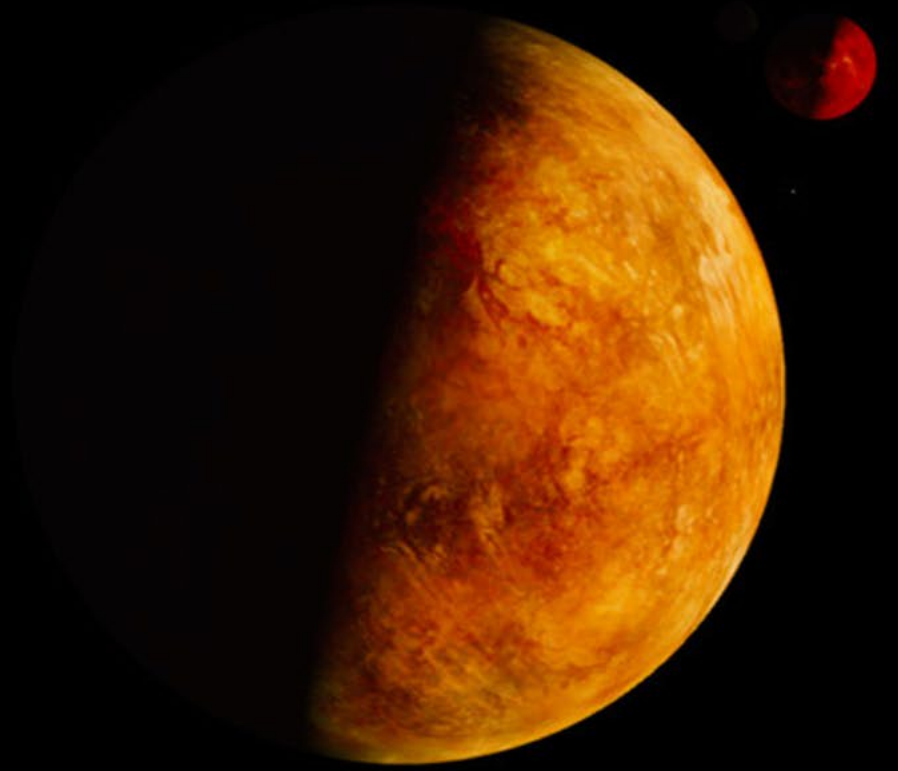
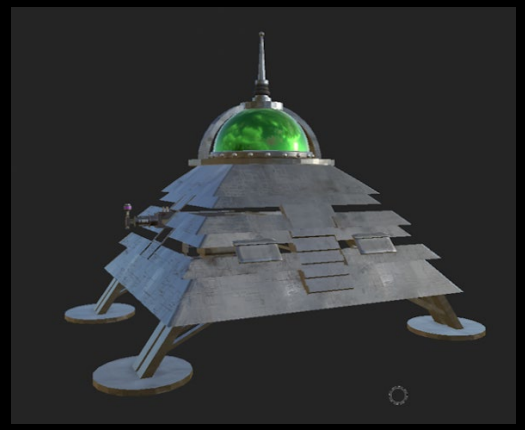
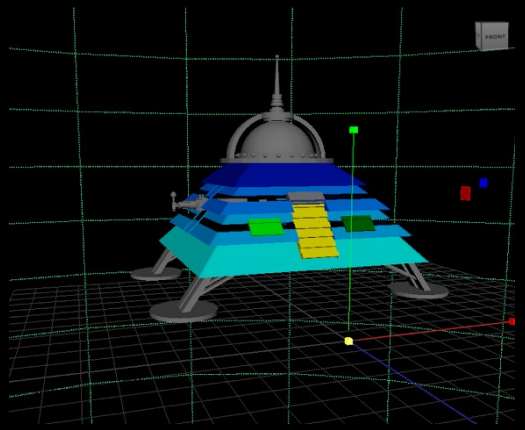
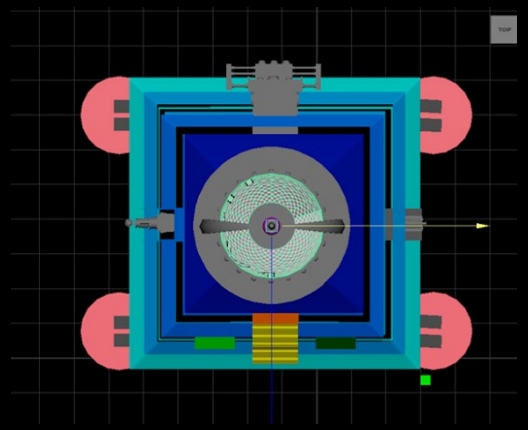
THE DEKILIOS MONSTER

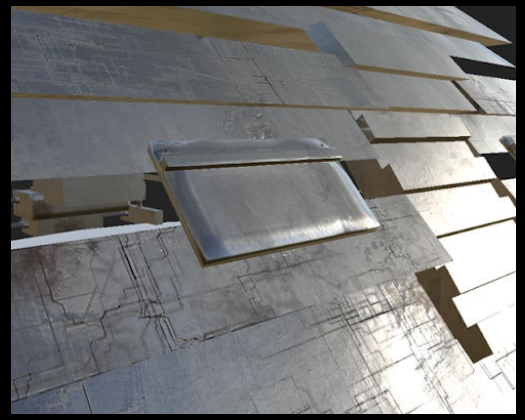


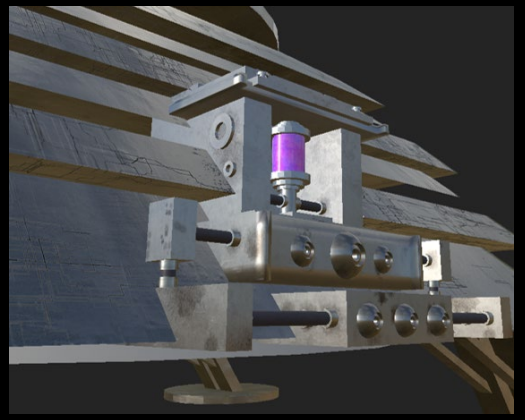
MAJOR ART OF

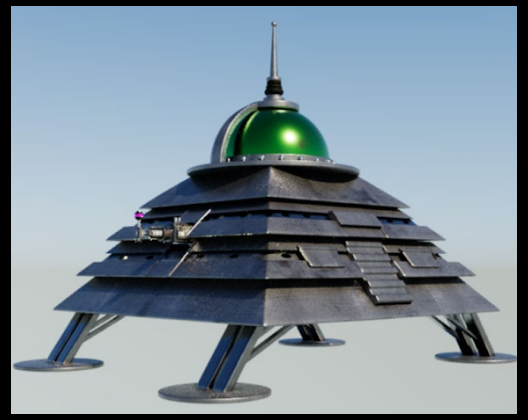








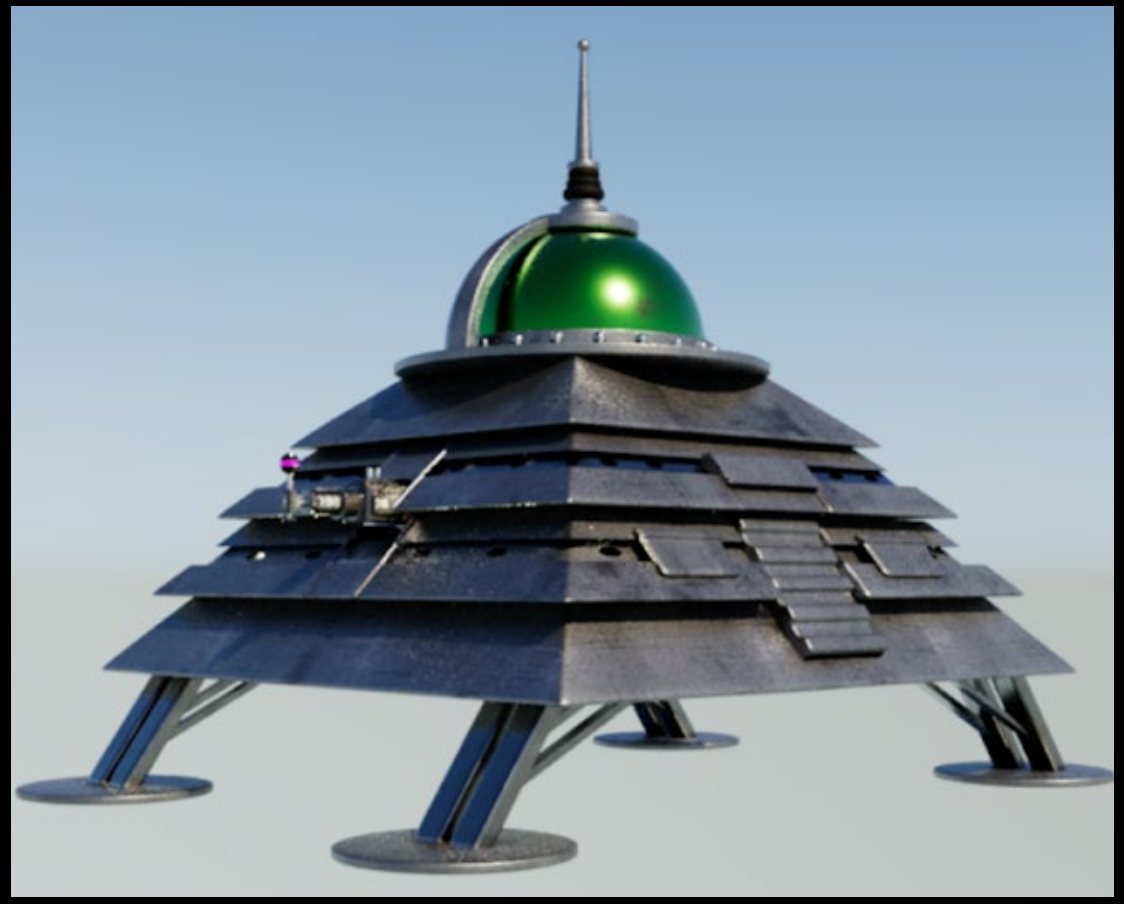


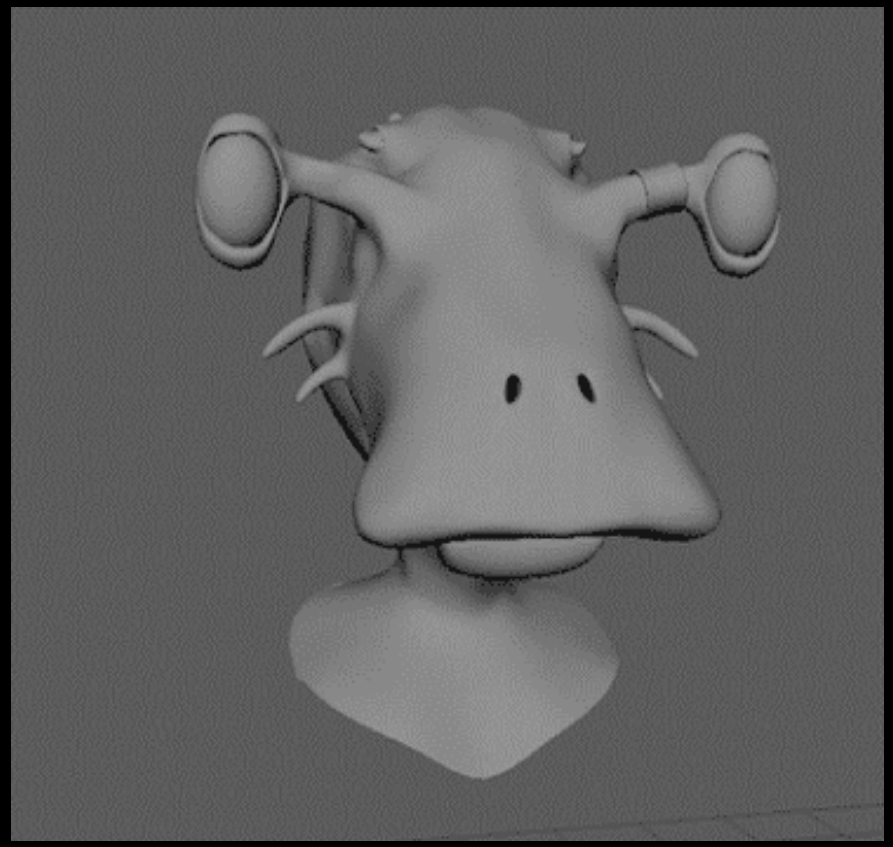


RETEXTURING THE WONDER

When Major began, I decided to retexture The Wonder. I had learnt a lot more about texturing by this point and I wanted to apply that knowledge. This time around, I assigned different colours to each component of the ship. I then named each one. These names transfer over to Substance. Before, I was trying to texture without much preparation at all, which only caused a lot of problems. Being organised and prepared makes things much easier.

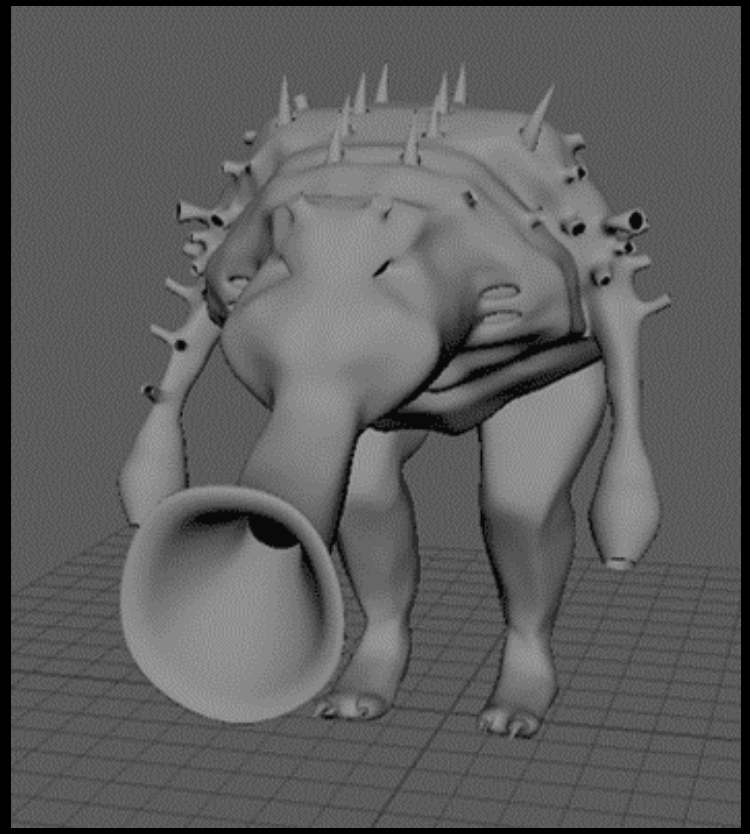
I had little to no problems with the texturing this time around. I was able to work quickly and efficiently. Not only that, I was able to spend more time on the details since I had more time. I really enjoyed the process, and I am very happy with the result. Below is a screenshot of the model with textures applied.





REMODELLING YOBI

After retexturing the ship, I realised that working “neater” pays off. The pre-viz version of Yobi, worked well for pre-viz however, I knew that I could not texture the model the way I wanted to since the topology was quite messy. I decided that my best option would be to remodel his head, using the Quad Draw tool. This tool let’s you go over the surface of your model and create a new topology in real time. This tool proved to be very useful and was quick to use. It didn’t take me long to rebuild the entire head, this time with much neater and easier to manage topology.



REMODELLING THE DEKILIOS MONSTER

Like Yobi's head, the monster's topology was also quite messy. I knew that this would cause me problems when it came to texturing, so it would be best to fix now. I used the Quad Draw tool again. Not only did I rebuild the mesh, but I also changed the monster. I decided to swap his claw hands for suckers, to reinforce the monster's characteristic as a creature that is essentially a giant air bag. I also covered his body in vents, that serve as a way for him to filter air.

With the new topology, I knew that it was going to be much easier to texture.

TEXTURING YOBI'S HEAD

Texturing Yobi was a lot of fun. I really enjoy using Mudbox. I feel like it is an easy program to use and you can get a lot of work done very quickly. It was really satisfying watching a grey, texture less model, turn into something that looks realistic and characterful. I used a wide range of textures and colours. I didn't want to just paint him brown. I wanted his skin to look life-like and have a lot of depth to it. It was also important that his skin looked leathery and thick, as that is a distinctive feature of a Tutoan. For things like bumps and scratches I used a displacement map. This allowed me to work with a very high amount of faces in Mudbox and then when it was time to move it over to Maya, the map with the details can be applied to the basic mesh. This lets you get the same level of detail with a low poly mesh.

I am very happy with how Yobi looks. The level of detail on his face adds to his character. He was also very easy to work with since everything was kept neat.

TEXTURING YOBI'S BODY

Initially, Yobi's outfit was going to be a solid orange colour. However, in Major, I decided that it would look too boring. Like the head, I decided to quickly remodel his outfit using the Quad Draw tool. I then sent it over to Substance and got to work on it. I decided on a fairly simple design. I used quite a lot of layering and focused on the look of the material. Unfortunately, the level of detail I wanted didn't carry over to Maya as well as I wanted it to.

REMODELLING SANGU

After finishing the texturing for Yobi, I decided to do the same with Sangu. Remodelling Yobi proved to be a very good decision. I used the Quad Draw tool again, and rebuilt the mesh. Just like before, I managed to do it quite quickly with no issues. Not only that, I had only just worked on Yobi and so I now knew the best ways of doing it.

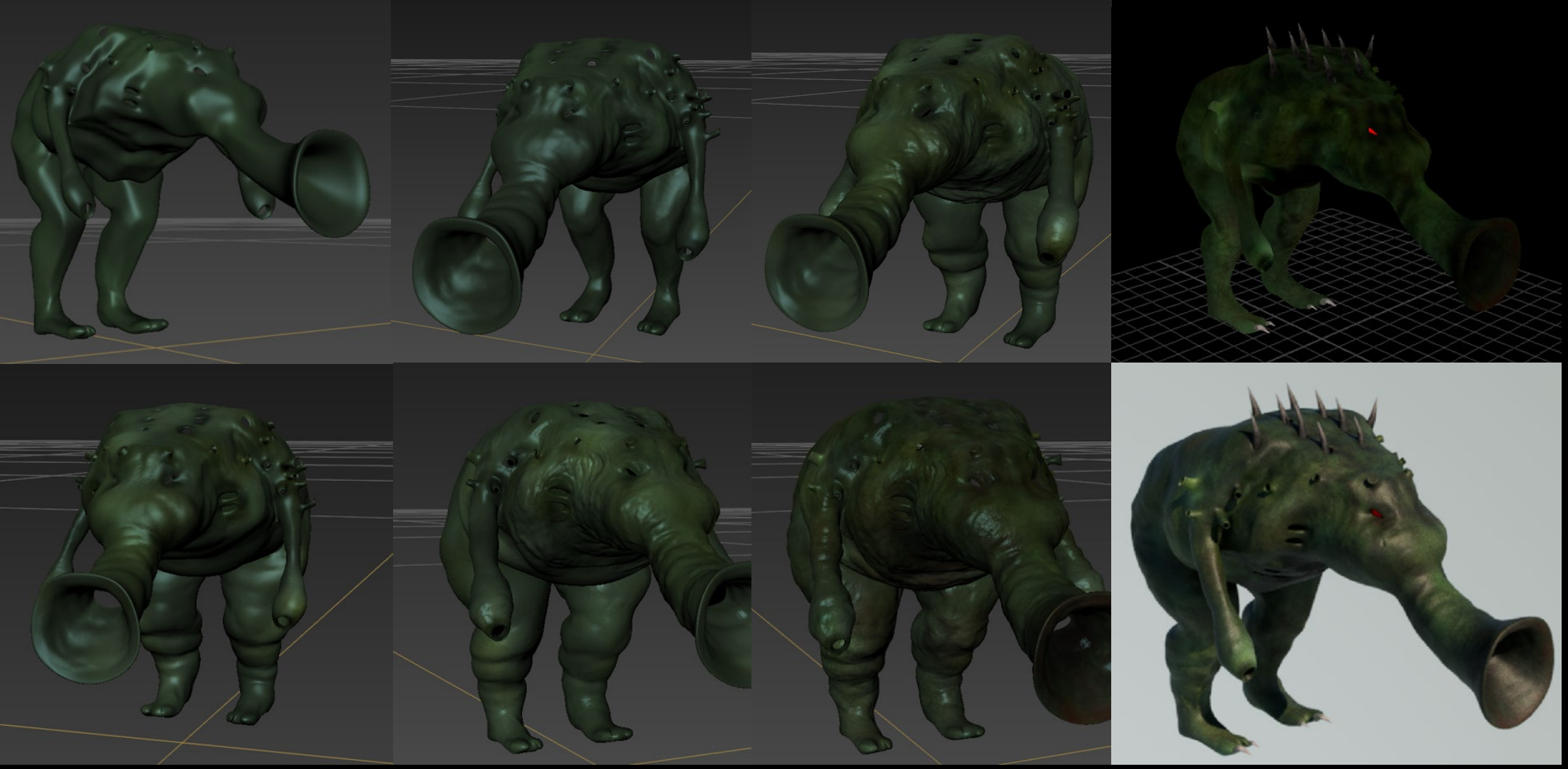
TEXTURING SANGU'S HEAD

When texturing Sangu, I wanted to make his skin look very leathery. Sangu is the older brother, and I wanted to make that obvious. Sangu's skin colour varies around his face. Some areas are a lighter, richer brown. Others are darker and muddy. Sangu looks quite weathered. This is only shown by the missing "whisker" on his left cheek.

TEXTURING SANGU'S BODY

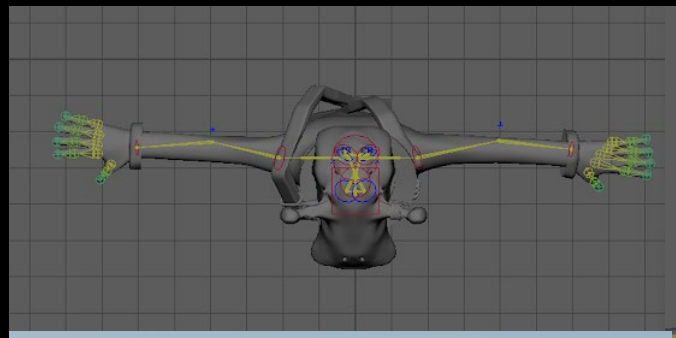
To texture Sangu's body, I reused Yobi's Substance file. This made the entire process much quicker. All I needed to do was change the colour of the outfit, gloves and straps.

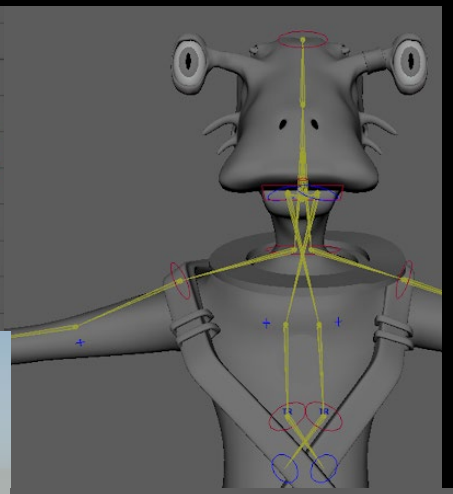
Sangu's uniform is also much cleaner than Yobi's. So, I removed some of the dirt layers.

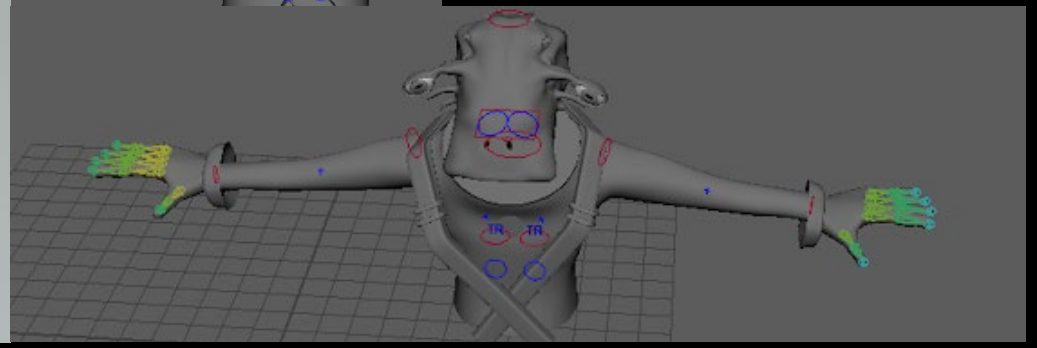


TEXTURING THE DEKILIOS MONSTER

In Mudbox, I was working at level 6. It was detailed and looked exactly how I wanted it to look. However, since I was working at level 6, it had a high poly count. I needed to make a displacement map to transfer the model back over to Maya. When exporting the displacement map, it kept hanging on either 79% or 98%. I tried exporting it many times, but each time it got stuck. I looked it up, and some people said it could be the version of Mudbox. I uninstalled 2023 and installed 2020. However, when I tried exporting the map, it got stuck again. I then began removing programs I didn't use to free up some space on my computer. That also did not work. I then deleted layers off of my model to see if there was a mesh issue. This also didn't change anything. I then decided to lower the image size. I was able to export the lower quality map. In Maya, after plugging all of the textures in, it turned out better than I thought it would.





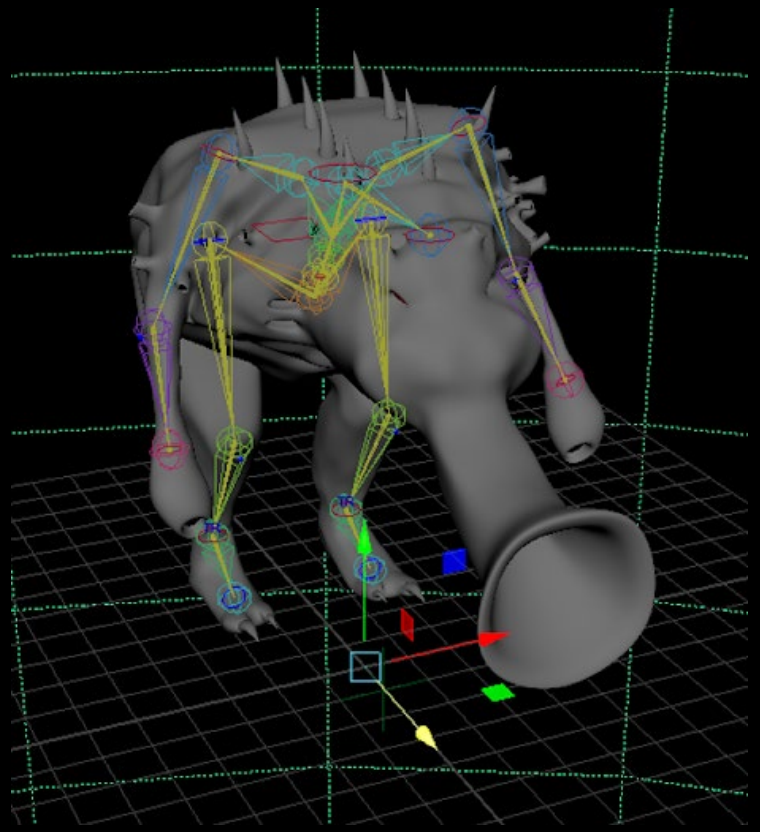


RIGGING YOBI AND SANGU

I decided to use the auto rig feature in Maya. I had a few problems with their spines, the movement was very unnatural however, after changing some settings around and redoing some of the joints, the rigs worked how I wanted them to.

I rigged the hands separately and joined them onto the auto rig. It is very important that their hands work correctly since some of the animation consists of them pressing buttons and using their hands.

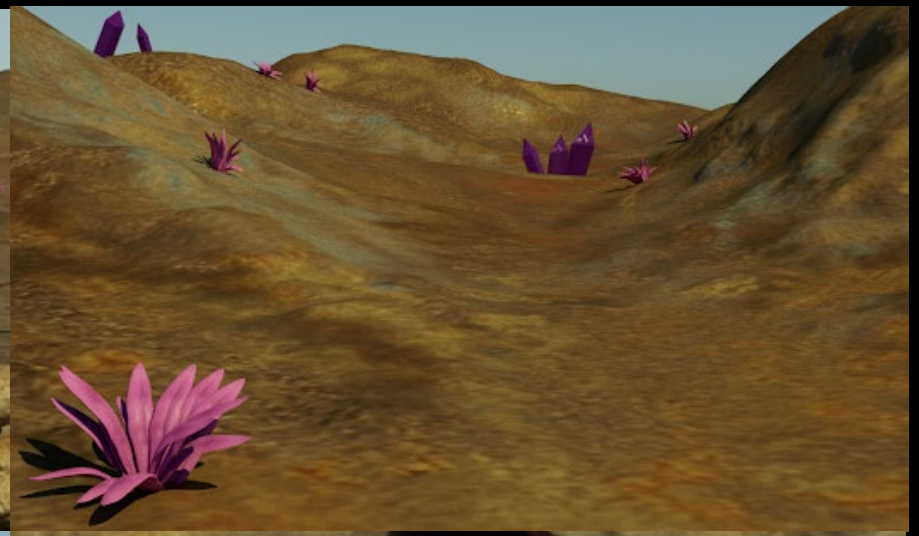
There is a fair amount of dialogue in my animation. This meant it was important that their mouths moved. To do this, I made a joint in their jaws. I had a few problems with rigging their jaws. I had errors popping up, telling me that I couldn't skin the jaw because of skin clusters. There was also problems with painting the jaw's weights. No weights could be painted on the jaw. I spoke to Kim and we managed to work out what the problems were and fixed them.



RIGGING THE DEKILIOS MONSTER

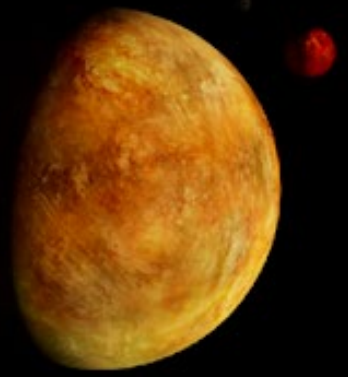
I used the auto rig feature for the monster. I had a few problems with moving his legs, however after playing around with it for a while I managed to fix them. His legs were not bending at the knee. At first I thought that this was a skinning issue but it wasn't. It turned out to be a problem with the controls. I decided to use a different set of controls in his lower leg rather than his upper leg.

I then decided to test out the rig by putting him in different positions.



POPULATING THE ENVIROMENT

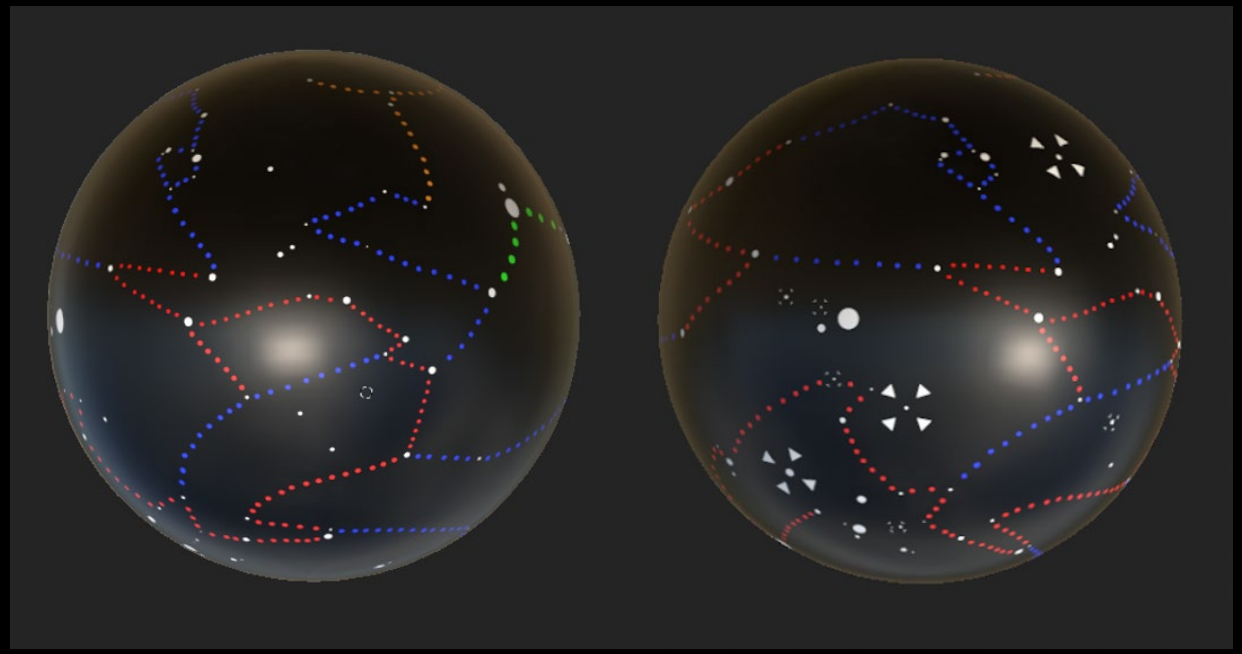
I imported all of the environment objects over to my scenes and placed them. This completely transformed my scenes.



POPULATING THE SPACE SCENE

I populated the space scene with stars. I created stars by increasing the emission of spheres which I dotted around the scene. I looked at photos of space for reference, because I wanted to get the brightness of the stars and also the distance between them correct. I am happy with how they look. They definitely make the scene look realistic.

I also worked on the lighting. I wanted one side of Dekilios to be well lit, and the other side of it, in darkness, because this would show the scale of the planet. Anexion appears much brighter than Zern. It is quite hard to see Zern and this is how I wanted it. Zern is supposed to be quite sinister.

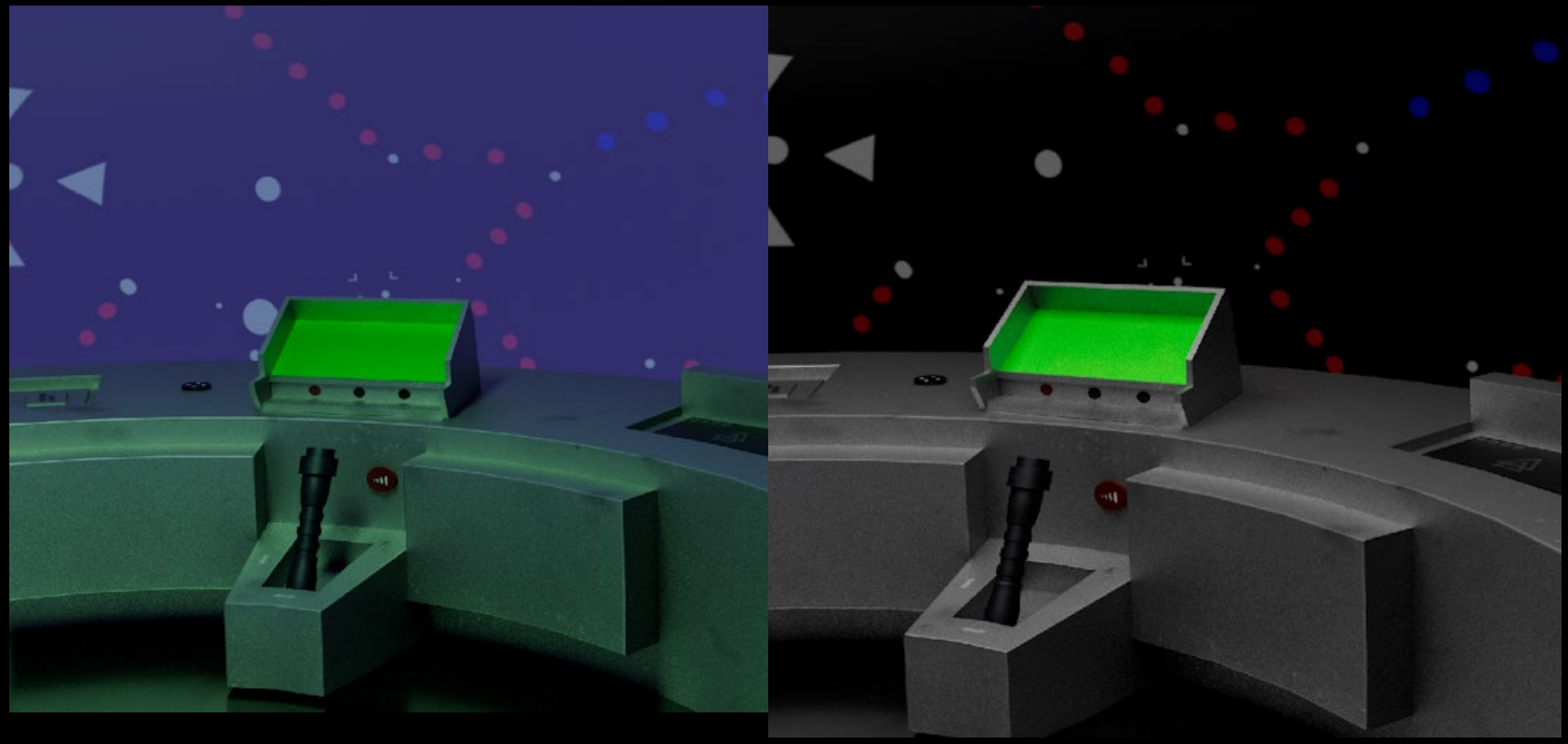


THE STARMAP AND LIGHTING

The Starmap is a spherical map which shows the surroundings of where the ship is. The 360 map moves when the ship moves.

Before, the inside of the ship had a green screen looking windscreen. I didn't like it. I wanted to show where the ship was without using a transparent screen so I decided on this. It also provides light to the inside of the ship.

When The Wonder is in space, the Starmap glows. When it has landed, the Starmap turns off. I also increased the amount of lights in the ship since it was quite hard to see the characters.



THE WONDER TERMINAL SCREEN

Before, the terminal screen was a green screen. However, I changed this and made a screen using Substance. I made a “connected screen” for when the brothers are speaking to Admiral Wakataha. Then, I made an “error screen” for when they are getting close to Dekilios and they lose signal. To animate the screen, I put the two on top of one another. When it was time for a screen change, I keyed the top screen to move down and the one below it to move up. They then swapped around. I also made a third screen. This screen was a black screen which was for when the screen flashes.

ANIMATING

Animating was a lot of fun. It was great seeing everything come to life. The hardest thing for me, was working out the timing for things. I needed to make sure that the animation went in time with the sounds. Before animating, I planned out each scene and made sure that everything was in time. I didn't want to render a scene to then find out nothing was in time when it came to editing it.

At times, it was a very repetitive process. However, I didn't mind this.

I am especially happy with how the ship flies. In my Pre-Viz, the ship's animation is quite jumpy and unnatural. I wanted to make sure this wasn't the case in the final animation. I concentrated on making sure that the ship glides and doesn't shoot around like a fly. The Wonder is quite a bulky, heavy ship since it is mainly made from metal. Not only that, but it also isn't the right shape to move fast. There are four jagged and flat sides which build up a lot of air resistance.

When I animated the characters, I keyed their basic movements first and then went back and worked on their smaller, less noticeable movements.

RENDERING

The rendering process was quite a long and boring job. At first, I wanted to render on the computers at uni. When I went in, I imported one of my scenes over to a uni computer and realised that my textures hadn't transferred over. This meant I needed to go through my files and organise them into source images. This would have been quite a lengthy process and so I decided not to waste time and render on my laptop at home instead. This turned out to be a great decision since my laptop could render quickly anyway. However, this also meant that I had to render over night. I set alarms through the night. When the alarm went off, I got up, put the rendered photos into Premier Pro and then set up another render and went back to sleep.

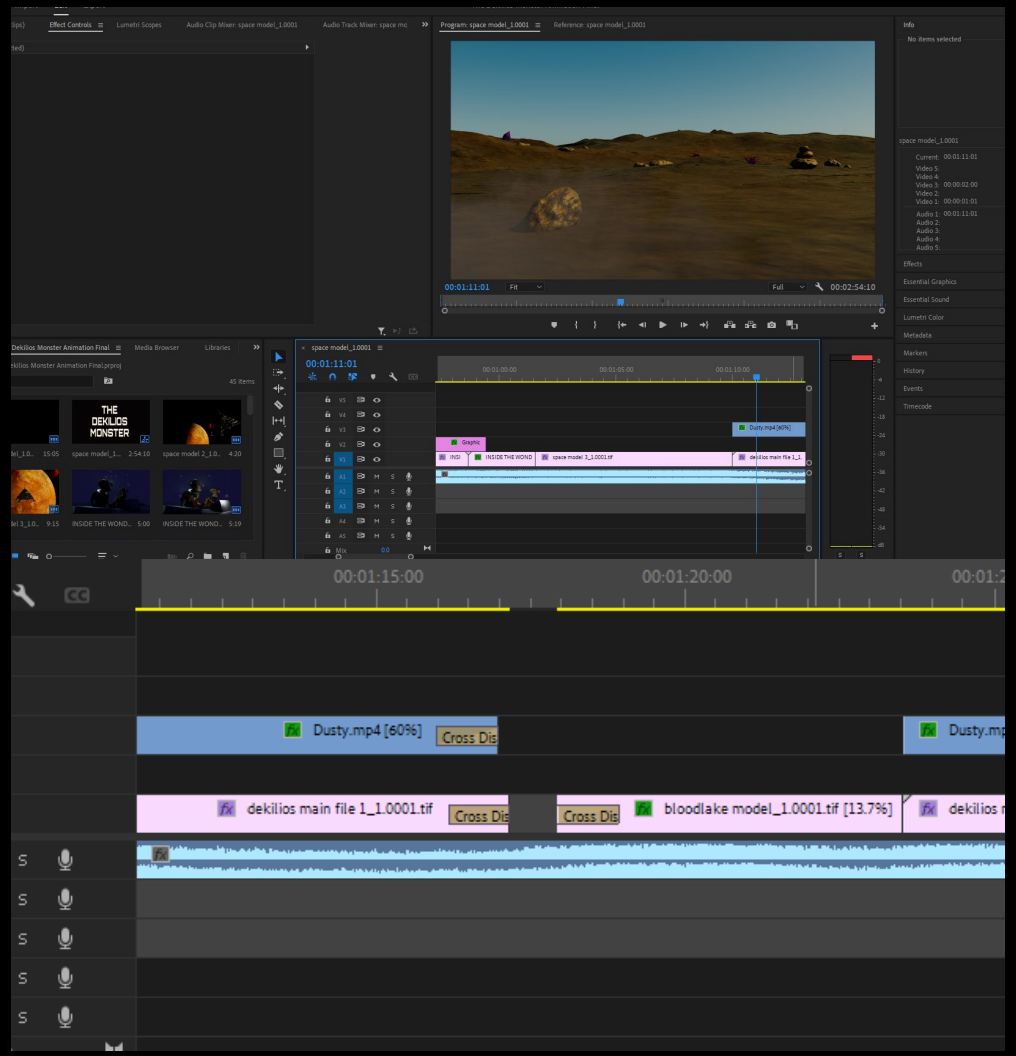
I wanted to make sure that I didn't run out of time, so I set the render settings up so they efficient. Any setting that was unneeded, I set to 0. This helped cut down render time.

EDITING

I really enjoyed editing. It made me realise how important editing is, and how it can transform the work into something that looks professional and well put together. I didn't have any problems with the editing, since Premier Pro is a program that I use a lot and know well.

Since the animation was well planned out, when I put the sounds over the top of it, everything was already synced in. I just needed to make some adjustments to the lengths of some of the scenes.

I downloaded some green screen royalty free dust effects. I watched a tutorial on how to use them. It was very straight forward. I also downloaded a lazer/light effect for the scanner.



I also thought that it would be good to have a filter on the animation. Filters are good because they bring all the colours together and give the animation a different feel. I chose to use "Lumerti colour (Fuji Eterna 250D Fuji 3510)". This gave everything a high contrast and it really helped bring all of the colours of the animation out.

In the scene where the brothers first see the monster, I added in a gulp sound effect to show that Yobi is scared.

I also added a few crossfades. This made the animation run smoothly.

REFLECTIVE STATEMENT

The Major project has been my favourite out of the three stages. I feel like I had much better time management. I didn't feel rushed at any point, and I think that is because I had everything planned out and I knew what I had to get done by a certain point. I set myself personal deadlines on the way and made sure I stuck by them so I could complete everything I needed to complete in time. It was really satisfying seeing all the work I completed over the three stages come together as one big project.

I have learnt a lot of new skills during the Major project. Skills that I will take further. I am now much more confident in Maya and animating as a whole.

I am happy with the outcome of the project. I am pleased with my animation, and it has turned out better than I thought it would.

I am looking forward to taking things further with animation.