

# Gimp

MAGAZINE



TURI SCANDURRA  
ILLUSTRATOR/ANIMATOR



ISSN: 1929-6894

DIGITAL VERSION



ANIMATED CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT  
AND DISPLAY BY TURI SCANDURRA

GIMP GALLERY FEATURING RAFAEL  
LAGATIC



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to Issue 11 of GIMP Magazine. This issue is a showcase of excellence in illustration and animation by multimedia artist and digital storyteller Turi Scandurra, who uses GIMP as part of his animation tool flow. Be sure to visit Turi's website for details, videos, and tutorials of his work. This issue also features a digital portrait gallery by Rafael Lagatic, who uses GIMP for his amazing illustrations.

Please enjoy Issue #11 of GIMP Magazine! If you are not already doing so, please follow us on Twitter, Google+, Issuu, or by email subscription. Also, tell a friend about GIMP and GIMP Magazine and kindly tweet or blog about us to help spread the word.

Enjoy!



Cheers  
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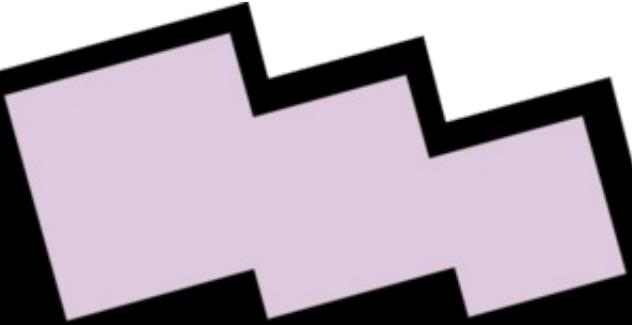
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# TURI SCANDURRA

Illustrator / Animator

Turi Scandurra is an Italian 2D animation artist and illustrator with a strong background in visual storytelling and traditional animation. He has many years of experience as an animation film designer, director, and editor. His online portfolio can be found at: <http://turiscandurra.com/>

TURI SCANDURRA 2012





TURI SCANDURRA  
2011



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# The Raven

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping, at my chamber door,  
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—  
Only this and nothing more."  
— Edgar Allan Poe

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**RAFAEL LAGATIC**

Title: The Queen

Description: A graphical rendition of Queen Elizabeth I made using Gimp 2.7.3.

URL: <http://rafallegatus.deviantart.com/art/Queen-Elizabeth-497124053>



## **RAFAEL LAGATIC**

Title: Cyan

Description: I had a lot of practice using my Genius pen. Another work I created way back.

URL: <http://rafallegatus.deviantart.com/art/Cyan-144565145?q=galleryRafalLegatus4259613&qo=98>

A Genius pen is a wireless pen mouse made by Genius. ([www.geniusnet.com](http://www.geniusnet.com))





▲  
**RAFAEL LAGATIC**

Title: Action Star

Description: I love doing comics too during my free time and GIMP is one of the tools that I use to color my work.

URL: <http://rafallegatus.deviantart.com/art/ACTION-STAR177602380?q=galleryRafalLegatus4259613&qo=48>

**RAFAEL LAGATIC**

Title: Hermione

Description: This is my own rendition of Hermione Granger from Harry Potter.

This was created using GIMP 2.7.3.

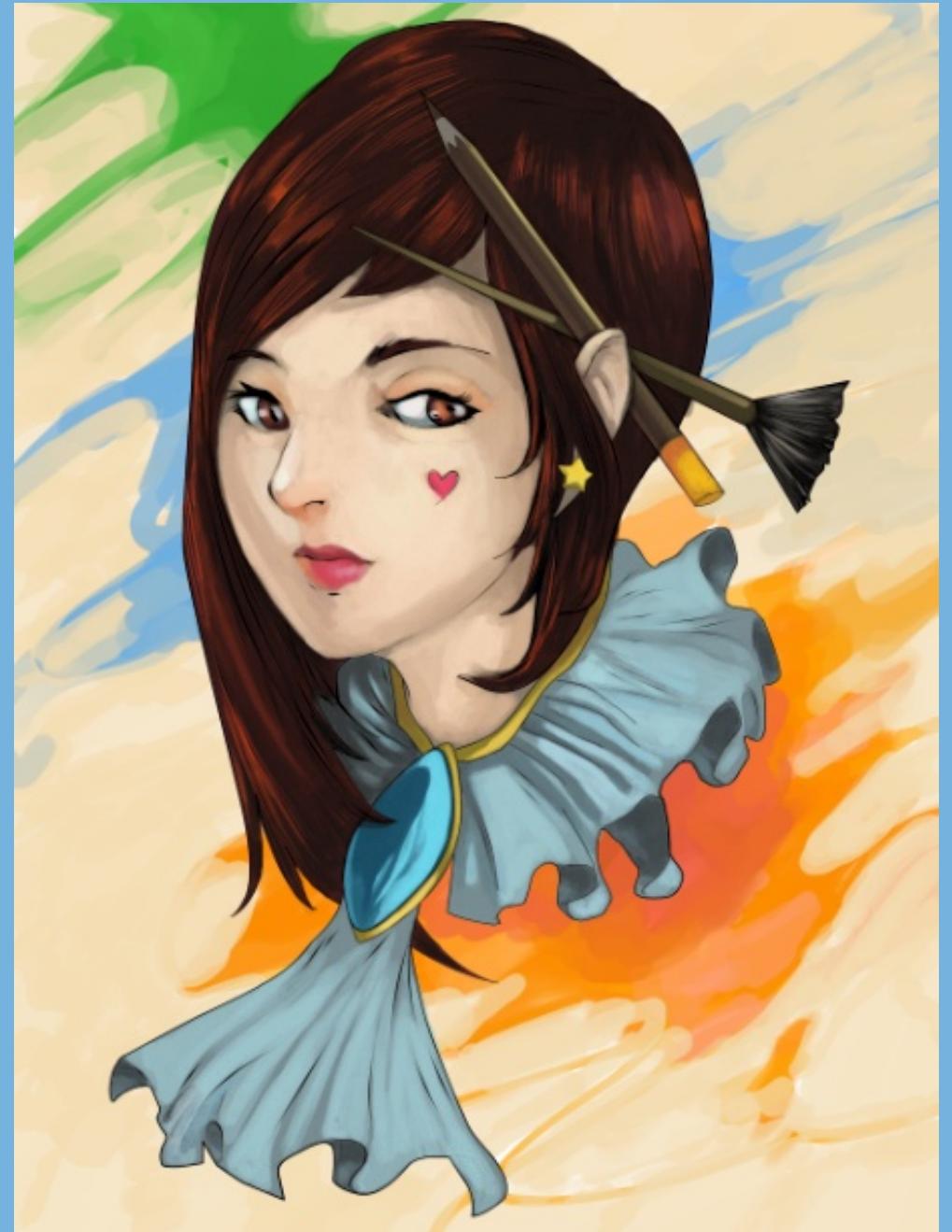
URL: <http://rafallegatus.deviantart.com/art/Hermione-Granger-502282698?q=galleryRafalLegatus4259613&qo=2>

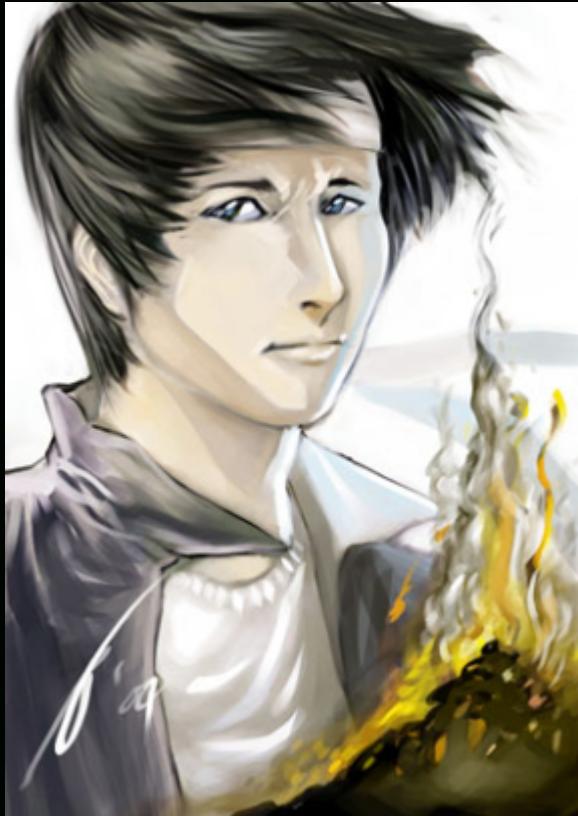
## RAFAEL LAGATIC

Title: Nimp

Description: I have been thinking of a new character mascot for GIMP. Here is what I came up with..

URL: <http://rafallegatus.deviantart.com/art/Nimp-502225478?q=galleryRafalLegatus4259613&qo=3>





## **RAFAEL LAGATIC**

Title: Kyo

Description: A fan art of Kyo Kusanagi of SNK (King of Fighters). I had a Genius pen before I got a Wacom pen and here here is one of the things I created using it and GIMP.

URL: <http://rafallegatus.deviantart.com/art/KYO-KUSANAGI-144566197?q=galleryRafalLegatus4259613&qo=97>

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# ANIMATED CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND DISPLAY

by Turi Scandurra, Edited by Debi Dalio

Animated characters can be compared to real-life actors, both must be able to show a vast range of emotions. This article shows the main steps in developing the design of characters for an animated project and how to properly display them. We usually start from a write-up that tells us who the characters are, their main features, and their roles in the story. The protagonists of my short film are two kids with orange peels as helmets. They take care of an orange grove and fight off an evil mechanical juicer.

TURI SCANDURRA  
2011



## STEP 1 – DESIGN THE CHARACTERS

The first thing to do is to sketch out different variations of the basic designs that compose the characters. We can nimbly perform this step with GIMP, but I prefer to use pencil and paper. We are just imagining shapes and fixing them on paper by drawing lines around them. And, after all, using traditional media is still an enjoyable activity.

Remember that the role of a character must be declared by its shape. An evil character is more effective if its design includes sharp corners and edgy traits, because the triangle, at an unconscious level, suggests danger. In a similar fashion, circles and round shapes are associated with the good guys, and that's why I softened the edges of the two kids.



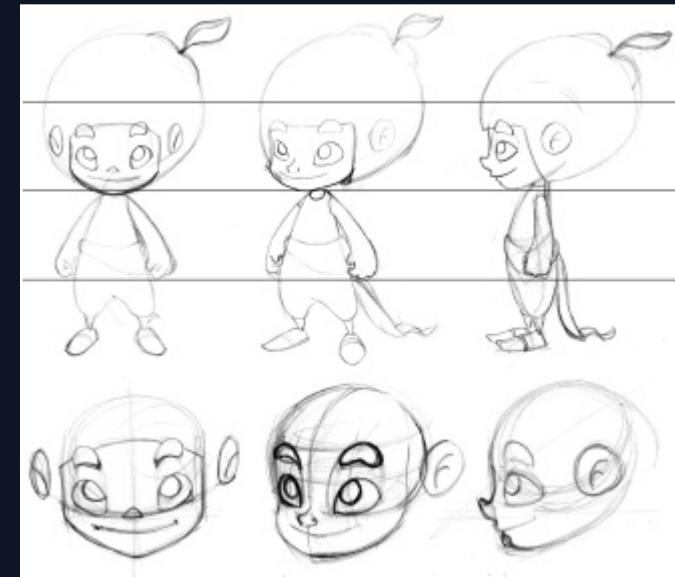


## STEP 2 – COMPOSE THE CHARACTERS' STRUCTURES

Once we're happy with a specific design for each character, we proceed to compose their underlying structure—the invisible joints that keep all the pieces together. It's important to think in three dimensions. We are drawing 3D volumes on a flat, 2D surface (the paper or the screen).

Note the construction rules for the younger kid. He is tall—twice the height of his orange helmet—while the older kid has a different head-to-height ratio. The ears and the bottom of the nose are placed along the curve of the eyes. The eye sockets will not be visible in the final drawing, but are there to mark the placement of the eyebrows.

It is normally a good idea to draw a "turnaround", a clear view of all the different sides, usually five. We need horizontal guide lines to maintain the proportions unchanged across the drawings. Don't try to skip the underdrawing, as this step is a way to check that everything is properly sized and placed, and ultimately it's a big time saver. This is also when we want to nail down the look of hands and feet. We can use our own hands as reference and draw several poses in the style of our character.

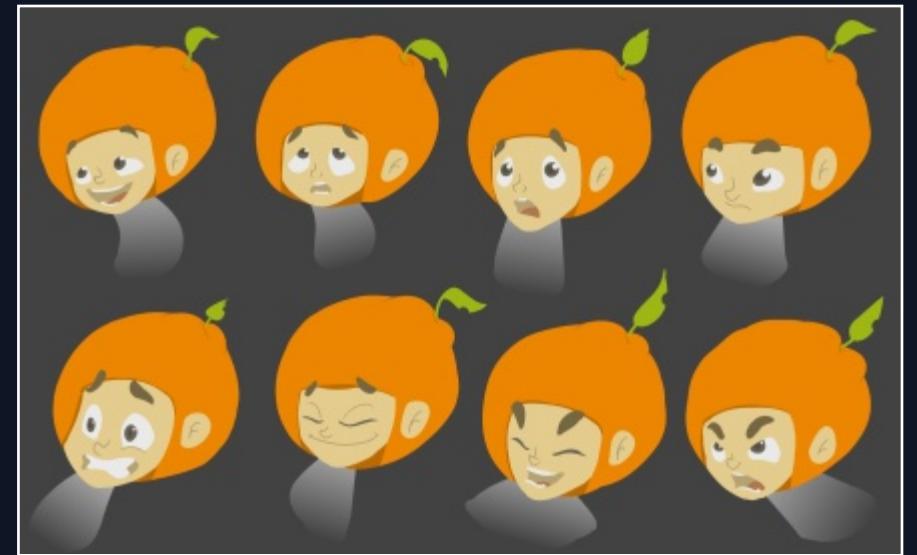


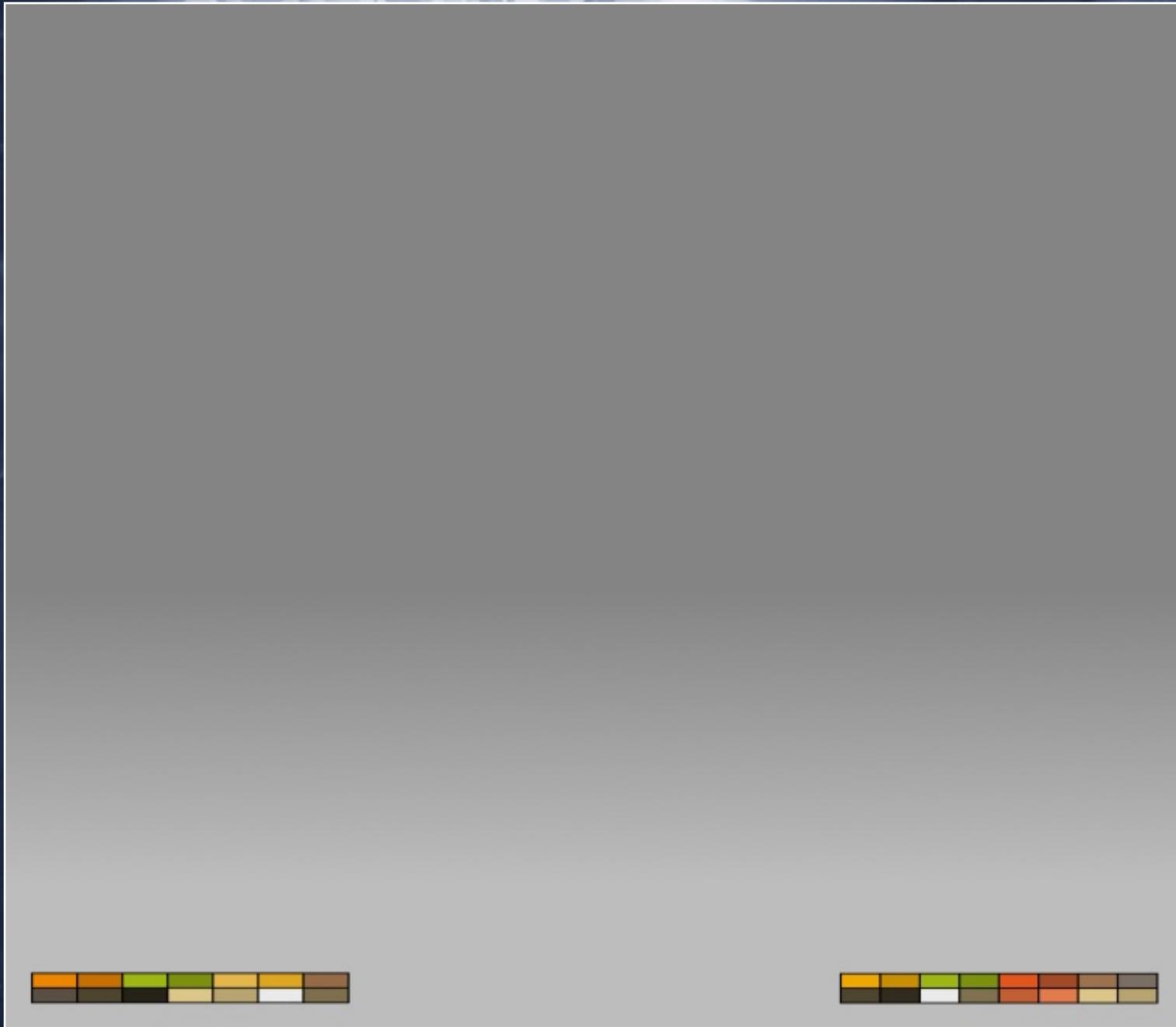


### STEP 3 – CREATE EXAMPLES OF CHARACTER EXPRESSIONS

The head requires special attention, but it must be addressed only after we're happy with the overall design. If a body isn't readable, the face will not help in fixing an unexpressive character.

The idea now is to explore the mechanical limits of our character. How low can the jaw drop when our character is surprised? How do the eyebrows show distrust? Avoid using the same head template for all expressions. The face is stretchable and integrates its features organically. Even robots and rigid-bodied characters should have a minimal degree of flexibility.





#### STEP 4 – SET UP A BASIC DRAWING IN GIMP

Once the characters are well-defined, it's time to scan our drawings and feed them to GIMP! I like the simple backdrop made by a linear gradient with two greys, roughly #808080 to #BABABA. It resembles the "infinity wall" used in photography and immediately adds depth to the image. Be sure to have a color palette handy. To save screen space, I place a cropped screenshot of the actual palettes dialog directly onto its own layer. This way I can pick a color by pressing CTRL + left-click while using the paintbrush. (For this to work across layers, you need to check "Sample merged" in the Color Picker's tool options.)

Place the scanned drawings on a new layer at the top of the Layers stack and set the layer mode to "Multiply". Adjust the levels (Colors > Levels) to maximize the contrast by bringing the black and the white input points closer together. This will also get rid of most of the grain of the paper.



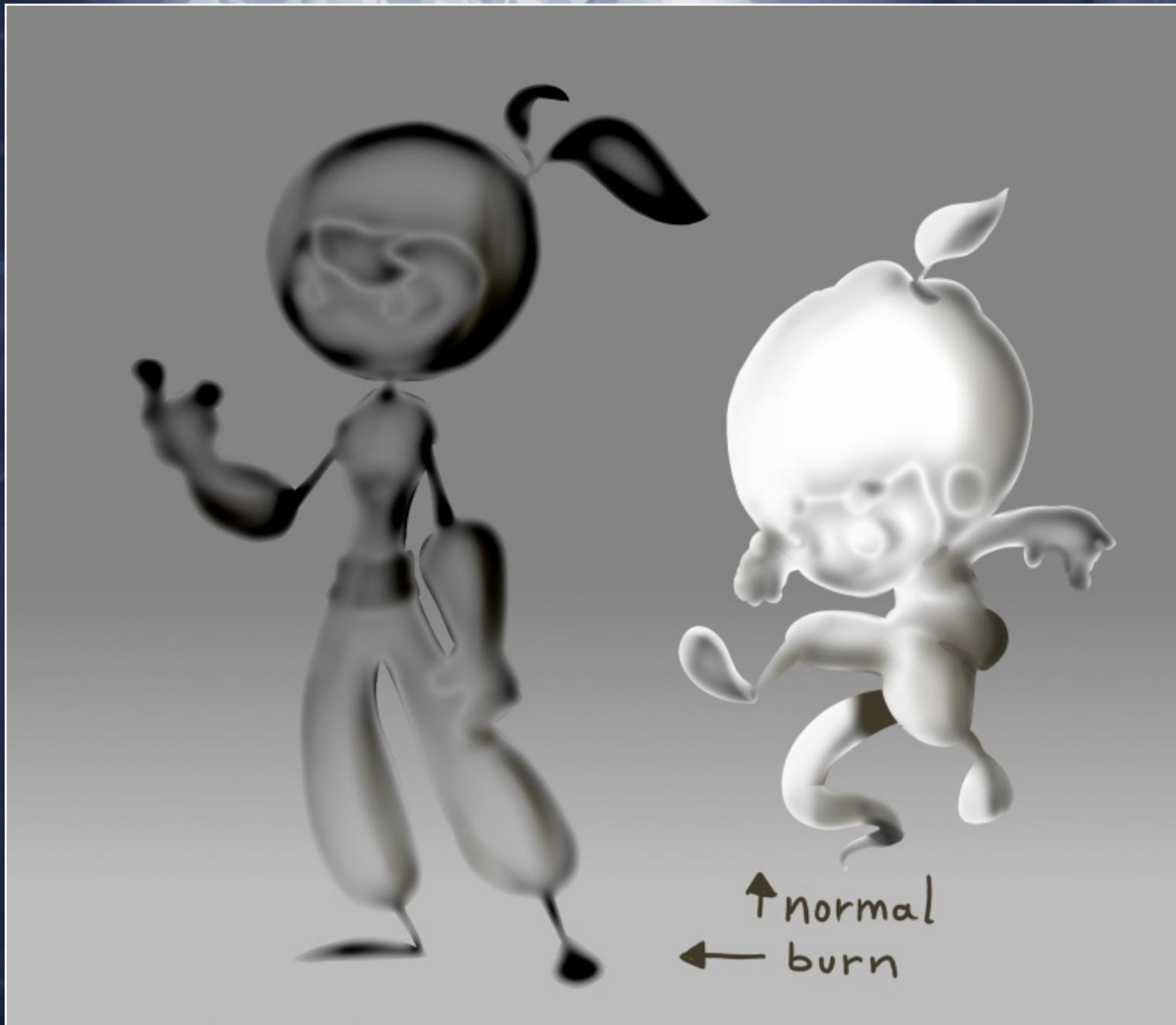


## STEP 5 – DRAW AND COLOR THE CHARACTERS' PARTS

On a new layer below the pencils layer, use a hard brush to redraw the lines with color. I draw the outline of larger shapes first. To get nice lines, focus on the gesture. Sometimes it's OK to go beyond the margin of the shape we are going over. We can always use a hard-edged eraser later to clean it up. The pencils layer will not be visible in the final image and the drawover has to be better than the pencils! Once the outline of a shape is complete and there are no gaps, the next step is to use the Fuzzy Select tool to select the empty part inside the shape, then choose Select > Grow and grow the selection by a few pixels. We can now use Edit > Fill with FG Color (CTRL+,) to fill the shape, then remove the selection (CTRL+SHIFT+A).

When all the shapes are filled in, we can hide the pencils layer. In this tutorial, I'm showing a graphic style that uses no outlines. However, we still need to define overlapping shapes of the same color by drawing darker lines to reveal details. I needed my characters to be quick to ink since I had to draw them countless times during the animation process, but to better present them and to show their volumes, we'll add some shading. Describing how light affects the surfaces greatly enhances the image and makes each character stand out.



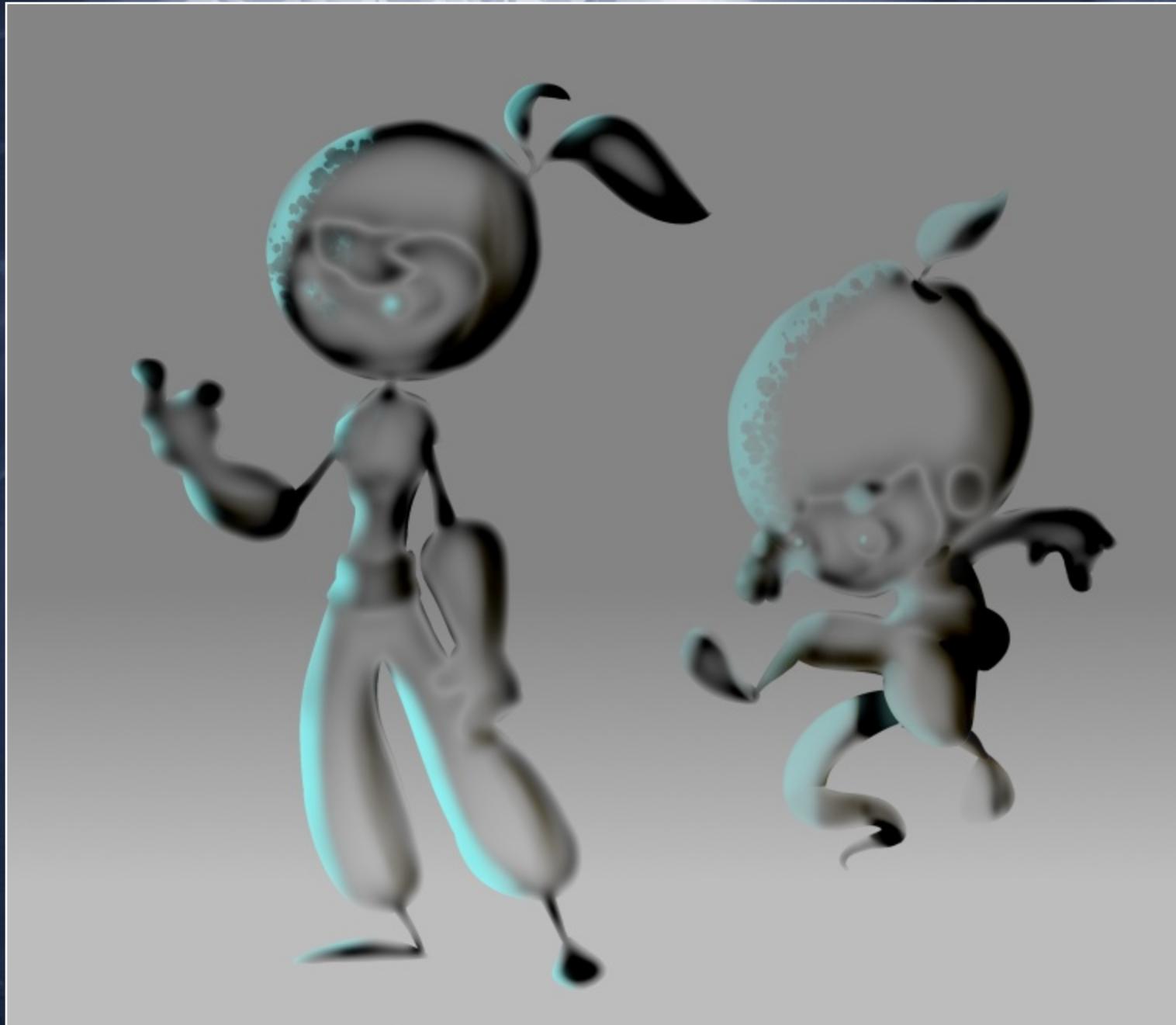


## STEP 6 – SHADE THE CHARACTERS

To create shadows on the characters, we first need a white silhouette of each character. A quick way to create the silhouettes is to hide the background layer, then, from the Layers dialog context menu, choose "New From Visible". Rename this new layer "Shadows", then choose Colors > Levels and drag the black output point to the far right.

We also have to create a mask for this layer. Right-click on the "Shadows" layer and choose "Alpha to Selection", then right-click on it again and choose "Add Layer Mask". In the Add Layer Mask dialog, choose "Selection" and click Add. Once the mask is created, left-click on the "Shadows" layer thumbnail to focus on it instead of its mask, then remove the selection. Now we're ready to paint inside the silhouette. The mask will keep us from painting outside of it.

Use a black soft, large brush. Set the opacity to 15% or less, as we want to gently build up the shadows. By the way, this technique is hundreds of years old and it's called "Chiaroscuro". We should end up with a ghost-like image with good definition of its three dimensions. Set the blending mode of this layer to "Burn" and lower its opacity to what looks best.



### STEP 7 – CREATE HIGHLIGHTS ON THE CHARACTERS

We can now move onto the highlights. To save time, duplicate the "Shadows" layer, rename it to "Highlights", and delete its content (but not the mask). We don't need a white silhouette here. Use a brush a bit harder than the one used before and pick a bright color that does not belong to the color palette. Paint the side of each character following the direction of the light. Again, build up the gradient and don't do it all in one stroke. Note how I used a spot eraser to create the texture of the orange peel. With this method we can suggest the texture of any surface. The light reflected by glass and metal has harder edges. Shiny objects would extend their glow outside the layer mask. Set the "Highlights" layer mode to "Screen" or "Dodge" and adjust its opacity.



#### STEP 8 – MAKE THE CHARACTERS CAST SHADOWS

The final step is to add a shadow for each character. Most of the time it's better to draw it by hand, but GIMP offers a quick way to do it for us. Create a silhouette like before, but make it black instead of white by dragging the white output to the far left. Flip it vertically, then use the Perspective tool to simulate the floor on which the shadow is being cast. Lower the opacity and blur it widely.



## IN CLOSING

A nice and quick addition to what we've done so far could be the choice of several color variations. This can be done easily by duplicating the image and working only on the colored layers. It might be necessary to shift the hue of the highlight layer to better fit the new colors.

One final tip: To archive the project, compress the .xcf with gzip to cut down the filesize to about 25%. GIMP can open xcf.gz files directly.

That's it! I hope this tutorial gave you an idea of how to develop and better present characters for animation, but these concepts also work well with characters for video games or any other project that involves character design.

Have fun with GIMP!

## ABOUT TURI SCANDURRA

Turi Scandurra is an Italian 2D animation artist and illustrator with a strong background in visual storytelling and traditional animation. The characters in this tutorial were developed for his 2D animated short "Oranguerrilla", whose making-of can be found at:

<http://www.turiscandurra.com/2013/06/the-making-of-oranguerrilla/>

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