



## CREATION OF ILLUSTRATED SCENARIOS WITH THE MATTE PAINTING TECHNIQUE: SYNCRETIC EXPLORATION OF THE DAY OF THE DEAD AND CYBERPUNK

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Syncretism is an aesthetic category in which thoughts, forms and techniques coexist indiscriminately, generating a mixture that seeks the way that two or more ideas operate in the same context, any element either cultural, behavioral or production, coexist with components that were originally contrasting with each other, even incompatible but that come to coexist according to the needs of the artist in the production of his works, using for its execution in its ideological, philosophical and technical support.

Having a previous technical and conceptual knowledge in the use of photo manipulation and Matte painting as an expressive and visual medium, we focus the development of the illustrations in the syncretic union of the aesthetics of Cyberpunk and the symbolic reconfiguration of the Day of the Dead. Using syncretism, we depersonalized the Day of the Dead festivity, reconfiguring its symbolism to incorporate it to the Cyberpunk aesthetics.

### **Background**

Mexicans perceive death in a peculiar way, instead of mourning it, we celebrate it, that is why the Day of the Dead is a very important celebration for Mexico and the world. It is full of symbolism, rites and is composed of multiple pre-Hispanic features that give it magic. For this reason, several works have been developed around this day denoting above all the aspects that make up this tradition: its rituals, its aesthetics, its origin; The Day of the Dead. Una festividad Ritual con Tradición Mexicana is a research done by Whizar-Lugo, V. M. that tells us how the Mexican creates a living entity in death and the importance of rituals in Mexican culture, frames the customs and traditions that have been maintained in different regions of the country. *que viva el día de muertos: Rituales que hay que vivir en torno a la muerte* by José Eric Menaza Luján (P. 17, 33) in this one talks about death and the rituals that revolve around it and the festivity.

The research around Cyberpunk ranges from, transhumanism through technology, the history of science fiction in literature and its arrival to the cinema some articles and researches that take these aspects:

- *Cyberpunk: carne y máquina* (2014) written by Juan Armesto. The Subgenre's aesthetics and evolution focusing on transhumanism and cyborg that we observe in the research;

- *Estética, cuerpos y modernidades* (2012) by the author Castañeda González, María Cecilia. One of the recent research that talk about this subgenre within the world of video games;

- *La estética del exceso en tiempos de cibertexto: análisis de la distopía cyberpunk en el videojuego cyberpunk 2077* (2021) by Jesús Albarrán Ligeró.

Syncretism is a phenomenon in which several ideas from different origins coexist, forming a result, whether ideological, cultural or artistic, as described in *El sincretismo y el*



*arte contemporáneo latinoamericano* (2016) by Álvaro Villalobos Herrera and in the text *Más allá de la tradición: sincretismo, género y arte popular en México* (1998), by Eli Bartra who talks about artistic syncretism in Mexico.

### **Creative process**

The following digital work was created combining two main ideas:

- Matte Painting as the main technique. This method used for the creation of fictional scenarios using the superimposition of images, illustration and video among others. We developed the illustration, since we want to focus on the production of environments and scenarios;

- by using elements of the mysticism of the Day of the Dead and mixing them with the advancement of technology that Cyberpunk shows us, fascinating results can be generated. The artistic product developed is a visual, aesthetic and narrative combination of these two concepts to create dystopian scenarios where technology is mixed with the ascetic aspect that accompanies the Day of the Dead.

For the composition we used the representation of the catrin as the main character, which is a very characteristic icon of the Day of the Dead created by José Guadalupe Posada and Diego Rivera. Adding elements used in science fiction such as cybernetic prosthesis, metal plates and the use of holograms used in cyberpunk works to represent the transhumanization of the human being.

For the creation of the environment, we choose a city full of buildings, and neon lights, changing the color palette by characteristic colors of the Day of the Dead, such as orange and purple, we subtly incorporated the marigold, a characteristic flower in the celebration especially in the creation of altars, which is considered as a link between life and death, It is used to frame the path to the altars.

A very important point of the cyberpunk aesthetics is the use of holograms and neon lights, for the composition based on a classic of the Bladerunner genre, we added a hologram to give more life to the city (Figure 1).

The technique used was matte painting, we created the composition through photographic cutouts, using as the focus of the composition a photograph of our authorship. Once the composition was mounted, we created through digital painting the lights and shadows to set the scene, to add the final details we used some lighting effects and brushes to create the fog, which helps us to give atmosphere and add depth to the composition.



Figure 1 – Catrin XXI



Figure 1, list 2

**Conclusion.** From this project we hope to develop a visual style through syncretism, which is a concept that is latent in the conception of Latin American art, with a strong visual identity based on Mexico and its culture through the unique features of this holiday, and together with the aesthetic contrast of Cyberpunk, we create a variant of this subgenre, which in a way pays tribute to this holiday and Mexican culture.

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