



# 'PROJECT CASTLE' | DISNEY

Treatment by Lisha Tan

Hello,

After our call, we all gave each other a look that said, 'we have to make this happen!' Not only are we huge fans of the creative possibilities— our team grew up watching Saturday morning cartoons, but we also love the visual style and the creative you're proposing. We also love the chance to revive more legacy characters from the vast Disney catalog. You had us at Darkwing Duck.

The previous spots you've referenced are right up our creative alley, and there's something really fun about taking what we assume to know about the Disney brand and turning it completely on its head, albeit still in a fun way. The tagline 'this is not your kid's Disney game,' couldn't be more spot on.

## OVERVIEW

To make this game teaser truly epic in both versions, we'll keep the introduction of our hero characters mysterious. We'll first tease their presence and their tougher, unexpected personalities, in tight framing, with flashes of light, flash cuts, and strong dramatic poses. As we hint at the larger breadth of Disney characters in the :15, we'll keep the mystery at an optimum level by featuring those additional characters in silhouette. In the longer film, what at first appears as silhouettes, will be beautifully lit up and revealed by flashes of light as the characters engage on the field of battle.

To keep the suspense high, we'd like to create a flexible rule-of-thumb in that three-quarters of our spot be told through frozen moments, and the final quarter is told in real-time. This way, the bulk of our spot is a bold reimagining of the characters through a roving camera, instead of going into the battle too early.





## FROZEN MOMENTS TO REAL TIME

An important detail to note: when we say frozen moments, they aren't completely frozen. We'll feature small, nuanced, secondary movements in the characters and VFX. This can be Ariel's flowing hair just moving across her furrowed eyelid, Sulley's snarl getting slightly wider and more menacing, hands tightening around a trident, or the glow of a weapon gradually getting brighter. These small subtle movements help add context and suspense to the scene. It's as though the characters are trying to burst through time, in order to race into the action. Thematically, these moments are the calm before the storm.

We'll use these hyper-slow scenes to build up the drama, tease the one-on-one battles to come, and hint at the characters' abilities and the game's 'card' feature. Stylistically, we view these scenes as dioramas, lit using carefully placed rim lights. With this approach, we can dramatically shape and reveal our characters, creating mini narratives within each moment.

As their powers are revealed, we'll use the light created from these effects (if appropriate) to add more drama to the scene and contour to our characters.

Once they are in fight-mode, we'll also let flashes of lights and glows from the battle illuminate them as well. This lighting can originate from explosions or born from magical weapons. Our approach to lighting will go a long way in accentuating the painterly style of characters we're going for.



## :15 STRUCTURE

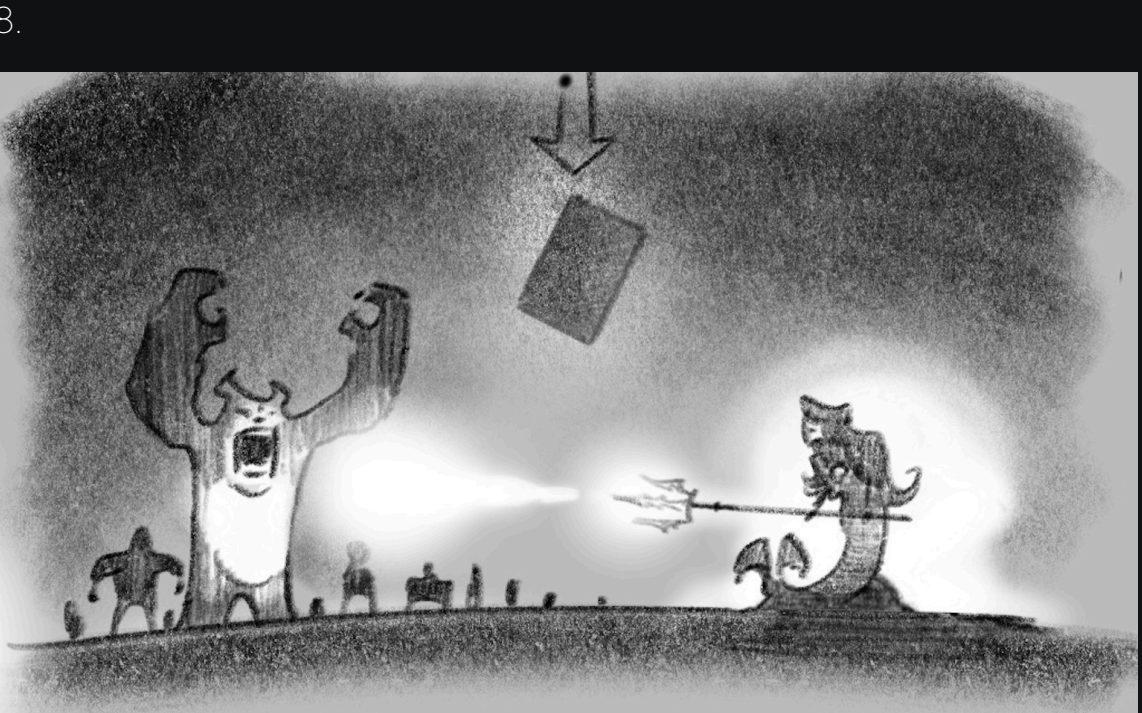
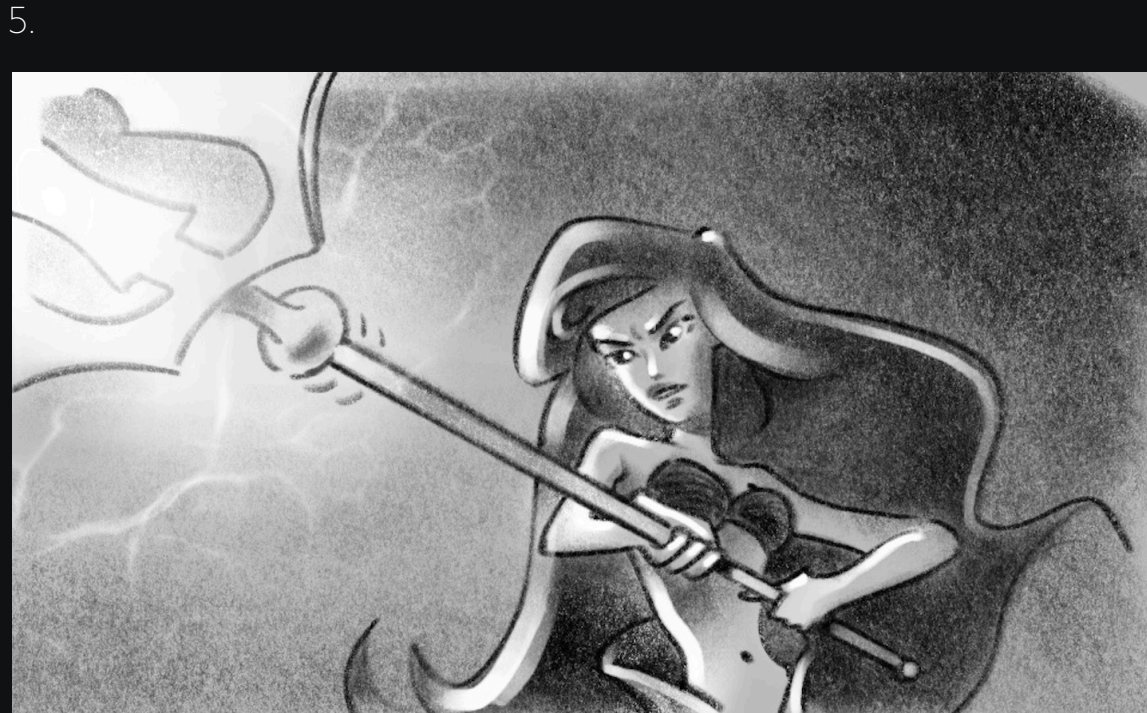
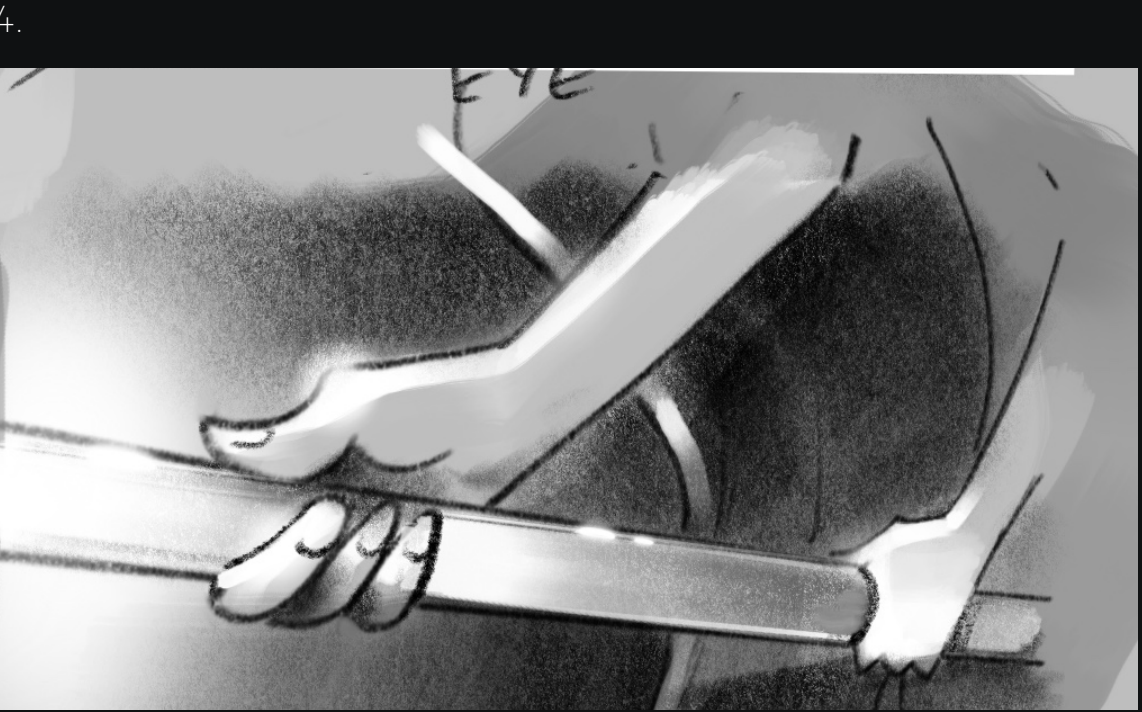
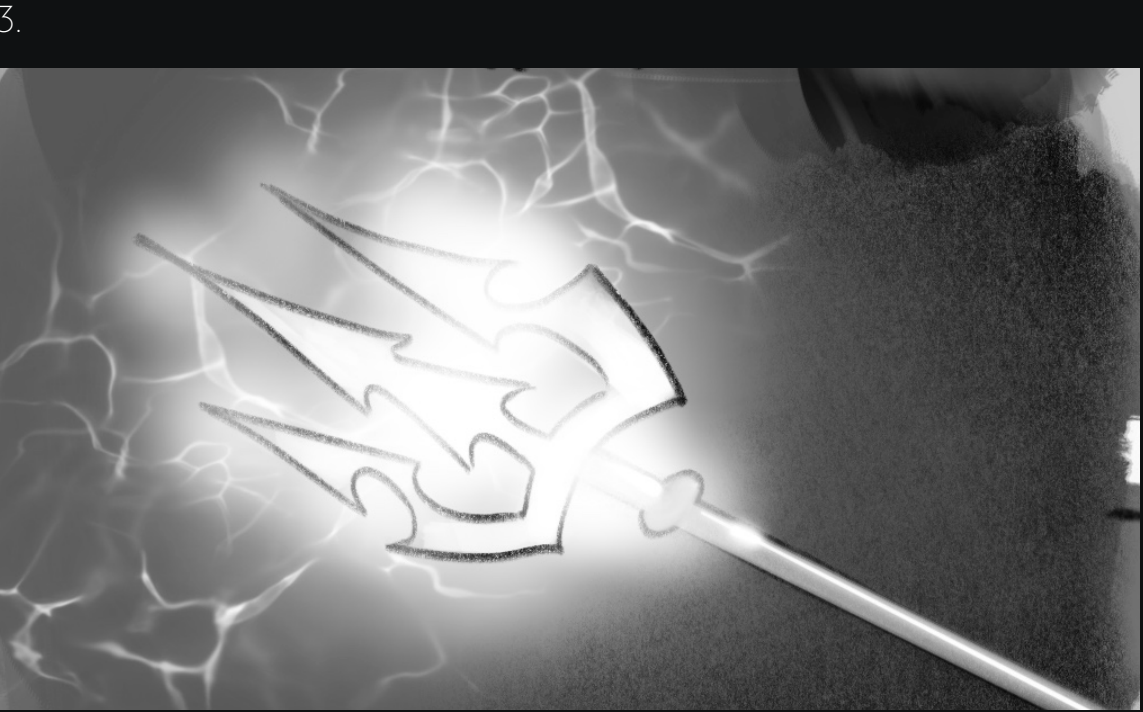
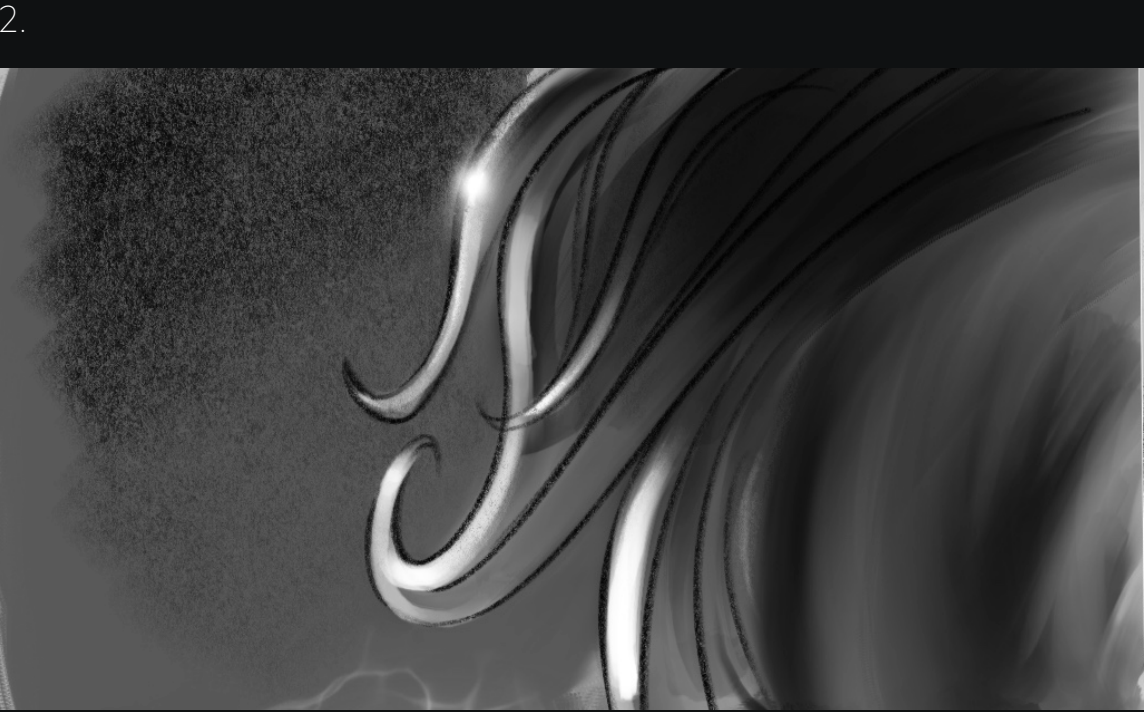
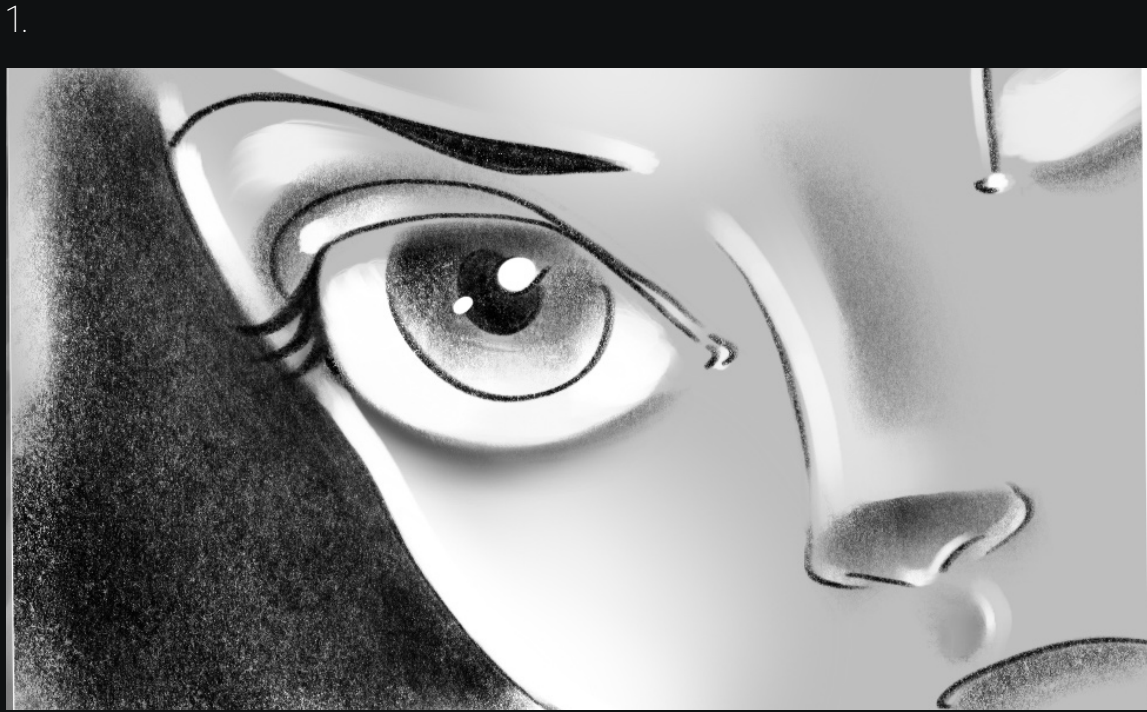
To build suspense we'll use snippets of frozen moments between Ariel and Sulley, two iconic characters. We want to pack as much punch into this shorter timeframe as possible, while at the same time build it up quickly. We'll accomplish this by teasing both characters, and then finally featuring them with brash poses. Ariel's frozen moments can be a closeup of a trident, a wisp of hair across an angry furrowed brow, and the a shimmer of light across her tail. Sulley's could first be a glint on ferocious snarled teeth, sharp claws extending out from his paws, and an uncharacteristic scowl.

From here, we launch into a quick flurry of real-time strikes between them. Sulley springs to action and Ariel creates a bolt of lighting, before being upstaged in a way by the drop of the Mickey card.

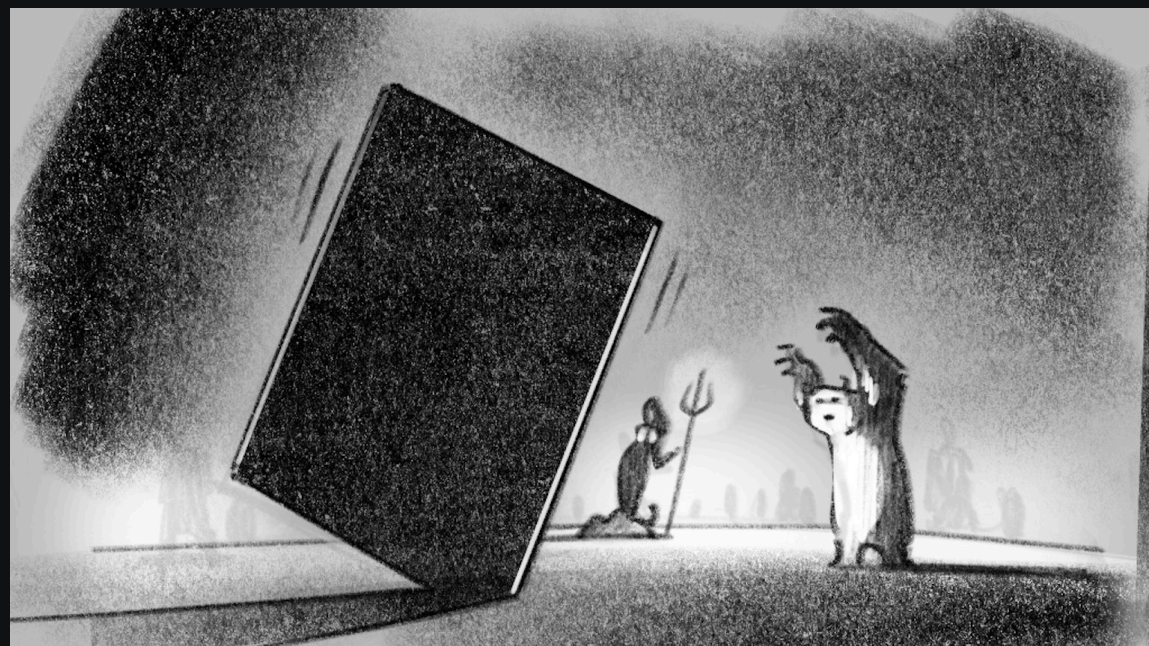
Here we can go into Mickey's frozen moments in a shot or two as he emerges from the game card. The iconic gloved hand, the classic Fantasia robe, until he stands at full strength and we shift to real-time as he forms the beginnings of a powerful orb. Just as we've landed with Mickey, we race back away from him and reveal a mass of Disney character silhouettes as they face off against one another in combat. Ultimately finding ourselves pulling out through the keyhole of the magical chest, and revealing the game on mobile.



STORYBOARD | :15



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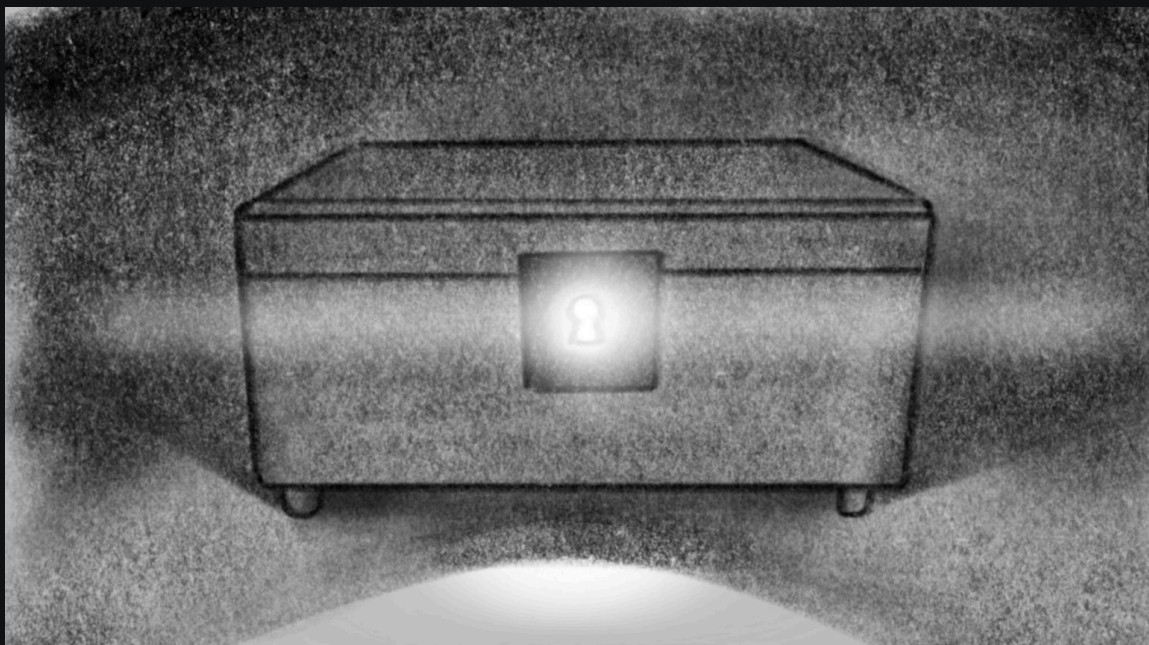
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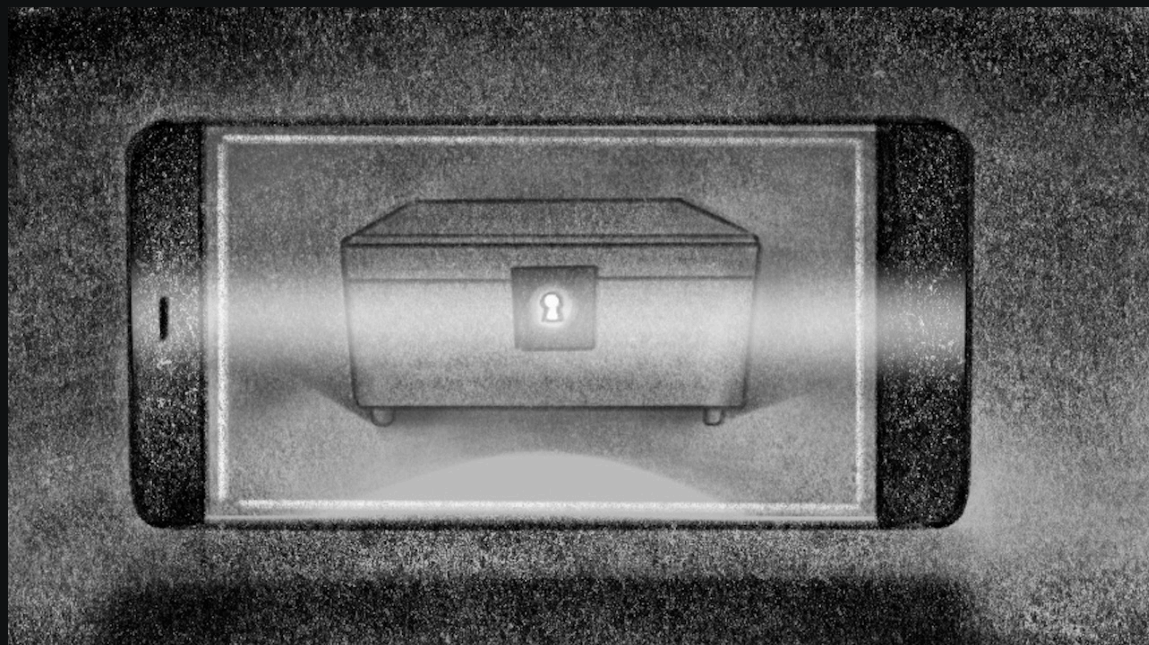
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15.



16.





## :60 STRUCTURE

We will approach this film much like the shorter version, but give ourselves more time to build up and tease out additional characters. There is something genuinely magical about giving a variety of classic Disney characters this graphic treatment.

We can also spend a bit of time on battles between characters, which is an exciting possibility. Sulley might take on a gargoyle, Merida and Facilier might team up to take on a group of little green men who are in a joint battle with Captain Jack Sparrow. We, of course, want to honor gameplay with a little bit of wiggle room for story, and as we progress with your team, we can find the right balance.

After a flurry of battle-centric activity, the hammer gets dropped in the form of the Mickey card. We like the idea that this also puts the rest of the battlefield on notice, pausing their fighting until the Mickey character is fully resolved from the card.

Of course, one trump card is met by another. As we swing around the powerful orb Mickey is creating, we reveal a rocky cliff surrounded by swirling storm clouds in the distance. On the cliff's edge is Maleficent. Plunging her staff into the rock in a frozen moment, we shift back to real-time as she transforms into a mighty dragon.

Cutting back to Mickey, who's sent a massive wave towards the beast. We see him conjuring up a powerful orb of energy. This frozen moment and transition to real-time meets up with our :15 as we pull back to show the massive battle. Here though, instead of keeping them in full silhouette, we'll light up the battlefield to fully reveal the broad range of characters that players can choose from; a really exciting visual! Continuing to pull back through the swath of well-known and obscure Disney personalities, we'll resolve on our locked chest embedded inside a phone.





## VISUAL STYLE

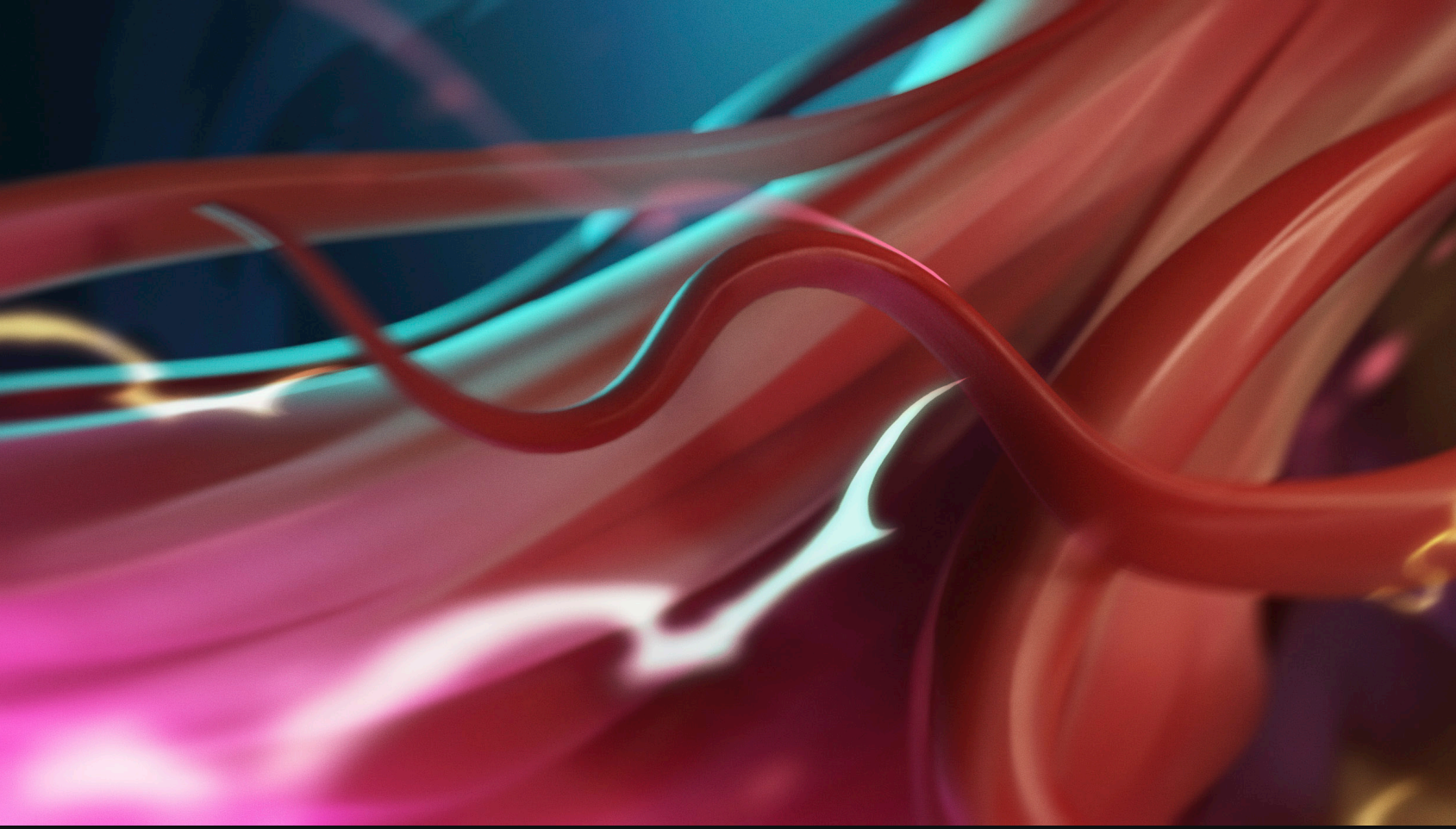
I absolutely love the painterly visual style you've suggested and the visual references you've shared with us. It's a fantastic way to elevate these beloved characters into a more grown up and elegant aesthetic for the game.

It's a unique approach, as it evokes a sense of 3D with the textural quality of illustration. This style sets a magical tone, and we love that all the action occurs in a sort of nebulous space. We can explore adding

a level of detail to certain backgrounds, i.e., the cliff for Maleficent, but off the horizon, it should fall off into space. This gives the arena of battle an infinite quality.

To get the conversation going, we started to do some look development on Ariel based on the existing geo from the game. We plused-up her look by giving her more definition, and we also updated her textures with new painted ones.





## APPROACH / WORKFLOW

To accomplish both films, we'll first begin with our storyboarding process. Here we will dial in the narrative and action of our characters. Once we are in the right place (and most likely in conjunction with the boards), we'll begin to build a board-o-matic. This will help get the timing of our shots down as we find the best way to tell our story within our given timeframe.

As we board, we will also be exploring the look and design of our characters; especially the featured ones, with our dev team. Using game models, we will plus-them-up for the purposes of our film and sculpt in additional details where necessary.

During this stage of development, we'll also begin to find bold poses for the characters as well as rig them for animation.

From here we'll move to the early stages of animation and create a previs from our 3D assets. This layout will provide a working story-flow that ensures we are landing on Mickey as the central figure at the end.

Another huge component of this phase is blocking out all of our camera moves during our frozen moments and our full-on, real-time battle sequences. Our camera blocking will move in conjunction with our character animation blocking during our previs. Once our blocking is complete we will move into final animation, finding and capturing the subtle nuances of our characters.

This piece is an exciting mixture of 3D that is augmented by hand drawn FX cel animation that ties together the illustrative quality of the characters. Once our teams are satisfied with the result, we'll combine our CG and the 2D cell effects and any additional lighting, particles and atmosphere to create the stunning final composite of the film.





## CINEMATOGRAPHY

We want to use a dynamic, roving camera that frames our characters and actions dramatically. Doing most of the heavy lifting, our camera will explore interesting details of the characters and at times fly through suspended magic particles. This gives us a rush of motion even though the characters are suspended in time.

During these suspended moments, we can also play with a shifting depth-of-field, not just shifting to other character details in the background, but also using an extremely narrow aperture to highlight features of the characters themselves.

This breaks them even further away from flat cartoons, and from what's expected. As we get into the fast-paced action sequences, we'll also look for bold framing opportunities to once again show these familiar characters in a different light.

Of course, camera movement is especially important during our frozen moments, but we'll continue to feature a cinematic roving camera throughout to keep the visual language of the film connected.







## EDIT

Even though our edit will begin with ‘frozen moments,’ that doesn’t mean it won’t be packed with energy and anticipation. It will be nice to sort of ramp up the rhythm of the edits as we get closer and closer to live-action, but the timing of the cuts should take a backseat to building up the story and capturing the fundamental aspects of the game.

Our editorial team is more than experienced at toeing that fine line between narrative and information. People will be so excited by the depth of characters they’re witnessing, they could lose subtle game details, but we’ll be sure that our edit gives them enough time to shine through.

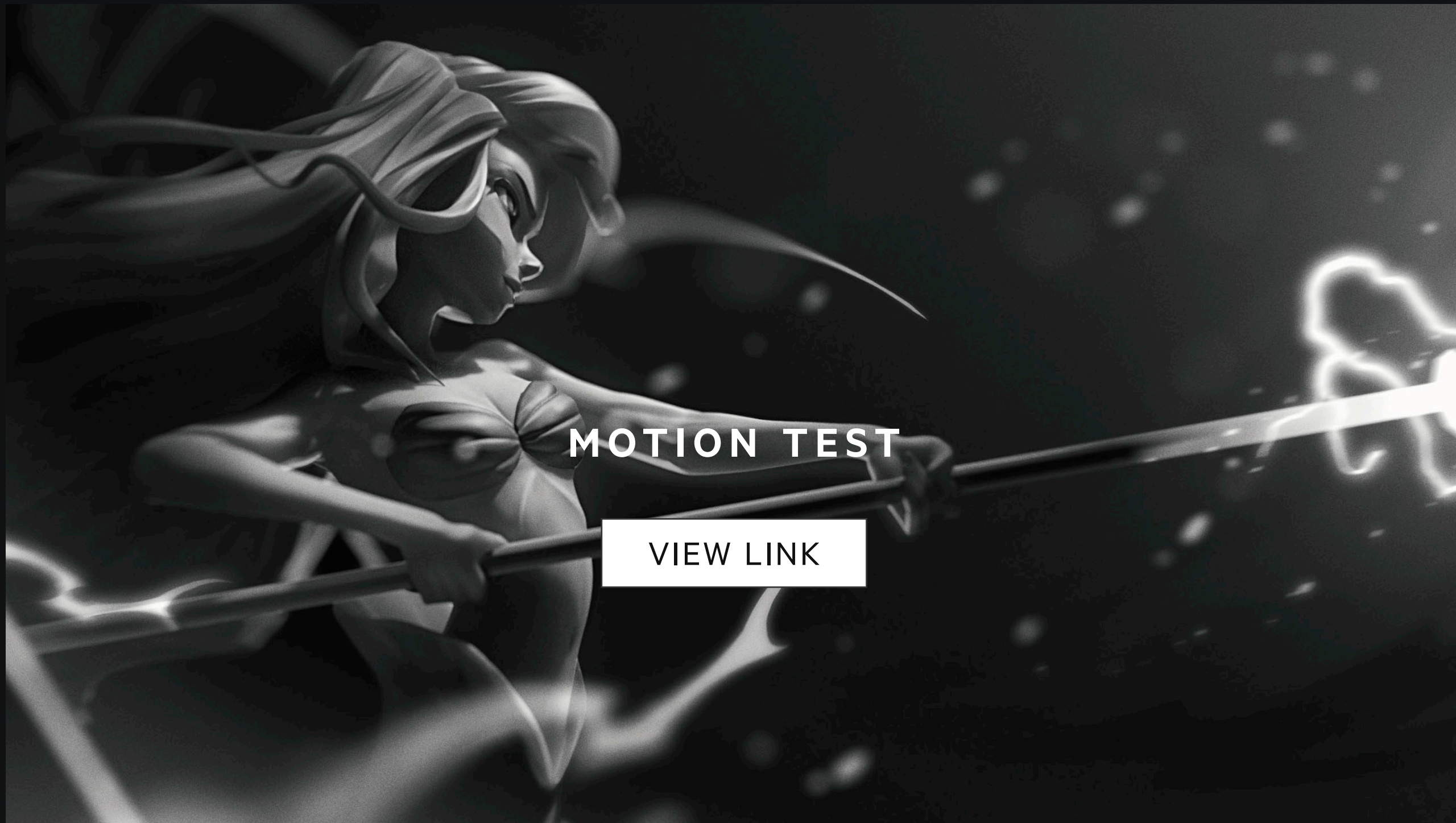
The build-up of the ‘frozen moments,’ might be a good place to sneak in subtle UI features on the cards and really key in on the game’s functionality. Once we get into full-blown live action, we can still feature game mechanics, but our primary goal will be to blow the audience away with our characters and animation. A battle between ‘Sorcerer’s Apprentice’ Mickey and Maleficent... WHAT?!





:15 TEASER | **BOARDOMATICS A & B**

[VIEW LINK](#)



**MOTION TEST**

[VIEW LINK](#)



## MUSIC AND SOUND DESIGN

The track for this film needs to fit the epic nature of the game, our films, and at the same time the nostalgic quality of the characters. We could explore taking the music one of two ways.

A beautifully scored and epic Disney soundtrack that carries a real magical quality to it might be the way to go. Possibly a reimagining of Fantasia's score or almost any iconic Disney music would work, but retooled for our film's purposes.

Another approach could be remixing a more contemporary song. The energy of the Beastie Boys 'Sabotage' feels like a good place to start, but perhaps a remix of something more timeless and recognizable to us Saturday Morning cartoon buffs. By timeless, we mean a Run DMC remix... INXS 'Devil Inside'... Tiffany anyone? Fun, irreverent, and iconic is the critical element in evoking the right response from gamers of all ages. Of course, this approach needs to fit within the Disney wheelhouse and the tone of the films.

Either way, we are really excited about the musical possibilities for these films and would love to collaborate on finding the perfect choice.

In addition to the music we also want the sounds to feel uniquely iconic. We want the familiarity of each character and their actions to ring true through their likeness as well as the sounds they create.

We also want our sound design to emphasize our camera moves, as we get closer to a powerful orb of energy or a magical lighting strike we need to feel that sound! Ideally, we'd have game sounds to start from, but build them out in cinematic fashion. I also like the idea of featuring the voices of characters when and if appropriate to the game.



# THANK YOU

Our team couldn't be more excited by the potential of this project. It speaks to us on so many levels. Of course, these are our initial thoughts, and we look forward to working through all the creative details with you, to deliver truly epic films.

Sincerely,

Lisha & The Mill+ Team



**THANK YOU**

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