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# *Illustrated Encyclopedia of* CRYPTOZOOLOGY

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## The Creation Process

Pro Gradu Thesis  
University of Lapland  
Faculty of Art and Design  
Graphic Design  
Autumn 2013  
Stankovic Vladimir





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Pages: 44

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## Abstract

This thesis deals with the research of illustration and picture book creation process in the context of an encyclopedia: how the images appear, how they tell a story and how they coexist with the text within the book pages. I will document my own creating process while illustrating mysterious creatures and their anatomy, as well as the environments in which they, according to stories and legends, existed or were encountered by humans. The main emphasis will be on the techniques which were used for the illustrations and their development, as well as their implementation within the scope of a book layout design. In addition, my aim is to find the balance between traditional and modern approach when it comes to the style of illustrations and the use of conventional techniques, such as colored pencils, watercolors, etc, in combination with digital software. The step by step method will be used to illustrate the process in a clear way, and of course, the final artistic project will demonstrate all the aspects and elements explained in the written part of this thesis.

**Keywords:** encyclopedia, picture book, animal illustration, scientific illustration, typography, character design, creation process, illustration techniques

\* I give permission for the pro gradu thesis and the artistic project “Illustrated Encyclopedia of Cryptozoology” to be used in the library of the University of Lapland.



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# 1. Introduction: The Realm of Images

Ever since I can remember, I was always fascinated by encyclopedias and illustrated books about animals, plants and human anatomy; I found the way in which the things were documented very appealing, along with detailed illustrations and their explanations. On the other hand, fairy tales and myths, the fantastical stories I used to read in my childhood were also accompanied by inspirational images which greatly influenced the experience of the story and its message. During my studies, I have been dealing with the creation of picture books and with each project I would get more and more familiar with the issues of the creation process. With this research I would like to go a step further when it comes to my creative process, both as a designer and an illustrator, and I will also try to experiment and venture on a new path when it comes to my artistic expression. Finally, the artistic project of my thesis, entitled the “Illustrated Encyclopedia of Cryptozoology”, should result in bringing the two aspects of illustrating books together, one very formal and scientific and the other surreal and fantastical. The images will visually describe the creatures, their appearance and anatomy and will also depict sceneries which are usually related to them, placed within a simplified page layout design of the book.

Before I go further with the specifics regarding the creation process, I would like to underline that many of us were influenced by different types of pictures and illustrations, and even though we are not always aware of that impact, those images stay with us and construct our visual taste and interests. Images connote numerous feelings and strong emotions, and from prehistoric cave drawings, Bible illustrations to first illustrated encyclopedias and picture books, they served as part of rituals and for passing of information with the purpose to educate, entertain and, later on, to advertise. Bang (2000, 41) explains that our feelings emerge due to the fact that we see pictures as expansion of reality, and that images that affect us greatly use structural principles based on the way we react in the real world. Further on, illustrations done for scientific purposes contributed to the general knowledge of all aspects of life, from explaining various tiny organisms and our own bodies and customs, to physics and technology. Arnheim (1969, 308) explains that visual education must be based on the idea that every picture is a statement which represents the object as a set of propositions. Also, it is clear that illustrations and picture books served as a foundation for animated films and video games, a very present and popular medium of our time.



## 1.1 To Whom it May Concern

In my thesis, I would like to go deeper into the details of how illustrations appear and what is the creation process behind them, where it begins and where it ends, and to show how an image can be built element by element to produce specific feelings in the viewer. Also, I will touch upon the basic rules concerning the use of images in books, the style and aesthetics, the layout, typography, etc, and will try to combine the traditional and vintage visuals with the more current and modern ones. In general, the thesis can be interesting and intriguing to artists, designers and creative people who are interested in the creation process of numerous illustrations and of an illustrated book, its progression and final results. Naturally, people of various occupations and interests can just enjoy the stories and artworks about the most famous creatures whose "existence" has captivated scholars and artists for centuries.

The word existence is under quotation because the field of cryptozoology is somewhat a new discipline not yet supported by official science. Nonetheless, it is a very intriguing and fascinated subject with many followers and supporters worldwide. Coleman and Clark (1999, 20) insist that now cryptozoology is all around us and that not too long ago, only a few people even knew the word. Also, Coleman and Clark (1999, 19) state: "From the Internet to the corner newsstand, cryptozoology has become an integral part of our culture." Surely, there are different media seriously dealing with the subject, from mainstream magazine to numerous documentaries and movies.

The word *cryptozoology* originates from Greek words *kryptos*, *zoon* and *logos*, and it means the study of hidden animals, appropriately named *cryptids* (Coleman & Clark 1999, 15). While there are many skeptics who perceive the subject of cryptozoologist's research as a pure figment of human's imagination, and misinterpreted experiences and events, few can deny that the stories and reports about these mystical creatures do not make for a very entertaining and fascinating reading, and of course, a viewing experience. As most encyclopedias, this one is not aiming only towards those who are interested in the subject, but also towards those who are not yet familiar with the field of cataloguing and describing these legendary beasts. Moreover, the way that these animals are described in the text, or presented visually, can serve to fuel one's imagination and inspire them to create their own new species of monsters and enrich their own artwork with the surreal and the fantastic.

## 2. Going on an Expedition: Where Do the Images Come From?

When it comes to my work, the process of creation varies from already exact idea with thought-through sketches, to the totally opposite action, where the beginning of the final piece starts on the blank piece of paper. In that case, the idea is born during the process, and every stage of creation can bring a different surprise; the composition, the characters that seem to appear and interact, and of course the meanings which can be interpreted in many ways.

In this particular case, however, it is the before mentioned action, naturally due to the fact that the images are strictly connected to the written text and the subject. Just like when illustrating a children's book or a novel, the illustrating process started after reading the story, in this case the article reports and explanations regarding these mysterious animals. Each creature is described, sometimes to a great detail, by several witnesses, or as it happened in several rare occasions, captured on film (those images however, offer just a glimpse or a detail of an alleged animal and therefore are not a reliable source on which one should base an entire illustration upon, but even so, they are valuable as an inspiration for the concept of the book's design which will be discussed in the following chapters).

Also, it is important to note that there are thousands of described and classified species of these hidden animals, too many to cover and illustrate in one medium size encyclopedia. Instead, I made a decision to concentrate and depict some of the most famous and, for me, inspiring cryptid creatures (figure 1). A decision, which on one hand has spared me of having to draw too many species and therefore made the work on this art project easier, but on the other hand, has made it much more challenging as there are already many depictions and artworks depicting these famed and enigmatic creatures.

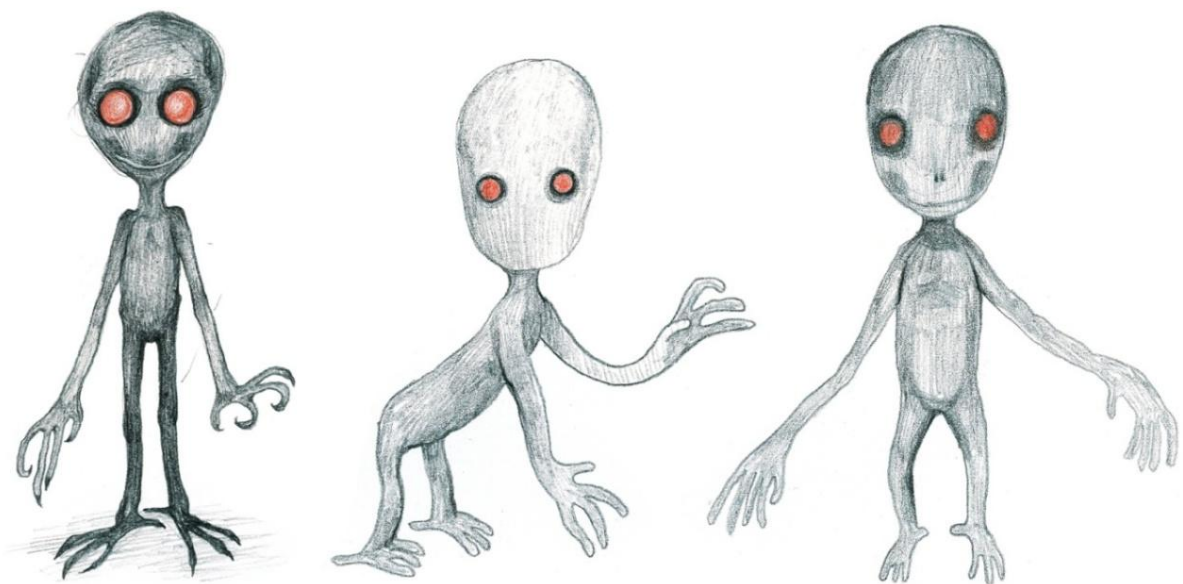


**Figure 1** Initial roughs of various cryptid creatures

For instance, we all have an image of Yeti, the abominable snowman, in our minds from different movies, documentaries and newspaper reportages. Therefore, having a task to find a different approach in order to visually interpret these famous cryptids, such as the before mentioned Yeti, the Sea Serpent or the alien-looking the Dover Demon is not an easy one (figure 2). The final illustrations should be different and original and yet have the features and characteristics attributed to these animals according to eye witnesses' reports, which are already ingrained within the conciseness of the cryptozoology researchers, as well as the people who are only familiar with the matter through popular culture.

Reading those reports about these cryptids, where the animals are described to a great detail, for example, of having a great triangular serpentine head or a distinctive white forearm on a body of darker hair, already gives the reader a clear image of how these creatures look like. For an illustrator however, it makes the process of creating an illustration based on these descriptions a challenging task and it is where the artist should demonstrate his/her creativity and ability to take on a new approach on a familiar and frequently illustrated subject.

As I'm writing this, I'm still trying to decide exactly which style and aesthetic should I use for the illustrations, and after already having many sketches for the animals themselves, it is becoming clear that it should be something between a vintage, antique style of science illustrations, and more modern and simplified approach. Marrying the old and the new will probably work best when trying to evoke the atmosphere of the times when some of these animals were first encountered and documented, but also keeping it current with the trends and the visual tendencies of the time we live in.



**Figure 2** Different styles of Dover Demon creature

## 2.1 The Journey Begins

As I was already familiar with the topic of cryptozoology to a great extent, it was not an issue to head on a journey of researching more about it. The research journey, when it comes to today's digital media age, starts with browsing the Internet for useful information and possible reading materials on numerous websites, blogs and videos devoted to this discipline. The gathering of as much information as possible about all the cryptozoological species, and the field itself, was fundamental in order to have some kind of narrative around which the images will be based upon, as sometimes the visual idea itself is not enough in order to try and capture the best interpretation of the subject.

In addition, watching documentaries about these mystical creatures was some sort of a hobby I have enjoyed ever since I was a kid, a hobby which has enabled me to have a clearer concept and idea regarding their appearance when sketching and drawing (figure 3), because in order to properly interpret an image we are trying to sketch, we must spend time observing it carefully (Wan 2002, 39). The analysis and observing of vintage science books and classical illustrators' work has also helped me with finding the most appropriate visual elements in order to achieve the similar impression and aesthetic.



**Figure 3** Sea Serpent sketch

### 3. The Illustrating Process

As every creating process, it all always starts on a blank piece of paper, and usually it can be a very stressful ordeal. In the book “Art of Sketching” (2007, 6) it is stated that sketches are not just rapidly executed renderings that use a specific technique or are done to a certain level of completion, but are important exercises when improving skills and finding concepts. Wan (2002, 3) claims that when drawing, a pencil becomes the physical link between the eyes, the mind, and the hand. Technically speaking, sketches are close representations whose goal is to capture all the important features of a model, a moment or a movement; and although full of expression they capture a form in a few lines and shapes. Rough sketches can be defined as preliminary sketches of sketches (figure 4).

The key at the very start, is making as many roughs as possible and finding a concept for the image, to “carefully study composition techniques, analyze the possibilities of the model... and work a series of drawings in which you systematically modify the frame and the point of view to find the best representation possible” (Art of Sketching 2007, 11). The idea is not to be too focused on the end result, which will come later after much necessary revising and choosing the right and final draft which will serve as the basis for the final illustration.

Without much thinking about what kind of paper or pencil to use for the drafts, the process of sketching is ready to start. The very first problem at the beginning was, of course, which animal should be the first one to draw, so I made a list of all the animals which will be featured in the encyclopedia in no particular order, and used the list as a guide in further sketching process. While making the sketches of the animals themselves, another important issue that immediately came up was the composition of the image i.e. the relation of the creature to the background, whether there should be a landscape (a frame of a typical surrounding for the depicted animal) or just a plain textured background; how to use the positive and the negative space of the composition etc.

It is important to pay attention to all of those instances and to identify exactly what are you interested in and what combination of elements makes the subject more attractive to you, before creating a refined version of a chosen sketch (Art of Sketching 2007, 12).





**Figure 4** First sketches of the Mothman creature

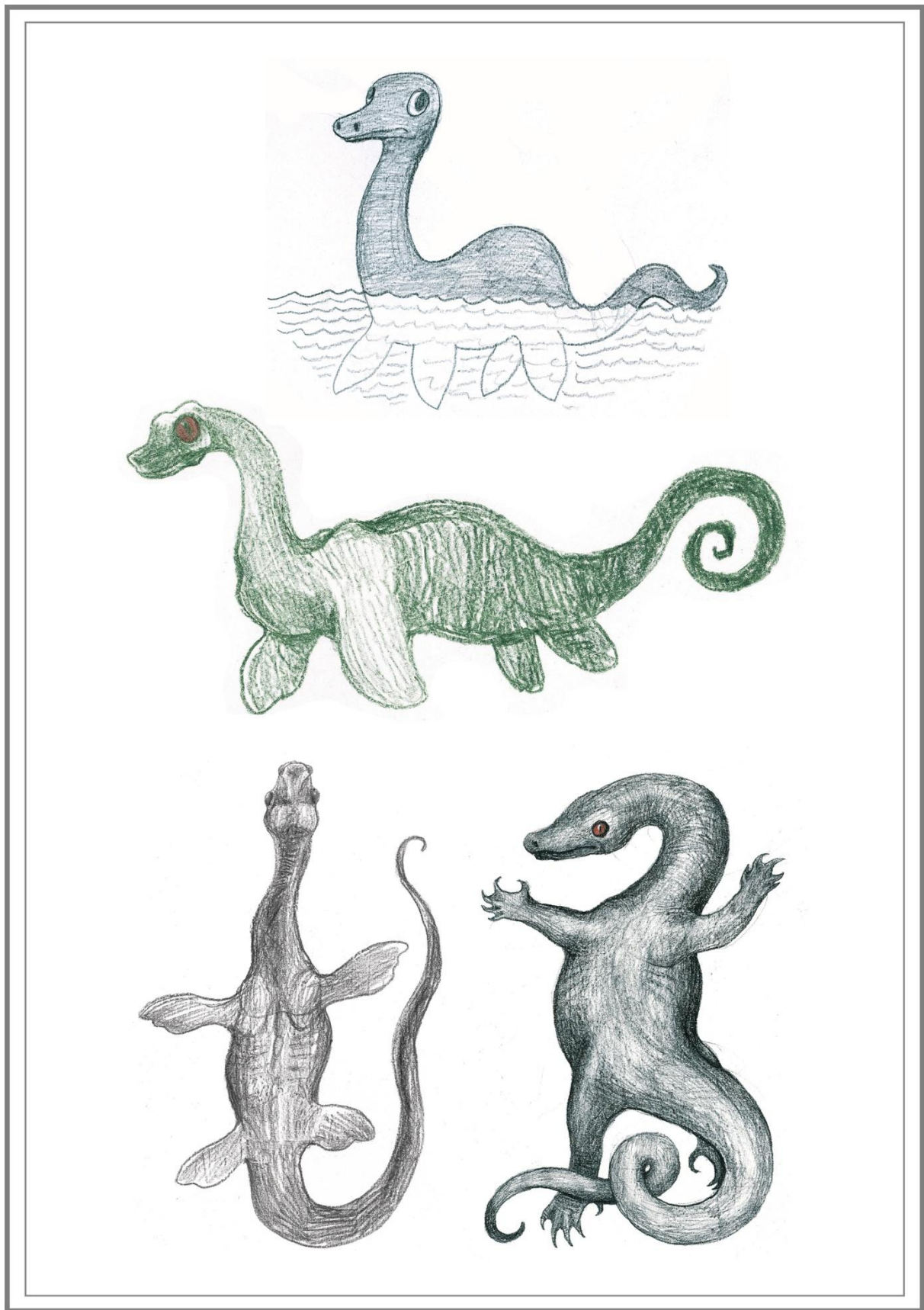
### 3.1 Sketching

Skills learned from sketching are easily conveyable to other design subjects and thus require a critical approach, which means that concentration and analysis is preferred when trying to come up with a proper concept or idea, no matter what the creative medium is. I started with the sketching of the most famous cryptid animal – the *Loch Ness monster*, and at that point I have gotten an idea that this animal might even end up on the book cover as well, but that was a decision which was too soon to make and needs a lot of revising.

The first step, a common one when drawing all sorts of characters and animals, is finding just the right point of view and the composition, as the latter “is part of the entire creative seeing process and it involves visual selection, visual ranking, and visual focus” (Wan 2002, 71). The viewpoints were usually very close to the creatures as if they were observed from a close distance, and, regarding their size, they either appear as viewed from below or from the side. Also, a very important aspect of a sketch is finding the right shape of the monster, and this was a rather easy task as there have been numerous reports claiming that the Loch Ness monster is similar looking to an extinct species of dinosaurs, with a long neck and round body of grey color. Finding a visually interesting form was a challenging issue here, as visually, the animal itself is not that new to the viewer so it will take for an interesting and engaging form to make it work inside the book pages (figure 5).

And after making several roughs of the animal I came up with an image where the “monster” is twisting its neck while it is moving among the ripples and waves, and to add to that feeling of movement I added many spirals and curls of water beside it (figure 6). Wan (2002, 59) claims that the repetition of the patterns in a horizontal manner down the page will give the sketch the sense of depth. I have applied the sketching manner to the final Loch Ness monster illustration in order to achieve the illusion of space as well.

The roughs for a second animal followed, and in this case it was an infamous *Chupacabra*, a very visually challenging and intriguing creature to draw, and, unlike the Loch Ness one, a totally surreal and eerie beast which cannot be referenced from any existing, or at least once existing, animal.



**Figure 5** Various drafts of the Loch Ness Monster – from cute to grim and realistic



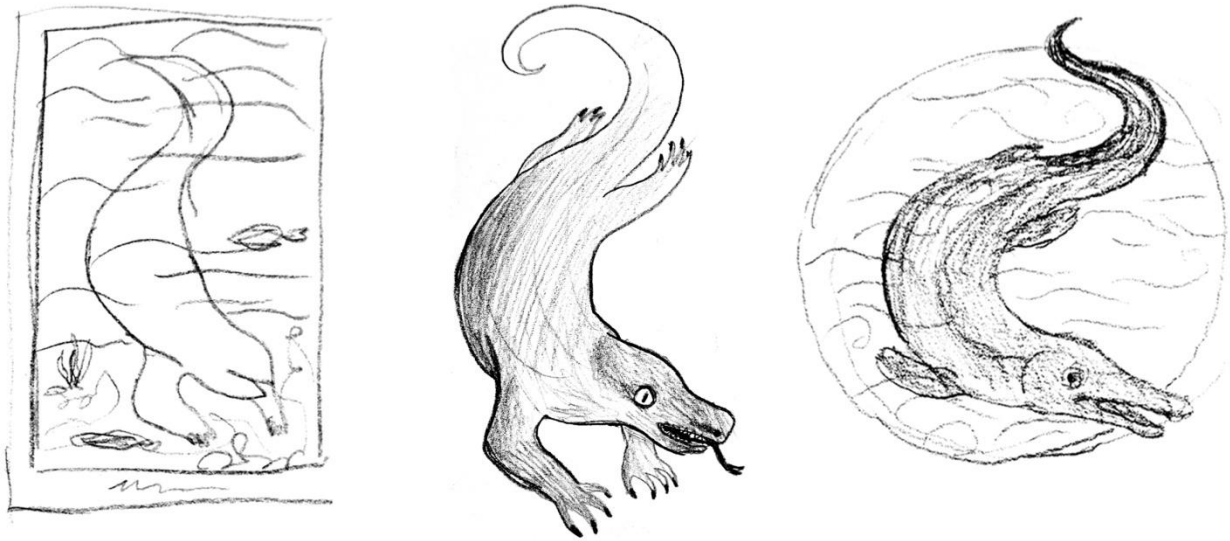


**Figure 6** The rising head of the Loch Ness Monster

Coleman and Clark (1999, 61) state that the legend of this livestock-slaughtering beast originated in small villages in Puerto Rico in 1995 and quickly spread to Mexico and Hispanic communities in the North America. Thankfully, there have been a few eyewitnesses whose claims can offer a rather vivid image of how the Chupacabra should look like. One of its most interesting features are long, sharp spines on its back, a characteristic which made for a very frightening spectacle (figure 7). Interestingly, the first roughs were everything but scary and are depicting Chupacabra in a rather amusing, even friendly manner, and have served only as a warm up for more serious and grim drafts.



**Figure 7** Various Chupacabra sketches



**Figure 8** Drafts for the aquatic Buru monster

The next animal on the “menu” is the *Buru*, an aquatic reptile from India, which bears characteristics of both crocodiles and large monitor komodo lizards: the crocodile-like back and tale, a head of a monitor lizard with a long neck and forked tongue are the features assigned to this mysterious lizard (figure 8). It is stated by Coleman and Clark (1999, 50) that the witnesses who have heard them claim they emitted hoarse, bellowing calls.

Naturally, photographs of both crocodiles and komodo dragons were used as references while conceiving the creature on paper in order to capture the features of both animals and the norm of their anatomy because “one can best veer from the norm if he knows what the norm is” (Hamm 1983, preface). The shape and the form were expressed with the use of simple lines and appropriate line width, and the use of dark shading and highlighting to bring the three-dimensional impression of the subject. Also, the swirling of its tale under the water was used to make the composition as dramatic and dynamic as possible.

Making drafts for the other animals selected to appear in the book went without any greater dilemmas regarding their appearance, pose or composition. The elements of each illustration which were considered were the creatures form, pose and the composition in regard to its surrounding and the book page format.

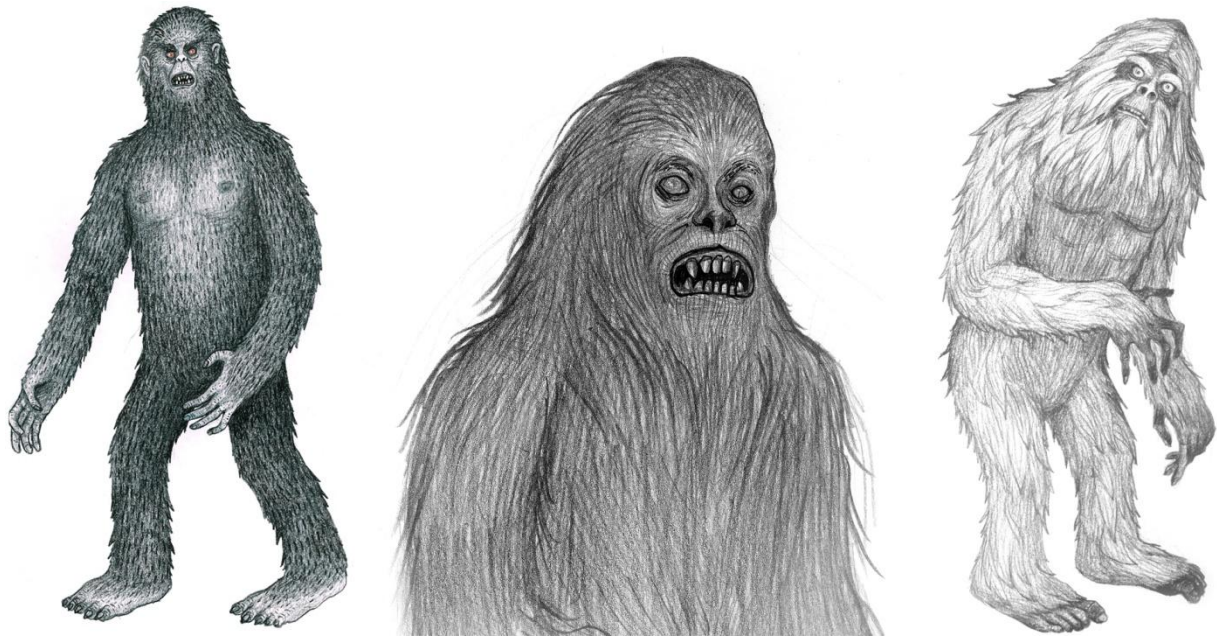
The only exception is the creature that can rival the Loch Ness Monster for the title of a most well-known and iconic cryptid – the *Yeti* or the abominable snowman, a nickname it gained due to its unpleasant odor. Indeed, the creating of the roughs for this mountain ape was an excruciating process for several reasons. One of the reasons why it was demanding to illustrate the Yeti creature was the fact that its appearance is already seeded within our own consciousness due to numerous depictions in the media that it leaves very little to the imagination and artistic freedom. Also, Yeti's human-like characteristic also required much more preparatory sketches. Thus, one of the ways to get a desired result of “an interesting analytical study, with optimal composition of the subject matter, is to make a series of drawings that reflect different aspects of the same subject.” (Art of Sketching 2007, 14). To illustrate this notion, these various drafts showcase many changes of the composition and the viewpoint of the many variations of the Yeti (figure 9). Also, it was substantial to create the right movement of its extremities and the facial expression because of all the cryptids Yeti is closest to a human and therefore the most articulate and presumably, intelligent (Coleman & Clark 1999, 254). Therefore, drawing the movement and rhythm of its hands was not that simple in the beginning. Burne (1996, 56) explains that the structure of the arms, upper or lower, has a consistent and similar curved rhythm, starting from the base of the elbow. Hence, it is important to pay attention to creature's human-like anatomy in order to make Yeti's pose natural and expressive at the same time.

In general, drawing a body form is complex as it is viewed as “the harmonious arrangement and interrelationship of its separate and individual defined parts” (Burne 1996, 8). In addition, Burne (1996, 9) states that the body is a defined mass, a three dimensional volume existing in space and depth, which is made up of a number of parts. Each of these parts is also a three dimensional volume existing in space and depth. It follows that the figure is a multiform complex of shape-masses, all independently formed and all related. For example, Burne (1996, 26) also explains that the extremity masses have a resemblance and correlation of form, and that the arm and the leg are elongated and jointed part, where each of whose parts has a modified column-like shape.



**Figure 9** Various Yeti roughs concentrating on the pose of the creature

With all that in mind, making the Yeti sketches was left as the last task and after many unsuccessful ones, I finally achieved what I was aiming for regarding the shape, gesture and the pose of this creature, with different lines giving a feeling of movement or tension to the picture (figure 10). After finding the right posture, it was important to visually evoke the sense of thick fur surface, an important feature of the Yeti, which can be achieved with different strokes and shading. Wan (2002, 18) states that shading is used to differentiate the lighter planes from the shaded ones, and that also, short and continuous strokes are used to give a suggestion of shadows. When it comes to illustration's background, Yeti's environment was easily determined as its supposed habitat is the high mountain range of the Himalayas (Coleman & Clark 1999, 253).



**Figure 10** More precise Yeti sketches

Beside the fact that these are all the creatures of mystery, the creation of each of them differs and requires more or less imagination and creativity. Some of the animals are pretty realistic-looking, while others have more otherworldly or even demonic characteristics. One of the goals when rendering these creatures was also to attribute to each of them a dose of personality and charm, the latter was a great challenge though considering the gruesome appearance of some of them. Another aspect which could make the images more enticing and attractive is to add a feeling of action or movement. If achieved, that feature can add an interactive aspect to the illustration, engaging the viewer with the image even more to forget for a brief moment that the creature is only on paper or on the screen.

As already mentioned, each creature has its own environment and setting. The form of the animal is being appropriately composed with the background and foreground elements. Wan (2002, 41) claims that the landscape often appears within the illustration and usually contains the following components: trees, grass, ground, hills, water, etc and that a good landscape drawing is a careful composition of some or all of the above mentioned elements (figure 11). Also, Wan (2002, 41) explains that we must train our eyes to see these landscape elements as a picture of good composition, which means that we should first select an appropriate viewing angle. Naturally, the key of organizing all these elements successfully also lies in arranging them appropriately along with the main visual subject.



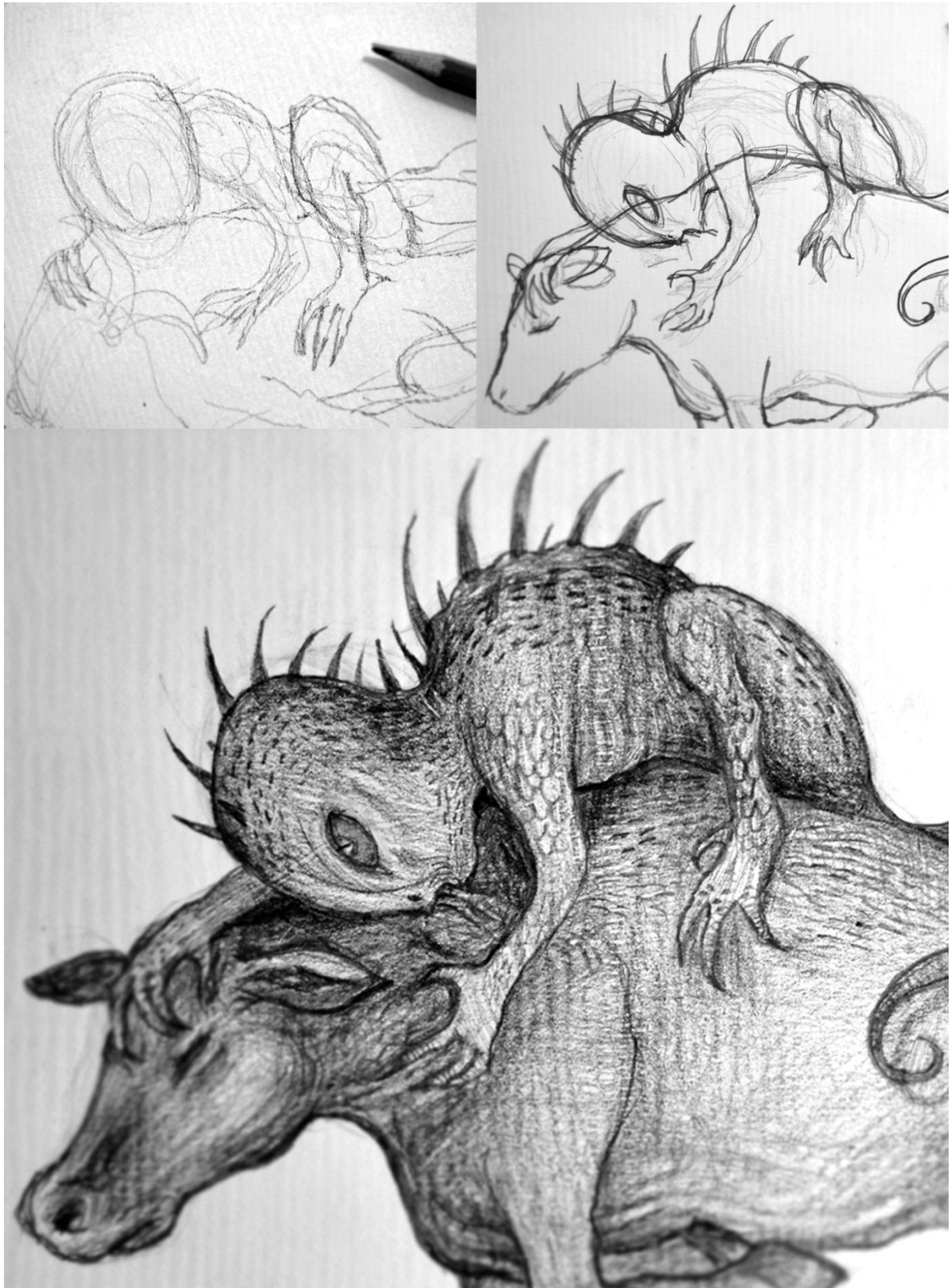
When creating the final image, the components which should also be considered as the key elements are: framing, balance and contrast (Wan 2002, 78-83). Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic (1999, 97) state that with the use of contrast, the desired result of the composition is achieved by conflicting the available visual elements (color, brightness or darkness, rhythm, tone, etc). With all that in mind, it was somewhat effortless to move those elements around when doing the final illustration, as they were cut out as layers in Adobe Photoshop, and could be placed and moved around in order not to interfere with the subject, which is the primary visual element of the image.

In addition, to make it more clear that the emphasis of the images will be on the creatures themselves, and to make the book as a whole more dynamic, some of the illustrations will be composed within a circular form, while others will be placed vertically within a format of the full book page. Furthermore, some of the creatures placed within a circle, will have some of their extremities (toe, tale, wing, etc) shown as they are getting out of their round-shaped frame (figure 11). The backgrounds on various images are usually darker in order to imply a dangerous or "stormy" atmosphere, as well as to make the creature more visually prominent.



**Figure 11** Sketch of the Jersey Devil creature

### 3.2 Technique: Tradition in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



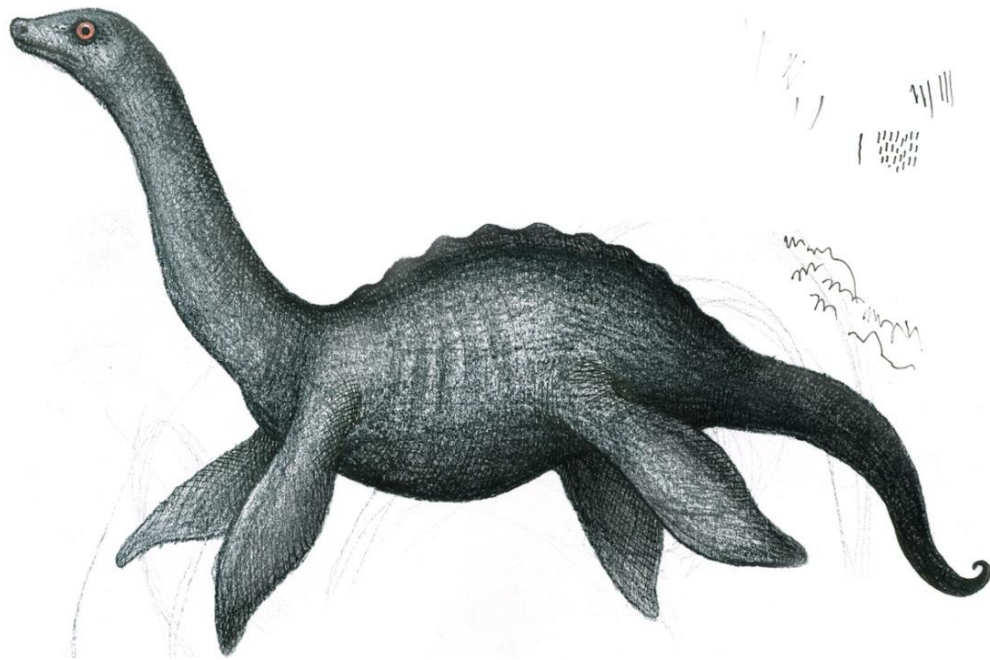
**Figure 12** Illustration process based on the final draft

After completing the roughs for all the species, it is time to choose the best sketch for each animal and bring it forward to the final stage, and of course to choose the tools and materials with which the final images will be created. The first step is to make a detailed drawing of the animal and all the elements which will appear on the illustration, using the traditional mediums and rendering it more precisely, but keeping the essence of an analogue drawing, with strokes and pencil dots highly visible (figure 12). Having said that, I was always attracted to patterns, dots and lines in order to enrich the shapes and other elements of my illustrations. Also, beside the fact that traditional tools and techniques are something I often use in my work, for this project it seemed like a prerequisite. As mentioned before, most of these creatures were introduced to the general public several centuries ago, so in a way the style of illustrations should echo the period of their origin, but at the same time should appeal to modern visual standards.

Keeping the reference of the chosen sketch in mind, the final piece was also hand drawn but with more refined details and tools, and naturally was much more time-consuming. While many artists prefer to trace the final sketch in order to save their time, creating the piece freely, without a template, gives the final artwork more freshness and spontaneity, considering that a sketch itself is perceived as less analytical and precise, and more spontaneous and informal, when the drawing was organized with soft and expressive lines, letting the hand to slide across the paper (Art of Sketching 2007, 19). Those are the qualities I intended to include when it comes to producing of final illustrations.

After making the drawing using a graphite pencil, the next phase would be to set tonal variations to the image in order to make it more dramatic and riveting. This can be achieved in many ways, from using ink wash to etching and painting, and with that being said; my choice was to use water based color pencils which can produce almost the same effect as ink or watercolors. After deciding from which side the creature and its surrounding environment will be lightened, I started making different gradations of tones, from lightest to the darkest areas which gave depth and three-dimensional feel to the illustration (figure 13). On the other hand, the three-dimensionality of the images is not much emphasized for the reason not to make them look too realistic, that is, the sort of “flat” rendering has remained distinctive so that the classic impression would remain. Later on, the dark areas can be made even darker applying water over the color pencil. Using a small size brush dipped in water, I went with it over several areas in order to make the piece more tonally balanced and to create greater contrast.





**Figure 13** Final drawing of the Loch Ness Monster

In general, contrast, as well as textures, is something I use often in my illustrations as I personally find it appealing and visually powerful when expressing and emphasizing an idea, emotion or a particular atmosphere.

At this point, it was obvious that the illustrations would work best if I tried to convey a dark and mysterious atmosphere echoing the vintage style of old encyclopedia books. Also, an additional task at this stage was to find visual elements in order to make the images look scary, because most of these sightings terrified people who have encountered them. Bang (2000, 29) claims that when we are in a scary situation, we see the scary elements in an exaggerated light; therefore I have decided to rely on that notion, and make the creatures look convincing and surreal at the same time.

Indeed, vintage animal illustrations which embellished old science books and encyclopedias play a big part as an influence and inspiration for these illustrations, which will also be some sort of homage to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century artists. One of those naturalist illustrators was Maria Sibylla Merian, who has contributed very much to this field with her own particular interests in nature and studies of animal and plant species (Etheridge 2011, 17). Another artist whose work played a big part as an inspiration was Heinrich Harder, whose illustrations of animals for books contributed in making learning and researching life more intriguing and beautiful than ever (The Wonderful Paleo Art of Heinrich Harder, n.d.).

On the other hand, the fact that we are into the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a digital and technological era, sets new standards of design and illustration every day and therefore should not be ignored. That being said, the vintage and traditional style should definitely mirror that fact and support the new ways of making images. The aim, therefore, is to connect the old and the new, vintage and modern, and make them coexist in some sort of a visual harmony. The traditionally created basis of each illustration, with slightly stylized figures and surrounding elements, will be digitally processed and enhanced, while the details, created with digital software programs such as Adobe Illustrator and Corel Draw, will come together with the hand drawn elements and make for a striking and intriguing illustration (figure 14).

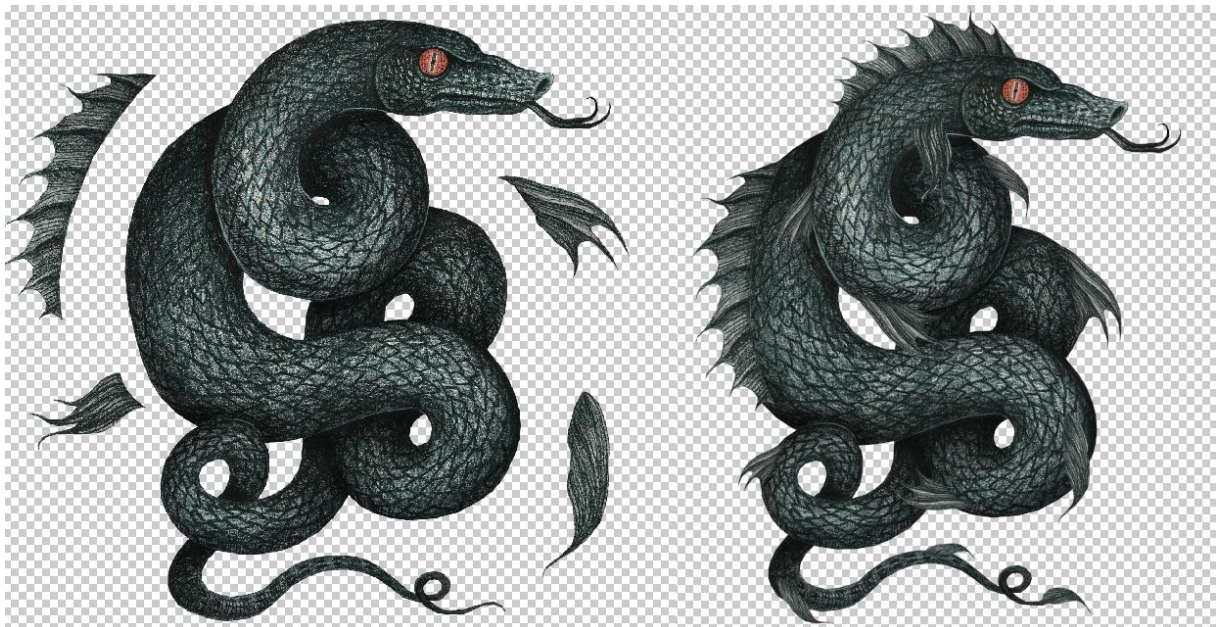


**Figure 14** The Storsjö lake monster - from the line drawing to the digitally processed piece

### 3.3 Coming to life – Finalizing the Illustrations

Each stage of making an illustration creates new issues, and with each step you get a new way of looking at the image. Firstly, the illustration will be processed using Photoshop, when all the irregularities and unwanted details will be removed and corrected, as well as re-organized if necessary (figure 15). What is appealing to me when using Photoshop is the fact that it can be used to create effects which can also be achieved in an analogue way, only in a shorter period of time. Tools such as air-brush, eraser and lasso, can be used efficiently in a combination with scanned drawings, which can be fully rendered or only used as an outline form or a template for the digital version. The use of digital tools is determined by the program's own settings, but each person can find new ways to combine those tools when creating, naturally the same thing applies when the traditional tools are in question.

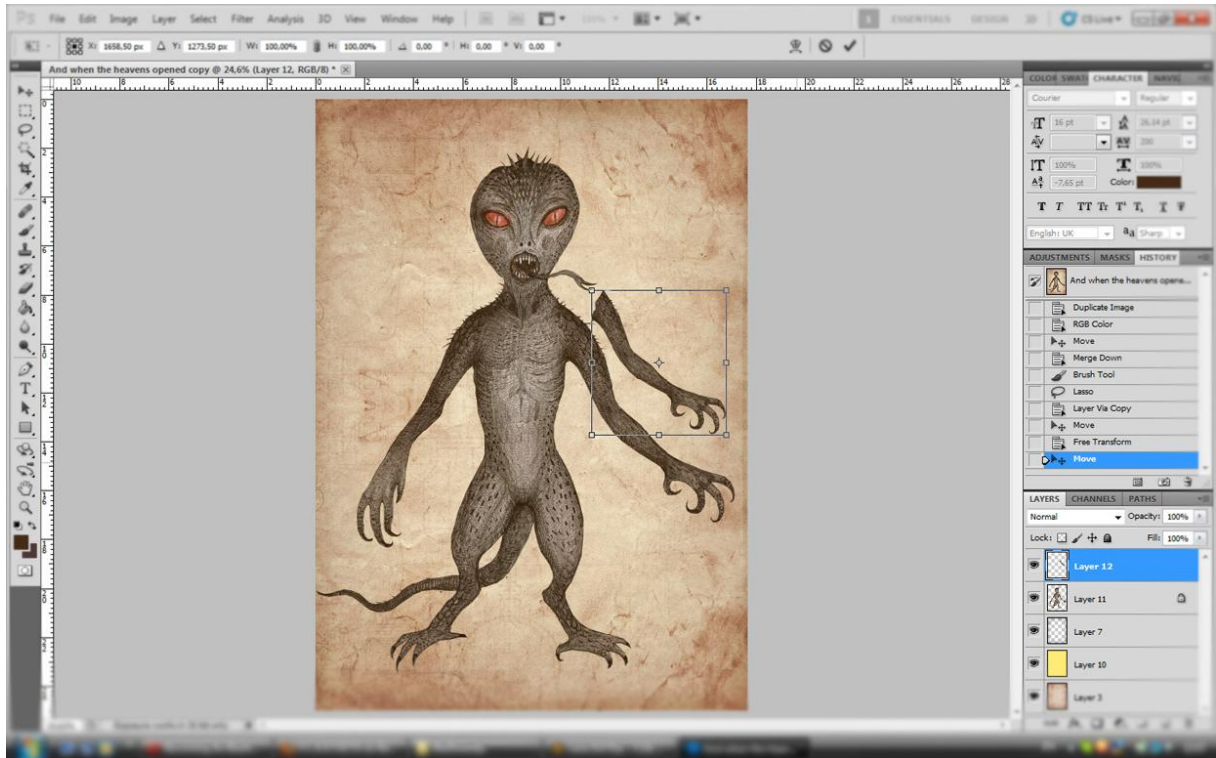
At the beginning of the digital process, the hand drawn elements will be cut away from their backgrounds in order to make them more accessible and easier to manipulate. For example, I have found that the front legs, or the arms if you will, of the Chupacabra creature were too long and human-like, and therefore with the use of Photoshop's free-transform tool, I have decided to make them shorter (figure 16).



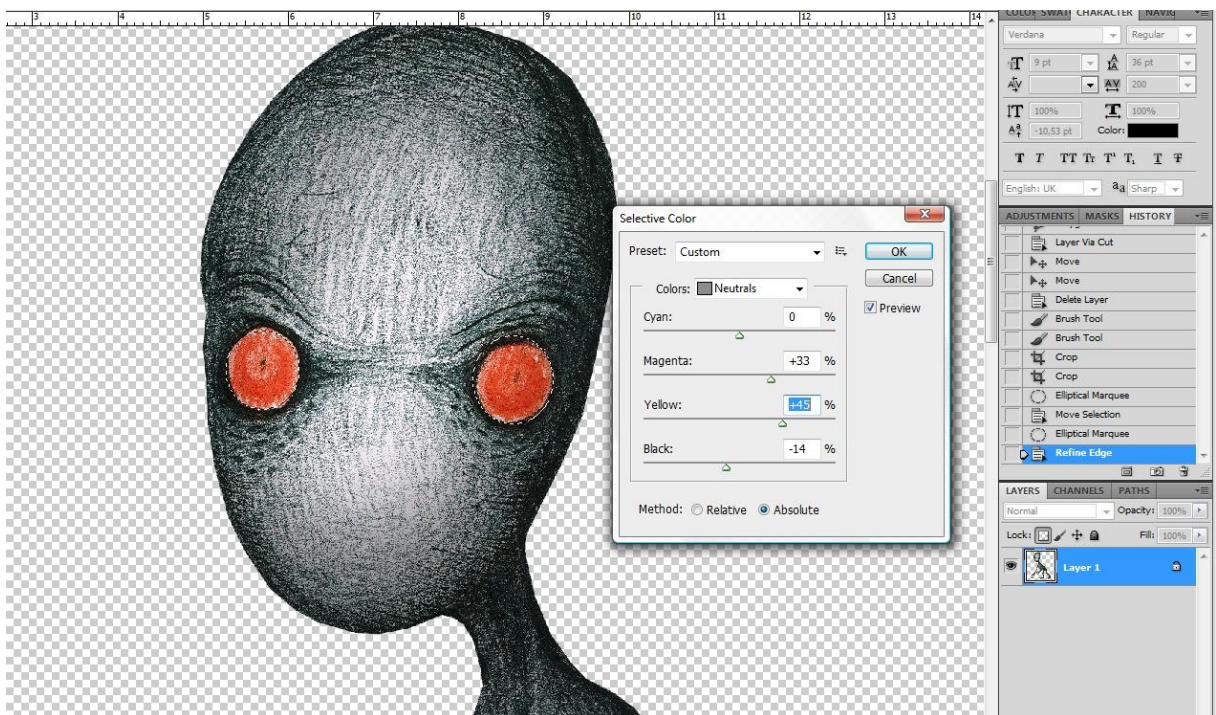
**Figure 15** Separating the drawing from its background and rearranging the details in Adobe Photoshop



In addition to adjusting the shapes of the drawings, an important aspect is tuning the colors and hues of the creatures, various details, background elements and areas, so that their arranging on the final image would be much more effective and natural-looking (figure 17).



**Figure 16** Making changes of the Chupacabra's proportions in Adobe Photoshop



**Figure 17** Adjusting the colors of the Dover Demon using Selective Color option in Adobe Photoshop

### 3.3.1 Setting the Monsters Free

As the process draws near to the finalizing stage, it is getting clearer if the illustration is satisfying and if the two different approaches fit in. That being said, after the production of the creatures and the backgrounds was completed, it was time to bring these elements together (figure 18). The final result should appear as natural looking as possible, in order to make the characters and, either plain backgrounds or environment surroundings, blend in.



**Figure 18** Separated hand-drawn elements and their arranging for the Mothman illustration



### 3.3.2 The Coloring Process

The arranging of hand drawn elements into a whole image conforms to basic rules where different parts make a unity according to an already pre-determined “plan” (Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic 1999, 95). This unity would not be complete without the colors. The color palette always plays a significant part, and therefore it was of big importance to find a proper relationship between the different colors of an illustration. While the colors expected to appear on encyclopedia illustrations are more natural and corresponding to the depicted subjects and their environment, in this the rules can be slightly different, having in mind the fantastic and bizarre aspect of cryptozoology. Therefore, it is logical that the applied color values and hues, their brightness and saturation should be somewhat unreal in order to underline the otherworldly theme of the project. The coloration of the background is almost always neutral and limited, or is of complementary value to the color of the subject, making the animal more dominant and the illustration more visually appealing. Also, the blurry and foggy effect makes the atmosphere of the illustration more dream-like and surreal (figure 19).



**Figure 19** Adding the colors and blurry effects to the background of the "Dover Demon" illustration

Another interesting feature of many of these mysterious animals are their captivating and, in many cases, red or bright orange eyes. After I got aware of this interesting fact, I came to an idea that the red eye would be a good motif or even a graphic symbol of the book, and may be used in various ways to underline the book's mysterious and eerie mood. Put that aside, the color of animals' eyes works perfectly as an accent, producing a stunning visual contrast to the green, blue or gray color schemes of the images (figure 20).

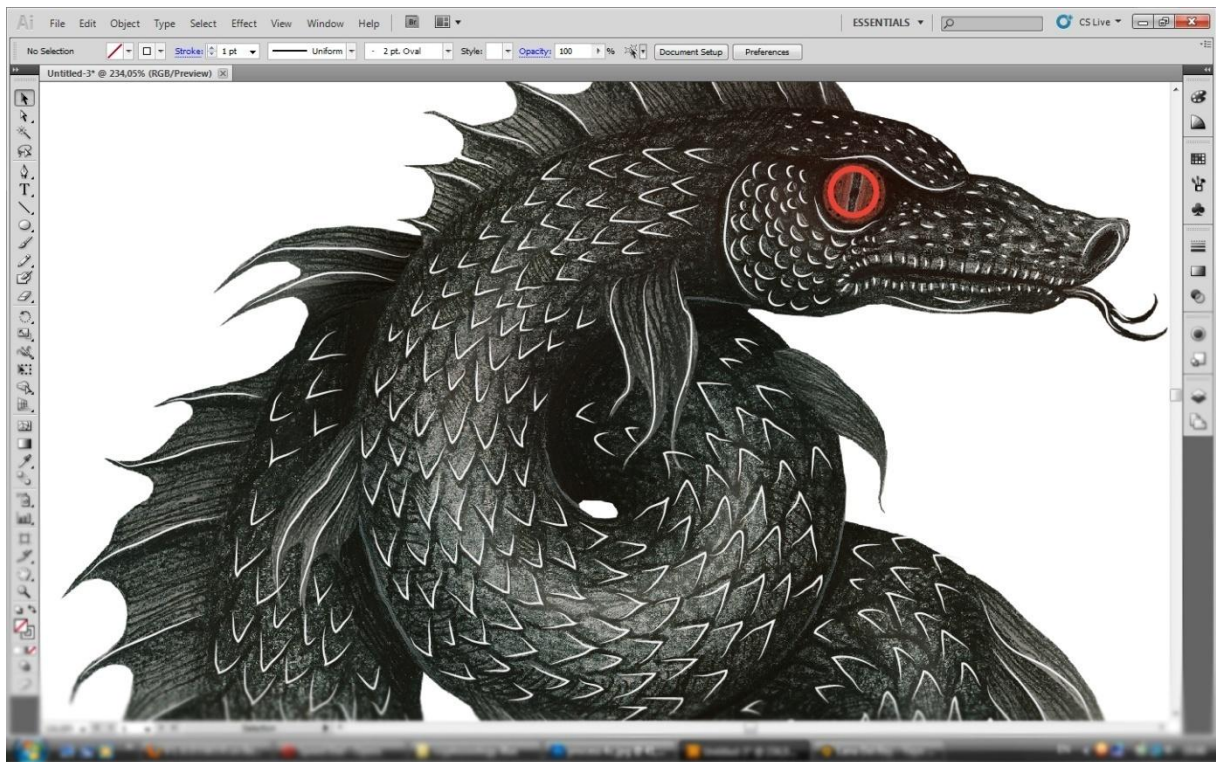


**Figure 20** Close-ups of the red and orange colored eyes of the cryptids

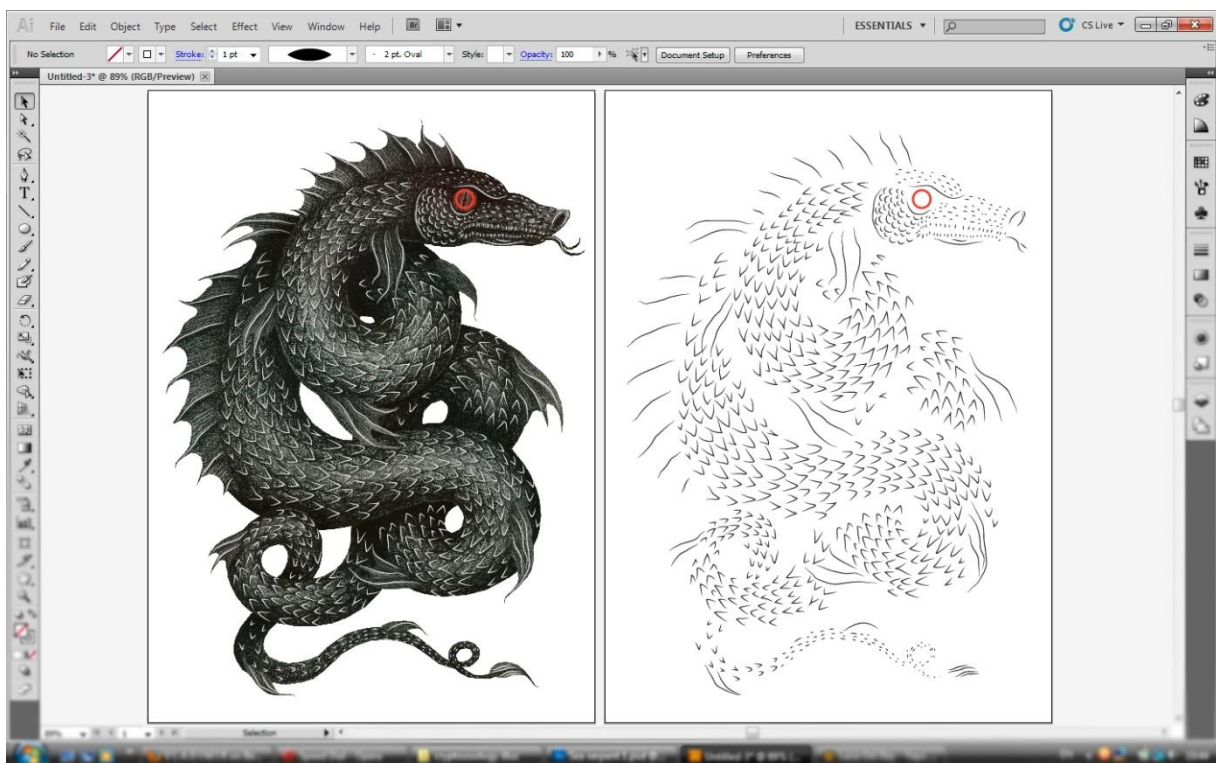
### 3.3.3 Final Touches

After arranging and tuning the coloration of the illustrations, the next step towards finalizing is adding the details which are created using the Adobe Illustrator software (figures 21 and 22). These vector based elements are usually very important details and will serve to make a certain part of an illustration pop-up. Those vector accents range from reflects on the eyes, teeth, scales, fur or are just lines created to give an illusion of movement of the water, wind, etc. The shapes of the hand drawn details are underlined with the use of these vectors and make the textures even more palpable. Also, the variety of these textured surfaces of the characters or the backgrounds make the illustration even more alluring and dynamic, even giving the viewer an idea of how those areas would feel to touch (figure 23). The following and final step, after composing the creatures and their surroundings and blending the digital and hand drawn elements, is to add the textured surface which will cover the full illustration and create the vintage, impaired and dusty impression similar to those of antique and science book artworks (figure 24).





**Figure 21** Adding of vector elements using the pencil tool in Adobe Illustrator



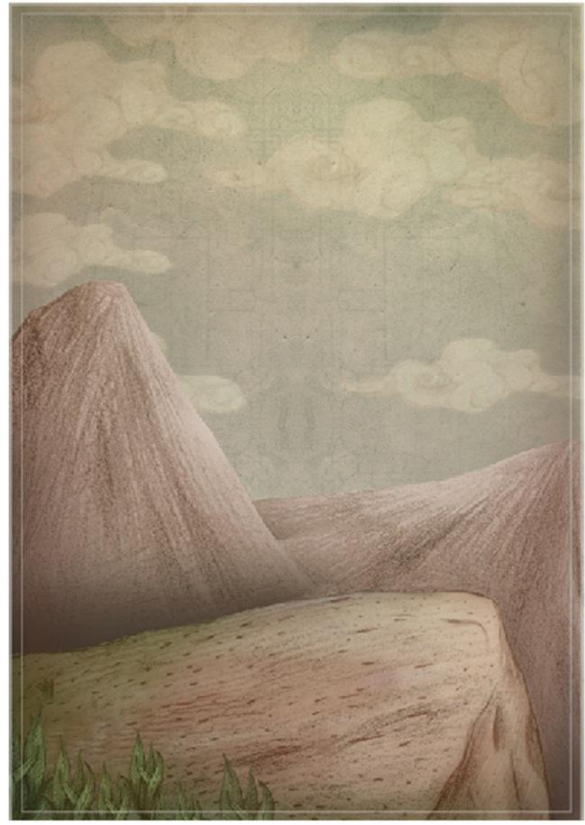
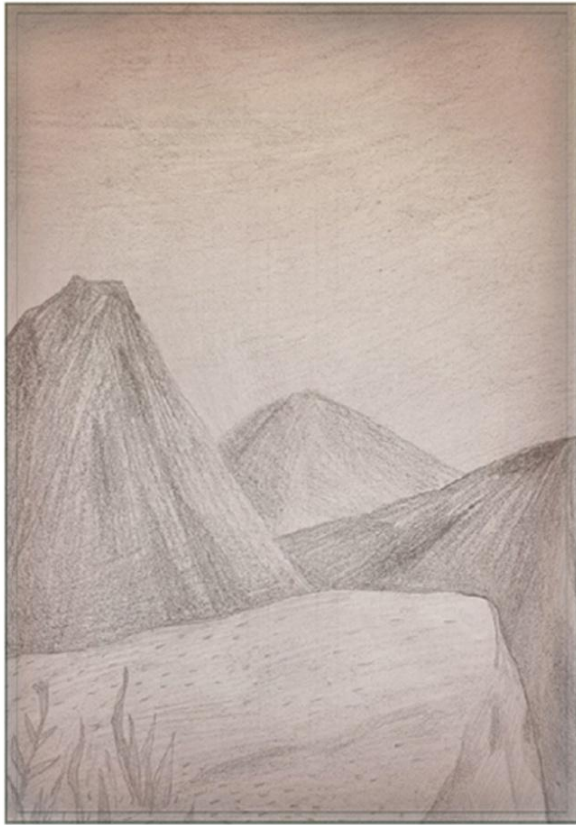
**Figure 22** Sea Serpent and separated vector details





**Figure 23** Completed Sea Serpent illustration



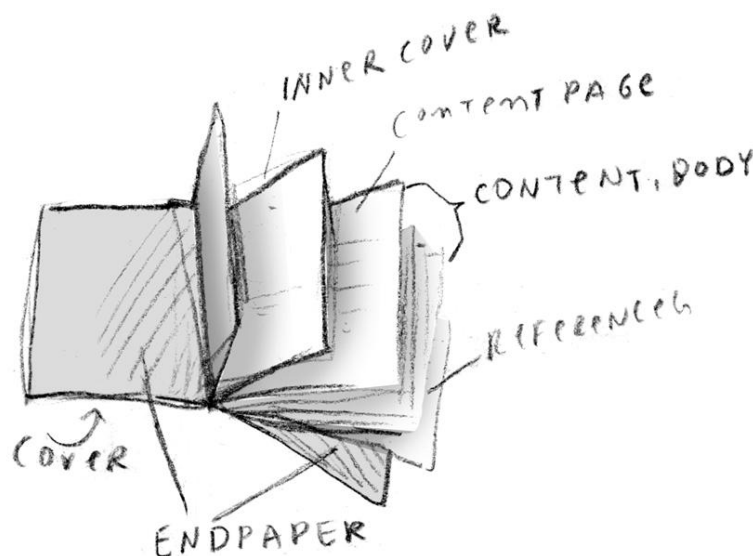


**Figure 24** Stages of creating the background and blending the layers with the Thunderbird creature

## 4. The Anatomy of an Illustrated Book

With all the illustrations completed, the next stage would be to embark on the design part of the project, that is, to design the cover, the layout of the spreads, make a decision which type will be used and to find a way to make it all work as a whole, in one word, to find coherence between the text and the pictures. Guidelines for formatting text and books, some of which have remained conclusive to this day, began to form since the medieval times. It is known that the history books changed their appearance constantly, adapting to new circumstances and accepting everything that could accelerate the development of its aesthetics and technology (Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic 1999, 204).

In order to create and design a book, it is important to get acquainted with those basic rules and to appropriately apply them. Each book consists of two main parts: the cover and the book block. Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic (1999, 204-205) state that the book block is the inner component of the book situated between the front and the back cover, and usually consists of three parts: the so-called front matter which is an introductory part containing foreword, title page, dedication, preface and contents, then there is the text of the main sheet which is the main part of the book made up of a number of chapters or from continuous text, and finally, the end matter which is the final part of the book and consists of an imprint, a list of references, glossary, etc. As it is important to get acquainted with these elements, I have made a rough sketch which will serve as guidance when designing the book (figure 25).



**Figure 25** Guideline sketch of a book and its various parts

## 4.1 Designing the Book Cover

A saying that we should not judge a book by its cover is true and should definitely be taken into consideration, but as proven many times, it is something which is not that easy to do. The cover functions not only as a physical protection of the text block, but its eye-catching appeal serves to attract the attention of future readers. Technically speaking, the cover board of the book is the outer part which consists of a front and the back cover sheet, or the front and back covers, connected with the spine; the spine of the book has an informative role, and usually has the name of the book, the author, and possibly publisher's logo and the number of the edition. Modern bookbinding techniques use cardboard, and depending on the binding method and the weight of the cardboard, the book can be categorized as a hard-cover or a paperback (Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic 1999, 205).

When designing the front cover of the book, it is very important to know the rules of typography, composition and visual communication, as well as to get familiar with the content, the atmosphere and the substance of the text in order to come up with a successful art solution that will visually communicate with potential readers (Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic 1999, 207). The cover design is a sort of an invitation to the viewers, and while those people interested in the field of cryptozoology will probably find it attractive anyway, the trick is to make the average viewer interested to get familiar with this fascinating subject.

Before embarking on the task of creating a cover illustration, an equally important aspect of all book covers is the use of a typeface. Finding a typeface which will possess the same kind of whimsy and seriousness at the same time will be a challenge. After the research of typography used in vintage encyclopedias I got a more clear idea of what I was looking for, although I was still in doubt whether I should create hand lettering for the cover as well as for the titles in the book. I have tried making several examples with ink and a brush, but the results were not that "compatible" with the illustrations.

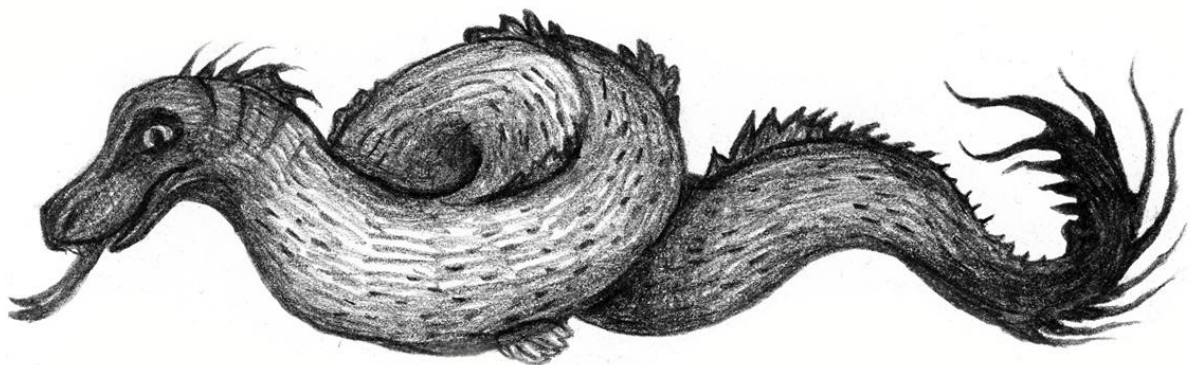
The first idea which came to mind for the cover was to depict the creature which is iconic and in a way represents the field of cryptozoology, an animal like the Yeti or the Loch Ness monster. After several drafts which clearly showed the creatures in question and their full appearance, it became clear that such a cover is not that original and mysterious (figure 26).



**Figure 26** Initial book cover thumbnail sketches

In order to come up with a better concept I have produced many sketches, and the idea which stood out the most was to display the body of a serpentine creature (figure 27) on both the front and back cover, but only the fragments of its body to make it appear hidden (figure 28). This idea could be directly linked to the meaning of cryptozoology and its notion of hidden animals. In other words, the viewer would be provoked to look for the creature inside the book pages in order to “discover” it. The creature which seemed to be most fit for this type of concept was the legendary sea serpent, due to the fact that the serpentine body can be showed in various intriguing forms.

In addition, I have used this idea not only for the cover, both front and back, but for some of the inner pages as well. The creature will appear and disappear on various pages, and it will not be seen until the very last page in the book. On the other hand, the head of the sea serpent is used as a cover illustration for this thesis because this is the part which reveals the creation process behind the encyclopedia itself.



**Figure 27** Pencil drawing of the Sea Serpent





**Figure 28** Various book cover thumbnail sketches

Moreover, the format of the book is an equally crucial visual feature of a book design, and in this case I have decided that the book will be rectangular and that its size will be A4 format. The format in question is mostly used in academic purposes, by companies and organizations with a lot of international correspondence, diplomats, universities, and some government agencies (Kuhn, 1996). With this in mind, the more formal format of the encyclopedia should underline its scholar and factual characteristic, even though it is sort of a surreal subject.

In addition, the color that dominates on the book cover must correspond to the literary work and must symbolize the substance of the content. The atmosphere can be optimistic, pessimistic, comical, etc, which imposes the use of certain colors; also, rhythm, contrast and color are intended to establish the unity of artistic form and content (Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic 1999, 207). In this case, the spiraling serpent's body will take on the role of a visual "hook", and its form should be attractive to a potential reader. As far as the colors are concerned, the dark brown with red hues will dominate against a plain, white background. That way, the contrast between the subject and the background is quite prominent, making sure that the snake is recognizable from a certain distance, while the presence of the white background area gives the design a modern tone (figure 31).

After finishing the sketches and choosing the final image for the cover (figure 23), it was time to find an appropriate typeface which will be used for the cover title, as well as for the titles within the book pages. The process began with sketching the title in order to get the sense and the appearance of the letters and find a connection with the subject. At first, my concept was to create a mysterious and fairy tale like lettering, but after completing the drafts and comparing them to the cover illustration, it was obvious that the result would be too illustrative and ornamental (figure 29), and would take away the scientific aspect of the book's content.



Figure 29 Initial book title concepts

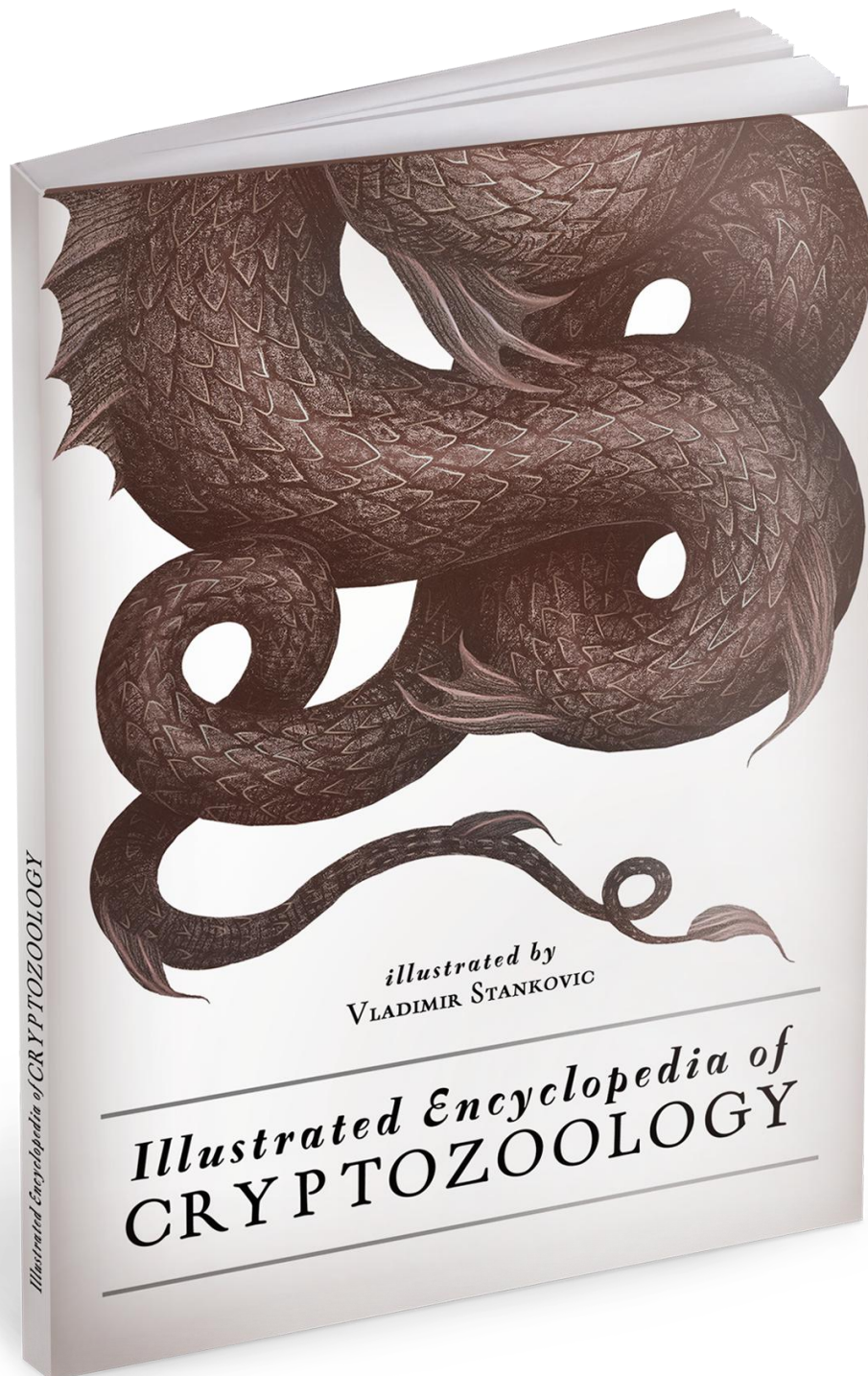
That being said, the aim was to simplify the title design and find a more appropriate typeface which will at the same time compliment the illustration and be relevant to the content. After many hours of searching my own font database, and comparing the fonts I found most suitable with the cover image, I have stumbled upon a typeface which was created by a Canadian designer Nick Shinn in 1999, entitled *FF Oneleigh*. This typeface possesses characteristics of some of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century typefaces with various new letterforms and details (FF Oneleigh, 2000). *FF Oneleigh* is created on the presumption that, then as now, it is possible to sustain features of the old style genre, and yet take sufficient freedom to come up with a new and original type. It fits the subject, as well as the vintage looking illustration style, both with its regular, bold and italic form (figure 30).

# *Illustrated Encyclopedia of* CRYPTOZOOLOGY

**Figure 30** Final book title design

After completing the front cover, the back cover was also designed soon, and it displayed the backside of the same sea serpent on its lower part, with the synopsis text describing the content of the encyclopedia above it. A combination of typefaces was used for this body of text: the already mentioned *FF Oneleigh* was used in order to accentuate the names of the cryptid species, and the *Times New Roman* for the rest of the text. The choice for the latter typeface was made due to the reason that it is readable and tonally balanced and it fits the character and the spirit of the given task regarding the nature of the book (Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic 1999, 215).





**Figure 31** Final book cover design

## 4.2 Inner Book Elements

With the book cover fully designed and the inner illustrations completed it was time to design the layout for the book pages, choose the suitable type face for the text and design the endpaper. Beforehand, it was important to get familiar with the elements which most books contain, such as the front matter which carries an internal cover page; most representative literary editions contain: a cover sheet, front cover sheet, inner cover page, dedication sheet, etc. Naturally, the logo of the publishing house is incorporated together with the title on both the front and the inner cover, often on the spine of the book as well. The introductory area also contains a photograph or a drawing of the author, the title of the publication, the publisher, the translation of the original title, note about copyright protection, preface, introduction, table of contents, and in some editions the interpreter of the abbreviations that are used in the book (Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic 1999, 210).

One of my personal favorite parts of a book is the endpaper. The endpaper is a sheet that connects the book cover with the book block and as a rule it is made from the thicker paper. The concept I came up with for the endpaper was to make a pattern out of the sea serpent's body depicted on the cover. The tone of the pattern is coloristically connected to the cover while the texture of the scales makes the snake instantly recognizable (figure 32).



**Figure 32** Detail of the endpaper design

The page which separates the insides of the entire book with the book cover, and the endpaper with the book block, is called the cover sheet. Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic (1999, 211) explain that the inner cover page is the front page of the whole front matter part and it contains all the relevant information: the name of the author, the title of book, as well as the name of the publisher. In this case, and as mentioned in the chapter about the book cover design, I have chosen to include the title of the encyclopedia and the fragment of the sea serpent's spine, which is present on various pages of the front matter and the end matter of the book (figure 33), making it look as if the creature is escaping from the curious viewer while he/she is flipping through the book pages. Finally, the viewer will be able to reveal the identity of the mysterious monster, which appears on the cover and throughout the inner pages, on the very last page which contains additional information about the encyclopedia and its purpose, the source of the book's content, etc.



**Figure 33** Various book pages showing the body of the Sea Serpent

## 4.2.1 Typeface Choice

Alongside other elements, the layout of a book page also relies on two seemingly minor details: character of the typeface and the quality of the paper. When it comes to the choice of a typeface for a longer text of an encyclopedia, or a book with a similar content, its symbolic connection with the content, or the variety of topics like in the case of magazines or other publications, is preferable and should be hinted through typeface's characteristics. For example, the already mentioned *FF Oneleigh* typeface, which will be used for the title, will also be used for the chapter titles of the inner pages, and will hint the basic orientation of the encyclopedia's inclination towards scientific and illustrative subject, while the *Times New*

*Roman* typeface will be used for the body text of the chapters, table of contents and the preface, due to its features and leaning towards literature, political and philosophical themes. After all, *Times New Roman* was re-designed from its previous versions by Stanley Morison who was inspired by old-style fonts, especially by a 16th-century typeface called Plantin (Alas, 2009).

Naturally, special attention should be paid on the legibility and optical influence of the typeface, as well as its tone value, especially when it comes to the longer texts (Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic 1999, 215). All of this implies that the choice of the typeface is very important, especially when combining two different ones. Therefore, the choice of using a very illustrative and entertaining typeface on one hand, and a very classic and formal one on the other, but with a common trait that they are both inspired by old-style and vintage typeface designs, seems as a very adequate choice.

#### 4.2.2 Text and Illustrations

As the opening and the closing parts of a book have their own rules, the same goes for the basic text of the main book block. Starting page of the book is implemented on the right odd page: the surface of the opening and closing white areas of the new chapter on the opposite sides should look even, as well as the areas filled with the text, but of course, in the opposite (Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic 1999, 221-222).

In addition, the contents, or in some cases the list of figures, tables, etc, are on the recto (front) odd page. The title is always separated from the rest of the text with white area. This area should not be smaller than one blank line. On the introductory page of the chapter (which should be right and odd, as already mentioned), the initial white area planned for the title can be separated in various ways, and very often used proportion is 2:1, where the title is closer to the text, with larger letter gradations used for the titles.

In addition, most of the typesetting rules must be applied in the representative and expensive editions, while on the other hand, when it comes to more standard editions, in which every space line is used, some of the typographic rules are allowed to be modified and even discarded (Nedeljkovic and Nedeljkovic 1999, 221).



With the page format and the typefaces being chosen, the next step would be to incorporate the text with the completed illustrations. When trying to make a composition of a text and an image, it used to be noted that images are just visual aids, while the words are considered the primary mode of communication and information source (Arnheim 1969, 308). However, it is said for a reason that a picture is worth a thousand words, especially in the case of encyclopedias where an illustration serves, not just to aid the reader in comprehending the material, but also to evoke emotions and enrich the whole reading experience, which is one of the main points and goals when it comes to my own illustrating process and its analysis.

Eventually, I have drafted various combinations of how the images and the text could be organized (figure 34), and after seeing the results where the image is overshadowing the text, I have decided to simplify the layout with fully justified and proportioned rectangle body of text and wider white margins. In addition to the simplified typography setting, I have decided to include only two format types of illustrations: circular ones, which will occupy a page along with the text, and the rectangular full page illustrations, obviously placed as closer as possible to the relevant written content (figure 35).



**Figure 34** Initial drafts of book spread layouts

## Kongamato

The Kongamato ("breaker of boats") is a reported pterosaur-like creature said to have been seen by natives and explorers in the Mwinilunga district's Jiundu swamps of Western Zambia, Angola and Congo. Suggested identities include a modern-day *Rhamphorhynchus* (pterosaurs lived in the area of Africa where Kongamato has been sighted), a misidentified bird (such as the very large and peculiar Saddle-billed Stork), or a giant bat. No photos or footage have been taken, leaving most of the stories to rely on large wounds and eyewitness accounts.

### History

Frank Melland, in his 1923 book *In Witchbound Africa*, describes it as living along certain rivers, and very dangerous, often attacking small boats, and anybody who disturbed the creature. They are typically described as either red or black in color, with a wingspan of 4 to 7 feet. Members of the local Kaonde tribe identified it as similar to a pterosaur after being shown a picture from Melland's book collection.

In 1956 an engineer, J.P.F. Brown, allegedly saw the creature at Fort Rosebery near Lake Bangweulu in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). It was about 6:00 p.m. when he saw two creatures flying slowly and silently directly overhead. He observed that they looked prehistoric. He estimated a wingspan of about 3 to 3 1/2 feet (0.91 to 1.1 meters) and a beak-to-tail length of about 4 1/2 feet (1.4 meters). It reportedly had a long thin tail, and a narrow head which he likened to an elongated snout of a dog.

The following year, at a hospital at Fort Rosebery, a patient came in with a severe wound in his chest, claiming that a large bird-like creature had attacked him in the Bangweulu swamps. When asked to draw the creature, he allegedly drew a creature resembling a pterosaur. This drawing does not appear to have survived to the present.

It is curious to note that the area concerned is advertised as a prime birdwatching site, but this large, flying animal seems not to have been reported by any visiting birdwatchers. There are reports of similar creatures from Angola, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Tanzania and Kenya. The kongamato may be related to what is called a "flying snake" in Namibia.

### Description

The Kongamato has been seen by African natives and European explorers for some time, and almost all of the accounts say it is a reddish blackish creature resembling a pterosaur. Other people have come back with large, deep wounds that they claim to be from the Kongamato. Eyewitness accounts say the creature has teeth, leathery wings, a beak, and claws. Some British scientists and explorers have shown natives drawings of pterosaurs, and the natives were said to have a terrified reaction.

Skeptics of the creature claim the Kongamato is a hoax or a misidentification of a huge bat or a stork. However, believers think that the beast has never been caught on film because as it supposedly lives in the thick vegetation of African swamps, there is not a good way to get a clear photo. If the Kongamato is real, there is likely more than one. Since the Kongamato was supposed to come up from underwater and upset canoes, the suggestion has also been made that the name originally referred to a freshwater stingray.



Kongamato

## Buru

The Buru was an aquatic reptile said to have lived in Jiro (also spelled and pronounced as Ziro) valley, a small town in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, India, at some undefined time in the past. In 1947, Professor Christopher von Furer-Haimendorf was the first westerner to be told about the Buru. By that time, the animals had reportedly already become extinct in the valley. According to the Apatani elders, when their forefathers migrated to Jiro valley, the valley was primarily a marsh which was populated by Burus. The Apatani people decided to settle in the valley because of its fertility and good climate. But every now and then they would have confrontations with burus. So they decided to drain the marsh of its water and thus eliminate the Burus. Most of the Burus died because of the drainage, and many supposedly went underground into the springs. The last Buru was said to be reported by a young woman, who sighted it in a spring one night while she was drawing water. The startled lady told her father about the incident. The next day the whole village helped fill the spring with stones and clay.

### Identity

Traditionally, there has been speculation that the Buru was an unidentified member of the order crocodylia. Tellingly, crocodiles or alligators are also called "Buru" by the Apatanis. There is large population of crocodiles which live in caves in North Africa, quite far from open water, so an underground existence is not improbable for persecuted Indian crocodiles. The mere fact that crocodylians are called "Buru" may not be very significant, since the Buru is described with monitor-like characteristics such as an elongated neck and a forked tongue. The native name of the Komodo dragon is "Land Crocodile". Both Bernard Heuvelmans, and Roy Mackal regard the Buru to be a large Komodo dragon-like monitor lizard, and there are fossils of such a creature to be found in the Indian subcontinent. Heuvelmans notes similar reported creatures from Western India under the name of "jhoors" where they seem to merge into the Iranian traditional dragon or ahi (Azi Dahaka), which in Iranian art is basically a local stylistic adaptation of the Chinese dragon. George Eberhart notes rumors of a similar creature in the Tigris marshes of Iraq, called the afa, possibly the same thing as ahi. Heuvelmans also notes in his checklist of unknown animals that similar reports to the buru also come from Burma, and they might also relate to a reported lizard-like Meikong River monster.

Cryptozoologist Karl Shuker claims that the Buru was a giant lungfish noting that this provides a far more comprehensive, comparable match not only in terms of morphology but also with regard to behaviour. Shuker believes this explains the Buru's alleged ability to survive hidden at the bottom of lakes during the dry season. Shuker's view admittedly does nothing to account for the various other buru-like creatures as cited in this article. It also does not account for the specified features of the long neck and forked tongue.



Buru

Figure 35 Completed page spread layout

## 5. Conclusion: The End of the Journey

Although my research was not based on an actual illustration theory, it clearly shows the artistic input which is described in the thesis, revealing in a linear manner what the creative process is when it comes to conceiving an illustration and how the creation develops from a rough pencil sketch to a completed multi-layered artwork. In addition, the thesis describes the design part of the project and touches upon the basic rules of book design. Having said that, I might add that designing a book of any kind is not such a simple task, especially if the book does not only entertain and amuse, but also inform and educate. With that in mind, there are many instances of the book creation that need to be taken into account, from basic layout and typography rules to creating illustrations of a certain quality and style which will appeal to potential “consumers”.

The motivation behind my goal was to create a book which will possess the charm of classic, antique and traditionally drawn scientific books on one hand, with a modern, simple and elegant “twist” to its design on the other. That being said, the field of cryptozoology, which is a mixture of mythology, science and popular culture, offers a broad variety of creative approaches, from caricatures and cartoons to movies and documentaries. However, the insisting on the vintage style of the illustrations does not come only from my own personal inclination towards all things historic and timeless, but from a notion that even though we have stepped into a new, digital era, we should not neglect the tradition and turn to the trends of over-digitized visuals. In addition, through my research of cryptozoology I have found that visually, the subject was very underwhelming with not many artists interested to bring its imagery to a new level. In a way, my aim was to contribute to the visual domain when it comes to the field of this mysterious subject.

Moreover, although I have chosen to “display” them in a context of an encyclopedia, the use of final images can be much broader. For instance, archival prints, posters, postcards, calendars and stamps, are all visual mediums which would be quite suitable for the placement of the completed illustrations and used as designs for promotional purposes, not only the actual encyclopedia, but for example the exhibition about these creatures, the area where they allegedly exist, etc (figure 36).





**Figure 35** Poster and stamp designs using the final book images

The illustrating process itself turned out to be a sort of an experiment, as the combination of tools, analogue and digital, offered many possibilities which meant that the final result can vary and incline to either of the two approaches. In spite of this risk, I have tried to keep a balance between the styles with an effort to keep the illustration more in the traditional, rather than in the digital zone. Eventually, as the images' creation progressed, I have noticed that the final result is very close to what was my intention in the first place; I have tried to step back in time and create illustrations which will look scientific on one hand, and fun and decorative on the other.

All in all, I have come to a conclusion that although we live in the digital age, illustrated books as a medium, either in printed or digital form, are still present and popular among a variety of generations and are continuing to educate and entertain, making a difference and providing guidance throughout our entire lives.





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**Pro Gradu Thesis**

**University of Lapland**

**Faculty of Art and Design**

**Graphic Design**

**Autumn 2013**

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