

WIP of an environnement concept art rejected

on September 5th, 2009, by Deevad

I take the opportunity of having a first WIP post about a “not totally but” **rejected early concept art**. So ; I will explain here the key moment of my workflow for 2D environnement , It will probably sound strange ; but I’m using mainly at first not Alchemy or Mypaint in this case but Blender ! Let’s me show you how and Why:



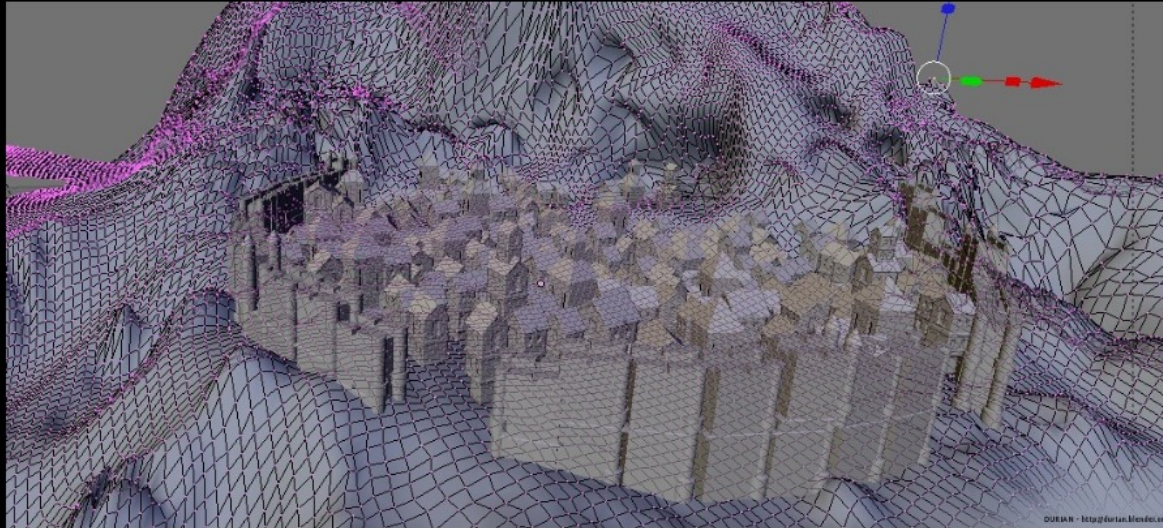


Simple lowpoly object, fun and speed to do

Why start with Blender ? Simply cause it's time saving. as a drawer a city represent a lot of work for the perspective / the design / the light and the angle of camera (composition too) ; with the help of Blender I can compress this time to a couple of hour.

First job is to create some toys ; and have a little library of some objects ; I started here with a subdivided cube for each of those objects ; after removing some faces of the cube to preserve 1/4 of the shape , I apply a mirror modifier and most of the time apply to the Y and X axis. I model this way only 1/4 of each building. I use the last layer of "Blender layers panel" to stock my blocks, and I take care to name them correctly. When finish ; I do a first Alt+D copy (linked copy to the original) , and move the copied object to the first layer. Why I named them correctly ? (ex : Building_1 / City_Wall / etc...) Simply cause this kind of simple 3D object I like to reuse them in other works with a simple "append", so it's always faster to know what to append in the long long object list.

2- The story of a simple 3D town

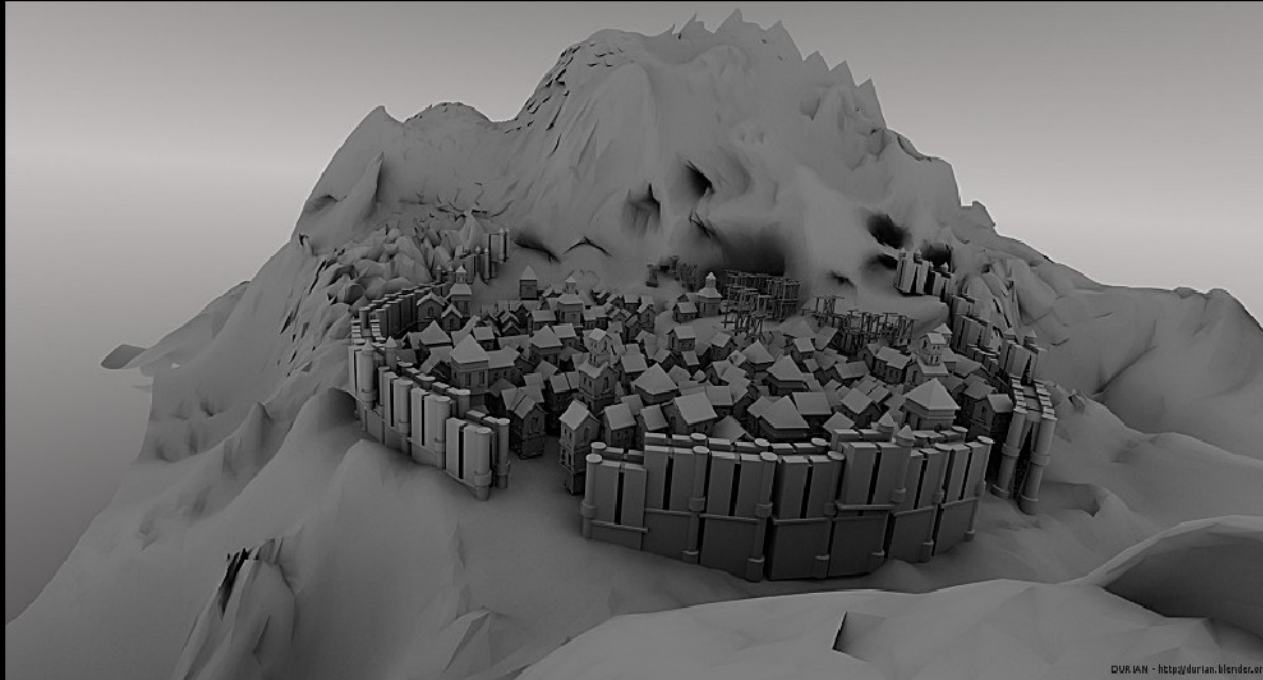


A screen capture of my 3D speed town , while editing the "moutain"

On my first layer ; I set up a first square of houses and building ; and play to invent new building while combining them ; I still use Alt+D to copy my object ; If I want to add a detail to one in edit mode ; all other will be updated at the same time. It can save time if I decide to re-use the scene and just change the shape of roofs ; or add only rounded windows.

For the moutain & floor ; I just sculpted fastly a plane with some textured brush (musgrave) ; I choose the "grab" option to be more speed ; and I keep it not too much subdivided to have a light-weight file and a happy computer. (even if a scene like this grow fastly to more than 2.000.000 polygon) . My laptop still handle it , so I can turn around easily and find a good shot with a Camera.

3- Material & rendering



A simple Ambient Occlusion rendering of the town

I didn't setup a lot the lightning , and usually I prefer to let the Ambient Occlusion (ray traced ; with the max 'samples' ; it take may be time ; but the job is always perfect to me) and I add just a simple grey gradient for the background.

Sometime , I save more than one rendering ; I try just a simple sun light ; or a approximate ; Just to have more information to work on Gimp after.

For the material ; I use a white smooth material that don't have specular point ; very simple to create.

4- Time for a Gnu Image Manipulation Program ; GIMP



A photo from the wikipedia page about "mountains" on overlay ; and some editing after...

I just open my result on GIMP 2.6 ; patched with gimp-painter , and the brush presets Gimp Paint Studio (you will find links in one of my previous post [here](#)) . I grabed a photo from the wikipedia page about Mountain , and pasted it ; playing with blending modes ; shadowing with a big brush on Multiply ; and highlight some other part with Softlight or Dodge to obtain the result above. Notice that I didn't work on the details ; I keep it global and zoom in very rarely in my picture.

When I finish this step I double the size of my files to get more pixels ; cause the step after require some digital painting.



The final image

Final step is to patiently paint all the details to make the picture look like what I had in mind ; (ok another mountains from wikipedia added on the background before having a paint over) . But painting details is fun is the details are not just some rendering , or just to add more resolution to the piece. I used mainly the brush preset “Oil1-Small ” from Gimp Paint Studio ; and played with the opacity a lot. For textures ; I used the Brush ‘foliage_1’. I finish with a airbrush simple round brush in the blending mode “Dodge” to make some glowing point ; Fire, cave and little misterious little bioluminescent dragon.

You can see too how I simplify the picture to get a uniform background back the character in the foreground to read the silhouette better ; or how I set the value of the town to be darker than the mountain background. All in all it’s just a simple 3 ground composition (Foreground / Middleground / Background). And all the elements are placed on a curve that’s start at the bottom of the left part to finish on the top of the right part. (eyes are leaded with the value of the points on this “reading axe curve”). This axe is always the best to place some elements for the cultures that read from the top-left to the right-bottom ; cause our key elements come in an opposite direction as the usual way to read , and the result is a better dynamic in the picture ; and almost the feeling in our exemple above that the snail move to the town. Just a composition trick 😊

