2d Artist

Udon Entertainment

A collaboration of world-wide talent funnelled into projects for some of the biggest industry names, such as Marvel and Capcom. We talk to Artist and Project Manager, Jim Zubkavich, to find out how things came about, and all about things to come...

Editorial

Welcome once again to 2DArtist magazine. Some really great stuff this month to tide you along until we get back from Siggraph, in San Diego. If any of you are coming along then please feel free to come see us at the 3DTotal Booth (#1847). This month, Udon Entertainment, another fantastic collection of artists from around the world, have kindly taken the time to answer some of our questions and also provide some amazing artwork, including this month's cover image from the Street Fighter series. Those of you who were furiously tapping SNES control pads back in '91 might recognise Vega with his Wolverine-like claws. Plus we have the usual Speed Paintings (this month is a little spooky), Custom Brush tutorial, Painting Tutorials, interviews and articles, and we have managed to provide you with a 130+ page edition of one of the best 2D magazines out there! Just a quick hint: some of the layouts include double-page spreads which we realise some of you may not be viewing in full. If this is the case, please go to the View menu in Acrobat and change Page Display to Two up continuous. This will allow you to view the magazine in a landscape format, showing both pages as if in a real printed mag. This way, you'll see 2DArtist and the amazing artwork in its full glory! Thanks again for purchasing the mag and supporting what we do. Enjoy. Ed.

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Warin Pismoke
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Wherever you see this symbol, click it to download resources, extras & even movies!

Contents

What's in This Month:

Contributing Artists

Every month, many creatives & artists around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist magazines. Here you can read all about them. If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist Magazines, please contact: ben@zoopublishing.com.

Anthony Cournoyer

Is on a quest to be known before he dies. He's programmed to do 2 things: drawing & watching illegally downloaded TV-series. He works 100% digitally, from sketching to colours. He fears the technological singularity which may produce drawing robots that will steal our jobs. He now owns a small business: Shaman's Stockar.

shaman.stockart@gmail.com
http://www.emptyroomstudios.com/a_cournoyer.php
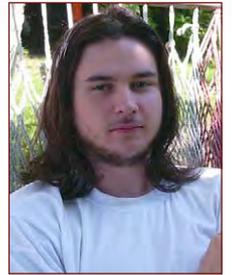
Stuart Jennett

Is a Freelance Concept designer, in the UK. He started out in comics before giving into his real passion: conceptual design & storyboarding. He made the move into the games industry and a few years later landed a Lead Concept/In-game Artist job at Warthog, working on the titles Starlancer & Bounty Hunter. He now freelances and has recently worked for Vivendi/Swordfish.

stuartjennett@hotmail.com
www.stuartjennett.com

Marie-Eve Tébrault

Is a 3D Artist in Montreal, Canada. She studied traditional & 3D animation at Cage du Vieux Montreal & graduated this year. She currently works mostly as a 3D animator, but still draws as much as she can when she has the free time.

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David Neale

After graduating from an Illustration degree in Hull, UK, in 2005, and teaching himself Photoshop, he has worked as a Freelance Consultant for EA games, has sold prints in galleries, & completed various freelance illustration projects. He's now represented by the Advocate Illustration Agency, and hopes to get more work on children's books. He'd would also like to move into concept design for animation. vejneale@hotmail.com

Min Yum

(Aka Bumskee) is a Concept Artist/Illustrator in Sydney, Australia. He's a self-taught artist currently working as a freelancer on concept art & illustrations. He discovered concept art in 2005 & started his career in the games industry with IR Gurus as a Concept Artist. He devotes much of my free time to his studies & planning his own graphic novel.

www.minart.net
minyum@gmail.com

Paul Davies

Is a freelance 2D Artist in the UK. He first started digital painting in 2004. He'd been drawing & painting with traditional media for years during college & university, & was excited by the new possibilities on offer from software. He's been freelancing since university & has had commissions from a variety of UK clients. He hopes to move into the computer games industry as a Concept Artist .

Paul@pdportraits.co.uk   www.pdportraits.co.uk
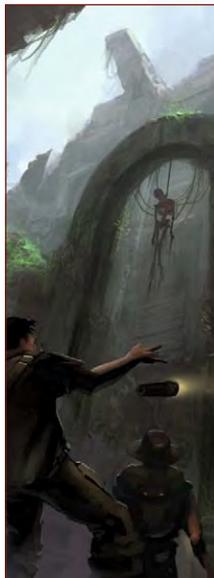
Anne Pogoda

(Aka Azurelle) is a 2D Concept Artist/ Illustrator, a student at the Art Akademy & a freelancer in Berlin, Germany. She made her first attempts in digital art in 2003. For the last 3 years she has been working on 2D illustrations & concept art with a Wacom Graphire in Photoshop & Painter. She will be learning ZBrush 3 & Maya & would like to do some game/film related work later on...

www.darktownart.de

János Kiss

Designs identities, brochures, flyers and so on, & sometimes illustrates for a small company in Budapest, Hungary. Apart from graphic design, he works to improve his digital painting, which is a pleasure for him. He usually works with Painter & ArtRage. Nowadays, his main goal is to develop his portfolio, demonstrating several styles & techniques.

janos.kiss@28thwing.com
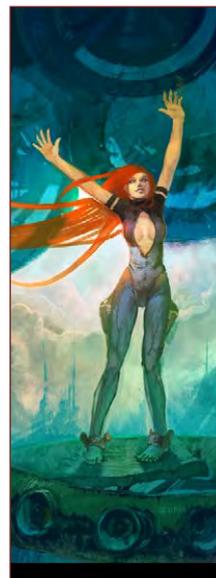
Marc Brunet

Is a regular 3D student in Montreal. He's been drawing ever since he could handle a pencil & it has now become more of a profession, working on various projects as an illustrator whilst he finishes his studies.

finalxii@msn.com

http://bluefley.cgsociety.org

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warin@zoopublishing.com

Richard Tilbury

Has had a passion for drawing since he was a couple of feet tall. He studied Fine Art & was eventually led into the realm of computers several years ago. His brushes have slowly dissolved in white spirit since the late nineties & now, alas, his graphics tablet has become their successor. He still sketches regularly & now balances his time between 2D & 3D, although drawing will always be closest to his heart...   ibex80@hotmail.com
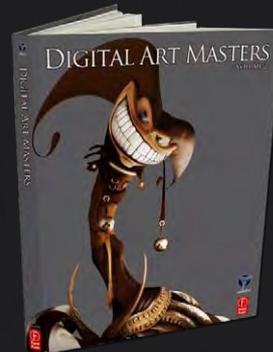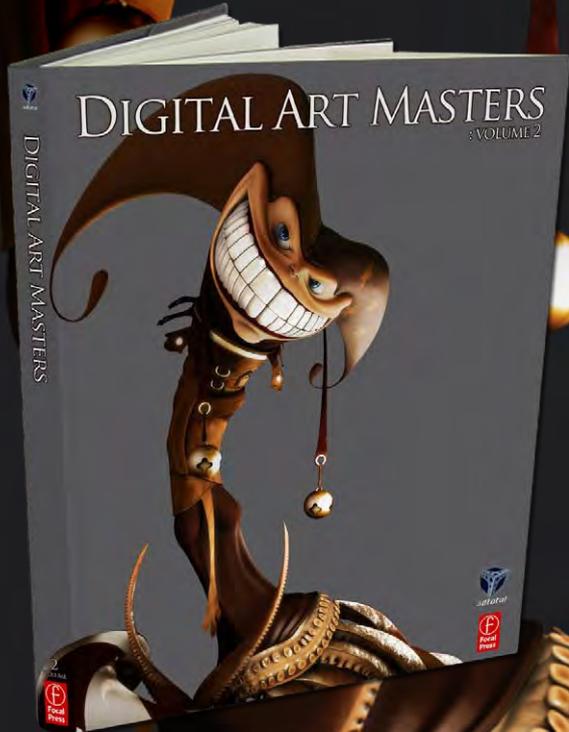
In this interview, we see how Anthony has been getting on as an established illustrator and how he uses manga influences in his work…

ANTHONY COURNOYER

"All I wanted to do was to make a lot of money by being some hot shot business guy, or whatever. However, my artistic needs became too intense to hold off."

ANTHONY COURNOYER

Hi. Thanks for talking to us. Can you remember the first time you thought, "I want to be an artist"?

Although I have been drawing for as long as I can remember, I made the decision to become one, professionally, 5 years ago. Before that, I never considered making a career as one because I feared the lack of income. All I wanted to do was to make a lot of money by being some hot shot business guy, or whatever. However, my artistic needs became too intense to hold off.

What first got you into a 2D animation school?

By looking over at the courses that the program provided, I had this strong feeling that I could've drawn anything I wanted afterwards. Back then, I had very little knowledge of perspective, character construction and design. Even though I was aware of my talent, I knew I was light-years away from what I could really achieve. So the 2D animation program was, to me, more than animation - it emphasized everything.

You list manga/anime as a starting point for you to discover your style. Which manga/anime features, in particular?

At first, I wasn't influenced by any anime show/ manga in particular, except perhaps Dragon Ball. I was inspired by the general look of anime and its aesthetics. It was only as a 2D student that I had soaked inspiration from some specific anime/manga titles, which were Animatrix, Ghost in the Shell, and Gun. After graduating, I went for a more American look. I'm not much into anime anymore...

So what influences you, currently?

Mainstream comic books, mostly for the inking which is a recent interest I have gained. Feng Zhu, a popular concept artist, is a great source of inspiration from a design point of view. I must also mention WarCraft art, too - I dig the style a lot. I am still influenced by Gun, whenever I'm in my "cyberpunk" mood.

Your artwork so far has been very comic book based and features some crazy characters! Is this commercial work or personal?

Everything I have done for the past 6 years has been exclusively commissioned work, but it's the kind of work I would've done for a personal purpose, too. I have clients that share the same interest as me, from a design and thematic point of view.

Being chosen for work by clients because they wish to use your style must be a real bonus! Do you get a lot of creative freedom from a brief?

Yeah a lot. I have the privilege to be trusted and my client takes for granted what I give them. So I sometimes take that opportunity to explore further than I would without this kind of artistic liberty.

What do you do for money at the moment?
Freelance work for an independent RPG publisher. Although they have a limited budget, I can make a fair amount of income by working fast.

As a freelancer, you must get a very varied range of projects... What sort of projects have you had over the last year?
It's not varied at all, in fact. It keeps on switching back from sci-fi, to fantasy and modern. I always get to keep my style, too. I have the liberty to choose what I want to do. I often decline commissions that are out of my interest. This is because I have a very good client network, all set in the same range of interest, so I get to do cool stuff all the time and never get bored!

And how do these projects compare to the video game industry that you worked in previously?

In that video game company, most of my work was meant to inspire 3D artists. That's what concept art is mostly all about. Also, you end up working for the same game title for several months. Right now, what I do is still concept art but it gets to be published, unlike in the game industry. I also have a lot more control on the result since there is no art director. Also, a project may take no more than a couple of days to do, which is what I like about it - a short and sweet ride!

You have joined 'Empty Room Studios'; an on-line artists' agency type company. How does it work?

Basically, you have access to a private forum where some new projects pop up once in a while. You choose the ones you want to do, and that's it! You also show your progress in the same forum where you get tips and advice from everyone.

And you knew a few of the existing members from Deviant Art. How important are sites such as Deviant and conceptart.org to the future of digital painting?

It's a great way to evaluate your progress as an artist. Without these sites, an artist can drift away into their own artistic bubble and never really know how good they really are. Art exists in the eyes of others. These websites are important tools for any artist seeking improvement. The average artist is, in my opinion, a lot more skilful than the ones that lived before the arrival of the Internet...

Do you have one piece of advice for any aspiring freelancers out there?

Building up a client network is a great way to achieve a certain degree of stability. Gather enough clients so you have a consistent work flow. Be methodical and work fast! And make sure you use PayPal, because checks are lame!

Anthony Cournoyer

For more work by this artist please visit:
www.emptyroomstudios.com/a_cournoyer.php and
http://sc4v3ng3r.deviantart.com/
Or contact him at: shaman.stockart@gmail.com
Interviewed by: Ben Barnes

STUART JENNETT

With a background in comic book illustration, involving Marvel UK and 2000 AD, Stuart Jennet then broadened his horizons and branched into the games sector spanning companies such as Sony / Psygnosis and Warthog. With eleven years of production experience, he is now offering his skills as a freelance artist from his base in England...

STUART JENNETT

Similar to a number of other artists we have interviewed, your career path seems to have started with comics, moved into the games sector, and then eventually on to a broader freelance position. Why is it do you think that comic artists often switch to games and then perhaps go it alone?

I think for the more design driven artists, the games industry - especially in the mid nineties - offered more of an arena to be creative in. It also seemed to fill the sci-fi/fantasy film industry hole that we've always had here in the UK, and of course it was a new and promising industry. The thing with most projects in the games biz is that concept guys are only required at the start of the project, and once that role has been fulfilled you tend to find yourself getting involved more and more in the 3D side of things, which can be really rewarding in itself but for me it personally wasn't as fulfilling as the creative rush of the design process, hence my move back to freelance…

It is interesting to hear you mention the sci-fi/fantasy genre as it is one that crops up frequently amongst digital artists. In view of the fact that everything and anything is a potential subject, why the universal fascination with these two topics and elaborate on the "hole" that you refer to?

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JENNETT.03

SUPERNATURALS

JENNETT 07

The arena of sci-fi and fantasy allows the artist's imagination to let rip, as you can place the scenario/characters etc. within whatever context you see fit. I'm not saying there isn't any artistic freedom when dealing with real world scenarios but from a professional stand point, especially in games, you're usually asked to inject a flavour of futuristic/fantasy into most things anyway. I guess the "hole" I'm referring to is the apparent lack of financial support within the British film industry for pretty much anything that brushes with sci-fi or fantasy themes; I mean, look at the US and European markets - we just can't compete. Things are starting to improve though, although for a long time it seemed that if it wasn't a stuffy period drama you were developing it would never see the light of day. There are brighter days ahead though, with the likes of Shaun of the Dead and Dr Who proudly waving the flag, shows we still have a lot of talent and imagination here to export, just too few projects to pump it into.

Your work covers a wide spectrum of subjects and genres and demonstrates more than one approach to working. How would you sum up your style/styles and who do you regard as being an influence?
I'd like to think that my style retains certain energy, is tight enough without being too sloppy, and doesn't lose sight of its objective/brief - whether

JENNETT 07
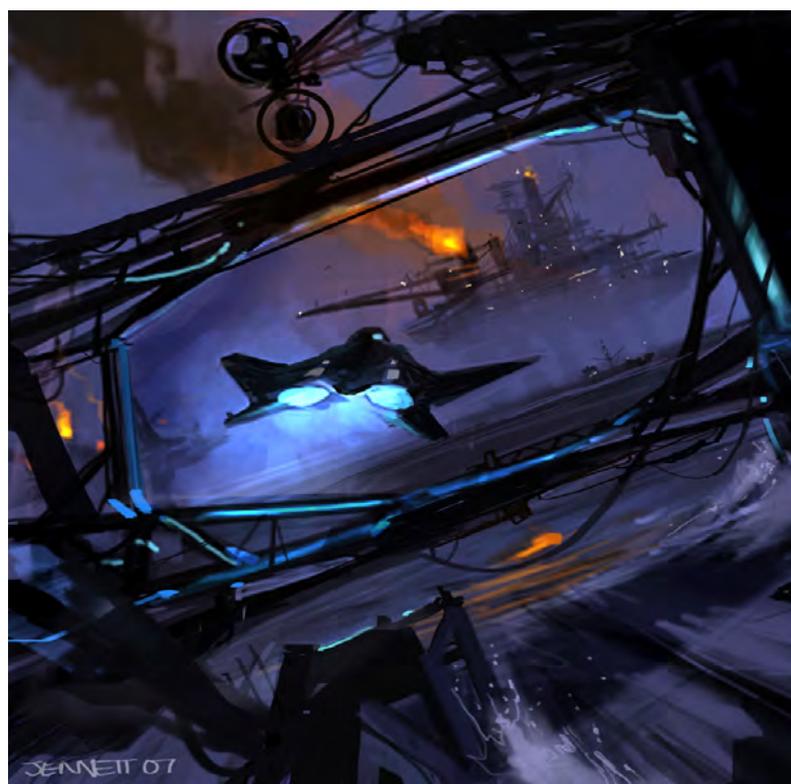
it be a pure design sketch or a finished production piece. I guess some of the approach depends on the genre you're dealing with at the time. Growing up, I was influenced by most of the usual suspects; Syd Mead, Harryhausen etc., but I think it was Joe Johnston and Ralph McQuarrie who really burnt my eyes out. I couldn't get enough of Johnston's markers as they had such a funky rawness to them, and McQuarries work was just the painted equivalent for me: dynamic with such rich palettes. At the moment, I'm really into Michael Turner - his stuff is so sketchy and bold.

It is self evident from looking at your portfolio that your style varies according to certain subject matter, but can you give us some specific examples of how this may dictate your approach in terms of materials and the overall look? Sure, as always it depends on the brief to a degree, for example the work I did for Supernaturals was set within a 19th century time frame so I felt it immediately lent itself to more sepia based tones in terms of palette, as if the images themselves were somehow dated. This approach helps with the design pitch as it subconsciously plays on visual frames of reference and in the mind of the viewer helps lock the characters and design within that time and universe.

Your personal projects feature several cityscapes and a retro looking detective. Are there any Blade Runner references in there at all?

Oh definitely, that was kind of the brief: Blade Runner without the product placement. This was for a writer friend of mine who was playing around with a real hard-core, future-noir piece. I only spent a day or so on this stuff but it was kind of fun... Thing is, you can't even go near that subject without referencing Blade Runner - it's too seminal.

Which other films do you regard as being benchmarks in shaping a creative style that has been widely referenced?

Star Wars of course; it changed everything in the 70's, but in some ways though I felt it ended up referencing itself in the new trilogy through most of the other sci-fi genres it generated. Lord Of the Rings has, for now, at least defined the quintessential medieval fantasy look and I'm sure will influence many films for decades to come. It's a strange one though as the sci-fi movie landscape as it exists today is still quite recent; I can already see Minority Report starting to influence nearly everything - it'll be looked back on as being as influential as Blade Runner, decades down the line. The biggest influence aesthetically in the games industry
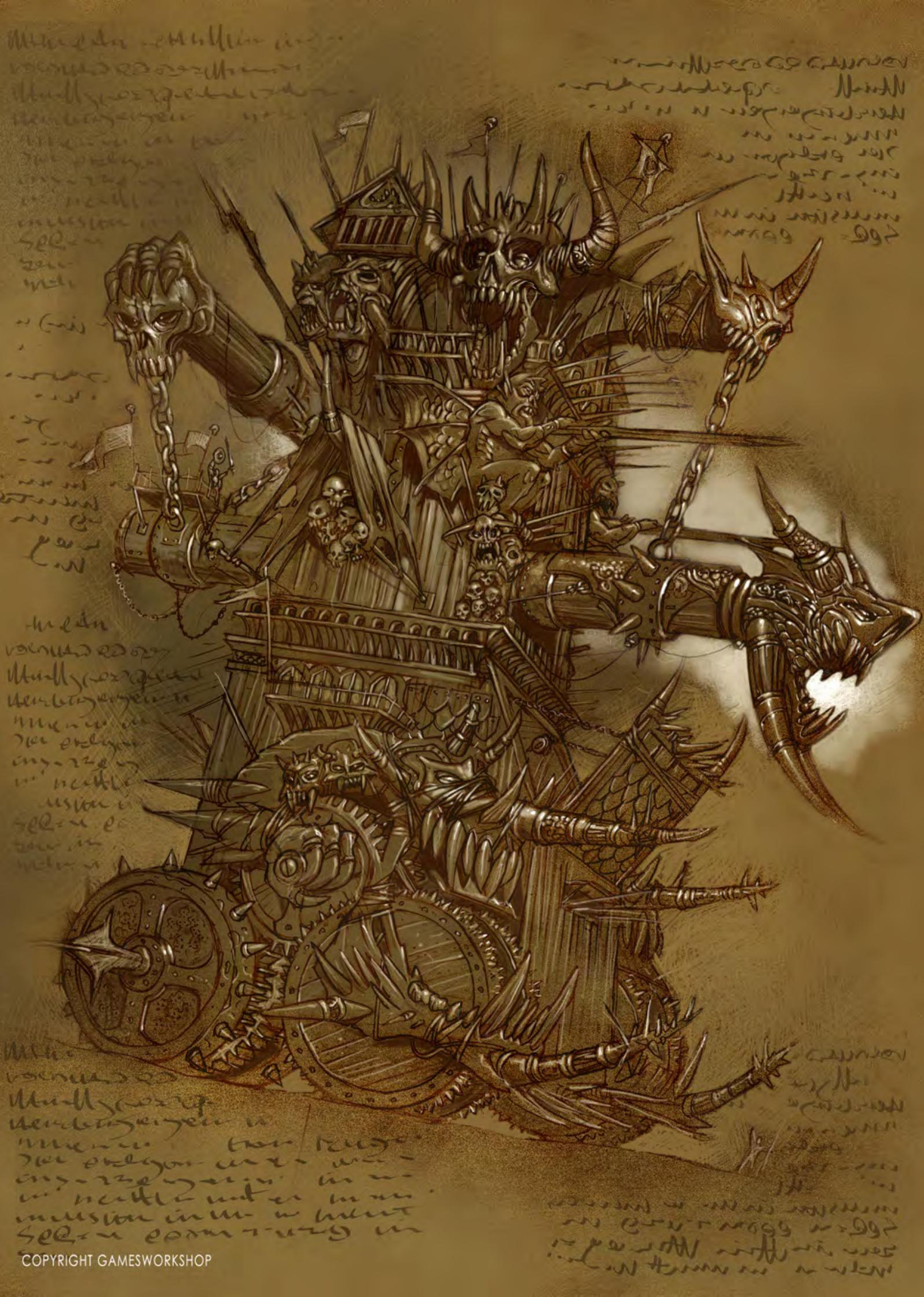
though HAS to be Aliens. That movie especially has to have been riffed more than any other. Where would modern sci-fi games be without marines, dropships, bevelled rusted panels with sunken screws and, of course, the obligatory chevrons?

Where do you generally draw your inspiration from?

Hmmm. In a professional context, a client might already have their own source material and want you to adhere to that so it can be a tough one; if not there will usually be some kind a brief. I kind of like these briefs though as they usually push you left field of the work you'd be doing if left to your own devices, as you can retreat all to easily to your comfort zone if you don't watch it and these can be the most rewarding jobs. I guess for my own projects though I like to have some kind of story idea that I can pull the artwork from. It helps a lot in selling something if it looks as if an object or character exists or has evolved within its own universe; you can just bring a lot

JENNETT 05

JENNETT 05_

of little details into play that ping stuff to life, although sometimes just by doodling a design itself can feedback into the story concept and it kind of self perpetuates itself. I do like mixing up different genres and aesthetics though, such as medieval meets 50's sci-fi or WW2 meets the prehistoric age, etc.

With your interest in story led imagery, have you any plans to make a graphic novel at all and could you also provide some useful tips/guidelines to any readers keen to explore the idea?
Hmmm, I'd never say "never", but at the moment it's more the design side of things I'd like to focus on. I do have a lot of story based ideas but they seem to end up more and more in a written form at the moment. I think if

any readers wanted to have a go I'd be more inclined to do it as an on-line exercise, rather than look at taking it through the printers just purely from a cost/distribution angle.

Can you tell us a little about your Lockdown series and explain to our readers what the project is all about?
This was one of the first freelance gigs I did. As far as I could tell, it was for a proposed theme park somewhere in the States. I only did a few weeks work on this, visualizing the proposed entertainment domes. I had quite a limited brief so I'm sorry I can't tell you anymore about this project's current status - would be great to see this come to fruition though!

Where do you feel your strengths and weaknesses lie as an artist?

I feel at the moment that my main weakness is the fact that, in the initial planning stages, I still find myself flitting back to using paper when I'd really like to just work completely on the computer. The painting side of things I find relatively easy, I just don't like dealing with my line work straight off on the PC. I guess I like the immediacy of pencil on paper and I can also rotate the page! Strength wise, I just hope there's nothing too "twee" about my work; I just want it to be bold and memorable…

If there was one thing you could leave behind as a "creative legacy" what form would it take?

Obviously it would be to take a project to the big screen, or even to TV, in one form or another. I guess that's what we all work towards; if people liked it though that would be a bonus. Either that or the fact that I made the best chocolate chilli known to mankind!

Stuart Jennett

For more work by this artist please visit: www.stuartjennett.com

Or contact him at: stuartjennett@hotmail.com

Interviewed by: Richard Tilbury

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- Mike Stern
Animation Mentor Graduate
DreamWorks Feature Animation

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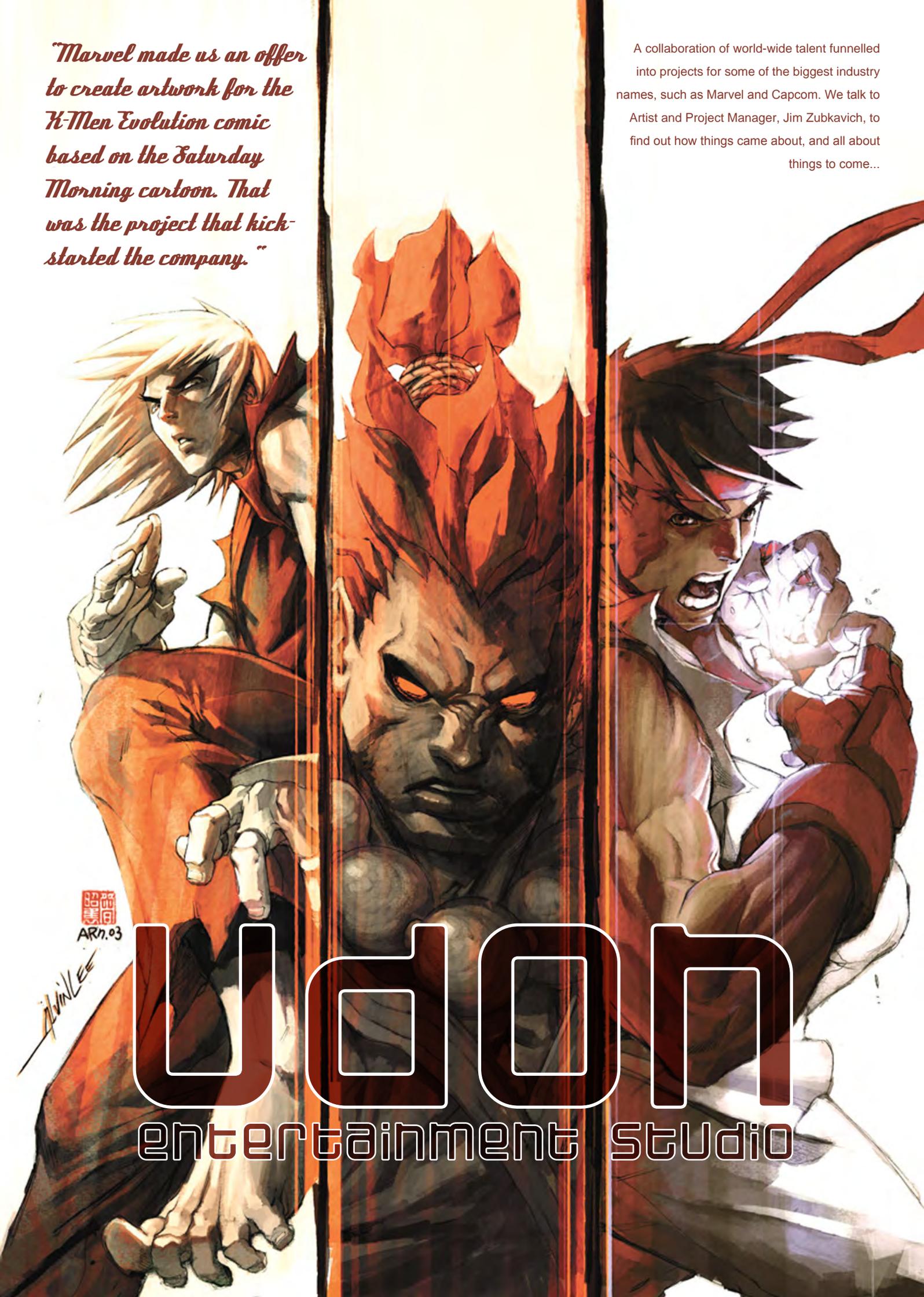
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"Marvel made us an offer to create artwork for the X-Men Evolution comic based on the Saturday Morning cartoon. That was the project that kick-started the company."

UDON
Entertainment Studio

Hi Jim, can you tell us a little bit of background about your company, UDON Entertainment? When were you founded and what made you 'go for it'?

UDON was founded in 2000 as a group of artists with similar goals. We were a creative services studio doing licensing artwork for Marvel comics. Over the past 7 years we've expanded to publishing our own books as well as creating magazine artwork, toy designs, RPG art, and design art for video games. We've always loved comics and video games. Getting the chance to work with the companies we grew up loving is a total thrill for us. Marvel made us an offer to create artwork for the X-Men Evolution comic based on the Saturday Morning cartoon. That was the project that kick-started the company.

How many artists are working for you now? Many nationalities? Different locations?

It swells or shrinks depending on the number of projects we have on the go at any one time. We have well over 20 artists regularly working with us digitally from all over the world. Although the majority of our crew is based around Toronto, Canada, we have 8-9 people in the U.S., a couple of artists in Korea, one in Australia and one in Norway. With the time differences and late hours I'm sure there's UDON work being done at all hours of the day or night.
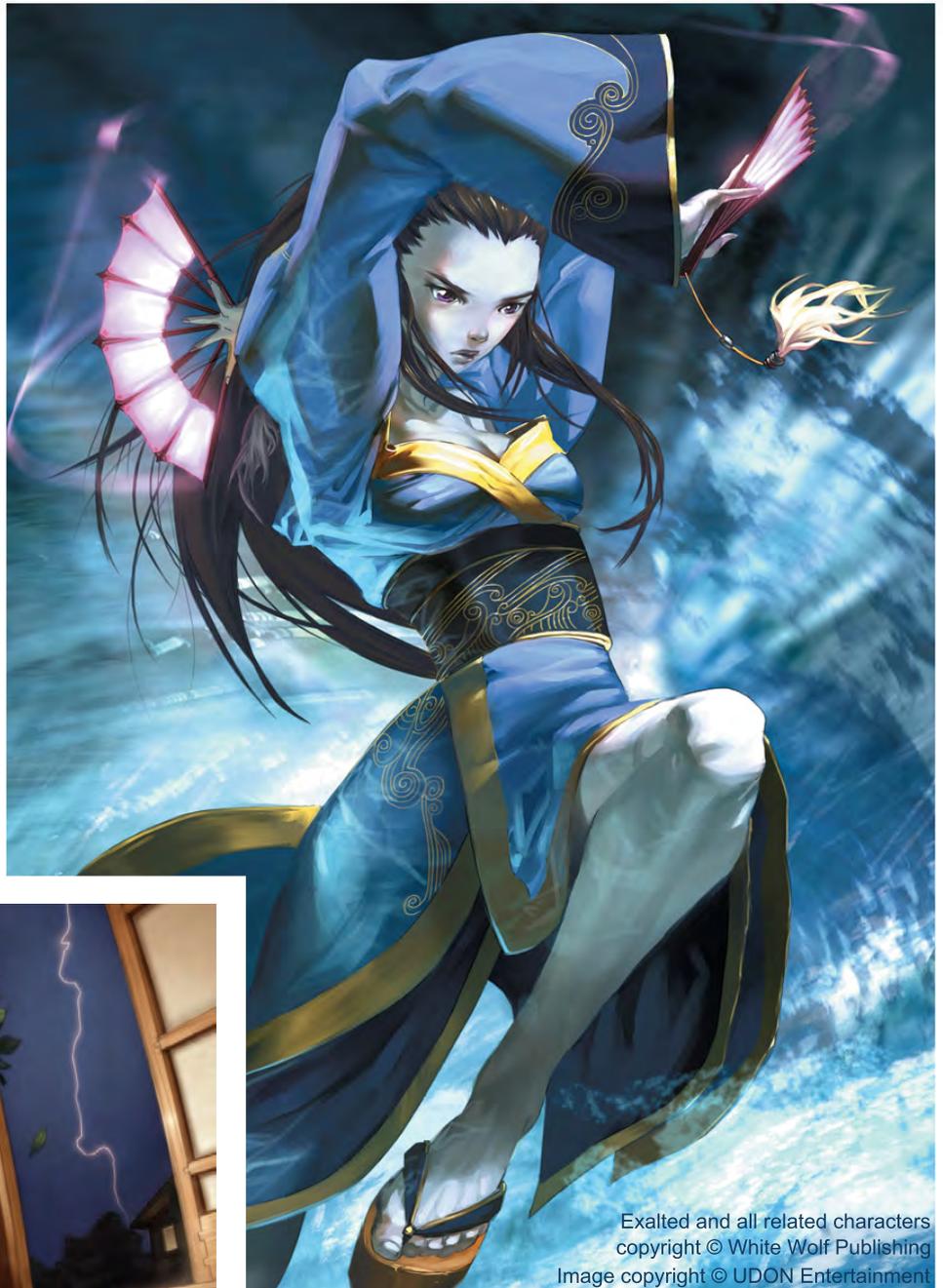
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Looking at UDON's impressive portfolio, **http://www.udonentertainment.com**, it looks like you tackle a lot of different projects for many kinds of media. Do you have one favourite type of project to work on that works best, either for your team's skills or what is best financially?

Video game artwork is probably the most satisfying for us, right now. The industry has become completely mainstream, so our work gets out to the widest possible audience. Our style suits the new generation of games, without ignoring the designs and tradition that hooked us when we were young.

Is this the concept stage for games or the actual in-game artwork?

Both actually, depending on the company. We just finished up an extensive project conceptualizing and designing characters for an as-yet-unannounced Konami video game. Now that the core design is done, we're moving on to in-game and advertising artwork for the game. With a project like Capcom's high definition re-

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release of Super Street Fighter II Turbo, we're doing the main designs for the sprites as well as character select, intro and ending artwork.

Do you have a big enough client base now to continually keep enough work coming through the door, or do you have to search and pitch to new clients all the time?

After the first few years of UDON, we finally hit a point where we didn't really have to look for new clients anymore. Our Capcom artwork in particular has helped secure our reputation and opened up a lot of opportunities. There's always a series of new projects developing and clients getting in touch with us about being involved. Some projects kick-off immediately, and others can take many months to come to fruition, but with so many always on the go we're able to stay extremely busy.
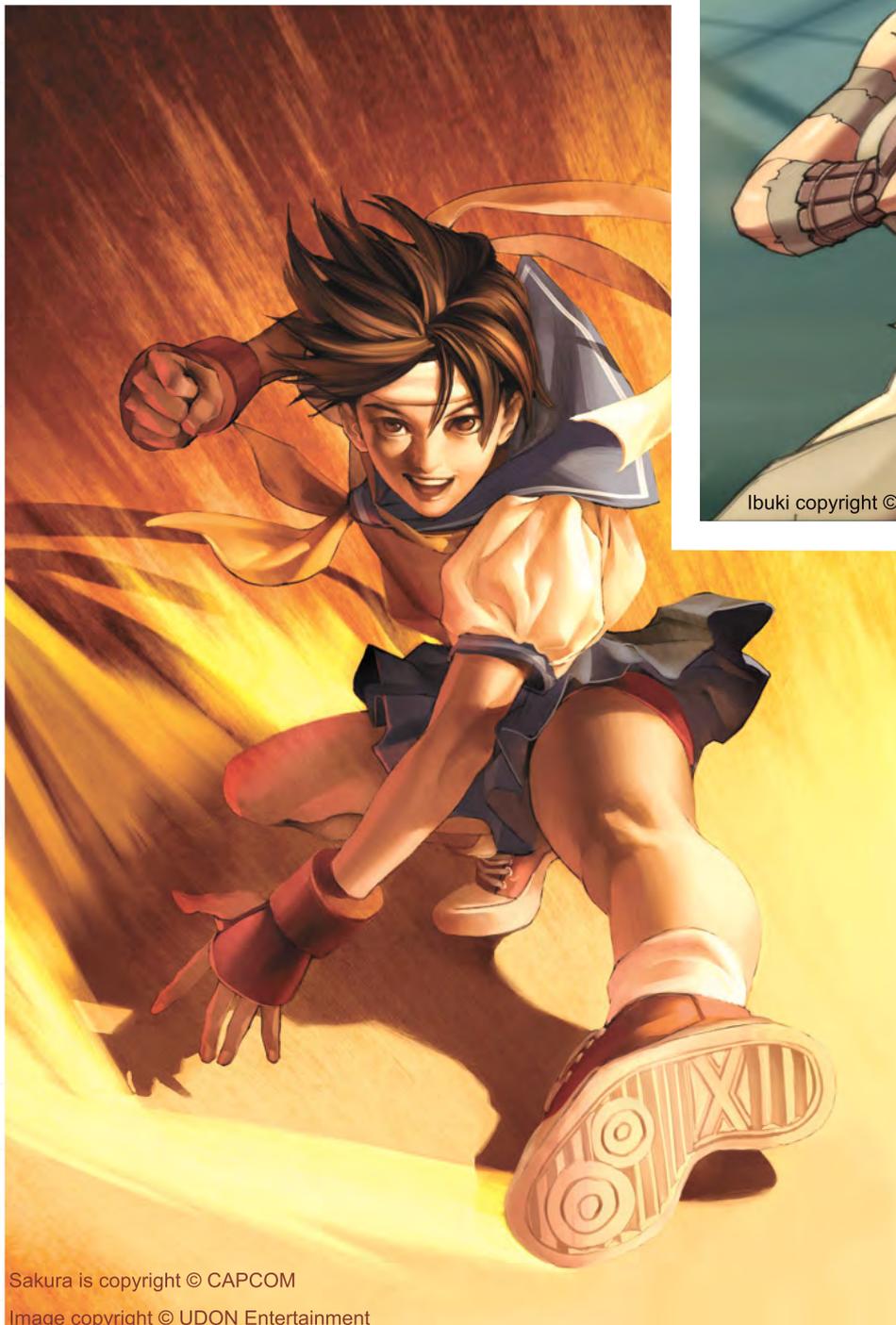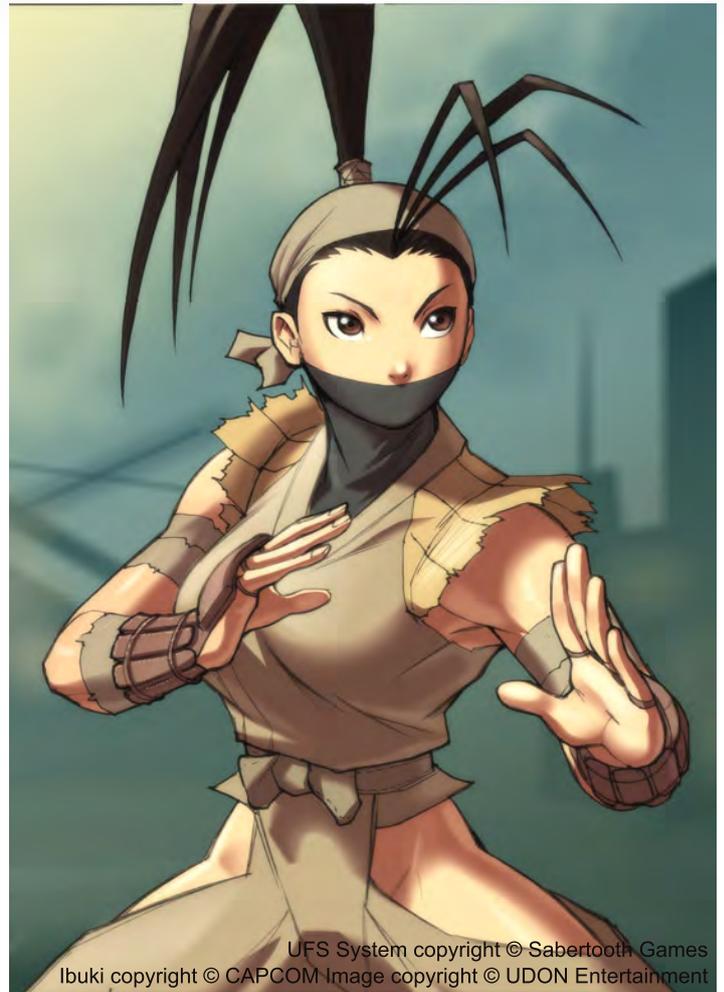

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Do you find you have to put a lot of work into pitching for projects which can sometimes result in a waste of time?

Well, we're in a spot now where we're not expending a tonne of resources on pitches. Our client list and portfolio samples are usually more than enough to secure a project at this stage. Companies approach us based on what they've seen from us before, so we usually don't have to prove that we can do the work properly. Most of the pitches at this point are negotiating rates, schedules and which artists are available to work on certain projects. We try not to do artwork on spec any more as it devalues what we're doing and makes the studio look desperate for the work, which we're not.

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Ibuki copyright © CAPCOM Image copyright © UDON Entertainment

What has been your most satisfying project to date? What would be a dream project you could wish for in the future?

Creating in-game artwork for Capcom's Fighting Evolution has probably been our biggest project so far. Working directly with Capcom Japan and contributing to one of their fighting games was something we never imagined being involved with. As far as dream projects go, we're actually working on one of them right now but we can't discuss details. Otherwise, we'd love to develop our own original stories/characters and see

As you work with a lot of comic and superhero imagery, I will think up a funny, final appropriate question for you: if your super power was the ability to replace your colleague's skin and hair with 2 other substances, what would you do to them to amuse yourself?

Umm, bubblegum and caramel? Fire and ice? I really don't know...

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STEVE ARGYLE

Geisha, Sake and Samurai are just a few of the topics that fascinate Steve Argyle, whose work comprises of a mixture of both eastern and western themes. He works in both 2D and 3D and talks to 2DArtist about how the two disciplines inform one another and help him with his projects...

STEVE ARGYLE

Can you tell our readers a bit about yourself, your background, interests, and how you came to be a digital artist?

I grew up in suburban Utah, so from an early age I was desperately trying to escape reality. Comics, cartoons, RPGs and video games - whatever it took to make me forget the colossal drollery of the Mormon capital. Just kidding. Utah is a great place to live and grow up! There is a lot here to inspire an artist. There's the

famous red rock, ski resorts, and so much in between. But the best part is a very supportive community. I was always encouraged in things that interested me, regardless of the glaring lack of ability I often displayed - especially in sports. To this day, I have a better chance of accidentally swallowing a baseball than hitting one. I don't know if it's the LDS church, or if I just got lucky, but I've always been surrounded by exceptional people here. So my background is a lot of misspent school days doodling on purple Xerox homework, watching Voltron and Thundercats, and reading X-men. At some point, I had the misguided idea that being able to draw Wolverine might get girls to notice me, and I began to study art. My dad has always had a sixth sense for how to best approach any endeavour, and he bought me some Andrew

Loomis books, along with Human Anatomy for the Artist and a handful of other books that I still believe to be the best resources out there. I won't leave you in suspense: drawing better did nothing for my mid-pubescent lack of skill with the ladies. Later, at the University of Utah, with the notion of going into the medical field, it dawned on me: I wasn't nearly smart enough for this. I had been doing odd art jobs for extra cash, and I heard about a local 3D graphics studio that was hiring. I pretty much tricked them into hiring me, and eventually worked from grunt to art lead. That got me familiar with digital media and caffeine. After a few years there, I worked for Sony on Playstation games, and at some point decided to trade the benefits and security there for the mania, starvation and stress-induced insomnia of the freelance world.

Has becoming a freelance artist proved to be a good move then? Can you explain the difficulties in establishing yourself in this arena?

I'm very happy as a freelancer. I don't think it's for everyone though, but it fits me perfectly. I've always been more oriented on the quality of my art over the amount of hours spent at work. I like that I can work during my relentless bouts of insomnia. I can take two weeks vacation on little notice without long negotiations with a boss. I can work in my underwear and listen to whatever crappy music I like. The best thing for me is that I have some control over what I work on, and that the work is a variety of subjects, styles and media. There are downsides, of course. During my time on salary at various studios I knew a lot of great artists who tried the freelancing route for a year or whatever and hated it. Your income fluctuates, and your volume of work goes from overwhelmed to famine and back again. There's a lot of time lost to book keeping, negotiating, and managing your own business. And you have to rely on your own determination to keep working. It's not always easy to push through the latest batch of bewildering revisions to a project when there's no-one looking over your shoulder, stopping you from sneaking out for a day of skiing. It's my style, or at least while I can deal with the instability of it. Maybe if I find myself suddenly the father of icosatuplets or something then I'll look for a really good long-term job, preferably with free diapers and staff psychiatrists.

Establishing yourself as a freelancer can be tough. Even though there's plenty of work to be had, finding the art directors can be tricky. The higher profile the projects they handle, the harder it is to get in contact with them. Several of the directors I work with have email filters that will block anyone who isn't on their contact list, so even if you had their information, you couldn't submit a portfolio. Well, you could, but you would never hear back, get discouraged and quit; taking that job repairing sprinkler systems with your cross-eyed cousin and nurturing a hatred for the art you once

loved. The Internet is a gift from the gods to aspiring artists: there are hodjillions of forums where artists and directors of all calibres gather and exchange words and images. You might not know who's who, but some pretty high profile folk are often lurking. Also, gallery sites have become the new "book" for some art directors. And last but certainly not least, online callouts for printed gallery books. You can submit your artwork for publication in Spectrum or Expose, or whatever, no matter who you are, very easily. I believe that many ADs are using these to look for new talent. However you get a gig, the next step is to be professional. Primadonna artists who argue with their clients quickly find themselves wearing a uniform, staring down a spatula at a dozen searing burger patties. There's a bit of a stereotype that looms around aspiring freelancers. Be sure to be counted as a seasoned artist, even if you're not, by making sure you're on time, with no excuses or substitutions, and with your highest quality work.

A good portion of your work refers to traditional Japanese culture. What is it about this that fascinates you?

Geisha, sake, swords... What's not to like? I think I'm drawn to the imagery and stories of feudal Japan because it was a highly refined culture, with values and beliefs different from what I'm used to as a western gaijin dog. The intricate detail and care that went into so much of their art, culture, and daily lives is stunning. Honour, discipline, and sacrifice are the principles of the heroic tales of the Samurai. But mostly, the appeal is girls wearing nothing but full-body tattoos...

Would it be fair to label you a character artist or do you regard yourself as an artist who can cover all subject matter?
Characters are what interest me most. I do like all sorts of subject matter, although I'll admit to never really honing my skill painting cute little kittens with fairy wings, or people with animal heads. Most of my freelance work so far has been characters, but in previous jobs I've done a lot of vehicles, environments and monsters. I sometimes miss having a broader set of artistic challenges.

If you could choose a particular project to work on what would it be, and why?
Right now, I'm really excited about StarCraft II. I'd love to work on that. In general, I'd like to do more concept work for film and games. I'm a fan of the cyberpunk genre, and I rarely have a

chance to work on that sort of thing. It can be a little hard to break out of a "typecast" situation in art. I started out with a lot of Samurai themes in my art, and many clients come to me because they've seen that work, so I do more Samurai for them, so then there's more in my portfolio, and it snowballs... (Don't get me wrong, I love Asian art. There's just so much more that I also enjoy.)

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given ?

"Get out of art before you've wasted any more time on it. You obviously don't get it, and you never will." I was told this my first year in college by a snooty professor who didn't like me because I didn't fit into his definition of an artist. I learned that day that opinion was the artist's first and perhaps greatest obstacle, and decided that my only honest critic would be myself. I have a real pet peeve about this idea of "talent." A thing that you either have or you don't, from birth. You can cultivate it if you have it, but if you don't have it to begin with, you're wasting time. Sure, some people take to this or that quicker than others. Some have more experience. But I believe everyone is capable of fulfilling their own wishes. And naysayer's who themselves failed, attack the ambitions of those who are inexperienced, too often succeeding in killing a dream.

We get one life and we should be in charge of it. And bugger with a rusty railroad spike what anyone says to stop you! Ian McCaig, a concept artist at ILM, has the philosophy on art I most relate to. He said, and I'm paraphrasing because I don't remember exactly, that "Art is a language we learn and use even before we learn to speak. As children, we all scribbled, and often could draw a recognisable house, dog, person, or whatever, before we knew the words for them. Everyone knows this language, it's just that many of us are out of practice in 'speaking' it." So maybe that's the better bit of advice? Whatever you want to do - art, music, accounting, whatever - there's never a "too-late". You may need more time, you may be inexperienced, you may start out absolutely and laughably, bad. The hospital staff may know you by first name because of how many times you've come in with a paint brush lodged in your ear, or choking on a guitar string. But, so what? That is a stage we go through. Bad is where all good things start.

You portfolio covers both 3D and 2D, but where do you see your strengths and weaknesses with regard to both?

Even though my portfolio is full of 2D stuff, and the 3D stuff is mostly out of date, I'd say I'm stronger in 3D. I have a lot more experience with it. But most of my 3D work is under NDA's until the stars burn out. So what I consider my best stuff isn't public. My 2D weaknesses are thus: I have trouble keeping things loose with a natural feeling flow, and letting brushstrokes and paper texture show through like in a traditional painting. My composition could use some work, and I'm really slow with perspective, so half the time I fake it and then wonder why everything looks a little wonky later. Unless I'm doing an environment, I tend to neglect background. Too much of my work is single characters in action poses. But hey, that's what I get asked for! I think my strengths in 2D are with lighting, and a decent sense of volume and depth. I like my rendering style, even though many of the artists I'm a fan of are looser. I think I manage to bring life and vibrance to many of my paintings. When I have time for it, which is sadly seldom the case, I feel I have a knack for details. Also, I can juggle cats without getting scratched. In 3D, I'm a very fast modeller, and I think that having
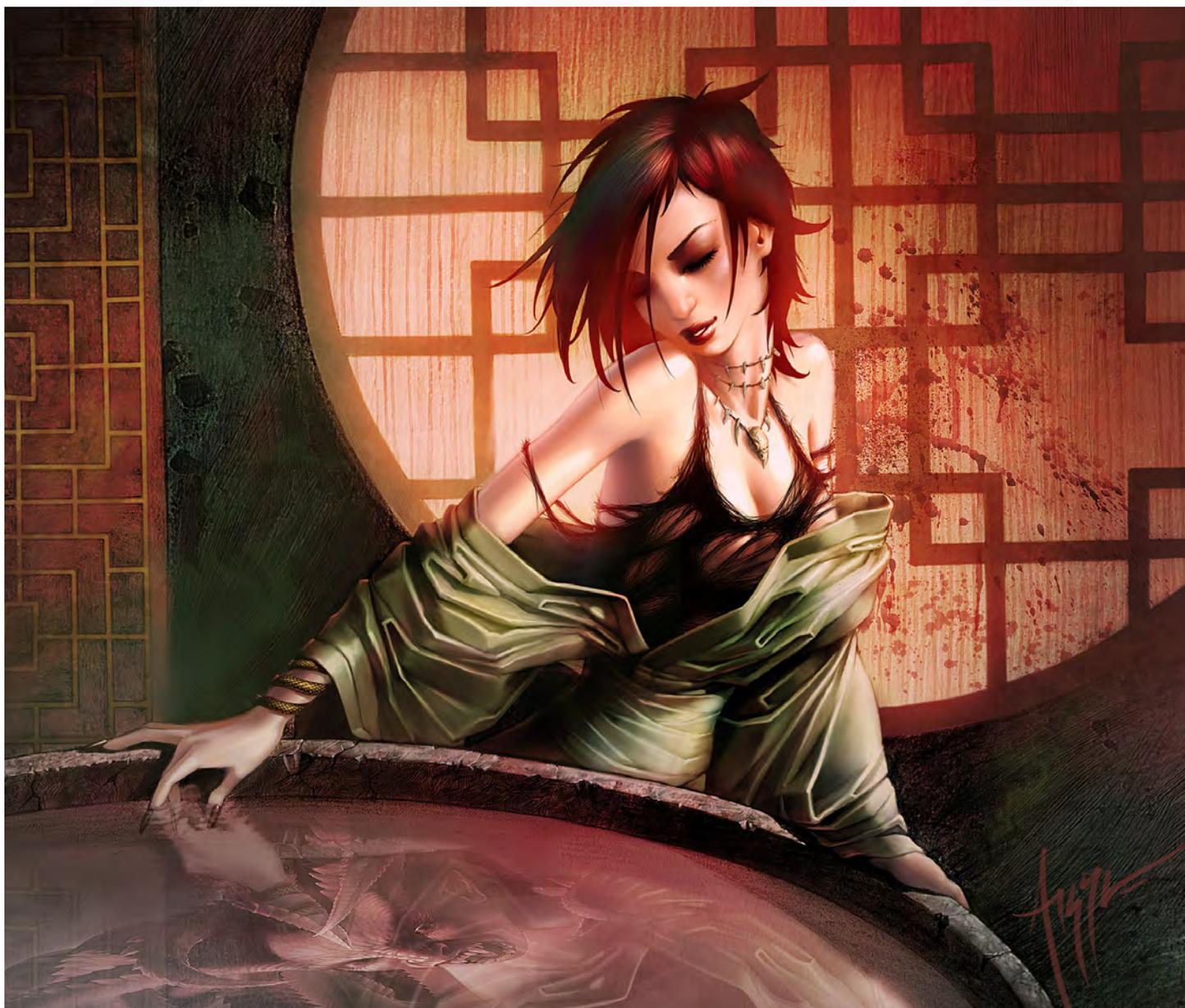
a background in traditional skills is extremely helpful. I think it makes my 3D art work better, and if I'm working with concept artists I seem to have a much easier time interpreting and converting the concept into 3D. In 3D, I have a better feel for proportions and keeping things feeling like they're where they should be. But I'm not the greatest animator. And I'm slow with rigging a character. And I can't write scripts or expressions to save my life. I've done 3D professionally for ten years, and I've worked to try and minimize my weaknesses. One more is that splitting my time between 2D and 3D makes it difficult to keep up with the rapidly changing and advancing technology.

Do you ever find that your 3D work helps inform your illustrations and vice versa ?
I feel that the two are invaluable to each other. For me, the combination of 2D and 3D has been very synergistic. I can work out perspective and tricky lighting for paintings in 3D first, and for pre-rendered marketing images, and the like, I can paint over problem areas and add details that would be painstaking to build. More than that, 3D work has given me a much greater sense of volume. I understand and can visualise structures in three dimensions more easily and completely. And 2D work is where you develop composition, line, colour, rhythm, and all the visual principles that can contribute immensely to 3D pieces.

You mention 3D being useful at calculating perspective, but do you ever use 3D characters to help your 2D compositions at all?
I do. Particularly with tricky poses, or with a strangely positioned light source. I've also found it invaluable for epic battle scenes, and the like, to put a lot of characters down quickly and keep them in proportion with the whole scene. For some recurring characters, I'll build them in 3D first, and then use them in the initial stages of each painting they occur in. This is most often the case when a character has things like detailed, segmented armour, and I want it to be consistent every time you see them. The prep time in building the rough model is always worth it for me.

What inspires you as an artist and which examples of 3D rank amongst your favourite, and why?

Geisha, sake, swords... I'm inspired mostly by people. Every single person on the planet is a visual smorgasbord; usually quite interesting in many other respects as well, but at the very least fascinating visually. Fashion and make-up from all eras, particularly - surprise - the elaborate dress of ancient Asian cultures. I'm inspired by animals, so long as I don't have to feed or clean up after them. I'm especially fond of undersea creatures, and as much as I hate to have them near me, bugs are just really cool. My favourite stuff in 3D is realistic but impossible stuff like the Animatrix "Last Flight of the Osiris" by Fransisco Cortina, Meats Mier's work, and tonnes of the amazing stuff going into feature films. Pixar has the uncanny knack for making expressive animation look super easy. There's still a lot to be explored stylistically in 3D. The technology is now where artists can really sink their teeth in without being overwhelmed by the technical limitations and steep learning curve of past software. I'm more impressed every day with stuff I'm seeing on forums and gallery books. With competition like this, I'm bound for a tragic career swing to fast food...

Computers have firmly established themselves in the world of design and illustration, but do you think this medium will ever reach the heights of paint and paper?

In some ways yes, in others no. I feel that, with more artists growing up in the medium, rather than converting, we're going to see computer art become unique from it's traditional equivalents. Right now, we're working hard to make computer art look like oil or watercolour - to mimic the classic media. I think that's going to get more realistic, but that we'll also see a break from that: artists using the medium in new, original ways. Since computer art is realistically still quite young, most artists have not even been introduced to it earlier than fifteen or twenty years ago, so we don't really have "old masters" of the medium. There's no-one on the planet who has done seventy or eighty years worth of study and experiment in computer art. On the other hand, since there is no physical painting - no original - I think the future will hold more value for "real" physical paintings. (Well, until we invent printers that can glob on oils...)

"I had no idea what to do with this topic; spent some time flicking through medieval images to get an idea for the armour... Then I started sketching ideas..."
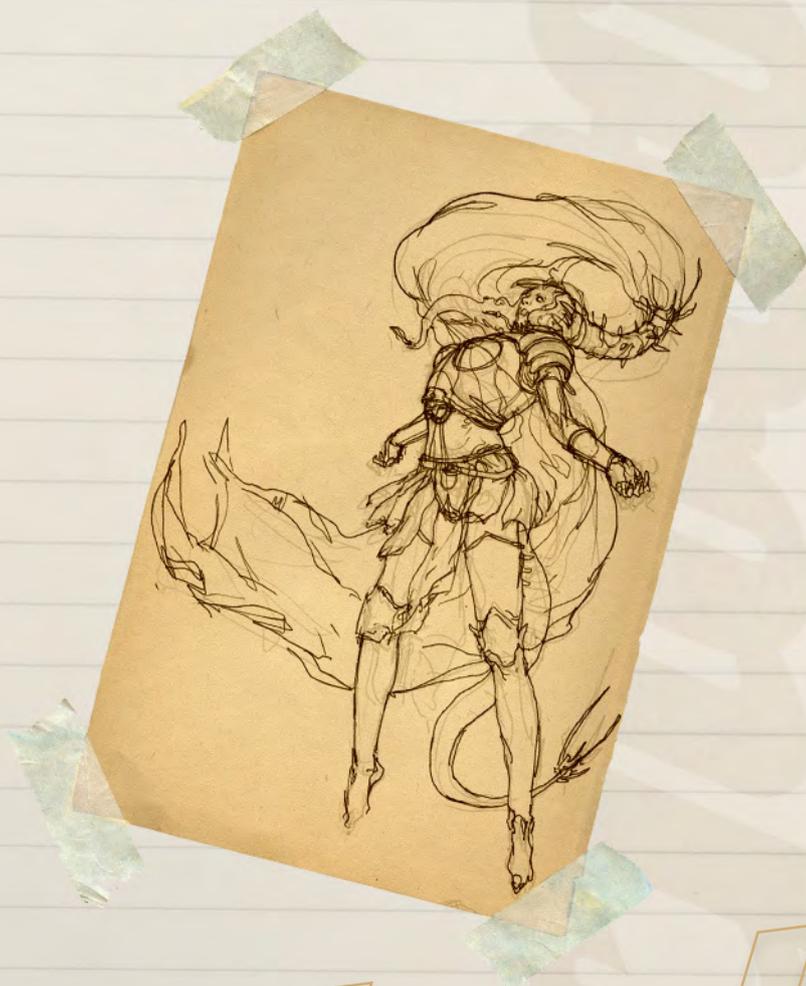
the Sketchbook of Min Yum

Min Yum is a concept artist & freelance illustrator. In this article, he reveals the techniques and processes he uses when creating his work...

Sanctuary

This artwork was created for a Blizzard Contest in 2006, titled "Sanctuary". I sort of had a good idea on where I wanted to go with this, so I headed off to do some research first of all to get an idea about forests and trees, which is a nice way of getting inspired, too. I started off with a very rough sketch; usually I would do more thumbnails but I had a specific scene in my head and it was more about getting this to work than to generate ideas. There was going to be a figure in the piece, but I wasn't quite sure about it at this point and so left it out for sketching stage. I rarely ever draw using anything other than Photoshop, and at this stage it was more about getting the composition and big shapes to work. Details were going to come down to rendering, so I didn't really worry about drawing in the details and just marked down the important landmarks using a size 7 custom brush. It was then time to block in scene - a bit like speed painting - filling in big shapes and colours. This stage is like setting up the scene with the emphasis on values and silhouettes. I tend to enjoy working in the darker colours, which is probably not a good thing. With the use of an Overlay layer I increased the brightness and bumped up the contrast. I used some texture brushes to generate random effects, like the branches and random bumps. This stage is probably the biggest time consumer. The rendering then begins; it's just matter of filling in all the gaps and making sure that all areas are given similar treatment. The way I usually paint is to do so on a single layer; basically I just paint over things rather than keeping everything in layers. The areas in the background did cause some headaches, but if you just put in the time it pulls through in the end. The rendering and refining process continued: it was almost mindless at this stage, but it all came together. It's really good to open up a

second window and use it to check the overall image whilst working on the details, as that way you know if you are over/under rendering. It was then time for the figure... I sketched the figure in a few positions and different poses, but decided to go with a more relaxed sitting position. More refining and adding in more "swirlies" was done to bring attention to the tiny elf. A friend of mine, Tom Scholes (truly a master with adjusting images) helped me adjust the colours and the overall brightness/contrast. I used the Colour Balance, Selective Colour, & Curve adjustment layers - and then it was done! This piece is almost a year old now, but I still look back at it fondly - probably because of all the hours that went into it.
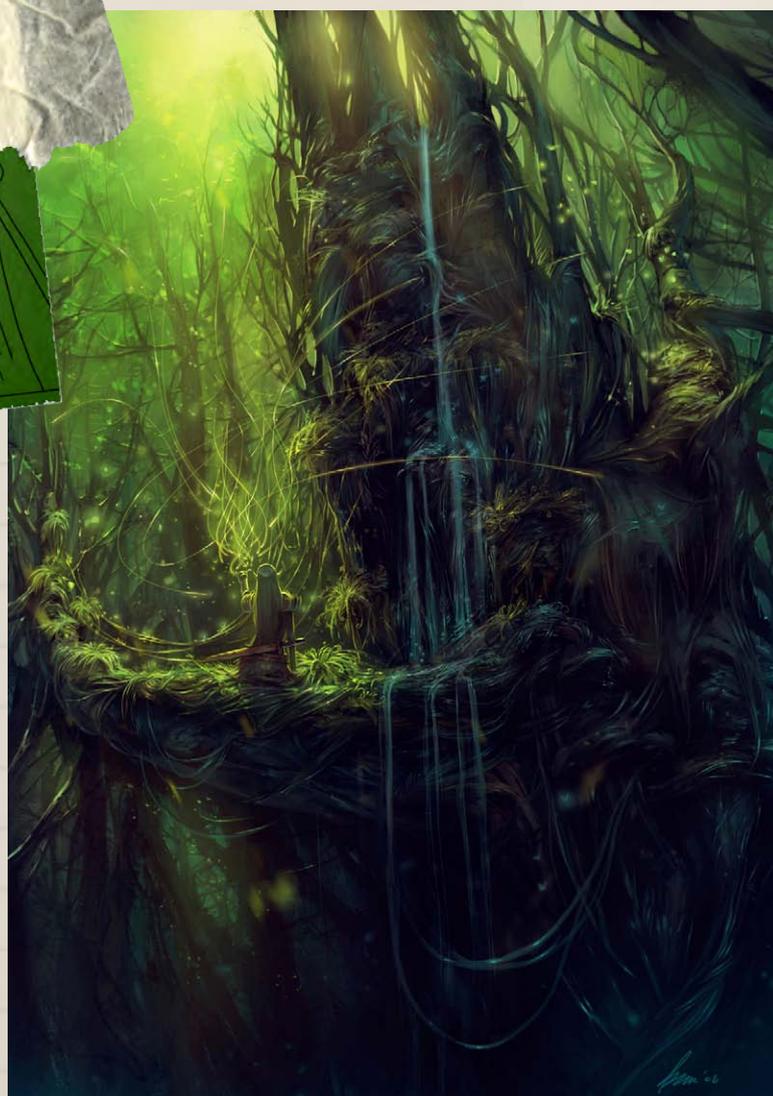
Death Horse

This artwork, titled "Death Horse", was created for Character of the Week (aka ChOW) on ConceptArt.org. The challenge was the fact that I'd never drawn a horse before, and so started with some studies and reference hunting on the Internet. I had an idea of a human embedded at the front of the horse, and threw in a horse skull over the figure. The sketch was pretty rough, and I wasn't too sure what to do with the background, but hoped something would come to me. With the help of large custom brushes, I quickly created the background - sort of an opening in a forest. I used a custom brush to create the overall look of the horns/antlers on its head. The rest was a simple black and white rendering. I use an oval custom brush, with the flow set to Pressure, for most of my paintings. Opacity is changed manually as required by pressing numbers 0 to 9. I refined the horse, as it looked more like a deer/cow; after many critiques from friends and lots of reference images I was able to fix up the horse. The background was also refined, using more texture brushes for foliage. I pushed the background further back to give more depth to the image. The colour layer went on top: it's much easier to add colour this way, but this method does seem to have its limitations, which I think is because the colour layer doesn't work too well on a white or black background. If you think about it, working with colour directly involves hue and saturation values all at once, whereas this method breaks down those three into different stages. The hue and saturation stage is more manual I think; I used Overlay and Softlight brush blending modes to bring out more saturation in an area, like in the upper torso where the lighting is warm. Having said that, this method seems to be good for keeping the image together, probably because you are working with values to make sure it works first before proceeding. I played with the adjustment layers, mostly Colour Balance, and then worked by refining on the top. I softened the edges a little using the blur tool to bring focus to the main figure, and then it was all done!
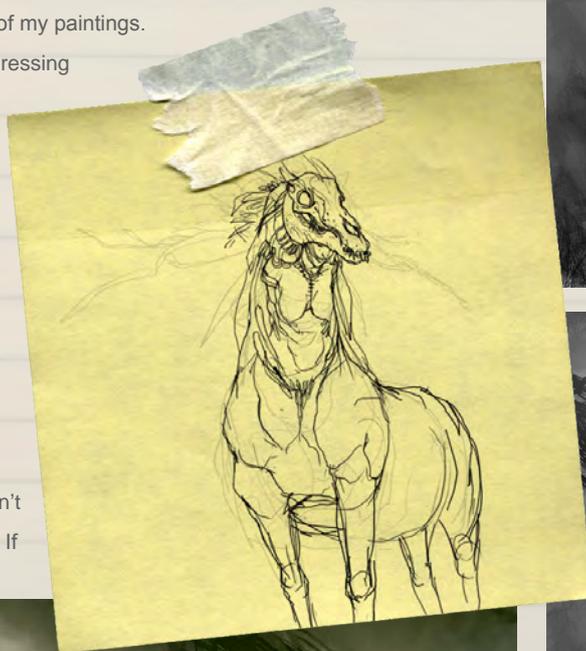
Fallen Valkyrie

Another piece, "Fallen Valkyrie", created for Character of the Week on ConceptArt.org. I had no idea what to do with this topic; I spent some time flicking through medieval images to get an idea for the armour... Then I started sketching ideas, not being too concerned about details but more on the overall look, like poses, silhouettes and any distinct features. Upon choosing the sketch I was happy with, I then proceeded to draw in the details and added the important landmarks, and basically just cleaned up the line drawing because a central figure like this requires more definition (and not to mention my ambitious attempt at rendering out finely detailed armour). Again, I took the black and white approach, simply because I knew the details would easily overwhelm me and cause me to lose the energy needed to wrap this up. I used a large custom brush for the background and rendered out the figure in simple forms. I was going to add patterns later on so I didn't bother with it at this stage. I rendered the background with simple, puffy clouds, as I didn't want it to take too much away from the central figure. I then started adding in the patterns and refined the details. The colours were added with colour blending modes, lots of retouching details, and after a few adjustment layers it was done!
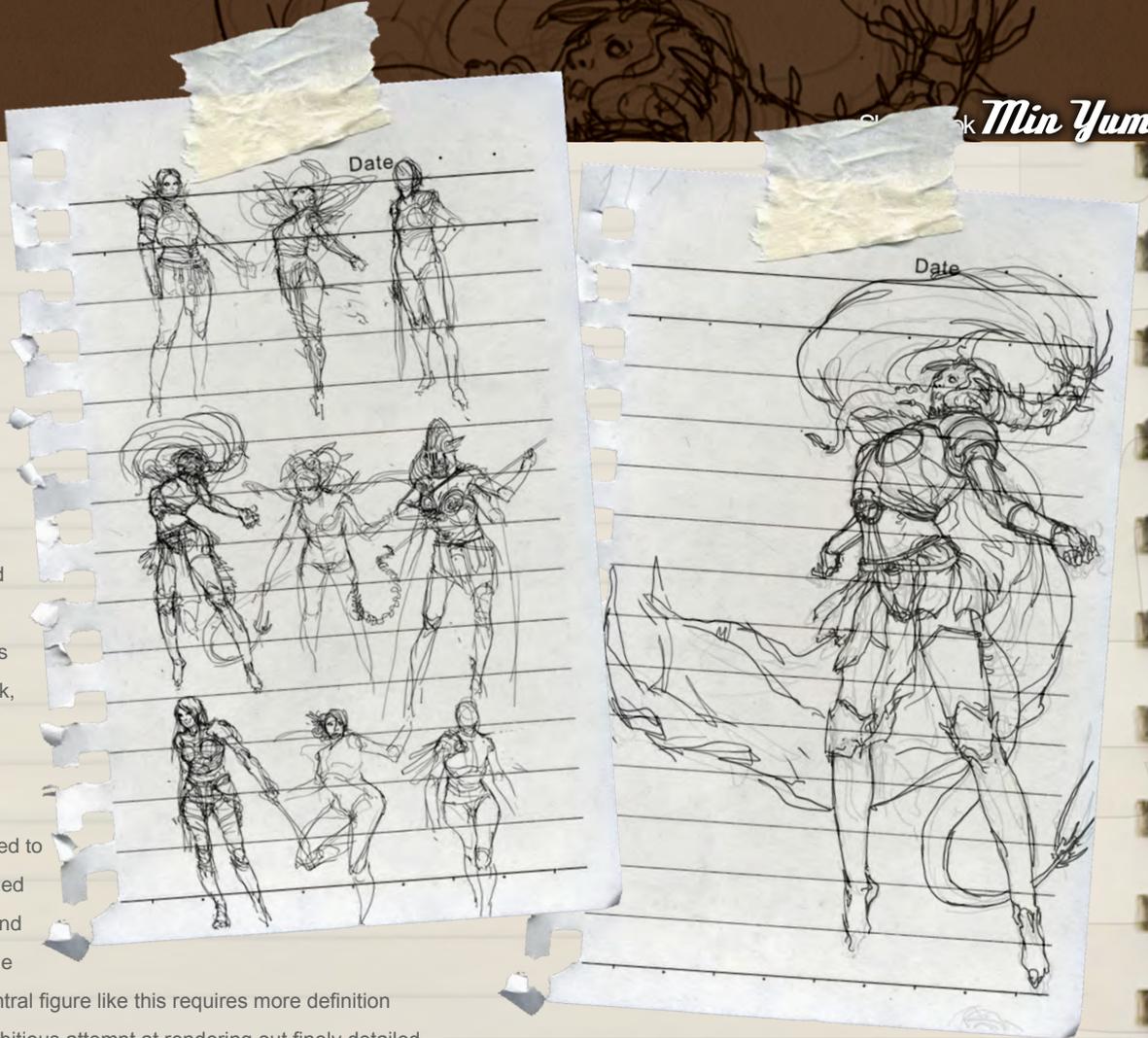
Soul Collector

Another example of the black and white method is the "Soul Collector": a cleaned-up sketch in Photoshop. It was a black and white render, but I decided to leave out highlights and saturated areas for later... I used a Colour overlay and started rendering more in colour on the top layer. Rendering and adjustments were then used to wrap up the piece.
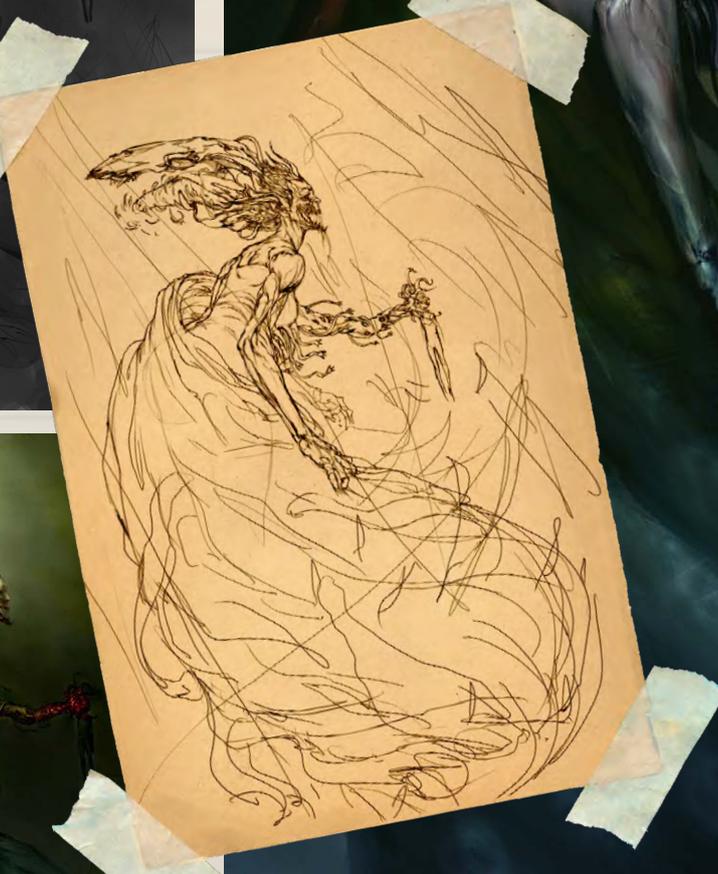
Intergalactic Troubadour

This piece was created for another Character of the Week activity on ConceptArt.org. I've always struggled using a lighter background for a character, so this was a real challenge for me. It turned out OK, though. I cleaned up my original sketch, again all drawn in Photoshop (this piece was actually flipped, initially). I quickly painted underneath the line drawing and then simply flattened all the layers and painted over the whole thing, rendering as I went along. Some adjustment layers were then done, finer details were added, and then it was finished!
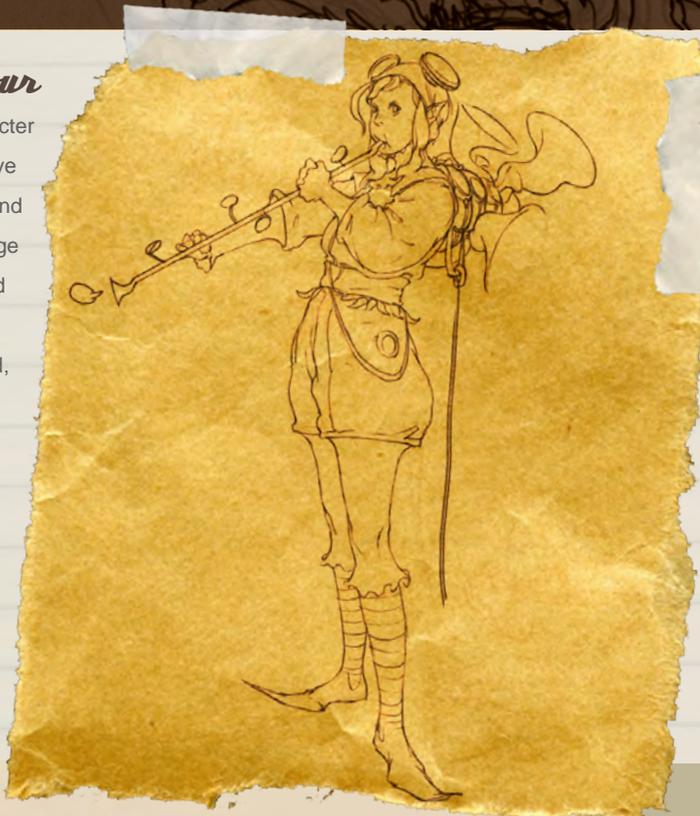
Min Yum

For more information please visit:

www.minart.net

Or contact:

minyum@gmail.com

"The deadline. That's why they are there. . . Otherwise we would mess with the stuff forever!"

IS IT FINISHED?

Over the last year, 2DArtist has been asking industry professionals the questions you need the answers to! This month, we asked:

"What tells you when a piece of work is complete?"

Here are the serious, and the not so serious, answers that we received this month...

Advice for Aspiring Artists

Andrew Hou
Senior Concept Artist,
Webzen, Seoul, South Korea
"Nothing. When I'm sick of it usually! I tend to over work my pieces a lot of the time."

Artie
Freelance Concept Artist & Illustrator
Prague, Czech Republic
"If there is nothing to erase on it."

Benita Winckler
Freelance Illustrator, Berlin, Germany
"I hear a voice that says: "Enough". It's a good thing to listen to it."

Christophe Vacher
Concept Artist, Painter & Art Director
Luxembourg & Los Angeles, USA
"Intuition and experience. Intuition because it's a gut feeling that gives you the sense of direction in your work, and experience because it's only through countless hours, days and years of practice that you refine your sense of when a work is really finished."

Daniela Uhlig
Graphic Designer & Illustrator
Mobil Entertainment Company, Berlin, Germany
"When I know that I should start a new one to improve my skills."

Daniele Bigi
Lead Lighter & Compositor
Aardman Animation, Bristol, UK
"I think that you never arrive at completely finishing a piece of work. There are always things that you would like to change and things that can be improved."

Image by: Andrew Hou

Don Seegmiller
Freelance Concept Artist, Illustrator & Artist
Utah, USA
"A piece is complete when it is complete. Really, you learn when a piece is complete by doing thousands of pieces and getting experience with judgement. There is not a clinical reason or point when an image is finished."

Egil Paulsen
"If the piece can speak for itself, and needs no description, it's definitely a finished piece of art to me. But I have found myself being stuck with details and pointless little parts for hours just to make it 'perfect'."

Image by: Daniele Bigi

Erich Schreiner

Freelance Artist, Germany

"That's one of the hardest questions. I think it's mostly just a question of personal taste. Some prefer a really tight rendering, whilst others prefer a more impressionistic look, so everybody has to decide for himself what kind of look he wants to achieve. I think there is no right or wrong, just a bunch of theories. The only thing that's important is making decisions for yourself that you are pleased with."

Justin Kellis

Graphic Artist, KICK Design, New York City

"The deadline. That's why they are there… Otherwise we would mess with the stuff forever!"

Kerem Beyit

Concept Artist & Illustrator

Aranim Media Factory, Turkey

"He he, nothing does actually... You just have to stop at some point before you ruin the piece. God bless Ctrl - Z."

Mike Corriero

Freelance Concept Artist & Illustrator

Colonia, NJ, USA

"I tend to have a problem with this because it's my nature to want to detail every inch of the page. I generally know a work is complete when I come back to it to make some changes and second guess adding anything else or changing something. If I feel like it may or may not look better by reworking an area or adding new elements and/or redesigning something within the piece, I know to just leave it alone. I've very rarely come back to a piece months later to fix it up, if only a little, and even then you tend to get attached to how it looked originally even if there were minor flaws. Now as far as professional jobs go, you know a piece is completed when the deadline is up, ha ha."

Mikko Kinnunen

Environment Artist, Recoil Games, Helsinki, Finland

"When all that is left is doodling and pixel pushing."

Misty Coats

UI & Concept Artist, High Voltage Software, Hoffman Estates, IL, USA

"I don't think there really is anything that can tell you when a piece of work is done. It's almost like a sixth sense sort of deal - you just KNOW. It isn't like a buzzer will go off; you just lean back, look at your work, and if it's done then you can just tell. Some artists tend to go beyond this point and that's when a piece can get too cluttered and overdone… Sometimes you just have to resist the urge to add more to a piece, but knowing when to do so, well, it's all gut instinct."

Paul Wright

"It just begins to feel right and all the elements come together. Having said that, there are few pieces I've done that I wouldn't make some alterations to."

Raluca Iosifescu

"When the message you're trying to express is there."
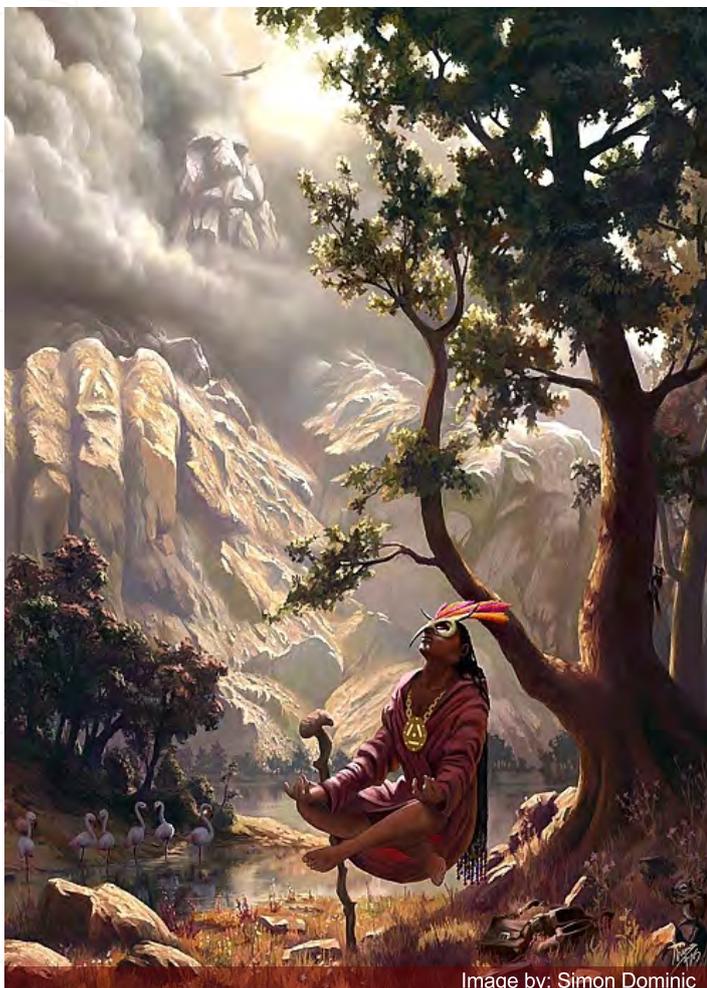
Image by: Paul Wright

Robert Chang

"When it matches the criteria I had set for it when I visualised the piece in the beginning, or I feel like I'm starting to beat a dead horse."

Robin Chyo

Concept Artist, Cryptic Studios, Los Gatos, California, USA

"Usually, I'll take a couple hours away from it and then make any changes if necessary. I'll then run it by a couple friends (artists and non-artists). For work, I'll run it by my lead artist or art director."

Rolando Cyril

"I submit my drawing on some art forums to get critiques, and I pray to read constructive comments. Once the main mistakes are fixed, I consider it as "quite" complete. A drawing is never finished, even if I work 40 hours!"

Roy Stein

"Once it's there - you just feel it; you sense that if you touch or tamper with it any more, you will just reverse the process."

Ryohei Hase

Illustrator & Designer, Bandai Namco Games, Tokyo, Japan

"When I'm so pleased with my work."

Image by: Simon Dominic

Sam Lamont

2D Animation Student

Glamorgan University, Trefforest, Wales, UK

"I suppose it depends on what medium I'm planning on using. If its an ink picture, then it's ready when the last shading is put on, but if it's prepped to be coloured on the computer then its a lot harder to say when its ready, as you can continue to layer colour on forever. I guess you just know."

Sasha Podogrny

Designer, http://tiro.by, Belorus, Minsk

"When I think, huh, it is high time to finish and start a new one that has already been worrying me inside."

Simon Legrand

"When every stroke I paint seems to just make it worse... I just stop painting. A lot of my works are unfinished for that reason."

Simon Dominic Brewer

"If a piece starts to lose its impact, or begins to look too refined, I know I've done too much. I try to stop when I still think I could do a little bit more."

Tiberius Viris

Lead Matte Painter,

King of Houston, Singapore

"Good question. Does the fact that I feel it count as an answer? He he, probably not."

Tim Warnock

Senior Matte Painter,

Intelligent Creatures, Toronto Ontario, Canada

"Either when I'm sick of looking at it or I'm out of time. I very rarely (never) get to a point where I just sit back and say "I don't think that this could get any better". I will always ask other artists what they think. If I am able to set it aside for a few days and come back to it later on I will always see things to change or tighten up."
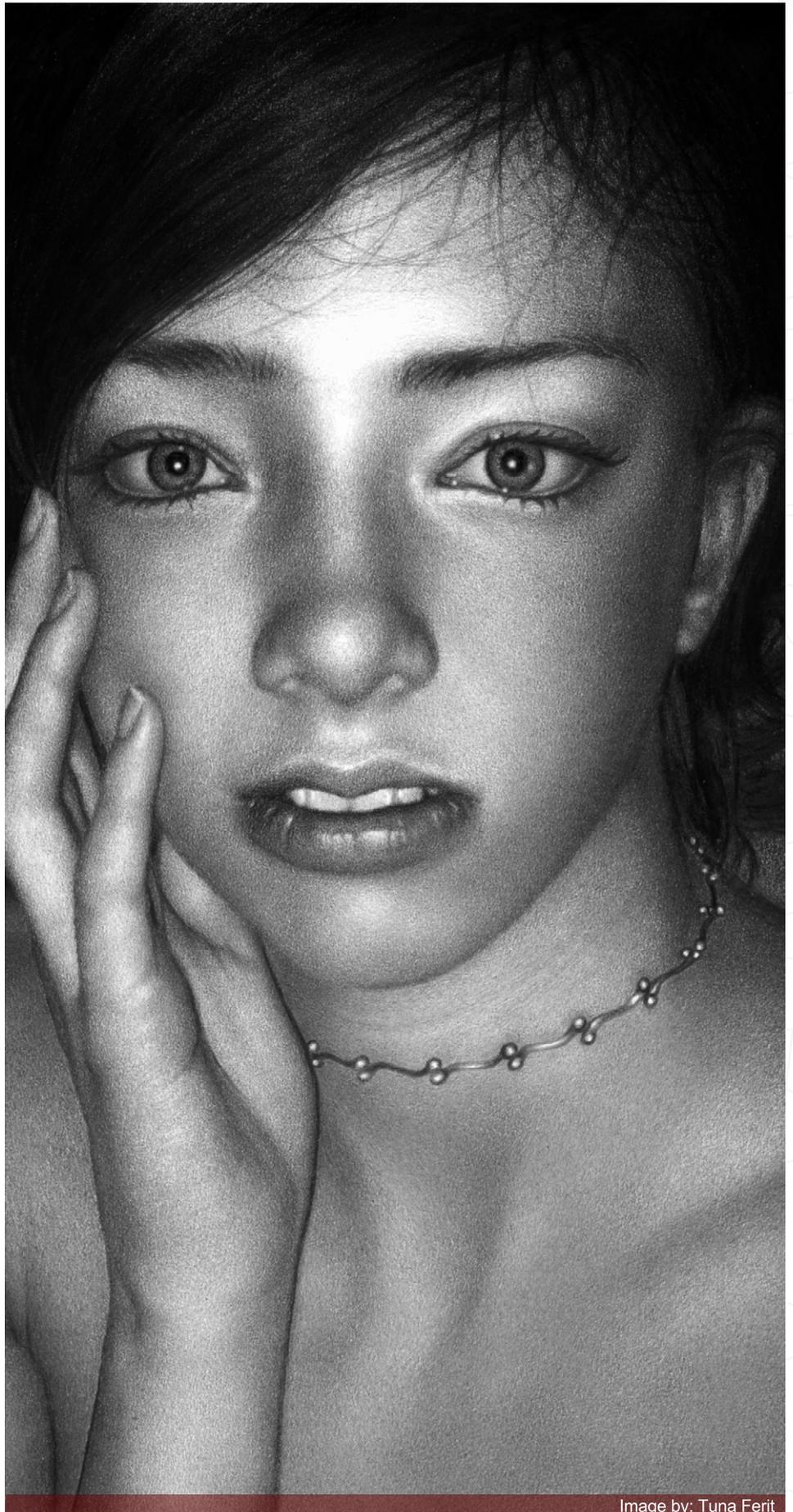
Image by: Tuna Ferit

Image by: Andrew Hou

Tuna Ferit

"When I finish a piece of work after dedicating so much time to it, and looking at it gives me a lot of pleasure because of the quality of the work. Creating something new out of nothing is important for me. I am always amazed by the reality of my drawings. Sometimes I can't even believe that I drew it myself. I feel that I always learn new things with each drawing that I finish. Every new drawing for me will be better than the previous one. My pencil control and my ability to draw environmental details develop. I can clearly see the differences between my new and old works."

Vinegar

Freelance Artist, Warsaw, Poland

"When I'm unable to touch it anymore through the feeling I'd only ruin it, then at this point I should leave it and come back to it, correcting many mistakes with a "fresh view" later on... But actually, if I can't work on it anymore at one point, I just know it's finished for me and that I'll never go back to it."

Vitaly S. Alexius

Freelance Illustrator, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

"My work is never complete because I can keep on adding detail to it indefinitely by zooming in closer and closer into my work. I prefer to stop after around 60 hours of work though, as not a lot of people notice these details anyway in the small, re-sized paintings that are posted online. My average resolution is 10,000 pixels at 300dpi, and when I feel that I've filled this space with enough visible detail, I decide that the work is finished... But I can go back to it at anytime and add something - you never know!"

Y. Sonner Yurtseven

"During the period of starting to work on a piece of work, and then working on it, there's always something to add to it. But knowing when to stop and complete the work is very important, otherwise the work could become ordinary. Content of the concept, the relation of the elements that are used for the concept, colours, and compositing, are all started and progress together. Then, at a certain point, each seems to be in their own place and correct. That's when the work must be complete."

Inspiring Advice

Article compiled by: Ben Barnes

2DArtist Magazine introduces the Challenge section of the magazine. Every month we will run the challenges, available for anyone to enter, for prizes and goodies from the www.3dtotal.com shop and to also be featured in this very magazine! The 2D Challenge runs in the ConceptArt. org forums, and the 3D Challenge runs in the Threedy.com forums. Here we will display the winners from the previous month's challenge and the Making Ofs from the month before that...

Monkey
Stylised Animal challenge

In Association With

Stylised Animal Challenge
Monkey

The Challenge

Welcome to the Stylised Animal Monthly Challenge. Each month, we will select an animal and post some images in the Forum Thread as reference. All you have to do is to create a 2D image of this creature in a stylised/abstract/cartoon style, whilst keeping your creature instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist magazine on how to create stylised animals, such as you see in the many feature films and cartoon galleries. We thought this regular competition might bring in just the images and Making Ofs that we need, whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. If it continues in success, we will try to boost the prizes as much as possible! This month's animal was the Monkey. Here you can see the top 9 entries, as voted for by the public...

What are we looking for?

Funny and humorous entries which break the animal down to its most recognisable components; emphasise these in whichever ways you think best and render your stylised/abstract/cartoon masterpiece. The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 x 2D render (minor post work is OK); its up to you if you want to have a background or include graphical elements or text on your image. Renders of the 800 pixel dimension sound about right, but the winners will be featured in 2DArtist Magazine so if you can create some higher resolution images, too - all the better! There will be one competition per month, with the deadline being the end of the month (GMT). For a valid entry, just make sure your final image is posted in the main competition thread before the deadline. We require the top 3 winners to submit Making Of overview articles that will be shown on either 3DTotal or in 2DArtist magazine. These need to show the stages of your creation; different elements and some brief explanation text of why, and how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure, and us some quality content! Each competition will have one main thread which starts with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIP's, give feedback and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that are emerging each month...

Challenge Thread

The entire *Monkey* competition can be viewed here.

The current challenge at the voting stage is:
Aye-Aye

The current challenge taking place is:
Crocodile

8th Jlalfaro

8th Jgarrington

7th Rusty Shakelford

5th Caruso juan i
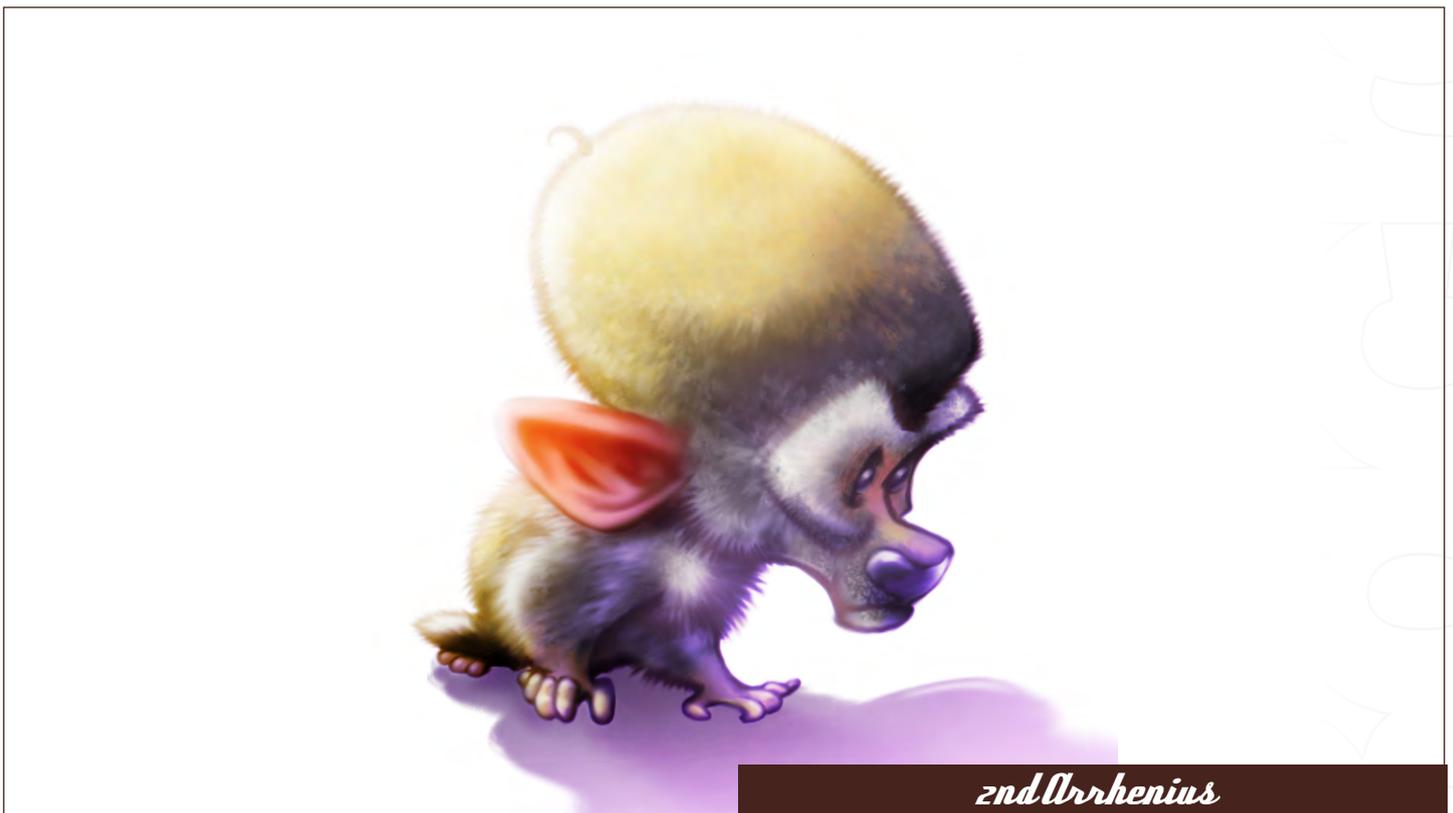

5th Cakepigdog

4th 28th wing

3rd Daveneale

2nd Arrhenius

To join the next challenge, or to view previous and/or current entries, please visit:

www.conceptart.org

Or, for the 3D Challenge, please visit:

www.threedy.com

Or contact: ben@zoopublishing.com

3D Challenge

Here are last month's top entries from the 3D Monkey competition...

1st MivaDeBo

2nd Arrhenius

3rd Shahin_FJ

Making Ofs

Here are the Making Ofs from last month's top 3 winning entries...

3rd - Daveneal

Introduction

In this step by step Making Of, I will give you an explanation of the process I went through when creating my stylised snail. I found the topic on ConceptArt.org, and as I love creating random animals and playing with different styles I thought this would be a fun little project. This is by know means my typical methodology; I just decided to play and have fun with this, which is something I'm always doing - I find it's the best way to improve and I don't think I will ever stop learning!

Quick sketches

I started out as I always do, by brainstorming a few ideas and playing with different styles, and this one grabbed me... It started out with the face, and as I was drawing the shell I just thought it would be interesting to bulk it up and give it multiple parts. At this point I also suggested some of the volume, so that it would help when I got to rendering the piece (Fig01).

I scanned the image and tweaked the levels to clean up the scanned image. Using the basic soft brush, starting at 50% opacity to lay down the main colour and then varying the opacity (to as little as 5%) for the more subtle highlights, I put down the main purple colour and tried to get the basic form down (Fig02).
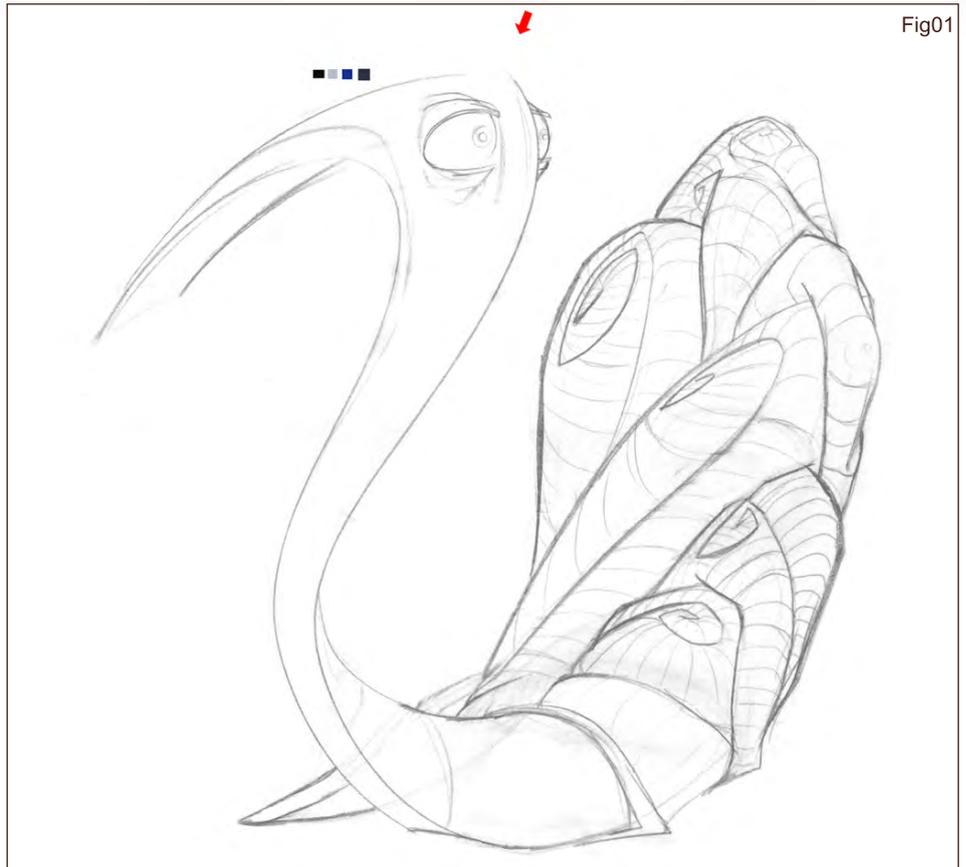
Fig01

Fig02

I then used a layer mask to define the edges and used the Pen tool to get a smooth edge, rather than doing it free-hand (Fig03).

Using a few of Photoshop's stock brushes (and tweaking the properties in the brush menu), I roughed out the main shadows/shapes of the shell, and again used a layer mask to get the edge of the shell (Fig04).

I added more shadow to the shell, but then decided to keep a lot of the brush strokes in
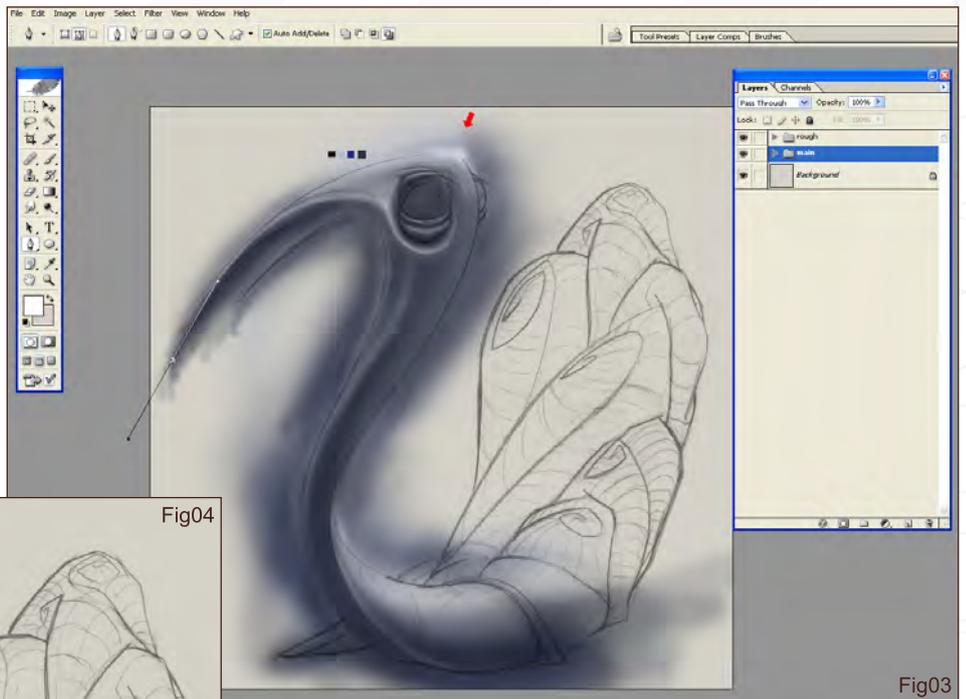
Fig03

Fig04

Fig05

Fig06

order to help juxtapose it against the smooth body (Fig05).

Finishing Tweaks

Finally, I added a few more highlights to the body to give it a slightly "wetter" look; added a shadow, and also an outer glow to soften the whole outline; threw it on a simple background - and there it is! I'm pretty pleased with the final result and it was fun to doodle (Fig06).

David Neale

For more work by this artist please contact them at:

davejneale@hotmail.com

2nd - 28th Wing

Finding the Form

After some short research, I started working on paper with pencil. I tried to find typical markings of snails and aimed to use geometrical forms. Snail means 'slow' to me, and so I wanted to create a contrast with a dynamic composition. After creating some thumbnails, I decided that a scared snail looking backwards would suit my concept, so I cleaned up and scanned the sketch (Fig01).

Making Vectors

My original plan was to make the whole illustration using vectors, so I imported the scanned image into CorelDraw and locked its layer. With the Bezier Tool, I started tracing the image and made closed forms (Fig02). I didn't have an idea about the colours at this point, so I decided to begin the image as a greyscale value study. With the Bezier Tool, I started tracing smaller forms inside larger forms. I added gradients and blended them with the Transparency tool (Fig03a and 03b).
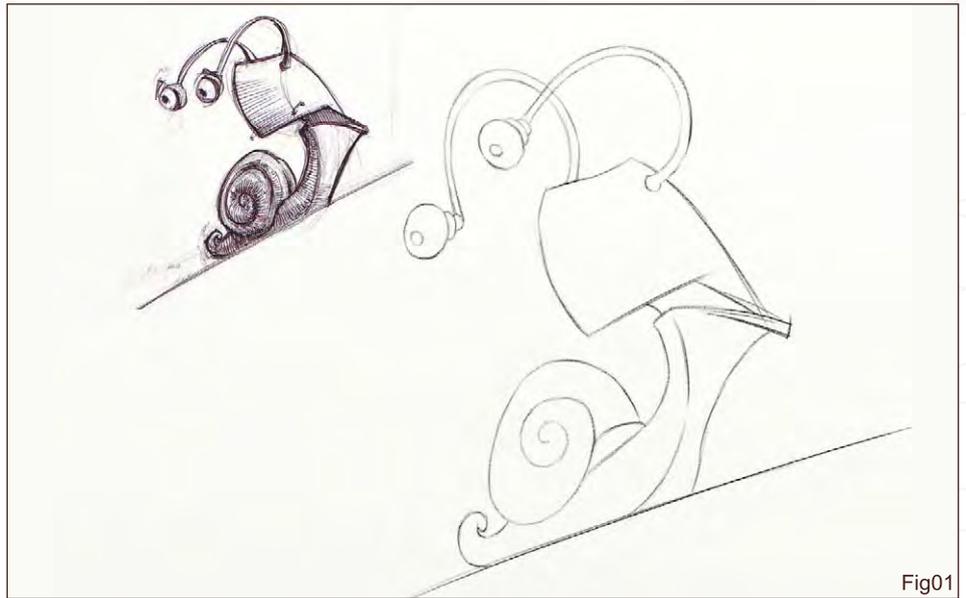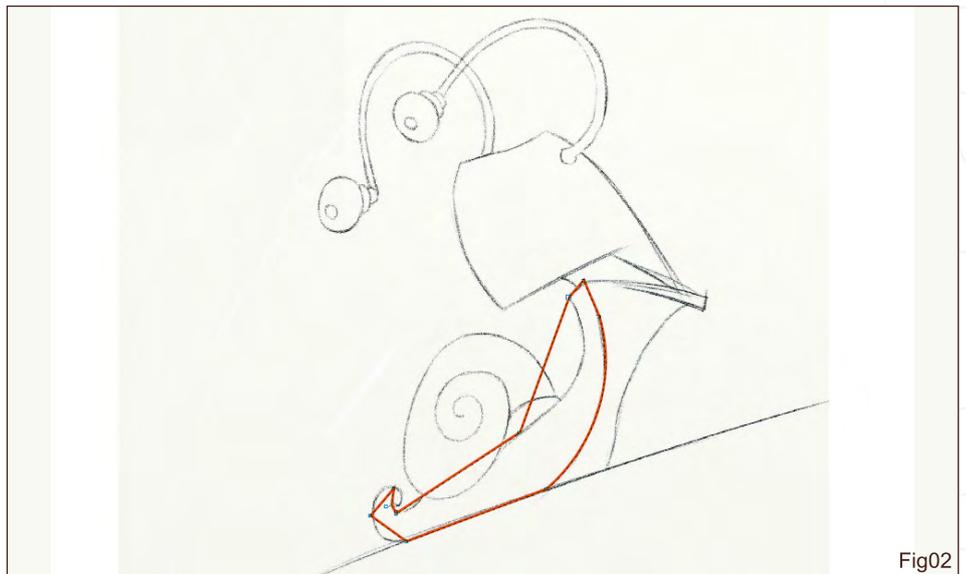
To intensify the drama, I applied strong lighting

Fig01

Fig02
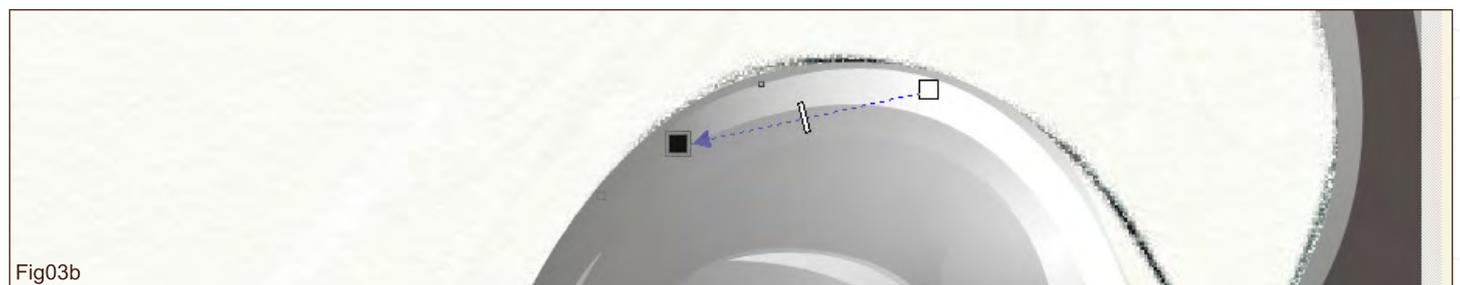
Fig03a

Fig03b
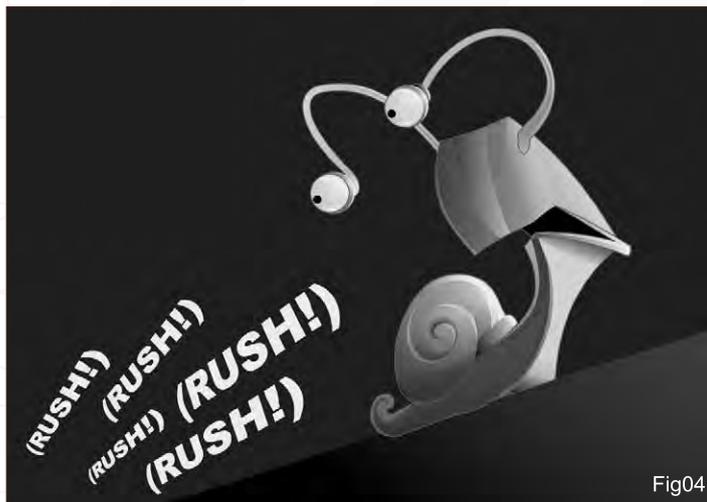
Fig04
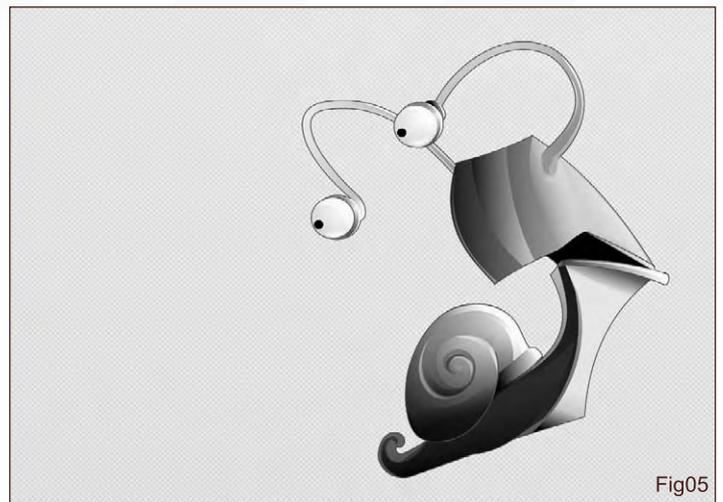
Fig05
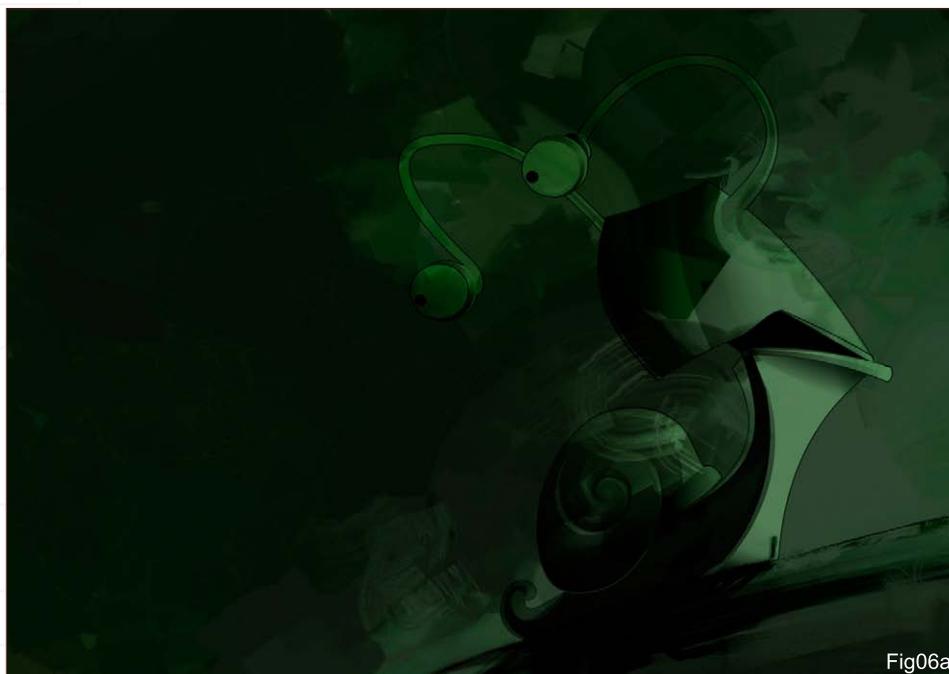
Fig06a

Fig06b

from the right. I added some simple background elements and text to enhance the composition. It looked cool but still wasn't enough (Fig04).

Colouring

After gathering references, I had an idea for the colour scheme: dark green for the background and brown/yellowish for the snail. I made a PSD from the vector snail, which had a transparent background, and imported it into ArtRage (Fig05). The black and white snail was on top of the layers; I changed its layer mode to Overlay. First of all, I built up the background on a separate layer with quick Paint Roller strokes (Fig06a and 06b). I created a new layer and started painting the snail using the Paint Roller, Palette Knife and Eraser tools (Fig07). When I'd finished colouring the snail, I duplicated this layer, set the opacity to 50%, and changed its mode to Overlay to give a warmer tone to some parts of the snail. Finally, I added the text in CorelDraw and loaded it into ArtRage as a Tracing Image to trace it with Paint Roller.

Fig07

1st - Yadelajoie

János Kiss

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janos.kiss@28thwing.com

RUSHHHHHH!

RUSHHHHHH!

RUSHHHHHH!

RUSHHHHHH!

Introduction

I heard of the stylised animal challenge from a friend at school. I was very enthusiastic about it, especially about the snail title since I'd wanted to draw one for a long time. So I started getting my ideas down on paper, and here is the Making Of the result...

Step 1

I started by doing many hand-drawn sketches of different snail concepts (Fig01). I finally came up with a fat, stupid-looking snail with big teeth, sitting on a branch which is crushed by his weight. Once I had the main idea, I made a very quick sketch in Photoshop, using my Wacom Tablet, to settle the proportions and the get down the main lines of the drawing (Fig02).

Step 2

I filled a layer under my sketch with green to create the desired ambiance. I followed by adding different colours, mostly red and orange, to contrast with the sky (Fig03).
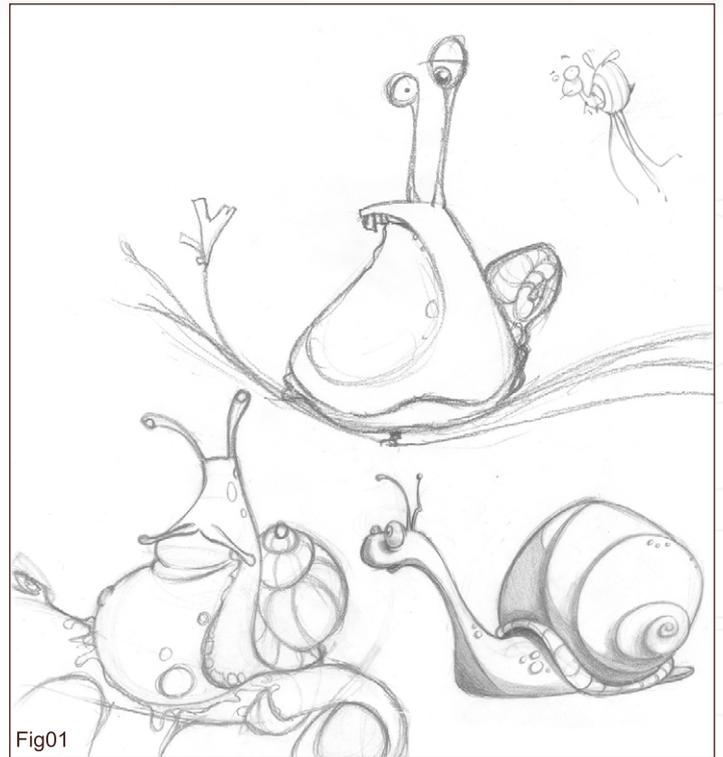
Fig01

Fig02
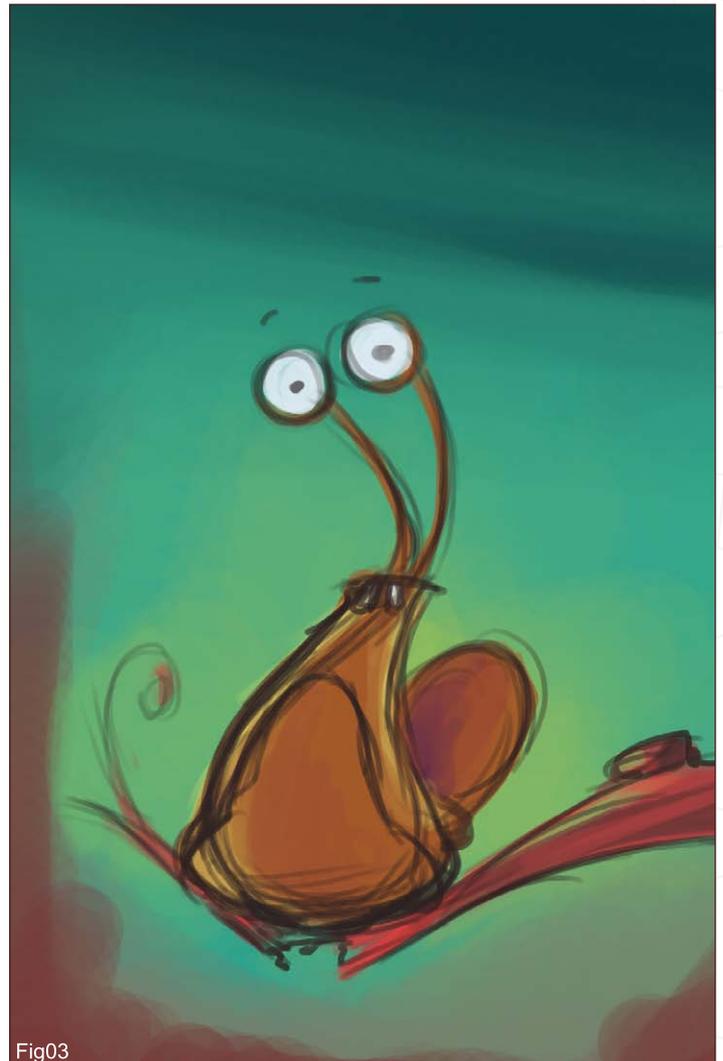
Fig03

Fig04

Fig06

Step 3

Using the Pen tool, I defined the shapes of the snail, which I later used as selection masks to do the shading (Fig04).

Step 4

I put some highlights, shadows and details on the body and on the eyes of the snail (Fig05). I mostly used the Airbrush Pen Opacity Flow, with the Opacity set to around 80% and the Flow to 30%. At this point, I had no idea what to do with the shell. I was not convinced with the shape I had originally sketched, so I tried many different designs and came up with this one (Fig06).

Step 5
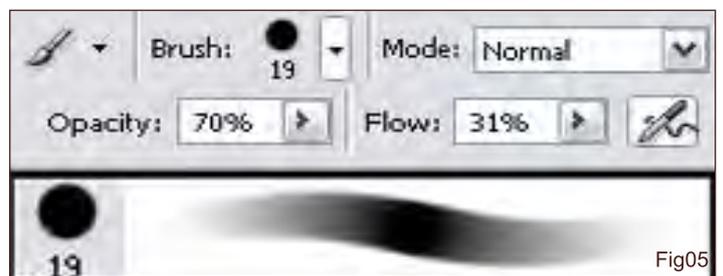
Fig05

All I had left to do was to finish the background. I detailed the branch and slowly moved onto softening the colours of the red rocks (see final image on following page).

Marie-Eve Tétrault

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You can follow an interview with this artist in a future issue of 2DArtist Magazine

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2dArtist

Rooftop

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You can read an in-depth interview on the 'Preproduction Design Process: Concept Art for Darksector', the biggest project for this artist, in a later issue of 2DArtist Magazine...

Renaissance

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The Return of the Shogun

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You can follow an in-depth interview with this artist in this issue of 2DArtist magazine...

Mech

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Sweet Pretence

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wnasir2@hotmail.com
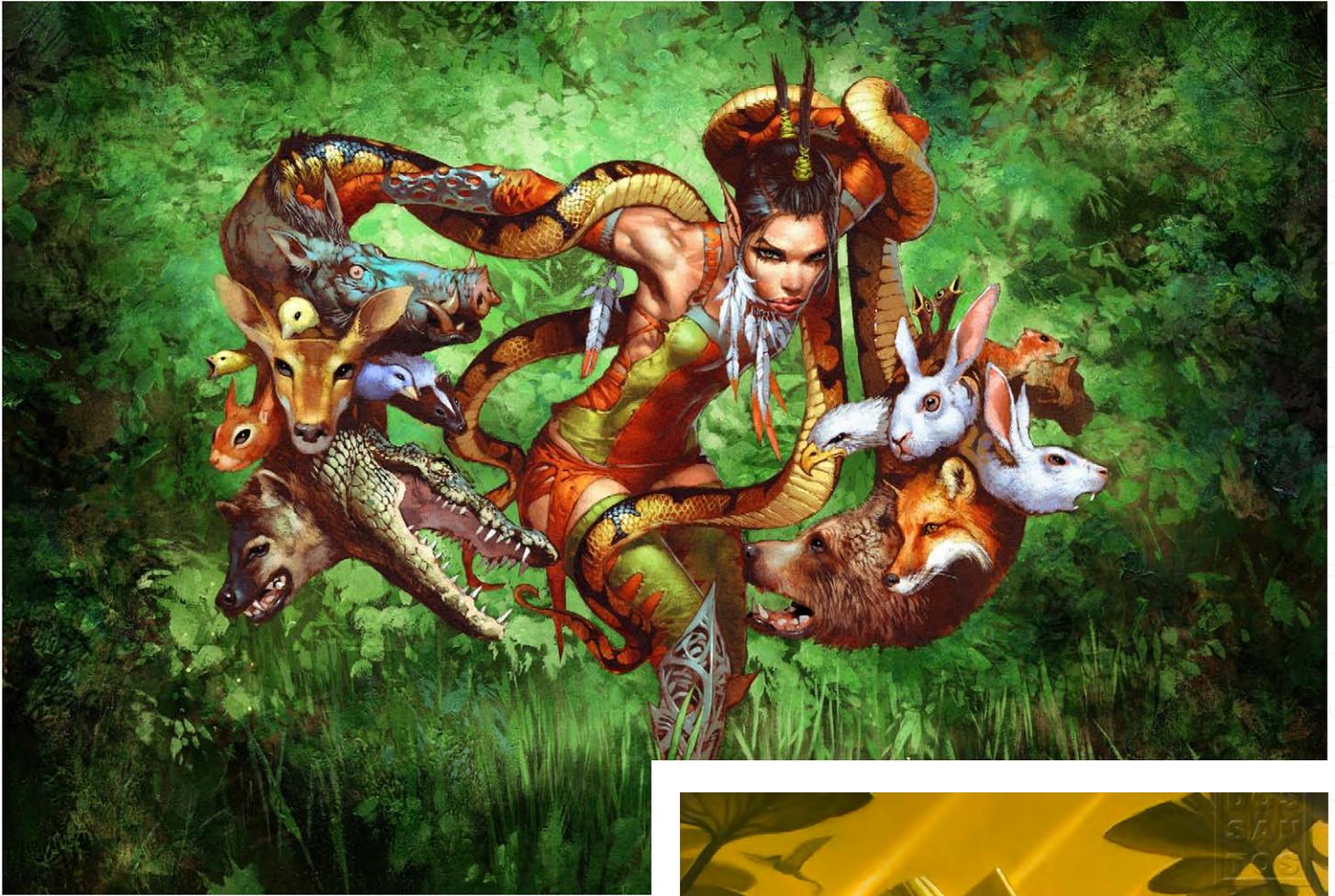
Gaea's Herald

Jim Murray

Publisher: Wizards of the Coast

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You can follow an in-depth interview with this artist in a future issue of 2DArtist magazine...
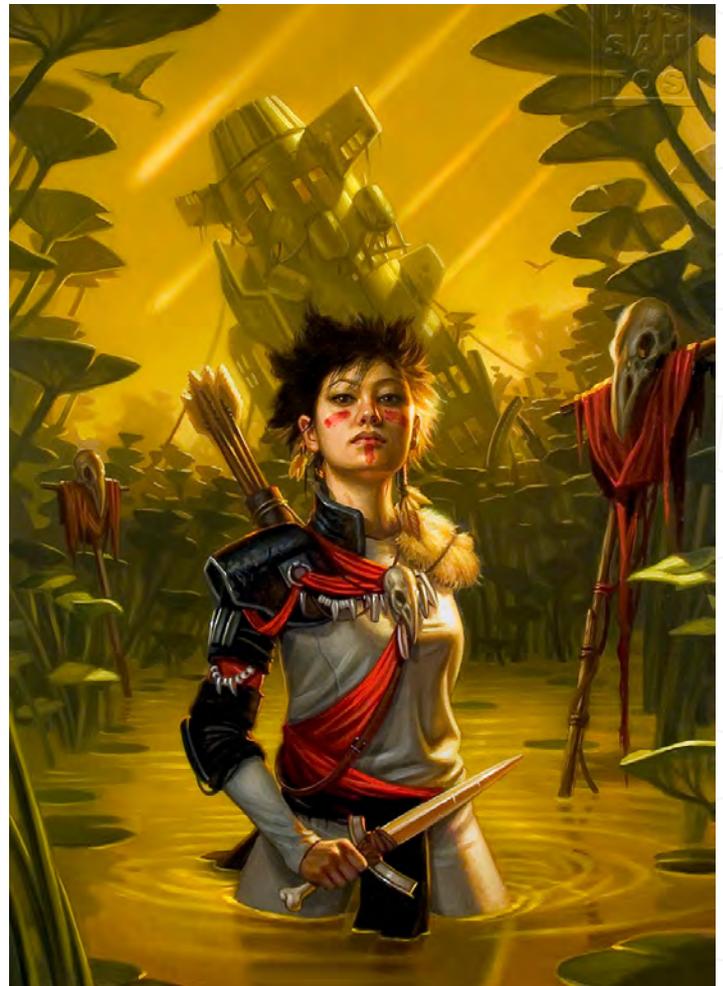
Farseed

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Galaonian Infantry

Kerem Beyit
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Custom Brushes

"At first the brush creating process seems a bit tedious, but as soon as you get the hang of it you'll pretty much fall in love with it."

Custom Brushes

Created In:

Photoshop

Using Photoshop, we have all had this thought at one point: ''Man, wouldn't it be great if there was a brush that could do all this instead of me wasting my life on it!''. In this tutorial, I will explain how I create my custom brushes and how I use them in order to save me an incredible amount of time when I paint. We will first try to mimic the stroke of a pencil, one of the main brushes I used to paint Sky Machina (Fig01), along with a textured dry brush. At first the brush creating process seems a bit tedious, but as soon as you get the hang of it you'll pretty much fall in love with it. You can create a brush out of everything you paint! First, let's open a new file of about 500 x 500 pixels and draw whatever you want (let's draw dots for the sake of this tutorial), then go to Edit > Define Brush Preset (Fig02 - 03) And that's it! Well, that's not exactly it, but following that the only things left to do are to rename your brush (Fig04) and tweak it to get the effect you want, in the Brushes tab on the top menu.
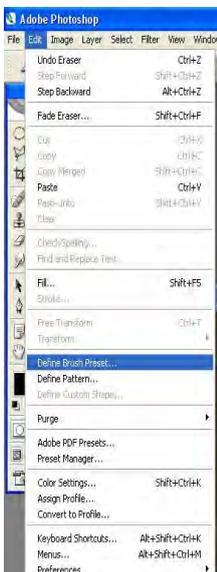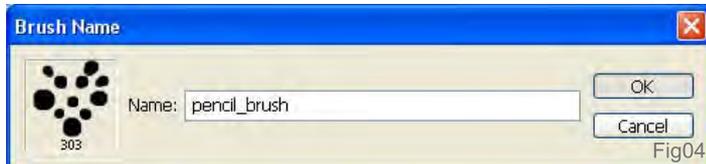

Fig01

Fig02

Fig03

Fig04

Fig05

Fig06

Fig07

Fig08

opacity dynamics off
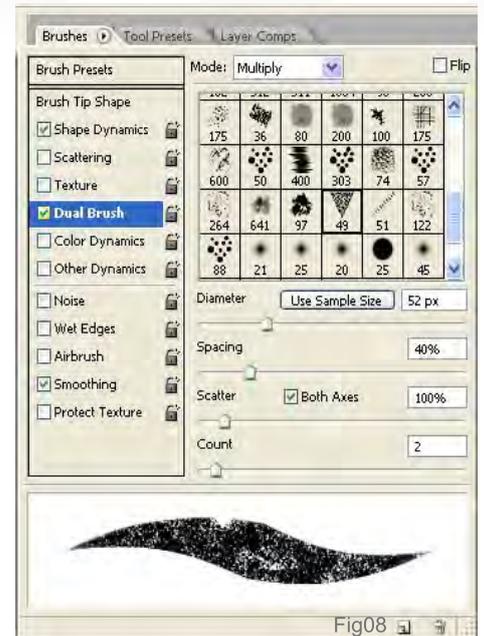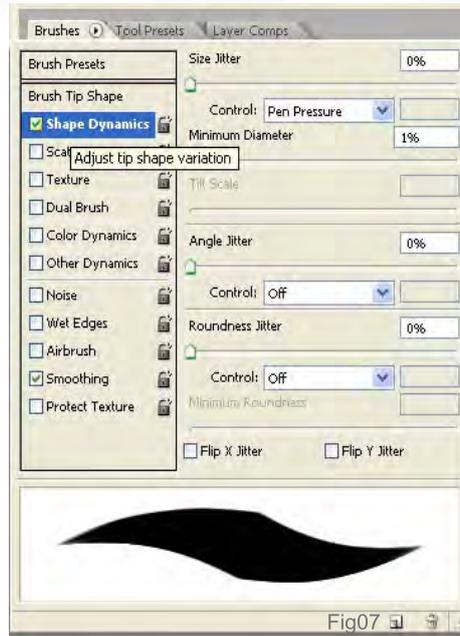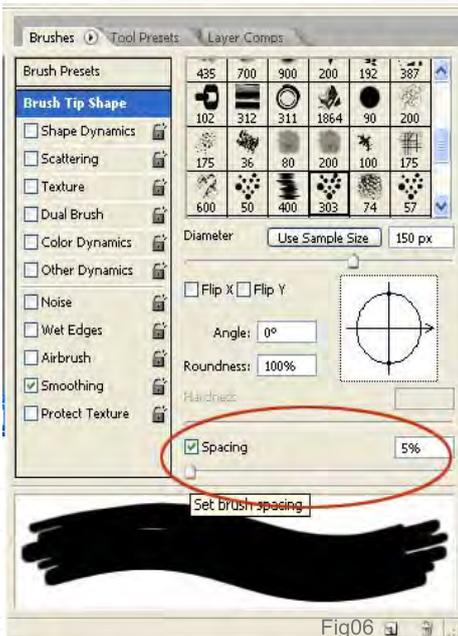Fig09


opacity dynamics on
Fig11

Fig10
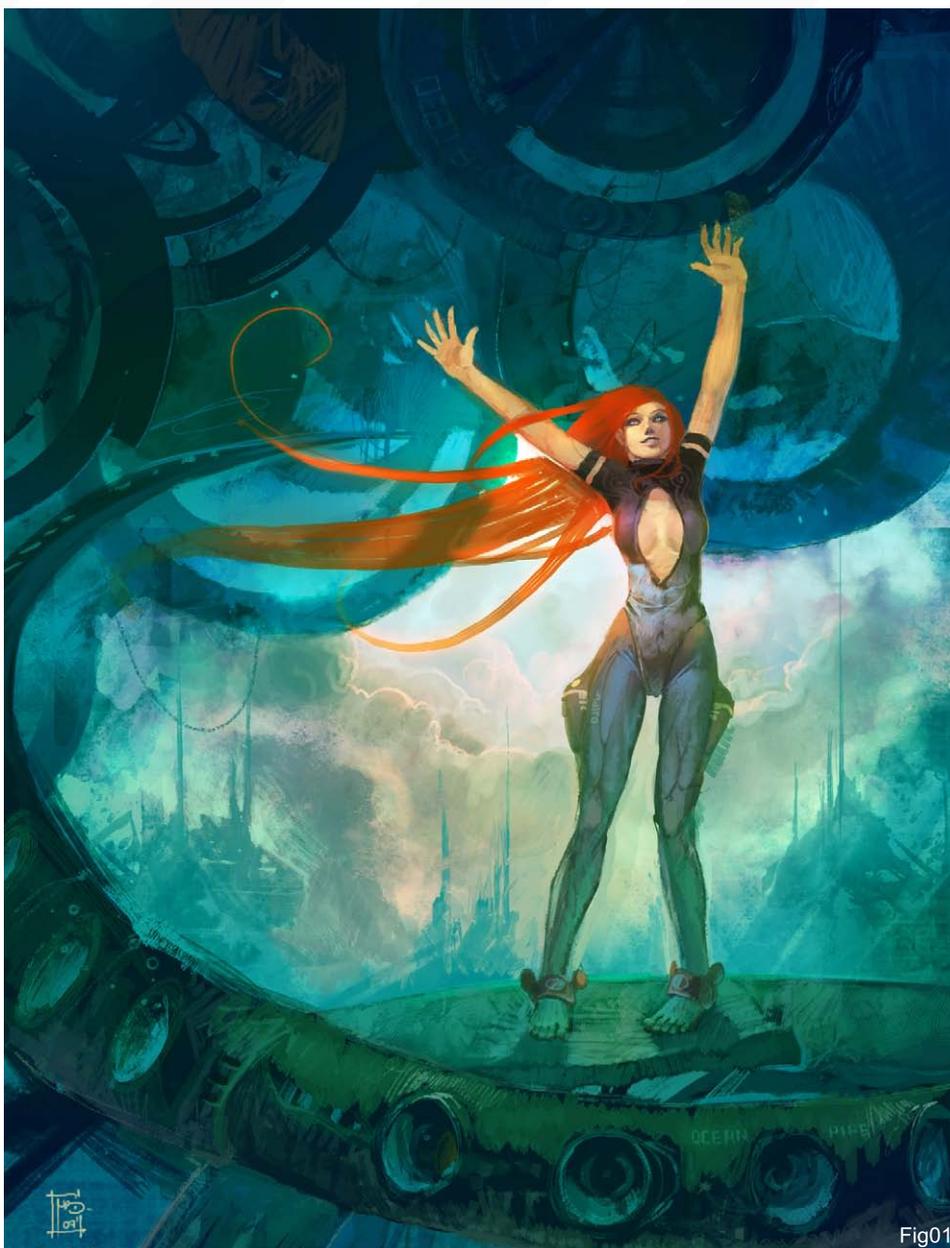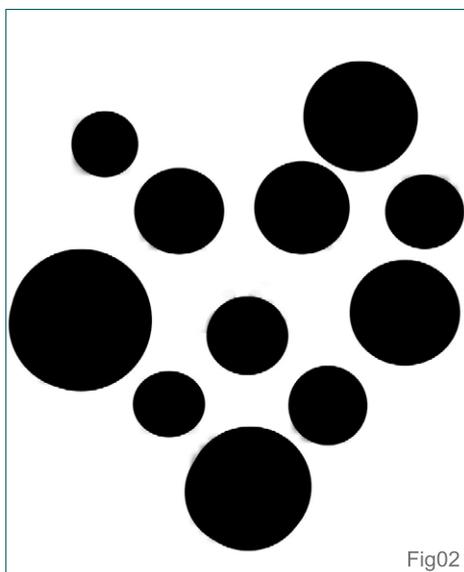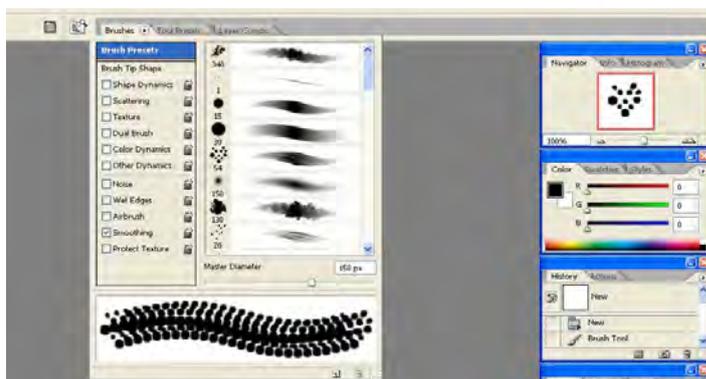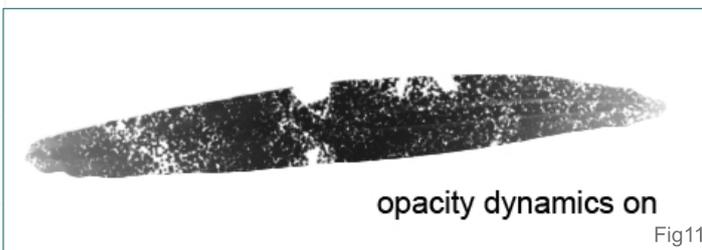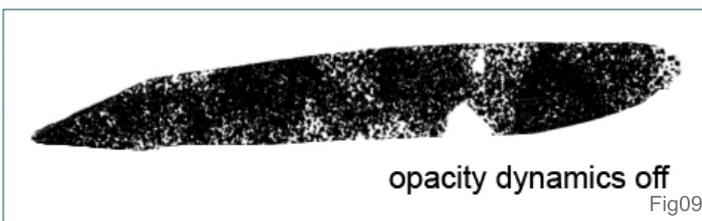
Opening the Brushes menu, we notice a bunch of options used to customise the basic brush that we just created (Fig05). So, at this point, I suggest you open a new file with a white background to test the brush as you make the tweaks. You don't need to change that much to get a decent result, though. There might seem to be a lot of options but they're all very intuitive and you can see the result right away in the brush preview window. Here we'll change the brush Spacing, since we want to eliminate the gap between each shape to make it look like a single stroke, so I'll change the spacing from 25 to 5. Notice how the stroke now feels even and continuous (Fig06). I then check Shape Dynamics so that the lighter I press with the tablet pen, the thinner the stroke will be (Fig07). You can just leave everything else at the default settings. Now skip to 'Dual Brush' - this option is really where the party's at! Here your brush can really become something special. For this brush I'll use the triangular shaped brush in the thumbnails menu, which is full of tiny holes so it'll give me it the pencil look I'm trying to achieve. Simply change the values, as shown in Fig08.
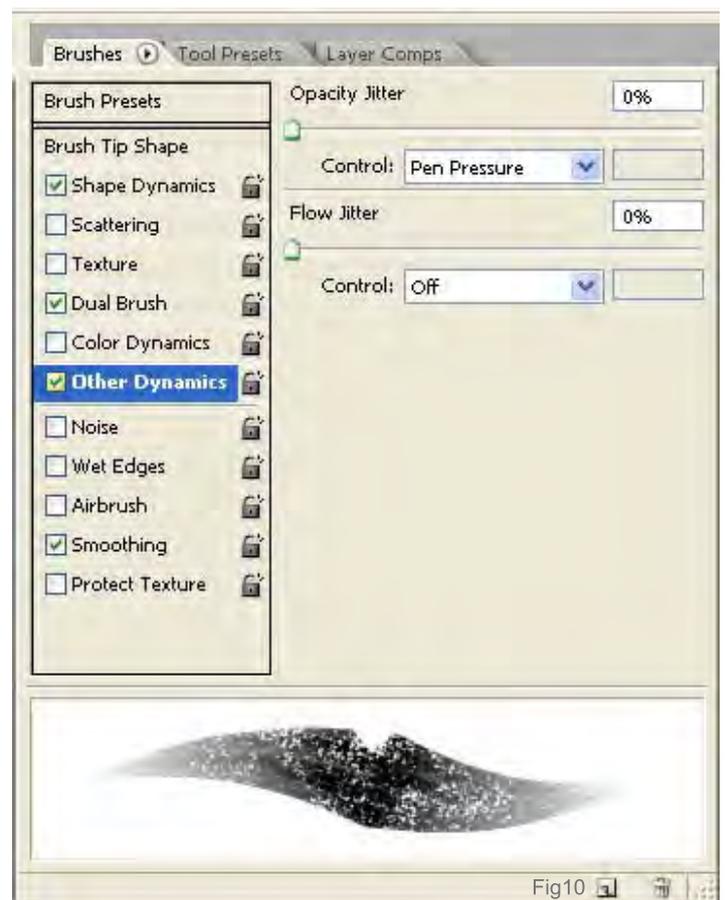
If I try the brush at this point I already get the result I wanted (Fig09); the only thing left now is to activate the opacity change with the pen pressure so that, if I press lighter on the tablet, the stroke will be lighter, too (Fig10). It's just more intuitive and easy to work with this way. Save the newly created brush under something like "pencil brush" and that's it! See the difference (Fig11)? Use this new brush as you would use a real pencil to create all the different opacities and brush sizes you need. It's a really
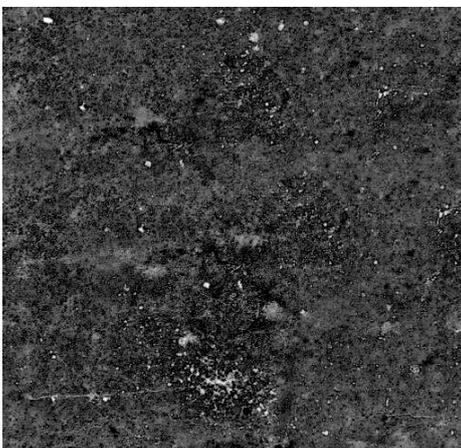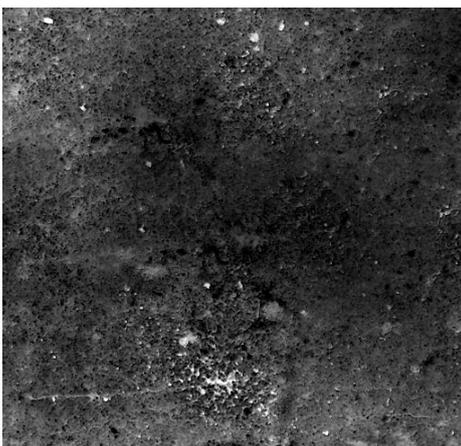
Fig13

Fig14

Fig15

Fig16

Fig12

nice brush to do line art digitally, or simply in getting a little more texture than you would get with a regular round brush, for example (Fig12). The other main brush I use, besides the regular hard-edged round brush found in the default Photoshop brush set, is another custom brush. This one is kind of like the one we just created, as it's based on the same starting shape, but it has a texture associated to it. So let's start with the same previous dots and save it as something like "dry brush". Again, in the Brushes tab menu, let's play with a couple of the options... Firstly, drop the spacing to 5, just like with the previous one, check Shape Dynamics and Other Dynamics, and leave everything else at default. Then check Texture, and leave everything at default there, as well. Let's step back at this point, save the brush we have here, and let's move on to creating the texture that the brush will use. There are a bunch of default textures you can find when you click on Textures in the Brushes tab menu,

but none of them will help us here. So let's make our own! A very quick and simple way I have found is to take a photo of concrete, or any similar surfaces, take it to Photoshop, play with then Brightness/Contrast until you have a really contrasted and uneven texture, invert the colours (Ctrl + I), Desaturate it, and then go to Filter > Brush Strokes and throw an Accented Edges filter on it (Fig13 - 16). This should do. Now all you have to do is go to Edit > Define
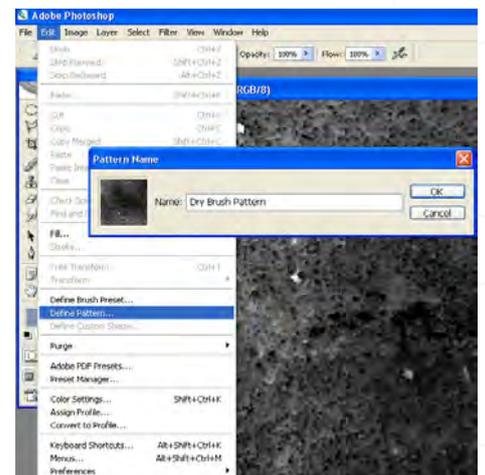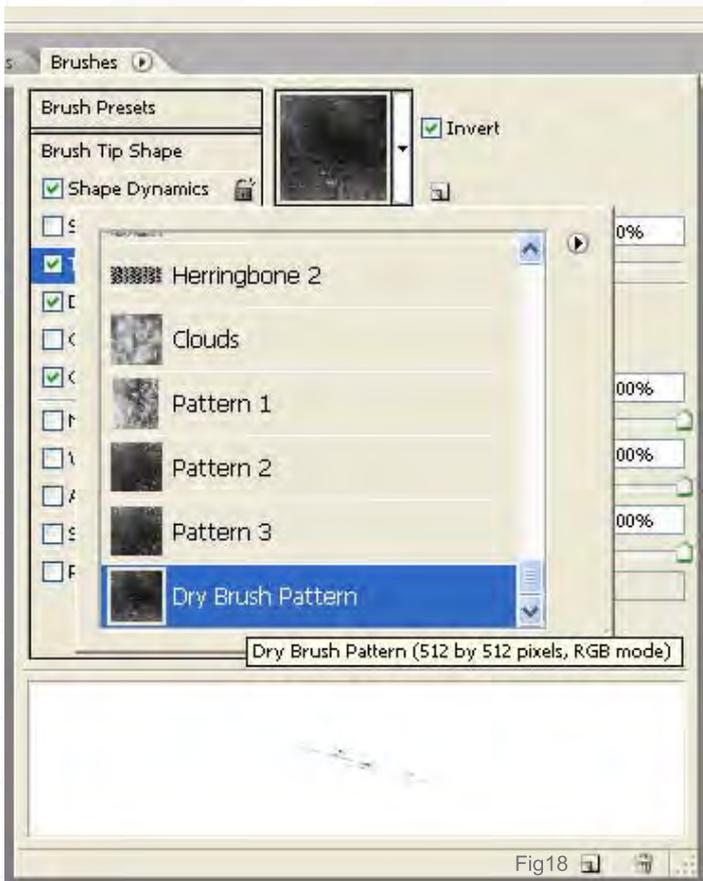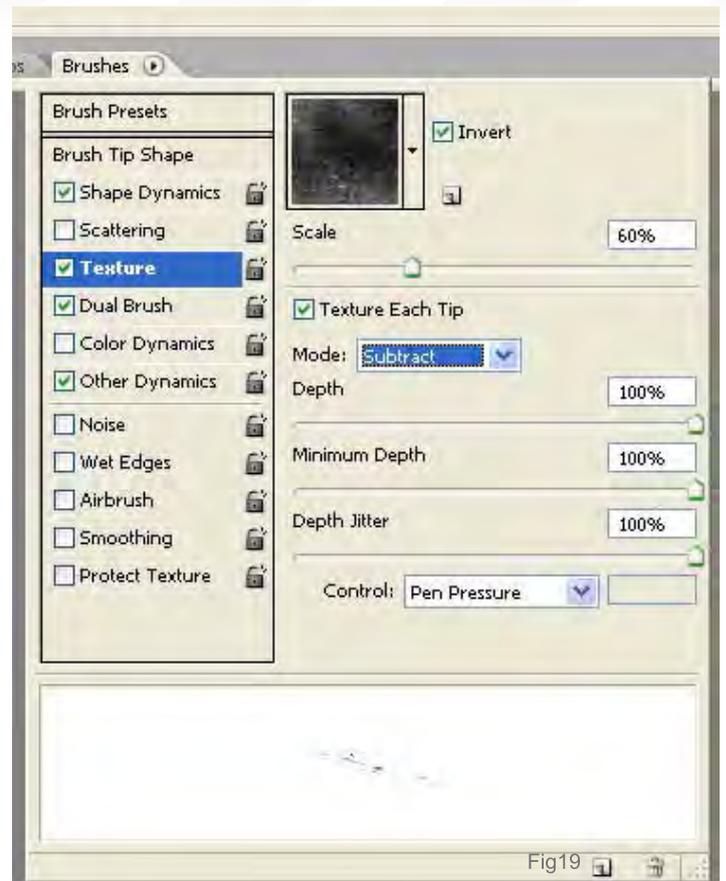

Fig17

Fig18

Fig19

Pattern, save it under something like "dry brush pattern" (Fig17), and it should automatically appear in the pattern library. Let's go back to where we were with our dry brush. In the Texture menu, browse the patterns and find the one we just created (Fig18), adjust the scale to 60% and make sure that "Texture each tip" is checked. Select Subtract as the blending mode and leave everything else at 100% (Fig19). The brush is now done, so save it and enjoy the texture madness (Fig. 20).
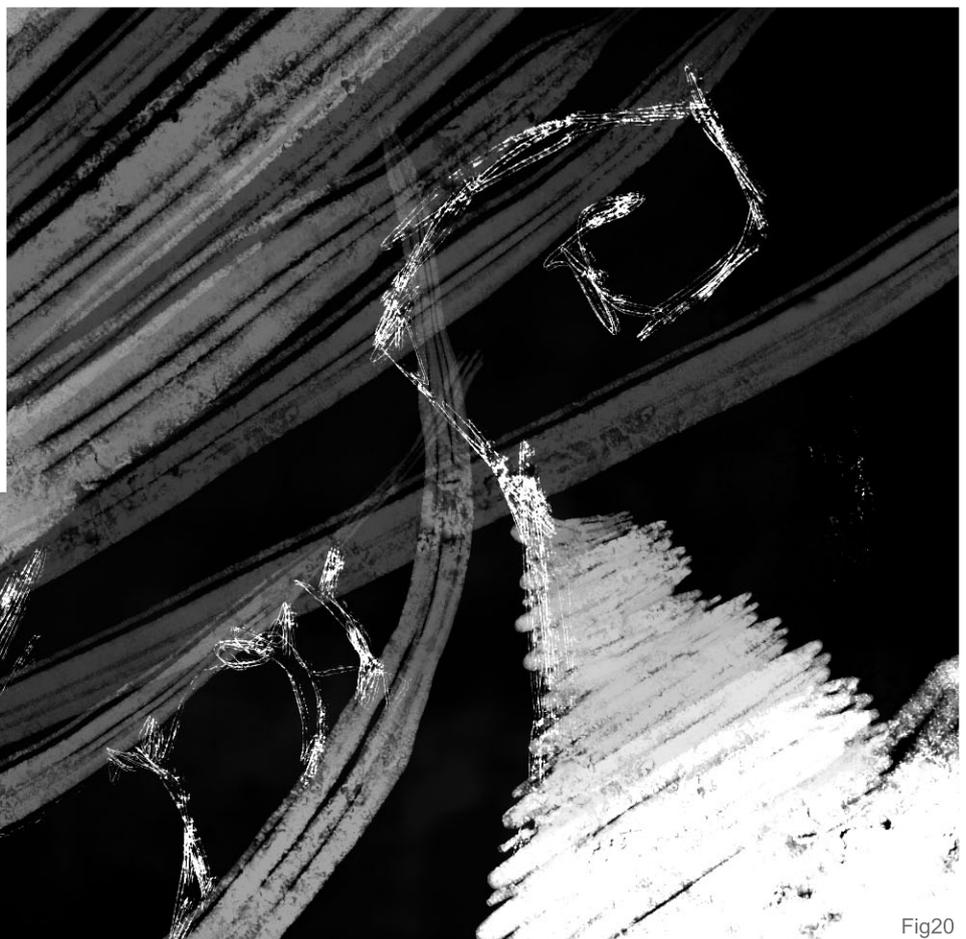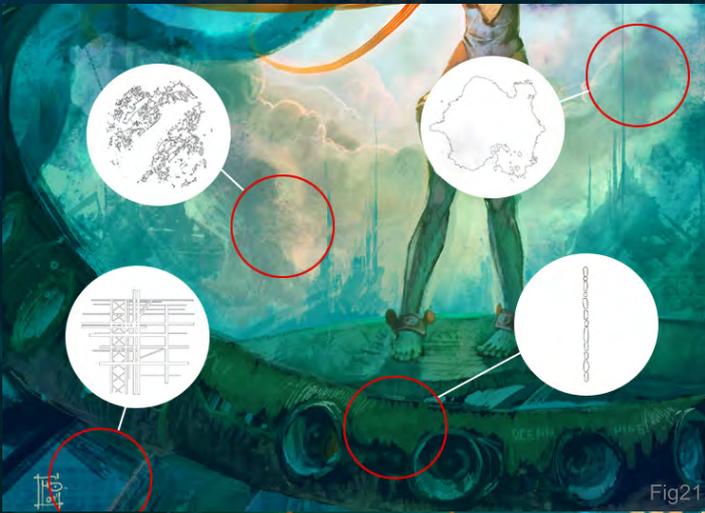

Fig20

Fig21

To get a little more diversity with the textures, I used the brushes seen in Fig21, as well. Everything else though was done with the two custom brushes that just created.

Marc Brunet

For more from this artist visit:
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Or contact:
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Marc Brunet is currently finishing his studies in Canada and enjoys painting fantasy environments that incorporate exotic females. There is an intriguing sense of narrative that underlies his work which he puts to use everyday in the game industry working at Artificial Mind & Movement, a Montreal based game studio. Check out his portfolio at **bluefley. cgsociety.org**! In 2DArtist magazine's March 2007 Issue, Marc took some time to chat with us. If you missed the interview, check out our back issues on **www.2dartistmagazine.com**.

Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the magazine. We've asked two artists to produce a speed painting based on a simple, one-line brief. Here we will feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes. This month, **Paul Davies** and **Richard Tilbury** tackle:

THE ROOM MADE THE EXPLORERS FEEL SICK WITH THE THOUGHTS AS TO WHAT HAD HAPPENED THERE IN YEARS GONE BY

Speed Painting

PAUL DAVIES

Introduction

UK based artist, Paul Davies, takes us on an honest journey through the Speed Painting titled "The room made the explorers feel sick with the thoughts as to what had happened there in years gone by!" ...

Speed painting can be used to accomplish many tasks. It can be a way of quickly comparing a series of designs based on the same theme, or it can be used as an exercise to improve an artist's skills. The purpose of many speed paintings is to quickly portray a desired mood and atmosphere by focusing on lighting and composition without worrying too much about detail. This can be a difficult task for beginners; you need to have a good understanding of values, colour and composition to be able to work quickly, so the key is to practice. The more you do, the better you'll get. When beginning any illustration, whether it's a speed painting or a portfolio piece, it's important to have a reasonably good idea of what you are painting in your mind's eye before you begin. In this case, after reading the brief, I spent ten minutes looking through stock photographs of ruined churches and temples until I had a good idea of what I wanted to do. In the next few steps I'll take you through my process of creating a quick sketch painting concentrating on mood and atmosphere.

Step 1

I start by laying down a range of basic shapes using dark and light shades to quickly establish my colour palette and some basic values. At this

point I'm not too concerned about design, I'm just concentrating on the general mood and feel of the piece. I try to work as quickly as possible here, using a round custom brush to block in a large area of dark grey and give myself an idea of where the main light source should be coming from. I enjoy working with a lot of custom brushes, and one of the things I like to do at this early stage is use the Photoshop's Smudge tool with one of my scattered brushes. This gives a blending effect similar to what can be achieved in Corel Painter and enables me to blend colours quickly and easily until I'm happy with where my colour palette is going. Once I've established my basic values, I choose a much smaller brush and start picking out small, linear highlights. These will suggest architectural details and give the impression that we are looking at a man-made structure rather than a natural rock face. Using the Eyedropper tool I grab colours from around the image and keep things very loose and sketchy, again not focusing on design but on the mood and feel. Already we can start to see some indication of the space and scale of the piece. At the top we have a glimpse of the sky broken up by a dark, grey structure. In the mid ground we have a darker area which will be the focal point of the illustration, and at the bottom we have the darkest area where the explorers will be.

Step 2

The next thing I want to do is to start establishing what type of environment our explorers are going to be in. I start by blocking in a large archway which will serve as the focal point of the image. Using a small round brush, I then clean up the sky area and add a few more linear highlights to the surrounding areas. The piece of architecture jutting out at the top of the structure acts as a mini focal point and also helps to remind us that we are looking at a building rather than a natural formation. Finally, I use another custom brush to add some areas of hanging vegetation to the mid-ground. Another thing I like to do is to use layers to quickly add texture to my work. I create a new layer and set it to Overlay with 50% opacity. I then use a few of my custom brushes to instantly build up rough areas of dark and light which give the impression of dirt and grime. Later on, these areas of texture will help me find a rough design to suggest architectural detail. I'm trying to keep things loose throughout the painting so I don't lose focus on the mood and feel, which is what I want this speed painting to be about.
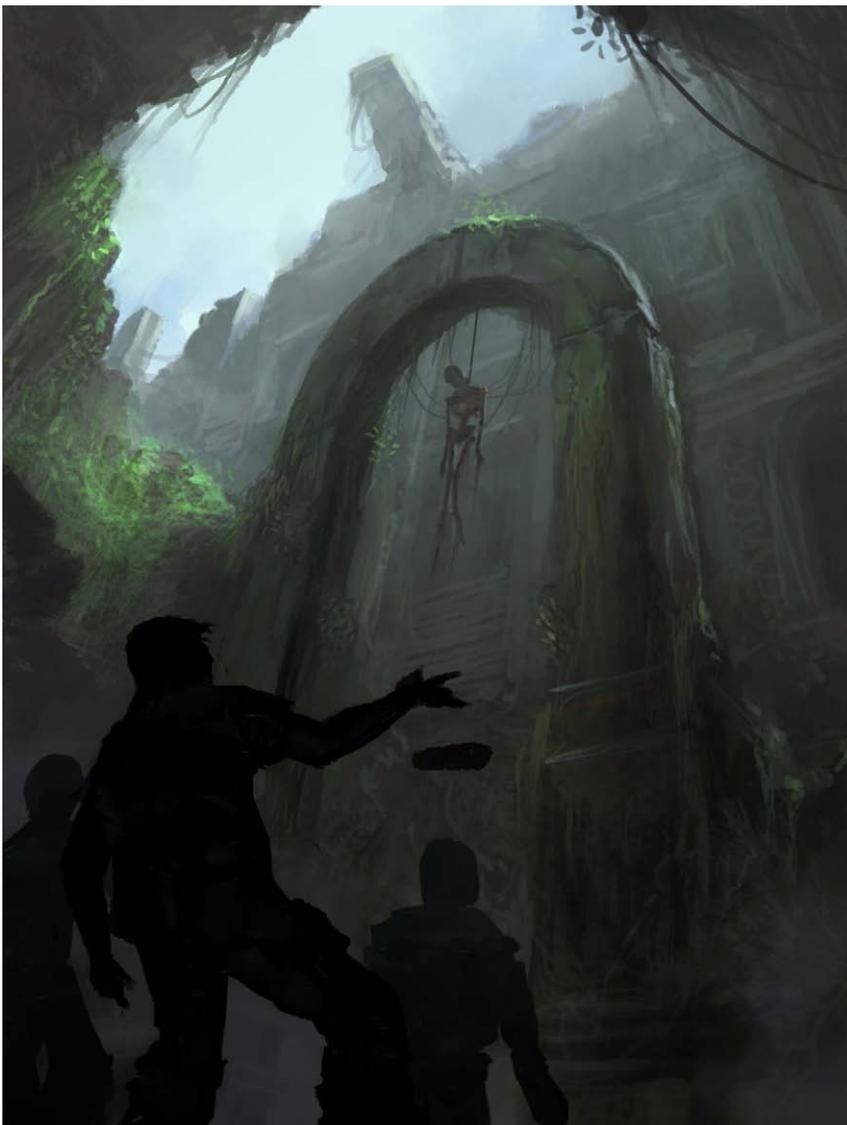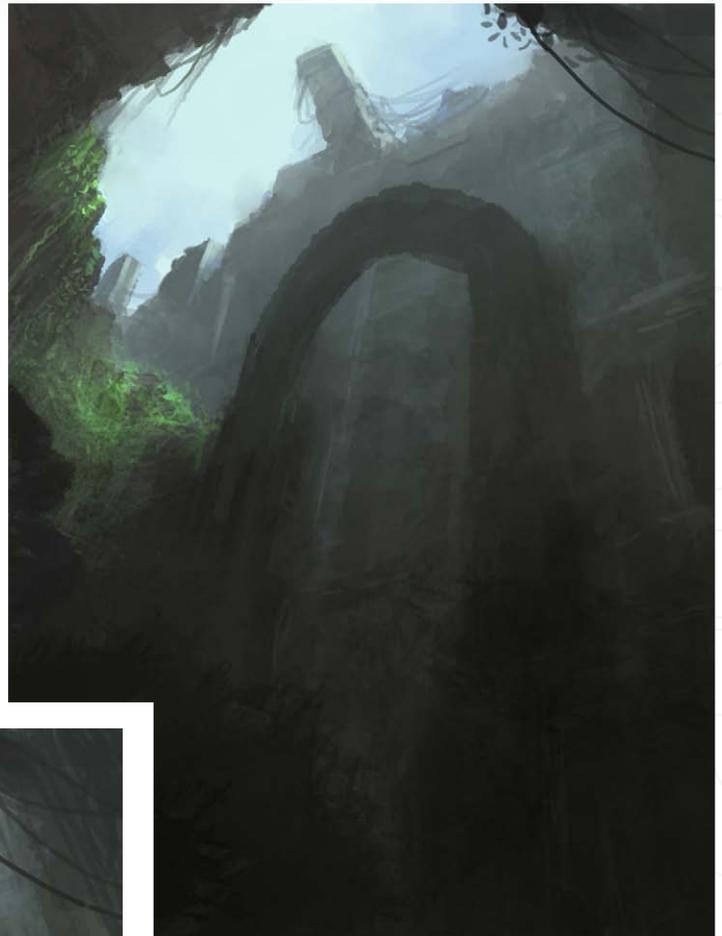
Step 3

The next step is to block in our explorers and to flesh out the focal point of the image, which in this case is the large archway dominating the mid-ground. Using a small round brush I add a hanging corpse and start to pick out areas of light and shade, adding a strong highlight to the right hand side of the arch and some more leafy areas around the sides. I also add some rough lines to keep my perspective consistent from left to right and also to suggest some detail at the base of the arch. Once again I'm still not being too specific about design, I'm just using highlights to suggest areas of varying depth around the structure. I continue by adding some more definition to the area behind the arch and the background structure. Once this is done I choose a large round brush and block in the explorers on a new layer. By using varied pressure, my brush automatically creates interesting shapes that I can work with later when I add more definition to them. I use a very dark shade as the characters are in the extreme foreground and are the nearest thing to us. I then add a thin layer of mist between them and the arch, adding some extra atmospheric depth and helping to bring the characters forward.

Step 4

This step is mainly about refining the characters and adding a few extra highlights to the background. I start by adding hats to the two explorers furthest away from us; this helps to make the closest explorer seem more individual and vulnerable. His pose also suggests that he is the least brave of the three. Often, small touches like that can help tell a story within an illustration and make the characters more believable. Working very loosely, I then block in highlights to suggest the type of clothing they're wearing and add a backpack to one of the explorers. I use warmer colours for their clothing and skin to help separate them from the background. Finally, I add some edge highlights.

Step 5

By now we are almost finished, all of the detailing should be complete, and we are ready to make any final colour adjustments. Firstly, I adjust the levels to make the highlights slightly warmer, then I use the Colour Dodge tool to brighten up and add focus to a few of the key areas around the arch and the explorers. So there we have it. Our finished speed painting now portrays a moody, atmospheric scene as our explorers venture into the unknown...
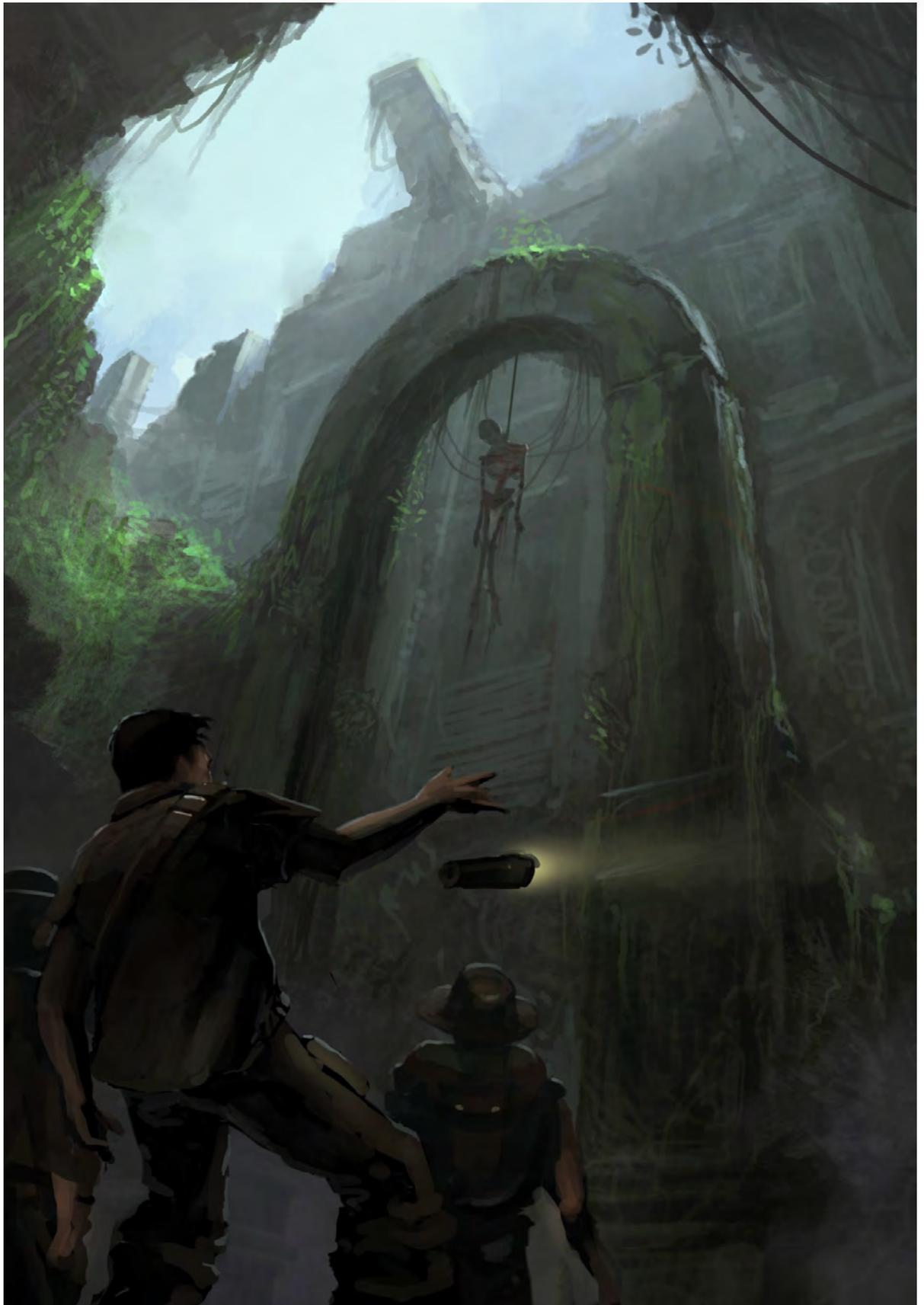
RICHARD TILBURY

Introduction

For this tutorial I initially imagined an image of an abandoned laboratory wherein some rather gruesome experiments had once taken place. As the title suggested years since the given events took place I decided to give the explorer a flare so as to imply there was no longer any power supply feeding the building. I also liked the idea that the flare would provide very strong shadows and a theatrical light that would help add drama and give the scene an intense unnerving quality. I chose to paint the image at a moment just after the flare had been ignited, with our explorer seeing for the first time the figure of a giant humanoid partially dismembered and strung up above some sort of tank. Around him would be a suggestion of some macabre machinery and tubes that were used to experiment on him and preserve his body .

Blocking In

The first thing I did was to quickly sketch the explorer and corpse and establish the spectators viewpoint. I wanted the eye level to be quite low so that the scene looked more imposing, with the focal point of the picture ominously looming overhead (Fig01). I concentrated on the two characters as they were the key components and essentially the most difficult aspects to draw. I added some suggestion of pipework and shading around them but would mainly leave this area to the painting phase. After scanning the drawing and importing it into Photoshop I made a new layer and started to block in the light and dark areas in greyscale. The two brushes I used for

Fig01

this initial layer are shown in Fig02; one is a custom brush I made, which I often use to provide a textural quality for metals and stone, and the other is a standard hard round brush which is perfect for denoting edges and details, such as the pipework. The explorer is meant to be holding out a flare in his right hand and so the main highlights appear on the tank directly in front of him (Fig03). I have now got a diagonal line of light running from the pipe in the bottom left up to the top right where I have blocked in an arch. I shall eventually offset this with the flare which will run opposite to this, but for now it's time to refine the level of detail and tidy up some of the edges.

 In Fig04 you can see that I have painted in some pipework and cylinders on the left and along the ceiling. I have also clarified the arch and put in some shading across the explorers clothing and tank. I used the standard hard round brush to add this detail, but as this is supposed to be a speed

Fig02

Fig03

Fig04

painting it is time to leave the detail and put in some colour. I do this on a separate layer which I set to Overlay and stick predominantly to semi-dark red. In Fig05 you can see that this now provides the main light from the flare with the brightest highlight being on the tank. Overlay is a useful blending mode as it maintains the tonal relationships but allows a colour range to be introduced. You can see when I set this layer to Normal mode how the colour works and how roughly I have blocked it in (Fig06).

Fig05

Fig06
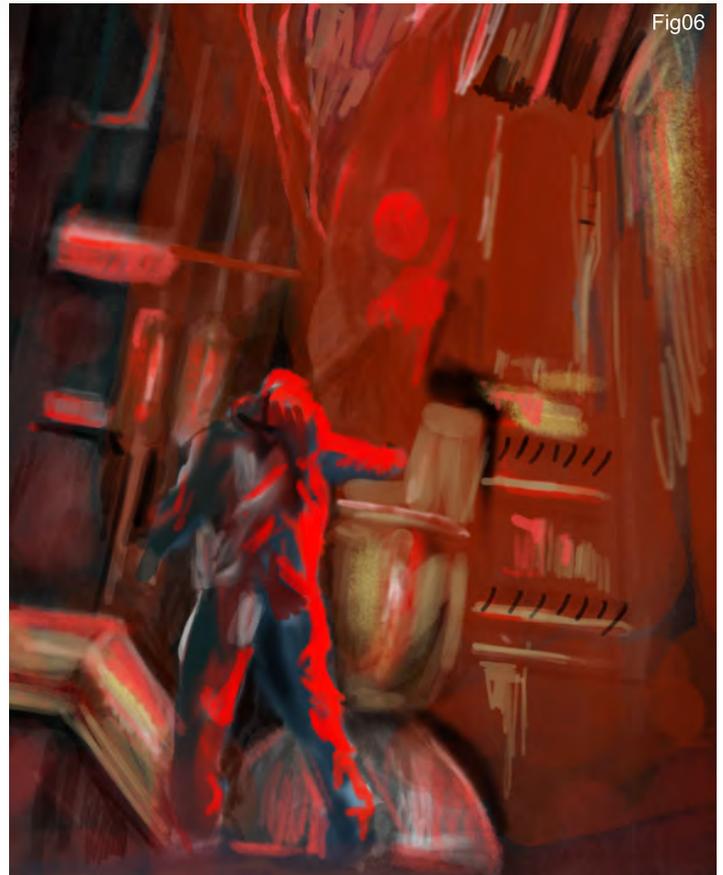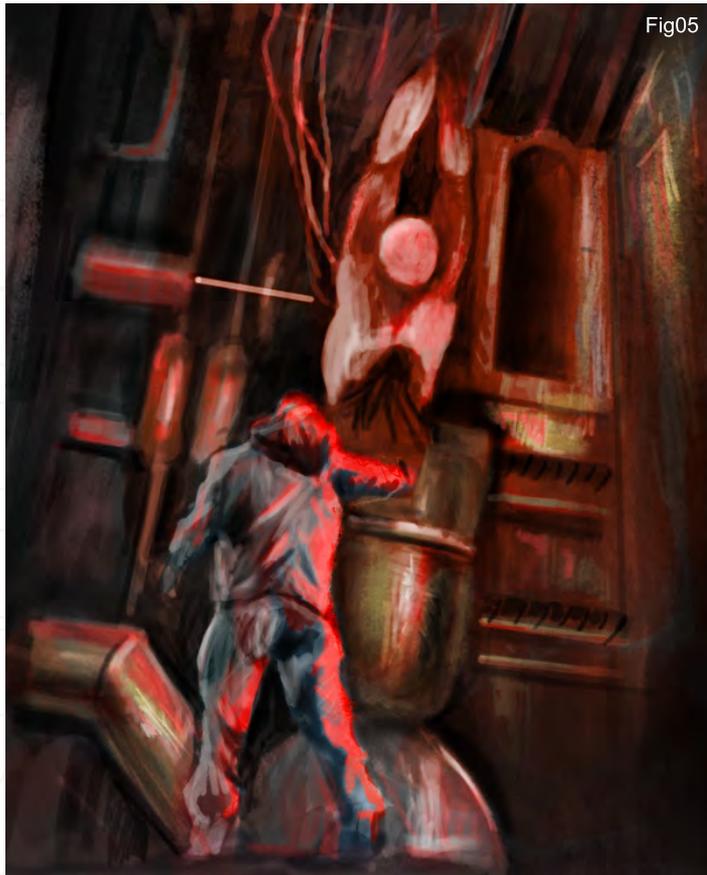
Finishing the Detail

To speed things up I am now going to flatten the PSD and add the final details on a single layer. As I was working on the image there was something that just didn't feel right and I could not decide where the problem lay. In the end, I tried increasing the canvas size and making the room much higher to accentuate the perspective. I don't normally do this so far into a painting, but as this was about speed I didn't consider the composition quite as carefully to begin with but it only added on about ten minutes or so to fill in around the image and it solved the quandary. In Fig07 you can see where I have extended the canvas. It is a little wider but much higher now. I have intensified the light from the flare on the right side of the explorer and added a ceiling vent from which the tubes emerge. You will also notice that the shadows are more pronounced and the pipework has more clarity, but more importantly I have "fleshed out" the corpse (pardon the pun) and given him some volume.
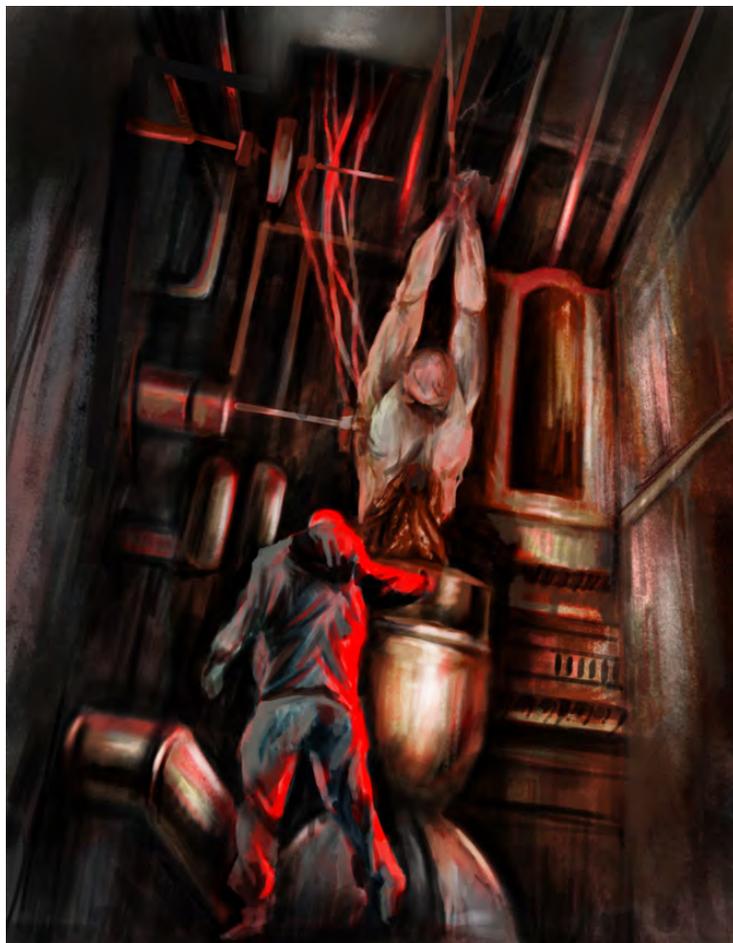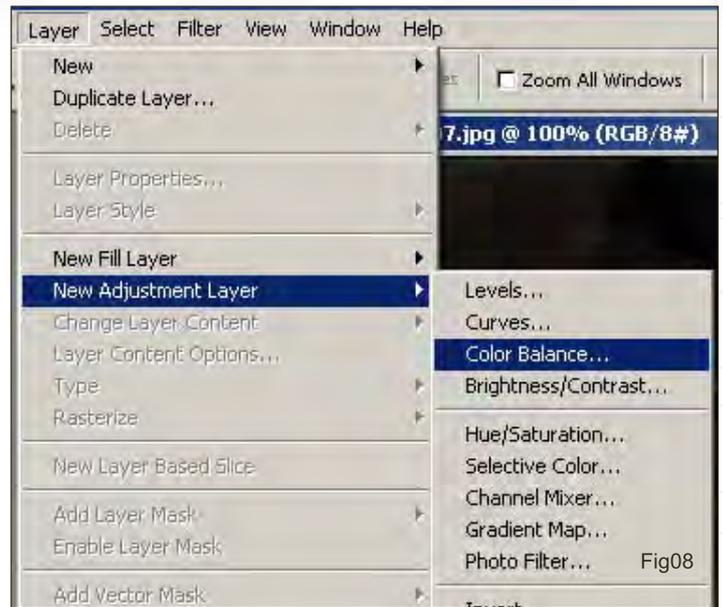
Fig09

Fig08

Fig10

Final Adjustments

This is all the detail that I am going to add as I have spent about two hours on the painting, so far. The next thing to do is to add an adjustment layer by clicking on Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Colour Balance (Fig08). This will enable me to alter the overall colour of the scene but be able to edit it at a later date if need be. In this case I have added a warmer hue by increasing the sliders towards red and yellow to reflect the flare (Fig09). This has helped the image but there should be a greater intensity of red light emanating from the source of the flare, so to combat this I am going to add another layer which I will call "Flare glow". This is going to comprise of a red Soft Airbrushed area around 50% opacity painted around the centre of the picture and then set to Overlay mode (Fig10). This does in fact destroy much of the subtle colour variations but is necessary to intensify the flare, as we will see. We are almost there but barring one vital component: the flare!
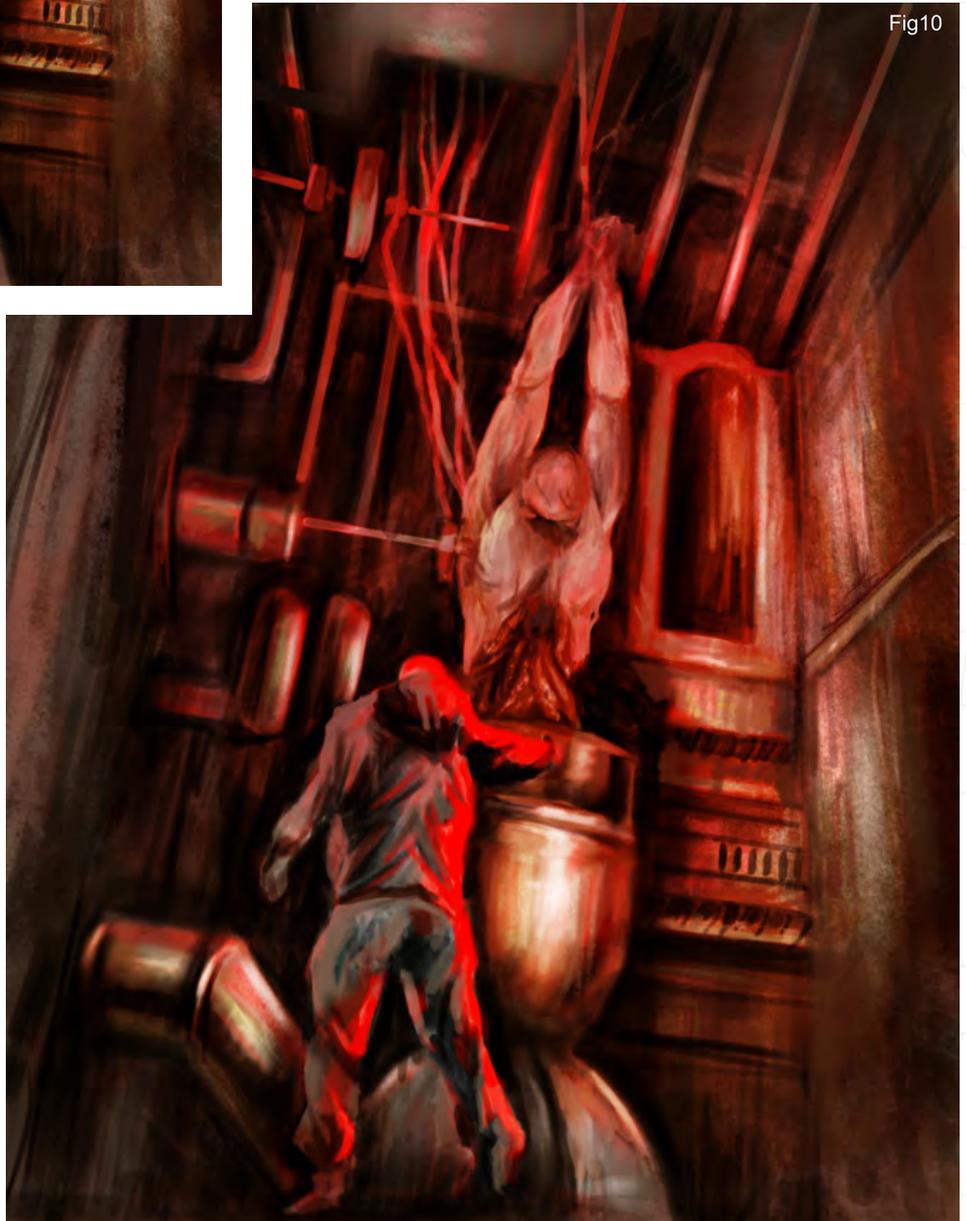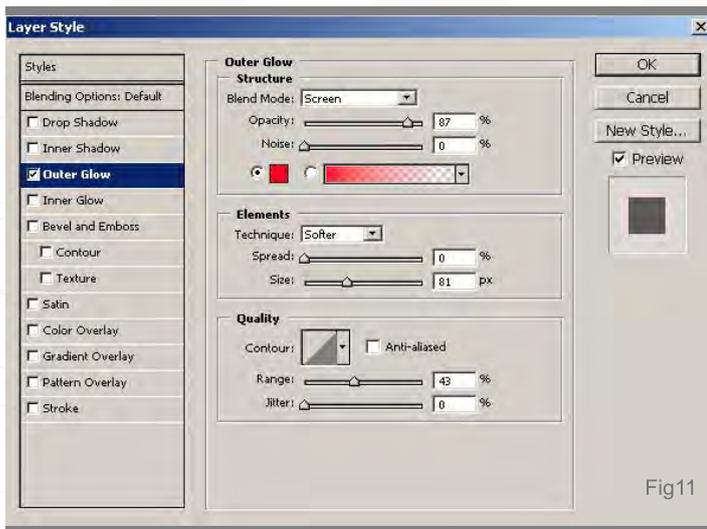
Fig11

Fig12

Conclusion

The painting took around two and a quarter hours to do and was great fun. It is always tempting to add more detail and spend too much time on specific areas of an image during this kind of exercise, and I would like to try and get to the final stages within an hour ideally, but with a bit more practice… I prefer the range of hues visible on the corpse in Fig08 and the fact that you can see the full extent of his injuries, but in a way, having the flare obscuring the abdomen does leave more to the imagination as there is a suggestion of a cavity in the final version. I may well go on to do a more detailed version, but perhaps moving the explorer over somewhat to fully show the gruesome nature of the subject!
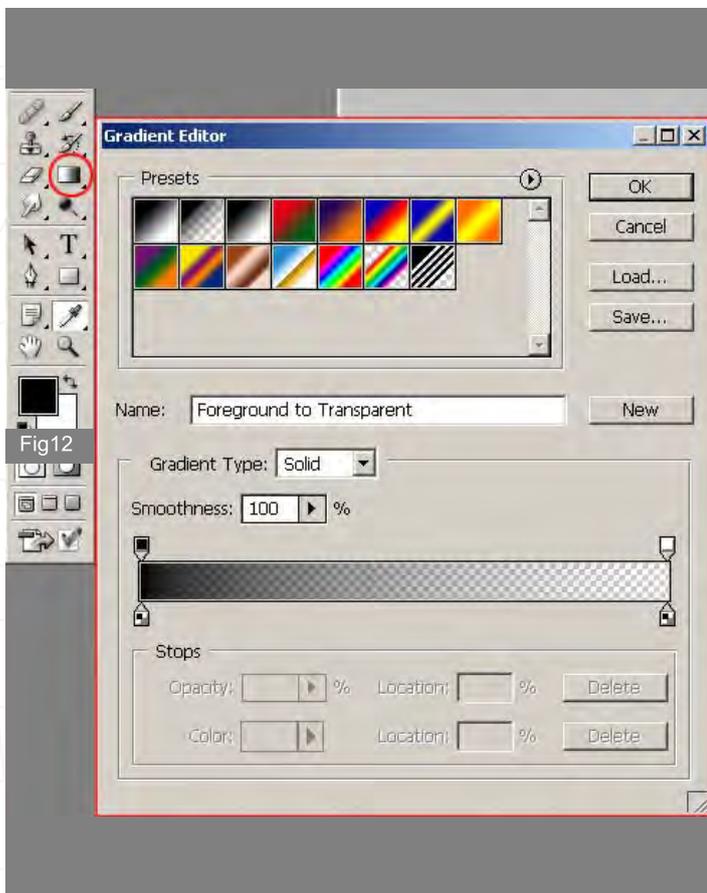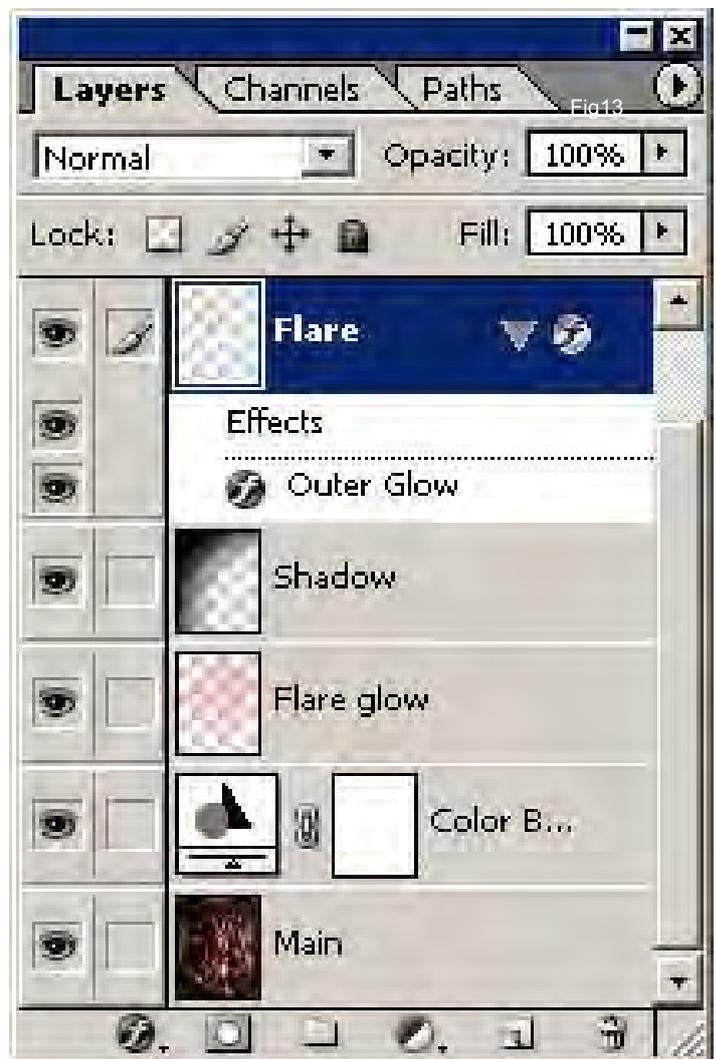

Fig13

This will again be done on a new layer using a standard Hard Round Airbrush and a Layer Style which can be found under the Layer menu. I painted in some strokes in pure white and then used the Smudge tool. I applied an Outer Glow layer style using the settings seen in Fig11. I added just one last layer at 20% opacity and using the Gradient tool added in some subtle shadows along the left edge (Fig12). My PSD file now looked like Fig13 with four new layers above my main layer. This all sounds like a lot of extra tweaks but it only took around 5-10 minutes to add all of these as most of them simply involved altering parameters and the hand-painted ones were straight forward.

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Using 3D

as a starting point for a Digital Painting

Over the course of three months (first part featured in July issue), I shall be discussing some methods and techniques used to create a digital painting of an interior. More specifically, I will aim to show how 3D software can be used as a useful application in the process...

Part 1 (last month):

We covered the reasons why 3D renders can prove invaluable tools in quickly and efficiently calculating perspective problems and supplying masks. We took the idea from a concept sketch through to a simple 3D scene and finally to a digital painting where we dealt with establishing the tonal ranges.

Part 2 (this issue):

We will continue by refining the painting in more detail and referring back to the 3D scene to further polish the details and eventually begin the colouring phase.

Part 3 (next issue):

We will cover finishing the painting with additional lighting and adjustment layers to complete the overall mood.

Using 3D
as a starting point for a Digital Painting

Created In:
Photoshop

We saw last month how starting with a relatively simple 3D scene quickly helped calculate accurate perspective for our painting. By rendering out elements it also helped establish selection areas that could be saved as separate channels and used as masks during the painting process. We were at the stage where the scene had been roughed out in black and white with the main components blocked in. Now it is time to start building on what we have so far and, perhaps more importantly, adding some colour.

The Floor
Before painting in a colour layer I am going to add something which would be difficult to paint accurately: the floor tiles. If you remember last month, I made a simple texture that I mapped onto the floor area and tiled a number of times until the scale looked right. Now it is time to export that floor from the 3D scene and paste it into our PSD file. It is no good simply hiding the objects in the scene, such as the plinth and staircase, and then rendering the floor, as this will reveal areas that are actually hidden in the painting behind and below the said objects. A handy tip is to select all the geometry in the scene, barring the floor, and apply a brightly coloured material as seen in Fig01. Here you can see all the objects in the scene have been assigned the red material in the Diffuse slot above the scene, except the tiled floor. You will also notice that I have turned the self illumination up to 100, which effectively erases any shading and gives the objects a pure, intense value. After rendering, we now have an image similar to Fig02. You will notice that everything is red, apart from the floor that is, and so it will be easy to select. As
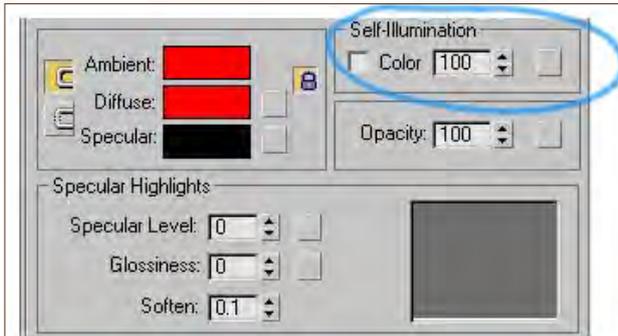
Fig01
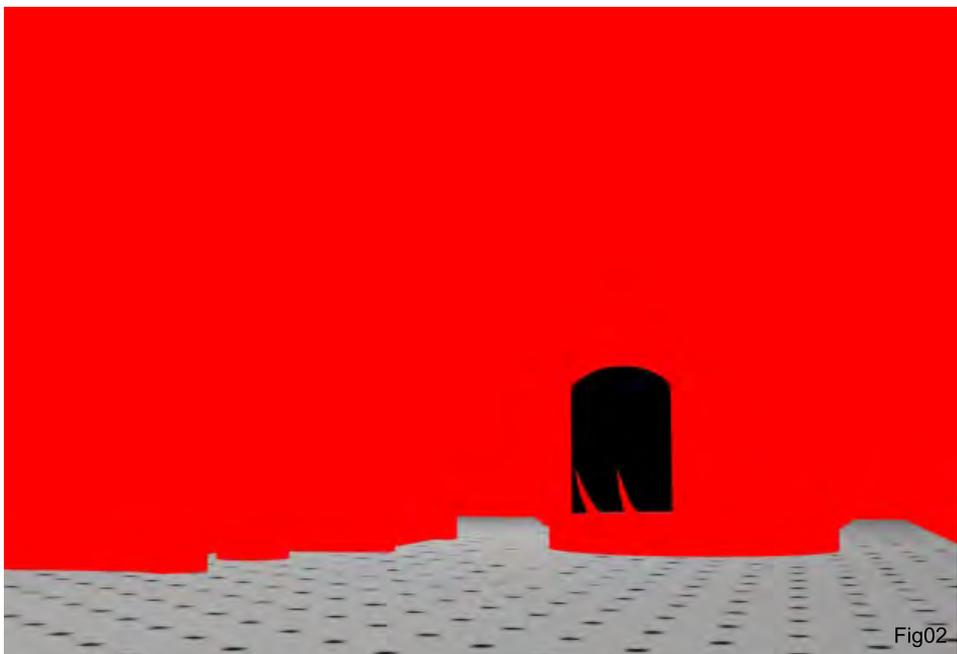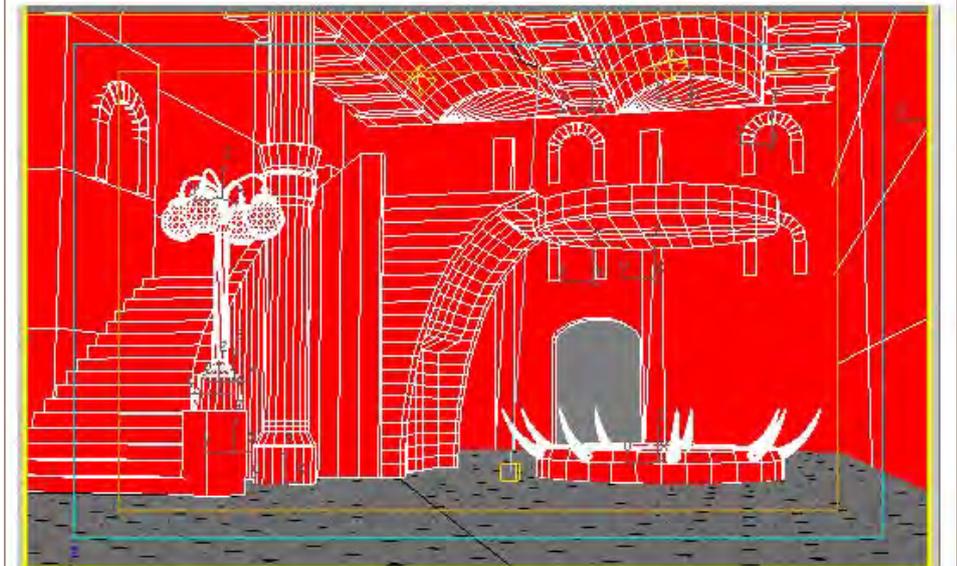
Fig02

a matter of interest, the doorway appears black because this is the default background colour in the scene. If I wanted to delete this I could substitute this black with the red colour on the objects, thus rendering it invisible, but in this case it was unnecessary. We now have a ready masked floor which we can copy into our 2D scene. After pasting this render into our PSD, set the blending mode to Overlay and you have a tiled floor in perspective that doesn't obliterate the brush marks on the black and white layer (Fig03).

Some Extra Detail

We are at a stage where we are almost ready to add some colour, but before we do there are a few more details I wish to add. The walls at the moment look a little simple so I am going to add some small alcoves, as well as some panelling and architrave around the room (Fig04). You can also see that I have added some handrails around the raised platform, a metal framework to support the glass skylights; as well as some spikes around the statue. The spikes and

window frame were rendered from the 3D scene, as demonstrated in Part 1 of this tutorial (last month), but I opted to paint in the handrails and wall detail in Photoshop. One other aspect that I extracted from the 3D version was the top of the lamp stand that holds the four glass lights, to which I added some simple shading and highlights. Other areas that were refined were the stonework on the staircase and the doorway below it. All of this detail was added in black and white on the same layer to keep things simple and consistent.

Adding Colour

There is a sufficient amount of detail for us to now begin the colouring phase. First of all, create a new layer and set the blending mode to Soft Light, or alternatively Overlay, depending on your preferences. You can see in Fig05 that my new layer is named "colour" and you can just make out in the thumbnail that the floor is a pale yellow and the walls an olive green. You can see that I have added some variation on the stone staircase and erased some lines

Fig03

Fig04
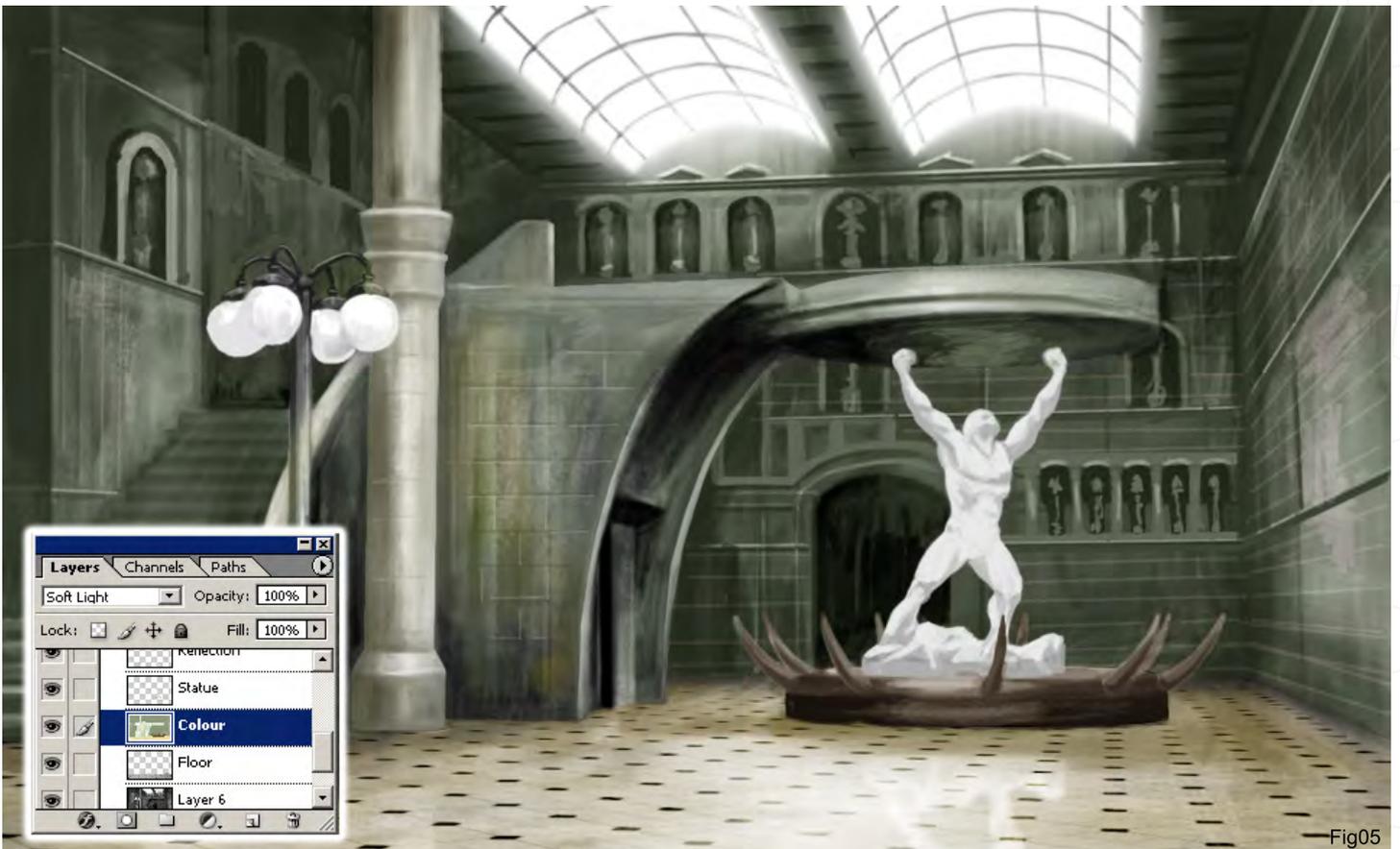
Fig05

into the walls to suggest tiling or stonework. As mentioned earlier, this technique adds colour but maintains the tonal range in the black and white layer. I decided that I would eventually have the sun positioned somewhere left of the scene filtering in and across the room, so it would follow that there would be some highlights on the right wall. I added a new layer which I naturally named "highlights", and using a custom brush and a pale grey painted in the main reflection on the right wall, as seen in Fig06. I also added some bounce light on the staircase and left wall, making sure to set the blending mode to Overlay. One useful and quick way to get some randomness to the highlights is by using Select > Colour Range along the menu bar, and then using the colour dropper click on an area and turn down the fuzziness slider, as shown in Fig07. This way you can select subtle colour variations that provide selection areas for a highlight. Click OK and then fill in with an off-white and the result is similar to Fig08. You can see how this compares to Fig05, giving the walls a far more polished look as though covered in ceramic glazed tiles, which was the initial intention. You will also notice that I have

Fig06

Fig07

Fig08

Fig09

unhidden the handrails and given the statue a yellow/green hue to reflect the general colour scheme of the room and help locate him.
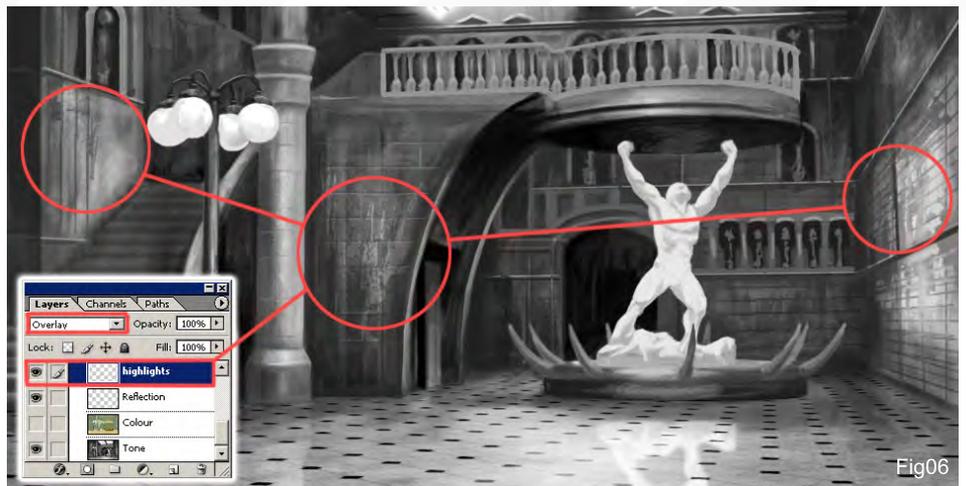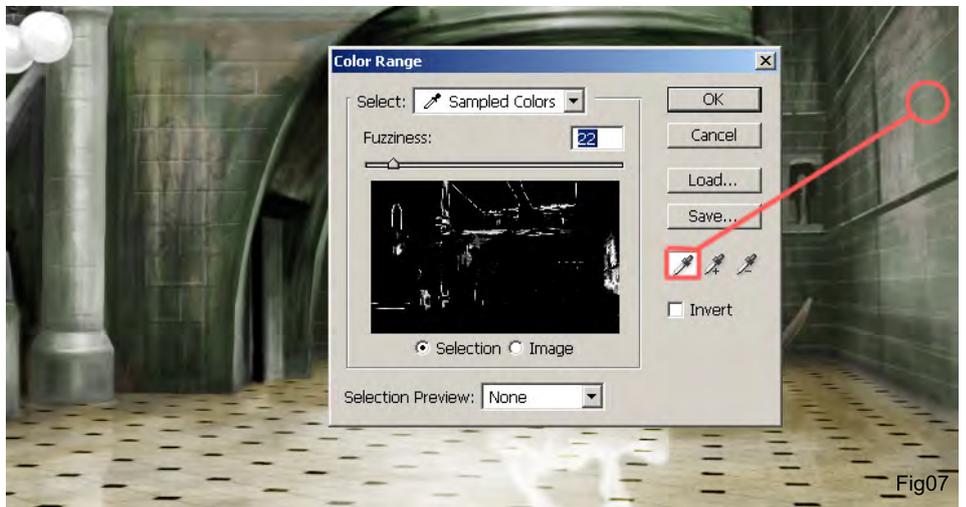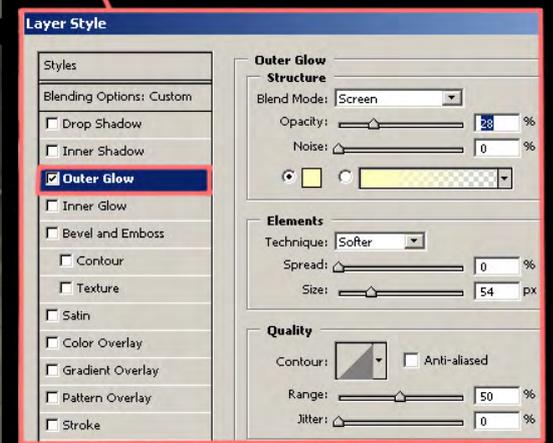
Let There Be Light

The painting is slowly coming together but the lighting still needs some work to help bind the environment. The first step is to add a new layer which will blend from a white to a pale blue and encompass the glass skylights, as seen in the upper left image in Fig09. You can see that there is a white outline around this, due to a glow effect which was added on the black and white layer, which can be seen at the end of last

month's tutorial in Fig09. Now set this new layer to Hard Light, which will reveal the framework and add a blue tint to the right section to reflect some blue sky outside. The left side is partially engulfed by the white so as to suggest a strong light source. The next stage is to add a Layer Effect by clicking on the small "f" icon at the bottom of the layers window and selecting Outer Glow. This brings up a dialogue box, as seen next to the lower left image. Here you can control the colour and extent of the glow which will serve to exaggerate the intensity of the sunlight. In this case, I have chosen a subtle yellow and only used it lightly (28% opacity) as

it is easy to overdo this effect. The sunlight now looks a little brighter and we can see it reflected on the right hand wall, but to help give the room a feeling of antiquity and age we can suggest a partially dusty atmosphere. This we do by adding some volumetric effects in the form of sunbeams catching the air particles, common to interiors penetrated by bright sunlight. I loaded the saved selection areas that make up the foreground objects in a manner similar to last month's tutorial, i.e. the statue, staircase, plinth, handrails and column. I then inverted the selection, and on a new layer made some large general brush strokes in a pale yellow with a

low opacity, sweeping from the window to the lower right. I then applied some Gaussian Blur until I arrived with something similar to Fig10. One additional feature which is required is a highlight across the floor and wall where the sunlight is streaming in. This once again was done on a separate layer set to Overlay mode with a little blurring applied (Fig11). To finish off this part of the tutorial I darkened the statue and added some shadows to help integrate it into the scene. One last touch was to add some lights around the plinth using the outer glow layer effects we touched upon before. Obtaining the reflections was a simple case of copying and flipping the layer and altering the blending mode.

Conclusion

You can see that the scene has come on quite a way since the end of last month's tutorial, especially when we compare the most recent version with that of part one. We have continued to use the 3D scene to help construct perspective, in the case of the floor, which would

Fig10

otherwise have been difficult to paint accurately. Next month I shall go on to finish the painting by adding more refinements to the scene as a whole. The walls, staircase and column still look a little sketchy and need to be resolved. I shall also add some adjustment layers to fine tune the lighting and overall colour in the picture.

Rich Tilbury You can contact this artist at: ibex80@hotmail.com

Fig11

advanced tutorial

In the following tutorial, Anne Pogoda will share her knowledge and thoughts on 3D illustrations and how to tweak them with Photoshop...

how to
paint hair

Painting Blonde & Red Hair

how to paint hair
Painting Blonde & Red Hair

Created In:

Painter & Photoshop

Painting Blonde & Red Hair

Now, since you are familiar with the way of painting dark and black hair, we want to continue to the advanced tutorial for painting it blonde and red. The question now is, "Why is red and blonde hair "advanced"?" Well, to be honest, it is not that easy to explain... But let's try it like this: when you have dark hair you just have to set up a basic "black" pattern in which you start to give some "white" highlights, and finally you might add a colourful shimmer of red or blue to the whole thing to make it appear more lively - and you're done. When you want to paint blonde hair, the result you want to come up with does have to appear anything but dark or black. So you have to work with more colours at once. If you want to have a good blondish seeming plate, you have to work with different kinds of "reds" and "yellows" (to mention just the basic colours). When trying to paint hair, you will see that getting a good handling of colours is actually harder than just lightening something up, as it is with the case of dark hair. In our previous session, we learnt how to create a speckled brush and how to set up a base for our desired hairstyle, so I will skip this part now and take you directly to the colour blocking stage instead...

The painting, in our example, is a picture of a lovely woman which I set up not too long ago for a customer. The customer gave Courtney Cox as a main reference, which also resulted in references of Olivia Wilde, Hayden Panietere, Calista Flockart, and one of Enayla's (www. furiae.com) paintings called "Ailil". When you

have a customer and he is unsure as to how he wants the look of his/her desired character to be, then it is good to ask him for celebrities or fine art paintings which seem to impersonate his imagined figure to him. Without that, it is nearly impossible to come up with a result that the customer will like or can feel connected to. Having that said, and having all your references collected, you can come up with a concept to show to your customer and ask whether he likes what you have in mind, or not.

Step 1 - Setting Up The Base By Blocking First Colour In

Such can be seen in Fig 01. When you are planning a figure it works best to pick your desired colours and block it in quickly in the way you want it. In this case, you can use an airbrush with hard edges, and the spacing set to 5%. I have also drawn in the colours which I used for the basic hair pattern in the upper left corner so that you can get a better understanding of how I worked here. As you can see, we have several reddish and yellowish tones in a range from light to dark. This is because the goal was to show not just the basic hairstyle, but also a basic lighting pattern. Like in the beginners tutorial, I set up the darkest colour for the hair as a base, which I have marked in

Fig01

Applied colors for bangs

Redish touch color added in for back of head

Fig02

as dark brown. Above this colour all of the other - three - lighter colours are applied, which means we define the actual lighting situation after we have painted in the dark base. I have kept the back of the head mostly unnoticed at this stage of work, and simply painted some big dark red strands in. The important part of this stage was how to define the "bangs". Such should always make their way around the head of the figure or else it will look oddly misplaced or even like a wig. Having the darkest colour as the base mostly helps at the parts where the yellowish highlight tones are applied. Because the darkest colour shines through, or makes its way between the yellow strands, it gives the hair more depth and also makes it appear more lively because more than one base colour (yellow and red) are applied.

Step 2 - It's All About Definition

In the next step (Fig02), it's all about further definition. I actually had planned some curls here for the back of her head, which I later changed. OK, but what is the meaning of all those arrows drawn in? It is actually not all as confusing as it seems; looking at how the lighting situation seems in this artwork we could generally split the image into two halves. On one we work with the lighter colours, and on the other we work with the darker colours. This makes it much easier to stick with the mood you are looking for without losing it. So, while on the left side, we can continue working on the bangs by adding some highlighted strands with our speckled brush; we can give some reddish tones to the right side of the image, such as the back of her head, to give it all a more life-like appearance. When we keep the reddish tones only applied to the parts of the head which are nearest to the "border", I draw in and leave the very back of her head unnoticed,
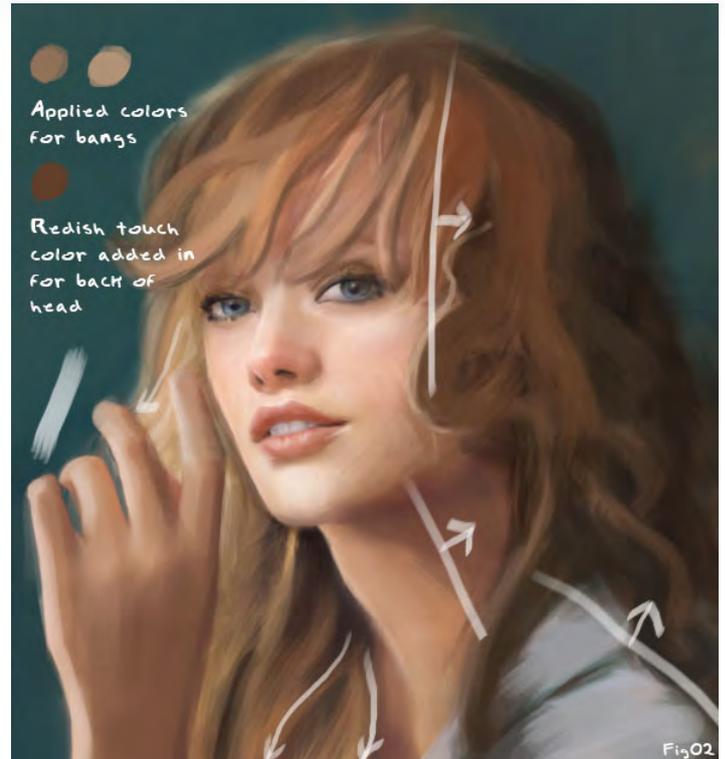
so that it stays in the dark base colour that we applied earlier. This also helps to see the head - and so the hair connected to it - as a 3-dimensional object.

Step 3 - Finding A Connection

So let's finally continue to step 3, where it's all about connecting what we had so carefully split with our "border" earlier on. It is vital to work with a rather small, speckled brush now - take a look at Fig03 for the directional

Behavior of "curls" for bangs

"outline"

Fig03
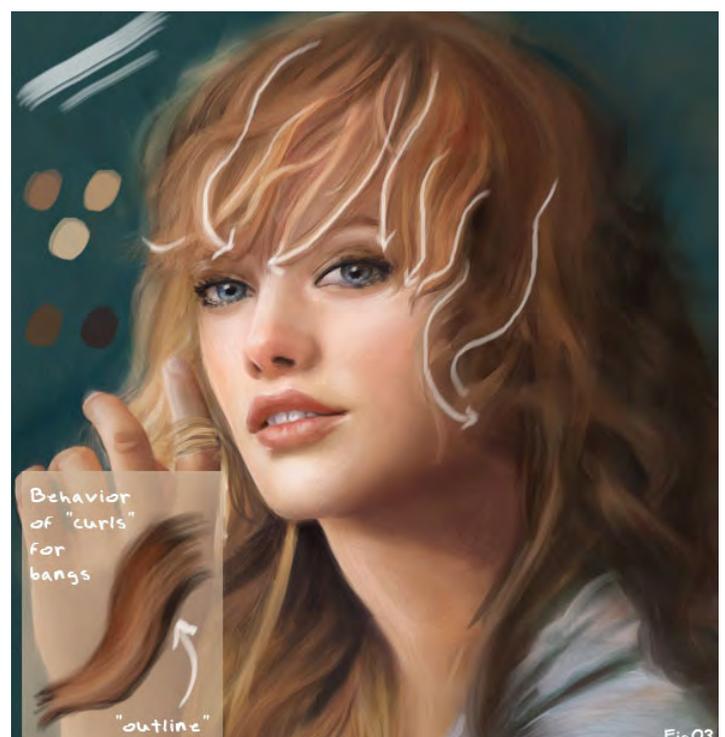
arrows which show the further definition of the bangs. To give the bangs better definition, we basically need all colours from our colour palette again, which also make the connection between the two parts we had separated in steps 1 and 2. The trick is to paint in curls with a rather small, speckled brush using the lighter colours from our palette. Then we simply pick the darker colours and define the borders between two curls with them, for example if we want to draw an outline (please take a look at Fig03 now, if you haven't already done so, to see the little panel which explains the meaning and behaviour of the "outline").

Step 4 - The Back Of The Head

OK, so now we finally want to focus on the back of her head. As written earlier, I firstly wanted to go with a curly look, but later scrapped the idea due to the working process. So, for the new look of the back of the head, pick a rather large speckled brush and the dark brown base colour to paint the new basic shape in. After that, pick one of the lighter colours and apply the highlight colours to the new base, as seen in the little

panel of Fig04. Then we leave it at this stage (for now) and get back to the bangs. Taking a small speckled brush, and the highlight colour marked on the right side of Fig04, just continue to paint more shape in. Be careful with this very strong highlight colour as it works best when applied to the "peaks" of the strands to give the hair more volume and a lively effect.

After that is done, pick the dark red to darken the strands at the top of her head more. This gives the viewer more understanding of the head as a 3-dimensional object. The darkening of the hair works best when you handle it, as I have explained in step 3 under "outlining the hair".

Step 5 - It's "Little Hair" Time Again

Step 5 continues on top of what we have done in step 4 - we are just getting into more detail, here. Pick your speckled brush and set it to a very small size. We will now paint in many tiny hairs, and since we have clearly defined the shape of the bangs and the back of her head earlier, this should be easy! It really is exactly like in Step 4, just with a very tiny brush to define all the unique little hairs (Fig05).

Step 6 - "Merging" The Figure With The Background

Now we will pick the colour of the background and a soft-edged airbrush, and the opacity set to no more than 30%. The brush should be a large one, as shown in Fig06 (simply follow the arrow), and we will now carefully apply the background colour to the "borders" of her head. This will connect the figure better with the background, and again makes it all more colourful and lively. In theory, you are done now, but just in case you own Painter there is a little nice addition you can apply to the hair when finished...

Step 7 - Going Advanced With Painter

To give the hair some extra highlights, there is a nice little trick you can add to it using Painter. What's so cool about Painter is that the brushes can interact with colour that has already been applied, which means that, if we duplicate (Photoshop: right-click > Duplicate) the hair layer and carefully apply oils to it, the oils will react with the hair pattern we have already
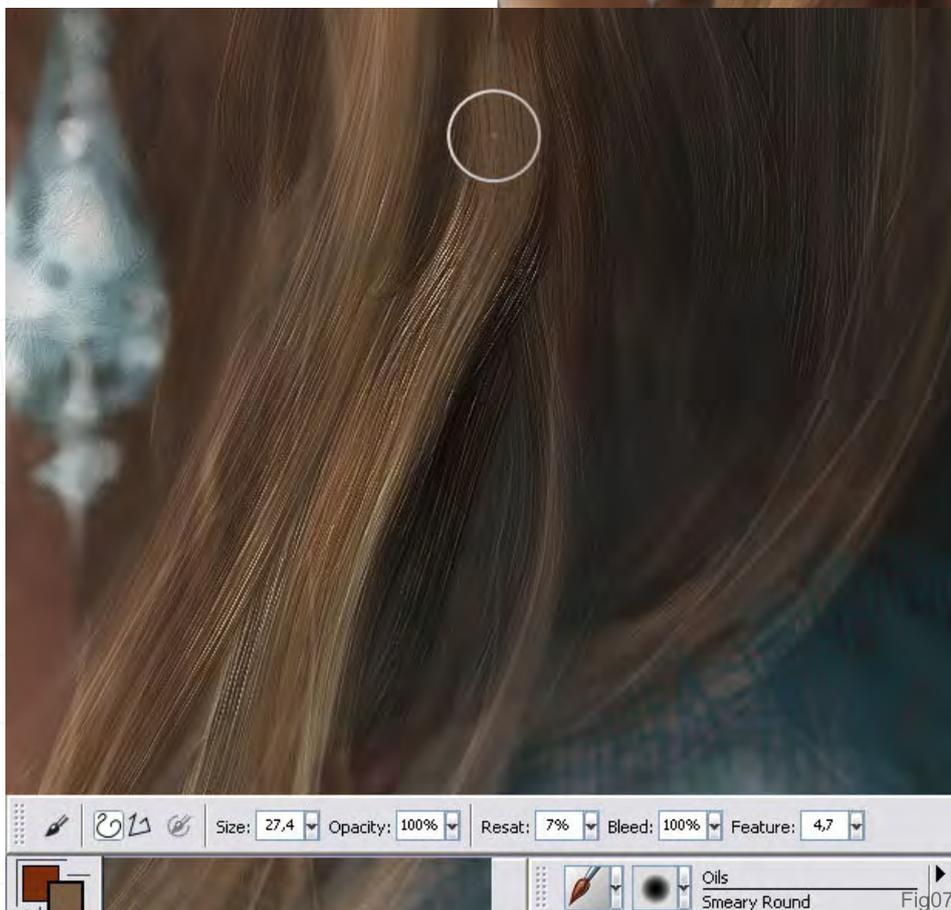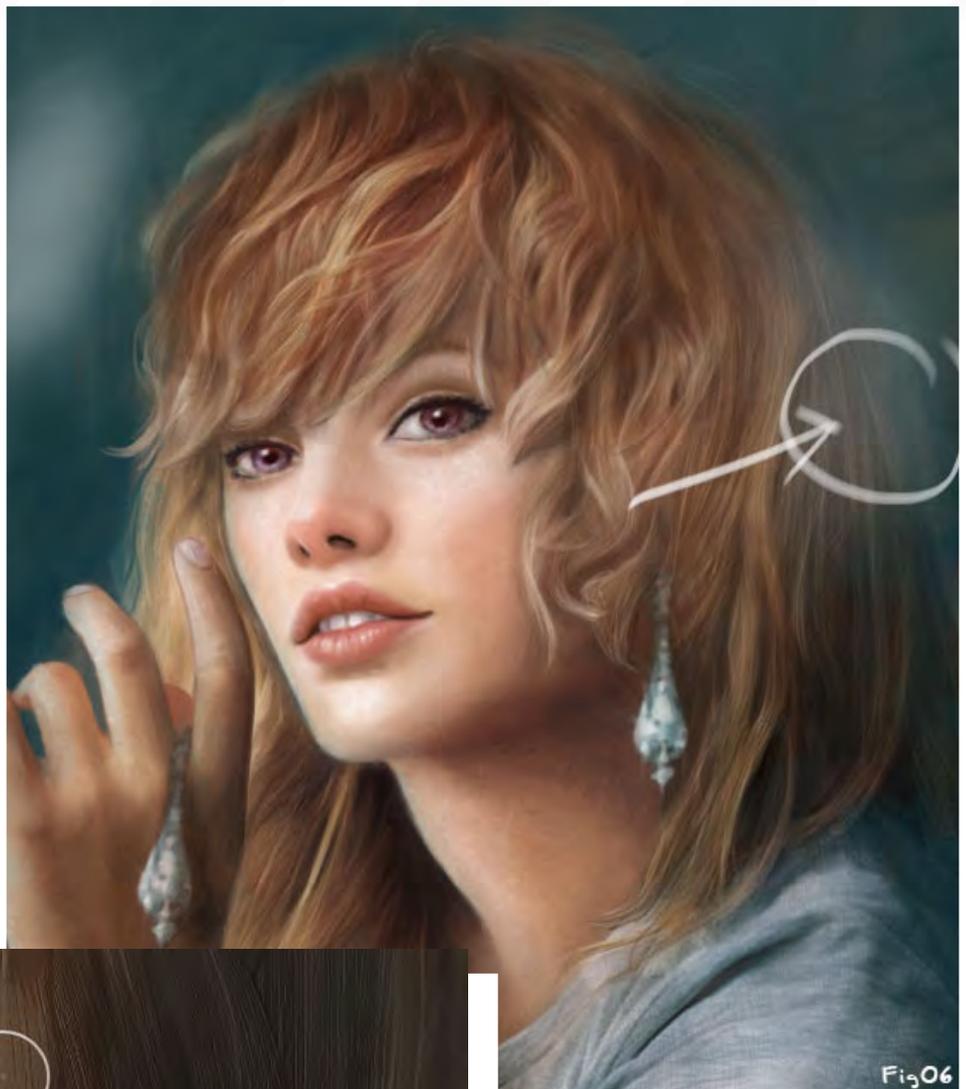
painted and therefore create a lovely texture. In this case, I used the "smeary" round brush from the oil brushes palette. Don't worry about the intensity of the brush strokes that will be created since we have made a copy of the hair layer on which we now paint, so it'll all be fine! In Painter and Photoshop, press the Alt key on your keyboard when you would like to grab a colour whilst painting, as this makes it possible to quickly get the colour you would like to work with. By the way, on the screenshot you can see the colours that I have worked with for the "oily hair texture". Since the new colour reacts with the colour which is already applied, it will merge altogether automatically, so you don't need to work it over with an airbrush afterwards to soften it up. After you have applied as much oil as you would like, which hopefully created a lovely fuzzy pattern to the hair you have already

painted, you can save the document, close Painter, and reopen the document in Photoshop. Or you can pick the Eraser (in Painter), set it's opacity to 20% and carefully erase the parts of the oily pattern that you don't like (Fig07).

Step 8 - Overworking Painter Work In Photoshop

Remember what I had told you in the beginners tutorial about painting something in just to "erase it" later on? Well, we are going to work with this technique again now to erase parts of the attached oil hair copy that we don't like. This basically works almost the same as in Painter, but in Photoshop it doesn't make much difference as to how much pressure you give to the pen after you have set the brush opacity of the eraser to 30%. In Painter, setting the brush opacity of the eraser to 20 or 30 % only makes sense if you handle the pen of your graphics
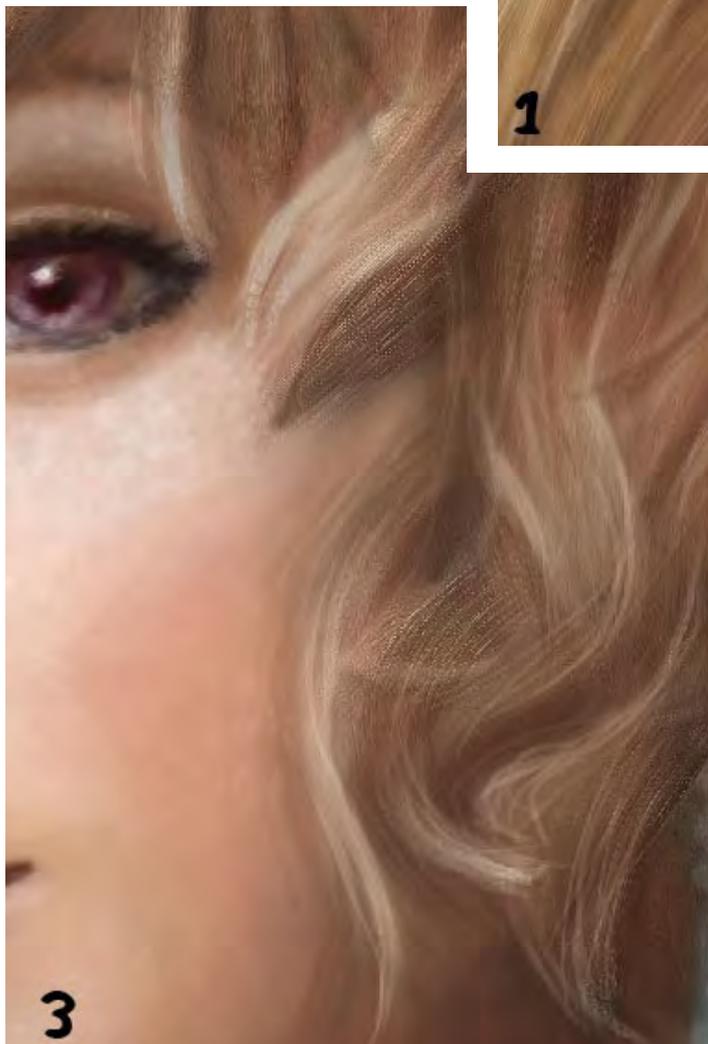
tablet very carefully. That's why I am mostly doing the erasing part with Photoshop because it gives me a feeling of better control over the whole thing. Fig08 shows 3 examples of oily Painter patterns which have been overworked with the eraser.

Anne Pogoda (Azurelle)

For more from this artist visit: www.darktownart.de

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue019 July 2007 $4 / €3.25 / £2.25

2d Artist

image : Dan Dos Santos

"The Dream-Quest of
Unknown Kadath" is a
story about Randolph
Carter, a mystic who
has the ability to enter a
fabulous world through
his dreams..."

FINDING UNKNOWN KADATH

When I first started thinking about painting of
this image, my initial idea was influenced by
the novel H.P. Lovecraft, "The Dream-Quest
of Unknown Kadath", which is one of my
favourites...

FINDING UNKNOWN
KADATH

Created In:

Photoshop

Introduction

"The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" is a story about Randolph Carter, a mystic who has the ability to enter a fabulous world through his dreams. Carter isn't content with merely shuffling about a dream world; he wants to track down Kadath, a fortress where the gods live and play. Carter's quest takes him through endless adventures where he faces both good and evil realms. Carter goes to the moon, talks to cats, sails on the seas, and encounters weird creatures - both helpful and harmful. All of this brings him steadily closer to his goal. This story is a synthesis of many of Lovecraft's other stories, such as "The Cats of Ulthar", but I was mostly interested in the idea about Unknown Kadath.

Before starting, I searched the Internet for reference images to clear my imagination and to ensure that I would get the right idea for the concept (Fig01 and 02). I wanted the scene to be set in a snowy climate, so I also searched for reference images of snow, too (Fig03 and 04).

Concept Sketch

The concept sketch was drawn on white paper. I then turned the horizon line to achieve an effect similar to that of a film camera. I scanned the sketch and opened the file up in Photoshop (CS2). The black and white picture was showing, and then I built up on top of that on a

Fig01

Fig02

Fig03

Fig04

Multiply layer. I created a new layer under the sketch as the fundamental colour draft, with the opacity set to 60 percent, and then removed the black and white sketch as I no longer needed it. The main object in the sketch was too clear, and initially Kadath's fortified wall was being "squeezed" by two cliffs, so I decided to move them apart on to opposing sides.

For this piece, I used photo references of mountains without a sky. I removed the sky from the mountains by looking at the colour channels from the original image and selecting the one with the most contrast between the sky and the rest of the image. I duplicated the blue channel and used the Curves to increase the contrast until the black and white image separated the sky from the foreground. To create texture on the mountain on the right, I used a photo of an iceberg (Fig05) and created a clipping mask layer (ALT + click between two layers) on the layer of painted ice. I changed the upper layer's opacity to 60%, and then cleaned things up using the Eraser tool. On the left, I used another photograph of a mountain (Fig06) and rotated it. I also painted from the icy mountain in a forest, using Fig07.

To paint Kadath, I used a clear-cut, jitter brush, and the Clone Stamp tool, taking reference from the photographs which I cut up into three parts.
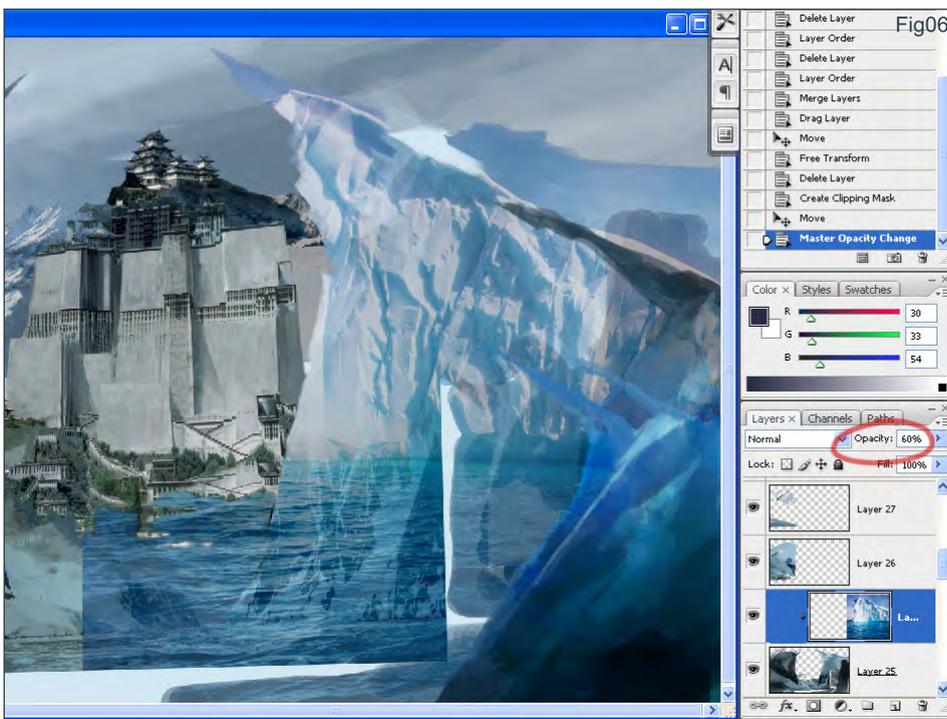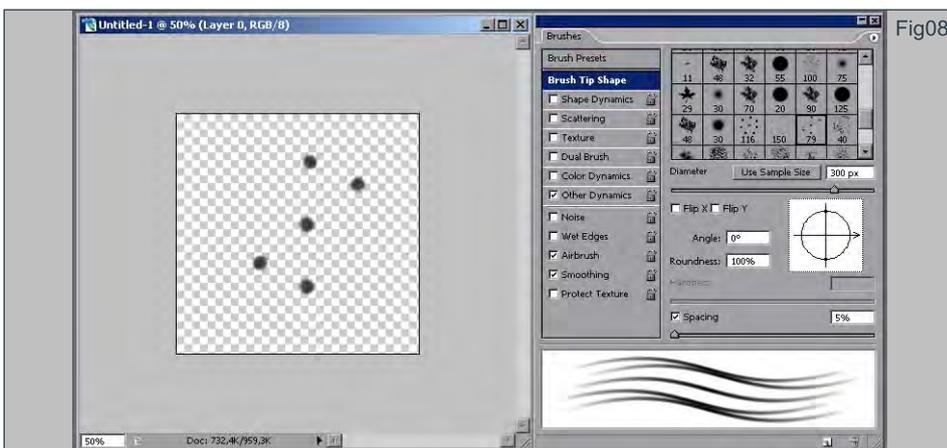

Fig05

Fig06

Fig07

Fig08

I painted the walls and lengthened them; I hand-painted and copied the stairs several times to increase the imposing height. Painting the snow and ice was very tedious. Most parts of this piece were painted using a hard brush (between 1 and 4 pixels in size). The block of ice in the foreground was painted thoroughly using a small standard brush (sometimes as little as 1 pixel), and custom brushes with 50% opacity to achieve cross movement (Fig08). The picture was finished off with lots of mist to achieve a good depth of field. I also decided to add an observation tower to increase the interesting features of the composition. The man in the boat was also hand-painted.

I created a new layer for the shadows, at 50% opacity. I used a firm brush, with the opacity set to 35%, and painted in the needed areas: in the lower right area and on the mountains on the left, because the sunlight could not reach there.

Fig09

Fig10

Fig12

Fig11

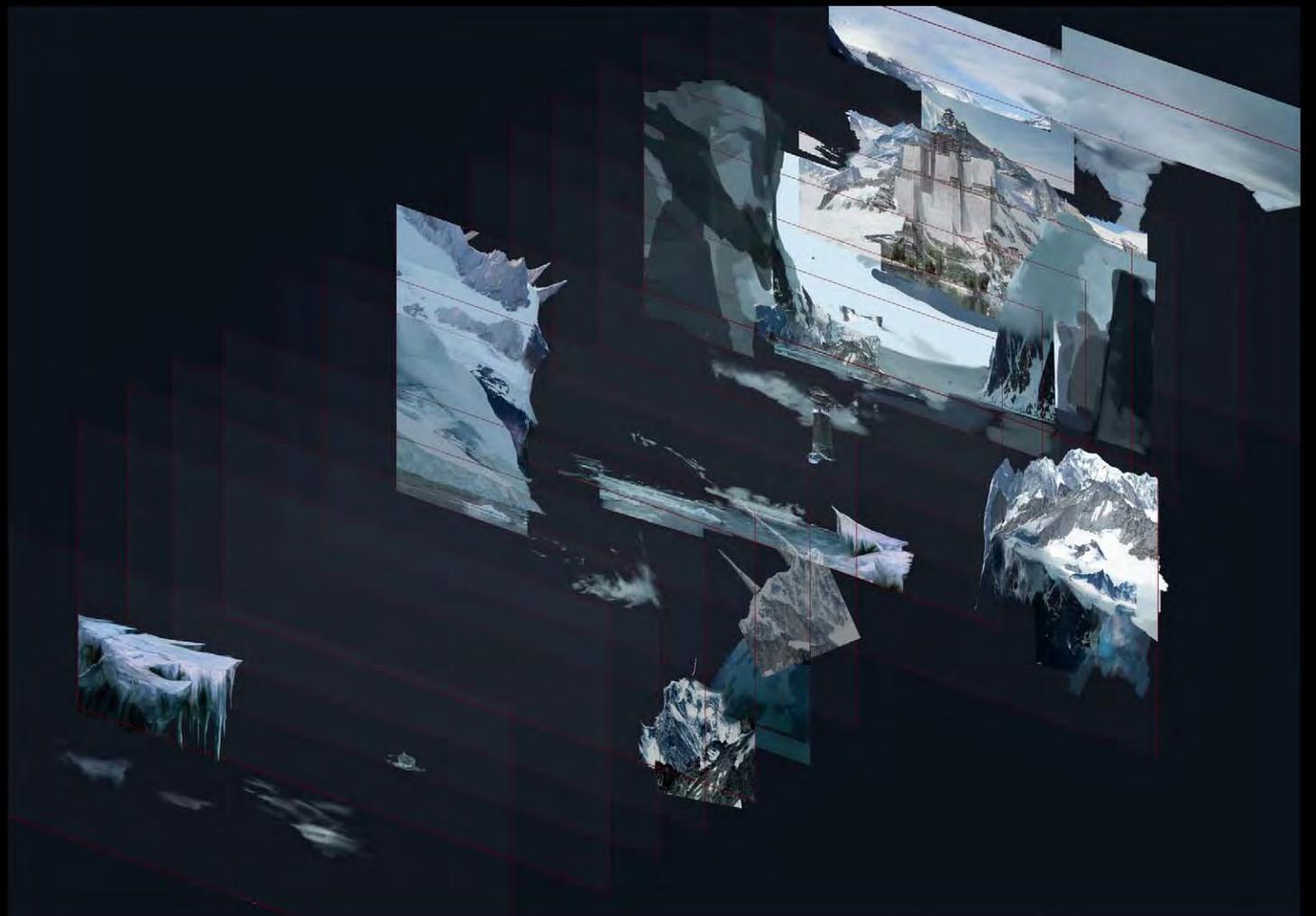I then created adjustments layers with alpha masks; that is, Hue/Saturation and Brightness/Contrast, to achieve a single gamma. I painted onto the adjustment layers on the mask to create the different tones and contrast areas on various sections of the picture. (The resolution of this piece is 5600 x 2500 pixels.)
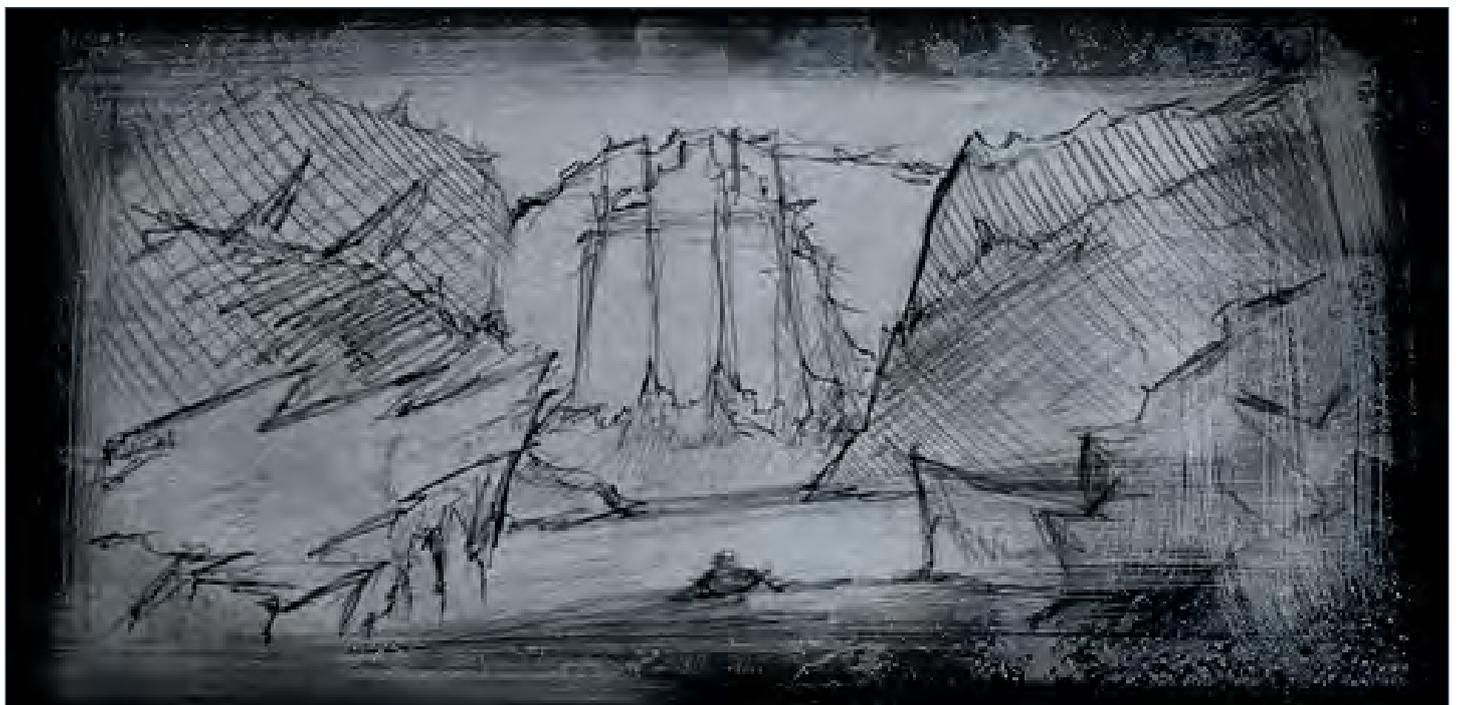
Sergey Musin

For more from this artist visit:
www.samfx.com
Or contact:
mail@samfx.com

"Our first artbook was like a personal portfolio from the IFS team of artists. This new one is that PLUS work we've done together as a studio, and it's twice the page count!!"

Imaginary Friends studios

Formed in late 2005, Imaginary Friends Studios was created to be an independent all-terrain art department to serve the creative needs of companies and studios in the entertainment industry - namely comics, games and television/film. Since opening their doors, IFS has created a substantial volume of work for international clients which include Electronic Arts, DC Comics and MTV, and diverse properties including Warhammer, Street Fighter, F.E.A.R., Superman, Spiderman and many others. Their two physical studios based in Singapore and Jakarta are equipped with high speed broadband, all the major game consoles and a reference library of books and media and toys up the wazoo. All these go to creating a studio environment like no other we know (and love)!Their second book is hot off the press this month and combines 24 months' worth of samples of all their best art!

"245 pages of imaginary goodness - a foreword by Ashley Wood and a tutorial on the making of the cover by Artgerm & collaborators"

Imagine: The Art of Imaginary Friends Studios Second Book Full of Imaginary Goodness

Last month, To win one of these amazine books, we asked you the question:

How many studios does Imaginary Friends Studios now have?

The answer was '2'

The winners were:

Mark Shrum from the USA

Darius Cheong from Singapore

Adrian Smith from the United Kingdom

Congratulations to all. Your prizes will be mailed to.

"Stamping some photography into your painted concepts might help to imagine the desired look very quickly."

In this Making Of, Marco Bauriedel is going to describe to us the process that led to the final piece, "Renaissance", for the Unofficial CGTalk Natural History Museum Matte Painting Challenge...

UNDERGROUND

Fig01

Fig02

Fig03

Fig04

Baseimage

Created In:

Photoshop

Editing the Base Image

The base image was provided and initially had to be cleaned up before anything else (Fig01). The second stage was to create an extension of the image, following the concept of leading on to a matte painting in which the National History Museum would be set in a natural environment, as if in existence some time in the future. I started off by taking the base image of the National History Museum and painting/stamping the people out (Fig02). The Lasso tool was used to select parts of the image, which were then copied, rotated, flipped and scaled to fit into another location (Fig03). Making selections of a shape by guessing how it would continue in a covered/extended area, and stamping in some noise from a similar part of the image and colour
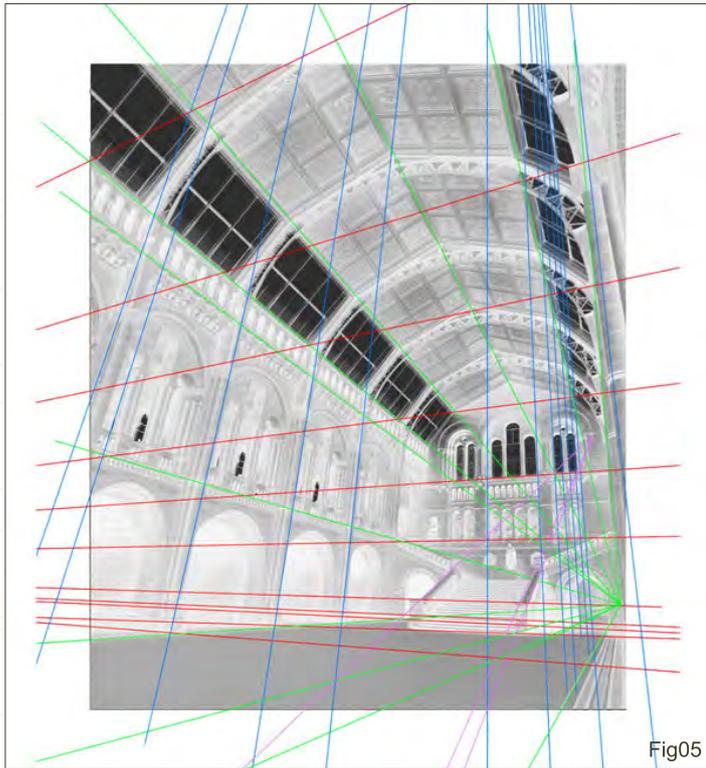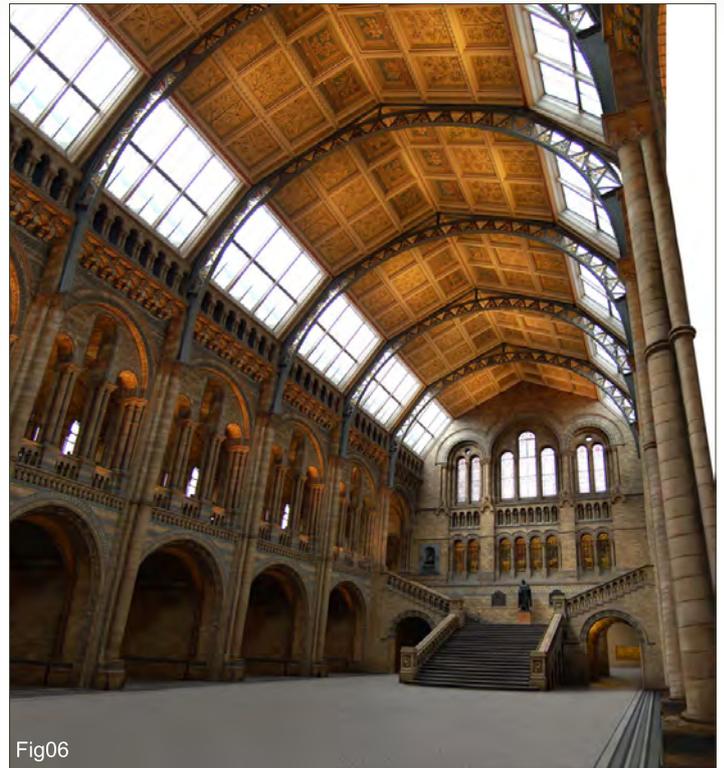
Fig05

Fig06

Fig07

Fig08

correcting it, is another nice way to work (Fig04). It is important to give some visual variation to duplicated parts. You can easily achieve this by painting some dirt, erasing things, or using the Sharpen brush. The idea is to imitate the colours, and the overall sharpness and grain, of photography. After cleaning up the image, perspective lines (Fig05 and 06) were used to extend the image. Concepts were made to get an idea about how to put the museum into a natural environment. Stamping some photography into your painted concepts might help to imagine the desired look very quickly. For the concept to work it is important to colour correct the building in a way that it is integrated into the background scene (Fig07). I should have spent more time thinking about perspective issues in the concept phase. As you can see here, I didn't take a lot of care with the rocky shore concept (Fig08); I wanted to sort of zoom out of the building to give the viewer a glimpse of the surrounding landscape, although I expected a lot of problems with the lens distortion of the original photography. I decided to do the rocky water landscape concept because of the drama that it expresses, and so I started extended the rocky shore photograph. Sharpness, shapes and

Fig09

Fig10

Fig11

colours were imitated, without copying elements 100% from the base image, by painting and stamping (Fig09). After extending and colour correcting the image, a sky and several objects were then added. The National History Museum was roughly adjusted into perspective and shaped to match the look of the concept. Adding rough reflections and shadows helped tie the image together at an early stage, and allowed me to see any further problems (Fig10). I then decided to get away from the dark mood and went for a warmer colour. Adding the sun and lighting the whole scene was done by painting light on different layers, with some set to Dodge. To achieve the glossy look of the stones, I

Fig12

painted sharp highlights, such as on the water's surface. I used a custom brush that scattered the tint depending on the pen pressure, and used a motion-blurred noise layer for most highlights (Fig11). I was then able to add all of the really fun details, and finally some more perspective correction of the building was done, without destroying the drama of its alignment in the whole image. Seaweed and water movement was painted around the foreground rocks to get some more variation in the whole piece. The cityscape on the right was added as well, and the background rock besides Big Ben was given a more realistic, hazy look. The stairs of the National History Museum were then broken down into pieces and the lighting was adjusted (Fig12 and 13).
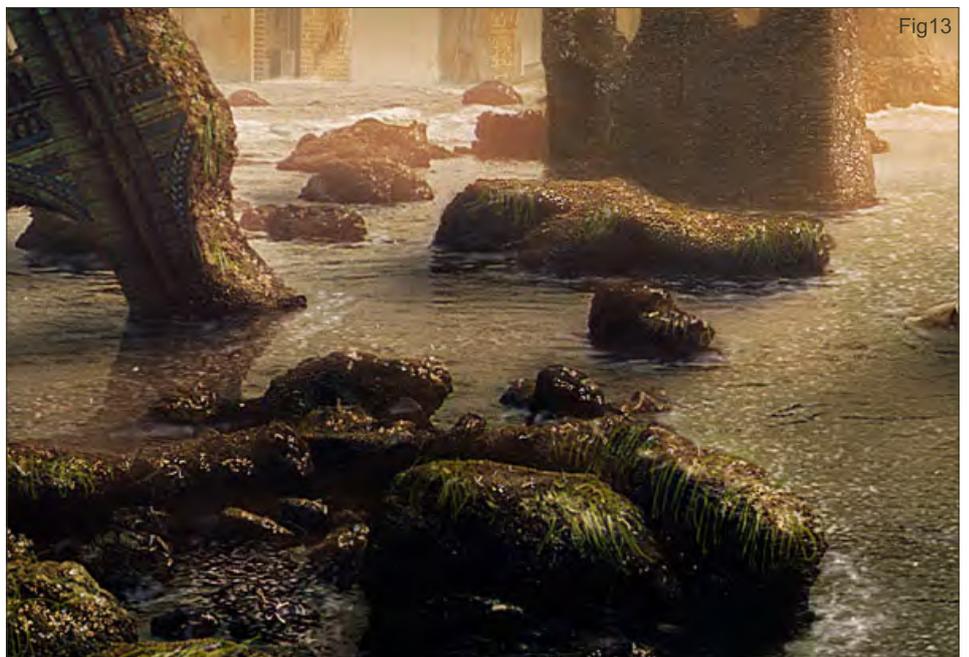
Fig13

Final Image (Fig14)

Sometimes it's hard to keep photorealism in photographic parts when colour correcting and painting. Of course, the perfection of those skills comes with time, so I'm always learning and trying to improve. Lately, one week after finishing a piece, I see a lot of things that could have been done better. I take these self critiques into every new project, which helps tremendously for me to push the boundaries every single time. I hope this Making Of was interesting and helpful. I'd like to thank Dave Edwards for making this challenge possible, and all participants for the great inspiration and learning experience.

Marco Bauriedel

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Fig14

2d artist

next month

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