



# ***Energizer Bunny*** ***RECHARGED***

***Treatment by David Blumenfeld***





## *Longevity. Persistence. Heroic endurance.*

*We see someone exhibit these qualities, and we call them an “Energizer Bunny”.*

*The term is part of our everyday vernacular. I can't imagine any other way to define how iconic something has become than this. Of course, with this status comes a responsibility to treat that property with respect and dignity. I'll be the first one to say I'm that guy in the room who sees a childhood character come on television in its modern computer generated incarnation and yell loudly at the screen, fists clenched, “Why did they change this? What was wrong with it for the last thirty years?! What have they done to the memory I know and love?”.*

*It is for this specific reason that I believe we're the right people to bring this famous icon back to the level of greatness he deserves. We understand the care that must be taken to maintain the brand identity, the recognizable likeness of which has been honed and crafted over decades. Any slight change that breaks this beloved feeling can easily be met in failure, and that's a challenge I'm confident we can succeed in.*

*We felt very strongly about taking the proper approach to this task, and decided to utilize our resources to work on some conceptual character design and development studies. Over the next few pages, I intend to take you on a small journey through this process and what we arrived upon. I am confident that our eagerness and attention to detail will show through, and this should give us a nice springboard to continue the process as partners on this amazingly fun campaign which we're honestly giddy about being involved with!*



## + Character Comparison

*In keeping with the notion of updating a character's visual feel and style without altering its defining core sense of self, I wanted to present the drastic difference a simple change of hairstyle, clothing, accessories, and attitude can make. Presented here are a handful of famous leading actors, contrasted by their period roles versus their modern dapper styles. Overall, the underlying person is the same, perhaps with a little slimming and toning thrown in. What has changed, however, is the style, the fashion sense, the hairdo, and the "king of the world" badass look.*

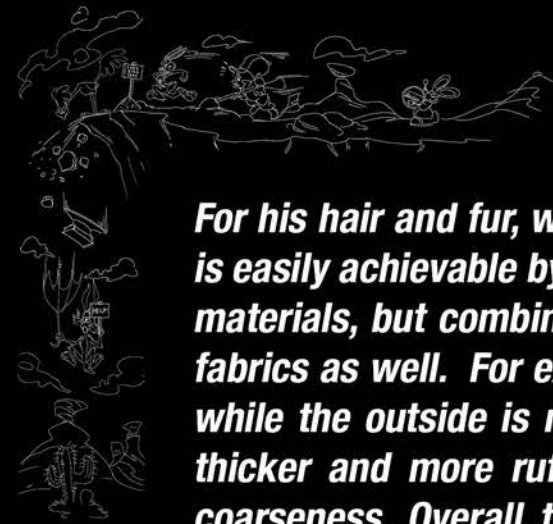




## + Design Focus

*After creating a slew of sketches and exploratory drawings, we've narrowed down the areas that can benefit from some refreshing and modernization. In doing this, our goal is to maintain the overall shape and feel of the existing bunny, keeping his recognizability and familiarity at a high level, but breathing a bit more life into him and a slight visual ego boost if you will.*

*For his body, the current 3D model is broken into individual pieces, as if he were a plastic toy that had been stuck together. We think this would benefit from rebuilding it as a single complete mesh. What this allows us to do is choose the time and place where it works to allow his body to bend and deform, making his motions more fluid, accentuating his poses, and essentially allowing him a far greater range of motion and emotion overall. However, there is an opportunity here to play with this quality. The Pixar movie Toy Story comes to mind in this case. When people aren't around, the toys have the ability to move and do all sorts of acrobatics, along with squash and stretch behaviors and deformations, all while still abiding by the restrictive nature of their toy design. However, when a human enters the room, they instantly assume their rigid object pose and behavior. This can be something fun to play with and gives a much greater range of motion when desired. This also allows us to streamline some shapes and profiles on him, which we'll dive into in greater depth shortly.*



*For his hair and fur, we feel that the goal of making him more “premium” is easily achievable by using not only more realistic and authentic looking materials, but combining up slightly different complementary families of fabrics as well. For example, the inside of his ears can be a leathery felt, while the outside is made of plush, soft silky fibers. His belly could be thicker and more ruffled, with a small amount of fuzzy clumping and coarseness. Overall, the fibers themselves can have a bit of color variation to them, giving the entire pelt a more naturally crafted feel. We can experiment with these qualities all over his body, from the pads underneath his feet to the shiny patent leather nose.*

*The most drastic changes we envision are in his accessories. We'll upgrade him with more modern, stylish flip flops featuring a bit of angular design and flair. His Wayfarer style sunglasses will be swapped out with a sleeker wraparound style shape, featuring oblong lenses with a frameless bottom conveying a bit of muscular chic demeanor. His battery can have a properly molded recessed socket instead of just being shoved into his fur, and his drum will show some wear and tear, as well as fine details like a hoop, nut box, tuning rod, and decorative flourishes.*



One of the best ways to give a character such as this one emotion is through the careful use of subtlety, the same way a highly skilled comedian can deadpan a punchline with just a hint of sarcastic intonation and facial expression. The persona built up around the bunny is one that seems to always imply a collected coolness, an air of "I got this!". We will build the animation rig to allow us considerably greater freedom of motion, but also be sure to use that feature set sparingly to convey his feelings. Our bunny has no eyes or mouth, and he doesn't speak. To boot, he's almost always holding his giant drum in front of him, and his hands are typically filled and busy. The bulk of his emotion must come from what remains. To do this, we will focus on the following areas.

**Feet** - His feet will be reshaped to allow for more definition among his toes. While they won't be able to spread apart, they also won't be a single stuffed pocket with a line of stitching down them. We will rig them to be able to deform as a whole. While we will always maintain the illusion that they are hinged to him around a pivoting axle so he can perform his trademark up and down walk, he can depart from this at times and use his feet like rollerblades or ice skates when he has to move fast. This can be combined with a sway to give him a slalom-style motion when he needs to dart between obstacles. If he must jump into the air, he can bend them at the ball of the foot to push off from the toes.

**Ears** - His ears are his primary display of emotion, and therefore should operate in much the same way as an extra set of hands. Not only can he emote in a manner that a movable mouth would provide, but he can perform gags with them such as tapping on things, holding objects, or pointing when necessary. We will provide for a modifiable shape profile, so they can thin out or thicken up as desired, and at other times be used to indicate dynamic motion and direction, such as slicked back or flopping in the breeze.

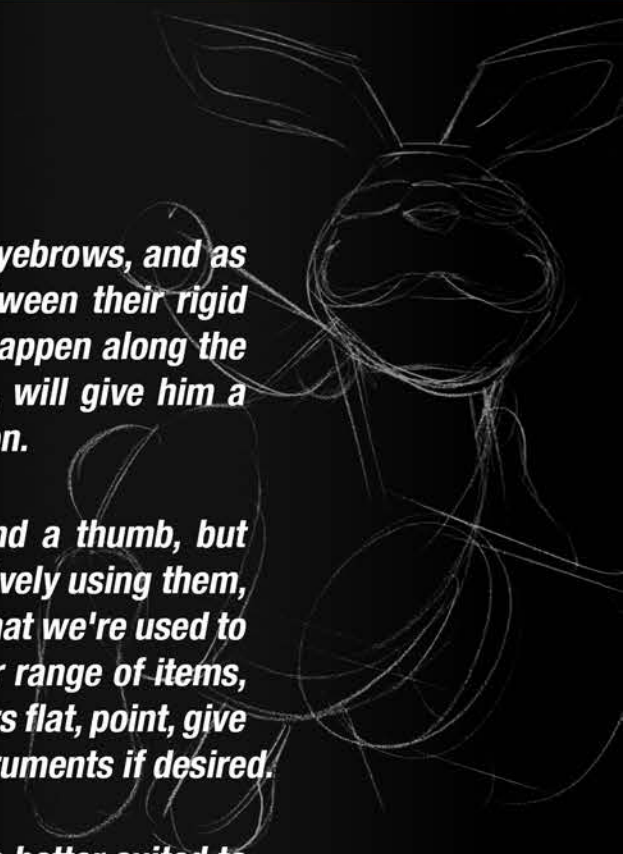
**Sunglasses** - His sunglasses take the place of his eyes and eyebrows, and as such, it would be great to give them the ability to switch between their rigid shape and flexible poses. The bulk of the deformation would happen along the top of the frame, and when used in conjunction with his ears, will give him a range of emotions previously unattainable in his prior incarnation.

**Hands** - His hands will be modified to have three fingers and a thumb, but without knuckles, keeping a stuffed toy feel. When he's not actively using them, the fingers can all be tucked back to resemble the simple paw that we're used to seeing. This extra detail will allow him to not only grip a wider range of items, including his sunglasses, but he will now be able to brush his ears flat, point, give a thumbs up or other sign, or even finger the drum or other instruments if desired.

**Body** - By creating a single mesh out of his entire body, he'll be better suited to sway and bend, accentuating his motions, attitudes, and intentions. This will also provide for some careful use of squash and stretch as well, and be useful in telling any story desired, regardless of what action it may call for.

**Mallets** - His mallets will be imbued with the ability to bend, bulge, squash, and stretch, allowing them to not only react to the beating of the drum, but at times providing a method for them to act as extensions of the arms, continuing their arc lines and poses.

**Drum** - The drum itself will also gain the ability to squash and stretch, deforming and wobbling from the impact of the mallets, and changing profile to accentuate the bunny's motion when he's moving at speed or bent in a direction.

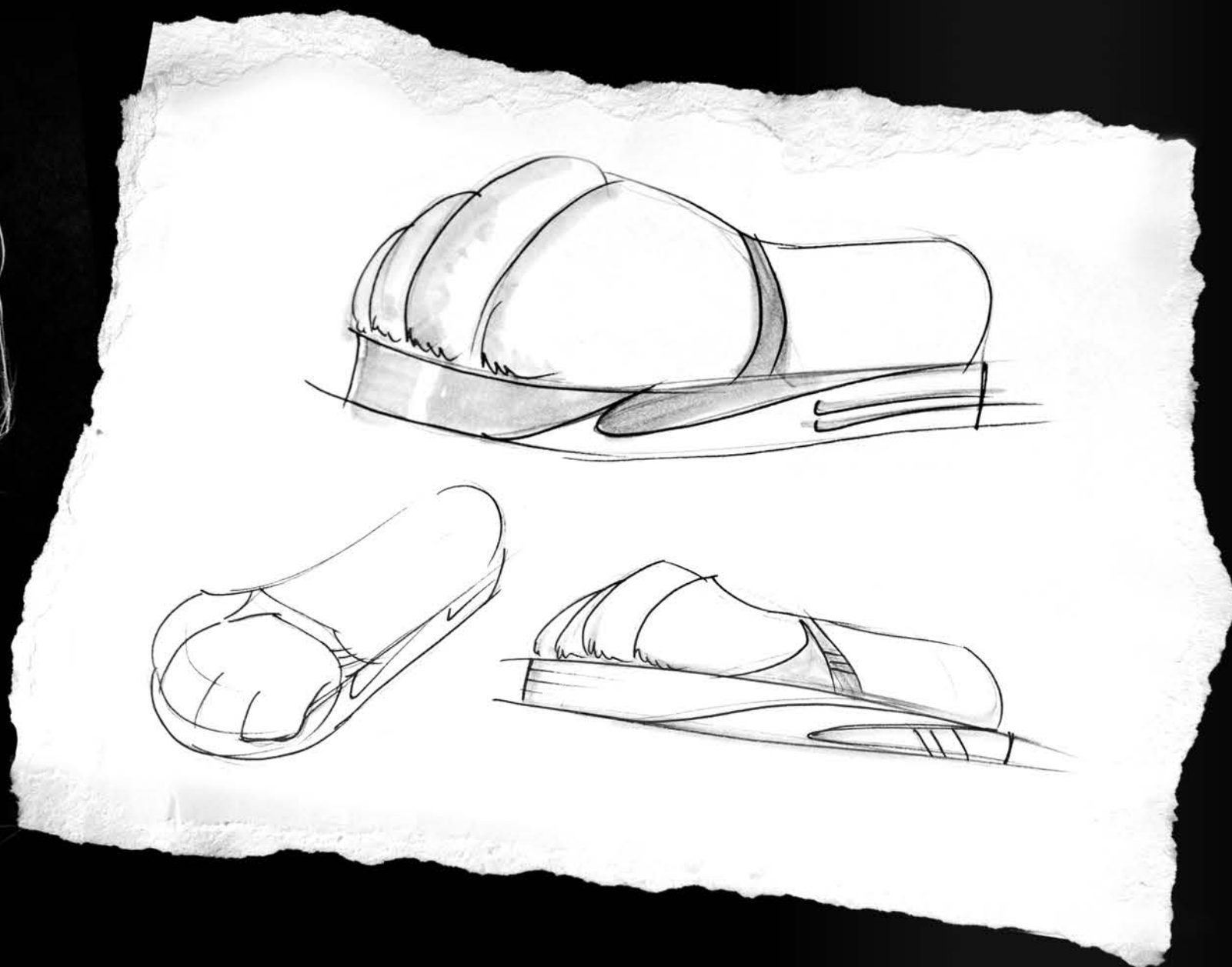
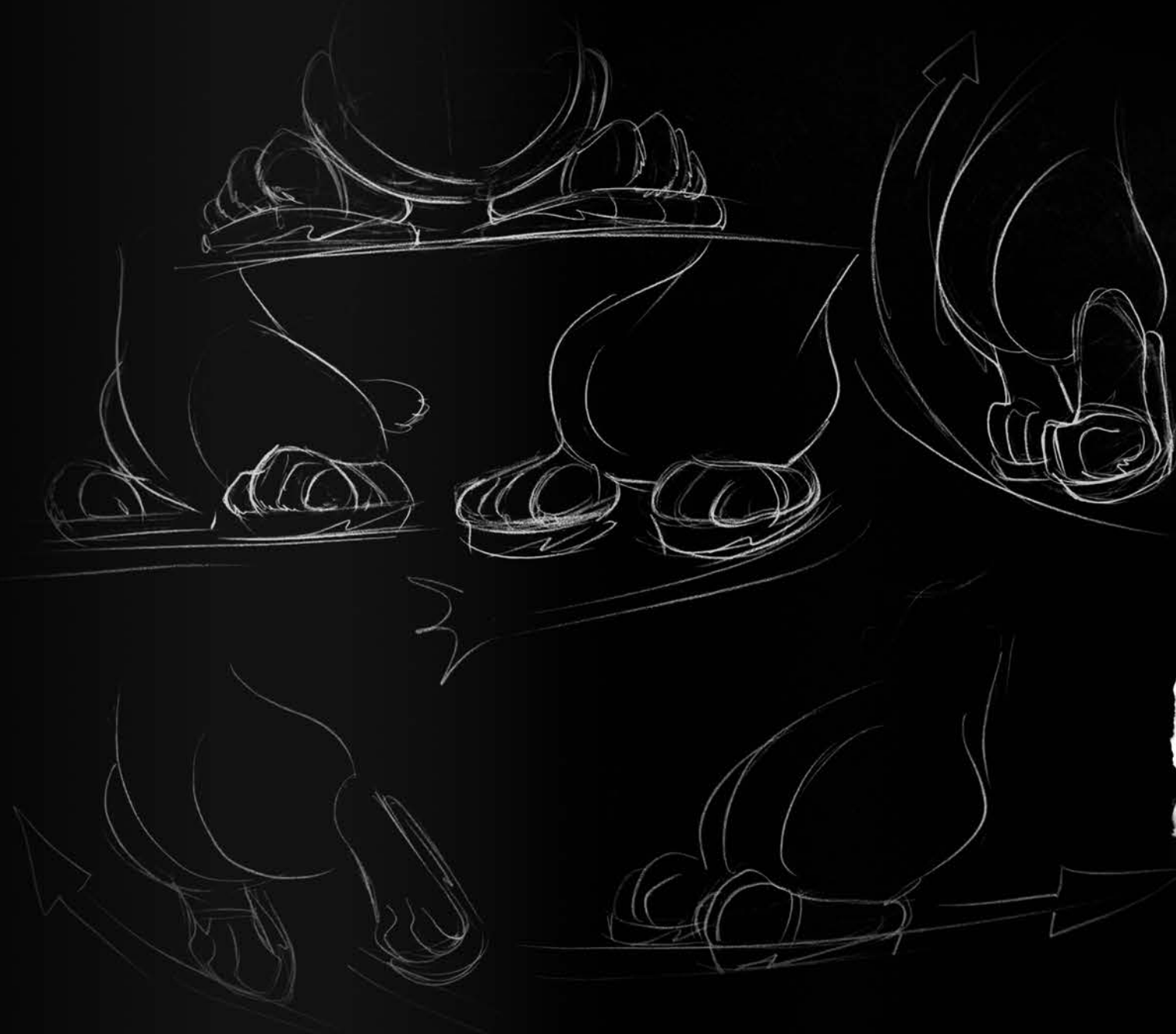




## + Feet & Sandals

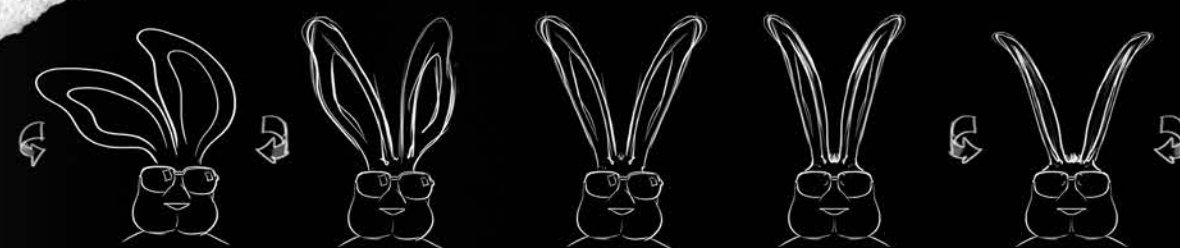
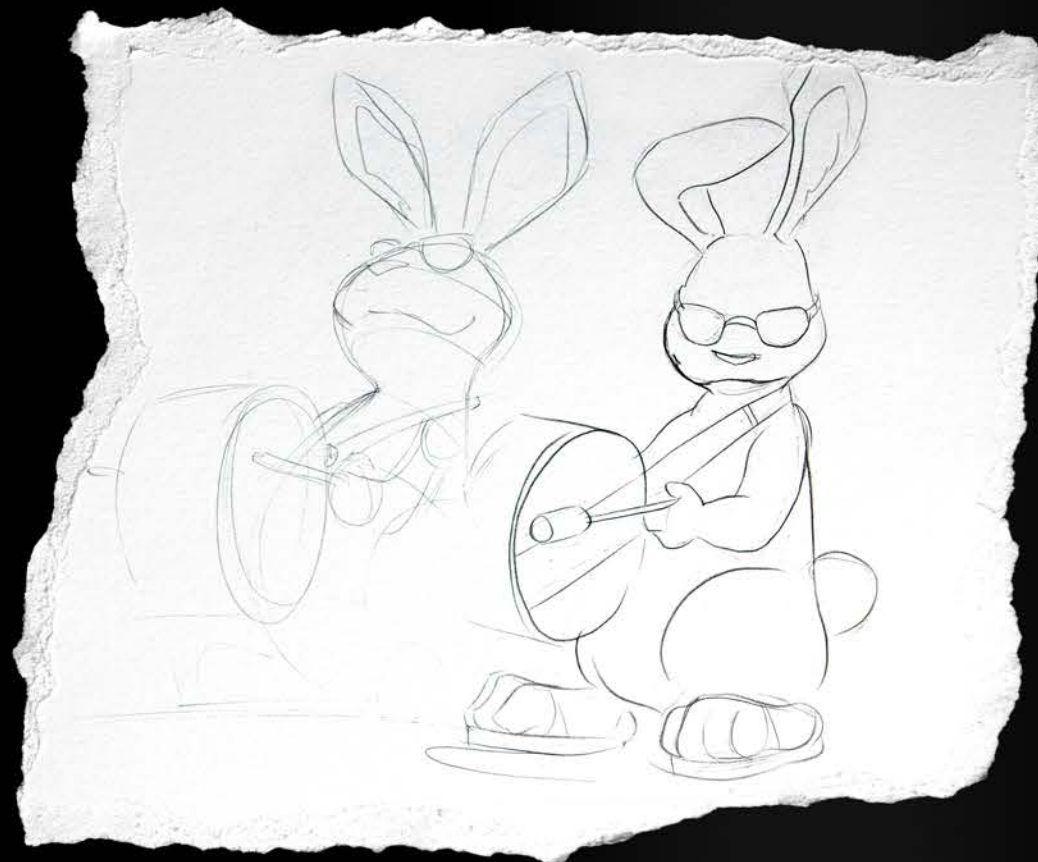
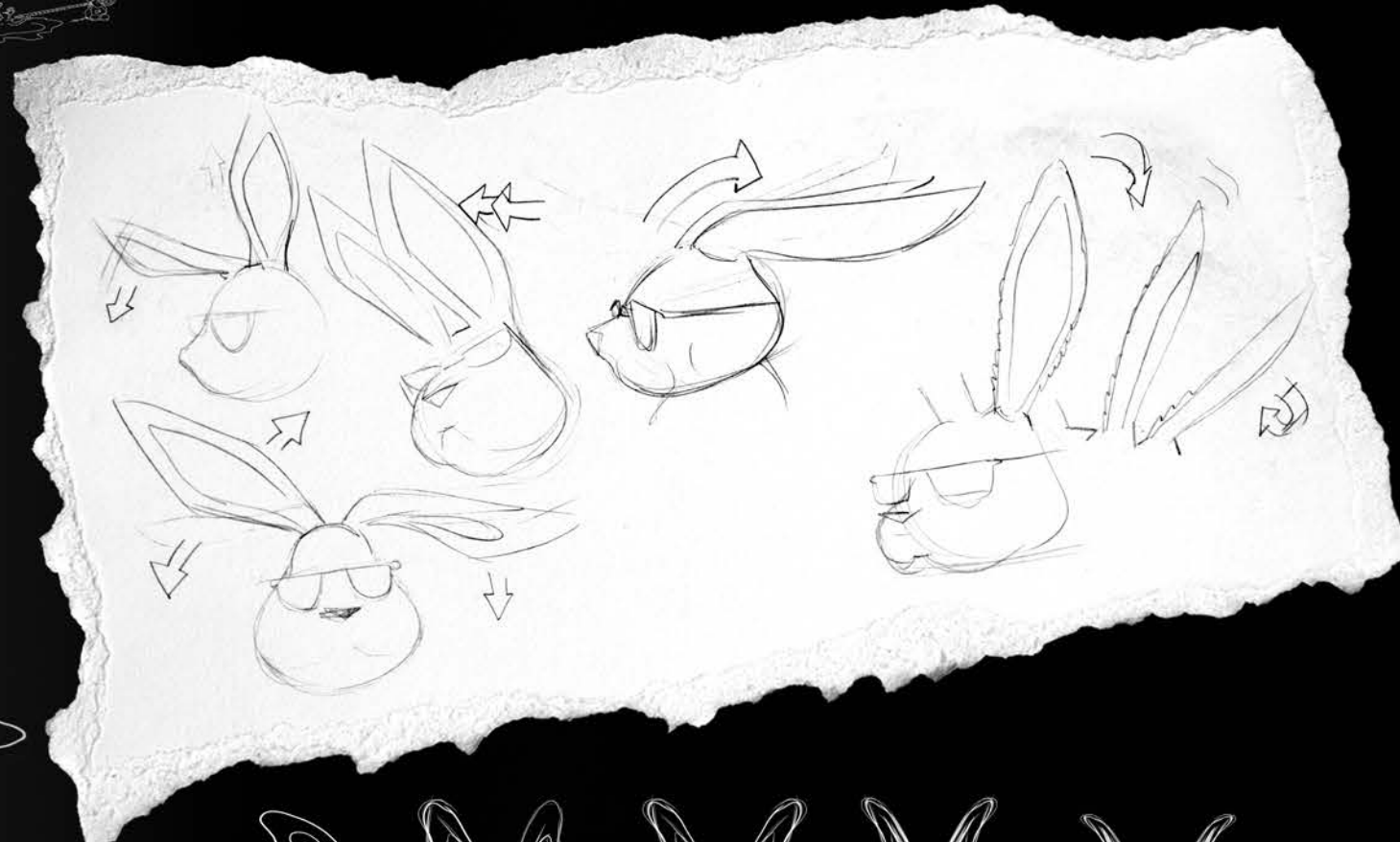


*One of the most clever ways to update the bunny would be to give him a new pair of skids. By upgrading him from the flat, plain foam thongs to a modern, sculpted rubberized pair of sandals, we can give him a fashionable, athletic feel. Combining rounded edges with an angular cornered latchet and a sculpted design on the outsole, his feet take on a whole new level of style.*

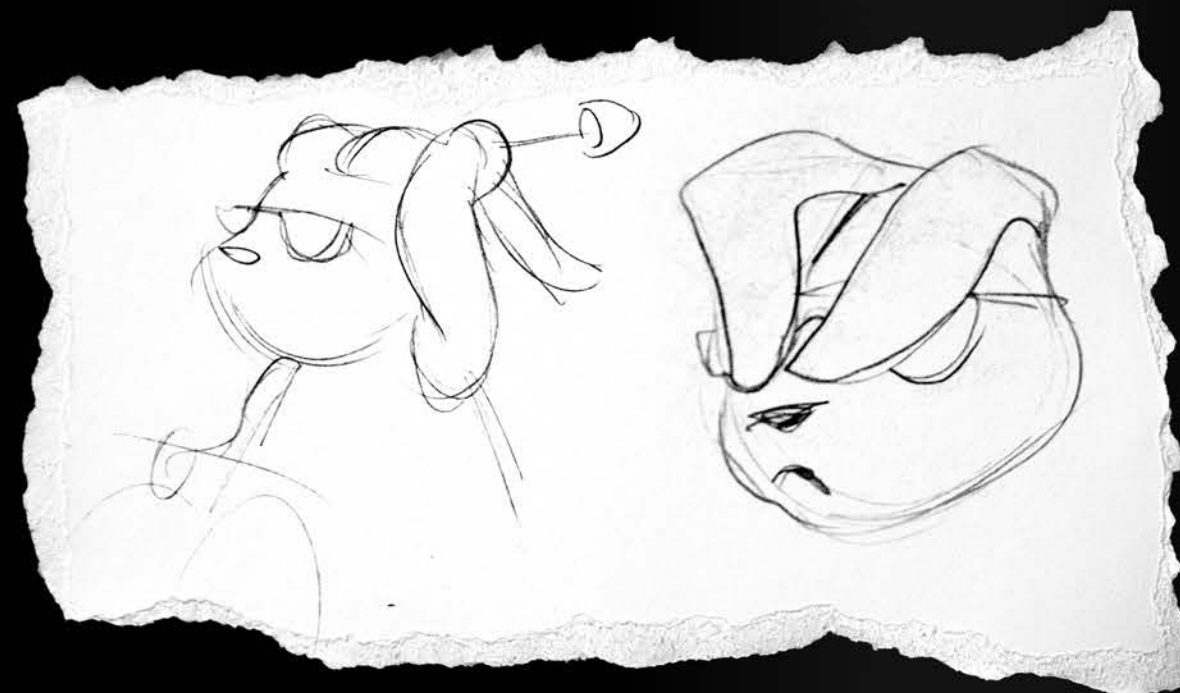




# + Ears



We intend to use the ears far more expressively than they have been in the past. By creating a custom controllable profile that allows us to easily change their shape, thickness, and taper, we can effectively convey his emotion and feelings. Being able to bend, fold, rotate, and twist the ears into various shapes and angles allows us to create hand and finger inspired gestures with them, while also providing for custom poses, motions, and reactions. Being able to blend between this fully sculptable animation rig and a dynamic cloth-style soft body simulation will further enhance our ability to do gags such as draping them over his shoulders, having them flap in the breeze at high speed, and other similar ragdoll type movements.





## + **Hands & Fingers**

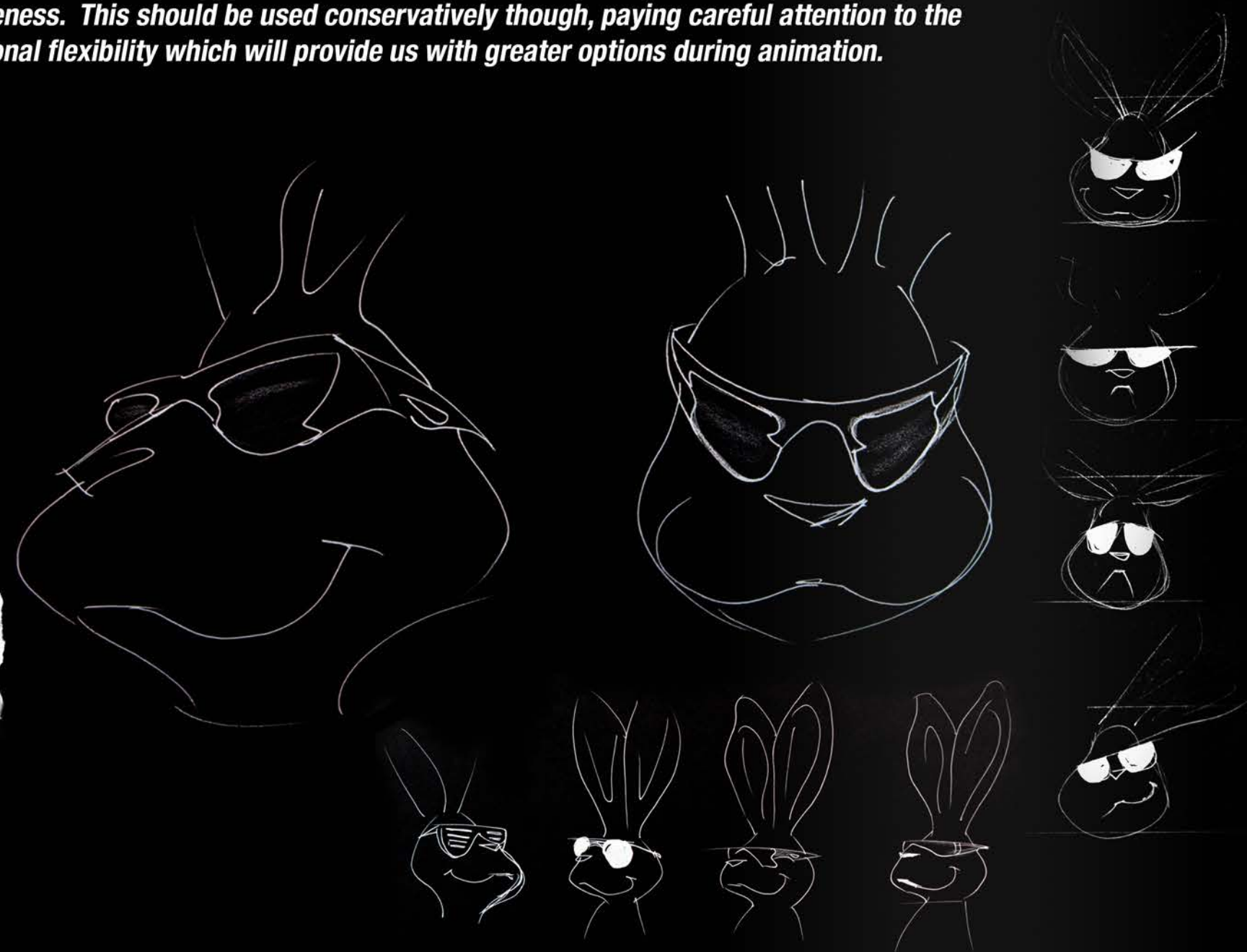
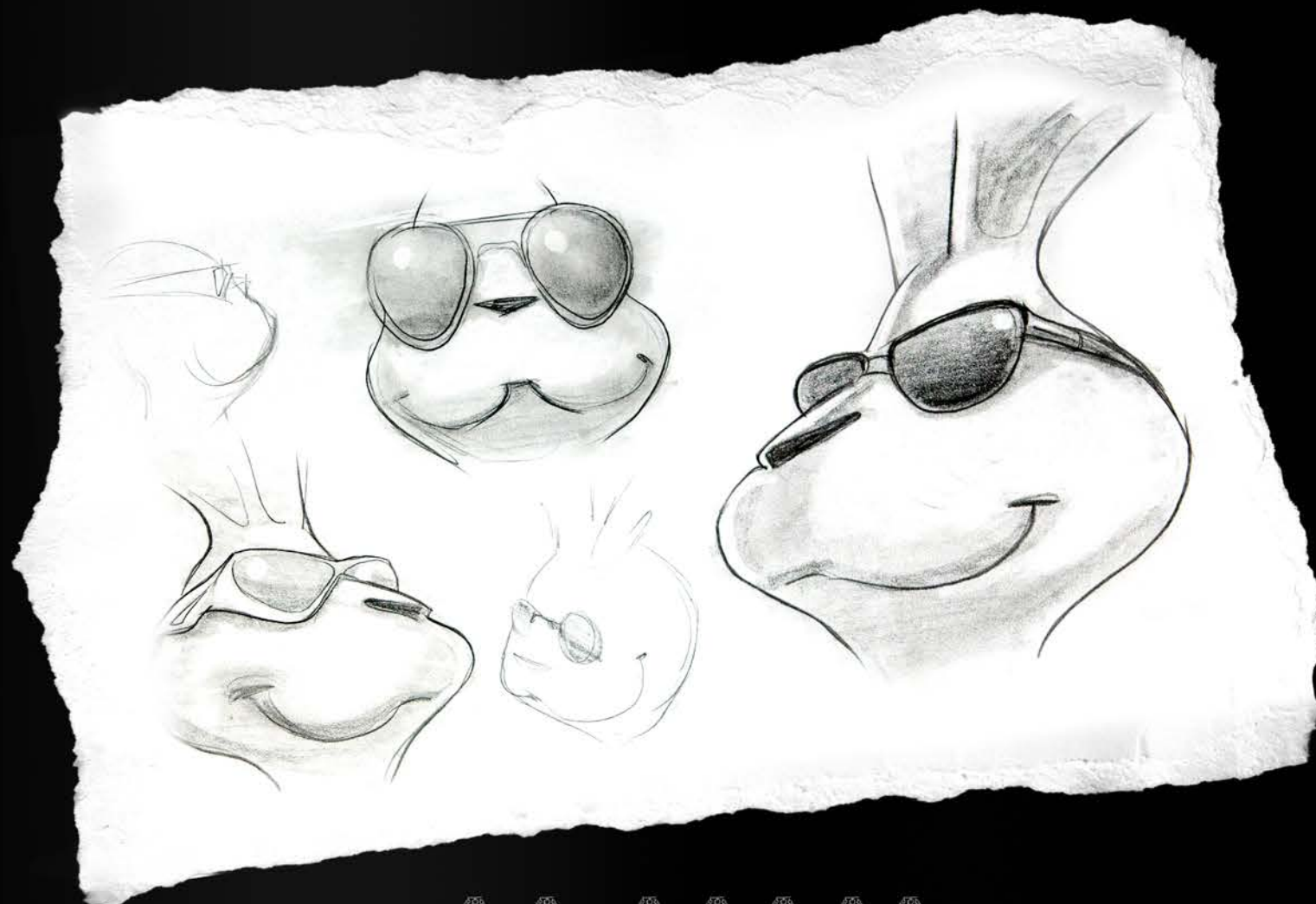
*Giving the bunny some actual digits will enable him to grip items and further emote with hand gestures in a way he has been unable to up until now. To keep him in theme, we won't give him knuckles. This will keep the fingers feeling like they belong to a stuffed animal, and will also limit them from being able to perform fully humanized manipulation. When they aren't in use, we can simply tuck them back like a closed fist, which will resemble the original design when desired.*





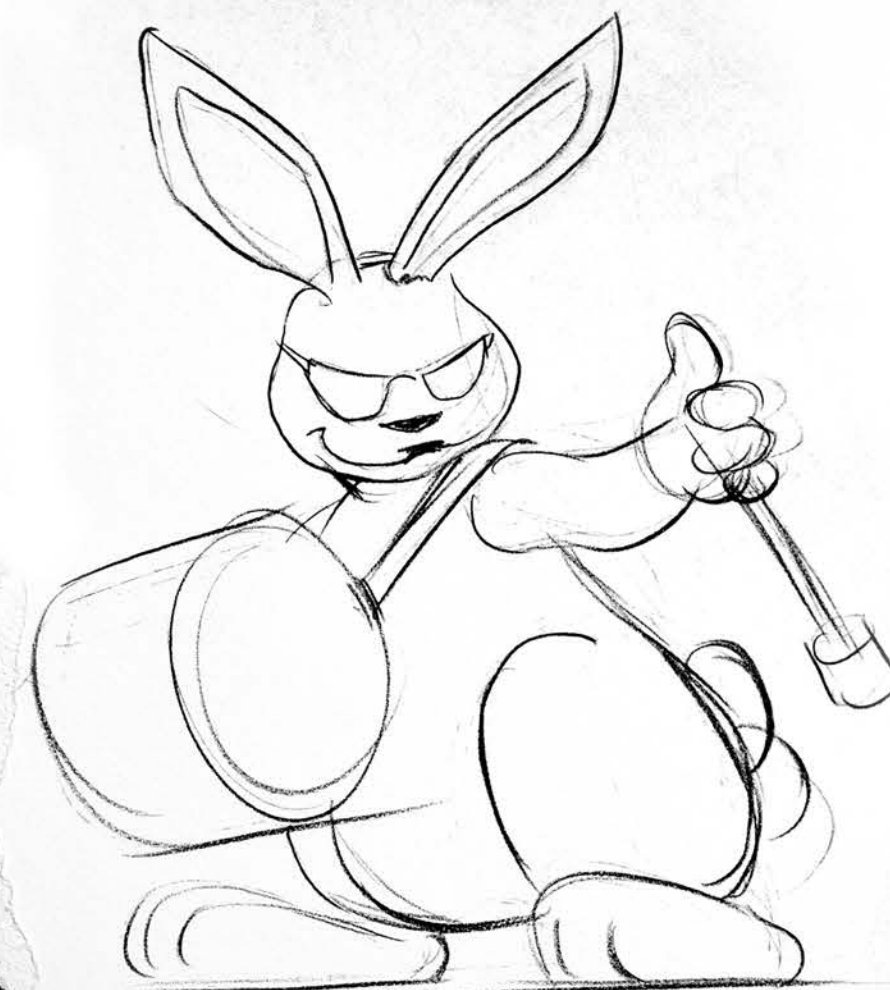
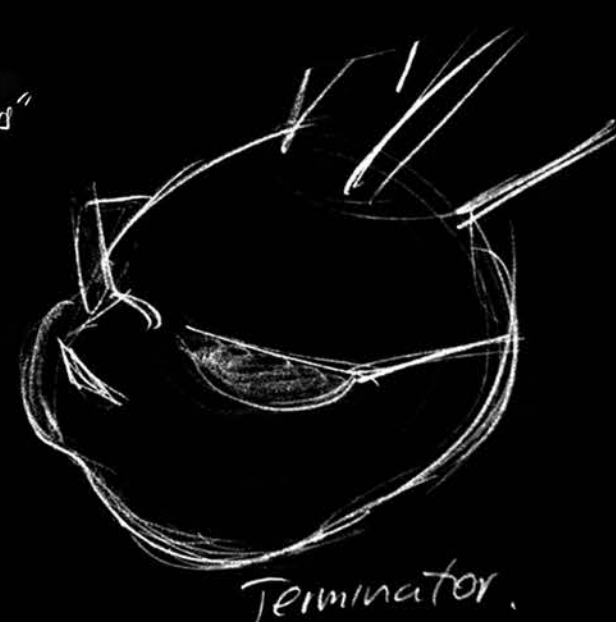
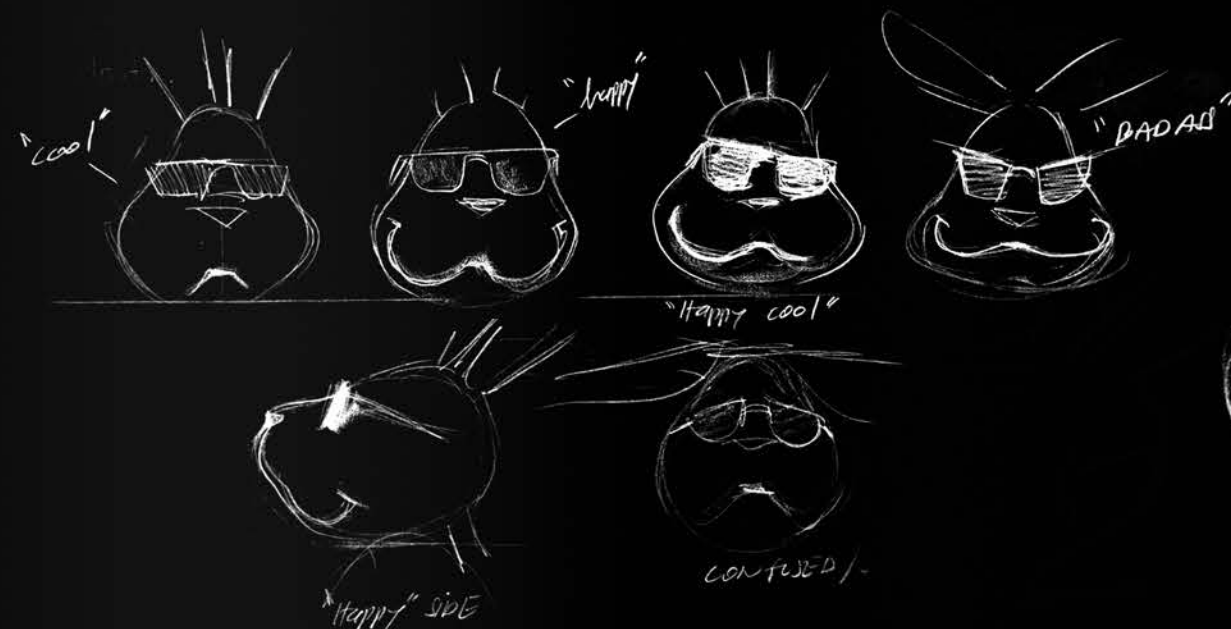
## + | **Sunglasses**

*Even more important than the flip flops, the sunglasses are front and center and possibly have the biggest impact on the bunny's persona. Switching them from Wayfarer style glasses to a slightly more modern, wrap-around, partially frameless oblong design makes him a tad more modern, while not deviating so far from the original design as to be jarring. We played around with other more drastic styles, and while we didn't feel these were necessarily the right fit for his standard look, it would be great to be able to swap these out for any other desired style if the spot and situation calls for it. One of the most important things we found in this exploration was that utilizing deformation on the glasses themselves allowed for a much greater amount of personality and expressiveness. This should be used conservatively though, paying careful attention to the times when rigid glasses make more sense. Again, this is additional flexibility which will provide us with greater options during animation.*





# + Emotional Range

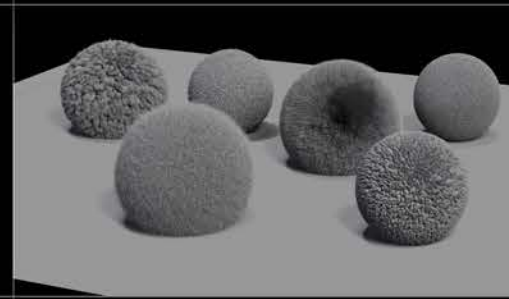
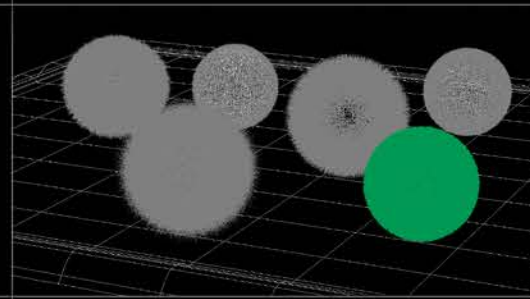


We have created a variety of sketches of our character to mock up an expression sheet. This is useful in visualizing how subtle changes to the animatable portions of the bunny can work together to express his emotions and thoughts with minimal changes to his actual face.





# + CG Fur Exploration



**TENNIS BALL**

**COARSE CLUMPY**

**NO HAIR**



**SOFT RAYON**

**FELT**

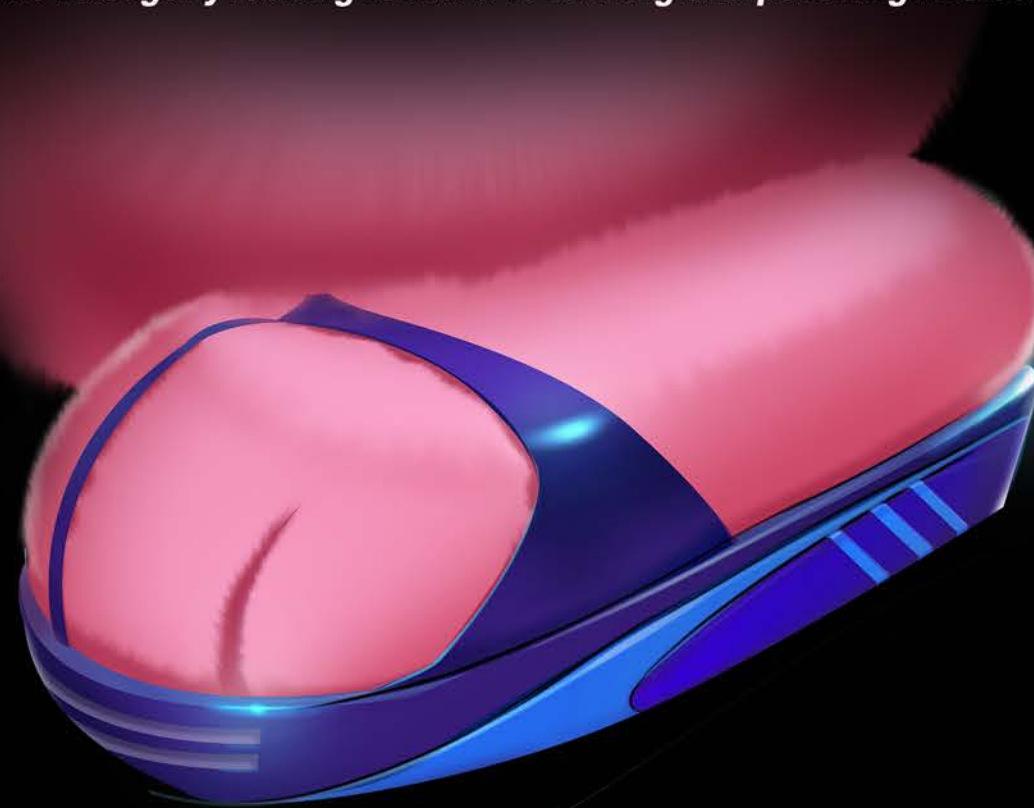
**SHAG PILE**

*There are myriad appearances we can use for the bunny's hair, fur, and accessories. In this image, we photographed our bar at the office, created an HDR lighting setup, and then built six CG spheres with a few different fur types attached to them. While none of these are intended to suggest these particular materials should be specifically used on his pelt, they will hopefully give you an idea for some starting points. The options and styles we can achieve are limitless, and we feel confident we can give him the high quality, premium look you are after.*



## + Rendered Designs

*Presented here are three fully rendered concept illustrations of our character, employing all the aforementioned modifications. This should be a good jumping off point for discussion, and we're eagerly looking forward to refining and polishing this concept and diving into the actual build.*



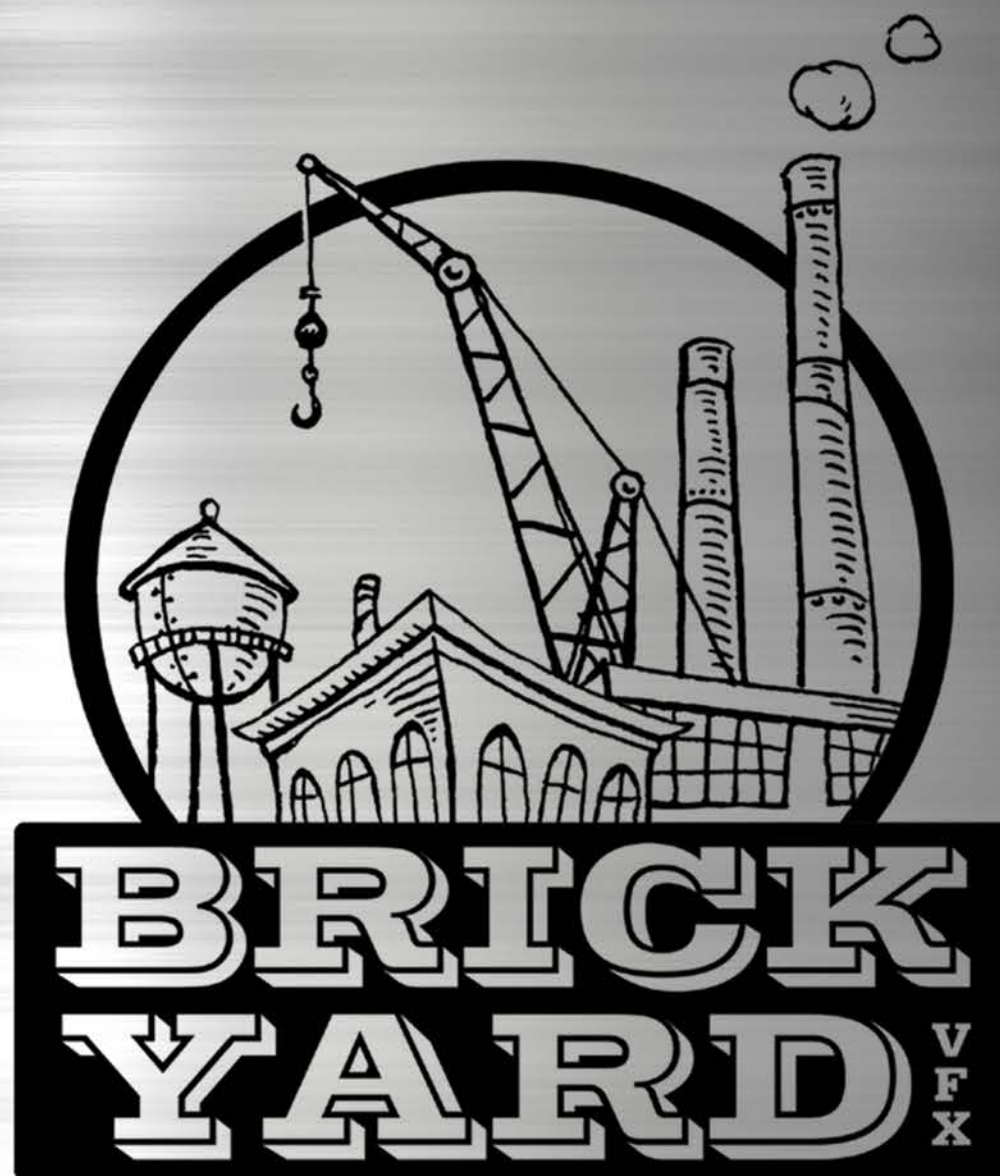


## **+ Conclusion**

***Thank you so much for considering us as a potential partner on the “recharge” of this fantastically iconic character. Opportunities such as this one are rare, and I find it very exciting to potentially be a part of it. I hope you find the research and design explorations we have done to be inspirational and as fun to look at as they were to create. We look forward to collaborating with you on this project!***







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