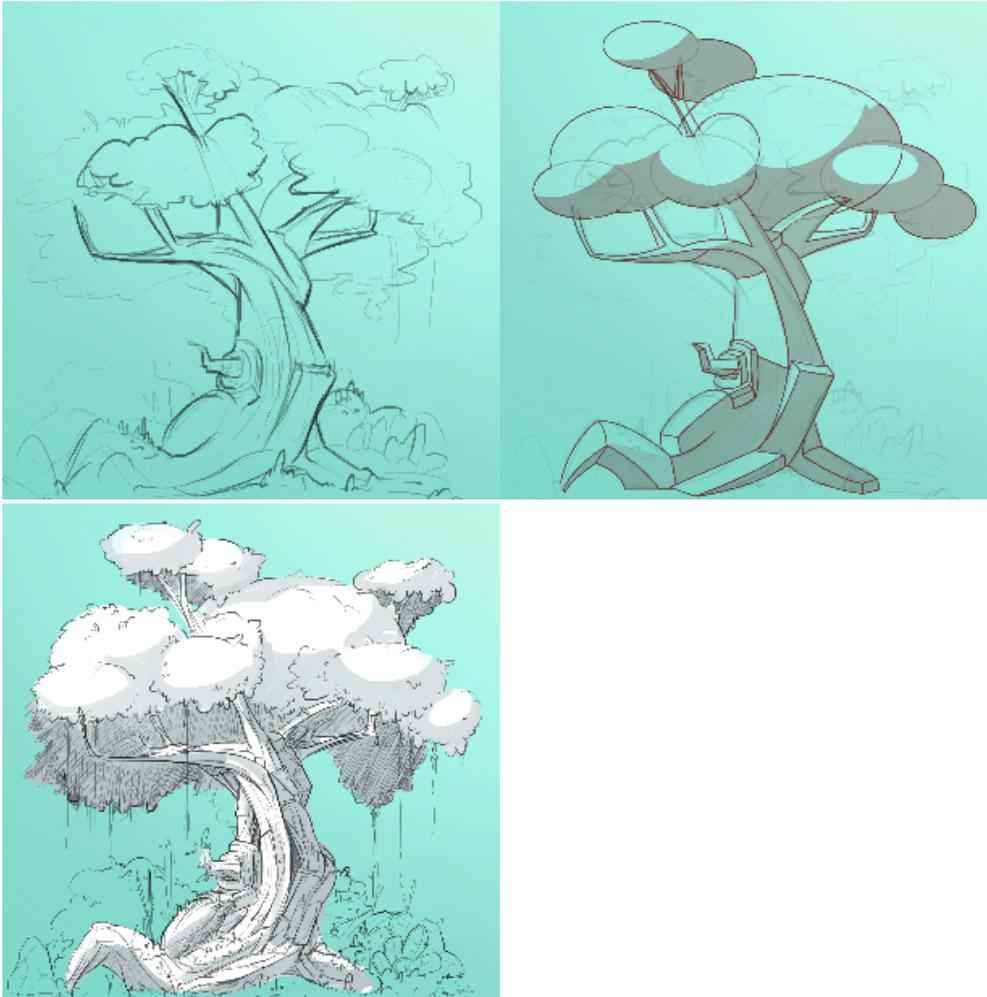


Tree

This is how I typically draw trees and is similar to how I made the tree in Lucky Ladybugs and Rainbow Riches.

001 Sketching



First I start off with a rough gesture sketch. Thinking about an interesting motion and posture to give the tree. When I detail out the sketch I try and think volumetrically. I don't usually do the middle stage but I usually think about it that way. The trunk and the branches I make into cuboid shapes to make lighting them easy. And the leaves are collections of spheres. It helps gives the tree a feeling of form and something stable to add detail to.

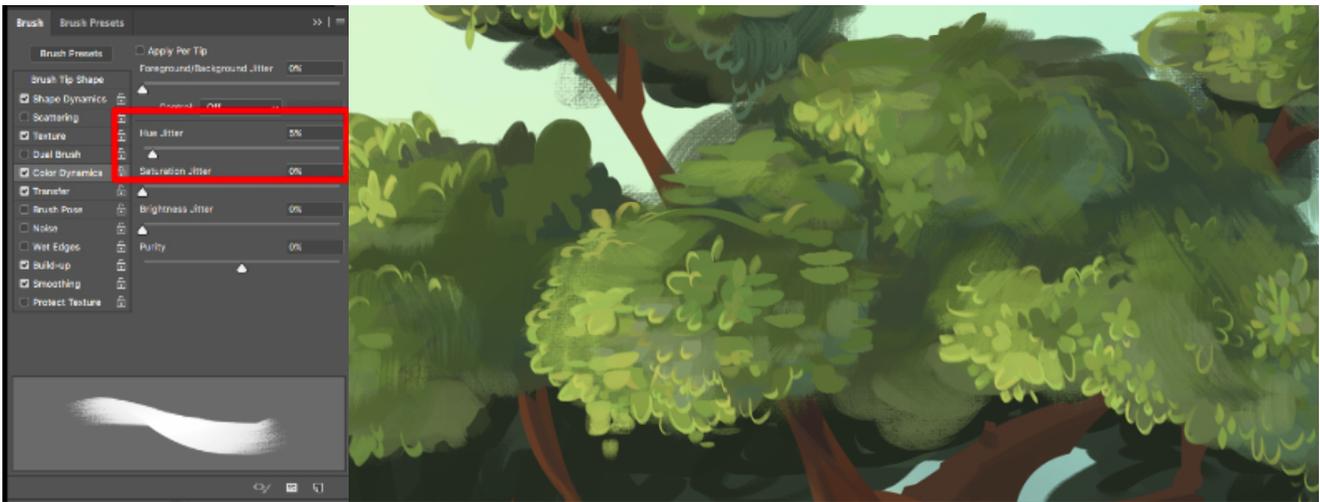
002 Colour Blocking



Wood material doesn't get much more red getting darker from the mid-tone but does desaturate a fair bit. When it gets to lighter areas it gets yellower and desaturates. I start by using the pen tool to block out different sections of the tree on different layers. And on a new layer paint in some leaf colours. Since the light is yellow and leaves are semi-transparent they pick up quite a lot of the yellow but I'm also keeping in mind that I want them to pick up some of the ambient blue light from the day time sky. The background was also looking a little harsh and flat so I painted in a darker section and some yellow light to push it back.

When painting the tree I start from the general and work towards the specific. Starting with large areas of light and shadow (even more basic than the second image above) and working into them to define more specific and small details. I'm keeping in mind that the light is coming from the top right and so part of the trunk will be shaded by the canopy.

003 Detailing



When detailing out the leaves and foliage I try and avoid giving the same amount of detail to every part of the canopy/bush/grass. Partly because this takes forever but also because creating a variation in detail, I think, creates a more interesting image overall. So I add the most detail and contrast in areas that catch the light. The same is sort of true for the detailing on the bark. Slightly less so because they're defined, solid shapes with sharp edges. But the most definition is still given to the part where the tree is brightest. So in those areas I take a lot of time to pick out highlights, define edges and add in some colour variation. A brush with colour variation on it makes that easy but a small amount of hue variation can make a lot of difference.

Next I start to think about all the different stuff that happens with trees; moss, mushrooms, blossoms, grass... Moss and grass are different plants (or I guess could be a collection of different varieties of plants too) but it gives us a chance to add a different kind of green and some more interesting colours. It also looks more natural than if all plants are the same hue range. The grass also helps to make the tree feel like it's sunk into the ground as it overgrows the bottom edge.

004 Light



Using a large, soft brush with an overlay blend mode I go through the layers, after locking their transparency, and paint in a bright yellow for surfaces affected by light coming in from the top left and a pale blue for surfaces affected by light coming in from the right side. Then I go through and, using the pen tool, define areas that have cast shadows and use a dark, desaturated purple (to contrast the light colour) to overlay these shadows. Lastly I go through with a brush in normal mode and pick out some of the edges.



Then just throw in some rocks and other plants and you're done!

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