

## THE INQUISITOR SKETCHBOOK JOHN BLANCHE

ohn Blanche, Games Workshop's legendary art director, has been the source of so much of the incredibly dark and gothic imagery of the Warhammer worlds. Now, with the release of the Inquisitor game, his arcane visions have reached a new level of inspiration and intricacy. Here for the first time is a glimpse into the development of a new game world, with John's original concepts taken directly from his infamous sketchbook including many ideas that did not make it into the finished release. This lavish full-colour book includes an introduction from Inquisitor's designer, Gav Thorpe, and annotations from John himself.

nquisitor was the first game project I have worked on in which I was really involved with John Blanche at the earliest conceptual stage. Right from the outset, we were aiming to do something a bit different to what our games had done before, and to really delve into the nature of heroes and villains in the Warhammer 40,000 universe. When John brought in his first concept sketch, the Imperial Guard Veteran, it was clear that even existing archetypes were going to benefit from a thorough going-over.

It started with a list of titles – different names like the arco-flagellant, the solar priest and the sycophantos. I wrote two or three lines fleshing each of these ideas out, while John started doing sketches and paintings. As I saw what John was doing the broad concepts were honed down into distinctive character types and even specific named characters, while some of what I was writing in the Inquisitor test introduced elements which John built upon in his art, such as the idea of doing a Deathwatch Space Marine rather than the Grey Knight we had originally been keen on.

After John had produced dozens of sketches we then narrowed down the field to the fifteen miniatures we had the resources to make as a main range, and believe me it wasn't an easy process. Obviously there were key figures that simply had to be included, such as the various new Inquisitors themselves, the Space Marine, a Tech-Priest of some variety, and so on. These were all figures from the heart of the existing imagery of the Imperium and the Warhammer 40,000 game. The real difficulty came in deciding which new characters to introduce to the background, since all had their merits. In the end, we chose the characters we felt were based upon the strongest and most diverse archetypes, mixed with no small amount of personal favouritism. for my part as much inspired by the actual pictures John had produced as the underlying concepts themselves – as you will see in this fine book.

Of course, perhaps the greatest achievement of Inquisitor was to explain all about those flying skulls John keeps putting in his paintings...

gav Thorpe

Designer of the Inquisitor game

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Think that whenever one develops a new world, or part of a bigger world, there is a real opportunity to try something new. The development of the Inquisitor game allowed

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us to focus on some aspects of the Warhammer 40,000 universe that had always been there, but never properly developed – such as the rogue traders and the Adeptus Mechanicus. We were also able to introduce characters who were not soldiers, but had their part to play as denizens of the wider 40K background. I was particularly interested in the more medieval and arcane characters like cultists, redemptionists and amazing new concepts like the arco-flagellant. That particular character's genesis actually started with Alan Merrett, who produced a wonderful list of provocative titles: words like 'arco-flagellant', 'daemonhost' and 'chrono-gladiator'.

These served to inspire my original concept drawings; Gav responded to them with more background notes, and in turn I responded to those. Beyond that, though, there was no set pattern to developing these characters — if you define the brief too rigidly, it's easy to lose that inexplicable spark that brings a character to life.

This freedom also extended to the deliberate speed and looseness these sketches. Inspired by old punk farzines and the spontaneous creativity of action painting and expressionism, on this project my methodology was to deliberately not be too precious. The freedom to try ideas, take them wherever they wanted to go, was liberating. I have been producing sketches for more than ten years, but usually the games only feature the finished product. However, inspired by Jes Goodwin's book of concept sketches, *The Gothic & the Eldritch*, I have started to pay more attention to them. In these sketches, you can see not just the ideas that made it into the Inquisitor game but many more besides that, but for this book, would have been discarded.

HAVE

John Blanche

Who is to judge what is right and what is wrong? Great and powerful foes surround us, unknown miscreants gnaw at us from within. We are threatened with total annihilation. In days such as these we can afford no luxury of morality. We can only do that which we need to do to survive.

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Inquisitors are most powerful individuals in Imperium. They are not necessarily the most physically strong or have the most dangerous weapons but no door in the Imperium is closed to an Inquisitor. They can go where they want/need to in order to route out heresy, blasphemy or traitors. They are able to call on the resources of an entire world if it suits their purpose. Space Marine Chapters, the Imperial Guard, Sororitas, even Imperial Assassins are all at their beck and call.

Inquisitors are the left hand of the Emperor, the Adeptus Terra and all that is associated with it are his right hand. They are monkish. They have access to, and awareness of, things no other humans have.

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Imperium is a mighty conglomerate of millions of worlds spread over unimaginably large distances. Over the eons an extraordinary bureaucracy has evovled to try and manage this great edifice. Because of its size and complexity this is a near impossible task. Therefore mistakes happen, poor decisions are made, or are delayed for ridiculous lengths of time. Planets are pretty much left to their own devices as long as certain things are done (eg psykers dealt with, etc). Some planets may have harsh governments who keep the populace under the lash, others may be barely governed at all. Some planets are dominated by the Imperial Faith and ruled by the clergy of the Ecclesiarchy; others may have little awareness of such things and be desolate brutal godless worlds. All owe some allegiance to the Emperor even if this is little more than a dim awareness or collection of

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ancient legends. Amongst all this the opportunity for individuals and groups to subvert or work against the Imperium are quite numerous. Sometimes this is through ignorance. Sometimes through weakness (greed, avarice). Sometimes this is through fear (mutants fear the Imperium and what it represents for obvious reasons). Sometimes this is because the heretics and traitors are the pawns of other agencies (eg Chaos, aliens).

Most of the Imperium organisations have some element of police force about them. All are concerned with maintaining the status quo and Imperium law (such as it may be). However these organisations are sometimes the reason for the problem or are the route of it. It is here that the Inquisitors come into their own. They alone can stand outside of the other organisations and pass judgements on them. They are the great balance of the Imperium offering impartial and acute assessments of guilt and offering solutions which could not be raised from within. Even the highest official in the palace on Earth would fear the attentions of an Inquisitor!

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Sister Repentia – A member of the Sisterhood may be stripped of all rank and rights, reduced to a Sister Repentia. They are banned from Holy Service for the duration of their punishment and may suffer other castigations in the form of frequent physical punishment, enforced fasts and confinement. Often Inquisitors will take the services of a Sister Repentia who may be more 'free-thinking' than her Sisters.

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Slave Runner – Trading in slaves is not against Imperial Law, though it is banned by some Imperial Commanders. Alien slaves can be more valuable than human slaves too. Although the Slave Runner does not care about the misery and abuse heaped upon his charges, he does want them to stay in the best physical condition for the best price, and so is well versed in medicinal skills and first aid.



. INQUISITION AGENT

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Desperado - Down-trodden and a fugitive, the Desperado will hire his guns and blades to the highest bidder. No job too small or dirty: back-stabbing, cold-blood killings, patricide and infanticide, all are missions he'll take, if the price is right. In fact, his grandmother is for sale right now at a bargain price.

Gunslinger - He's the man to beat. Flashy, and fast, he wants to carve himself a reputation across the whole sector as the man you face at your peril. Calm, imposing and deadly accurate, the gunslinger isn't adverse to do a little enforcement work, or doing good deeds if his overgrown machismo is appealed to.

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## Cyber-berserkers

Chrono-Gladiator – Fitted with numerous biomic weapons and an administry, the Chronogladiators have a pre-set self-destruct deating, which is only excluded when they are in battle, so they thirst for battle as they thirst for life used.

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Pirato-renegade – Adventure and booty are this character's goals. If you can pillage it, he'll take it. Interesting twist is the Pirato-grafter who steals body parts and organs from his victims and has them grafted on to his own hody.





Arco-Flagellant – The Ecclesiarchy may enlist the services of the Adeptus Mechanicus to turn a notable Heretic into an Arco-Flagellant. Implanted with frenzy-inducing chemical dispensers and emotive pattern regulators, the Arco-Flagellant can be turned into a mass of boiling hatred and anger, his muscles super-charged with adrenal fluids, causing him to run amok until he collapses from exhaustion.

~ FLACELI

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ohn Blanche's art work has been a driving force in the appeal of Games Workshop's games and miniatures for over twenty years. He continues to devote his time to further developing the dark and gothic imagery of the world's most popular tabletop games, both in his own paintings and sketches, and as the inspirational Art Director of GW's Design Studio.



av Thorpe works for Games Workshop in his capacity as Warhammer Loremaster, whatever that is. Something to do with making stuff up and designing games, apparently. He has written a clutch of short stories for Inferno!, and people constantly nag him for more novels featuring the Last Chancers to follow 13th Legion and Kill Team. You may be worried to learn that, when he is thinking really hard, he has a tendency to talk to the mechanical hamster with which he shares a flat.



Games Workshop

