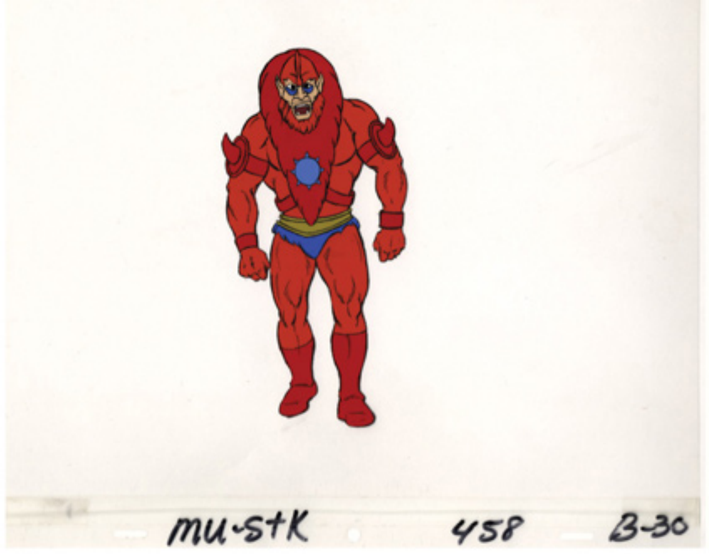


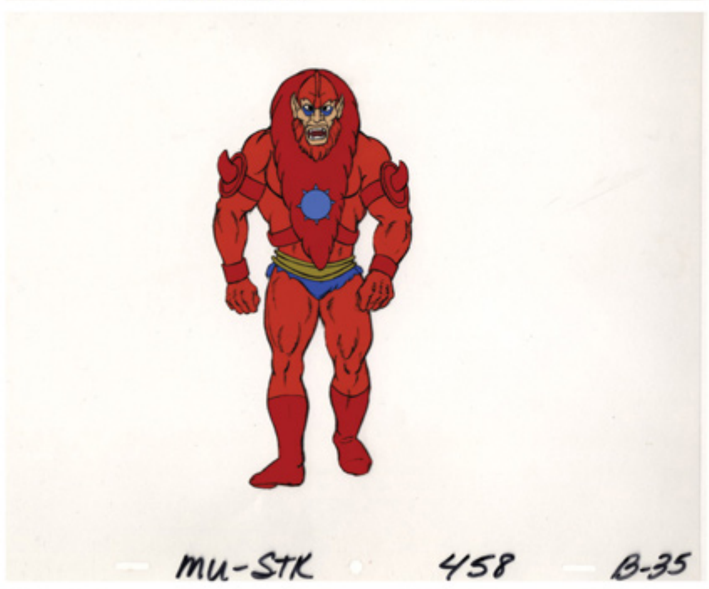


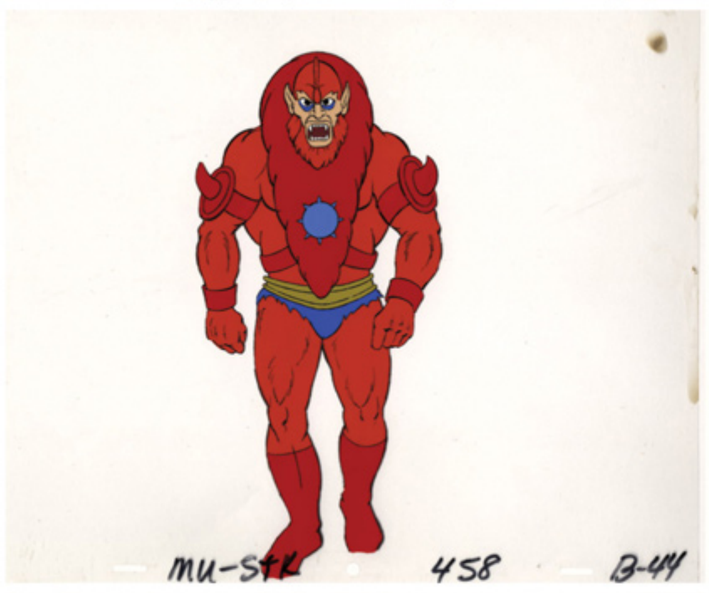


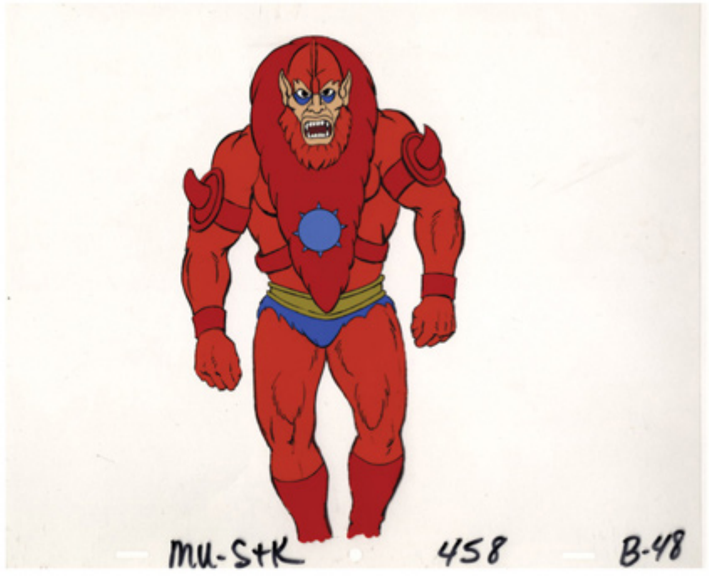
This page: Orko getting ready to cast a spell (from "Diamond Ray of Disappearance"), Trap Jaw armed for combat (from "Song of Celice"), She-Ra looking concerned (from "Small Problems"), Glimmer walking toward camera (stock sequence), Hordak laughing maniacally (stock sequence), and Shadow Weaver preparing to exit shot (stock sequence).

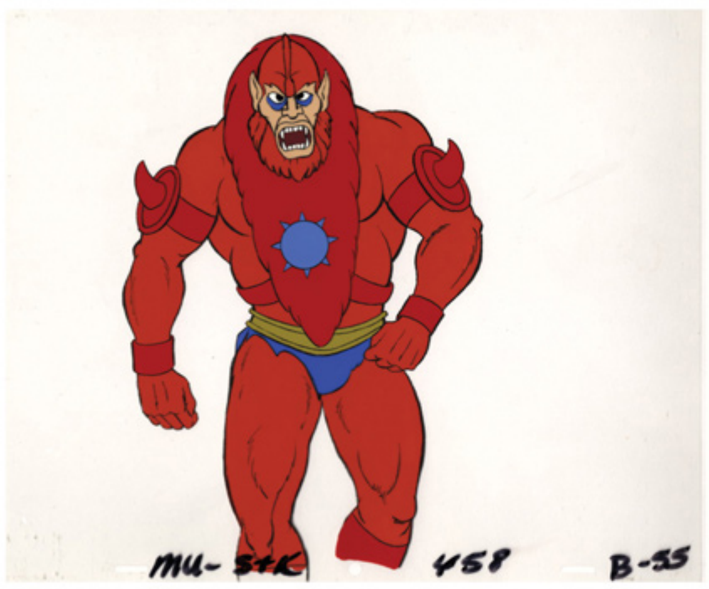
A highly memorable shot from the episode “The Problem with Power” has He-Man sadly raise the Sword of Power and surrender the power of Castle Grayskull. When this was shot for the episode, animation masks were used in order to create the illusion of shadows.













BACKGROUNDS

Filmation backgrounds were some of the most beautifully illustrated pieces of artwork to ever grace a cartoon of the eighties. A great deal of work would go into each and every background. In order to create a more striking background, Filmation artists would place an acetate sheet over the top of the painting and use a black outline to emphasize the background illustration. While this technique was not favored by all at Filmation, it helped to create some very memorable scenes.





SCRIPTOS, HEROIC CONCEIVER OF TALES

AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL DINI, WRITER ON *HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE*

I know that you're a writer, but what do you think you brought to the art of *Masters of the Universe*?

If I contributed at all to the visual success of *Masters of the Universe*, it's only in that I didn't draw any of it. I'm not much of an artist, at least not in the traditional superhero style that was adopted by the *Masters of the Universe* crew. Occasionally, if there was a creature or a villain that I felt should have a certain look, I would sketch something up on a legal pad and show it to Lou Scheimer in a story meeting and get an okay from him on it. After Lou's approval, he'd let me pass it along to the episode's director for inspiration. In general, though, the artists and the writers at Filmation didn't have a lot of interaction. There was no hard-and-fast rule; it was just that writers stuck to their typewriters (very few computers then!) and answered to their story editors, while artists reported to their directors. Animated TV production then was on a very tight budget, which didn't allow much time for writers and artists to get together and brainstorm action sequences or share ideas on character designs. If I wrote a description of a monster or a beast in the script, then the artists would either come up with something similar to what I had described, or try to find an existing model they could reuse. When you're producing a lot of episodes and both time and money are tight, that can be advantageous. If He-Man fought a blue dragon in one episode, then four episodes later he fought a red dragon, you'd just recolor the same dragon model and save some production money.

What were the influences that you brought to the table?

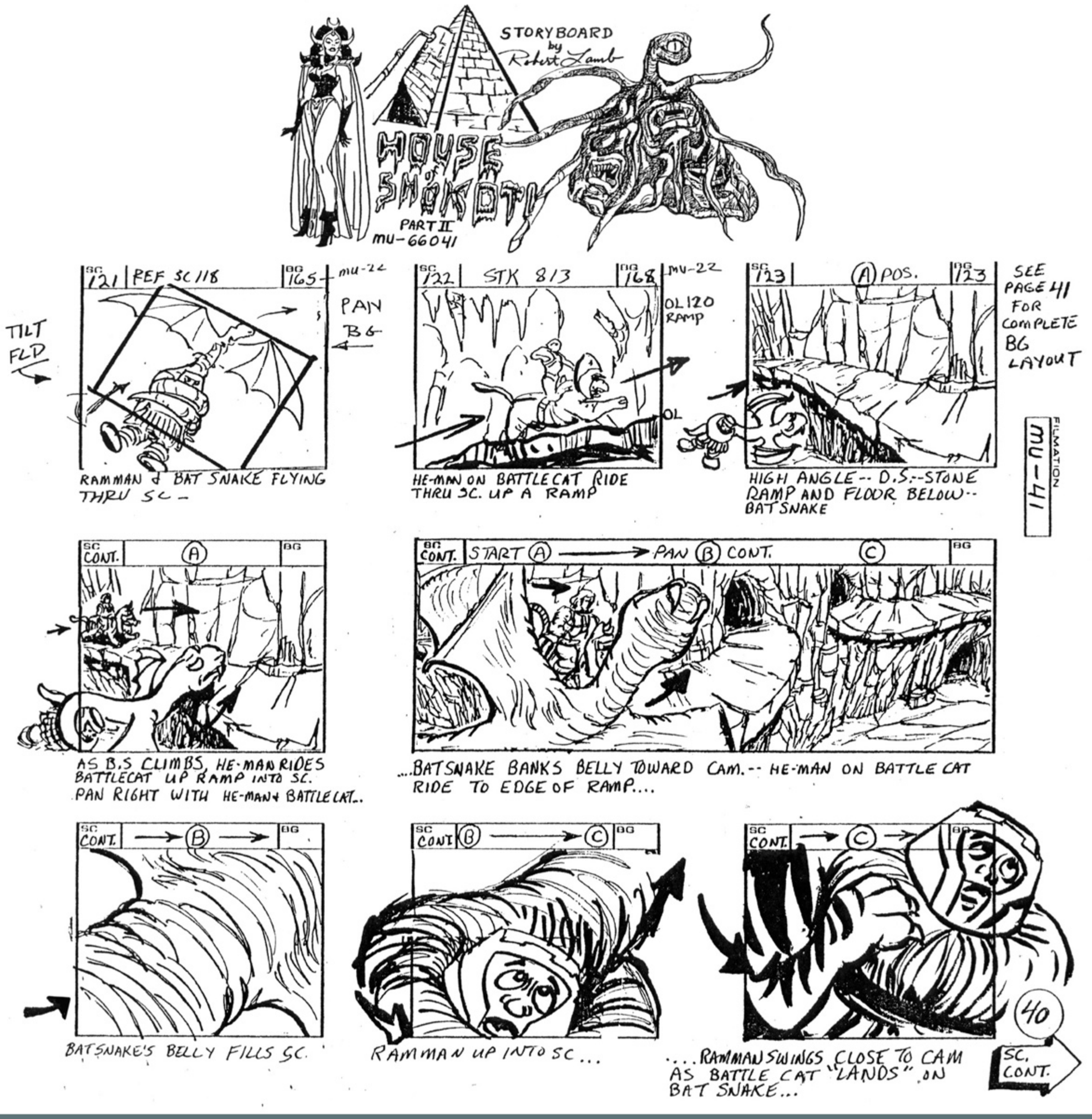
The look of the show was pretty much dictated by the toy creators at Mattel working with the staff artists, so I had no input there. As for the writing, I wanted the stories to have a bit more substance to them, along the lines of *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, and the Marvel comics I was reading at the time. There were a lot of terrific science fiction writers working on *He-Man* during the show's run, such as Michael Reaves, Marc Scott Zicree, Larry DiTillio, and of course, later, J. Michael Straczynski. Even writers best known for comedy, like Tom Ruegger and Robby London, contributed quite a lot to *MOTU*'s origins and subsequent success. They each brought a wealth of knowledge, boundless enthusiasm, and great talent to the Filmation writers' wing. We all wanted to raise the bar as much as we could, and to try to tell stories that hadn't been done before in traditional Saturday-morning action-adventure. We didn't have network executives giving us creative notes and we had a lot of episodes with which to experiment. It was quite liberating for the time.

Who was your favorite character to write? What about that particular character appealed to you?

I liked Teela a lot. I felt she could be more than just Adam/He-Man's platonic sidekick, so I always tried to give her a lot to do in my stories. I pitched the idea she was the Sorceress's daughter, which I think gave her more substance and a deeper history in the series. I paired her up with Evil-Lyn in an episode, and that went pretty well. That helped lay the groundwork for me to write future team-up stories with other female characters, like Harley Quinn and Poison Ivy, Black Canary and Zatanna, and so on.

How much freedom were you given when creating and writing characters that weren't already planned to be toys (such as Plundor, Sh'Gora, etc.)?

We had a lot of episodes to script, and at some point I think all the writers wanted to stretch out beyond Skeletor, Beast Man, and Clawful. Well, maybe not Clawful. We all kind of liked Clawful because, well, look at him—he's a mutant lobster/monster/crab man. Never enough Clawful. Anyway, when you've maxed out the epic Skeletor-attacks stories, the Orko-feels-unappreciated stories, and the giant-beasts-run-wild stories, you start looking around for something new to write. The Plundor story came about because storyboard artist Warren Greenwood and I really liked Matt Groening's weekly *Life in Hell* comic strip, and we thought it would be big fun to have He-Man fight a creature like Matt's Binky the rabbit. Naturally Plundor didn't wind up looking like that, but that's what kicked off the creative process. I was stunned to receive a Mattel Plundor action figure as a Christmas gift last year. They really do get around to making a toy out of everything. With Sh'Gora, I was thinking about a basic Lovecraftian cosmic horror. Automatically you start thinking tentacles, blob-like body, fangs, etc. It just all falls together.



Art provided by He-Man and the Masters of the Universe *animator Robert Lamb*

I'm sure you've noticed that *MOTU* has really helped define a generation of artists and writers. Why do you think that is? And how, as such an integral part of it, does that make you feel?

I think when it premiered in 1983, *Masters of the Universe* was the first TV cartoon in a long time that felt it had some guts to it. There were certainly lots of Saturday-morning superhero shows, but on *MOTU*, the characters could get into bigger battles, the storytelling could be a bit more complex, and it had a richer history and supporting characters that just happened to be part of the product line. In early meetings, the writers would ask the toy makers, "Okay, this Zodac is a cosmic enforcer, but what does that mean? Is he a good guy or a bad guy? Same deal with Stratos and Man-At-Arms." And the answer from Mattel was, "You tell us." They were open to us reworking certain things about the characters, as long as we preserved whatever was cool about the character's look and powers. That gave us the opportunity to shake things up when we felt a character could be more interesting and entertaining. The viewers noticed the series took a more continuity-conscious approach to its writing, making it closer in feel to a comic book series than most of the comic book–based animation properties on TV at that time. It made the series memorable to a lot of young fans who later wound up becoming writers and artists. I'm happy I was able to play a small part in that.

ALL THESE GIRLS

NOTE

SP.V.① EYELIDS

RED Ⓐ

MBL Ⓐ IRIS



MBL Ⓐ IRIS
#① - EYES
SP.V.① EYE LIDS
RED Ⓐ LIPS
XR DI INT. MOUTH
XVER① TONGUE
#① TEETH

RED Ⓐ FINGERNAILS

Y① XXGY AI DR Ⓐ XXGY AI XXGY AI SFL① TU IA VER Ⓐ XXGY AI DR Ⓐ SFL① XXGY AI

SOLES 16

SHERA

RED Ⓐ FINGERNAILS

Y① ① XXGY AI DR Ⓐ Y① ① VER Ⓐ SFL① VER Ⓐ DR Ⓐ

SOLES 18

ADORA

HAS GLOVES

TU IA SFL① BL Ⓐ BL Ⓐ ① BL Ⓐ ① BL Ⓐ TU IA ① BL Ⓐ TU① ①

SOLES 5

NOTE

FROSTA

RED Ⓐ FINGERNAILS

XVER Ⓐ SFL① XXGY AI Y① X MBL Ⓐ XXGY AI Y① Y① MBL Ⓐ Y①

SOLES 18

CASTASPELLA

PRINCESS SERIES

BL①

BL Ⓐ

BL 5

EYE LIDS BL-5

BL Ⓐ X TU IA BL Ⓐ Y① BL 5 BL① Body VER Ⓐ X BL Ⓐ X

IMP

HORDAK #1

NOTE

EYES VER Ⓐ

NO PUPILS

VER Ⓐ teeth

X Int. mouth

NOTE

CG④ EYELIDS

Ver Ⓐ CG⑪ X BL Ⓐ CG⑪

soles CG-01

HORDAK

Ver Ⓐ Helmet

YG Ⓐ EYE SHADOW

GR Ⓐ EYE LIDS

#① EYE

X Iris & Pupil

RED Ⓐ Lips

NOTE

NOTE

#① teeth

XR DI Int. mouth

XVER① tongue

X Pupils

SFL① skin

RR Ⓐ

Ver Ⓐ

X

soles #18

SCORPIA

Hood RV Ⓐ

FACE X

Lids Ver Ⓐ

EYES Y①

NOTE EYELIDS

X FINGERNAILS (WHEN SHOWN)

YG① HANDS

X NAILS

X Int. Sleeve

Ver Ⓐ Belt

RV Ⓐ Robe

X

TRANS SHADOW BY EFX

SHADOW WEAVER

CHAPTER FIVE 1985

COMICS, BOOKS, MAGAZINES & MORE

POST-TOR HEROIC DECORATOR OF WALLS

AN INTERVIEW WITH ILLUSTRATOR EARL NOREM



What do you think you brought to the art of *The Masters of the Universe?*

I think the object of an illustrator is to act out these things in their mind, you know. To get the action of the sword fights and things like that. It's extreme action most of the time. But to get the idea across that this was a big fight. And then of course I had to pick backgrounds for these things too, which were different because this planet where He-Man lived was different from Earth.

What were the influences that you brought to the table?

It started out with things like Superman and Batman. Spider-Man. I did things for Marvel Comics. The super-heroes. I was pretty good with action figures and anatomy. All these guys had tight-fitting clothes on. So you had the anatomy and the action of the body, and that was my forte.

Who was your favorite character to paint?

From the universe? Oh. Well, I did almost all of them, I think. I think Skeletor was kind of fun to do. Make him look horrible.

What about that particular design appealed to you?

I don't know. He looked like a weird guy. A skeleton face and muscular body and the colors purple and blue. Whoever designed him did a great job. The ultimate villain!

How did being chosen to paint the *MOTU* magazine posters and covers affect your career? Were you aware of He-Man's popularity at the time? Did you ever think it would still be popular more than twenty-five years later?

Well, of course, He-Man came along when I needed an account. I lost some of my accounts when some of the men's magazines folded, so when I got the covers and posters for the Telepictures magazines, that was a big thing at the time, for me anyway. And actually when I got paid for both the cover and the poster for the same painting, it was one of the best accounts I ever had.

And of course at the con I went out to in Los Angeles I met all these young men who were still *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* fans because they had grown up with it. Some were from countries like India, Australia, Venezuela, France. All over the place. And I was quite shocked. I hadn't realized that my art was so influential all over the world. I'm just surprised that everyone wants me now that I don't need the work.

Your paintings have become synonymous with MOTU, and for so many fans, they represent the MOTU brand. How does that make you feel—being such an integral part of its origin and knowing how your art affected a generation?

Well, all I know is that when I was doing the artwork, it was a job and it was fun to do. I like He-Man and the superhero stuff. It kept me young right up into my seventies, doing that stuff. I just appreciate the fact that I have so many fans that I did not know I had.

POSTERS

The magazine illustrations, especially those of Earl Norem, are among the most memorable vintage art pieces for the brand, truly capturing the adventurous nature of the hero. It is clear that many of the pieces were directed by Marketing, as they feature characters, accessories, and vehicles that were new to the line at the time of the art commissions (1985–1988), rather than the more iconic characters like Teela and Man-At-Arms. The following pages collect much of Norem's memorable art.

NOREM


NOREM


NOREM


NOREM

NOREM


NOREM



Cover and trifold poster from the last issue of *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe Magazine,* published in 1988.


NOREM


NOREM


NOREM


NOREM


NOREM


NOREM




NOREM


NOREM



She-Ra, Perfuma, and Flutterina enjoy the lovely flowers outside Crystal Castle. Catra and her assistant, Entrapta, lurk nearby.

oster 4 ©Mattel, Inc., 1986

Illustration by Beverly Kirby



She-Ra and Swift Wind bring their new friends to meet SweetBee and Peekablue. Beautiful Crystal Sun Dancer guards Crystal Castle during the day. Her brother, Crystal Moonbeam, protects it at night.

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Beverly Kirby illustrated many of the beautiful posters that appeared in the *She-Ra: Princess of Power* magazine.




SHE-RA
PRINCESS OF POWER
Angella
Crystal Castle
Castaspella
Catra
She-Ra
Swift Wind
Bow
Enchanta
Arrow
Double Trouble
Glimmer
Illustration by Kirby-Mardin Studio



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This 1984 William George poster is part of a series of cross-sell paintings, with a new one offered each year until1987, showing the latest additions to the line, including vehicles and accessories.

This is the 1986 giveaway poster from Mattel, painted by William George, featuring mostly late-series figures and vehicles, as well as the Eternia play set. Interesting things to note: it features both a heroic and an evil Battle Bones, Monstroid attacking the Evil Warriors, and the combined form of Modulok and Multi-Bot called Megabeast!



KING RANDOR™
SORCERESS™
MAN-E-FACES®
FRIGHT FIGHTER™
SNAKE MOUNTAIN®
STINKOR™
EVIL-LYN®
LAND SHARK®
WEBSTOR®
JITSU®
ETERNIA™
PANTHOR®
FAKER®
CLAMP CHAMP™
AATILLERAY™
BATTLE BONES®
KOBRA KHAN®
HORDE TROOPER™
TWO BAD®
HURRICANE HORDAK®
ANTISAUR™
MONSTROID™
MEGABEAST (Multibot™ & Modulok®)
NINJOR™
TUNG LASHOR®
SCARE GLOW™
TERROR CLAWS®
SKELETOR®
KING HISS™
RATTLOR®


MASTERS
OF THE UNIVERSE®
GWILDOR™
KING RANDOR™
TURBODACTYL™
BEAM-BLASTER™
ROTAR™
FAKER
PRINCE ADAM®
NINJOR™
SSSQUEEZE™
SCARE GLOW™
HE-MAN®
MAN-AT-ARMS®
SNAKE FACE™
TEELA®
CLAMP CHAMP™
BIONATOPS™
William George

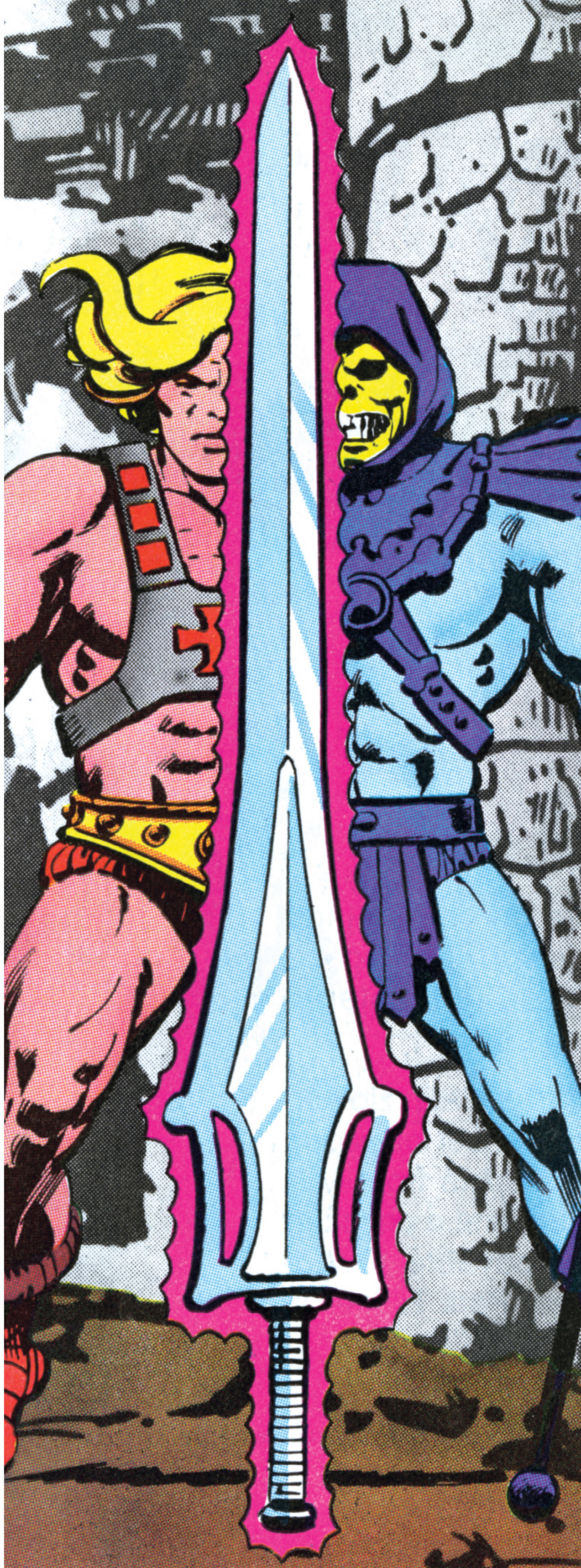


You will note that while the released techno dinos were included in this 1987 poster, the unproduced He-Ro and Eldor did not make the cut and are oddly missing from a battle set in Preternia. But the then-current 1987 movie characters are somehow there, along with a very '82-looking Teela in her Goddess snake armor. The Filmation version of the Sorceress character finally became a toy in 1986 and thus made the poster as well. Fun fact: That's actually Stonedar in the poster, mislabled as Rokkon.

DC COMICS

Mattel worked with DC Comics on the development of the second series of minicomics (starting with the 1983 line, issues #5–#10). At the time, there was no backstory for the brand, and the little storytelling that had been developed by the first four minicomics featured He-Man as a jungle warrior. Depicted here are images from the licensed three-issue comic series from DC that predated both the Marvel/Star comic series and the cartoon. Issue #1 cover (*below*) by George Tuska and Dick Giordano and issues #2 (*right*) and #3 (*bottom*) covers by George Tuska and Klaus Janson.







DC produced two one-shots in which He-Man encountered Superman. These one-shots were followed by a three-part miniseries which introduced many of the key elements that would become the core of the *MOTU* story and were used by Filmation in the series. Many of these elements were created by Michael Halperin in the brand bible. Prince Adam was introduced as an alternative identity to He-Man. At this early stage he would transform into He-Man by running into a magic cave.

MARVEL COMICS

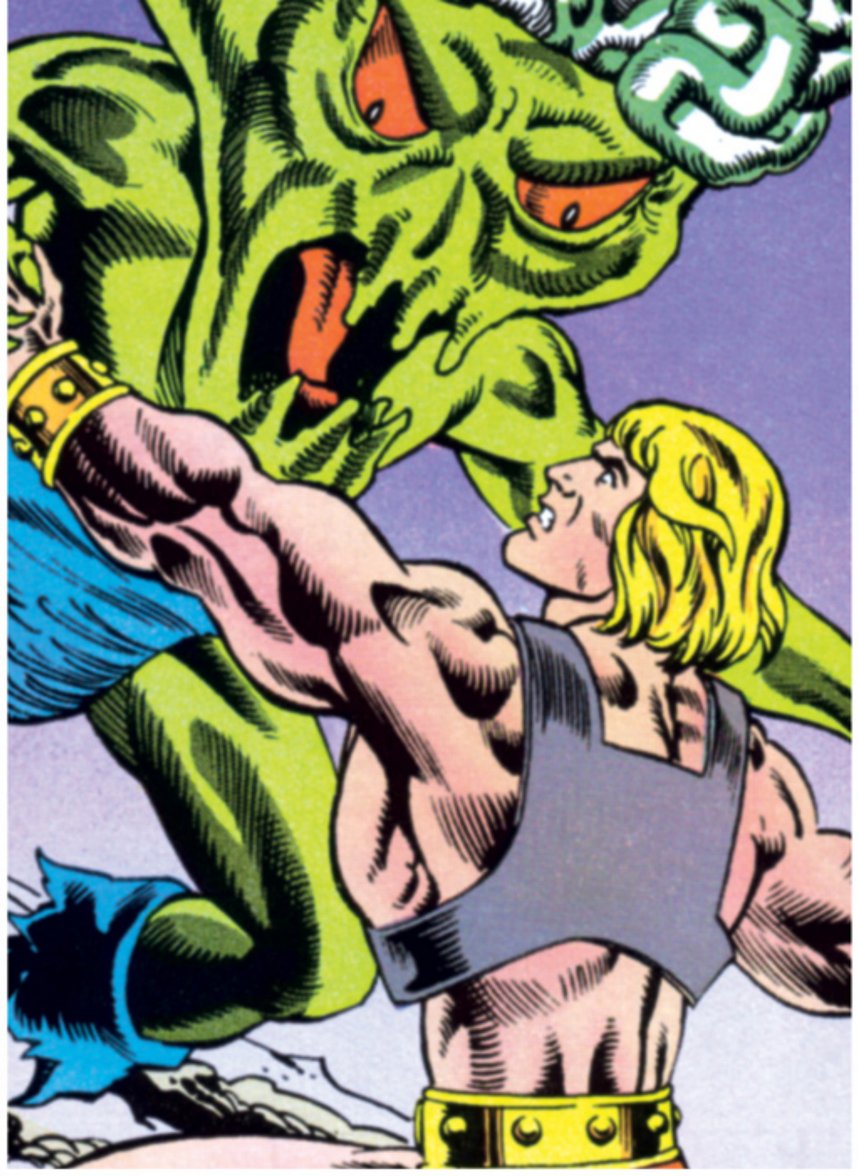


Marvel Age, a Marvel news comic, introduced Marvel's debut of He-Man, drawn by Ron Wilson. In the corner box Orko meets Marvel's Irving Forbush, also known as Forbush Man.

In 1985 Marvel's new Star imprint took over the MOTU rack comics (Mattel continued to produce its own minicomics, taking back production from DC after issue #10). Issue #4 (*above right*) of Marvel's Star comic came out during Marvel's twenty-fifth-anniversary celebration and featured Hordak amidst a frame of Marvel heroes. Hordak did not appear in the issue. Cover art by Ron Wilson.









The Marvel Star comics climaxed in one of the best-written original stories, appearing in issues #12 and #13, in which He-Man's death is faked and we see a world without him. Issue #13 was the last issue in the series.







Later, in conjunction with the 1987 movie, Marvel's Star imprint published the official film adaptation, which is notable because it contains several scenes cut from the film, including an alternate ending where we learn Eternia was founded by ancient astronauts from planet Earth after an American flag is found in the bowels of Castle Grayskull.

MASTERS 14

Book HE-MAN Issue# pg.# 21

XEROX: 1a | STATS: | CODE:

HORDAKS BRIDGE IN MIRRA?



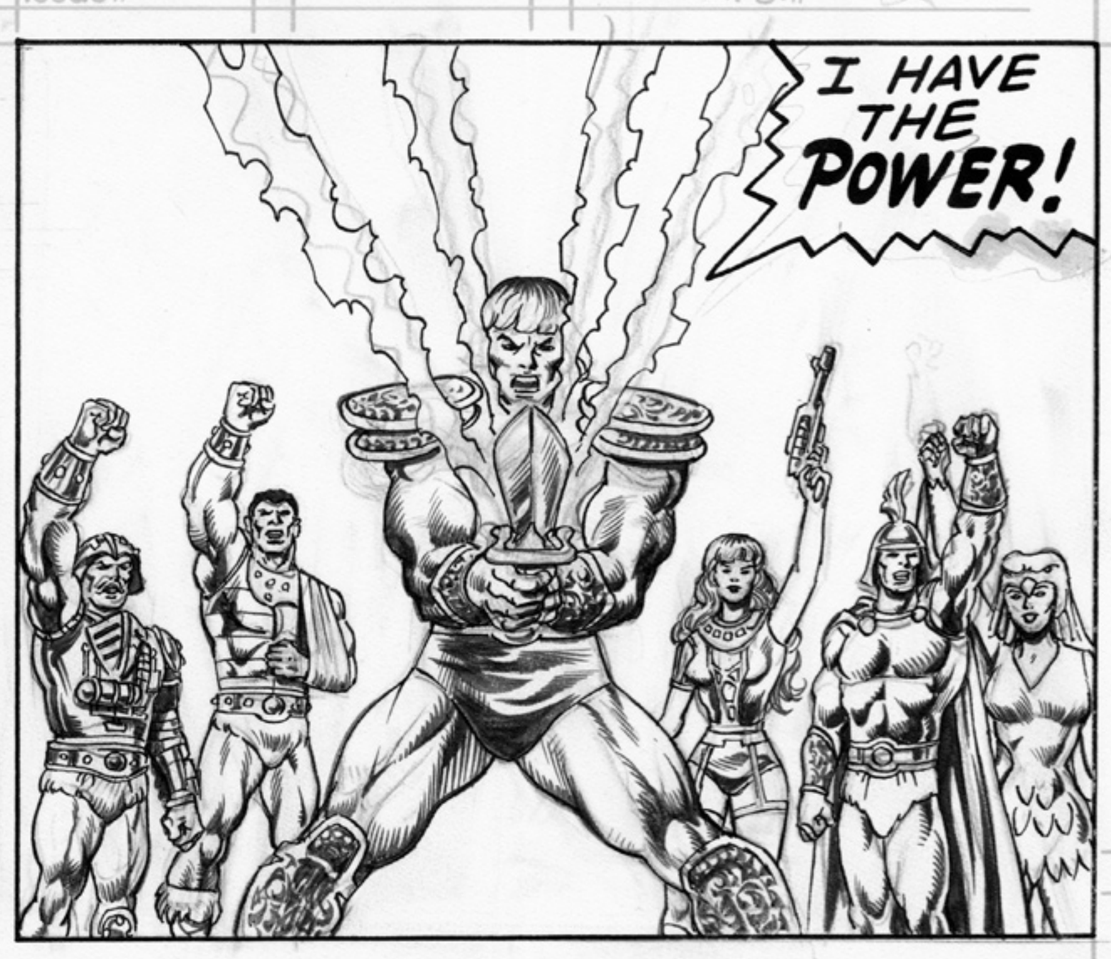
Pages from the never-before-seen, unreleased Star comics series from Marvel. Issue #14, pages 21 and 22.

MASTERS 14

XEROX	STATS	CODE

Book He-Man Issue# pg.# 2









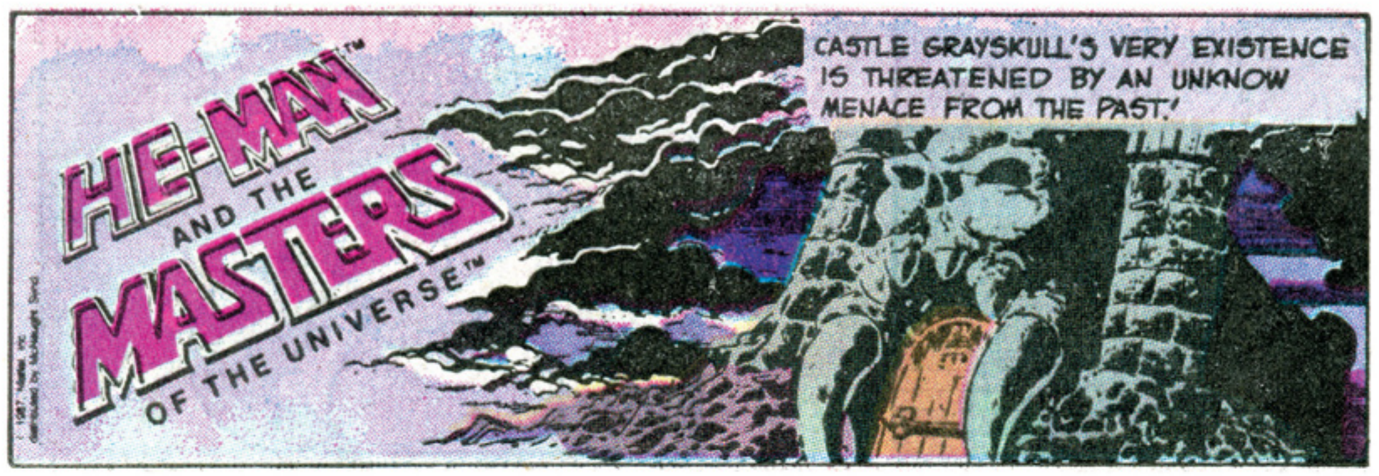




22

COMIC STRIPS

The *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* comic strip was syndicated in newspapers worldwide from 1986 to 1991.

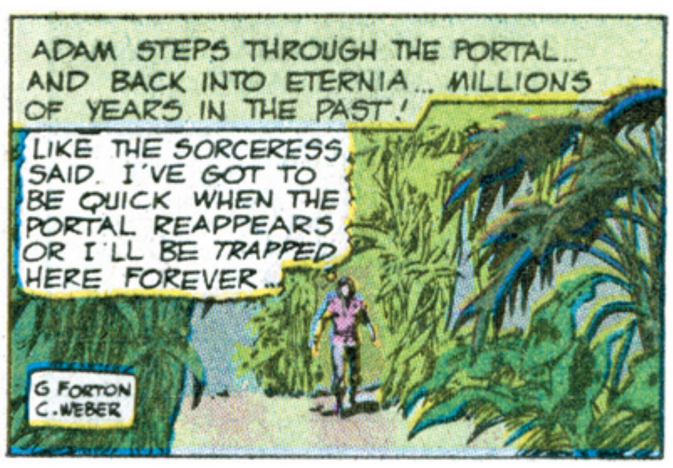






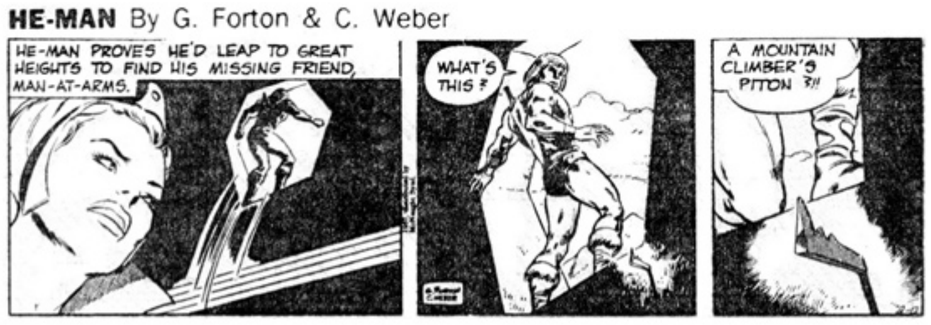








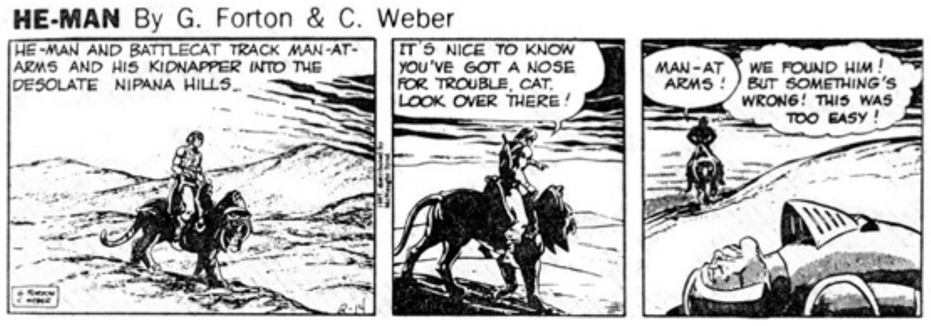
HE-MAN By G. Forton & C. Weber



HE-MAN By G. Forton & C. Weber



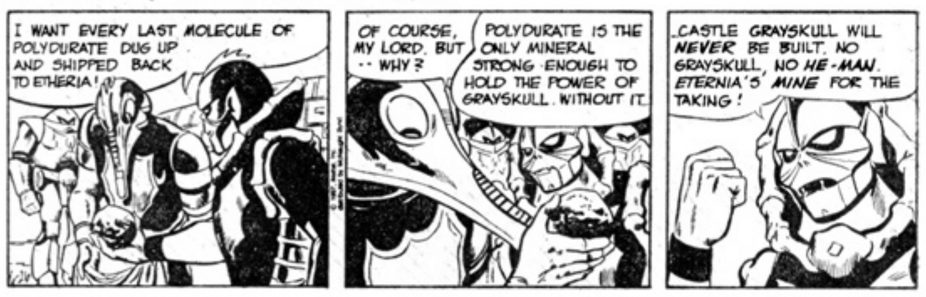
HE-MAN By G. Forton & C. Weber



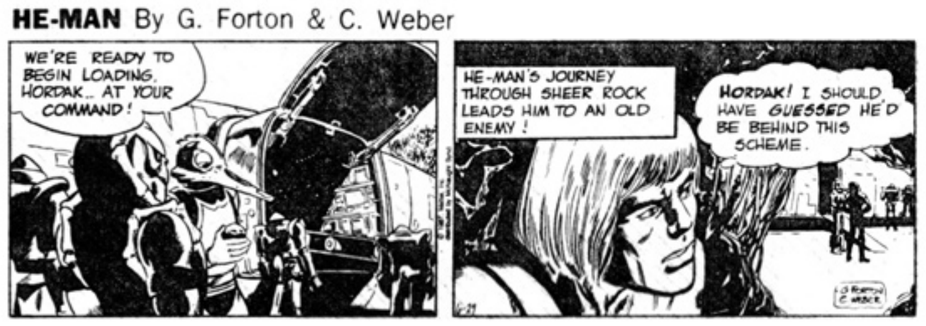
HE-MAN By G. Forton & C. Weber



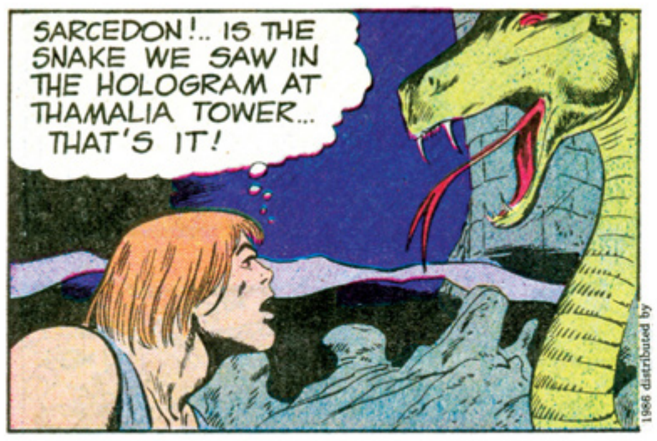
HE-MAN By G. Forton & C. Weber

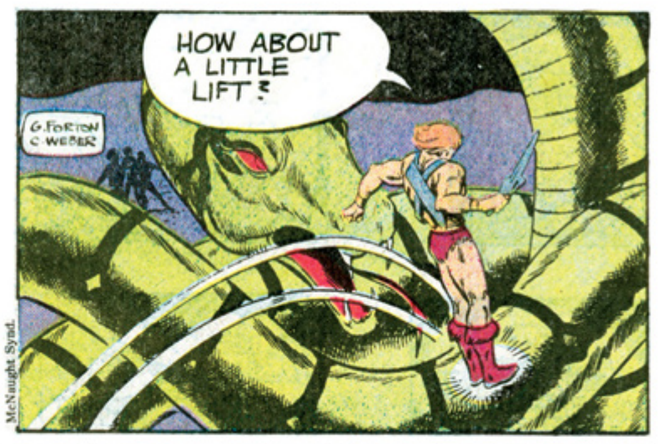


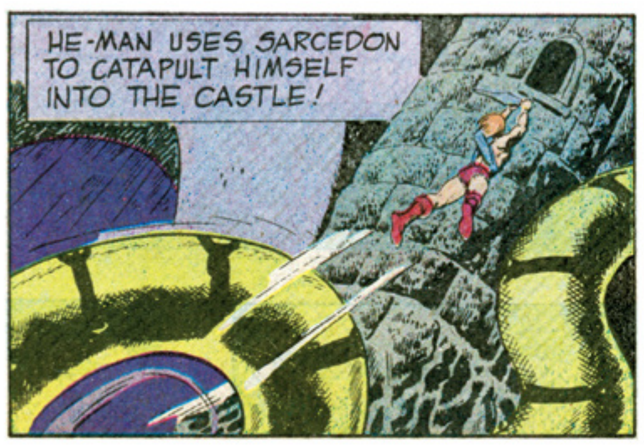
HE-MAN By G. Forton & C. Weber

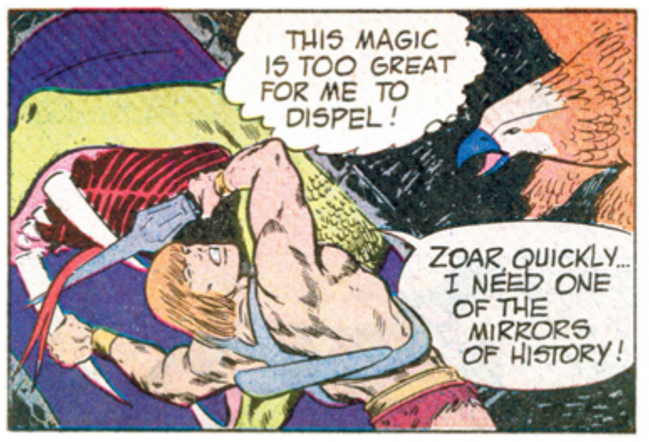


Writer Jim Shull penned the first story, "Day of the Comet," while Chris Weber wrote the remainder of the series. Gerald Forton illustrated the daily strips, and Connie Schurr provided colors for the Sunday stories. The series was edited by Karen Willson. All of these creators were Filmation alumni.

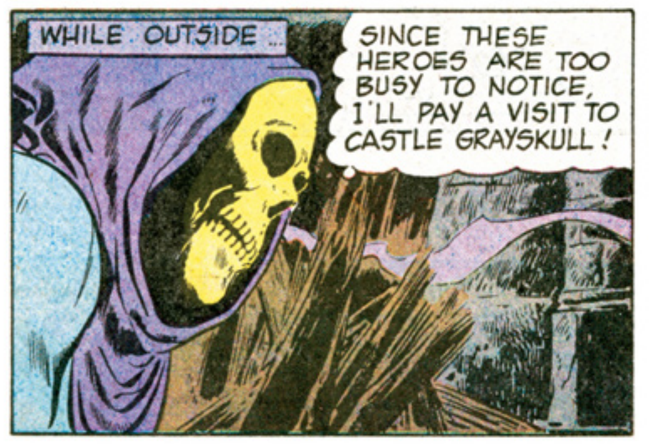


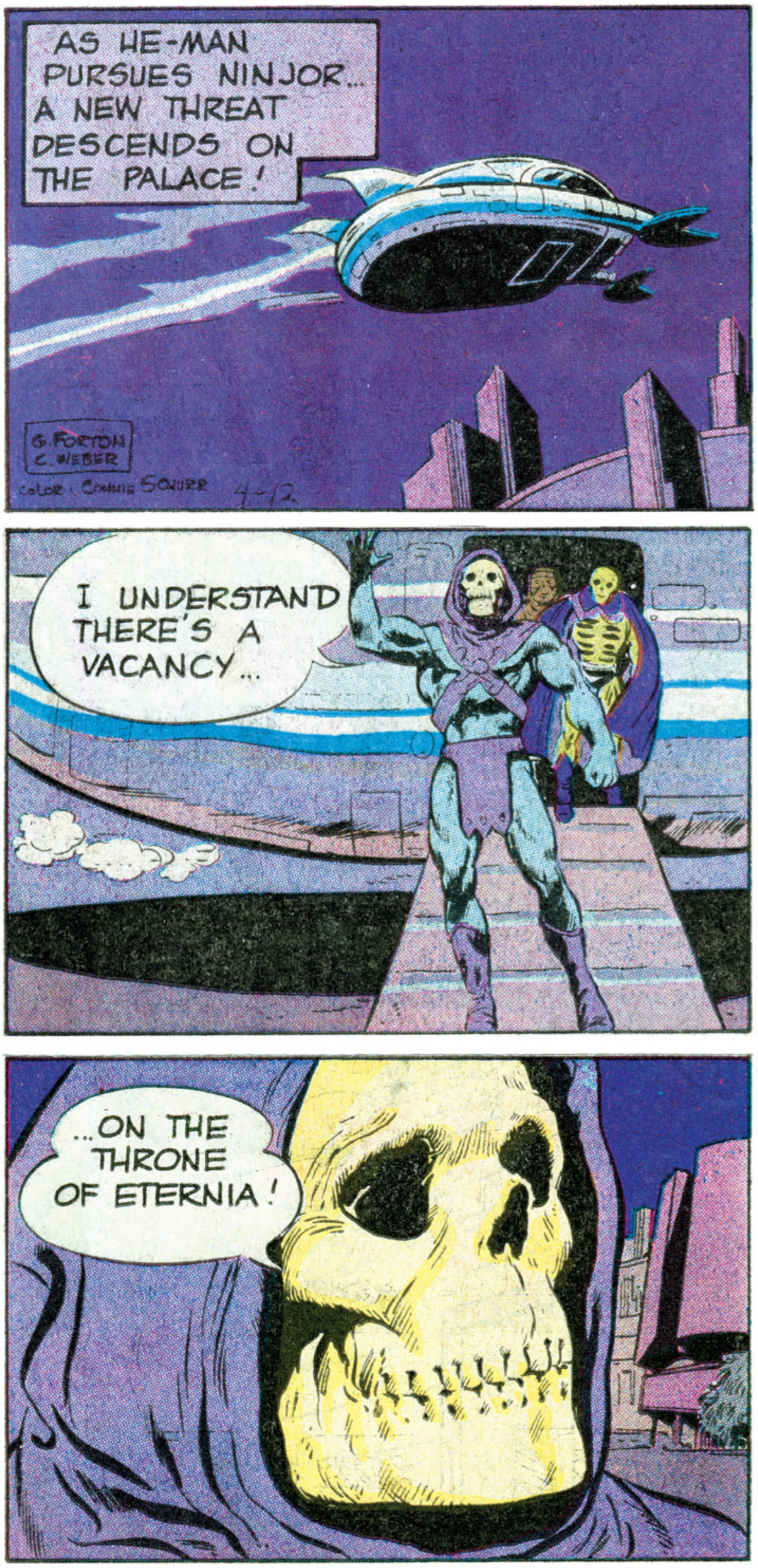








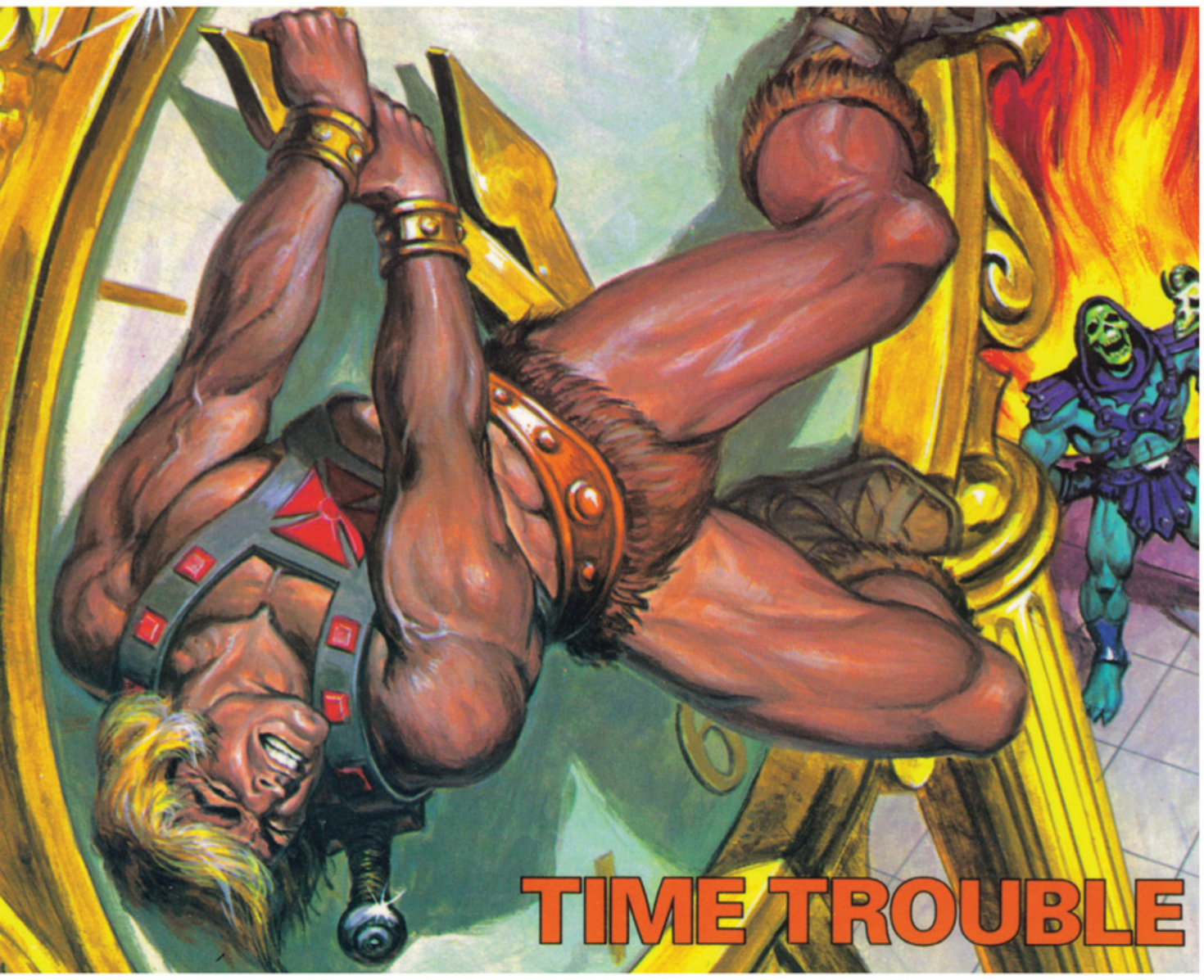


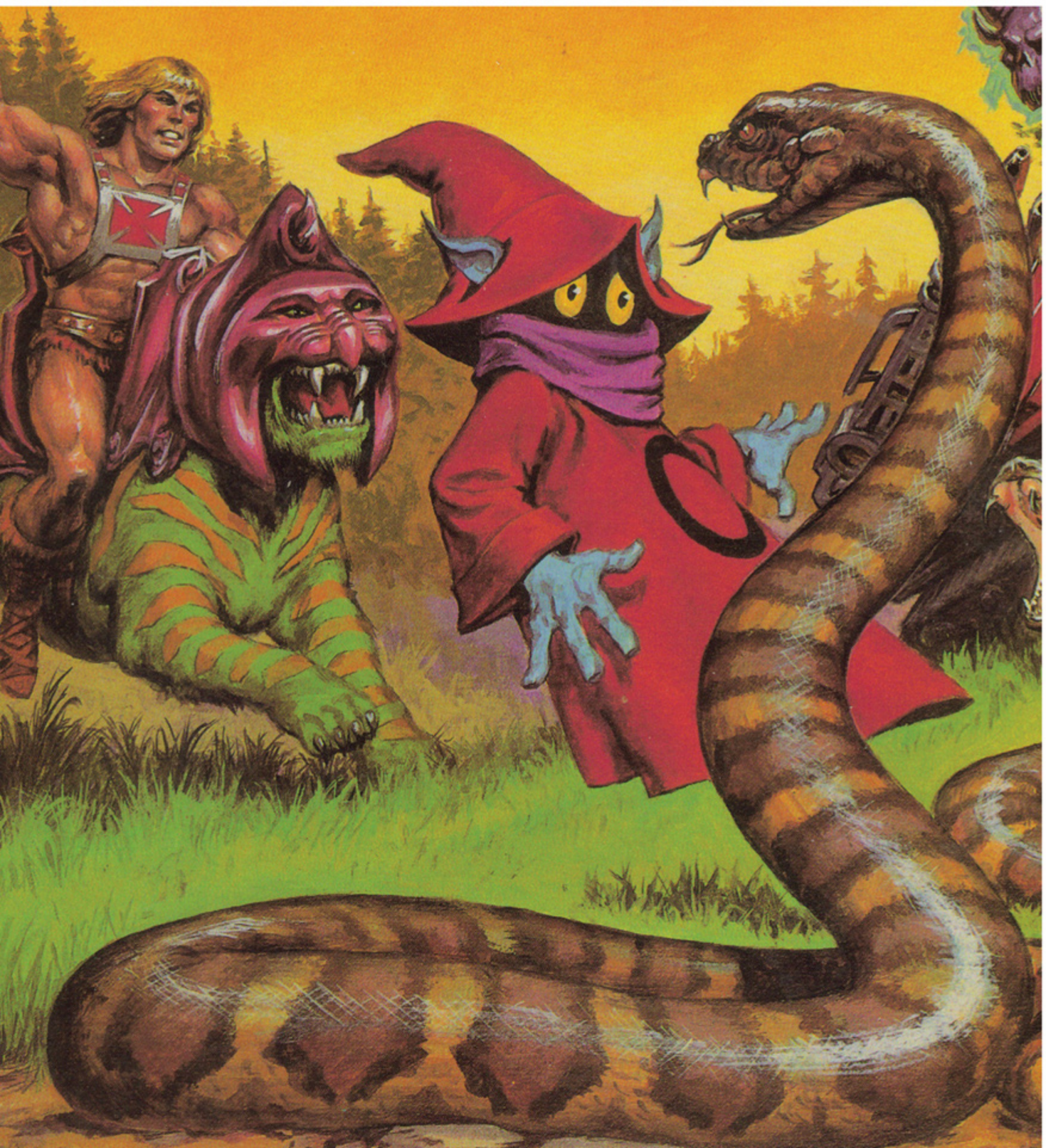


The adventures featured serialized story lines, each unfolding over several months. The final story, "The Last Survivors," bridged the gap between the original Masters of the Universe and the New Adventures of He-Man canons, with He-Man returning to Eternia in the final strip.

BOOKS

The amazing covers by Earl Norem and other artists for the Ladybird Books, Golden Super Adventure, and Golden hardcover series are some of the best MOTU art pieces ever made.

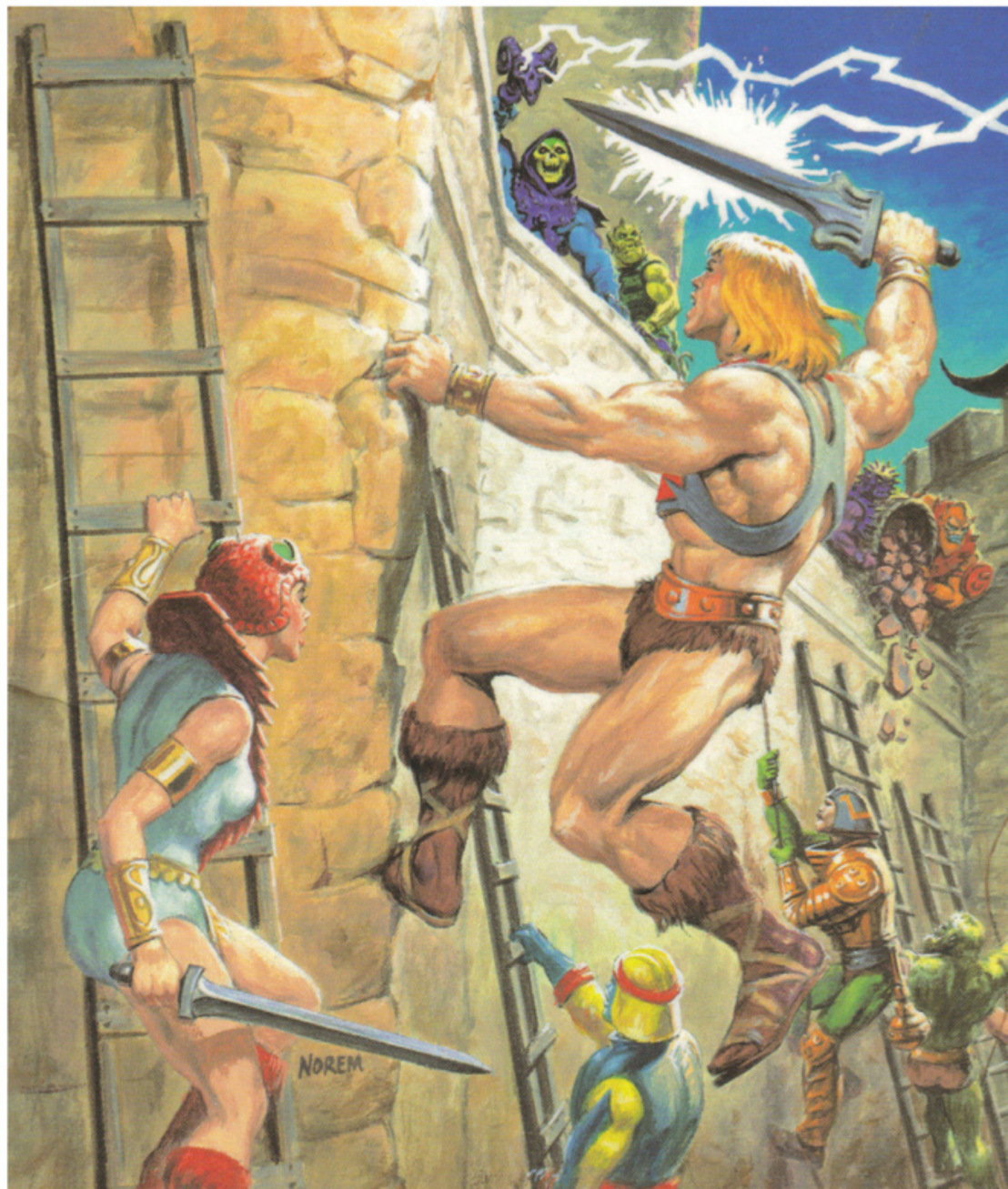








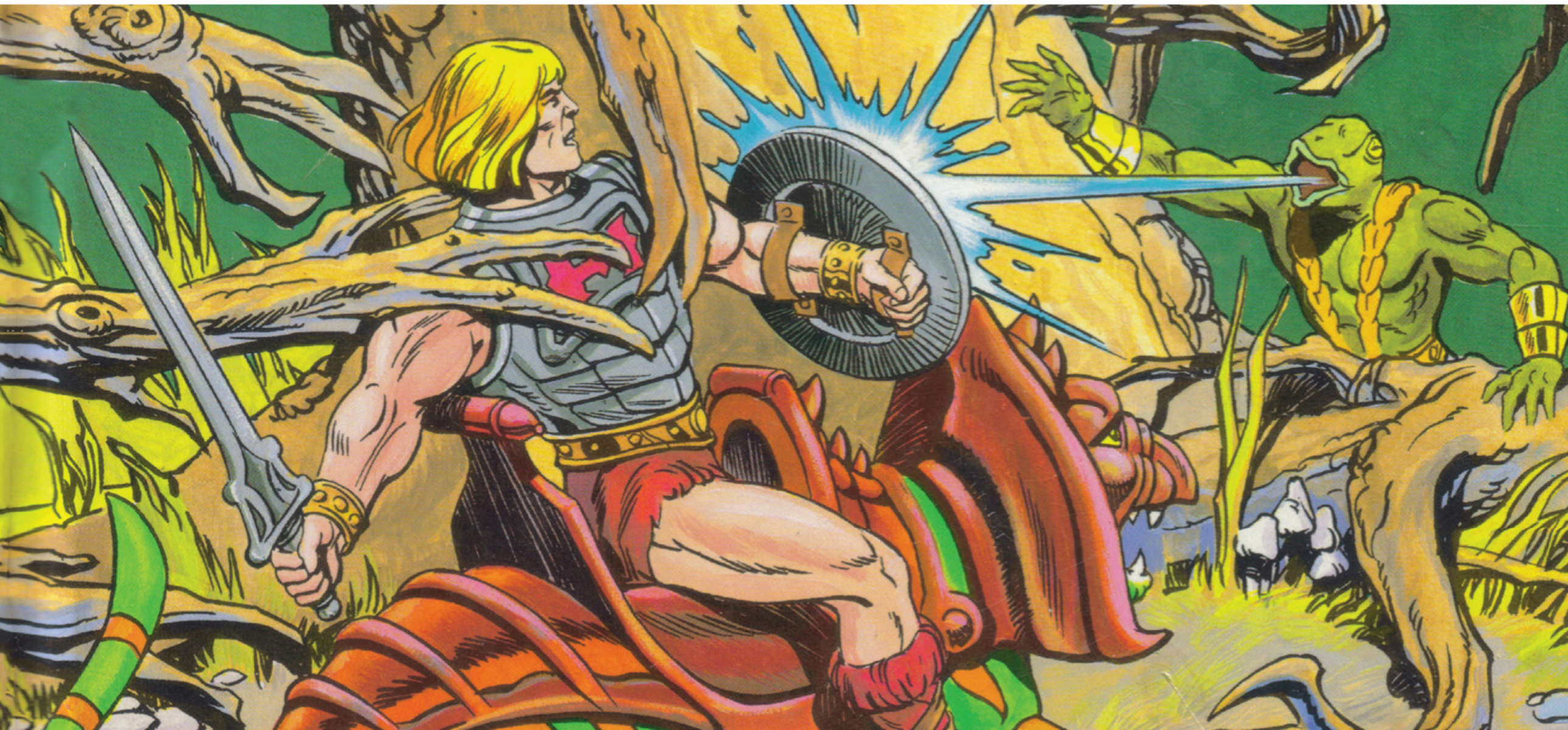








The hardcover Golden Heroic Champions books, another Golden imprint, featured art by Fred Carrillo and Al McWilliams.

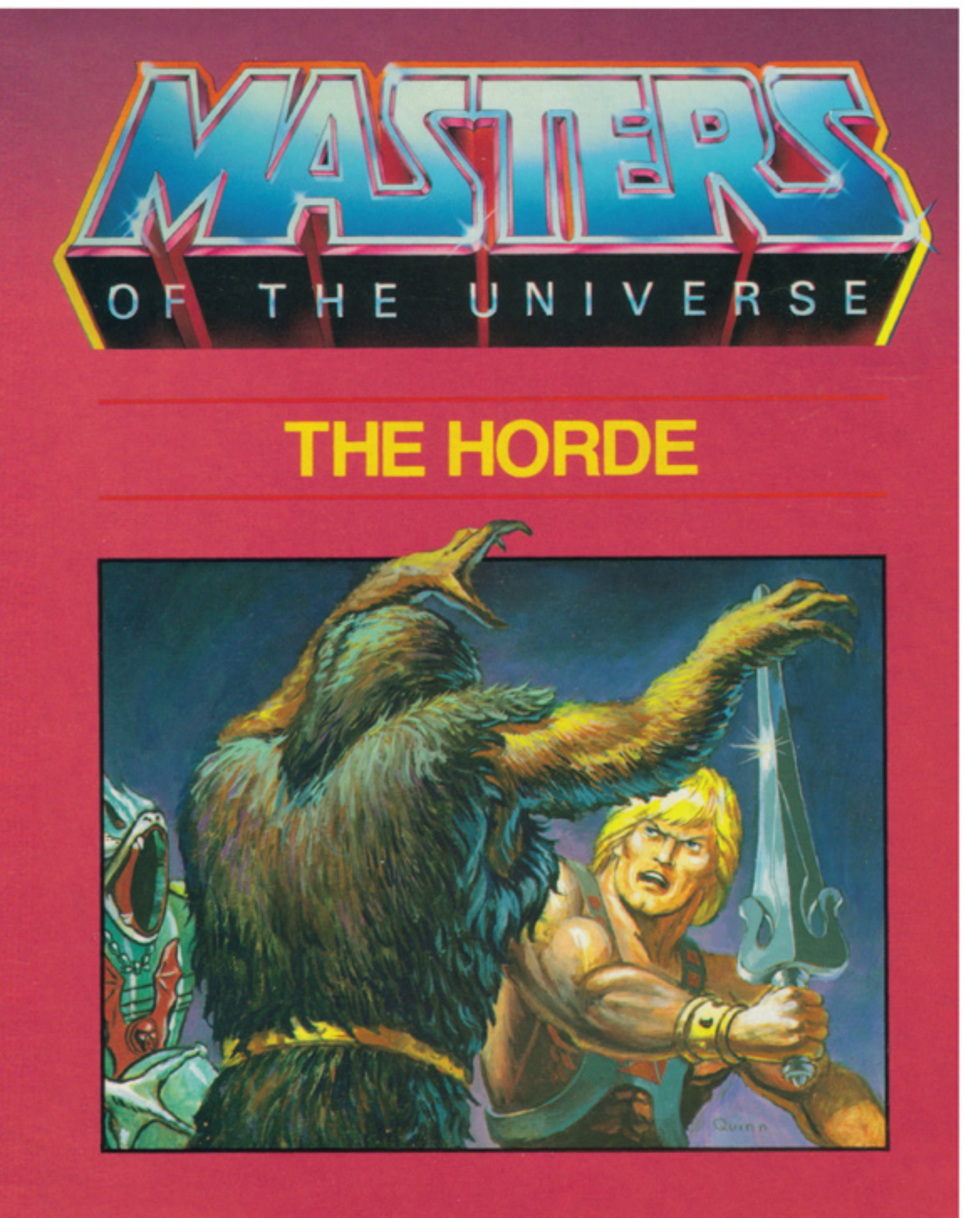


MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

THE SUNBIRD LEGACY

NOREM

The Sunbird Legacy (*opposite*), with a cover by Earl Norem. *This page:* The Golden hardcover series featured art by James Holloway and Harry J. Quinn.







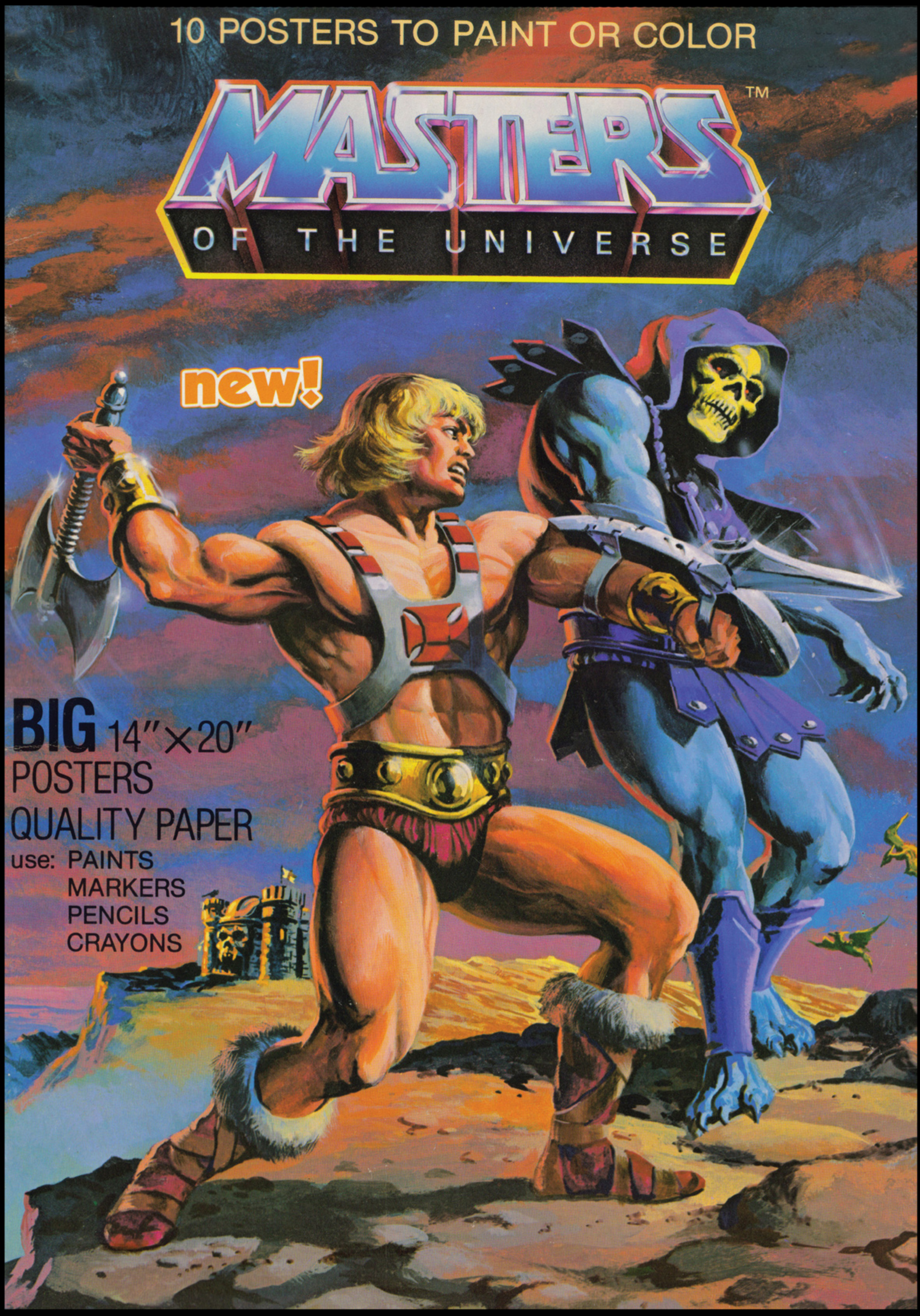








She-Ra stories were published by numerous companies over the years. Some were beautifully painted, like the Fernando Fernández piece at the bottom of this page, while others had a simpler style.



Golden also published many activity books, including this poster coloring book.

COLORING BOOKS & MORE

More Golden activity books, featuring art by Fred Carrillo and others.









U.S. 99¢

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

EASY TEAR-OUT PAGES

PRINCESS of POWER™

U.S. 99¢

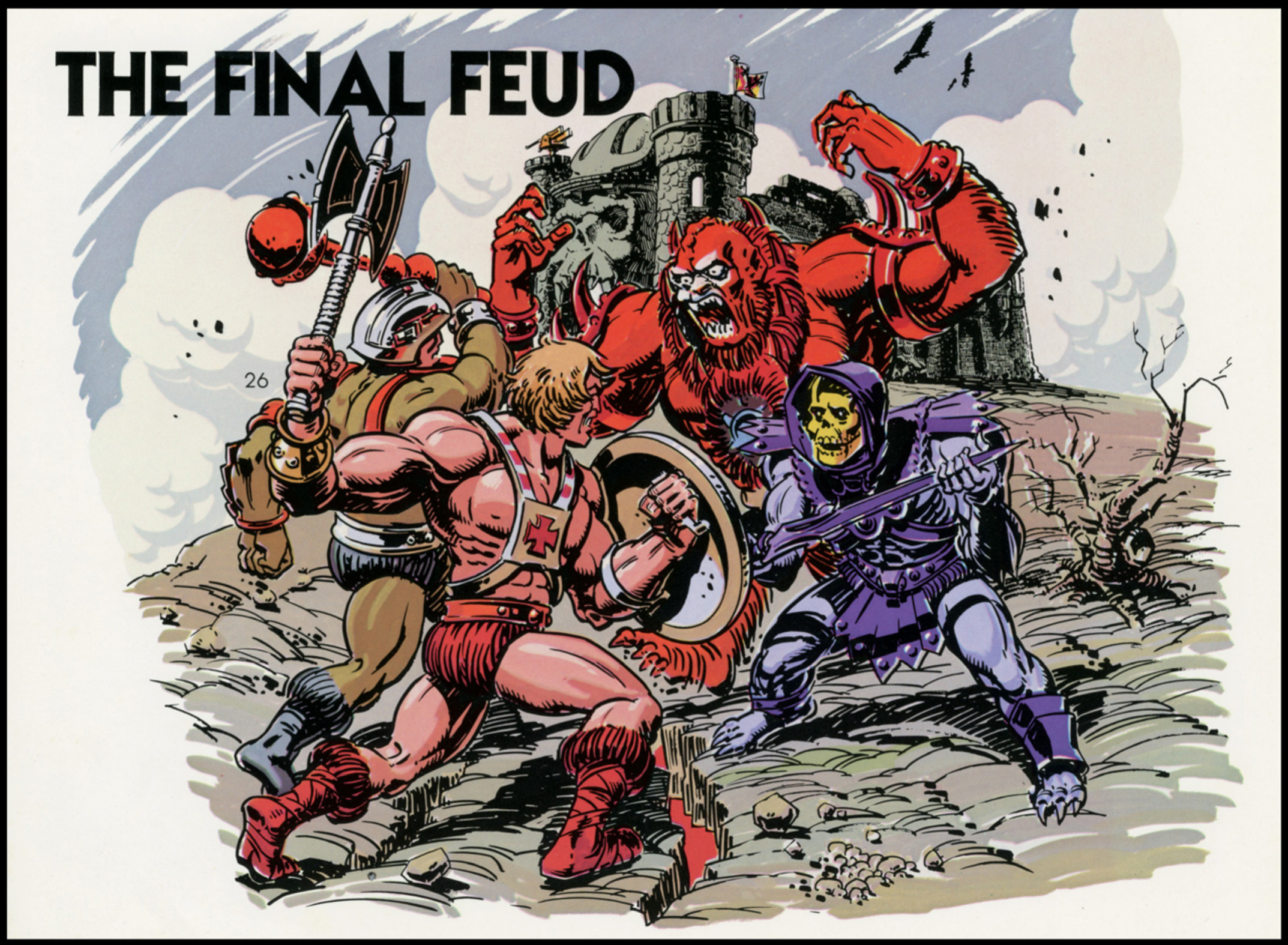
MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE™

Adventures at Snake Mountain

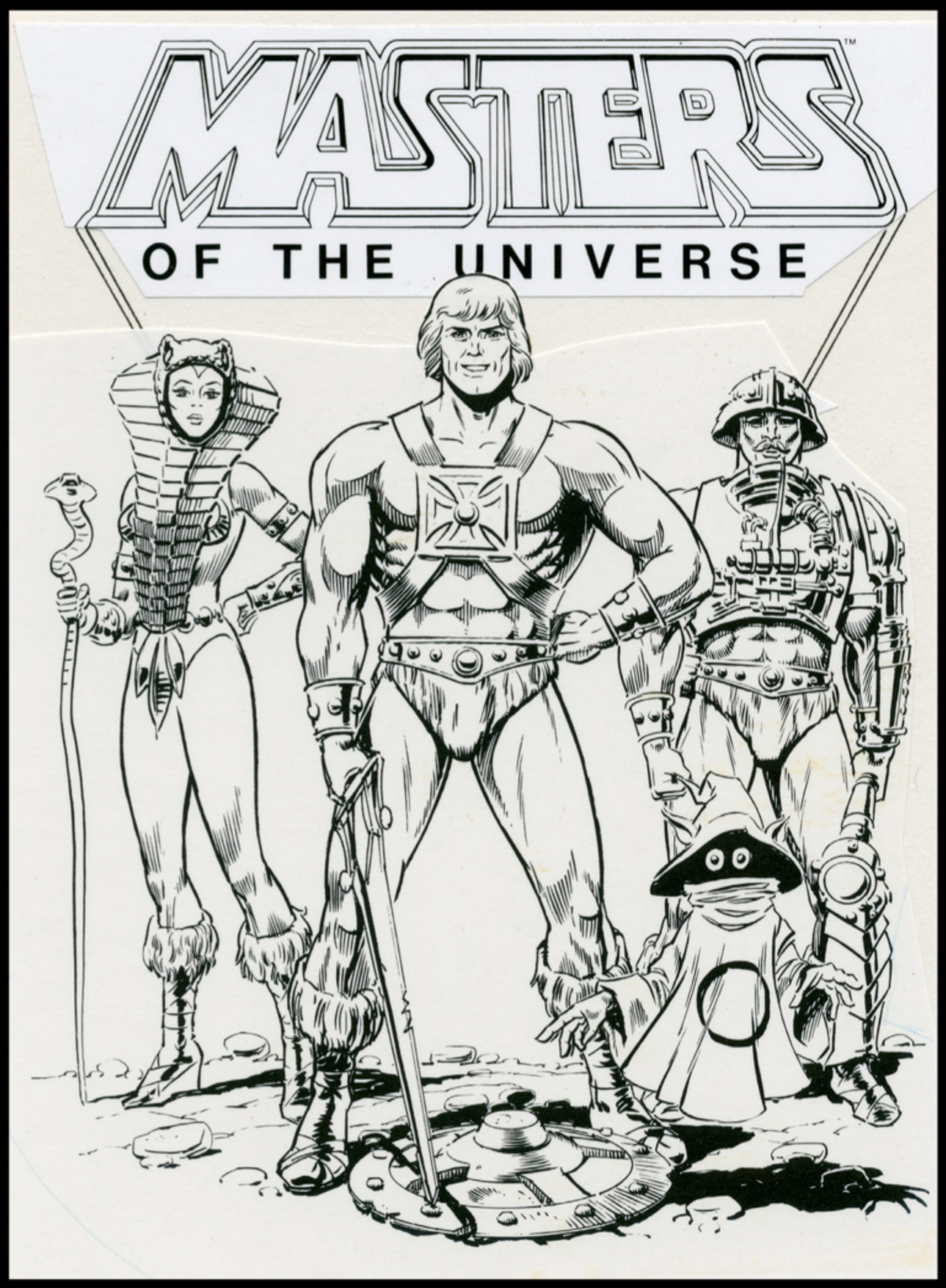
Golden puzzle art by Fred Carrillo and others.



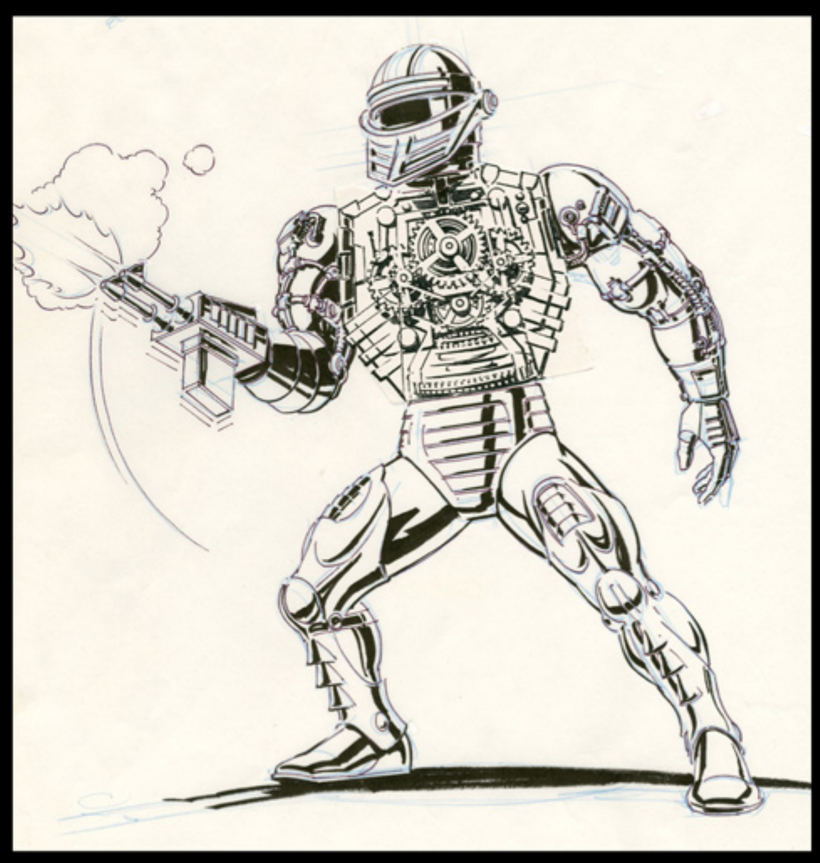




Toy companies, including Mattel, provide their licensees with a style guide containing stock art for use on their products. The illustrations within the eighties MOTU style guide, many of which were created by Errol McCarthy, have appeared on hundreds of products all around the world!


MASTERS™
OF THE UNIVERSE






PMS
339
PMS
185
PMS
265







Design for a 1986 float used in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade that was seventy-five feet long and weighed twenty tons. The giant snake in the float reached twenty-four feet and required four Macy's technicians to animate it during its battle with He-Man.



A late-release knitting pattern booklet for the Powers of Grayskull line, featuring one of the only appearances of He-Ro, the Most Powerful Wizard in the Universe. Artwork by Errol McCarthy.

CHAPTER SIX 1987

THE MOTION PICTURE

DIRECT-TOR, HEROIC DEMANDER OF ACTION

AN INTERVIEW WITH GARY GODDARD, DIRECTOR OF THE *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* FEATURE FILM

What were the influences you brought to the table when it came to taking the director's chair on *Masters of the Universe*? Films? Art? Literature? Pop literature (by which I mean comic books)?

Edward Pressman had seen the massive live stage production of *The Adventures of Conan: A Sword and Sorcery Spectacular* that I created and directed for the Universal Studios tour and he was impressed with it. He liked the fact that I had written the show as well. He felt that I had an intuitive understanding of the fantasy/adventure genre and could helm a movie adaptation of the Masters of the Universe property. He met with me, and then had me meet with David Odell (who had already written the first draft of the screenplay), and both of them felt that I was right for the material. In terms of influences, it's interesting, because I grew up not only as a major Marvel Comics fan, but also as a reader of everything from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, to the *John Carter of Mars* series of books, to most of the *Tarzan* and *Doc Savage* books, the *Book of Three* series, *Dune*—just about everything having to do with epic sword and sorcery, sci-fi empires, and other great fantasy adventures. But I was also in the theater and had read Shakespeare, Molière, Pinter, Miller, O'Neill, and on and on. I was also a big fan of fantasy artists growing up, from Frazetta to Moebius, and a major fan of Jack Kirby, Jim Steranko, Al Williamson, Gil Kane, Barry Windsor-Smith, and many others. Ultimately I met Jack Kirby and got to know him and Roz pretty well—I would drive to Newbury Park and talk to Jack while he would be drawing at his board. I met Jim Steranko on numerous occasions when he was in LA collecting information for his *Mediascene* publication. And on a completely different side of things, I got to know the "Nine Old Men" at Disney Studios pretty well, starting at the time I was in high school. In particular I would wind up knowing Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston, Milt Kahl, and Marc Davis pretty well (ultimately working with Marc at Disney Imagineering many years later). I would say that all of these various influences were at work at some point along the way, and I like to think that I had developed a pretty good sense of design and storytelling from these various and different sources.

I had the good fortune to have been able to spend time with Jack Kirby once he moved to Southern California. We would talk about how he created various characters or stories. And one thing in particular stuck with me with regard to the hero/villain relationship. He said, "You have to make sure that no matter how powerful your hero is, the villain must always be more powerful. If not, there is no real drama and no real victory. The hero has to overcome a power greater than his." He also discussed the nature of a villain—who does not see himself as a villain, but as some kind of savior, or godlike with the best intentions. Hence the "noble villain," as seen in Dr. Doom, Magneto, and, even in a very interesting way, Galactus. I think as we set about creating the *Masters of the Universe* movie, I tried to impart to the writer that I saw the story more from Skeletor's perspective—and that we needed to make him a villain who was not simply "the bad guy" but who really saw himself as "the right guy" to rule Eternia. While his reasons would not make sense to us, to him, he was the legitimate heir to the power of Grayskull. The original script took place solely on Earth—and this was the script that I was given. Due to budgetary issues—the film was to be done for $15,000,000 or less—the idea was to bring the Eternians to present-day Earth. I liked the fish-out-of-water approach, but I thought we had to ground it in some part in Eternia. I devised a way to have the opening and closing in Eternia, with the rest of the movie located on present-day Earth, and that's how we bookended the movie. Because of this, we had to design the world the Eternians came from. There needed to be a sense of "whole cloth" with regard to the Eternians' dress, hardware, and so on. Ultimately we wound up pulling off the opening and closing sequences (in Eternia), and so we had the task of creating a complete and believable world for Eternia, on a very tight budget. From the movie I think you can see we were aiming for an epic feeling, even though we had a budget of just $17,500,000—and for that we created an entire world, through the talents of William Stout and his team.

Were there any particular images or designs from the brand that guided or inspired you? What about the design of the world and its characters appealed to you?

I wanted to have a strong team of designers, and we started the project the first time with John DeCuir and Claudio Mazzoli. That first effort (which was going to be a Warner Brothers production, produced by Howard Kazanjian) got stopped early into preproduction. I had approached Ralph McQuarrie early on, but he was busy doing *Cocoon* at the



time for Ron Howard. I had told him if anything changed to let me know, and he called one day and said that *Cocoon* was on temporary hold, and did my offer still stand? I said yes, and he came over the next day. And Ralph wound up working on the picture for about three weeks before *Cocoon* started up again. I asked him to focus on the Air Centurions (by that time I had done some rewrites to the script and created the Air Centurions sequence, along with the "Skeletor transforms into a god" concept for the finale) and some of the ideas for costume and castle suggestions overall. Ralph really excelled on the Air Centurions and captured a great feeling in his early pencil sketches. He had an interesting take on Skeletor as well. But the project went into hibernation about a month after Ralph went back to *Cocoon*.

We waited about five or six months, and when the project came back to life, it was with Cannon Films, and we needed to start over. I asked William Stout to come onboard to help create what Eternia might be, and to also begin to adapt each of the toy-like characters into costumes and uniforms that would make more sense for a live-action movie. To that end, we drew inspiration from the existing designs (of the toys and their various interpretations) and then tried to expand from those designs into an approach that would create a world within which swords, magic, and technology all could coexist. Bill Stout and I had a very common language in terms of design and conceptual images—we had loved many of the same artists growing up, and we had a kind of shorthand when it came to creating the characters, costumes, props, and environment of the Eternian universe. Claudio Mazzoli was working on a number of the concepts for various elements of the movie—he had a major influence on the Android Sentries (the "robot warriors") and on Gwildor in particular. Bill brought in Moebius to take a crack at the costumes for He-Man, the goddess, and other key characters. Bill really assembled a top-notch design team that really helped to bring the entire movie to life in a credible way.


NOREM

THE BRAND SHOULD PRODUCE SKELA RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHICH CHARACTERS TO USE WHEN AS DEGSNOWS TO PRESSMAN. ONLY PRESSMAN-CREATED CHARACTERS CAN BE KILLED, NOT ANY MATTEL CHARACTERS.

ARACHNO, a man with the eyes and poison mandibles of a giant spider.

~~SAUROD~~, a man with scales, lizard-like face, and a constantly darting forked tongue.

MANTOID, a cyborg robot with infrared-vision, he also has long, telescoping limbs designed for seizing things.

SKELETOR
You. And you. And you there. Go through to where the other Key is, find it, and bring it to me. Kill the refugees from Eternia and bring me their heads.

NO KILLING! NO HEADS!

"ELIMINATE HE-MAN AND HIS ALLIES..."

The five horrible creatures salute uneasily.

SKELETOR
Somewhere in the dimensional fabric of space and time, He-Man is plotting against me. He is no doubt raising an army even as we speak -- so do not fail me. You know the penalty for failure...

NO!

Skeletor plucks a severed head off one of the poles behind his throne and tosses it into the mouth of Oggor, which swallows the head in one gulp.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS NEAR WHERE JULIE FOUND THE COSMIC KEY - DAY

He-Man is walking alongside a babbling brook, when he sees something in the trees above. He stops and stares.

INSERT HE-MAN'S P.O.V.

A neat perfectly circular hole has been cut in the leafy forest canopy revealing a blue disk of sky against the green.

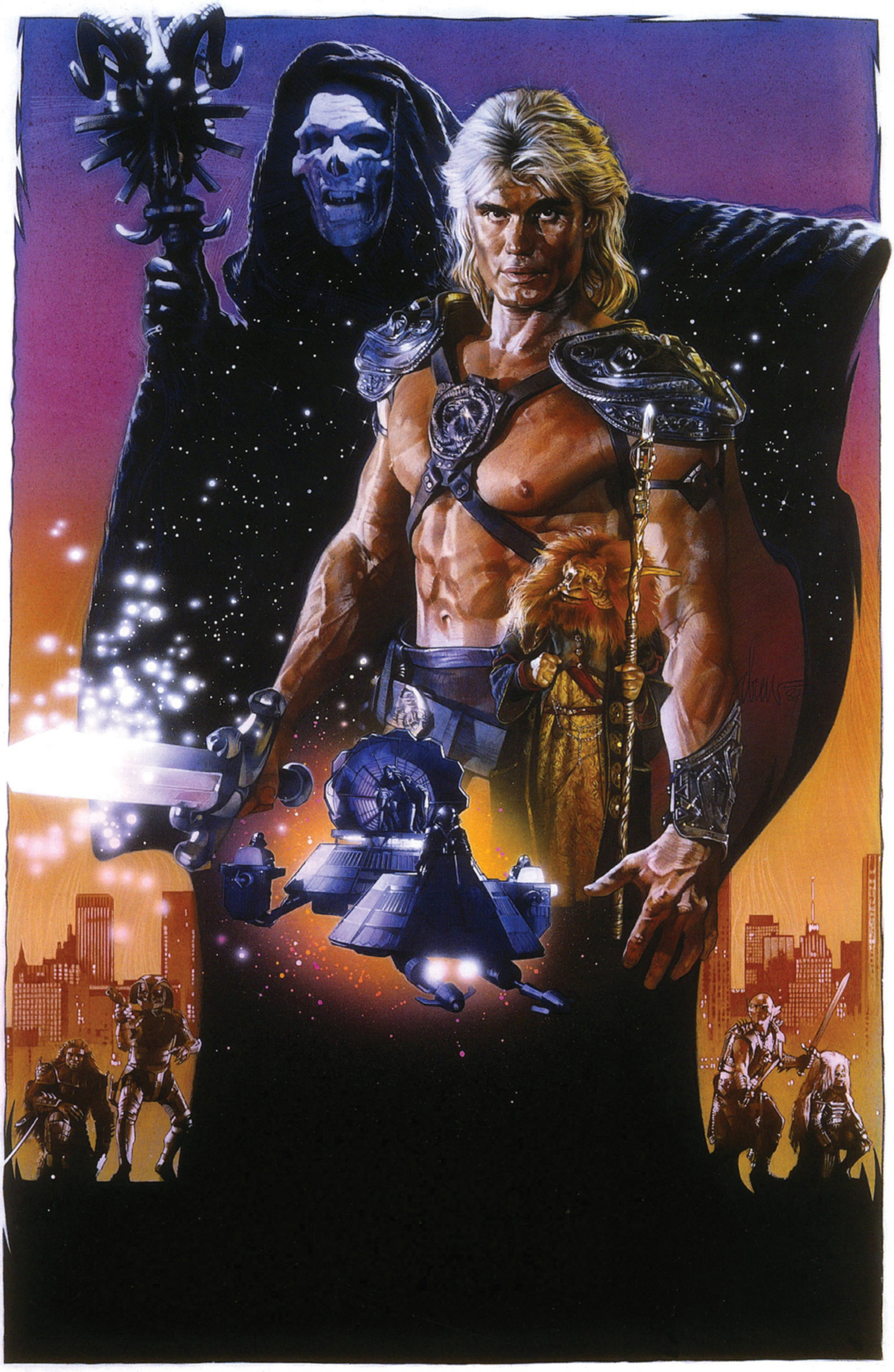
Further below, a FRESH PERFECTLY-ROUND HOLE the size of Gwildor's cylinder has been drilled obliquely down through the trunk of an old tree.

He-Man's gaze follows a line slanting from the blue disk of sky to the hole in the tree -- directly to the bank of wildflowers where Julie discovered Gwildor's Cosmic Key.

ANGLE ON HE-MAN

as he crosses to the bank of wildflowers and kneels down.

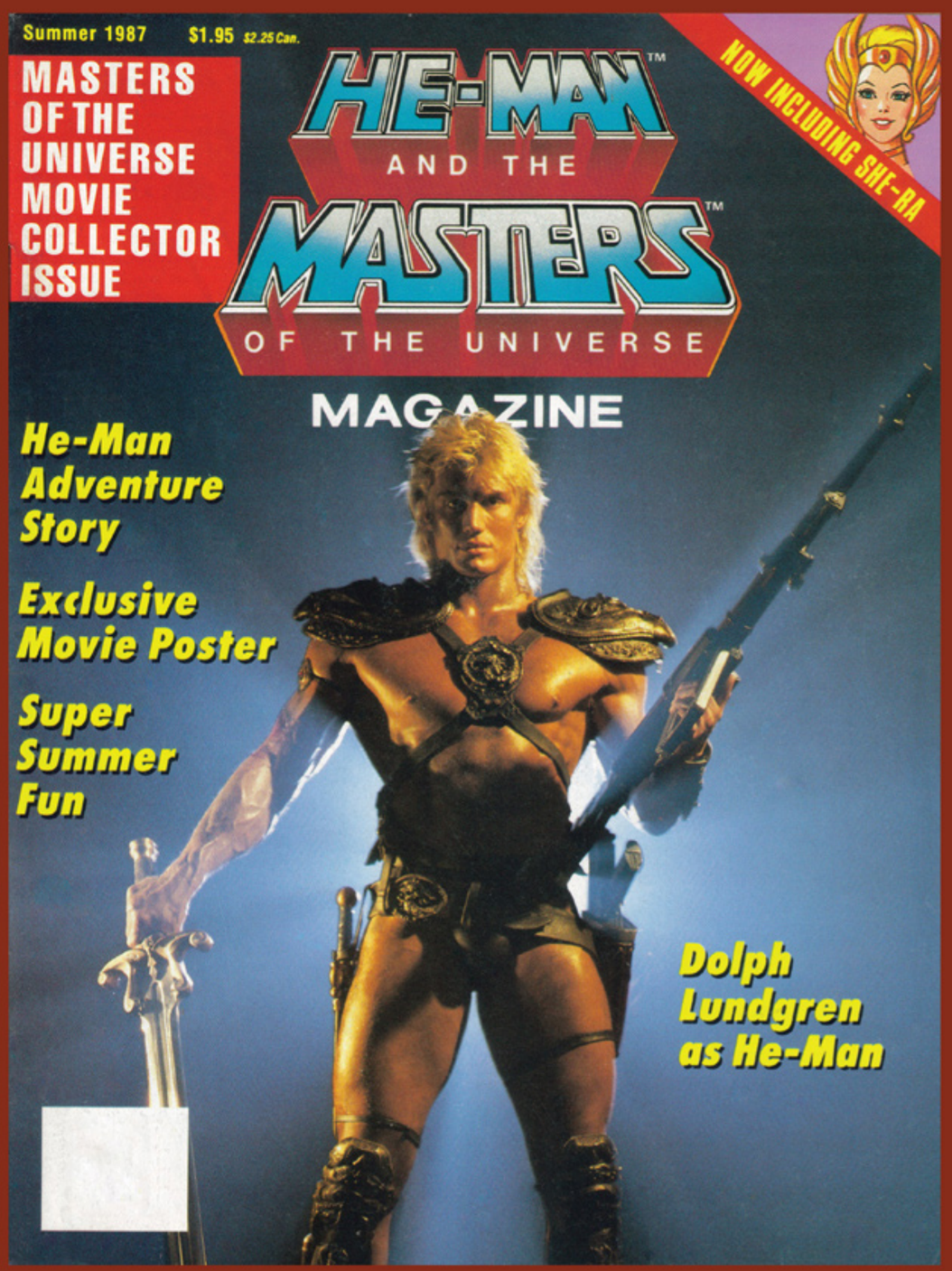
Opposite: A 1987 poster illustration by Earl Norem for the live action film. *Above:* A script page including corrections. Things of note: Arachno and Mantoid as early-draft villains and the strict notes rejecting the weirdly pervasive gore.



Masters of the Universe movie poster by Drew Struzan, the undisputed master of movie-poster art.

LUND-GRAHN, ADVENTUROUS MASTER THESPIAN

AN INTERVIEW WITH DOLPH LUNDGREN, HE-MAN IN THE *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* FEATURE FILM



Mr. Lundgren, you had to bear the responsibility of becoming the living embodiment of a well-loved action figure and cartoon star. Do you recall feeling a lot of pressure when you agreed to swing the Power Sword?

Yes, I felt a lot of pressure having to play an American hero after playing an evil Soviet fighter in *Rocky IV*. It was unusual in those days to play a toy. Now it's in vogue, and many Academy Award–winning actors are standing in line to join the comic book frenzy. Back in the eighties it was considered a possible career ender. So I was nervous about the choice itself and also about pulling off an American accent, being likable on screen, etc.

Did you anticipate the popularity of the brand, the cult success of the film, and its enduring resonance?

When the film was released, it wasn't the box-office hit the producers had hoped for. Cannon Films was under financial pressure, and I believe the filmmakers were pushed to finish the film without proper attention to the quality of the product. The underperformance was a disappointment to me at the time. However, fans seem to love the film worldwide. The brand must have a special quality, because when I went to the *Expendables 3* premiere in 2014—twenty-eight years after the film was made—fans still showed up with photos of me as He-Man to sign. The same is true almost anywhere in the world that I go. That feels pretty good.

What are you most proud of in the *Masters of the Universe* film? Is there anything you wish you could do over?

I went through a very tough time at the time of the shoot, on a personal level. The flip side of sudden Hollywood success had just hit me: problems with my manager, financial pressures, tough career choices, the price of fame, losing my privacy, staying out too late at night with a cavalcade of pretty girls (not all bad . . .), etc. Despite all that, I'm glad to have pulled off that role and done a fairly decent job of portraying that iconic character. I don't regret anything in life. Everything, good or bad, happens for a reason. It comes along to teach you something, giving you a chance to grow. *Masters of the Universe* was a great experience for me.

Are there any of the toys or film designs you wish could have been in the film and weren't?

Not a toy specialist, sorry!

Do you have a favorite *Masters of the Universe* character or toy—I mean, besides He-Man, of course?

She-Ra, of course.

I'm sure you get asked this all the time, but how do you feel about the proposed new live-action version of *Masters of the Universe*?

It's fun that people are still interested in the property. I met one of the writers, Jeff Wadlow, at Comic-Con and he was very excited to meet me. I was equally curious about how they will approach the story and, of course, who will wear the leather diapers (sorry, loincloth . . .) and swing that mighty sword.

I wish the filmmakers the best of luck!

SNOUT STOUT, HEROIC ETCHER OF THUNDER LIZARDS

AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM STOUT, CONCEPT ARTIST ON THE *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* FEATURE FILM

You're renowned as a film designer, and one of your best-known projects is the *Masters of the Universe* film. What do you think you, as an artist, brought to the art of *Masters of the Universe*?

I made clear visual sense out of the existing toy world of *Masters* in a way that was deeper and more believable than what had been done prior with the *Masters* toys and cartoon show. In regard to character design, I got rid of the limitations of the toys, which, for the most part, were different heads on the same bodies, a cost-saving aspect that wouldn't fly in a film.

In order to make these characters and situations believable to a moviegoing audience, I had to believe in them and make them real for me first. I gave each character a believable history, which not only helped me, but helped the actors as well.

I also brought a comic book sensibility (in the very best sense of the term) to the screen in a fashion that, despite our limited budget, paved the way for later superhero films, like the *X-Men* series. Gary Goddard (the film's director) and I share a passion for comic books. We didn't look down on them when we were making *Masters*, which was unusual for that time. It also helped our communication. When Gary asked for something "a little more Kirby," I knew what he was talking about. I didn't have to ask who "Kirby" was; I knew he was talking about Jack and what that meant. So, we had a great shorthand style of communication between us.

To implement my vision for *Masters*, I also built a top design team for the film that included my old friend Jean "Moebius" Giraud.

What were the influences you brought to the table?

To begin with, over three decades of reading and drawing superhero comics. My comic book influences for the film included Ron Cobb (my production designer on *Conan the Barbarian*), Moebius, and Jack Kirby (I ghost inked an issue of *The Demon* for Jack). Gary and I saw a lot of Doctor Doom in Skeletor.

I also brought in a sense of the great stage designs of Edward Gordon Craig, whose work I am passionate about. This was something our well-educated writer, David Odell, picked up on immediately.

I'm a movie nut; I've seen thousands and thousands of films. I brought my deep and broad knowledge of film history into play in my design work for *Masters*. My redesign of Evil-Lyn, for example, was inspired by the Norma Desmond character in Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard*.

I also love American pop culture. Designing Robby's Ribs 'n' Chicken (where Julie/Courteney Cox worked) enabled me to celebrate the look of American fast food eateries. I took an existing fast food stand in Lake View Terrace and transformed it into Robby's for our film.

Creepy film history trivia note: the fast food place we used for Robby's was the site where Rodney King was beaten.

What were the considerations for translating an action figure into a living, breathing, moving film character?

The history that I gave each character helped to inform my designs. I tried to imbue each character and his or her design, as well as the design of their individual worlds, with a sense of their having a deep, rich past. That meant jettisoning aspects of the toys that were clichéd or predictable.

For example, I imagined that the Beast Man came from a relatively primitive tribal culture. Before he left to do battle for Skeletor (a great honor in his mind), each of his tribe mates dipped their hands into a dye and put their handprints on his clothes and armor—their way of being metaphorically present with him and symbolically giving him their collective strength.

What was your favorite character to design or illustrate?

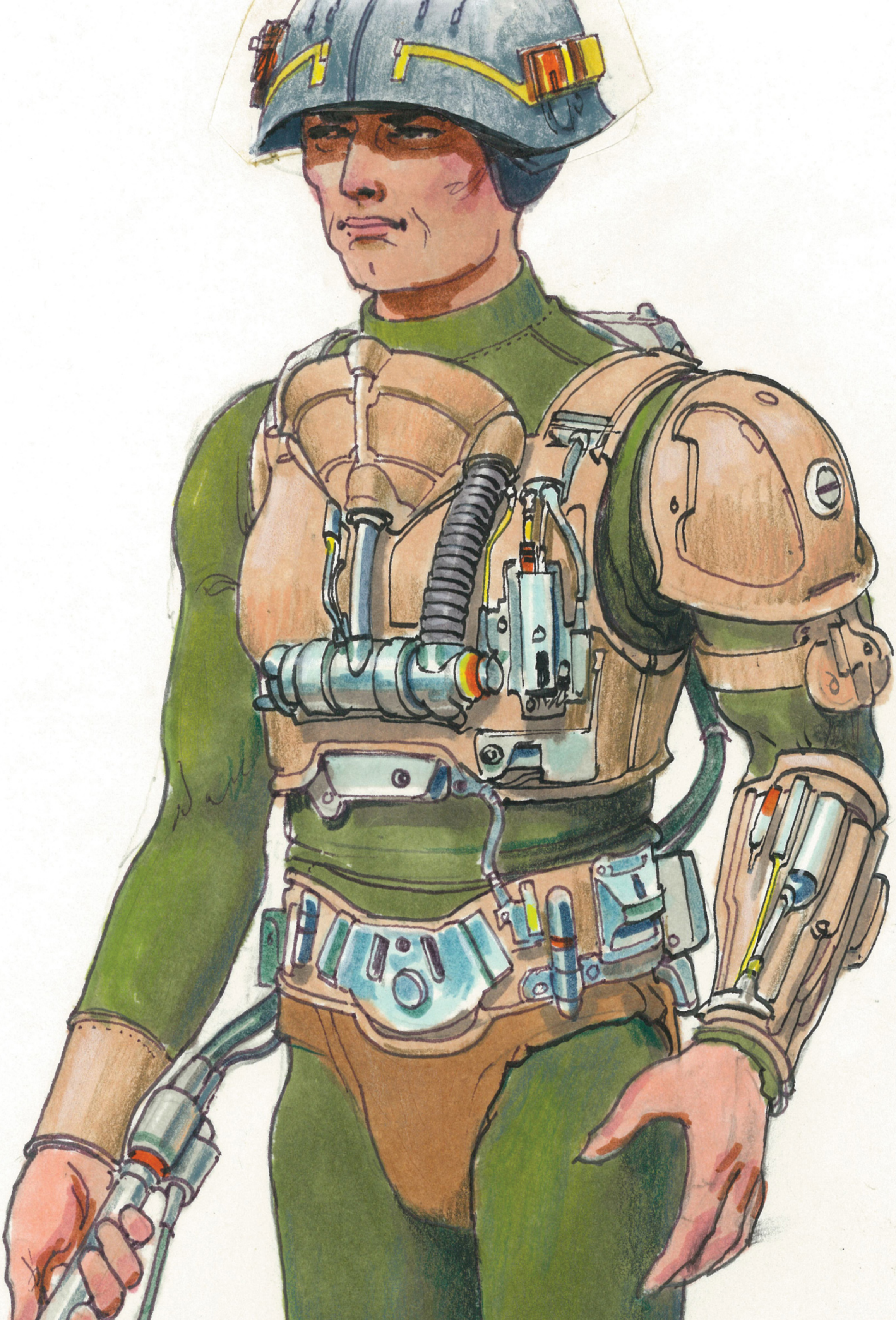
While I loved designing both, the villains are always more fun to design than the heroes. I especially enjoyed designing Saurod. His design was so appealing, and the performance of Pons Maar as Saurod was so incredible that we all regretted killing him off so early in the movie. I took great pains to design every single aspect of Saurod, even down to his contact lenses. Pons ended up purchasing the original art to my Saurod designs. That particular design toured the world as part of an exhibition on special effects in the movies many years ago.

What about the design appealed to you?

I love reptiles. Reptiles usually have a primitive association. I found it interesting that despite being reptilian, Saurod lived in a high-tech world with high-tech armor and weapons. Along with his culture's high-tech influences, Saurod's design still had to reflect his reptilian nature and origins; so his hood, for example, was a sort of high-tech version of a cobra's head and flared hood.



Early He-Man design by Ralph McQuarrie, who is best known for his work on some small indie film called *Star Wars*? Never heard of it.







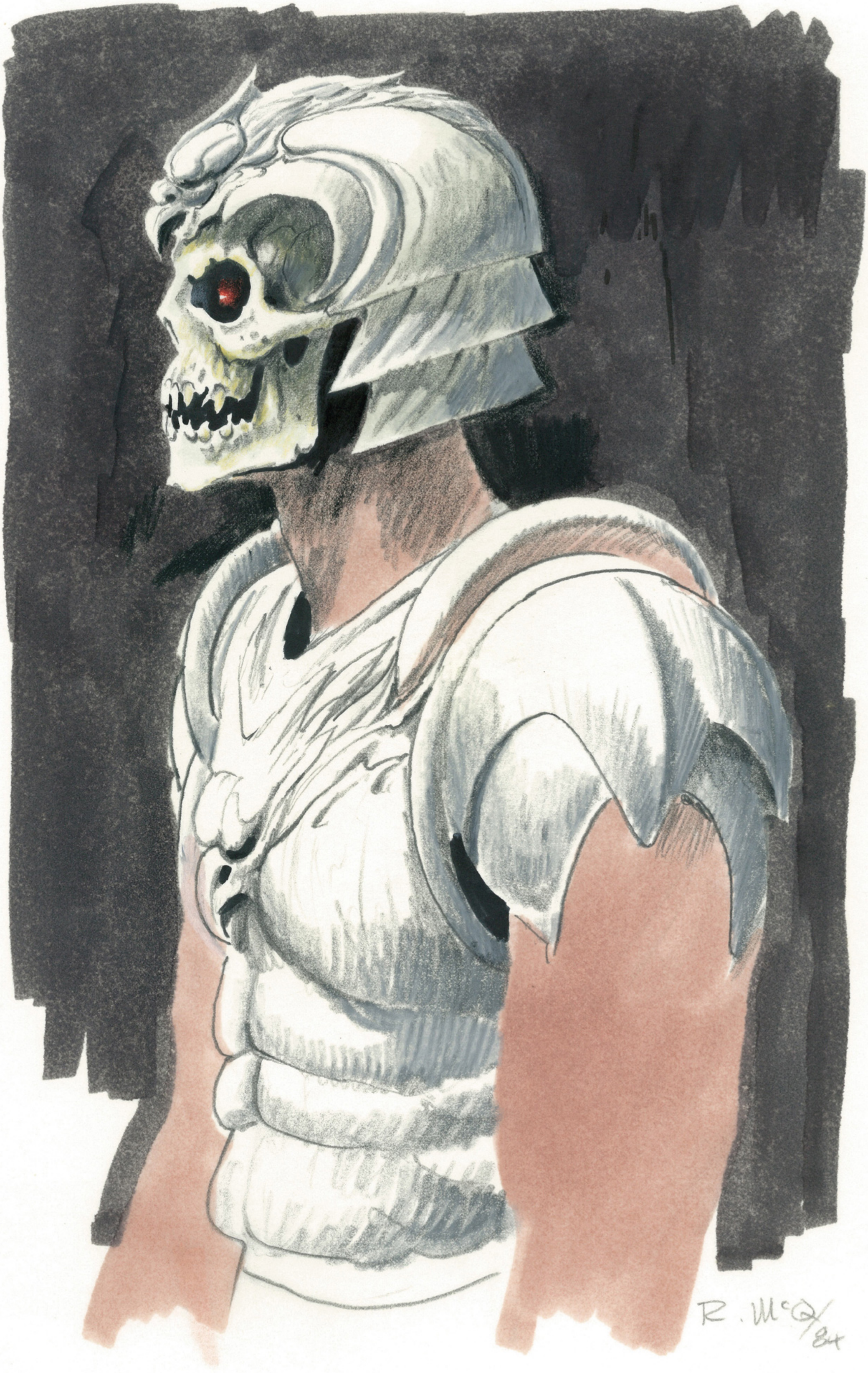




Opposite: McQuarrie's design for Man-At-Arms, which remained faithful to the toy down to the color scheme and the tights. *This page:* McQuarrie's designs for a bizarre Gwildor/Fisto fusion, Gwildor, Teela, and perhaps a royal guard. Of note is Ralph's classic skimpy-armored Teela design. This was most likely abandoned due to the fear that a live-action, snake-armored Teela would have "charmed" a few too many fans. The art is dated 1984 because it was created for pitching the movie. Both McQuarrie and Mazzoli created art for selling the movie to the studios, but only Mazzoli came back for the actual production of the film.



This page and opposite: Skeletor studies by McQuarrie, lacking his iconic blue skin and yellow skull.


R. McQ/84


R.M-Q/84

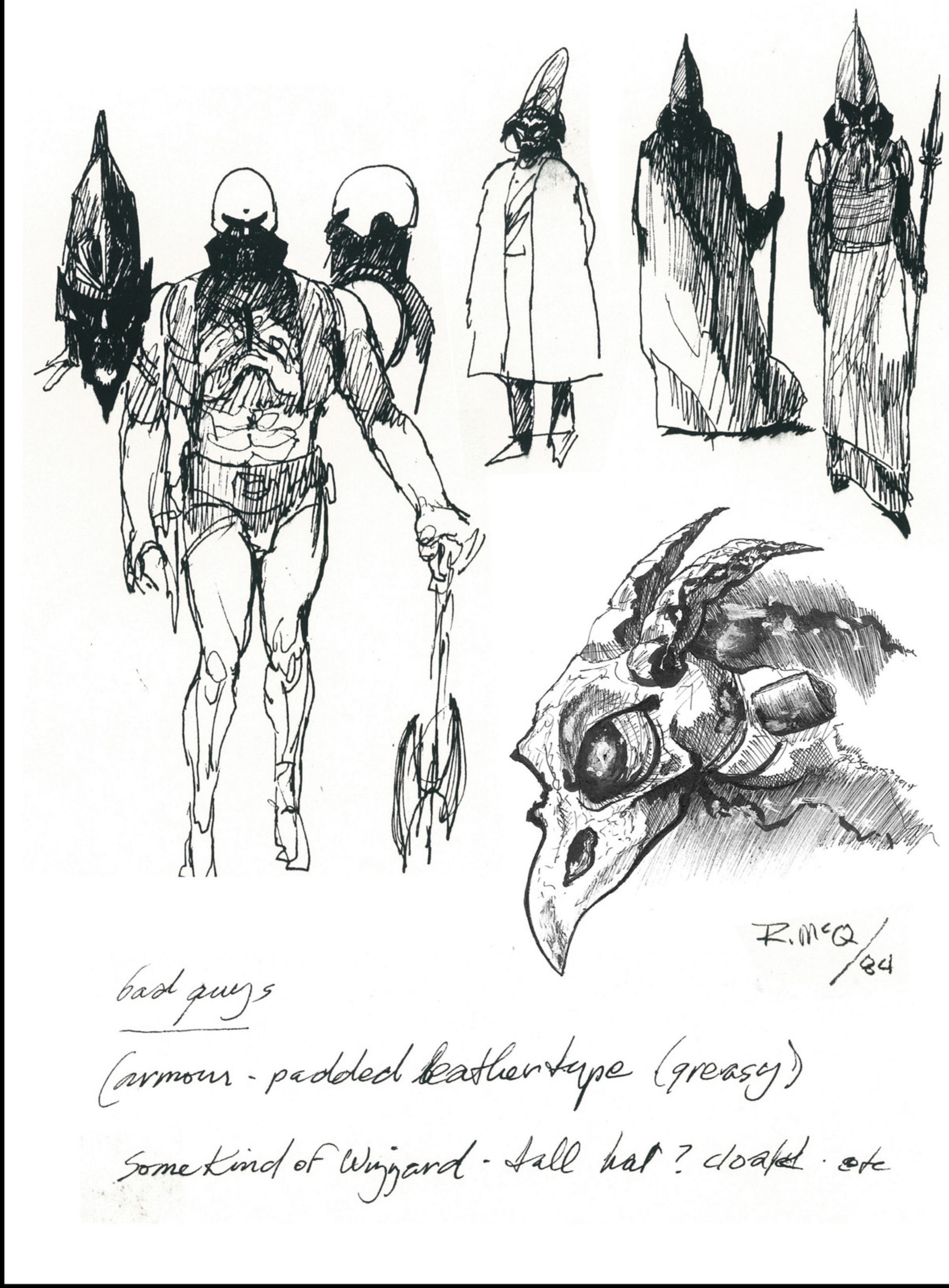


Evil-Lyn

This page and opposite: McQuarrie's designs for Skeletor's evil sorceress, Evil-Lyn. The design seen opposite is remarkably faithful to the cartoon and toy designs, minus the jaundiced skin. The designs on this page are closer to the final design, although both possess a grittier, more gothic fantasy quality.



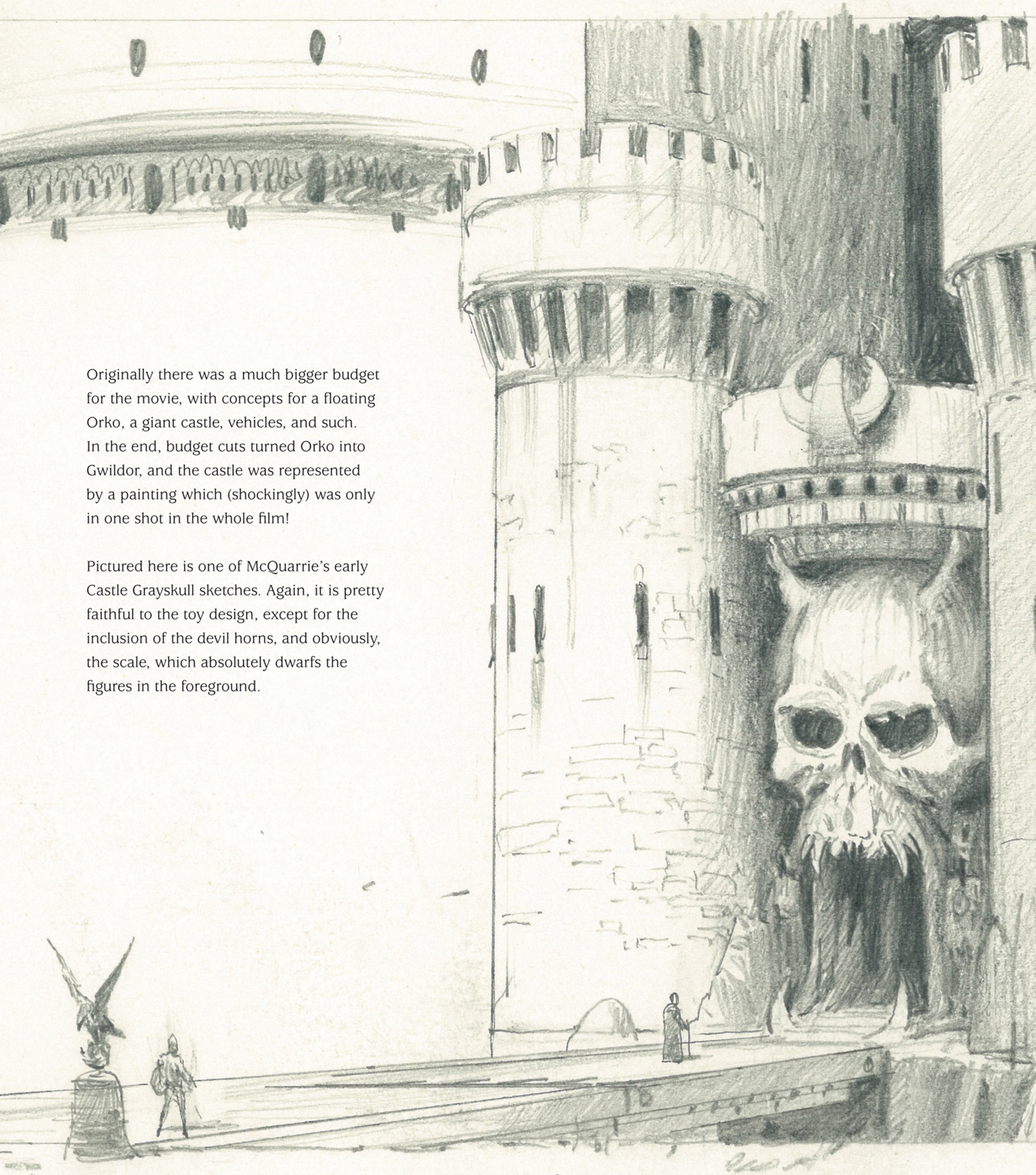
Possible designs for Beast Man and some of his flying beasts by McQuarrie.



Evil warrior trooper designs, including a standard guard and some sort of wizard, by McQuarrie.

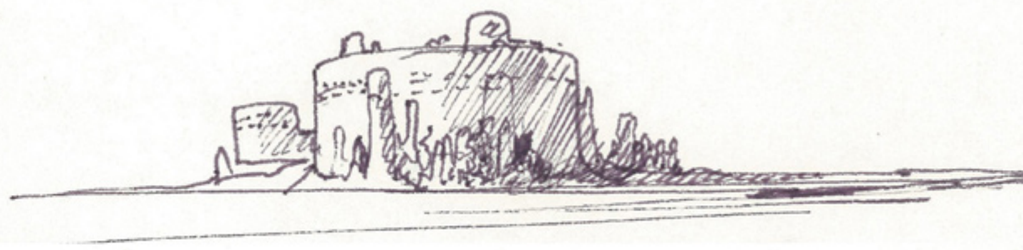
Originally there was a much bigger budget for the movie, with concepts for a floating Orko, a giant castle, vehicles, and such. In the end, budget cuts turned Orko into Gwildor, and the castle was represented by a painting which (shockingly) was only in one shot in the whole film!

Pictured here is one of McQuarrie's early Castle Grayskull sketches. Again, it is pretty faithful to the toy design, except for the inclusion of the devil horns, and obviously, the scale, which absolutely dwarfs the figures in the foreground.

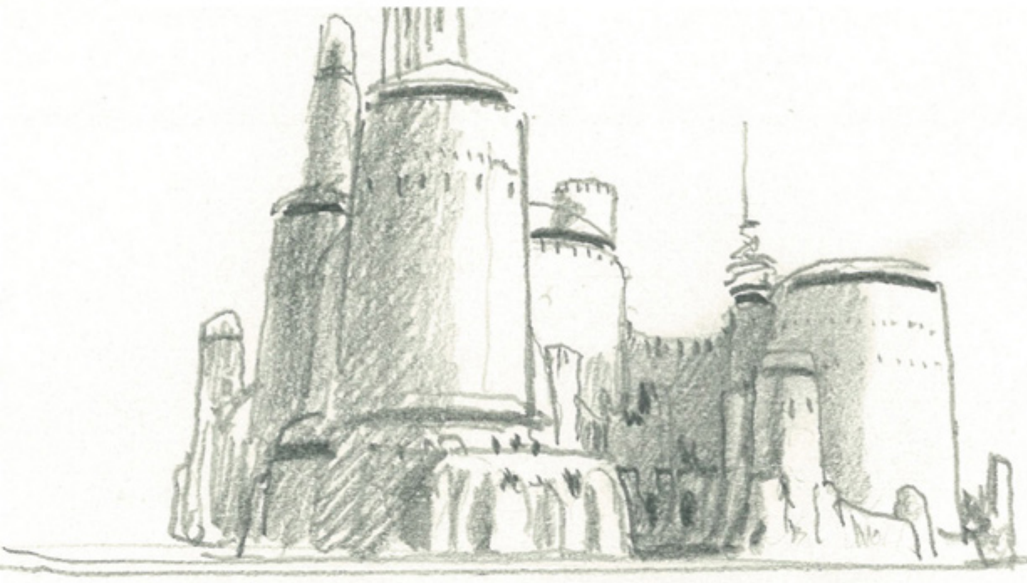



R. McQ/84





eternia before war.

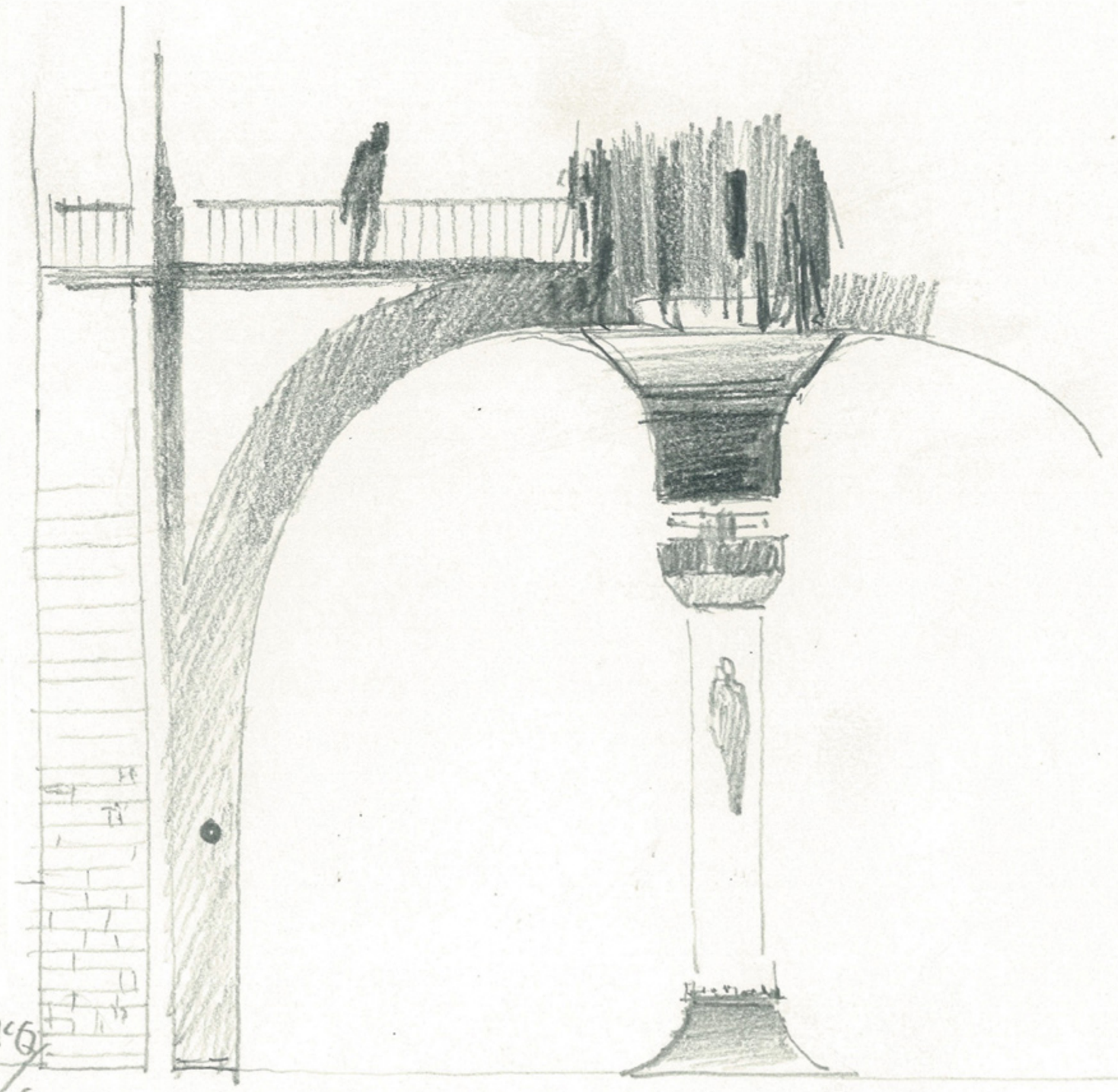




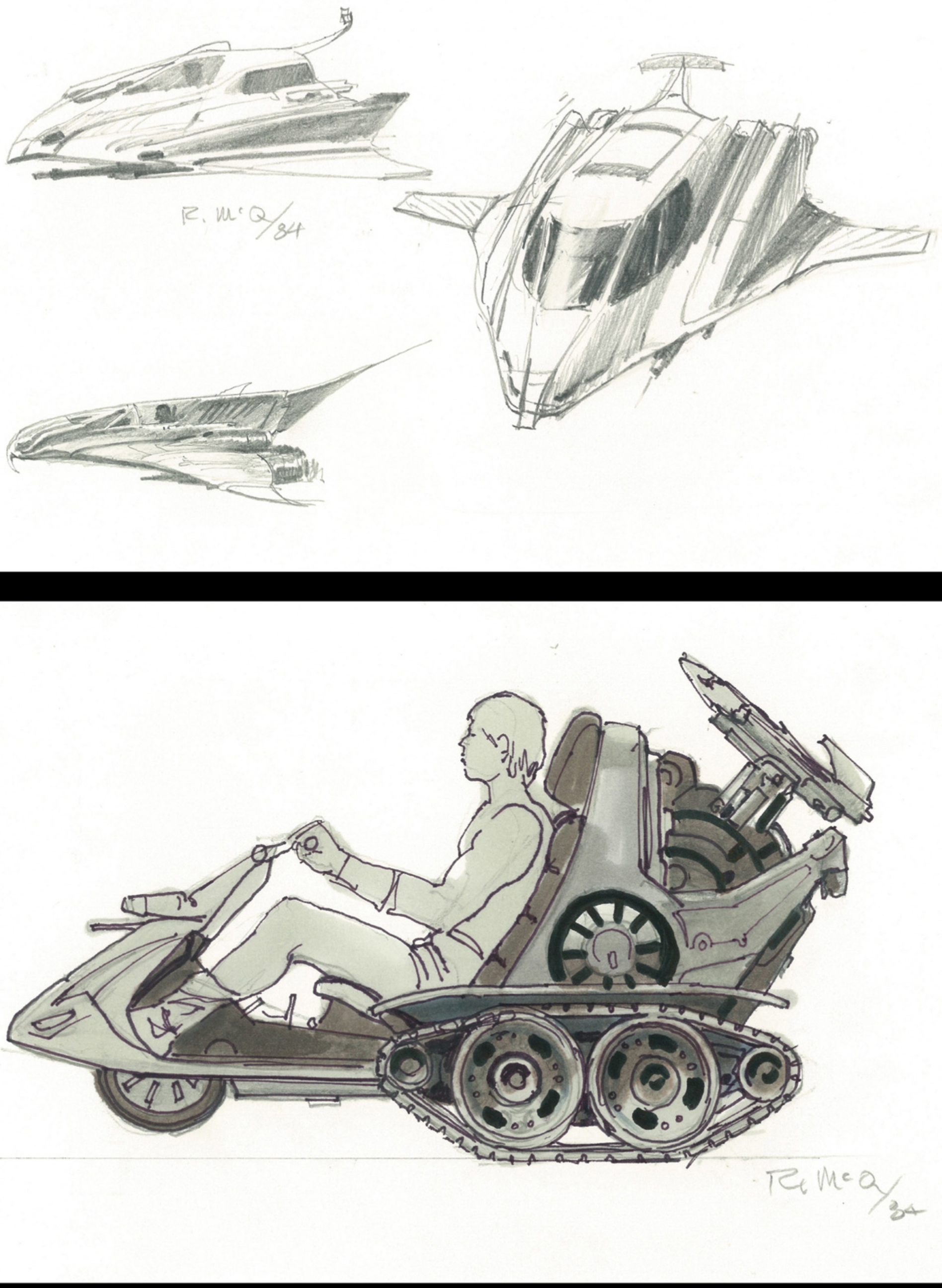
R. McQ / 84



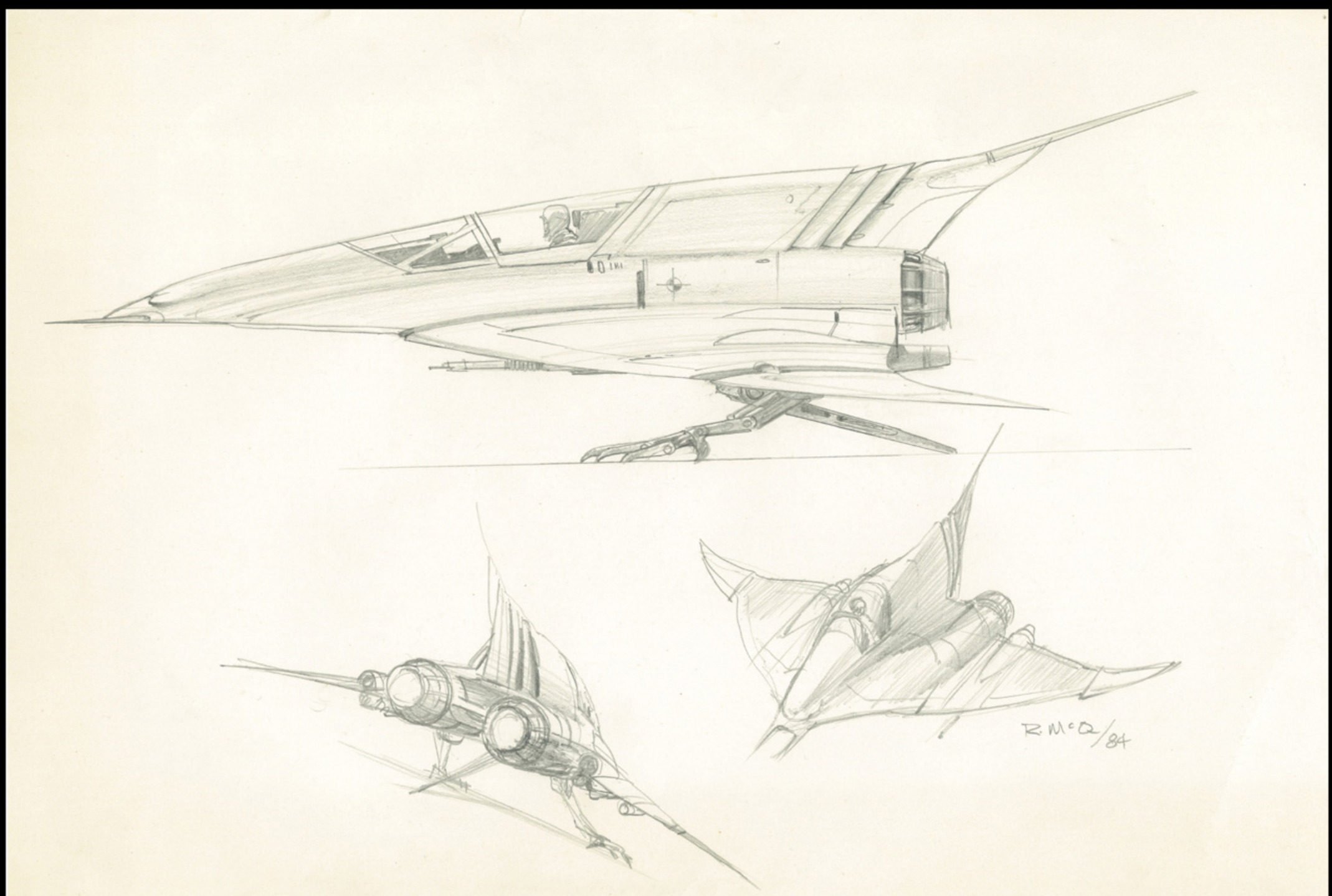
More Castle Grayskull and Eternia designs. Note the transformation of Eternia into an evil dwelling after a war. Also, note the buttress design, similar to architectural . . . Pff, who are we kidding? We have no idea about art history. He-Man!

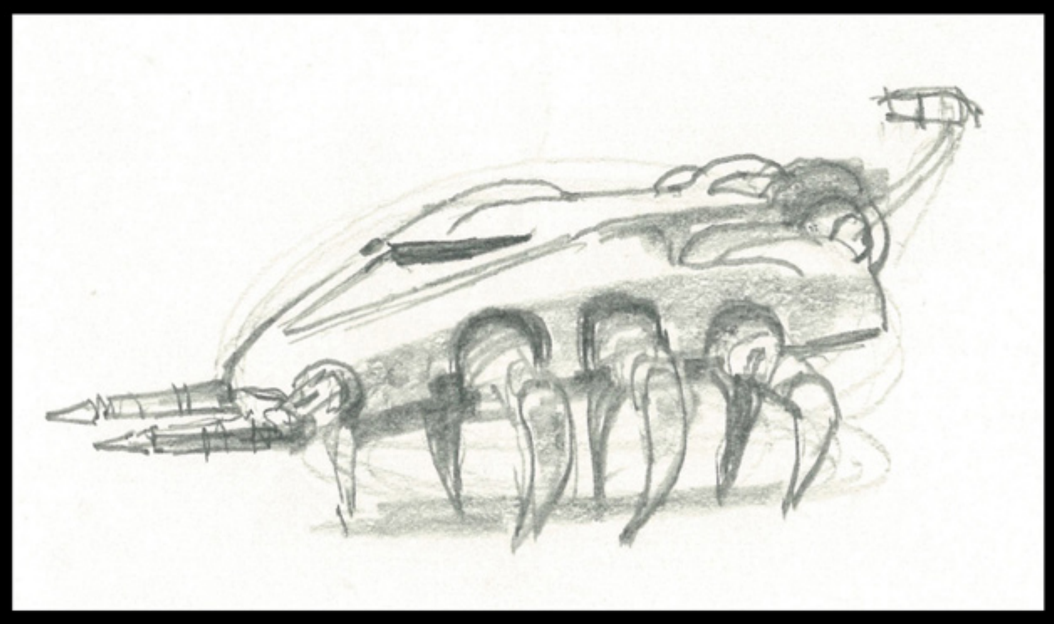


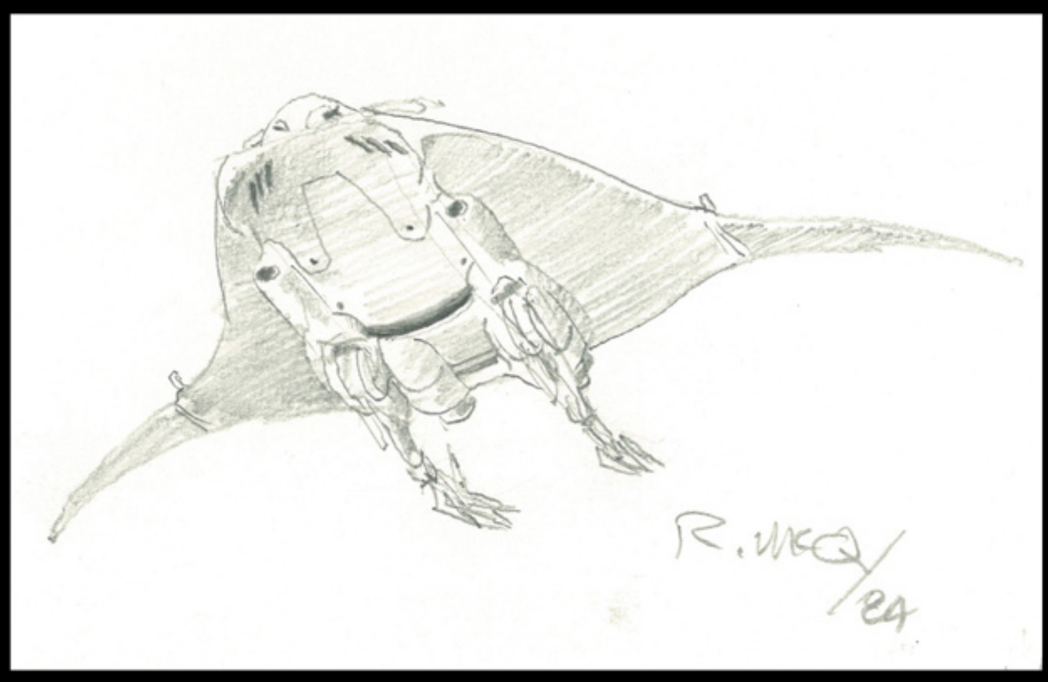
Even more Grayskull preliminary studies by McQuarrie. Notice how the skull is de-emphasized and becomes solely an element in the design rather than the main focus.

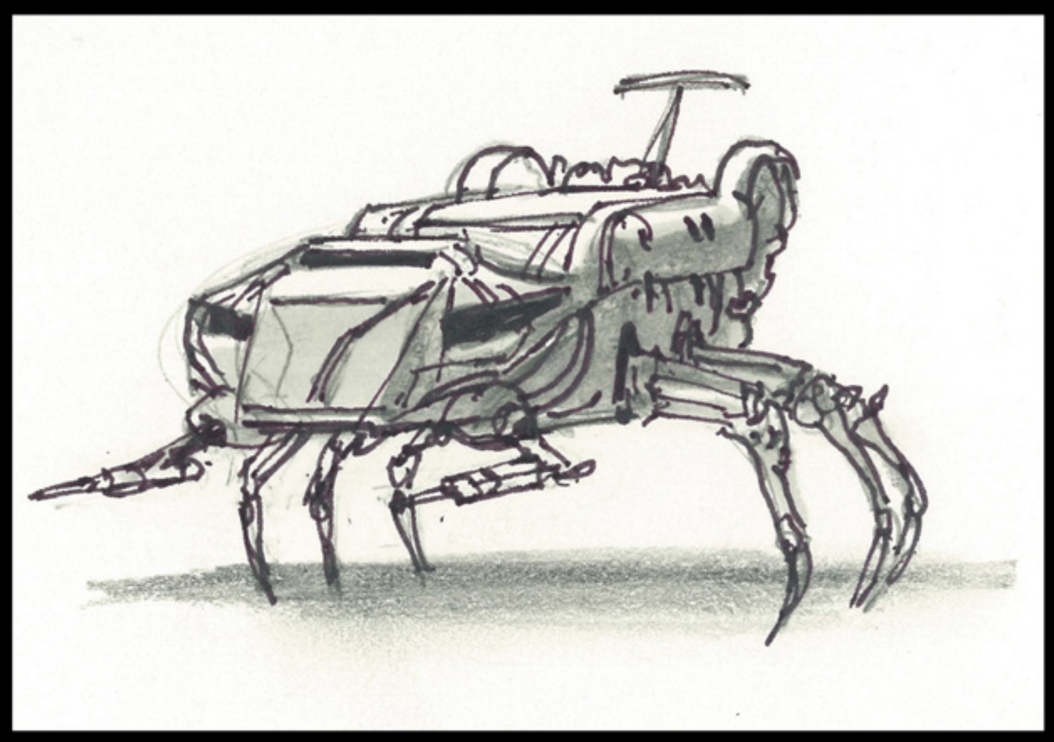


McQuarrie's designs for movie vehicles. At top is a Wind Raider–inspired vehicle and below it is the more affordable, compact version of the Attak Trak.

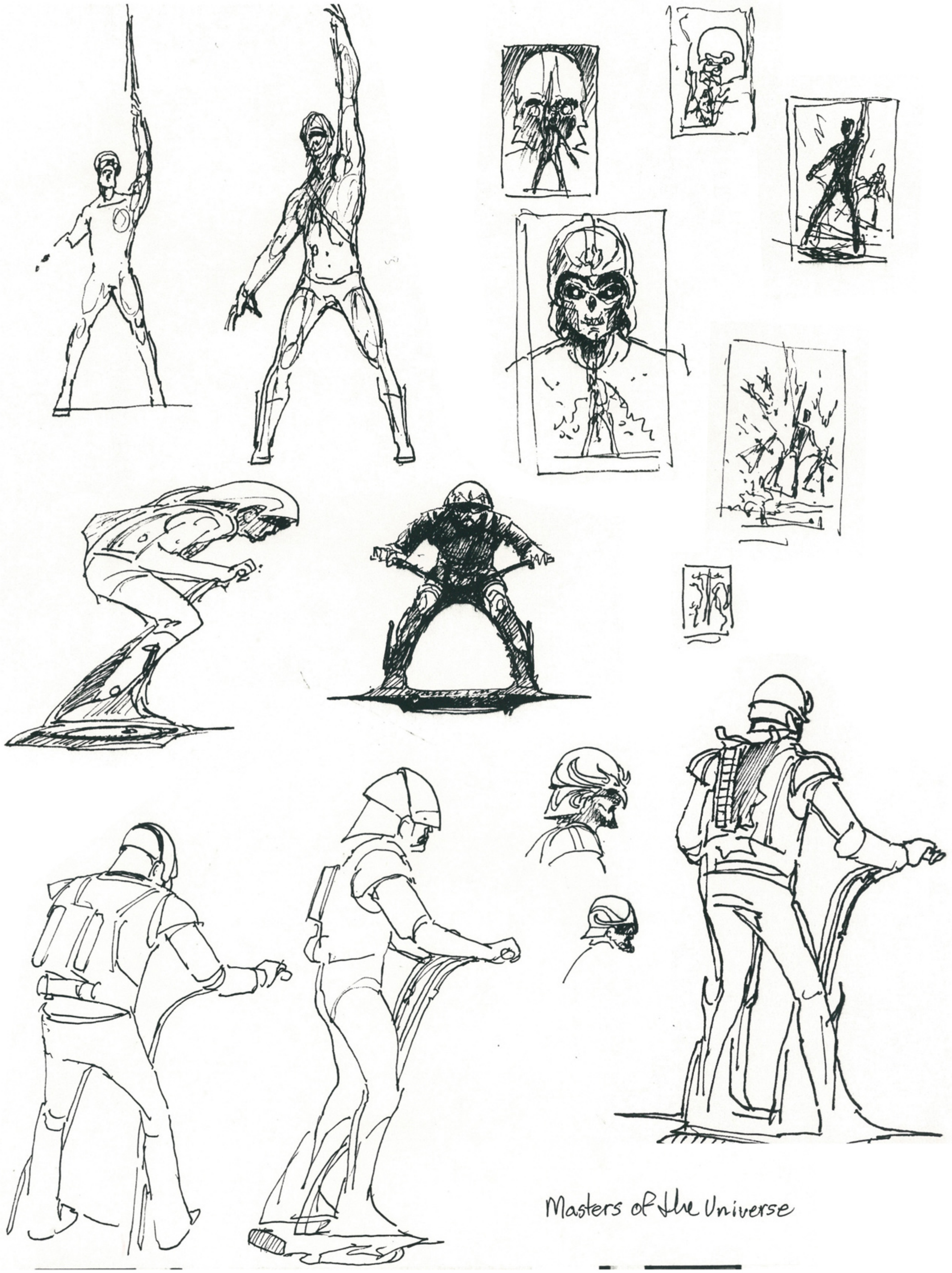






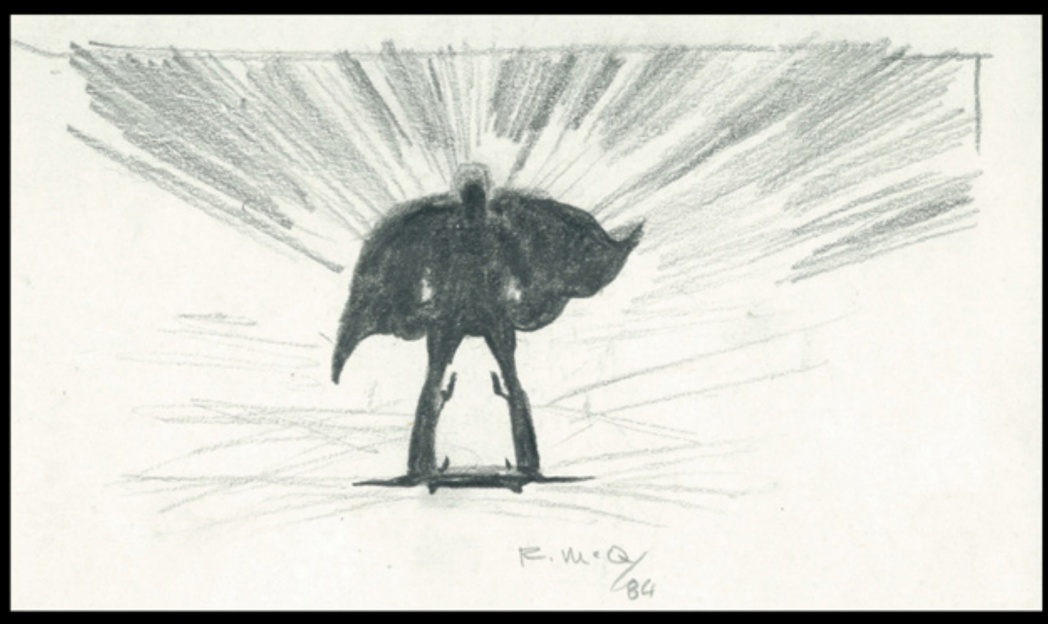


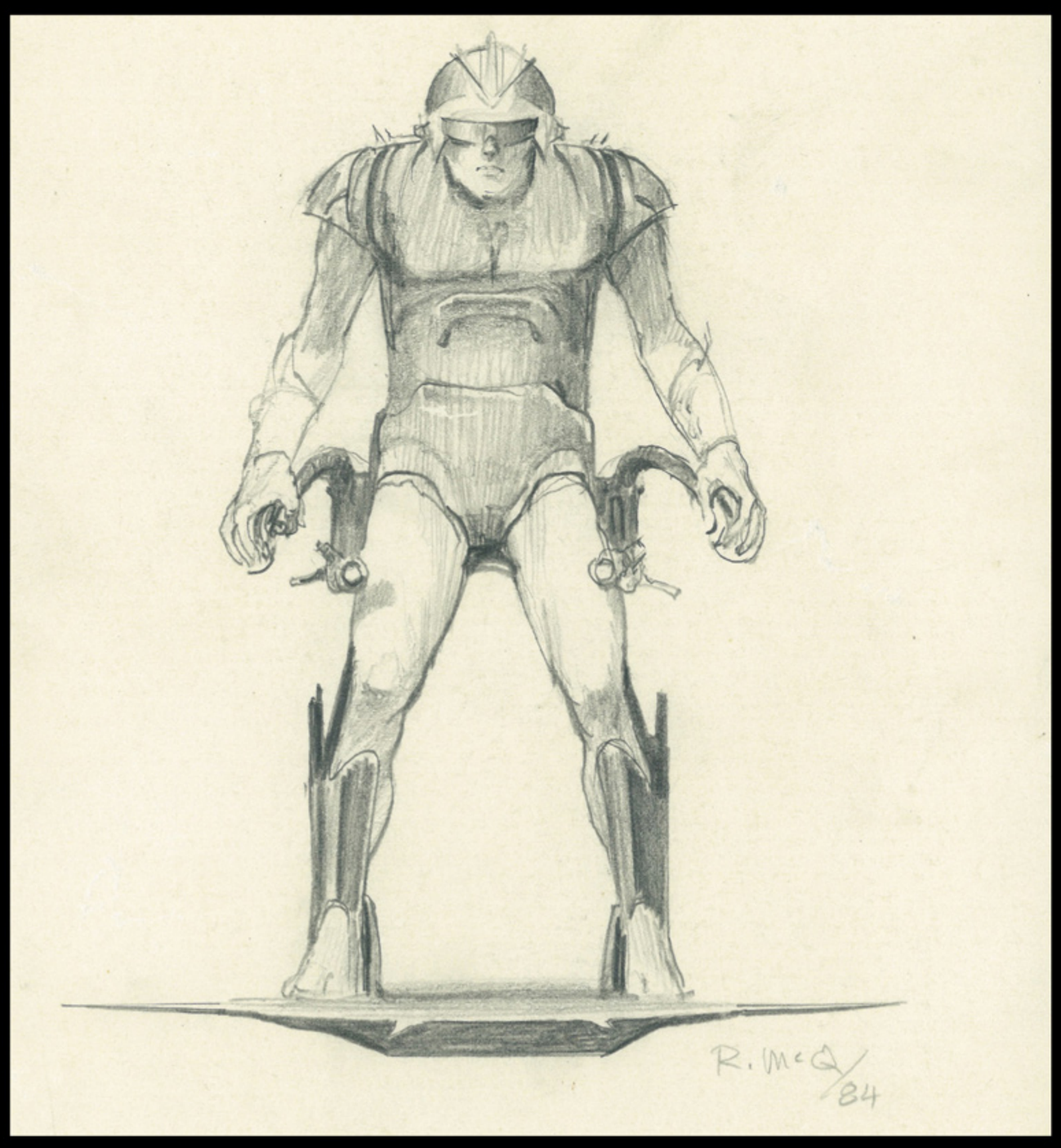
More early vehicle concepts by McQuarrie, including a Talon Fighter–influenced vehicle and some sort of personal scorpion cruiser.

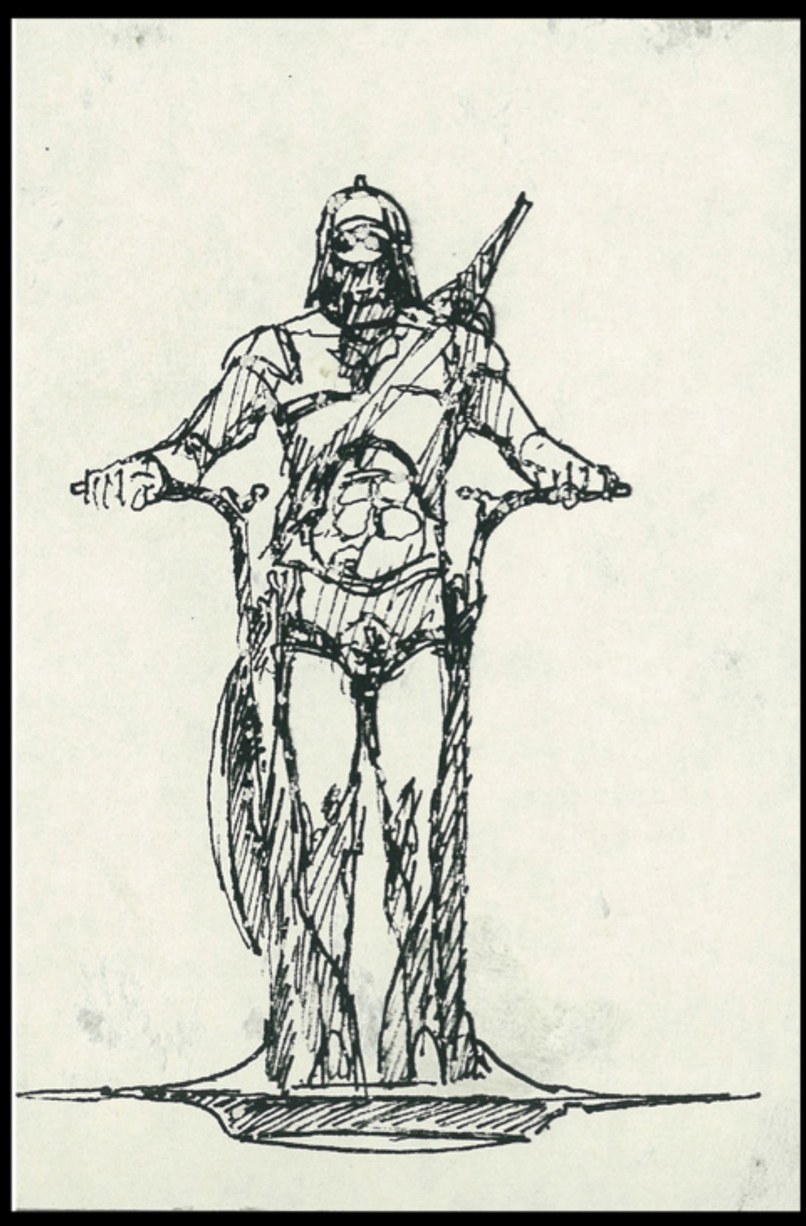


Masters of the Universe

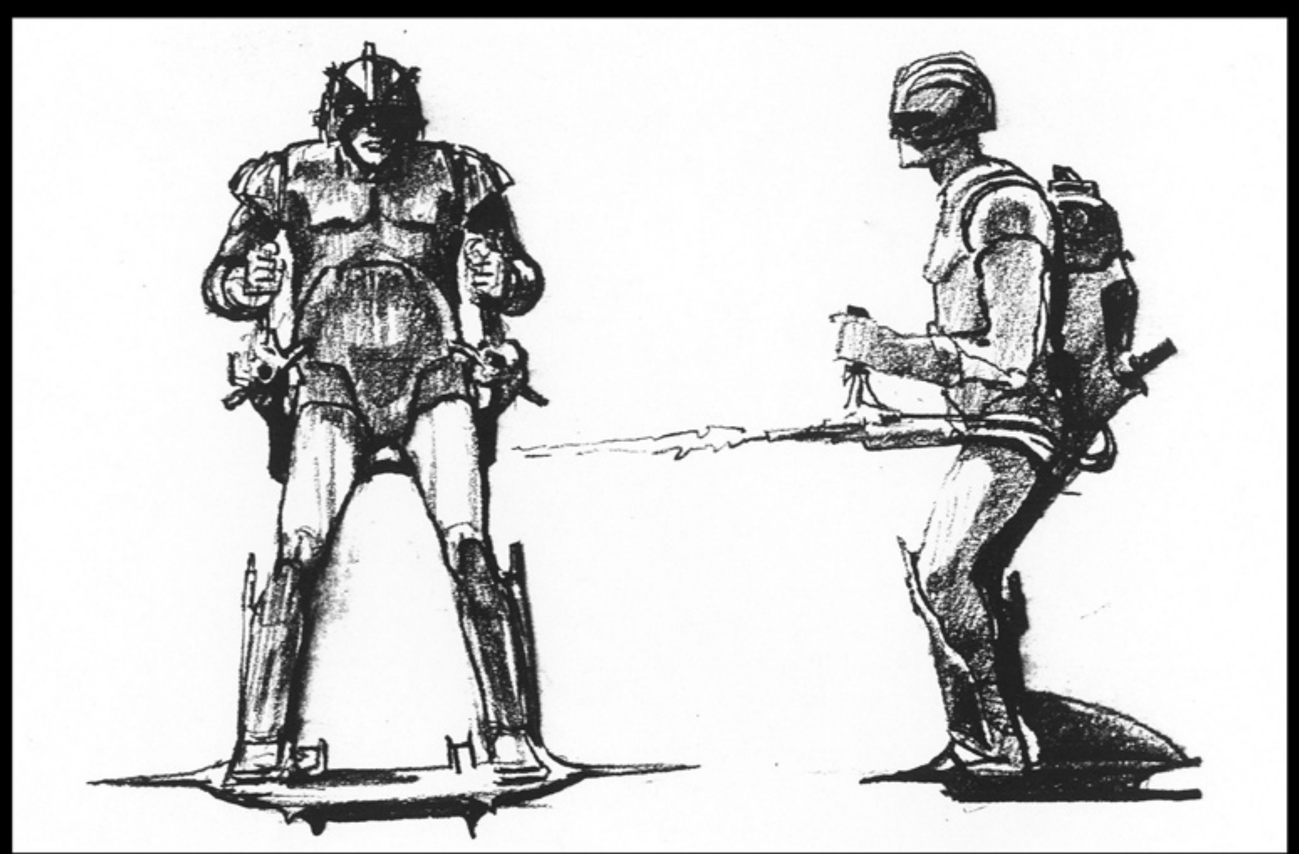


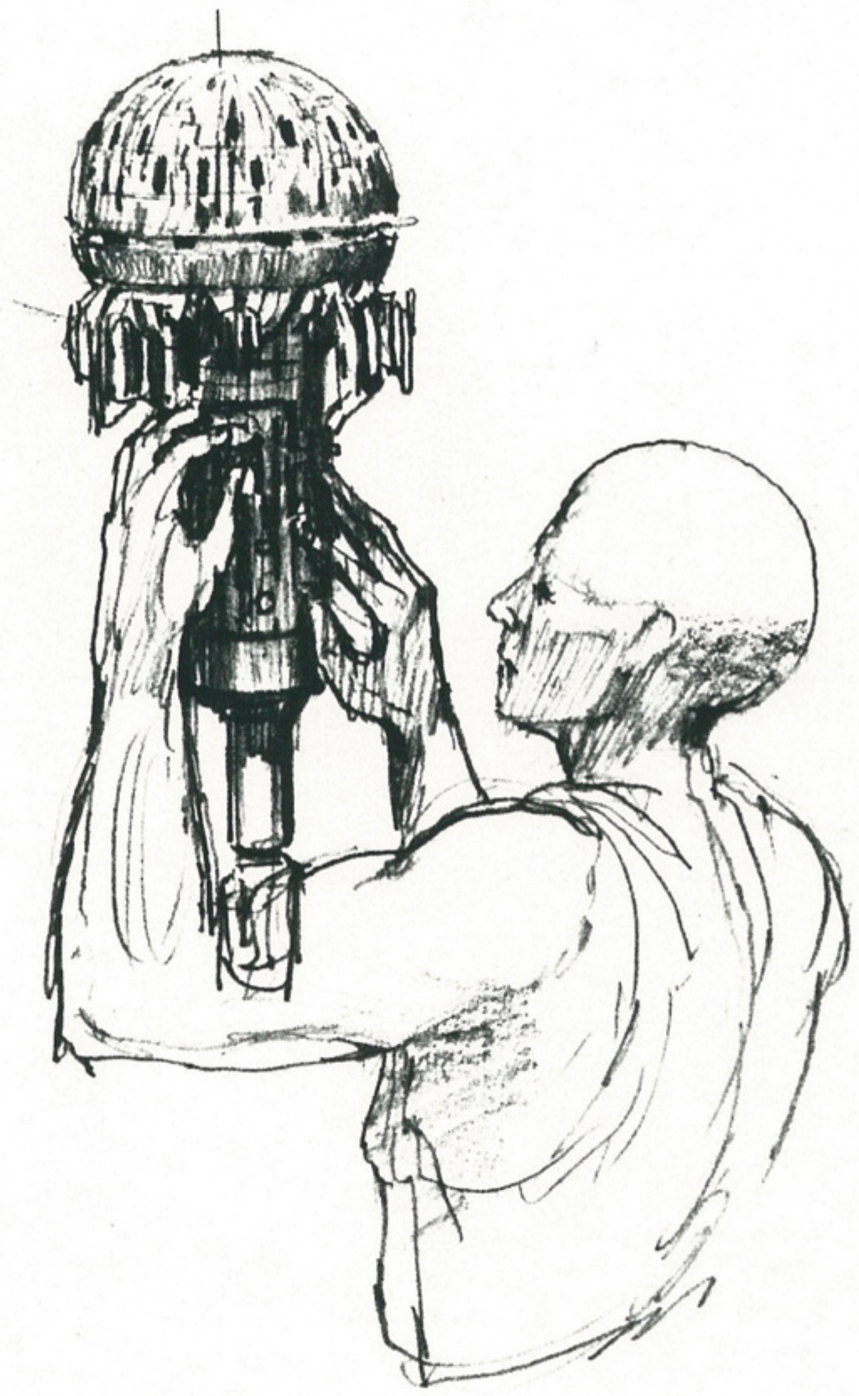


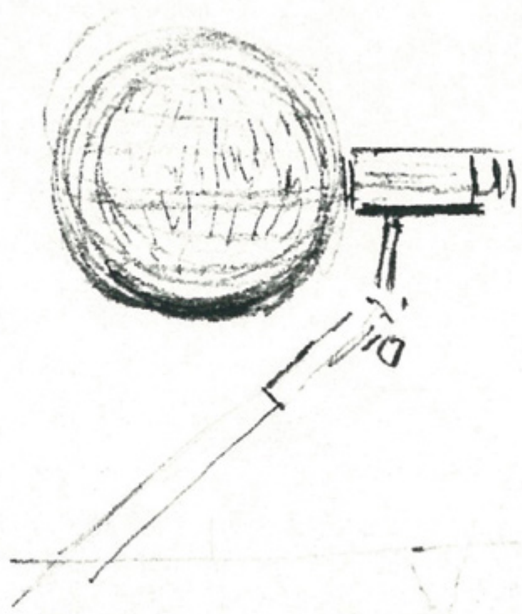




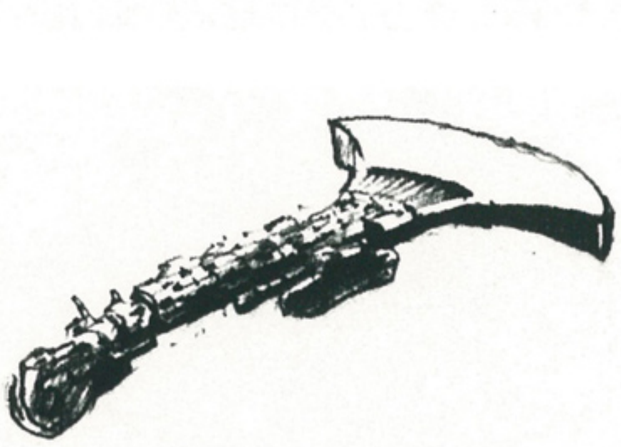
A host of studies for Skeletor's Air Centurions. Also note the classic He-Man pose sketches, both with and without Skeletor, for potential poster ideas.

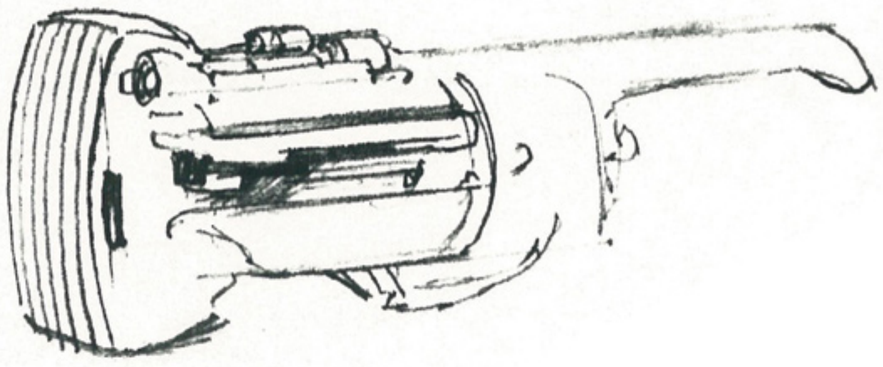




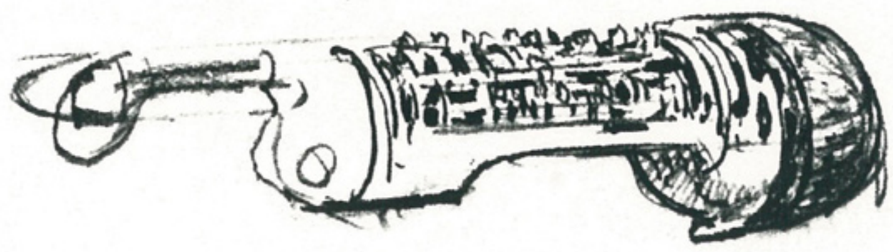


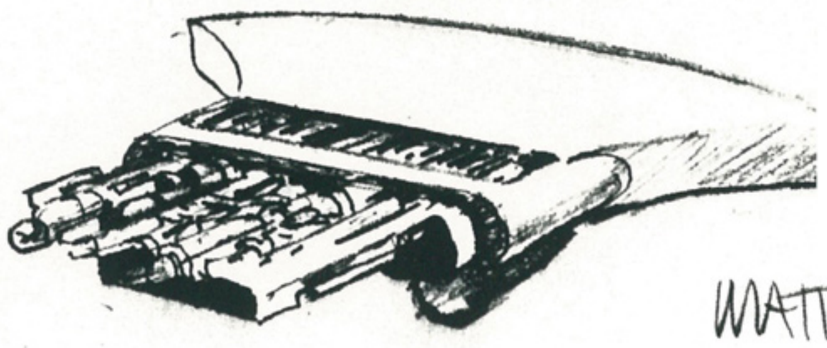












MATTER KEY.

R. McQ/84

McQuarrie's early pencils for the Cosmic Key, originally called the Matter Key. Let's all agree that Cosmic Key is a better name.



This page and next: Film concept art by Italian artist Claudio Mazzoli.


Visiting Our Past
American Highlands
STORY of the MONDY
NEW YORK
AGAINST The GODS
GOLD

CHAPTER SEVEN 1990

THE NEW ADVENTURES



WOLFRAM MAN, ORACLE OF TOY DESIGN

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID WOLFRAM, DESIGNER ON THE ADVENTURES OF HE-MAN

You designed many of the figures for the New Adventures of He-Man line. What was the idea behind the new series of figures, and how were they different from the classic figures?

The idea was primarily driven by our international division, which had done quite well with Masters, and didn't have the same problems that we had domestically with all the MOTU products at retail, due to overshipping. At the same time, they wanted a different theme, and a more space-oriented theme was decided on. Right about the same time, a Japanese inventing company, Sentai, had brought a series of figures in with some nicely engineered fighting and action features. Since the features were more realistic than the fantasy features in MOTU, we went to a more normal proportion with the figures. This had the added advantage of making them easier to fit into vehicles.

Was the process for creating art and figures for New Adventures different from the MOTU line?

The major process change we made was that on MOTU we had a preliminary design group that came up with concepts, and a visual design group that would take those concepts and turn them into real products. There was always a certain amount of "hand waving" (as we on the visual-design side would call it) on the prelim side, where features in a simple breadboard model could be very dramatic, but when you had to put them in the figure, and work with engineering, safety, and cost factors, they might be underwhelming, or downright ugly.

Under the new way of working at Mattel at that time, the prelim- and visual-design groups were merged, so that all designers were coming up with preliminary designs, and then they would have to take them all the way to the finish, which, at least somewhat, toned down the tendency to overpromise.

What do you think you, as an artist, brought to the art of New Adventures?

The way it worked out, I ended up designing most of the evil figures, which was just fine with me. At some point, the decision was made to have the heroic figures be human, whereas the evil figures could be anything, and their features didn't have to be limited to more human fighting features. It also allowed me to have a lot more freedom (and fun) with the look of the characters.



What were the influences you brought to the table?

First of all, I was trained as an illustrator at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, whereas most of the designers came from product- or transportation-design backgrounds. I was frequently called on to add a sense of "character" to various products. As a lifelong comics and sci-fi fan, I had fun borrowing from those genres. As an example, Sagitar, a character that I called Tharkus, was originally designed as an equine homage to Tars Tarkas, from the John Carter books. Unfortunately, the sculpting was terrible on the finished product, which at that point was pretty much out of our control. Much later on, the boys' design group was able to find its own sculpting vendors, rather than relying on the sculpting department, which at that time sculpted mostly dolls and preschool products.

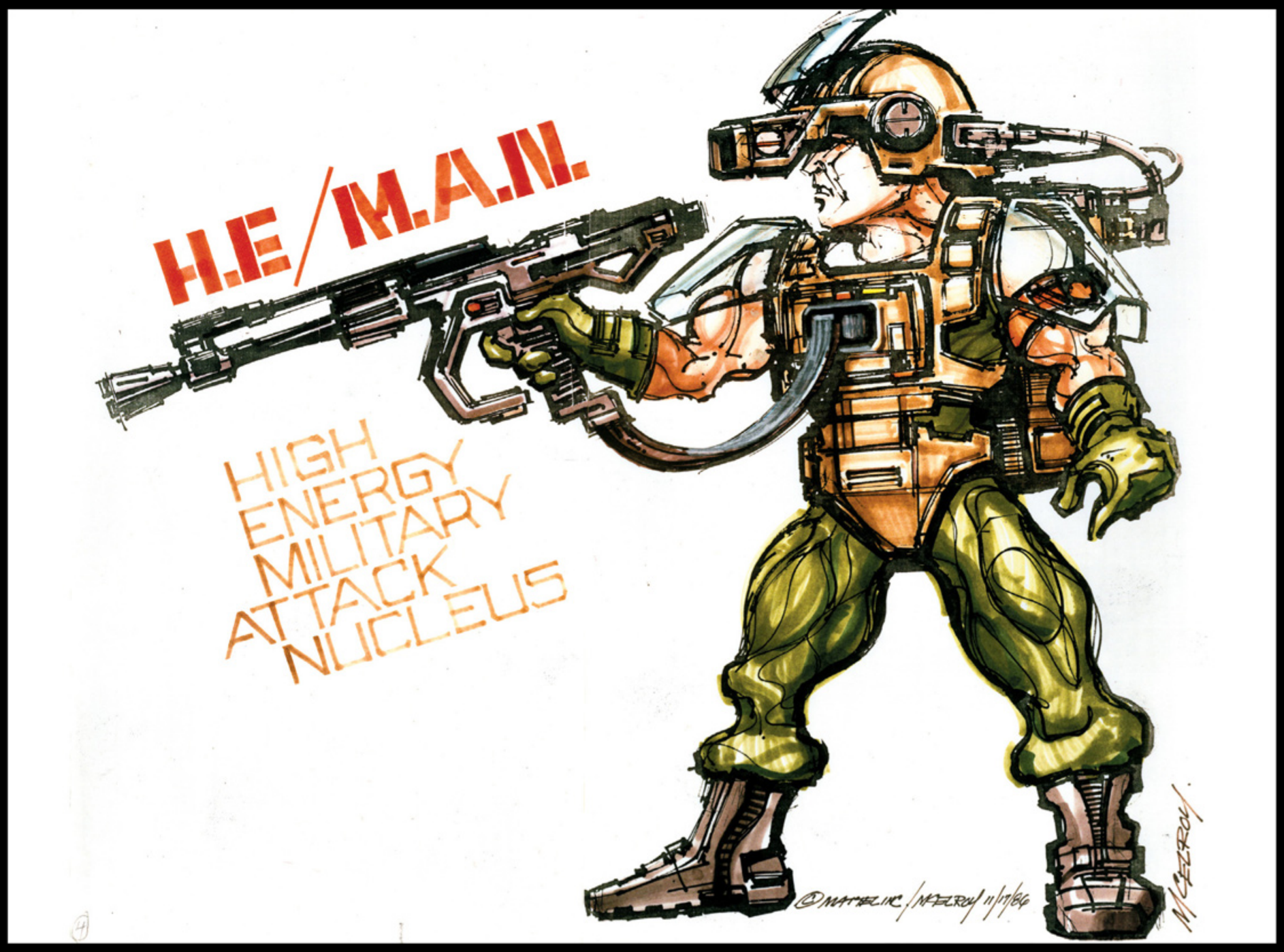
What was your favorite character to illustrate? What about the design appealed to you?

I have always been partial to Disks of Doom Skeletor. It was a toy that worked well, and had a lot of subtle features incorporated into it. The helmet design was from a subset of MOTU that we had worked on (that never got produced) called "Mutant Space Pirates." The torso and the helmet, when closed, make up a skull, and I liked using the Lisa acrylic material to make the eyes glow.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT WORK



The relaunch of the MOTU brand had been in development since 1986. One of the first attempts was a military pitch called H.E.M.A.N. This morphed into the sci-fi-themed New Adventures of He-Man, which was in fact the title of the animated series, not of the brand or the toy line.

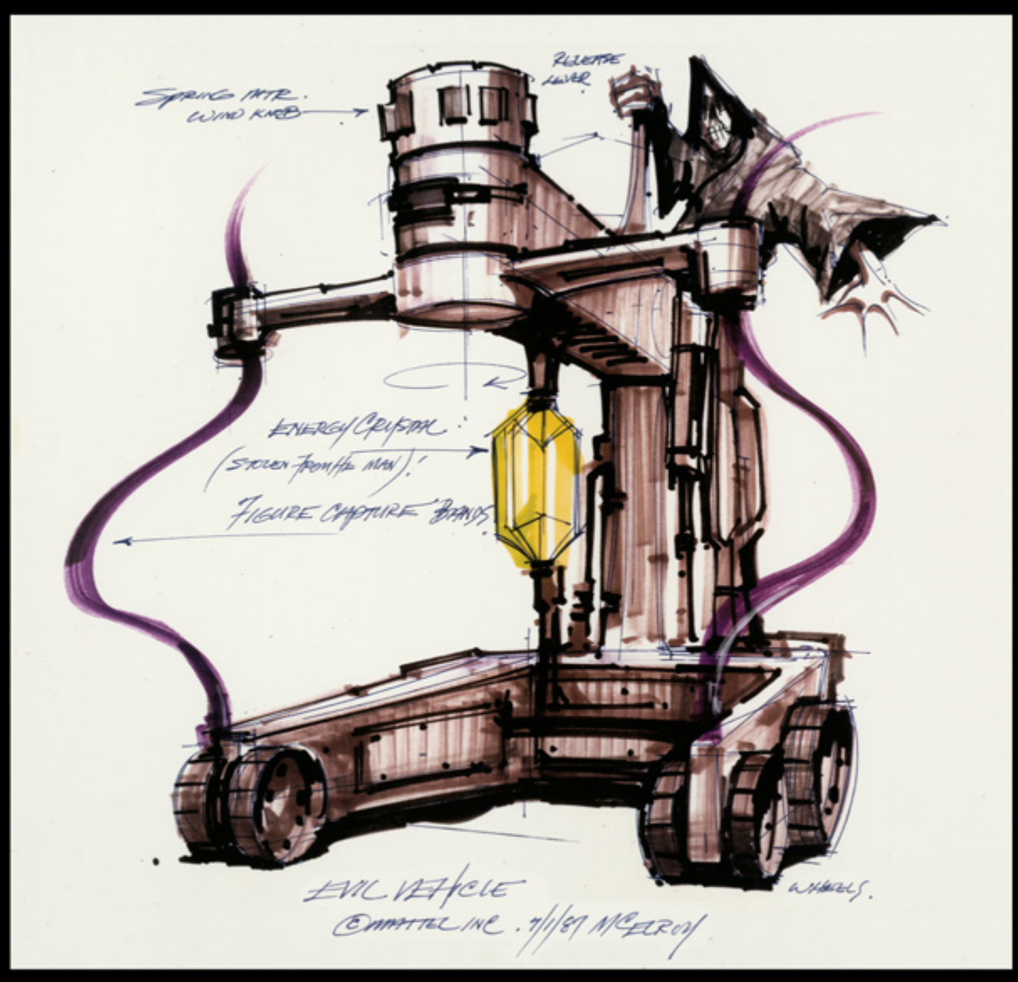




From 1986 to 1989, Mattel struggled to find a way to relaunch MOTU. Many ideas were thrown around, including a military pitch illustrated by Stephen Lee (*bottom left*), where He-Man joined the US Army! *Top left:* Dave McElroy created a more futuristic military He-Man. *Center:* The early exploration of a new He-Man led to a limited release

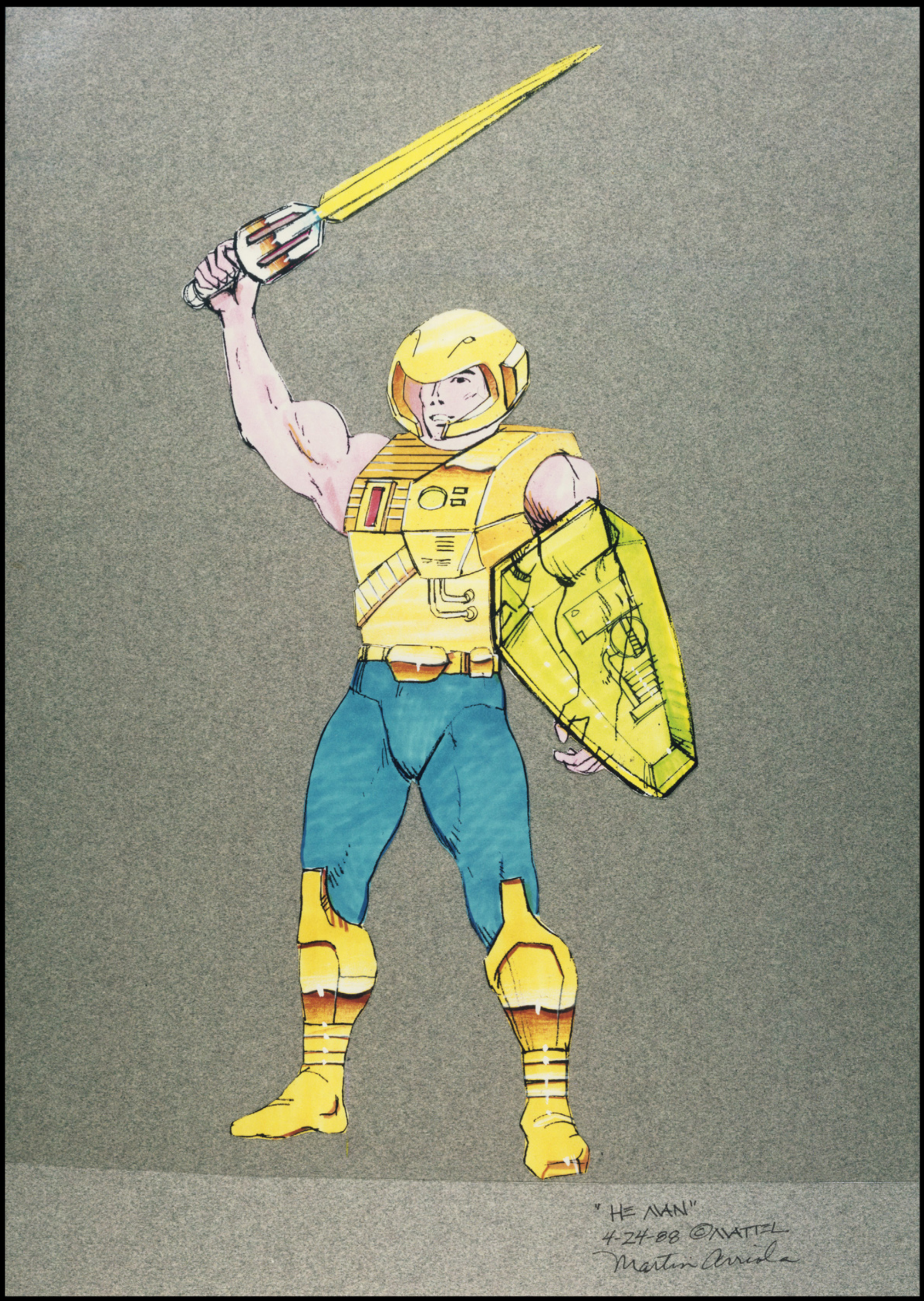


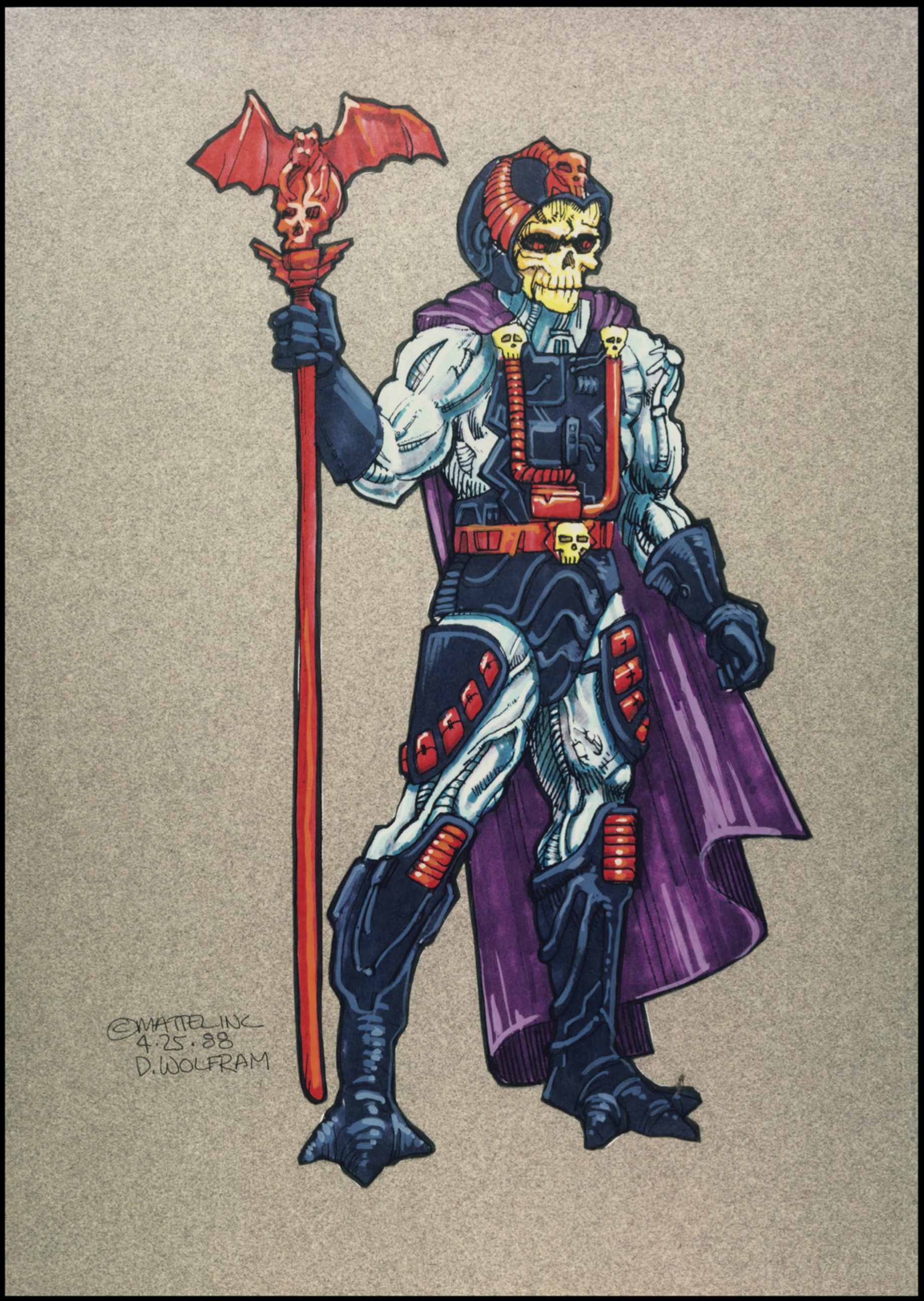




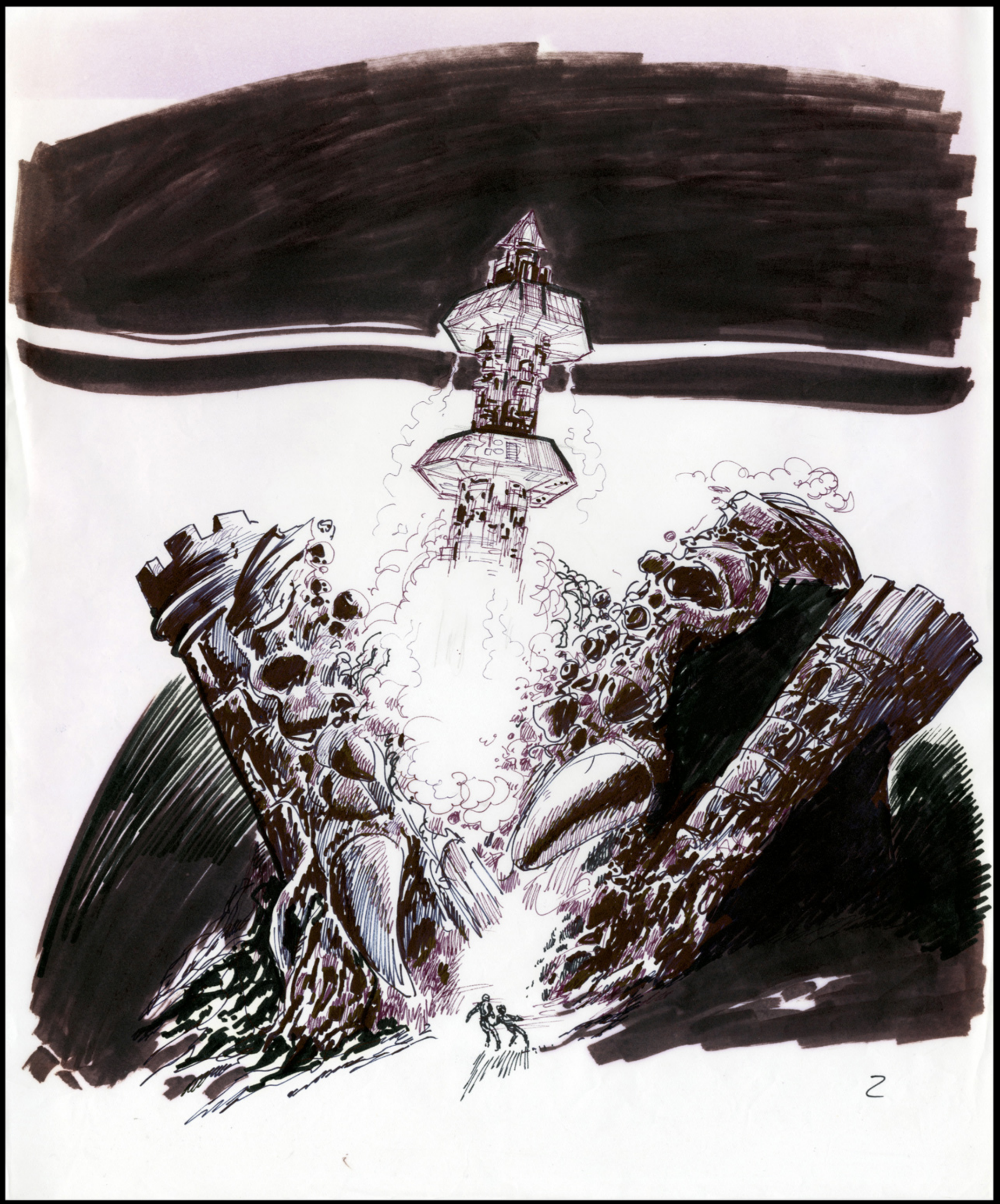
in three European countries of the Laser Power He-Man action figure, seen here in a study by David Wolfram. *Top right:* An illustration of Thorn, an evil figure that never made it to the new line. *Bottom right:* A vehicle that can capture an action figure, which was mocked up and shown in a Mattel retailers catalog.

CONCEPT ART

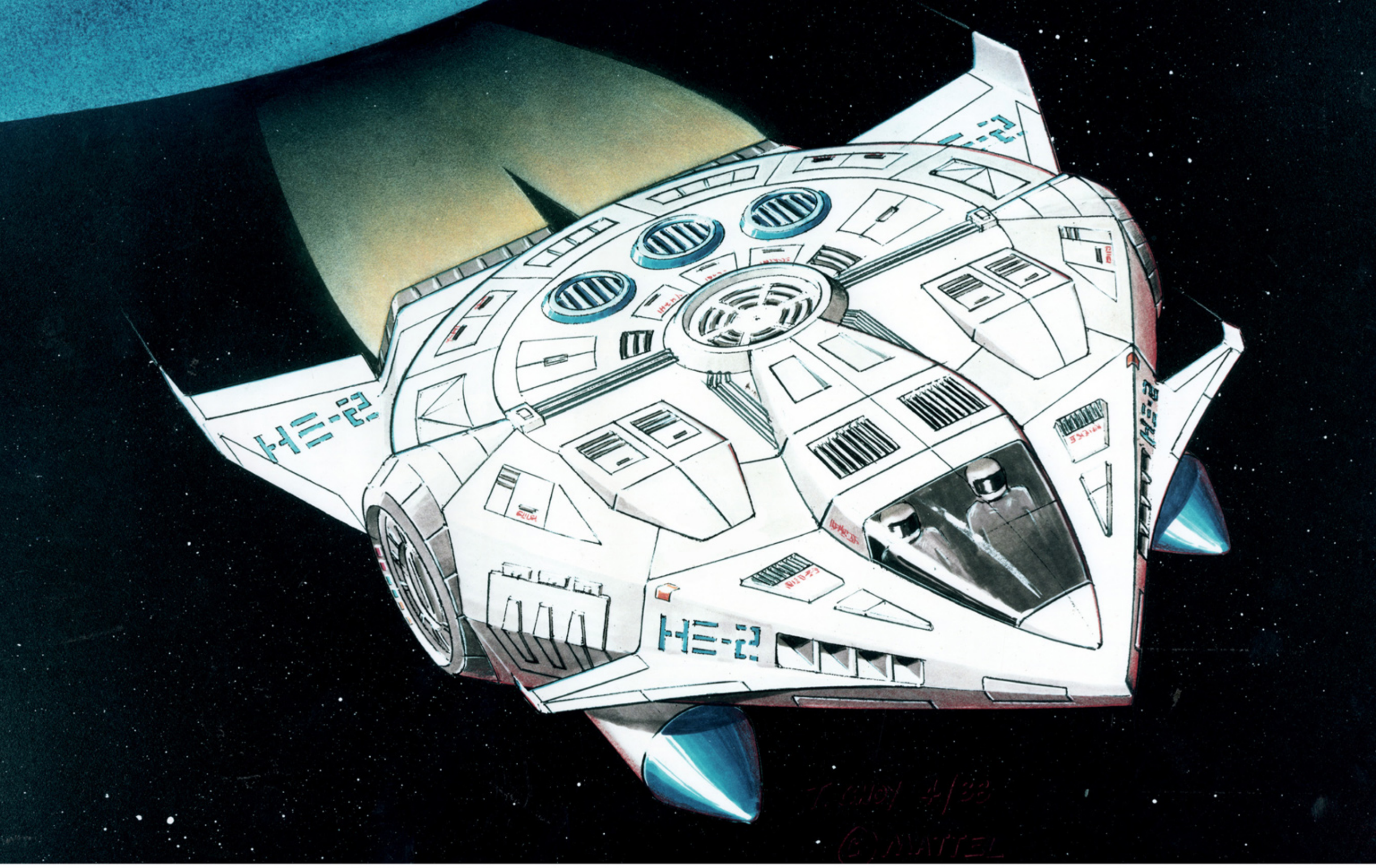




A late concept design for Skeletor by David Wolfram (*above*) and Martin Arriola's design for He-Man with a lightsaber-esque Power Sword (*opposite*). In New Adventures, He-Man exclaimed, "By the power of Eternia . . . I have the power," rather than the iconic line "By the power of Grayskull . . ."



Filmation was in charge of creating at least two pitches for a new He-Man animated series. One was *Son of He-Man*, and the other was *Masters of Space,* in which Starship Eternia emerged from a collapsing Castle Grayskull! *Opposite:* Early concepts for Starship Eternia and the Evil Mutant spaceship.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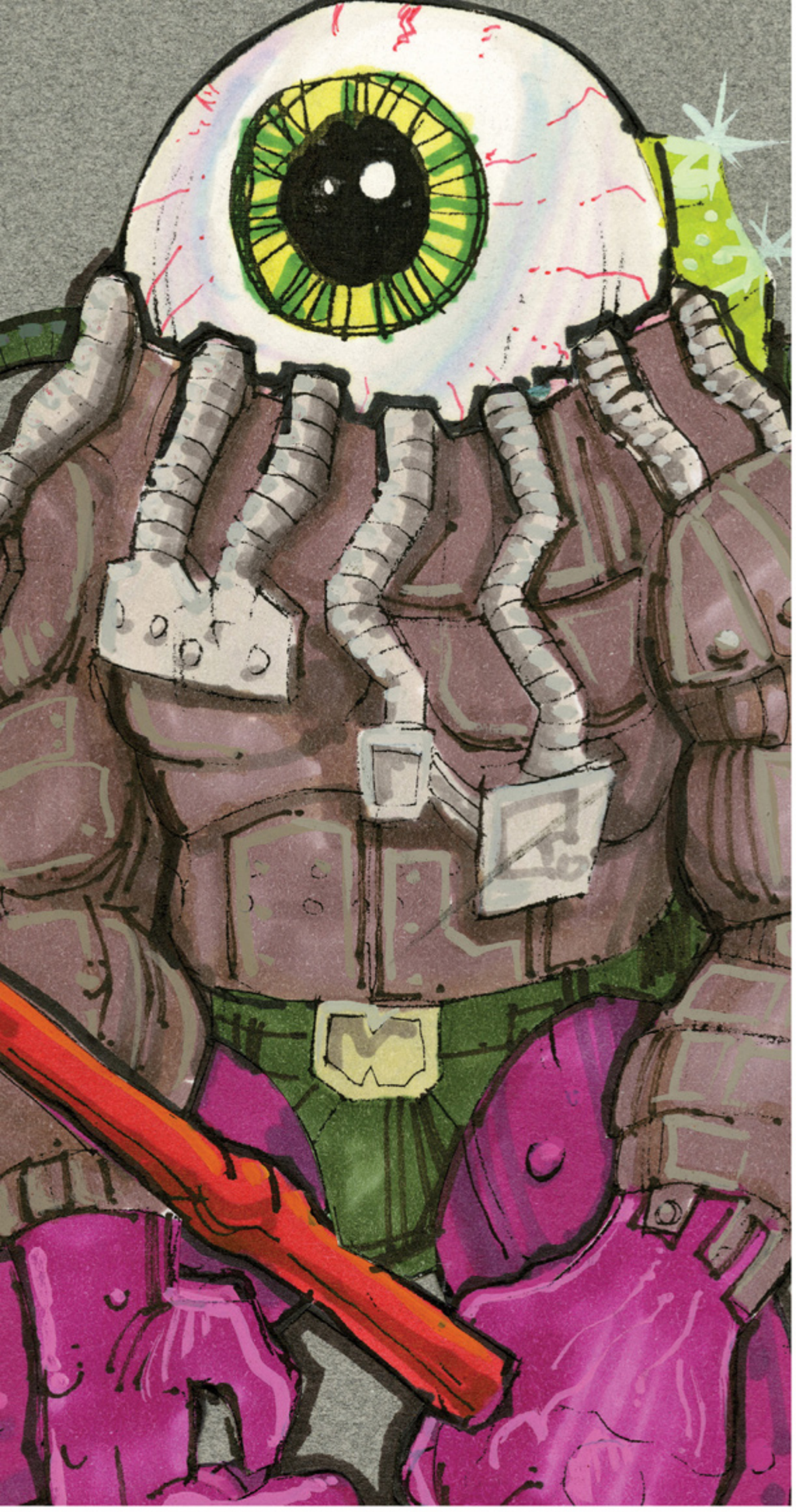
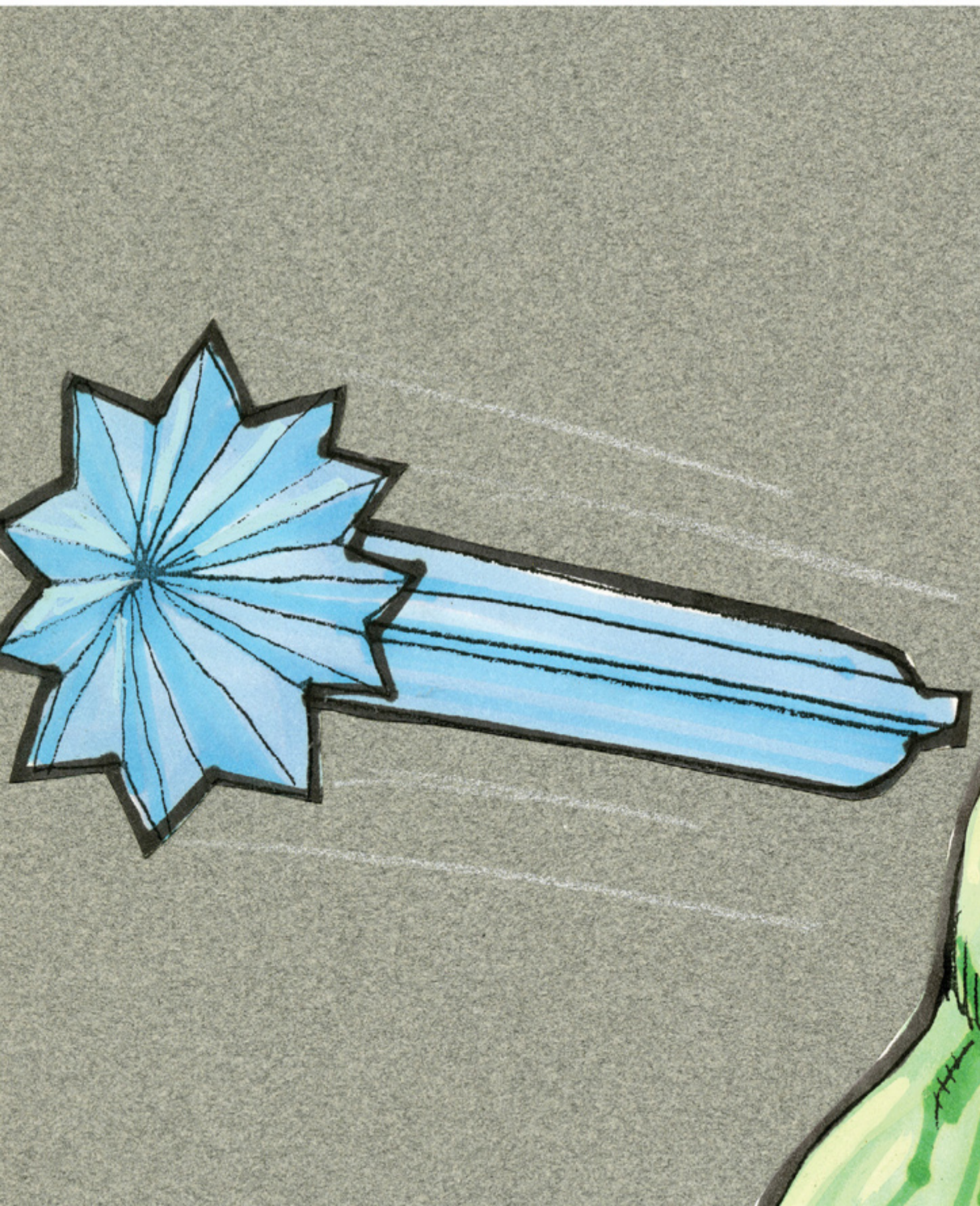
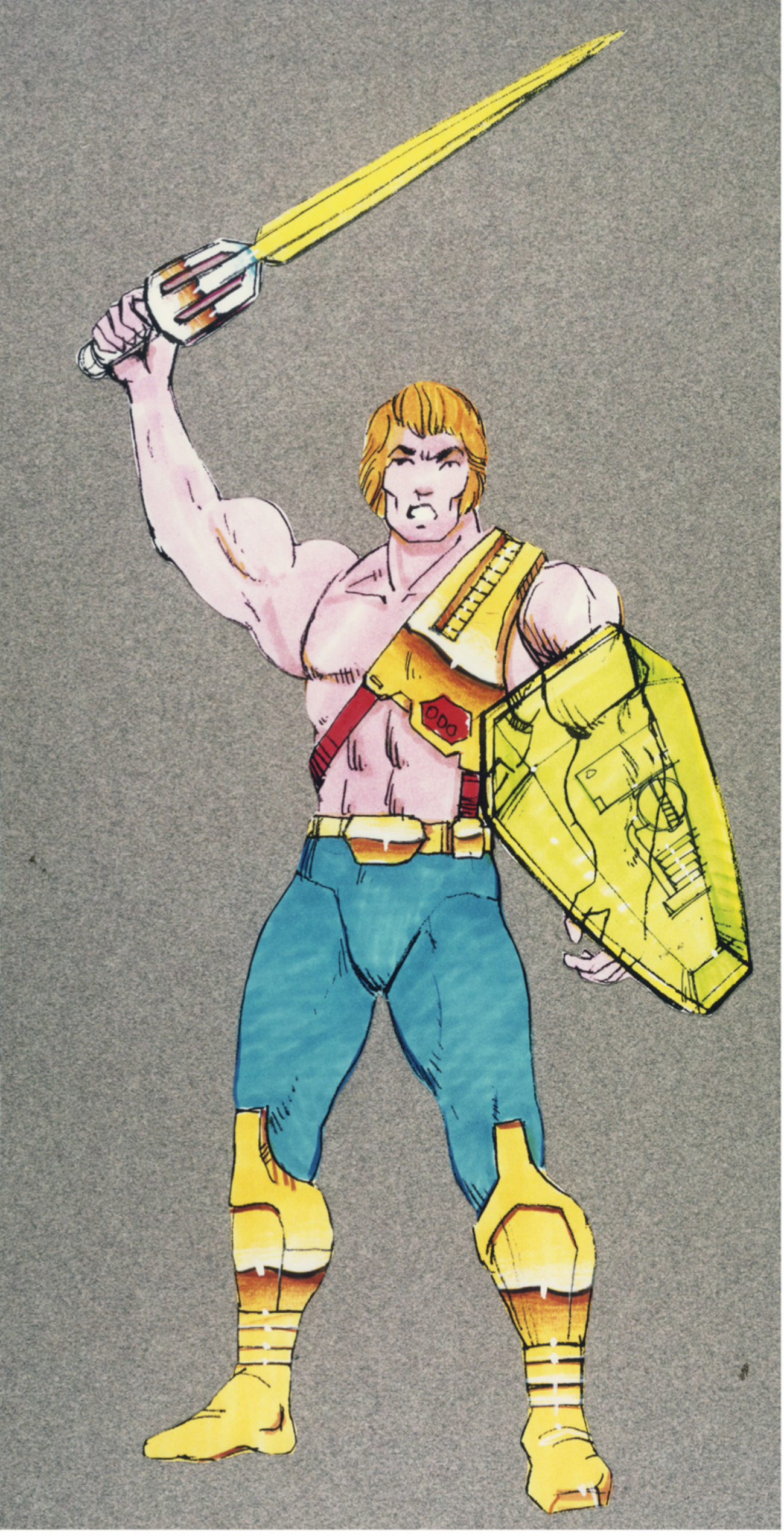
ARRIOLA/WOLFMAN '88 ©MATTEL







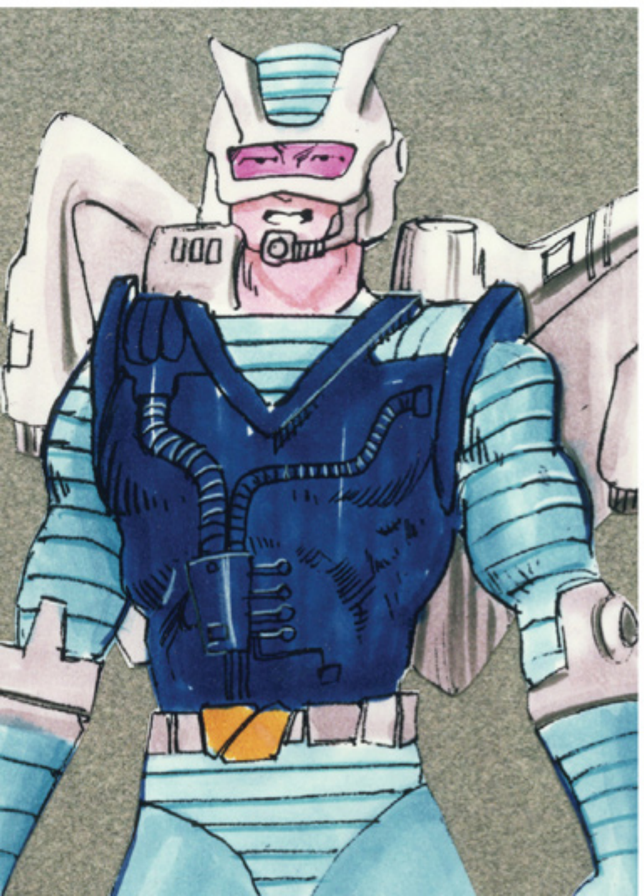






Opposite, clockwise from top left: Early design for Optikk, one of Skeletor's evil space mutants, and unused designs for Negatonik and Elastron.

This page, clockwise from top left: Production drawing for He-Man, Laser-Light Skeletor, Kayo, Hydron, Detector (who later became Vizar), and Flipshot. Art by Martin Arriola and David Wolfram. These drawings inspired the New Adventures series designs.







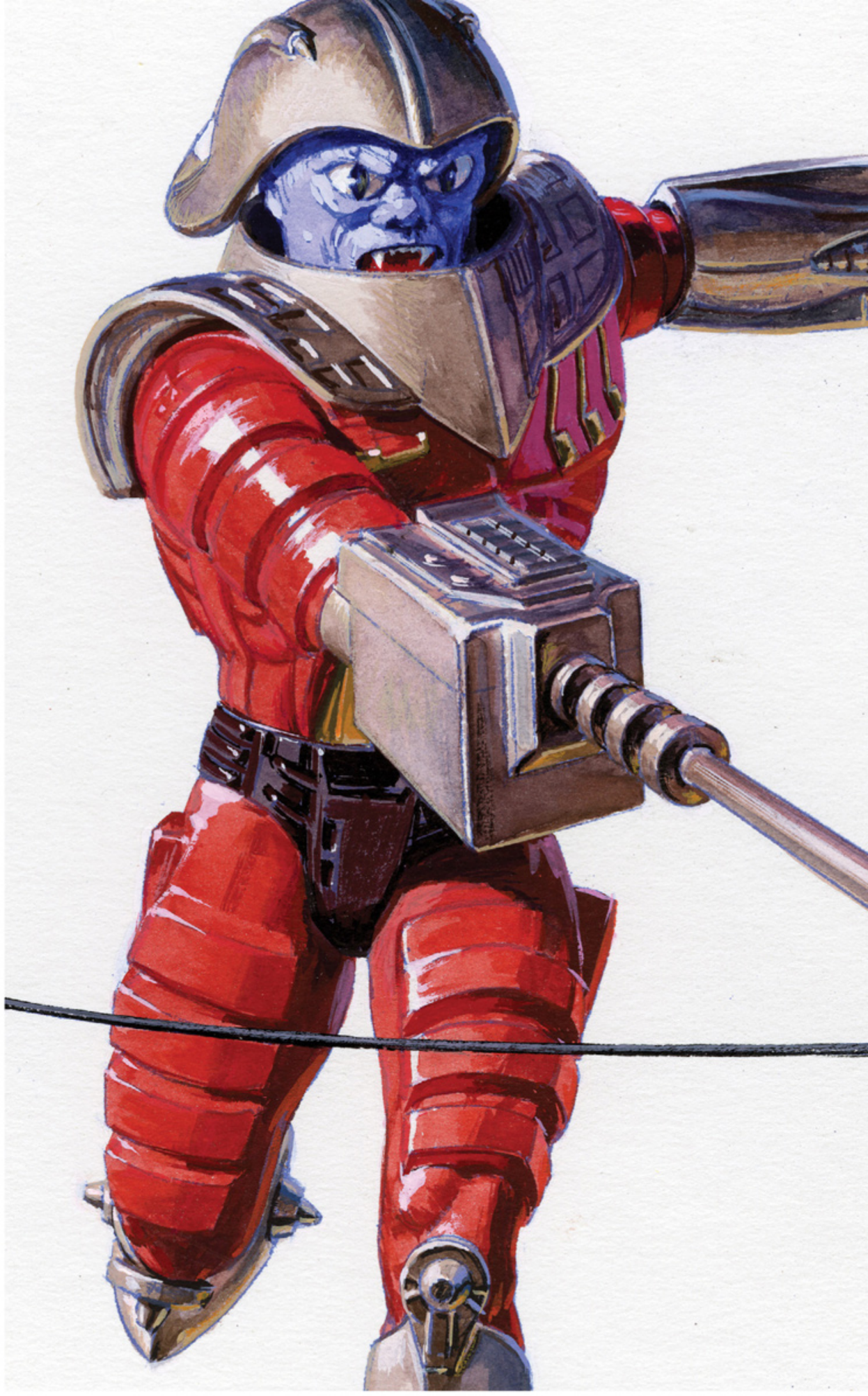




PRODUCED TOYS

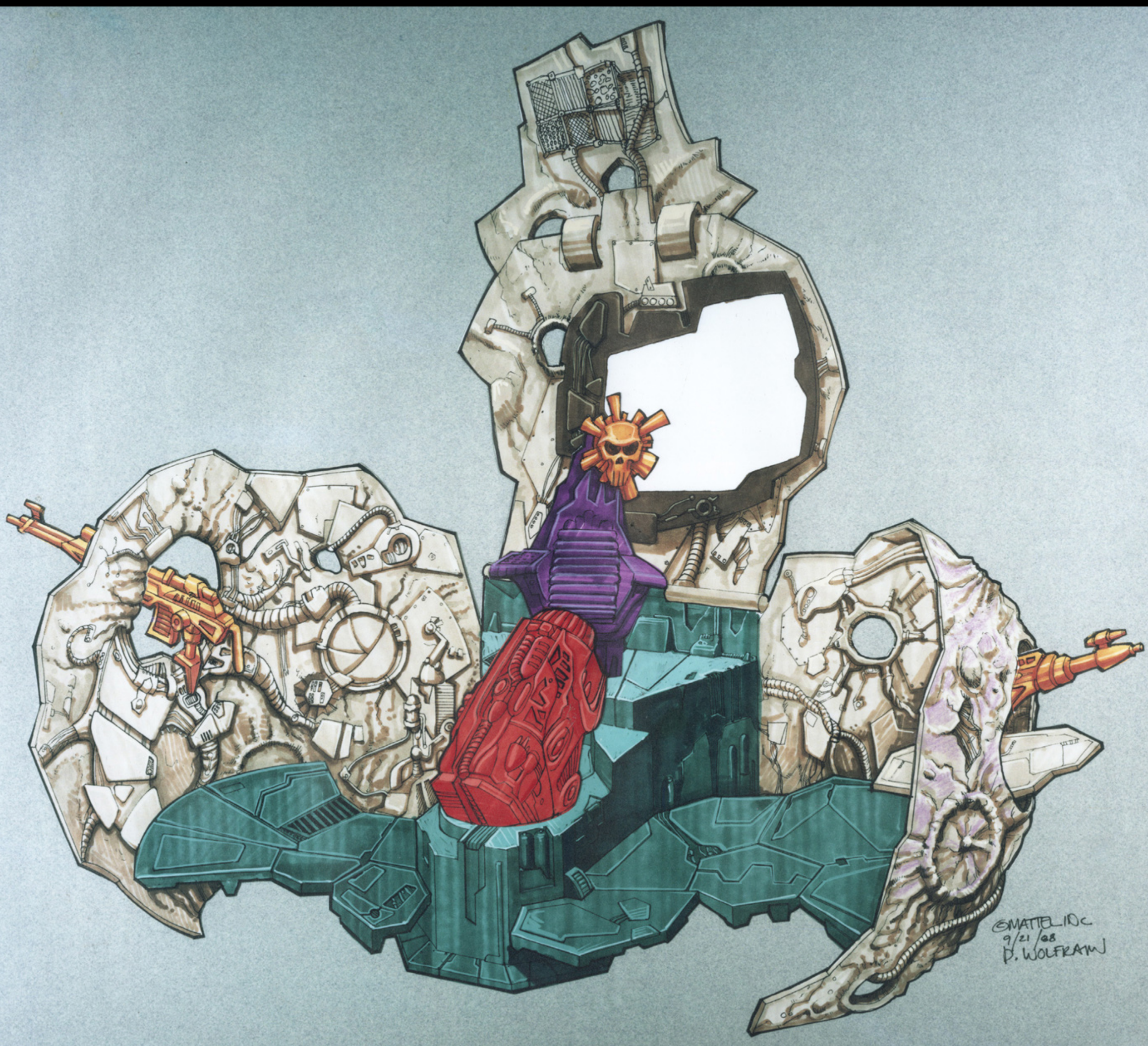
Card-front art by William George for the space opera-infused He-Man toy line, including Skeletor and (*opposite, clockwise from top left*) He-Man, Flogg, Flipshot, and Slush Head.











Final design for Nordor, Denebria's moon and the Evil Mutants' headquarters, by David Wolfram.



UNPRODUCED TOYS

Some of the unproduced toys. Darius (*left*) made it all the way to preproduction, with a prototype advertised on the cross-sell as "coming soon." Despite being the "Man-At-Arms" of the series, he was never made. The reason: his action feature, a spinning mace hand, never worked, so the toy was shelved. He is accompanied by Crystoll (*top right*) and an unknown figure (*bottom left).* Art by Martin Arriola and David Wolfram. *Bottom right:* This Clawber cross-sell art is from an unreleased line of pets.











In keeping with the original line, the initial releases of the new He-Man figures featured four new minicomics. Errol McCarthy returned to the brand to illustrate two of them, and Bruce Timm illustrated the fourth.



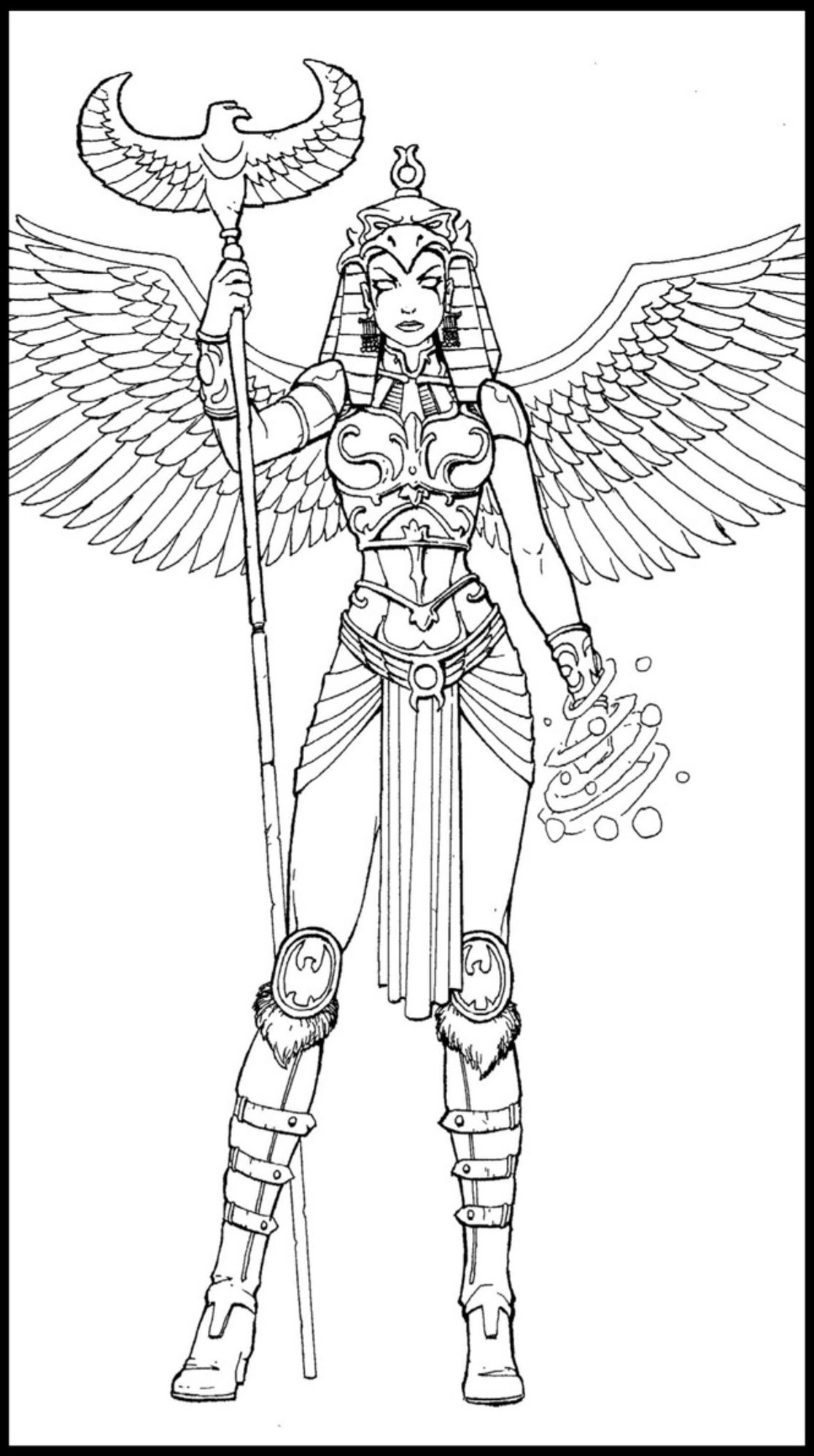
CHAPTER EIGHT 2002

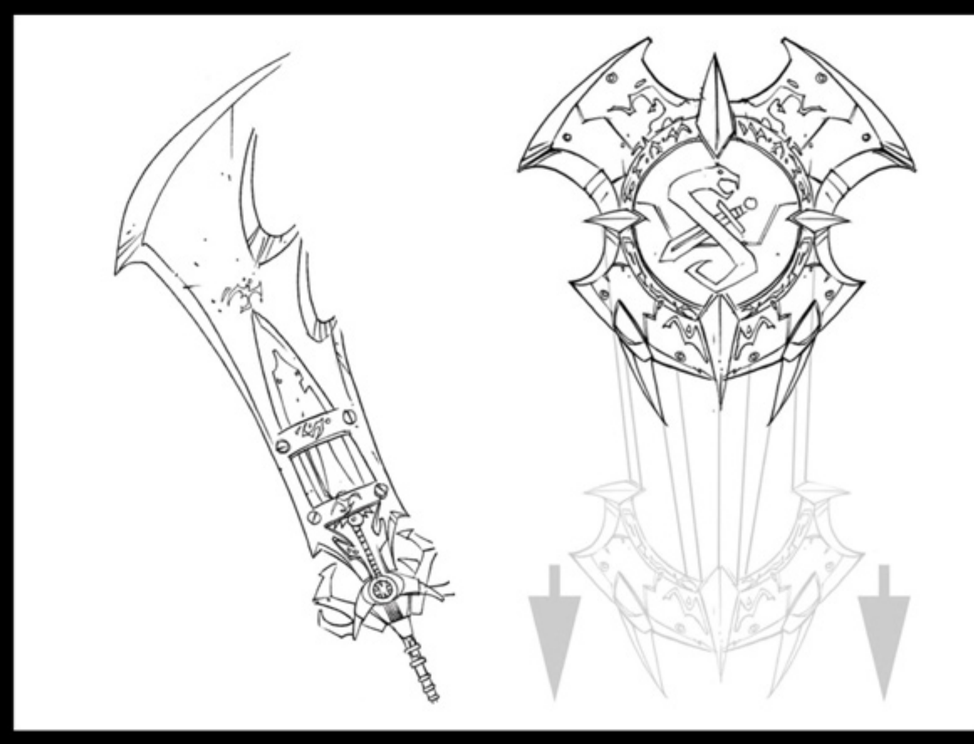
THE COLLECTION REBORN



After nearly a decade of hibernation, Masters of the Universe returned in a major way with the millennium's relaunch of the brand. A new toy line was teased to the public at the 2001 San Diego Comic-Con. These action figures were ready to take the toy aisles by storm, with a fresh new look that resonated with lifelong fans of the property. *Above:* An early concept by Four Horsemen Studios for the 2002 design of He-Man, displaying the McFarlane Toys level of detail that was popular in the toy industry at the time.



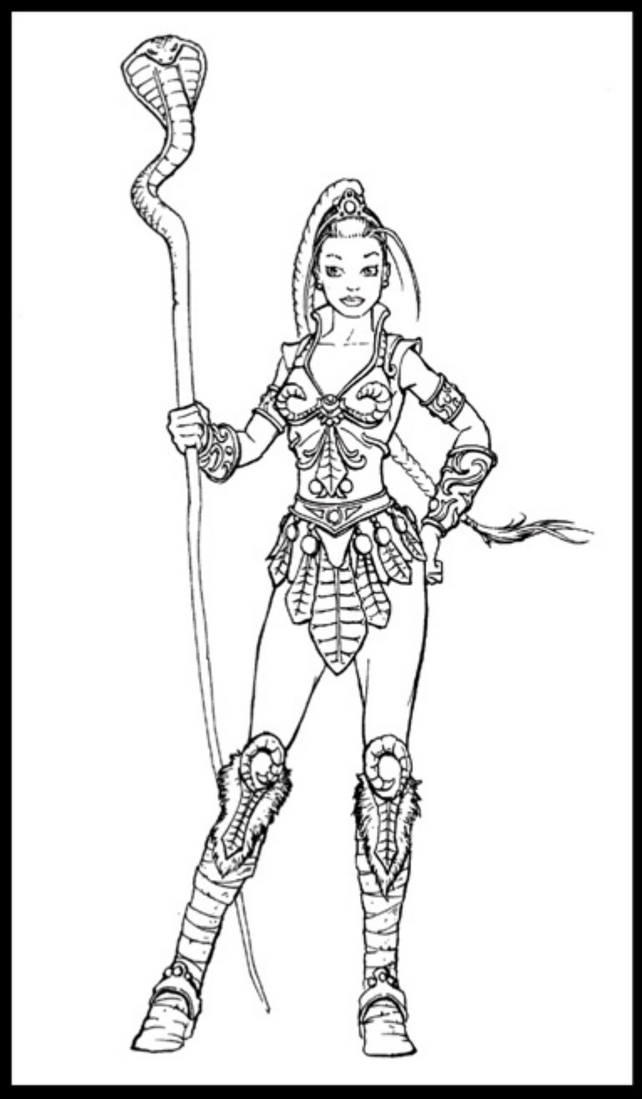




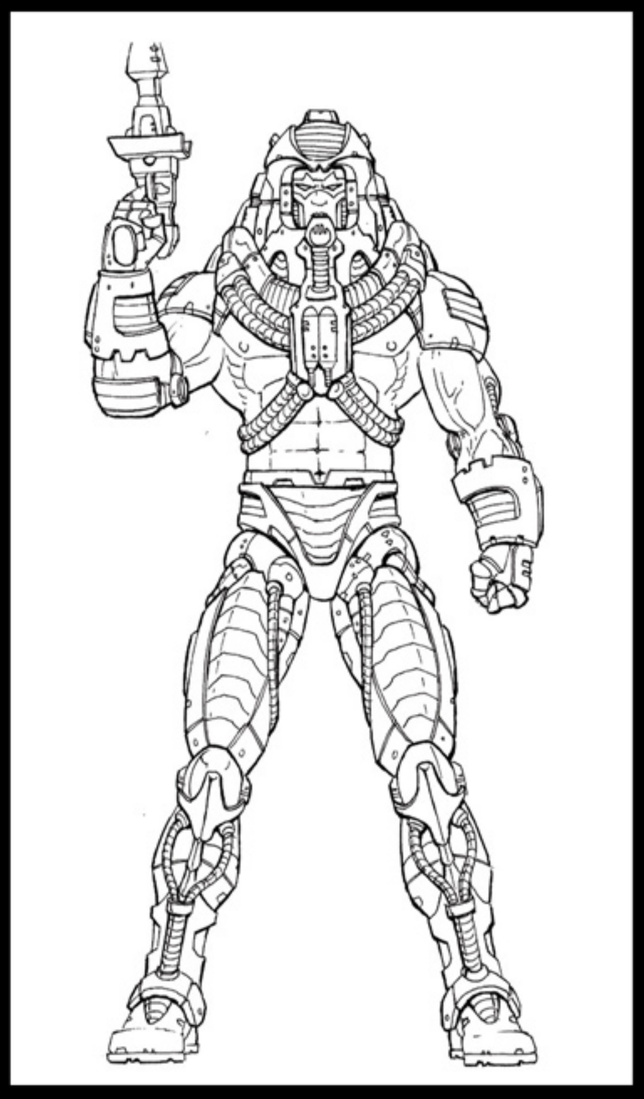
Top: More armor variations proposed for He-Man as part of the 2002–2003 toy line and series. While these added play value, in the end too many variants were developed, which impeded the inclusion of more original characters and is often seen as one of the major problems that led to the downfall of this toy line.

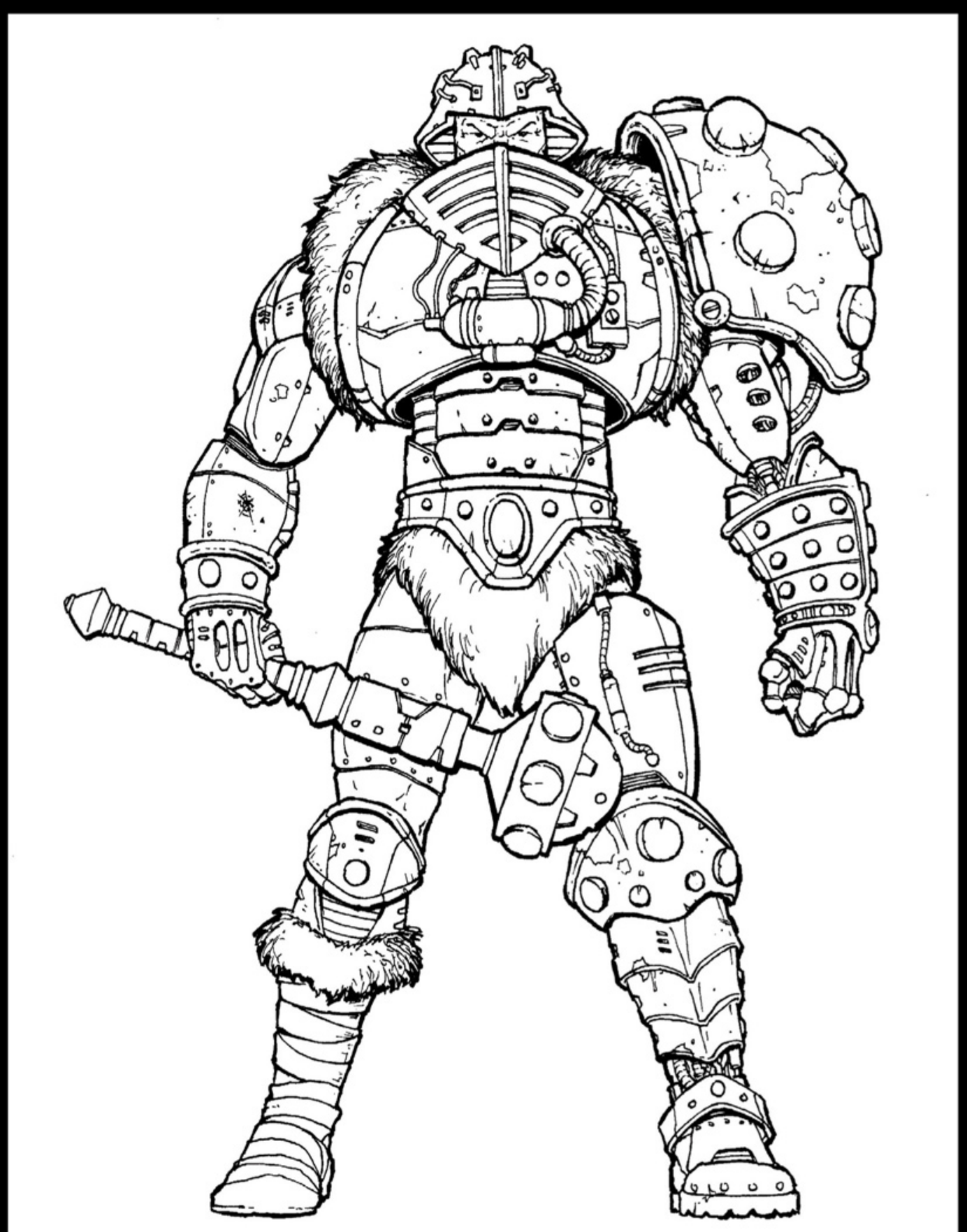
Above: Early concepts for Snake-fighting weapons, based on the idea that He-Man could transform his armor and weapons to suit his current enemy. This older concept that was resurrected for the 2002 line had roots in the vintage minicomics.

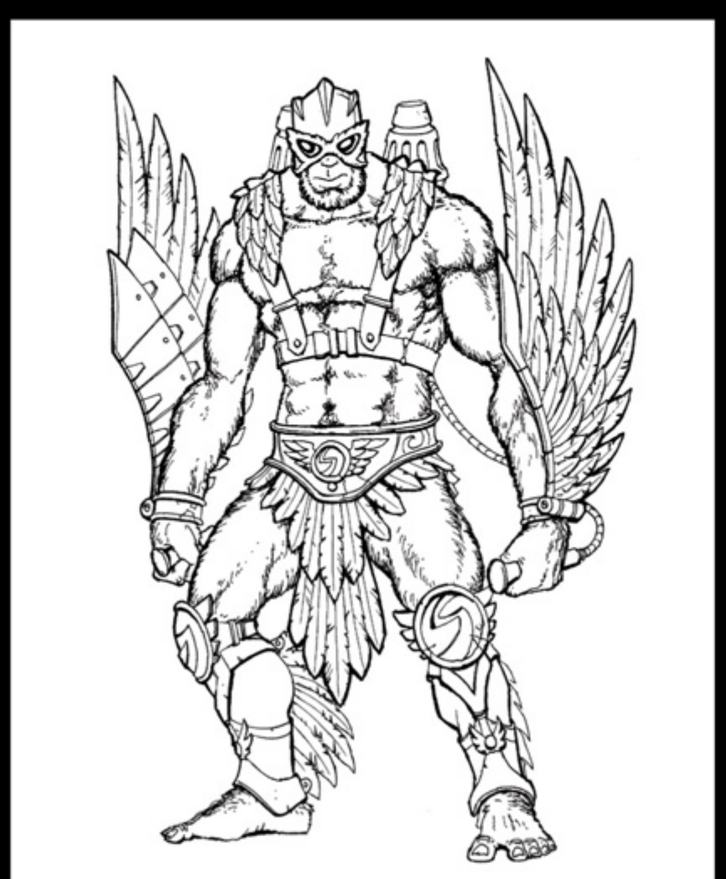
Left and next page: Early concepts for updating the different cast members to the new 2002 look. An abundance of detail was trendy at the time, due to the popularity of toys from McFarlane, as well as Japanese imports. This artistic style became the basis for the redesign of most of the characters, with features like extended spikes and armor, windblown hair, and extremely detailed sculpting.

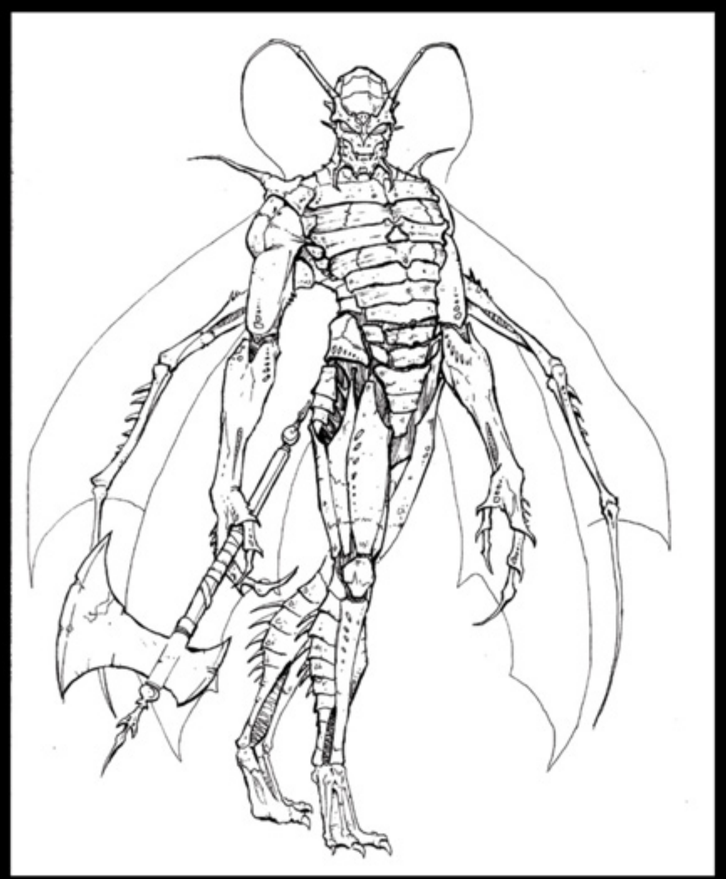








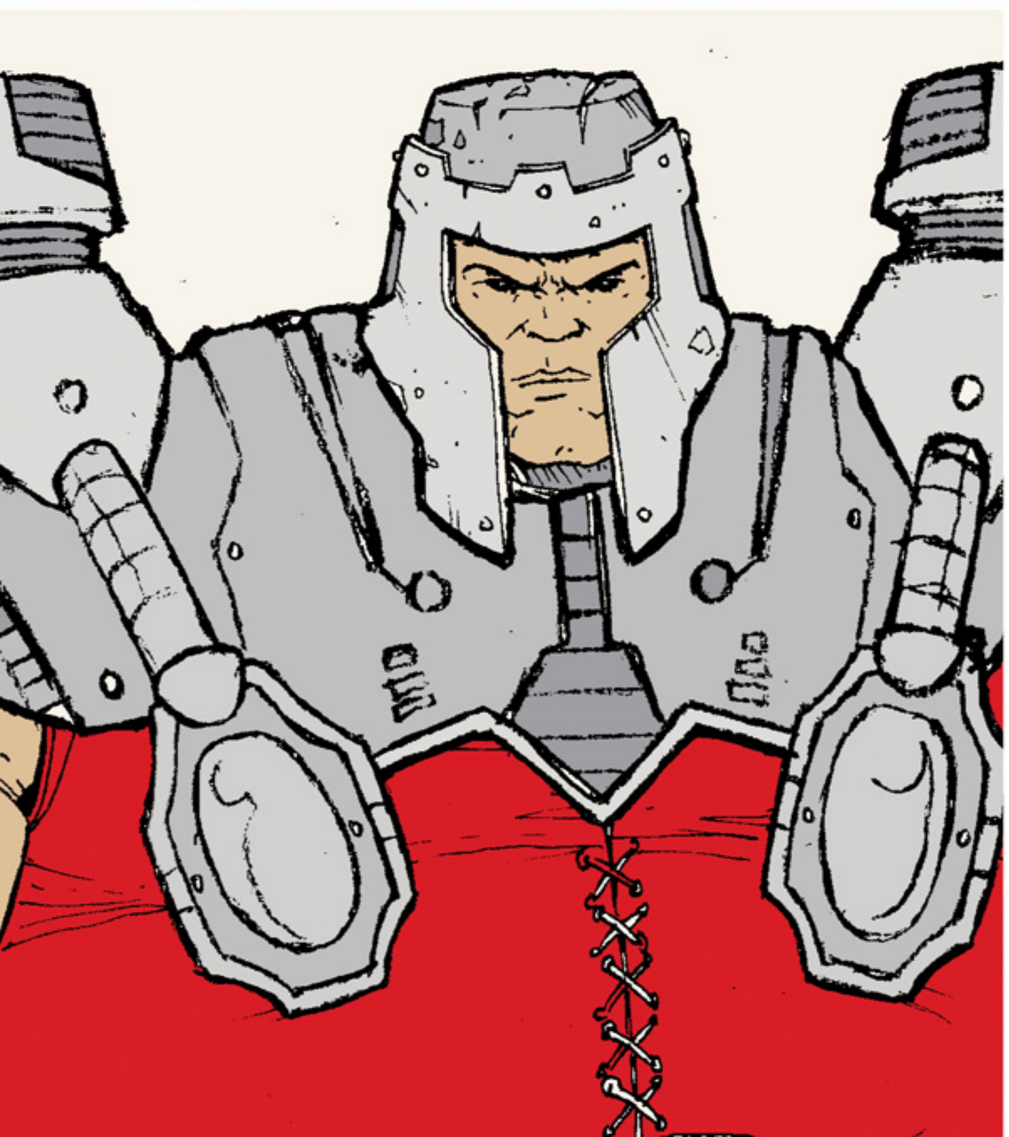


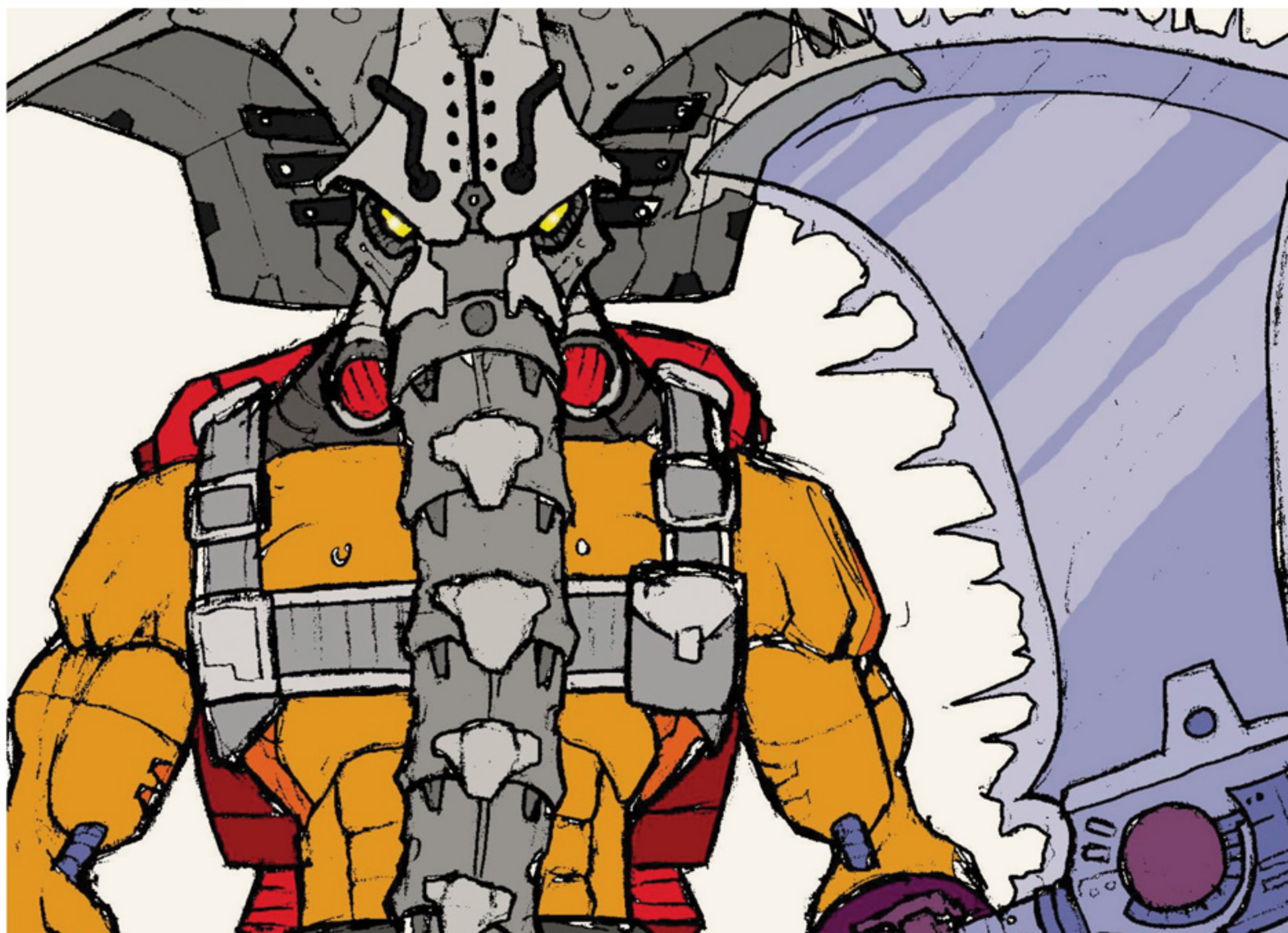






More early concepts for 2002 heroes. *Clockwise from upper left:* Fisto, who was released as Battle Fist in the toy line. She-Ra, who was released as a convention item, using a retooled Teela figure. Snout Spout, who only appeared in the NECA ministatue line. Ram Man, whose final design did not have the shoulder protrusions. Moss Man, who was never released as a toy using this design. Instead, a flocked version of the Beast Man toy was released with a proof-of-purchase mail-in redemption offer. Rio Blast, who only appeared in the NECA ministatue line.

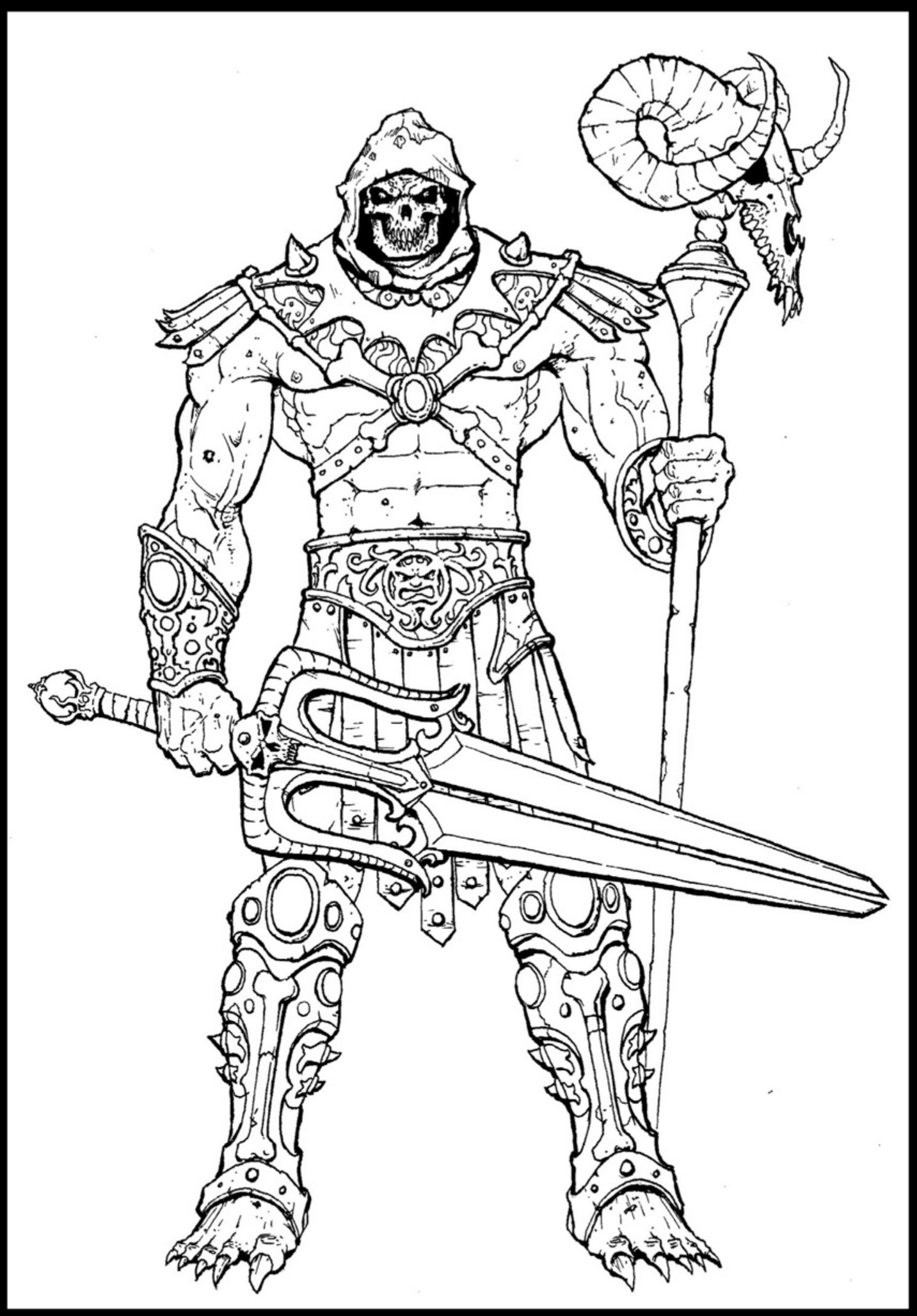


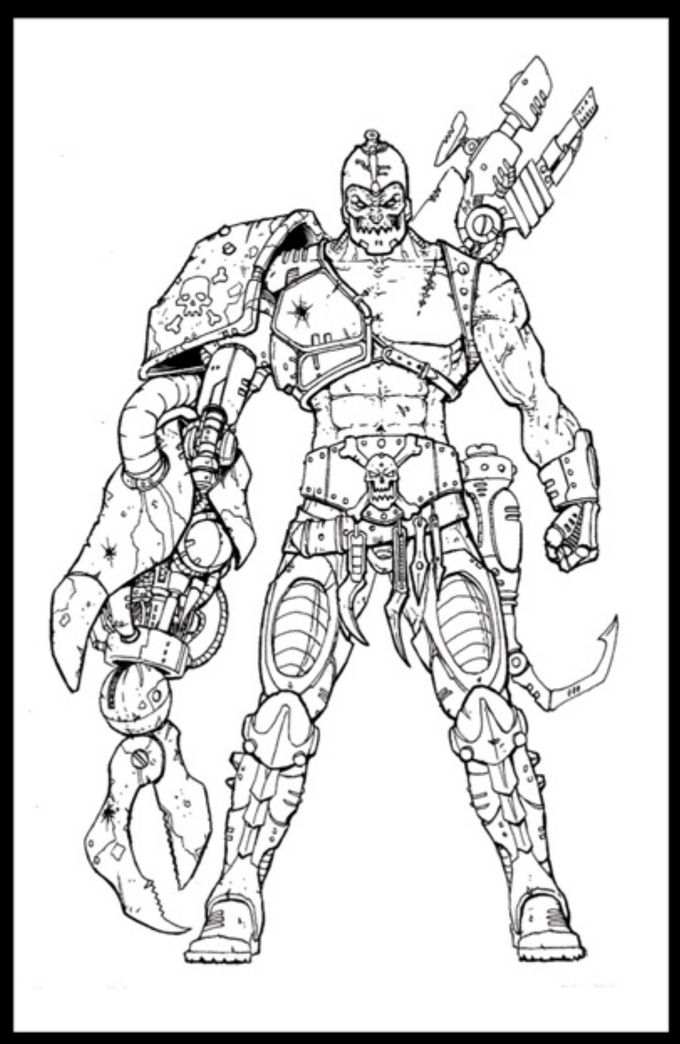


Villain designs by Four Horsemen. Note that the sword Skeletor holds was originally intended to be the Power Sword, which had been captured by Skeletor at the start of the series. This forced Man-At-Arms to create an electronic version of the Power Sword for He-Man while he battled Skeletor to get his original sword back.



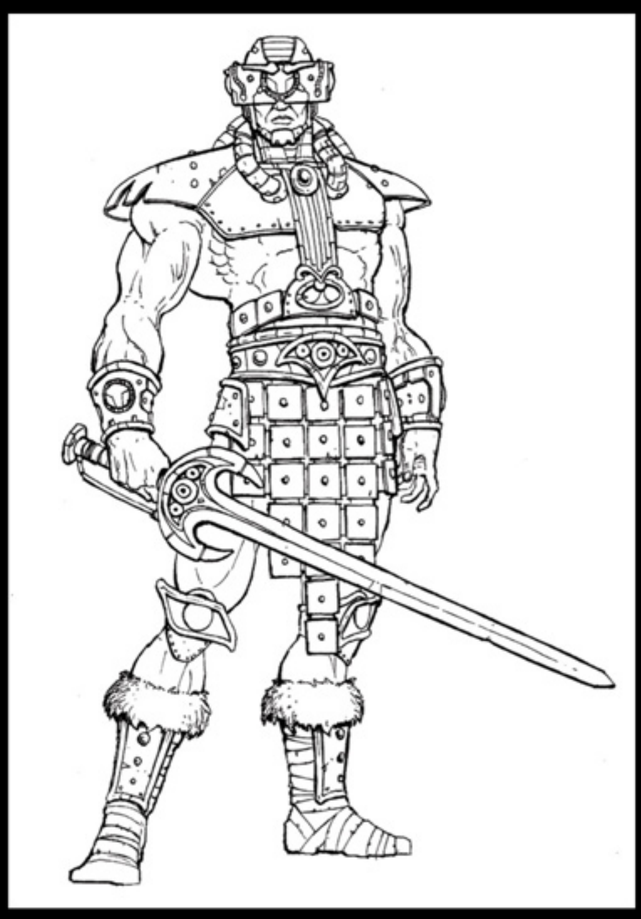
















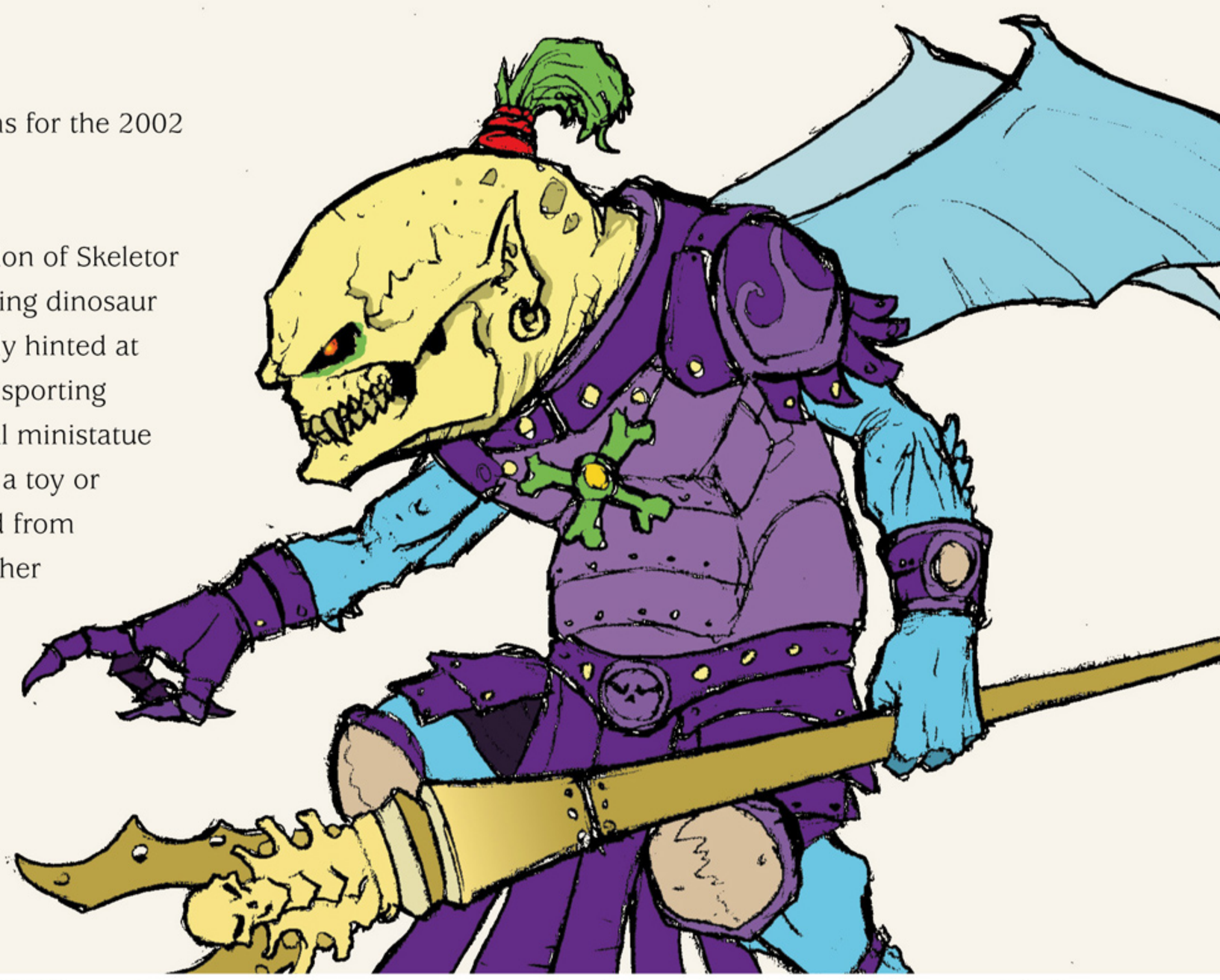


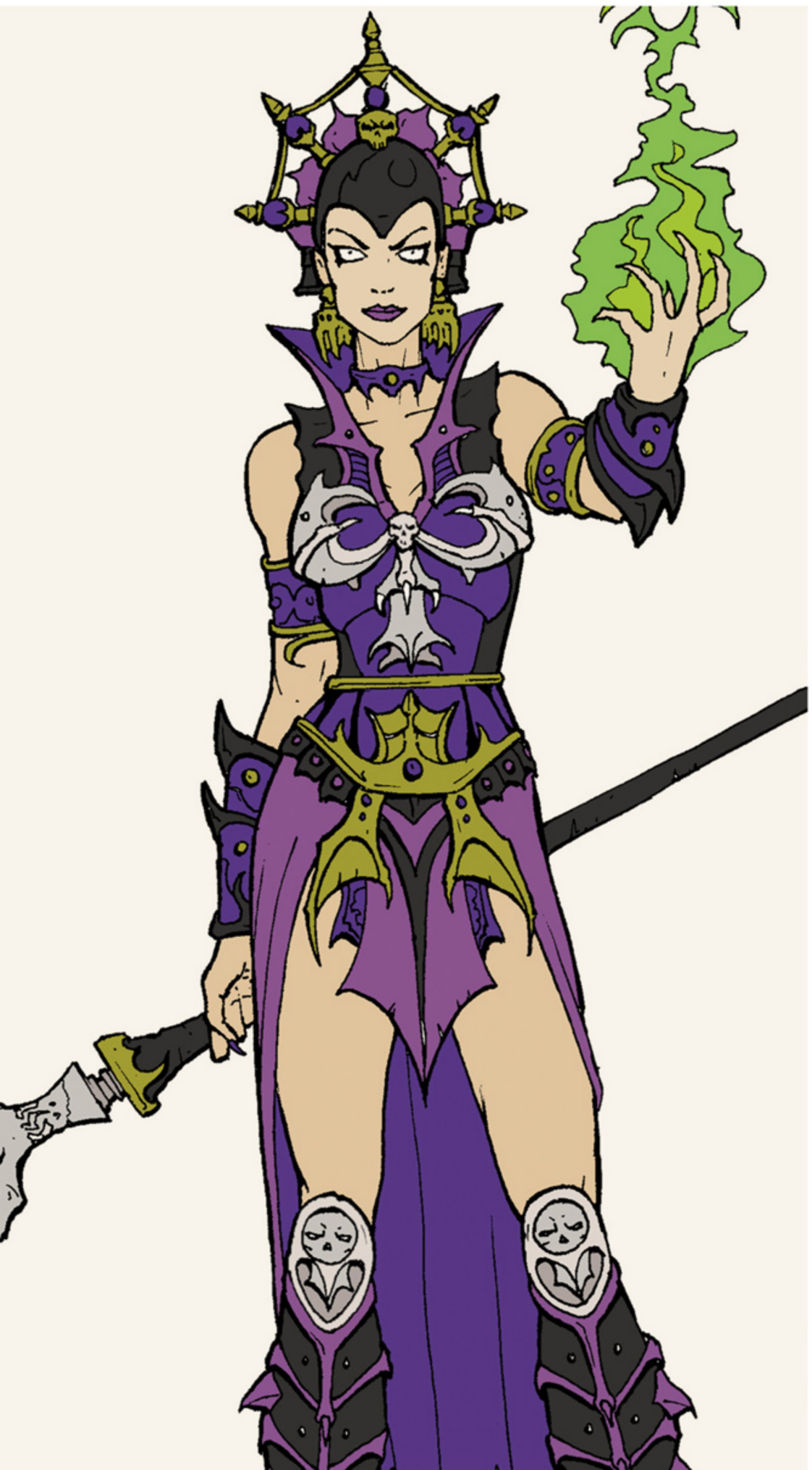
This idea was later dropped, but the concept made it all the way into the toy release, with Skeletor's sword splitting into two, showing a clear good side and a bad side.

Seen on these pages are several new bad guys who never made it onto the show or as toys, including a character who could be a male version of Scorpia and a giant blob guy.

More early concepts for character redesigns for the 2002 series from Four Horsemen Studios.

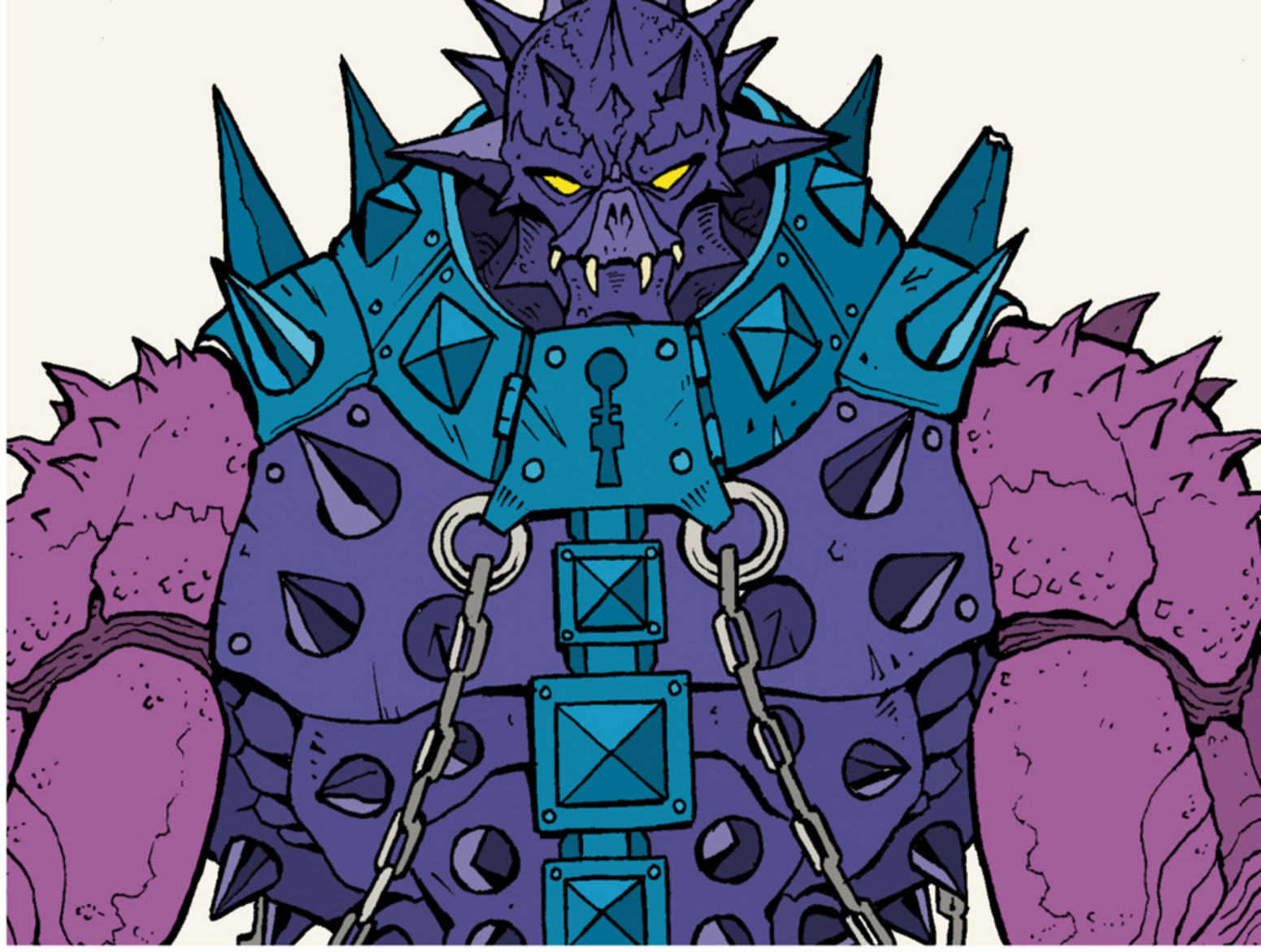
This page, clockwise from top: A flying minion of Skeletor based on the Imp character; an all-new flying dinosaur character; Faker, who was released but only hinted at on the show; and Evil-Lyn. *Opposite:* Jitsu, sporting facial tattoos that never made it to the final ministatue design; Spikor, who was never released as a toy or a statue; Stinkor; Zodak, who was changed from a Caucasian interstellar guardian and watcher into an African American mystic with tattoos that glowed when he used his power; an alien Cosmic Enforcer; Webstor; and Kobra Khan.

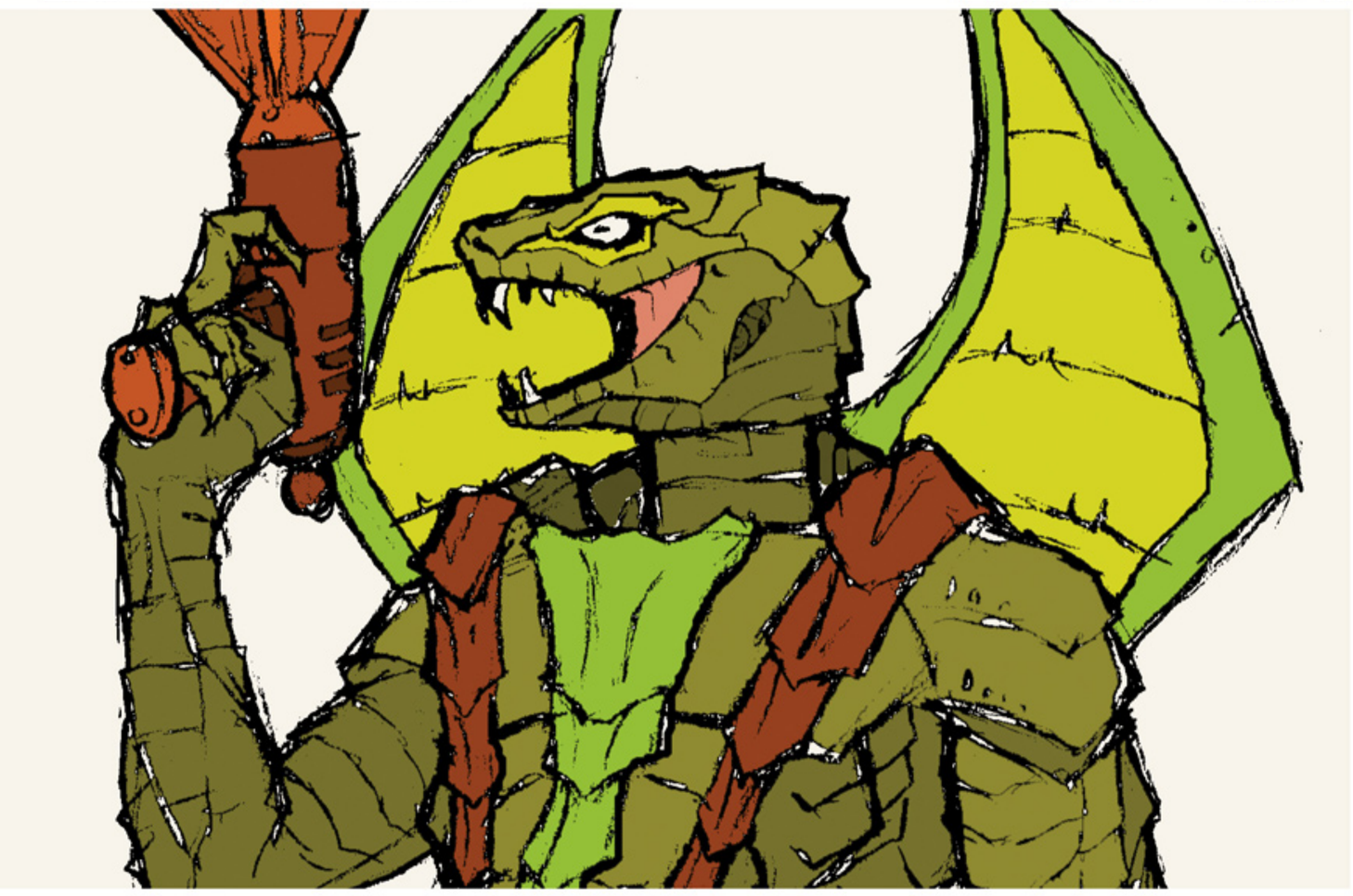


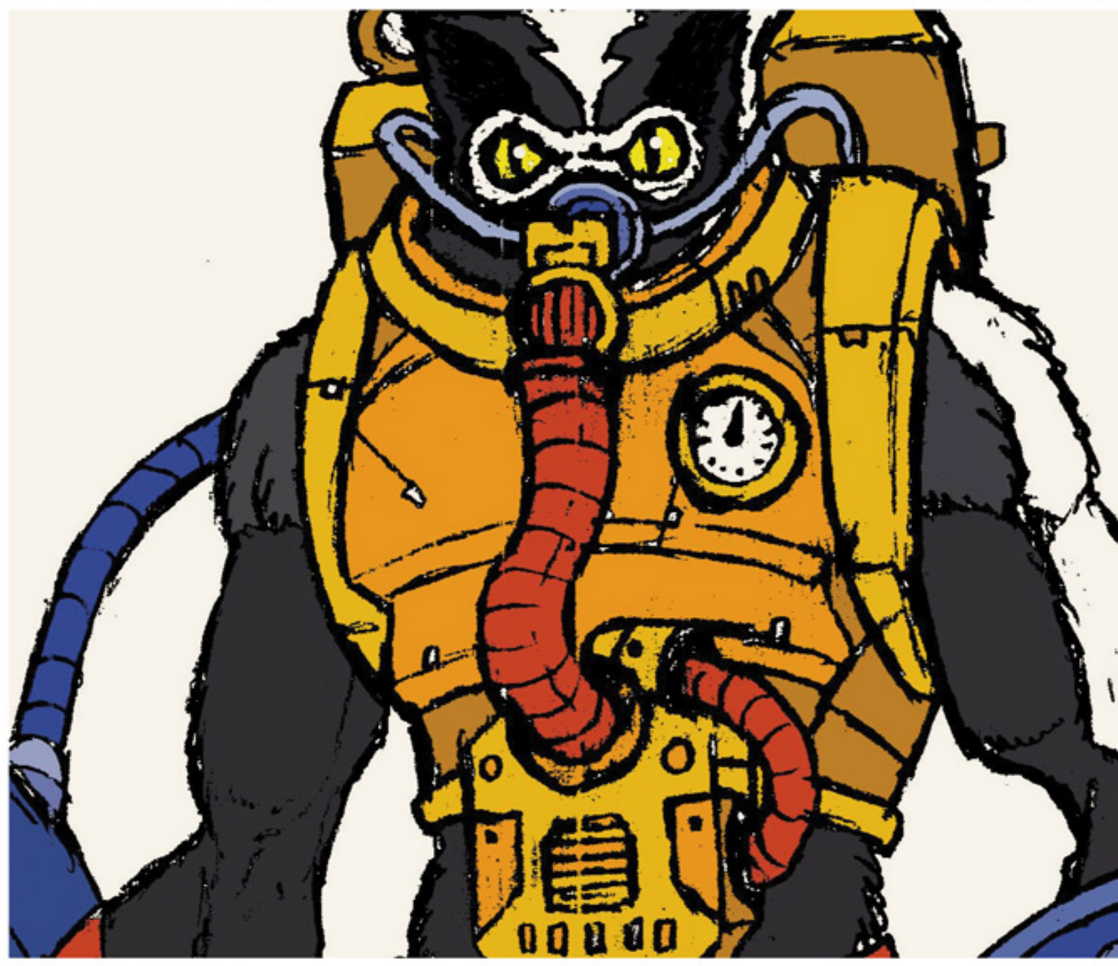


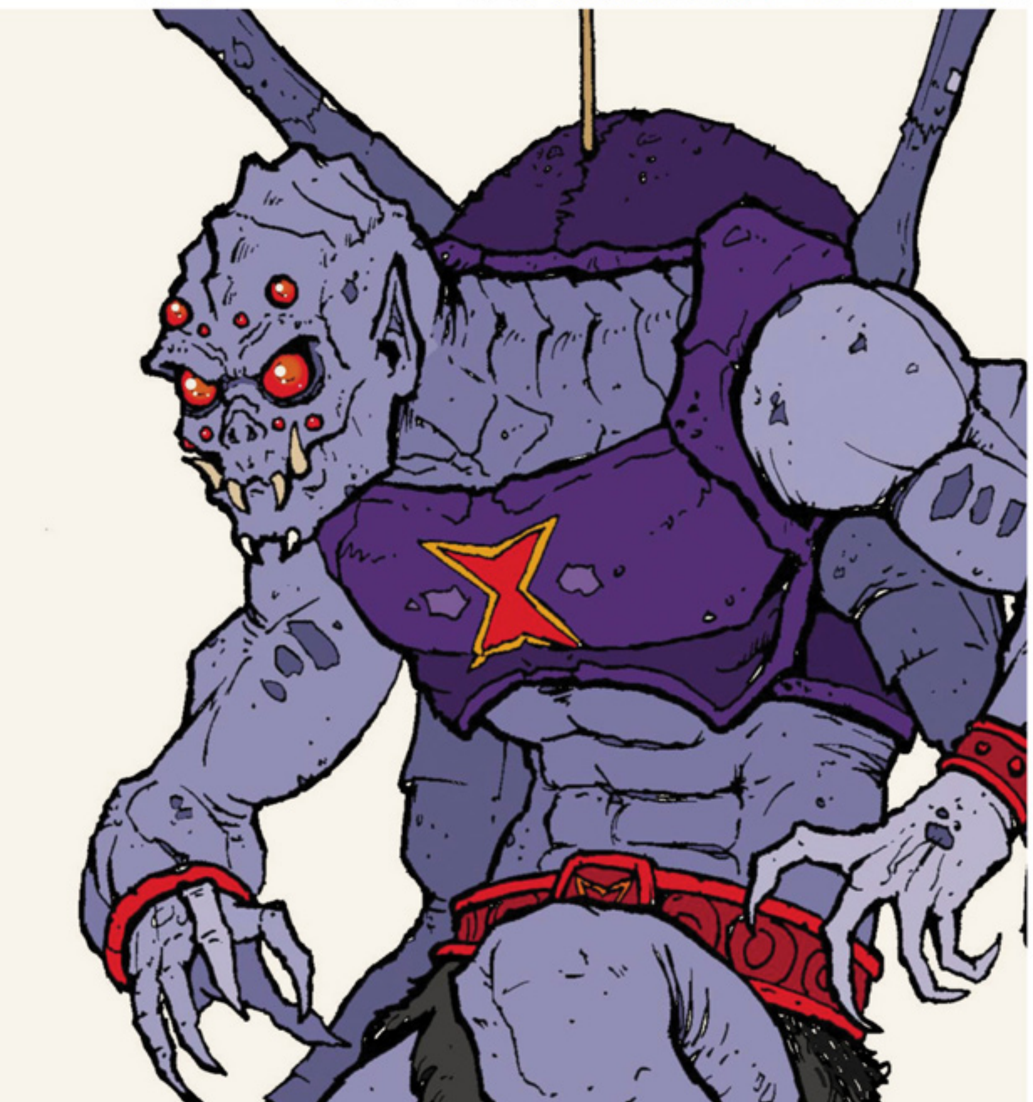


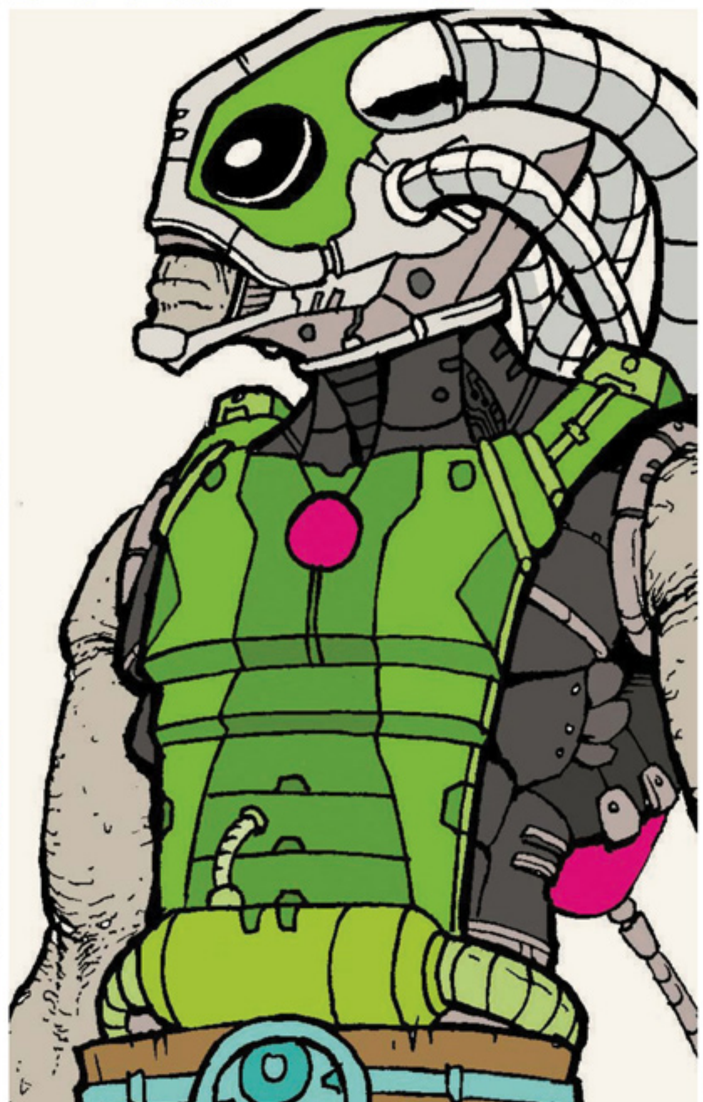


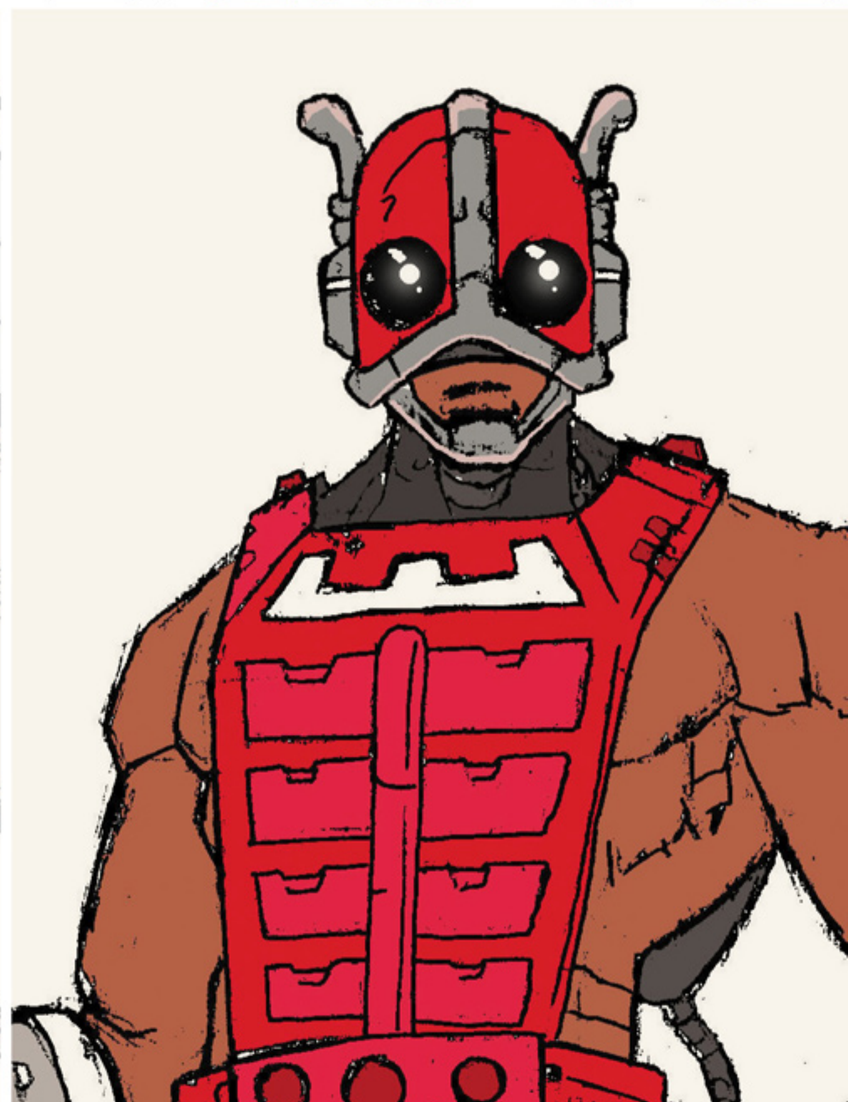


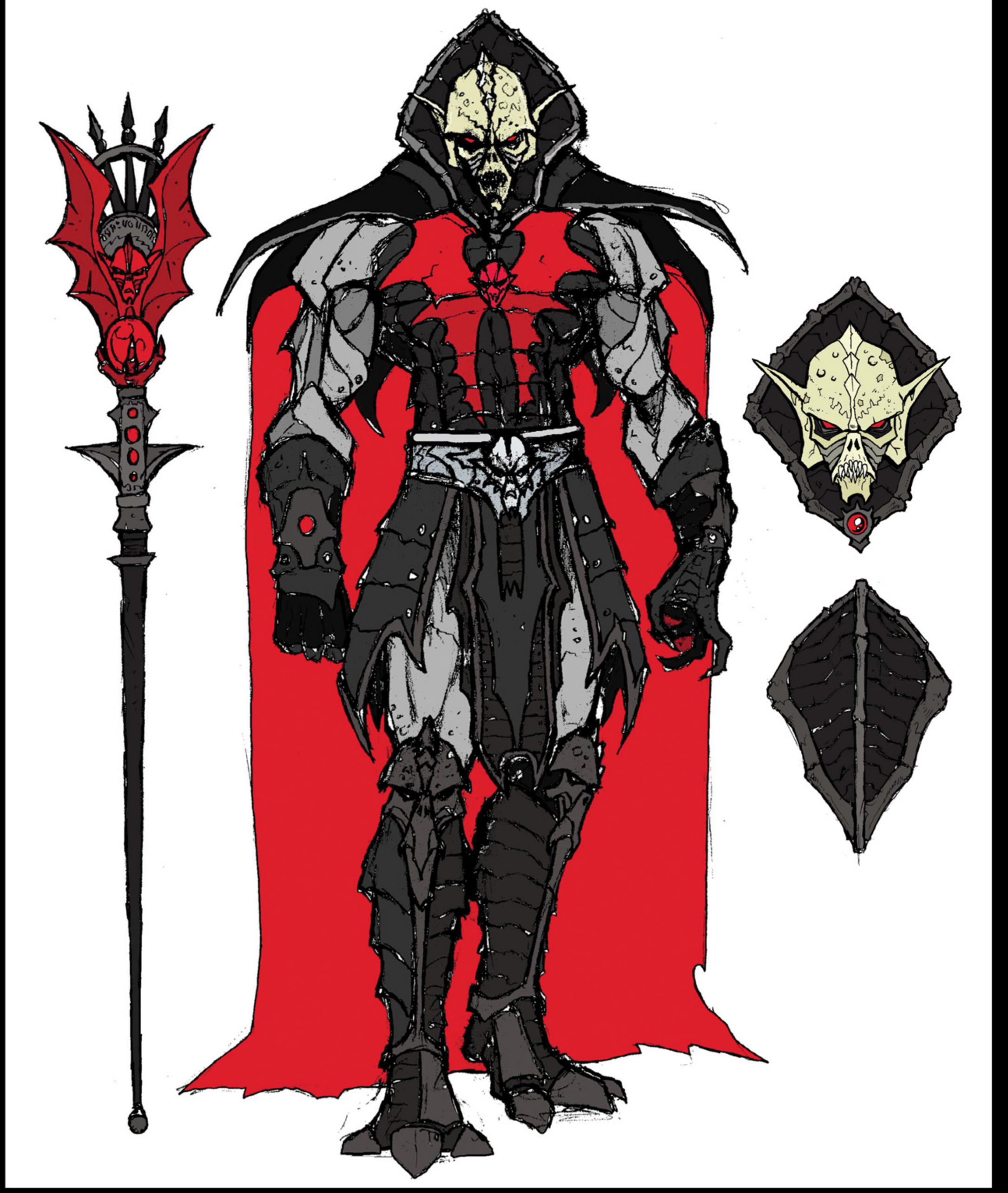




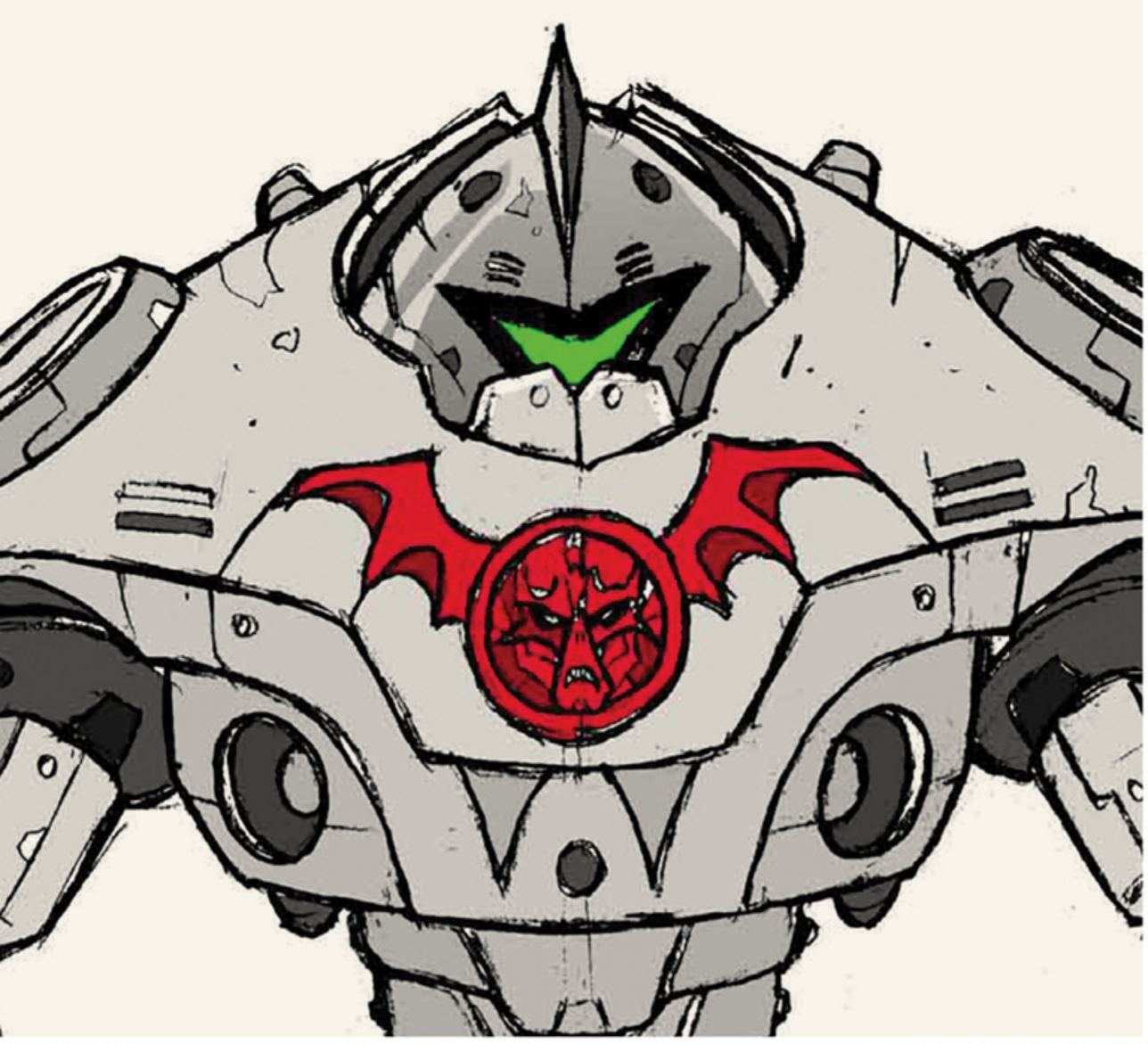


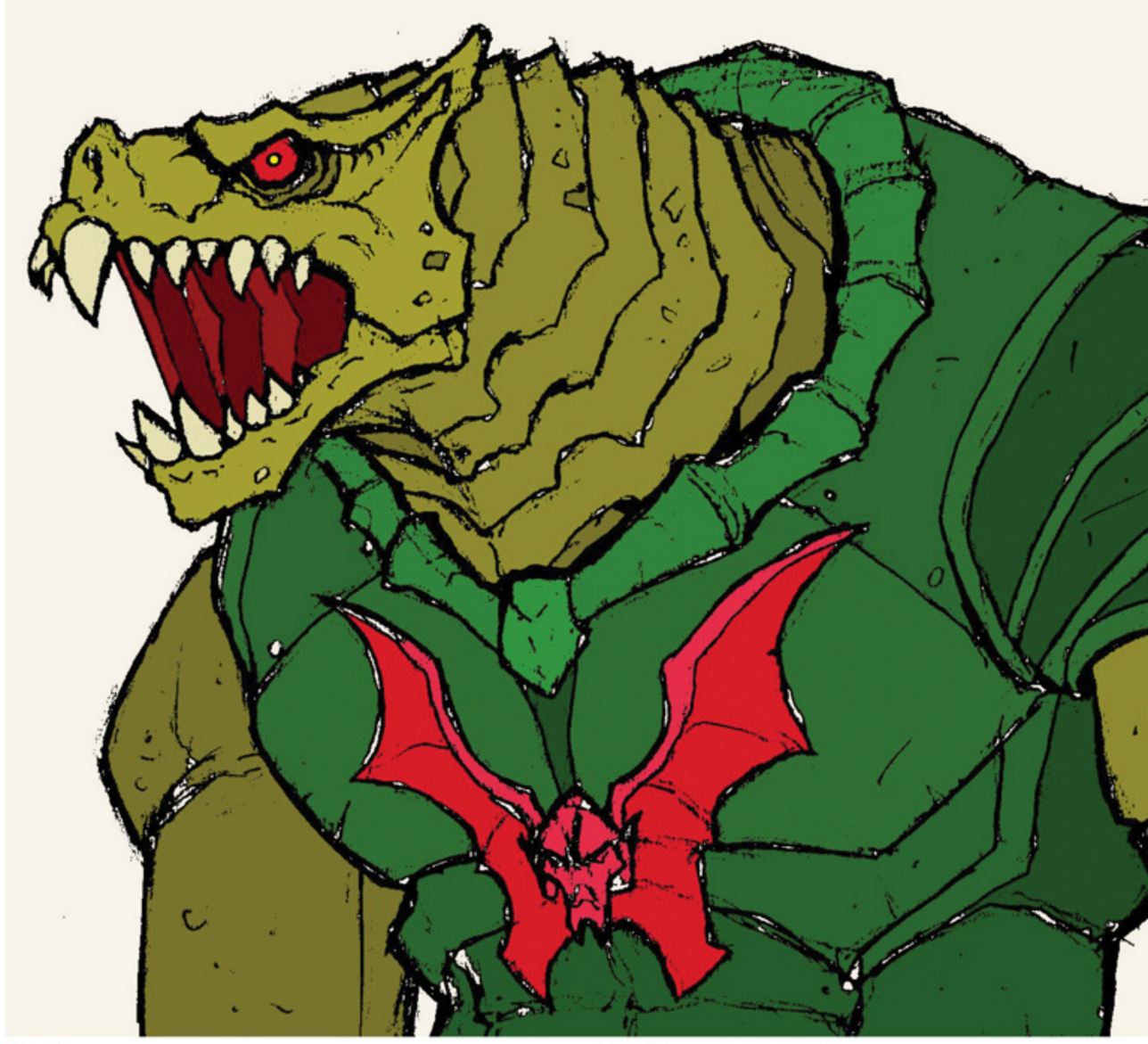


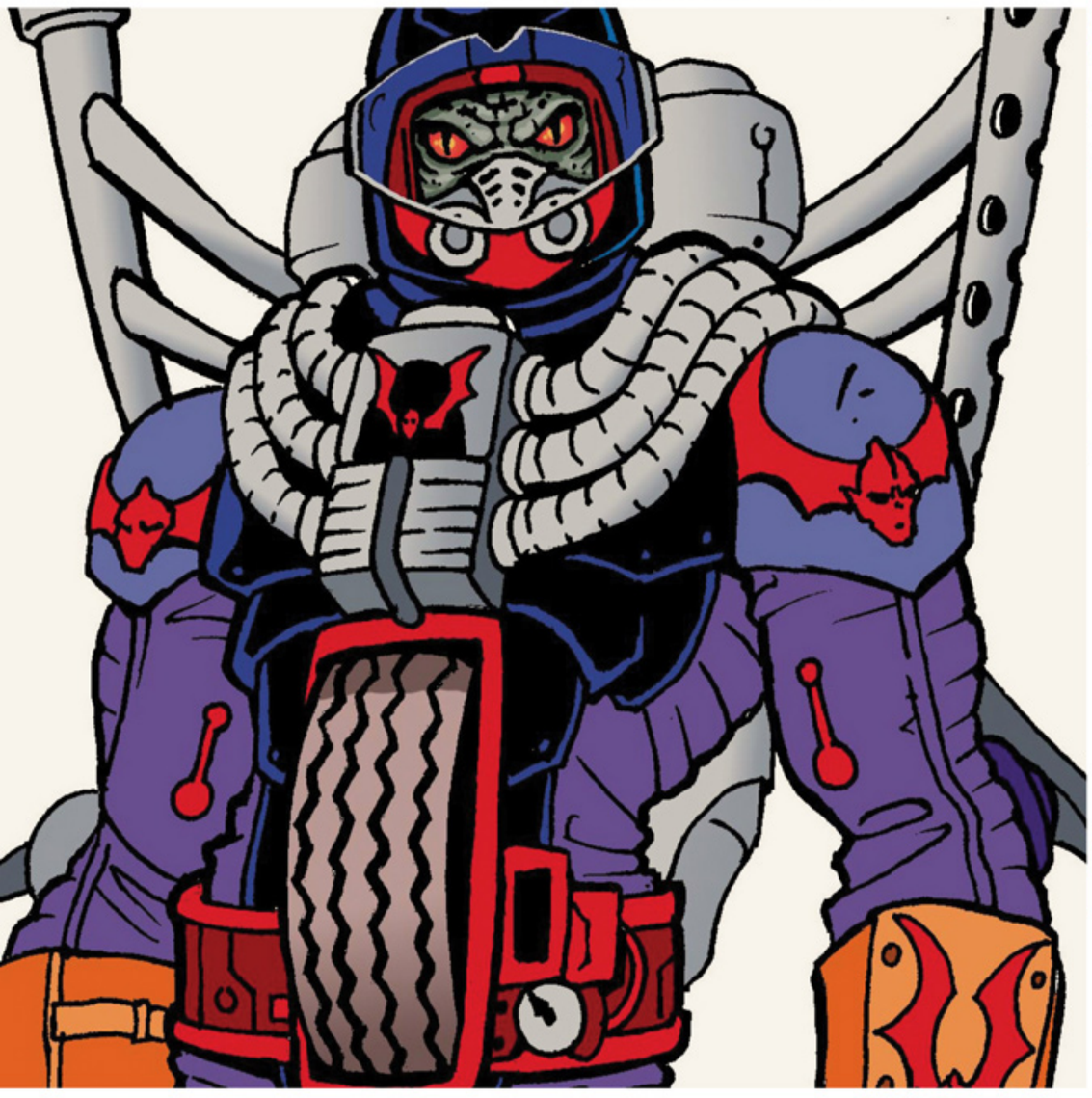


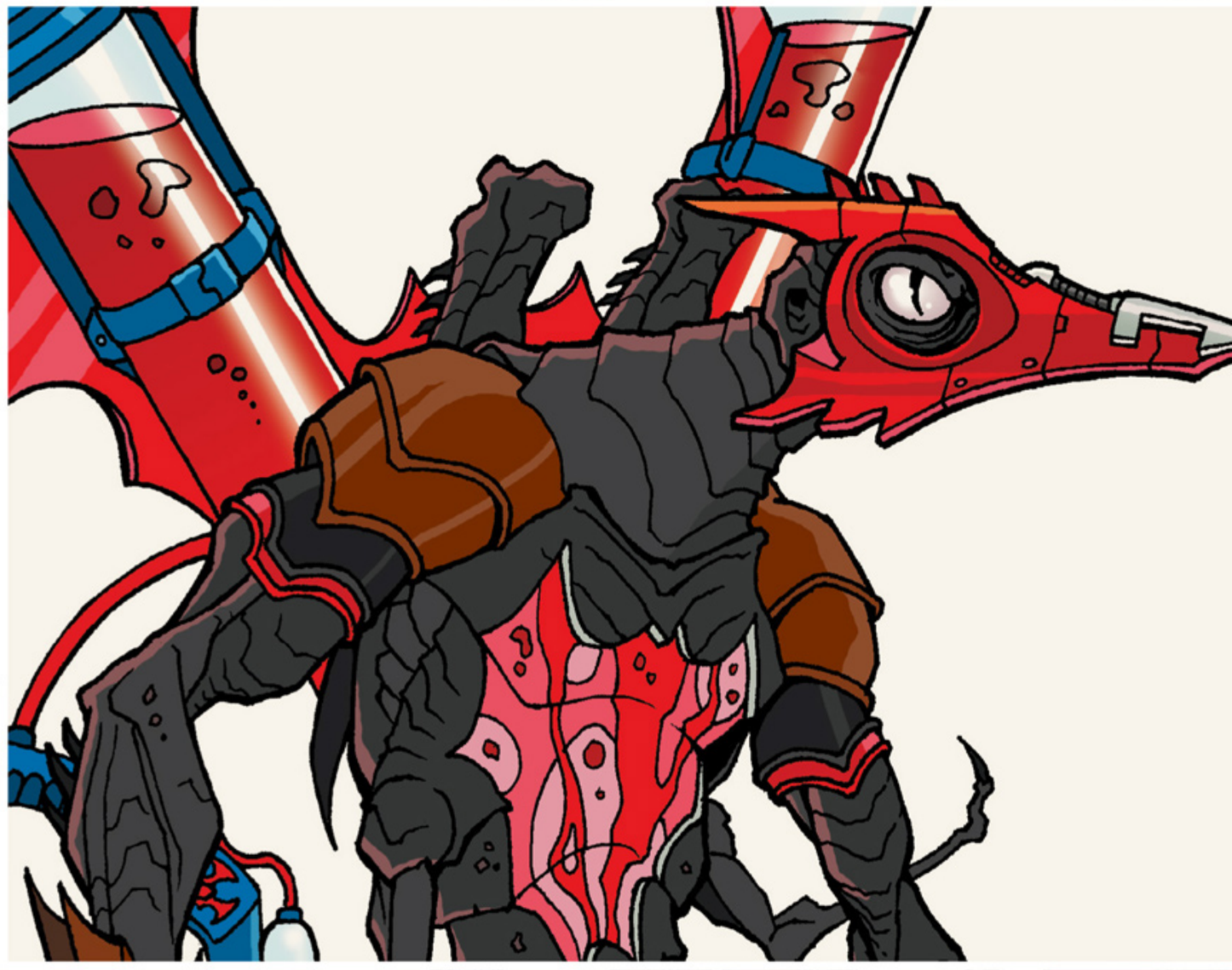


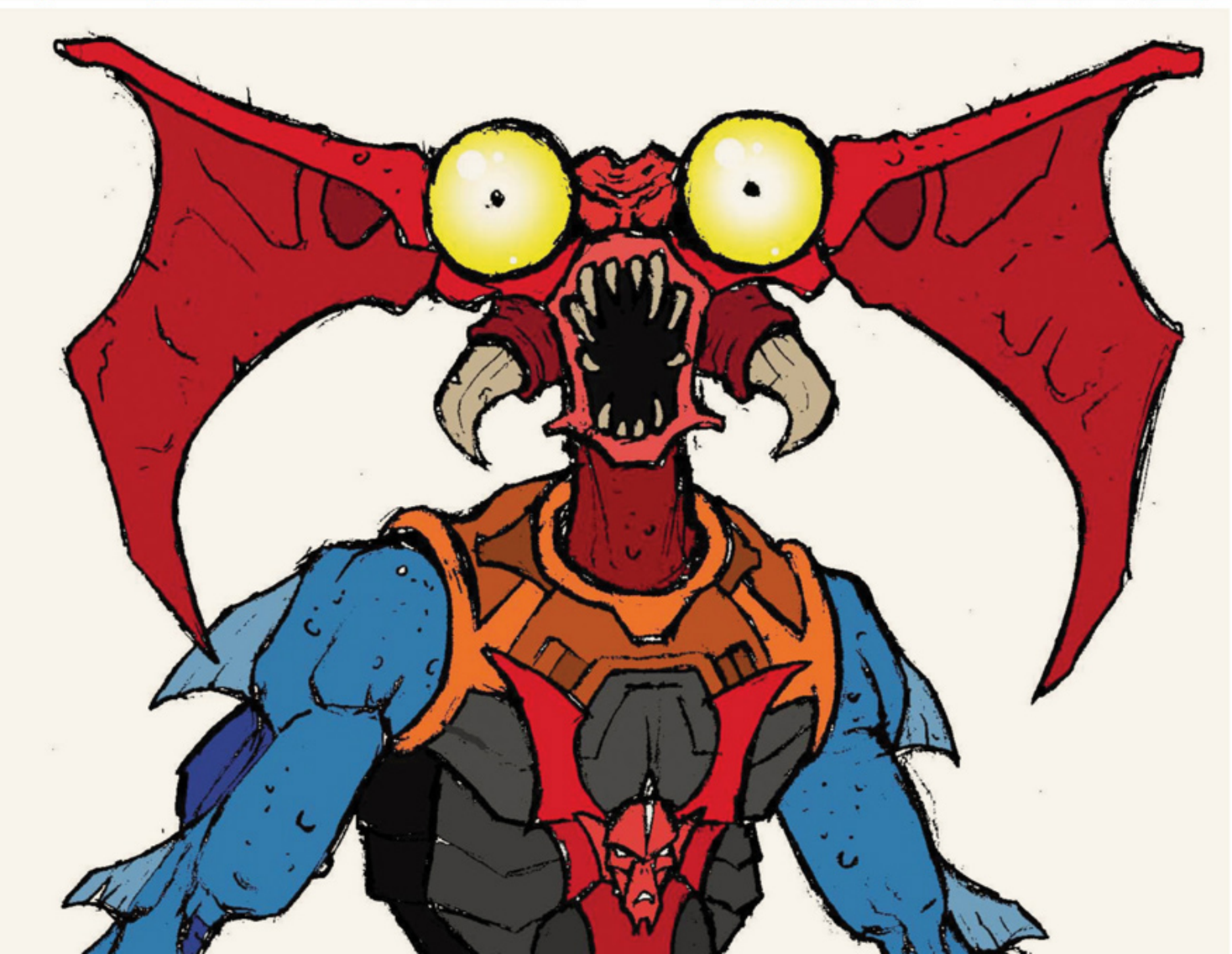
The original long-term plan was to introduce the Horde as the main villains in season 3 of the cartoon series. Due to its early cancellation, they were only seen in full in episode 35, which was itself a flashback to Preternia times. Some of the designs seen here did not appear in the show but were in the works for future introductions, such as a Horde Trooper, Dragstor, and Mosquitor. None of the Horde members made it into the 2002–2003 Mattel toy line, but most were released as ministatue figures from Four Horsemen Studios and NECA between 2005 and 2007.

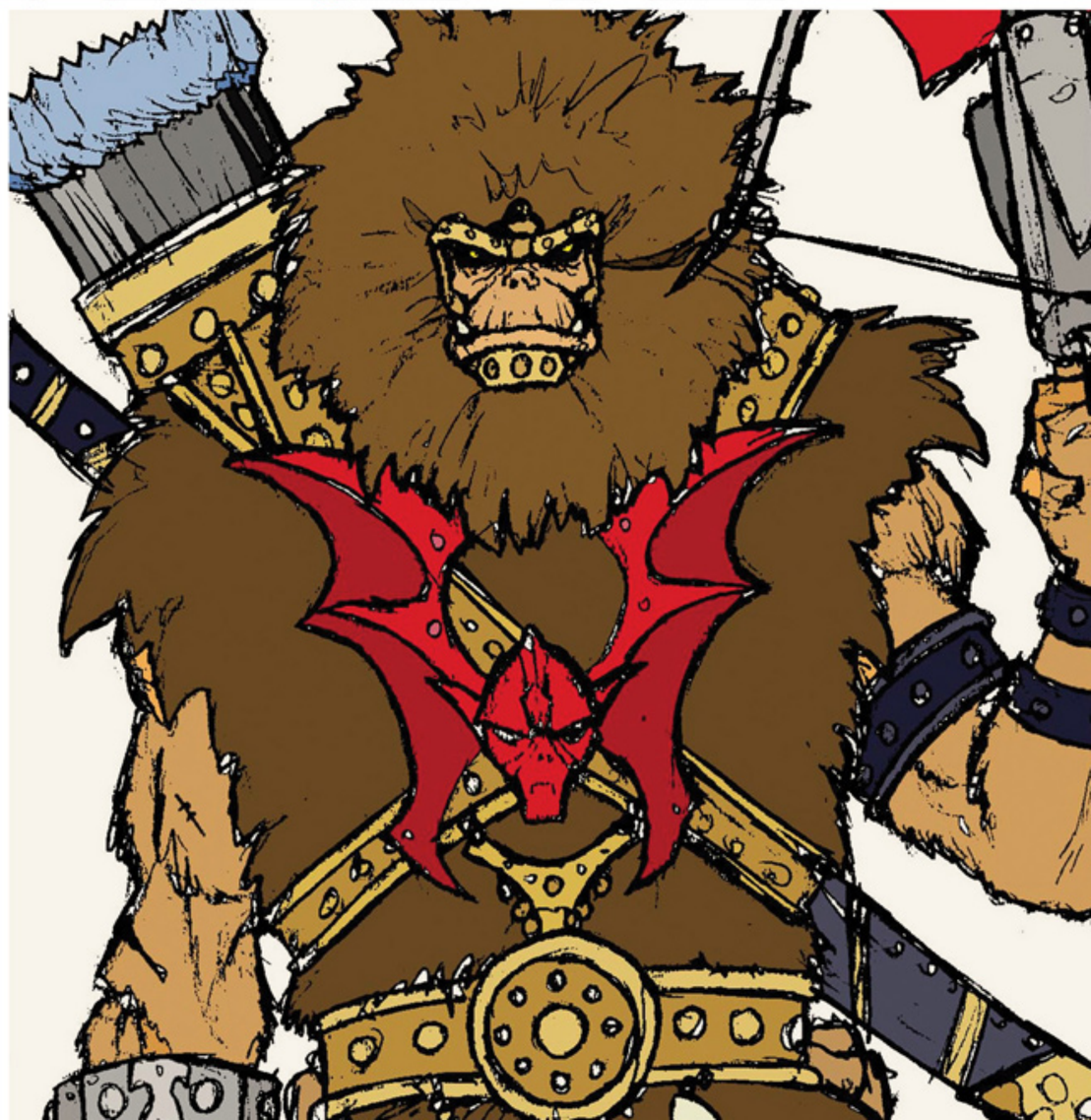












After the 2002 Mattel toy line ended, the Four Horsemen partnered with NECA to release a series of ministatues, also referred to as "stactions" because of their action-figure size. Produced from 2005 through 2007, these mini-statues were of characters that would have originally been released as toys. All of the ministatues featured artwork by Emiliano Santalucia, colored by Val Staples, some of which is featured here.

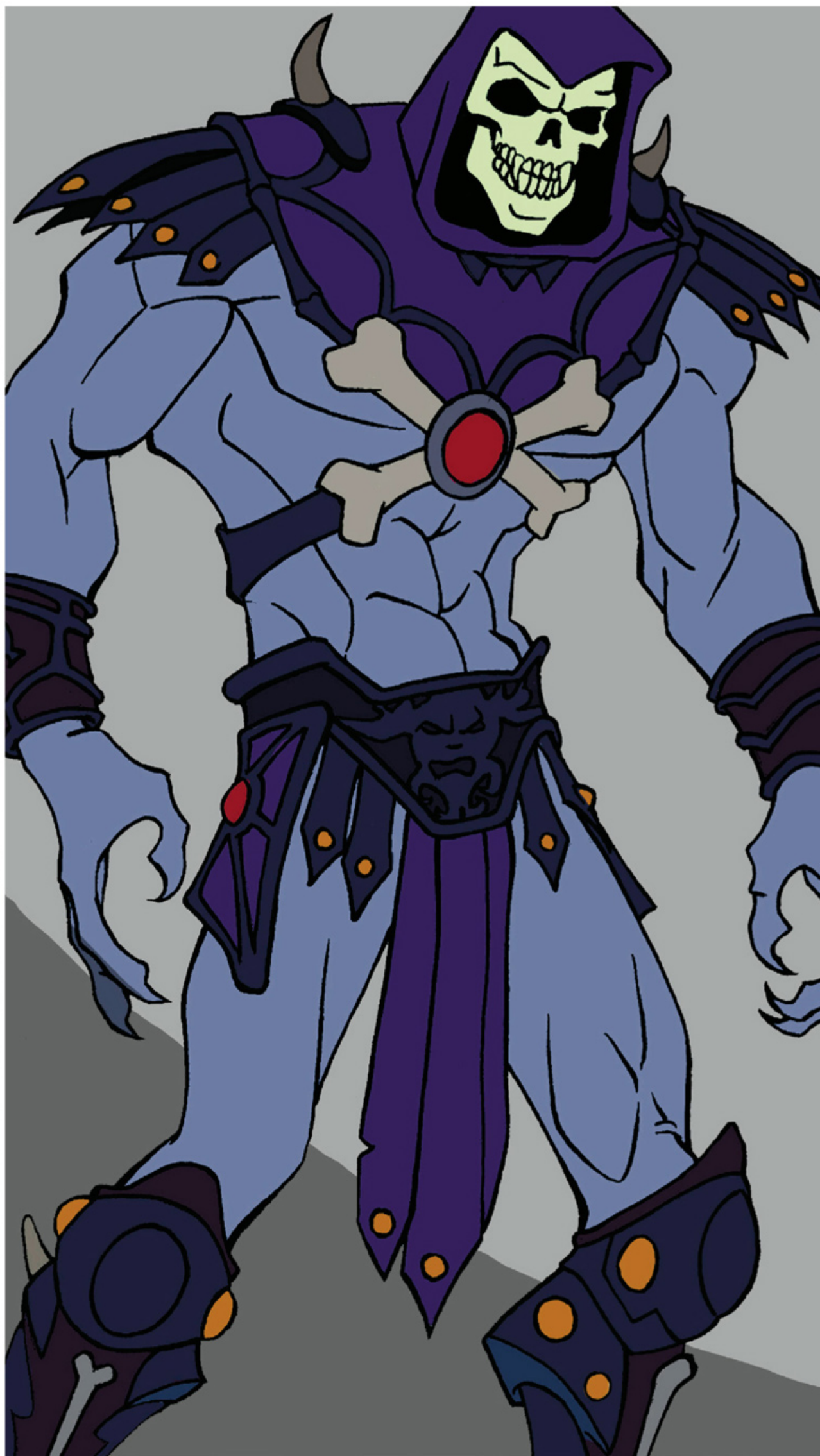


A RETURN TO ANIMATION

The fantastic new toys had to be matched by an equally incredible new cartoon. And that's exactly what happened when a new Masters of the Universe cartoon series hit the airwaves later in 2002. Fans were excited to see episodes with detailed animation that delved deep into the most powerful story in the universe.

This page: Character models for the 2002 series based on Mattel and Four Horsemen character designs, continuing the anime-influenced style.



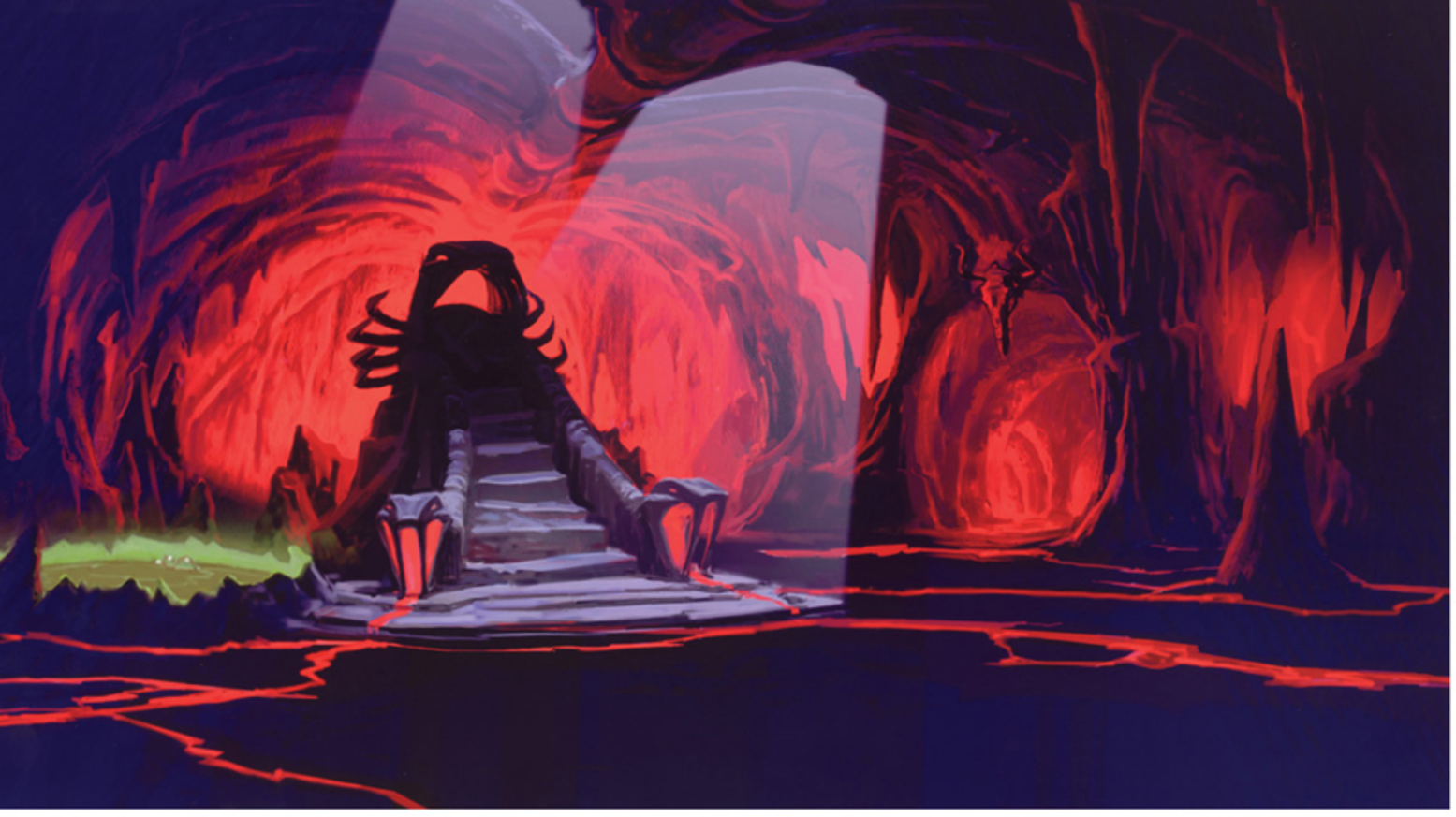




Promotional stills from the 2002 cartoon, featuring the most prominent heroes and villains. The Heroic Warriors promotional piece was prominently used to advertise the Toonami debut of the series on Cartoon Network.



Background stills from the 2002 series. *Above*, Castle Grayskull; *below*, Snake Mountain. *Next page*: Skeletor's throne room (*top left*); space over Eternia (*top right*); Eternos Palace, which was referred to as the Royal Palace on the show (*center*); Mt. Barathrum (*bottom left*); and the Hall of Wisdom, which was destroyed in the pilot (*bottom right*). Many of these images were reused as backgrounds in a series of print ads from MattyCollector.com for the Classics toy line from 2009 to 2011.











TOYS

As the 2002 cartoon series progressed, it became clear that there was a need from both a storytelling and a merchandising perspective to have He-Man in different uniforms and battle armors (just like in the vintage line). Early testing showed that kids in the 2002 generation did not care for the "nekkid" look of He-Man in a loincloth that had worked so well in the 1980s, and a deliberate attempt was made to design armor that covered more or all of his body. Ruben Martinez, one of the lead Mattel designers on the 2002 line, created the look for Snake Armor He-Man as a way for Adam to power up using the Power of Grayskull during fights with King Hssss and the Snake Men.



R. MARTINEZ
5-03



A page from the never-before-seen, unreleased 2003 pack-in comic *Spin Blade Skeletor vs. Smash Blade He-Man*, cowritten by *Walking Dead* creator Robert Kirkman.

2002 COMICS AND BCI DVDs





An ambitious licensing program was rolled out with the brand's relaunch, featuring a new comic book series to complement the new cartoon. Produced by MVCreations and initially published at Image Comics, the first issue debuted as that month's top pre-ordered comic in the United States.

Above: A 2002 cover by Earl Norem for one of the Image comics. *Left:* Alex Ross was commissioned for this stunning cover, but due to time constraints it was unfortunately never completed. However, it did see print as one of the art cards included in the US release of the DVD.



Face-off image from the 2002 series, by Frank Quitely and Val Staples.

STAPLESAURUS, SCHOLAR OF ALL THINGS MOTU

AN INTERVIEW WITH VAL STAPLES, PRODUCER OF THE 2002 *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* COMICS AND CURATOR OF HE-MAN.ORG

Do you remember the first MOTU art you saw, and why it resonated with you so strongly?

The first artwork I saw was on the back of the toys, when I picked the figure off the rack in the store. The first bit of MOTU art that really resonated with me was the mini-comic that came with the first figure I ever had, which was Man-E-Faces.

During the eighties, when you compared the MOTU artwork to the artwork on a lot of the other brands, there seemed to be something about it that was not only more kinetic in nature, but also more fundamentally sound. There were big, beefy fighters and monsters and bad guys, but they were really realistic and anatomically correct. The art wasn't just good by kids' toy standards; it was really good artwork. The minicomics and the card art were often done in a classic comic book or illustration style, but when you got to the packaging, you had these beautiful paintings that you rarely saw on other products of that era. It came across as Frazettaesque, 1970s barbarian–type art. It had great color choices, a lot of mood, and really conveyed a story all by itself. The packaging wasn't just an advertisement; it also drew you into the universe.

What illustrator is your favorite? Who do you think brought the most to MOTU?

There were a number of illustrators who, I think, were instrumental in defining the feel of the brand, but in particular, the one artist who always stood out the most for me was Earl Norem, who did these wonderful painted covers to both *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe Magazine* and a number of the Golden Books storybooks. Those pieces in particular really drew me in. There was something about the way he painted . . . His He-Man in particular was something I really liked. The cover to the Golden Book *Time Trouble* was one I just stared at all the time as a kid. He-Man is straining to stop these clock hands from making it to twelve o'clock and Skeletor is in the background laughing at him. Skeletor's not even doing anything; he's just standing there confident that He-Man isn't going to accomplish this act. It's really convincing because there's so much tension and strain . . . a real focus on detail and anatomy. It really connected with me, and I think it's one of my favorite pieces of all time for Masters of the Universe.

What were the influences you brought to the table when you became the publisher and writer of the 2002 comic? What did you want to add to the art of the brand?

One major idea when I was producing the comic was to deliver as many diverse styles as I could to represent the brand. As much as I may love specific styles, Masters itself is a cornucopia of different characters and story concepts. It's like a great melting pot of sci-fi fantasy that also has so many fans with so many different interests and likes. I felt the comic should represent that. There's such a diverse array of artists in comics, and I felt like they could really do some interesting things with He-Man, Skeletor, and the rest of the cast of characters. As it went along, it was sometimes hard to get Mattel to sign off on some of these cover ideas. There was a cover by an artist named J. J. Kirby, where there was this big action mural painted on the side of the wall, and the heroes are just standing off to the side admiring it while Orko does the spray painting. I thought that was very creative. Robert Kirkman suggested we get Erik Larsen to do a cover. Erik did this sketch for a double-page spread. On the front, there would have been Skeletor . . . just devastated, on his knees, yelling angrily over this wrecked sculpture of Grayskull. But the back cover showed He-Man, Teela, and Man-At-Arms playing volleyball and He-Man has accidentally stepped on Skeletor's sand castle. I couldn't get that one approved.

But I'm seeing more of that kind of creativity from the current roster of talented people working on Masters. There was an art show featuring art inspired by the brand, showcasing some very diverse takes. They've also tried some new approaches in the latest DC comic. And even though not all the fans have been onboard with it, I think it's cool to experiment. I think MOTU lends itself to experimentation. Going back to our covers, and the comic, that was one of the goals. We'd get fan-favorite artists when possible, but also we'd get artists that fans didn't know at the time to create something cool, while giving them an opportunity to bring their vision to Masters. I also liked to give a shot to artists who were fans . . . to let them get a chance to work



Illustration by J. Scott Campbell, colors by Val Staples

on the brand in a comic format. I didn't want to hog it all for myself. I wanted to give a chance to other fans and that ended up being a lot of fun.

What's your favorite character or toy in the MOTU universe? What about the design of the characters appeals to you?

That's really hard. I describe it to people as like trying to pick your favorite flavor of ice cream. I love almost all of them, but there's always going to be a few that stand out more than others. I'd say the three that stand out the most are Webstor, Mosquitor, and Dragstor. I was really into insects and reptiles as a kid. But those three figures also had great visuals and great action features. With Webstor you pulled the string and he scaled up on his backpack line. Mosquitor had that blood-pumping feature, which was really awesome. Dragstor was great because you'd use that ripcord on him, and he'd just take off. They were just a lot of fun as toys. Visually compelling with great action features . . . That's a win-win all around.

Is there anything coming out now or in the future associated with the brand that intrigues you?

I really like a lot of the new concepts that have been done. The tablet video game looked really cool. I loved the artistic style, and it looks like a ton of fun. Also, as someone who works in the comic book industry, I'm used to publishers and creators always trying new things. So with the new DC comic, they're trying something different. Maybe it hasn't hit home with a lot of the hardcore fans, but I feel it's a good way to introduce a new audience to He-Man. The people who are currently buying comics are reportedly in the thirty-to-forty-year-old bracket. So trying to do a comic book with the sensibility of the old Filmation cartoon just isn't going to fly. They've tried a lot of different things, and I've been really interested in the concepts they've put to paper with the comics.





Top row, left to right: Wall mural variant cover by J. J. Kirby and Joel Benjamin; fantasy cover by Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell; movie poster style variant cover by Tommy Lee Edwards.









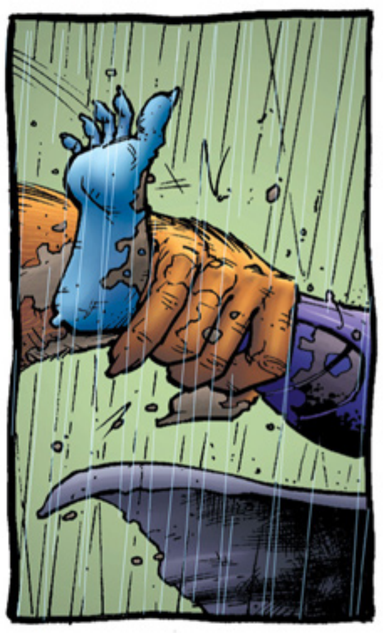
Bottom row, left to right: Evil Warriors cover by Brett Booth, Joe Weems, and Val Staples; Heroic Warriors cover by Francis Manapul, Joe Weems, and Val Staples; and battle scene cover by Keron Grant, Pierre-André Déry, and Val Staples.















This page and opposite, clockwise from top left: Art by the legendary Drew Struzan; Beast Man and Keldor by Tony Moore and Val Staples from the *Icons of Evil: Beast Man* comic; Trap Jaw and Skeletor by Carlo Pagulayan and Ron Riley; Prince Adam cover by Enza Fontana and Jeremy Roberts; Skeletor by Emiliano Santalucia and James Offredi; and character montage by Cully Hamner, Tim Townsend, and Val Staples.





Starting in 2005, after the latest toy relaunch had concluded, both the eighties Filmation and the 2002 Mike Young Productions cartoon series were released on DVD by BCI. These DVD sets were accompanied by a series of art cards by popular comic book artists and illustrators. *This page, clockwise from top left:* Dave Johnson, David Mack, Colleen Doran, and Jock. *Opposite:* Dan Brereton, Gilbert Hernandez, Ben Templesmith, and Earl Norem.














HOREM



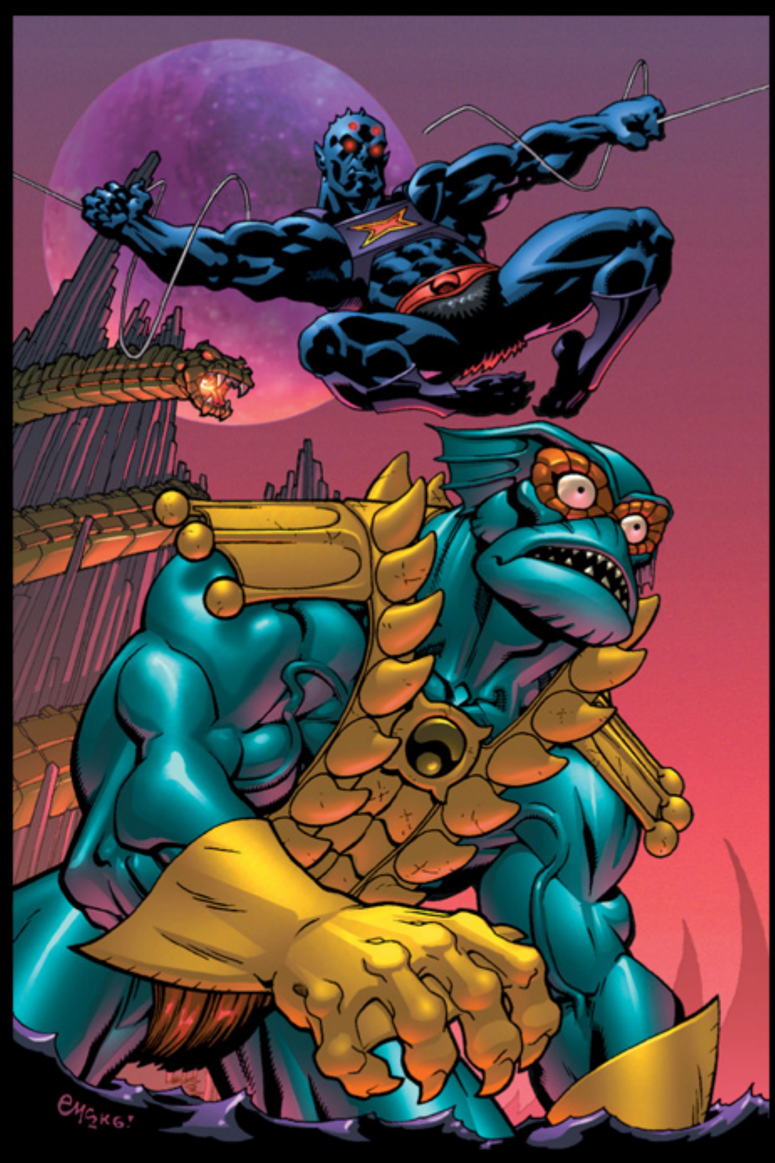





AH!













This page, clockwise from top left: Chris Bachalo, Ed McGuinness, Dustin Nguyen, Bryan Hitch, and Humberto Ramos. *Opposite:* Jason Shawn Alexander, Phil Jimenez, Frank Cho, and Adam Hughes. *Next page:* Bruce Timm, Gene Ha, and Bill Sienkiewicz.






ha!

CHAPTER NINE 2009

THE COLLECTION REVISITED



While the BCI DVD releases wrapped up, Mattel had been exploring new ways to energize the brand. Coincidentally, the Four Horsemen toy design company had some ideas of their own and, in secret, showed a new He-Man toy prototype to Mattel during the 2007 San Diego Comic-Con. In a bold move, Mattel put the prototype on display during the convention and it was met with rampant interest. In a year's time, fans were treated to the 2008 San Diego Comic-Con King Grayskull exclusive based on the 2007 prototype's larger scale and multiple points of articulation. This led to the Masters of the Universe Classics line that debuted at the end of 2008. Originally planned to be handful of figures, the Classics line went on to run longer and featured more action figures than the original 80s toy line! The 2009 San Diego Comic-Con release of He-Ro (*above*) was the second SDCC item for the Classics line and really showed the breadth that the line would one day reach, by introducing a toy based on a concept character for the first time.

ERIC-AT-ARMS, MIGHTY SCULPTOR OF ICONS

AN INTERVIEW WITH ERIC TREADAWAY, ILLUSTRATOR, SCULPTOR, AND COFOUNDER OF FOUR HORSEMEN STUDIOS

What do you think you brought to the art of Masters of the Universe?

I think that the answer to that actually comes in two parts—the first in regards to our debut on Masters with the 2002 line, and the second answer is for everything that has come since. With the 2002 line we were able to come in and reenvision the entire universe of MOTU. Although there were some changes along the way, for the most part our designs remained intact all the way to the final product and the character designs on the cartoon. To this day we are still floored that we were given so much artistic freedom on the line. To say that we are honored is an understatement!

What we brought in terms of style was a fresh look at our beloved characters that included more variety in the shapes and sizes of the characters, more exaggerated features, more tech elements, and perhaps most controversially: oversized weapons! A lot of those elements have shown up in Classics, and it's nice to hear that many fans are still fond of those designs.

With MOTU Classics we have been able to bring out a line that pays total homage to the original line. The 2002 line did that too, but Classics has allowed us to just go in and accentuate and make slight updates to the designs that made MOTU a phenomenon in the first place. It's been amazing to work our way through all of these characters a second time.



What were the influences that you brought to the table?

With the MOTU Classics line the influence all comes from the vintage line. That includes the toys themselves and the cartoon, and most importantly we wanted to capture the mood and mystery of the box-art paintings, the cross-sell art, and the minicomics. With the 2002 designs, the influences were more widespread. Of course, most of the inspiration came from a love of the vintage line. One of the major differences back then, though, was that we jumped in without the relationship with the fan community that we've made over the years, and the knowledge that the relationship brings about what folks want to see on the line. In that way, it was a pretty pure process. We were just designing what we wanted to see, and flying blind doing it. We were fresh out of McFarlane Toys at the time, so heavy detail was an intrinsic part of the look. We were also looking at a lot of Japanese design, video game art, and classic fantasy design.

Who was your favorite character to illustrate or redesign? What about that particular design appealed to you?

On the 2002 line, we had a lot of fun with Trap Jaw. He was over the top on all levels: huge arm, oversized weapons, cool costume, and seething with evil! On Classics, getting a classic-box-art-style Mer-Man after all of these years was a high point, and getting to work on Castle Grayskull was an absolute dream for us. On both lines, though, one thing that we really enjoyed was when a figure would surprise us. A good example would be a character like Snake Face: We weren't huge fans of the original figure. The concept was always cool, but the execution was so beholden to the action feature that the final product was lacking. In both lines we had a blast taking advantage of the absence of the action feature, and trying to find the character's full potential.





For the thirtieth anniversary of Masters of the Universe, six all-new characters were introduced, created by professionals who had worked on the line or were big fans. This lineup included Fearless Photog, the previously unproduced winner of the 1987 Create a Character contest, and Castle Grayskullman, the winner of the new thirtieth-anniversary Create a Character contest. These fan creations were joined by Sir Laser-Lot by Geoff Johns (*above left*), the Mighty Spector by Scott Neitlich (*above right*), and Cy-Chop by Terry Higuchi (*right*). The final figure was Draego-Man by Four Horsemen (*see page 268*). This early concept for Spector tried out a set of "fuzzy shorts" and included boot jets and a laser whip, which did not make the final toy.





Left: Skeletor and Demo-Man as Classics figures, both inspired by early concept art for the 1982 line. This Skeletor head was a pack-in bonus with Demo-Man. Demo-Man looks like he jumped out of the Mark Taylor painting (*see page 12*)! He was recast from a concept for Skeletor as the demon that melded with Keldor to form Skeletor, making him stand out as an original character and letting fans choose how they wanted to display and incorporate him in their collections.

Below: A thirtieth-anniversary promo piece by Axel Giménez of He-Ro alongside his Man-At-Arms, Sir Laser-Lot, showing the coming together of old and new ideas and characters.



Box art by Rudy Obrero for the 2013 Classics Castle Grayskull release. Early customers were given the chance to vote on which ten characters would be on the box art. Sadly, Stinkor did not make it.





CLASSICS FIGURES *First row, left to right,* Standor, Procrustus, Unnamed One, Horde Prime, Hordak, Mantenna, Grizzlor, Modulok, Ca
Wun-Dar, Count Marzo, Shadow Beast, Dekker, Zoar, the Sorceress, Hordak's Spirit, Keldor, Panthor, Man-At-Arms, Fisto, Beast Man, M
fourth row, Prince Adam, Adora, Cringer, Orko, He-Man, Battle Cat, Buzz-Off, Stinkor, Sy-Klone, Roboto, Faker, Plundor, Chief Carnivus, Two
Scorpia, Octavia, Horde Trooper, Netossa, Snout Spout, Extendar, Starla; *sixth row,* Glorybird, Jewelstar, Tallstar, Fearless Photog, Battle Arm
Slush Head; *seventh row,* Optikk, Karatti, King He-Man, and the Mighty Spector. All the Classics releases from July 2008 to April 2014. Wi

























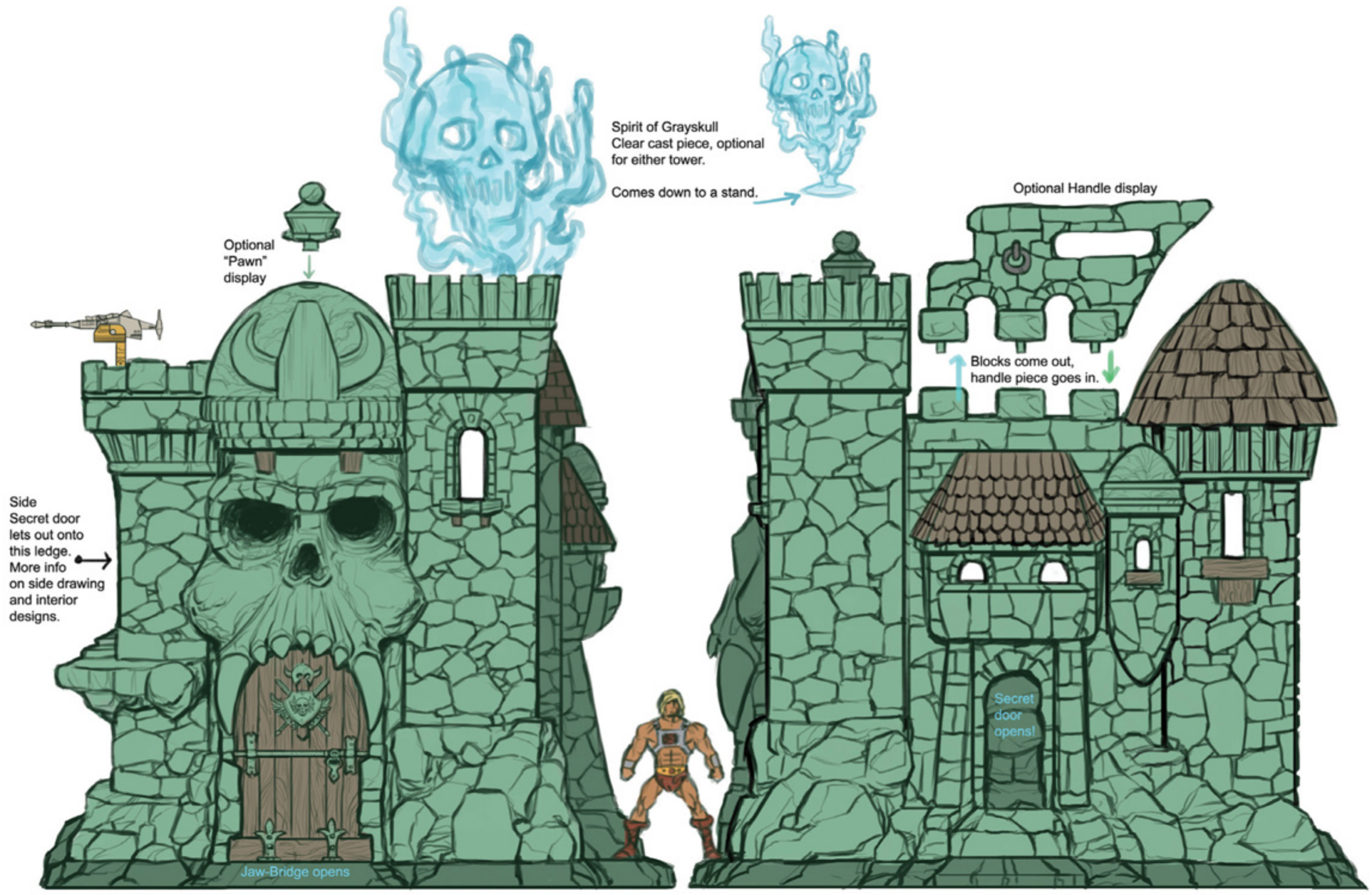


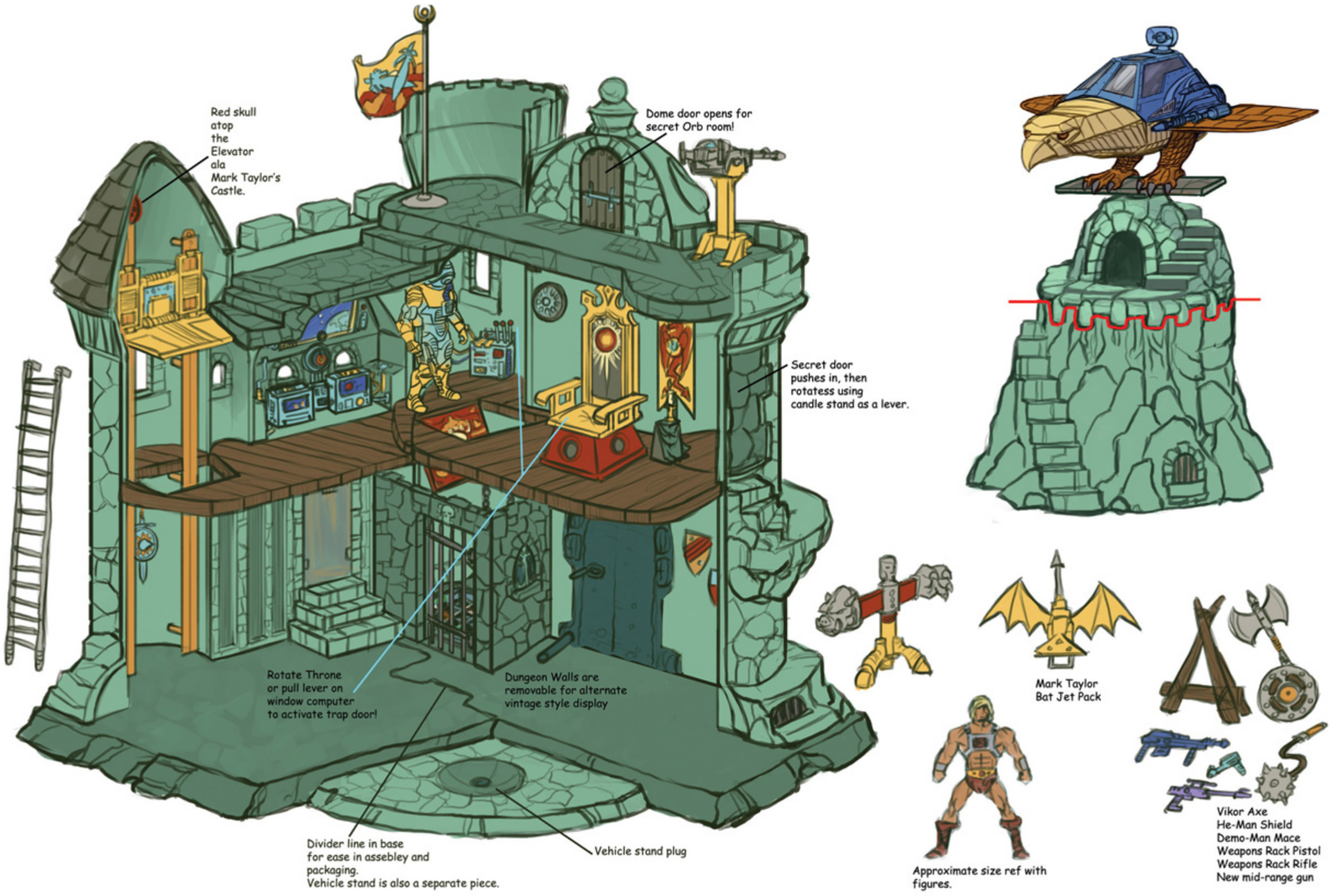
atra, Mosquitor, Zodac, He-Ro, Leech, Granamyr, King Hssss, Rattlor, Snake Face, Snake Man 1, Snake Man 2, Megator, the Goddess, er-Man; *third row,* Kronis, Evil-Lyn, Screeech, Tri-Klops, Jitsu, Clawful, Whiplash, King Randor, Man-E-Faces, Ram Man, Mekaneck, Bad, Lord Dactus, Geldor, Shokoti, Goat Man, Kobra Khan, Spikor, Temple of Darkness Sorceress, Battle Armor He-Man, Batros, Nepthu; nor Faker, Snake Man-At-Arms, Dragon Blaster Skeletor, Scareglow, Blade, Thunder Punch He-Man, Preternia Disguise He-Man, Bubble th many more to come!



King Grayskull, Battle Lion, Moss Man; *second row,* Zodak, Tytus, Sir Laser-Lot, Griffin, the Faceless One, Vikor, Dawg-O-Tor, Sh
Stratos, Captain Glenn, Demo-Man, Skeletor, Trap Jaw, Webstor, King Randor, Queen Marlena, two Eternian Palace Guards, Sky
fifth row, Stonedar, Rokkon, Icer, Clamp Champ, Fang Man, Strong-Or, Mo-Larr, She-Ra, Swiftwind, Bow, Kowl, Loo-Kee, Glimme
Power She-Ra, Hurricane Hordak, Draego-Man, Battleground Teela, Battleground Evil-Lyn, Cy-Chop, Castle Grayskullman, Hydron,

ield Maiden Sherrilyn, Ditztroyer, Gygor, Vykron,
High with Jet Sled, Battle Armor Skeletor, Teela;
er, Frosta, Castaspella, Sea Hawk, Shadow Weaver,
Icarius, Galactic Protector He-Man, Strobo, Flogg,





Through a presale campaign, fans helped fund a Castle Grayskull play set for the Classics line. Shown here is early concept art by the Four Horsemen, some of which was modified to promote the presale. Note the Talon Fighter sitting atop Point Dread and what could have been a clear-plastic snap-on "spirit of Grayskull" piece for mounting on the top of the castle, inspired by the very first minicomic. The triangular weapon rack also did not make the final toy for cost reasons.

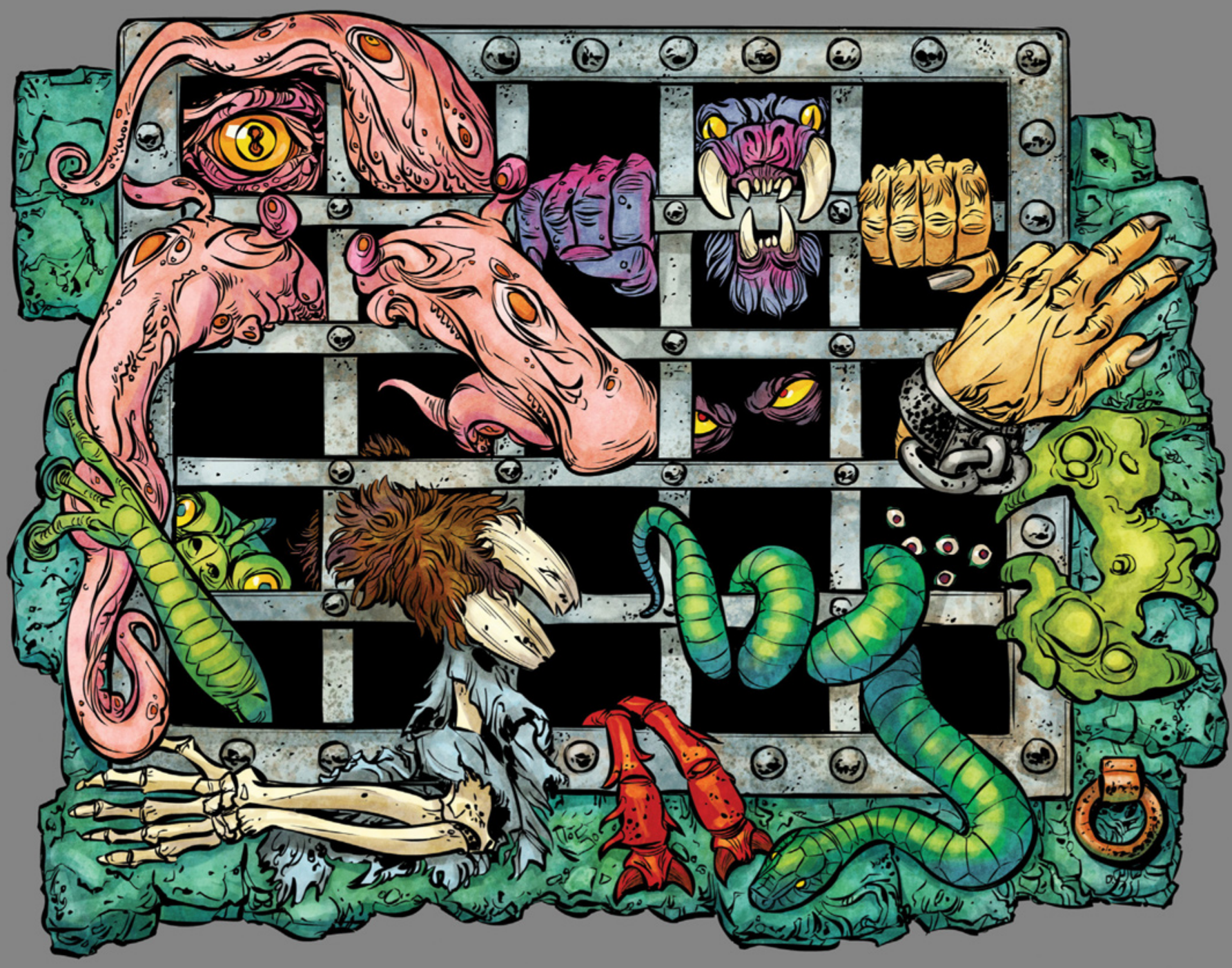


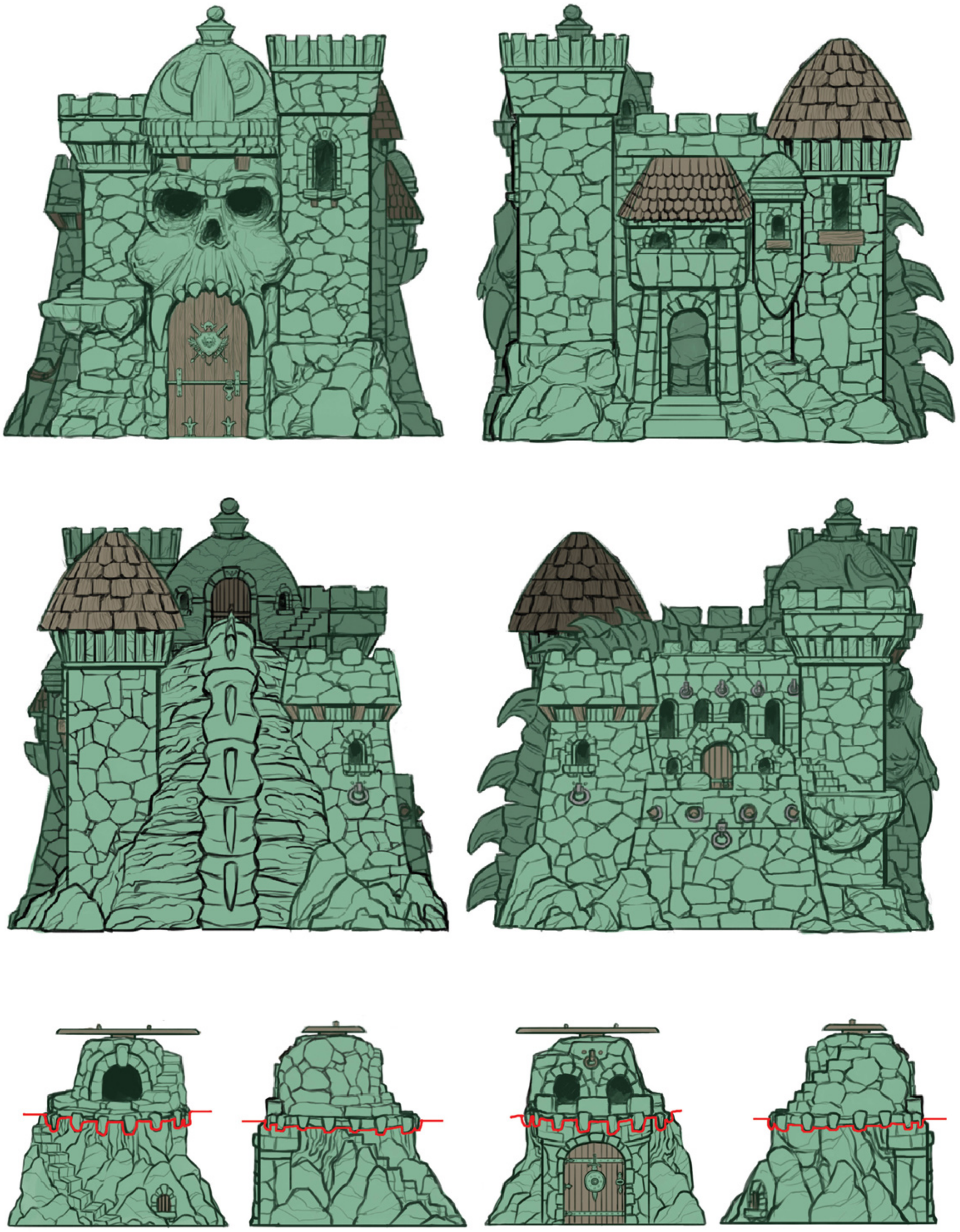




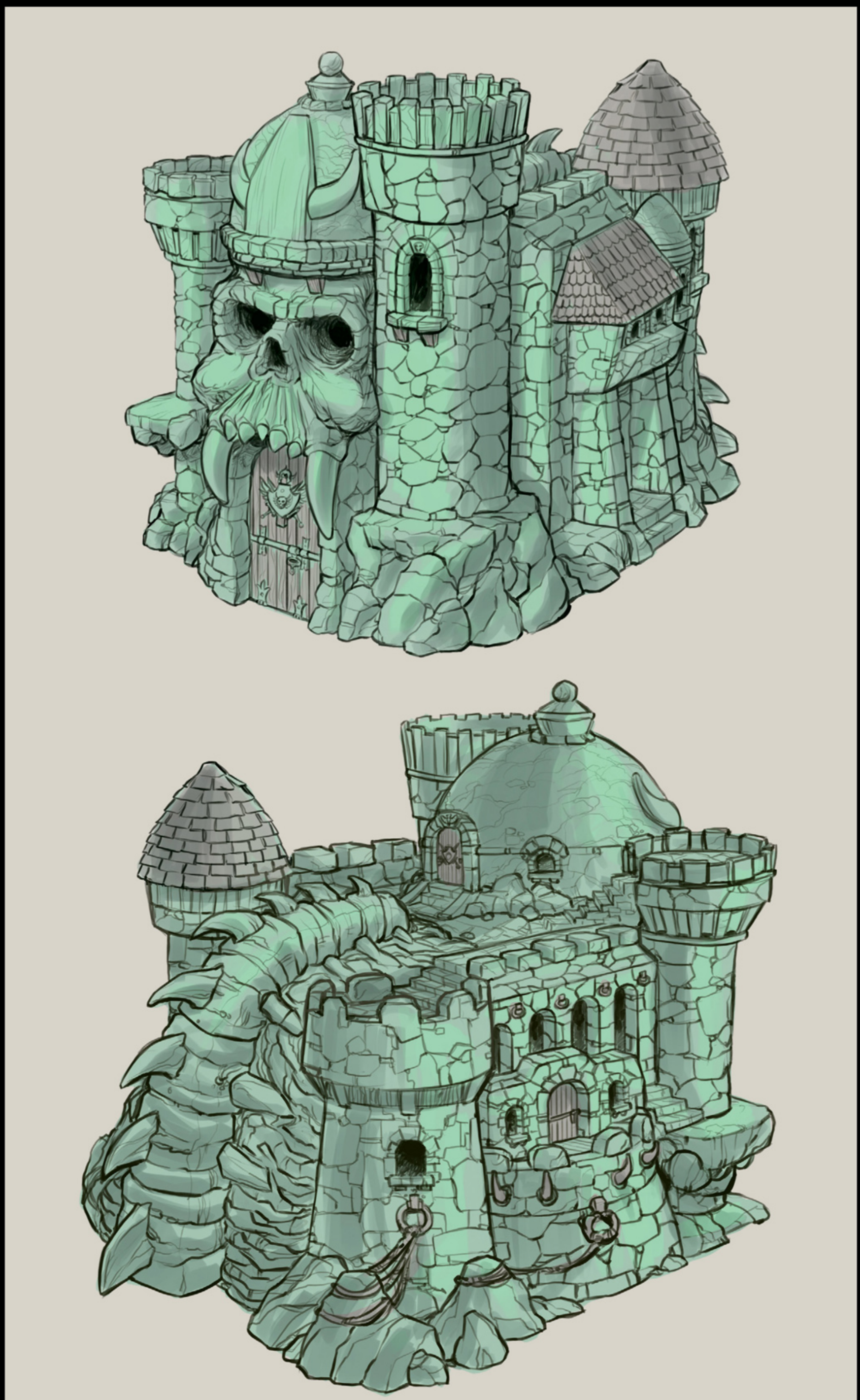
Bottom: The dungeon grate, a sticker on the original castle, was discussed as a possible candidate for a sculpted feature this time around, but the deco alone would have cost as much as a standard figure, and so the trap door to the Dwell of Souls once again was represented by a sticker.

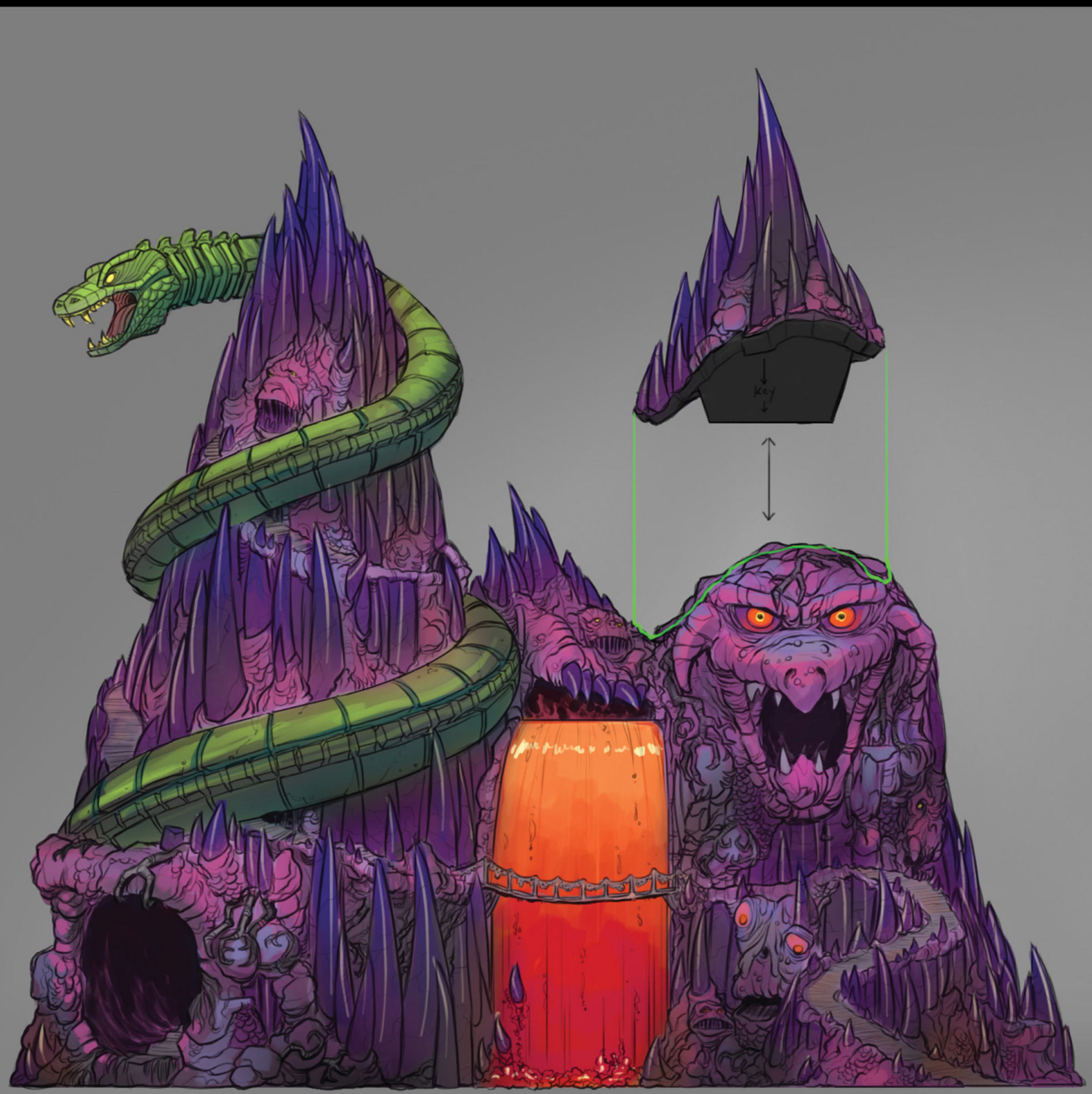
Top: The flag and rug stickers were based on the original release and art from Mark Taylor.



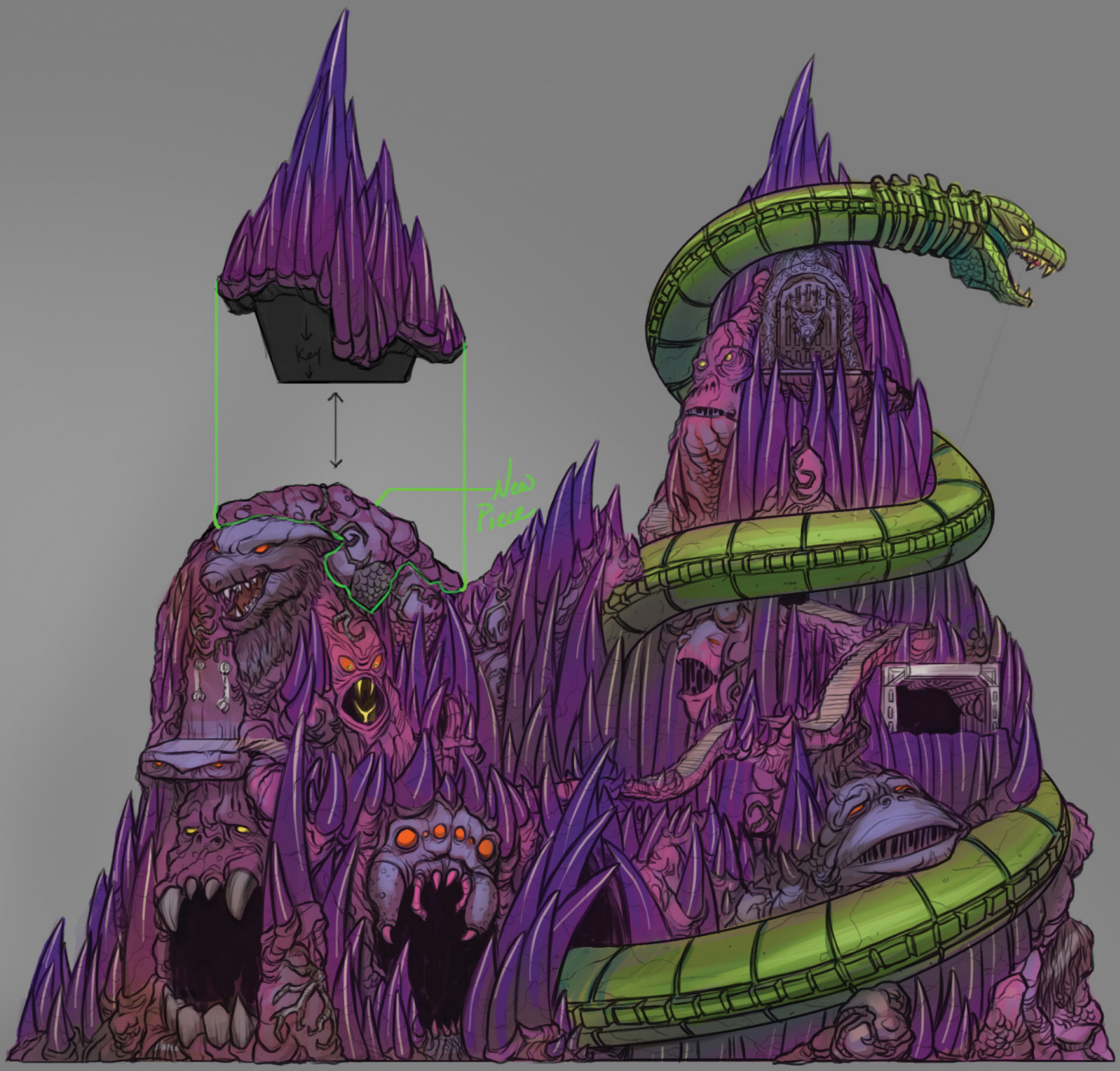


While Mattel produced a six-inch-scale castle with two walls, Icon Heroes took on the challenge of rendering a full four-walled, roofed castle as a resin statue. The art was based on the look of the Mattel play set and expanded by the Four Horsemen.

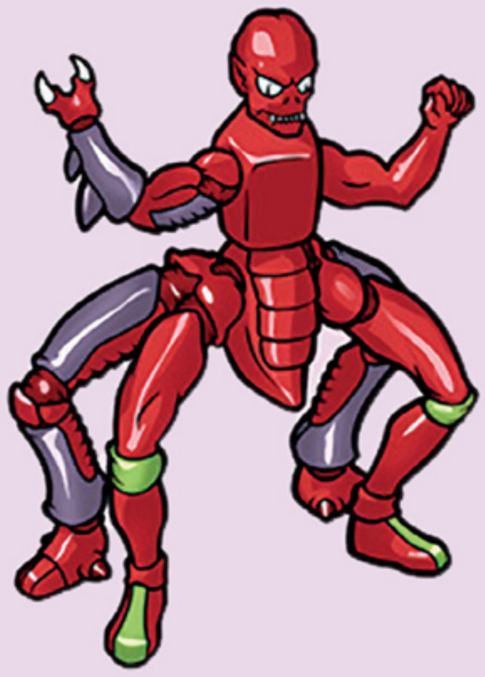


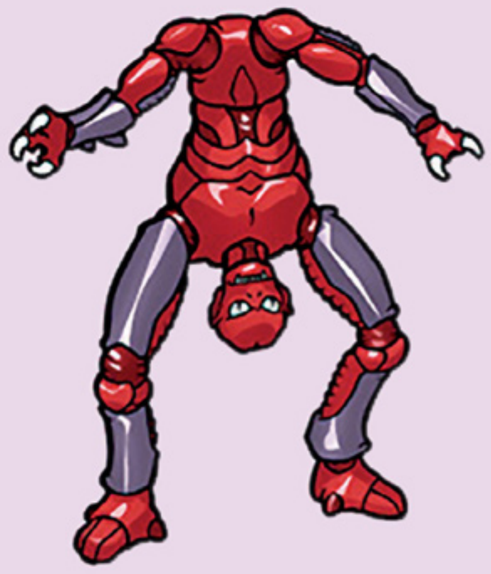


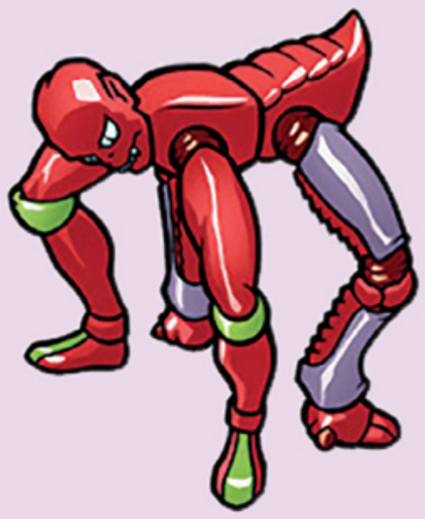
Icon Heroes' Snake Mountain statue. This combines the look of the vintage eighties toy with design elements from the Filmation cartoon. If this was ever released in six-inch scale by Mattel, this statue would be a good jumping-off point!


Key
New Piece







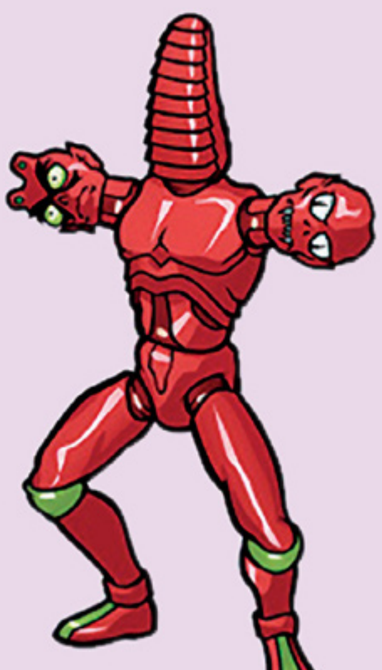




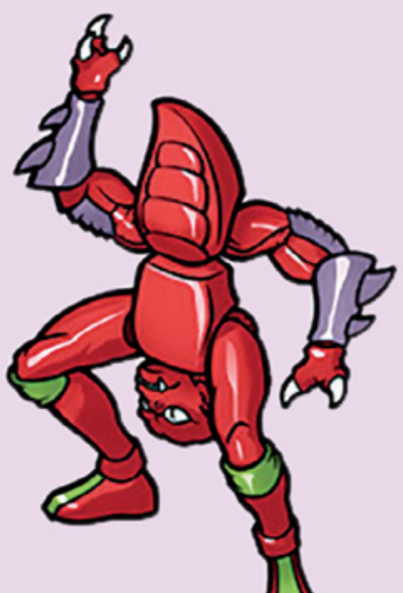








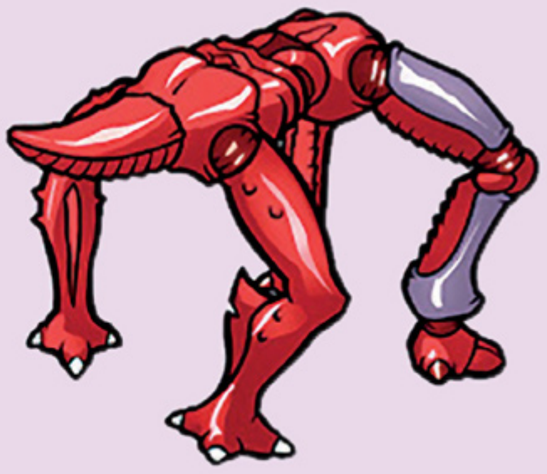




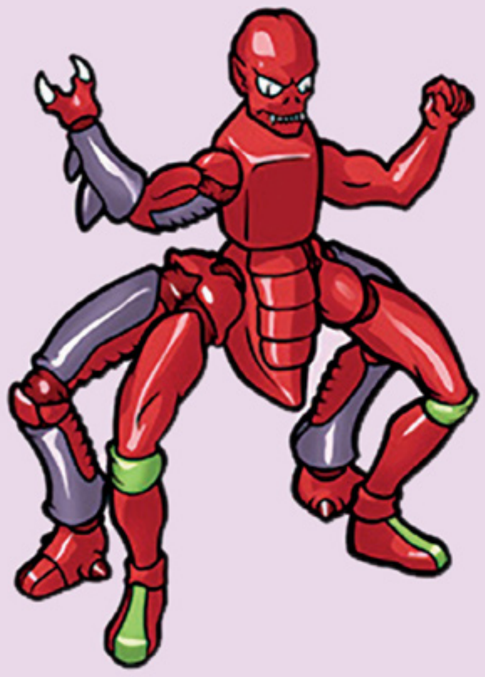


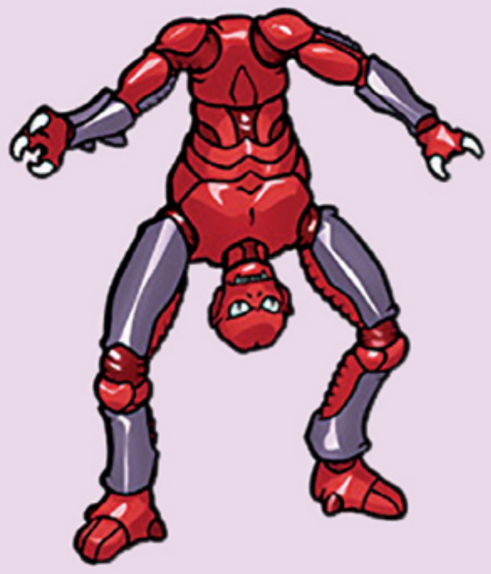
Modulok in the Classics line. Art by Axel Giménez for the box, based on the vintage box-art poses. Modulok was one of the largest and most complicated basic figures, as he could be pulled apart and recombined in almost every way the vintage toy could. He was a fully tooled figure with no reused parts.

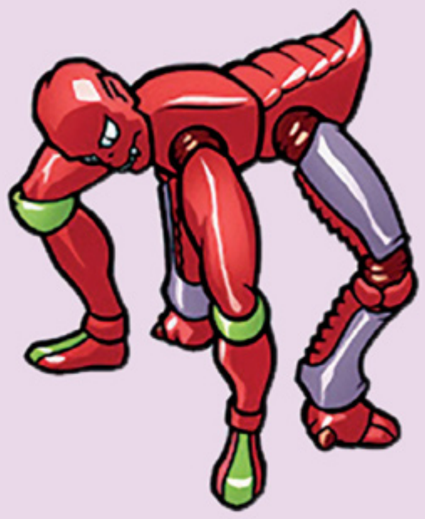










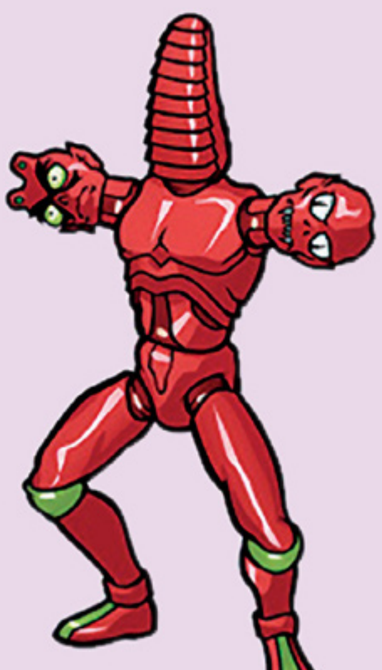




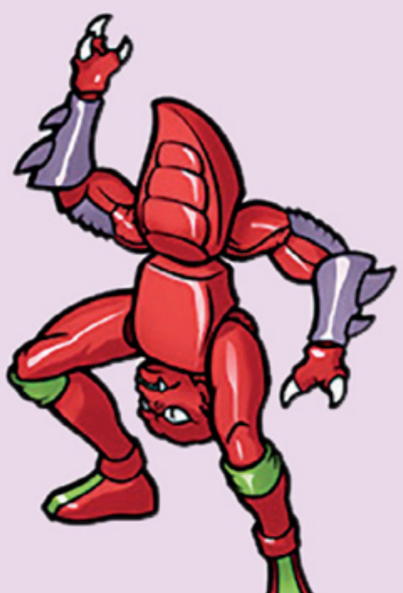














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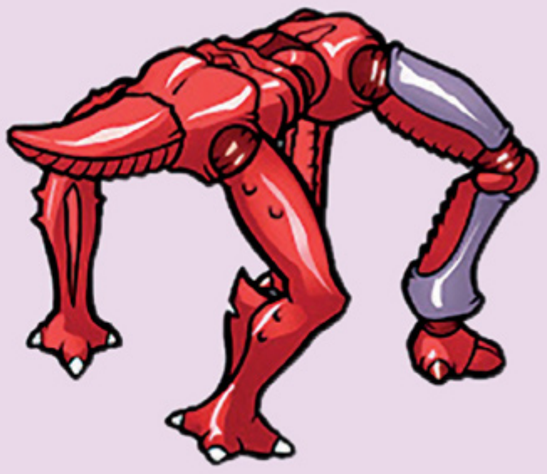
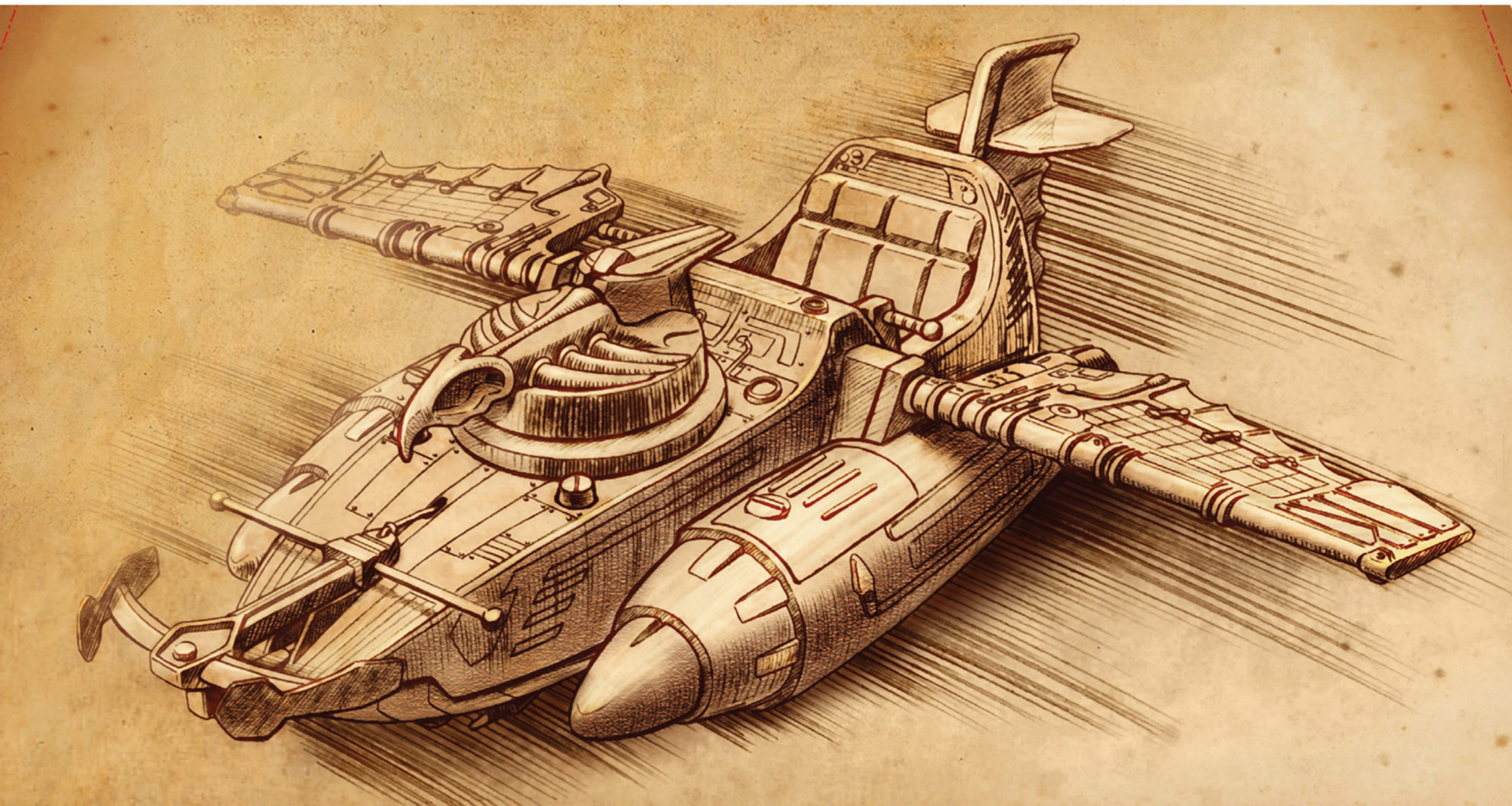


The Wind Raider, the first vehicle in the Classics line (*above*), as sculpted by Four Horsemen. The Classics design is based on a combination of the original toy, the animated version, and Rudy Obrero's box art from 1982 (*opposite*). Note the similarities between the original package art and the piece created thirty years later in 2011 (*below*). The Wind Raider featured the first true action feature in Classics, a push-button grappling hook that shot out and wheeled back in by turning the skull winch.







Above: Granamyr, who first appeared as a big green dragon in the vintage minicomics, was also a major character in the Filmation series—but in red. Fans were allowed to pick his color, and the all-red Granamyr became the biggest figure in the Classics line, standing over thirty inches tall! *Below:* Original box art by Rudy Obrero. *Right:* Draego-Man, an original creation of Four Horsemen, was introduced in the 2012 thirtieth-anniversary line. He had a genetic relationship to Granamyr, although they did not get along in the story line!









Above: Another fan vote was taken to choose the color of She-Ra's horse, Swiftwind, who would be either vintage-toy pink or Filmation white. The white version (which was released as a Royal Swift Wind variant in the vintage toy line) was the winner.

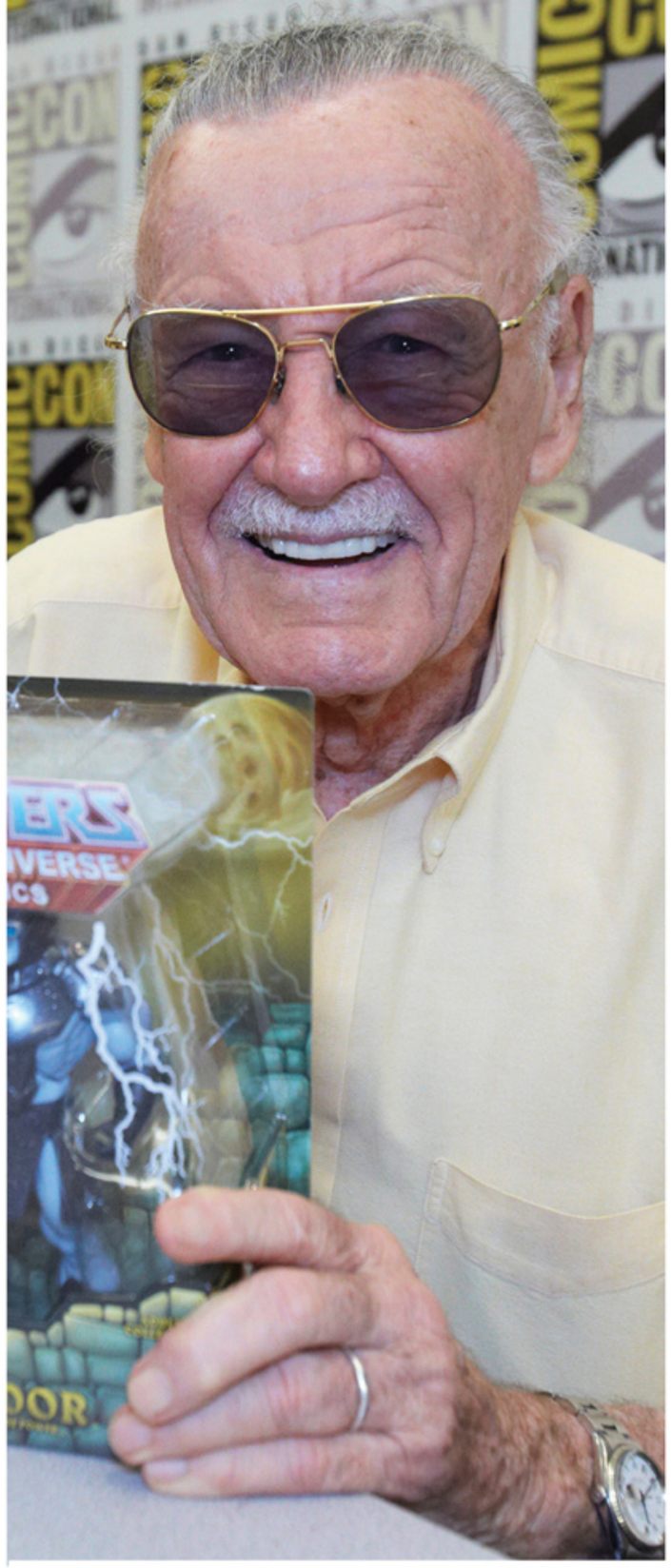
Below left: An all-new version of She-Ra was created for the anniversary—Galactic Protector She-Ra, a part of the New Adventures line (the old name, Galactic Guardians, was no longer available, due to copyright law). Art by Nate Baertsch.

Below right: Vintage cross-sell art for She-Ra, showing her mask in the original position (with the eye holes over her face) that was rejected by young girls during toy testing (*bottom*). Bubble Power She-Ra, a variant in the Classics line, wears her mask the way young girls preferred (*top*).











Mattel entered into a partnership with Stan Lee's POW! Entertainment in 2013, commemorated with a special Classics figure (*above and right*): Standor, a cosmic figure with the face of Stan Lee (and removable glasses!).

In the original minicomics, the Snake Men referred to a great evil leader, the Unnamed One, whom they served. This character (*below*) was reimagined for the Classics line in 2014 to be an evil Trollan called Gorpo. *Right:* Original drawing of "Nameless One" by Four Horsemen.





NAMELESS ONE

RO-SCOTT-O, MECHANOID WITH THE HEART OF A COLLECTOR

AN INTERVIEW WITH SCOTT NEITLICH, MATTEL BRAND MANAGER

Scott, you're the man behind the Classics relaunch, and you have a long history with the MOTU brand. What was your first exposure to the art of Masters of the Universe, and what did you think of its blend of sci-fi and fantasy elements? Do you have a favorite image or artist from your fandom and your tenure working on the brand?

I was first introduced to MOTU on my fourth birthday. I was very sick (just a cold, nothing serious), and my parents, for safety, had to cancel my party. Obviously this crushed me, and to cheer me up my parents gave me my gifts early: Castle Grayskull, He-Man, Skeletor, Ram Man, Stratos, Man-At-Arms, and Battle Cat. Later when I finally had my party, I also acquired a few other figures: the Teela and Zoar two-pack, Man-E-Faces, and Trap Jaw. Needless to say, it was love at first sight. I used to carry that castle around with me everywhere! And as I grew up, I continued to collect MOTU figs right up until around the Snake Men era. I remember especially loving the introduction of the Evil Horde; I got all of the original members, including Modulok. The combo of sci-fi and fantasy was so fresh and original. Plus, these MOTU figs were huge! They could rip my 3.75-inch space warriors in half!

As to the art, I never kept the packaging and for years had a memory of the figs being on green cards. I remember seeing a red card when I was older and thinking, "That is funny—I thought the packages were green." The Filmation series also had a huge influence, and I would watch that show daily with my sister and friends. She-Ra's show was also a favorite, and I think I actually grew to love her show more. I remember my sister got an extra She-Ra fig for her birthday one year and I absconded with it and added her to my MOTU toy collection (don't tell her)! I also have a lot of fond memories of some of the later minicomics. *The Search for Keldor* and the Snake Men comics were huge favorites.

From my tenure on the brand, my favorite art is a tossup between the latest minicomics (which have more fan Easter eggs in them than I can count) and all of the incredible map posters Rudy Obrero did. I drew all of the original sketches for the maps—well, not Eternia and Etheria, but all of the others, Preternia, Subternia, Horde Empire . . . Seeing Rudy turn my pencil sketches into beautiful masterpieces has been amazing. I was always a fan of fantasy maps growing up and had a wonderful time working on all of these map posters.

Why do you think MOTU has an enduring resonance to this day?

MOTU has a classic good vs. evil mythology that appeals to any generation. One of the great things about the character designs is how instantly recognizable the characters are. Skeletor is clearly the bad guy, and He-Man fights for good. Whether you put these figures in the hands of a four-year-old or a forty-year-old, there is an instant connection. On top of that, the core idea of Prince Adam heroically transforming into the super-muscle-man He-Man has that magical aspirational quality boys love. I was a super-skinny kid from Connecticut, and the idea that I could instantly change into this huge muscular hero was always very appealing.

What were the influences you brought to the table when you began working on MOTU?

A lifetime of playing with and collecting the toys was definitely an asset I brought with me when I was assigned to work on a new collector line at Mattel. Being a huge, avid fan of the property helped a ton, as I was not just a typical marketing guy, but at heart was a collector and specifically a MOTU collector myself. This meant I could use myself as a benchmark in product development. While my opinion would not be the same as that of every fan, if I—as a hardcore collector—could please myself, there was a good chance I was also pleasing a majority of fans as well!

Who is your favorite character visually? What about the design appeals to you?

Stratos and Trap Jaw are definitely two characters I really loved as a kid. I think Stratos was actually my preferred hero over He-Man in my own backyard adventures. And Trap Jaw, he was just an incredible toy. With three interchangeable arm pieces, a helmet loop he could zipline in on, and an articulated jaw (Come on, how many figures from the eighties have articulated jaws?), he was a real winner. Later in the line I grew to love Grizzlor, the Rock Men, and Kobra Khan. Spikor was also a personal favorite, especially because he was purple, my preferred color.

OUGRAUT SPACEPORT

ANWAT GAR

LAND OF GIANTS

MOUNTAIN

PIRATE COVE

CAVERNS OF RAKASH

MOUNTAINS OF GNARL

FOE CASTLE

GREAT JUNGLE

FREE PEOPLE OF PRETERNIA

VALLEY OF GNARL

GRAYSKULL TOWER

CENTRA

VILLAGE OF GAZ

CASTLE GRAYSKULL

VILLAGE OF ORKAS

HOR
TERRI

BERSERKER CASTLE

TALOK CITY

HORDE FACTORY W

ELDOR'S VILLAGE

MAGIC CAVE

HE-RO'S CRATER

OCEAN OF TIME

PRETE

BEFORE THE SPEL

DRAGON TOWER

AVIOPOLIS

OCEAN OF FIRE

DRAGON TERRITORY OF DARKSMOKE

S OF PERPETUA

MOUNT ETERNIUM

SLAVE CITY

CORRIDORS OF LITHOS

LAVA LAKE

SNAKE TERRITORY

L TOWER

TEMPLE OF SERPOS

MOUNTAINS OF GNARL

VALLEY OF BARATHRUM

VIPER TOWER

TEMPLE OF HORDAK

RDE
TORY

ORACLE'S TEMPLE

VILLAGE OF HY-DOE

ZALESIA

SLIME PIT

ORKS

HARMONY DESERT

ARACHNIA CITY

ERNIA
L OF SEPARATION

Stilia

Ice Mountains

Plains of Perpetua

Eye of Zurcain

Zodak's Mountain

Avion

Village of Pelleezeen

Underground City of Tundaria

Ocean of Gnarl

Andreenos

Mystic Mountains

Tar Swamp

Sea of Rakash

Anwat Gar

Golden Isles

Vine Jungle

Evergreen Forest

Sands of Time

Sands of Fire

Grave of He-Ro

Castle Grayskull

Orkas Island

Berserk Islands

Dunes of Doom

Former Location of the Hall of Wisdom

Village of Veridas

Eternos Palace

Harmony Sea

Southern Plain

Polar Ice Cap

Light Hemisphere

Eternia during the R

Ice Mountains

Sea of Rakash

Merman's Lair

Corridors of Lithos

Valley of the Dragons

Mount Zarathrum

Temple of Hordak

Dunes of Doom

Blood River

Snake Mountain

Death Channel

Ocean of Gnarl

Ruins of Zelesia

Harmony Sea

Polar Ice Cap

Dark Hemisphere

eign of King Randor

Castle Chill
Kingdom of Snows

Skull Path

Valley of The Lost

Dark Edge

Fright Zone

Growling Seas

Beast Island

Horror Hall

Meadowlands

Polar Ice Cap

Eth

during the Ho

Castle Chill

Kingdom of Snows

Crimson Waste

Whispering Woods

Scorpion Hill

Mystacor

Thaymor

Areas of Horde Occupation

Crystal Castle

Kingdom of Brightmoon

Growling Seas

Talon Mountain

Singing River

Polar Ice Cap

eria

rde occupation

Sands of Fire

Zodak's Mountain

Grayskull Tower

Central

Caves of Tundaria

Marzo's Treasure

Spalia Gate

Rock Temple

Spalia Kingdom

Crystal Chamber

Castle Grayskull

Rockmen Kingdom

Ruins of Eternos

Gar Star Cruiser

Elder's Trai

N

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S

SUBT

DURING THE REIGN


Mount Barathrum
Dunes of Doom
Tower
Viper Tower
Snake Mountain
Temple
of Serpos
Crystal Temple
Calligar Fiefdom
Hidden City
of Jatoria
Seed
Lava Lords
Arachnia City
Tubek Mining
Operations
ning Citadel
Kex Kingdom
Moon of Droom
ERNIA
OF KING SKELETOR

DESTROYED BY HORDE BOMBINGS

EXTENT OF THE HORDE

NORDOR

DENEBRIA

TRI-SOLAR

EQUIOS

ENOS

PRIMUS

JANTIX

MULTRA

FALLEEN

STRUG

GEEBOR

HORDE WORLD

JANTIX II

KYLEX

KARIB

PATH OF HORDE INVASION FLEET (FOLLOWING HE-RO)

BESTOUS

UNITORA

CRELUS

SNAVE

PHELIBIO IX

ZAFFER

JUGULIA

P'OCHEK

KANDROX

ALITY

INSECTICA

TROPICA

MANDOR

LAREDOS

TREADAWAY

EXTENT OF THE HORDE EMPIRE

FLORANIA

RUE-BAN

EARTH

KNOWN PLANET

HORDE

FROM THE NOTES OF ZODA

EMPIRE

SYSTEM

LASER GATE

VEBEX

PLAGRA STATION

NAMELESS DIMENSION

TIMELESS
(ETERNAL)
DIMENSION
(TROLLA HERE)

INFINITA

POLARIDES

PHANTOS

DESPONDOS
(ETHERIA HERE)

TRANNIS

ETERNIA

DRAEDUS

PRISON STARR

ROBOTICA

BATTLE
PLANET

ERONIA

BELATRAB

DRAPHOS

GARIUS
ASTEROID BELT

EINSTEIN ROSEN SPACE BRIDGE
(PER CAPTAIN GLENN)

SYSTEMS IN THE

EMPIRE

AC ZUR AND TEELA' NA

ETERNIA AND HER MOONS



Preternia Chamber

Preternia and Her Moons Hologram

Statue of King Grayskull

Sorceress Personal Chamber and Library

Turret Gun

Hidden Passage to Preternia Chamber

Training Room

Hall of He-Men

Energy Anvil

Zoar Stand

Secret Escape Door

Turbodactyl (Preserved)

Coridite

Spherical Astrolabe

Ancient Observatory and Main Library

Secret Chamber of Defense

Library of Forbidden Knowledge

Throne Room

Mystic Mirror

Great Eye of the Galaxy

Trap Door

Castle Grayskullman

Small Passage to the Eyes of the Skull (From the Right Tower)

Molkrom (Imprisoned)

Hallway of Holograms and Illusions

Grave of He-Ro

Secret Entrance to the Tomb

Hidden Tomb of He-Ro

Magic Staff

Book of Living Spells

Sarcophagus

Secret Door to the Crypt

Statue of He-Ro

False Door (to the Abyss)

Dungeon

Dwell of Souls

CASTLE GR

Fortress of Mys

Point Dread

Console

Control Panel

Walkway of Elders

Trolla Chamber

Timeless Military Issue Space Suit

Trollan Military Issue Space Suit

Fortification Built After the Great Wars

Laboratory

Eternia Chamber

Eternia and Her Moons Hologram

Spell of Separation Triad and Tablet

Control Room

Elevator

Secret Door

Spirit of Grayskull

Endless Abyss

Crystal Chamber

Power Orb

To the Center of Eternia (Star Seed)

Subternia Gate to Castle Grayskull (From the Buried Ruins of the Lost City of the Ancients)

DIANA

RAYSKULL

tery and Power

Previous pages: A series of maps designed for and released with the Classics line depicting various details of the Classics universe, illustrated by Rudy Obrero, Axel Giménez, and Nate Baertsch.





This spread: The Classics toy line produced eight minicomics that helped to bridge the gaps between major points in the story line and the lore. Shown here are the covers for the first three issues by Eric Powell, Raymond Swanland, and Wellinton Alves, which all came out in 2012 as part of the anniversary line. These three comics reimagined the Powers of Grayskull story line that started in the final minicomic from 1986. These minicomics bridge the gap between the 2002 series and New Adventures.

BATTLE ON, MASTERS! WE WILL NOT BE OVERRUN!

DESTROY OUR ENEMIES, MY MINIONS! THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN BEING DEFEATED BY HE-MAN IS BEING DEFEATED WITH HE-MAN!



A double-page spread, drawn by Wellinton Alves and colored by Michael Atiyeh, from *The Powers of Grayskull: The Second Ultimate Battle-ground!*, showing the massive battle of the title, a name taken from a minicomic of the vintage era that came with the Eternia play set.

Shown here are the cover and panels from issue #4, *The Secret Origin of Skeletor*, which introduced the spirit of Hordak, who would later be released as a clear-plastic chase figure in the Classics line. A deliberate attempt was made to use the mini-comics to introduce characters who had not yet made it into the toy line, such as Prince Keldor and Randor, the runners-up from the 1987 and 2012 Create a Character contests, as well as the first official appearance of Dare, son of He-Man, from the proposed 1988 and 1996 concepts.

CHAPTER TEN 2014

THE EVOLUTION OF A UNIVERSE



MAN-A-JER, MAKER OF PLANS

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOE FERENCZ, MATTEL FRANCHISE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

What do you think you brought to the art of Masters of the Universe?

I was not an artist on MOTU, but I did contribute to design strategy and direction. I worked on the Masters Facebook page, mobile game, and comic book series. In all of these executions, our goal is to make MOTU relevant to today's audiences by building on the authentic history and DNA of what makes He-Man and the Masters of the Universe an iconic entertainment property. We focus on the clear battle between good and evil, as exemplified by He-Man and Skeletor, the strong heroic vision and displays of courage that define He-Man, the epic mash-up of sci-fi and fantasy, and the close relationships between characters that warm fans' hearts.

By being true to the history of MOTU, we are able to give fans a fond, nostalgic feeling, but by focusing on creating relevancy to today's audience, we take risks and try to show fans something new and exciting. This is the strategy that we used to create the He-Man mobile game. Inspired by Matty's reinterpretation of the original toys, we asked ourselves, what would the Filmation style look like if it were created today? What Gabe and Rob came up with was everything that Filmation was in its day—cartoony, accessible, aggressive, and imaginative, but not in the exact same way that it was in the eighties. It became something new, and fans and critics loved it. It harked back to classic MOTU while at the same time giving fans something relevant and surprising, and at the end of the day, we watch movies and cartoons, and play video games, because we want something unexpected, we want novel experiences. That same philosophy is true of the tone of the mobile game overall, which is the same as the Facebook page (which is a fan favorite).

Mobile gaming and Facebook are fun mediums. We needed to look deep into this hardcore fantasy/sci-fi world for the fun, the fun that fans look forward to. And what we found was that fans know that MOTU can be funny, and they like it when it is, and we can probably partly thank Seth Green and Matt Senreich for that. But the difference when we're developing official He-Man content is that He-Man is always the hero. He's the ultimate hero of so many of our childhoods. We can laugh and have fun with so many elements of the MOTUverse, and He-Man loves to crack wise himself, but he is also always a hero, always standing for something positive, for our best and most noble intentions.

Did you anticipate the popularity of the brand and its enduring resonance to this day?

When I first started working on MOTU, we knew the brand had a huge following but we also knew that the brand needed to increase its relevance. The creative team has done an amazing job of firing on all cylinders. We have won awards for the quality of our toy line, our video game, our comic series, and our Facebook page, and we have seen a major increase in popularity due to those initiatives. We can't say for sure, but the fact that we've shown up in *Family Guy*, *South Park*, *The Walking Dead*, *True Blood*, the *New Yorker*, Jimmy Fallon, etc., in the past couple of years is probably due to some of these great efforts to rekindle the love for the hero of our childhoods.

What were the influences you brought to the table?

As the franchise manager I built off Scott Neitlich and the toy design team's great work on the MOTU Classics line to continue to push for a contemporization of the world. I asked the team to consider *Venture Bros.*–style meta humor, Kidrobot's fresh take on character design, and conceptual video game successes such as *Robot Unicorn Attack* to understand how a classic character and universe can live in a vital and authentic way in today's postmodern entertainment marketplace.

Who was your favorite character? What about the design of the world or its characters appealed to you?

This is boring, but I think He-Man is the most interesting character to work with. It's such a great design challenge because his classic costume gives you so little actual material to work with. It becomes about proportion, line style, and overall vision for his tone and manner. The fact that he has lived successfully in so many forms and media speaks to the versatility of the character, but also to the talent of the creative team to continually reinterpret him for new opportunities and adventures.

Above: Title screen from *He-Man: The Most Powerful Game in the Universe,* developed by GlitchSoft and released by Chillingo in 2012. *Below:* Cutscene art from the game featuring a fun, cartoony style, rendered in homage to the dramatic fantasy style of Rudy Obrero's vintage packaging art









Above: Screen captures from the game. The game features a light, cartoony vibe, allowing for in-jokes and totally sweet Skeletor insults. *Below:* Concept art from the game's development.



HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

HIGHLIGHTS FROM HE-MAN'S FACEBOOK PAGE

By 2012 He-Man had reconquered the toy business, mobile gaming, and comics—it was time to go where no He-Man had gone before in order to tie it all together: social media. The He-Man Facebook page began posting in September 2012 and immediately struck a chord with fans across the globe. The page featured a vision of He-Man that fans of all levels of interest, ages, and genders could get behind: He-Man as the ultimate, but still approachable, hero. On Facebook, always posting in first person, He-Man could share his sometimes heroic, sometimes domestic, and sometimes downright hilarious life with his fans. A steady stream of fresh posts, sparked by anything that might catch He-Man's attention, from the history of Eternia to the most recent pop culture phenomenon, delighted fans on a nearly daily basis. He-Man was always ready to surprise his audience with his candid, clever, and timely observations and experiences, and his Facebook page quickly grew in its following and went on to win awards and distinctions within the social media industry. The same attention to quality and devotion to the characters and world of Masters of the Universe that have always made the brand great informed the content for this most trendy of media platforms and once again put millions of smiles on the faces of fans around the world.

By the Power of Grayskull, I Have a Facebook



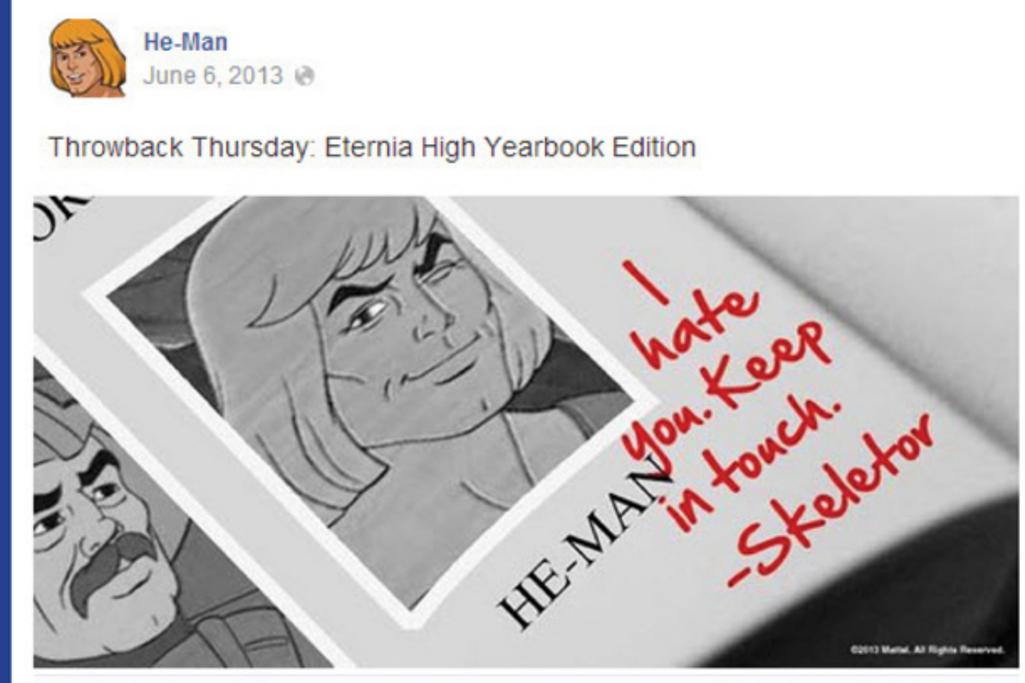
He-Man's first-ever post announced to the world that he was ready to not only be on Facebook, but to be the Most Powerful Man on Facebook!

Maythe4thbewithyou



May the 4th has a special place in the hearts of sci-fi fans worldwide. He-Man wanted to pay homage to one of his greatest inspirations.

Yearbook



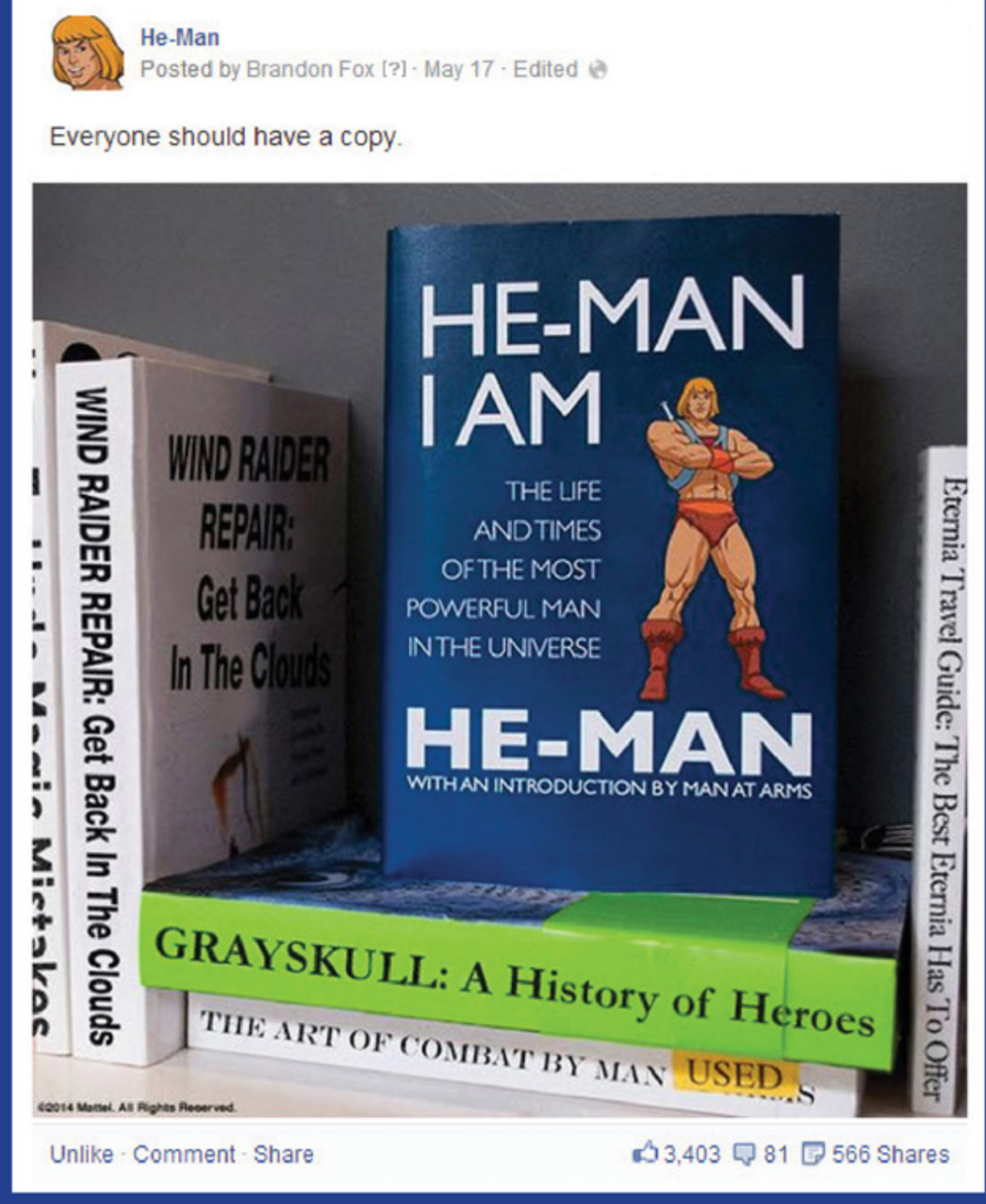
To celebrate the end of the school year, He-Man posted an old yearbook message from Skeletor. Unsurprisingly, it was not very nice.

Black Friday



To celebrate America's biggest day of pre-Christmas shopping (the Friday after Thanksgiving), Skeletor was photographed skulking around the local mall. What was on his holiday shopping list? Havoc Staffs, of course!

He-Man I Am



One of the most fun aspects of the He-Man Facebook page was thinking of product ideas for He-Man that fans could only wish were true. A He-Man biography surely would be a bestseller.

Fortune Cookie



You'd be surprised how often He-Man seems to get this fortune, but it's true of everyone in their own hearts as well.

CREAT-ORS, HEROIC DIRECTORS OF FUTURE ENTERTAINMENT

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROB DAVID, MATTEL HEAD WRITER AND LEAD CREATIVE,
AND GABRIEL DE LA TORRE, MATTEL SENIOR ART SUPERVISOR

Describe your creative roles on Masters of the Universe.

Rob David: My background is in writing and story editing TV animation. Mattel's new entertainment studio, Playground Productions, recruited me to develop, write, and supervise new story lines for MOTU, across film, television, video games, comics—the whole entertainment spectrum. It's a total dream job for me. I get to work on He-Man with ridiculously talented artists like Gabe.

Gabriel De La Torre: I have the honor of working with Rob as the senior art supervisor on Masters of the Universe. I oversee all visual assets, and create and direct the present and future aesthetics of the brand.

What was your first exposure to He-Man?

Rob: The vintage packaging art! The box to Castle Grayskull knocked me on my butt when I first saw it as a kid in the toy store. Just unbelievable work from artists like Rudy Obrero and William George. If you look closely at those vintage boxes, you can actually see the oil on canvas, and their brushwork! An insane amount of craftsmanship went into that packaging art. And each box told a story, pulling you into this barbaric, sublime world of Eternia. Along with *Star Wars* and Marvel comics, He-Man really terraformed my imagination at a pivotal age.

Gabe: My first exposure to the brand was during my childhood, when, after hearing my loudly stated preferences, my mom gave me the He-Man and Skeletor action figures and, more importantly, the legendary, three-towered Eternia play set, which at the time was bigger than me. This was for me the prized possession in my collection, which is now stored safely away in an undisclosed location. Years later, when I was fortunate enough to get a design job at Mattel I knew I was destined to be part of the MOTU brand someday. I worked on the brand for many years, but with Mattel's Playground Productions in place, I now have been given the awesome chance to shape the style of the brand.

How do you approach reinterpreting such iconic characters for today's audience?

Rob: First, by recognizing they really are icons! There's a reason people are still talking about He-Man and Skeletor. You need to respect and honor the characters—their core concepts.

But at the same time, it's very important to me that these characters not stay stuck as products of their time. We can't treat He-Man like a history piece. He needs to have the power to surprise you. Even old fans like me.

I'm always looking for ways to recapture that feeling we had as kids, when we first met the characters and didn't know what to expect. In that way, I think it's possible to excite both old and hopefully new fans. It's important to look at the characters with a new lens, whether comedic or dramatic—sometimes it's just asking questions about things we take for granted, like, why is Hordak's base called the Fright Zone? Who is Skeletor's mother? Why does King Hssss wear a human disguise? The answers often lead you in exciting new directions. If you stay true to the core concepts, it's always fun to explore the possibilities.

Gabe: The MOTU characters have always had a larger-than-life aura about them, as powerful demigods that could crush or save a universe, with a very distinct and recognizable design sense. Visually retaining these elements, but also making them feel timeless and relevant, has been a key rule for the brand. Essentially, we are representing the characters the way we have always imagined them: epic, heroic, and recognizable, but fresh and unexpected.

For example, He-Man has had many distinct designs throughout his existence that consisted both of barbarian and sci-fi influences. Getting a chance to explore those aspects to different degrees and the push and pull of those elements has been a great experience. Applying these design explorations to the He-Man app game, the new DC comics, licensing, and lots of upcoming, top-secret projects we can't mention here has allowed us to push the boundaries of the brand beyond just nostalgia.

Despara has become a popular reimagining of Force Captain Adora. What led you guys to her creation?

Rob: I loved *The Secret of the Sword* as a kid. Adora's character resonated with me—the fact that she was kidnapped as a child and raised by Hordak to be his force captain and leader of his Horde troops. She would later



become She-Ra, a great hero, but her origin was rooted in pain and loss . . . and villainy!

In the Filmation cartoon, her time as Force Captain Adora is glossed over very briefly. In fact, Force Captain Adora is a nice young woman who doesn't even suspect that Hordak is evil. She's shocked, shocked, to find out Hordak is a fascist dictator. Sure, there's brainwashing involved, but still. When she finds out the truth, she immediately joins up with the good guys. No harm, no foul.

But I love that story. It has so much drama in it. I just wanted to update it. Stay true to the core concept, but play it out logically. For example, if Hordak abducted Adora as a baby, and raised her to be his force captain, why would he allow her to keep her birth name? That didn't really make much sense to me. He'd change her name. He'd give her a name that would instill fear in the hearts of his enemies.

If you play the core concept out logically, Hordak would strip her of her past life, and mold her in his image. He'd forge her into a living, terrifying weapon. She'd be utterly devoted to him. She'd see him as a sick sort of father figure. She'd have no conscience, no pity, and absolutely no knowledge of her true past. I wanted her to be the polar opposite of She-Ra, so we could make her ultimate journey from villainess to heroine as dramatic, and heroic, as possible. That's when I took it to Gabe, my partner in crime, who came up with a sick design.

Gabe: When Rob came to me with this darker reimagining of Adora being raised and influenced by the Evil Horde, I thought that was so epic and different but also part of the lore of the brand (especially because I too was recruited into the Evil Horde as a child, so I could relate). With that idea, there were so many visual possibilities to play with in terms of Despara's design, but ultimately, with Hordak being so egotistical, he'd want to mold his "daughter" in his own evil likeness as a tribute to himself. Like any father, Hordak would want to live on beyond himself!

So instinctively we wanted to transform Adora into Hordak. We took Hordak's original design and made it more sinister and cold and treated it as armor she would wear in honor of her "father." Her helmet is literally Hordak's face. I took the classic headpiece silhouette from his design and reinterpreted it as a more feminine but villainous crown that framed the horrific white bat-skull mask. Both of their outfits retain the very strong gray, black, and red color palette but the colors are used in a slicker and sharper manner on Adora.

Rob had this great idea to strip Princess Adora of her signature long blonde hair for Despara's look under the helmet—as a metaphor for how Hordak robbed her of her true identity. With that in mind, I suggested keeping her hair in a more masculine and military buzzcut so that we could see remnants of the Adora that we know and love, but completely suppressed by Hordak. I wanted a very powerful, feminine, and villainous character that would make a visual impact that Masters of the Universe fans would recognize. Rob and I were so pleased with the fan reception and are always listening to the people who love Masters as much as we do—the fans. Long live Despara!

What's in store for Masters of the Universe? Where is it going next?

Rob: We're working on lots of new He-Man projects, which we hope fans will enjoy, old and new. This art book is an amazing testament to the work of so many talented, passionate people, including the fans who have kept the brand alive for so long. MOTU's story is one of a kind and its future is just getting started.

Gabe: You can be sure that no matter what new and exciting interpretations Masters goes through, we will always capture the power, color, and distinct visual presence of the brand that is displayed in this art book. And, of course, always keeping the blond, muscled swordsman with his hooded, yellow-skull-faced frenemy. They both have the Power!

RETURN TO DC COMICS



Courtesy of DC Comics

Cover to *He-Man: The Eternity War* #1, an epic maxiseries that premiered in December 2014. The Eternity War is the war to end all wars—Ragnarok MOTU style! Art by Stjepan Sejic.

In 2012 He-Man and the Masters of the Universe returned to DC Comics with the launch of a six-part miniseries, followed by an ongoing series, one-shot origin specials, a crossover event costarring the Justice League—and more! Working closely with Mattel's Playground Productions studio, DC Comics' *Masters of the Universe* provides a deep exploration of the mythos, and a fresh and hard-hitting take on the world of He-Man. With stories by Geoff Johns, Dan Abnett, Rob David, and Lloyd Goldfine and art by Pop Mhan, Ben Oliver, Frazer Irving, Ed Benes, and more—DC's revolutionary He-Man run is just getting started.

This is a double-page spread from *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* issue #13, a flashback issue to the era of King Grayskull, one thousand years before the birth of Prince Adam. This climactic moment of victory, in which King Grayskull slays Hordak with his newly forged Sword of Power, lies at the heart of the new mythos and reverberates throughout the series.

Pencils and inks by Pop Mhan. Colors by Mark Roberts.



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Courtesy of DC Comics

HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE


...POWER!
NO! HOW CAN IT BE?
I AM NEXT! I MUST WIELD THE POWER SWORD!



Double-page spread from the *Origin of He-Man* one-shot. Prince Adam has just held his magic sword aloft for the very first time and now faces off against Skeletor.

Art by Ben Oliver. Colors by Kathryn Layno.

Courtesy of DC Comics



Courtesy of DC Comics

Cover to *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* #18 by Stjepan Sejic, featuring She-Ra!



Courtesy of DC Comics

The creepy cover to *Masters of the Universe: The Origin of Skeletor* #1 by Frazer Irving.



A variant cover by Darwyn Cooke for *He-Man: The Eternity War* #1.



Courtesy of DC Comics

EXPLORATORY ARTWORK

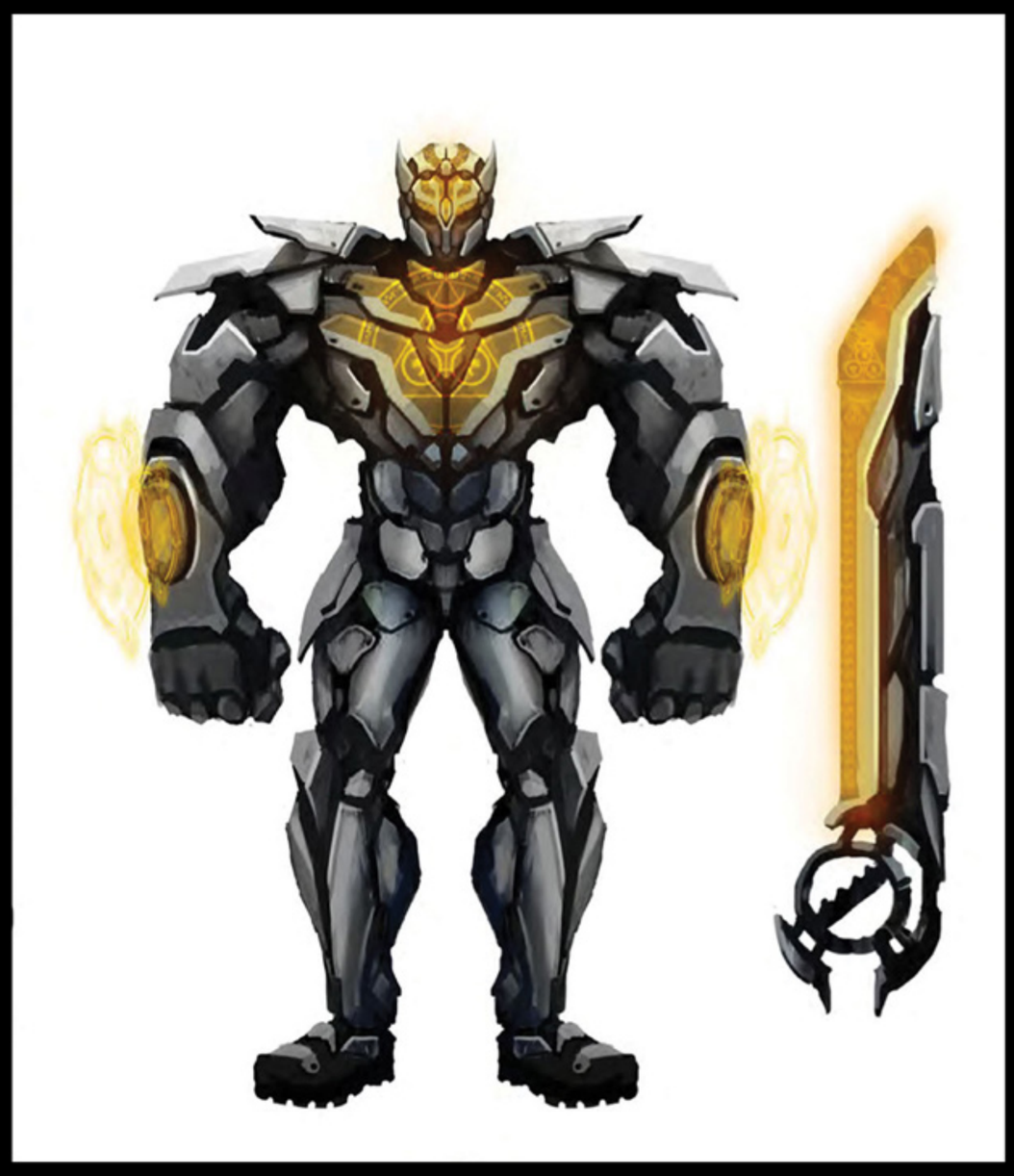
The following pages contain exclusive, never-before-seen inspiration art for potential upcoming Masters of the Universe projects: Television? Video games? Fever dream? All of the above? He-Man won't say. He guards his secrets as closely as he does the Power of Grayskull. But one thing is clear: when it comes to Masters of the Universe, the future begins now.











Above: He-Man battle armor infused with the magical Power of Grayskull. *Right:* Prince Adam in battle armor.

Opposite, top left: Roboto reimagined as a robotic warrior following in the footsteps of his creator (Man-At-Arms) by enlisting in the Royal Guard and later becoming a Master of the Universe—the Master of Machines. *Top right:* Orko with more of his body visible in the design. *Bottom:* Battle Cat reimagined as a humanoid shape changer. In his base form, he's an ancient general from King Grayskull's era, now a mentor to a young Prince Adam. When it's time to fight Skeletor, the general dons his enchanted battle helm (which caps his staff) and transforms into the ferocious Battle Cat, Master of War!






GABRIEL DELATORRE 07'





Above: Moss Man, the elemental Master of Earth. *Below:* Initial concept sketch for “Eternity Armor Battle Cat.”



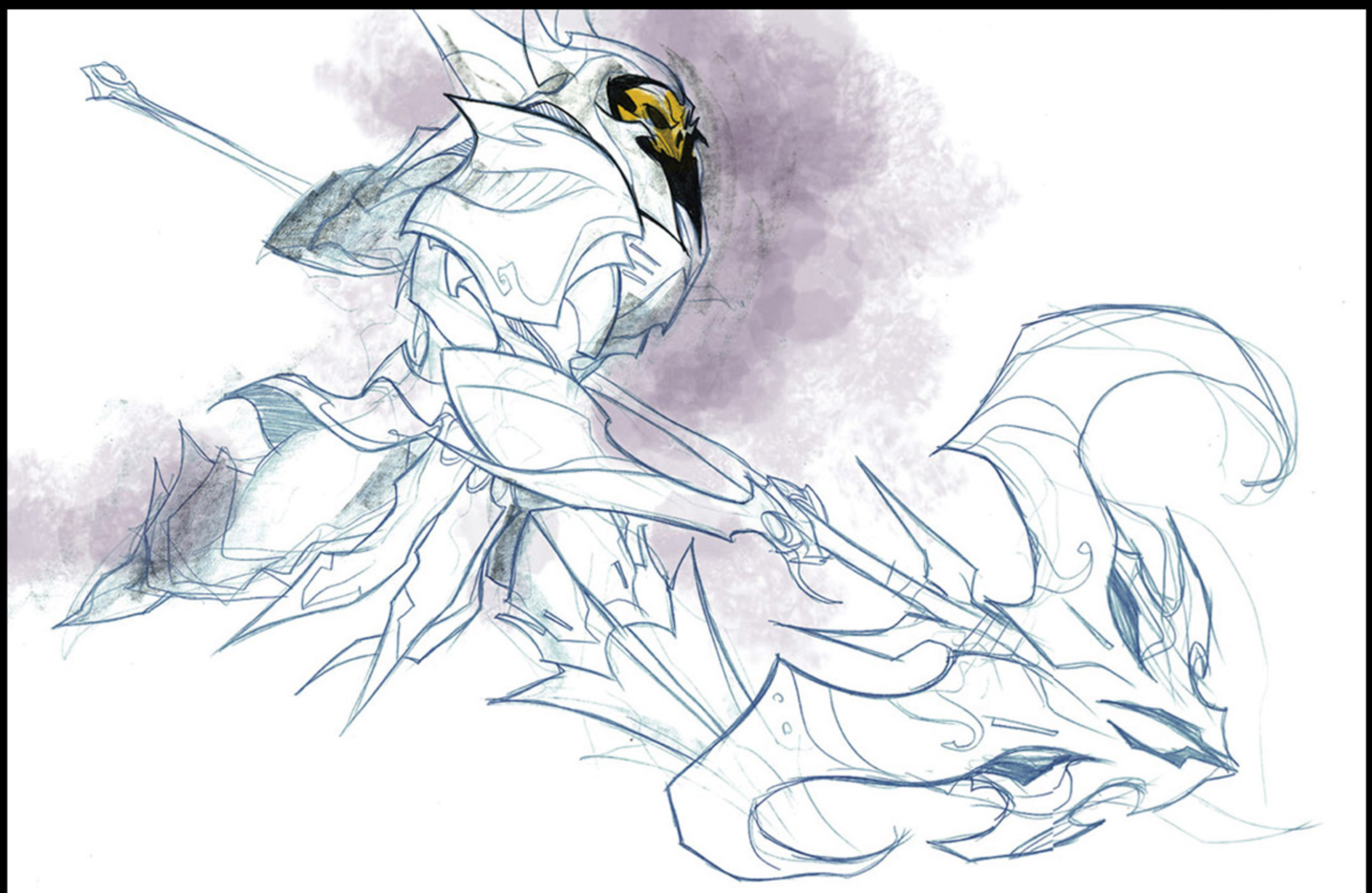


Above: Castle Grayskull reimagined as a fortress built from the skeletal remains of the first titanic hero of ancient Eternia, Tytus.

Next page: Castle Grayskull reborn, its bricks and mortar now infused with the very magic it was built to protect. Seen here being summoned by its heroic guardian and protector, He-Man, the Most Powerful Man in the Universe.





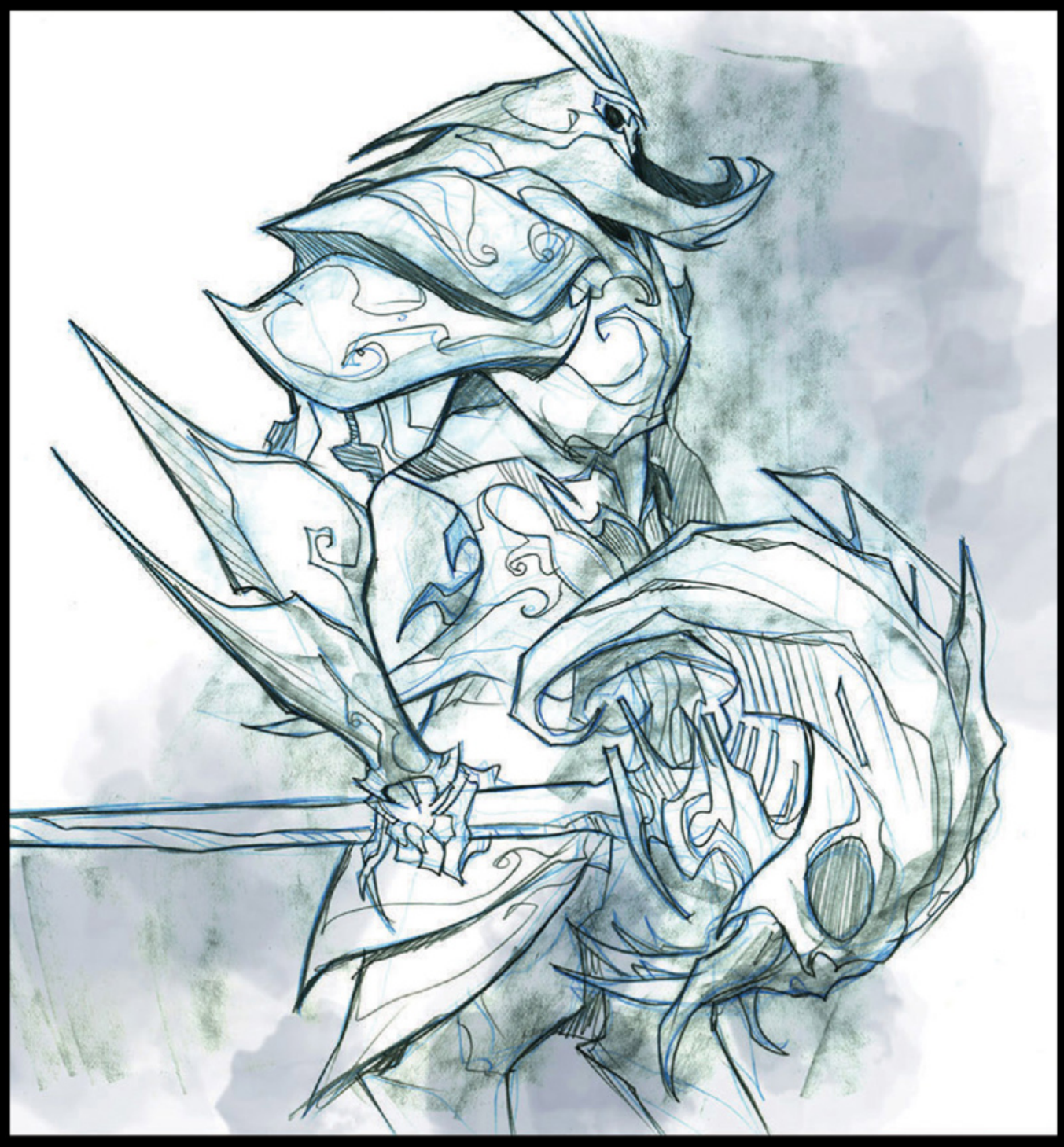


This spread: Exploratory reimaginings of Skeletor, Overlord of Destruction. Commissioned by Mattel.











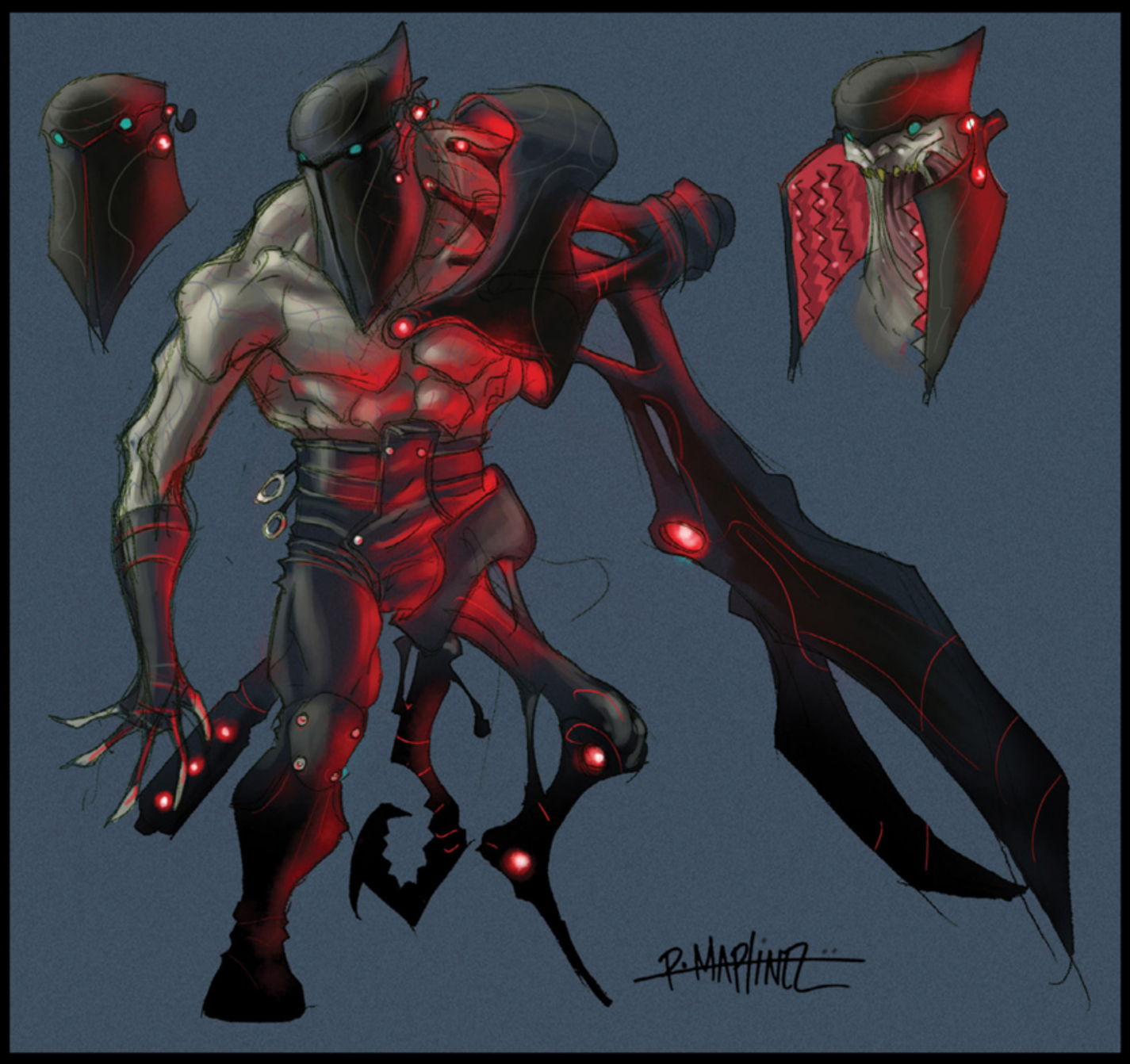












Opposite, top left: The Eternian guard is no match for Skeletor! *Opposite, top right:* Prince Keldor beholds a multiverse of havoc! *Opposite, bottom:* When Prince Keldor holds his magic staff aloft and says the words, "Cry Havoc, I am the power!" he transforms into Skeletor, the most powerful demon in the universe! Seen here in his battle mode: his body is composed of havoc magic encased within indestructible armor.

This page, left: Trap Jaw reimagined. *Above:* Beast Man reimagined. Note the ram skull symbol on Beast Man's chest and lash, suggesting that both Beast Man and Skeletor draw their power from a common source.

I AM ADAM. PRINCE OF ETERNIA AND
DEFENDER OF THE SECRETS OF CASTLE GRAYSKULL.

THIS IS CRINGER . . . MY FEARLESS FRIEND.

FABULOUS SECRET POWERS WERE
REVEALED TO ME THE DAY I HELD ALOFT
MY MAGIC SWORD AND SAID . . .

BY THE POWER OF GRAYSKULL!

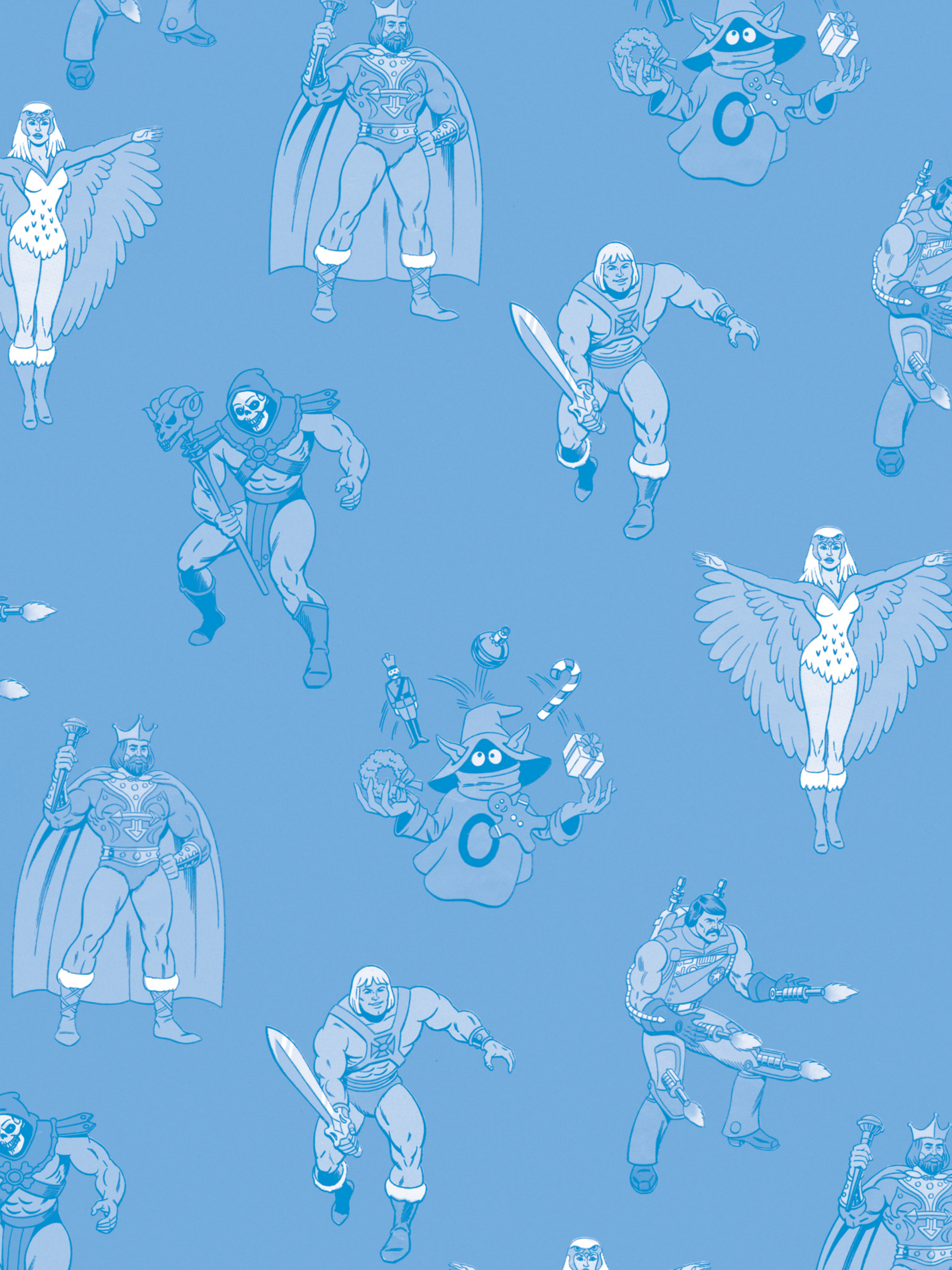
I HAVE THE POWER!

CRINGER BECAME THE MIGHTY
BATTLE CAT, AND I BECAME HE-MAN,
THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN THE UNIVERSE.

ONLY THREE OTHERS SHARE THIS SECRET . . .

OUR FRIENDS: THE SORCERESS,
MAN-AT-ARMS, AND ORKO.

TOGETHER WE DEFEND CASTLE
GRAYSKULL FROM THE EVIL
FORCES OF SKELETOR.





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HE-MAN AND THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE.

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