



ILLUSTRATOR DIARY

Ellie Yong, known professionally under the super professional name of SillyJellie, is currently working as a concept artist and a freelancing illustrator. She loves immersing herself in her Little Mermaid world. She does various editorial illustrations, Children's books, posters, and murals. Her dog is her therapist.

We chatted with her to learn about her process creating this rich, unique design of the Aztec world.

TITLE



I played around with a few designs for the font and border frame, but in the end, readability is the most important key here. As always, I researched the material, looking up examples of stone work from the Aztec world to incorporate into my design. I mainly opted for simple shapes and designs.

GOD PROPHECY CARDS

HUITZILOPOCHTLI



For the art style, I wanted to make them seem sort of carved, thus deliberately making some of their features blocky looking. Wherever possible, I tried to incorporate actual Aztec art into the design, for example the Sun disk behind Huitzilopochtli and the maize design in the background. I had the fortuitous chance of coming across a book on Aztec culture during a book sale after accepting this project, which I snapped up immediately.

MICTECACIHUATL

Every god card has their own distinctive mood and colour, sunny yellow for Huitzilopochtli the sun God, watery blue for Tlaloc, and gloomy darks for Mictecacihuatl, Lady of the Dead. I didn't want her to look quite as festive as how she is often depicted on the Day of the Dead; rather, I referenced old stone sculptures and paintings of her, giving her a more humble traditional look and headdress. The skull and bone patterns are also reminiscent of how the Aztecs drew them.



CÓATLICUE



For Cōatlicue, apart from a giant statue with serpent heads showing what she looks like after she got her head cut off by her children (Yup history is bloody) there weren't as many other historical works of art or sculptures to reference her design on. I sort of played by ear on how a motherly figure could look. She is the mother of the moon, stars and sun, and in this visual, currently pregnant with the sun god (Huitzilopochtli) by a hummingbird feather which she tucked into her snake skirt.

QUETZALCÓATL

The headdresses of each God were deliberately made distinctive to their roles and name. Quetzalcóatl is known as the feathered serpent, and has the flashiest headdress of them all. I didn't want him to look more important than the others, thus I simplified his headdress while maintaining the "serpent and feather" bit of his description. The headdresses are made of feathers, but keeping to the intended style depictions, I kept the feathers looking like blocky carved stone.



TLALOC



Wherever possible I try to depict objects as how the Aztecs did them, but sometimes their depictions look too abstract for normal people to comprehend. Tlaloc's lightning strikes look vastly different from the zaggy zaps we associate with lightning—they look more like patterned curls. I think it was a good call that the publishers gave me feedback to change it. I still kept some of the Tlaloc's original lightning strikes at the back for the curious.

COVER ART



The composition for the box cover was actually super tricky to get right, but the idea is pretty simple. Giant serpent and the city (Tenochtitlan). Cōatl means snake, just in case you're wondering. I wanted to incorporate some game play into the box cover as well, where you'll see the winding feather serpent tail gradually transforming into game pieces as the decorative feathers fly off.

PLAY NOW

Cōatl is now available at your friendly local game store and on [Tabletopia](https://www.tabletopia.com/).

Follow Synapses Games on Facebook and Instagram for more information on Cōatl and other upcoming titles.
[@jeuxsynapsesgames](https://www.facebook.com/jeuxsynapsesgames)



www.jeuxsynapsesgames.com