Editorial

Welcome

Welcome to 2DArtist Magazine, the first issue of Zoo Publishing's new publication. As far as we know there is no other current magazine dedicated to 2d art in the form of concept, matte and digital painting so we thought we would fill the gap for all you many thousands of enthusiasts out there!

The content is aimed to be a great read for hobbyists and professionals alike from beginners to experts. Other artists such as 3D'ers or traditional artists wanting to venture into this digital medium will find a wealth of information here too on how to get started and expand your skill sets. There is going to be so much awesome artwork, information, techniques and features packed into each issue we are sure you will not be disappointed!

Artist Interviews

Each month we will be speaking to the top industry talent, passionate hobbyists and upcoming students, this month we put Stephane Belin, Marc Simonetti and Frederic St.Arnaud under the spotlight and apply lashings of wonderful imagery from their portfolios to create some beautiful pages!

Studio Interviews

The cover featured 'Imaginary Friends Studios' tell us all about their projects, teamwork, production pipelines and the games they play

Tutorials

Tutorials are going to feature heavily in this publication, and we are kicking things off with 'Creating the concept artwork behind a 3D scene' by Richard Tilbury and the first of which we are sure is going to be a very popular series 'Elements'. Each month we concentrate on a particular element such as this month's skies and guest artists show just how they tackle the subject, presented in clear step by step form

Reviews

Painter IX - A photoshop only artist gives a run down of swapping to and trying out this popular alternative.

Making ofs

Take one fantastic artist, take one of their amazing works, hound the artist until they crack and tell us just how they made it! This month we went after two of the best and are very lucky as we have Matt Dixon and Jose Manuel Oli giving away tips and techniques.

Extra's!!

Competitions and galleries :- Win signed books and exclusive prints from the guys who created the cover image 'Imaginary Friends Studio' and if there wasn't enough fantastic imagery already to make your head spin, we are throwing some dedicated gallery pages at you too.

About us

Zoo Publishing is a new company comprising of a small team here in the Midlands UK. 2DArtist is our second magazine project following the successful 3DCreative (www.3dcreativemag.com). We are very grateful for the support of the following CG sites which have help promote and spread the word about our publications. As well as ourselves, all digital artists owe a lot to these communities for the incredible amount of work they do for the CG Industry. 3DKingdom, 3DLinks, 3DTotal, 2DValley, 3DM3, CGUnderground, ChildPlayStudios, DAZ 3D, 3DExcellence, Epilogue.net, GFXArtist, the3DStudio, CGDirectory, MattePainting.org, Max-Realms and Mediaworks, we look forward to lasting and successful partnership with these CG community sites
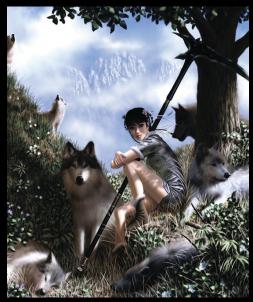
DIGITAL ART MASTERS

- The largest project from www.3DTotal.com/book features some of the finest 3D and 2D artwork you can see today

- Discover how certain parts were created and maybe find out some new tips and tricks

- These are not simple step by step tutorials but more the thought process behind the artwork

- Hardback 192 full colour pages.

- More than just a gallery book of artist work, each piece has a breakdown and overview of how it was made written by the artist.

3dtotal.com

an interview with
Stephane
Belin

>> French born artist Stephane is currently working as an art director, modeller and concept artist and has produced some of the best digital art that can be seen on the web today. He takes a few minutes to talk to 2dartist magazine...>>

an interview with

Stephane Belin

Hi could you tell us a bit about yourself?

I was born in France near Paris in 1970. My education was scientific. I studied Physics at the university and it was not before the age of 20 that I decided to follow an artistic career. I've been working as an art director, modeler and concept artist for the past 5 years. Before that I was a journalist and I began my career as a freelance videogame designer back in the good old 2D games days.

What first got you started in 2D?

Actually, my first contact with computers and 2D graphics was at the age of eleven when my parents bought me a Commodore 64. It was more pixel pushing than real drawing at the time but it eventually drove me toward more elaborate images, first in on Atari St for my first freelance games and after that on Macintosh with Photoshop. I've been using Photoshop extensively since then and also some 3D software.

You have been working as a freelance illustrator for the past few years and previously full time for some quiet well know computer companies, but which do you prefer, freelance work full time employment?

It really depends. I would say that I probably

need both. On one hand, working for a big compay has its advantages, the most important one being a regular pay check! Working with people also helps me to open my mind and get constructive criticism from my colleagues. Working alone requires a lot of discipline and self awareness of the problems in your images. You always have to keep a very critical eye over your work. The one interesting thing about freelance work is that it usually yields more variety so you are always confronted to new challenges. Projects are also usually shorter. Working on a long term project for a company (sometimes more than 2 years) can become quite demanding and even boring. The ideal situation is to be able

to work on the most interesting projects, and sometimes get a few extra freelance gigs.

You use a mixture of 2D and 3D within some of your paintings. Can you tell us how you came to start using this techinque, and what do you like about mixing the two together?

2D and 3D mix is a quite common technique in matte painting. This is an approach I experimented when I wanted to add a few photoreal images to my portfolio. It was only when I did some research about matte painting

travelling, a painting I saw in a book, a scene in a movie, even a book I read. I combine all these influences in my mind to come up with new ideas. I really like to get a quite realistic feel in my images but with a more dramatic lighting, composition and perspective. I also like to mix different architectural styles or have slightly anachronic elements in my pictures. I'm not really appealed with completely over the top sci-fi or fantasy work. I really like the kind of images that are grounded in reality, yet more than real. I love romantic painters which

were the masters at that.

How long does it take to produce one painting. From concept through to finished piece?

It depends of the complexity of the image, if it needs to be printed at very high resolution, whether it needs 3D elements, etc..but 2 to 3 weeks from start to finish is usually the time it takes for me to do a photoreal project.

Which part of producing these paintings do you enjoy doing the most?

that I realized everybody was doing the same, even if I was suspecting it! Painting over 3D, 2D painting and photomanipulation is really about getting the most realistic picture in the minimum amount of time. Photos and painting are really tremendously efficient for natural scenery, but when dealing with architecture, I feel a lot more free to experiment with perspective and lighting with a 3D model. Most of the time, 3D is just a support for the painting. I don't even bother to texture the models. But it's a great tool for laying out an accurate perspective and it's also essential for moving cameras.

Where do you get all the inspiration from to produce such visually stunning paintings?

Everything I see and live is a source of inspiration. It can be something I see when

Definitely the concept sketch. It's the most creative and fun part, where you work very fast and feel free to try out different palettes and compositions. Any idea you can come up with can be tried out right of the bat with a few pencil strokes. Doing the detailed image is more about time and technique than anything else.

Can you tell us a little about what your working on at the moment?

For the past few months, I've been doing concept art for Electronic Arts Montreal. I'm afraid I can't really tell much more about the project though.

Where do you see yourself in a 10 years time?

I have no idea at all! Even if I try to go in a general direction, my career evolves with the opportunities I get. So it's very difficult to project so far in the future, especially in an industry that moves so fast! Of course, I've got
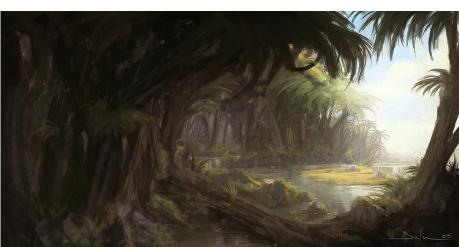
a few dream projects that I'd like to see come to life, but I'm too superstitious to talk about them.

Who inspires you artistically

The list is really long! For concept artists and matte painters, I would say that I admire the work of old masters Rocco Gioffre, Albert Whitlock, Peter Ellenshaw, and Matthew Yuricich From the digital age, I would say Craig Mullins, Erik Tiemens, Yannick Dusseault, Ryan Church and Dylan Cole. I also like romantic painters, I tend to like pin-up artists too like Hajime Sorayama, Vargas, George Petty...

What has been your greatest accomplishment?

Honestly, I don't really feel like I've accomplished anything really special. I feel happy to be able to live from what I love to do and in itself, I think it's my best accomplishment. I feel already glad that people that have worked with me in the past still grant me their trust.

What is one piece of advice you would give to any aspiring artist?

I think most beginners really have strong models that they forcefully try to mimic. It's a

big mistake that I've been guilty of myself ! But that's ok as it's part of the normal evolution of an artist. But even if it's a good thing to learn from experienced artists, I think it's really important to find as soon as possible what really is your thing, wheter it's scenery, characters, absract or whatever you feel the best for you. You have to develop your own vision and always keep a critic eye over your
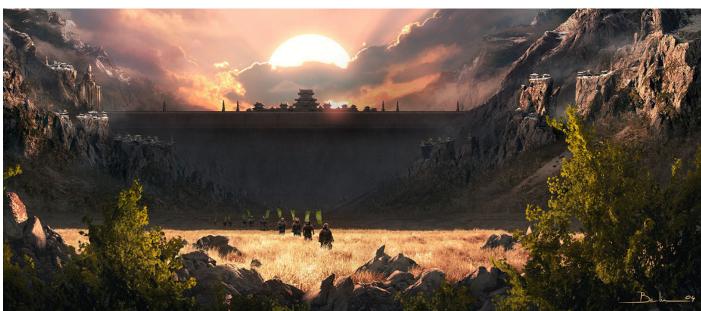
work.

It's also essential to learn to walk before running. Learn your basics. Composition, perspective and understanding of color is an essential foundation. And it takes time and work to master. There's no shortcut for that.

Interview by :

Chris Perrins

MARC SIMONETTI

>> Self taught French artist Marc is currently
working as a freelance artist for companies
such as EDEN Games, takes a few minutes
to talk to 2dartist magazine...>>

MARC SIMONETTI

Hi could you tell us a bit about yourself?

Hi, I am 28, and I live in France. Art has always been my passion, but it wasn't my work before 3 years ago.

I was an R&D engineer during 2 years, when I realised that I need to have a real creative work. That's why I decided to go to the Emile Cohl School to learn 2D and 3D. I began as a 3D background artist in the videogame industry. Now I am a freelancer working in 2D on concept arts and illustrations as well as in 3D, making high res and low res models for video games.

What first got you started in 2D?

Well, when I change my career orientation, my aim was a 2D work, but I wasn't good enough to earn my life in that field. So as I worked the day in 3D, I trained myself as often as possible in 2D the night. 3D taught me a lot about lighting and texturing. I also used a lot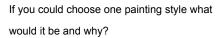 the internet forums such as café-sale and cgtalk, to have comments on my work. That really helped me getting better, and it always does.

You are working at the moment producing 3d backgrounds for games companies and 2d illustration, but which do you prefer to work on?

I really prefer working in 2D, because it's all about creation. Another reason, is that when I began working in 3D, I was in charge of the whole background (modelling, mapping, lighting). With the next gen games, the work tends to be more and more segmented and that's far less motivating.

If you could choose one painting style what would it be and why?

I would say Romanticism, because I just love Turner's paintings. I find his brushworks and the way he makes the light "vibrate" fascinating.

Where do you get all the inspiration from to produce such visually stunning paintings?

My inspiration comes from everywhere! The main sources are the books I read (about

3 a week), the movies, and my country. I live in a beautiful place near the Swiss alps, and medieval architecture can be seen very easily. I am also very inspired by the "vertigo" feeling.

How long does it take to produce one painting? From concept through to finished piece?

One painting takes me about 5 to 7 days. In some cases where there are much more details needed it can take me far more…

Which part of producing these paintings do you enjoy doing the most?

I always have a step where I put Black and white values on the sketch before adding any color. This step is very important and very rewarding; because I set the lighting and the way each element of the composition interact with the others then.

What would be your ideal job?

I think I already have it! Now I just want to get better and to work on interesting projects.

Where do you see yourself in a 10 years time?

I hope I will still have the same job, with maybe bigger projects. I'd like to associate myself with others freelancers like me in the future in the same place, so that it would create some emulation.

Who inspires you artistically?

There are really many people that inspire me. The main artists for me are:
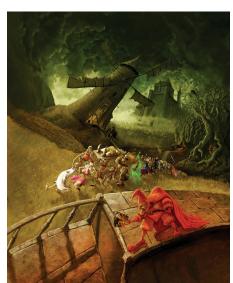
Sparth alias Nicolas bouvier (http://www.sparth.com/)

Mathieu Lauffray (http://www.lauffray.com/)

Black frog alias Igor-alban chevalier (http://homepage.mac.com/theblackfrog/Menu9.html)

John Foster (http://www.jonfoster.com/)

Georges Hull (http://www.ghull.com/news/news_main.php)

Craig Mullins (http://www.goodbrush.com/)

I wish one day I could have one percent of their talent…

What has been your greatest accomplish-

ment?

Recently, I began making covers for Science-fiction and fantasy books. One was edited by the same editor as the first SF book I ever read as a child, that made me found of reading. That's was a kind of big accomplishment for me.

What is one piece of advice you would give to any aspiring artist?

I would give one that is truly helpful: When making a piece of art always consider it in its wholeness. If you begin by making very small details when the other parts are not even started, you will certainly loose strength and efficiency.

Interview by :

Chris Perrins

I choose ZBrush because...

"ZBrush's **unique** and **intuitive** tools allow me to **create** complex and **detailed** creature designs that couldn't have been achieved any other way, as swiftly or **precisely**."
Caroline Delen

ZBrush
2D & 3D Painting, Modeling & Texturing

carolinedelen.com

ZBrushCentral.com

ZBrush.com

>> Frederic St Arnaud is Currently employed as the Lead Matte Painter at Digital Dimension, Canada. Having been creditd for digital visual effects on international blockbusters such as Shark Boy, Sin City, Racing Stripes, Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, plus matte painting for 'The Day after Tomorrow' and many more, the 3D Animator turned concept artist & matte painter talks to 2dartist magazine...>>

Frederic
St.Arnaud

V-V-KRUCZYNSKI

Frederic St.Arnaud

Hi Frederic. What do you think was the main motivation that prompted you to become an artist ?

It was'nt motivation as much as a way of living. I started drawing at the age of 3. Everything in my life turned around art: drawing, sculpting, painting, playing music, visiting museums, watching movies and theater plays.

What subjects do you like to explore most in your work and where does the interest stem from ?

At some point in my life, I was really interested by portraits and close-ups of people and then, At one pint I switched towards lanscaping and scenics views which is closer to Matte Painting material.

<<Image Left : Frederic St. Arnaud

Which artists,contemporary or old ,do you get most inspiration from ?

I would say Craig Mullins because of his ability to create an impressive amount of realism with rough brush strokes.

What is your favourite medium to work with and why ?

Acrylic as a traditionnal medium would be my favorite one because it dry really fast, it is strong and durable , but I also enjoy using my computer and my wacom tablet every day at work.

What is the most challenging part of your job ?

The most challenging part is makes the viewer see what you want to see the most in your image. Makes something believable et clear. It's a lot of cheating!

From your biography it is evident that you have worked across a number of disciplines, both 3D and 2D including animation.Which areas do you enjoy most ?

I used to do a lot of 3D character animation, but now I enjoy Concept Art / Matte Painting and everything relating to Photoshop work.

As a professional matte painter how vital do you think it is to be familiar with 3D packages ?

If you want to stay in the loop of major feature films, you definitely need to be familiar with 3D softwares, especially with camera projections techniques because most of the new movies use a lot of different camera movements.

Could you just provide a brief run down of how you go about doing a matte painting outlining the most common elements/ techniques involved in their production ?

Usually, you start with a quick sketch of your vision. You refine it until you recieve the client approval, you start the real matte-painting. First step of the matte painting is the photo session. You need to take photos of textures and elements that you will need to work with. I think it's the most important part, getting

good images before you start your work in Photoshop. The longuest part takes place in front of your computer, playing with photos and colors, tweaking images.

What would be your ideal project to work on ?
My ideal project would be photo-realistic matte paintings on a subject that I really like. For example: Dinosaur movies like Jurassic Park or cityscapes like SpiderMan would be very cool.

TALAROS CITY

What advice would you give young, aspiring artists wishing to pursue a career in your field?
Go with your passions, never stop drawing and make good contacts in the industry.

Thanks Frederic, good luck for the future.

Frederic's Work, Filmography and Info can be found at:

http://www.starno.net

Interview by :
Richard Tilbury

imaginary
friends

Despite a modest 1,600 square foot artist studio in Singapore , IFS has gathered a team of rising talents all over Asia and beyond to bring its creations to life. By bringing together artists and writers who have grown up on both Asian and western influences, IFS hopes to deliver entertainment that will transcend international boundaries yet remain genuine to its influences. Formed in 2005, Imaginary Friends Studios aims to create entertainment properties that will bridge the gap and appeal to Asian and international audiences. 2dartist talks to one of the founders of IFS; Edmund Shern>>>

Imaginary Friends : Clockwise from top left, Stanley, Kendrick, Edmund and Ri.

Imaginary Friends

When did the studio start, and by who?
It all started in Feb 05 by the 4 partners: Edmund T Shern, Stanley Lau (artgerm), Kendrick Lim (kunkka) and Ri Kai (Ukitakumuki) those are their online nicks

How many staff do you have, full time at your Singapore HQ or freelancing from other areas?
We come from different backgrounds. Full time staff in singapore there is 8 including contract/ freelancers, about 30.

All based in Asian countries?
Almost all are but we have one in Finland the majority are in Jakarta, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore

What were the main reasons for starting IFS?
Hmm...Well Stan and myself were previously founders and were running the creative department of a design agency called PAPRIKA www.paprikaglobal.com and we recognized that there was always a problem with getting creative work out the door the way you feel it should be done. Clients loved to art direct and the results were not pretty. We had done some personal projects on the side and got more satisfaction from those, so since we are also big fans of toys, comics, movies, games...we decided to get into the biz but

黑暗騎士
BLACK KNIGHT

MBT. JAKOB

Congratulations!

Hehe thanks we're pretty proud of that well we DID call in a LOT of favors

That knowledge must have been a great boost

Yes definitely

When you said "we'd let the people who had the staying power and the expertise execute the rest of it", what did you mean by it?

being creative people with the attention span of fleas, we wanted to focus only on the cool part that means the creating/designing bits we'd let the people who had the staying power and the expertise execute the rest of it while we move on to something else we also felt if we created something- the best medium to do it is in comics.

Sounds like a great concept, is it working well so far?

Because of the freedom, low budgets and high profile of some of the projects yes. So far we're having lots of fun. We had a rough start because we couldn't get funding. We are creative people, so doing up business plans is not our forte.

Well that's to be expected I guess with most new enterprises

Thats not to say we didnt have a sound business plan just that if we had to present in a way right down to detailed numbers then that would take us months to do research...so we had some near misses for financing but in the end we just dug deeper into our own savings and within 8 months, we broke even.

Right. We refer to the game producers...tv series producers etc.

Can you explain a bit more on the work the leaders do and then the work the other artists do?

Haha hmmm well my responsibilities include overseeing work, assigning work, reassuring clients, reassuring artists and taking out the trash literally.

Do artists specalise for example in just one aspect in the pipeline?

Hmm. No not particularly, its a pretty egalitarian structure very low structure our idea is to work ourselves out of a job.

Ok next question. What does egalitarian mean?

Haha well it means anyone can take the lead in a project. Stanley Lau is still overall creative director but the artists have a lot of say in what they want/dont want to do and which aspects.

Ok gotcha

Motivation is a BIG factor in our approach unlike say programming a product is not just a product an unhappy artist can still deliver a painting and we feel that ultimately THAT is the one thing that will keep artists loyal to us.

ULTRA
PRETTY
MOM
Mother of Ultraman

Marry me!

In what ways do you think there are western influences in your studios portfolio?

I think its in the sensitivity to the market in focusing on subjects and styles that are more popular to western audiences its a natural thing for most of us. Because we also grow up with similar tastes. Many of the artists are english speaking

Can you tell me about a current project you are working on that you find particulary enjoyable/ interesting?

Ok I was just checking to see if its public knowledge haha. Ok yeah they made a press release about it, so its ok. We're doing a series of art for a card game for Sabertooth Games. They're the card division of Games Workshop and we're doing the art for a fighting card game based on Soul Calibur 3 (and some Warhammer 40K along the way too haha) so we've been playing games, and drawing the characters. Its a massive project and we've pretty much pulled in most of the studio to all work on this one project so its been truly a studio project. The deadline is insane of course and we practically lived in the studio

That sounds great, has there been a buzzing atmosphere.

Yeah and we've really gotten closer as a studio working under extreme conditions, haha plus Sabertooth has been great to work with. Its always nice when the client REEEEALLY appreciates your work and they tell you.

When working on art such as this, how much is done traditionally and how much digitally?
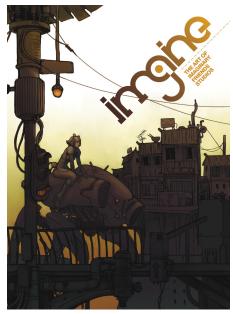Only pencils are done traditionally if at all the main partners hardly touch real pencils these days they swear by their wacoms. Wacom was nice enough to sponsor us a Cintiq (you know that LCD screen you can draw on?)

So even penning an outline or sketching is done on your tablets?
Correct. Thats for the partners no trees were harmed in the process (unless you count the trees cut down to generate the electricity) haha yeah. . there's something for the readers to think about.

And do you use a lot of character reference material when working?
For our licensed projects yes we reference like crazy for everything in fact we try not to lose the logic in our work so if we're doing a martial arts pose it has to be achievable anatomically and naturally done we tend to be quite picky about that, about lighting and we have long debates about hover cars haha.

We play mini basketball and ping pong in our studio, do you guys have any stress relievers?

OH BOY DO WE EVER. We have a pool table, we have a capcom arcade machine which we gutted and fitted in a PC, a PS2 and an Xbox <green eyes come accross the 3DTotal gang> and 5-7pm is Lan game happy hour. This week it's retro week, we're back to Frozen Throne. Lan gaming is a big part of the studio culture. I've been in other studios where it's frowned upon. I think it helps to bring the team closer together, stuff like that. They relate to each other in deeper ways. If someone saves you regularly from orcs you respect them a little more i think.

I think after talking to you, we definately need more! Do you have any advice for budding artists?

Art is about work, sometimes it just looks easy erm. is that too much?

For more information about the Imaginary Friends book please visit http://www.imaginaryfs.com/
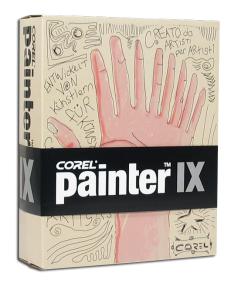
Interview by :

Tom Greenway

Painter IX

If you are a traditionally trained artist from either a fine art or illustration background and are keen to break into the digital field then Painter 9 may well prove to be the most suitable way in.

Prices

Painter IX - £292.58 inc VAT

Upgrades

Painter IX Upgrade - £116.33 inc VAT

Download Version

Painter IX - £263.20 inc VAT

Painter IX Upgrade - £104.58 inc VAT

System Requirements

Windows

Windows® 2000 or Windows XP® (with latest Service Pack)

Pentium® II, 500 MHz or greater

128 MB RAM (256 MB recommended)

Mouse or tablet

24-bit colour display

1,024 x 768 or greater monitor resolution

CD-ROM drive

380 MB of available hard disk space

Macintosh

Mac® OS X (version 10.2.8 or higher)

Power Macintosh® G3, 500 MHz or greater

128 MB of RAM (256 MB recommended)

Mouse or tablet

24-bit colour display

1,024 x 768 or greater monitor resolution

CD-ROM drive

395 MB of available hard disk space

More details

http://www.corel.co.uk

The moment the package launches there is the ubiquitous colour wheel evident along the edge of the workspace, familiar to anyone who has studied painting and colour theory and the feeling is that this is a program geared towards artists and indeed anyone interested in producing digital paintings.

> "If you are from a Photoshop background such as myself and are new to Painter then at first glance things look a little similar but this is in no way a criticism, in fact quite the opposite"

Toolboxes, property bar options, colour selection boxes and palettes are all where you would expect to find them and this makes things seem a bit more familiar and user friendly. You are immediately presented with a welcome screen on startup which gives you quick and handy access to recently used files, tutorials and brush settings and even

work examples from established Painter users. Looking at the new features movie is where you begin to to realise just how this package has been tailored to the traditional artist. Rather than being aimed at manipulating existing imagery such as photographs the emphasis here it seems is on using a comprehensive array of drawing and painting tools to create original works of art.

There are new updated brush control palettes which will enable artists to swiftly swap between numerous brushes and make on-the-fly changes to the various settings by way of simple slider bars. The whole process has been designed so as to enhance the work flow as much as possible and enable quick and easy access to a whole range of different brushes. This effectively enables more versatility when working and accomodates a variety of approaches and techniques within a single session. Another feature which proves to be of immeasurable use are the tracker palette enhancements which retain a record of brush strokes applied on the canvas. This is great because when in the middle of a painting session one often samples hundreds of brushes in order to get the right mark and often it is difficult to trace or remember which ones have been used but now you can scan the history and easily recall a brush and

save it to a library. Perhaps the best new feature and certainly the one I was most excited about was the inclusion of an artists oil painting system which utilises a colour set that corresponds to the real world pigments availiable in art shops such as Yellow Ochre, Raw Umber and Prussian Blue for example. This is perfect from the point of view of an oil painter or watercolourist as it makes it easy to translate skills into a digital medium. There is a massive array of brushes on offer and each stroke is loaded with a finite quantity of paint and so the marks grow fainter as the brush is moved across the canvas. Even more clever is the way in which different colours interact with others already layed down and effectively mix on the image. As if this was not enough, the people at Corel have also included a very intuitive Mixer Palette which is akin to an

artists palette where you can lay down dabs of clour and then mix them in varying degress to produce an endless number of hues and tonal ranges. These can then be applied directly to the picture and the whole process perfectly mimics the manner in which one would paint traditionally. It would have been good however if you could enlarge this window a little but it still remains a powerful tool. With regard to the Digital Watercolour brushes there is now an option to keep the paint wet between sessions and also apply dynamic alterations after the paint has been layed down by way of a simple Wet Fringe slider.

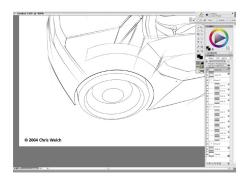Along with a large collection of brushes there is also a considerable number of recognisable

"Being able to customize brushes is a very handy aspect of Photoshop and the option is also availiable here through the Brush Creator where you can design an entirely new brush, customize existing ones and combine characteristics from more than one"

paper and texture grains on offer which help describe the qualities of each medium such as pastel and conte. By selecting the appropriate surface any number of effects can be replicated that are similar to the real world counterparts.

Other additional features include improved performance and a rather odd new Boost slider which enhances brush speed. I do however find myself asking why brushes cannot always operate at an optimum level and then have this tool taken out. Another useful feature is the ability to rotate and flip the canvas (something I would have expected anyway to be honest) as well as being able to customize shortcut keys - very useful when coming from Photoshop and the Snap-to-Path Painting which allows brush

strokes to follow a line accurately for precision painting.. Animators can now test frame rates in Painter with the new frames-pe-second tool giving them a range of 1 to 40 per second and Iterative Save has been introduced allowing

© 2004 Chris Welch

Snap to Path Art example by Chris Welch

users to save a sequential number of image versions with a single command. What is also particulary useful is the enhanced compatibility with Adobe Photoshop with the ability to open PSD files with all layers, alphs channels and masks intact which will certainly make dual use far easier.

Summary

So to summarise then Painter is a powerful tool which will appeal more to traditional artists and seems to be first and foremost a painting package that has a leaning towards reproducing a long established art form in a digital context. Anyone wishing to adapt their traditional skills into a modern medium would be foolish to ignore this software as indeed from a painters point of view it could be considered the most advanced in its league.

Reviewed by : **Richard Tilbury**
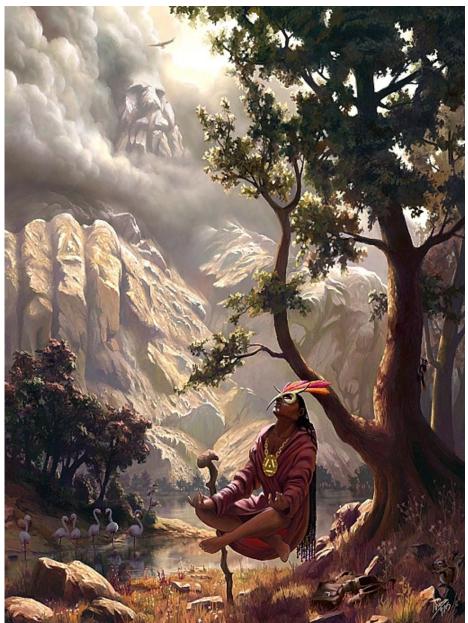
The Gallery

Faith

Simon Dominic

simon@painterly.co.uk

Water Shuttle Station

Graven Tung

gtung@artofgt.com
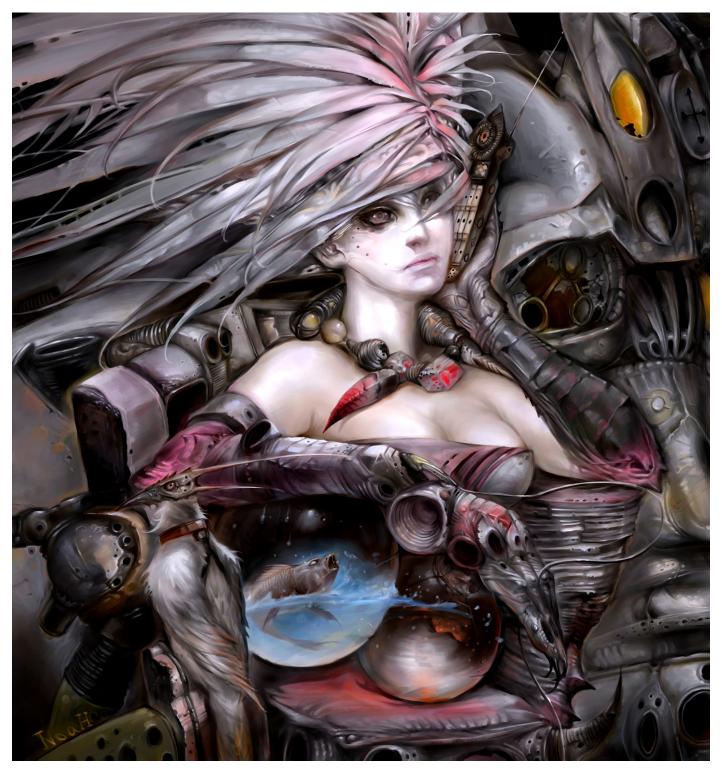
My World

Kuang Hong

noah@zemotion.net

Naree Phol

Keko

keko3dr@hotmail.com

Samurai

Abuze

abu.krause@gmx.de
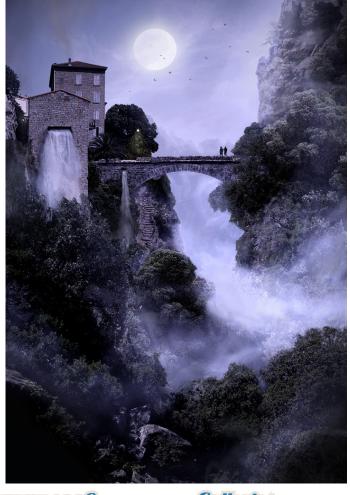
Thunderdome Warrior

Matt Dixon
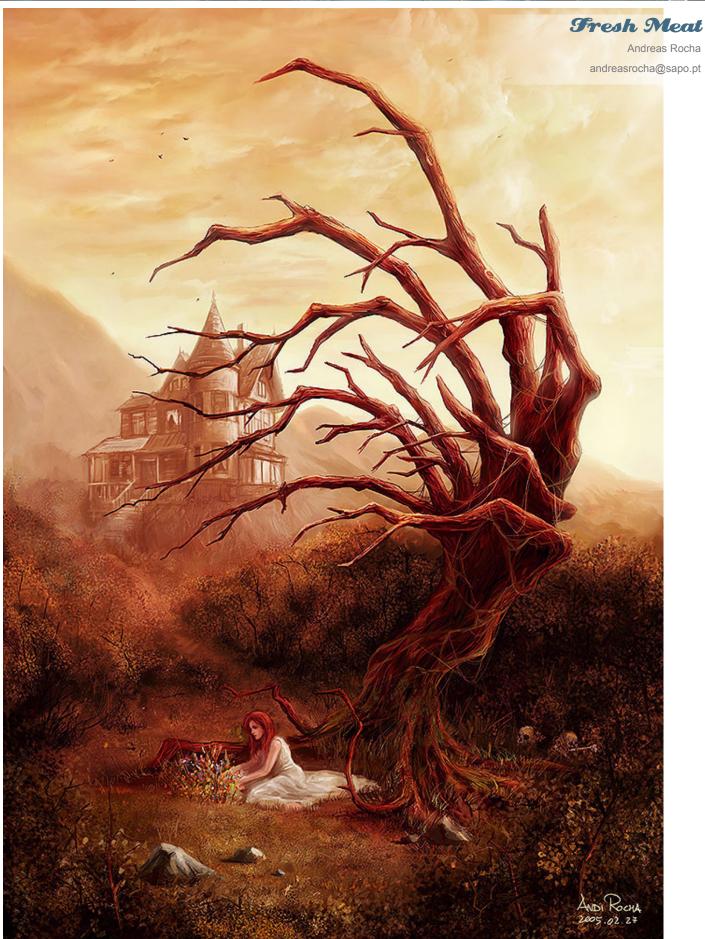
mail@mattdixon.co.uk

Sartene

Thomas Krahn

thomas.krahn@stofanet.dk

Fresh Meat
Andreas Rocha
andreasrocha@sapo.pt

Mushroom Hideout

Gracjana Zielinska aka vinegar

http://vinegaria.com

Equilibrium

Henning Ludvigsen

www.henningludvigsen.com

the
concept

>>>For '3DCreative magazine', Richard tilbury creatd the 'Corridor' series of tutorials. Each month for the last 4 months the tutorials have covered the modeling, texturing and lighting of a simple scene to be able to see the distinct differences that can be achieved with the subtlest of texture and light changes. Here, Richard has outlines the concept artwork behind the Corridor series.>>>

Corridor Scene

This particular scene was designed with the intention of making a 3D version which would hopefully have a little more clarity after having been explored as a 2D digital image first. My aim was to create a scene that relied more on light and textures as opposed to geometry. I therefore opted for a simple corridor environment using some basic one point perspective and ending with a doorway. I started by drawing a rough sketch of a scene with some pillars along both walls which I then used to make an alternative version but this time suggesting a more Sc-Fi orientated environment with some pipework. The perspective and vanishing points in both sketches are consistent along with the proportions of the space and it is only the details lining the walls that differs.
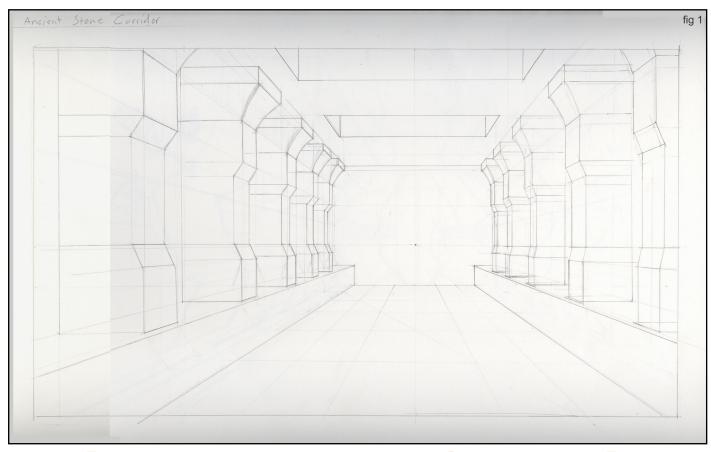
By doing a digital painting I was able to explore various lighting effects and the impact these may have on the scene as a whole. I find it is very useful to rough out ones ideas in the form of sketches and concept paintings as it is a far

quicker way of working and can save much ime further down the line when transposing the ideas into 3D. Anyway without saying too much more I will get on with the tutorial in which I shall endeavour to break down and outline the process and techniques involved.

Blocking In

1. The first stage as already mentioned is to do a basic sketch of our scene which we can then scan and import into Photoshop (Fig.1). You can see from the drawing that I have decided

Ancient Stone Corridor — fig 1

ent Stone Corridor   fig 2

to raise the pillars of the floor in order to give the scene a bit more interest. You will also notice that the ceiling has two vents or skylights cut into it which will be our light source in the image. There will be no artificial light just natural sunlight filtering from these two openings. This will afford me the opportunity to use some high contrast between the light and dark areas and create some drama through the pools of light along the floor area and shadows cast by the pillars.

2. With the drawing now scanned and imported into Photoshop we can begin by breaking down our image into areas that will recieve varying degrees of light and then creating selection areas around these, filling them in with a grey colour and saving each out as a different layer (Fig.2). These layers when complete can be saved into a sub-folder and named accordingly by creating a new set which will make it easier to navigate through our file (Fig.3). You can see from the diagram that by altering the layer opacity we can alter the lighting quality very quickly but more importantly it will enable quick selection of parts of the scene throughout the painting process when boundaries are blurred by numerous layers and lighting effects. It just means that we can edit our image right up until the very end if need be and have access to crisp edged selection areas when we want to draw in finer and more precise details etc.
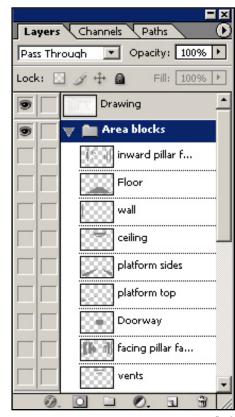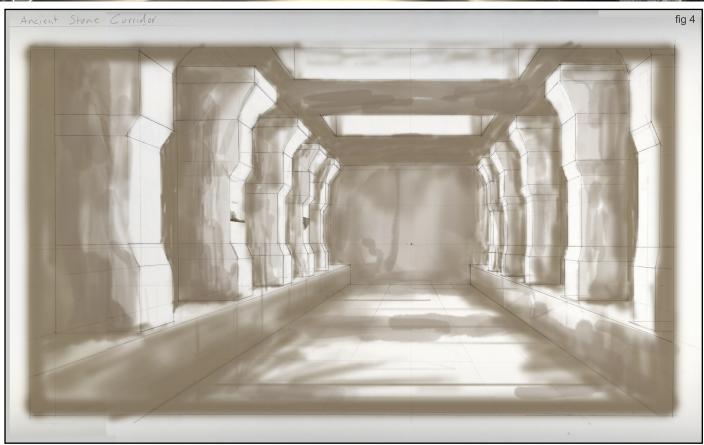

fig 3

Ancient Stone Corridor   fig 4

3. With this step out of the way we can now get on with the painting process. So the first thing to do is set this layet to multiply and then create a new layer and begin by very roughly blocking in areas of light and dark and try to establish early on which parts will be in shadow and which will recieve highlights (Fig.4). The vents will naturally appear very bright compared to the rest of the scene as these are the light sources. The fact that there are no other windows or entry points will serve to emphasize this and so give them an even brighter quality not unlike clear glass windows in a church or cathedral where we can observe an almost blinding light compared to the dimly lit interiors. Remember not to be too fussy at this stage as we are only blocking in main areas and are not intending for a finished look. It is quite a good idea to use a largish brush for this stage and maybe a watercolour one so as to encourage random accidents and discourage any attention to
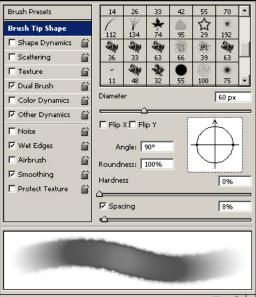

fig 5

detail. For this stage I chose a standard "watercolour small round tip " brush and altered the settings to those similar to Figures 5 and 6. As this will be a stone corridor I selected a brownish colour to block in the dark areas and did not worry too much about staying within the guidelines.

fig 6

4. With this initial stage underway I then went on to use the same brush set to a smaller size and add some additional darker areas that this time have a more scratchy look compared to the previous brush. I find that at this stage it is a good idea to freely apply marks and sweeps of the brush and try to let the medium suggest some of the results in a way similar to drawing on paper (Fig.7). I really enjoy charcoal drawing for this very reason - one can create large tonal areas to forge out the lighting as well as drawing in fine lines and shaping form in a variety of ways but also allowing for happy accidents as it is not as precise as a pencil. This versatility can be mimicked in a digital format through utilising the large array of brushes availiable in Photoshop as well as customizing existing ones. Some of the random thinner marks may be used to suggest cracks in the stone or just general weathering.

5. We can already begin to see how the light source will govern our final look but before we go any further it is a good idea to introduce a little colour variation as it all looks a bit monochromatic at present. On a new layer set to Soft Light which I chose to call "Colour Overlay ", I painted in a pale orange-grey colour across the whiter areas apart from where the light is most intense i.e. the ceiling vents and floor directly underneath as well as where the light catches a few columns (Fig.8). This will help add some warmth to the scene and give the overall colour scheme a more realistic feel.

6. Now on another layer set to Soft Light using the same watercolour brush as before I selected a mid blue-grey hue and blocked in some cooler tones that would fall mainly within the shaded areas but not exclusively (Fig.9) This will add a subtle colour variation to the stonework and prevent the scene from looking too much like a sepia photograph.

fig 7

fig 8

fig 9

Ancient Stone Corridor   fig 10

8. In order to rectify this I added a background layer that goes below all the other layers and for this I decided on a very slightly orange grey-brown colour (Fig.11). When this is applied it essentially tones down the contrast we have just created but do not be concerned because the light areas we have been used to seeing so far are represented by the drawing we scanned in as a guide and as this will eventually be discarded it is wise to ignore it as an integral part of the final image. Indeed if we switched the layer off we would see transparent areas in our picture and so we may as well substitute it now and prepare to begin painting in the final source of light.

7. We so far have four layers (not including our selection folder) in our PSD file and with a generalised colour scheme in place it is a good time to flesh out the lighting a bit more and add a more realistic level of contrast. The scene already demonstrates the preliminary light and dark areas but still appears washed out so we need to add a further layer which we will call Shadows and set its blending mode to Multiply. On this layer I chose a muddy, darkish brown

and added the darkest parts of the scene mainly along the sides of the columns and walls (Fig.10). You will now notice a marked change in our picture and by darkening much of the space we have essentially made the light appear brighter by comparison and added much drama as a result. We can already get a feel for how the scene may end up but there is still a "black and white " look to the picture caused in part to the white areas.

Tutorial By :
Richard Tilbury

Ancient Stone Corridor   fig 11

"Tina. She is young, she is a little crazy, and she has the control. She is the founder of a group like the people who release the garden dwarves. But she prefers the steam giant robots !! wake up people!! it is time to change the rules!"

Jose Manuel Oli

WAKE UP BABY!!

WAKE UP BABY!!

First Sketches and Design

This is the part that I consider as most important in the process of creating an image. These are the first sketches and different variations of the same idea. I independently develop each character design, and take the same dedication for each individual character's personality design (age; 25, name; Tina, environment and where she lives; little industrial city, etc.) and so for the story.
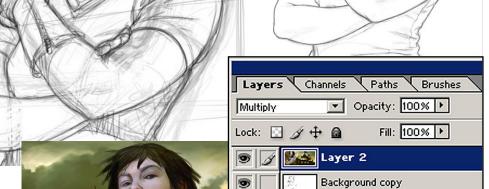
First Drawings and Cleaning Lines

It can be noticed that I changes the remotes design to make it less futuristic and more logic.

Colour

I consider as suitable the sketches' colour test and I create a multiplying layer over the line drawing. Over it, I place the sketch scaled to the final image resolution. I use the sketch as a colour base and I start painting with colour stains.

I eliminate the t-shirt lines in order to get a better definition of the clothes wrinkles and shape. I create the lighting effects of the robot's focus in two layers; linear dodge for the most luminous part and colour dodge for the most stumped part. I create a multiplying layer, where I painted the t-shirt lines.
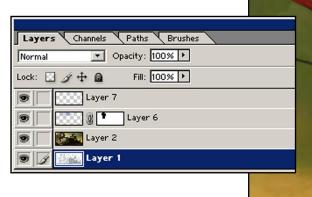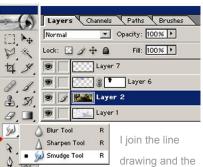
I erase the layer containing the t-shirts lines. I am just not convinced about it, as the wrinkles volume gets lost (fortunately, it was made on an independent layer). We have already got a good colour base. It's now time to join layers.

I join the line drawing and the colour layers Before doing that, I make a copy of the line drawing layer in order to keep it as a reference in case I distort any of the shapes whilst painting. Through the following steps I use the smudge tool for stumping the colour stains and eliminating the drawing line. On these steps, I also paint directly for creating more shades and eliminating the drawings black line.

On this step, I have detailed the Robot's smoke and I have finished the neck scarf. I have avoided the original translucence, as I consider the scarf cloth is too thick and there is not a very clear back lighting.

Basically, Tina is already finished. There is only some final retouching to be done and It's time for finishing the background. I develop the towers at the bottom and the warehouse elements. For the door, I first make the door's drawing without any perspective and then I apply a distortion transformation, adapting it to the composition's perspective. This same process is used for the tiles. Making a comparison with the previous image, the effect of lighting can be noticed.

I paint and detail the floor area, with the puddles and mud. It is an almost unappreciated zone, which really does not stand out because of dark colour tones, however it is probably one of the most complicated parts of the image. I also detail the bushes growing close to the little wall. His is another part of the image really difficult to appreciate, after such hard work on the detailing.

It is time for detail and polishing 'baby'! I used the smudge tool for refining shapes and then I paint and add details with a normal brush, without adjusting size by means of pressure. I paint the glass on the lower part of the warehouse as well. For painting the warehouse shapes I use the polygonal lasso tool, taking the line drawing as a reference.
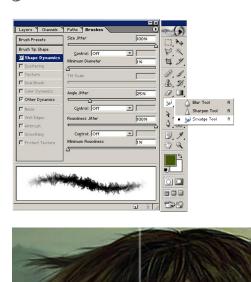
Tutorial

I finish detailing the upper windows. It's time to touch heaven! For obtaining the iregular and blured shape of the clouds I use the smudge tool with an irregular brush and the parameters shown in the image. It is really pleasant and easy improvising and changing the shape of the clouds and smoke. After some general retouching (some details on the glove etc) we are ready to say "Wake up Baby! it's time to change the rules!"

This is the last step. I apply to the image a special noise that irregularly affects the whole illustration, giving it an incredible aspect, much warmer and pictoric...but this is just a secret...;-)

Tutorial by :

Jose manuel Oli

bird catcher

Here I'm going to try to explain my Photoshop painting process, from first doodle through to a finished painting. As I go along, I'll detail both what's happening on the canvas and what's going around my head. *Matt Dixon*.

Here I'm going to try to explain my Photoshop painting process, from first doodle through to a finished painting. As I go along, I'll detail both what's happening on the canvas and what's going around my head.

I'll be working on a 2480 x 3508 pixel canvas (A4 at 300dpi). This is a high enough resolution should I ever want to print or publish the image in the future, but also fits nicely on my monitor at 25% magnification, which allows me to see the whole image as I work. Except where stated in the text, the painting is being worked on at that magnification throughout.

A note on brushes:

I use my own custom brushes for all my painting, though I'm not going to go into any detail on brush creation during this walkthrough. There are two reasons for this - firstly, there are plenty of excellent brush tutorials out there already and I don't feel that I have much to add to the information already available, and secondly, Photoshop's brush engine is very easy to use and I hope anyone with an interest in custom brushes will take the time to experiment with the settings on offer to find their own custom brush settings; it really is a lot of fun, and certainly the best way to learn.

The brushes I use fall into three basic categories - soft edge, hard edge and texture. I'll mention which I'm using as I go along and it really doesn't matter exactly what brush is being used as long as they fit into those basic categories. The standard airbrush, Dense Stipple 56 (Natural Brushes set) and Rolled Rag - Terry 120 (Faux Finish set) Photoshop defaults will do just as good a job as any fancy custom creation if used correctly.

Whatever brush I'm using, I have my graphic tablet set up the same; stylus pressure controls opacity and nothing else. I use the square bracket keyboard shortcuts to control the size of my brush while I work, and I vary this regularly to break up the marks I'm making.

One final brush setting to be aware of is texture. I use this a lot to help break up my brush marks, and it's worth spending some time experimenting with this area of the brushes palette to see what kind of effects can be had. Again, the Photoshop defaults are perfecty acceptable in most situations, particularly the Texture Fill and Rock Pattern sets.

Sketch

I begin by sketching out a rough idea for my image. I've decided to paint something fun for myself, so I've chosen a fantasy demon character, but that's as far as my concept goes at this stage so I just doodle around for a while. The hunched-over pose was suggested by imagining the character's spiteful, covetous personality; I find it really helps to try and get into the spirit of the image I'm working on so there's a fair amount of face-pulling and growling going on while I scribble away. As you can probably see I'm not that fond of working with lines, so as soon as I have something that feels right, however rough, I'm ready to move on.

Value

Here's where the painting begins. I'm much happier here than with a sketch, and I'll often begin a piece by jumping straight into this stage. I create a new layer, filled with a mid grey, and proceed to block in a tighter

version of the image working mostly with a large, hard-edged brush. I'll click my working layer off to reference the sketch every once in a while, but I'm not concerned with tracing any part of it - I'm looking here to refine the idea into a strong composition. Ideally, I'm trying to compose an image that can be read by silhouette alone for maximum impact, so I'm working with just two or three mid to dark tones. I think I'd consider this stage the most important part of the painting process - these basic values are the 'bones' of the image and if it doesn't work here, no amount of work with colour or detail will rescue it.

Once I'm happy with the placement of values in the composition, I'll begin to define the significant forms a little, again working with just a couple of tones to keep things bold. I take the opportunity to tweak the position of the de

mon's hand here, so he appears to be looking more directly at it's contents. What is he holding? It needs to be something bright to draw the viewer's eye to that point, but I still haven't decided quite what it should be. I often leave trivial elements like this undecided as I find it helps to keep me interested in the picture as it progresses. Generally speaking though, this is bad practise and I'd recommend working things like this out thoroughly at this stage.

Underpainting

Next, I duplicate the painting onto a new layer which I then set to multiply, with the opacity dropped to around 70%. On the layer beneath, I begin to lay in some basic colours. I want the overall colour scheme to be quite cool, but with some warm tones in the demon's flesh to pull him out of the background so I begin by filling the base layer with a grey-green colour. On top of this, I work some lighter tones into the background with a large, soft brush to strenghten the character's silhouette - I'm adding

Rendering

With the basic colours established, I can start rendering. I find it easier to gadually build up the rendering from dark to light - this first pass will define the forms with mid-tones. Hopefully, the detail shots will help to show how I approach this stage.

I begin by colour picking from the area of the painting that I intend to work on (shoulder and upper arm in this case), then shift that colour to be slightly brighter to provide me with my mid-tone, maybe also shifting the hue to make it slightly warmer depending on where I'm working. I'll then use a soft brush to dab this

some blueish hues here to cool off the green base. Now it's time to work on the demon, so I roughly block in the character's form with a de-saturated purple to give a little contrast with the green/blue background before adding pink and orange flesh tones on top. Essentially, all I'm doing here is colouring in the value sketch - I'm not concerned with adding any extra definition to the painting just yet as you can see from the rough 'n' ready state of the base layer. When I'm done here, I flatten the image. That's the last time I'll use layers on this painting until the very last stages.

A note on layers:

As far as possible, I like to work on a single layer when I paint. That allows me to focus simply on the painting process, and not layer management - I always seem to end up painting on the wrong one if I have more than two layers, anyway! There's very little in the way I work that actually requires layers - if I make a mistake, I'll paint it out, or use the history palette to undo that stroke.

This process continues around the image, taking care to work within the overall pattern of values layed out at the beginning. For the most part, I'll remain at 25% magnification for this stage, though I'll zoom in to 50% here and there where I want to tighten things a little further.

An abstracted background such as this can be very useful in balancing out the composition. The flow of the picture up to this point is very much on the diagonal, from bottom left to mid right, through the angle of the rock and the placement of the demon's limbs (red arrows). I'm hoping to balance this by introducing a contrasting flow in the background (white arrows). If I've done it right, the flow should converge on the demon's open hand, reinforcing it as the principal focus in the image.

Background

Now it's time to throw in a background. I follow a very similar pattern here to the rendering process above - colour picking in the area that I intend to work in, shifting the colour to provide me with the hue I want, then dabbing with soft and texture brushes before finally working in around the character with hard-edged brushes. I choose quite a strong green here, as I like the way it contrasts with the red flesh, and introduce some blues around the bottom.

colour back onto the area I want to render up, working very gently to keep the opacity low. This lifts the general brightness in the area, without obscuring too much of the underpainting. Now I'll swap to a hard-edged brush and begin to slowly work up the forms - I approach this very much as if I was using pencil crayons, or scumbling with oils, gradually building up the colour with a series of light, repeated strokes. Using a texture on your brush (see A note on brushes) really helps here. In some places (veins and around the chin and eye), I may use a heavier stroke to introduce some hard edges, working back over them with soft strokes if necessary. I'm mostly adding lighter tones here, just occasionally colour picking a dark colour to add a hard edge here and there.

Details

Hmm. I can't put off tackling the contents of that hand any further. Several ideas have come to me while I've been working - a captive fantasy damsel, a kitten, the remains of a brave warrior. None of them seem 'right' somehow, so I decide to play safe and go for a skull, with a few other bones scattered on the rock.

I build up the skulls in the same way as the rest of the image - painting in dark base tones first, then layering lighter colours on top, until they're at the same mid-tone rendered level as everything else.

Final render

Time for a final render pass. I follow the same technique as before, dabbing with a soft brush and refining with a hard-edged brush, but with progressively lighter tones. I don't want to overload the painting with details, so I'm treading very lightly and trying to pick out only what's necessary - the shoulder, arm and fist, the demon's face and the skull in the hand. I know I still have highlights to come, so I'm not taking things too far. I also added a few simple pieces of jewellery to help add some interest in those 'secondary' areas not picked up in this render pass. Again, I'll jump to 50% zoom here and there for the more detailed work.

Highlights

Less is definately more when it comes to highlights. If the rendering has been handled carefully, all that should be necessary here is a few well placed strokes. Bright highlights will draw the eye, so it's particularly important not to spread them into areas where I don't want the viewer's eye to settle. I use a hard-edged brush to accent the same principal elements as before - the arm, face and skull, with a few carefully placed marks on the horns, hoof and jewellery to help communicate their hard, shiny surface properties. I add the highlights on a

seperate layer, so I can quickly swoop in with the eraser if I feel like I'm over-doing them.

I'm also balancing a few other areas of the image, adding some more bones and details to the rock, and working into the background with some brighter tones, trying to up the contrast around the demon's face and hand to hold the focus in that area.

I think I'm just about done at this point, so I leave the pic to rest over night. I can look at it again tomorrow with fresh eyes.

Fresh Eyes

Oh dear! Spending a few hours away from an image can really give you a different perspective - the skulls just aren't working now I look at it again. I said that leaving certain elements undecided was bad practise; I should listen to my own advice! At least digital paintings are easy to adjust, so I paint out the hand and rock and prepare to begin again.
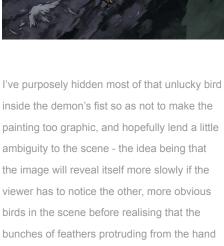
Reworking

I paint the rock back in, this time with a more neutral colour, as I think the blue I used before was over saturated. The previous rock had lost it's 'flow' (shown with the arrows earlier) as I added details, so I'm careful to try and re-emphasize that as I work. As elsewhere, I'm working from broad, soft strokes and refining with smaller, harder marks. The basic rock is painted against the dark base colour using just two tones.

Now I have to tackle the problem of what the demon is doing up there on the rock again. The skulls didn't work because they didn't add anything to the picture - I want something that will help communicate the character's evil personality and suggest some kind of narrative. Perhaps wanton destruction of something beautiful, delicate and innocent? The idea of a spiteful child pulling the wings off insects pops into my head, so I decide to have him perched up there catching birds and I paint the hand back in as a fist.
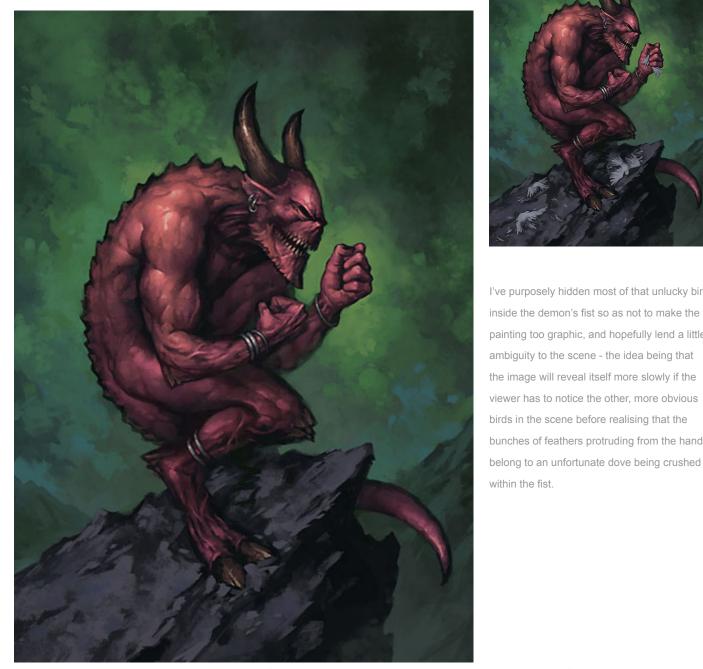
Birds

Here I'm painting in the birds - following the same technique of working from dark to light, first roughly defining the shape of the dead birds on the rock with a dark colour, then laying down a mid tone to add some form with a final round of highlights on top. I want them to stay quite loosely rendered so as not to pull focus from the demon's face and hand.

I've purposely hidden most of that unlucky bird inside the demon's fist so as not to make the painting too graphic, and hopefully lend a little ambiguity to the scene - the idea being that the image will reveal itself more slowly if the viewer has to notice the other, more obvious birds in the scene before realising that the bunches of feathers protruding from the hand belong to an unfortunate dove being crushed within the fist.

Final Touches

I really hated that glowing eye from the earlier version so I paint in a more conventional eye, choosing a yellow/green hue that will hopefully stand out from the blue/green in the background. I also feel that the background is a little unbalanced, so I use a soft brush to stroke across some of the textures around the edge of the painting to reduce their contrast which should draw the focus more towards the centre, and touch some of the blue from the horizon into the top of the picture in an attempt to balance the distribution of colours a little better.

Tidying Up

Almost done. I'm much happier with the birds than I was with the skulls, so I'm just working around the painting picking away at any areas that still bother me. I paint in the flying birds in the background, keeping them very simple, add a few highlights to the demon's fist and work into the rock a little more.

Conclusion and Critique

The painting feels complete, so I add my signature and give it a gentle pull with the levels tool in Photoshop to add a little extra punch. Done!

Now is a good time to look back and see if the image is a success. It's often interesting to compare the final product against those early value sketches to see what's changed - I think that comparison holds up well, with the composition and basic distribution of values remaining consistent throughout. I like the way the demon's flesh has ended up, though some more variation in hue across his body would be in improvement, in my opinion. The jewellery does it's job connecting the less well defined areas of the character's body, but looks a little like an afterthought - perhaps some more significant metalwork, maybe a belt or ornamentation on the horns would help to solve this? There are always lots of little niggles like this that I try to remember for the next time. The big one this time around is to make sure I have the contents of demon's hands worked out well before I start to paint..!

Tuitorial by :

Matt Dixon

ELEMENTS

by Richard Tilbury

DIGITAL PAINTING TUTORIAL SERIES

The 'elements' series is a guide to basic 2D Digital painting and can be followed in most software packages supporting paintbrushes and layers. Each month 2 or 3 professional artists will cover a specific theme or 'element', resulting in 2 or 3 different styles and techniques which can be viewed side by side. This month we begin with skies.

Subjects:

Painting a Sky
by Richard Tilbury

Intro:

This tutorial will attempt to outline a brief and straightforward approach to painting a simple sky with particular attention to the interaction between sunlight and cloud formations. It is aimed at beginners who are keen to find a technique to in which to tackle a very popular and universal subject and one that features in much digital painting

Step 1:

The first step is to fill in a base colour but due to the very changeable nature of the subject there is no particular hue that should be chosen here. In this case I have decided upon a reasonably neutral light blue grey (R 153, G 167, B180) and filled in the entire canvas.

Step 2:

Next stage is to decide upon the positions of the main clouds which in this example will enter the frame from the left edge. For this I will use a darker version of the background colour (R 126, G 140, B 157) and rough in the general shape on a seperate layer. It is a good idea at this stage to use loose and bold brush strokes and encourage happy accidents that may help suggest the forms and then

refine them further down the line. You can see in the image that I have varied the edges to add some interest and realism and this I did by using the eraser to cretae sharper accents and also the smudge tool to blur some sections. You can also use the eraser to gradually fade out some of the edges by setting it to around 25% opacity.

Step 3:
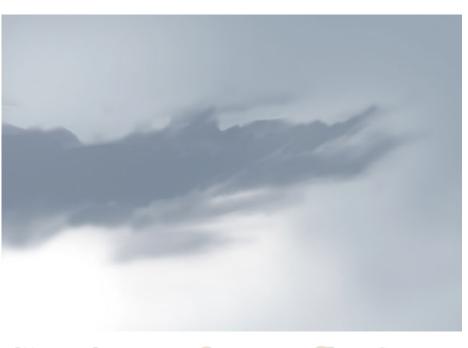
With this main cloud in place it is time to add the light source which will emanate from the bottom left corner and so on another new layer I selected a pure white and placed this layer under the previous one to ensure the light is behind the cloud. With a large airbrush around 400 pixels I simply blocked in the light in the bottom corner and faded it out slightly across the image.

Step 4:

With these two key components blocked in it is time to refine the main cloud by varying the tones to prevent it looking too flat. So using the eraser tool partially begin erasing areas to give it some form and also fade some of the edges as well as perhaps adding in lighter accents using a paler blue grey.

Step 5:

It is now time to begin adding in some of the detail that will make up the distant clouds that will run along the base of the canvas to the right as well as add in highlights around our main cloud where it thins out and catches the sunlight. Again on another layer I start to paint in the highlights using a pure white by first outlining the top edge of the cloud with some thinner wisps extending from the right edge. Lastly I suggested a formation of clouds in the distance by just painting in the top edges which have caught the light using a small airbrush around 3 - 5 pixels.
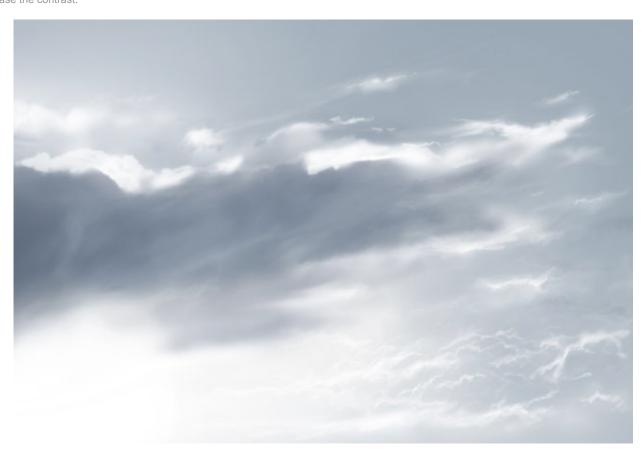
Step 6:

In order to add a little more drama and volume to the cloud I added some darker tones on a seperate layer which was set to Multiply but made sure to focus these only on the far left where the sunlight is at its brightest and so increase the contrast.
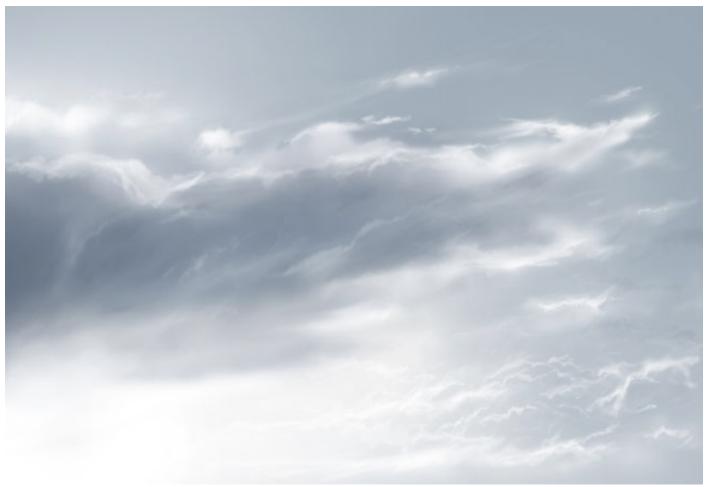
Step 7:

With this layer done it is just a question of refining what we have already done by either adding one or two final layers or manipulating the ones already in place. For the purposes of this tutorial I worked on the existing ones and painted in some finer lines along the top of the cloud to give it some definition and highlights. I also painted in some traces of detail across the middle of the cloud to give it some form as well as some small smudged clouds around it. Here is the finished article done in about an hour and a half.

Conclusion:

It is a good rule of thumb to paint in rough
shapes and then use the Gaussian blur filter
to soften the shapes and then using a small
airbrush simply add in a few sharper lines to
create the forms. It is not often necessary to
add an equal amount of detail across the entire
painting because the brain does a very good
job of filling in where the eye is only offered a
suggestion of something.

Tutorial by :

Richard Tilbury

by AquaSixio

ELEMENTS

DIGITAL PAINTING TUTORIAL SERIES

The 'elements' series is a guide to basic 2D Digital painting and can be followed in most software packages supporting paintbrushes and layers. Each month 2 or 3 professional artists will cover a specific theme or 'element', resulting in 2 or 3 different styles and techniques which can be viewed side by side. This month we begin with skies.

SUBJECTS:

'You have your head in my Cloud.'

by Aquasixio

How can i start ?

First, I had to choose two complementary colours. I tried the orange / light-purple combo. Then I choose a basic brush (size: 100 opacity: 100 flow: 20) and I paint in rough shapes.

I drew the same cloud forms as I did when I was a small child.

Use the form of the brush to help you (size: 50 opacity: 100 flow: 20).

Reduce the opacity to add a misty effect (size: 50 opacity: 50 flow: 20).

The light outline
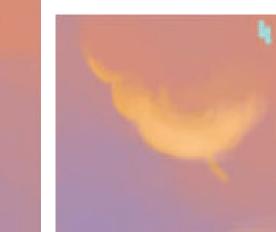
I added A third colour (don't ask me why lol)
and used the same process as before except
for one thing: -THE LIGHT OUTLINE-

I picked the light-orange from the previous
cloud and drew the cloud's form.
(size: 6 opacity: 75 flow: 20)
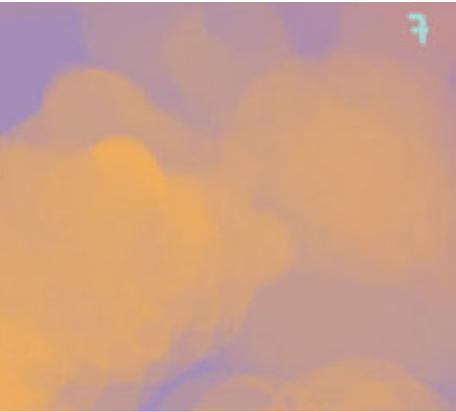
What about
the bottom part ?

Here, I tried to unify the two parts of the drawing.
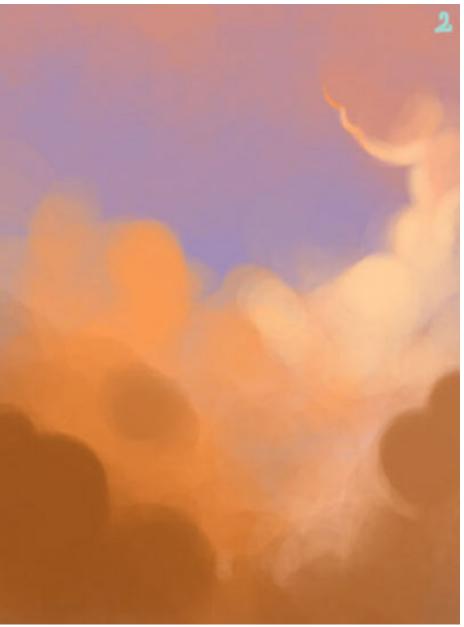
Here I added a dark orange.

Then i drew a rough cloud form.

I changed the hue (-9).

It's not Precise !

Now is an important phase:

- WORK AND CLEAN -

I tried to change all the crude shapes into precise cloud forms (using the same brushs as the previous clouds).

Recapitulatory for the brushs

Remember there are no strict rules here

because there no magic formula haha...)

Canvas's size 480*640 pixels and one layer

used.

- For crude cloud's form:

Size 100 opacity 100 flow 20

- For the cloud details:

Size 30-60 opacity 100 flow 15-25
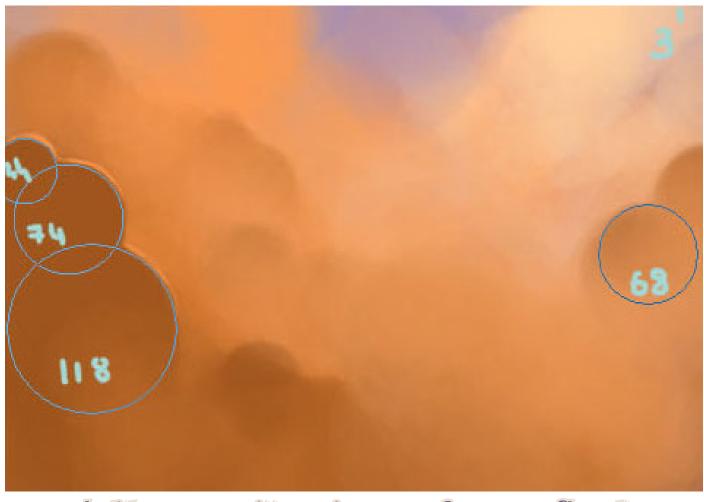
- For the mist:

Size 100 opacity 30-50 flow 15-25

- For the light's outline

Size 3-6 opacity 60-100 flow 20-35

You can bulid the cloud structures using the

form of the brush, it easier.
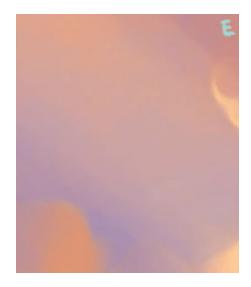
The second part

The heaven thing... bah it's the continuation of the drawing. You will see what I draw when I haven't any inspiration lol. So I added another light effect with the basic brush (size: 150 opacity: 20 flow: 10).
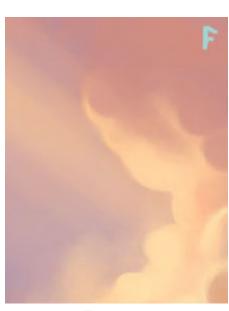
The composition

Hehe now it's time for the composition. What's the composition ? It is the structuring of how people see your work and read your picture. If you don't consider the perspective, the frame or the the colours then the

render wom't be as interesting as your work. I am sure my composition is not perfect but I tried my best.
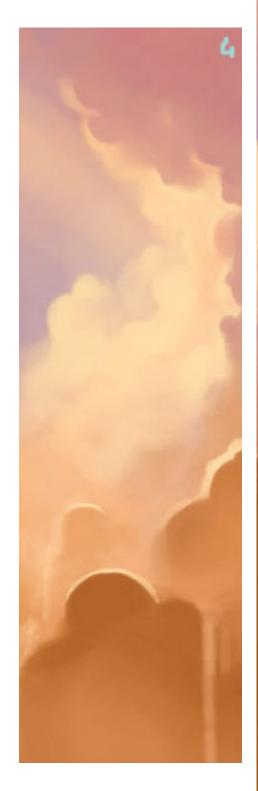
Canvas's size revolution

Here you can see the new composition of the drawing as I was not satisfied with the previous version. I decided to change the canvas size 400*800 as the waterfall might work better... Why did I added the green I can't explain, the fact this drawing is very light could be a possible explanation. I painted the green as mist, but this time it was the waterfall's mist.
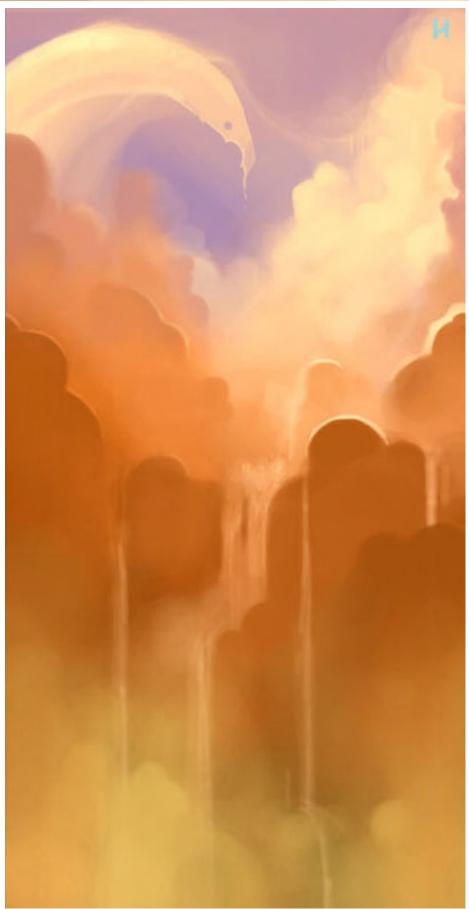
Finished Artwork

I changed the brightness, but I think the composition is still unresolved.

I tried another composition idea below.

You can see the process I use when starting a new drawing in photoshop 7 and you could now possibly try to do your own cloud drawing.

by Linda Tso

ELEMENTS

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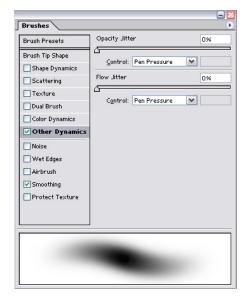
SUBJECTS:

Step 1:

Take a large soft edged brush to block in the most basic colours. I have used a very dark, saturated blue, a lighter medium blue as the base colours of the clouds, and a medium purple to suggest the sky.

Step 2:

Choose a bright, saturated red, with mode set to Hard Light and brush over the bottom of the picture, then use bright orange and yellow and brush over the same area a few times. This will create a nice sunset like gradient.

Step 3:

Using custom brushes, and mainly picking some colours from the image, block in the main shapes of the clouds/sky. I have decided on the upper left corner to have some bright sky showing through with a large supercell-type cloud occupying the rest of the space. The custom brushes add some interesting irregular edges and textures at this beginning stage.
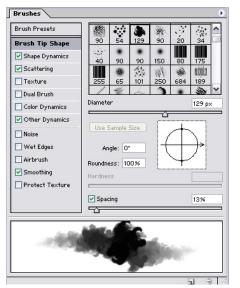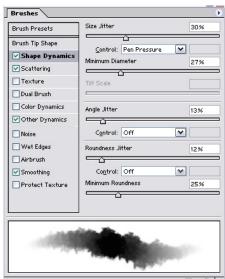
Step 4:

Using more strokes of various custom brushes to paint in the back lit cloudy sky in the upper left. The brush sizes are still quite large here.

Examples of custom brushes and their settings.

Step 5:

Use smaller brush sizes to start refining the cloudy sky. I alternate between simple painting with the colours chosen, or colour-picked off the image, and a soft edged brush set on Soft Light with a medium saturated blue over the areas where the sky colour shines through.

Step 6:

This step is mainly using the smudge tool to drag out some of the textures from the custom brushes, which have become just a bit too much for clouds. I mainly use the smudge tool with the spacing not checked, which is great for smooth blending of colours without that "Photoshop" look, although for this I also wanted to have that pulled colours look so sometimes I leave the spacing checked.

Step 7:

Adding more details, this time using mostly small soft edged brushes, and start working on the large supercell.

Step 8:

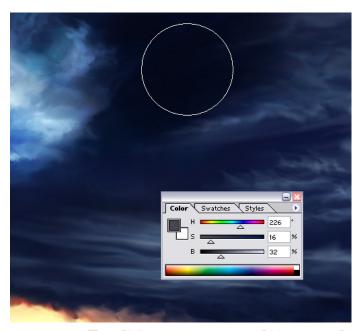More details with a small soft edged brush, and blending and pulling colours with the smudge tool.

Step 9:

The last step is really just checking the overall image, I decided it would be good to adjust the lighting, and this can be done quite easily with a large soft edged brush. Chose more saturated colours with similar hues and mode set on Overlay/Soft Light/Hard Light. If you want to lighten an area, make sure the value of the colour is more than 50%, and vice versa if you want to darken an area. These blend modes are very useful for making things "glow". I also blend out more of the too-recognizable texture from the custom brushes. If this were to be a complete painting, I would probably spend a lot more time to add details to the supercell, which could really enhance the sense of scale.

Using a soft edged brush set on Overlay or Soft Light/Hard Light blend modes to lighten or darken large areas. These blend modes are usually better than say Screen or Multiply since they also tend to saturate the colours a bit more.

In order to bind the image together and finish it we need to bounce some of the orange light along the bottom left edge across the clouds and unify the colour scheme slightly. Using Select - Colour range pick an area of the dark blue stormcloud and then feather the selection somewhere between 30 and 50. With this done go to Image - Adjustments - Colour Balance and add some warmer tones by moving the sliders towards the red and yellow. Then select an area of the bright orange using the colour picker and then on a new layer set to Overlay start painting in some light above the dark cloud in the upper left and also highlight some of the lighter clouds in the right of the picture in front of the main cloud formation. This will help these lighter clouds reflect the light source at the bottom of the picture and bring it together more. If you like you could also select the light area in the upper left of the painting using the lasso tool and after feathering the selection, adjust the colour balance in a similar fashion to the large cloud.
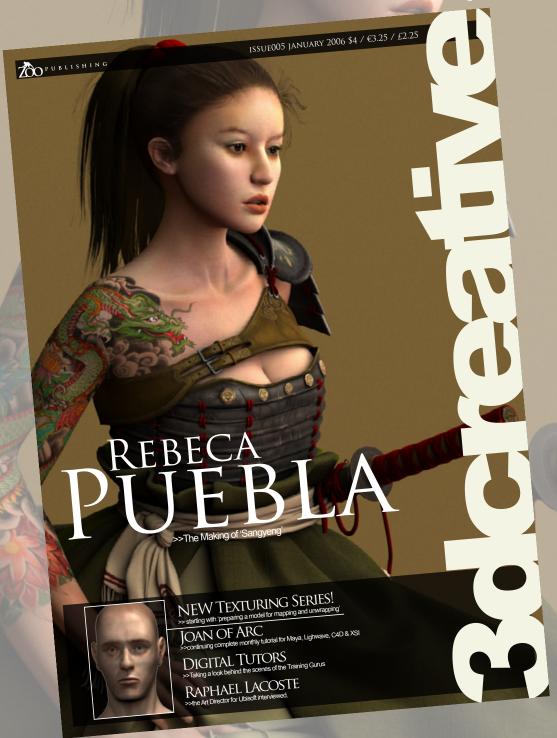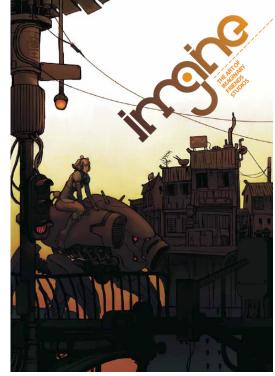
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