**Bringing a Mechanical Creature to Life**

(Images***: 08\_MechagonBossConcept & 09\_Mechagon\_InGameModel***)

I had a lot of fun creating the Mechagon Reaver. I’ve watched tons of Japanese mech anime from childhood, so I was excited about the opportunity to make a *Warcraft* version of a giant robot.

Throughout the process, I referenced a whole lot of classic games and animation. One conclusion I came to is that, although Mechagon is technologically advanced civilization, the Reaver shouldn’t look too “sci-fi.”

After I sketched out the overall proportion and shapes, adding the Mechagon elements wasn’t too hard. Thanks to all the artists on the *WoW* team who created Mechagon’s props and buildings, I had access to a lot of cool designs inspired by Tesla coils, turbine engines, and clockwork gears.

During the modeling process, I wanted to convey the feeling that there are actual moving parts and gears working underneath the plate, driving the Reaver. To achieve that, I made sure that some clockwork mechanisms would be visible to players beneath the Reaver’s plating, and animated them to make them feel functional. I also added some smoke, steam, and lighting effects to the revving engine.

The Mechagon Reaver was probably one of the biggest creatures I’ve made in *WoW*—I had a blast working on it!

*–Sukjoo Choi - Character Artist*

**Props Paint a Picture**

(Images: ***01\_MechaGnome\_Prop\_Concepts, 02\_Mechagnome\_Crane, 03\_Mechagnome\_Crane\_InGame, 04\_Gnome\_Props\_Sketch, & 05\_MechaGnome\_PropKit\_InGameModels***)

The prop kit for Mechagon is as vast as it is varied, and each prop we created had to help tell the zone’s larger visual narrative. Whether it was the tools of a tinker in a workshop or a massive lifting crane, each prop was lovingly crafted to fit in its space and provide some context as to how these creatures live and demonstrate how far they’ve advanced technologically. Drawing the player into these spaces and taking this nuanced approach to storytelling allowed us to really have some fun with these props, and I hope players enjoy looking at—and interacting with—them!

*–Jordan Powers – Senior Character Artist*

**Visual Effects: Communication Is Key**

(Image ***10\_FX\_Concept\_InGam*e** )

When coming up with visual effects, it all starts with concepts. For me, the first step is always a sketch. This allows me to explore ideas much quicker. It helps me compartmentalize my thoughts and focus on what a specific visual effect needs to communicate.

(Gif ***FX\_01\_GIF\_ArcaneBomb***)

For Arcane Bomb, it was important to show a player that they had a set amount of time before the spell that was cast on them would explode. I wanted this information to be represented in the visuals without using typical game icons or symbols. The result is a spell that clearly represents time and gives players a sense of urgency without being too literal.

(Gif ***FX\_02\_GIF\_SquallTrap***)

Squall Trap is a spell that releases a tornado and a volley of arcane missiles when a player sets it off. Allowing players to see the wind and missiles restrained by a magical rune is a fun and intuitive way to signal its effects.

(Image ***11\_FX\_Rune*** & ***FX\_03\_GIF\_ArcaneDoor***)

Arcane energy is the magical equivalent of nitroglycerin. It *wants* to explode. It is equal parts dangerous and beautiful. To wield Arcane energy requires a lifetime of training and a large dose of respect. Fall short on either of these and missing fingers will be the least of your worries.

*–Guillermo la O’ - VFX Artist*

**Mechagon: Visual Effects**

(Gifs: **01\_KujoJunkBomb, 02\_GigaZap,** & **03\_DoomsDayDevice)**

The wondrous city of Mechagon is home to some of the most brilliant inventors and scientists on Azeroth. Countless new devices have been conceived by its gnomish inhabitants in the hopes of advancing that much closer toward technological perfection! But let’s be honest . . . field-testing these wondrous devices can be risky. Every time a new robot is activated—or a big red button is pressed—there’s an immediate consequence (typically followed by a shower of sparks and that burnt plastic smell). As such, the visual effects in Mechagon played a heavy supporting role in selling the feeling that this island is a living, breathing, community of inventors.

When building the effects for Mechagon, I tried to keep this in mind as a guiding principle. Every device, no matter the size, is essentially unstable and has the potential to do just as much harm to the user as the target. Gnomish inventions have always had this quality, but for Mechagon, it needed to be amped up to 11. Mechagnomes are far more technologically advanced than their fleshy brethren, and less hesitant to play with exotic technologies like plasma and fusion reaction. At the same time, however, it was important to us on the art team that any assets we created feel grounded. This isn’t magic, after all; it’s science!

*–Ethan Zink – Associate VFX Artist*