



Retro Derby

Artwork by Holly McGregor

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An Iterative Design Process

By Holly McGregor

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The Initial Process

Preliminary work begins by doing form finding exercises. These can be anything from loose pencil sketches, random shapes drawn on a canvas in Photoshop or Alchemy (a shape generation program).

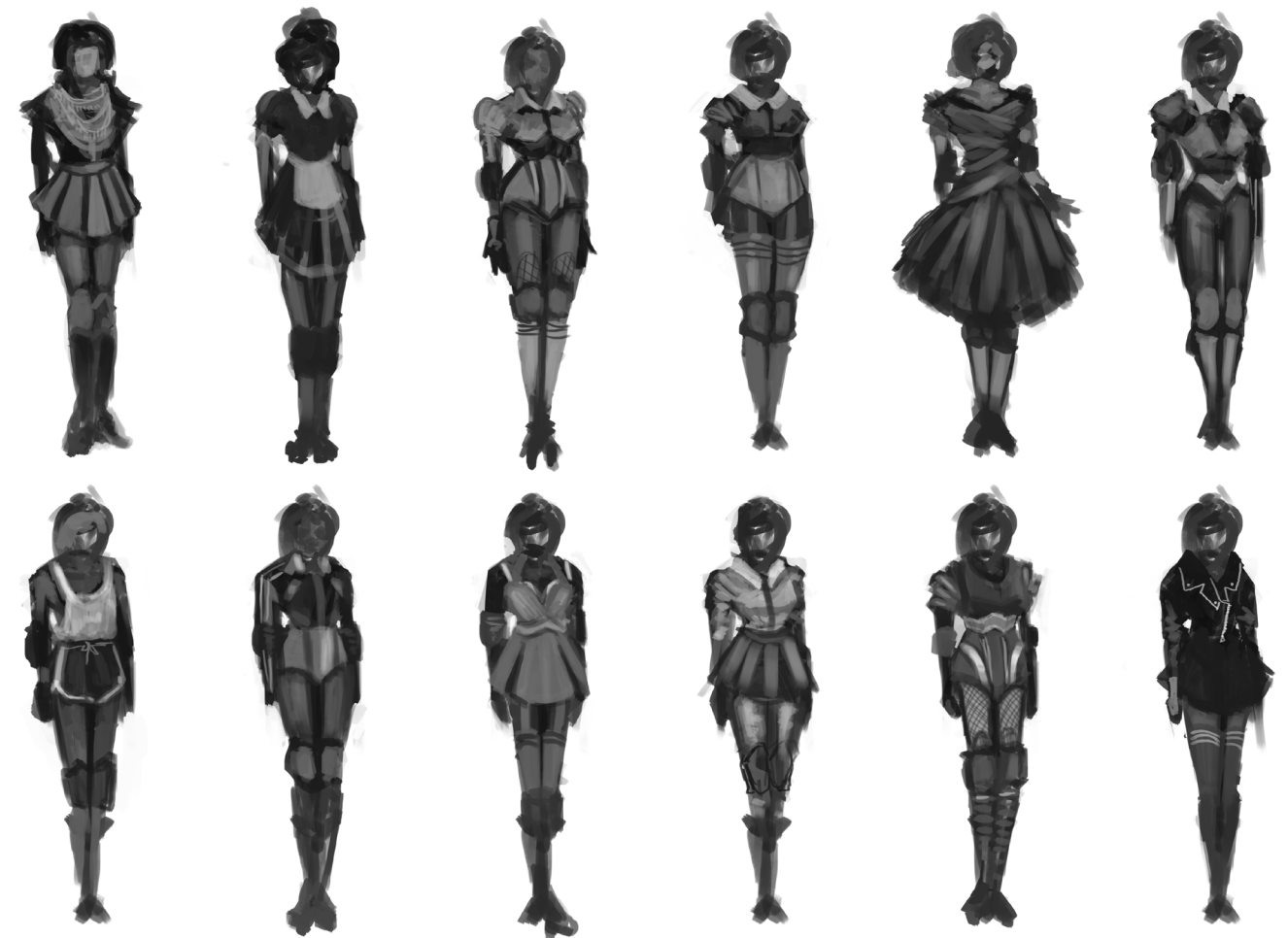
Basic silhouettes give the artist a quick method of producing forms that are engaging and exciting to look at. This will provide a base for the character, creature or object that can be taken forward to the next stage of the design process.

Shapes are drawn that are referenced from source material or moodboards. For example, the forms here are sampled from 1950s fashion trends, catalogue images, and modern day sportswear.

From the initial research, there were requirements that the character's costume had to have - as they were to partake in a very particular sport, which in this case was roller derby. This meant fairly tight, form-fitting clothing that would be light and comfortable to wear in a warm sports environment. Any of these silhouettes can be modified to any gender, and they do not have to be directly copied in the next stage of the design process, which is iteration.



The Iteration Process



Two silhouettes from the previous pages were chosen to carry on in the design process. The iteration process involves taking those silhouettes and creating many different versions of the same character.

The silhouettes were chosen as they provided the easiest and most malleable base to create a character. The male was athletic and broad, and the female silhouette had the true 1950s cinched waist and long legs that were typical of the era.

It is a process that is not as fast as the silhouette stage, but it helps to clear any preconceived ideas that the artist may have of the final character. These slightly more detailed images allow the artist

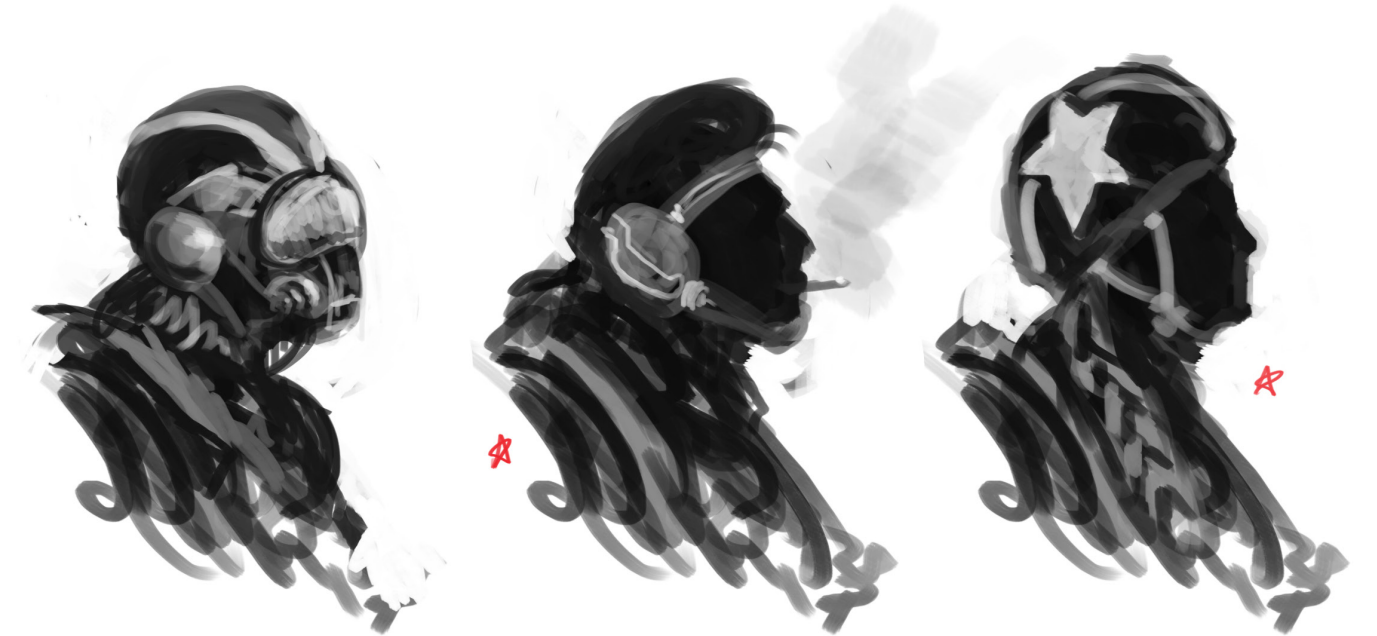
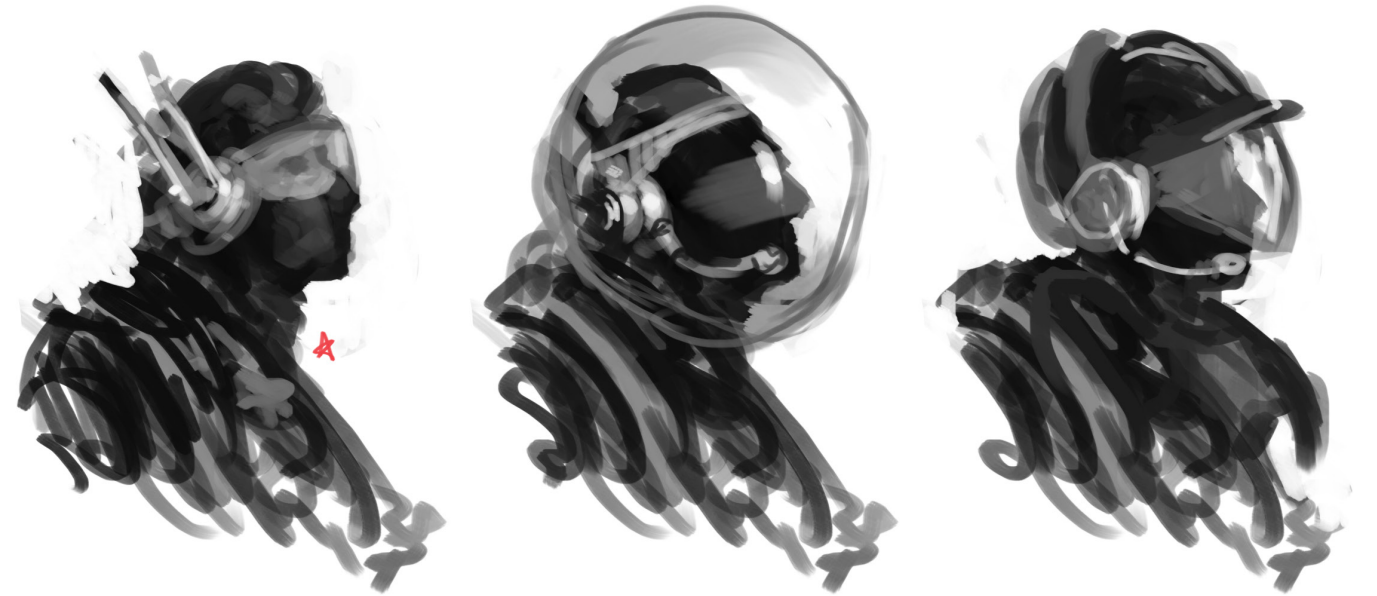
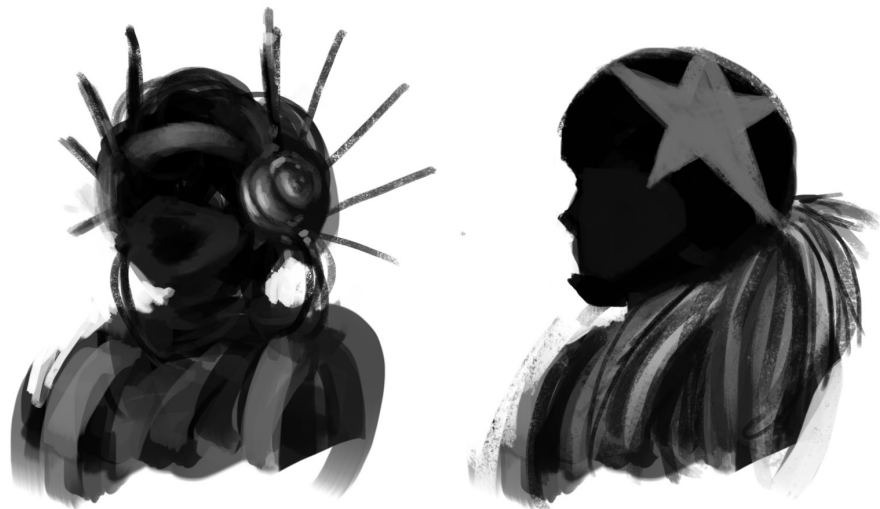
to apply a more accurate version of the costume research to a form, and to try our different combinations of costume to see what works and provides an aesthetically pleasing and engaging silhouette to the body.

The iteration stage allows the artist to test costumes and clothing designs quickly and efficiently, using monochrome tones to build up a quick sense of form, value and texture.

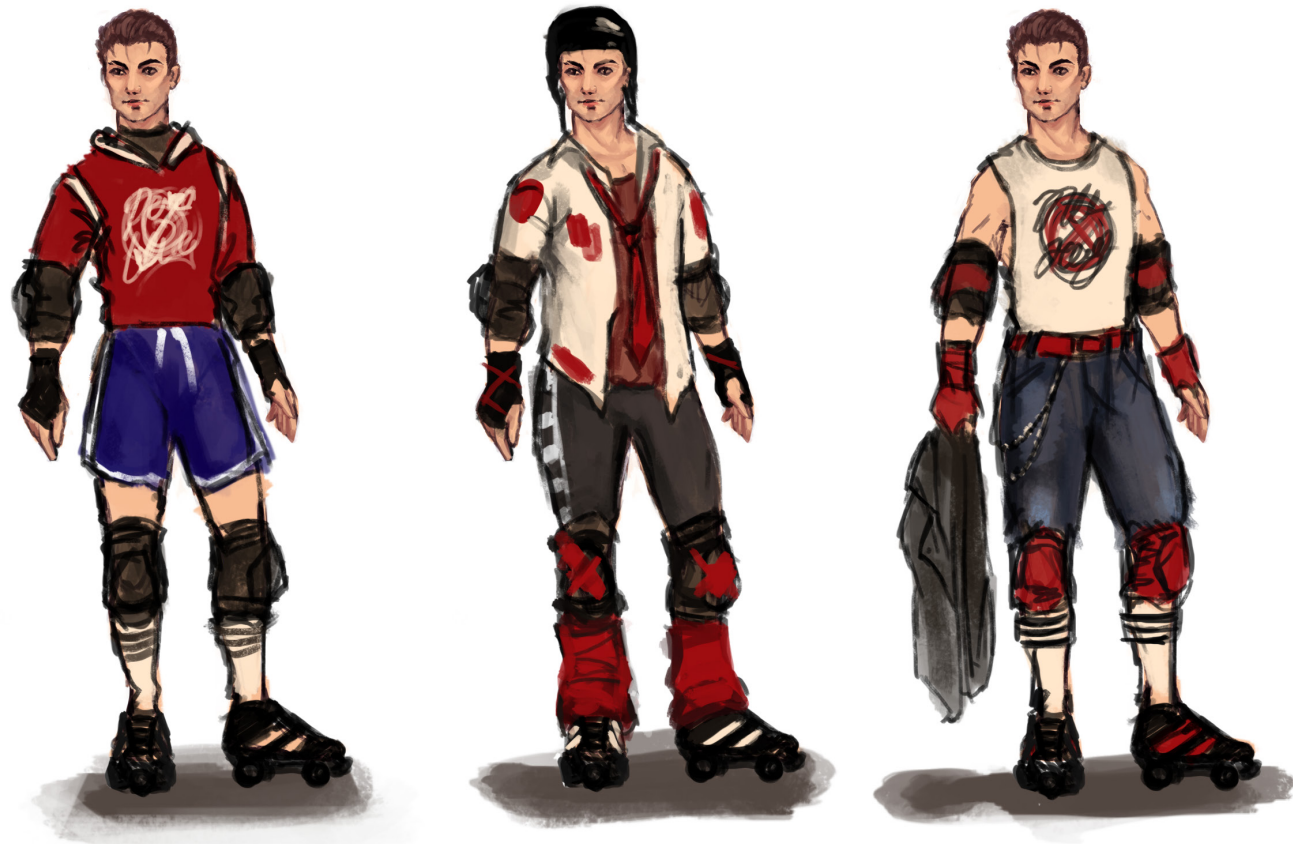
On the next double page, the same process has been done to two silhouettes that were a good base for iterating headgear designs.

The designs with stars next to them were taken forward again.

Headgear Iterations



Body Iterations



After some first hand research, key design elements began to influence the creation of the character designs. These included a broad range of considerations, such as:

- Retro 1950s apparel
- Alternative, modern dress
- Protective gear, such as kneepads, elbowpads and wrist guards (standard derby protection)
- Team/league logos and decals
- Sponsors
- Colour consistency
- Any accessories

On the opposite page, an alternative method of design iteration is put in to

practice. A base form is used, but instead of blocking out tones and colours in greyscale, potential designs are drawn straight on to the body.

This method of design makes it much easier for the artist to visualise a whole outfit just by sketching, and using block colours to fill the sketch. This is instead of drawing each design, as well as its form underneath, multiple times. This process also allows for colours to be changed quickly, and to see how it affects the feel of the character and the balance of the outfit. The green/orange and the red/blue work particularly well here, and each lends itself to a different character personality.

Alternative Headgear



The same technique is used here, to quickly develop character hairstyles that have been sourced from 1950s imagery.

Like the various colours on a character, a hairstyle can also say a lot about the

character it is on. A long, curly hairdo can imply high-maintenance, whereas a short one may indicate a character that is practical and active. A headscarf can imply a belonging to a group, or team.

Facial Details



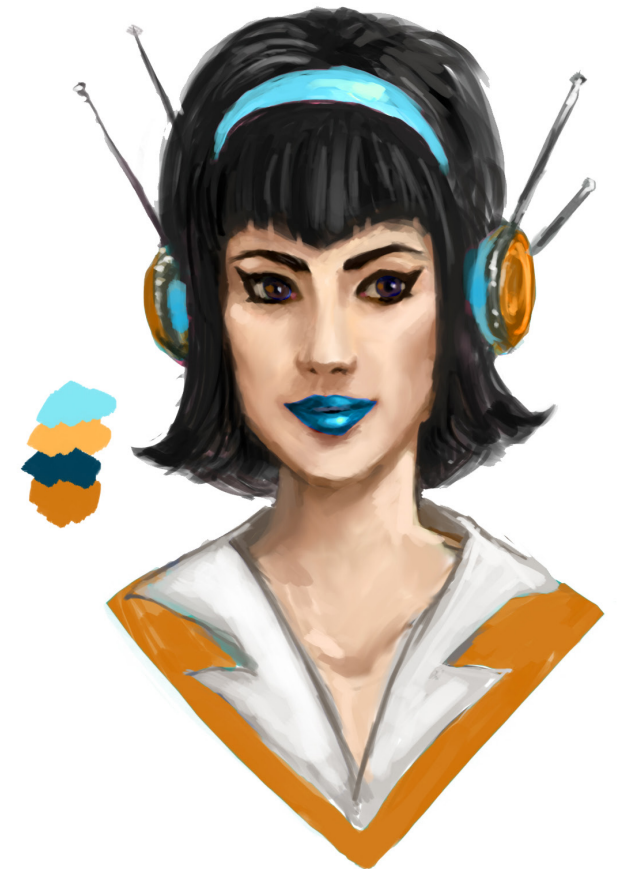
Makeup and war paint is very common in modern roller derby. For both men and women, a stripe or two under the eyes can immediately add a level of intimidation, and it is reflective of the sport's similarity to American Football.

As roller derby has strong 1950s and retro roots, women often do their

makeup in the feminine, stereotypical pin-up makeup method, with winged eyeliner and red lips.

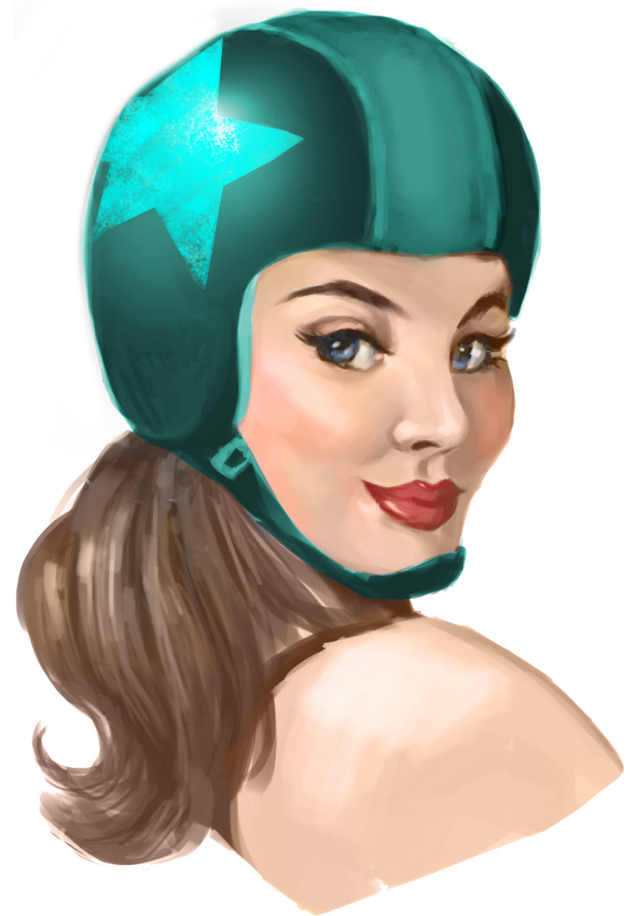
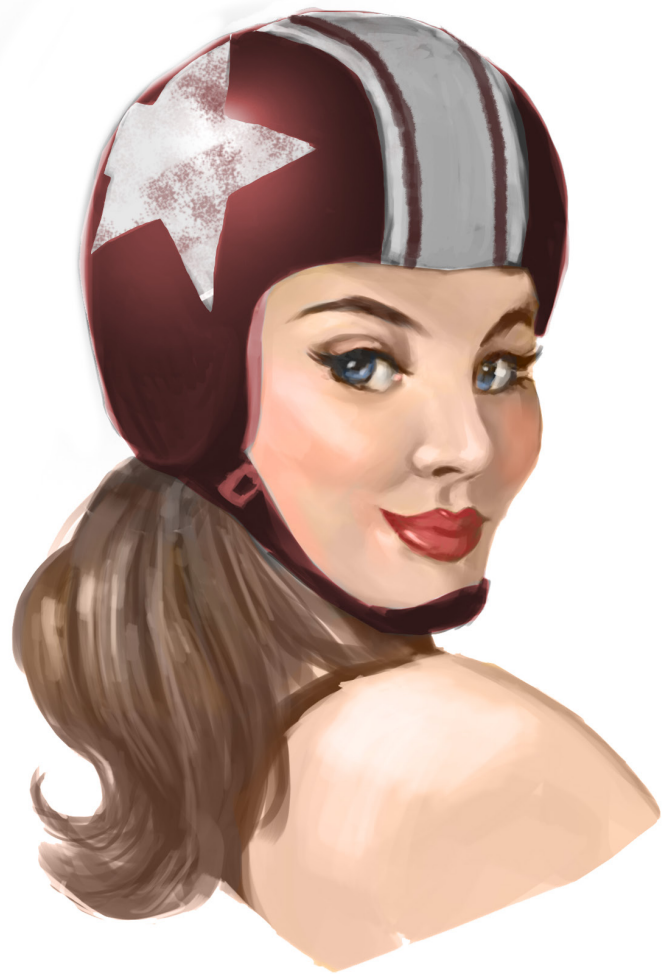
Makeup colour and heaviness can also have an influence on how the character will be perceived.

Colour Combinations



The next few pages apply various colour themes to different models, to see what the effect would be. Despite all combinations, a classic '50s diner' red,

coupled with blue and white gave the most retro 'race' feel. The orange and blue here gave the character a 'retro-futuristic' space age feel.



Facial Illustrations



Final Image

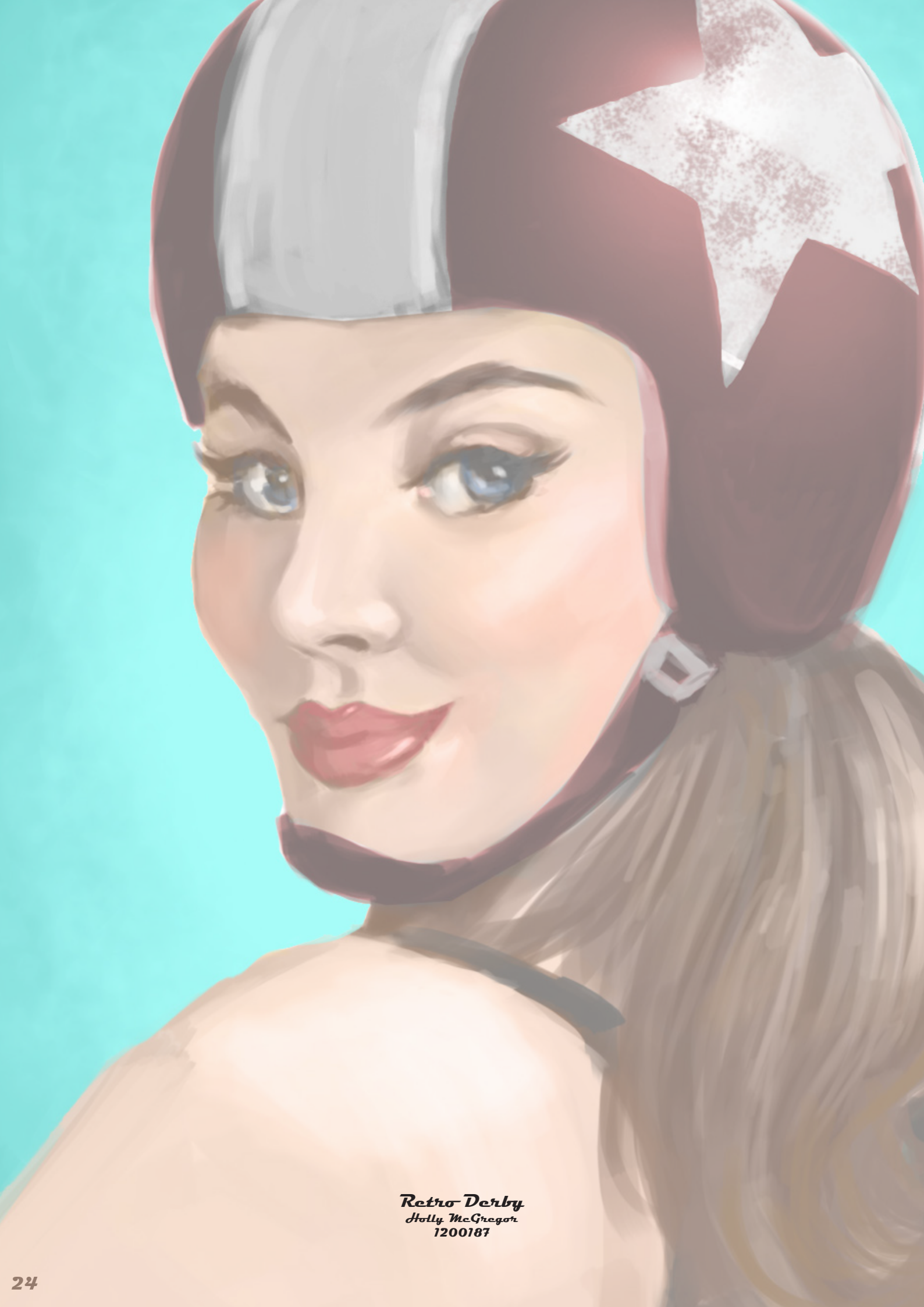


In order to create a dynamic and engaging final character illustration, a combination of different stages were used in conjunction with each other to produce a relevant outcome.

A number of first hand photos of roller derby skaters was taken to understand motion and movement on skates, and it was combined with an element of 1950s pin up portraiture, to produce a pretty, strong, 'pin up-esque' derby girl illustration.

Current motorsport brands and sponsors were also added, to enhance the implication that the character is a modern derby racer.





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