

2d artist

concept art, digital & matte painting

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Tim Warnock

Toronto Based 'Intelligent Creatures' own matte painter and feature film concept artist

TUTORIALS

The Corridor Concept part 2
Elements digital Painting Series part 2 'Trees'
Photoshop Curves Tutorial
The Making of: 'My World' by Noah,
Samurai by Abuze,
Equilibrium by Henning Ludvigsen
& Fresh Meat by Andreas Rocha'

INTERVIEWS

Tim Warnock
Laith Bahrani (JCB Song)
Martin Abel

ARTICLE

Dimitri Delacovias on 2D Digital Matte Painting

REVIEWS

Christian Scheurers unique 'Entropia' book
plus win a signed copy in this months competition

GALLERIES

Some of the best 2d digital
artworks around today

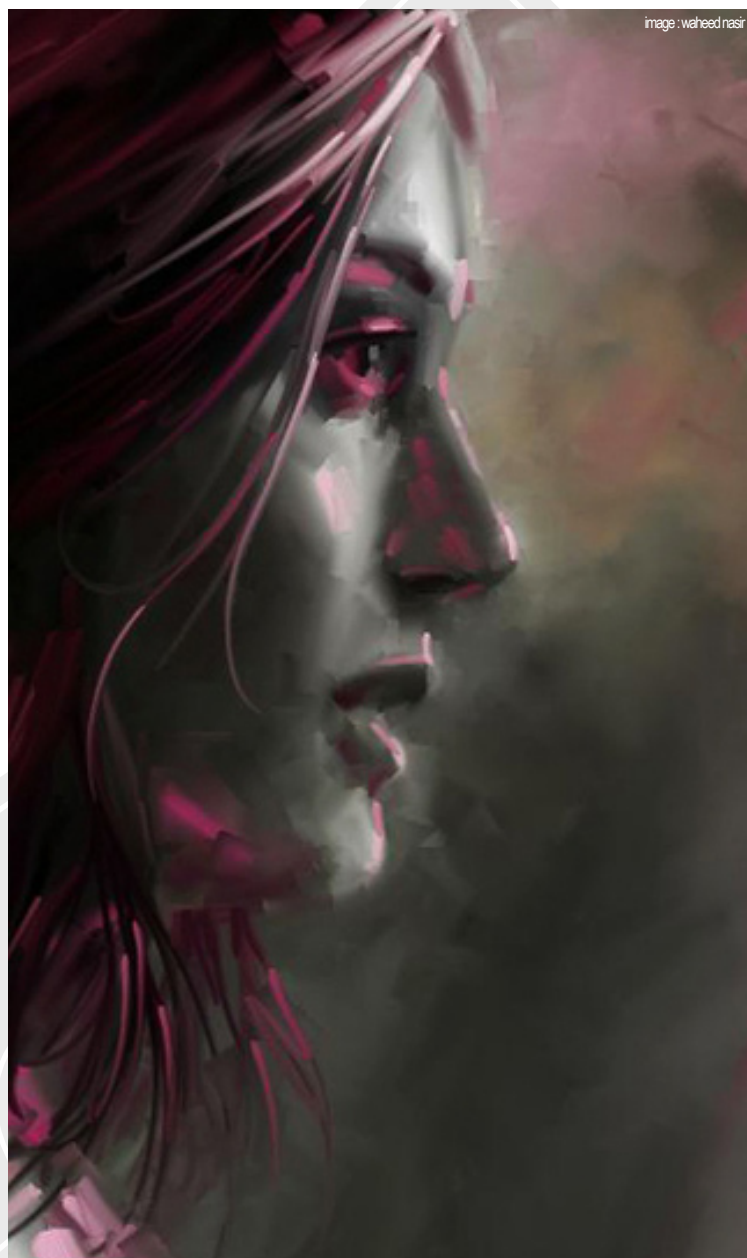


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Welcome

The coming of our second issue brings some great news, the magazine launch was very successful bringing in steady flow of interest throughout January, forums around the net picked up this new magazine with some fantastic comments and feedback boosting the Zoo Publishing team ever forward. Here are a small collection of some comments :-

"I've been buying the full version of the 3D artist magazine (even though I'm 2D). I bought the full version of the 2D magazine the other day, and it is well worth the money you pay. The content is stunning. Anyway, just thought I should let you know" - gfxartist User

"4 bucks is pretty darn cheap!! Talk about bang for the buck. Lots of cool stuff in there. pretty good tutorials as well." - CGTalk User

"This is a great magazine and its a bargain at only \$4USD. Its full of the sort of articles I spend a great deal of time searching the internet for. I'm definitely going to buy this on a monthly basis because its exactly what I need" - gfxartist User

"I gave the 2DArtist "lite" a glancing over, and it definitely looks very well put together. I hope I can sit down and give it a more thorough reading over. I'll hold off on buying a copy until

the magazine goes to print. My eyes can only take some much screentime." - gfxartist User
Reply from Editor - See our survey on page 4, seriously considering going into print as an option as well as pdf download

Yep, same old story , can't buy because Paypal don't accept pays from Romania.... hate that. - CGTalk User

Reply from Editor -This is annoying we know, there are many countries Paypal doesn't support, if you reside in one and want to buy a copy please email into support@zoopublishing.com and we will give you a regular shop/credit card solution.

This month

we have crammed so much quality content in for you, it wasn't quite so much of a mad rush here at Zoo's studio as last month, so we have had more time produce (what we regard as) an amazing issue, with lots features, tutorials and interviews from well known industry talent, upcoming students, dedicated freelancers and inspired hobbyists.

Artist Interviews

Cover featured Tim Warnock, details his work as a matte/concept artist in one of Montréal's leading studios 'Intelligent Creatures'. Laith Bahrani, gives us a hilarious overview of his life and works including the music video for No.1 hit 'JCB Song' and Martin Abel tells us about his freelancing ways whilst showing off some of his pin up girls! All in all, not a bad selection!

Articles

We are very pleased to have Double Negative Studio artist Dimitri Delacovias detailing how 2D Digital Mattes are progressing and being used in the projects taken on by this leading London studio. We also take a look at new masking Photoshop plug-in 'Fluid Mask'.

Tutorials and Making Of's

Where to begin!? 9 tutorials this month, a whopping 42 pages created by very talented digital artists who want to share their secrets with the community, from project overviews to in-depth 'step by steps' there is more than enough here to keep you going until our next March Issue!

Reviews

We review Christian Scheurer's 'Entropia' A Collection of Unusually Rare Stamps is a uniquely crafted storybook for all ages. "Readers are taken on an unforgettable journey to the fantastic world of, with it's unique history, locations and inhabitants."

Extras!!

Competitions and galleries :- Win signed 'Entropia' books with personalized dedications and illustrations from Christian Scheurer and view this month's dedicated gallery pages, with works from many artists. If you would like to submit to the gallery for future issues please see here www.2dartistmag.com/gallery

About us

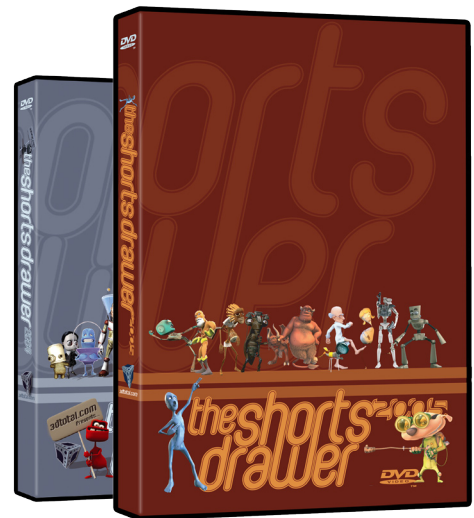
Zoo Publishing is a new company comprising of a small team here in the Midlands UK. 2DArtist is our second magazine project following the successful 3DCreative (www.3dcreativemag.com). We are very grateful for the support of the following CG sites which have help promote and spread the word about our 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, DAZ3D, 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.

Your Views!

Enter the Survey

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*for your chance to win both
short drawer dvd's*

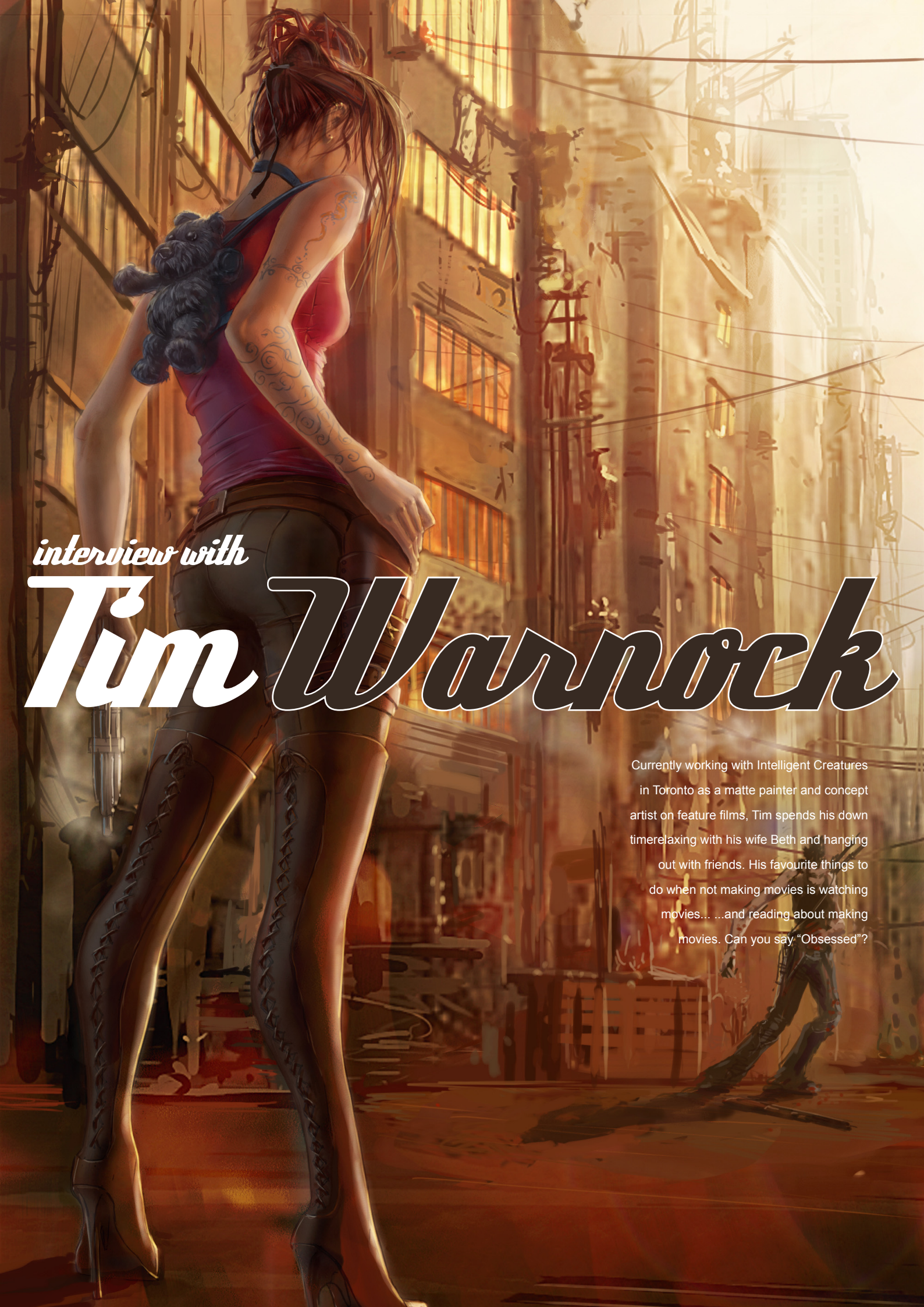


3DCreative Magazine is steadily growing each month and gaining support from more and more online communities. We are working on improving layouts and content every month, so please stay with us and we will endeavour to make your reading and viewing experience more interesting and inspirational with every issue!

To help us improve the magazine we need your feedback! To continue improving and giving you the content you want we need you to help us by answering a few questions, please give this a couple of minutes of your time, it's quick and easy to fill in and we are even dangling a couple of 'out of the hat' prizes in front of your noses to tempt even the busiest artists!



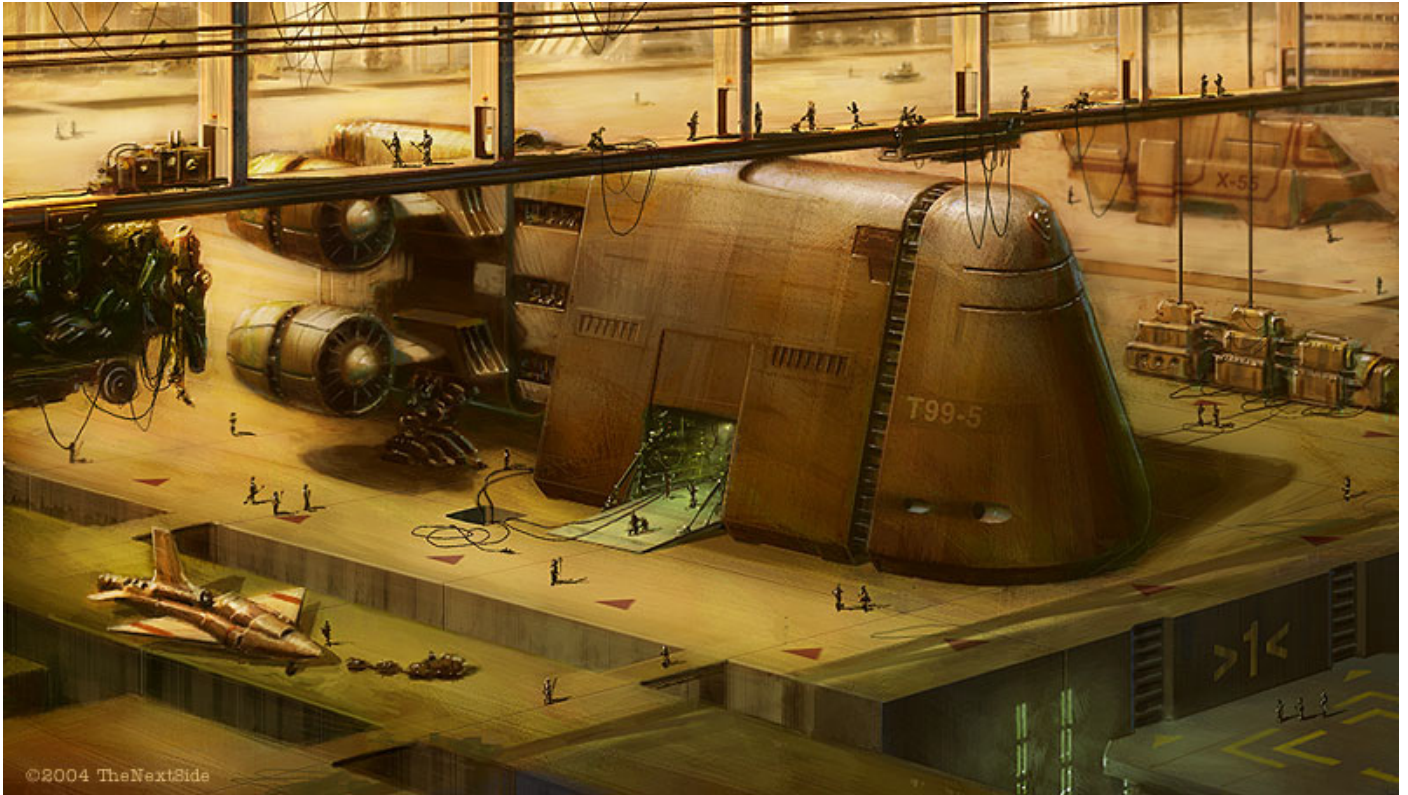
To fill out the survey please use this link :
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=802941752896>



interview with

Tim Warnock

Currently working with Intelligent Creatures in Toronto as a matte painter and concept artist on feature films, Tim spends his down timerelaxing with his wife Beth and hanging out with friends. His favourite things to do when not making movies is watching movies....and reading about making movies. Can you say "Obsessed"?



Tim Warnock

Profile

Age : 31 going on 32

Profession : Matte Painter / Concept Artist

E-mail : tim@thenextside.com

Homepage : www.thenextside.com



Hi Tim, thanks for taking the time out to talk to us, can you begin by giving us a little introduction to yourself?

Hi, well I live and work in Toronto and I am a matte/concept artist and I have just started working for a company called 'Intelligent Creatures' www.intelligentcreatures.com who have recently wrapped up work on 'Mr and Mrs Smith' and 'The Fountain'. Currently in production is 'The Sentinel' starring Michael Douglas and Kiefer Sutherland, 'Stranger Than Fiction' starring Will Ferrell, 'Babel' starring Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett, 'Silent Hill' starring Radha Mitchell and Laurie Holden, and 'The Number 23' starring Jim Carrey. So we are very busy and very fortunate to be working on so many excellent films. I've been involved on 4 out of 5 of them and am really enjoying the diversity of the projects.

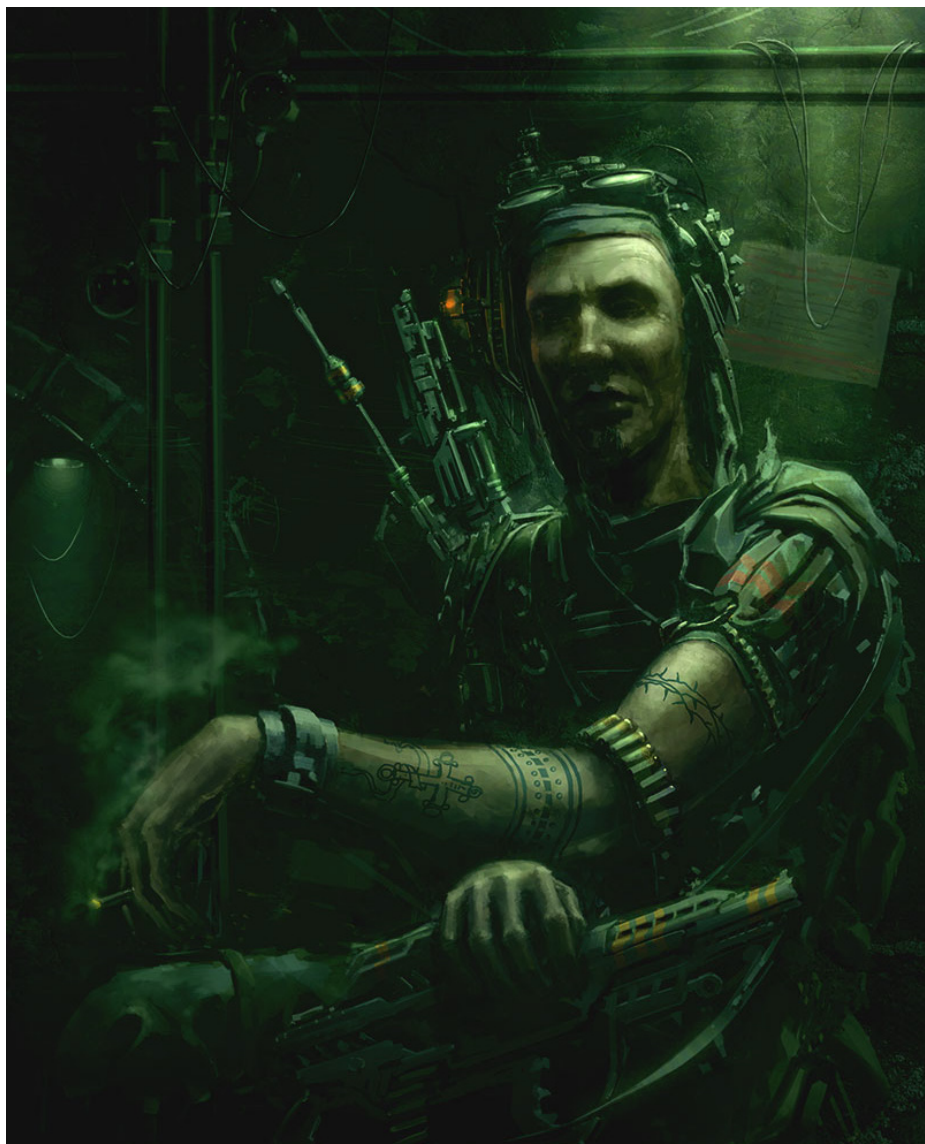


Sounds great, before this have you worked on projects for different sectors of the industry such as games?

Yes before this I worked for another visual effects company and before that I spent a year at a mobile game studio. And what seems like a whole lifetime ago I worked as a graphic designer and illustrator. And if you go way back I was a chicken cook at a certain fried chicken restaurant. I pray that I never need to do it again!

Can you tell us how you started out, did you go to art college?

Yes I started out doing graphic design, I went to St. Lawrence college in Cornwall Ontario and whilst I was there I became more interested in illustration rather than graphic design. After this I moved to Montreal and went to Dawson college to follow the illustration programme there. When I got out of college my heart was leading me towards being an illustrator but I found it difficult to find a full time job. At this time I thought I would like to be a book illustrator but that's something that you pretty much have to do freelance and it's





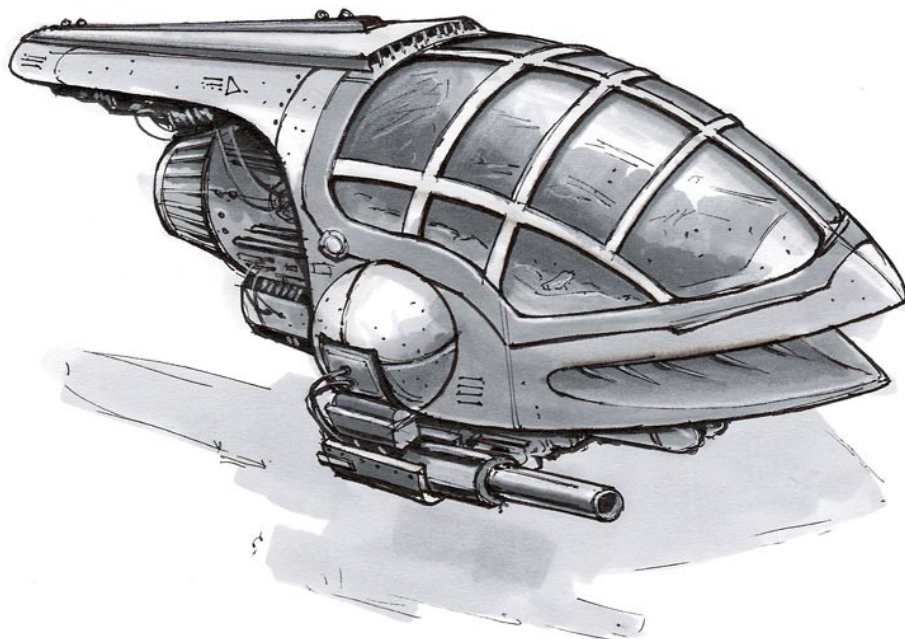
Interview

Well times certainly have changed for the young student artist's today.

Yes It's amazing how the industry has transformed, anyone can now put their artwork online for free and if it is good you will get much more exposure than one of those \$1200 page book adverts generated.

So how did your career lead you into matte painting?

Well as a kid I didn't have books such as 'The Art of Star Wars' and I wasn't really aware of very much of this side of the industry. I thought it was cool but back then but I kind of put it on the same level as being a rock star, more of a dream than a realistic career aspirations. In



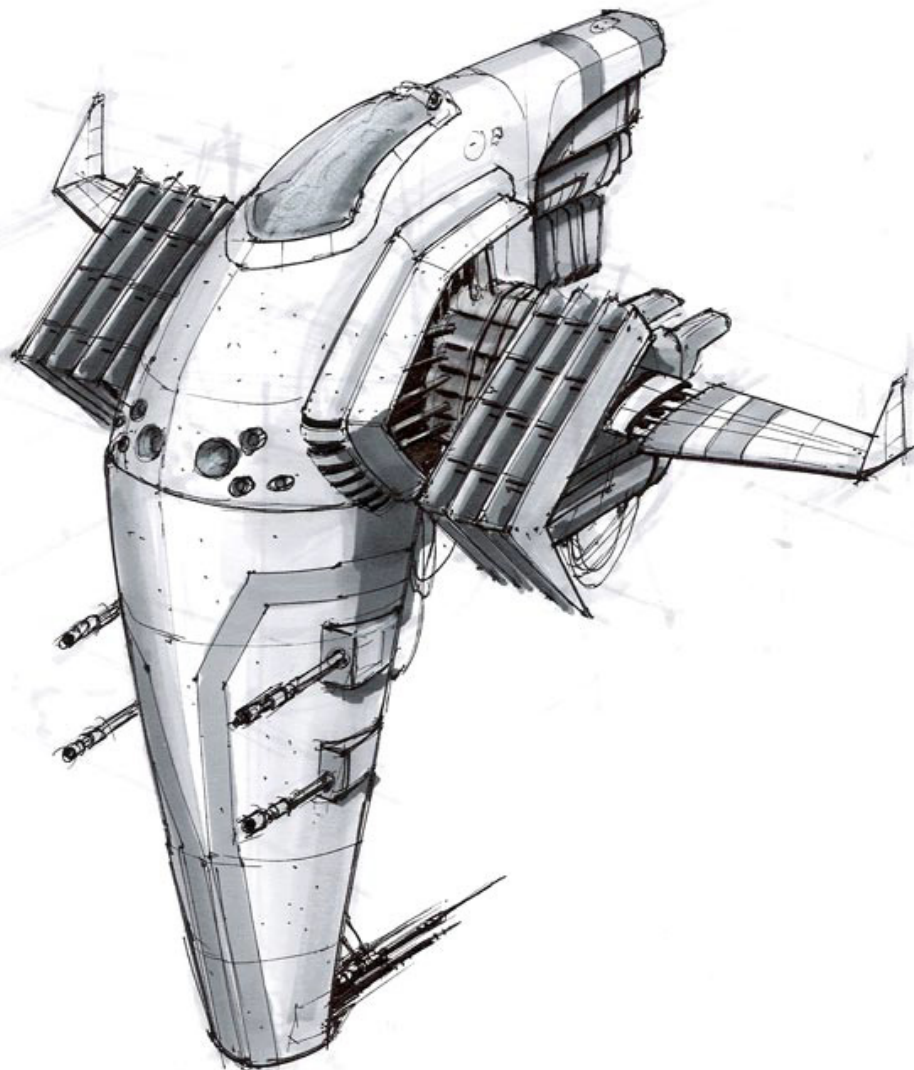
a tough market to break into straight out of school.

Why is that? Is it because there are so many others trying to do it?

No it's not that there are so many others trying to do it, it just takes a while for you to build up a name for yourself and unless you have some savings it's very hard at first. I went through a couple of years that were pretty 'lean' times, so I ended up relying more on graphic design jobs in studios rather than illustration work. It was a small market in Montreal at the time and as I didn't speak French, it was an even smaller market.

So it sounds like trying to establish contacts is one of the main starting out problems?

Yes, at that time the internet was just starting to become mainstream so there were not sites like CGChannel, mattepainting.org etc so this easy way of getting noticed did not exist so we had to send out mail shots and advertise ourselves in creative source books which was really expensive.





Interview

college I received an education in traditional painting and towards the end of my education I was introduced to illustrator and Photoshop. My teachers and others around me were starting to paint digitally but the results were less than inspiring. The general feeling seemed to be, "it isn't really there yet" and in some cases there was almost some snobbery regarding digital painting that might make you think that you shouldn't even be looking at it as a medium as you might be compromising your artistic integrity! This was back then but about 4 years ago I moved to a design firm in Oakville. The creative director there, Dan Wheaton, who is a good buddy of mine now said, "you should give digital painting a try" and I replied, "well I don't think it is there yet". He started to show me some stuff and introduced me to work from guys such as Craig Mullins and Ryan Church and I was completely blown away and at the time just couldn't believe what I was seeing was painted digitally.

So has the recent part of your career since this time been a steep learning curve?

Well I didn't find the transition to painting digitally that difficult since I was already fairly



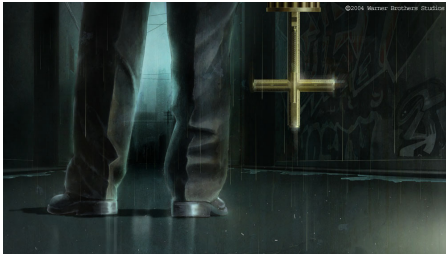
experienced with Photoshop as an image editing tool. One of the main things I noticed was that I could paint a lot better and faster because all of the inhibitions of making mistakes were completely removed so really I came a long way in a short time. I think the steeper learning curve has been on the 3D

side of things and trying to get my head around all the technical aspects of visual effects.

So back to the present day, you say your current job is 100% matte painting?

Yes that's my primary role. I also do concept work in terms of concepts for matte or





sometimes they are called "Style Frames".

Ok I see, for our readers who are starting out can you give a quick explanation of the difference between concept and matte painting?

A matte painting is typically a background



element that takes the place of or extends a set or location. Essentially you are creating paintings of what is either too expensive to build or find in the real world. They can be a simple static background or a very complex shot that involves camera moves that simulate changes in perspective. On the concept side of things I spend a fair bit of my time doing "Style Frames" which are basically establishing the look of the shot. It becomes the guide for myself and the other artist to follow when we produce the shot. I really enjoy this aspect of the job because it gives me the opportunity to really be creative and try new things.

You mention that you seem to be create mattes for more moving shots these days, how do you go about this? Is a series 2D layers placed further away from the camera each time?

Well it depends on the shot and just what is required, if the camera is just moving only slightly and not really turning or rotating you can get away with it this way by creating '2d cards'. These are 2d layers that create a parallax effect with the cards closer to the camera moving more quickly, but these only really work with smaller camera moves and with items that are in the distance. If you start



Interview

to do anything like a dramatic push-in or have the camera moving enough you start to see a change in perspective then the way you can tackle this is through a method called 2.5D (two and a half D). You create the 3D geometry then project your 2D painting on to it. This can work for slight changes in perspective but if the camera movement becomes too dramatic then maybe you have to start to look at a full 3D solution or a combination of all three approaches. For "Babel" we are doing a full CG shot of Japan that involves a very long camera move. The shot starts in tight on a building and then pulls back through the city. So you're seeing roof tops and sky scrapers moving past the camera. It will probably require a mix of 2D, 2.5D and possibly 3D solutions to do it effectively.

So when this happens is the job passed to another artist altogether?

It is always the effort of a number of artists to pull off shots like this. Currently we are doing a shot for Silent Hill that requires several 3D artists both modellers and animators, composers and texture artists. I have been involved both on the concept side of things as well as doing a lot of the texture painting. Lots of blood and rust!

That's all very interesting Tim, I'm sure our readers will totally agree. Moving away from your employment do you still get to produce any personal work?

Less and less! I will try to stay fresh by doing some character work if I've been doing a lot of environment stuff at work and visa versa. I also really enjoy drawing vehicles and other tech. There just isn't enough hours in the day to do all that I would like to.

Do you find it easy to always stay motivated?
er.....I get tired <laughs> but I find things often inspire me and I have enough peers in the



industry to keep some healthy competition going and I guess there's always a nagging, 'well if you're resting you're falling behind' but I try to keep a healthy lifestyle too.

What sort of things do you like to do away from the monitor?

I play guitar, I watch a lot of movies, which is back to the screen I guess....y'know I have

to be careful not to let my career become all consuming. I try to exercise regularly, not so much in the winter but in the summer I like to go mountain biking.

Yes I hear you guys have got the terrain and weather for mountain sports, a lot better than what we have here in the UK, damp and flat kinda sums up what we have at the moment!



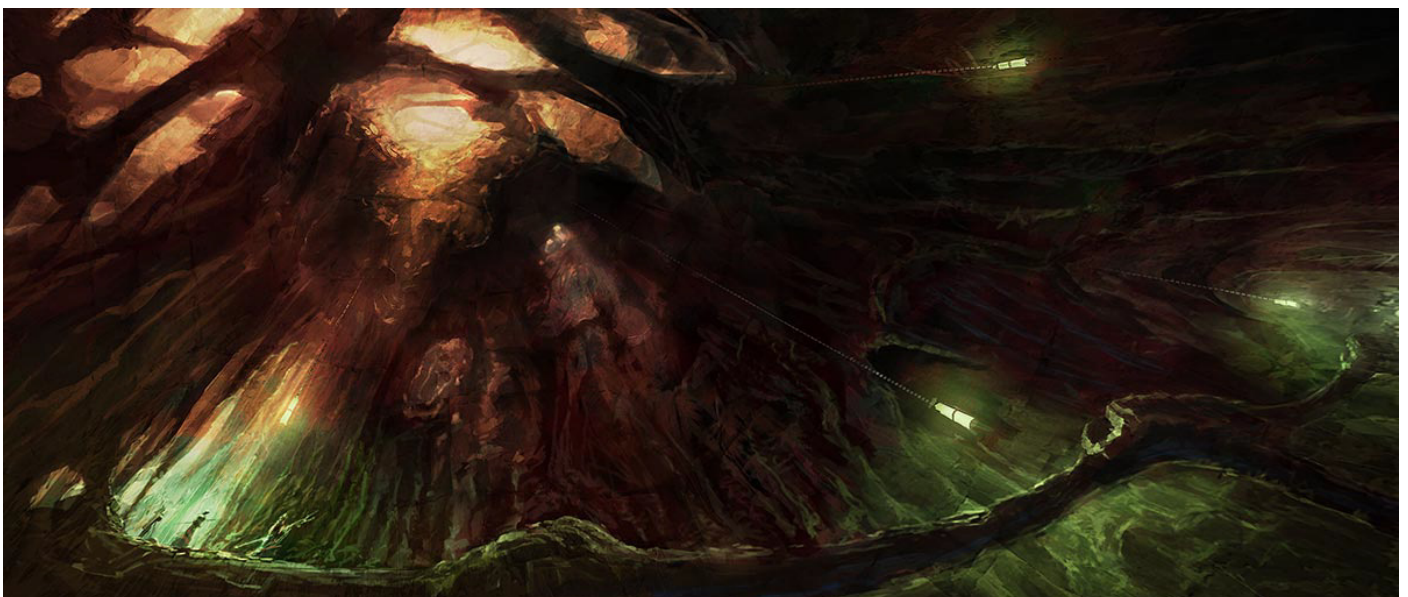
Well right now I think I would take damp and flat over freezing cold and white!

Well it's been great chatting with you Tim, to round off can you give a bit of advice for our student readers?

Yeah, there's so much out there for you to educate yourself, for me one of the greatest things was the Gnomon training DVDs. They have a couple of matte painting ones and lots of concept titles and a ton of 3d stuff; you could get away with not going to college at all! I wouldn't recommend that because college offers such great opportunities, meeting other people etc. but I'm just saying its definitely an amazing supplement for going to school. Even before college you see high school kids now posting on these forums and getting training DVDs and I don't know if they realize how much of a leg up they are actually getting.

Yeah it's such a great early start

Oh they're getting a good 10 years on me! Another very important contributing factor to accelerating my career has been posting in online communities as there are so many opportunities to connect with professionals and one I go to a lot is www.mattepainting.org. Dylan Cole, Chris Stoski and Alp Altiner



Interview

who are top guys in the industry posts here. So you can post your work on here and they may comment on it which is just something you would never have had the chance to do years ago. I am a really strong believer in the community aspect of the industry and it really helps everyone improve. The flip side of this is you have to be prepared to share you work and tips too and some people may want to work more in isolation and keeps things to themselves but I have learned so much from others I would be a complete hypocrite not to share in the same way.

So being very open with your work and skills like others has ultimately benefited you a great deal.

Absolutely!

Many thanks Tim its been fantastic talking with you, thank you very much for your time.

Great talking with you too.

Interview by :

Tom Greenway

The online communities Tim mentions can be found here

www.cgchannel.com

www.cgtalk.com

www.mattepainting.org

www.conceptart.org

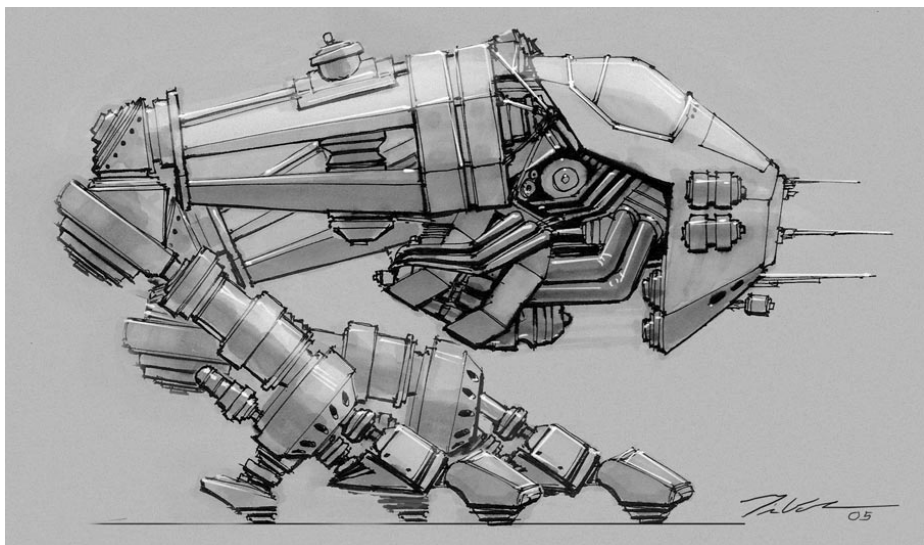
www.threeddy.com

Training DVDs

www.gnomon.com

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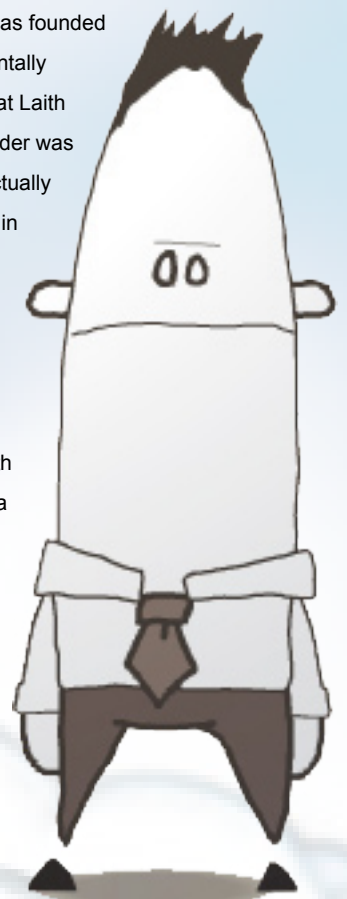
www.3dtotal.com/tutorials



Laith Bahrani

>> Monkeehub was founded in 1979, coincidentally the same year that Laith Bahrani, the founder was found. He was actually found...curled up in a pencil case, sucking on a rubber...
...Many years of drawing and therapy later, Laith has emerged as a Hercules-esque freelancer; ready to battle with the most ferocious creative projects through the Monkeehub brand...>>

Laith Bahrani





Laith Bahrani

I'm 26 years old and I am an alcoholic.

I'm also an animator. As well as animation I draw pretty pictures and create websites that take ages to load, then don't load at all because the server starts sulking. I work under the self-created brand of Monkeehub; a brand which started as the name for my portfolio site and is now essentially my company/wife. This and more I do all on my own from my flat in Reading, England...totally on my own.....so.....very...alone.

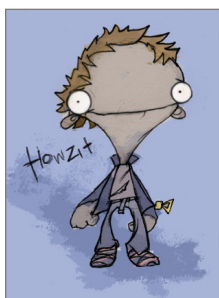
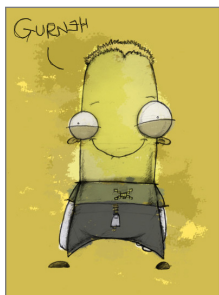
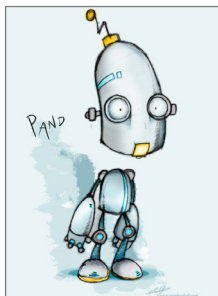
A bit about your history, when did it all start for you and did you go to art college or are you self taught?

It all started from the beginning when I began to draw before I could walk. Drawing occupied most of my childhood and I developed a real passion for cartoons, characters and anything to do with animation. I was weaned on old Warner Brothers and Disney cartoons and would watch them enthralled for hours then scamper up to my room and disappear into a frenzy of doodling and thumb-sucking. It was also during my childhood that I made the progression from scribbling on wallpaper with crayons to scribbling on computers with a mouse. Back in 1805 the Commodore

Amiga personal computer came out, and I was fortunate enough to be given one by Santa. The Amiga came packaged with a paint program called 'Deluxe Paint' that allowed drawing and the creation of rudimentary animation. I was immediately hooked and began trying to recreate on the screen what I could do on paper. Despite being left-handed with a pencil I strangely learnt to draw on the

computer with my right-hand. This makes me digitally-ambidextrous which I believe qualifies as a super-power. I'm actually getting a cape made. Despite my passion for animation and superhero abilities I never undertook any education in the field and thus have never had any form of training or teaching. I did attempt to gain a place on an animation course for my degree, but it required a

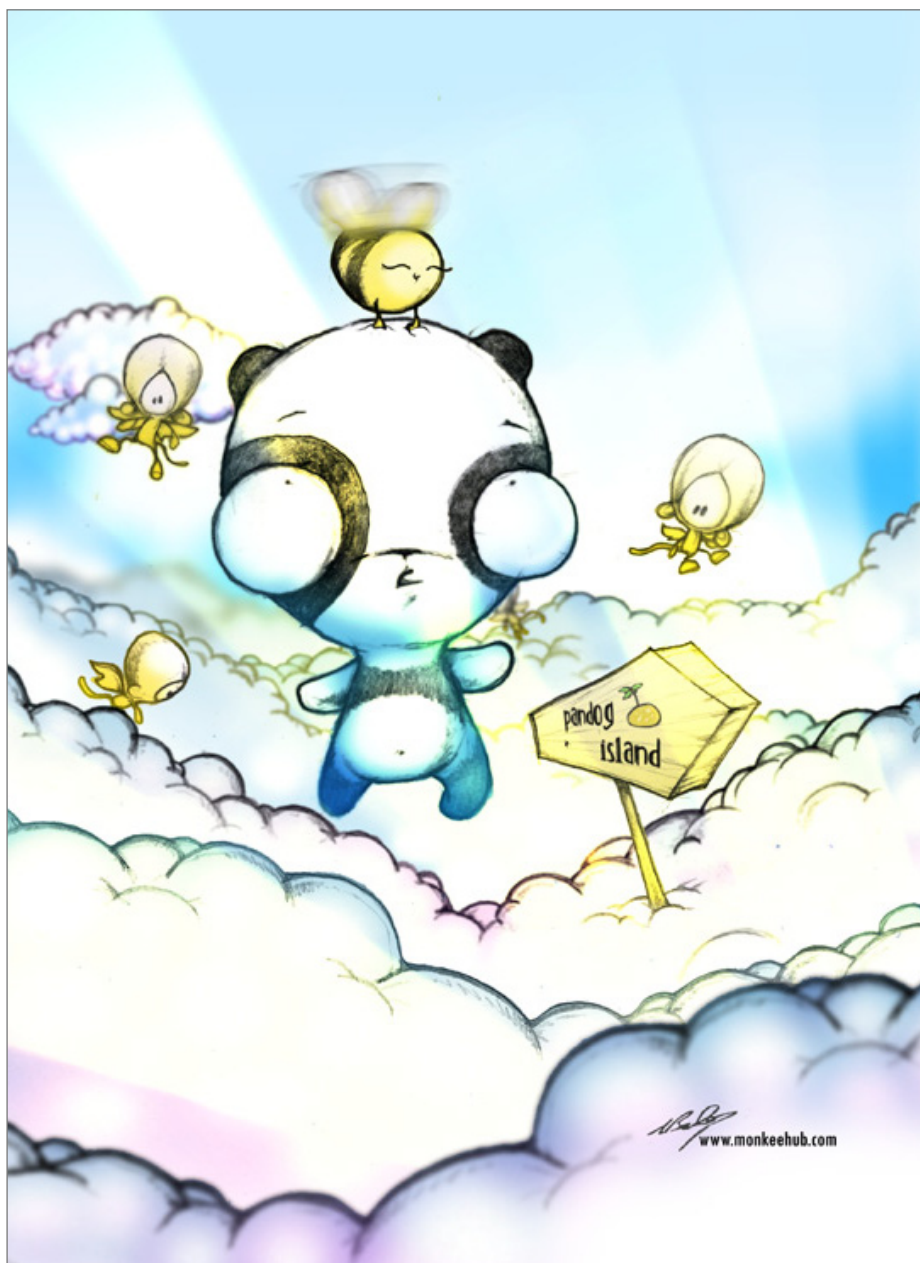


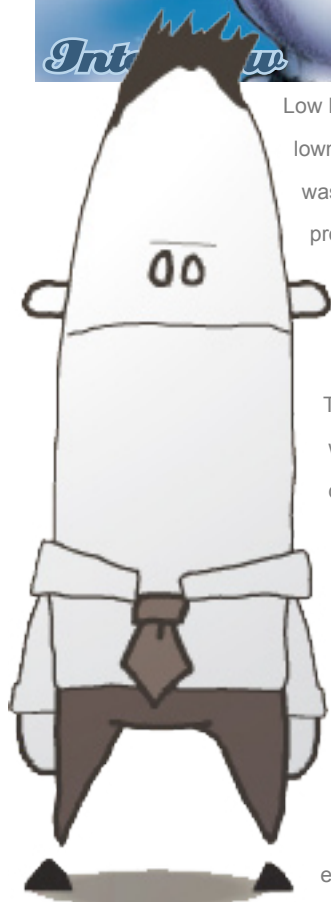


B-grade in A-level maths and I failed. A lot. In fact I got a U (ungraded). The irony was that I finished the paper in half an hour and spent the remaining 2 hours of the exam working out my mark, concluding that I would pass by a few points. As a result of this numerical inadequacy I ended up on a multimedia degree course at Plymouth University. During the course however I became introduced to a lot of the software I use in my work now such as: Photoshop, Flash, After Effects and Notepad. Despite the fact the multimedia degree wasn't expressly concerned with animation I found myself constantly trying to steer the software and assignments towards this area. I also found myself constantly waking up with a road sign and/or traffic cone and a vague recollection of police sirens. After graduating and then missing my graduation I got my first job as a web monk creating site designs, flash menus and site graphics. I was hired on the strength of my portfolio (the first version

of Monkeehub.com) and through exposure gained by some viral flash animations I had created. The best thing about this job was that I worked from home and never actually met my bosses. They ran the company from up Nottingham whilst I sat in Surrey, in my pants, chain-smoking and working out of a cupboard. I finally got to meet my employers one year later when I went to see them and quit. It was a great first job and a really helpful, albeit unconventional, learning ground to start in the world of work. From there I moved to a larger multimedia agency and over the course of 3 years worked my way from junior

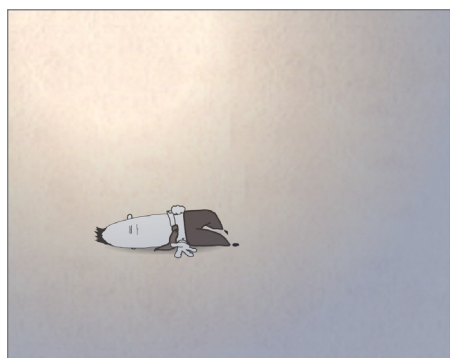
designer to creative director. I also worked my way from wide-eyed naivety to bitter cynicism about much of the industry and the projects I was involved with. The work was heavily presentation orientated and invariably for sales forces and marketing managers. The websites we created were subject to the scrutiny of some of the dumbest people on this planet (read: clients) and a lot of creativity, innovation and joy was sucked out of projects long before they ever saw the light of internet explorer. Eventually my morale sunk so low that I began to create personal projects outside my job to release the creative frustration I felt.





Low Morale (www.lowmorale.co.uk) was one such project, and the beginning of the end...of the beginning. This web-series was borne directly from the torment and anguish suffered at the hands of clueless clients, soul-sapping sales people and an environment of banality and blue-chips.

Low Morale led to 'Creep' (www.lowmorale.co.uk/creep), an un-commissioned music video to Radiohead's 'Creep'. The piece was created over a period of 3 months, working every night and weekend after work. The reaction the piece received once it was complete was so positive and overwhelming that it gave me the confidence to leap from the well-trodden, well-paid lanes of the rat-race to the hedonistic and poverty-stricken road of freelance. I quit my full-time job in January 2005 and became self-employed.

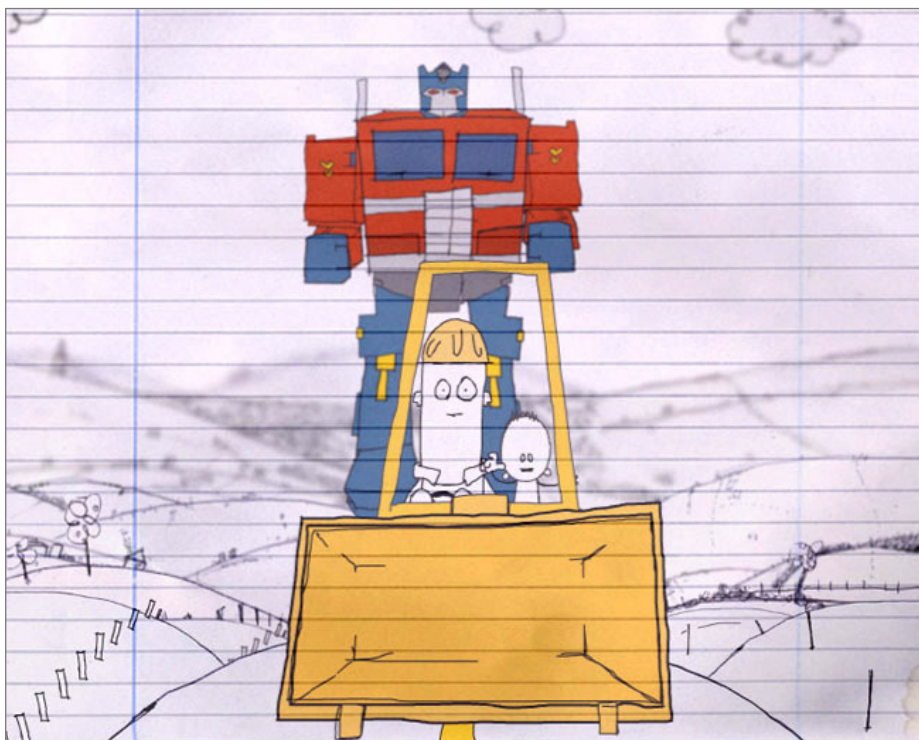


So, I heard on some backwater radio station about some UK band called Nizlopi and they have a funny little music video for their new release - JCB Song, do you know anything about this?

Niz-who??

So seriously how long did this video take you to make, how did you make it and how did you get this gig in the first place?

The JCB video was actually the first official project I embarked on as a freelancer. The band got in touch in Jan 05 after seeing the Creep animation. They loved the piece and asked if I'd be interested in creating an animated video for their first single release 'JCB'. I'd obviously never heard of the band or the song but I agreed to check it out and go from there. After being sent the track and listening to it 7 billion times (I counted), I enthusiastically agreed to create the video for JCB. Amongst other things, I felt the song was fresh, quirky and child-like, yet emotional, deep and engaging...much like me. What followed was 5 months of the most intense, challenging, yet enjoyable and fulfilling work



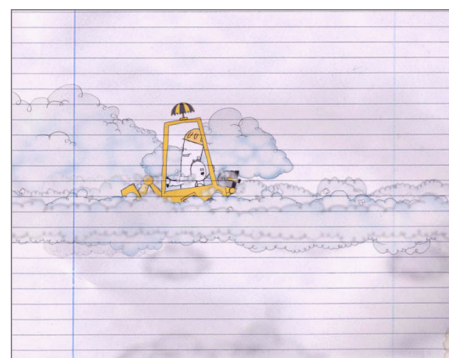
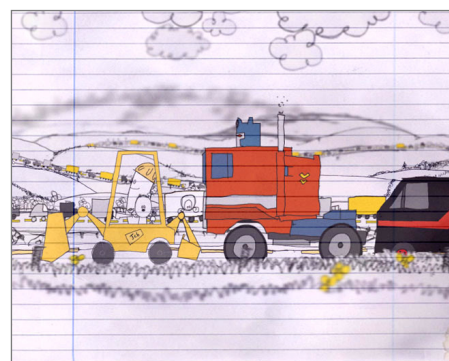
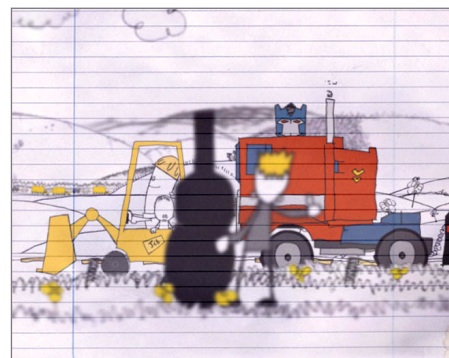
I have ever experienced. The first main task was to establish a foundation of concepts and themes on which to build the video. These were derived from repeated sonic scrutiny of the song and deep reflection on the lyrics. I connected the child-like perspective and nostalgic over-tones of the song to memories of childhood (especially mine) and the unhindered imagination capacity we have as kids. This led to the idea of doodling as an expression of this imagination and this in turn dictated the style of the video, with doodled characters on lined exercise book style paper. Having established a main direction and outline storyboard for the video I began to create the actual animation. This was achieved using a combination of Flash, After Effects, Photoshop and good ol' fashioned left-handed drawing. The scenery was drawn in black biro on paper, scanned in and then cut-out in Photoshop. These elements were assembled and layered in After Effects, then animated and scrolled to create the sense of travelling. All the characters were drawn and animated in Flash using the mouse – I've never used any graphic tablets. The characters were then exported

from Flash as .PNG image sequences and integrated into the After Effects scene to form the final movie composition. The entire process of creating the JCB video was quite organic and this was something I relished. New ideas were incorporated constantly as the video took shape and things were tweaked and re-tweaked to achieve what I wanted. Although I favour a certain organic/spontaneous quality in my work I feel it's a luxury I may not (understandably) always have to the same degree as JCB. But for me sometimes the best ideas are those that arise when I'm sat staring at the scene on the screen.

How have things changed for you after this song and video went it at No.1 in the UK charts?

Things have got pretty crazy since the JCB campaign and sometimes life can feel a bit surreal. I try not to devote a lot of thought to the final outcome and reception of my work; I immerse myself in the creative process and try to produce the best I can within the project constraints. So the success of JCB; the 1 million plus hits to the website,

the No.1 spot and all the acclaim from the public is something of a wonderful shock. The campaign has brought me and Monkeehub to the greedy attention of lots of new and wonderful people. I have been truly overwhelmed by the interest from businesses, film festivals, production houses, floozies, distant relatives from the Macheke district of Zimbabwe wanting to transport 54 Billion dollars into the country who just need my bank details, and the Inland Revenue alike. It's actually a lot for one person to deal with at times, therefore I'm looking at ways to start working closer with other artists and talented friends in the future to help spread the load and broaden the ambitions and exposure of Monkeehub.

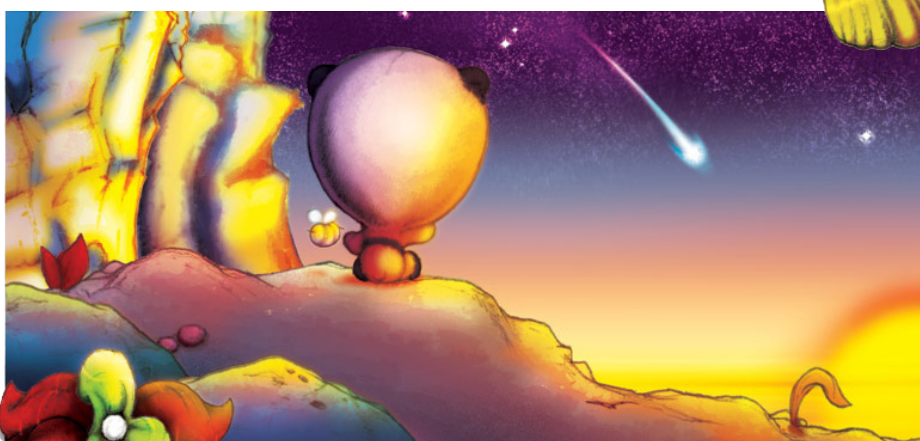
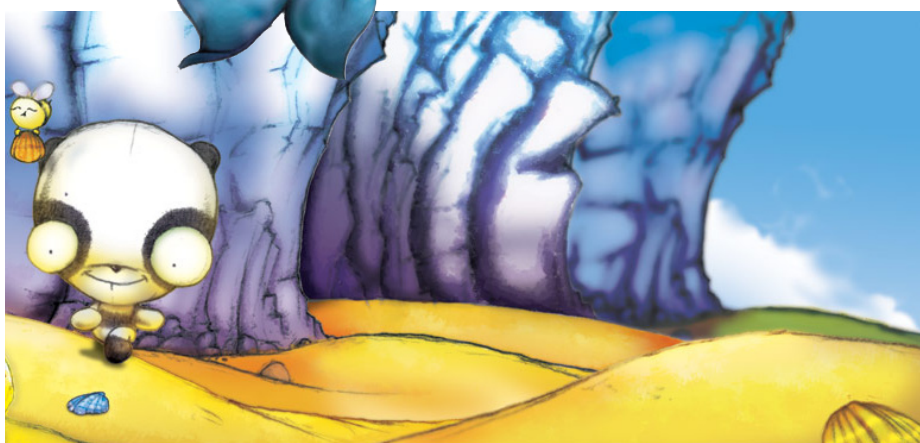
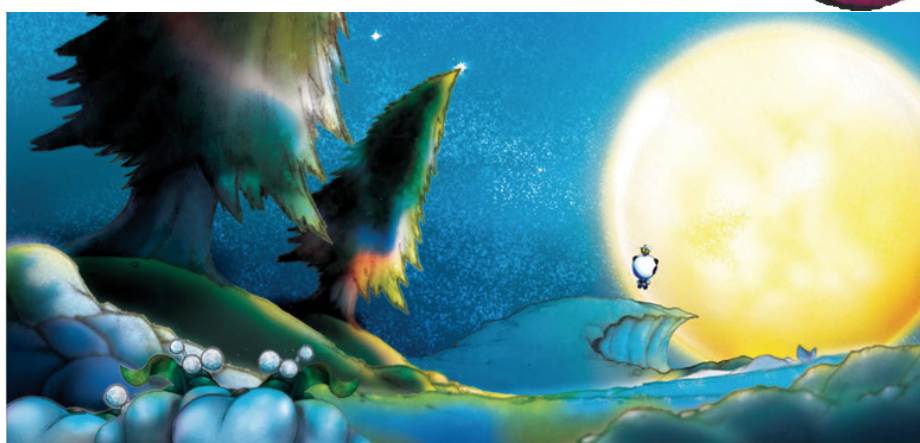




Looking at your site www.monkeehub.com we can see your main project 'Panda Island', Can you tell us some more about this? How did this one start? Plans for this etc.

Panda Island is a set of digital illustrations created shortly after completing the JCB video. The pictures feature a Panda and Bee who visit a magic island and frolic around. The characters and concept were originally inspired by a relationship with a girl (*giggle*) but also represented a welcome relief from animating and gave me the opportunity to exercise my equal passion for illustration. The idea to package the illustrations in a calendar was fairly random and spontaneous, but having now created a proto-type of half a calendar I'm determined to create a full version for 2007. Hopefully this will be available for purchase on Monkeehub towards the end of 2006.

A much more ambitious long-term plan for Panda Island is to bring it to life as an animation, possibly in a music video vein. I'm currently discussing this project with a very talented friend who helped with the JCB website and it's almost certain that some of the animation would be done in 3D. It would be a massive task though and would need a lot of preparation and time to develop but it's something I'm really eager to do.





For the Panda Island images can you tell us a bit about the process in creating them, software, techniques etc.

All the elements in the Panda Island illustrations are hand-drawn on paper first and each object/character is drawn separately. The sketches are then scanned into Photoshop and cut-out, then assembled together to form a main composition. Although I'll have a general idea for the layout of each illustration I do play around a bit with all the various objects to achieve a final composition.

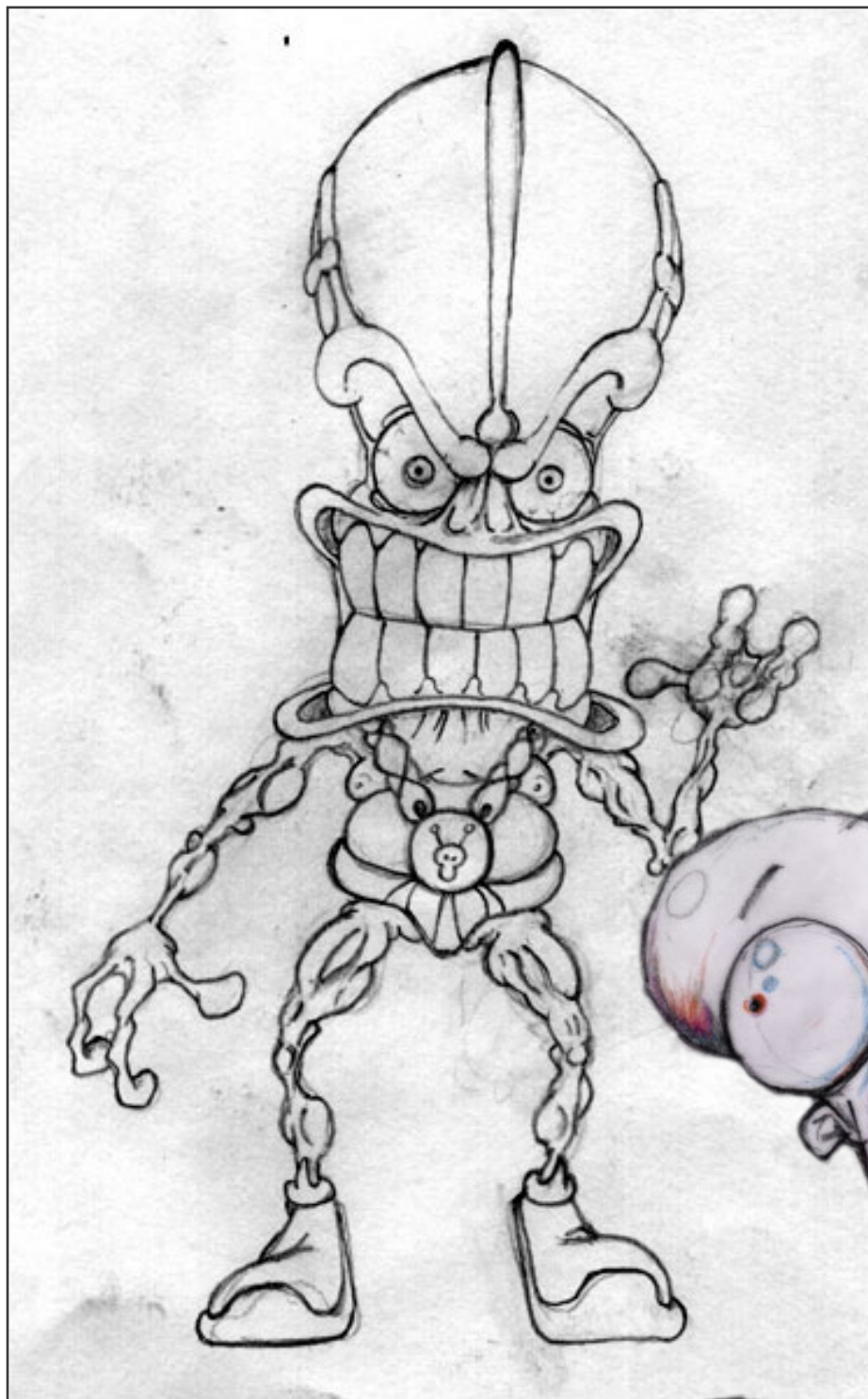
Once the foundation is done the colouring process gets underway. This involves using a wide variety of different brushes that Photoshop offers to give texture and "material" to the scenery and characters. Colours are also toned and graduated to add depth and form to objects, and Layer ink effects such as 'multiply' and 'overlay' are employed in abusive capacity to enhance and strengthen different parts. It's a very laborious process, especially working at 300 DPI, but I feel the details help keep the images interesting and rich. The final stage for each picture involves adding shadows and shading using the lasso tool with feathering to create areas of darkness. Lighting and luminance is also introduced using feathered areas of white or bright tones that are set to 'overlay'. These finishing

touches help pull the image together and aim to create a slightly magical tone to the scene. Each illustration takes between 3-4 days to create.

Do you have a dream project that you would like to work on? How about some more music videos?

There are so many dream projects for me that I'd need a coma to do them all. At the rate I'm going a coma is a distinct possibility. Music videos are definitely an area I want to work more in. For many years, long before I went freelance in fact, I've had the ambition to do an official Radiohead music video. They are still top of my list in terms of bands I'd like to work





with. The Strokes and Aphex Twin are also high on the list. Cartoon TV shows is another area I'd absolutely love to explore. I've got a few ideas and have some contacts so may pursue this more in 2006. Finally I think I'd really enjoy illustrating a children's book. The creative process I think I have most fun with is the concept and visualisation stage. The fundamental brief of illustrating a story would

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be to visualise words and narrative and that's an ideal creative field for my brain to run around in.

How many hours a week would you guess you spend in front of the screen?

I'm currently working with the

Einstein Institute of Clocks in an effort to construct a new measure of time to account for the length I spend in front of these infernal monitors. In current earth-time though it's about 4 years a week. However I do take chunky breaks when I can, but in order for me to truly relax I need to actually leave the country and more importantly my computer. So I get out to an apartment I have in Portugal and hide in the sea with the jelly-fish.

Do you have piece of advice for our keen student readers?

If you want to succeed/get a good job it's easy. All you have to do is work harder and longer than you ever thought possible. Until you cry in fact. Then some more. This is basically the only route to improving you skills and nurturing a talent. Then as your skill starts to grow so

will your work and if you're passionate about

what you're doing it will show and

people will notice you. Design/

animation/multimedia is a

visual industry...so show

people what you can do.

Begin a portfolio/website

as early as you can, and

update it and work on

personal projects

to increase it. Even

if you personally

don't think

some of

your

work

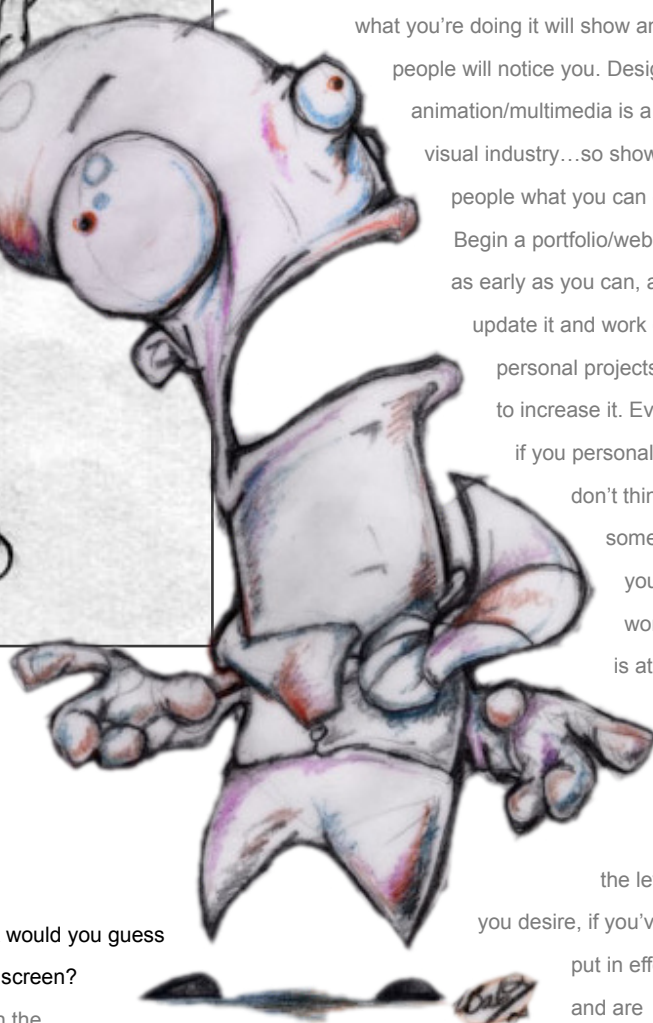
is at

the level

you desire, if you've

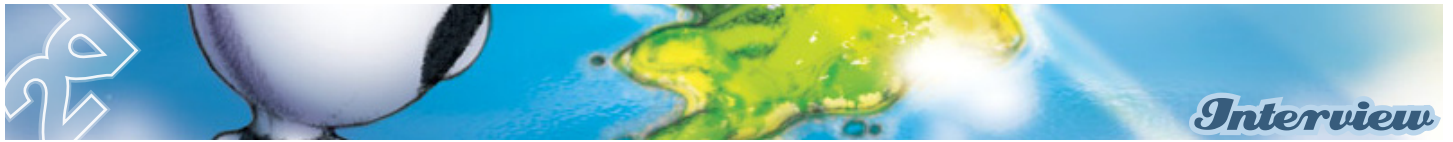
put in effort

and are



issue002 february 2006

Laith Bahrani



passionate about improving this will show.

Finally...for the love of pearl stop sending me emails asking if I can send you the flash file for Creep or JCB. Forgive my lack of philanthropy but IM NOT JUST GONNA SEND YOU A 500 MB FLASH FILE I SPENT 30000 HOURS ON!!?!?

How about another piece of advice for our freelancer readers?

Stay off my turf?

Away from the monitor what else do you like to do?

If I'm away from my monitors it means I'm in Portugal which means I like to do absolutely nothing.

If you didn't do your current career what would you like to be doing instead?

This is going to sound pretty twisted, but sometimes I fantasise about being a shelf-stacker. I actually envy the fact they can leave their jobs and various cans of tinned vegetables at a specific time and just forget about work and switch off. My work is with me every second of the day, festering away in my mind...I never get to put my mini-carrots down.

Do you play games? Either video, traditional card or board games or sport?

I used to play a lot of video games when I was younger and then at University but it's something that's just slipped out my life almost completely now. Along with sleep, nutrition, mental stability and innocence. I did however buy a board game a couple of years ago. It was called 'Ghettopoly' and was a 'gangsta/ghetto' version of the popular property game Monopoly. Me and 3 friends eagerly bust open the lid and found....a game that looked like it'd be constructed and printed in someone's bedroom by 2 stoned frat boys. After 5 minutes

of play, I quietly put my plastic 'crack pipe' counter-piece down on the board, looked at the others and said "I'm gonna put this game away now....and let's never speak of this to anyone ever again". I appear to have just broken that pact.

What is a typical Saturday night for you?

I'm usually answering interview questions and emails or alternatively on the phone to the Samaritans.

Is there a question you would have really liked to have been asked? If so what is it? And what's the answer? (great interview technique this don't you think Laith!?)

Q: Why is the world in such a gosh darn mess?

A: Because money is worshipped with a ubiquity and aggression that no god could ever hope to achieve, no matter how many bottles of Shiraz he miracles up. And because we devote entirely too much time and attention to the vacuous spasms of jumped-up desperate Zero-list "celebrities" who prance across the sets of reality TV shows leaving

behind nothing but wasted headlines and media black-holes that suck the real talent from the world.

Many thanks Laith

Interview by :

Tom Greenway



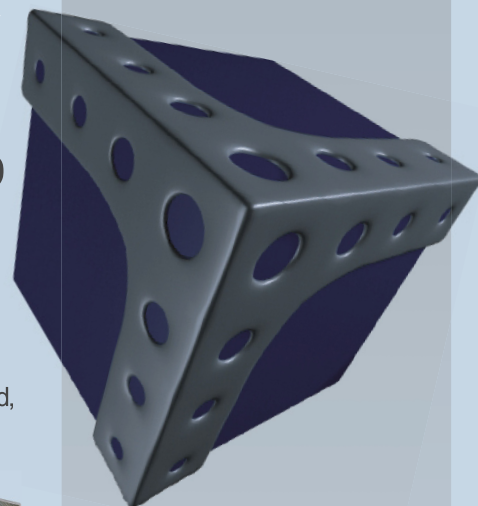
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totalTextures

15 Amazing Hi-res Texture Collections for all 2D and 3D Applications and software.

Covering a wide range of topics and compatible with both PC and Mac. Don't be fooled by the price, these are NOT lesser collections, just take a look at the large companies who use total textures:

Electronic Arts, Rockstar North, Namco co.ltd, Team 17, ESPN Star Sports, Acclaim Studios, Rare Ltd, Sony Pictures Imageworks, Nike plus hundreds more.



v1

General Textures
A Collection of hi-res seamless textures covering a wide variety of subjects including many bonus features.



v6

Clean Textures
Textures which are 'clean' textures that have little or no 'aged/stressed' elements.



v11

Alien Organic
From the wierd and slimey, to more subtle toned skins, these textures are like nothing you have ever seen before.



v2

Aged & Stressed
Meets the demand for stressed, aged, damaged and dirty textures. Again covering many subjects, being hi-res, seamless and having many bonus features.



v7

Sci-fi Textures
The textures range from Exterior Spaceship textures to decals and Damage maps



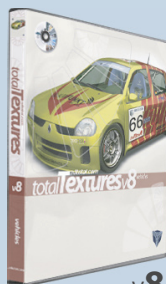
v12

Around the World Vol 1
Mostly architectural textures, derived from original photography, taken all over the world.



v3

Bases & Layers
Base textures that are suitable for building up layers or applying straight to surfaces such as stone, plaster, concrete etc. This CD has many bonus features.



v8

Vehicle Textures
The textures range from Tyre bump maps to cool flame decals. Included are .dxf meshes of some of the more 'common' car objects. These include Alloy Wheels, brake calipers, dials etc.



v13

Around the World Vol 2
Mostly architectural textures, derived from original photography, taken all over the world.



v4

Humans & Creatures
Suitable for texturing human and creatures. The textures range from natural, realistic eye, skin and hair textures to bizarre creature skins and eyes.



v9

Ancient Tribes & Civilisations
The textures range from Aztec, Japanese, Medieval, Greek & Roman, Celtic & Viking, Egyptian, Neanderthal, Indian & Islamic, and African.



v14

Fantasy Textures
Mostly fantasy textures some created from 100% original photography and others hand painted by our own texture artists.



v5

Dirt & Graffiti
Dirt masks/ maps and graffiti. These have many uses, the main ones being as a mask to mix two textures together or being placed as a layer over an existing texture to add in detail and 'dirty it up'.



v10

Trees & Plants
This DVD has trees based on the four seasons, and a variety of plants and grasses and leaves with each one with the very own alpha map which makes them ready to pop into any scene.



v15

Toon Textures
Toon and stylised textures. The textures fall into 'sets' hand crafted by our artists, each set has a continuous style throughout and contain colour and bump maps which range from leaves to tiles and from wood to windows.

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EUR-€473 (normally €630)
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Buy 10 items - save 20%
Buy 11 items - save 21%
Buy 12 items - save 22%
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MARTIN LABEL

>>Like most artists,
I've been drawing
since I was very young.
But thankfully when I
was 13 years old My
family bought our first
computer with a copy
of Adobe Photoshop..
Probably version 5
I'm not sure. But it all
started from there. I self
taught myself the entire
program, and I still use
it to this day for all my
work>>





Profile

Age: 22

Occupation: Freelance Illustrator

Approx. Caffeine intake per day: 1 Energy Drink, 2 Coffees... More if there is an impending deadline ;)

What are your major influences?

In my early teens I discovered the Comic Book. In particular, Gen13 When J Scott Campbell was illustrating it. His beautiful artwork captured my heart and imagination, which pushed me forward to learn how to draw better, and gave me a personal goal of one day becoming a comic book artist. Since then my goals have expanded and I work for magazines, drawing pin-up girls.. all sorts of illustrations, but recently I am realizing my initial dream of creating comic books.

What are your chosen tools / programs and how do these affect your working process?

I use Alias Sketchbook Pro OR the traditional pencil and paper for my initial sketching. I then bring it into Photoshop 7, drop the opacity and digitally ink my sketch with the hard brush. I use a Wacom Intuos 3 which is just a great tool to use.. A life saver for me. Colouring work is all done in Photoshop, with the fill bucket tool and then just draw on the shadows and highlights.. airbrush for special effects, Its all pretty simple really.. Nothing too fancy ;)

And how big is yours? (the Wacom i mean)

It's an Intuos 3 A4 9"x12" Just the right size I think, Not too big, not too small ;)

How do you improve your style / finish for each new image?

Improving my style and quality of artwork, usually comes from learning from the previous illustration. I see what works and doesn't work.. And what could be a quicker way of doing things. Getting feedback from other artists and the online community in general is a great way to start improving your work. Such as getting critiques on Anatomy, Composition, Design and colour. There are plenty of great online art communities such as Deviant art, GFXartist among others. Also trying new techniques and

methods/
materials is
a good way
of defining
your style. For
a short time I
dabbled in a digitally painted style using
Photoshop, which was great fun but I
finally realized I was trying to be something





that I was not. I also tried a more 'sketchy' style, where I took my rough like pencils and coloured them without any inking. It produced a nice 'raw' look but just like the painted style I abandoned it and went back to what really worked for me, which is the clean cell shaded artwork you see in my art today.

Your favourite Number is 355? What is the reason?

Kind of a long story, but to cut it short someone I vaguely knew's alarm clock went off at 3.55am for no apparent reason which created many a discussion on the philosophy of the number 355. One example of many; The 355th day of the year is December 21st. The Mayan calendar ends on December 21, 2012. Will 355 herald the END OF THE WORLD? Who knows.. I just like the number.

Your website is excellent, but very flash heavy, did you create it yourself as not all 'digital paint' artists enjoy the 'vector' lifestyle too?



www.2dartistmag.com



Yes I created my flash website, I in no way would say I was a web designer, and although absolutely hair-pullingly annoying I really do love making flash interfaces. I went through about 10 different flash designs before landing the one you see today. And you are right, it is quite flash heavy, so I've decided I will release a 56k friendly version as soon as I get a chance!

Follow this link to see the site:

www.martinabel.com

With todays tools, a lot of comic book art is being turned to animation, has this ever been a route you would like to take?

Definitely! After I release my first short mini-series comic book this year I plan to tackle my creator owned story. Hopefully of which would work beautifully as an animated movie or Anime. That would be an absolute dream come true. As for animating myself, I have had a limited experience in it, and to be honest it's just way too much work for my liking! Gotta admire those animators!

issue002 february 2006

Martin Abel

Interview

They have Red Dwarf in Oz?!?!?

They do! Fantastic Brit comedy J...
smegheads..

XBox Magazine, Viper Comics... did you pitch
for a job or did they come to you?

Well Xbox magazine I contacted them offering
my services, and to my delightful surprise
they loved my work and I've been creating
illustrations for them ever since. A great job,
and they are fantastic people who run the
magazine. As for Viper Comics, I picked



up there first title
Dead@17 #1, really
liked it and decided
to email the creator;
Josh Howard. We've been
in quite close contact ever
since, and I've done a
short story and
quite a few covers
for them. Currently
I'm working on a 4 issue
mini-series debuting this year
hopefully.

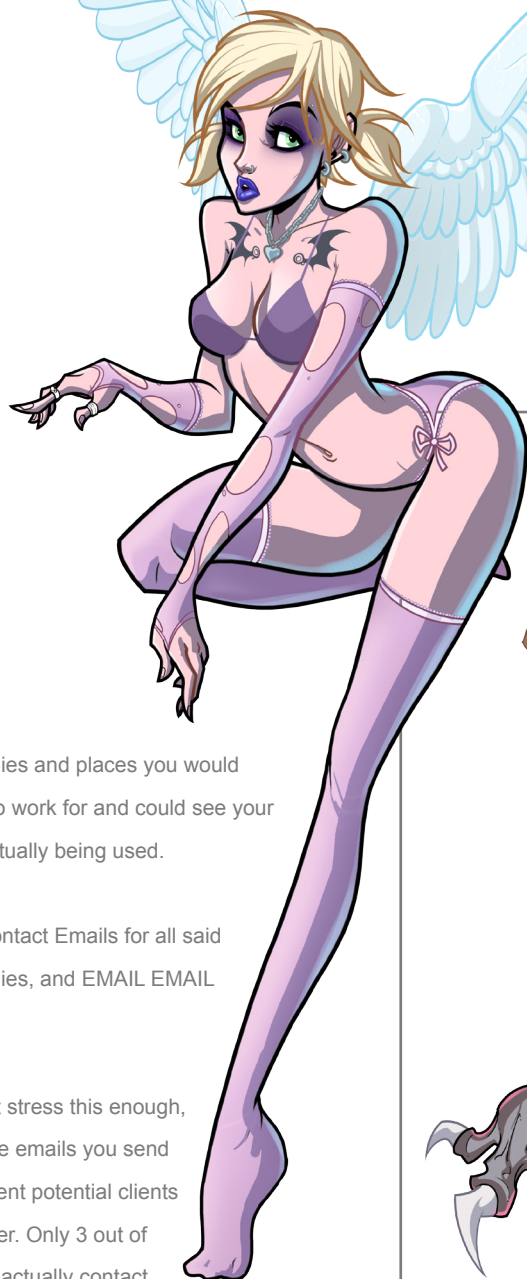
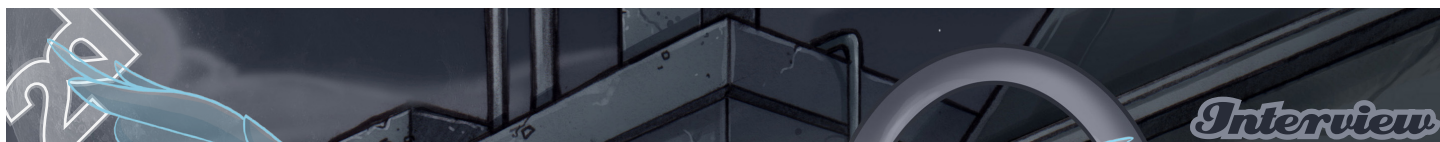
So given that you had the enthusiasm to
go and get clients rather than wait for them to
come to you, what advice could you give to
similar artists in that position?

Advice? Go and get your clients!!!!!! You can't sit
around waiting for them to come to you, at least
when you are first starting out. My plan of attack
was this: -

Create a professional website portfolio
(preferably a .com or .net etc)

Create a list of ALL the possible Magazines,

Martin Abel



companies and places you would LOVE to work for and could see your work actually being used.

-Find contact Emails for all said companies, and EMAIL EMAIL EMAIL.

I cannot stress this enough, the more emails you send to different potential clients the better. Only 3 out of 10 may actually contact you back, and only 1 or 2 may offer you some work if you are lucky! SO get the computer booted up!

Dream Job / Assignment / Company to work for?

Yikes that's a tough one. At the moment I'm creating pin-up girls for magazines, and creating comic books.. Both of which were my dream jobs. So I'm pretty happy right now.

I would like to get a book out with Image Comics as I grew up on those guys. Also at

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some stage produce concept art for computer games, or be a project leader. I have a lot of ideas for video games I'd love to let loose one day. I'd also love to write and direct my own movies.. but that one is a long shot ;) Its all just a matter of time, and like I said I'm pretty content with where I am right now.

Interview by :

Ben Barnes



www.martinabel.com

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
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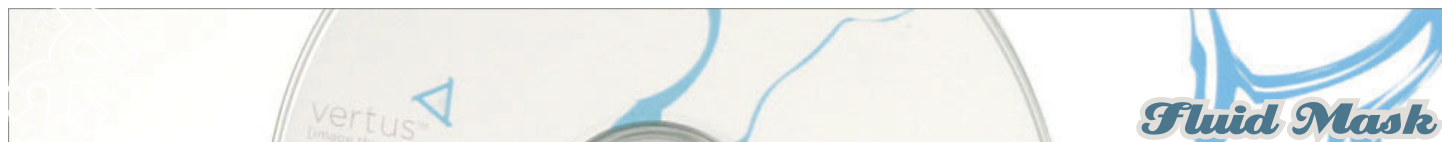


ZBrushCentral.com

ZBrush.com

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fluid mask



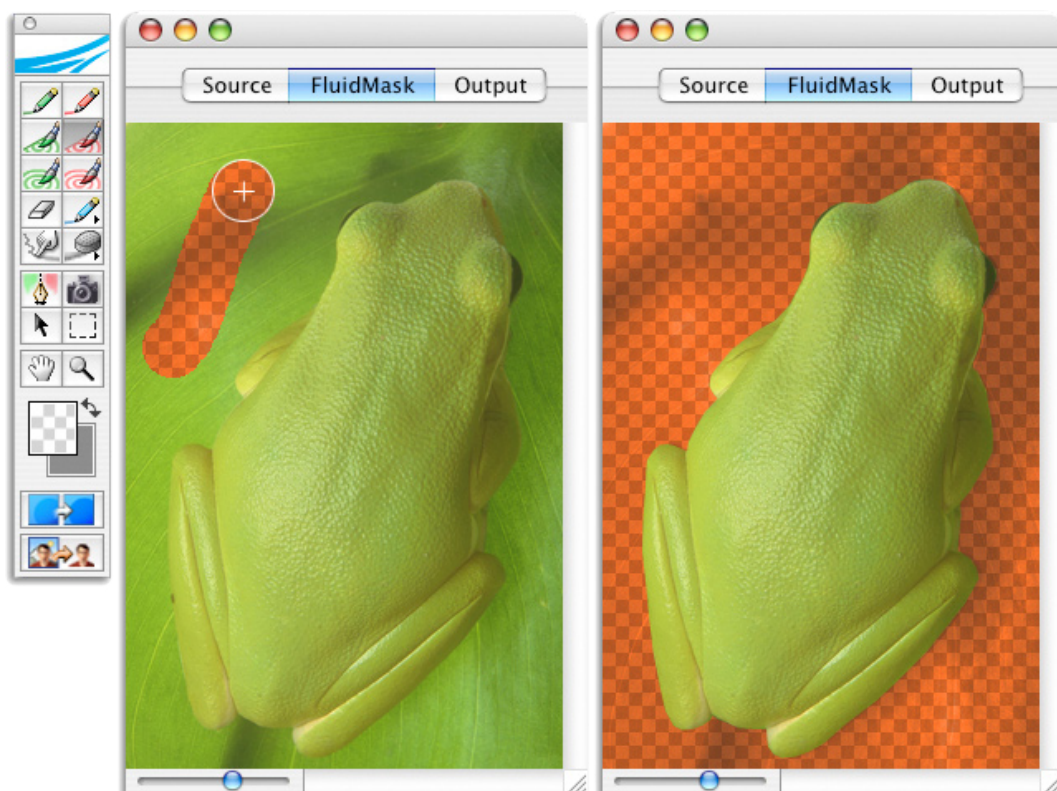
Cut out plug-in for Adobe Photoshop
XChange International announce
release of

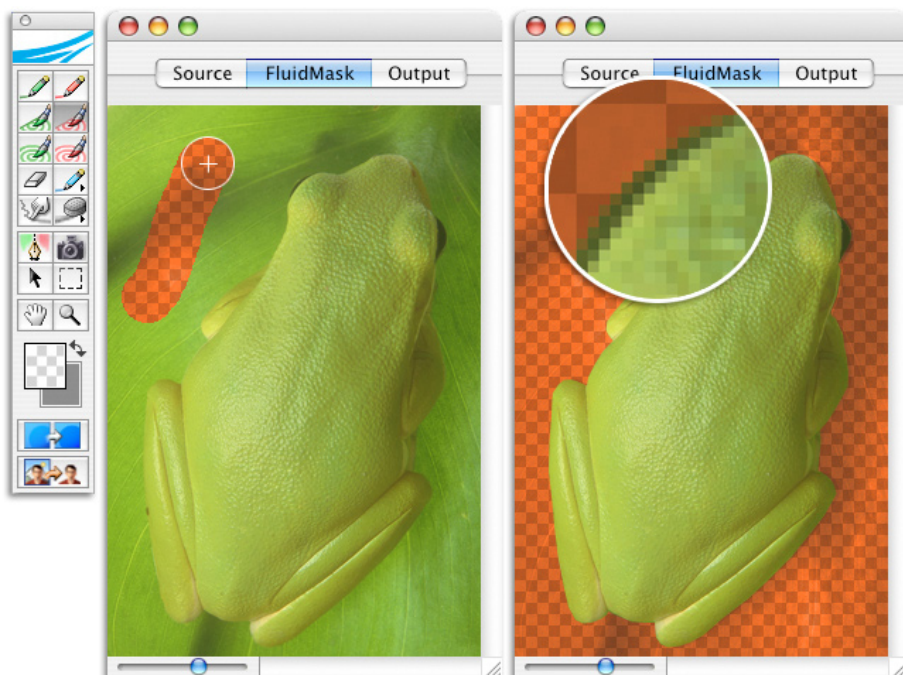
Fluid Mask cut out plug-in for
Adobe Photoshop

London, UK XChange
International, the source
for extended technology
worldwide, are pleased to
announce the release of
the Fluid Mask plug-in for
Adobe® Photoshop® v7.0
and higher. Fluid Mask is a
highly advanced software
tool designed to make life
easier for everyone who
creates cut outs. Built as a

plug-in to Adobe Photoshop, Fluid Mask is the
new next-generation cut-out tool and behind
the product is breakthrough technology that
mimics the way the eye, optic-nerve and brain
perform visual processing. It offers an intuitive,
accurate and fast approach to creating cut outs
and professional high-quality masks.

Using Fluid Mask, users apply selections to a
meta-data layer of image information called
the Image Information Layer (IIL). This is made
up of boundary, texture and colour information
pulled from an image. The plug-in differentiates
between hard and soft edges, and edges and
colour transitions are separated smoothly.
Blending and masking are co-synchronous
with no double work, and since there is less
data to work on, the additional speed makes





working with large images no problem.

Users can adjust ILL resolution to work on hard-to-gauge edges, and the plug-in boasts real-time, image-derived colour palettes for colour-based mask selections. Fluid Mask makes work in progress easy to review, providing users the ability to fine tune mask selections at pixel level for maximum control < users can preserve maximum detail at the blended transitions.

Fluid Mask provides:

Speed < One-Mask lets users work quickly and reliably on their cut outs

Opportunity < work with images which could never be cut out before

Detail < preserve all-important edge information for a professional quality cut out
Easy to use tool set < create professional cut-out images in 30 seconds.

One-Mask provides a One-click' solution offering fast and accurate cut outs at the touch of a button. More control using the Region Editor < work at levels of detail that until now have not been possible. Image Information

Layer (ILL) - adjust the Image Information Layer (IIL) to select hard-to-hit edges or to loose image noise (e.g. high resolution transparency scans)

System Requirements:

Adobe® Photoshop® 7.0 or higher, 512MB RAM, CD-ROM drive, SVGA monitor with

24-bit colour display, Internet connection

Mac - Mac® OS X 10.2.8 or higher, 833Mhz G4 or higher
Windows - Windows 2000® or above, Processor speed 750Mhz or higher

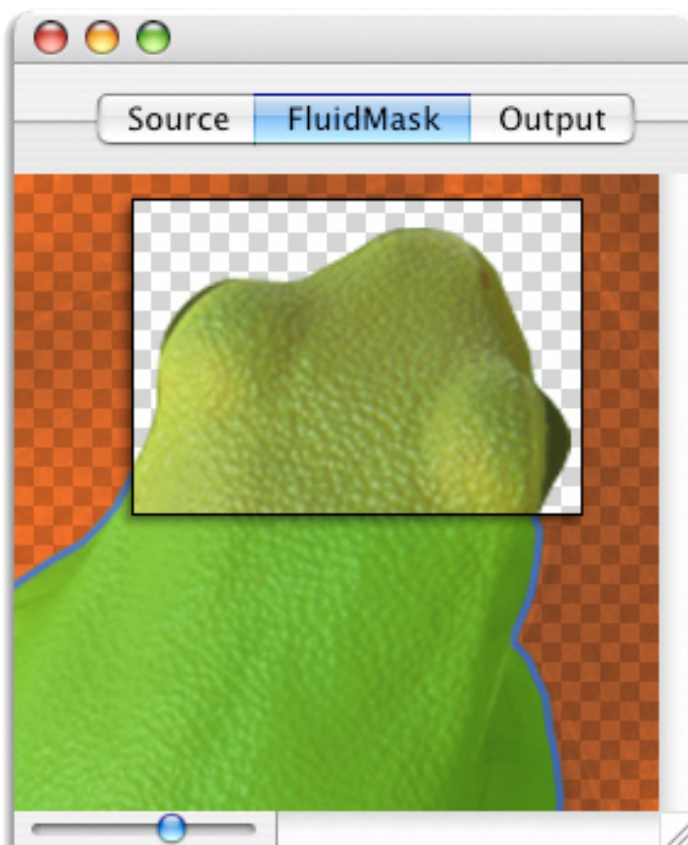
Fluid Mask is available now through XChange International for £69.50. To order,

or for more information, users can visit www.xchangeuk.com, or call on +44(0)20 7490 4455 during UK business hours. Email address is info@xchangeuk.com.

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Article Courtesy :

Tami Stodgehill





2d digital

MATTE PAINTING

by Dimitri Delacovias

There has been a great deal written in recent years about visual effects and digital post production on film blockbusters. There has even been an attempt to promote the invisible effects which help enhance a film's storytelling.

However, one aspect of this digital revolution, which provides one of the most cost effective means of adding production value to a film, has been rather neglected.

That of digital matte painting.

2d digital MATTE PAINTING



by **Dimitri Delacovias**

The ability to paint high resolution images on a computer and work directly on a scanned image of film has equally revolutionized the old glass shot and traditional matte painting techniques. With the ability to digitize live action footage and then combine hi-res 2D artwork with 3D CG and/or model/motion control

elements, using digital compositing, tracking and rotoscoping, a whole new world of image enhancement is now possible.

Yet you may still hear people who say things like, "yes, but it's not really painting in the old traditional sense", or that they miss the feel of painting with brushes and oils or acrylics.

While one can sympathise with certain aspects of the traditional ways, especially the fabulous work of the old masters such as Percy "Poppa" Day and Albert Whitlock, or the photo realistic style of Spencer Bagdatopoulos, (see enclosed examples) a closer look at past optical and matte painting effects often reveals less than convincing results. Which is probably why there was the old adage that a matte painting shouldn't be on screen for more than four seconds. In today's highly competitive industry, it is wise to use whatever tools are available to provide the most convincing and cost effective solution to the film's storytelling needs. Besides, what can seem initially a 'good painting' can often look 'phoney' on screen, as a matte painting has to assimilate detail not as the eye sees reality but as it is exposed on film. When working on a magnified frame of film, you soon realize it can take on a very impressionistic quality with a very distinct texture for each exposed stock and lighting style.





It's matching that texture with a sense of light in the painted image which is even more important than fine architectural detail and perspective - something the old masters of matte painting often pointed out.

Image enhancement is not new of course; even at the turn of the century, George Melius stunned early cinemagoers with his fantastic optical trickery on "Voyage to the Moon". Since then the ingenious use of mirrors, mattes, glass painting, front and back projection screens, as well as various optical printing techniques, have entertained audiences for the last hundred years or so. The trouble was, with the added physical problems of matching light exposure on the older stocks and the chemical processing of the day, the combining of images in many of the optical post productions was sometimes obvious and even crude. Unfortunately even today, because of the 'speed' and flexibility of digital post production, or the dreaded "Nah, it's alright, we'll fix it later in post..." you still see digital matte work, CGI and compositing that betrays the reality of the live action elements. The main problems with digital matte painting is pretty much the same as with traditional painting - overdoing it, which gives even more of a flat, laboured look than traditional painting - or underdoing it, in which case a lack of detail and substance fails





Article

to convince. When a young colleague recently asked me what was the secret of good matte painting, I was reminded of the professor in the beginning of 'The Fifth Element' and half jokingly replied "Aziz! LIGHT! Much better Aziz". At the end of the day the painted elements have to match the look and feel of the exposed film, with the same sense of lighting and not just be a "good painting".

With the latest digital processing, properly prepared effects work can now be practically seamless. The creative demands of the film industry in recent years has pushed the technology as well as the art of cinematography to new frontiers of achievement. Yet it is important to remember that apart from the obvious "whizz-bang" special effects, digital post production also opens up unlimited opportunities to enhance the story.

Whether it is simply solving technical or logistical location problems, to recreating old worlds or creating new ones, there are virtually no technical or creative limits; just the age old problems of time and money.

Yet, and this has to be stressed once again, if early consultation and proper pre-production is observed, the cost effectiveness of digital post production can also be very impressive. Especially to medium and low budget work where it is often overlooked because of costly past experience or the lack of experience with new digital techniques.

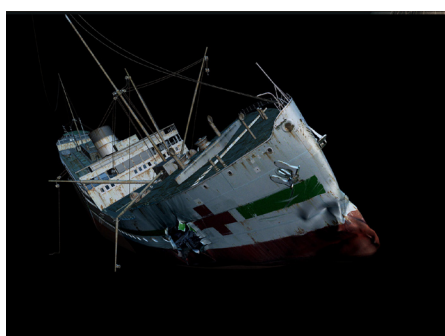
At Double Negative there is a dedicated Digital Matte Department as opposed to just someone who uses Photoshop, which is often the case. There is also an art to providing convincing, cost effective, digital matte painting and a dedicated team and approach to the growing

demands of film makers and their audience is vital to achieve this. And when it is successfully achieved, it can actually save a production a lot of money on set and location demands, as well as image enhancement.

Recent work includes matte paintings and CG environments for Batman Begins, Kingdom of Heaven, Bridget Jones 1&2, AvP, Harry Potter 3&4, Doom, Chronicles of Riddick, Cold Mountain, League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, Die Another Day, Below and Enemy at the Gates.

The latter being an excellent example of the extensive use of 2D matte painting and CGI enhancement, particularly the two fly over shots of war torn Stalingrad. Director Jean Jaques Annaud and VFX Supervisor Peter Chiang set out to show the hell of that ruined city 50 years ago and therefore many of the location and studio sets required extensive 'topping up'. These examples show to what extent Digital Matte Painting can enhance a shot and provide hugely cost effective production value to a film or TV series. It is this extension of





the wide, establishing shots of the sequences, which initially takes the audience to that time and place in the story.

We are often told by people who see these before and after shots, especially having seen the film, that they just did not realize how much work had been added to a sequence. That is the best compliment a digital artist can receive, because at the end of the day the audience should be taken in by the drama of the story, not the wizardry of the effects

'Enemy at the Gates' before and after Matte shots (top).

'Below' which involved Hi-res CG submarine, CG ships, and underwater environments (left) - a fine example that showed CG and Matte Paintings can provide a convincing and highly flexible alternative to miniature work .



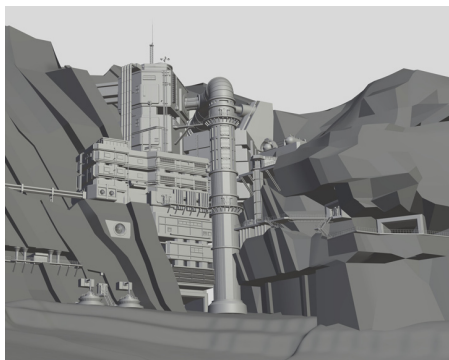


'Tomb Raider II' before and after Matte shot for Hong Kong airport, which was shot in the UK (top right).

Some of the concept paintings , which we are often called upon to provide, for 'Doom' (bottom right).

Article by :

Dimitri Delacovias



DOSCH DESIGN



**Dosch 3D:
Flowers**



**Dosch 3D:
Interior Scenes**



**Dosch HDRI: Chrome
& Studio Effects V2**



**Dosch Textures:
Construction Materials V2**



**Dosch HDRI:
Radiant Skies**



**Dosch 3D:
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**Dosch 3D:
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**Dosch Viz-Images:
Trees**



**Dosch 3D:
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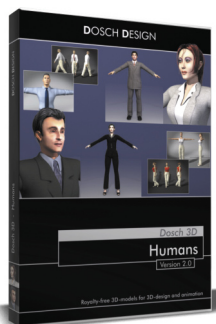


**Dosch 3D:
Cars 2005**

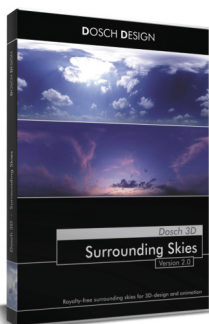
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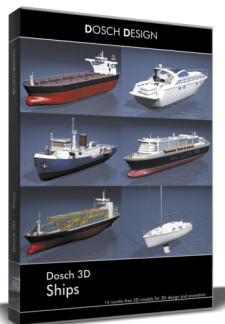
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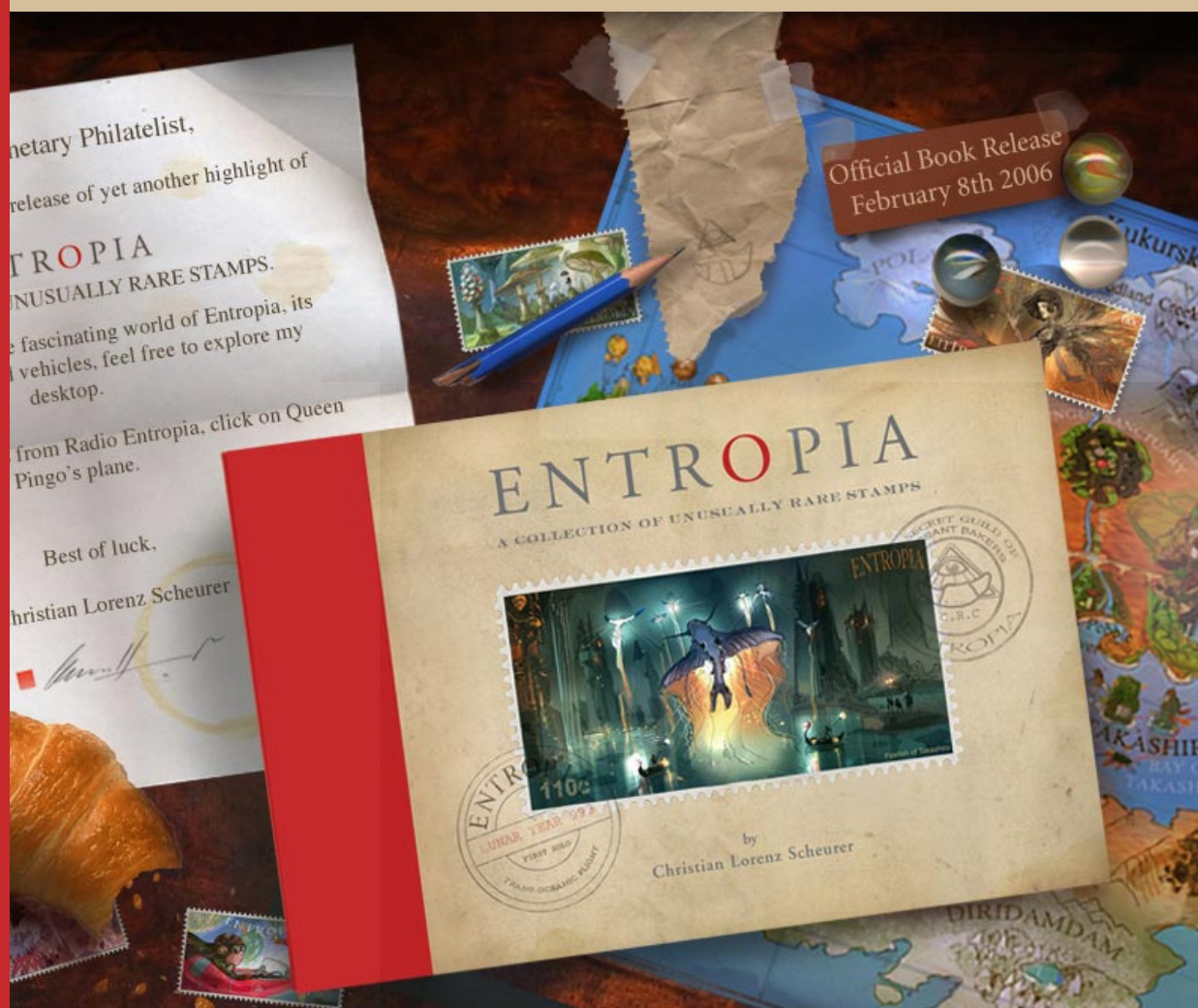
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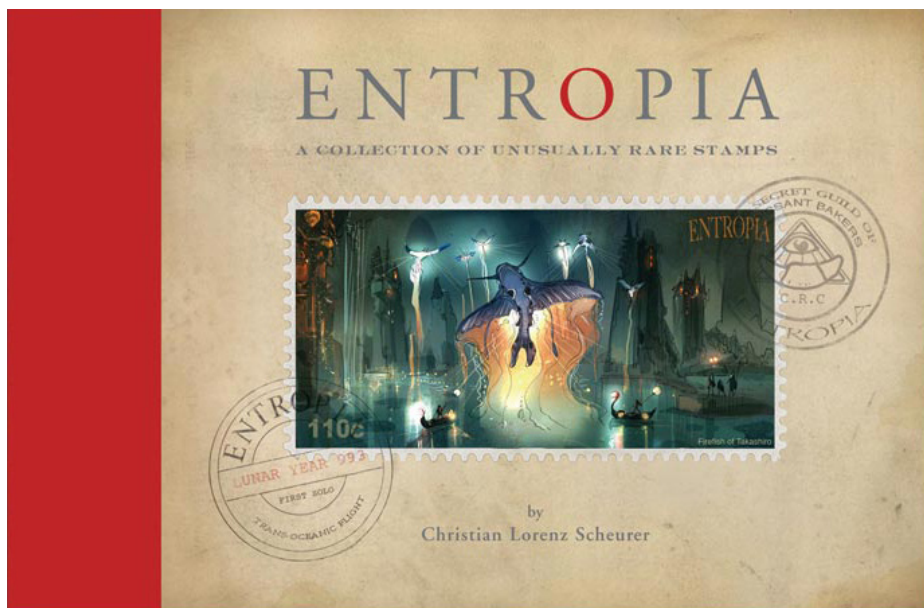
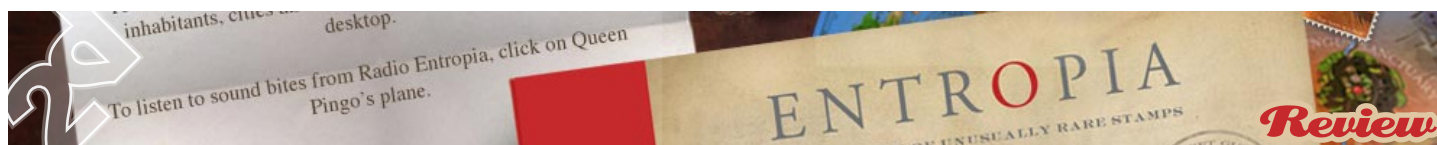




ENTROPIA

A Collection of
Unusually Rare
Stamps is a
uniquely crafted
storybook
for all ages.
Through a full
length narrative
accompanied
by 60
beautifully
illustrated
imaginary
stamps,
readers are
taken on an
unforgettable
journey to the
fantastic world
of Entropia,
with it's
unique history,
locations and
inhabitants.



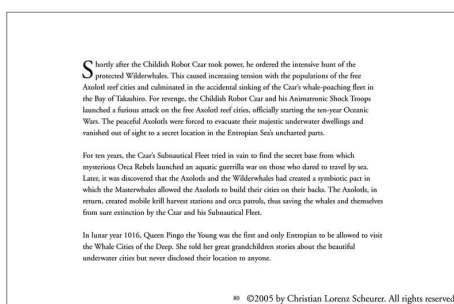


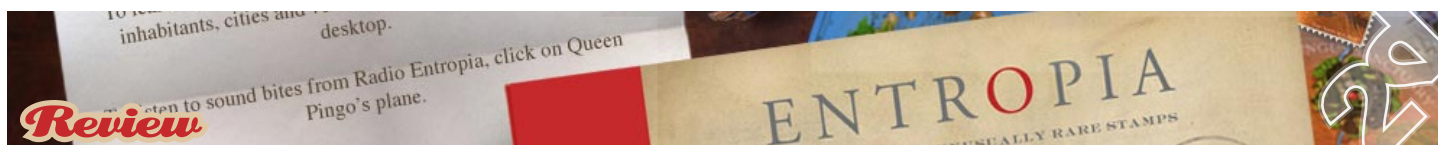
book represents a different aspect of Entropia which either outlines an area of the island and surrounding sea, a historical event or a facet of the numerous societies that co-exist there. The illustrations all appear to be done with an ink and wash technique and have an economy and sense of spontaneous freshness about them that contribute towards the fantastical vision of Scheurer's world. They conjure up a richly textured and diverse universe and are supported by the text associated with them. It is evident that the stories and background history are as important to Scheurer as the artwork and after an initial look at the book it is unclear as to which may have evolved

ENTROPIA

A COLLECTION OF UNUSUALLY RARE STAMPS BY CHRISTIAN LORENZ SCHEURER

Entropia is rather a strange little book in that when you first open it you are posed with the question of whether it is a story book about an imaginary world with illustrations or indeed a collection of paintings accompanied by brief descriptions. Either way it does not really matter but I think the truth is that the two are elements are intrinsically linked and part of a rich world that Christian Scheurer has created in this charming publication. It is as though the short textual accounts and illustrations are there to enhance one another and provide a mutual insight into the sociopolitical background behind this imagined planet. As the title of the book suggests, it is a compilation of images that appear in the form of stamps along with the perforated edges, prices and some even include postage marks. At the beginning of the book there is a short introduction detailing the history and population of the planet alongside a map with the various geography and islands. Each page in the





first. The text and artwork serve to mutually illustrate one another in an equal fashion but one feature that is obvious from the outset is the attention to detail in both a written regard as well as an illustrative one. The fact that all the paintings are presented in stamp format somehow magnifies the scope and minutiae of this imagined world and we are introduced to glimpses of Entropia from its lush swamps and rain forests to inland lakes and cities coupled with an array of characters that populate the world. The colour schemes and visual language throughout the book reflect the variety in the text and the numerous narratives served up in a short story formats that are used to convey biographical



reader and someone interested in delving more deeply into the world of Entropia.

www.designstudiopress.com

www.christianlorenzscheurer.com

Entropia is available to order now from:

<http://www.radioentropia.com/>

Reviewed by :

Richard Tilbury

information about key events and their respective characters. The environments and geography are also suitably complimented through the use of line and colour and do a good job of communicating a comprehensive concept which seems both very personal and yet universal in the themes it explores. Entropia – A Collection of Unusually Rare Stamps is both a quirky and alluring book and would make a welcome addition to ones' bookshelf and is appealing to both the casual r





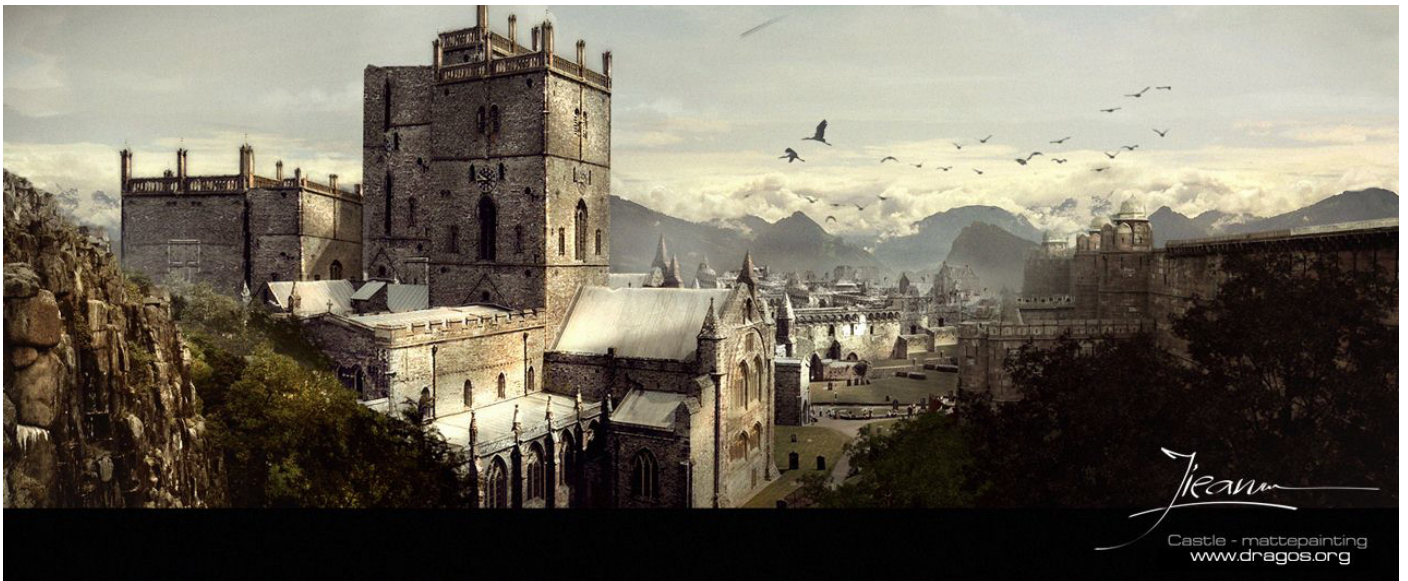
the Front

Every month 10 of the best digitally created concept, digital and matte painting scenes from around the world



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theGallery



Castle - mattepainting
www.dragos.org

Castle

Dragos Jieanu

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Rescue on Kandhar

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issue002 february 2006

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Mermaid

Riana Møller

rm@watagame.com

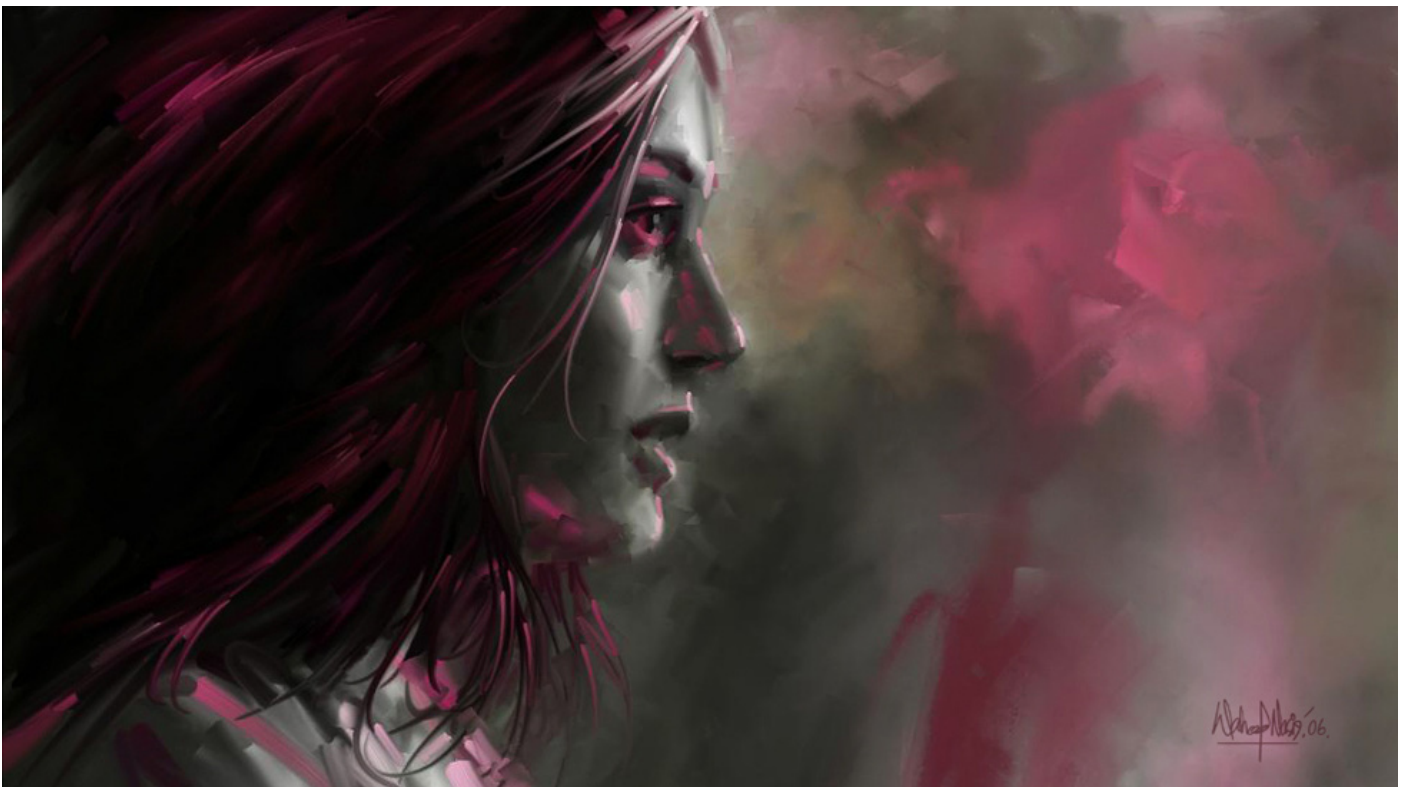
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Memory Lane

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Tenderness

Olga Antonenko

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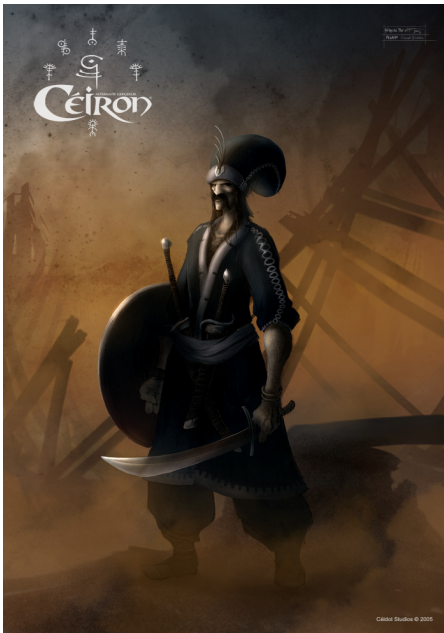


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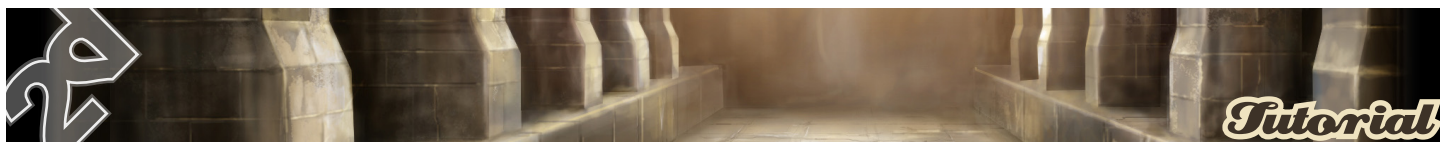


Corridor

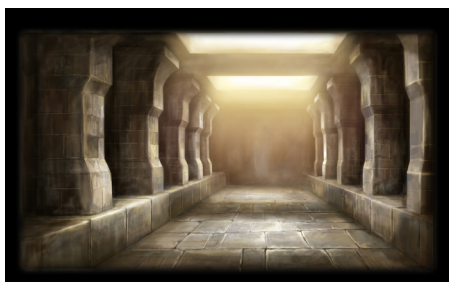
the concept

>>>For '3DCreative magazine', Richard Tilbury created 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 outlined the concept artwork behind the Corridor series.>>>

part 2



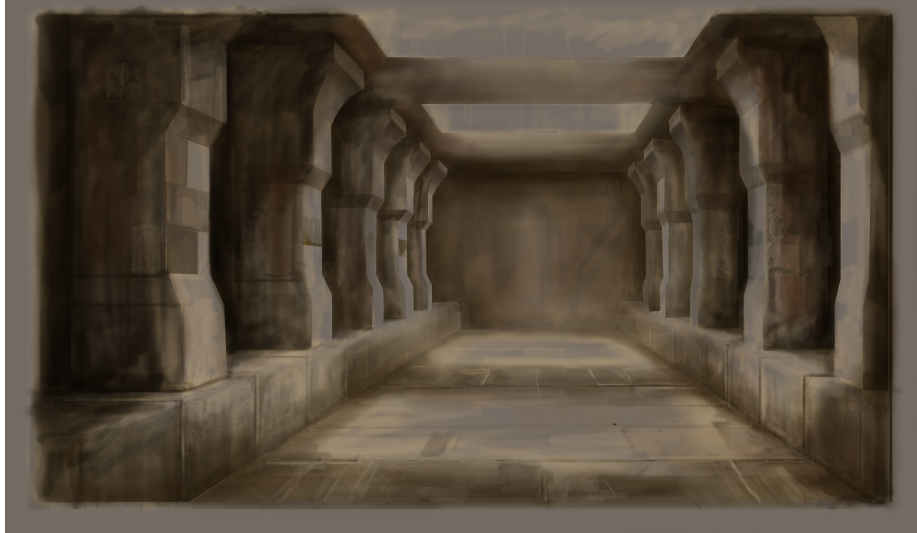
Corridor Scene Part 2



Finishing off.

1. In the second and final stage of this tutorial we will go on and finish the scene by adding in the details to the stonework and creating the finished lighting effects. In the previous edition of the magazine we blocked in the key shadow areas and established the general tone of the picture. The next stage involves defining some of the stonework on either a separate layer or you could use the shadows layer if you feel confident enough (fig 01). You can see in the image that I have started to fill in some of the

fig 01



flagstones along the floor as well as a few stone blocks on the pillars – just enough to add some definition without describing the entire scene.

2. The next phase will be to introduce what is probably the key component into the scene – that being the light source, as so far the image has a very muted look and is lacking any drama. On a new layer set to Normal and

using white at various opacity settings start by blocking in the ceiling vents where the light is at its strongest and directly below on the floor. I also highlighted the inward facing sides of the pillars as well as the tops of the platforms that support them (fig 02). You will also notice that I have included some further detail in the flagstones where the light is being reflected.

fig 02



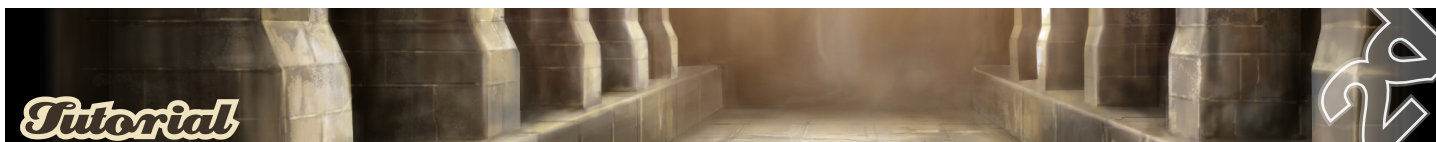


fig 03



3. With the bones of the scene now starting to form it is a good time to start fleshing out some of the finer details and begin refining the picture. Again on a separate layer start painting in some of the gaps between the stonework using a dark brown colour but concentrate mainly in the foreground where the details will be more apparent (fig 03). This has helped give the scene a better sense of

perspective as well as creating some interest in the foreground and carve out the stonework a little more.

4. The last stage helped suggest the stonework in the scene but what it needs now are some highlights along some of the edges where the light will be reflected as well as

some lighter grouting along the columns to help add a sense of scale. On a separate layer set to Soft Light and using a small airbrush set to a pale brown (R204 G186 B153) start painting in grout lines along the columns. Also use this layer to add in highlights down the edges of the columns and around the flagstones as seen in (fig 04).

fig 04





fig 05



5. With this stage of detail in place the next thing left to do is emphasize the sunlight penetrating the dark corridor and create some atmosphere by showing the sunlight filtering through the dusty interior. In order to do this, another layer was made and then with a selection group made that emanates downward from the skylight widening as it descends (fig 05) I simply feathered the

selection so as to soften the edges and then applied a gradient that blended from a yellow to a red to help accentuate the dust particles in the light beams. I then repeated these steps for the second vent but this time just used a yellow through to transparent. The layers were then set to Screen blending mode with the nearest set at 54% opacity so as not to appear too bright in the scene (fig 06).

6. All that is really left to do now is add a few highlights across the floor directly under the near vent and along the platform edge on the left as well as on the near left hand side pillar. This serves to just break up the symmetry a little and suggest that the light is not necessarily entering the corridor from directly above -

fig 06



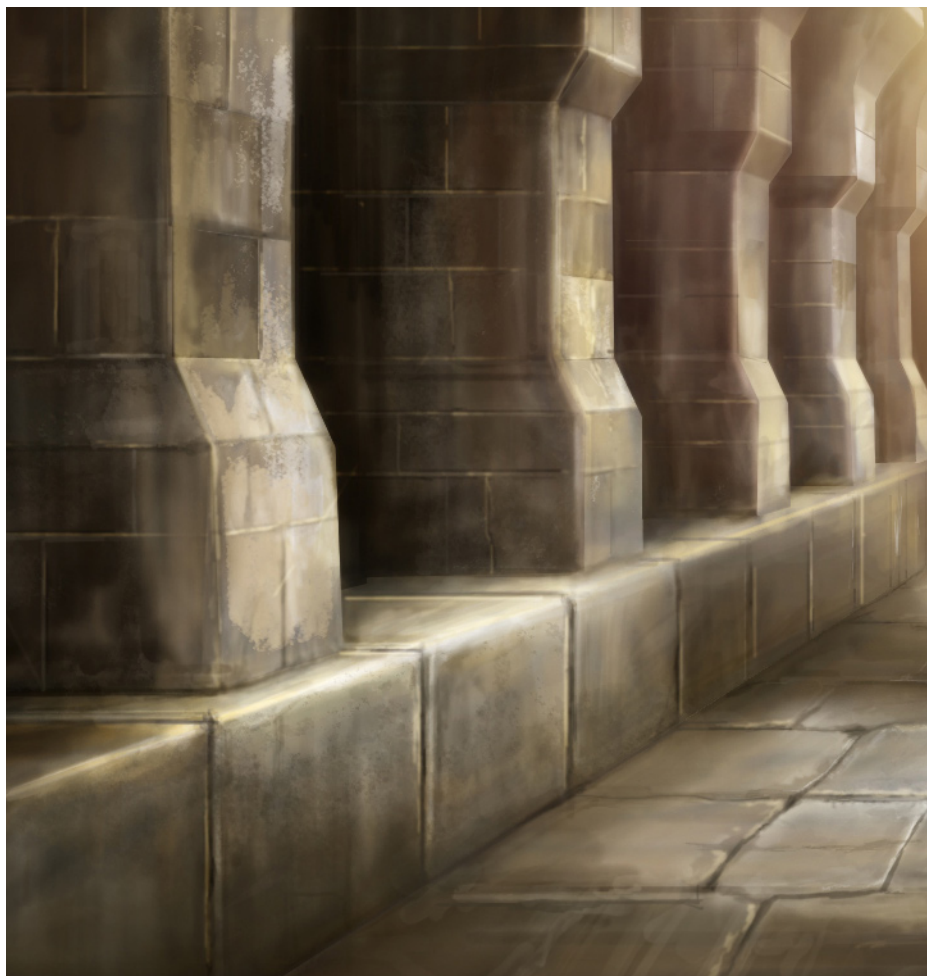
fig 07

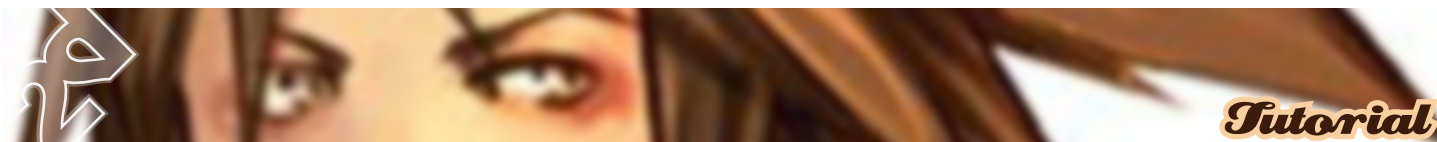


Here is the final version seen in (fig 07). This about concludes the tutorial and hopefully has covered all of the main stages involved. I may well proceed with the painting and polish it by adding a further layer of detail in the future but hopefully you will have gained some insight into achieving the stage we leave it at for the moment. I hope you have enjoyed following the tutorial and if interested there is one that goes alongside this detailing the making of a 3D version in 3D Creative.

Tutorial by :

Richard Tilbury





Colouring

With Layers, Masks & Curves.

by Abuze



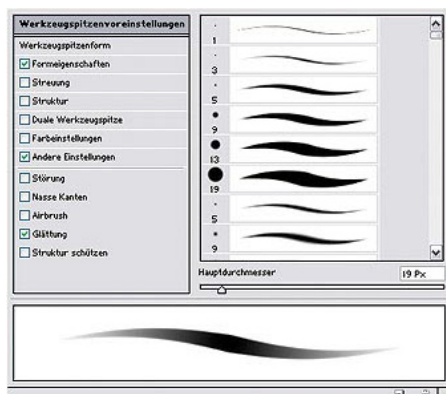
First of all: this is not a tutorial for complete Photoshop newbies you have to know what layers are and how they work and you should know the basic tools of Photoshop.

I wanted to draw something cowboy like, so I googled a bit until I found a image that fitted. After some time of scribbling I got my first idea of a pose.

Step 1: Outlining

For the ones that use a graphics tablet: so when you got your pose you can start outlining - I usually use the 19 brush with sensitivity and smoothing.

The ones that use a mouse should perhaps scan a clean sketch.



As you can see my outlines are not very clean but when you zoom out you won't see all the crappy lines. So it's not that important to draw perfect lines.



Tutorial

Step 2: Colouring

Ok the fun can begin, I'm not very good at outlining so colouring is the fun part for me. Ok here we go, first of all you have to put your outline layer on "multiply" and on top of all the other layers. Then you can take the lasso tool and fill the person with a ground colour. I picked a brown colour because I thought it fits as he's a cowboy.

I'm doing this to get a similar colour scheme in all parts of his clothes and I think it really works.

When you've finished with filling this part press strg and click on this layer in the layer palette, the whole brown layer should be selected now. After that you have to create a new layer set (1), click on this set and create a layer mask (2).

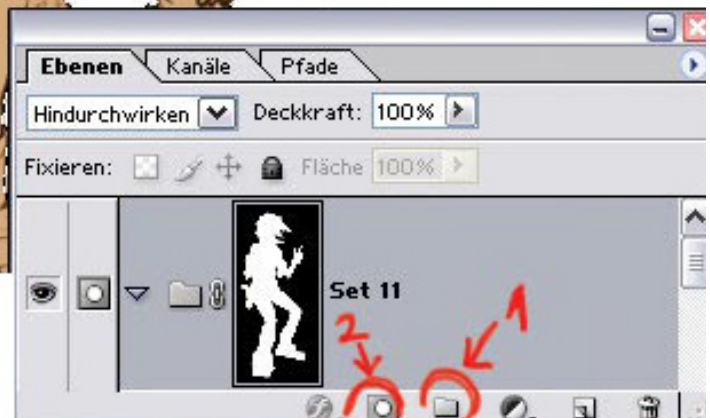
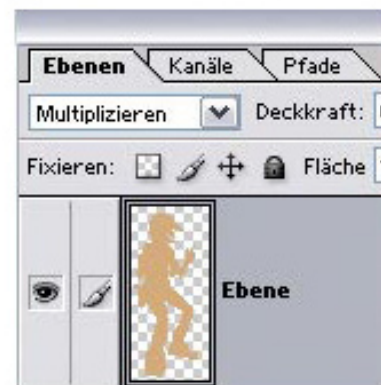
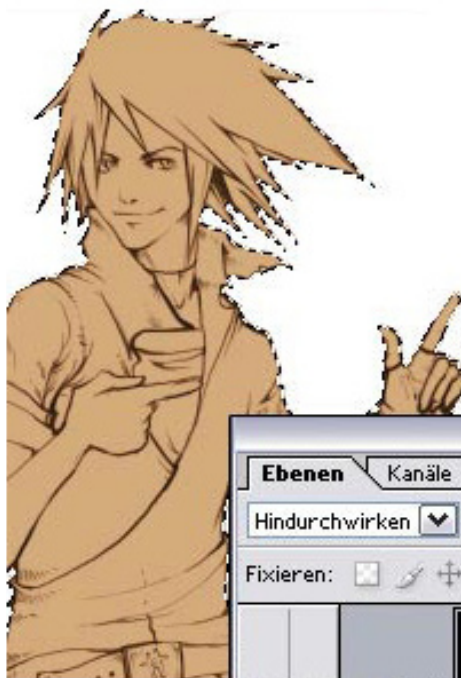
Short explanation: layer masks

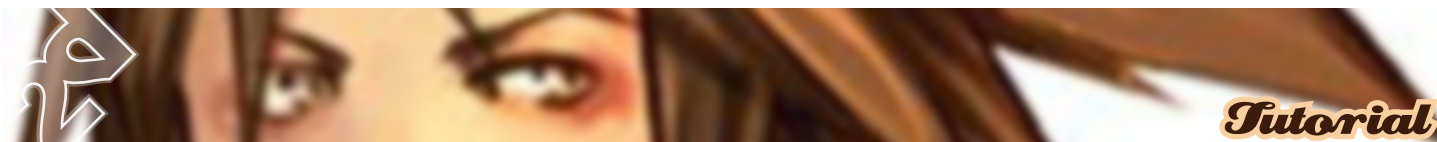
It's pretty easy to work with layer masks, when you click on your layer mask in the layer palette a little border will appear that means that your layer mask is selected. Within a layer mask you can draw greyscale and do transparent this way,

White visible, Black invisible, 50% gray; 50% visible. The advantage of layer masks is they don't delete the parts your image that should be invisible - you can always make them appear again.

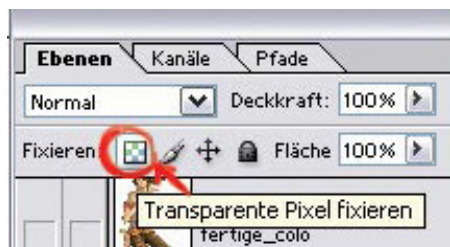
Perhaps you already noticed the little chain between the layer and your layer mask. When you click at it, it will disappear this means: chain visible: when you move your layer around your layer mask is moved around on the canvas too.

Chain invisible: you can move layer mask and layer separated on the canvas.





Now we can start colouring, I'm doing a new layer for every part of the body and fix all the transparent pixels (sorry don't know the correct English name.



When you put down the ground colours you can start doing folds and shadows and so on. I can't give you any specific tips here. The only thing is pick one light source and always work on that one. Then it's going to be some kind of realistic.

So after some minutes hours whatever you've finished the colouring.

All the details were done afterwards, they are several layers in different layer modes put above the original clothes layer, you can play around until you are satisfied. Layer modes I love using are multiply, overlay, colour and soft light, but everyone can do as he or she likes



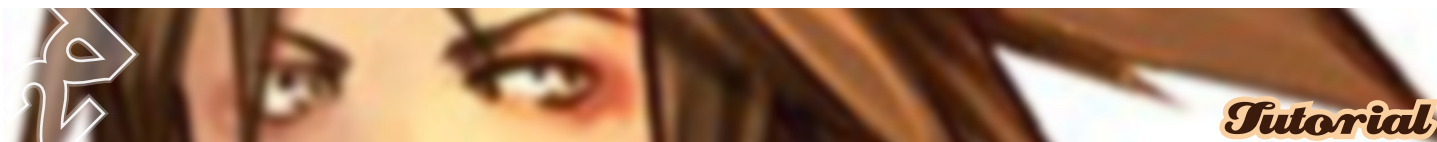
Step 4: Atmosphere

So here we go with the effects, so we click on our top layer and create a new LAYER> ADJUSTMENTS LAYER> CURVES. Here you can play around with the curves until you are satisfied. I lightened the whole thing and gave a warm yellow colour.



The screenshot shows the 'Ebenen' (Layers) panel with the 'Kanäle' (Channels) tab active. The 'Normal' layer is selected, and its 'Deckkraft' (Opacity) is set to 100%. The panel also displays icons for visibility, lock, and other layer functions. The text 'Kurven 1' is visible on the right side of the panel.





The final result looked like this.

I hope I could explain the colouring with layer masks and curves a bit I hope that I have made everything clear and please enjoy this tutorial and good luck with your creations!

Tutorial by :

Abuze



Abuze

Adina Krause

Age : 21

Profession : Student - Graphic Design /

Multimedia

abu.krause@gmx.de

abuze.deviantart.com

"I always loved to draw and paint but i seriously started drawing at the age of 16 when i first discovered photoshop. I was so impressed because of all the possibilities you had with that program. And when I saw the works of all those great artists on the internet I just had to know how they did those gorgeous pictures. From that day on the digital media became my favourite media until today and I'm constantly trying to learn more and become better."

by Richard Tilbury

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 move on to Trees.

SUBJECTS:

Last Month : Issue 01 : Jan 06 : part 1 : SKIES

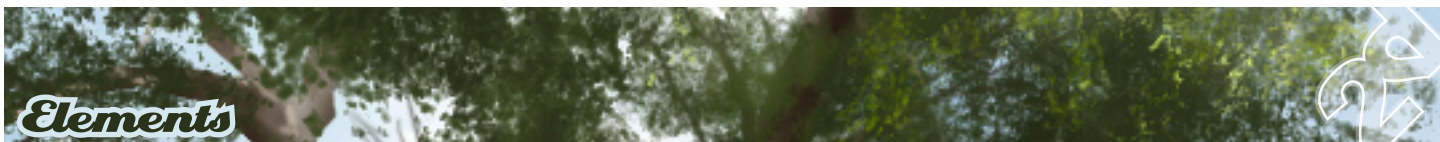
This Month : Issue 02 : Feb 06 : part 2 : TREES

Next Month : Issue 03 : Mar 06 : part 3 : FABRICS

Issue 04 : Apr 06 : part 4 : ROCK & STONE

Issue 05 : May 06 : part 5 : WATER

Issue 06 : Jun 06 : part 6 : FIRE & SMOKE



Intro

The following tutorial will attempt at outlining an approach to painting trees and hopefully summarise techniques that can be applied to the subject as a whole. Off course the capabilities of creating custom brushes in Photoshop is very useful with regard to painting different types of trees and will need to vary accordingly but overall the principals explained will remain universal.

Step 1:

The first step is to draw in a rough shape that represents the trunk and branches of the tree. I made an initial plain white background and then using the polygonal lasso tool simply traced in the shape of the tree and then filled it with a dark brown colour similar to (fig 01).



Fig 01

Step 2:

Then using one of Photoshop's standard dual brushes called dry brush which appears in the default palette and using a mid green (R42 G65 B11) start blocking in some of the main areas of foliage as seen in (fig 02). Try varying the size of the brush until you get the scale right.

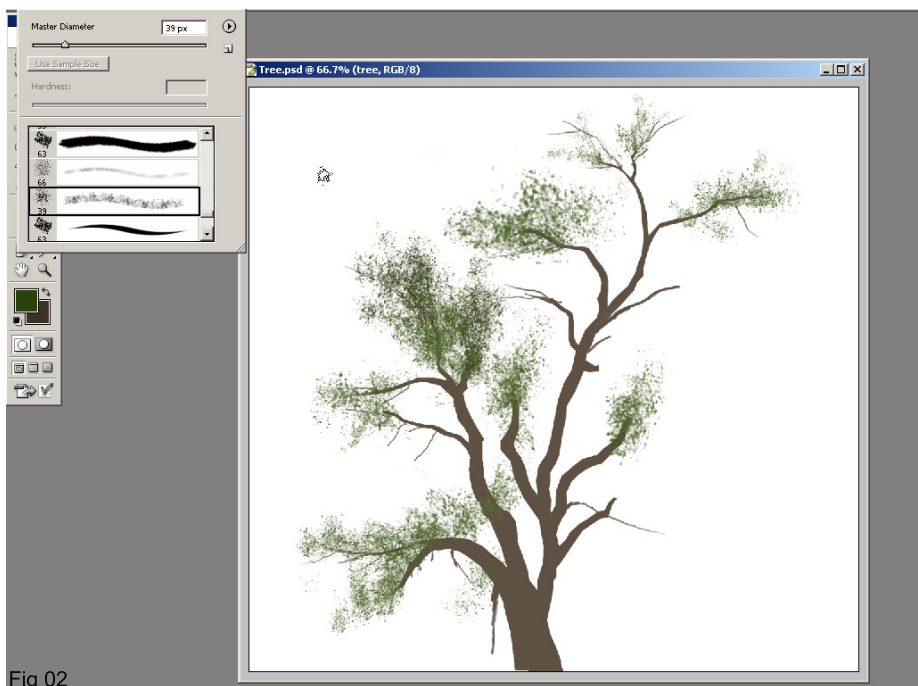


Fig 02



Continue adding the leaves until you are happy with the look and have filled out the shape of the tree (fig 03).

Step 3:

Then in order to add some volume and shadows I duplicated this layer and erased the upper most portions so that the sun appears to be shaded from the lower boughs and in contrast highlighting the highest branches (fig 04). Then on another new layer I painted in some lighter green highlights across the top sections of the foliage to also help create the volume. In (fig 05) I blacked out the background so you could more easily see these areas. You will also notice how I have included highlights on the branches to reinforce the sensation of light.



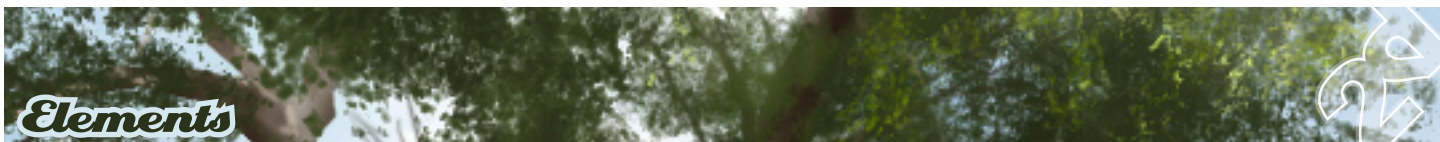
Fig 03



Fig 04



Fig 05



Step 4:

The next stage is to add some further highlights on the same or a new layer as well as some extra branches that appear in front of the foliage. It is important to remember that the branches and foliage spread out in every direction as well as towards the viewer and so branches disappear behind leaf groupings and also overlap them at points (fig 06). You can see the extra highlights when you compare the picture to the previous image. These represent the leaves that have really caught the light and often appear very pale due to their reflective quality.



Fig 06

Step 5:

All that is left to do now is flatten down the layers of the tree and then using the colour dodge and colour burn tools enhance some of the qualities of the light across the branches and foliage. I also decided to add in the sky painting from last month's Element's tutorial and tweaked this using the Colour Balance and Hue/Saturation values to give it a sunnier and warmer quality. You can see the final result in (fig 07).

Tutorial by :

Richard Tilbury



Fig 07



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 move on to Trees.

SUBJECTS:

Last Month : Issue 01 : Jan 06 : part 1 : SKIES

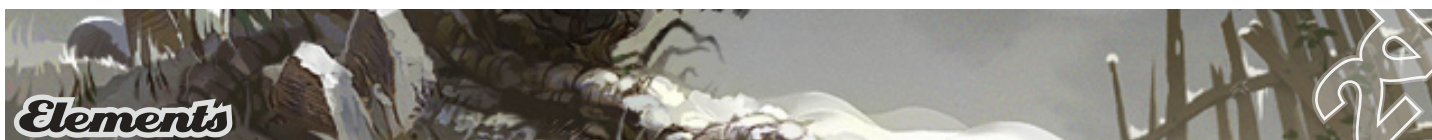
This Month : Issue 02 : Feb 06 : part 2 : TREES

Next Month : Issue 03 : Mar 06 : part 3 : FABRICS

Issue 04 : Apr 06 : part 4 : ROCK & STONE

Issue 05 : May 06 : part 5 : WATER

Issue 06 : Jun 06 : part 6 : FIRE & SMOKE



Intro:

This tutorial will attempt to outline a shape-based approach to painting using a snowy tree as an example. It is meant to explain a more graphic as opposed to a fully rendered modus operandi while limiting oneself to using mainly contrast and form to create an illustration.

Step 1:

Before actually starting up the computer I produced a quick ink sketch on aquarelle paper to lay down some interesting shapes, find a decent composition and define the general direction I plan on going into. Besides the fact that I am able to stay looser when exploring an idea traditionally before fleshing it out in Photoshop I find that the paper structure and ink shapes will give the image a subtle naturalistic quality that is otherwise difficult to reproduce digitally. When sketching, even

Fig 01



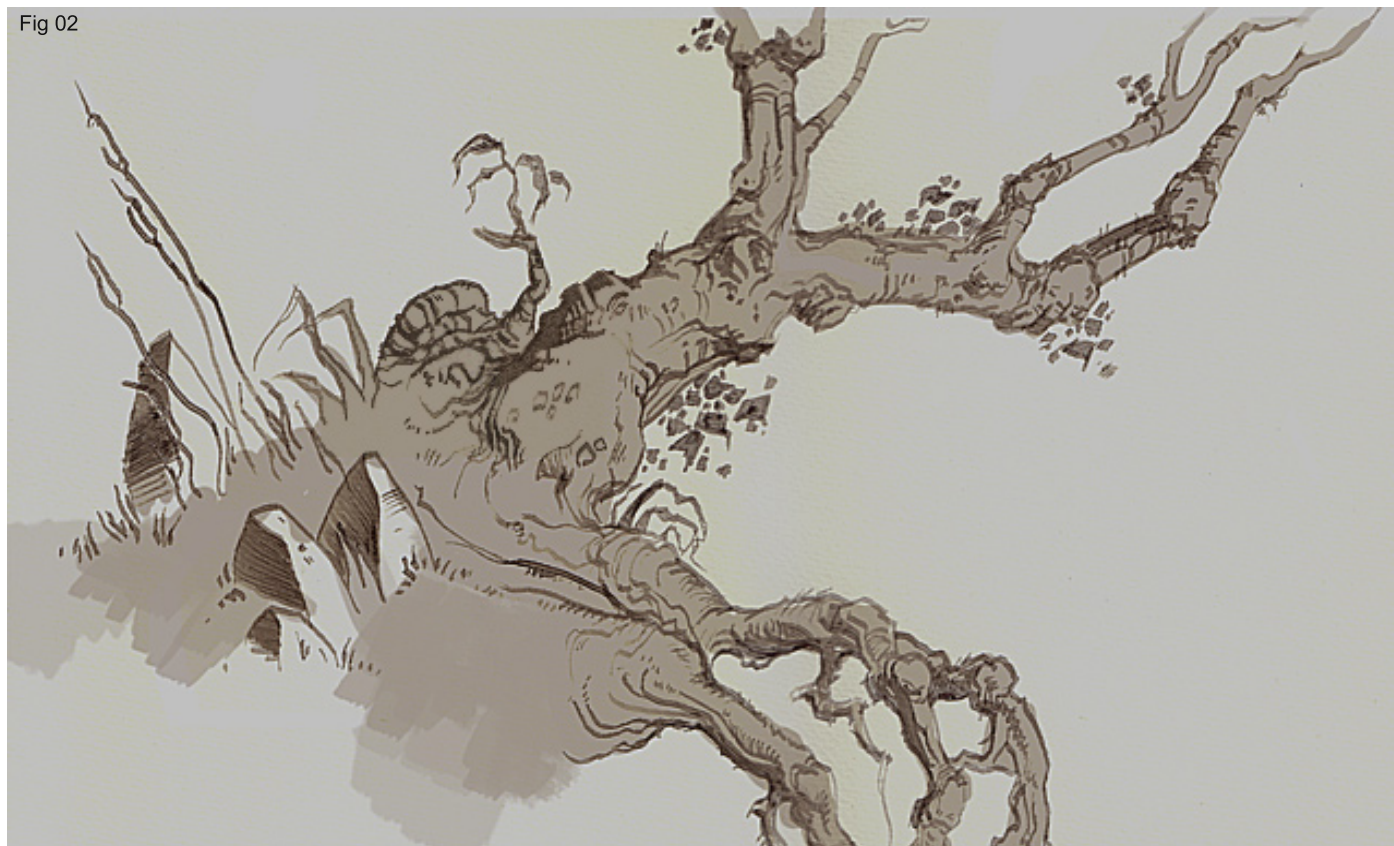
at this early stage, it may be worth to hint at perspective and volume by blocking out some of the inner shapes with a few strokes instead of solely relying on the outlines as this will initially give a clearer idea of where the drawing is headed. (Fig.01)

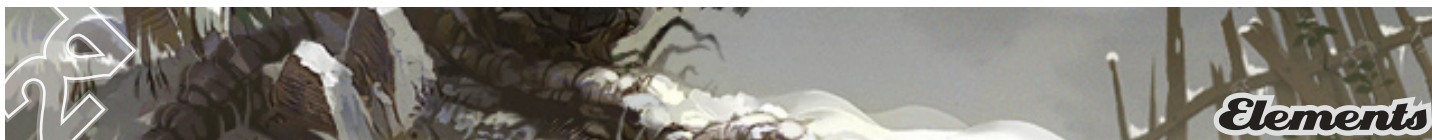
Step 2:

After scanning the sketch I first of all applied an overall Brightness/Contrast layer to darken

the image enough to allow me to add both, darker and lighter values when rendering the volume of the tree later on. I then roughly filled the shape of the tree with a base colour in a multiply-layer using a medium sized chalk brush. Though the brush itself generates a solid "coat" of colour the outline of it makes the smudges look more natural than a normal round brush would, resembling somewhat of marker sketch. (Fig.02)

Fig 02





Step 3:

Since the subject matter is characterized by a rather limited colour spectrum and sharp, contrasty lines in a usually diffuse light situation I am using what I call a shape-based approach in creating this image rather than setting a definite light source and going straight for a realistic light source-based rendering. In doing so I try to define light and dark areas that form shapes by contrasting each other. In achieving this the snow patches in this picture play an important part and I start laying out them in broad, rough strokes with a smaller charcoal-shaped brush. (Fig.03)

Fig 03

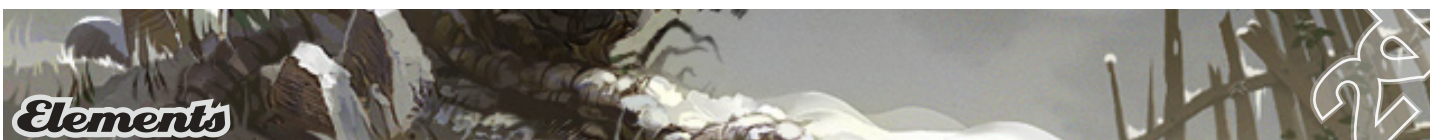


Step 4:

By darkening the base layer of the tree slightly more I increase the contrast between snow and organic structures further and start blocking out details of the trunk, rocks, and grassy bits to begin generating volume as well as giving more shape to leaves, roots and branches. Adding just a subtle touch of colour on in places will be enough to prevent the image from looking too monotone. (Fig.04)

Fig 04





Step 5:

Next, the cleaning up of the yet untreated areas could begin. In doing so I found it important to angle the sharp outlines of shapes of, for instance, the snow patches in interesting ways to generate appealing compositions and as such filling white space by relatively simple means. This ensured that none of the less important areas would become overworked and the focus stayed firmly on the tree. (Fig.05)

Fig 05



Step 6:

As the detailing continued by fleshing out the texture of the bark I also took the opportunity to add small gimmicks such as icicles and tiny tracks to break up larger shapes and lines into smaller ones and invoke a touch of lively playfulness. A slight gradient as a background not only helped to juxtapose the contrast of the snow patches on top of the tree further but also gave a subtle hint at a damp sky. (Fig.06)

Fig 06





Fig 07



Step 7:

With the tree painted up and the largest part of the clean-up work completed I decided to add some patchiness to the gradient to somewhat diminish the CG feel. A few more roots peeking out from under the snow on the left helped the tree's perceived stability. I then balanced the composition on the right by adding a few grass leaves in the foreground and a fence behind the tree while the subtle disk of the moon simply serves as another means of contrasting shapes against each other and virtually leading the focal point from the base of the gnarly trunk over to the right towards the fence. The comparably young, slender and fragile plant clasping the batons to the right also serves the purpose of juxtaposing opposites. (Fig.07)

Conclusion:

Breaking up large shapes into smaller ones while using tonal contrasting to separate them can be a relatively quick and easy way to create interesting compositions while maintaining some form of readability by detailing mainly the areas of interest and keeping the surrounding forms simple and sharp, yet appealing in their layout and angularity.

Tutorial by :

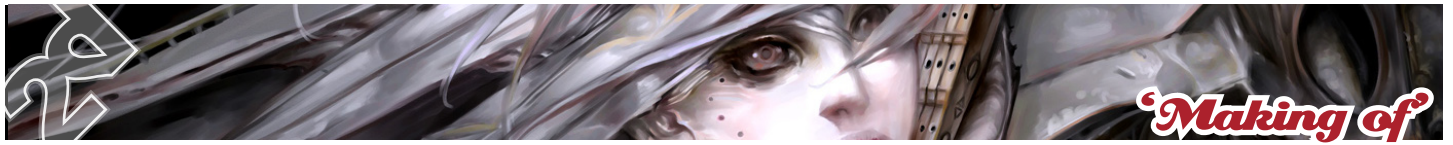
Chris Thunig

<http://www.thunig.com>



making of **my** **world** **by Kuang Hong**

Outstanding illustrations are filled with creativity. So plan well before you start on your draft. Know what you want to convey to your audience through the picture, your ideas, concept, colour, world view. Don't let your illustration become to mush like an anatomy drawing from the biology class, use your unique ideas to draw the viewers attentions. The inspiration for 'My World' came from an early piece entitled 'Butterfly'. Closely studying past works will sometimes give you a new feeling about it, I felt an urge to compose an image which can give a new world to Butterfly, a new definition.



Sketch

I usually use blue pencils for contouring and drafting out my works, then with 0.5 2B mechanical pencil to finalize the outline and define the finer details before scanning the drawing into the computer and adjusting the contrast in Photoshop. Colouring is done solely in painter.

However, I decided to use a different method, just sketching from scratch in the computer (it was the same for Butterfly). The good point of this is it gives better control over the line art, shadings and allows adjustments for contrast in different areas. This image's composition is nothing new, just with some personal concepts and style, like the fish and volcano in the glass spheres, mechanical limbs and hair of the girl, and the masked bird etc.

Tool

The only software I used for the My World was Painter 6.1. Watercolour was used throughout the process ever since drafting, in this manner the lines' edges will create a very dedicate and subtle touch when colouring because of the mix of hues. Due to the fact that in Painter 6.1 watercolour's only a base layer, I do my colouring only on one as though on paper.

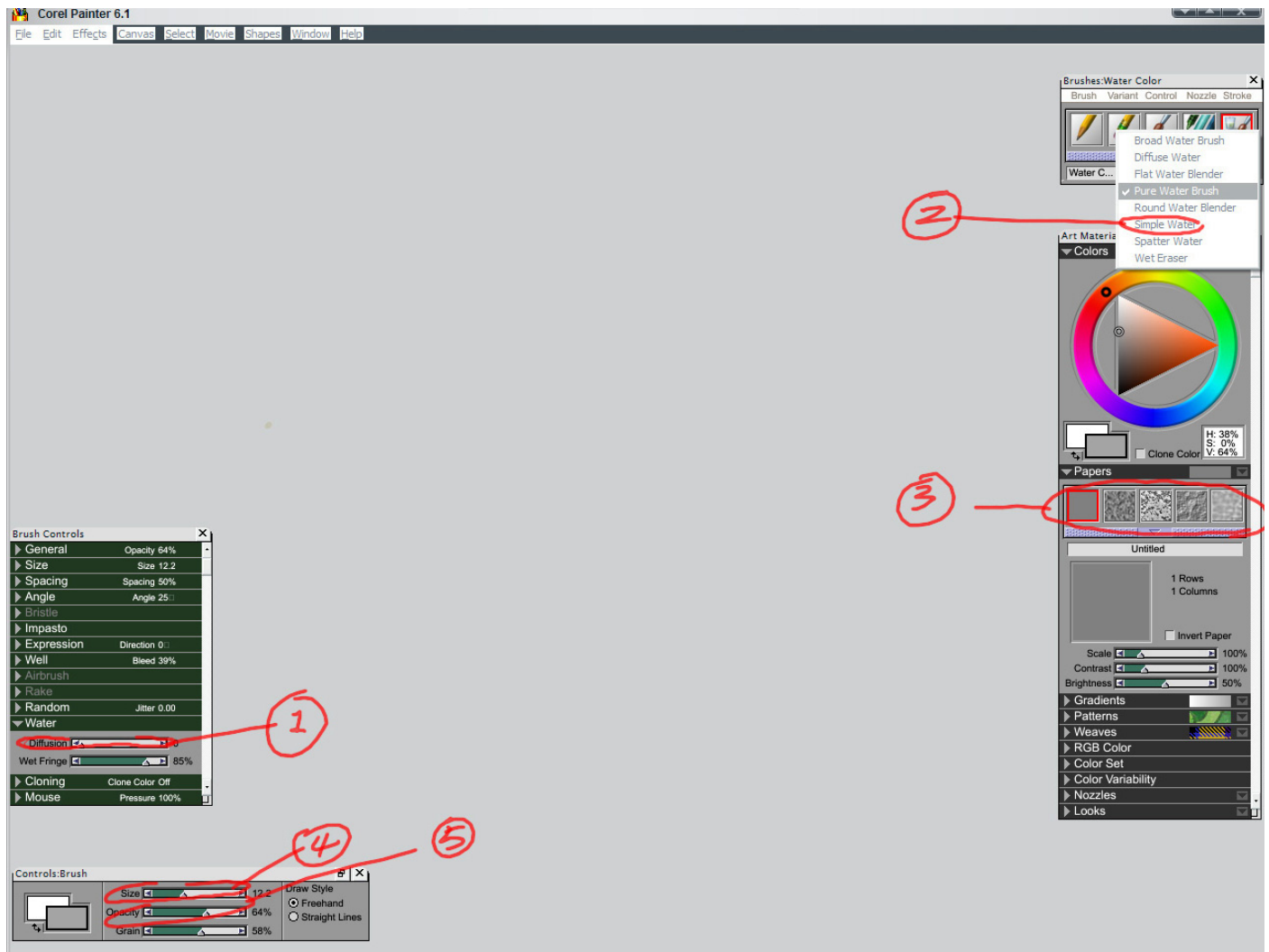
1. Diffusion: gives the medium a certain amount of wetness, usually use it for the base colour on big areas as well as to give a blurred effect at places.
2. Simple water: my most used tool from watercolour, most colourings are done with this.
3. Papers: base's textures, doesn't really stand out used with watercolour brushes, but

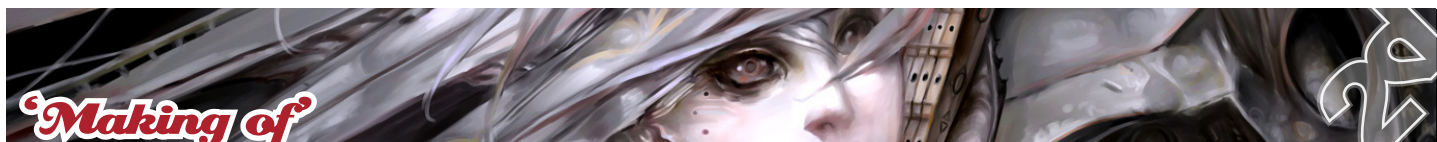
for rough textures like rocks and machines, I do increase the percentage, but for skins just usually not at all.

4. Controls – size: used most frequent during colouring, shortcut keys are [and] on the keyboard, adjusting the brush sizes from time to time gives better control over the colour mixing.

5. Controls – opacity: I usually keep the brush opacity at 100% because personally I like my colours a little more opaque, though it does make using watercolour a little not like it in some ways.

A tablet is a must, I use a Wacom one. Without one I'd recommend users to stick to Photoshop because in my point of view without a tablet it's really difficult to work in painter.





Colour

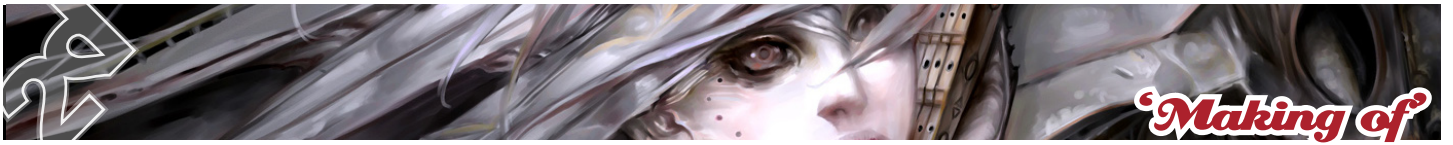
01, 02 - Colouring should always begin with the background, usual steps are to decide on the range of basic colours to use, shade blocks, then go into details. In this picture I wanted to present something simple and at will, so in the lighting and colours I didn't apply the aforementioned method, instead, directly into section by section of details.



03, 04 - Behind is a huge robot's head. After laying out the base colours, follow the value and tones to define details. Some cracks and scratches were added to the surface to give more texture.



05 - Finishing the background, I started working on the girl. The face takes a lot of time to render. Detailing the light pupils and dark eye rims, the forehead and face's sides' textures, all to give her a more industrial feel.

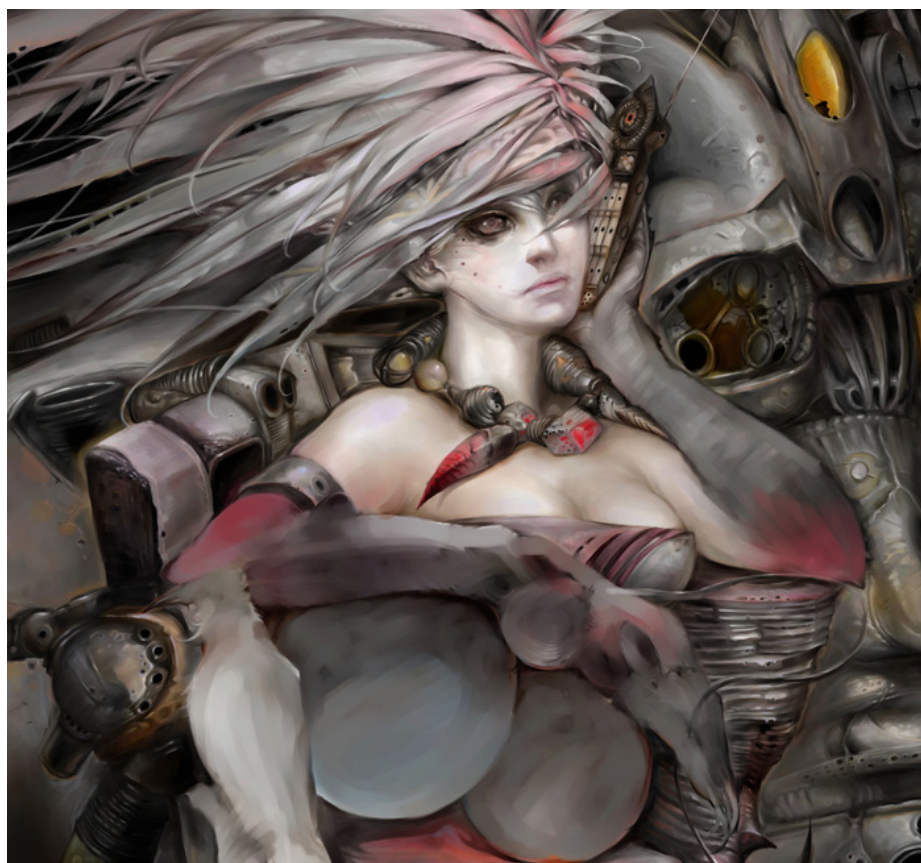
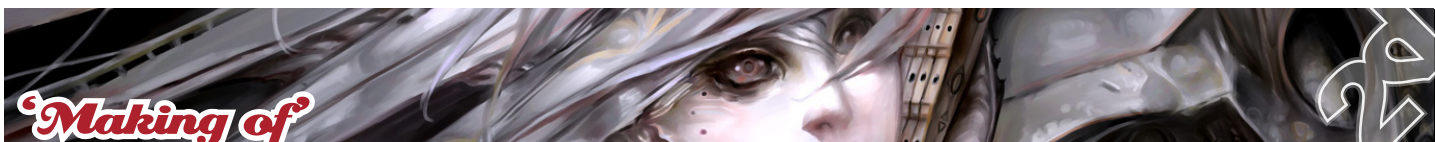


06 - The colouring of hair is pretty easy going with the base colour blocks already there. But extra care is noted making sure the lighting doesn't go wrong for the arranged layers. Slight designs in the front make the hair more interesting and girl more charming.



07 - The body is coloured according to the order of arrangements back and forth; paint the skin first, then the accessories, the chair before all that, of course. Attention was paid to the joints and structural proportions; I used smaller brush size and work slow to keep the skin smooth, also, not forgetting the shadows cast by the necklace.

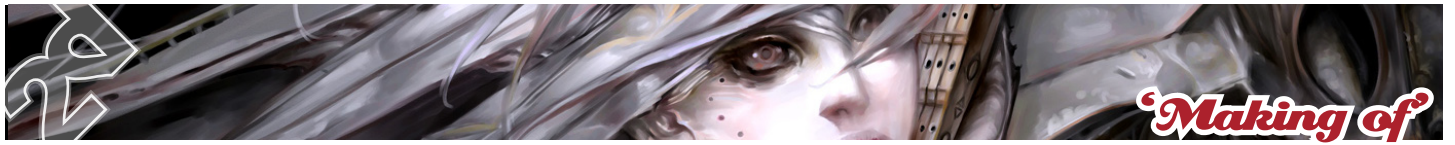




08 - Edges of the necklace was strictly controlled, the carvings and lines took a lot of time to detail. Those done colours were laid for the remaining parts of the image. More hues were used in this section to make the centre more colourful and interesting. In detail the left armrest on the chair was shaped and made into a twisting stack of CDs.



09 - To bring out the half mechanic half organic feel in the piece, a trait in Butterfly, the design of arms were made to look organic yet locked in a mechanical design. The textures not flesh but plastic and leather inclined, the right wrist's spiral looking thing is a speaker, earphones directly plugged in for music; and to leave an impression of difference the phone in her hand was designed out of the norm, communication of a different world with another.

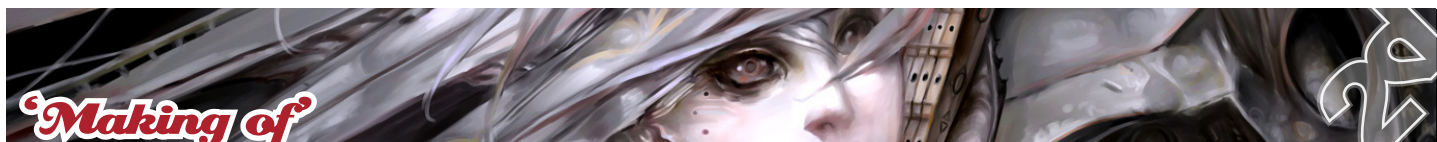


10 - The two spheres are also part of the main focus, I had wanted to use them to present two totally different worlds contained within. Final decision was an erupted volcano and a fish in water.

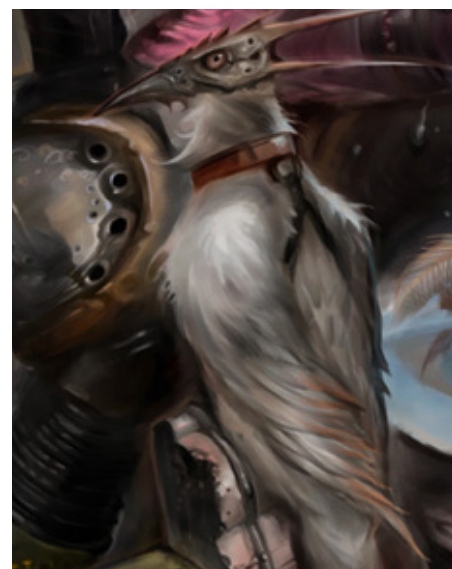


11 - Here, other than painting what's within the spheres, the texture and shapes themselves also had to be projected; thus cracks were painted on the one behind, and the one in front, weightlessly floating, water spurting out from the centre.





12 - The last part is the bird at the most front. This bird was painted casually with no reference, wearing a mask and giving it a sharp looking eye is to show that even birds have thinking in this world. After the colouring was all done the image was resized to check



on any mistakes or if anything was missed out. Adjusting of colours was done in Photoshop because Painter's colour contrasts are lighter. Because there was a very clear concept in mind since the very start, the work flow was very smooth. Overall the image took about 10 hours without any references.

Tutorial by :

Kuang Hong

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SAMURAI

COLOUR ADJUSTMENTS IN PHOTOSHOP

MAKING OF
BY ABUZE

In this tutorial I will show you how to get more mood into your pictures. This will be done in Photoshop via Adjustment Layers and some other effects. Some basic knowledge in Photoshop wouldn't be that bad. You should know what layer masks are.





Step 1

In this tutorial we start with our almost finished picture. Open it in Photoshop and look at it. Is the mood the one you wanted to be? In my case it is definitely not. I wanted a more mystic mood and the colours should be brighter and more shining. At the moment it looks pretty dull. Ok lets start and change that.

Step 2

Go to **Layers - Adjustment**
Layers - Gradient Map

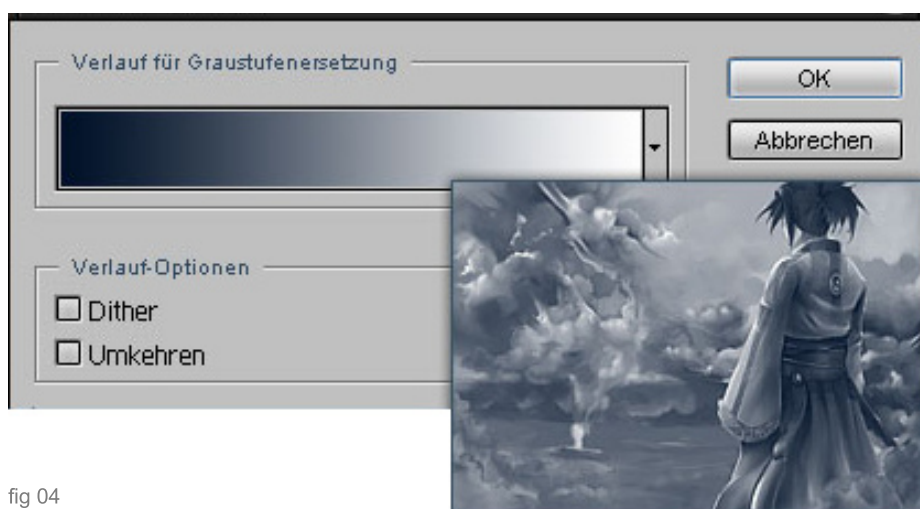


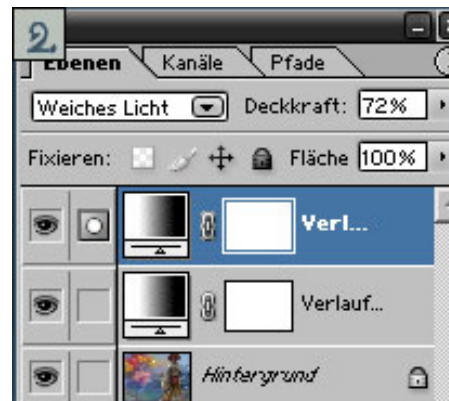
fig 04

I chose a gradient from dark grey blue to white. Press ok - your image should look something like this. When you look at your layers you can see a new layer (fig 01) appearing - this is your gradient map layer.

Select the layer and put it to brighten (in my version its called aufhellen) and put the Opacity to 70% Now duplicate that layer and set it to soft light (in my version its called weiches licht) (fig 02)

Your image should look similar to (fig 03) now. But I wanted the clouds to be really colourful. So I decided to erase some parts of the Gradient Map

Just pick a black or grey colour and draw on our gradient map (fig 04)





Step 3

Ok now we have to push our image into the direction we want it to be. For this we use

Layer - Adjustment

Layer - Curves

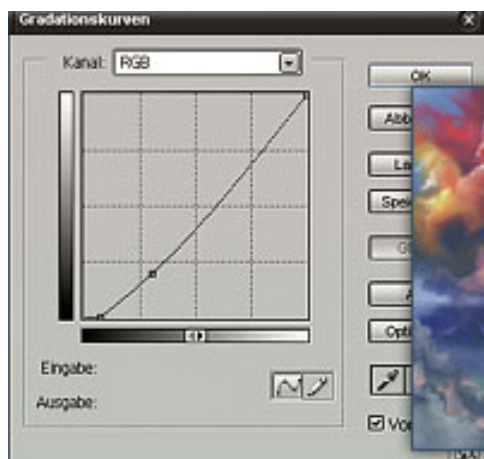
A window looking like this should appear.

You can grab those little points on the edges and move them around when you click into the middle of that curve a new point will appear so that you can move too.

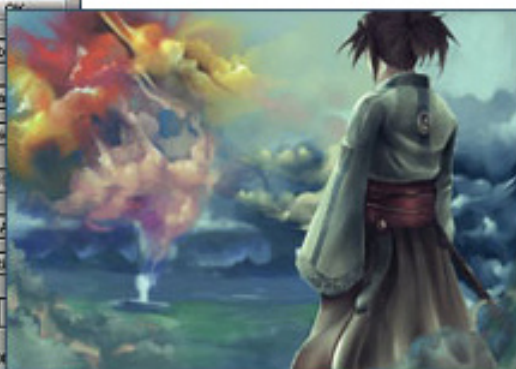
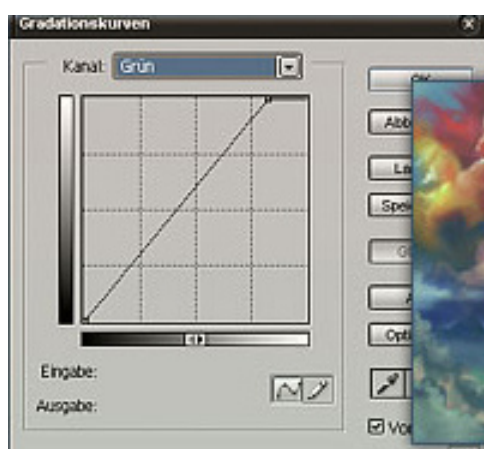




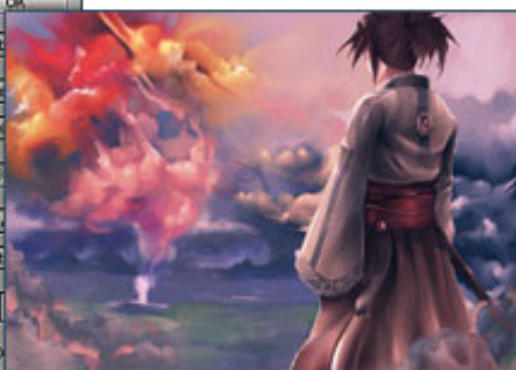
Ok I will show you what kind of effect those changes can have.



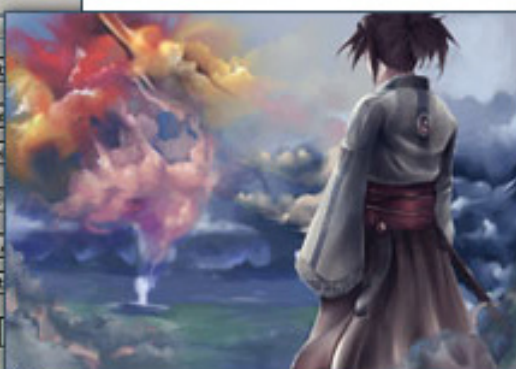
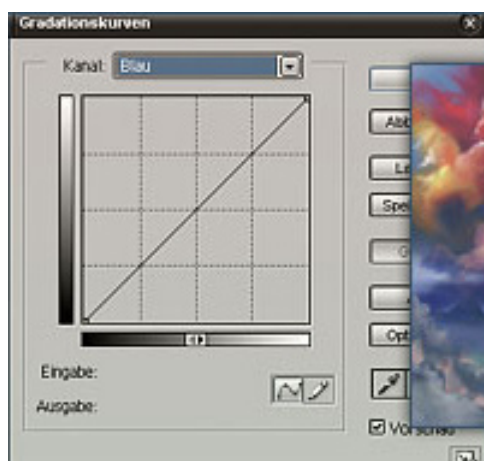
RGB



Green



Red



Blue



Combined

When you are satisfied with your colours click ok.

Now you can make a new layer and add some sparkles and stuff - until you are satisfied with your picture. Hope you understood everything and here is the finished picture.

Tutorial by :

Abuze



'Abuze' a.k.a. Adina Krause

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"I always loved to draw and paint but

i seriously started drawing at the age of 16

when i first discovered photoshop. I was so

impressed because of all the possibilities you had with that program. And when I saw the works of all those great artists on the internet I just had to know how they did those gorgeous pictures. From that day on the digital media became my favourite media until today and I'm constantly trying to learn more and become better."



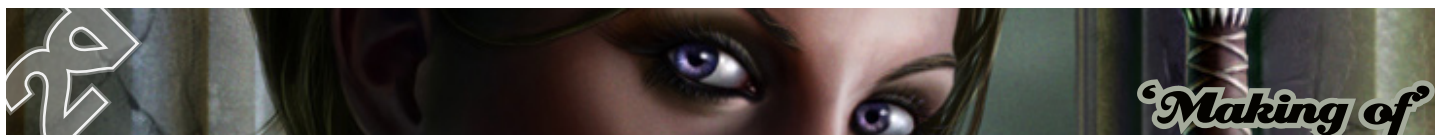
I've always been really fond of narrow standing formats, and this painting will hopefully be the first in a series of 2 or 3 with the same appearance and dimensions. I want to make a series that looks nice together, perhaps hanging on a wall.

This painting took me quite some time, and the high resolution almost made my gimpy HP lap-top melt. Please take a look at the close up details (which is also scaled down quite a bit) and the step by step process :-)

Painted from scratch in 4-6 evenings using Photoshop with a Wacom tablet. Reference used for the girl and the folds.

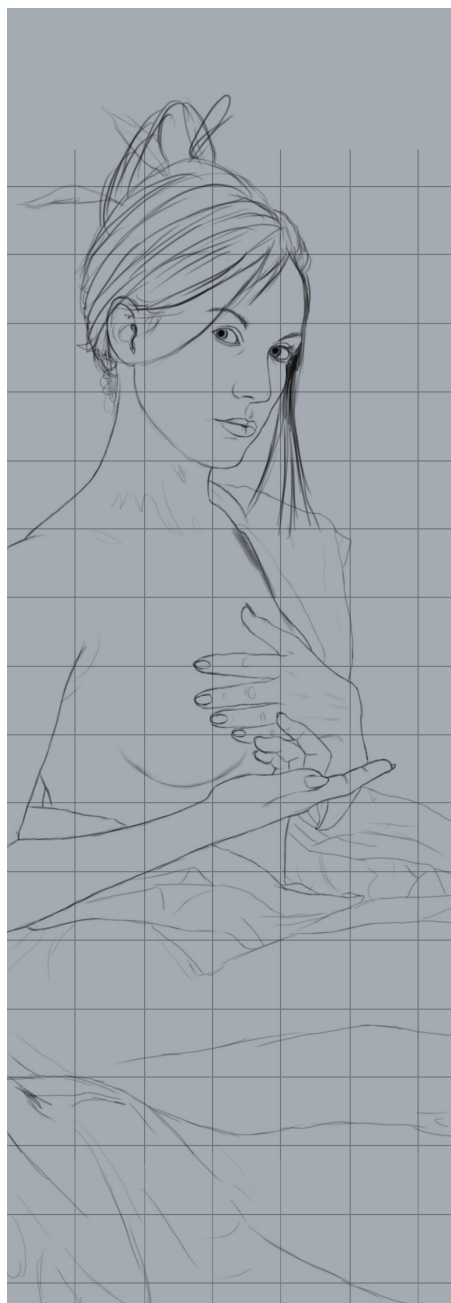
Henning Ludvigsen

equilibrium



Line art

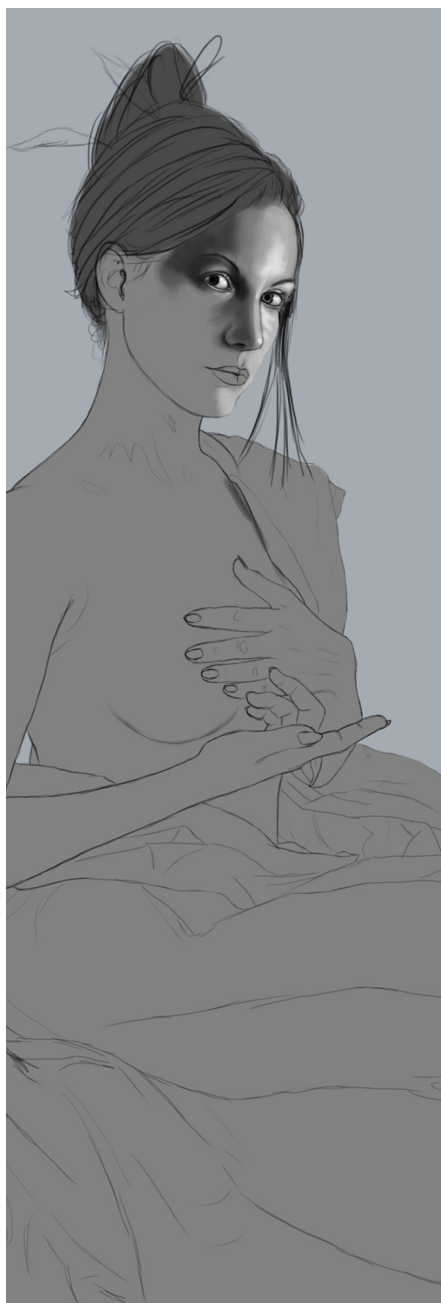
I've always been fascinated by realism, and because of this it is really important to me that the base line-art sketch has got proper proportions. I usually use the old trick by putting a grid on top of a reference photo I've shot, and then I copy the same grid onto a blank canvas and start drawing grid by grid from what I see on the reference photo. I make sure to keep the grid on a separate layer so that I easily can remove the grid at a later stage, and also keep the drawing on a separate layer underneath



the grid.

Blocking in, and grey scale shading

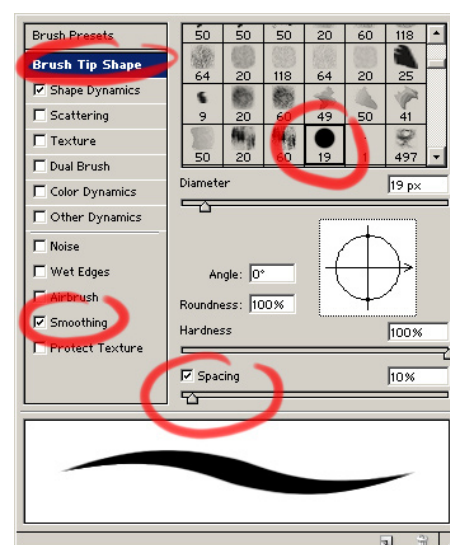
Once I have the line art version ready, I delete the layer with the grid, and then I make another layer behind the line art drawing which I fill with one grey scale colour using a hard brush. Once this is done, I collapse those two layers so that I only have the background behind and the character in a separate layer.



Now I start shading with grey scale tones only by looking closely at the reference photo. I use only grey scale tones at this stage only because I like getting the shape up and running before having to think about colours. Some like it the other way around and start out with colours. However, you should do what comes natural to you.

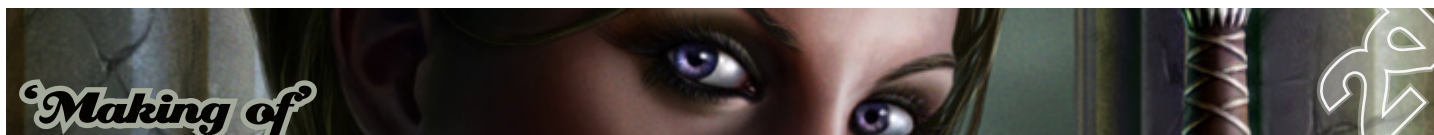
Brush usage

Personally I really like using hard edged brushes as they resemble the traditional brushes in both the way of working and when it comes to the result. To make a simple hard edged brush in Photoshop, simply follow these settings:



1: Make sure you have the brush tool selected, and choose a hard edge brush (the ones that looks like a hard circle).

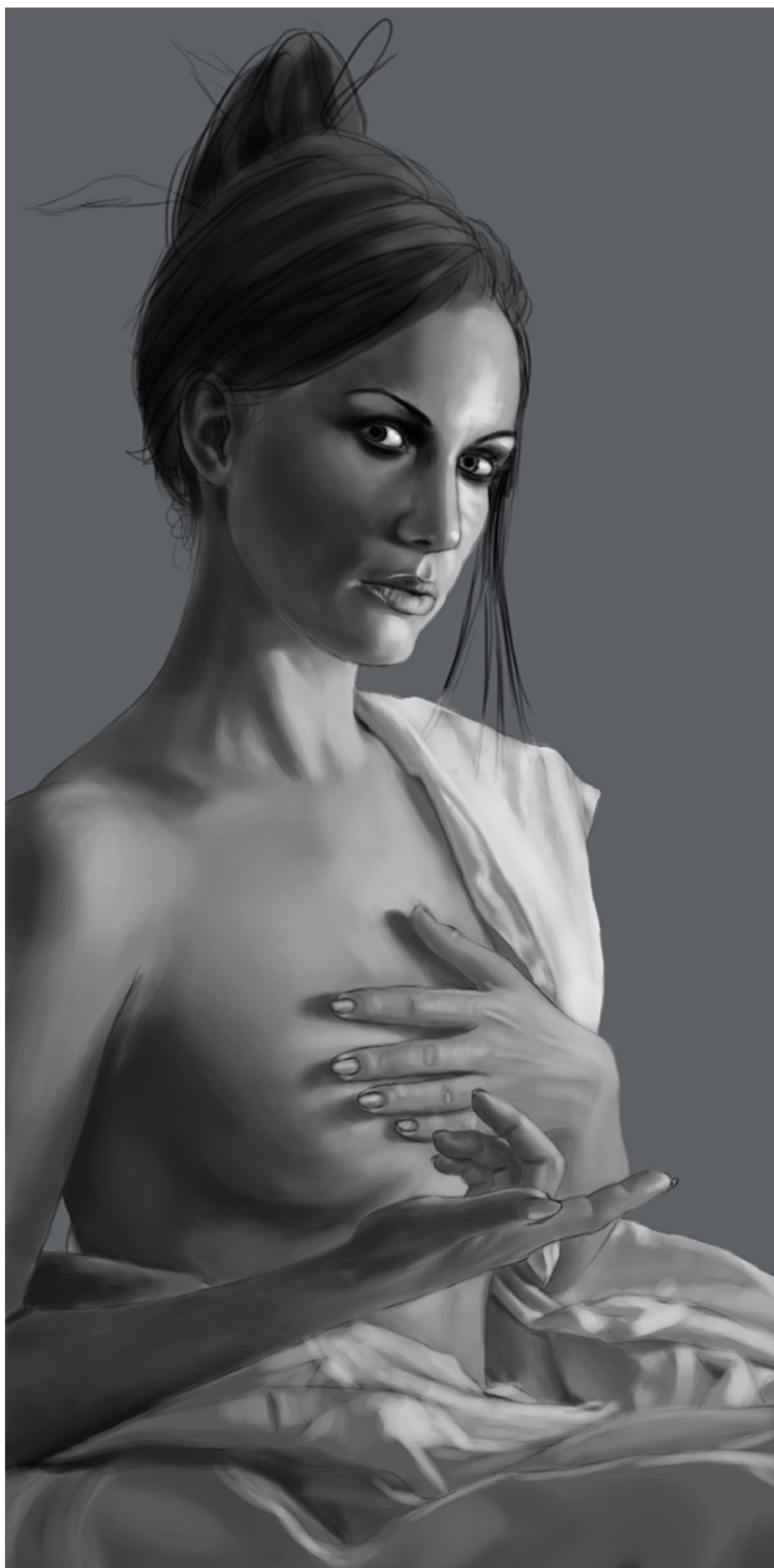
2: Now open the "brushes tab" (Windows/brushes). Click the "Brush tip shape" button and drag the "spacing" slider to 10%. If this is set too high, the stroke looks like a row of balls instead of one single stroke, so keeping the spacing narrow makes the strokes look nice and smooth.

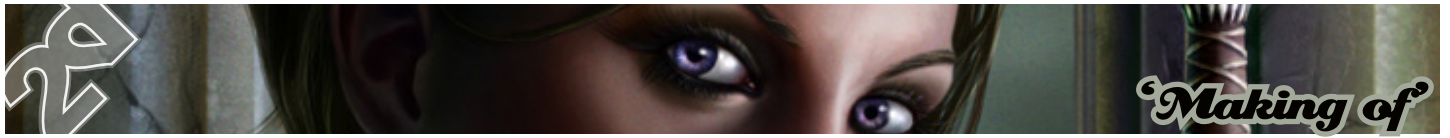


'Making of'

Getting the grey scale version up

Using the new hard edged brush, I simply go over the entire character keeping the flow of the brush low (2-5%). I colour pick (by pressing "alt" while using the brush) where I'm painting for mixing new values directly to get smooth transitions. For example, if I have a dark grey-scale tone, and then a brighter one next to this, I will colour pick one of these tones and mix it with the other, and then colour pick the new tone and paint with this one and continue like this until I have a smooth transition. This makes the painting look a lot more interesting and dynamic than using the smooth air-brush looking brushes.





Colours

Having the grey-scale version of the character in a decent state, I spend some time to find a colour-palette suitable for the skin tones I would like this piece to have. Some times I base this on previous paintings I've done, other times I create completely new ones. This time I wanted to use cold colours, close to porcelain values, so I made a palette with skin tones with quite a bit of blue and purple in it. Now I turn on the "Lock transparent pixels" button on the "layers" menu so that I don't paint outside the edges of the character, and set the brush to "colour" mode and start adding rough colours to the character. This is just to get a base, and will be changed completely once I start shading for real. I also added some very basic green and blue values to the drapes at this stage.

Once the rough colourized version is ready, I change the brush mode back to "normal" and start shading the entire piece all over again, using the same hard edged brush with low flow. When doing this, it's really important to colour-pick as I go along. Instead of mixing colours on the side, I like mixing directly as I paint. I think this makes the result appear more dynamic and more interesting as you get all kinds of colour-variations. It also creates some imperfection which is good in my opinion, especially when working digitally.

Adding extra elements

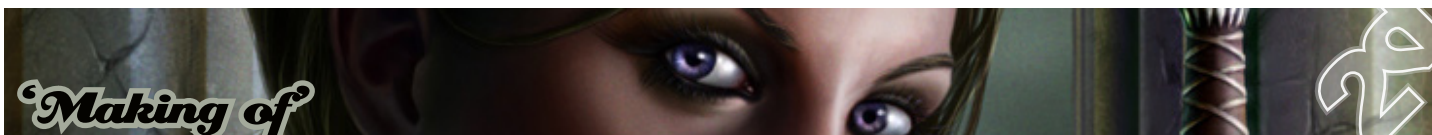
After spending quite some time shading skin tones, drapes and hair, the time has come to add a background and extra elements.

I wanted the background to be simple and symmetrical, so by framing the narrow piece by painting some columns seemed natural to me. Using a background sky with green values also makes sense to me according to the ambient light I wanted the scene to have. I used

green colour in some of the dark places of the skin tones, the hair, and on the drapes.

The dagger was also added at this stage. I wanted it to include intricate decorations, and by looking at some references photos of different daggers, this one was the result. As usual, I started out in grey-tones before adding colour here as well.





'Making of'

Finishing the piece

The dagger has now got the colours needed, and I go over the entire piece checking details and that ambient colours are right. I always add a soft glow to the brightest high lights in the piece by brushing very carefully with a soft brush with white colour. This makes a difference in my opinion when used carefully. Too much glow will kill the piece.

The last thing I do is to add a noise grain on top of everything. This to make the piece look less computer painted, and to add some imperfection to the values. If you look closely at a digital photo, you will see that there are not real clean values, each surface usually has got some grain to it.

I follow these steps when making a noise grain:

- 1: Make a new layer on top of everything.
- 2: Fill this layer with this value of grey: R=128, G=128, B=128
- 3: Set the layer blending option from "Normal" to "Overlay". This will make the layer with the grey scale fill appear 100% transparent.
- 4: Now add a noise to this layer (Filter/Noise/Add noise), and set it to 400%, Gaussian.
- 5: Run filter: "Filter/Brush Strokes/Spatter" a couple of times to break up the noise patterns.
- 6: Run filter: "Filter/Blur/Blur".
- 7: Set the layer "Opacity" to 5-10%, depending on what looks best.





About The Artist

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Art Director, Aventurine S.A, Greece. (computer game development) / Freelance 2D artist.

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I grew up in Holmestrand, in Norway. In Norway art school can be joined at quite an early age, and this is where I learned the basics of traditional art. This all happened in the time before digital computer art made its way to the traditional art schools. Because little more advanced art education was available, I began working full time after two years of basic art school. Since the ad operates within a digital environment (mostly Macintosh OS), I set about teaching myself this. This Amiga was the first computer which opened my eyes to digital art and I realized the tremendous opportunities available when working digitally. After ten years of working my way up through the ranks of the ad agency industry, I got the opportunity to use my skills in computer game development. With this opportunity, came an invitation to move to sunny Greece, which I immediately accepted. It was here in Athens I realized that I'd been working for ten years without doing what I really wanted to do in life, paint. Since 2004, I have focused on developing work flow skills and creating fantasy-related 2D art. I am currently (enf of now 2005) working as the Art Director of a Norwegian/Greek computer game development company in Athens, currently developing the mmorpg game Darkfall. I spent my spare time working on personal and commissioned projects. Thank you for reading my tutorial, and for your interest in digital art.





MAKING OF **FRESH MEAT** *BY ANDREAS ROCHA*

One day, on my way to work I decided to make a small detour on my way to the subway and took a walk through one of Lisbon's most charismatic parks. It was a cold February morning, no one was in sight and the sound of morning traffic was subdued by the trees. I was immersed into a natural environment and it almost seemed magical. Suddenly, I passed by some trees that really caught my attention (fig 01). They somehow resembled groping hands and with their scale, they looked threatening. I believe it is my love for fantasy that made me see the tree like that and not as mere tree. Several days later I went back and took some photos of these trees and so started the painting "Fresh Meat".

Andi Rocha
2005.02.27



fig 1

FRESH MEAT

At the time I still wasn't sure what I wanted to portray. I knew I wanted to have the tree in a "hand-groping pose". I asked myself: What could make the tree even more threatening? It had to be groping for something innocent, something delicate: a little girl (which later turned into a young woman) lured by the wickedness of the tree. Almost like Old Man Willow from Tolien. I also wanted to introduce the classic "Psycho"-type-on-top-of-the-hill-house to add mood. So now I had the main ingredients and I was ready to get my hands dirty, digitally, that is.



fig 2

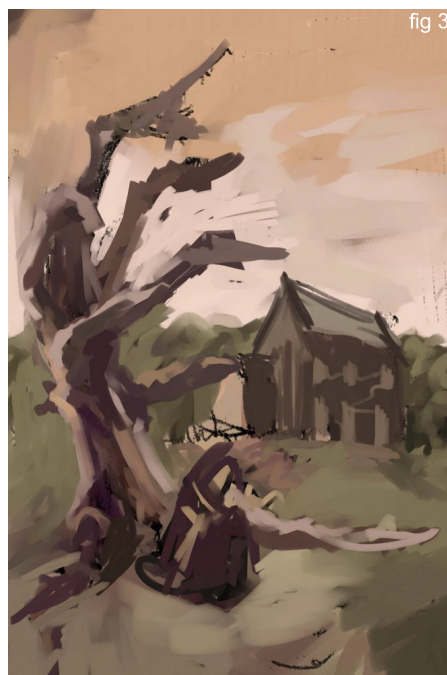


fig 3

My initial sketches were done on plain A4 photocopy paper and they were quite small. The chosen sketch is actually 2 cm high (fig 02). I scanned it and brought it into Painter where I applied my first layer of colour. (fig 03) I love Painter mainly for its ability to apply brush strokes that mix with underlying colours. This initial painting was done quite quickly to maintain spontaneity and not to over work it. I just wanted to find the right colours to go along with the mood of the painting, which in this case were autumn colours: yellow greens



'Making of'

and orange browns. At this stage I wasn't concerned with details, avoiding working on a particular area of the image for too long. This was done keeping the tip of the brush quite big and working quickly.

While I paint, sometimes I flip the canvas to get a fresh look at what I am working on. (fig 04) I've seen countless tutorials that speak of this technique, but I would like to underline it once more, because it really helps (although I forget to do it most of the time). In this case I ended up liking the flipped version better, and I kept it. At this stage I also started to introduce some detail especially on the tree which was the main subject. I progressively painted with smaller brushes, constantly changing opacities.

As I go through the painting process I keep going switching to Photoshop, because of its outstanding adjustment tools and ease of use, especially with layers. Here, (fig 05) I used Levels and Hue/Saturation adjustments to fine tune contrast and colour. Sometimes I use adjustment layers so I can make localized fine-tuning.

During the process I don't have a clear idea of what the final image will be and so it is quite a sinuous walk until I get to the final painting. As you can see here (fig 06) I tried to introduce a cathedral-like building and make the tree "fuller" with small branches.



fig 4



fig 5



fig 6



fig 7

Even if you drop these new ideas, there is always something that is retained (fig 07). That is one of the things I love about digital painting: its versatility to experiment various versions of the same image.

Between these two steps (fig 08 & fig 09) the main difference is the texture. It can really make the image more detailed and finished. However, this step didn't take so long as it may look because I made use of a custom hose in Painter

(I could similarly have done a custom brush in Photoshop) to do the vegetation. I believe that if you have the tools to make things easier (without making it look artificial) use them! It's not cheating in my book.

Something that really helps during the whole process is to seek criticism from the people around you, be it family, work colleagues or even your dog! Most of the time they do not relate to the image the way you do (especially the dog), and most of the time you are doing your paintings for other people to see and not for yourself. So consult the client often! Other ways to seek opinions are through online forums in the work in progress sections.

Although it's rare to get an in depth analysis of your work, sometimes you get some really cool tips, like the one to introduce some skulls in the bushes behind the trees to spice up the image.



fig 8



fig 9

'Making of'

While working the background elements, like the house and the sky I realized that the vegetation behind the tree wasn't really working because the silhouette of the tree was lost. The vegetation also created a strange diagonal that didn't help the composition. So, I decided to cut away some bushes and introduce a mountain ridge to balance the image and add more depth (fig 10).

Back in Photoshop I introduced a warm haze to hint at a setting sun to the right (fig 11). A new layer in Photoshop set to the Colour Dodge blending mode can do wonders sometimes. For me it is the best and most interesting way to introduce light into a painting. This was the image I ended up posting in the forums in the finished paintings section.

Another big bonus of digital painting is that an image is never finished. You can paint over it as many times as you like because it will never deteriorate. So, several months later, I picked it up again and corrected aspects that were criticized in the previous finished image, mainly the building in the background and the girl (fig 12). I reworked them and I think the image improved with these important modifications based on feed-back.

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fig 10

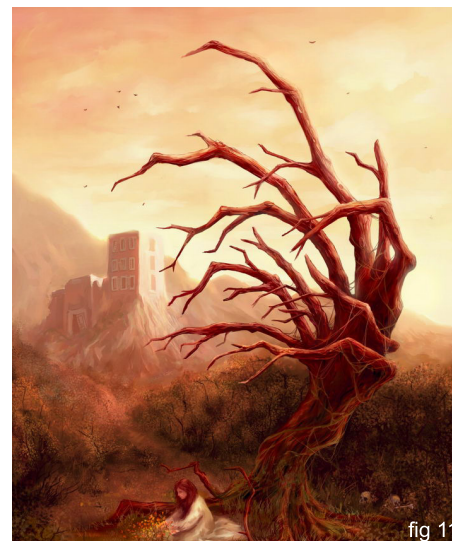
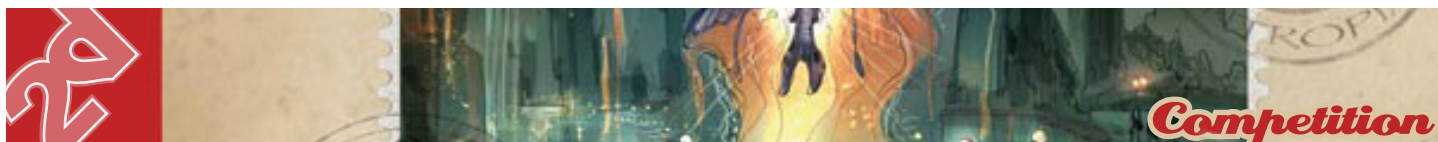


fig 11





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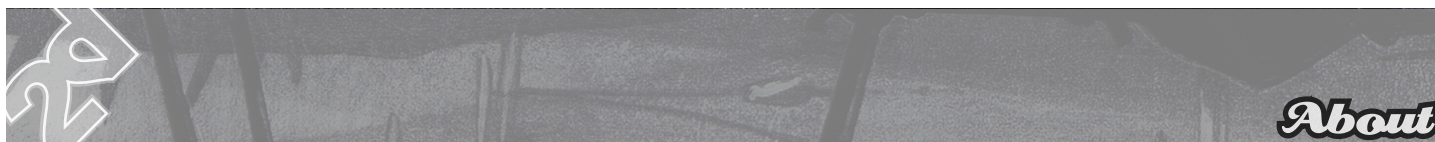
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