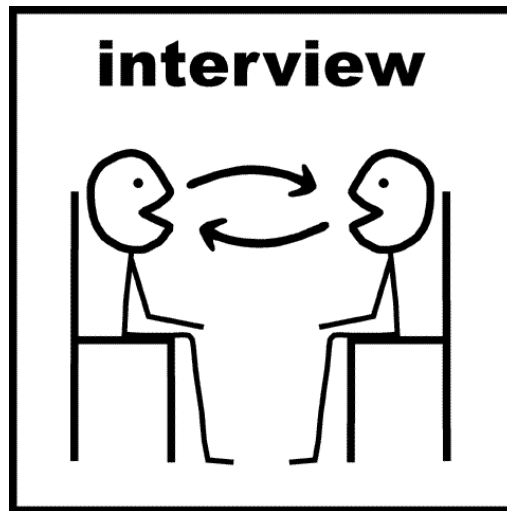


# BEHIND THE PIXELS

ISSUE 5



## **An Interview with Ilkka (by Mark)**

Ilkka started working for Habbo in 2000 before Habbo was even released. He was one of the very first employees hired by the company. During his time at Sulake he's worked on many different projects, from Lumisota (the pre-Habbo Snow War game), to Bobba, but mostly he has concentrated on Habbo and making Habbo look and feel how it is today.

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

**Ilkka :** I have been part of making Habbo to look and feel as it is and I've had input into how things work on the site. Basically, the way I see my work is that try to visually solve problems in a pleasant ways. My current title is AD / lead graphic designer.

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

**Ilkka:** I became a Habbo designer by a happy accident, I had no special training for this actual job. I had some sort of background from art / design school and then spent some years working on web design for a couple of online advertising agencies. Of course you have to have a basic understanding of graphics, colors, game production etc., but those things follow if you are really interested, motivated and have an eye for what you are doing.

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

**Ilkka:** Heh. It's pretty hard to mention just one. One thing that motivates me in my work, on every task is that I just have to love the idea what I am doing myself, so based on that, I am proud of them all. Some of my favorites are maybe the old HC furniture range where I tried to reach something unique, positive and mystic. Alhambra was quite a hectic project which had some good results, rubber duck, surf van, and the Xmas 2011 Swiss cottage Furni was quite a massive project after all. Also "Lodge", which was my first Furni range etc... The horse was also quite a challenging

project because I had no previous experience of drawing horses to draw on all, although the outcome of the horse became quite nice after all with the help of other talented colleagues.

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

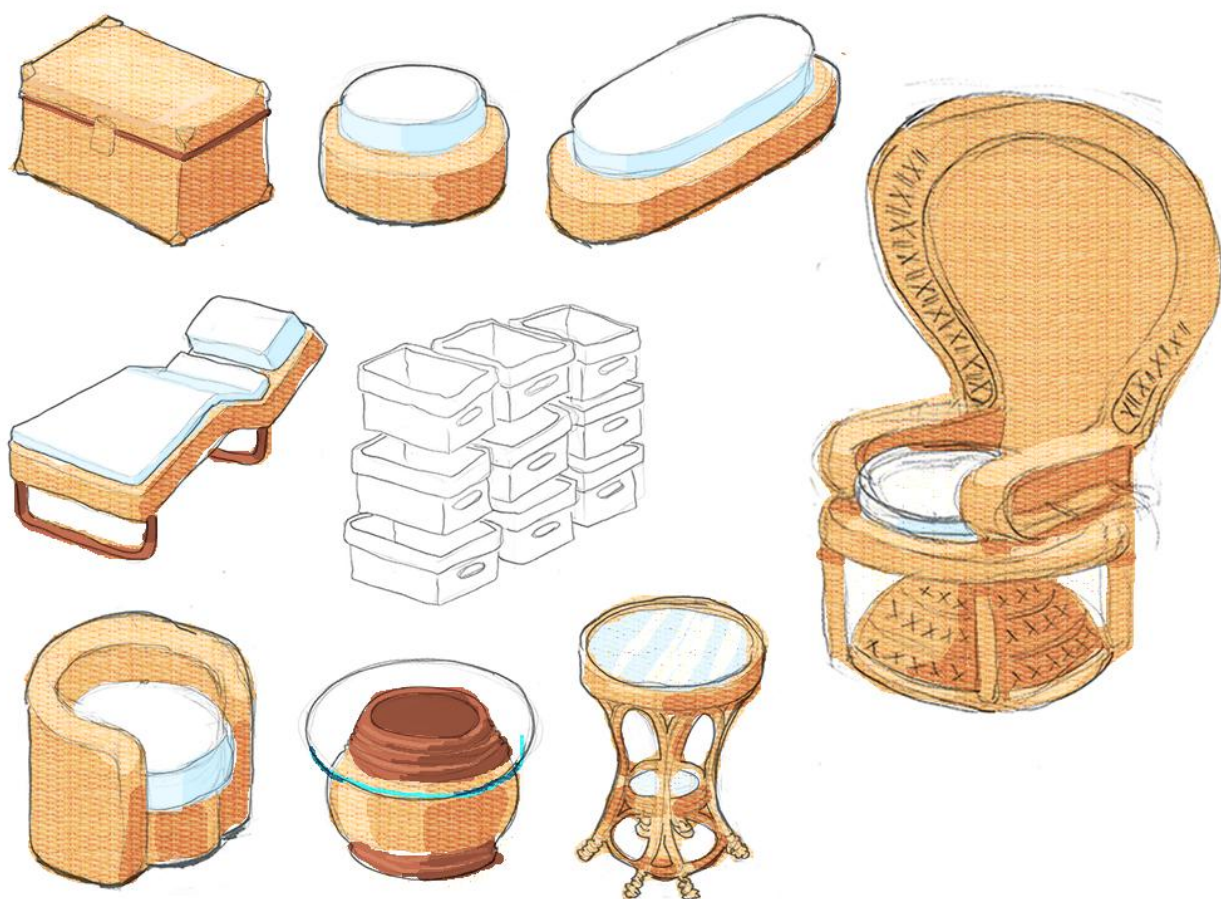
**Ilkka:** Doing furnitures for Habbo follows the typical design process. First you have the idea what you should do, then you do some searching from web and gather image references and maybe collect them to a "moodboard". i prefer to do a collage so it is easier to discuss to others what you are visually after. when overall guideline is ready, then start sketching the actual pieces. take some details here and there and combine some ideas to others. think the whole range. After the initial sketches I start to make pixel versions of the Furni. I usually start by making really low flat colored simple versions and then add some colors, textures and shades. Then there's the dull technical production part where you slice the Furni and add it to the system.

Here's example of the process with the "COCO" Furni set from last year. My goal was to make something more feminine and "summerish". Items and Furni that could exist in a faraway beach resort where you peacefully read a book and hear waves break on the shore.



*Above: A moodboard for the Coco Furni range.*

*Below: Sketches and images for the Coco Furni range.*



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

**Ilkka:** Keep it simple but detailed enough. Deliver fun. Every pixel should have meaning. One important thing is that you are not doing this alone as an egoist artist, but a member of a group. What you do and design should fit perfectly into the whole big picture.

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

**Ilkka:** There are a couple of funny and interesting ideas which would be nice to be done, but I might want to keep those as a secret... someday eventually those might even exist in Habbo for you to see.