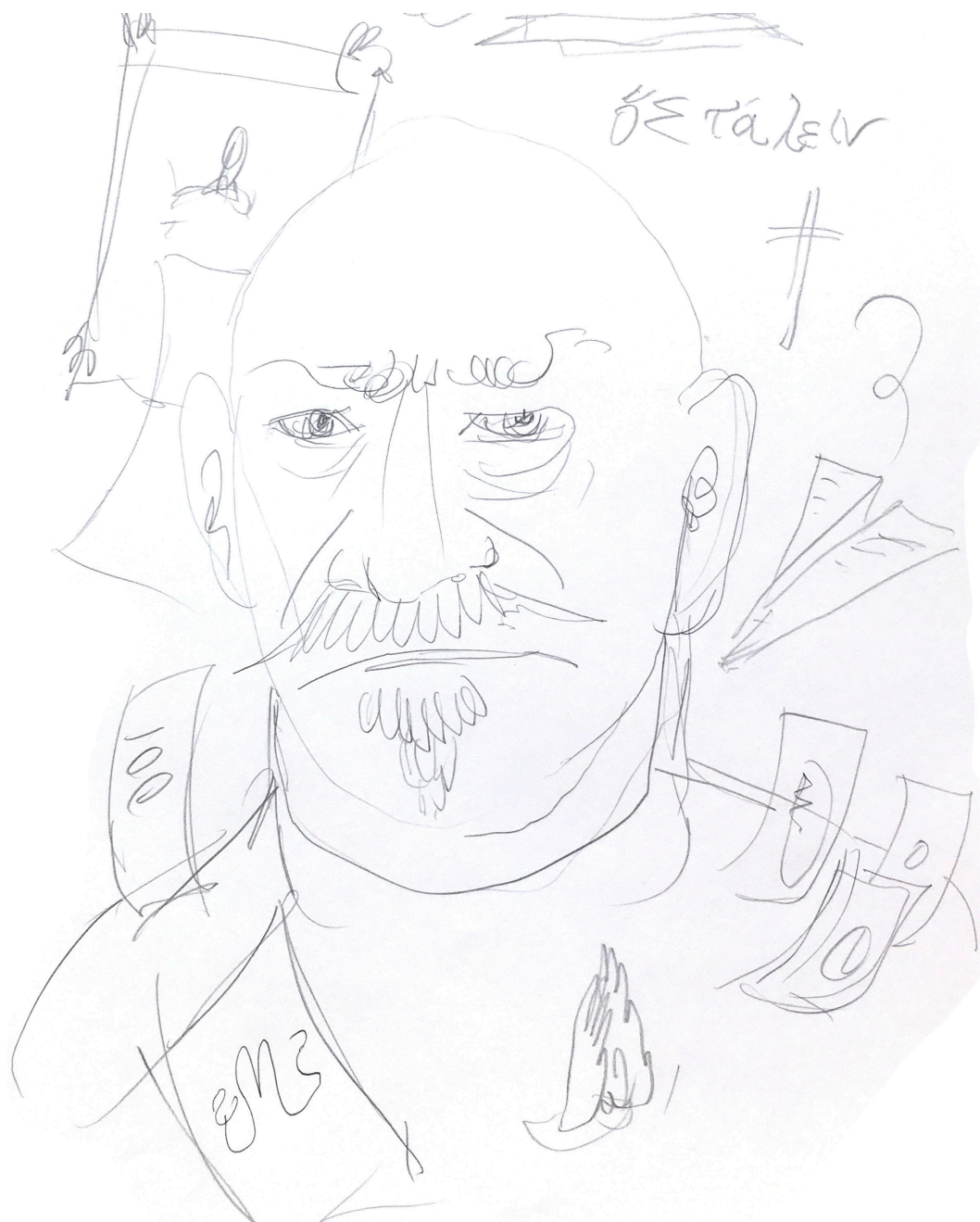




Ilona Partanen



What was the commission?

The commission was by Suomen Kuvalehti magazine for the article about letters sent to the past presidents of Finland. It was common that regular folk used to send letters including money, pleas and/or complaints to them, and waited for a response. There were four presidents all together which I illustrated.

What was the biggest challenge of this assignment?

The biggest challenge was to fit all the relevant info into the illustrations and make it work as a whole. I actually got some photos of the real letters and drew some info from them, tried to copy the handwritings, and took some weird little symbols from some of them, so that the diversity of the people would come through.



Describe your sketch process.

First I collect the moodboard of words, and from those words I start illustrating. The sketches to me are more like visual notes and the handprint of that is really messy at times. But I've tried to make it easy for the client so I often sketch a simple layout/idea picture of the illustration with pencil and simply colour it on the computer. In a way, my sketches offer the idea to the client, but don't tell too much of the final illustration, so that I have some freedom in the creating process.

Did the finished work turn out the way you thought it would?

It did. They are all quite vivid, colourful illustrations, and they worked well together, but also as individuals.

Did you have to go outside of your "comfort zone" in this commission?

This one was actually my first portrait commission that was based on real-life people, and I found it really enjoyable.

What is the first thing you do when you receive a commission?

At first I read the possible input I've got for the commission. Then I see if the client has any pre-wishes for the illustration and those things in mind start reading the input again. Then I usually write down a list of words that first, randomly, pop into my mind from the text. Then I see if there's some words I could connect to each other in an interesting way, to make the illustration more special. Only after that, do I start drawing some sketches.

