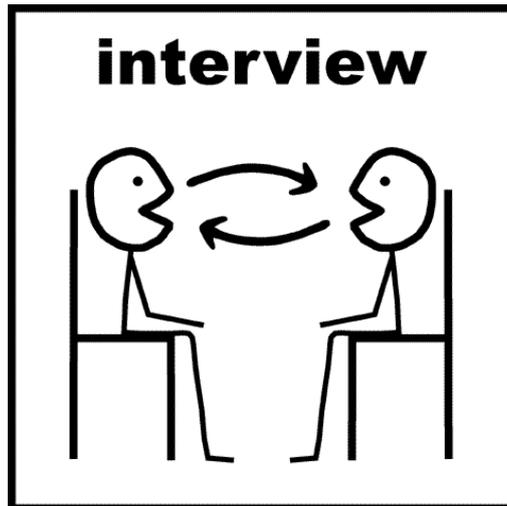


# BEHIND THE PIXELS

ISSUE 2



## An Interview with Painimies (by Mark)

Painimies is a long time Sulake employee, who first joined the company eleven years ago. In that time, he's been working mostly in graphic design, designing and building Furni for Habbo, but he's also worked on a few other Habbo related projects, including a few Hotel views and website layouts.

Let's go and meet Painimies...

**Mark:** What's your role in Sulake?

**Painimies:** It's varied a bit over the years (11 of them), but mostly I've been designing and drawing Furni, as well as making them "work". Lots of furnies. I've also designed one of the old [habbo.com](http://habbo.com) looks. This one: <http://i2.photobucket.com/albums/y37/h4Xb0x/OldHabboNewHome.png>  
What else? I've designed 5 hotel views, Brazil, USA, Canada, China and Germany, worked on graphics and game design for both versions of SnowStorms, I've designed several of the old Public Spaces including the Library. Right now I'm working in the Games team building future mini-games for Habbo.

**Mark:** How did you become a graphic designer?

**Painimies:** Short answer: By luck. Long answer: My 3rd grade teacher in Oulu was an artist, and I think he inspired me most to start drawing and painting.

When I was about 13, my mom spent all her money to buy me a Mac, since she promised it to me without knowing how expensive they were back then. Bless her for sticking to the promise. I dabbled with some painting programs, and eventually got hold of some ancient version of Photoshop, as well as a program called VideoWorks, which would later become Macromedia Director, the program that was used to create original Habbo Hotel. I just studied those programs by myself and created some silly animations and pictures.

I guess I just spent enough time doing those things to eventually develop some kind of design sensibility. So when I was 16 and was attending this Finnish Mac expo, I sort of bumped into the CEO of the first Finnish multimedia company called To The Point. We got talking, and he asked me what kinds of things I do with my Mac. I told him I do some graphics and animation. He asked me to show some of my work, and got hired on the spot.

I have also studied photography at the University of Industrial Arts in Helsinki, but I would still say that most of what made me a graphic designer was just doing a LOT of it. Just for fun.

**Mark:** What skills, training is required?

**Painimies:** Having a good taste is definitely a plus, but everyone can learn to draw like a champ just by practicing. It's a commonly held belief that being able to draw well is something you are born with, but it actually is just lots of repeats, just like in most any field of work. (Heck, even Van Gogh learned to draw from a book. He had a vision and wanted to be able to express it.) After that, I would suggest you watch and study a lot of graphic design, as well as art history, since in my opinion, all of the greatest graphic designers know their arts.

Lastly, it's just learning the different tools you are going to be using. In my case it's mainly Photoshop, but also some Flash, Illustrator and After Effects. Nowadays, I'm experimenting with some 3D programs, in case I someday get a good idea and making it happen requires some 3D stuff.

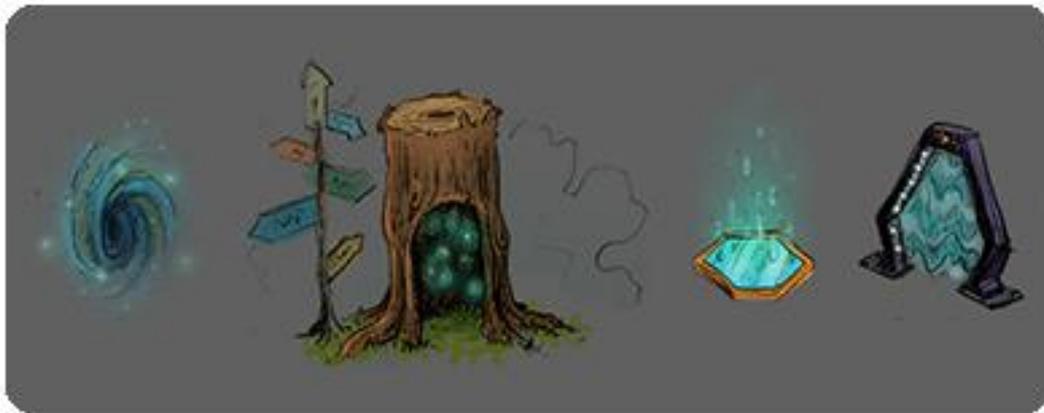
**Mark:** Is there any one Furni you've made that you're really proud of? And why?

**Painimies:** I don't have any specific favorites, and I don't really remember most of the stuff I've done, so I'll just name some that come to mind:

- I think the first Furni I did was the holoboy.
- The sizeable beanstalk was fun to draw, since I didn't have to worry about corners, perspective and such.
- I quite like the gothic table.
- The disco ball was surprisingly tricky to animate without a 3D model.
- I've done the Executive set, and I like it because they are the kind of furniture I like in real life as well. Dark wood, leather, clear lines, that sort of thing.
- I love how you can stack USVA shelves without getting that black line between pieces. Same goes for that one sand patch I did.
- Crystal patch was a pain in the butt to do, but I'm not sure if it was entirely worth the trouble.
- Actually, maybe I AM proud of one thing: The way Bling pool fools you into thinking you are sitting below floor surface, even though it's just a regular chair.
- Oh, and I have to mention the huge movie "screen", just because it's so big. What a job it was to make it work.

**Mark:** Can you talk us through the process where you start creating Furni?

**Painimies:** Someone else really should answer this, since my process varies from Furni to Furni. I can maybe share this most recent thing, where I was supposed to make a general room hopper (Hopefully you'll get it soon after this interview – there are still some technical issues with them.) Here are some early sketches I made with pen and paper, took a photo of and colored in Photoshop:



All of them are maybe fun enough, but not generic enough. So I just made one that was as generic as possible (just a plate on the ground, really – it was someone's design decision that room hoppers need to have some kind of moving particles, so they would automatically make them a bit sci-fi).

I also quickly wanted to make a themed one, so I just took parts of some old Furni, threw them together and polished the thing. The end result is decent enough in my opinion. Lesson: It's not a crime to recycle old stuff, just make it your own:



**Mark:** What are the main things you keep in mind when designing a Furni?

**Painimies:** Sometimes, I have no say in what I have to design next: someone might have already decided on a Furni set, or there might be some very specific thing I'll have to make for an advertiser, etc. Those usually end up being the least interesting pieces.

When I get to design myself, I have but one rule: I want to make something I would personally like. I tend to go towards stuff that you can use as building blocks, since to me, the Lego-like aspect of room building is the most interesting thing in Habbo.

I also want to always try out things we haven't done on Habbo yet, and try to find out the limits of our Furni engine. I also prefer functional stuff over mere decorations.

**Mark:** Is there a Furni you have always wanted to build, but have never gotten the chance?

**Painimies:** There are SO many things I'd like to see in Habbo, here's hoping we'll get around to implementing some of those **in** not too distant future:

For example, I'd like to be able to "group" some Furni together for a bigger Furni, where different parts of the Furni could have different properties. This would allow for a huge variety of new stuff: corner sofas being an obvious, yet basic example.