

DIGITAL PAINTING STEPS



STEP BY STEP GUIDE ON HOW I PAINT

*KIRASHION



Ah!



SKETCH

LINEART



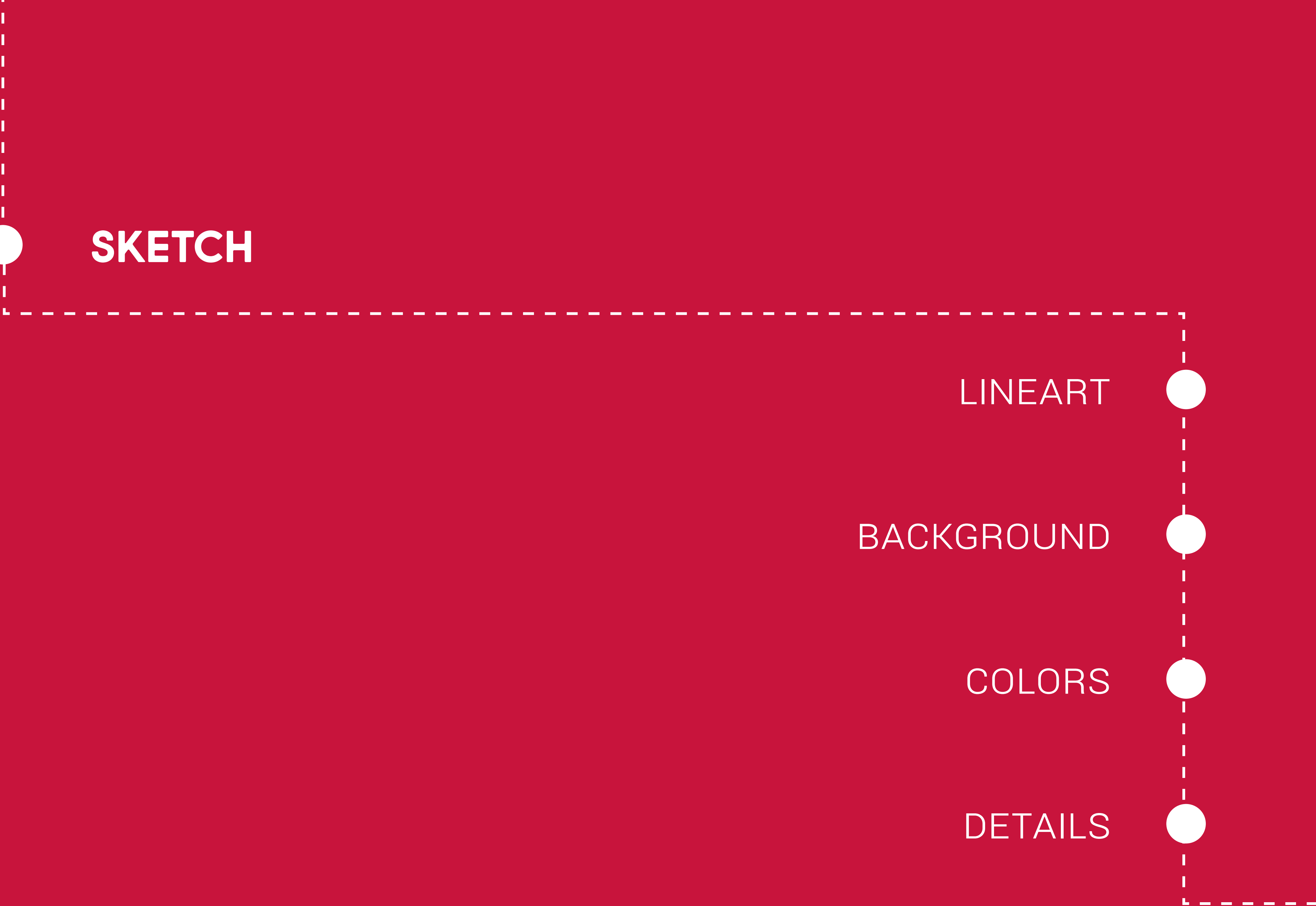
BACKGROUND



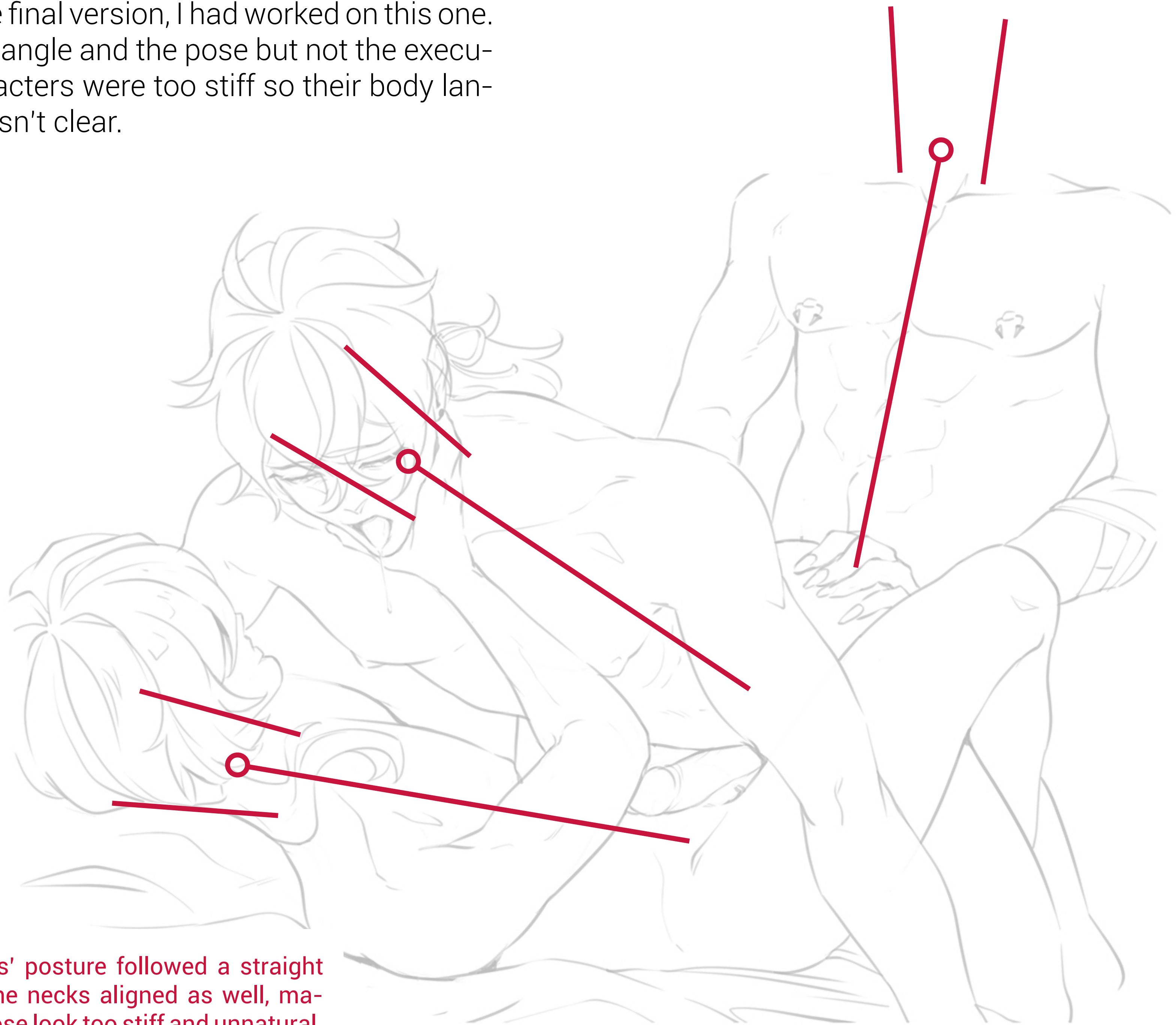
COLORS



DETAILS



Before the final version, I had worked on this one. I liked the angle and the pose but not the execution: characters were too stiff so their body language wasn't clear.



The bodies' posture followed a straight line and the necks aligned as well, making the pose look too stiff and unnatural.

I usually redraw the sketch 3 times before the lineart. At each stage, I work on different aspects:

1ST SKETCH _focus on pose and flow

Find a pose and choose an angle that shows the most of the characters. You want natural shapes: recreate them with **round, flowy strokes**. **No straight lines allowed!** Adjust proportions, don't work on "difficult"/detailed body parts such as fingers or expressions.

Ask yourself:

- Is enough of the faces showing to be expressive?
- How well is the composition filling the canvas?
- Is the pose itself able to narrate what's going on?

2ND SKETCH _focus on expressions and gestures

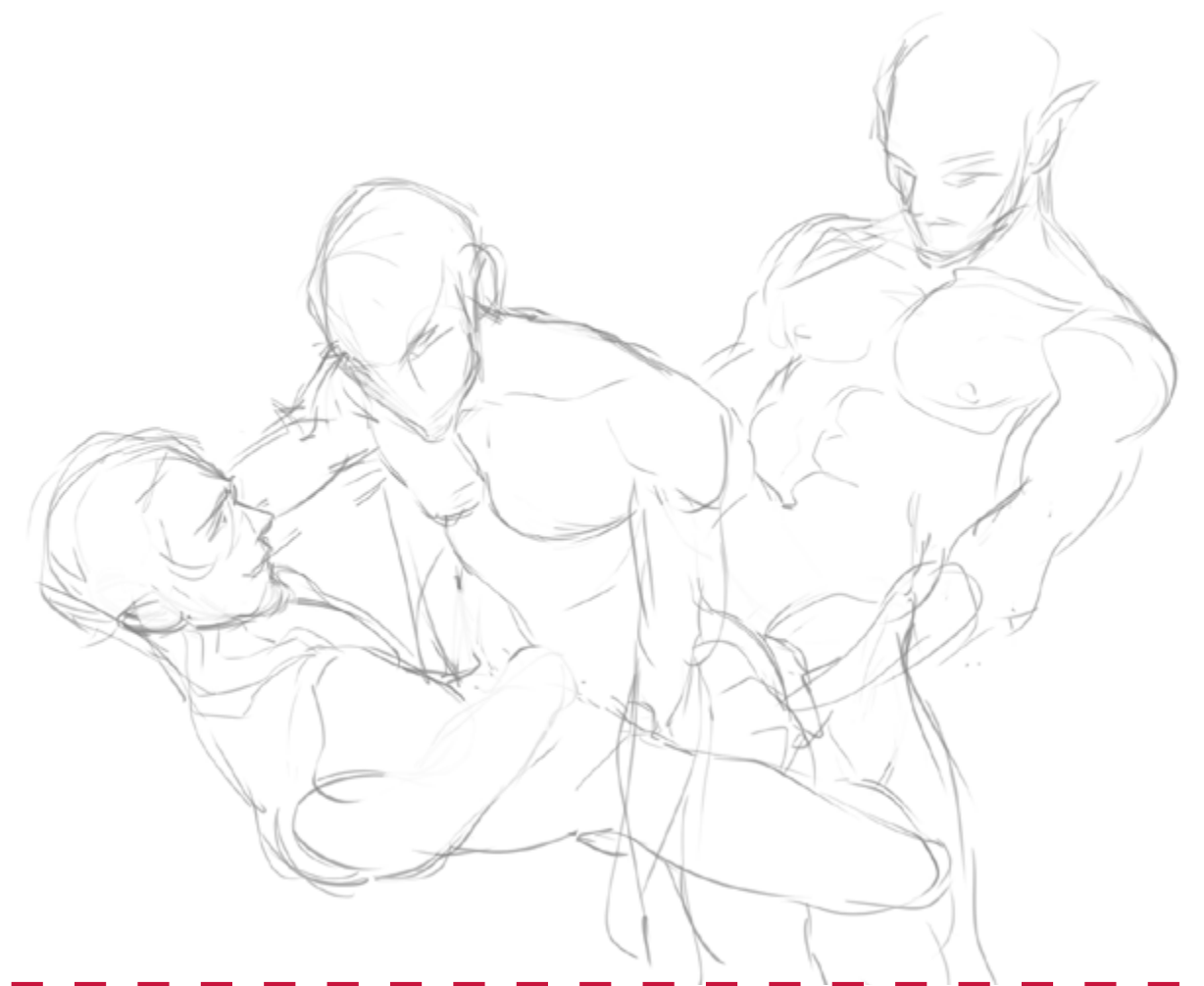
Sketch the elements of the face and distort them until you're satisfied! Don't forget the face features themselves are distorted by certain expressions. Tweak the pose, try various hand positions: work on improving the first sketch, don't just trace it!

By the end of this phase the composition should be your final one!

3RD SKETCH _focus on how lines describe all of the above

How do you want hair to fall on the face? How should the eye curve to better depict the emotion while respecting that character's eye shape? Which muscles are contracting and how defined should each muscle look?

Don't adjust a single sketch, redraw it!

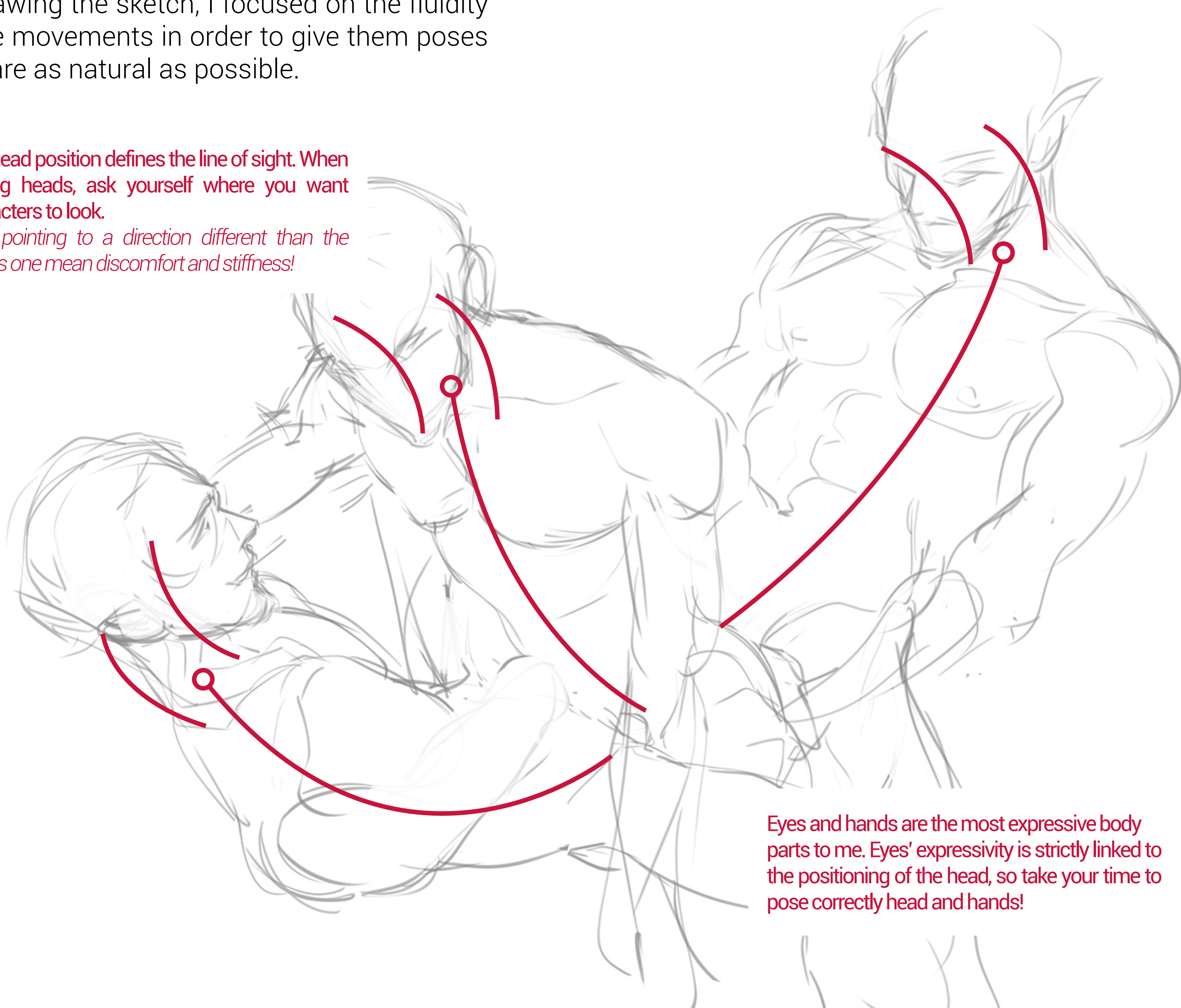


1ST SKETCH

Redrawing the sketch, I focused on the fluidity of the movements in order to give them poses that are as natural as possible.

The head position defines the line of sight. When posing heads, ask yourself where you want characters to look.

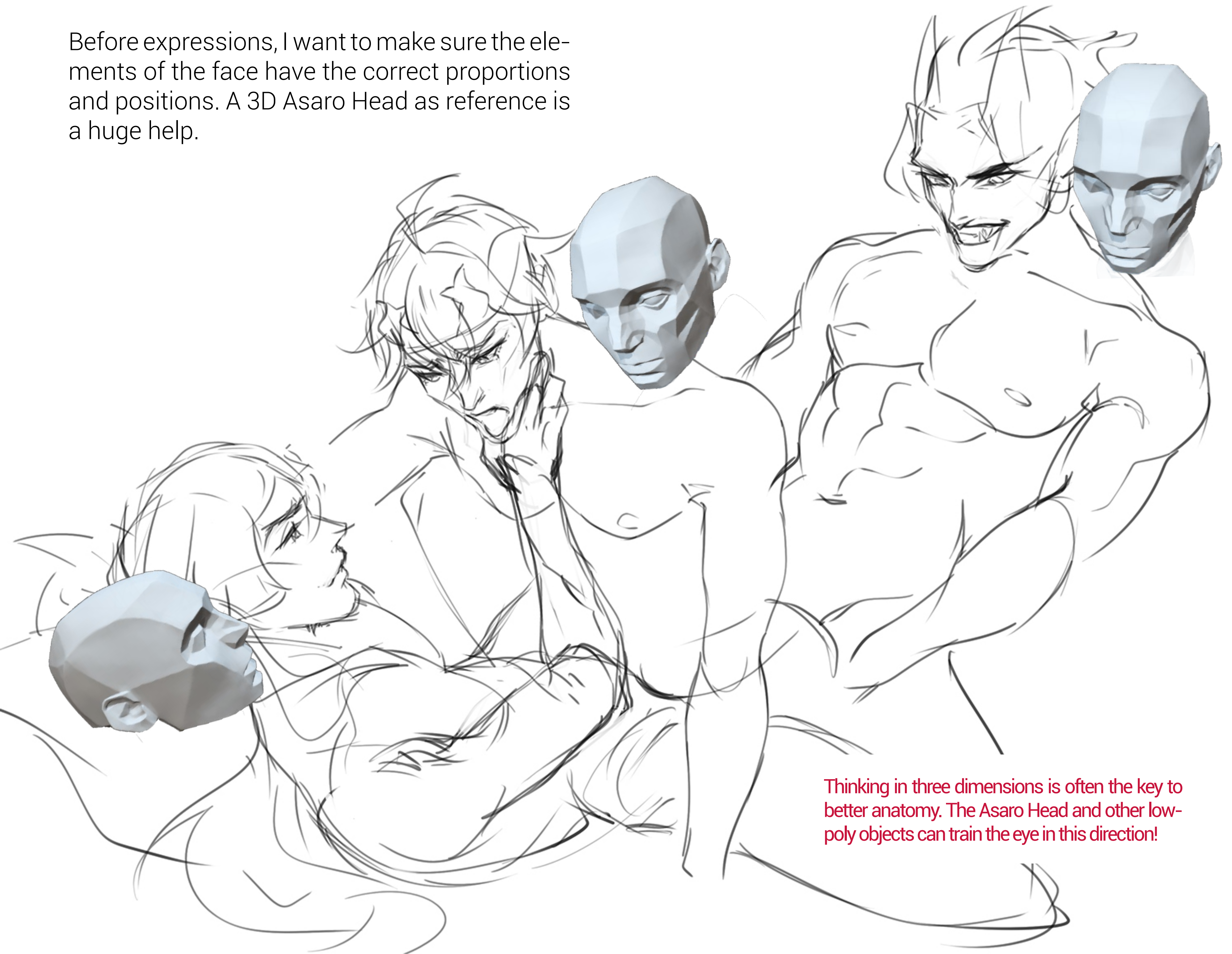
Eyes pointing to a direction different than the head's one mean discomfort and stiffness!



Eyes and hands are the most expressive body parts to me. Eyes' expressivity is strictly linked to the positioning of the head, so take your time to pose correctly head and hands!

2ND SKETCH

Before expressions, I want to make sure the elements of the face have the correct proportions and positions. A 3D Asaro Head as reference is a huge help.



Thinking in three dimensions is often the key to better anatomy. The Asaro Head and other low-poly objects can train the eye in this direction!

3RD SKETCH

This is the "control sketch", the first stage before the line art. I want to make sure the pose looks natural, the shapes are defined, the expressions are meaningful and that everything works out"



Speech bubbles help me realize if expressions actually convey what I have in mind.



SKETCH



LINEART

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At this step, you should be able to trace your li-
near heart confidently! If you still find it hard to draw
some parts, draw them once again on a new
sketch layer.



The most important thing:

FLIP THE CANVAS OFTEN!

Filling the characters in grey (a neutral color) is helpful to realize if the proportions are actually correct. This is how I often discover I've drawn the head of a character WAY TOO BIG.



Roughly complete the composition with additional details (those are going to be defined later)





SKETCH



LINEART



BACKGROUND

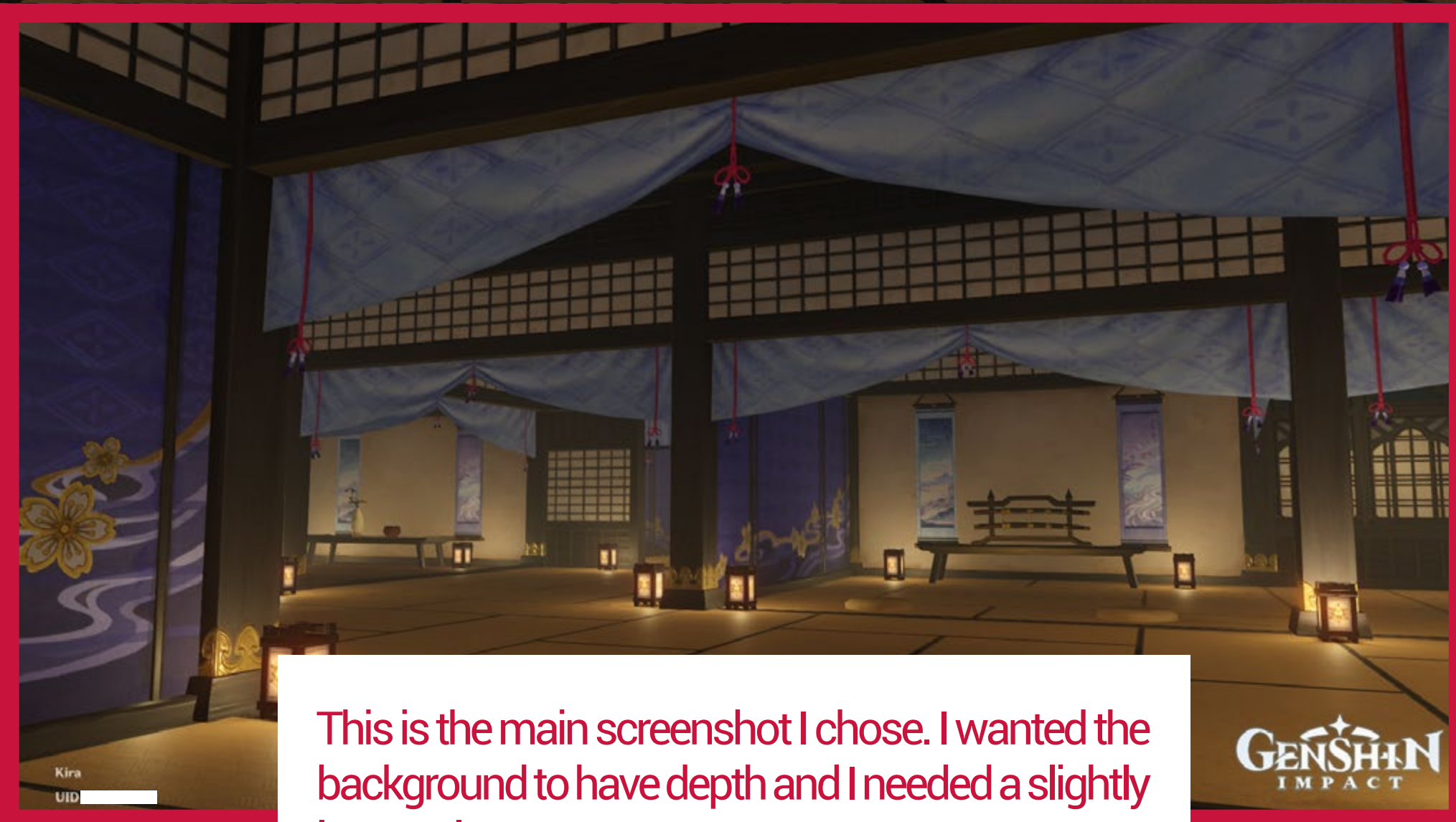
COLORS



DETAILS



I took some screenshots of the Kamisato Estate interiors, where I knew I wanted my scene to take place.



This is the main screenshot I chose. I wanted the background to have depth and I needed a slightly low angle.



From this other screenshot I took the purple panel so I could have more freedom when adjusting the previous one as background.

The image shows a traditional Japanese interior. On the left, a large purple wall panel features a repeating geometric pattern and stylized yellow and white cherry blossoms. The rest of the room has light-colored wooden floors with dark lines, a dark wooden ceiling with a grid pattern, and blue curtains. Several small, glowing lanterns are placed on the floor. A white text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

The screenshot is rotated and distorted in order to match the angle from which the characters have been drawn.

A white rectangular text box with a thin red border is positioned in the lower-left area of the image. It contains a single line of text.

Here is the purple panel borrowed from the second screenshot.

UID 7099556

Check if the background fills all the blank space around the characters and if it's properly adjusted according to their angle.



UID 709950677

don't
wanna
"



SKETCH



LINEART



BACKGROUND



COLORS



DETAILS

Pick colors from the background and adjust them to match the character's palette.



To better blend the lineart with colors, set the layer(s) blending mode to **COLOR DODGE** and lower its opacity as you please.

Here's how I separate the color layers to better manage them during the coloring process:

1 ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

On top there are the additional light/shadow effects with the respective vector masks.

2 LINEART

When the lineart is done, I duplicate all the layers I've used for it and merge them.

3 COLOR LAYERS

The base color layer is usually the skin one. In the layers above I fill different areas, making sure the colored areas in a single layer are not adjacent so that it's easier to reselect the one I need.

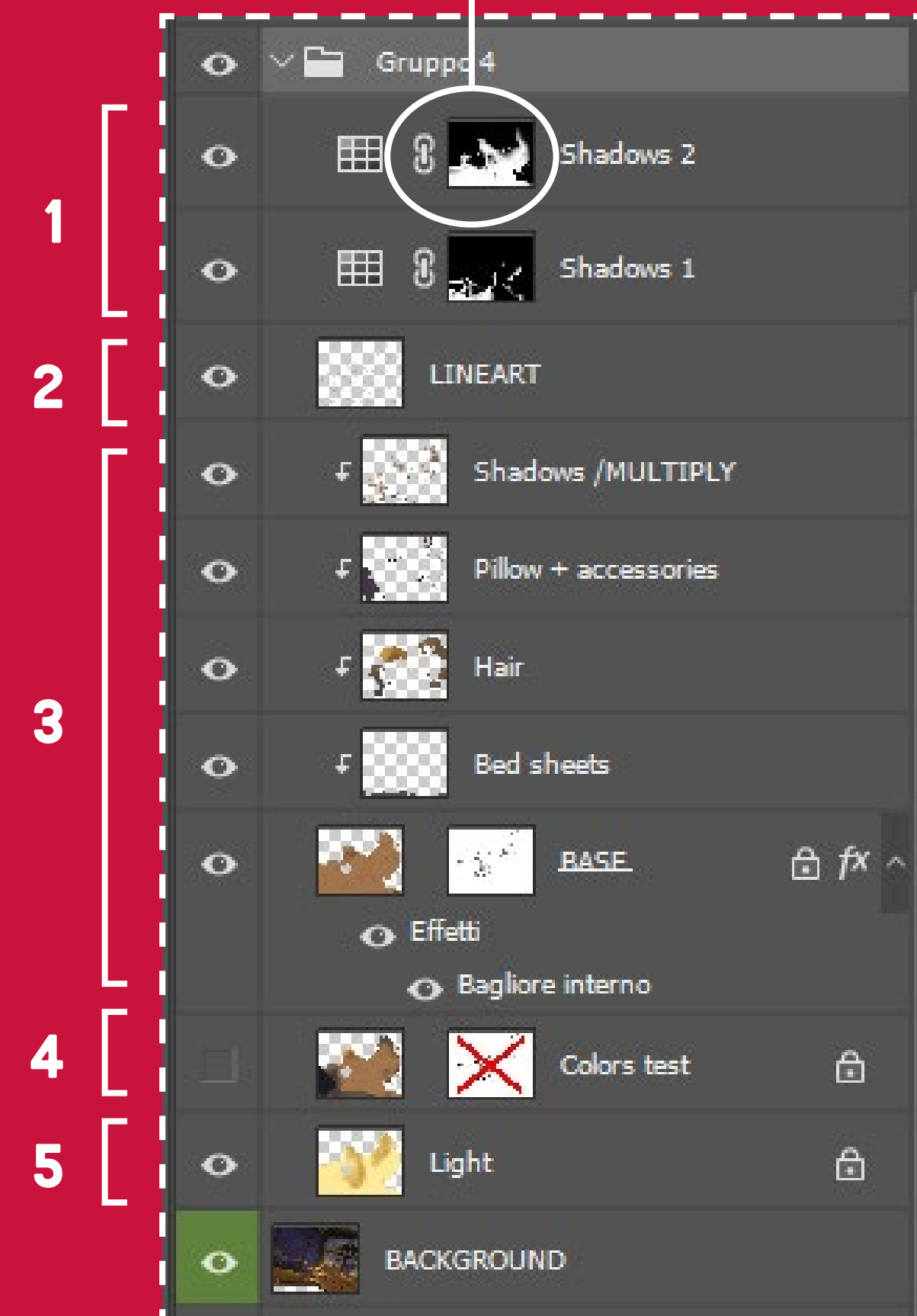
4 COLOR TEST LAYER

This is the layer in which I experiment with colors and compose my palette (as seen in the **previous page**). Once colors are set, I pick them from this layer and fill the COLOR LAYERS in an orderly way.

5 LIGHT

This layer is a copy of the COLOR LAYER, but filled with the colors of the light source.
In this case, the light sources are warm lamps all around the house, so this layer is filled with yellow to orange colors.

Vector masks are used to manage the visibility of a layer. A layer only exists in the white areas of the respective vector mask.



Apply a vector mask to the base color layer and erase it in the areas hit by direct light. This way the light layer (yellow) will show.



For a more realistic fading effect of the rim light, add INNER GLOW to the base color layer. double click on it, pick a color and set it to OVERLAY.

Pick the skintones' color, create a new layer above and paint the basic shadows. The suggested blending mode of the layer is MULTIPLY - set opacity at your liking.



BLUE-ISH SHADOW

BROWN-ISH SHADOW

While the skintone color usually looks good for shadows, sometimes the scene and lighting require adjusting the tint! An example above with the brownish shadows resulting from the skintone color and the shadows after painting over with a different color to match the atmosphere.
Hit CTRL + U to adjust the color of your shadow, or paint over it.

At this point I'm adding heavier shadows to better blend the characters in the setting. You want lights and shadows to be on opposite sides of the color wheel, so for mine I used blue/purple.



For this type of shadow, I use a special Photoshop adjustment layer which is called COLOR LOOKUP.

*As far as I know, no other software has it but you can recreate the effect with the process described in the previous page: **pick a color, set the blending mode to MULTIPLY and set opacity.***

Added an additional layer to blend the shadows more naturally and create more contrast with the light source.





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Here is where the fun finally starts: it's time for rendering! I merge all the layers of the characters and proceed to blending the lin-art, sculpting shapes, defining details...









Final touches to the background: I usually add a couple layers of thin dust and emphasize the light sources.



Eventually, I always find the illustration needs more contrast and brightness, so I play with more adjustment layers to increase the atmosphere.



Here's a quick overview of the adjustment layers used:

PHOTO FILTER 2

Increases **warmth** of the overall canvas.
To increase contrast, I've erased the filter from the area right behind the characters.

CURVES 2

Increases overall **brightness**.
I've erased the layer from some elements in the foreground to create more depth.

BRIGHTER LIGHTS

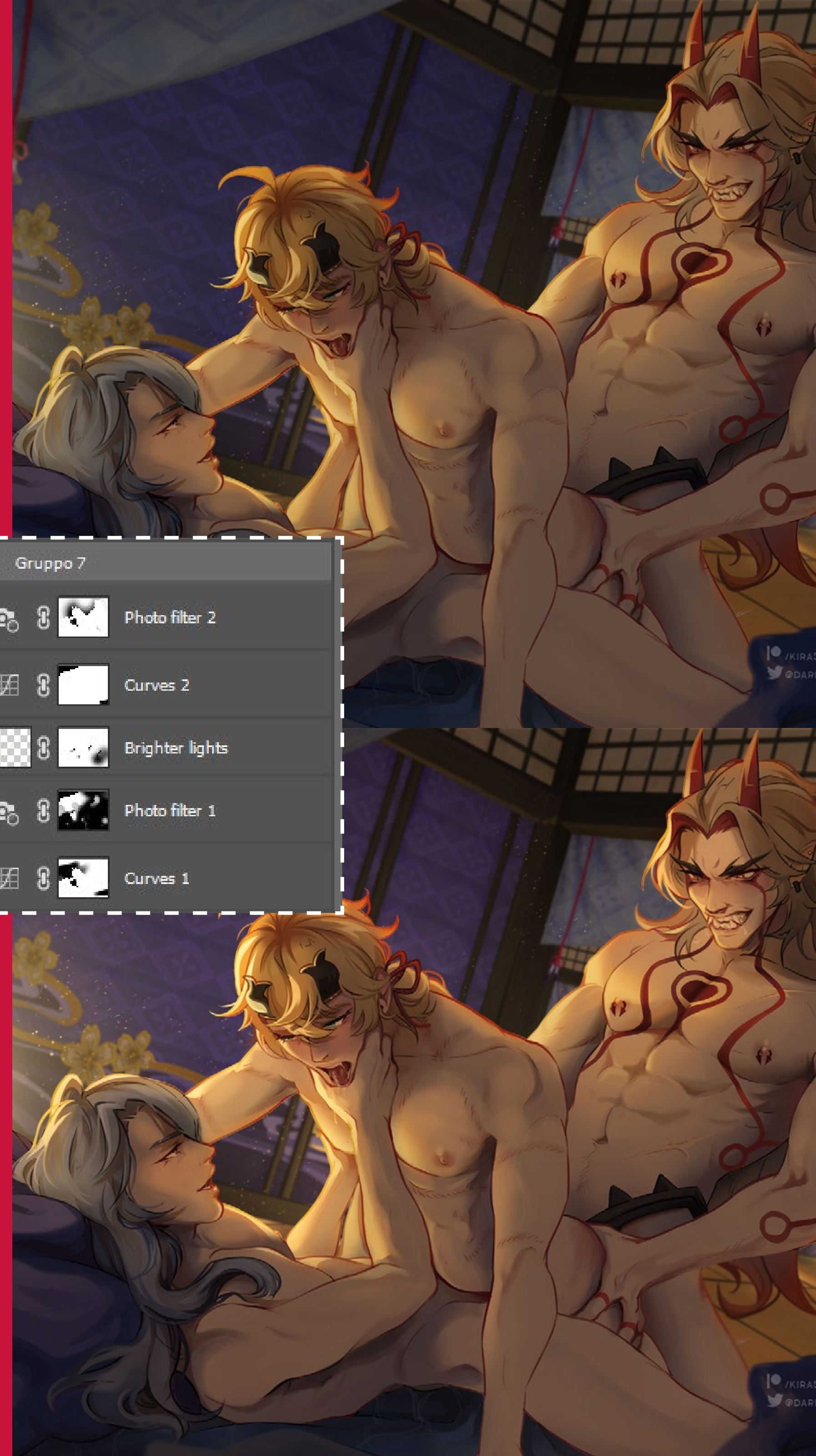
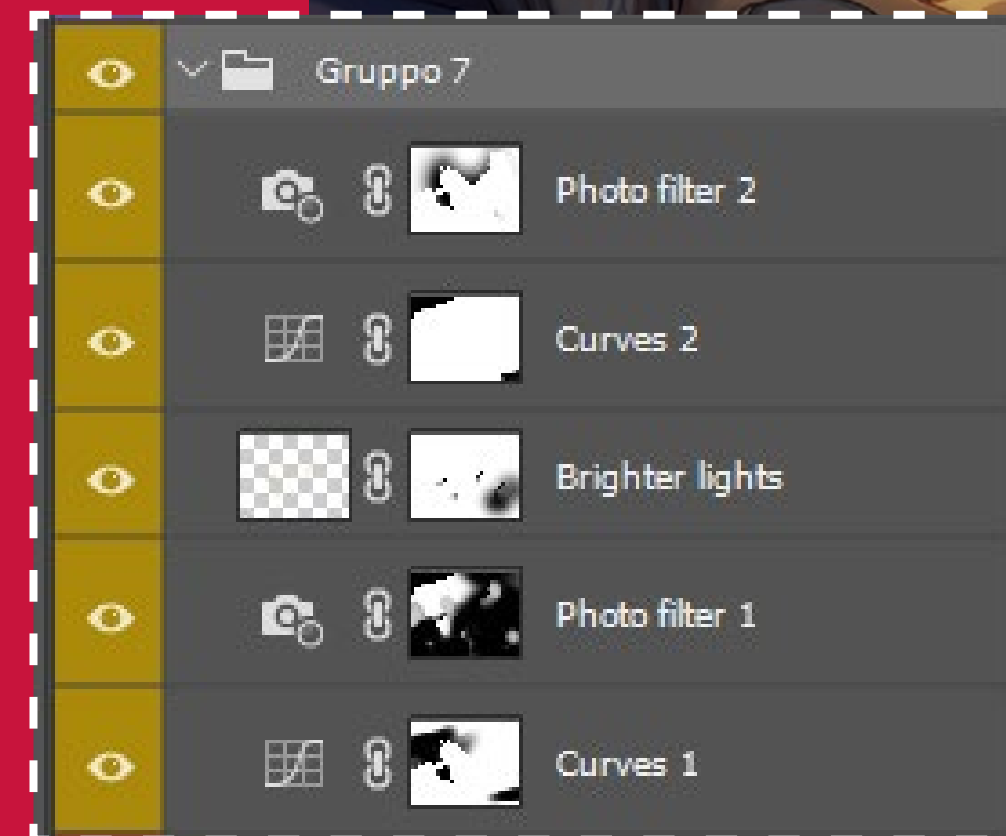
I've painted yellow some body parts further from the viewer to increase **depth**. The layer's opacity is low.

PHOTO FILTER 1

Increases warmth of the main light source.

CURVES 1

Increases **contrast** of the overall canvas.



BEFORE



/KIRASHION
@DARKSIDEOFKIRA







Ah

Ah

EYES
ON ME,
THOMA

Master,
I...

Ah

I
think-

I
don't
...

SHH,
BEHAVE

NINGHA

Ah

THIS
HOLE'S
SO
TIGHT!!

Ah!

Ah

-----● END