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62

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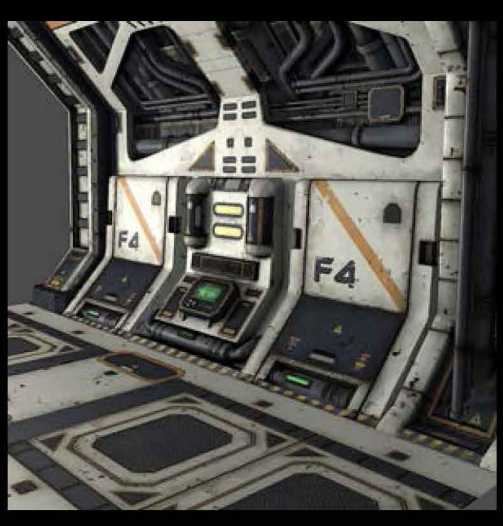
"3D Artist" Sci-Fi Tips

Here are the 5 tips I contributeed to the article.

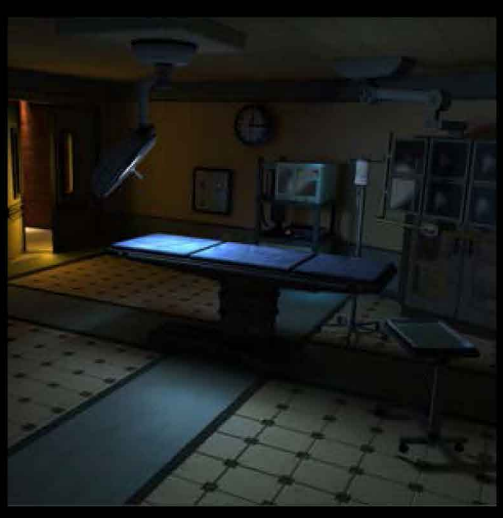
Reading Your Shapes



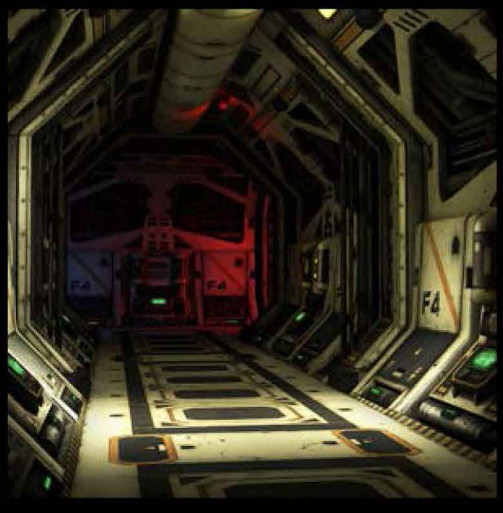
When putting a scene together it helps every now and then to zoom out or squint at what you're working on to make sure the shapes are readable. Typically it's best to give the viewer areas of visual rest and not have detail cluttering every part of the scene. When you zoom out you should be able to see the shapes fairly clearly. This concept applies to textures and well as geometry. This is an example of modular tile pieces where I tried to create a good variation of sizes and level of detail in my shapes and create a good balance between the colors and the shapes they create.

Warm Colors Advance - Cool Colors Recede

Also, in regards to lighting, warm colors advance and cool colors recede. In this image of an operating room, the blue light on the operating table would be the first thing the eye goes to because it's the brightest, but immediately the eye is drawn towards the door where the warm light is. So, if you want to draw the eye towards something you might be better off using a warm light. An interesting note is that this principle is used a lot in interior design. If they want a room the feel larger they paint it with a cool color like blue or green. A room can feel more intimate and smaller by painting it a warm color like red or orange.



Leave Them Wanting More



In a lot of my work I try to create areas that imply the environment is bigger than what is seen. This could be just showing the bottom of a staircase or a slightly open door with light streaming through. This was a low-poly piece I was asked to do with a very strong contrast in lighting. I wanted to convey a sense of some comfort in the foreground with the bright warm light and create a sense of unease in the background with the red key light and cool ambient light. The sense of unease is heightened by the fact that the source for the red light is out of sight. Not knowing what is around the corner, but yet knowing something is probably there, builds tension in the scene.

Faking It

When lighting a scene, don't be afraid to put lights in areas without a visible light source. Many would think that this is cheating, but in reality it works well in being able to enhance the composition by leading the eye to specific parts of the scene. Again, returning to the operating room scene, I lightmapped it externally and put inside Unity3d. If you look closely, the lighting doesn't quite match up to the light sources, but for the sake of composition and where we wanted to lead the player this works well.

Find the Meaning

When making environments, one way to enhance them is to craft a story around it. This is an image I made about a homeless man who lived outside an exclusive community. The only one who was friendly to him was a shopkeeper who gave him some food and allowed him to sleep in front of his store. Even though there are no people in this scene the objects tell the story. The characters are the environment itself.

MASTER THE ART OF SCI-FI CG

Sci-fi has never been more popular. Here, industry experts give us their top 50 tips for designing futuristic robots, aliens, environments, props and vehicles that are light years ahead of the rest

There's are few realms of design that offer the breath and scope of creativity as that found in the world of science fiction. Whether it's for games or for film, whether it's robots or aliens or even exhaust pipes protruding from the back of an M-class starfighter, whatever you're tasked with, the possibilities of an imagined futuristic world are near limitless. But while the sheer vision and spectacle of sci-fi design can be exhilarating, it can also be intimidating. So, here we've tracked down some of the world's top sci-fi artists to have them explain their processes. Over the next few pages, we speak with contributors to such projects as *Elysium, Halo, Star Wars, Iron Man, Pacific Rim, Star Trek: Into Darkness* and more to discover just how they take the mundane and everyday, and turn it into something truly out of this world...

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