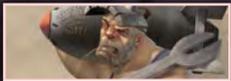# 2d Artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 033 September 2008 $4.50 / €3.25 / £2.25

Kai Spannuth

We delve into the life of self-taught artist Kai Spannuth and discover more about the Roughneck Rabbit Fight Club...

EDITORIAL

Welcome to **ISSUE 033!** Well, the summer – what summer? – has officially left us now in the UK, and we're back to our well-known grey skies, cold winds and rainy days. But, how long will the grey skies last, we ask? For are we about to get sucked into oblivion when scientists in Geneva, Switzerland, this week fire up the biggest physics experiment of all time, in their attempts to recreate the 'Big Bang'? Who knows what will happen … a black hole, perhaps?

In keeping with this science theme the latest 2DArtist Stylised Challenge for September has kicked off on **ConceptArt.org** with a 'Frankenstein / Science Mishap' theme, so drop in on the challenge, check out the latest WIPs and perhaps join in yourself if you have an interesting concept to share, and you may even see your work featured in the next issue of 2DArtist!

OK, so back to the September issue – which we better read quickly before Geneva implodes – the cover image this month is a fantastic artwork by **Kai Spannuth**, whose work graces the pages of the interview section of this month's issue on **PAGE 007**. Kai is a freelance 2D digital artist based in Berlin, Germany, whose been using the digital medium as a means of artistic expression since '98. So with 10 years under his belt, we felt it was a perfect time to get to know a little more about this talented self-taught artist, whose work fittingly ties in nicely with the theme of 'when science goes wrong'. Our second interview this month, in the interest of variety, we chat to **Eduardo Peña**, who is a true inspiration for any would-like-to-be concept artist out there! Eduardo works for the only videogame developer in Colombia, where we was brought up, but he does not see the limitations of the country's involvement with his chosen career as a brick wall, he simply finds ways to climb that wall and push the boundaries as much as he can with the truly stunning works that you'll find on **PAGE 023**. It is artwork such as this that really illustrates the creative workings of an artist's mind, and I can honestly say that this artist has one hell of a fantastic mind!

Tutorials this month feature **Joel Carlo** using traditional media as a starting point for the creation of a digital artwork **[PAGE 063]**, the 3rd chapter of **Chee Ming Wong**'s space painting tutorial series – Barren Planets – on **PAGE 077**, and of course we have our regular Speed Painting slot where this month in-house artist, **Richard Tilbury**, and our interview featured artist, Eduardo Peña, tackle the brief: 'Overloading core in futuristic power plant'. And our Making Ofs feature the talents of **Ron Crabb**, with an overview article of the creation of his awesome image, "Keep a Sharp Eye" **[PAGE 094]**, and **Yu Cheng Hong** also talks us through the creation of his image, "RUO" on **PAGE 101**.

Also, don't miss out on the fantastic Sketchbook article by sketching addict **Hethe Srodawa [PAGE 033]**. I first fell in love with Hethe's sketches after seeing the Making Of his image, "Fagin's Lot", and I'm sure that when you take a look at this article you'll, too, see the raw talents of this sketching genius!

Next month we'll bring you an interview with **Brom**, the first of a 3-part tutorial series by **Nykolai Aleksander** on 'The Human Face', and **Nick Miles** will take us through the creation of this month's gallery image, Mantis Queen, plus so much more! So enjoy this month's offerings and we'll see you next month – providing we haven't been sucked into a black hole [*winks*]. **ED.**

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1. Open the magazine in Reader;
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3. Select TWO-UP CONTINUOUS, making sure that SHOW COVER PAGE is also selected.

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Every month, many artists from around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist magazines. Here you can find out all about them! If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist magazines, please contact:

lynette@zoopublishing.com

Kai Spannuth

Is a 2D Digital Artist and Colourist – freelance – born and raised in Berlin, the capital of Germany. He started with digital painting and colouring circa 1998, inspired by the old image comic books of that era!

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Hethe Srodawa

Is an artist born from 80's cartoons who has been creating characters and worlds since he could first hold a pencil! He has a petulant passion for all things mystery, adventure and, above all, pirates! He's fortunate enough to work as a Concept Artist in the entertainment industry and currently designs for Rockstar Games in sunny San Diego, California.

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Eduardo Peña

Was educated as a graphic designer at the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Bogota, Colombia. Inspired by films like Blade Runner, he discovered the discipline of conceptual art for the entertainment industry and has been developing this artistic interest ever since. He currently works as a Conceptual Artist at Immersion Games in Colombia, and also as a professor at the Andes University, leading workshops.

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Dr CM. Wong

Has over 8 years of creative visualisation and pre-production experience, having worked on various independent game projects, publications and CGI pre-production artwork. He is currently the CEO of his own digital art studio, Opus Artz, based in London. Previous work includes his role as Senior Concept Artist and Visual Lead for 'Infinity: The Quest for Earth MMO 2009', plus numerous commercial publications.

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Richard Tilbury

Has had a passion for drawing since being a couple of feet tall. He studied Fine Art and eventually was led into the realm of computers several years ago. His brushes have slowly been dissolving in white spirit since the late 90s, and now, alas, his graphics tablet has become their successor. He still sketches regularly and now balances his time between 2- and 3D, although drawing will always be closest to his heart!

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Ron Crabb

Has been working in the entertainment industry for twenty-four years. His career has included a variety of disciplines including illustration, graphic design, motion graphics, visual effects and matte painting for film and television, as well as some fine art. He moved from LA to the Northwest in 2003, and now works globally via the Internet as a freelancer for both film and television clients.

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Joel Carlo

Is a Multimedia Developer residing out in Denver, Colorado. His career as an artist has spanned over the last 14 years and includes work in both traditional and digital media, web design, print, and motion graphics for broadcasting. His client list is varied and ranges from commissioned work for small studio projects to larger clients such as Future Publishing, Burrows & Chapin, The Ayzenberg Group, NASCAR, Dodge, Toyota and Fox Television.

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Nadia Mogilev

Is an Illustrator and Graphic Artist, and a student of the Academy of Art University, San Francisco. She says that her life is 3D: drawing-drawing-drawing! She can't remember a time when she hasn't been sketching; she has been drawing on napkins, her dad's paperwork and on wallpapers in her room since a child, trying to leave a mark everywhere. Growing up, she has continued to do the same thing: drawing everywhere with any medium around. http://www.nadiamoon.com
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Raffy Dematawaran

Has been creating art and working in design professionally for over 15 years. His first freelance job started when he was still at college, at which time he was joining art competitions for the prizes and recognition, later realising that it was knowledge and experience that was far more rewarding! He rarely resists work offers now, whether major or minor projects, as long as he still has time to eat and sleep.

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Sean Thurlow

Was born and raised in New Jersey, 1986, and has been drawing since he was a kid. He was inspired a lot by classic horror movies, like "Frankenstein", and independent classics like "Crawling Eye". When he moved out to Tucson, Arizona, he went for a career in illustration, and along the way was introduced to the digital medium. He's currently working towards a degree in illustration and freelancing as he goes.

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YuCheng Hong

Is a Concept Artist, Graphic Designer & Illustrator. His background is in Graphic Design and 3D Animation, and, after graduating, his first job in the industry was as a 3D Modeller. He feels he has more passion for concept design and he was lucky, because he now work as a Concept Artist in a games company!

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KAI SPANNUTH

From cruising around town on his long-board to creating his next abomination to enter the arena of the "Roughneck Rabbit's Fight Club" (RRFC), Kai Spannuth chats to us about how he started out in the art word and his collaborations with one of our favourite artists, Marko Djurdjevic.

KAI SPANNUTH

Hello Kai, can you tell us about yourself and how you ending up drawing for a living?
I was born and grew up in Berlin, during the time of the East German dictatorship. I followed drawing during my childhood, but wasn't serious enough about it. Due to the combination of the socialistic, communistic and totalitarian society of the former GDR and my politically rebellious nature, I constantly ran into trouble with the law. So studying at a state university was not an option for me. I got into digital art out of sheer personal interest and worked my way through in a self-taught manner.

So could you give a little insight into your progression as a self-taught artist? Where did you get the most help and do you have any advice for anyone just starting out?
Well, regarding my progression, there's not much to say – it was just learning by doing. But, if anyone asked me, I'd definitely recommend getting a professional apprenticeship, if possible. Speaking for myself, the best help

I always got was the critique from others, especially from fellow artists. Every artist should long for critique, because it's very likely that you'll get blinded by routine, which makes it impossible to judge your own artworks objectively. So my recommendation to every young gun out there is: get rid of your artistic boast, because this will keep the critique from reaching your ear. Praise is good for the ego,

but it's constrictive critique that helps you to improve your abilities.

Looking over your portfolio, I can't help but notice that you've turned what is a seemingly loveable creature into some sort of freakish lab experiment. Could you tell us about "Roughneck Rabbit's" and how you came up with the initial idea?
I had the idea to open up a thread on a German board, in which users could create their own character (based on freakish laboratory creatures), and have their creation "fight" another user's creation within a picture. To make it look like a real "Beat 'em Up", I created a handful of layers with life/energy bars etc. and offered them for download. I created "Roughneck Rabbit" as a starting base and my friend Mario Leuschner threw his "Fat Squirrel" into the mix. Those two also had their first "battle" against each other. The whole thread got closed a while ago because the forum hosts deemed it as too violent for children.
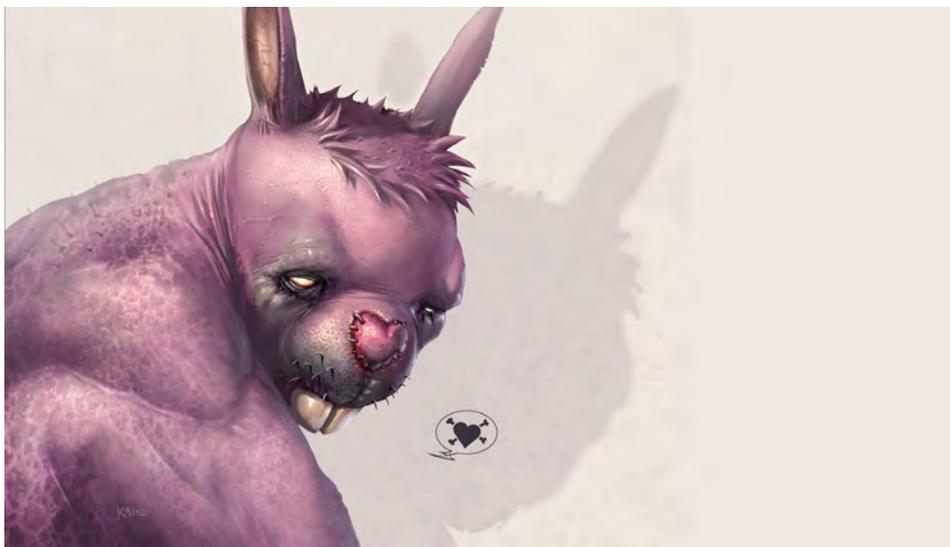
What are your plans for the Roughneck Rabbit's?

There are no real plans. The "Roughneck Rabbit's Fight Club" (RRFC) is a personal project, that develops sporadically and gets new images and concepts added whenever Mario and I have a bit of time off. Should we ever get the chance to put a nice portfolio together that features our project in the right light, then we can move on and see what we can actually do with it. Neither of us wants to try to sell an unfinished idea!

SpiFisH_7

Whilst still rummaging through your portfolio, I came across three pieces that particularly caught my eye; if I give you the names of the artwork, could you tell us what inspired you to create them?
1. SpiFish_7,
2. Snail-O-Morph,
3. Bill 'n' Bob Muroidea
Well, all three images have a common source: they were made for the RRFC.

1. SpiFish_7

Simple idea. How can a fish fight against land-living animals? Easy, if he's in some sort of robotic suit that holds his water tank!

2. Snail-o-Morph

A snail might not be physically morphing but she can give the impression of doing so if you just look, i.e. how her eyes change if they're exposed to a touch. On top of that, the idea of a small, slow and unimposing snail that morphs into a fearless monster sounded absurdly cool.

3. Bill 'n' Bob Muroidea

Rats are a classic and can't be missing in a host of laboratory creatures. Bill and Bob are brothers, in which the head of the smart brother Bill got transplanted away from his weak body and onto the body of his brother Bob. Bob, on the other hand, is strong but rather simple in nature. It gives you the opportunity to make funny twists where cunning Bill tries to get simple Bob into a fight, or even when they're having a differing opinion about something.

I CAN NEVER LOSE!

MORPH EXAMPLES

POISON STING

DEADLY BLOCK

SNAIL CRUSHER

ABSORBING BITE

SPIDER ATTACK

DEEP HEADBUTT

UNHOLY UPPERCUT

FINAL JAB

"Materospanodon" - Painting is based on pencil sketches by Mario Leuschner

So do you have any new characters in the pipeline?

Damn sure! [Laughs].

Now, you've worked with one of my favourite artist around today: Marko Djurdjevic. Could you tell us how this collaboration came about and do you think you will work together again in the future?

I met Marko back in 2000, when he was working on a German RPG-project. A mutual friend brought us together, because Marko was searching for a colourist to handle the cover for
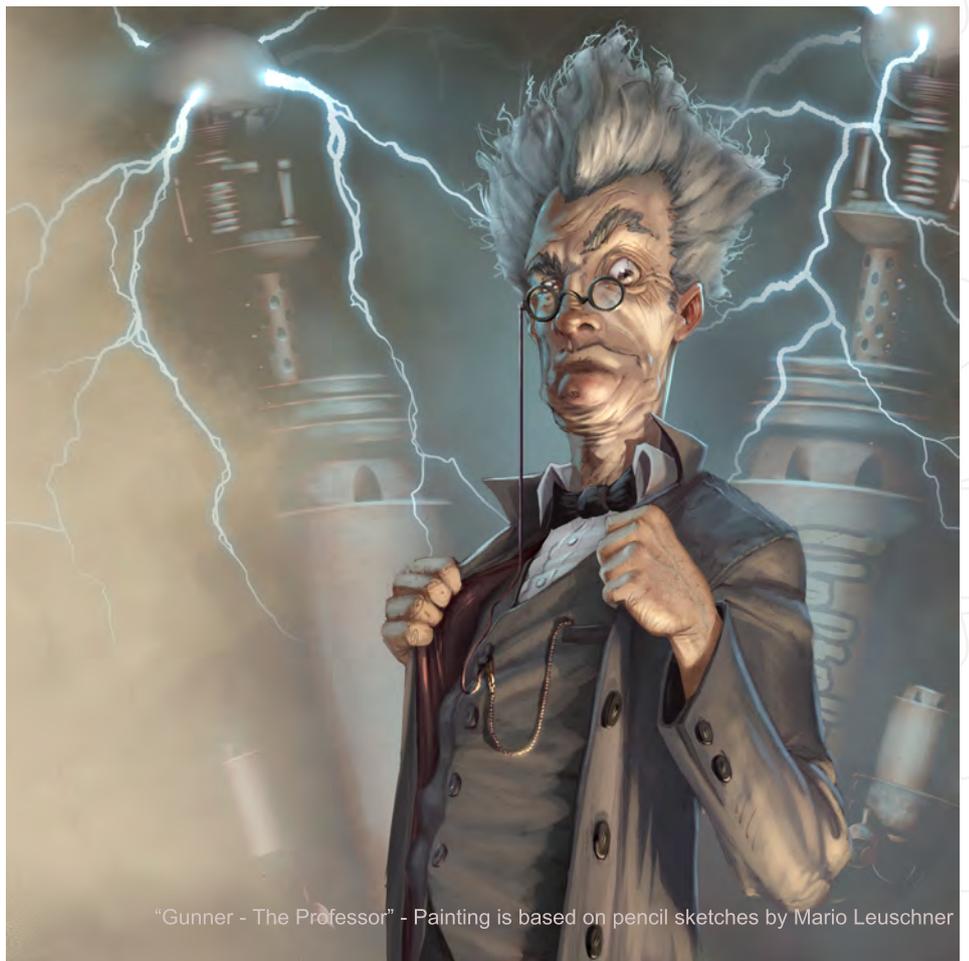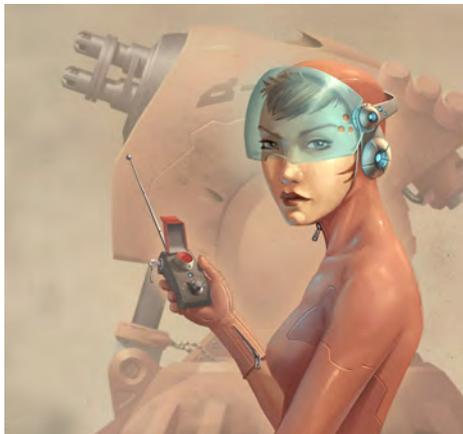
"Gunner - The Professor" - Painting is based on pencil sketches by Mario Leuschner

"Gunner Schmidt" - Painting is based on pencil sketches by Mario Leuschner

the book he was working on. Shortly thereafter he moved to Berlin and so we finally got the chance to meet in person. We worked together on small projects on and off, whenever we had the chance. During his stay at Massive Black in San Francisco we lost contact for a while, but he recently got back to Berlin and we keep in touch again more frequently. Jelena, Marko's lovely wife, who is a great and inspiring artist herself, needed help on colouring a book for Marvel that was under a very demanding deadline. So Marko gave me a call and that's how everything got together again!

In terms of what ways we might work together in the future, well that can't be forecast right now, even though we chit-chat about possibilities here and there. We'll definitely get together on something sooner or later - Marko is not only a great, experienced and incredibly fast artist, but also a great friend and partner to talk to.

You mentioned that you can forecast anything right now, but if there was one dream job that you would like to collaborate on, what would it be?
Uh, hard question… I don't think there's such a thing as a dream job for me. I think every job is ideal if you can work freely, creatively and with a good team.

Have you ever been tempted to try and push your deck designs into production or are you happy to just leave them as one offs?
No, I've never really tried to get my decks into the market, but I certainly wouldn't have anything against it! I've just never really had the time to seriously look into the possibilities of that market. The few existing deck designs (except for the Snail-o-Morph one) were done for the 2005 "Little Monkey Event", a charity auction initiated by the great Jason Jacenko from Australia. Thus they were never aimed for making me any money. I probably wouldn't want to reprint those anyway since they were exclusively for Jason's show.

Apart from drawing, what sort of things do you enjoy doing out of work hours?
In summer or in the winter time? [Laughs]. I have a lot of hobbies, but I rarely focus on just one of them. In the summertime I love to be outside, meet up with friends and have a drink. In the past I used to cruise the city

"Keen Games - Concepts" - These digi paintings are based on rough pencil sketches by Tobias Mannewitz. Copyrights by Keen Games.

on my skateboard (longboard) but it's starting to get too dangerous for the hand that I need to make my money with. In winter, I love to drown myself in a few rounds of RTS or shoot'em ups. Additional fitness training three times a week, not because I like it, only to save my body from falling apart from sitting in front of my desk and getting old! But I tend to enjoy even the smallest things, like a beer with friends and playing a round of "Mall of Horror"....

Mall of Horror, what's that?

It's a fast-paced, entertaining and incredibly artful zombie board game, where the only thing that counts is your own survival and where every pact has a half-life of 30 seconds (well, the subtitle says "Survival is in the betrayal" for a reason). [Laughs]. The illustrations for this game were done by one of my favourite artists by the way, Aleksi Briclot.

Well it has been a real pleasure Kai and thanks you for doing this interview. One last question before we wrap things up: SpiFish has his robotic suit; Snail-o-Morph turns into a monster; if you could enter yourself into the RRFC what special ability or appendages would you have and why?

Oh, the pink bunny already embodies me quite a lot. [Laughs]. But honestly, a time-travelling feature would be pretty useful, making it

KAI SPANNUTH

"FOR ME, DESIGN AND ART ARE
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A GIVEN MESSAGE..."

Eduardo Pena is a Concept Artist working at

Immersion Games, based in Bogota, Columbia.

He trained as a graphic designer, but now uses

his talents to visualise environments and explore

"new worlds where fantasy and fiction meet"...

EDUARDO PENA

EDUARDO PENA

Can you tell our readers a little about yourself and what you are currently doing?

I am Eduardo Peña. I was educated as a graphic designer at the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Bogota, Colombia. Even before entering into my professional education, I always felt a passion for the creation of worlds where fantasy and fiction meet. I had vague memories of masterpieces made by Ridley Scott, notably *Blade Runner*, and other such films, and these were my key inspirations until I found a great discipline in the form of conceptual art for the entertainment industry.

I have been developing this artistic interest under my own initiative, because in Colombia this discipline is almost nonexistent. The closest area was graphic design, which obviously provided me with great resources and tools that ultimately helped me to grow and mature as a designer, enabling me to evolve and better understand the aesthetics and functions of this discipline.

For me, design and art are essential tools as a means of expression and communication. They open up more possibilities for interaction and, because of this expressive power, we are able to create a structured communicative tool which

>>LE CO3UR::ANALOGUE

is well suited for the optimum understanding of a given message.

I currently work as a Conceptual Artist at the one and only company that develops video games in Colombia: Immersion Games. Most of my time is spent visualising environments, creating the general feel of the game, alongside other visual proposals. I also work as a professor, leading design workshops at the Andes University.

>>LE CO3UR::ANALOGUE

Working at the only games company in Colombia – quite an exclusive job then! Is there much competition to get in there and how do you find time to teach at the university?

In Colombia, the discipline of conceptual art is still very under-developed. Nevertheless, little by little, this branch has become more evident in the art and design environments and is gradually gaining more recognition.

Regarding the level of competition at Immersion Games, well, let's just say that all my concepts have to be solid and well structured. The level of my personal demand needs to be high in order to be able to interact in a better way with other professionals that work in the same field.

Besides this, it is very gratifying for me to be immersed in the teaching field. I don't see it as an additional workload, but as an enriching challenge which is helping to shape my perspective and professional intentions within the field of art and design.
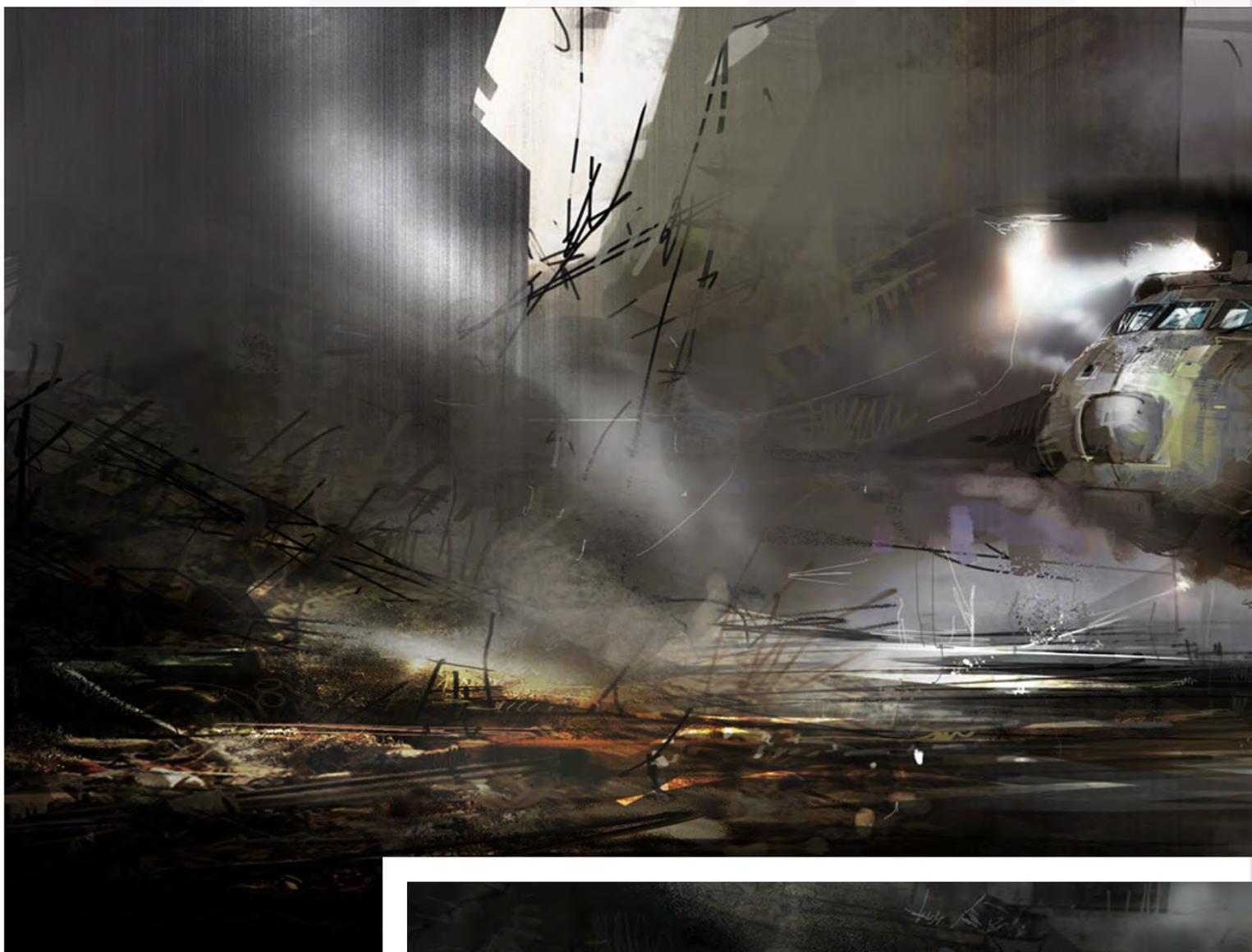
Your work appears to be a collage of different components. Can you describe your approach to concept painting and how you typically construct one of your images?

This collage is due to the different projects that must be developed. At Immersion Games, each project must have its own feel and descriptive force and there is a need to visualise parameters in terms of chromatic values and lines. We also have to make each game component relative; for example, in the case of *Cell Factor*, which is a shooter game, the nature of the game itself allows us to plan the aesthetic guidelines of the in-game universe and to generate visual propositions that better suit the story and essence of the game.
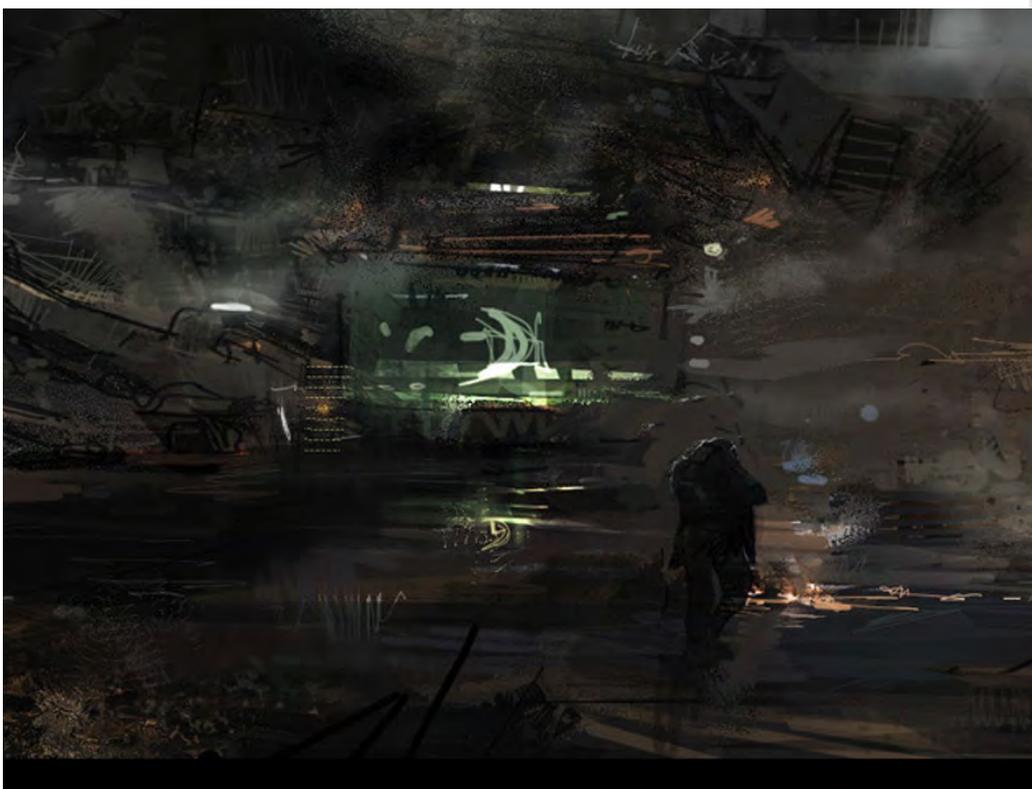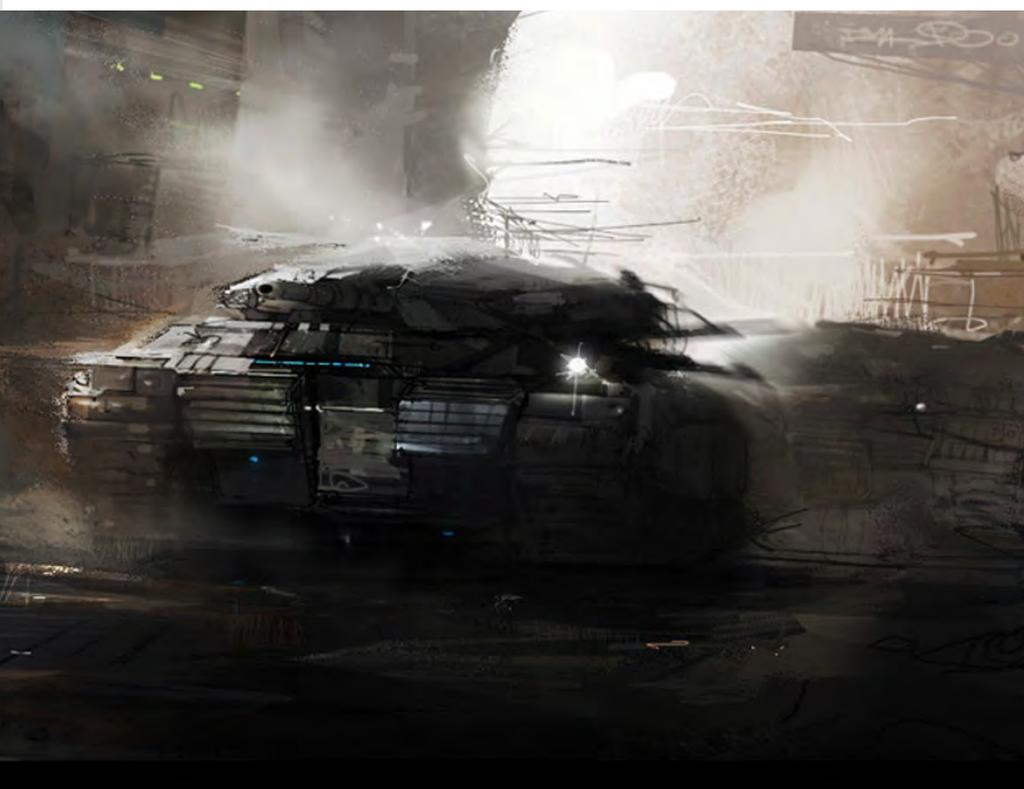
>>LE CO3UR::ANALOGUE

In other cases, such as in children's games, the line must have other specific aesthetic components.

There are other compositional and technical elements that also describe my work in terms of the lighting, visual force and other technical factors – these are all a part of my visual language, or my "rough-edge temperament"!

Some of the factors that I take into account in my profession as a designer are to enrich my discipline, both professionally and personally, and to always develop my knowledge and transfer my experiences to future generations that will be looking for a meaning in the design.

In terms of the visual language you have developed, what aspects of your education in graphic design have helped forge your style and help your current job as a concept artist?

All aspects; bearing in mind that within the academy of graphic design, the structuring permits an overlap of disciplines within the field of visual language. As a designer, I have learned to develop this method as instinctively as possible. Methods, like tools, are instruments that help facilitate the execution and development of any project and also enable one to observe, interpret and synthesise not only mechanically, but with an aesthetic criteria and personal appraisal. For me, this is something that a conceptual artist that works in this specific field should understand and exploit.

I try to follow through with this belief everyday, with a certain level of practicality; not as a continuous set of rules so to speak, but rather a biological need that helps me to live and better understand the environment that surrounds me.

Can you describe your role on *Cell Factor* and the challenges that you faced?

Cell Factor has been one of my favourite projects and was the first one where I faced the

>>LE CO3UR::ANALOGUE

challenge of visualisation. I also experimented with many techniques to represent visuals that allowed me to enrich my artistic attitudes and be able to express optimum visual production for game development.

For me it is a great challenge to produce images with an impact, that display a visual quality. Working as a conceptual artist carries a huge amount of responsibility and a need for a high level of professionalism, and it's great to be able to hold my own and earn recognition in this field. Seeing so many talented artists and facing the limitations of being in Colombia only motivates me to grow even more.

Every day I research and explore new possibilities that enrich my ability and contribute to the growth of the company where I work, all of which I hope is helping to set high standards for the quality of video game production in Colombia.

Can you tell us a little about the new techniques you used for this project and the key lessons you learned?

More than structured techniques, I work by experimenting and I've learned to play a little with the errors that I make, to help enrich the composition and to generate new visual sensations. Nevertheless, once I have what I consider to be the general piece, I start the finishing process. And as in every piece that I work on, I always learn something new; I am always on a continuous personal exploration to create new pieces that have their own accent and own communicative visual force.

There seems to be a theme running through some of your personal work, most notably the spherical shaped droid. What is the story behind these images?

In this series of images, as in many others, I established a process of visual exploration. In this case I used the graphical interpretation of William Gibson's *The Neuromancer* as a starting point; a masterpiece, in which I envisioned the psychology and temperament of the environments in the book. Then, I sought the type of composition which suited an interpretation, as well responding to my visual preferences. Whilst picturing an environment removed from this book, I had as many successes during the initial phase as errors, but what I focused on more than the technical issues, was encapsulating the sensation that the image produced.

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>>LE CO3UR::ANALOGUE
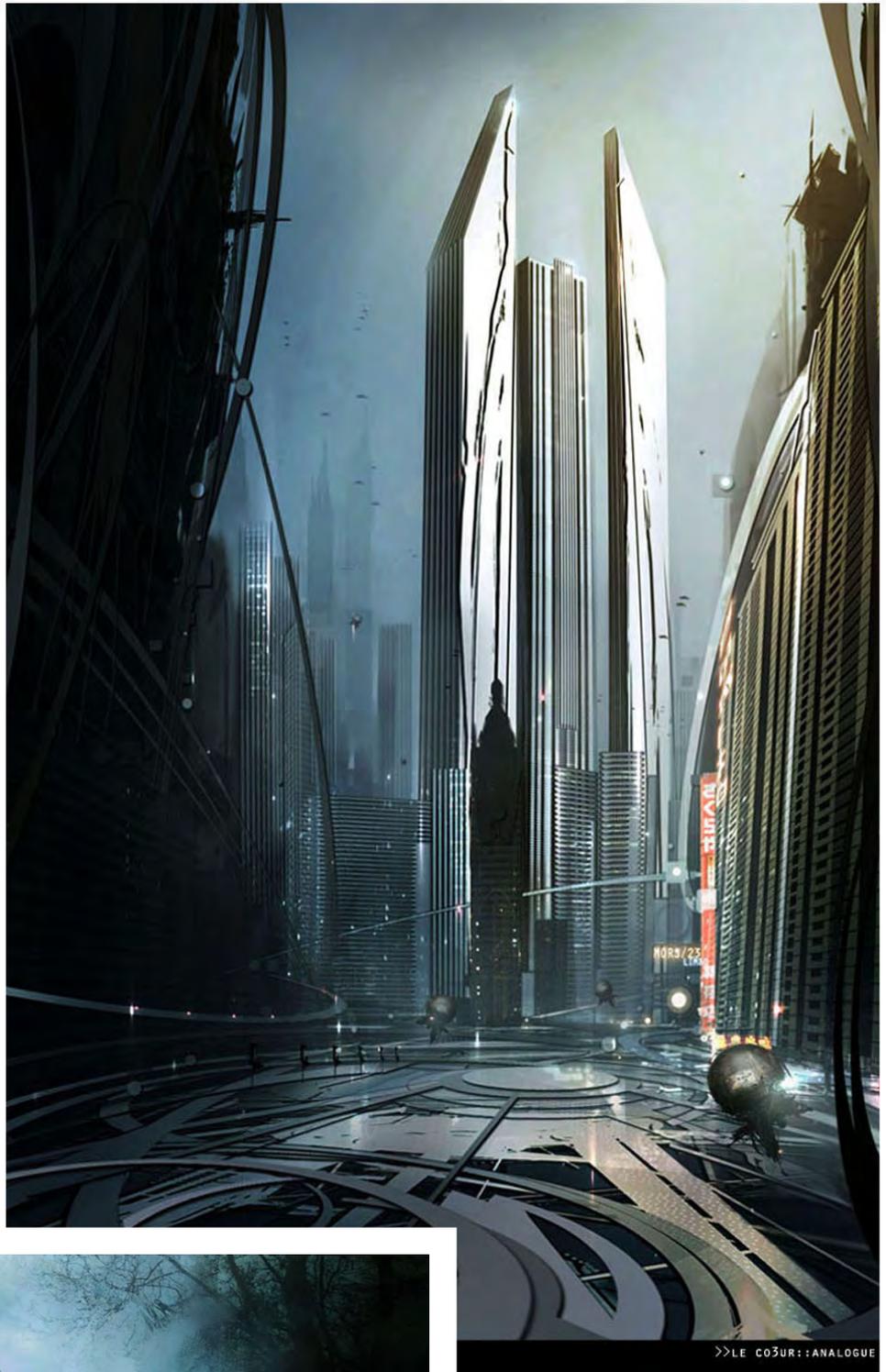
Which artists have you drawn on for inspiration and which do you feel you have learnt from the most?

I particularly admire Syd Mead, Stephan Martiniere, Sparth and Craig Mullins. Other people whose work I've enjoyed include Frank Frazetta, Ashley Wood, Jean Giraud (Moebius), Enki Bilal and artists such as Gustav Klimt,

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, William Turner, Claude Monet and Leonardo Da Vinci. I have learnt certain techniques from all of them, and also a great deal about artistic intention, which for me is – and always will be – the most important element in my everyday work. However, my priority at the moment is to mature in this discipline and to be able to explore new creative forms and designs within the language of art.

One last question: if you could own one painting or artwork in the world, what would it be and why?
Generally, I would not have any preference for an artwork in particular… because among the preferred ones, each one awakens a specific state of mind within me, and contributes to my daily education in some way.

For me it would be selfish to have a piece of artwork from someone that I admire; I'd rather share words, brushes and talk about the creative process. I think that, in some ways, I would like to share this experience with the artists that I mentioned in the previous answer.

EDUARDO PENA

For more work by this artist please visit:
http://leco3ur.carbonmade.com/
Or contact them at:
caareka20@hotmail.com
Interviewed by: Richard Tilbury

"I BOUNCE BETWEEN
MEDIUMS A LOT.
SOMETIMES I'M DRAWING
WITH PENCIL ON PAPER.
SOMETIMES INK ON PAPER
AND SOMETIMES IN
PHOTOSHOP. I CREATE
PAINTED SKETCHES
ALL IN PHOTOSHOP, OR
I SHOULD SAY ALMOST
ALL; EVERY NOW AND
THEN, WHEN I'M AWAY
FROM THE COMPUTER,
I'LL 'SKETCHPAINT' ON MY
NINTENDO DS."

the Sketchbook
of Hethe Srodawa

In this article, Hethe Srodawa shows his
versatility through a variety of different
artistic mediums

Sketching is very important to me as an artist. I definitely spend more time sketching than creating planned, finished works of art and that's certainly the way I like it! My day job as a concept artist is a good fit for someone like me. Sketches are where most of the learning happens; where all the magic happens. I love the freedom of a blank canvas or piece of paper. I can just create whatever I want. The sky's the limit! So, suffice to say, I sketch a lot!

Sometimes, when I'm doing sketches for an illustration, I'll be working on figure drawings like these (**Fig.0 1**).

When I'm sketching characters out for a story idea, I'll be working on something like these (**Fig.02 – 04**).
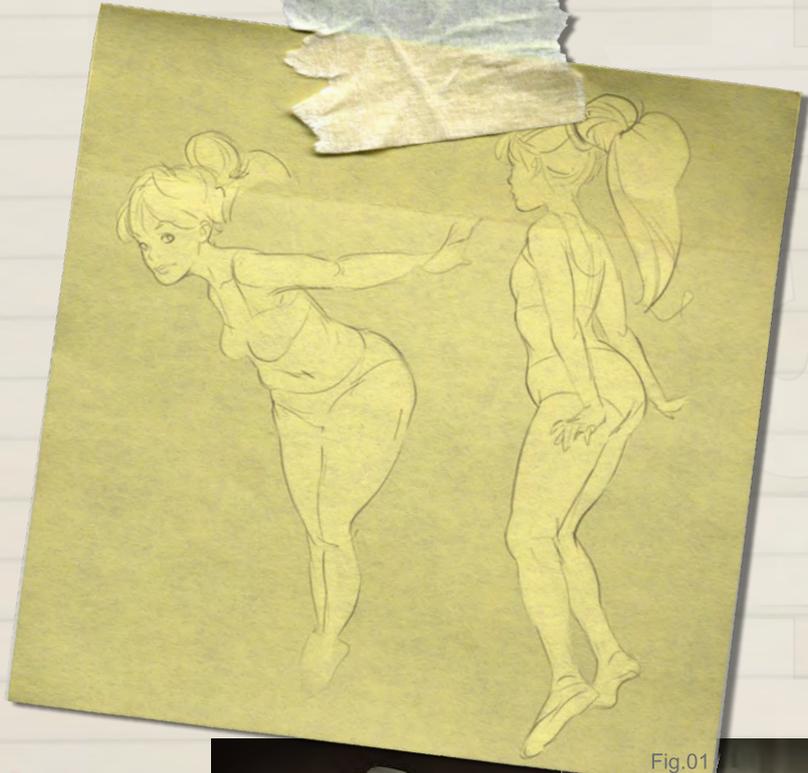
Fig.01
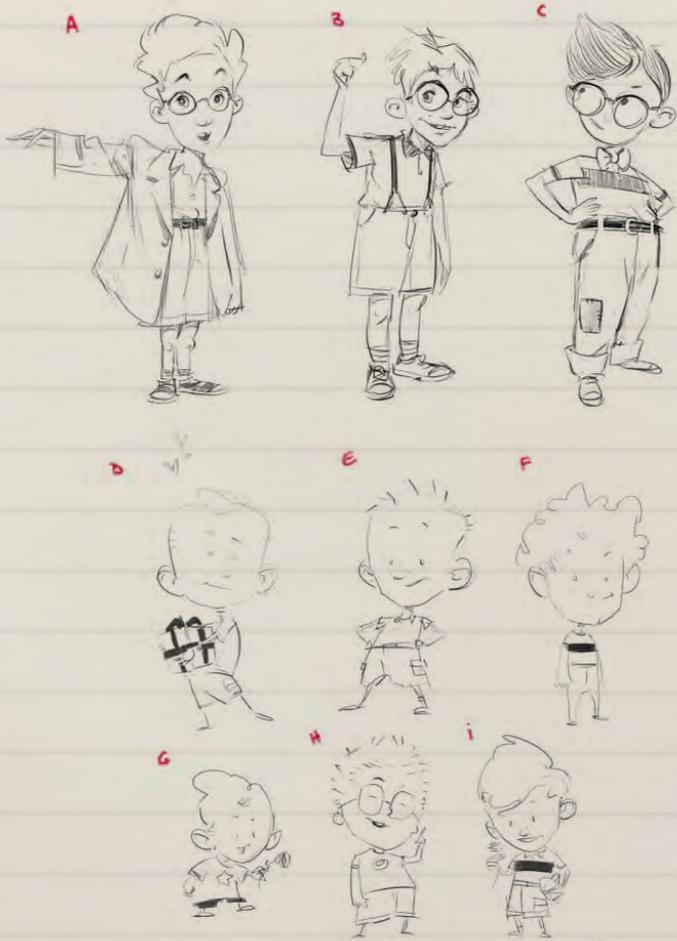
Fig.02

Fig.03

Fig.04

Fig.05

Fig.06

Often, when I'm just sketching characters that come to my head, I'll perhaps develop a story from one of them later on (**Fig.05 – 19**).

Fig.07

Fig.08

Fig.09

Fig.10

Fig.11

Fig.12

Fig.13

Fig.14

Fig.15

Fig.16

Fig.17

Fig.18

Fig.19

Sometimes I do studies so that I can learn through observation (**Fig.20 – 22**).

Fig.20
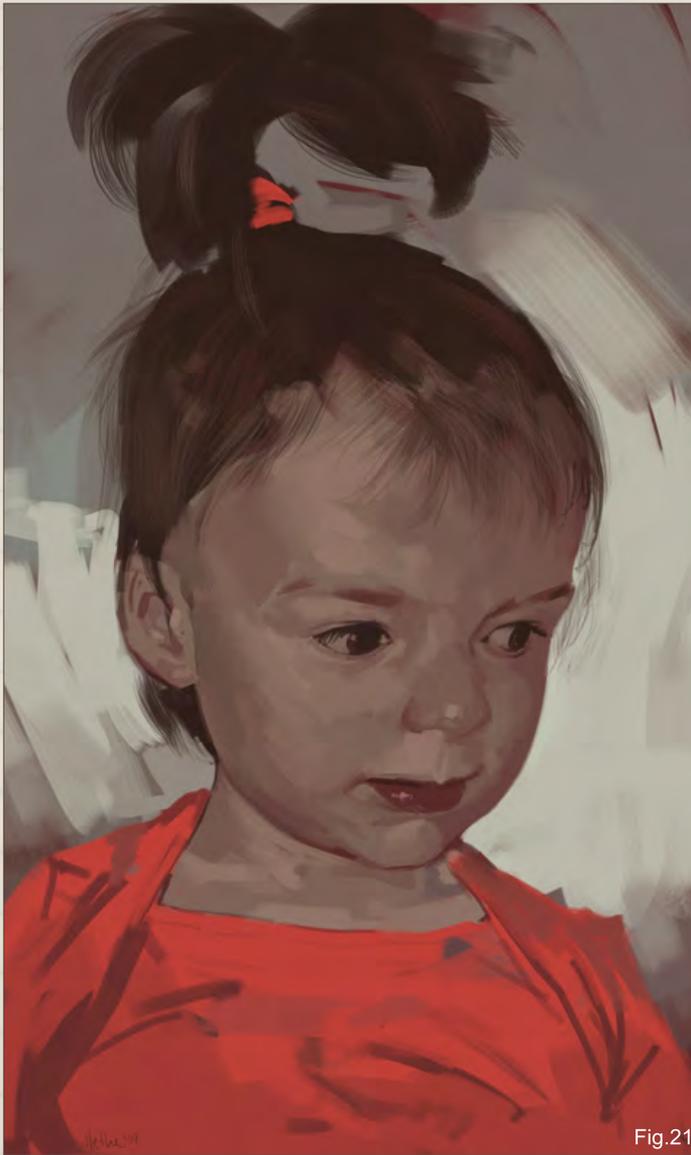
Fig.21

Fig.22

I also do a lot of scene sketches. Some are story driven and some are merely mood driven (**Fig.23 – 28**).

Fig.23
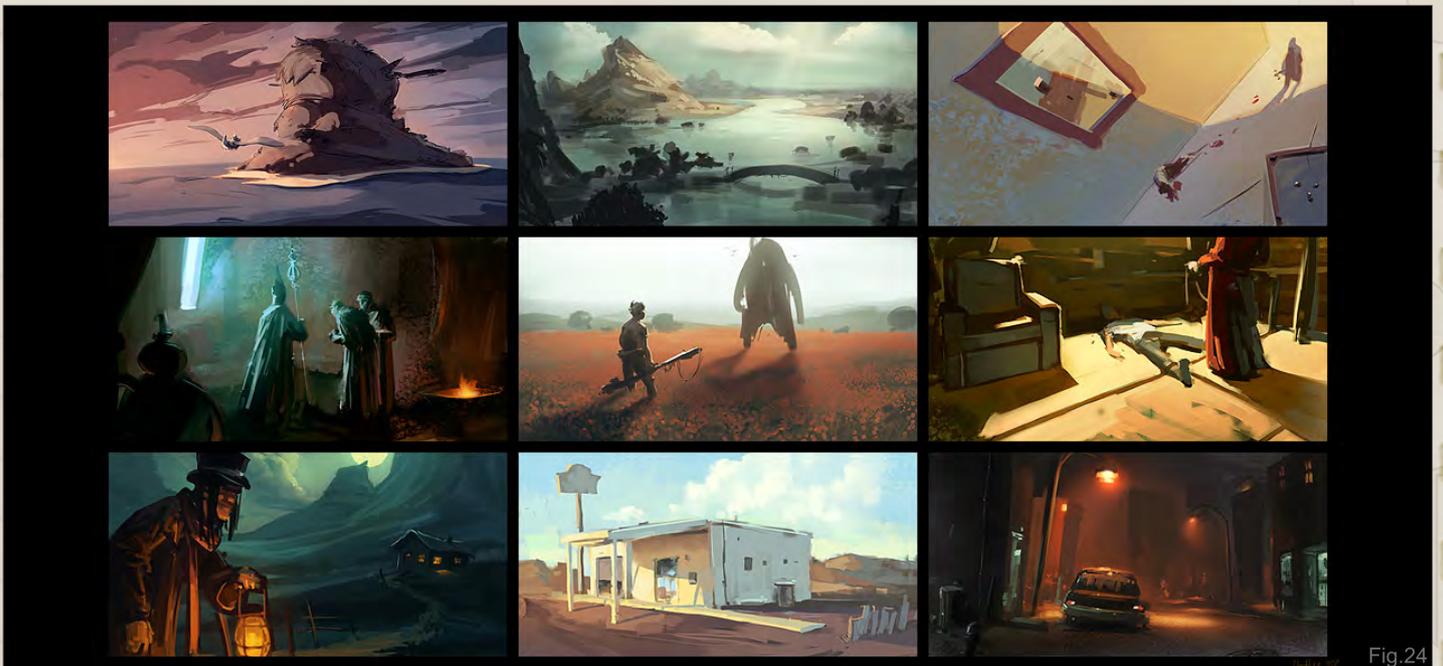
Fig.24

Fig.25

Fig.26

Fig.27

Fig.28

These last set of thumbnails were painted on my Nintendo DS (**Fig.29**).

I bounce between mediums a lot. Sometimes I'm drawing with pencil on paper, sometimes ink on paper and sometimes in Photoshop. I create painted sketches all in Photoshop, or I should say almost all; every now and then, when I'm away from the computer, I'll "sketchpaint" on my Nintendo DS.

HETHE SRODAWA

For more information please visit:
http://www.hethe.com
Or contact:
hs@hethe.com
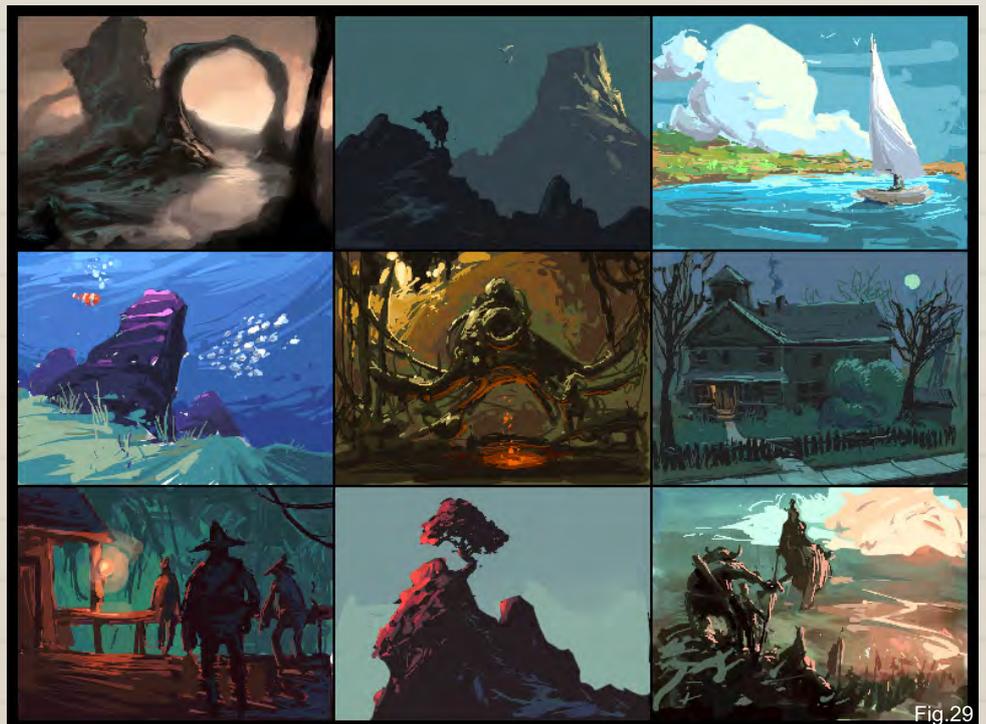
Fig.29

ELEMENTS

Digital Painting Downloadable Tutorial Series

Introduction:

The 'elements' series is a 70 page guide to 2D Digital painting and can be followed in most software packages supporting paintbrushes and layers. With in this downloadable PDF E-Book we have choosen some of the most used aspects of digital painting and asked 2 or 3 professional artists to cover a specific theme or 'element', resulting in 2 or 3 different styles and techniques which can be viewed side by side.
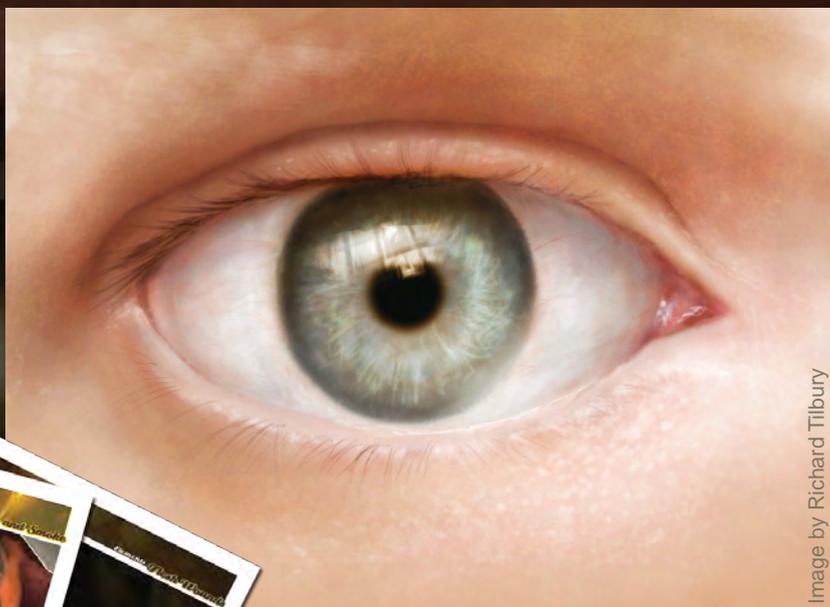
Image by Richard Tilbury

Image by Chris Thung

Volume 1:

Chapter 1: Painting Eyes
Chapter 2: Painting Fabric
Chapter 3: Painting Fire & Smoke
Chapter 4: Painting Flesh Wounds
Chapter 5: Painting Fur & Hair

Volume 2:

Chapter 1: Painting Rock & Stone
Chapter 2: Painting Sky
Chapter 3: Painting Skin
Chapter 4: Painting Trees
Chapter 5: Painting Water

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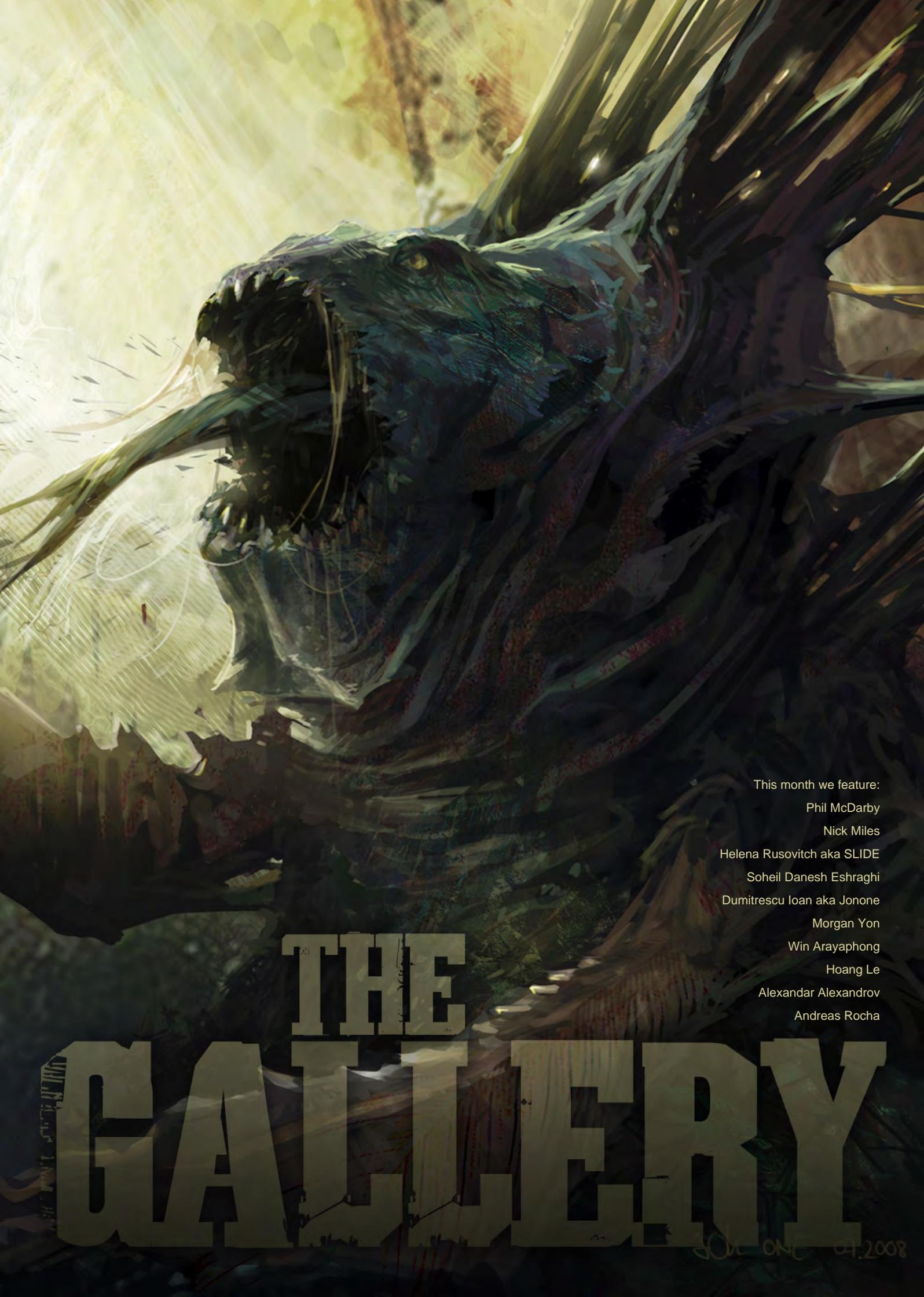
This month we feature:
Phil McDarby
Nick Miles
Helena Rusovitch aka SLIDE
Soheil Danesh Eshraghi
Dumitrescu Ioan aka Jonone
Morgan Yon
Win Arayaphong
Hoang Le
Alexandar Alexandrov
Andreas Rocha

THE GALLERY

THE WOOD DRAGON AND THE LADYBIRD

Phil McDarby

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LAND CONCEPT

Win Arayaphong

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PINKA [VANILLA PIXY]

Helena Rusovitch aka SLIDE

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2dArtist

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Supervillain
Stylised Challenge

In Association with

2dArtist

Stylised challenge
Supervillain

THE CHALLENGE

Welcome to the Super Stylised Monthly Challenge. Each month we will select an theme and post some images in the Forum Thread as reference. All you have to do is to create a 2D image in line with this theme in a stylized / abstract / cartoon style, whilst keeping your image instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist Magazine on how to create stylized images, such as you see in the many feature films and cartoon galleries. We thought this regular competition might bring

7TH GNAHZ
http://gnahz.deviantart.com/

7TH GUNTROUVER

6TH TUOVNI
augusto.goicoechea@gmail.com

Radric the Biohazard!

That ugly kid you used to insult back in high school is back with a vengeance. After years in solitude trying to come up with gene altering solutions as a cure for ugliness, he went insane. Now this repulsive villian spreads his manufactured virus' around cities to which only he is immune.

6TH CAMSYKO
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http://camsyko.deviantart.com/

7TH LOZTVAMPIR3
joewiegts@yahoo.com
www.loztvampir3.deviantart.com

in just the images / Making Of's that we need, whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. If it's a success we will start to boost the prizes up as much as possible! This month's theme was "Supervillain". Here you can see the top seven placed entries, as voted for by the public.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Funny and humorous entries which break the theme down to its most recognisable components; emphasize these in whichever ways you think

6TH LUCENT VERNER

5TH ROSATRON

rosatron@gmail.com
www.rosatron.com/

4TH TOMMOY

info@thecartoonfactory.nl
www.thecartoonfactory.nl

3RD SHATTEREDFX

shatteredfx@hotmail.com
www.raffydematawaran.com

best, and render your stylized / abstract / cartoon masterpiece. The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 x 3D render (minor post work is OK); its up to you if you want to have a background; include some 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 res 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 three 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...

1ST BSTSK

contactos@ffilustracion.com

Skulltopus
2ND SCARYPOTATO

rslater4@telus.net
www.scarypotato.com

CHALLENGE THREAD

The entire **SUPERVILLAIN** competition can be viewed Here

The current challenge at the voting stage is: **ANCIENT WARRIOR**

The current challenge taking place is: **FRANKENSTEIN**

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

Or contact: lynette@zoopublishing.com

MAKING OF'S

Here are the "Making Of's" from last month's top three winning entries...

3RD NADIAMOON

STEP 01

I think that, for this particular challenge for 2DArtist, it was very important not just to draw a character, but to put it into a certain situation and tell a story with my illustration. I didn't know where to start from at first, but I happened to go to the Yerba Buena Park Festival in San Francisco and I saw a little girl there. For some reason she caught my eye and I took a picture of her to use it as a reference for my work. I thought she would be a perfect character for my spaceship illustration and so I started with a simple pencil sketch, which I then scanned and opened up in Photoshop to start work (**Fig.01**).

STEP 02

I switched the layer mode from Normal to Multiply, removing all of the white and having

Fig.01

Fig.02

only the line work show up over the coloured background that I added in a new layer underneath. I stuck to an almost monochromatic colour scheme, because I didn't want to make the image too colourful (**Fig.02**).

STEP 03

I started colouring the image in a new layer – between the sketch layer (which remained on top) and the background layer. I decided to create a mysterious mood, but at the same time I didn't want the image to look scary, because of the eye and weird creatures in the background. So I chose the pink colour, which doesn't look gloomy and is childish at the same time. For colouring I usually use basic round brushes, and other brushes, like Natural Brushes Set, I usually use for texturing (**Fig.03**).

STEP 04

Here I was experimenting with colours… As I said before, I felt like pink was a right colour for this illustration because I wanted to create the feeling of an illustration in a children's book.

Everyone who has seen this image asks: "What is that eye above the girl about?" Well basically, I have depicted the dream of a kid, where the eye is an eye of an adult who wants to take a look at children's dreams. Many of us can't see the fairy tales that we used to see in our childhoods when we were growing up, and the spaceship is the vehicle that carries us away to the real world (**Fig.04**).

STEP 05

Sometimes when I draw or paint in Photoshop, my eyes get used to the image, and so I find it good practice to flip it and play with the colours. I just went to Adjustments and started experimenting with the Colour Balance setting to create the right feel for the final image, and I was done (**Fig.05**)!

CONCLUSION

This will probably sound really obvious, but I think that the most important thing about art is to let yourself be free and to not be afraid of making mistakes. Only then will your mind open

Fig.03

Fig.04

up and you will be able to create things that you probably didn't even expect to create (the fact is that the human brain is only 10% studied!). Give yourself the freedom of creation, follow your heart and let your mind and inspiration lead you. Be yourself and you will be surprised what your imagination is capable of ...

NADIA MOGILEV

For more work by this artist please visit:

www.nadiamoon.com

Or contact them at:

nady.design@gmail.com

Fig.05

2ND TRASHY

THE IDEA

I actually started thinking of the old Volkswagen vans made in the 1960's, and all the crazy and cool artwork that came about in the "hippie" movement. I then found myself asking the question: what would a hippie spaceship look like in outer space…? At this very point, I realised I had a pretty good idea about what direction I was going in, so I started jotting down some sketches to get a feel for the concept (**Fig.01**).

STARTING THE PIECE

Early on, I cleaned up the line work on the originally sketch (**Fig.02**). Having cleaner line work in your work sometimes helps when blocking in the lights and shadows, and basically just makes the workflow that much faster. After getting the lines down I then started blocking in the shadows and lights on a new layer set to Multiply (**Fig.03**). I tend to spend a good amount of time at this stage tinkering around with the

Fig.01

Fig.02
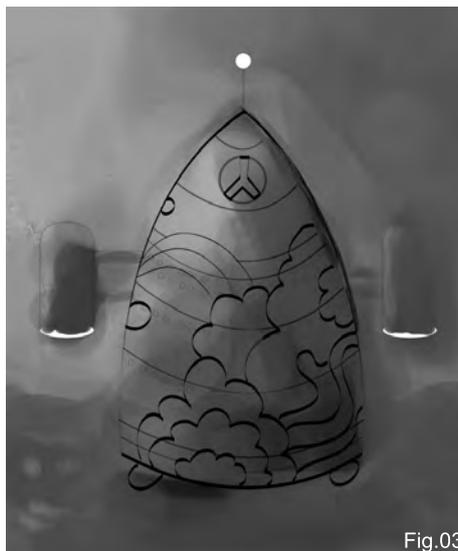
Fig.03

Fig.04

Fig.05

placement of the light and shadows, and planning out the rest of the piece. I continued blocking in the values until I was happy with the results. Once I got to that point, I could then start introducing some colours and textures.

GETTING DIRTY!

I wanted to break up a lot of the shapes and make it much grittier, so I flattened the piece, and then created a new layer and brought in some textures. I reduced the layer opacity just a little so that I wouldn't cover the original piece, and I erased parts of the texture and cloned other parts with the default round brush. On a third layer set to Colour, I brought in some colours (**Fig.04**). Generally, I find that when certain things aren't quite working in a piece, then if you destroy those parts with a brush or some harsh textures and move things here are there, you may actually be able to make it work for you!

CLEANING UP!

I flattened all my layers again, and on a new layer I started detailing and cleaning up. This part was all about getting the nuts and bolts in! I started messing with the idea of steam coming out of the engines of the rocket, like it was getting ready for lift-off (**Fig.05**). It also crossed my mind that sticking to the washed-out tone I had going on in the piece was perhaps not in the spirits of a true hippie space shuttle… Could it really be a hippie spaceship without its flying colours? So I went onwards and started adding the necessary colours.

COLOURS

Flattening all my layers once more, I start introducing a couple of adjustment layers. I usually use the Curves layer adjustment and Colour Balance to add in the base colours. I then tend to use another layer set to Colour to add more to it. I noticed at this stage that I could probably push

Fig.06

my values more, so I started working more in that area again. I also found that I could bring out those colours more (**Fig.06**).

FINISHED!

As a final touch, I added some last highlights and gave the colours an extra kick. I wrapped up some of the little areas and added more glow to the light on top and to the engines. After bringing out the steam a little more, I was finally able to call it a day, and class my entry as finished and ready for take-off (**Fig.07**)!

SEAN THURLOW

For more work by this artist please visit:
http://trashyworks.blogspot.com/
Or contact them at:
deadite44@hotmail.com

Fig.07

1ST SHATTEREDFX

STEP 01

For every project or painting I do, I usually think of the concept first. Somehow for this painting I didn't manage to come up with anything; I was just interested in the theme and started off by doing some very rough sketching directly in Photoshop. I used a grey background and a default black brush to draw some lines, without knowing what I was actually drawing at all. I really didn't have any idea how to start, all I knew was that I had to make a spaceship, maybe with a pilot(s), but the rest could be anything! In **Fig.01**, you can see that the ship was really crooked and the two characters were nothing interesting at this stage, but I didn't mind as it was time to move onto the next step...

STEP 02

Here I began to block in some colours. I still didn't know what the spaceship would look like (though I knew I wanted to colour it orange, with maybe some blue colours in small areas for contrast). For the pilots, I thought about making them appear alien-like (I was thinking of something along the lines of the "Teletubbies"),

Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03

or creatures with pairs of antennae (or really big ears!). At this point I was just thinking, why not? I was still just in the ideas stage, and recalling a rule of brainstorming: "All ideas, whether genius or crazy, should be considered until the final evaluation". The only difference here was that there was only one brain that was storming! Where were my art buddies when I needed them (**Fig.02**)?

STEP 03

Okay then, so at this stage I came to the conclusion that the two aliens were going to be rabbit-like creatures, and their ship had to be coordinated with them - so what else could the form of this spaceship take, other than a carrot-filled spaceship? My pallet seemed to be on the right track for this concept as I had previously chosen to use orange, which is

Fig.04

obviously the main colour of this veggie! At this stage, I decided to add a fancy-looking garden (or should I say a small carrot plantation?) in the front part of the spaceship (**Fig.03**).

STEP 04

To make the subject "pop" more, I thought about painting the background with darker colours (blacks, blues and magenta perhaps?), so I started throwing some colours onto my previously grey background to add some darker hues and colours of sky, and so that I could make the "bunnies" and ship look like they was travelling somewhere in deep outer space. The faces of the characters in the ship started to look more bunny-like here, but I still wasn't convinced; my idea was to make them look more like intergalactic mammals, but not too weird-looking or menacing like those you see in sci-fi alien movies. I simply wanted them to look funny and uncorrupted (I wanted them to be happy because they've brought some carrots with them... or could those carrots have been taken from Earth? Are they taking them back to their home planet to grow them? I guess I will leave it to the viewer to decide!). Some carrots on both sides of the wings were also added, and

Fig.05

some fences on the small plantation were added to the front of the ship (**Fig.04**).

STEP 05

As I continued to make the background darker, I began to pay more attention to the forms, shapes and the colour combinations as well, and by using smaller brushes I further defined

the lights, shadows and contours in some areas. Here I tried to use more varied types of brushes – some PS default, but most were my own creations. I adjusted their facial expressions, and I realised that they had begun to look "cuter" than in the previous attempts. I also played with their skin tones, making them more flesh coloured in comparison to the yellowish tone used before. The spaceship's finer contours started to emerge at this stage; I was putting more colours on it, more shadows on the darkest areas and some lighter colours on the highlights (**Fig.05**).

STEP 06

Okay, so almost finished here (**Fig.06**) – at least for the colour pallet anyway, and I had started to feel more comfortable about the contrasts between the subject and background. Feeling this way, I started to work on the fine lines, adding some radiosity and saturation, and working some more on the highlights and shadows. Whilst adding some of the final touches, I used a textured brush on the ship's body (some simple dabbing of scattered brush for the plantation, a splatter for the heavenly bodies) and applied some motion blur to show the ship's mobility. Notice that I also lifted the

Fig.06

left arm of the boy "bunny" to signal a "thumbs-up" sign to his partner. I also added third eyes to each of them, which I guess was my take on making them look more alien-like, not to mention their fashion and their facial expressions!

FINAL STEP

For the final image, I flipped the entire canvas to check whether the overall composition was looking fine, and I finished off by rendering some more details and adjusting the colour, hue and saturation. And that's it (**Fig.07**)!

Thanks a lot guys for taking time to read this walk-through. Cheers!

RAFFY DEMATAWARAN

For more work by this artist please visit:
http://www.raffydematawaran.com
Or contact them at:
shatteredfx@hotmail.com

Fig.07

"BEING ABLE TO MOVE BETWEEN MEDIUMS GAVE ME THE ABILITY TO NOT ONLY TAKE ON MORE WORK, BUT ALSO TO UNDERSTAND THE KIND OF LOOK AND FEEL THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED WITH EACH OF THOSE MEDIUMS."

USING TRADITIONAL MEDIA

AS A STARTING POINT

Joel Carlo explains how to create this image by using traditional media and Photoshop.
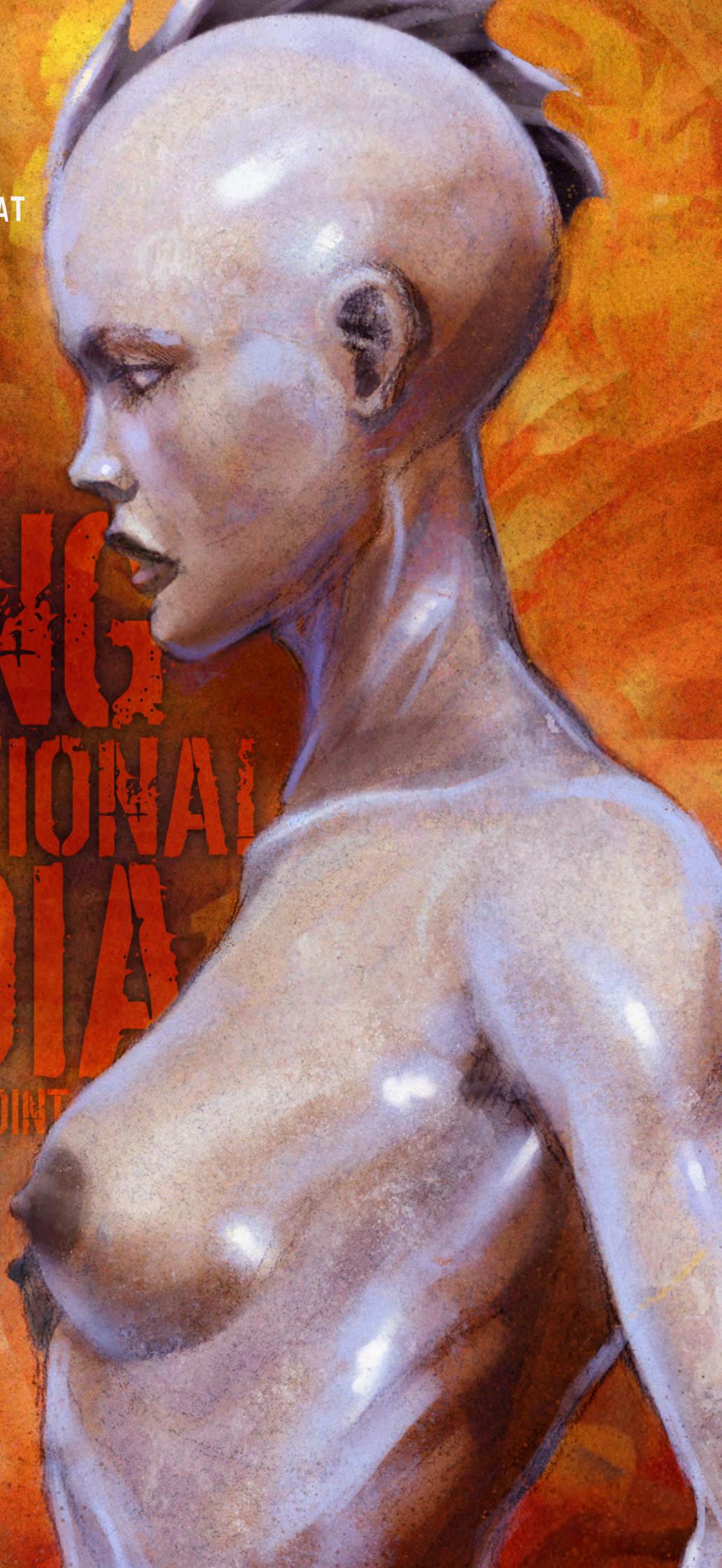
USING TRADITIONAL MEDIA AS A STARTING POINT

CREATED IN:

Photoshop

When I began working as an illustrator over 15 years ago, being competitive as an artist meant you had to be extremely flexible with your abilities. Commissions in those days for me were hard to come by, so I made it a point to learn as much as I could about techniques using multiple mediums. Being able to move between mediums gave me the ability to not only take on more work, but also to understand the kind of look and feel that could be achieved within each of those mediums. These days, applications do a good job of mimicking the look and feel of traditional artwork, but sometimes trying to pull off that exact look can be difficult with software alone. And this is where using traditional media as a starting point can help!
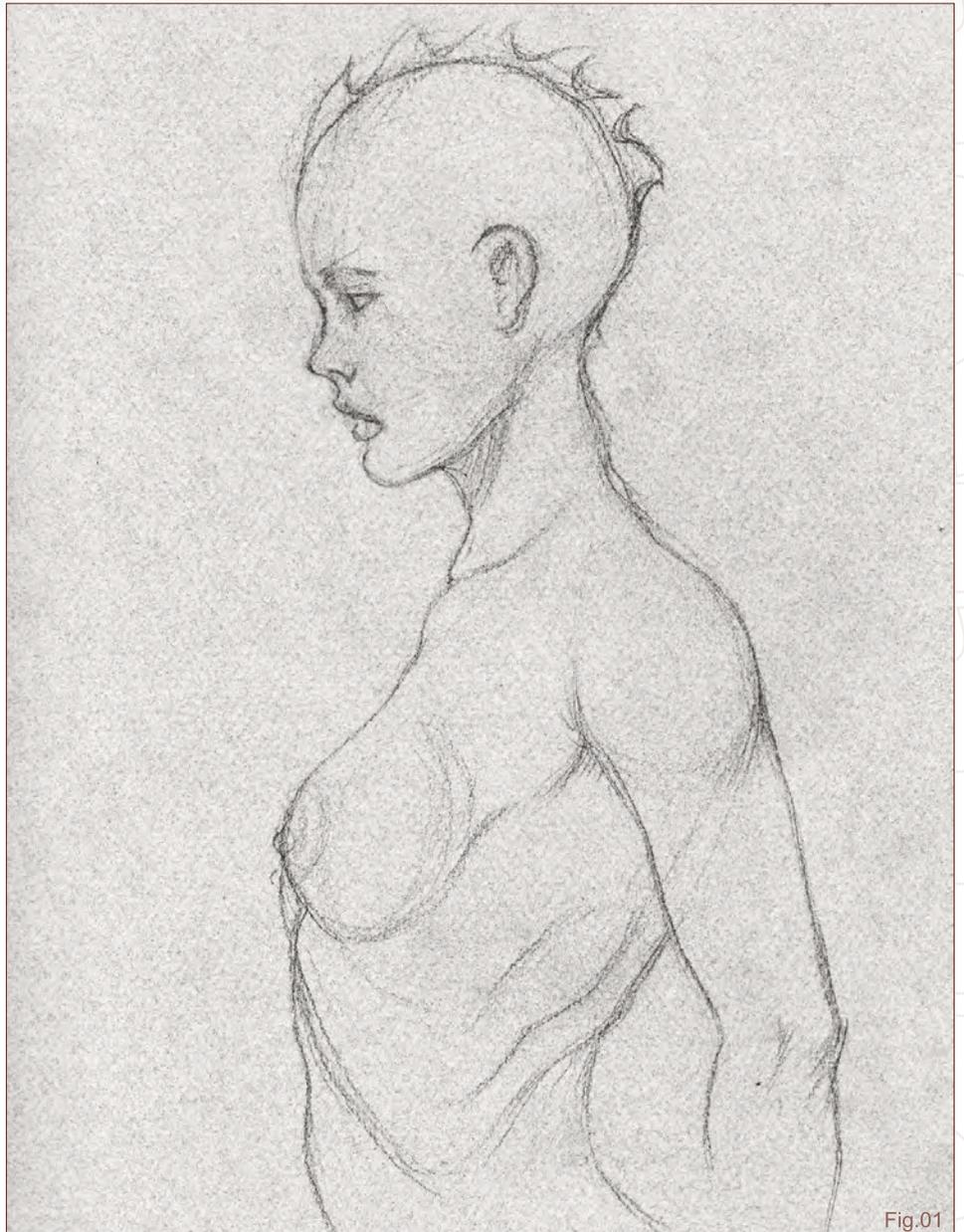
Fig.01
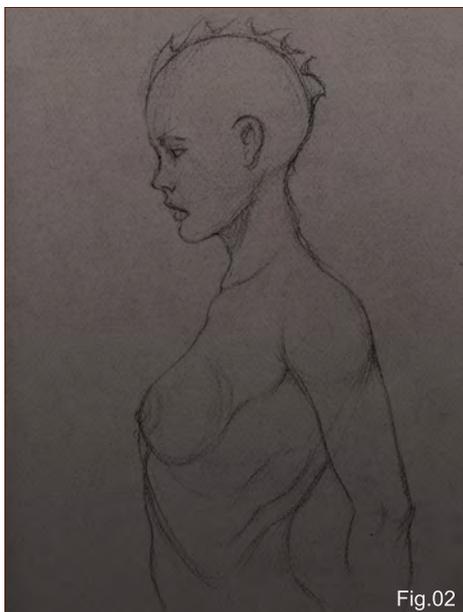
Fig.02

What gives an image its look and feel can be attributed to many factors. In the case of traditional artwork, two of the most important components are the medium and surface you choose to use. Each medium will look different on a surface, not only in the way it's applied, but also in how that medium reacts to the surface's texture. For example, running chalk across the gritty textured surface of pastel paper will give you an entirely different look than if you were to dab acrylic paint across the same surface. By the same token, drawing on canvas with a pencil will give you a completely different look than painting on it with oils. Because texture (or lack of) plays an important role in the look and feel of a traditional illustration, we can use this information to help us recreate some of that same look and feel in the digital realm.

For this tutorial, I set out to create an image typical of something I would have created in my days before the computer... the difference being that now I would actually have the flexibility of editing inside Photoshop, not to mention cleaner fingernails at the end of the illustration! In my early days, I enjoyed working mostly with a mixture of airbrushed acrylics and coloured pencils, so the trick here would be to re-create that look. As I stated earlier, surface texture is one of the most important factors which

attributes how a medium will react and look along that surface. There are also many subtle nuances in how a medium is applied that will also contribute to the overall look and feel of an illustration. This is something I keep in mind throughout the illustration process, because it's these very differences that will add to the believability of the final image.

I decide to begin by sketching with pencil on colored pastel paper (**Fig.01**). I've personally always enjoyed working on pastel paper because it's fairly inexpensive, lends itself well to multiple mediums, and in this case I knew I could also play up the surface detail of the final illustration by adjusting the overall presence of the surface, which would add to the effect.

Fig.03

Fig.04
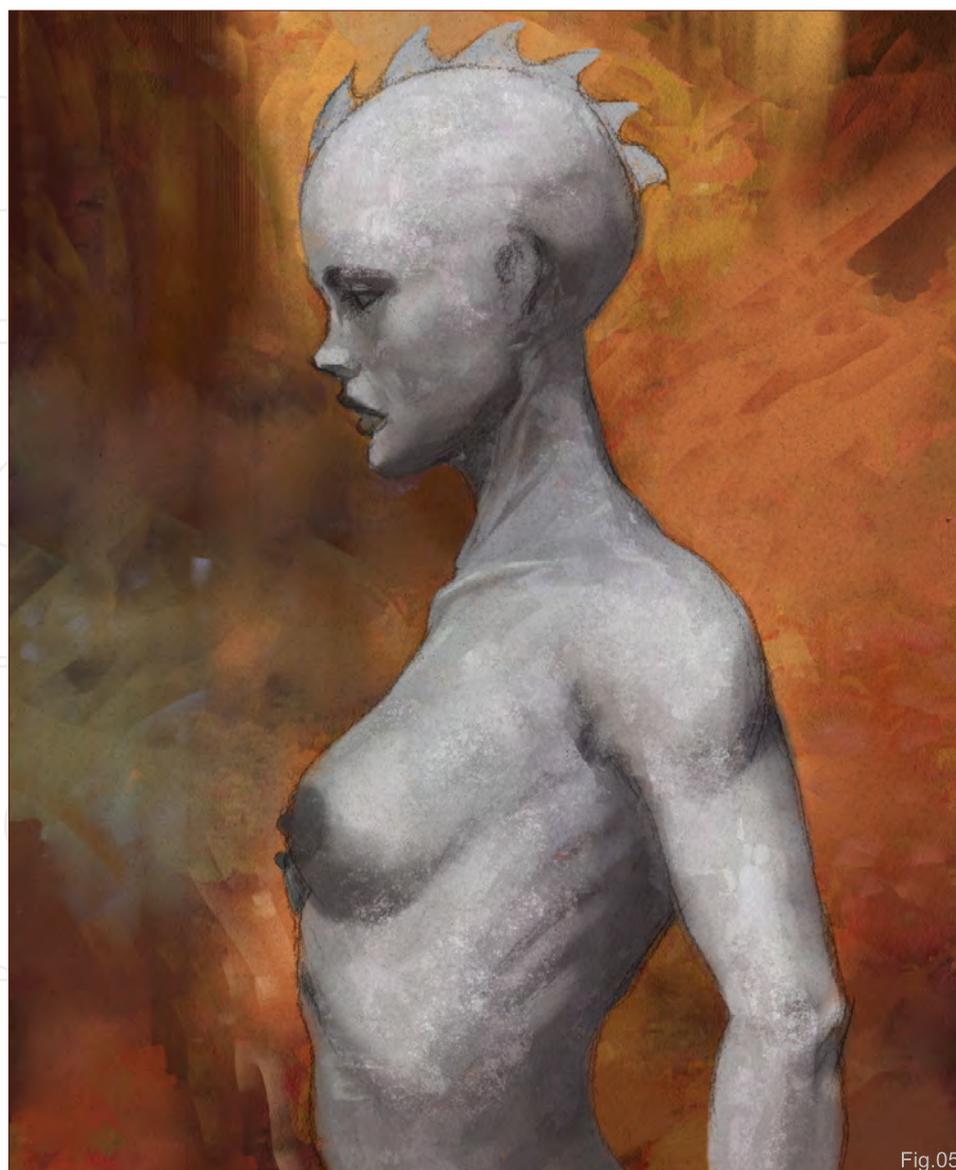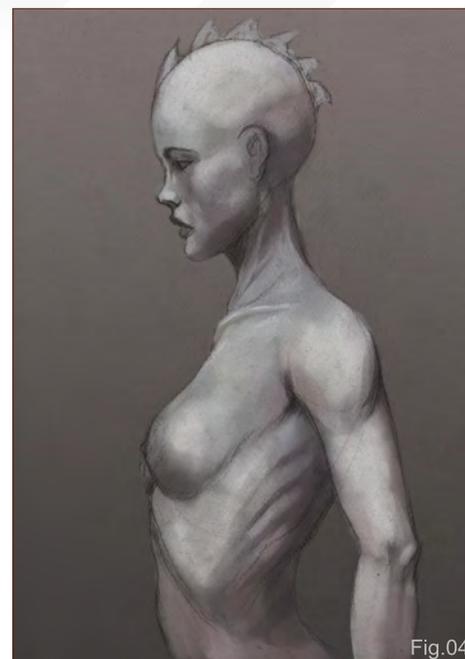
After scanning the image, I duplicate the layer and then create a new layer with a dark grey fill underneath the duplicated sketch layer, setting the layer blending mode to "Multiply". Duplicating the sketch layer will give me a little bit of a safety net as I work into it, whilst still keeping the original sketch layer intact for adjusting my texture levels later on. The fill layer is there simply to add contrast until I decide what I would like to do with the background (**Fig.02**).

Next, I create a new layer in-between the duplicate sketch and background layer, which I will use to paint in my values. Here I'm using a mixture of a palette knife and a round brush to create a value study (**Fig.03**). Understandably, I realise that if I were to paint this in a real life, I would be losing my pencil sketch as I apply paint to the paper's surface, which is why I begin to erase in the duplicate sketch layer any areas that are supposed to be painted on. Additionally, I also begin to blend the values in my paint layer, using the blend tool in order to give them a somewhat chalky and painterly look (**Fig.04**).

From here, I begin to add a bit of colour and additional texture to the image (**Fig.05**). I create a new layer above the paint layer and, using

Fig.05

several textured brushes, I randomly paint over my value study. The effect I'm shooting for is similar to painting with a sponge, or even what can sometimes happen when you pull off airbrush Frisket from a surface too hastily. I also create a new layer underneath the paint layer to work colour into the background. This process is a bit more involved, as I am really aiming to give the background a traditional airbrushed look and feel. Here I use a palette knife brush with varied opacities and sizes to randomly paint in colour and to create the effect of painting with French curves or cut-out masks. I also use a soft round brush to paint in a light over-spray effect in certain areas.

At this point I take a step back and review my work. I feel the character needs to blend a bit better with this new background, so I adjust the contrast of the grey tones using the Curves tool and begin to work some colour into the skin. I do this by creating a new layer and setting the blend mode to "Lighten". I then adjust the opacity to about 40% and lightly paint over the value layer until I achieve the soft colour wash effect I'm looking for (**Fig.06**).

Continually working in detail to both the character and background, I begin to wrap things up by adding a bit more colour to the character's skin and painting in some grey-blue tones and highlights (**Fig.07**). After painting the final details on the character's head fins and adjusting the overall Levels
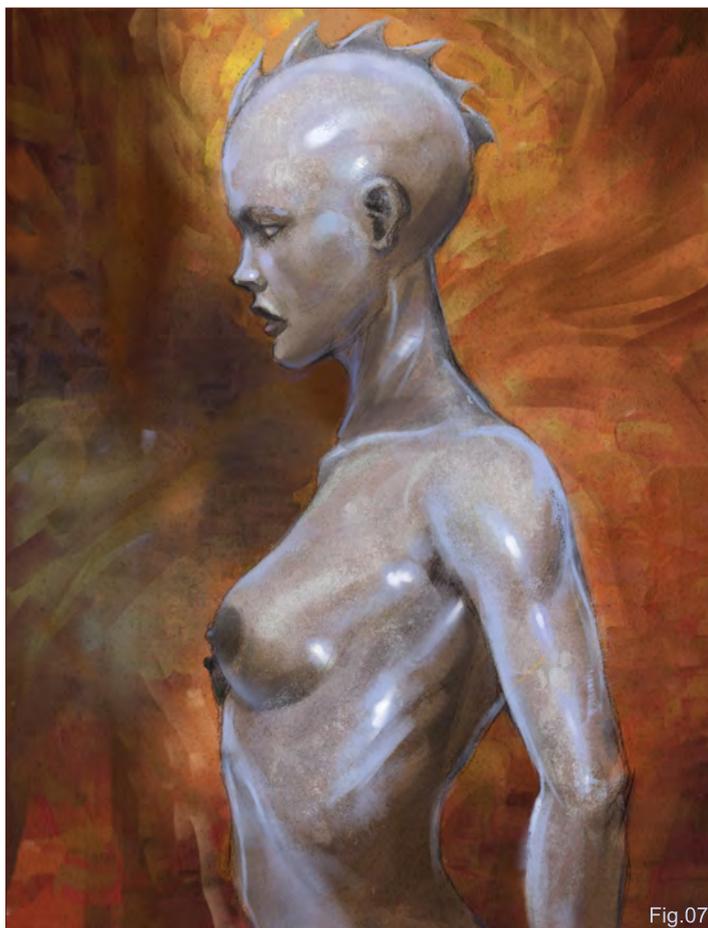
Fig.06

Fig.07
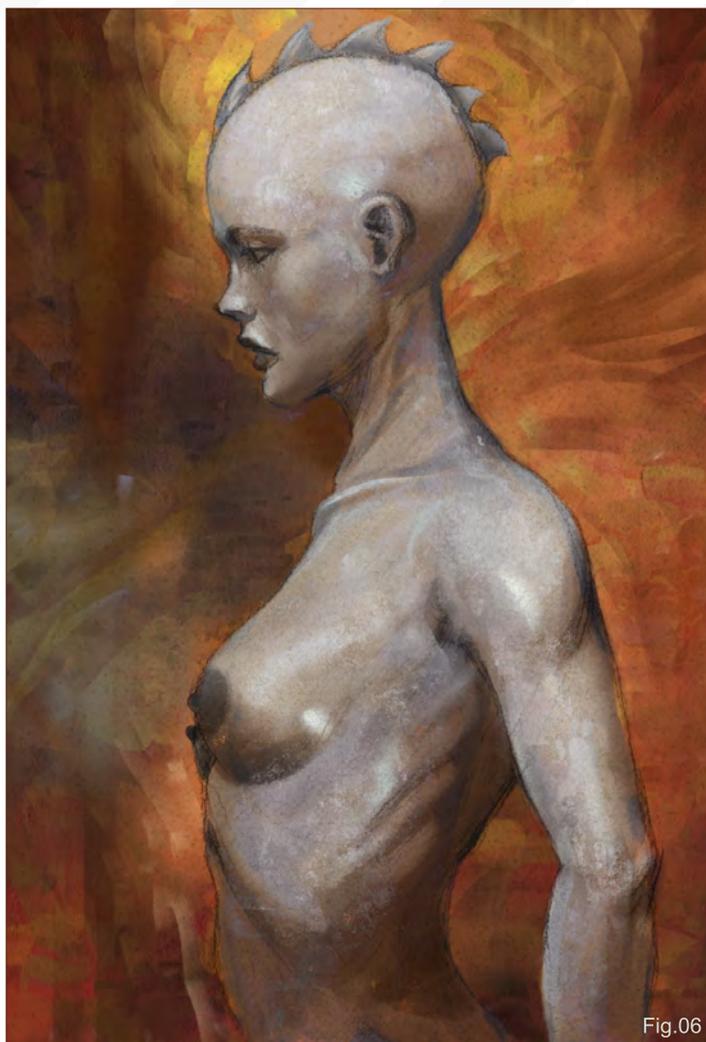
and Colour Balance, the image is now close to completion. All that is left is painting in some miscellaneous details, such as the speckled over-spray effect, using a speckle brush at a low opacity and laying the original scanned sketch in Multiply mode over the entire image to add more texture (**Fig.08**).

As you can see, beginning with something as simple as a pencil sketch on textured paper is a great starting point to help you achieve more traditional-like results. Being able to distinguish and recreate some of the subtle nuances behind traditional mediums in a digital environment also helps tremendously! Effects such as the over-spray, speckling, pencil lines that peak through the paint layers, and the right texture, all add to this image's believability. Every medium has its own nuances and each one can enhance an illustration's overall look. In short, there really is no limit to what you can do when you combine traditional with digital, and using both will not only compliment your art, but also make you a more flexible artist.

Once again I'd like to thank Lynette Clee and the entire 2DArtist team for their help and support. I hope you have enjoyed this article and if you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me any time.

JOEL CARLO

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http://www.joelcarlo.net

Or contact:

joelcarlo@gmail.com

Fig.08

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speed painting

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

This month our talented artists, Eduardo Peña and Richard Tilbury, tackle the topic:

OVERLOADING CORE IN FUTURISTIC POWER PLANT

EDUARDO PEÑA

CREATED IN:

Adobe Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

Before starting this speed painting, I tried to imagine the general theme and what kind of narrative that I would like to implement in the picture. I decided that I wanted to tell a story in which things were shown in a space environment, where the circumstances reflected this, whilst still answering the brief: "Overloading core in futuristic power plant". Because of the nature of this kind of content, it allowed me to

Fig.01
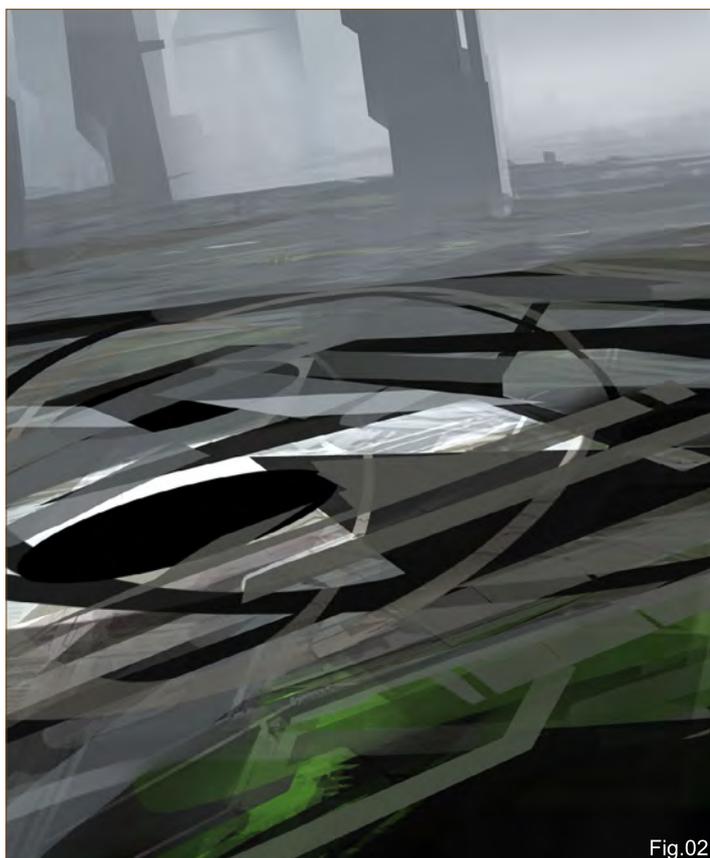
propose a story and/or physical events in a very particular way, where the idea could be unwrapped from my own ephemeral history.

WORKING PROCESS

Beginning initially with a vertical canvas, I wanted to apply and propose some attractions in the visual composition. Here I applied some inconsistent and orthogonal brushstrokes to gauge the orientation of the image (**Fig.01**). At this stage I was only concerned about the composition, without going into too much detail. The main thing was to simply create as many "happy accidents" as possible, as these would later create possibilities to guide my creativity and also visually enrich the painting (**Fig.02**).

This process is a bit risky in the sense that it's an unstructured process of building an image, but with speed paintings I like to let my instincts visually guide me towards what may be considered to be correct. Obviously, wandering around the canvas is the only way in which I can develop,

Fig.02

using this kind of method.

Because I started off with a vertical canvas, in order to propose some attractions in the visual composition, this is not to say that this is an appropriate start for every project! However, for this piece it was a good point from which to develop the ability to observe, interpret and then propose new things to later help me make better achievements in the painting.

Continuing with experimentation, I began to develop different directions, using both linear and random circular brush strokes (**Fig.03**). At this stage I started to link them together, giving the impression of routes that connect with each other. And, in terms of the brief for this speed painting, gradually building up an area that could eventually be interpreted as a complex power plant.

After applying the same method of finding structures and relationships within the brush strokes to the rest of the painting, I found that this process was really starting to best describe
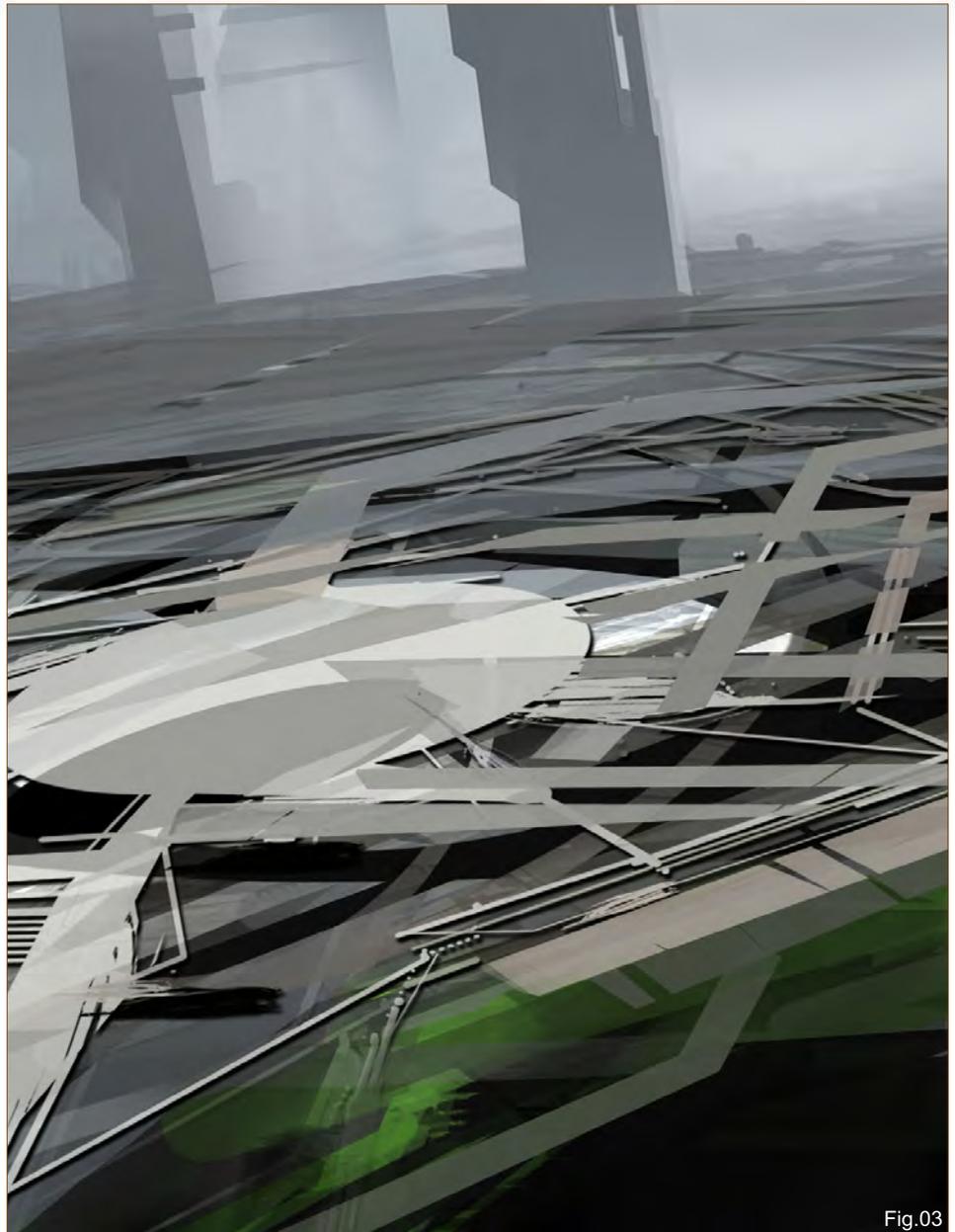
Fig.03
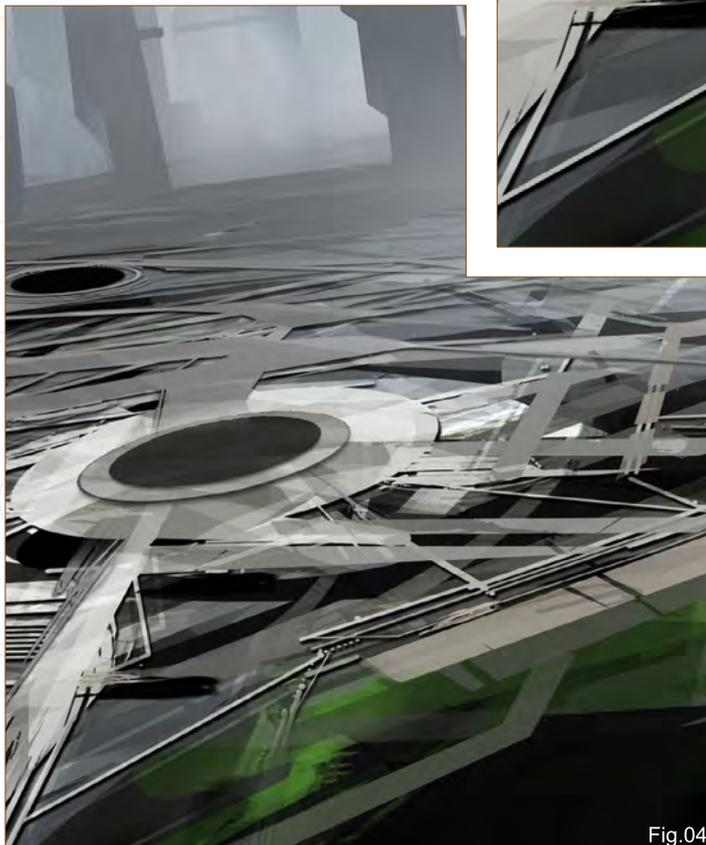
Fig.04

the theme of the image. I continued to explore this method, following the joints exposed in the structures that created lines and circles (**Fig.04**), which are really just basic forms if we look at them as individual pieces. But what is interesting to see is how they can become complex and elaborate forms, and how they cooperate if they relate to each other. This generates new visual proposals, and I like to take advantage of these situations that arise!

Gradually, the general form was "sculpted" in this image. The structures that seemed abstract and undefined at the beginning were starting to show some order and consistency; likewise, the space and atmosphere were also acquiring such characteristics (**Fig.05**). I flipped the image at this stage to check that everything was looking good and to give me a fresh view of the painting.

At this stage, I also began to work on the finer details and points of attraction in the image. What I really wanted to show was the scenario in its entirety, but I thought it would also be nice to show certain things that give importance to the image, such as the holes which make up the reactor and also somehow define the space. The small garden-like areas around the structure also play with the idea of an urban quality of space (**Fig.06**).

To finish off, retaining the structure that already existed and continuing with the treatment of colour and texture, I played with the tonal values to give more drama to the image (**Fig.07**). This final touch gave a little more wealth to the atmosphere and highlighted some of the areas within the picture that were of particular value to the viewer.

CONCLUSION

As well as painting this image I found it fun to create stories whilst I painted – I played with my imagination. By doing this, for a moment in
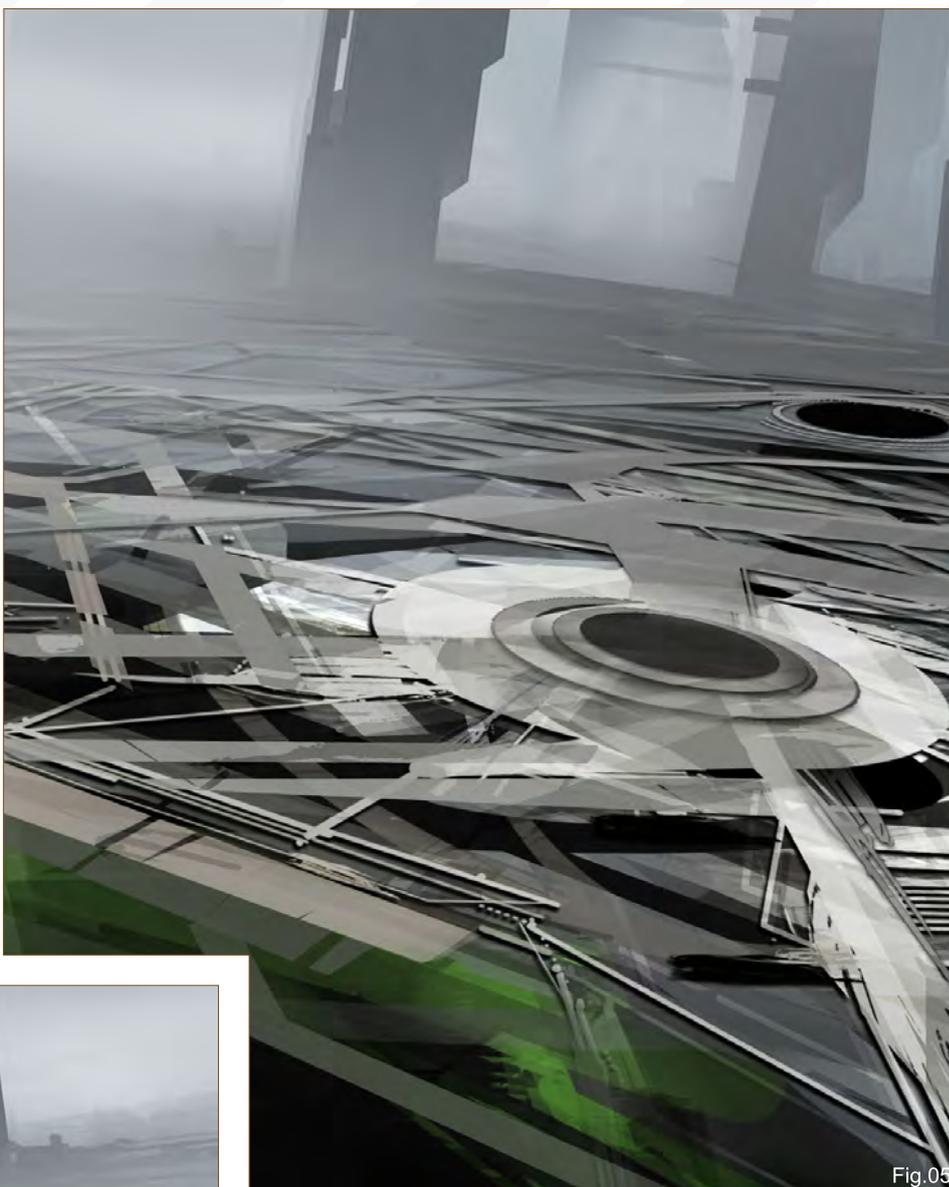
Fig.05

Fig.06

life, I got to be the protagonist in a dream world and I was able to roam around in my mind and exercise my creativity to it's full extent! I hope this is reflected in my image, and that my working process will encourage you to try out some of the same techniques within your own art works. Thank you!

EDUARDO PEÑA

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Or contact:
caareka20@hotmail.com

CREATED IN:

Adobe Photoshop
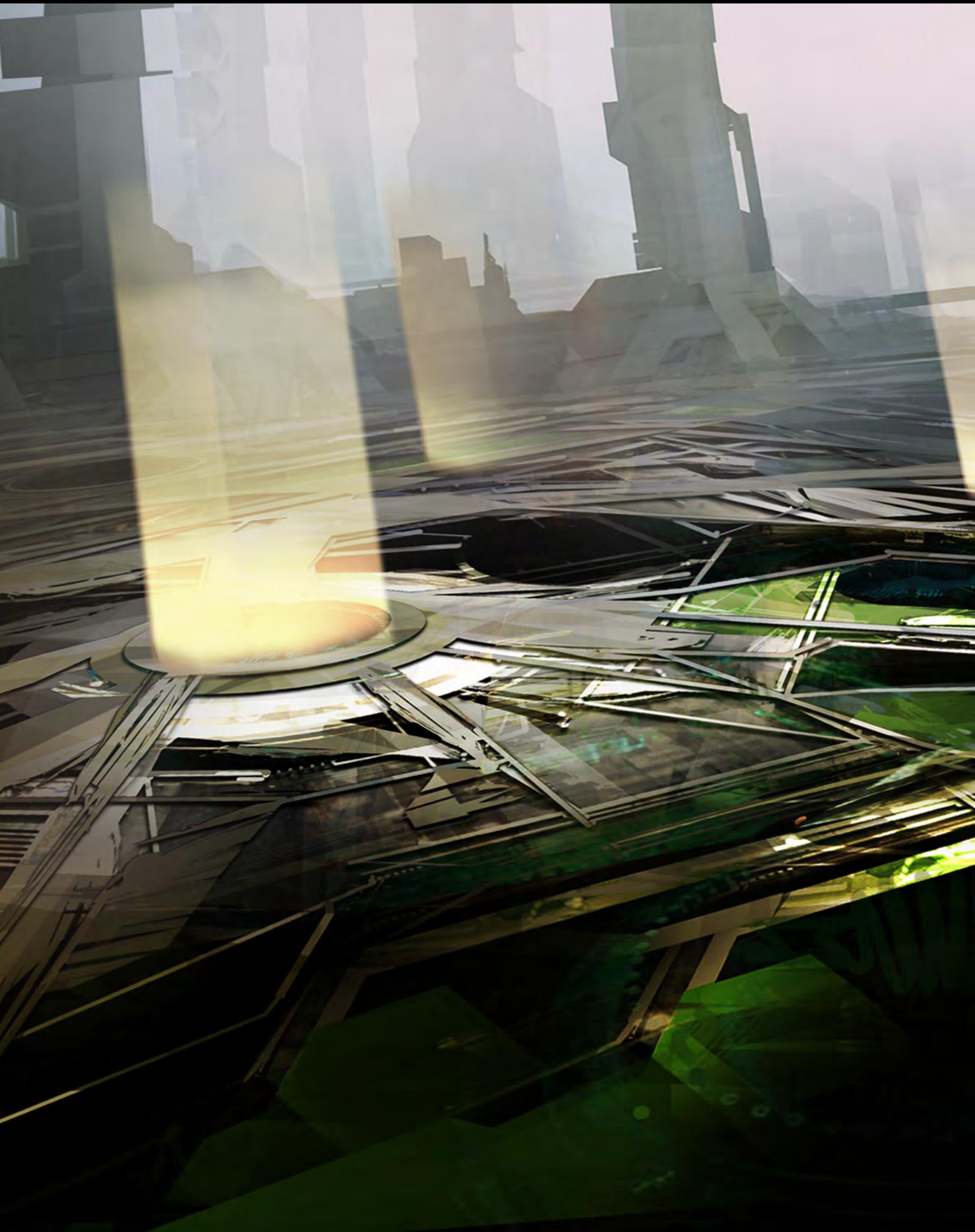
Fig.07

RICHARD TILBURY

INTRODUCTION

For this particular challenge I had very little idea about how I wanted the final design and composition to look. I knew that I wanted the scene to depict a large interior with the suggestion of machinery in the background and a bright light emanating from the core as though it was about to explode. I also wanted to portray a large sense of scale, so I decided to have the ceiling and distant wall invisible and have everything disappear into a dark void to help give the room a large and cavernous quality.

BLOCKING IN

The first step was to establish the shape of the main focal point in the image: the overloading core. I imagined this as some form of centrifuge, rotating at high speed to generate energy - hence the cylindrical shape evident in **Fig.01**.

I began by establishing the light source at the centre of the core. As this was the focal point of the image, I kept the background and foreground darker by comparison and I also painted in some streaks of light shooting
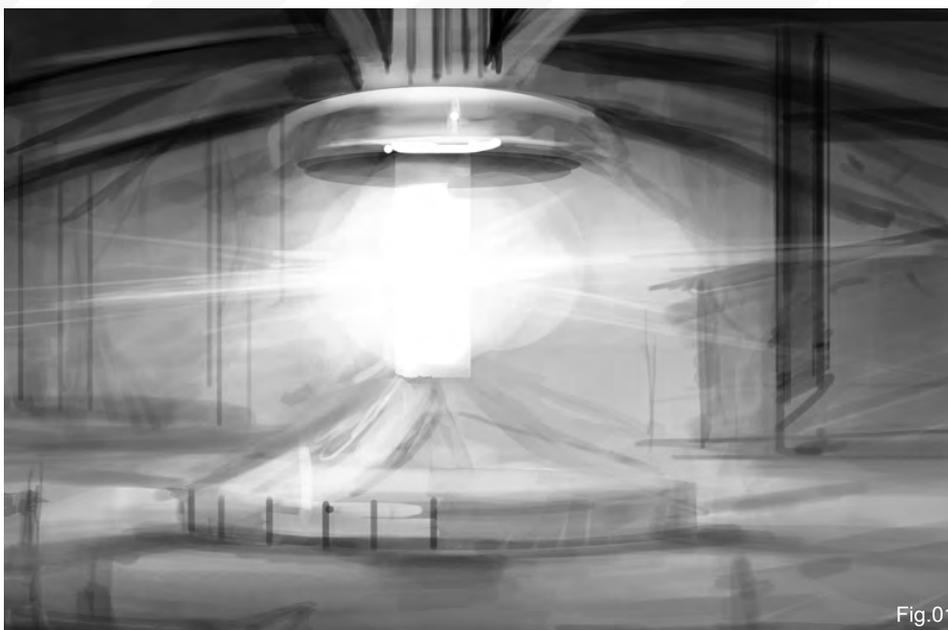
Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03

outward; an indication of a possible explosion. The rough shape had now been established so it was time to add some simple shapes in the background to imply some random pipe work

and cylinders etc (**Fig.02**).

ADDING DETAILS

With the main shapes and tonal values blocked in, it was time to refine the picture. On a separate layer for each, I added a base to the generator and some fencing around it. In **Fig.03** you can see a custom brush (inset) I made to create the fencing. With regards to the base, I made half of the shape and then mirrored it.

Although the scene was a little more defined at this stage, the base still lacked form and there was no real sense of the scale of things either. In **Fig.04** you can see that there are some extra brush marks to help add volume to the lower section, as well as a figure sheltering his eyes in silhouette against the light, which helped to determine the scale.

COLOUR SCHEME

There was enough detail and information in

Fig.04

Hard Light
Overlay

Fig.05

the scene now to warrant adding some colour, which was done on separate layers as a series of overlays. In **Fig.05** I have added two new layers using the colours and blending modes in the top left corner, with the blue being restricted to the core and the brown to the surroundings.

The colours helped soften the background shapes and tie them all together a bit more, as well as emphasise the core itself, which was brought into the foreground by the blue hue However, things weren't finished yet! This was only the initial phase and to help improve the composition, I decided to place some light in the right background section. This served to fracture the symmetry somewhat and also suggest that something may be amiss in the background that could perhaps be causing the overload (**Fig.06**).

Overlay

Fig.06

I added a new layer here set to overlay and used the orange colour (inset) to add the light and I also painted over the background with a pale pink. I carried this colour through across the foreground and added some reflections, as well as some shading around the base of the core. One other important feature that was added at this stage are the tiny highlights, picked up by the background shapes.

FINAL STAGES

The picture was all but complete, but with a few extra touches it could be more tightly "knitted" together. The main addition was to bind the background colour more to the core by giving it a cooler hue. Initially I wanted a stark contrast between the foreground and background but I felt this solution was far more convincing in the end. I also used a blueish colour to add further highlights on the background shapes to reinforce this. I neatened up the fencing a little and also copied and pasted the light section of the base over itself and set it to Screen mode which now gave it a brighter and "hotter" quality.

The last remaining components were the particles that are shooting from the beam. These were painted with a hard edged brush on a separate layer and then Motion Blurred, leaving me with the final version of the image (**Fig.07)**.

RICHARD TILBURY

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Fig.07

"SPACE IS A WONDROUS THING,
AND CURRENT COSMOLOGY MODELS
SUGGEST THAT THE UNIVERSE IS
APPROXIMATELY 13·7 BILLION YEARS
OLD!"

SPACE
PAINTING

SPACE PAINTING
PART 3: BARREN PLANETS

CREATED IN:

Photoshop

OVERVIEW

Drifting into the third aspect of our 12-part space and sci-fi art series, we take a planetary wide approach at how planets are formed, depict the destruction and death of planets, and explore the farthest regions of our known solar system! But first of all, let's take you back to the beginning... to the birth of the solar system.

THE SOLAR SYSTEM – A FIERY BIRTH AND ITS DESTRUCTION

(**Fig.01**) Space is a wondrous thing, and current cosmology models suggest that the Universe is approximately 13.7 billion years old! The

Fig.01

constant search for how life began and the origin of the species comes to mind first and foremost. For space enthusiasts, scientists and

armchair explorers alike, the current consensus leads to the Big Bang model, as originally proposed by Georges Lemaître, and its modified framework based on Einstein's Theory of General Relativity by A.Friedmann.

Note: Fig.02 describes a suggested timeline of the Universe based on a 1996 WMAP (Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe) Satellite that measured the remnant temperature of the Big Bang (by measuring the temperature differences in the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation), and thus extrapolated the age of the Universe to be 13.73 ± 0.12 billion years old.

So how do we best depict the rise of the solar system in a painting?

Fig.02

Canis Major

Milky Way

Andromeda

Fig.03

OUR SOLAR SYSTEM – IN A NUTSHELL

Note: Fig.03 depicts our Milky Way galaxy (centre), with our closest neighbouring galaxy, the Canis Major Dwarf galaxy (left: red stream – the Milky Way is depicted as a blue stream), and our other neighbour the Andromeda galaxy (right).

SOLAR SYSTEM

From inside looking outwards, let us look at the Solar System as it exists. Our solar system resides within one of the outer spiral arms of the Milky Way (small spiral arm – known as the Orion Arm).

Our solar system comprises of a main sequence G2 star, an inner circle of four terrestrial planets, a main asteroid belt and outer four-gas giant planets.

An outer Kuiper belt of ice, debris, Pluto (and its moon, Charon) and Makemake (initially known as 2005 FY) encircle the outermost region, also known as the Trans-Neptunian region (i.e. the area beyond Neptune).

Overlapping this is a wider belt called the Scattered Disc – thought to be an extended version of the Kuiper belt containing scattered objects, although it exists in a wider elliptical belt on a perpendicular axis to the Kuiper belt. Interestingly, there is also a large brown dwarf planet, Eris, within this region (which led strongly to the redefinition of what constitutes a planet, resulting in the current loss of Pluto from the list of our own planets).

Credit: Orion Nebula. M42. Hubble Space Telescope - ACF/WFC   Fig.04

Going even further outwards lies the hypothetical Oort cloud – comprising of billions of comets or a trillion icy objects, all believed to be comets having been ejected from the inner solar system and gravitational effects of the outer planets.

And beyond that, who knows...?

THE BIRTH OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Solar System 101 aside, let us proceed with actually depicting the birth of the solar system, with the death of a star...

Imagine going back roughly 10 billion years after the Big Bang. A large star is about to die, having

expended all its fuel, and from this its core eventually collapses inwards until it explodes as a supernovae – sending a shock wave through the galaxy (**Fig.04**). It is from the remnants of this long distant star, and many others, that eventually form a new star – our Sun – via the fusion of hydrogen atoms in a process called "nucleosynthesis".

ILLUSTRATING A DYING STAR

For our first painting we will look at illustrating the last moments of a dying star, transitioning before it explodes in a spectacular nova (which in the case of a large star is a super novae). In this instance it is probably more interesting to

take a more impressionistic approach to space art, whilst working from a position of informed knowledge (**Fig.05**).

1. Coloured Approach: We start by depicting a loose bluish-green background with flat washes over the canvas.

2. Basic Planning: Incorporating a circular styled composition, the illustration is planned to spiral outwards from its point of origin – the dying sun.

3. Edge Control: To illustrate a mixture of expanding gasses, a dash of orange and burnt yellow is applied liberally, towards the outer segments of the illustration (far left) at almost 100% opacity and with 100% flow. At the same time a softer wash of looser shapes and forms suggests clouds of gas in the mid-ground. The purpose of this is to establish early on the feeling of hard and soft edges (the analysis of clouds reveals that they often have a hard outer edge).

4. Establishing the Mood: In the initial stages the overall look is less important than the general feel and ambience. And preceding all of this, composition more so (I would normally add perspective is King, but in this instance it takes a lesser role).

5. Level 1 Details: You can start to consider various aspects like stars and local objects
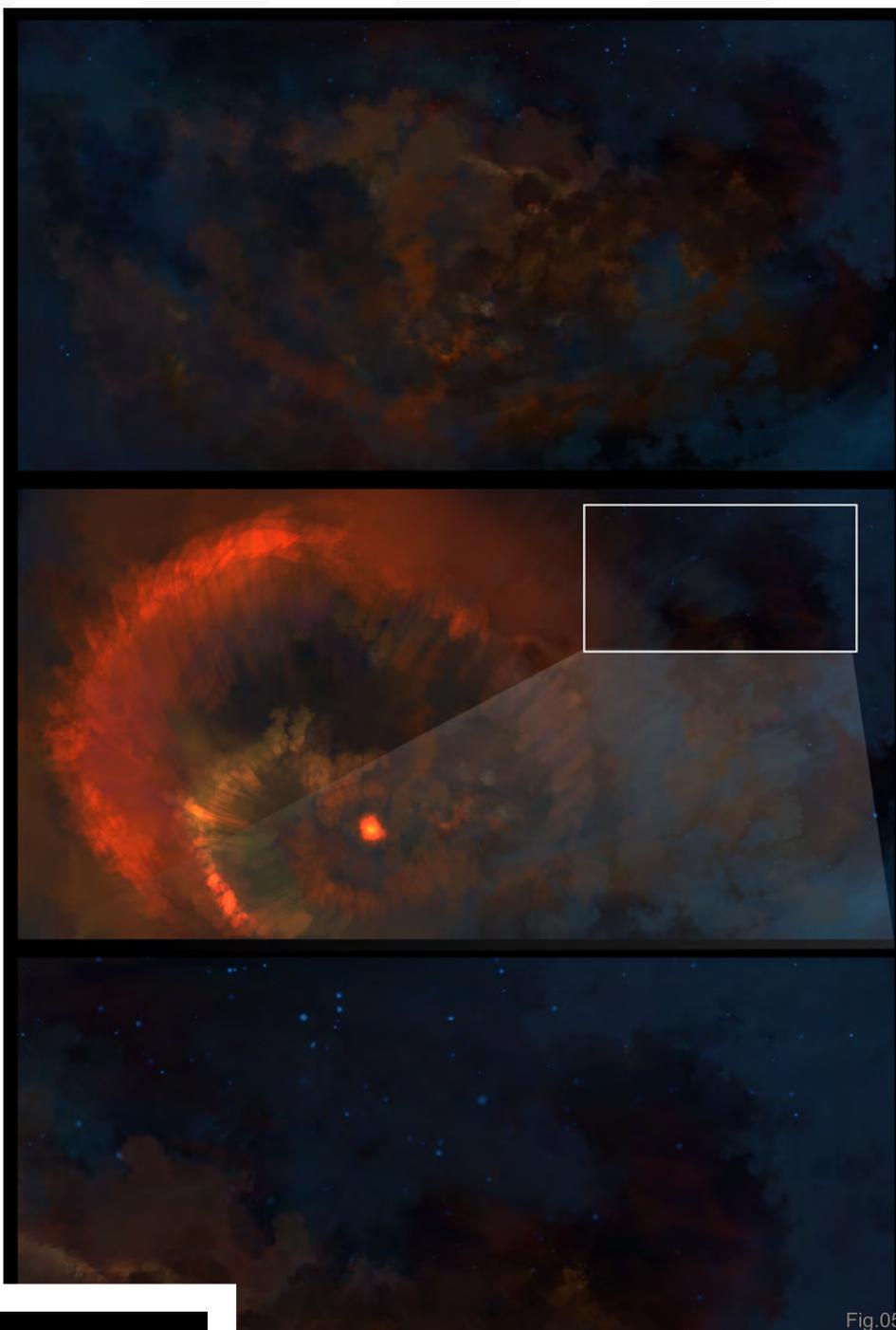
Fig.05

Fig 3: Blending brings the image alive
Fig.06

at this juncture (as they are easy to forget later on in the process). Remember that the background stars will probably be very faint and only the brightest will shine through.

6. Blending: (**Fig.06**) The next part brings the illustration to life, as it allows the establishment of mid-tone values, allowing various colours to bleed into one another and providing a softer, more realistic feel of an expanding cloud of gases.

7. Level 2 Details: Once the general disparate colours are blended in general (remember not to blend in just one area of the illustration, but

Fig.07

to work and put effort into the whole image), the next step to consider is the level 2 details. This means taking that extra care and making additional attention to ensure that the key areas of the illustration harmonise and 'sing' together. In this image, it means adding a subtle blend of golds, jade, and turquoise with faint highlights and glows to make it all work together (**Fig.07**).

ILLUSTRATING THE BIRTH OF A SOLAR SYSTEM

Following the death of a star, a vast and widespread cloud of raw material is scattered across a region. When sufficient interstellar clouds (giant molecular clouds) of raw elements collapse under gravity, it is theorised that, in the centre of these clouds, some minor rotation already exists. As the mass of the centre gets heavier and heavier, the rotation also gets faster and faster. Eventually, clouds of hydrogen become fused together until sufficient mass is reached to form a proto Sun disc under a process called Stellar Accretion.

It is this process, through which a star is born, that a stable solar system is formed. And it is this transition between the formation of a stable Stellar Accretion and a proto Sun that we will try

to illustrate in this tutorial, at this point. In some ways, it is similar to the shape of how some spiral galaxies may appear from a long distance, however not quite the same (**Fig.08**).

INITIAL COMPOSITION

In the initial stage we start with a rough layout of the proto stellar disc, using just pure deliberate colour choices on the main canvas. Using the similar principles as before we can continue as follows:

1. Flat Washes: Paint in a background of deep saturated blues and greens initially, and then sprinkle a scattering of faint stars.

Fig.08

2. Work Briskly: Then, very quickly and loosely, just paint in the basic layout of a central red and orange clump of clouds that spiral outwards in a ring.

3. Technical Data: Different artists depict this – the proto sun – as a geometric ring, and others as faint arms within a red disc. For the clarity of purpose here, we will first depict the thin edges of the arms, and subsequently lay in the red proto disc.

4. The Problem of Establishing Highlights Early On: Other issues to consider are the use of Colour Dodge and brighter glows. I would like

to stress that, in the initial stages, it is often too easy to Colour Dodge or add highlights straight away. If you do wish to do this here, try to limit these actions purely to the central portion!

5. Contrast to Make Things 'Hotter': This is due to the fact it is very hard to add further information/pixel data onto a white value. This illustration has almost pure white in the centre, but due to the contrasting red surrounding it, it appears even hotter (in fact, it is merely a light desaturated yellow).

6. Minor Details: The ends of the disc should be depicted as wispier clouds (of raw elements). Using the method of blending as shown previously, establish your mid-tones early on.

7. If all of these points have been considered, the early draft of your image should look pretty decent (**Fig.09**).

MATURING THE ILLUSTRATION

The next stage to consider is to 'work up' the initial composition into something respectable. Thereafter, one can spend a good indeterminate amount of time perfecting every tiny detail or star, perhaps even adding a foreground element like an asteroid or some space transport of sorts – basically working till your heart's content!

The following stages refer to the **Fig.09** sequence:
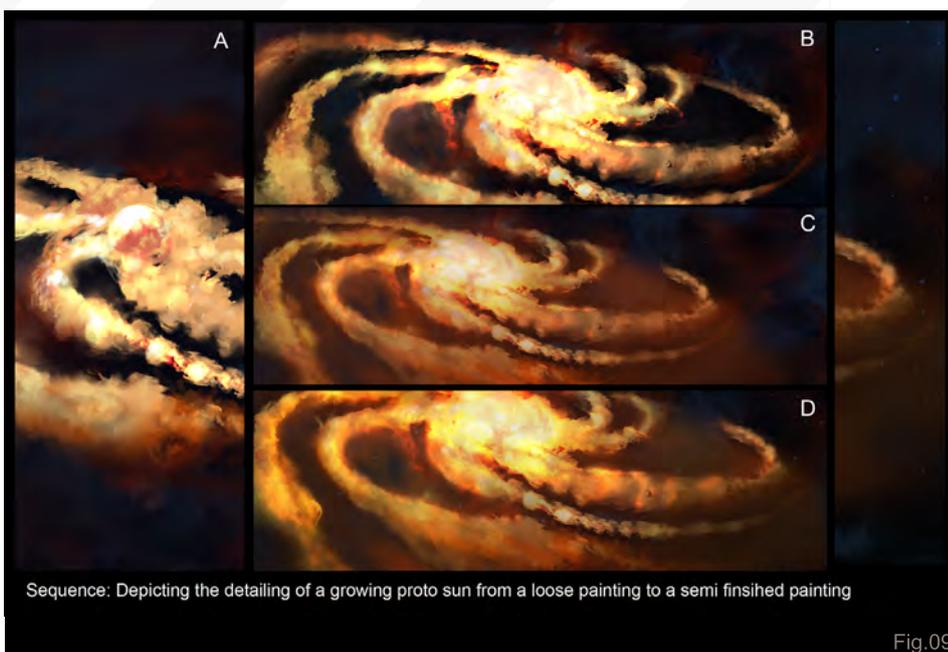
Sequence: Depicting the detailing of a growing proto sun from a loose painting to a semi finsihed painting

Fig.09

A. The foreground elements of the edge of the stellar clouds have more colour and mid-tones applied. Moving inwards, brighter glows – with judicious use of Colour Dodge – can be applied closer to the centre.

B. The central disc is thickened, with a more nebulous ring of circular globes that cumulatively form a rough spherical aspect.

C. The mid-range of the disc has more orange blended within. This lends a bit of an aspect of atmospheric perspective, however it does detract from the brightness of the original draft.

D. Additional details and blending are added to harmonise the overall feel. A faint wisp of red

is eventually seen to emanate from the central aspect.

To finalise, the edges of the illustration are Colour Balanced and lightened to provide relief and contrast to the final illustration (**Fig.10**).

WHAT DEFINES A PLANET?
OR. WHAT DIFFERENTIATES A PLANET VERSES A LUMP OF ROCK...?

In August 2006, the **IAU** (International Astronomical Union) were forced to redefine the definition of what constitutes a planet, following the discovery of Eris (a trans-Neptunian object confirmed to be larger than Pluto, discovered on July 29th, 2005 by Mike Brown of California Institute of Technology). The acceptance of Eris as a tenth planet meant that Pluto would now be the arbitrary minimum size.

However, other recently discovered trans-Neptunian objects (TNOs) such as Quanar and Sedna also exist. Does this mean they will be included within the current catalogue of planets? For a brief moment, it seemed as if our current solar system would be welcoming these into the fold (**Fig.11**)!

Fig.10

Fig.11

This created a small problem; a problem that essentially did not change how we saw the universe, but from the official stance it meant updating a clearer and more robust definition of what constitutes a planet – a definition that will still require "tweaking" in 2009!

In any event, a long story cut short, this culminated in a decision. As such, the final vote of the IAU General Assembly defined a planet as such:

1. A "planet" is a celestial body that (a) is in orbit around the Sun, (b) has sufficient mass for its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium (nearly round) shape, and (c) has cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit.

2. A "dwarf planet" is a celestial body that (a) is in orbit around the Sun, (b) has sufficient mass for its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic

equilibrium (nearly round) shape, (c) has *not* cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit, and (d) is not a satellite.

3. All other objects, except satellites, orbiting the Sun shall be referred to collectively as Small Solar System Bodies.

This means there are now only 8 planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. All other celestial bodies had to be designated into the 'minor planet catalogue', namely Pluto, Eris (and its moon Dysnomia), 2003 El, Makemake (2005 FY), Sedna and Quaoar.

PLUTO NOW A PLUTOID…?

In addition, the IAU decided to further distinguish planets from dwarf planets, whereby a dwarf planet is *not* considered to be a planet (and therefore Pluto could no longer be considered a planet).

Furthermore, on June 11th 2008, the IAU decided to establish even further a subclass of dwarf planets into the term 'Plutoid' (defined as any TNO having an absolute brightness magnitude of higher than $H = +1$).

To summarise, in a final conclusion:
Planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune
Plutoids: Pluto, Eris, 2003 EL, Makemake
TNOs: Sedna, Quaoar, etc.

For the purposes of further self-directed learning, check out the NASA: JPL Solar System Simulator (**http://space.jpl.nasa.gov/**) which produces accurate depictions of planets and satellites as seen from elsewhere in the Solar System.

A SPACE PROBE

For the purposes of object interest, let us now design a space probe that can look to the stars (**Fig.12**). And perhaps, to project it even further, one that could look at past events or travel back in time?! Often, the challenge of producing space imagery is the lack of providing relative scale between the viewer and the main object of interest. This will often be a large astronomical object, such as a planet, star and asteroid field, or the heavens above.

PROVIDING AN OBJECT INTEREST

There are two popular ways to achieve this:

1. Depict the object of interest from the view of a Moon/Surface of an asteroid.

2. Depict the object of interest from a space transport of some description.

In this instance, let's opt for the latter option.

KEY FEATURES OF A SPACE PROBE:

In the design of the space probe, the key features that come to mind are:

1. The ability to launch deep space to surface probes;

2. The ability to feature a large protective and heat resistant shield (anti solar flare/anti debris);

3. The ability to have alternative means of propulsion, e.g. a deployable solar sail or ionic propulsion;

4. The ability for secondary propulsion;

5. The ability of vector thrusters;

6. The ability and feasibility of long-term main propulsion

With regards to feasible propulsion solutions, possible viable and future technological solutions suggest:

1. A compact He3 fission reactor (e.g. The British Inteplanatery Society – Daedelus Project, 1973-1978);

2. A ZPE (Zero Point Energy) alternative;

3. A trusty – fully feasible – nuclear powered

Fig.12

fission alternative which features beautiful and impressive pulses of nuclear fireballs in its wake The latter is best exemplified by the 1960 General Atomics and USAF-backed seven-year feasibility study, Project Orion (not to be confused with the new CEV NASA space vessel also named ORION-CEV).

History contains many forgotten discoveries and advancements, and in this respect I recommend the following read: Dyson, F. *Death of a Project*, Science, 149, 141-44 (1965).

PROJECT ORION

The initial idea is accredited to Stanislaw Ulam and Cornelius Everett in a classified 1955 paper

describing the use of solid propellant discs and the release of atomic bombs, that, when vaporised, converts the propellant into hot plasma, subsequently impinging on a pusher plate and thus driving the vehicle forwards (**Fig.13**).

In terms of durability of the pusher plates, extensive testing of the plate erosion showed that exposure to such extreme temperatures were only for 1/1000th per second of each explosion, and that very little heat flowed into the plate. As such, active cooling was not required even. Technically, and economically, there was *no flaw* in the overall scheme, save for the use of nuclear powered explosions that would potentially release harmful radiation into the environment.

The project was subsequently upgraded to involve NASA involvement, whereby the design involved the Orion vehicle to be carried – initially – into orbit as a Saturn V upper stage (thus reducing the radiation hazard to Earth's atmosphere). Ultimately, however, Orion fell quietly into the wayside for the following reasons:

1. Politics: In 1963, a nuclear test-ban treaty by the US, Britain and Soviet Union made the use nuclear explosion illegal by international law.

2. Classified: As a classified project, few in the scientific and engineering community knew it existed. For the project to survive, Orion needed to be reclassified as a peaceful scientific endeavour, and had to be partially declassified.

3. Funding: And lastly, the final nail in the coffin: funding. In 1964, the USAF indicated it was unwilling to continue support unless NASA also coughed up from its own coffers. In addition, the moon race from the Apollo missions meant that further funding was not easily forthcoming.

Thus, in some senses, mankind could have been travelling to the stars from as early as the late 1960s (**Fig.14**).
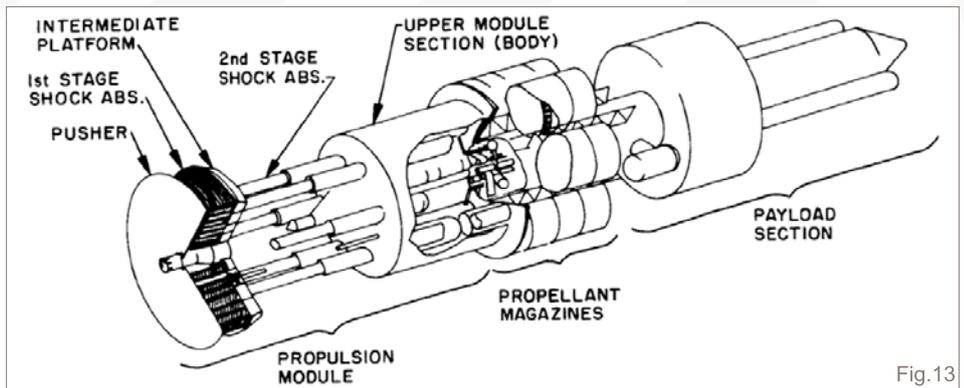
Fig.13
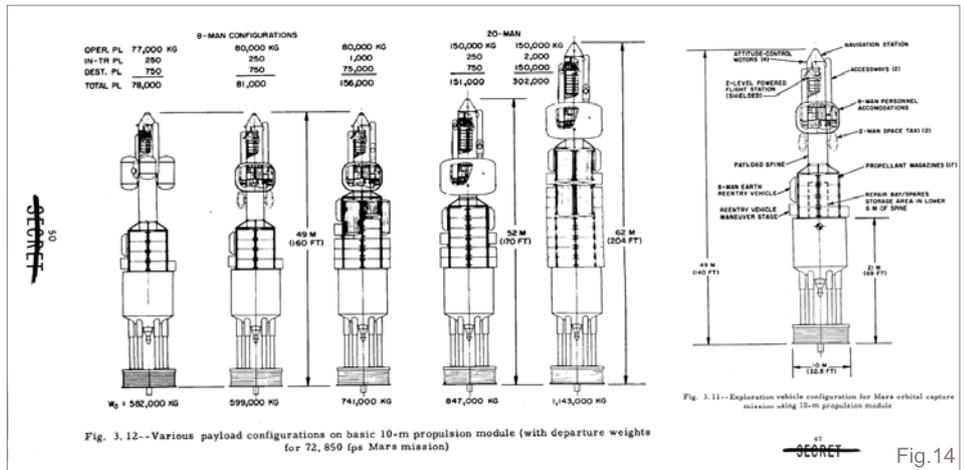
Fig.14

For the full declassified document containing the conceptual vehicle design can be read here: **http://ntrs.nasa.gov/archive/nasa/casi.ntrs. nasa.gov/19770085619_1977085619.pdf**

Numerous other video material and articles show its working test models and reincarnations, which still capture the popular imagination of future space explorers to this age.

DESIGNING A SPACE PROBE

There is not much to add here, except to say that, using the various existing reference material and research, we end up with a simple robust space probe that has a few additional features (**Fig.15**):

1. The ability to deploy solar sails;

2. Multiple probe modules – allowing easy deployment to explore different planets for various scientific endeavours

DEAD MOON

Moving on towards our last segment of this workshop: **How to depict a dead barren planet.**

Technically, Mars and Venus count as terrestrial planets that can sustain life, but not

Fig.15

LICKOBS9 Jan 1949   DSPE Clementine Satellite 1994   Far side   Nearside   Farside   Fig.16

classically Gaian, and thus will be covered in our next segment instead (when we look at possible colonisable planets and the concept of terraforming).
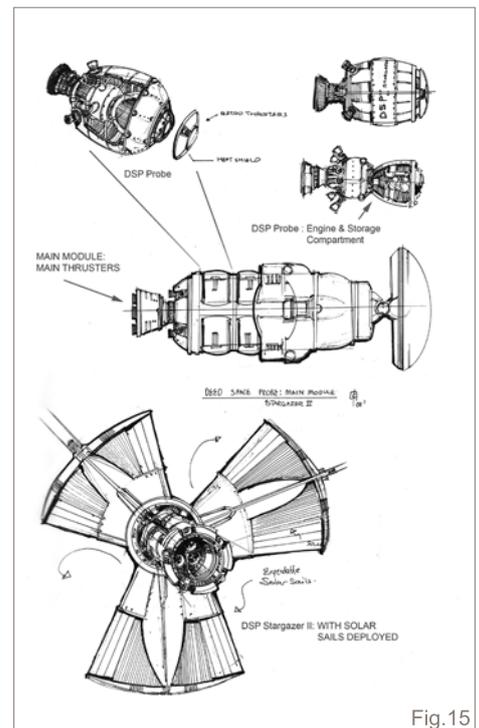
In this instance, we shall use our own natural satellite: the Moon – in full colour, that is (**Fig.16**).

Often, the lunar surface is depicted in a bland grey, or a false desaturated blue colour. However, the advent of webcams and improved technology now show that the moon is indeed more colourful that previously known (colour photography provided from the 1994 DSPE (Deep Space Program Science Experiment) Clementine satellite).

CRATERS ON THE MOON

The key issue to consider when drawing any large circular object on a curved body, such as a planet, moon or asteroid, is the perspective. In contrast to the other aspects throughout

the workshop, perspective is the key primary determinant when drawing craters (**Fig.17**). In general:

1. The closer (or more perpendicular) a crater is towards the viewer, the more circular it appears;
2. The further away a crater is, the more elliptical it appears;

Lastly, nature is random, and thus, to achieve both aesthetic and an accurate rendition of the moon, try to vary the size, depth and discolouration of the craters!

ILLUSTRATING THE MOON

Some things to consider when illustrating the moon are that there is a nearside and a far side. Because our moon is "tidally-locked" to the Earth's gravitational pull, the view of the moon is always fixed relatively to Earth. In the example of the Moon, it is said to be tidally locked to a larger body of the Earth. The dark patches seen on the moon by eye are said to be called the Lunar Mare/Maria (**Fig.18**).

The dark patches seen on the moon by eye are said to be called the Lunar Mare/Maria (dark regions made of basalt which give a dark green-blue colour cast).

INITIAL LAYOUT AND COMPOSITION

1. Initial Layout: Using the circular Marquee, paint a base of light yellow/grey in large flat washes to represent the base of the moon.

Exagerated depiction of circular craters (ala tribute to spore)   Fig.17

(Lunar Maria)   Basalt   Fig.18
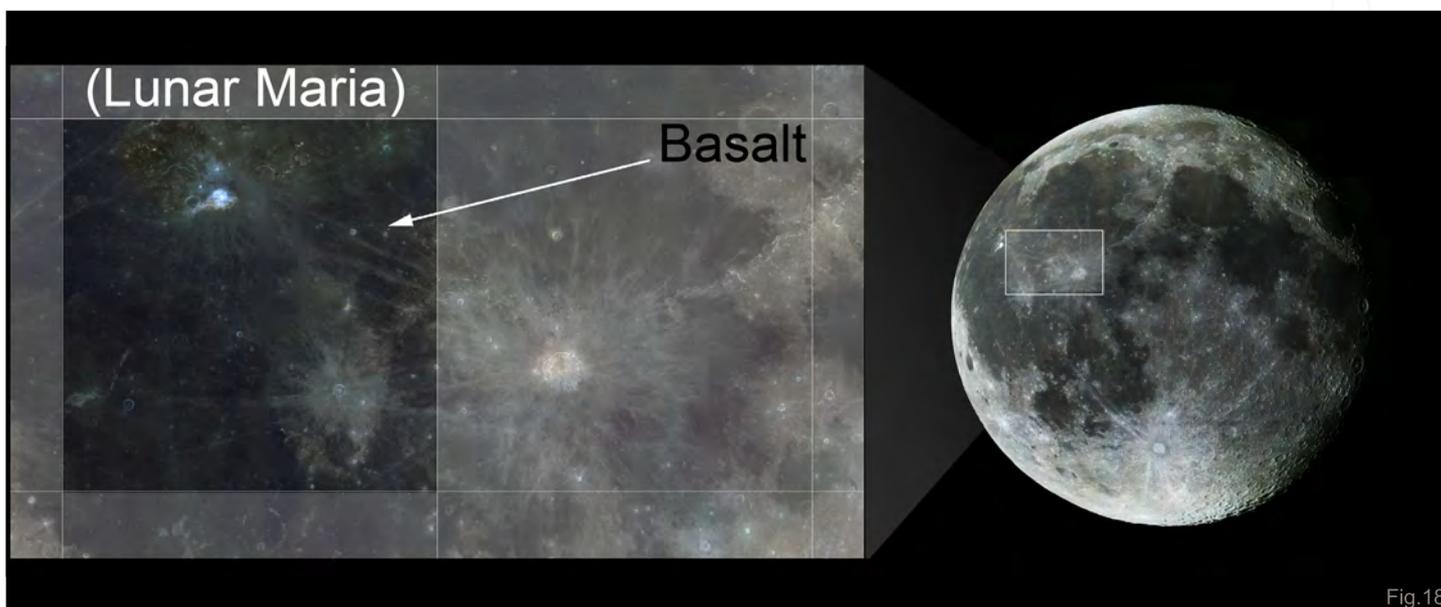
2. Palette: A colour palette of dark, mid and light tones will help in the overall production of the image using only colour. Optionally, one can choose to start out in greyscale and work out the base values based on the reference of the near and far side; however, it will take some work to make it appear painterly and naturalistic in the final outcome (**Fig.19**).

3. Save A Selection: In the Channels option, add a new alpha layer of the circular marquee. This will be frequently used from time to time; however, note that this will result in a sharp circular edge, whereas a softer edge is a more desirable outcome.
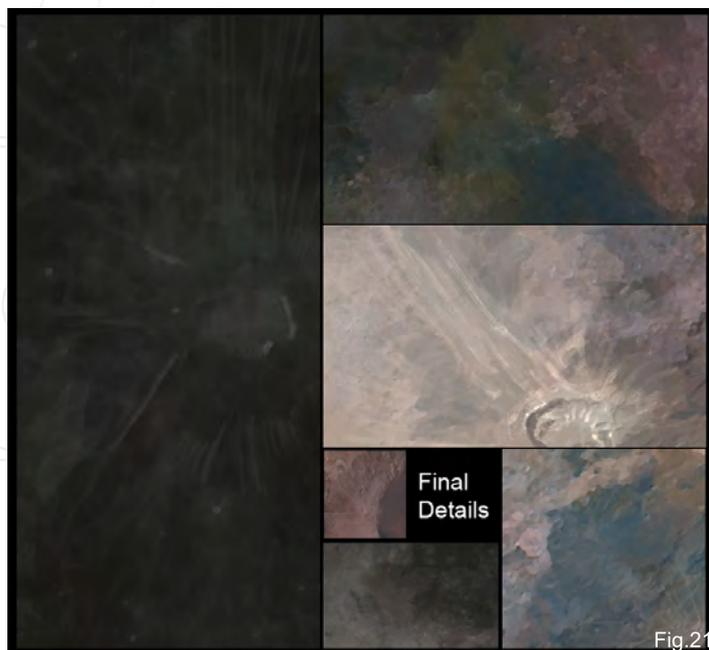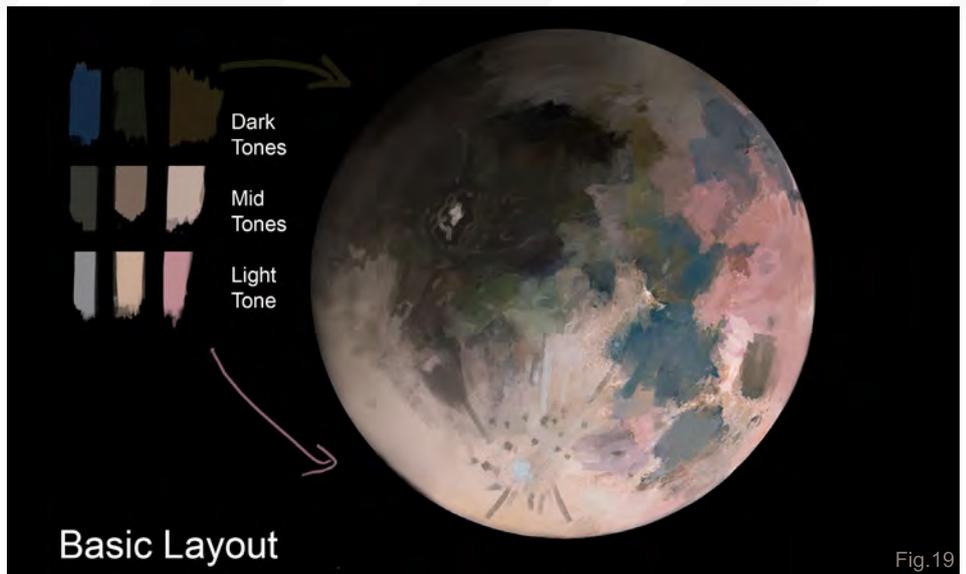
4. Base Shapes: Using the dark tones, lay down the dark basaltic mares, tempered with the mid-tones of pink and yellow. Finally, the lighter tones can be used to inscribe the edges of large and small craters. For a naturalistic feel, do not describe the whole shape of the crater, but rather just the edges that may catch light (**Fig.20**).

ADDING DETAILS

1. Work Big: For this piece, the overall image is at 6,000 pixels wide. This allows many tiny details to be "faked" by using purely colour complementaries.

Dark Tones
Mid Tones
Light Tone

Basic Layout

Fig.19

Closeup at full resolution: Step by step guide to painting basalt

Fig.20

2. Painting Basalt: Using a base of sea green, mix in a desaturated pink to suggest crater edges and highlands, and mix it in with the base green and yellow to get a good blend.

3. Craters: Try adding long light streaks emanating from some large craters. These can be thought to be left over trails from micro meteorite impacts or smaller showers.

For that final finish, try adding various foreground elements, such as the space probe previously designed, or the whole illustration can be colour-graded to a more traditional monochromic look (**Fig.21**).

Well, this has been a quick 'whistle stop tour' of the start of the galaxy and depicting a barren planet. In the next issue we will look at how to terraform and paint Gaian planets!

Final Details

Fig.21

DR CHEE MING WONG

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KEEP A SHARP EYE

MAKING OF BY RON CRABB

"RECENTLY I'VE FOUND
MYSELF LONGING TO
GET BACK TO SOME
FIGURATIVE WORK AND
DO SOME STORYTELLING
WITH MY ILLUSTRATION
ABILITIES."

KEEP A SHARP EYE

INTRODUCTION

The digital painting, "Keep a Sharp Eye", had its genesis in my desire to return to my roots as an illustrator. Most of my recent commercial work has consisted of matte painting work for film and television, and that has occupied a lot of my time for a number of years now. Recently I've found myself longing to get back to some figurative work and do some storytelling with my illustration abilities (it's the variety of things I get to do that makes me love being an artist!).

To that end, I came up with an idea to create images that feel like they have a great story behind them, even though that story hasn't been written yet. "Keep a Sharp Eye" is the first in the series that I'm calling: "Illustrations from Untold Stories".

THE CONCEPT

I had a number of ideas that have been in my mind for quite some time, but the one that jumped to the front of the line was a concept that developed during a trip to Louisiana. I've travelled most of the United States, looking for artistic inspiration (and good location photos) for fine art, and I once found myself on a swamp tour boat in the bayous west of New Orleans. It was daytime, and I was on a pontoon boat sitting comfortably above the water (and alligators), but I instantly imagined going back in time and being there on a small skiff, gliding through those spooky waters at night with nothing but lamplight. That basic idea is the one I expanded upon for this digital painting.

All the work was done in Adobe Photoshop with just a little assistance from Cinema 4D. Here's how it all came together.
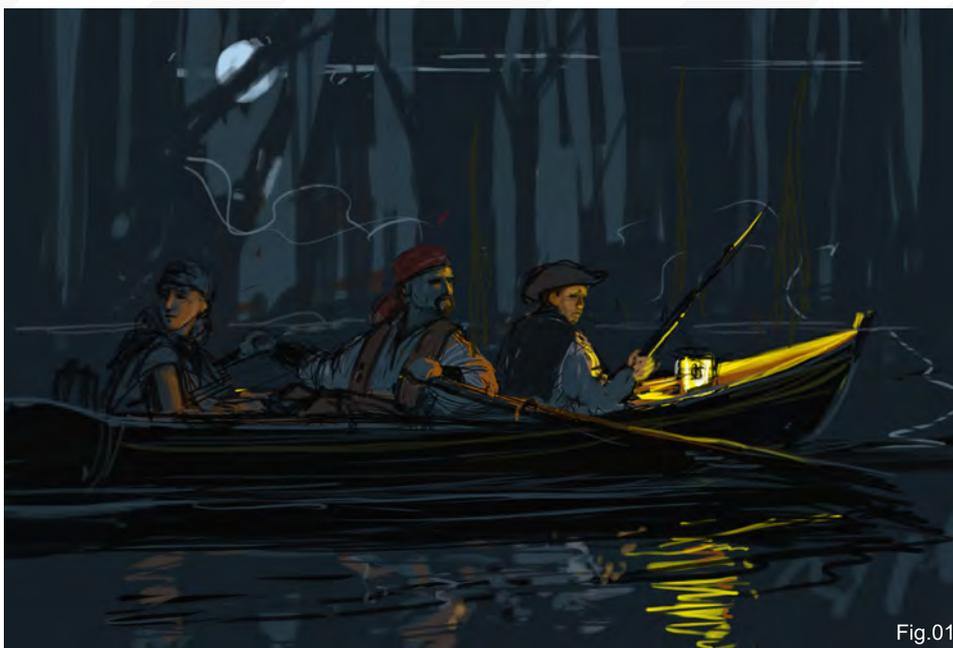
Fig.01

THE SKETCH

Normally, for a paying client, I would do a pretty good concept sketch. Since I was the client for this piece, I already had a good idea of what I wanted to do, so I just did a very quick, rough sketch – just to know what problems I might need to solve. This process allowed me to figure out lighting positions, model poses and prop requirements (**Fig.01**).

GATHERING REFERENCES

I then began collecting references from a number of sources, as well as online. I needed swamp images, period boat references, pirate costume details, and water ripple patterns. Once I decided to switch from lamplight to torchlight, I also needed flame references. This all came together quickly and I was then ready to photograph some models (**Fig.02**).

Fig.02

THE MODEL SHOOT

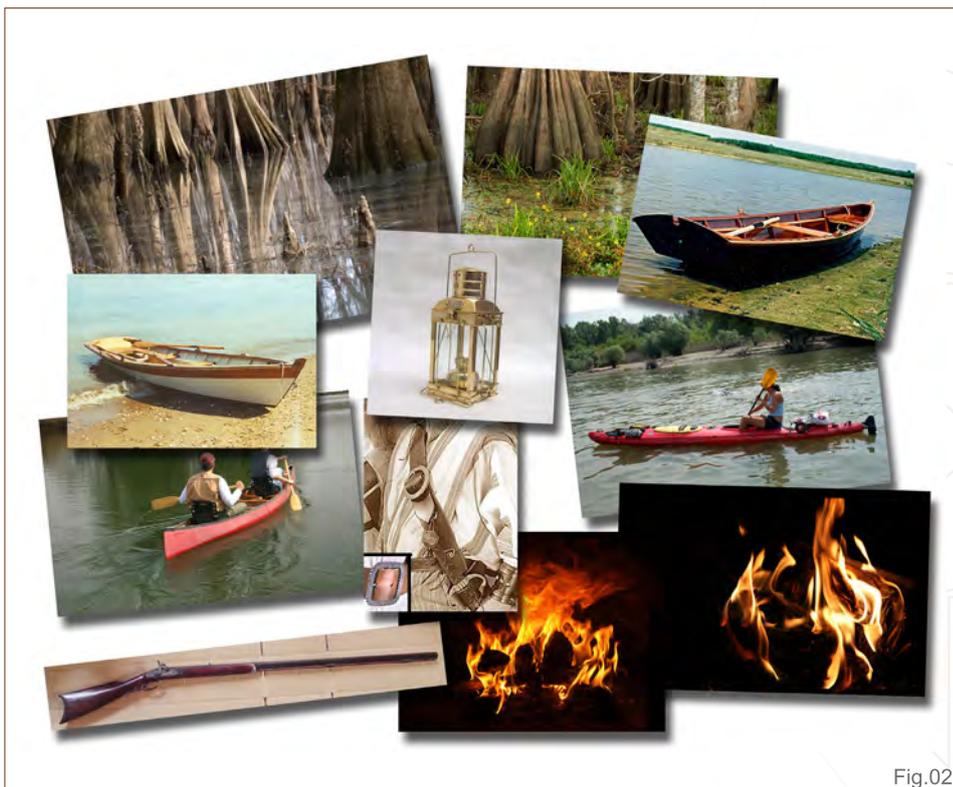For the older pirate I needed a rough-looking old guy with nice scars. Since there aren't many pirates in my neighbourhood, I decided to use myself as a model (a lot of artists do this!), and I could then roughen and scar myself to an appropriate degree in the painting process. I also found two very willing children close by who were happy to help out.

A note about model shooting: I don't go overboard in trying to get everything just perfect in the photo shoot because I find that the process of correcting things during the painting phase allows for quite a bit of creativity. It forces me to think hard about lighting conditions and shapes, as well as final poses. I take many photos and often end up combining elements from a number of them to get exactly what I want (**Fig.03**).

STARTING THE PAINTING

With all my photos and references in hand, I began the painting process. I created a quick background just to get a base going, using simple, hand-painted tree silhouettes (**Fig.04**).

I also did a quick boat model in Cinema 4D, just to make sure I got the shape right. I then placed the basic boat into the picture, which gave me the platform to position my characters (**Fig.05**).

I pieced together my model references, combining body positions with preferred facial expressions, and did some colour correcting to get close to the desired lighting and colouring. During this process I decided to make a slight

Fig.03

change in lighting and to get rid of the bright moonlight that I had indicated in the rough sketch. I felt that having it darker, without an overly bright rim light on the characters, would make it moodier; more like a classical painting than a movie poster. I would still add some ambient moonlight, but much less pronounced than originally planned. I wanted that torch to really pop.

I positioned the corrected photo layers and roughed some quick positioning sketches over them. I then moved the photo reference off to the side and began sketching in more details. I did this for two reasons: one, it's more fun to draw than trace; two, it allows me to make the changes I want to make and be creative. For instance, I often make a man's head slightly smaller in relation to his body size and his

Fig.04

Fig.05

hands slightly larger. It's a common illustrator tip I picked up from a Norman Rockwell book ages ago. I also make kids' eyes slightly larger – it adds to expressiveness. None of it is dramatic, but I think it helps the storytelling.

Photoshop technique note: All through this process I keep all my elements separated into many Photoshop layers. I combine as I go, once I'm satisfied with each layer.

PAINTING FACES

I seem to always start with faces. That's because that is where the story is, and the rest supports the mood that is captured there. Plus it's the most fun part! Once I had the line work in (as a separate Photoshop layer), I painted a new layer that was a silhouette of the characters as a base to work on. I chose the medium level value of the ambient moonlight colour
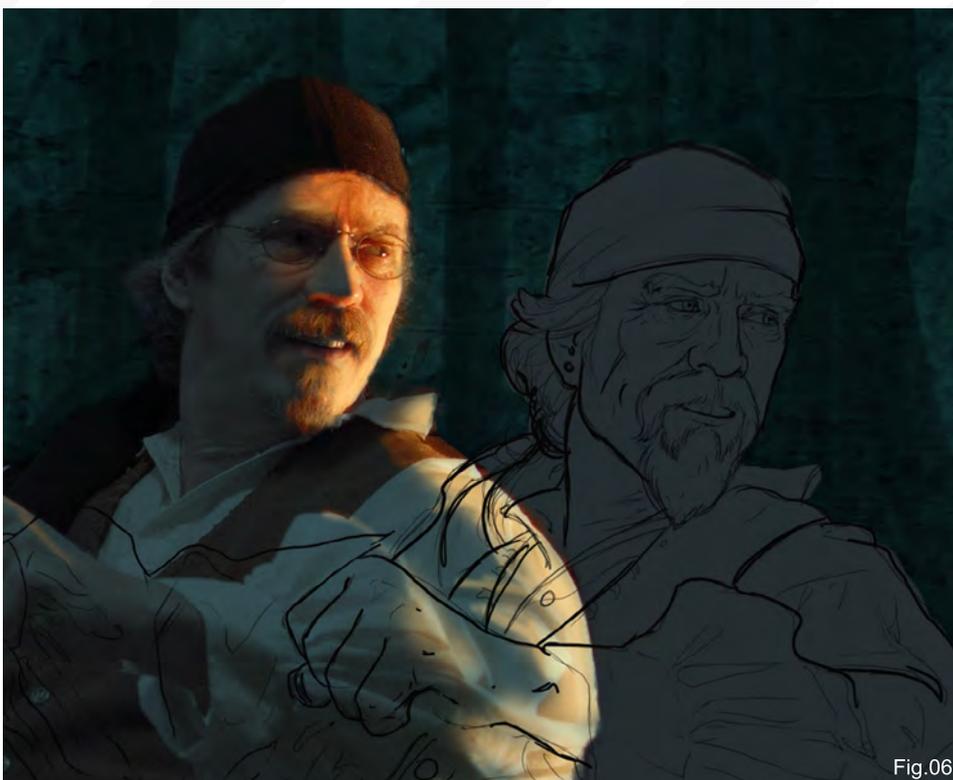

Fig.06

Fig.07a

Fig.07b

Fig.07c

Fig.07e

Fig.07d

as a starting point. That way, when I started painting, I was thinking about the torchlight, how it would hit the shapes and where the resulting shadows would be. Even when copying from photo references, it is good to really understand what is going on with shape, lighting and colour (**Fig.06**).

CONTINUING THE FACE

I created a new Photoshop layer under the line layer and above the character base layer. I set the transparency for the line layer to around 50% and started blocking in colour with a custom brush that has a chalk pastel kind of feel to it. I find this brush gives me results similar to those I get when oil painting with worn sable brushes. I worked quickly and started reducing the size of the brush as details emerged (**Fig.07a – e**). It was a pretty straightforward painting at this point, but I constantly kept in mind the underlying bone structure and my two light sources (torch and ambient). I also made the character change by making the nose more chiselled than my own rounder one. I enhanced check bones a bit and weathered and scarred the face considerably. I also gave him a better goatee than I have. Artistic license is a great thing! As I neared the detailed work, I turned off the line drawing layer, or made it very transparent, and merged it down. I then fine-tuned the sharper details.

THE KIDS

I continued in the same way with the kids. During this process, I decided to age the girl from a nine year old into a young teen. I felt this would add a better range of character ages and complicate the potential story a little. It also
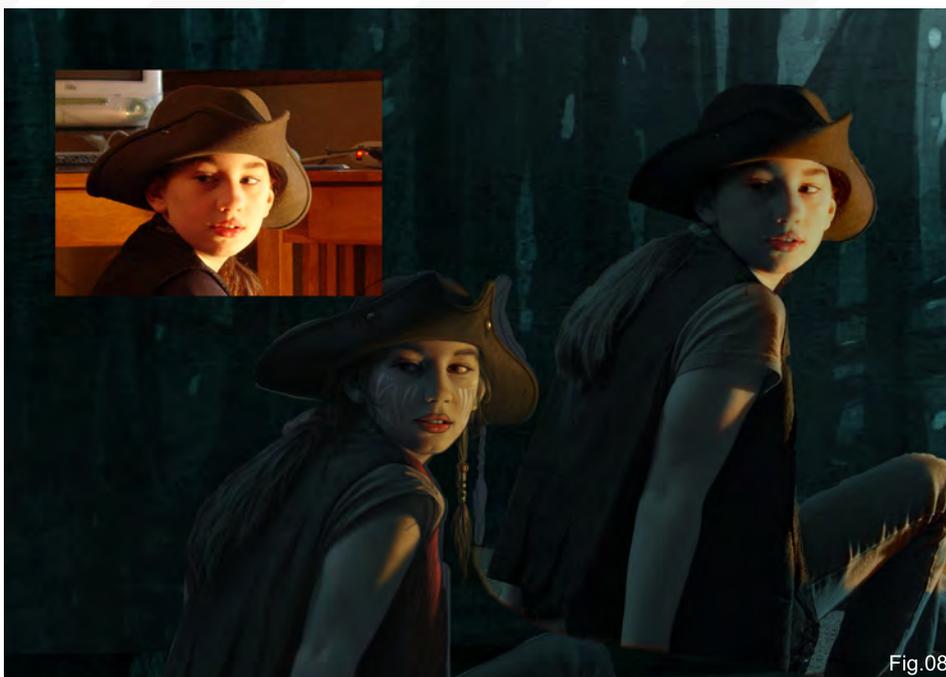

Fig.08

replaced cute with beautiful, again making for a broader range of emotional appeal. I now had a cute boy, a young and beautiful girl, and a rough-looking pirate – all in the same boat. There has to be a story there (**Fig.08** & **09**)!

MOVING ON

I got the people to an almost finished point and moved on, knowing I would return to them for final adjustments and detail additions. I painted a quick torch to establish its exact location for lighting purposes, and then began the boat by painting on a layer above the 3D base.

Compared to the people, this all went fairly rapidly and I moved quickly from boat to torch, and then to the background.

THE BACKGROUND

Back when I used oil paints, I almost always did the background first – just for the practical reason of working back to front. In the digital realm this is not necessary, and in this case it allowed me to determine just what I wanted to do with the environment, based on the look of the characters. I decided to leave the trees in the distance somewhat graphic in style, with overlaying transparency levels. I think this gives it a ghostly appearance and fits with the mood. It also leaves the underlying texture visible, which adds suggested detail without the need for a lot of painting. I only enhanced areas on the tree trunks that would pick up light from the torch. It was also at this point that I started defining foreground elements and decided to make that detailed in shape, but silhouetted in nature. I then added some fog layers.

SOME DETAILS

After getting the background just about right, I went back and added some details to the boat and everything inside it. I added the tattoos on the girl's arm, the sword and baldric (scabbard)

Fig.09

on the pirate, a rifle, some jewellery, stitching and other small details.

THE WATER

Since everything in the upper half of the image needed to be reflected in the water, I naturally had to do the water last. But it wasn't as easy as simple copying and flipping the image. The reflection would have a slightly different angle on the people in the boat and the boat itself, so after making separate copies of the people, the boat and the background, I cut and pasted elements and shifted them so that they would have the correct perspective – or at least a reasonably close one. I then flipped the image and used a combination of Photoshop smudging and painting.

A FEW MORE DETAILS

At this point I was almost there, and just went around adjusting details and doing slight colour corrections. Once I considered the painting part

done, I made some overall colour correction layers to fine-tune the focus on the people.

AFTER SOME FEEDBACK

Here's where the global community of artists came in nicely! Once this image was posted I

got some great critiques that I went back and applied. They included better rendering of the flame and some lighting adjustments to the boy and girl to account better for light fall-off. I had knowingly cheated the lighting (artistic license again), but apparently a bit too much (it's great

Fig.10

to have the whole world of artists available to give you some good advice – use them!).

REFLECTION FINE-TUNING

After it was all done, I discovered that I didn't like the water reflections (so it wasn't done after all!). I decided to take advantage of 3D to get a more detailed rendering of water reflections. I took the image that had been adjusted for the reflection perspective and mapped it onto a plane in Cinema 4D. I loaded it into the illumination channel so that the image itself would be the only light source. I then rendered a number of water reflections at different scale settings. (**Fig.10 – 11**)

I could then take them into the Photoshop file and combine them so that the reflection represented the correct water flow dynamics (or was at least close). I ended up combining some of the original hand-painted with the new 3D to get exactly what I wanted.

THE FINAL IMAGE

The whole process took about four days, maybe five (I was working on this in the midst of commercial jobs). The final resolution was 6,000 by 4,496. I'm planning on doing giclée prints of this image and hope to do more in my "Illustrations from Untold Stories" series. I hope you can glean something valuable from hearing about the creative process that went into it!

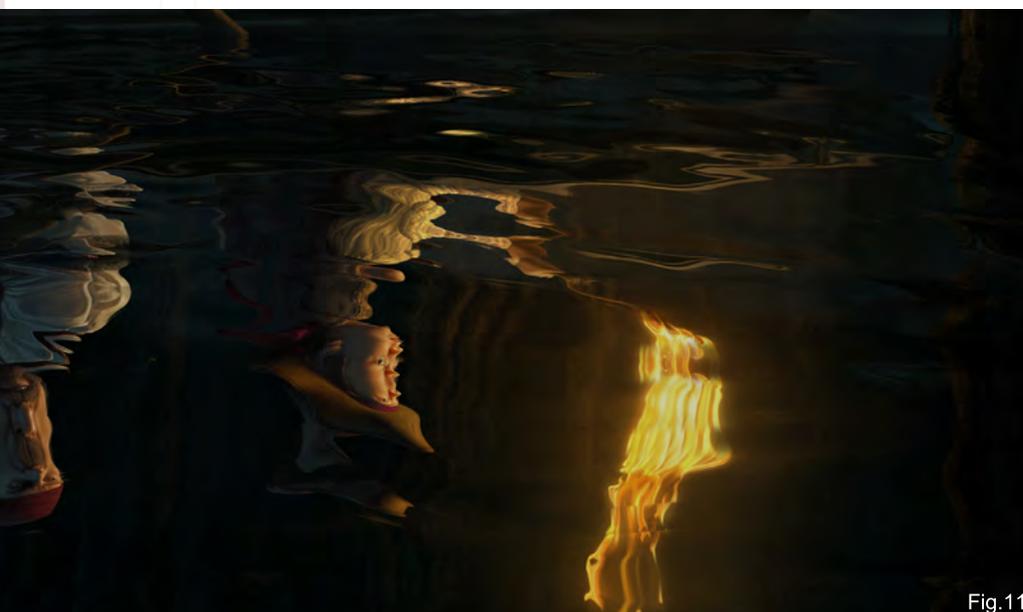
Fig.11

Thanks for letting me share!

"IN THIS PIECE I DIDN'T START FROM A SKETCH. INSTEAD I JUST STARTED PAINTING OVER THE 3D SHAPE. IT WAS JUST LIKE 3D MODELLING. REALLY: YOU MODEL THE BODY FIRST AND ADD THE CLOTHES SECOND!"

Yu Cheng Hong reveals how he created his character "Ruo".

RUO

making of by yu cheng hong

RUO

CREATED IN:

Maya and Photoshop

INTRODUCTION

This piece is the third character that I have created for personal work; a dark magician with cool looks and a gloomy, cold personality. I wanted his costume to not be too armoured, but to be more modern-looking, and I intended to have the space featuring some magical steel on the wall, and so I started doing research and finding references to help me on my way.

REFERENCES

Here are some costumes I found on GQ web. One of the outfits is actually by my favourite fashion designer, John Galliano. So I tried to aim for the same feeling in my character's clothing design (**Fig.01** and **Fig.02**).

Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03

Fig.04

Fig.05

3D WORK

I started in 3D first of all, because I wanted to get an exaggerated perspective, and I figured 3D would help a lot. So I went to Maya, where I started to model some simple basic shapes as references (**Fig.03**).

COLOUR

In this piece I didn't start from a sketch. Instead I just started painting over the 3D shape. It was just like 3D modelling, really: you model the body first and add the clothes second! So I painted the body first, just using Photoshop's basic default round brush to paint (**Fig.04**).

I then started to design the hair style, which I wanted to be punk-like, mixed with reggae braids (**Fig.05**).

Next I painted the shirt, which included buttons decorated with a traditional Chinese lion pattern (**Fig.06**).

Then, I started to design the upper suit and added some Sanskrit to the sleeve (**Fig.07**).

The tie was then included, with a skull and some metal on it, and I added some metal in the form of a Chinese pattern onto the suit, and also two skulls, to achieve more of a punk feeling (**Fig.08**)!

Fig.06

Fig.07

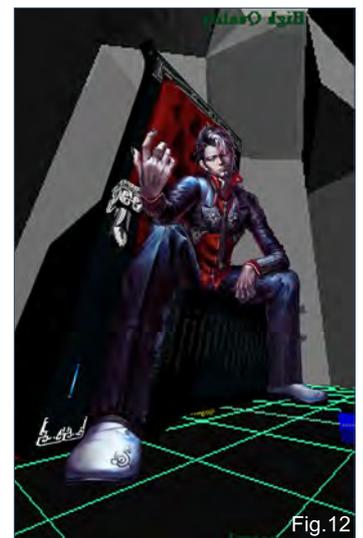Fig.08

Fig.09

Fig.10

Fig.11

Fig.12

I started to paint the pants and added the sleeve for the shirt (**Fig.09**) and then I imported the chair image, made in Maya, and painted the shoes (**Fig.10**).

I also added Sanskrit to the bottom of pants – same as for the sleeves of the upper suit - refined the shoes and changed the suit colour to red (**Fig.11**),

Fig.13

Fig.14

I saved the 3D image as a perspective guide line to check that everything worked the way I wanted it to (**Fig.12**).

The background image was modelled in 3D, for the chair I used a Chinese lion sculpture for the arm rests, with Eight Trigrams (a set of symbolic signs created in ancient China) (**Fig.13**).

At this point, I was still trying to think about what the background should look like (and it was really bothering me!) (**Fig.14**).

I refined the background and put more work into the lighting, but I still didn't know how the colour tone should look. So, I used the Color Balance option to adjust the colour tone; I tried to give it a warmer tone to see how it would look, but

Warm Tone Fig.15

Cold Tone Fig.16

Fig.17

Fig.18

I didn't feel it worked with the character, so I reverted back to the colder blue tones (**Fig.15** & **Fig.16**).

Because I was still struggling with the background at this stage, I got stuck into detailing work on the chair and designing the

feature of the metal with some glowing light on it – making it more sci-fi looking (**Fig.17**).

I then cut the pattern and pieced it together for the ground texture (**Fig.18**). I thought the ground should be made of a marble-like stone, so I
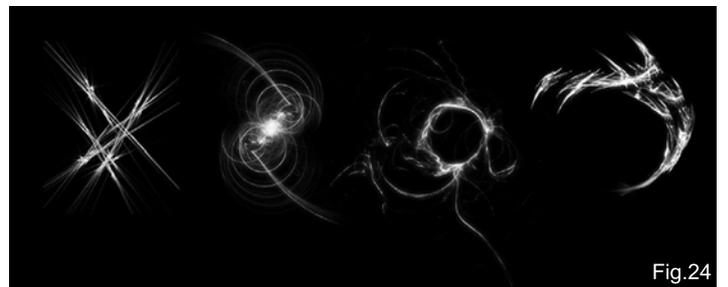

Fig.19

Fig.20

Fig.21

Fig.22

Fig.23

Fig.24

copied the legs and chair to create the reflection on the ground (the same goes for the reflection on the chair) (**Fig.19** & **Fig.20**).

I copied the light (Eight Trigrams), enlarged it and blurred it to make the light lie nicely on the ground (**Fig.21** and **Fig.22**).

I then used the Color Balance tool to give the picture more blue and purple tones, and a generally colder feeling (**Fig.23**).

GLOWING EFFECTS

To create the "glowing magic" in the scene, I used an abstract brush that I'd downloaded from a graphic design website (**Fig.24**). I used the Free Transform tool to transform and scale the "glowing magic" (**Fig.25**) and I then copied the magic brush many times, and blurred the result (**Fig.26**).

And after some final tweaks and adjustments, here is the final image (**Fig.27**)!

So, here I have just talked you through some of the methods that I used while working on

Fig.25

Fig.26

this piece. I hope my working pipeline has been of interest to you and will maybe help you in your own projects! If you have any questions or suggestion, please feel free to let me know.

Thanks!

Fig.27

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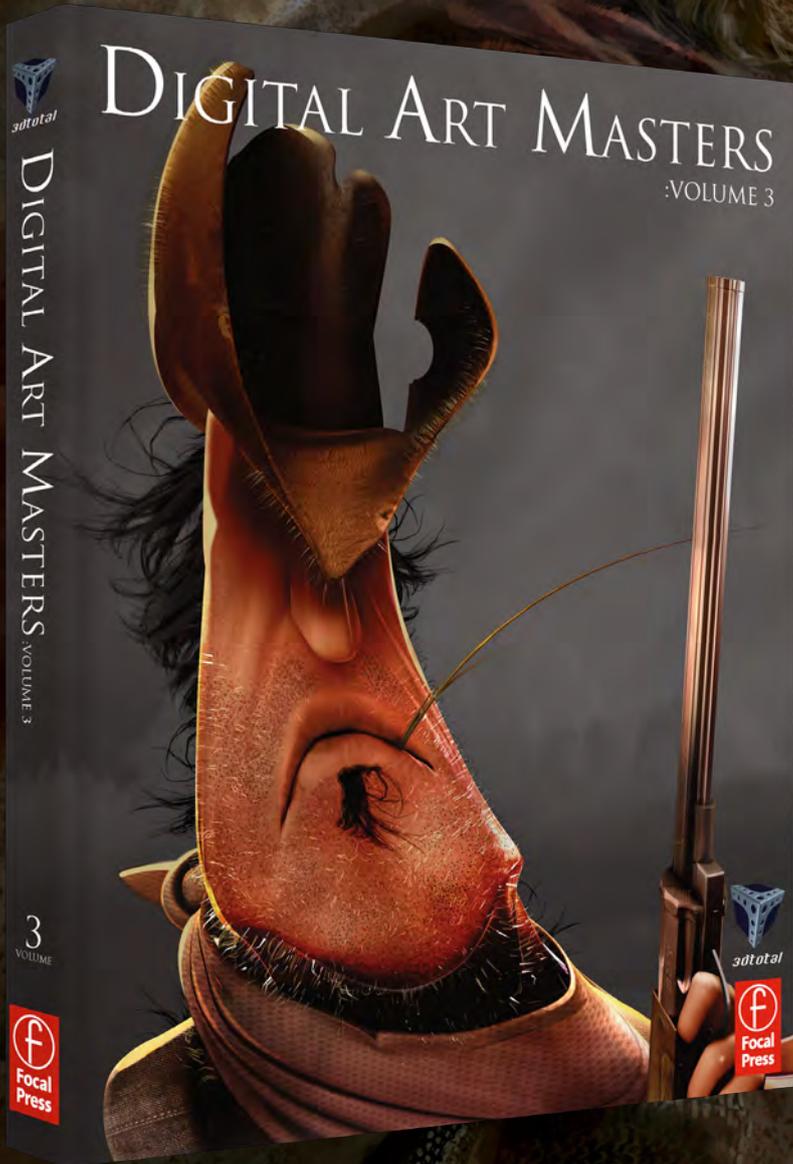
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This month we feature:

"Fearless"
by Alon chou

The following shots of the "Fearless" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...

FEARLESS
BY ALON CHOU

INTRODUCTION
This is a story based on the era of the Crusades; I was commissioned by a Portuguese company, Vector EA – Artes Electronicas, for the project named "Lisbon Siege – 1147". The original plan was to create some character designs, but I suggested creating some more powerful and completed illustrations. By using dramatic expression, I hope to let viewers have a more direct communication with the drawings. Creating emotions in my drawings is very important for me; luckily, they accepted my suggestion.

This character was one of the Crusader's leaders - a Norman. My client wanted the design of this character to somehow suggest the dark side of the Crusaders, which was brutal and greedy, whilst also presenting him as a powerful leader.

CONCEPT
The story happened in 1147 and is based on historical truth, therefore a great deal of research was needed. Of course, personal imagination can also be added. I did a really rough drawing of the cloth design. To emphasize the character's facial expression and to capture the viewers' focus, I decided to remove the helmet so we could see his face. I also added a cape to bring out the authoritativeness (Fig.01). The colored, rough drawing indicates the possible further color design (Fig.02). I think red and white make a good contrast.

COMPOSITION AND MOTION DESIGN
I first started out studying his characteristics. The client provided some descriptions. He was a leader of the Crusaders; a very brave man on the battlefield with the talent of agitating soldiers, and with an element of brutality in his persona. He was very obstinate and rude, and enjoyed pillaging. He was not a decent man and his characteristics implied the negative side of the Crusaders.

On the motion design, the initial idea was for him to draw his sword, but this pose lacked vigor and motion (Fig.03). For the second design, I focused on his facial expression. I wanted to present him as ambitious, carrying a disdainful smile on his face (Fig.04). In his pose, his two hands grasp the sword harder.

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The client liked the facial expression, but corrected two errors on the other parts. First, a two-handed sword had not yet appeared in the 12th century, so his weapon had to be single-handed. The second error was the emblem on his chest; the cross is usually recognized as the emblem of the Templar religious military order. To avoid this kind of historical mistake, I needed to choose other patterns instead. As the kinds of ornaments used by the Normans were animals, like dragons, lions, tigers and geometrical patterns, I redesigned the emblem as a lion (Fig.05), and also combined it with an eagle's wings in order to bring out the aggression and tension.

I then went into the third revision of his pose. The previous draft of his pose was too still and I wanted to represent him killing on the battlefield, as this would emphasize his pugnacious personality and the function of the Crusaders.

This time he was given one weapon in each hand, which is perhaps more assertive than before (Fig.06). His forehand is defending with a sword, and his backhand is wielding an axe, about to hack, with his foot sliding

forwards making the dust spread. This time the pose was much more dynamic. More details were also added to the background: soldiers killing, flags fluttering, dust filling the air, grit spreading, and fire burning everywhere. The whole picture now looked more complete.

For the facial expression, I restrained the evilness a little to make the drawing more comfortable to view. While battling, I thought he would just be thinking about defeating his enemies, so I thought, why not emphasize the courageous side of this character as well?

COLORING AND FINISHING TOUCHES
When I started on the coloring, first of all I switched the brush mode to color and painted directly on the black and white original (Fig.07). I then drew a basic pattern of the chain mail on the side (Fig.08) and started to redo the chain mail on the character's body. After erasing the originals, I pasted the chain mail pattern that I drew earlier piece by piece onto the main drawing, adjusting the shapes according to the different angles on each part of his body (Fig.09).

I really enjoyed certain war scenes in movies which I had seen, like the saturated orange-toned battlefield you might see as the sun is going down. Here I made a sketch – really quickly – according to this feeling for viewers to understand (Fig.10). I think the atmosphere created works very well. The only issue would be that the background is brighter than the figure, since he is backlit. I wanted the light to spot on the main character, but I also wanted the background to have the kind of tone I mentioned before. When combining these two atmospheres I faced some difficulties. Does the light have to come from the back when the background is very bright? If so, then the foreground should be backlit, but the main figure cannot be too dark or else it loses attention. So, how should I combine the two of them?

In the end (see final image), I assumed the light was coming from the right side. The background could still be very bright without any negative effects. I added highlights on his sword which reinforced the sword in the foreground, and I darkened the axe a little and made its texture more clear, so the axe looks further in the distance. Other than that, I also retouched the stains on everything, including his face, clothes, hair and so on. By adding stains it shows more traces of fighting on the battlefields. I also retouched the background by creating two brush strokes to handle the grit and dust scattered behind (Fig.11), and I refined all the details.

Here is a close-up of some of the detail (Fig.12); I usually leave many brush strokes on materials for polishing.

CONCLUSION
Looking back to the original goal of using dramatic expression, placing the character in some sort of situation, combining his pugnacious personality with a brutal battlefield and giving viewers sensations of war – just like watching a scene from a movie – I think I have accomplished my goal.

Other than that, I also wanted to express, with many brush strokes, the pursuit of quality, instead of smooth types of stroke, and I think I have also achieved this. The solution for the figure's expression and the atmosphere of the battlefield also turned out to be satisfying. Finally, I have been very happy to share my thoughts here with you.

ARTIST PORTFOLIO

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