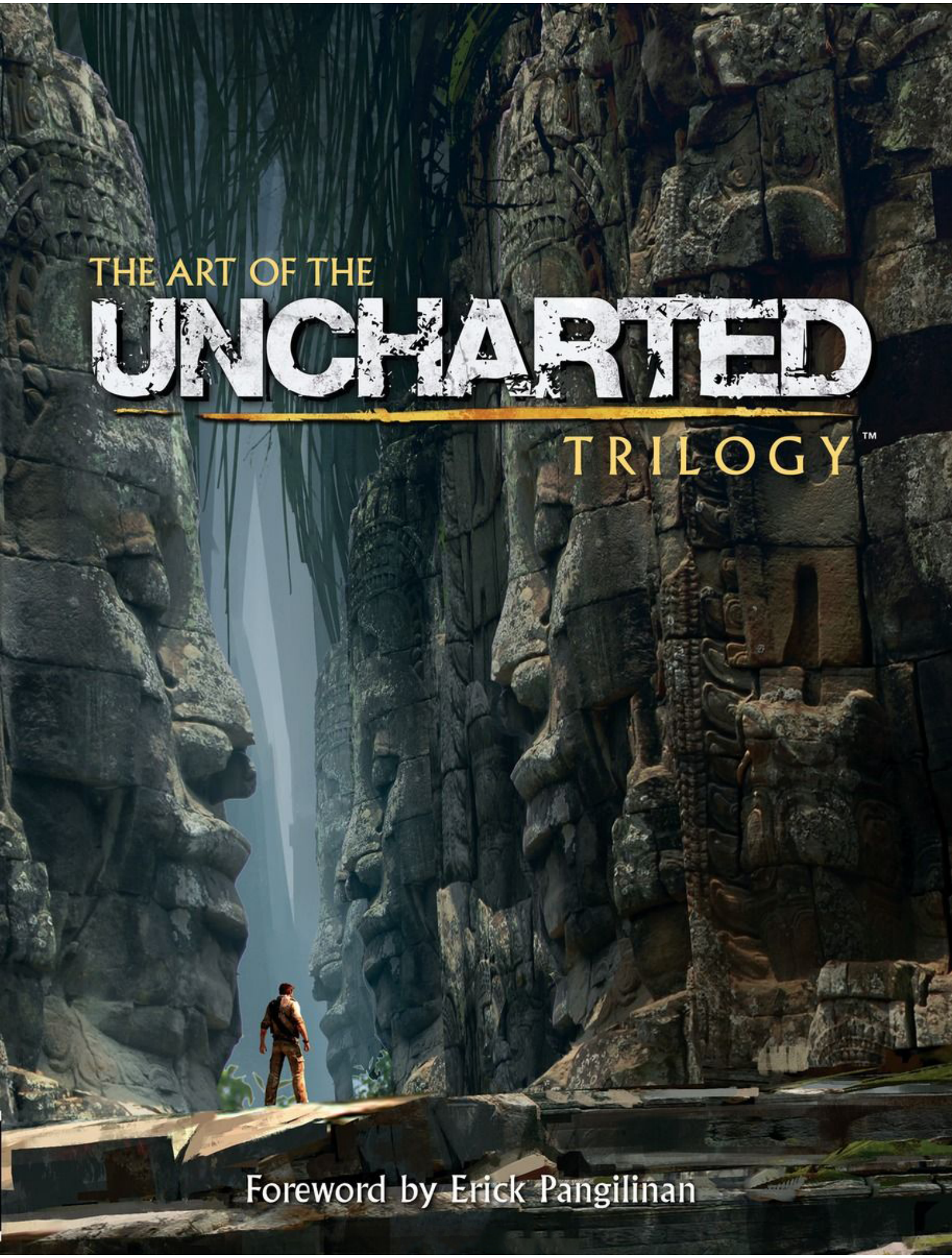
THE ART OF THE UNCHARTED TRILOGY™


THE ART OF THE
UNCHARTED
TRILOGY™
Foreword by Erick Pangilinan

UNCHARTED





THE ART OF THE UNCHARTED TRILOGY





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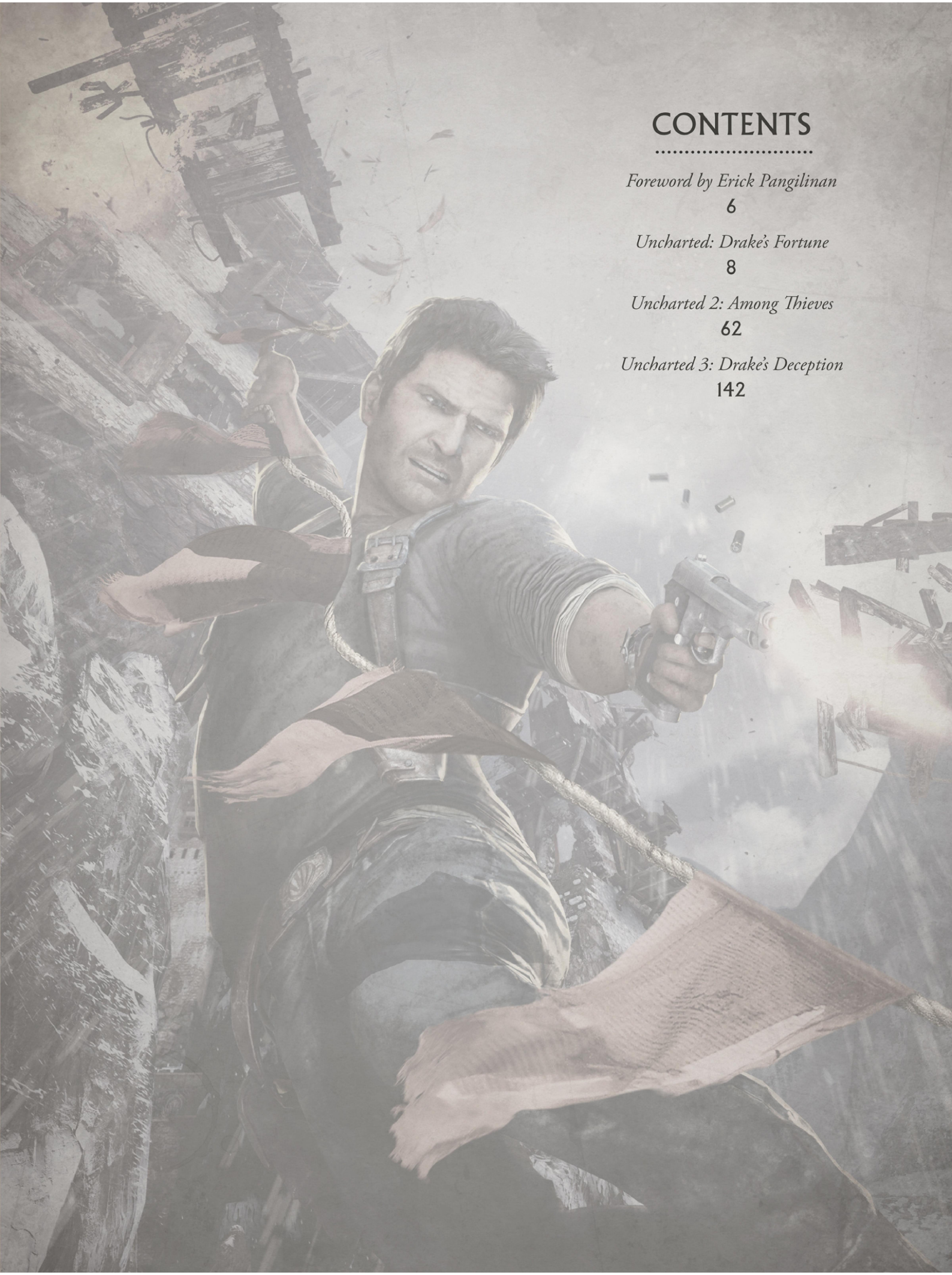

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FOREWORD

During the *Crash Bandicoot* and *Jak and Daxter* years, our art team was assembled to produce largely cartoon-style games. But in 2004, we started working on a new IP for the PlayStation 3, one with a distinctly different, more realistic style.

The transition period between PlayStations 2 and 3 was a challenging time to work at Naughty Dog. The PlayStation 3 hardware came in late, and the spec was dauntingly complex. Meanwhile, our new project found itself in a constant state of flux, as we engaged in endless debate about the direction of the game and the art style. As if wrangling a new system and inventing a new IP weren't hard enough, we also went through a management transition when our original copresidents left the company, creating a vacuum that forced team leaders into new roles. The studio, which was used to a flat hierarchy, strained as the size of the team rapidly grew. We were forced to adopt a slightly more top-down approach yet retain the creative benefits of our traditional flat structure. Like a dark storm brewing on the horizon, these converging factors collectively seemed like a perfect recipe for disaster. As the months wore on, it became clear that *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* was a project that would define the future of Naughty Dog. Either it would lead our studio to its greatest success or destroy it altogether.

In contrast with our previous projects, the new game had to be realistic, which required new software and pipelines to upgrade the quality of our characters, animation, and environments. We needed a retooled team that could sculpt and rig realistic, high-resolution characters. Our animators, long used to handcrafted cartoon animation, had to shift to a performance-based motion-capture pipeline. This new workflow enabled us to capture more natural interactions between actors and pair their dialogue seamlessly, but radically increased complexity. The shift to naturalistic settings radically increased the density and fidelity of our game world, and our environment team had to adapt to these changes. Levels that on the PlayStation 2 took only a few weeks now took months. Coming off the ambitious *Jak and Daxter* series, the designers doubled down and crafted a game of staggering scope and complexity. That scale, combined with the more complicated technical and graphical requirements of the new platform, caused the team roster to balloon to nearly double its previous size.

Even for a studio used to thriving in creative chaos, production on the first *Uncharted* redefined "challenging." During most of the project, nothing was set in stone, or even clearly defined—story, design, tools, pipeline, or technology. We had to rebuild the engine that ran our games from scratch. Every element was under constant redesign, yet the PlayStation 3 hardware launch was set, and the schedule demanded the team race forward. Team members used to a more organized grind quit on a weekly basis, not just individual contributors, but leads and other people with critical assignments. These setbacks dragged our schedule out by months. Fortunately, enough core senior Naughty Dogs in each department picked up the pieces and powered through. Throughout the struggle, a single-minded determination to ship a first-rate game remained the sole constant.

In classic Naughty Dog fashion, the chaos of *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* was tamed in the end. Its launch served as a huge morale boost. Positive public reception validated our efforts and inspired us to push forward on a sequel, incorporating nearly every great idea that didn't make it into the first game. The second time around, the team structure was more settled, the art and design vision clear, the production pipeline defined, and the tools workable. Now it was possible to handle an even grander scope of work, and the designers took advantage. Improvements were made incrementally in every department and aspect of the game. Programmers pumped up the efficiency of the cell processor, allowing significantly improved graphics. Artists more confident in their process produced substantially better work. Designers, more grounded by having the basics in place, were able to innovate with new scenarios and gameplay mechanics.

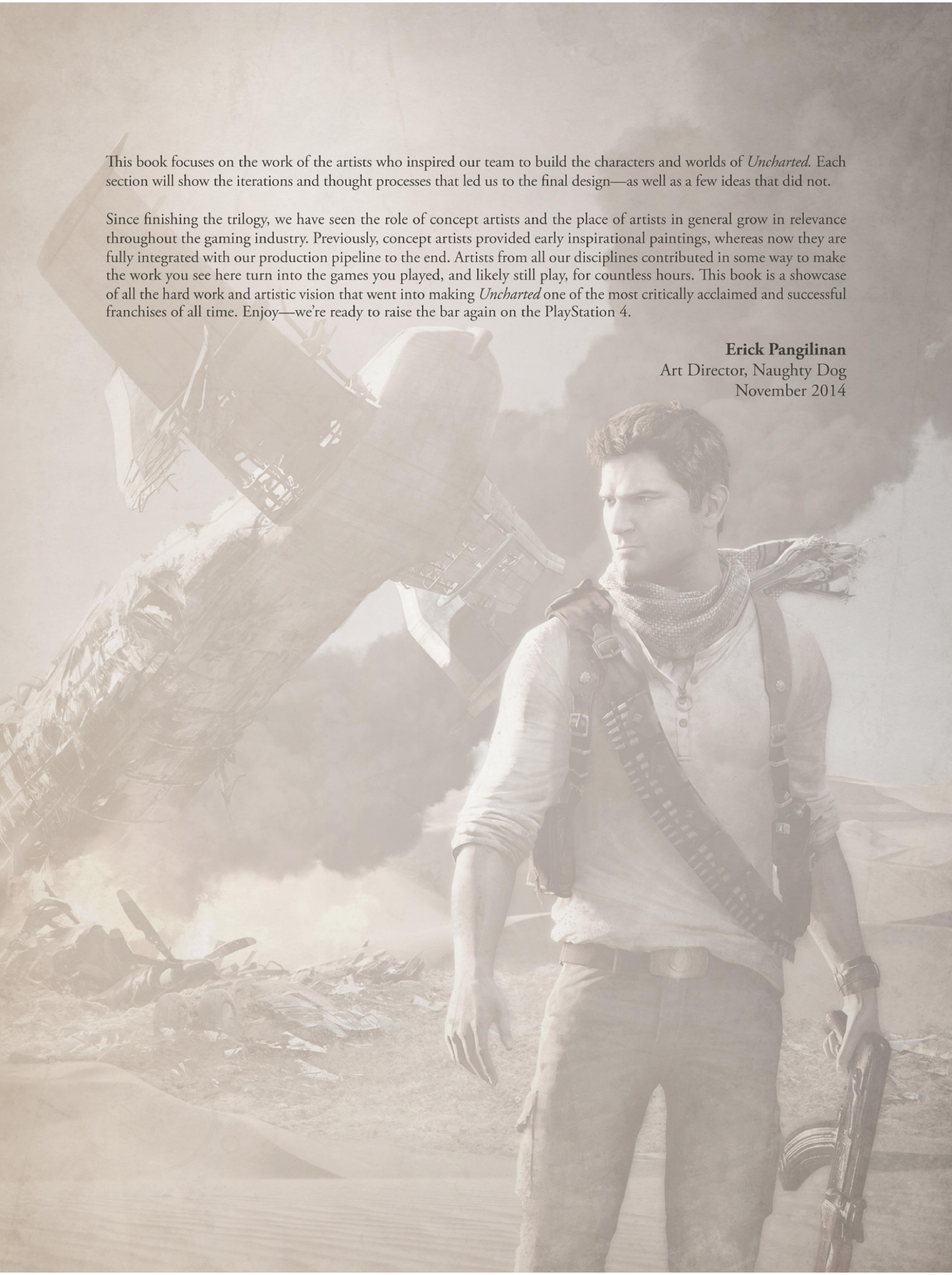
These improvements led to *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves* being one of the most successful titles in the history of PlayStation and, arguably, gaming. The game swept awards in almost all categories and earned an aggregate score of 96/100 on Metacritic. Confident in our vision and eager to set the bar higher, we wrapped up the trilogy, releasing *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception* in 2011, to great commercial and critical success. The art and tech of *Uncharted 3* was an evolutionary refinement of the already groundbreaking *Uncharted 2*. The repeated success of the series opened a flood of new talent into the company. This new blood injected additional ideas, techniques, and improvements into our process.

The Art of the Uncharted Trilogy covers the vast array of environments and characters we developed over the last ten years. Each finalized concept had to be designed, modeled, rigged, textured, and lit by our army of artists and designers. While concept art is not shipped with the final product, it remains a critical part of the production process from beginning to end.

This book focuses on the work of the artists who inspired our team to build the characters and worlds of *Uncharted*. Each section will show the iterations and thought processes that led us to the final design—as well as a few ideas that did not.

Since finishing the trilogy, we have seen the role of concept artists and the place of artists in general grow in relevance throughout the gaming industry. Previously, concept artists provided early inspirational paintings, whereas now they are fully integrated with our production pipeline to the end. Artists from all our disciplines contributed in some way to make the work you see here turn into the games you played, and likely still play, for countless hours. This book is a showcase of all the hard work and artistic vision that went into making *Uncharted* one of the most critically acclaimed and successful franchises of all time. Enjoy—we're ready to raise the bar again on the PlayStation 4.

Erick Pangilinan
Art Director, Naughty Dog
November 2014

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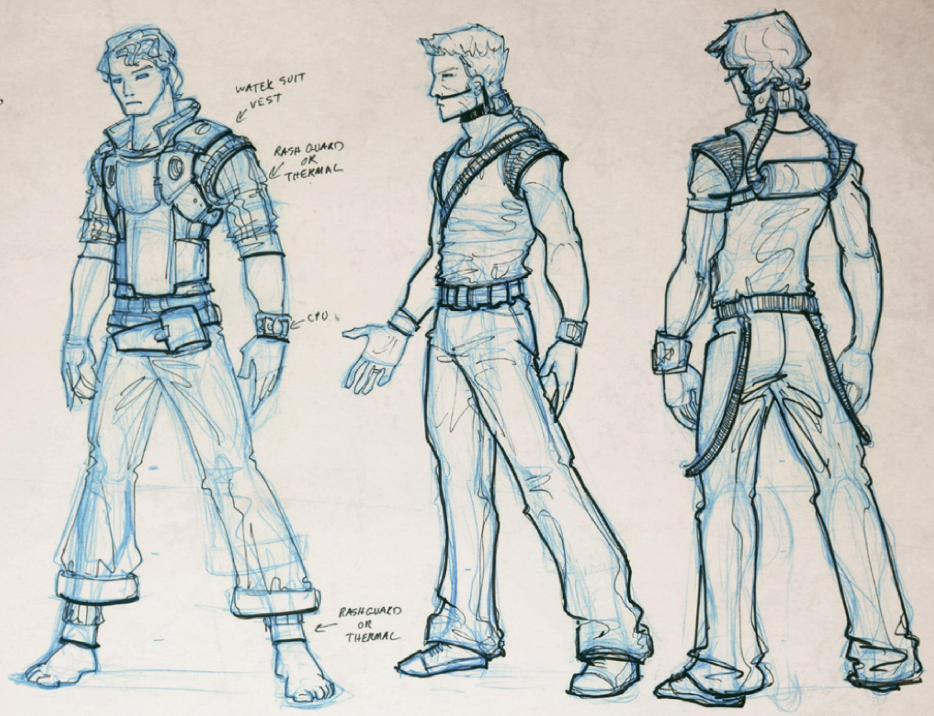
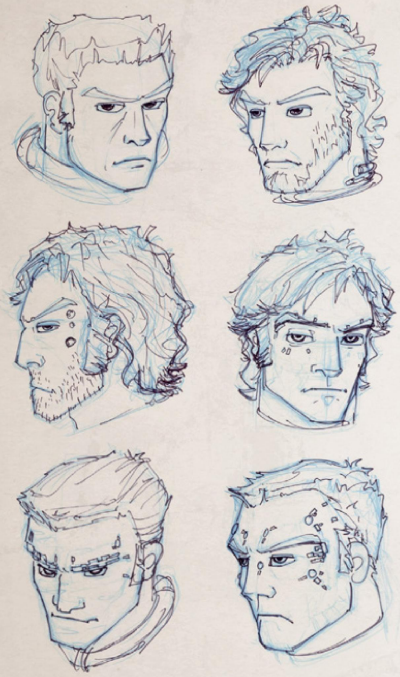
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

CHARACTER DESIGN

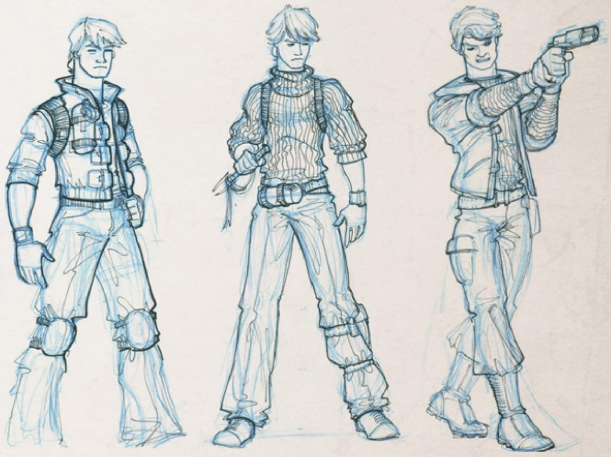
DRAKE

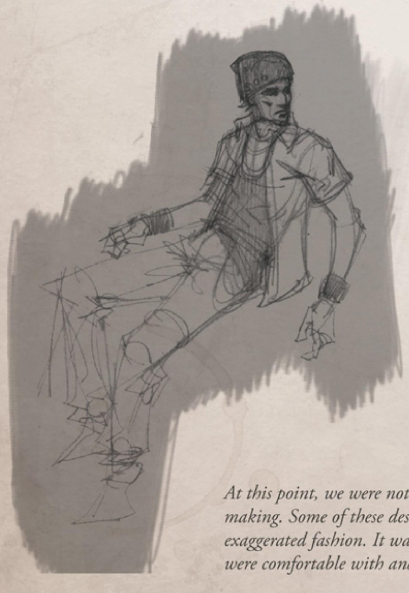
Before Nathan Drake was Nathan Drake, we explored a lot of ideas. This page shows some of the earliest explorations. Right from the start, we were going for an everyman look. This was not only a departure from the standard design perspective, but it presented us with technical challenges that we wouldn't have dealt with if our hero had been wearing hard-surfaced, metallic armor. We needed to render his hair and make his clothes fit and move realistically.







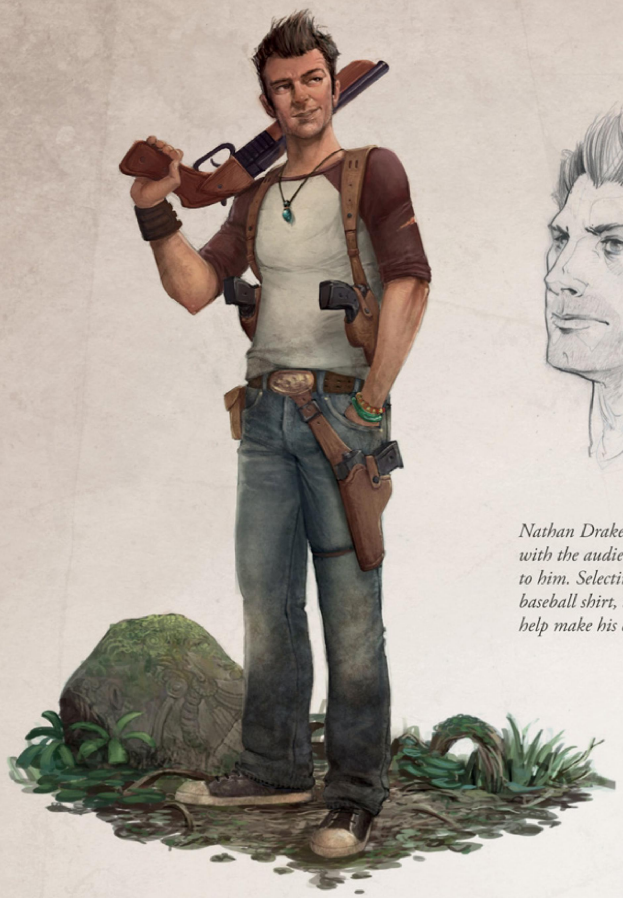








At this point, we were not even sure what style of game we were making. Some of these designs had futuristic elements and exaggerated fashion. It was a real challenge to create a character we were comfortable with and could build an entire world around.





Nathan Drake's design had to resonate with the audience, so that players relate to him. Selecting clothes like jeans, a baseball shirt, and common sneakers help make his character familiar.





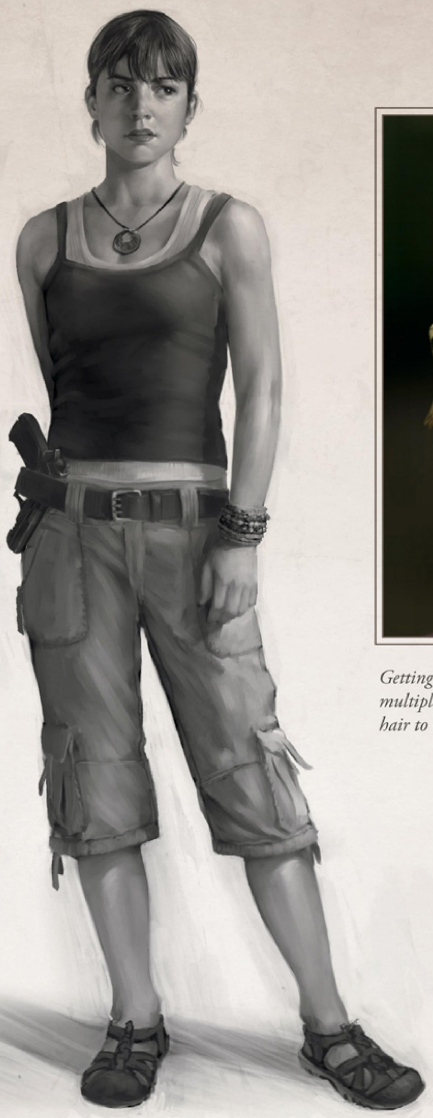


Early sketches of Nathan Drake made him look younger than the final version. We wanted a happy-go-lucky kind of guy, who should probably be dead, given the risks he takes, but somehow manages to find a way to overcome impossible odds.



ELENA

Elena Fisher was to be Drake's love interest, but she also had to be a strong character who could go toe-to-toe with Nate. As a reporter who often works solo, she's learned to handle herself in just about any situation. But even she didn't know what she was in for when her path crossed with Nate's as they used one another to help recover the coffin of Sir Francis Drake, buried at sea off the coast of Panama.





Getting Elena's look right involved several iterations and multiple hairstyles. Ultimately, we decided to change her hair to blond and make it longer.

We create a lot of sketches for all of our characters to show the range of their emotions and personality. In Uncharted *this helped to define their unique traits and habits, as well as give them the proper voice.*

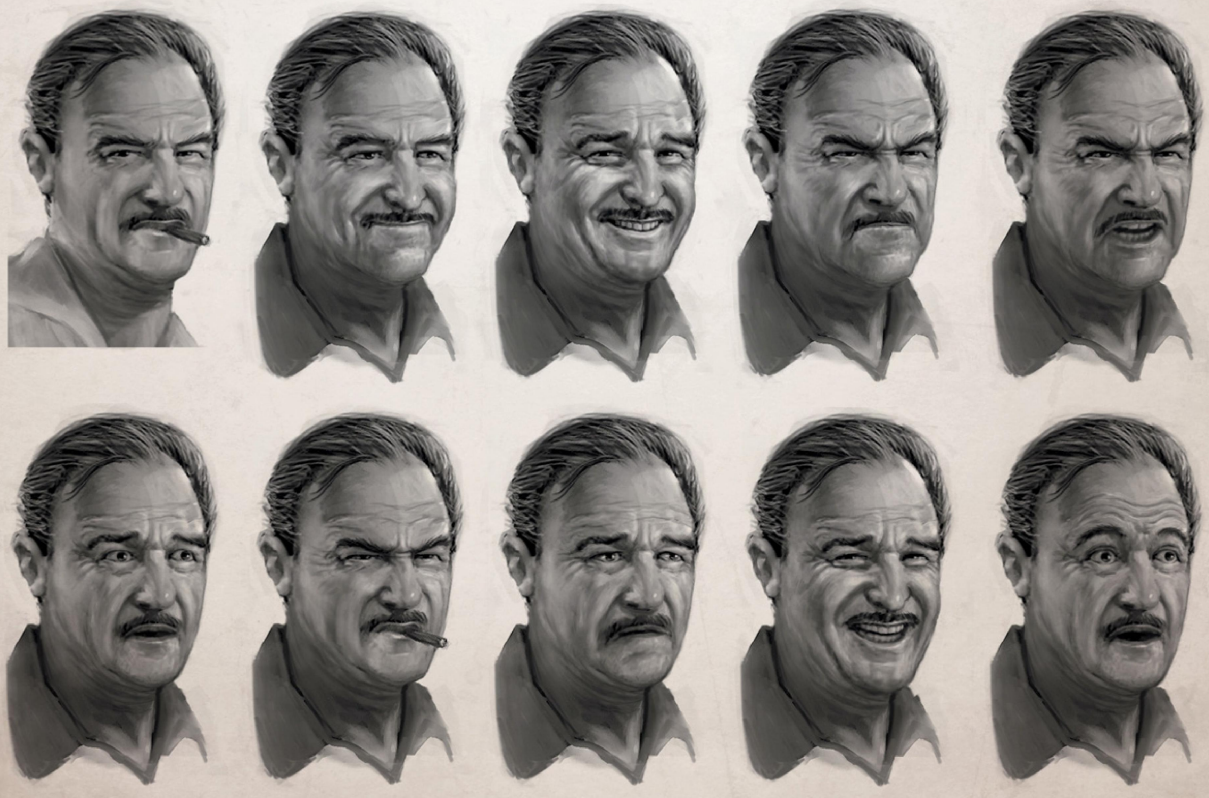




SULLY

As Drake's mentor and father figure, Victor Sullivan was envisioned as balancing macho toughness with a degree of approachability. He served in the US Navy and later became a professional treasure hunter. Sully is the stable figure on the team. We wanted him to look confident and experienced but also as if he might have a questionable past. Even if he is motivated by money, he is a good guy inside and does the right thing in the end.





Explorations of Sully's range of emotion. It was critical for us to be able to capture just about any of Sully's expressions with his trademark cigar in his mouth.

ATOQ NAVARRO

Navarro is a treacherous lieutenant in Gabriel Roman's gang. He ultimately betrays his boss and goes head-to-head with Drake. We wanted someone to counterbalance Drake's character and who could be his archnemesis—someone who would be his worthy match in a climactic fight scene. Navarro's high cheekbones and strong chin give him distinct South American characteristics—handsome and dangerous. We used angular shapes and deep-set features to give him a more aggressive look.



Clothing design for each character was important in separating them from each other by shape and color. For Navarro, we chose dark, earthy colors to contrast him with Drake.

GABRIEL ROMAN

The main antagonist and a counterbalance to Sully. We wanted him to look like a crime lord and went through several sketches that maybe looked too much like a Mafia don. Ultimately, we made him look more sophisticated but with a cruel side to his personality.



These sketches explored various kinds of looks for a crime lord, ranging from an obese South American crime boss to a Godfather*-style mobster.*



EDDY RAJA

We wanted a flamboyant but tacky Southeast Asian gangster, who thinks of himself as a cool, gunslinging cowboy. The mixture of bad taste in fashion and a lack of wit best describes this overconfident killer. We dressed him in a patterned silk shirt, leather vest, pinstriped pants, and cowboy boots. He is armed with a cowboy revolver and several daggers.











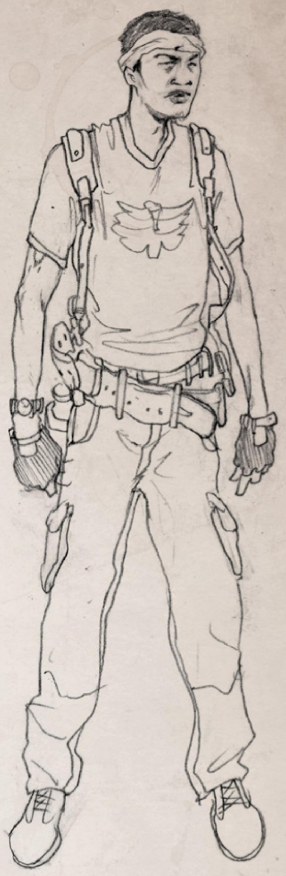


THE PIRATES

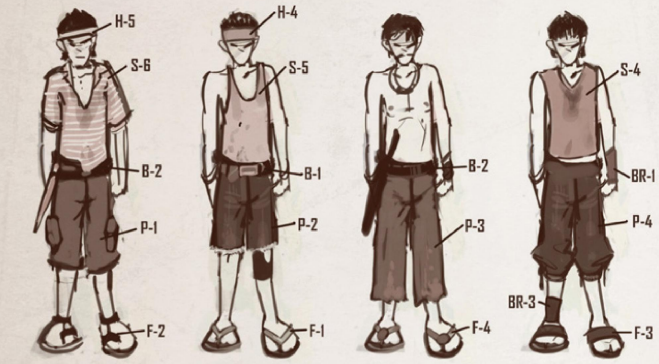
We based these mercenaries on actual pirates off the coast of Africa and guerrilla insurgent groups in Southeast Asia. Mostly dressed for the hot weather in tank tops, shorts, and T-shirts, they are meant to look like people who are poorly paid and desperate but heavily armed.

We tried to create a language for each character class of pirates. There is a link between how a character is armored, colored, and bulked up and their durability and the number of shots needed to take them down. Because we adjusted the difficulty level and challenges of these different classes, it was important to be able to visually differentiate them quickly, so the player could adjust their strategy accordingly.

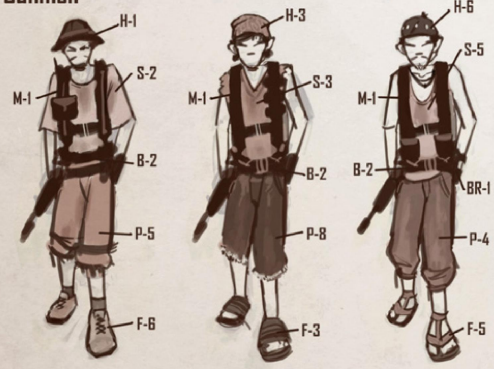




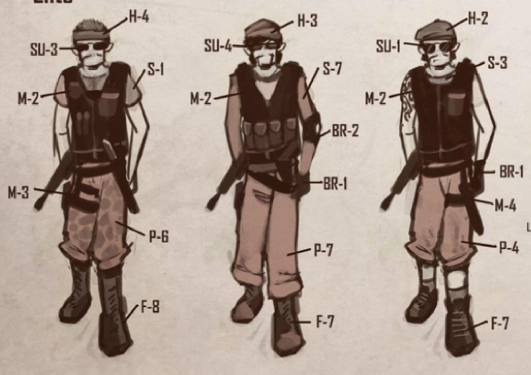
Rookies



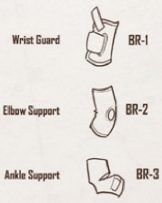
Gunmen



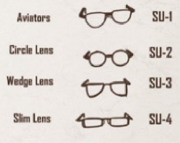
Elite



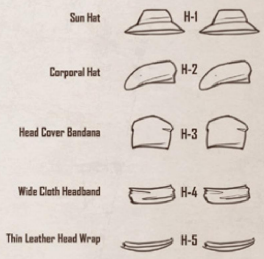
BRACES



SUNGLASSES



HEADGEAR



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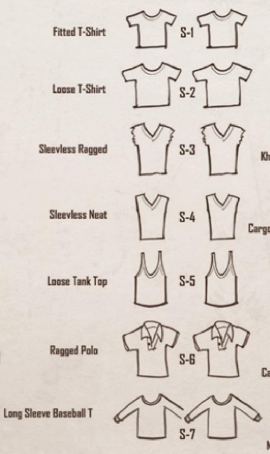

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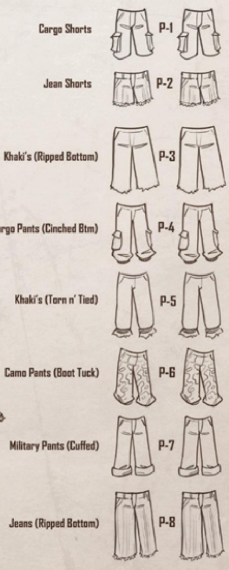
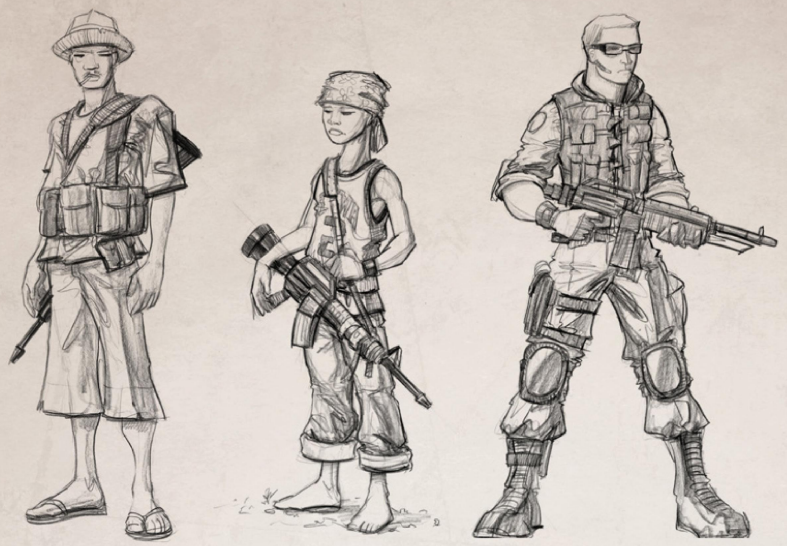


FOOTWEAR



MILITARY





We explored many kinds of mercenaries, with the idea that some of them weren't from the region, so we could vary their weights, heights, and hair and skin colors.

Below: Sketches of pirates looking more like modern city gangsters.







The Descendants

The designs for the Descendants, the game's mutated and devolved Spanish colonists, were inspired by creature designs of cave-dwelling monsters.







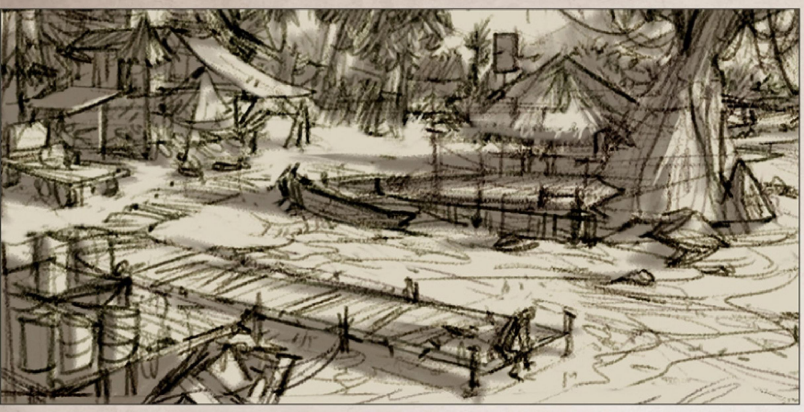


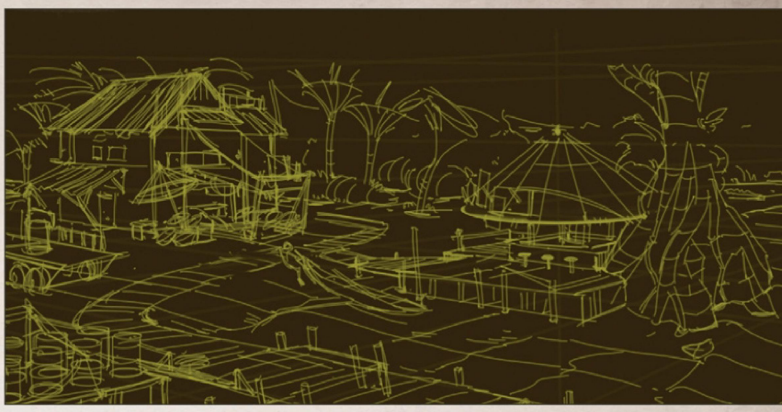
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

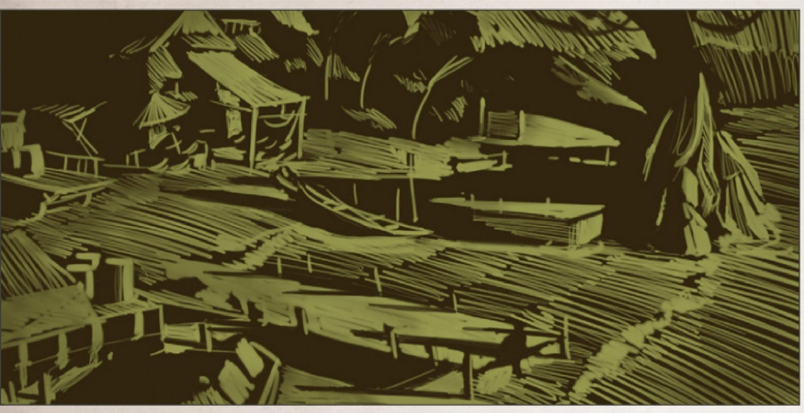
ENVIRONMENTS

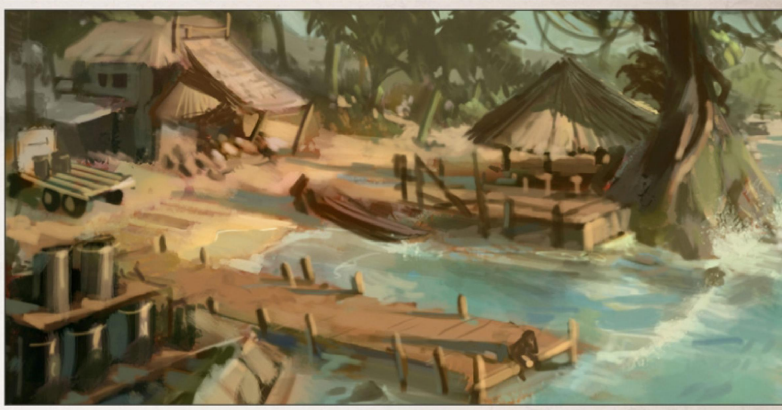


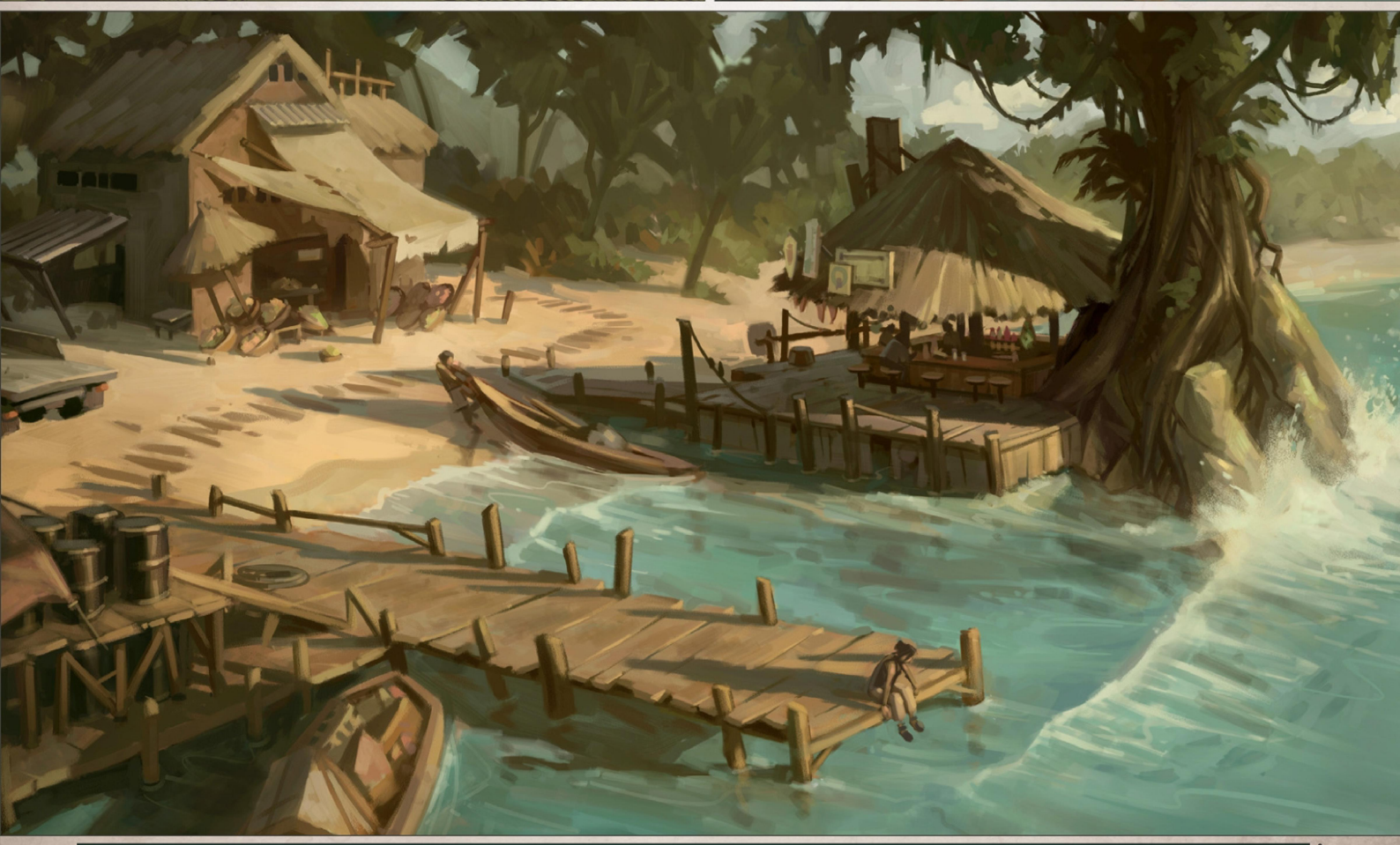
This tropical beachfront cottage is one of Sully's secret hideouts. It is featured briefly in the game as the launching point for their adventure.











Probably more elaborate than it should be, the hideout has a bit of an old 1950s tiki vibe, which is consistent with Sully's age and personality.



Ruins

We designed a ruined civilization deep in the Amazon rainforest that held clues regarding the lost city of El Dorado.







We wanted the organic jungle trees and vines to cover the geometric shapes of the ruined architecture. Our initial challenge was to create a language for climbing, and having all the horizontal designs engraved on the stone would not help players find a logical climbing ledge. Another problem we needed to tackle was where players could take cover during gunplay.

We decided that Drake can only take cover behind man-made structures, not organic elements like tree trunks and rocks, unless they are logs or dead tree trunks lying on their sides.



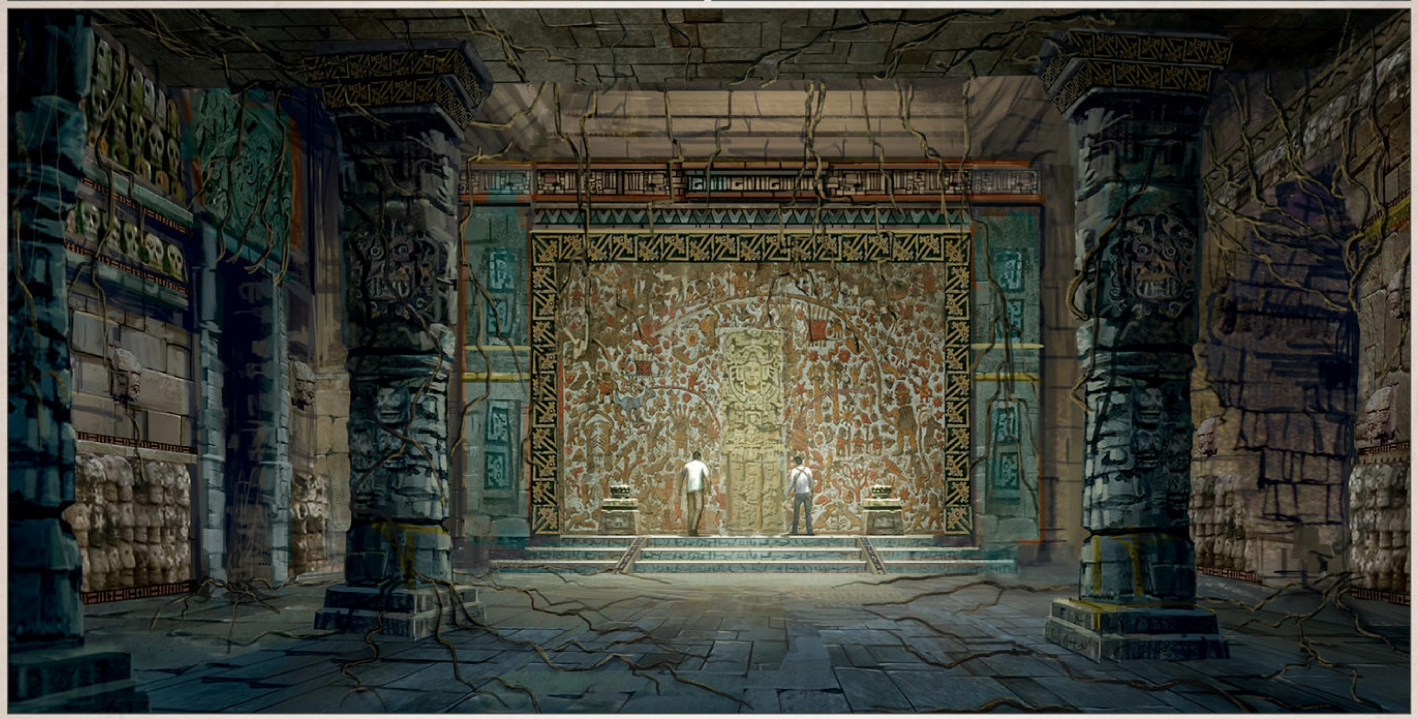
We designed this creaky old wooden scaffolding that was eventually going to collapse and burn down. These scaffoldings were supposed to have been built by the Spanish conquistadors who looted the temple centuries ago.

The environment was meant to be very creepy and dangerous. We designed several elements with sharp spikes and tribal talismans that look like they are for some form of dark-magic worship.









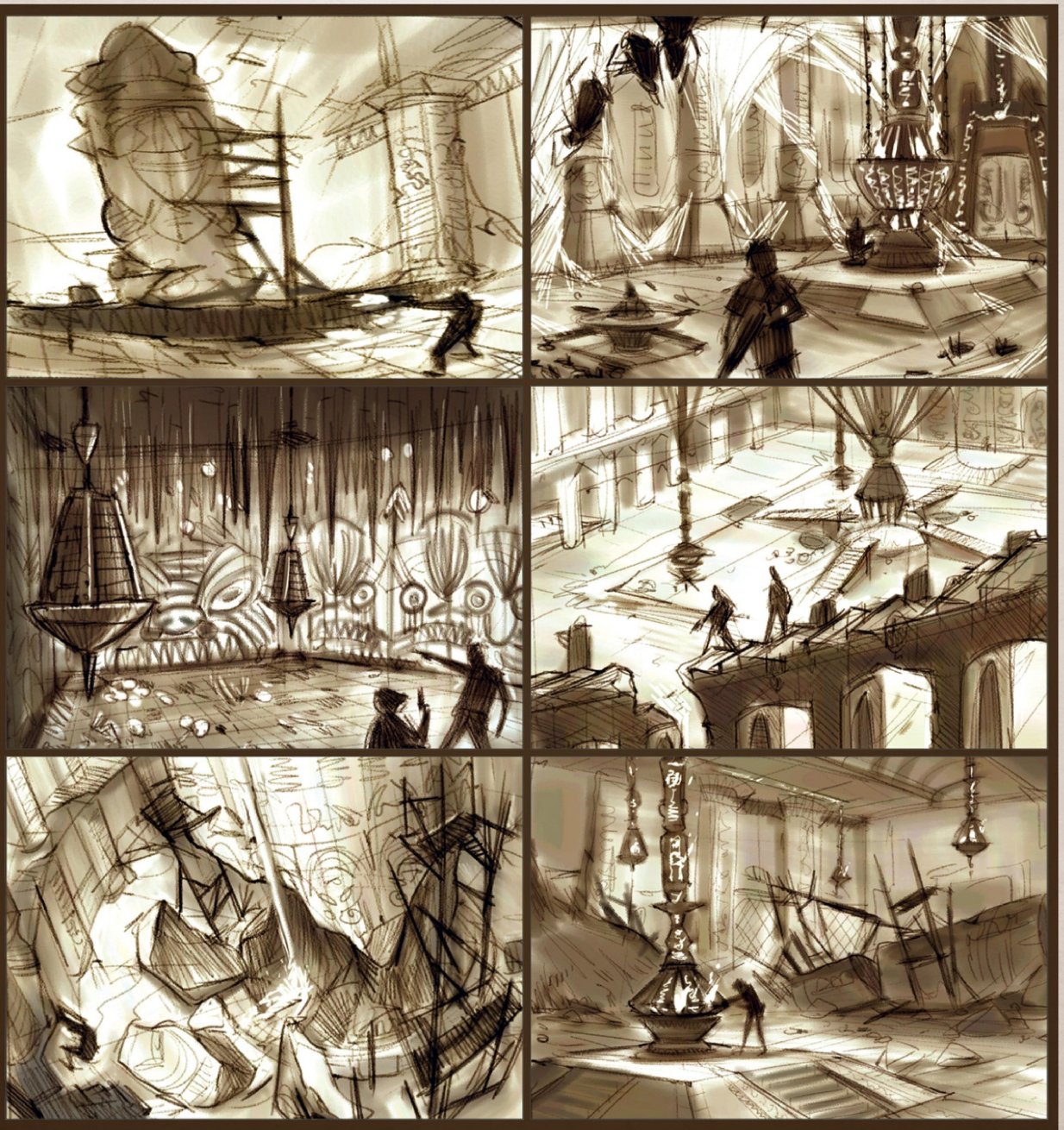


Lighting has always been a problem when exploring caves and underground ruins. We explored several options for lighting, whether from a hole in the ceiling, fire, or flashlight.

El Dorado

We had to design several puzzles and devices that worked mechanically, as if the ancient people had created them with the technology of the time. They were also decorated with the same ancient aesthetic.





We originally wanted to have a swarm of spiders attack, but eventually that was cut from this level.



The swarm of spiders was later included in Uncharted 3, *but this early version received quite a bit of development.*

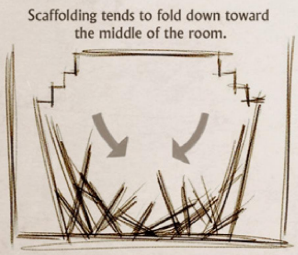


Outside "Guardian" Statue

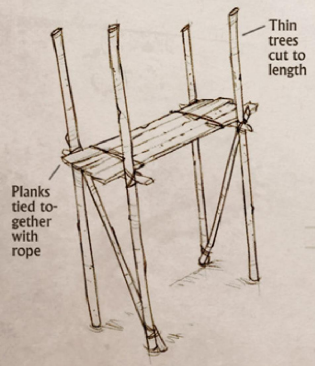
Inside "Watcher" Statue

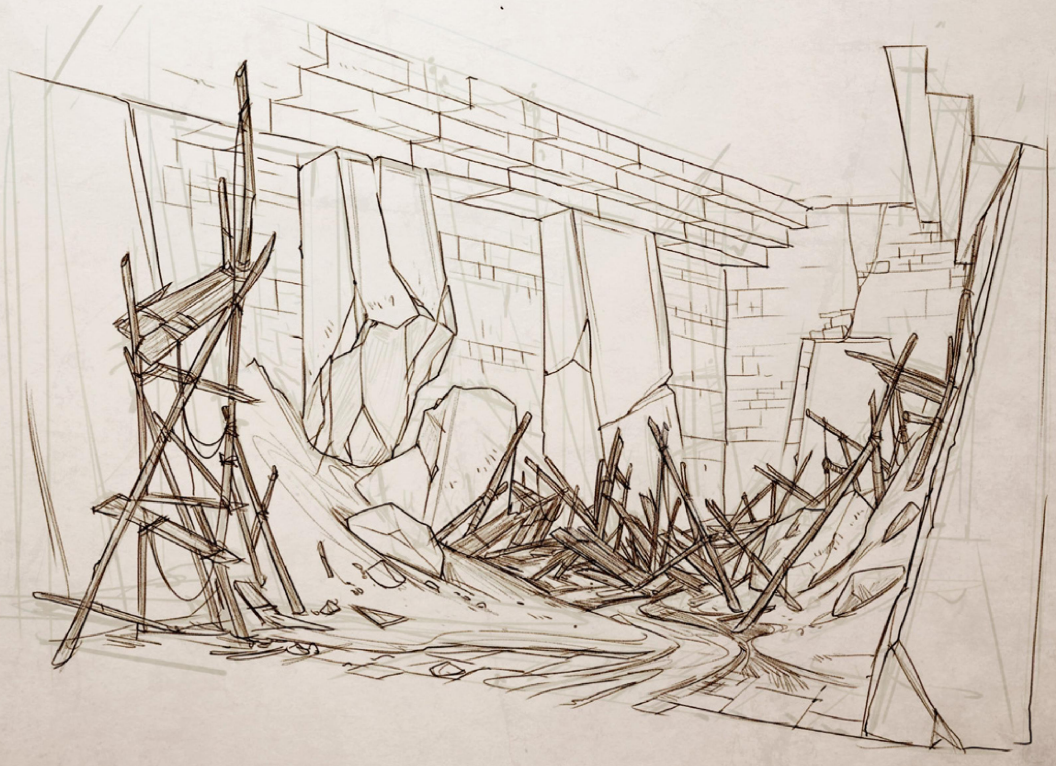
Scary Column Statue

We created several designs for totem-like columns and pillars. These were used to stand out and attract attention if we wanted players to interact with them or if we hoped to lead their eyes in a certain direction.



Basic Undamaged Scaffolding Elements







Designers give our artists puzzles in block mesh, and we try to create a clear shape language that the player can quickly read. Here we made the pillar into a totem so it stands out from the simple pillar, then put in some cracks so it looks like it could fall over.





The U-boat

Putting a U-boat in the middle of the jungle was as puzzling for us as it was for the audience. But we needed to create a compelling visual to frame the U-boat by the river. It's a bit fantastical, but we justified its presence by saying that the river at one time had been deeper and the boat had gotten stuck upstream.





We explored different ways to present the submarine in an epic way. We first thought about simply stranding it on a dry riverbed and then we got crazy, with the sub suspended in the treetops or being held by thick vines. Ultimately, we put it on top of the waterfall on a high cliff side. This rewarded players with magnificent views of the surrounding area after reaching the submarine's top.







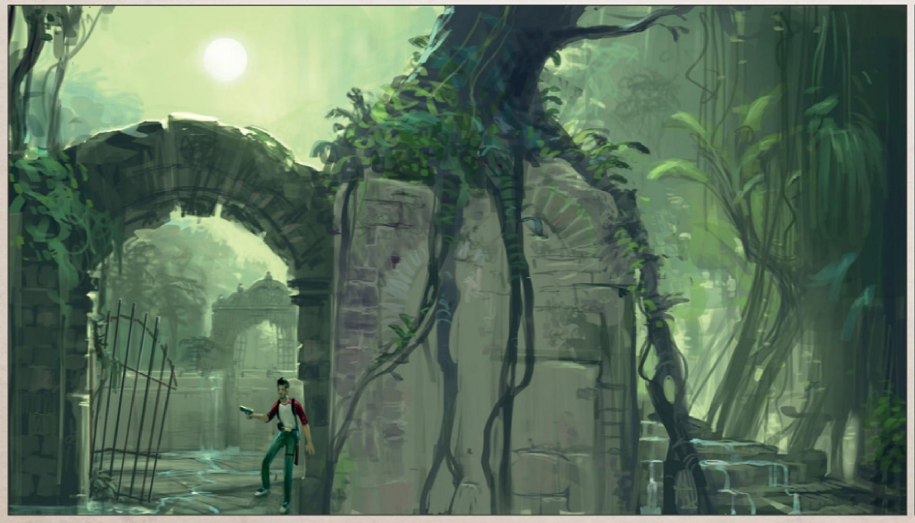
Sully's plane was named Hog Wild, *after a level in* Crash Bandicoot. *It's loosely based on the Grumman G-21 Goose seaplane.*







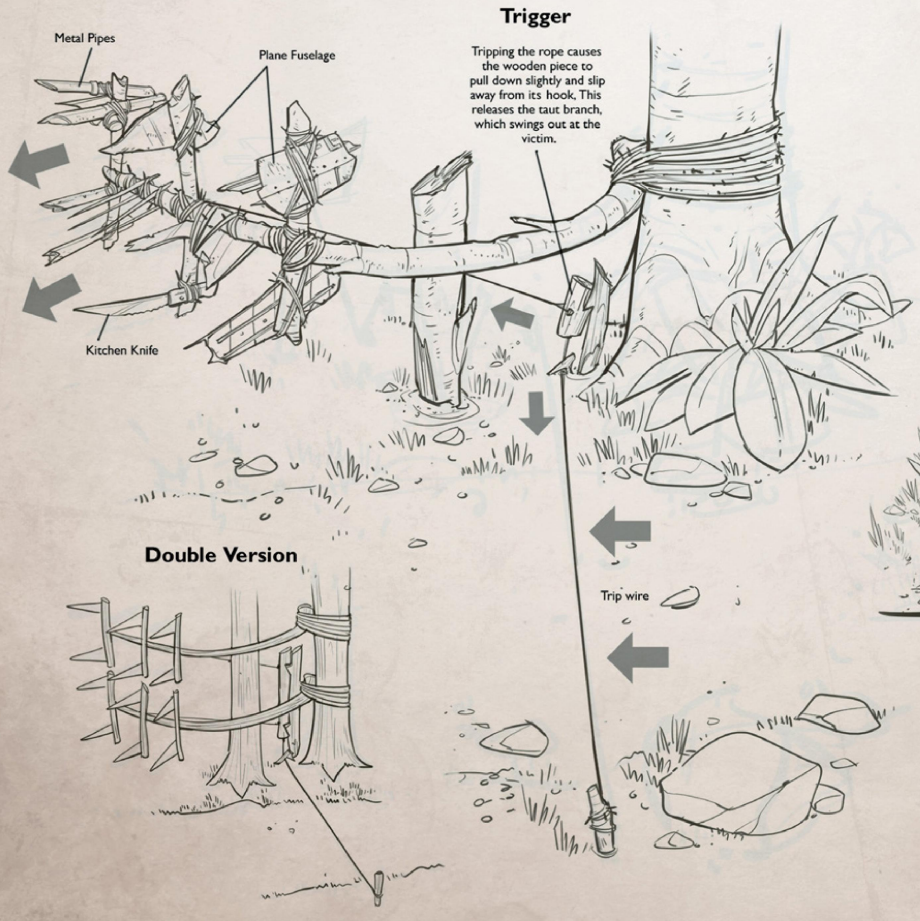


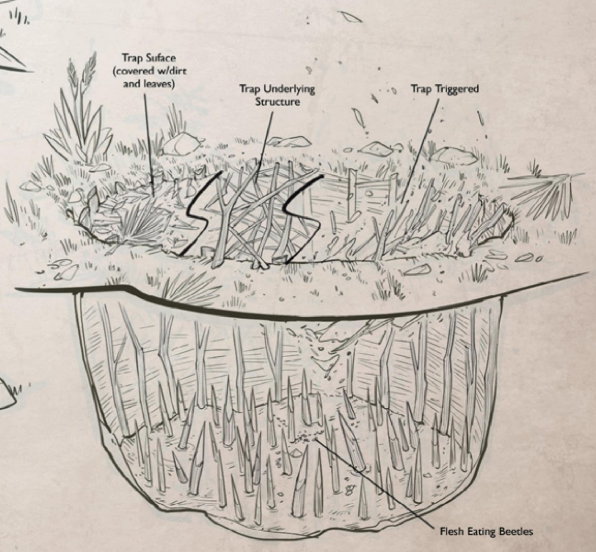


Escondida

We did several studies of jungle landscapes and lost cities. We were inspired by the temples of Angkor Wat in Cambodia the most. We liked the idea of trees growing on top of ancient building structures and roots snaking down the walls and wrapping around columns. We had to create a vast library of jungle plants and trees of different sizes to populate our jungle levels.







Above: We wanted to focus on the basic mechanics of jumping and gunplay, so we came up with this level on a whitewater river that terminates in a waterfall. There are rocks and small outcroppings for players to jump between to avoid enemies.

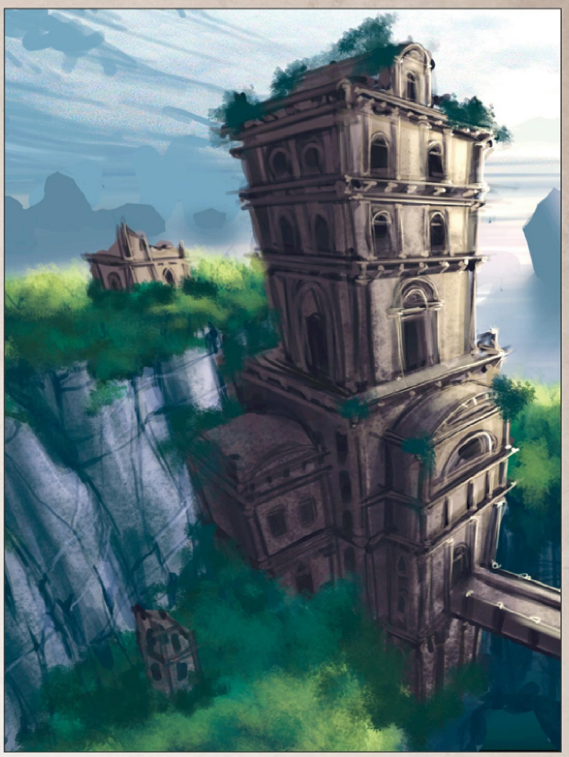
Jungle traps were one of the elements we added to make the environment more interactive and add to the feeling of danger at every step.



The Fortress

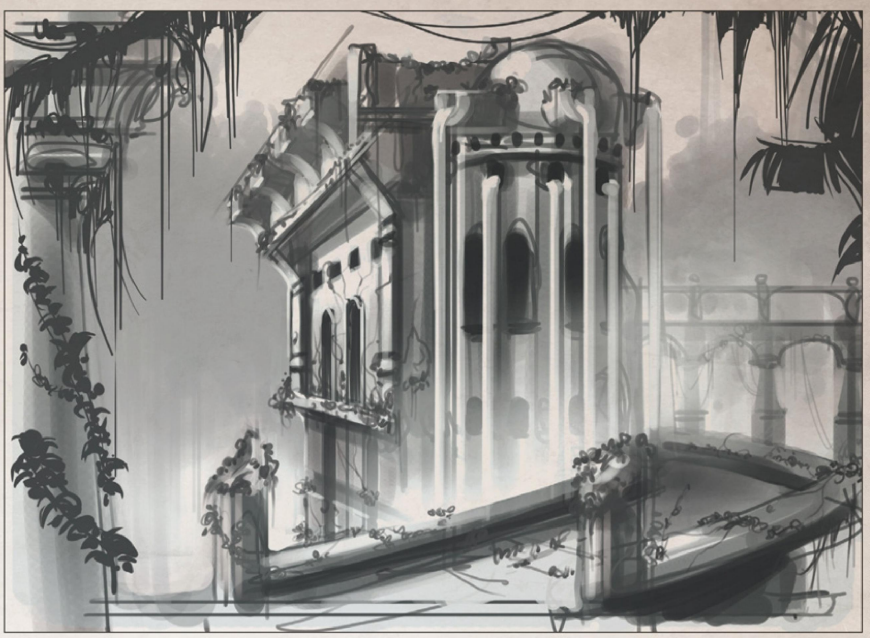
The final design of the fortress was based on a real fort in Puerto Rico called Fort San Felipe del Morro, but the initial concepts looked more like a church. This was probably because the design called for several structures that did not exist in any fort, like a carillon bell tower and tall, thin façades. This required the team to look for design elements that matched the architecture of a church.















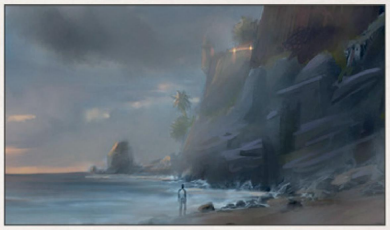
We went down this road for a while, but it was interesting to see how we still integrated this look with the jungle overgrowth. We really wanted to combine the Cambodian Angkor Wat–style trees with these Spanish-style structures and explore that look.



The original idea was for Drake to walk up to the fort from the beach. We made several concepts and environments to show the view of the epic fort from a beachfront.

Eventually, we decided to change the architectural style and made it a true fort. We just made the unusual church structures with fort-like construction. For the most part, nobody questioned it. We later designed how the pirates would build around the ruins to accommodate their military equipment and vehicles.



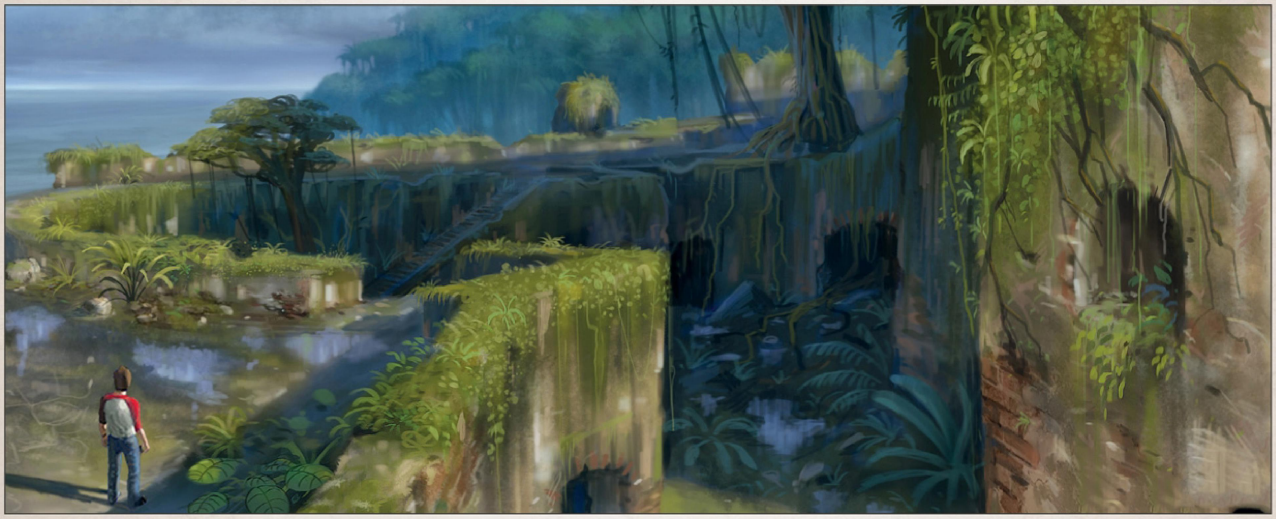












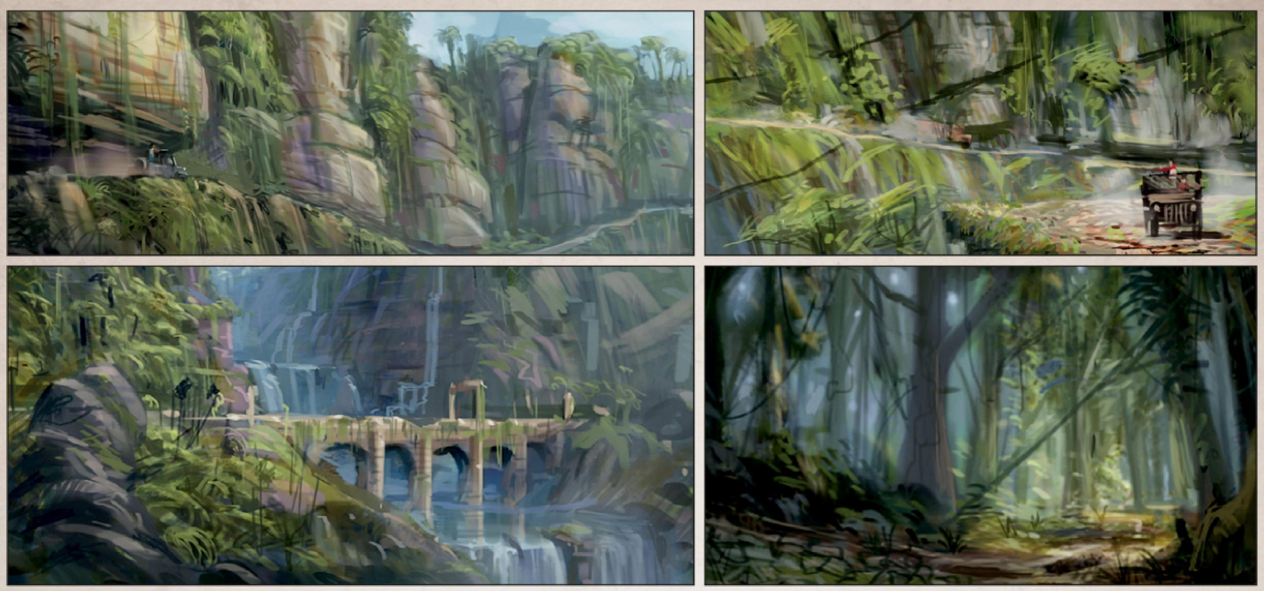


These camera angles were directly taken from the designer's block-mesh design. This was the first time we used actual design geometry and drew over it. The technique was very useful for the artists and communicated clearly what we wanted the fort to look like.

The breakout from the fortress jail is a classic chase-and-shoot gameplay scenario that we try to incorporate into each Naughty Dog game. For this one, since the path happened to be very long, it was important to design several environments to keep players' attention. It needed to match the intensity of being chased by armed pirates and the perils of driving through treacherous but interesting terrain.







The jungle chase sequence required several concepts to show a transition from the fortress to the jungle's many areas. We designed Spanish-style bridges, ruins, and roads by the cliffs off the jagged rocks. We got inspired by the most dangerous roads in the world, like the ones in South America or in China where roads were literally carved from the vertical side of the mountain.



We incorporated more manmade elements to add interesting juxtapositions. For instance, the initial dirt road concept became an ancient cobblestone road that's deteriorating on a cliff side.









The Drowned City

The Drowned City was originally supposed to be completely underwater. But because of the Jet Ski gameplay and how we wanted the player to get on and off the Jet Ski, we decided to make it partially sunken. We did several designs for trees, many inspired by fantasy artist Frank Frazetta's lush jungles and twisted jungle trees.



Driving around with the Jet Ski was another interesting challenge in both the design and the construction of the level. Since a lot of distance is covered on the Jet Ski, we had to create a big level; that was problematic because of the enormous space required to give the gameplay enough room. We also had to develop a way to render convincing ocean water and whitewater rapids. This would include the physics to make players feel like they are floating and propelling themselves upstream and in the rapids. Water is very complicated and expensive to render because of how it flows, how it floats objects and players up and down, and how it reacts to light and shadow, not to mention the transparency required to show geometry beneath it.

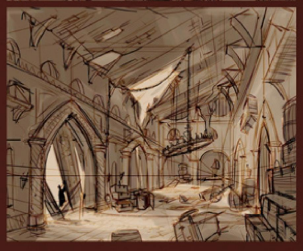












The Customs House

The Customs House was one of our main levels in the game. It had beautiful Spanish architecture, a big, domed roof, elaborate Spanish tiles, and wrought iron. The floors had cut-marble designs and the stairways were carved. The wooden rope bridge was also very dramatic, as players had to cross this unstable bridge over the sea. One of the challenges with the Customs House was taking the low angle of the lights into consideration, and using it to our advantage to show form and shape within the buildings. Using the openings in the roof slats and port windows, we let in just enough light to give focus and enough darkness to create contrast.



The Monastery

The monastery courtyard was another level we designed for a daylight theme, but it was later changed to a nighttime level. We were hoping to create beautiful architecture that had been taken over by the jungle. The monastery has a winged maiden statue in the center of a Spanish fountain with intricate carving details on the floor and walls. Again, we borrowed heavily from the temples of Cambodia and transplanted the ideas to a Spanish courtyard.

When developing environments, we always place our characters in gameplay situations to give a better idea of the mood of the level.







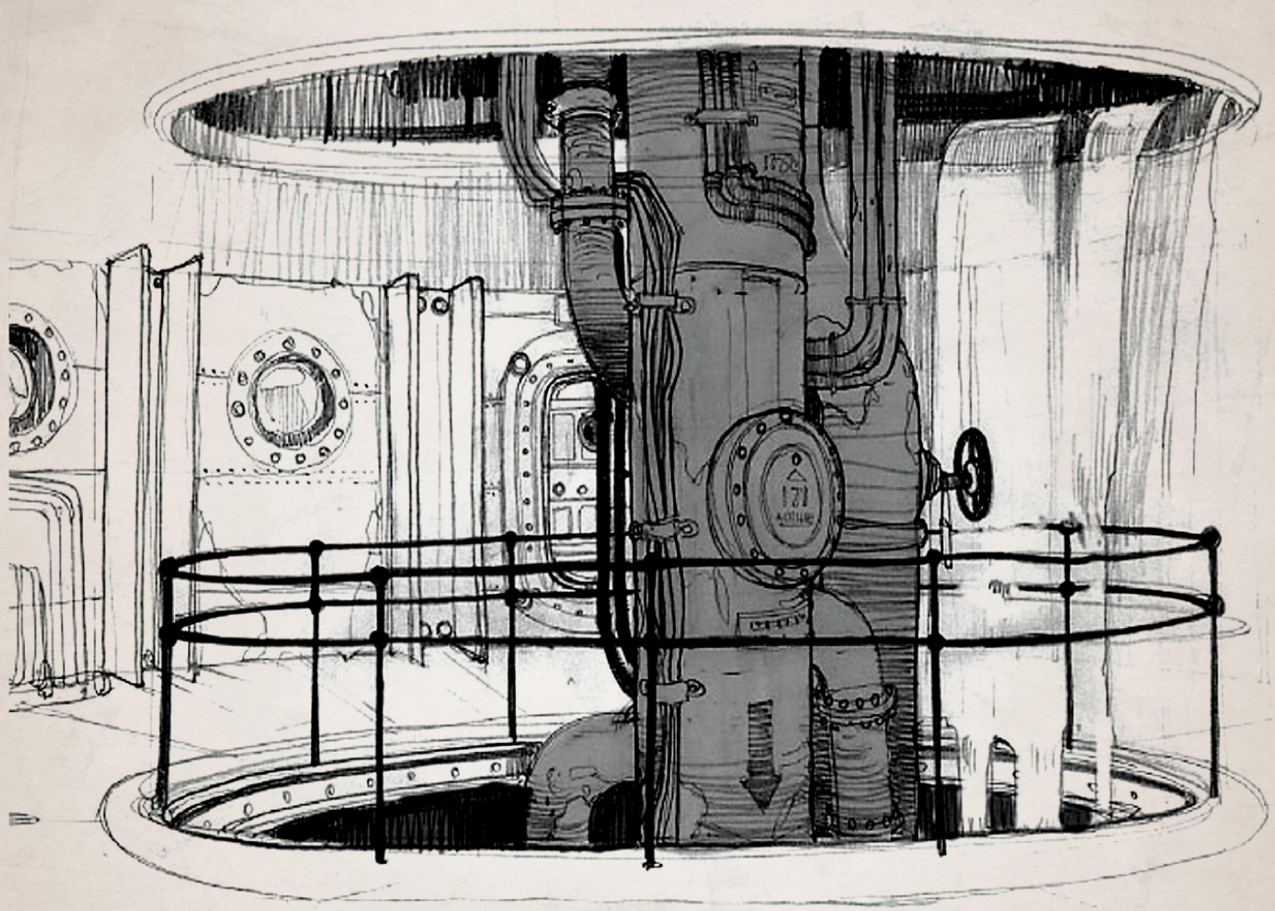
The Vault

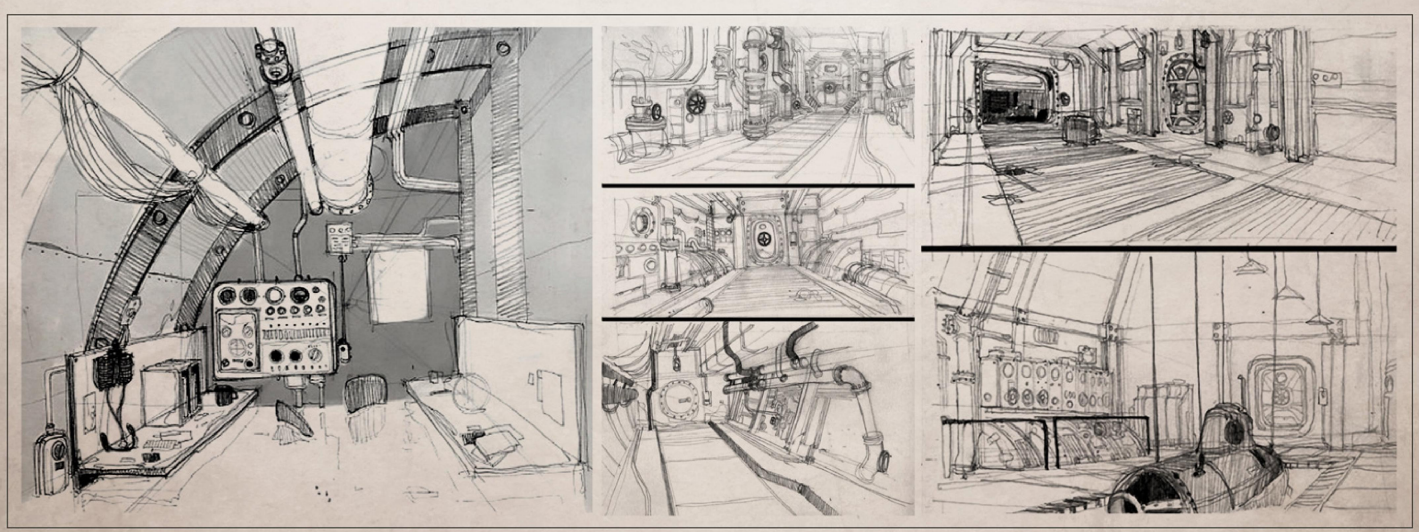
The vault design was inspired by Italian artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi. We also wanted monolithic prison structures that had some M. C. Escher–like labyrinth forms. This made traversing these narrow catwalks and bridges look perilous and unstable. We wanted to give the impression that this maze was huge, with multiple levels crisscrossing each other and misdirecting players to dead ends and fatal traps.

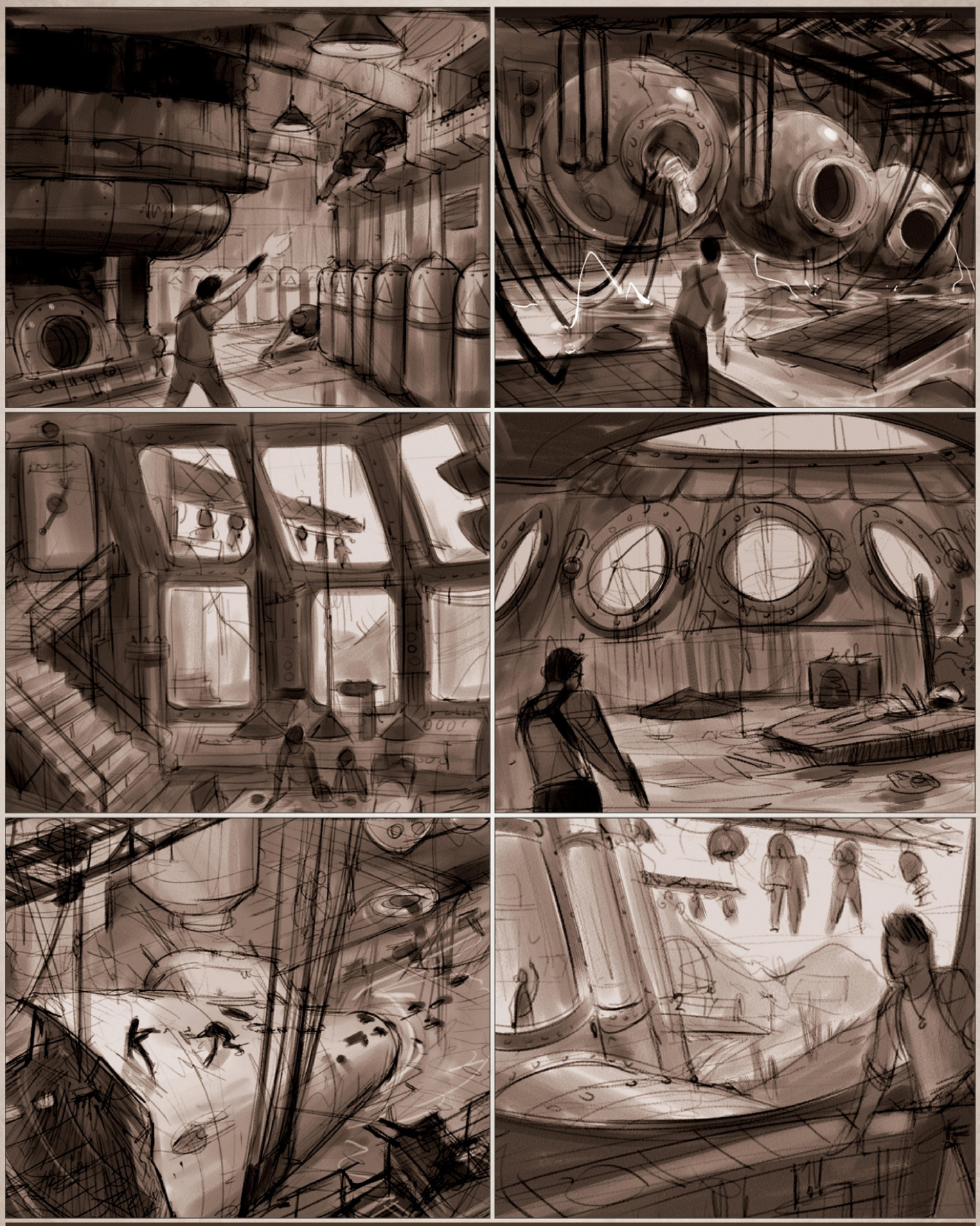
The Facility

The submarine facility was inspired by old World War II German mechanical designs—big pipes, nuts and bolts, pressure valves, and gauges. We wanted to design spaces that led players through these tubular corridors, then opened up to a bigger metal cavern. A space feels larger when you emerge from a smaller, constricted space. The pipes and cables control light and darkness and help lead players in a certain direction.









We were hoping to design several hydraulic machines with large tanks and rubber cables strung everywhere like vines. We made water spill down ceilings and structures to make it look like a waterfall. It was almost like building a cave and a jungle, using the same design shapes and principles but substituting them with human-constructed elements.





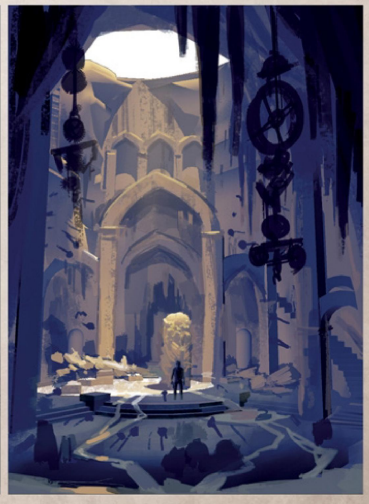
We were inspired by traditional Egyptian sarcophagi but gave them a precolonial America design treatment. We also exaggerated the size and made the carvings more elaborate.



The Cavern

The cavern was designed to frame the sarcophagus and keep the focus on it. The cavern is of Western design, but we got inspiration from an ancient city called Petra, where the structures were carved from the mountainside. It is interesting to see a precolonial design, centered in a cathedral-like structure and adorned by Witchcraft-inspired talismans.











Final Showdown

For our adrenaline-filled finale, we wanted Drake hanging on to a cargo helicopter as it whips him around, quickly transporting players to the final boss fight on the cargo ship. Coming from the jungle, which has a cooler blue and green palette, we transition into the final, most dangerous fight and turned the scene red from the fire and sunset. Then we increased the intensity and changed the mood dramatically with rain and lightning flashes.



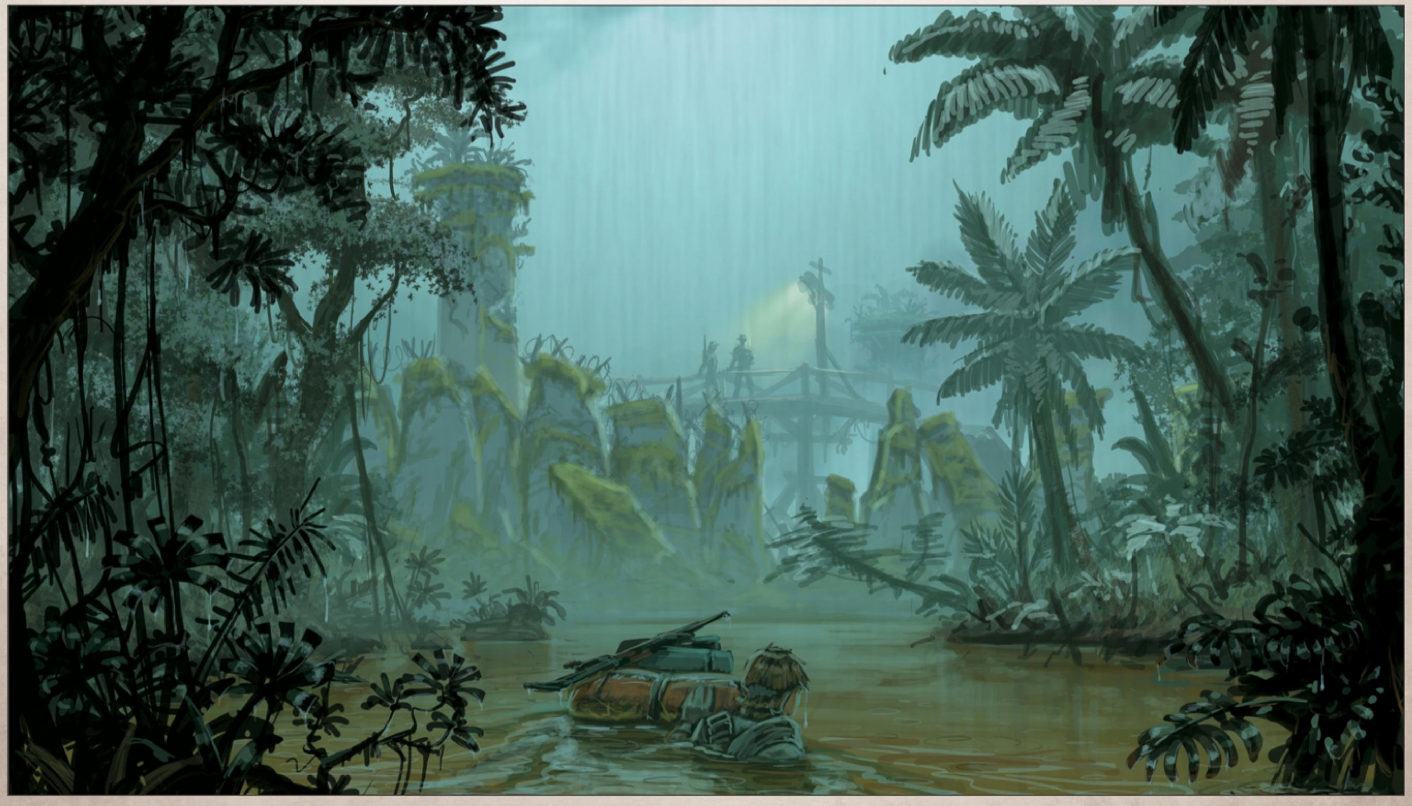
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

UNUSED IDEAS

Environmental Concepts

We made several exploratory concepts to inspire the game designers and environment artists. Most of them made it into the game, but some unfortunately did not fit with the story beats or the scope of the gameplay. This was one of the concepts that took inspiration from Petra, as if the ancients had carved a cave city in a big sinkhole with waterfalls. The image below was a jungle exploration, where we thought about having players stealthily traversing the river and silently taking out enemy sentries one by one.

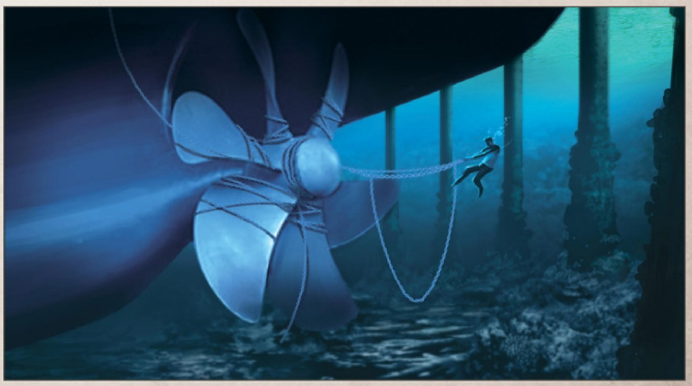








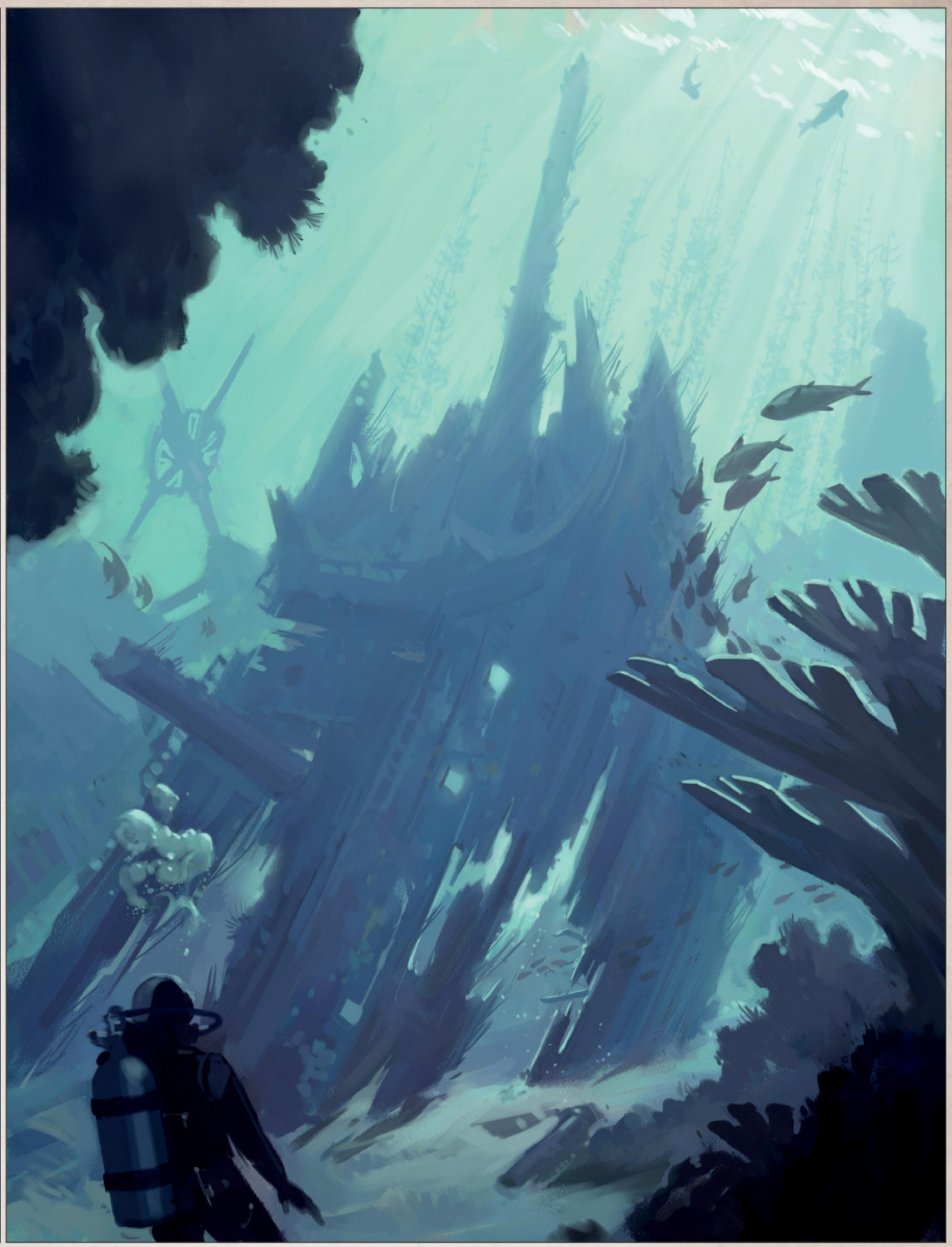




We always try to create interesting gameplay scenarios when we devise our environments. Some of these ideas (like the flooding ship) may not have made it into the first Uncharted, *but we revisited these ideas in later games to see if we could integrate them into the story.*

We always wanted to make an underwater level. So we created this Spanish colony that was swallowed by the sea, like Atlantis. We were experimenting with the diving mechanics and actually created this entire city to explore underwater. There were several challenges, including: How would it be lit? What would stop players from just swimming anywhere and getting lost? How could we keep the frame rate in check, since players are seeing things so fast, as if they are flying?

Swimming underwater could open possibilities of exploring caves and going into buildings in a whole different way. Some buildings would be on their side, or have air pockets to explore while walking.



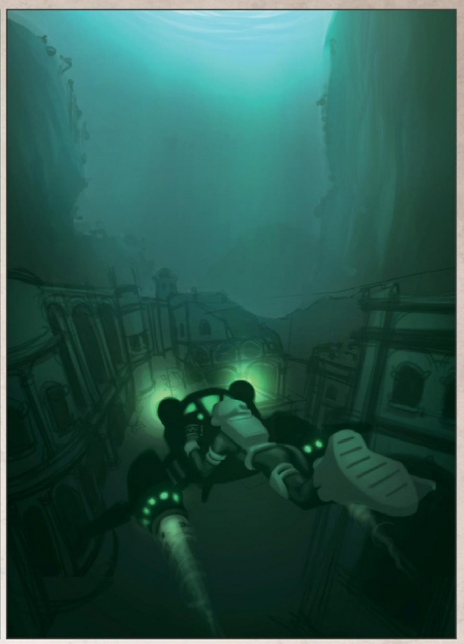














The sunken ruin was one of our favorite levels to design, since it was so different from anything we'd done. We were experimenting with different aquatic life, like schools of fish, sharks, kelp forests, and coral reefs. We also had underwater vehicles to enhance mobility. Designing an underwater city was like making the temple-jungle level out of different kinds of plants and animals. It would have been one of our more interesting and challenging levels to pull off, but it didn't make it into the game.


UNCHARTED™ 2
AMONG THIEVES



Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

CHARACTER DESIGN



DRAKE

Drake takes on a darker look in this installment, echoing this stage of his story. Costume design should always emphasize the game's core idea and story, in collaboration with the environment. We only have a few hours to tell our story and to connect players with what's going on, so every decision needs to move in that direction. Every choice needs to help tell the story.







There are so many decisions that come into play when designing for video games. We were incorporating native Himalayan materials and styling for Drake's winter look, and it raised several questions: How much color? How much accent? Does it work in-game?



The second game provided an opportunity to update and improve Drake's model to make it more sophisticated and complex, from his facial design to the wrinkles in his clothing. For Drake's winter coat look we wanted him to identify with the local people who saved him, so having him adopt their look was a good way to make that connection.



CHLOE

An old associate and flame of Drake's, Chloe reflects the darker side of Drake's psyche. Chloe represents what could happen if Drake ever goes off the deep end in his life of thievery and adventure. We tried several looks and ethnicities before casting Claudia Black.



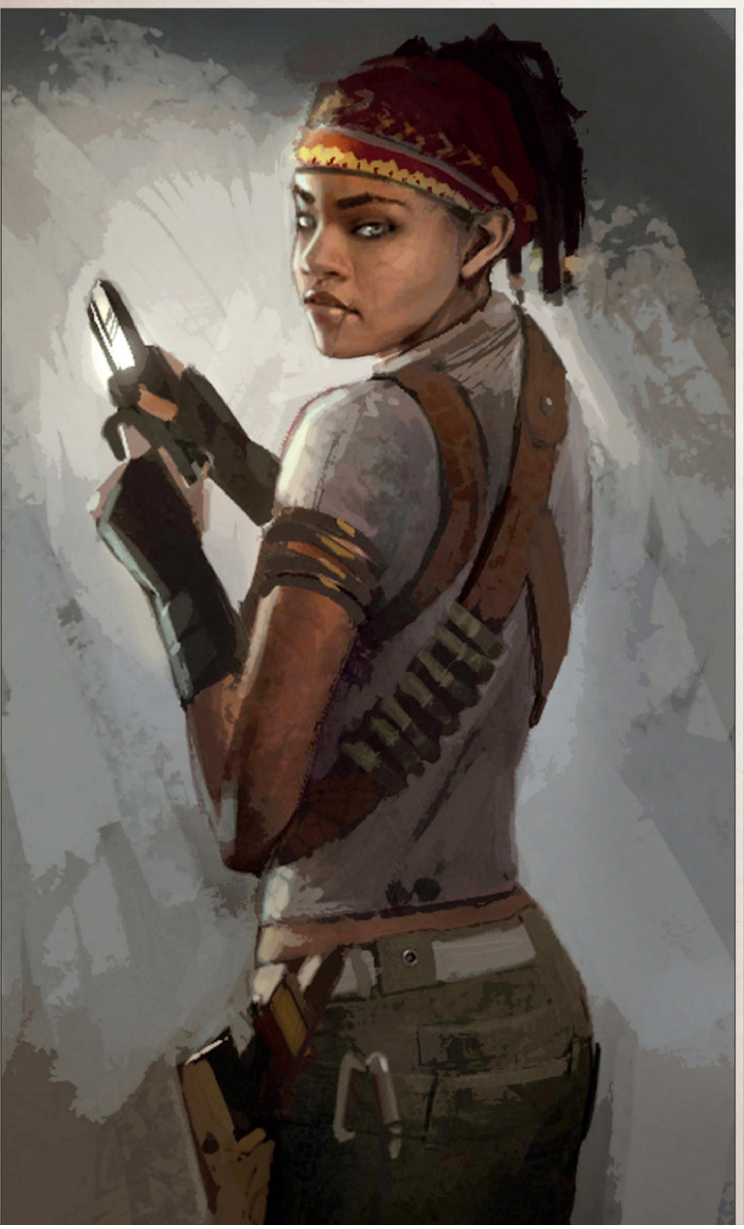




Chloe needed to be attractive and dangerous. How do you design that without being too cliché? Lots of iteration!









ELENA

Developing the basic look for Elena's redesign took longer than expected. Finding the right outfit that spoke to her profession as a reporter, and that looked grounded and believable, proved difficult. Dozens of ideas were cast aside in pursuit of this seemingly simple look.





A series of studies of different looks for Elena to make sure her personality as an adventurous and persistent reporter came across and that her outfit read against her environment.



More Elena studies with several pattern and color variations and under different weather conditions. We needed a winter look that would be modern, in contrast with Drake's adopted native look, and would keep her identifiable during combat.

LAZAREVIC

Lazarevic is a maniacal, obsessed, ruthless, and cruel antagonist. We explored so many looks, styles, and ideas to evolve his identity and look. How military? What's too much? How ruthless? We needed players to feel a certain, immediate fear and revulsion when they saw him; they need to know they are in trouble. That's how you produce clear storytelling.





We tried a lot of quasi-Russian looks to get across Lazarevic's backstory. Ultimately, we settled on an all-black motif.



A few ranks of Lazarevic's men, with varying levels of vulnerability. More armor means enemies who are harder to defeat, a simple concept but difficult to make work in-game. The first attempts were nearly invisible—hard to see and hard to attack—but eventually we got there.



Explorations of general readability and simplicity, with a consistency that ties all of Lazarevic's men together.

TENZIN

Tenzin is a brave Sherpa who saves Drake from the train wreckage, helps him to navigate through the dangerous ice caves, and fights alongside him against Lazarevic's men. Tenzin is armed with a Nepalese machete called a Kukri, since we wanted to represent him as a capable character who can fend for himself. We wanted a rugged-looking character whose abilities match Drake's, so we designed his costume to be as flexible to his animation as possible. That also meant no capes or long robes, which would have been problematic with animation at the time.







SCHAFER

Karl Schafer was an old German Nazi who was part of an early expedition to uncover the secrets of Shambhala. We dressed him in traditional Nepalese clothes to make him look like he has adopted the simple ways of the village, as he has been living there for decades. He is modeled with so much detail because there are so many close-up shots of his face and body.









GUARDIANS

We tested a huge number of approaches for what the Guardians would look like, from thin and strung out to beefy and thoroughly roid-rage looking. The influences ranged from rock stars to wrestlers and ethnicities from Nepalese to Eastern Indian and beyond.







The Guardians have eternal life, but the sap that granted it eventually corrupted them. They degenerated into ritualistic barbarians.



Early exploration of the Guardians' monster suit. It was important to figure out how the suit would fit their bodies to make them look like real monsters, rather than people in a fake suit.









We started the design with a monster that the suit was meant to evoke, then worked backward to figure out how the Guardians would construct it from their primitive supplies. It was a sort of reverse engineering.



Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

ENVIRONMENTS





Drake meets Chloe in a cheap, dingy motel in the Mediterranean. The dirty room was designed to reflect the situation these two ex-lovers now find themselves in. This is not a four-star joint. Right: The beachside bar is part of the hotel scene, and is intended to be more rustic and remote for a secret meeting.




BAR
TACO
HAPPY HOUR!!
Greek Beer Special!!!
BEER
BEER





The museum was inspired by Topkapi Palace in Turkey. We exaggerated the palace to make it more impressive and perched it on the cliff side so the city lights would serve as backdrop.









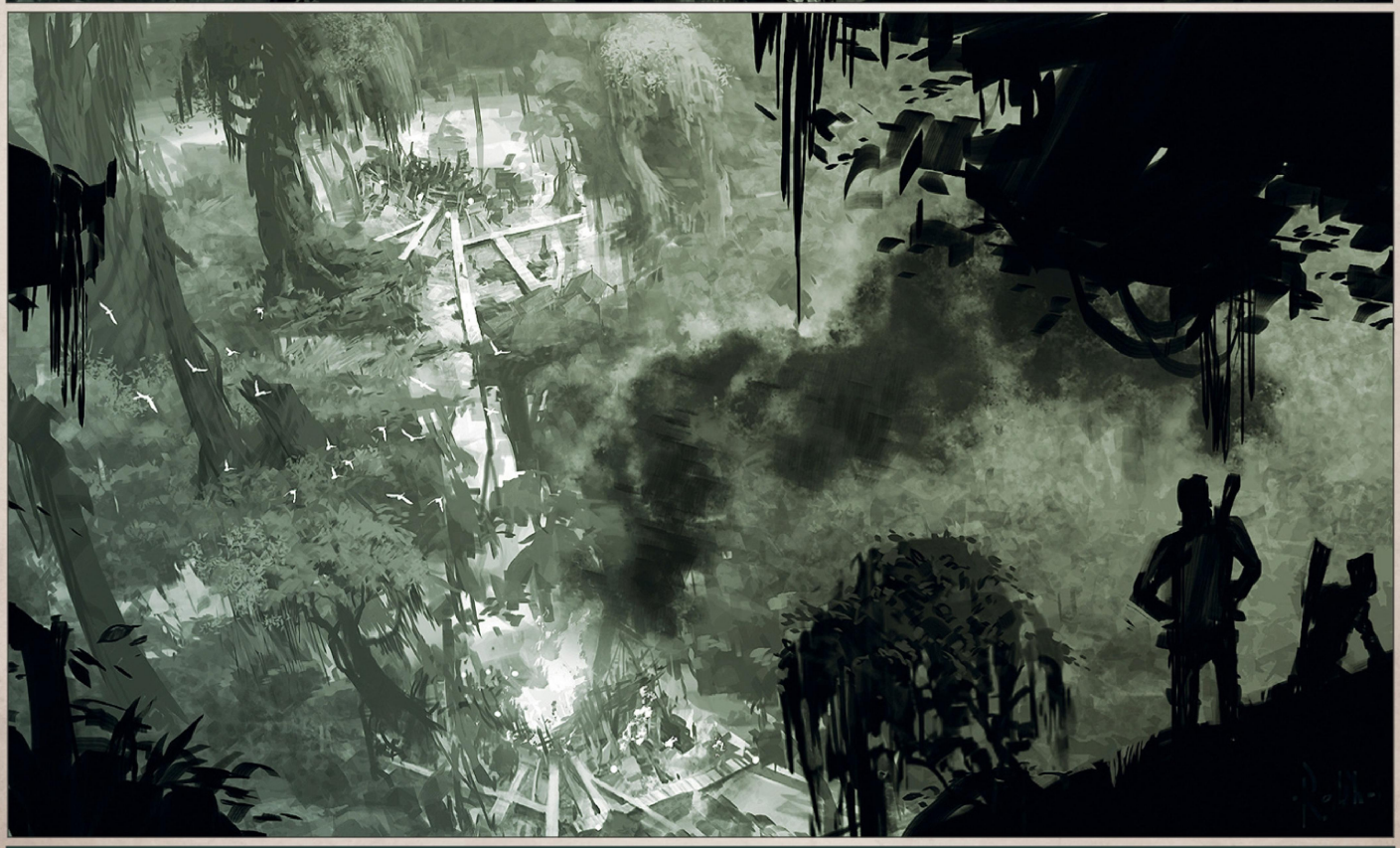






The museum has very distinct Ottoman architecture. Beneath the museum is a cistern that was converted into a sewer.





Drake encounters the excavation site of a lost wreck in the middle of a swamp. Catwalks connect the different areas of the site.











The swamp was exaggerated to look almost like a prehistoric landscape, with big trees, thick vines, and root systems.

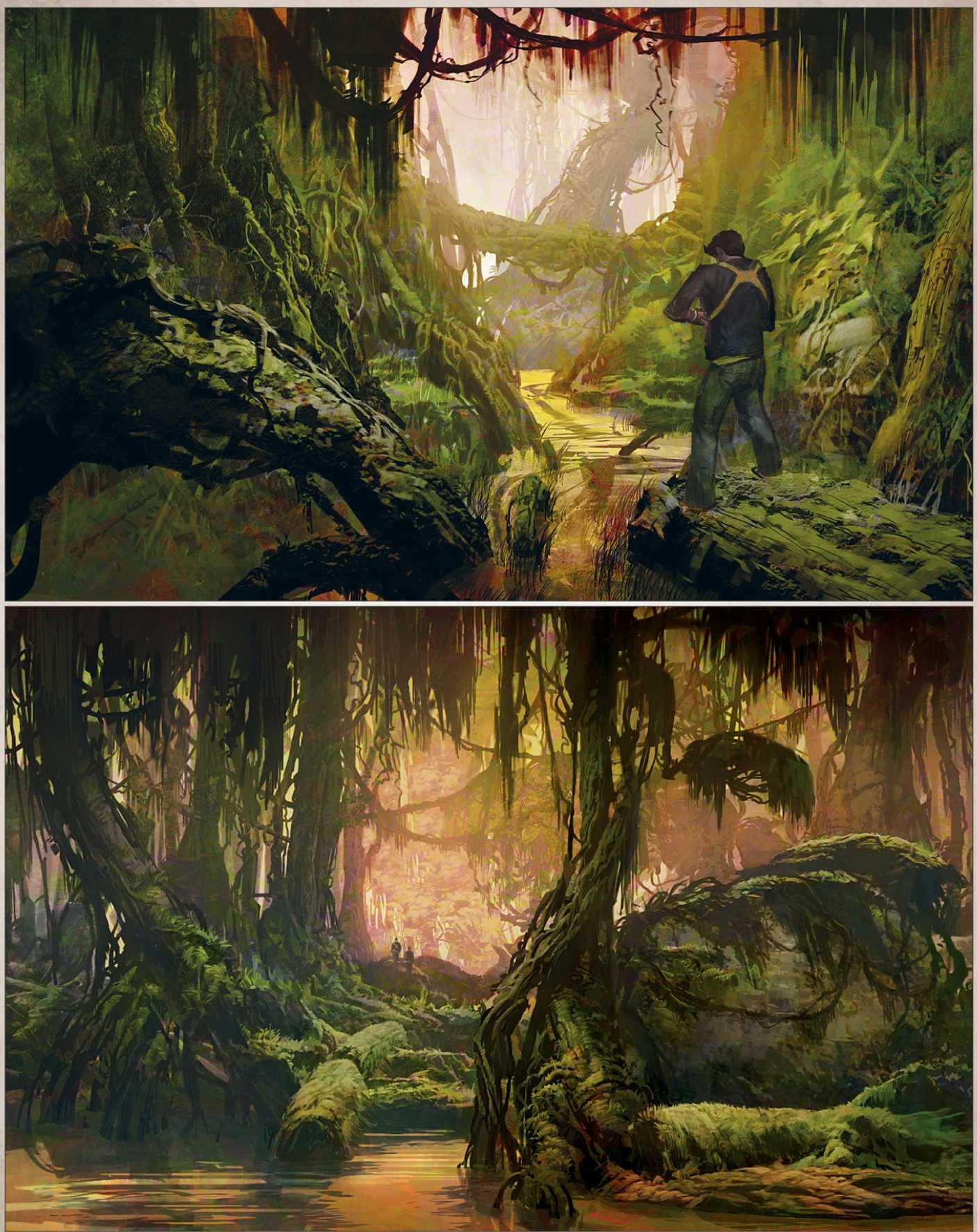


We did several studies to determine what kind of trees to use. We were attempting to make them more bulbous, with a sickly look.





Color studies of the swamp and a comparative size study to get the scale of the trees.



In designing the swamp, we were inspired by artist Frank Frazetta's trees. We liked the twisted vines and roots that wrap around rocks and sink into the water. These concepts were draw-overs from the actual game mesh.









We studied several styles of architecture of the Nepalese and figured out how buildings would look after battles took place in them. From the materials and construction aspect, how would the buildings look if it was destroyed by a rocket launcher? Or how would it react to fire?


निषेध
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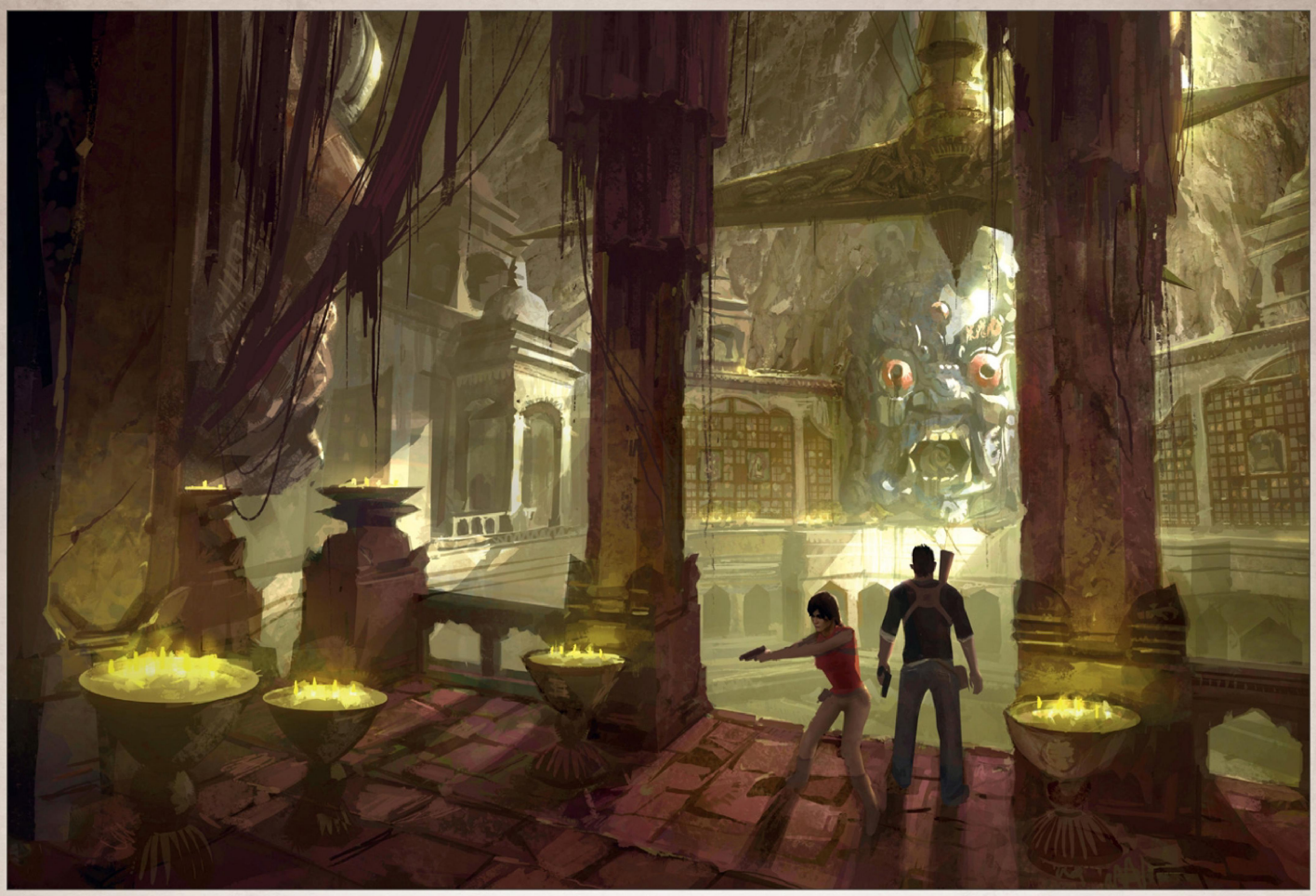
We studied several interior designs and wanted to combine water features, natural lighting, and fire. We wanted the light to bounce off the colors of the gold and old stone to create a more dramatic environment.



Lighting is always a challenge in ancient indoor structures like these, which don't have electricity. The lighting design is reliant on natural light from cracks and holes in the ceiling.



The mask puzzle was particularly challenging, because we had to design a way to climb on the mask so that players could solve the puzzle. We used a large amount of reference to create three distinct masks.



The train is long, and we needed to design cars that would provide variety in shape and color, as well as gameplay options. The gameplay needed to allow players to climb on the sides, walk on top of and inside cars, and take cover at different areas.







The train yard and warehouse are in a remote, Industrial Revolution–era town, that once held many manufacturing plants and factories. We looked at several train yards from Middle America and the former Soviet Union.

We wanted to make this area as cold and hard surfaced as possible, to contrast it with the beautiful, natural landscapes encountered on the following level.





We wanted to combine the train yard with various industrial elements, and we designed several structures based on old steel and coal plants. The level was originally planned to be much larger, since it had a lot of possibilities, but it was eventually chopped down to what it is in the game.

The next levels after players get on the train replace all the hard surfaced buildings with towering mountains, lush jungles, and waterfalls.

















The train battle went through several environments, to give players a sense of distance and scope.
As the battle continues, players will notice the transition from a cold, snow-covered mountain range into a lush bamboo forest in the lowlands.





We experimented with several gameplay scenarios, like a trailer full of logs being shot loose, or a shootout taking place inside a train car with a bunch of livestock and blowing feathers everywhere. A standout was the vertical gun battle while the train hangs off a cliff.



Drake encounters the train-wreck level while wounded. We made an effort to simplify the shapes here, to help players navigate through the wreckage and lead them to doors using light effects and movement like smoke and flapping flags.







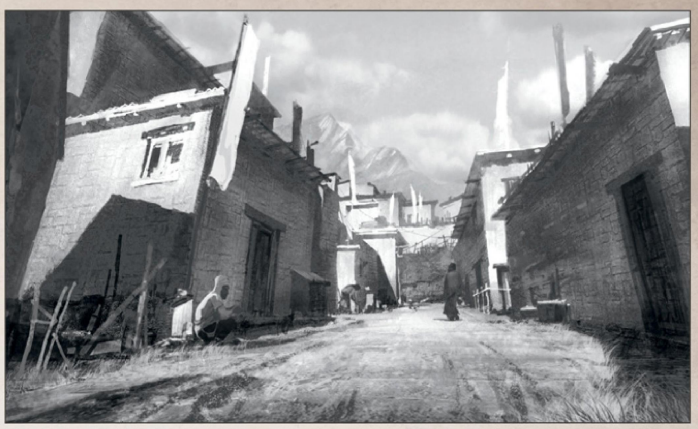







Because the gameplay goes on rooftops, balconies, cliff edges, and basements, it was necessary to flesh out the construction of the village structures. We needed to see how these places would look, so we developed a lot of different concepts.











Tenzin's house was very comfortable and settled in, to show a close relationship between him and his family.

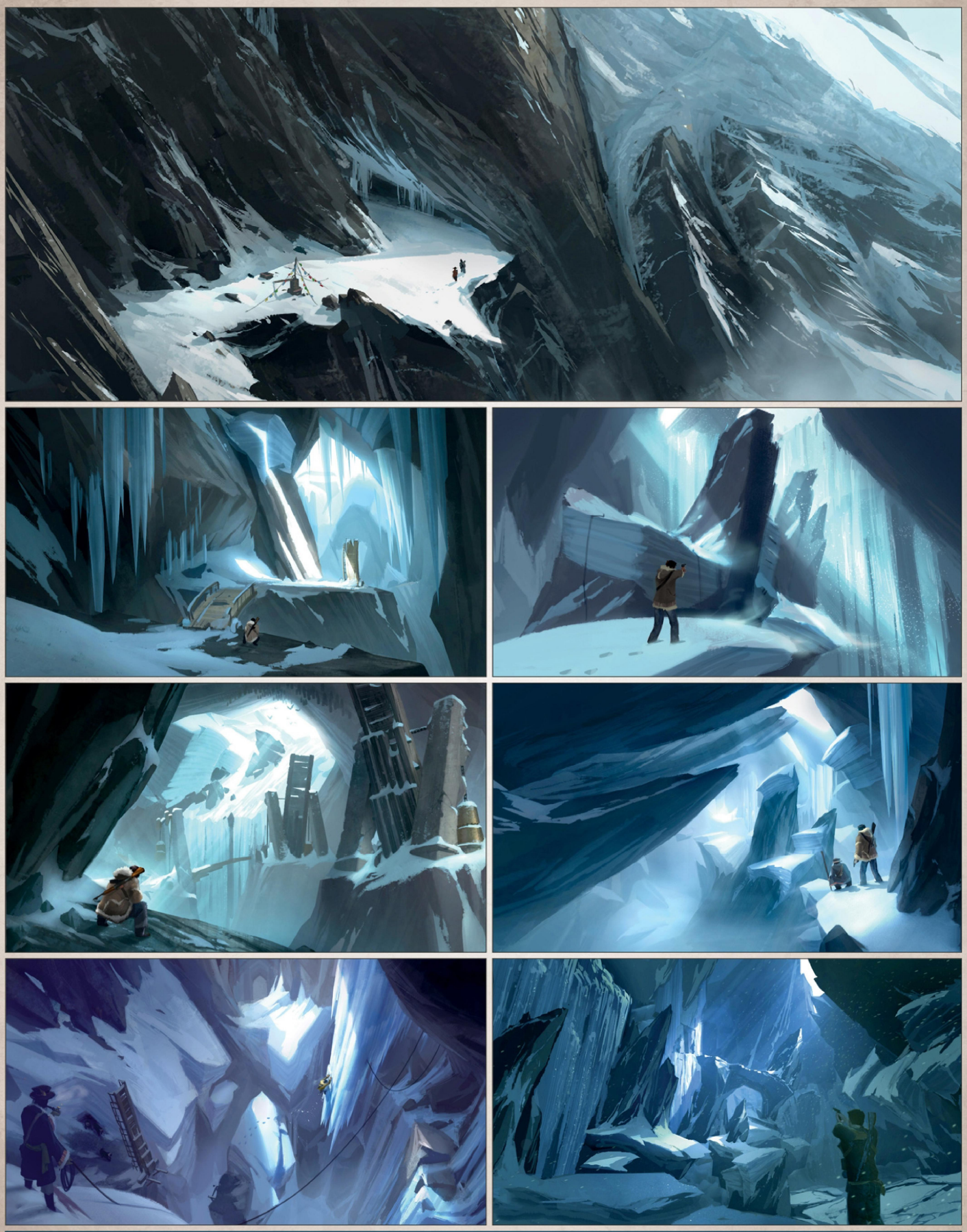




The first time Drake visits the mountain village, players see a peaceful community and colorful homes. To set the tone, the epic mountain range enjoys perfect weather conditions. This visual provides a peaceful atmosphere that serves as stark contrast to Drake's second visit to the village.

All of the basic tools and furnishings of the villagers were carefully designed and iterated to play up the characteristics of the village.


福气祥和通四方



In creating the mountain pass, we combined elements of snow, ice, and rock and experimented with different angles and shapes to define and illuminate the path players would follow.









Foremost in the design of the snow temple statues was the need to integrate them into the glacial walls, floors, and ceilings.



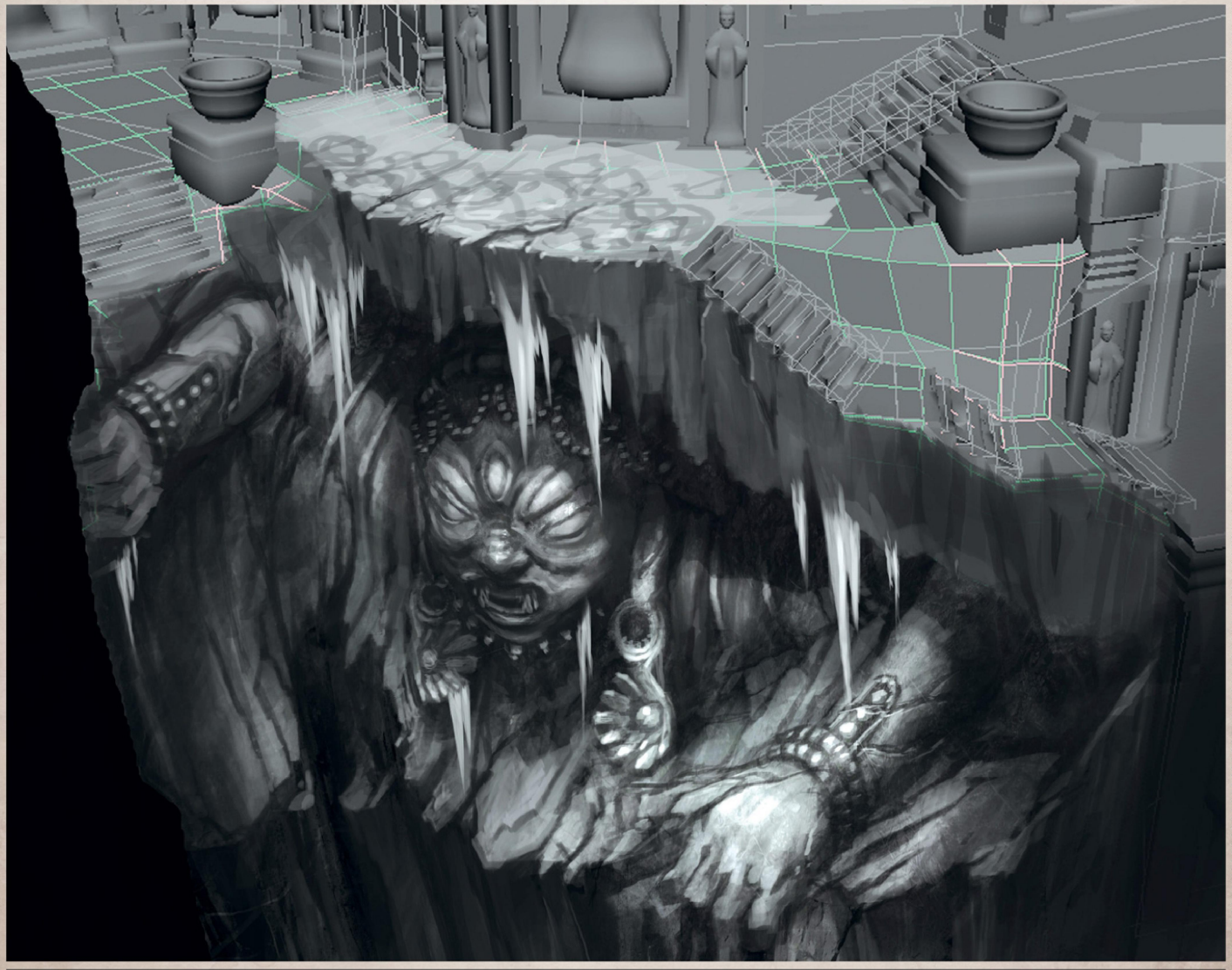


We incorporated these giant statues throughout the temple level, placing them under rocky cliffs and using them as pillars. Each statue's design had to include a transition from peaceful to evil.



The first statue on the left displays its peaceful state, while the central image shows the moment of transformation as the sections rotate, giving way to the evil version on the right, which reveals a different personality while maintaining the same silhouette.





These gigantic rollers are fortune wheels that we exaggerated to fit a traversal puzzle.



The temple's central chamber was designed to highlight the importance of the Chintamani Stone, which the central statue guards in his hands.

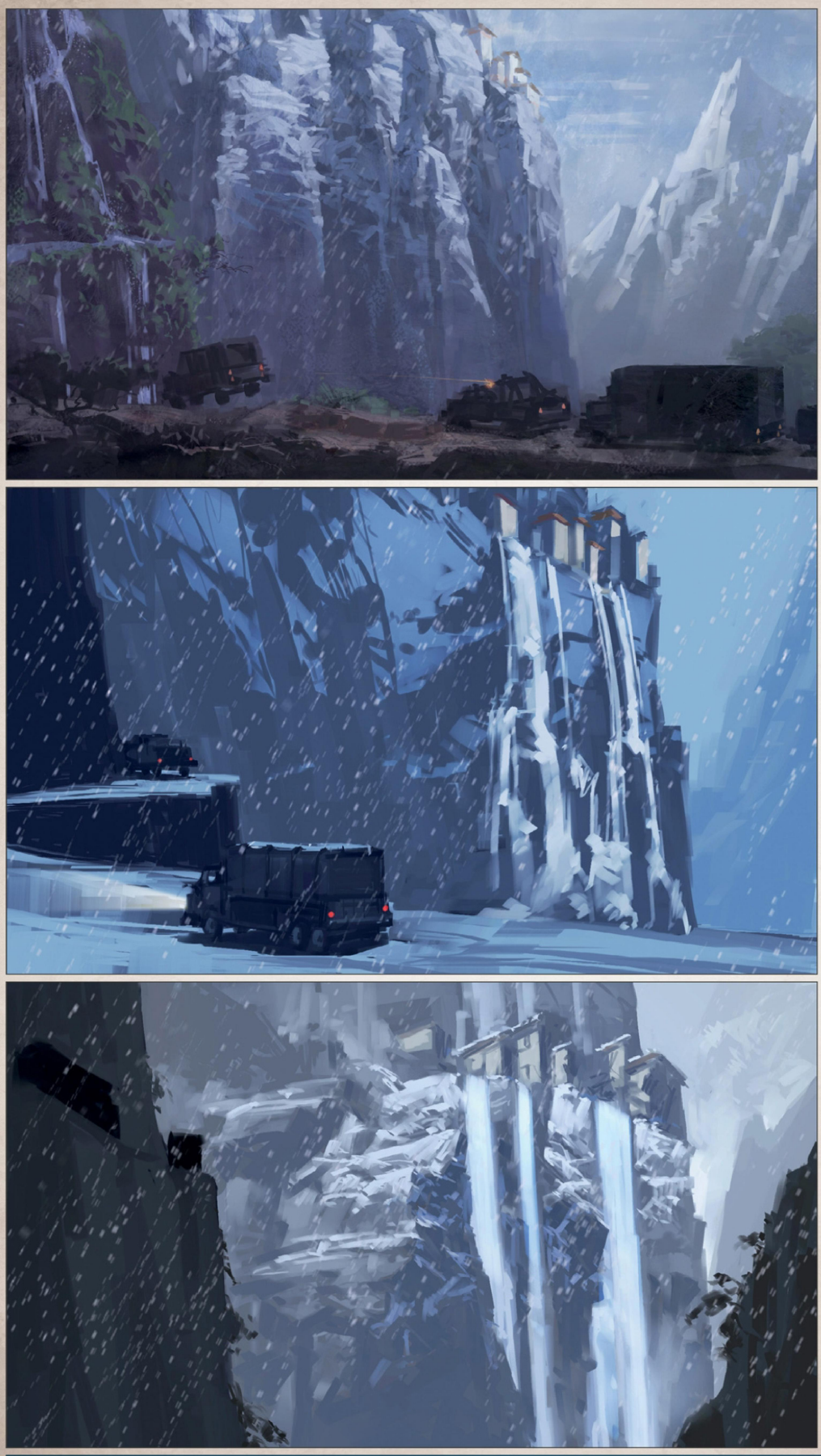






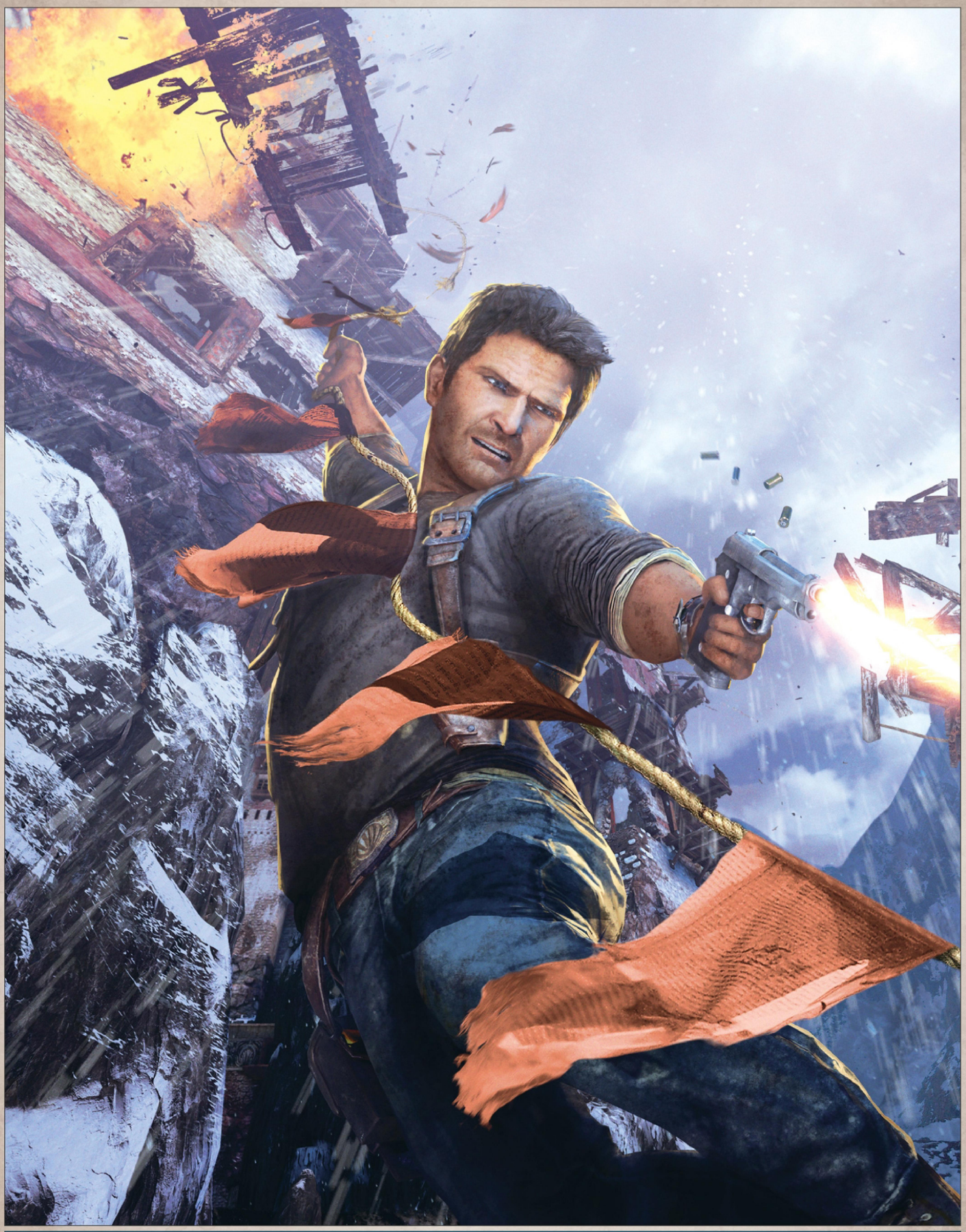


When Drake returns to the village, it is under attack. To emphasize the change from the first visit, which was characterized by a colorful, sunny palette, this time the skies are gloomy and overcast, with an overture of fire and smoke to lend urgency to the danger.





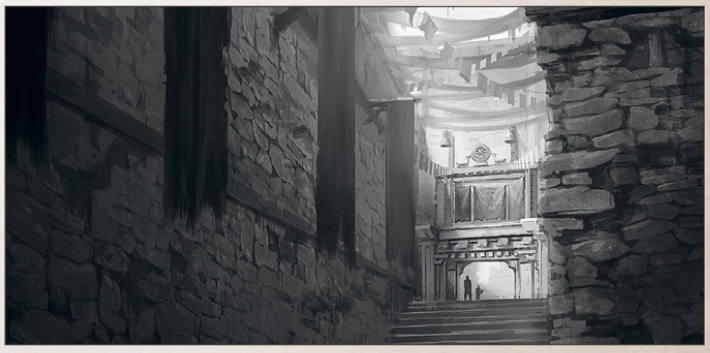
The mountain chase is a fast-paced level that needed to be designed to give players a glimpse of the Gompa every now and then as Drake progresses up the dangerous mountain pass.



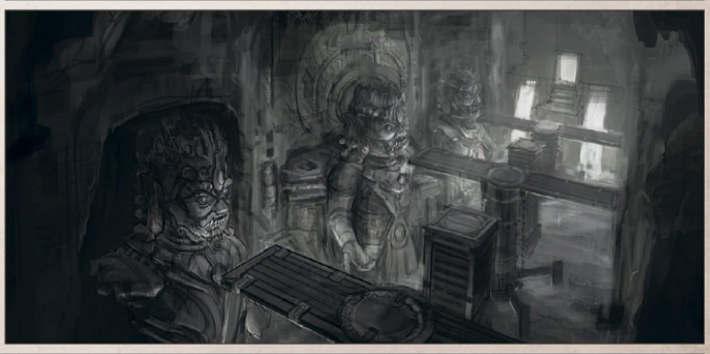
This scene is from the falling bridge in the Gompa level and was eventually used as the cover of a book on Uncharted 2.











The Gompa is a monastery where monks guard the secret gateway to Shambhala.
Filled with intimidating statues, it is generally uninviting, yet intriguing enough to be enticing. The design needed an almost haunted feel to it.

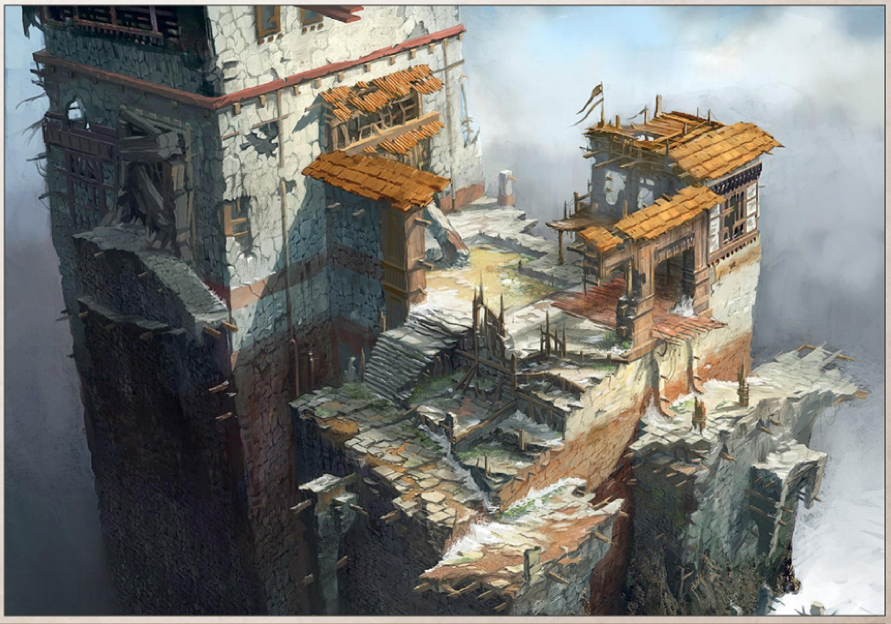





1
2
3







Many of the architectural elements of the Gompa level had to be adapted to suit gameplay requirements, like providing cover and ledge grabs for traversals. This added difficulty to the goal of maintaining the authenticity of the architecture.

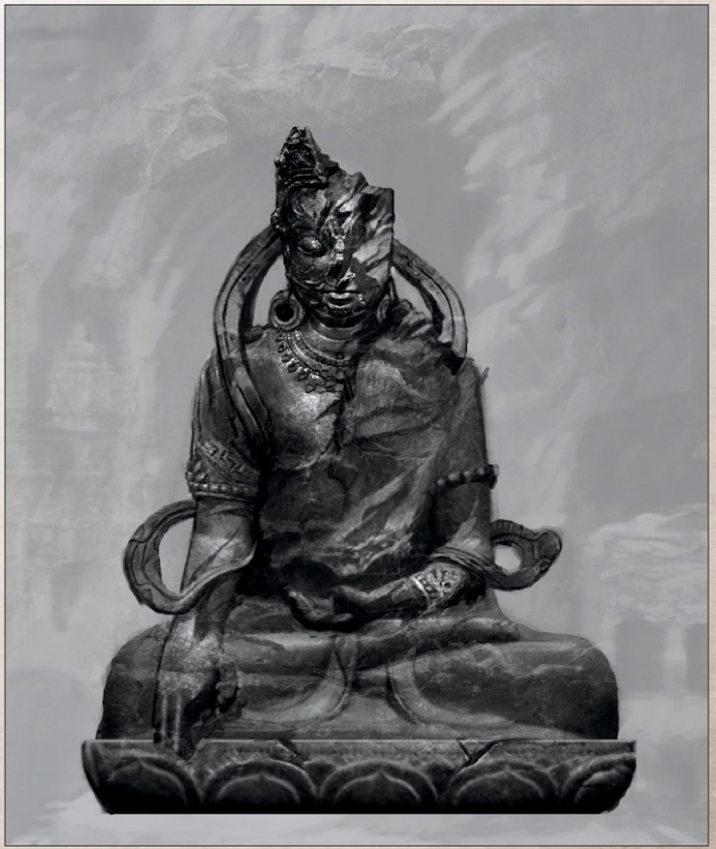






A multitude of deity statues were designed to be integrated into the level to add mysticism to the environment. Many of these deities were inspired by our interpretations of actual mythology.







Early studies of an actual Gompa were made to provide designers with inspiration on ways to integrate the space into the game.



Sleeping quarters and a pottery room were conceptualized, but never made it into the game.









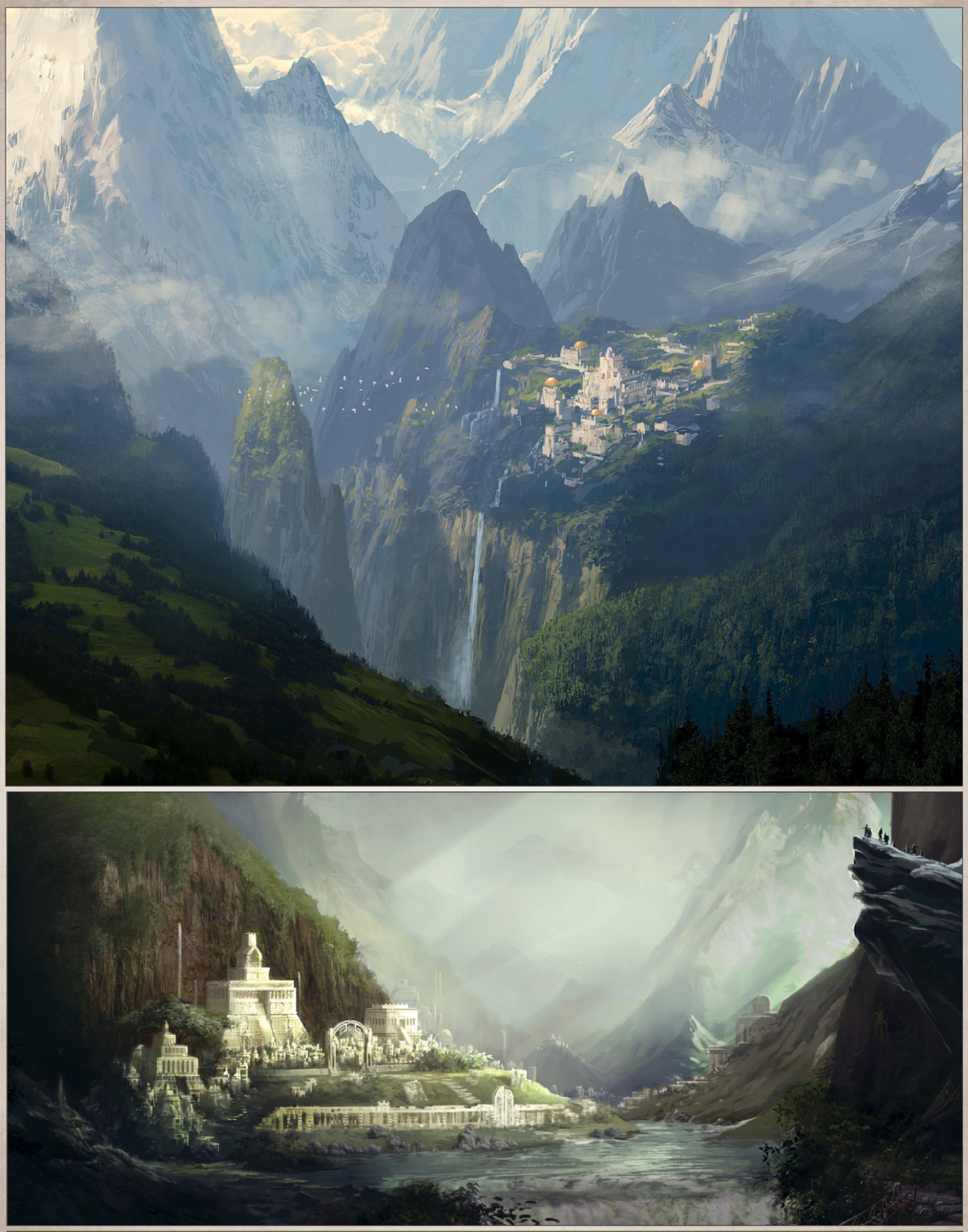




The Gompa design drew direct inspiration from a real-life Gompa called Tiger's Nest monastery in Bhutan. We exaggerated the structures by making the towers higher and connecting them through fragile suspension bridges. We added waterfalls and sheer cliff drops.





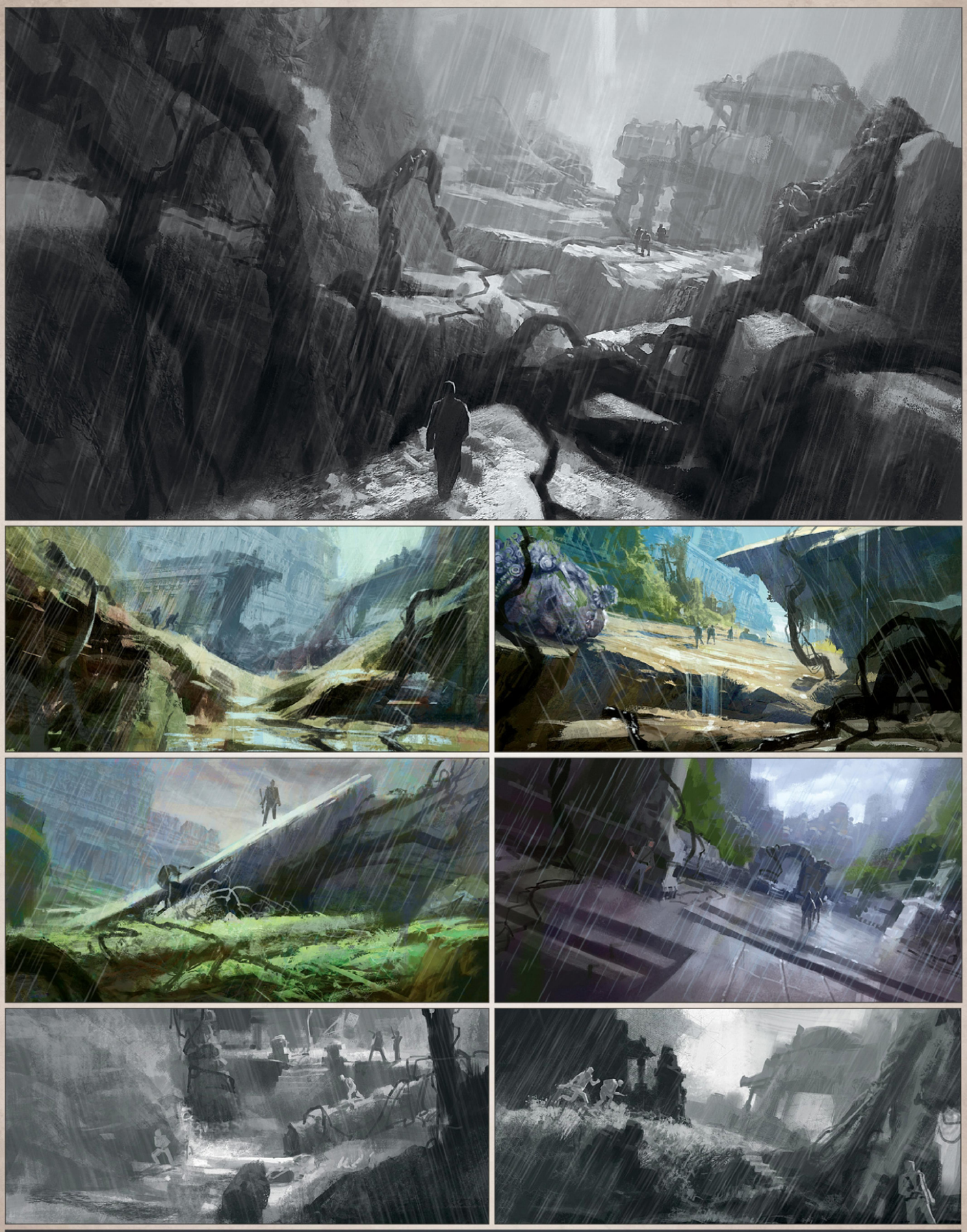


The Shambhala vista reveal was probably the most important concept art we made. It needed to be that elusive, magical paradise.

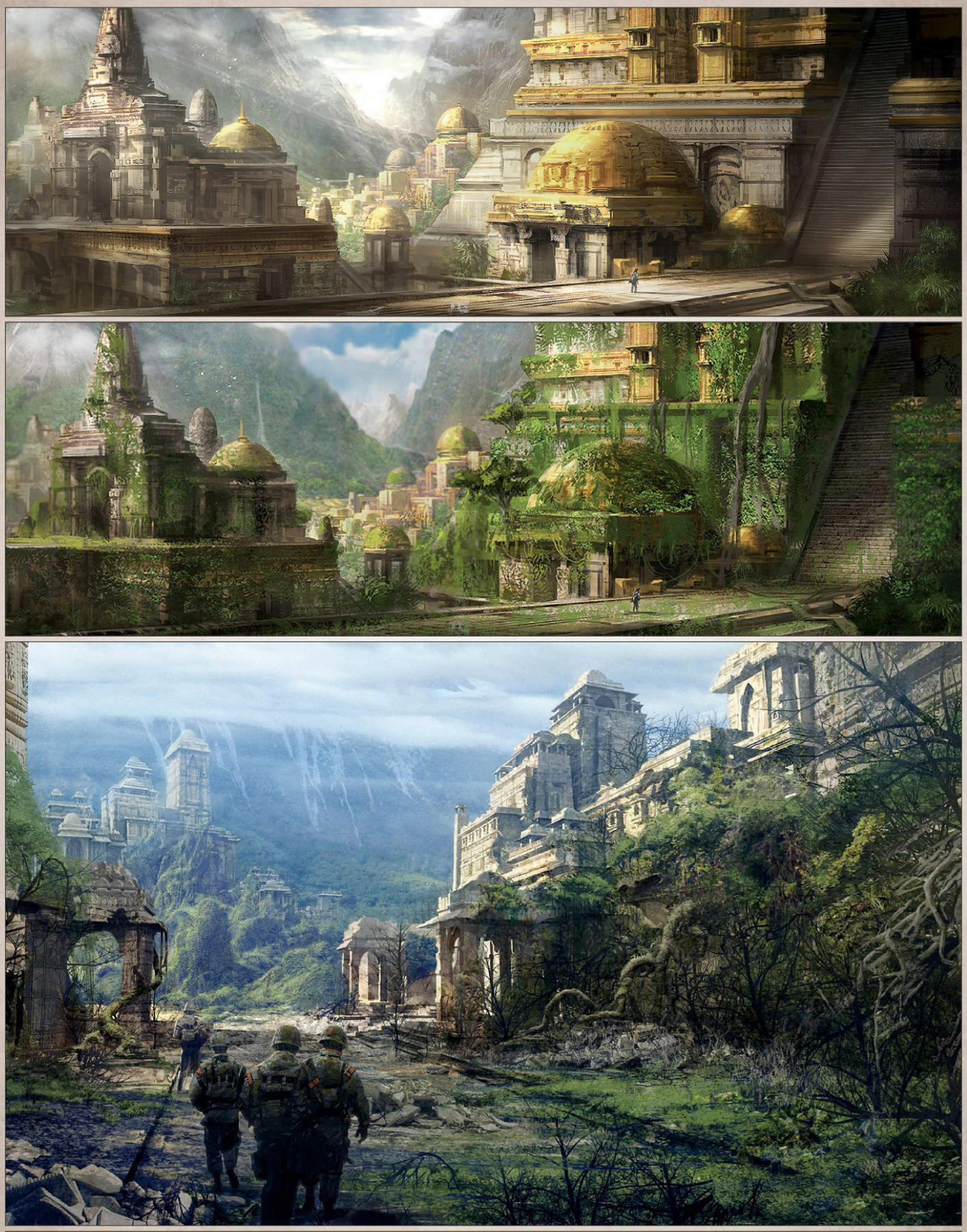




The underlying theme of the design was of a paradise lost, and the concept art hints at the corruption and devastation that took place here.



The city is abandoned and over time has been almost crushed by roots and swallowed by the earth.



Entering Shambhala is like wandering into a lost civilization, magically protected from the outside elements.















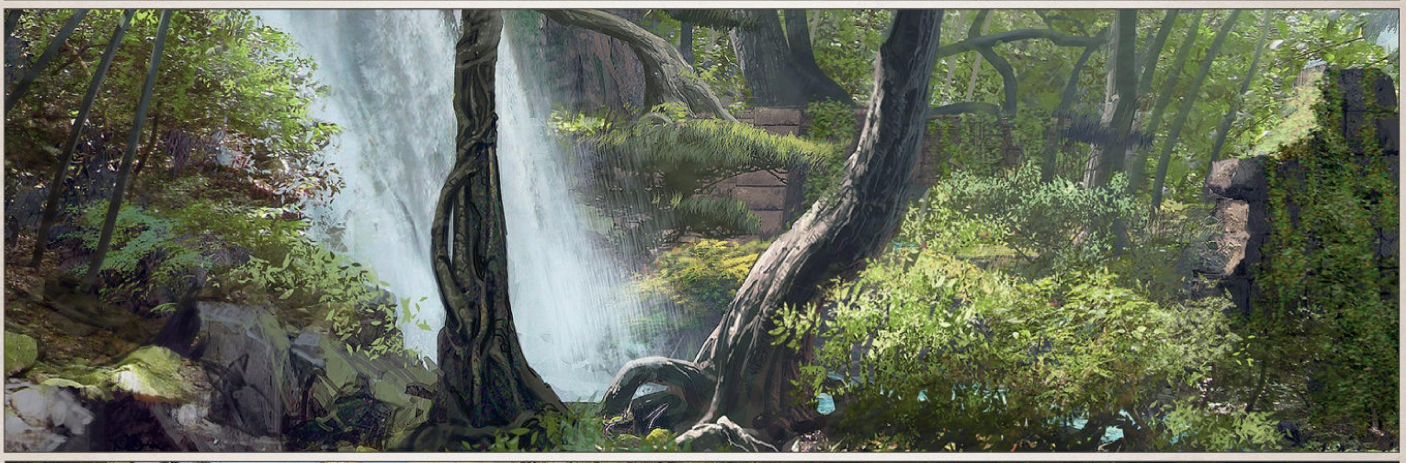


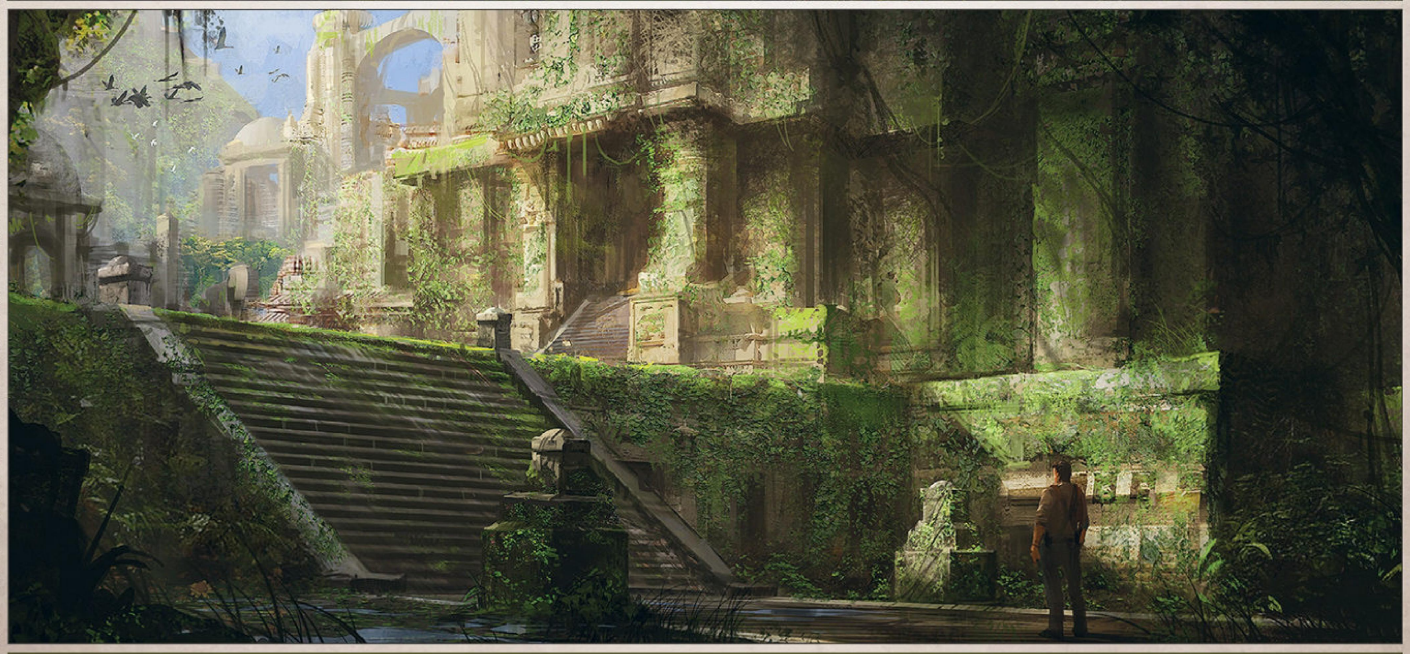




We made several studies to ensure the architecture authentically represents ancient ruins. We took inspiration from Angkor Wat temples in Cambodia, where roots cover the structures.







One concept involved a central, invasive tree that spread throughout the city.



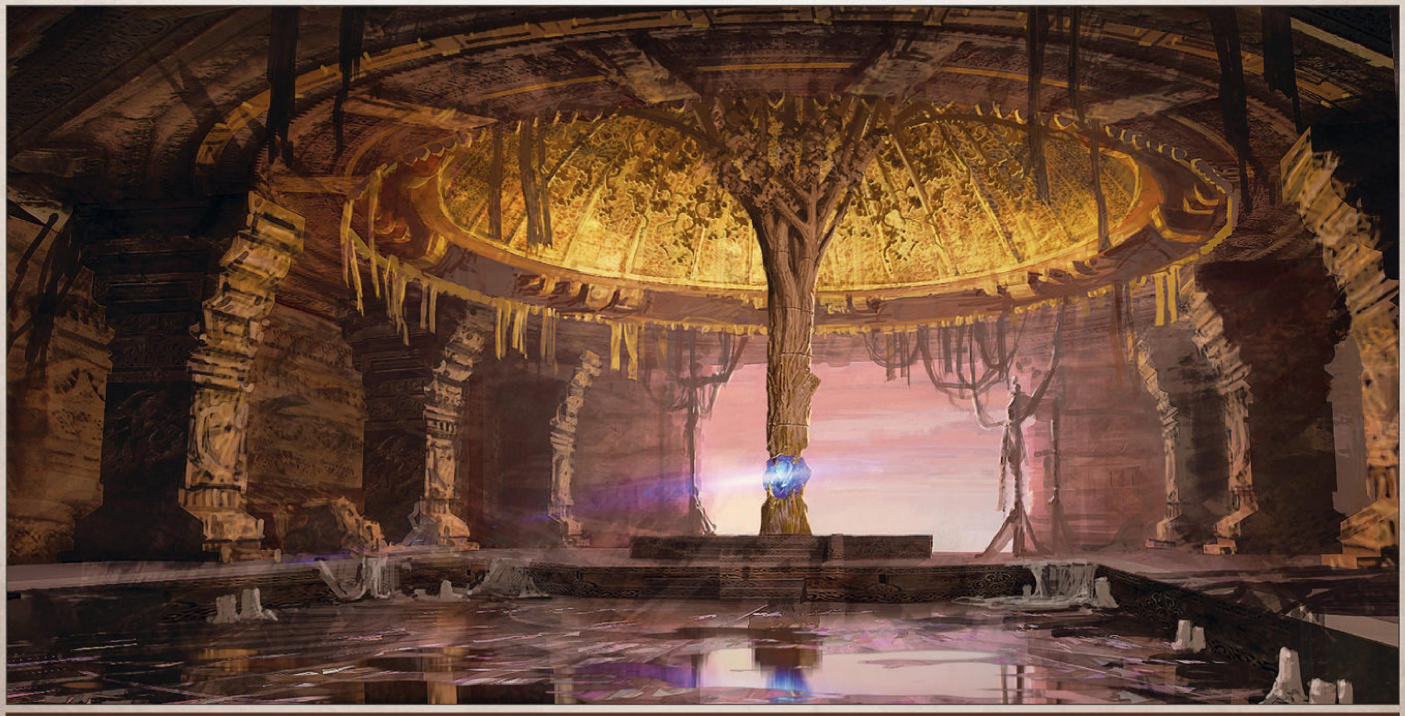


Early visual design for the Guardian's Lair, evoking a society that still held onto some rituals but had degenerated into more primal practices.





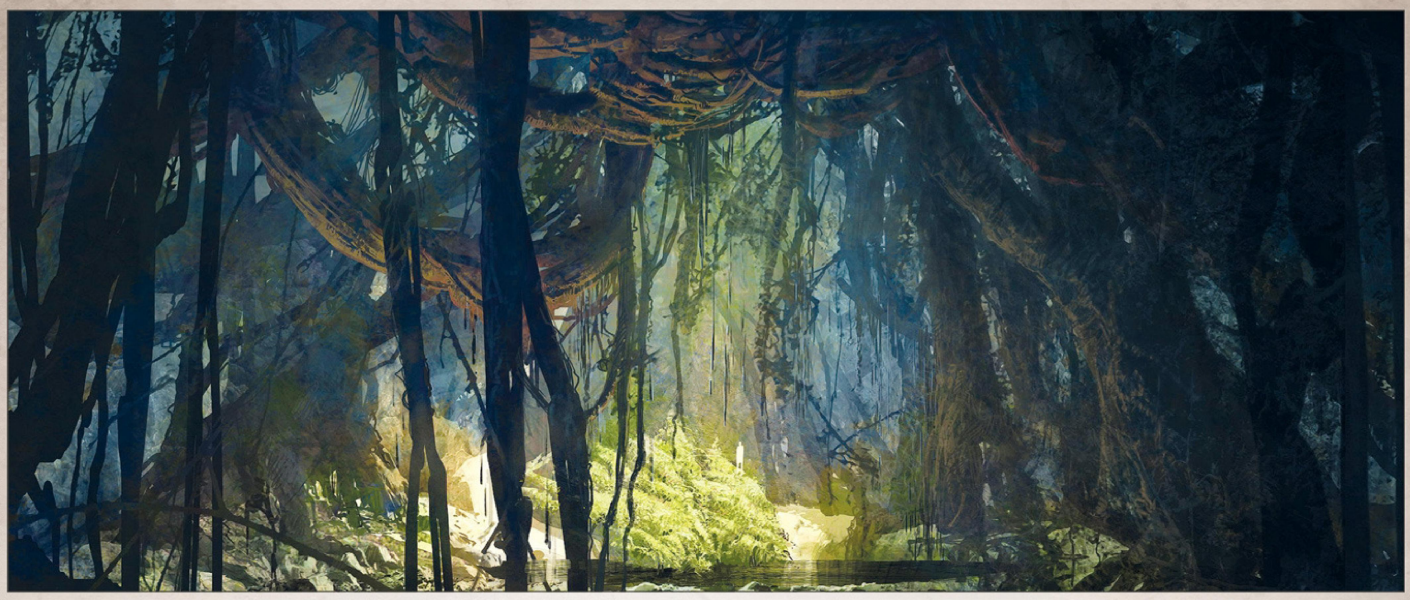




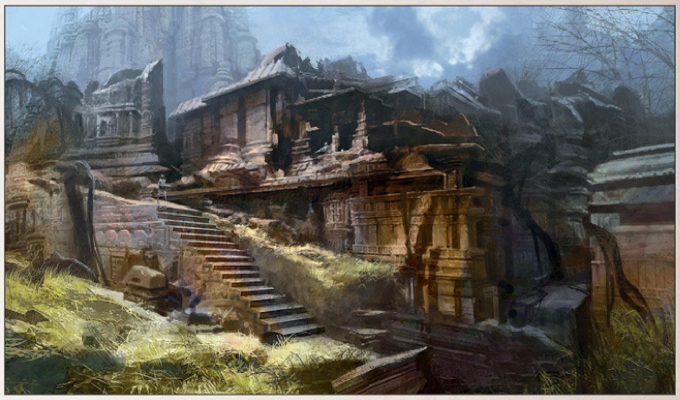
These drawings exploredearly designs for the chamber's centerpiece, a representation of the tree of life. The idea evolved dramatically into the version players encounter in the game.













These concepts explore the ruins of Shambhala and how the overgrowth has begun to consume the city.



Studies envisioning what the sap pool under the tree of life would look like. This is the setting for the final boss fight with Lazarevic.



These concept designs explore potential lighting schemes for when Shambhala is first revealed. Both are effective but portray very different moods.



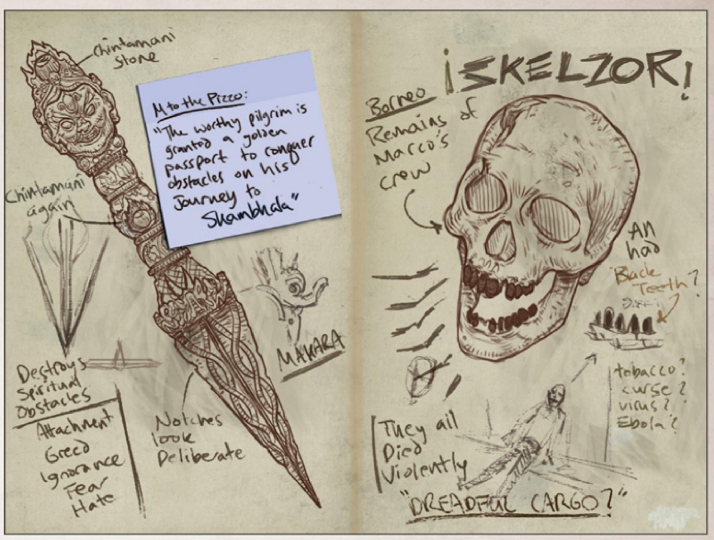
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

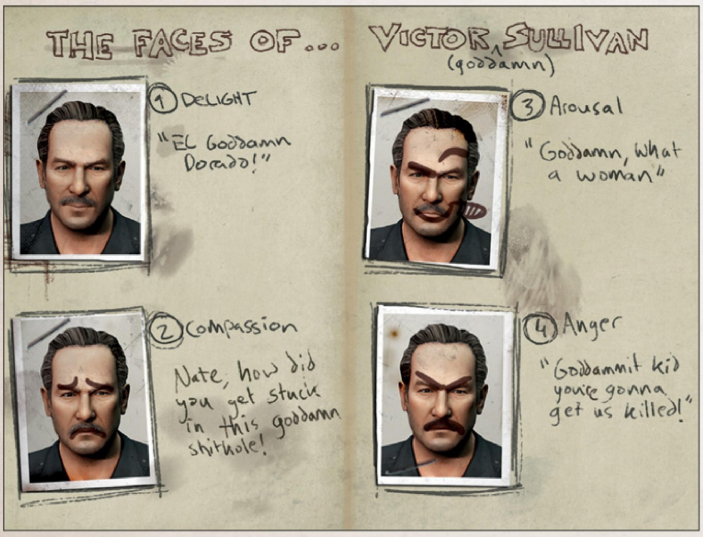
DRAKE'S JOURNAL

DRAKE'S JOURNAL

Drake's journal is one of the hardest things to conceptualize in each game. It has to look hand drawn, consistent in style, impromptu, and informative, and has to give correct clues. The journal is usually the last thing to go into each game, since all the clues and puzzle solving need to be done before we can generate art that represents those ideas. The journal also had to be historically accurate, so all those details and design drawings needed to be thoroughly researched, then drawn to look like they came from the same hand.














12 Clue
Arm arrangement (Indian?)
~~VAJRAKILAYA~~?
Wrathful Deity
central orb a clear representation of the cintamani stone
dagger!
DORJE
3 Faces
TRIDENT
Destroys obstacles hostile to compassion
TEMPLE WATER SPOUT
Makara Food chain
Lazarevic (ugliest)
Flynn (Most scales)
Chloe (Biggest Mouth)
Wall Painting FROM INSIDE TEMPLE
Pick up attitude sickness pills & Lipbalm
THE DHARMA WHEEL
Represents the path to enlightenment
"The Noble Eightfold Path"
Weird tree relief carved on temple wall.
"I KILL YOU DRAKE"
ANGRY EDDY
WATCH FOR LIGHT TO OPEN Passages
Nepal Temple
cintamani Stone
Demon yeti? WTF!
Always Depicted on Fire
Conqueror Bearing the cintamani Stone
crushed skulls of vanquished enemies

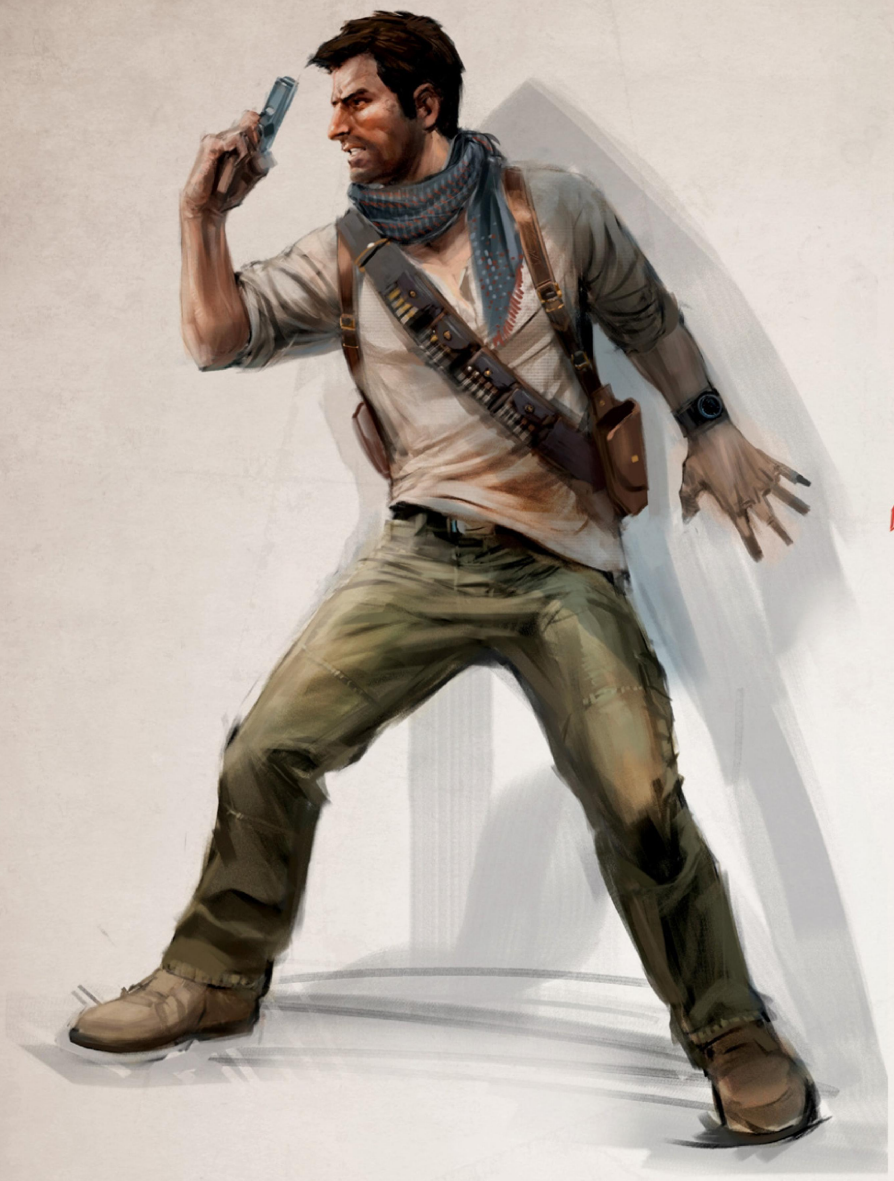

UNCHARTED™ 3
DRAKE'S DECEPTION





Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception

CHARACTER DESIGN

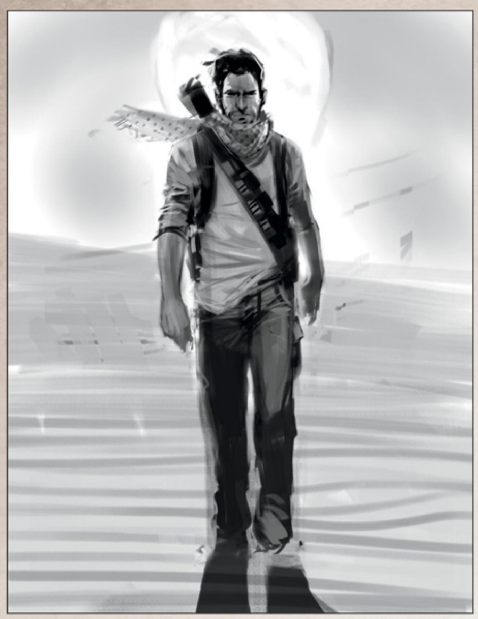


DRAKE

For his third outing, we gave Drake a more desert military feel, with khaki/desert tan cargo pants, combat boots, a leather bandoleer, and shoulder holsters. We also mixed in some Middle Eastern influence by adding a square scarf called a *shemagh* (or *kaffiyeh*) around his neck.





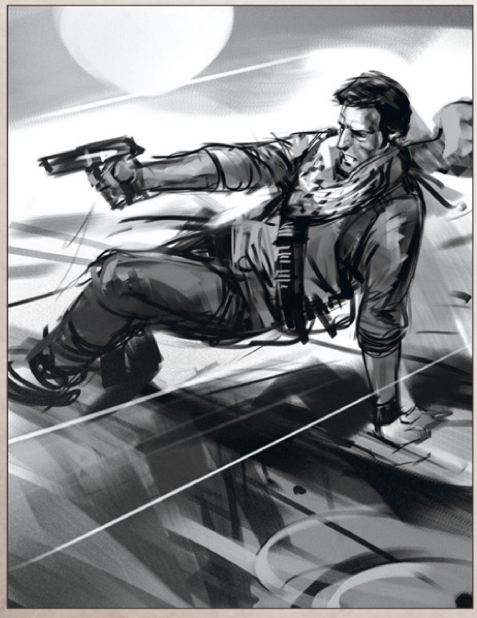










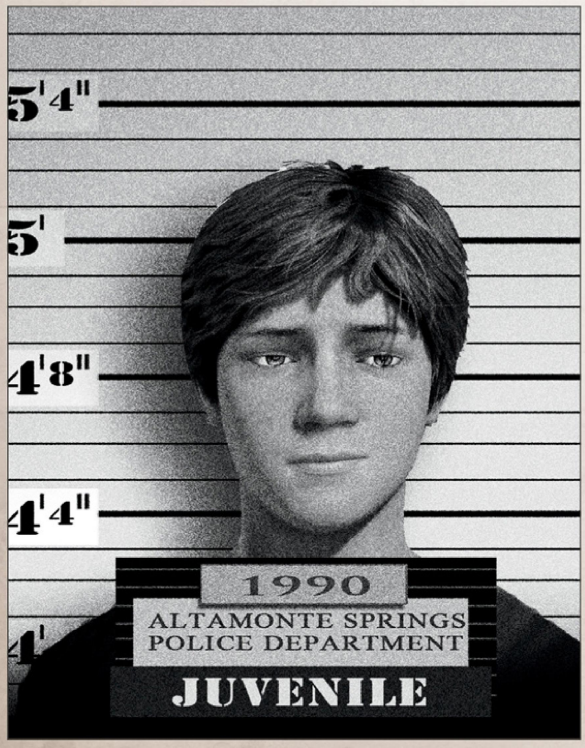


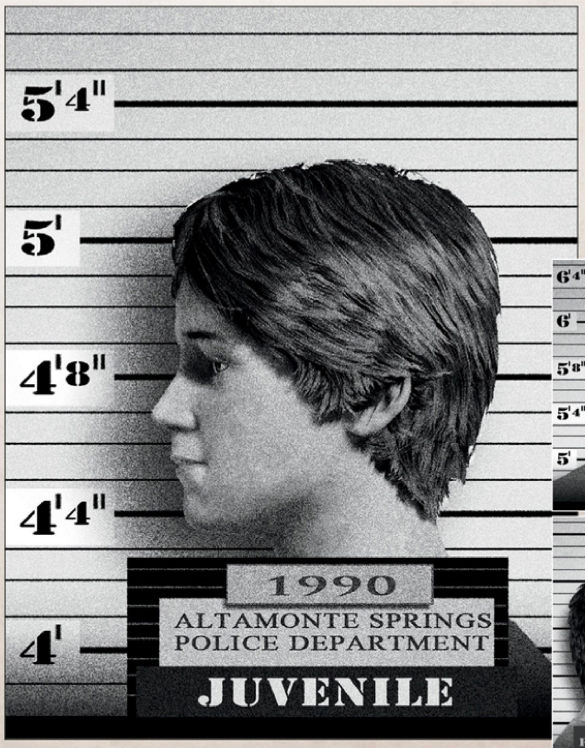
We always draw gestural poses and action poses of our characters to help us imagine them on location and see if the resulting look has the right feel for the game.











In his youth, Drake was rebellious and a delinquent, already pushing his luck at a young age. We wanted to make sure this was apparent, but that his intelligence and quickness still came through as well.






GD-01
DENIM
GD-02
PLAID SHIRT
UNTUCKED LONG-SLEEVE T.
GD-03
LIGHT HOODIE
DARK LONG-SLEEVE T.
GD-04
SHORT-SLEEVE OVER LONG
GD-05
FITTED SHIRT
*ROLLED SLEEVES
GD-06
T-SHIRT W/ UTILITY VEST



SULLY

Sully is one of the game's strongest personalities, and we decided he wouldn't have changed much since he was younger. We took the opportunity to show him at his peak, when he had more hair, tighter skin, and, of course, displayed more chest hair.



A series of drawings defining the gunshot wound Sully sustains and how blood spreads through his clothing.



ELENA

Elena's desert gear is similar to Drake's palette, but reshaped to fit her body. We also gave her a scarf and khaki pants.





We generated a great variety of color studies of Elena to make sure her palette would complement Drake and the environments she appears in.



CHLOE

Chloe's look is designed to contrast Elena's—slicker, with sharper angles. We gave her a burgundy leather moto jacket, with sharp collars and angular shoulder pads. This differentiation reinforces the difference in their personalities.





Variations on Chloe's color scheme and costume.





CUTTER

Cutter is a quintessential European thug—fitted leather military jacket, matched with denims and black, steel-toed, leather work boots.





These Cutter variations also helped inspire the designs for the rest of the thugs in the bar.



MARLOWE

Marlowe is a sophisticated, calculating, and manipulative leader of a Hermetic order, strong willed and very determined to get what she wants. We gave her a very serious, all-business look with sharp, angular features, especially her hair, nose, and eyes.





Variations on Marlowe's costume, revealing her personality. We dressed her mostly in dark colors, primarily black, for a slick, streamlined look.



TALBOT

Talbot is the lieutenant of Marlowe's organization. We fashioned him similarly to his boss in order to keep the sophistication befitting his role in a well-funded organization. His facial features and clothing follow the angular designs of our antagonists.









Talbot's clothing design follows the organization's uniform of slick black suits and red ties.





RAMESES

Rameses is the leader of a Yemeni pirate group, hired as mercenaries by Marlowe's organization. He and his antagonist group stand in dramatic visual contrast to Marlowe's Hermetic order. Rameses is similar in style to Eddy Raja of *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*. He is greedy, flamboyant, and badly dressed.





We dressed Rameses's pirates in military cargo pants tucked into military boots. Pairing that with open-chest, military-shaped jacket tops gave them a tougher look. We also worked to keep the color values consistent between each variation to make enemies easier to identify.





SALIM

Salim is a sheikh of the desert-dwelling tribes called the Bedouin. We dressed him in a traditional Arab garment called a *thobe*. Bedouins usually dress in white cotton with earthy tones, but we decided to color him blue so he'd stand out from the desert. Bedouin men usually do not wear jewelry; instead they carry curved knives, rifles, and ammunition bandoleers.





For the Bedouin designs, we experimented with different color variations, while keeping the blue theme. We also chose to outfit them with sirwal *(loose, baggy pants), instead of the traditional sarong. This made them easier to animate, especially when riding a horse.*



Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception

ENVIRONMENTS



The English Pub was one of the game's first levels, and a lot of enthusiasm went into field-researching an authentic pub. Every detail was considered, even how the British electrical sockets looked.

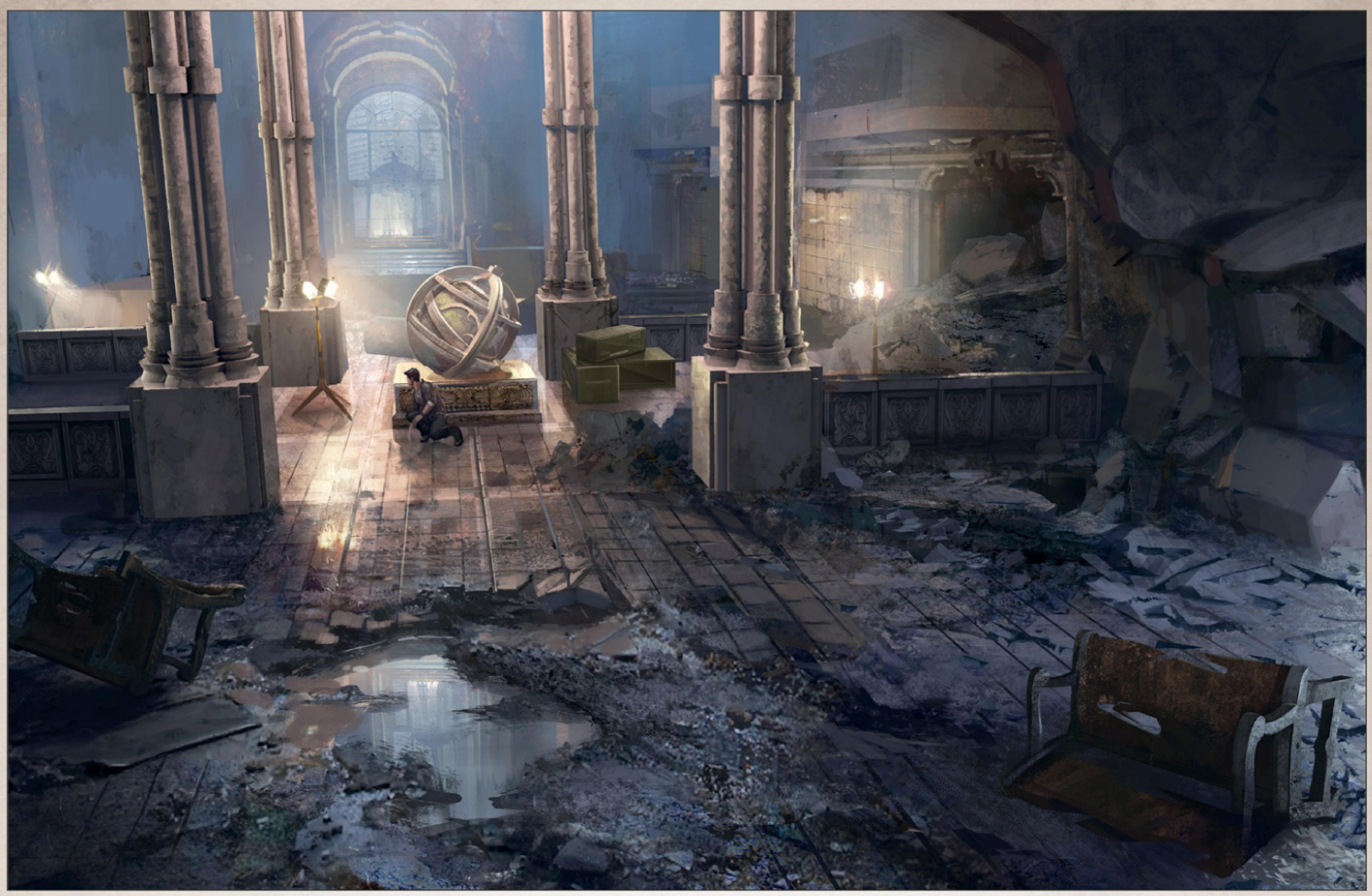


The Cartagena town square was the first time we tried putting a large crowd into an open area. This necessitated rebuilding characters to optimize them for crowds, so we could put more of them onscreen. The busy market square was the ultimate challenge for us because it comprised not only people but also different store elements, like in a farmer's market.





The sewer originally had many traversal gameplay elements, so we had to study how to create clear, grabbable ledges out of pipes, electrical tubes, and supports. The challenge in using industrial elements like pipes and wires was trying keeping it believable for the period, rather than making the location turn out spaceship-like.





The inspiration for the abandoned train station is very Victorian, including the old train itself, with everything taking cues from models of the time.

















The graphic design for these posters is also intended to reflect the type of displays that would have adorned the station at the time it was operational.





Cutter's apartment is a bachelor pad designed to show that its owner is an educated, cultured man. The punching bag in the far corner reveals a tougher side of his personality.



For this forest, we developed new tree designs to clearly differentiate this setting from the jungles of the previous games.





The chateau incorporates elements of several abandoned, baroque-style chateaus in France, but ours is overgrown and unstable.













The citadel is inspired by the Krak des Chevaliers, which is a Medieval Crusader castle in Syria. We took designs from other citadels in Syria as well, but the location and actual look of the Crusader castle was perfect. We wanted it to be on high ground, where players can see the city all around and a long, winding road below. We planned a chase on the tour bus, but it was unfortunately cut.



Early designs of the Crusader tombs below the citadel.



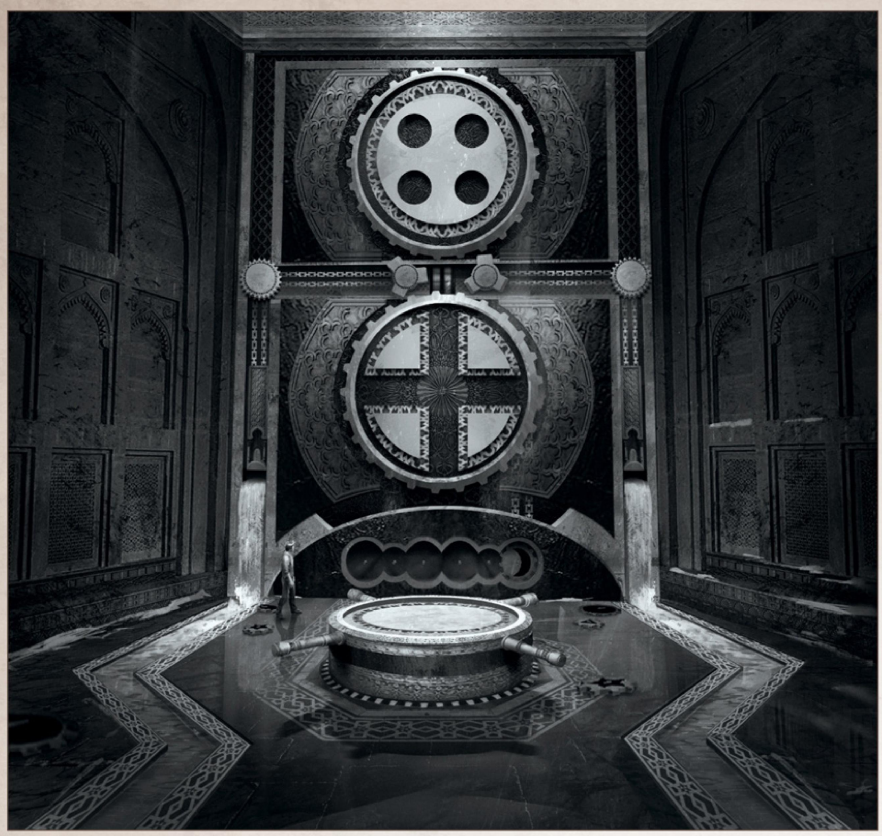


We wanted to establish that the Citadel is a touristy place, so we created a few tourist elements like a ticket booth and a gift shop by the entrance. Here we were also conceptualizing how the lighting affects the scenery at night.





This Yemeni city was based on the medieval city of San'a. We combined the old city with the fortified village of Al Hajjarah, known for its towering houses built on cliff faces of the Haraz Mountains in the twelfth century. The design gave us a variety of landscapes, transitioning from the flat city streets to unique rock structures. The architecture of the Yemeni city is very distinct, with squarish walls and painted and embossed patterns. The palette is largely monochromatic, dominated by earth tones.



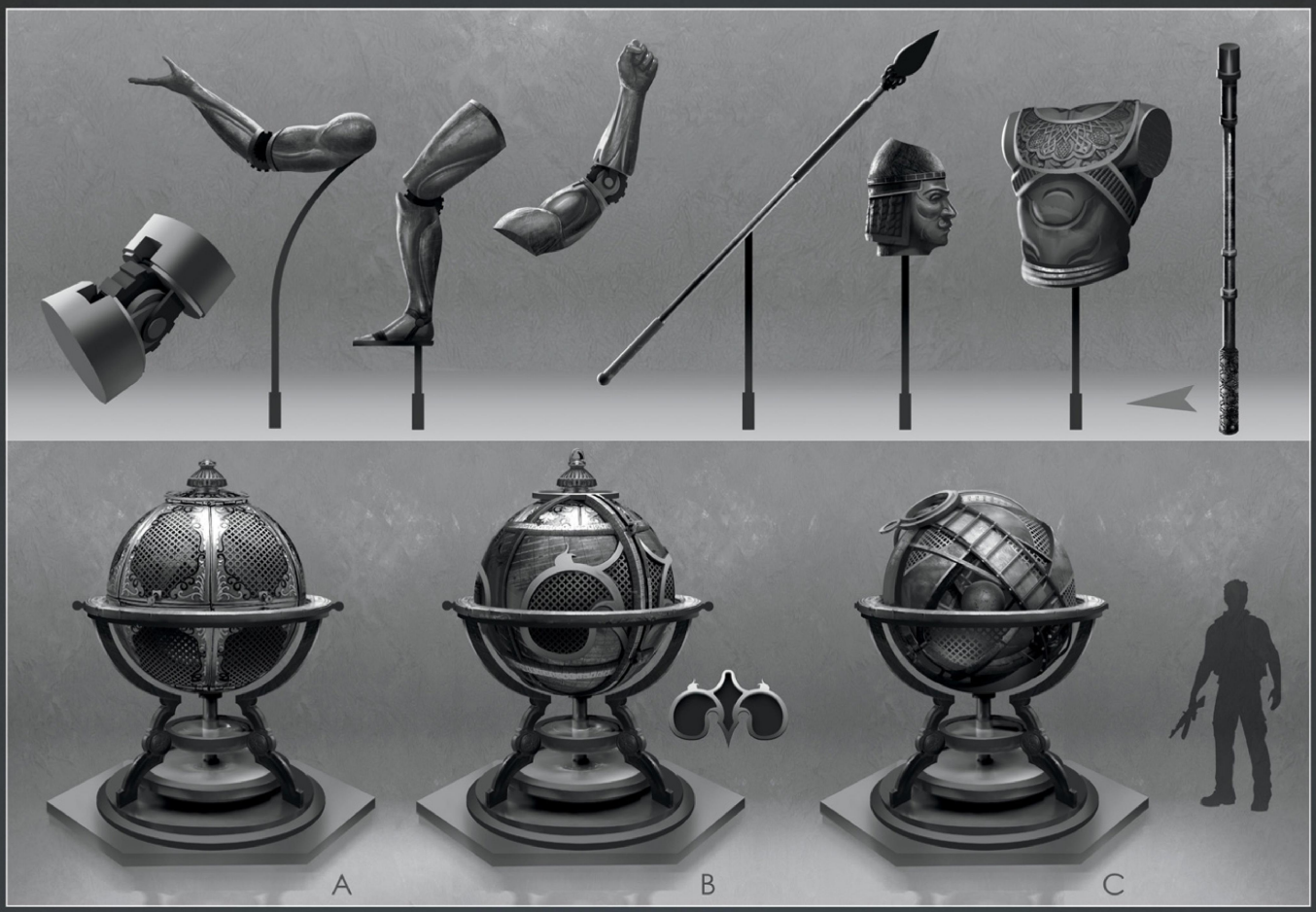








Of the many puzzles in Uncharted 3, *one of the more iconic devices was this planetarium projector that displayed constellations on the ceiling. Its design was based on an armillary sphere, which is a device that models objects in space.*



We created several renditions of the armillary sphere projector, trying to make sense of it. The metal body parts above are from another puzzle level in which each part appears disjointed until it is viewed from a particular angle. We based the warriors on the golden mechanized statues players see all over the lost city.





The Derelict Cruise Ship was another huge level that had to be scaled down, but was nonetheless resource intensive. It was one of the first levels designed for Uncharted 3. *We started building the geometry and textures early, but could not move forward until the ocean water technology was ready. It's an ambitious level, in which the boat has to flip over and remain playable. It took time to develop and created several new tech and design problems we had never encountered before.*





The inspiration for this level was an actual ship graveyard off the coast of Africa, where huge hulks of rusting metal are dismantled and sold for scrap. This was a perfect environment to combine uneven traversals with interior/exterior spaces. The ocean creates an unstable platform that adds extra difficulty and variation to the gameplay.







The ship graveyard was originally a massive level, spanning five or six big areas, before it was truncated to only two and a half. The different elements within the ship—cargo crates, engines, vents, and viewing decks—created several cover options and divided the space nicely, funneling players from one battle arena to the next.



The inspiration for the cruise ship level was obviously The Poseidon Adventure *mixed with* Titanic. *We originally wanted the ship to start listing as the water chases Drake down the inverted hallways, ultimately ending in the ship snapping into two parts. It was an epic idea that had to be scaled down because of the scope and lack of resources available.*

THE SEAWARD™ DECK PLAN

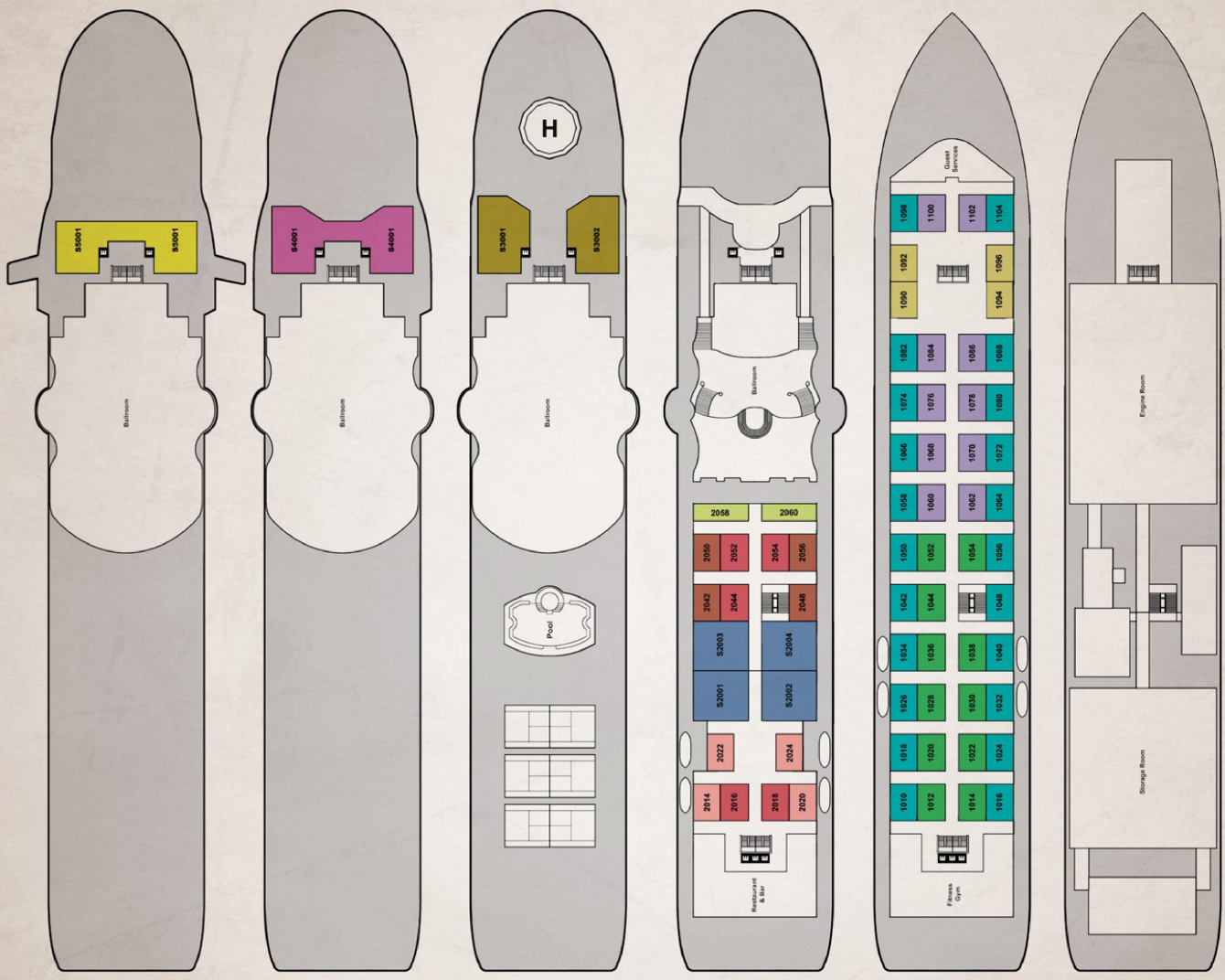
FORWARD
PORT STARBOARD
AFT

CATEGORY & SHIP ACCOMMODATIONS

Concierge Royal Suite A with Verandah
Concierge Royal Suite B with Verandah
Concierge 2-Bedroom Suite with Verandah
Concierge 1-Bedroom Suite with Verandah
Deluxe Family Inside Stateroom
Deluxe Family Oceanview Stateroom
Deluxe Family Oceanview Stateroom
Standard Oceanview Stateroom
Standard Oceanview Stateroom
Deluxe Oceanview Stateroom
Standard Inside Stateroom
Standard Inside Stateroom

STATEROOM AMENITIES

Almost all staterooms have tub and shower, remote-controlled HD LCD TV, ample closet space, in-room safe, hair dryer, phone with voicemail messaging, and individual climate control.









We looked at a real ship layout and copied the proportions to get the scale of our ship right. The design was classic art deco, reminiscent of the Titanic. *We explored several renditions of what the ballroom would look like in different lighting conditions.*

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The cargo plane sequence was another ambitious level; we had the idea to use zero gravity as part of the gameplay, which shakes up the combat arena by rearranging cover placement as things shuffle around. Rather than a consistent layout, the level changes as items float around and targets go in and out of cover.





The design of the abandoned desert village was inspired by the ksar *of Ait-Ben-Haddou, in the northern part of Africa. There, buildings are built out of hardened mud and straw, and are surrounded by a defensive wall, supported by corner towers.*





The horse chase in the desert was a difficult level to design, because it required a strictly closed path, but had to give the visual feeling of an open desert. We had to develop a lot of variation in the dunes and canyon walls to create the illusion that players can travel outside the path but make it inconvenient to do so.





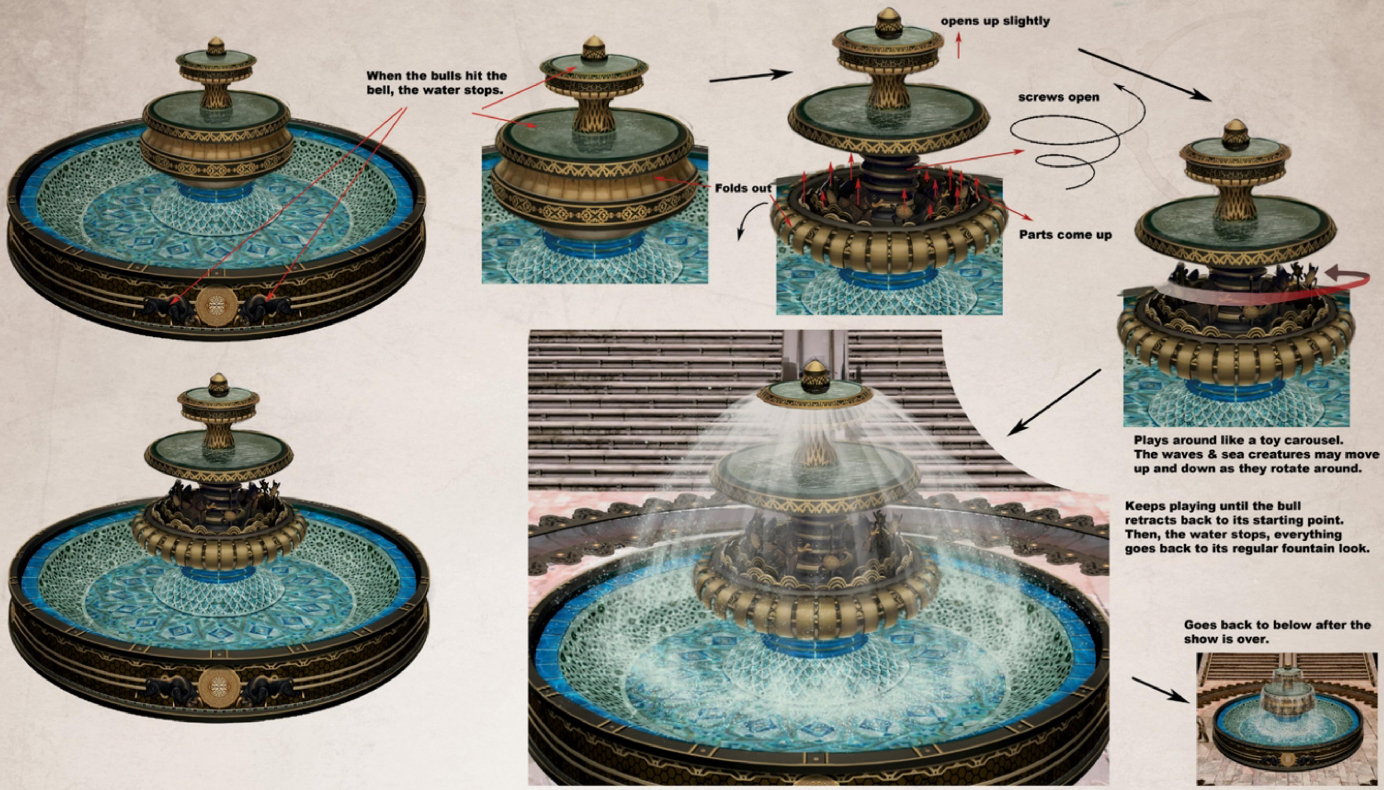


The desert gates had to look massive and imposing to convey the idea that it is the product of an advanced civilization. The city is filled with mechanized statues, like these guard statues that control the gates' locking mechanisms.





Iram of the Pillars is the lost city Drake and his crew are trying to uncover in Uncharted 3. *It is an ancient city that was supposed to have been swallowed by the desert. A highly developed and thriving civilization with ornate architecture and design, it stands in contrast to the Yemeni city, with more rounded domes and arches, and more colorful pigments in the design patterns.*



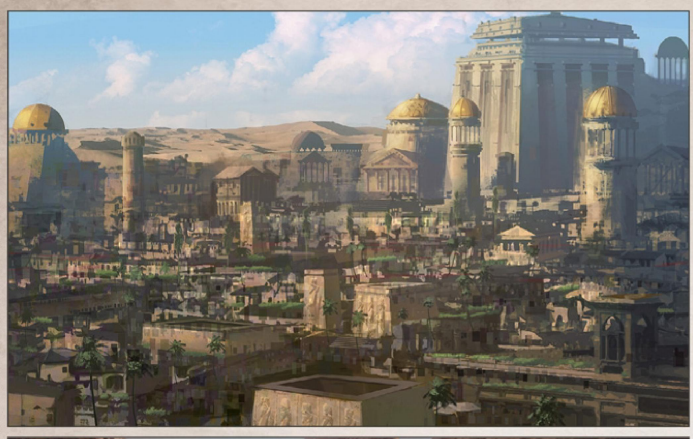


The fountain puzzle is another complicated mechanism for players to solve. In developing it, we first had to concept the stages the puzzle goes through, so the animators and artists could construct it and animate it properly.





The lost desert city is cloaked by magic and is only visible to the modern world when entered through a secret gateway.







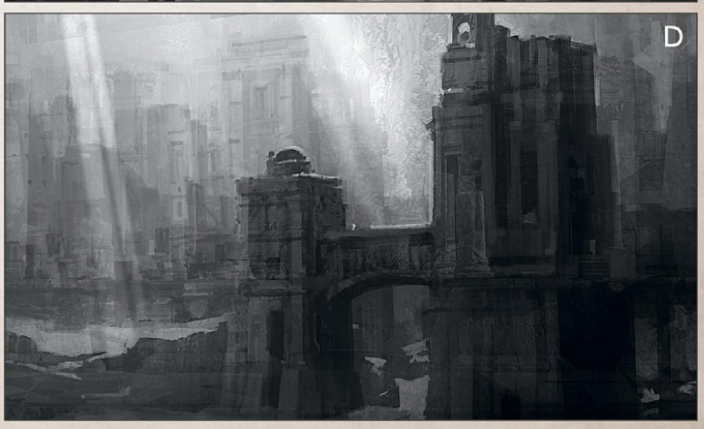


Variations on the hidden city before it was swallowed by the desert.









When we originally envisioned a lost city that was swallowed by the desert, we thought about literally putting the city underground, so it was completely hidden from modern surveying methods of the time. We envisioned it hidden under massive caves or caverns that were built into the rock. Since our earliest version of the cave city, the problem of lighting was always an issue. These sketches show a few proposals for revealing the city, with light spilling in through holes in the cave ceiling.

Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception

UNUSED IDEAS



Unused ideas for a floating city based on Kowloon City. This section would have included heavy traversal gameplay if we had made it work within the game.











This area of the dry dock was completely built but never used. We wanted to encourage a lot of vertical gunplay, and we even planned to flood the dry dock so that it forced players to climb up the scaffoldings to avoid drowning. We also included several tunnels underneath the dock to create a variety of ways to flank the enemy. Players could control the cranes and use them to drop heavy items onto their enemies. Ultimately, this level found a different life in another form as a multiplayer map.



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