

2d Artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue008 August 2006 \$4 / €3.25 / £2.25

A History of Matte Painting

Interviews

Olivier Derouetteau
Emrah Elmasli

Articles

From real Brush to Digital Stylus

Tutorials

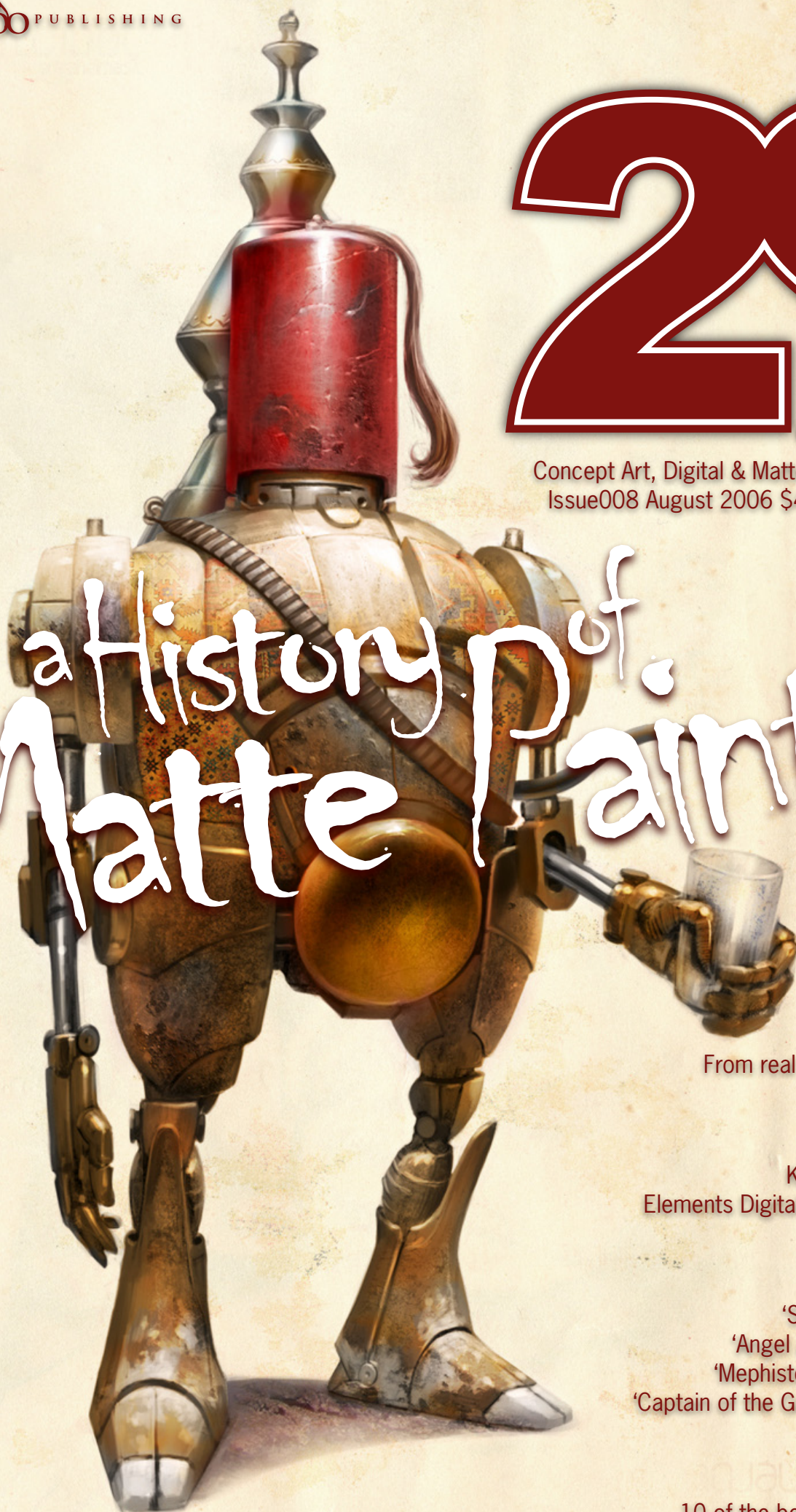
King Kong – Part 3 of 3
Elements Digital Painting Series - Eyes

Making Of

'Sirens' by Jimi Benedict
'Angel Attack!' by Daniele Bigi
'Mephistophelia' by Ivan Mijatov
'Captain of the Guard' by Eric Wilkerson

Galleries

10 of the best 2D digital artworks





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welcome **Editorial**

Editorial

Welcome

Once again to 2DArtist magazine. Please continue to write in and tell us what you think of the mag. We want to make sure that we are aiming it at every single one of you.

Artist Interviews

Cover artist Freelancer Emrah Elmasli and Olivier Derouetteau are this month's chosen artists.

Articles

We have 2 amazing articles for you this month. Pierfilippo Siena's second part of his 'History of Matte Painting' and Christophe Vacher takes us

through his experience of changing from real brush to Digital Stylus. Any artists wanting to make a start in 2d dare not miss this one!

Tutorials

Our King Kong digital painting tutorial comes to a finish with part 3 'painting Ann Darrow'.

Making of's

No less than 4 making of's completes this month's line up. Sirens by Jimi Benedict, Angel Attack! By Daniele Bigi, Mephistophelia by Ivan Mijatov and our Digital Art Masters exclusive 'Captain of the Guard' by Eric Wilkerson.



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 helped promote and spread the word about our publications. As well as ourselves, all digital artists owe a lot to these communities for the incredible amount of work they do for the CG Industry. 3DKingdom, 3DLinks, 3DTotal, 2DValley, 3DM3, CGUnderground, ChildPlayStudios, DAZ 3D, 3DExcellence, Epilogue.net, GFXArtist, the3DStudio, CGDirectory, MattePainting.org, Max-Realms and Mediaworks, we look forward to lasting and successful partnership with these CG community sites





this month's **Contributing Artists**

Contributors

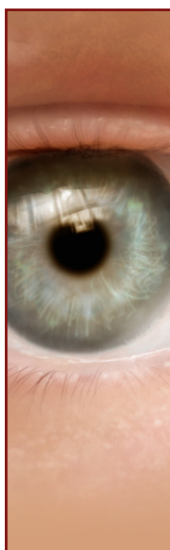
Every month, many artists from around the world contribute to 2DArtist Magazine. This month, we would like to thank the following for their time, experiences and inspiration.



Richard Tilbury

Have had a passion for drawing since being a couple of feet tall. Studied Fine Art and eventually was led into the realm of computers several years ago. My brushes have slowly been dissolving in white spirit since the late nineties and now alas my graphics tablet has become their successor. Still sketch regularly and now balance my time between 2 and 3D although drawing will always be closest to my heart.

ibex80@hotmail.com



Daniel LuVisi

A.K.A 'Adonihs' > Conceptual Artist > California, USA > I got into art around the age of 3, my dad told me that I couldn't draw this crocodile villian from Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. He came home that night & was proved wrong, from that day on I always drew, everyday. I would create my own characters, stories, creatures, vehicles, etc. As you can see, im into art: mostly conceptual art. I want to major in Production Art, & work on films once I graduate from school. dmxdlz@aol.com
www.adonihs.deviantart.com/gallery/



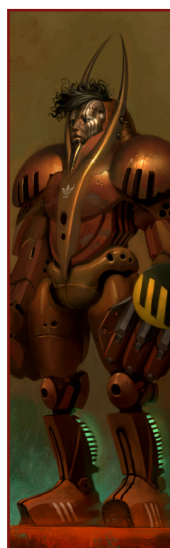
Olivier Derouetteau

Artistic director/2D artist
gamedesigner.

I started working as a stylist during 2 years just after my product design studies.

In 1999 I have worked for the first time in the videogame industry with Lexis Numerique. I have created & I still create many children games for Disney, Ubisoft and many other licensors. I really like children projects, it's magic for me and I am actually working to create a child book.

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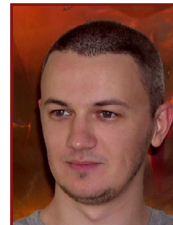


Emrah Elmasli

Concept artist / Digital Illustrator
/Freelancer.

As a Graphic Design graduate, i've started to work digitally in the year 2002. I'm creating digital illustrations and concept designs since then. I've worked with Crystal Dynamics, Irrational Games Australia, Fantasy Flight Games, Cgtoolkit and vs. remotely. I would like to work as a Concept Artist in a video game company someday.

emrah@partycule.com
www.partycule.com

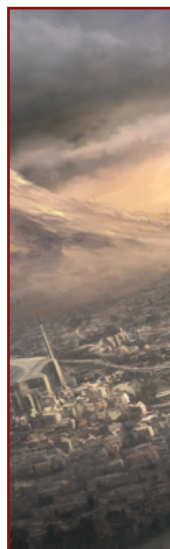
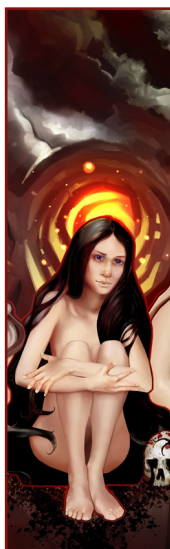




Jimi Benedict

Digital Artist > Active Creations >
Nashville, Tennessee > Tshirt
designer by day, hobby digital
painter by night. I hope to be able
to earn a living through my own
art one day... and meet a nice girl.
LOL. ;) Available for freelance.

jimiyo@yahoo.com
www.jimiyo.com



Daniele Bigi

Daniele Bigi, after studying art
subjects at the high school,
graduated in 2002 at Milan
University with a master degree
in Industrial Design. Since then
he has been working in the animation industry as a
3D Lighter and Compositor. He is currently working in
the CGI Department of Aardman
Animation in Bristol UK.

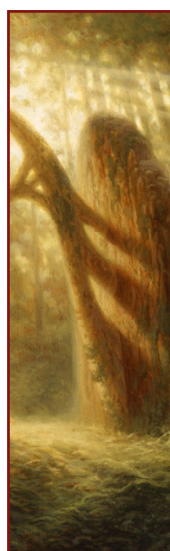
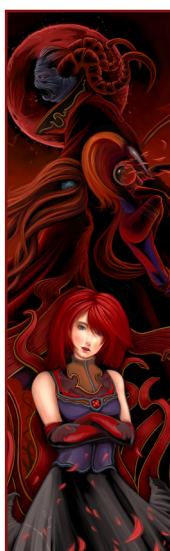
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Ivan Mijatov

2D / 3D Game Artist > Chicago /
Illinois > Midway Games.
I became interested in art and
drawing my senior year of
high school which convinced

me to pursue art as my destined career path. My
educational pursuits took me through two years at the
American Academy of Art|Chicago and two years at
the Illinois Institute of Art|Chicago, majoring in Game
Art & Design. Currently, I am employed by Midway
Games' Chicago branch, where I am fulfilling the roll
of a 3D character artist.
ivanmijatov@gmail.com



Christophe Vacher

Illustrator, Concept artist &
background painter. North
Hollywood, USA. I work with both
traditional & digital mediums.
I have been working in the
animation and movie industry for more than 16
years, mainly for Disney Feature Animation and
Dreamworks. I started working with Photoshop on
Disney's "Dinosaur" in 1996. I also do book covers
and personal work for Art Galleries. I am currently
doing Concept artwork for Disney's next live
action/animation feature movie "Enchanted", and Art
Directing a CG animated short movie on the side.



The Original Total Texture collection was created in 2001, utilising the best methods and technology of the time. Since then, techniques and technology have both moved forward, and here at 3DTotal we felt that although the original collection is still widely used and highly regarded among artists and studios of all calibers, it was time for an update...

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- 7 Shadow Maps
- 15 Skies

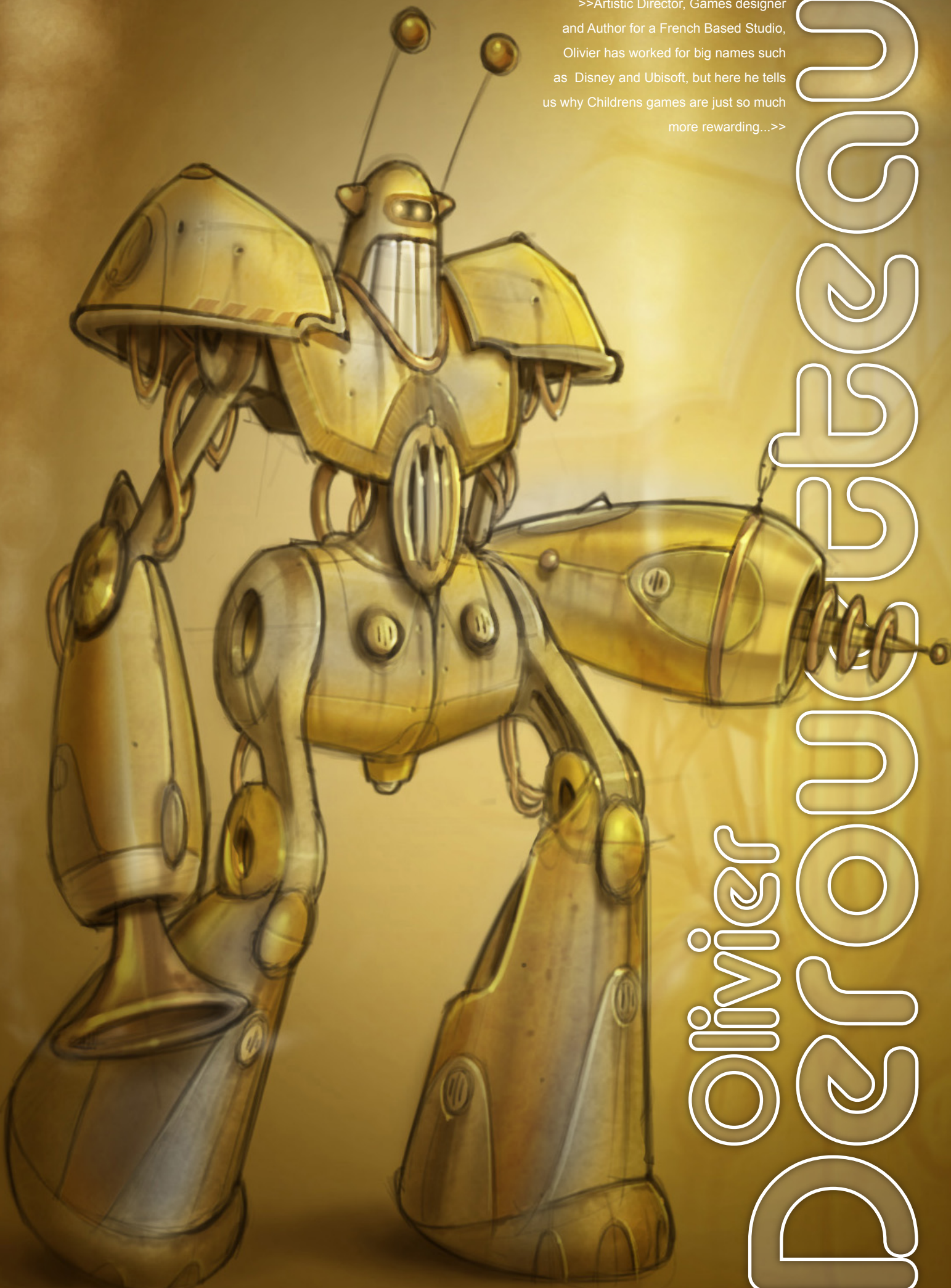
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>>Artistic Director, Games designer
and Author for a French Based Studio,
Olivier has worked for big names such
as Disney and Ubisoft, but here he tells
us why Childrens games are just so much
more rewarding...>>

Olivier

Debut





An interview with **Olivier Derouetteau**

Olivier Derouetteau

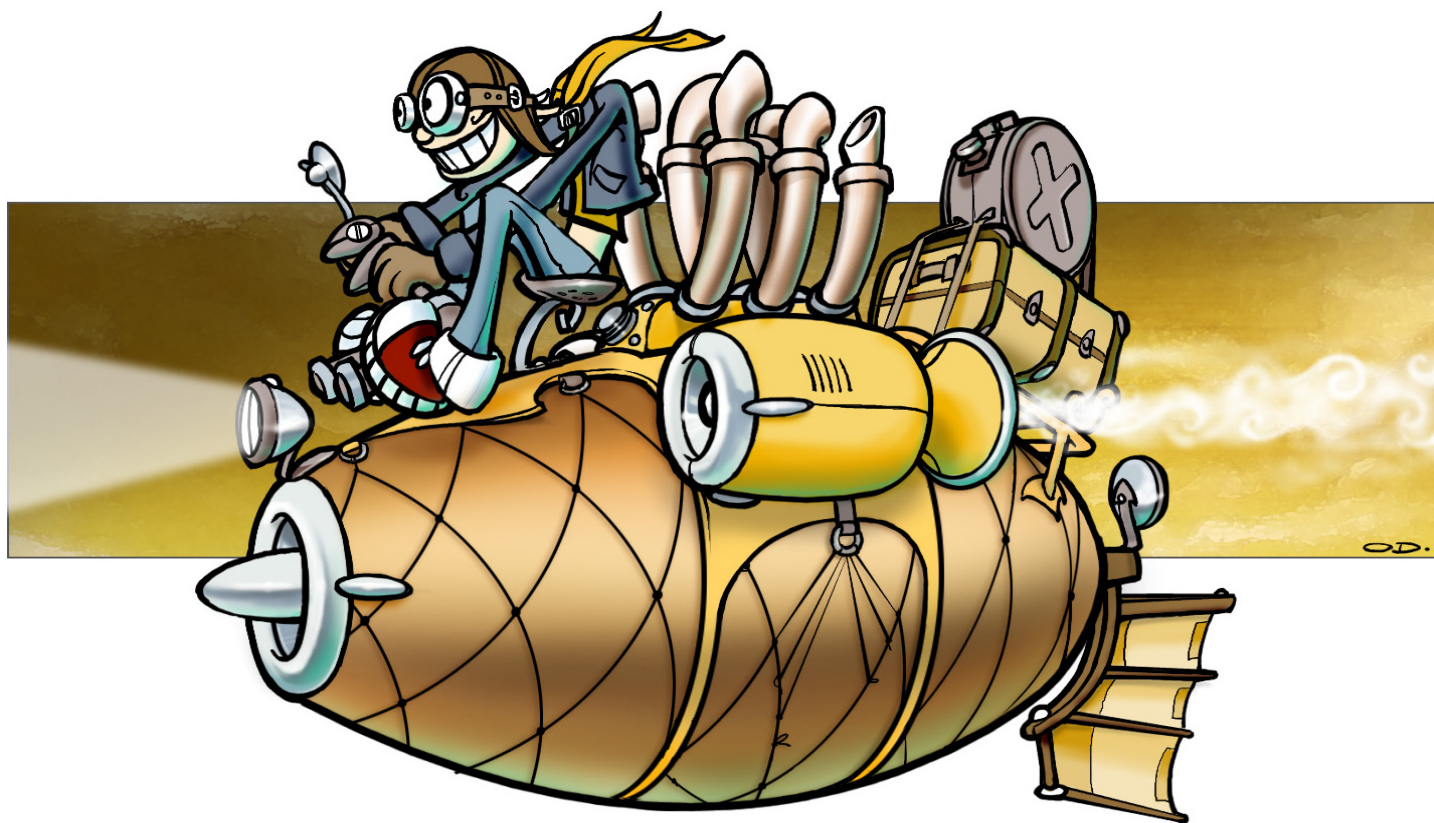
Hi Olivier, could you please give our readers a little introduction to yourself; your age, location, current projects, etc...

Hi, my name is Olive2d (Olivier Derouetteau), I'm 34 years old, I live near Paris in France and I'm a 2d addict! I have actually been working in a French video game studio as an Artistic Director, Game-Designer and Author (so many jobs in one!) Since 1999. I have worked on many children's' games for licensors such as Disney and Ubisoft. In fact, my entrance into the game world was by chance; I was originally working as a stylist, drawing back-packs every day, when a friend asked me if I would be interested in a video game job. I didn't know anything about the game designer job, so I just decided to try it for one week, so it's funny that I am still in this firm even now! I am often working for children's' games in Lexis Numerique and the like. I can say that I am less interested by adult games, because they're just too serious for me. I think that childrens' games have inspired many of my illustrations. I'm actually trying to develop my own style, and I would like to create my first childrens' book...



That sounds great!... So, you're a "2d-addict"? What exactly would you say defines a 2d addict? (I'm sure we have other readers out there experiencing similar symptoms!)

Well, 2D is a very powerful form of expression because there are so many styles, so many imaginative ways! I can draw when I want, where I want, it is just so powerful! In fact, drawing gives me a real fantastic freedom! When I am drawing, everything is possible and there are no limits... except perhaps the limits of my imagination.



So, what was it that originally inspired you to become an artist?

I have never asked myself this question. I always knew, and still know now, that I will create all my life. I have always drawn and when I was a child the teachers said that I was a 'dreamer'. My parents gave me a strong interest in artistic creation; my father was a designer too, as was my grandfather (I have some very old painted advertisements, which are very funny!), and my mother also taught physical activities,

such as; cooking and leather-working.

So I can say that I have been plunged into the artistic world since my birth!

Would you say you are still a bit of a 'dreamer' now? Do you think it is important for artists to be able to dream?

Yes, I really do think that I am still a dreamer!

My wife sometime says that I still have the

vision of a child because I am always looking at the funny little details around me; snails, funny stones, etc... There are just so many little things! I am fascinated by old objects and old materials because they all tell us a little story about themselves... So, yes, I think that being able to dream is very important for an artist!





An interview with **Olivier Derouetteau**

Looking at your portfolio, I am particularly taken by the curious creatures who seem to inhabit the magical world that you have created through your artworks. Can you tell me a little about your thoughts behind these creations?

Well it's difficult to explain because I have never asked myself this question. I am interested in finding creatures that make me smile and dream, and that's why they are so strange I think. I create characters now because I once

drew one of my friend. My characters are never realistic and always have a 'toonish' style (they are not serious as you can see!). They are never perfect as 'people', but they always have a funny touch to them. I am also interested by mechanics and gears and I always put some robotics or mechanical elements into my illustrations. It's probably because I have studied micro-mechanics for 4 years!

I see! ...So would you say you draw a lot on your personal experiences in the creation of your artworks? Are you able to find inspiration in everything that you see, or do you think these elements come into your works subconsciously? Well, many things inspire me; sometimes it's a situation, sometimes it's an object, sometimes it's a colour or an atmospheric idea; in fact there are no rules. I think it's a mixture of every little thing that I see, live and dream; the creation process is just so complex. I think that the most important thing about creating is doing...So, when I have a little idea - I do it!

Your portfolio consists of a combination of works; some very beautiful soft narrative artworks, and more 'punchy' bold cartoon illustrations. Which would you say you get most satisfaction from as finished artworks?

I think that I prefer my soft narrative artworks, because they make me dream when I draw them and see them finished. I always try to find a particular atmosphere and lighting and it's often a little story for me and the people who see them. So that's why I am so interested in creating a childrens' book. My cartoon illustrations are funnier because they don't have too much of a narrative; when I want to draw a funny scene I often choose a cartoon style with my bold outlines - it's very different!

You talk about 'finding a particular atmosphere'; can you talk us through some of the techniques that you use to create those fantastic cloud, mist and steam effects in your artworks?

When I do an illustration, I often draw a sketch to get the correct construction and design. Then I often scan it and set it at 20% opacity and I put in the colours of all the elements. I decide where to put the lightning source that will give me the principal atmosphere, using a big aerograph brush in a dark colour. I can then add the shadows using a medium grey in multiply mode. At this point, I am always viewing my illustration in small to see if the unit is correct. When all the shadows seem to be ok, I then add some lighting using white in overlay mode (it's





a magic moment!). After that, I sometimes add a material texture to give a less computerised effect. Then I put in some clouds with a very light aerographer brush for the atmosphere. When all seems to be correct I often copy and apply my work; I use a watercolour filter and I copy this picture in my artwork. I put this "water coloured" version in overlay mode and give more or less contrast using a mask. I often draw like this, but sometimes I draw some speed paintings in my own style ...although, I'm not quite Ryan Church!

So Olivier, what do you do in your spare time when you're away from your computer screen? I often go to see live shows; like dance, new circus shows, and street shows that will probably inspire me in my drawings. Sometimes I play my guitar, as many people do, or I juggle when the weather is good!

But my favourite past-time is Seventies design; every week I go to second-hand trade shows with my wife to find beautiful Seventies light-fittings and furniture. I really like the Seventies era and I think that it was the most creative approach to object design that we ever had. Seventies design is so crazy, round and colourful, it's so incredible, it seems to come from another world! So, I spend some time repairing old furniture, so you can imagine the decoration of my apartment!

You mention "another world"; do you think that you like to escape to these other worlds, through your artwork and by decorating your apartment in this style, to escape the 'here and now'?

Yes, it's a kind of escape - I am creating my own world; a round and coloured world that helps me to live... It's my small nest...

So Olivier, I have to ask, do you have a life-long dream that you would like to fulfil?

Well, I have many, many dreams, like creating books, furniture, and perhaps one day even creating a place - perhaps an attraction park, why not! So, I simply want to create again and again and again... That's my life-long dream!

Many thanks for chatting with me Olivier. I wish you the very best of luck with your first childrens' book adventure, and of course, please don't ever stop dreaming!!

Many thanks to you Lynette and to Zoo Publishing for this interview.



Olivier Derouetteau

You can see more of this artists work at:

<http://olive2d.free.fr/>

and contact them via:

derouetteau@free.fr

Interview by : Lynette Clee

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EMRAH EL MATTE

>> Emrah is a Matte Painter and concept artist who fell into the industry by accident. He tells us why he stuck with it and what he gets to do for a living now >>





Your website states that you are skilled as a concept artist as well as Matte painting. What do you feel are your key skills that enable you to work in a number of disciplines?

My interest in Matte painting started after a film project proposal on which I was going to work as a Matte painter. I hadn't done any Matte paintings until that day, but they asked me if I could do so or not. It was a very good opportunity for me so I accepted. Then I examined great Matte artists like Dusso and Dylan Cole who were a great inspiration to me. I worked on some sample Matte paintings but then unluckily the film project was cancelled. It was unfortunate for me that I couldn't work on a big project like that but it prompted me to explore my Matte painting skills. I realised that I liked Matte painting a lot and I wanted to work in this field as well as concept design and digital painting and so this was the main reason that I chose to work in this field. I'm not a professional Matte painter yet but I'm trying to become one. I got commissioned to do some Matte painting projects recently and I think it's really useful for me to develop my concept design and digital painting skills too.

Working both as a Matte painter and a concept artist involves digital painting but which interests you the most as a career path and tell us why?

I've started this adventure to be a good Concept artist and I'm heading in that direction. Matte painting is mainly an interest for me but I would like to have those skills as it's an advantage for a 2D artist to be versatile. Concept art is the main thing that I wish to pursue for the rest of my life since seeing a conceptual painting by Justin Sweet years ago. It was like a U-turn in my life; I still remember that moment...

Did your college course orientate more around illustration or graphic design and did you work in a traditional medium much or was it mainly digital?

I studied graphic design at the university and Illustration was just a lesson in our department. In the first years of school I studied the



fundamentals of art as a class and so worked only in a traditional manner in those days. I even did engraving and wood block printing. Then I discovered digital painting and have only been working in this medium since then.

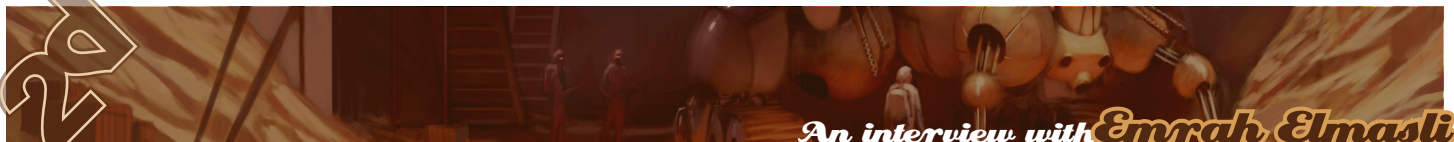
What is it about digital painting that has caused you to dedicate yourself to this particular medium?

Firstly it's really fast to work digitally. The video game and Film industry needs a lot of work to be done to very tight deadlines. The digital medium saves your life if you're using it professionally and all of the traditional artists are switching to digital these days. I see the living examples everyday. It's the way industry

professionals work and therefore I'm creating my art digitally since I understand this fact. If I had to paint with an eye lash, I would surely do that in order to create my art.

Could you describe the work you have done for games companies and what it has involved?

I'm working on two projects right now and I'm only doing environment design for both projects. My works mostly include concept design, determining the colours and atmosphere of the environment and key art production. I did some vehicle designs too but mostly environments as I said. I cannot talk about the projects because they are still under NDA.



An interview with **Emrah Elmasli**



If you would like to see the brushes that I have used to create this piece of work, you can download them by clicking this bit of text. Brushes will work in Photoshop CS and CS2

As a concept artist what sort of subject matter do you enjoy exploring the most and why?

Actually I'm a sci-fi freak. I enjoy drawing and painting science fiction themes a lot especially environments and robotic characters. I like to read sci-fi books, including Arthur C. Clarke, Heinlein, Asimov and Ray Bradbury. Maybe that's why I create so many science fiction images. Those books are really inspiring. When I sit and start to draw something randomly, I can't help but draw a robot or a utopian environment. As a concept artist, you need to be able to draw everything. I mean "Everything!"

from vehicles to environments, creatures to sci-fi characters. That's why they call you "Concept artist". If you're only drawing characters, then you're a character artist. I believe that I can draw anything an art director or a lead artist wants. I'm not that good at everything but at least I'm able to. It's a big advantage in my opinion.

Tell us about your collaboration with Mathias Verhasselt?

I met Mathias over the internet. He's a great artist and a great guy. I loved his work and

asked him if he wanted to collaborate with me. He accepted and we started doing a series of digital paintings. His lines are really dynamic and powerful. I love to do collaborations with great talents like him. It really improves my vision and technique.

You have many concept sketches and illustration work in your portfolio. Talk us through how you generally go about making a new image and the processes you go through?

My processes are not really so different from the other digital artists. When starting a new image I generally do some thumbnail sketches with a pencil. I choose one and redraw it digitally. Then I block the colours under the lines. This is the most important step for me because I define all basic colours at this stage. If I'm pleased with the colours I start painting directly over the lines. I put in the last details as a final step and polish the illustration a bit. This is the way I work when I'm working on a commissioned piece but if I'm doing a personal work, I sometimes start digitally with some random lines and scribbles etc. The best way of working is to choose the way you are most comfortable with.

Tell us a little about some of your most demanding paintings to date and the reasons why they proved so difficult?

Generally I don't spend too much time on my paintings. I like doing speed paintings and sketchy works. I finalize my images between 5 and 10 hours. But the most demanding works I've done are the San Francisco Matte painting and Grand Space Opera image "They came". They took so much time to finish especially "They came". I made it for the cg challenge on 'CGTalk' and as you know those challenges continue for 3 months. The sketches and concept process took so much time because I designed everything that appeared on the image from 'motherships' to little hovering vehicles. Add the painting process to it and I guess it took 2 months on and off. It's been 1 year since I did that image and when I look at it now, I say "Why did I spend so much time on this?" I've improved



so much since then, so I don't spend that much time on any of my work any more. Need to be faster to reach the artists at the top.

Tell us a little about the difficulty and rewards of working as a freelance artist?

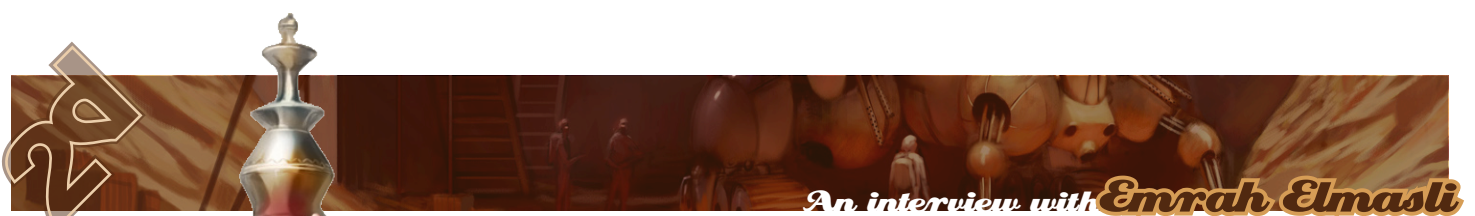
Basically, Freelance is Freedom! I can't think a better way of working and doing the job you always wanted. I love working alone and I'll continue to work as a freelancer while I'm living in Turkey but it will surely change if I go to some other country to work. The most crucial disadvantage of working alone is the lack of experience. What I mean by "experience" is the information you get while working as a team in a company environment. It's a must in the Video Game industry and I still don't have that experience. I have always worked remotely in this field and I hope to get a job in a video game company one day. There isn't a big video game industry in Turkey. Well, to be honest there's "NO" industry here and that's why I'm working remotely. But as I said, I hope to get a serious job in a big video game company in the future. This is why I'm working every single day of my life.

If you could work for any games companies who would they be and what would be the kinds of projects you would like to work on?

Cool question :) Actually I always wanted to work for Black Isle studios. But they do not exist any more. Those guys were my heroes. I loved the Fallout series. Best games ever especially the first Fallout game. I would like to work with Ubisoft and Relic Entertainment also. Ubisoft Montreal seems like a cool place to be and Relic is the creator of Homeworld series. Got to love that game. It would be cool to work on a sci-fi game project where I could design ships and futuristic environments. I'm more comfortable with that kind of stuff.

Finally if there are any of our readers out there trying to get into the CG industry and live in countries where there are few opportunities what advice would you give to them?





An interview with **Emrah Elmasli**

It's harder to get into the CG industry if you're living in a country where there are few or no opportunities. Only chance is to work a lot and prepare a good portfolio. The best way to show your portfolio is to have a clean and professionally designed web site. Then you need to search for freelance jobs. It's actually the only way to gain experience. You can search the big CG forums like 3DTotal, CGTalk.com and Conceptart.org. Game companies post job announcements on these sites. There is a chance to find a contract work opportunity as well. You can apply to these jobs and get the gig if you're good enough. After a while they will find you. It depends on the quality of your work and how well you're known. Then who knows? You can get a full time job offer.

Thanks for taking the time to talk to us.
It was a pleasure.

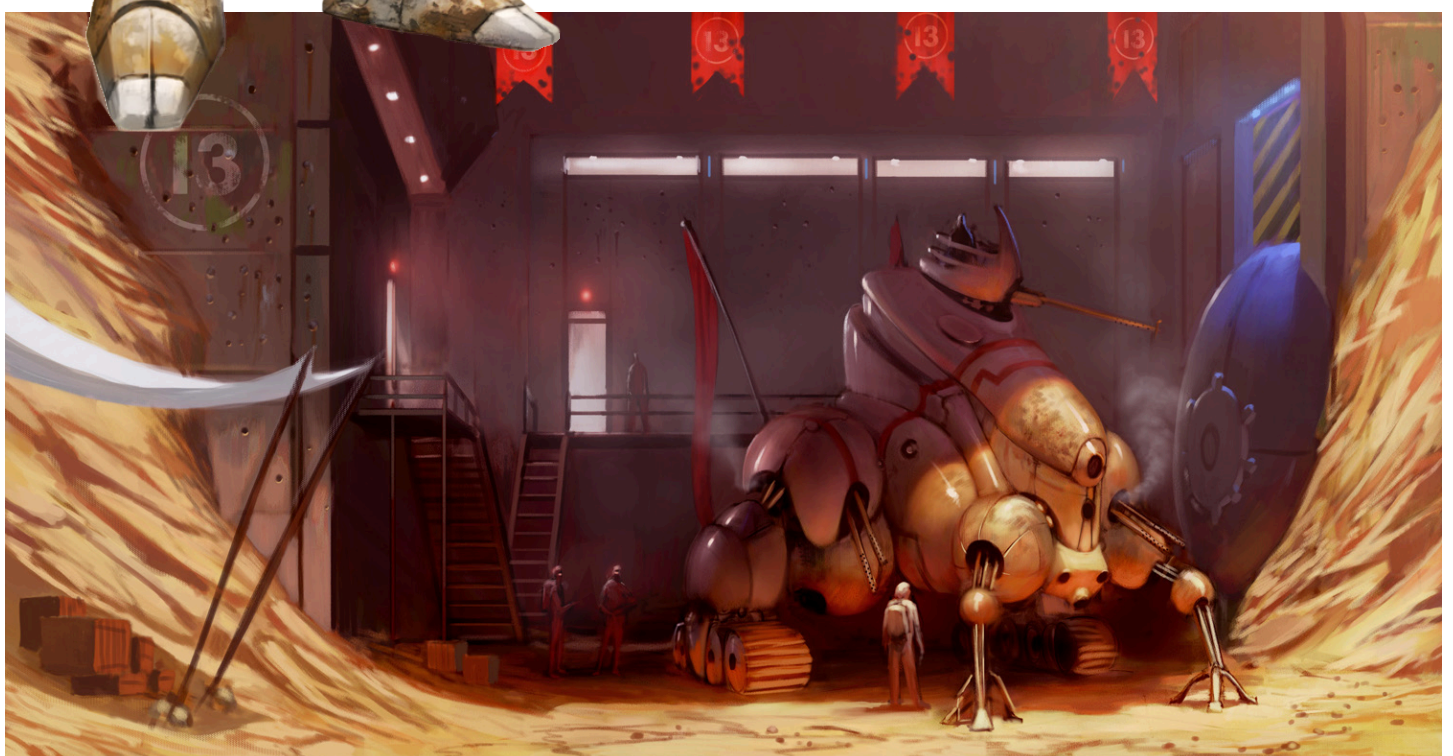
Emrah Elmasli

You can see more of this artists work at:

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a History of Matte Painting

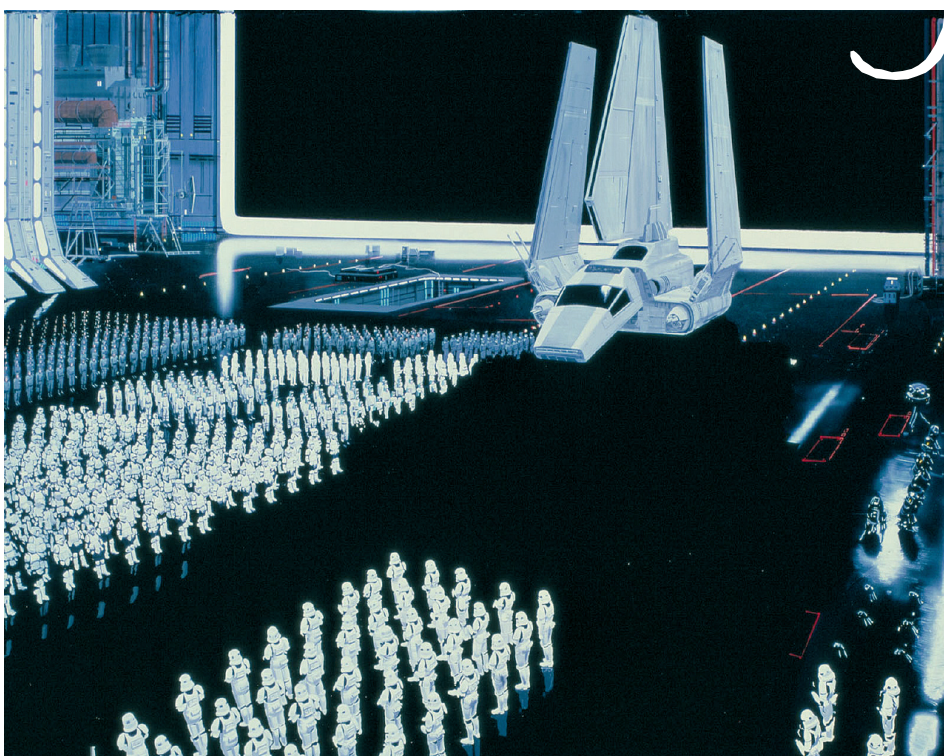
by Pierfilippo Siena part 2



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Historically, digital matte-paintings entered the visual effects world in the early nineties. However, turning back time and discovering their origin, we have to focus our attention on the Star Trek movies. Directed by Nicholas Meyer, 'Star Trek 2: The Wrath of Khan' was released in 1982 and presented the first all CGI effects sequence of all time, except for those seen in Disney's 'Tron' by Steven Lisberger. The Genesis effect sequence was produced by Industrial Light & Magic under the joint supervision of Academy Award winner Ken Ralston and Jim Veilleux. Basically, the sequence was conceived as a Starfleet demonstration tape and showed a planetary environment changing from a lifeless and barren moon to a Terra-formed world. The camera starts in outer space and suddenly the Genesis torpedo enters the shot, plotting the course





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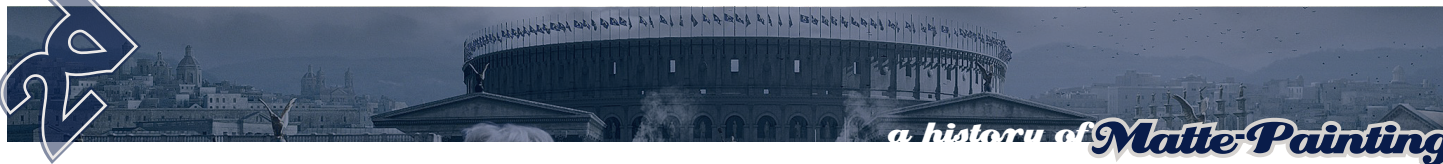
towards the moon. Then the camera gets closer and closer to the planet's surface that is being transformed by the Genesis effect. We assist to a flyover a sea of fire caused by the sub-atomic reaction. "Real" seas fill with water, and lakes, rocky and snowy mountains start to appear whilst the camera leaves the new-formed planet orbit and goes deeper and deeper into space... All was done in the computer using the ILM paint system in order to produce texture maps

to be applied on to three-dimensional planet geometry. Matte-artist Chris Evans executed the digital paint work and he didn't suffer the lack of physical interaction with the artwork using both the graphic pen and the graphic tablet. Several matte-artists advised that painting with the computer is like air brushing because their "brushes" don't touch the canvas or the matte-painting itself. In the middle of the eighties, Chris Evans again painted the computer animated

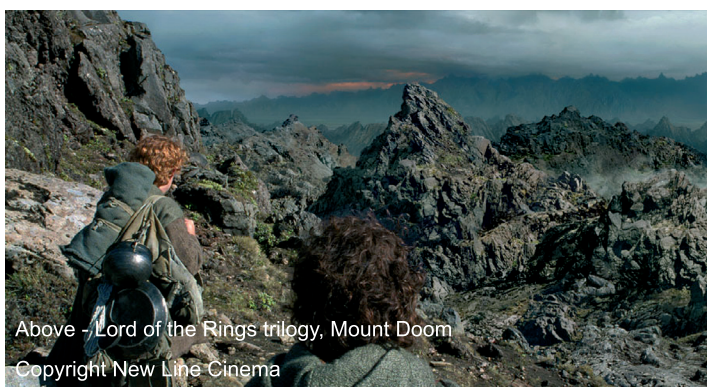
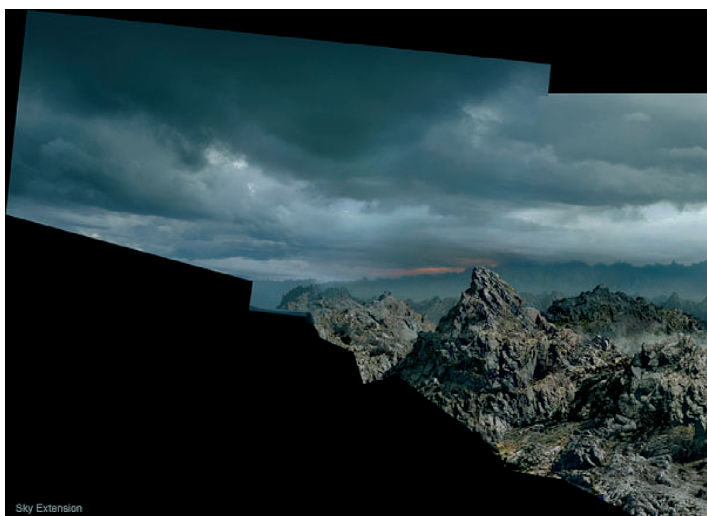
Matte-artist Matthew Yurich



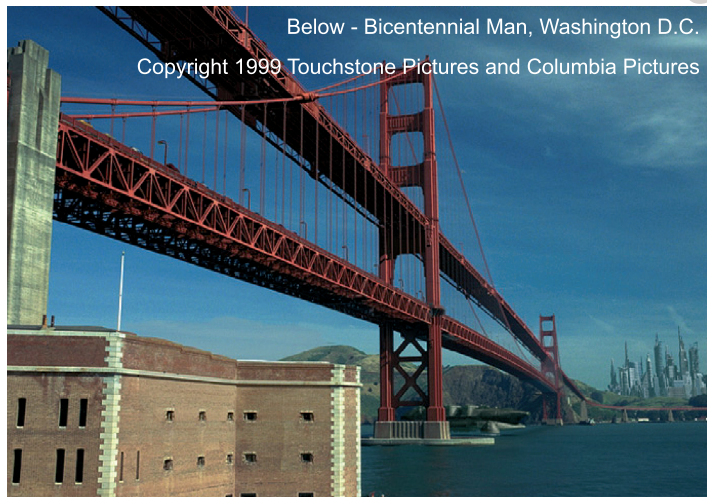
Lord of the Rings trilogy Copyright New Line Cinema



a history of *Matte-Painting*



Above - Lord of the Rings trilogy, Mount Doom
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Below - Bicentennial Man, Washington D.C.
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glass-knight figure for Barry Levinson's 'Young Sherlock Holmes' (1985), produced by Steven Spielberg. However, computer paint systems weren't so powerful and flexible as artists had hoped for. To achieve better results, traditional oil and acrylic matte-paintings were scanned and converted into digital information inside the workstation hard disks. This allowed visual effects facilities to perform primitive image manipulation as well as re-touches, painting out unwanted elements and just a few other things.





All Images - The Fifth Element, 23rd Century New York City
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Then Adobe Systems commercialized the first version of the worldwide famous and most powerful software 'Photoshop', written by brothers John and Thomas Knoll almost 16 years ago. In September 1988, the Knoll brothers presented a demo to Adobe's internal creative team and they loved this innovative

application. A license agreement was signed very soon and Photoshop 1.0 was shipped in February 1990 after 10 months of development and testing. Photoshop was the digital equivalent of paint and brushes. Digital paint could be used for touching individual frames of film, for creating texture maps for digital

models or for painting an entire scene for digital matte-paintings. Digital artists could paint with colours as well as with textures that have been sampled from real photographs or paintings.

Thanks to this great tool, matte-artists were able to create very effective extensions, manipulation and improvements of filmed and photographic images using 2D digital paint methods.

Thomas Knoll remained involved with the project all along and John started his career at ILM, serving as visual effects supervisor on projects such as 'Mission: Impossible' (1996), 'Star Trek: First Contact' (1996), 'Star Wars Episode I : The Phantom Menace' (1999), 'Star Wars Episode 2: Attack of the Clones and Star Wars Episode 3: The Revenge of the Sith'.

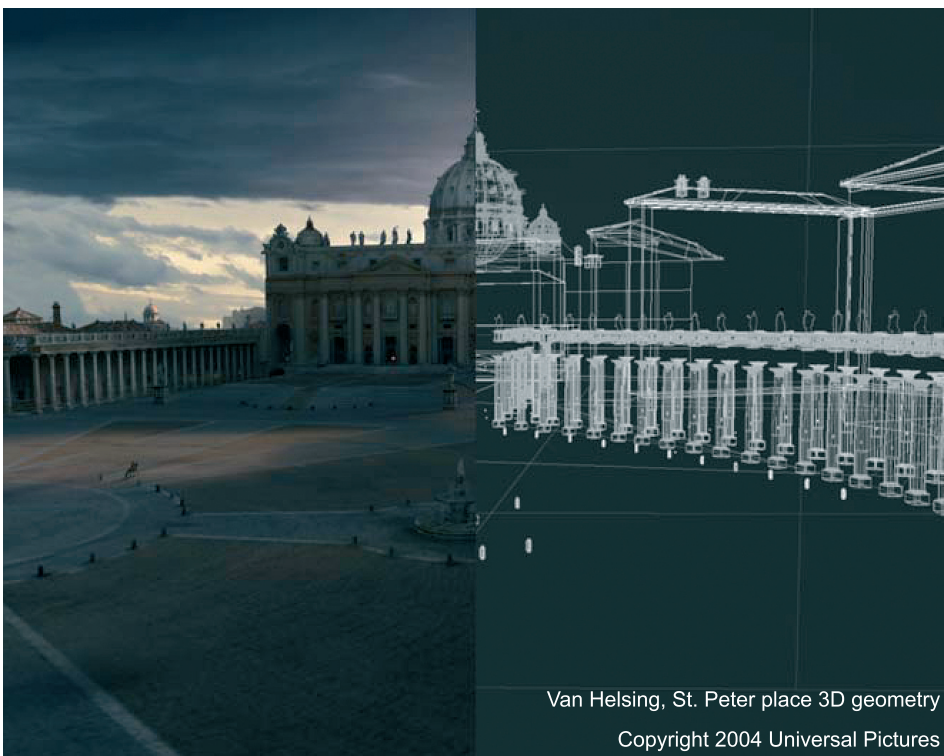
Glasses and brushes, as well as photochemical





Gladiator, Ancient Rome

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Van Helsing, St. Peter place 3D geometry
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compositing processes, began to disappear in the nineties and one of the most memorable half "traditional" matte-paintings was seen in James Cameron's 'Titanic' (1997) in the final shots where the S.S. Carpathia saves the White Star Line's gigantic ship survivors. The Atlantic Ocean was real and filmed at dawn with floating lifeboats, the icebergs were miniatures and the rescue ship was a scanned oil painting embellished with a particle generated funnel smoke effect and the sky itself was a digital painting. In the past, if a matte-artist had to render a brick wall or a rock surface, he was forced to paint every single element with his brush during a long and tedious work. In the digital realm, the Photoshop capability of "cloning" an area to be replicated again and again, made things easier. No one believes that digital matte-painting is less complicated



Van Helsing,
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to execute than traditional painted mattes, but undoubtedly the computer helps a lot. One of the worst nightmares for a matte-painter was hiding the matte-lines, which are the borderline between the painted areas and the live-action footage. A lot of testing was necessary in order to find the proper colour matching the real elements. Today, as above mentioned, with the clone stamp tool (formerly known as the rubber stamp tool), an artist can copy, or clone copies of, a portion of an image and paint them onto any other part of the image. The size of the area copied depends on the brush size he selected from the brushes pop-up menu on the tool's options bar. How the copy merges with the new area is determined by the choices he made on the options bar. This is an excellent and very effective way to "merge" both the painted area and real elements, making the discovery of matte-lines very hard to find. Very often, the matte-artists were asked to produce simple 2D backgrounds to be composited with live-action. For example, in 'The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers' (2002) feature film, there is a particular shot where Boromir's brother looks at the night



Van Helsing,
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sky with a shining moon. The background image was a digital matte-painting and the actor was filmed standing on a rock piece in front of the blue-screen, later composited with Apple's Shake. Like traditional matte-paintings, many artworks were used to create "locked-off" bi-dimensional set extensions with the camera in fixed position. Every single camera move could result in a change of perspective, causing the misalignment of both the live-action set and

digital matte-painting. However, the most used 3D modelling tools, as well as the innovative camera tracking software, allowed the digital matte-paintings to enter the third dimension. Australian director Peter Weir shot 'The Truman Show' in 1998, starring Jim Carrey and Ed Harris. Matte World Digital, founded by former Industrial Light & Magic matte-photography supervisor Craig Barron, created the 3D digital set extensions of Seahaven. Seahaven is the



The Matrix: Revolutions, Machine City
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small town where hero Truman Burbank lives, but the city is also the biggest television set ever constructed. Here he unknowingly acts as a reality show character. Production designer Dennis Gassner created CAD-designed models used by the construction crew to build the full-size set-up to the first storey. After that, Matte World Digital used the same wireframe buildings to model a lot of 3D set extensions. Very detailed texture maps were created with Photoshop using hi-res photographs taken on location by the visual effects supervisor. There are similarities between both the traditional and digital matte-painting methods. The first one is scouting the location in order to take reference material regarding the live-action. The second one is taking photographs as visual aids. The third one is working very closely with the director of photography to study the lighting set-up and the camera movements to be "transferred" in the matte-shot. This happened also for The Truman Show because director Peter Weir wanted to move the camera, tilting and panning across the set. Once they had tracked the on-set camera movements carefully, the Matte World Digital virtual camera had to duplicate them inside the 3D workspace in order to maintain the 3D extensions perspective precisely. Accurate

pre-visualisation work, detailed hi-res still pictures, on-set light set-up readings, stunning 3D modelling work and 2D paint work are not enough to achieve a masterful illusion, blending with real footage in a very seamless way. The key to the success is called "radiosity", which is a method for creating realistic lighting for three dimensional images. Here, the computer calculates the interaction of light emanation from every surface in a 3D scene. The final results are the most convincing but this is a very time-consuming process, heavily affecting the machine speed. The radiosity method, which is used to calculate a balance of radiation power in the scene, is an efficient method for illumination calculation in static environments. But unfortunately, any change of the scene geometry can influence the entire balance of power. There is another problem which raises for animation sequences calculated with the progressive refinement method. If the radiosity calculation for the different frames is performed independently from each other, the different remaining errors cause a flickering of the images. Martin Scorsese's 'Casino' of 1995, was the first feature film effects work to use the radiosity calculation. Conceptually speaking, radiosity is different from the ray

tracing technique, a method of "tracing" the path of light beams as they bounce around an environment. Adobe Photoshop still remains the preferred artists' choice for digital painting but visual effects houses use different tools to model 3D elements for set extensions and for creating all digital environments. Sony Pictures Imageworks used Maxon's Cinema 4D for 'The Polar Express' background digi-mattes, Pixar Animation Studios made use of 3ds max by Autodesk for 'The Incredibles' digi-mattes. Industrial Light & Magic created the 'Wookies' home planet, Kashyyyk, with Maya and 3ds max, while several effects facilities relied on Softimage|XSI by Avid Technology for scenic landscapes rendering in 'Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow'. New and powerful camera tracking tools, like 2d3's boujou and compositing systems like Apple's Shake, inferno and flame by Autodesk, are "rendering" the digital effects world completely without limitations.

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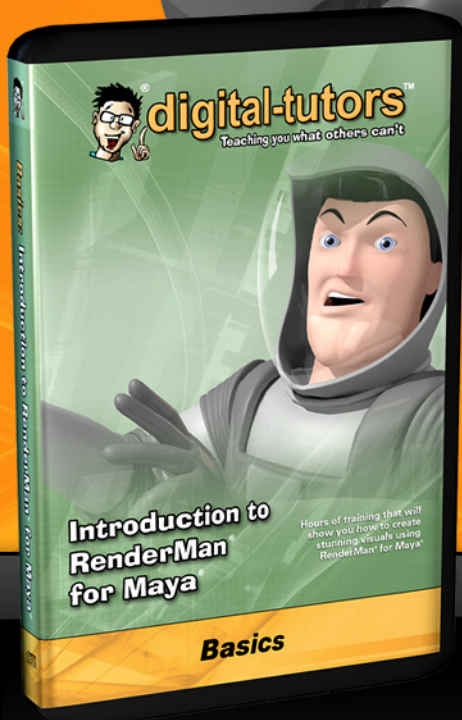
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CHRISTOPHE LACHER

When I started Animation in 1989, little did I assume how much of a dramatic change this industry would go through within a 10 to 15 year period of time. Would I have done things differently had I known? Probably not. As challenging, and sometimes painful, as the ride has been, I have to admit it sure has never been boring.

From Real Brush to Digital Stylus



Christopher Vacher *From Real Brush to Digital Stylus*



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My first TV show was the "Ninja Turtles". Needless to say, it was the brightest day of my life when it happened. I started with character design, followed up with layout, and finally felt the most comfortable in the background-painting department. In those days, computer technology was barely reaching the big Hollywood Animation studios, and I was laughing at people who were telling me one

day we would be painting on computer. As a painter, I just couldn't imagine how a computer would ever replace a brush, and even better, produce a believably controlled painted texture. No Adobe Photoshop, no Corel Painter, no Macromedia Flash animation, just pencils, boards, brushes and frame-by-frame shooting cameras. Everything was assembled at once under the lens; the more levels, the greater the

chance to make a mistake. Show after show, I made my way through the Animation industry, and when I entered Disney in 1993, computer was only starting to make a timid footprint in the Animation business. After working on "A Goofy Movie", "Runaway Brain" and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" at the Disney facilities in Paris, I moved to the Disney headquarters in Burbank, California in 1996. When I got there, I was put right away on the biggest CG production of the moment, the ambitious "Dinosaur". That's when I started to learn computers, and more specifically, Photoshop and Painter. Still, most of the paintings I did as a concept artist for the film were done with acrylics. I wasn't completely ready to pour my full creative stamina into programs I barely knew. In the next movies I worked on, like "Hercules" or "Fantasia 2000", CG animation was still a very tiny portion of the whole production and traditional artists still had



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Christopher Vacher **From Real Brush to Digital Stylus**

a very large role to play, even without knowing the first thing about computers. On "Tarzan", we were trained to work with a Disney proprietary software called Deep Canvas to paint some backgrounds in a 3D type environment. Since we were assigned Technical Directors, the task wasn't too complex, even for artists who had never had computer experience before. Nonetheless, most backgrounds were still painted traditionally, with acrylic on board. Then came "Treasure Planet". When I look back at how things slowly turned around, I believe it was really at that time that traditional artists had to face the facts: CG animated movies had been growing in popularity, and 2D Animation was not making the box-office numbers it used to. "Treasure Planet", although completely painted digitally and assembled on computers (the



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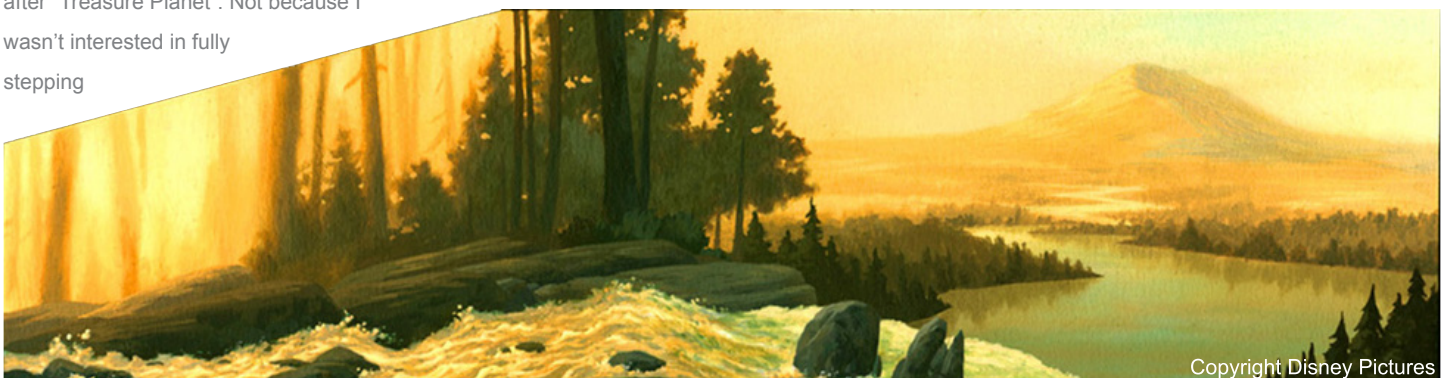


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animation part was still hand drawn -except for ships, that were built in 3D and textured with 2D paintings) was one of the very last attempts to show that traditional looking Animation could still be cool. I still believe it was. But the movie was a flop. At that point, the studios had already started a major clean up: while suits and ties were being put in key positions, most traditional artists had to take a hike. Some took CG classes to adapt to the new environment. Others became Art Directors. Many felt overwhelmed with the digital wave, and decided to completely change careers. Some of my best friends couldn't find a job for years. For my part, I had already made the decision of leaving Disney after "Treasure Planet". Not because I wasn't interested in fully stepping



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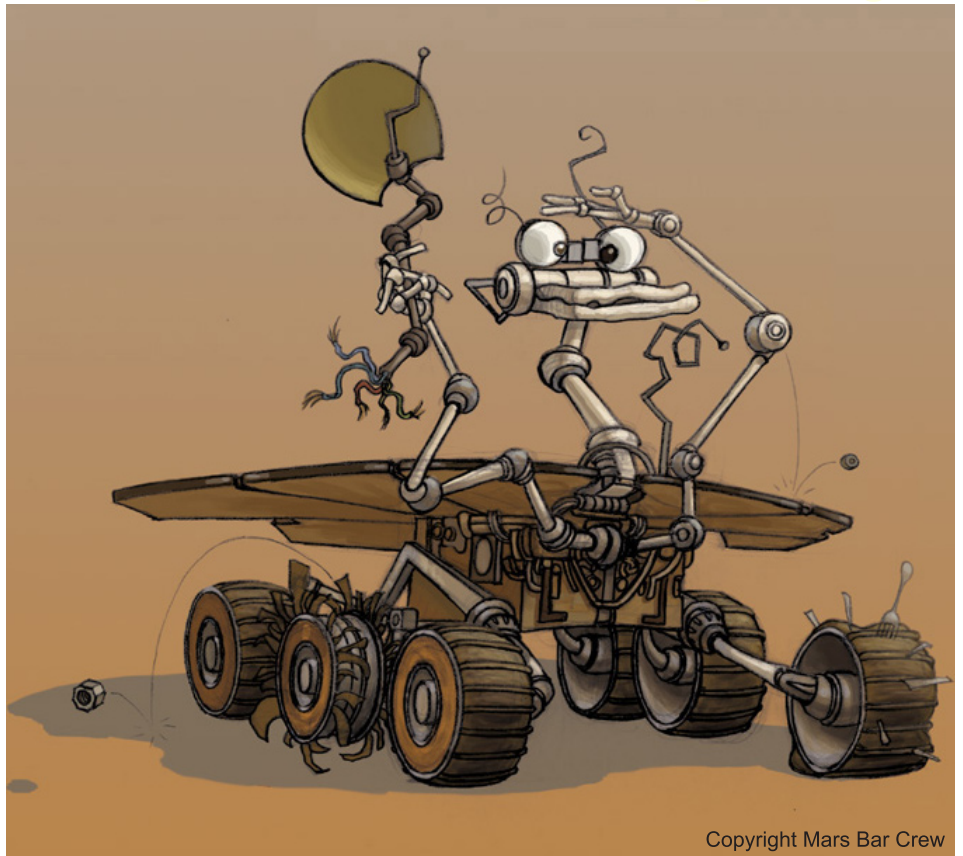
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into the digital realm - I was actually intrigued by it and wanted to explore further than just Photoshop or Painter; I wanted to learn 3D in depth. Besides, I was convinced that adapting was just a matter of putting yourself to it, and that all the visual experience I had acquired in traditional Animation would be that much more strength added to my resume and portfolio. However, for several years, I had worked on the side on my own paintings and prints for Art galleries, on book and videogame covers, slowly building up a reputation and clientele. I wanted to give it an extra push; and in order to do that, I needed to work on it full time. So, in 2002, after I left the Disney studio, that's just what I did, for a year and a half. And things really started to pick up. From the sales of my personal work, I could have chosen to stay the course and never go back to the film industry, but I also started to feel isolated, and I really missed the interaction with other artists, the unique atmosphere of movie studios. In June 2003, I was hired at Dreamworks to do concept art/Visual development on the movie "Shark Tale". Then I left studios again, almost a year later. I decided it was time for me to cross the CG line once and for all: I went to Studio Arts school, in Los Angeles, 7 hours a day for 14 months, to learn Maya and ZBrush, and see how my classical skills could apply to those new tools. It was the best move I've ever made. The teacher of the class, David Gottlieb, who is now an animator at Disney Feature Animation, offered the students to build a group project, in the form of a short CG animated movie - "Mars Bar"- and asked me to Art Direct it.



Christopher Vacher *From Real Brush to Digital Stylus*

It has been a very interesting ride, and working so closely with a small crew, putting my hands on virtually every aspect of the film -from story to design and visual conception, to modeling, texturing, lighting, rendering, etc...- trying to resolve all the different issues associated with a 3D production, has been priceless. The short is not finished yet, though. We are still slowly working on it, on our spare time, because of the jobs we all got now. But I'm confident it will be complete soon. Ironically, the job I got after I left school is not a CG job. It is a 12 minute segment of traditional animation in a Disney live-action movie, "Enchanted". The animated characters come out of their medieval animated world after the first 12 minutes to become real live action people in today's New York. Starring Susan Sarandon, 2006 Academy Awards Nominee Amy Adams, James Marsden (X-Men) and Timothy Spall, the live-action part is being shot right now in Manhattan. The Animated segment is being



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handled by James Baxter Animation studio in Pasadena, where I am currently working. Coincidentally, now that Pixar has merged with Disney and John Lasseter (the founder of Pixar) is the head of creative executives, the rumours are strong that he will fight for traditional Animation. Who would have known? The champions of CG Animation might eventually be the ones to revive old school Animation. As time goes by, it seems more and more people are finally realizing that what makes a good movie

has nothing to do with the fact that it's done with CG animation, painted backgrounds or colour crayons. What makes the success of a film rests on one thing, and one thing only: the story. A story with heart and appealing characters. The rest is cherry on the cake. Production values like marvellous Animation and lavish backgrounds are always a major plus, of course. But all this is nothing without a good story. And I'm just the guy who works on the background and the look of a movie. So, imagine what the storyboard people

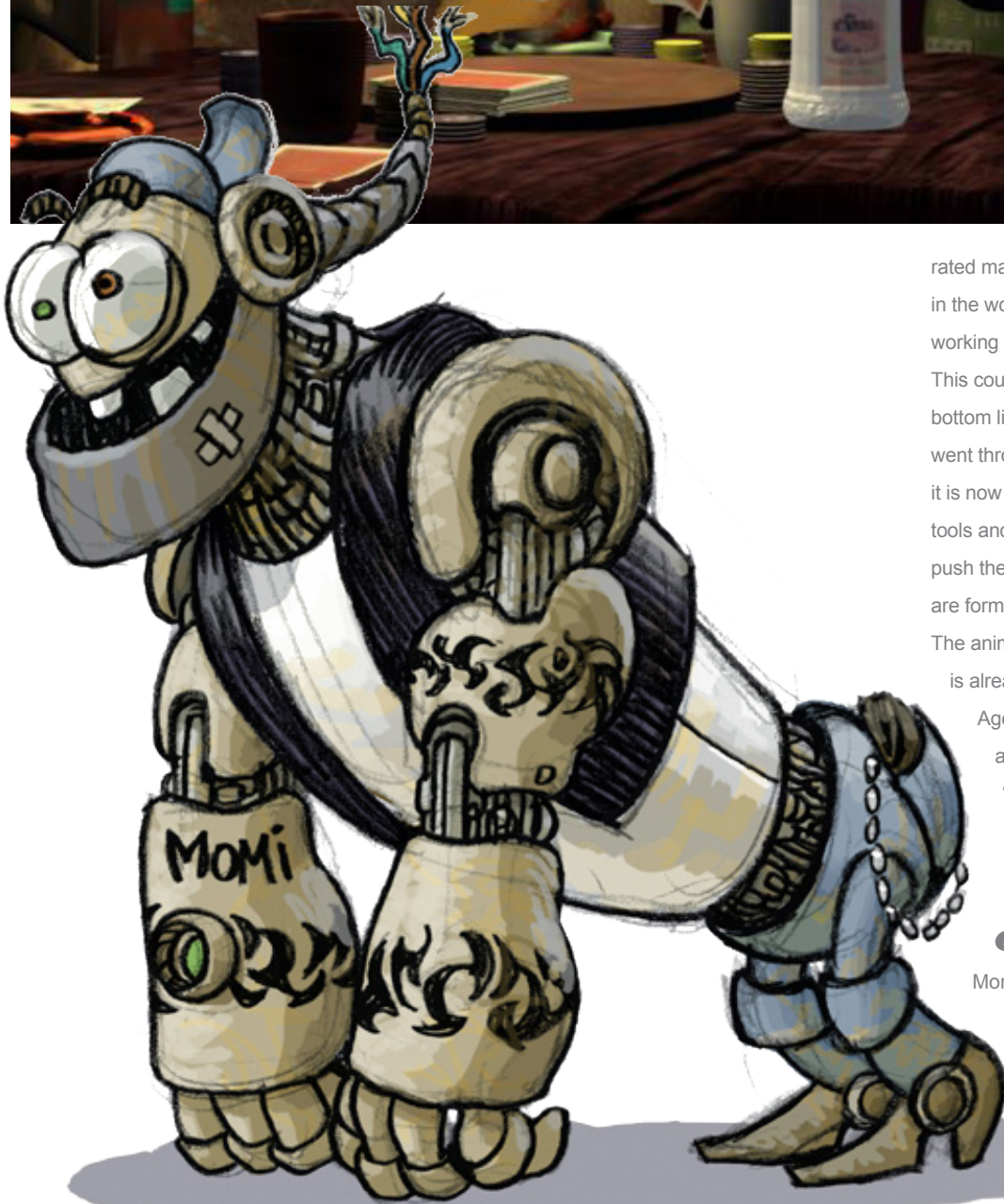
would say...For now, I am doing Production Design and Backgrounds on this 12 minute segment in "Enchanted" and I am in transition to become the new Art Director on it. I can't show any artwork at the moment, but it's been a fun experience, so far. It is supposed to be released in 2007. So, I guess I still have a future in movies. Nonetheless, I am also interested in exploring options outside California. Maybe Vancouver in British Columbia, that has a booming cinema industry and a beautiful scenery (it has been



Christophe Vacher *From Real Brush to Digital Stylus*



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rated many times one of the best cities to live in the world). I might also have a possibility of working in a CG studio in Bangkok, Thailand. This could be fun too, at least for a while. The bottom line is that beyond the hardship animation went through to transition from traditional to CG, it is now ready to move forward with enriched tools and artists who are more than ever eager to push the boundaries of Creation. Many projects are forming everywhere, and studios are hiring. The animation community here in Los Angeles is already starting to talk about a third "Golden Age of Animation" (the two first ones being around the times of "Snow White" and "Lion King"). Well, History has sometimes a nice way of repeating itself, hasn't it?

Christophe Vacher

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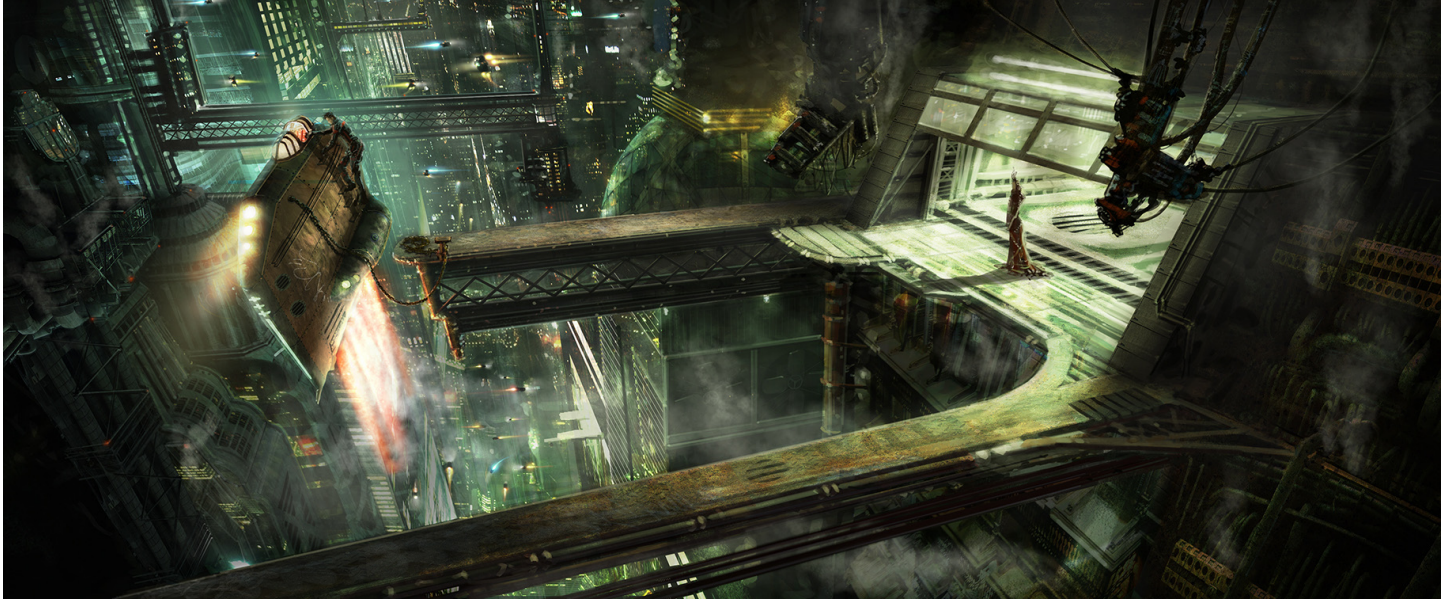


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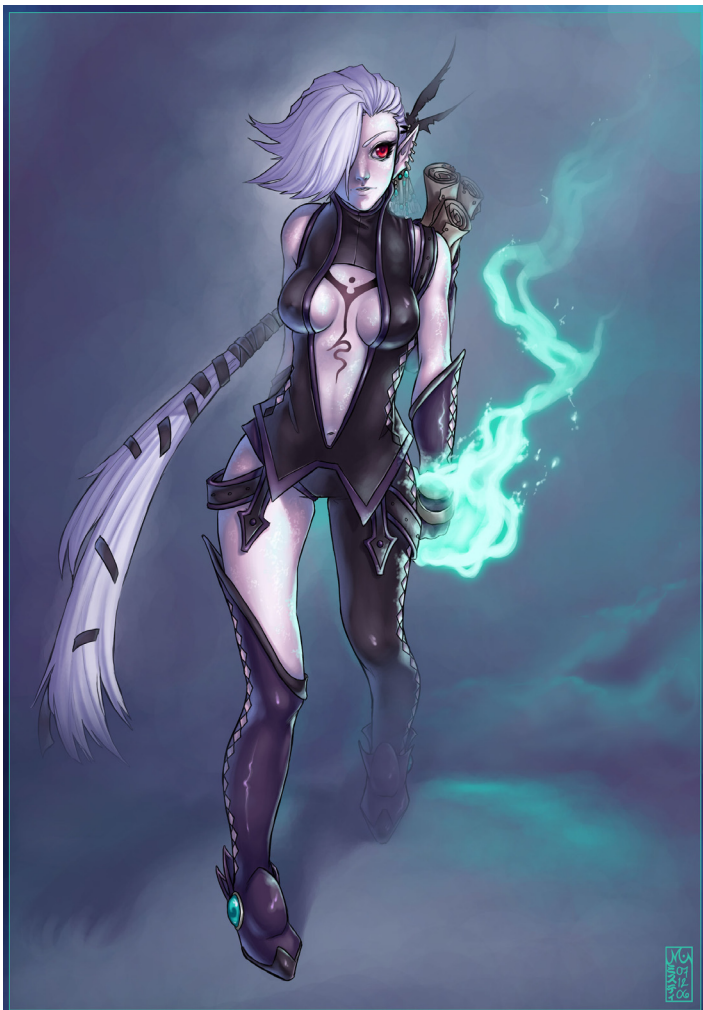




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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
PART 3 : PAINTING

ANN DARROW

ANN DARROW



Hello and welcome back! In the last tutorial we went over the basics on how to finish up Kong and smudging techniques. We also went over some of the detail tips such as Kong's hair etc. In this tutorial, I will show you how to paint Ann Darrow, our female lead. We will start with the sketch and move on through the colour layout, a new way of blending, and a first for me, the hair tutorial. Now before I begin, I want to pre warn all the readers. There is no possible way for any artist to teach how to draw a picture, from front to back, unless you want a 500 page tutorial. I will give you as many tips and tricks as I can, but the rest is up to your patience and talent as an artist. That being said: let's begin!

The Sketch of Ann

If you read the first part of the tutorial, you'll be able to pick this up relatively easily. What I usually do, as said in the previous tutorial (Issues 6 & 7), is start from scribbles, sketches, to painting. You should already have your main line art, as instructed in Part I (fig.01). Once you have this all set up, then we'll start to move on to colour blocking. Now, before we start on this, be warned: there will be much trial and error in the tutorial. Sometimes Ann will look funny, sometimes like a melting android. Although at times you'll hate your image of her, by the end I hope you'll love it. Be patient, if you can't get it the first time, keep trying! Never give up.



Fig 01



Colouring, Laying Down the 'Blobs'

Before we begin, many parts on her face were done all together, going from one part to the next. Pay attention, I won't teach it like that, but rather by parts, which means you'll have to go back through images. Alright, now this is going to be different from Kong's 'colour blobbing'. In our image, we're going to have to lay down a base layer of skin, something to just fill in that open line art. As instructed in Part I, this is how I paint. Make sure the Line Art is a new layer and not connected to the background, from that layer, we'll place a new layer underneath it, and fill it in with the underneath skin tone; which can be seen in (fig.02). After you have that filled in, which should be pretty quick, start to block in shadows and highlights. Darker tones underneath the eyes put some soft blues on her forehead and deepen her hair with the yellow differences. Now the difference here between Ann and Kong's colour blocking, is that I use a soft brush on her, instead the hard one used on Kong. A soft brush is the "Soft/blurry" looking default brush, the hard brush being the first set of flat brushes in your selection. The soft brushes give the advantage of a haze like feel to the skin, and are easier to blend in with

colours. I used a soft brush on her forehead and cheek bones (this was after I laid down my basic colours with the hard brush). Her eyes are up to you, and if you followed my eye tutorial in Part I, Issue 6, you should get the hang of it. Otherwise, there are numerous eye tutorials online. As much as I'd love to put an eye tutorial in here, I will say this: You need to get those eyes perfect. Eyes on celebrities can totally make them look different, be careful here. Ill try to throw some tips as I move on.

Colouring, Step 1 of Refining Ann's face

Lets start with her face first, as you can see her hair is blocked in but don't worry about that for now as for it will come back later. Her face is important; it's more of a personal thing, when you have a bunch of random colours on. What would make you feel more inspired when painting? To have a finished face or a random hairline? Face! So here we'll start to form her bone structure in her face. To do this, we'll want to darken in her cheek bones, maybe with a soft brown, low opacity on a hard brush. Doing this will give her face more depth. After this, you can start to form some lights and shadows on her nose, mostly lights alongside the bridge, the front flat on her nose and the bubble part. Work

tutorial King Kong pt.3

tightly with her nose, make sure her nostrils aren't too flared, or that the softness around the edges isn't too hard. As for the edges of her nostrils, the brown will be a soft but then will grip hard around the actual circumference of the nostril. On the bubble tip of the nose, you should apply a soft light blue, with the soft brush on a low 10%. The highlight will be created with just a small brush & the Dodge tool. The strength should be 10% and make it bold, but not too noticeable.

Colouring, Step 2 of Refining (Hair, Eyebrows & Eyelashes)

In this next step (fig.03) we're going to start to block in her hair. Now you want to reach the same colours as the photo reference, because the hair can easily go from picturesque to platinum blonde highlights. What we don't want are very vibrant yellows and oranges, we want desaturated gold's and browns. For highlights It will be mixes of light pink's, bold yellows, and a hint of beige. The highlights, or shall I say, bright areas will not come in until later, with Layer properties, and the Dodge Tool. Since our light source is coming from her right, our left we will apply the lighter of the gold's on top. Work your way down, going from brightest to darkest. As the hair folds over in the middle, you'll see a collage of darker blues, browns mix



Fig 02



Fig 03



Fig 04



Fig 05

together. This is where the shadows will be. Again work your way down, from brightest of the blues to darkest. Don't worry about the hairlines, etc, just put in your colours here. When the hair is done with the blocking of colours (fig.04), start to work on her eyebrows.

Ann's eyebrows

Her eyebrows are pretty easy to achieve; basically just colouring under the line art with a pretty dark brown. The light is hitting her from behind, so you won't see them as a colourful yellow. I usually wait to smudge the eyebrows into the face once I have the line art linked into the face. So if you have done so, then you can smudge. Now for the eye lashes. If you're a detail freak, like me. You can usually just outline the eyes in a dark blue or you can do that and then draw each lash connecting from the base. Now it's pretty self explanatory so I don't think I have to go into detail on this one. I usually paint in the outline of them, smudge it so it blends with the skin, or go over it with a soft brush on low opacity. Either way works, some like to blend, others like to smudge. I prefer both if you ask me, as they both work fine.



Fig 06

Alright, now this may seem intimidating at first, but it's pretty easy. Where we last left off on her hair we were laying down the colour blobs for it (fig.05). You can see in the image that I shaped it a little more, so it's just not random strokes. You will need to have some discipline here, so you don't go crazy and give her a fro. As you can see, the top folder of hair, above the center of her forehead has already been smudged / blended together. I did this by just blending those colours together at first, blending in an upwards motion. Not to the side, I blend in the way the

hair is flowing. After I have my smoothed out lock of hair, I'll then go over it in thin lines with a size three brush. I'll turn on Pen Pressure too, so I can get soft strokes, hair isn't rock hard. Afterwards, I go over it with the small brush, I'll then refine it some more such as lights and dark highlights and putting in random threads of hair to add motion. (fig.06) Now for the rest of her hair throughout the image. It's pretty much the same as I have explained previously, but highlight advice will come later in the next part.

Colouring, Step 3 of

Ann's hair



Refining (Eyes & Lips)

Let's begin on her eyes now, you can tell that her hair on the next image has been done a little, but let's go on to the eyes. Now from the start, her eyes will first be filled with a soft blue colour, not too dark but not too light. The pupils will be filled with a dark blue and for the pupil, just very dark blue or black. The bottom eye lid will be painted a medium toned brown; you can blend that into the skin. Once you're okay with that, paint in a white soft circle over the pupil for the glare, and brighter blue for around the pupil. Now what you have to realize is that the eyes are key, I can't tell you how to do them 100%, because that's up to you and the reference. Her eyes were very, very hard to get down. So I'll try to explain my best. When you have those final colours in her pupils, start to blend them in together. Once that is through, use the dodge tool to lighten up the glare on her eye. If you're paying attention to her hair through the images, you'll notice that it's starting to get pretty wild. I exaggerated too much on it, and it will go down later. As for her lips now, what was started in the earlier thumbnail pictures was a basic colour overlay. The colours that I used are magenta and a darker version of it. Blend those together going vertically, and also make sure the Pressure (if you're using the smudge tool) and make sure the colours blend really softly. Always remember that females have very soft features on their face, cheeks, lips and etc. Once you have those blended together, you can start to add highlights to them. I used a soft brush, at 3 size, and pressure on and went with a cream colour to blend over them softly like a light glaze. You can also use the dodge tool on it to highlight the lips just a little. The thing is that you don't go too overboard with the dodge on his lips; it can really fault her look. You might also notice that her teeth are a little large let's say, but over the course of this tutorial they will go down in size.

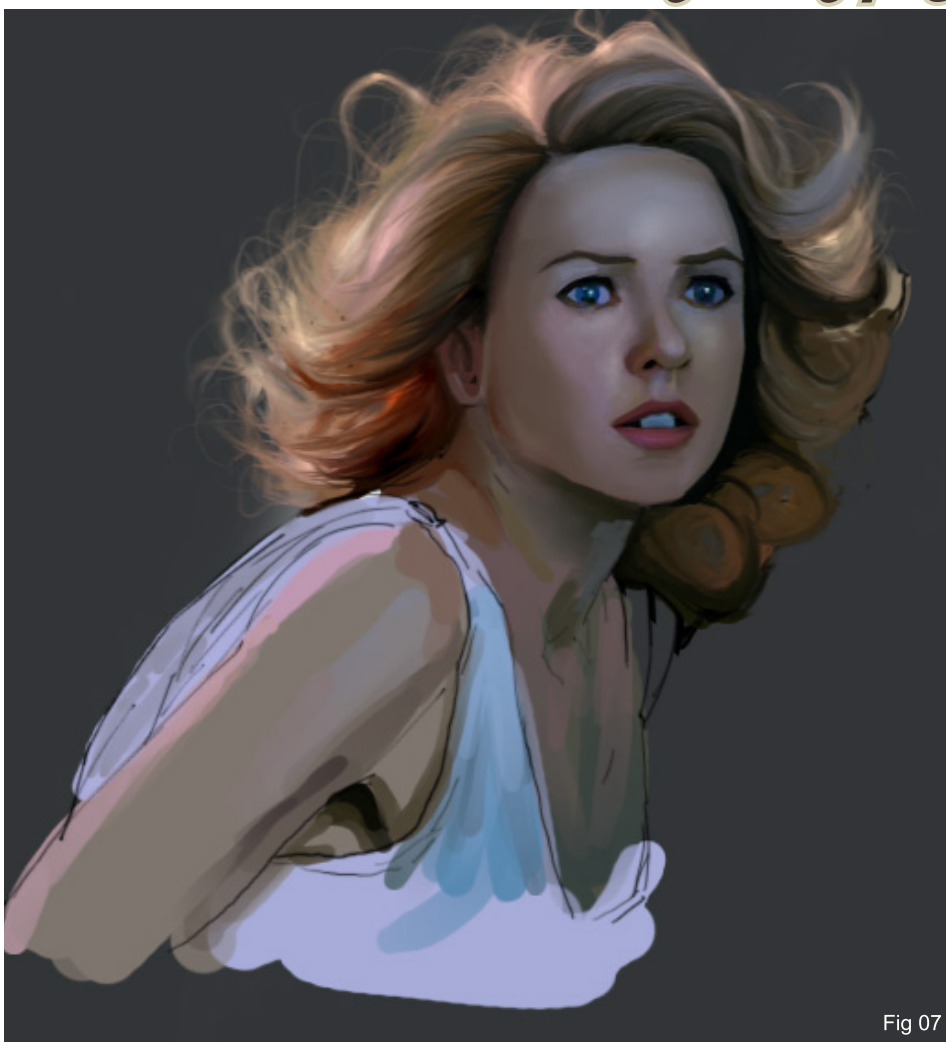


Fig 07

Refining (Face, Eyes, Lips & Hair)

Ann's Face: Now in this next step, we need to refine her face, make it a bit more feminine. This involves soft colours, rather than the hard ones that you might see in the previous step. To do this, you'll want to start to paint over her original skin tones with a soft brush. Make sure you give distinct looks the right touch though, remember they are what make her. (fig.07). **Ann's hair:** Let's finish this hair up finally! As for her hair, where we left off last was with the starting of highlights. What you want to achieve first is a rendered version of her hair. No more sloppy marks, don't start until you have the hair fully threaded and realized. Once you have that done, you're going to start with a base underlay of colour to fill her hair. This is called, well to me, Under Glowing. First you want to get a soft brush, and make sure the opacity is very low, around 20%. Then select a red/orange tone, and set the brush to

Overlay or you can create a new layer and do it (make sure the Layer is set to overlay) and just mess with the opacity there. Once ready, start to stroke in certain parts on her hair to get that under glow look from the outside lighting breaking through her hair. (Ann9.jpg) Switch up the reds and oranges and change it back and forth to achieve different feels. When that is through with, you can start to add upper highlights on the hair. I use dodge for this but not only that, I duplicate the layer of hair (Magic Lasso tool) and mess around with my settings such as: screen, overlay, colour dodge and etc. (fig.08) The base step to what I did with it, was duplicate it once, set it to screen and make the Opacity 10%, after that, I merged the two layers. Once merged, and looking to my acceptance, I then used the dodge tool again on low strength and created the outer rimming lighting on her hair (fig.09). When using the dodge tool, it would be a good idea to set it to Pen Pressure, so

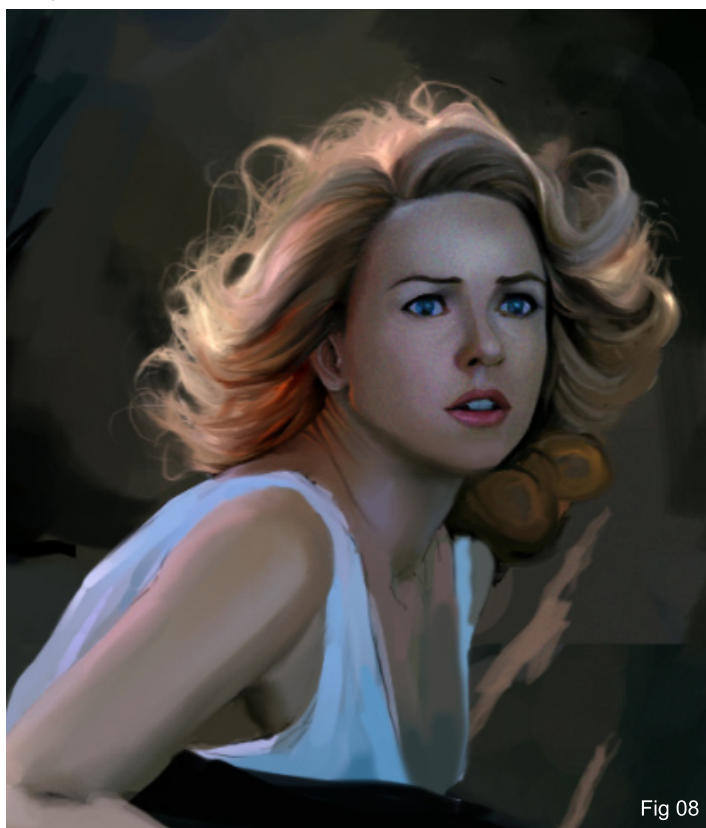


Fig 08

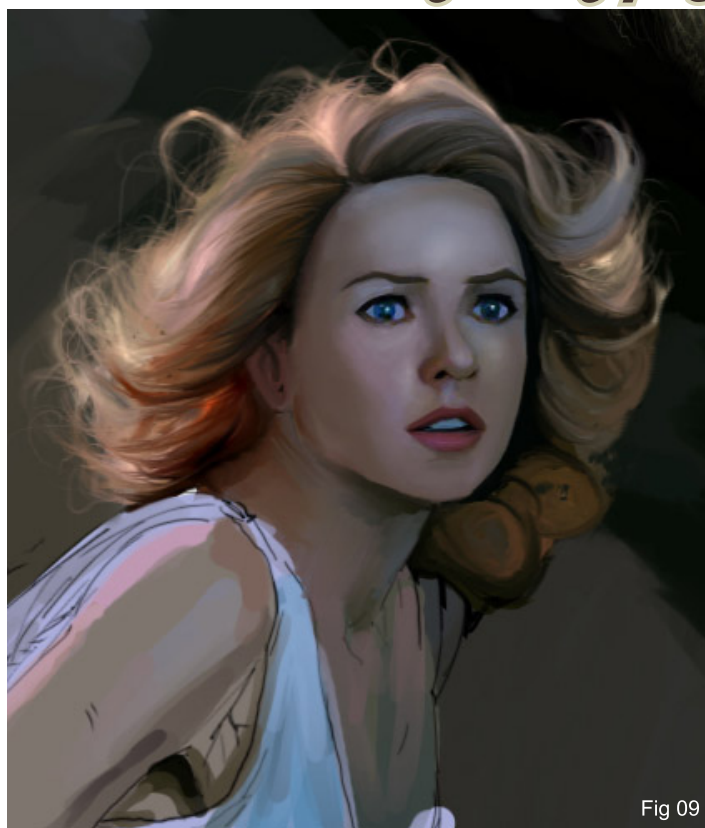


Fig 09

you can make smooth lines and not hard lines. When you have your hair laid out (don't pay attention to the images, this step was done over the course of the entire image) and finished such as (fig.10), you'll notice that the hair has dimmed. This was because I desaturated with the Desaturate tool. You may be thinking why I did this and the answer is because it adds more depth to the hair and will be used later to your advantage. Once you have desaturated your hair, circle it with the Magic Lasso tool and right click, and hit Layer via Copy. Do that twice. Once that is done, set both of those copied layers of hair to Screen and one Overlay. Mess around with the opacity on both of them till they match up to the picture. After that, Merge the Overlay and Screen layer together, set it to Overlay or Screen after that (which ever fits your preference) then merge it into Anne's original hair (fig.11). You will notice a difference from the Tutorial Images (Fig.11 and 12), and that difference is the glow and curls. Let's first do the curls, since the glow will overwhelm the curls and barrier them. You'll want to again use the soft brush, with Pen Pressure set on, and use the same colour as the outer rim of her hair and

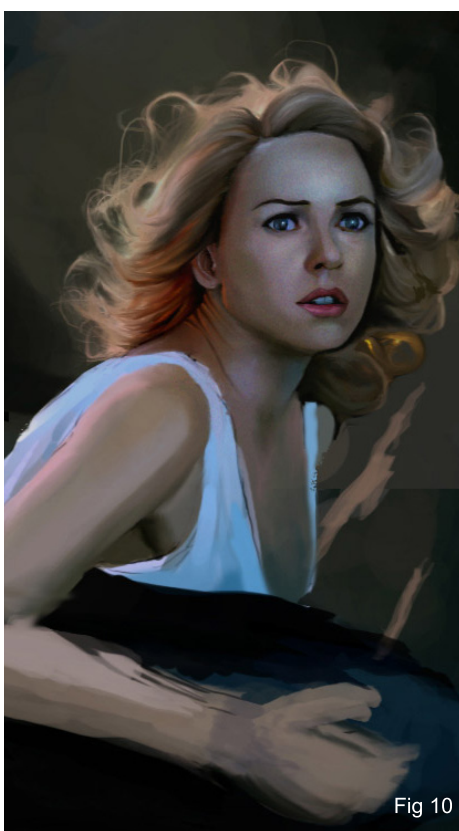


Fig 10

just stroke thin lines of it, some chubby others skinny. This usually can be time gruelling but it's up to you if you want the details. For the final step of her hair will be the overall glow. I will admit, I think I went a bit overboard with the hair

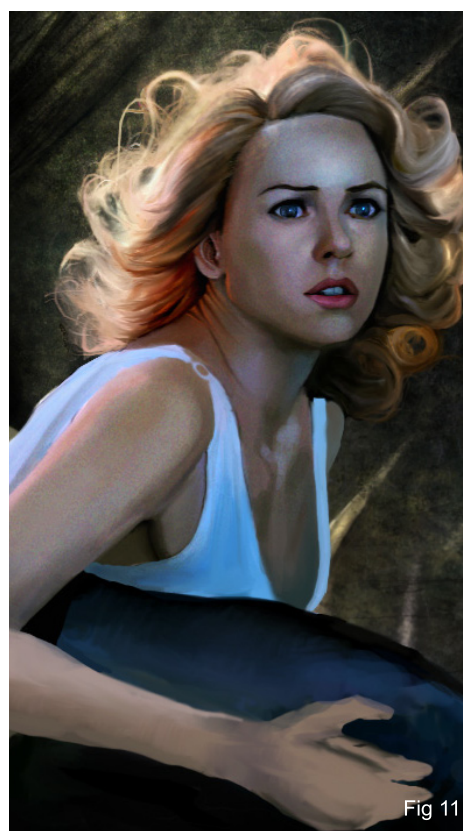
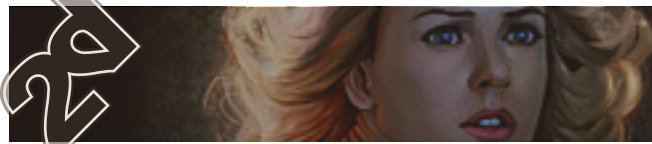


Fig 11

glow, but it's all up to you on how far you want to take it. Get that soft brush out again, and set it to screen, get a bright yellow (more near white) and turn the opacity down to 10% and just stroke over her hair. Don't etch at it, do full on



strokes so it stays the same pattern. Not really any more to it then what I have said, the rest is up to you, creatively.

Ann's Eyes

For her eyes, where we left off on the basically colouring and rendering of them. We need to start moulding her eyebrows more, giving them more edge and slant. Thinning them out also helps, too bold and you will have manly guy eyebrows, which really doesn't fit Ann too much. After they are thinned, start to work on her eyelashes and eye make up. The darkness really pops out on her skin, so you need to use a very dark blue to outline them. Give them sharper edges near the slit of the eye to give that more edgy female form, also a big thing that tips it off is near her upper eye lid HER left, it slants up, which would be the starting eyelashes.. Inside the eye, you'll put in some dark blues at the bottom, then round them off on HER right side with lighter blues. This will give the eye a more rounded feel, and dimensions. A tiny blotch of white near the edge of her eye lid will end this eye off. To add more to the glare, just Dodge tool it a little bit to get a clearer glow. And to end it of, darken her upper eye sockets with a grey-blue. (fig.13)

Ann's Lips

All we have to do is finish off her lips and her face is done! Now for the lips, I haven't expressed this before but make sure you get that crevice of her upper lip painted in there underneath her nose. To get the lips all finished up, what you want to do is simply define them, by doing so you can do this with three simple steps. First off, you can start to outline them with a dark shade of red/velvet. Start to darken in the edge of her lips, and make sure you work your way up and curve them at the two slants, then back down the other side. On the lower part, use a lighter red (than the previous dark one. After you have rendered her lips some more, darken the part underneath her lip where the chin bends at a slant. (fig.11)



Fig 12

Colouring, Step 5 of Refining (Ann's arm)

Ann's arm: To fast forward through this part, just follow the same beginning steps on how to paint, to block in her arms underneath the line art. Once you get your basic colours (which should somewhat match her face) you can smudge them/blend them together. I smudged them, and then with a soft brush went over them with highlights and shadow colours to give the arm more depth. What I start on first is the highlights, such as the light vanilla colours on her shoulder down to her elbow. (Ann14.jpg). Then start to darken the underside of the arm with a soft brush on low opacity. Some whites alongside the bare of her arm also give a bit of

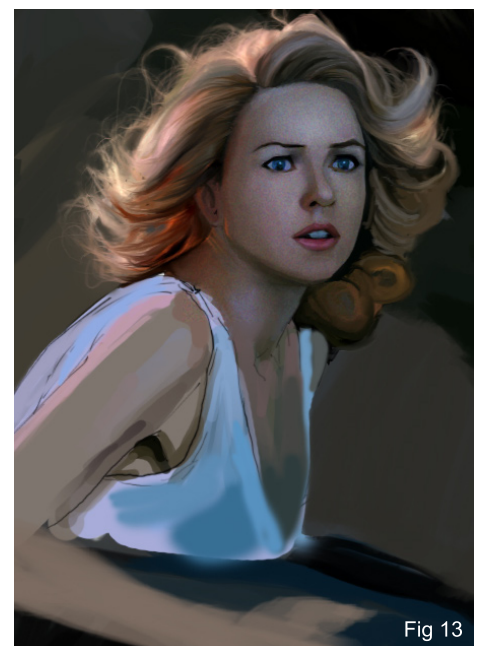


Fig 13



form to the overall shape. Her hand will mostly consist of dark colours since no direct light is hitting it. On HER left side of the arm, some soft blues should be applied to give a cooler feeling to the underside of the skin. Also where the breast attach to her arm, give it a dark first colour, applied with some more green/browns. Her shoulder blades where they connect near the neck, which I like the most out of the entire body, we're really just done without even noticing it. But what I can remember was just moulding of colours and getting the lighting down. Use the dodge tool, set on Mid tones, and make sure the opacity is pretty low so you don't strike too hard of a white mark on her. Softly go over the bumps of the bones, underneath the skin with the dodge tool to bring the shape of them out. On the opposite side of the highlights, use dark colours to counter react with them, thus giving them more depth. The highlights on her neck are a mixture of oranges and dodge tool, set with low strength. I also used the dodge tool, set on highlights, with a textured brush that spreads tiny dots all over to create the sparkles on her dress. For that sharp lighting on her jewels on the dress, I used my technique of setting the brush to Overlay with a bright blue, 30% opacity and stroking over it gently. Some touch up tips for the hands would be the orange highlighting on the upper ridge, lighting up her knuckles and the fingernails. The rest of the texture is applied, right after this. (fig.14)

Refining, Step 6, Custom Grain

Now most of my pictures for a while have always had a custom grain layer created over them. I will tell you how to create the grain, but in steps.

Step 1: Create a new layer over the entire picture (once it is fully finished) and set it to Overlay.

Step 2: Fill the layer with Grey (RGB:128) the layer should look transparent. (fig.15).

Step 3: Go to Filters<Add Noise. In the box



Fig 14

where it says AMOUNT put 400%. (fig.16)

Step 4: You will then apply a filter, 3-4 times, up to you called "Brush Strokes – Spatter" which will make it look quite weird. (fig.17).

Step 5: Then go to Filters<Blur<Blur which will soften the overall shapes. (fig.18).

Step 6: Finally you will adjust the opacity of the layer; I usually make it 5%-8%. That's all!

Background

Even though this tutorial doesn't list background in there, I'll give you a quick tutorial on how I did it. First I did the line art, with straight lines so the perspective was dead on. After that, I made a new layer over it, going over the line art with tiny details, such as dirt and what not as if you were sketching a picture of a building. I then made a layer underneath it and set the line art layer to Multiply. As always I started painting the environment with basic colours, putting down a solid block colour with 100% opacity for the over all background. Why I do this? Because you wont get transparency issued with the colours, after I have my solid colours I set the brush to Pen Pressure and start to paint my highlights

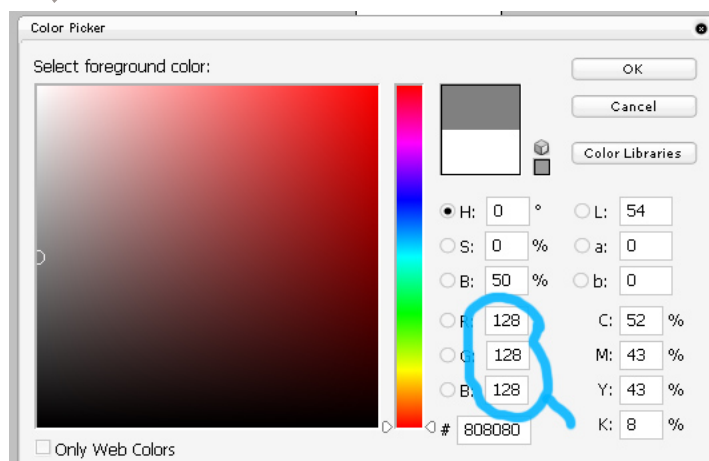


Fig 15

and shadows. Just go messy here, it doesn't matter it will all be blended in the end. Once those colours are laid down on the background, I go piece by piece of the design of the Empire State Building (which is what's behind him) and start to blend them together. For example, the left (ours) part of the building which is shades of green, to get that dripping dark green feel I painted a bunch on a separate layer of green strokes then set motion blur downwards on it. After I merged them together, I then smudge the greens (from the motion blur) into the rest of the old yellow type of metal. As we move on to the right, you get the beige type of colour which is a little brighter. This one had no filters, but rather strokes over strokes with a soft brush. Then I cropped part of it with the Magic Lasso, Layer Via Copied it and set it to screen and dropped the opacity a bit. For the right side of the picture, I cheated a bit I will admit. I made one slab of metal, then copied it and pasted it below, and then below. After I merged them with the background, I would go and finely detail them up. Adding etches, scratches and darkened spots. That's it for the background, nothing more to add onto that.

Conclusion:

This is the end of my tutorial, I hope you have learned much from it, whether it was a small tip or a large one! Don't think this is an easy picture, it took me a week straight (of 12 hour drawing periods) to finish it. This is no cake walk, so don't get angry if it's difficult for you. I tried to speak my best Photoshop English for everyone out there, so hopefully you guys don't get too confused. If you ever have any questions, you can email me at Dmxdmlz@aol.com. But I hope everyone gets this tutorial and has a great time with it. Enjoy and keep painting!!



Fig 16



Fig 17

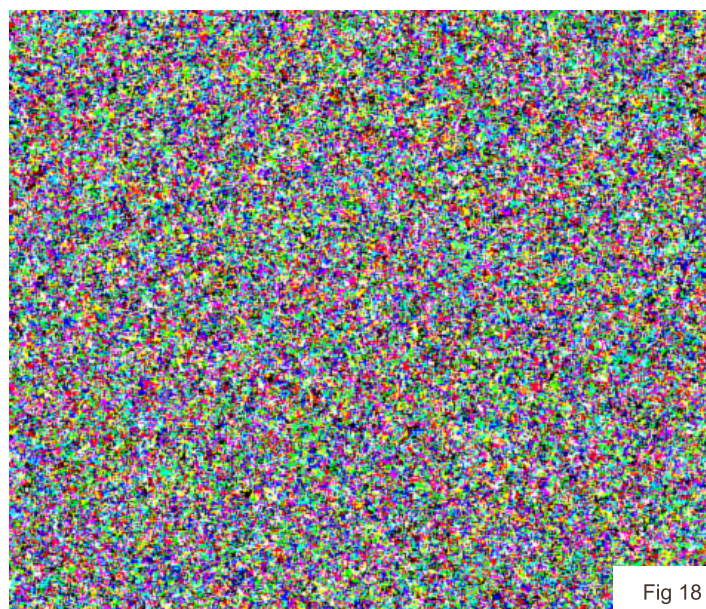


Fig 18



tutorial *King Kong* pt.3

Adonihs

More work from this artist can be found at

<http://adonihs.deviantart.com/>

And contact them via:

dmxdlz@aol.com



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- Geoff Cambell, ILM Senior Model Supervisor



by Rich Tilbury

ELEMENTS

DIGITAL PAINTING TUTORIAL SERIES

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

Issue 07 : July 06 : part 7 : FUR & HAIR

Issue 08 : August 06 : part 8 : EYES

Issue 04 : September 09 : part 9 : SKIN

Issue 10 : November 06 : part 10 : FLESH WOUNDS



Fig 01



Fig 02



Fig 03

Digital Painting: Eyes

This month I will be painting a human eye. The first thing to do is gather as many reference pictures as you can including a mirror ;) You will notice that all eyes are unique in both colour and shape and that the skin will vary in every image. Lighting also plays a key role in determining how reflective the lens looks alongside the as well as the skin itself.

1. Once you have enough reference at hand start by deciding on a light source and then putting down some very rough shapes and colours using a standard chalk brush. In Fig 1 you can see that I have laid down a basic template to build on. I created the skin tones on a single layer and then added the white of the eye (or sclera), the iris and pupil all on separate layers. I added some gaussian blur to the three eye layers to avoid any sharp lines. It is good practice to keep these layers intact for now to ease the process of making any colour alterations as we progress.

2. In Fig 2 I have added some provisional detail to the eye on the same layer as the iris – just a few random squiggles that emanate outwards from the pupil as well as a darker outline. You can also use the smudge tool to soften the edge of the iris as well as destroy the perfect symmetry. I added an extra layer on which I painted in some more flesh tones to soften the image. In fig 3 you can see some of the darker paint strokes that define the eye lid as well as some pinker shades that run around the sclera. There are also some lighter accents that help form the bottom lid. Try and vary the colours across your painting but keeping them within a similar tonal range. You can select pale reds through to yellows, browns and even some cooler blueish tones. Remember that variety is key to creating a convincing look.

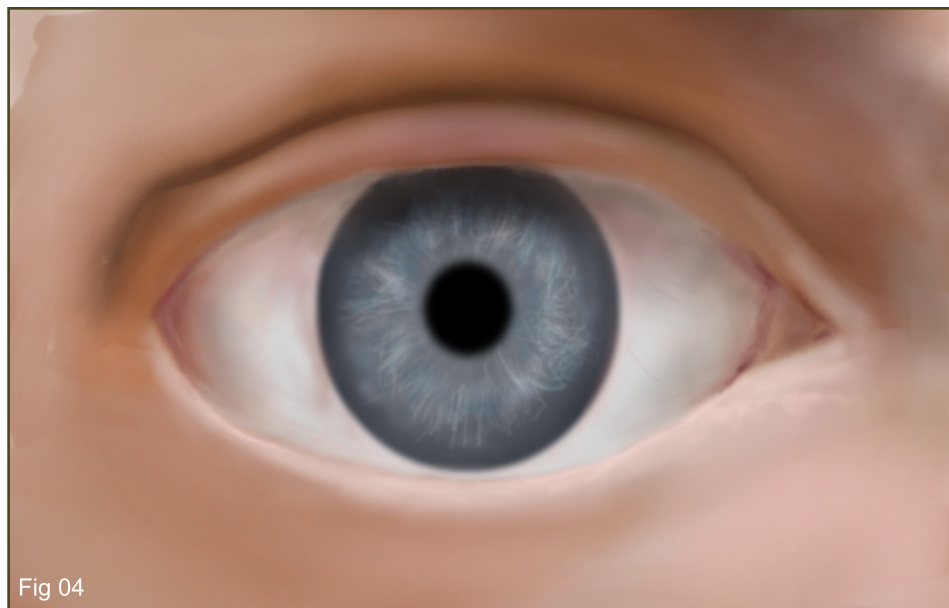


Fig 04

3. In fig 4 I have refined the corner of the eye where the eyeball curves inward and have softened the surrounding skin area. More crucially I have added a new Shadows layer set to multiply and painted in some grey / brown tones under the eyebrow and top of the eye itself to help refine the form.

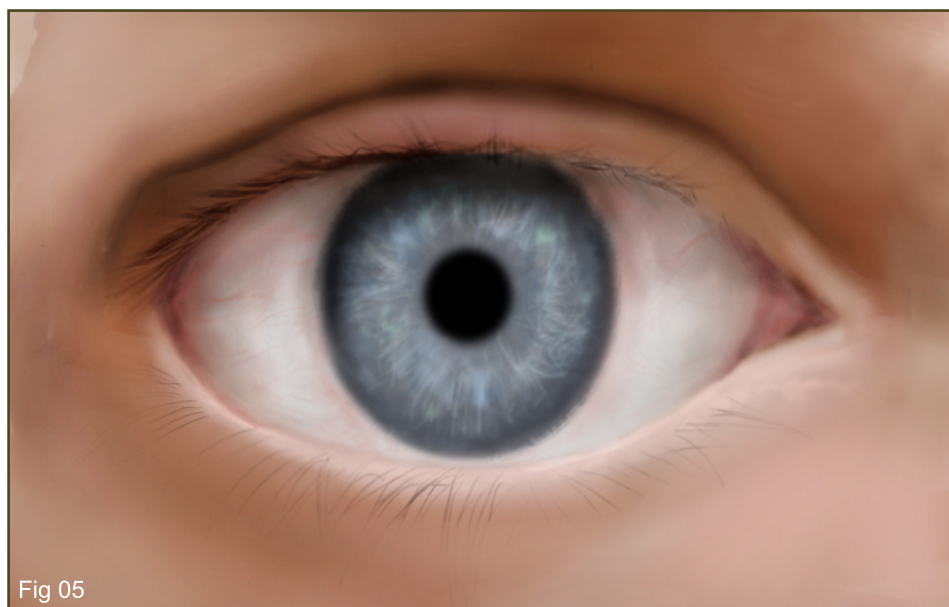


Fig 05

4. I then created a new layer to add in the eyelashes using a fine airbrush as seen in Fig 5. I also painted in some greyish tones under the upper lid to denote some shadows which are also being cast across the top of the eye. You will notice that I have also used the smudge tool to add an inconsistent edge to the iris as well as painting in some small blood vessels and subtle pink tones towards the corners of the eye. One other layer has been added to inject some light into the eye. Here I have used a pale blue and green colour and made some random shapes around the pupil and then set the blending mode to screen which helps bring it more to life.

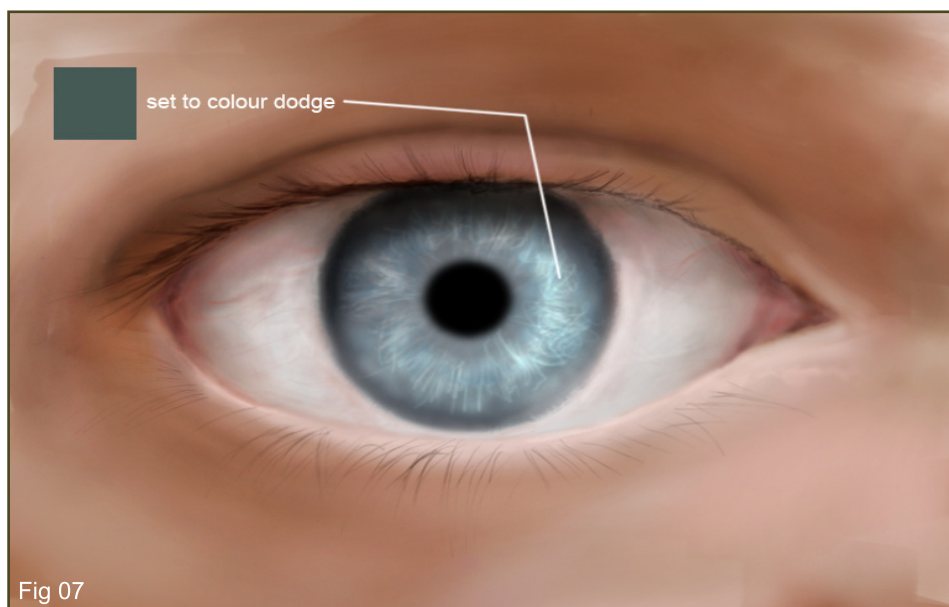


Fig 07

5. To further enhance the eye I selected a dull green and on a new layer set to colour dodge, painted a random shape covering most of the lower right side of the iris to create some highlights as seen in Fig 6.

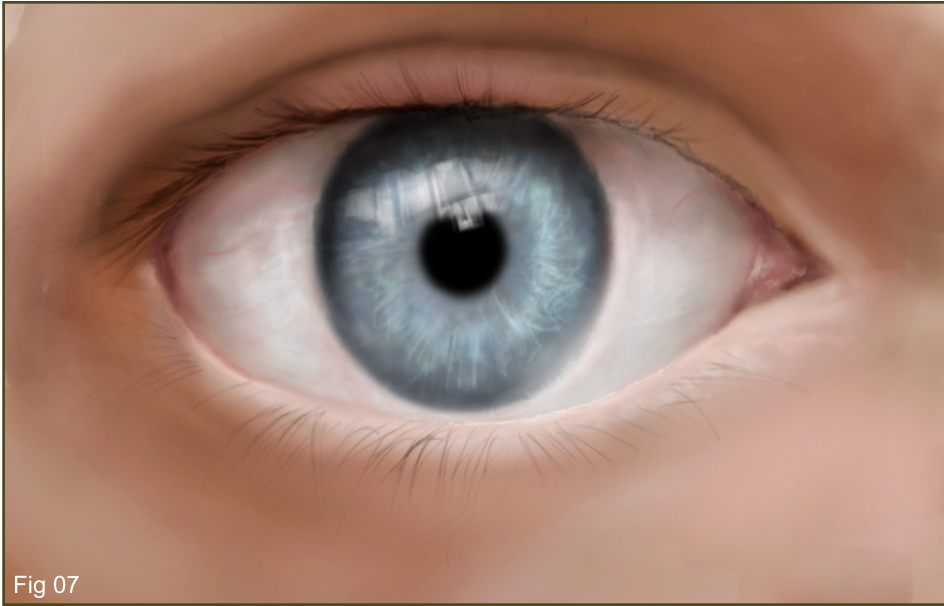


Fig 07

6. The one vital aspect still missing from the image is a reflective highlight across the cornea. This will add a necessary touch and breathe life into the image. This is done using a pure white on a new layer with the opacity turned down to around 80%. It is up to you where you paint the highlight and the type of shape you choose as it is very subjective anyway. I have chosen a window shape using some sharp lines to describe a framework and faded the edges somewhat (Fig 7). Reserve a pure white only for a small section of the highlight. I have also painted in some small highlights in the corner of the eye and along the bottom lid. At this stage it may be a good idea to flatten the painting if you are happy with things.

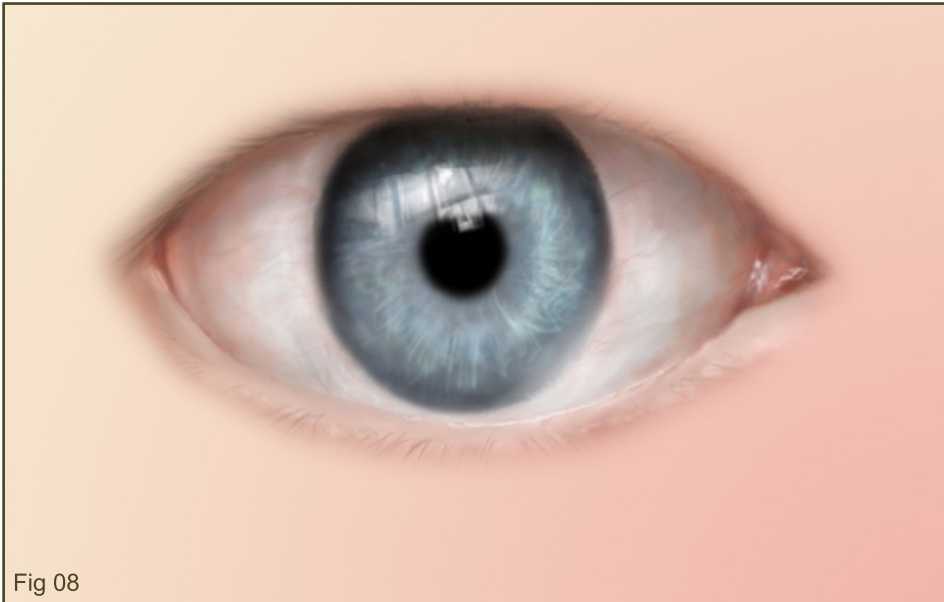


Fig 08

7. We are almost finished now apart from some subtle colour overlays which will be used to improve the skin tones. In Fig 8 you can see that I have masked out the actual eye and then on a new layer applied a gradient across the image from corner to corner using a pale pink and yellow. I then repeated this process but this time using a much greyer denomination of the previous colours as seen in Fig 9.

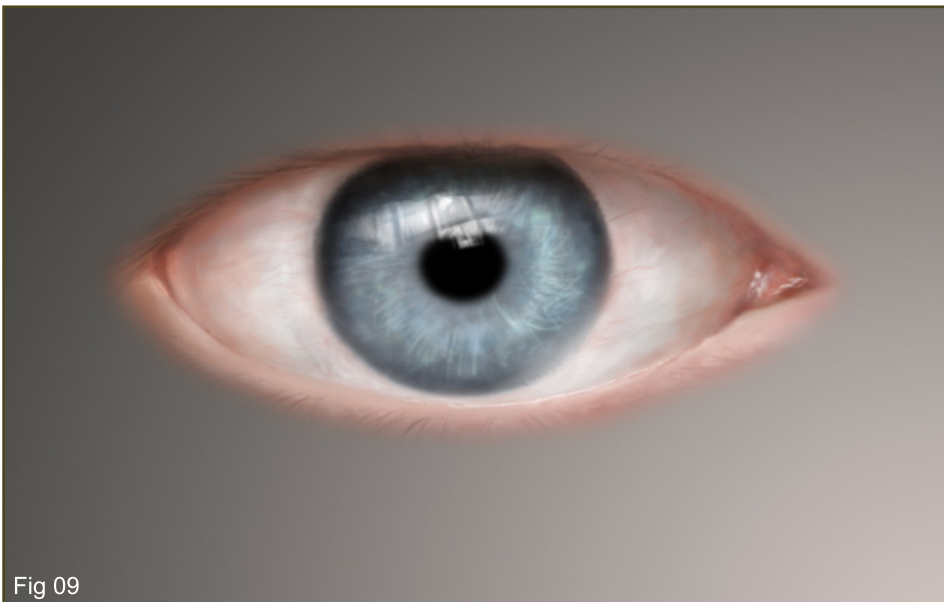


Fig 09

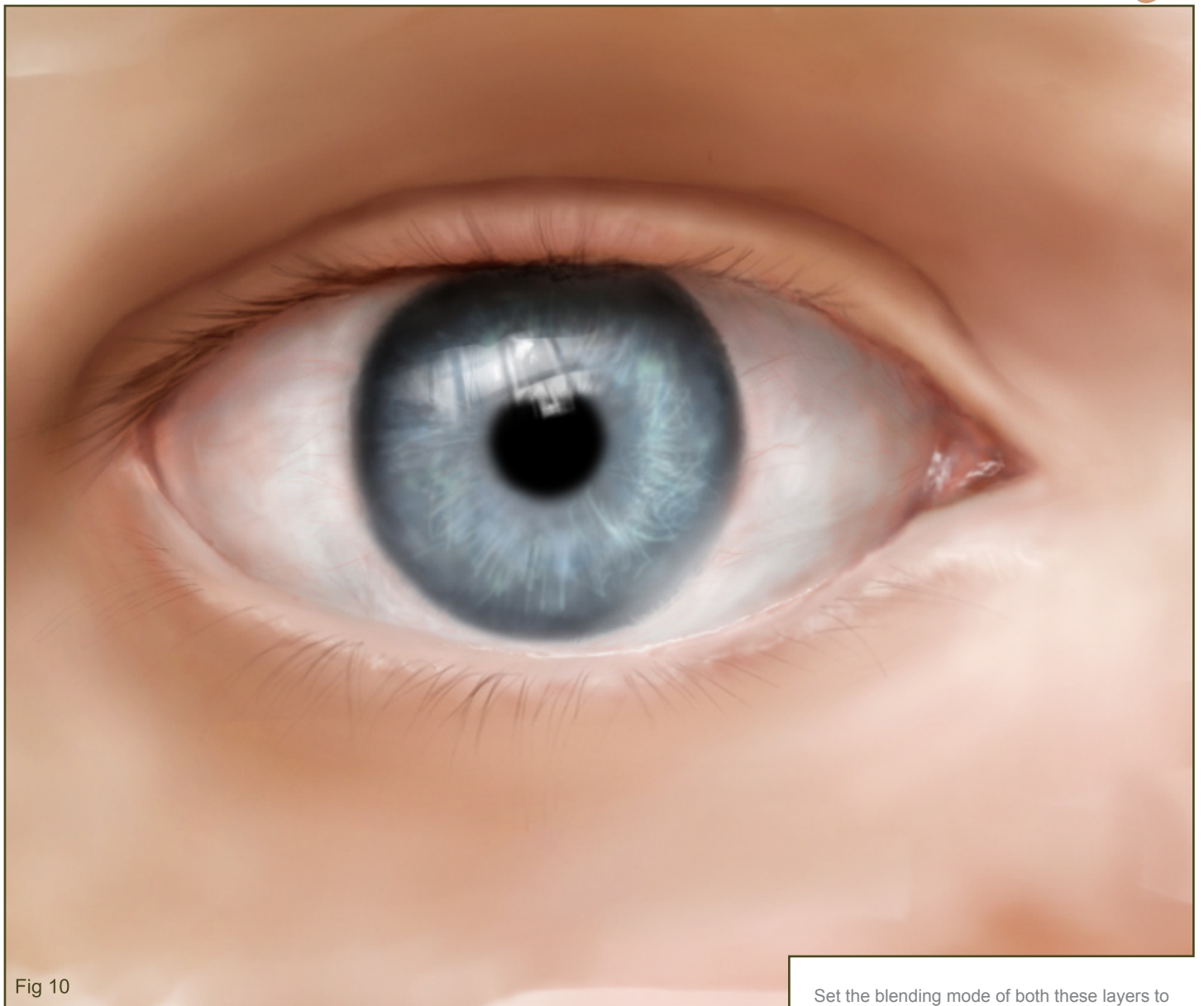


Fig 10

Set the blending mode of both these layers to soft light at 100% opacity and see the results in Fig 10 compared to Fig 7. The tones are now much warmer and the shading softer.

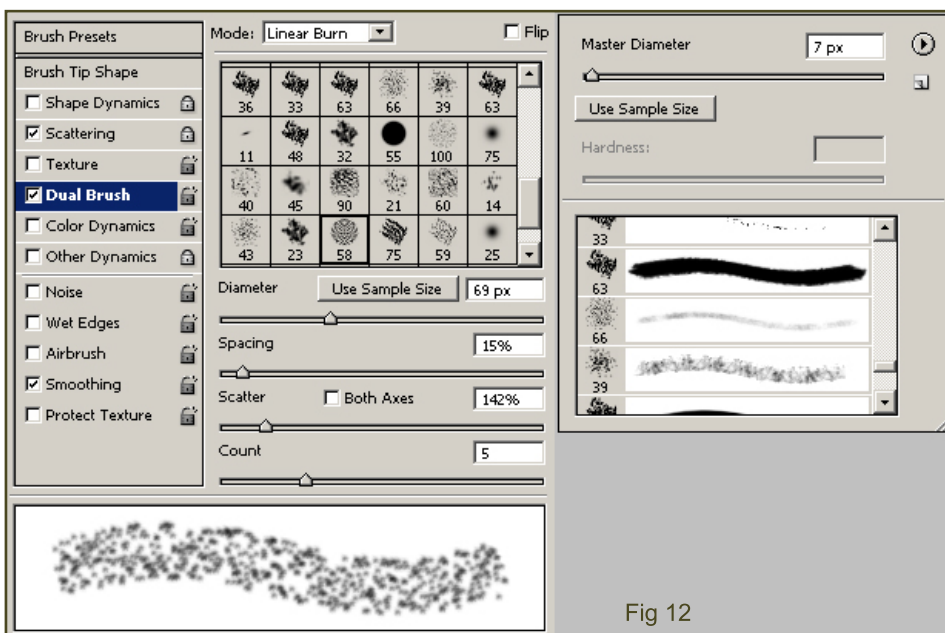


Fig 12

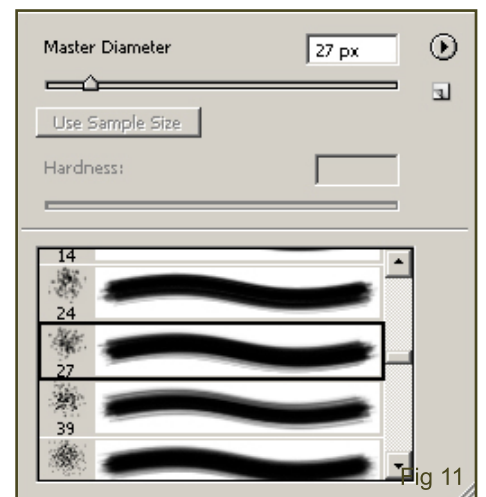
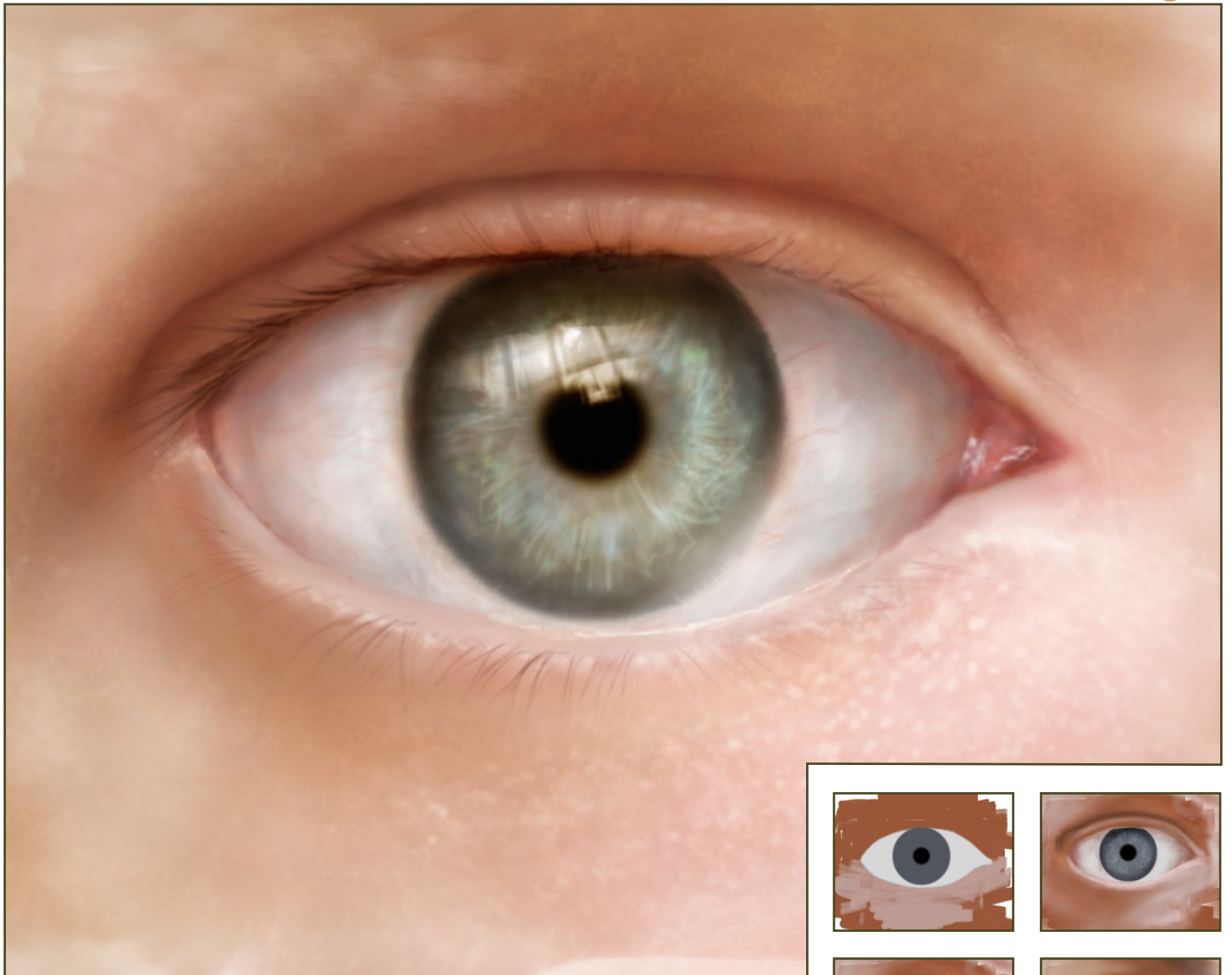


Fig 11

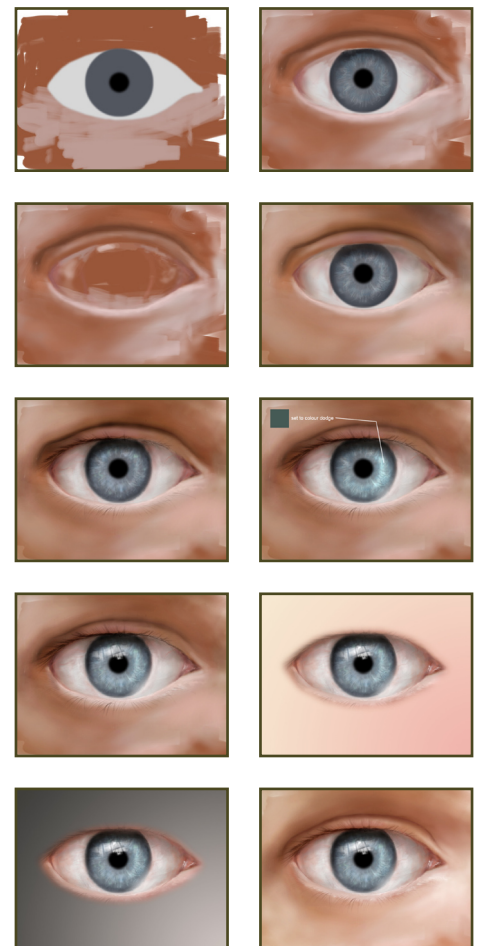


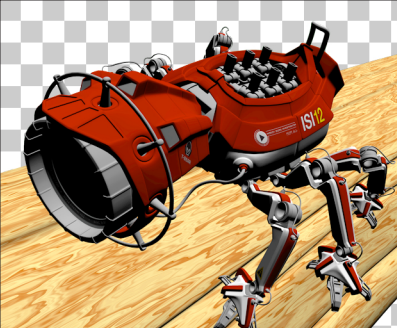
8. One last thing which we can do is use a spatter brush with a little scattering to help break up the skin tones and show some highlights around the pores. You can either do this on a new layer or paint onto the flattened version. Select a spatter brush and reduce the size down to between 7 and 12 and begin painting in lighter marks below the bottom lid to create a textured surface (Fig 11). You can also increase the scattering from within the brushes palette to paint in some varied tones which are just visible above the eye area.

I used a standard dry brush to begin with and combined this with the dual brush function and some scattering for this area (Fig 12). To finish of the image I added one final layer using a pinky purple colour (171,112,126) set to overlay which just increases the redness around the eye to suggest the blood vessels just beneath the surface. Then using the circular marquee tool with some feathering I altered the colour of the eye through, Image- Adjustments- Hue/Saturation. I increased the hue slider to create some brown around the pupil and gave the eye a more green grey colour. The final result can be seen in Fig 13.

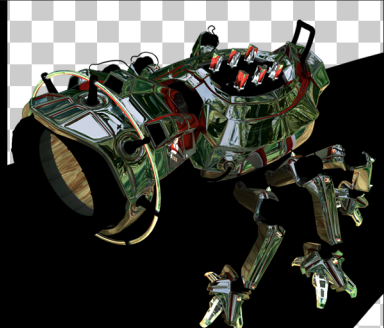
Richard Tilbury

More work from this artist can be found in 3D Creative and 2D Artist magazines each month.

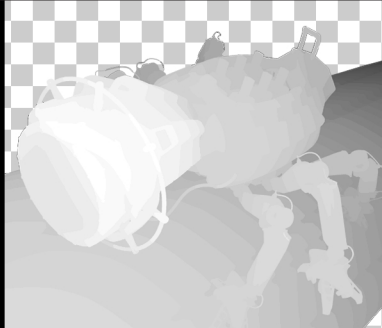




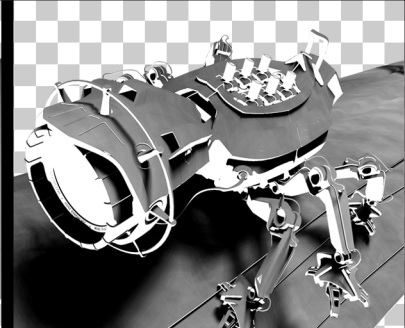
COLOR



REFLECTIONS



DEPTH



SHADOWS



THE POWER OF LAYERS

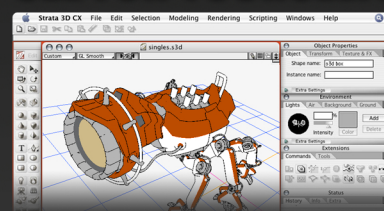


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by Stephanie R Loftis

ELEMENTS



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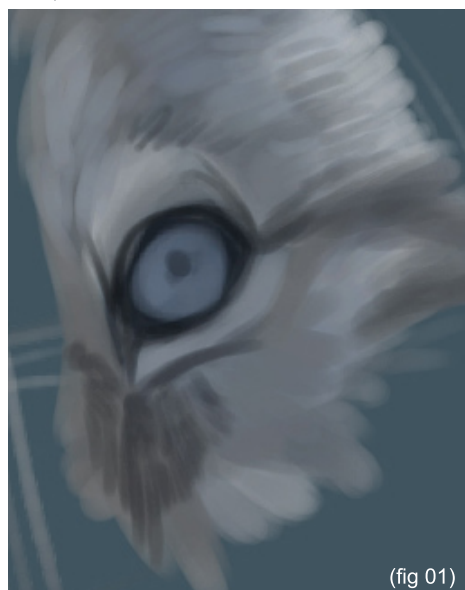
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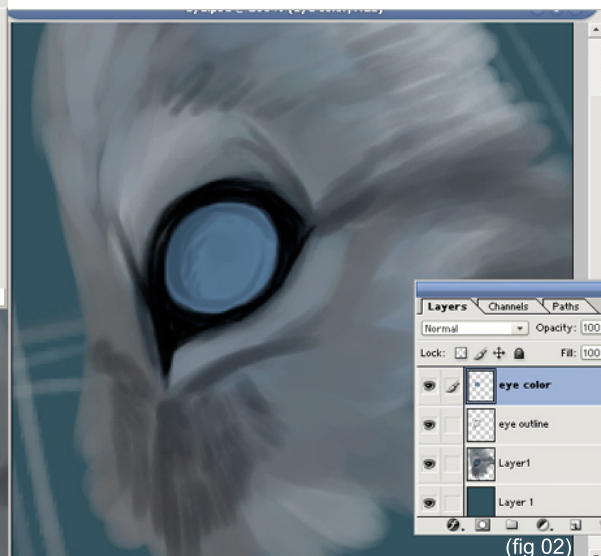
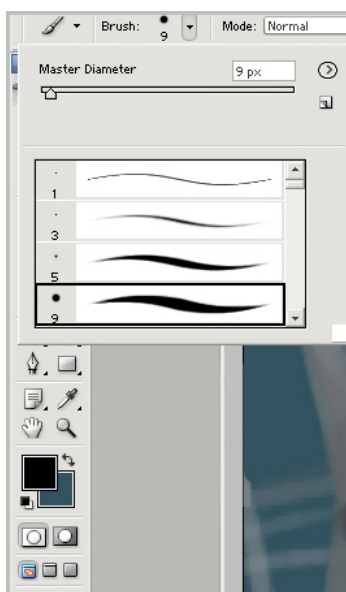
Issue 08 : August 06 : part 8 : EYES

Issue 04 : September 09 : part 9 : SKIN

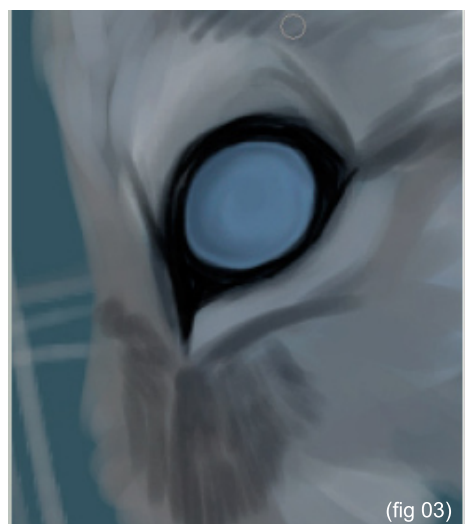
Issue 10 : November 06 : part 10 : FLESH WOUNDS



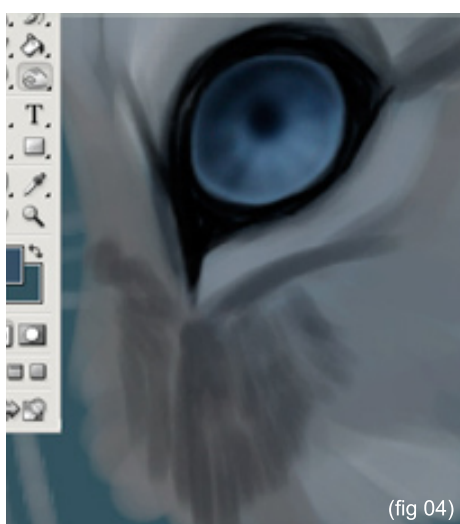
(fig 01)



(fig 02)



(fig 03)



(fig 04)



(fig 05)

Eyes

We're going to start off with a picture I have drawn in Open Canvas and open it up in Photoshop. The coloured part (including the eye) is all on one layer and the green background is on a separate one. He's got a little bit of detail in his fur, this helps me tell where to put shadows/highlights and I have some pre made clumps of fur. On separate layers use a brush to colour the eyelids and the inside of the eye. I then started adding in some shadows with a darker blue colour, still on the eye colour layer. Make a new layer for the eye colour and eye outline. (fig 01)

The brushes I'm going to use have an Opacity set at about 60. (fig 02)

Then I took the smudge tool and I blended in the colours. (fig 03)

I am a user of the dodge and burn tools, burn in some moreshadows and separate the eye into little segments like a star shape. (fig 04)

Do the same thing with the highlights tool as you pretty much did with the burn tool. (fig 05)

Note: Burn - set on midtone opacity 50% more or less depending on what I want) Dodge - Highlight 50% more or less. You can also start adding shine into the eyelids

I made a separate layer to add a shine in the eye and to colour in the top of the eye with black. (just coloured in black and smudged it until it covered where I wanted it to). (fig 06) Go

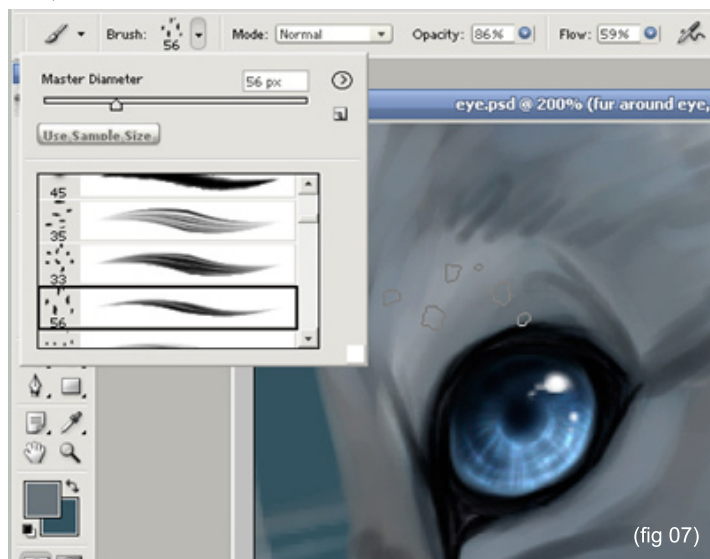


(fig 06)

back to the eye colour layer and add dodge / burn more until satisfied.

Fur Around The Eye

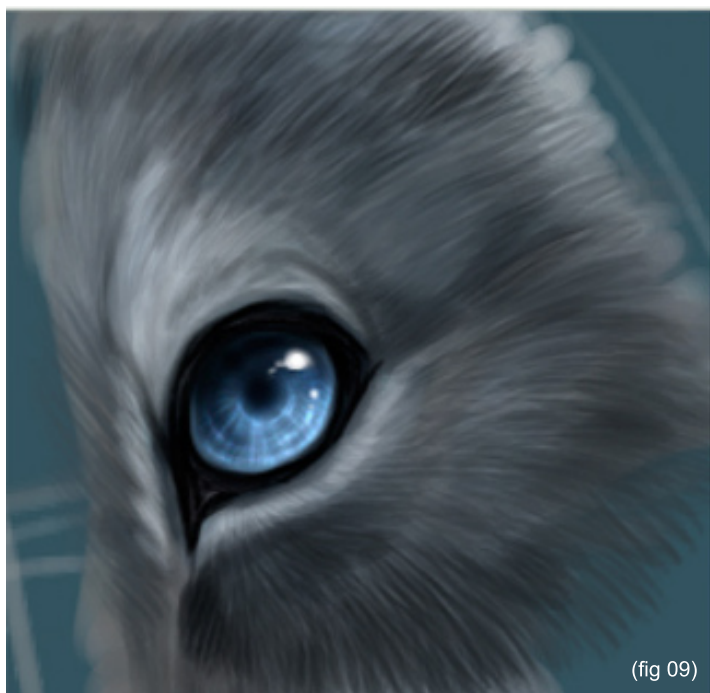
One of my problems with colouring in Photoshop when I first started was getting the eye to look blended in with the head and look like it belonged there and not like it was just a 2D floating object. The problem is, when creating



(fig 07)



(fig 08)



(fig 09)



(fig 10a)

a picture I normally have a separate layer of fur and then a "fur around the eye" layer... so you have to make sure both layers blend with each other. (Later on I might just merge all the head and eye layers but right now they would be seperate).

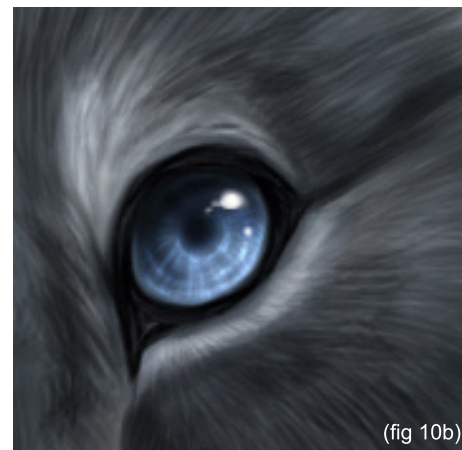
(fig 07) I have my home-made fur brushes. Ignore the opacity, usually I have it set at about 60%... 80% tends to be strong.

(fig 08) Then we create a new layer for the fur around the eye, I start filling in those shadows with a darker colour.

(fig 09). Skip ahead - I have filled in most of the fur around the eye using various colours.

Once you have finished with your fur you can shrink it down and get something beautiful like this (fig 10a).

The colours are off a bit because this picture was saved as a .jpeg while the rest were printscreened but it is the same picture. (fig 10b)



(fig 10b)



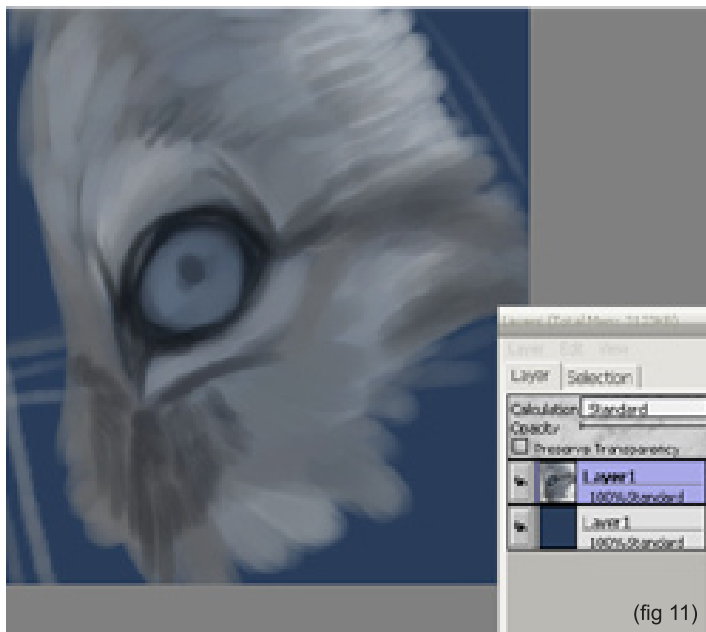
Open Canvas version - real fast

We have our original drawing. The head on one layer (It's easier to blend things in OC if its on one layer). (fig 11)

First I darken the eyelids and then start colouring in the shadows and pupil, I also like to outline my eye. (fig 12)

Separate our eye into little segments and in that start type pattern with dark and bright colours. Add shine in the eye. (fig 13)

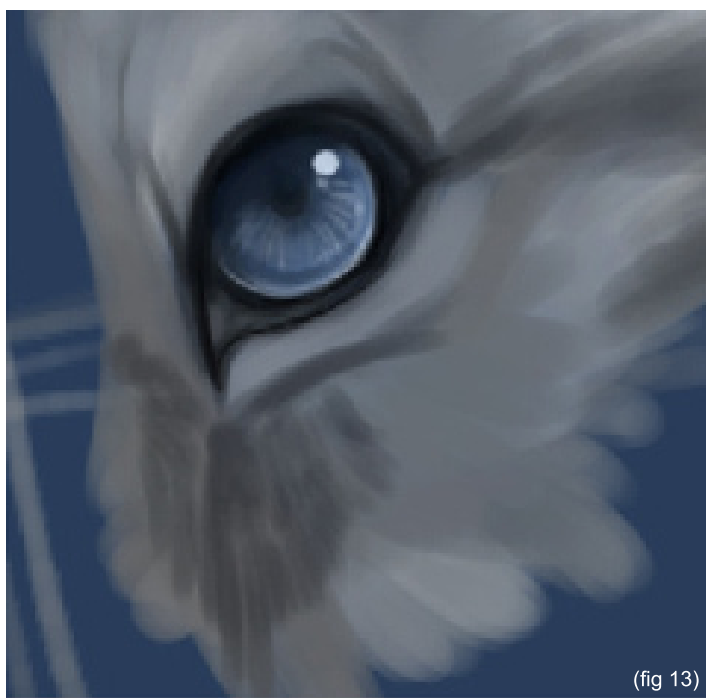
I usually always take it into Photoshop and burn/dodge the heck out of my eyes to make it brighter. I dont like to use the ones in Open Canvas. Also draw the fur around the eye, it's easier in Open Canvas because it is all on the same layer it blends. You just have to make sure not to colour anything of importance. (fig 14)



(fig 11)



(fig 12)



(fig 13)



(fig 14)

Stephanie R Loftis

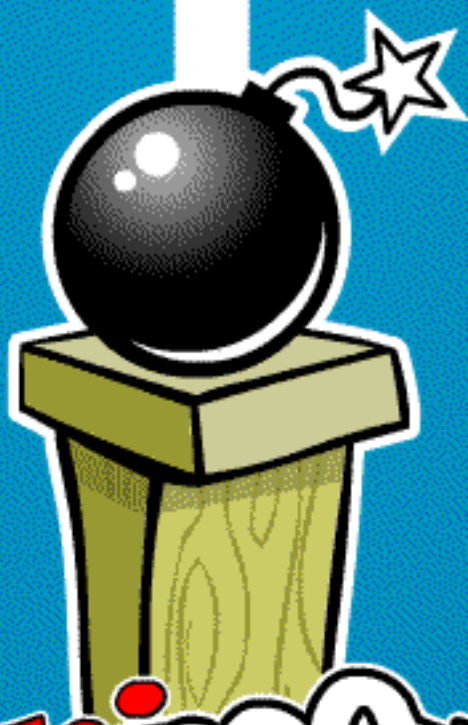
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>> This image
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Intuos 3 tablet. Most
of my images are
made to be printed
so they are created at
print size at 150 if not
300 dpi. >>

by jimmi benedict





Fig 01



Sketch

(Fig 01). My approach is not as scholarly as most. Sometimes while practising/doodling, I will like the doodle enough that I will want to see it realized into a full painting. The Sirens image was originally three individual sketches from my figure drawing practice sessions. I had originally been trying to go for an art nouveau style, which at the end, you will see is completely lost.

After the basic framework is laid down, I excitedly moved on to the painting phase. In hindsight, if I had spent more time in the sketching stage, it would have most likely produced a much better final image, and might have even maintained its original art nouveau style, but NO! So HARK! I think my next piece will reclaim that endeavour!

Initial Stage & Methods

I created a new layer filled with mid tone gray set to multiply mode and merged it down. (Fig 02). The gray tone becomes the predominant background colour. This is important since if you were to have a stark white or black in the background, since they are extreme in contrast, its difficult to discern tonal value. Throughout the painting stages, my normal process includes copying the main layer, and leaving the original for backup. The short-cut Ctrl-A, Ctrl-C, Ctrl-V (select all, copy, paste then followed by Ctrl-S for save) is something I do all the time. I work on the copied layer in small stages/sections, and once satisfied with the appearance, I will merge down (Ctrl-E) to the original backup layer. Many online viewers have told me that my style has a very 'smooth' airbrush appearance. I think the result is from the many times I merge the duplicated



Fig 02



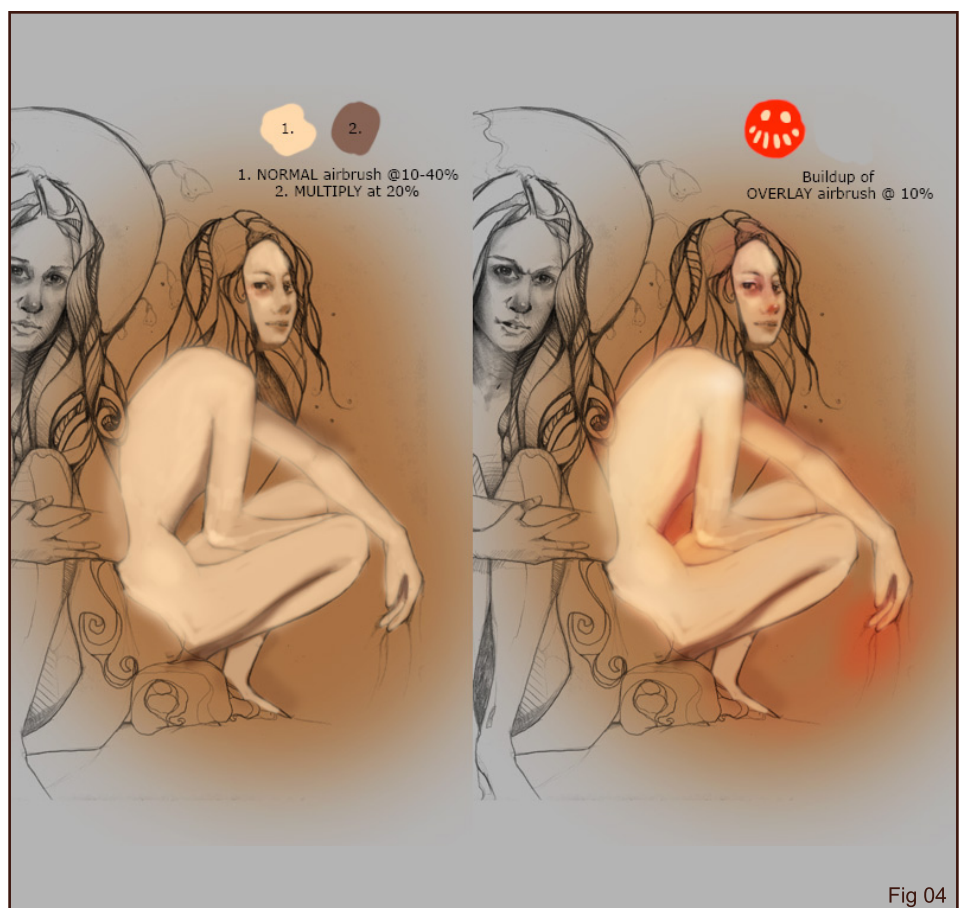
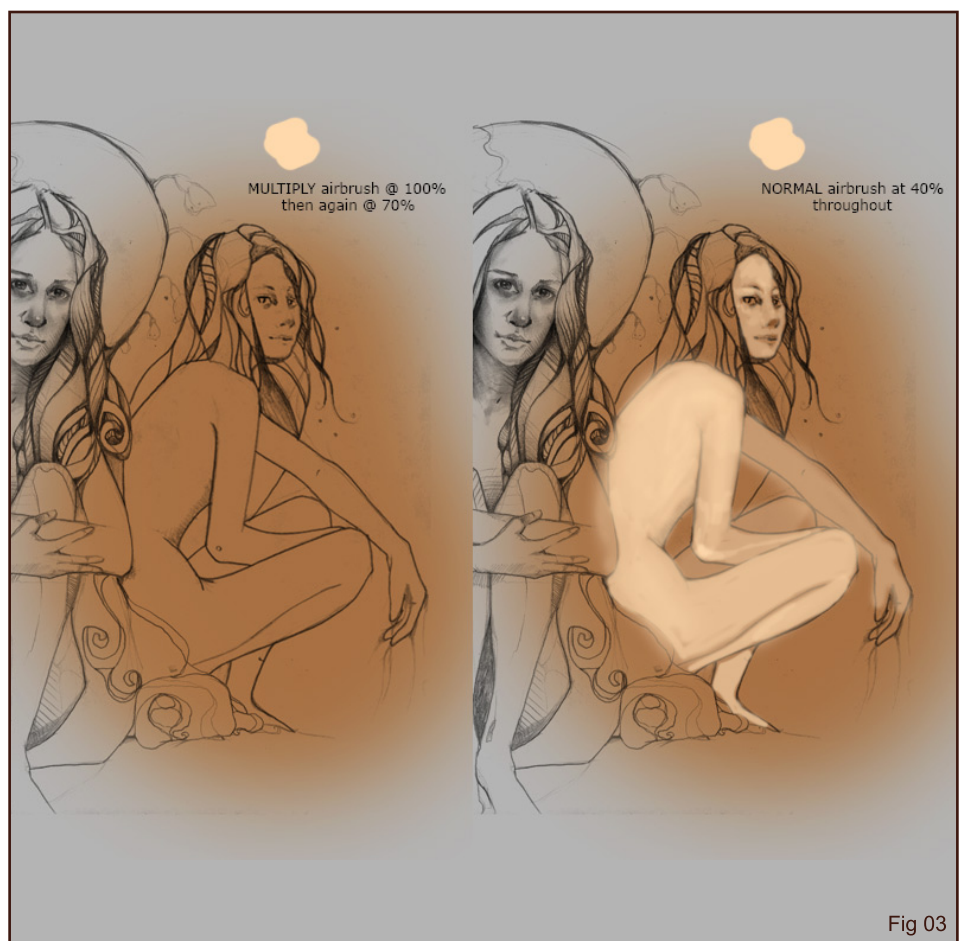
layer to the main layer with varying degrees of opacity. Over several iterations of merging varying opacity layers, the combination results in a wider gamut of tone. While painting the working layer, I will sometimes over paint, or paint too dark or light, where ever it is needed, then reduce the opacity of the layer to compensate (Quite a bit sometimes, even down to 7-15% opacity). This is very helpful for sections that have a very subtle shadow/highlight. This is similar to glazing oil painting techniques where the painter builds up form with multiple layers of thin glazes. Let's get to colouring!

Adding Colour

Using a flesh tone, I used a multiply brush at 100% to lay down a base. Seeing that it wasn't dark enough, I cover the area with the same brush at 70% opacity. I'll go back and erase the over paint later. Using a blank layer, I use the same flesh tone swatch with normal brush at 40% and buildup the lighter areas. This stage is a little discouraging because you will start to lose the line art and it will look like bullocks, but forge onward brave ones! (Fig 03).

Adding Darks

Using the dark swatch shown (2.), I reclaim some of the lost line art details by adding the shadows using a multiply brush at 10-30%. Cleanup and further modeling of the form is done with the original light flesh tone at a low opacity. Now comes the fun part. Using the red swatch shown using overlay brush mode at 7-20%, I've started to accentuate the flesh tones with subtle colour. Experiment with this part. Try using dark purples, blues, pinks, and dark oranges, but make sure to keep the opacity low as the overlay mode is quite aggressive. The example is what the layer looks like before I reduce the opacity and repeat the process until I end up with a satisfactory tone. I also popped in some preliminary highlights on the nose and shoulder with the dodge tool at 20%. After finishing one girl, I moved on to the others. After I had finished all three girls, I used the Hue/Saturation Adjustments to tweak the skin tones to the desired appearance.





Basic Background Layout

For the background, I experimented with Painter. It's very handy for quick painterly looking mock ups since the brushes blend so beautifully. Using a basic blender brush, I threw down some experimental background elements and painted over the excess paint from the skin colouring process. I also started to block in the hair colour. (Fig 05).

Definition and design elements

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BRUSH DOWNLOAD

(I will be using the Sarsa hair brushes and splatter brush, found on internet long ago, I do not know the author)

In this stage, I defined the design elements and pushed the details further. (Fig 06). The skulls were done in a separate document and brought in separately, and I added a stroke around the girls to separate them from the background. Black hair seemed to be more dramatic so I used the Desaturate sponge to take the colour out, and also used a multiply brush with a black to get the desired effect. I use the Sarsa Brushes (Fig 07), to blend and add hair strands. Try using the Sarsa hair brush with varying opacities as well as using them as a dodge/burn tool on top of the hair layer. Although not evident in this piece, using a small airbrush and adding single strands of hair is the most effective way of getting realistic hair. For the splatter beneath the girls and on the skulls, I used splatter brush (image splatter.gif). Using red, and colour burn mode.

Fig 07

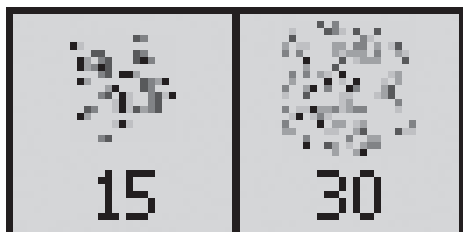


Fig 05



Fig 06



Defining the Background

Easy as pie hot glows! Once again, I took the image into Painter and added some interesting circular halos (Fig 08). I also used a off white blender brush and literally scribbled around to get the cloud formations. The colour variations in the clouds were done with overlay mode in Photoshop. Before bringing back into Photoshop, the halos mainly consisted of low contrasting pink as seen in the outer rings. Once brought into Photoshop, I used an orange flesh tone colour airbrush set as colour dodge to create the pretty glows in the halos. Let's see



how the colour dodge mode works. (Fig 09) Oh snap, how easy is that? Colour dodge is a wonderful way to make some really impressive glows!

Final compositing

Satisfied with the background and overall appearance, I decided that I wanted the image to have a darker theme as well as make the girls pop out, so I took the reddish background

and desaturated it with the Sponge tool. I also used the burn tool to darken certain areas. It is important to notice the options when using the Dodge/Burn tool. You can choose to affect three levels of an image - the highlight, mid tones, and shadows. Make sure to choose the appropriate option before burning or dodging. And that's it. Some key tips I want to stress in creating images are: Always seek critiques from artists and non artists. I frequently post my images

while they are in the progress stages to get advice from other viewers. Sometimes working with an image, you can become blind to mistakes that might keep the image from being better. Check out 3DTotal's Forum <http://www.threeddy.com>. There are many others, and most of them have professionals that hang out that have real world experience, and can offer sage advice. Don't be afraid to experiment. Some of the coolest things I've learned were accidents. Serendipity is sweet! Practice, practice, and practice some more. This image was actually created when I was in an artistic slump. Although I was in a slump, I was making myself practice figure drawing on autopilot when the idea came to me. So out of practice, one of current top ten images was created. Always strive to become better. You are your fiercest enemy. Thanks for looking!



Jimi Benedict

More work from this artist can be found at
www.jimiyo.com and contact them via:

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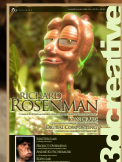
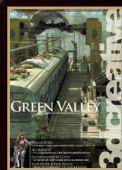
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Angel Attack

by Daniele Bigi

In this making of I will not describe all the passages that brought me from the sketch to the final image.

There are many artists better than me that have already described that several times. What I will try to describe is primarily the process that brought me at the composition and colour palette choice.



Not all my choices could be easily rationalized but some of these were and I will try to explain them. The project is clearly inspired by the TV series "Neo Genesis Evangelion". I had a wish and a need to paint something related. I wasn't interested in recreating a particular scene, already seen in an episode or in the movies, I wanted to create a concept that interpreted some of the symbolic elements that fascinated me. I thought a lot about what to paint even before I took a pencil in my hand or opened Photoshop. Without an interesting idea even the best painting remains just a technical exercise. I didn't want to just draw, I also needed the piece to say something. I am fascinated by the idea that different people could read what I have painted in different ways. I took some decisions about the main elements to represent: the first was the Angel, the second a figure strictly connected to it, and finally the environment in which the action would have taken place. I have started to sketch on paper with a black pen to establish the bases of the composition. After dozens of sketches I started to work with Photoshop and my small Wacom Graphire Tablet. During the next phase I was interested in studying the composition and colour palette (Fig 01, 02 & 03). From the beginning I decided to tilt the horizon. It has been one of the elements that I haven't changed since the beginning. I like the dynamic effect that it creates and furthermore it should symbolize the danger of the situation. I had some doubts about the colour palette to use and I was quite hesitant about painting an active volcano. When I painted concept B, I instantly liked the idea of representing the volcano. I thought it could have been a strong impact element and besides I could have worked freely with colours, shape and position of the smoke caused by the eruption. When I started concept C I was so sure about the composition and the elements that I thought it would have been the base

Concept & Colour Palette (A)

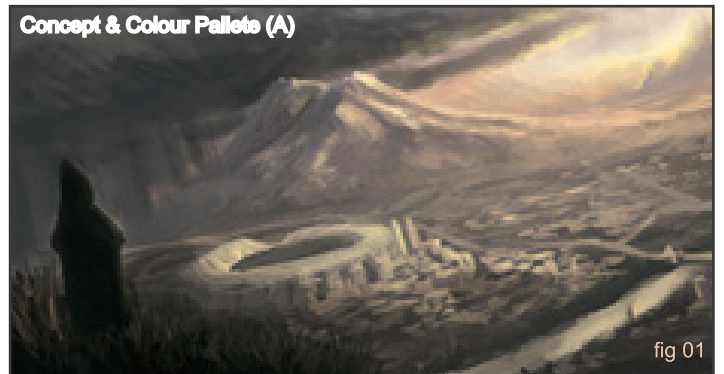


fig 01

Concept & Colour Palette (B)

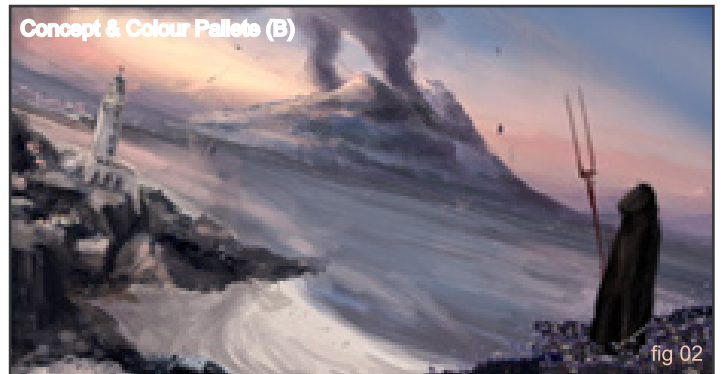


fig 02

Concept & Colour Palette (C)

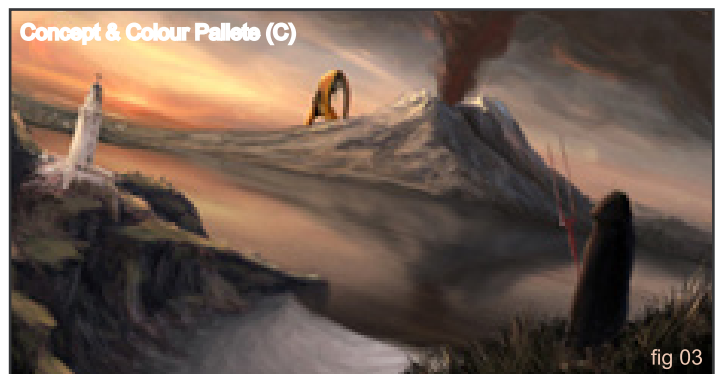


fig 03



fig 04

to work on for the final painting. (Fig 04). After collecting all the reference images, I started to add details but after only a few hours work I began to have some doubts. The element that didn't convince me was the active volcano. I was sure about its presence but the fact that it was positioned almost at the centre of my painting and also the fact that it was active gave it too much importance. It was becoming the main "character", spoiling the concept. When

you have been working on a painting for several hours it becomes painful to admit that you need to take a step back, but from my point of view that was the right choice. Therefore I have decided to go back to where I started: concept A. The colours were less lively and saturated, but at the same time less obvious and more serious, closer to what I wanted to express in the first place. I thought the presence of the city would have made everything more

interesting and more consistent with what happens in the TV series. I haven't painted the actual Neo Tokyo 3 but a hypothetical Neo Tokyo 3. The city also helped me to represent clearly the proportions and the space in the painting. In concept B and C the presence of only natural elements like the cliff, the volcano and the gulf, didn't help to understand the real proportions. The city helped to create a wide and deeper view, as well as make the Angel's



fig 05



fig 06

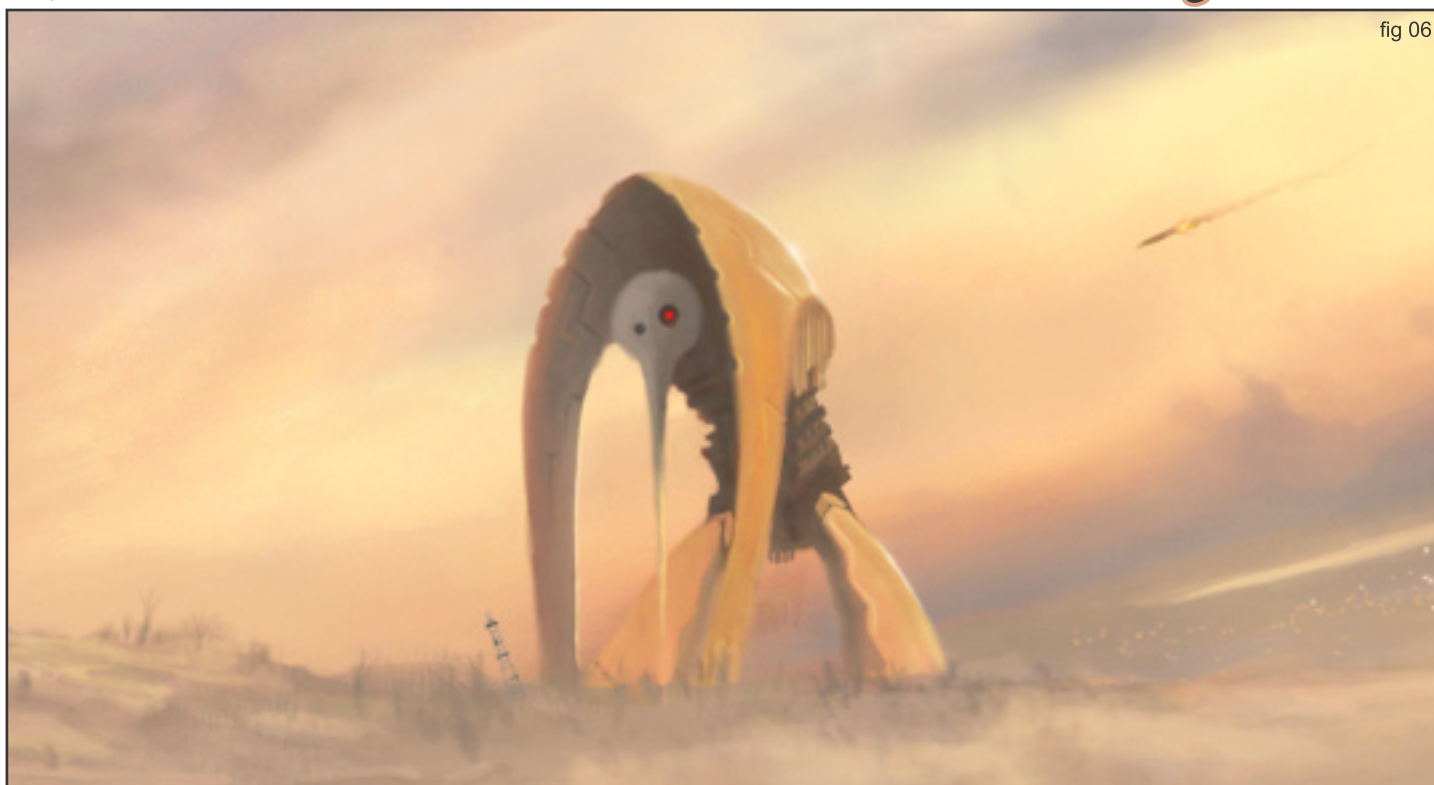


fig 07

figure of enormous dimensions if compared to the buildings. Instead of working on the smoke from the volcano I concentrate my efforts on the clouds. (Fig 05).

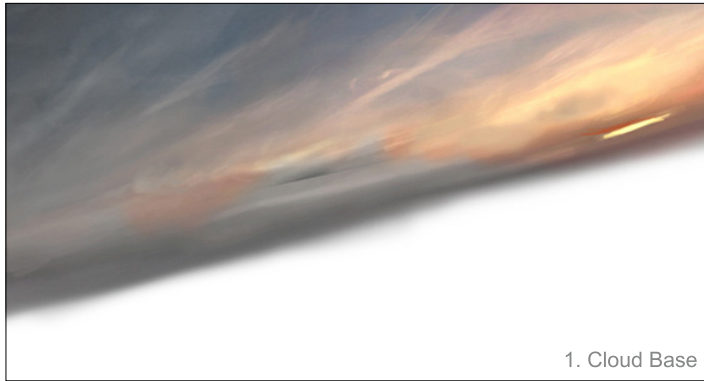
I have made the left part darker and used desaturated colors, moving the attention towards the brighter area. In that point I have positioned the Angel (backlight), transforming it into the main character. The shape and the colour of the Angel are clearly inspired by Kou, one of the two half of Israfil (the 7th Angel) (Fig 06). I kept the yellow and the orange saturated. The angel is the element with the most saturated colours in all the painting and I thought this would help to move the attention to it.

The city is inspired by different metropolis: Israel, Athens, Chicago and others.

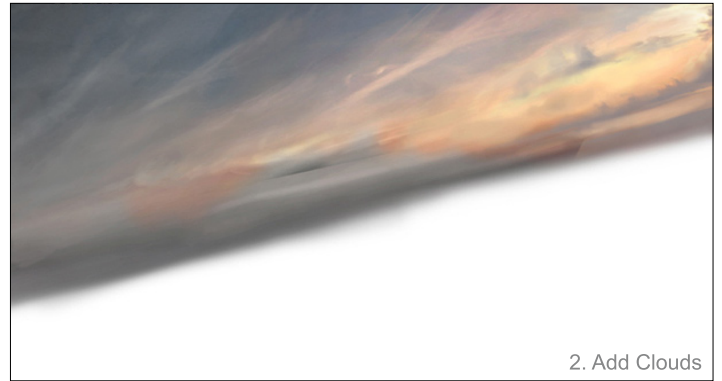
I have decided to paint a river to break the elements in the city. In the same way the big structure similar to a stadium has been used to create a variation between all the buildings. The hooded man has never been a point of discussion. I thought he creates questions, like it happens in the TV series. What he has in his



The making of **Angel Attack!**



1. Cloud Base



2. Add Clouds



3. Add Dark Clouds & Rain



4. Add Volcano, Horizon, Lake & Mountain



5. Add City, Angel, F11, Fog & Grass

hand it is clear to all Evangelion's fans: it's the Lance of Longinus, one of the few weapons which can stop an Angel attack. (Fig 07)

When I started the painting I have separated the elements in several layers. First for the intense use of the Ram, but above all because, when I paint, I like to move really quickly and chaotically from one element to another. Anyway I tried to group some of the layers to keep them into a reasonable number. I painted all the images using the standard brushes



6. Add Man, Louginus, Colour correction & Grain.

Daniele Bigi

More work from this artist can be found at
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Mephistophelia

What began as a quick inspirational doodle on 06/06/06, soon became a full-fledged painting, in an effort to benefit and evolve my shading and composition. And so here is my latest 2D piece, 'Mephistophelia'. - Ivan Mijatov.

Ivan 2006



Demon Briefing

What is Mephistophelia? It is a place where cunningness, trickery, and underhandedness reign supreme, and where wickedness from one demon to another is the supreme rule to outweigh all others. Mephistophelia derives from the name Mephistopheles, the devil in the Faust legend to whom Faust sold his soul to.

This piece is character-centric, and in it, your eyes will trace to a teenage girl demon who has just awoken several ancient entities roaming freely in the background, tingling with pure chaos and delight. Mind you, this is just another common activity for the youngster demons in the land of Mephistophelia. And the malignantly playful expression in her face proves just how fun it can all be!



Emerging Creativity from Darkness

For every project that I am ready to plot down a good chunk of my time on, whether it be 2D or 3D, I require to take mental note of what it is I exactly want to achieve with it. With

Mephistophelia, I had a few simple desires in mind: canvas colour was to be a raw black, unique graphic design quality, mostly restricted monochromatic colour palette, lots of curves, suggestive and iconic graphic imagery, and nowhere near reality.

The moment that I began a quick sketch with the Detail Airbrush on that 10x18 black digital canvas in red, I knew that I wanted to work with restricted tones of red, black, and minor influences of other colours from the palette as well. Which leads me to...

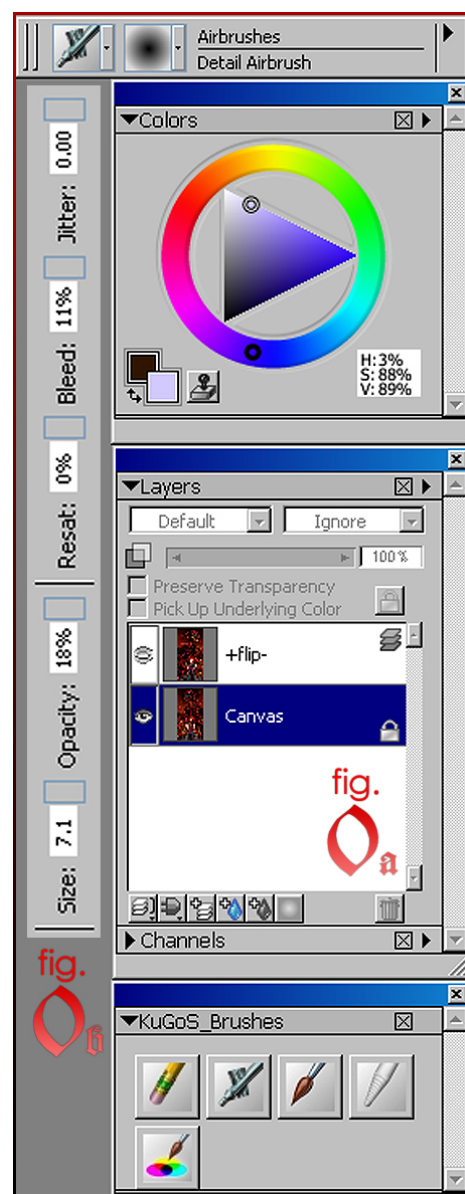
Working Preferences

Every artist, amateur or professional, has a completely customized work flow method, that they have based off of from that of other artists and their own personal preferences, meshed into one unique beast. Just like you, I am no different. So, how exactly do I work when I work on my 2D projects? I'm as simple as they come, honestly. Ninety-five percent of every painting I have worked on thus far has been painted in the various versions of Painter (6, 7, 8), most notably Corel Painter IX. The five remaining percentages are left for doing image flipping tests (will explain later), touch-ups and final composites in Adobe's Photoshop (currently CS).

Document Preparation

When I am ready to draw, I open up CP (Corel Painter). I begin a concept painting by going to File>New (or typically Ctrl+N) under the main menu bar, usually fixated at the top of the application. Once the window pops up, I will then lay down my desired dimensions for the Canvas Size. I will usually try to at the very least give myself 3000x3000 pixels width/height respectively with a Resolution of 300dpi. Once I am pleased with my values, I will then hit the OK button and a white blank canvas will appear where all the magic will soon happen on. Before starting to draw or paint, I will usually give a flat colour to set the general mood/tone to the canvas. This could be orange, teal, deep purple, strawberry red, or even just left as white,

depending on what kind of atmosphere I wanted to set with the piece. In this case, I chose the colour black. I select the Paint Bucket (K) tool located on the Tool Bar attached to the left side of the CP window, and click on the canvas after having adjusted to the colour of my choice in the Colours Docking Palette stationed to the far right of the window. This will give me a nice build-up to colour as I work through Mephistophelia. I typically only work on the canvas layer (one layer), so elements blend in very nicely and lighting becomes easier to distribute. Although other segments of the painting become more difficult, like layout down and detail shapes – since it is a single layer after all.

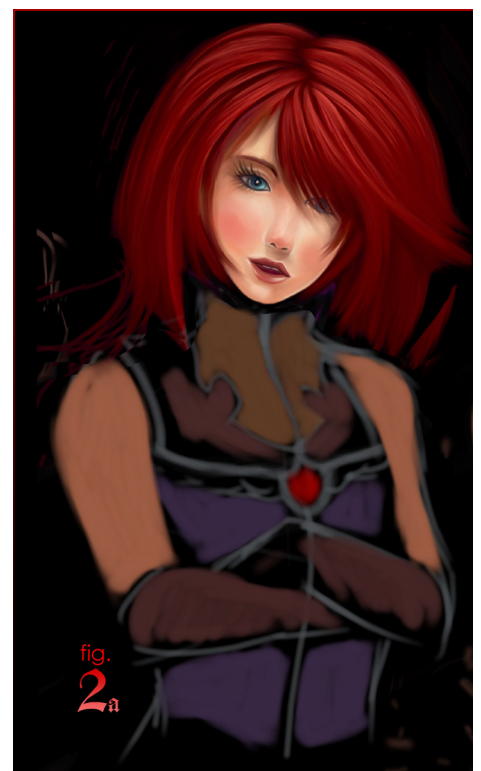
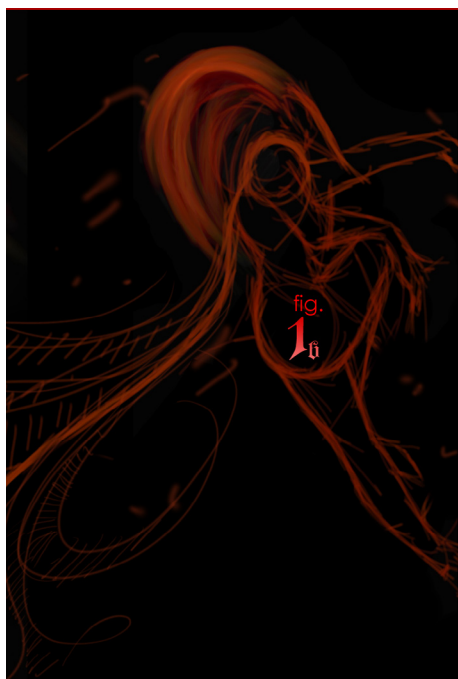
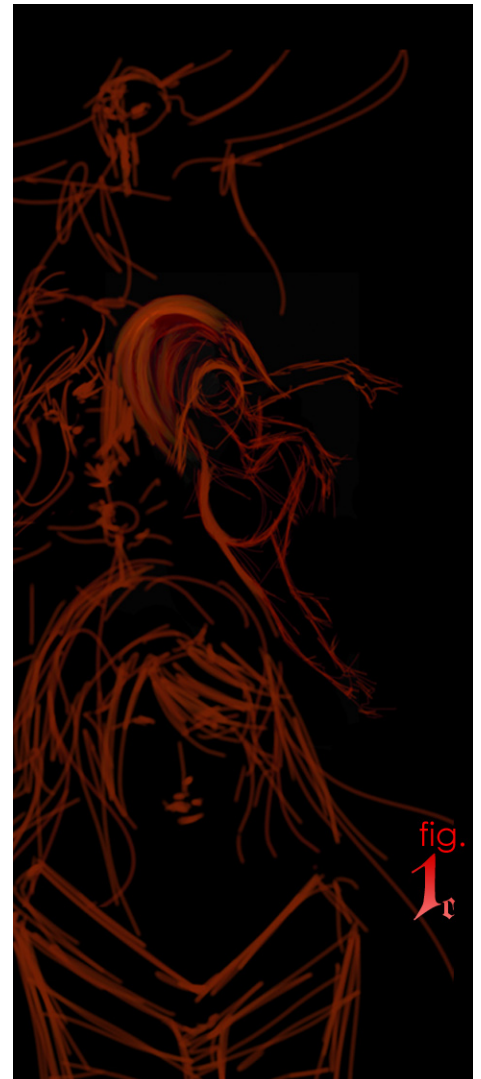
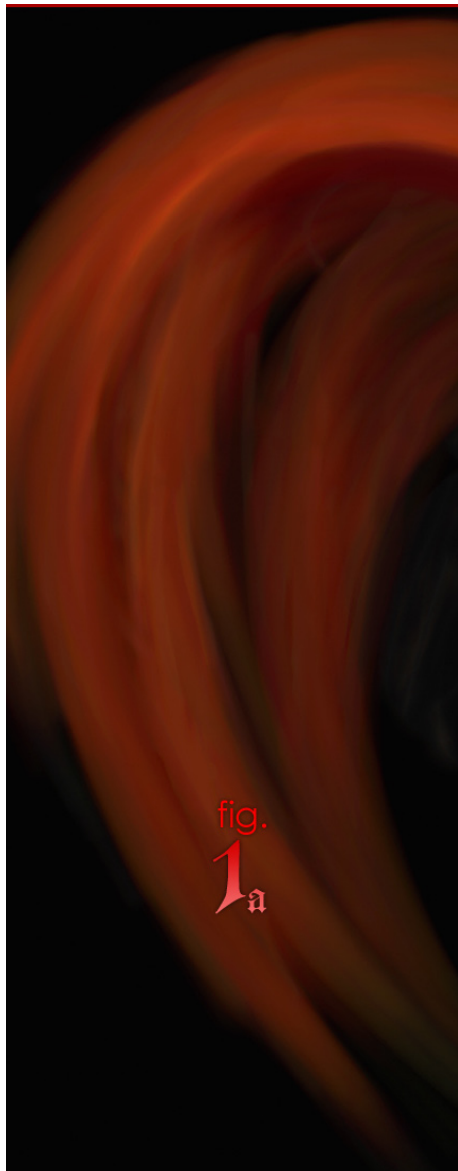




Key Concepts in My Method of Painting

In FIG. 0,(A)., Take a look at the very bottom of the image. There, I have my custom set of brushes that I most often use in this application. Out of the five brushes that you see there (starting from top-left: Eraser, Detail Airbrush, Camelhair Oils Brush, Blender Brush, Soft Glazing Round Tinting Brush), my most popular and loved ones only consist of two: the Detail Airbrush and the Eraser. For most of my paintings, these are the only two that I will use (and in Mephistophelia's case, these are the only two that I have used). The Tinting Brush I will sometimes use for highlights, bloom lighting, or to give surfaces an emulsive quality. Camelhair Oils Brush I have yet to fully experiment with, but will be dealt with sometime in my near future endeavours.

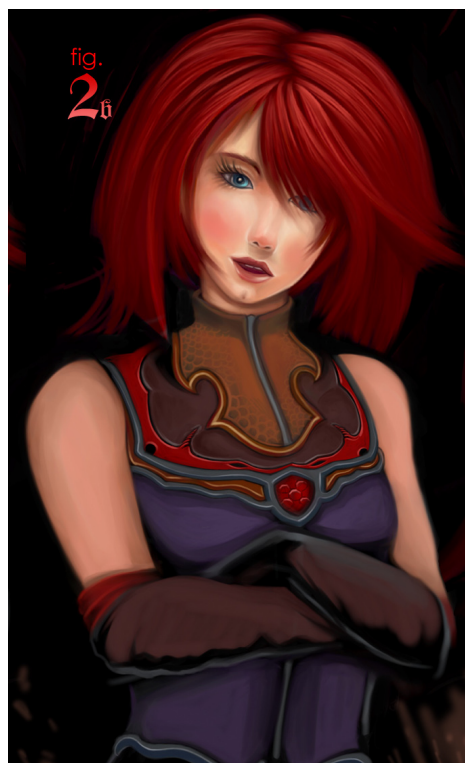
I used to use Blender Brushes, until I understood the true beauty of CP's blending options – you are not restricted to blend colours with only those. Let me explain. Take a look at the left vertical bar I inserted in FIG. 0,(B). You can literally blend with any brush that has the percentage slides for Resat (controls the amount of colour replenished in the stroke) and Bleed (controls the amount of underlying colour mixed in with the selected colour). Which is most if not all of them, by the way. For my work flow, when painting, my Detail Airbrush is set to a low Opacity (ranges from 6%-24%), low Resolution (mimicking values to those of my Opacity), and Bleed (of 7%-15%). When I want to blend colours with my Detail Airbrush, I simply slide the Resat percentage of the brush to 0%. And then I begin blending by dragging my brush across the colours I had just laid down. Voila! It begins to blend and soon you learn as to how seamless it becomes. That's how I achieve the "creamy and smooth" look to my shading technique, as some have previously described.





Exploring Mephistophelia

What do I want to achieve with this concept painting? In FIG. 1, I show you how I start every painting. Before I even sketch anything, I choose a random element that I would like to incorporate into the painting. In this case, it was the hair FIG. 1,(A), from the faceless demonic female entity in the background. In FIG. 1,(B),



I start a sketch of what that hair belongs to exactly ;) And in FIG. 1,(C), I fully flesh out a really quick sketch, mostly generalizing the flow and shape of the picture. Looking at the sketch and the finalized piece, I have stayed mostly true to the initial sketch. Also, take note how I'm sketching on the black canvas with a red airbrush, which submerges me into the mood of the piece. FIG. 2,(A), I begin full detail shading as I usually do, and that would be by blocking out the central character that makes up that painting. I start my details from the head, where I can lock down the eyes, nose, and lips. We all know how much influence a human face can have on a piece of art. So, it is important for me to do this very early on. For me, having a character at the very beginning is like a motivational crank to keep me going to the very end of a painting. In FIG. 2,(B), I start to detail out her flesh tones and the materials that make up her garments. FIG. 2,(C) is a closer look at her delicate facial features and her hair strands. I render hair by blocking in a solid dark colour value. Then I set my brush size to something to the size of a strand of hair like 2-5, depending on the size of my canvas, and start brushing in medium-sized strokes in a wavy pattern. I will rinse and repeat with several more lighter values that I will build on top of each other, which will in turn boost the detail more and more at each intervention. I like to pick specific elements of the picture and then focus on those. Next in FIG. 3,(A), I chose to paint in the details of the female





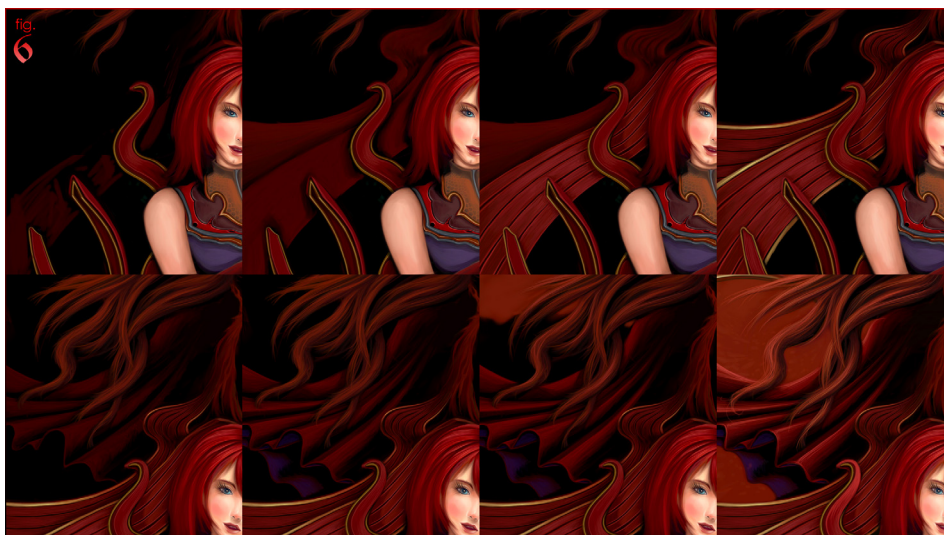
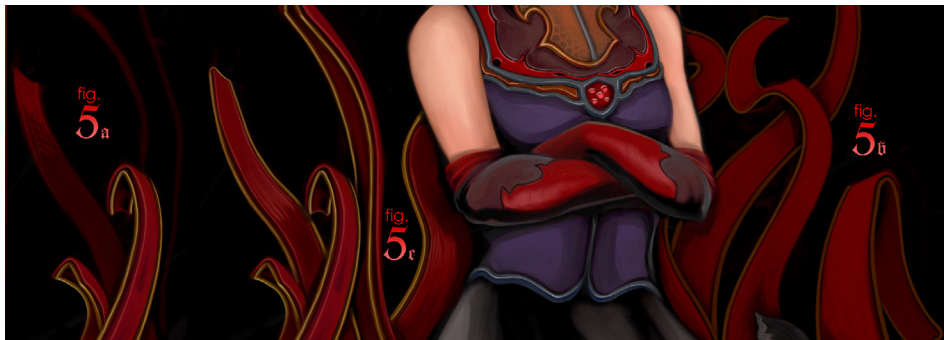
The making of *Mephistophelia*

demon-ness. I start by putting final touches on her hair, then working my way down her body, as demonstrated in FIG. 3,(B). Next, I will move onto the long-haired monstrosity underneath the hair. As I've described with the girl's hair earlier, I will apply the same concepts to doing his bushy, wavy, and extremely long hair. Again, I start from darker tones, and then build-up to lighter ones. Next, I move to the very top of the sketch where the horned demon lurks FIG. 4,(A). I refine his look from the original sketch. And then I slowly progress in bringing him to life by filling in those sketchy outlines with detail to the wrinkly skin, curvy horns, and slicked-back hair. In FIG. 4,(B), I start shading the collar, add lush gold trim, and putting together a cape for him. All with a low-opacity brush and patient brush strokes, smoothing a little bit at a time by bringing down my Detail Airbrush's Resat to 0%. Now it's time to let the character creation aspect go for a bit, and to begin laying down the foundation for my simple but effective environment. I want to create royal golden ribbons that seem as though they are taking a

life of their own, like octopus tentacles coming to life FIG. 5,(A). So, I sketch out flowing lines that then get filled with a solid dark-red colour FIG. 5,(B). Next I build on top of them with lighter values, similar to the approach of doing hair. To finalize, I add gold trimming to the edges. What's next? Well, I really liked the way those life-sprung ribbons were painted out, so I decide that it is a good idea and perfect opportunity to pay a revisit to my vamp character, and give him a ribbon-like cape. FIG. 6 demonstrates to how that cape comes to life, implementing the same approach I just used a while back for those ribbons.

Finalizing Mephistophelia

All elements in the painting are wrapping up, but the next several image updates will be the most crucial to the visual delivery of this piece. By observing FIG. 7,(A), I add a reddish moon around the horned demon and begin building the base foundation for a misty backdrop. In FIG. 7,(B), I add the remainder of that base reddish-orange for the background, carefully



drawing around all the existing shapes in the painting. This part can be tedious, but ultimately satisfying. In the lower left corner I add simple solid tentacle-like grassy shapes and in FIG. 7,(C), I further add and refine to those, until there is just enough visual clutter to keep things interesting. Bats, the beginnings of a floating skull continent, and gold/red rims are quickly added to further the balance of the image on both the left and right upper corners of the painting. FIG. 7,(D) establishes the final results



of Mephistophelia. Little details like the floating petals at the bottom of the girl's skirt, sparkles from the moon, a fully rendered floating skull island with a castle are all added to enhance and lock down the details of the painting. After all this has been painted, I am finally ready to let this painting go.

This about wraps it up. I hope that you have found this Making of Mephistophelia feature both informative and enjoyable.

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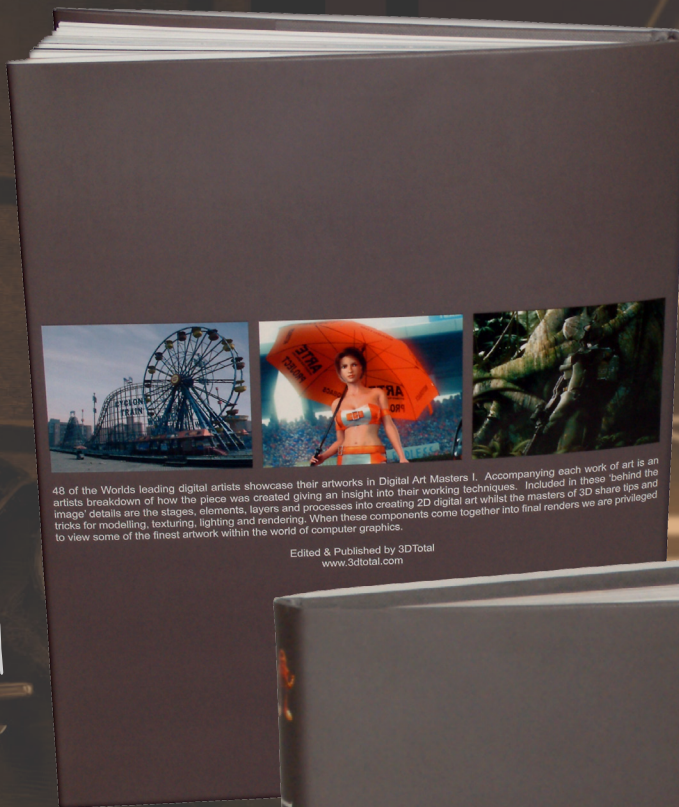
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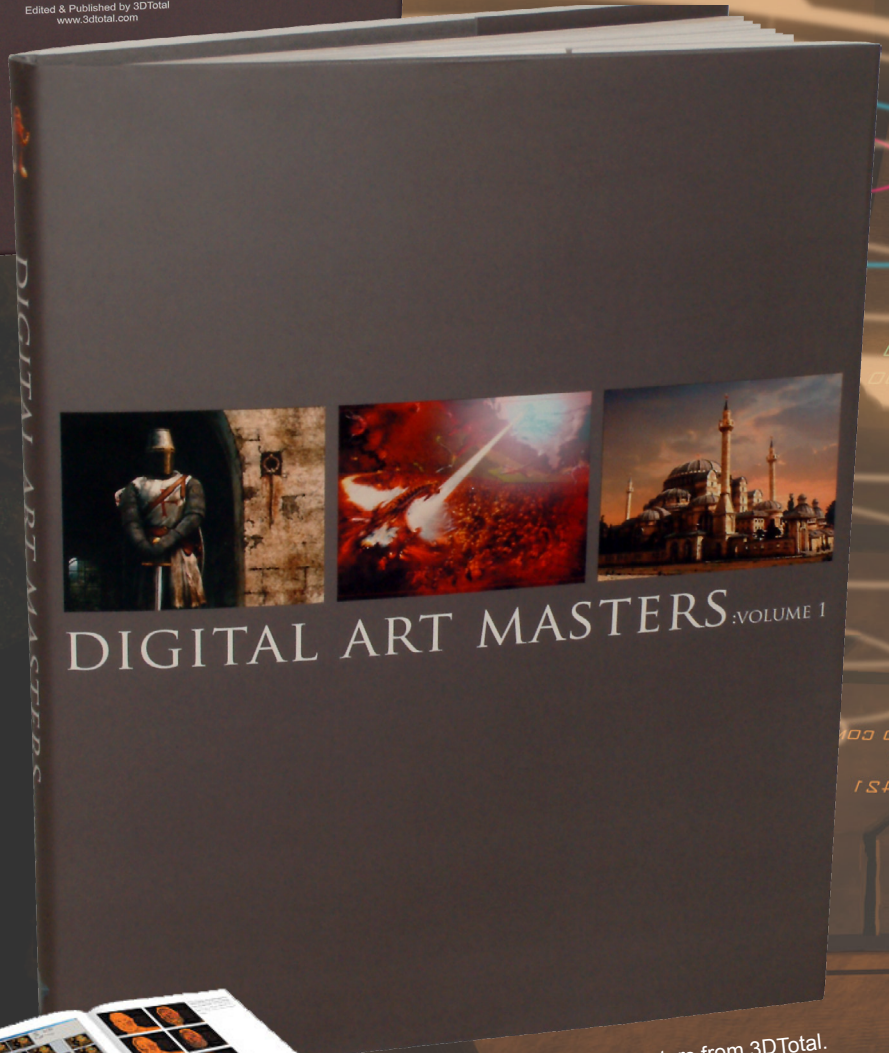
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We have exclusive chapters from 3DTotal.com's new book 'Digital Art Masters'. The book is more than just an artwork book as not only does it feature full colour, full page images, each artist has described the creation process in their own words, and exclusively for this book. This month we feature:

'Captain of the Guard'
by Eric Wilkerson





Captain of the Guard

by Eric Wilkerson

Concept

Each illustration starts from generating thumbnail sketches. For this painting "Captain of the Guard" I had left over photo reference from old western book cover commissions lying around and decided to put it to use. I had been wanting to do a painting with a huge hologram in it ever since seeing the film *Final Fantasy The Spirits Within*. While creating abstract drawings I am thinking about mood, lighting, atmosphere, size relationships, composition and overall concept. I consider the story I am trying to tell in the image and remain conscious of



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fig 1

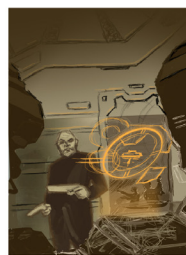


fig 2



fig 3

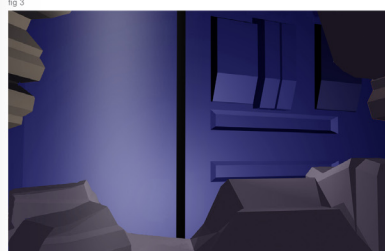


fig 4

staying away from clichéd images. Not that a figure or figures staring into a hologram is original in Sci-Fi cover art but I thought I'd play with the idea. After producing some loose thumbnail sketches (1 & 2) I create a rough final drawing (3) as a guide for my next few steps. For me this stage is the most fun. Here I begin focusing on character and costume designs, architectural detail and other background elements. Depending on the illustration, machinery and other conceptual designs are all worked on as well.

Reference

Now that I have a fairly good idea what the composition and overall concept will be, I set out to find reference materials for the figure and environment. When I work in oil paint I usually end up building small scale models of objects that I don't feel comfortable making up as I paint. To make something look believable the lighting has to be acceptable. This is something that I just can't make up. When working digitally I decided to build small non-detailed block models (4) in 3D Studio Max as a point of reference. In this case the background wall and foreground computer monitors were done in 3D Studio Max. The figure reference was obtained prior to the start of the illustration so it was more about working the environment around the figure. I don't always have it this way. Most times it is necessary to do a photo shoot of models and various other props before I begin painting. I referenced uniforms of military officers to find the appropriate look for the captain standing in front of the holograms. I knew that the creation of the holograms was going to be tough and I needed to find a good way of creating the effect. At first I tried it in 3D but ultimately ended up doing all the holograms in Photoshop. I studied screen shots from *Final Fantasy* since that was the look I was going for. I created them by first making and filling a shape then distorting and adjusting it to the correct angle. I then duplicated the shape multiple times, always adjusting the scale of each piece. Once I had the holograms finished I merged all the layers into a whole. Afterwards I duplicated the new layer and added a gaussian blur to the copy. This gave me a nice glow to set behind the original layer. All the rest of the hologram work was done the same way, just playing with opacity and distorting when necessary.

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Painting

Before starting the final drawing, painting or modelling it is necessary for me to settle on a colour scheme for the painting. I decided the entire painting should be lit by the holograms in the room so it made my job easy to just take my preliminary sketch and play with hue and saturation adjustments until I found my hologram colour. Once I knew that I wanted a yellowish hue to the entire painting I needed to experiment some more. So by going to image/adjustments/variations (5), I was able to play with a variety of possible colour choices from yellow green, yellow orange etc.

When I've finished gathering my reference and worked out colour and value, all that is left is to complete a detailed final drawing from which to paint. Since my environment was a 3D model the only thing left to draw in was the figure. The figure drawing was done directly in Photoshop. I decided to crop a good portion of the illustration and zoom in on the figure and hologram. My sketch left much more room at the top for text but didn't really help to show the focus of the piece.

In the second semester of my sophomore year I was introduced to the Frank Reilly system of painting. This method taught me to paint with a controlled palette. Almost all my essential colours are pre-mixed from light to dark. The values for each colour are broken up into a numerical system. From 10 to 0, value 9 being the lightest - value 1 being the darkest, with white and black as value 10/0. When I decided to do my work digitally I saw no reason to change that approach. I use Adobe Photoshop almost exclusively when doing digital painting. Not that it is better than other options, it's just my personal preference. I keep my digital controlled palette open in a separate window (6). My flesh tones, various colours and neutral greys are all close at hand (7 to 12). For painting the environment I first started off by creating a rough scratched metal texture in Photoshop. I then applied distorted stamp tool the texture all over the 3D model. This gives a nice rough metal look and gets rid of the smooth rendered look of the model. Other small details are added. Rust, chipped paint, computer panels etc. I constantly made changes as I went and tried to stay flexible as the painting was taking shape. This is what works for me. Regardless of medium or method of working, the end result is always the same if you know what you're doing. Since I use a controlled palette while doing work digitally it really doesn't matter to me if I use

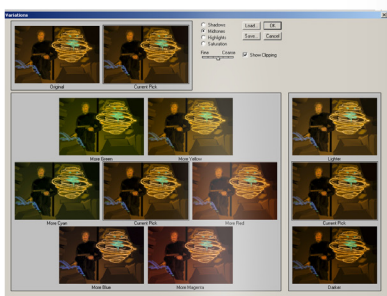


fig 5



fig 6

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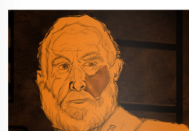


fig 7

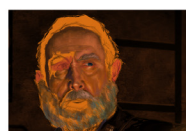


fig 10



fig 8

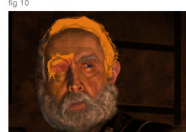


fig 11

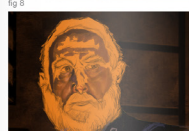


fig 9

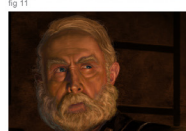
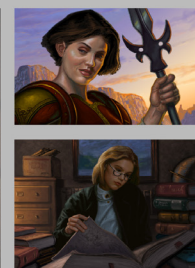
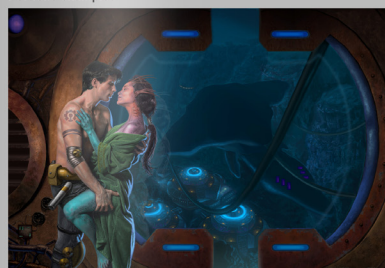


fig 12

Painter or Photoshop. I tend to create an assortment of custom brushes that give me the results I'm happy with when using either program. I hope this gives someone just starting out a little better understanding of the stages of creating illustration, whether it be traditional or digital.

Portfolio examples



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