2dartist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine

Issue 042 June 2009

Interviews
Raphael Lacoste &
Blaz Porenta

Articles
Sketchbook Of **Drazenka Kimpel**

Galleries
Jason Seiler, Eric Deschamps
& **Alex Popescu**, plus more!

PAINTING TECHNIQUES

ORGANIC VS. HARD SURFACE

Space Colonies
Chee Ming Wong wraps up his epic 12-part space painting tutorial series with his final instalment – Space Colonies

'Ground Breaking'
Richard Tilbury and **Robin Olausson** are this month's speed painters tackling the theme, 'Great cracks split the earth as the ground shook beneath them'

Image Breakdowns
From a knife-wielding woman to a carnivorous plant, we bring you two in-depth making of articles by **Tony Foti** & **Geoffrey Cramm**

Editorial

Welcome to **Issue 42** – and what an issue to get your teeth into if ever there was one! We've got everything from man-eating plants to earth-chomping diggers, to car- and people-gobbling earth. We like our destruction don't we?! Not only is this another great issue because it's packed with a variety of both organic and hard-surface painting tutorials, but this June release is also quite an emotional one for us as we are publishing the final tutorial of **Chee Ming Wong**'s year-long space painting series. We are indebted to Chee for his continued enthusiasm, dedication and passion to providing the most thorough and stunningly painted tutorials of the space painting genre you'll find, and we hope that he has not had enough of us yet and will be back for more tutorial projects in the future. A round of applause for Chee, please! And that's not the only end of a chapter this month; we're also waving farewell to our vehicle painters, as **Hoi Mun Tham** brings us the final chapter of our 5-part mini-series **(p.65).** Our two extremely talented vehicle painters, **Dwayne Vance** and Mun, are yet more examples of artists in this industry who take time out of their already busy schedules to bring you high quality tutorials through these pages; we hope that you have enjoyed their teachings over the past few issues. And while on the discussion of things coming to an end, our speed painting tutorials will be taking a 6-month breather as of August, when we'll be bringing you a new tutorial series to keep you all inspired and up to date on your painting techniques! So be sure to check out our penultimate speed painting tutorials – for the time being that is – on **p.73,** by **Robin Olausson** and in-house artist, **Richard Tilbury.**

We have none other than world renowned matte painter and concept artist, **Raphael Lacoste** who has lent us his awe-inspiring portfolio for the interview pages of this issue. We first interviewed Raphael in our sister magazine, **3DCreative**, back in 2006, and we find out how since then he decided it was time to switch videogames for films, and went from art director for games to concept artist and matte painter for the movies **(p.7).** Our second artist interview this month is with one of our personal favourites of the moment, **Blaz Porenta**, who we find out is not only an awesome artist, but is also a ninja?! Yep, that's right; he's been practising the art of Ninjutsu for several years – this is one artist with a kick for something more extreme, and his artwork is a reflection of his fantastic personality. Check out his stunning portfolio on **p.17.**

I was proud to discover that recent gallery feature, *It was a fierce battle* by **Geoffrey Cramm** was originally inspired by one of our stylised challenges held on the Threedy and ConceptArt.org forums, so it is with real pleasure that we bring to you the making of this wonderful image **(p.101),** which is also quite deservedly this month's front cover feature, too. Our second making of is something a little different, by **Tony Foti (p.93).** His article is packed with personality and wit, and we hope you'll enjoy it as much as we have. And with these giving you what I hope is a thirst for more making of goodness, check out *Aretha* by **Jason Seiler** on **p.39** in the gallery this month, as we'll be bringing you the exclusive making of this in next month's magazine!

I hope you enjoy this June issue, and be sure to look out for your free resources throughout the magazine; **Drazenka Kimpel** has kindly provided some of her custom brush collection which accompanies her stunning sketchbook article on **p.31,** and **Richard Tilbury** has also created some custom brushes specifically for his speed painting tutorial on **p.73. Enjoy! Ed.**

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Editor	Layout	Content	Proofing
Lynette Clee	Layla Khani	Lynette Clee	Jo Hargreaves
	Matt Lewis	Tom Greenway	Lynette Clee
Lead Designer		Richard Tilbury	
Chris Perrins	**Marketing**	Chris Perrins	
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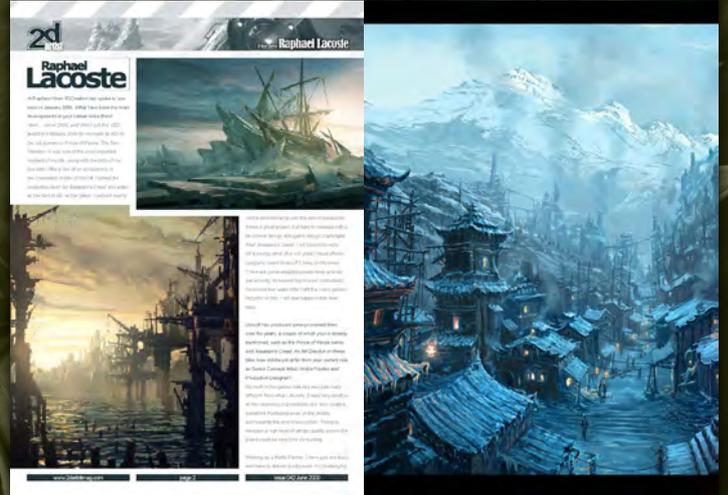
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To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2DArtist magazine, you can set the reader to display 'two-up', which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the *View* menu, then *Page display*;
3. Select *Two-up Continuous*, making sure that *Show Cover Page* is also selected.

Contributing Artists

Every month, many artists around the world contribute to 3DCreative and 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@3dtotal.com

Richard Tilbury

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

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Hoi Mun Tham

The early *Star Wars* trilogy really got him into wanting to become a concept artist. He graduated from art school in 2006 and has been working in the field as a concept artist for almost 3 years. He spent time working for a production studio and is now a full-time freelancer. He's worked on several projects which include games, commercials, animations and toys, and would love to teach someday, too.

http://hoimun.blogspot.com/

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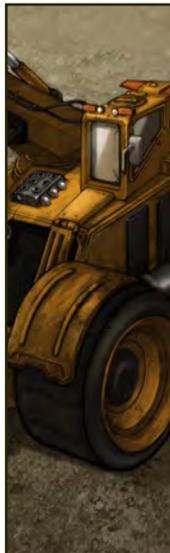
Robin Olausson

24-years old from south Sweden, currently a student at the school of future entertainment in Karlshamn, and working as a freelance concept artist. He's currently looking for an in-house position anywhere around the globe. He's been freelancing for 2-3 years for different companies and is also familiar working with 3D applications, such as Maya and ZBrush.

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Chee Ming 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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Drazenka Kimpel

Florida-based freelance illustrator and graphic designer with over 10 years of experience in the digital medium. She has a diverse style and vision which she loves to incorporate in her images, and she is always open to commissions in many fields of illustration and design.

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Geoffrey
Cramm

Drew a lot as a little kid and picked up drawing again during his media technology studies. After graduating in 2007 he worked for a short period as a 2D/3D artist, and has been full-time freelancing since 2008. He's currently doing illustration, graphic design and 2D/3D animation for various clients in The Netherlands.

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Tony
Foti

Freelance illustrator in California. He has won several awards and his work can be found in, on and around numerous museums, books, newspapers, magazines, T-shirts, video games – and even a tote bag that may or may not have been released! He is currently working as an illustrator for the *Warlord* CCG, as well as a character designer and sprite artist for Amaranth Games.

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Aviv
Or

25-year-old artist from Israel: web designer by day and comic artist by night (and illustrator during lunchtimes!). She's worked on six comic books that have been published in Israel, and is currently looking for an awesome story for her own book. She loves character design, good storytelling, and ponies.

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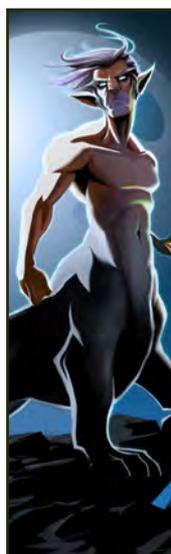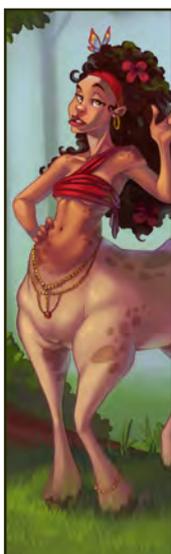
Felipe
Fernández Morell

Studied art in Montevideo, Uruguay. He then worked freelance in Barcelona in different media – from publicity to editorial to web. He's currently working as a production and concept artist in the games industry.
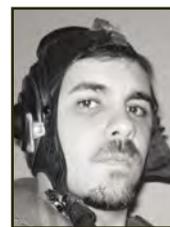
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Raphael Lacoste

"A matte painter is like an art director, he can manage image composition, light, aerial perspective, palette, etc…"

Raphael Lacoste was an art director in the video game industry for over seven years, working at Ubisoft on acclaimed games such as *Assassin's Creed* and the *Prince of Persia* series. Deciding it was time for a change, he made the switch to the film industry where he now works at RodeoFX, as a senior concept artist and matte painter.

Raphael Lacoste

Hi Raphael! Now 3DCreative last spoke to you back in January 2006. What have been the main developments in your career since then?

Hmm… since 2006, yes! Well I got this VES award in February 2006 for my work as AD on the cut scenes in *Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones* - it was one of the most important moment of my life, along with the birth of my two kids! After a few other productions in the cinematics studio of Ubisoft, I joined the production team for *Assassin's Creed* and acted as the Senior AD on the game. I worked mainly
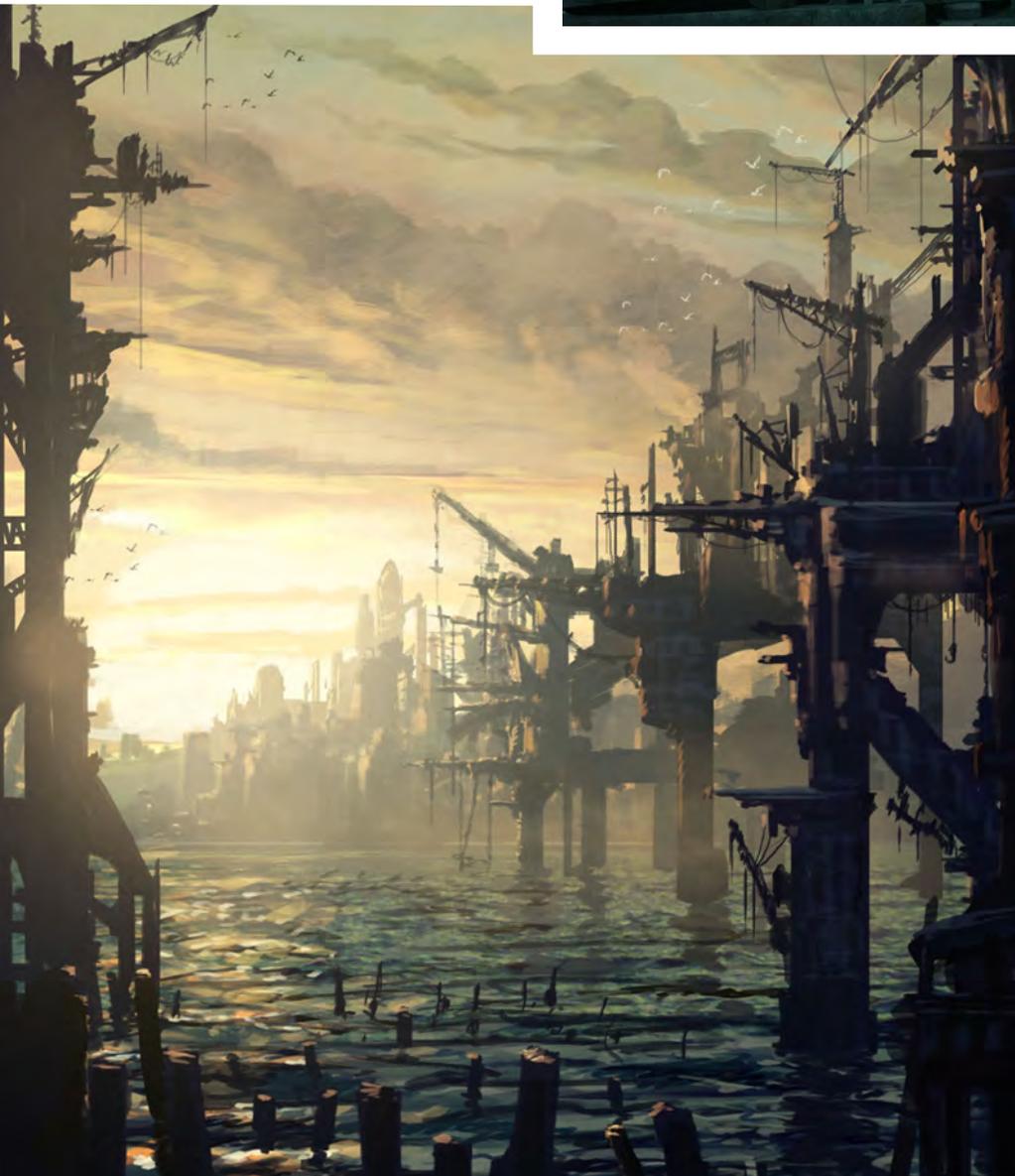
on the environments until the end of production. It was a great project, but hard to manage with a lot of level design and game design challenges! After *Assassin's Creed*, I left Ubisoft to work for a young, small (but still great) visual effects company called Rodeo FX here, in Montreal. There are some amazing people here and we are working on several big movies productions. So almost two years after I left the video games industry for film, I still feel happy in this new field!

Ubisoft has produced some prominent titles over the years, a couple of which you've already mentioned, such as the *Prince of Persia* series and *Assassin's Creed*. As Art Director on these titles how did the job differ from your current role as Senior Concept Artist / Matte Painter and Production Designer?

My work in the games industry was just really different from what I do now. It was very creative at the beginning of production and less creative, sometime frustrating even, in the middle and towards the end of production. Trying to maintain a high level of artistic quality across the board could be very time consuming.

Working as a Matte Painter, I have just one boss and have to deliver quality work. It's challenging

but I don't miss drawing anymore as I can draw all the time now. And best of all, I don't lose time in meetings and political fights!

Working in an older industry is also a great impetus; I can learn a lot about art and creation from the seniors artists. I feel that I still have a lot to learn from the amazing artists in the film industry.

You mention having to put in a lot of time in order to achieve a good overall level of art; what are the key difficulties associated with this task? And what are the main challenges facing someone in this job position?

Working on a big production, as much as you might like it, you can't get 100 percent senior artists. So it becomes your job to push and help the younger artists to reach a good level of work. Fortunately, I got a few key people on the team to lead and help the juniors in their progression. But it is always a constant fight to get the best possible visuals. When I was working on video games, I also spent a long time in the engine myself to set up the mood and lighting in the game. There was also a long time spent with engineers to help them to create the right tools for graphical needs, and a lot of meetings with the technical art director and the level designers in order to make fun, but also beautiful and real-time, stunning visuals.

With regard to your matte painting, how often do you build a 3D scene as a starting point? And do you ever block in the composition purely in 2D beforehand?

I usually draw a rough sketch to start, and if the matte contains some architectural elements, use 3D for final composition. If the matte is a natural environment, like mountains, valley or desert, I will work only in 2D. 3D is also great to setup your camera, and if needed, track the camera of the shot and match it!

What do you feel are the common pitfalls that beginners should be most aware of when learning the art of matte painting?

There are a lot! First, taking pictures is a good way to learn how light works in reality.

You need to train your eyes; doing a simple "photo cut and paste" is not considered a matte painting, unless you're lucky with your materials!

Second: don't underestimate the need for good, basic painting skills. While traditional painting is a little outdated, you will still need to apply these skills when producing matte paintings, in order to create nice image compositions, good depth and atmosphere and homogeneous lighting. The big challenge is that you will have to do all of that with only photos, selections and colour corrections, so make sure you spend time experimenting and trying to get really seamless photo montages with a photo-real look.

Also, a nice painting is not a matte painting, it is a nice illustration! A matte painting is used as a matte, to fill a part of a live plate or for a CG animation background.
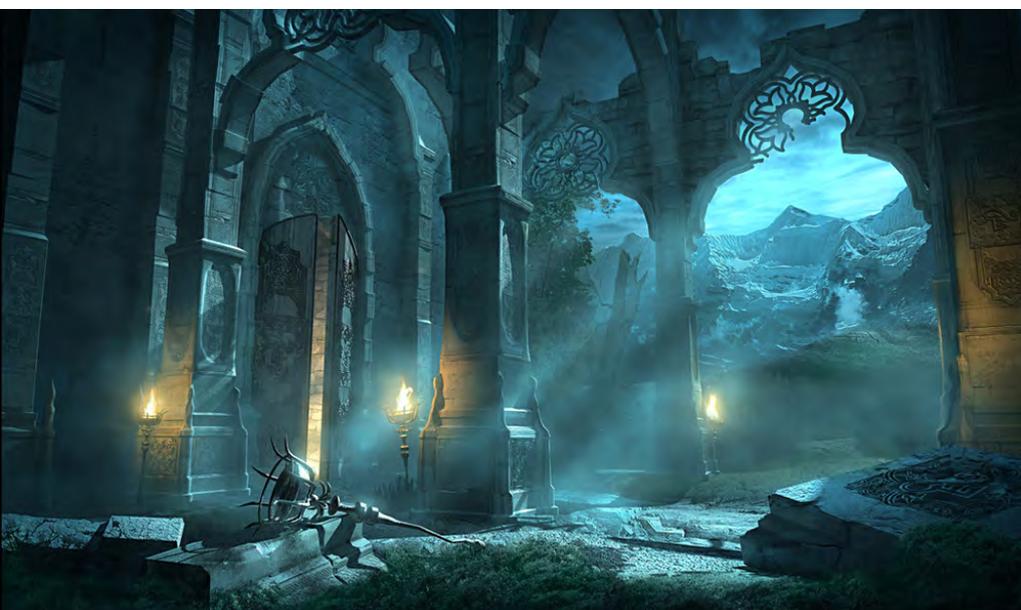
Basically, often a matte painting is a set extension; in the best case, an establishing shot. The word is glamour, but reality… it is more technical than you think!

A matte painter is like an art director, he can manage image composition, light, aerial perspective, palette, etc...

How and where did you learn the skills to become a matte painter and what do you feel are the key techniques important to such a job?
I learned from senior matte painters like Mathieu Raynault and Frederic St Arnaud, my coworkers, but I would say that my skills in photography, illustration and 3D environments gave me a good head start.

A matte painter is like an art director, he can manage image composition, light, aerial perspective, palette, etc... Working on an

> **Doing a matte painting, even from scratch, must look like a photo in the end, so for sure the more you shoot and know about photography, the better you will become.**

establishing shot of a movie is like doing the art direction, directing the shot! I think that matte painting is a senior job; it is good to start with illustration, concept art, modelling skills and to also have a good artistic knowledge. Knowledge of photography and fine arts is also a plus.

In what ways does a knowledge of set design and photography help with your current career?
Thanks for asking. Actually it helps a lot in understanding camera settings work for films, but also, from an artistic point of view, it helps in managing image composition and light. When you're doing a matte painting, even from scratch, you're trying to produce something that must look like a photo in the end, so the more you shoot and know about photography, the better you will become. Set design is also a good way to learn how to light and compose scenery.

One can understand how knowledge of photography can help inform matte painting but what, in your opinion, are the main skills necessary to being successful in this field?
I really think that photography is key, but traditional skills are also welcome, along with a good knowledge of traditional art and the history of art, in order to understand light, image composition and depth. Usually matte painters are senior artists with several skills in different fields like concept art, art direction, photography etc...

What prompted the move from games to film?
As I mentioned before, I missed drawing and learning new skills. It was also a new challenge for me and after seven years of making video games, it was time for me to learn new stuff!

The digital medium has enabled a merging of very different disciplines, from painting and drawing to traditional sculpture and photography. What do you feel are the key advantages and disadvantages of such a marriage?

I don't see many disadvantage except that it could keep some people away from traditional art, where you can learn a lot from masters! I think the merge is amazing because it allows talented artists to experiment and create a lot of different, innovative stuff. We've seen a bunch of new genius coming through with the new wave of concept art and I think the same thing is happening in 3D with the new modelling tools, which are less technical and boring and closer to real sculpting.

I just hope that ideas, styles and concepts will follow a similar reinvention. We have the tools; now we need some fresh air and inspiration!

Within an artistic context do you feel it is crucial to look back in history in order to move forward?

Totally. I mean, trying to recreate what has already been explored centuries ago is not really challenging, but we should learn from the masters and move ahead with their discoveries. We can create new stuff from what we learn from them. Georde de La Tour, Vermeer, Bierstardt are incredible inspirations for us, digital artists.

Thanks for taking the time to talk to 2DArtist Raphael and good luck for the future!
My pleasure!

Raphael Lacoste

For more work by this artist please visit:
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Interviewed by: Richard Tilbury

NEW ORLEANS: ULTRA-ANALOG

SIGGRAPH 2009: MEGA-DIGITAL

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"A project becomes so much more than just something to pay your monthly bills. You start living the project and forget that you haven't slept for a week."

BLAZ POURENTA

Art Director for Actalogic, a freelance artist and a damn nice guy (though with 10 years of Ninjutsu training under his belt you don't want to mess with him!) So sit back, read, and gather inspiration from this truly talented artist!

BLAZ PORENTA

Hi Blaz, after having the pleasure of laying out your artwork - "20,000 Miles Lost" - in the *Digital Art Masters 4* book, it's great that I can get to know a bit more about the artist behind the image. So let's get things under way shall we? Could you tell us what sparked your interest in art? Can you recall the first image you drew and what it was?

Firstly, I would like to express a big thank you for inviting me to do this interview for your magazine and giving me this great exposure.

I've been interested in drawing and painting for as long as I can remember. If it was at home, at my grandmom's place or anywhere else for that matter. I felt expressing that my ideas through art was much easier than explaining it verbally. I put down everything I saw, from things that had happened that day, characters from cartoons that I had been watching, animals from a zoo that I had visited, etc. Fortunately, that urge to portray things around me still keeps me going today.
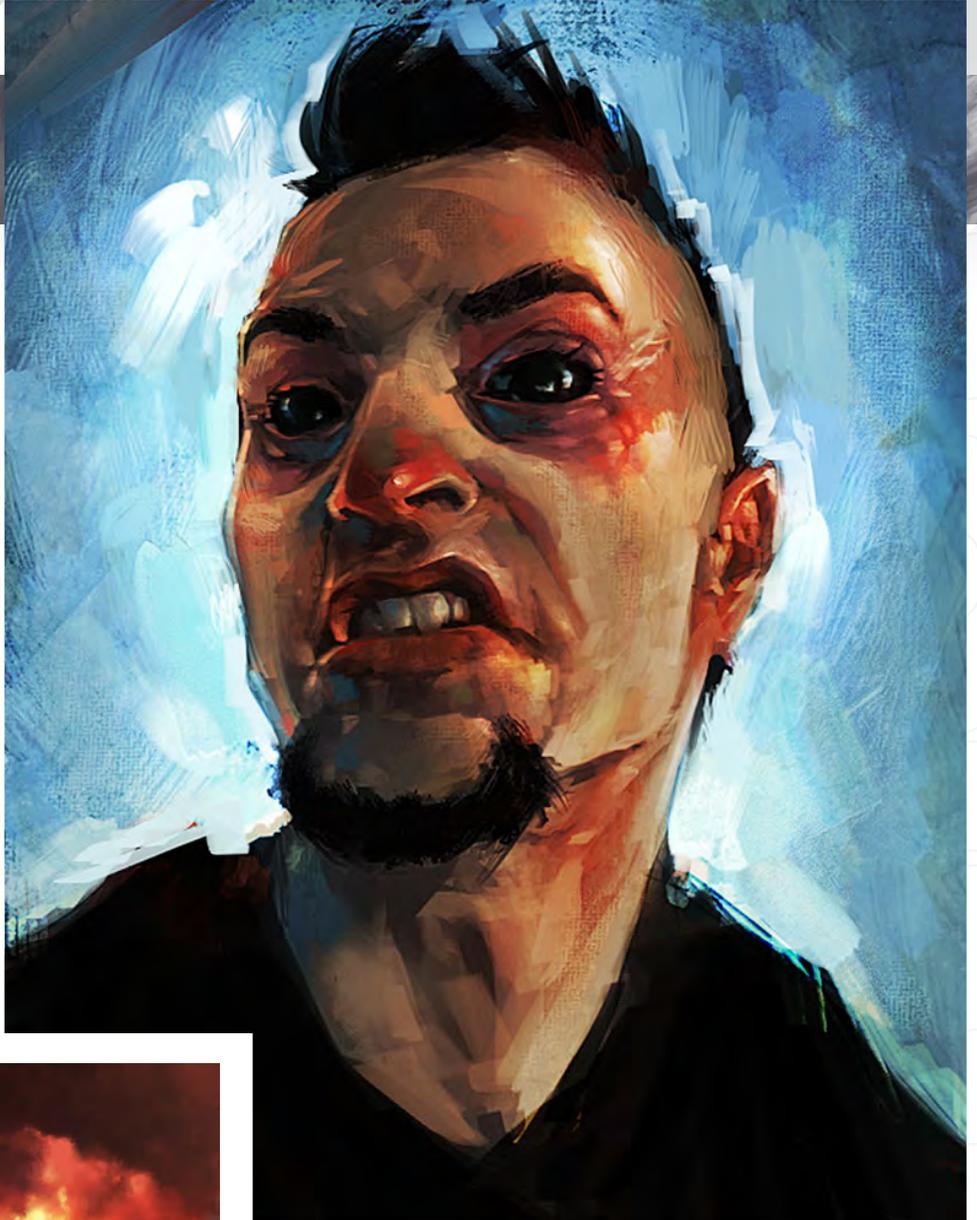
> **"I was 19 at the time and very inexperienced, so it was a great opportunity to get to know the industry a bit."**

You're currently the Art Director for Actalogic and prior to this you were AD at Zootfly. Could you tell us a little bit about your role and what sort of projects you've worked on whilst you've been there?

One of my first professional projects was for Zootfly, where they hired me as a concept artist for their The Hollow project – working on weapons design. I was 19 at the time and very inexperienced, so it was a great opportunity to get to know the industry a bit. The project unfortunately didn't get published. At the same time I was accepted into the Academy for Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana and because the school didn't fill up all of my schedule, I started working as a freelance illustrator as well. I finished various projects and a couple of years later got back to Zootfly, only this time they invited me to take an Art Directors position.

We did a demo pitch for a TimeO game, which was very well accepted by publishers and we got a *Prison Break* licence for the game. I stayed there for the first year of the production, but due to some differences in our point of view later on in the development process, I chose to leave the company and joined Actalogic instead.

Working for Zootfly must have been a dream job for a young man, still wet behind the ears in terms for work experience, so what tempted you to leave and go to art college?

My Zootfly experience was definitively a huge leap forward in my career. I got my first insight into the game industry, my first real cheque and, of course, a strong reference. But working for them before going to art college was strictly freelancing, so when I got the opportunity to go to school and broaden my basic knowledge of art, I just couldn't say no. At that time I wasn't so confident and didn't completely trust myself to work on such big projects. I knew my limitations and flaws, which I thought would sooner or later translate to my work. So I went to school to learn more about anatomy, art theory, spatial concepts, graphic design, etc... it helped a lot, not being just an illustrator at the end or trying to learn everything by myself. And as I mentioned before, I never fully left freelancing, which helped me to stay in touch with real world projects, and brought me back to Zootfly when I felt I was ready, with much more experience and greater self-confidence.

Not only are you an Art Director, you also dabble in doing freelance projects. One such project I would like to talk about is the illustration that you did for the rock band Siddharta's album cover. Could you tell us how this project came about and what it's like to produce work for one of your favourite bands?

Just before joining Actalogic, I had also been contacted by Siddharta's design team, Veto Group. We'd done some smaller advertising projects together before and when the "Siddharta – Saga" project came around, they called again and asked me if I was interested in being part of this epic journey. I was totally thrilled, since Siddharta are one of my favourite bands ever, and I couldn't have been happier to join the team. The Saga Project is a publicly open journey for fans to monitor the development of their newest album, run under the production of a well known metal and rock music producer, Ross Robinson. My part is to illustrate images for every single track from the album, which will be presented through EP covers and later in the album booklet, as well as doing merchandise material illustrations for the band. It's a grand project, and to collaborate closely with a great design team, as well as the band itself, is a great honour to me.

Do you think that being a fan helped you to understand what the band were looking for in terms of artwork for the project?

I believe that working on something you're also a fan of definitely helps you to achieve better results. A project becomes so much more than just something to pay your monthly bills. You start living the project and forget that you haven't slept for a week. But with Siddharta it is a bit more difficult to understand their vision completely just because you're a fan. They are always striving to achieve something new and different than before; they always want to top their previous albums and concepts. Fortunately I've been working closely with the previously mentioned Veto Group and Siddharta's frontman Tomi Meglic. Those guys are an

" ... started with no special idea, but rather with some abstract forms and brush strokes, which eventually brought me to a final piece."

awesome team, and brainstorming is so easy that the overall look of the new album is almost generating itself.

As I mentioned before, I had the pleasure of laying out your "20,000 Miles Lost" image in the *Digital Art Masters V4* book, and I have to say I'm really glad that we're showcasing this particular piece of yours in the book, as I never get tired of looking at it. What was the inspiration behind this piece and how long did it take you to produce it?
Well, thank you very much for those kind words. The image was made for CGSociety's challenge, "Strange Behaviour". These challenges are all about having fun and I try not to think too much when doing an image for

them. There is no client to worry about, and also I am not into these challenges for the prizes. So there is no pressure; it's just case of having a blast with fellow artists and going with the flow when painting. As I showed in the book, I started with no special idea, but rather with some abstract forms and brush strokes, which eventually brought me to a final piece. I love working that way, where some lucky mistakes give you a new ideas for the story. You just can't get bored while looking for new things to pop out almost by themselves.

If there is no tight deadline for the piece I am working on, I really try not to hurry. This was true of the "20.000 Miles Lost" image, which I believe took me nearly two months to finish.

But then again, it wasn't the only project I was working on at that time!

You mentioned that you started with just some abstract forms and brush strokes - is this a style you adopt with all your paintings or was it just the best starting point for this particular project?
The way I start to create a new piece varies from image to image. If I work on a project that demands a pre-approved design, than everything starts with sketches, outlined forms and concepts that could easily show if I am on a right track or not. It would be too risky to begin with some abstract forms and tell the client he needs to wait until the end of the process for the final image. Working out of random brush strokes and textures usually only gives

an impression of the final image very late in the painting process, or even at the end, while early phases are rather unclear and I often change even the main elements in the image or overpaint the whole background. I don't stick with the basic story, but aim more for the final visual impression. While I use this technique mostly for my personal projects, occasionally I start sketching in a very similar way. Putting down some unclear forms sometimes helps new ideas to pop out, while you can outline them later and produce concept art material for the project you are working on.

> "...I just want it to be as diverse as possible, not doing only one type of work until the end of my life. Everything goes, from drawing concept art for a movie or game production, to painting final art pieces for cards, book or album covers."

What has been your most accomplished piece of artwork to date, and why?
It's actually very hard to judge my own pieces like that. I must say that over time, every painting starts to look full of mistakes and there

are lots of things I would change if I had to do them all over again. Having said that, I think that even today, "20.000 Miles Lost" still looks okay [Laughs]. I am happy how the colours turned out and I got to paint a lot of zombie soldiers and some penguins! But working on the Siddharta

Saga project right now, I believe some of these newer pieces will overtake the penguins.

So where do you see yourself in ten years time and what would you like to have accomplished within this time frame?
I have some ideas about where I would like to be 10 years from now, although I am more of a person that lives for the moment. In the near future I am sure I will attend some great art workshops abroad, to upgrade my skills and get a boost of motivation for new projects that are coming my way. Looking further into my career I just want it to be as diverse as possible, not doing only one type of work until the end of my life. Everything goes, from drawing concept art for a movie or game production, to painting final art pieces for cards, book or album covers. As long as the project represents a challenge, I will put everything I've got into it. And since Slovenia is a very small place, I would love to work abroad some day, under the direction of much more experienced artists and learn from them.

Putting aside work for a moment, what kind of things do you do to unwind when you have a spare moment?

A spare moment? What's that? [Laughs]. Joking aside, I actually find some spare moments. I've practice Ninjutsu for over ten years now, and air-soft for nearly two years. It has to be something full of adrenalin and a bit extreme for my taste. I am also a movie freak, which means I am a regular at the cinema and I try not to miss any rock or metal concert around

Well it's been a real pleasure chatting with you and getting to know a bit more about you, Blaz. One last question before we wrap this up: As you enjoy the odd challenge or two, if you had to think up one what would it be?

It would be interesting to have a challenge without a title, but with a theme song. I know music helps me a lot while doing my paintings, so it would be nice to see what others see in that same melody. And of course I would like to thank you as well for introducing me and my works in your magazine!

Blaz Porenta

For more work by this artist please visit:

http://blazporenta.blogspot.com

Or contact him at:

blaz.porenta@gmail.com

Interviewed By : Chris Perrins

SKETCHBOOK
OF DRAZENKA KIMPEL

The process from the original idea to the final image can take many months,
especially if I am not sure of the idea itself and want to dwell on it extensively....

SKETCHBOOK OF
DRAZENKA KIMPEL

Sketching is absolutely essential in my process of creating illustrations as it helps me visualise the picture as a whole. I sketch almost every idea on paper, so that I can have a permanent record of it. In most cases I don't trust my memory as I get distracted easily. So, by having a collection of visual ideas, I can go through them at any point of time, make a selection and develop the final illustration.

Not every sketch becomes an illustration. At times, some already finished sketches inspire me for an entirely different project, whilst some just remain undeveloped to any further point.
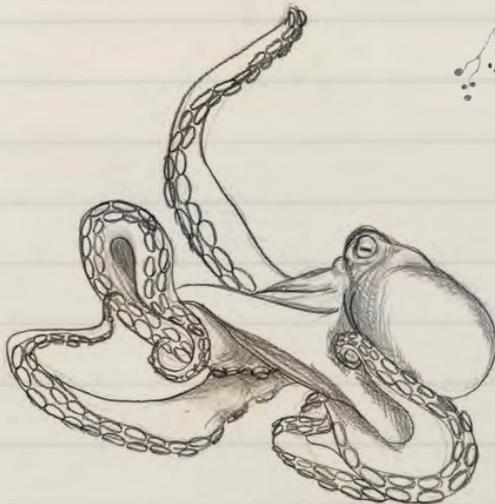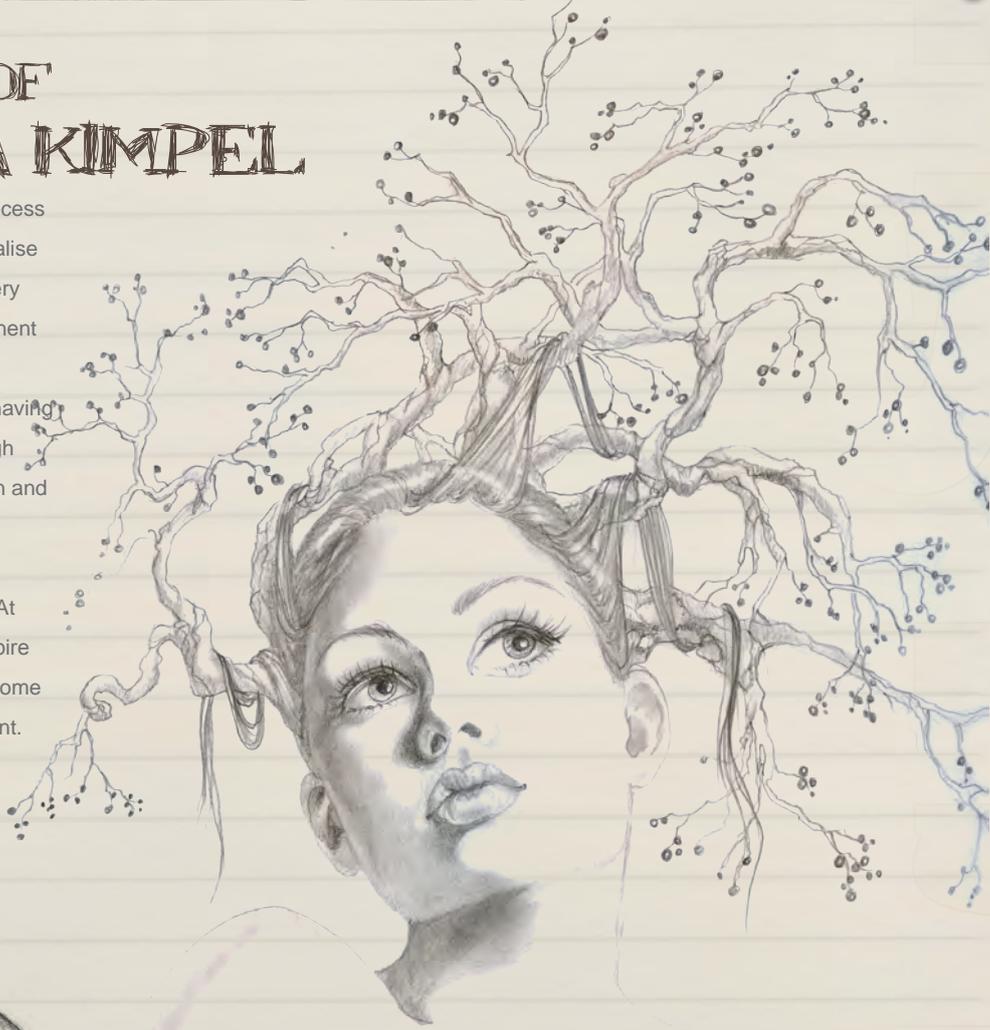
In my drawings I love to incorporate objects (almost subconsciously) that are natural and organic, with lots of curved shapes (**Fig.01 & Fig.02**).

Fig.01

Fig.02

One of my favourite concepts has been human interaction with nature; with this in mind the next few drawings are from my "Mirrors of Twilight" illustration project (**Fig.03 & Fig.04**). And here are some more botanical examples (**Fig.05 & Fig/06**).
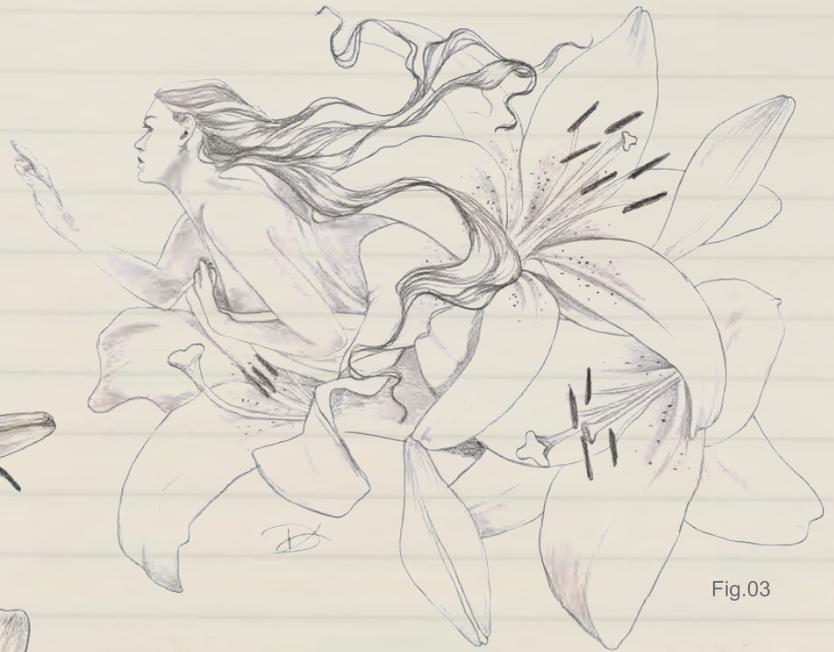
Fig.03

Fig.04

Fig.05
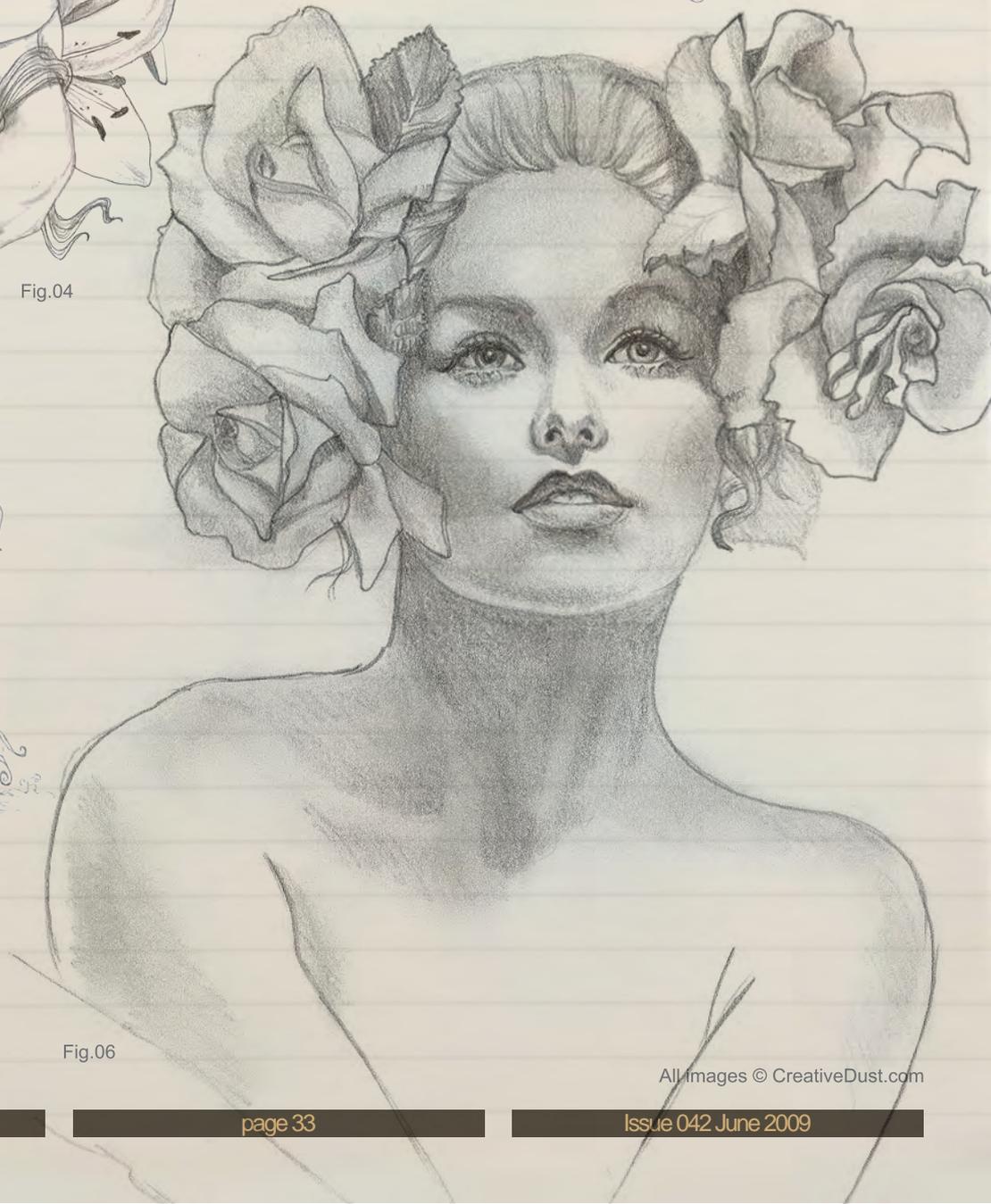
Fig.06

I was inspired by nature's intricate colours and the textured patterns of deep sea creatures for my project titled "Monarch". I contemplated creating a character constructed from seashells (nautilus), a crustacean (lobster) and an underwater serpent (**Fig.07**). The sketch for the final illustration was constructed from two pieces. I first sketched the character and then the architectural background on a separate page. The two were then combined into one to use as a guideline for the final project (**Fig.08 & Fig.09**).

Lobster claw

Nautilus shell

Monarch Head – side view

Back view
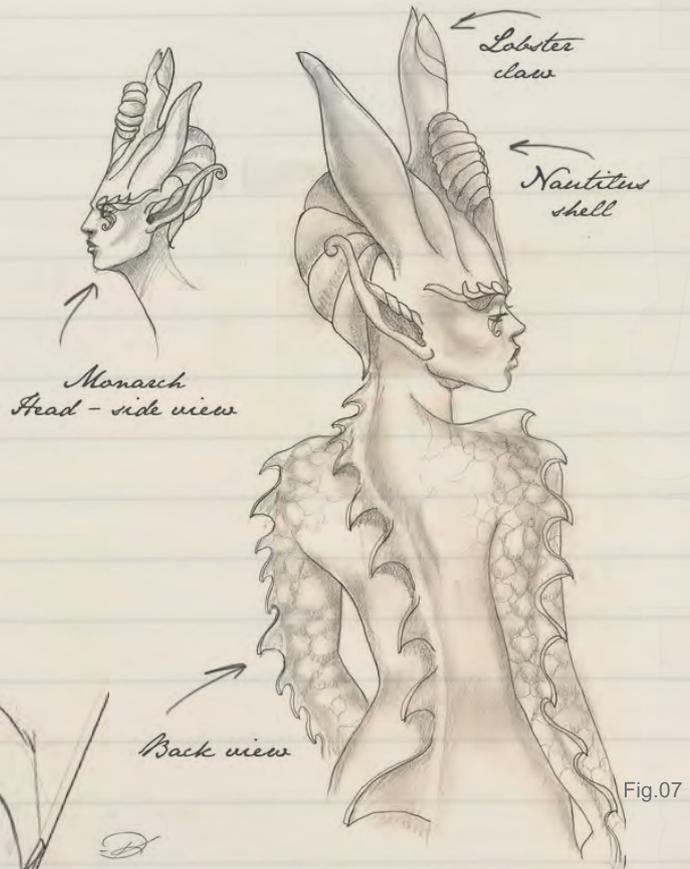
Fig.07

Fig.08

Fig.09

Additionally, I sketched some Nautilus guards to populate the image with inhabitants, but in the final image none were shown. Those sketches will go into my archive folder and could possibly be used in the next project (**Fig.10 & Fig.11**).

morea recurrirostris (protecting shell)

"Monarch" Nautilus guards

monarch - mermaid 2

Fig.10

Fig.11

Chaperon headdress
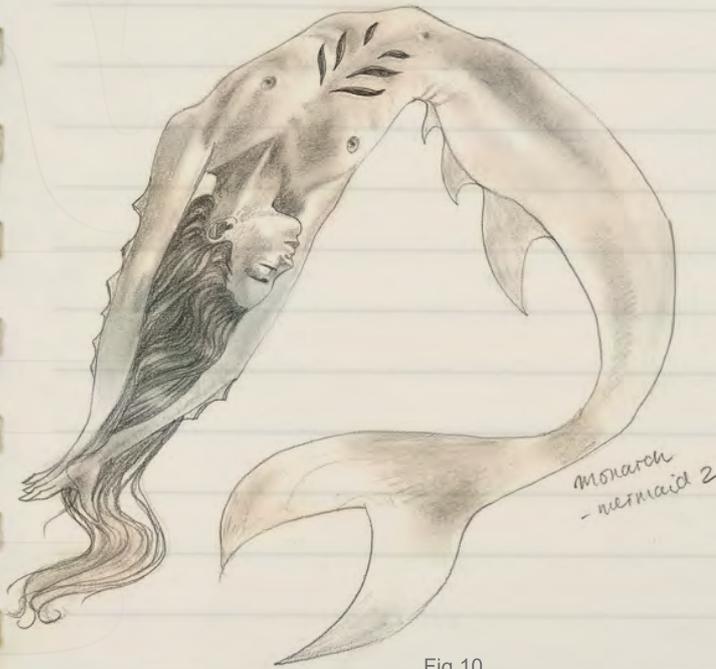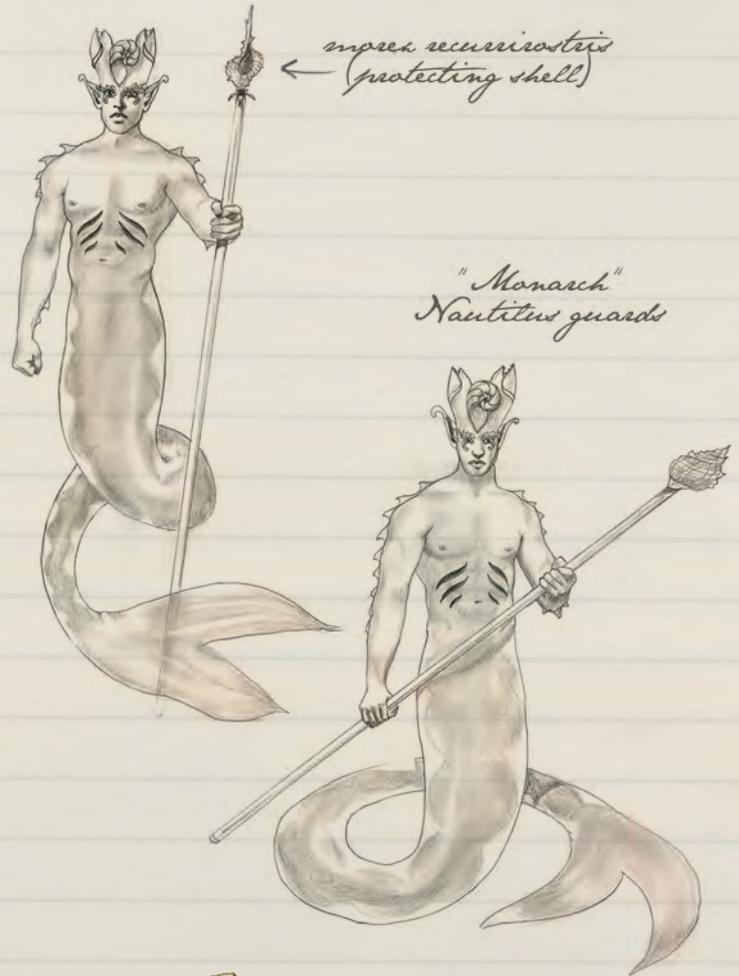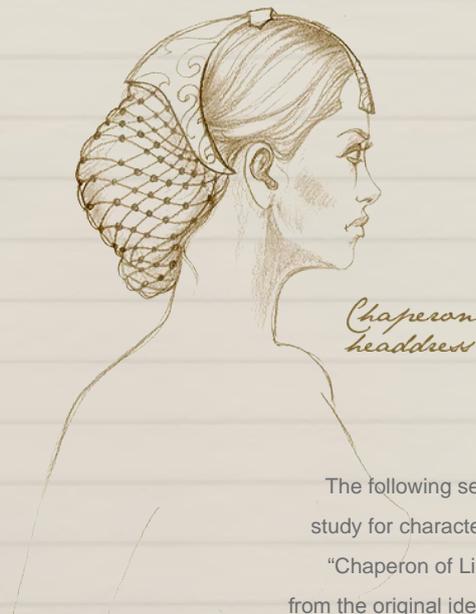
Fig.13

The following set of drawings was used as a study for character and costume design in the "Chaperon of Light" illustration. The process from the original idea to the final image can take many months, especially if I am not sure of the idea itself and want to dwell on it extensively. During that period, the look changes and the final result differs a great deal from the original (**Fig.12 – Fig.15**).

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Fig.12

I'll round things up now and leave you with some miscellaneous figures from my sketchbook (**Fig.16 – 20**).

Fig.16

Fig.15

Fig.17

Fig.14

Fig.18

Fig.19

Fig.20

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Cloth.01

Cloth.02

Lace.01

Note from the Editor:

Drazenka Kimpel has kindly provided us with **10 free custom brushes** (in 2 different sizes) that she uses regularly in her paintings to paint the stunning cloth and fabric that you can see in the examples of this page (**Cloth.01, Cloth.02 & Lace.01**). See the effect of these materials in her final artworks, as shown (**Desert Moon, Silent Lucidity**). These brushes are free for all 2DArtist readers this month – simply click on the Free Resources logo to download and get painting beautiful fabrics in your own illustrations. Many thanks from 2DArtist go to Drazenka for this wonderful opportunity.

FREE BRUSHES
DOWNLOAD HERE

Drazenka Kimpel

For more information please visit:

http://www.creativedust.com

Or contact:

picky@creativedust.com

Silent Lucidity

Vancouver Film School alumni credits include **Across the Universe** Geeta Basantani, Digital Compositor **Alias** Scott Dewis, Visual Effects Artist **Ant Bully** Ben Sanders, Character Animator | Rani Naamani, Animator | Ernesto Bottger, Character Animator **AVP: Alien Vs. Predator** Shawn Walsh, Color & Lighting Technical Director **Babel** Luis Blackaller, Storyboard Artist | Lon Molnar, Visual Effects Supervisor **Battlestar Galactica** Daniel Osaki, Lead Modeler | Megan Majewski, 3D Animator | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Blizzard Entertainment** Alvaro Buendia, Cinematic Artist **Bolt** Lino Di Salvo, Supervising Animator/Voice of Vinnie **Charlotte's Web** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator | Tony Etienne, Lead Lighter Kristin Sedore, Lighter **Chicago** Lon Molnar, Animation Supervisor **The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** Kristin Sedore, Lighter | Shawn Walsh, Lighter | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator **The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian** Andreas Hikel, Pre-Visualization Artist | Christoph Schinko, Character Animator | Jami Gigot, Senior Layout Artist **Cloverfield** Nicholas Markel, Pre-Visualization Supervisor **Constantine** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **The Dark Knight** Pietro Ponti, Lead CG Lighting Artist **Dead Like Me** Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Diablo III** Alvaro Buendia, Cinematic Artist | Steven Chen, Cinematic Artist **Family Guy** Michael Loya, Storyboard Artist **Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer** Arun Ram-Mohan, Lighting Technical Director | Shawn Walsh, Visual Effects Executive Producer | Jessica Alcorn, Compositor **Flags of our Fathers** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Gears of War (VG)** Scott Dossett, Animator **The Godfather (VG)** Kirk Chantraine, Motion Capture Specialist **The Golden Compass** Adam Yaniv, Animator | Chad Moffitt, Animator | Thom Roberts, Animator | Ben Sanders, Animator Andrew Lawson, Animator | Matthias Lowry, Visual Effects | Tony Etienne, Look Development Justin Hammond, Lighter Technical Director | Aruna Compositor | Fion Mok,

Your name here.

Pearl Hsu, Effects Inversin, Digital Matchmove Artist

Hairspray Lon Molnar, Visual Effects Production Executive **Halo 3** Bartek Kujbida, Character Animator **Happy Feet** Ben Sanders, Character Animator | Thom Roberts, Character Animator **Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban** Shawn Walsh, Color & Lighting Technical Director **Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix** Pietro Ponti, Technical Director **Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince** Harry Mukhopadhyay, Lead Effects Technical Director **Hellboy** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Hellboy II: The Golden Army** Christoph Ammann, 3D Sequence Supervisor **Horton Hears a Who** Arun Ram-Mohan, Lighting Technical Director | Brent Wong, Modeler **Hulk** Geoff Richardson, Visual Effects Editor **I, Robot** Daniel Osaki, CGI Modeler | Megan Majewski, Pre-Visualization **Ice Age: The Meltdown** Ben Sanders, Character Animator | Arun Ram-Mohan, Lighting Technical Director **The Incredible Hulk** Shawn Walsh, Visual Effects Executive Producer Tony Etienne, Look Development Lead **Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull** Henri Tan, Creature Technical Director **Iron Man** Adam Marisett, Visual Effects Artist **King Kong** Chad Moffitt, Senior Animator **King of the Hill** Michael Loya, Director **Kingdom Hospital** Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist | Megan Majewski, 3D Animator | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Kingdom of Heaven** Shawn Walsh, Digital Compositor **Letters from Iwo Jima** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Live Free or Die Hard** Jessica Alcorn, Compositor **Lord of the Rings Trilogy** Chad Moffitt, Senior Animator **Lost** Scott Dewis, Visual Effects Artist **Lucasfilm Animation Singapore** Sandro Di Segni, Senior Effects Technical Director/Lead Digital Artist | Ming Chang, Lighting Technical Director | Adrian Ng Chee Wei, Character AnimatorSeema Gopalakrishnan, CG Software Developer **Mass Effect (VG)** Sung-Hun (Ryan) Lim, 3D Modeler **Matrix: Revolutions** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor | Shawn Walsh, Color & Lighting Technical Director **Master & Commander: The Far Side of the World** Robert Bourgeault, CG Artist **Metal Gear Solid 4 (VG)** Josh Herrig, Artist | Yuta Shimizu, Artist **The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Night at the Museum** Allen Holbrook, Animator | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator | Chad Moffitt, Animator | Kristin Sedore, Lighter **Persepolis** Marianne Lebel, Animator **Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End** Ben Sanders, Character Animator Allen Holbrook, Animator | Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything: A VeggieTales Movie** Mike Dharney, Animation Supervisor **Reign of Fire** Lino DiSalvo, Animator **Resident Evil: Extinction** Joshua Herrig, Visual Effects Artist **Robots** Arun Ram-Mohan, Additional Lighting **Rome** Teh-Wei Yeh, Matchmove Artist **The Santa Clause 2** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist **Scarface (VG)** Maya Zuckerman, Mocap 3D Generalist **Shrek the Third** Rani Naamani, Animator **Shrek the Third (VG)** Samuel Tung, Technical Artist **Sin City** Michael Cozens, Lead Animator **Smallville** Geeta Basantani, Lead Compositor **Speed Racer** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith** Andrew Doucette, Character Animator | Nicholas Markel, Pre-Visualization **Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic (VG)** Arun Ram-Mohan, 3D Artist | Jessica Mih, Level Artist **Stargate SG-1** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositing Artist | Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist | Shawn Walsh, Digital Effects Supervisor **Stargate: Atlantis** Daniel Osaki, 3D Animator | Megan Majewski, 3D Animator | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street** Jami Gigot, Concept Artist **Transformers** Allen Holbrook, Animator | Henri Tan, Creature Technical Director

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Unreal Tournament III (VG) Scott Dossett, Artist **Valiant** Robert Bourgeault, Lighting Technical Director **Viva Pinata** Megan Majewski, Animator **WALL-E** Mark Shirra, Layout Artist **Watchmen** Jelmer Boskma, Previs Modeler | Lon Molnar, Visual Effects Supervisor | Cynthia Rodriguez del Castillo, Visual Effects Artist **World of Warcraft: Burning Crusade (VG)** Carman Cheung, Animator **A Wrinkle in Time** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **and many more.**

VFS student work by Jeff Plamondon

THE
GALLERY

Space Granny

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http://www.marioveltri.com

marioveltri@marioveltri.com

Electric Rain

Saul Espinosa

http://www.artofsaul.com

unfor54k3n@gmail.com

Aretha Franklin

Jason Seiler

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jseiler@jpusa.org

Be sure to check out the making of Aretha Franklin in the next issue (July 2009) of 2DArtist Magazine!

Discovery

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Self Portrait

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http://cgaddict.blogspot.com

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© George Patsouras

Imp Vs Angel-Warrior

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Tucked Away

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Jester

Stylised Character challenge

Stylised Challenge
Jester

The Challenge

Welcome to the Super Stylised Monthly Challenge. Each month we select a theme and post some images in the **Forum Thread** for reference. All you have to do is to create a 2D image in line with this theme in a stylised

9th
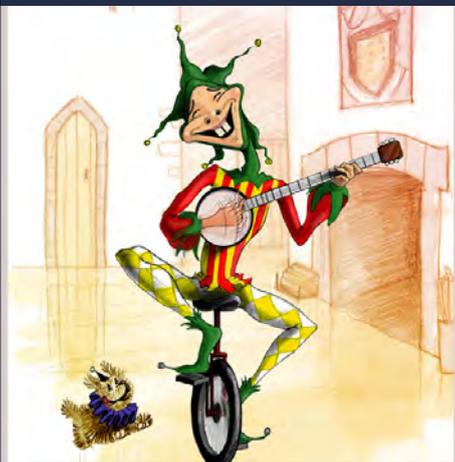
Angela - Angel Intheuk

angel.b79@googlemail.com

8th

Arturo Aguirre - Artina

artinastudio@gmail.com
http://artinastudio.blogspot.com

10th
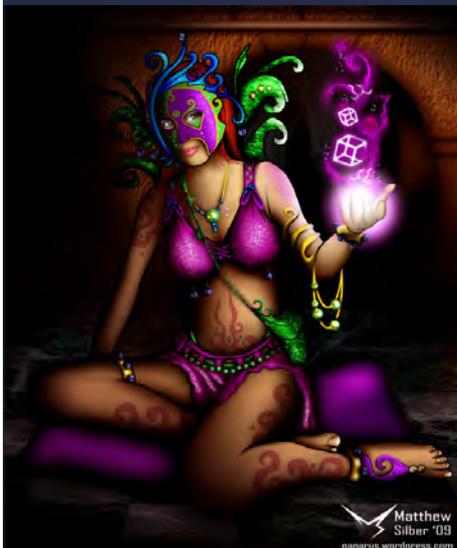
Matthew Silber - Dreygus
strad1138@yahoo.com
http://www.ganarus.wordpress.com

9th

Mazz Brewster - Atastrophea

the_funky_corvid@hotmail.co.uk

/ abstract / cartoon style, whilst keeping your image instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist magazine on how to create stylised images, such as you see in the many feature films and cartoon galleries. We thought this regular competition might bring in just the images and "Making Of's" that we need, whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. This month's theme was **"Jester"**.

9th

Lautaro Bestard - Cocou
thecocou@gmail.com

8th

Kevin Richter - KevinR
kev-artist@hotmail.co.uk
http://www.kevinrichter.com

Here you can see the top 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; emphasise these in whichever ways you think best, and render your stylised / abstract / cartoon masterpiece. The rules are

7th

Matahoon

5th

Adrian Zhang - Gnahz
adrian.zhangzhiwei@gmail.com
http://gnahz.deviantart.com/

5th

Daldbaatar

6th

Jason Smith - Macaruba
info@macaruba.com
http://www.macaruba.com

5th

Tsolmonbayar Batbaatar - GRMC
grmcx_xac@yahoo.com

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 then all the better!

4th

Leo - Blackcherry
leo@almasy.zzn.com
http://ninja-biscuit.blogspot.com

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

3rd

Arvid Torres - Rvdtor
jagon_eye@hotmail.com

2nd

Alberto Peréz Chamosa - Albertocubatas
perezchamosa@hotmail.com

1st

Rosa Hughes - Rosatron
rosatron@gmail.com
http://www.rosatron.com/

and some brief explanation text - of why, and how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure, and us some quality content. Each competition will have one main thread which starts with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIP's, give feedback and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that are emerging each month...

Challenge Thread

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

The current challenge at the voting stage is: **Robots**
The current challenge taking place is: **Amazon Woman Warrior**

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

Or contact: **Lynette@3dtotal.com**

Making Of's

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

3rd Bstsk

Software Used: Photoshop

As always, the first – and possibly most difficult – part was the concept itself, the representation I was going to choose for the subject. With the challenge being more about the concept than painting skill, I took more time thinking than painting with this challenge. I did extensive research for references about Centaurs online

Fig.01

and quickly found lots of limitations: centaurs are a mythological being – half human and half horse – with the human part always placed where the horse neck would be.

I decided to go for a feline half, instead of horse, and mixed it a little further by giving the character's face some catlike traits, in order to create a relatively original take on it. So with the character concept clear in my head, the illustration quickly took shape. After defining the

Fig.02

Fig.03

rough shapes with pencils, I started exploring poses directly in Photoshop (**Fig.01**). With the character being feline, I tried to convey a feeling of arrogance, elegance, as well as a certain element danger.

Once I was happy with the sketch, I laid down some colour, thinking in the mood of the image, trying to accompany the pose. My lighting choice was pretty obvious for the subject, and it helped me compose the image. I framed him with a huge moon, and then used a second light source to enhance certain parts of the image and give it a little contrast in terms of colouring, since it was painted in cold colours (**Fig.02 & Fig.03**). The flame was actually more a matter of lighting; I hadn't thought of the centaur as a mage or any sort of energy user, but it certainly suited him (**Fig.04**).

Once the illustration was as good as done, it was just a matter of time. I started detailing, trying to get the right amount of detail in each part of the illustration, whilst at the same time balancing the image colours. The face

Fig.04

took quite a lot of time to get right, since I was not completely convinced by the expression – I found it somewhere towards the end. The last step I took was to add some warm tones by changing the flame colour (**Fig.05**). I resisted this a lot, but in the end the look of the image was extremely cold and lacked a bit of punch, but once I added the changes I think I reached a point at which I was satisfied with the image. I would have liked to have had some extra time to devote to this image, in order to tweak the atmosphere a little more, and add some clouds and a better background.

Felipe Fernández Morell

For more work by this artist please visit:

http://www.ffilustracion.com

Or contact them at:

contactos@ffilustracion.com

Fig.05

2nd Jpedro

Software Used: Photoshop

Before touching pencil to sketchbook for this Centaur challenge, I took a few moments to think about what the key elements or themes were that I wanted to have in the final piece. Decision number one didn't take very long: I wanted to draw a female Centaur (in all honesty, "Girl" is the keyword here – go from there and voilà, instant inspiration!) … But wait, there's more! I realised she should be a creature emanating a joy for life and playfulness, the kind you see in a young foal hopping around in the spring.

I felt that the whole image should feel warm, and to some extent also show something naturally powerful. I like the fact that Centaurs were always also a symbol for untamed nature, and since we're dealing with a half horse half human hybrid here, I felt like the choice for the horse's body would be great to demonstrate those wild, strong and powerful attributes, and the human side should take care of the tender, joyful and feminine parts, which gave me a nice contrast to work with, too.

Fig.01

So with all this in mind, I went on and sketched something into my sketchbook. I had a simple design without a complicated costume in mind, and I worked from my imagination and without references for this one. I like working like this: starting out to see how far I can get, just going from the visual library in my brain. I thought of Shire horses with their strong build and scraggly hair near their hooves; the girl's pose and gesture, along with the horse's body and pose, had to illustrate much of her character – this alongside her happy, smiling expression, already looked a lot like what I had in mind. For a more complex illustration I'd surely do more research and look at references if necessary, but I was quite happy with how far I got with this sketch just using my own visual library (**Fig.01**).

I decided the sketch was ready for scanning. Once I had the pencil sketch in Photoshop, I built up a greyscale image in which I took care of the values, defined the volumes of all the shapes and forms, and did some rough cleaning up here and there – without getting lost in details just at this moment. I did all this by first filling the entire canvas on a separate layer with a grey

Fig.02

Fig.03

of medium value; my pencil work sat on top of it on a layer set to Multiply. The painting of the lighter and darker values I did on another layer in Normal mode above the pencil sketch (**Fig.02 & Fig.03**).

I mostly used a simple round brush with only Other Dynamics turned on and Control set to Pen Pressure. I controlled the hardness of the edge of the brush with shortcuts as I needed to (Alt + Shift + Ctrl + K brings up the Keyboard Shortcuts Window; there, in the shortcuts for Tools towards the bottom of the list, Increase and Decrease Brush Size as well as Increase and Decrease Brush Hardness can be assigned – I recommend assigning those to keys that can easily be reached with your non-drawing

hand or have them on the Function keys of your tablet). Depending on what I paint, the need for soft or hard edges changes, but I can cover most of it with just this one brush while constantly altering its parameters.

Next I started to lay down some colour. To give me something to start with, I went with a desaturated hue that was slightly in the complementary range. This first lay-in was done with the Radial Gradient tool on an Overlay layer (**Fig.04**).

I then used a combination of Multiply, Colour and Overlay layers to push the hues of the different parts (background, horse's body, and skin tones) into the direction I wanted them to

Fig.04

Fig.05

go (**Fig.05**). For less complex illustrations like this one, I don't usually keep too many layers around. Once I see something I am happy with, I copy a merged version (Shift + Ctrl + C) of all that is visible, paste it to the very top of the layer stack, and get rid of all the different layers between the two steps in the process. It keeps my file very tidy and I have a good few landmark steps to look back at (**Fig.06**).

The image was almost done at this point, and so it was a good time to evaluate some things again before I called it finished. One thing I noticed when I compared my coloured version to the pencil sketch, was that when I'd established the values in painting with the lighting I applied, I felt like her breasts had

Fig.06

become a little too prominent somehow, so I wanted to see what she'd look like with a very simple leather material bra to counter this (**Fig.07**). For the face to be more of a focal point again, this worked much better. I also got some feedback on the ConceptArt.org forums that her left foreleg was merging a bit with the overall shape, so I lifted that leg as well to give her a clearer silhouette. I think the changes helped, so I decided that was it – she was ready to go!

Jan Pedroietta

For more work by this artist please visit:
http://jpedro.cgsociety.org/gallery/
Or contact them at:
jpedro@jpedro.com

1st Chate Noire

Software Used: Photoshop

When designing a character, I usually start with a few quick sketches of different poses and concepts. With the Centaur I settled almost immediately on this "Oh, you did not just whinny at me…!" pose and expression, somewhat inspired by Carla from *Scrubs*.

Using a small brush with Opacity set to Pen Pressure to get a pencil-like feeling, I started sketching the figure, keeping in mind the

Fig.01

characteristic attitude. I wanted her to be round and soft but also a little edgy, hence the combination of curves and angles. She definitely had to be fancy and prettied up, so I gave her long curly hair with colourful touches, and even some "bling". The spots are for the same reason – she's naturally decorated (**Fig.01**).

My original intention was to do this piece with comic-style colouring, so the next step was some solid inking, done using Photoshop's most basic brush (with hard edges and Size set to Pen Pressure). I tried keeping my lines flowing and soft to preserve the essence of the sketch. At this stage I felt she lost some edginess, so instead of having her do that intimidating "from-the-hood" hand gesture, I let her just play with her hair in a more relaxed way (**Fig.02**).

Fig.02

I actually went and coloured this comic-style, but felt it didn't have the effect I was looking for. Going back to the line-art, I created a new layer under my ink and started shading with a soft brush, focusing on good tonal work and trying to create some nice contrast, especially around her face where I wanted the main focus to be (**Fig.03**).

When I was satisfied with the greyscale stage, it was colour time. I merged the line-art and shading layers and set this new layer to Multiply. This way I could just place different hues on a layer underneath, and they would show through the values I'd already created. At this stage I didn't worry too much about precision, I just wanted to give the piece a nice range of colours. To make the character stand out, I made her colours warm

Fig.03
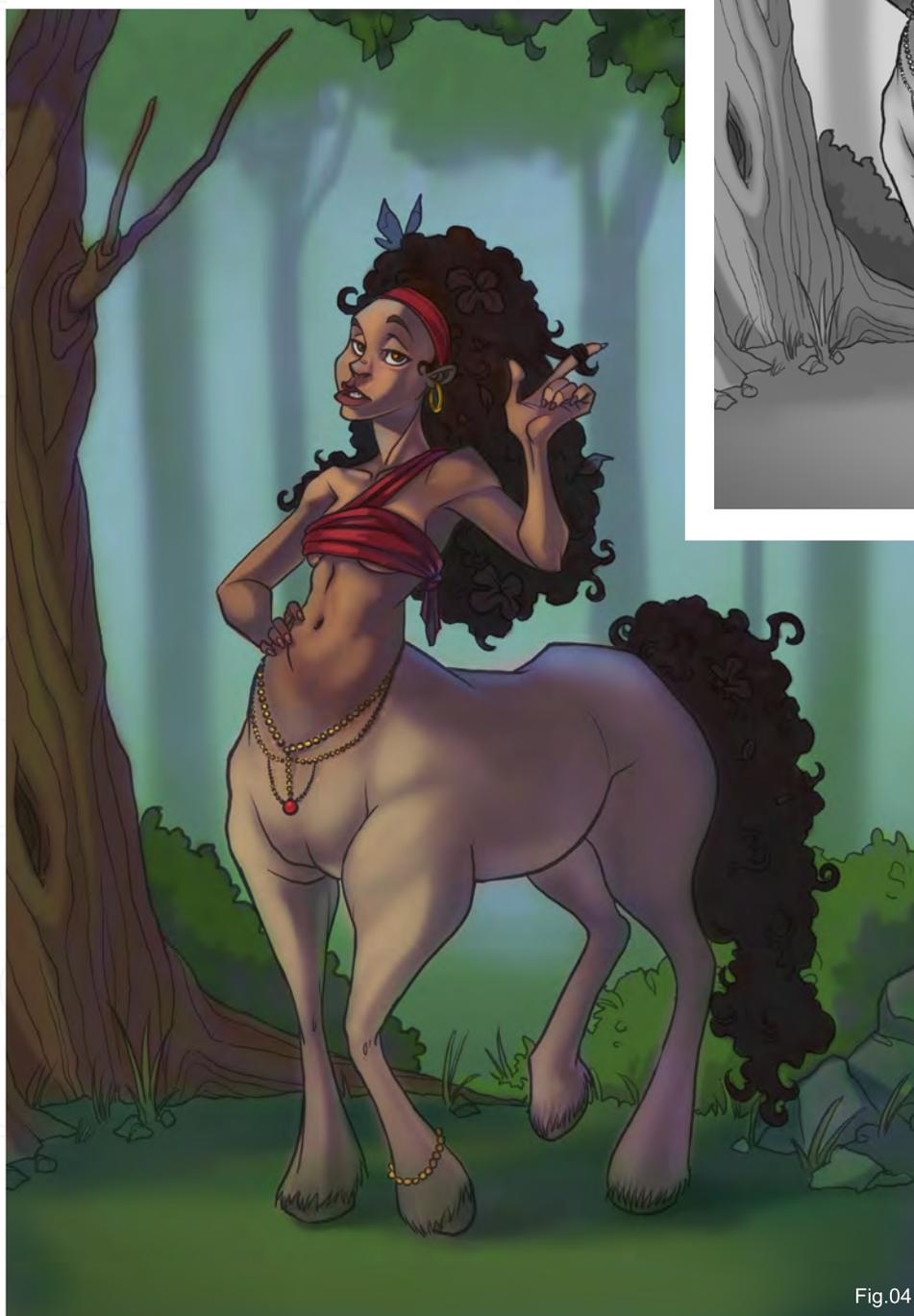
Fig.04

and saturated, and the background cooler and more toned down. I kept in mind not only the character's own colour, but also how the environment and light affected it – some blues and greens from the sky and trees on her forehead and back, some bouncing green light from the grass on her legs, and also bouncing light from her own body (under the chin, on the insides of the arms, between the legs, etc). In shaded areas I threw in purples and blues, to give a bit of a mysterious, magical feel to the image and to avoid the flatness you get when using just a darker version of the same colour for shading (**Fig.04**).

After laying the basic colours I played a little with brightness and saturation, and started rendering, which usually takes the longest. I used a soft brush which made blending colours easy, and also let me work on small details and hard edges by using a small brush size. I always

create a new layer and start working on top of the rough; after some work I turned the new layer on and off to make sure I was pleased with the progress, merged it into the main layer, and continued the same way. What I was basically doing was blending the rough colours together, adding some stronger highlights or shadows where I thought it was necessary, and defining the shapes and lighting as best as I could. Most of the hard work was already done because I started with a greyscale "map" of all my values, but it still needed tightening up. I also tried to

merge the black lines into the painting, using them to define form but losing the cartoonish line-art look (**Fig.05**).

More rendering: I tried giving the trees, bushes and hair a rich, full, curly form by throwing small, twisty touches of highlights – both warm (from the sun) and cooler (from the bluish environment). I continued rendering the character and background, keeping the latter less detailed and sharp so the character would stand out. I also painted in the flowers and
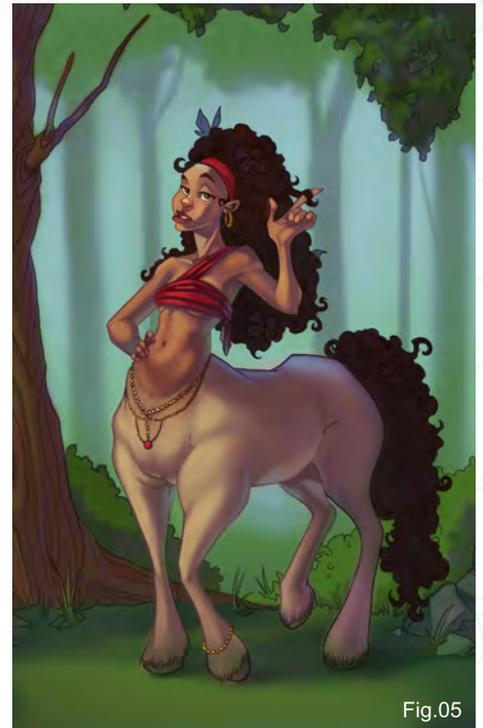
Fig.05

butterfly and fixed her right arm, which just didn't look right. A tiny dot of light in her eyes made her expression sharper and less hazy than it was before (**Fig.06**).

For the final piece, I rendered the grass and tree some more, adding stronger highlights, some texture and more random shapes to make everything more real and vivid. The bare branch stood out a bit in all the green, so I covered it with some leaves as well. Since I felt the colours were kind of dead I added an adjustment layer of Colour Balance and started playing with it, giving the whole piece a warm, reddish tint. It's not what I originally had in mind, but that's the beauty of working with Photoshop – with a click of a button you can change your whole colour scheme if you feel it's not working. Lastly I brought back the spots, which disappeared somewhere along the way – and there you have it (**Fig.07**).

Avív Or

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Or contact them at:

avivor@gmail.com

Fig.06

Fig.07

Aviv Or

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POWER
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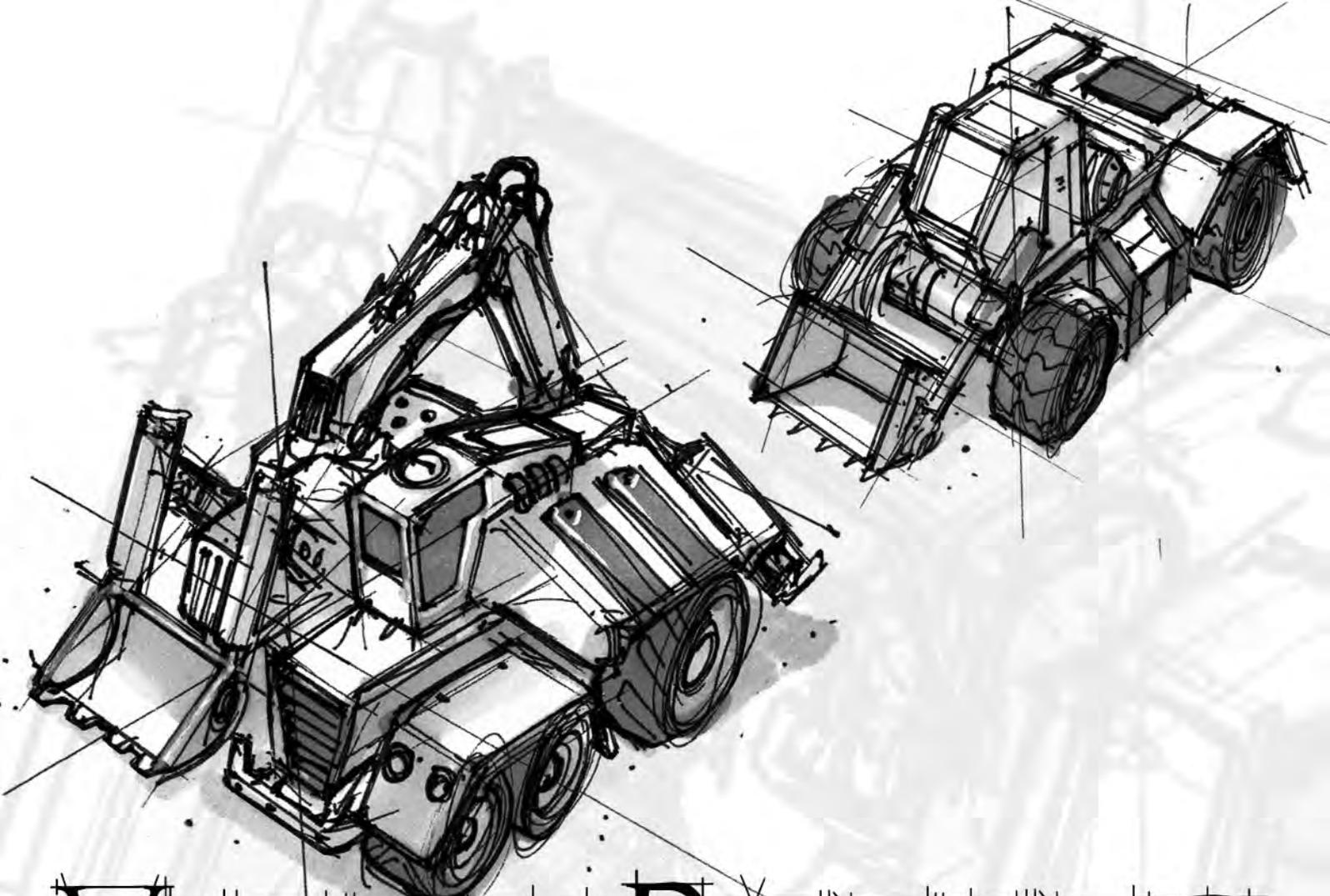
Vehicle Painting

Tutorial Series

This series will take an in-depth look into the process of designing vehicles, beginning with the concept stage and following through to a final design. We will cover sketching approaches used to evolve and refine an initial idea, and show the techniques used to produce a number of drawings, exploring a variety of designs.

The tutorial will then move onto creating a finished design and placing the vehicle in a simple scene and addressing the issue of rendering the various materials that make up its construction. The importance of perspective will be explained before concluding with a chapter on adding design details and lighting effects.
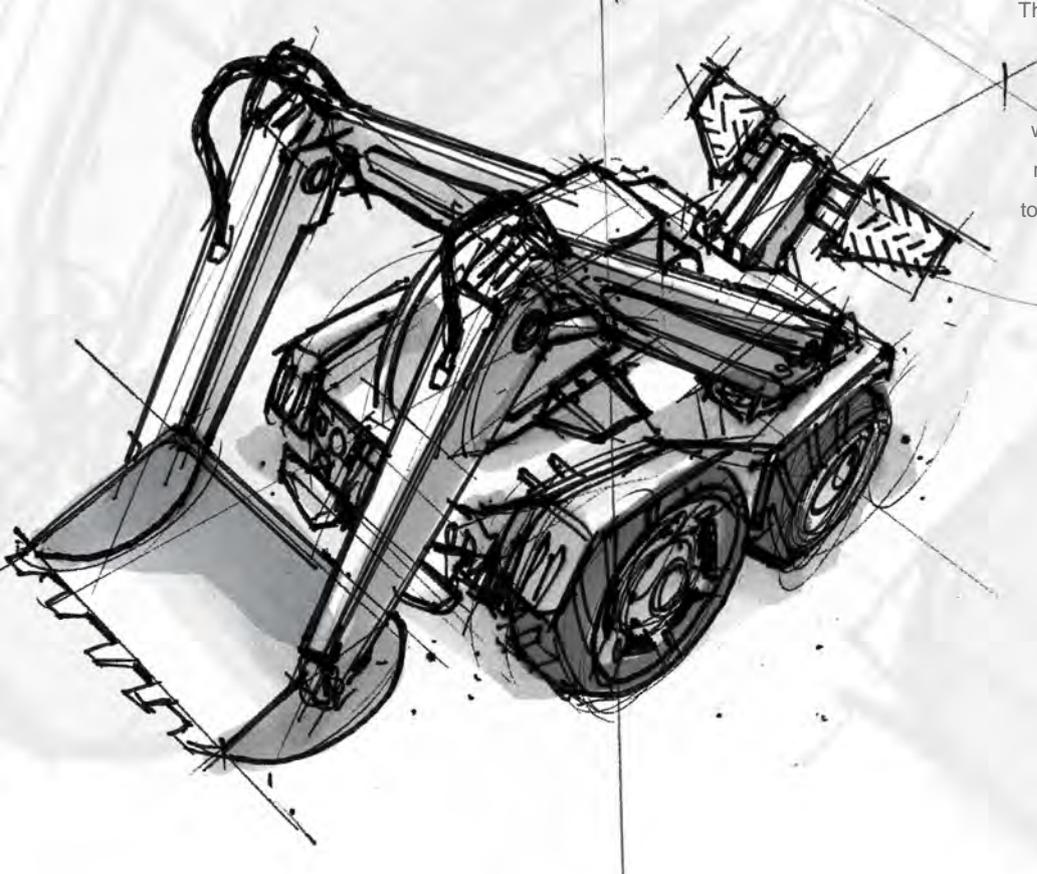
Vehicle Painting Part 5 - Final

Created In: Photoshop

Picking up from where we left off in my last chapter of this series, we kick off this final part of the tutorial by moving onto a new layer in Photoshop where I will paint what I like to call a "paintover" layer. This layer will be painted
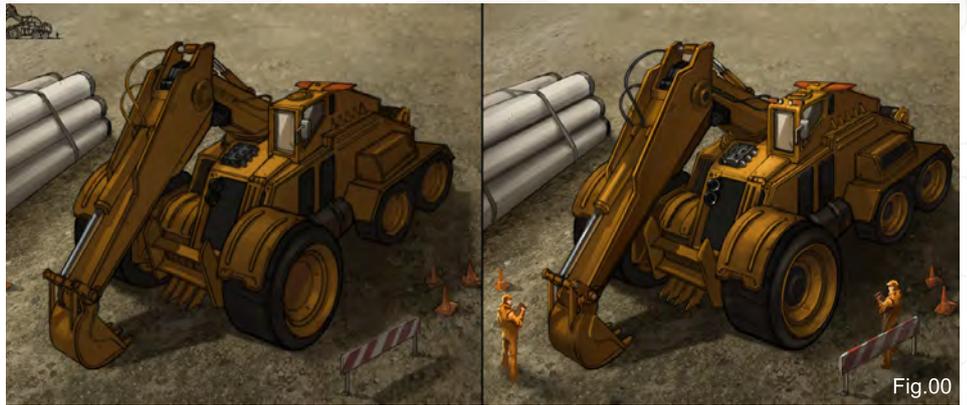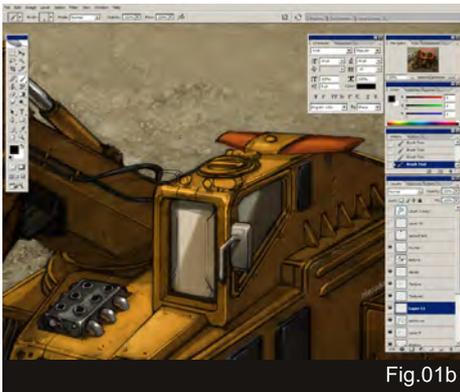
Fig.01b
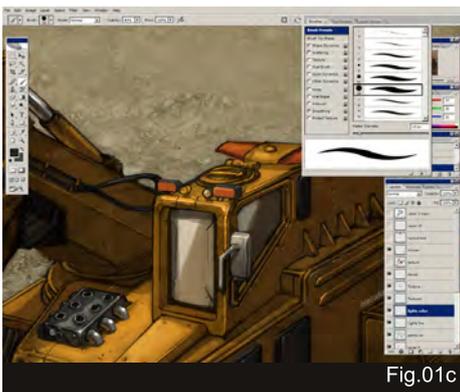
Fig.01c

Fig.01d

Fig.00
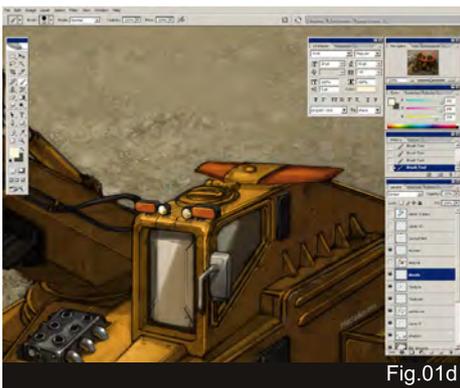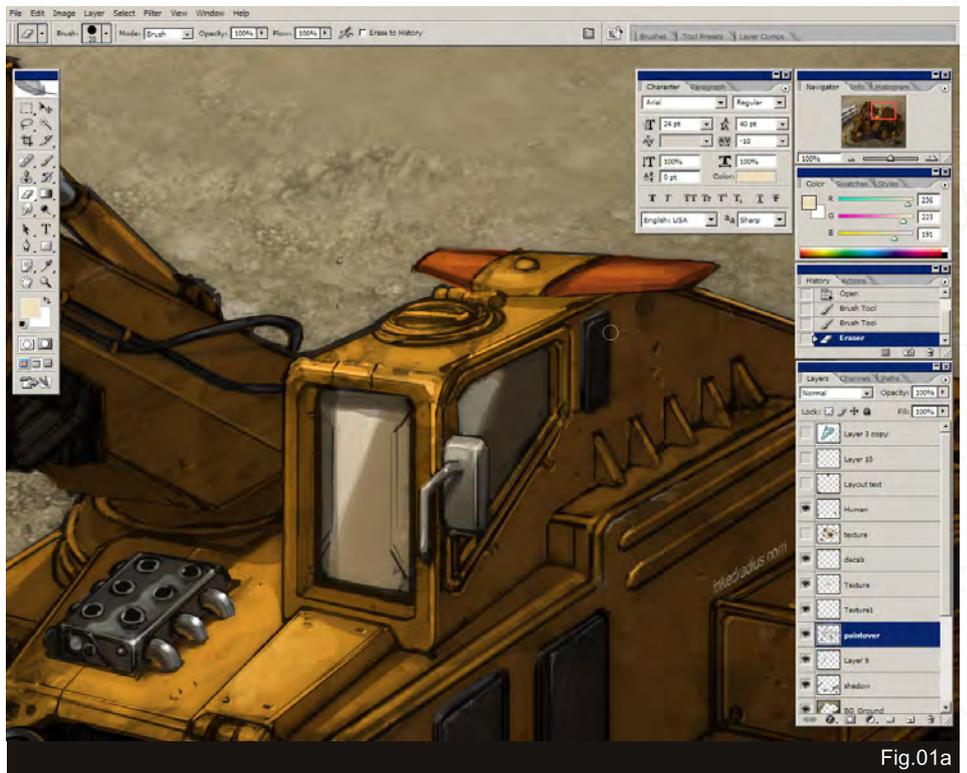
Fig.01a

similar to how a traditional, non-transparent painting would be done, for example an acrylic or oil painting. In the previous part of the tutorial, if you remember, I approached the rendering style like a transparent painting, for example a watercolour or marker drawing.

So on this opaque layer, I further refine and enhance the shapes and volume of the already established lighting. As you can see from **Fig.00**, the one on the left is where I finished the last chapter, and on the right we have the new one where I've painted in the opaque layer. Lighting-wise it should not change much at this stage if it was already well established before. So it's very important to get the lighting correct

before we put more and more layers on top – again, from general to specific.

Adding details (Signal Lights & Spot Lights)

Here's a short walkthrough showing how I add the extra parts on the vehicle which were not created during the line art stage of the process (**Fig.01a – Fig.01d**). I want to add some small details on the vehicle's cockpit, and after some research I decide to add signal and spot lights. These are details which I think are practical and sell the believability much more. So what I do is start a new layer (Layer 11) and draw a simple line art of the lights. Once I'm happy I proceed into colouring by starting another new

layer above the line art layer (a Normal layer will do; a Multiply layer would does not work well above coloured areas). I paint in the values and colours of the lights – they are not highly detailed because they're rather small when you look at the painting as a whole, so simple shades can suggest the shape and alsoread well without having to render photo realistic lighting.

Fig.02
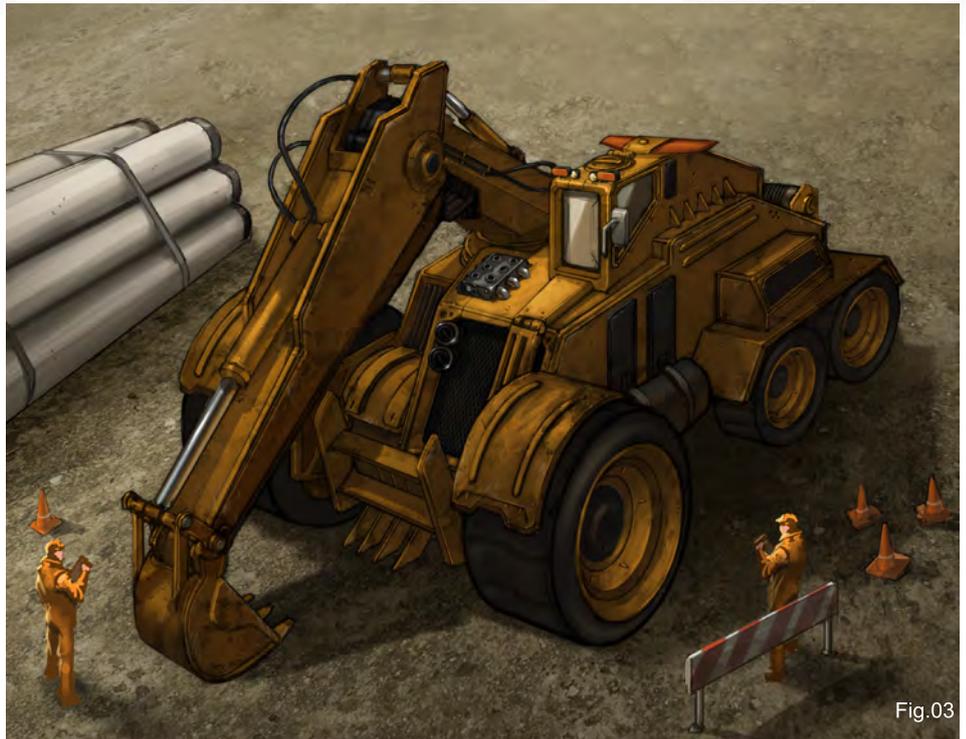
Fig.03
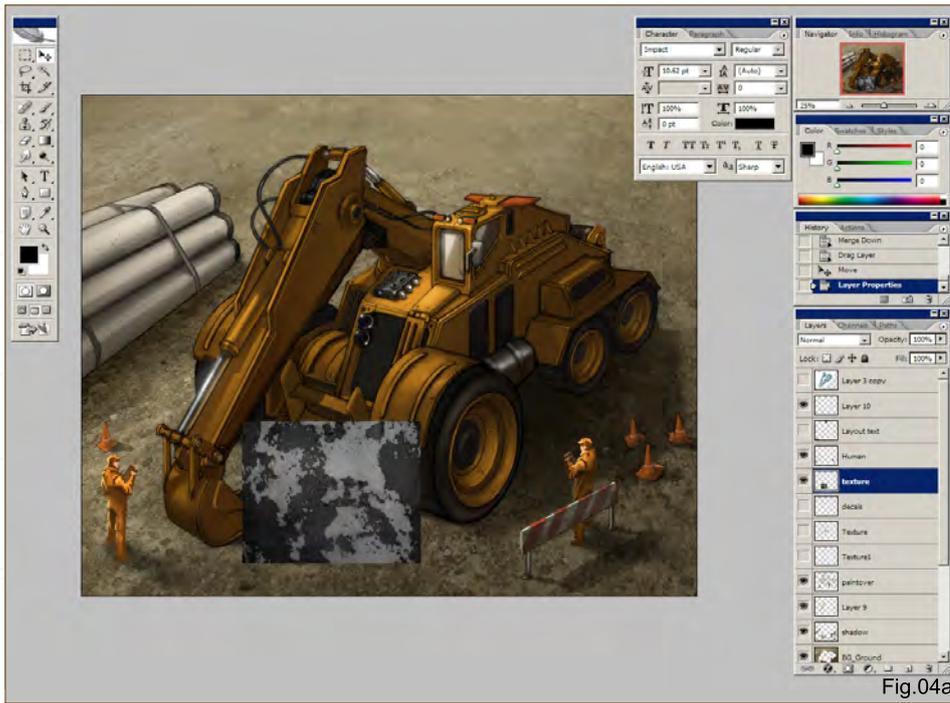
Fig.04a

In this tutorial I am using the default round brush found in every Photoshop package – just a round brush tip and an eraser.

Here I try to keep in mind the different materials I'm painting (**Fig.02**); for example, having the very polished metal against the painted yellow metal creates a nice contrast for the viewer. There are not as many cables compared to real, existing excavation vehicles because I wanted it to look a little more streamlined and advanced compared to the ones we have in our own time. When I design a vehicle which is set in the future, I try not to go too crazy and fancy with the concept (unless the brief says otherwise); I like to keep it real and believable so that it feels like it could actually be true. Some parts of technology advance faster than others, so
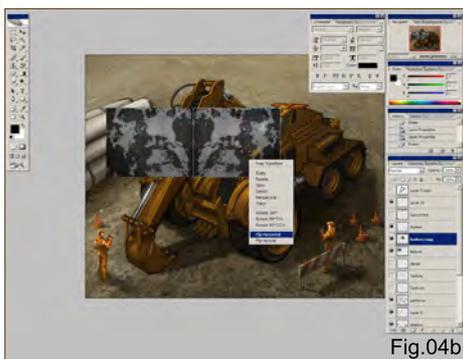
Fig.04b
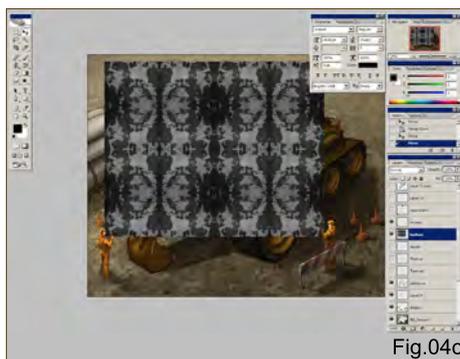
Fig.04c
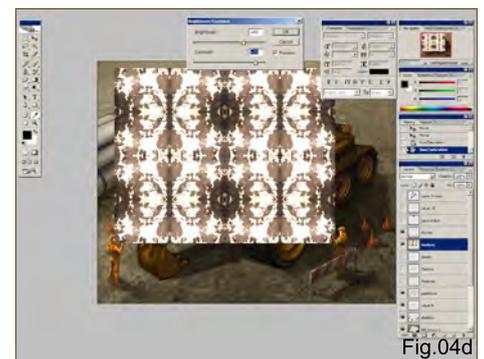
Fig.04d

not every single part of a vehicle needs to be modified when designing something for the future. Some details/functions are already good enough for what they need to do, like the arm mechanism, and so don't really need to be changed.

Once I'm done and settled with the overall paintover on the opaque layer, things are pretty much done. So here is where I start adding textures, dents, weathering and scratches. Not every vehicle requires this sort of treatment, but a construction vehicle would not be complete without any of these characteristics, especially when the vehicle is in an outdoor setting. Sometimes wear and tear detailing could even push the story/context of a vehicle further, like where it has been, what it has been doing, and what its purpose is. So here I overlay a Multiply layer of rusty paint, and on the edges I add some painted scratches as well (**Fig.03**).

Take note that even though I have applied a rusty texture to almost the whole part of the vehicle, I haven't forgotten that some parts/materials would not rust, like the hydraulics.
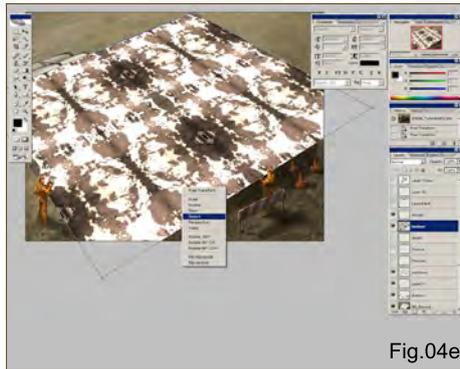
Fig.04e

Fig.04f

This material in particular should always remain smooth and polished, so that it functions well.

Texturing up close

Here's a step-by-step walkthrough showing how I applied the texture (**Fig.04a – Fig.04f**):

• First of all, I find a texture that I would like to apply to the vehicle; I have gone for a rusty paint texture which I found online (free texture websites like CGTextures.com are a good place to start) (**Fig.04a**)

• Secondly, I need the texture to be bigger, so I tile the same texture by flipping it and lying them next to one another (**Fig.04b**)
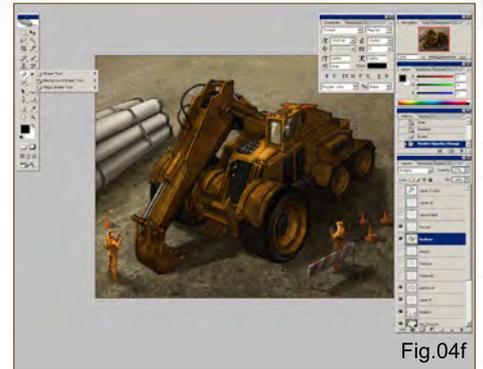
• I keep repeating the tiling process until I get the size I want (**Fig.04c**)

• Here I adjust the contrast and colour of the texture so that the pattern on the texture stands out more from its background (**Fig.04d**)

• Now I use my arrow and right-click on the image to open a sub menu, and from that I select Distort, where I distort the texture according to the rough perspective of the vehicle/scene (**Fig.04e**)

• Lastly, I select the Multiply blending mode for the texture layer and set it on top of the vehicle. Using a standard round eraser I erase some of the areas where I don't want the texture, like the glass, polished metals and the ground (**Fig.04f**)

So once the texturing has been done, everything else from here on in is just extra tweaking, but still all serves a purpose. With this image I add a layer of glow which I paint in with a Soft Round brush to show the reaction towards light on these materials. For example, the polished pipes and mirror would have a small amount of glow reflected, and this will help suggest the material better (**Fig.05**). It should not glow too much because we don't want that to distract the viewers' eyes from the main subject, which in this case is the whole vehicle.

Decals up close

I have a library of vehicle decals and after market stickers. I like these because they

Fig.05

somehow give the audience a hint of what the vehicle is about and where it comes from, but in this tutorial I have decided to create a decal for this magazine. Here I load the decal which I want to use, which is currently black on a white background, but I will invert it to white so that there are multiple ways of applying it to the vehicle (**Fig.06a**).

Here, since the decal is on a separate layer from the white background (Layer 1) I just hold down Ctrl and press I, and it will invert the colour to white for me. Once that's done I want to transform the shape so that the decal fits well on the perspective of the vehicle. I use the arrow, right-click on the decal, and select the
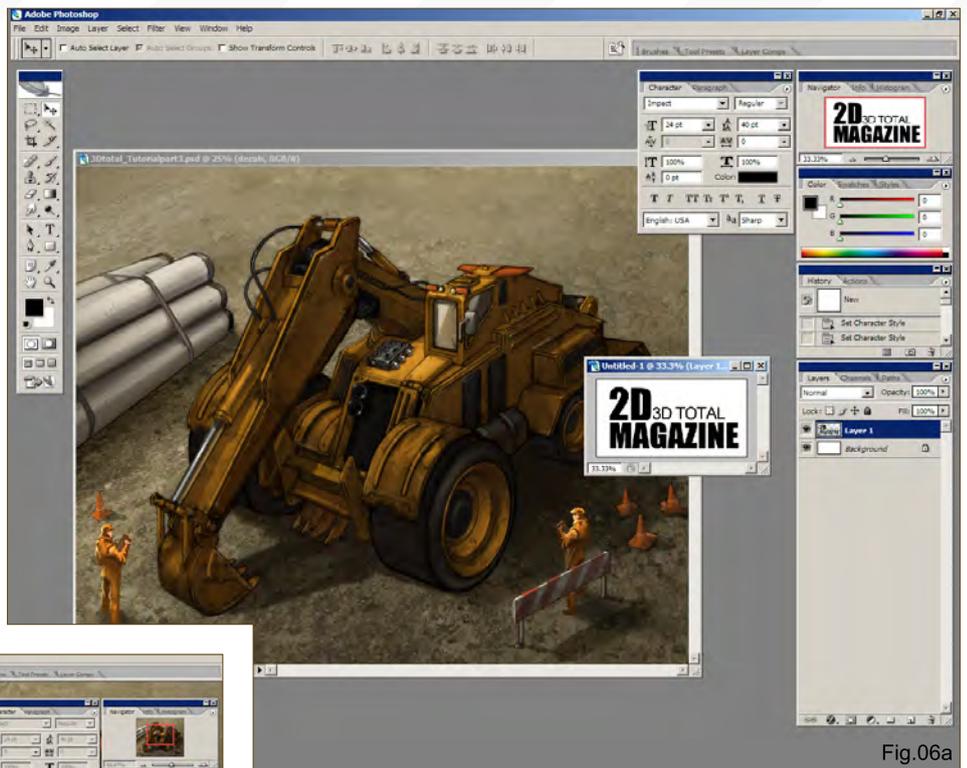
Fig.06a
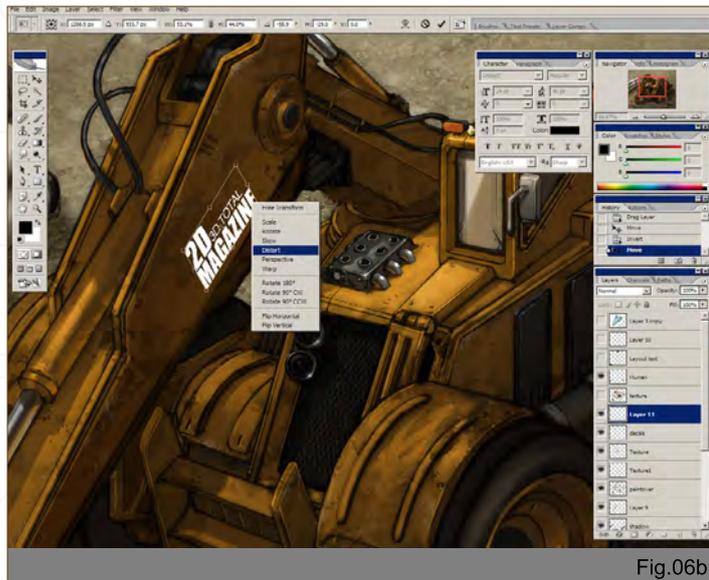
Fig.06b
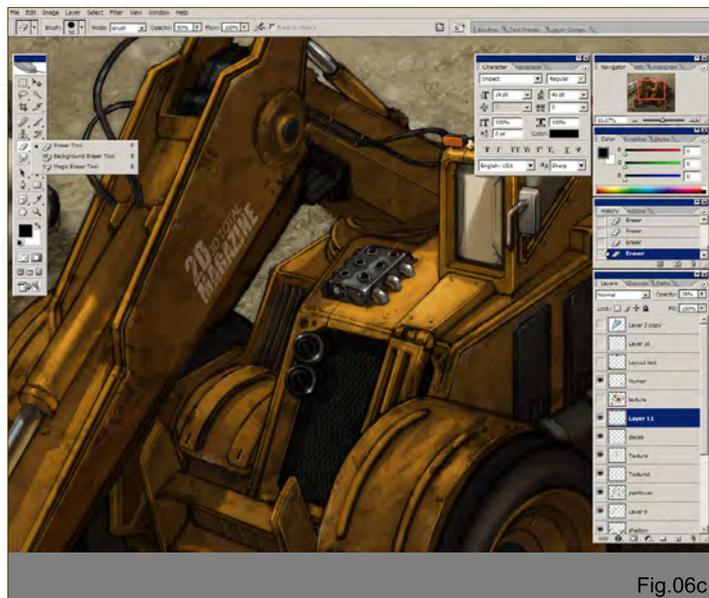
Fig.06c

Distort transformation tool. This allows me to manipulate all four corners of the image separately (**Fig.06b**).

So once it's placed on the vehicle, now is just a case of blending that solid white decal to the vehicle's tone. Since it's on the darker side of the vehicle, I simply decrease the opacity down to about 28% (Layer 11). Then I just make it look more believable by using the Eraser to add weathering and scratches on the decal, and it's done (**Fig.06c**).

Last, but not least, I add decals on the vehicle to help create a little bit more context, like where it was manufactured (**Fig.07**). I also add some small traffic cones and humans to suggest scale. I love creating layouts for my designs because I always believe in the good presentation of a concept. It helps to improve readability and creates a better finish. Details of the artist, date, and title of the piece will provide better understanding to viewers, so they know what they are looking at.

Final Thoughts

We are visual communicators. We communicate through our designs. A visual communicator's job does not end with the artwork. The final product of a certain design goes beyond our jurisdiction because it will be handed down to other people further down the pipeline, so therefore a good, readable, believable design is essential.

We are also known as commercial artists because in our line of work we don't work in the same way as fine artists. Our time and budget is always limited. We don't have the luxury of waiting for inspiration to hit us and

spending two years finishing a painting. I think many students need to understand that clearly if one chooses to pursue a career in this industry. It's not always glamorous and good money, so it really boils down to how much you love the craft and how "do-able" the individual is. Competition is really high, so be prepared and be clear on your goals and objectives.

Think about it: if concept art is really what you want to be doing then you should know that nothing is going to stop you, and you will strive through no matter what life throws at you. Be strong, and work hard and smart. "The last person to give up is the first one to win."

Good luck and thank you all so much for taking your time to read this.

Hoi Mun Tham

For more from this artist visit:
http://hoimun.blogspot.com/
Or contact:
thamhoimun@gmail.com

Fig.07

Add Natural 3D Environments

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taylorjames.com

used Vue xStream to create
3D environments for the Motorola City
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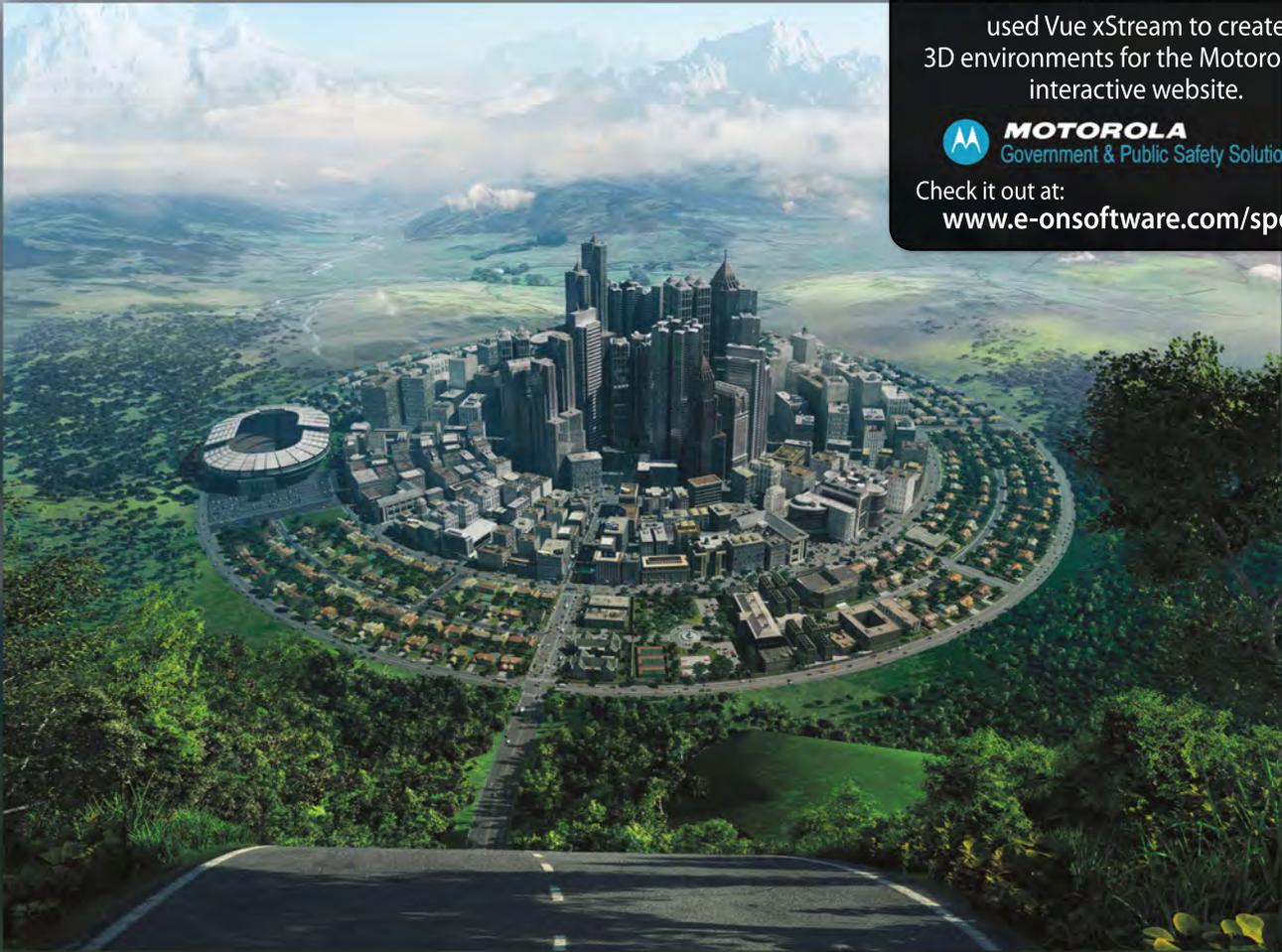
Complete image production by Taylor James, for Motorola.

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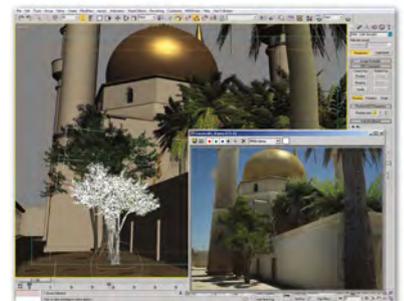
3ds Max mosque model, rendered in a Vue environment using Mental Ray Sun & Sky.

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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, Robin Olausson and Richard Tilbury, tackle the topic:

Great cracks
split the earth as the ground shook beneath them
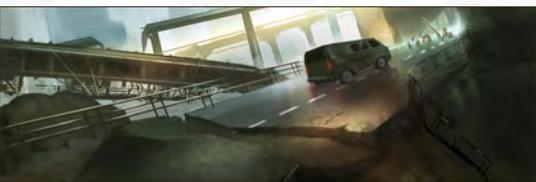
Robin Olausson

Created In: Photoshop

Introduction

The absolute first thing I do each time I start out with a new piece is to fill the canvas to get rid of the scary white space. It's hard to start from white since that's the brightest value you'll ever get. At this stage I was having a discussion with myself about the composition, what point of view to use for the shot etc. I want to put the viewer right into the image and kind of feel the action, so I'm going to play with the perspective to get the feeling just right.

Step 1

I choose a medium value for the background so that I can push the contrast in both directions (medium to light, medium to dark) and then with the Marquee tool I set the perspective of most of the scene with just the road converging to the right, and also create some kind of a depth with different values of the road itself – darker closer to the "camera" (with a spot of light on it), and lighter as it descends into the distance (**Fig.01**).
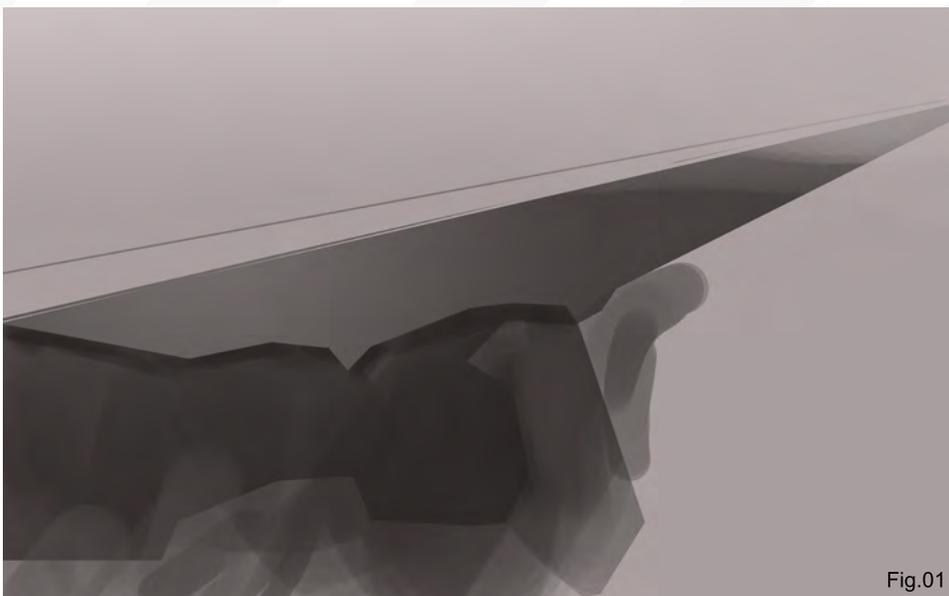
Fig.01

Fig.02

Step 2

After planning out my composition I broaden the road itself to enhance the feeling of being close to the scene. Whilst doing the composition I try to keep it simple and with large brushstrokes to create a visual path for the viewer's eye to wander across the image. I also introduce a hint of my second vanishing point out to the far left of the image, with those three lines going from left to right (**Fig.02**).

Step 3

I don't feel that there's much drama in the image so I'm changing the view to a more diagonal composition with more motion in it by (Edit >

Fig.03

Transform > Distort). With the Lasso tool I start breaking up the road itself and introduce some chaos. Try marking an area with the Lasso and then distorting it a bit and rotating it. With the selection still active I paint shadow and light onto the objects to make it feel more 3D and less flat (a good tip while using selections is to press Ctrl + H – this will hide your blinking selection borders) (**Fig.03**).

Step 4

When it comes to colouring a piece I really don't have a special way that I go, it varies from piece to piece, but in this case I start out by playing
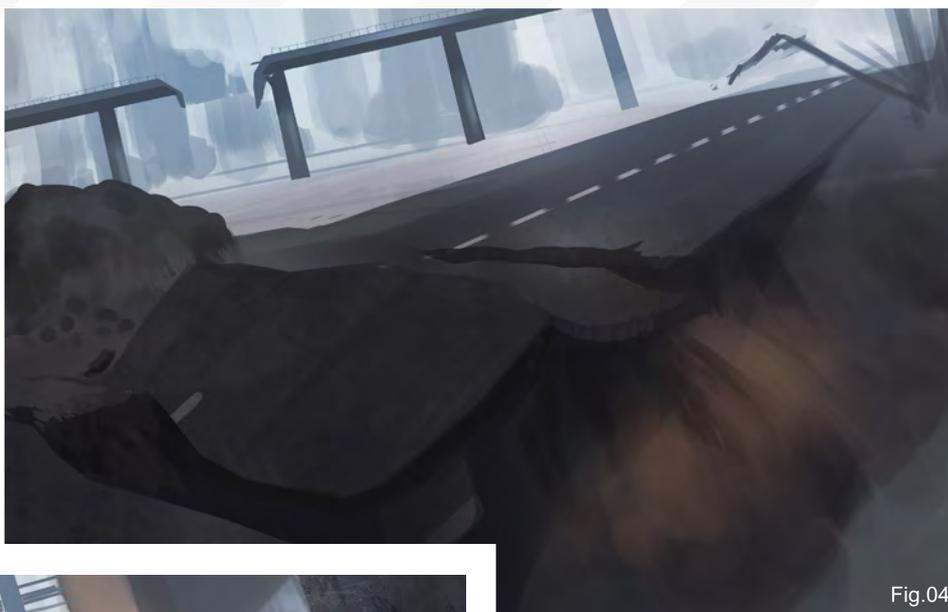
Fig.04

with different layer modes, like Overlay, Multiply and Vivid Light with a pretty high saturated blue. I tend to do it too saturated at first, and then lower the saturation a bit with Curves and brightness (**Fig.04**).

Step 5

Now I've got a pretty good base to build on – it's more a matter of adding more detail and enhancing what's already there to make it work now. I add some more roads in the background to push the depth a bit further, and I also add a new focal point in the upper right corner where the light hits the wall of the tunnel (**Fig.05**).

Step 6

Here I tweak the colours to add more variety into the image, using the Overlay, Vivid Light and Colour layer blending modes. I create a new layer with Overlay mode selected and make a gradient of an orange colour to make the focal point more obvious and to push the contrast further – this is only possible because I didn't start out with a completely white background (**Fig.06**).

Fig.05

Step 7

I'm starting to wrap things up now … It's time to create a vehicle and push the composition even further. For the van itself I use the Marquee tool to select areas and then go over it with a large

Fig.06

Airbrush and paint in light hitting the surfaces. I also paint some reflections of the van on the ground to make the image more believable. For composition purposes I paint some highlights hitting the railings on the far left side to lead the viewer into the image (from left to right). To push the contrast in a different area I play with texture vs. smooth surface; for example, the road with the van on is really smooth versus the cracked-up end of the road, and the dirt is falling down the image on the right side. (**Fig.07**)

Conclusion

Start out simple and focus on getting your ideas across, and if you don't have any ideas yet, keep scribbling with large brushes until it sparks your imagination enough for something that you think is worth pursuing. Don't focus too much on the technical stuff such as perspective or light in the beginning, but try to get a nice composition. Also, I think it's worth testing a lot of different methods for your paintings, for example, in this case I used the Marquee tool a lot, and in other speed paintings I used only the round brush. This just feels like a good way to really get to know the brushes and tools and what you can do with them. Try to experiment with the colours and light with different layer modes and curves etc., too, to see what happens and what colours works best for you.

Robin Olausson

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http://www.robinolausson.com/
Or contact:
tv1000@spray.se

Fig.07

Richard Tilbury

Created In: Photoshop

Introduction

As is usual the first stage was to try and decide on a theme that illustrated the title. I initially envisioned a scene similar to the plagues of Egypt or at least set in Biblical times, suggesting the wrath of God. I recently did a speed painting based upon a large swarm which I set in the past so wanted by contrast to set this in a different era. For this reason I set upon the theme of an earthquake but apart from this had no idea what sort of picture I would create.

Painting

I started by laying down some abstract marks using a few custom brushes without any clear notion of where the image was going (**Fig01**). The two main custom brushes I used can be seen in the upper left corner and after doodling for a while I drew some horizontal lines. These

Fig.06

Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03

Fig.04
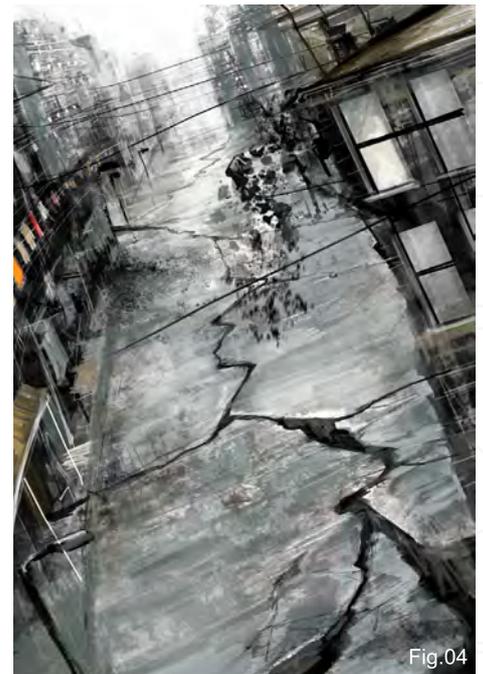
suggested telegraph wires spanning a street and so I decided to develop an urban scene, looking down onto a road.

I started to block in the main compositional elements, just using a range from black through to white to begin with (**Fig02**).

I imagined a character eventually standing in the foreground on the road and to help lead the eye towards them I added some falling rubble coming from the near right building (**Fig03**).

On a new layer set to Normal mode I began adding some colour as seen in **Fig04**. Normally I set the colour layer to Overlay or Soft Light but hey...for a change; not this time.

With a few provisional colours in placed I thought it was time to add the all important figures implicated in the title. I painted these on a new layer in order that they could be altered easily and then once happy with their positioning, duplicated them to create their shadows. To do this I simply desaturated the

Fig.06

Fig.07

layer and reduced the contrast and then applied a small amount of Gaussian Blur (**Fig05**).

Now is the time to use a colour layer which this time I will set to Soft Light. The reason for doing so is to add some variation to the hues and also separate the right hand building more form the middle distance and background. **Fig06** shows the colours set to Normal mode on the left and the eventual Soft Light mode on the right. If you compare this image with **Fig05** you can see how the near building now has a warmer value than the background.

To make the event seem more ominous I created a new layer set to multiply and then airbrushed some yellow ochre across the foreground blending through to a pale emerald in the background. This had the effect of adding

Fig.08
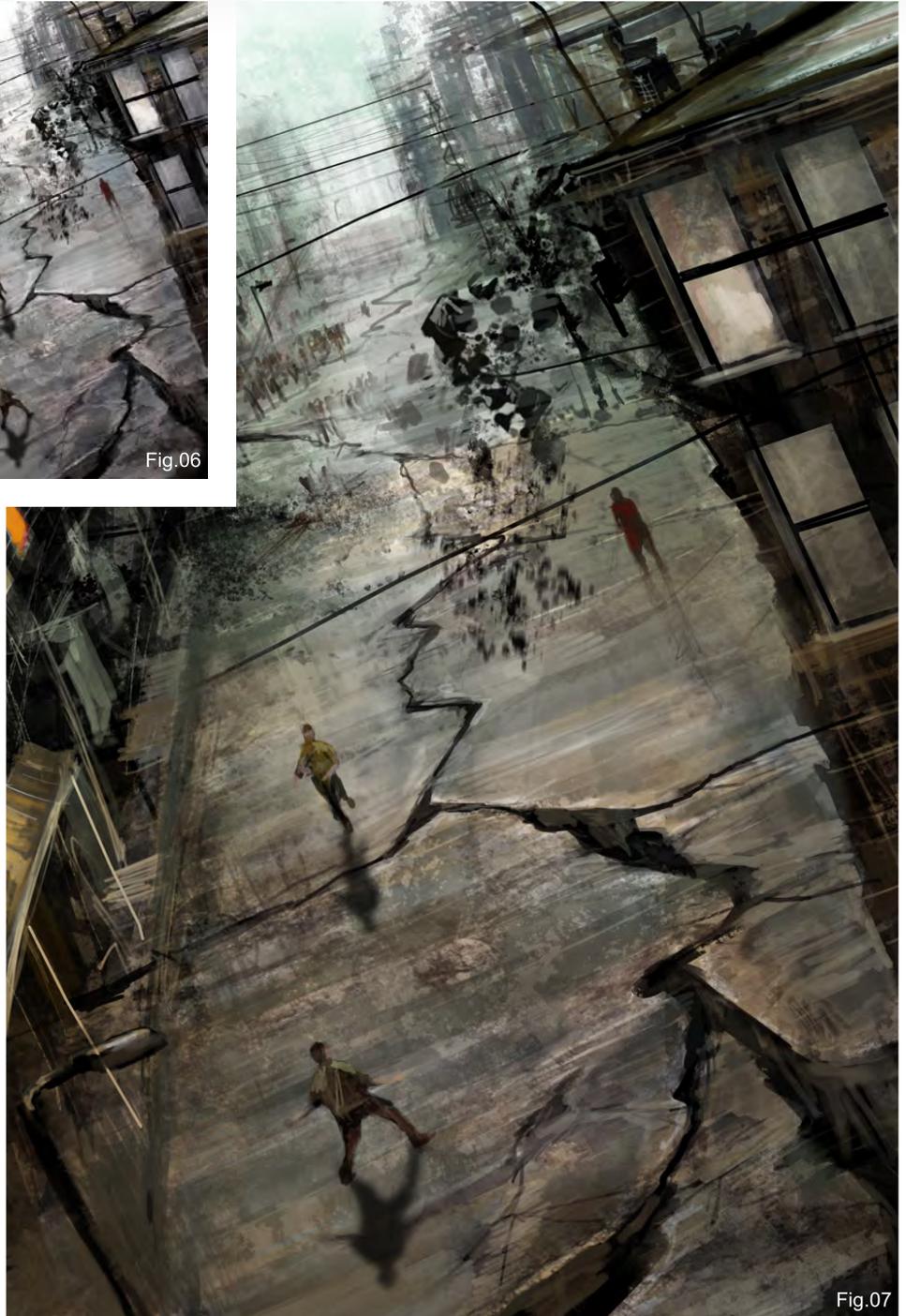
some much needed colour as well as darkening the overall composition (**Fig07**).

The picture at this stage is almost finished but I feel that darkening the foreground even further will make it seem more threatening. So on a new layer set to Multiply at 30% opacity I added a new layer and using a Foreground to Background Gradient with the colours seen in **Fig08**, dragged from the bottom right corner up towards the opposite corner.

I painted in some small details such as the double yellow lines and the window light and with this decided to call it a day (**Fig09**).

Richard Tilbury

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http://richardtilburyart.com/

Or contact:

rich@3dtotal.com

Fig.09

"from the birth of the stars and hurtling forth through nebulous clouds and the barrenness of desolate planets, we explored the far flung reaches of mankind's journey into the last great frontiers of space"

SPACE PAINTING

SPACE PAINTING

ENVIRONMENTS: PART 12: SPACE COLONIES

Created In: Photoshop

Introduction

Welcome, dear friends, to the final chapter of our year-long exploration of science- fiction and outer space travel, both within and without the vast tapestry of our Milky Way. We are at last at our journey's end, and looking back over the past year it has indeed been quite a journey, both artistically as well as in the richness of life experience; distilling and consolidating space research, knowledge and art techniques into one memorable whole. Starting from the birth of the stars and hurtling forth through nebulous clouds and the barrenness of desolate planets, we explored the far flung reaches of mankind's journey into the last great frontiers of space. For our final act though, let's reach back to a time when mankind has decided to actively reach for the stars, and in the first step to greatness, mankind has decided to build the first space colony, known as the International Space Island Station One (ISIS-1).

I: Colony Construction

To build a colony that can truly sustain the long-term habitation of a new breed of mankind in space, there are a few fundamental challenges. In essence, mankind needs to address the issues of:

- Radiation
- Lack of gravity
- Reproduction and fertility
- Sourcing building materials
- Sourcing sustainable and consumable resources

For a vision of the future today, exploration of Closed Ecological Life Support Systems (CELSS), or biospheres, started from the 1965

Fig.01
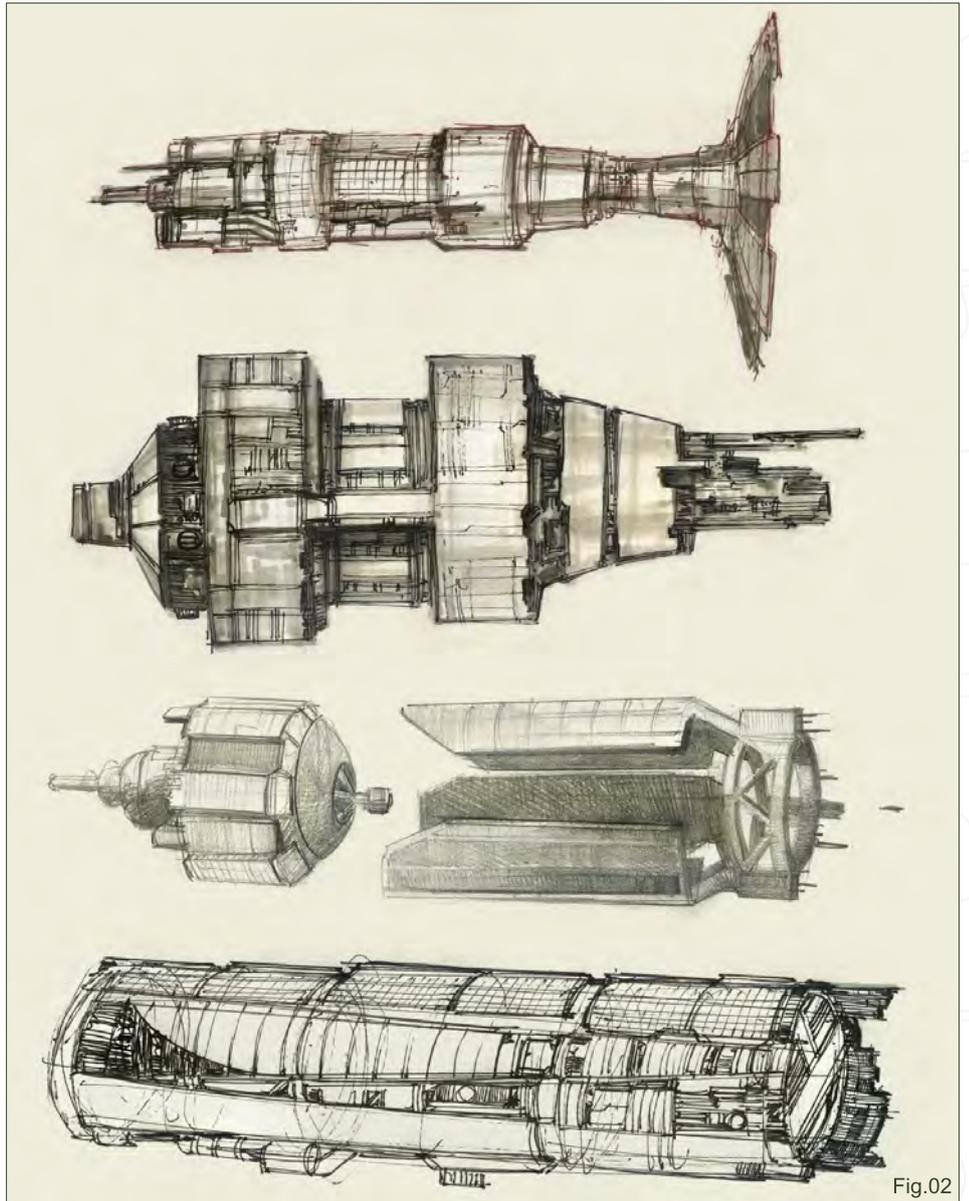
Fig.02

Russian BIOS-3 pioneers, when algae was used to recycle the air breathed by humans in a closed facility in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia. Subsequently, various projects such as NASA Human CELSS Experiments, Biosphere 2, Nauvik and the Eden Project explore the range of habitation within various enclosures that all help in our understanding of the building and

habitation of orbital space settlements, and therefore future planetary habitation (**Fig.01**).

Colony Designs

The designs produced for this workshop are based on a combination of large cylindrical colonies, paired with twin torus-shaped habitats that are built to counter rotate one another to

produce artificial gravity and reduce any wobble along the central cylindrical axis (**Fig.02**).

Artificial gravity can be generated via centrifugal forces with gravity being stronger on the periphery of the wheel-shaped habitat. This allows for the use of zero gravity within the central zone, which is useful for the placement of:

• A space port
• Manufacturing sectors
• Hydroponics
• Research and development labs

In our initial schematics (see **Fig.02**), the external wheel-shaped (torus) habitats are not included but can be placed at various diameters at any point along its central axis. Locating these tori within the centre may tend to cause wobble on either end of the central axis, whereas on the end of each cylinder tends to cause a larger wobble on the opposing end. It is

therefore vital to attach an equal and opposite rotating force – to counter the centrifugal force – at any one point.

In addition, various design aesthetics (see **Fig.02**) are explored for the central axis colony designs. These range from delicate and welded parts to more solidly constructed elements, giving the appearance that the various forms have been built from a singular slab of mass. These schematics allow us to logically visualise how the circular habitat would attach to this central hub.
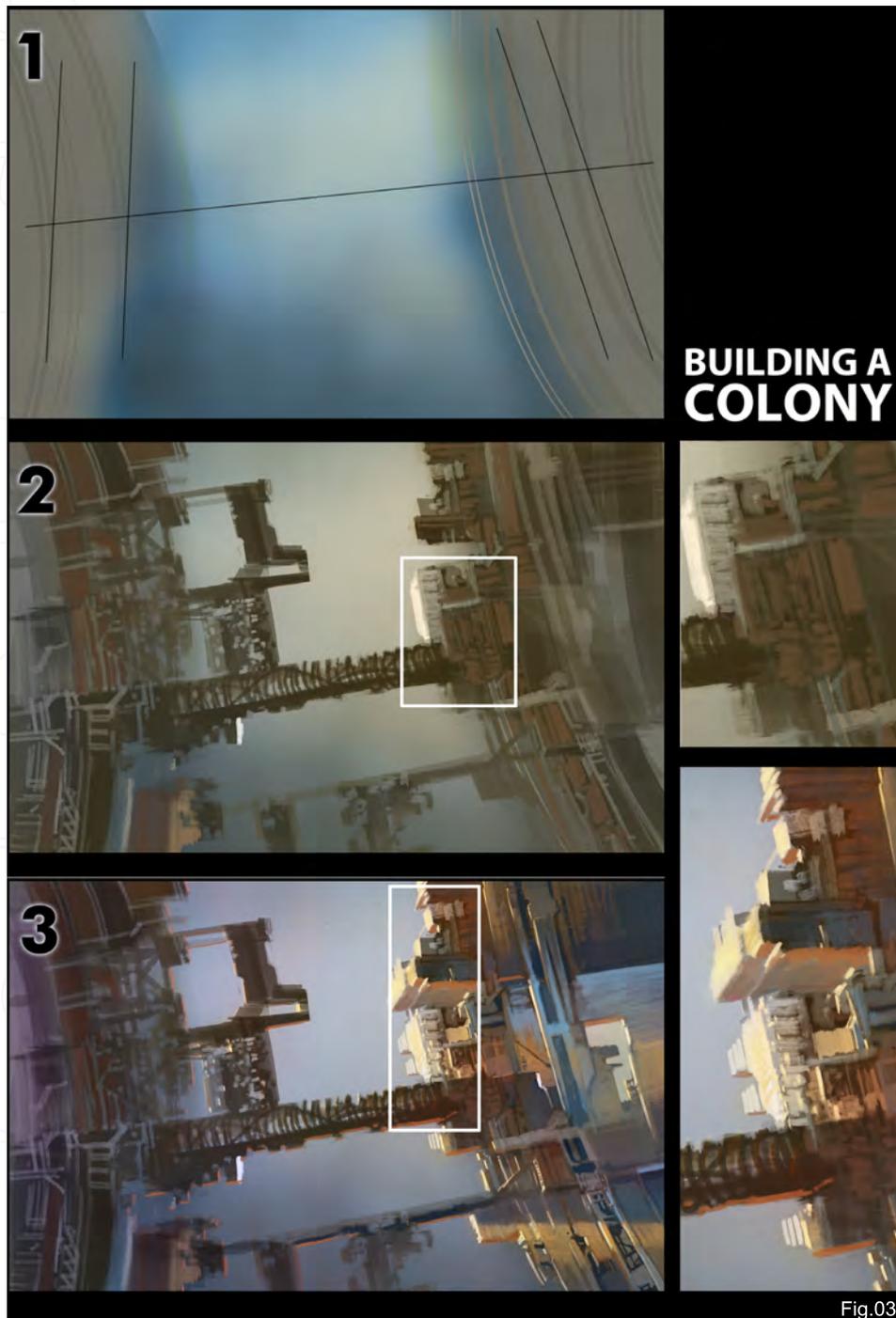
Patchwork Colony

We can now visualise how the gigantic toroidal ring may be assembled around the central axis (**Fig.03**). Often, due to the scalar issues involving such gigantic masses, the whole super structure is rarely visualised without losing some element of detail. The larger an object is, the smaller a feature, such as a bay window, may appear. It is therefore a trade off between detail versus overall shape and form.

Layout

The first steps (see **Fig.03**) involve essentially the layout of the composition, general shapes and forms, whilst establishing the key (main) light (source). These 3 key steps are sufficient to establish up to 70% of any illustration (the rest can be thought of as additional window dressing, sprucing and polishing; i.e. bringing an image into sharper focus).

Initial Layout: Establishing the perspective. The main axis is plotted and a gradient fill (main back light) is established. Initial construction lines allow us to plot and suggest the overall direction.

Block-In (Monochromic): The key forms and shapes are established in this shot. Ensure the overall composition reads as one shape, and that the key lighter and darker panels are established.

BUILDING A COLONY

Fig.03

Colour Palette (Warm and Cold): The establishing (low contrast) monochromic palette gets a warm and cold treatment. Areas of light are assigned warm colour values, and areas of shadow are assigned cooler tones. A low key light is used to allow for long cast shadows.

To unify the whole illustration – this is where the artistic license comes in – some suggested bounced light from local light sources (orange/red is used in this instance), and a fake bluish sky light (to gel the whole image as if it were within atmospheric conditions) is implemented. This is due to the decision to employ a primary blue-cyan colour, with a naturalistic yellow sunlight complementary colour scheme.

Colour Correction

The next aspect is to explore the overall colour of the composition. In **Fig.04** you can see how the change from a primary blue-purple shadowed area to a cyan-brown-orange

Fig.04

combination changes the whole mood and feel of the establishing illustration. Notice that only the far right aspect has this applied. This is due to the initial piece having a uniform colour palette established, and by adding a warmer set of tones on the right tells the viewer that there is an overall contrast to the piece, and suggests a global backlit light source (left).

In addition, we have taken the opportunity to add some minor object interest, such as a string of objects traversing from one end

of the cylindrical mass to another. These represent a collection of cargo and extension modules to help further extend and build the bridging structures to bring the two cylindrical structures together. Within this step, the suggestions of volumetric cast shadows and light are established as well. We will return and strengthen this aspect later on.

Local Colour & Lighting

Once the right colour palette is established we can tackle the window dressing aspect (**Fig.05**). This segment can bring much life and local hue variation to any image, and therefore cast interesting shadows across various forms and provide the clearer suggestion of abstract shapes and forms in an image. We can employ various methods, such as:

- Use of pin-point lights
- Neon glows (used judiciously)
- Repeating shapes and elements (suggest forms in perspective)
- Strips and bands of light and darker material

Lens Flare

The lens flare was once a key selling feature of early digital art, that eventually suffered from overuse and subsequently died a violent death. However, lens flares are back with a vengeance and in this instance can be justified.
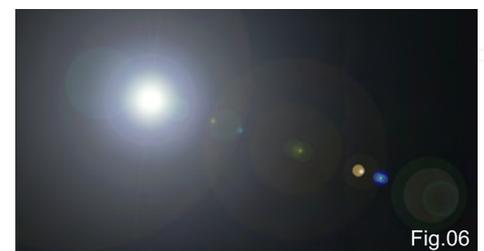
Fig.05
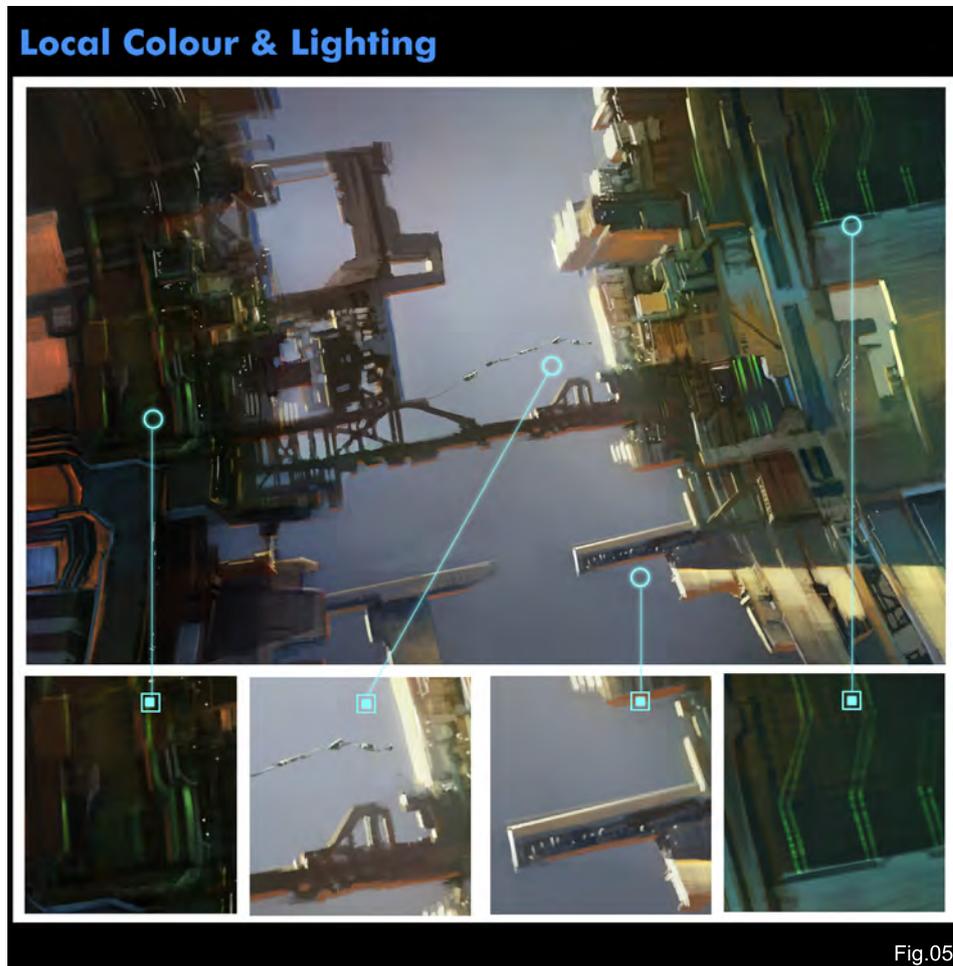
Fig.06

To use the lens flare (**Fig.06**), we make a new layer and fill it with a primarily black colour. Subsequently, a lens flare is plotted on, and using the layer blending options we set it to Overlay or Hard Light, to suggest backlighting.

Bloom & Volumetric Shadow

With the final lighting and colour integrated, the final aspect is to apply volumetric cast shadows and bloom. In this instance, the main light source is hidden in the upper left, and to suggest additional 3-dimensionality we can punch in further holes and prebuilt panels to create interesting plays of light and dark (**Fig.07**). Similarly, appropriate volumetric cast shadows across the large structures help to sell the overall image by suggesting the correct form and readability.

II: Inhabiting the Colony

In this second part of our final workshop, we aim to establish the first colonists living within a small segment of the space colony. The whole habitat ring has yet to be fully built. Over the

Fig.07

next few years and decades materials secured from strip mining of the local asteroids and surface of the moon go into the generation of space alloys, rare metals, water and resources for life in space. Each segment of the vast ring habitat has a thick exterior to provide effective radiation shielding; this is further provided by a thick half-mile layer of soil, concrete and life support systems.

The early colonists are to establish a small space city and farming community to research and develop a self sustaining community in space. The aim is to recreate an artificial land of verdant green plains, lakes and vast waterways that additionally ensure there are sufficient natural CO2 scrubbers, and humidity – therefore a sub atmospheric condition that is suitable for human life, once some basic adjustments are made (akin to living in high altitude).
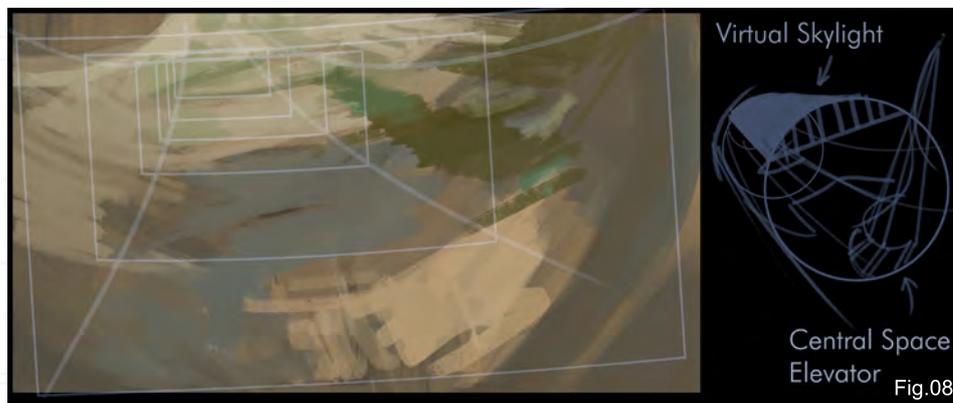
For the simulation of a 24-hour night and day cycle, a virtual halo sky light strip extends all across the inner side of the torus, with inhabitants never seeing a real horizon during the habitation of ISIS-1.

Farming Colony

The initial canvas involves exploring various compositions for the depiction of such a large colony. The idea involves a high bird's eye view, whereby the viewer is high above from an adjacent sky train leading towards the inner segment Zero-G spaceport (**Fig.08**).
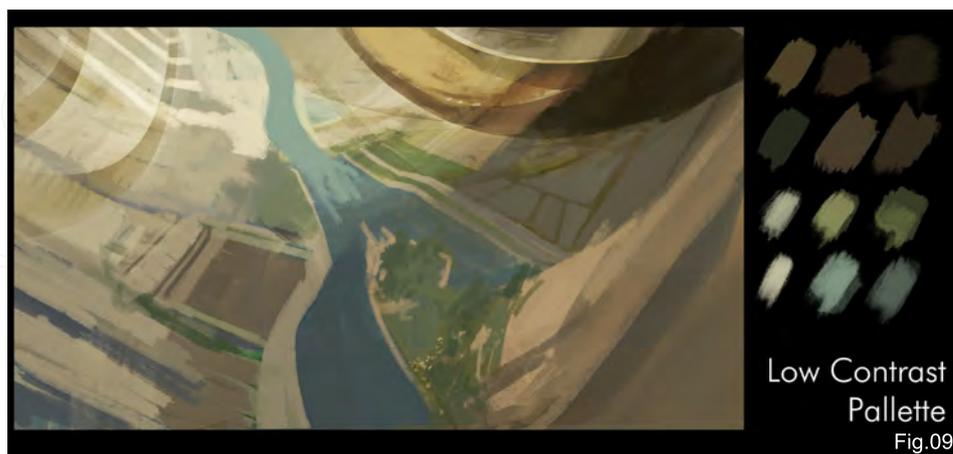
You can either choose to plot a curved perspective in by hand (I use the simple process of receding boxes plotted by hand), or to make your life easier a simple 3D torus block in can be employed.

Virtual Skylight
Central Space Elevator
Fig.08

Low Contrast Pallette
Fig.09

Palette

The next task is to establish a low contrast palette. In search of the old style of early space illustrators, we will aim to stick to a sky blue, yellow-green surface style of painting (**Fig.09**). The initial forms are not much to look at, and in this instance look like mud! The key is to stick to the plan and carry it out methodically. A meandering central waterway occupies the main aspect of this view, and curls slightly towards the top left. Repeating large shapes of habitat dividers can be seen in parallel on adjacent segments on the periphery of vision.

Central Sky Train Elevator

The next part of the illustration involves some struggle in defining the design and forms of the foreground (**Fig.10**). Essentially, this will be the base of the sky train that will curve and lead upwards into the spaceport (upper right).
The initial layout involves some sort of futuristic tower and materials, which was subsequently reforested with crags, low hills and plains. A central transport hub is initially blocked out, and in addition the suggestion of distant farmlands sloping away into the distance is established.

Initial Layout

ReForestation

Farmlands

Fig.10

WORLD BUILDING

Fig.11

Fig.12
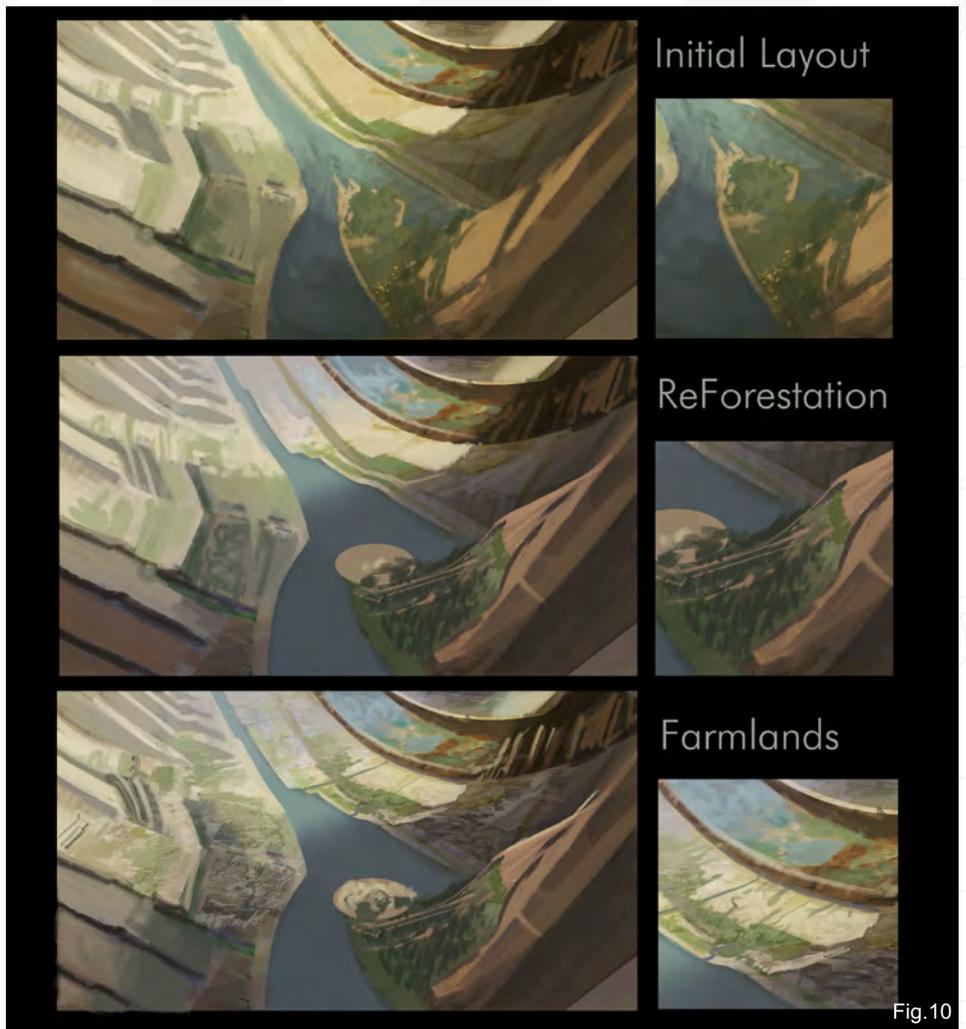
World Building

Once the general foreground details are established, we can go about and decorate the whole illustration with farmlands, lawns, forests and initial outlying buildings (**Fig.11**). (For inspiration, the various biomes seen in the Eden Project are used as reference – see **Fig.12**). In addition, various docks and waterway resorts are added to suggest various alternate methods of transport in this ring habitat. Fast-forward a few hours, and most of the illustration has been populated with small segments of farmlands, lakes, and waterways. Within each waterway,

care is ensured to establish a light, mid and dark side, to suggest depth and translucency (**Fig.13**).

In the far right corner, the initial block forms of a sky train are established, and the overall sweeping form of a curved perspective is ensured.

VFX Post-Processing

To complete this illustration, the whole image is saved and flattened, and the final aspects can now be attended to.

A simple Levels adjustment does magic to the overall image (**Fig.14**) – compare the initial green-tinged image (top), and the one with levels adjustment (bottom). We add an additional layer of aerial perspective and a light glaze of desaturated bluish fill light to gel the overall image.

VFX Sky Train

To bring the foreground object (the sky train) into sharper relief, various details require further attention, such as (**Fig.15**):

- Focal detail
- Motion blur (edges)
- Decals
- Thrusters

Once these elements are attended to, the final touches are really just to address various areas
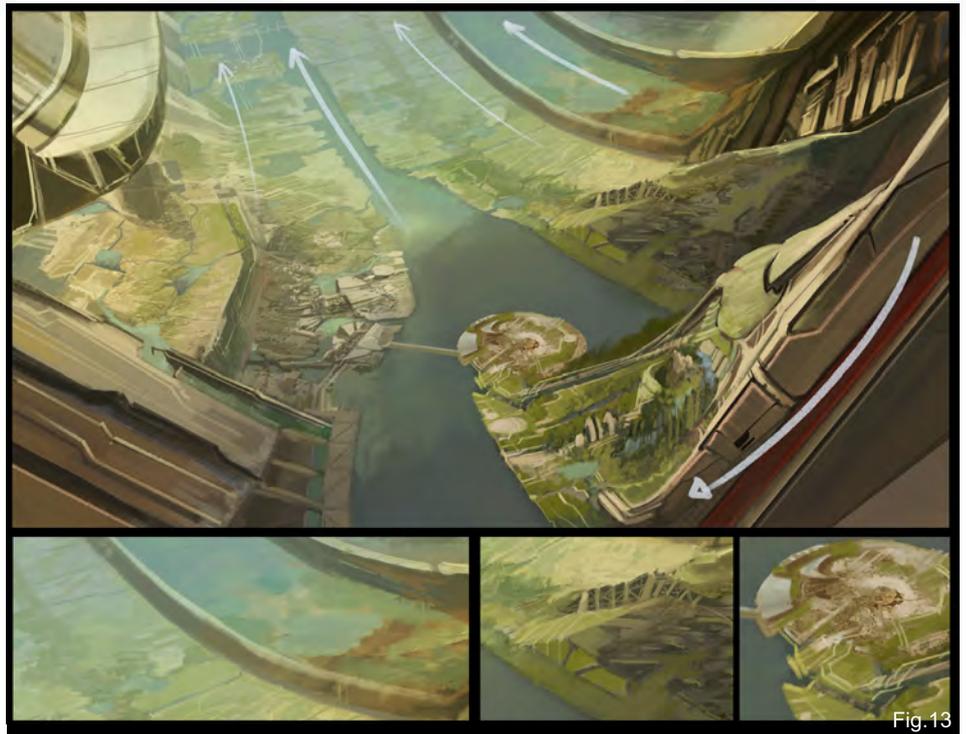
Fig.13
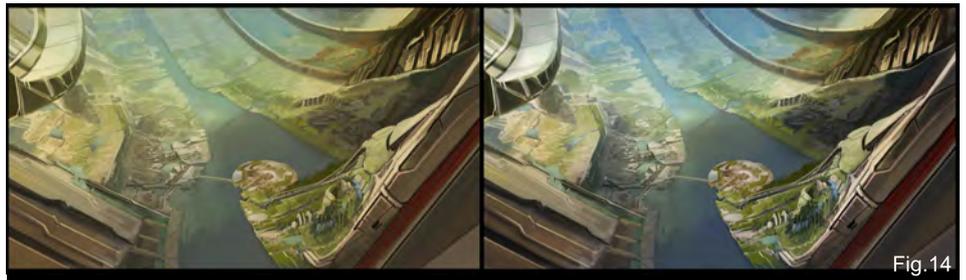
Fig.14

of deficit. This tends to happen when you have worked a few hours on an illustration and have become too accustomed to everything. It is useful to take a few minutes out, to walk about and do something else – i.e. give yourself a short break.
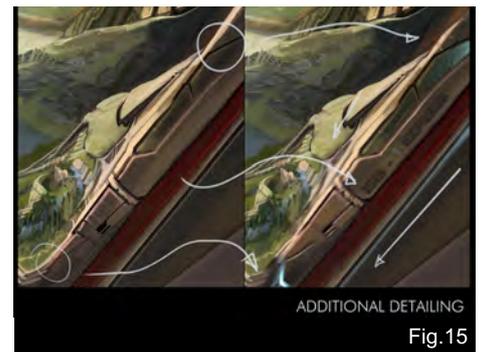
ADDITIONAL DETAILING

Fig.15

Break over! Let's take an objective look at the overall image (**Fig.16**). Looking at the illustration, I feel there are still some gaps to be filled, out with the brush and more lawn and greenery is added over various barren surfaces. Some highlights and reflective details on the sky train are worked over, and the translucent toughened glass cockpit is given some subtle highlights.

Fig.16

To complete this, our last space painting workshop, the illustration involves some final colour correction. This last stage also includes the addition of aerial perspective, the tidying up of various small details, and the addition of some motion blur via the use of the Smudge and Blur tools (for that personal touch!) on the far edges of the space rail, I ISIS-1 Express (**Fig.17** – Final).

Conclusion

We have now come full circle in our exploration of mankind's continued quest to explore, seek new life and discover the mysteries of the universe. Thank you for taking this journey with me, and may we meet again in the future.

Dr Chee Ming Wong

For more from this artist visit

http://www.opusartz.com

or contact

info@opusartz.com

Fig.17
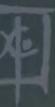
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"A lot of people ask me, "Tony, how do you do what you do? What's the secret?" And I tell them, "Deferment of gratification." Unfortunately, that doesn't come anywhere near 800 words, so I'll have to elaborate a bit…"

30 MINUTES
MAKING OF BY TONI FOTI

Toni Foti takes us through 1000 steps for creating his image "30 Minutes".

MAKING OF
30 MINUTES

Created In: Photoshop

A lot of people ask me, "Tony, how do you do what you do? What's the secret?" And I tell them, "Deferment of gratification." Unfortunately, that doesn't come anywhere near 800 words, so I'll have to elaborate a bit…

While the piece that I'll be walking you through today is an unforgivably busy and detailed one, I will basically just be using it as a vessel to illustrate the way I make all of my digital paintings (and some not-so-digital). All of my e-paintings are done in Photoshop CS2, but honestly I think my process is transferable to pretty much any non-Microsoft Paint art programme. Aside from being able to manipulate layers and move freely back in time at any point (I keep my number of history states pretty high), it's mostly just a matter of round brushes and smudging – lots of smudging.
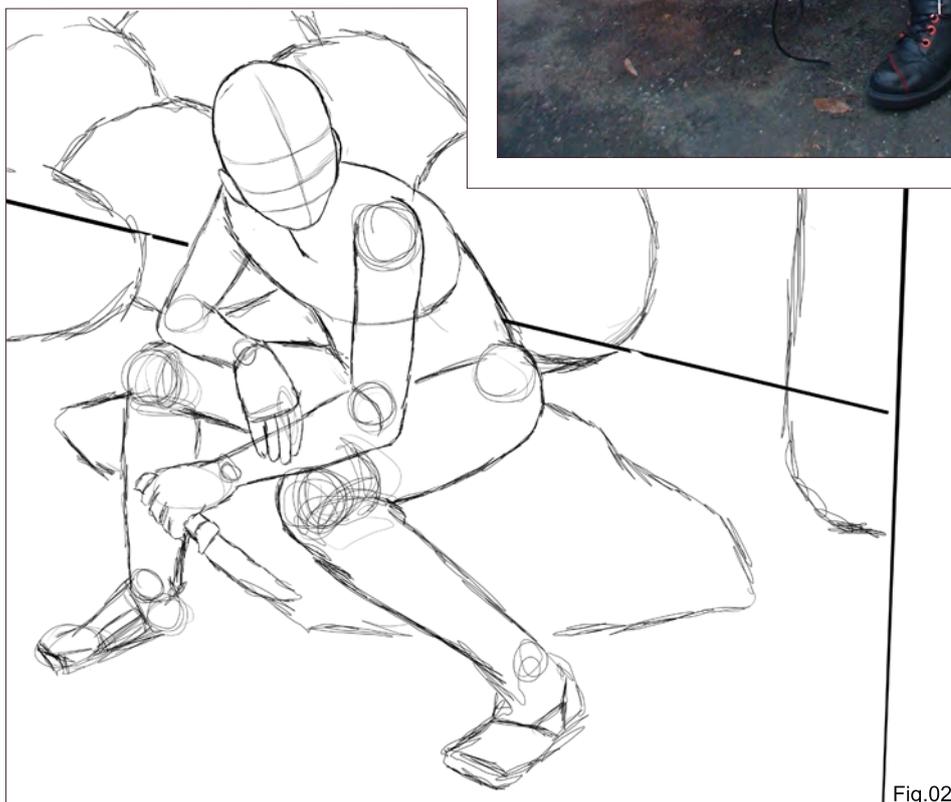
Fig.01

Fig.02
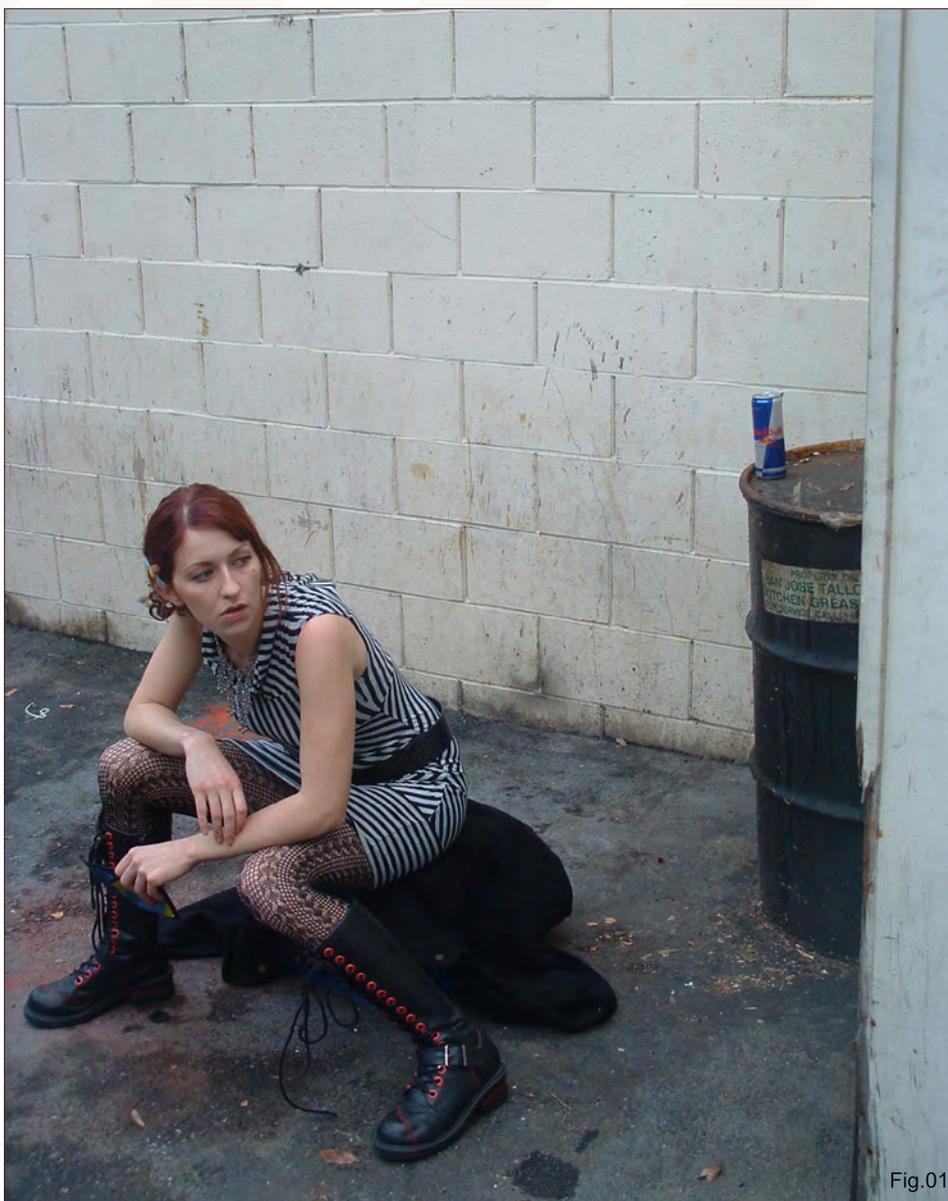
So let us now embark on an exciting journey of not using Photoshop to its full capacity!

Step 01

Come up with something. Does it sound interesting? Has your idea not already been beaten into the ground by other artists featured on your favourite websites/magazines? Have you made sure you're not just objectifying women? Cool, on to step two.

Step 02

Get a reference photo. Now, I know that many (if not all) of us artists have little to no friends, so you're going to have to either turn on the charm or come up with some money for a

model. I prefer the former, because part of being an artist includes having the income of a ten-year-old with a mediocre allowance. Channel Tom Sawyer and make your buddies feel like posing for a painting is an honour and not just free labour. Here you see my good friend Meghan (**Fig.01**) posing for my concept, and the absolute thrill of it is readily apparent on her face (honestly, I told her to make that face, but still).

Step 03

Now that you've got your reference photo, it's time to start drawing. As an artist, it's important to have at least some background in figure drawing. Community colleges are a cheap and awesome way to build up that skill. I personally use the geometric shapes method of blocking in the human form, but you can do it however you like (**Fig.02**). Draw the scene however it appears in your head, and do your best to keep everything as appealing as possible. You don't

Fig.03

necessarily have to keep everything balanced, but make sure that you use these early steps to figure out exactly what you want to do. Probably the most important lesson I've learned

as an artist is to figure out what I'm doing at the beginning of my painting, and not towards the end when every modification requires an extra four hours.

Fig.04

Step 04

Simple, but crucial. Now is the time when I figure out where my blacks are going to be (**Fig.03**). I learned how to draw using a sea of how-to tutorials on comic book art, and as a result I spend a lot of time figuring out where I want to direct the eye of my audience. Creating contrast is something I usually try and work out beforehand, and it hasn't let me down yet.

Step 05

Draw it out. Now I actually try and work out some of the details. I create a face, figure out a hairstyle, design the clothes, etc. Nothing too detailed, since none of this will appear in the final piece, but still draw enough to get a feel for the desired outcome (**Fig.04**).

Step 06

Base colour (**Fig.05**). Pretty simple stuff, but for a long time I used to worry about why my paintings didn't have the same harmonious feel of Michelangelo's. As it turns out, it's just a matter of using a base colour to paint over that brings it all together, and has nothing to do with the gigantic discrepancy in our abilities in general. Using brushes with lowered opacity over a base makes everything feel like it belongs together.

Step 07

Begin painting! At this point, I basically just try and figure out what colours are going where,

Fig.05

Fig.06
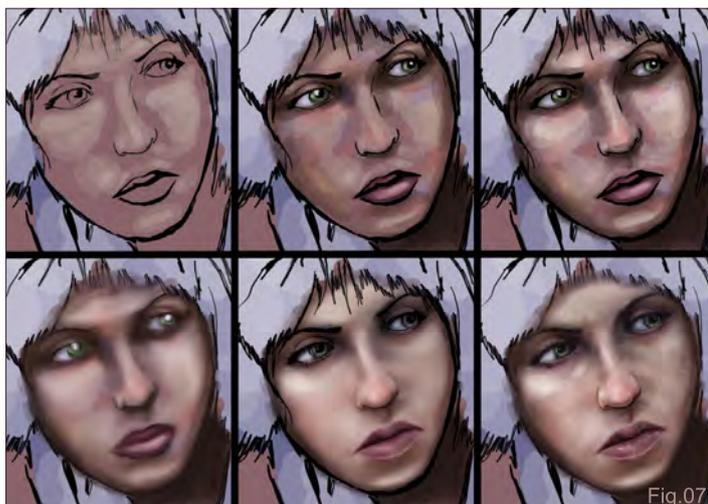
and make sure the colour scheme works for me. There is a lot of scaling down and squinting going on here, since I can pretty much gauge what a tiny, blurry version of the final piece is going to look like by looking at a tiny, blurry version of this basic layout (**Fig.06**).

Step 08

Fleshing things out. Now we get to the meat and potatoes of how I work. Basically, I build up shapes and colours with the round brush until I feel like there is enough variety (**Fig.07**). I start dark and work up my depth with lighter tones based on my light source. As far as colours are concerned, sometimes I'll just pick one at random (i.e., "Purple sounds good") and try and find some place to put it, but for the most part it's fairly planned out. Skin tones especially have a wide spectrum of colours, but

Fig.07

it's generally a good idea to add some variation in every place you can.

Step 09

Once the mishmash of colours and tones begin to look like a face beneath my initial drawing, I use the smudge tool to blend it all together (paying special attention to following the natural forms of the face), and once things are relatively smooth I get rid of the line art (see **Fig.07**). I then replace the sketchy, naïve lines of the original art with more controlled, painterly strokes. Finally, as a last step I add the texture. This is skin, so for the first time so far I whip out a brush other than the basic round. You can find an unlimited number of different texture brushes online, but I just have a basic one that lays the pixels out in a sort of "clogged spray paint can" fashion.

Step 10

Hair – simpler than you could ever imagine. The process I use for hair is my ultimate exploitation of the smudge tool. Basically, I lay down the darkest colour first, and then build up my highlights. Once everything is in place, I shrink the blend tool pretty small, turn up the strength to the upper 80s and just pull into the shape of the hair. I wish I could tell you that it was a refined skill honed over years and years of intense practice, but it really is that simple (**Fig.08**).

Steps 11 – 999

Repeat steps 07, 08 and 09 throughout the rest of the painting. I wish I could get into more detail about it, but I don't think the people at 2DArtist want to re-title their magazine, "Tony Bores You Out of Your Mind Magazine". As long as you keep building up those original ideas with colour and tone variation, blending, detailing, and texturing, you'll have my process down perfectly. It's a drawn out and tedious process, but as long as you've put enough thought into your Netflix queue you'll be fine (**Fig.09**).

Fig.08

Fig.09

Fig.10

2d
artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine

Issue 042 June 2009

"In every illustration, a certain degree of detail is expected, which you have to apply as an illustrator to make it "believable". By detail I mean the specific elements for certain subjects in certain environments."

IT WAS A FIERCE BATTLE

MAKING OF BY GEOFFREY CRAMM

In this article, Geoffrey Cramm shares the process taken to create his digital painting "It was a fierce battle", from the intial ideas stage all the way to the final image.

MAKING OF
IT WAS A FIERCE
BATTLE

Created In: Photoshop

Concept

The idea behind this image was actually triggered by a Stylised Animal challenge on the 3DTotal forums (**http://forums.3dtotal. com**), titled "Carnivorous Plant", almost a year ago now, I think. I started with a quick concept sketch (**Fig.01**) but unfortunately couldn't find the time to continue with the challenge. So, it stayed in the lost sketches archive for a while, until I happened to stumble upon it, some months later.

I liked the idea of a giant evil flytrap with a monstrous grin, versus a small, helpless prey. I decided to take a different approach and finish the sketch only in 2D. This way I could keep more control over small details and vegetation, as I'm not a particularly good 3D modeller. Painting it would definitely give a more satisfying result.

I found that the image lacked action elements and drama. The pose was boring and the

Fig.01

Fig.02

Fig.03
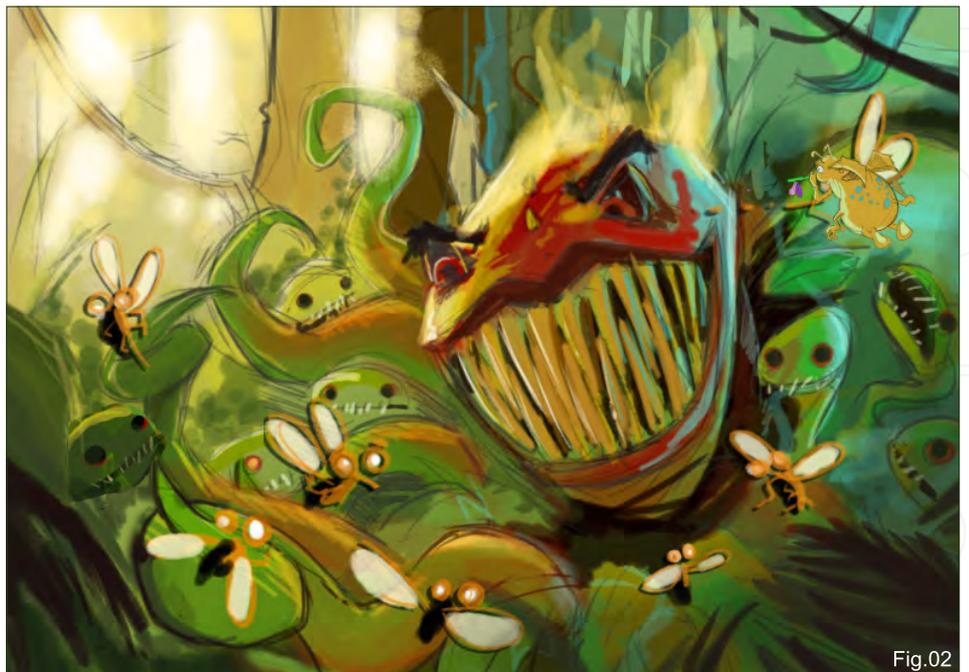
composition too straightforward. I redesigned the scene in a second sketch, changed the camera angle, added some flies, small flytraps and a bit of environment around it (**Fig.02**). It created some potential storytelling possibilities,

which can be an important aspect of an image. A good illustration should make the viewer curious about the subject. By creating a battle scene with multiple creatures interacting with each other, I tried to achieve that effect.

Fig.04

As you can see this image is quite similar to the final illustration, composition wise. I always like to keep early sketches as a base for the final image. If it feels right at the start, I tend to change as little as I can on that part. Of course I can always move some minor elements around, but the general composition often stays the same. Having the composition nailed, I then took some minutes to produce a few sketches of creatures flying around him (**Fig.03**).

Lines, Colouring & Shading

In the line art stage I created rough outlines for all of the final shapes (**Fig.04**). I then moved on to the colouring process. In this case, I started working on the head and kept working on the head without starting on other parts of the image. I often get a bit too focused on a particular part, without paying attention to the rest. It's probably a bad habit of mine, since it is easier to keep consistency in an image by gradually building it up step by step. Instead, I have to make everything else match with the "head" element, in terms of lighting and amount of detail. Can't help it though, it's hard to change a personal workflow!

I always start out with separate layers; one for the base shape, one for basic shading, and several for texturing and additional details. This

BASE SHAPES

Fig.05

way I work my way through all parts of the image; shading tentacles, leaves and creatures one by one, working layer by layer (**Fig.05 – Fig.09**).

The basic shading is done mostly with a hard round brush, with size based on Wacom pen pressure. To get a more textured touch, I also paint with a rough round bristle, set on dual brush with a chalk or pastel brush (**Fig.10**).

For the background textures I used a few custom brushes created by Goro Fujita, which I downloaded quite some time ago – they're great brushes for background foliage, bushes and dirt.

Light

There are two light sources in this image (**Fig.11**). I wanted to create a high dynamic light source on the left, from the sunlight shining through and highlighting the focus points of the image. This gave me the opportunity to create some translucent interaction with the tentacles and leaves. I then added a blue light source from the right, to give some variation in colour to the overall image. I didn't want to overdo it, so the second light source is quite subtle. To get some contrast and depth in the image I made the lower right parts of the image a lot darker, with deep shadows

BASIC SHADING

Fig.06

TEXTURING

Fig.07
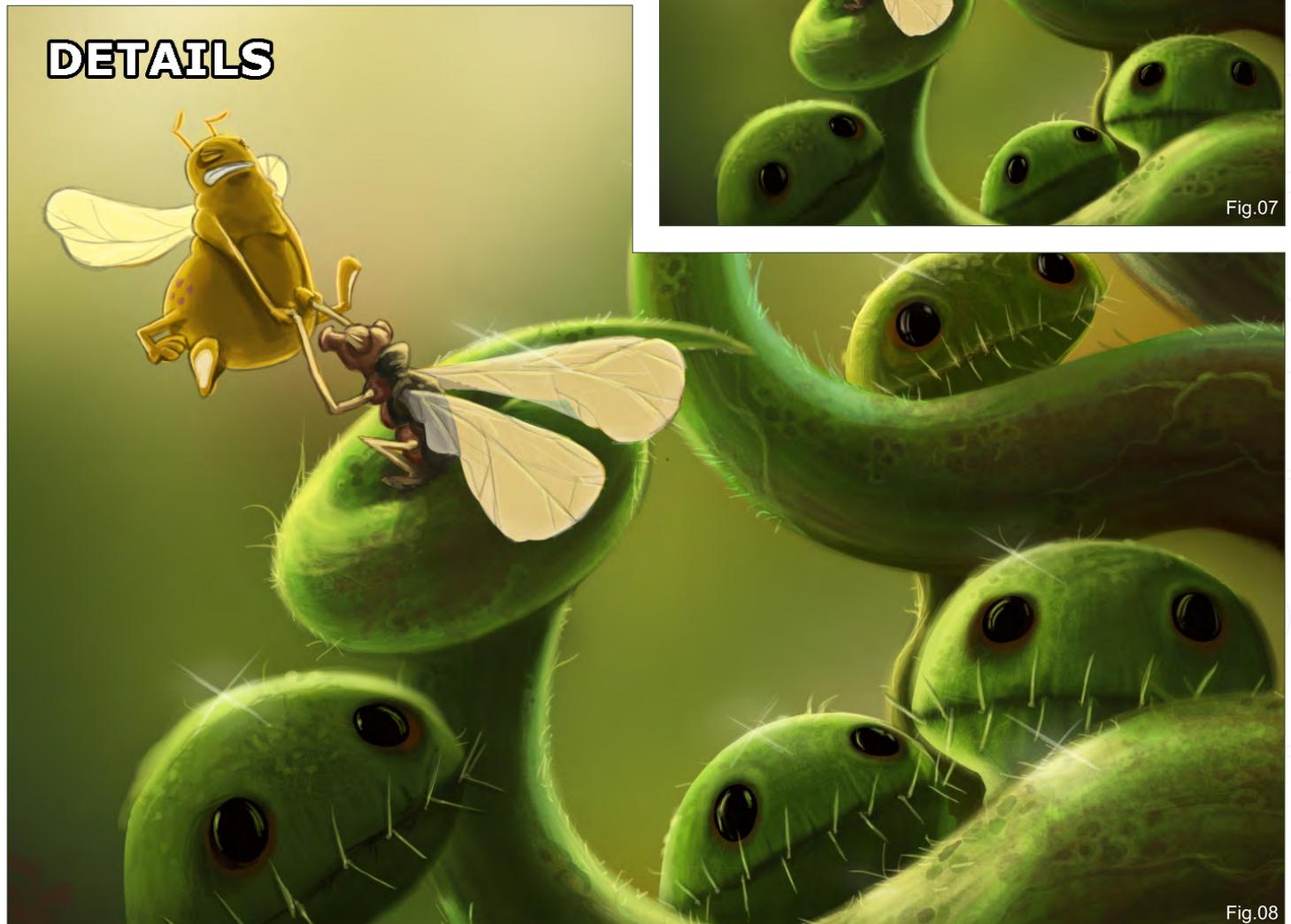
DETAILS

Fig.08

FINAL WITH BACKGROUND

Fig.09

between the tentacles. By doing this I tried to keep the viewers' eyes within the image, circulating between the Flytrap King and the flying creatures.

The Importance of Detail

In every illustration, a certain degree of detail is expected, which you have to apply as an illustrator to make it "believable". By detail I mean the specific elements for certain subjects in certain environments. If you paint an attic, you add dust particles and light beams shining through the cracks. If you paint a robot, you paint rust on the metal, dirt stains, scratches and worn out edges, small highlights on the shiny parts. In this case, I had to create the details you'd expect from a jungle and the creatures in it. Moisture, beams of sunlight, dirt on the Flytrap King and his teeth, highlights on his gums, dripping saliva, small hairs on his tentacles, etc. As I said, these details are

very important, but a lot of them are easily overlooked. It's all about setting the right mood and creating an atmosphere.

The original image was done completely in Photoshop CS3, and its resolution is roughly 3500 by 2400 pixels. As a final touch I like to cheat a little by adding a Smart Sharpen filter on the flattened result, to get a slightly crispier

look. It really helps to make small details, like highlight spots, stand out. Enjoy!

Geoffrey Cramm

For more from this artist visit:

http://www.geoffreycramm.nl

Or contact:

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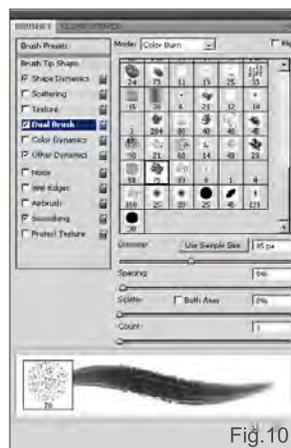
Fig.10

Fig.11

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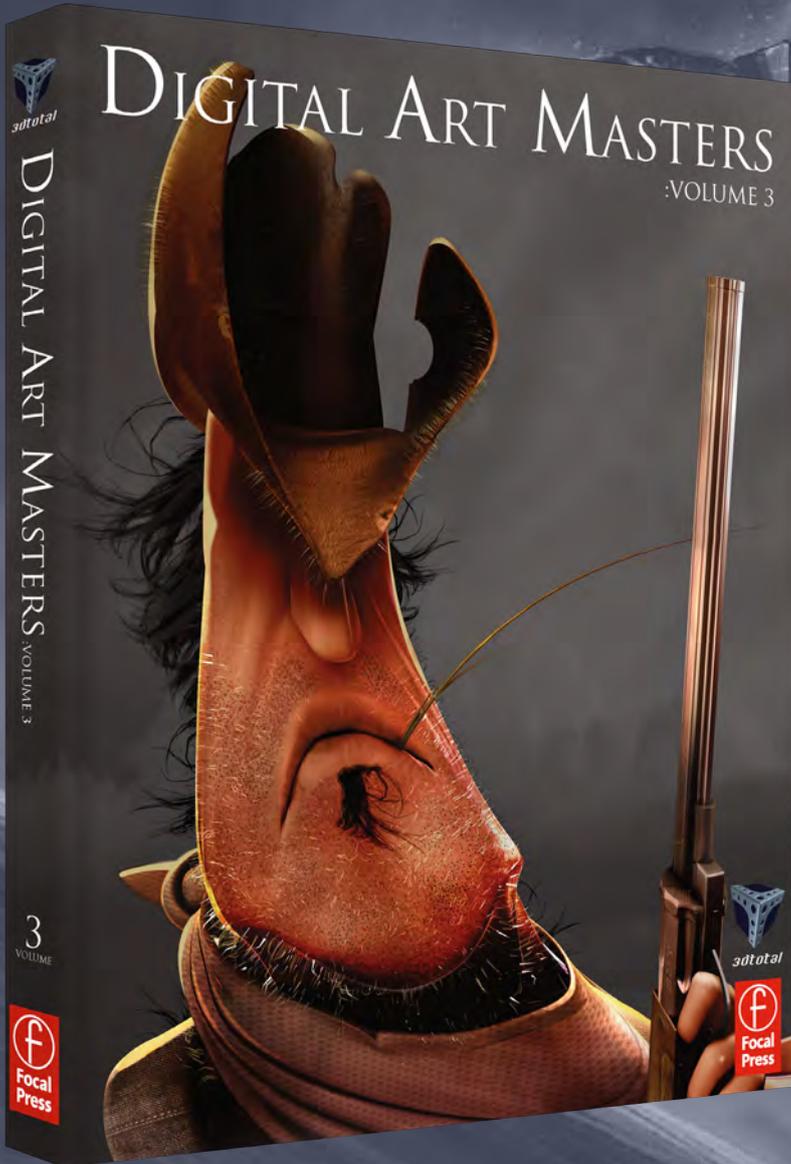
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This book is more than just an artwork book. Not only does it feature full-colour, full-page images, but each artist has given a detailed description, in their own words, of the creation process behind each piece of published artwork. And they've done it especially for this book!

This month we feature:

"Break Away"
by John Wu
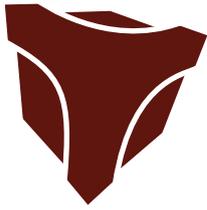
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