

BREAKING THE MOLD



BIOSHOCK

RAPTURE

FORFWORD

I've never written a foreword before, so you'll have to bear with me on this one. What is BioShock without its look? A lot of games sell on features. BioShock sells on Rapture. Even when non-gamers see it, they say, "Man, I gotta check that out!" It's a hard bridge to gap, in an industry where almost everything is either Aliens sci-fi, Lord of the Rings high fantasy, or Saving Private Ryan well, you know. But the BioShock art team has pulled this off. So when Elizabeth Tobey, the BioShock community manager asked me to write a forward to the art book, I couldn't help but turn it into a love letter.

Every single one of the artists blew me away, but here's the thing I'll remember most from each of them.

WARNING SPOILERS AHOY - DON'T READ UNTIL YOU'VE PLAYED!

B O S T O N

SCOTT SINCLAIR

The statue of Atlas in the Kashmir. It's the first thing he built after coming back to Irrational after a stint on Guitar Hero, and it sort of set the tone. Oh, yeah - he art directed everything else. Without Scott, there is no BioShock style.

SHAWN ROBERTSON

Masterminding the Little Sister safe house. I just walked in one day, and there it was...dozens of amazing animations, all strung together in a cohesive whole. Back in the old days, Shawn used to animate everything himself and do all the special effects. Now he's the visionary of sequences we only could have dreamed of making before.

NATE WELLS

The Steinman "murals" with the Dali-esque female heads and the bloody scripted phrases. With barely a conversation between the two of us, he managed to create a world for Steinman to live. It was a toss-up between this, the eye-popping chaos of Apollo Square and the descent to Rapture. Oh, yeah... he also conceived the first Big Daddy. When you have these masterpieces to choose from, you thank your lucky stars that you managed to convince Nate Wells to stay with us these past ten years.

HOAGY DE LA PLANTE

Besides stepping in as temp lead artist #3 (!), Hoagy was the pacesetter for Arcadia, perhaps the most difficult level in Rapture to conceptualize. I had this idea for an underwater forest. Hoagy took this extremely out there idea and made it real. In my years as a game designer, I've had more than one artist throw an idea back in my face as "un-makeable." Arcadia perhaps should have been one of those ideas. If not for Hoagy, the seeds of Arcadia might never have taken root.

MAURICIO TEJERINA

The idealized statue at the Gatherer's Garden. How can something be so cute and so wrong at the same time? That stunning crossbow (Mo did almost all the weapons) is a very close second.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER

From animation, to special effects, to frame buffers. Stephen does everything. Without Stephen, the electricity would not crackle, the fire would not burn and the blood would not flow. But the man did BioShock's water (with crack programming by Jesse Johnson) in a manner of weeks. The WATER! What else do I have to say?

ROBB WATERS

Another hard pick. The Sander Cohen concept? Every gorgeous icon in the game? The wonderful Plasmid training movies? The Plasmids mural in the "over the railing" room? Well, for me, it was the first drawing of the first Little Sister. She's changed a bit since then, but Robb's work established the visual of the most important character in the game.

JAMIE MCNULTY

The incredible image of Tenenbaum in the Little Sister safe house. I asked for a Femme Fatale in the noir style, he gave me back something I didn't know was possible in our medium.

JON MANGAGIL

No contest here: the Little Sister backing away from you when you first learn about Harvesting and Saving. If there was an Academy Award for virtual people, Jon and the Little Sister would have won it.

GRANT CHANG

Grant animated a metric ton of cool stuff in BioShock, but have you seen the Little Sister struggling to get in the vent? If that doesn't break your heart, you ain't got a heart to break. A close second goes to Steinman's insane rant at the tail end of the Medical area.

MICHAEL "SWID" SWIDEREK

The king of gorgeous shaders that gave dimension to the surfaces of Rapture. His rock star eye for retro advertising helped bring locations to life. Swid came into turn the map from a functional eyesore to a thing of beauty. But Swid's best work in the game was a twist on an existing object- the "soda machine" body of the Gatherer's Garden. Before he made that addition, the model was cool, but a bit too abstract. Swid really brought it down to earth and turned it into one of the best objects in the game.

BEN SHORE

Ben came in moderately late and got the unenviable task of making the entire 360 interface for a game whose design was shifting moment to moment. Working (literally) side by side with interface programmer Jake Etgeton, Ben created Irrational's first truly beautiful interface. Ben's not only freakishly talented; he understood the technology enough to squeeze the engine for texture memory until it cried Uncle.

LAURA ZIMMERMAN

Second place goes to the "Plasmids" arrow sign on the stairs by the first Gatherer's Garden. The first one she did was drop-dead gorgeous. She took it well when I told her she was going to have to rebuild it because it wasn't what we needed gameplay-wise. So she rolled up her sleeves and hit another one out of the park. But then there's the machine in Ryan's office. Check it out: words don't do it justice.

CHAD KING

The PC interface. He stepped in at the last minute and helped Ben make a best of breed PC interface in just a few weeks. Every time I looked at his desk, I thought I had time traveled a few weeks into the future. Insanely fast and insanely good. What's not to love?

A U S T R A L I A

JAY KUBURZ

As well as stepping in as temp lead artist, Jay really is the one who set the pace for the layout of the science area before the Little Sister Gauntlet. I think this was the first level layout that really felt right for BioShock.

ANDREW JAMES

Second temp lead artist, Andrew also modeled Shawn Robertson's design of the Security Bot. This was very early in the production, and amazingly survived all the revisions to ship in the game! Also, Andrew was the key artist who made sure the levels ran at 30-60 frames. Frankly, I think he must have sold his soul to the devil to make this happen.

CHRIS CHAPRONIERE

The Ferris Wheel of Arcadia! Chris toiled for months, working on his own from the opposite side of the Pacific, he painstakingly created the most beautiful Ferris wheel for the Fort Frolic level, only to have it cut. The best piece of art not to appear in the game!

DANIEL HEATING

Dan labored on the awesome plants & foliage in Arcadia, battle debris, sandbags & barbed wire. But it's the amazing giant whale from the descent to Rapture that really floored me.

BRENDAN GEORGE

Sander Cohen! Goddamn Sander Cohen. Have you taken a look at that model? Perfectly executed in both its sculpt and texture. It roXXors. Bonus points for Cohen's flawless bald spot. (Hat tip to Robb Waters for a great concept as well!).

JAMES SHARPE

All the little detailed & animated pieces of tech that dot the walls in every room all over Rapture were made by James. Also he made the best typewriter seen in any game! Seriously... I have a screenshot of it on my wall!

JOHN TRAVERS

The Teddy Bear. Yes, the flaming Teddy Bear from X06. It's one of those nice touches that makes Rapture such a unique place to visit. Of all the small things that made people get what BioShock was about, that Teddy Bear was the best bang for the buck!

CHRISTIAN MARTINEZ

Christian did a huge amount of work on several levels, but I think he's the first one who was able to light BioShock the way it should be lit. If you design video games for a living, you know what that means to a game.

ALEX BOVLAN

The Dead Cat, you will find it on every dark corner of every room in Rapture. You haven't lived until you telekinised one of Alex's dead cats. Alex also did level architecture & lighting in Recreation.

LORNE BROOKS

Rosie's Rivet Gun. It's one of those things that shouldn't work, but does. Huge props to Lorne for taking an out there concept and making it happen from half-way around the world.

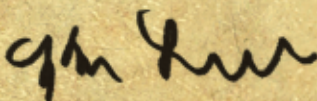
RAY LEUNG

The man of 1,000 screenshots. If you saw it on a website or magazine, there's a fair chance it came from Ray (or Walt, 2K's game analyst with the golden eye!).

BEN HUTCHINGS

Ben didn't do just one outstanding thing. He did about a million. Some artists demand huge tasks. Others labor behind the scenes and clean up tirelessly. Without him, BioShock would be the game of a thousand visual glitches.

For me, this book is a walk down memory lane. For you, it's a glimpse into the process of building Rapture.
I only wish I could enjoy it for the first time along with you.



RAPTURE

LOGO

This section shows the evolution that brought about the final BioShock logo we all know and love. These concepts tried to capture the water, decay, and art deco beauty shown in Rapture.









RAPTURE

ENEMIES

The evolution of the enemies in BioShock took years, beginning when the game was set in a place and time vastly different than what it is today. Once more fantastical monsters, you can see the progression as Rapture came to life and the enemies turned from horrors into things that clearly once were people with lives - lives that went very wrong.





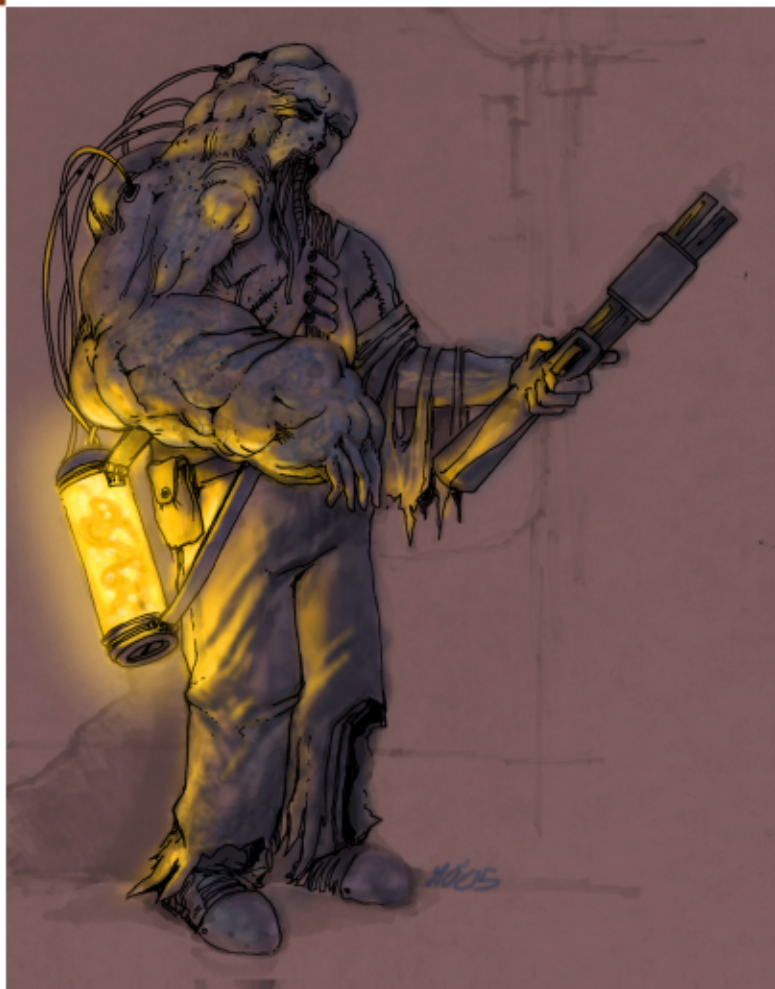




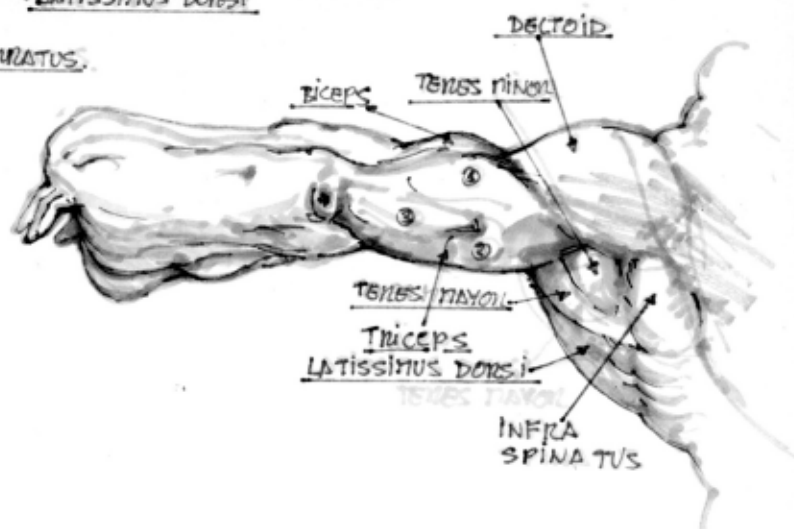
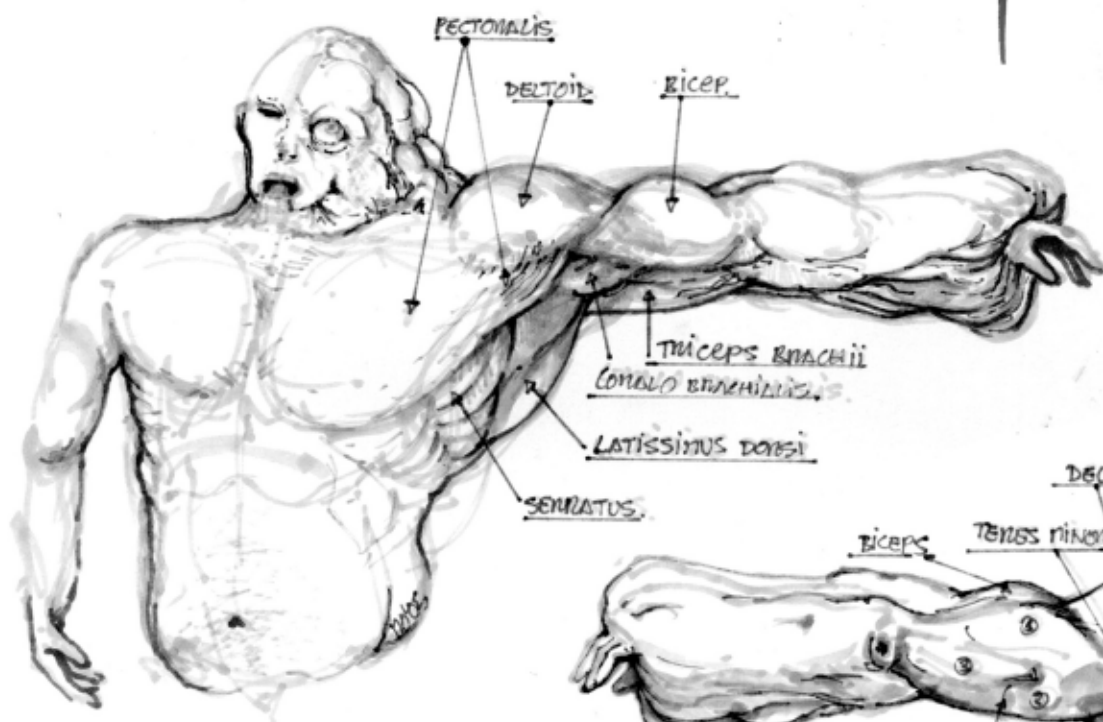






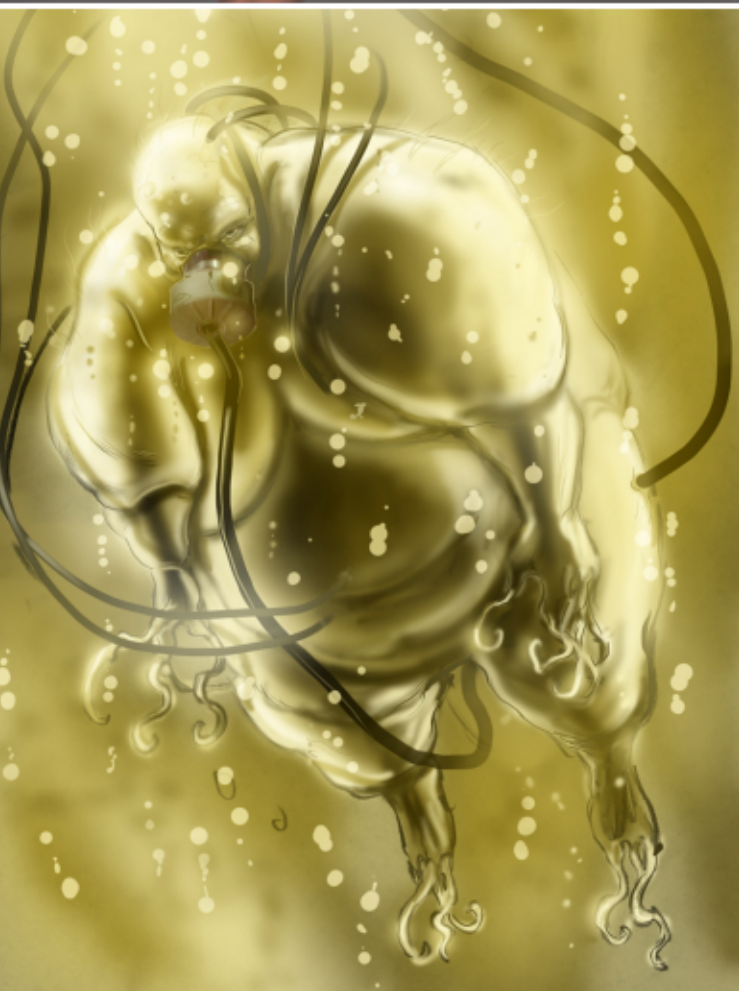
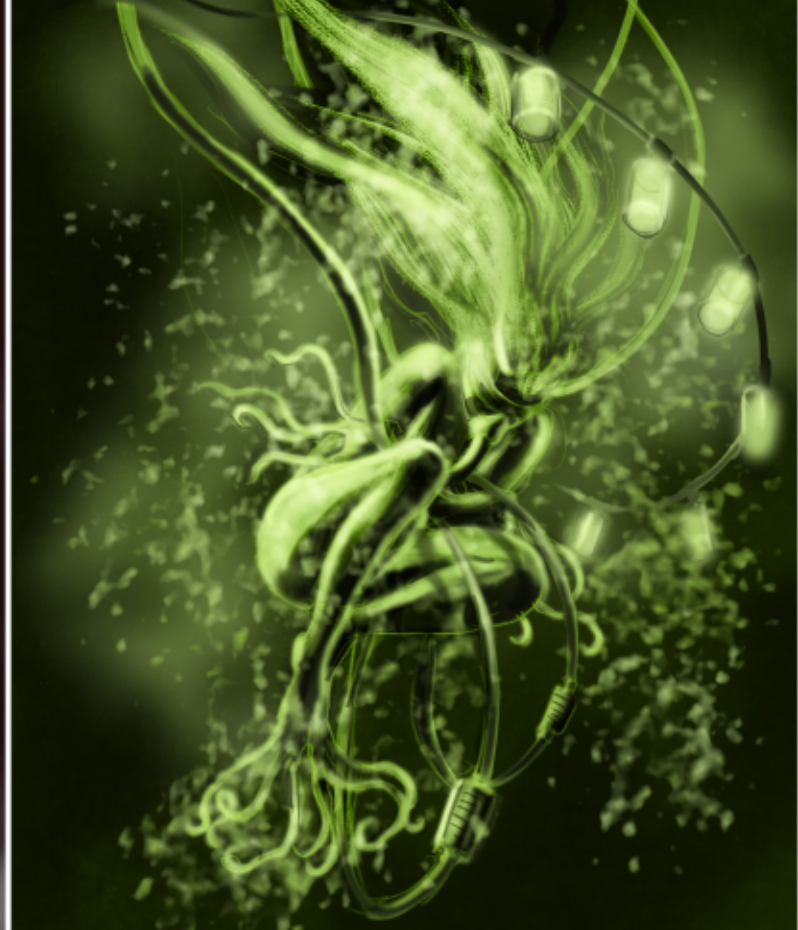
















white pancake makeup
on face

face should be very wet
and greasy

eyebrows drawn on with
grease pencil

waxed moustache

smearred lipstick

warm brown satin cravat

lesions on hands



silk shirt

black satin lapels
and stripe down pant leg

Sander Cohen



rip in shoulder

material rose,
"shape only"
"not texture"

black dress pants

two toned leather shoes

rip in pant leg

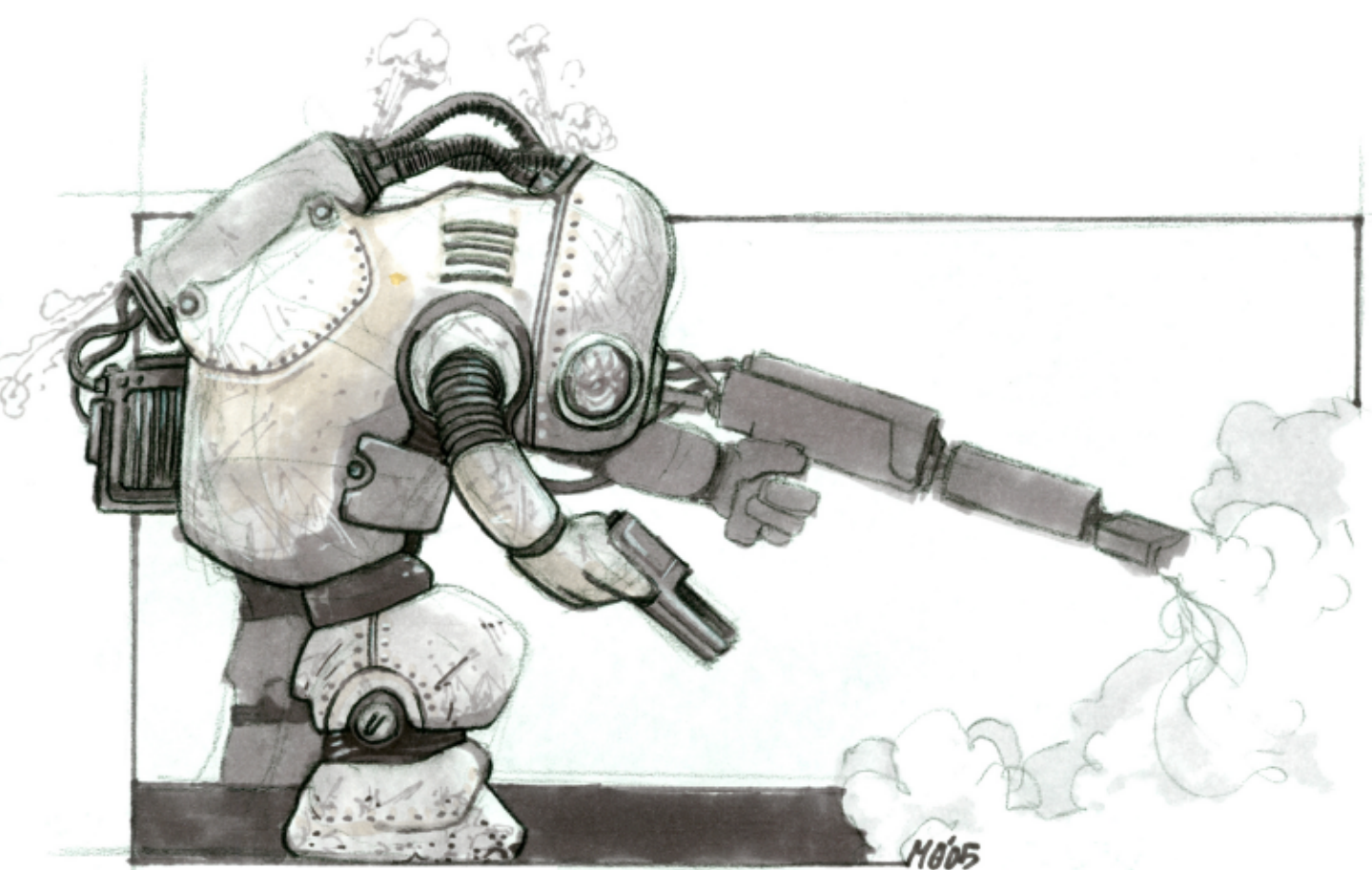
tux tails



RAPTURE

BIG DADDIES

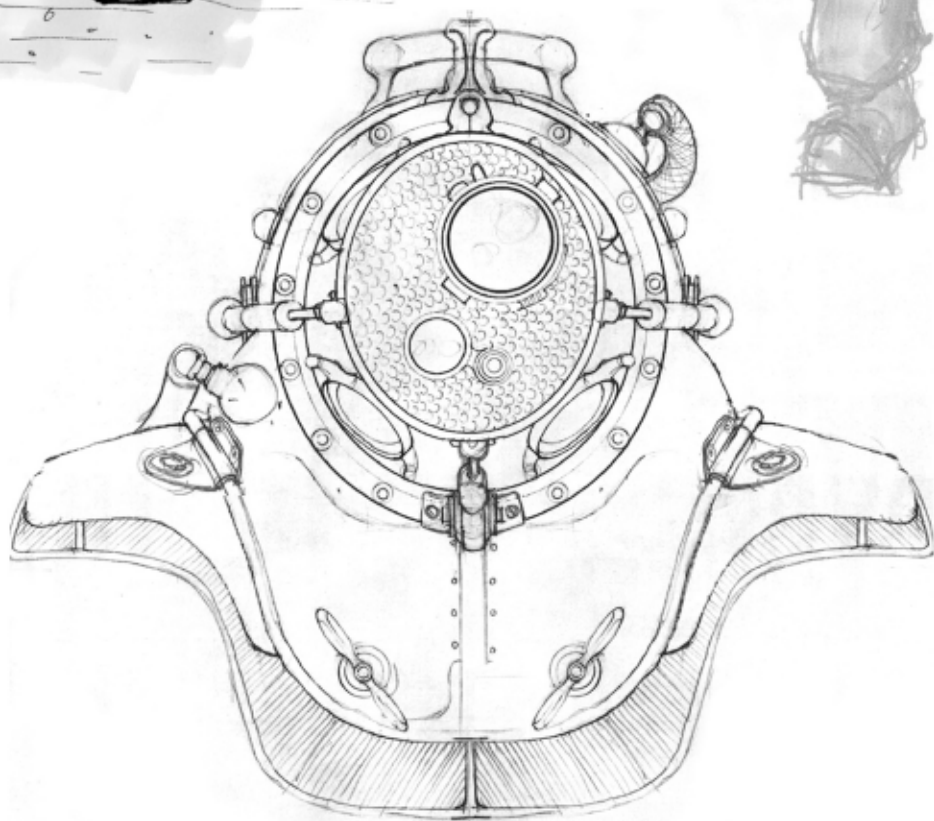
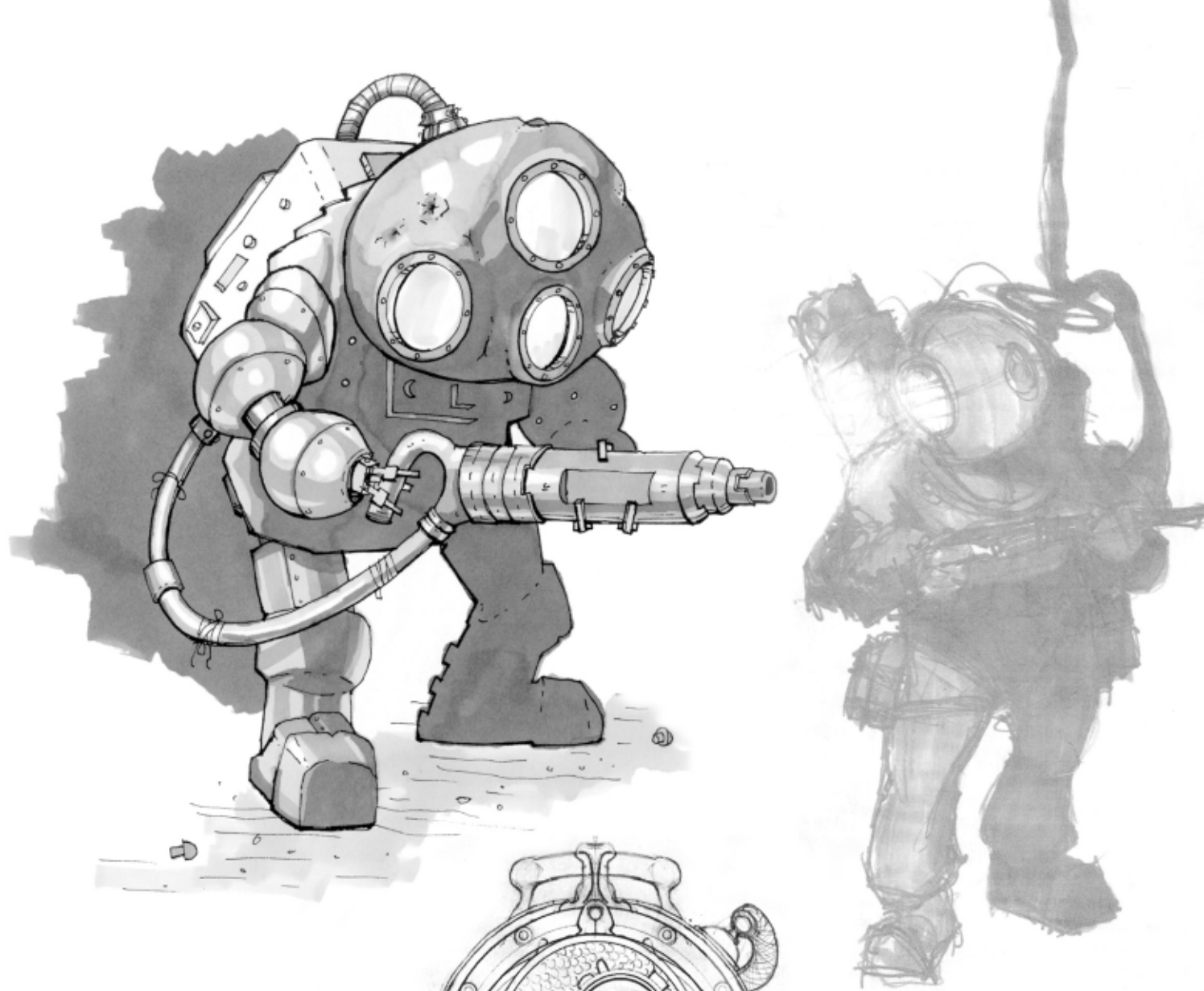
The Big Daddies concepts were fairly set since they first were dreamed up on paper, but their execution, and mobility, changed over time, until they found their rightful place in the hierarchy of Rapture as the protectors of the Little Sisters.

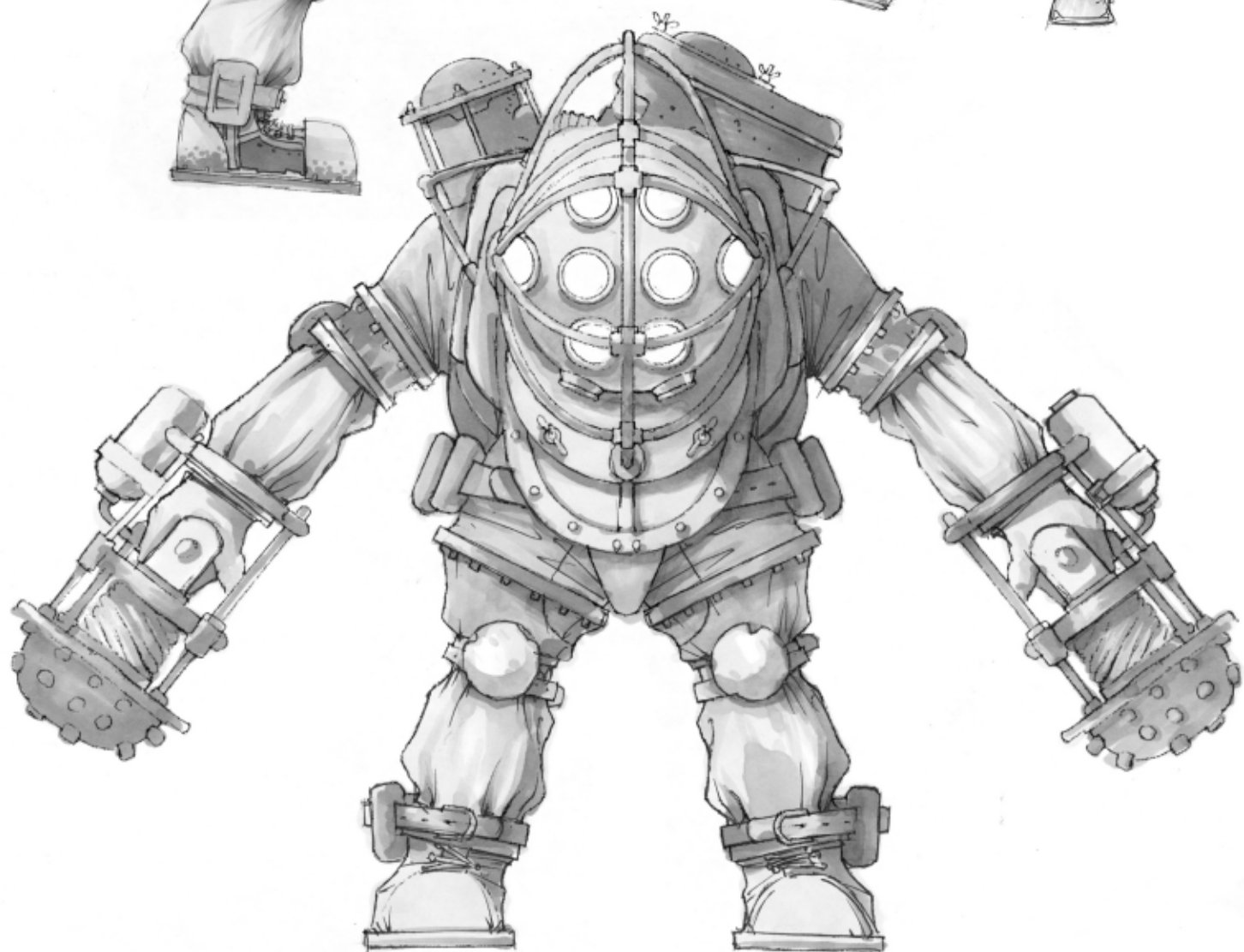
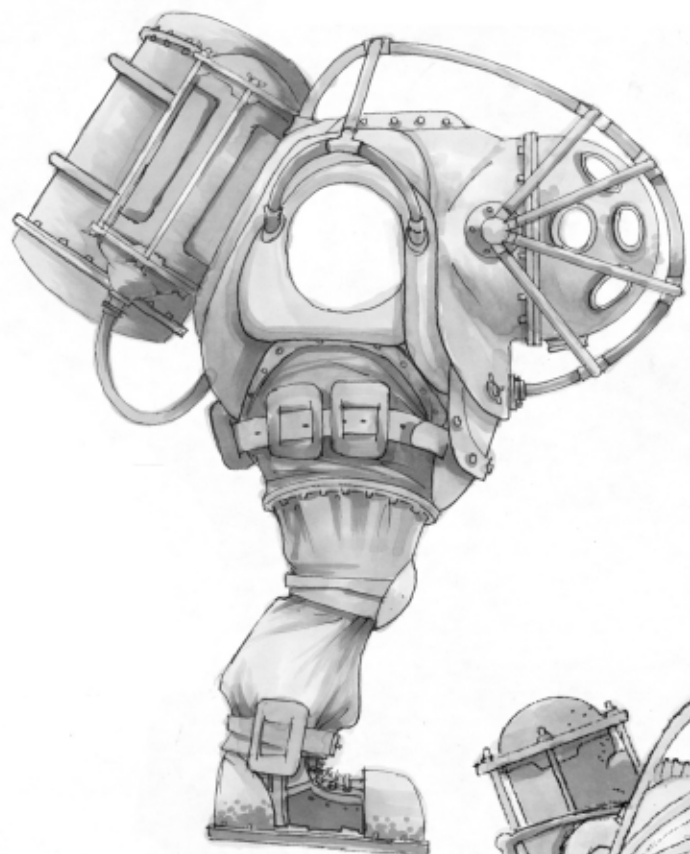




MR. BUBBLES

SINC





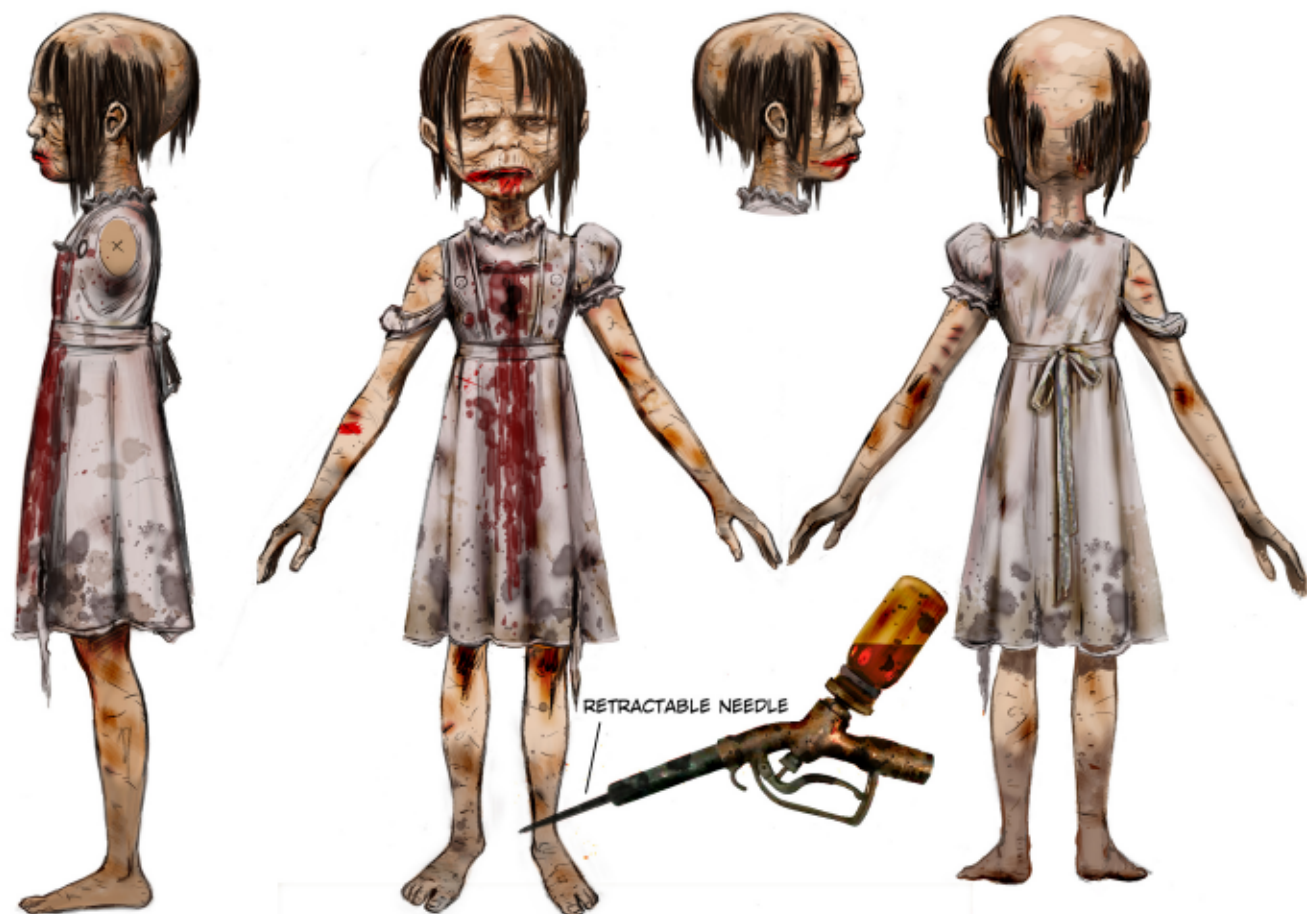




RAPTURE

LITTLE SISTERS

Originally called Gatherers, Little Sisters were originally sea slugs. As the team struggled to connect with the Gatherer and give it life in Rapture, it changed shape drastically - once even becoming a sort of chipmunk - until finally the Gatherer became the iconic face we now call the Little Sister.





PUTS TOOL
DOWN IN MOUTH

JUMPS

DIVES IN

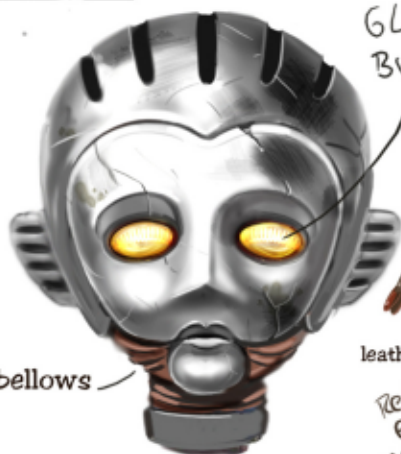




reference



leather bellows



GLASS
BULBS with
HOT COIL



back of head



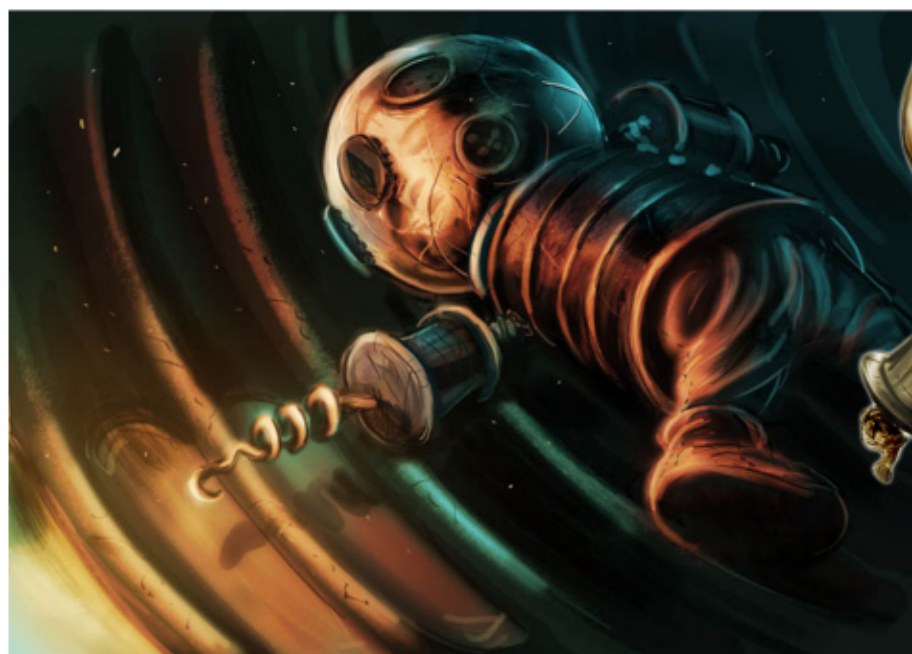
leather bellows

RED
ENAMEL
FINGER TIPS

SPRINGS
Leather



REF











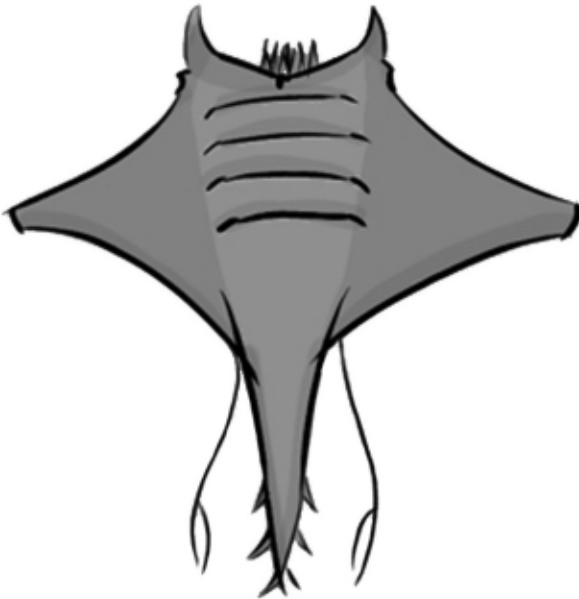
empty



full



defensive

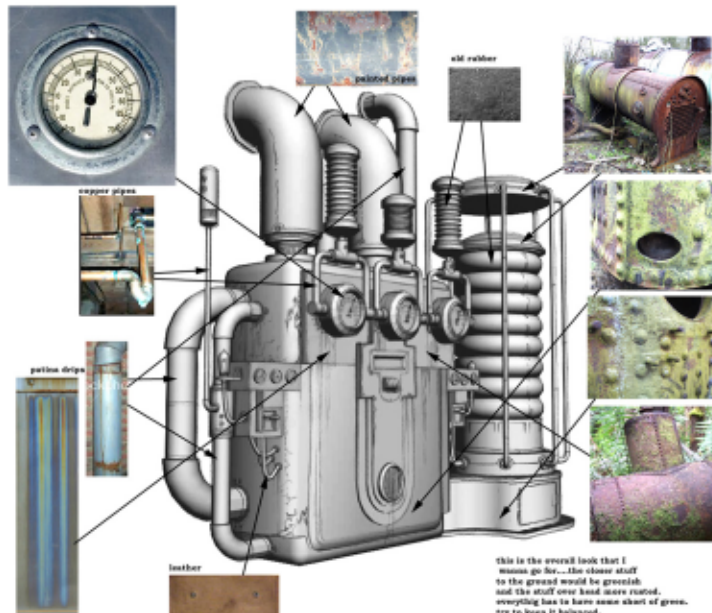
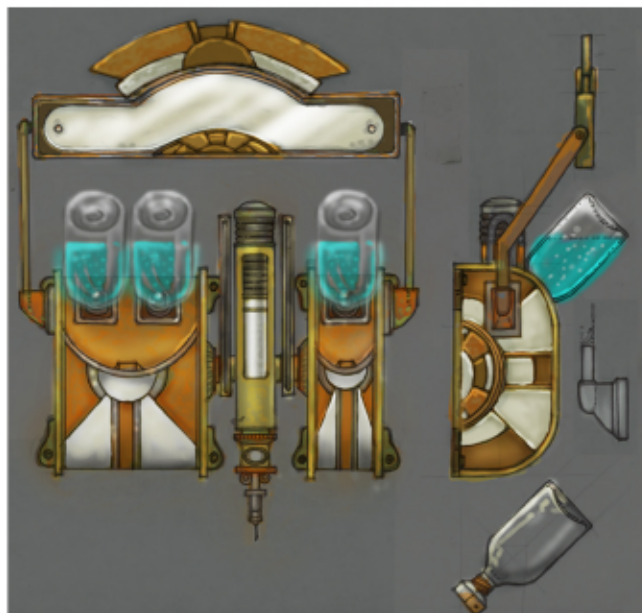
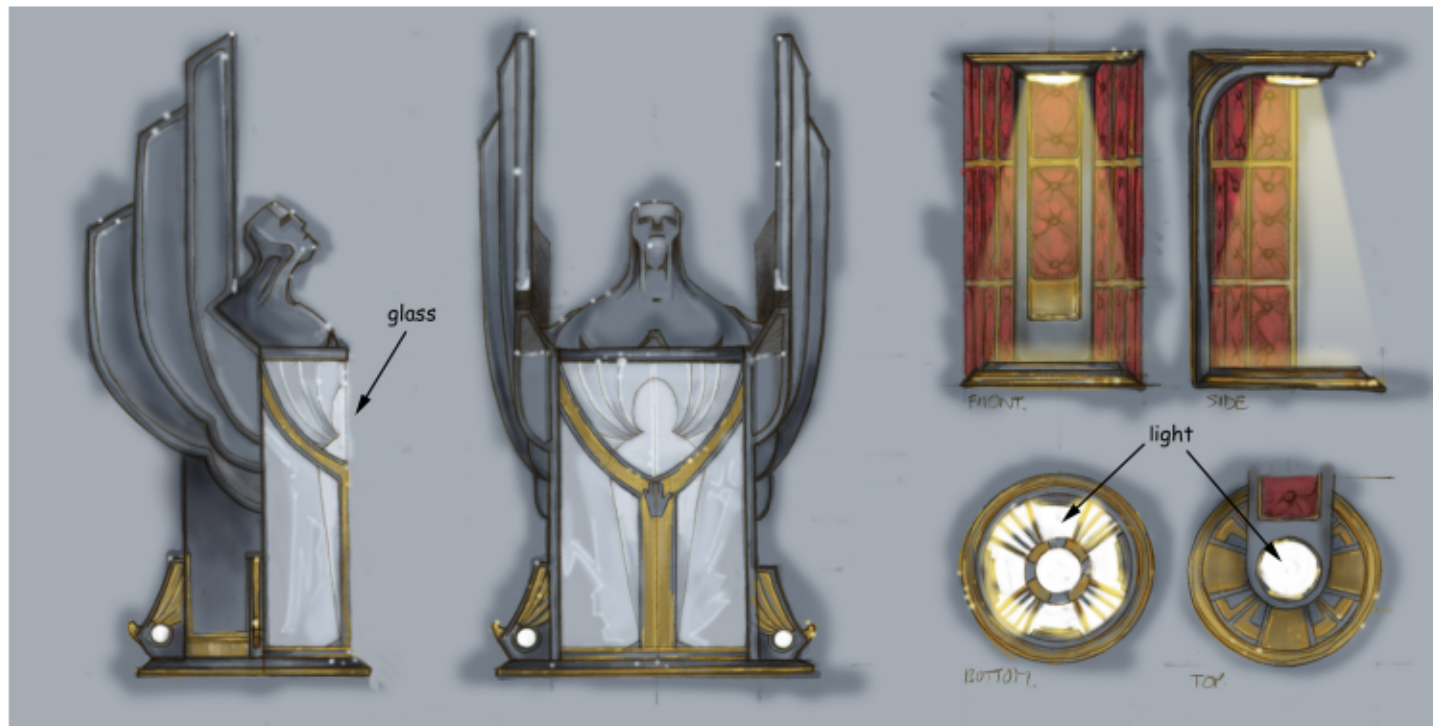


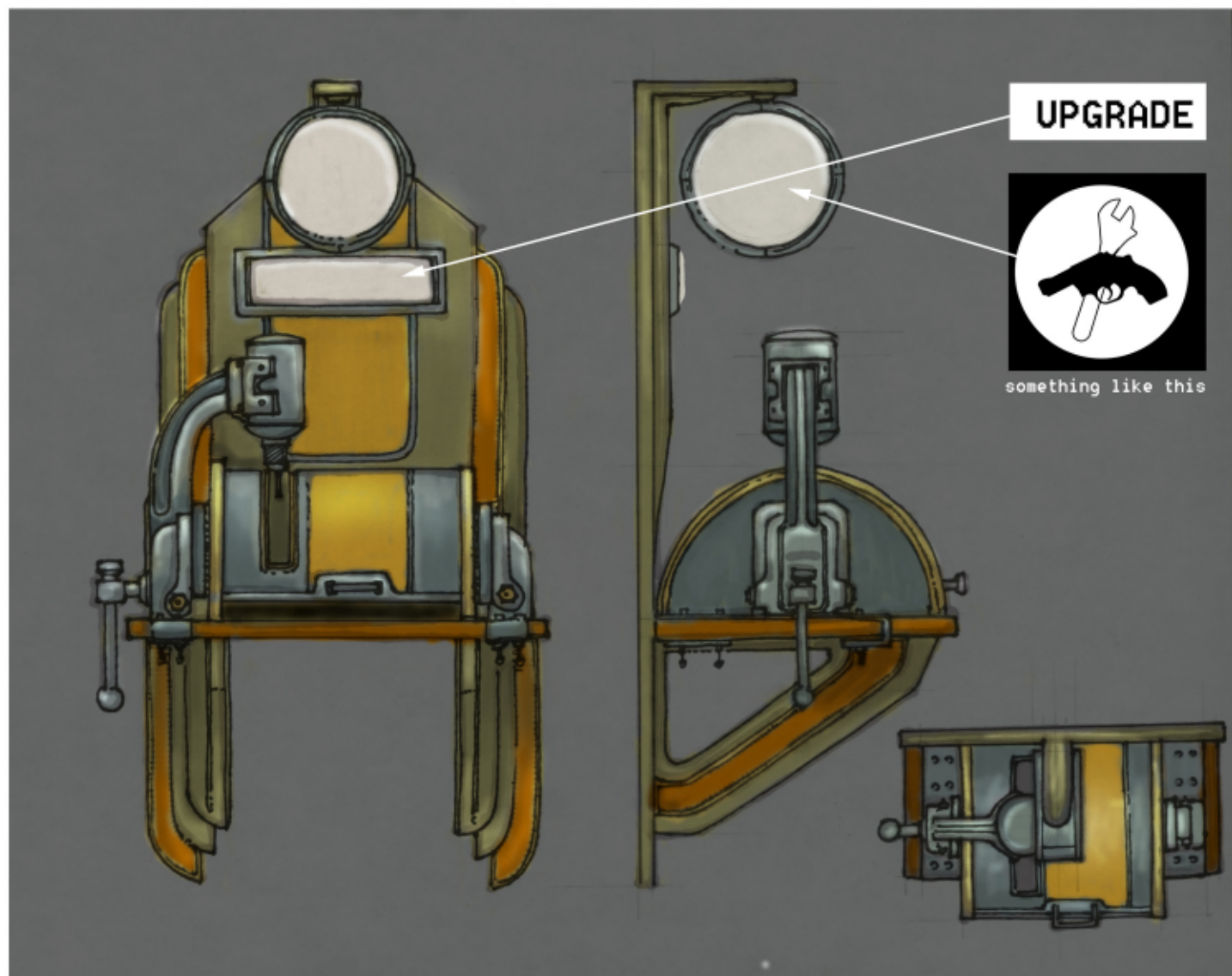
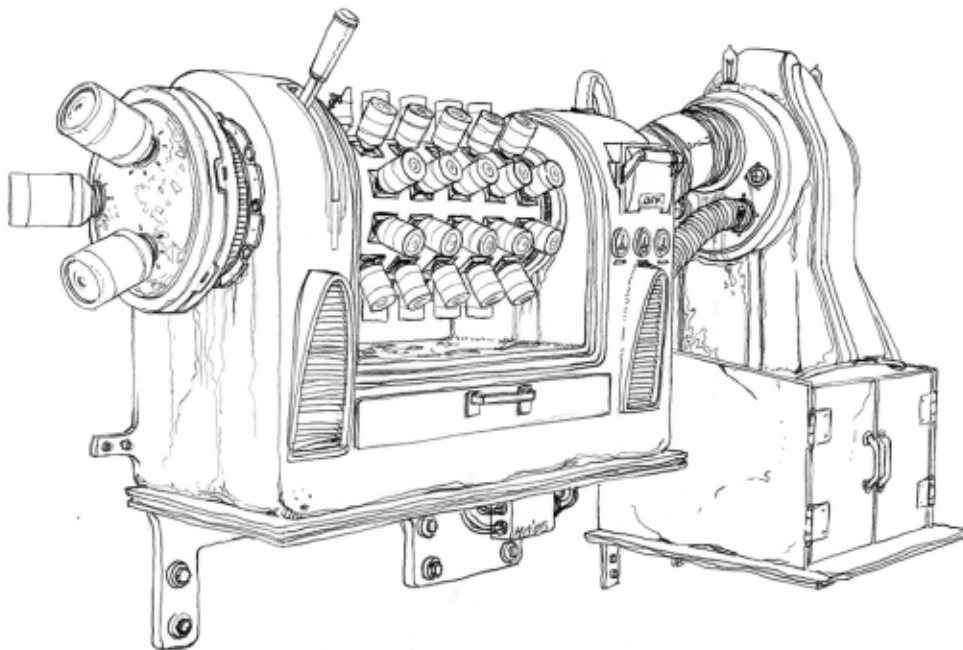
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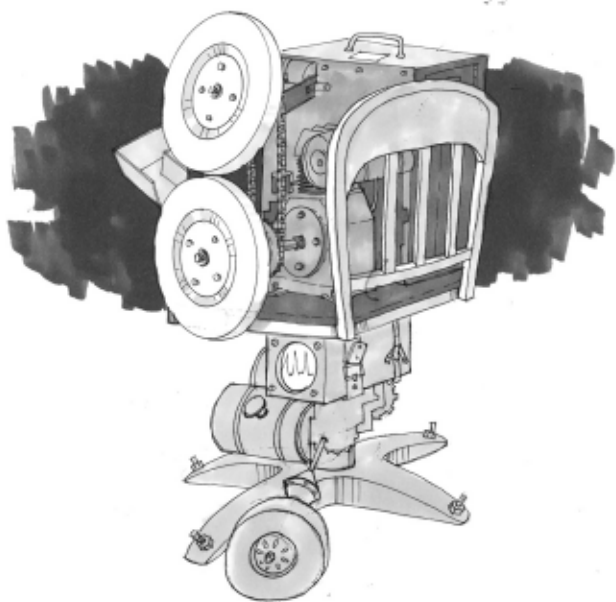
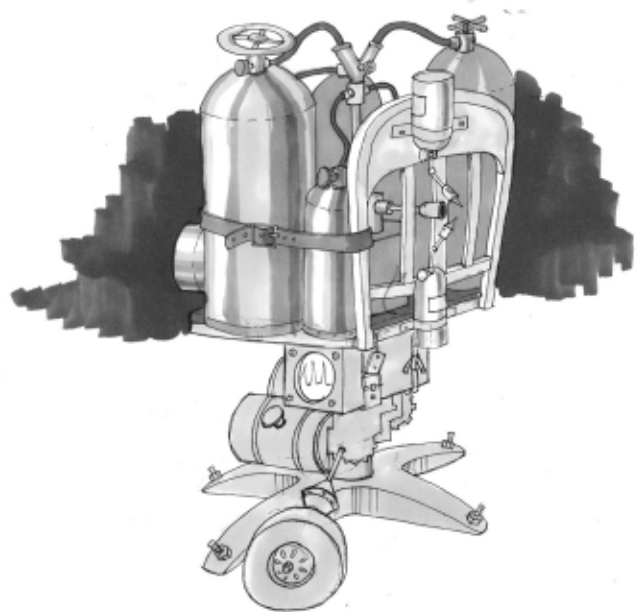
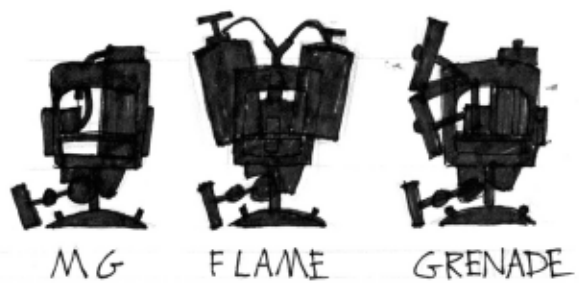
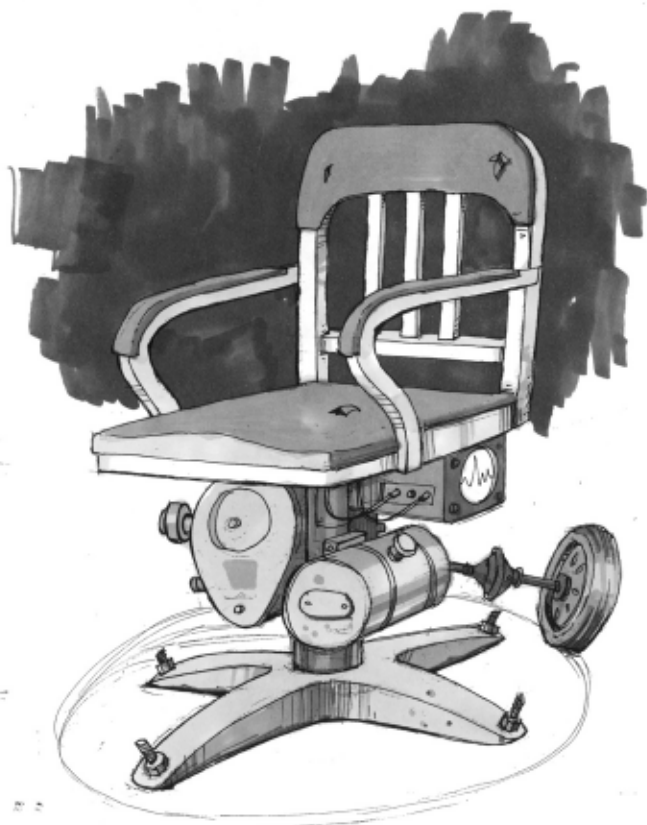
RAPTURE

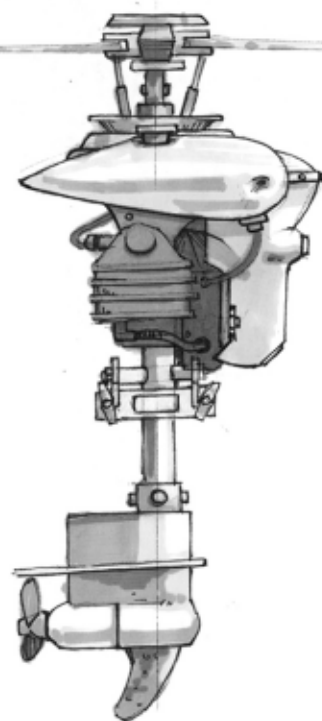
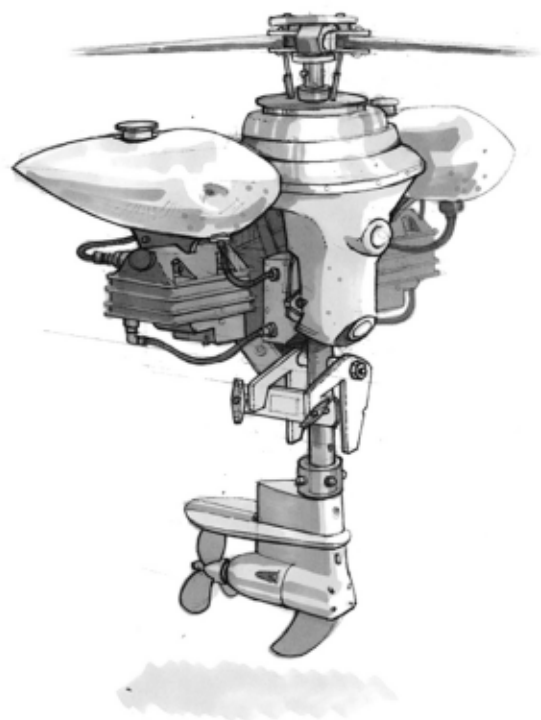
MACHINES

From the cash registers to the gun turrets, each machine in Rapture was carefully crafted to fit into the world of BioShock as well as be easy to use and understand for all players, even when the society that created these machines was so different from any culture that exists today above the surface of the water.





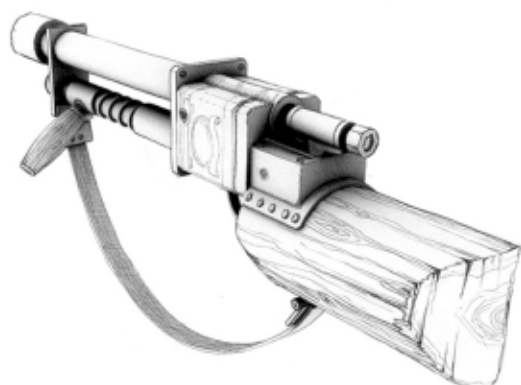




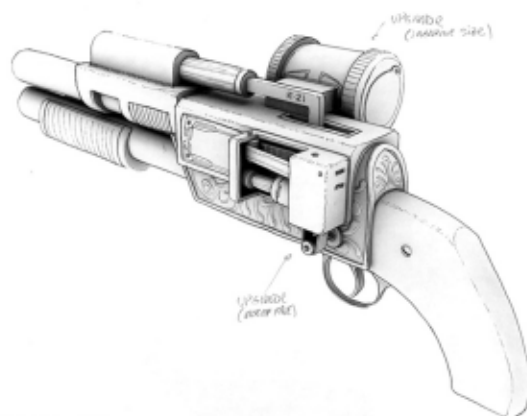
RAPTURE

WEAPONS

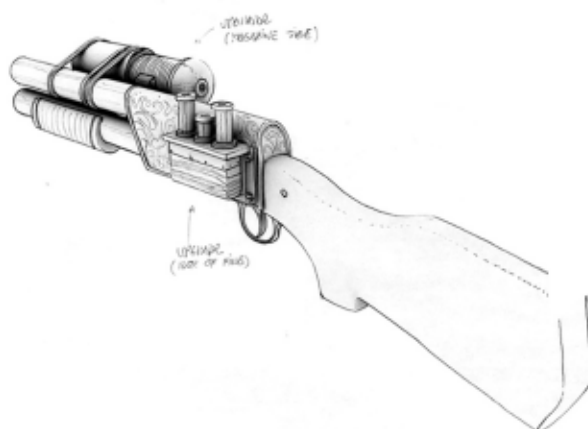
Each weapon in BioShock may be based on something that exists in our world, but when you look closely, you realize a shotgun is not just a shotgun, but a tool crafted from the everyday items that were scattered around peacetime Rapture. These weapons tell the story of how the citizens of Rapture built arms out of the tools they had as their society crumbled into civil war.



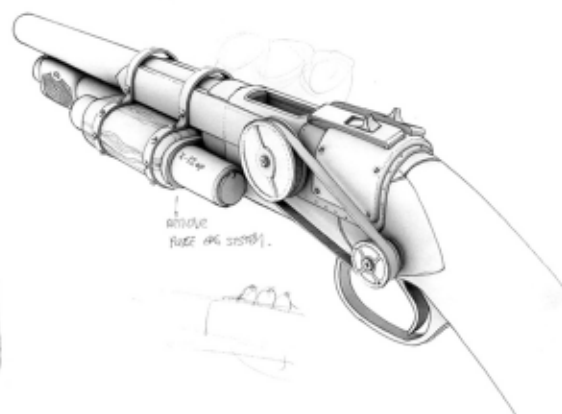
SHOTGUN - B -

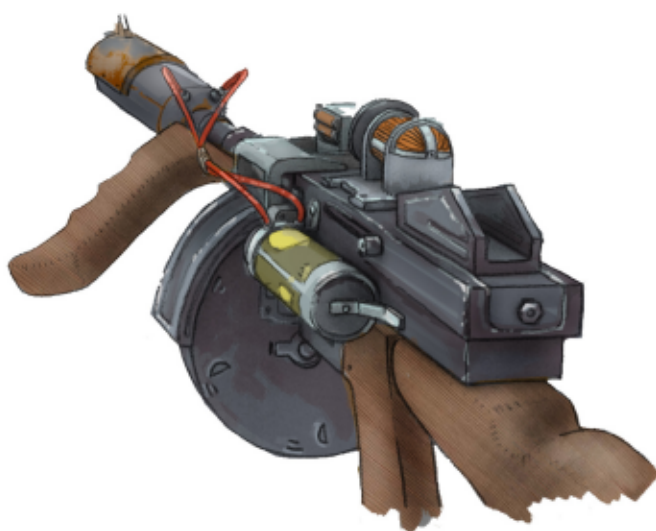
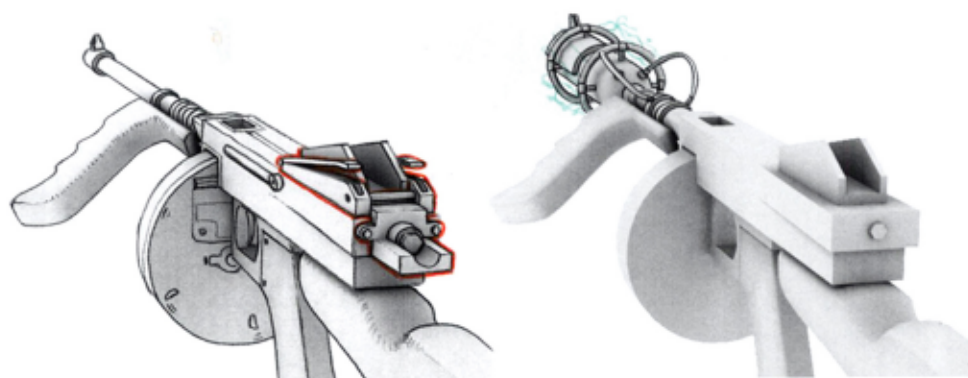
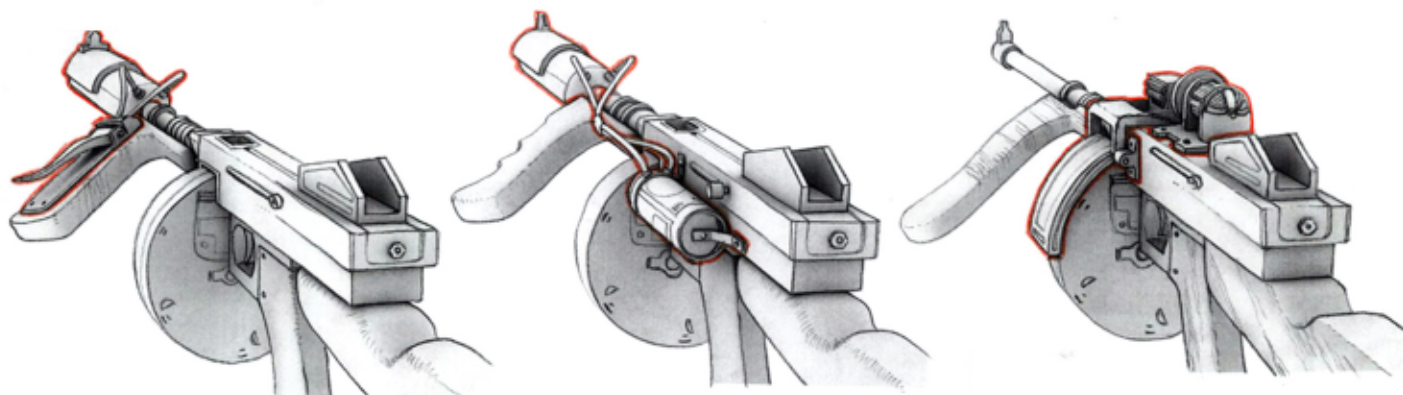


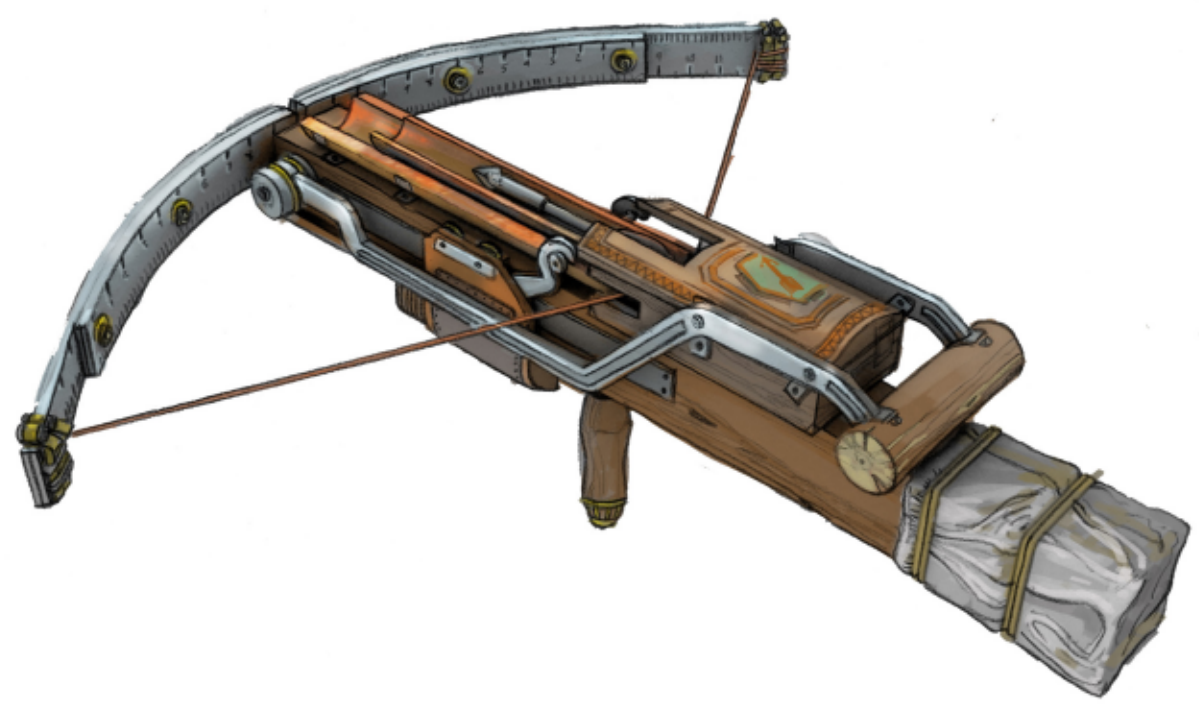
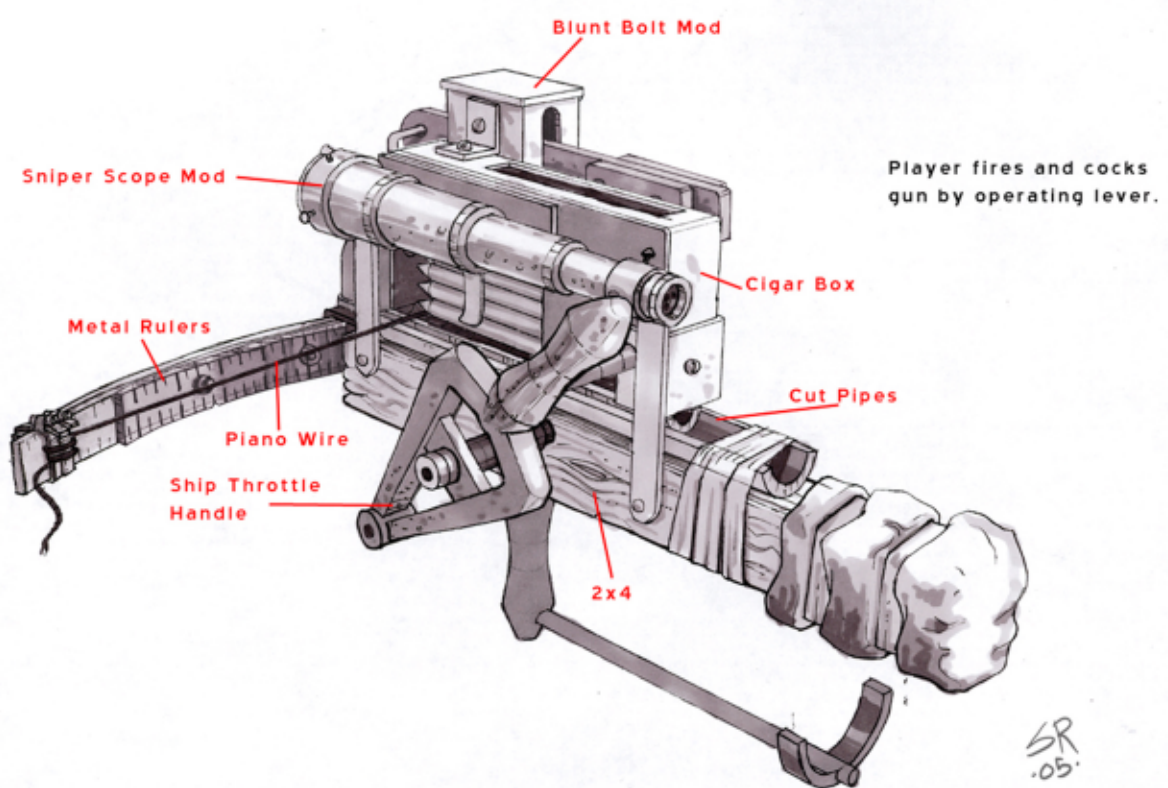
SHOTGUN - A - UPGRADES

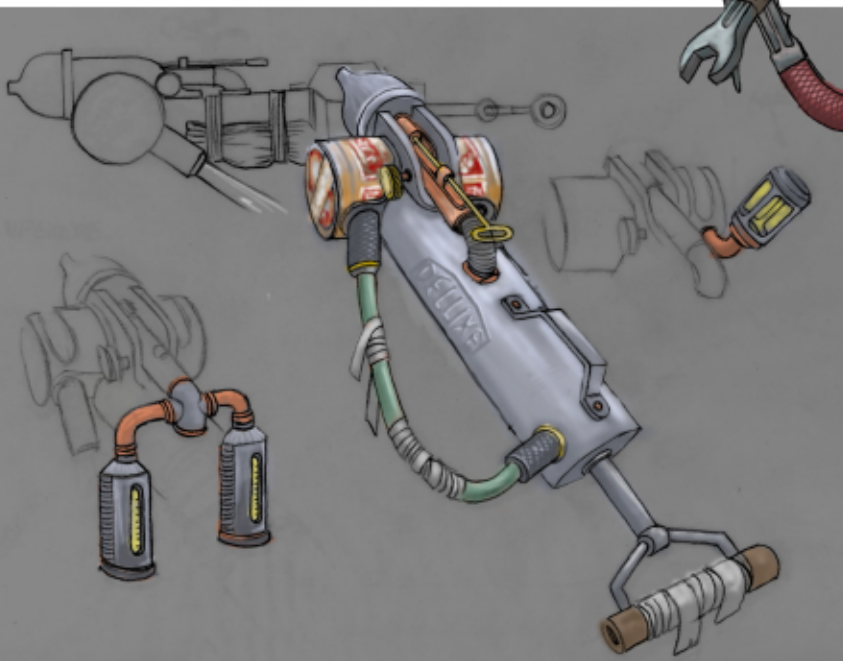
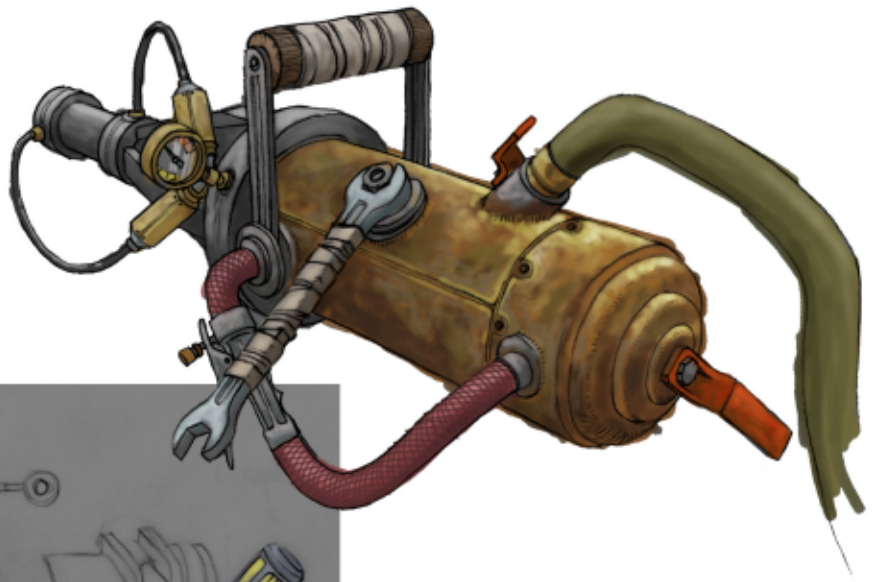
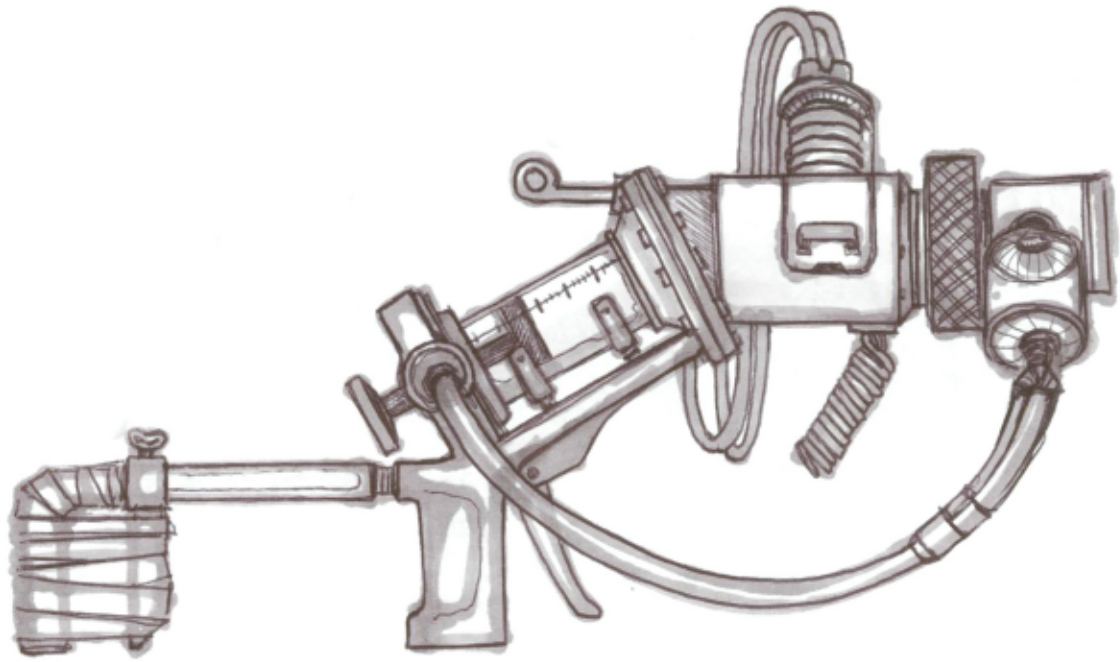


SHOTGUN REV.





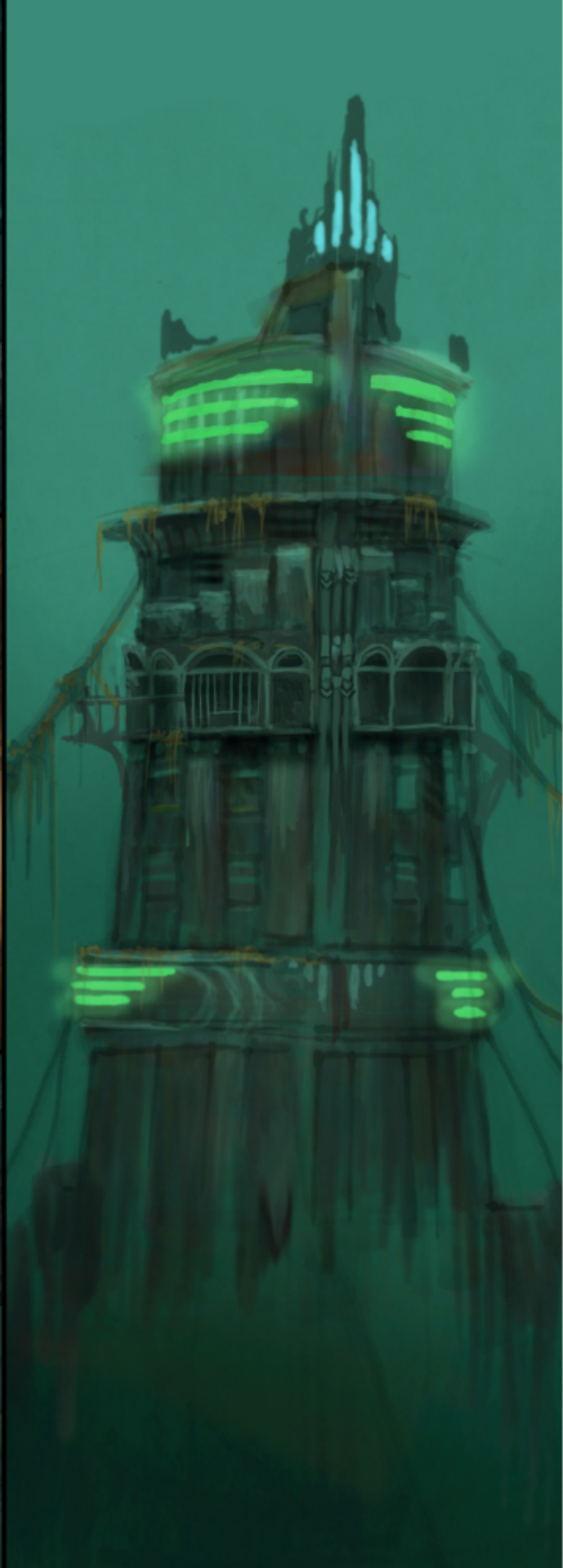


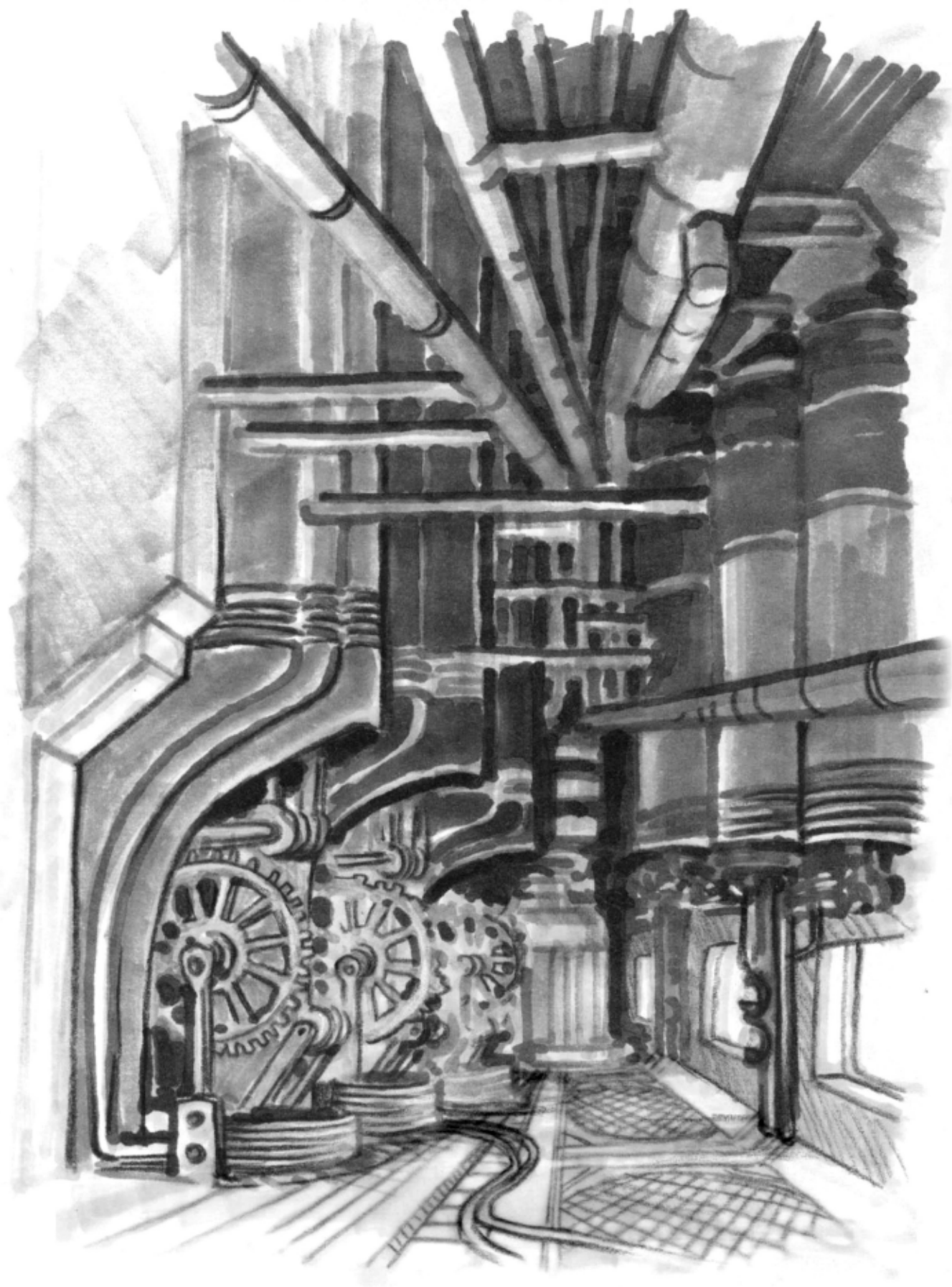


RAPTURE

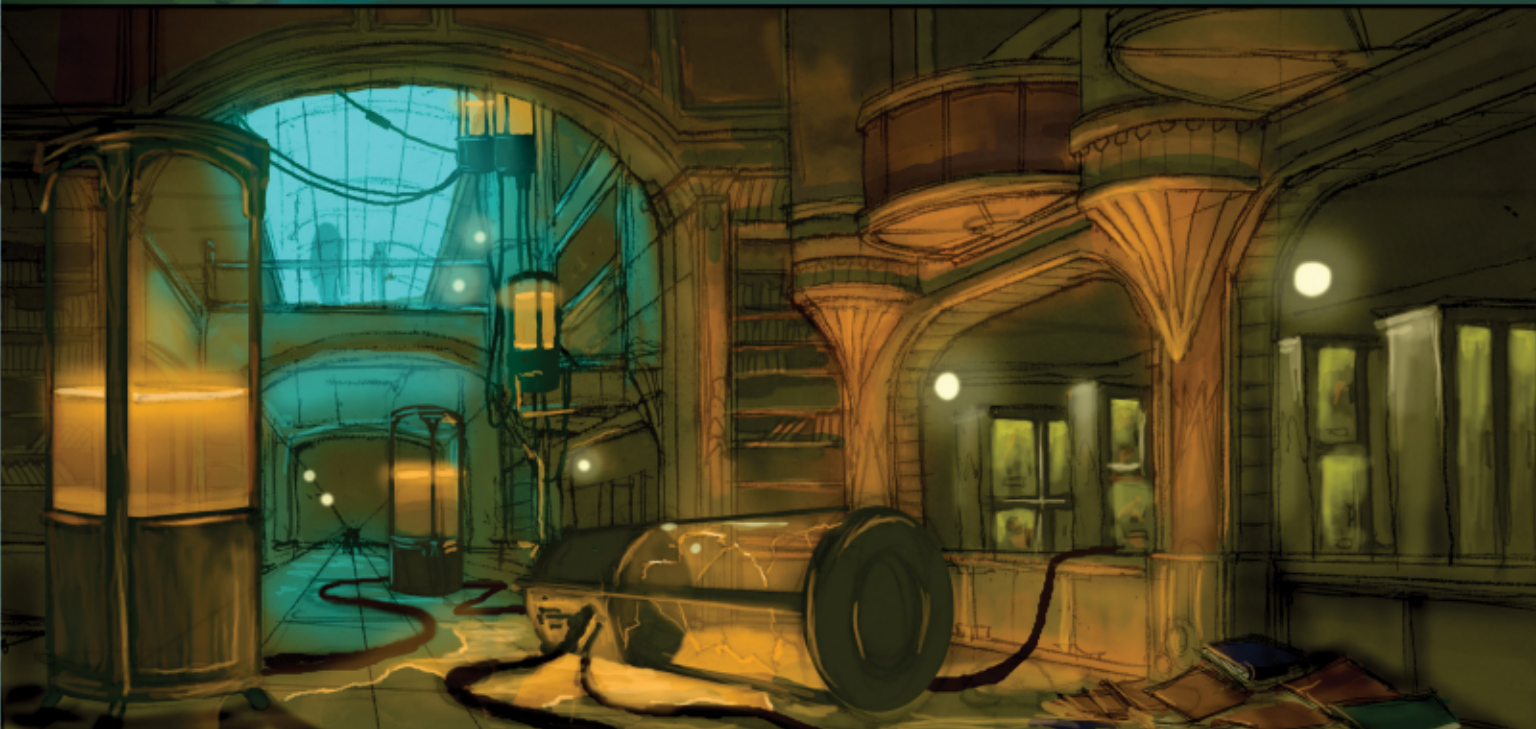
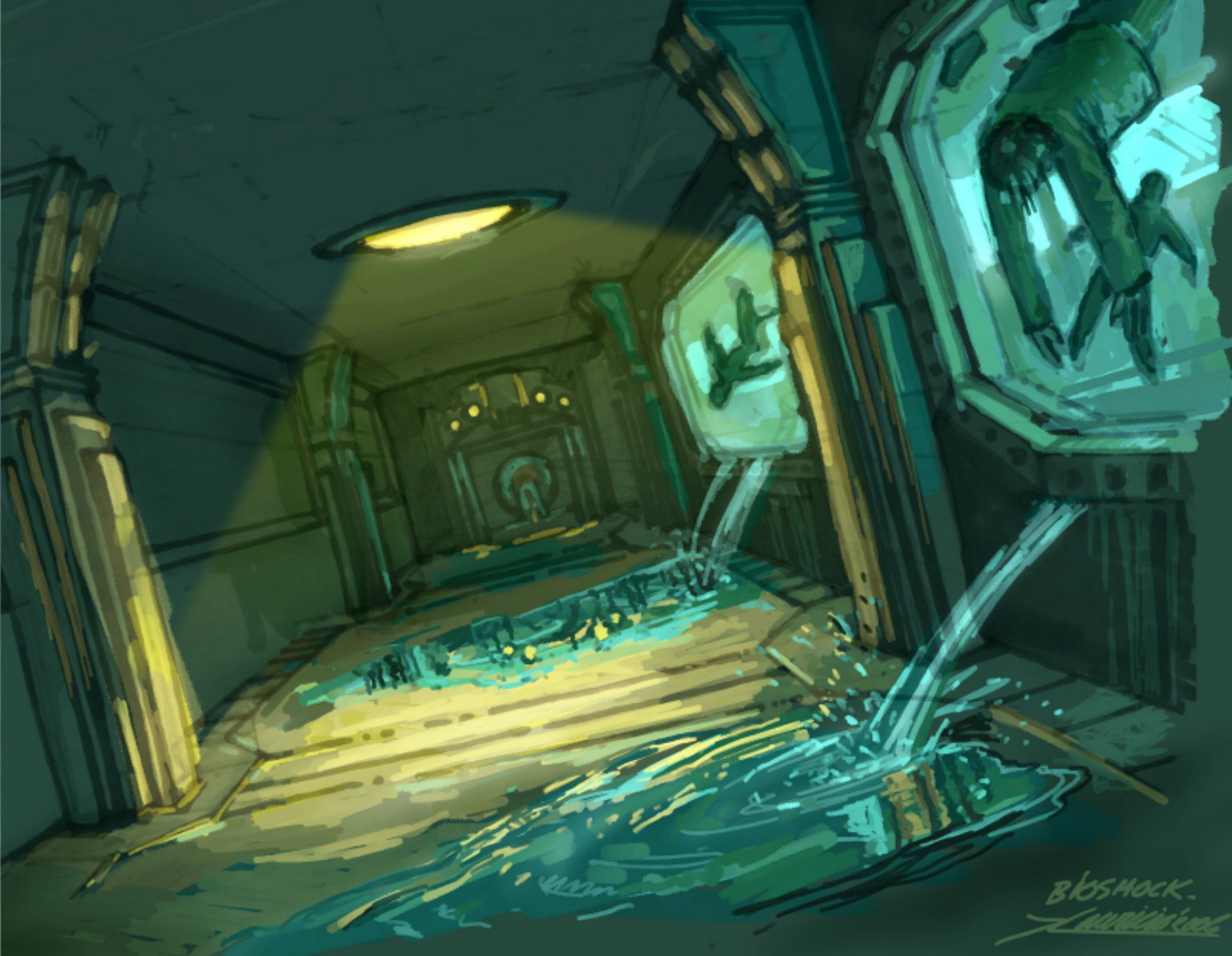
ENVIRONMENTS

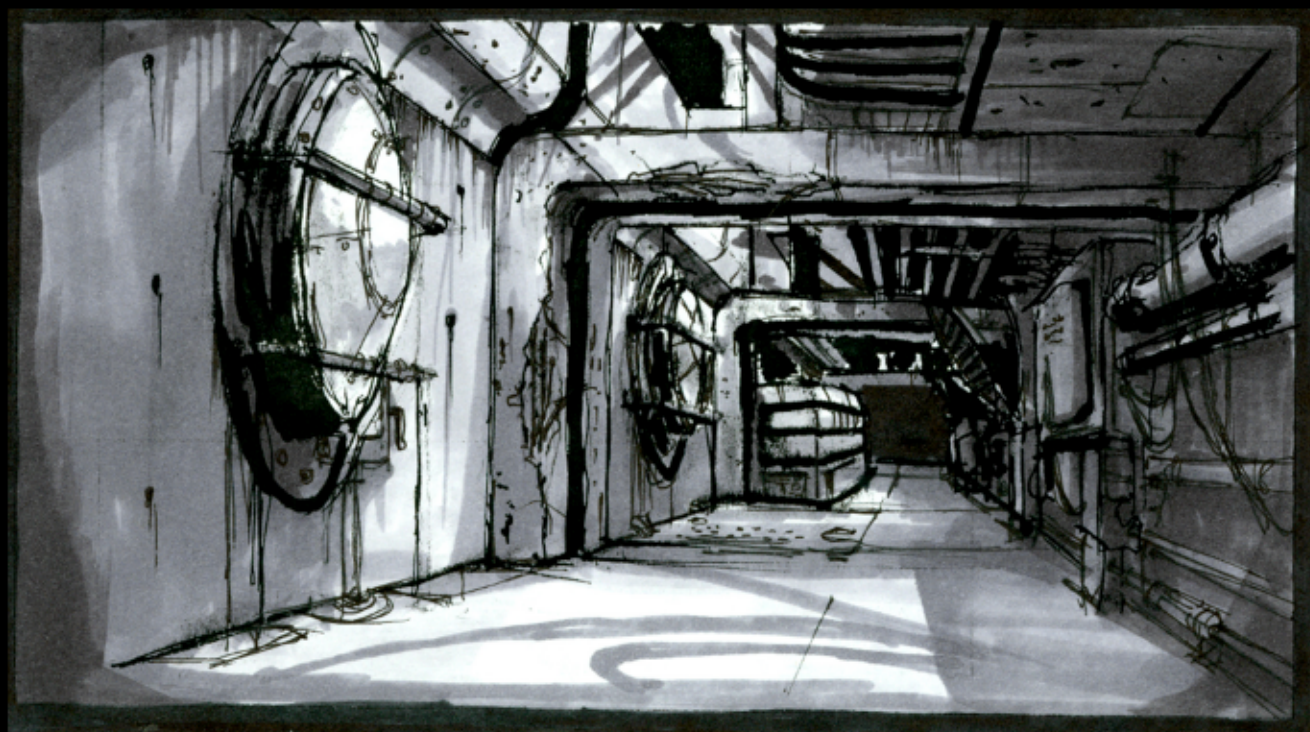
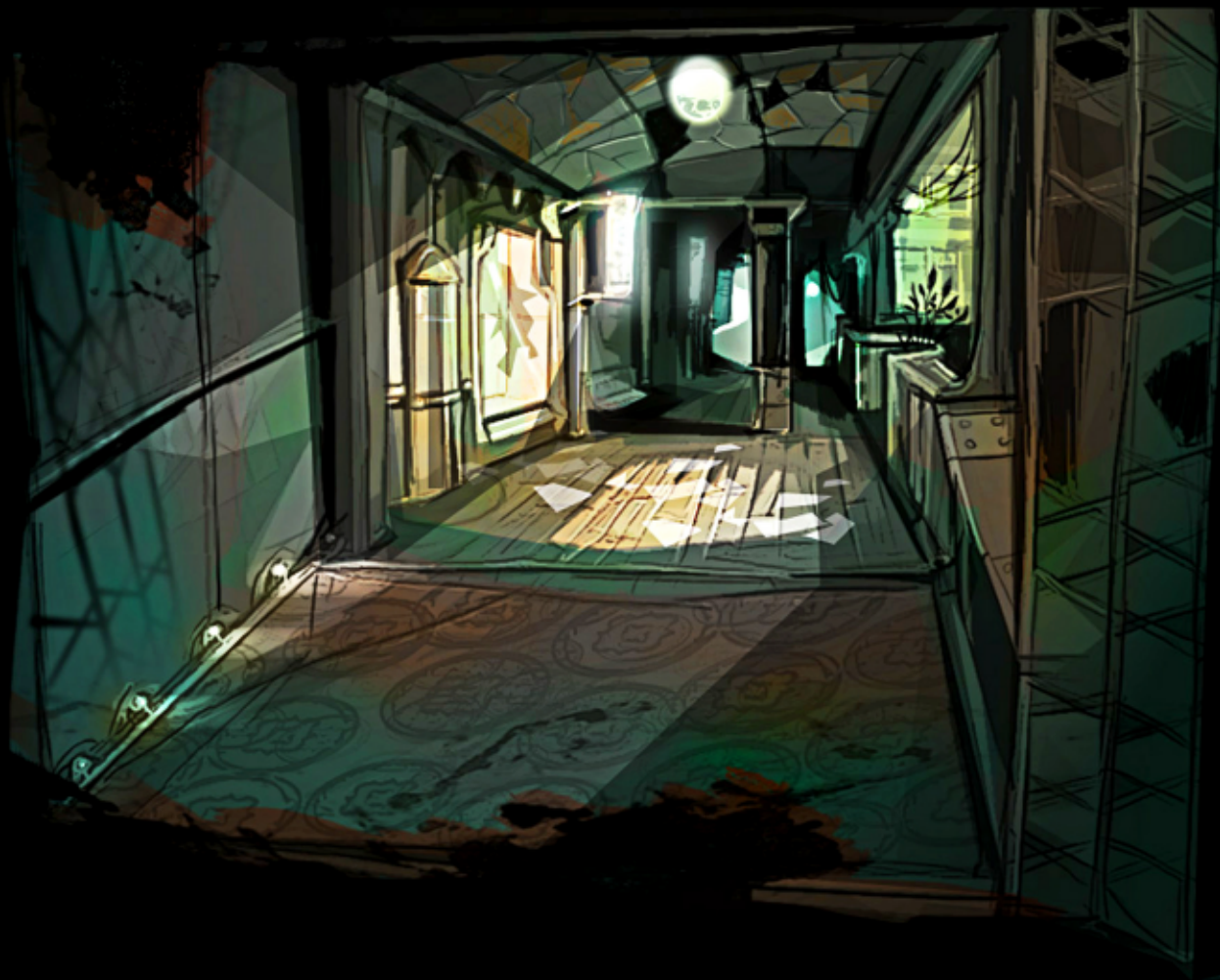
One of the most noted features of BioShock is how rich, detailed, and immersive the environment is. The sketches that made the rooms and world of Rapture could fill a single artbook by itself. Each room feels lived in, with lives scattered around in the objects you encounter. By looking at these concepts, you can see a once vibrant world, now drowning in ruined ideals, being swallowed by the ocean it so callously believed it could keep out.

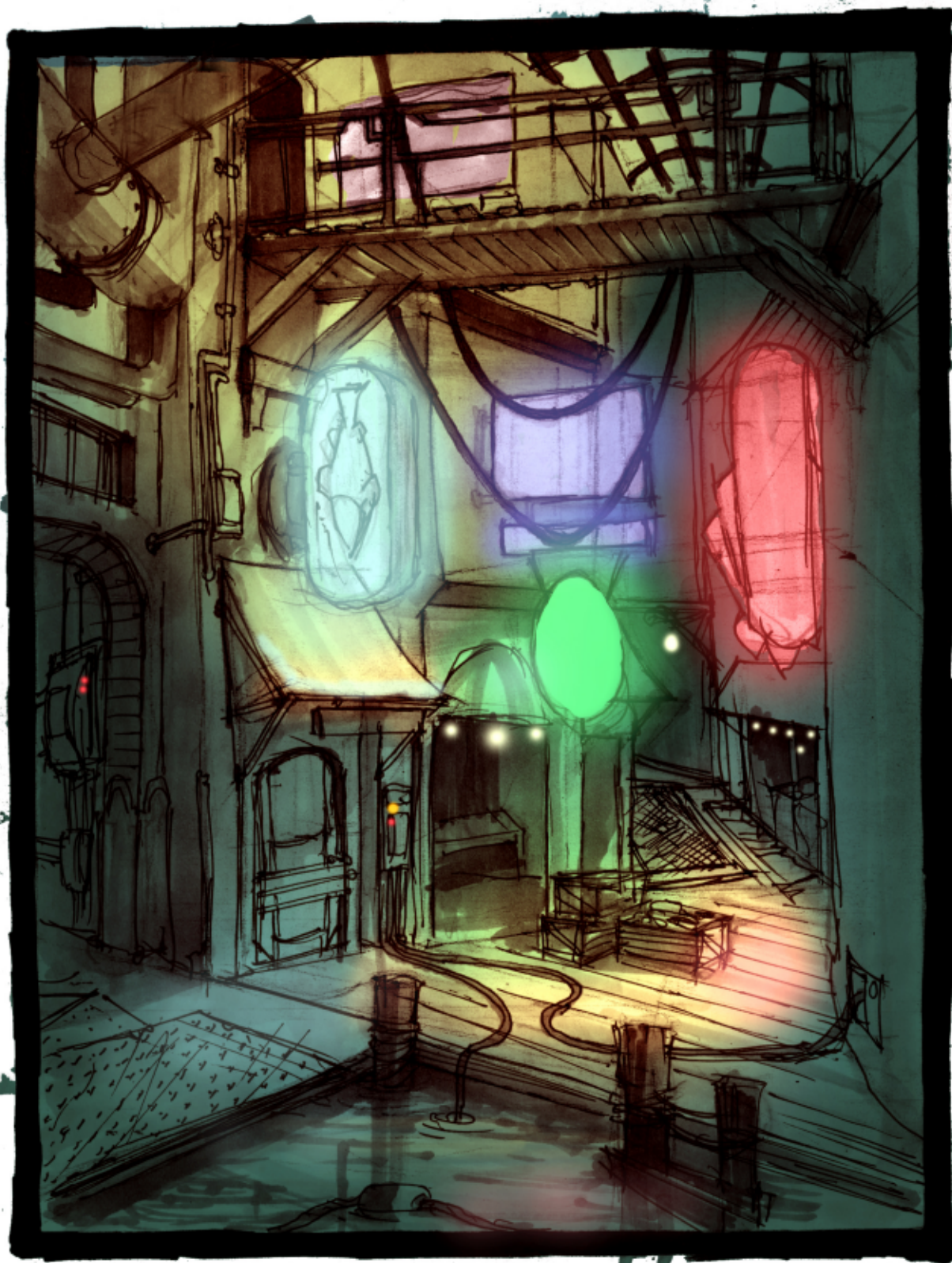


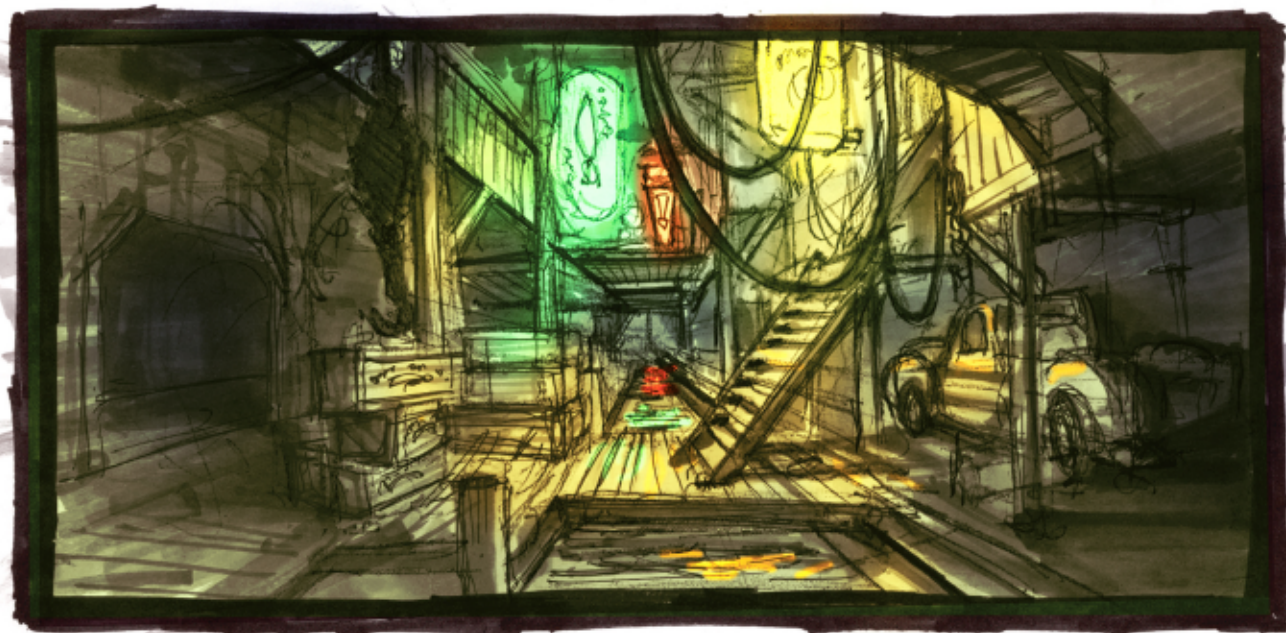
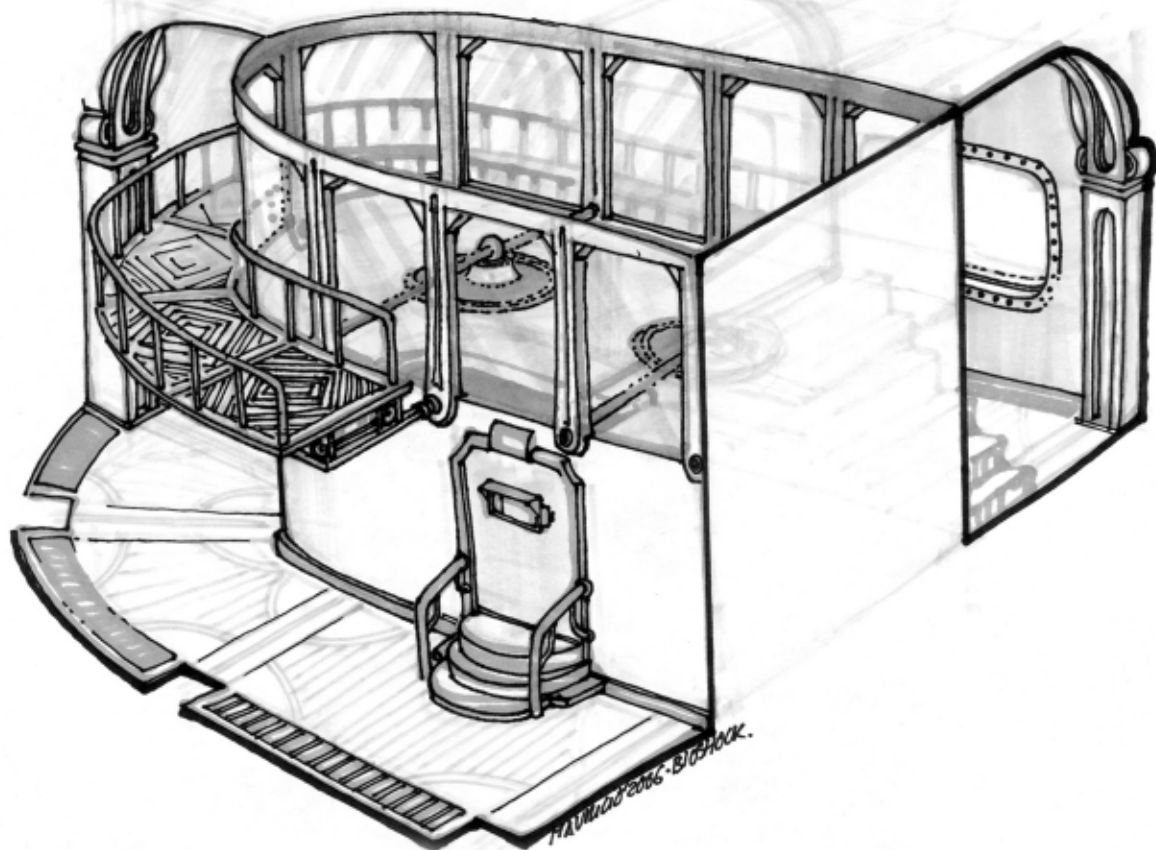


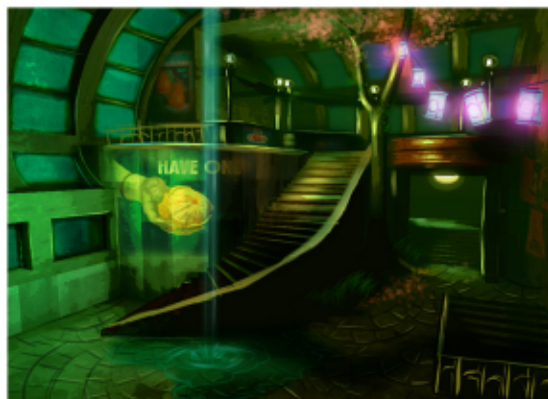
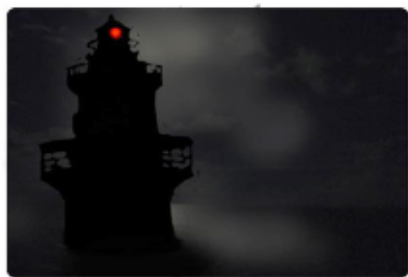


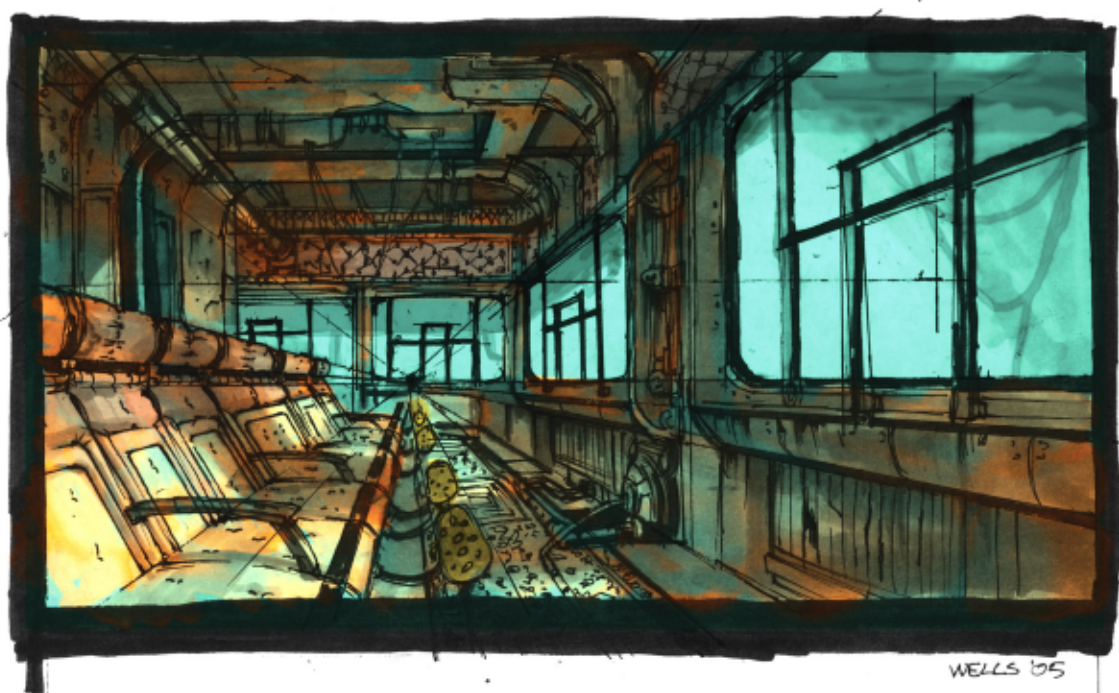
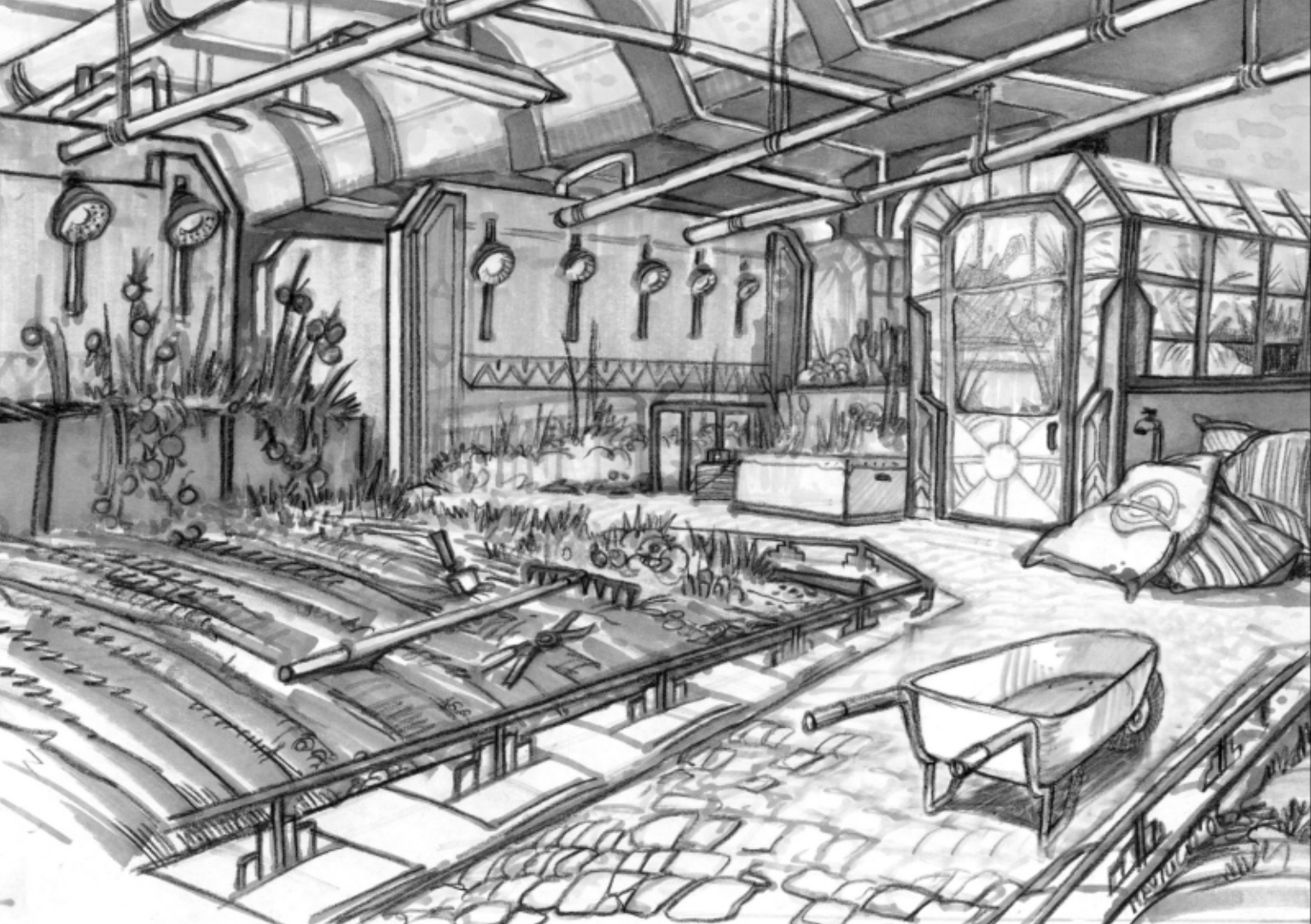




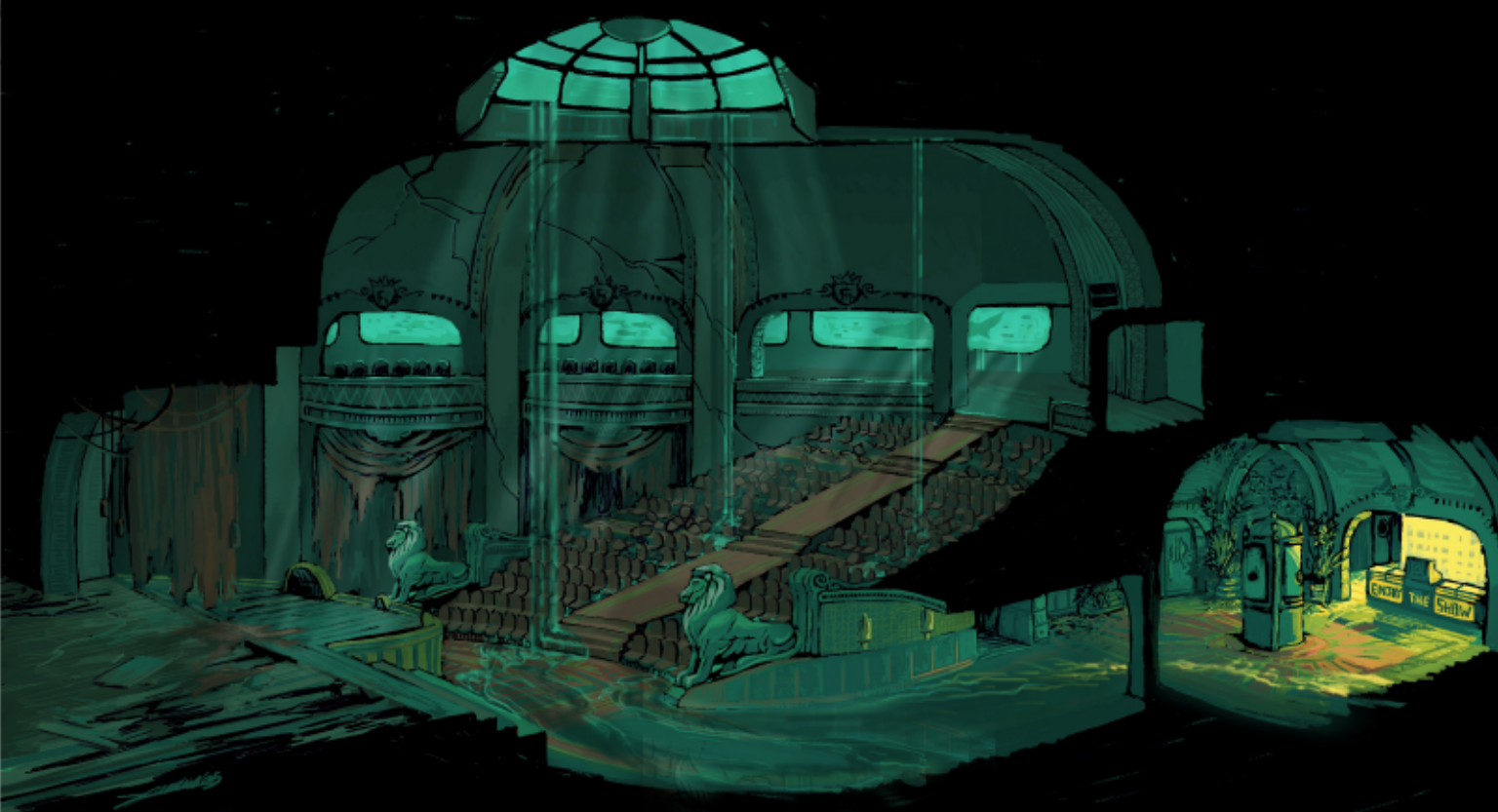
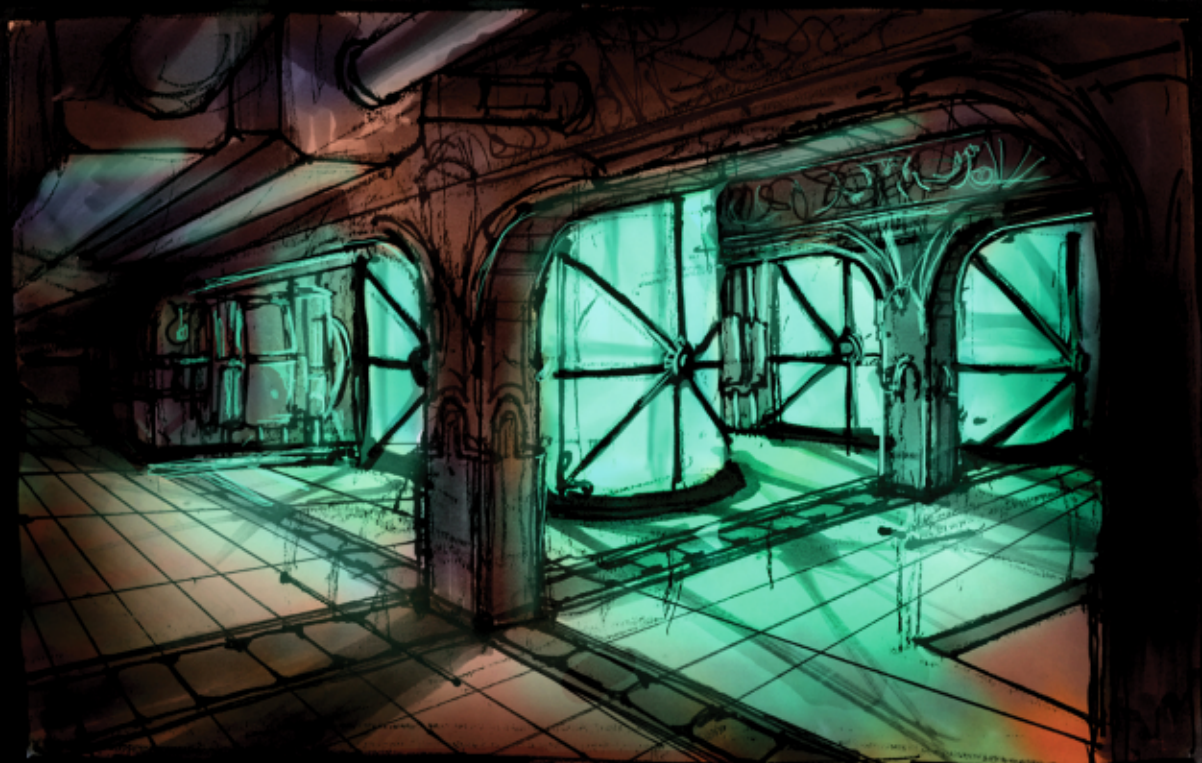


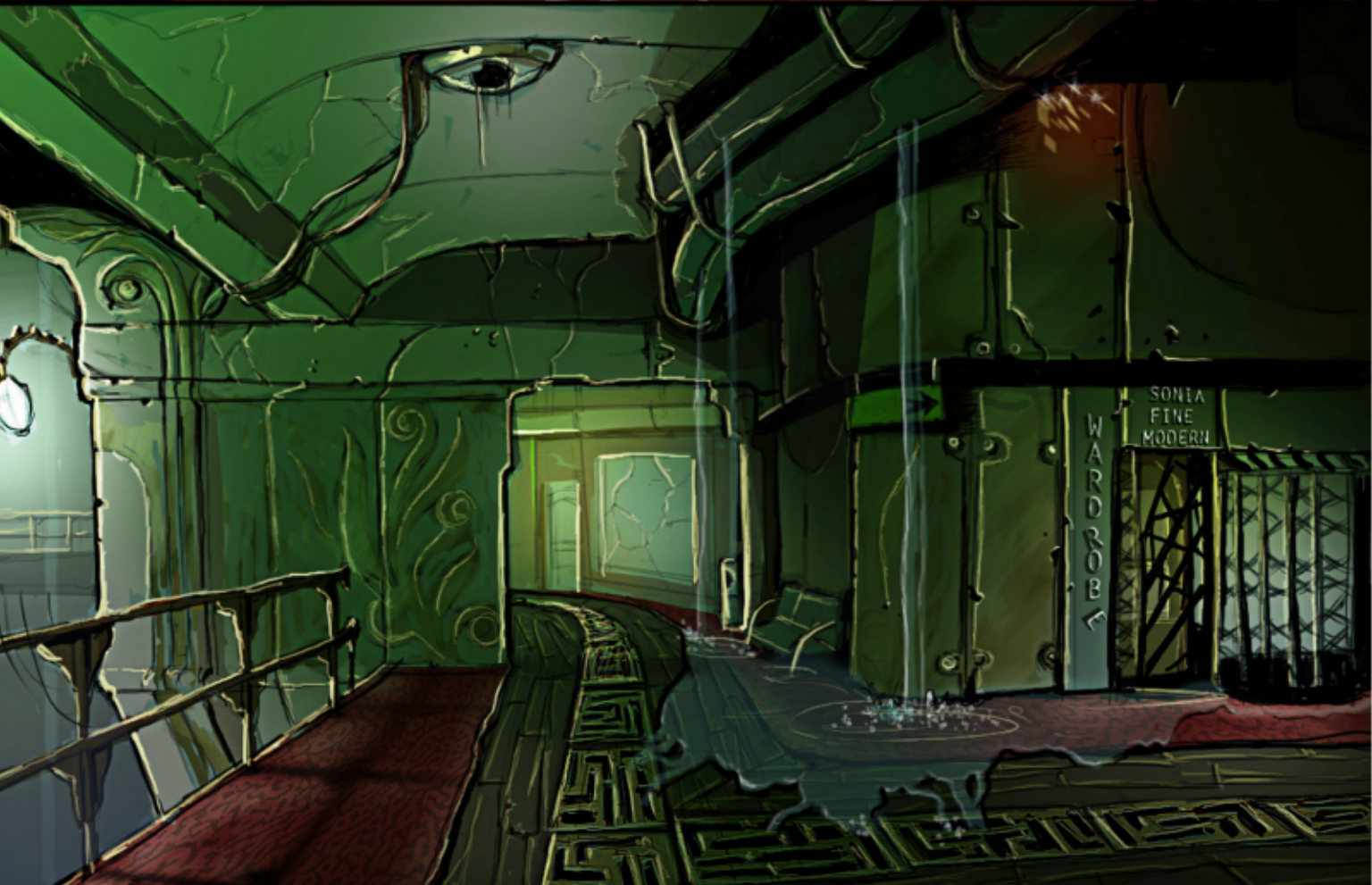


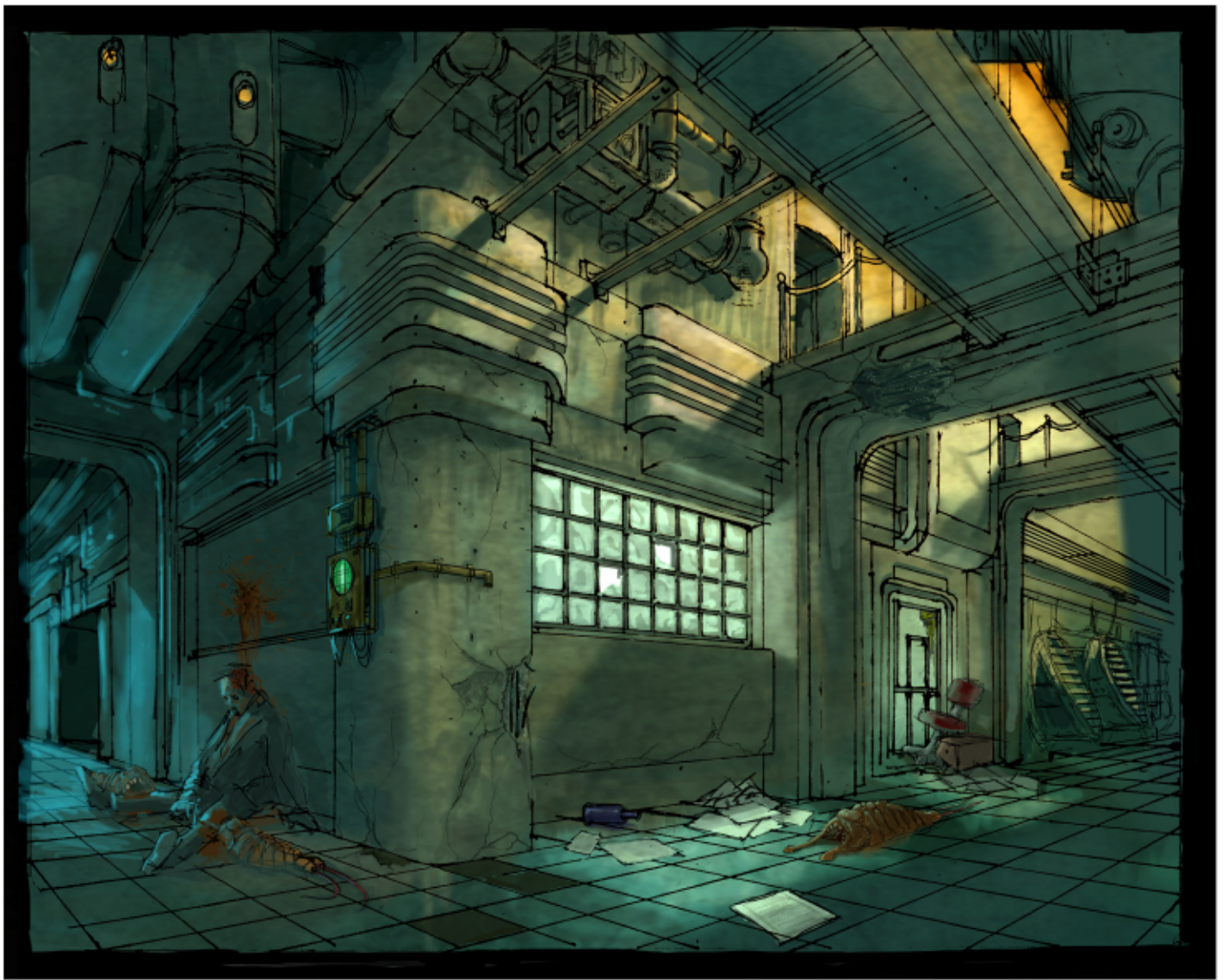




WELLS 05











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