



# MY DIGITAL WORKFLOW

A WORKSHOP BY LOIS VAN BAARLE // LOISH



## IMPORTANT

This PDF is for your personal reference during the workshop. It outlines the steps to create the different assignments, so you can review them after the demo.

**Please do not distribute it outside of the workshop!**

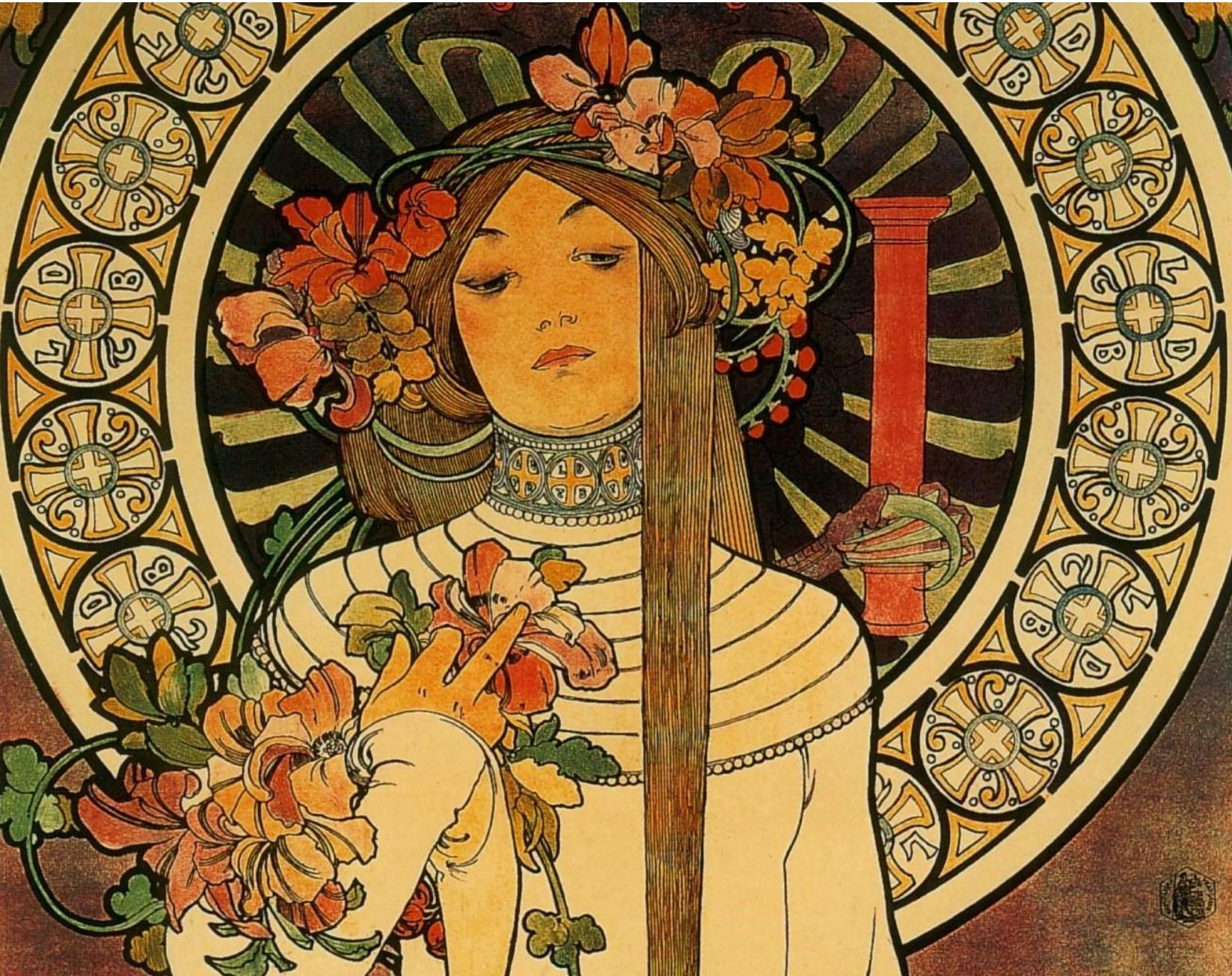


# Workshop structure: day 1

STARTING POINTS IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS.

## 01 FINDING YOUR STYLE

listing and understanding our inspirations,  
thinking about our goals & aspirations



## 02 SKETCHING DIGITALLY

most simple breakdown of my digital drawing  
process, warming up



## 03 CHARACTER CREATION

how to create a character, from sketch to  
color version, using an efficient technique



# Workshop structure: day 2

## DIGITAL PAINTING

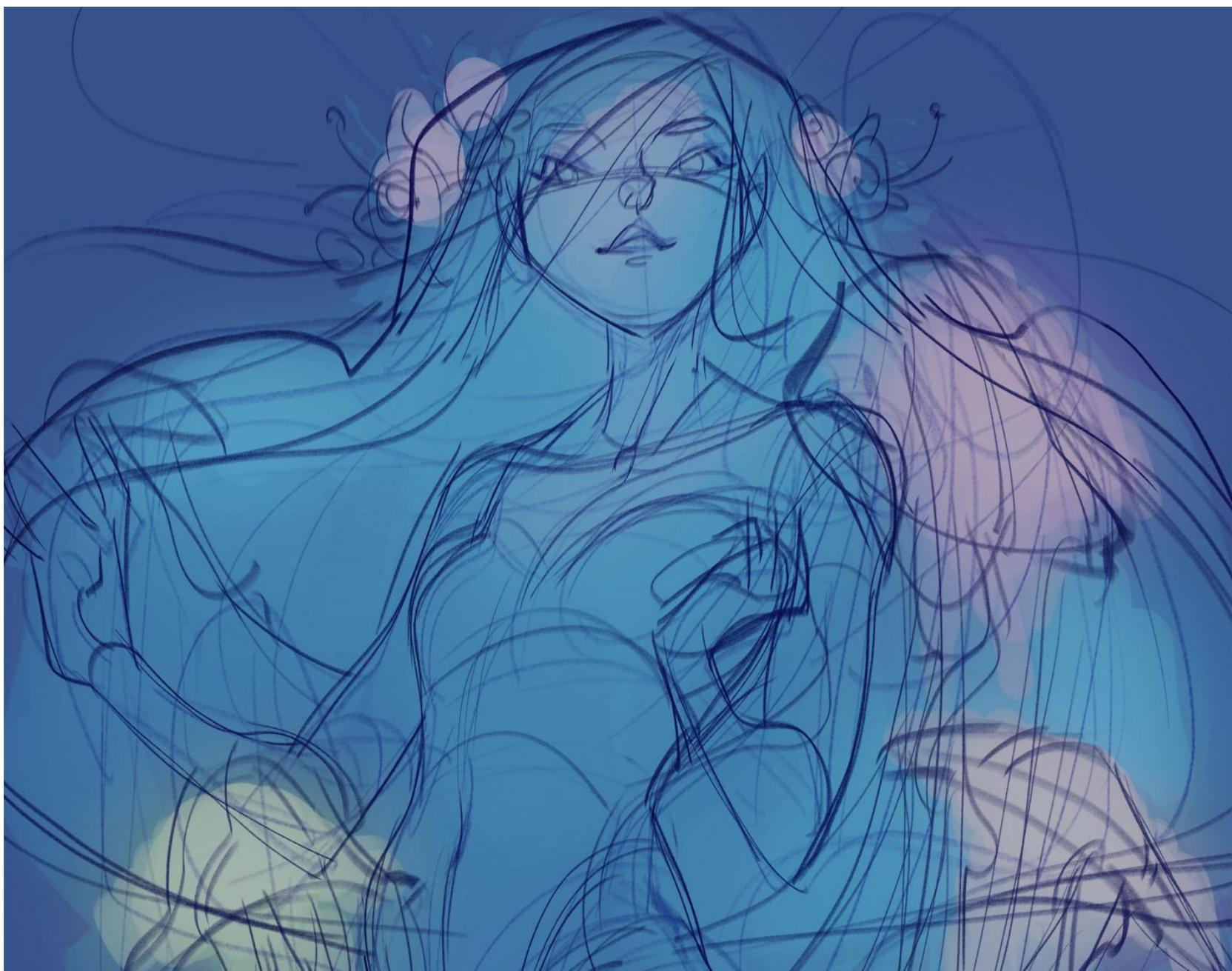
### 04 FLOW IN COMPOSITION

understanding 'flow', how to direct the eye  
around a digital painting



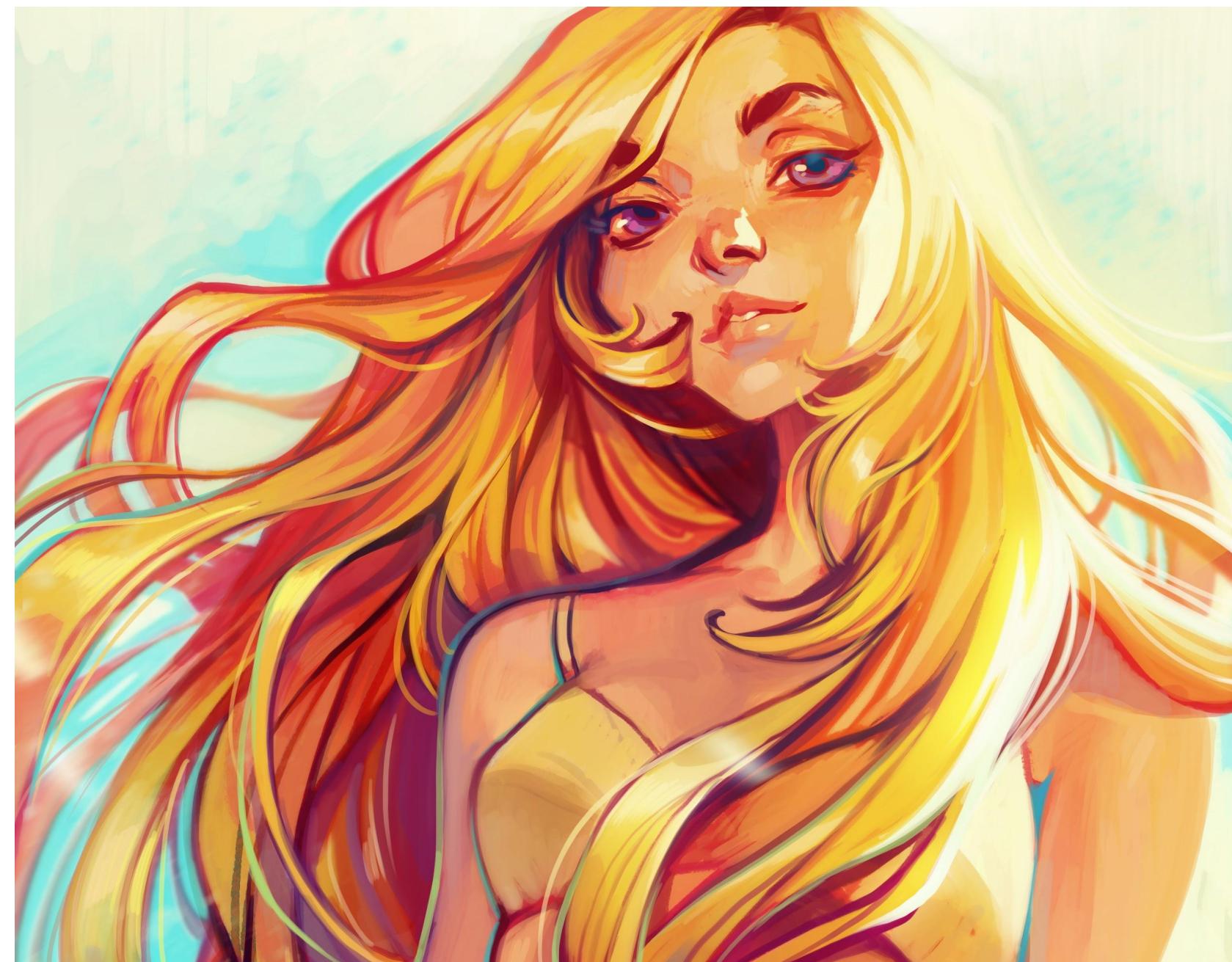
### 05 COLORS FOR DIGITAL PAINTING

color theory, role of color, creating color  
thumbnails for your painting



### 06 PAINTING & RENDERING

how to paint, add detail, 'sculpt with color',  
and add finishing touches





# Defining your style

A METHOD

1

## MAP OUT YOUR INSPIRATIONS

List 2-3 of your biggest artistic inspirations

2

## FILTER YOUR INSPIRATIONS

List 2-3 things that you like most about these inspirations.

3

## MAP OUT YOUR PRIORITIES

What are you trying to convey with your artwork, in a literal sense?

4

## LIST YOUR THEMES

What themes, moods and genres play a role in your work?

# ASSIGNMENT

## 01 FINDING YOUR STYLE



Using the worksheet, map out your inspirations and artistic priorities.  
Introduce yourself to the group with the results.

TIME // 15 MINUTES



# MY DIGITAL WORKFLOW // A WORKSHOP BY LOIS VAN BAARLE

## DEVELOPING YOUR OWN STYLE // WORKSHEET

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

1. List three things that inspire you most as an artist. This can be another artist, a movie/comic/game, a style, or anything else that inspires you!

INSPIRATION #1	INSPIRATION #2	INSPIRATION #3
What are 3 things you love most about this inspiration?  1. 2. 3.	What are 3 things you love most about this inspiration?  1. 2. 3.	What are 3 things you love most about this inspiration?  1. 2. 3.

2. List three priorities that you have when creating your work - for example, wanting to tell a good story, making interesting characters, making something visually appealing, showing emotion, etc.

PRIORITY #1	PRIORITY #2	PRIORITY #3

3. What are the themes you want to address with your art? Circle a few from the list, or write some of your own.

Nature	Society	Culture	Animals	Cuteness
Stories	Heroes	Dreams	Fantastical worlds	Comfort
People / personalities	Good vs. Evil	Friendships / companionships	Travelling / journeys	Edgy & controversial
Autobiographical	Diversity	Love / romance	Epic stories	Gritty & dark
Emotions	Femininity	Happiness	Fighting for good	Strange & weird
Psychology	Masculinity	childhood	Villains & monsters	experimental

Additional themes (optional):

The idea behind this worksheet is to be mindful of what we want to achieve when we start our creative process. What inspires us the most, and what makes us really enjoy drawing?

Focus not only on what you want to learn, but also what you **love**.





# MY DIGITAL WORKFLOW //

## 02 SKETCHING DIGITALLY

# Sketching process

A QUICK OVERVIEW

1

## ROUGH SKETCH

On separate layers, I do a very simple sketch. If needed, I add a more detailed one on a second layer.

2

## COLORS ON A SEPARATE LAYER

On a layer below, I block in the colors.

3

## MODIFY COLORS

I then use color editing tools to modify the colors so that they blend together more nicely.

4

## ADD FINISHING TOUCHES

I use a simple shortcut to easily paint in some finishing touches.

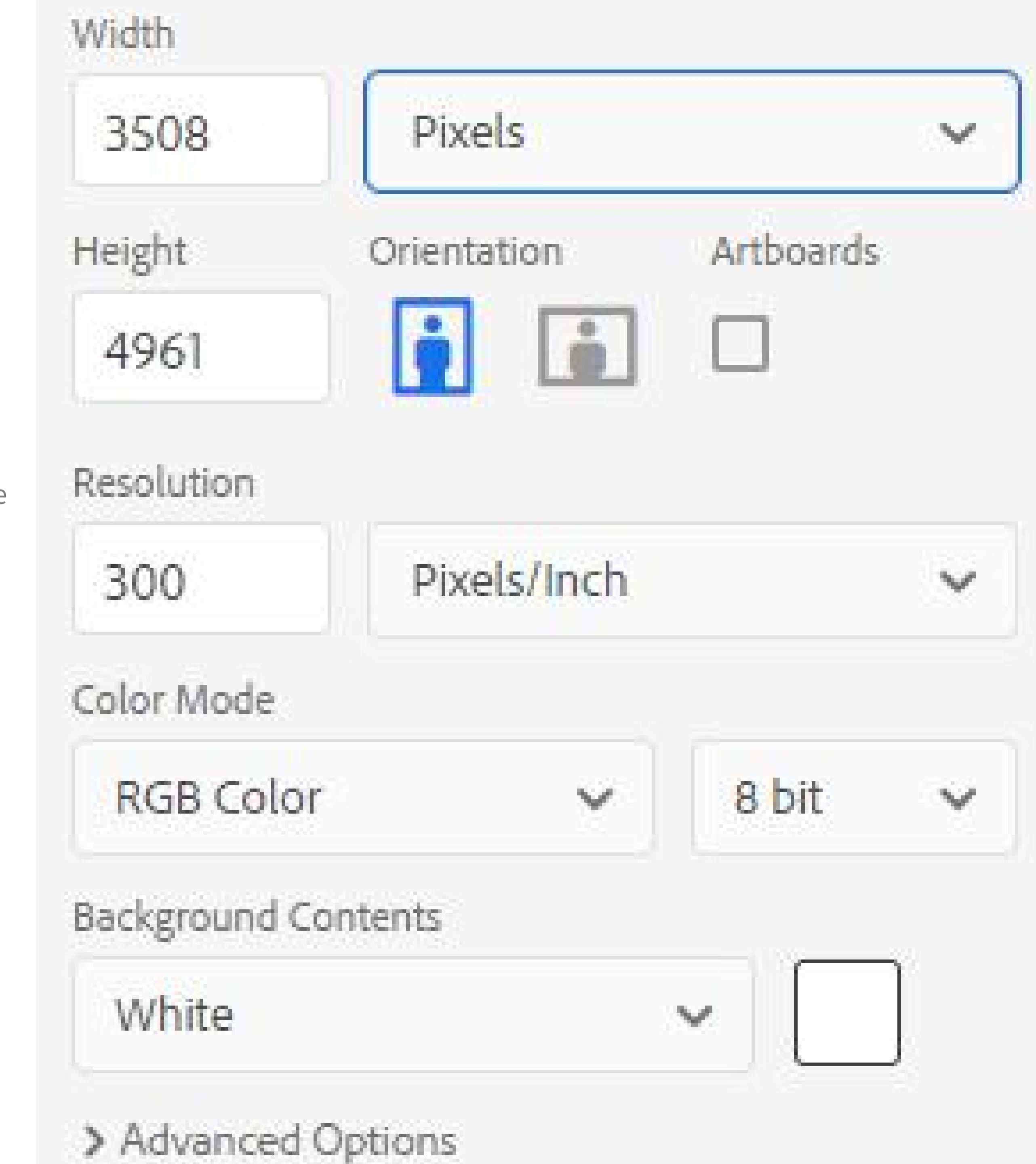


# SKETCHING DIGITALLY: PROCESS

01

## SETTING UP WORKSPACE

- ▶ canvas size: minimum A3 in size, 300 DPI
- ▶ pick the brush tool and select a brush with some texture
- ▶ create a new layer



02

## SKETCH

- ▶ quick, smooth lines
- ▶ don't worry too much about the details
- ▶ ok to stylize



03

## BLOCK COLOR LAYER

- ▶ create a new layer underneath lines
- ▶ block in the silhouette
- ▶ lock layer transparency



04

## COLOR IN

- ▶ color in using brush tool
- ▶ use lasso & gradient tool for gradations



05

## MODIFY COLORS

- ▶ use hue/saturation to change color of lines
- ▶ search for a color that blends well with color layer



06

## GROUP / DUPLICATE / MERGE

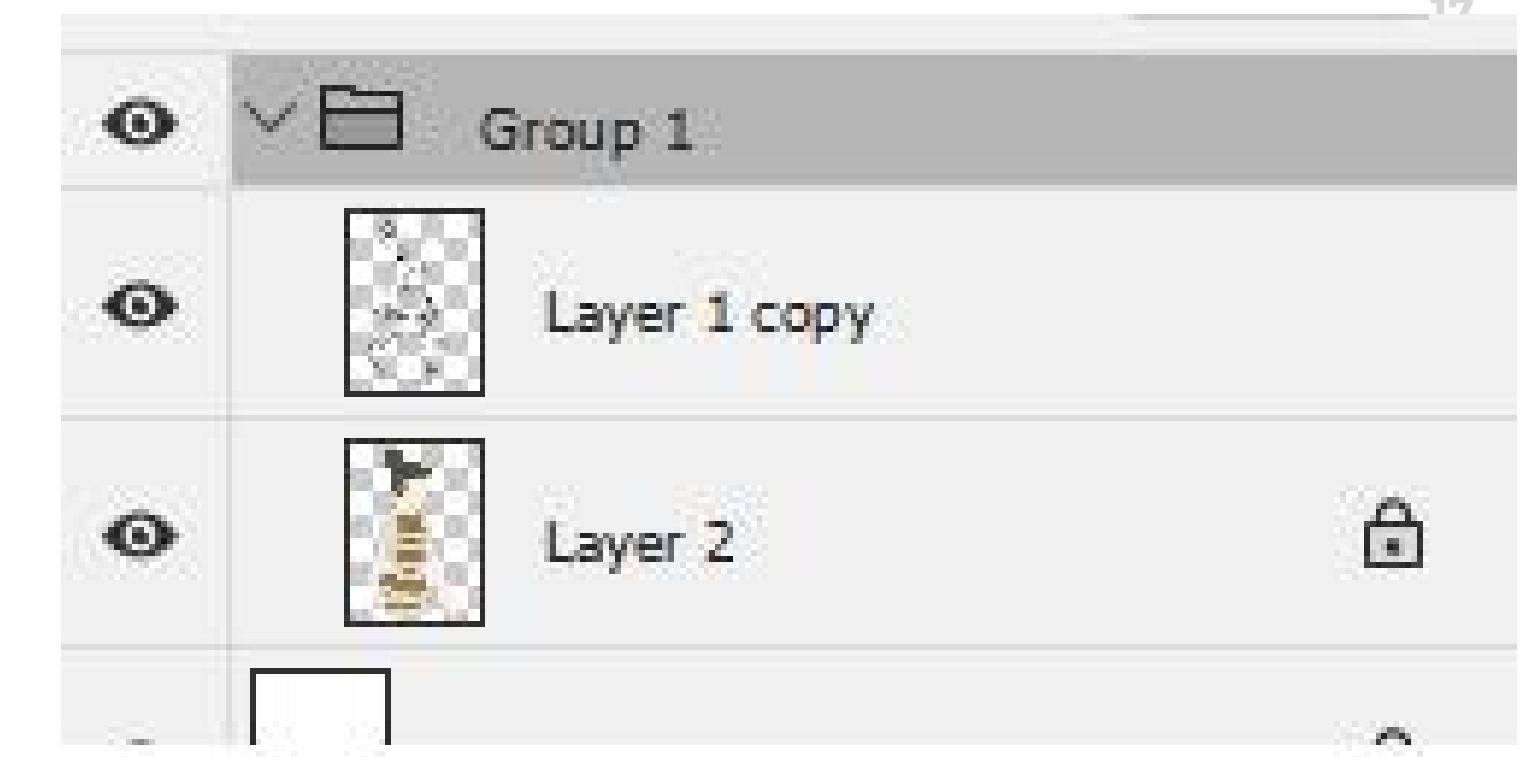
- ▶ group the layers
- ▶ duplicate group, hide the bottom one
- ▶ merge the top group (ctrl + e)
- ▶ set the layer mode to 'multiply'



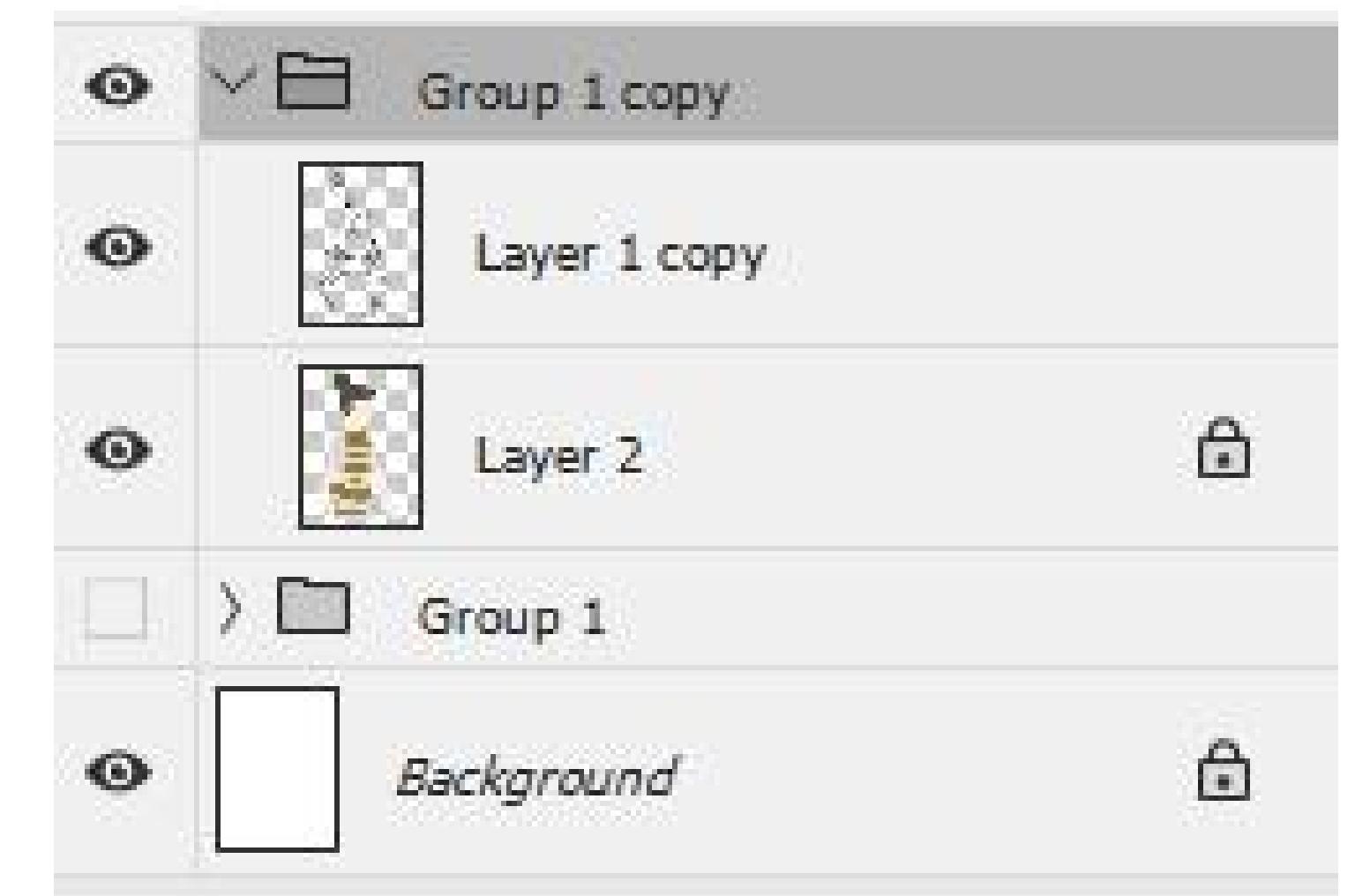
### IMPORTANT TECHNIQUE

This layering technique is something I'll return to repeatedly throughout this workshop, so keep it in mind!

01



02



03



07

## ADD DETAIL

- ▶ make your brush size smaller
- ▶ lower the opacity and flow, test
- ▶ paint in the details using alt+click
- ▶ you can erase edges to clean as well



08

## MODIFY COLORS

- ▶ use color balance to experiment with colors of overall image
- ▶ play with sliders until you get a nice effect



09

## PAINT FINISHING TOUCHES

- ▶ make your brush size smaller
- ▶ lower the opacity and flow, test
- ▶ paint in the details using alt+click
- ▶ focus on area that needs most detail
- ▶ add some darker + lighter colors, plus finishing lines..



### IMPORTANT TECHNIQUE

Alt+click is something I'll return to repeatedly throughout this workshop, so keep it in mind!

10

**DONE!**



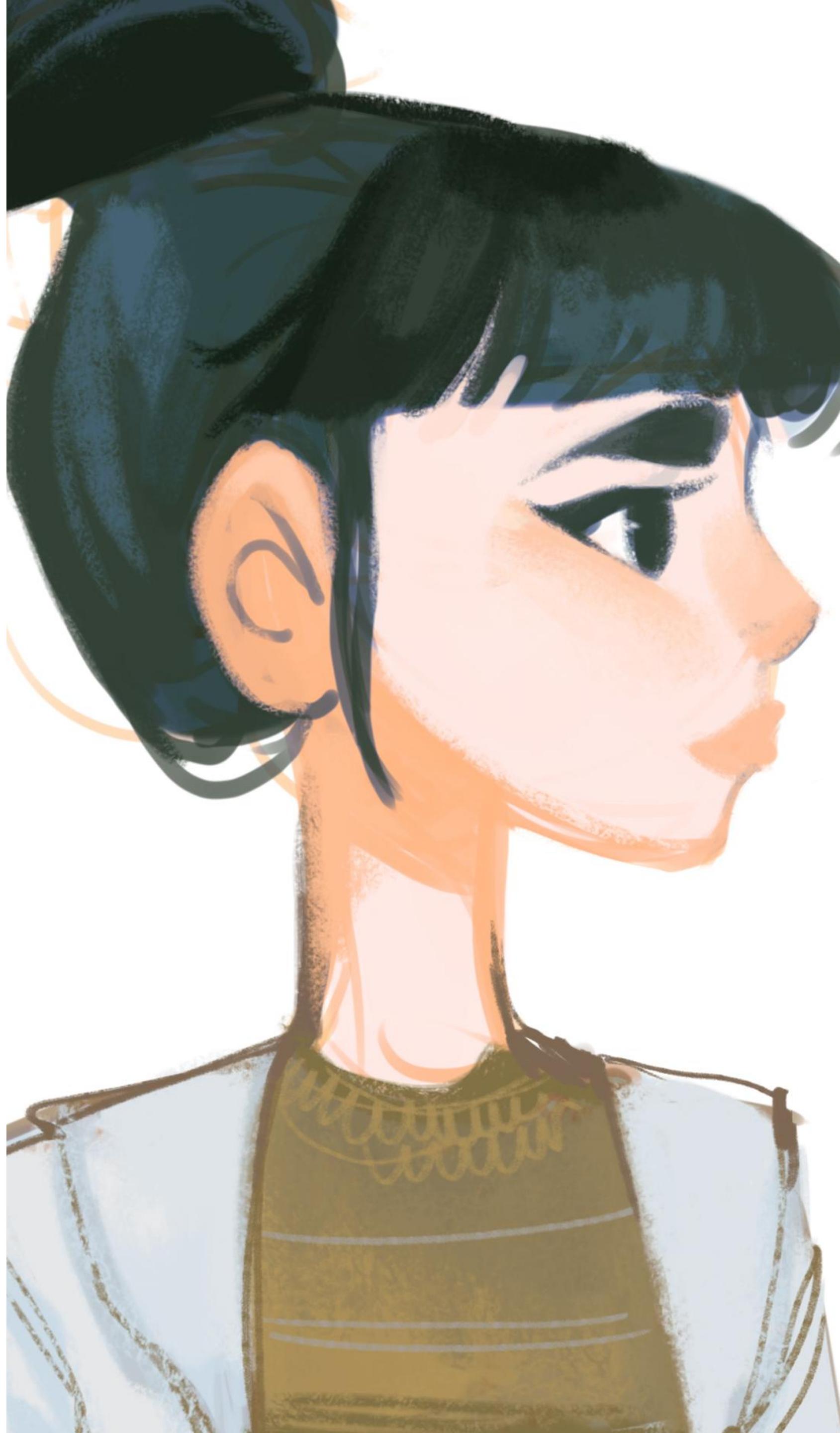
# ASSIGNMENT

## 02 SKETCHING DIGITALLY



Do 2-3 rough warm-up sketches that align with the themes from the previous assignment. Take the strongest sketch and color it in using the digital sketching process.

TIME // 30 MINUTES





# MY DIGITAL WORKFLOW //

## 03 CHARACTER CREATION

# character creation

A QUICK OVERVIEW

1

## CONSTRUCTION

I use a simple technique to construct the character, focusing on creating movement and a lively pose.

2

## HAIR & CLOTHING IN MORE DETAIL

On a separate layer, I draw in hair and clothing, trying different things to see what works best.

3

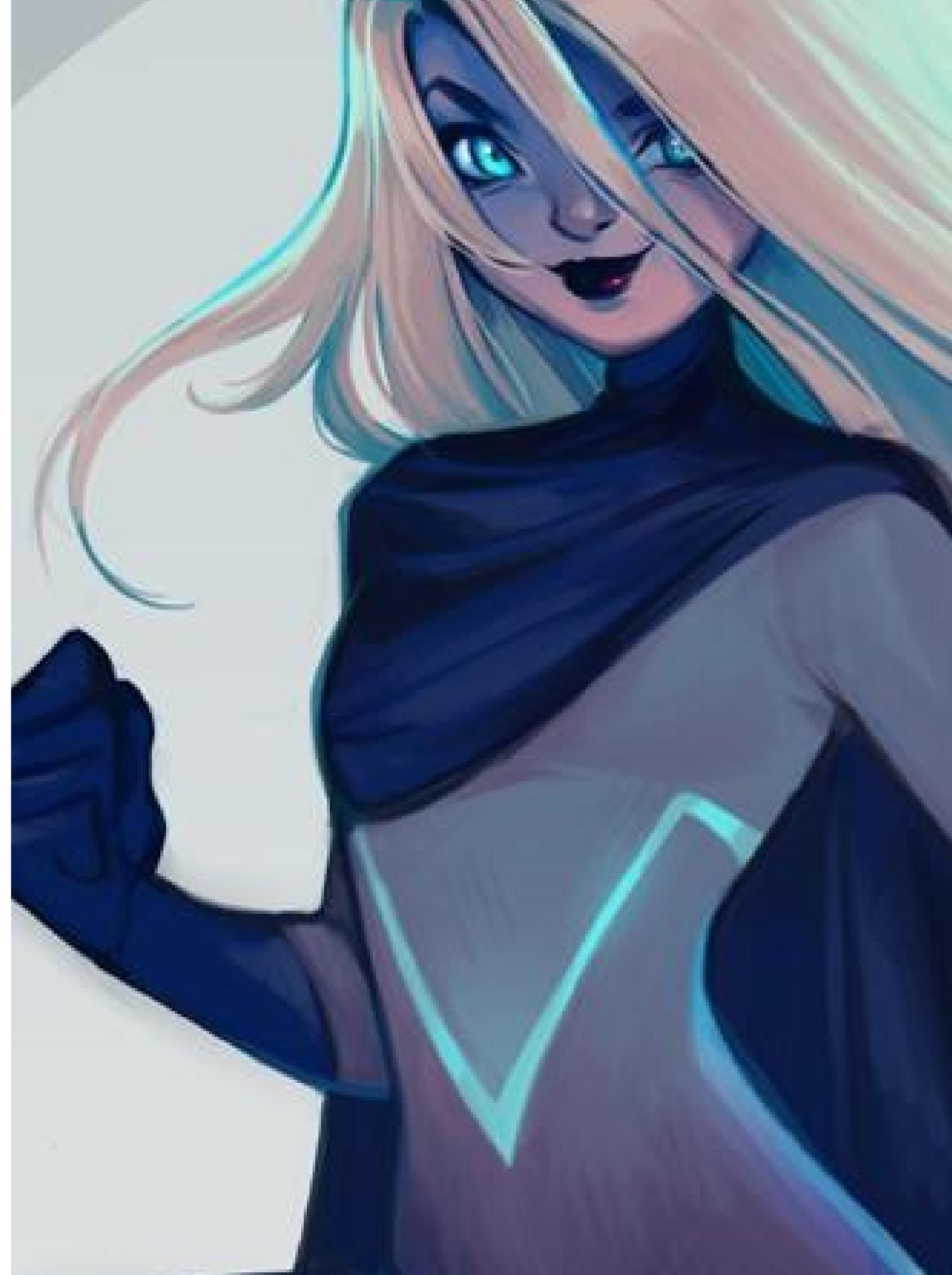
## BASIC COLORS

I block in basic colors on a layer below, and play around with the color scheme until I like what I see.

4

## ADDING DETAIL

I merge all layers and paint in detail, focusing on the areas to which I want to lead the eye.

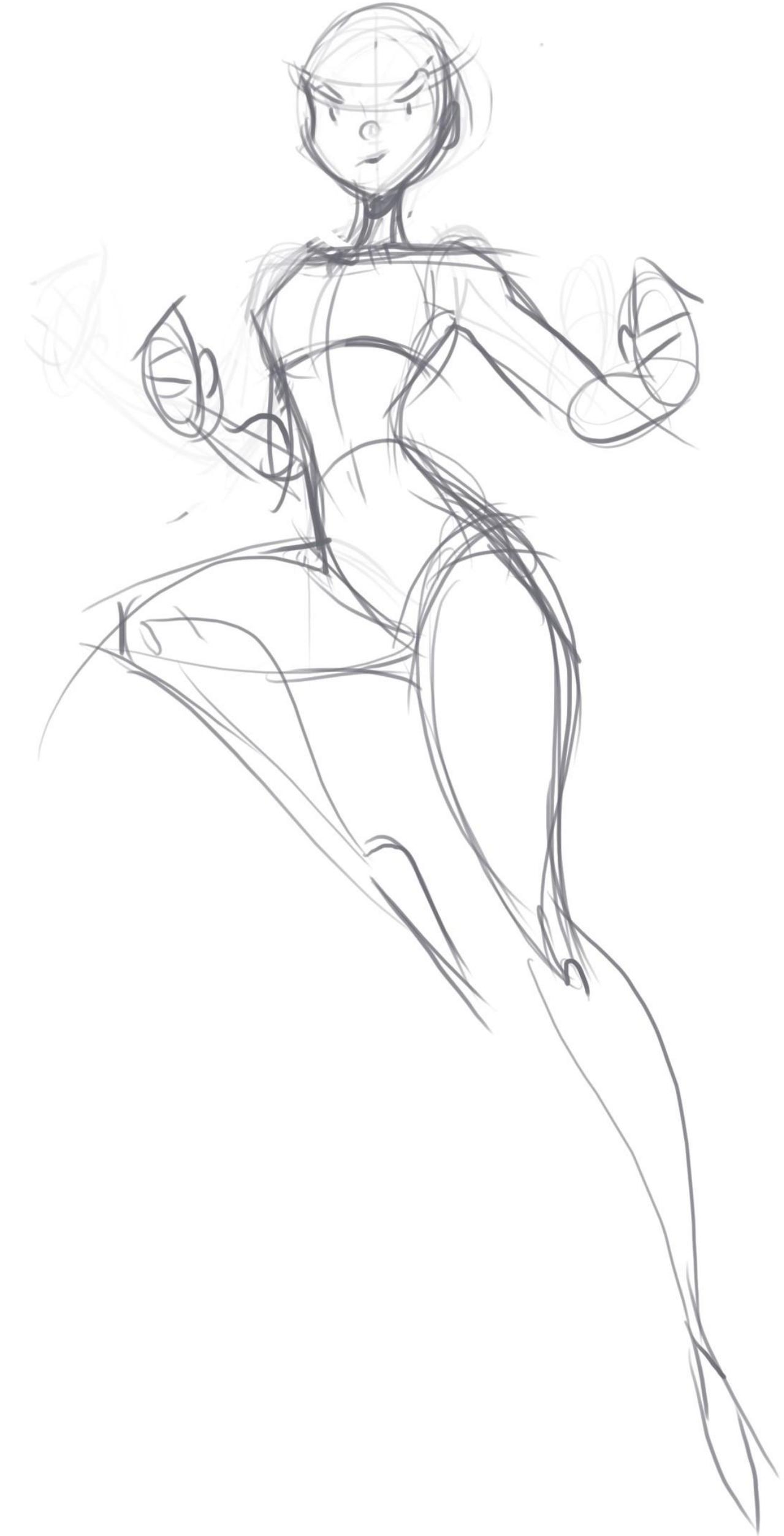


# CHARACTER CREATION: PROCESS

01

## CHARACTER CONSTRUCTION

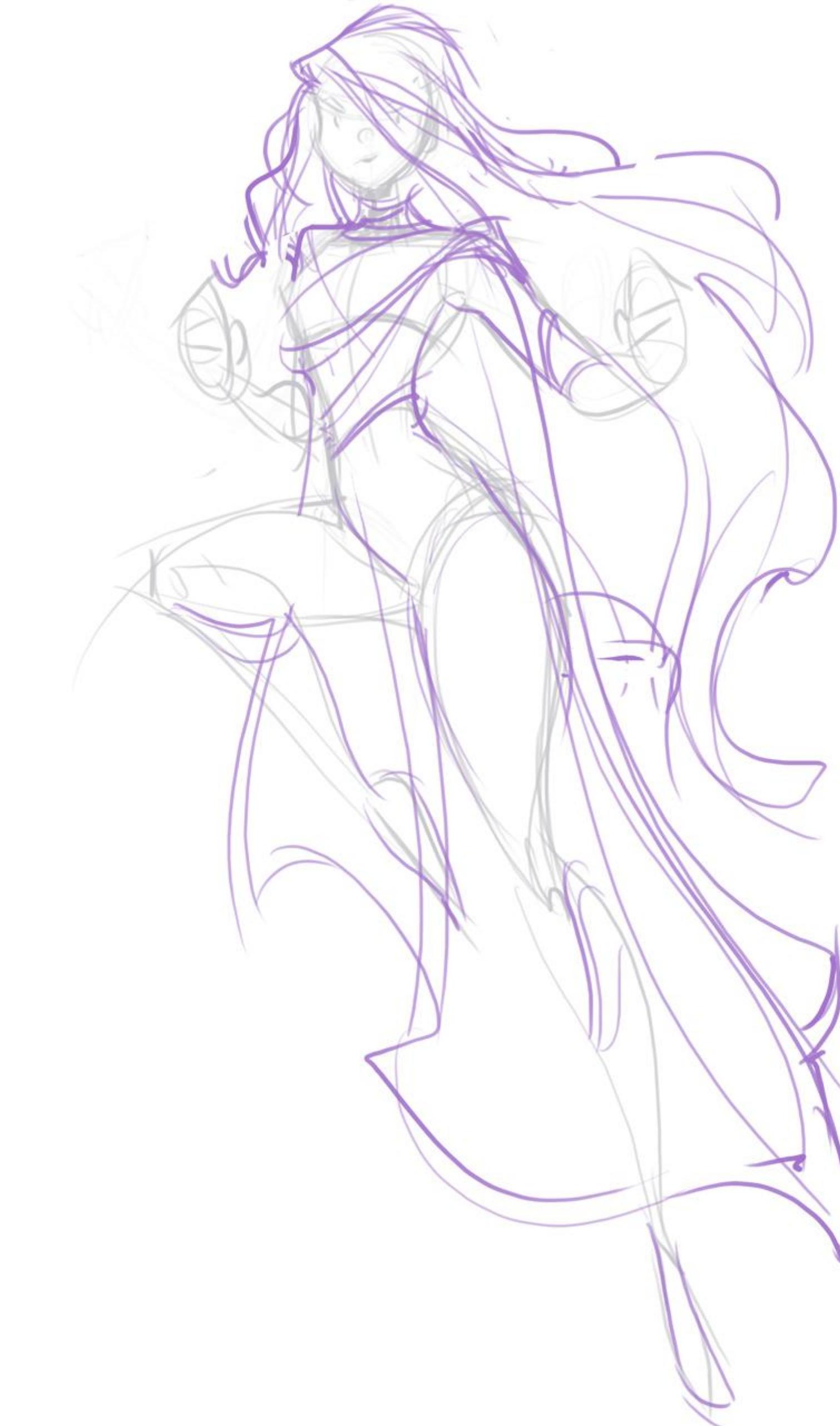
- ▶ use simple body construction
- ▶ focus on line of action & movement
- ▶ don't sweat the details (yet)



02

## HAIR & CLOTHING

- ▶ create a new layer
- ▶ draw hair - test what works best
- ▶ think of hair in terms of 'clumps' , not strands
- ▶ focus on shapes & rhythm
- ▶ draw clothing - be mindful of detail distribution



03

## MORE DETAILED LINES

- ▶ create a new layer & pick a darker color
- ▶ work out the sketch in more detail



04

## FINAL LINWORK

- ▶ create a new layer & pick a darker color
- ▶ now you can sweat the details
- ▶ be mindful of detail distribution



05

## BASIC COLORS

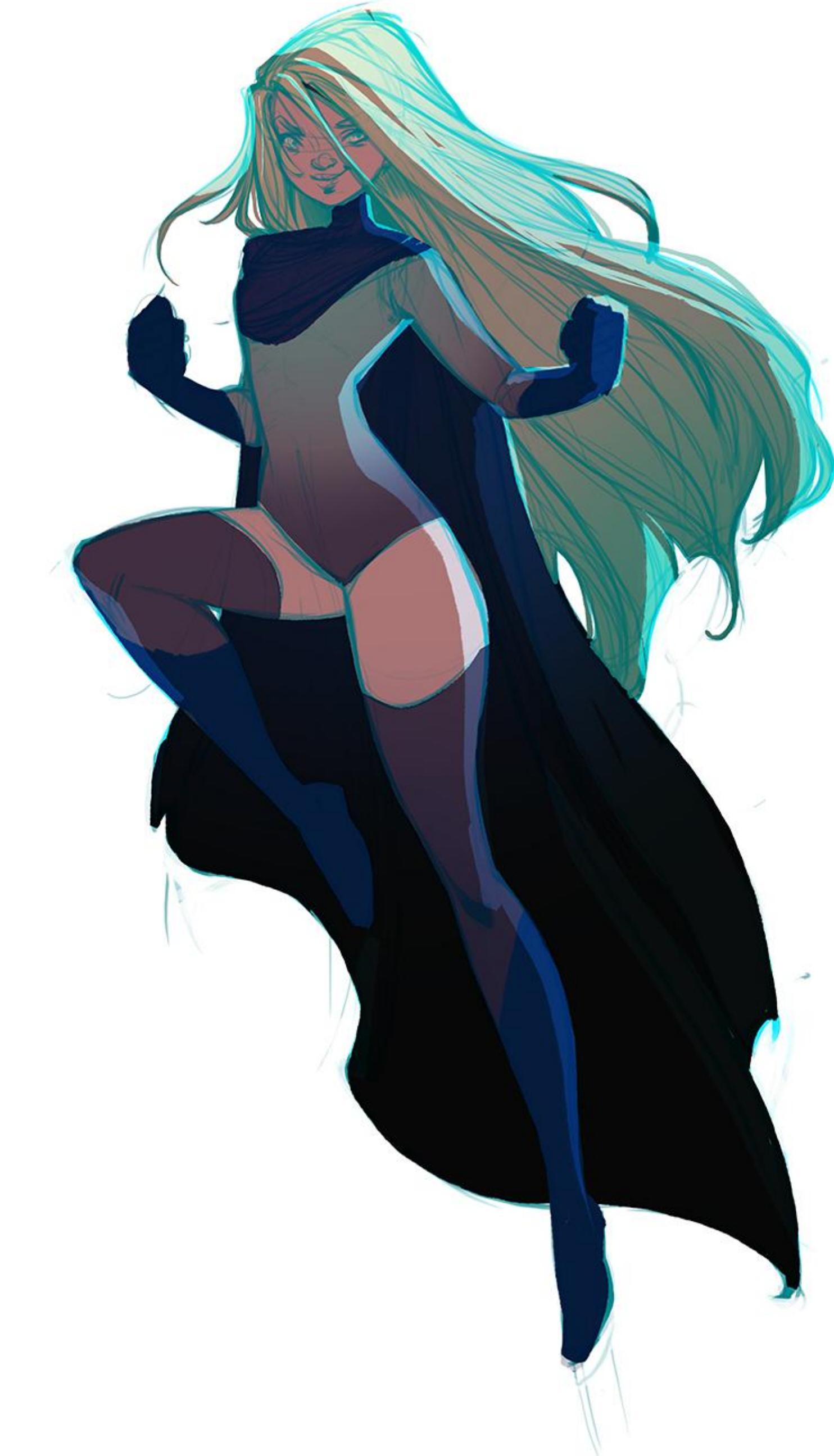
- ▶ group / duplicate / merge
- ▶ on a new layer, block in colors
- ▶ be mindful of color distribution & accents
- ▶ use hue/saturation to change color of lines



06

## BASIC SHADING

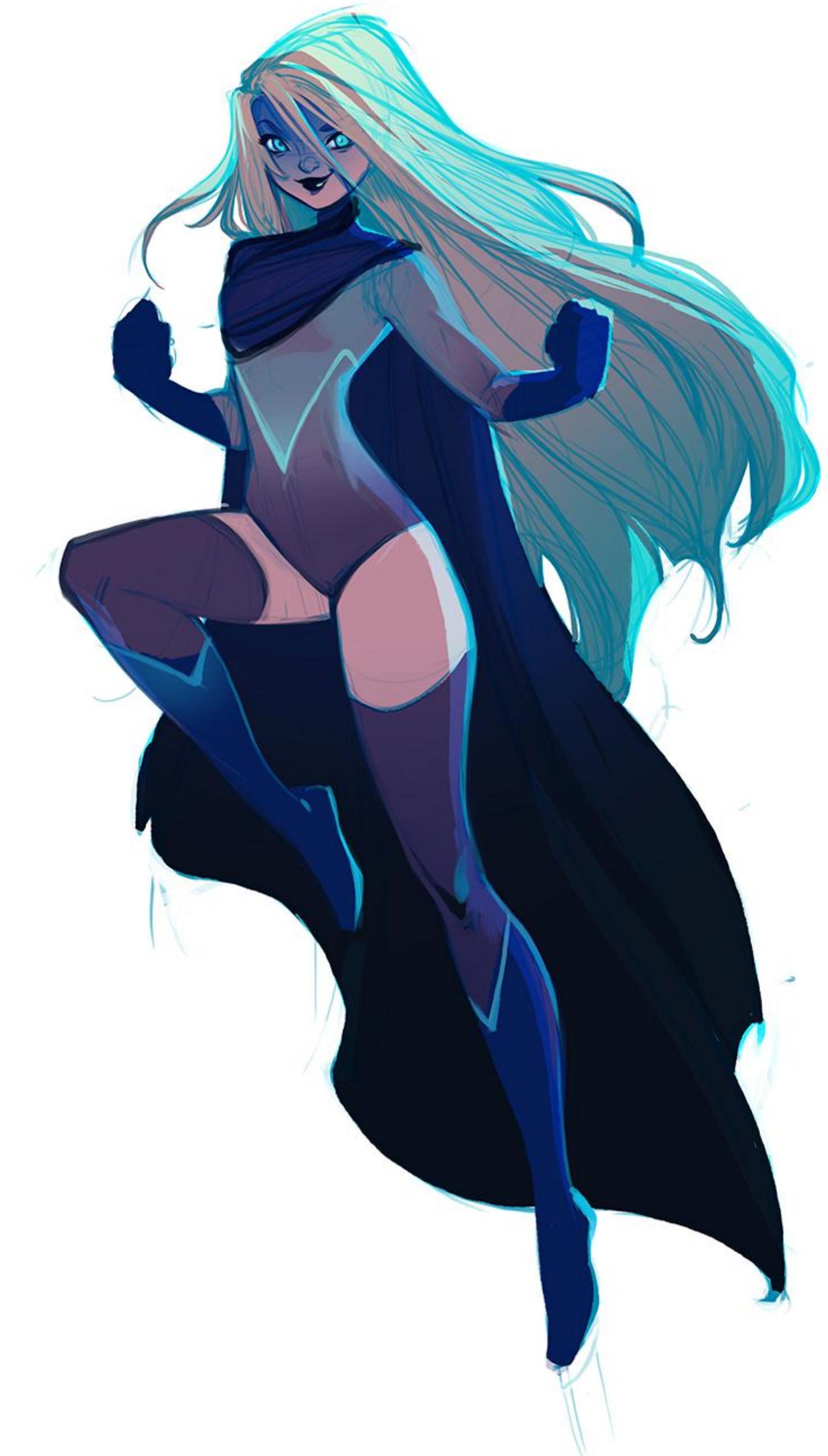
- ▶ create a new multiply layer and pick a light color
- ▶ add some simple hard shadows to your sketch
- ▶ use hue/saturation to modify shadow color



07

## MERGE & ADD DETAIL

- ▶ group / duplicate / merge
- ▶ pick a more 'painterly' brush
- ▶ start blending and painting in more detail



08

## COLOR CORRECTION - IF NEEDED

- if you feel like colors need to be changed, do it!

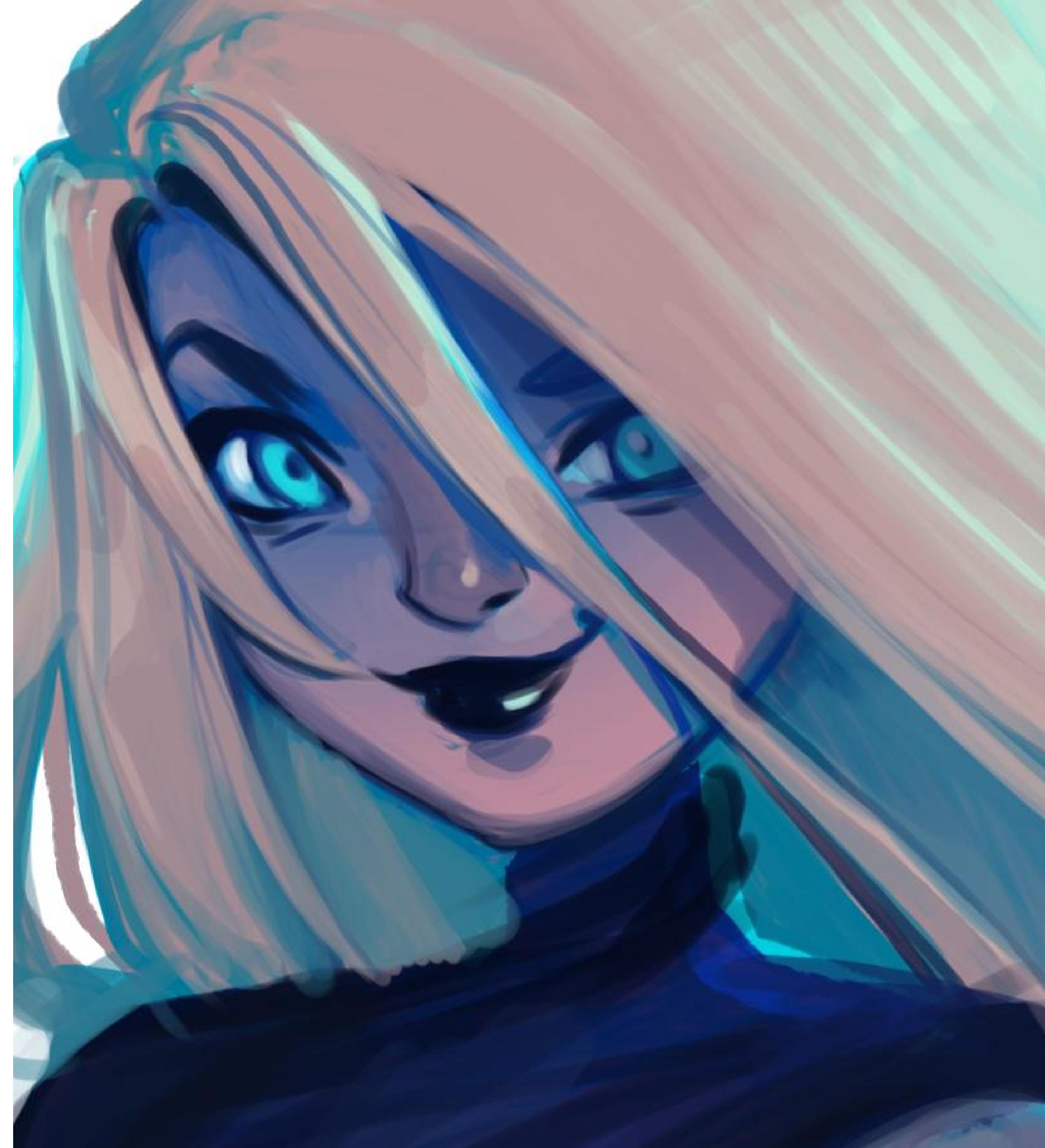


09

## MERGE & ADD DETAIL

### EYES

- ▶ more contrast than the rest of the image
- ▶ want them to stand out
- ▶ clear 'gaze'



10

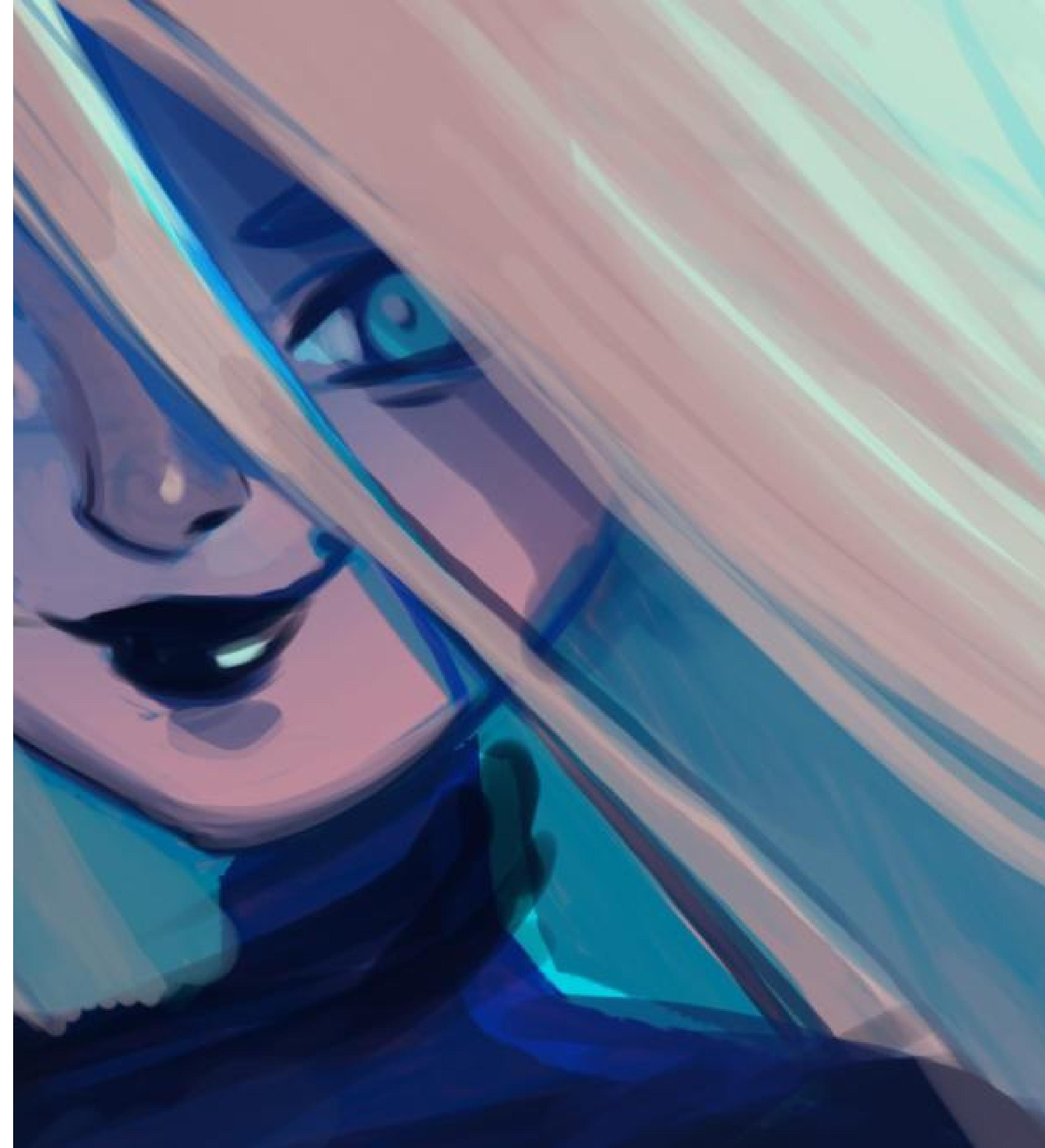
## MERGE & ADD DETAIL

### EYES

- ▶ more contrast than the rest of the image
- ▶ want them to stand out
- ▶ clear 'gaze'

### HAIR

- ▶ add loose strands
- ▶ ribbon style highlights - apply sparingly



11

## MERGE & ADD DETAIL

### EYES

- ▶ more contrast than the rest of the image
- ▶ want them to stand out
- ▶ clear 'gaze'

### HAIR

- ▶ add loose strands
- ▶ ribbon style highlights - apply sparingly

### LINES

- ▶ add darker lines, but only in some areas
- ▶ blend in some color lines



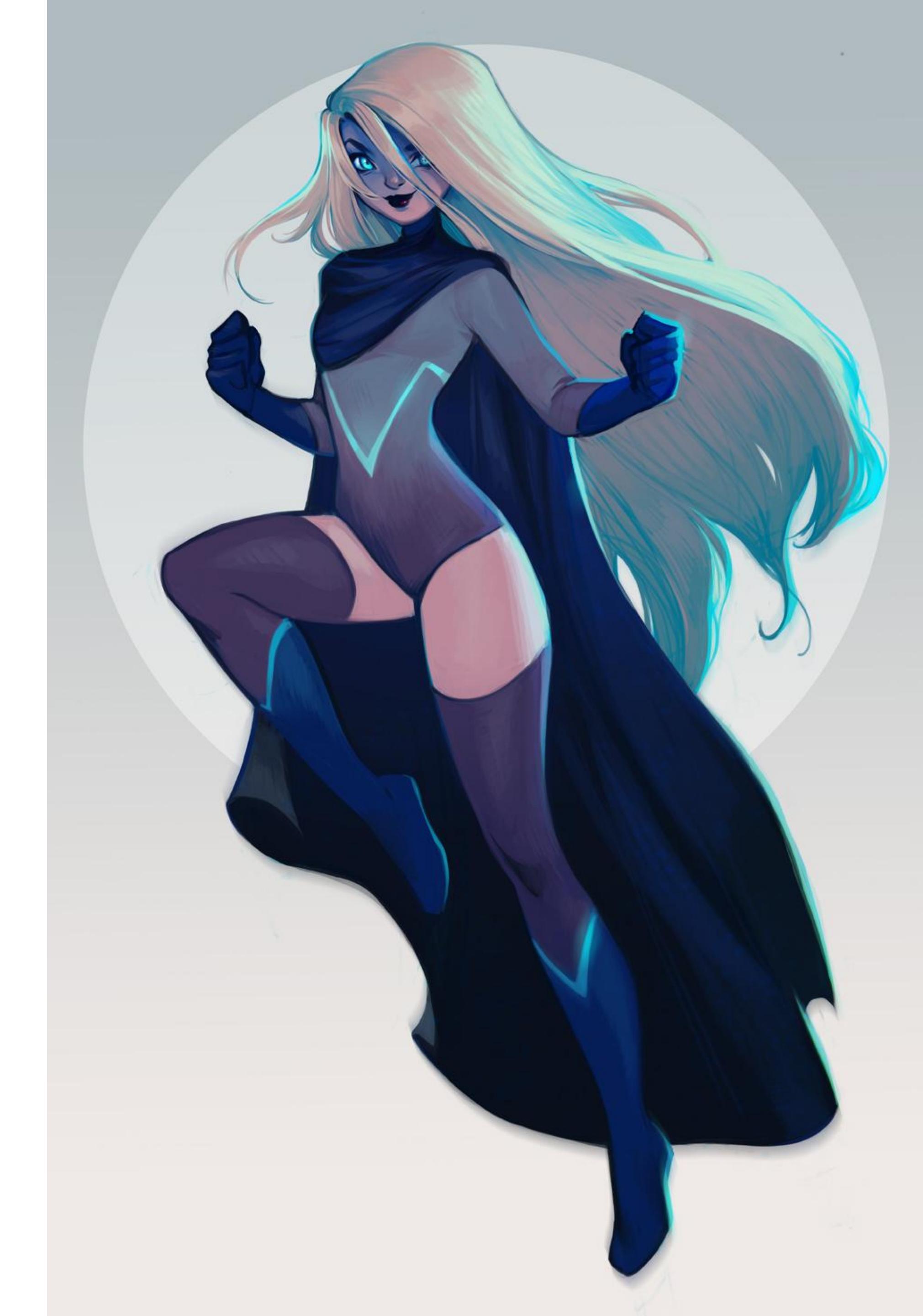
12

## FINISHING TOUCHES

- ▶ add a shape, gradient or shadow to complete image
- ▶ smooth out some areas
- ▶ final color modifications

13

**DONE!**



# ASSIGNMENT

## 03 CHARACTER CREATION



Think of a character that fits into your theme. Do some very quick, rough sketches using steps 1-2 of this process, experimenting with the different character design principles.

Pick the strongest sketch and finalize it using the rest of the steps. Try to pick a pose that says a lot about this character's personality.

TIME // 1.5 HOURS





# MY DIGITAL WORKFLOW //

## 04 FLOW IN COMPOSITION

# composition

A QUICK OVERVIEW

1

## CHARACTER SKETCH

I use the character construction technique from yesterday to sketch the basic pose of the character.

2

## SKETCHING ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

On a separate layer, I add the background, decorative elements, props, etc. I keep this as simple as possible.

3

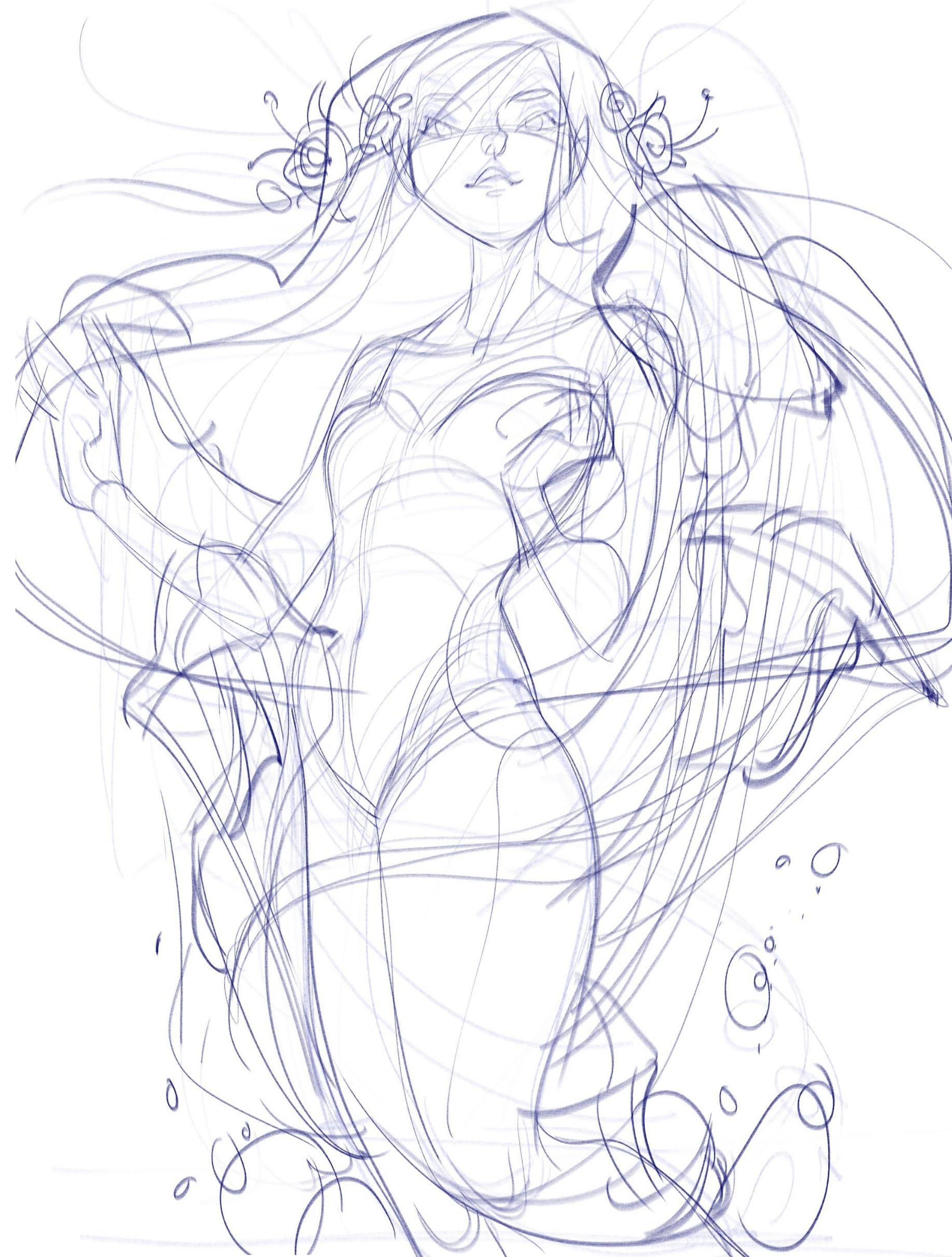
## MULTIPLE THUMBNAILS

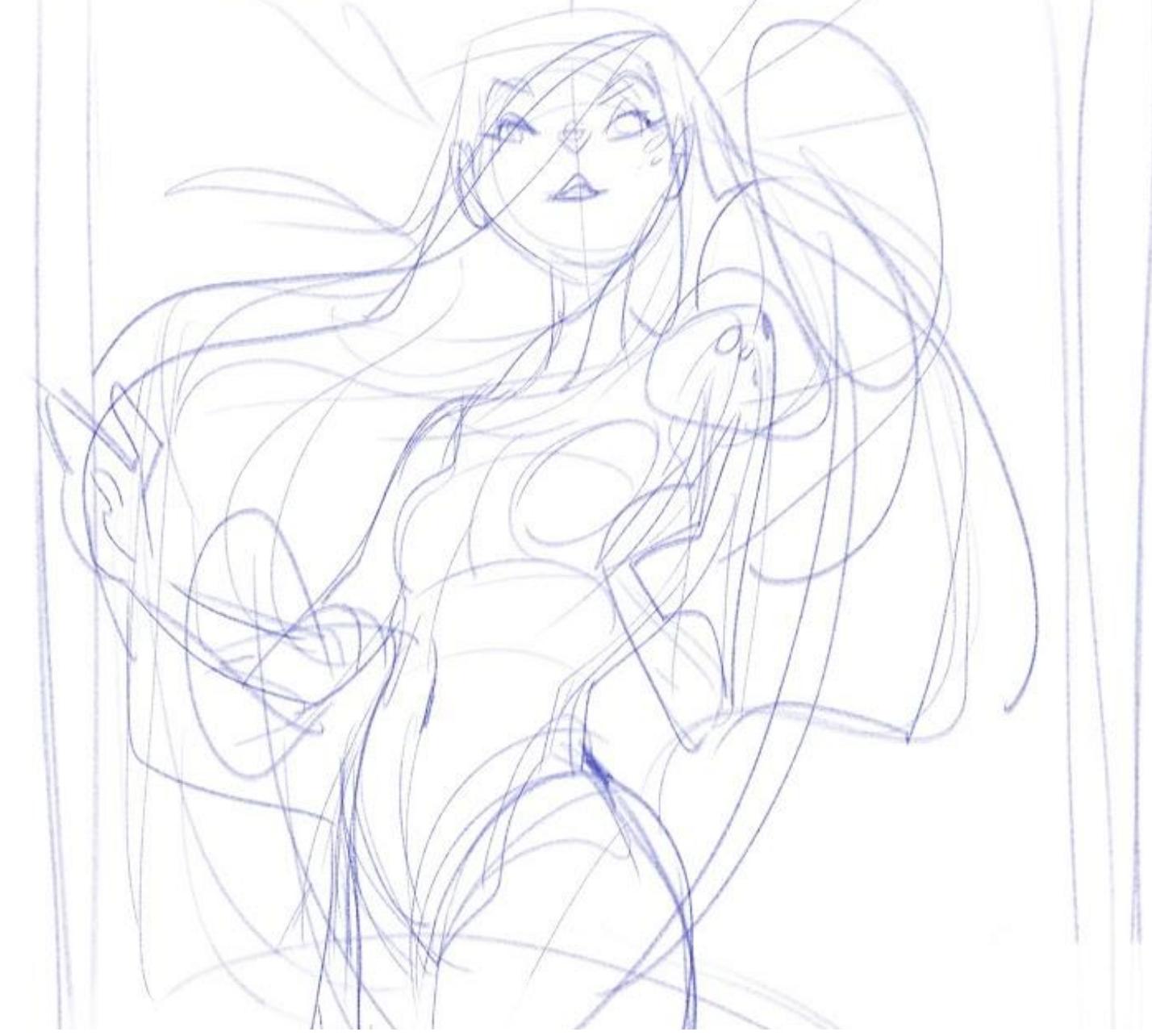
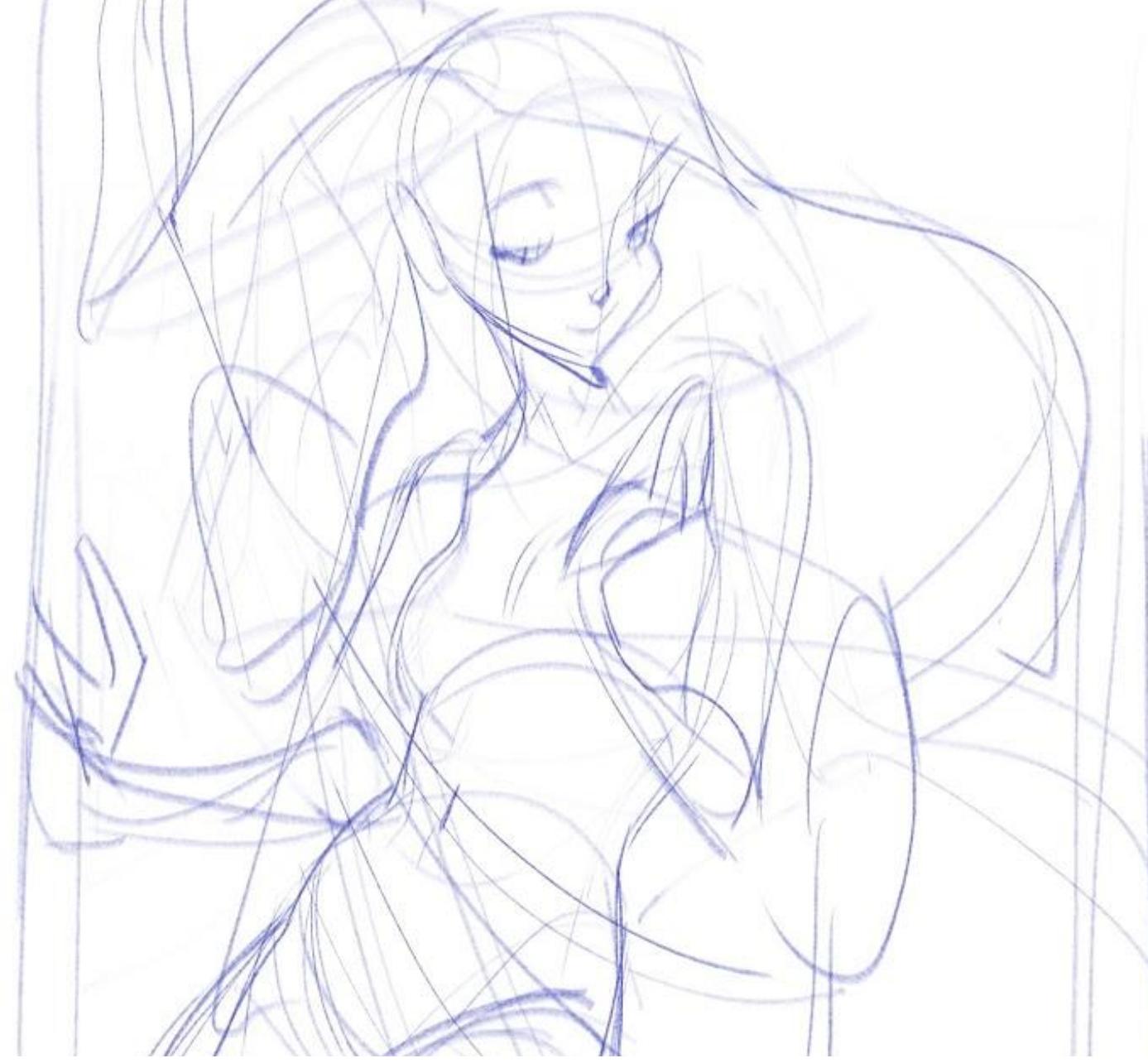
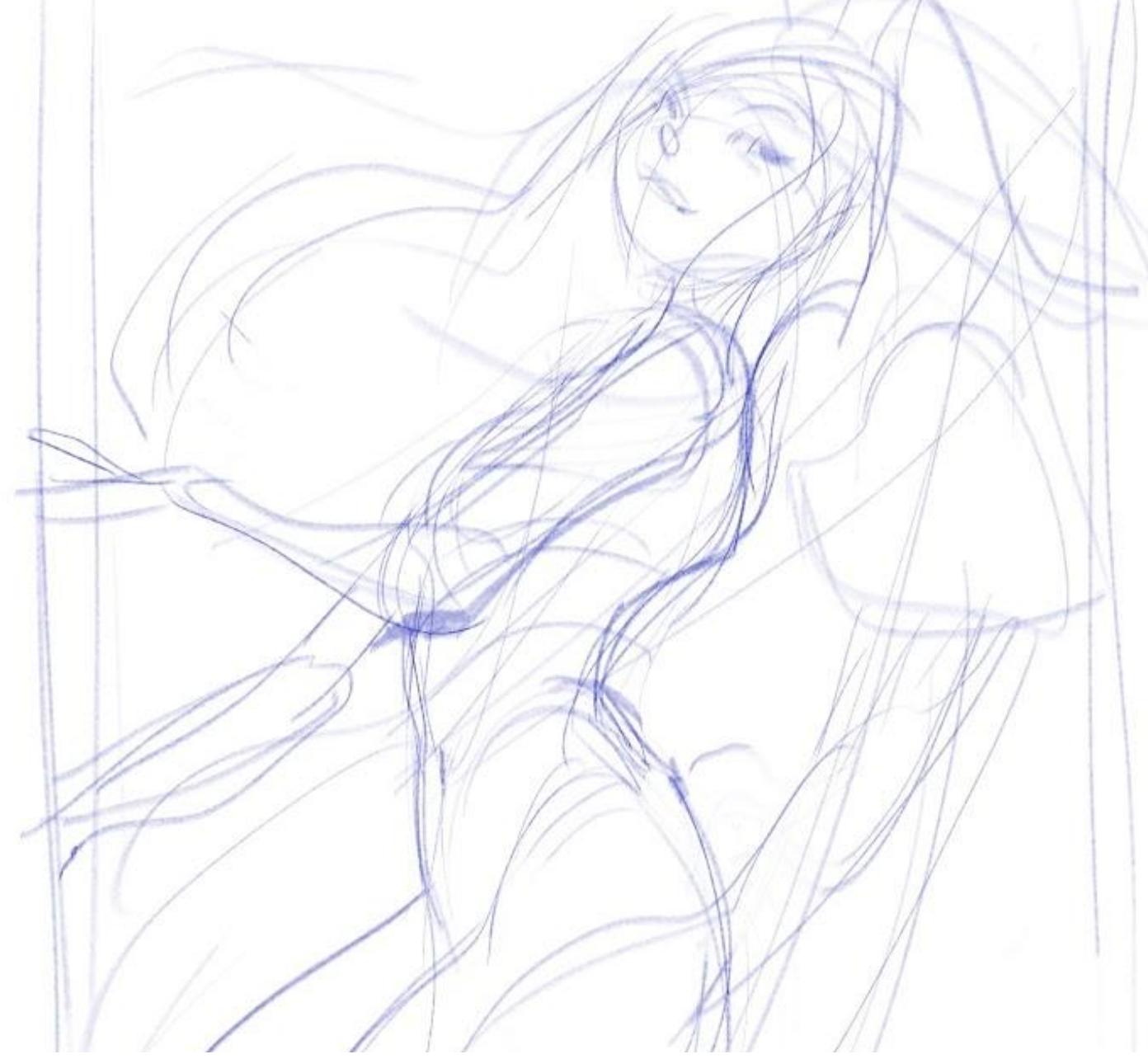
I repeat the process, challenging myself to draw the same image in a few different ways.

4

## SELECT 1 & ADD DETAIL

I pick the strongest sketch and work out the details a little more.





## KEEP IT SIMPLE

The most important thing about sketching out your digital painting - keep it simple. Details can be added later on.

## WORK SMALL

If you create small thumbnails, you have a better sense of whether the image is working from afar

## FOCAL POINT

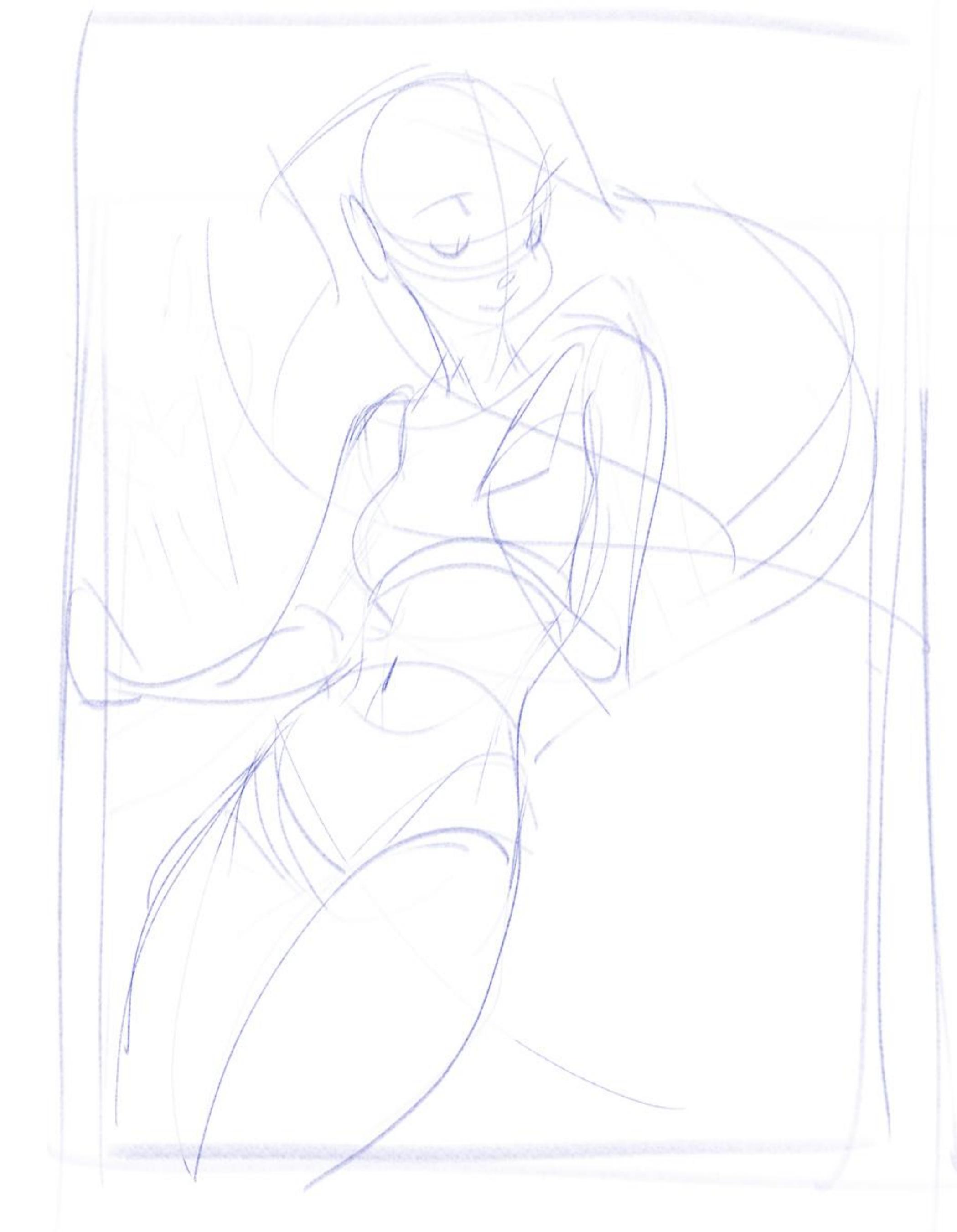
Arrange all of your elements in such a way that the eye is led to the focal point - often the face.

# CREATING COMPOSITIONS: PROCESS

01

## ROUGH SKETCH

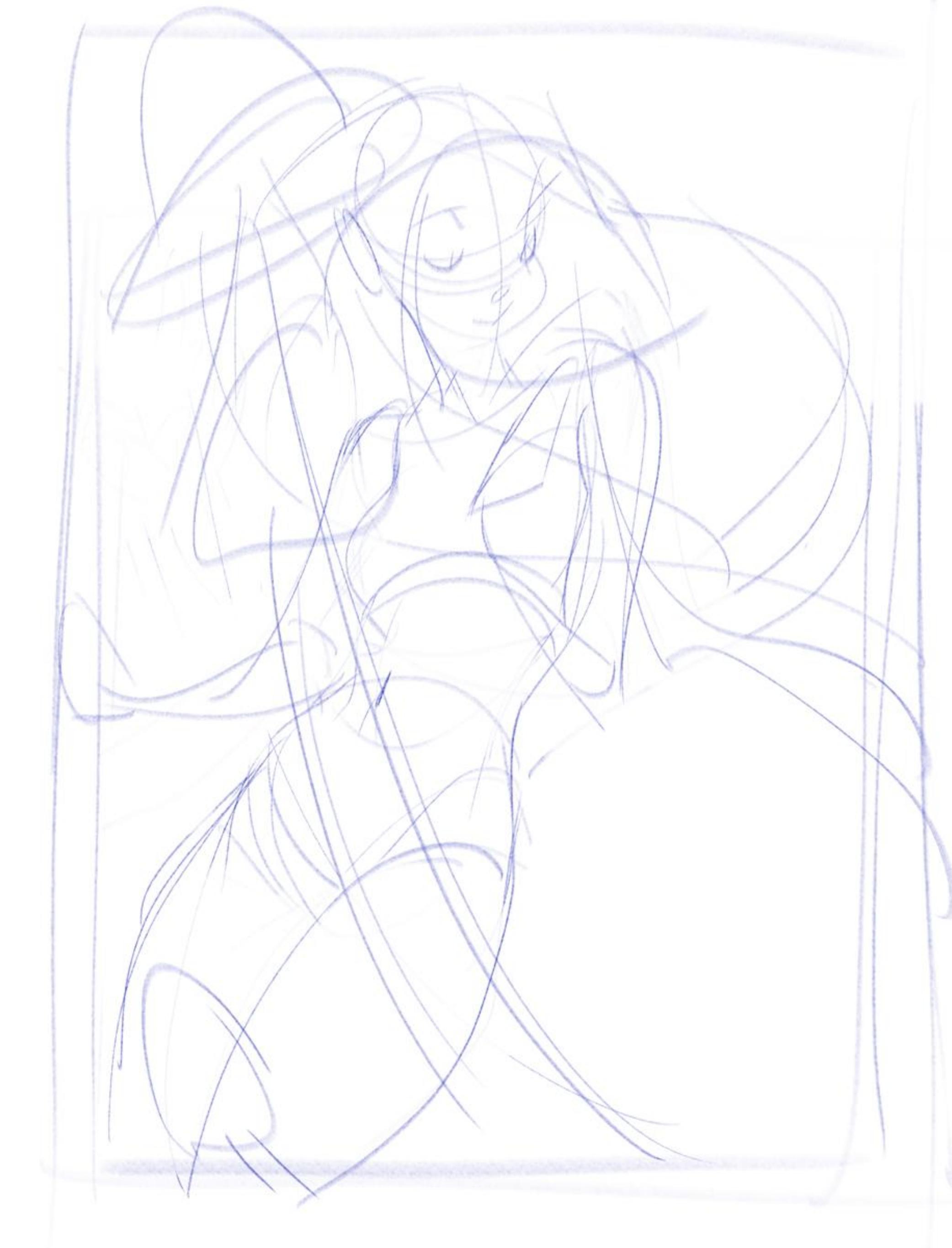
- ▶ work small on a larger canvas
- ▶ don't worry too much about the details
- ▶ ok to stylize



02

## SKETCH ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

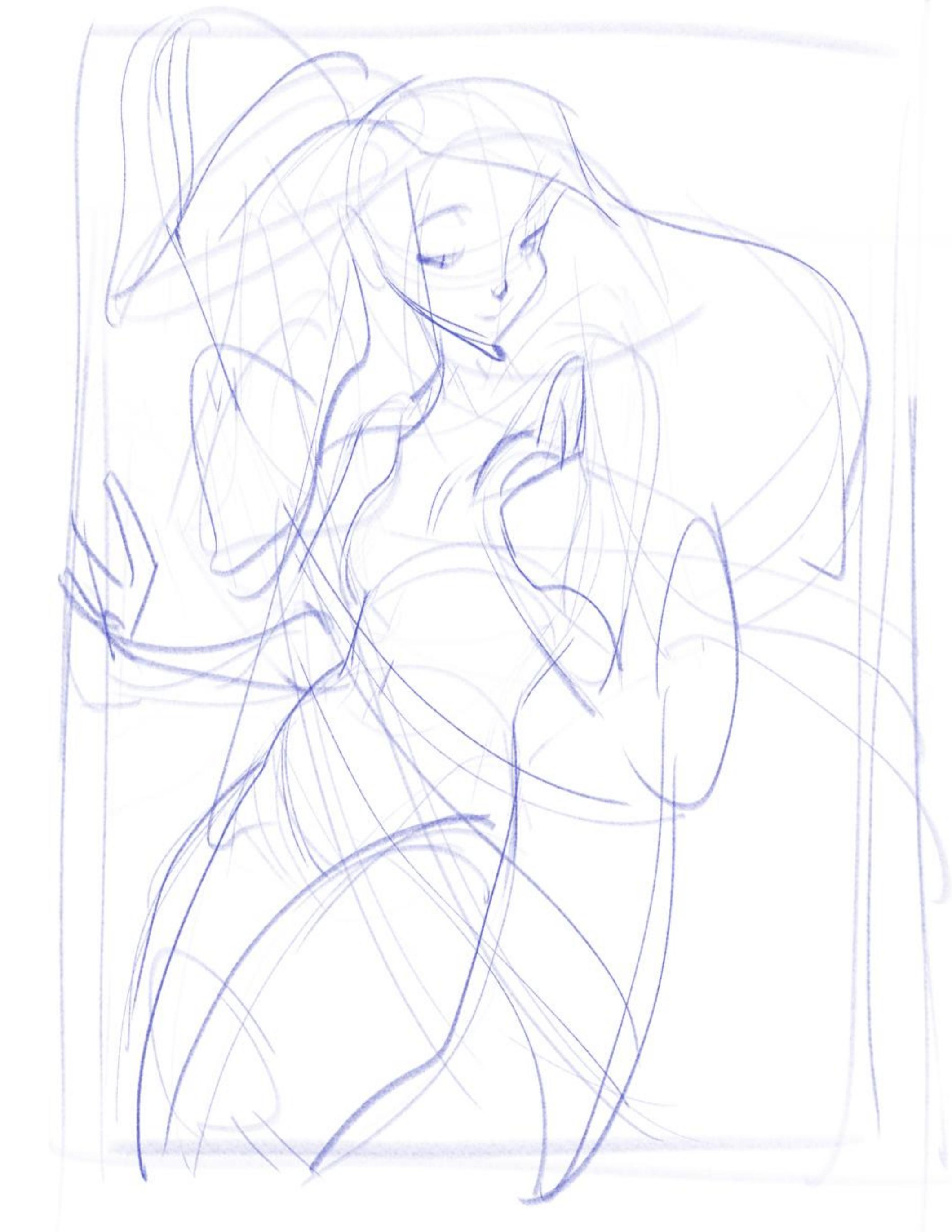
- ▶ keep it simple - use shapes
- ▶ think mainly in terms of the 'line of action'



03

### **ADD A LITTLE MORE DETAIL**

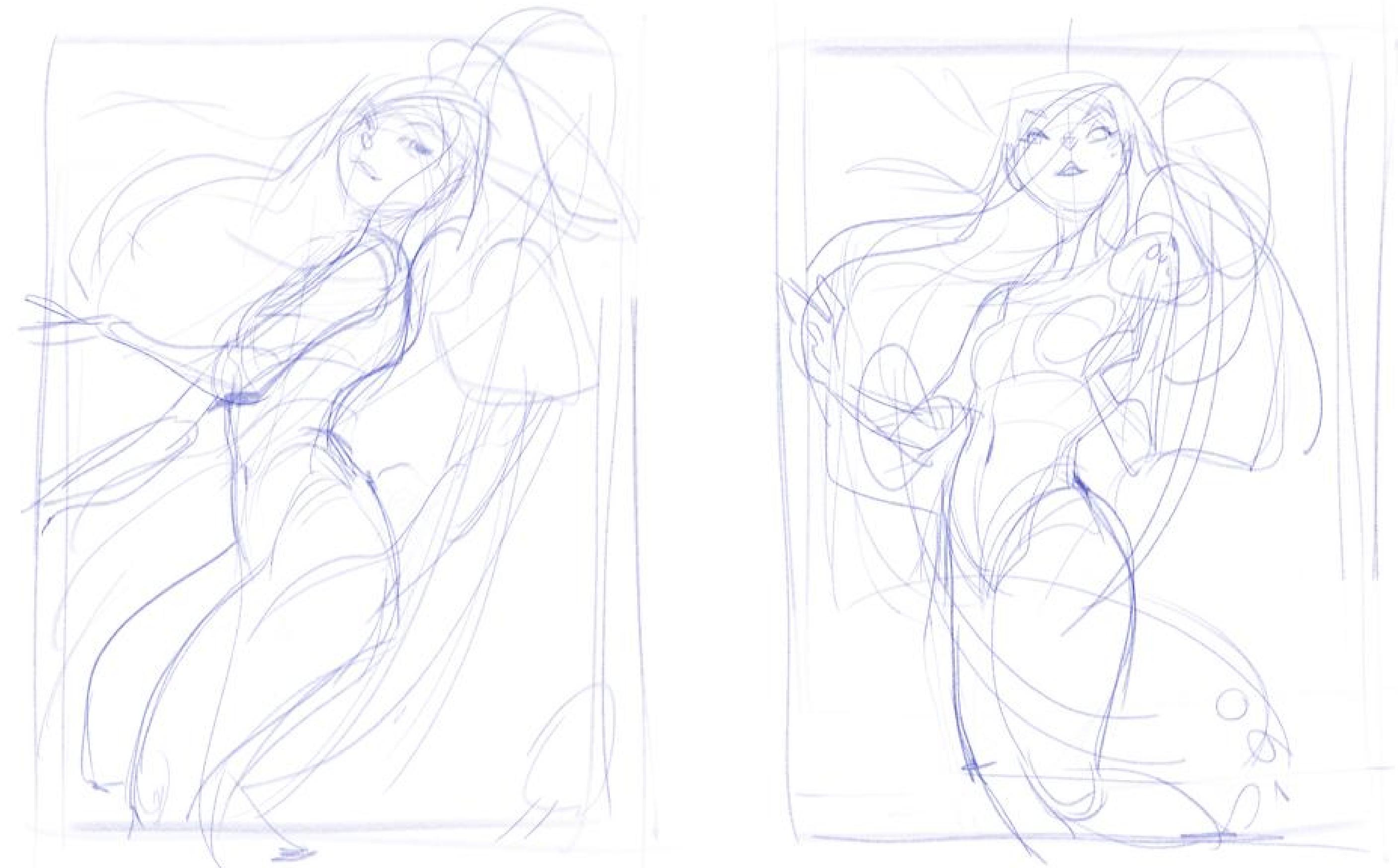
- ▶ lower opacity of other sketch layers
- ▶ on new layer, work out the detail a little more



04

## MULTIPLE THUMBNAILS

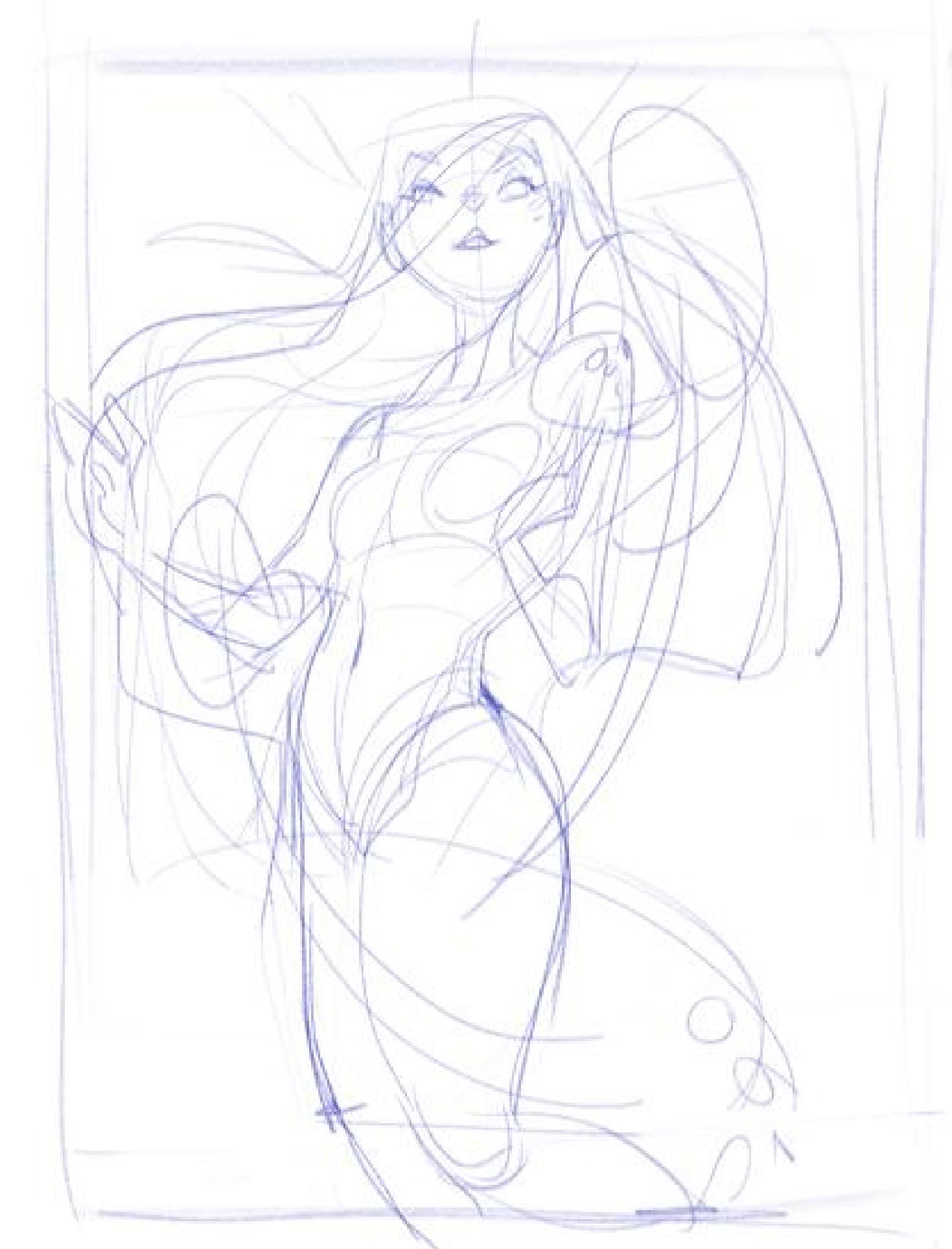
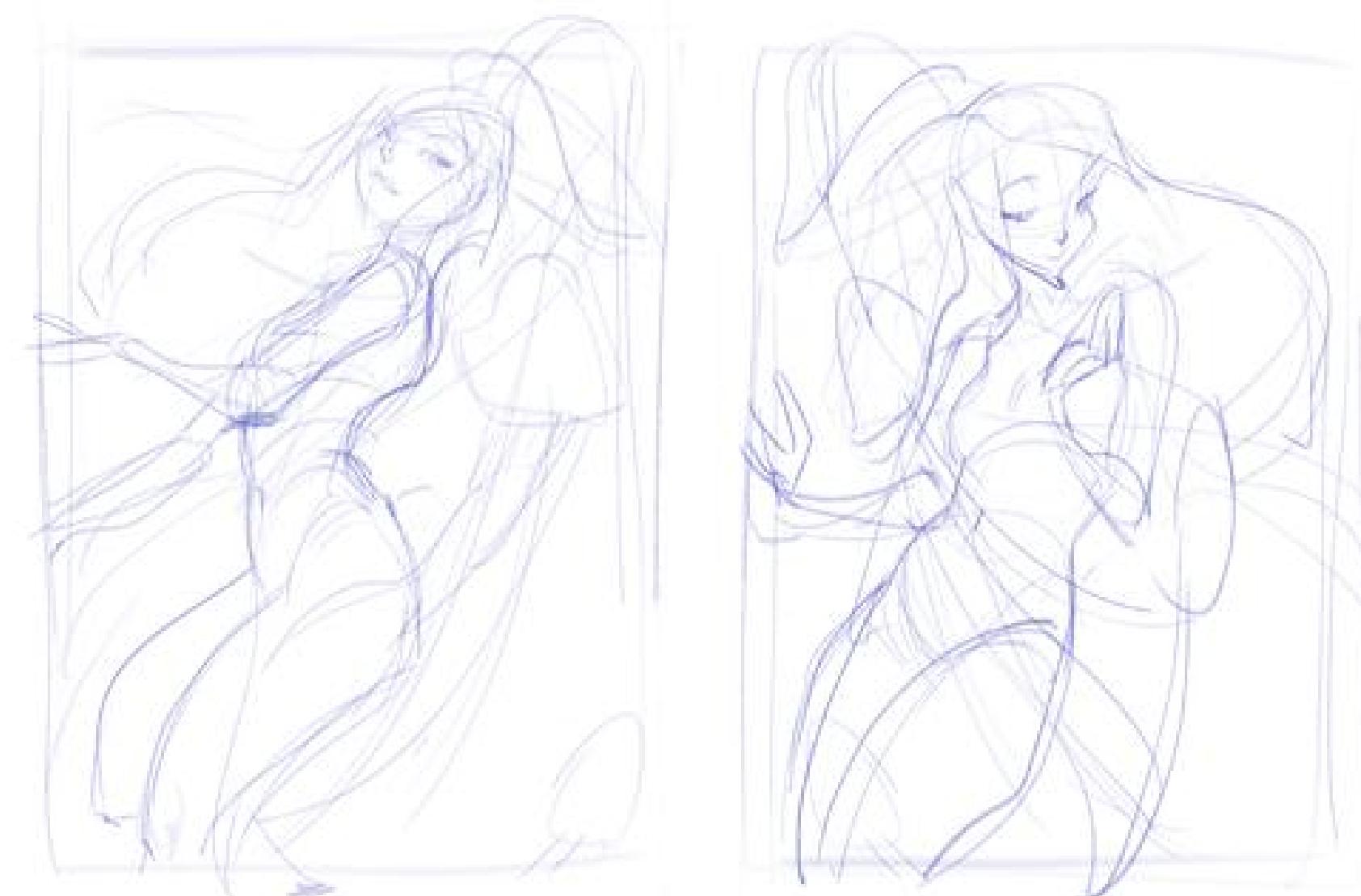
- ▶ on the same canvas, draw 1-2 more versions
- ▶ try a different angle or composition



05

## PICK ONE

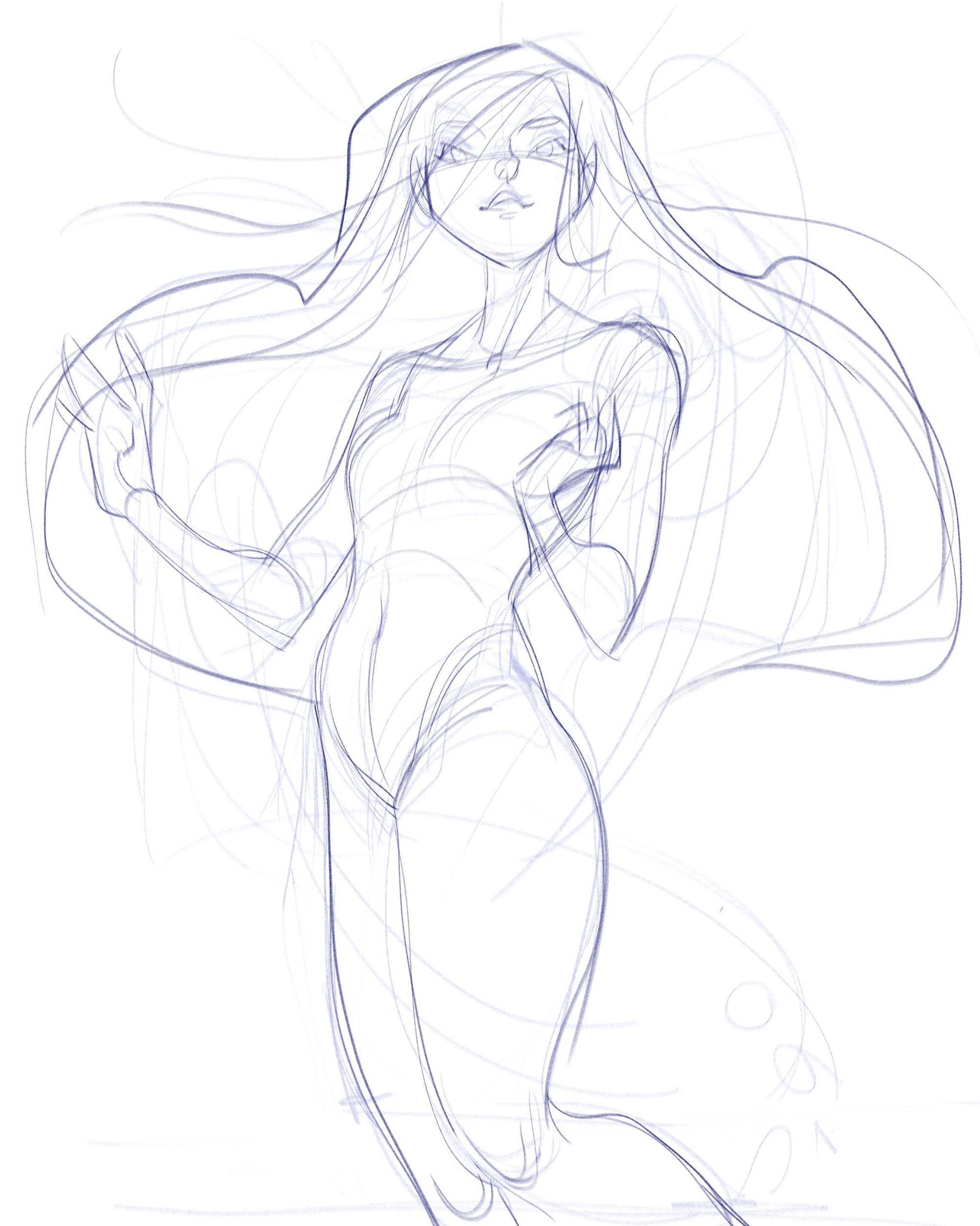
- ▶ choose the composition that is working best



06

## ADD MORE DETAIL GRADUALLY

- ▶ upscale the sketch and work out details
- ▶ start with character and gradually add more detail



06

## ADD MORE DETAIL GRADUALLY

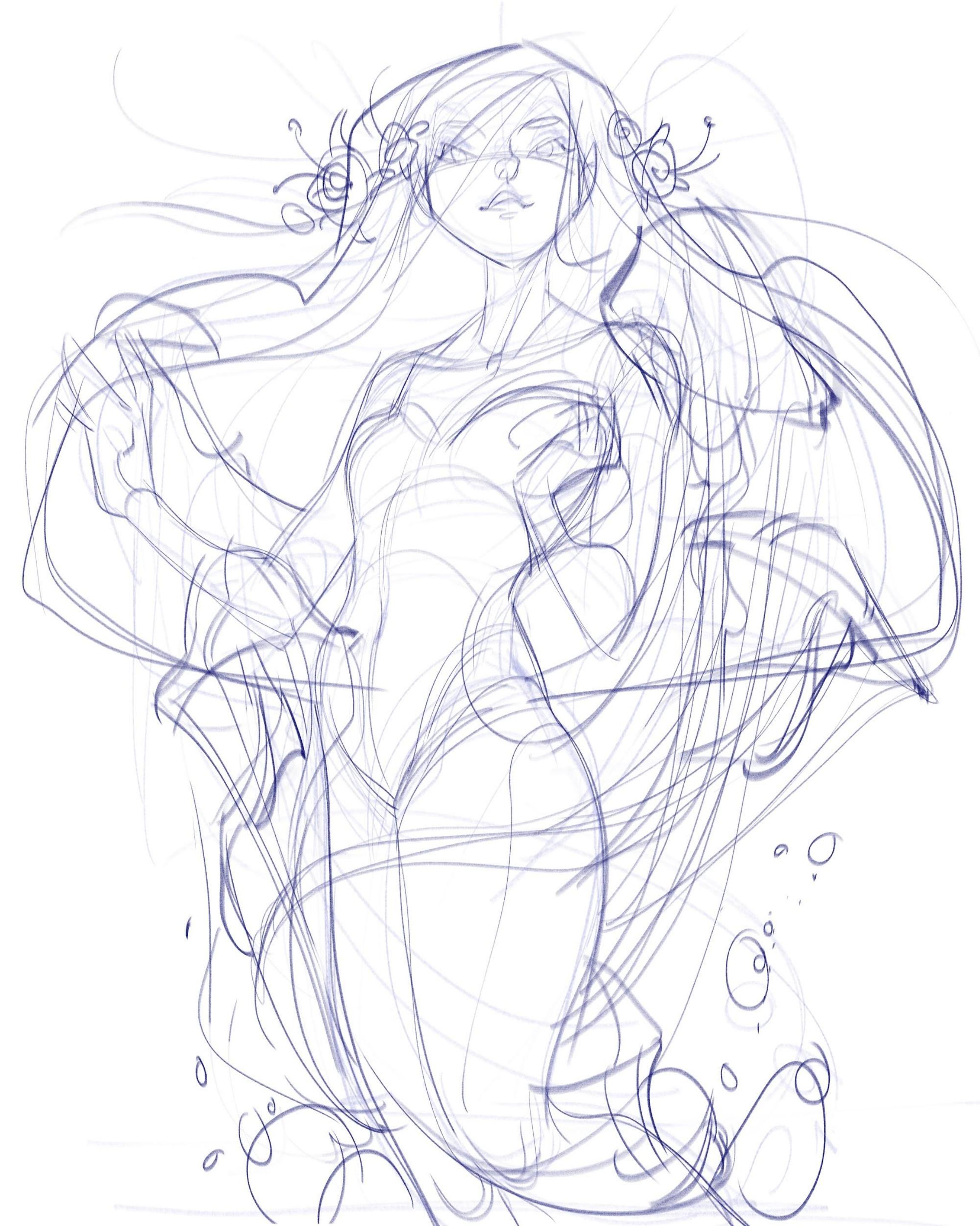
- ▶ upscale the sketch and work out details
- ▶ start with character and gradually add more detail



06

## ADD MORE DETAIL GRADUALLY

- ▶ upscale the sketch and work out details
- ▶ start with character and gradually add more detail



07

**DONE!**

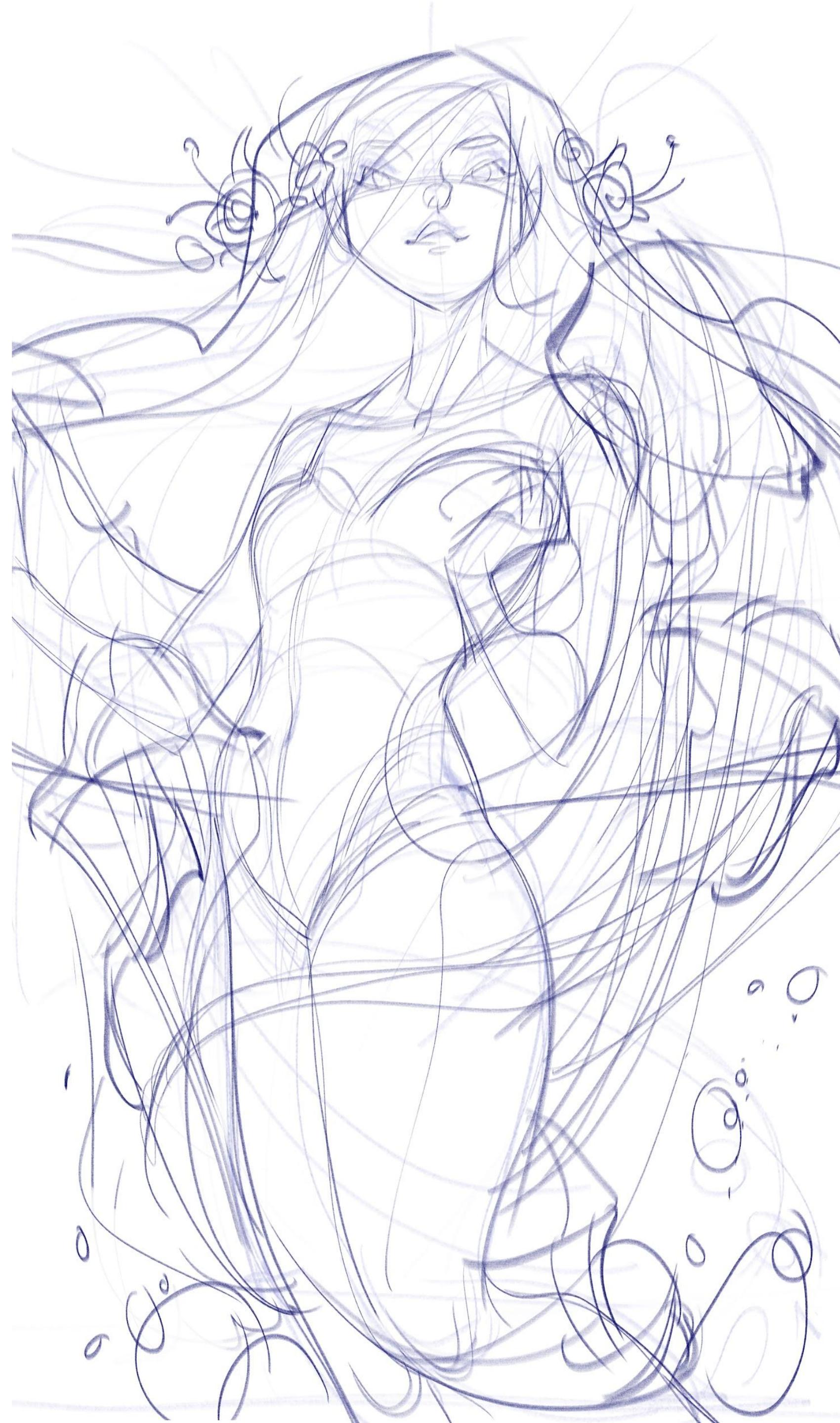
# ASSIGNMENT

## 04 FLOW IN COMPOSITION

Yesterday, we created a character. Think of a way to convey this character in a digital painting, either with decorative elements or in a scene.

Create 2-3 rough thumbnails for your idea. Choose 1 and work out more detail.

TIME // 30 MINUTES





# MY DIGITAL WORKFLOW // 05 COLORS FOR DIGITAL PAINTING

# choosing colors

A QUICK OVERVIEW

1

## SET A BASE COLOR

I set sketch lines to multiply and use the flood fill tool to set a base color. I tweak with hue/saturation.

2

## ADD GRADIENTS

I use the gradient tool to add color transitions, and introduce new values to the piece.

3

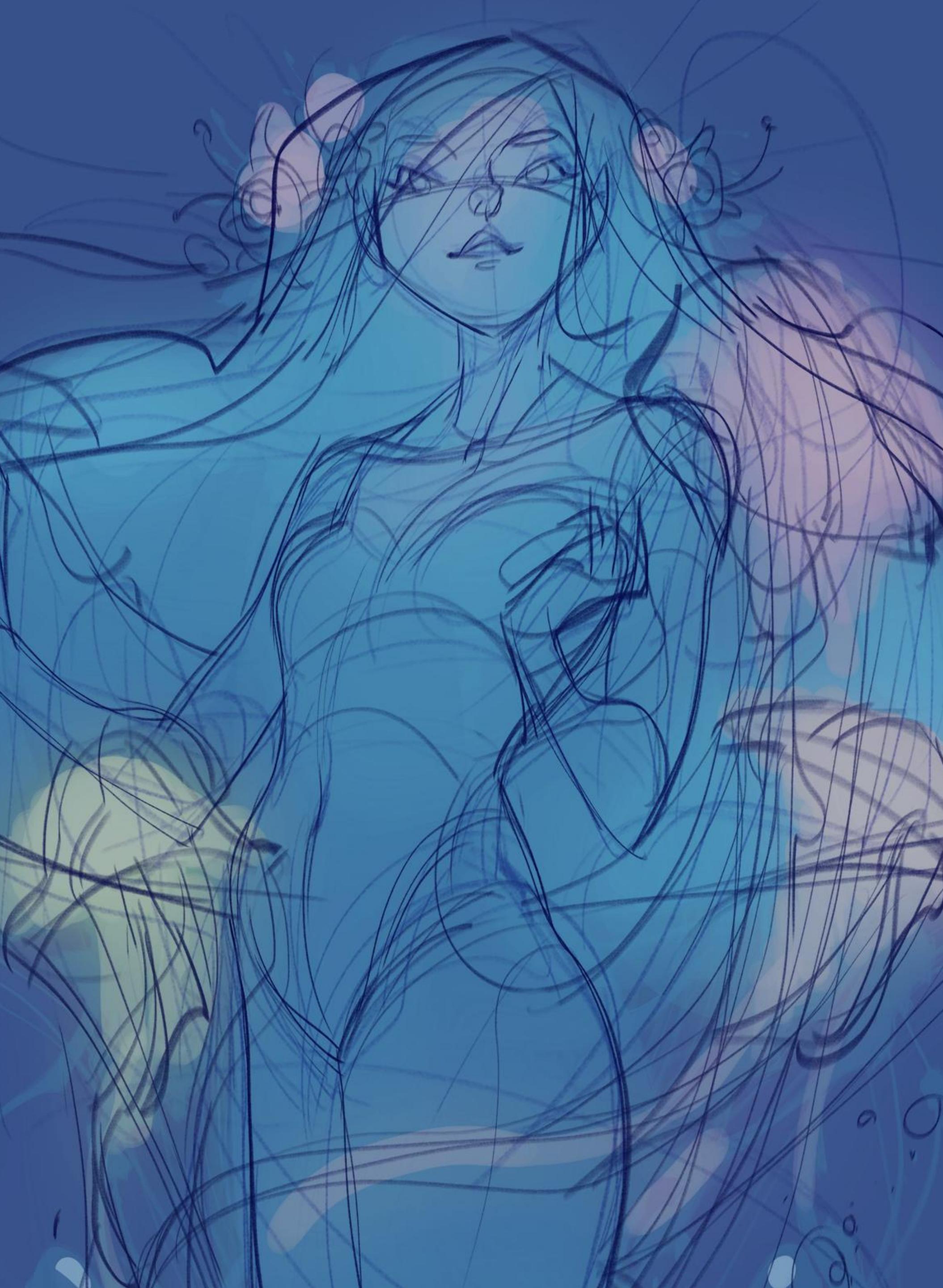
## DRAW COLORS

I set my brush to a lower opacity/flow, and block in some of the additional colors, adding more contrast.

4

## MODIFY COLORS

I use selective color, replace color, color balance and hue/saturation to tweak the color scheme.

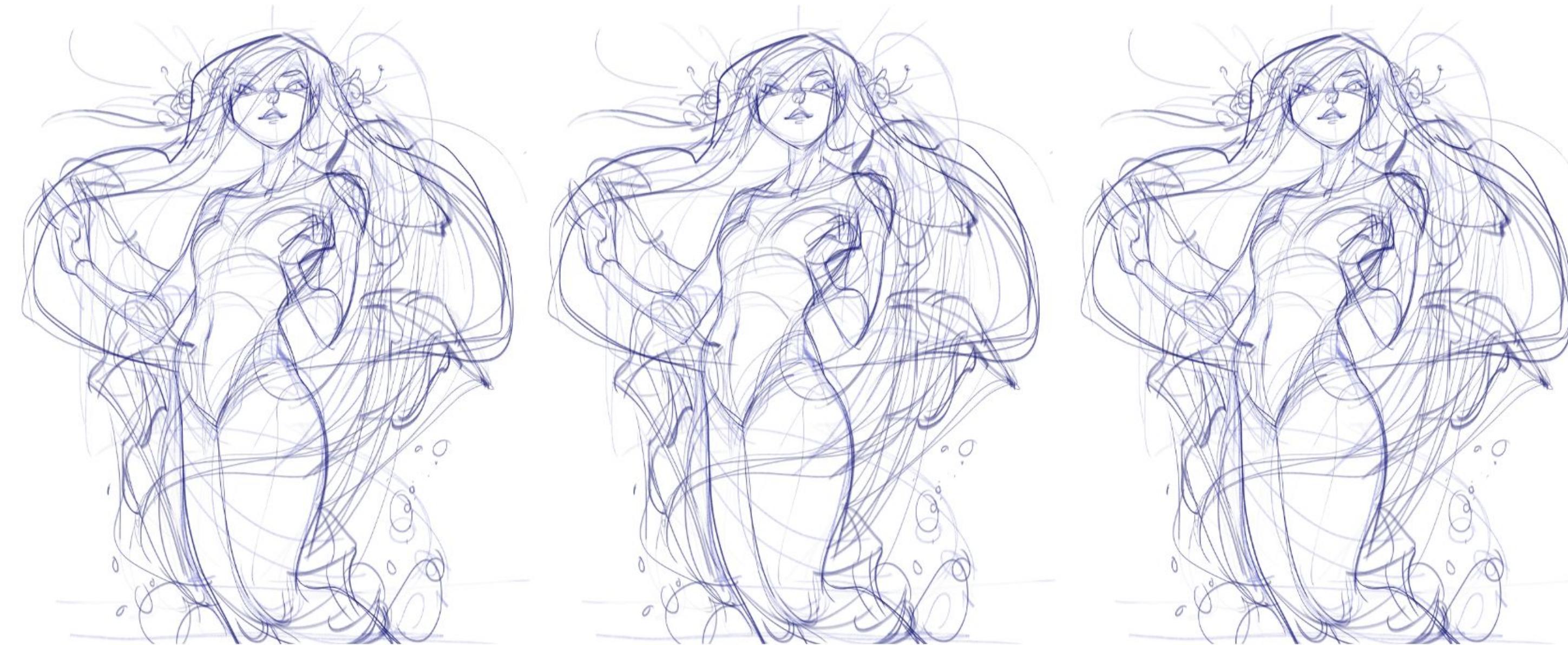


# CHOOSING COLORS: PROCESS

01

## PREP YOUR CANVAS

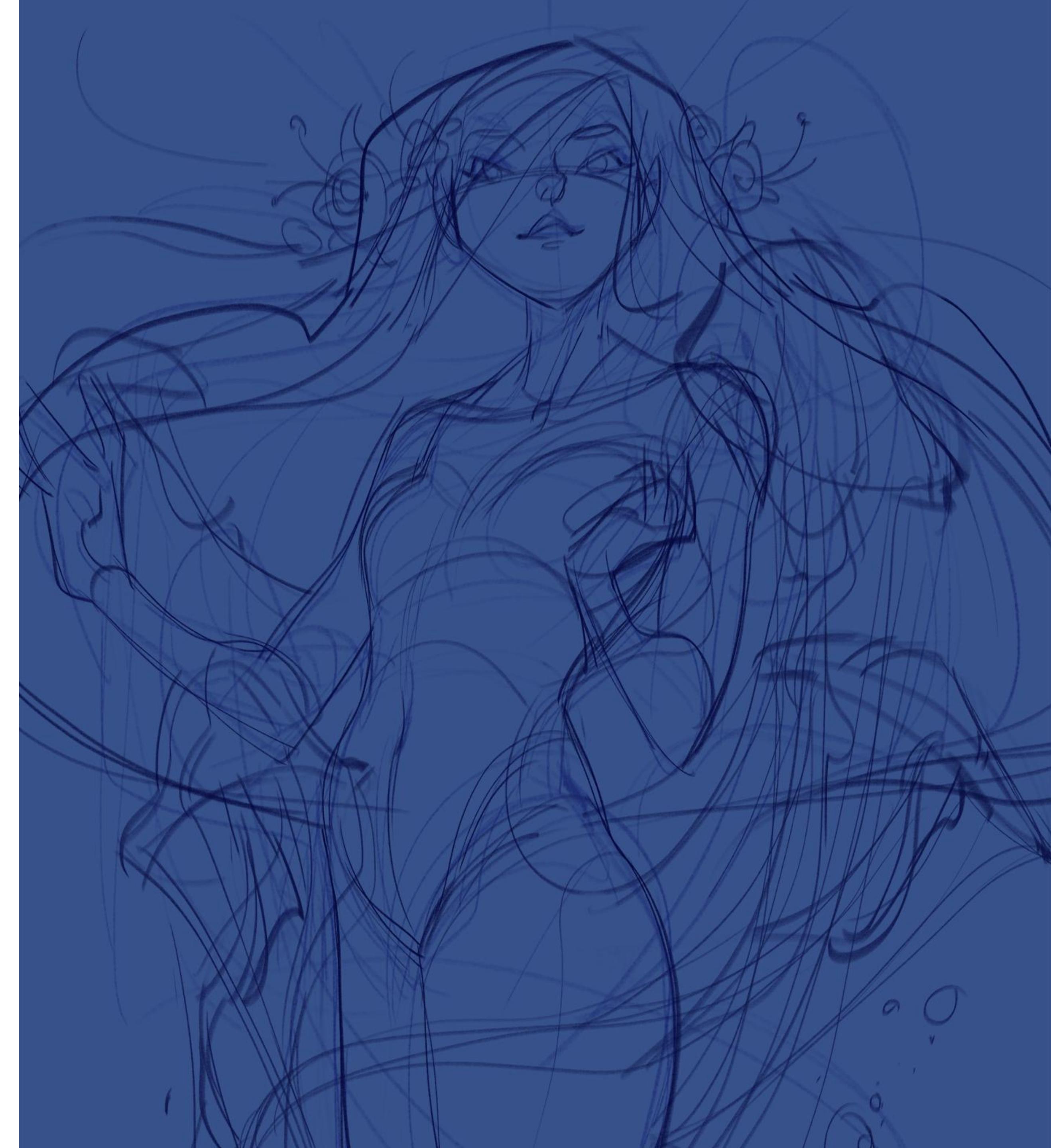
- ▶ take your most successful thumbnail sketch
- ▶ copy/paste to a new canvas
- ▶ duplicate 2-3 times across your canvas
- ▶ give each thumbnail it's own group



02

## BASE COLOR

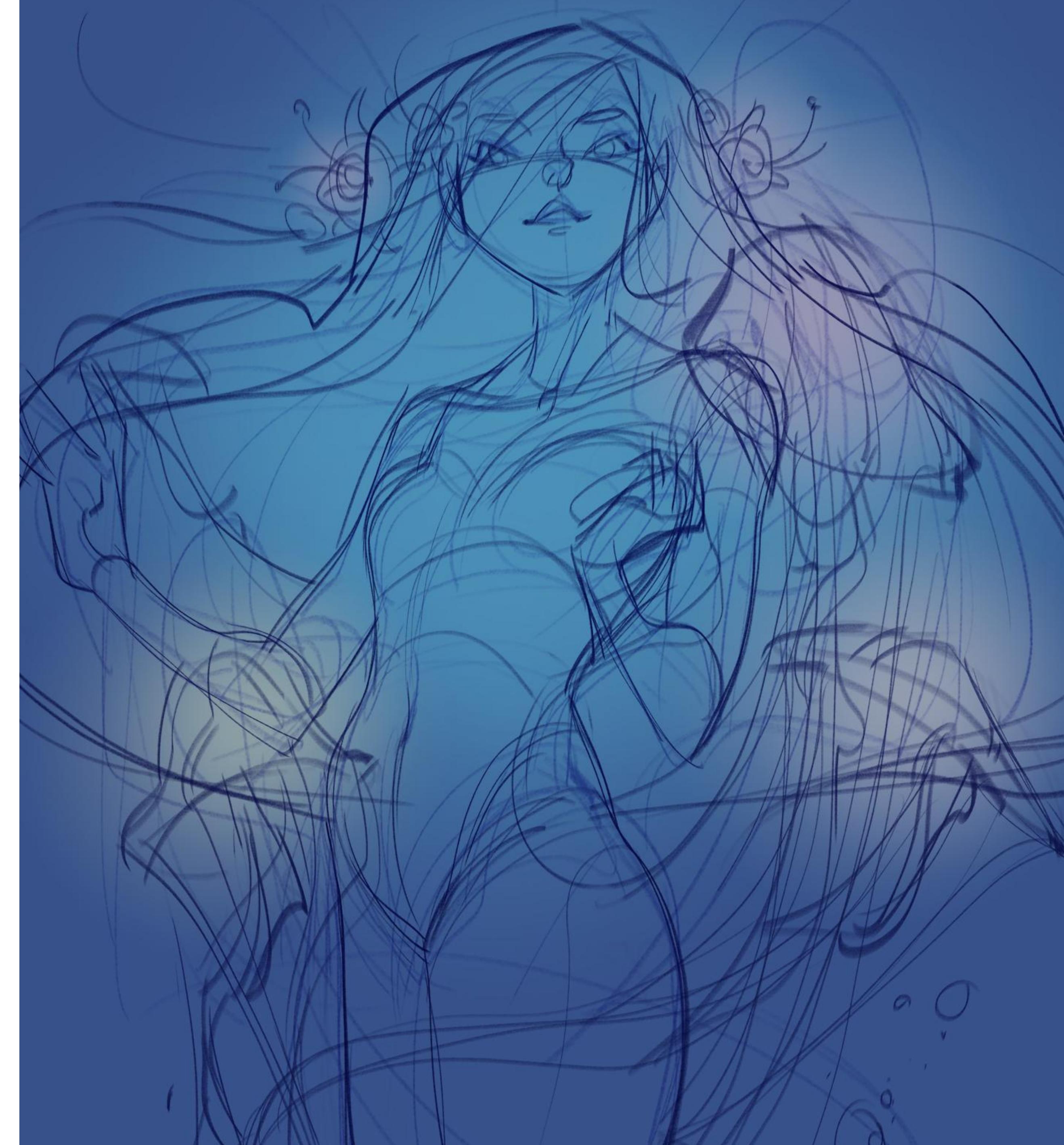
- ▶ start with your first thumbnail
- ▶ pick a color that fits your concept.
- ▶ try to make it deep, rich or bright.
- ▶ tweak with hue/saturation to get the right tone
- ▶ change color of sketch lines to match



03

## ADD GRADIENTS

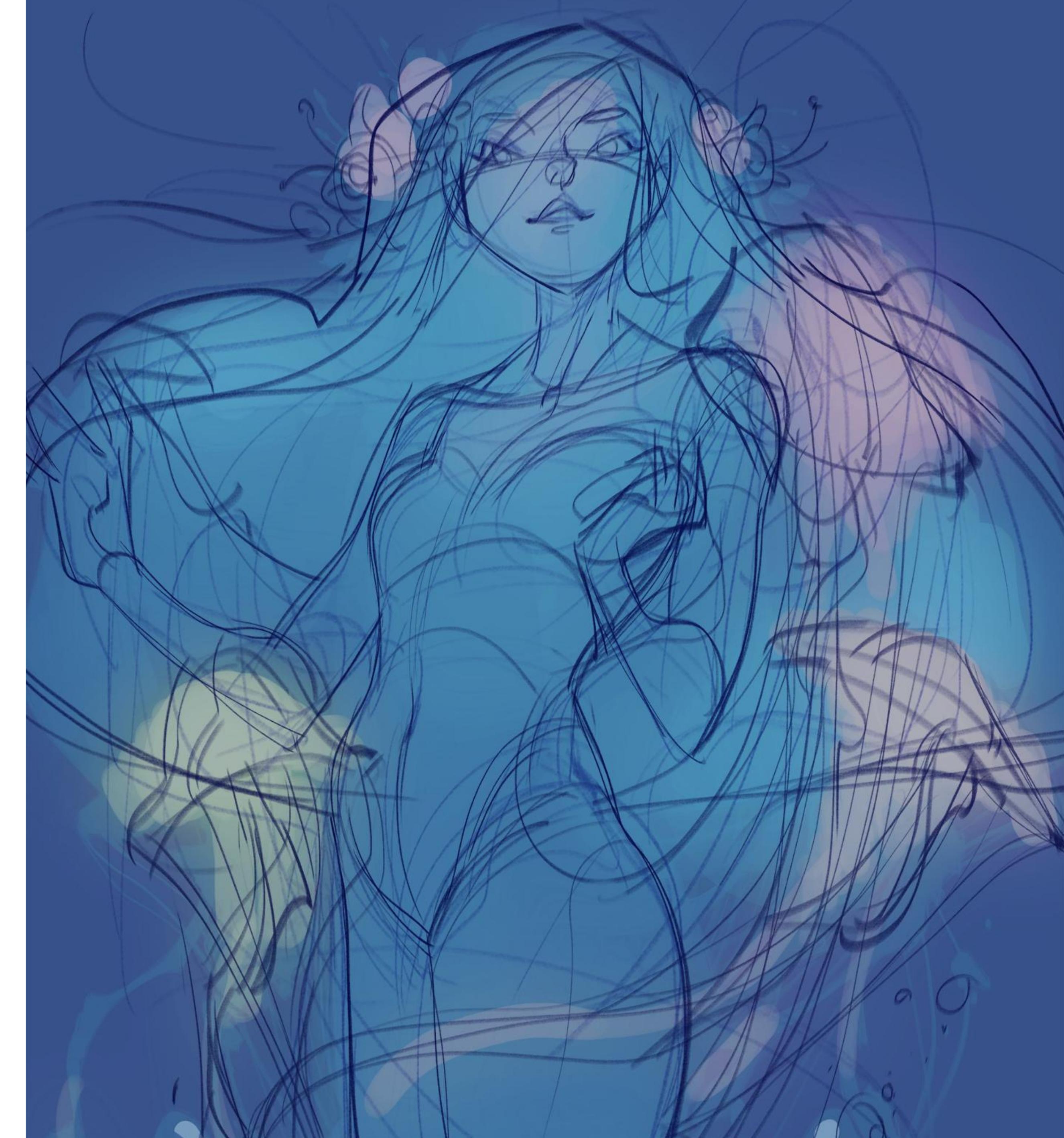
- ▶ set gradient tool to transparent BG, lower opacity to 60-75%
- ▶ add a secondary hue to your image with gradients
- ▶ add some contrast with darker/lighter values
- ▶ keep in mind the 'flow' - where do you want the viewer to look?



04

## PAINT IN COLORS

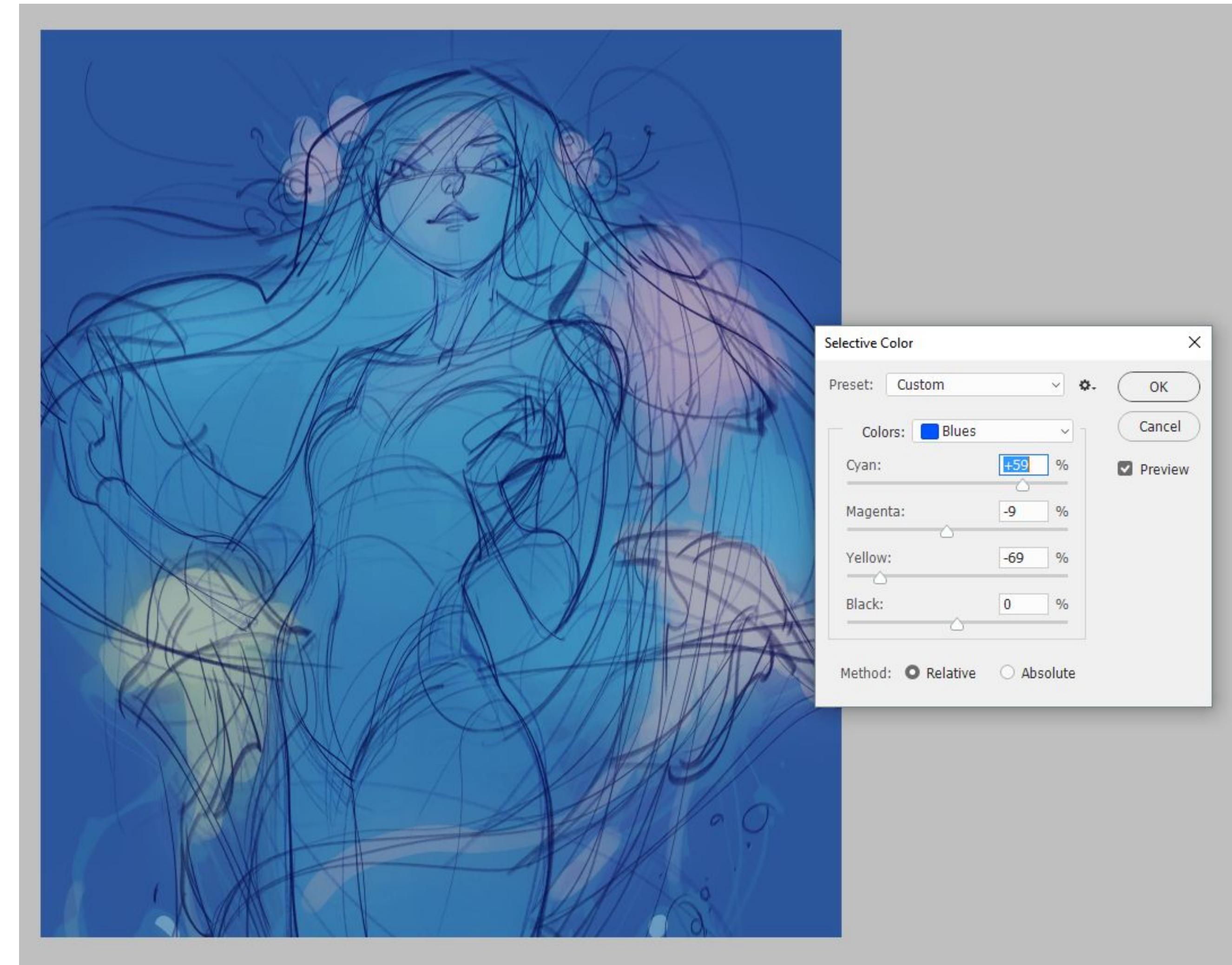
- ▶ set your brush to a lower flow/opacity
- ▶ paint in some new colors - quick & rough
- ▶ blend slightly with alt + click
- ▶ think about where you want your color accents and where you are leading the eye



05

## MODIFY COLORS

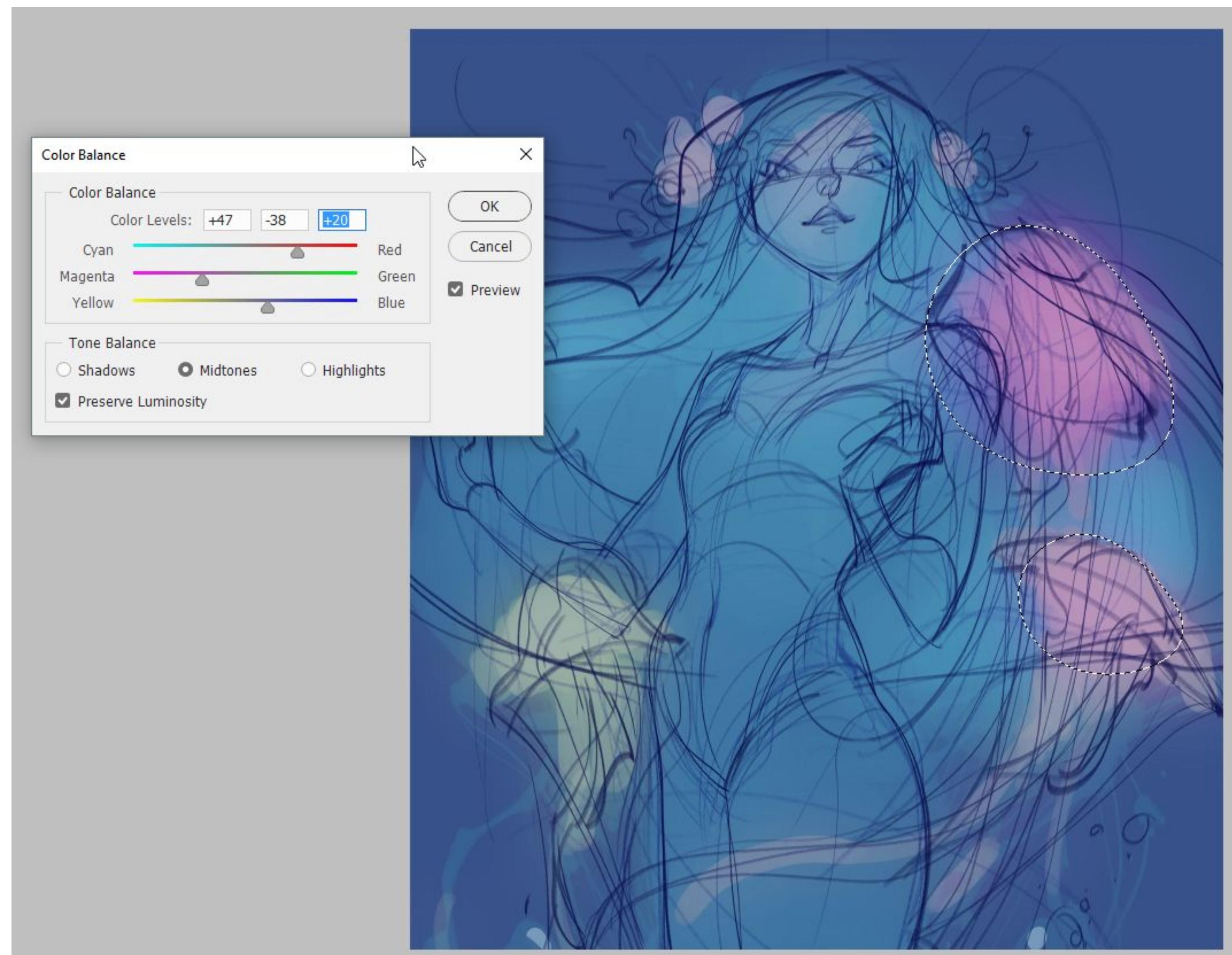
- ▶ use selective color to modify the colors.
- ▶ if needed, use replace color to tweak specific colors
- ▶ try to get a good balance of warm & cool



06

## FEATHERED LASO TOOL

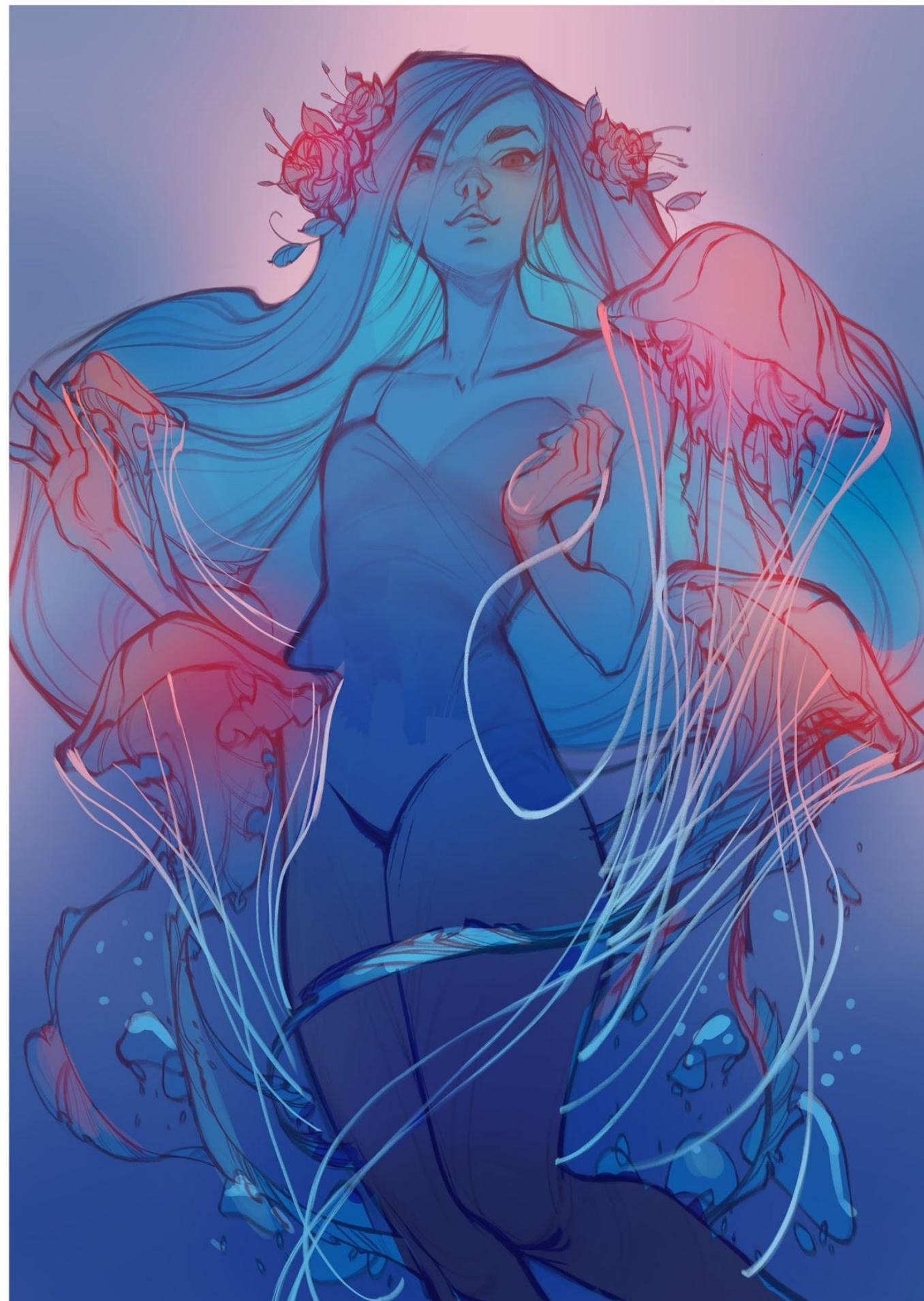
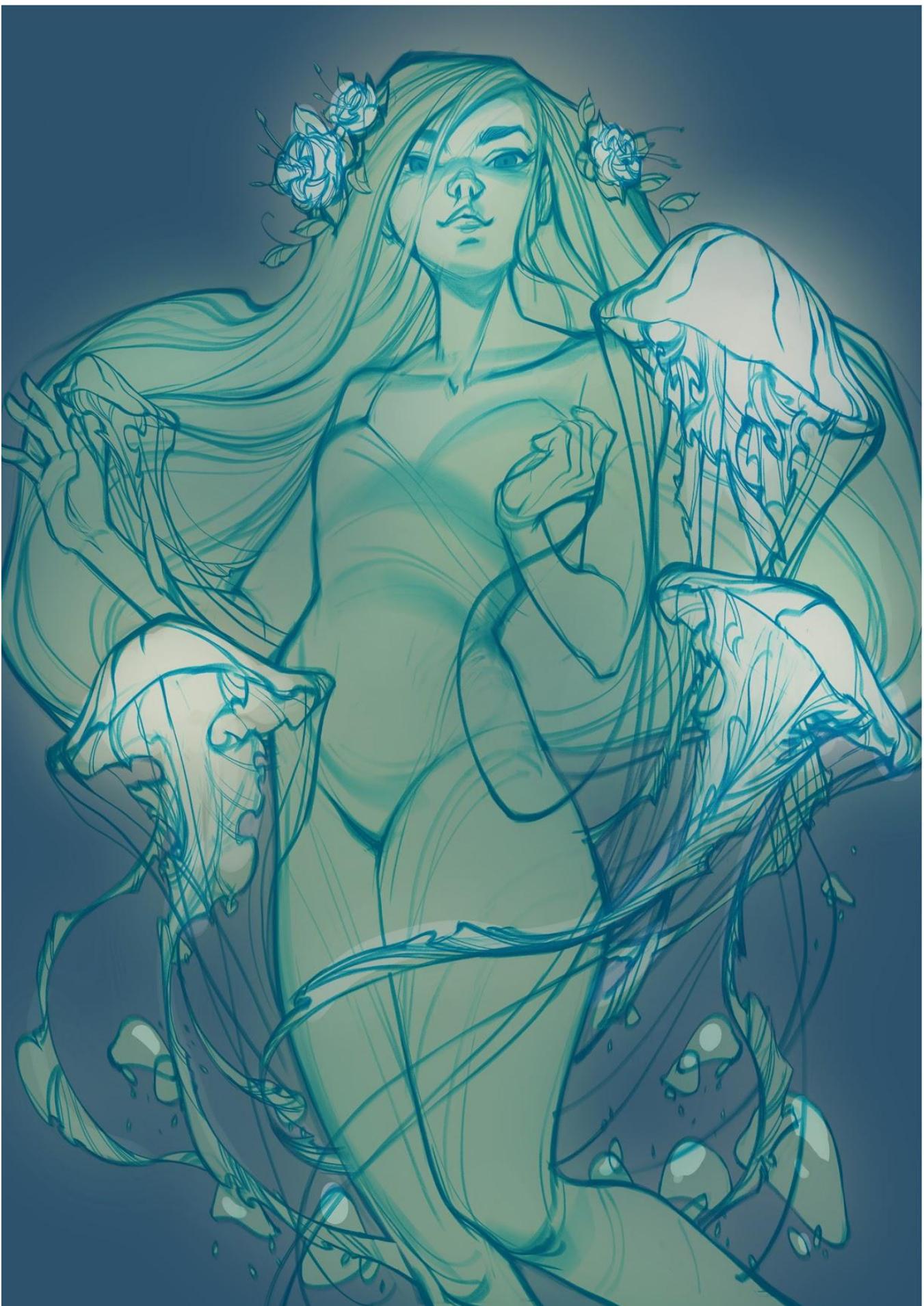
- ▶ set lasso tool to feather 100px or more
- ▶ select specific areas
- ▶ use color editing tools to modify these areas



07

## MULTIPLE COLOR SETUPS

- ▶ try the same process 1-2 more times
- ▶ experiment with a different base color each time
- ▶ try different value variations



08

**DONE!**

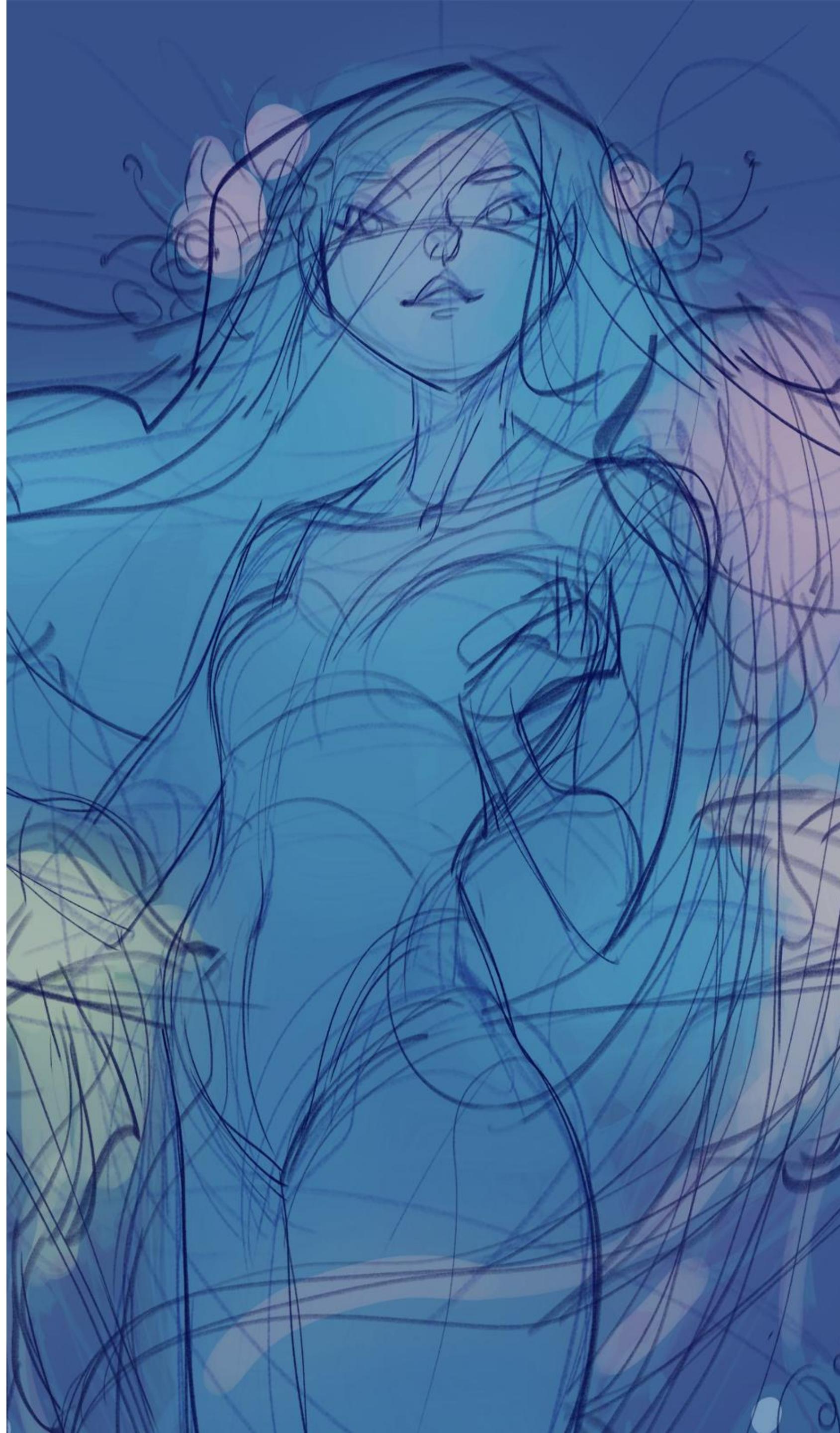
# ASSIGNMENT

## 05 CHOOSING COLORS FOR DIGITAL PAINTING



Make 2-3 color setups for your composition sketch from the last assignment. Challenge yourself to try different base colors, different value setups and different color accents. Try to work as fast as possible.

TIME // 30 MINUTES





# MY DIGITAL WORKFLOW //

## 06 PAINTING & RENDERING

# painting & rendering

A QUICK OVERVIEW

1

## ADD LIGHTER VALUES TO FACE

I use colors already on the canvas. If I add new colors, I avoid making them just lighter than the base.

2

## WORK ON THE HAIR

I use the steps described earlier to work out the hair in some more detail.

3

## MOVE OUTWARDS

I then start slowly working in more detail, gradually moving outwards from the focal point.

4

## FINER DETAIL

I add the smaller, finer details, like loose strands of hair, sharp highlights, etc.

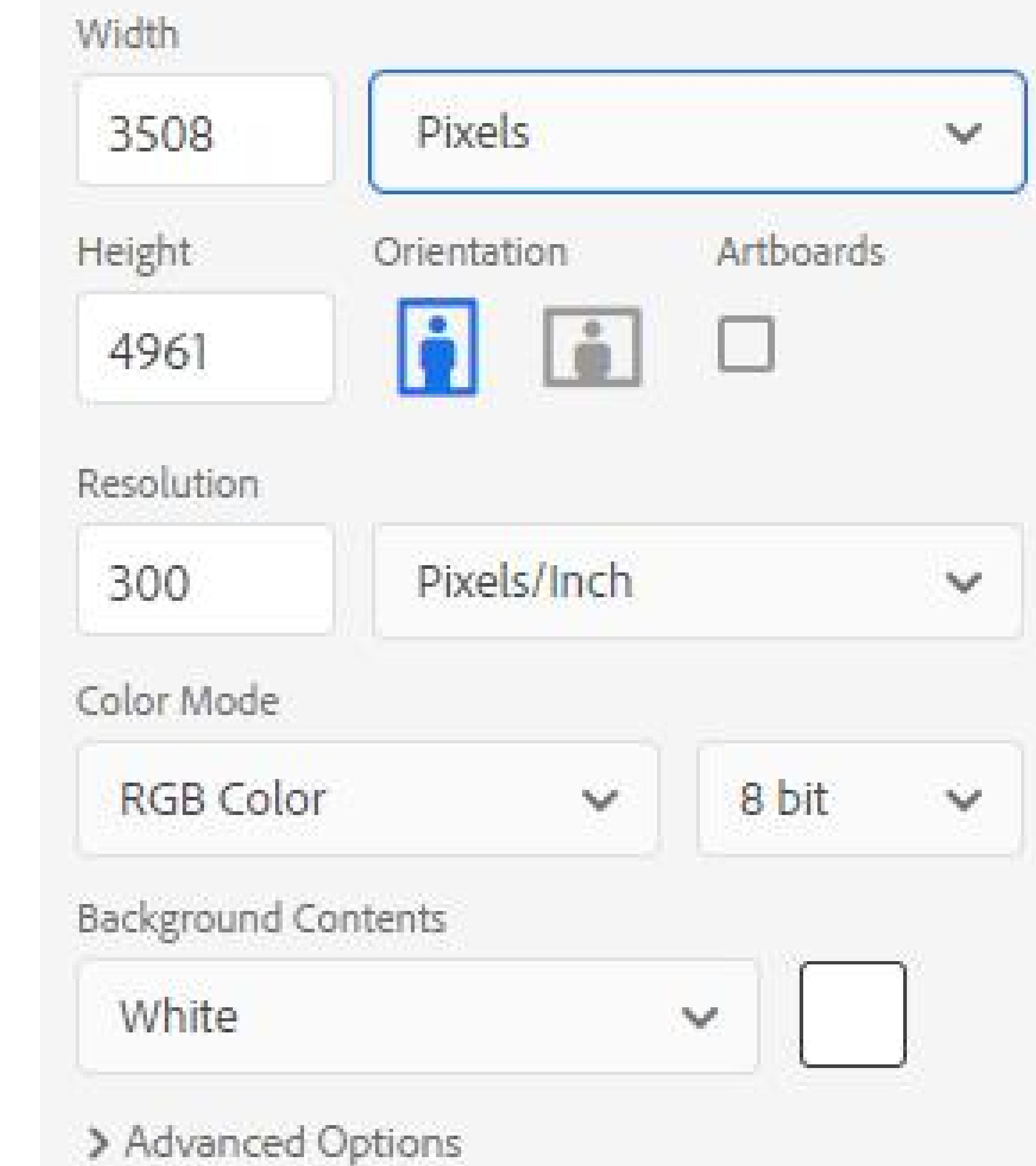


# PAINTING & RENDERING: PROCESS

01

## PREP YOUR FILE

- ▶ take your color thumbnail and upsize to minimum A3, 300DPI - preferably larger
- ▶ warning: only upscale at a very early point in your process, when you will paint everything, otherwise there is too much quality loss
- ▶ be sure to use the group / duplicate / merge technique at various points in your process, to observe whether your work is improving as you paint.



# PAINTING & RENDERING: PROCESS

01

## PREP YOUR FILE

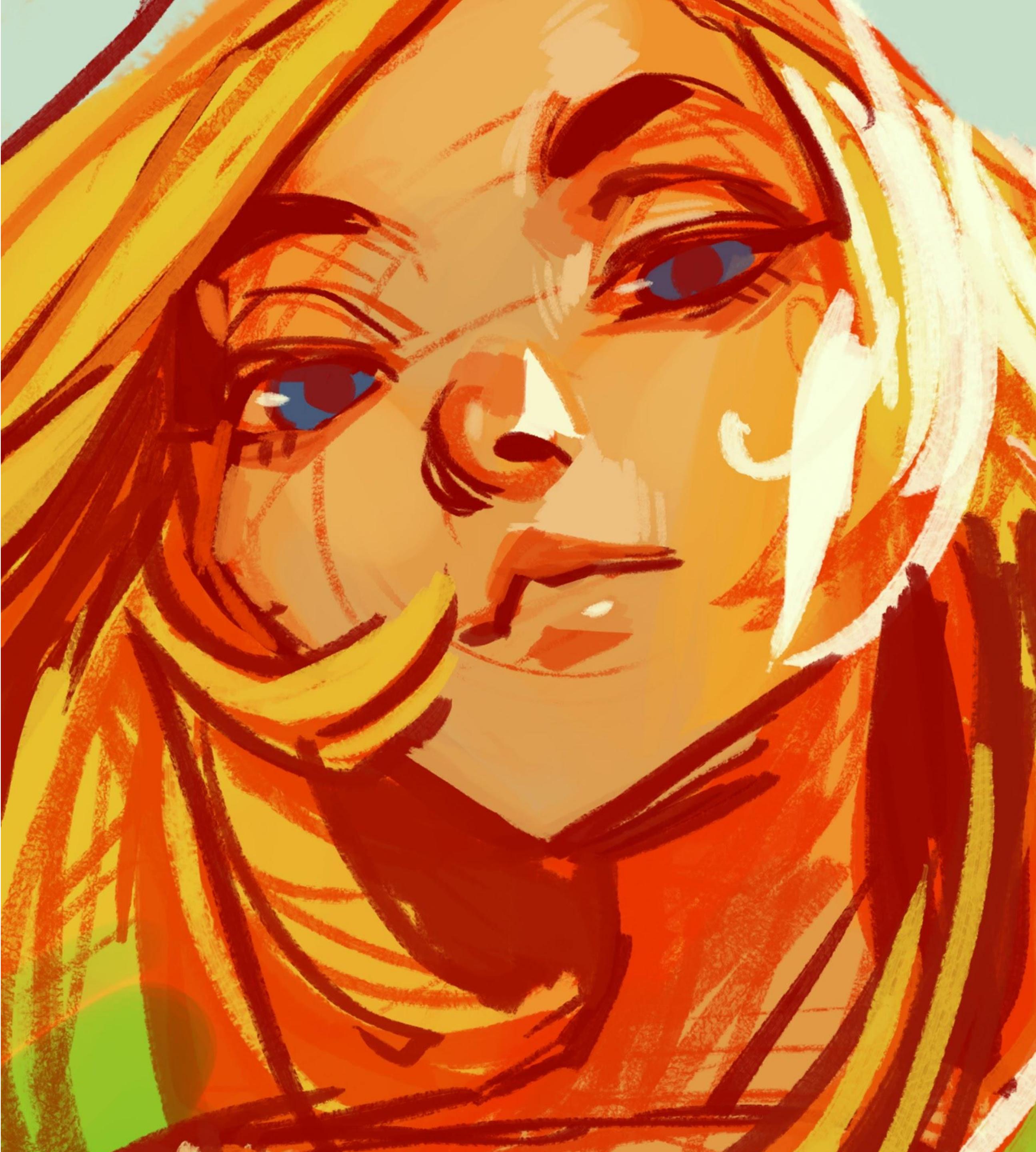
- ▶ I'll be using this image as an example - different from the previous steps, but it's a better example of my painting process.



02

## ADD MORE CONTRAST TO FACE

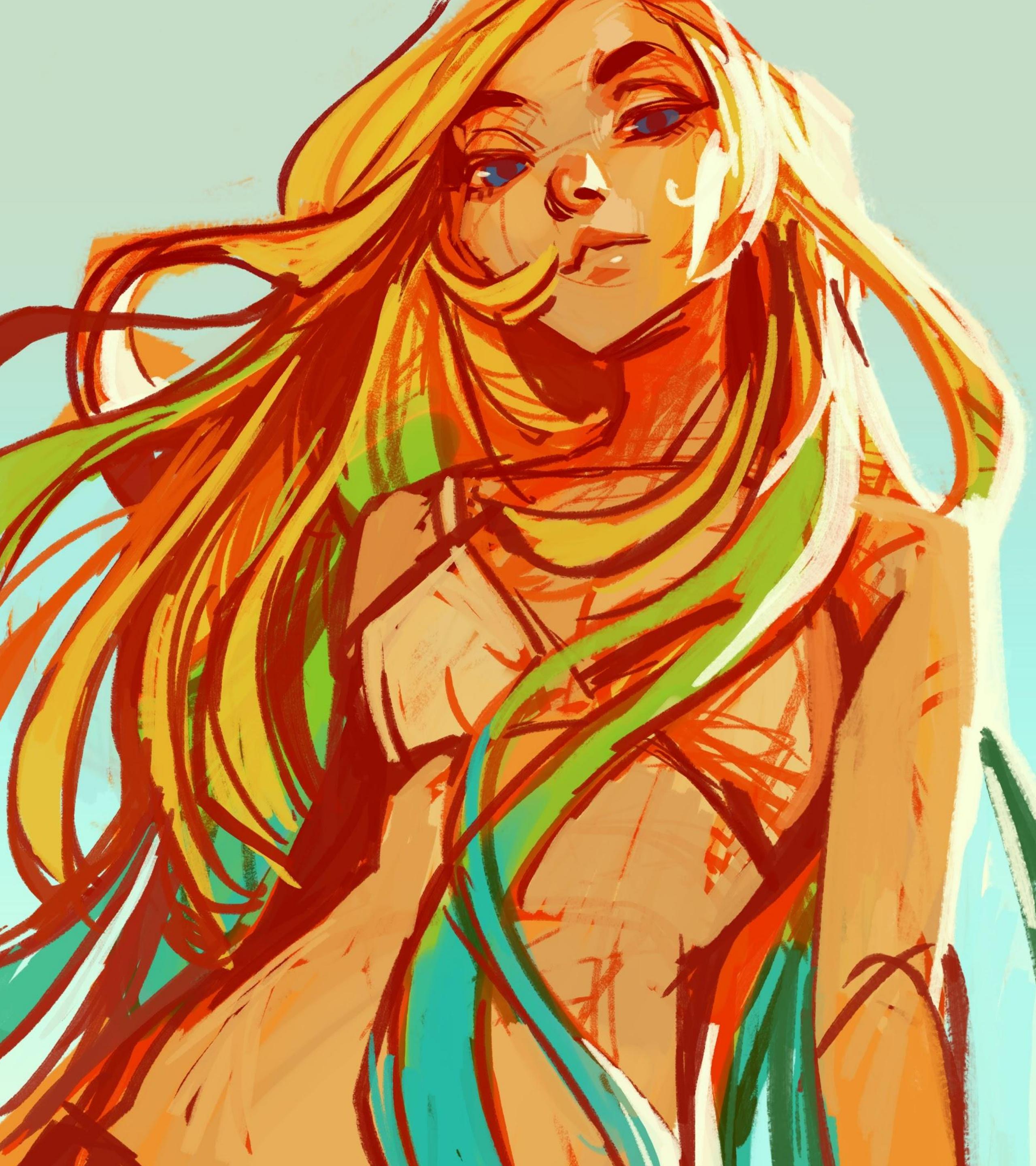
- ▶ or to the area that is the focal point
- ▶ pick a highlight color from the canvas
- ▶ if you want to introduce a new color to your color scheme, try picking one with a different temperature or saturation as the base
- ▶ blend in these highlights and start painting, without over-blending



03

### ADD MORE CONTRAST TO WHOLE IMAGE

- Repeat previous process for other areas of the image



04

## WORK ON THE HAIR

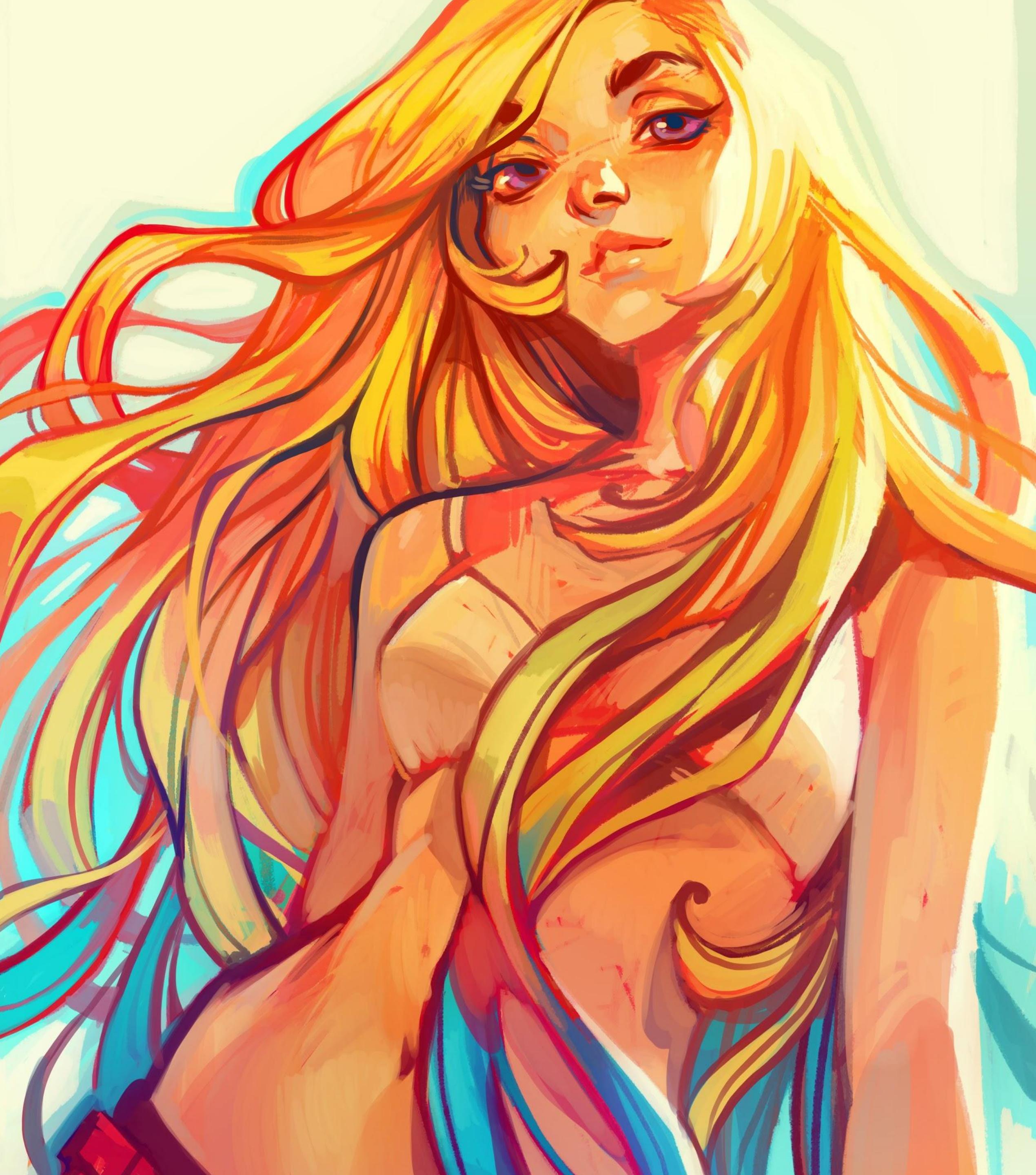
- ▶ use ribbon technique to add highlights to the clumps of hair. apply sparingly
- ▶ add some bounce light to shadows for a glossy effect
- ▶ add loose strands to strategic areas
- ▶ on a separate layer, add slightly lighter loose strands over the clumps. apply sparingly



05

## MOVE OUTWARDS

- ▶ Move outwards, gradually adding more depth to various elements of the image.
- ▶ Try to be mindful of detail distribution - don't apply the same amount of detail everywhere
- ▶ Keep brightest contrast and highlights for focal point only



06

## FINER DETAIL

- ▶ Reduce brush size and add very thin, small detail
- ▶ Leave this to the very end so that you can be selective about WHERE to apply this detail
- ▶ Make sure that you can still see the detail at normal print size

07

## FINISHING TOUCHES

Almost done...



# ASSIGNMENT

## 06 PAINTING & RENDERING

Take your strongest color thumbnail and begin creating your finalized digital painting with it. Sculpt with color, but be sure to focus the detail on the focal point of your piece.

Right before the end of this workshop, I will give you some tips for the final touches.

**TIME // 1 HOUR AND 15 MINUTES**



## FINISHING TOUCHES

A FEW SIMPLE TIPS

### GAUSSIAN BLUR

Duplicate your image, blur it, and then mask areas of it to emphasize focal point. Mimics camera effect



## FINISHING TOUCHES

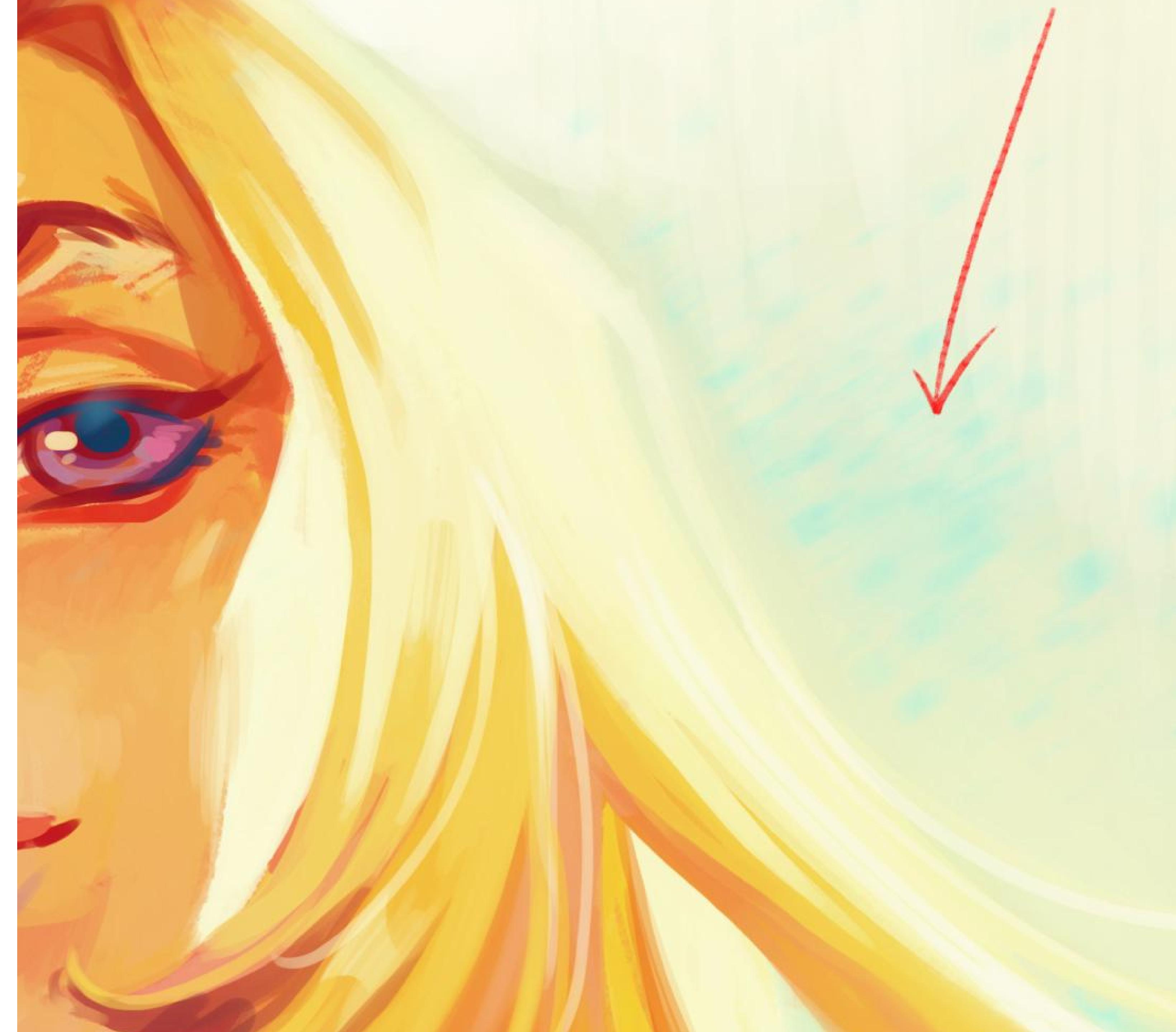
### A FEW SIMPLE TIPS

#### GAUSSIAN BLUR

Duplicate your image, blur it, and then mask areas of it to emphasize focal point. Mimics camera effect

#### ADDING TEXTURE

Literally copy/paste an image of a texture, and set layer mode to 'soft light' or 'overlay'. Erase to blend.



## FINISHING TOUCHES

### A FEW SIMPLE TIPS

#### GAUSSIAN BLUR

Duplicate your image, blur it, and then mask areas of it to emphasize focal point. Mimics camera effect

#### ADDING TEXTURE

Literally copy/paste an image of a texture, and set layer mode to 'soft light' or 'overlay'. Erase to blend.

#### GRADIENTS

Use gradients with layers set to 'screen' and 'multiply', and then lowered opacity, to enhance lighter or darker areas. Use subtly & sparingly



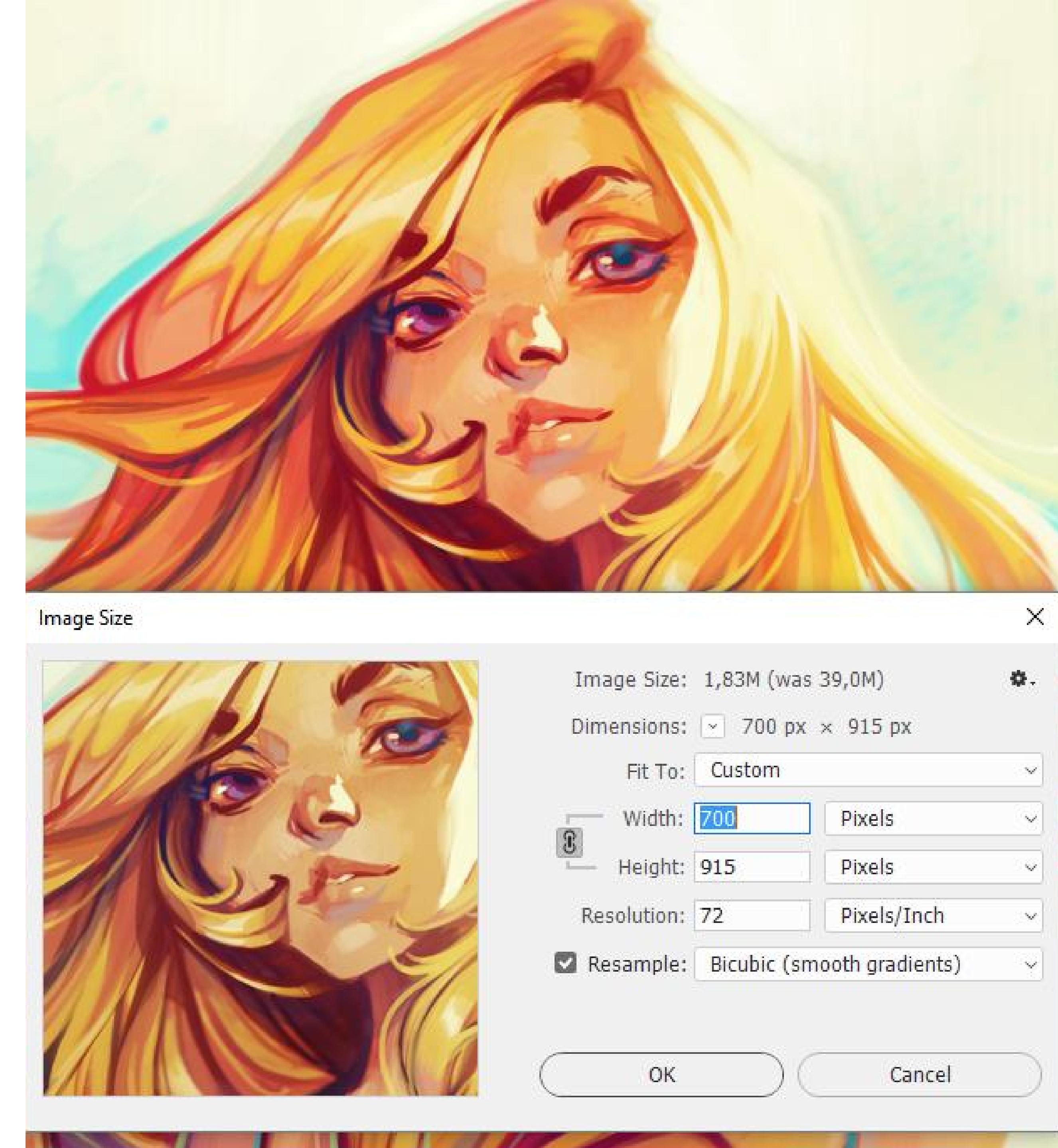
07

## RESIZE YOUR IMAGE FOR WEB

- ▶ Never post your high resolution work online
- ▶ Resize to web - I always do 700 pixels width using 'Image Size' option
- ▶ DO NOT save over your existing file - save as a new version
- ▶ add a signature or watermark to your image

08

**DONE!**



# ASSIGNMENT

## 06 PAINTING & RENDERING

Add some simple finishing touches to your piece and save for web. If you feel your piece is not yet complete, continue working on it at home - digital painting takes lots of time!

TIME // 15 MINUTES



# Gumroad tutorials

[GUMROAD.COM/LOISH](https://gumroad.com/loish)

## ★ **FULL BODY CHARACTER PORTRAIT**

A tutorial covering what we learned on day 1, with more tips on finishing touches & painting

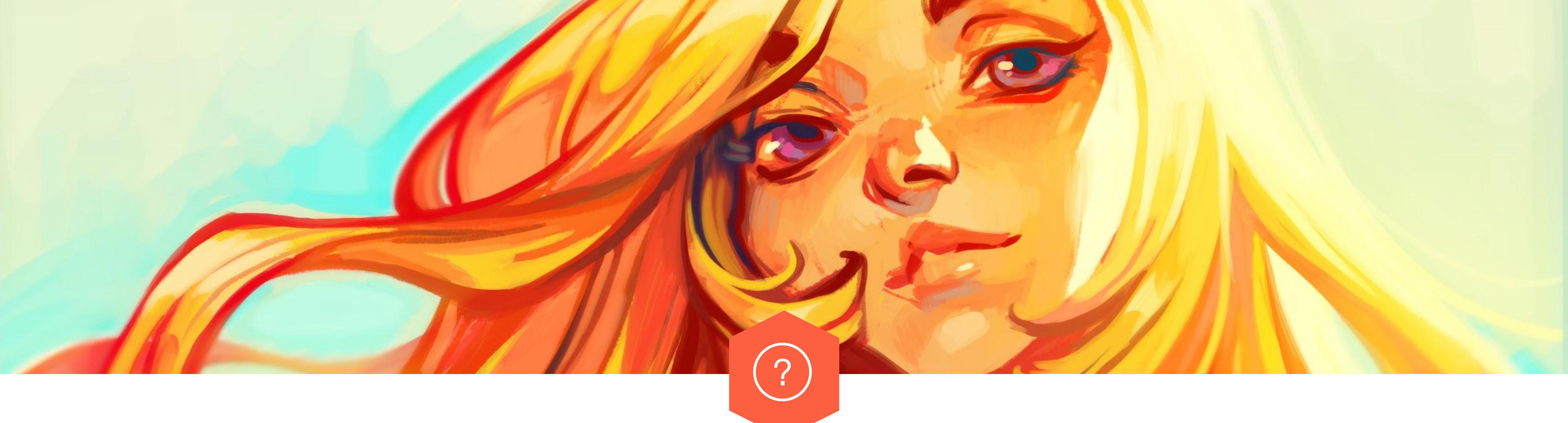
## ★ **CREATING A DIGITAL PAINTING**

My full process for creating a detailed digital painting

Students of this workshop may contact me personally and get these tutorials for free, to stream from the Gumroad site at any time.

 [info@loish.net](mailto:info@loish.net)





## QUESTIONS?

Keep in touch if you have questions after this workshop!

 [info@loish.net](mailto:info@loish.net)

 [www.loish.net](http://www.loish.net)



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THANK YOU!