



Adam McCarthy

Art Director

acmccarthy2000@yahoo.com

310.592.0847

A large, faint, circular logo with the letters 'AM' inside, positioned in the top left corner of the page.

AM

This portfolio outlines the work I did as Art Director on Avatar: Pandora Rising. I was involved with the project from the very beginning, working with concept artists on the first visual exploration of the game, all the way through the launch of the product. As Art Director I oversaw the creation of all art assets for the game, as well as Marketing assets, and therefore this portfolio contains the work of dozens of incredibly talented artists with whom I worked closely to maintain the vision of the game.

The background of the entire page is a misty, mountainous landscape from the Avatar universe. In the foreground, a Na'vi warrior stands next to a large, blue, scaly creature. The warrior is wearing traditional Na'vi clothing and has a determined expression. The creature has a long, curved horn and a fierce look.

AVATAR

PANDORA RISING

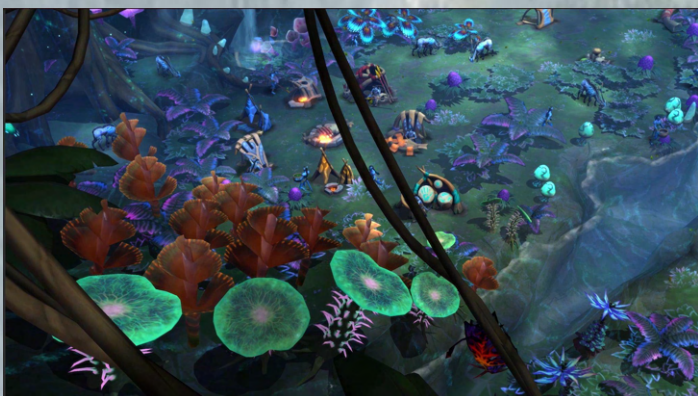
Environment ART:

From the beginning of the project, we knew we had to deliver on the promise of the “Pandora Experience” and so we worked closely with Lightstorm Entertainment’s Art Team to develop a look that was true to the vision of the film, while still being readable on a small mobile screen.

Early Look Dev Environment ART:



Shipped Environment ART:



Environment ART:

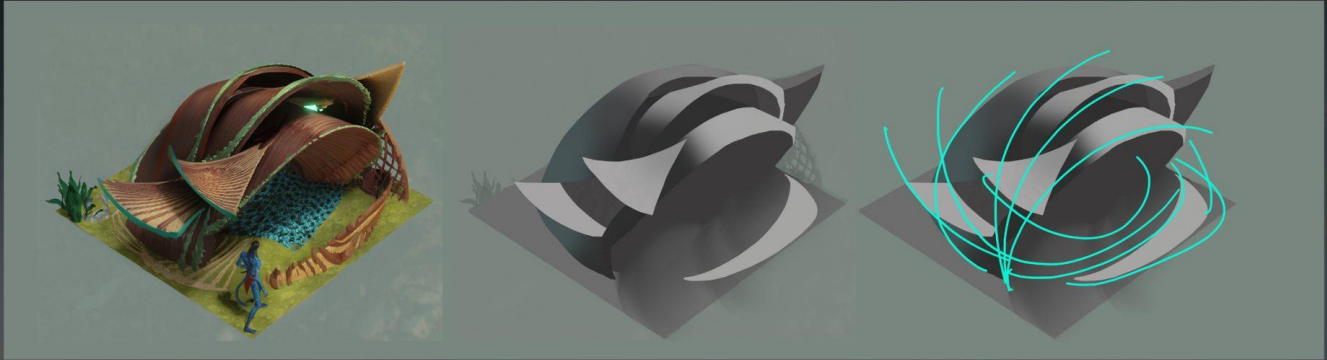
Another component of the game was to show how the RDA Faction built their high-tech base in the jungle environment of Pandora, and the juxtaposition of nature vs. technology.



Environment ART:

Having a clear rule set for structure shape, value, silhouette, and color is critical in creating art that is easily identifiable and discernable on the gameplay environment background. The structures for Pandora Rising had a very clear, and well communicated rule set for the art team to follow via the style guide.

VILLAGE REGION: Buildings



Building visuals goals:

- look cool!
- feel like avatar
- be visually distinctive and identifiable
- describe their function to the player
- be readable on device

Design thoughts:

- We're hitting a look that is primarily Omaticaya, with influences from some of the other clans.
- Buildings should be asymmetrical, made of a mix of woven and found/natural materials. - Structures and patterns found in nature help make them look less 'constructed' and more alien.
- Signature shapes/elements work best if they are centralized within the footprint and raised off the ground.

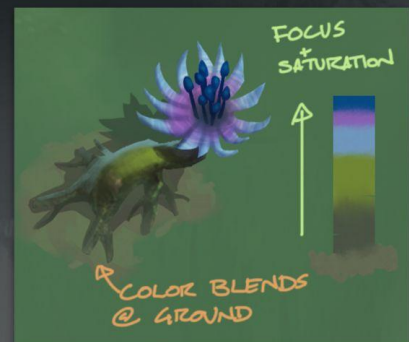
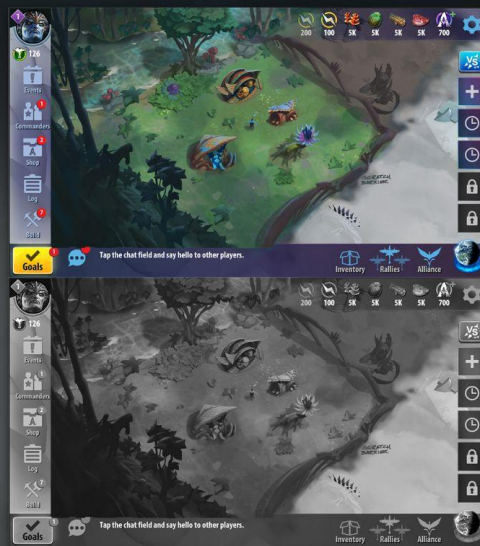
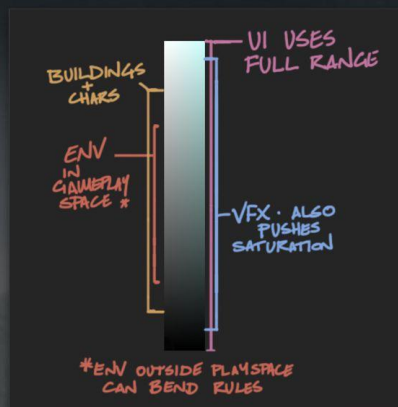
shapes/forms:

- keep to simple 3d forms
- silhouette is king
- emphasise swoopy, organic gestures
- try to taper with height
- don't stack too many forms/shapes
- Navi stuff is all asymmetrical
- the smallest forms that will read are actually pretty large. Smaller shapes can be placed on flat surfaces, but with caution.

PANDORA RISING™



VILLAGE REGION: Buildings



Values:

- We have a pretty tight value range to maintain readability. More critical elements get more contrast. UI > VFX > Gameplay 3d Assets > Environment
- We typically graduate from lower contrast to higher contrast and from midtone to bright with height

Color Palette:

- Buildings are generally low/medium contrast and saturation, with a pop of color and contrast at the focal point. Troop buildings generally have red, spiritual/eywa themed buildings lean into pinks and purples, alliance buildings have blues, and we're generally avoiding green to ensure buildings read against the grass/foliage

PANDORA RISING™



3D Character ART:

Our team worked closely with Lightstorm's Artists to develop a stylized Character Design that would appropriately represent the film's characters, while updating the look to be more cohesive with a mobile game title. The result was a simplified yet compelling character style. The following are excerpts from the style guide that I created, which was approved by both Lightstorm and Disney.

Na'vi Male: Head Art Style



Head:

- **Eyes:** Large, far apart, almond-shaped, angled, deep sockets.
- **Face Shape:** Cheekbones are chiseled. Stylized hard angles. Forehead is large. Tapers towards the chin at pronounced angles.
- **Nose:** Cat-like, wide, flat with hard angles at the sides, tapers towards the bottom.
- **Ears:** Cat-like in shape. Avoid looking too elf-like.
- **Lips:** Full, generally down turned at the sides. Highly structured mandible.
- **Hair:** Simplified detail, thick strips coming from the scalp.
- **Neck:** Long, corded, pronounced adam's apple.
- **Profile:** Cut out of stone, angular and strong. Notice sharp downward angle of nose. Sloped forehead and protruding brow.

PANDORA RISING™



Na'vi Male: Costume Details



PANDORA RISING™



Na'vi Male: Art Style



Our Navi Art Style:

- **Body:** Sharp angular bone structure. Exaggeration of long/lean limbs, torso, posture, and sloped shoulders
- **Simplification:** Accessories and details are kept large, chunky, and few in number
- **Saturation:** Colors are bright and bold
- **Color Variation:** The addition of various blues and greens in the skin, pinks and purples in areas like the nose, lips, ears, fingers and toes
- **Textures:** Simplified for readability, big bold shapes in texture details. Reduce unnecessary noise

PANDORA RISING™



Creature Design



Our Creature Style:

- **Simplification:** Shapes within the model and it's markings are kept large as much as possible while still retaining quality of form. This applies to patterns, markings, plates, scales, etc.
- **Colors:** The colors are bright and saturated. Color variation is key
- **Material Rendering:** simplification of texture to reduce noise while still expressing subtleties such as iridescence and differences in skin type

PANDORA RISING™



Heroes + Creatures



Hero Screen mockup: Some Heroes will be paired with Creatures

PANDORA RISING™



Combat:

The biggest challenge when designing artwork for a real time combat system is that it needs to be incredibly accurate and readable in an instant for competitive gameplay. Combat units need to be instantly discernable from other units on the battlefield, and those units need to stand out from the background environment artwork.



Combat Units:

Simplifying character models for in-game combat is critical for a mobile screen game playing experience. Camera angle and distance needs to be considered, and Color, Value, and Silhouette give the player an instant read on their own units, as well as those of their enemies. These unit creation rule sets are clearly communicated to the art team through a well curated style guide.

COMBAT

SHAPE

Chunky exaggerated proportions ensure readability at game camera height.



Unique silhouette. Units should be easy to identify even without texture.



Taper buildings to increase the amount of surface area facing camera. This will also help solve some overlap issue caused by having a nearly isometric camera.

PANDORA RISING™



COMBAT

COLOR

Use one or two distinguishing colors to set a unit apart from similar units.

In a scrum of multiple units, color will be the easiest way for a player to identifying a unit type quickly.

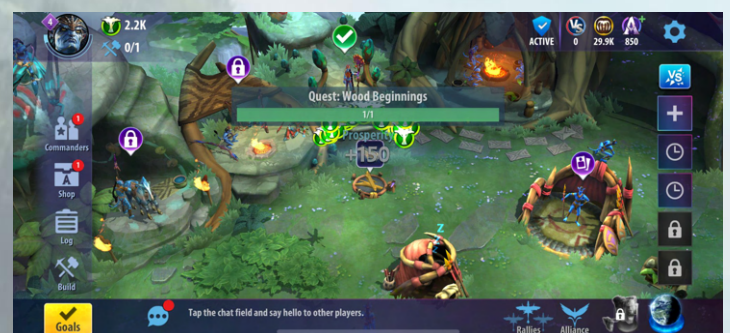
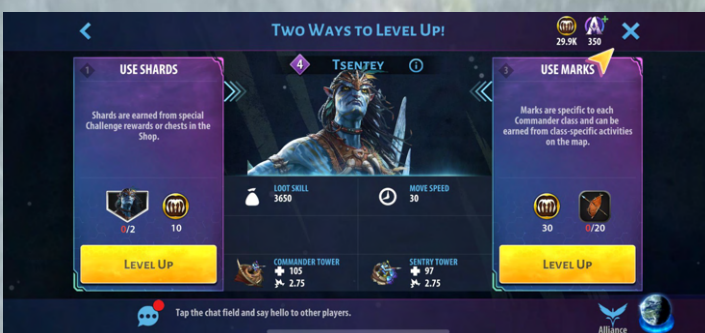
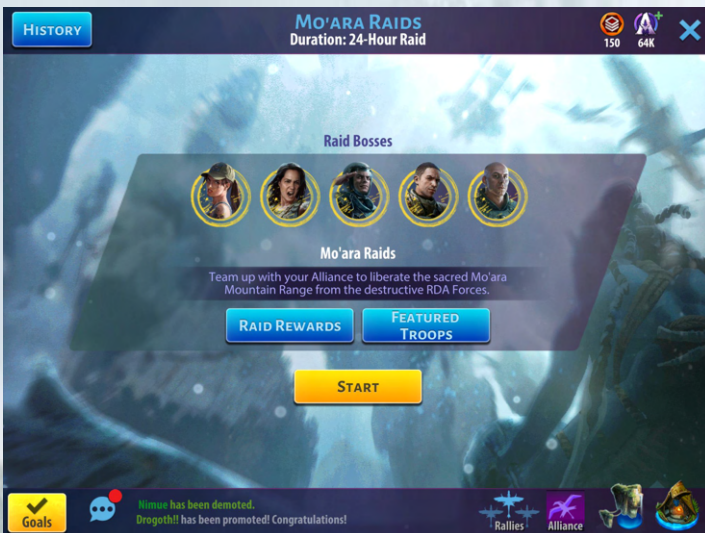


PANDORA RISING™



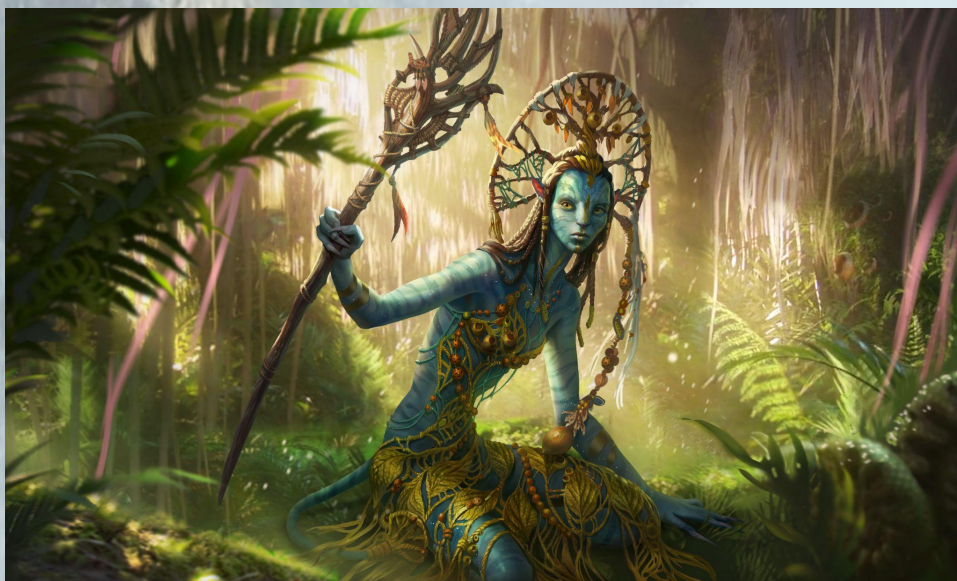
UI Art:

For mobile game development, a clear, readable UI is critical for the User Experience. Implementing UI that connects with the IP while still being easy to understand is a challenging feat, and one that takes a lot of patience and exploration.



2D Character Art:

For Pandora Rising, we knew we had to have the highest quality artwork when representing the characters from the film, and match that style for the new characters introduced for the game. These paintings were used to represent the “Commanders” of the player’s army.



Key Art:

Another critical component to making a game with a licensed IP is to connect the game with the films as much as possible with Key art that reflects the looks of the film integrated into the game.





THANK YOU!

For taking the time to look through my work. Should you have any follow up questions about my experience or skills, please do not hesitate to reach out!

Adam McCarthy
Art Director
acmccarthy2000@yahoo.com
310.592.0847