



JUMP POINT

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FROM THE COCKPIT

GREETINGS, CITIZENS!

Welcome to April's **Jump Point!** You might've noticed we pushed this issue a week to better align with Alpha 3.23, as we're detailing some of the patch's new features and releases and didn't want to spoil anything. Like everyone else at CIG, we're at the mercy of the build and appreciate your understanding as we push closer to Alpha 4.0. Having roamed around the studio to see what's coming in the next year and beyond, there's A LOT to look forward to this year, and it'll definitely be worth the wait. Anyway, back to this month's issue:

Firstly, to coincide with the latest release, we spoke to Gabriel Hector about his work on the all-new Character Customizer, including some interesting insights into how the new system works and how it relates to *Squadron 42*.

Then, we're digging through the Ship team's hard drives to share the development of the new Mirai

Pulse hoverbike. Arguably one of the coolest vehicles we've released for a while, it could've taken a dramatically different route at concept. Check out the early designs to see what could've been!

The Narrative team is back with more exclusive lore, this time sharing the turbulent origins of the Interstellar Transport Guild, including missing haulers and deep political corruption.

Finally, Weekly Star snags an exclusive interview with Andolyn Melvin, the infamous Shot to the Heart Killer.

Thanks a lot for your continued support of *Star Citizen*. We'll see you again in June!

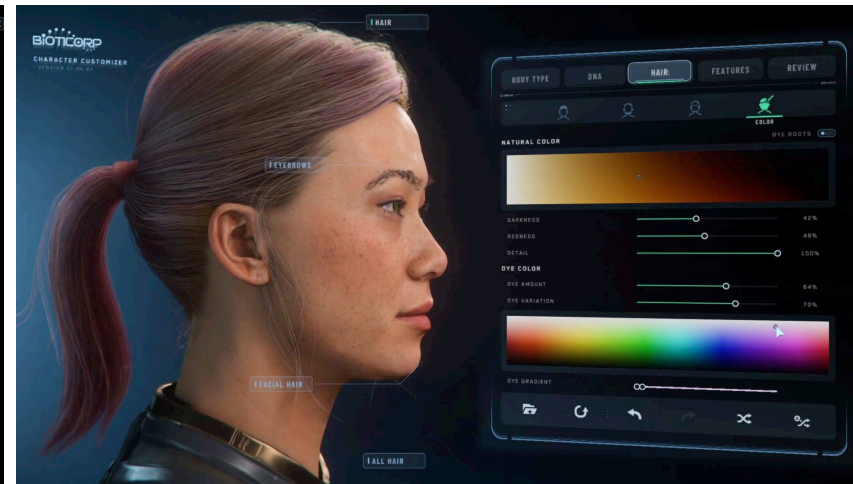
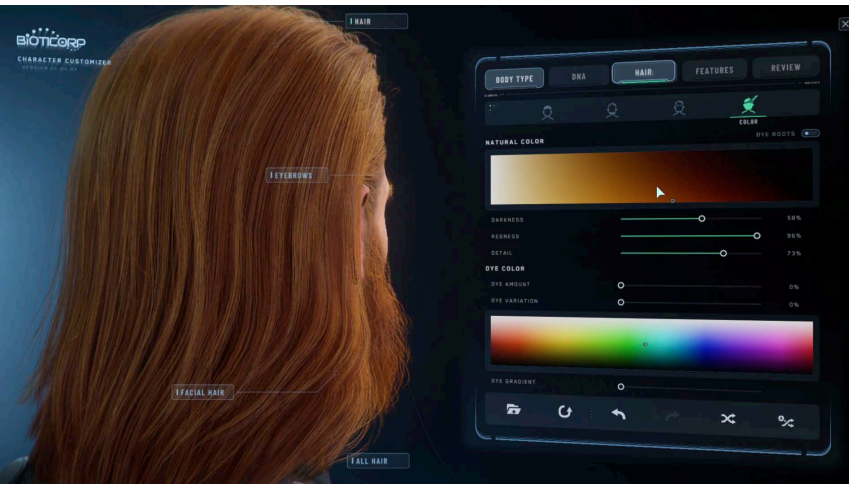
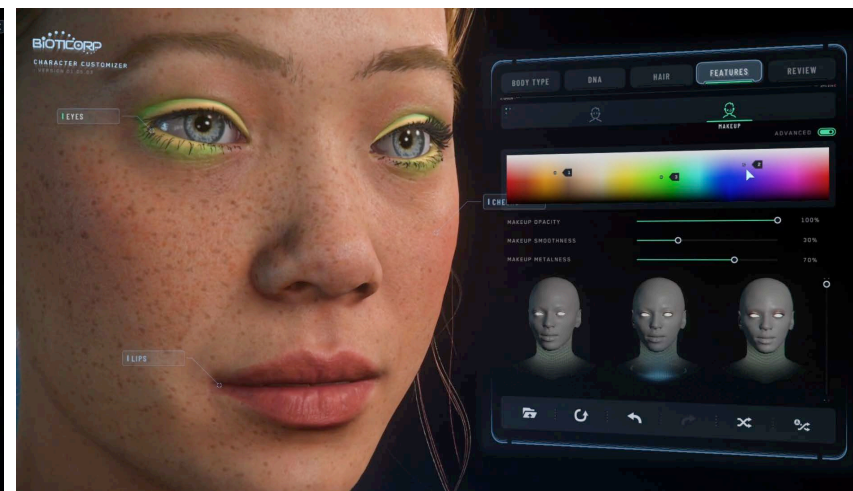
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IN DEVELOPMENT: CHARACTER CUSTOMIZER

Alpha 3.23: TBC introduces the most ambitious update to the Character Creator since ever, including a wealth of new options for players to explore when designing the way they appear in the 'verse.

To mark the release, we spoke to Gabriel Hector, a systems designer in charge of the wider Character Creator project to find out what's new, how the system works, and what's in store for the future.

Hi, Gabriel! What do you do at CIG?

I'm a systems designer based in the Manchester office. My job is to design and document gameplay systems as requested by the game directors. Then, I communicate the vision out to the developers implementing those systems and help ensure that it gets delivered. I work closely with all disciplines involved in bringing a design into the game to see that the implementation reflects what the directors are expecting.

What was the goal of this update to the Character Customizer?

The original pitch was to make a Squadron 42 version of the Star Citizen Character Customizer, but that quickly grew into something larger and more involved than just putting some new paint on the old one and calling it a day. We had content available to us that was not present in the old version, and we had many ideas for how we wanted to make more content available to the players to make sure that they could express themselves more freely when creating their characters.

How does the new version of the Character Customizer differ from the previous one?

There are a lot of new additions to it, and I'd say you can barely see the traces of the old customizer as you look at this one. First off, the UI had a ground-up rework so the user experience is fully updated and restyled; we now have the ability to sculpt faces rather than



just blending from one to the other. We also added options for facial hair, eyebrows, makeup, freckles, and hair dye that were not at all a factor in the old one. And, lastly, I'd say that the ability to save a character as a local file and then import it into the game is going to make a massive difference to our players.

Does it still use the DNA system from the previous version?

Yes, under the hood it works the same as the old customizer and you blend between your current head and a target head to get the result you want. You can even still do the blending in a very similar way to how it was done in the old version if you just go to the 'Blend' tab under DNA.

Blending has also been improved, as you now have a library view of the heads where you can see several heads at a time and, when you click the feature, you can now start dragging it on the targeted face to adjust the blend rather than clicking a face and then using a slider (although this is also still available).

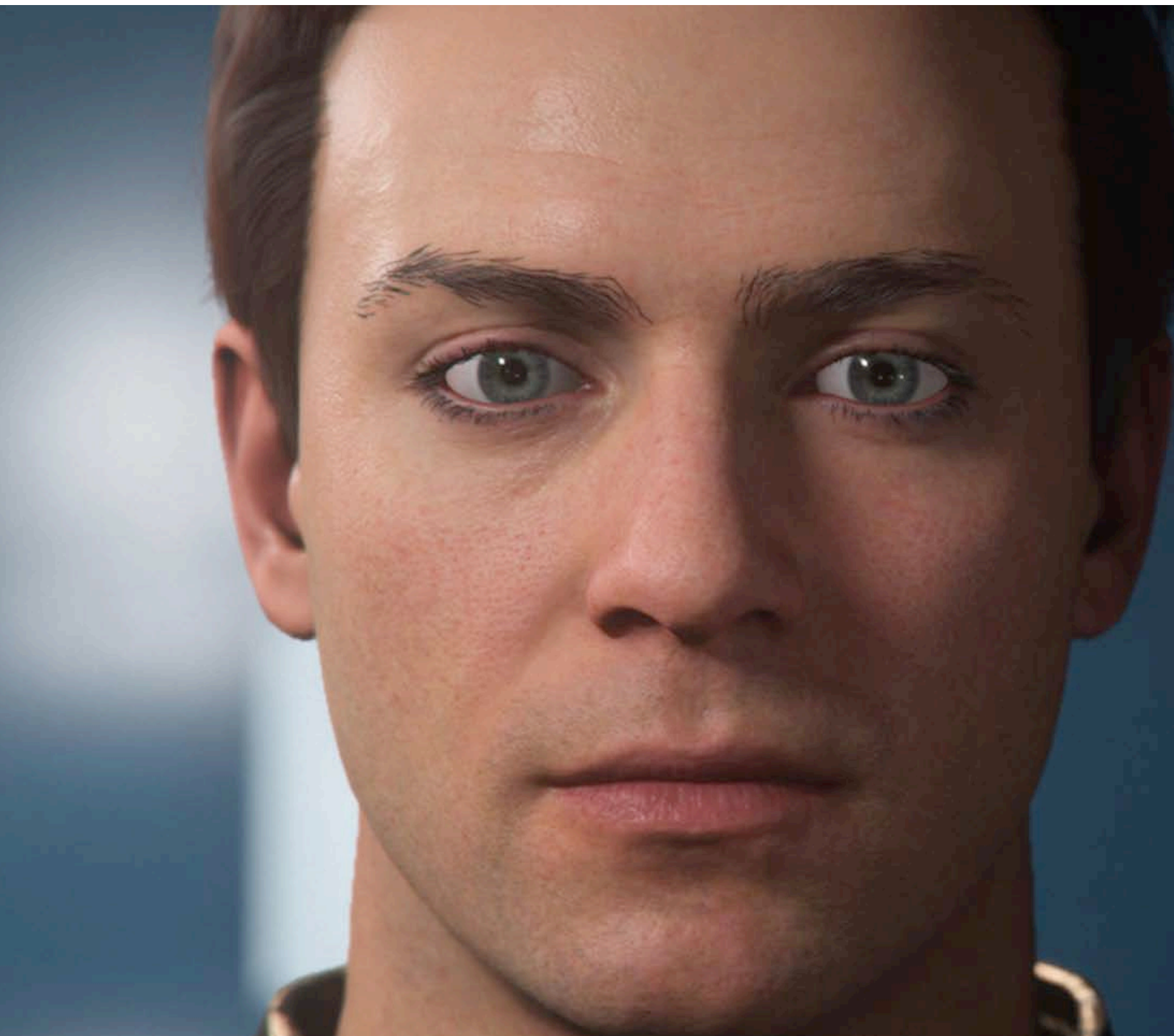
Technically, how does the Character Customizer work?

As we just established, it uses the DNA system, but what does that mean to the user? Essentially, it takes data from all the head scans that we have available and allows us to reshape the 3D meshes into anything in between. So, if we have one scan with a tiny nose and one scan with a

massive nose, we can do an interpolation between the two and get you any result in that blend space. However, the new sculpting system takes every scanned head into account, not just your current and your target as the old system did. This means that it also finds any shapes between the extremes and allows for way more variation for every part of the face. Every variation has its own DNA string that we can then input to load that character into the game. However, that string doesn't come with any of the other features from the Character Customizer, so we also developed a system for exporting the files with all the data adjusted in the customizer (the character's loadout) to more easily load complete characters into the game – the same file that our players now can save and import.

For all the other adjustments to characters, the Tech Art team set up different item ports on characters where we can add hair, makeup, freckles, etc. For that to work at all, a lot of heavy lifting had been done by the Graphics team to add functionality to the shader we use for skin to allow us to add in all of the additional options for skin tones, freckles, makeup, and even the styling of the heads in the head library. Once the setup was done, it was up to the Character Art team to make assets for all of it.

Lastly, the hair shader we have now has some truly amazing features, allowing the player to control the look of these photo-realistic hairstyles to a degree not seen in any other character customizer.



So, will Squadron 42 use a version of the PU Character Customizer?

As it stands today, Squadron 42 has voice selection and background-story options not available in the PU, but the hope is that creating a character in the future will also give players a chance to give them a bit of backstory. There have also been discussions about whether someone in the military would really be allowed to do all of the things we now have the power to do in the Character Customizer. We have been looking into real-life examples of what rules different countries' armed forces set for their troops when it comes to makeup, hairstyles, tattoos, and piercings, but as Squadron 42 takes place some 900-ish years in the future, only time will tell.

Is there a different process for creating NPCs for Squadron 42?

Any non-player main characters will so far be using bespoke scans of the actor or actress' own likeness, so the pipeline for that is a bit different, but the underlying systems are all the same, and the same level of quality should be expected from the characters coming out of the Character Customizer when we reach 1.0.

What will the Character Customizer look like at 1.0?

Aside from some additional features and a way to edit your backstory, this is really the 1.0 Character Customizer. The biggest difference between now and then is content – we'll be polishing anything that still looks a

bit off, we'll be adding more hair and makeup styles and – importantly – we'll be adding more face scans, making for a wider choice of natural skin textures and a more detailed and varied sculpting experience.

What's next for you and the team?

We are looking to bring the Calliope Machine (the in-lore name of the Character Customizer) as its own feature into the world of Star Citizen, giving the opportunity for players to alter their appearance in-game. We are also looking into how we can add scars, tattoos, piercings, and a new stubble option into the mix. I think, with those additions, we'll have far surpassed the goal we set out when we started planning this feature.

A huge thank you to Gabriel for taking the time to answer our questions and share his fascinating insights into this impressive update. The latest version of Character Creator is live now in the PU.



AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE SHOT TO THE HEART KILLER!

WEEKLY STAR!

KLESCHER CONFESSIONS

BY: HEDDA PARSONS

Convicted killers and star-crossed lovers Andolyn Melvin and Nesta Kwan first met on a landing pad in Lorville. He was earning credits hauling heavy weapons from remote distribution facilities to a central processing center, while she toiled away doing warehouse administration, logging each of Andolyn's deliveries. Though it wasn't love at first sight, Andolyn later claimed he instantly felt an uncommon warmth beneath Nesta's stone-faced, professional demeanor.

"Every time I saw her we'd chat for a few moments about sataball scores or that day's pollution levels. You know, stuff that doesn't really matter," says Andolyn over a monitored comm from his cell on Aberdeen. "We were friendly but not close, if that makes sense. But that all changed when

I saw her at that screening of Shot to the Heart. Think that was the first time I ever saw her smile."

Andolyn and Nesta both lived in Lorville's worker's district, and one night found themselves in the same courtyard where someone was projecting Shot to the Heart onto a wall for all to enjoy. The hit vid tells the story of two lovers fighting their way through gangs, jealous ex-lovers, and a corrupt Advocacy agent in an attempt to create a new life for themselves. After the screening, Andolyn and Nesta connected and aimlessly strolled the worker's district for hours sharing their hopes, dreams, and desire to pay off the onerous long-term worker contracts both had signed. Nesta was optimistic that she would free herself ahead of schedule, but Andolyn

had run the numbers and was more realistic about how long it would take to get out from under Hurston's thumb. According to Andolyn,

"I remember breaking down the specifics to her, and this brief moment of anger flashed across her face. Then she simply said we should do something about it."

At first, it was all talk between the blossoming lovers, but a plan slowly came together. On April 11, 2953, Andolyn received a work order to deliver a high value shipment to Nesta's facility. He comm'd her their arranged signal, 'Shot to the Heart', sealing their fate and forever associating them with the vid that brought them together.

"I tried to act like it was just a normal day," recalls Andolyn. "But my nerves got the better of me. Spilled a whole pot of coffee at the distro office and nearly scraped off a wing pulling out of the hangar. When my boss asked me if I was feeling alright, I almost called the whole thing off. The only thing that kept me on course was the thought of Nesta depending on me."

"Luckily, I managed to make it to her without anything else happening. As soon as I arrived, she falsified the records, marking the whole shipment as already being delivered, and then took her break. Thought my heart was going to leap out of my chest when she asked for permission to come onboard. Once she was with me, sitting co-pilot, everything felt right, like we were free and clear and everything was gonna work out."



That feeling of ill-gotten freedom wouldn't last long. After breaking atmo, Andolyn spun up the quantum drive and directed the ship to an outpost on Aberdeen. There they planned to meet someone who promised clean reg-tags and the names of contacts in Pyro willing to buy their haul of stolen weapons.

"I bloody well knew something was wrong the second we stepped off that ship. Half the landing pads lights were off and our 'contact' was just waiting in the shadows," says Andolyn. "I should've listened to my gut and pulled Nesta right back onto that ship. Guess that's why I'm here now."

Once Andolyn and Nesta were clear of the ship, the figure stepped from the shadows with a gun raised. Jalani Konecny identified herself as an Advocacy agent and told the two to raise their hands above their heads. Andolyn complied, but Nesta only pretended to. Instead she quickly drew her ArcLight pistol and pulled the trigger. Agent Konecny returned fire.

"Looking back on that moment now is... hard. For so many reasons," remembers Andolyn. "When it all went down, I wasn't thinking at all about the stand-off at the end of Shot to the Heart but I see why people think that's what inspired us. Honestly, I don't know what was going through Nesta's mind when she pulled that gun and I guess I never will."

Unlike the lovers from the vid, Andolyn and Nesta would not escape unscathed. Following the brief volley of fire, Nesta and Agent Konecny both fell to the ground. Andolyn rushed to Nesta to see a bullet hole through the center of her helmet's visor. The realization of what happened overwhelmed Andolyn who then noticed Agent Konecny struggling to pull out a medpen.

"I don't know what came over me. I grabbed Nesta's gun, aimed it at the person who killed the love of my life, and pulled the trigger until the mag was empty. There was absolutely no thought behind any of it, only grief. Swear I didn't even hear the Advocacy reinforcements show up until they shot me."

Andolyn took several bullets to the back and right shoulder but survived. Today, he is slowly whittling down a lengthy sentence at the Klescher Rehabilitation Facility on Aberdeen. Agent Konecny died from her wounds but regened with enough memories of the incident to testify against Andolyn in court. Lacking the funds to afford an imprint, Nesta died in Andolyn's arms on that landing pad.

When asked if Andolyn regrets ever meeting Nesta, he sits in quiet contemplation for a while. His eyes waver between joy and sadness.

"I'm ashamed of what I did and not a day goes by that I don't wish things would have turned out differently. But I honestly don't know if my life is any worse because of this. Living and working on Lorville feels like there's weight on your chest. It makes getting up every morning a struggle. And yeah, I feel that same thing here in Klescher, but at least, I had those few beautiful months together with Nesta and never having her in my life feels like a worse fate."

'SHOT TO THE HEART' images used courtesy of EARTHLIGHT PICTURES.



BEHIND THE SCENES: MIRAI PULSE SERIES



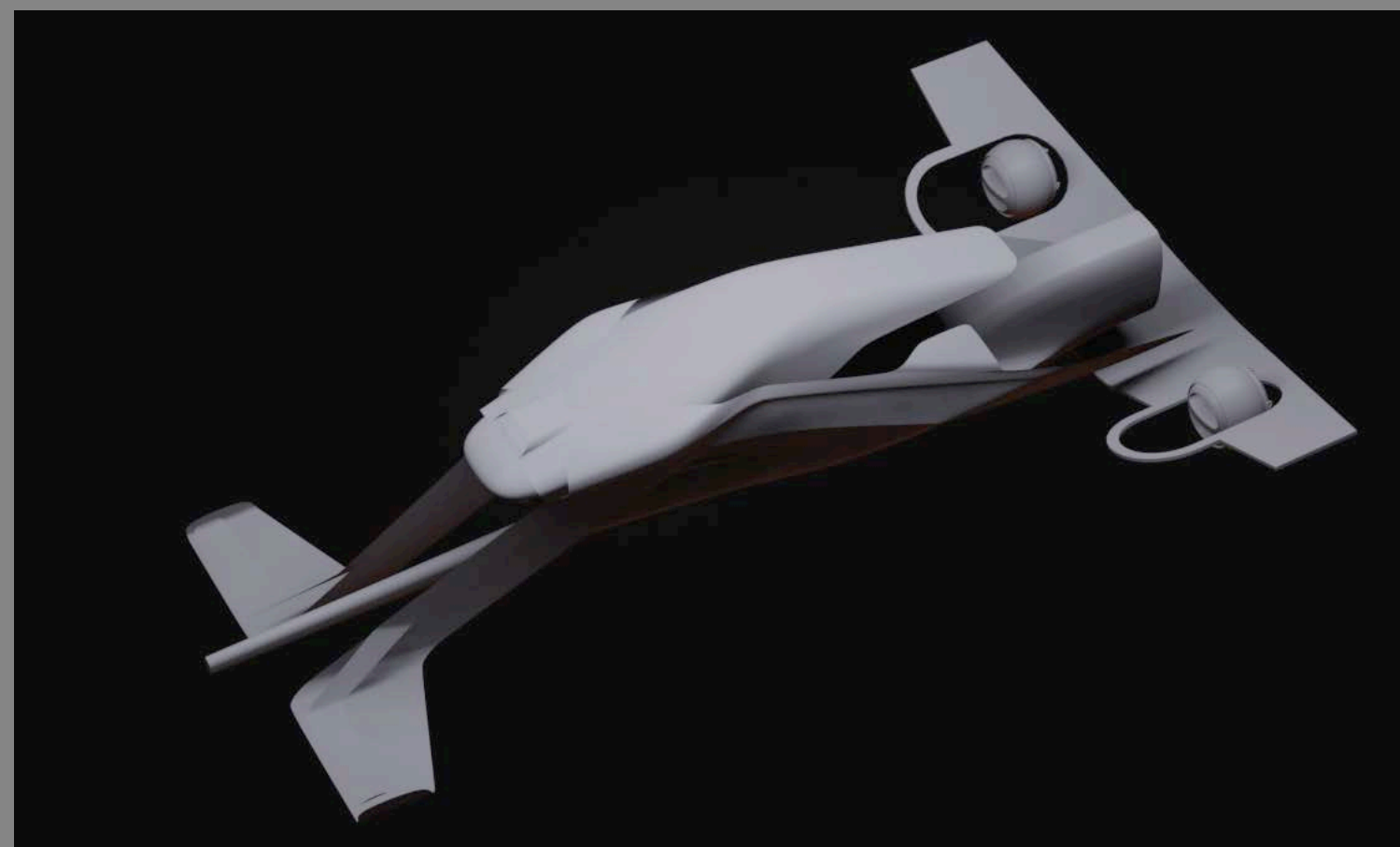
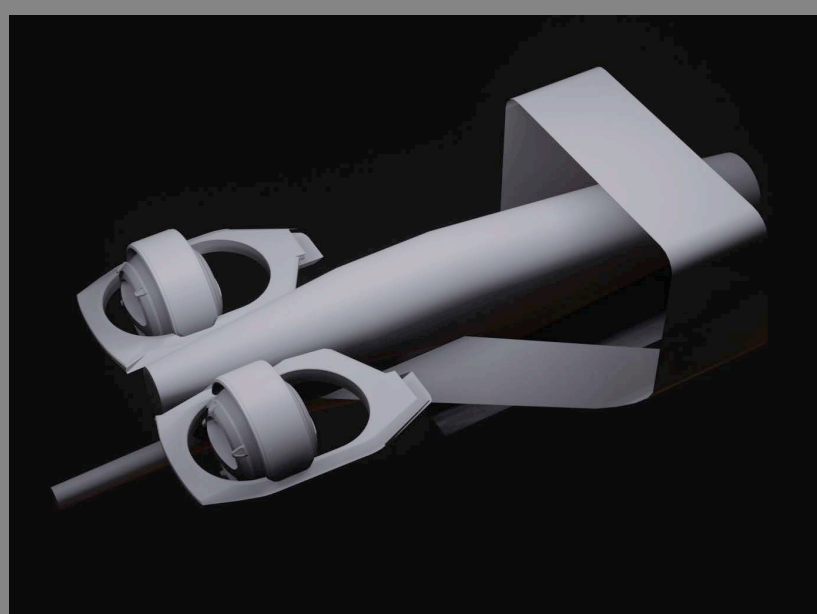
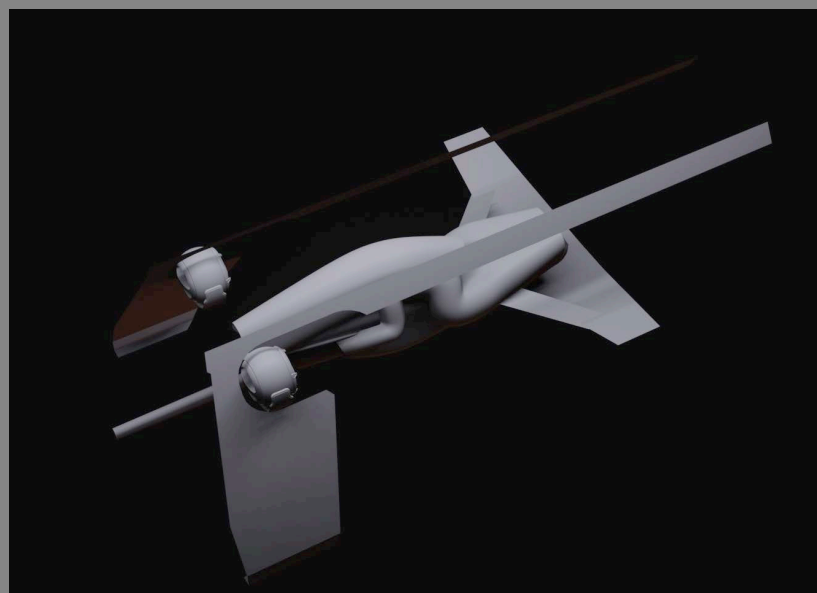
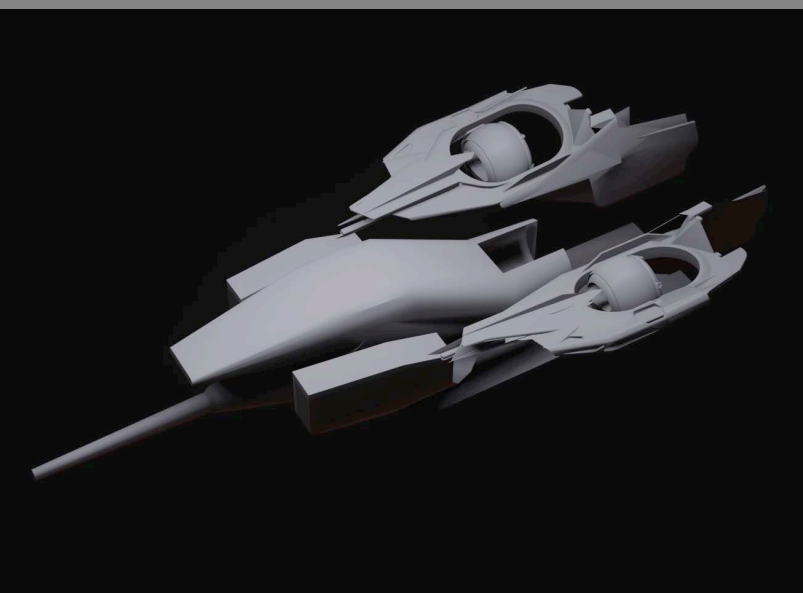
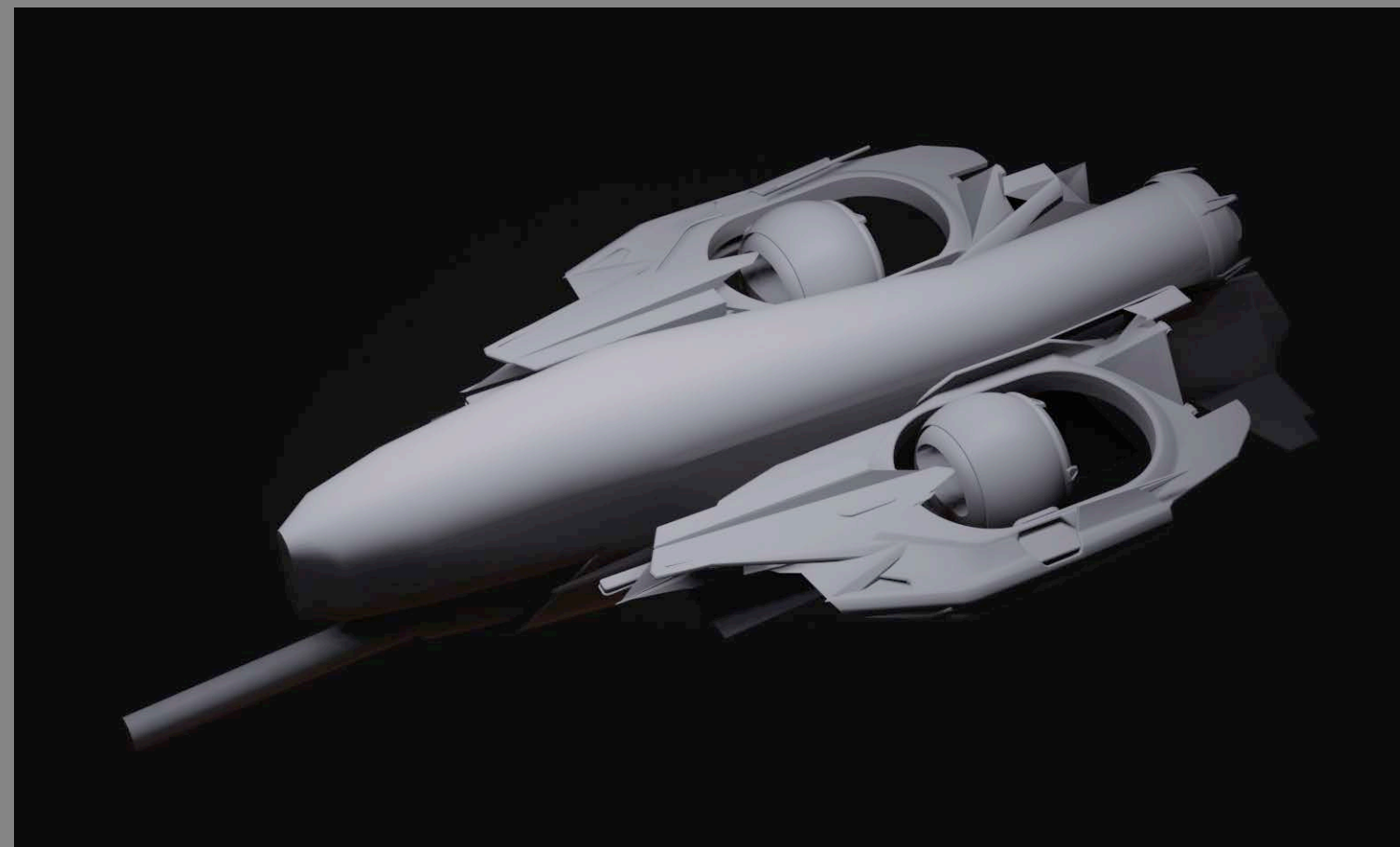
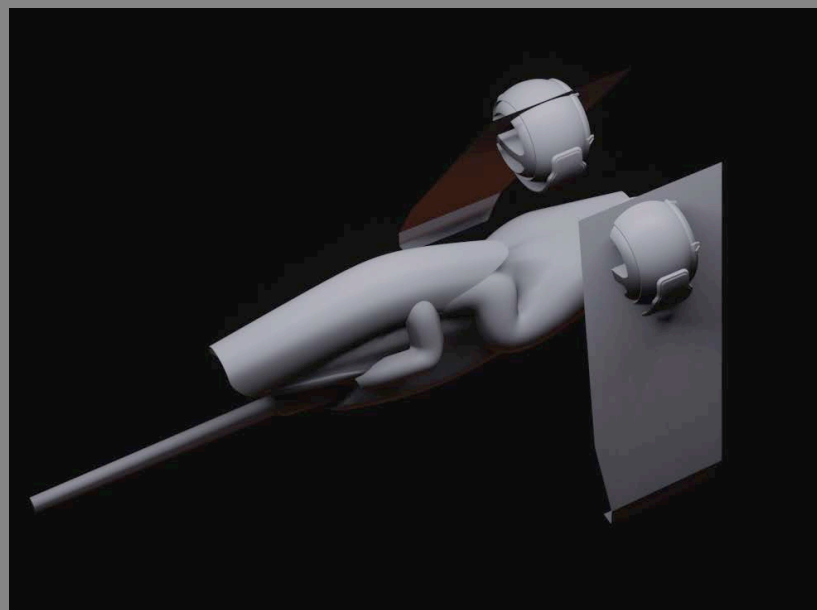
Last year's Invictus Launch Week saw the unveiling of an all-new snub fighter focused on speed and agility. The Fury was like nothing seen in the 'verse before – a true glass cannon that relies on its maneuverability to hit hard and escape before the enemy knows what's hit it. Initially conceived as a MISC ship to take advantage of the brand's deep connections to Xi'an technology, the significant departure from the shipbuilder's typically utilitarian output led to the founding of Mirai; a sub-brand focused on performance. Alongside the release of the Fury, MISC's Razor racing ship was rebranded to Mirai, leaving a small-but-

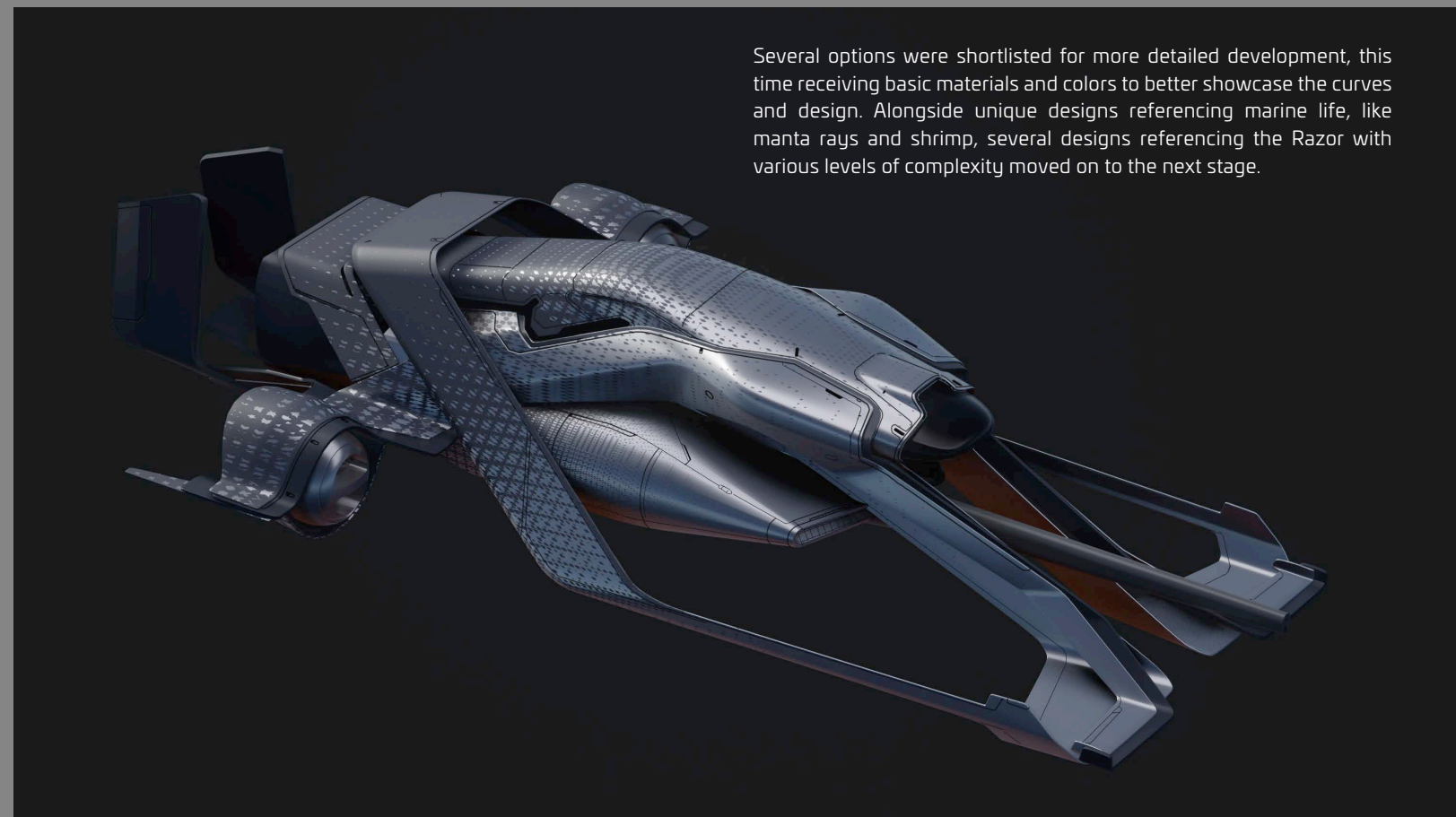
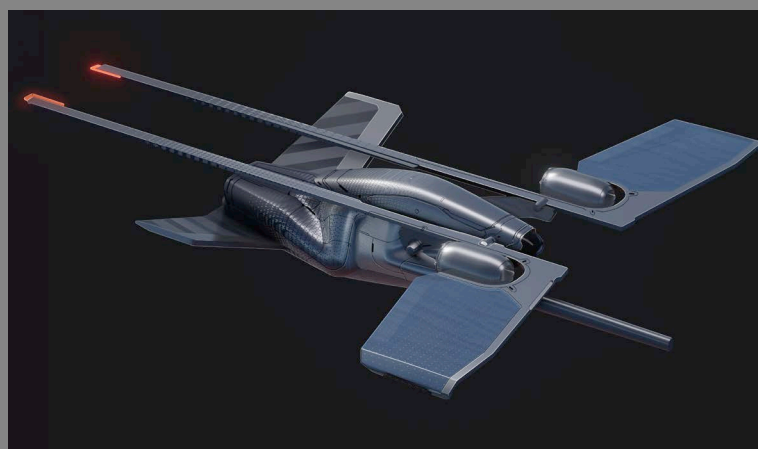
highly-focused range with a clear mission. Where Mira would go from there was anyone's guess, but it was clear that when the time came, the new vehicle would prioritize speed above all else. And the new Pulse confirmed it when it was briefed toward the end of 2023:

Taking cues from other MIRAI vessels the Hoverbike tries to blend the line between pilot and machine by giving them the performance they expect of MIRAI with the ability to experience any location without any unnecessary encumbrance (environment suit as an example).

As with most ships, the project began with exploration. Here, the devs 'kitbash' elements of existing ships from either the same manufacturer or role to create design directions and silhouettes that can be further explored later. Both racing and combat versions were planned from the off, but the first step was determining the general shape. And, unlike the final ship, the first explorations were all enclosed following direction from the brief stating, "Fully enclosed to protect the pilot from the elements (hence life support)."

Several of the designs incorporated elements of the Fury's engine layout and the Razor's aerodynamic package, while several unique approaches utilized Xi'an grav-lev tech to connect the various components and body elements.

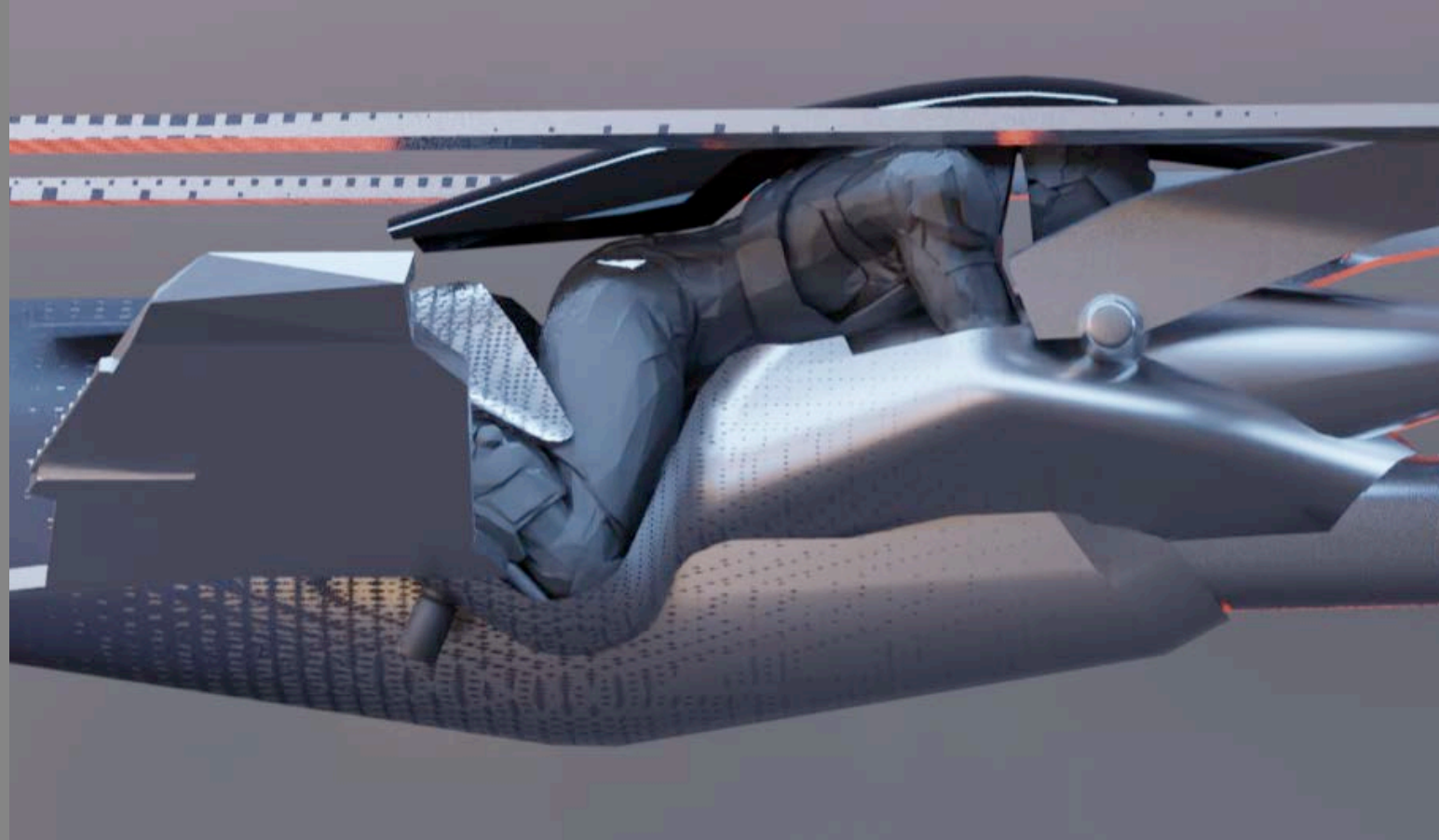
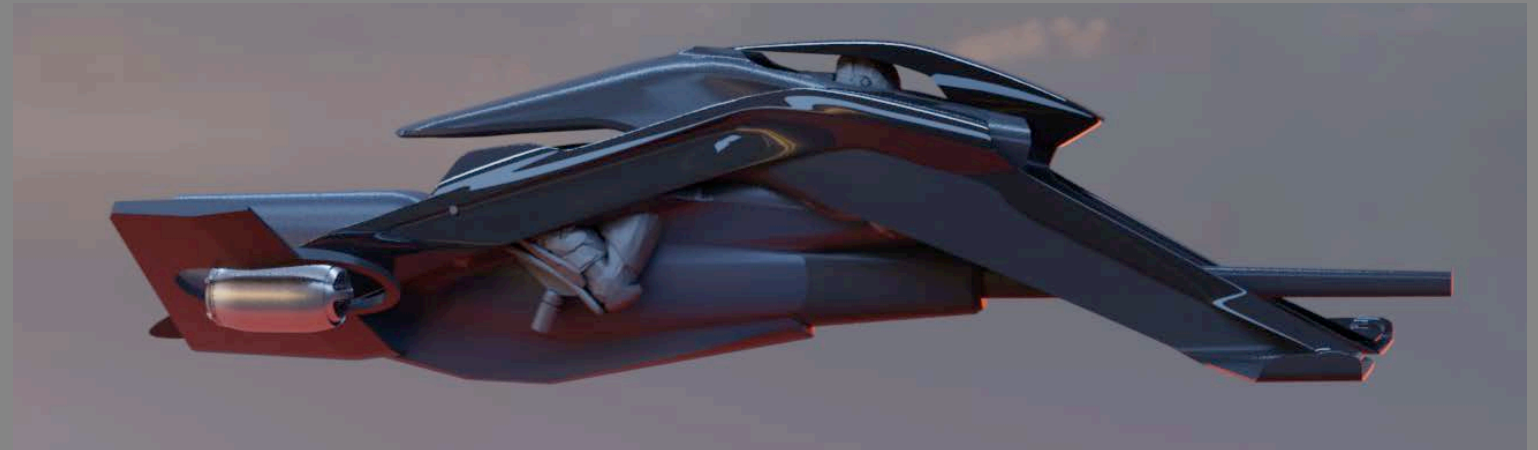
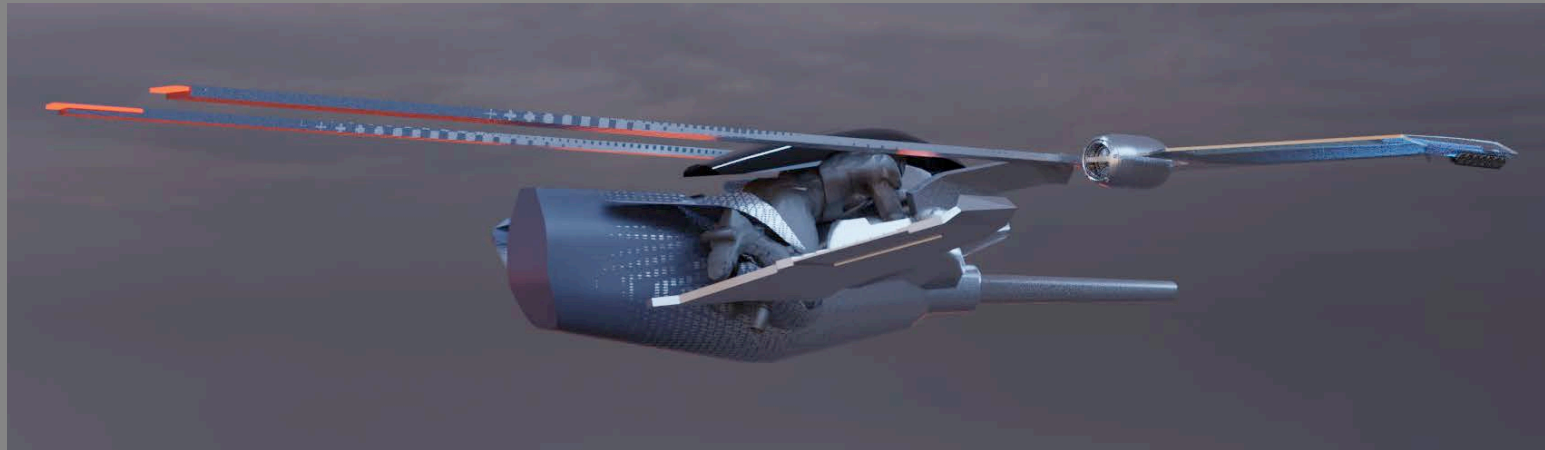
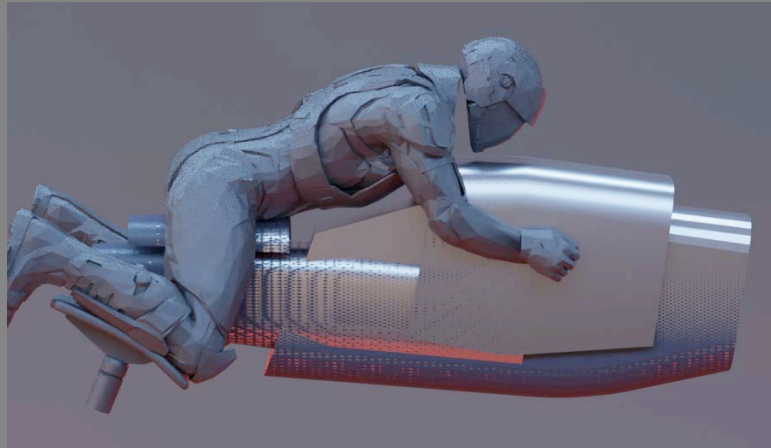


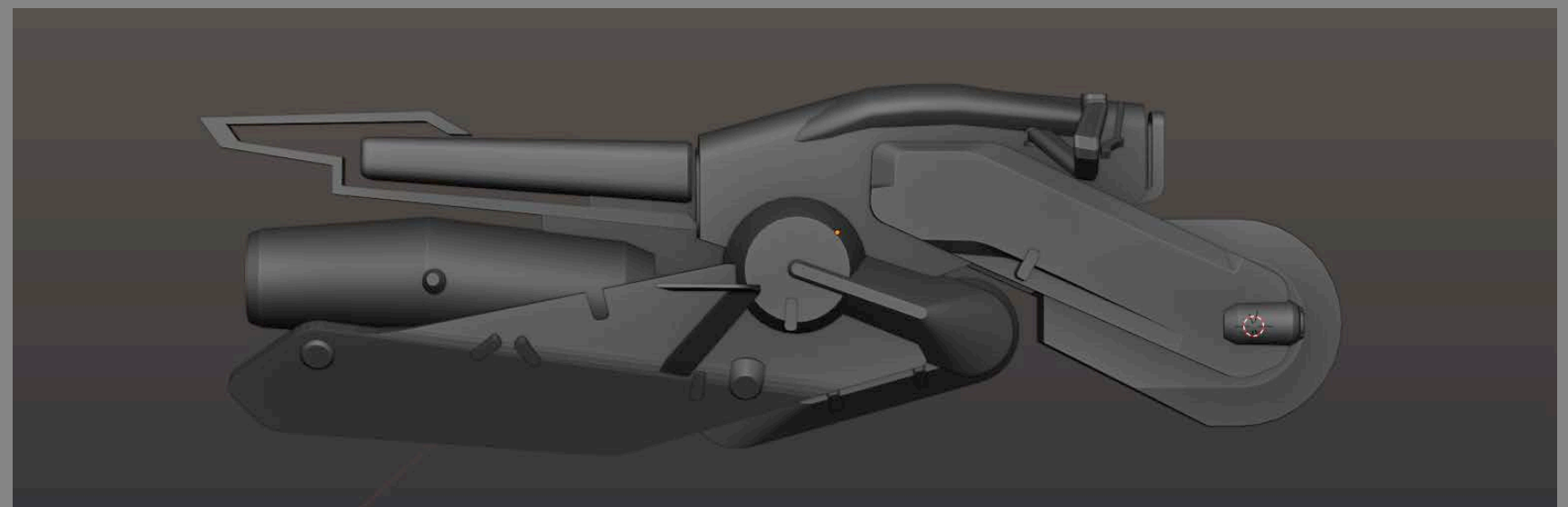
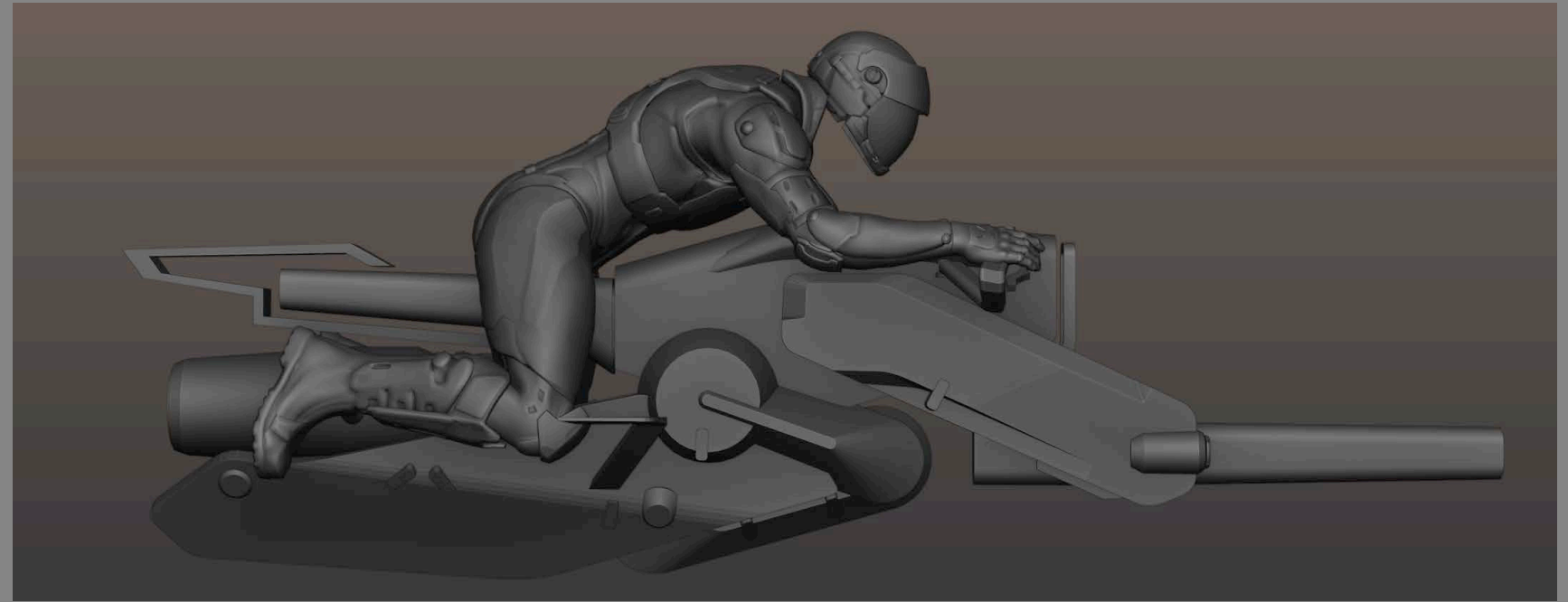
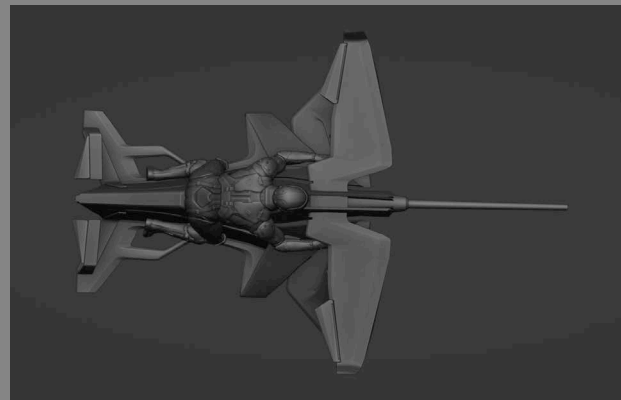
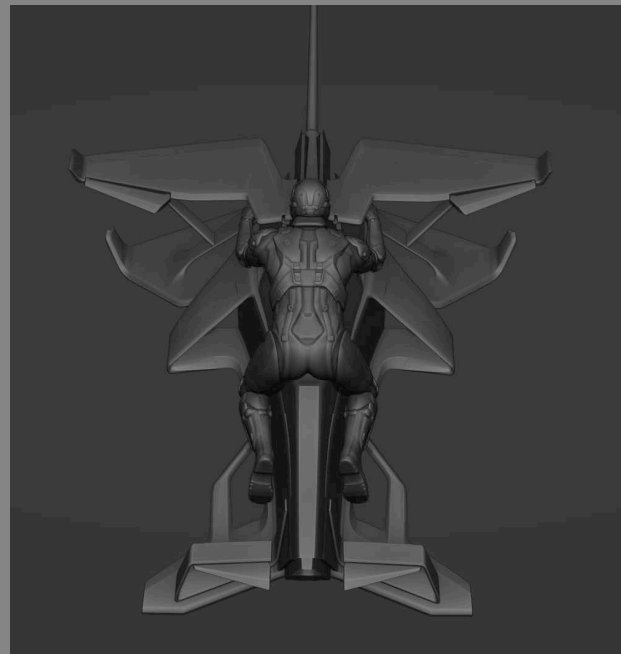
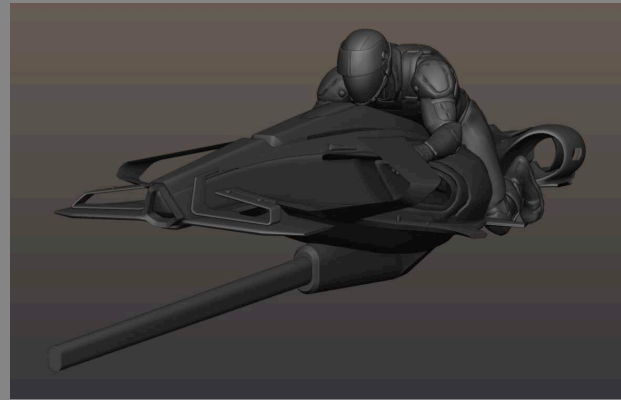


At this stage, a standard-sized character was brought in to help refine the vehicle and ensure the preferred designs could accommodate the player while maintaining the original vision. This time, it was clear either the size of the vehicle would need to be increased or the closed cockpit would need to be opened. While several options were worked up featuring various states of cover, sacrificing pilot protection was preferred over increasing overall dimensions.

Despite wing and canopy differences, the character fit best laying over the hull, similar to contemporary high-performance motorcycles.

With the rider's position determined, four designs were worked up





to greybox, the more traditional bike layout being chosen over the more elaborate, winged shapes. Basic differences between the racing and combat variations were worked up too, with the integrated gun being removed in the performance-focused racer to reference the brief:

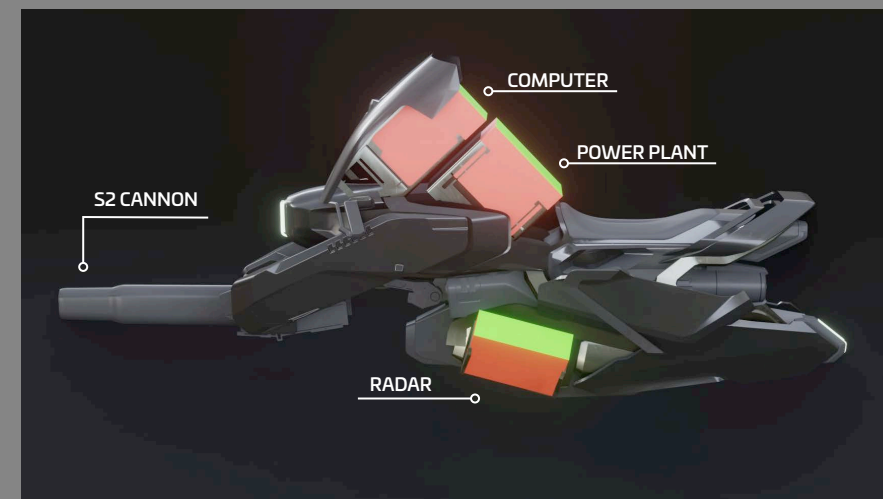
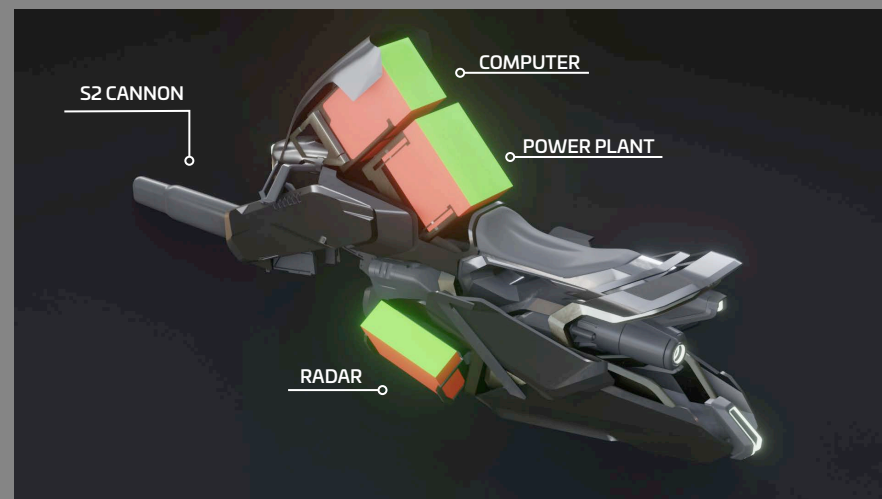
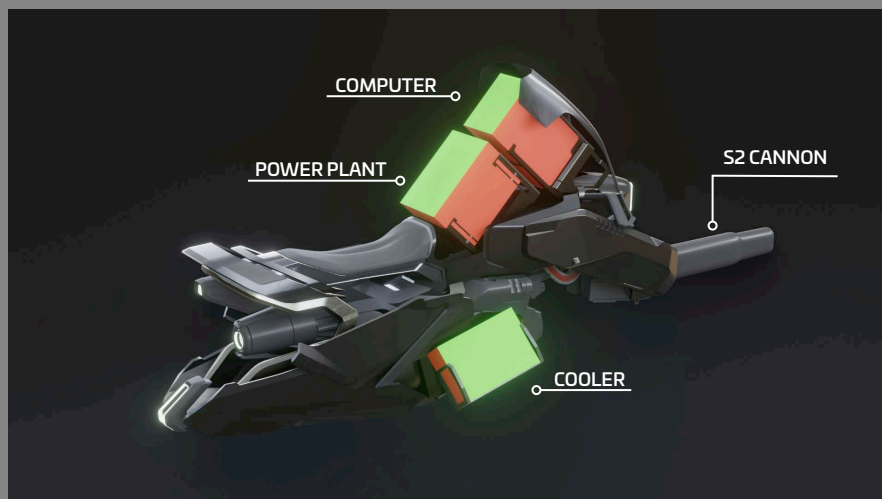
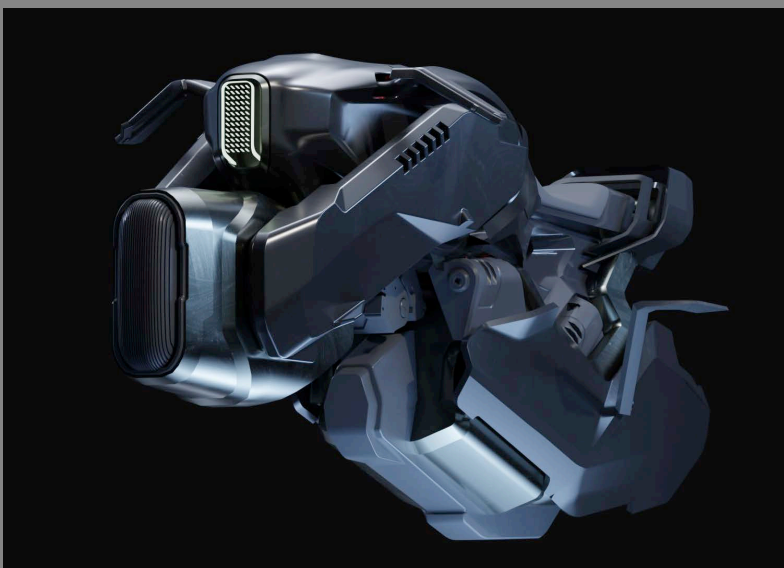
"The racing variant will have more cues from the Fury LX and the

Razor with the flare at the nose which the Razor has and the LX has on the wings along with more thrusters/control surfaces for better maneuverability.

The S2 weapon will be removed and the location where the S2 gun was should be filled in and shaped to hint at being more aerodynamic and at a more powerful drive system underneath."

The Pulse as we know it emerged following further passes, with both variants receiving additional detail across their hulls. Key visual elements, like the lighting and Mirai design cues, were added across both vehicles.

Component placement was also determined, with clever hinged panels allowing the main internals to raise for access.





The Pulse gained additional detail along with further differentiation between the variants. The paints and liveries for each were also proposed – the racer’s bold yellow and red remaining through to production.



With the ship finalized and approved, the final concept files were prepared and handed over for implementation. Internal promotional images were rendered to help all downstream teams add it to the 'verse and share it with the community.

Once in-engine and working, the Marketing Art team built scenes using in-game assets and created images to support the Pulse's release with Alpha 3.23.







A week's worth of food and water, one oxygen tank, one loaded pistol, and one cyanide capsule. Dedicated trivia hounds will recognize that list as the meager assortment of items carried aboard Nick Croshaw's ship during the first flight through a jump point. The Interstellar Transport Guild (ITG) officially classifies them as the first goods hauled on an intersystem flight. Though the Guild did not exist when Croshaw made his historic jump in 2271, the ITG is one of the oldest professional unions still active today. Founded in 2391, the longevity of the ITG proves how vital cargo hauling is to Humanity's ability to thrive and survive among the stars.

SOLO VENTURE

The idea for the Interstellar Transport Guild germinated in the mid-2380s with haulers who frequented Bulkhead, a long-defunct ship repair shop

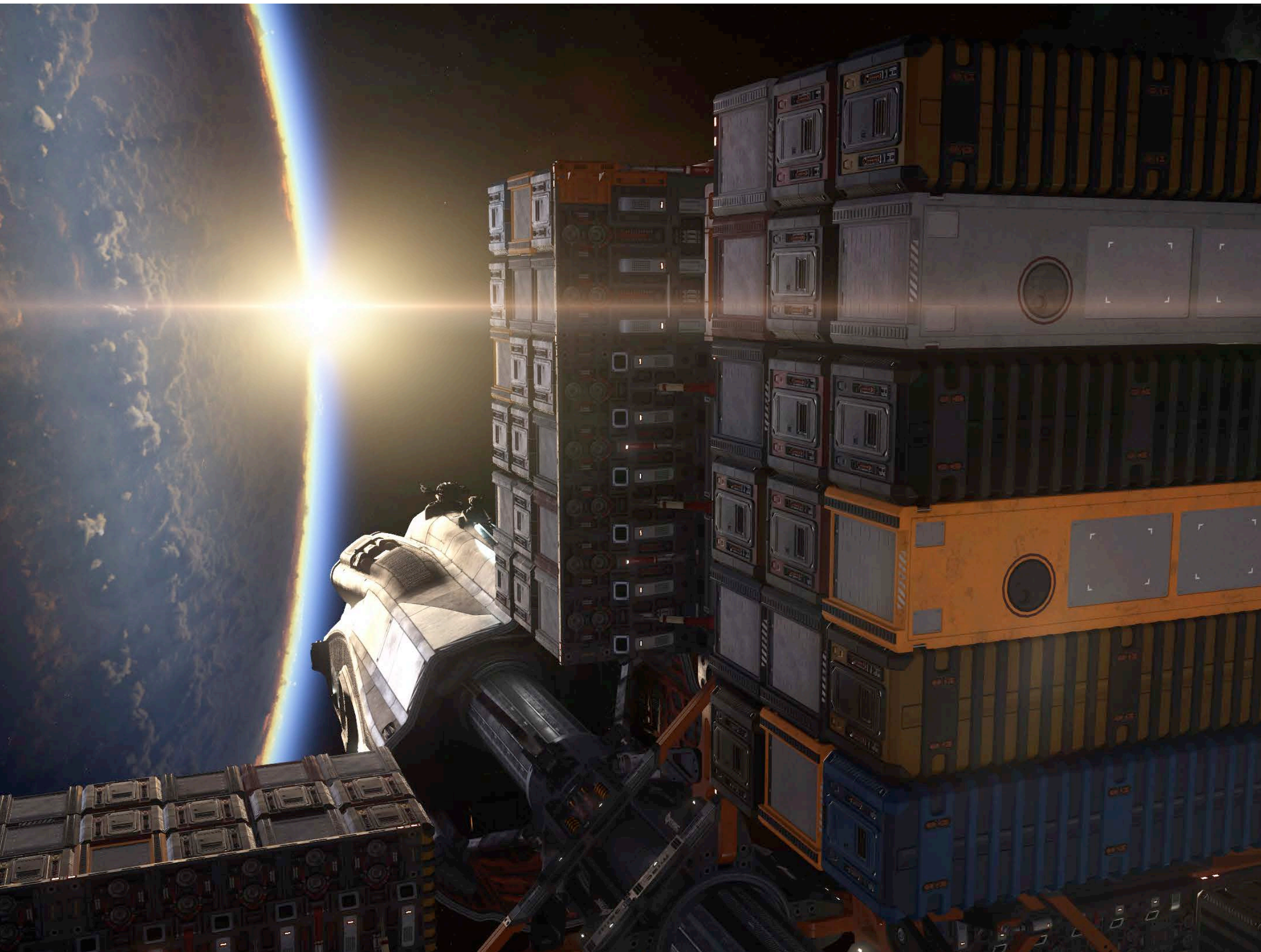
in Quinton, Angeli. This lounge where haulers chatted while waiting for their ships to be repaired became known as the place to go in Croshaw to share harrowing hauling stories, route recommendations, and employers to avoid. Over time, a core group of veteran haulers became fixtures at Bulkhead. They drove the day's conversation and helped anyone who asked for it. They also realized that they were taking fewer jobs because fewer were worth taking. Many contracts docked hauler pay if the cargo arrived late, then mandated a nearly impossible delivery deadline. With little to do, this crew spent their time vigorously debating systemic issues plaguing haulers and potential solutions for the next generation. And it might've remained only theoretically if not for reports of haulers disappearing in Fora System.

Izzy Varley, a fixture at Bulkhead, became determined to find out what

was happening to haulers in Fora, so they accepted a hauling gig whose vague description and insulting pay aligned with offers the lost haulers had allegedly accepted. Varley transported supplies to a space station in a remote part of Fora system only then to be offered a much more lucrative contract to make another run. After agreeing to the job, Varley comm'd the Bulkhead crew with what would turn out to be their final update. Varley was never heard from again. The loss of Varley would kickstart what was to become a full fledged labor movement.

Varley's final destination had been Banshee system. Discovered in 2317, the pulsar at the system's center spewed deadly radiation. This danger drove government officials to keep its jump point location a secret and once the United Nations of Earth (UNE) formed in 2380, the government passed a law banning most ships from accessing it. Still,

Banshee contained an abundance of valuable resources and several well-connected companies were granted access and the right for their employees and contractors to enter it. A dogged investigation, and a few well-placed bribes, by the Bulkhead crew identified Maymodi Inc. to be behind the shell companies that had hired Varley and other haulers. Their investigation also tracked down a few haulers who survived the perilous journey. These haulers claimed to not have been informed of Banshee's dangers and that they were even denied the chance to refuel or repair their ship at the dropoff destination. The Bulkhead crew took their findings to both Fora and UNE government officials but realized the political power of Maymodi Inc. outweighed that of a few angry haulers. Yet, the Bulkhead crew refused to roll over. To add an air of authority to their cause, they branded themselves the Interstellar Transport Guild. The group then shared the story with reporters across the UNE, and began



a publicity campaign advising haulers to not take contracts with Maymodi Inc. or their affiliates. The public shaming worked and pressured the UNE to mandate that companies accessing Banshee clearly specify the dangers of the system and allot space and resources for contractors to refuel and repair their ships at the drop off destination.

This victory for hauler's rights was significant, but the ITG wanted to capitalize on the momentum to address larger systemic issues. The group actively sought dues paying members and brokered deals with several Croshaw-based companies to provide premium gigs to experienced members. Yet, the biggest win for the ITG came in 2388 when they struck a landmark deal with ADJUST Colonial, who had the rights to terraform Centauri. In a savvy public relationship move meant to show that terraforming could be done ethically on all levels, ADJUST Colonial guaranteed ITG certified haulers premium contracts, hazard pay, reasonable delivery timelines, and more. The deal convinced scores of independent haulers to join the ITG and provided a framework for hauler's rights that the guild would fight to implement across the UNE.

CERTIFIED DELIVERY

The deal with ADJUST Colonial elevated the Interstellar Transport Guild into a major force in the cargo hauling sector. Experienced haulers joined the guild for gigs that guaranteed good pay and perks, while companies appreciated knowing that the haulers they hired through the guild were responsible and qualified. To ensure haulers met the desired standards, the ITG instituted a multi-level certification scale and reserved certain jobs (hazardous materials, high risk, etc.) for their most competent members. It wasn't long before haulers working for other shipping companies wanted similar benefits and pushed to work under the ITG standards. Faced with mounting pressure, major hauling concerns soon became part of the ITG.

The Interstellar Transport Guild also cultivated political influence by hiring well-connected lobbyists and supporting political candidates who backed hauler's rights. For years, the ITG fought for a Transporter's Bill of Rights to supersede the confusing patchwork of laws that varied from system to system. Though the Transporter's Bill of Rights never passed, the guild was able to convince Senator Nomi Rao to include several of its provisions in the Common Laws, which the United Planets of Earth (UPE) codified in 2526. Yet, the ITG's biggest political win might be the Arballo Act of 2614, which gave haulers the right to defend themselves without fear of prosecution or lawsuits.

Despite these successes, the Interstellar Transport Guild has also faced criticism and courted controversy over the centuries. In the early 2690s, a massive corruption scandal involving ITG officials embezzling funds and secretly funneling political donations to candidates who voted against hauler's interests almost drove the guild to financial ruin. Historians credit the guild's salvation to a series of lawsuits filed by haulers in Terra that exposed the corruption and forced the implicated officials to resign. In 2771, several major hauling concerns suspended their association with the guild following a certification scandal that saw the widespread sale of credentials attributed to fake haulers, which



granted unqualified and disgraced transporters access to premium contracts. More recently, the ITG faced criticism in 2934 for moving to a new tiered dues system that reserved premium gigs for those willing to pay a higher dues rate. The fierce blowback drove the guild to do away with the dues system completely. Instead, the ITG restructured their operations to charge companies a small percentage of each haul that they offer guild members. Guild engagement is now at an all-time high, as any hauler can accept guild contracts and gain access to better paying gigs by proving themselves to be competent and reliable.

Today, the Interstellar Transport Guild is considered a cornerstone institution of the UEE. They have expanded from just representing haulers and couriers. Now the ITG proudly considers taxi pilots, starliner pilots, and commodity traders members. However, their focus remains on supporting and strengthening the rights of haulers so, much like the Bulkhead crew who first formed it, hauling remains a viable and reliable career for future generations.





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