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***THE GLOW* - STYLE GUIDLINES**

GENERAL

The art for The Glow must strike “Artistic” and not the “Illustrative.” By that, we mean it should be a comic driven by visual grandeur that caters to the story. We don’t want panels to exist for just the sake of covering a beat or dialogue. We want panels to be impressive on their own merit, yet service the story as well.

Movie-wise, think of scenes like the opening of Star Wars, or the travelling shots of Lord of the Rings. These movies have angles and frames chosen to drive the story and add emphasis to the drama. For Star Wars, the framing makes the enemy ship feel much bigger than say if it was shot from the side. For Lord of the Rings, the high angles help perpetuate the idea of long travels as the people are walking specs in a huge beautiful scene.





Ray and I are epic storytellers. We love grand things and we hope that shows in Skies of Fire and hopefully in The Glow.

EASTERN VS. WESTERN TRADITION

The Glow is not a traditional manga, nor is it a superhero book of the west. The way we want you to think of it as a fusion of those two traditions designed for the modern reader.

From the West we'd like to carry the grandeur and spectacle of a wide panel format, while maintaining the kinetic dynamism of the East.

Something that we want to shy away from in both traditions is the tendency to do ridiculous poses; in the eastern tradition, we're talking about kung fu style WHACHAs while in the western tradition we're talking about heroic, pelvis in the air triumphant poses.





Instead of relying on poses, let's try and create a more naturalistic style informed by human emotion.

A word about action lines: sometimes, action line are necessary to quickly convey energy into a scene. However, they should be used sparingly in *The Glow!* Remember that the action line serves the story and is not a crux *for* the story. Too many action lines will be seen as a way to quickly crank out pages without focusing on background, and that's not what we're trying to do.

INKS AND COLORS

The Glow should be a somewhat seamless blend of linework and painting style. Comics like *Saga* relegate backgrounds as painted, while offering inked lines for characters and important props.



This is quite jarring, and really pulls the characters out of the scene. This is something we shouldn't really feel in The Glow. There should be some unity between the scene and the characters. One cannot simply be made without the other in mind.

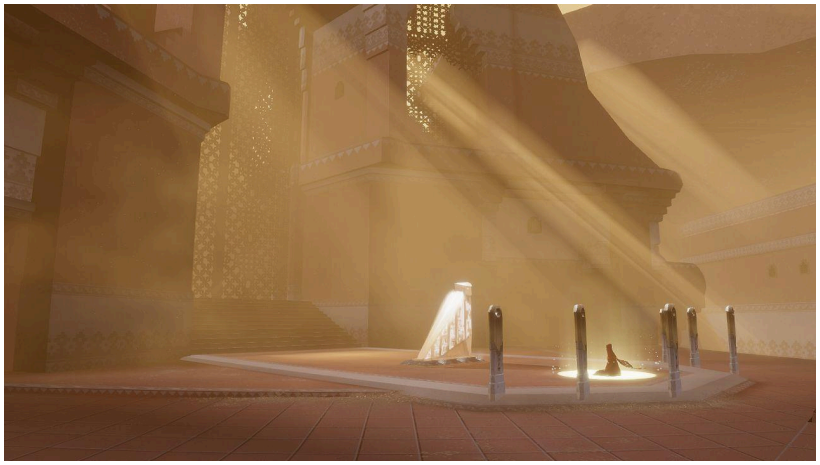
The particle effects they use in Saga to tie both the characters and the background together is a *great idea*, but we cannot use it all the time. There will be moments where particles will not be appropriate.

To achieve a harmony between character and background, there needs to be an artistic harmony in the way they are drawn. One example of something that shows a balance is Journey.



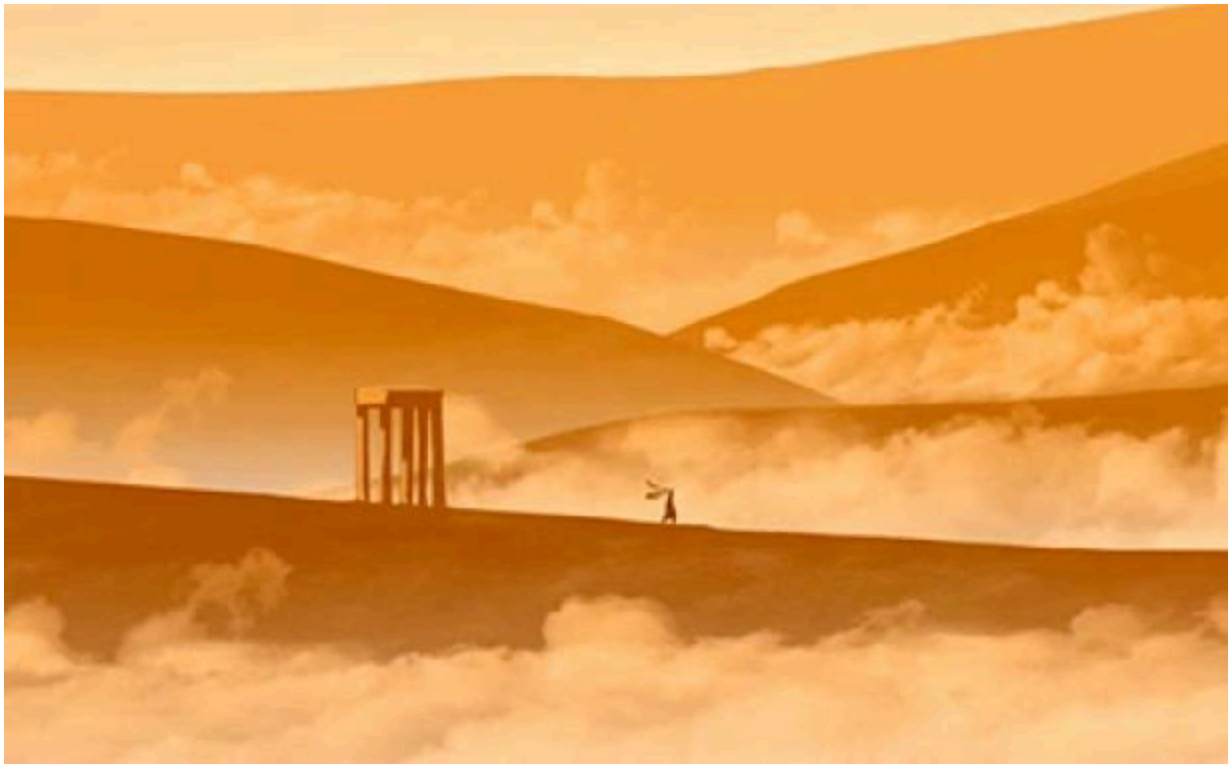
Though there is no linework in this image, there is a nice balance of detail and no-detail. If we translate it to comic style, we can say that the character is done through linework, but the background is a bit of linework and painting (a form of selective linework, shall we say).

The Glow can work wonderfully with this approach. Characters and important props can be done with complete linework, but backgrounds can be done with selective linework. The selective linework occurs with certain landmarks/elements that will enrich the background and give it more harmony with the characters.



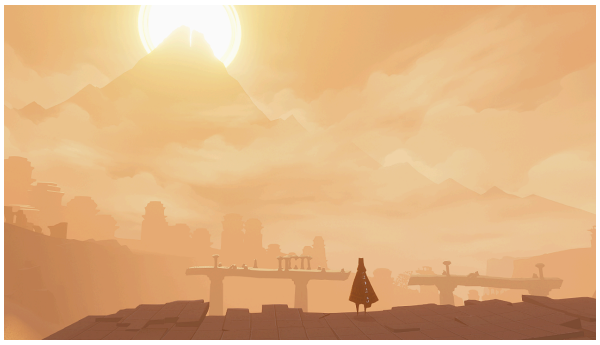
In this example, we get a bit of that as well, and I think what really makes this style work is lighting and draw distance.

For this style, lighting will be so valuable to the project. A study on light effects especially through fog, clouds, and sand would be great help. Creating detail through contrast of colors is a big plus. Below is a great example of that.



These effects occur when the sun is shining towards you. The clouds become lighter, and objects get a darker tone as they are in shadow. In fact, in Journey, I believe the lighting is always in front of you. It’s the most aesthetically pleasing position - a trick Ray and I were taught in film school. Thanks NYU!







Color will be vital to get right. As a painting style, it will help define landscapes with contrast. Tones should be vibrant pastels. In journey, things are a little too monochrome. Perhaps more lively skies (pink, or a baby blue?).

A great color reference is in the fantasy parts of Tarsem Singh's The Fall:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO0LYcCoeJY





FRAMING & PANELING

Ray and I come from a film school background. Films are our first love, so naturally, cinematic styles tend to come with our artistic endeavors. For Skies of Fire, this translated to adopting a 2.35 style aspect ratio for a lot of the shots.

For The Glow, we want to maintain these traditions. It doesn't mean we want the entire comic in a solid 2.35, in fact, we love trying new frames as long as they feel like they are doing service to the story. For example, when someone is falling, we felt it was nice to make the panel long to give emphasis to the drop. We also like small panels for action as it gives the audience a feeling of quick actions (as opposed to a spash page with offers more time for the reader to look at it, making the beat feel longer).

WE WANT CINEMA

When we say this, framing of characters need to be precise to give story and drama. Many modern movies have people just standing around, we want shots from angles that are expressive, meaningful, and that serve the story.



Above is a great example of boring framing. Camera is set to almost eye level, characters are balanced in frame… awesome… grass. At least they got one thing right, the sun is in front of the camera, giving nice highlights :)

Let's compare this to this:



Characters are to one side of screen. This spacing gives an artistic touch. It doesn't feel flat, it feels alive. Such a small move in frame leads to such an effective outcome. Even Saga follows the first image as opposed to this.

Framing tells story as much as dialogue, if not more.

Another great example is Tarantino's trunk shot.



He is defined by this shot. Why? Cause it's cool! Sure, but it tells a story. The fact that the characters are looking down makes them feel powerful, they make the audience feel small. Imagine doing this scene from the side of the car.

He does this a lot. He loves his characters to be powerful.





When we panel shots, we always try to read the emotions of the characters and the scene and look for ways to express them in the angles. We want you guys to do the same. Get that eye for the camera. If you think one angle will work better, by all means try it!

What we don't want is a flat comic with visuals needing complete support from dialogue and story. There must be a balance of both.

WIDE SHOTS ARE AWESOME

As we are epic, we love epic wide/splash pages. Our stories are bigger than life, and certain scenes should feel that. Lawrence of Arabia, Lord of the Rings these are awesome examples.

