



# Lullaby

A short film about letting go through music and necromancy





*A Man* is resurrected by a *Witch*, to play his daughter *one last* lullaby.

Concept art by Owen Buckley

# Lullaby concept

Lullaby is a short animated film about loss, the fading of memory and the desperate desire to hold on. It uses dark and macabre imagery combined with a hint of comedic irony to tell an endearing story about a final song and dance between father and daughter.

## Logline:

A man is resurrected by a witch, to play his daughter one last lullaby.

## Scenario

Lullaby follows a 32 year old witch called Lucy, who lost her father when she was young. They shared a love for music, which Lucy continued after his passing. Lucy clings desperately to an old lullaby her father would sing to her when she was little. However, with time, all memories fade and change. Lucy grows older, and her father's face and voice have become unclear to her. The lullaby so near and dear to her is now a wordless melody, and the sound from her guitar rings hollow.

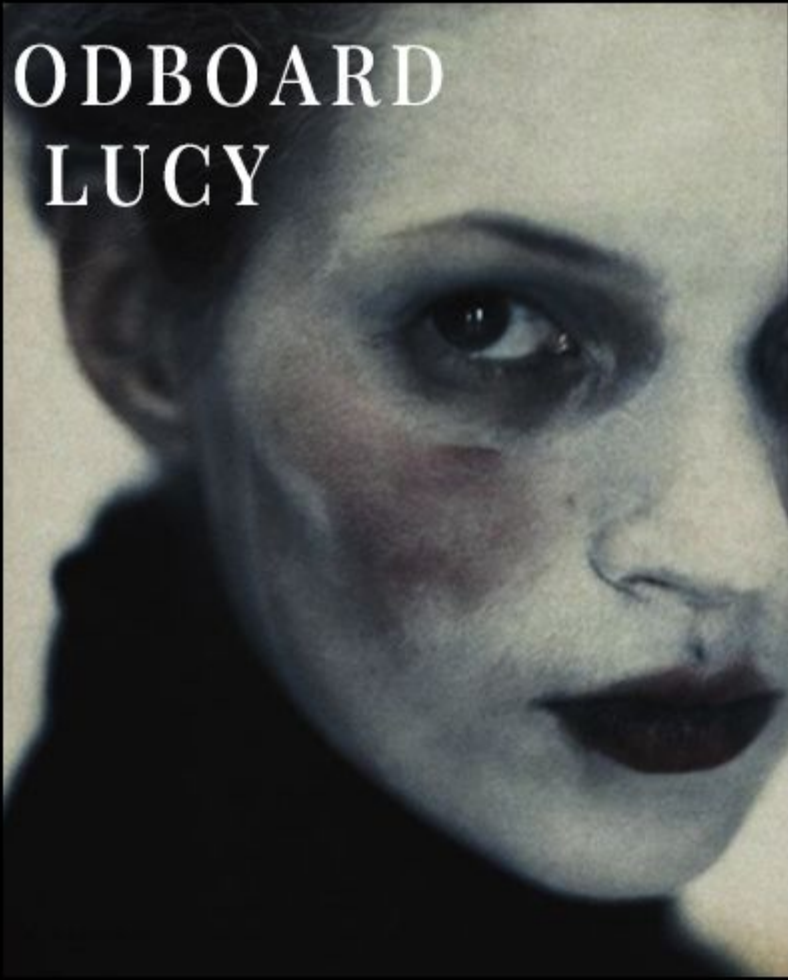
Our story starts at Lucy's lowest point. The feeling of forgetting her father drives Lucy to a dark and desperate place. Lucy uses forbidden magic to resurrect her father from beyond the grave in a macabre ritual, to sing her the lullaby that fades from her mind. Her father is brought back as a severed head and for a moment is overjoyed to see his daughter again. However, the reality of the situation quickly sets in when her father realizes what Lucy has done in order to cling to his memory in an extremely unhealthy way.

## Story beats:

- A giant pillar of rock stands tall in an endless ocean, almost eroded away by the waves and wind. A setting sun shines its last light upon a lone woman sitting on the rock. In her tattooed hands an aged skull, surrounded by occult symbols.
- She whispers to the skull, starting a dark ritual that tears the skin off her arms and face and transfigures it onto the skull. Dark energy begins to fill the cavities of the skull and a scream emanates from beyond the grave.
- The head opens its eyes, confused and shocked as the setting sun blinds its vision. The silhouette of a strangely familiar woman sits before him. As he blinks and his vision slowly returns to him the silhouette of the woman reveals herself to be his rough looking daughter, much older than last he saw her, holding an electric guitar.
- 'Hi, dad'
- Her father is confused, but upon realising the woman before him is his daughter he is overjoyed and bombards her with questions about her life, wondering why she looks older than when he last saw her. After a moment he realises the situation. His joy turns to confusion and then to sadness. His questions fade into the ocean breeze unanswered. He turns away from her. After a moment of silence her father makes a joke to try and lighten the oppressive mood.
- Gently, Lucy strums the strings of her guitar. With a sorrowful, shaking voice Lucy asks him if he remembers the lullaby he sang to her when she was little, she hums where the words once were, claiming she knew them once.
- Hearing the sadness in his daughter's voice, her father masks his sadness and steps up to be there for her. He begins to sing the words that were missing.
- Happiness returns to her face that was so full of sorrow a moment before. He sings, she plays the melody, when they get to the bridge she takes over the song and plays a raw sounding guitar solo.
- The song ends, her father is amazed by her talent. Lucy tells him that music was her way of connecting to him, and how she thought it would make his passing easier. But the pain never stopped. Lucy jokingly notes that they should start a band now that he's back. A moment of silence passes. Her father tells her he's not really back.
- The mood drops again.
- Her dad smiles and asks her to dance with him. Lucy uses magic to make her guitar play a slow tune. Lucy embraces her father's severed head. They dance together in silence. Lucy apologizes for bringing him back. He tells her it was a privilege to see her again, but that his time has passed. He tells her that her memories fading is not a thing to be feared, but the destiny of all things. Even if her music is no longer about him, it has never lost its value.
- Lucy hugs her father's head tightly. The Music picks up again while they slowly sway, as her spell comes to an end, Lucy and her father say their final goodbye. Beautiful light gets emitted and her skin is returned to her.
- Lucy sits alone on the rock, strumming her guitar. Singing the lullaby as the credits roll.

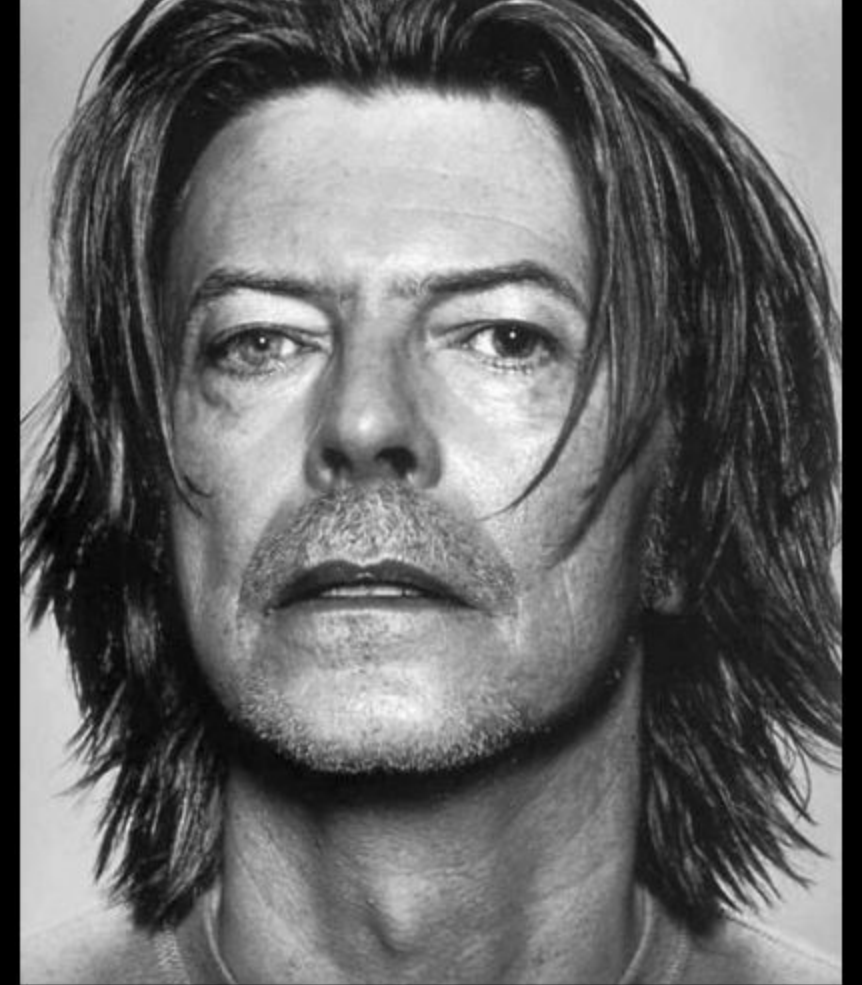
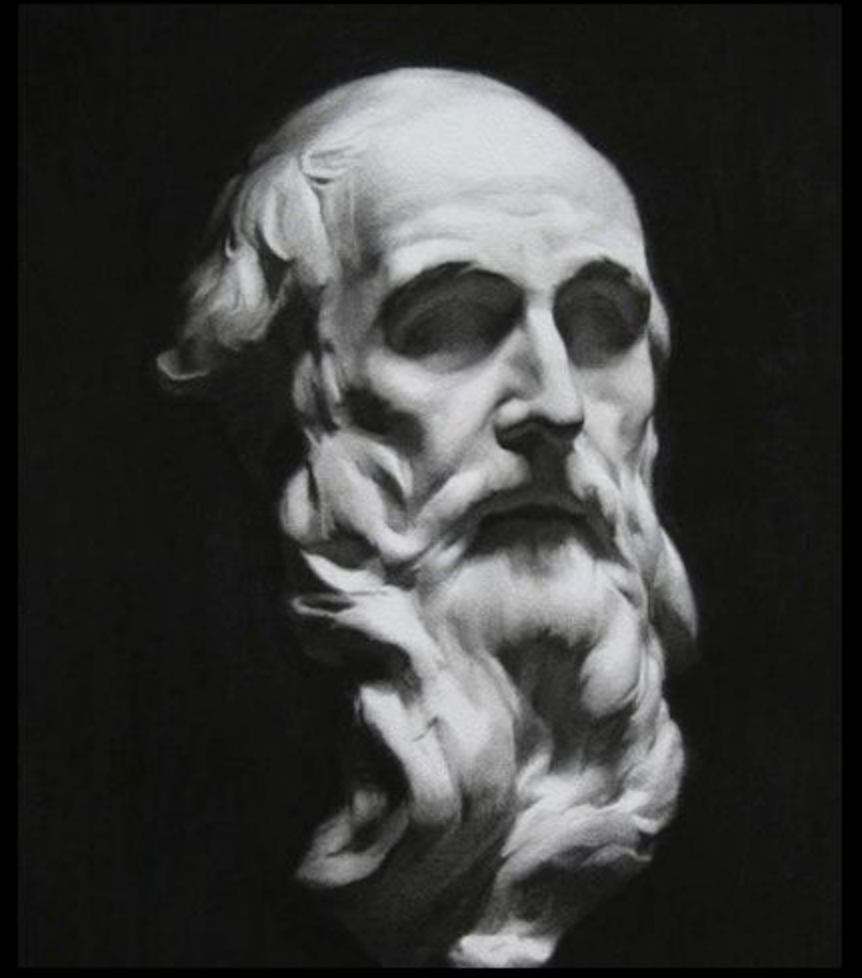
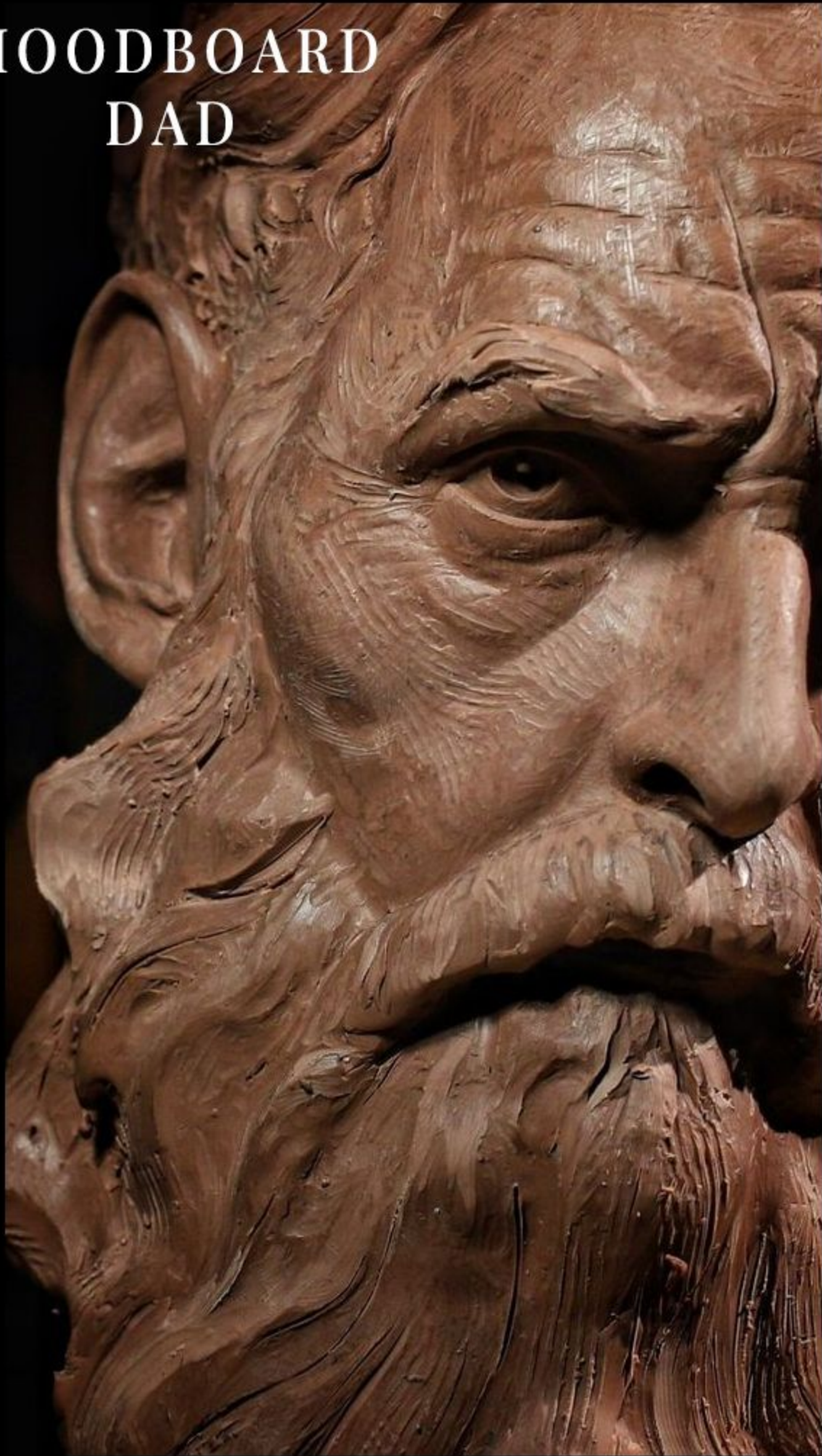


MOODBOARD  
LUCY



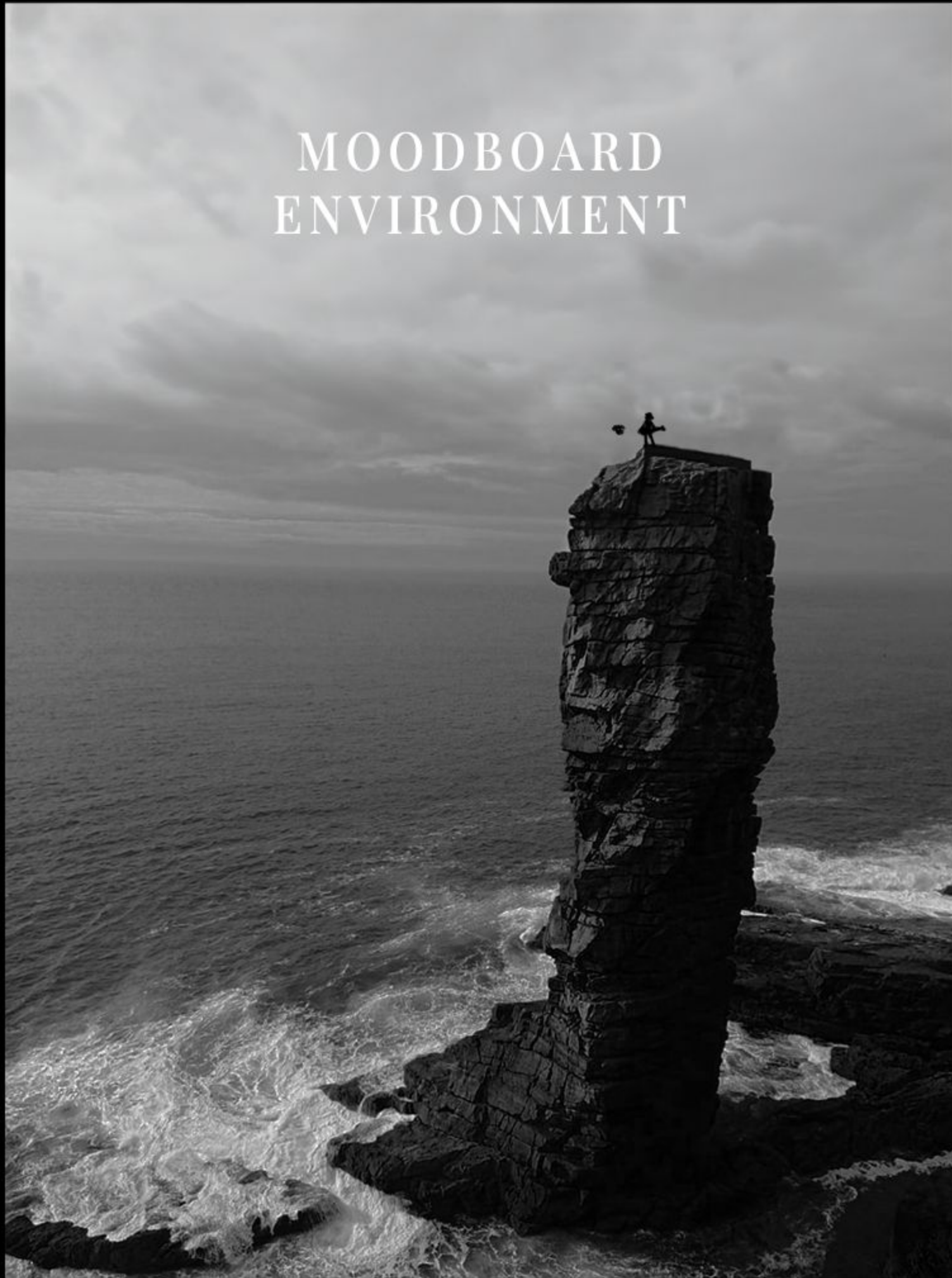


MOODBOARD  
DAD





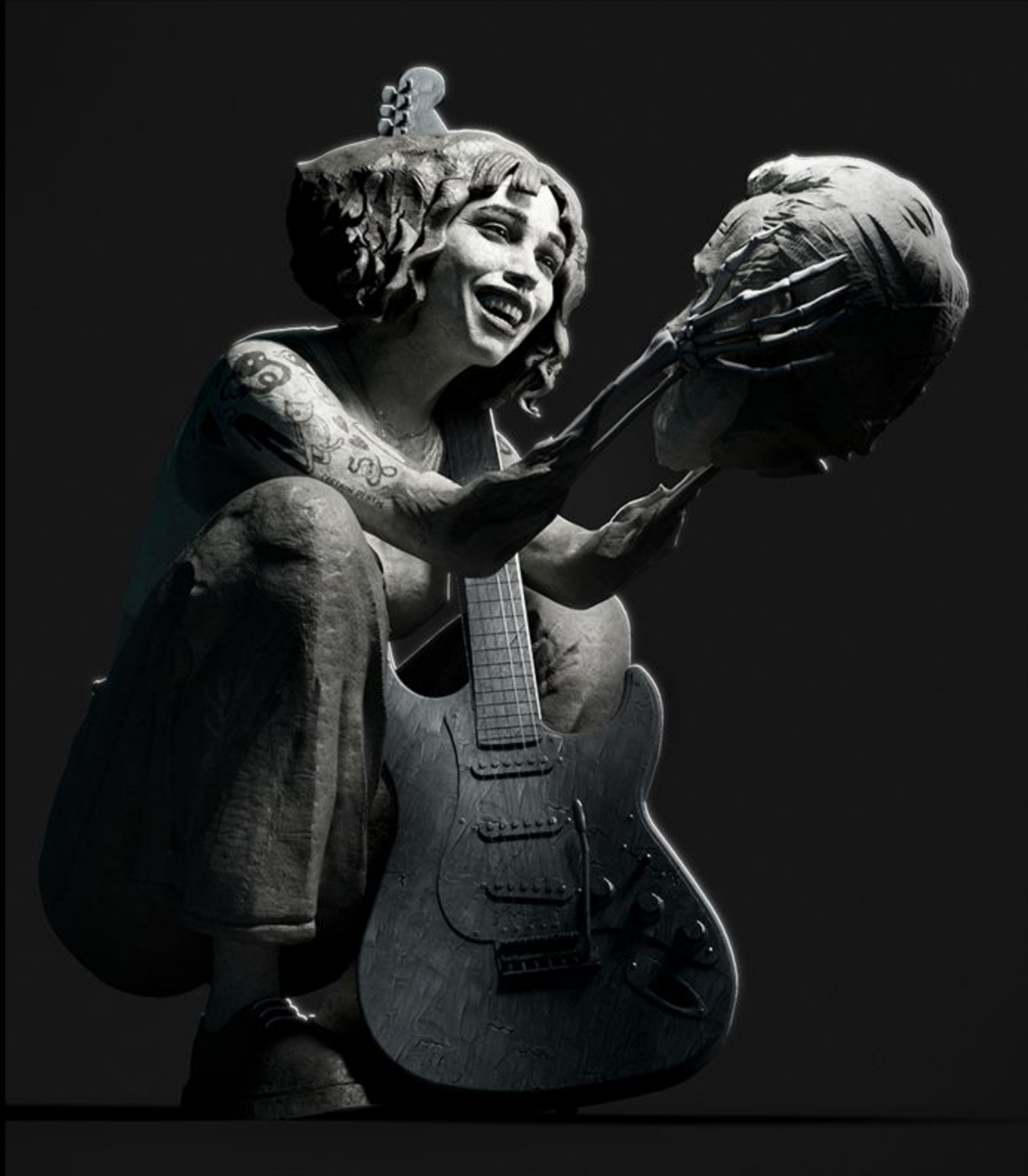
MOODBOARD  
ENVIRONMENT





# ART STYLE: CHARACTERS

We'll be aiming for a stylized realism look. Character proportions and animations will be pushed, emphasizing bold shapes and strong poses.





# ART STYLE: BACKGROUND & LIGHTING

By lighting our characters like a baroque or romanticism era painting they'll become the focus of every shot. This means we'll be able to simplify and imply details in the background, instead of creating full fledged environments. We're aiming for rich, saturated colors.





# GOALS

With *Lullaby* we want to create a macabre, yet endearing film about loss and letting go. Combining our love for dark fantasy with absurd comedic concepts and relatable struggles. We want to strike a *bittersweet* cord that'll resonate with people who love the fantasy genre, and people that are usually turned off by fantasy.

Our target audience is teens and adults aged 12-34. We think the irony filled comedy, punk-rock-witch-aesthetic and serious undertone will resonate well with both age groups.



# INSPIRATIONAL FILMS / MEDIA

*Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood* Inspires us in both theme and narrative, due to the balance it creates in combining heavy subject matter with comedic moments.

*Arcane* inspired us with it's characters, narrative and its visual style. The character of Lucy was inspired by the characters of Jinx, and the desperation and loneliness felt by both characters.

*Adventure Time: Remember You* We're inspired by the character of Marceline and the forgotten song shared between her and the Ice King in season 4, and how music is used to hold on to memories long passed.





# INSPIRATIONAL FILMS / MEDIA

## (LIVE-ACTION)

*Everything Everywhere All at Once* has a deeply emotional yet absurd concept, the emotional heights it reaches during the climax while keeping it somewhat light with its absurd visuals is something we'd like to achieve as well.



*Aftersun* inspired us with the way it visualizes the main character remembering her dad and all the regrets that come with that.



# Workflow and Team

Directors & Producers: Owen Buckley & Alexander Bierling

Art director, CG Lead & Editor: Owen Buckley

Writer & 3D Generalist: Alexander Bierling

Sound design: Joost Dieren

Music: August Mis - Aomame

## Workflow

Medium: 3D animation

Aiming for: 8 min short film

The directors work as a duo, as they have on earlier projects. (Ubasute, Questbound) Alexander Bierling takes the lead in the narrative and Owen Buckley takes the lead in art direction. Both directors work as 3D generalists on the project.

## Preproduction

### Step 1, Writing and Concept art:

When starting the project Alexander Bierling starts by writing the script as a base for the story. At the same time Owen produces concept art and character designs based on the scenario. During this stage a talent agency will be approached for voice actors who would fit with our characters.

### Step 2, Music, Storyboard, 3D Scene layouts, Character sculpting, Asset creation:

When the script is finished and the concept art is made Owen begins storyboarding based on the script, working towards a 2D animatic. Owen will also make a start on the character models and rigs. Alexander will make a start on 3D scene layouts of the environment and various 3D assets.

Meanwhile, our music team will produce two songs, one based on the script that Lucy and her father will sing together. Alexander will work closely with the music team to produce the lyrics.



### **Step 3, Casting, First recording session, 3D animatic, Finishing character assets:**

Voice actors are hired to record dialogue and sing the song. With their audio and the scene layouts, we can make a rough 3D animatic of the film. The character assets should be done around this stage with their various rigs, ready for production.

## **Production**

### **Step 1, Record mocap animation, Animate:**

We'll be using MoveAI to record our own mocap for Lucy. This will massively speed up the animation process later down the line, as our character rigs make for easy adjustments.

We'll start refining the rough 3D blockout animatic and tighten up the edit, while we place lights and make still frame renders to get a feel for the look of every shot.

As Owen and Alexander animate the scenes the simple animated blocking will gradually be replaced with completed animations.

### **Step 2, First edit, Second VO recording session, Lighting, Rendering:**

When the first real edit is completed, we'll discuss feedback and plan a day for possible re-recordings for the voice actors. The edit will also be shared with our sound designer, so that he can make a start.

Lighting and rendering will take place during the final phase, when the animation is complete with finished animations.

## **Post-Production**

### **Sound Design, Compositing, Final tweaks, Grading, Delivery:**

While we'll be compositing, sound design for our movie will be done by Joost Diederren. We'll go back and forth, bouncing ideas off each other to improve the edit.

When the movie is finished we want to send it to festivals around the world, and will hold on to a piece of the budget for that end.



# DIRECTORS

Owen and Alexander have a passion for telling stories with borderline absurd concepts. They have worked on several projects together, most recently [QUESTBOUND: Forbidden Ventures of the Undead Soul](#). Winner of 2023's Best Dutch Short at Kaboom Animation Festival.





# ALEXANDER BIERLING



Alexander is a 27 year old writer and 3D animator based in Utrecht. He graduated from the HKU in 2023. Currently he work as a freelance 3D artist and writer.

The main inspiration for my work comes from myths and legends throughout the world, stories told by ancient people about magic, divine experiences and great trials and tribulations.

In my most recent work together with Owen we look at these settings through a more comedic lens. Taking the absurdism inherent in these stories and taking them to a new level.

[Instagram](#)

[Showreel](#)

Second year film: [Ubasute](#)



# OWEN BUCKLEY

Owen's a 25 year old all around filmmaker who graduated from the HKU in 2023. Last year he made his start in the VFX industry at [The Panics](#) as 3D generalist, specialised sculptor and storyboard artist.

I'm always looking to push myself with new and challenging projects, but I'm most of all trying to have fun with friends. Playing make belief in random cafes with Alexander has become one of my favourite activities as of late.

With my work I set out to entertain audiences with absurd concepts that have a bittersweet and relatable hook.

[Instagram](#)

Commercial work:

[ALTS BY ADIDAS](#), [FREE FIRE](#), [SPEEDFLOW](#), [STILL HERE](#), [THE](#), [MIDAIR](#),







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