

How should the Indian character designer brace up to meet the global stage?

While India has a rich tradition of character designing, it is the West that has acknowledged and explored the form in the modern age. Although Indian designers are waking up to the importance and nuances of the craft, it is still a long way to go before we meet the global standards. Noteworthy names of the Indian design industry come together to discuss how Indian character designers should prepare for the ensuing challenges and opportunities.



Vinay Vikram Singh

We have a great tradition of art with diverse and unique inspirations. Add to it the ever growing consumer base of our country in the areas of gaming and animation. Despite all, we have not being able to produce indigenous creative content.

The primary reason is a lack of sensibility that balances both Indian and Western influences on our creative thinking. It will take deep research and hard work to come up with a universally accepted Indian design language, that is a nice blend of both Western and Eastern art styles. Lack of time and quality consciousness is another big issue. Our industry is driven by the tendency of quick results in terms of creation or developing something.

The government needs to play a major role to create a platform for local content. We should also have subsidies and promotional opportunities provided by our government



Vaibhav Kumaresh

Artistically our design standards are as good as any other in the world. We have our own artistic sensibilities, our own ways of unique storytelling. So far our domestic audience is concerned, we are nicely engaging them in good stories and characters that they relate to. As long as they are being catered to, we don't really need to worry about global standards.

A character or a design cannot exist in isolation. I believe if the story, context or the premise for the character is exciting, half the job is done. It doesn't really matter from where we take our inspiration from. If the final result is a job well done, we are home.

We need to be true to our tradition and craft. I am sure that will help us win our audience's hearts. After all we have one of the largest markets waiting to be tapped!



Sonia Tiwari

Expectation of the world from Indian character designers is very stereotypical. The best way to embrace modern times with traditional designs is to pick up certain elements from the past and use them to design a modern character. Modern Indian character design, as a process, should 'represent' and not 'document' our culture.

Good character designs come from good stories. If we focus on original, well-thought plot structures and thorough research, great characters will be born. As a case in point, Pixar Animator Sanjay Patel studied Hindu gods and drew them in the style of Hello Kitty for his books. Nina Paley took motifs and patterns from traditional paintings, but also added her personal graphic style in 'Sita Sings the Blues'. Indian directors like E. Suresh and Vaibhav Kumaresh are bringing some amazing traditional-modern character designs through their works. The coming days will see more bridging the gap between modern and traditional character designs



Rahul Gaikwad

There has already been a lot of impression, acceptance and use of Indian art and content globally.

Unfortunately our Industry focuses more on outsourcing work for the international market. This is one reason very few artists concentrate on exploring and innovation. Which is why there are not very diverse and strong people to work on original content, ultimately leading to a team where there is no equal and healthy exchange.

We have been trained to produce fast to make the production quick, since the very early stages of professionalism. In the West, they work on the individual strength, naturally coming up with more ideas and works.

If we start believing in originality and not imitate, if we purely work on our own ideas and not follow what is so called a trend, which is set in some other part of the world, we surely will reach international standards retaining our roots



Kunal Kundu

India, with its treasure trove of mythology and characters is definitely one up on the West when one talks about character design.

The problem lies in the taken-for-granted attitude towards our own culture and the constant aping of the West mentality that is rendering indigenous work a slump in quality. The amount of effort put in for those failed endeavours to copy the West could have produced a lot more fruitful and creative work.

All is not bad though. Indians are opening up to the fact that West's acceptance of Indian art and culture has increased a lot in the recent years. So this is the right time to get those Indian characters and their nuances out in the open. If done right, they will also make a mark on their Western counterparts. So next time one marvels at the CG wizardry of six-tusked 'Mumakil' from LOTR, one should get back to making a CG 'Airavata' instead ←



S. Nagesh

Our tradition of epic and folk stories has always been around us. But nobody ever took the pain to document it and spread it in the masses during our times. Till the advent and popularity of the western books and characters happened.

There is direct or indirect influence of the West on our creative thinking, right from the stories to characters designs and overall rendering style. Despite this, Chandamama and Amar Chitra Katha have successfully introduced a tradition of indigenous comics based on Indian culture. This implies that Indian characters and designing have always been there.

In totality, I don't see any kind of lack. In fact, there are several examples of Western comic publishers using our culture in their stories and adapting their original characters. One good example is the characterisation of the popular superhero 'Spiderman' shown wearing a Dhoti ←



Ishan Trivedi

Indian tradition of art has always been welcoming to every new thought and discovery. Across generations of artists, the same can be witnessed. In the modern times, owing to an interaction with the Western school of thought, even the indigenous art has seen influences from the other part of the world.

Today, all Indian visual expressions like comics, graphic novels, story books, advertisements,

animation etc have hired profusely from both the schools of art.

For Indian character designers, an open mind and wildest thoughts are the first and foremost requirement. The ideas in your mind and thoughts have to work visually in order to express themselves. With a topping of influences from everything one witnesses, the right way to move ahead is to cut boundaries and do the right thing that one thinks of ←

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Do write to us at Knock@CreativeGaga.com with 'Indian Character Design' as the subject.