

Taren Morse

Academy of Art University
MFA Concept Illustration
Midpoint Review

Kindred

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A utobiography	1
R esume	2
P ortfolio Samples	3
M idpoint Thesis Abstract	5
M idpoint Thesis Project Proposal	6
S tyl ^e / Technique Samples	9
S tatement of Professional Goals	10
T imeline	11

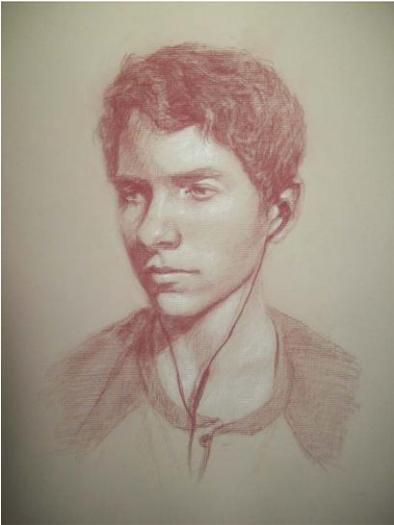
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Ever since I was young I created my own comics and characters. But back then, drawing was simply a hobby and it never dawned on me to try to improve my skills. For my senior project in high school I drew a simple, eighteen-page comic book. That project made me realize how poor my drawing skills were. Because of this, I had made it a point to avoid art and felt biology—which I was equally passionate about—was the direction I should take in college.

When I became a student at Sterling College, I changed my degree from biology to programming, and eventually, to art. Despite my effort to avoid art because of my lack of skills, I couldn't help but move in that direction. I felt art was an excellent way to explore the world around me, especially in biology. I began studying traditional art and quickly fell in love with drawing and painting. My thirst to learn helped me to absorb a good deal of knowledge in a short amount of time. By continually pushing myself to do better, I quickly exceeded the expectations of my professors and classmates. It was no question that I had found my passion.

I graduated at the top of my class at Sterling College, but I didn't feel I learned as much as I could have since my only challenge was the goals I would set for myself. Immediately after graduation, I enrolled at the Academy of Art University. I had a strong excitement for the anticipated challenge it posed. My hope was that AAU would challenge me beyond my self-made goals, and up to the present, AAU has met my expectations. The knowledge I have gained at this school has been invaluable, and I have been applying what I have learned diligently to my personal projects. As much as I have learned in the past two years, I'm exuberant for the challenge that will present itself in the next two years.

PORTFOLIO SAMPLES





MIDPOINT THESIS ABSTRACT

I have always been interested in visual development and have studied the “making of” books from various games and animated films over the years. My passion in general is storytelling, but not just any type of storytelling, the kind portrayed through illustrations, such as graphic novels. Because of this passion, I have developed many graphic novel scripts over the years, among these is *Kindred*. *Kindred* is the most complex of the stories I have developed and, for this reason, I have chosen it for my final thesis project. It has a wide variety of characters, creatures, environments, and technologies which would make it an exciting and challenging story to visually develop. Although this story is intended to be a graphic novel, I will not be working on sequentials for my thesis project as that is not my focus. However, I do plan to take a couple of graphic novel courses in order to ensure I am well-rounded as an artist and better equipped to achieve my future goals.

MIDPOINT THESIS PROJECT PROPOSAL

For my final thesis project I plan to work on the visual development of *Kindred*, a story concept I created which will be a graphic novel in its completion. *Kindred* is about a young man named Kyson who comes from the Earthen Realm—one of seven realms that exists in its own reality. The Earthen Realm is basically Earth as we know it; however, it will be portrayed in a timeless manner. At the beginning of the story, Kyson inadvertently jumps through a Gate that takes him to a foreign realm called Mekreia. Much to his misfortune, Kyson finds himself in the middle of a two-thousand-year-old war and being falsely accused as an enemy spy. Hoping to clear his name, and avoid execution, Kyson sets out on a journey across Mekreia as a prisoner at the mercy of his captors.

The bulk of the story takes place in the Mekreian Realm where war has been waged for thousands of years by Xecrenon and his Echurlin warriors. Xecrenon's army largely inhabits the far Northern region of the Mekreian continent leaving the fortified Southern regions untouched but at high risk of attack. These Southern regions are what I will be focusing on in the visual development of my thesis. However, although Kyson's adventure primarily takes place in Mekreia's Southern regions, some locations in other realms will be developed as well. One of these would be the Earthen Realm where Kyson is first introduced at a train station. Another would be Xecrenon's realm, Sentroavia, where only stone walls remain from a great civilization that was overcome by disease.

I will be developing at least four different fictional cultures for this project. The first would be the people from the Earthen Realm. As I mentioned earlier, this realm is Earth as we understand it but with a timeless approach. For instance, the train station in the opening scene resembles a 1920's train station with a modern spin. The next race I would be developing is the

Mekreians who are a human race with both primitive and advanced technologies. They would use wagons, bow and arrows, and such, but also have high tech machinery for advanced medicine and research. Most of the environment will involve their cities which are generally built with stone and wood. Another race would be the Sentroavian people, which is Xecrenon's race. These people are similar to the Mekreians except for their lack of advanced technology and their off-human appearance. Lastly, are the Echurlin who are bull-like creatures from an unknown realm and primarily use axes, clubs, or their bare fists in combat. They have a gruff appearance due to their horns and thick skin.

The reason I chose *Kindred* for my final thesis project was because of the variety in characters, props, and environments. Some of the characters and creatures I will be developing for my thesis include: Kyson who was mentioned earlier; Keima, who is a female warrior from Mekreia, Xecrenon, who is a Sentroavian warlord; and the Echurlin General. Each of these characters comes from a different realm so their design would reflect their cultural standing. I may also include a sheet of people resembling different cultures and occupations such as council men, scientists, soldiers, commoners, etc. Props would include weapons, primitive and advanced Mekreian technologies, and Mekreian wildlife. Environments would involve interior and exterior scenes such as the entrance to Terrakesha (Mekreia's capital city), Lwodenal's marketplace, the Sentroavian temple, the Gate, Xecrenon's castle and the surrounding areas, the train station, the Council Hall, and Amalusha's home.

I expect the biggest challenge during this project would be developing the various races since there are so many. I will be doing a good deal of research on various cultures in order to achieve believable differences and will study concept art from films such as *The Lord of Rings* which also involves the visual development of multiple cultures.

Despite the complexity of my proposed final project, I have the enthusiasm and determination to see this story come to life! Because of the difficulties I will be facing in this project, I plan to take courses that will help me strengthen my understanding of perspective and human anatomy. These courses will serve as the building blocks for developing believable ethnic differences and architecture. Also, since *Kindred* will eventually be a graphic novel, I also plan to take a couple of graphic novel courses in order to prepare myself to complete *Kindred* after graduation.

STYLE/ TECHNIQUE SAMPLES

Kindred will be a low fantasy graphic novel for ages teen through thirties; however, for my thesis project I will only be doing the visual development of this story. Although this will eventually be a graphic novel, it will be digitally painted instead of drawn and inked, so the illustrations in my final thesis project (which focuses solely on the visual development) will be digitally painted to reflect this. There may be minimal use of line used in the illustrations and brush strokes may be fairly loose in order to achieve a balance between style and speed.

The overall style will be stylized realism. The colors will be generally less saturated but may have pockets of higher saturation, particularly where clothing is concerned. The style may be similar to the following illustrations, although I expect the style for *Kindred* to evolve as I experiment with different approaches in the digital painting process.



STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL GOALS

During the next two years studying at AAU, I plan to focus more on honing my weaknesses. I have three primary goals to target these weaknesses--among these is perspective. Seeing paintings from Eric Gagnon



(example below), Feng Zhu, and Pete Amachree (example above) have inspired me to rise to the challenge of taking my perspective skills to an advanced level. Another goal of mine is to



enhance my understanding of human anatomy—particularly where hands and feet are concerned, but also in terms of ethnicity so I can better portray the cultural differences of the

characters in my final thesis project. Lastly, I feel my paintings are largely stiff and I hope to incorporate more energy into them by adding more rhythm and dynamic. After targeting these three weaknesses, I expect my skills to be more up to par once I graduate.

Once I graduate, my goal is to teach at a college or university. However, I also plan to work on several personal projects on the side. These largely entail developing my own graphic novels. My thesis project, *Kindred*, is among these. Once my final thesis project is finished, I will have a solid foundation for the visual development of the story and the skills to produce the finalized graphic novel.

TIMELINE

Completed Courses – 30 units

Sustained Figurative Concepts (ILL 612: MS)
Layout Design for Animators (ANM 377)
Head Drawing (FA 602: MS)
Character Design and Drawing for Animators (ANM 633: MS)
Renaissance Art World & Its Classical Origins (GLA 601)
Crossing Borders: Art and Culture in a Global Society (GLA 606)
Creature Design (ILL 639)
Situation and Environment (ILL 607: MS)
Visual Elements of Story (VIS 611: MS)
Digital Painting (ILL 660: MS)

Future Courses – 33 units

Fall 2013

Concept, Technique, and Illustration (ILL 602: MS)
Perspective for Illustrators (ILL 625: MS)

- ❖ Have 3 environment paintings finished

Spring 2014

Graphic Novel I (ILL 620: MS)
Group Directed Study: Concept Art (ILL 801-3: MS)
Landscape Painting (FA 605: MS)

- ❖ Have 3 character designs finished

Summer 2014

Genres in Science Fiction and Fantasy (GLA 712)

- ❖ Have 2 environments, last of character designs, and prop designs finished

Fall 2014

Graphic Novel II (ILL 630: MS)
Advanced Perspective (ILL 243)
Narrative Illustration (ILL 604: MS)

- ❖ Have 3 environment paintings finished

Spring 2015

Group Directed Study (ILL 801-3: MS)
Professional Practices & Communication for Illustrators (GS 675)

- ❖ Finish last 3 environment paintings