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ANIMATION

How to start painting your best-ever character designs, backgrounds and stories!

INSIDE!
The story of the lost female concept artist
15 storyboarding tricks to create compelling art
Louie del Carmen and Armand Serrano speak!

FUTURE

ISSUE 165

GO FIGURE! PAINT ENGAGING, APPEALING CHARACTERS WITH PERNILLE ØRUM

Welcome to…
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Ah, animation. It's always a rip-roaring edition when we feature this theme. I just can't fail to be energised by this buoyant and colourful medium. In this issue, there are so many amazing teachers and so much advice and inspiration… it's going to blow your minds!

Please remember though, that all this advice won't be of any use to you – yes you! – if you don't act on your ideas after reading this magazine. Make sure you engage with what these artists are saying, get out there and try some of the ideas yourself. An idea will only come alive when you make it happen by picking up a pencil, paintbrush or stylus.
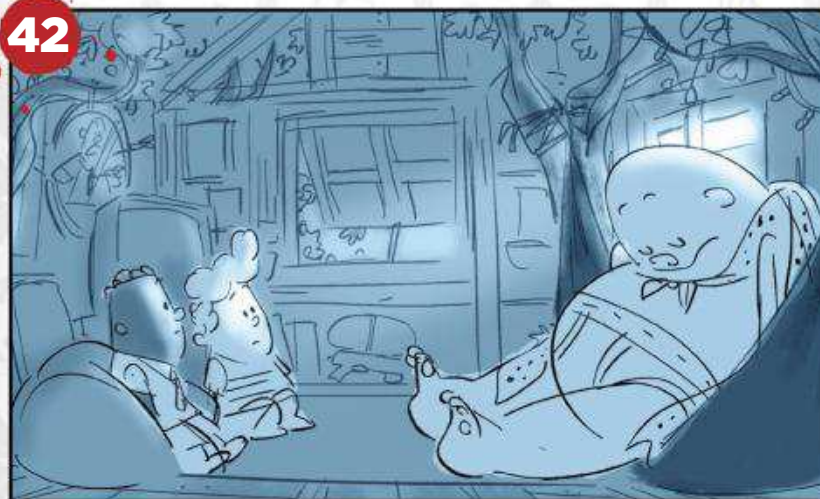
Another way to remind yourself to create art is to sign up for our weekly art newsletter! It'll arrive in your inbox stuffed full of art instruction, advice and offers. See the link down below to sign up.

Also, if you want a copy of Rebelle 3, the natural media painting software worth $89.99, you can get it for free when you subscribe to ImagineFX. By subscribing you'll also be guaranteed not to miss any of Patrick J Jones' new eight-part, figure-drawing workshop series which starts in two issues' time!

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

EDITOR'S CHOICE Three of my top picks this month…

42

Contents

GET HOLD OF OUR
NEW-LOOK BINDER!
56

32

Artist Portfolio
ARMAND SERRANO
"It's a tool to keep my passion burning…"
Armand on his personal work

42

Artist Portfolio
LOUIE DEL CARMEN
"Styles don't get old, they just get recycled"
Louie's green approach to art

20
Get more from conventions

26
Artist in Residence: Nathan Fowkes

FREE REBELLE 3 WORTH $89.99 – PAGE 4!

Sketchbook: Genevieve Tsai

Engaging background

Render in greyscale

Quickly pose your characters

Get better at sketching

Sequential storytelling

Workshops

Traditional Artist

Resources

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Get hold of this issue's videos and custom brushes by visiting **https://ifxm.ag/animation165advice**

COVER WORKSHOP

OVER 5 HOURS of video tutorials from pro artists to watch and learn from!

Watch how to render characters from a greyscale foundation

In David Ardinaryas Lojaya's two-hour video he reveals the rendering secrets that he used to create this month's fun-packed cover art. There's more pro advice in his workshop on page 58.

WORKSHOP

Paint a detailed background

See how Nick Kennedy paints a detailed setting that pulls in the viewer, through his use of light and colour. His workshop's on page 64.

Step up your pose game!

Bader Badruddin wastes no time as he puts a cartoon character into a series of energetic poses, using Maya. More on page 72.

PLUS! Clip from Goro Fujita's training video, Taking a Break

5 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING…

DAVID'S SCATTERING BRUSH
This brush enables David Ardinaryas Lojaya to create colour variation and add details.

NEMO
Nick Kennedy uses this brush to develop subtle textures. He tells us that he once used it to paint a fish.

PORE BRUSH
Another of David's bespoke brushes, which he uses to paint pores and other skin details on his characters.

COMING SOON...
NEW SERIES ON FIGURE DRAWING!

Master artist **Patrick J Jones** begins a brand-new eight-part workshop series on the fundamentals of figure drawing, starting in **ImagineFX issue 167**!

SUBSCRIBE
BY 12 SEPTEMBER
TO GET THE
WHOLE SERIES!
Turn to page 4

DON'T MISS IT SUBSCRIBE NOW!
GET REBELLE 3 WORTH $89.99! TURN TO PAGE 4

FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Winson Tsui

LOCATION: Canada **MEDIA:** openCanvas, Photoshop **WEB:** www.quirkilicious.art

Freelance illustrator Winson's interests range from video games and cartoons to anime. His art tends to feature lots of movement and a strong narrative.
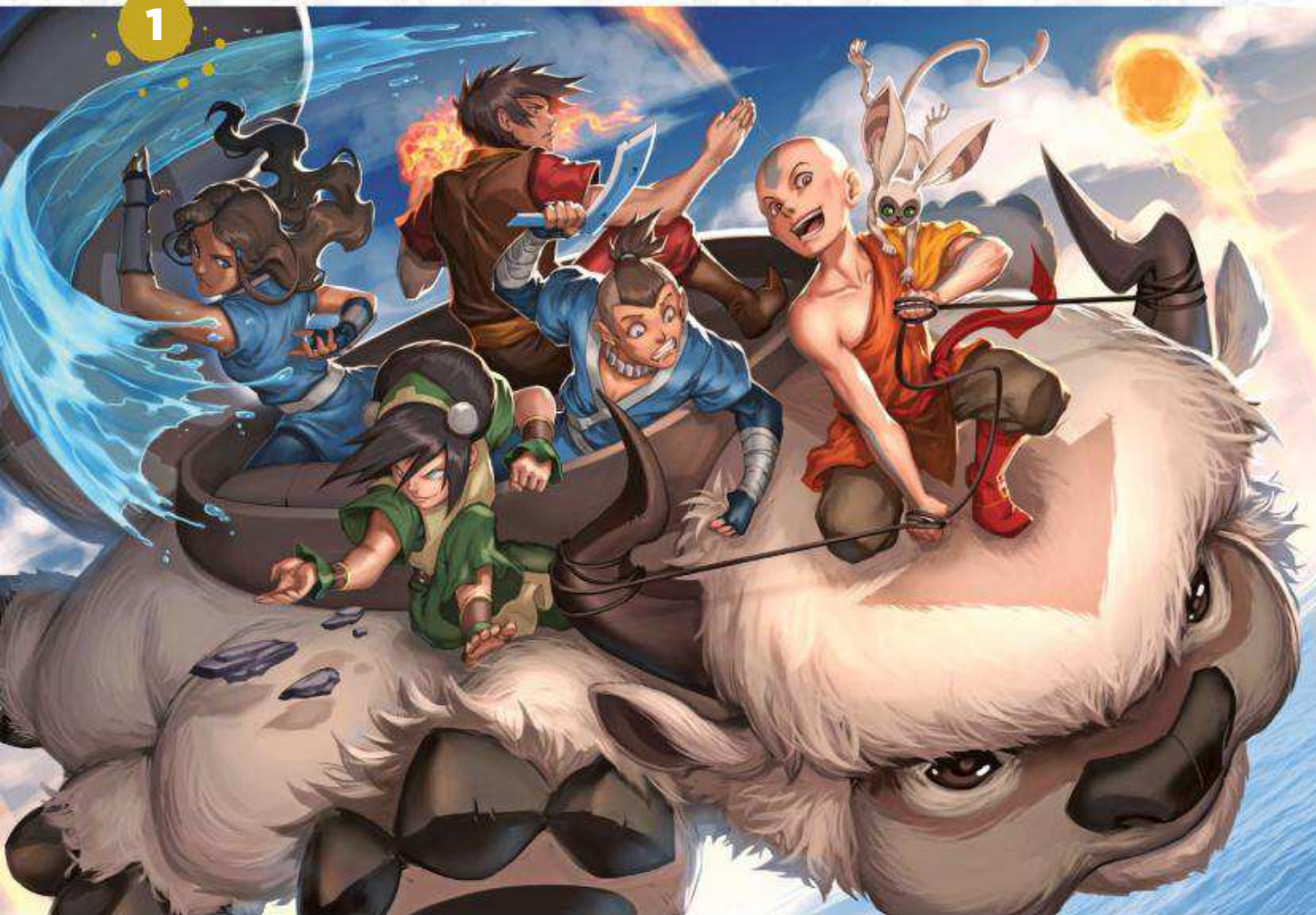
1 THE LAST AIRBENDER
"As a creator, Avatar was inspiring for me because it was the first animated series to successfully appropriate a Japanese animation style into a western cartoon."

2 DEITY
"Here's an original character that I redesign every couple of years. Deity is a half angel/demon being that I came up with during high school. The idea isn't too interesting, but I feel each iteration illustrates my growth as an artist."

3 ALLIANCE AND HORDE
"World of Warcraft was a huge part of my life in my teens, and I wanted to pay homage to that. I also pulled some characters from Heroes of the Storm."

ARTIST OF THE MONTH

4
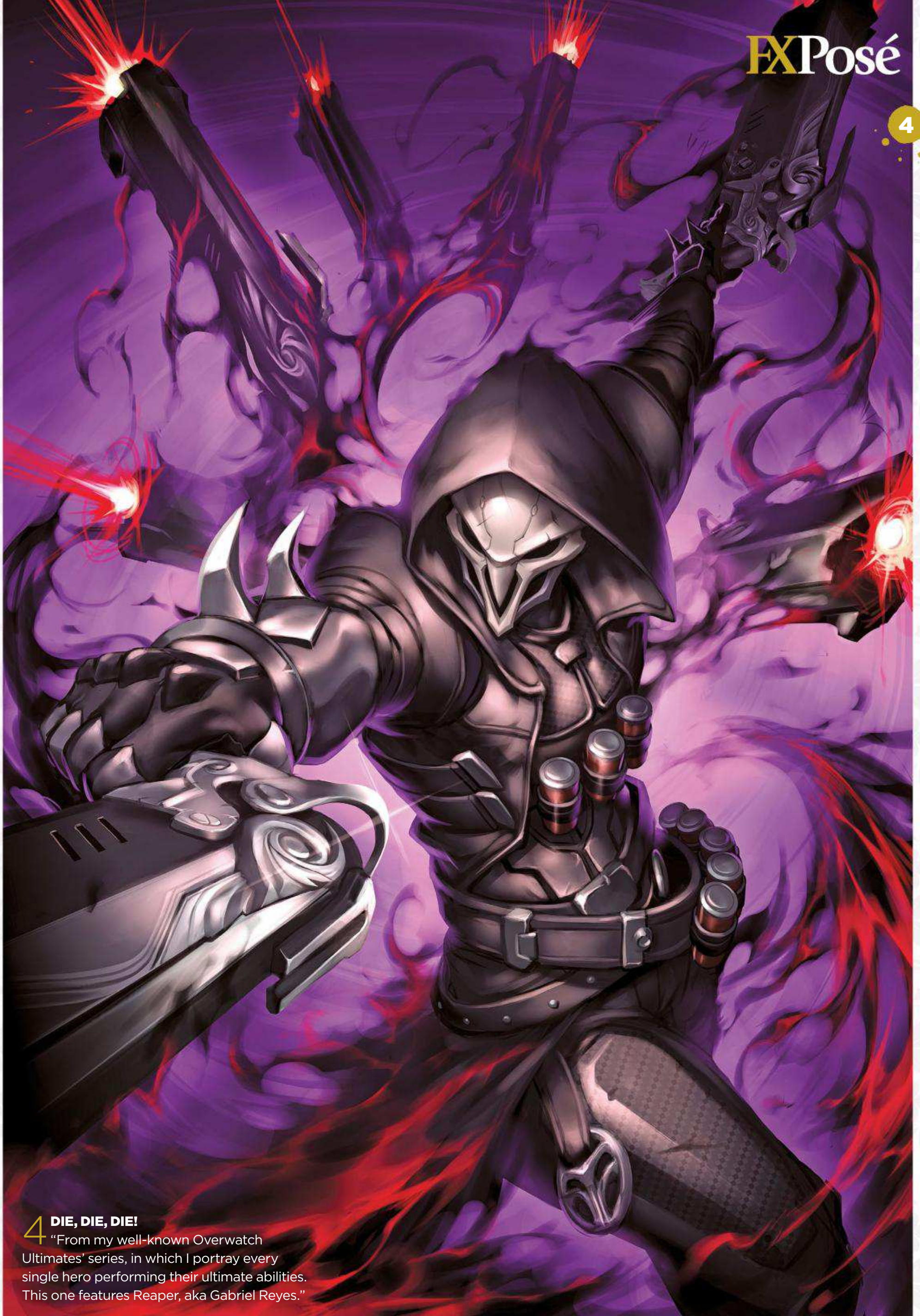
4 **DIE, DIE, DIE!**
"From my well-known Overwatch Ultimates' series, in which I portray every single hero performing their ultimate abilities. This one features Reaper, aka Gabriel Reyes."

Ali Hassanein

LOCATION: Canada **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.alihassanein.com

"I adore the functionality of digital painting, but also love the gritty texture of an old oil painting," says illustrator Ali. "I try to approach digital painting like traditional painting, to maintain that organic aesthetic."

1 IMPERFECT
"I was looking to paint an android, but I wanted it to be almost entirely human in appearance with just a hint of synthetic, rather than a clear 50/50 hybrid."

2 QUEEN
"Inspired by Ruben Ireland's Girl with Finches, I decided to paint some bees worshiping a human as their queen. The hair was both a nightmare and a delight to paint."

3 HOLLOW
"I was trying to capture the feeling of being trapped in your own shell. Breaking through your own barriers can be difficult, but well worth it in the end."

4 DIGITAL BLOCK
"In the eyes of the public, there's an inherent stigma attached to digital art. I hope there comes a day where the word 'digital' no longer holds us back."

FXPosé

Aleksandra Manastirska

LOCATION: Bulgaria **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Clip Studio Paint **WEB:** www.instagram.com/thealexim

Aleksandra is a student at Manchester Metropolitan University. "Growing up with Bulgarian folklore guided me towards the fantasy horror genre," she says.

1 DRAGON
"With this illustration I really wanted to portray the bond of friendship between a girl and her dragon."

2 ONE WITH NATURE
"I was keen to illustrate a Shaolin monk, but set in a fantasy world. In this piece he's mid-meditation, gathering spiritual energy and connecting with the other world."

3 CREEPING
"This is my take on dark fairy tale imagery – I wanted it to be menacing and nightmarish. I was inspired by the themes and characters in the Dark Souls series."

4 SKELA'S LITTLE ONE
"This piece is a portrait of the character Skela and one of her hatchlings. I combined both traditional and digital media to create this piece."

Want to submit your work? Visit http://ifxm.ag/getinifx

1

2
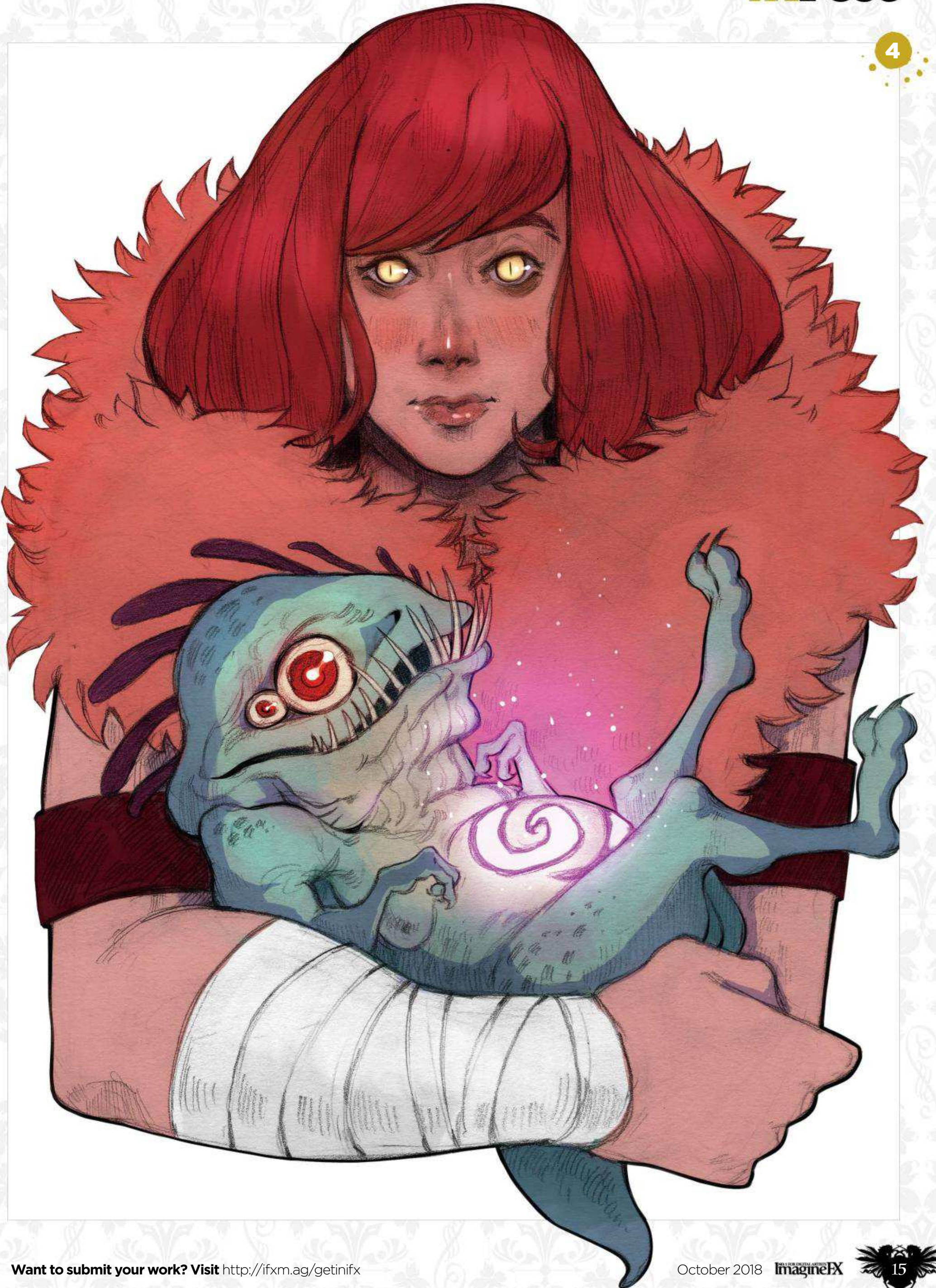
1 TRUNKS REDESIGN
"This piece won a character design challenge on Facebook. I try to get involved every month, to practise my drawing skills."

2 TIGERRERNS
"This is a personal piece. I find it relaxing to draw in black and white – this way I can focus on line weight, ink marks, design and patterns."

Boell Oyino
LOCATION: France **MEDIA:** Painter, Photoshop **WEB:** www.instagram.com/boelloyino

Boell spent three years at an indie video game studio before going freelance, working for clients in animation, video games and comics. He's currently working with a fashion brand for an upcoming show.

3 **CAPTAIN GREYJOY**
"Due to problems with my sight, I had to change my way of drawing slightly. My new approach makes use of bigger bushstrokes."

4 **AMORAMORT QUEEN**
"I pay a lot of attention to my figures' poses, and like to borrow trends from dance and fashion in my artwork."

5 **BASUTETTA**
"I painted this for a character design challenge while I was in Japan visiting my big sister. Although drawing conditions were really hard, the result turned out great."

FXPosé

Shelly Mullan

LOCATION: Ireland **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.shellz-art.com

Shelly is a concept artist who lives and travels on a boat. In her spare time she creates personal illustrations, along with the occasional bit of fan art.
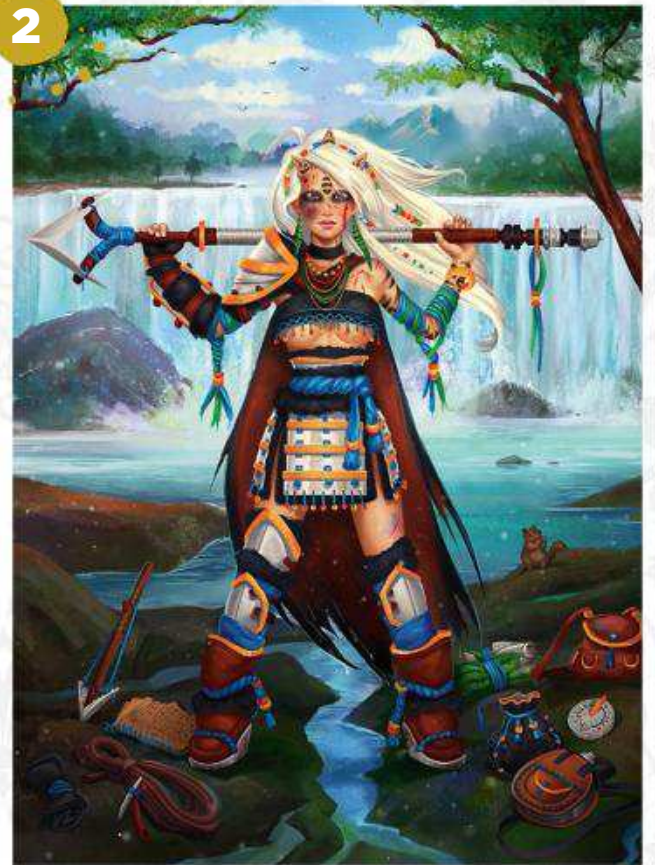
1 LIEN-HUA
"Just as the prophecy foretold, Lien-hua quickly became the sole protector of the land. She guards the temple's villages from the stone giants that dwell within the mountains."

2 HUNTER OF BEASTS
"The lone traveller prepares for the seasons ahead, foraging for supplies and fishing for food. The waterfall provides a tranquil place to rest and recover."

3 DREAMCATCHER
"These half-machine, half-human lifeforms are a necessity in the slums of their world. They travel to the uninhabitable areas of the planet to illegally deal in dreams and nightmares."

4 FAWN PRINCESS
"The woodland princess weeps as the storms of winter begin to tear away the greenery of the forest."
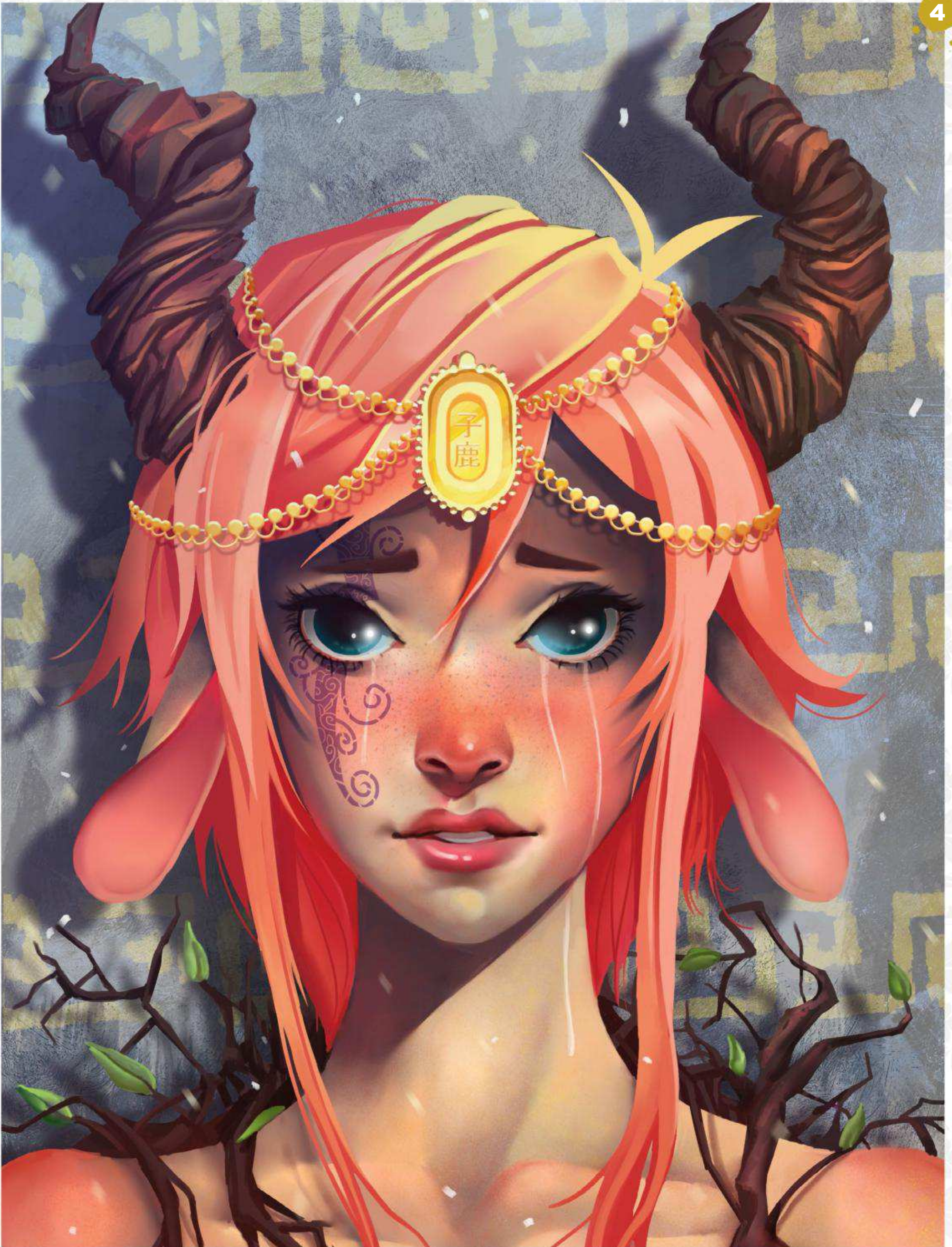
As an event organiser, Jort van Welbergen tries to facilitate the best convention experiences, including "learning new tools and techniques that will help you boost your career even further, and finding that first job."

How to get the most out of conventions

Pros of cons Fun, sociable and good for your career… conventions have it all. Top artists tell **Dom Carter** why you need to attend

Conventions have gained momentum over recent years and come into their own. Take San Diego Comic-Con, whose attendance rate has almost doubled over the past 15 years to rival the numbers of people going to mainstream music festivals.

If this is good news for convention organisers, it's even better news for artists. Not only do they have more people to network with and sell to, they also get to increasingly feel like they're part of a community. A sensation that all too often can seem out of reach.

"Making comics can be a very solitary existence," says convention veteran, illustrator and NC Comicon

Stock control is key for artists selling at cons. "Don't over-order. Better to take a sensible number and sell out than drag piles of unsold stock home with you," says Matt Dixon.

Glen Southern attended conventions for fun before realising their career potential. "Going as a presenter or exhibitor can help grow your following and lead to some amazing friendships."

co-owner **Tommy Lee Edwards**. "Conventions are a great way to get out of your creative dungeon and spend some time with friends, colleagues and fans. A good convention experience leaves me feeling inspired, refreshed, and energised to do my best work."

Jort van Welbergen, one of the organisers behind The Netherlands' Playgrounds Festival, agrees. "The beauty ➤➤
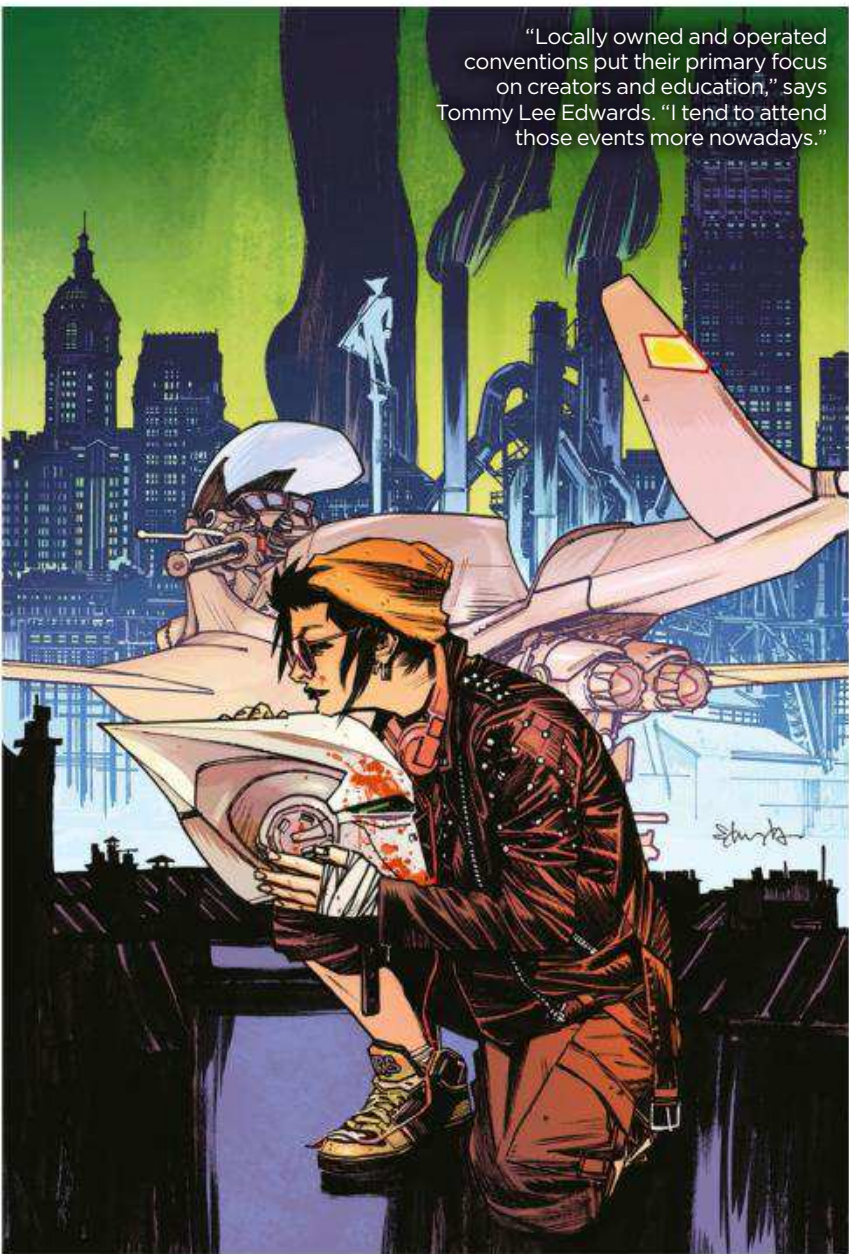
"Locally owned and operated conventions put their primary focus on creators and education," says Tommy Lee Edwards. "I tend to attend those events more nowadays."
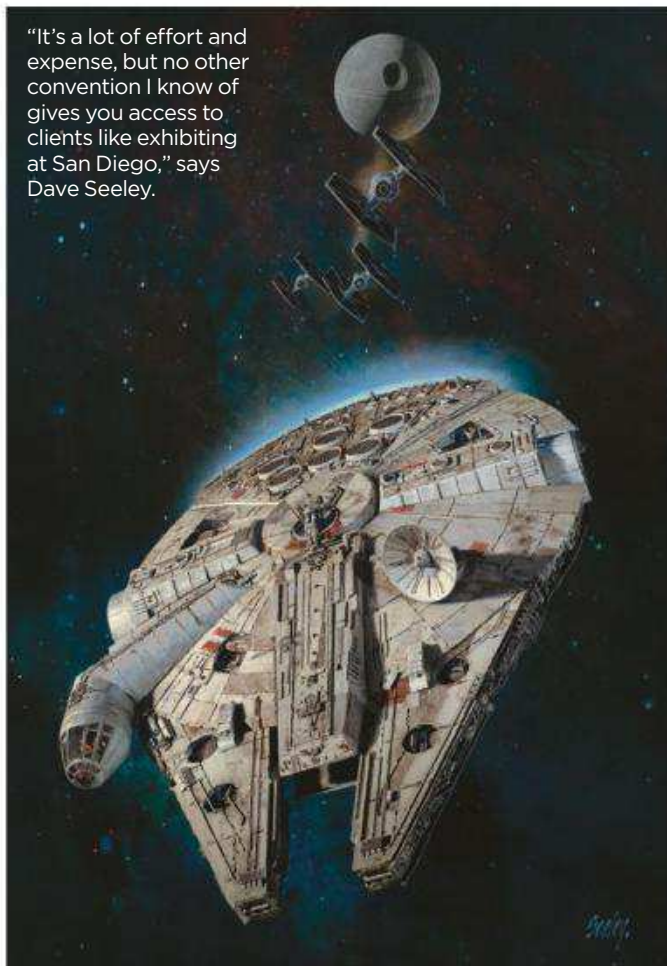
"It's a lot of effort and expense, but no other convention I know of gives you access to clients like exhibiting at San Diego," says Dave Seeley.

> 66 A good convention leaves me feeling inspired, refreshed and energised 99

"My best tip for getting the most out of an event is to take lots of notes during the talks and try out the different techniques and approaches they discuss when you're back home," says Jort.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT
MATT DIXON
The artist shares what it takes to run a successful convention stand

What groundwork should traders do?
Visit at least one convention, ideally the one where they'd like to exhibit. This is an opportunity to see how other traders set up their tables, get an idea of the sort of customers who visit, how busy the event is, and to chat with traders and visitors to get their advice and opinions on the event.

When is an artist ready to host a stand?
A consistent presentation is more attractive and easier for visitors to understand and identify with you, than a sales table with a variety of different styles and subjects. If you're still finding your style, it's probably better to wait before taking the plunge.

Any preparation advice?
Practise your table setup at home. At the very least get a tablecloth, bed sheet or a length of material to cover your table. Consider investing in some display materials such as picture frames, book stands or small shelves that can sit on your table. Make a clear price list. Your convention will be much easier if you already know how you'll arrange your display when you arrive.

And what about finances?
Don't spend too much money on your first event. Some good-quality prints in clean, simple frames standing on a plain table covering is a perfectly acceptable display and it'll be much easier to turn a profit if you keep your costs low. The same applies to stock. Don't over-order.
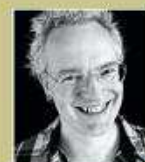
Freelance illustrator and concept artist Matt can be found running stalls at lots of UK conventions.
www.mattdixon.co.uk
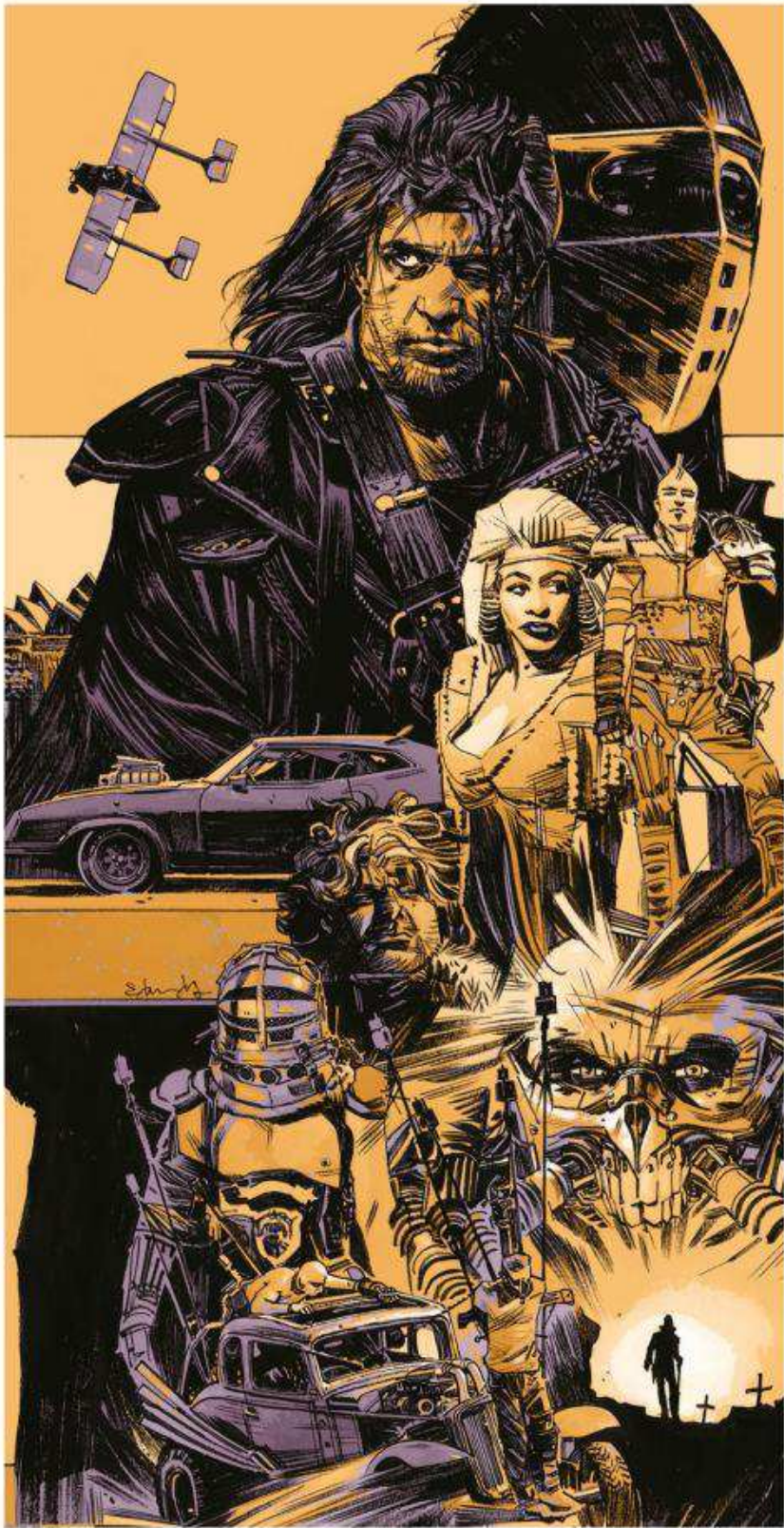
As a speaker, Glen wants to bring something new to the table: "New software, new hardware or a new technique that will hook people and hopefully get some attention."
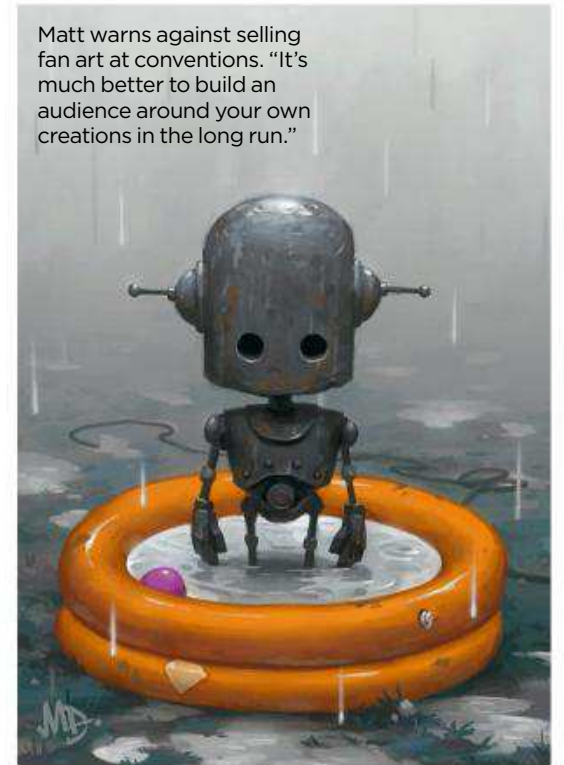
Matt warns against selling fan art at conventions. "It's much better to build an audience around your own creations in the long run."

> 66 Be nice, but also be persistent. Failure is part of the succeeding process. Keep knocking on the doors 99

show a diversity of fluency, including figures, environments, tech and creatures. You really need to do it all, to avoid being a niche illustrator. Ask pointed questions for specifically targeting feedback. Be extremely receptive to any criticism… even if you feel innately defensive. Good criticism is gold, and if the reviewer feels you're too sensitive to hear it, they'll devolve to platitude and you get nothing to help you evolve."

"Bear in mind that organised portfolio reviews can be very busy," says illustrator and concept artist **Matt Dixon**. "The people reviewing the work have seen many portfolios and may well be tired from the previous night's party, so don't include irrelevant work and do whatever you can to be memorable. Do something different. And make sure you have a card with your contact details to leave with them."

MAKE A STAND

To get the most out of a convention, Tommy recommends reading up on the event and thinking ahead. "Go to a convention with a goal in mind. Do you want to sell prints and books and take lots of commissions? Cool – you'll probably be stuck behind the table and often working in your hotel room into the night. I've done that when I needed to make some money."

This might sound like all work and no play, but setting up a stand at a convention is a valuable way to find your audience and get your art noticed by people who might not see it

➡ about these events is that artists, aspiring artists, freelancers and employees from all over the world all come together in one place. It's like getting a glimpse into what this industry stands for, what it represents, what kind of people work in it, and what their hopes and fears are."

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

One of the main lures for artists when it comes to attending festivals is the opportunity to get their portfolio reviewed by their heroes. However, if the thought of offering your work up for review sounds a little too intimidating, illustrator and San Diego Comic-Con exhibitor **Dave Seeley** has some advice to keep in mind.
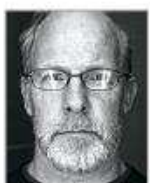
"I'd say keep your folio to 10-15 strong pieces that

Tommy underlines the importance of educational convention panels, "The NCC film festival often features the filmmakers. As an artist wanting to improve their skills, attending events like this are pure gold."

Having a business card and website link is key," says Tommy. "And make sure that it's a proper website and not DeviantArt or Tumbler or some crap!"

Conventions aren't all work, says Tommy. "I visited the most recent Heroes Con in Charlotte just to check out all the great things being made by amazing people."

Dave says being organised is the key to getting the most out of a convention. "It's easy to get caught up in the party. Make lists and keep calendars and reminders."

otherwise. Making some money doesn't hurt, either.

"Arranging to exhibit at a convention is usually a simple matter of contacting the organisers," says Matt. "Most conventions have a website with all the relevant information, and while a few may have restrictions on what goods can be offered for sale, in most cases the events are open to everyone. Some conventions offer special artist or small press areas, which can be cheaper than a standard sales table and also means you're grouped with similar traders."

MEET AND GREET

Setting up a stall is one way to meet people, but nothing can beat getting out onto the floor and talking to potential collaborators and clients face-to-face. Breaking out in a cold sweat at the thought of approaching strangers? Don't worry. Digital sculptor, Vertex speaker and workshop host **Glen Southern** is here to offer some advice.

"Just be nice. No one likes arrogant or loud people. But also be persistent. Failure is part of the succeeding process. Keep knocking on the doors. Not everyone will have time for you at events, but no one will have time if you don't go."

As for doing something different to get noticed, Glen has ditched business

cards for a decidedly more up-to-date approach. "I like to make sure my contact goes into someone's phone with a picture of me or what I do. It can be deleted, but I can't be idly tossed into a trash can on the way home.

"In this world of online social media overload I can't stress how powerful it is to walk up to someone, give eye contact and converse," continues Glen. "Face-to-face meetings mean more and people will remember you if you are polite, passionate and also have an amazing portfolio on your tablet or in your sketchbook."

"Much of the networking is after hours over meals or drinks, so don't

Small gestures as an event organiser can have a big impact. "Just pointing people towards other people and introducing them to each other can work wonders," says Jort.

hide in your hotel room," says Dave. "If someone you think is connected responds to your work, don't be afraid to ask for introductions to people who could potentially help or hire you."

With so many like-minded people in one place, there's no reason to be wary of diving into conventions and making the most of them. "Coming to these events feels like coming home," says Jort. "It's like everyone just speaks the same language, is on the same level. It's the one place where people truly seem to understand you. It's like finding a second family, and they all accept you in an instant for who you are."

Mallory O'Meara's new book aims to give back Milicent Patrick her rightful place in film history.

As an artist and animator, Milicent Patrick was a pioneer for women in the movie industry.
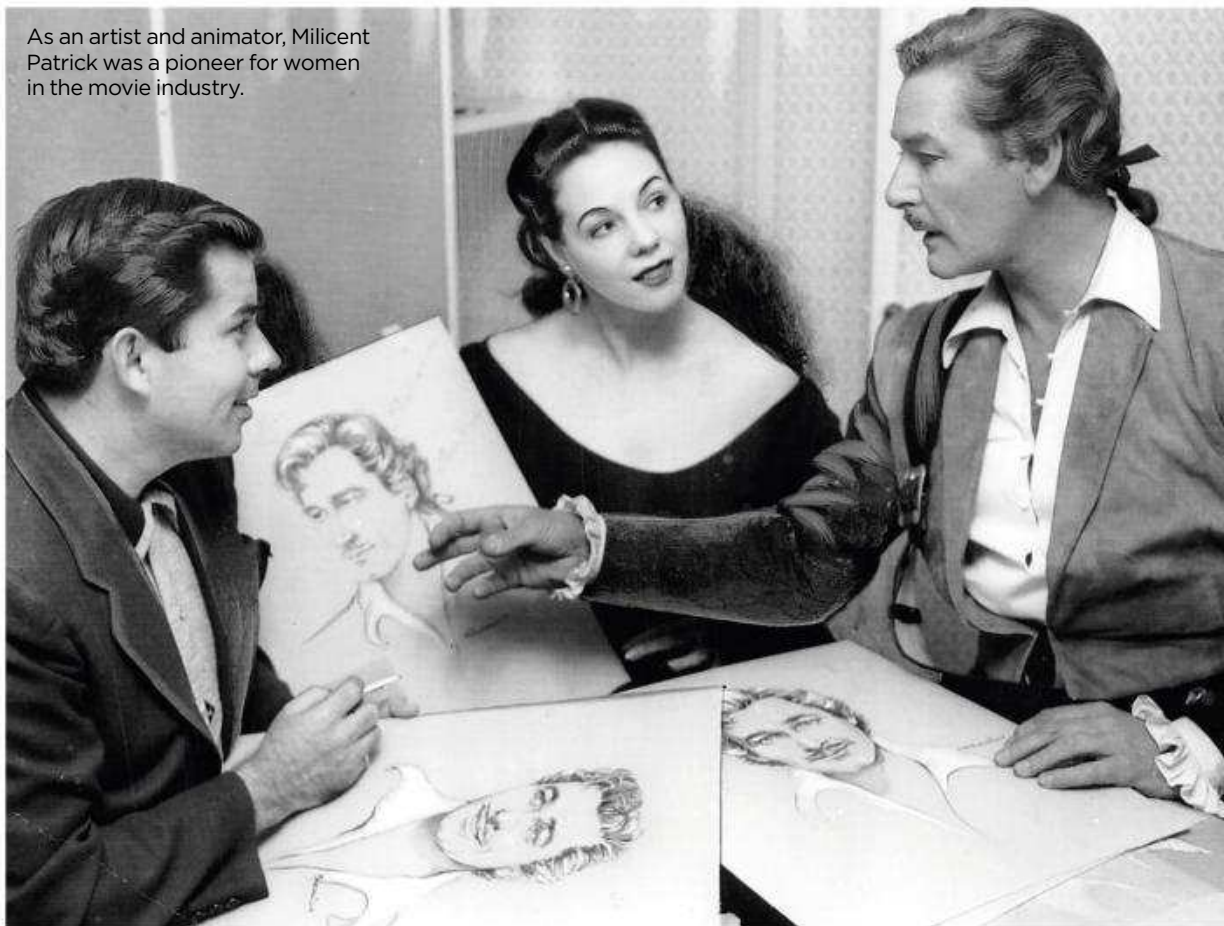
"Milicent was the first woman I'd ever seen behind the scenes on a horror movie," says Mallory.

A monstrous injustice

Costume drama A jealous male colleague denied creature designer Milicent Patrick of her place in horror-movie history. A new book sets out to right that wrong…

Milicent Patrick was a true pioneer. An actress, special effects designer and one of Disney's first female animators, she most notably designed the monster for 1954's Creature from the Black Lagoon.

However, her career was cut short after a jealous male colleague, Bud Westmore, claimed credit for her work. Now though, she's getting the recognition she deserves, thanks to a new book from Mallory O'Meara entitled The Lady from the Black

Photo by Allan Amato 2018

Lagoon: Hollywood Monsters and The Lost Legacy of Milicent Patrick. **Mallory** works as a screenwriter and producer for Dark Dunes Productions, and learning about Milicent when she was "a teenage monster nerd" was a huge inspiration to her. "It made me realise

❝ **Milicent getting recognition for her achievements is decades overdue** ❞

there could be a place for me in the male-dominated world of horror," she says. "Milicent getting recognition for her achievements is decades overdue."

If Milicent hadn't suffered discrimination, Mallory believes she would have continued to apply the same skills that made The Creature from The Black Lagoon so exceptional. "I'm not saying Monster on the Campus (1958), which had the same director, would have been less of a lacklustre cheesefest if Milicent had designed the monster... but I'm not *not* saying it."

"I hope Milicent's story will encourage more potential female filmmakers to see there's a place for them too," says Mallory.
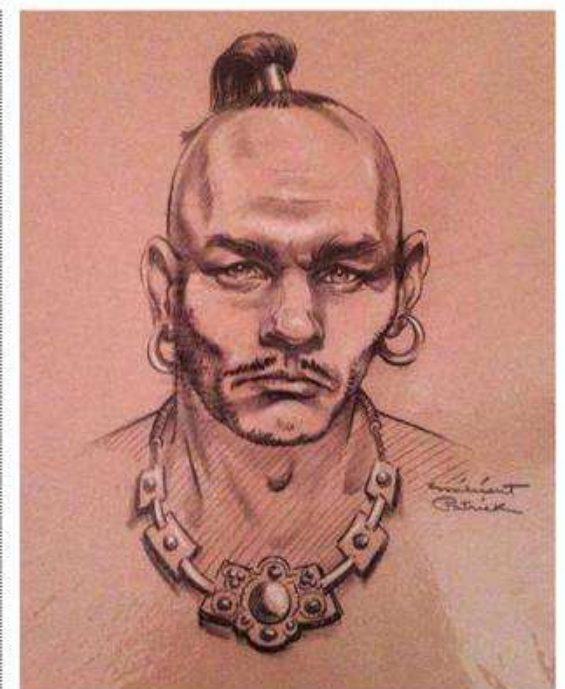
A sketch by Milicent of the television and film actor Leo Gordon, who often played supporting roles.

Mallory hopes her book, which will be published by Hanover Square Press and is available for pre-order now at **www.malloryomeara.com/book**, will encourage more women into the horror industry. "What happened to Milicent is still happening over six decades later," she says. "No woman has designed an iconic monster since Milicent did. That needs to change."

Jumping from digital to traditional art and back again keeps me fresh, productive and happy. That's what my studio is all about.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Nathan Fowkes

Double the fun The digital animation artist and traditional painter makes the most of both mediums in his LA studio
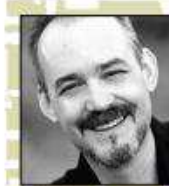
Welcome to my studio! I live on the farthest north-east reach of Los Angeles, where the city ends and the neighbourhood rolls up into the local canyons. It's the peaceful life that I've always hoped for and finally acquired in recent years, after working in-house at DreamWorks Animation for 15 years.

The studio is a separate building in my backyard and I work here full time, freelancing primarily on feature animation projects. I often work for local studios like Disney and Paramount Animation, but do my work at home, driving in for key meetings and art reviews.

My schedule is not an orthodox one, I do work from nine to five, but it's the overnight nine to five! I sleep through the morning, then take care of business meetings, calls and ➤

> **❝ I often work for local studios but do my work at home, driving in for key meetings and art reviews ❞**

My backyard garden studio is a vast improvement over the 30-mile LA commute that I used to make daily.

I surround myself with sketchbooks. I've collected a variety of them from all over the world, including one that was custom made for me in Florence as a gift from a local art school.

My favourite tools for sketchbook work are black Prismacolor pencils, bold ballpoint pens and especially Pentel #101 brushpens. I make sure to keep them all within easy reach.

This carving is a memento from a painting trip to Peru where I visited Machu Picchu and ended up lost in mountain fog, but eventually came away with some memorable sketches.

Under my computer desk is a hidden pullout table. I bring it out when I need drawing and painting space while looking at reference on the monitor.

Here's a blow dryer holster for the watercolours that I do on the pull-out table.

These are field and studio paintings being prepped for an upcoming gallery show!

This taboret side-table has a water container holder built into the top. This avoids the pain of knocked over buckets of dirtied water!

emails during the afternoon with the actual painting time mostly happening after my family is settled down for bed.

The studio is equipped with a digital painting setup on one side and a traditional painting setup on the other. I love working with both, and like to blend the two by keeping sketchbooks nearby so that I can quickly rough out ideas in pencil or marker. I then scan my sketches into Photoshop for development and full-colour treatment.

And my sketchbooks are my best creative hack! Whenever I need to take a break or even procrastinate about my commercial work, I'll break out one

of my many sketchbooks and splash around some tone or colour to try to come up with something interesting. I take a break from art by doing art! It's what keeps me productive and prolific enough to post something on social media 365 days a year.

FIGHTING THE ELEMENTS

My traditional painting setup includes oils and acrylics, but I've primarily settled on watercolours and gouache as a favourite medium. My movie painting career began in the early 90s before digital painting was a thing. We painted everything in acrylics and I've loved the medium ever since, but

I keep a selection of sketchbooks within easy reach at my computer desk to rough out ideas or to just take a break from staring at the screen.

when I tried to take them outdoors to paint landscapes I had to fight them permanently drying on my palette and in my brushes. I painted with oils throughout art school and still really love them, but struggle with their portability outdoors and harsh solvents in the studio.

> ❝ Whenever I need to take a break or procrastinate about my commercial work, I'll break out a sketchbook ❞

Extra strong dark chocolate is what fuels the late-night working sessions.
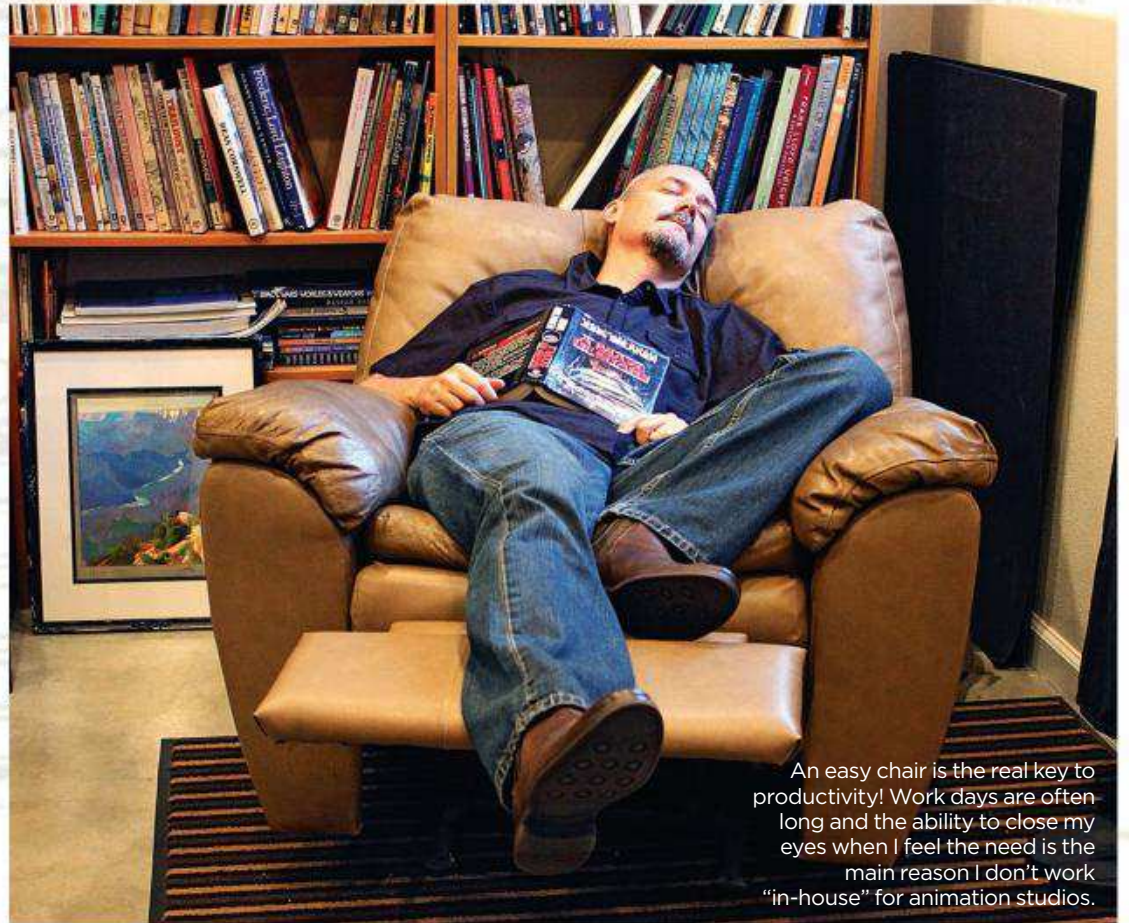
An easy chair is the real key to productivity! Work days are often long and the ability to close my eyes when I feel the need is the main reason I don't work "in-house" for animation studios.

FROM DREAMWORKS ANIMATION

THE
Prince
OF
EGYPT

1 9 9 8

It's fun to put up movie posters of films I've worked on. I make sure to get signatures on each from our team of artists and designers.

Here's a work-in-progress. All pigments are from watercolour squeeze tubes and I use opaque white gouache as needed. To achieve a strong range of colour I like to have two versions of each colour hue, for instance a golden yellow like cadmium yellow deep and a greener yellow like Lemon yellow.

So watercolour and gouache became my go-to medium for painting outdoors and has now come back into the studio as my primary medium here as well. You can see my preparations for an upcoming gallery show of my plein air and studio paintings!

For me there's no such thing as one perfect medium or studio space, the grass always feels greener on the other side of the studio and it's always right there within my reach!

Nathan is an animation artist with credits on 12 feature animated films and a consultant on theatrical design for AAA video game studios. Additionally, he teaches in his native Los Angeles and online at Schoolism.com. Nathan's work can be seen at www.nathanfowkes.com.

The studio has shelf after shelf of useful art books, but the secret truth is that they're quickly forgotten in the glow of my beloved science fiction novels!

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England

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DAZ artists

This is a response to the letter in issue 163 concerning DAZ 3D. I believe there's an audience for articles on DAZ 3D. As an amateur artist on a budget, I've used DAZ 3D and Manga Studio 5 (now Clip Studio Paint) for years as the basis of my work, and I think there are a lot of pluses to this approach.

Kelvin Gumbs at Black Sun Comics has done interesting work with DAZ 3D as a primary tool in the creation of his graphic novel. Black Sun: The Longest Night. It's a tremendous example of what's possible through this approach, and would make a great subject of a workshop in my opinion.
Blackbird, via email

Reader Blackbird uses DAZ 3D and Clip Studio Paint to create characters.

Claire replies *In the past I've found it difficult to find artists who use DAZ 3D, so thanks for the info on Kelvin Gumbs. I'll definitely check him out!*

Yes please to 3D

I wanted to say thanks for including the two workshops on working in 3D in issue 162: Model a Scene for a Paint-Over and Character Creation in VR. As someone who's always been too intimidated to start teaching herself 3D modelling, it was encouraging to see the steps taken broken down so thoroughly!

And to weigh in on the Q&A section debate, I personally always enjoyed reading through the section, even if the published questions were never relevant to what I was working on. I actually kept a list of the questions and what issues they were in, so I could find them if I ever got stuck!
Amanda Fisher, via email

This ZBrush workshop caught the eye of Amanda, who's keen to learn the ins and outs of creating 3D art.

Claire replies *Amanda, wait… you kept a list of the Q&A questions and the corresponding issues that they were in? Now, that is amazing! I need this list for myself! Thanks for your comments, especially about VR and 3D, I hope it's given you the push you need to try it for yourself.*

What to do, what to do…?

I've been a Canadian ImagineFX reader for many years. I especially like your manga-related issues. I love how in-depth, but not hard to follow, this magazine is and has helped me considerably over the last few years.

Is it better to diversify and know many abilities (such as 2D, 3D, traditional, digital, and so on) or is it better to specialise in only a couple of areas? And does an arts degree of some measure make you more popular than those who are self-taught?

I ask because I'm a self-taught artist. I know Photoshop but prefer Clip Studio Paint, and have various other tools under my belt as well. Should I focus on one or two art programs, or continue adding to my belt? But I have no degree and am wondering if I should have one in order to be seen as a proper artist. I want to know so I can be prepared to try and get into a graphics career doing what I love to do – draw!
Lee Knickle, via email

Claire replies *Lee, these are million dollar questions! In terms of getting an education, I hear about as many artist who are schooled as those who are self-taught. An artist's popularity depends on how good they are, not whether they have a qualification. As for diversifying, I'd suggest you focus on getting better at what you love, rather than quickly branching out into different areas. You'll soon discover where your heart lies and what you should focus on next. It can seem like a race to get everywhere and know everything right now, but no one successfully learns this way. Skill takes time for good reason and people will be drawn to your work if it's delivered with passion and love. Good luck!*

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FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention

Ninejia @Ninejia.Artist
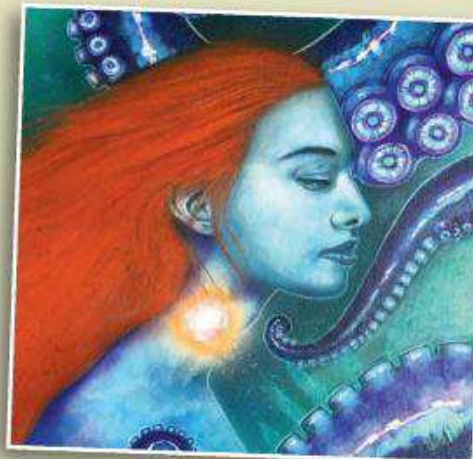
Randy Debono @debonoart

Guillermo Alonso Navarro @guillermo.alonsonavarro

If you've created art that you want us to shout about simply tag us on Twitter or Instagram, or find us on Facebook!

MULAN
"Mulan was the very first feature I worked on and this painting was done to pay homage to the film's 20th anniversary this year."

LIZARD ATTACK
"I'm inspired by the Orientalist painters of the late 1800s. This speed painting was done in that vein, but with a fun twist to it. It's always good discipline to create these small, quick pieces."

Artist Portfolio

ARMAND SERRANO

The Filipino artist tells **Gary Evans** how he went from failed civil engineer to successful Disney animator, and why it's time to go freelance…

A rmand Serrano spent 13 weeks, without much sleep, working up a new portfolio. He made three copies. The first, he took to Warner Bros. – the California studio that had just finished 1996 film Space Jam. Armand sat down with the man who "filtered" portfolios. This man turned the pages, closed the book, and then shook his head. "Sorry, kid," he told Armand. "You don't have it."

Armand emailed the other portfolios. After a week, DreamWorks phoned. The company liked his work. But because Armand worked mainly in TV – at Philippine Animation Studio and Hanna-Barbera's studio in Manila

– DreamWorks wasn't sure if he'd cut it in film. So it invited him in for a test.

The phone rang again a couple of hours later. Armand had sent the third portfolio to Disney, who loved it. Disney offered him a job in Florida, and because of his TV experience, it wasn't an entry-level role, but a position as key assistant. "I guess," Armand says, "the rest is history."

HOLLYWOOD WAS A LONG SHOT
Armand's mother, a teacher, likes to say Armand started drawing at two years old. He grew up in Manila. His dad, an accountant, would bring home used papers from work so Armand could draw on the "clean side".

NEED FOR SPEED
An image from Armand's collection of speed paintings. No matter how busy he is with work, he makes time to create personal pieces.

MERIDA
"I wasn't sure what title to name this piece. But I always love the personality of Merida from Pixar's Brave, especially her curly hair, so that's what the title ended up being."
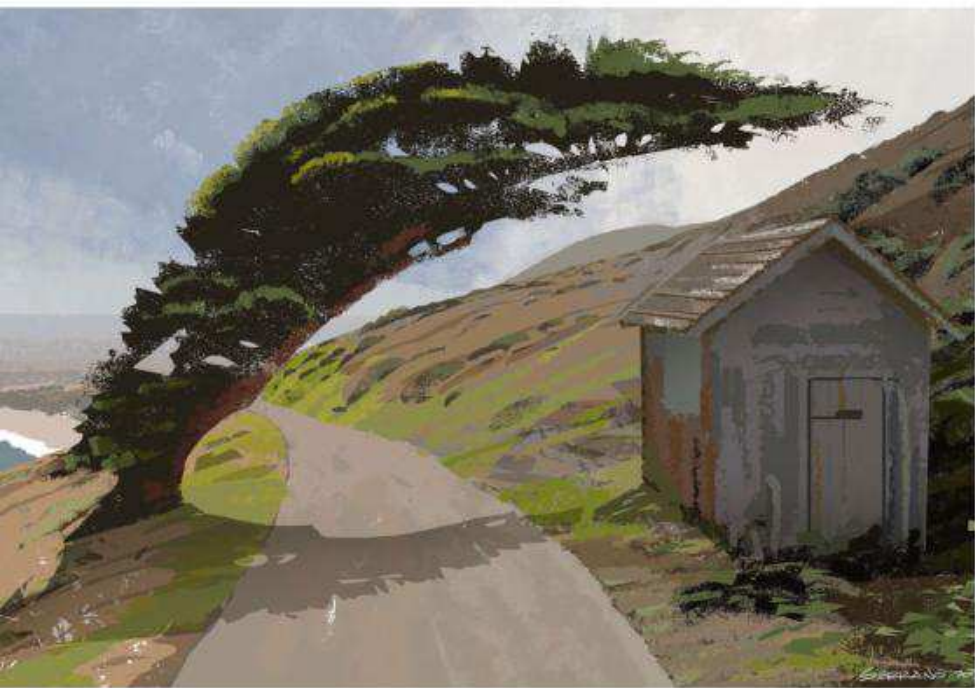
Armand saw Star Wars at 10. He became aware of concept art and dreamed of working in the movies. Except, he never took it seriously. "Hollywood," he says, "seemed like a very long shot."

Armand is also a multi-instrumentalist, so he wanted to do a degree in fine art or music. His dad suggested something more practical. Armand picked civil engineering, but stuck with the music, played in an 80s band, grew his hair long, dyed it red, and skipped his mandatory military service. But university didn't go well. It took him almost seven years to complete the five-year course. In that final year, Armand says, "I cleaned up my act" – met his wife, did his time in the military and got an engineering

Artist PROFILE

Armand Serrano
LOCATION: US
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Alex Niño, Sergio Toppi, JC Leyendecker, NC Wyeth and Dean Cornwell
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop, Procreate
WEB: www.armandserrano.com

> **I began to understand the process… that's when I decided this was my career**

SPEEDY PLANE
"Speed painting is a tool to keep my passion burning, my sanity intact, and explore other techniques that could benefit me and help me continue to grow."

apprenticeship – but he still failed his exams to become a working engineer. Then he heard about an animation studio opening up in Manila.

In 1990, Armand got a trainee job at Fil-Cartoons, the Manila studio set up by Hanna-Barbera. Armand worked in animation for a year, then moved to the layout department. He designed backgrounds, characters poses and played around with camera mechanics. He worked on Yogi Bear, The Addams Family, and Captain Planet and the Planeteers. "I loved it," he says. "I felt

I began to have an understanding of design and had a handle on the overall production process. That's when I decided this was my career of choice."

Philippine Animation Studio offered him a job in 1994 as head of its layout department for shows by Marvel. He worked on X-Men, Fantastic Four: The Animated Series, and Biker Mice From Mars, now alongside artists from the US and Europe, who encouraged Armand to move to America.

He sent applications to 30 different US studios. Most said the quality of his work wasn't good enough. But a small video game company called 7th Level offered him a job. Armand moved with his wife and two-year-old daughter to a one-bedroom apartment in Burbank, California.

CAVALRY CHARGE
"One thing I never want to happen is for me to stagnate creatively. My inspirations stem from ideas and themes that excites me to draw when I was a kid. Mostly revolving around history."

ANIMAL CRACKER
"I did all the production design pieces for Animal Crackers in black and white, so the directors and I could focus mainly on the design language during the early stages of pre-production."
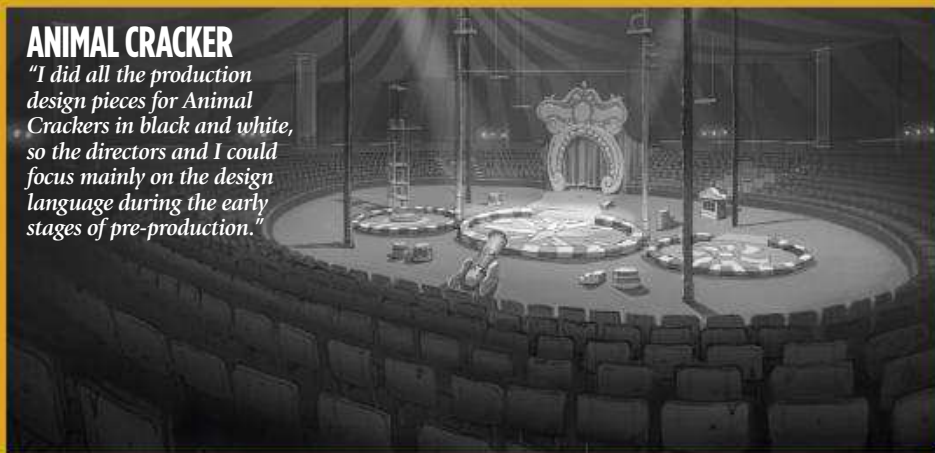
THE EVOLUTION OF AN ARTIST
Armand traces the roots of this scene back through his career to find the moments that shaped it

"I created this image for the film Animal Crackers (aka Magic Circus). I can trace the evolution of this piece back to two experiences in my career.

I worked on Disney Animation's Lilo & Stitch. I was a 2D layout journeyman, designing the backgrounds, the character layouts for the animators, and the camera mechanics for the shots. It proved to be a defining moment for me as an artist.

Working under production designer Paul Felix shifted my style and overall understanding on how I approach design. Felix's work made a huge impact on my design sensibilities. What I learned from the overall experience of the film, I still carry with me now: control, clarity of shapes, playfulness in forms, proper flow, defining values through consistency in lighting, how values carry the weight of colour… I could go on.

The Animal Crackers images clearly shows that a touch of that Lilo style will always be part of me. That film also gave me the opportunity to do visual development, which opened the door for me to move into that field.

Then second was the experience of working on Sony Pictures Animation's Surf's Up. This was the film where I was involved fully in visual development and production design from the very start of pre-production, until almost the very end of production. That's when my transition from a traditional artist to a digital artist was fully realised."

Alongside the 7th Level job, Armand took a 13-week course at an animation school. The course helped him understand the differences between TV animation and feature film animation. But he spent much of those 13 weeks working on a new portfolio, which he sent out to three different studios.

OSCAR-WINNING MOVIES
Armand took his family to Florida in 1997 to work on the Disney movie that became Mulan. He was promoted to layout journeyman and earned credits on Tarzan, Lilo & Stitch and Brother Bear. He learned a lot working alongside some of the best artists in the world. He also began to feel validated in choosing animation.

In 2004, Disney decided to close its Florida studio. But Sony Pictures

MURMILLO
"This was a live demo piece during one of my online CG Masters Academy class. I teach the effective use of composition to control the perception of the audience and focus on the story."

STEAMPUNK BIKE
"The idea was steampunk meets Mad Max: that mental juggling of concepts, juxtapositions and the 'why not?', which together make an idea interesting and fresh."

➤➤ Animation offered Armand a job back in Los Angeles. He tried out different fields – visual development artist, conceptual art director and production designer – and worked on more big movies: Surf's Up, Hotel Transylvania and Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs.

A big movie takes roughly five years to make. Three years goes into the story and character development, then the visual development team gets to work: the character and environment designers. "That's where I come in," Armand says, "creating a believable world that the characters will live in."

He was still at Sony when he was finally granted US citizenship. This gave him new opportunities – to work in other industries, to travel more widely, and to teach.

Armand returned to Disney in 2013. Many of his old colleagues from Florida now worked as art directors, producers and directors. His second

HOPPERESQUE
Armand regularly visits museum and galleries to learn from master painters. This concept is reminiscent of Edward Hopper's work.

SPIDER
"Another speed painting of a wild concept. This was inspired by those giant spiders in old movies and spiced up with my love for history. Fun."

💬 That's where I come in… creating a believable world the characters will live in 💬

spell was even more successful than the first: he worked on Oscar-winning films Big Hero 6 and Zootopia. Despite all this, Armand decided to leave and become a freelancer. "For the past 20-something years," Armand says, "I've always been known as the Disney guy. I believe it's now time for me to pursue other creative opportunities."

An average workday at one of the big studios was spent mostly in his office. But what he liked best was the chance to collaborate with all the other

departments. Now he's a freelancer, he's in his home studio all day and collaboration happens online. He starts work early and keeps a calendar in his eyeline to stay on top of deadlines. Exercise helps him stay physically fit. In the studio, his Chihuahua keeps him company.

SANITY INTACT

Many of the things that excite him as a kid excite him now. He's into history: tanks, aircraft, uniforms. He keeps ➤➤
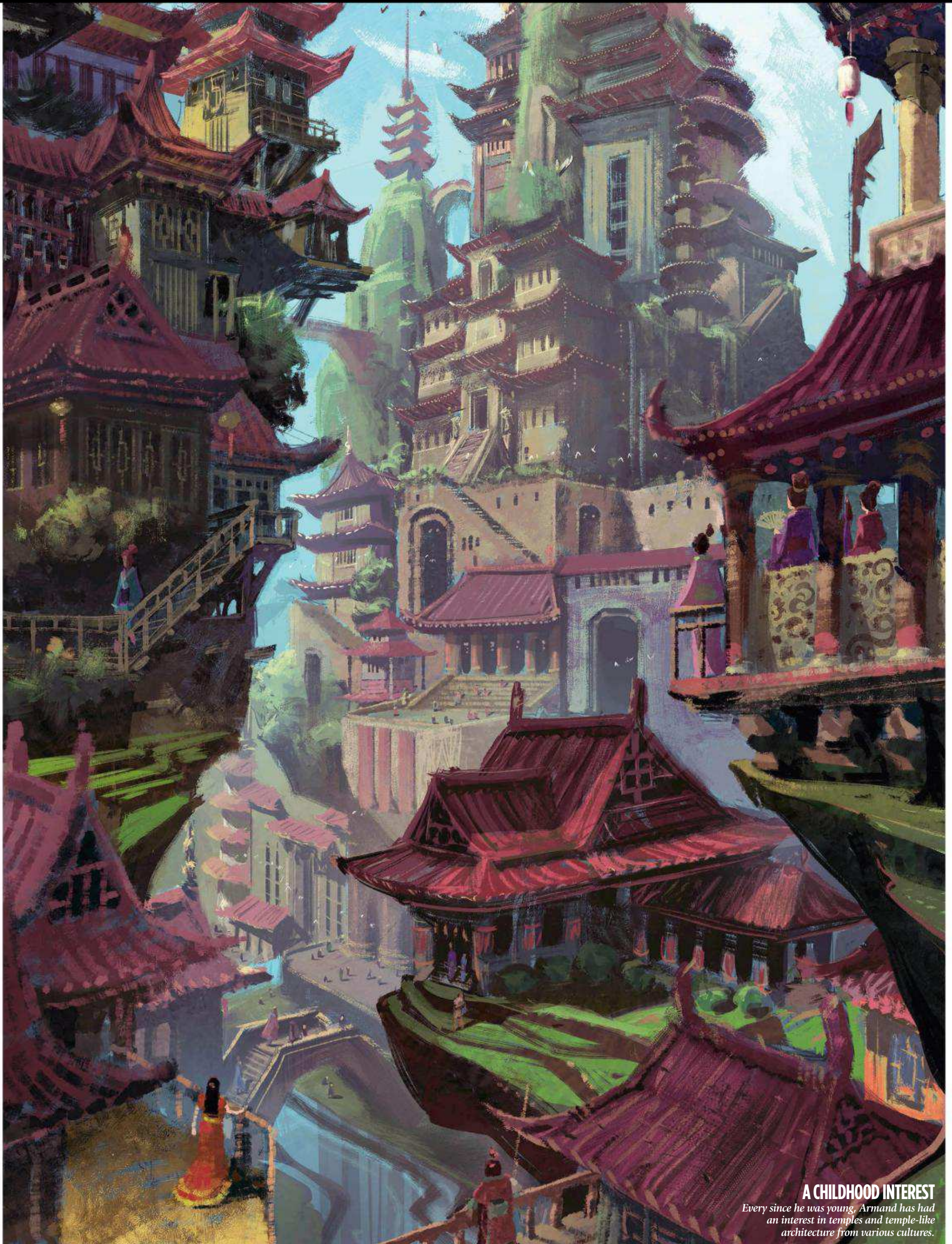
A CHILDHOOD INTEREST
Every since he was young, Armand has had an interest in temples and temple-like architecture from various cultures.

STAGING A MONSTROUS BATTLE

Armand reveals how he set up and developed this many-headed fight scene...
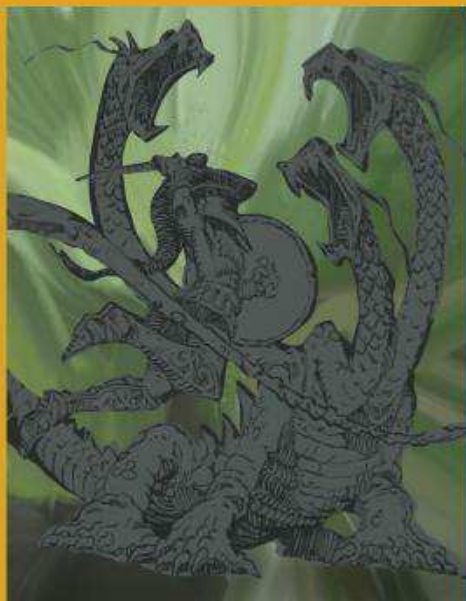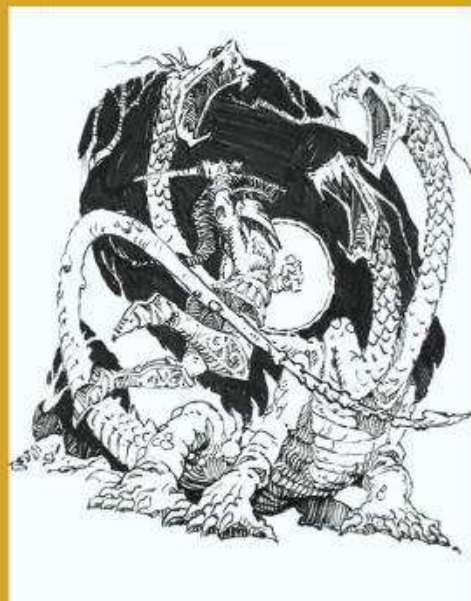
1 INK, INITIAL FEEL, TONE

The original drawing is in ink. This is my starting point. Here I set up and re-stage the initial feel I had for the environment. The next step is tonal value with some sort of ambient occlusion.

2 TEXTURE, REFERENCE, FOCUS

Now I work out some textures. I do this by photo bashing. I grab a reference photo that I'll use to work up colour and light. I get painting on the main areas of focus, starting with the creatures.

3 CREATURE, SUBJECT

Along the way, I continuously modify the three heads of the creature, as well as the swordsman. At this stage, I'll also get to work painting the main subject of the piece.
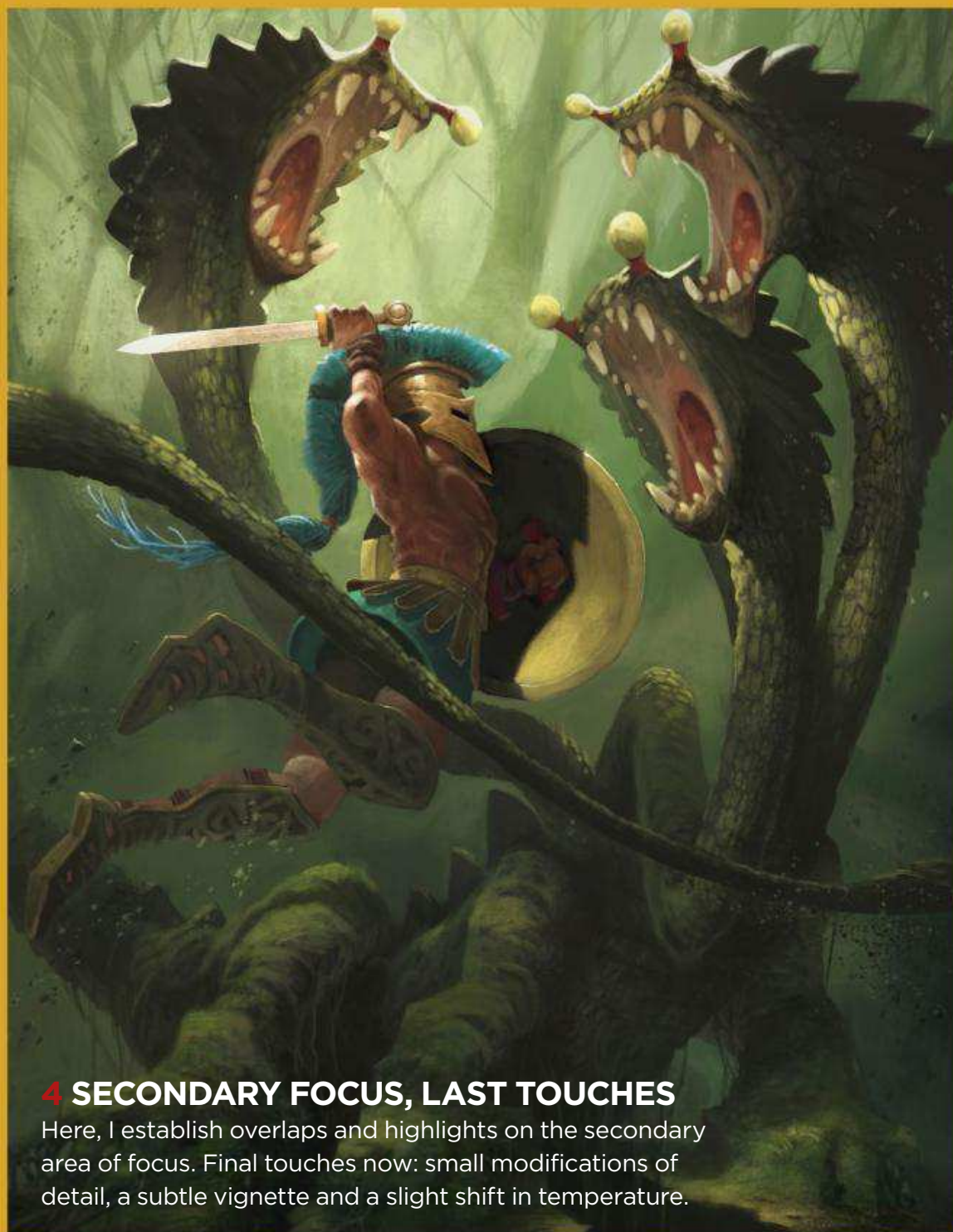
4 SECONDARY FOCUS, LAST TOUCHES

Here, I establish overlaps and highlights on the secondary area of focus. Final touches now: small modifications of detail, a subtle vignette and a slight shift in temperature.

➤➤ a library of photo references, but doesn't horde. Regular hard-drive clearances feel refreshing. He does have a ton of art supplies, though he doesn't use them often. For sketches on the go, he uses Procreate with an Apple Pencil on his iPhone or iPad Pro. He keeps plenty of art books within reach on his worktables. He has two stations: one with a MacBook Pro attached to a Wacom Cintiq Pro and a 22-inch HD Dell monitor, and another with Oculus VR gear attached to a 15-inch Alienware gaming laptop.

The best bit of being freelance is the chance to explore new technology. VR speeds up his design process by bringing him inside his art. He finds it "excitingly wild and useful", the best thing since Photoshop and the drawing

BATTLESHIPS
"I use Oculus Medium a lot. The time I'd usually spend on a piece – by just using references and freehand – was exponentially reduced with the aid of VR modelling."

> ❝ **Being a visual storyteller is like music. I have to become a good composer** ❞

tablet. However busy Armand is, he sets aside time for personal work: "It's a tool to keep my passion burning, my sanity intact and to explore other techniques that could benefit me and help me continue to grow. One thing I never want to happen is for me to stagnate creatively."

For an aspiring artist, it's not much use being told: "Sorry, kid, you don't have it." A young artist needs to know

what it is they don't have and how they can get it. Armand wants to help.

"The foundations of great art always remain the same," he explains. "Story or idea, design and execution, through visual storytelling. I want them to feel, and take hold of the message that I want to convey."

FACING THE MUSIC

"What makes concept art is the word concept," continues Armand. "Meaning art with a story or idea. Without concept, it's just a good piece of art. Sadly, I'd see so much concept-less concept art out there that it pushed me to teach and share my own

experiences and what I've learned through the years, which a young artist may never learn in an art school."

As a teacher and mentor, Armand shares the knowledge he built over a 20-year career in animation. But he's found that his short-lived career as an engineer also helps. His work has strong sense of "functionality and structural believability".

There's even a bit of music in there too: "Being a visual storyteller is like music. I have to become a good composer in order to drive my visual composition to affect my audience to grasp the story I want to tell and experience the emotion." ◉

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Issue 163
August 2018
Become a manga superstar with the help of the pros, including Toni Infante and the artists from Collateral Damage Studios. We explore Paul Kwon's workspace, talk to Valentina Remenar and explore Copic marker techniques.

Issue 162
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Learn the skills to need to give your art extra impact, include 3D sculpting, working in VR, lighting and anatomy advice, creating a 3D scene ready for a paint-over, and more. Plus, 15 pro tips to boost your motivation levels.

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March 2018

Issue 157
February 2018

Issue 156
January 2018

Issue 155
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Issue 154
December 2017

Issue 153
November 2017

Issue 152
October 2017

Issue 151
September 2017

Issue 150
August 2017

Issue 149
July 2017

*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.

Artist Portfolio

LOUIE DEL CARMEN

The Filipino artist tells **Gary Evans** how he went from dead-end jobs to directing animated movies in five years

L ouie del Carmen hadn't done any proper drawing for nearly a decade. The Filipino was living in Los Angeles. He bounced from one boring job to the next, a career detour, while he tried to work out what to do with himself. He eventually decided on animation. The problem was: he didn't know if he could still draw, never mind draw professionally. As for animation, he'd never had any training in it.

Artist
PROFILE

Louie del Carmen
LOCATION: US
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Katsuhiro Otomo, Syd Mead, Jordi Bernet, Hugo Pratt, Moebius, Denis Bodart
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Clip Studio Paint
WEB: www.louiedelcarmen.com

Louie had completed a commercial art degree in Manila in 1985. Making money from drawing seemed impossible in those days. So he switched to computer programming. Soon after, he and his brothers decided to leave the Philippines for America.

"I found out quickly," Louie says, "that, technologically, the standards in the US far outpaced my third-world education. That career detour was a period in which I was kind of in limbo. I needed to go back to school if was to make a go in computers, which was kind of deflating. I hadn't even really considered returning to art, let alone animation."

But Louie had connections. His brothers had started working in animation. Even if he could get a foot in the door, he had no work to show once he got there. So Louie spent two
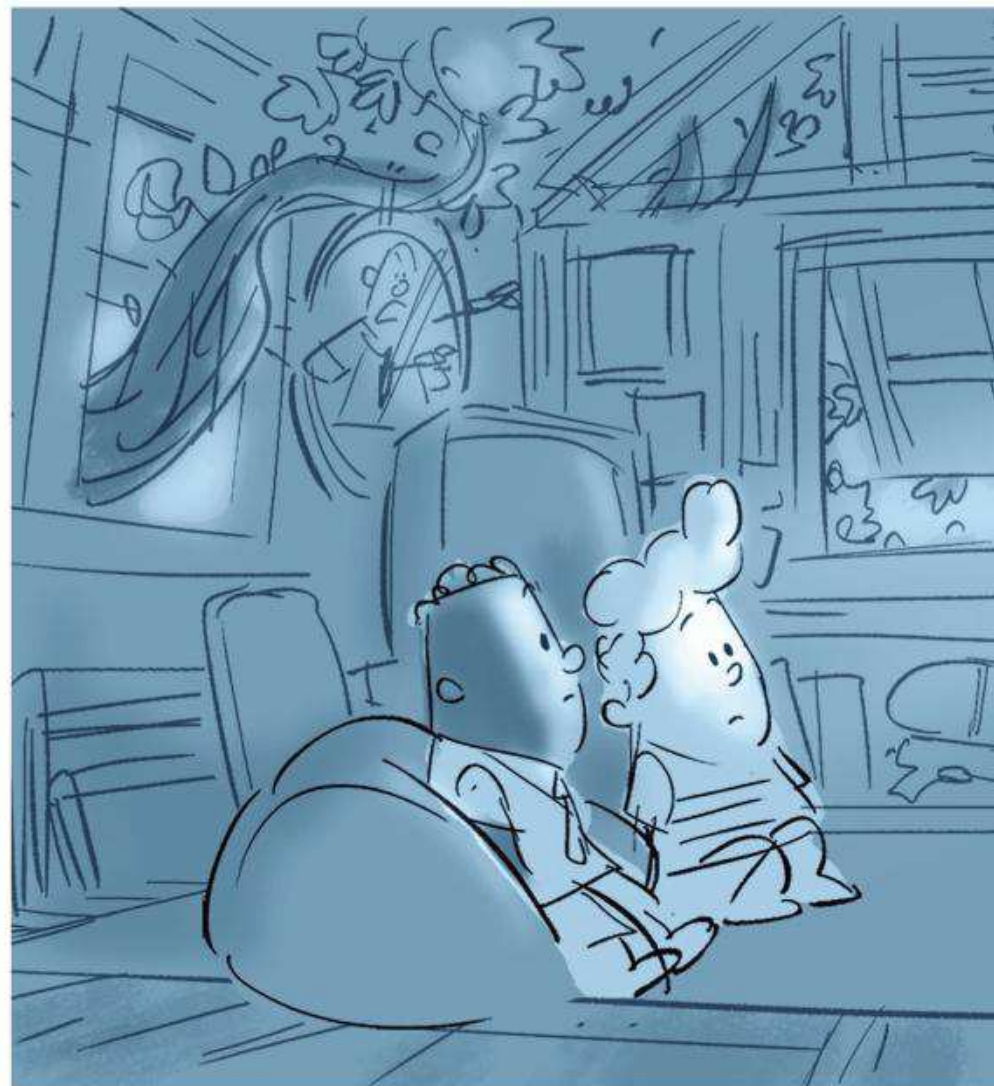
SOIRÉE
"Much of what I sketch is dictated by whether I can lay down an appealing drawing off the bat. Then it's just finishing with accent colour and details."

years working on his portfolio, then showed his work to Klasky Csupo.

Louie got a job at the animation company in 1995, started as a character designer, moved on to storyboards, and by 1999 was directing episodes of Rugrats and Rocket Power.

"That kind of growth can only happen if the environment is right," he says, "and Klasky Csupo, for all its ➡

CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS
"A story panel for the 2017 animated film adaptation of Captain Underpants, from a sequence towards the end of the film."

STRIPES
"One of my first attempts at capturing the golden age illustration look. I like how it blends the graphical with the realistic."
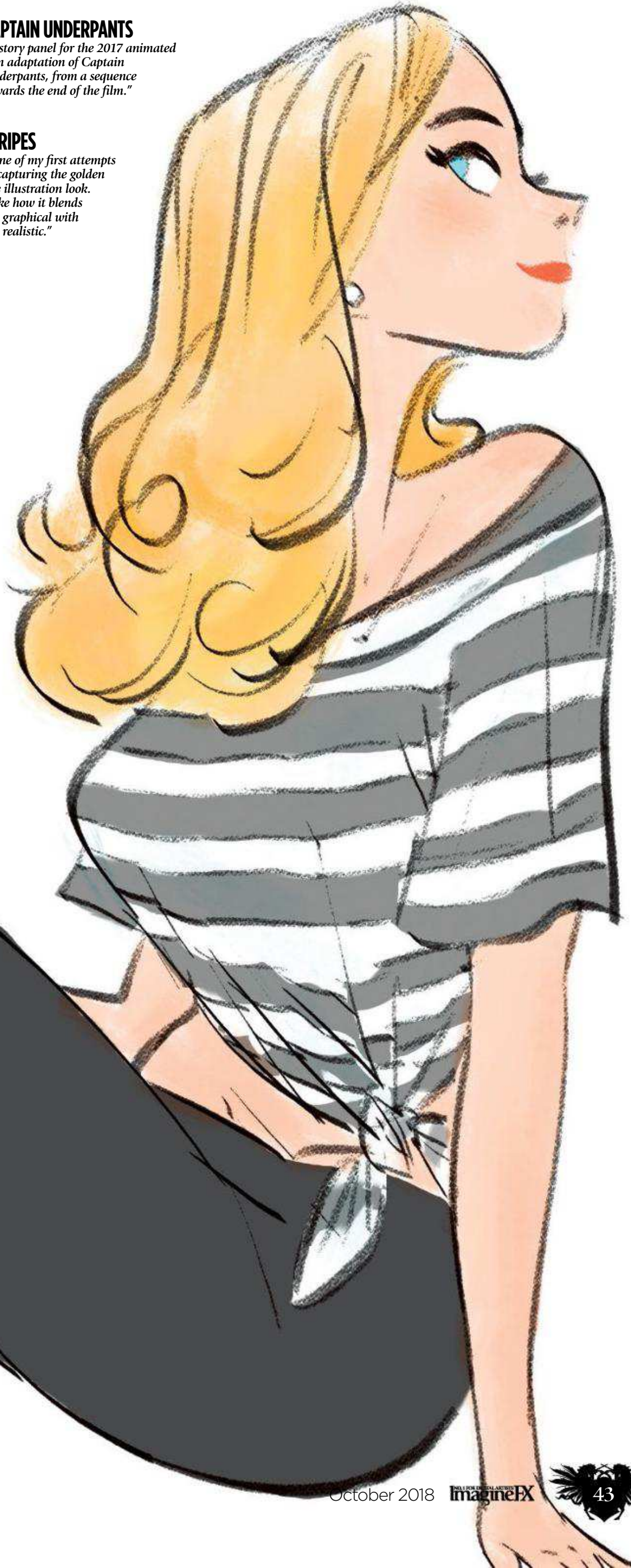
❝ The standards in the United States far outpaced my third-world education ❞

LOST
"A few years ago, I was inspired by a news story of a little girl who got lost in the woods with her dog for three days. I switched the dog for a cat instead."

GIRL 'N' ROBOT
"Years ago, I created a comic called Girl 'n' Robot about two characters lost in dimensional limbo. This is a recent one-page story treatment perhaps for a future comic. I was also testing a pencil look on Photoshop."

➡ perceived weird studio style and non-traditional pedigree, was a very nurturing and supportive environment to work at. I didn't go to animation school. Klasky Csupo was my school."

AN ACTIVE IMAGINATION

Louie grew up in the 1970s watching Hanna-Barbera cartoons like The Herculoids and The Flintstones. Jonny Quest was his favourite. He also got into manga, particularly the super robot stuff, Mazinger Z, Voltes-V and Macross. He noticed how American shows were episodic – each episode a complete, self-contained story – while the Japanese shows had storylines that ran over several episodes. He couldn't articulate it then, but he knew this was a more advanced form of storytelling, way ahead of its time. These observations would pay off.

"I grew up in a small town on a peninsula surrounded by water just outside Manila. It was meagre and simple, and I found myself dreaming of worlds outside that town and what it would be like to go there. I discovered how much of an active imagination I had, especially coming up with stories and scenarios based on the things my young mind had seen on TV, movies and books."

❝ Watching all those cartoons on television as a kid ended up paying off ❞

SUMMER
"This piece quickly came together, inspired once again by that classic fashion illustration style. The orange hair and teal bathing suit make this look appealing."

Having an eye for story helped him easily make the switch from character designer to storyboard artist. Working at Klasky Csupo, he was used to handling scripts and storyboards. So even though he hadn't made one himself, he knew what a good storyboard should look like.

TIME WELL SPENT

A character design is a story in a single drawing. Storyboarding gives him the luxury of using multiple images to tell a story: "It was just a matter of learning the idiosyncrasies, the process, and really putting that filmmaking hat on. And, yes, watching all those cartoons as a kid ended up paying off."

The move into directing was also a natural follow-on. He felt ➡

HOW TO RECREATE RETRO GLAMOUR

Louie explains how he used one of his favourite artists as inspiration for this classic but modern illustration, and subtly evolved it, including adding a red layer underneath

1 BOB PEAK VIBES

I'm a fan of classic illustration from the 40s, 50s and 60s. The inspiration for this piece that I call Neon Boa is the amazing [American commercial illustrator] Bob Peak. I love how deceivingly simple some of his work looks and how graphical and evocative it is at the same time. So, I wanted to capture some of that essence using a bit of retro glamour.

2 THE RIGHT EXPRESSION

In the preliminary sketch, I loved how it looked immediately but after a little pondering and thinking about it, I discovered that I want less of her torso area and for most of her top to have the texture of a feather boa. I also wanted her to be looking at us a bit more and have a much more subdued but alluring facial expression. So I revised the sketch.

3 APPLY SOME PRESSURE

I wanted the silhouette to really take up most of the square canvas. I highlighted her face. I liked the expression right away. Once I have a face I like it's just a matter of making the rest of the details match. I used a pressure-sensitive texture brush that mimics a very soft grease pencil – dark lines on heavy pressure, and loose, sketchy lines with light pressure.

4 NEON AND MINIMAL

After some experimentation, I got the idea of going with a neon colour scheme. To keep things minimal, I wanted to work more in tones rather than do full-colour rendering. I wanted it to be graphic just like those glorious Bob Peak illustrations that I have so much admiration for, so I picked this neon red colour and placed it on a layer under the sketch.

5 KEEP IT UNPREDICTABLE

Once I settled on the background colour it was pretty simple execution wise. To frame the skin, I added a medium grey tone based on the background colour. I used an acrylic-type brush and I applied colour while keeping it fast and loose. Again, the idea is for things not to look too deliberate and predictable, for them to look a little more 'casual'.
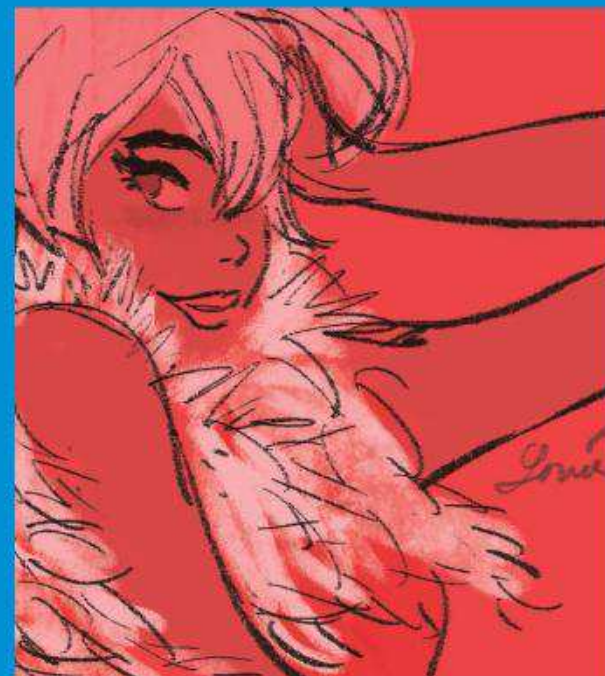
6 CLASSIC, BUT MODERN

Finally, I added one last layer over the skin tone, in between the sketch layer, to highlight the feather boa and hair, the boa being the lightest in value. This ensures that your eye really zones in on her face. This is one of my favourites because of how things flowed from concept, to execution, to final, and hopefully evokes a classic but modern essence.

LEAN
"This was a quick sketch meant for social media that really came together. That feminine lean and look over shoulder, sketched with minimal lines, was a win."

BLUE SHADOW
"The idea here was to develop sort of an 1980s vibe. The screen tone made it look graphical while the sketchy textures kept it loose."

© DreamWorks

comfortable with preproduction work – writing, character design, storyboards – but he really had to work on other areas. "Sheet timing is where the animation is timed out frame by frame as direction for the animators. It's very technical and that took some effort in terms of trial and error. It was an intensive schooling because you were learning and experimenting, but you were responsible for the studio's money. So retakes and corrections had to be minimal. Those high stakes really helped in learning things quickly.

"Directing for animation is so specific because your vision has to be clearly demonstrated to other artists, and the language is drawing. Not to say that a non-artist can't be a director – especially because it's also a management job in terms of keeping crews motivated and moving in the right direction. But being able to communicate visually is an advantage which can help eliminate ambiguity."

A DAY AT DISNEY

Louie left Klasky Csupo in 2007. He worked for DreamWorks Animation on movies Captain Underpants, Kung Fu Panda and Rise of the Guardians, then in 2015 joined Sony Pictures Animation, where he contributed to nativity movie The Star. Last year, Louie accepted a job as story artist at Walt Disney Animation.

A typical day at Disney might look like this: Louie receives an assignment

THE STAR
"A dramatic moment from 2017's family nativity movie The Star, which singer-songwriter Kelly Clarkson voiced."
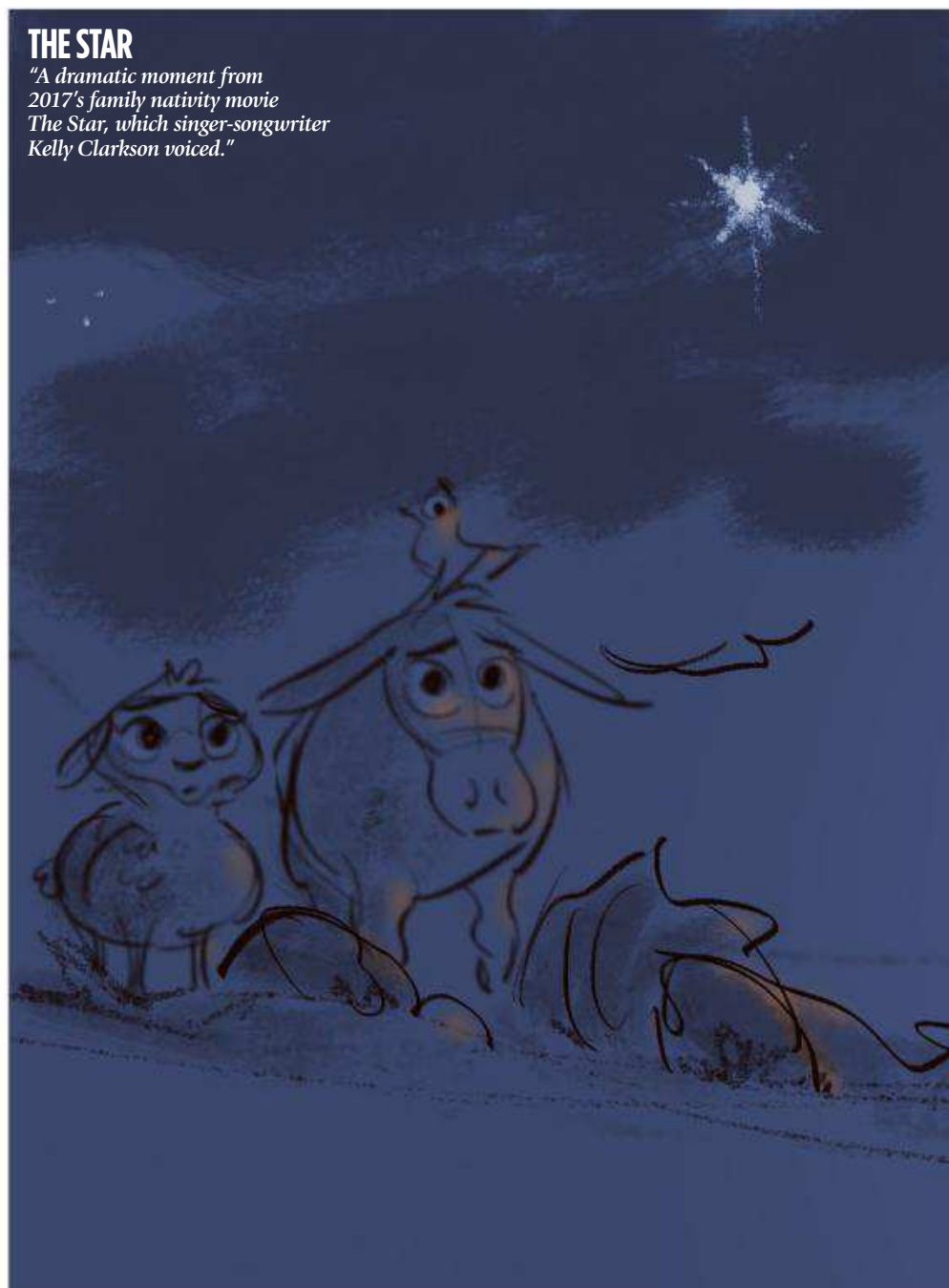
CLASSIC STYLE
"Here's a story beat panel of Mary and Joseph's hopeful ending journey from The Star. An attempt at classic filmmaking, shooting against the sun with a long lens."
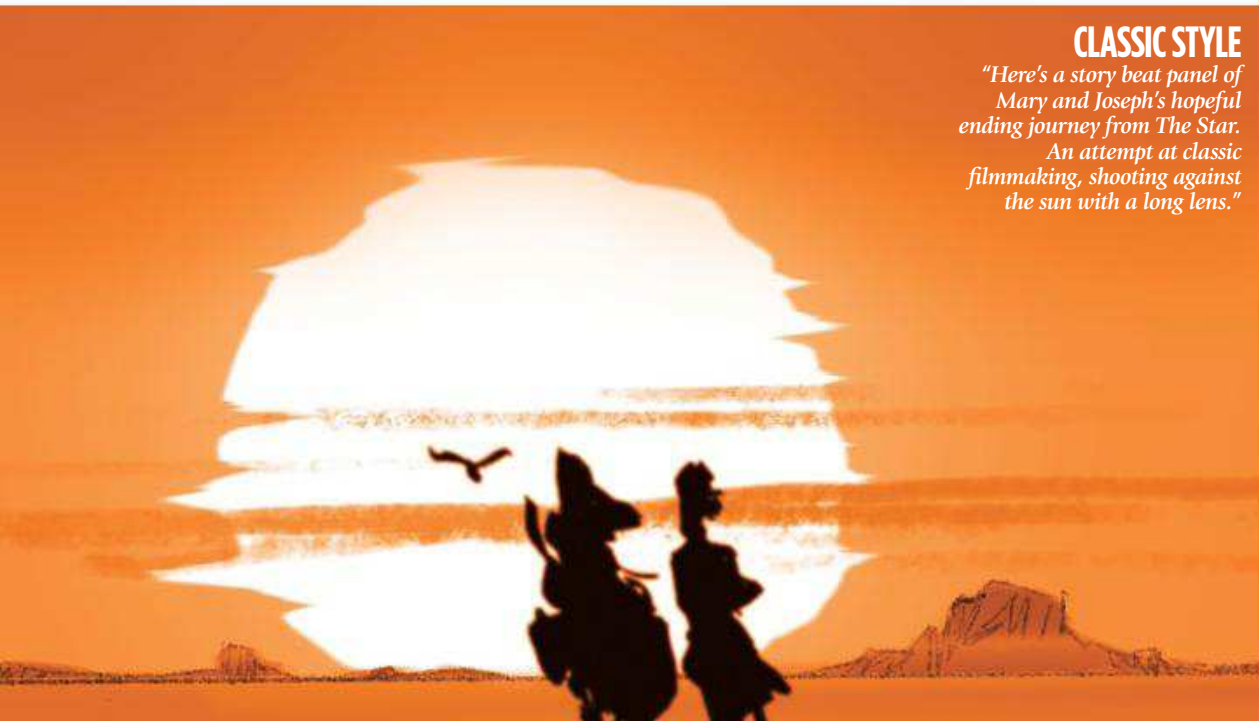
© Sony Pictures Animation
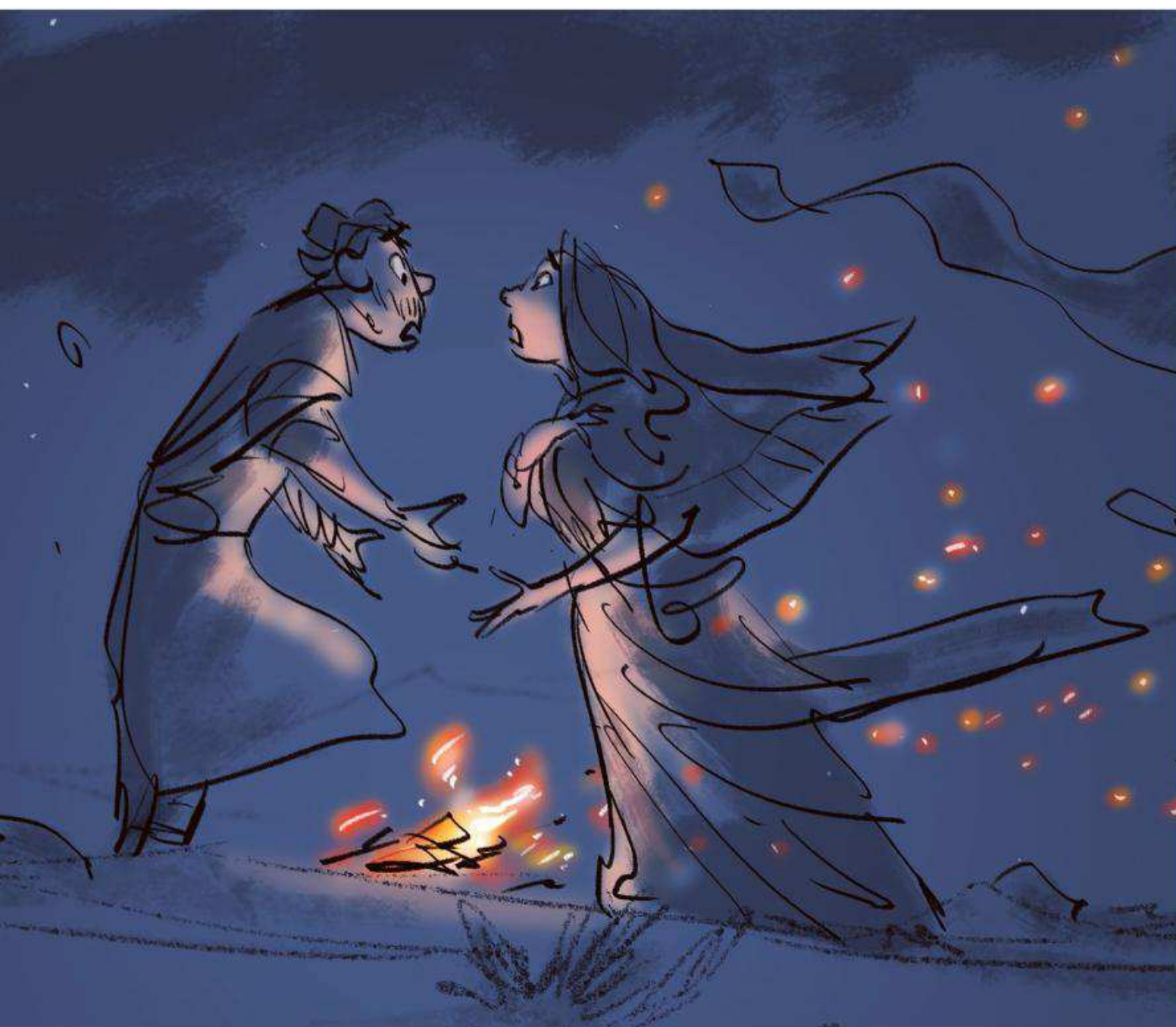
66 Every day you feel like you are chipping away at the story 99

– say, an animated sequence or full scene for a movie. Before he can get drawing, before he can start the research that sets up the drawing, he first reads and rereads the assignment to "really get to the heart of what the scene is about". He really enjoys spending time with colleagues, who just happen to be some of the world's best artists. And there are sessions in "the story room", working with writers, directors and producers.

Being part of a big team means knowing when to work towards someone else's vision and when to fight for your own ideas. It's a balance: "Too much of the former makes you seem passive and withdrawn. But too much of the latter will cause people to tune you out. There's a fine line.

"Every day you feel like you're chipping away at the story, trying to find the best version of the movie. What I really like about this process is that you have the best of both worlds: you can craft on that piece of the ➤

© Sony Pictures Animation

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE MIND

Before Disney, Louie self-published a sketchbook that helped him believe anything was possible…

Louie del Carmen is a prolific publisher of books. He released his first, Random Anomalies, in 2006. It features 15 editorial-style cartoons about "seemingly random events".

Since then, he's released all-ages comic Girl 'n' Robot, several volumes of a comic called Steel Noodles, and three sketchbooks in his MUSE series – full of drawings "of the feminine persuasion". But it was his second book that he looks back on most fondly.

"In 2006," Louie says, "having been in the animation industry ten years, I branched out into illustration and self-publishing. I illustrated and printed an ashcan-style sketchbook called The Wayward Traveller: Snapshots from Alternate Worlds."

The Wayward Traveller pays tributes to many of Louie's favourites artists: "The whimsical and quaint style of Rowland Emett, the technical wizardry of Syd Mead, the charm and innocence of Hayao Miyazaki, and of course, there's some in there from the master, Jean 'Moebius' Giraud."

Louie printed the book in time for the San Diego Comic-Con 2006 and sold all 500 copies. He liked the idea of creating alternate worlds on the page, where possibilities are endless: "It proved to me that if I kept experimenting with what I can do with art, that it would open new roads.

"Looking at that book now, it's so primitive and amateurish, but the energy and intent is not lost, and reminds me of a time where it seemed like anything was possible."
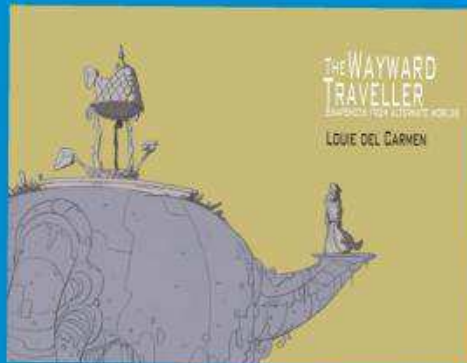
A TYPICAL TOWN
"Early in production during Rise of the Guardians I sketched an image of typical mid-western town in winter, which might become the set for the boy character's home, for use in my storyboards."

KUNG FU COOKING
"This is a story panel from the 2013 Kung Fu Panda short film, Secrets of the Scroll. Po's attempt at cooking fails miserably."

movie in your office, but, at the same time, collaborate with everyone to make what you've crafted the best that it can be."

MAKE IT APPEALING

Louie likes the balance of being busy at work and having side projects at home. "When I'm in heavy storyboarding mode at work, I'm also in the best shape drawing-wise," he says. "Everything I generate personally benefits from that because the gap between idea and execution is at its narrowest."

Louie has two gears for side projects. He works fast, drawing pieces he'll post online. He takes a bit more time over "legacy" work – illustrations for books

CARIBE
"A sketch featuring island charm. The tan floral wrap really complements her skin. It's always great when the colours and the sketch come together well."

© DreamWorks
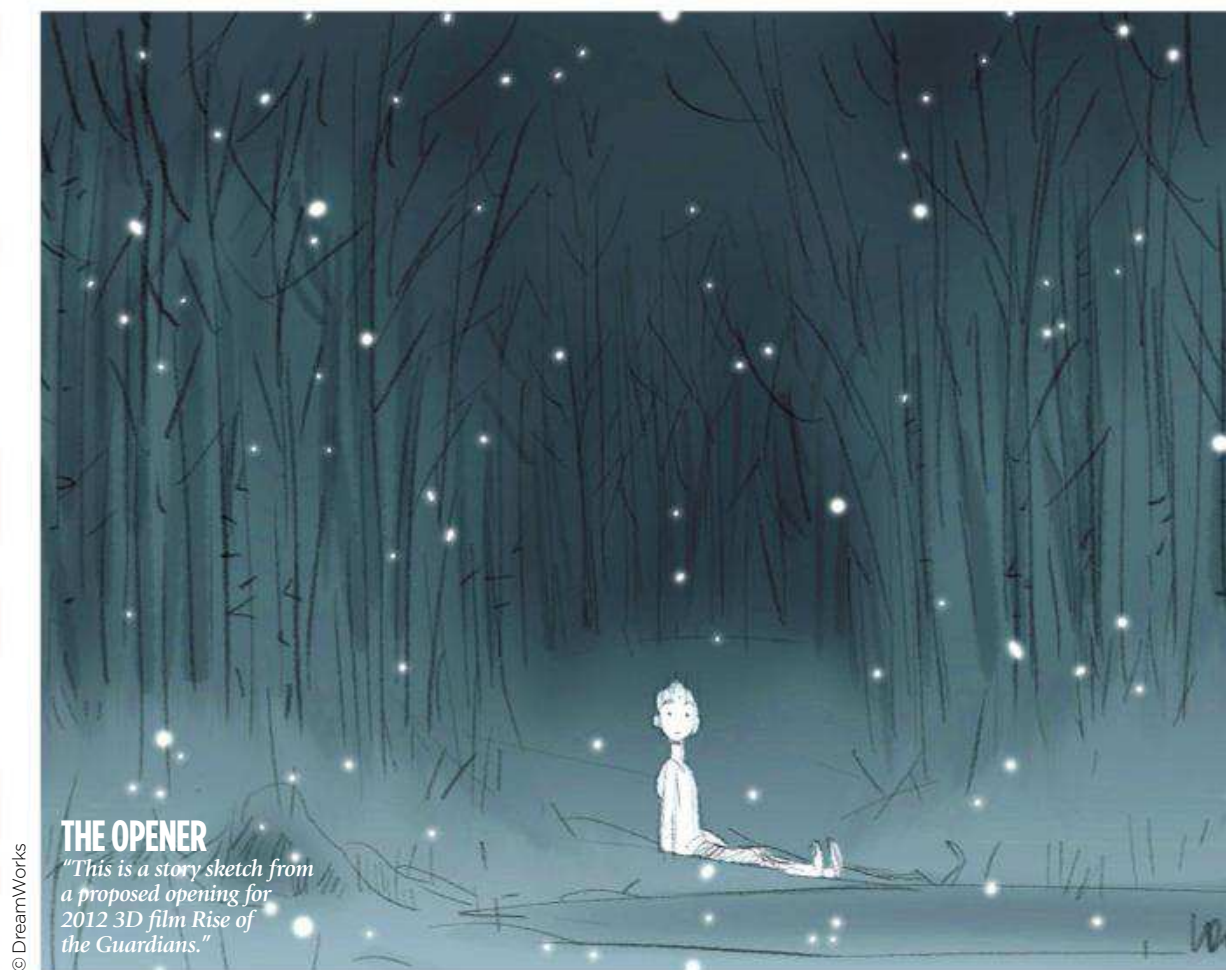
THE OPENER
"This is a story sketch from a proposed opening for 2012 3D film Rise of the Guardians."

> **If I liked it yesterday, I'll still like it today. It's also happened where I'll look at it and say, What was I thinking?**

and art for sale. But even here, Louie rarely spends more than an hour or so on initial sketches. If the idea's working, it feels good straight away. He knows it's worth using this "blurted-out" sketch as the foundation for something bigger. If it starts to feel laborious, if he's having to edit a lot, then Louie knows he's lost the initial spark. If he's still not sure either way, he leaves it a day: "If I liked it yesterday, I'll still like it today. It's also happened where I'll look at it after a day and say, What was I thinking?"

Louie is comfortable working in various styles and says this is a necessity.

He tries to incorporate styles from the past and present. The aim is to be able to "flip a switch" and go from one style to another, like a character actor moulding themselves to a new part. The past couple of years, he's focused on a style he calls female glamour.

THE FEMALE MYSTIQUE

"For so long drawing females intimidated me (and still does to a certain degree), so I embarked on attacking this head-on by really trying to understand what makes the female figure so difficult to translate, what makes a really appealing drawing?"

SWEPT
"Using the fun allure of those classic print ads, I wanted to capture movement while keeping things fairly simple and minimal."

This is what separates good work from great work: appeal. Louie says it's hard to define and even harder to quantify. But it's the thing he's looking for every time he draws: he hopes this picture that's appealing to him will also be appealing to an audience.

"Styles don't really get old, they just get recycled. Innovators simply take what was appealing all along and project things forward by suggesting what these classical ideas would look like in the contemporary," he says.

"Things have to come together in some sort of magic alchemy that translates to something eternally interesting: colour, texture, tone, shade, subject matter. Then there's execution, how well things are drawn and composed, and ultimately what kind of story it's imparting. All those things have to conspire in order to create something that's universal and charming and lasting."

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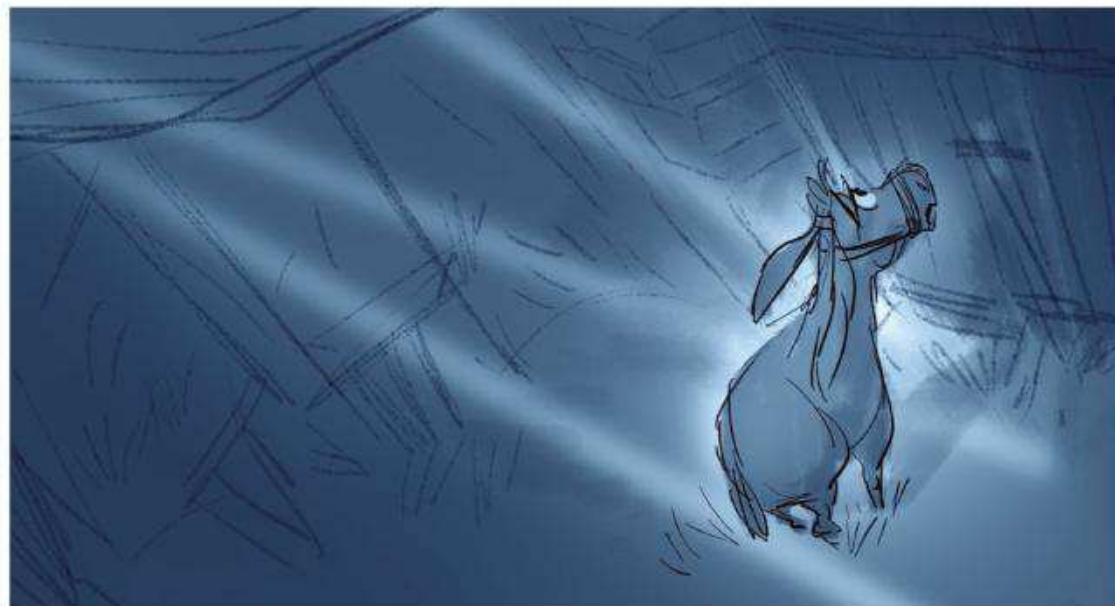
NATIVITY DONKEY
"A little donkey looking for the ultimate inspiration. A story beat panel from 2017's nativity animal comedy The Star."

Genevieve Tsai

Flip through the pages of this character designer's sketchbook and you'll find mutants, rockabillies and Pomeranians with attitude!

Artist PROFILE

Genevieve Tsai
LOCATION: US

Genevieve is a lead character designer on the upcoming Animaniacs reboot at Warner Bros. Animation. She's been a character designer in the film, TV and video game industry for over 13 years, working with companies including Illumination, Blizzard, Riot Games Hasbro, EA and Activision. Genevieve enjoys video games like Monster Hunter, fighting games, MOBAs, SHMUPs, Overwatch and watching ridiculous, over-the-top action anime. She loves mochi, boba tea and crazy paranoid mech-piloting goblins.
www.genevievetsai.com

WOLF SKETCHES
"I love wolves and dogs and they've always been one of my favourite creatures to draw ever since I was a kid."

GEARHEAD GOBBOS
"I have an unhealthy obsession with goblins, no joke. These are early concepts from my personal project, Cherry HiJinx, of the goblin inventor Fyzzleglitch."

> **I was inspired by the Tokyo Rockabilly Club, who sport crazy greaser hairstyles**
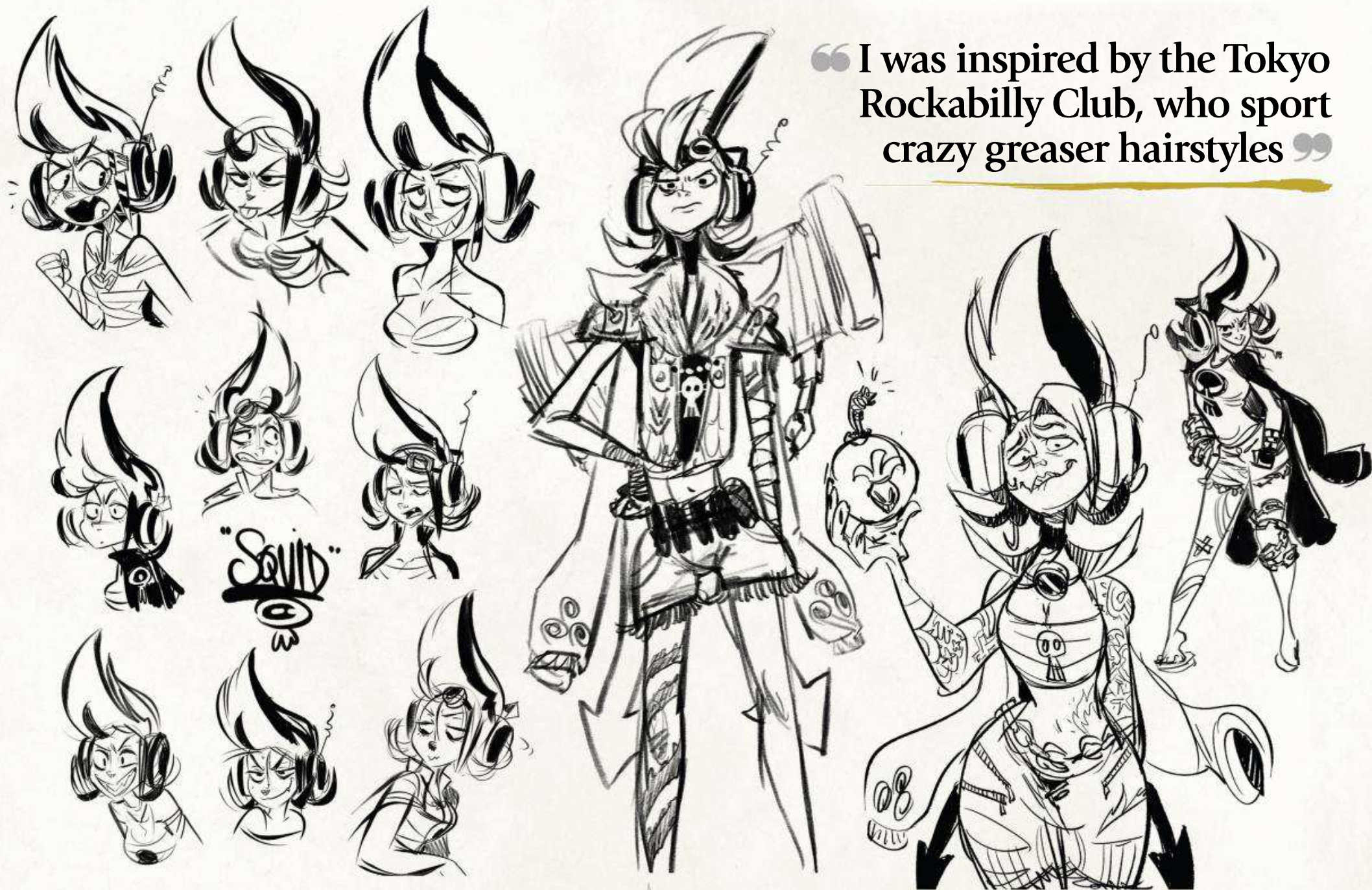
CHERRY HIJINX – SQUID

"Squid is another character from my Cherry HiJinx project. A graffiti artist born from a long history of hardcore Mafia members, Squid loves to pick a fight and her weapon of choice is a chain attached to her sentient demon-skull padlock. I have a penchant for pompadours and Bōsōzoku characters, and was inspired by the Tokyo Rockabilly Club, who sport crazy greaser hairstyles and dance to Rockabilly music in Yoyogi Park. I love their passion and spirit!"

POMERANIANS

"I adore Pomeranians! When I found out that two Pomeranians is called a puff while a group of them is called a tuft, I had to make a bunch of sassy, huffy puffs – one for every day of the week!"

Sketchbook

ODD DOG

"These are character designs done for the upcoming animated short Odd Dog by Keika Lee. It's about a cat who thinks he's a dog. I had a lot of fun playing with the cat's quirky personality and organic shapes."

ODD
DOG
CONCEPTS
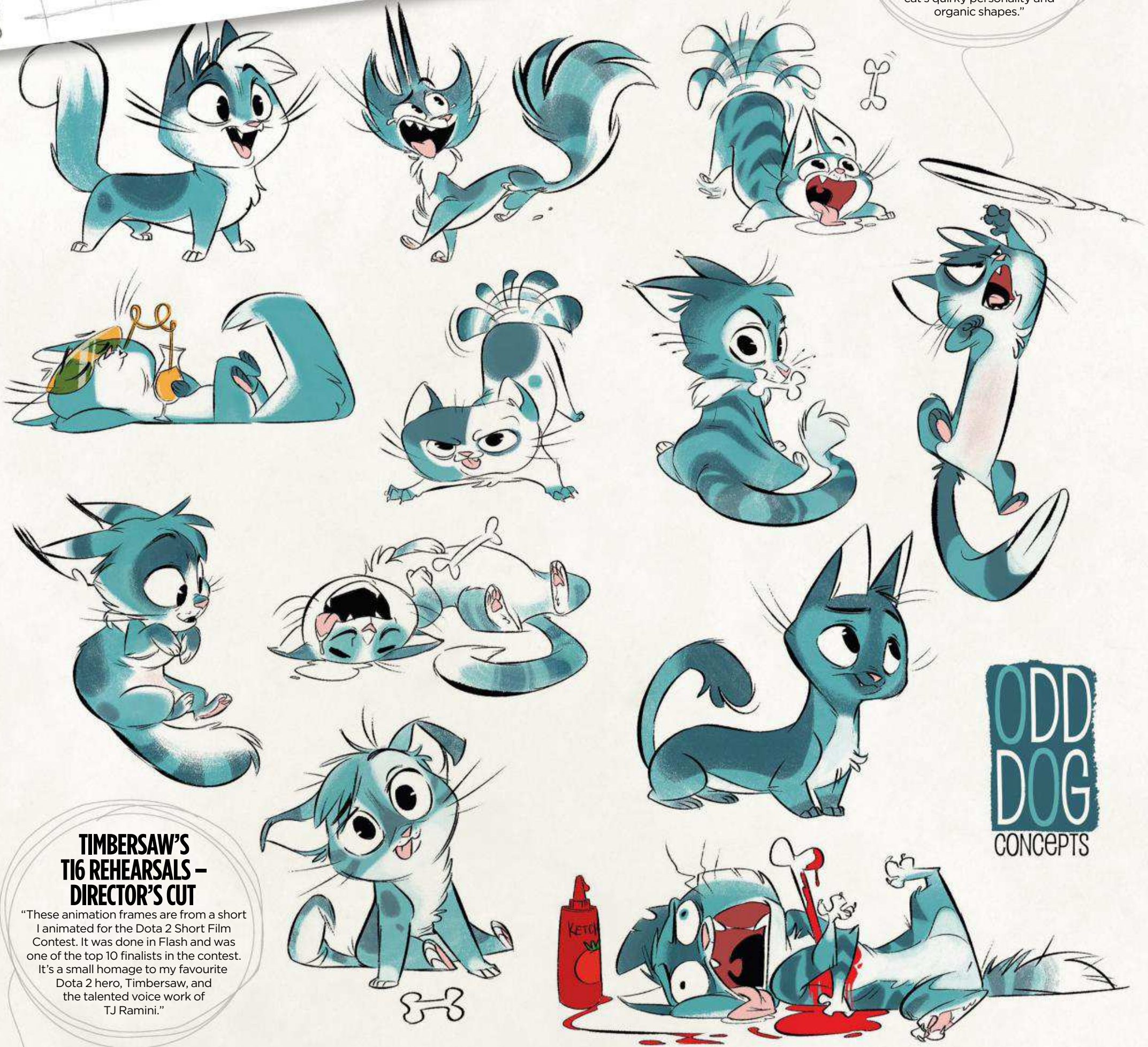
TIMBERSAW'S T16 REHEARSALS – DIRECTOR'S CUT

"These animation frames are from a short I animated for the Dota 2 Short Film Contest. It was done in Flash and was one of the top 10 finalists in the contest. It's a small homage to my favourite Dota 2 hero, Timbersaw, and the talented voice work of TJ Ramini."

skeletal CANARY

HEARTHSTONE – EVOLVED KOBOLD

"This was my Evolved Kobold card for Blizzard's Hearthstone in the Whispers of the Old Gods expansion. The aim was to imagine the normal kobold being corrupted into a monstrous form. I started with some rough thumbnail concepts, and liked the idea of melding the pickaxe into his cursed tendrils. The original kobold had a candle on its head and I kept that aspect, but thought it'd be neat if a horn grew straight through it. My final black and white illustration was coloured by Nutchapol Thitinunthakorn."

> " The aim was to imagine the normal kobold being corrupted into a monstrous form "

RESCUE SIRENS – TANGLED

"Here's one of my favourite illustrations I did for the novel, Rescue Sirens: The Search for the Atavist. The story is about a group of lifeguard mermaids, and at one point the main character is entangled in a fishing net. I felt the pose and acting was priority, so I thumbnailed her without the net. I was trying to get in her head to see what happened before she went unconscious: was she struggling and then gave up, or struggling and reaching out for help, or did she just pass out in mid-struggle?"

> " I felt the pose and acting was priority, so I thumbnailed her without the net "

RESCUE SIRENS – MEET NIM

"Another illustration I did for Rescue Sirens: The Search for the Atavist, introducing the leader of the lifeguard mermaids, Nim. This piece didn't end up in the book. It was used as a concept piece to showcase her personality, design and how she looked when she was wearing her beach rescue uniform."

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS – WARWICK & SORAKA

"This was for Riot's League of Legends art book project, which depicted the Champions in everyday situations. I wanted to tell Warwick and Soraka's lore in a lighthearted way, yet still maintain the dark twist of him wanting to cut out her heart."

NO. 1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX
Workshops

VIDEO WORKSHOP

Advice from the world's best artists

58

64

78

84

This issue:

Photoshop
USE GREYSCALE TO RENDER FIGURES

Discover how **David Ardinaryas Lojaya** is able to create a dynamic character illustration, building it up from a strong greyscale foundation

Artist **PROFILE**

David Ardinaryas Lojaya
LOCATION: Indonesia

David has been part of the animation industry for over six years, developing character designs. He's worked for Disney TV and DreamWorks TV, and on Jon Bellion's album art.
http://david.lojaya.com

In the animated film industry, visual development artists bring all their ideas to the table, creating imagery needed for the film. Some are quick concept paintings, while others are detailed illustrations. What's important is the storytelling contained within those images. Now there are a thousand ways to realise those ideas, and here I'm going to share one: my process for creating a detailed painting from scratch using a greyscale technique.

To get the most from this workshop you'll need an understanding of visual design, including depicting lighting and shadows, forms, and negative and positive space. Of course, these skills are crucial for any drawing, not just this article. Refining such skills will help you to grow as an artist.

I'll take you through my process for creating a greyscale render and how to control it, so you can add to or edit your artwork. I'll give you tips and tricks for bringing vibrant colours on to a greyscale layer and how to adjust them. All these techniques will help you create a painting that tells a story.

1 Brainstorming your ideas

It's crucial to have a vision in your head before you create the painting. Then get that idea down by doing lots of sketches or even some studies. In this case, I do some doodling based on a fun concept about a cyborg and a young engineer who's doing some emergency repairs on him while they're travelling through the air. Unfortunately, she's gradually losing all her tools! The cyborg looks terrified while the girl is enjoying the ride; the contrast in their expressions will 'sell' the scene. I produce two sketches, but I prefer the first one because it has a clear silhouette. ➤➤

Workshops

2 Create a coloured thumbnail
After the sketch has been approved, I create a colour thumbnail to help guide my colour choices. Because I want to create a bright and playful painting in an animated style, I choose fun blues, with hints of pinks, greens and yellows elsewhere. I place an emphasis on the blues and purples.
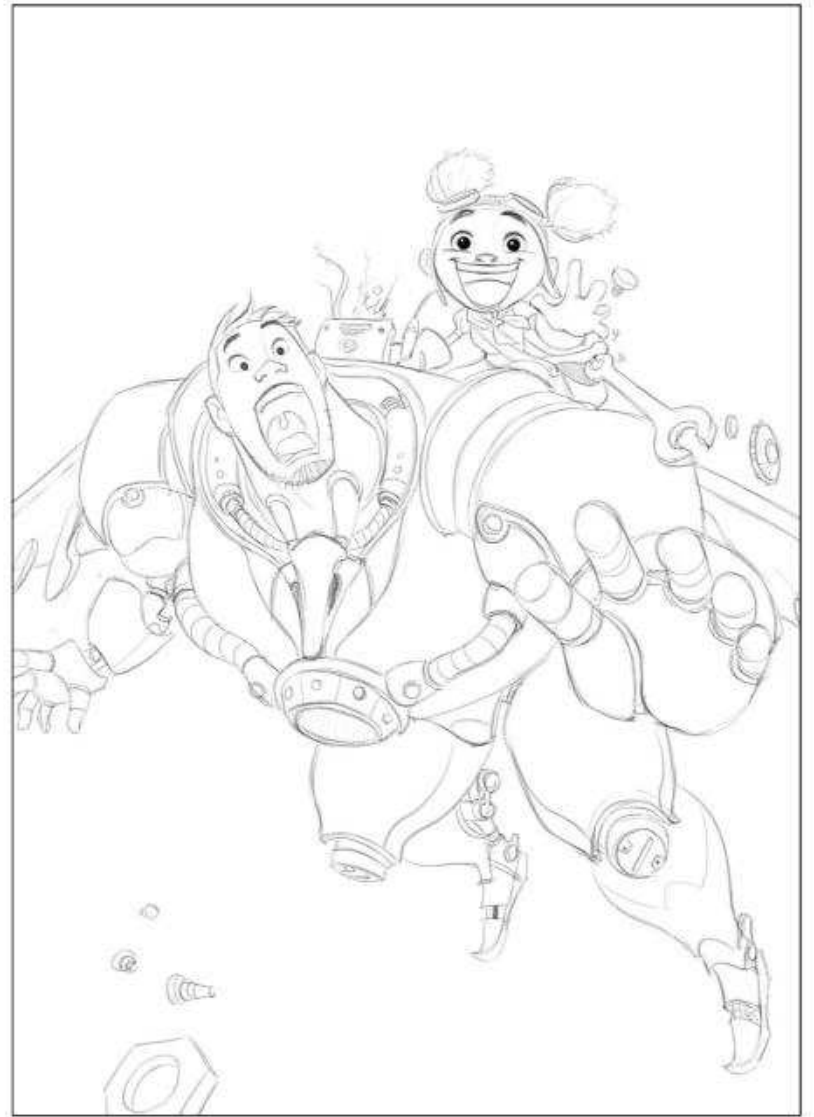
3 Cleaning up and starting anew
Now that I know my direction, it's time to start with a clean line because it's easier for me to render it later on. I create a new layer and start blocking in my characters. I'm using a default Photoshop brush with 100 per cent Opacity and Flow to block my outline.

4 Generate a greyscale version
I use the Magic Wand to select the outer area of my clean outline, then invert this selection with Ctrl+Shift+I. Now that the inside of the outline is selected, I select a brush and paint everything in grey. Now my greyscale layer is ready to be painted on. I clip my sketch layer to the greyscale layer by holding Alt and clicking in between those two layers in the Layers palette. Then I reduce my line's Opacity to around 10 to 20 per cent, because I won't be needing it.

5 Developing a solid lighting foundation

Working on the greyscale layer is the fun part! First, I paint on the shadow area in the new layer, which means I can easily erase into it, if necessary. Because it's a daylight scene set high up in the sky, my characters need to have strong lighting and shadow contrast on their faces. I take my time during this stage, working to develop a believable lighting and shadow scheme. I recommend using as many layers as you need for this stage. I create three layers of shadow: a hard shadow, a soft shadow, and the effects of ambient occlusion.

Always clip your Multiply layer to the greyscale layer by holding Alt and place your cursor between the two layers.

Select the top lightest colour.
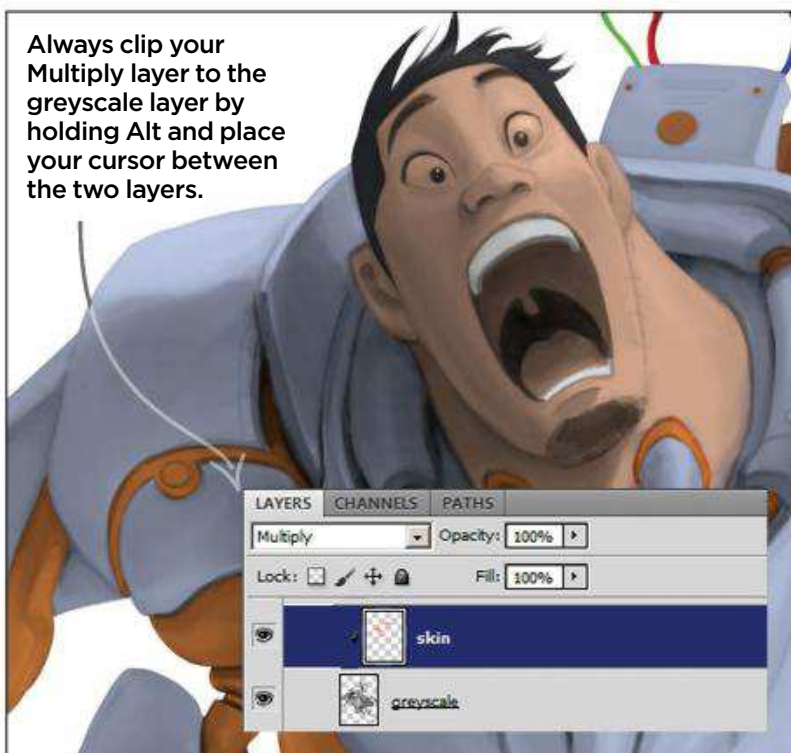
6 Filling in colours

Colouring the greyscale can be daunting, because the colours initially look bland and flat. The trick is to use the lightest possible colour on a Multiply layer. I like to divide my colours across different layers, such as the skin, hairs and suit. Don't worry about things looking lifeless, because I'm about to give you some cool tips on how to reduce that dull colour look… ➤

7 Colour refinements

The trick is to add a variety of colours to each layers. For example, don't just use one reddish colour for the skin layer – add some oranges, yellows, purples and even blues. In real life our skin is composed of a range of colours. I have a custom scatter brush that I use to add the diverse colours. It's very efficient and handy for introducing colours during this step. I'm also adding some blue colours in the shadow area because it's affected by the blue of the sky.

8 Bringing in more light

Another trick to add more depth to your coloured greyscale elements is to add light on a Color Dodge layer. I paint with a light yellow brush set to a low Opacity to brighten some parts that are looking too dark, especially on the faces of my characters. Try painting on a new Screen layer to add more depth, too.

9 Merge those layers!

Once I'm satisfied with the results, I merge all of my layers. This move might seem a little odd, but it's because I like to work on just one layer. But don't forget to back up the greyscale layer and all those colour layers, because we're going to use them for masking. For instance, if you want to edit the skin, you can go back to the skin layer and press Ctrl while clicking the square box. This will select the area you want to work on. This is the benefit of separating out elements of the composition.

10 Repainting stage

Now I start painting on my merged layers. This is because I see the greyscale stage as the foundation for the painting. So this step is where you really get to paint the characters. I mostly repaint the areas of skin: smoothing any areas of uneven render, and bringing more colour depth into the painting.

11 Paint the background
I've finished refining my characters, so now it's time to add the background that will reveal the extent of their chaotic flight. I paint some islands and mountain: the natural environment contrasts with the cybernetic technology on show, and strengthens the amount of story telling in the scene.

12 Details... with no detail
If there's one composition tip I can give you, it's to draw large shapes with low levels of details. I take this approach with each of my painting: for example, the shapes of the island are rounded and have 'big' shapes, but also feature tiny details. I'm using my custom scatter brush to quickly create this visual interest.

13 Merge everything with a brush
After painting the background it can look like my characters are somehow not in their environment. This occurs because of the sharp edges on their outlines. To minimise this effect I select a soft brush that's set on a low Opacity and paint around the edges that I feel are looking too sharp. This is also a chance to apply the colours of the environment to the figures.

14 Final tweaks and adjustments
This is the step where you really have to expend a lot of time and energy. Because it's the final adjustments stage, rest your eyes first or ask for another person's opinion on what needs tweaking. You'll definitely find some mistakes at some point – this is your chance to correct them. I use a black and white filter to check on my values. It's also a great way to check on the positive and negative space of the composition. Finally, I call the work done and save the image.

VIDEO
WORKSHOP

Photoshop & Procreate

HOW TO CREATE AN ENGAGING BACKGROUND

Nick Kennedy develops a strong background painting by planning ahead and staying open to possibilities…

Workshops

Artist PROFILE

Nick Kennedy
LOCATION: US

Nick is a vis-dev artist at Disney. His focus is on painting colour and light, and how they affect the environment around us.
www.paintwithnick.net

One of the key aspects of painting is making sure that I enjoy the process. I do this by leaning into what excites me and working in a variety of different methods and styles. For this workshop I'm going to create an interior background featuring line art and a textured paint style.

I want to set myself up for success by doing lots of planning in the early stages of the painting process. I start by seeking out plenty of reference and inspiration. Once I have a simple idea of the story I'll do a drawing of the environment, featuring as many props and details as I can bring to mind. The goal during this stage is to be able to imagine what kind of person lives in this room.

I then create several black and white compositions that explore different ways of lighting the image.

At the same time I'll create various colour keys of the image.

Even though I spend a good deal of time preparing and planning the piece, I want to keep my options open. I know that I have the chance to change my mind and improvise my approach as I go. This enables me to keep the energy high throughout the entire painting process, and ensures that I won't get bored and quit halfway through!

1 Starting from nothing

When I start a painting I try and pick one simple idea. This takes the pressure off me to think of something amazing right from the start. I want to paint an interior shot of an office with lots of props. At this point I'll spend lots of time researching and quickly sketching ideas in Photoshop to spark my imagination.

2 Establishing a story

I start to hone in on what makes the subject matter interesting to me. I decide to turn the office into an artist's studio because – perhaps unsurprisingly – I can relate more to that subject matter. At this stage I'm focusing on large shapes and the overall feel of the drawing, rather than getting bogged down in the details.

3 Experiment with lighting

I tend to do lots of prep work for a painting. These lighting options provide a safety net so that I won't get stuck later on in the process. Composition, lighting and colour are so intertwined that I like to make these decisions early, knowing that I'll change things up as I go.
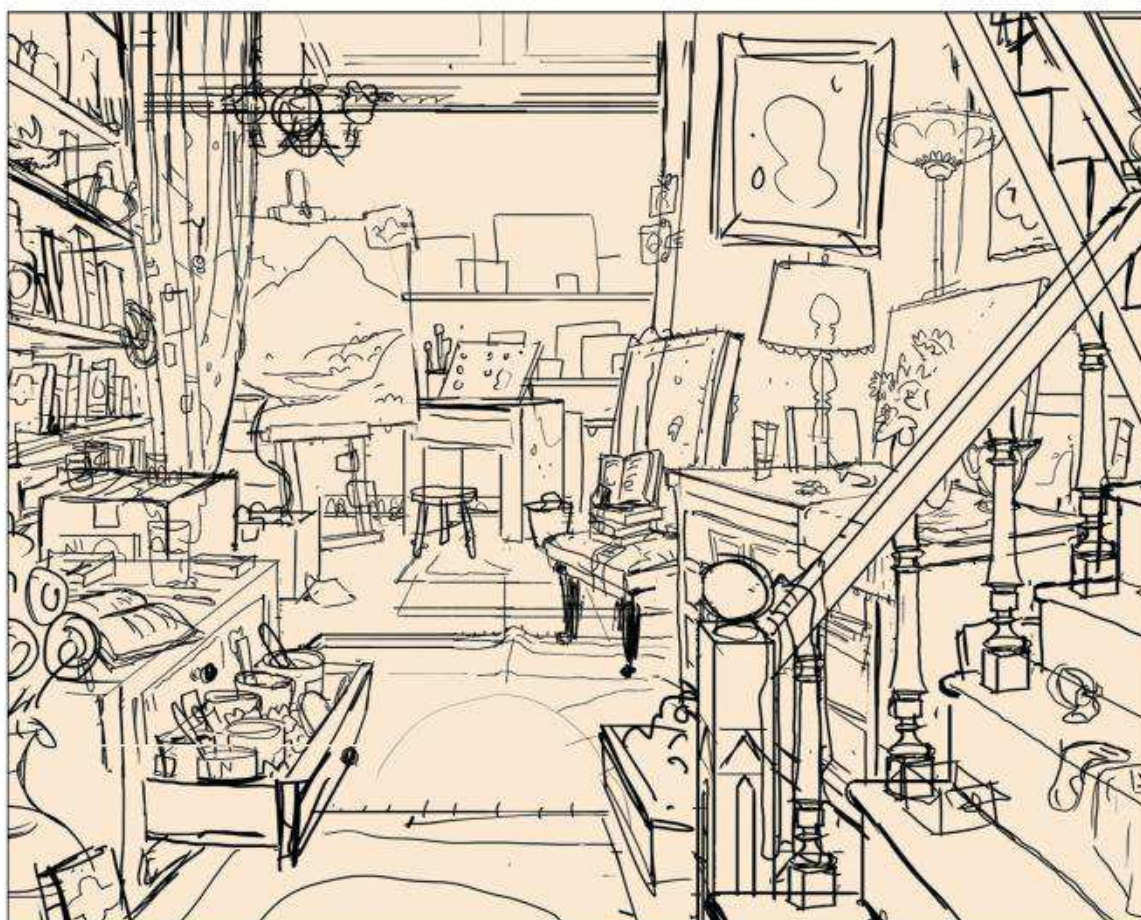
4 Refine the composition

At this point the image feels as though it lacks depth, so I expand the frame to show more of the room. I try adding a large window before ruling that out and eventually settling on a staircase as a framing device. There's lots of experimentation in the early stages of a painting – but that's all part of the fun.
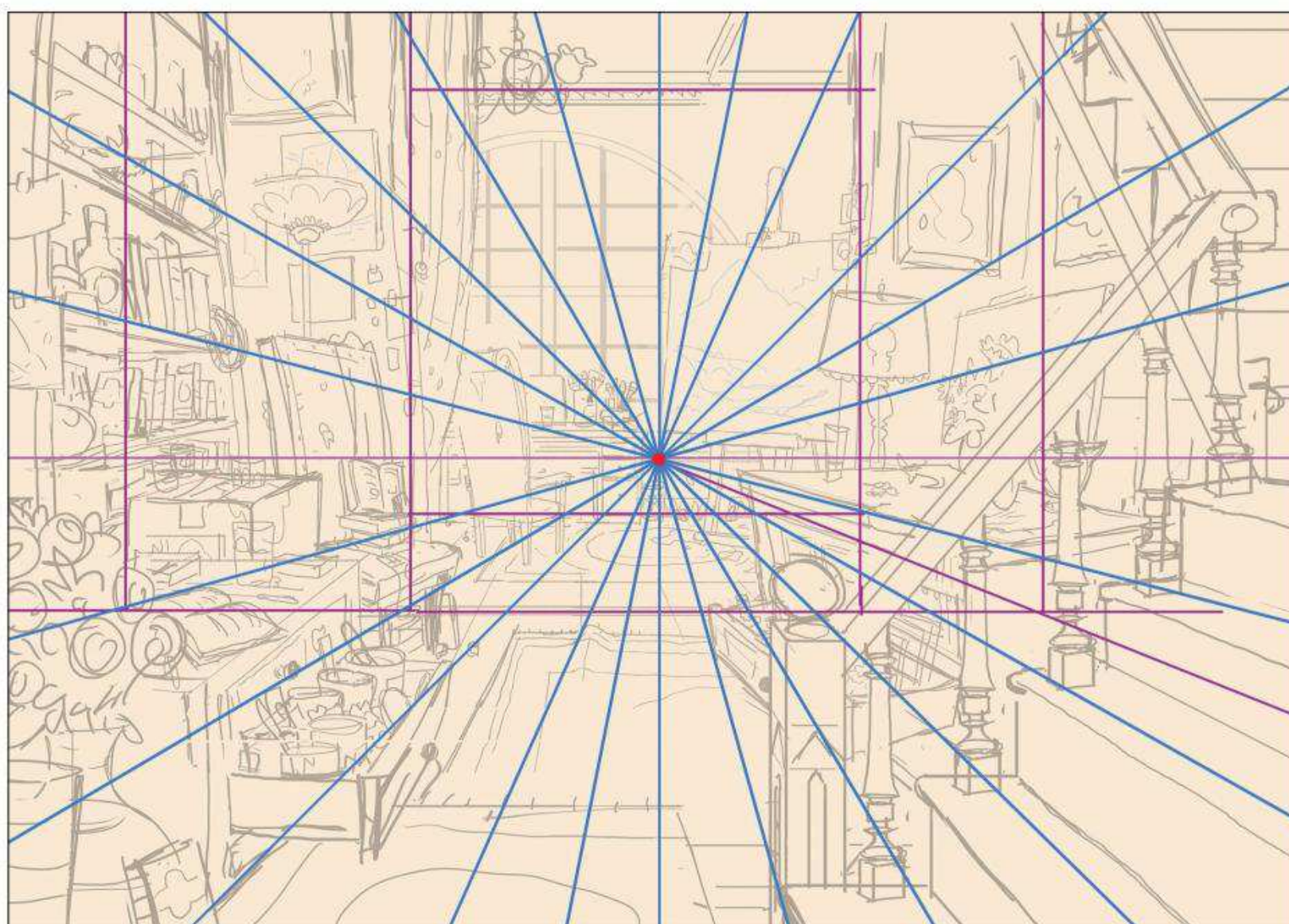
5 Consider the perspective of the scene

Perspective can be a daunting task, but with practice it can become second nature. For this image the perspective is relatively simple: it's one-point perspective with a horizon line in the middle of the image. To avoid becoming overwhelmed by the complexity of this image I lay in main shapes as cubes and then build around them. ➦

6 Create lighting and colour keys

When creating my colour comps I like to infuse them with energy, making as many as I need in five minutes. I avoid using transparency when painting colour comps, opting instead for a hard Round 100 per cent Opacity brush, so I'm not tempted to start painting details.

7 Produce a clean line drawing

I transfer my Photoshop file to my iPad and open it in Procreate. At this stage I like to take a step back and have fun. Time to really let loose and allow my personality to shine through the drawing! I make sure not to trace the sketch, but to improve on it, fix perspective errors, and add more personality and detail.

8 Laying down a base

I want to create a base to paint on so I don't have to stare at a white canvas. It doesn't matter what kind of brush or texture at this point, I'm just trying to start the final painting process with lots of energy, to make sure I don't end up with a stale-looking image.

9 Blocking in major shapes

I block in my shapes with what I consider would be their local colour and value without any lighting effects added. I can paint those in later. What I need now is for the main shapes to be there so I can paint into them later. This little bit of prep work will enable me to jump around different parts of the image with ease.
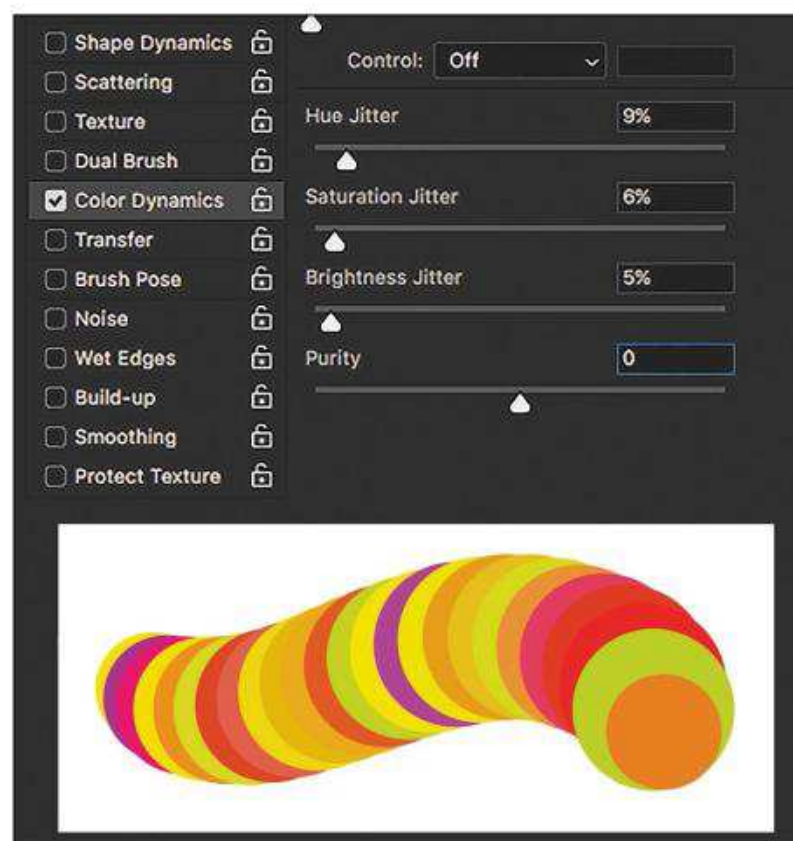
10 Take advantage of Color Dynamics

One great tool in Photoshop is Color Dynamics. I like to have this turned on with most of my brushes, although I rarely turn any of the sliders past 10 per cent because it can get garish. It generates a subtle colour variation that would take too long to paint by hand.

11 Painting with light and colour

Once the main shapes are laid in I can start to light the image. Using my colour key as a guide I make my way around the painting, adding a light and shadow side to all objects, I consider the local colour of the object, as well as the temperature and colour of the light that's affecting it.

12 Keep your value groups consistent

I create a layer filled with black and set the blend mode to Color. This enables me to check that I'm not straying from my initial value comp as I add colours. It can be easy for an image with this much complexity to lose focus if I allow the colours to take precedence over the value.

13 Taking plenty of breaks

One thing that demos can't convey is time. Generally, when I'm painting I'll work in small chunks – 20 minutes to an hour, say. I find that when I stare at the image for too long I can become blind to the mistakes I may have made. Overall, I spend about 13 hours on this interior scene.

14 Colouring the lines

To give my image an extra bit of depth at the end I go through and colour the lines, My goal is to integrate the lines into the image so that it feels like they belong. In my experience, having an all-black line drawing on top of a colourful painting will flatten it out.

Tara Phillips shares how she creates her fantasy portraits!

Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Fantasy art

Fresh new skills from the world's finest illustrators to help you make your best art yet!

All this and more!

The new stars of Magic!
The artists painting up a storm for Magic: The Gathering.

Lessons in Painter 2019
How to get the best out of Corel's natural media software.

Games Workshop
Behind the scenes at the art studio of the wargaming giant!

3D world building
Philipp Scherer details his 3D art landscape skills.

ISSUE 166 ON SALE IN THE UK *Friday 7 September*

Maya
RAPID POSING SKILLS IN MAYA

Bader Badruddin encourages you to stop over-analysing your character animation work and try to get a pose done in as little time as possible!

Artist
PROFILE

Bader Badruddin
LOCATION: England

Bader's a character animator who's worked for Disney, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network, applying his 2D and 3D animation, storyboarding and character design skills. He's also the co-founder of AnimDojo.
www.animdojo.com

I've been a lead and director for the past couple of years and have worked with many animators, helping them hone their skills to become faster and more efficient.

Initially, I found that the animators were taking too long fiddling with their keys in the graph editor, trying to fix a fundamentally flawed animation. The best thing to do was to start again with a new foundation for them to follow.

So we thought it would be best to put these steps into an easy-to-follow list. This has developed into the foundations of AnimDojo's approach to animating.

There are many things I can cover here, but I want to share with you something practical so you can get a sense of how our approach is different. This is an exercise that's recommended to be done at least half an hour before animating, just like a warm-up exercise. Doing so will help you to build muscle memory,

enabling you to break free from viewing the computer or Maya as an obstacle. Instead, you'll embrace it as part of your time and work effortlessly. In time this will free you to focus on posing and animating without feeling "slow or stuck".

You'll have five minutes per pose, and you can use the rig provided with this workshop and follow along in one of our pre-recorded live sessions. However, before you do that you need to follow a few simple steps to know how to do it correctly…
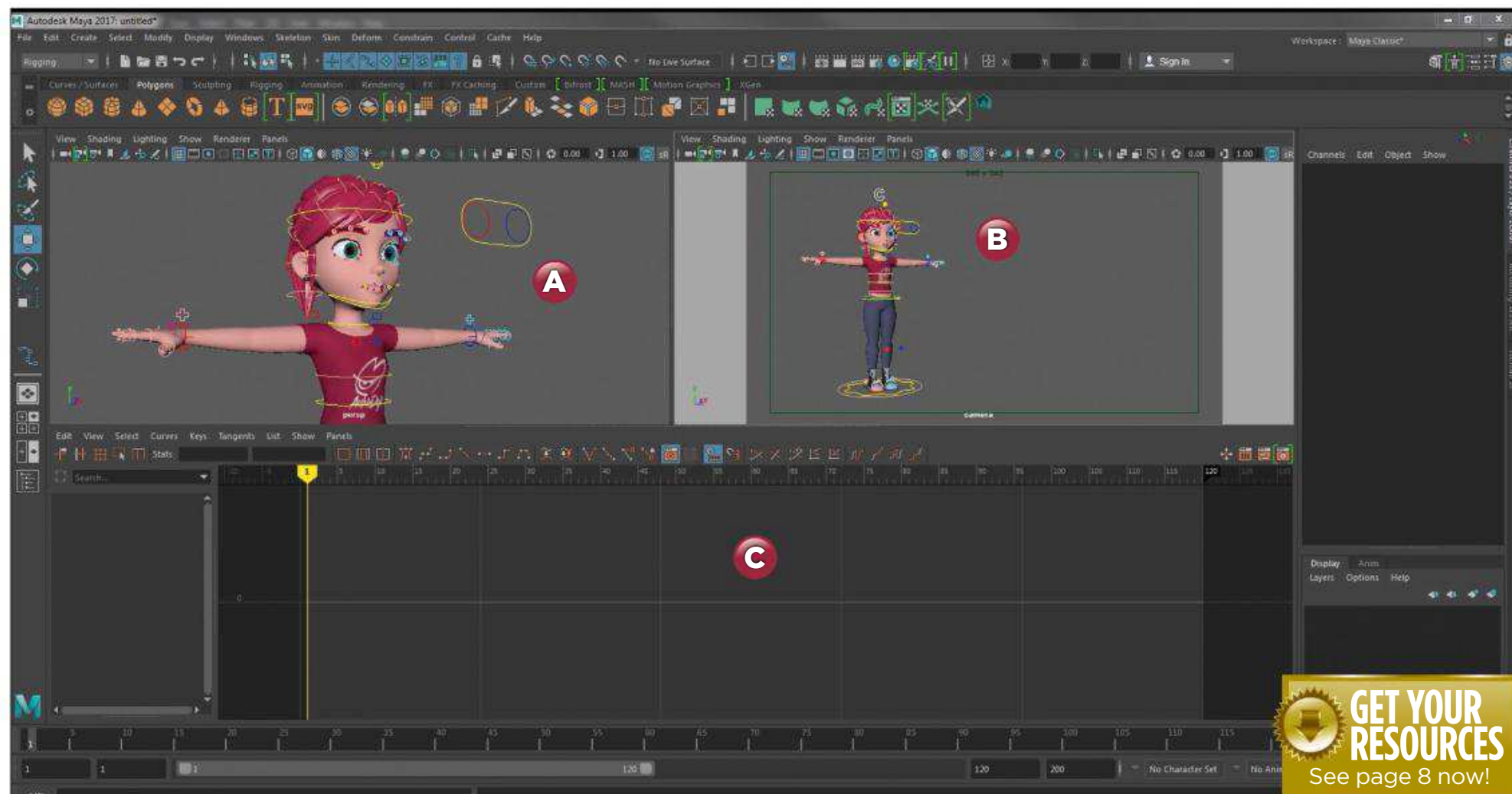
1 Configuring the Viewport in Maya

One of the things that helped me improve my speed and efficiency in Maya was when I used the three-port view instead of having dual monitors. On the left would be my perspective (A), on the right my camera view (B), and below is the graph editor (C). The reason for this is so I don't keep turning my head between two screens, constantly checking both for every step I make. I work 90 per cent of the time directly in the camera view, and only use perspective if I can't get the pose to work because of awkward positioning of body parts to the camera. ➥

Workshops

2 Let's middle mouse it!
This is a term I use a lot with my animators. I've seen so many people control the rig by selecting the actual manipulators and moving them axis by axis. This is such a time waster! Grab the character's arm, then anywhere on the screen just use your middle mouse button and drag it wherever you need it to be. This is much faster, and over time you'll see the benefits of this approach. Note that this is only possible with translation, not rotation.
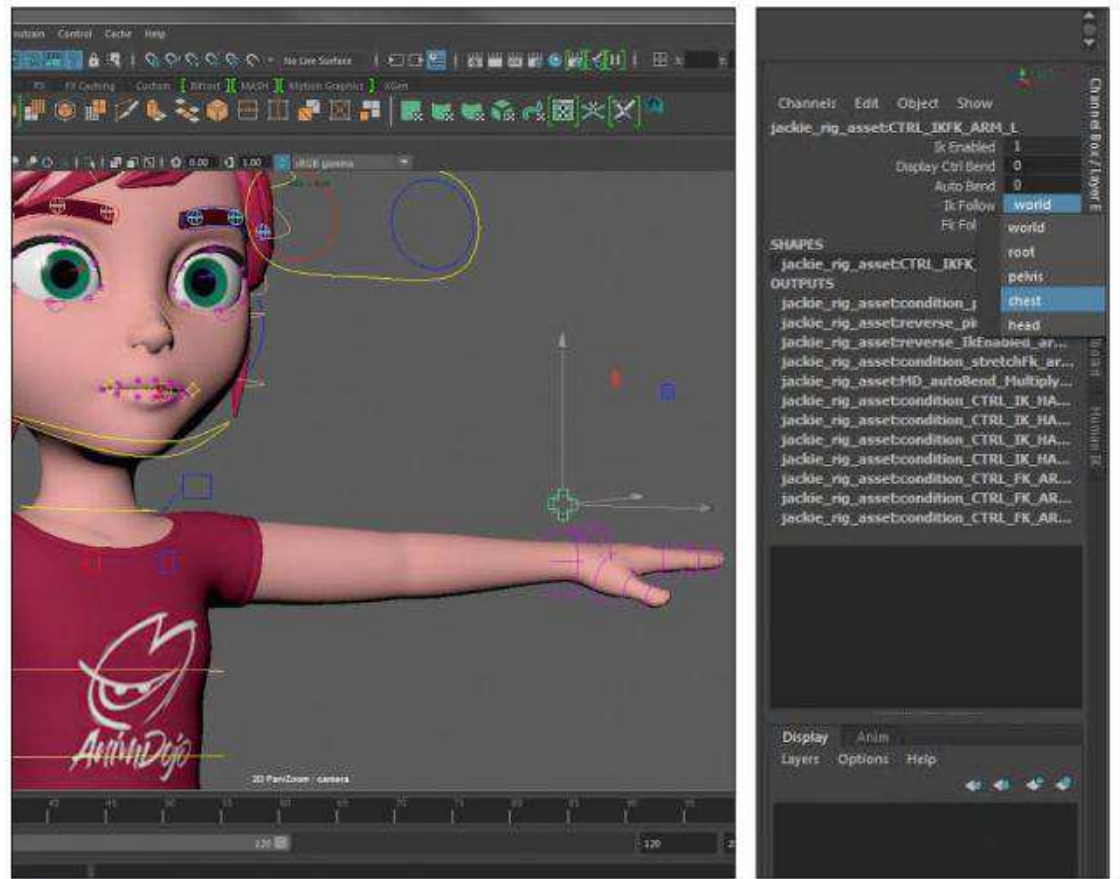
3 Less is definitely more
The idea that the more complex a rig is the better it'll perform, is a pet peeve of mine. Keep things simple. Set your arms to IK mode and set their space to either hips or chest. That way, when you move the hips the entire upper body moves along with it. You want to be able to move the character with as few controllers as possible.

4 Quickly assess your line of action
The amount of time wasted when posing a character sometimes boils down to one little thing animators forget about, and that's the line of action. Grab the hips, the chest and the head if need be, and together move them into position. This will give you a quick glance at what your line of action will look like, without spending a long time moving each body part – only to realise you haven't pushed the pose enough.

It's all in the hips
5 Once you've posed your line of action, you'll notice that your character looks a little wonky. But that's okay, because now it's time to fix the pose to work with our line of action. Don't bother with the chest or head, and completely ignore the arms at this stage. Your focus should be on the hips. If you've set up your rig to work from the hips up like we did in step two, then moving the hips moves the entire upper body. This is also a good time to pose the legs to work with the hips.

Go through the spine upwards
6 Now that our hips are in place, it's time to adjust the chest and head to fit perfectly into our line of action. Don't forget to tilt the shoulders in such a way that it's in balance with the hips. I always keep an eye out for twinning (when both sides of the body are mirrored) and this is a simple way to fix that.
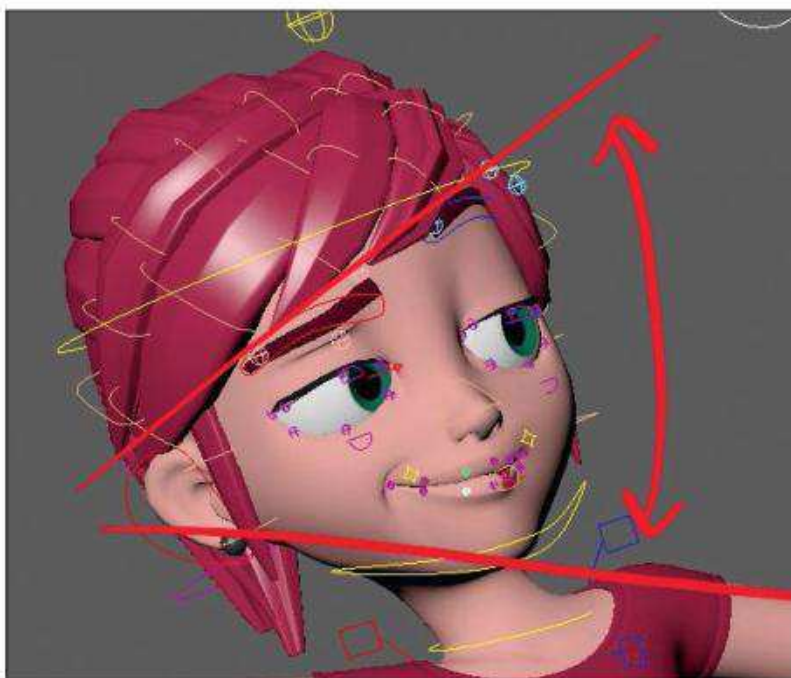
Work the face early on
7 One thing that I regularly notice with animators is they tend to leave the face until the very end. This usually results in the face feeling detached from the body as it moves. A good way to get into the habit of always posing the face with the body is by following this workshop. Don't ignore things and say to yourself, "I'll get to that when I polish my animation." The face needs to be posed from the very first blocking stage.

The hands need attention, too
8 I often get asked how I pose my hands so quickly, and the answer is very simple. I select all the controllers at once, so when I rotate they all rotate together. It's taken me some time to get used to doing it, but once you work this way you won't want to go back to your old ways of posing. ➤➤
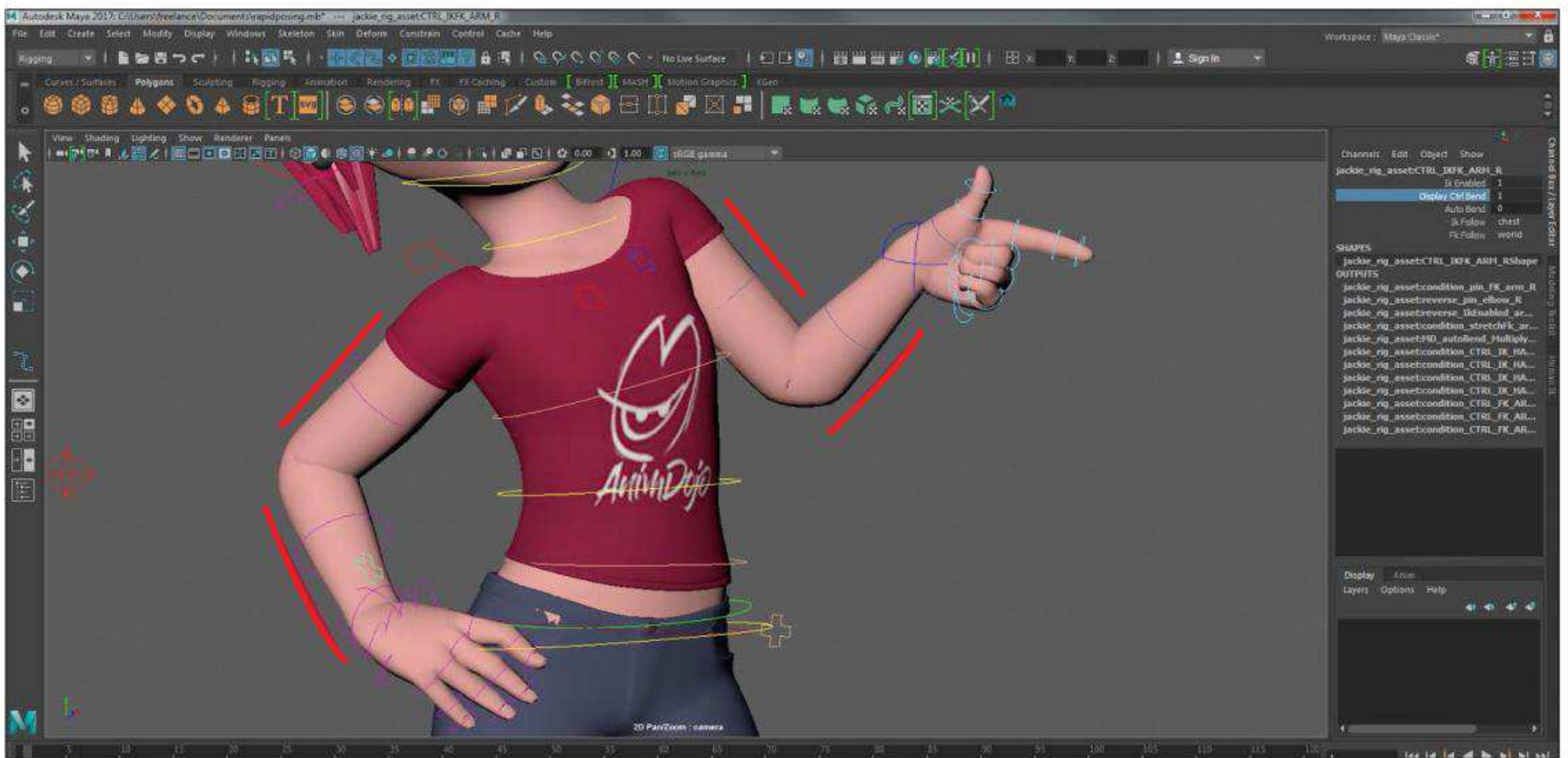
9 Soften the edges of the character's limbs

In general, for cartoon animation I always prefer to soften the edges of elbows and knees. It gives it a softer more appealing look. Don't go overboard though, otherwise you'll end up with a "rubber hose" style (unless that's the look you're going for). It's a balancing act and I always push my animators and students to work this into their initial blocking.

10 Do you have more time?

Now this step relates specifically to our AnimDojo workshop. If you find that you still have time to work on the pose before the five minutes are up, be careful not to over-analyse and end up ruining the pose you came up with. There's a creative freedom that you generate from the first "gesture" pose you made, and you don't want to lose that. I'd recommend focusing on pushing the details. Work more on the limbs, the face – even the character's hair could add to the pose.
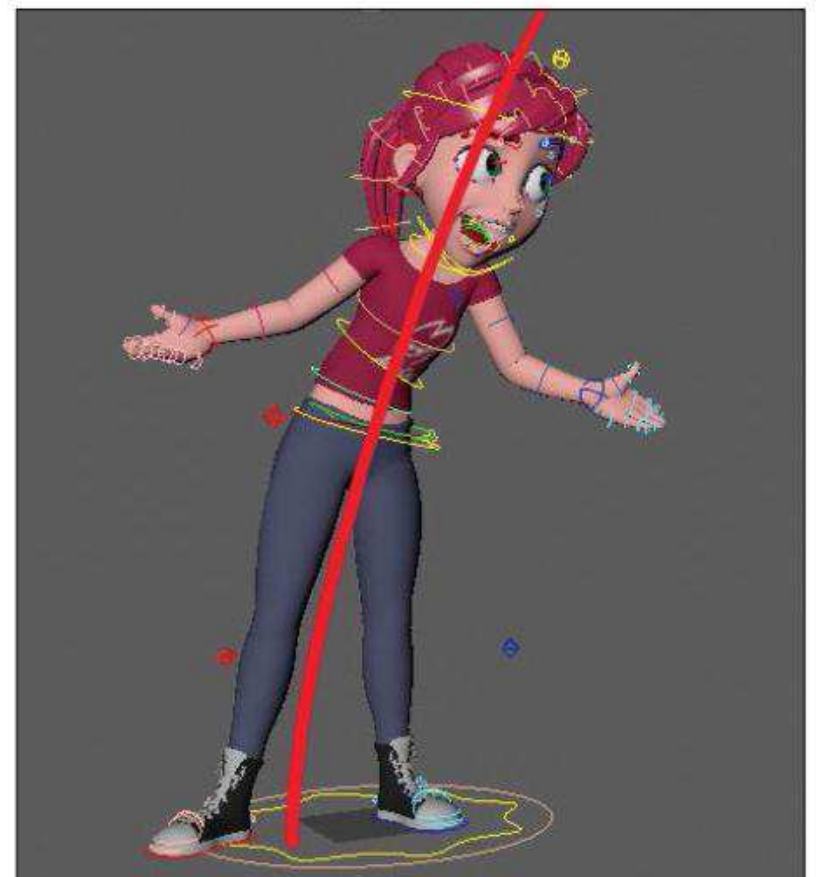
11 Go one way or the other

I always get asked about acting and how to decide what pose to put the character in. The tricky part is how to do this in just five minutes! The way I look at posing a character is by simply going one way or the other. For example, if I were to pose the character as "surprised" I can either draw my line of action going away, or towards the viewer. There are many other ways of course, but I like to keep things simple. If I'm posing a character moving as they talk, pose one would be one way and pose two would be in the opposite direction.

12 It's all about developing contrast

One of the problems I used to experience early in my career was getting my animation to look cartoon-like. I've realised over the years that the reason I wasn't getting those results was mainly down to me not putting enough contrast between my poses. Don't just go for 50 per cent of what the pose could be – push beyond and exaggerate it. Don't be afraid to "break" the rig – in other words, pushing it beyond its limits. As long as what's broken is hidden from the camera view, it doesn't matter.

13 Compiling an acting library

One of the best ways to learn how to pose is to build a library of acting choices in your head. I love going to the park just to observe and study people. I keep a mental note of what I see and try to add it to my work. I also try to act and feel things out, to know which muscles to pull or where the weight is in my poses. This takes time, but in the long run you'll be able to pull a pose out of your head whenever you need it!

Artist insight
STORYBOARD FOR TV ANIMATION

Wendy Grieb reveals the vital concepts of sequential storytelling and how they apply to storyboarding for television animation

Artist PROFILE

Wendy Grieb
LOCATION: US

Wendy is an Annie Award-winning artist with over 20 years' experience in creating storyboards for Walt Disney TV Animation, Nickelodeon, Klasky Csupo and more. She also loves to draw and read sci-fi and fantasy.
www.wendygrieb.com

Storyboarding is a creative, exciting and fulfilling career. In addition to being able to draw to a high standard, a storyboard artist needs an understanding of storytelling, as well as a knowledge of animation layout mechanics.

The television storyboard artist creates the visual blueprint for the animated production. Put simply, if it isn't in the storyboard, it won't be on the screen. It's not unusual for the character poses from the storyboard to be traced and used as extreme poses by the animation artists.

In addition to drawing the characters acting out the performance, a production board artist (The Animation Guild title for a television storyboard artist) must also have a firm grasp of filmmaking principles and how to translate those principles when designing the layout for animation camera moves.

These tips examine the most important principles an animation story artist needs to understand. Storyboards aren't finished art, but rather a key component of planning the production from which the finished art is designed. The storyboard enables the movement of the characters and camera, with each scene sequentially designed in context of what came before and what will come after as the story unfolds…

1 IT'S ALL ABOUT TELLING THE STORY

Boiled down to its essence, my job is to tell the story. I begin by reading the provided script or outline for the show. It's important to remember that the story is about the characters, so I always ask myself these questions:

- **What is happening in the story right now?**
- **How does it affect the character?**
- **What is their state of mind?**
- **How do they feel?**
- **How should the audience feel?**
- **What is the emotional moment that I'm trying to communicate?**

These are the key points that, as a whole, tell the story. Every decision should be driven by the story!

2 BUILD ON THE LINE OF ACTION

The line of action is a design decision related to the energy/force the character exudes and is the first line I draw. A character who has the weight of the world on their shoulders will slouch, with his/her head pulled to the ground. One exuberant with success will arc in the opposite direction, throwing his/her weight into the air and away from the pull of Earth's gravity. This line is the design foundation upon which the drawing of the character is built; communicating direction of movement, emotion, energy and so on.

3 ONE DRAWING EQUALS ONE IDEA

Film moves quickly. The audience can only look at one thing at a time, so including multiple ideas in a drawing will just result in the audience missing some of those ideas. The storyboard artist must commit to creating a new drawing for each new idea. If an event takes more than one step to be described, then you're going to have to draw each step. For example, if a character sees something and reacts, draw the character looking, draw what they see, and then draw their reaction.

4 DRAWING FOR ANIMATION

Disney animator Ollie Johnston said it was important to draw clearly, not cleanly. I begin drawing loose thumbnails to work out the flow of the storyboard and explore various solutions. When tying down the final drawings, keep the energy from those early sketches. Construct your drawings with simple shapes and volumes. Use guidelines and 'draw through' to ensure your drawings have sculptural dimension. Turn your character in space, tilt and twist the shoulders, hips and the head.

> 66 Test the clarity of your pose by filling the drawing with solid colour. Can you still read the action of the character? 99

5 CLARITY FOUND IN SILHOUETTES

Clarity is key! The audience has a very short time to absorb information before the next idea appears. There should never be any doubt as to the action described, nor to the intent and state of mind of the character. Test the clarity of your pose by filling the drawing with solid colour. Can you still read the action of the character? Using clear silhouettes when designing poses ensures this clarity of communication. ➡

6 COMMUNICATE THE STORY THROUGH CHARACTER POSES

The poses I draw need to be clear and simple, but also unique to the character. Too many poses and the character won't stop moving, thereby losing emphasis on what matters. Too few poses and the character will be lost on the screen. Working with the dialogue track, I listen for the subtext, or the feeling beneath the words. The poses I draw capture this emotional subtext, so I change poses when the attitude changes. Pauses between lines are often more important than the dialogue itself; providing opportunity to show the character thinking and changing attitude.

7 THINK LIKE AN ACTOR

Storyboards plan the performance of the characters. For television productions, this character layout is detailed and very specific. Voice actors are vital in defining the character. Listen to the dialogue and then listen to it again! Don't be afraid to try acting out the words yourself – I have a mirror at my desk to help me draw convincing expressions and movements. Subtle expressions are the most challenging. Each character is unique and the performance must reflect this individuality. Character design model sheets are a handy resource story artists use to maintain a consistent character performance.

> 66 Each character is unique and the performance must reflect this 99

16X9 Aspect Ratio
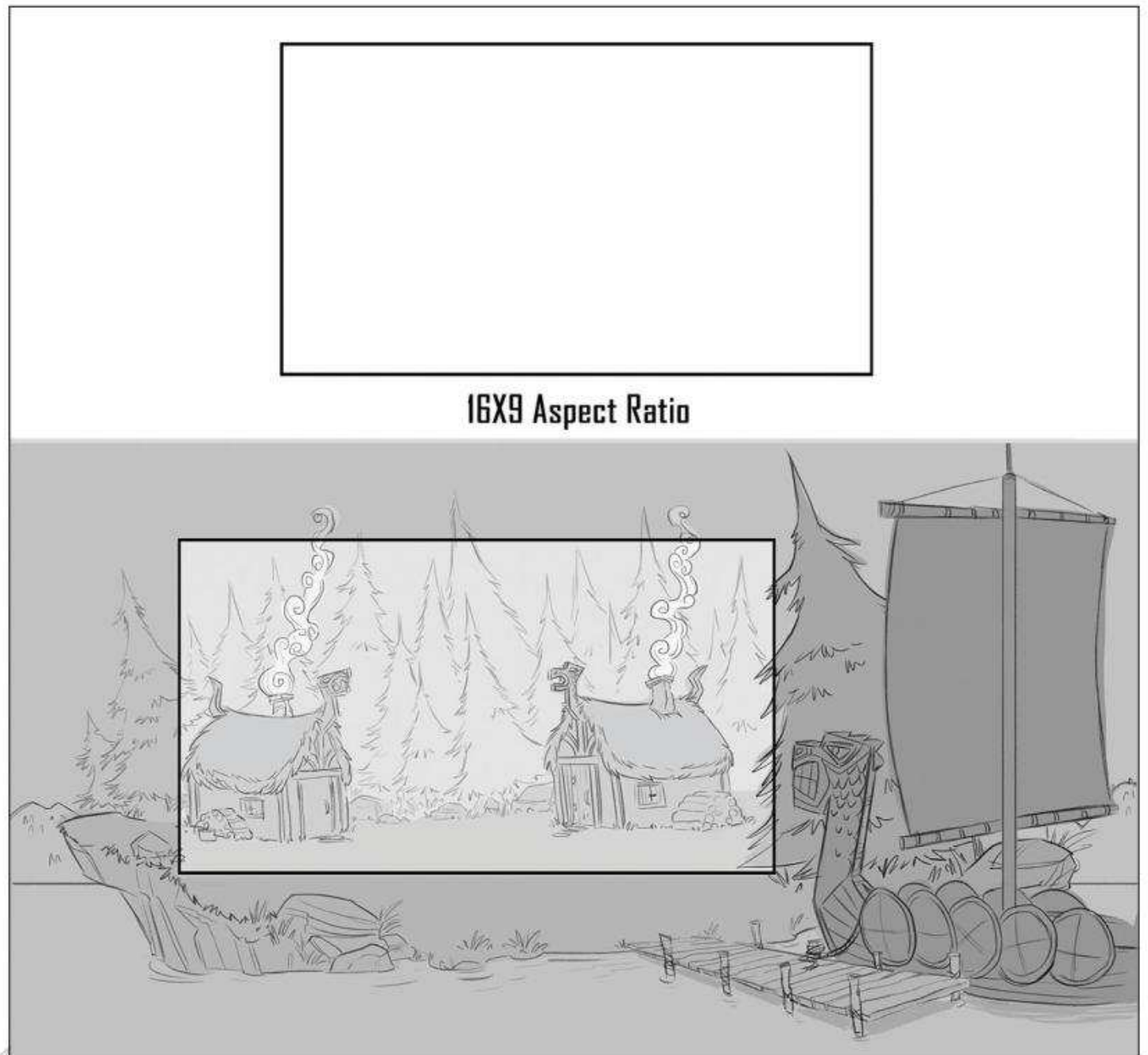
8 THE FRAME IS THE 'EYE'

Tied with the concept of point of view (see tip 10, opposite), the frame is the lens or window we use to tell the story. The frame can move and elements can move into and out of the frame. In the example here, the frame is defined by a 16:9 aspect ratio, meaning the width of the frame is about 1.78 times that of the height of the frame. This 1,080p aspect ratio is the standard for American television. Be aware that theatrical distribution uses different standards, as do broadcasters in other countries.

9 DRAW A SIMPLE STORYBOARD PANEL
Follow these key steps to create a clear storyboard
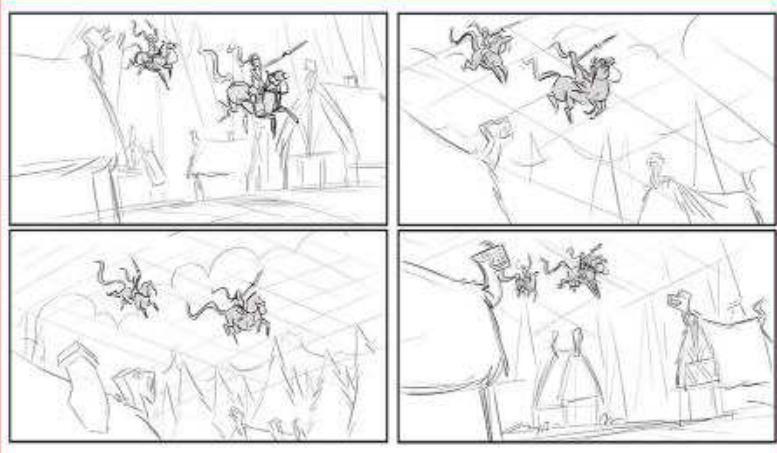
A Sketch thumbnails
Thumbnails are meant to be drawn quickly and should be small in size. I use them to begin exploring solutions for telling the story. I then select the thumbnail that best communicates the story point. In this example, I explored four possible solutions.

B Rough panel
Next comes the rough panel – I blow the selected thumbnail up to the size of the finished panel. At this stage I resolve perspective, structure and refine the posing of the character. The rough panel is reviewed by the director, storyboard supervisor or executive producer.

C Clean up the storyboard
Any change requests from the review are sorted in the cleanup. The final line should delineate forms and idea, but also maintain the life of the character. Tone may be added. Some productions require tight 'on model' drawings; others like looser, more energetic drawings.

DUTCH ANGLE HORIZON LINE

THE AXIS OF THE CAMERA IS TILTED

HIGH HORIZON LINE

CAMERA IS PLACED HIGH AND LOOKING DOWN

LOW HORIZON LINE

CAMERA IS PLACED LOW AND LOOKS STRAIGHT OR UP

MIDDLE HORIZON LINE

AVOID CUTTING THE PANEL IN HALF
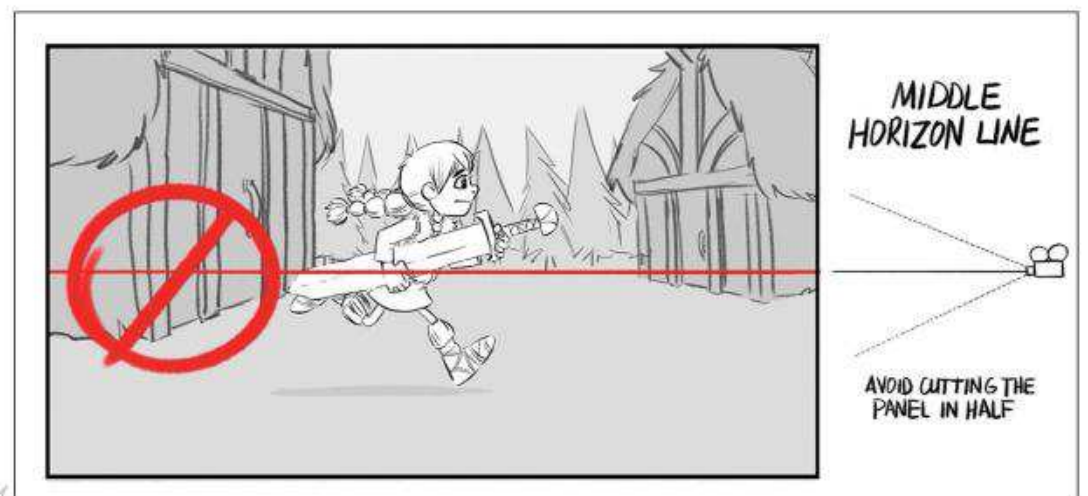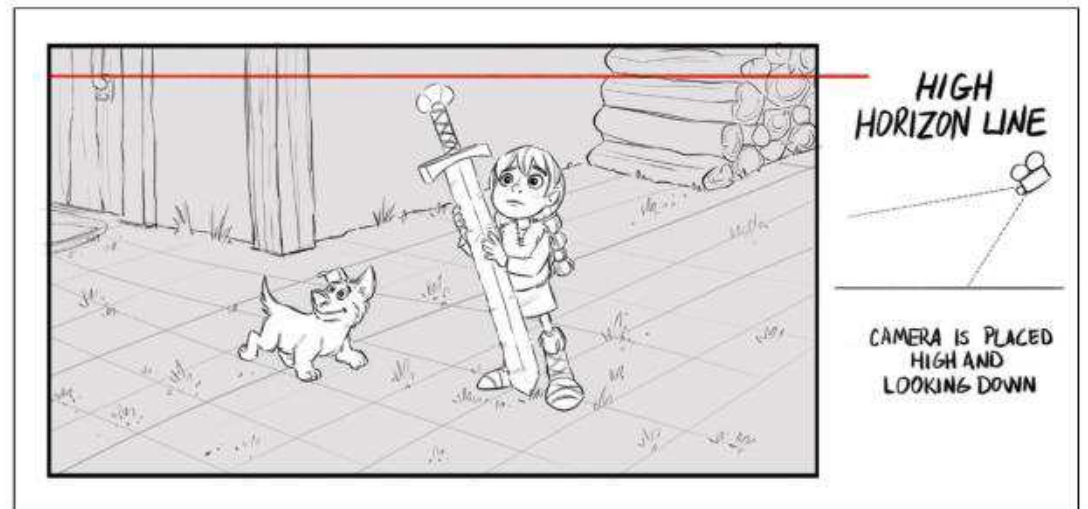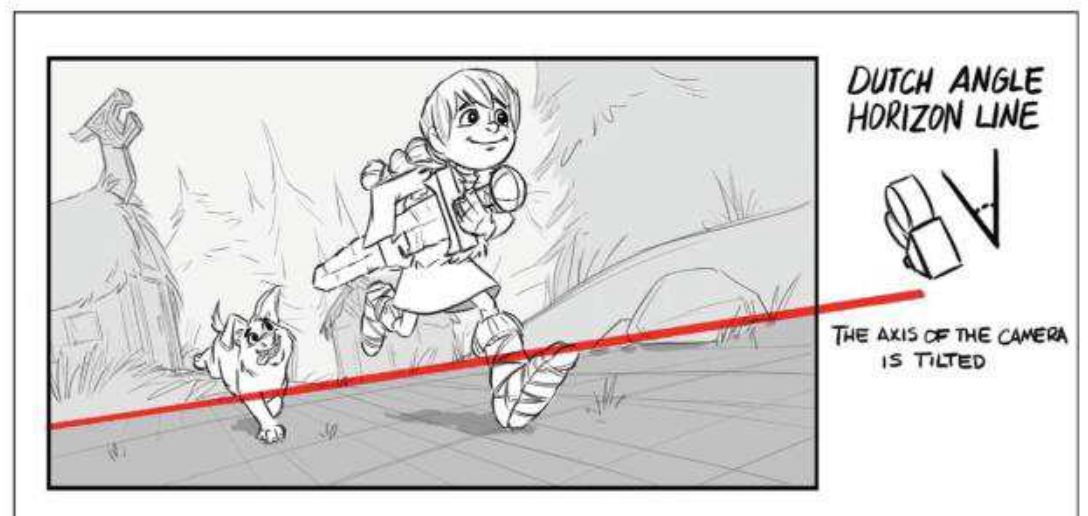
10 ESTABLISH THE POINT OF VIEW WITH THE HORIZON LINE/EYE LINE

The horizon line, determined by camera placement, dictates the point of view and is the first line I draw when beginning a panel. With a high horizon line, the audience will look down, while an extreme low horizon forces the audience to look up at the scene. A variety of camera angles ought to be considered, but the decision should always be dictated by the needs of the story. Low horizon lines are often preferred because they're consistent with how we experience the world, enable clearer staging (clean silhouettes), show depth (you can see for miles) and require fewer perspective challenges, for example.

VARY LINE WEIGHT TO SHOW DISTANCE

OVERLAP HELPS TO SHOW DEPTH

NOTE INTERSECTIONS

NOTE INTERSECTIONS

H.L.

WHERE IS SHE STANDING?

SHE MUST BE ON HER KNEES OR STANDING IN A HOLE.

H.L.
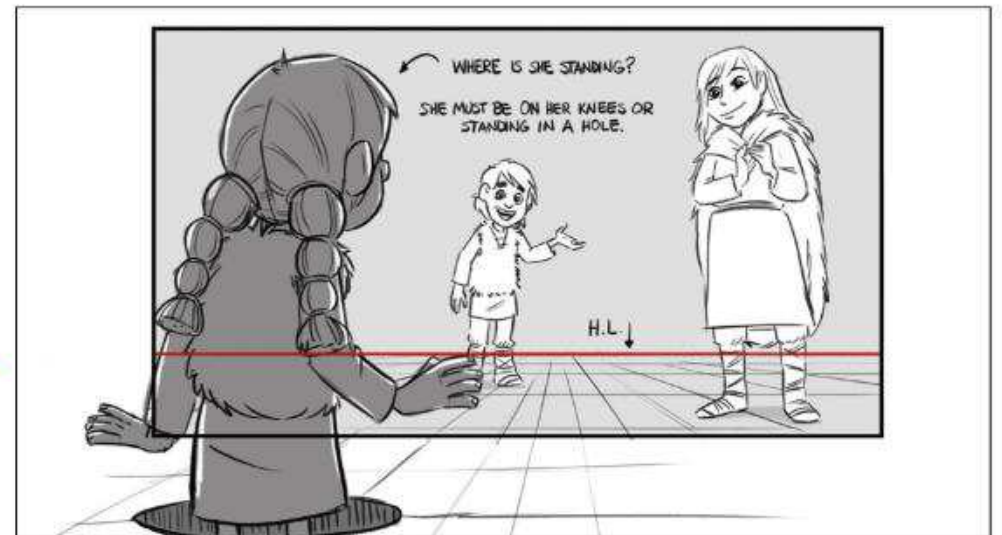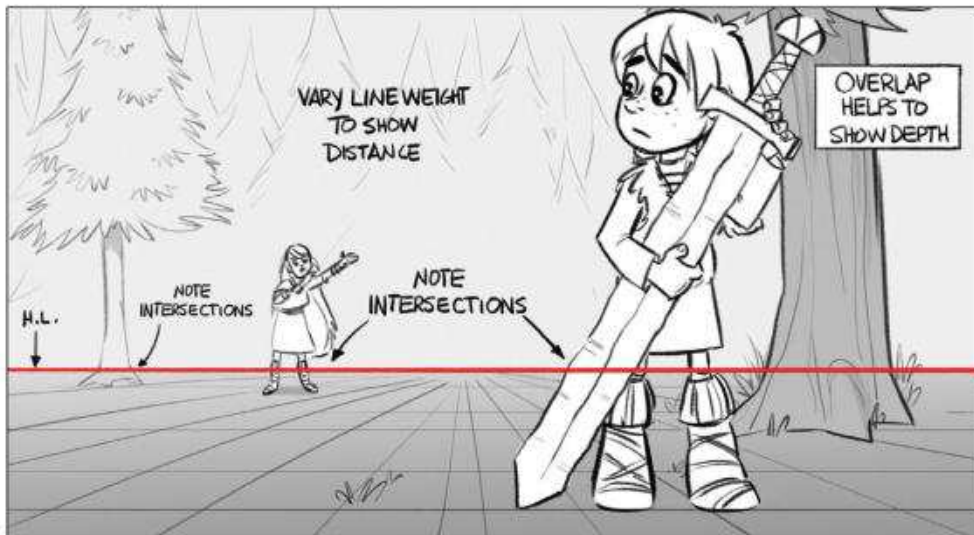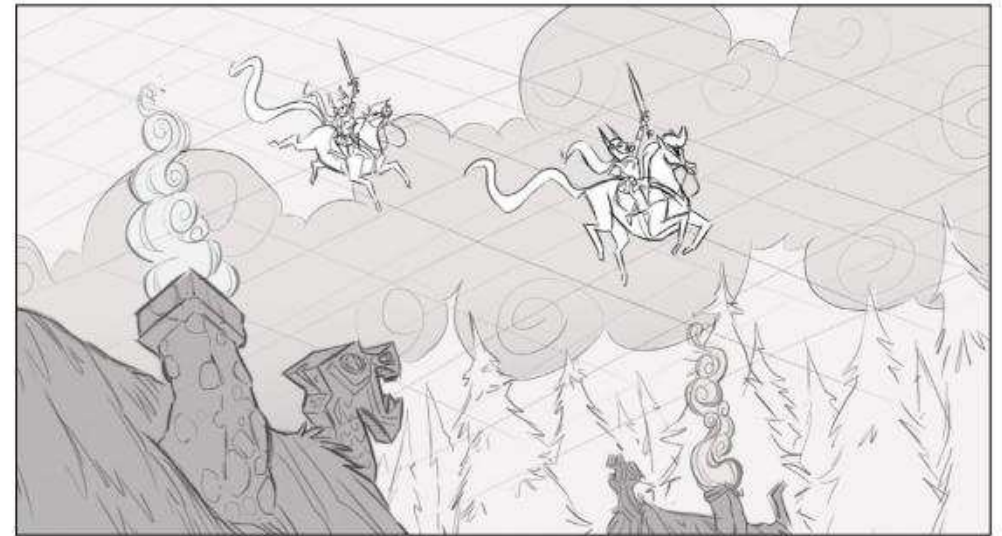
11 USE GRIDS TO HELP WITH OBJECT PLACEMENT

I draw a grid to show the ground, sky plane or even a wall. This helps me draw the scene in a solid, convincing way. When an element within the scene bisects the horizon line, everything in the scene will bisect the horizon line at the same relative height. Knowing this makes placement of elements within the scene easy. Be certain that your characters all fit within the world you've created. Too often, characters in the foreground would have to dig a hole to fit in the scene! Use overlap and line weight variation to communicate objects are further away.

CAMERA CANNOT BE PLACED HERE.

180° DEGREES

CAMERA CAN BE PLACED HERE.
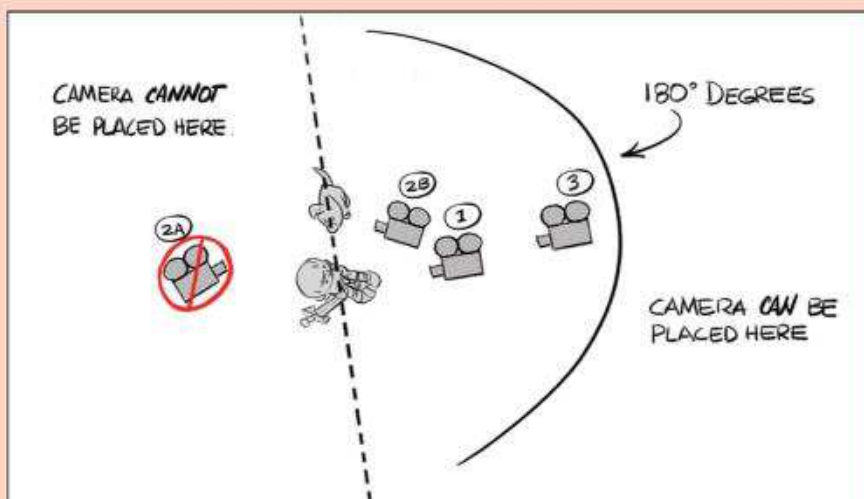
12 ENSURE CONTINUITY

Continuity is a word used often to refer to screen direction, although its meaning extends beyond that. Maintaining continuity is ensuring the geography of the space and characters is kept clear from shot to shot. Screen direction, or the 180 Degree Rule, is an important filmmaking principle and a fundamental aspect of continuity. We're translating a 3D world into a 2D experience on the screen. Once a character is established as moving left to right or right to left, keep that direction of movement while the character is onscreen.

INCORRECT

CORRECT

CAMERA 1

CAMERA 1

CAMERA 2A

CAMERA 2B

CAMERA 3

CAMERA 3
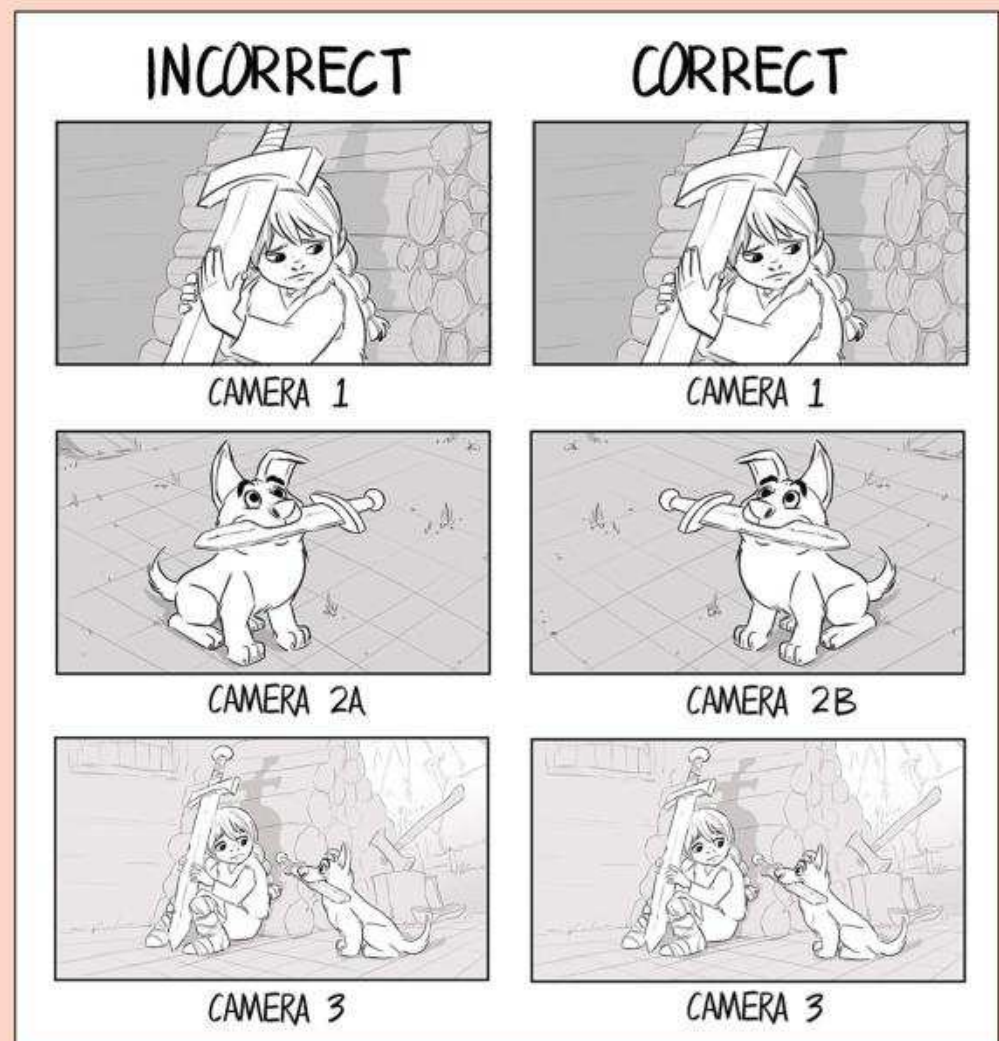
13 FILM TIME AND EDITING

Scenes/shots are designed to work in sequence. We extend, compress and reorder time to best suit our story. Shot size and design should be varied as we transition from one shot to another. Film has a language. We learn to 'hear' this language, but often don't know how to use it to tell a story. Study great films. Thumbnail out the scene cuts and then assess what the filmmaker was doing when making choices, such as camera placement, character movement within the scene, sequencing of shots, time allocated to scenes and so on.

LEAVE 'NOSE ROOM' IN FRONT

GOOD

BAD

GIVE ROOM TO MOVE

TOO TIGHT!

GOOD

BAD

14 COMPOSE FOR MOVEMENT

A scene/shot, comprising a series of panels, describes only seconds of time. Every idea must be clearly and simply presented. The focus of interest should be the only object of that size, shape and value within the scene. The Rule of Thirds can be useful in composing – avoid corners and edges of the frame. But remember that the world extends beyond the frame and the frame itself can move. And be sure to leave room for the characters to move around. They shouldn't feel 'squeezed' into a panel.

CROSS-DISSOLVE

CROSS-DISSOLVE TO THE NEXT PANEL TO SHOW "REMEMBERING": A TYPE OF "FLASHBACK"

CROSS-DISSOLVE

CROSS-DISSOLVE BACK TO THE PANEL BELOW: RETURNING TO THE PRESENT

START

STOP

CAMERA MOVE
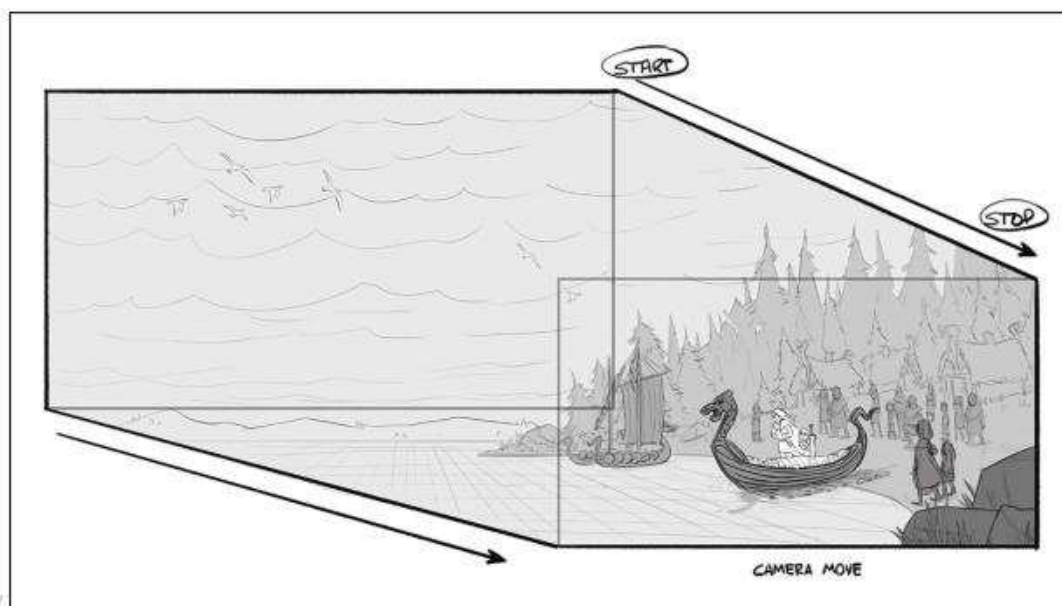
15 ANIMATION LAYOUT

Animation layout refers to the mechanics of how an animation camera works. The illusion of a dimensional, moving camera is created by designing artwork that will slide past the camera. Layers of art are designed and synchronised to create an illusion of depth. Toon Boom Storyboard Pro has an excellent Camera tool that makes it easy to plan out camera moves. ●

STOP

START

VERTICAL PAN
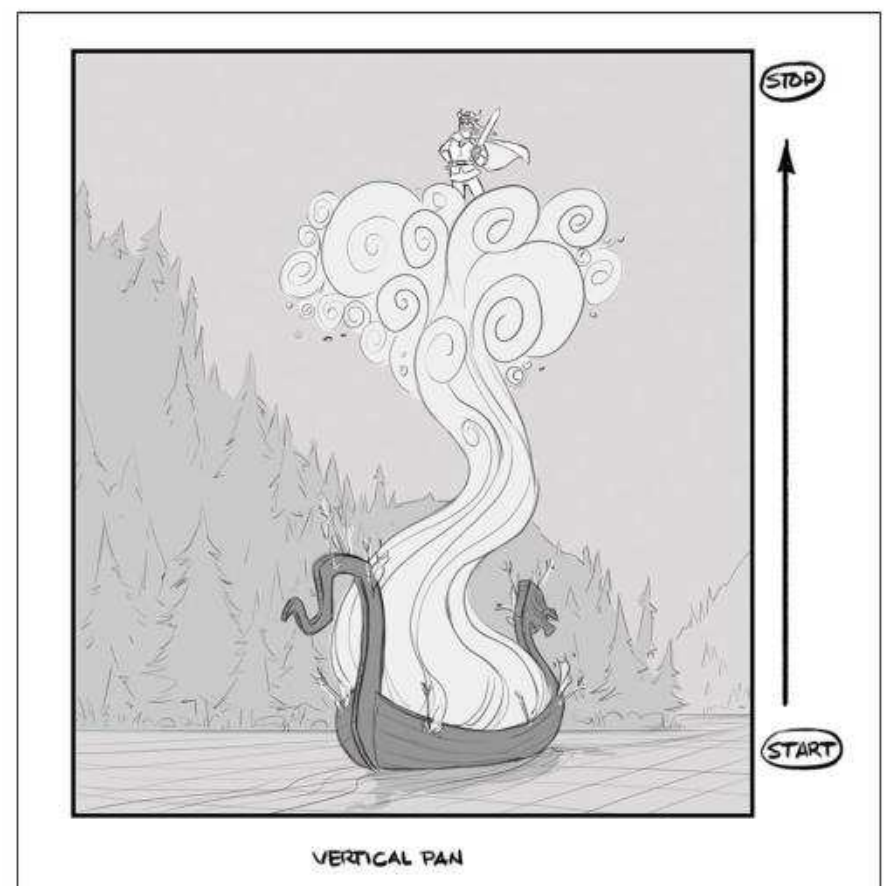
15 CHARACTER DESIGN TIPS

Pro vis-dev artist **Pernille Ørum** reveals her approach for developing characters that are full of life, covering colours, pose, silhouette and more

Artist
PROFILE

Pernille Ørum
LOCATION: Denmark

Pernille is a freelance visual developer and was the lead character designer on DC Super Hero Girls. Her clients include Warner Bros., Disney Publishing, DreamWorks and Mattel.
www.pernilleoe.dk

When starting as a character designer it can seem an impossible task trying to follow the many rules, style and approaches. How can you find your own style and how do you know when you're good enough?

The truth is that no one knows and there are no specific answers. Everyone you look up to in design, still asks themselves the same questions. The good artists are those who push themselves and keep exploring new ways for how to get better. This is something I always keep in mind when I'm looking at a blank piece of paper and can't find my inspiration. Everyone struggles – it's how you deal with –it that will dictate your success as an artist.

Being uninspired happens from time to time. I can have periods where there aren't enough hours in the day to draw everything that I see in my mind. And then a week or two can go by where every day is a struggle to be creative. That's when your knowledge of the rules of design becomes crucial. Understanding how colours work together, how to create dynamic poses and how to make your character stand out are all skills that can be practised. Such quick pen and paper exercises are perfect when trying to overcome the daily hurdle of feeling uninspired.

There's no magic to becoming a good character designer. Instead, it's willingness to keep working and improving, as well as having a love for the craft.

1 MAKE AN EFFORT TO WORK FAST

When starting out on your character design, don't get caught up in the details. Decide what you're trying to communicate, then create loose sketches with movement, acting and flow. As soon as you start to tighten up the drawing, you'll automatically lose some of the dynamic, so it's important to have as much life in the early stages as possible. Movement is all but impossible to add later, so make sure it's in the initial sketch. Work quick and do more than one drawing to test your idea.

2 CLEAR SILHOUETTE

If you wish to improve your pose, a good approach is to turn it into a silhouette. Then you can see how the character 'reads' and if you need to make the gesture more clear. Do you understand the emotion of the character and see the line of action? Can things be simplified? Try not to overlap everything, and keep the limbs separate.

3 DEVELOP A LINE OF ACTION

A key tool in character design is the line of action. It's when you first capture the pose and reveal the direction of the design. A line of action can help create an efficient narrative and conveys the movement. Try to bring the line of action all the way out to the extremities. A ballet dancer is a good example: they emphasise the line from the tips of their toes to the tips of their fingers. The line of action is also easier to see in creatures with fewer limbs, which is why mermaids are an ideal subject for developing a strong line of action.

4 DYNAMIC POSING

Try to push your design with a strong line of action and a clear silhouette to give your character life. A good way to achieve a lively pose is to work fast. Think about the general feeling and ignore anatomy for now. Where is your character going, what is he or she thinking and where is the focus? Push, tilt and turn the head, torso and hips and give your character life.

> 66 Try to push your design with a strong line of action and a clear silhouette 99
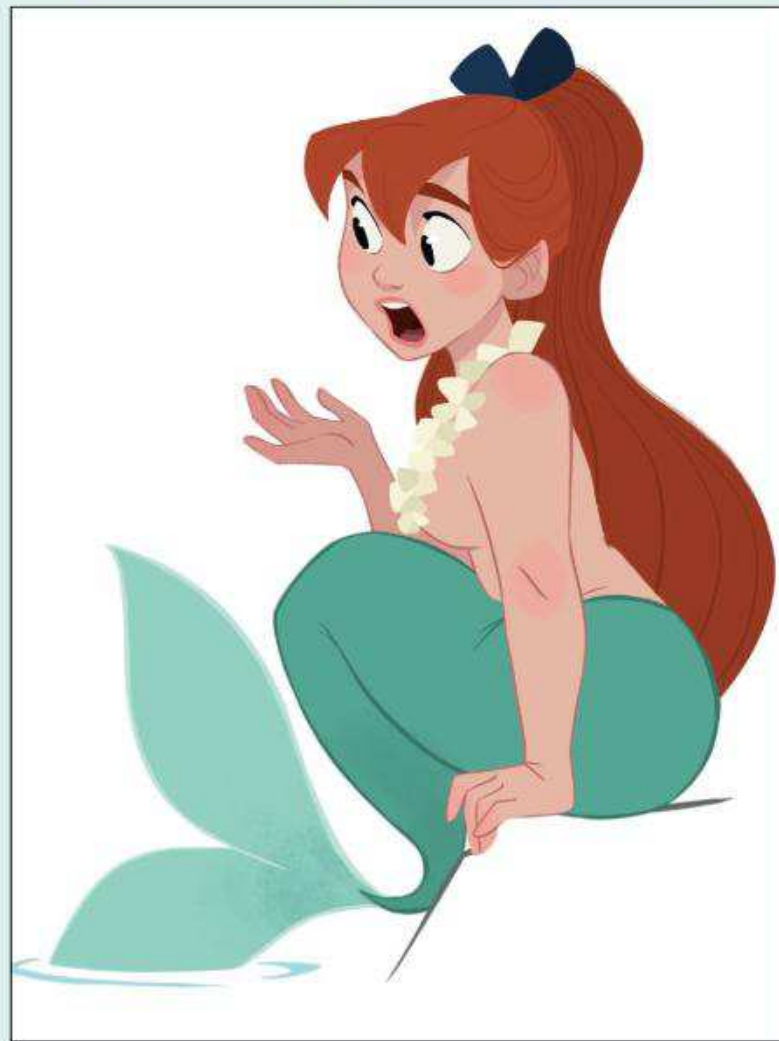
5 KEEP IT SIMPLE

One of my main principles is simplicity. I always try to communicate the designs with the fewest lines possible. It doesn't mean that work hasn't been put into creating the volume, placement and design of the character, but I try to simplify as much as possible and only put down the lines and colours that conveys the necessary information. This is easy to see in my animation-like style, but it also applies if you do highly rendered artwork. Try to simplify your work and identify what you want the viewer to see. ➤➤

6 STRAIGHTS VERSUS CURVES

Straight lines and curves gives your character design a rhythm. A straight line (or a simple line) leads the eye quickly, while a curved (or detailed line) slows down the eye. A good design achieves a pleasing balance between compression and stretch – complex and simple – while adding life and movement, even within the design. Even a neutral pose can lead the eye by applying these two approaches, resulting in an effective character design.

> **A good design achieves a balance between compression and stretch, while adding life and movement**

7 GATHERING UP INSPIRATION

When you work with characters you need to be inspired, and you can do this through research. You mind is a visual library that you can fill up. Try to notice people around you – how they walk, their gestures, how they dress – and use that in your design. Photos found online, in magazines or that you've taken yourself can lead to a great source of original inspiration. For example, 1950s advertising had a great limited colour palette, which can be a great inspiration.

8 CREATING YOUR CHARACTER DRAWING
Take your initial idea, refine your lines and choose your colours…
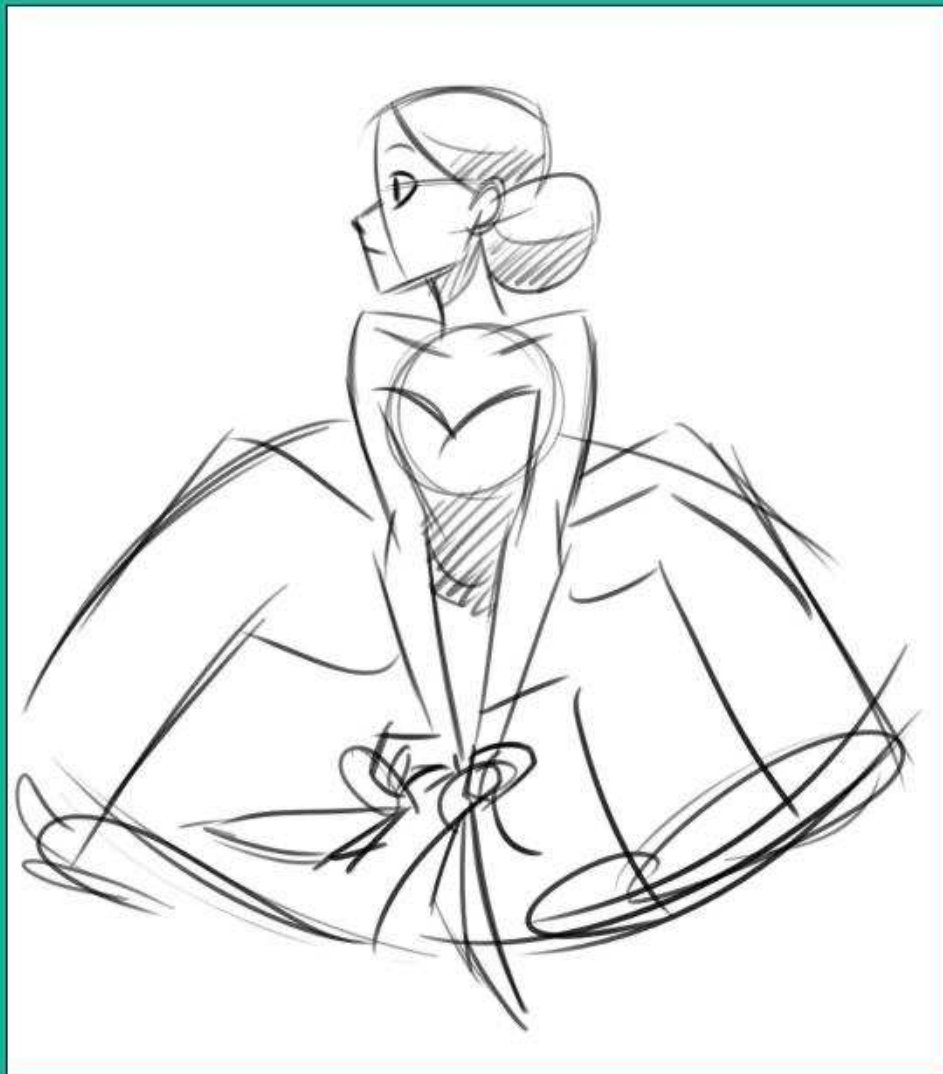
A Visualise your idea
Start by sketching out your character idea quickly, using simple lines and shapes. Remember that your key goals are a clear composition, an identifiable emotion and clarity.
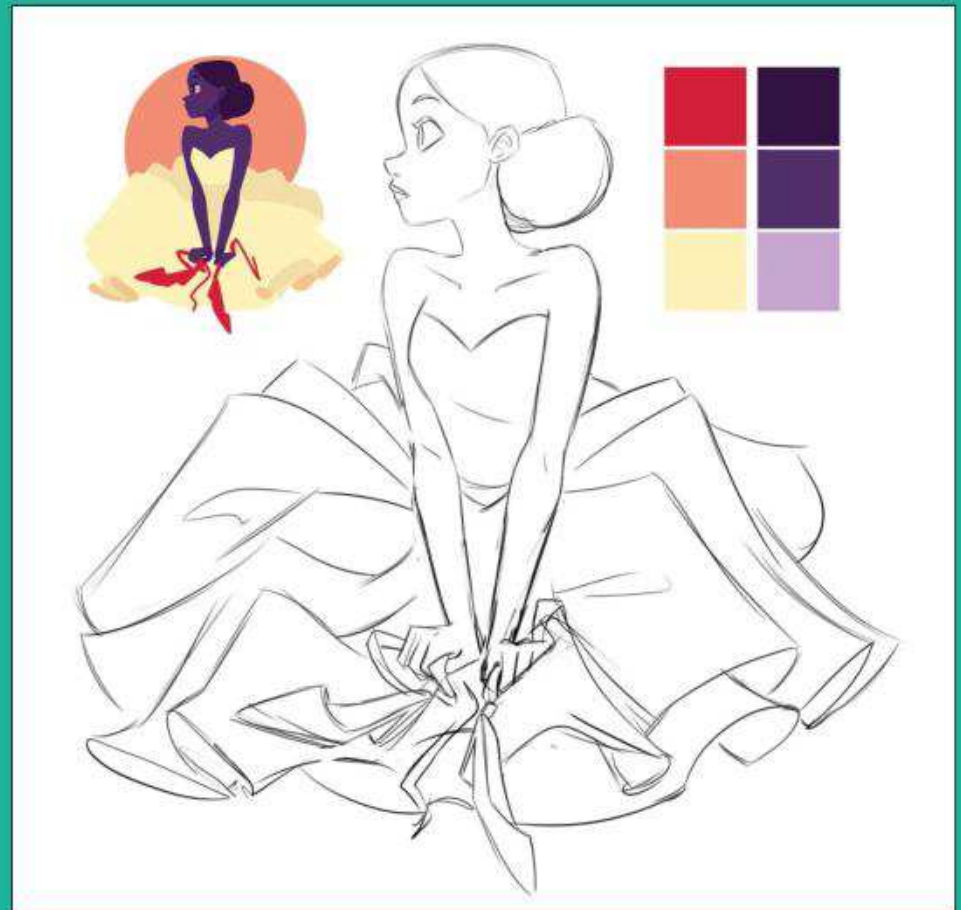
B Refine your character's look
Clean up your rough stretch and figure out details such as hands and facial features. In this example I need to depict the shoes clearly. Then decide on your colour palette and create colour thumbnails. A thumbnail shouldn't take more than a minute or two. The reason everything is done as small sketches is to make sure the simplicity of the design works. Drawing quickly enables you to reject an idea and try again, if it doesn't feel right.

C Put everything into action

Now all that's left is to create the final image, which isn't as difficult a task now that you know what colours to use and the drawing has been tidied up. Remember the decisions that you made when you were working out the design and trust your choices.

9 TELL A STORY

If you're experiencing problems when attempting to nail the essence of a character, try thinking of them in a certain situation. Use the story to think about your character's emotions before tackling the design, and add the details afterwards. Setting the scene is the best help when staring at a blank piece of paper, and it makes the process more fun, too!

10 REMEMBER TO BE BOLD

You should always try to push your designs, both in colour and in shape. I love to take my colours right to the limits and see what I can get away with. A visually pleasing drawing can quickly become boring if you don't take any chances. If there's a pull there should be a push – in sketching as well and in colouring. When you've done your drawing and your colour thumbnail, try to step back and see if you can push it even more. ➤➤

Workshops

11 MAKE INFORMED COLOUR CHOICES

To choose effective colours, it's important to understand the basic rules of colour. Become familiar with the primary, secondary and tertiary colours, as well as monochromatic and complementary colours. One technique for generating an effective colour palette is to chose two complementary colours and work with them in a monochromatic colour scheme. You'll create balance because complementary colours create dynamism, while monochrome colours invoke feelings of calm. You could also try a tertiary colour scheme, which adds a third colour (for example, violet, orange and green), and then work with monochromatic versions of those colours, but it demands more planning and skill for it to work well. If you're new to colour, try and keep it simple.

12 AVOID TANGENTS BY CROPPING SENSIBLY

Don't crop a character at a joint. It creates the illusion that something's missing from your figure. Furthermore, avoid cropping right on the edge of the character, which makes them appear stuck to the frame. Instead, crop at the two-thirds or three-quarters mark. This gives the figure room to breathe and avoids composition confusion!
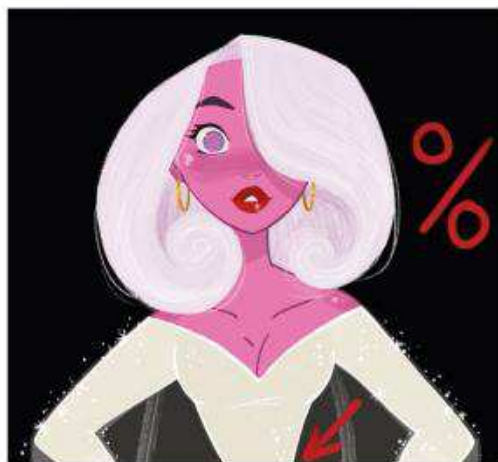
13 ADVICE FOR DRAWING HAIR

Some years ago I went from hating drawing hair to loving it. Previously, I used to view working out all the details and directions of the hair as a tedious endeavour. Now I think of it more as a large, organic shape, which like a flag in the wind indicates and emphasises the movement of the character or its surroundings. Start by creating a large shape and divide it into shorter sections, while thinking about where the hair is parted and where the hairline is. Every line should help to define the volume, shape and direction of the hair.

> ❝ Use a mirror to read your own face and notice the subtle changes ❞

14 EXPRESSIONS

When you know the basics of drawing a face, play with the expression of the character. Use a mirror to read your own face and notice the subtle changes. Push and pull the eyebrows to show emotion. Avoid giving the face symmetry. The mouth will always favours a side and it gives life to the drawing. And give the head a tilt to add nuance.

15 GENERATING APPEAL

Visual appeal brings a drawing to life. The hard part about appeal is that it doesn't have rules. A two-second scribble can have more appeal and life than a drawing which has taken weeks to complete. It's about making your character exist beyond the page, using your personal art style. Take a look at the work of your favourite artist and see how they're able to create strong characters.
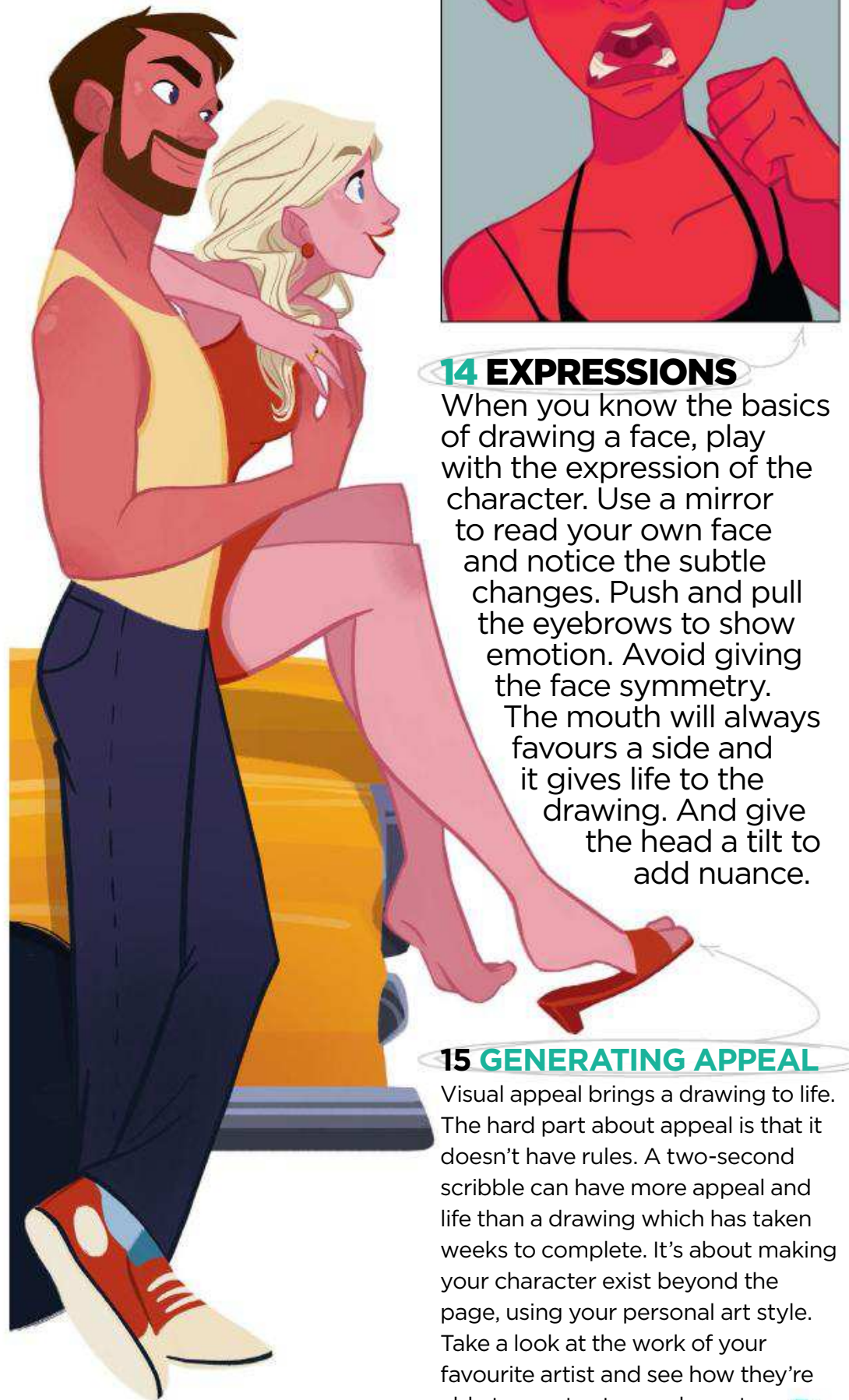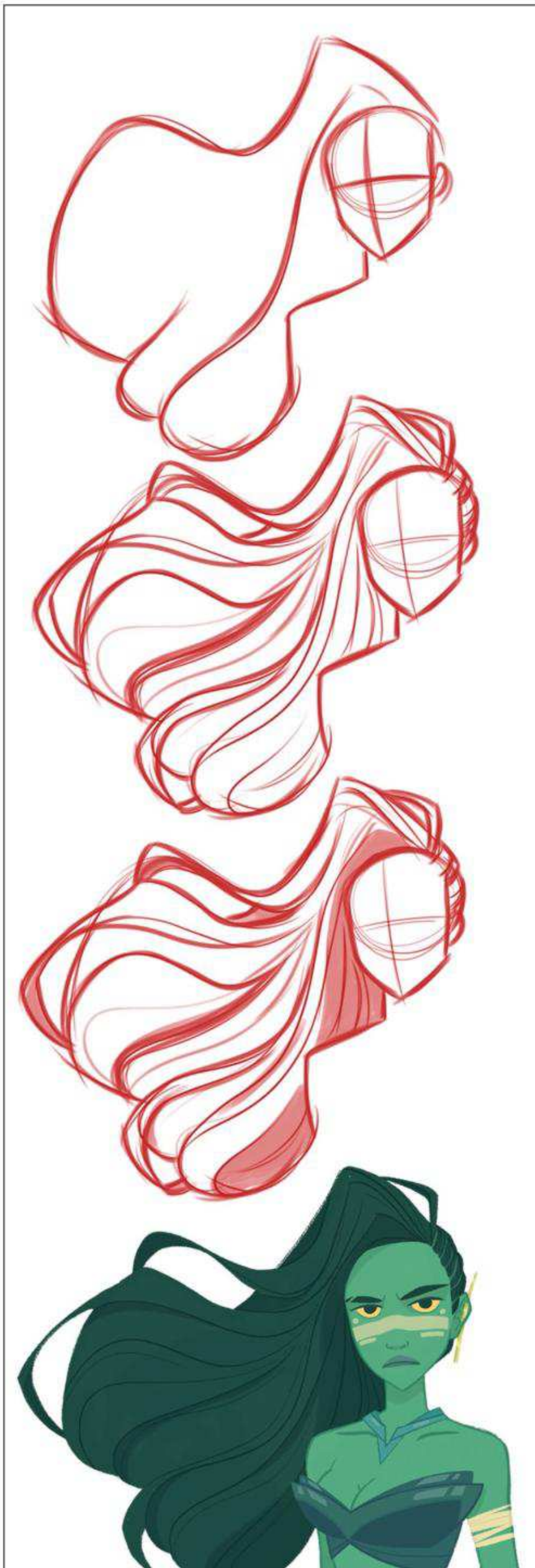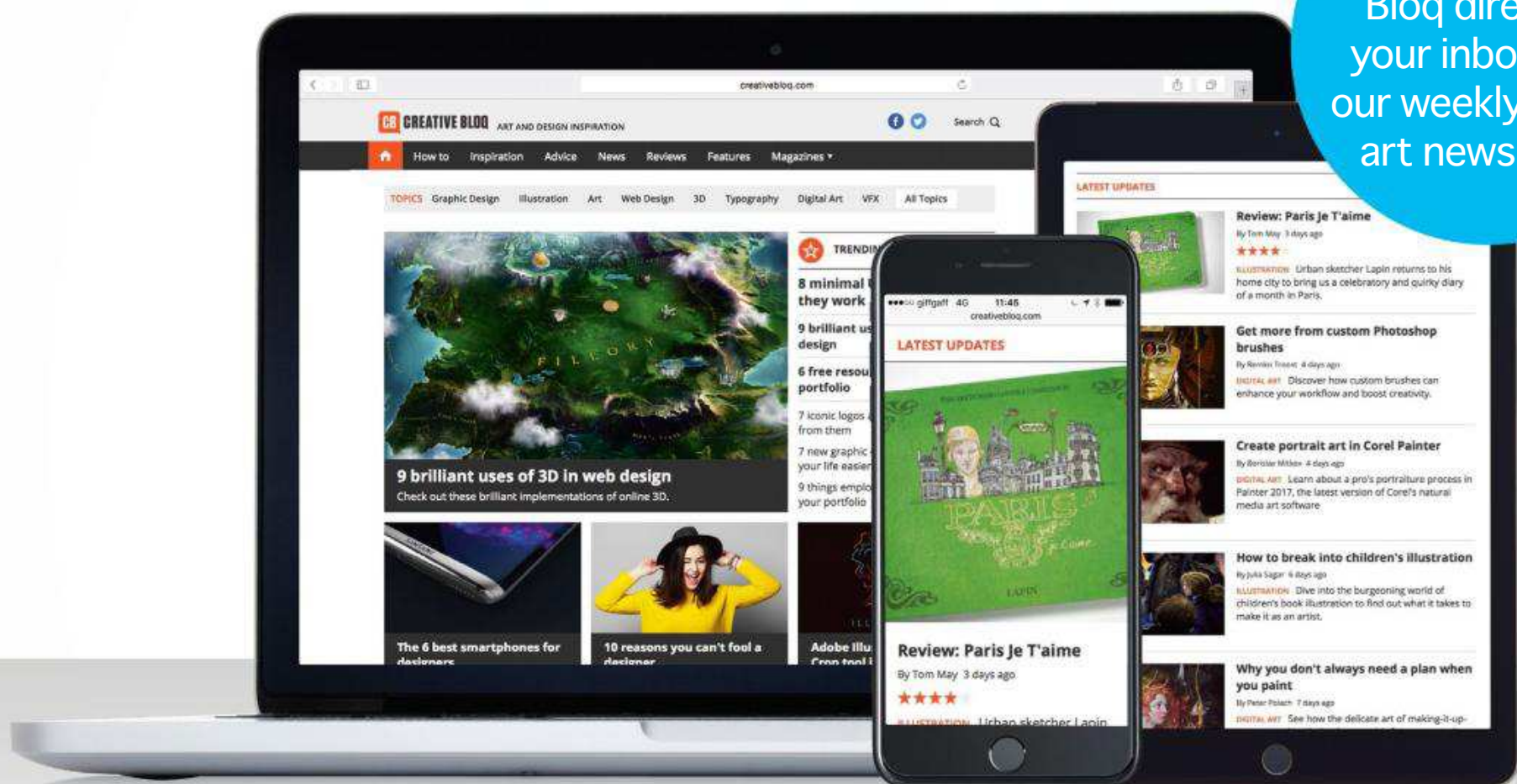
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Reviews

The latest art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team…

5 PRODUCTS ON TEST

HARDWARE
92 22E Pro graphics tablet
Pen displays are now more affordable, but have too many corners been cut to bring XP-Pen's latest device to market?

TRAINING
95 Taking a Break
Goro Fujita shares his animation and film expertise to show how the environment affects how you paint your characters.

BOOKS
96 The Art of Incredibles 2
Discover the extent of the visual development process that went into the making of Pixar's family-based superhero sequel.
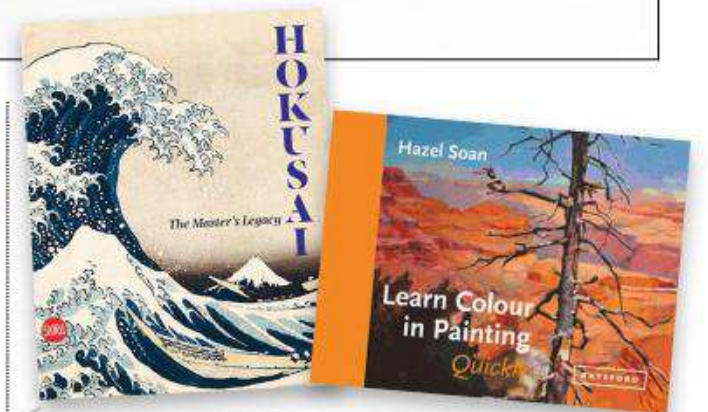
97 Hokusai: The Master's Legacy
The work and impact of seminal Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai is celebrated in this comprehensive publication.

97 Learn Colour in Painting Quickly
This refreshing look at pigments reveals how and why colour paints work.

RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent   ★★★★ Great   ★★★ Good   ★★ Poor   ★ Atrocious

Its looks may fall into the 'nothing fancy' category, but the 22E Pro is certainly capable of getting the job done.

22E Pro graphics tablet

MAC & PC

INTUITIVE INTERACTIONS Pen displays are becoming more affordable, but have too many corners been cut to bring XP-Pen's latest device to market?

Price £499 **Company** XP-Pen **Web** www.xp-pen.com

Previously, pen displays have been either poor quality or too expensive for the casual user. However, the balance has shifted recently and you can now find good quality at a much less-intimidating cost. The XP-Pen 22E Pro's £499 price tag is much easier to justify, even for the hobbyist or student digital artist, than many other options on the market.

From the moment the packaging is opened you'll see that everything is well made. The customisable buttons have a good action and the bezel is wide enough to give you some room for your arm to rest.

The display's construction materials used are perfectly fine, although you won't find any of the soft-touch rubber or smooth plastics that are present on higher-end devices. That said, the

screen's coating is a joy and the stylus (which is itself a little flimsy but well sized) interacts with it in a pleasingly tactile way. There's no slippage or stickiness that cheap, shiny glass screens often suffer from, and the surface feels rough in a good, paper-like way that benefits sketching.

The sturdy, adaptable stand makes this pen tablet easily to use in any position.

The stand is sturdy enough to lean on, and reaching over to adjust the angle is simple: the rubberised feet holding the device in place as you do so. Similar pen displays from other manufactures have the ports on the bottom edge, but the 22E Pro has its ports to the right. At first this seems like a bad idea, but when you lower the angle this is a big help and ensures that your cables don't interfere with the bottom edge of the stand.

In use the 22E Pro is solid, reliable and easy to work with. The buttons for software shortcuts are well spaced without needing to stretch too far, so you can keep your eye on your work. The USB rechargeable stylus is accurate with a firm nib feel, and the range of pressure sensitivity is impressive: 8,192 levels, no less. The stylus's side button is well placed and

The case doubles as a stand, that also houses spare nibs.

The rechargeable stylus is well balanced and weighted. It feels good in the hand.

The screen menu buttons are old-fashioned but function well.

AUTO − + MENU POWER

Shortcut keys run down both sides, making this well suited to left- and right-handed users.

❝ **The display is vibrant and easy on the eye, and the 178 degree viewing angle is nothing to be sniffed at…** ❞

although its action isn't overly precise, it always works.

Elsewhere, elements of the 22E Pro fall slightly short of the mark. For example, there are few rounded corners or edges, giving it the appearance of an old monitor that you can draw on. The display is only 1080p and lacks in colour accuracy. Having said this, it's vibrant and easy on the eye, and the 178 degree viewing angle is nothing to be sniffed at, either. You'll

soon learn to ignore the display's budget-led shortcomings and focus on creating your art.

You may not benefit from the latest specs with the 22E Pro, or experience higher-end materials and industrial design, but at this price that was never going to be a given. And the leftover cash you'd have if you'd been considering one of the rivals could pay for a full licence of Painter or over a year's subscription to Photoshop. 🔴

DETAILS

Features
■ 8,192 levels of pressure sensitivity
■ 21.5-inch 1080p display with 178 degree viewing angle
■ 16 customisable shortcut buttons on the bezel
■ Vesa mounting option
■ Multi-position ergonomic stand
■ Rechargeable stylus. Case converts to stand and houses spare nibs

System Requirements
PC: Windows 7/8/10 with HDMI/DVI port and USB port
Mac: OS X 10.8 or later, with HDMI/DVI port and USB port

Rating
★★★☆☆

ARTIST INTERVIEW
ROB REDMAN
How does a multi-disciplinary artist use a pen display?

What are your typical tools of choice and set up?
Cinema 4D for 3D work, and Resolve/Fusion for VFX, editing and grading. I use tablets for everything, either desktop or display based. I don't even own a mouse these days. My main monitors are an LG ultra-wide 21:9 for the cinema aspect ratio and a 4K 100 per cent Adobe colour accurate monitor.

Why no mouse?
I like the fact that there's an immediacy to working with a pen display, and even the disconnect of an Intros is far more intuitive than dragging a mouse around.

How do you choose between a tablet or a pen display for different tasks?
For colour grading work or editing I prefer a tablet and monitor. The colour accuracy of a good panel is vital and I find a little extra distance between me and the image is useful. For 3D and illustration work a pen display is far superior. Often the last few per cent in accuracy are less important, but the physical act of interacting with the work is what aids me most.

How is your desk set up for such different working styles?
I have two desks. One is in a light-controlled area against a neutral grey background, which is important for the film and colour work, and has my grading console on it. The other is more versatile, and has ergonomic, adjustable VESA mounting arms so I can adjust my monitors. The pen display stays on a moveable stand so I can move it about and manage the glare of the screen.

Rob is creative director of a studio, working in VFX, photos and illustration, and editor of 3D World magazine.
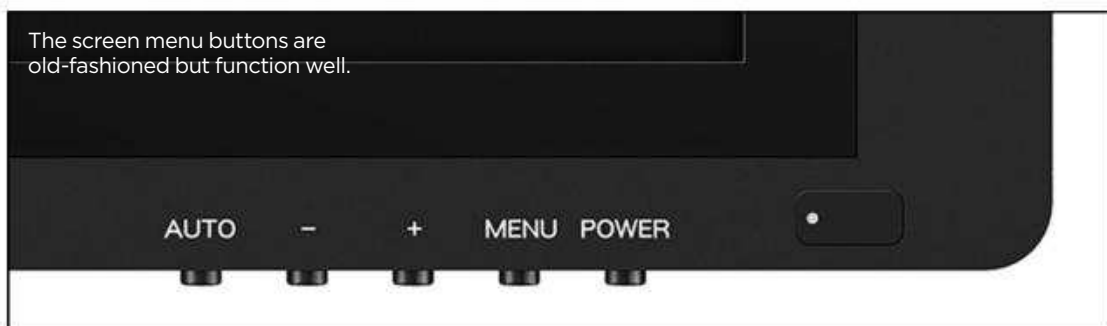
www.pariahstudios.co.uk

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Enter epic art competitions	✔	✔	✔
Use your own domain name	✘	✔	✔
Sell on the Marketplace	✘	✔	✔
Create or import your own blog	✘	✔	✔
Partner perks & discounts	✘	✔	✔
Pro Analytics	✘	✔	✔
Customise beautiful premium themes	✘	✔	✔
Password-protect pages	✘	✔	✔
Unlimited bandwidth, pages and projects	✘	✔	✔
Larger Marmoset uploads	✘	✔	✔
Appear at the top of searches	✘	✔	✔
Pro badge	✘	✔	✔
Priority support	✘	✔	✔
Save 30% off your subscription	✘	✘	✔

"Use ArtStation to host your portfolio! It's affordable, standardised, widely common in the industry, searchable, clean and easy to use!"
Gavin Goulden, lead character artist & hiring manager, Insomniac Games

"ArtStation Pro helped me increase my network with new clients!"
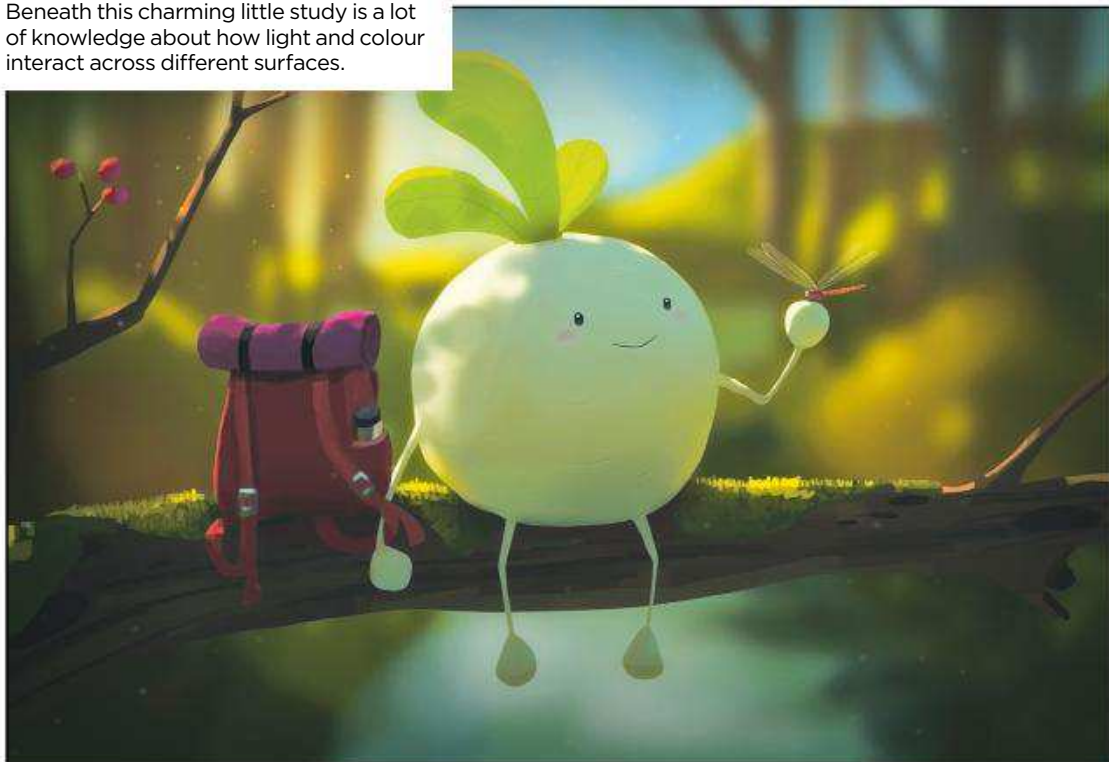**Antoine Collignon, concept designer**

SIGN UP AT ARTSTATION.COM/PRO NOW!
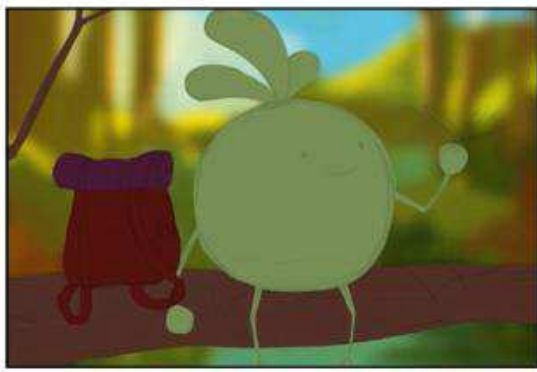
Despite the simplicity of the scene, Goro still uses a perspective grid to assess the position of the horizon.

Beneath this charming little study is a lot of knowledge about how light and colour interact across different surfaces.

Goro shows how he's able to use colour to suggest translucency in the leaves on the radish character's head.

Taking A Break

DECEPTIVELY SIMPLE Art director Goro Fujita shows how the environment affects how you paint your figures

Publisher Goro Fujita **Price** £8 **Format** Download **Web** www.gumroad.com/gorofujita

The radish character in this video from Goro Fujita is a traveller exploring the world. It looks like a simple image, but there's a lot more to it than you might expect.

The sketch reveals a strong photographic influence. Goro simulates a shallow depth of field to blur out the background and pays attention to the effect of light on objects, although he argues during the video against integrating photos directly into your work. Seeing photo-bashing in a portfolio is, he says, "a deal-breaker".

After defining the direction of the main light source, he applies his knowledge of how light acts on different types of surface. The character's metal buckles, for example, are painted with strong dashes of colour reflected from both the sky and the ground, lending the surfaces a metallic feel with little effort.

Photographic influences return towards the end of the video, as Goro shows some simple Photoshop techniques, giving areas of highlight a soft glow and adding a subtle vignette around the corners to draw the eye towards the character. The result is a lovely blend of cartoon and realism.

The video is a recording of a live stream Goro did for his Patreon subscribers: you have the choice of subscribing via Patreon for regular videos or buying videos à la carte via Gumroad. The Gumroad download also includes the layered Photoshop file for study, as well as the Photoshop brushes Goro used for the sketch. He points out the perils of fretting too much over which brushes you should use, though: "It's more important that you understand what you're doing than that you focus on brushes," he remarks at one point. "There's really no shortcut – you have to practise."

SAMPLE VIDEO

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Depth of field
- Environmental light
- Light and colour
- Painting white surfaces
- Reflected light
- Translucent surfaces
- Shadow colours

Length
73 minutes

Rating
★★★★☆

ARTIST PROFILE
GORO FUJITA

Goro is an art director at Oculus Story Studio, working with a team to create virtual reality storytelling. He was previously a visual development artist at Pacific Data Images/DreamWorks, working on projects including Megamind, Madagascar 3 and Penguins of Madagascar, as well as 2017's The Boss Baby. On his Facebook page, Goro shares VR animations made with the VR software Quill, and offers regular live training sessions via Patreon.

www.facebook.com/goro.fujita

WANNABE SUPERS

The direction that ended up being most successful for the Wannabe Supers was trying to zero in on the kinds of characters that would serve as the best foils for the family. What powers would be particularly problematic for each of the Parrs? Combining the questions of "what are the most essential ways we can test the family?" with "how can we make them memorable and immediately visually understandable?" led the story team to a spectrum of ideas and names that Brad could take away and cogitate on. —**Derek Thompson**, Story Artist

Matt Nolte pencil and digital; digital painting by **Bryn Imagire**; digital graphics by **Paul Conrad**

We meet a pantheon of new heroes in The Incredibles 2, but are they friend or foe...?

The Art of Incredibles 2

RELATIVELY SPEAKING Discover the extent of the visual development process that went into the making of Pixar's family-based superhero sequel
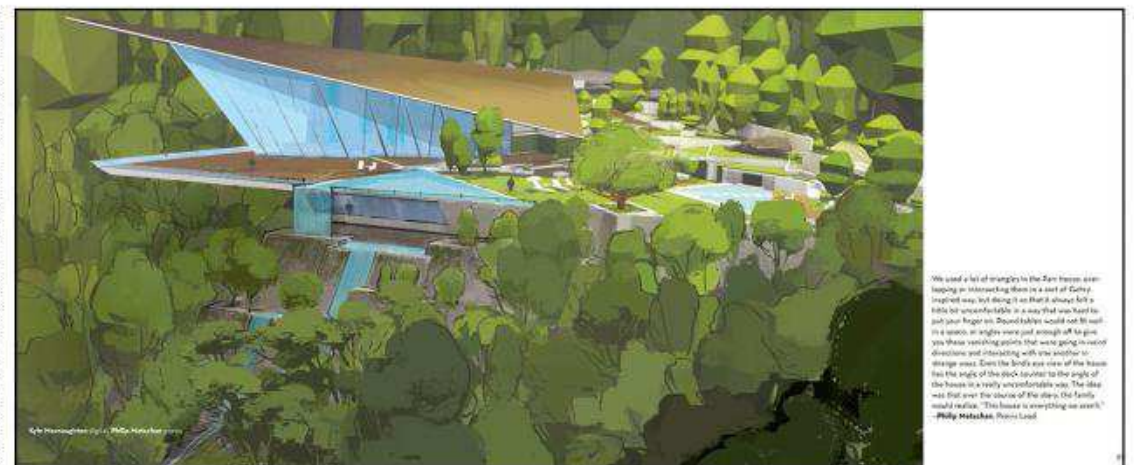
Author Karen Paik **Publisher** Chronicle Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.chroniclebooks.com **Available** Now

The Incredibles 2 picks up from when its 2004 predecessor's credits started to roll. And while technology has moved apace in between the two films, Pixar's art team has worked hard to maintain its aesthetic while polishing the details.

The sequel's sense of evolution rather than revolution runs through this art-of book, which kicks off with a look at how the Parr family has been refined since we last saw them. The story revolves around the idea of role reversal, with literal super mum Helen Parr (Elastigirl) placed in the driving seat. Meanwhile, Mr. Incredible deals with family duties as a stay-at-home

'A rocket to the future' was the art direction given during the creation of the Parr's new home.

We used a lot of triangles in the Parr house, overlapping or intersecting them in a sort of Gehry-inspired way, but doing it so that it always felt a little bit uncomfortable in a way that was hard to put your finger on. Round tables would not fit well in a scene, or angles were just enough off to give you these vanishing points that were going in weird directions and interacting with one another in strange ways. Even the bird's-eye view of the house has this angle of the deck taunted to the angle of the house in a really uncomfortable way. The idea was that over the course of the story the family would realize, "This house is everything we aren't." —**Philip Metschan**, Production Lead

> **Pixar's art team has worked hard to maintain its aesthetic while polishing the details**

dad. From the art on show, both roles are explored without relying on clunky visual shorthand. And to suit her character arc, Helen's appearance has fittingly become more nuanced.

Elsewhere, Baby Jack-Jack has been tweaked to look even more cute. Super-siblings Violet and Dash don't merit nearly the same amount of coverage, though: a lone page is allocated to each character.

The frustration with this style of art book is that only so many concepts can be put on show. Take the villainous Underminer whose appearance, we're

told, was going to be accompanied by golems, robots and giant earthworms... none of which we see in the book. Instead, we follow the development of characters, environments and vehicles that make it to the big screen.

As a nod towards the film production's embarrassment of art riches, the final chapter provides a glimpse of these conceptual dead ends. Yet given that The Incredibles 2 finds a place for ideas that didn't make it into the first film, it's no surprise that Pixar wants to hold some art back in case there's a need to use it in the future. In the meantime though, we get to enjoy character concepts, storyboards and costume choices that would satisfy even Edna 'no capes!' Mode.

RATING ★★★★☆

Storyboards portraying Violet's attempts at getting to know a fellow student.
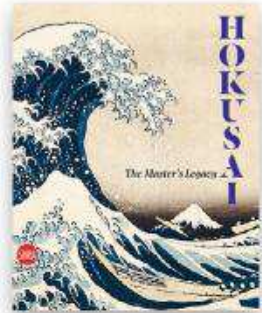
Hokusai: The Master's Legacy

MAKING WAVES The work and impact of seminal Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai is celebrated in this comprehensive publication

Author Rossella Menegazzo **Publisher** Skira **Price** £40 **Web** www.skira.net **Available** Now

For a man as dedicated to pursuing artistic greatness as Katsushika Hokusai, it would come as some comfort to learn that his drawings, prints and paintings continue to fascinate casual audiences and students of his art. Such is the status of his creations that it acts as a visual shorthand for an entire country, yet also overshadows the craft and skill of his contemporaries.

The Great Wave Off Kanagawa is perhaps the painting that Katsushika Hokusai is best known for.

Both of these angles are pursued in Hokusai. The Master's Legacy. Delving deep into ukiyo-e, the movement of Japanese art famed for its depiction of everyday life in which Hokusai made his name, this survey also shines a light on key artist Keisai Eisen, whose beautiful and often misattributed pictures of female courtesans helped bring the scene to a wider audience.

Opening with detailed introductory essays that give a fascinating historical context to the genre, coupled with a look at how the artists involved influenced both each other and the West, these chapters set you up nicely for more than 200 works of ukiyo-e art that chart the development of consummate talents.

Broken down into sections that cover landscapes, seduction, fortune and nature, the rest of the book

Detail from Keisai Eisen's A Pair of Beautiful Hands, Pillow for a Thousand Men.

generously gives each piece of art by Hokusai, Eisen and more a full page to shine. This is a luxuriously presented must-have book for fans of the printmakers and Japonism.

RATING ★★★★★

Learn Colour in Painting Quickly

PALETTE CLEANSER This refreshing look at pigments unravels the mysteries behind how and why colour paints work

Author Hazel Soan **Publisher** Batsford **Price** £10 **Web** www.pavilionbooks.com **Available** Now

Use of colour can make or break a painting. Get it right and you've created a harmonious masterpiece, but get it wrong and you'll leave viewers puzzled. Thankfully, the scientific and artistic know-how behind colours are skills that can be learned by anyone, as artist Hazel Soan reveals in this quick guide.

Opening with a scientific breakdown of how colours respond to light, Hazel
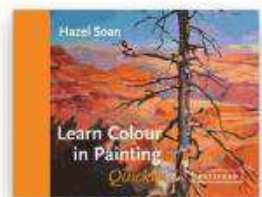
By using a selection of small brushes, Hazel's able to keep the colours clean for the slight variations in skin tone.

sets a brisk pace for the reader. Paint types and a brief history of pigments are also crammed in, giving the reader context before looking at the colour palette proper.

From here Hazel walks us through how colours interact, mixing advice, and a look at the strengths of core colours. The insight is sound; however, the structure of the book can make it difficult to reference key techniques.

Hazel makes use of Ultramarine blue and Burnt umber to create strong silhouettes of the wildebeest.

Better suited to artists with a degree of experience under their belt, this book assumes a level of competency and is geared more around theory than holding the reader's hand through practical painting tutorials. Learn Colour in Painting Quickly certainly delivers on its promise if you're prepared to keep up.

RATING ★★★☆☆

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX
Traditional Artist
Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists
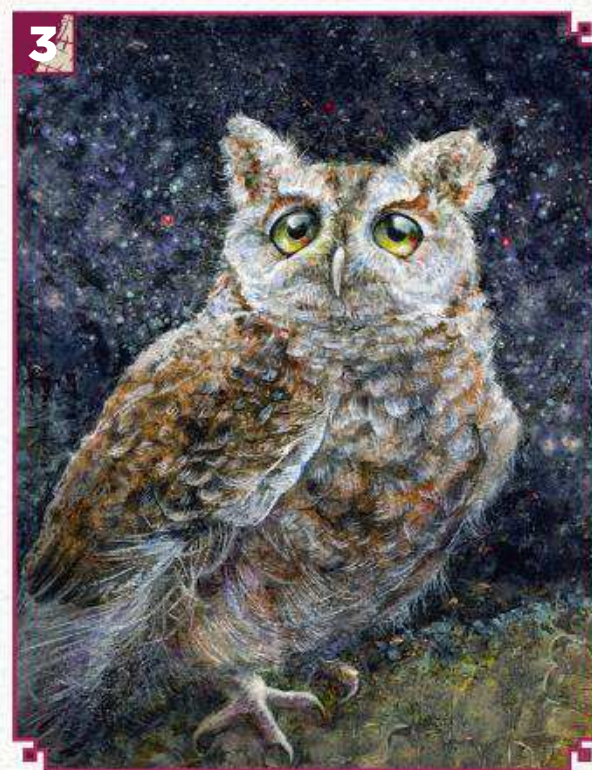

This issue:

FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

Melissa Gay

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Oil, acrylic, graphite, ink, watercolour **WEB:** www.melissagay.com

Melissa is inspired by science and fairy tales. "I like creepy, but I don't do dark," she says. "Even my post-apocalyptic paintings always have hope."

1 OFFERING
"I created this oil painting as an illustration for the core SagaBorn rulebook. It was nominated for a Chesley award for Best Gaming Illustration."

2 HARVEST
"I knew this piece would rise or fall by the lighting. For reference, I strapped a basket of lights onto my costumed model. Lights everywhere!"

3 SCREECH OWL CONTEMPLATES THE MILKY WAY
"I built up form and texture in layers, scraping shapes with silicone wedges, then glazing."

4 THE FAR PASTURE
"This piece is about the transformative power of joy. I did many gesture drawings of sheep!"

Joel Rong

LOCATION: Singapore **MEDIA:** Pencil, pen **WEB:** www.instagram.com/jlron

Joel is a self-taught illustrator who enjoys sketching and painting Japanese architecture. He's also a cat lover, and incorporates cats and their unique stories into much of his art.

1 GIANT CAT ATTACKS!
"To introduce some creativity and fun into my artwork, I added strange cats into my building sketches. With a simple story, I'm able to create a narrative for the cats in every drawing."
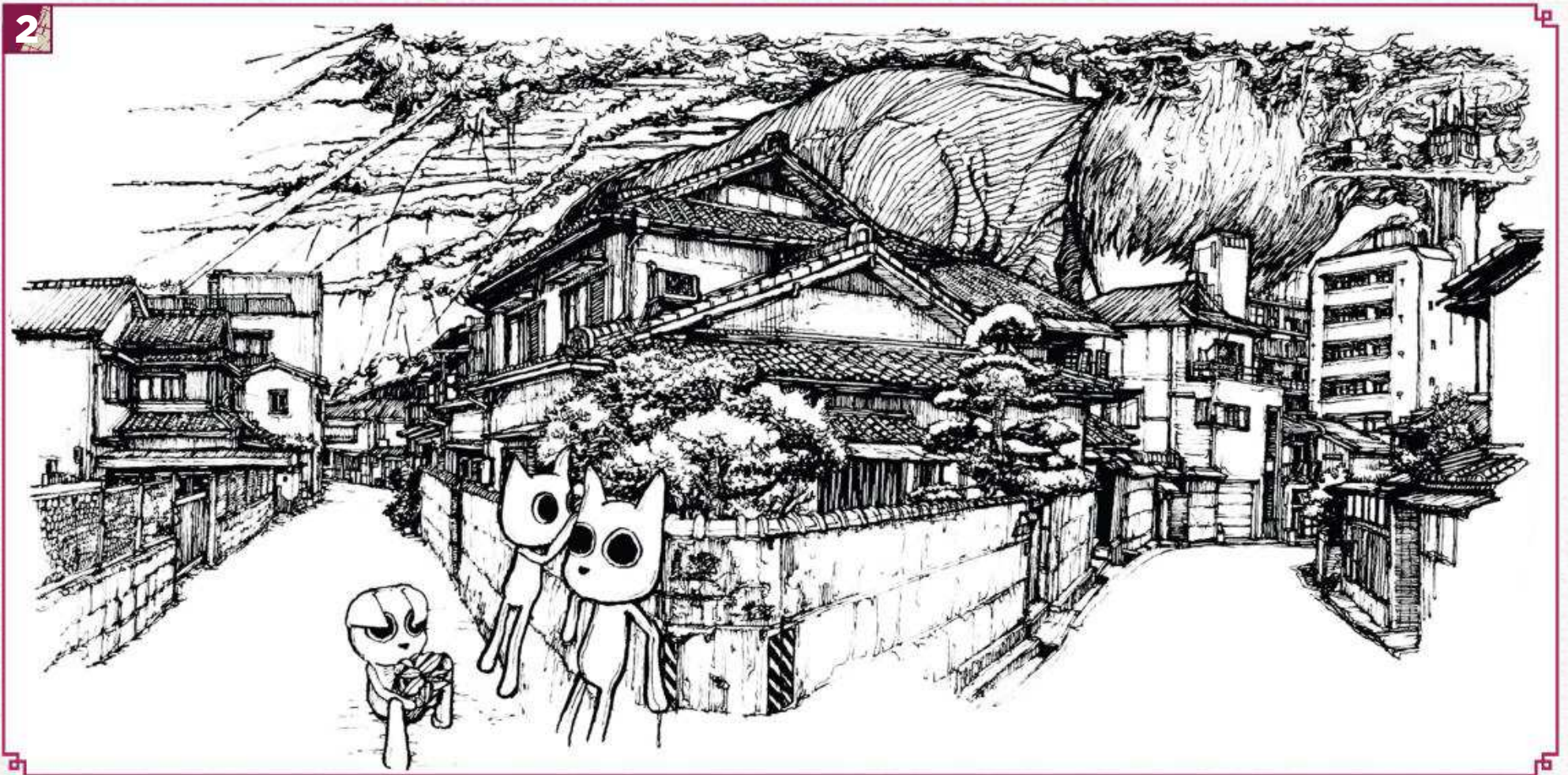
2 ARE WE SAFE HERE?
"This is my favourite cat artwork so far: a combination of Japanese buildings, strange giant people and talking cats! Hopefully, I can create a comic series revolving around this theme in the future."
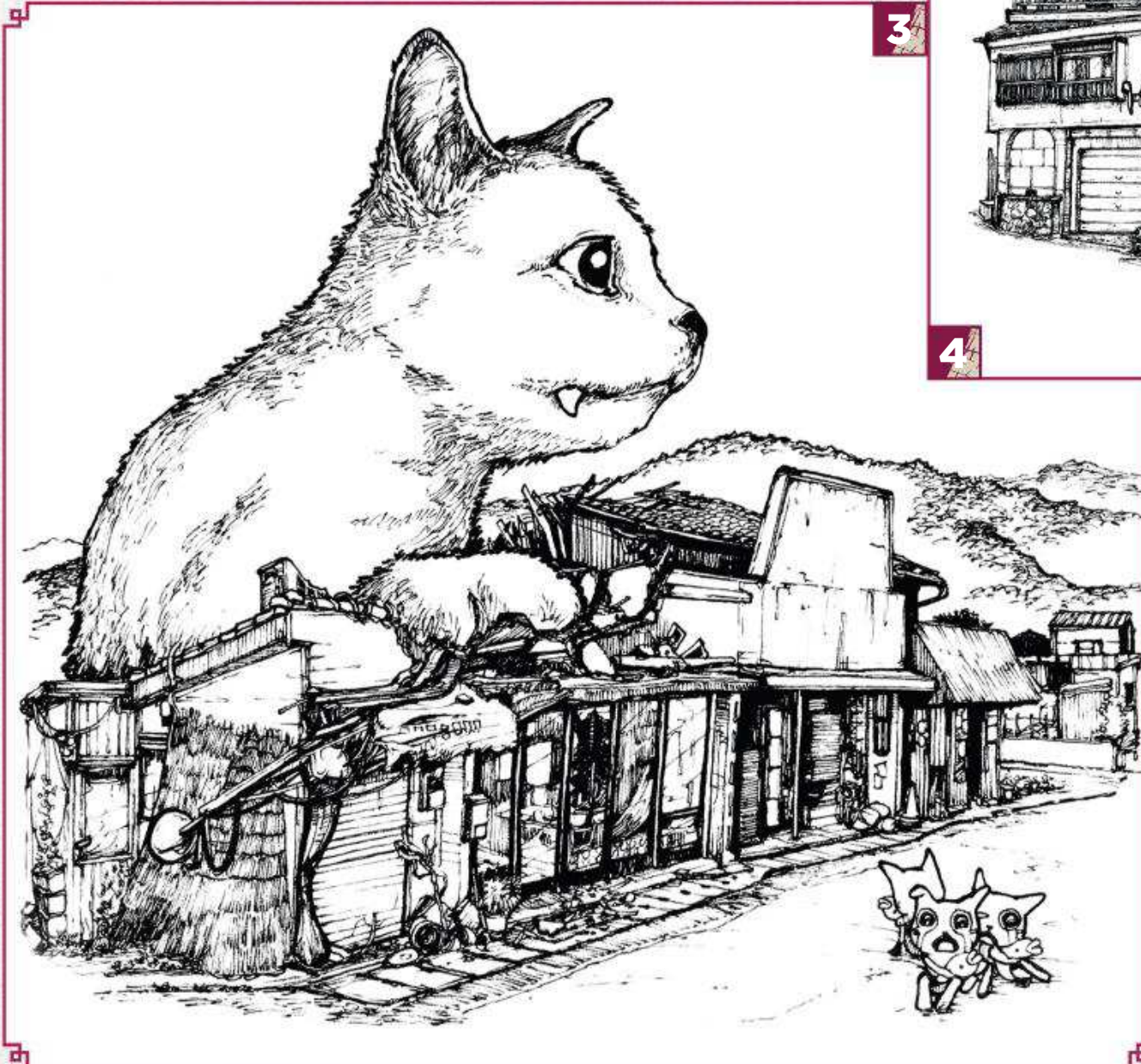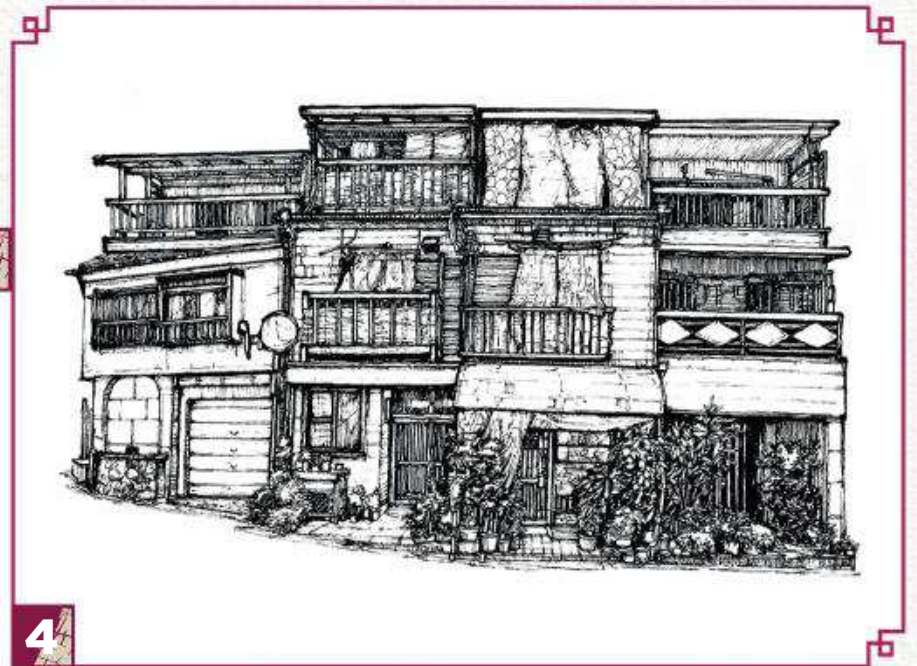
3 GIANT CAT DISTRACTED!
"Sometimes it's hard to find references to sketch, such as the crumbling parts of buildings in this drawing, so I have to use my imagination to mix things up."

4 JAPANESE HOMES
"The houses in Japan each have their own unique details. There are potted plants, colourful curtains and lots of other small details on each property that make drawing them challenging and fun to sketch."

Pencil

ELEVATE YOUR SKETCHING SKILLS

TIM VON RUEDEN distills his extensive teaching experience into 15 key pieces of advice that will help you grow in confidence when putting pencil to paper

There are many pieces of advice that I want to share with you on your creative endeavour, but I had to narrow it down to 15 tips for this sketching workshop. These tips are meant to help you build some underlying structure, hopefully spread a little inspiration, and support you to get motivated right back to the drawing table!

I believe it takes a partnership of technical skill and authentic creative pursuits to manifest great works, so don't ignore learning the fundamentals or neglect the truth and message you want to create in your works.

I'm going to focus more on the technical side with sketching tips that will help any artist elevate their ideas and translate them on paper the way they're seeing them in their head. Having been a teacher for six years, I understand that just getting started can be the hardest obstacle to overcome as an artist. So use this workshop as a reminder to keep drawing, because the best way to level up in your work is to apply what you learn through practice, practice, practice. And always staying hungry for that desire to improve and grow!

Tim is an independent, travelling convention artist. He aims to inspire and mentor others through hard work while encouraging big ambitions. See his art at www.instagram.com/vonnart.

B (Blackness or softness) ← | → **H (Hardness)**

| 8B | 6B | 5B | 4B | 3B | 2B | B | HB | H | 2H | 4H |
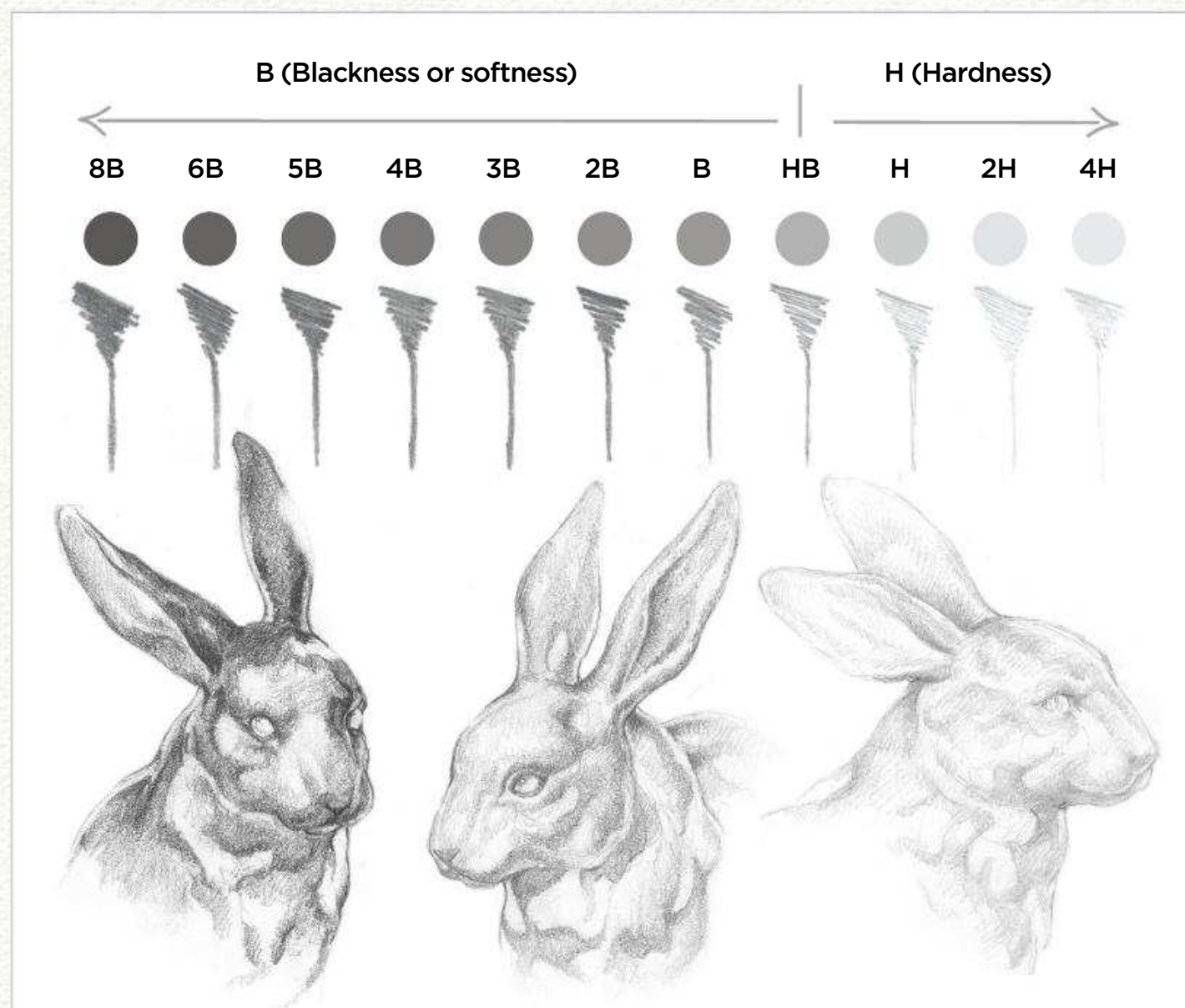
1 Know your pencils

I use both traditional and mechanical pencils. Mechanical pencils are usually better suited for precision, while traditional pencils are great for laying down large areas of texture. Whichever you prefer doesn't matter as much as the pencil hardness in the graphite you're using. For example, there's a big difference between a 2H and 4B hardness. I recommend starting somewhere on the H scale as a foundation and then finishing with the darker B scale. Keep in mind that most mechanical pencils come with HB pre-inserted, which gives you only the middle range to work with.

> **❝ There's a big difference between a 2H and 4B hardness ❞**

Hatching   Cross-hatching   Stippling

Scribbling   Small circles   Finger blend
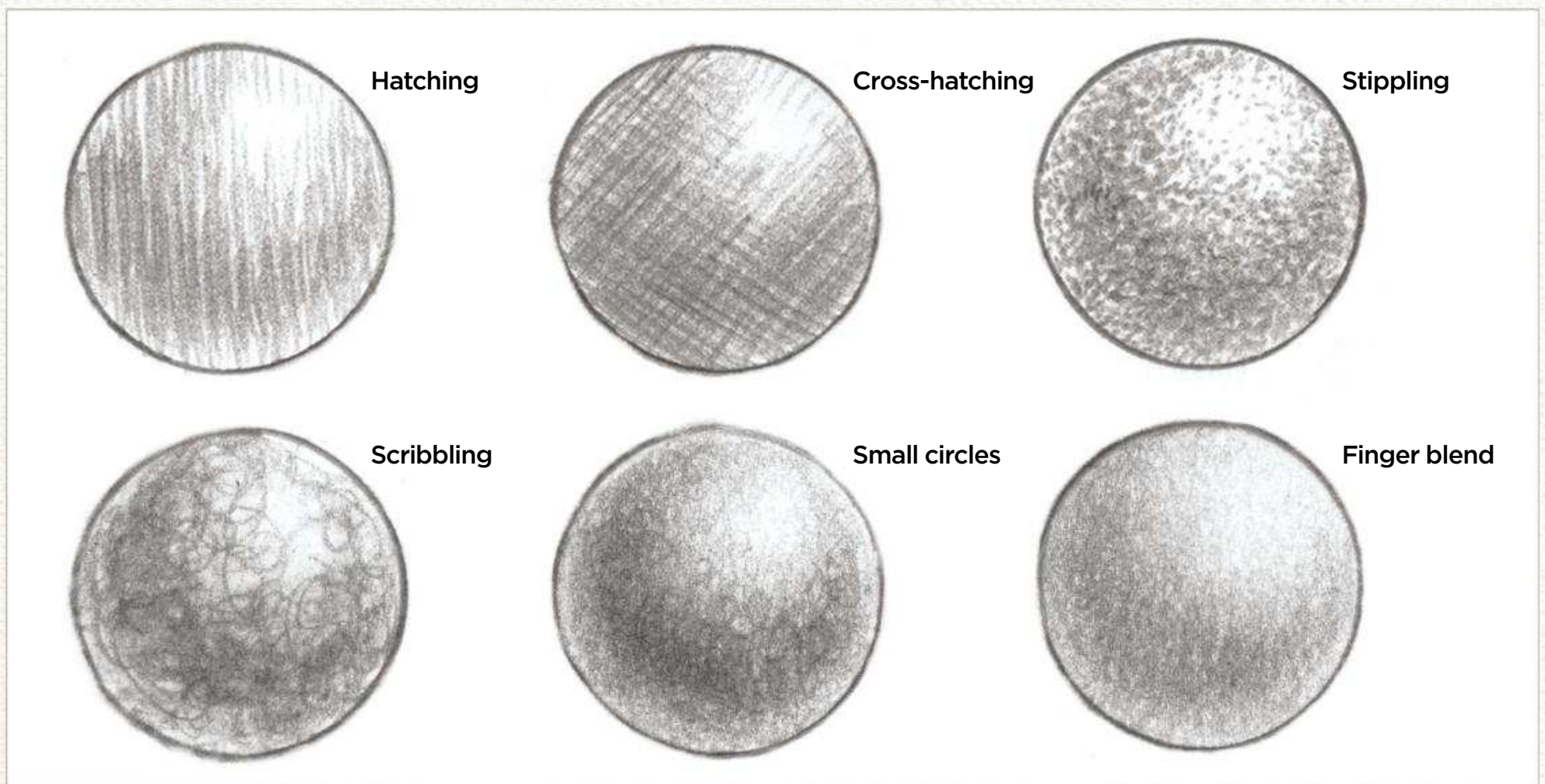
2   *Make use of different methods of mark making*

There's no "right way" to draw. There are so many different methods and techniques to achieve the same end result and look within your work. Here are a few examples to show that you can create form and depth with completely distinctive styles of rendering. I believe it's important to experiment and find what works best for you, to not only complement but enhance your style. So while I prefer smoother value transitions with the pencil strokes blending in against a thin outline, you may be more partial to cross-hatching against a bold outline.

Low-value contrast

High-value contrast

3   *Impact of high and low contrast*

Even though I enjoy working with contrast, that doesn't mean every drawing has to have high-contrasting values everywhere. Subtle, low-contrasting shading can also showcase form and can be just as effective (if not more) in showing details and pull the viewer's eye to a specific area just from the lack of contrast. In these examples, you can see that the softer, low-value contrast piece enables the eye to wander and doesn't define an area of focus. While the area of focus in the high-value contrast piece rests on the darkest darks against the lightest lights. ➦

4 Edge control

When I think about edge control within a drawing, there are four techniques that come to mind. A thin and hard edge that first generates a literal border to your subject matter and then defines where it begins and ends. A lost edge, where the subject matter and background values blend together so that the edge is ultimately implied. And finally, an undefined edge, which heavily relies on the viewer to do the heavy lifting and decipher the subject matter's edge.

All four edges can be used to separate your subjects within your composition. You can also experiment with a combination of them to produce interesting results.
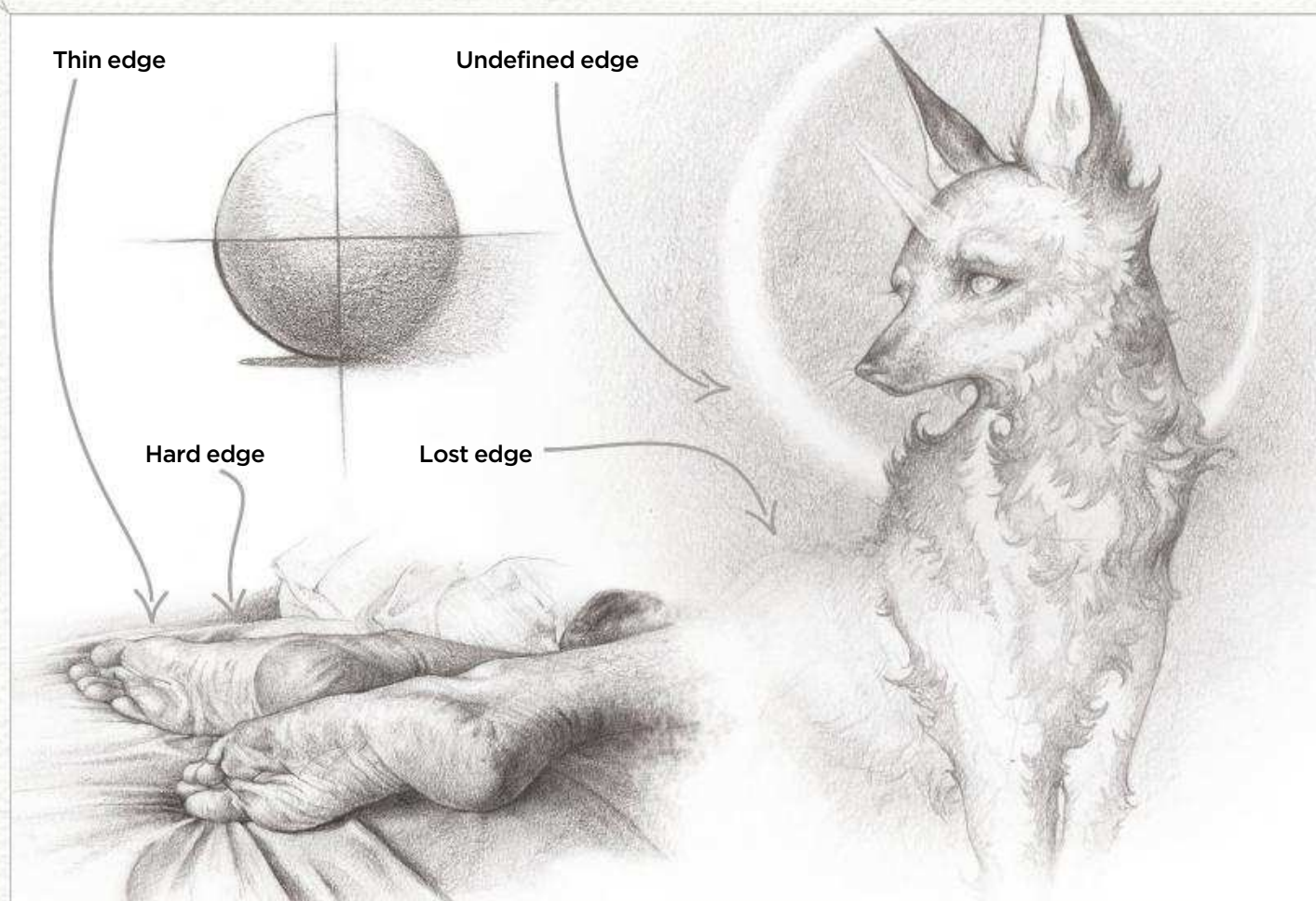
Thin edge   Undefined edge

Hard edge   Lost edge

> 66 You don't always need extreme contrasts to show dimension, just well-placed hints to imply it 99

5 Creating the illusion of form

We draw on a flat surface and it's our job to create the illusion of form and depth. This can be done with gradations or purposeful mark making, often with a light source in mind. You've seen the examples of a well-shaded sphere and it showcases how light-to-dark value transitions can create a three-dimensional form. I want to also show that you can imply the illusion with subtle shading and well-placed highlights/shadows within a mid-range value spectrum. You don't always need extreme contrasts to show dimension, just well-placed hints to imply it.

6 Make gradients work for you

My favourite inclusion within a drawing (besides contrasting values) is a well-placed gradient. This is typically referred to as a gradation from a light to dark value. They are visually pleasant to the eye and can direct the viewer's attention to an area of focus. The scope of the gradient is important as well. A gradient that covers most of the drawing or subject matter will influence where the viewers look, and smaller gradients can add a pop of detail and contrast. If you feel your piece is looking flat or has lost focus, try adding a subtle gradient.
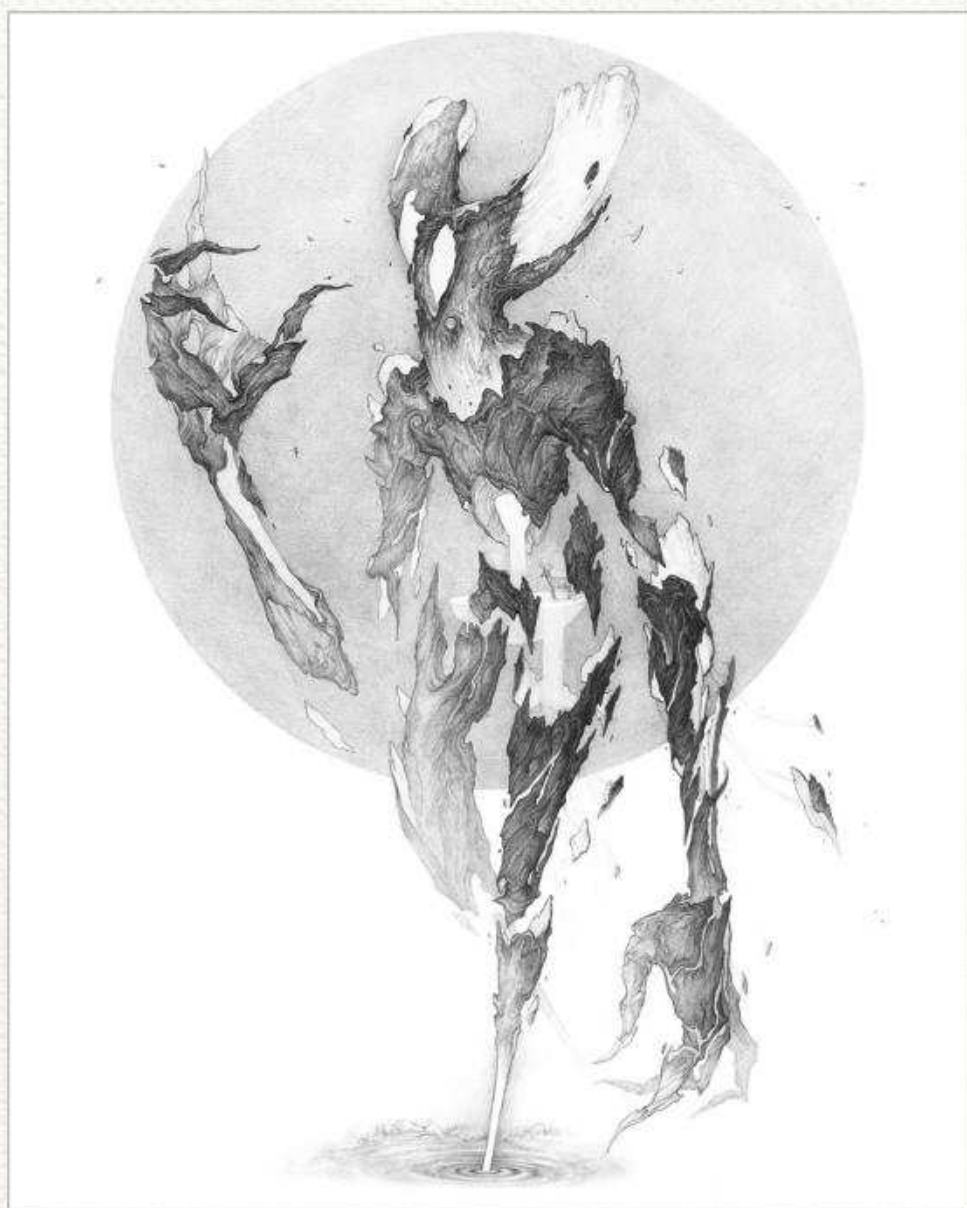
7 Contrast, contrast and more contrast

I love contrast. Our eye is attracted to areas of contrast and we can play with that knowledge in our imagery. Contrast is usually thought of as a value contrast, which consists of a dark and light value butting up against one another. But contrast can also be found in hue, saturation, shape, texture, edges, proportion and more. Heavy contrast will demand attention. Thus, I recommend placing the highest value contrast in your area of intent focus. You can also add contrast to separate forms and distinguish subject matters from one another.

8 Applying the 70/30 rule

The 70/30 rule is applied to all sorts of different facets in life, but I was taught this rule when creating art. The main idea is that you place 30 per cent of the detail/focus/contrast in one area of your piece and let the remaining 70 per cent be "filler" or less interesting, to push more attention towards that 30 per cent focal point. In this drawing I'm showing a 70/30 detail example to show this rule applied in practice. This can also be a reminder that in some cases, "less is more"!


9 Concave versus convex

This is a simpler tip I learned in college while grasping the differences between shading something convex and concave. I think about it every time I draw horns or placing the lighting within the iris of an eye. It's all about the direction of a light source and how different forms will respond to that information to create the illusion of depth. In these examples you can see how a simple study can be pushed further and result in a more complex form while still maintaining the same construction and thinking process behind both. ➢➢

Basic

Interesting

Fantastical

10 Understanding textures

Textures are distinct from one another and should be drawn to reflect that. You wouldn't want to shade skin the same way you shade metallics or fur. They each have unique properties and capturing that will elevate your drawings because of the accuracy depicted. To begin understanding textures, analyse two main concepts: does the texture tend to absorb/reflect light, and how smooth/rough is the surface? For example, a reflecting and smooth texture such as chrome usually has higher contrasts and prominent highlights, while an absorbing and rough texture like cotton has low contrasts and little to no highlight present.
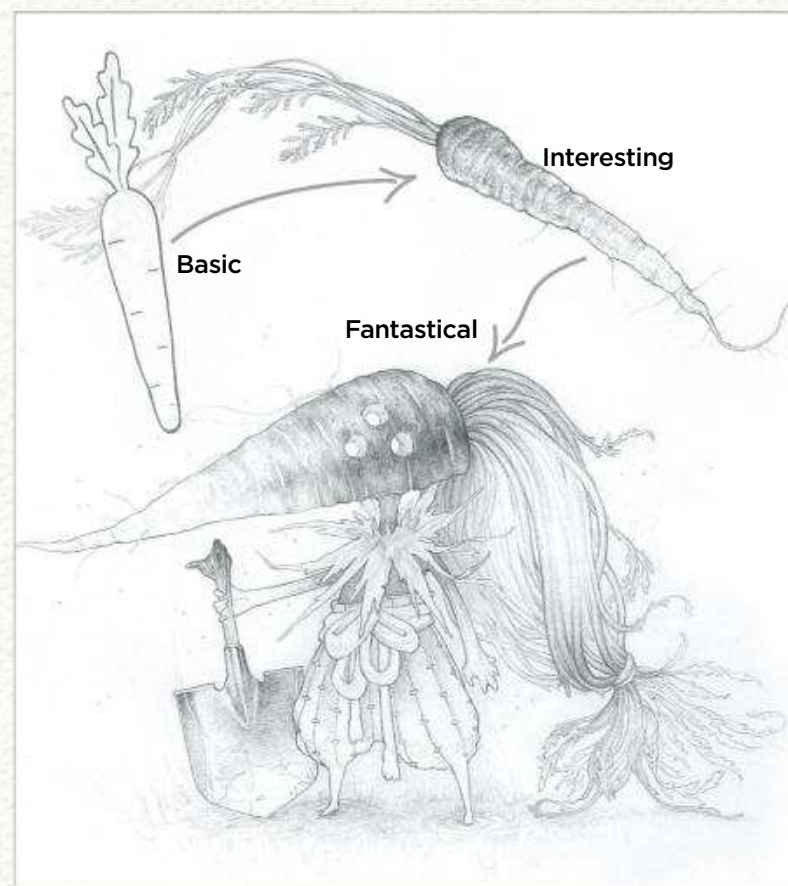
11 Imperfections and anomalies

The details and quirks that make an object stand out also adds character and a potential story for the viewer to elaborate upon. Instead of just looking at what makes an object recognisable you should also consider how to make this object distinctive. For my examples, I'm taking a simple vegetable and showing the general "look" that may come to mind at first thought. From there I bought the an actual carrot for reference and emphasised its anomalies, bumps, roots and imperfections. Look to add those on any given subject matter and try to have some fun pushing it into something fantastical.

## 12 Step by Step: Building up your image from a strong foundation

1 KEEP AN OPEN MIND
When looking to start, I try to keep my line work fluid, quick and open to change. At this stage nothing is permanent, so don't treat it as though nothing can be altered or changed. Focus more on laying down lines that you can construct your drawing on top of!

2 ENSURING A CLEAR 'READ'
After I feel comfortable with my base, I then look to introduce some values. I'm still not focusing on the details but rather seeing if the drawing reads clearly and creates accurate form. It helps to back away from the sketch to better see if there are any mistakes.
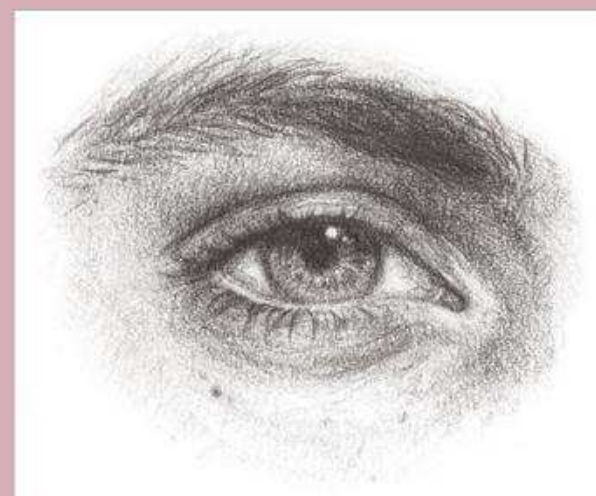
3 ADDING A LAYER OF DETAILS
My favourite part is the rendering and detailing of a piece. Just remember not to enter this stage early because you want to be efficient with your time. Detailing can consume a lot of it! Just be patient and have fun adding the details that will help to bring your piece to life.

13 *Realism versus stylised imagery*

I believe it's necessary to understand the value of learning realistic pursuits such as lighting, values, proportions, anatomy, and much more while honing in on your craft. It's not that a realism look is any better than a stylised one. Once you understand how to recreate something realistically, it becomes incredibly easy to then create a stylised version of the same object, especially for creatures and characters. Over time you'll make seemingly small, personal preference choices on the actual execution of a piece (often straying from realism) and that's what will help you to gradually build up your own style.

> ❝ **Once you understand how to recreate something realistically, it becomes easy to then create a stylised version** ❞

Realism   Stylised

14 *The heart is in the details*

How often have you heard "The little details are the most important"? I believe those details are where a piece reflects the artist's heart and soul. The additional time put into adding elements that may go unnoticed are like treats for viewers who take the time to look for them. I emphasise putting that extra care into adding the secondary details without rushing them, because it also teaches patience and practice. Great art should be nurtured, not manufactured. Don't overlook those details or let time be a deterrent. Embrace them!
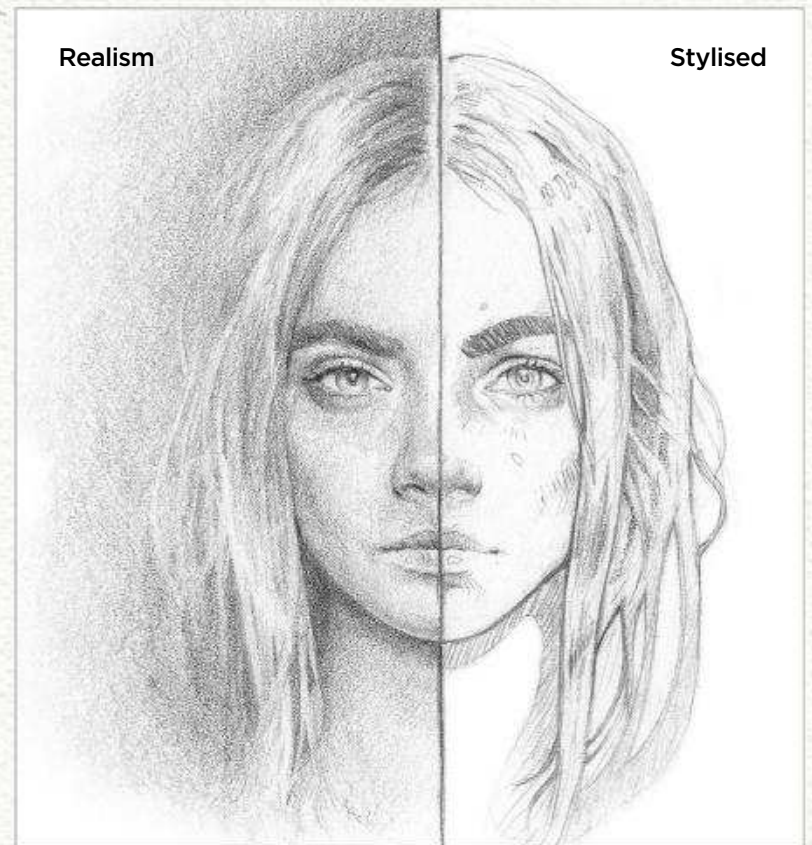
15 *Trust your intuition and be confident in your decisions*

Creating art takes courage. To fully express who you are, what you're interested in, how you're feeling and what you stand for can be daunting. Too many artists play it safe. They find an appealing and marketable comfort zone, and then only create from that space. I can speak from experience that people respond and will resonate when the work feels authentic. When you're in your creative zone, trust your gut feelings and be expressive with your preliminary sketches and thumbnails. Don't worry about the reaction. Create without the fear of whether it will be "good or not". ◆

Core skills: Part 4
CREATE TEXTURES IN WATERCOLOUR

KELLY MCKERNAN shares several techniques for creating and controlling unique textures with watercolour, effectively developing visual interest on the paper

My favourite part of working with watercolour is incorporating techniques for creating fascinating textures. I remember the first time I watched salt transform a watercolour wash right in front of my eyes, creating tiny stars where there were previously none. I thought it was magical. It was only later on while in high school, when my art teacher introduced me to watercolour techniques beyond using just salt, that I discovered just how versatile and interesting watercolour could be.

At first, it's easy to assume that some of these techniques create texture at random. However, keeping in mind how water behaves will help guide your technique and get you closer to the results you're looking for. Timing is key when working with many of these techniques.

Watercolour dries fairly fast, so there isn't much time to act to begin with. When the watercolour has a dull sheen – roughly just a couple minutes before being dry to the touch – this is the optimal time for adding salt, creating water blossoms and more.

*Kelly creates original paintings for galleries, travels for conventions and mentors students via her Patreon site. See her art at www.kellymckernan.com.*

BEFORE

Your best results will come when your established layer isn't puddled, but smooth and with a slight sheen of wetness.

When laying down the establishing layer of colour, aim for an even distribution for best control of the water blossoms.
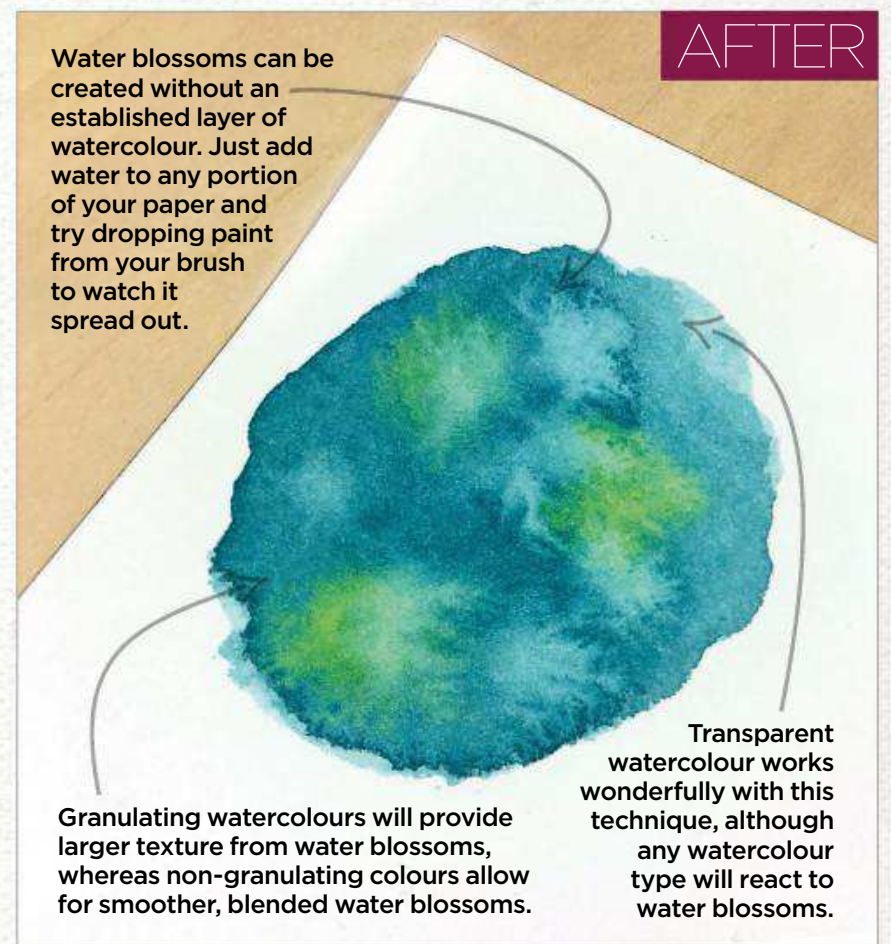
AFTER

Water blossoms can be created without an established layer of watercolour. Just add water to any portion of your paper and try dropping paint from your brush to watch it spread out.

Granulating watercolours will provide larger texture from water blossoms, whereas non-granulating colours allow for smoother, blended water blossoms.

Transparent watercolour works wonderfully with this technique, although any watercolour type will react to water blossoms.

1 *Creating water blossoms*
A little bit of physics comes into play with this technique. Just like when you step into a tub full of water and the water level rises, water displacement occurs when depositing drops of water or watercolour on to a wash. The deposited water pushes aside the watercolour wash and creates a distinctive water blossom.

2 Lifting and leaving texture

Removing watercolour creates texture, too. This technique is called lifting and can be used to accomplish both subtle as well as dramatic textures. A wide array of tools can be used to achieve this, from basics like paper towels, sponges and brushes, to the unexpected such as lace, netting or cotton balls. The possibilities are endless!

BEFORE

Whether a watercolour is staining or non-staining will make a difference when lifting watercolour. Staining watercolours won't lift easily.

It's a good idea to have a paper towel nearby when painting with watercolour. It's my primary tool for lifting stray marks or rogue watercolour, but I'll also use it frequently for fading out an area of paint.

AFTER

To help when lifting an area of dried watercolour, try rewetting it. You'll then be able to lift up that area of damp paint, creating more precise effects.

Using a damp brush, wiping detailed designs away from your watercolour wash is possible. A stiff brush will aid in scraping away any watercolour, too.

This is Moonglow by Daniel Smith, and it's my favourite watercolour because of its granulating properties and subtle shifts in colour.
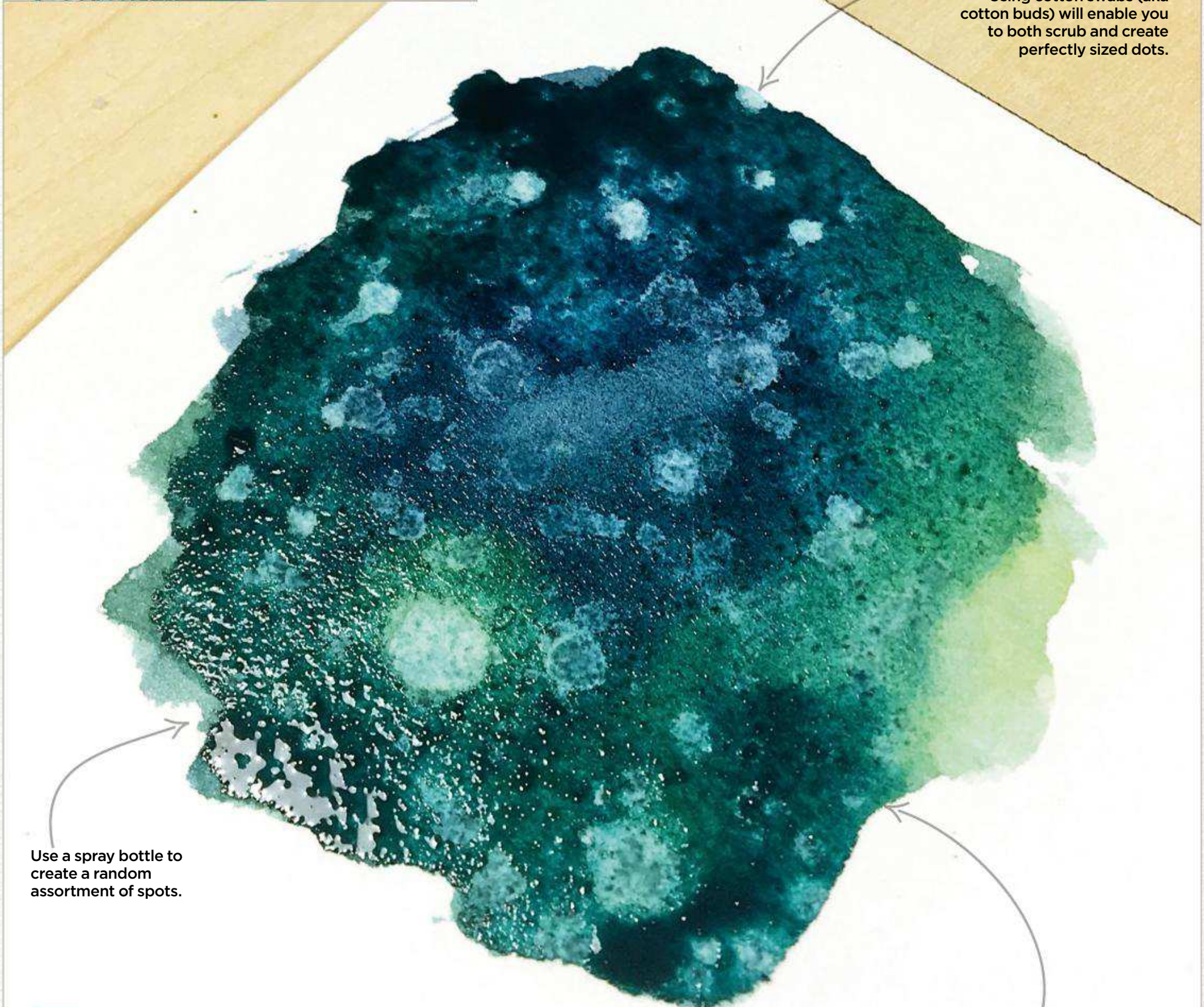
BEFORE

AFTER

I don't recommend using your nice watercolour brushes with rubbing alcohol, because it may strip oils found in natural hair brushes and this can lead to breakage. Use a back-up brush!

Using cotton swabs (aka cotton buds) will enable you to both scrub and create perfectly sized dots.

Use a spray bottle to create a random assortment of spots.

3 *Using rubbing alcohol*
Adding rubbing alcohol to your watercolour painting will cause it to repel the water, leaving a bubble of lighter colour. At first glance the effect is basic, but by experimenting with diluting the alcohol and its application, it can aid in creating interesting textures.

I prefer to keep 91 per cent isopropyl rubbing alcohol around, which is easy to find at any pharmacy. Ethanol alcohol will do the trick as well, although the Isopropyl mixes with water just a little better, which I prefer to have in case I want to dilute the solution.

4 Introduce some salt into the mix

Here we are: my favourite watercolour technique, and one I've spent a lot of time experimenting with. When salt interacts with water, moisture is sucked away, leaving behind lighter coloured trails and star bursts surrounding the areas where the salt has landed.

BEFORE

I prefer to work with either kosher salt or sea salt in a medium to large grain. Iodised table salt tends to "melt" into the watercolour and then leave behind a grainy texture that's difficult to paint on top of. The larger the grain of salt, the bigger the area of texture.
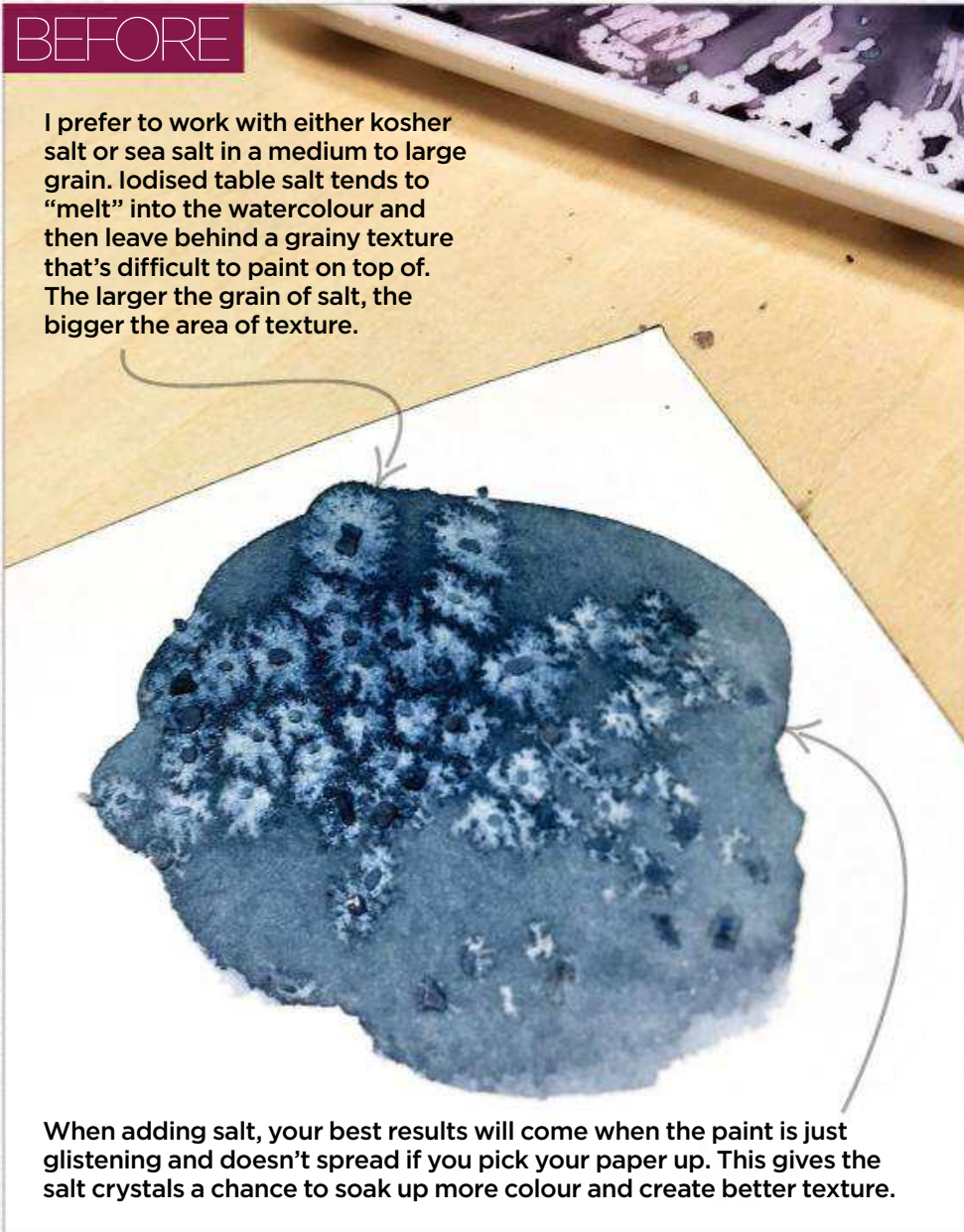
When adding salt, your best results will come when the paint is just glistening and doesn't spread if you pick your paper up. This gives the salt crystals a chance to soak up more colour and create better texture.

AFTER

Transparent watercolours work especially well with salt; opaque watercolours have a reduced effect with salt.
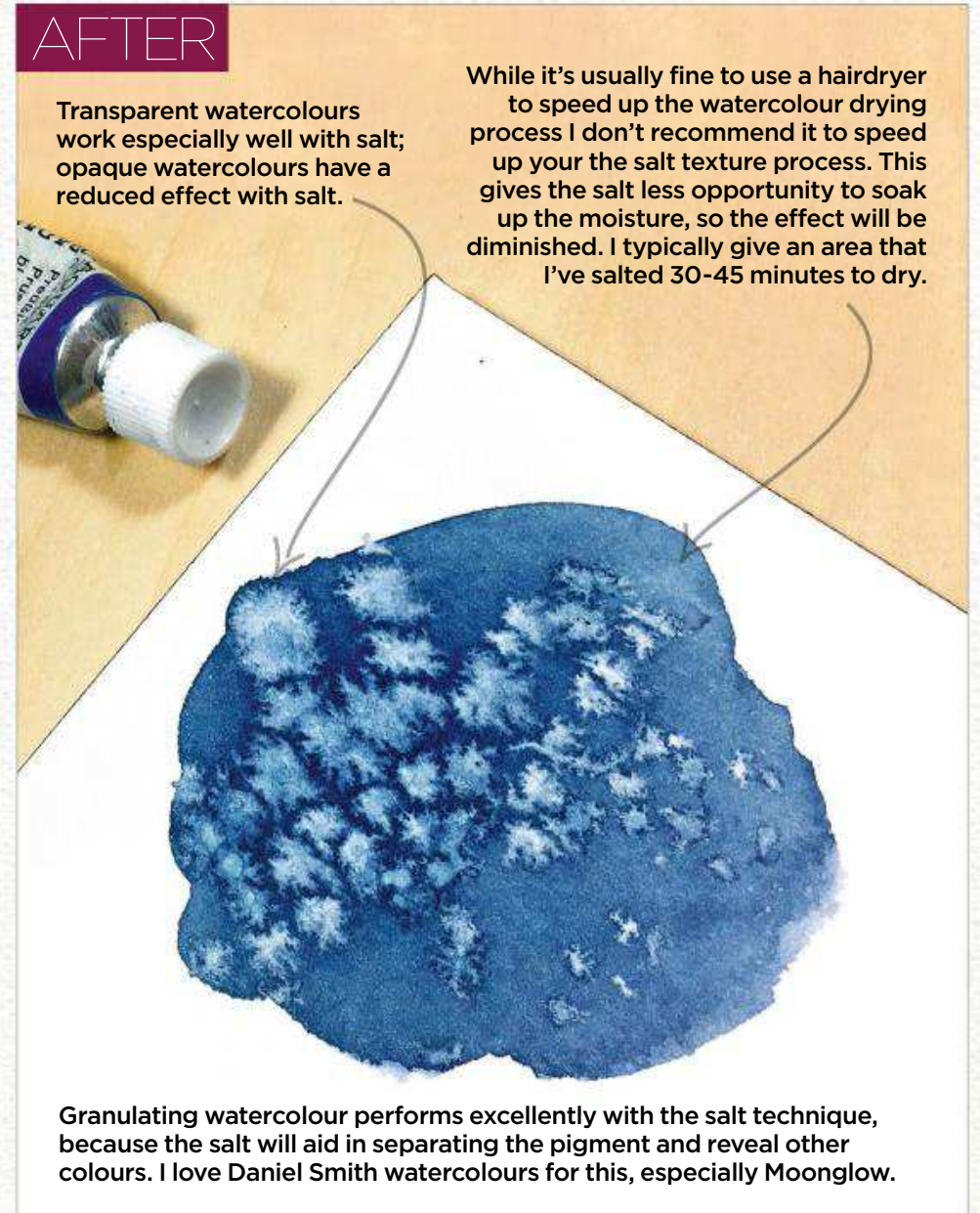
While it's usually fine to use a hairdryer to speed up the watercolour drying process I don't recommend it to speed up your the salt texture process. This gives the salt less opportunity to soak up the moisture, so the effect will be diminished. I typically give an area that I've salted 30-45 minutes to dry.

Granulating watercolour performs excellently with the salt technique, because the salt will aid in separating the pigment and reveal other colours. I love Daniel Smith watercolours for this, especially Moonglow.

5 Imprinting with plastics

For texture that's truly randomised and unpredictable, get creative with plastics! This can include plastic grocery bags, cling film, cellophane, bubble wrap and more. This requires ample drying time as well as a weight, such as a book, over the top of the plastics.

While it's tempting to peek, don't lift the imprinting materials before you're certain it's dried, or the texture will be shifted.

Here I've used a scrap of plastic grocery bag, crumpled up before placing weight upon it.

Adding pigment to the plastics before placing over wet watercolour will produce interesting effects as well.

I like how the imprint caused by a piece of bubble wrap looks like tiny leaves.

First Impressions

✳ Hope Doe ✳

Having a stand-up row with her paint helps this artist to master her media

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
When I was really young, I moved around a lot. Most of the places that I lived in were pretty rural, so I spent a great deal of my childhood outside. I used to hide in tall grasses or cornfields and pretend I was some predator stalking my prey. I had the habit of catching frogs, turtles and sometimes snakes, talk to them a little, and release them. I found a lot of comfort in the natural world.

Now, as my work is growing and I'm finding out more about myself, I think of these majestic times and try to put that same sense of wonder and mystery that I felt as a child into every piece of art that I do.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork through the years?
Nature is the one thing that I've always been passionate about. It's

RENGOKU (煉獄)
"This painting, whose title translates as Purgatory, was done when I wasn't sure about who I was or where I was going. I created it using graphite and oils on wood panel."

HIKAGEMONO (日陰者)
"I painted Outcast to describe our deepest, hidden inner soul, using graphite, oils and gold leaf on wood panel."

beautiful and terrifying. It gives life and takes it away without mercy.

Does one person stand out as being helpful during your early years?
No – there are a handful of people who are all connected and have

> ❝ I face my opponent, my in-progress art, and I yell at it until it submits to my will ❞

helped me to get to where I am today. Each one of them is so very important that I couldn't choose just one person to talk about.

What was your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent?
To be honest, I haven't had a paid commission yet. I'm currently taking

steps to get myself into the freelance scene. However, the first painting I ever sold is one of my favourites that I have done. The painting's title is Purgatory, and it was a pivotal point towards the direction I want to go with my art.

What's the last piece you finished, and how do the two differ?
The last piece I finished has a lot of similarities. Purgatory is a painting of a girl with a candle walking aimlessly in tall grass. She's lost and not sure where she is or where she's going. But the last piece I finished is a girl in leaves, capturing a bird with a cat's cradle. Purgatory was just letting things be as they are, while in this new painting (no title yet), the girl is taking control.

What are your painting rituals?
Painting starts with me getting ready for battle. I pray to the paint gods of old. Then put on my paint-smeared battle skirt. I face my opponent, my in-progress piece of art, and I yell at it until it submits to my will. After all that, I whistle a little tune and begin.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?
Don't worry about figuring where your life should be right away. Enjoy the experiences that you're having now, because they'll define you later in life.

Is your art evolving? What's the most recent experiment that you've made?
Yes, I have a fear of standing still. I feel that if I'm not struggling with something, then it won't be worth finishing. Right now, I'm trying to figure out liquid acrylics. We fight a lot, but I hope to be good friends soon.

Hope is an American artist who buries herself in the countryside of Japan. Her work has a strong sense of narrative and blends humanity with nature. See more o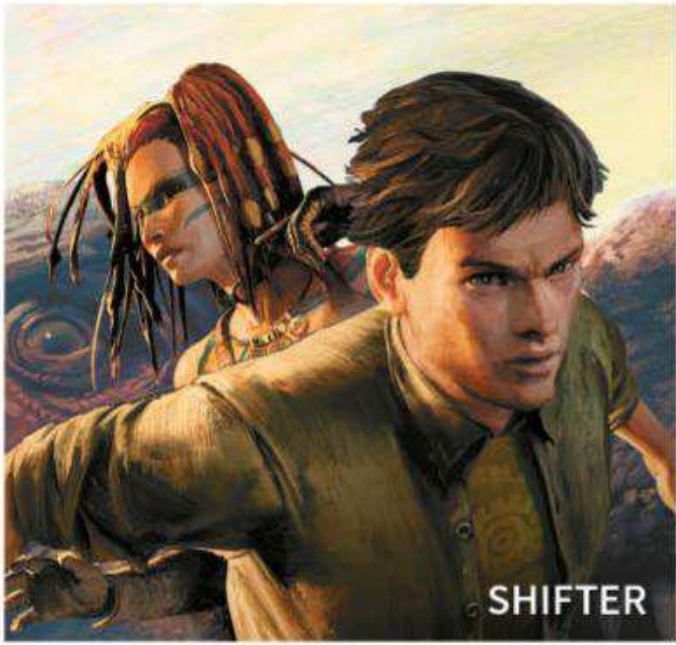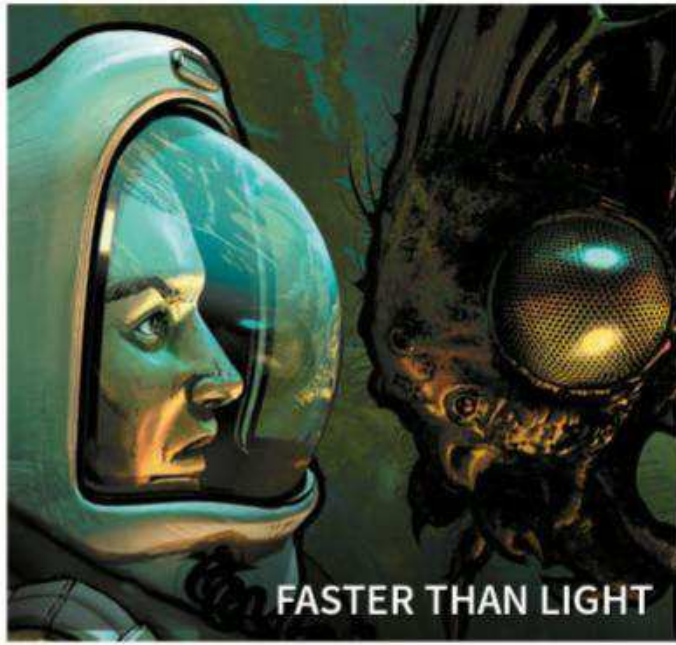f her art at www.heartswithumbrellas.com.