


**AWAÑENE, LOST DECADES: BRAZILIAN HISTORY FOR DIGITAL GAMES TOLD THROUGH CONCEPT ART** <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2024.038-002>**Danielle de Marchi Tozatti<sup>1</sup> and Daniel Henrique Teixeira<sup>2</sup>.****ABSTRACT**

This article aims to explore Brazilian history and culture and present notable characters in the construction of the country for a digital game, addressing the Itapuã War (1555), one of the first conflicts between natives and settlers. Through studies carried out on historicity, especially on the birth of the city of Salvador. The use of graphic design and concept art makes the subject more attractive to the target audience, and an artbook was developed that tells this part of history through images and narratives. To this end, this work comes from qualitative and inductive research, seeking to understand the phenomena on the subject addressed and the role through bibliographic research on the topics covered, and a collection of data with the target audience to better understand it.

**Keywords:** Concept art. History of Brazil. Itapuã War.

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## INTRODUCTION

The choice of the theme was motivated by the question of how to disseminate facts and characters present in the formation of Brazil with a bias towards digital games. With this in mind, this work aims to use a passage from Brazilian history, the “Itapuã War”, and tell it through a fantastic story, exploring national characters and scenarios, starting with the production of concept art following its pretext of giving “life” to image concepts.

The construction of this article used a qualitative exploratory methodology, aiming to observe the problems of digital games together with the public. In addition, the research was supported by bibliographical references that discuss the areas covered, such as concept art and Brazilian history.

In addition to the mentioned methodology, the inductive method was used to obtain better results regarding the understanding of the problem of a persistent lack of information on the subject of national themes addressed in digital games, through an applied questionnaire; in the end, the analysis of the case resulted in the design of a material that invites the public to entertain themselves with the idea of this work.

## THE ITAPUÃ WAR

“It was precisely the frequent distribution of sesmarias, as well as the incessant appropriation, by eager colonists, of the most fertile portions of the Tupinambá tribal territory in the interior of Recôncavo Baiano, that resulted in the explosion of an indigenous revolt, which occurred in May 1555”. Eduardo Bueno (2019).

The main reasons that culminated in one of the first armed conflicts, the so-called Itapuã War (according to the location in Figure 1), arose during the government of D. Duarte da Costa, who treated with irrelevance the problem of the invasion of Portuguese territory by the French in order to traffic goods to Europe, doing the same with the insurrection and the imminent war of the natives against the Europeans given by the issues of invasion of indigenous land where their crops were destroyed. In addition, there was the resumption of the slave system by the colonists, using the labor of the natives to work in sugar mills, a practice that was prohibited by the Jesuit missions.

Figure 1 - Location of Itapua



Source: <https://shorturl.at/QZmZ9>. Accessed in 12/07/2024.

The conflict, led by Ipiru and Apacé, began with the capture of the Pirajá sugar mill, when D. Duarte da Costa left Salvador to respond to a call for help from Olinda, located in the neighboring capital, Pernambuco, as a conflict was taking place there between the Portuguese and the Caeté ethnic group. As soon as he set sail with his ship, a storm prevented the voyage and D. Duarte da Costa was held at sea for three days, a moment that the Tupinambás took advantage of to start the conflict. While he was taking the Pirajá sugar mill, indigenous warriors invaded the farm of Garcia D'Ávila, an advisor to the former governor-general Tomé de Sousa, taking control of the place and arresting everyone there. Finally, the city of Salvador itself was surrounded by the Tupinambás.

D. Duarte da Costa was informed of the conflict while still trapped by the storm. He then decided to return to Salvador and appoint his son, D. Álvaro, as commander of the Portuguese front to lead the Portuguese offensive. Determined to put an end to the conflict, the Governor-General's son sent his troops to Porto Grande; and upon arriving there, he found the village surrounded by wooden fences and large pits lined with sharp stakes. Although these defenses delayed D. Álvaro's battalion, they did not prevent the Portuguese from completing their mission of destroying the place and capturing Apacé. D. Álvaro continued on to Garcia D'Ávila's farm, freeing the prisoners and recovering the cattle, without encountering any resistance, because upon seeing their leader imprisoned and defeated, the Tupinambás surrendered immediately.

Although most of the revolt had been contained, it presented yet another stage for the Portuguese to fight. On the last day of May 1555, the natives had once again surrounded the sugar mill, this time led by Ipiru.

During the march to the sugar mill in Pirajá, D. Álvaro's troops set fire to several villages along the way. They began the attack late in the afternoon of that last day in May.

The fight, described as intense by the Portuguese due to the number of Tupinambás and the fortification they had built, lasted for hours. On the morning after the War of Itapuã, in which the Europeans emerged victorious, D. Álvaro's troops made their way back to Salvador, leaving the bodies of the natives in the open air, setting fire to more villages and finishing off fugitive warriors they encountered on the way back. The disproportion of strength between the firearms and metal weapons of the Europeans and the clubs and arrows of the Tupinambás was so glaring that, although several Portuguese were wounded, not a single one died, while among the natives, the casualties exceeded seven hundred men. (BUENO, 2019, p. 236). At the end of the conflict, which lasted for five days, almost all the natives were dead. No Europeans died, although several were injured. Three thousand indigenous people were either killed, expelled from their villages (incidentally, about thirteen were destroyed by the Portuguese), or enslaved.

A brief summary of the historical period in Brazil known as the Itapuã War, one of the first armed conflicts involving European colonizers against the natives who fought to defend their lands, cultures, and experiences. All this contextualization will serve as a basis for the development of the project and the concept art aspect, a subject that will be addressed below.

## CONCEPT ART

Originating from major animation studios, concept art is an area whose objective, in short, is to transform thought into physical and visual media (Figure 2). It can be said that concept art is like the starting point for every project that involves it, through which ideas are debated, selected and conceived for whatever media medium is to be worked on. Well-known mainly in the gaming market, but also active in the film, comics and advertising industries, concept art is the entire visual outline that carries the essence of a project.

Concept art builds the idealization we have of a certain subject for the visual world, thus forming an auxiliary guide in the possible development of the project. (CIRILLO, 2018, p.30).

As mentioned, concept art is seen as the starting point for the development of a project, formulating proposals quickly and transmitting the idea and concept as efficiently as possible, using methods that aim to externalize abstractions. After this stage, the concept artist, a professional who is responsible for developing ideas for a physical figure/image, is then responsible for transforming them into a type of visual script that will be the foundation for other areas involved in the project, such as animators and 3D modelers.

Figure 2 - Digital Art Masters Volume: 7



Source: Mandrik, 2012, p.131.

As previously mentioned, concept art is a fundamental step, especially when it comes to the gaming industry. Its validity is mainly due to its efficiency and speed in the production of this media and in the management of subsequent stages of production. Concept art is vital to the success of a game, whether digital or manual, conveying its essence and defining the entire portfolio to be developed in greater detail during the creation of a project. Below, we will see some aspects of the concept art area.

## CHARACTER DESIGN

Character design refers to the area that works specifically with the creation of characters. In the following image (Figure 3), you can see simple sketches, more detailed than the concept art process, to better define the character to be worked on. Poses, faces, adornments, expressions, height and the like are created and analyzed, with the aim of coming up with the best proposal in relation to the concept to be conveyed.



Figure 3 – Moana



Source: The Art of Moana (2016, p. 31).

The search for a more concrete design, together with cultural, psychological and imagery references (such as semiotic symbols or the advent of the use of colors), gives more life to the sketches developed from concept art. Specific elements and clothing are more developed, body and facial expressions, showing how the character behaves in different situations, the issue of geometrization is more applied here (use of geometric shapes to define the format and more visual characteristics of the character), or other creation rules used in the character design stages.

## CREATURE DESIGN

The creature design aspect (Figure 4) concerns the specific focus on creating monstrous or fantastic characters.

Figure 4 – Peryton



Source: Ana Kozuki, em <https://www.instagram.com/p/CAGnvsZjBOz/>. Accessed in: 16/07/2024.

Covering the study of human anatomy, but mainly animal anatomy, the creature designer (the professional responsible for this artistic aspect) will build all the creatures present in a project; dragons, mythological beings, demons, supernatural beings, among many other possibilities present in pop culture and mythology that serve as inspiration and basis for the development of creature design.

## PROP DESIGN

The area of prop design is another aspect of concept art. Its objective is specified in the production and conceptualization of objects that will be present in a given project (Figure 5).

Figure 5 - Prop examples



Source: The Witcher Artbook (2007, p. 136).

Working on the production of ornaments and armor for the characters, diverse items from the everyday life of that world, such as books, torches, crockery, door handles, plaques, among other common objects from a fantasy setting, for example; even the design of weapons, ranging from the most primitive to the most futuristic weapons.

## COSTUME DESIGN

Costume design is consolidated in the unique and exclusive creation of the characters' costumes (Figure 6). The production includes all textile production, texturing, combination and development of color palettes for different materials and in the styling and decorations referring to the period in which the project was based.

Figure 6 – Clothing



Source: J. Gauthier. Spiritfarer the Artbook (2020, p.14).

Costume design, in short, takes care of the clothing of all characters present in a media.

## SCENARIO CONCEPT

As the name suggests, set design is the branch that is entirely dedicated to the creation of landscapes and environments (Figure 7), creating a range of diverse sets, such as fictional places, ancient or futuristic settlements, natural landscapes, among many other possibilities provided through set design; all in accordance with the idea developed in concept art.

Figure 7 - Dragon Stone in Game of Thrones



Source: Sven Sauer, Adam Wasserski, Alexandra Toth, Juri Starossek, Jörn Grosshans.  
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/26320507/Game-of-Thrones-matte-paintings>. Accessed in: 17/7/2024.

Present in audiovisual, games and advertising, set design is characterized as a digital illustration technique, using photographic, 2D and 3D elements, where fantastic scenarios are designed and created in the most realistic ways possible, thus dispensing



with the use of real sets, in addition to the great savings that the project will benefit from this modality.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to develop a inherent media to the universe of digital games and that addresses the theme of this project, the action research method was also used, which, according to Barros & Lehfeld (2014), consists of the relationship between researcher and researched, aiming at the vision of the target audience, which is a younger audience, in the age range between 15 and 30 years approximately, with a focus on those belonging to generation Z. Furthermore, the questionnaire created a basis for the development of the project. The use of this method is integrated into the practice according to the results collected during the process, which resulted in the proposal of the concept art about the Itapuã War.

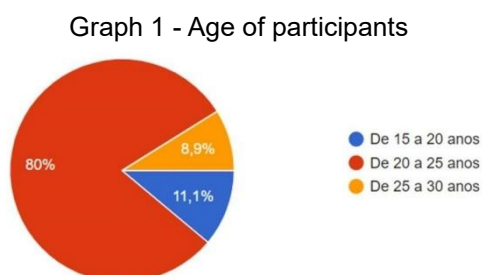
As a methodology for this article, an online form was applied containing personal questions such as level of education and personal information and others focusing on the theme of the project, which is the Brazilian historical part, thus presenting questions of this nature.

The purpose of the form was to collect data that could serve as proof of the justification and the problems contained in the theme and approach to developing concept arts, in addition to better understanding the public's preferences and the delimitation of the product to be developed. Below, the questions that guided this work will be presented.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

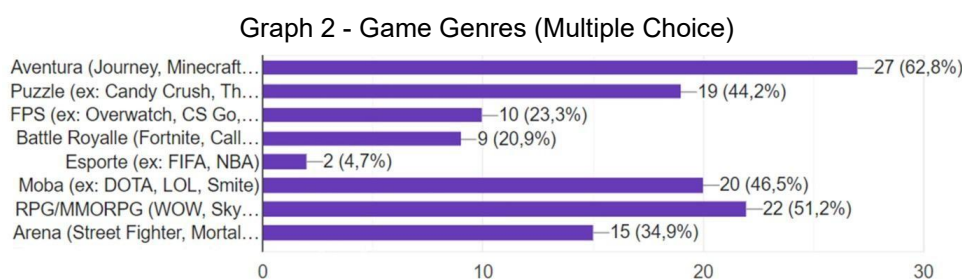
With the help of the form, it is possible to analyze the preferences and levels of knowledge and/or interest in the Brazilian national history of the target audience of this work, Generation Z, consumers of digital games and derivatives.

From the results obtained, it is noted that the target audience is mostly between 20 and 25 years old, corresponding to 80% of the respondents (Graph 1), the age group corresponding to the current Generation Z.



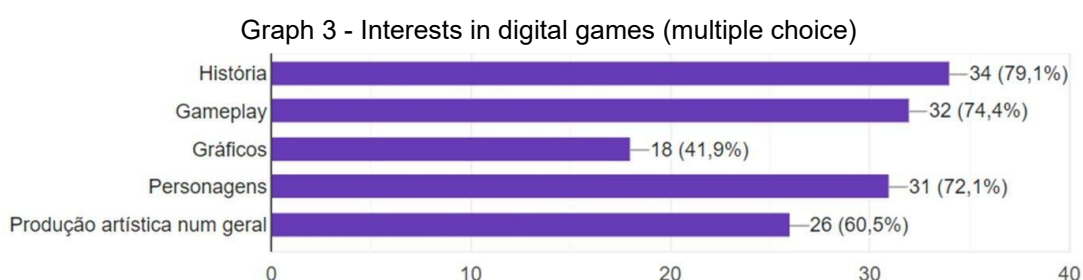
Source: From the authors (2024).

The form also aims to provide information on some characteristics of digital games consumed by the target audience (Graph 2). The question shows the genres most consumed by respondents, which are: Adventure, with the preference of 62.8% of participants, followed by RPG/MMORPG (Role Playing Game/Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game), with 51.2% of the public's preference. Both styles may come to work with similar proposals.



Source: From the authors (2024).







The public was also asked about what sparks their interest when choosing a digital game (Graph 3). The answers showed that the majority value the game's story, 79.1%, followed by the gameplay and characters, 74.4% and 72.1% of respondents, respectively.



Source: From the authors (2024).

In order to collect information about the graphic styles that most captivated the target audience, two multiple-choice questions were asked in the online form in which the respondent could choose the characters and scenarios, respectively, that they liked the most (Graph 4).

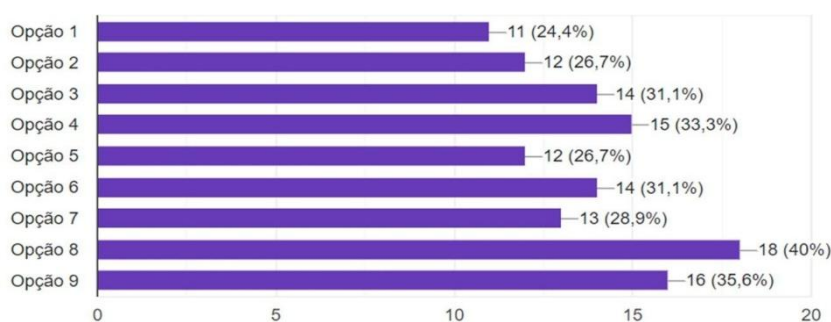
Graph 4 - Multiple Top Voted Choices

| Questões  | Três mais votados (em %)   |
|---|--|
| 10. Dentre as ilustrações de personagens a seguir, quais você mais gosta? | <p>8. </p> <p>9. </p> <p>4. </p> |
| 11. Dentre as ilustrações de cenários a seguir, quais você mais gosta?    | <p>1.  9. </p> <p>2. </p>    |

Source: From the authors (2024).

Regarding the characters, with options 8 (40%), 9 (35.6%) and 4 (33.3%), respectively, the most voted (Graph 4), the public reports that their choices were motivated by aspects that refer to figures of power, whether through the use of vibrant and striking colors, the silhouette, the cartoonish lines or even the implantation of dynamism in the compositions and the feeling that the illustrations tell a story in themselves. It was then decided to follow the graphic style present in these images to work on the use of concept art in the creation of the characters.

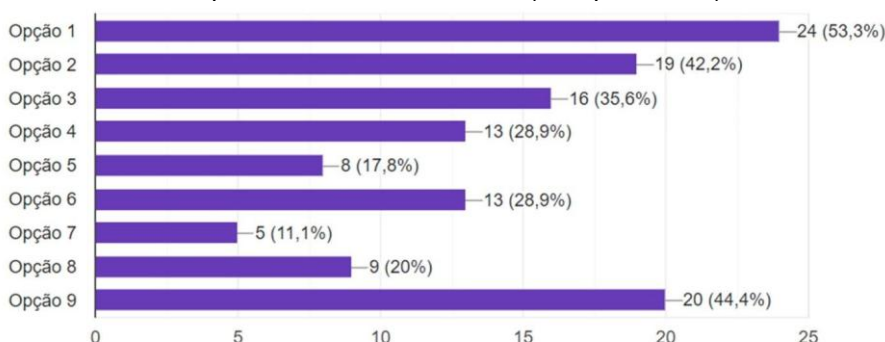
Graph 5 - Choice of characters (multiple choice)



Source: From the authors (2024).

The same applies to the scenario choices (Graph 6), the options that dictate the artistic style to be followed in the compositions are 1 (53.3%), 9 (44.4%) and option 2 (42.2%), respectively, the most voted. According to the public, the figures with vibrant and contrasting colors with the strong use of light and shadow refer to inviting environments for an adventure.

Graph 6 - Choice of scenarios (multiple choice)



Source: From the authors (2024).

In short, with these questions, it can be concluded that the target audience of this project is, in its great majority, those who make up the so-called Generation Z, in addition to having a basis in accordance with the desires of this audience regarding their choices regarding interactive media of games that place them in an immersive scenario. In the artistic aspect, where the respondents chose the styles they want portrayed in the work, we can highlight the use of light, silhouettes and lines that refer to the feeling of telling a narrative.

## GENERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

### Concept Art

Based on the results of the research methodology applied to the public added to the compiled conceptual images used of references to the design of this project, some generations of characters and scenarios alternatives that will be present and will play roles in the narrative of the war of the war were prepared and playing roles in the Itapuã War.

Starting with the presentation of a Concept Art, we have Çaa Cy (Figure 8); Known name on Brazilian Popular Imaginary (Saci), the character here is created using elements that mix the indigenous roots on the entity to what it became due to Portuguese colonization. Çaa Cy, was worked with the idea of being an entity of nature and winds where, in its conception, it was designed using rounder and triangular shapes, referring to a language, in terms of geometry, something between the friendly and the dangerous, idea that hangs the mischievous character. In addition, the character has selecting clothing both native culture and body paintings and props by the body, as well as the peoples that were enslaved to the region of Salvador at the time, these clothes being simpler; Çaa Cy also shows the observer an animal and humanoid form, alluding to the origin of the entity (a bird), and how it became known.

Figure 8 - Concept character Çaa Çy



Source: from the authors (2024)

## Character Design

Continuing to the Charater Design area, the Guar and Maranir characters (Figure 9) are portrayed with visual variations and signs to better meet the idea worked under both. Here is present more stripped and faster traits in order to develop the character's identity until its final presentation.



Figure 9 - Guará and Maranirũ characters design



Source: from the authors (2024)

Just like the Çaa Çy, Guará presents elements of the African peoples brought to the strength by the European settlers, more portraits in their garments and hairstyles; still bringing the animalistic issue since it is a company to Maranirũ where both portray one of the native entities, the Kaãpora.

Maranirũ here is presented in the model of the already discussed Model Sheet, with semilateral (3/4), lateral and rear, transposing his look developed with elements of the indigenous peoples of the region where the Itapuã War takes place. Both characters also have the issue of geometrization where rounded shapes mix with more rectangular shapes to Guará (passing a strong and solid character concept, at the same time closed and tough), adjunct with slightly triangular shapes for Maranirũ, externalizing the fury of a warrior, even if too much young.

### Creature Design

In the Creature Design part in Awañene, it was made among several creatures present in the broad brazilian native repertoire, the Mapinguari (Figure 10).

Figure 10 - Creature Design Development of Mapinguari Character



Source: From the authors (2024)

Portrayed as a large beast, similar to a giant laziness with one eye only on his face and a mouth that crosses his body, here this being presents a background behind its development, being represented by distorted animals, with flora elements in their bodies as fungi and vines arrested, as well as claws and protuberant shapes in order to pass an air of mystery and fear on those who see them.

### Prop Design

Moving on to the development of prop design (figure 11), this aims to work on the development of each and every object present in a narrative, from most simple to the most complex ones.

Figure 11 - Prop Design on the narrative



Source: from the authors (2024)

The props designed here (figure 11) concern the weaponry of the characters in the work, with alternatives being created for a Tacape (a type of wooden club used in indigenous rituals), a combat spear, period weapons used by the Portuguese during the period of great navigations and the colonization of the Recôncavo Bahiano, as well as a hat made from a plant called vitória-régia, an element present in the character Iara; finally, a guarana flower was also worked on based on the precepts of concept art and prop design, being a simple but significant element in the narrative.

### Costume design

When it comes to clothing, the costume design concepts used in Awañene combine ancient clothing from the Iberian Peninsula, more specifically from the Renaissance and medieval periods, with clothing from indigenous natives and people brought from other parts of the world.

Figure 12 - Cuca Costume Design Development



Source: from the authors (2024)

The character presented (figure 12), Cuca, another of the great names of Brazilian entities, is worked with some of these mixtures. From european origin, the entity presents clothes in a medieval and fantasy style of the time, with detailed fabrics, tied cloths, decorated hair and accessories on the body; such ideas were worked on in order to develop an air of mysticism over the character and bring characteristics of a witch as this entity is known, all through her clothes.

### Scenario Concept

As the last area of the concept art strands presented and worked on here to bring to life the narrative proposed in this work as a whole and to immerse the characters developed in the fantasy world, the set design followed the same logic as the characters, being developed through the artistic principles voted on by the target audience in the online questionnaire.

Inside the forest (figure 13) is one of the scenes present in the unfolding of the plot of Awañene. Here the observer contemplates, in narrative terms, the encounter of possible European settlers (given the silhouette of horses present in the composition, an animal that had not been introduced into Brazilian territory until then), coming across the creature Mapinguari, already presented previously.

The art works with the strong use of light and shadow to focus the viewer's gaze on the elements of the scene; the rays of light that extend to the characters in contrast with the

giant creatures and their gazes turned completely towards them, aside from their appearance, contribute to a darker scenario. Textures are also present on the composition, with a visible demarcation of the brushes used both for the sketch as in the first frame, as well as those used to make the transitions between light tones and shadow tones, as in the last, those characteristics are very present in concept art.

Figure 13 - Inside the forest



Source: from the authors (2024).

It is worth highlighting the fantasy setting, a question also present in the questionnaire and requested by the target audience. The scene itself aims to convey the grandeur of the original creatures, while also leaving it up to the observer to decide what may or may not have happened in the scene.



## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article proposed the development of concept art for a digital game, using its aspects in a practical way, both in the composition of characters and in the settings, all based on fantasy using the Itapuã War as a context.

Before production, a study was conducted on the historical course of this conflict between natives and European colonizers, its roots and its aspects, a course narrated by the European invaders who “discovered” Brazil (it is important to highlight that the territory that today constitutes the Brazilian nation was never discovered, as many people of diverse ethnicities with complex cultural, linguistic and life systems already lived here. In other words, Brazil was not discovered, it was invaded, taken and assaulted).

During the production of this work, some difficulties were found, the main one being to portray the choices of the target audience and to create a unified identity among the characters, based on the premise that they were based on the native peoples of the Northeast region, with emphasis on the region of Bahia, and the environments where both the armed conflict and the narrative of the concept art take place, the settings that seek to portray excerpts from the written stories; and since it is a theme containing indigenous elements, great care was taken in the production of the characters, always seeking image references from scientific study materials and/or indigenous people themselves, even if presenting some aspects.

Returning to the objectives of this article, it can be seen that they were achieved, presenting the Itapuã War, up to the production of a digital artbook that includes the use of concept art and its ramifications, with characters developed with characteristics consistent with the proposal of the work and the entire universe developed and contained in it.



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