

THE ART OF
Disney **EPIC**
MICKEY





The following is an excerpt of Warren Spector's foreword from *The Art of Disney Epic Mickey* :

Foreword – warren spectator

From the start, I knew we had to achieve a higher level of graphical quality than I'd ever even dreamed of reaching before. I mean, when you think of the word "Disney" (at least when I do), the first things that comes to mind are amazing imagery, amazing style, amazing character design and, of course, amazing animation!

Disney Epic Mickey is set in a world called Wasteland, a world where all of Disney's forgotten, rejected, replaced and outdated creative efforts go when audiences, filmmakers, and Imagineers tire of them. That fictional setting gave the Junction Point team a free hand in drawing inspiration—specific inspiration—from anything and everything ever created at the Walt Disney Company.

Holy Cow.

Talk about the mother lode of material! Talk about fun!

We were like kids in a candy shop, rummaging through the Disney Archives on the Studio Lot, through the prop archives, through the Imagineering Research Center and the Animation Research Library and the Disney Consumer Products "Lounge." We devoured every book we could get our hands on about Disney's history (and that's a lot of books, let me tell you!). We read comic books, watched movies, read Big Little Books, played with toys. You name it, we did it, Disney-style.

OPPOSITE:

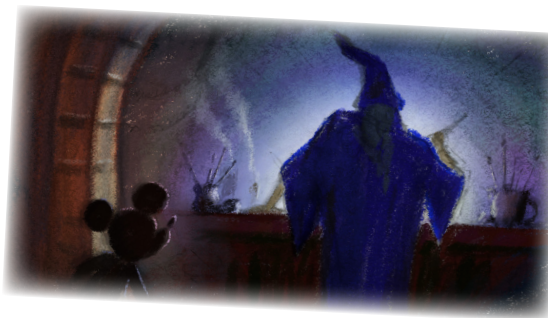
This image of Mickey Mouse captured the adventurous spirit of the character in a painterly style that spoke to the game's celebration of the creative process.



We saw and even touched blueprints and color swatches for buildings at Disneyland's Main Street U.S.A., models for film props (the *Nautilus* from *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* was exquisite!), costumes out of cherished childhood memory (a Mexican soldier's uniform with Zorro's "Z" sliced through the jacket!), storyboards for films that were never made ("The Gremlins" created by Roald Dahl!), as well as strange and wonderful sketches for characters we thought we knew (countless Alice in Wonderland designs, a variety of Tinkerbell possibilities, even rejected-Woodys galore!).

All of that stuff brought Wasteland, our game world, to life for us in unexpected, even magical ways. The place became real—the product of not only Walt's respect, but also his company's respect for its creative heritage. We were inspired and driven by a need to do justice to all of Disney's children, especially the forgotten and rejected ones.

We most definitely were inspired, but we were also challenged. We were challenged not only by the talent of the Disney artists who came before us, but by the unique needs of *Disney Epic Mickey*.



Let the Game . . . Begin!

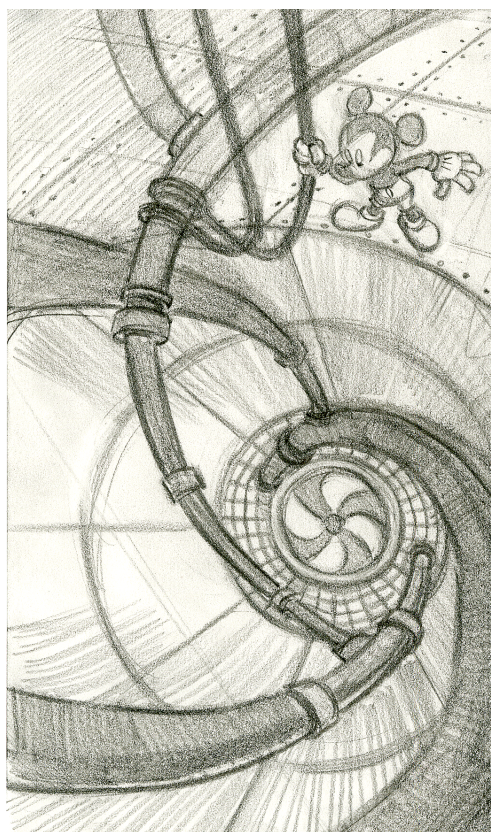
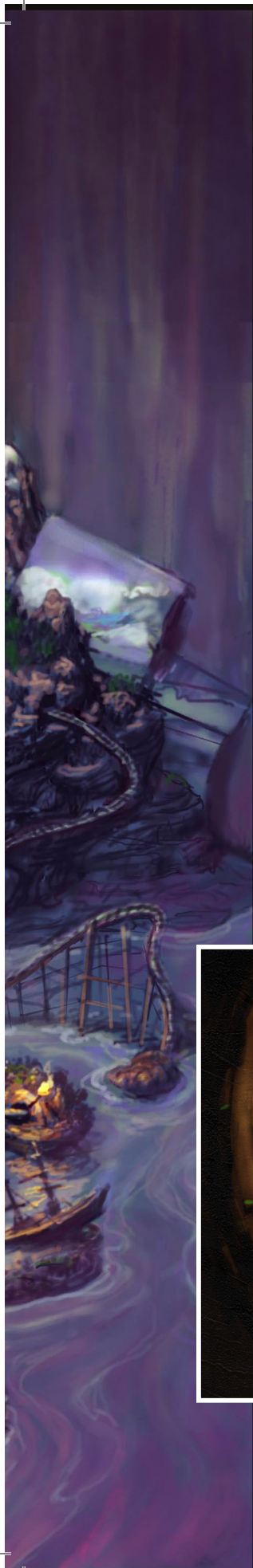


THIS PAGE: These early storyboard images by Junction Point concept artists were instrumental in guiding the animators and CGI artists who brought the game's introduction to life. These images also got the team thinking that a "storyboards brought to life" approach might be a great way to communicate key story elements in the game itself.

OPPOSITE: This image was generated later in the development of *Disney Epic Mickey* than anyone at Junction Point or Disney would have liked, but it was one of the first that captured the desired tone of the game. The iconography is undeniably Disney, and it's clear that Mickey is a hero in a dark world.







Into Wasteland

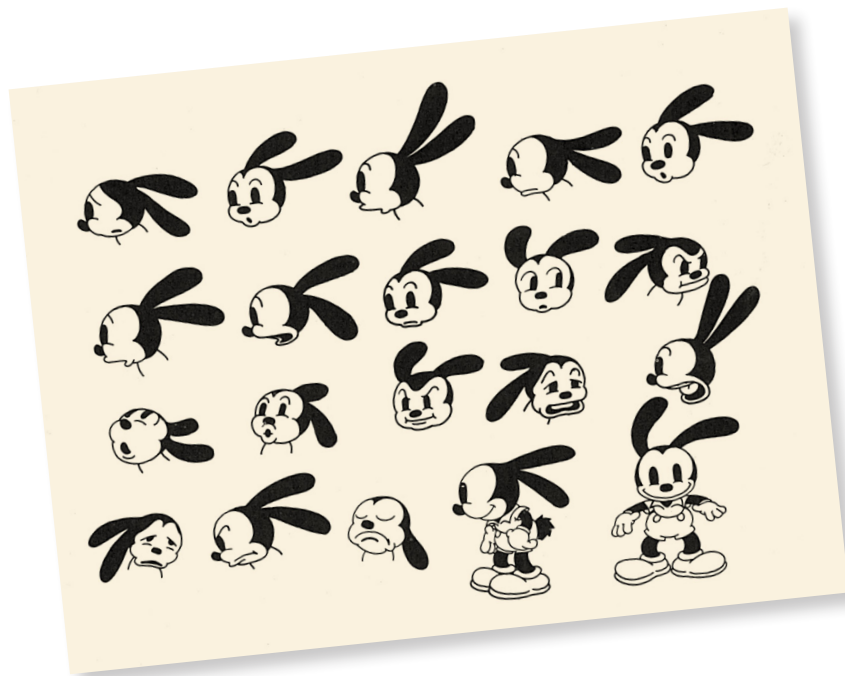
TOP LEFT: An early concept sketch that gave a sense of the scale of the world and of the outsized challenges Mickey Mouse would face. That's a leap worthy of a hero, and that fan down there looks dangerous!

TOP RIGHT: One of the earliest images that proved we could use color to differentiate between "toon" things (things that could be erased using Thinner) and "inert" things (things that were immune to Thinner).

LEFT: A darkly twisted version of an Alice in Wonderland-inspired level. The Cheshire Cat has never looked more malevolent. This land was never built, but it still exists out there in Wasteland, perhaps under an ocean of Thinner, waiting to be discovered.

FAR LEFT: This Wasteland overview was the first in which the world was structured like the real-world Disneyland. Earlier sketches had been more vertical, inspired by paintings and woodcuts from Dante's Inferno. This overview hints at what Wasteland once was, and shows off the world's makeshift nature.





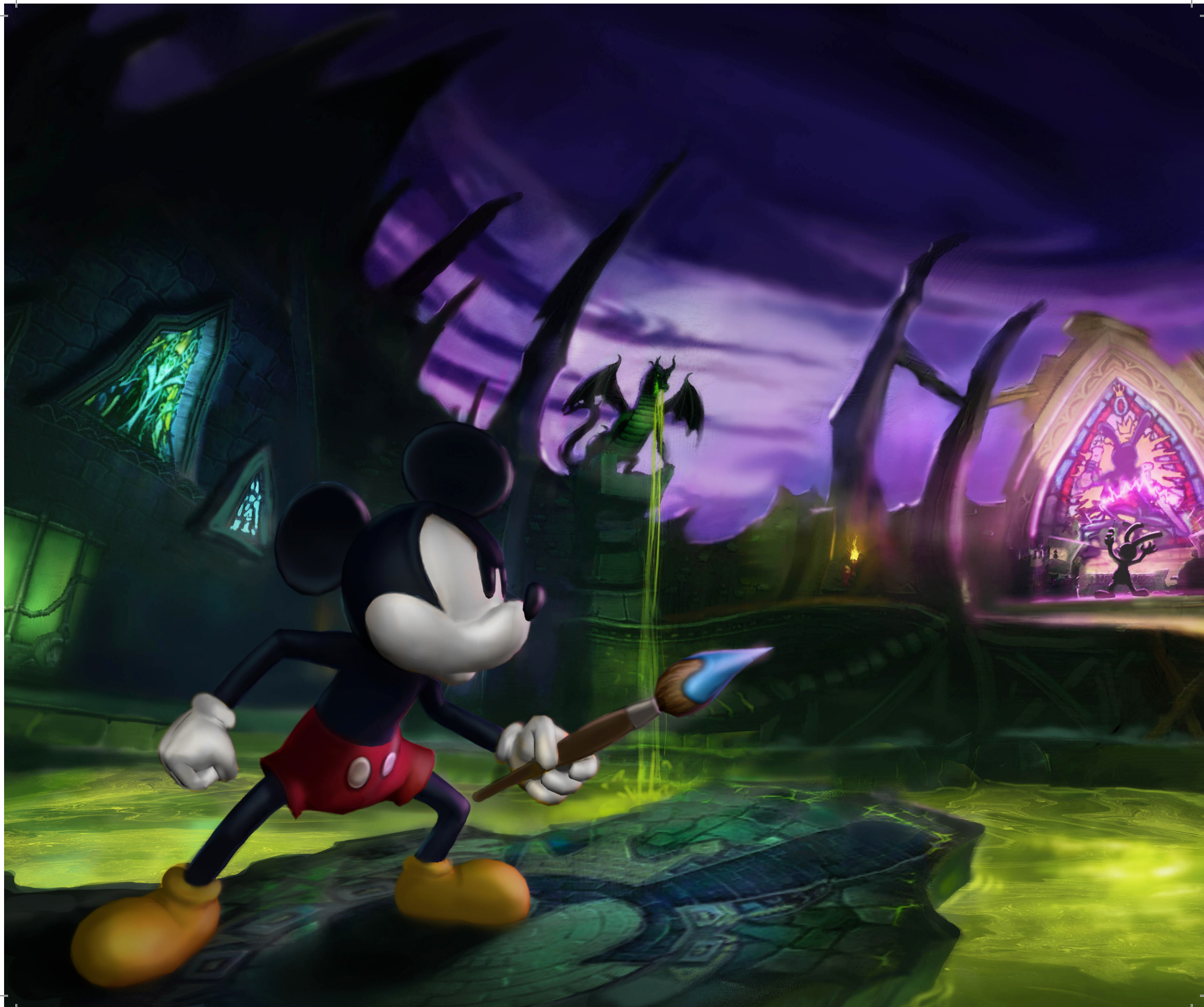
A Forgotten Star

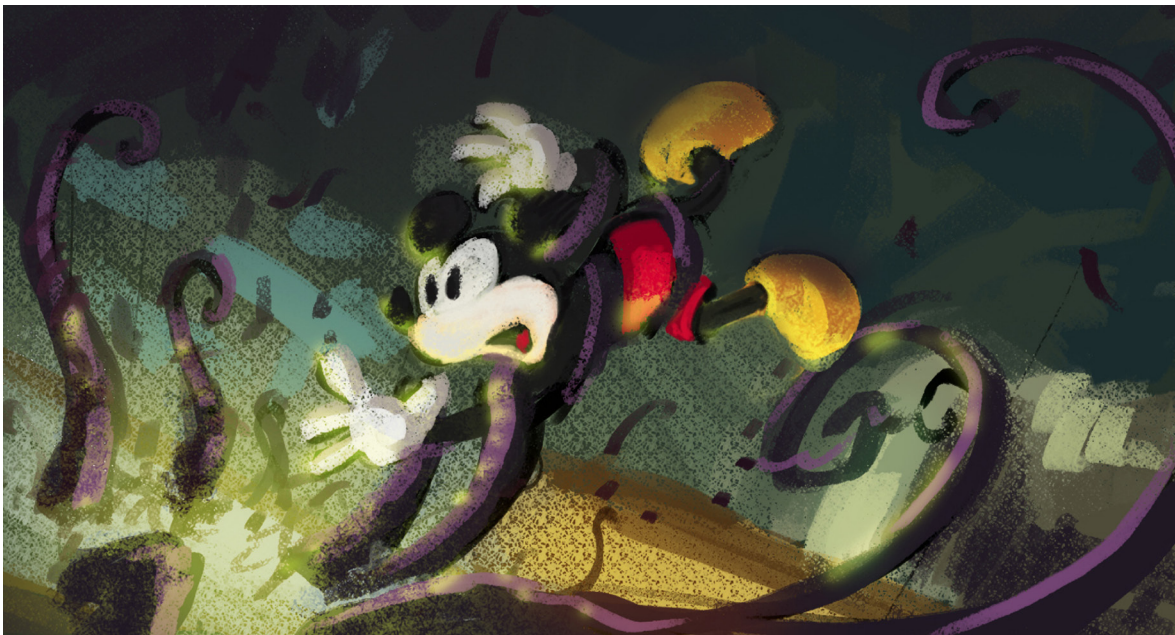


ABOVE: Though Mickey Mouse is the star of the show, his older brother, Oswald is right there with him every step of the way. We wanted to capture the spirit of Walt Disney's first cartoon star (seen top left in an original model sheet) while bringing Oswald a little more in line with the look of Mickey. Players had to believe the two were brothers.

OPPOSITE: Can you say "resentful?" Oswald, once one of the most popular and successful cartoon stars, sees Mickey as someone who stole the life of fame and fortune that should have been his. This image captures their initial relationship perfectly!





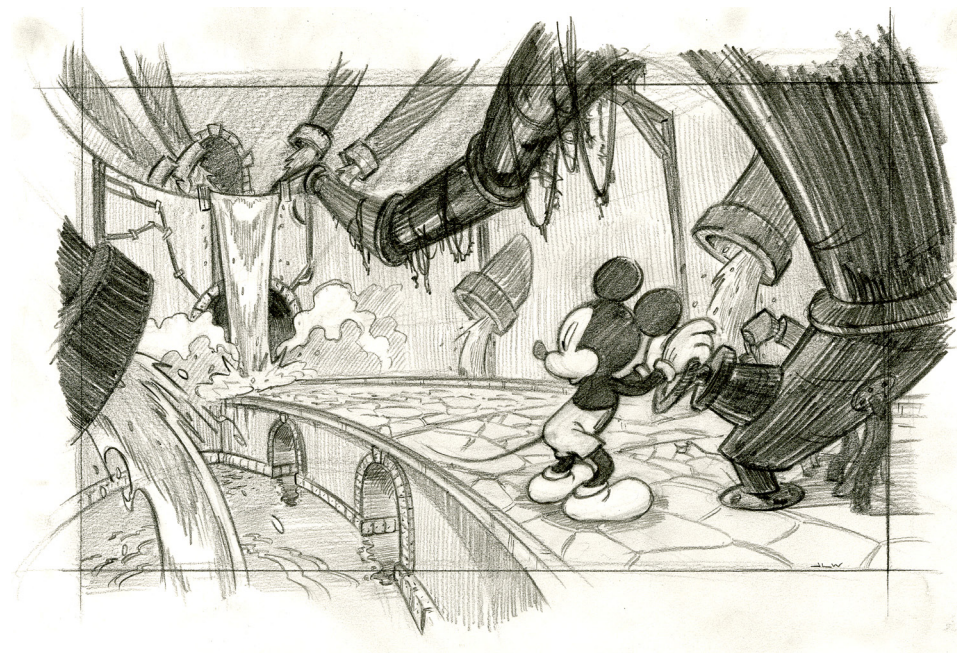


Enter Mickey

ABOVE: For Mickey to be a hero, he had to find himself up against true danger and villainy. We open the game with Mickey being dragged from his comfortable world into Wasteland by a mysterious foe who seems far tougher than Mickey. Of course, Mickey shows he's made of sterner stuff than expected!

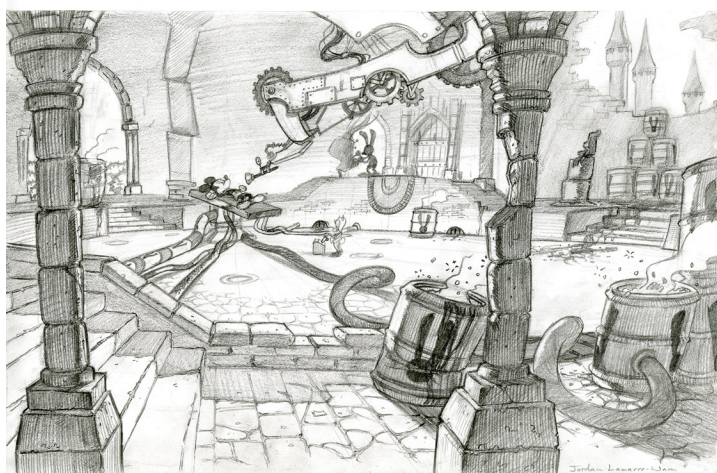
RIGHT: Early sketches of Mickey were a little "cuter" than the final version. This sketch also shows a little of the "behind the scenes" feel we wanted for the game.

LEFT: This was one of the first images that really nailed the epic and heroic quality we wanted Mickey to have. This image also shows off Mickey's magic paintbrush, a tool that lets him create and erase parts of the landscape, and is his key to survival.





OPPOSITE: The first place you explore in *Disney Epic Mickey* is called "Dark Beauty Castle." Once home to Oswald, it's a place of desolation and danger. It's also where the Mad Doctor conducts his terrible experiments. This image was one of the most important generated during the development of the game, the first to capture the split between toon and inert, dark and light, familiar and strange, desolate and beautiful, all contrasts we needed to be present in all game locations.



ABOVE: Humor, peril, echoes of real cartoons, they're all here in this early sketch. The cartoon echoed here is *The Mad Doctor* (1933) a major inspiration for much of the game.

TOP RIGHT: Late in the game, a sacrifice is made by the player. But that sacrifice has the unintended consequence of unleashing the TRUE power of the Blot. Here, Mickey, Oswald and Gremlin Gus get their first glimpse of the Blot in all his hideous glory. They quickly realize what they've been fighting so far has just been... drippings.

RIGHT: Ortensia, Oswald's true love, was an important part of *Disney Epic Mickey* from the start. She was inspired by Oswald's girlfriends from the original cartoons. Her location and status changed several times and it was with some regret that we couldn't use this lovely sketch of Ortensia's bed chamber.



Dark Beauty Castle





Gremlin Village



ABOVE LEFT: Every Disney hero or heroine needs a “spirit guide,” a voice of reason, a source of inspiration, a conscience. Pinocchio had Jiminy Cricket. Dumbo had Timothy Mouse. Mickey has Gus the Gremlin, a character from a World War II Disney feature which was never fully finished.

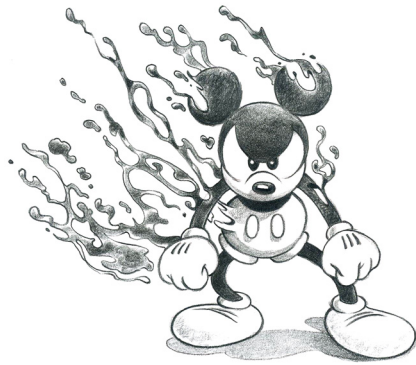
ABOVE: One of the mandates for the *Disney Epic Mickey* team was to find inspiration from real films and park elements. This image is a perfect example of that. Everything in the scene (except Mickey, himself, of course) is found in the real “It’s a Small World Ride.” A little twisted, but still recognizable.

LEFT: This is a terrific example of “twisted but recognizable” and our desire to bring inanimate things from the Parks to life. At the end of the day, this dragon from the “It’s a Small World” ride didn’t become one of Mickey’s foes, but it did end up in the game in slightly different form.

RIGHT: This was another critical image, relatively early in the project. It helped establish the rides as part of our game structure and one of the organizing principles for our world. It has a recognizable element—the Clock Tower near the Small World exit—re-imagined as a living thing. It also shows the “behind the scenes” areas we wanted to reveal, in highly fictionalized form. And Mickey’s presence in the foreground gives it a sense of epic scale.







Mean Street



TOP: This early version of Mickey in all his drippy glory captured the steely determination we wanted in our hero. The drippy-ness set him apart not only from earlier versions of Mickey Mouse in all other media, but from other video game characters.

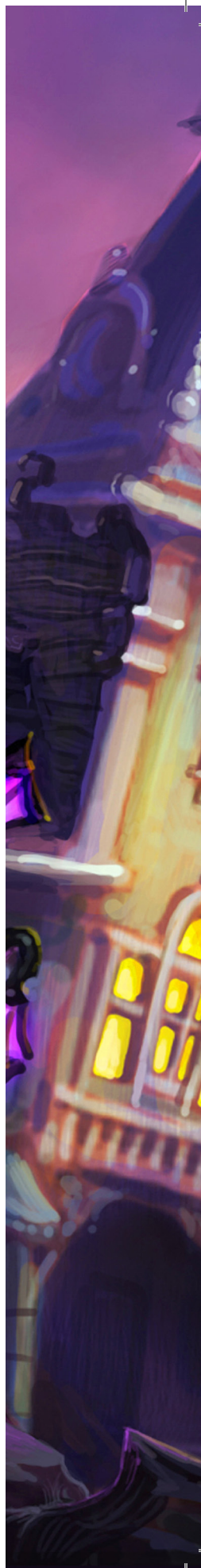
ABOVE: Another critical image that helped the team define the game's art style. Here, they explored the incorporation of background paintings (in this case, from *Lady and the Tramp*) in place of

realistic skies. In addition, the clouds and even the sun were placed as physical objects hanging from ropes. Crucial to *Disney Epic Mickey's* gameplay, this was an early attempt at differentiating the painted things from those that were partially erased. It also helped differentiate the characters, including enemies immune to Mickey's Paint and Thinner abilities (as evidenced in this painting by a metallic sheen—an approach that didn't make it into the game).



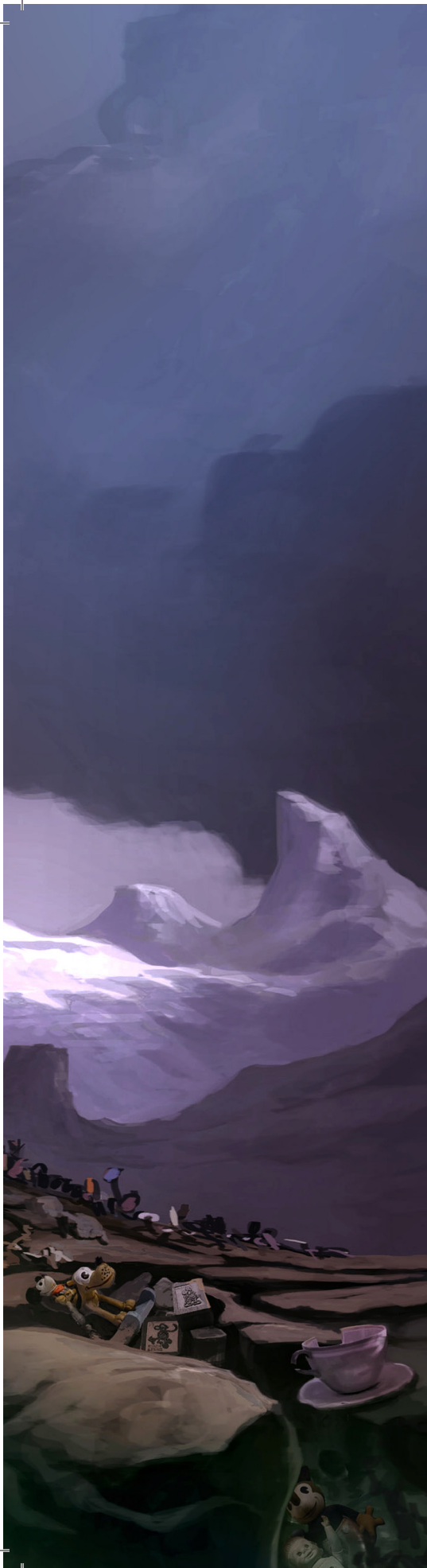
ABOVE: Though there are clear real-world inspirations from Main Street USA (the lamppost, the basic style of the buildings, the castle as focal point at the end of the street) this painting was a little to "out there" to be useful as direct inspiration. However, its dark, mysterious mood served as a touchstone for the team.

OPPOSITE: The team generated dozens of variations of this image, exploring ideas about time of day, color palette, overall tone, and scale. This version was deemed too dark and divorced from the reality of Main Street USA. The approach to differentiating colorful painted things was too much of a contrast to the dark, sharp-edged inert building components. Still, many elements of this image were used in the final game, including the Walt and Oswald Partners Statue at the end of the street, and the castle in the distance.









Mickeyjunk Mountain

ABOVE: This was, and remains, one of the most striking and evocative images generated in the concept phase of this game's development. Although the setting changed, it's still a great visual, and one that reveals the team's dedication to creating new and unique Wasteland locations from real world elements.

LEFT: The exterior of Mickeyjunk Mountain went through countless iterations. Originally, it was conceived as a huge mound of merchandise, with no underlying structure. It was to be linked to the rest of the world by a version of the Disneyland Skyway (no longer at the real world Park, but still very much a part of Wasteland). The integration of ride elements and internal support structures resulted in a rethinking of the mountain as a version of the Matterhorn with a "skin" of Mickeyjunk, which was more in line with the feel of Wasteland.



ABOVE: The game location known as "The Jug" underwent countless changes during development. At one time it was a bleach-bottle-like thing for Mickey to explore . . . at another time it was home to a rejected version of Ursula from *The Little Mermaid*. It's been filled with machinery designed to drain the Thinner Ocean that was eating away the world of Wasteland, bit by bit, which is the version depicted in this image. In the end, it morphed into a glass prison for the Blot.



Disney **EPIC** **MICKEY**

Written by Austin Grossman (*Soon I Will Be Invincible*) and with a foreword by Warren Spector, *The Art of Disney Epic Mickey* will be available Summer 2011.

This 160 page, 10" x 12" volume will showcase the artistic building blocks of the world of *Disney Epic Mickey*, including never-before-seen material. Don't miss this chance to see concept art, designs, insights, and the creation of a stunning new world, with commentary from Spector and the Junction Point team!

