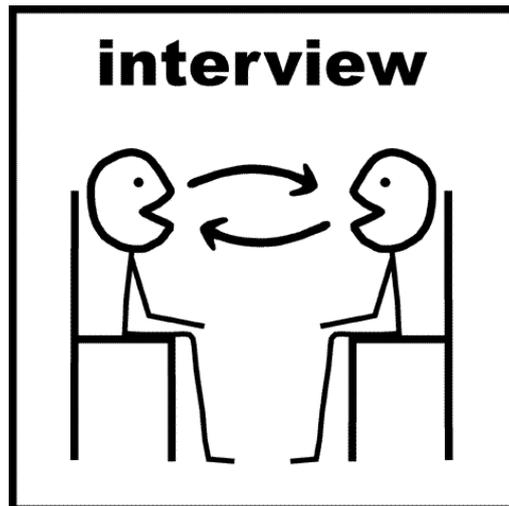


BEHIND THE PIXELS

ISSUE 9

Behind The Bunny (Parts 1 & 2)





Behind The Bunny (Part I): An Interview with Xeregrinus

Xeregrinus (that's his name on Habbo.com) started working for Sulake as a graphic designer in November 2011, and we didn't scare him off! Before working for Sulake he's worked in industrial design, print design and done graphics work for mobile platforms. He's also a keen sportsman.

How did you start working on the Bunny? Did you make any sketches or work from any reference material?

I started with checking all kinds of references in the Internet - googling every kind of rabbit and bunny I could find. Then I did some hand and tablet drawings and also tried to find out how rabbits and bunnies move in real life by watching online video footage of them. All this to get the right feeling and perspective.

What is the most difficult thing about designing a pet for Habbo?

The most difficult thing about designing a pet in Habbo is making it look natural while keeping in mind the Habbo environment it's going to be situated in. So it's all about the right balance.

What's the process for making a pet in Habbo?

It's an iterative process with trials and errors. First you begin with rough sketches – hand drawn or whatever suits you – then you build from that into more detailed pixel graphics and animations, while adjusting and revising graphics along the way. You can't plan everything in advance.

Do you like rabbits in real life?

I like rabbits and wild life in general.

Do you have any funny stories about your real life encounters with rabbits?

No, but I used to be afraid of cows when I was little, for unknown reasons! I think that's funny, even if it doesn't have anything to do with rabbits.

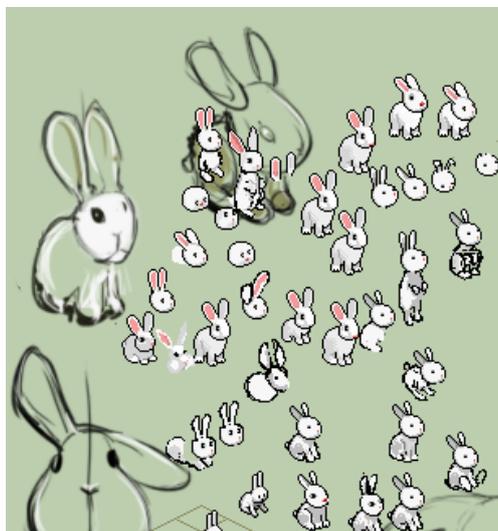
Is it true that you were once going to star in a remake of Gymkata?

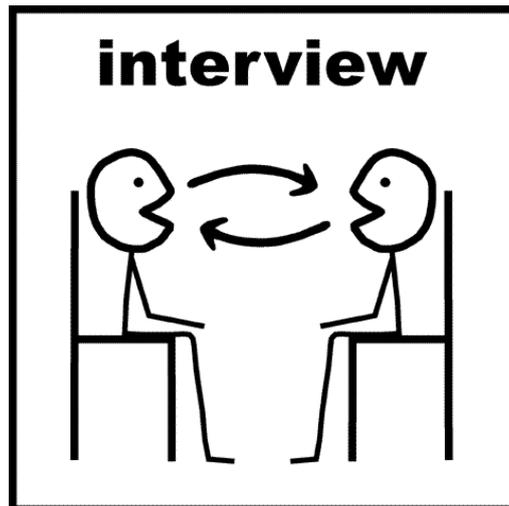
Nope. (What's Gymkata?)

So what are you working on now?

I did enjoy the bunny project a lot, but now it's time to work on something else, time to move on. I might however want to create another pet one day. The feedback from Habbos is encouraging!

An early sketch of the rabbit, courtesy of Mr Xeregrinus:





Behind The Bunny (Part II): An Interview with Mark

Mark has worked for Sulake for ten years, and in this revelatory and confusing article he talks about the personalities of the various pet rabbits. To make it less confusing, I am conducting this interview via time travel, where 'Morning Mark' interviewed 'Afternoon Mark', and 'Evening Mark' wrote it up. It was less confusing to Mark, at least...

Good morning Mark

Hi, good afternoon! How's it going?

How's it going?

I asked first.

It's going okay. Yourself?

It's going okay also.

I knew that, since I am you.

So what do you want to talk about?

The pet rabbit.

Oh awesome. Like I haven't talked enough about those big-eared pests. But enough about those guys that I met on the tram this morning, who tried to sell me a half-eaten shoe.

Before we begin, did you leave that half eaten sausage on the kitchen counter last night?

Yes, yes, I did.

I'm going to have to clean it, you know.

Tough.

Okay, so when you were writing the speech for the white rabbit, what were your thoughts?

Well. First of all I did some research into rabbits. Did you know, in Sweden they like to have rabbit show jumping? It's called Kaninhoppning. They do it in Finland as well, apparently. I then watched Watership Down. I was expecting a lively and upbeat cartoon about rabbits. This was not that kind of film. It was dark, and depressing, and surprisingly gory. I realized if I tried to base the personality of the rabbit on that, the cute and fluffy animal would have some form of PTSD. So I thought a little more, inspired by looming deadlines and the videogame Devil May Cry, and decided that the best personality for the white rabbit would be friendly, kind, a bit poetic and a bit wistful.

Right, that's all I wanted to know.

So I can go now?

In a minute. Who's Nazabozho?

Among the Anishinaabe people, Nazabozho is a spirit who is a trickster figure and shapeshifter who often appears in the form of a rabbit.

Who's Julie?

Ah, not telling. Some Habbos might figure that one out, some won't!

Oh, you tease! Wasn't Julie the name of that girl you met at the bus stop three years ago in *Lewisham?

**No, that was Lee from Steps. At least, that's who she claimed to be.

Lee from Steps was a man. So what about the other three rabbits, how did they come about?

Well, it was always in the plan to have multiple colours, the white one was released first as it was the first to be made. The other three took a bit more time, due to them having wildly different personalities- they really are like no other pet around, personality wise.

Okay.

Okay? That's it?

Okay, please continue?

Well first of all I had a plan. The sugar plan. The pink bunny would be written after I had eaten a lot of candy, as it was to be a super happy, manic pixie bunny. The brown bunny was to be written when I was coming down off the sugar rush and I was too tired to do anything, and the black bunny was to be written after I had no sugar left and was a bit grouchy.

Tell me more, please, I am dying to know.

Well, the pink bunny was the most difficult to write. I brainstormed lots of different personality types- air headed bimbo (Heini recommended I watch Legally Blond for reference, but I couldn't bring myself to do it), then I thought about making the bunny super love obsessed with the owner, but that was just creepy, then I thought about making the bunny super flamboyant and camp, but that read like a cruel stereotype. So I decided on using the manic dream pixie girl persona, someone who is super enthusiastic and loves life, also a bit similar to Robin Williams in Dead Poets Society, all about seizing the day and whatnot. Basically, I based the pink bunny on someone I couldn't be in a room with for longer than three seconds without looking for a window to jump through dramatically.

What about the black bunny?

The black bunny was to be evil, or nasty. My first draft was too nice, my second draft was far, far too nasty- I based it on my German teacher from school. In the end I split the difference.

And what about the brown bunny?

The brown bunny was to be apathetic and bored all the time. He's a little depressed. I based him, a little, on myself as a teenager, only a little mind you, as I've managed to repress most of those memories. Originally, he was going to be very sarcastic, but when I tried him out, he actually sounded pretty nice- the subtle sarcasm didn't register.

What's with the Nirvana line? Is it a joke? It's not very funny.

It's a joke a girl I once knew told me, about when she was on the bus once, I guess teens don't use buses anymore; they use the internet or something. Anyway she was on a bus and some kids in front of her were talking about going to see Nirvana in concert, they were trying to brag and one up one another by seeing who was the biggest fan, and one of them said they were going to go see Nirvana in concert the

next month. This was in 2002.

Right.

Jokes were different back then, they didn't have to be funny.

Did you listen to Nirvana when you were a teenager?

No, I listened to Korn and Limp Bizkit. And Bruce Springsteen.

That explains so much, if anything it explains too much.

You know it! Imagine Fred Durst doing a duet with The Boss! It would shatter the universe. I'm going now, it's almost home time. And my boss is staring at me, which means I've got to apologize for something.

Aw man, I've got another seven hours...

Well, when you're interviewed by yourself, watch out, he's a real piece of work

.

Bye, Mark.

Bye, Mark.

*Lewisham is a Southern suburb of London, UK

** Here is Steps:<http://www.pop-music.com/steps/steps.html> and here is Lee:
<http://www.pop-music.com/steps/lee.jpg>