

Assignment 3: Working Inside the Borders

"I do what I like : I muddy & sweep my hut, carry myself into the sky & listen to what it says, I gather mushrooms, terrorize foxes & men with my fiendly claws & gait, laugh a long time into a bucket until it laughs back with a spit, breathe as a stone at the bottom of a creek—& many other things I do not say."

—Baba Yaga, from "Ask Baba Yaga" by Taisia Kitaiskaia

Description:

A lot of written descriptions in stories give you a lot of information, sometimes more than you might consider including in an illustration. Myths are like that too. Even in a single moment in their stories, there is the foreshadowing of moments to come, places to travel, friends to meet, foes to fight. Like in the quote above, it might be that there are too many perspectives (sky and ground), or too many moments at different locations in a short time (inside and outside), to show in one illustration. For example, a chapter illustration might be showing a character inside their room, preparing for their journey, but if there is a wide world outside with many objects to collect and characters to meet, how can you allude to those people, places, and things? One classic way is the use of a decorative border that acts as a framing device in itself. Ornate designs, icons, landscapes, and objects line the borders of old fairy tale illustrations, to help tell more of the story in one image. The objects featured in a border are often clues about where the story will go, what will happen, or what items will be featured. Old Russian folklore illustrations often feature arrows, pine trees, goblets, feathers, castle towers, wolves, and more, to help sneak literal and symbolic clues into the image, so readers get a sense of what is to come. For this assignment you will be creating a spot illustration for one featured myth on the website Mythopedia.com.

- ✦ **Format:** Online Spot Illustration
- ✦ **Dimensions:** 1024 x 768 points, no bleed, horizontal orientation
- ✦ **Final Delivery Specs:** 300 dpi, RGB colour profile, PNG files of full size and web page resize at 612 x 408
- ✦ **Client:** Mythopedia.com – the world encyclopedia of mythology
- ✦ **Timeline:** 3 weeks *extended deadline
- ✦ **Professional Fee:** \$350

Process:

Mythopedia's mission is "to enable discovery, promote learning, and advance research by building the world's most authoritative mythology resource." With that in mind, part of the website's features are pages with individual mythical characters, creatures, and places. Each of these articles features one spot illustration of the myth, consistently sized at 612 x 408 points across the website. For this assignment, you will be picking one myth from the Mythopedia website, and creating a full-page illustration at 1024 x 768 points to be used with its

corresponding article. The extra consideration you must make for your myth's illustration is the incorporation of a decorative border that uses contextual imagery and symbols as a tool for communicating either A) more of the story, or B) more about the subject itself. Things to consider as you move forward with the composition:

- ✦ The shape of the border must be rectangular on the outside to match the overall final dimensions, but may change shape or proportion on the inside.
- ✦ The final artwork will be sized down on the website to almost half of the original dimensions, so you will not need to fill the composition with the kind of small details that a full-page feature would show. Think about your composition at that smaller size.
- ✦ For a more culturally-appropriate look, think about what culture the myth is from and what art media and style is traditional to that culture.

Part 1: Research and Sketch Development

Begin with finding a myth on the Mythopedia website. Disregard the current illustration that they are using and read through the text. Use the most prominent information that they have gathered as your criteria for your own piece. In this assignment, the "research" has mostly been done for you by the website, but you will still be responsible for deciding what kind of composition suits the myth best, and how a border design will provide the extra context to the information provided by the site. It is encouraged that you do *not* seek out more information beyond the website, so that there are no inconsistencies. If you want to do further research, make sure the visual elements you include are not contradictory to the information provided by Mythopedia... they are the ones paying you, after all.

***SPECIAL NOTE** – Because this is a cushy three-week assignment, you will have an extra week (over Study Week) to work on your final. Given the extra time allotment, it's expected that you'll put a little extra effort into the composition and details of this one, and this is just the right assignment to do that, given the borders you'll be including. SO... don't skimp on the details in your sketch development!*

Through the thumbnail process, develop two strong sketches of possible spot illustrations, which use the information provided by Mythopedia and your own flourishes to combine visual elements and contextual clues related to the myth you chose. The main composition should highlight the myth itself, and the border should provide contextual clues and foreshadowing of the story or character. Include drawn details and annotation in both sketches.

Bring the following to class in Week 6 to discuss with your classmates and instructor:

- 1) The link to your myth on Mythopedia.com
- 2) Two detailed and annotated sketches of possible compositions for the spot illustration.
- 3) A short, written breakdown of your conceptual and media goals for the illustration.

Part 2: Final Artwork

After determining the best sketch direction and any adjustments that should be made to it, prepare a substrate that fits the format listed above, whether analog or digital. Analog finals must be scanned in and formatted to match the “Final Delivery Specs” listed above. Digital final artworks must be executed on a canvas matching the specs listed above.

Execute the final artwork and prepare a digital image to show for presentation in class on Week 7. A short review and discussion of the work will take place, followed by directions on how to upload a PDF of process documents and final work to the Assignment 3 interface for grading.