



CONCEPT ARTIST STARTER PACK





WAIT A SECOND!

This guide and starter pack is made for those who have already previewed our MASTER LIST on entrylvl.ca.

If you haven't already, be sure to check out our Entry Guide on our website and be prepped with loads of information on starting up your job hunt.

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INTRODUCTION

BABETTE NORTON

Character & Concept



Babette Norton is the founder and lead of ENTRY LVL. Within her first year of serious job hunting, she was able to secure a position in concept and 2D art within the games industry, working all-remote with SOUPCORP Games out of Quebec, CA.

Babette seeks to provide entry-level-friendly guidance on how she initially got her start in games, and how she continues to navigate the competitive world of art in games & tech.

Prior to working in the games industry, Babette worked as a freelance artist for several years and in Tokyo as an ALT for two. She has a BSc in Biology & Japanese, and speaks English, French, and Japanese.

Concept art is perhaps one of the most popular and desirable jobs within the industry for games. A concept artist is responsible for creating several different mockups and designs that are later refined by illustrators and character artists (in either 2D or 3D). Concept artists are not final illustrators, and instead focus on some of these core ideas:

- Creating multiple iterations of a character or design
- Creating multiple reworks as the definition of the design progresses
- Demonstrating the design prototype simulated in-game
- Showing a strong use of shape, colour, and art theories

Concept artists may come in both 2D and 3D formats (and now often those who can do both have an industry upper hand), but generally the role is a digital 2D type. Concept artists may also be hired as generalists, with the expectation to make game-ready assets later on. Traditionally, concept artists are divided into **generalist, character, environment, & item/weapon roles**.



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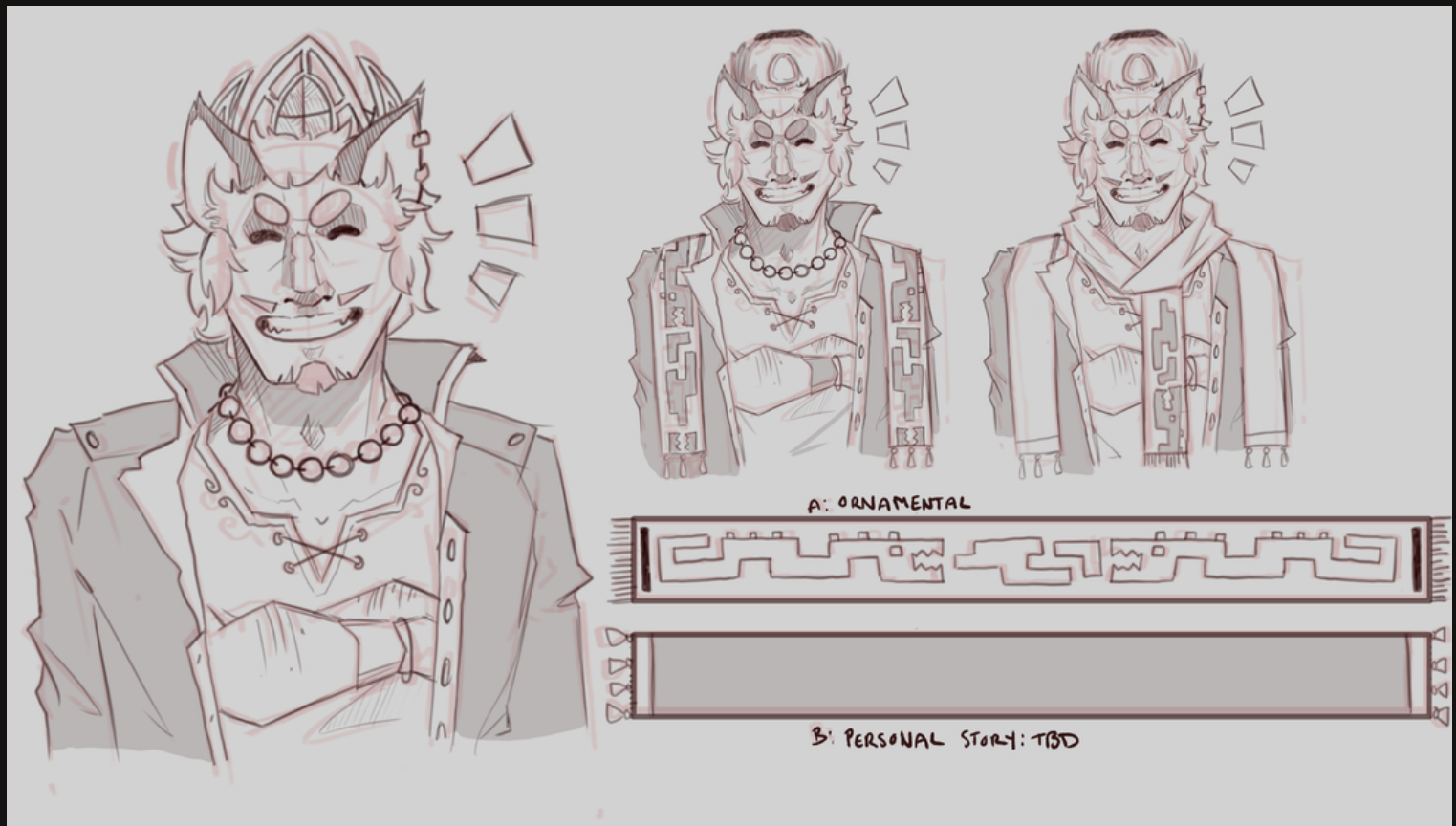
DEFINITION



"CHARLES" - ASSISTANT CONCEPT

BXB

An example of concept work done by Babette Norton



Character concept work by Babette Norton for dialogue poses

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POPULARITY LVL

Concept art roles are insanely popular due to their creative freedom and amount of positions available. As has been mentioned by professionals, “every 1 concept artist needs 10 character artists”. This makes the demand low and the interest high, often causing it to be one of the most difficult roles to make it into. Proportionately not a lot of game roles worldwide are concept, and out of that, even fewer are in an entry level or mid level stage.

Due to this, we do recommend applying to more than just concept art roles such as **graphic design**, **illustration**, or **UI/UX**.



Prior to getting my job as a concept artist, I also did illustrative gigs and commissions!

4 INDUSTRY WAGES

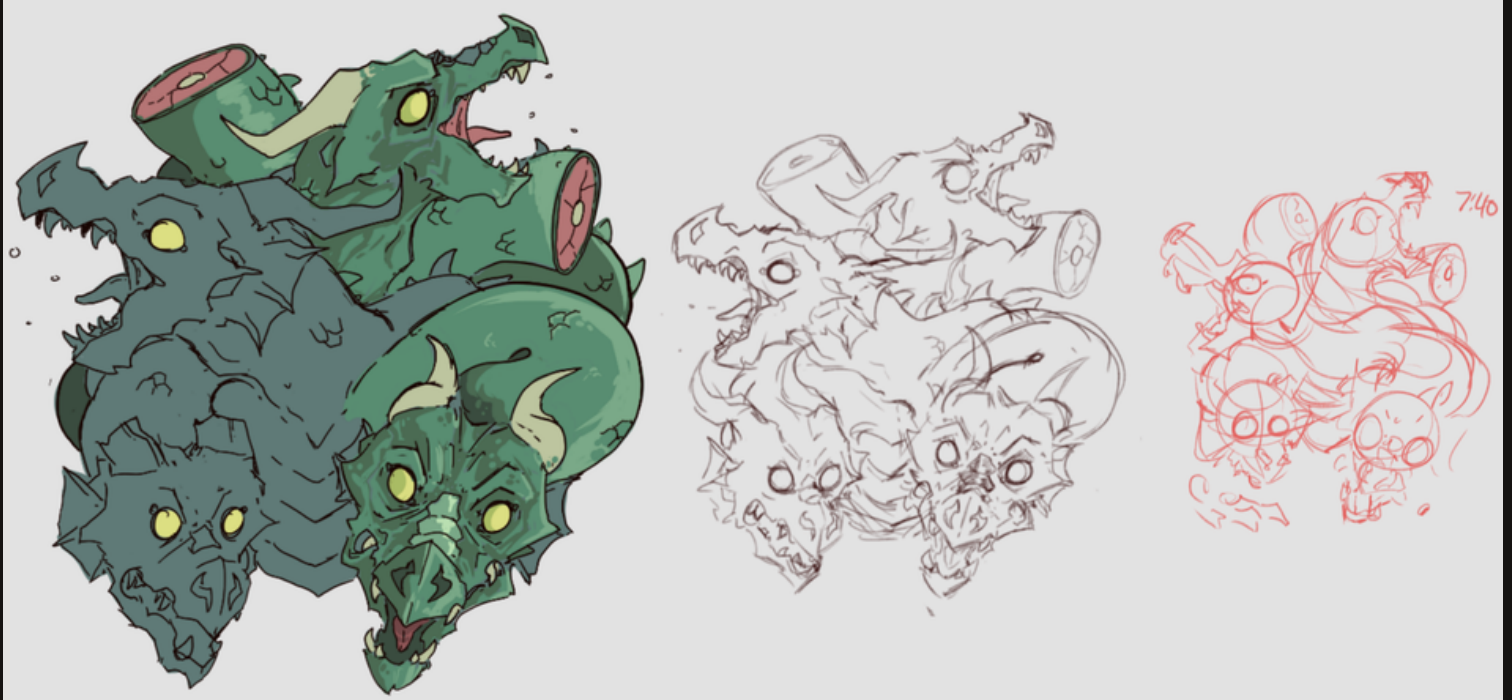
Concept art wages range of course depending on the company, location, and seniority/skill level of the individual. However, transparency is important; many roles have negotiable salaries or request you enter your offer first.

As a concept art intern at SOUPCORP, I was paid a flat contract rate over the course of approximately 10 weeks. I was given 2500\$ for 10 hours of weekly work. While I accepted under minimum wage (17.20) for this position, I was willing to start low for my first industry role.

Traditionally, concept artists on a salaried pay will receive approx. **50,000\$ CAD for entry, 62,000\$ median, and 120,000\$ for seniors** at an annual rate. However, concept artists are also often contracted as they are necessary for GDDs and Pitch Decks in order to secure proper funding. 1 to 3 month contracts are common within this role.

At an entry level, we recommend you shoot for indie studios for concept art roles, but be prepared to work more as a generalist.





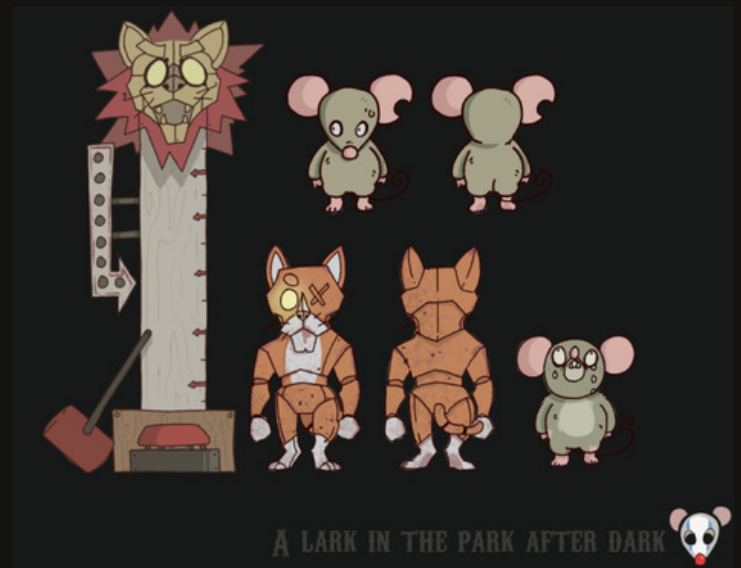
Card concept work for Doodle Deities by Babette Norton

Making a resume is so important when you're applying to roles nowadays, as you have a very limited amount of time to catch a hiring staffs' eye. The bad news is a lot of it is now scanned by AI and doesn't even make it into the hands of a human.

Make sure you are familiar with ATS style resumes and that yours can be printed easily (no all-black!) As an artist, you **must include your portfolio** link here as well. Focus on your software skills & experience doing work on concepts, but it's also great to **include any work you've done as an artist in games**. Nowadays, a lot of companies search for at least 1 shipped title prior to applying.

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RESUME



Character assets for ALITPAD by Babette Norton

If you haven't shipped a game yet, game jams are a great way to get your foot in the door for concept work as it simulates the job and environment.

Remember to tailor your resume to the position you're going to be given. My internship job was building a fantasy themed game, so I was sure to highlight fantasy themed pieces and involvement in TTRPG projects.

Remember to include keywords for the position too!

TIP:

A shipped title is a released, fully produced game.



NAMEROLE | EMAIL [@GMAIL.COM](mailto:EMAIL@GMAIL.COM)**REFERENCE LINKS & PORTFOLIO**[ITCH.IO](#)[LINKEDIN](#)[PORTFOLIO](#)**HIGHLIGHT OF QUALIFICATIONS****[TECHNICAL SKILLS]**

- Experience in softwares (art programs)
- Experience in management tools or secondary softwares
- Experience in team-based qualities
- Experience in other qualities; what things have you produced/created?

[NON TECHNICAL SKILLS]

- Soft skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Extrapersonal skills

EDUCATION & AWARDS**EDUCATION** – Degree

Place + time

WON AN AWARD? – 1st Place**PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE****COMPANY – ROLE (At least 3-5 is solid!)**

YEAR (LOCATION)

- What was the role
- What sort of things did you create/what deliverables?
- Explain your successes and wins in the company
- Explain what you used/how you worked in a team/etc

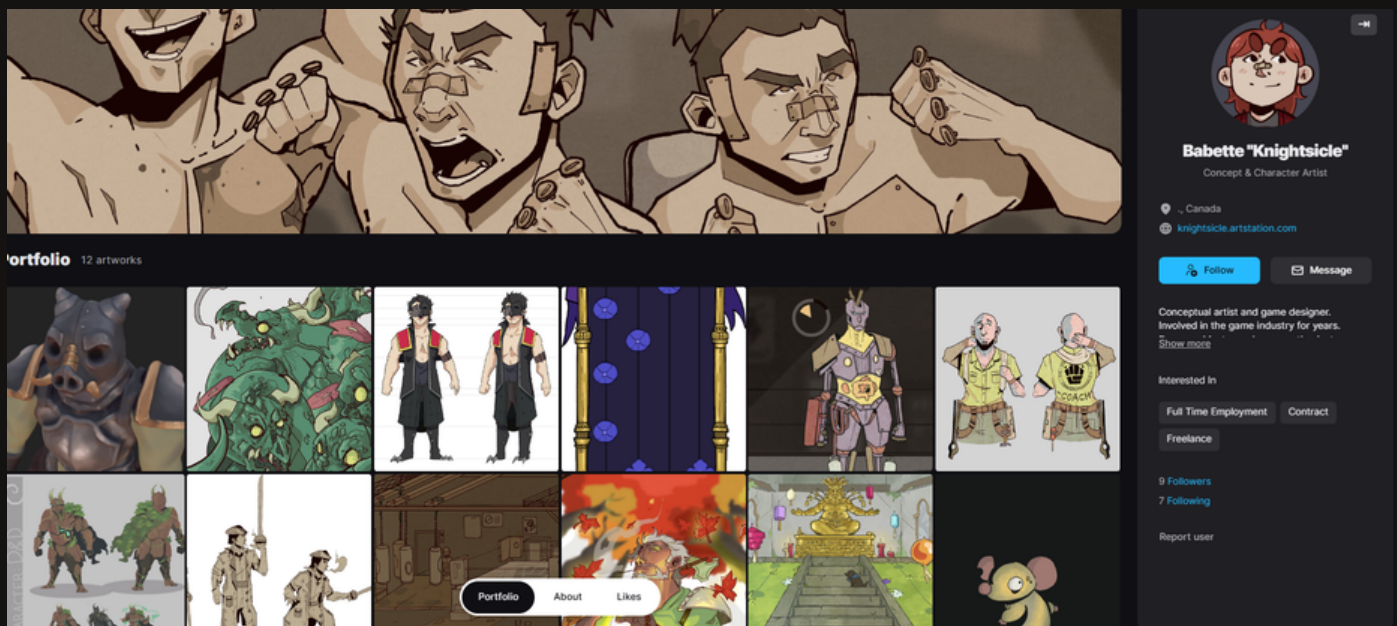
VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE**COMPANY - ROLE**

START - END



7 PORTFOLIO

The first thing that's important is to **use ArtStation**. Within the industry, **ArtStation is the standard for portfolio pages**. If you go by a username, include your full name somewhere as well.



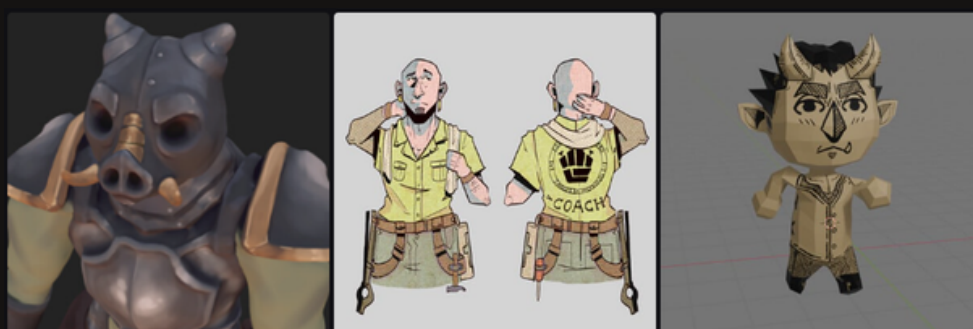
Most places nowadays will not require PDF or physical resume copies and prefer links. Your portfolio is also not for works in progress. If possible, you should also **focus of your portfolio pieces to demonstrate skills for the role you're applying for**; if I'm a character artist, pictures of environments and weapons should not dominate my portfolio. This may be good for generalist roles, but companies want to see if your style and technical knowledge is a match.

7 PORTFOLIO

Portfolios, similar to resumes, are looked at *fast*. Keep your page concise and to the point. **You should be including a diverse range of concepts**. Even if you're strongest at drawing masculine characters, it's good to show you can do feminine ones. Like drawing horror? Prove you can draw in other styles too.

Some professionals have recommended keeping the amount of work quite small - as low as 5 pieces. Personally, I keep a consistent 10-12. It is however worth noting I apply for 3D art, 2D art, and concept positions (so my page reflects that).

When posting concept art, **companies want to see why you made the choices** you did. Be sure to explain processes, include lineart-only (with grey or plain background), and show all the stages of your work. Concept art is meant to evolve and be reworked several times with iterations, so it's important you showcase this. Of course, final product up at the top.



7 PORTFOLIO



Original concepts proposed of the assistant. Traditional coach, Redneck mechanic, and businessman inspirations from left to right.



Don't just include the final work, include your processes, reworks, references, and in-game examples and commentary as well!

Networking as a concept artist will largely be the same as networking in other game industry roles.

Networking is the best way to get an industry career, but is so much more than friending everyone you can on LinkedIn.

Networking should be much more than trying to get someone to refer you to a job. Especially in person, this comes across as insincere, pushy, and oftentimes leaves the mood sour. You obviously want to showcase your skills, but you should be trying to **meet colleagues and industry folks**, not finding a reference.

While many struggle with social anxieties, unfortunately I heavily encourage making the first move to conversations.

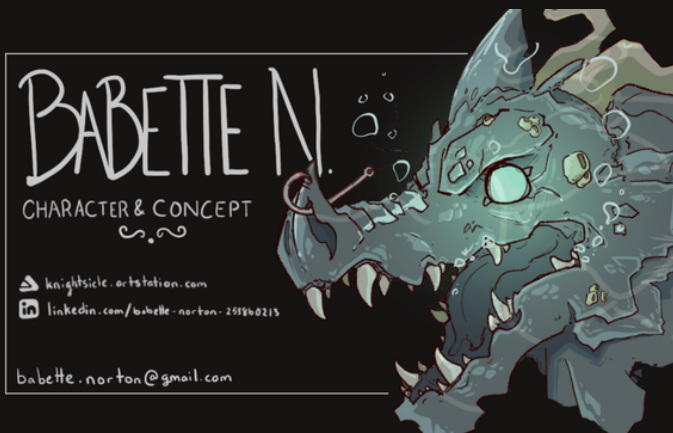
Of course, if you can afford it B2B events are your best shot at networking. In Canada, **XP Summit** holds 4 major events each year. While these may be costly, raffles routinely held by folks like [AMIR SATVAT](#) can help you get a ticket. In total, I've had all 4 of my networking B2B events compensated by professional giveaways.



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NETWORKING

Oddly enough, networking tools still include the good old fashioned **business card**. Both in Tokyo Japan and in Canada I carried business cards with me to events and was able to exchange them with both indie developers and teams and full companies and recruiting agents.



My most recent and past business cards!

As a concept artist, I always recommend **keeping your art visible and highlighted**. I routinely get positive comments about my cards because there is my own art front and center on them.

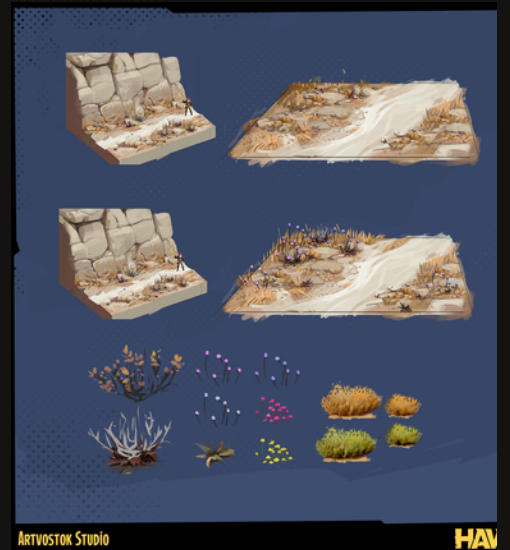
While QR codes are common, **always include your information/username somewhere else** as well, as some people are still wary of QR due to possible virus sharing.



9 PRO EXAMPLES



Hicham Habchi's work for 2XKO (Via ArtStation)



ARTVOSTOK STUDIO's work for HAWKED (Via ArtStation)



Anton Ananin's directed work for RAID: Shadow Legends (Via Artstation)

Similar to networking, job hunting is largely the same as a concept artist to the rest of the industry's roles. [LinkedIn](#) often posts positions that are great for indie or AAA companies, but be wary of too-good-to-be-true offers and scams.

One of LinkedIn's features is that it often displays when your resume has been downloaded and viewed. It also allows you to view staff members of the company you're applying to and connect.

[Workwithindies](#) and [Hitmarker](#) are all great online job application tools as well.

If possible, **NEVER** take a "test" that is unpaid. Oftentimes companies will require an "art evaluation" as part of the interview. Your work should be paid, even if you do not secure the position, as you are spending time and effort on a potentially NDA piece.

Art positions like concept art is being gradually overtaken by AI as of 2025. As mentioned before, **we highly encourage artists to be open to not only other art roles within games, but also open to non-games industry jobs** (especially as a starting point and resume booster).



A.

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B. NOTE ON AI



ENTRY LVL is against the use of generative AI in games.