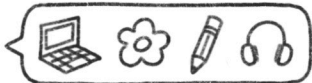# how to go from
ARTWORK
to
CHARACTER

making assets for a museum game

by Amanda Rabin
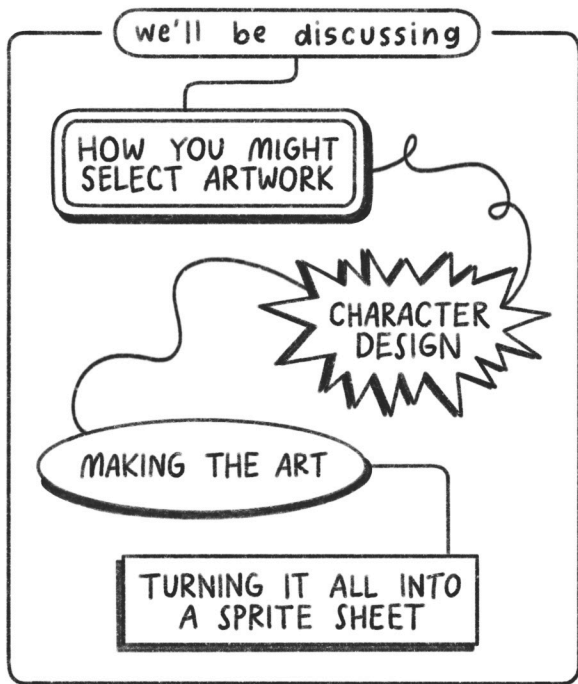
about the artist

Hello there! My name's Amanda (she/her). I'm a junior and am double majoring in CS and Studio Art!

I've been part of the Museum Game Research + Development lab since the summer! One idea I've been focusing on is making game characters out of artworks from museums. It's been a really fun experience so far and I wanted to share what I've learned!

If you're interested in character art and/or curious about making museum-related games, keep on reading!

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we'll be discussing

HOW YOU MIGHT SELECT ARTWORK

CHARACTER DESIGN

MAKING THE ART

TURNING IT ALL INTO A SPRITE SHEET

select the artwork

Think about how this artwork fits into your game! This can influence the way you go about designing the character.
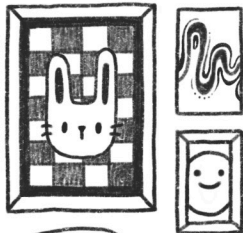
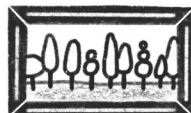Find pieces by visiting the museum and/or taking a look at their collections online!

For a platform fighting game a labmate and I worked on, we found a contemporary piece that could be interpreted & transformed into a humanoid.

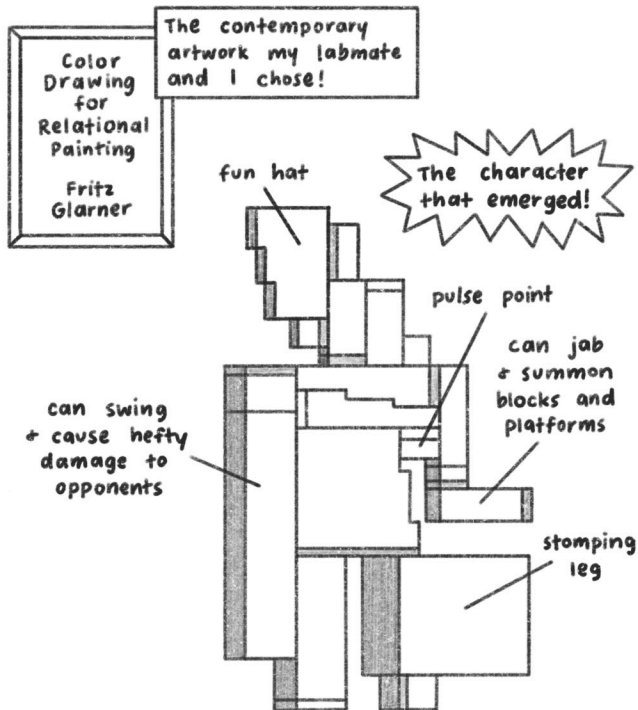You could also stylize already-existing figures.

Another approach is to think about aspects of character design first & find an artwork that fulfills such components.
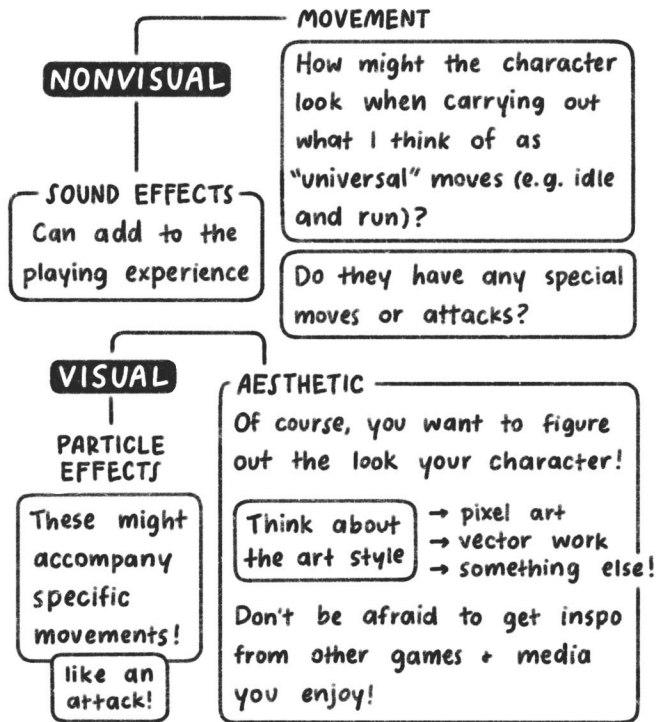
ART

THIS BRINGS US TO OUR NEXT TOPIC

character design

Color Drawing for Relational Painting

Fritz Glarner

The contemporary artwork my labmate and I chose!

The character that emerged!

fun hat

pulse point

can jab + summon blocks and platforms

can swing + cause hefty damage to opponents

stomping leg

Some components to consider when sketching your imagined character...

NONVISUAL

MOVEMENT

How might the character look when carrying out what I think of as "universal" moves (e.g. idle and run)?

Do they have any special moves or attacks?

SOUND EFFECTS

Can add to the playing experience

VISUAL

PARTICLE EFFECTS

These might accompany specific movements!

like an attack!

AESTHETIC

Of course, you want to figure out the look your character!

Think about the art style
→ pixel art
→ vector work
→ something else!

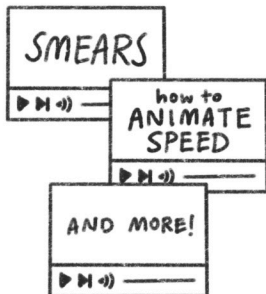Don't be afraid to get inspo from other games + media you enjoy!

Drawing & animating a character can be an entire book on its own, but here are some tips to get you started!

Use a program you feel comfortable with!

Tutorials are really helpful here too!

SMEARS
▶ ▶ᛁ ◀ᴪ

how to ANIMATE SPEED
▶ ▶ᛁ ◀ᴪ

AND MORE!
▶ ▶ᛁ ◀ᴪ

Remember the process is not linear!

Any kind of animation takes time. While there may be a lot of back & forth, a lot of erasing & putting back, know that there's a really cool character on the other side!

doing the art part

Know that making multiple versions of the same movement animation isn't a bad thing.

bent like this?

what if the arm swooped?

Acting out the yourself might what exactly translate into | character's movement help you understand you're trying to the animation frames.

asking friends you're working as in-person | (and dev mates if in a group!) to act references may be fun!

ver. 1   ver. 2
☐   ☐   ← can be a great jumping-off point!
    ☐ ☐
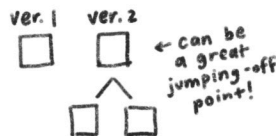
turning it all into a sprite sheet

Not to sound like a broken record, but tutorials really are your friend!

When constructing the sheet, be sure to think about how you plan to implement this character into your game!

		IDLE	
			RUN
	JUMP		
		DUCK	
	• • •		

a grid is really useful for placing each frame on the sprite sheet!

labels not only help with organization, but also make the sheet more readable for others who might interact with it!

finally, export & share that asset!

With all that being said, thank you for reading my zine! I hope you found it helpful. If you end up making a character of your own, I would love to see it! Find me at arabin@oberlin.edu!

But wait, there's more coming soon! Keep an eye out for more assets from me if you're interested!