

201

Artist

The Best Digital Artists

In the World, Every Month! This Month: Evan Shipard, Carl Critchlow & Dan Scott...



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The Sketchbook of Khan Muftic A.K.A "Chupacabra" & Manga Animation Books



Interviews

Evan Shipard, Carl Critchlow & Dan Scott



Galleries

Andy Park, Ryohei Hase, Joe Slucher, Danny Antivalidis & More!



Making Of's

"Rejuvenator of the Human Flame", "Hecate" & "Another Rainy Day"



Tutorials

Custom Brushes, Speed Painting, Colouring Line Drawings & Sub-Surface Scattering



huge number of artists taking up the digital lifestyle. We even see some hardened 3D'ers trying their hand. And why not, after all, some of the work we see daily is stunning. Will we look back in 100 years at the artists featured in this magazine and see them as the 'pioneers', or the original 'masters'?... Only time will tell. The three artist interviews this month have all got an opinion when it comes to the digital revolution. Some see it as purely another tool, some as a time saving device. There are those who see it as the gateway for a lot of artists to fulfil dreams, such as comic book artist wannabes who can now produce full-colour comic strips with the most basic of digital tools and software at home! Whatever your opinion is, I think we all have to agree that the current state of the 2D CG industry is looking good. Directors have a current preference for digital matte paintings over 3D CG backgrounds; a trend which was so different only a few years ago, and if you need any more convincing, just look at the fantastic work in this months issue... Enjoy! Ed.

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Editorial

2D digital art is currently growing at an amazing rate. Obviously, this has a lot to do with the growth of the digital market itself, but as the technology becomes less expensive, allowing the "home hobbyist" users to be able to afford tablets, faster and better computers, and more intuitive software, we see a

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Contributing Artists

Every month, many creatives and artists around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist Magazines. Here you can read all about them. If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist Magazines, please contact: ben@zoopublishing.com



Francis Vallejo

Freelance Illustrator & Maya Artist, USA. Currently waiting to begin my senior year at Ringling College. I'm majoring in Computer Animation but will be pursuing freelance illustration work upon my 2008 graduation. I have graciously been featured in Spectrum and Creative Quarterly and am looking to build up my clientele and portfolio. fvallejo@ringling.edu <http://francisvallejo.blogspot.com>



Janos Kiss

Designs identities, brochures, flyers and so on, and sometimes illustrations at a small company in Budapest, Hungary. Apart from graphic design, he works to improve his digital painting, which is a pleasure for him. He usually works with Painter and ArtRage, but nowadays his main goal is to develop his portfolio, trying out several styles and techniques. janos.kiss@28thwing.com www.28thwing.com



Kim Taylor

Is a Matte Painter, Texture and a Concept Artist, in England. In 2003, straight out of university, he started work at MPC, London, as a Matte Painter. He's since worked on many amazing projects including Xmen 3, and a TV adaptation of Terry Pratchetts 'Hogfather', doing texturing, matte painting & concepts. He loves to paint and to create. sketchling@yahoo.com | www.sketchling.com



Patri Balanovsky

Is a Production/Concept Artist, at PitchiPoy Studio, in Israel. He has drawn and painted since he can remember; creating characters, creatures and fantastic scenes have always been a passion. Telling a story through a single image can be a challenge, but he's always up for it! Keeping his work fresh and versatile, he explores all genres and styles. Pat2005b@hotmail.com <http://chuckmate.blogspot.com>



Richard Tilbury

Has had a passion for drawing since being a couple of feet tall. He studied Fine Art and was eventually led into the realm of computers several years ago. His brushes have slowly dissolved in white spirit since the late '90s and now, alas, his graphics tablet has become their successor. He sketches regularly and shares time between both 2D & 3D, although drawing will always be closest to his heart... ibex80@hotmail.com





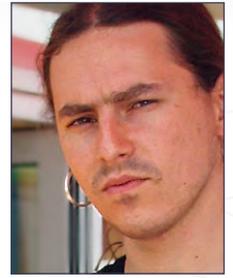
David Revoy

A.K.A Deevad, is a Freelance 2D Illustrator & Concept Artist, in Toulouse, France. He started working in the field of CG in 2001 after a career in traditional painting and illustration. Now working as a Concept Artist for anime studios, and as an Illustrator for book covers, he wishes to evolve his career to video games, especially as Concept Artist & Art Director for an RPG. info@davidrevoy.com
www.davidrevoy.com



Kosta Ulanasov

Is a freelance all-rounder, in Bulgaria. He's worked on game development projects, covering every aspect of art asset creation, from concept art, modelling, texturing, rigging, & animation, to renaming images back in the 2D games era. He currently works as a freelance artist as he needs money for food, clothes, an HDV camera, and another motorcycle. kosta@kostaatanasov.com
www.kostaatanasov.com



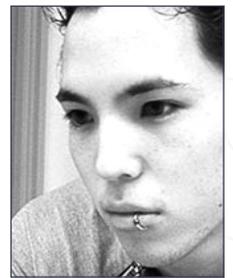
Ivan Mijatov

Is a 2D & 3D Game Artist, for Midway Games, in Chicago. He became interested in art & drawing in his senior year at high school. His education took him through 2 years at the American Academy of Art, and 2 years at the Illinois Institute of Art, where he majored in Game Art & Design. He is currently employed by Midway Games, fulfilling the roll of a 3D Character Artist. ivanMijatov@gmail.com
<http://ivanushka.deviantart.com>



Daarken

Is a 2D Illustrator/ Concept Artist, in the USA. He began working in the gaming industry after graduating from the Academy of Art University, San Francisco, in 2004. He has worked for Wizards of the Coast, Fantasy Flight Games, Widescreen Games, Digital Extremes, & BreakAway Games. www.daarken.com
daarkenart@daarken.com



Ivan Mijatov

Grew up in Sarajevo, Bosnia, attending the School of Fine Arts. The war came & he left. Moving to Switzerland, he started doing graphic design & animation, and now works as a freelance Concept Artist, Illustrator & Matte Painter. He directs shorts and music videos, works in post production as Animator & Composer, and composes soundtracks for ads, games & movies. info@streamatica.ch | www.streamatica.ch



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EVAN SHIPARD

Working on such films as "Stealth" and "House of Flying Daggers", digital matte painter Evan Shipard talks to us about his interest in WW2 and his art...

"Exploring design and art in all its different forms is more essential than learning one particular software package."





EVAN SHIPARD

Hello Evan, could you tell us what first got you hooked on 2D?

I think the first time visual effects peaked my interest was when I was a very young child watching films like Star Wars - even with no idea as to how it was done I still wanted to be part of it and it was only after a short stint in the print design industry that I was exposed to what could be achieved with Photoshop. I had always been interested in early digital paint programs from Dazzle Draw to Deluxe Paint 2 on my old Apple IIGS. I would draw my favourite characters pixel by pixel in 16 colours and print them out on a dot matrix printer. After watching a matte painting/visual effects seminar in 1999 at Enmore Design Centre in Sydney, I was hooked.

So after watching this seminar, could you tell us about the course of education that you have travelled?

I spent 2 years studying graphic design which included print, web, illustration and photography. This led me to a job in the print design industry. After a couple of years working on magazines I attended the seminar which inspired me to apply for a scholarship studying 3D, visual-FX, and animation. I won the scholarship and after 12 months I was in the industry.

Could you tell us how your style of painted emerged?

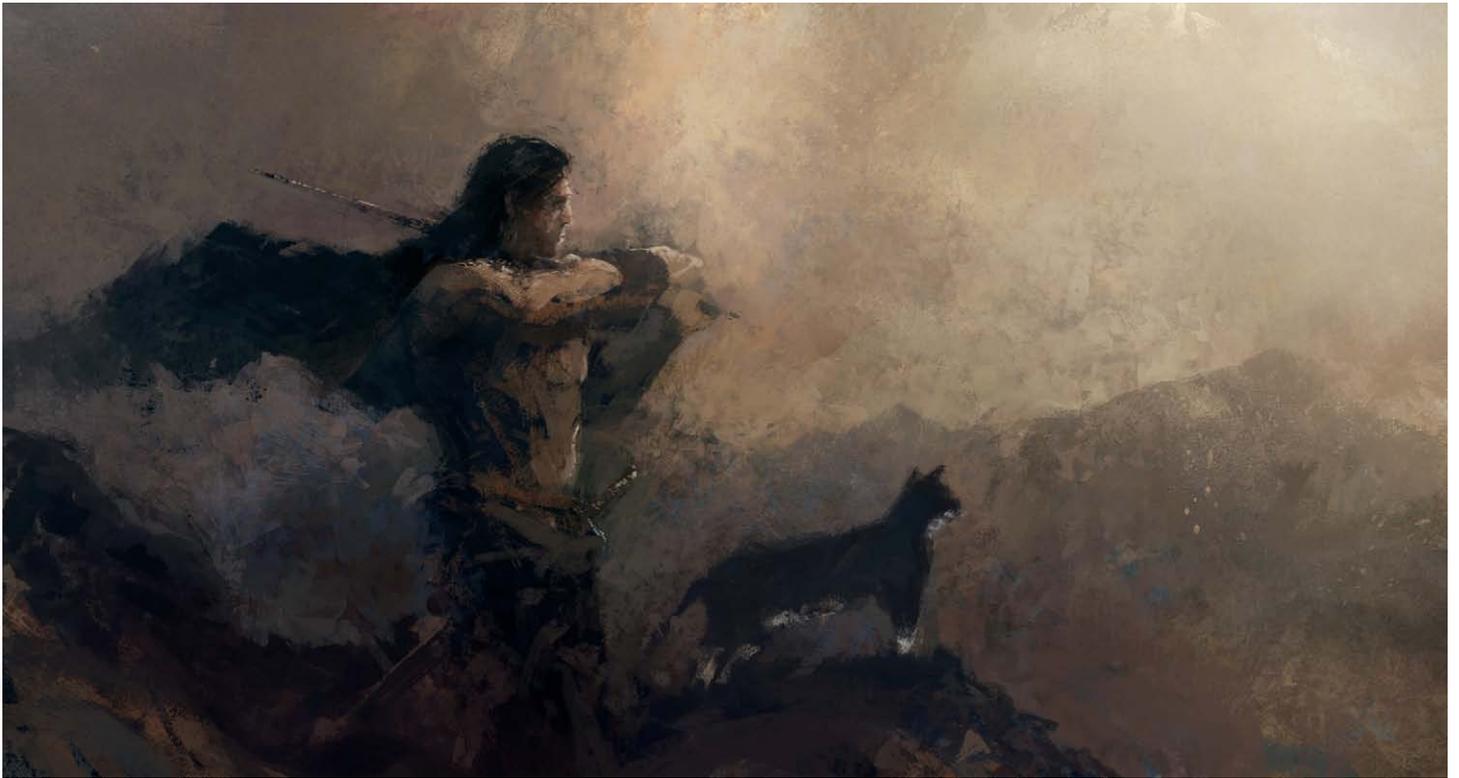
I think my digital art has always tried to mimic a painterly approach. I was never fond of the sharp, crisp, sterile 3D/2D art that was so popular in the past and have always wanted to push my art in a different direction. I came from a traditional illustration background and focused on illustration techniques in college. With my art I always try to create a mood and play with light to capture a cinematic frame.

Photographers use a lot of light to set moods for their images; is this something that you have dabbled with to help you understand light better?

I have always had a interest in photography and from a young age was encouraged by my parents. My composition was one thing that my father would always comment on. In college I studied photography and darkroom techniques. Light is something I'm very interested in. Observation is the key in learning how it all works and you will always notice something new.

A lot of your work seems to have a similar theme running through it: war. Is this something that you have a fascination of?

The work on my site does seem to have a theme. I guess the whole idea of battle, or the human condition during war, really strikes a chord with me. It is often dramatic and visually interesting. My interests stem from history and the fact that my grandfather served in WW2. He was an RAF Night Fighter Ace who served in Malta flying with the RAF. I am also a fan of the design during WW2 - the various hardware that was built out of necessity, and the idea that a lot of it in turn influenced the technology that we use today.



Does this also have a bearing upon the types of projects that you undertake in your professional career? As I have noticed that the majority do have a war/military theme to them...

I would love the opportunity to conceptualize and work on a classic WW2 film. Choice doesn't really come into a lot of the projects that I have worked on; it is pretty much down to the luck of the draw or it depends on what the company I am working for are bidding on. It would be great to pick and choose projects but often this just

isn't the case. Obviously being passionate about something is going to bring out your best, but it is still a job and you get the good along with the bad.

You're currently working freelance; what do you feel are the advantages and disadvantages of this kind of work?

I have recently moved to a freelance position which has given me the opportunity to pursue personal projects and also to travel and vary the

work that I do. Experiencing different companies and different techniques/work-flows allows you to grow as an artist. The down-side to travelling for freelance work is that you have to leave your family at home.

When you first start a painting, whether it's for your work or for your own personal portfolio, what are the first things that you do before picking up your Wacom tablet?

The initial stages of the painting are always



the most fun. Firstly, before picking up a pen, I usually make sure that I have done my research and I then explore composition. Generally this is done digitally but I often use pencil and paper too. With most of my commercial concept art I am trying to represent a story beat, or to sell a cinematic mood, so it is very important that thorough research is done, whether it is reading the script/book or Google-searching for images. Often a chat with the other artists working on the project is also essential as they can bring things to the plate that you didn't think of.



Have you ever been disappointed with an outcome of a project, whether it has been personal or professional?

I do finish projects that I feel could have been better - most of the time it is due to time or budgetary restraints, but it makes the projects that you are proud of feel that much better.





What has been the most memorable piece of advice that you have been given?

Off the top of my head I don't remember one particular, memorable piece of advice. I am always asked for advice about getting into the industry or what courses or software to learn... Exploring design and art in all its different forms is more essential than learning one particular software package. But most of all, discipline and practice is at the top of the list. I believe in working on good, interesting projects with talented people and growing as an artist. If this isn't the case then there isn't much point in pursuing it - it's that simple.

Well it has been a real pleasure talking with you. One last question before we finish: if I was to hang around with you for a whole day, what would I learn about you that not a lot of people know?

There's not much to tell; I'm just like any other guy in this business looking for creative opportunities and other ways to express my vision.

Thanks very much for talking to us, and the very best of luck for the future.

Evan Shipard

For more work by this artist please visit:

www.ecsdesignvfx.com

Or contact them at:

ecsdesign@iinet.net.au

Interviewed by

Chris Perrins

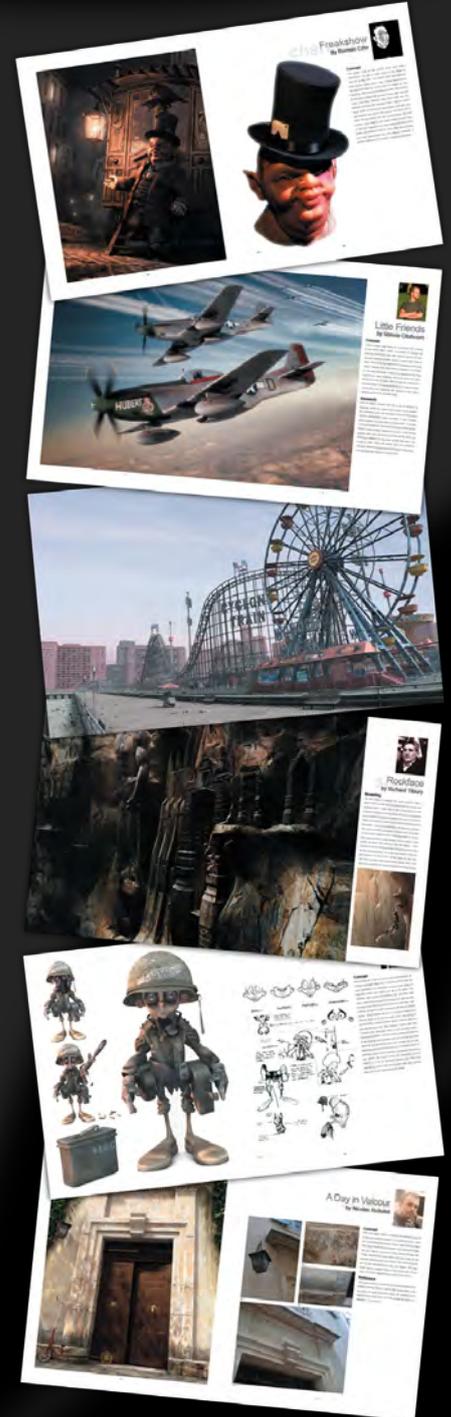
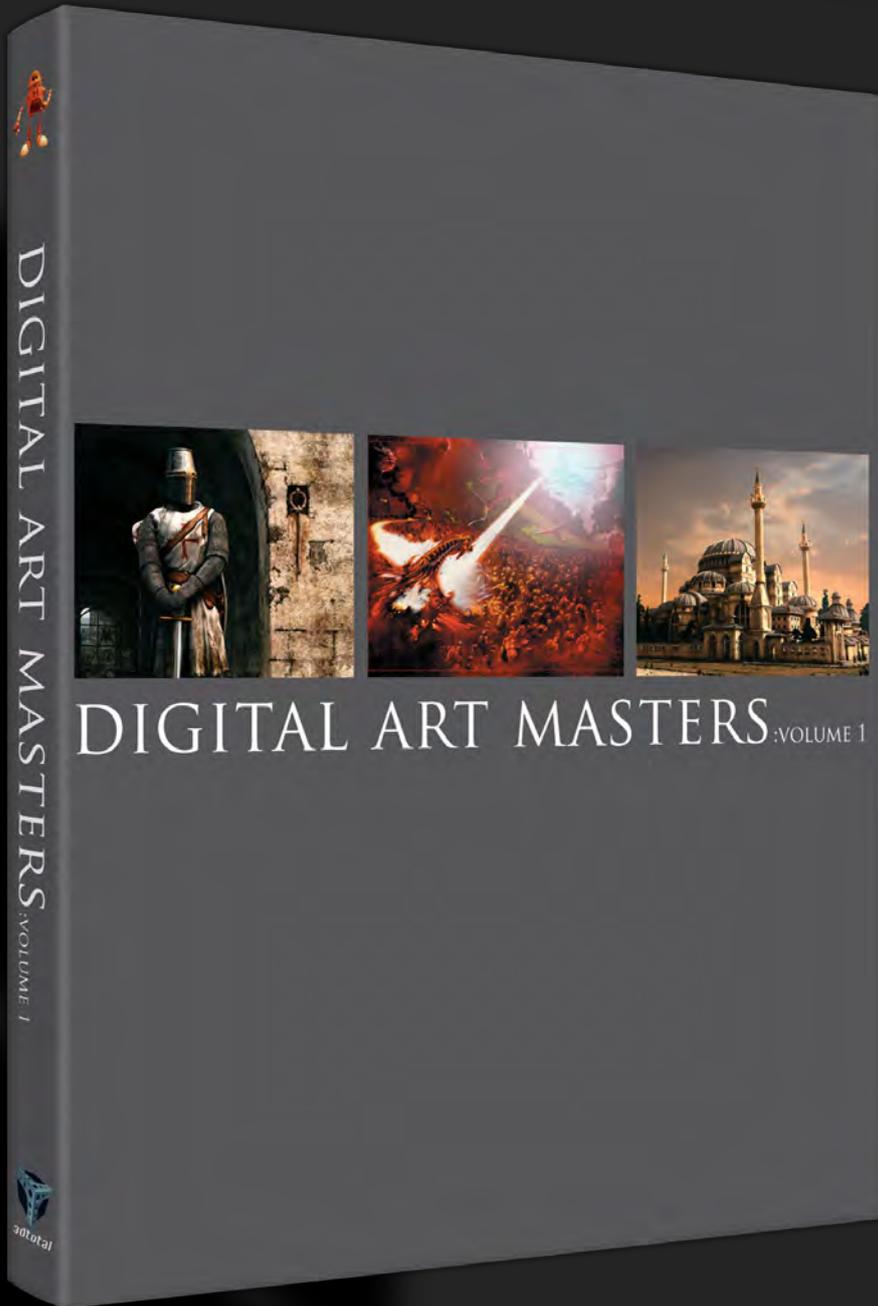


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CARL CRITCHLOW

Carl Critchlow, creator of the iconic "Thrud the Barbarian" and veteran within the world of fantasy and comic art, talks to 2DArtist about surviving in the competitive world of illustration and his contribution to 2000AD and the Dredd history...

"Forget it, (being a comic book artist) get a proper job and a social life. You'll thank me in the long run!"

CARL CRITCHLOW

Let's start with "Thrud"
- a character that must remain close to your heart. Could you tell us a little about his evolution and what inspired his creation?
The graphic design tutor at my foundation

art college was Bryan Talbot (Luther Arkwright, "The Tale of One Bad Rat", and so on) and one of his projects was to produce a comic strip... I was reading Robert E. Howard's "Conan" books at the time and this led to my first "Thrud" strip - the first comic strip that I ever drew!

Thrud and Conan are both "Barbarians", but what is it about this type of character that interests you in terms of a comic strip?

To be honest, the appeal is in the imagery involved - I just like drawing heavily muscled men running around in their under crackers - you got a problem with that? (Note: I HATE drawing suits.)



Thrud© Carl Critchlow : All Rights Reserved.



Thrud© Carl Critchlow : All Rights Reserved.

Could you describe your work on the "Magic: the Gathering" cards and explain to any unaware readers what they are exactly?

To any readers who don't know, "Magic: the Gathering" is a Collectable Card Game (CCG), produced by Wizards of the Coast, with a strong fantasy element. Over the last few years I've produced close to 200 images for different playing cards for the game, as new sets are released each year. They have mostly been monsters of various descriptions; many of which can be seen on my website: www.carlcritchlow.com.

Would you say that fantasy is a genre that suits your personality, being someone who enjoyed the Conan novels, or are there any other topics you would like to explore in more depth?

I'm a big fan of the R. E. Howard Conan stories, but although I enjoy some of the visual elements of the fantasy genre, to be honest I haven't really read too much else - even though it's fun to draw!



Darksteel Colossus © Wizards of the Coast : All Rights Reserved.

What was it that initially led you into the world of comics and prompted an interest in this genre? Until I went to art college I hadn't really had an interest in comics, although I was a huge Frank Frazetta fan and I knew that was how he'd started his career, so I was interested in finding out more. As I mentioned before Bryan Talbot was my graphics tutor, as well as teaching he was working on the first of his Luther Arkwright stories and it was seeing his work (as well as his comic collection) that led me to realise there was a ton of fantastic stuff out there that I'd previously been unaware of.

What is it essentially about Frazetta's work that inspires you?

I could go on about this for some time but in one word it's the dynamism.



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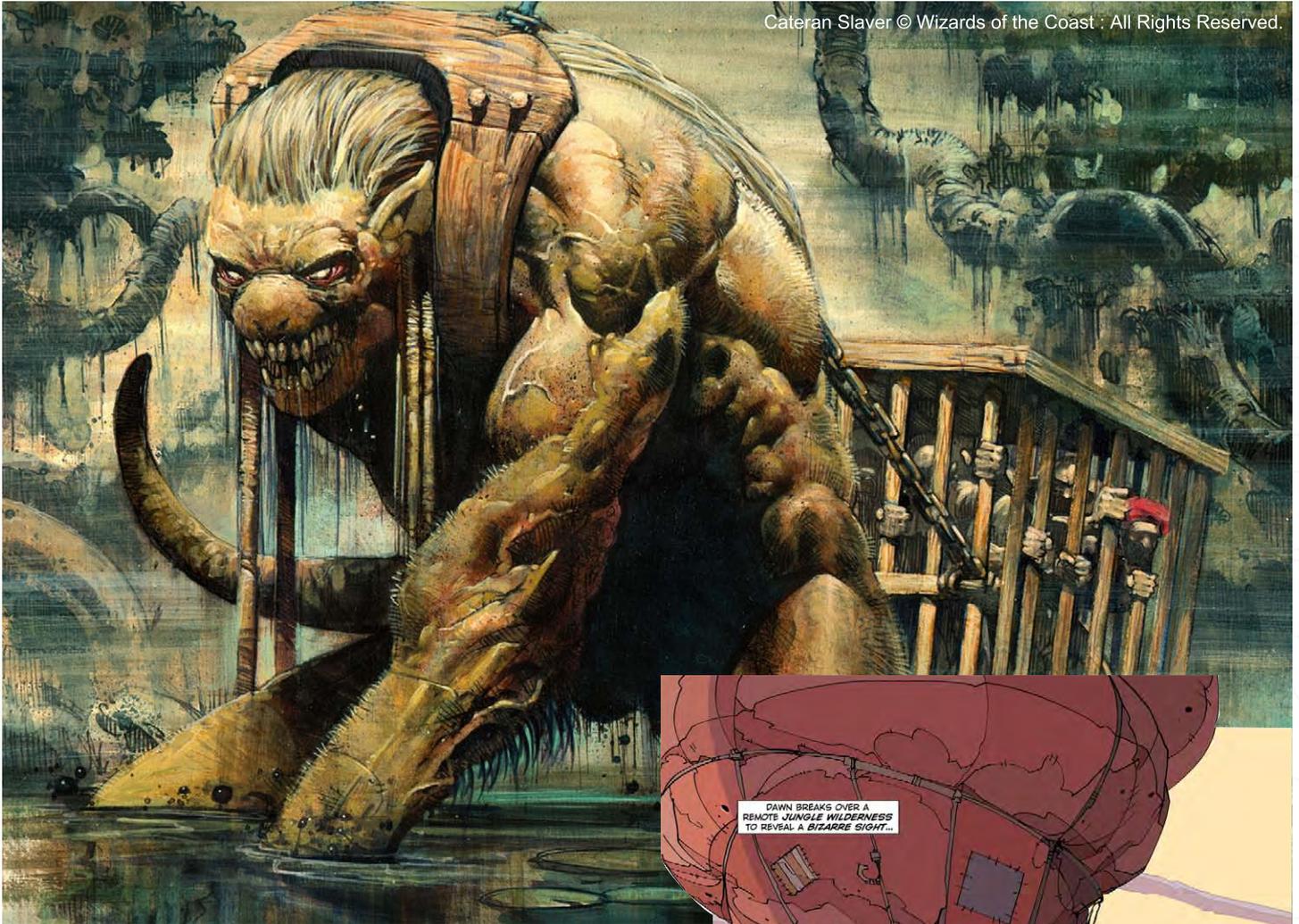




GERROFF!

POK!

SSSSSSSS!



Cateran Slaver © Wizards of the Coast : All Rights Reserved.

How do you think that comics have changed with the advent of computers and the digital medium?

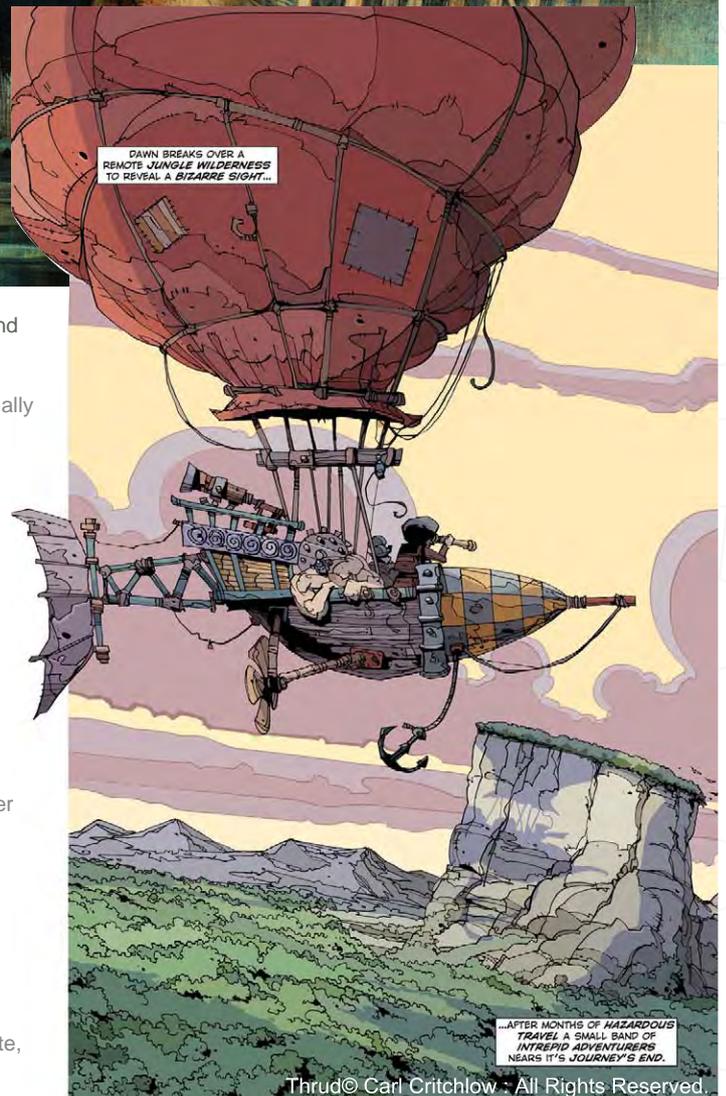
Apart from making the whole job quicker, cleaner and more accurate (especially colouring and lettering) the main change as I see it is that it is now perfectly possible for an individual creator to produce an entire comic book to a professional standard at home.

What do you think are the skill sets necessary to being a good comic artist, and what do you feel are the greatest challenges?

General draftsmanship (especially figure drawing) is essential, as well as storytelling (very important if you want to make any sort of a living), and speed. The challenges are being able to keep banging the stuff out, whether you're in a really creative mood and buzzing, or full of cold/hung-over with something that seems much more interesting on the TV: a deadline's a deadline (or so I've been told).

How did it feel to contribute towards the Dredd history and were there any specific challenges that the job presented?

I'd been a fan of 2000AD for many years before getting a chance to contribute, and it was a real honour to finally get to work on the top character. As far as

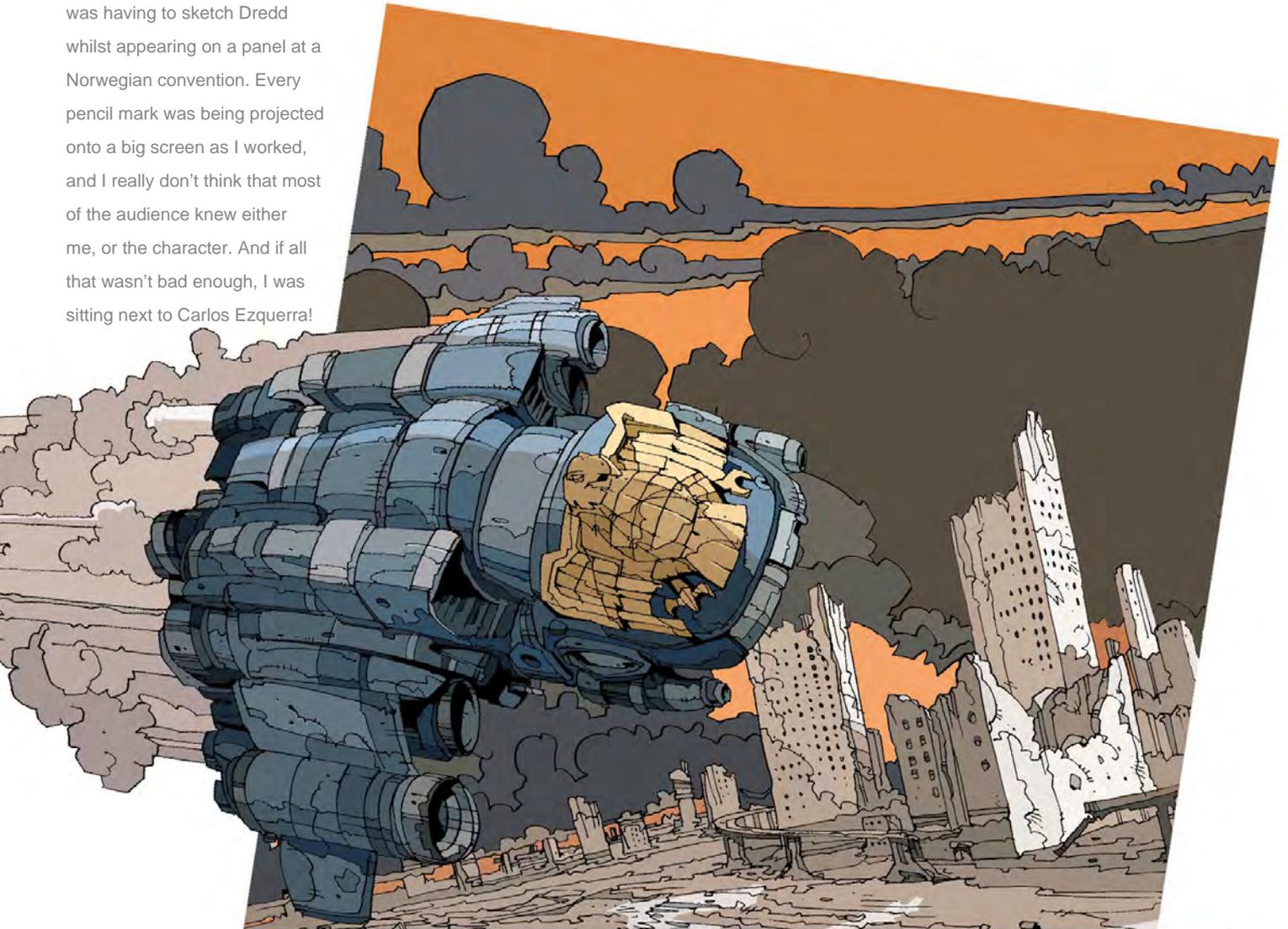


DAWN BREAKS OVER A REMOTE JUNGLE WILDERNESS TO REVEAL A BIZARRE SIGHT...

AFTER MONTHS OF HAZARDOUS TRAVEL A SMALL BAND OF INTREPID ADVENTURERS NEARS IT'S JOURNEY'S END.

Thrud © Carl Critchlow : All Rights Reserved.

specific challenges go, the shoulder pad and eagle can be a headache in certain poses, although my most nerve-wracking moment was having to sketch Dredd whilst appearing on a panel at a Norwegian convention. Every pencil mark was being projected onto a big screen as I worked, and I really don't think that most of the audience knew either me, or the character. And if all that wasn't bad enough, I was sitting next to Carlos Ezquerra!



Which comic artists would you rank as your favourites of all time, and why?

There are lots and for all sorts of different reasons, but for consistently creative high standards it would be a toss up between Mike McMahon and Mike Mignola. Other favourites of mine include (off the top of my head and in no particular order) Duncan Fegredo, Jamie Hewlett, Simon Davis, Nicolas de Crecy and Masamune Shiro.

How would you describe your comic book style? Iffy.

What do you think are the most important pieces of advice you could offer to anyone interested in becoming a comic book artist?

Forget being a comic book artist get a proper job and a social life. You'll thank me in the long run!



Lobster Random © Rebellion : All Rights Reserved.

If you had not been an artist what career do you think you would have followed?

A question I seem to be asking myself more and more recently... I'm really not sure, but something that finishes at 5 PM every Friday has it's appeal.

Thanks for talking to us Carl.

No problem. Thanks for asking me and I hope it all made some sort of sense!

Carl Critchlow

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.carlritchlow.com>

Or contact them at:

c.crit@virgin.net

Interviewed by: Rich Tilbury



"You have to expose yourself to other artists and inspirations or you risk being stuck in a stagnant bubble. Next thing you know, your art is outdated and no one wants to give you work anymore."

Dan Scott is a Freelance Artist who has worked for clients such as WoW, Warhammer, Wizards of the Coast, and DC Comics. His portfolio and ability to bring his own style to even the most iconic of characters, brought him directly to the attention of our ever-preying interview team! Here's what we talked about...

Dan SCOTT

MTG(Magic:The Gathering) images: © 1995-2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved."



Dan SCOTT

Hi Dan, how are you? It's great to have this opportunity to chat with you, so can we start off simply by learning a little bit about you?

For example, what's your current location and occupation, and are you working on any exciting projects right now?

Hi Lynette! Good to chat with you too. I'm currently located in a suburb just outside Kansas City, Missouri, in the United States, working as a Freelance Illustrator. As for current work, I

have several pieces I'm working on for Magic: The Gathering and World of Warcraft trading card games. I was excited to get to do some packaging art for WoW recently, and I just turned in a batch of concepts this morning for the Warhammer Online MMORPG. Last week I got the opportunity to do some sketches for the DC licensing department. I enjoy mixing in concept art and comic art to go with the fully painted pieces I do for the trading card games. I think it helps keep everything fresh and interesting.

Wow, so you're keeping busy then?! OK, so I feel like there will be many artists out there now who will want to kick me if I don't ask you how you originally got into this industry? How did you get your first job creating artwork for trading card games? Also, where do you think you will

go on from here? What paths have opened up for you whilst you've been working for the likes of WoW, Warhammer, Wizards of the Coast and DC Comics?

Well my first commissioned work was for a little Internet collectible card game called "Chron X". Of course, it paid horribly, but at least it paid and it gave me experience dealing with deadlines and an Art Director. It also helped me build my portfolio which I used to get, what I felt like at the time was my big break, the Warhammer 40K CCG. Getting to work on a big name like Warhammer was really cool and I think my work grew tremendously during that time. My Warhammer work got me into Magic, and so on. Over the last few years it has been nice to have Art Directors contact me, rather than vice versa. It has given me the opportunity to pick and choose jobs a little and work on things I really

enjoy. I'm really happy with what I'm doing now but I definitely still have plenty of goals for the future. Comics were my first love, and the thing that got me into art, so it would be really great to get the chance to paint more of my favourite characters, and possibly even painted sequentials. Although, I'm not sure how I'd ever keep up with a monthly deadline. I'd also like to explore doing more book covers or video game packaging at some point.



I am always very curious about how digital artists originally found their way into the CG world. What events and decisions, etc., have so far informed the path that you have taken to where you find yourself today? Doing fantasy/sci-fi/comic art was always my dream, but as a kid I never expected I would be doing it on the computer. I think it was around 1992 or '93 when my family got our first computer. It was a Macintosh with Photoshop installed. I was amazed at the possibilities and would spend hours trying to paint cool pictures using the clunky, single-button mouse. In the years to follow, I got to use Macs quite a bit in college but still didn't think it would ever take the place of my trusty brush. After I graduated college in '96 I got a job in the real world as a Production Artist where I used Photoshop on a daily basis. This really helped me hone my technical skills in the program.





I learned how to really take advantage of short-cuts and actions. I also learned a lot about the colour manipulation capabilities in the program. On the side, I started doing art for the Chron X game I mentioned earlier. In the beginning all my pieces were painted with acrylics. Eventually, I started dabbling with scanning my paintings in and doing minor tweaks on the computer. It wasn't until 2000 when I started doing work for the Warhammer 40K CCG that I attempted to do an entire piece digitally. Originally, I worked exclusively in Photoshop but eventually I overcame my fear of Painter and started working in that too. For quite some time I would still do my pencil sketches on paper and scan them in to render them on the computer, but over time even that fell by the wayside. Today everything I do is 100% digital.

MTG(Magic:The Gathering) images: © 1995-2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved."



But, do you still sketch for fun with traditional media, or is everything that you do now purely digital? Do you ever feel a little guilty having left your roots behind? Or do you feel that there is really no difference between sketching/painting whether traditionally or digitally? Would you say that either way uses the same skill and has the same feeling of satisfaction as the other?

Sadly, I very rarely pick up an actual pencil to sketch anymore. I really need to do it more, not only because I enjoy it but because it really helps build your drawing skills. I don't feel guilty

for going digital because to me the computer is just another tool for creating art. I don't feel like any less of an artist for using it, and if I wasn't using it I probably wouldn't be able to do work quickly or accurately enough to pay the bills.

Looking at your fantastic portfolio, I was overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of high quality images that you have created. Your work is of a specific genre - fantasy, game and comic art - so what is it about this type of artwork that really gets you going?

Thanks! There is a lot of stuff on there isn't there? I probably should narrow it down to a more focused portfolio but it's difficult to exclude anything because so often the pieces that I think are weak are enjoyed the most by others. In any event, I try to always maintain a minimum level of professional quality even if I'm not necessarily excited to work on a certain piece. To answer your question, I couldn't imagine doing any other type of art as I don't think it could maintain my interest. There's something so cool to me about bringing to life the amazing characters,

creatures, and settings you see in the genres I work in. Painting a still-life, portrait, or landscape can be an interesting exercise, but it doesn't really get my blood pumping. I grew up immersed in comics and video games so I guess it's pretty much been a lifelong passion for me. It's kind of ironic that I'm so busy doing art for them that I rarely get the chance to read comics or play video games anymore!





MTG(Magic:The Gathering) images: © 1995-2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved."

So if you don't get chance the play the games or read the comics these days, where does your inspiration come from for all these fantastic artworks? You have listed some great artists as sources of inspiration on your website; however, I wonder where else you seek inspiration from... Is it simply a case of keeping your eyes open to the world around you, or do you spend a lot of time researching to inform your personal concepts?

I wouldn't say I never get the chance to play video games or read comics - it has just been greatly reduced from my 'teen' days. You have to expose yourself to other artists and inspirations or you risk being stuck in a stagnant bubble. Next thing you know, your art is outdated and no-one wants to give you work anymore. I use the Internet almost daily to find inspirational art which I refer to sometimes while working. A couple of times a year I'll take a two

or three day break from working and do nothing but research and organise my art collection. It can be a real inspiration and can jump-start your creative engine.

Some people regard Superman as the most iconic superhero of all time, who has been immortalised by many well-known artists. How difficult was it to give justice, and apply your own personal stamp, to such a huge icon?

It was very difficult. He's probably the most iconic character I've ever got to work on. It definitely adds a different level of complexity to the work because you have a checklist of things you must include when depicting him. Spit curl? Check. Huge dimpled chin? Check. Can we see his symbol? Check. It does take a little away from your personal vision but is still well worth it. I'd jump at the chance to do it again. I'll tell you one thing, I came out of the project with a new-found respect for Alex Ross!





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How do you go about starting something as huge as an artwork of Superman? Can you give us a brief insight into your general working process, from beginning to end?

With a painting that shows an iconic character like him, I felt I needed to first research how he had been depicted in the past. Quite often there's a little bit of research time that needs to

be put in before you even put pencil to paper (or maybe I should say stylus to tablet), whether it be to see what kind of plants are found in the jungle scene you're going to paint, or to make sure you know the proper musculature on that horse you're getting ready to depict. In this case I dug out several trade paperbacks I had to see how other artists had shown him. I made mental

notes of what I liked and disliked about them and regurgitated it all into my own personal take on the character. As for the actual working process, in Photoshop I'll generally block-in very rough shapes with a large brush to get a feel for the composition I want. When I get something I like I'll make a hue/saturation layer with settings Hue: 210, Sat: 85, Lightness: 85. What this does



is allows my initial sketch to show through very lightly, as if done with a non-repro blue pencil. This is a trick I got from a buddy of mine, Freddie Williams, who draws Robin for DC Comics. Now I make a new layer and do a tight sketch on it. Once the sketch is approved I'll create a new layer below it and do the entire painting in values of grey. At this point the meat of the painting is done. From here it's just adding colour and "noodling" the details as much as you want. For colour I create a new layer which will be applied to the grayscale painting by a combination of different methods. I don't have a set method for applying colour to my grayscale. It's usually a combination of multiple copies of my colour layer at different opacities with different effects applied. It seems like each painting takes a different recipe to get a result I'm happy with, but usually a few of the layers are set to Colour mode, Overlay mode, or Multiply mode. As I work I constantly try to flatten layers as much as possible to try to keep the file size from getting out of hand. To help in this I create lots of channels with selections on them, since channels take up less memory.

From the FAQs on your website, I can see that you switch between Painter and Photoshop when creating your artwork. What advantages does Painter have over Photoshop, for you?

Both programs have their advantages, but I really love the feel of the brushes in Painter. The way they blend and lay down colour feels so much more natural than Photoshop, although I have been playing around a lot lately with custom brushes in Photoshop and have been really happy with the results so far. Painter also has the ability to rotate the canvas which can be so handy. It really helps it feel almost like your working on a physical board on your art table. Photoshop is the King though when it comes to selection tools and colour manipulation. During the course of a painting, it's not uncommon for me to switch back and forth between Painter and Photoshop a dozen times or more.

That's really interesting, because you mentioned earlier that you were frightened by Painter in the beginning?! What was it that frightened you so much, and how did you get yourself started in Painter and able to overcome your fear? Do you have any tips for artists out there who have a similar fear of the program and are waiting for that nudge to get them experimenting?

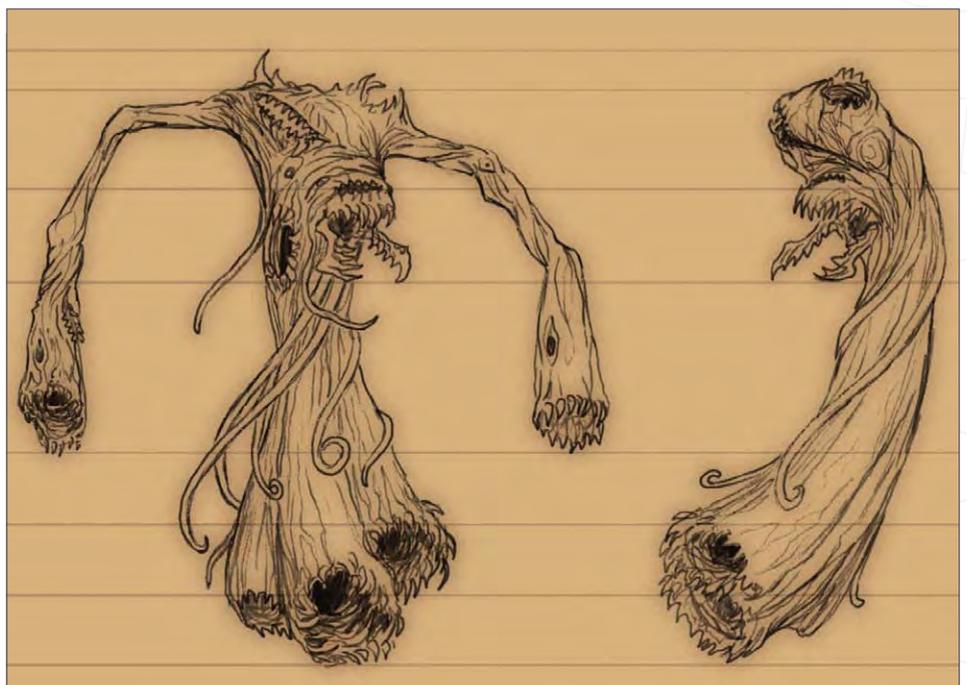
Definitely the interface. Coming from the Photoshop world, all the little drawers and options were a little foreign and intimidating. Nothing seemed to work the way I wanted it to at first. It took two things for me to finally get over the hump. First, I watched a DVD tutorial where another artist was working in Painter. Next I found one brush that I was comfortable with and worked exclusively in the brush without worrying about any of the other features. Eventually I added a second and third brush and started tweaking some of the settings on the brushes. I still feel like I have a lot to learn about Painter but feel a lot more comfortable with it now.

If time were not of such essence these days, do you think you would ditch your tablet for a good, old-fashioned paintbrush?

My first thought was yes, but actually, I'm not so



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sure. There are pros and cons to each. I definitely miss working traditionally and there's a real tactile satisfaction to slapping paint on board and having a physical piece to look at. I've learned so much on the digital side though that I'm not sure how I'd survive without access to layers, quick mask, undos, colour adjustments, and so on. I've tried to do a few traditional paintings since converting to a digital workflow but I've never been satisfied with the results and it seemed agonizingly slow. The computer has spoiled me!

So you've been completely won over by computers - that's totally understandable! You mentioned earlier that you grew up using Macs. Do you still use these over PCs? This is a debate we often have here in the studio; Mac or PC? What are your thoughts on this for all those out there who aren't sure of the pros and cons of each type or are maybe thinking about investing in a Mac?

There's really very little difference once you get into the program. The biggest pain is the

location of the Control-Option-Alt-whatever keys. I'd like to strangle whoever made the decision to make the keyboards different! I think Macs are more stable computers but they also cost a lot more. It used to be that it was a lot harder to find programs for the Mac because so many more people used PCs, but that doesn't seem to be as much of an issue anymore.

When working digitally, we talk about not having a hard copy artwork to look at, so what steps do you take to back-up your work and make sure that your artwork is safe for the future, being that you can't "hold" it and lock it away?

I've been pretty lucky and I've only ever lost one piece that I can remember. Usually when I finish a piece I copy it to a second computer I use. Once several pieces have built up I'll burn them to a DVD backup. I also usually burn a secondary copy which I'll keep at my parents house in case a fire were to destroy everything at my house.



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That sounds very sensible! Finally, we have a pretty much compulsory question these days: what one, single piece of advice would you give any aspiring artists looking to get into the industry today?

Be dedicated. Don't waste your time if it's not something you really love. It sounds like a fun job but there is a lot of work involved. If you really want to do this for a living then be ready to put in 50-60 hours a week doing it. Don't cut corners on your work because it will show. Be honest with yourself. If you look at a piece and see something's wrong with the anatomy: fix it. It may take a lot of time and be a pain but in the end you'll have something you're proud to show. Oh yes... and have fun! You're painting superheroes, goblins, and elves for crying out loud!

Dan Scott

For more work by this artist please visit:
www.danscottart.com Or contact him at:
danscottart@hotmail.com

Interviewed by: Lynette Clee

totalTextures

v7:r2
Sci-Fi

This enormously improved version of the original texture collection now contains 642 individual Materials, (576 on v7:r1) comprising of over 2573 individual, hand crafted texture maps. Every Texture now has its own unique colour map, bump map and in some cases specular, normal maps and alpha maps.

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- * 17 Control Panel
 - * 8 Logo
- * 56 Number
- * 20 SS 'set'
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- * 16 Container
- * 26 Damage
- * 8 Dirt Map
- * 9 Dish
- * 32 Door
- * 31 Floor
- * 27 Girder
- * 11 Gun Flare
- * 14 Handle
- * 13 Hatch
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The characters are rough, rude and brutal. One of my personal favourites is called "Cochise"; I drew this guy while sitting in a cafe, not realising that I was running out of space on my paper.



Sketchbook of **Khan Muftic**

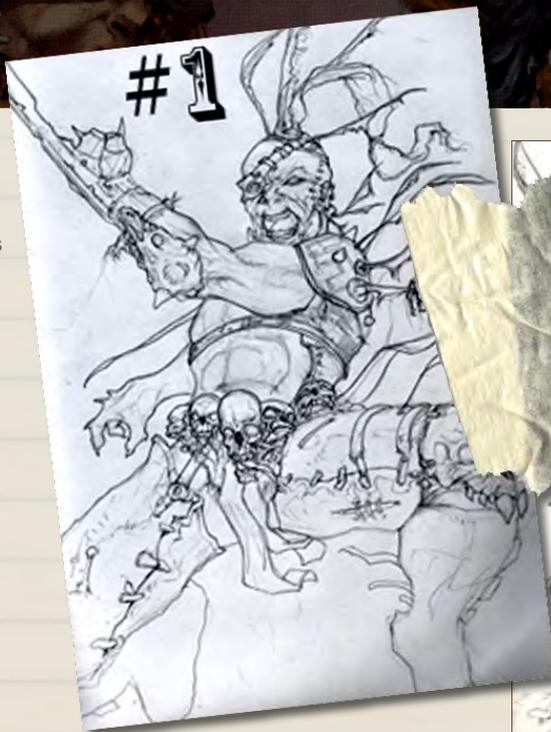
"Wild West 2500" is a project that Kan has been working on in his spare time. This month's sketchbook shows of some of his character designs along with other elements of his project work...

Cochise Whenever I have some spare time I work on my private project, called "Wild West 2500", which is all about western legends set in a distant, post-apocalyptic future. The characters are rough, rude and brutal. One of my personal favourites is called "Cochise"; I drew this guy while sitting in a cafe, not realising that I was running out of space on my paper. However, it turned out to be OK because it worked to make the character appear larger, and scarier. This part for me was the hardest, and yet the fastest. It is really tricky to set a powerful action pose without using any reference material. After about one hour the line work was done, and so I started rendering some simple and neutral shades,

and applied little details like scratches and tattoos. I paid good attention to the shrunken heads that I felt this character would probably have killed, or even eaten. Since I had my values done for the drawing, I started with the colouring in Painter. I had some weird, strong colours in mind, like cyan and pink. Everything at this point was painted with a chunky, oil brush. I received some



friendly tips about the cropping, but these were obviously wrong. Realising the error with the cropping, I repainted some elements and gave the figure more space to fly. From this point on, I painted everything above the drawing layer. This caused me to lose a lot of the detail, but gave the image a certain "oily" look. Increasing the contrast also helped to separate the figure from the background. I brought back the red by painting it in but did not 'colour adjust' it, and so it hints at the underpainting - which is quite a cool trick! It took me about seven hours to complete the whole painting. There are many people out there who I'm sure could do it much faster, but I like to take my time...



Dalton the 2nd Here I approached the task completely differently. This one is a 100% digital sketch made in the new version of Painter. I learned my craft in an old eastern European school of fine art; I remember coming home with lots of dirt on my brand new sneakers, or having chunks of clay in my hair. Painter is one of the very few digital tools that can bring back the feelings of those good, old, smelly times. I absolutely love to play around with Painter's oils, just like I have with this piece. Although I can't draw digitally

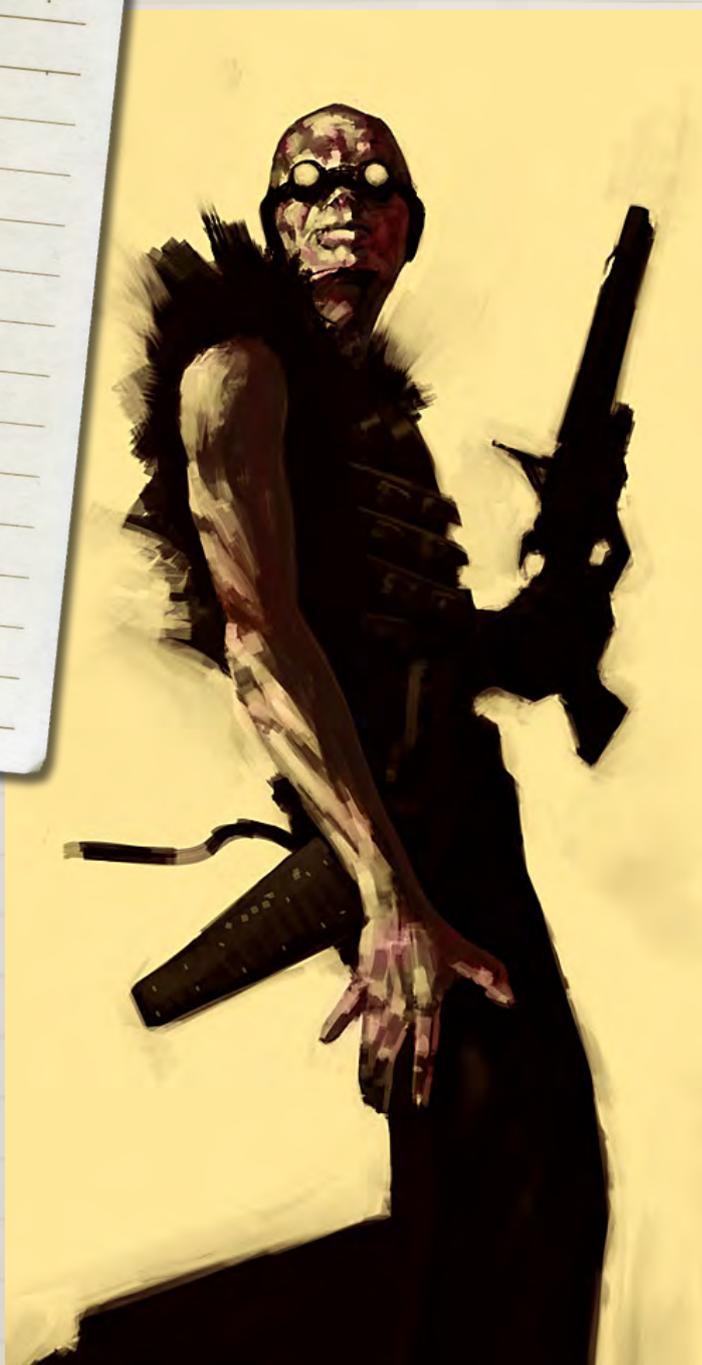
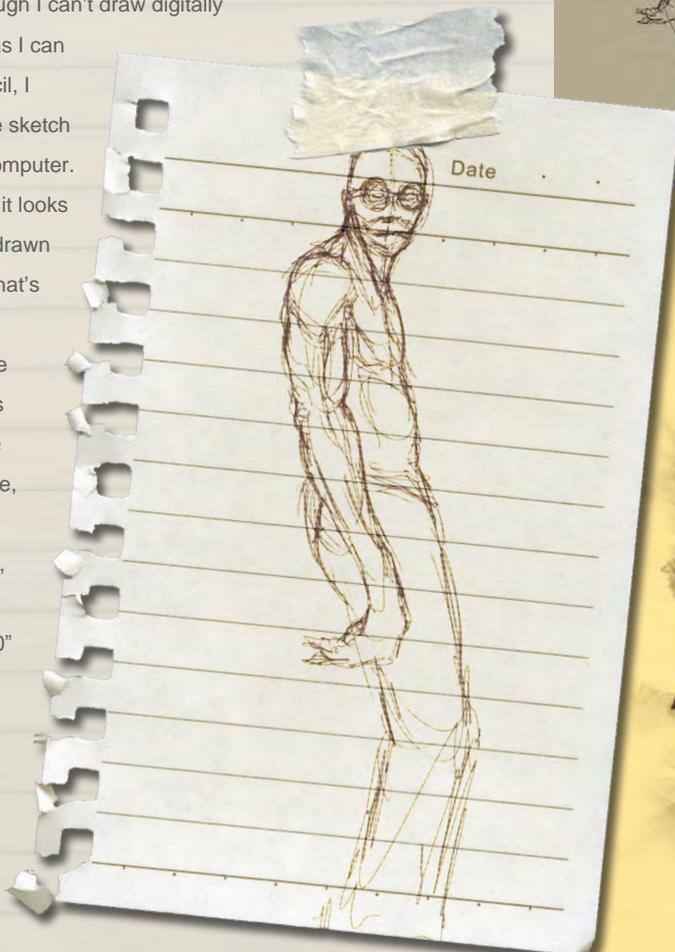
nearly as good as I can with a 'real' pencil, I tried to make the sketch correct on the computer.

As you can see, it looks like it has been drawn with a foot, but that's

OK. I didn't want to have any trace of drawing in this piece; just a little guide for my wide, oily brushes. As for the character, it's one of my "Wild West 2'500" reincarnations - one of the Dalton brothers.

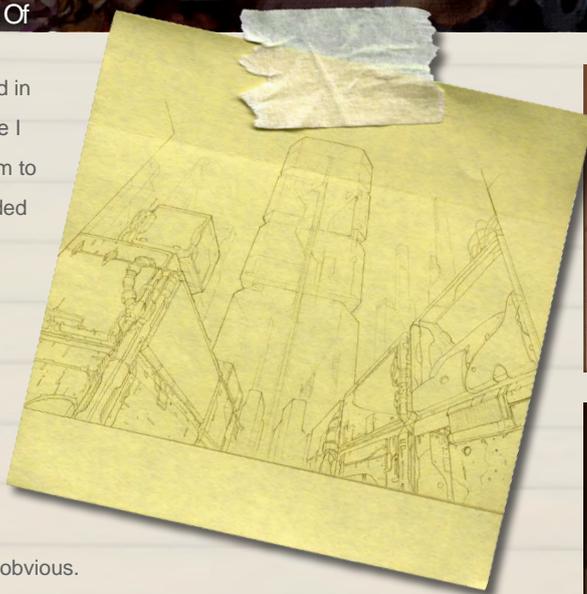
I had this idea of a stupid, yet dangerous, Redneck; caught in a

moment just before pulling out his gun. I wasn't happy with the first sketch, so I made a second one. I couldn't let go of those little skulls and so they feature here again, sitting on his shoulders. I drew him with one gun in his left hand, and drew the other one with his right hand. I applied values, but kept them very simple. I wanted it to look like one of those very old photographs, yet with a lot of energy contained in it. I made a decision to get rid of the skulls - it was a stupid idea anyway. I continued and defined the costume, but forbid myself to use a smaller brush. Any mistakes were covered by a new brush stroke, rather than using Undo, which gave the underpainting "air to breathe". I couldn't resist some basic colouring of the skin, and so increased the values. I also find yellow to be very attractive, and so, without much thinking, I simply splashed the paint on and called this one finished. This was a very fast one, which was made in around two hours.



Opening This was going to be used in a music video as the very first shot. Since I co-directed this video, I had a full freedom to design whatever I wanted, and so I decided to go somewhere between Judge Dredd, in terms of its design, and Ghost in the Shell, for its neatly drawn aesthetics. First of all, I opened up my sketchbook and started drawing lines, with the help of a ruler. I knew that I wanted to make the building in the background huge, and so I played with the perspective a little, without making it too obvious.

After about two hours, the drawing was done. I scanned it in and took it into Photoshop, where I gave it a main background colour, executed with a brownish gradient below the drawing, and set its layer mode to Multiply. Next, I gave it some basic values. To be honest, I didn't worry much about the light at this moment, since I knew there were going to be multiple lights, and I didn't want to think too much in advance. As I mentioned before, once the lights were set the situation got a bit tricky, but I aimed to keep it all as simple as possible. Neon lights gave some glow, edges received some highlights, and the colours were chosen to really stand out, like in Japanese anime. Finishing the piece was fun. Textures were added using custom brushes; pushing levels and playing with the Dodge tool until they were where I wanted them to be.

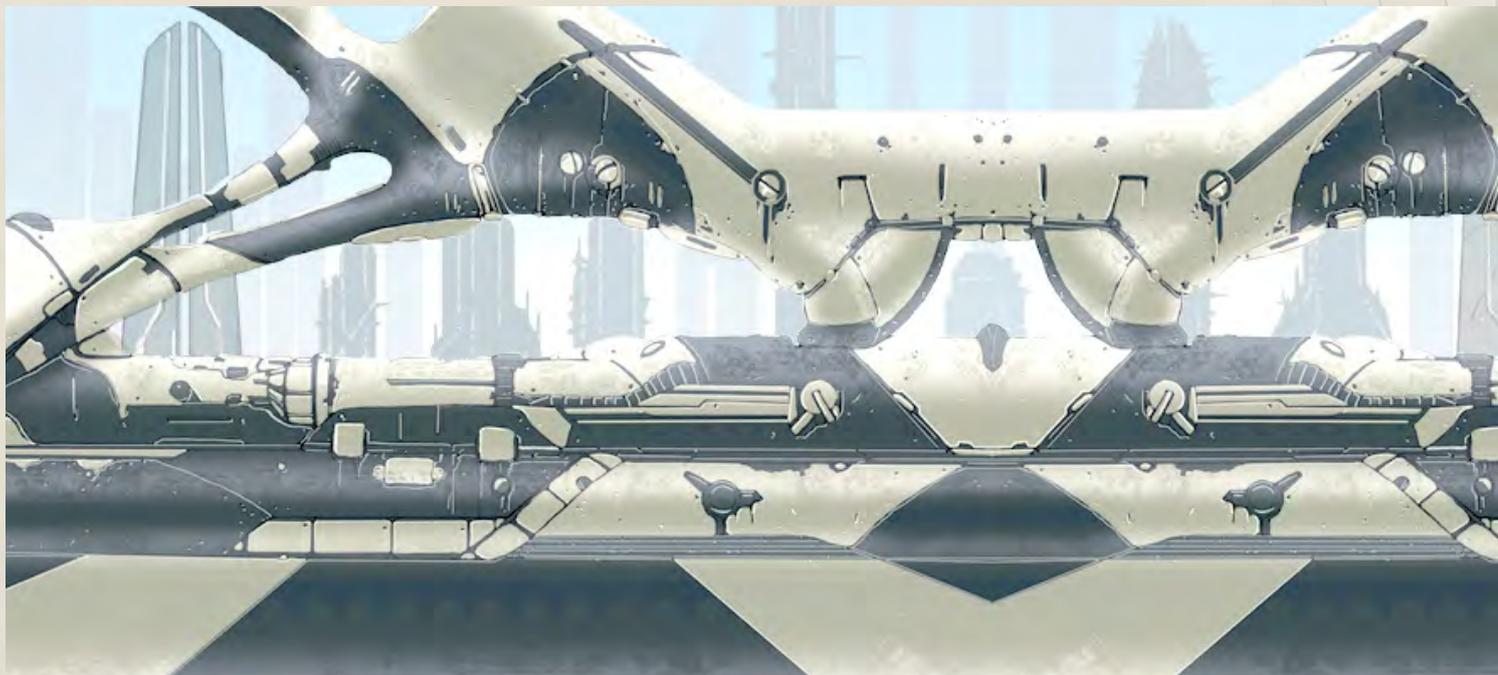


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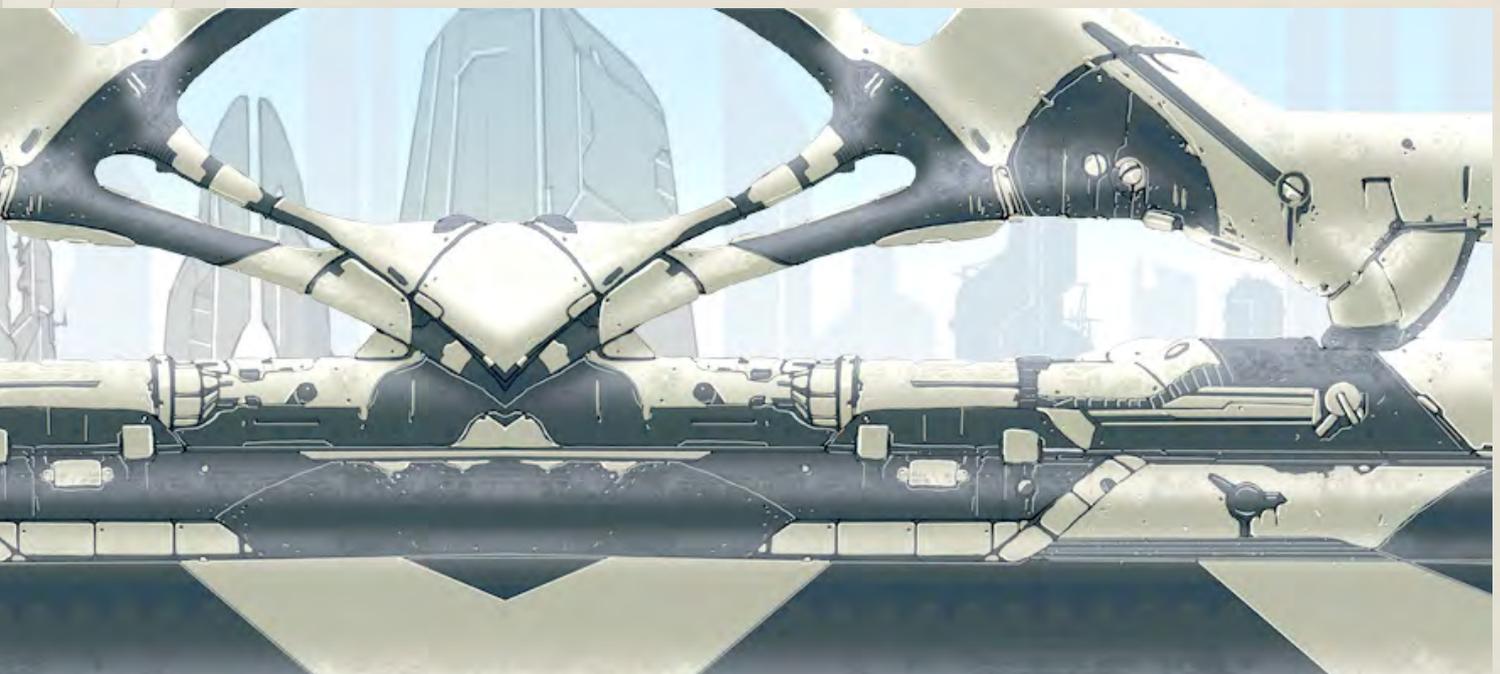
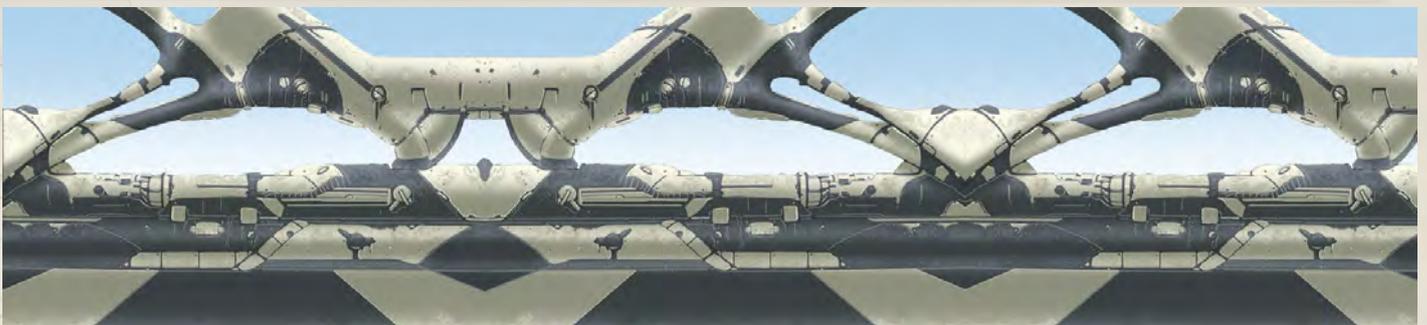
Mid Level

There is rarely such a pleasure for me as when I sit down in a cafe, pull out my sketchbook and dive into the drawing. And this was exactly how I created this piece. I was supposed to make a background for a pretty important scene of a music video, which I mentioned before. It's a long scene with some characters involved, so I knew this had to be good "eye-candy". Since I settled the architecture with a rusty, futuristic look, I had to keep that as a style guide. I started to draw organic shapes which were similar to bones. I then made some mechanical parts and came up with a terraced wall at the end. I took the drawing into Photoshop and firstly created a silhouette of the wall. I needed to read





the shape well, since it's quite abstract. I then made a layer of its base paint. The two-colour pattern works very well on architecture. Without thinking about values at this point, I just hit some edges with the small highlights, which is not quite the right way to do this but I just did it anyway. The next thing I did was to duplicate the image, and then mirrored it. I wanted to get the best out of those shapes, and so I experimented with it for a while. I also painted a simple sky gradient to achieve more feeling for the terrace. Finally, I drew and painted the skyline in the background, and pushed the contrast a little higher. It's obvious that I used one fragment and replicated it, but I believe that it works quite well in the video. It took me about five hours to complete this painting.



Ship

I love designing vehicles of all kinds, with hovercrafts being my all-time favourites. For this particular design I had a shape of a fish in mind; one of those huge, exotic fish (whose name I can't recall now). It should be just like that fish: full of scars - heavy but powerful - and perhaps some kind of a combat ship. I drew this one without using references of the fish that I had in mind, but I think I matched it quite closely. Anyway, it didn't take me too long, perhaps just half an hour or thereabouts. I painted in the scratches and the parts of the engine that would be seen; perhaps they fell off due to the bad conditions? The base paint was applied to give it a ground colour to work upon. Combining colours that I wouldn't normally put next to each other always gives me surprising results, and in this case also gives a certain rhythm to the shape. Applying textures with a custom brush, and setting logos and decals, helped me to achieve the realism of the vehicle, and just makes it look so much better. Below is how I present my designs to clients. It's always nice to have some kind of a stripe in the background, but it shouldn't compete with the design itself. Also a small



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description helps to sell it. There is a little trick I use at the very end of the process: I flatten the image and then apply the Sharpen filter on it, which creates some extra detail and gives a nice crispness. Don't do this with files that you want to print, as it'll just get messy. This whole process took me around two hours to complete.

Khan Muftic

For more information please visit:

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Making Anime

Follow this excerpt from the book "Making Anime", which provides essential animation skills in making anime; create mesmerising manga-style animation with pencils, paint and pixels...

"The basic production methods for animation have not changed much over the past century, but many of the tools involved have evolved considerably."

Making Anime

Essential Animation Skills

Although the vast majority of today's animation is created digitally, basic drawing and animation skills are still required. Computers can reduce the amount of work, especially for repetitive or labour-intensive tasks like painting, but they cannot replace essential drawing skills. The following pages cover a variety of basic animation techniques that can be applied to any 2D animation, whether it is hand-drawn on paper or input digitally with a graphics tablet and stylus. By mastering methods such as key frames, walk cycles, facial animation, lipsynching and sound, as well as easy ways of achieving the same effects with minimal work, you will be able to create professional-looking animations.

The basic production methods for animation have not changed much over the past century, but many of the tools involved have evolved considerably. The integration of computers into the workflow has reduced labour in certain areas of production and allowed more time and energy to be focused on the animation itself. Whatever method of production suits you best, be sure to choose the correct tools for the job.

Pegboards and Animation Paper

When producing animation on paper, you need to use a pegboard. Animation

paper typically has three holes punched in it to make sure it aligns perfectly with the previous and subsequent frames. By placing the paper on a pegboard, it is possible to flick between animation frames to ensure a smooth transition.

It is common for animators to fasten a pegboard to their flatbed scanner to guarantee each frame of animation is perfectly aligned when digitized. This speeds up the scanning process and avoids unnecessary errors or adjustments. Professional studios use scanners with sheet feeders (like on photocopiers) and software that automatically aligns the peg holes.

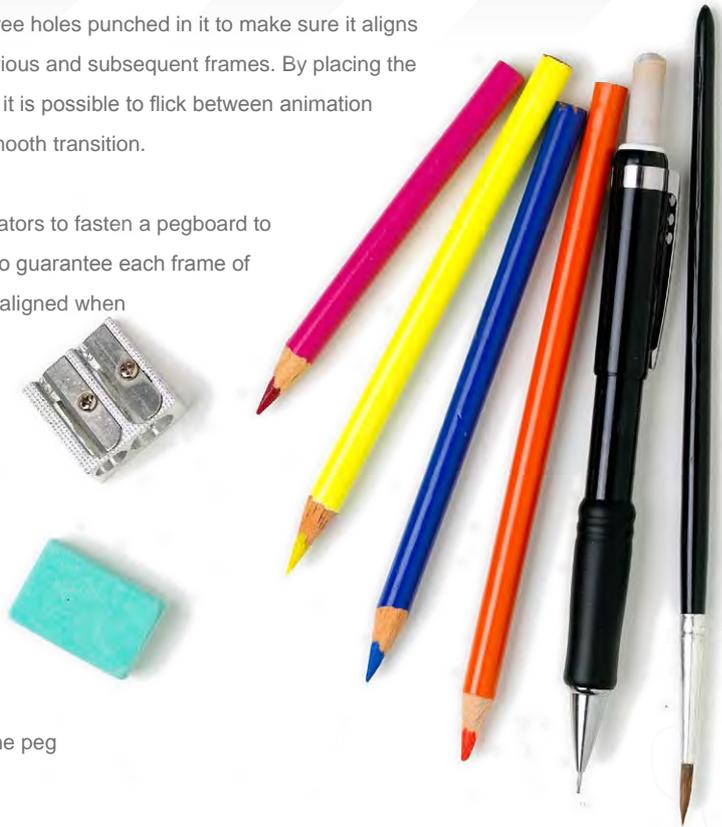
Pencils and Erasers

Mechanical pencils are recommended for animation work because they are clean and reliable, with a consistent stroke. You should opt for the softer grade pencils, as a lot of adjustments may have to be made to each image to ensure the animation is perfectly smooth, which means a lot of erasing. Soft putty erasers are a good choice, since they do not leave residue on the paper.

Some animators use coloured pencils for certain parts of their frame, such as marking the "cel-shaded" area of the image. This is picked up later during scanning and is used as a guide when colouring the frames.

Lightboxes

The lightbox is an essential tool for producing animation on paper. By placing the paper on the lightbox, it is possible to see several frames of the animation at once, making it easy to predict where the following image should be. Pegboards are used here to ensure each frame is aligned correctly. Lightboxes designed for animators feature a rotating disc that makes it easier to draw when the paper is fixed to the pegboard. Animation software for computers often emulates the use of a lightbox with a function called "onion skinning".



Animation Cels and Paints

Traditionally, animation is produced on sheets of clear acetate called cels. The line art from the individual frames is copied on to transparent sheets and paint is applied to the rear side of the image. This technique has become less common with the advent of digital animation, but it is still used by many animation production companies.

Digital Still and Video Cameras

Digital cameras have a number of useful purposes when producing animation. First, they can help provide reference material – you can film movements of yourself or a friend from different angles and then play it alongside your animation. It is easier than using a mirror and doesn't have to be perfectly lit.



Secondly, the footage can be used as the basis for the 2D animation itself, using a technique known as "rotoscoping". Rotoscoping involves tracing the movement of a person from existing footage to create very accurate 2D animation. It was originally done by projecting the frames of a film through a lightbox, but modern digital solutions make it much easier.

Finally, digital still cameras are a great way to get reference images for backgrounds, environments, household items and any number of other objects.

Shoot the scenes and objects from as many different angles as possible to take full advantage of the medium.

Computers and Software

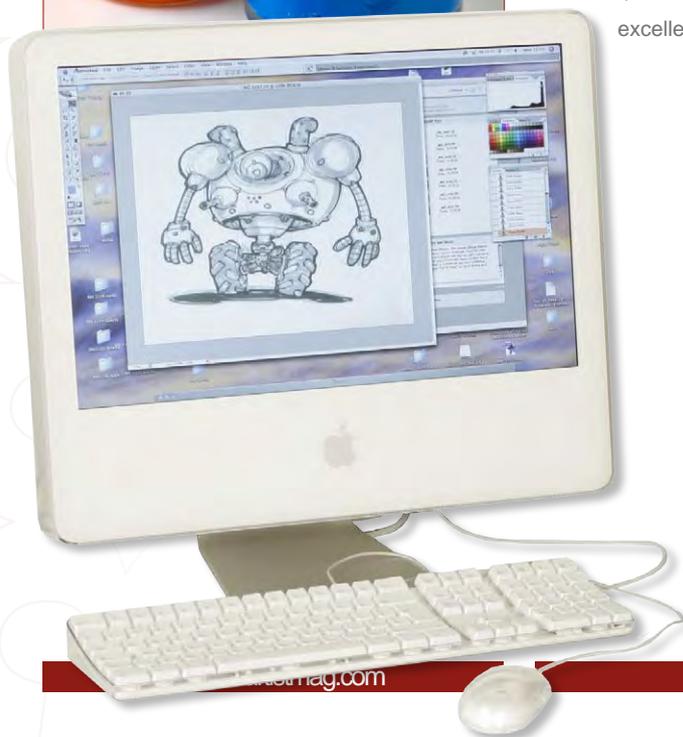
Computers are now the mainstay of anime. They have made it much easier to produce professional-looking animation, even for first-time animators. Software like Flash and Toon Boom Studio has simplified the process and made it easy to create a short anime to show on the web. Nearly all animation software is available for both Apple Macintosh and Windows machines, so your choice of computer will be down to personal preference and budget. A large monitor and fast processor are important, so an Apple iMac would be an excellent choice, for instance.



The most important peripheral to get is a graphics tablet. These come in a variety of sizes and prices, with Wacom being the market leader. This tool will allow you to draw directly into the software, as if you were using a pen, and is a more natural way of working.

Animator's Tip: Using a Mirror

Many animators use mirrors, either on their desk for facial expressions or full-length ones to see body movements. It is



much easier to get animation correct when you have a good reference and are certain of how a character should move.

Essential Skills

- Break figures into basic shapes
- Keep detail to a minimum

It is an age-old lesson in art theory that everything we see can be broken down into simple geometric shapes that make up the very essence of their form. The human body is a complex structure, but if you think of it as a collage of spheres and cylinders you will find it much easier to mentally digest and subsequently draw. This technique of sketching out a “mannequin” has always been synonymous with comics/mangas and animation, and is very helpful in conveying core ideas before finalization.

Drawing a Male Figure

1. Basic-shapes mannequin

You may wish to create stages 1 and 2 by hand, and then scan the sketches into a computer for inking and colouring. If you are working on a computer, open Photoshop (or the digital imaging software of your choice) and start by outlining the character pose using basic shapes. Since the human body is relatively curvaceous, it is a good idea to stick to using simple circles and oblongs to construct the overall shape. Bear

in mind that you are building a male character and make sure that the proportions are set accordingly, with wide shoulders and straight hips.

2. Rough sketch

Create a new layer on top of the mannequin and do a rough sketch over it. Details are not important at this point, just treat it as a pencil sketch and get the basic ideas down. To get a nice pencil feel you may wish to reduce the flow or opacity of the brush to 50%.

3. Erasing the mannequin

Once the sketch is in place, you can delete the mannequin layer (or you can just leave it and instead toggle the visibility off).

4. Digital inking

Depending on how much time you wish to invest in the piece—bearing in mind that you will be doing this frame by frame—start digitally inking in the sketch on a new layer. Keep the detail to a minimum (no more than what is shown in the example).

5. Adding colour

Create a new layer (or a separate layer for each colour) and begin filling in the base colours.

For advance masking techniques, refer to the

“Masking” panel over the page. You may wish to tweak the colours with the Hue/Saturation tool until you are satisfied. Try to keep your colour palette simple, as it is both easier to manage and visually more cohesive.

6. Cel shading

Now create another layer(s) on top of the base colour layer(s) and begin the shading process. The anime cel-shaded style requires sharp precise block shading to be implemented as in the example. Avoid using soft brushes, as it is much easier to animate blocks of colour rather than indistinct and vague “clumps” of colour.

Animator’s tip: The line of action

The line of action encapsulates the dynamics of a pose – it’s an imagined line which goes inside the figure. For some animators, it is the first mark they make when drawing a moving figure. The body parts are hung off this line and reflect its direction.



Drawing a Female Figure

1. Basic-shapes mannequin

The procedure here is essentially no different from that of drawing a male figure. Sketch out the mannequin in your desired pose. This example depicts a slim, model-like character, posed as if walking down the catwalk.

2. Rough sketch

Create a new layer on which to lay the rough sketch. Avoid spending too much time fussing over details at this stage – just try to get a good sense of the overall composition.

3. Erase mannequin

Delete the mannequin layer (or leave it and toggle the visibility off).

4. Digital inking

Begin digital inking. Avoid too much detail, as the higher the detail the harder the character will be to animate later. The detail shown in this example is probably too much for long-haul animation – you may want to counter this by reducing the amount of crease marks in her clothing and the detail of the hair. However, as a still shot, a highly detailed frame like this can be visually arresting.

5. Add colour

A limited colour palette has been used. The simple combination of pink, black and white is effective and appealing.

6. Basic-shaped mannequin

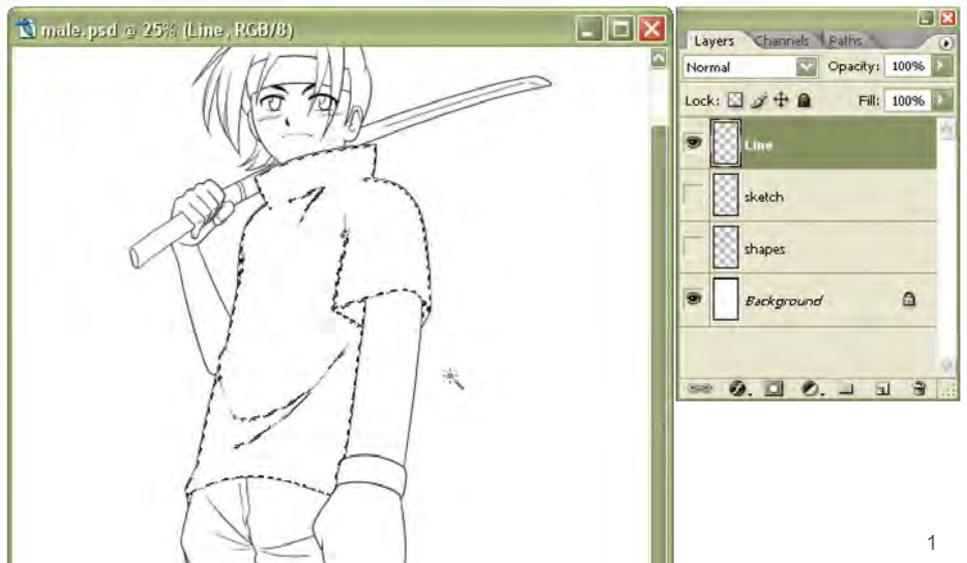
Apply cel shading and finishing touches to complete the piece. Keep details to a minimum.

Masking

Using a “mask” is not compulsory to the cel shading process, but it can be a very handy technique to employ in order to raise efficiency. Essentially the virtual equivalent of masking tape, the mask tool in Photoshop (or any other advanced imaging software) can help section out specific areas of the image permanently, saving you the trouble of reselecting/deselecting over and over while applying cel shading.



1. Choose the "Magic Wand" tool and select the desired area to cel shade. When the selection is made, go to the top menu and choose "Select>Modify>Expand" and apply a 1-2 pixel expansion. This is important because the magic wand does not go right to the edges of the line art. By expanding the selection, you are making sure that the colours you later implement will bleed right to the edges. It should be noted that this method is only applicable to selections that are totally sealed off. If there is a gap in the line art, the magic wand will not accurately make the selection. In this case, simply use the "Polygon Lasso" tool to make the selection manually instead.



1

2. Create a new layer underneath the line art that is to be the coloured layer. With the desired area selected, click on the "Add Layer Mask" button located at the bottom of the "Layers" window (a black box with a white circle in its centre). Now the area is sectioned off by the mask and anything outside the mask is immediately non-visible. The exact area of the mask can be seen by pressing the Control and Backslash keys together.



2

3. Add in the desired colour and let the mask do the rest. You may need to amend the mask slightly at this point, since the magic wand tool is fallible and might not pick up the tight corners very well. The mask can be modified by selecting the mask property of the relevant layer (the black rectangle to the right of the original layer image). Now you can add to the mask and cover up more of the image by using a pure black brush, or delete some of the mask by using a pure white brush. Any tones inbetween will result in a mask of half opacity.



3

Is a chapter excerpt from the book: *Making Anime*

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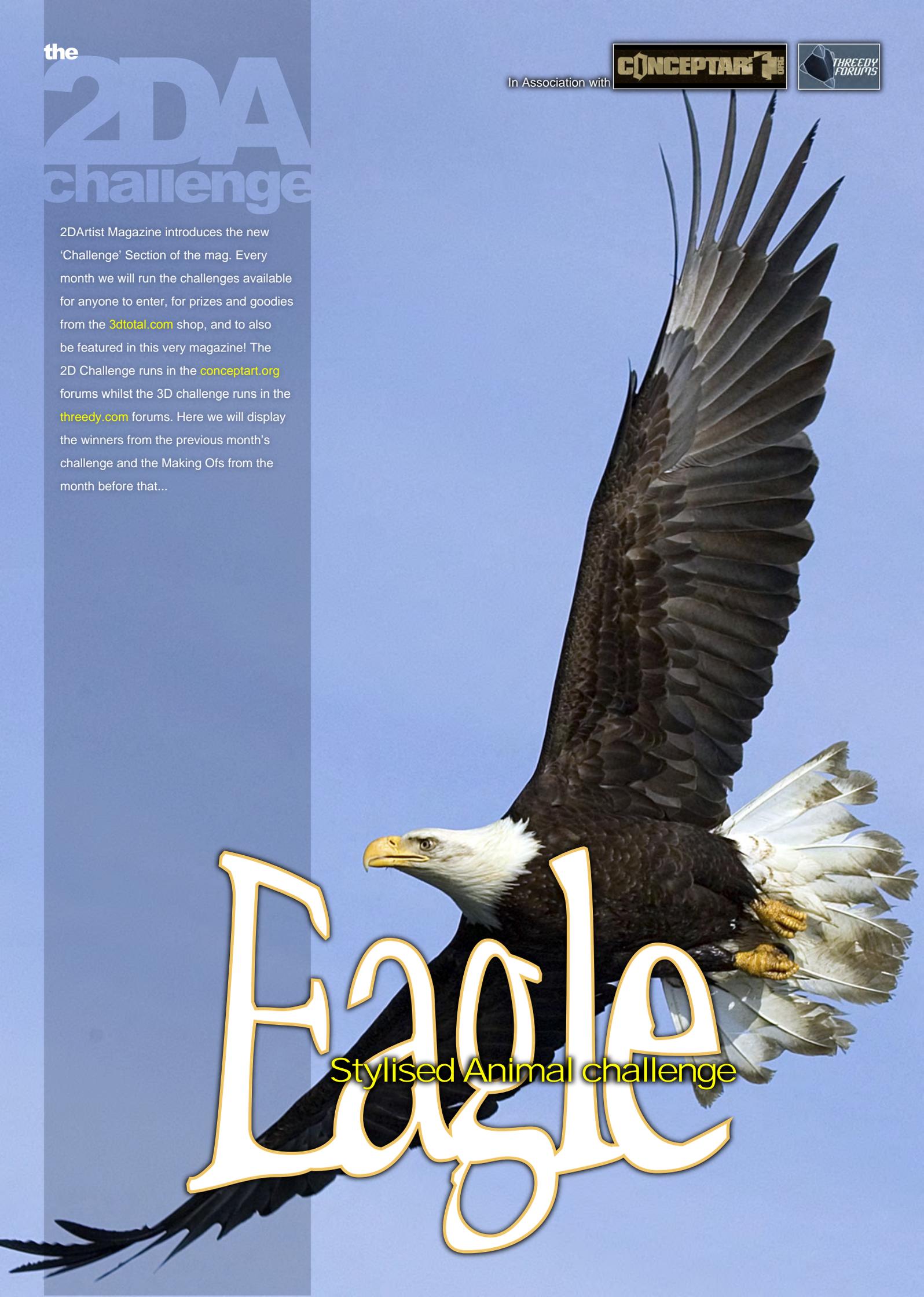


the

2DA challenge

2DArtist Magazine introduces the new 'Challenge' Section of the mag. Every month we will run the challenges available for anyone to enter, for prizes and goodies from the 3dtotal.com shop, and to also be featured in this very magazine! The 2D Challenge runs in the conceptart.org forums whilst the 3D challenge runs in the threedy.com forums. Here we will display the winners from the previous month's challenge and the Making Ofs from the month before that...

In Association with

A photograph of a bald eagle in flight, with its wings fully extended, set against a clear blue sky. The eagle is the central focus of the page.

Eagle

Stylised Animal challenge

Stylised Animal Challenge

Eagle

The Challenge

Welcome to the Stylised Animal Monthly Challenge. Each month we will select an animal and post some images in the Forum Thread for your reference. All you have to do is create a 2D image of this creature in a stylised / abstract / cartoon style, whilst keeping your creature instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist Magazine about how to create stylised animals, similar to those that you may see in feature films and cartoon galleries, and we thought that this regular competition might just bring in the images / Making Ofs that we need, whilst also giving away great prizes and exposure of course. If it continues in success we will try to carry on boosting the prizes up as much as we can! This month's animal was the 'Eagle'. Here you can see the top 5 placed entries, as voted for by the public...

What are we looking for?

Funny and humorous entries which break the animal down to its most recognisable components; emphasize these features in whichever ways you think best, and render your stylised / abstract / cartoon masterpiece. The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 X 3D render (minor post work is OK); it's up to you if you want to have a background or if you want to include some graphical elements or text on your image. Renders of the 800 pixel dimension sound about right, but the winners will be featured in 2DArtist Magazine, so if you can create some higher resolution images too, then all the better! There will be one competition per month, with the deadline being the end of the month (GMT). For a valid entry, simply make sure your final image is posted in the main competition thread before the deadline. We require the top 3 winners to submit Making Of overview articles that will be shown on either 3DTotal or in 2DArtist Magazine. These need to show the stages of your creation - different elements and some brief explanation text - of why, and how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure, and us some quality content. Each competition will have one main thread which starts with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIPs, give feedback, and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that emerge each month...



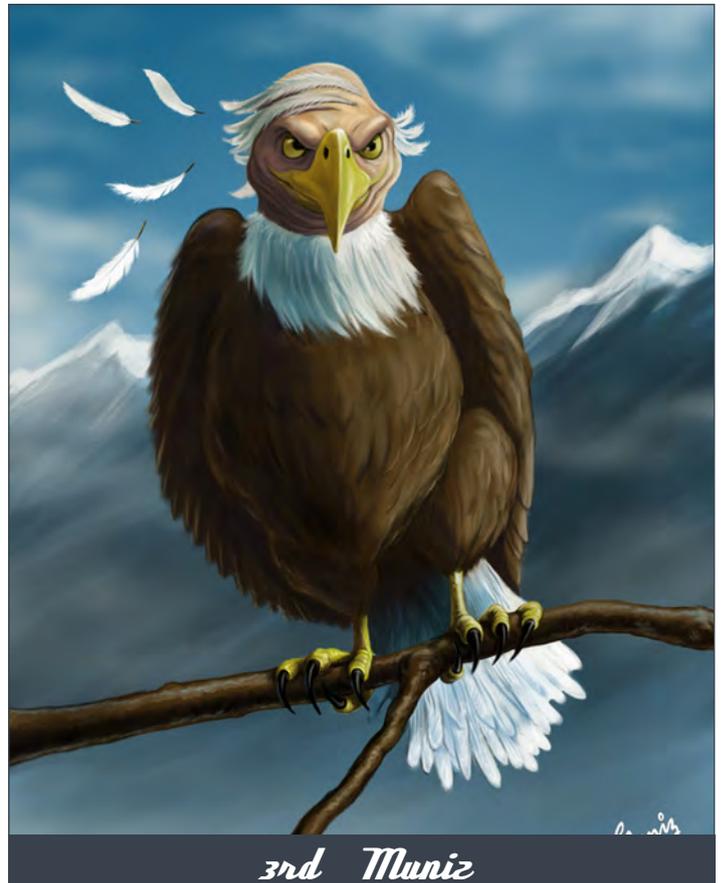
6th Voraz



5th 20th Wing



4th Einen



3rd Muniz



2nd *Chuck Male*



1st Vallejo

Challenge Thread

The 2D 'Eagle' challenge can be viewed here

The challenge now at the voting stage is:

'Anteater'

The current challenge taking place is now:

'Snail'

To join the next 2D challenge, or to view the previous ones and/or the current entries, please visit:

www.conceptart.org

If you're also interested in the 3D challenge please visit:

www.threedy.com

Or contact: ben@zoopublishing.com

3D Challenge

Here are last month's top entries from the 3D competition...



3rd Galero



2nd Authentic



1st Papumash



Making Of's

Here are the Making Of's from last month's top 2 winning entries...

2nd - János Kiss

Find the form

At first I attempted to catch the peculiarity of the camel, and so I downloaded some reference photographs and made preliminary sketches. I decided to depict my camel from a side view, and played around with the proportions of the strange animal. I chose to work with a long form; a big head, small body, long and slim legs, with tired eyes to evoke the emotion of the character (Fig01).

Outlining

I thought that a clean, smooth, vector-based, comic-like solution would be great for this theme. I scanned my chosen sketch, made some corrections by playing with the brightness and contrast settings, and then imported it into Corel Draw. I first locked my scanned image's bitmap layer to protect any accidental moves or drawings made upon it. In the next step I created an outline layer, where I traced the contour of my sketch (Fig02). I tried to solve it with as few nodes as possible, and developed the form with control points. I modified the back leg and cut out the unnecessary parts on the legs. I then drew the inner details, but not too many; the mouth, nose and eye, plus some lines for the ropes and tail. Next I combined the lines together, gave an average thickness and expanded them (go to "Convert Outline to Object"). I copied the remaining contour to another layer so that I could colour it later on, and then began

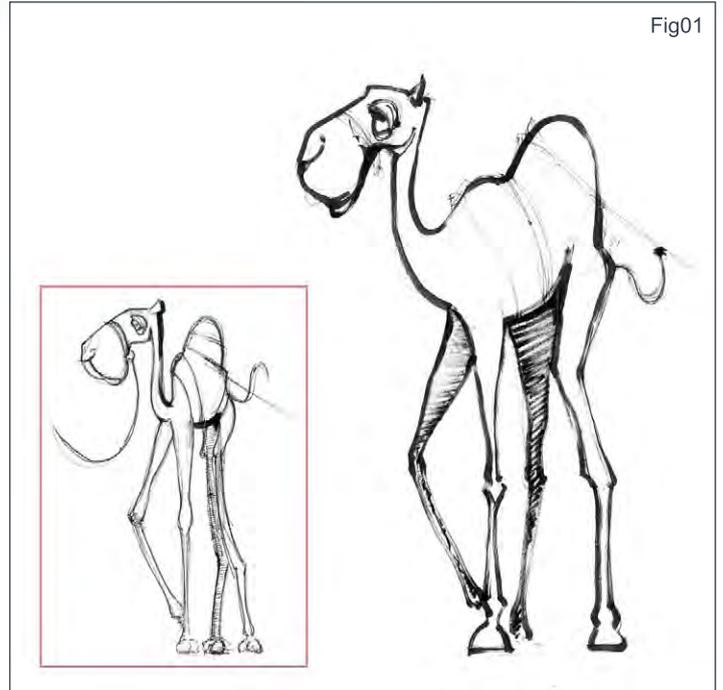


Fig01

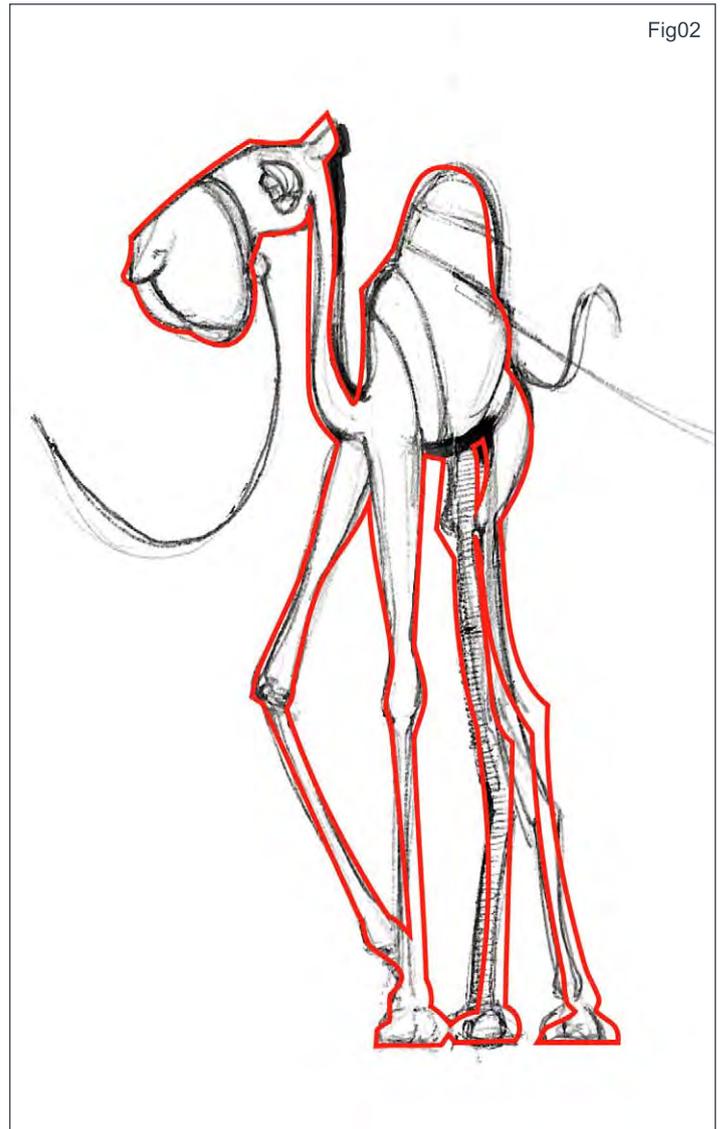


Fig02

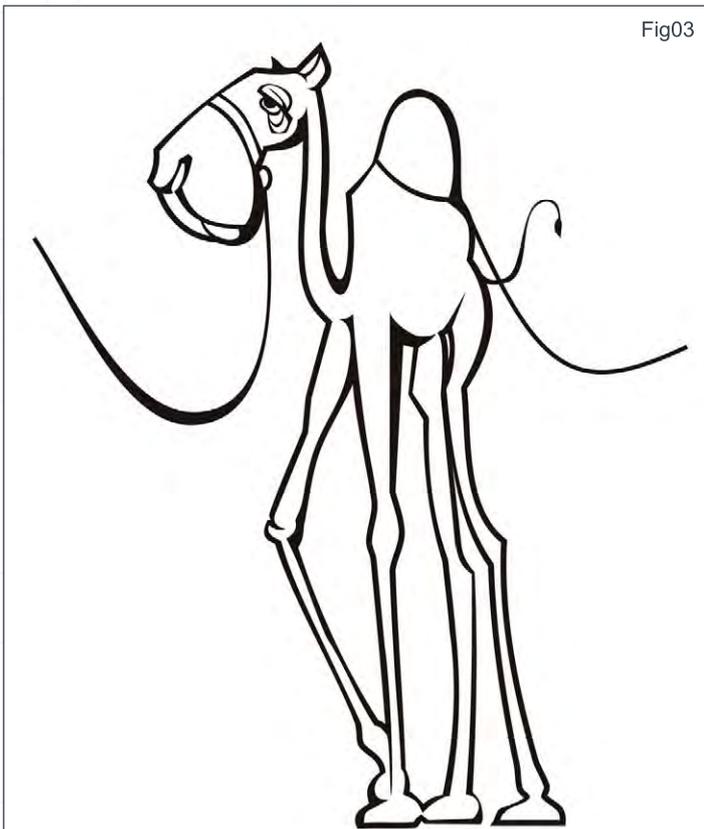


Fig03

to edit the outline's nodes and control points to simulate inking (Fig03).

Colouring I chose a brown and a yellow-brown for the basic colours, and made a gradient fill colour. I began shading to define the camel's forms using yellow and brown. I started with the head and the eye, then moved on to the body, and finished with the lower parts. Instead of using a blend tool I used the transparency tool to make transitions between the objects and their colours (Fig04).

Fig04

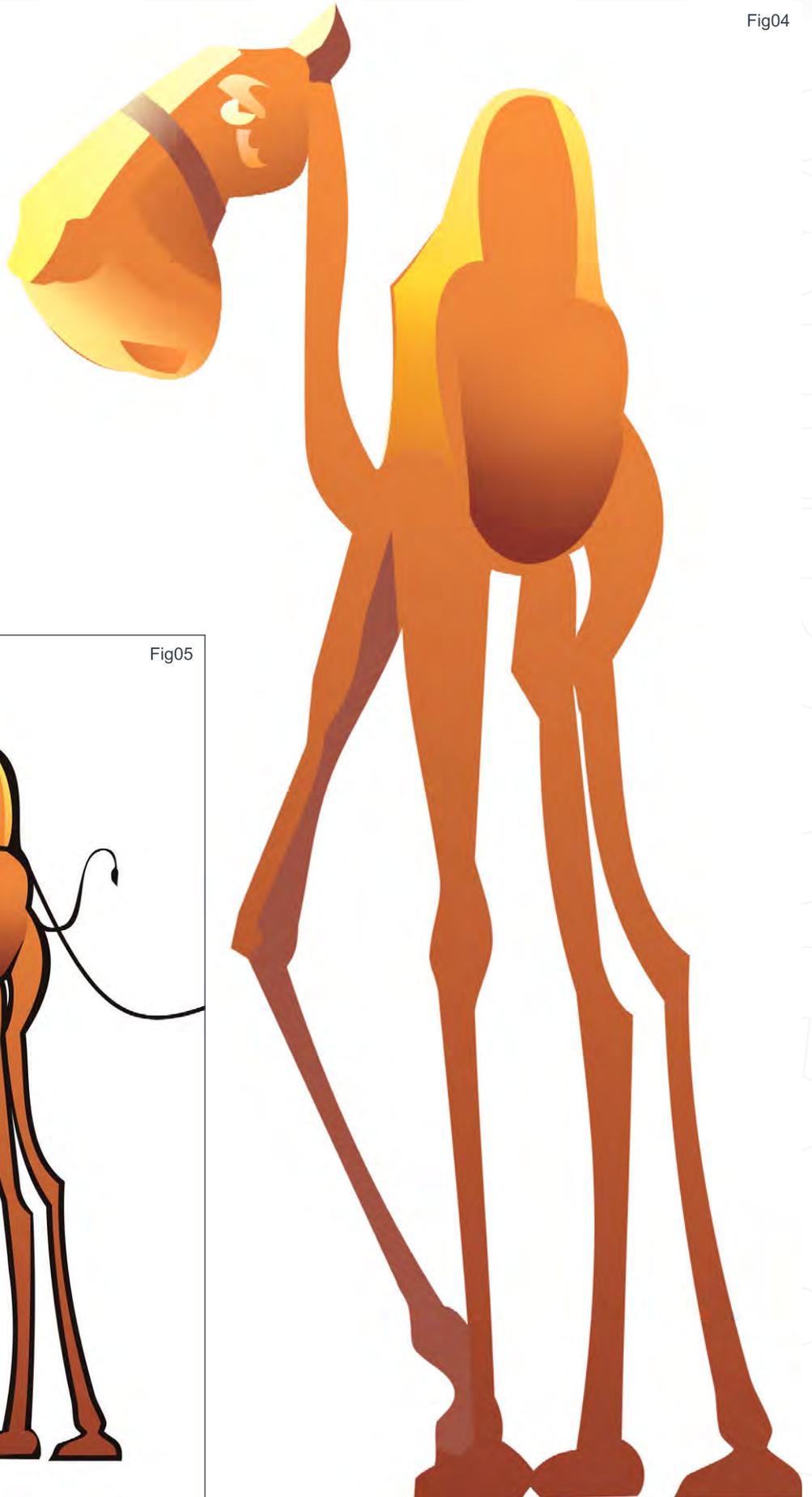
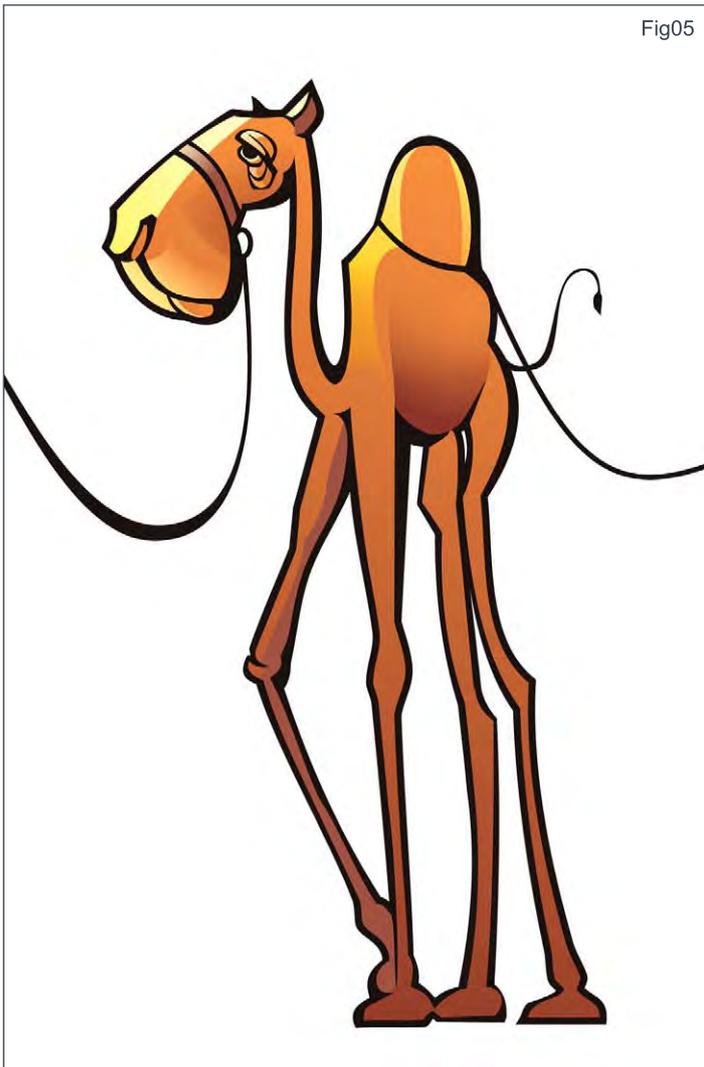
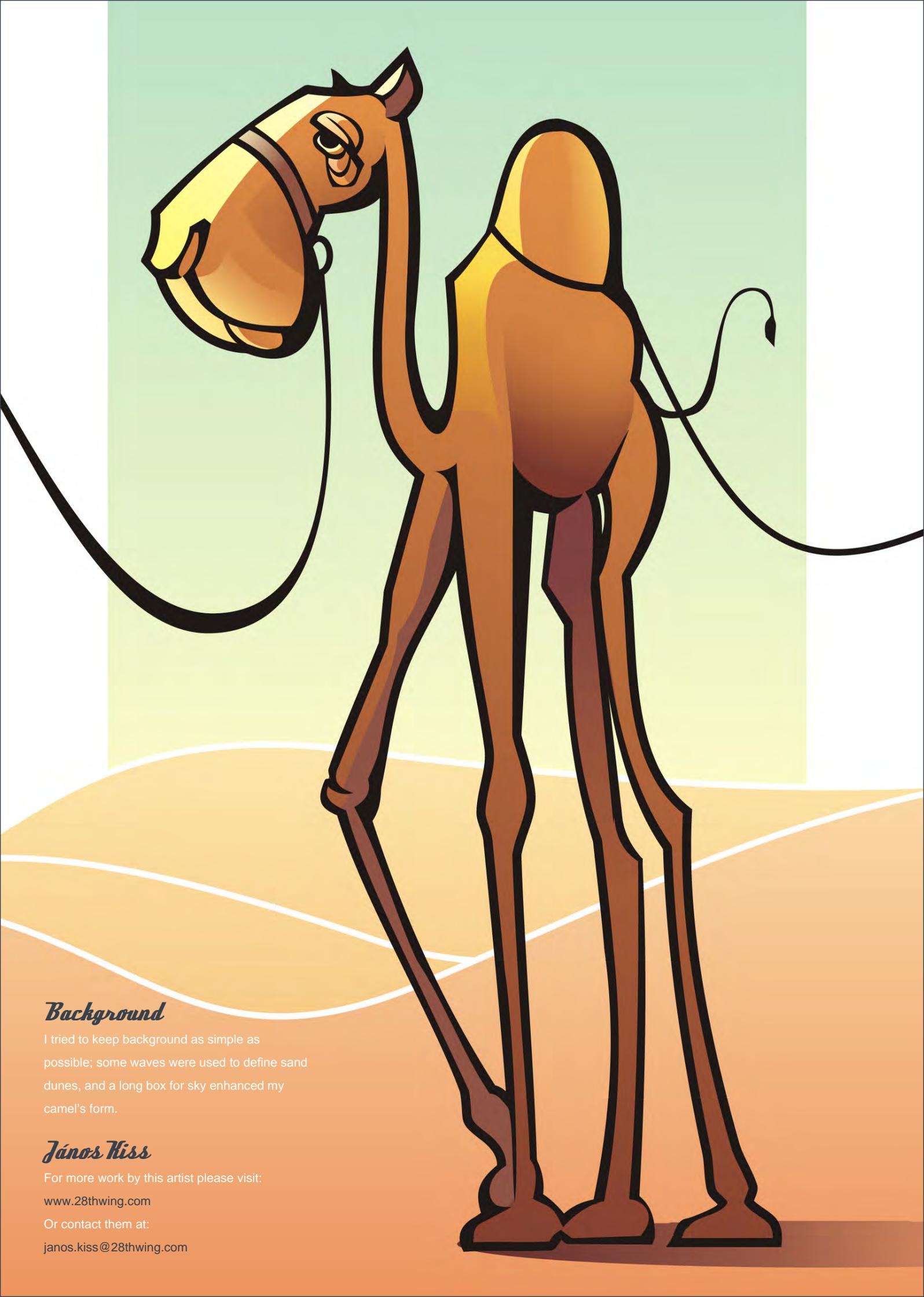


Fig05





Background

I tried to keep background as simple as possible; some waves were used to define sand dunes, and a long box for sky enhanced my camel's form.

János Kiss

For more work by this artist please visit:

www.28thwing.com

Or contact them at:

janos.kiss@28thwing.com

1st - Patri Balanovsky

I started by sketching the camel, all the while keeping in mind the quirky and distinctive characteristics and features that make up a camel; the long face, lazy eyes, hanging neck, big toes, and those wobbly legs with their bulging kneecaps (Fig01). On a new layer set to Multiply I painted in a solid, flat sand-like base colour, using a brown/grey (Fig02). I painted in some shadows and curves; pushing and pulling the values whilst further cleaning the forms (Fig03). On another layer set to Overlay I warmed my basic colours up a little by painting in some yellows and light oranges. I then painted in the camel's eyes and gave him a shaded beard using a blue-green colour. I kept on pushing and pulling the forms, "carving" out the camel's shape and body. With some white paint I went on to cover over the back legs to make them fade into the background slightly (Fig04). I kept warming up the browns and oranges with more solid Overlay layers



Fig01



Fig02



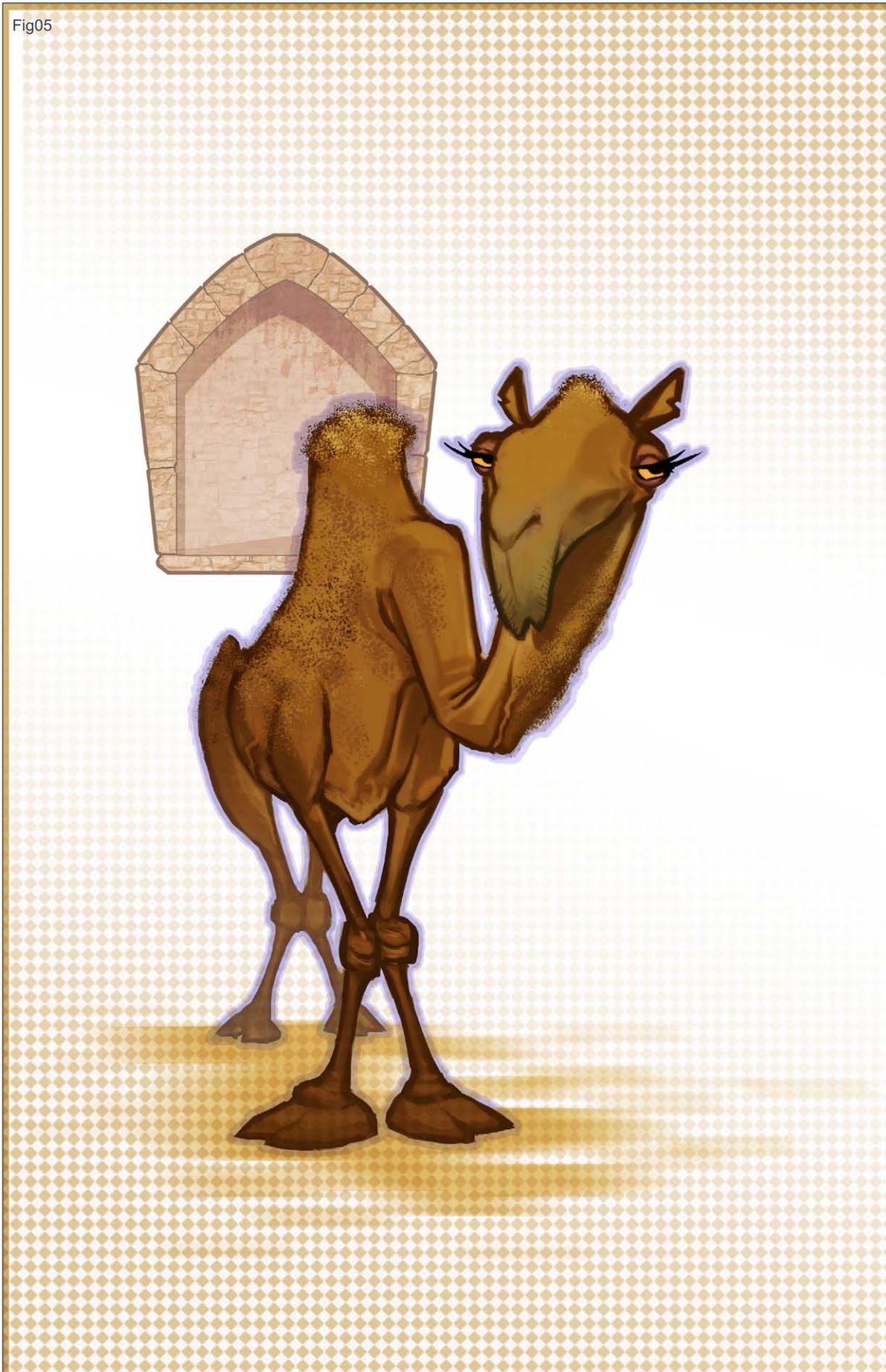
Fig03



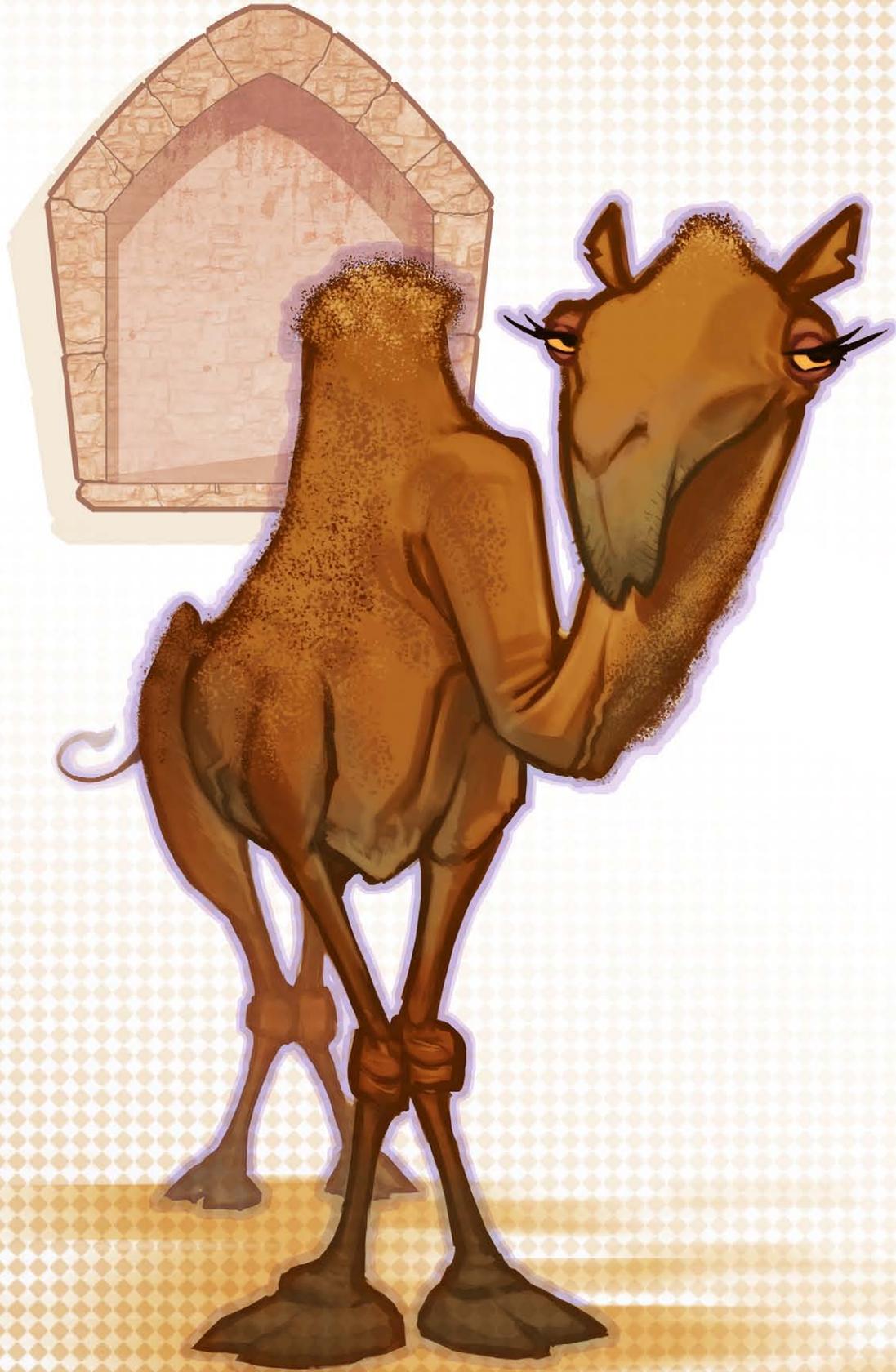
Fig04



Fig05



of yellow colours. I then painted in some fur and hair textures using a custom brush on the camel's head, neck, back and hump. I painted a purple/blue stroke around the character to frame him, and painted a drop shadow upon the ground. Using some selected textures, I created an old, middle-eastern looking window frame for the far background. At this point, I also created a sand-coloured, half-tone pattern on top of my image on a new layer, which was set to Darken. Using the quick mask tool I erased this new layer's central part away from where my main figure was (Fig05). Using a green/blue colour I lightly painted the camel's belly, neck and toes. I also added a little tail, which I forgot to paint earlier, and created some arabesque-like decorative lines using the Pen tool to frame the whole piece. Finally, using a new Overlay layer of solid, orange colour, with its opacity lowered to about 10%, I warmed my whole image even further (Fig06).



Patri Balanovsky

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://chuckmate.blogspot.com>

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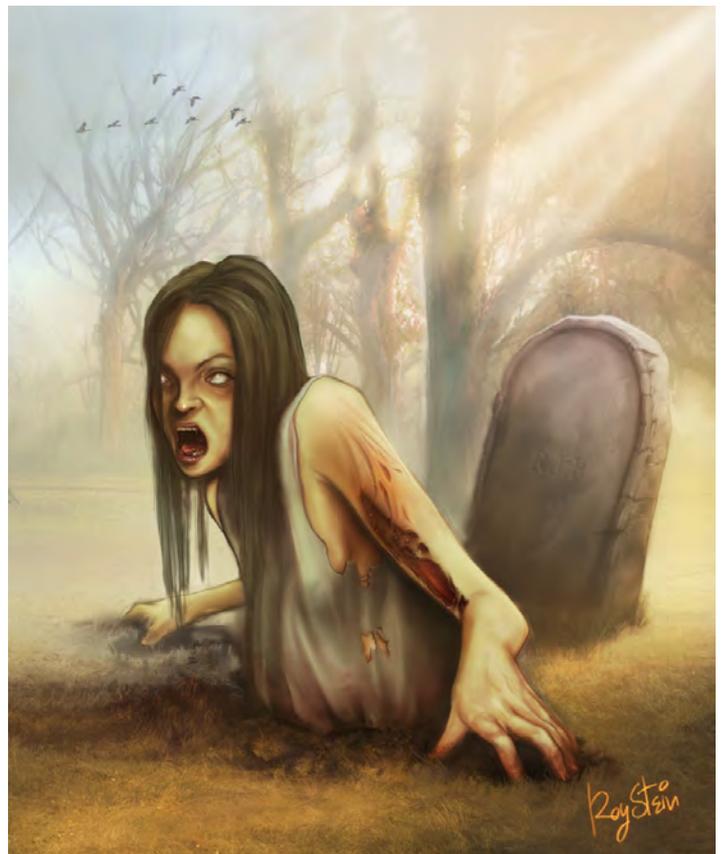
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Follow the 'Making Of' this image in the next issue of 2D Artist magazine!



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Follow an in-depth interview of this artist in Octobers issue of 2D Artist magazine!



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**2d
Artist**

"Custom Brushes make the trip a lot more enjoyable and help you make your images unique"

Kim Taylor, X-Men 3 artist, shares the importance of custom brushes and how they can help to make amazing and unique pieces of work...

Custom Brushes



Custom Brushes

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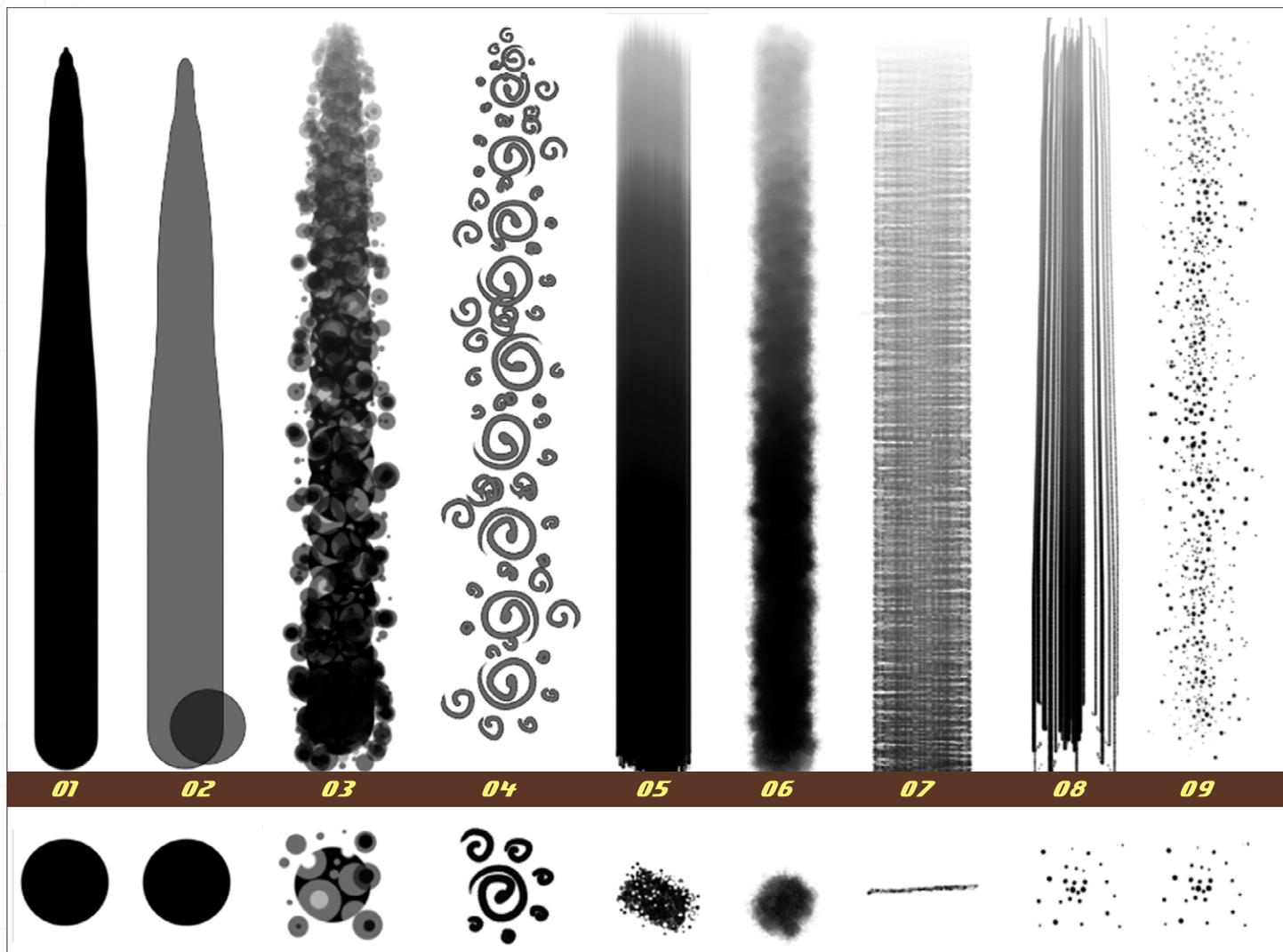
Photoshop

What are Custom Brushes?

Most Photoshop brushes are made from small bitmaps that are used like stamps to make marks on the digital canvas. Much like potato stamps on a piece of paper, the raised, inked parts of the potato stamp are like the black pixels in the bitmap. You can control the way that Photoshop uses these 'stamps' in many ways. For instance, set the scale, rotation, scattering, opacity or colour of a brush to "random" and you get a mass of dots or blotches, or if you control them with the "pen pressure" you can achieve a smooth brush-stroke - all from the same bitmap, as you can see in brushes 8 and 9 below. There are enough variables to play with to keep you exploring forever, and each time you experiment and save what you have made, you have a new custom brush.

How do I Make a Custom Brush?

There are many approaches to making custom brushes; some brushes are made using bits of photographs whereas others are painted for a purpose - there are no rules. In this tutorial, I am going to cover how to make some brushes from scratch, by painting your own brush tips... To make a brush, firstly create a new image - usually quite small to keep the strokes fast. Each time the computer stamps that picture on to your canvas it's crunching numbers, so smaller is quicker. Once you have this new image, paint some marks on the canvas: go wild and experiment - you can always delete it if it doesn't work. Once you have made a few images and tried to paint with them you will get a feel for what works and what will be useful, but for the moment make it a few simple

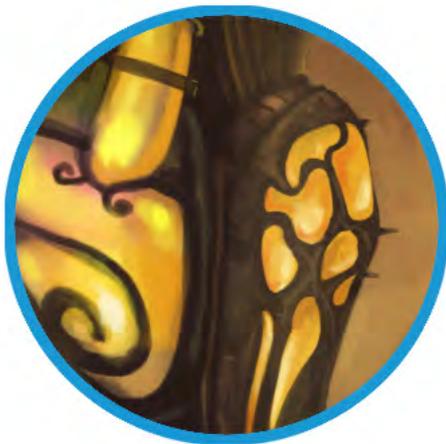


dabs or a pattern, or even your signature! Then, when you have painted something you are happy with, go to Edit > Define Brush Preset, give it a name, and it will be added to your brush list. It is still a very boring brush with the default settings applied to it, so start playing with the settings in the Brush Palette. Fiddle with all the settings to get an idea of what they do and soon you will be making some amazing brushes. You can find the Brush Palette by going to Window > Brushes if you can't see yours on-screen already. Lastly, be sure you save it! With the brush tool selected, right-click on the canvas to bring up the brush list and save the brush by pressing the little icon in the top, right-hand corner.

Why Would I Need Custom Brushes?

Before custom brushes came to be, Photoshop artists were still happily painting away and creating beautiful images, but they all looked very digital and similar to each other. Custom brushes allow people to make their own marks and take more creative control. In my work as a Matte Painter and Texture Artist, custom brushes allow me to create detail very fast and efficiently without having to paint every dot and smudge. They allow me to work fast and effectively, but they are not just for work. In my free time I use them to make interesting marks and shapes that sometimes turn into people or places, or in the case of this tutorial, a strange building over lava. I love custom brushes as they bring nature's randomness into my paintings.





When and Where Should I Use Custom Brushes?

When I started working on this tutorial, I decided to create a set of brushes from scratch and to make a painting using only my new set. Some brushes turned out to be incredibly useful, but some others were never used. I hope you learn something from my experiment - I certainly did, and I recommend everyone to try doing the same thing. Right, here is a list of how I used each brush (images of the brushes can be seen on the previous page), and my reasons for creating them:

Brush 1: I started with this brush, as it is the most basic Photoshop brush and has been around since Photoshop began. It is just a simple hard, round brush and as such can be useful for sharp details, though in this case I only used this to create custom brushes 4, 8 and 9.

Brush 2: This is the same as the first brush but with "wet edges" set in the Brush Palette. I used this one to create brushes 3 and 5 and to do some detailing. It is a nice, crisp brush and is very fast for quick sketching, but it is very digital looking and isn't really much of a custom brush.

Brush 3: With this brush, I decided to have a bit of fun and make a blotchy pattern. I ended up finding little use for it in this image, despite really liking it in the beginning. I sometimes make brushes like this, but never really find a use for them and soon delete them. You have to throw them away if they don't work!

Brush 4: Here you can see the brush used as a motif, or symbol, on the floor. I painted a single dab on a layer, transformed that into perspective, and then painted over it. I wanted something curly and symbol-like, as I like to leave traces of writing or symbols showing though in the final image. This one pops up all over the place in the finished painting. The whole composition was in fact inspired by the shapes made using a very blown up brush stroke with this brush. I personally enjoy using writing and symbols in my own artwork, which is possibly a bit of my graphic design background coming through! You need to find what works for you and have fun with it.

Brush 5: This brush was meant to be the workhorse of the library. It is a simple brush with a tip similar to a real brush, with its opacity controlled by pressure. This brush allows for subtle blends, sharp details and is a fantastic all-rounder. If I was to make an image with just one brush, this is the kind I would choose. I used this brush for general painting and detailing all over the image. Here you can see the subtle values in the windows and the sharper edges of the building, which were both achieved using this brush.

Brush 6: Here you can see how this brush was used to paint the subtle transitions and fine details in the clouds. This brush is the blender of the tool box. With this brush, I can create subtle gradients, glows, clouds and haze. It was my cloud brush of choice, especially as the edges it makes feel very cloud-like, so much of the subtle work is done for you.

Brush 7: Here you can see how this brush creates ground so that it feels flat in perspective. It's a great landscape brush which is similar to one that I use a lot in my paintings. This brush is a very useful brush for landscapes as it makes everything that you paint feel like it is on a ground plain in perspective. It is also very useful as a general brush because it leaves very interesting streaks and marks behind and feels quite painterly. It is also particularly good for rendering reflections on flat surfaces, as shown on the path leading up to the front of the building.

Brush 8: This brush ended up not being used much, but that was mainly due to the subject matter. Were I to paint a tree, water streaks or reflections on a chrome pipe, it would come in pretty handy.

Brush 9: This one was made with the same brush tip as brush 8, but has its rotation set to "random" so that it creates a field of random dots. I didn't use this brush much either, but again, that is due to the choice of subject. A brush like this is gold when you have to paint gravel or textured rock. A combination of the streaks in brush 8 and the dots in this brush can create some amazingly life-like textures when they are layered over each other. I also create paint using only those brushes.



Basically I'm trying to inspire people to make their own crayon box and to understand what such a box would need. The circles show where the brushes have been applied to create this image, and here is the final image. The best advice I can give about custom brushes in general, based on the questions I have been asked in the past, is that a good custom brush does not make a good painting or a proficient artist. Don't expect custom brushes to make the face you are painting feel correct, or the landscape you are working on look beautiful. That journey takes time, strong basics and lots of practice. Custom brushes can, however, make the trip a lot more enjoyable and help you make your images unique. You can download the brushes mentioned in this tutorial for free by hitting the clickable 'medallion' which appears on the cover page of this article. Or you can go straight to my website by hitting this link: http://www.sketchling.com/Sketchlings_brushes.abr.

I hope you have found this Custom Brush tutorial helpful and informative. If you have any questions or suggestions please contact me through my website.

Kim Taylor

For more from this artist visit:

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3dcreative
MAY 2006



SPEED PAINTING

Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the magazine. We asked two artists to produce a speed painting based on a simple, one-line brief. Here we will feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes. This month, Richard Tilbury and Levente Peterffy tackle:

SHIP HIT BY TORPEDO

LEVENTE PETERFFY

Created In:

Photoshop CS2

Build your confidence in just an hour: Levente Peterffy shows you how to whip up a ship hit by a torpedo with just a few digital strokes... Speed painting is an effective painting practice to achieve good composition, colour and light-interaction with shapes and forms, and with the use of brushes - both default and custom - you can quickly create and simulate a realistic environment with just a few strokes. The topic "Ship Hit by Torpedo" reminds me of World War II; I don't really know why but I have always been interested in World War II and I was therefore quite taken with the topic set for this challenge. There are probably a million stories to tell about that period, which would all be very interesting to illustrate, and in this case is a ship being struck by a torpedo. In this tutorial, the focus on this article is that realistic images, or colours if you like, can be achieved with the use of custom brushes and blending modes in Photoshop. The software used to create this speed painting were Photoshop CS 2 and a Wacom Intuos 2. Let's begin...

Background Colour

I started off with a coloured background, as you can see in Fig 01. On this background I started to paint with custom soft-edged brushes (see brush example in Fig 01), often with a very low opacity of between 10-20%. I worked in this way until I could see some shapes evolving (Fig 02).

Ship & Fog

At this stage I started to develop more of the shapes from the previous image which were slowly forming. Already, at this stage, one can see that it shows the shape of a ship in



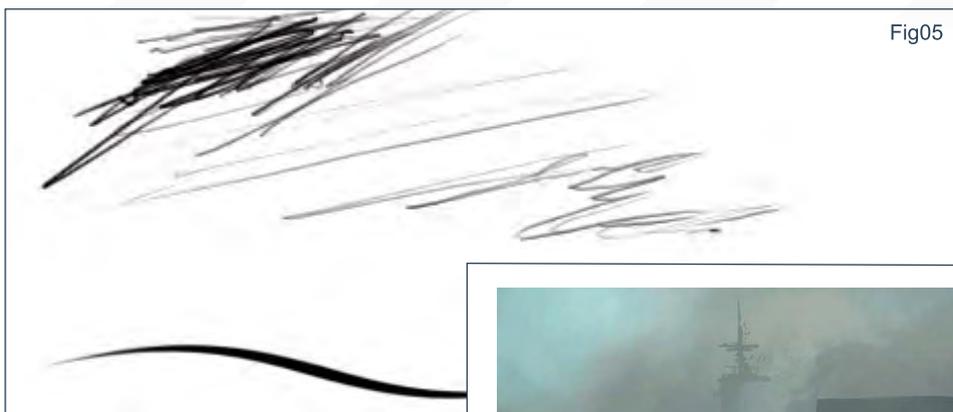


Fig05

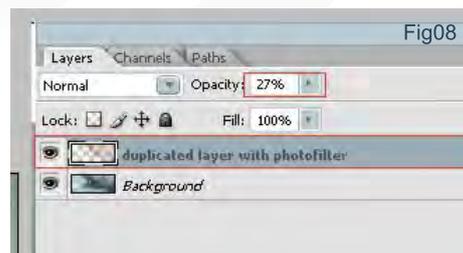


Fig08

the foggy atmosphere. I used similar kinds of colours to define the shape of the ship more and more (Fig 03). When I first had my shapes defined I started testing some new colours out. I used a light blue in this case for the sky, and also defined the horizontal sea-line. I used a simple gradient to make the ocean. The colours were all picked from the painting: one light colour and one darker (Fig 04). I cropped the image at this point, and at this stage was able to start going into more detail. I picked a small, hard-edged brush (see Fig 05) and started adding details on the ocean, and some smoky clouds (Fig 06). I flipped my painting horizontally a lot, helping to refresh my eyes and so I could see if there were any flaws (proportions, perspective, and so on). I continue adding details and also building on the background, trying and testing hues of blue for the sky (Fig 07). There is one thing I usually try a lot, which is duplicating the painting layer,



Fig04



Fig06



Fig07

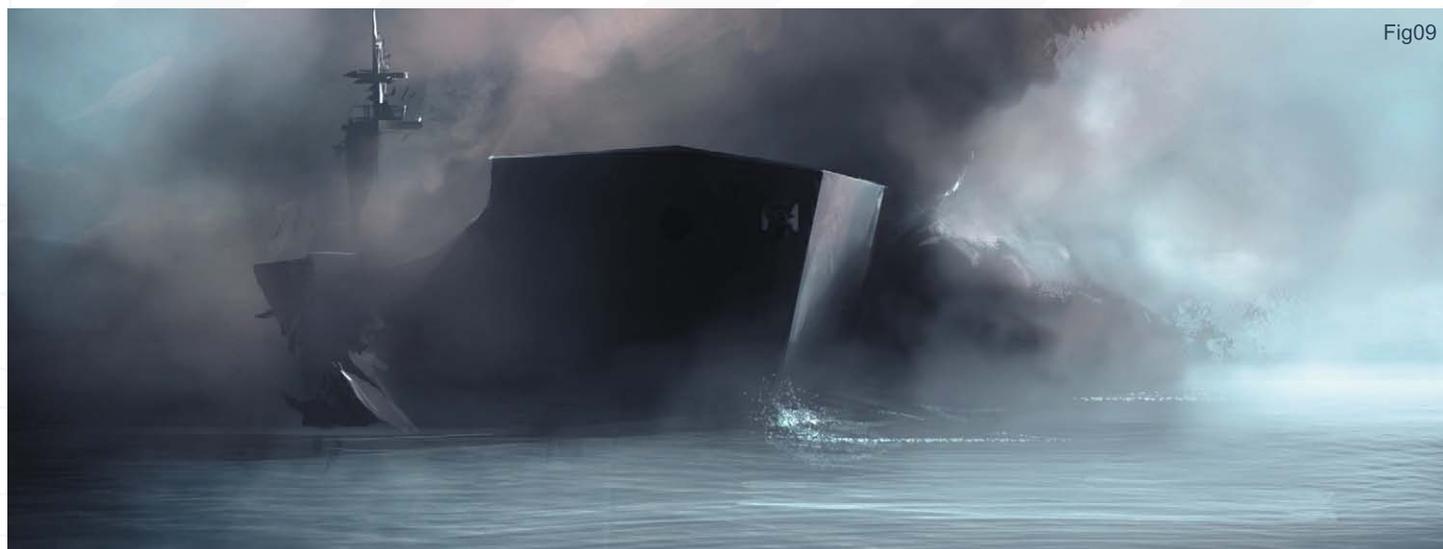


Fig09



Fig10

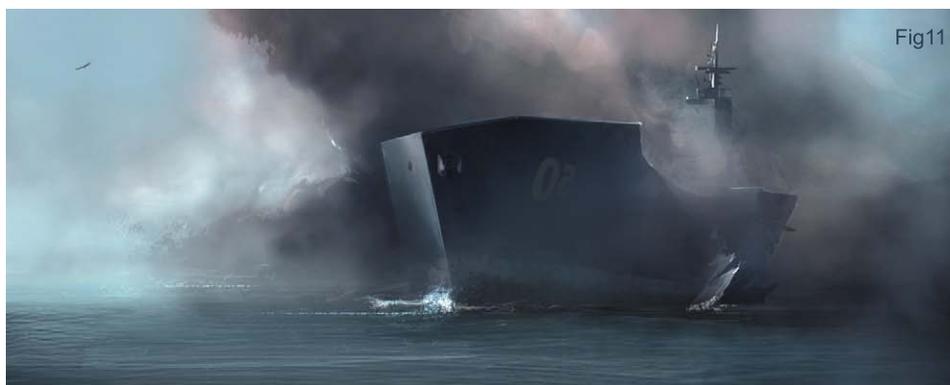


Fig11

using a photo filter on the duplicated layer and increasing the density on the warming filter to 85, then choosing Multiply as the blending mode for the duplicated layer on top. To finish it off I took down the layer opacity to a fairly low level until I felt that the colours were just right. If you want more control you can erase parts of the top-layer, as I have in Fig 08. At this stage I added some more detail to the ship. There is an open crack on the ship's hull, just as if a torpedo tore a hole into it (hence the topic for this speed painting) (Fig 09).

Detailing

I like adding details. Adding details is kind of like adding more words to a story, and there are those details that you just simply have to add because they help the picture to make more sense, for example breaking waves, reflections in the water, and so on. I painted a silhouette of a bird on the left, because I felt that the sky-area in that section was a little empty. Another detail which I realised would help was the use



Fig12



Fig13



of a rusty texture - look at the ship's lower part. I wanted to create something rust-like, so I painted with a custom-made brush which slightly resembles rust (see brush example on previous page) (Fig 10 -11). I continued adding more strokes to the smoke (Fig 12).

Colour Test

These last stages of a speed painting are to basically test the colours to see if you can improve them and add more to the mood (Fig 13).

Final Tweaks

Adjusting the resolution and adding sharpness are the last things that I do to my paintings. And there we go: finished (Fig 14).

Artist Tips & Secrets

I can't stress this enough but "practice and practice more" is the key to success. Even



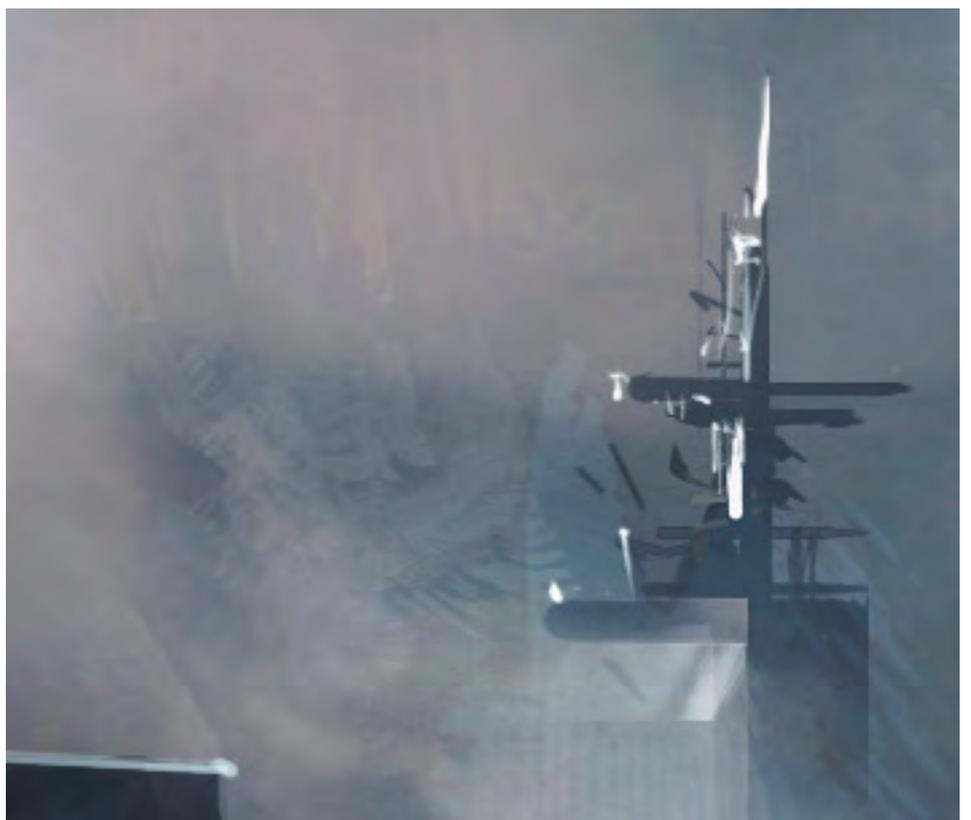
with cool custom brushes as assets, you still need to train your eye to see shapes and colours interacting with light, in order to evolve a painting. Try not to get too dependent on tutorials; dare to experiment a lot, even if you don't know where to start, just scribble around. There are a lot of forums out there with speed painting threads, so post your work a lot and see what feedback you get. There are people out there willing to help you so use their advice wisely. However, do try to think of the problem for yourself, and try to solve it as best as you can. If you have a hard time starting to paint, then make studies from master paintings or of screen-shots from movies - that should help to get you started at least.

Levente Peterffy

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**RICH
TILBURY**

Introduction

Speed painting is a very useful way of quickly establishing aspects of an image such as the composition, colour scheme and lighting, and a method of clarifying the mood of a scene, whether it be for a film, computer game or simply a digital painting. Depending upon the artist in question, the notion of a speed painting can have different connotations. In some peoples' eyes the idea of a speed painting can be 45 minutes or so, whilst others may consider 2 or 3 hours spent working on a piece as a short span of time. In the following exercise I have tried to limit myself to a couple of hours and have chosen to focus on the moment at which a torpedo slams into the side of a destroyer! ...

Blocking-In

As is my usual approach to any painting, I firstly conduct a search for as many reference images as I can find on the Internet. In this case I gathered a number of photographs of battleships in order for my image to look convincing. As the ship was going to be the main focal point I wanted to make sure it resembled its real counterpart quite closely. As I was looking through photographs I liked the camera angle of one of the ships and decided to use it in my painting. The first stage involved roughly blocking-in the composition in black and white, and experimenting with the areas of light and dark (Fig 01). The reason I chose this particular angle was because I felt that the foreshortened size of the ship seemed exaggerated, and as a result gave it a more imposing quality, as well as adding a certain dynamic. I predominantly used two brushes to establish the tonal range, which can be seen in Fig 02.



Fig01

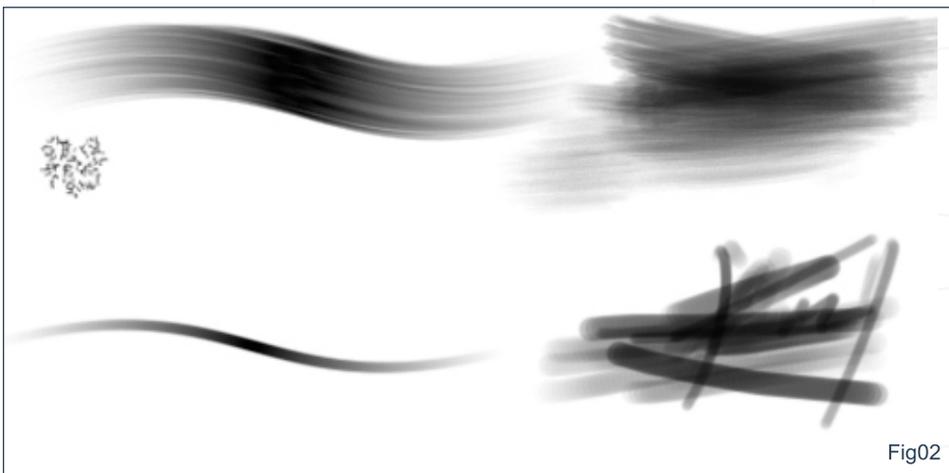
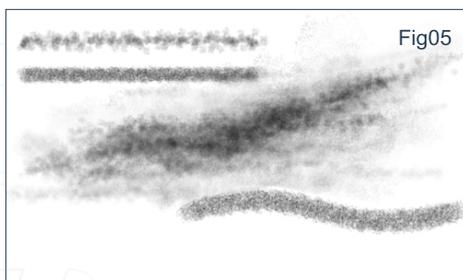


Fig02



They are both hard-edged yet retain a painterly quality. The top example (see Fig 02) is one of my custom brushes, and the lower one is one of Photoshop's default hard, round airbrushes. They both utilise opacity set to "pen pressure" to enable more control and a level of transparency.

Building up the Details

With a medium grey I then began to tie the sky and the sea together, and tidied up some of the lines of the bow and refined some of the structures above the deck (Fig 03). Having made a reasonable start on the tonal ranges it was then time to add some colour, which was done on a separate layer set to Overlay blending mode. In this way the light and dark areas remained, even though colour was being added (Fig 04). I began by using a subtle blue/green and also painted in some random horizontal strokes to help define the water a little. As this painting was meant to depict a torpedo collision it was about time we added some action into the scene! For this I created a custom brush, as seen in Fig 05, which is illustrated in the bottom-right of the image.

When some scattering was applied it created an effect similar to the top-most brush stroke, which has the effect of appearing more broken



and will be suitable for something else later... Anyway, I decided to have the torpedo hit towards the back of the ship, and with my new brush I painted in a splash with a bright white,

making sure that the centre was more opaque and fading towards the edges (Fig 06). I added this on a separate layer so that it could be moved and altered with ease if need be, as



it was done very quickly. To add some extra drama I wanted to add a torpedo wake passing just in front of the ship, just narrowly missing the hull. This was also done on a separate layer using the same brush, but this time with scattering applied so as to describe the tiny air bubbles made by the propeller. The reason this was on a new layer was because it needed to be set to Overlay mode in order for it to appear darker in the shadow of the ship (Fig 07). The way to achieve a sense of perspective is to either paint in a shape and then use the Edit > Transform tools to Skew and Distort it so that it tapers off, or alternatively one can simply use the Eraser tool to do it manually. You may also notice that I have painted in some evidence of a land mass on the far left of the horizon



Refining the Image At this point I thought that the torpedo splash was becoming somewhat lost amongst the very bright area of sky behind it, and as a result was subduing the impact - pardon the pun! Using the Gradient tool I overlaid a grey/green (inset square) from the top of the image towards the horizon, and similarly from the bottom up to reflect the sky. Being set to Multiply mode this also served to create a more ominous mood to the picture and also emphasised the splash (Fig 08). I worked back into it with a soft edged eraser in places to bring out some cloud formations, as well as adding some further refinements to the ship, together with a line of flags. I generally cleaned up the edges and put in some simple shadows and highlights to help describe the scale, as well as shifting everything back a little towards the rear of the boat, because the perspective seemed wrong as it was. The next step was to put the guns in, which were done in single strokes using a hard-edged brush. A little shadow was painted in below the larger ones to add



Fig09



Fig10



Fig11

some volume, as well as a few elements at the bow (Fig 09). You will also notice that I have continually added areas on the ship and then maybe erased them later down the line. Do not be afraid to change things and experiment as

you work - it is good practice to keep things fluid and to try alternatives as you work as this often yields positive results that you could not have predicted. In Fig 10 I have added a wave along the bottom of the ship to show that it's moving, as

well as adding some more density to the torpedo splash. In Fig 11 I have put in some detail along the hull of the ship to break up the consistency of the way of some metal panel. shapes.

Fig12



Finishing Off

The picture is now essentially complete and could be left, but a few quick enhancements can improve things. Because I left the torpedo wake on a separate layer I can now duplicate it easily, and after a bit or re-adjustment create a gap down the line of air bubbles which is more realistic. Also, using a simple brush, I added some random strokes around the splash to widen the spray, as well as some swift random marks to add more definition to the water. I put in some evidence of railings and a few highlights and finally used a large soft airbrush to lighten the horizon and water and to paint in some simple suggestion of clouds.

Rich Tilbury

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Conclusion The finished picture can be seen in Fig 12. I am happy with the final result but as with any speed paintings the temptation is to get carried away with unnecessary details. I spent just over two hours on making this image and feel it was a useful exercise. I may well attempt to paint another image on the same theme, except next time limit myself to one hour, just to see how the result compares. The crucial lesson to bear in mind with this type of painting is to acquaint yourself with the subject matter beforehand and have as clear an idea as possible about composition and colour schemes before you begin, as it will inevitably save you much time during the painting process.

"The blue pen allows you to draw a sketch on the paper without it looking as if it has already been scanned. This is a godsend when you realise that a grey pencil seems to "dirty" the paper and often needs erasing."



This tutorial has been written for the young generation of artists/graphic artists who wish to build up their knowledge of professional and classical colouring in a cartoon style, for work intended to be published and printed...

Colouring a Line Drawing Ready for Print

Colouring a Line Drawing Ready for Print

Created In:

Adobe Photoshop CS2; scanner; blue colouring pencil; black pen (for inking-in lines); graphics tablet.

Introduction I won't be explaining in this tutorial where to shade, or how to choose colours, but instead I will talk about how to make the most of the flexibility of Photoshop CS. I have used this technique several times in my own work as a freelance Illustrator. CMYK is a colour mode which represents the first letters of the colours used by printers, which stand for Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black (K). As the diagram shows you, in the bottom-right corner of Fig01, those three colours - cyan, magenta and yellow - should be enough to obtain black simply by mixing them together. However, the quality of paper and inks available often mean that this combination is imperfect and you actually end up with more of a dark maroon/green. This is why black ink is essential as both a support and also to add depth to the other colours. I intend to show you how black ink can be used for lines, and how cyan, magenta and yellow inks may be used for the colours. With this method your lines will be more precise and intense; your colours will not contain black, and will be more luminous.





Fig01



Fig03



Fig04

From Theory to Practice

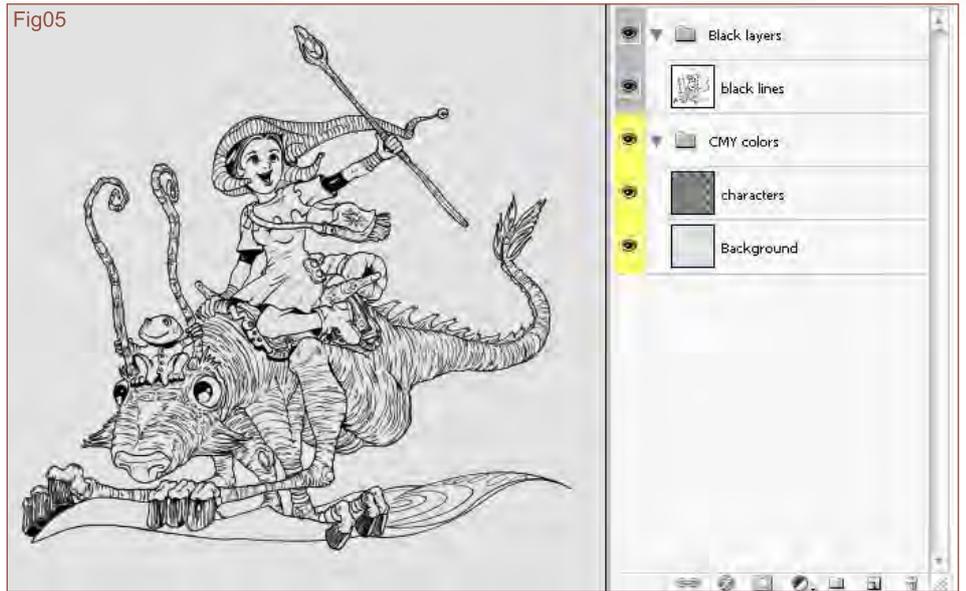
For the drawing I use a blue Faber Castel pencil, because you can often buy these individually. However, for your first attempt any old, blue pencil will do the job. The blue pencil allows you to draw a sketch onto paper without it looking as if it has already been scanned. This is a godsend when you realise that a grey pencil seems to “dirty” the paper and often needs erasing - this destroys the clarity of your black lines. Inking is then carried out using a felt pen of around 0.3 mm; I use either a Staedtler pigment liner or a ball-point pen. I also use Bristol paper which assures fluid lines (Fig02).

Scanning

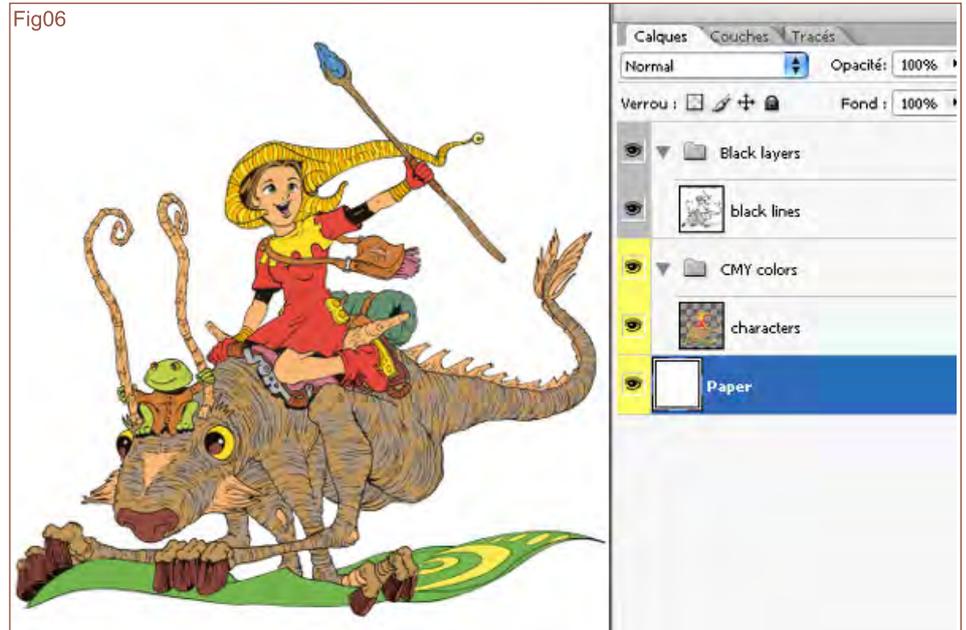
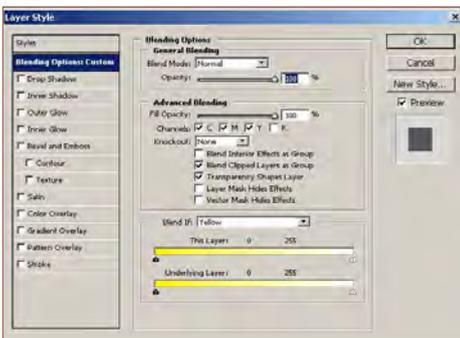
I scan the drawing in Adobe Photoshop CS2 at 600 dpi - in grey - using a high quality, Canon scanner, which achieves a high resolution (go to File > Import > Select Scanner). In the majority of cases, the result is too light, and there will also be also grey in the black lines, but this depends upon the quality of the scanner that you’re using (Fig03). To correct the clarity of your line drawing go to Image > Adjustments > Levels. By placing the pointers in a similar way to the graph shown above, you will improve the black and white zones of your drawing. Try out various adjustments and you will quickly find the best one for you. Beginners may prefer the Brightness/Contrast control simpler, but this might not be flexible enough for more experienced illustrators (Fig04).

Colour

You now have to configure the colours in your drawing (go to Image > Mode > CMYK). I create three layers in Photoshop and re-name them by double-clicking on each layer, upon which a box should appear. The first layer will be called "Black lines" and is where you will only be able to filter the black layer : (Fig 05)



It is here where Photoshop CS2 is essential, because its predecessor did not perform this command quite as easily. The second group of layers are for Cyan, Magenta and Yellow colours ("CMY colors"), as shown in Fig06 and here:



third group is for the background. By double-clicking on the Background layer I change it into a copy, re-name it, and then click "OK". Now they are changed into copies the lines of the drawings should be movable. Click and hold the copy whilst dragging it into the group "Black layers" and it will join the group. Keeping the "black lines" copies open, I change the blending mode parameters (see "c →" in Fig07) to a suitable mode. This will make the whites transparent, and therefore the drawing will become more like a drawing on a transparent

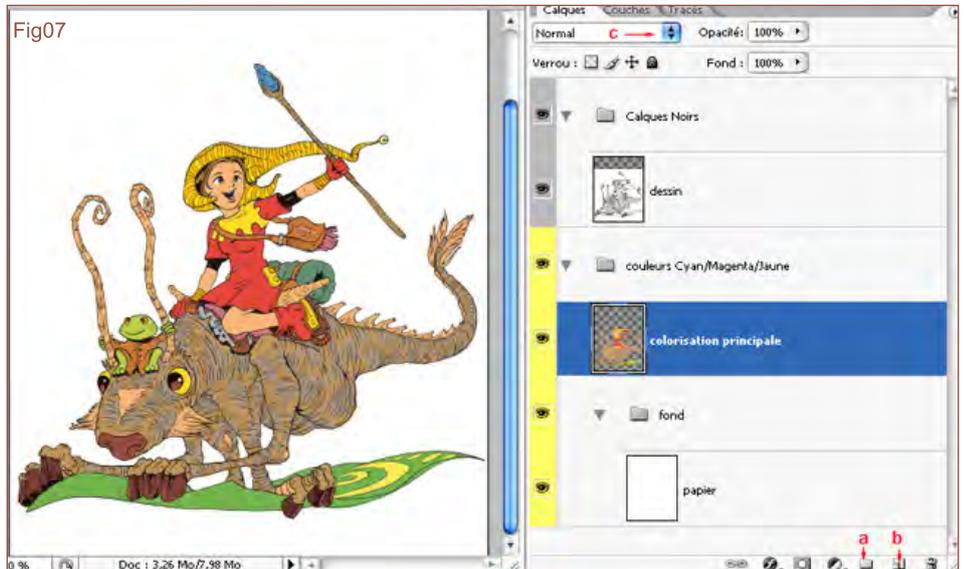


Fig08

sheet. I create a copy using the icon labelled “↓” (Fig07) in the Copy box, transfer it into the Background box, and then fill it in white using the Paint Bucket tool. Finally I create a copy in the Cyan/Magenta/Yellow group, which will act as a base for receiving all of the colours. The configuration of the file is now finished and colour application can now begin. I start by filling in the basic colours, initially using a basic brush and filling each zone thoroughly (Fig08). I change the colours progressively on this copy using the Magic Wand tool and by using the Colour/Saturation box (press the Ctrl + U hot keys) in order to vary the colours. To create shading, I make another copy in the Cyan/Magenta/Yellow box and fill it with a light purple colour, and change the blending mode. Then in Menu > Layer > Add Layer Mask > Hide Selection, the Layer Mask will act as a “scratch card”. Using a white brush, I draw in the shading

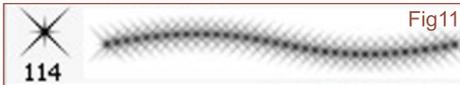


Fig11

by leaving the purple layer in specific areas and using a black brush to get rid of them in certain places (they are left in at about 50% with grey). The interesting part of this technique is being able to vary the colour of the shading without impairing the drawing, and also being able to change the shading easily (Fig09). I also use a 60% white opacity copy on this, as a mask to cut little reflections into (white spots seen in Fig10). My final layers are for the special effects, like the stars or little white reflections, which are created using a special brush (see Fig11). I also drew a background in the group in order to add emphasis to my scene. After several hours of work my picture is ready to be printed, so I export it to a PDF or TIFF file, according to the printer being used. To make your file lighter, you could also try flattening the layers.

Well, it's over to you now! Don't hesitate to post your work in the Work In Progress sections of forums to get some valuable advice!

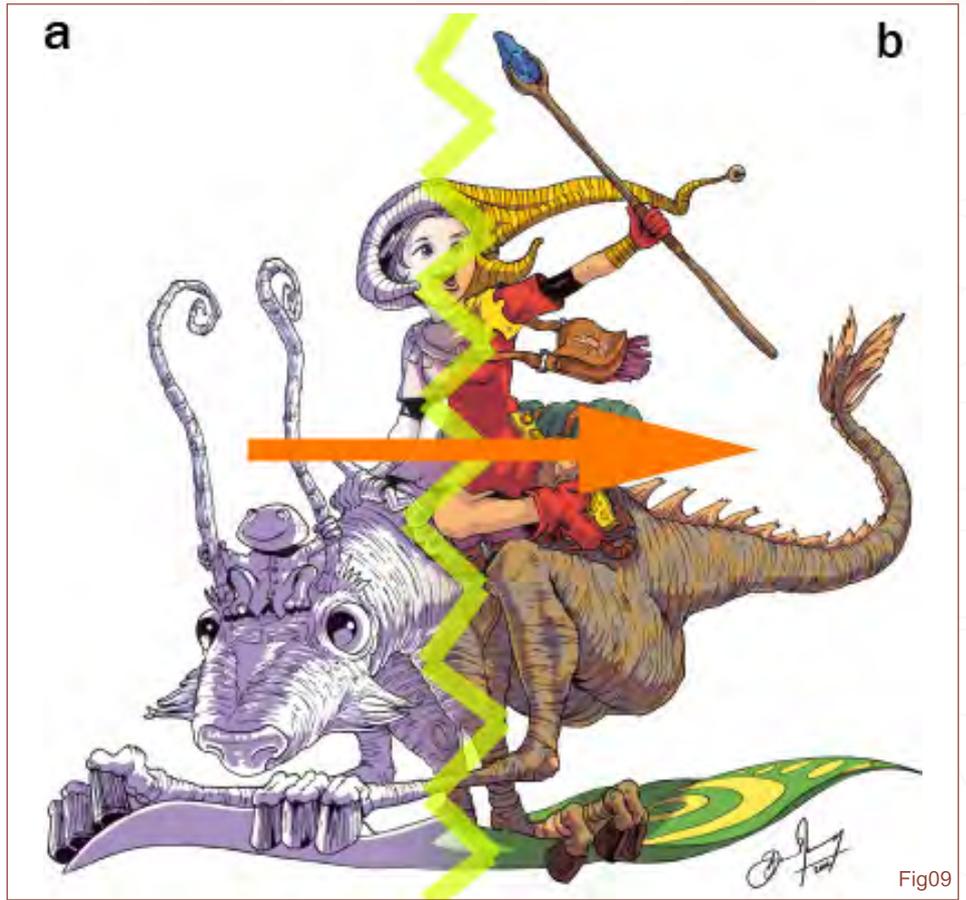


Fig09

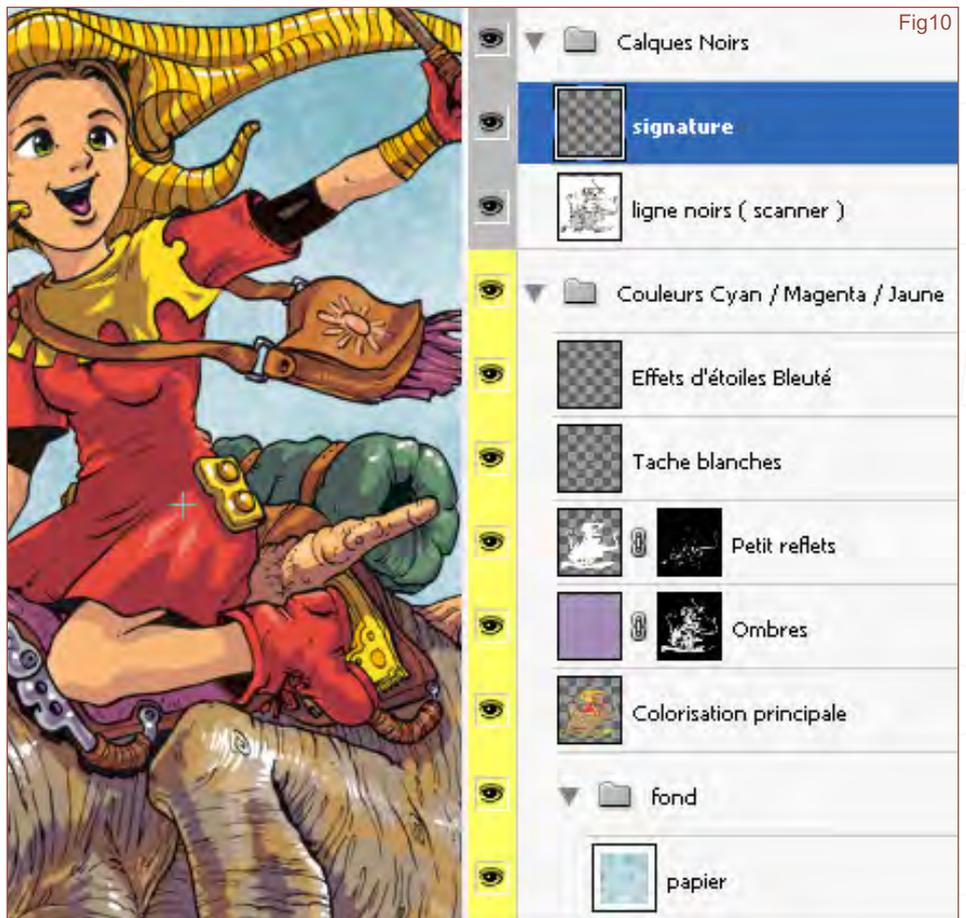


Fig10



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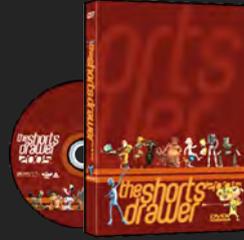
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"If you're really, really curious about whether Kings have blue blood, you don't have to kill one to find out, you just have to make one sit still and light him properly. Another myth busted!"

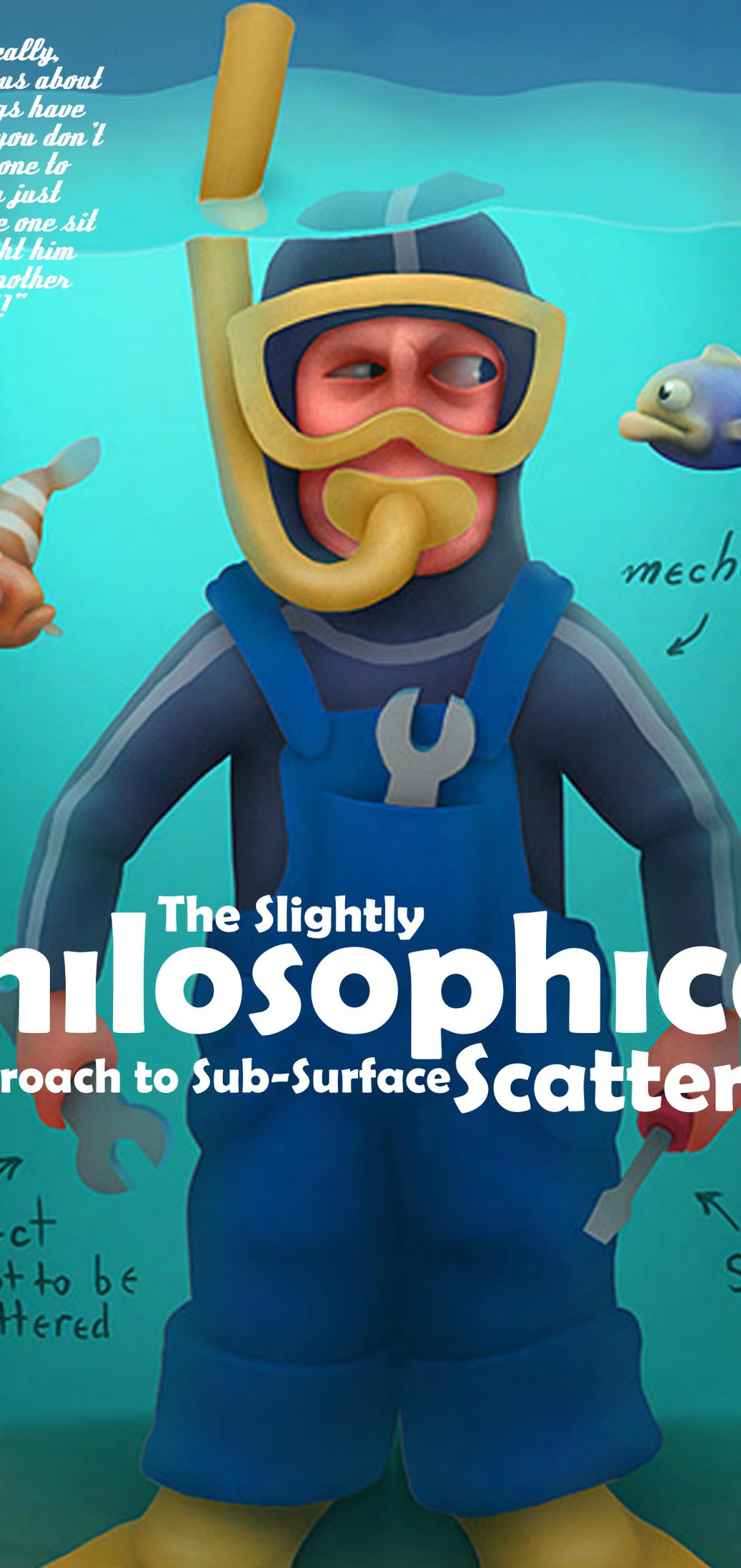
In this tutorial, Kosta Atanasov tells us all about the techniques he uses when creating his artwork...

The Slightly Philosophical Approach to Sub-Surface Scattering

↗
object
about to be
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↖
same
here

mechanic
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The Slightly
Philosophical
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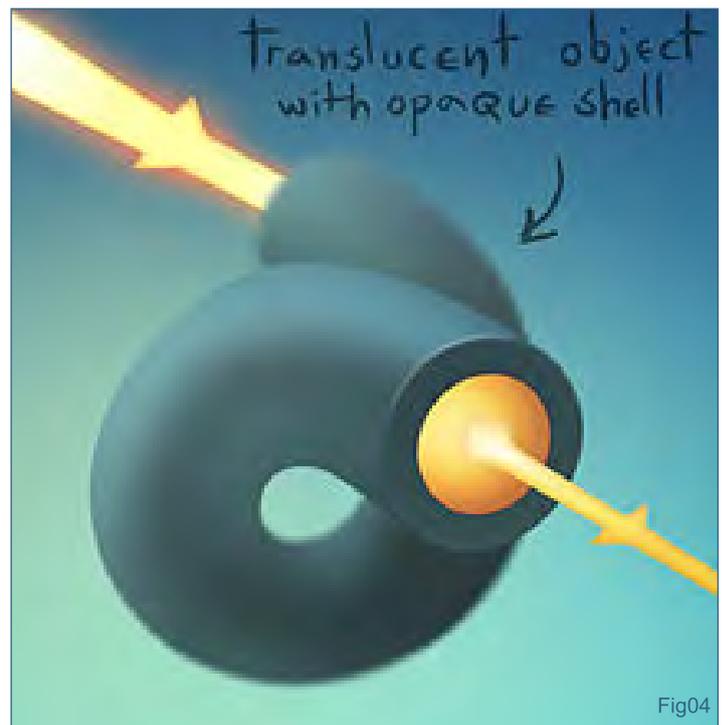
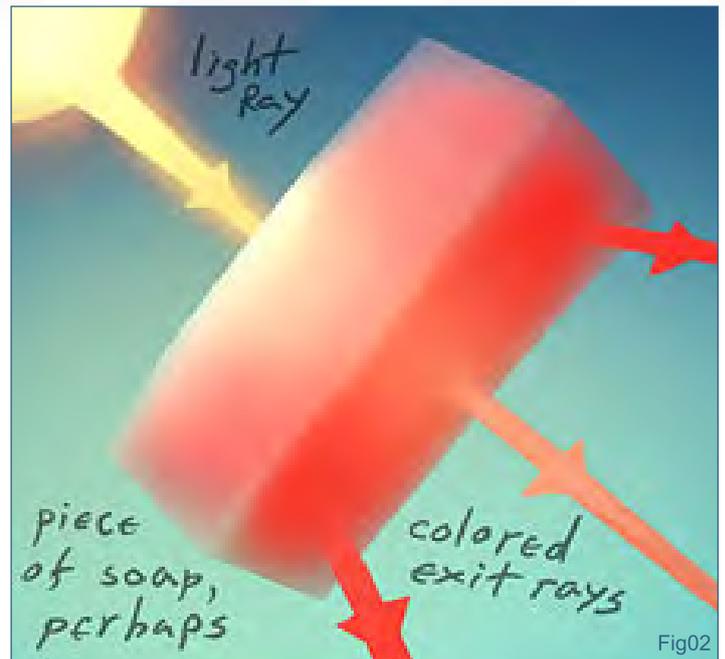
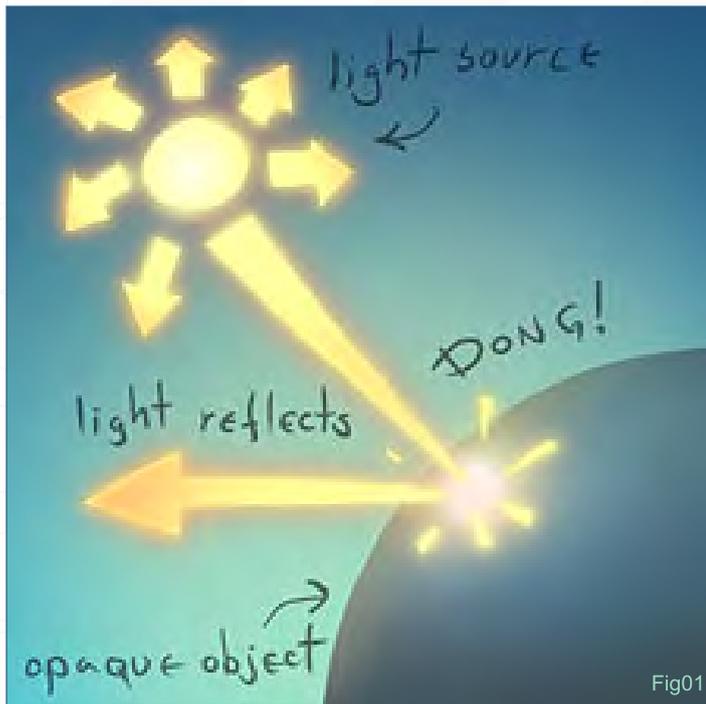
Created In:

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Introduction

If you want to make a transparent object that you are painting appear to be realistic, then it's certainly not enough just to know where the layer's Opacity slider is. Light has a distinct behaviour within translucent objects, and just like in anatomy where the artist's understanding of underlying forms makes his paintings more convincing, the understanding of this behaviour will help us to identify the effects that we see. More than that, it will also help us to work out how an imagined, nonexistent object would look if it were to exist. But what is "existence" exactly? We paint what we see, and what we see is nothing more than reflected light. The image we perceive through our eyes is transferred to the brain through the optical nerves, where it gets processed and the object is recognised. Things we imagine, however, are also produced in the brain and trigger exactly the same "strings" as the pictures we receive through our eyes. So, since we have no way to tell the difference between things that are real, and things that we imagine, how do we know what is "real"? Well, we don't. Throughout the ages, a great number of scientists and philosophers have wondered if whether the world we see actually exists, or if it is all just in our minds. For the purpose of this tutorial however, we will just have to assume that the world we live in actually exists and is guided by some certain physical laws and principles; a small part of which I will try to explain in the following study...





What is Sub-Surface Scattering?

So, what does triple-S stand for? Nope, it's not one huge S; those three letters actually mean "Sub Surface Scattering". And don't get fooled by the name either; if you envision the mechanics of subsurface scattering somewhat like the one in Fig0, then I'm sorry to tell you but you're wrong once again. To put it simply, SSS is a property of light, and it occurs in basically every object which allows light to pass through its surface (but that doesn't count for objects that you have to drill a hole in first). Whilst solid, opaque objects (Fig01) reflect light without the light penetrating their surfaces, with translucent ones the light actually enters into the

object. Once there, light doesn't just continue travelling in a straight line, like we might imagine it would. The light rays - just like very small and somewhat fast pin-balls - bounce off the tiny particles which build the object's structure, and scatter; changing in direction and colour (Fig02). When you cast a strong light onto the back of your finger, you should see a visible glow around the edges (Fig03). When light enters the object, it hits a particle and splits. The split rays also split, and this splitting of light rays continues. Reflected from particle to particle, light can actually travel inside the material's mass, no matter what curves it may have (Fig04). Because of this, light often comes out of an object in a place where we may not normally expect it to if it were travelling straight, for example.

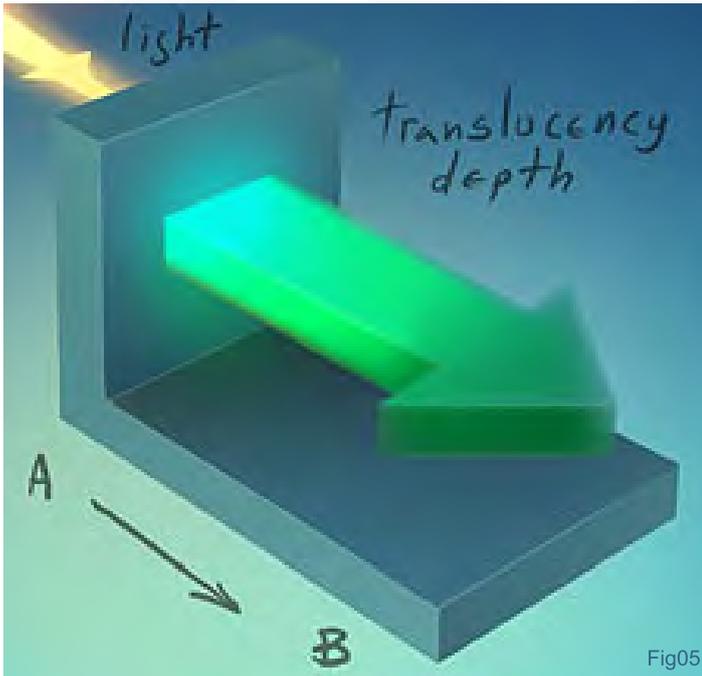


Fig05



Fig06



Fig07

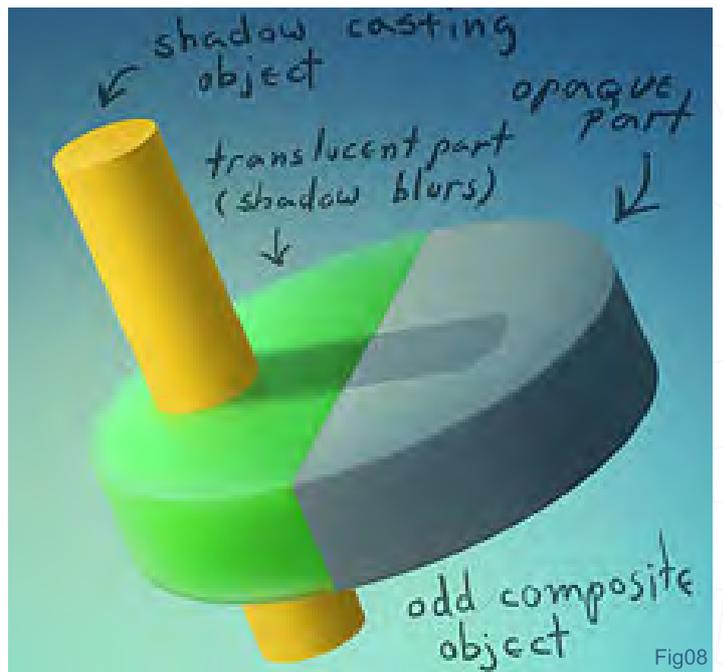


Fig08

This causes another effect: since light can exit into unlit, darker areas, then objects with SSS seem to have an “inner glow”. Dependent upon the colour of the material, the exiting colour of the light also changes. For example, human skin is full of blood vessels, and so the light travelling through it is coloured red. So if you’re really, really curious about whether Kings have blue blood, you don’t have to kill one to find out – you just have to make one sit still and light him properly. Another myth busted! All materials have a maximum depth at which the light can penetrate to. For example, in an ideal scenario of having a single, consistent material, let’s take a glass of milk - which has its “translucency depth” (see Fig05). In the case where a fly makes an emergency landing into that cup of milk, you would be able to see it clearly when it was on the surface of

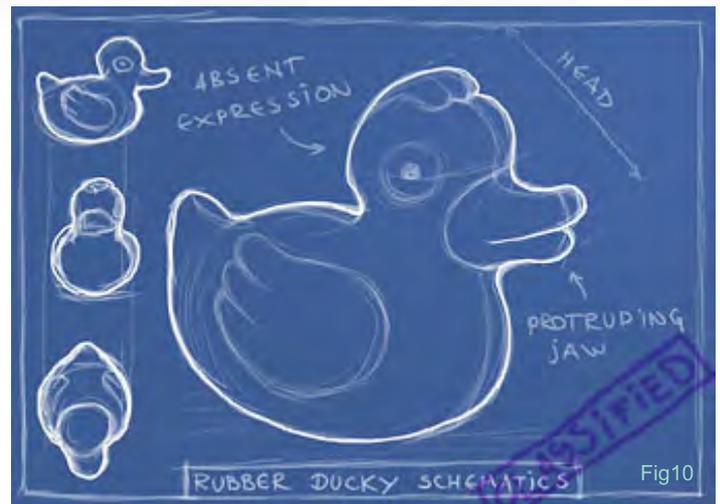
the milk. The further into the milk’s mass that it sinks, the blurrier it gets and the more it fades into the milk’s ‘colour’, until it finally disappears (remember not to drink that milk now) (Fig06). (Please note that no flies were harmed in the creation of this tutorial - they were drawn rather than drowned.) A good analogy of an SSS effect is like having a fog (with the material’s main colour) and a depth of field effect (focal point at the surface) combined. For our own purposes we can treat the blur and the coloured fog as the same distance, however their “translucency depth” may differ in real life. The translucency depth depends upon the density of the material (which in the upper example depends on the species of the “milked” animal and the date that it took place) (Fig07). Light intensity reduces exponentially from A to B. In dense materials translucency depth



is shorter, and is longer in more translucent materials. This SSS value is also interconnected with light intensity. The brighter the light, the more the translucency depth will stretch, and light will be able to pass deeper into the object. With SSS materials we also have the effect of shadow depth. If we have a shadow cast over the translucent object, then we will note that its edges aren't crisp, but it blurs into the underlying object (Fig08). The darkness of the shadow seems to penetrate the surface - scattering underneath it. Since shadow is actually the absence of light; light enters the surface around the shadowed area and spreads wider, causing the shadow to narrow in depth. This effect is also visible when another object is inside a translucent one, where the non-translucent object will cast narrowing volume shadows (Fig09). This effect will be close to what we see when bright light enters a dusty room from a window, where any objects blocking the light's path will cast visible volume shadows. The single difference would be that the environment in which these shadows are being cast is much denser, and due to the SSS of light we get the narrowing and diffused look of the shadow.

How to Paint Sub-Surface Scattering?

Knowing these principles you can paint SSS using any technique you want. The purpose of this tutorial is to explain what to do, rather than how to do it, so I will not enter into too much detail in this part, and I'll presume that you are familiar with the software that you use. Here is how I paint when I'm aiming to get realistic results - it's pretty much software independent, though I personally use Adobe Photoshop (all of the before mentioned illustrations for this study were created using this technique):



Step 1

First, paint the object like you would a normal, non-translucent object. Normally, I start with a quick sketch (Fig10), then clear the outlines and proceed to filling it with colour. Usually, I pick a neutral grey to paint. I then shade it using the Burn and Dodge tools in Adobe Photoshop (which basically darken and lighten the image). For the first shading part I paint a soft shadowing ambient, which is the kind of lighting you will nearly always have present in the unlit, darker areas, no matter what lighting you choose. I use soft brushes in differing sizes. When the ambient-lit image is done, I then add colours using coloured layers with different Overlay modes (Fig11).

Step 2

Now it's time to kick some triple-S! As explained previously, where the translucency depth is longer than the volume thickness, light will pass

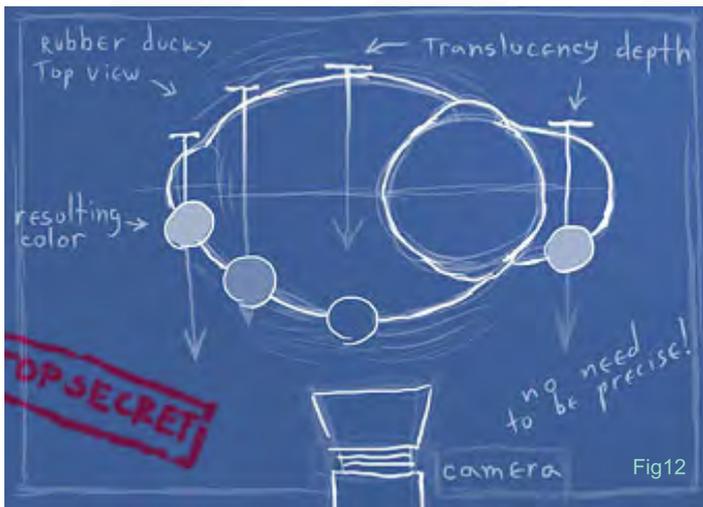


Fig12



Fig13

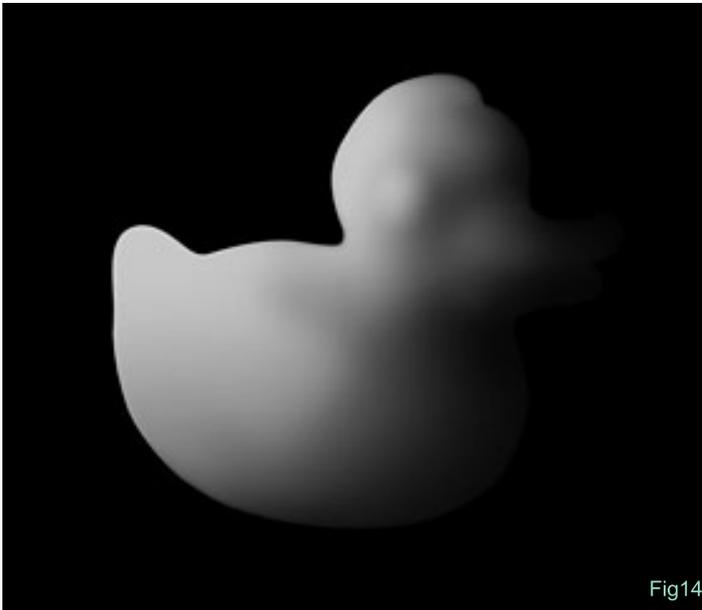


Fig14

through your object. The thinner the volume, the more light will pass through it, and the more the colours of the background will show through it. Imagine that your translucency depth is a stick which is coloured with a gradient - white at the base (where light enters the surface) and transparent at the end (where the material will no longer allow light to pass). I try to keep in mind the volumes of the object whilst mentally sticking the stick from the back to the front of the object, so that it's perpendicular to the camera and facing the eye of the viewer (Fig12). I paint in the colour of the translucency depth stick in the point where it hits the surface facing the eye. Don't feel too bad about back-stabbing the object that way - you are painting the SSS equivalent of ambient lighting, which is something that you will have in nearly every lighting condition. There is no need to be precise here, simply paint approximately what you think the passing light intensity is at the exit point. In most cases you can enrich the image by adding another layer: background bleed. Use the layer seen in Fig13 by applying "Levels". Make the gradient much thinner and closer to the surface, and use it to select and copy over the object the



Fig15

background layer colours. Again, you can go through this process any way you want to. I use a white-to-transparent gradient because I often use the layer's transparency afterwards for selections, and because I can see the layer underneath (the object itself) as opposed to when using a white-to-black gradient. (The illustrations here are presented in a white-to-black format for viewing convenience only.)

Step 3

After we finish the overall base for the image it's time to get into the real lighting. The next step is basically like the previous one, only you must stick your translucency depth stick somewhere else: place it along your key light vector. In this picture we place our key light on the left so that we are pointing the stick from left to right along the path of the light beam (Fig14). Once we get this layer done we're ready to finalise the painting...

Step 4

Normally I would use Overlay mode for the two layers, and would play around with the Opacity value (Fig15). If needed, you can then duplicate one of them to strengthen the effect. If you have a really translucent material you can select the layer transparency of the first SSS layer, copy the background colours on top of the object (depending on the level of

refraction you can offset or even flip the image vertically), and then blur them according to the material's density. Don't be afraid to experiment with the layers - you might find your own, or even a more convincing way to paint SSS. Be brave; Undo is a mighty weapon to have at your disposal and is a luxury that classical artists don't possess. Your image should be now more or less ready...

Step 5

At this stage I would normally flatten my layers (Fig16) and play around with the Dodge and Burn tools again. I'd also add a specular layer, and an ambient colour (environment lighting) layer (both shown combined in Fig17). Try changing your Dodge settings to "Highlights", and refine the SSS areas a bit more. Do it with a larger brush and a single stroke so that you can use the "Fade" option from the Edit menu. This allows you to adjust with what opacity you apply your last stroke, which is very useful when fine tuning your image.

Step 6

You should now be ready to print it and show it to your girlfriend. Watch out for the translucent, rotting zombies, but if you've painted a cute, gummy heart then you should be in for a good time. Remember that your painting doesn't need to be 100% accurate; stay close to what you think is true, and you will probably get results which will look good enough, and as long as they are convincing they don't need to be physically correct. In fact, I don't pretend that what I'm suggesting is scientifically correct; it just helps me produce believable results. I'm not a scientist and most probably you are not one either. After all, we're doing artwork, not a scientific study. Besides, if this world doesn't actually exist, you'll be wasting time... which you don't actually have because there's no such thing as time, right? Then why waste something you don't have? It would make no sense, would it? Anyway, in case it does exist, thank you for reading, and I hope this study has been of some help to you.

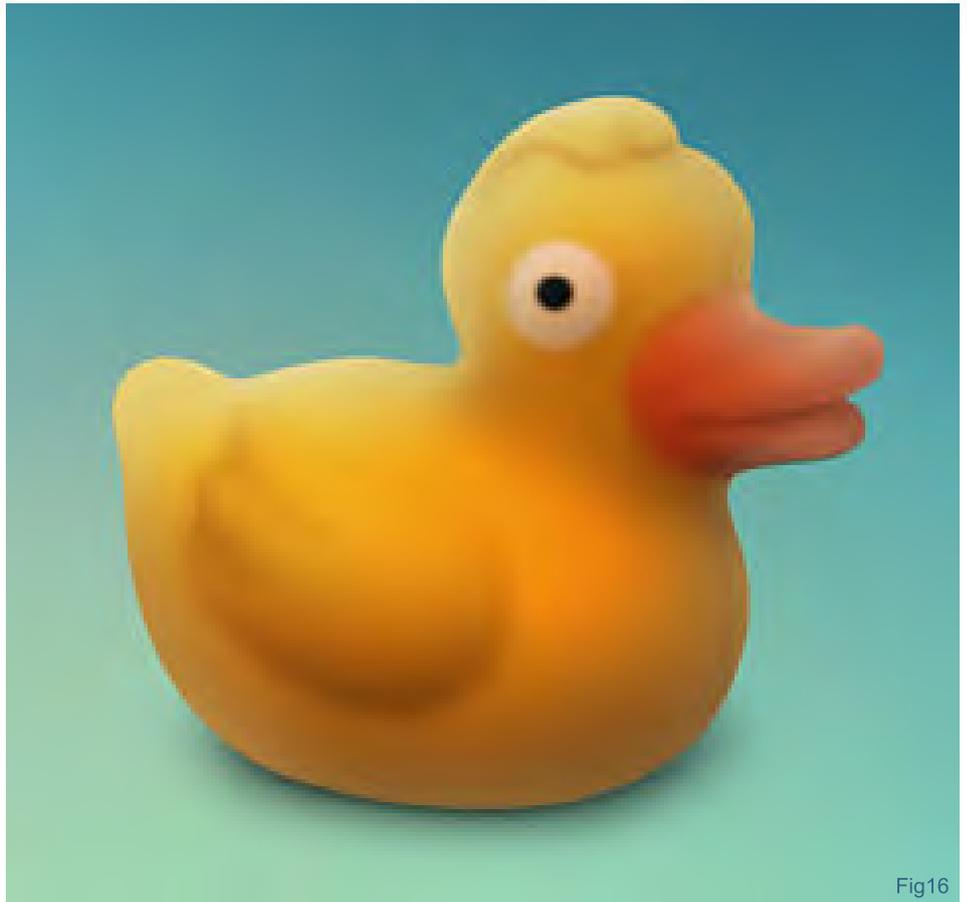


Fig16

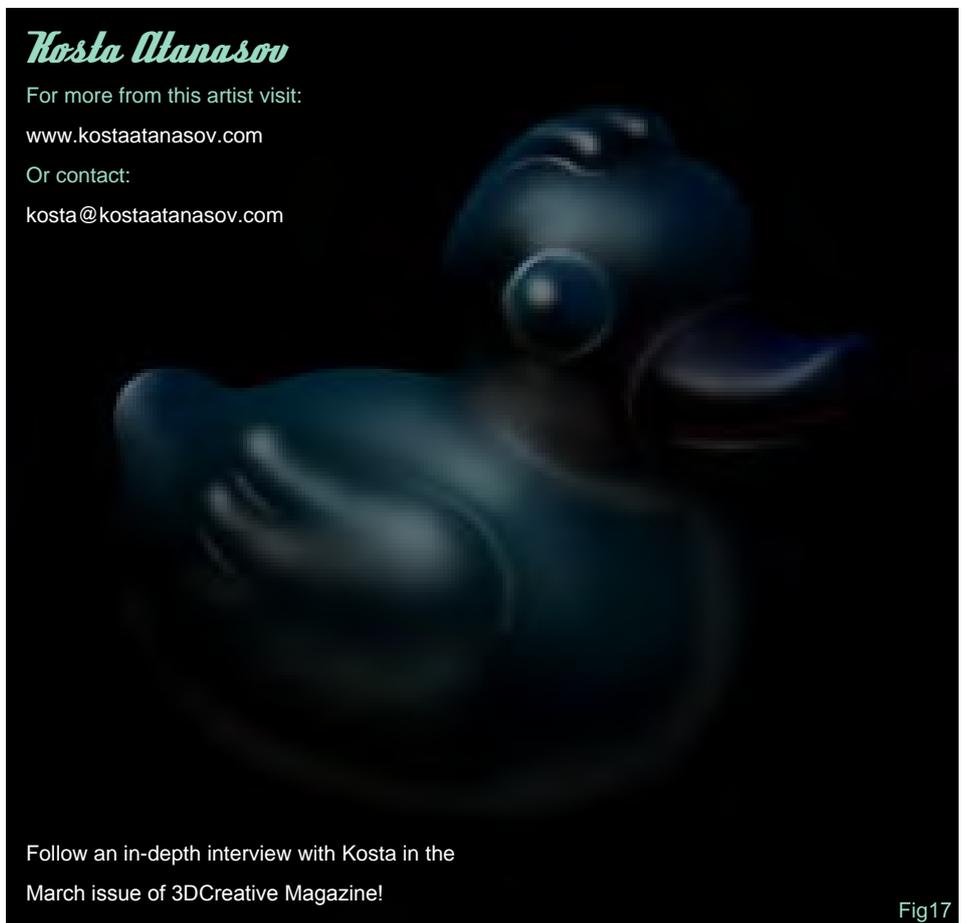
Kosta Atanasov

For more from this artist visit:

www.kostaatanasov.com

Or contact:

kosta@kostaatanasov.com



Follow an in-depth interview with Kosta in the March issue of 3DCreative Magazine!

Fig17

FROM THE PRODUCERS OF QUACK III
AN ALFRED HITCHQUACK FILM

THE BATHROOM HORROR



WHEN IT SAYS DUCK, YOU DUCK.
THERE IS NOWHERE YOU CAN QUACK

STARRING: COUNT DUCKY, QUACK GON JIN, DUCK VADER
MUSIC BY: DUCKKEN, QUACKSRYCHE, DUCK THEATER
COMING FOR YOU SOON IN BATH-TUBS
ALL OVER THE WORLD.



*"Upon the completion
of this piece, I
have regained my
passionate flame
to do more art, as I
was having a rather
malfunctioning art
block so to speak..."*

I have tried to ease the explanation
of this tutorial by capturing most
"happenings" visually, so I am left
with little to explain. This means
that the images themselves
should be the main guide for
progression...

REJUVENATOR OF THE HUMAN FLAME

REJUVENATOR
OF THE HUMAN FLAME*Digital Painting
Failures and Successes*

The evolution of the world involves the success and failures made by people, and nature's other inhabitants and resources. The same proves true when applying this context to art. The evolution of my art (and most likely anyone's, I believe) is partially based upon the mistakes

that I have made and have learned from, which are all going forward to evolve into successful triumphs. Although what may be a success to me, may be at the complete opposite end of the spectrum through your own eyes when looking at the final results. Keeping this in mind, let's move forward through the piece that I'm going to walk you through today...

Step 1: (Fig01)

To the below left, you will see a quick sketch which suggests the central ideas that are coming into focus. To the below right, you will see a rugged exploration of some colours and shapes. At the very bottom of this page are the main tools and palettes that were used whilst painting in Corel Painter IX. Two main brushes

were used: Eraser Brush (standard) and Detail Airbrush. When laying down colours and details, I blend by decreasing the brush's Resaturation option to 0%, and "viola"! To affect the level of control for blending whilst the Resaturation is set to 0%, I simply play with the percentage of the brush's Bleed. The circular Colours palette is the one I visit most often as I lay down my colours, although lately I've also been expanding the Colour Sets palette for easily picking pre-selected colour values.

Step 2: (Fig02a - c)

I then start work fleshing out the faces, body structures, and wardrobes - all the while trying to maintain a sense of balance. After major changes, I generally tend to temporarily flip

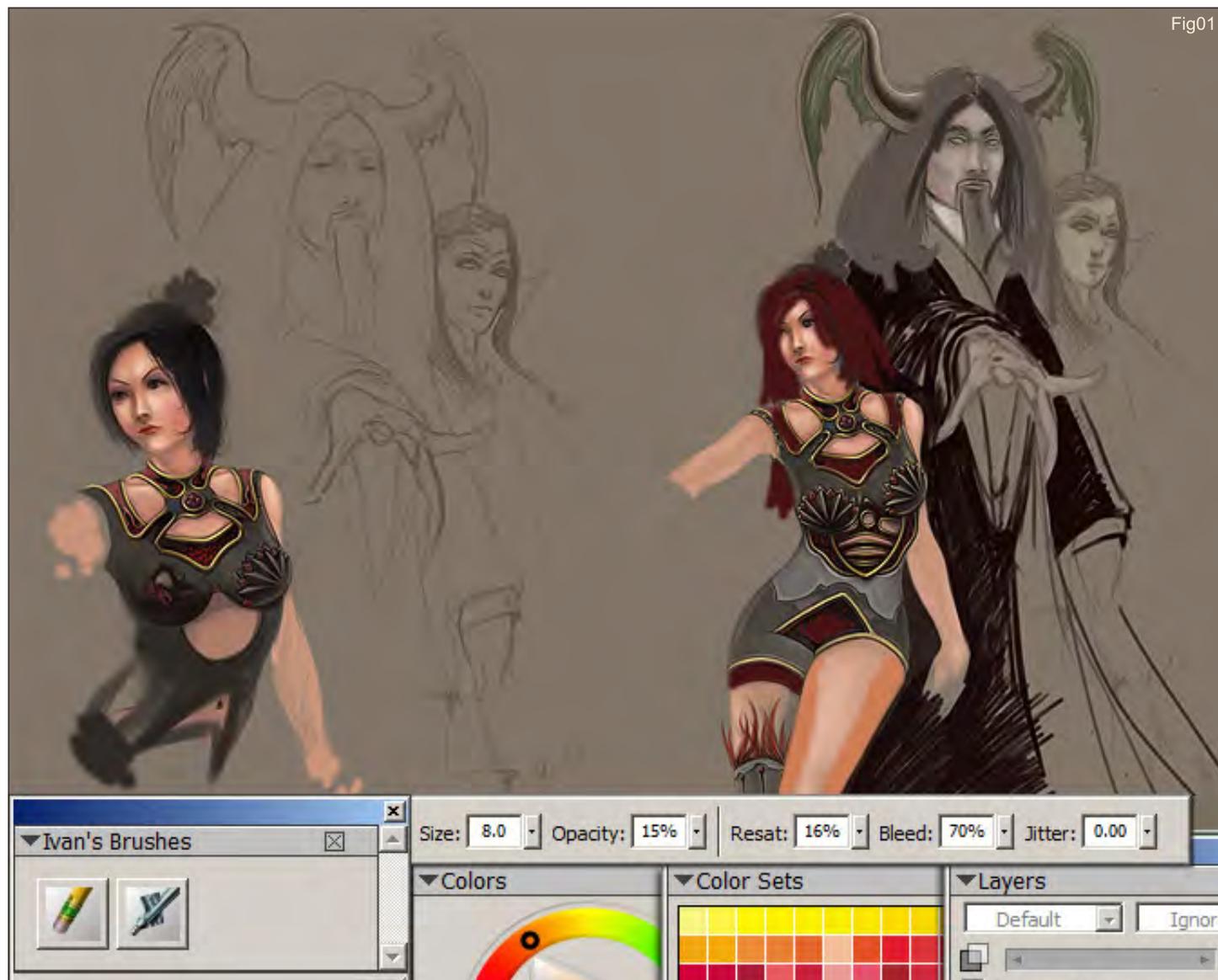




Fig02a



Fig02b



Fig02c

the image in the opposite, horizontal direction to easily spot any incorrect proportions or any other undesired oddities. This process also aids me in cropping the canvas with more satisfactory results.

Step 3: (Fig03a - b)

After having worked with the four, main characters for some time now, they appear to be more of a clustered mess at this point. I make a decision to add more interest and break away from the dreadful monotony by increasing the size of the canvas more vertically, and by adding larger-than-life faces.

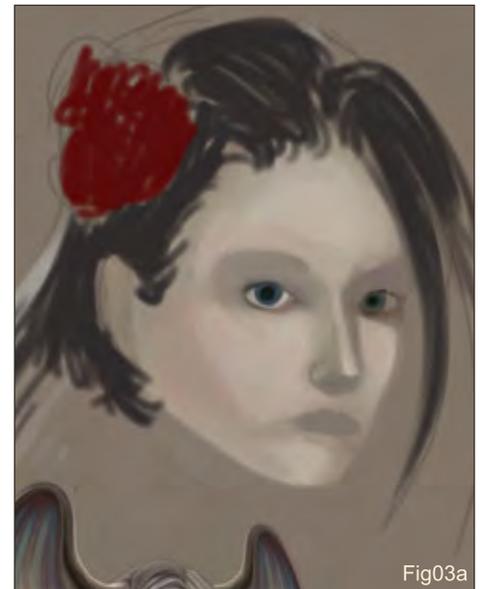


Fig03a



Fig03b



Fig04

Step 4: (Fig04)

Lighting has been unplanned so far, and rather surprisingly neglected, so it's time to rectify this problem. Using a round gradient in Adobe Photoshop, I make a decision to change the tonal feel of the piece.

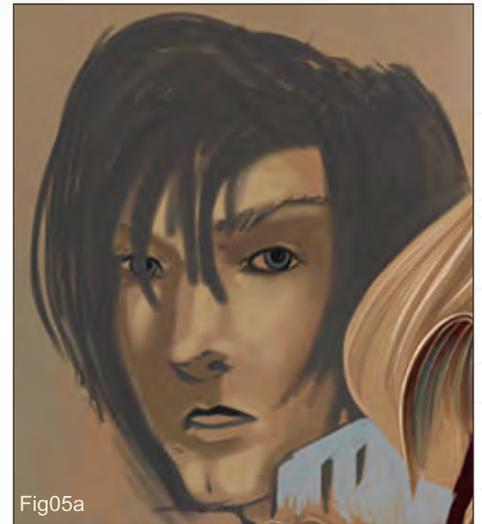


Fig05a

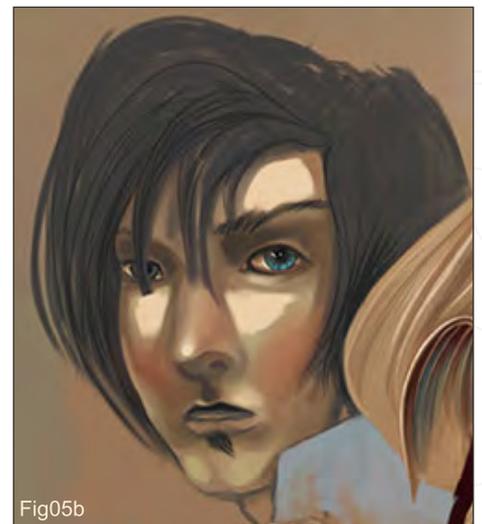


Fig05b

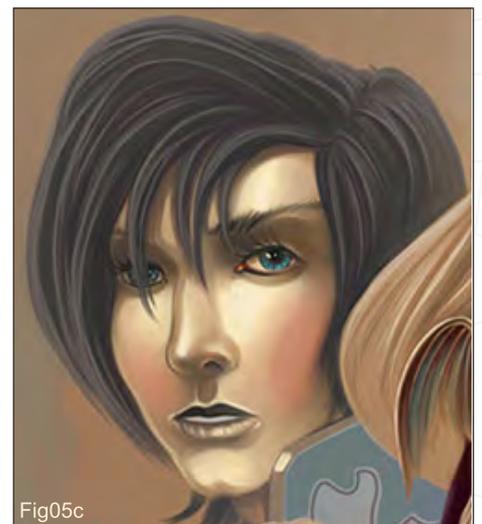
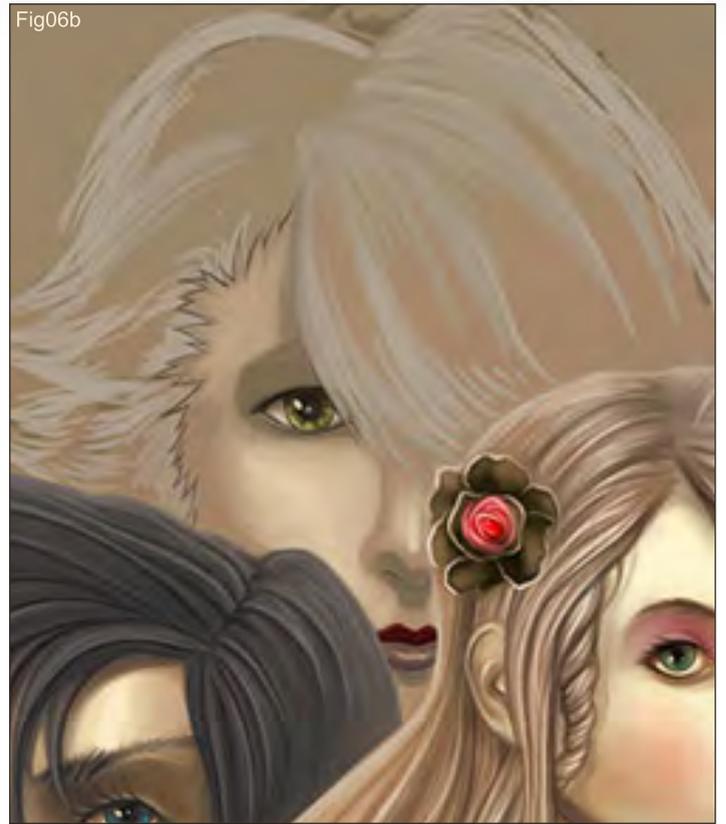
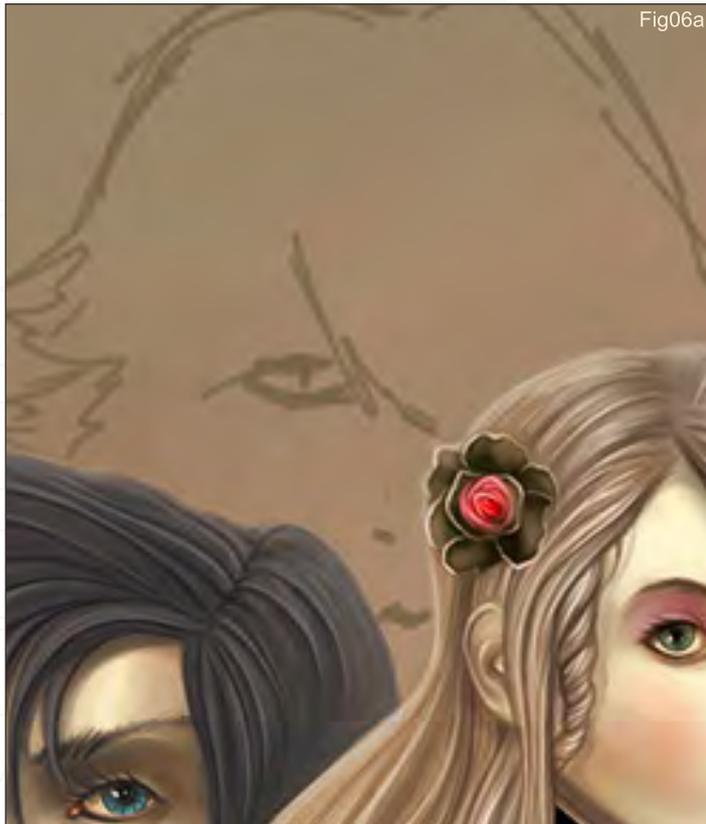


Fig05c

Step 5: (Fig05a - c)

The second character is now added - opposite the female doppelganger with the blackish rose - because the picture was crying out from the negligent lack of compositional balance.



Step 6: (Fig06a - d)

A third character that bumps its head out from the top should help to further influence a more pleasing sense of weight to this unexpected cluster of characters.

Step 7: (Fig07a - c)

As the final stages come into play, my decision-making seems to become more cautious and "mother-like". In the left image (above), I clean up the background and prepare for the extraction of the characters (since



Fig07a



Fig07b

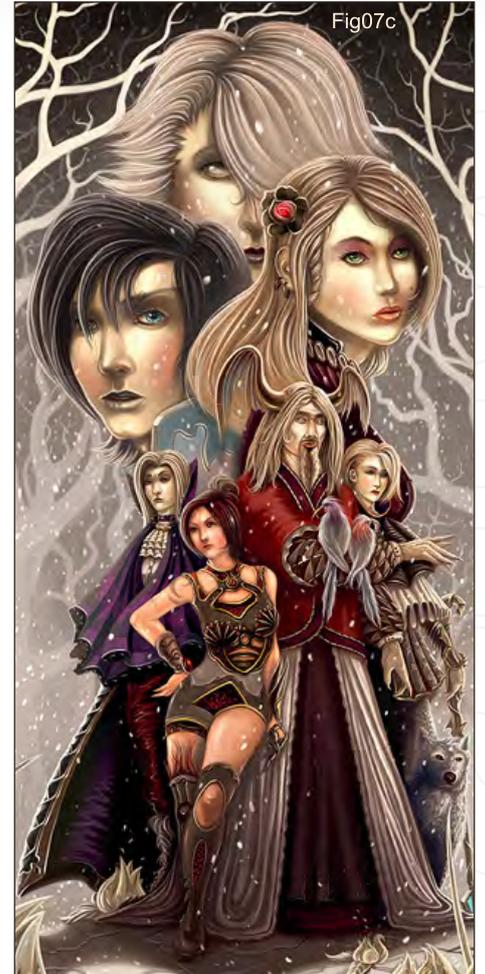


Fig07c

everything has been worked on one, flat layer up to this point) using the Polygonal Lasso tool in Photoshop. In the middle image (above), the characters have been removed from the background and placed on their own dedicated layer for easy, future editing. Highlights are also added to the silhouette of the characters to enhance lighting conditions. To the right (above), you can see the final results to this piece. All kinds of post-effects have been painted in, like the snow and the ghostly, illuminated tree branches, along with many other little touches which all work to tie everything together .

Stories with Endings

This piece, as many others that I have previously worked on, has its share of successes and failures. Saturation of colour and lighting were true failures that were thankfully taken under closer observation, and corrected towards the end. The contrast gives me a neutral feeling because I think the art came out with an OK 'punch', but it could have been pushed further. The perspective was predictable and underwhelming for me. As the title suggests, "Rejuvenator of the Human Flame", upon the completion of this piece I have regained my passionate flame to do more art, as I was having a rather malfunctioning art block so to speak... I have therefore learned by studying others, and by brainstorming a great amount too. I have hopefully become a little wiser in preparation for whatever I may work on next.

Most of my concept art works develop their stories towards the final stages of their creation. Now, here is a little treat to give you the story behind what this painting is all about, now that everything is all said and done:

There's a greenhouse engulfed by a forest around Adeline Vaillant's mansion grounds, where all of her passion and dedication takes place. She possesses a special talent of utilising the proteins that run through the veiny streams of plant life to reanimate the deceased back into the living world. These perfectly rendered humans with such unique qualities, make the trees turn stark white, and the plants sway wildly, as these doppelganger beings walk past them. The skin of these rejuvenated spirits bounce back with a pale, twilight quality, with no presence of blood flowing through their veins; just soft, plush, doll-like cheeks which easily give away their inhuman camouflage...

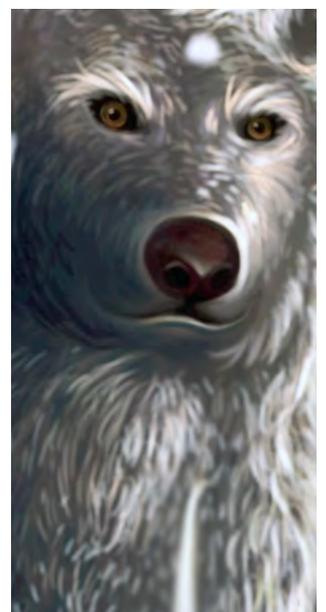
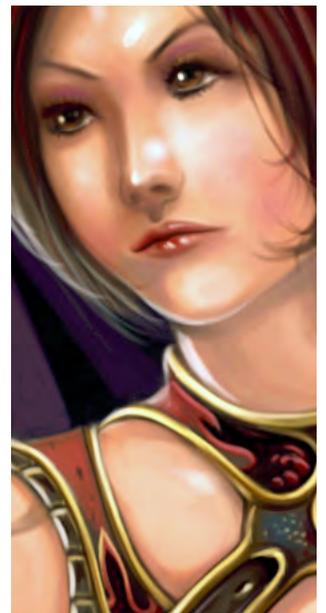
Ivan Mijatov

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"Hecate is said to haunt a three-way crossroad; each of her heads facing in a different direction. She is said to appear when the ebony moon shines. But I would like to create something a bit different to the real myth..."

Xiao Bing takes us through the Making Of one of his creations, "Hecate". Xiao has taken the Greek Goddess, Hecate, and produced his own version...

Hecate



Hecate

Introduction

Hecate is the Greek Goddess of the crossroads Wilderness and Childbirth. She is usually seen with two ghost hounds that were said to serve her. Today she is often seen as a goddess of witchcraft and evil. Hecate is said to haunt a three-way crossroad; each of her heads facing in a different direction. She is said to appear when the ebony moon shines (see Fig01 for reference). But I would like to create something a bit different to the real myth, because in my



Fig02



Fig01

mind there must be a round moon behind her. In history, she is said to haunt a three-way crossroads, but to create something different I'm going to put three keys in her hand. Hecate is a Greek Goddess, with Greek traditional clothes, so I will give her a long skirt. I don't know why all the girls in my paintings are so heartbroken; maybe there is a crack in my own heart...

Sketching

I start out with a blank, white document. Following my original concept I want to set my image at night. She will have a light in her left hand with three keys attached, and will be walking around the three-way crossroad under the moon. I was satisfied with the original sketch (Fig02).

Adding-up

I draw the first colour on a new layer. Picking colours for your palette is a very good idea, even in the first stages of a painting. I put both a deep, blue colour and a skin colour onto this layer (Fig03).

Beautiful Face

I keep drawing using my technique, with my goal to paint her face. I chose a precious stone's blue colour to light her eyes; a tear streaming from her eye; her lips shut tightly. I finish drawing the figure of the body and the skirt with my colours. Right now I want to attempt to change the colours to give my painting a different feeling, and to make it "prettier". To achieve this I used Photoshop's Colour Balance to change the Cyan, Magenta and Yellow (Fig04). Each group of colours display a different mood; it's very difficult to give them up. I chose to use the mood created by the colours seen on the right of Fig05. With embellished hair and lips, and with the harshness of the face having been adjusted, the face is now basically complete (Fig06).

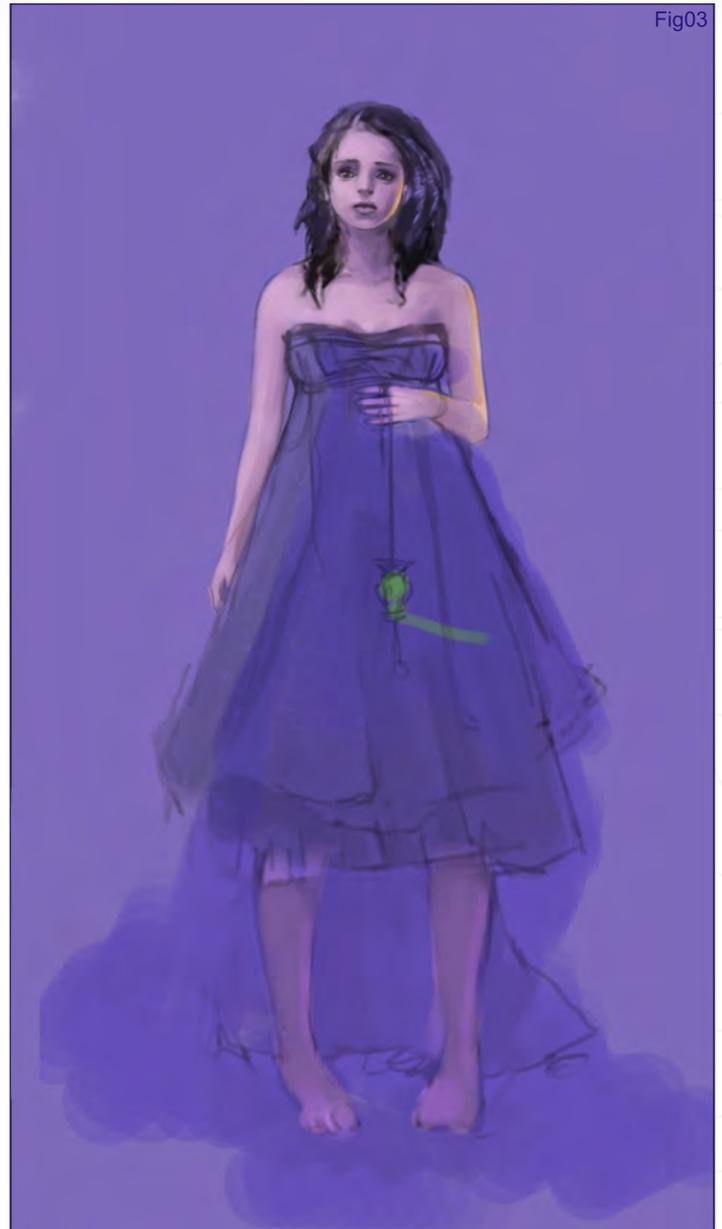


Fig03

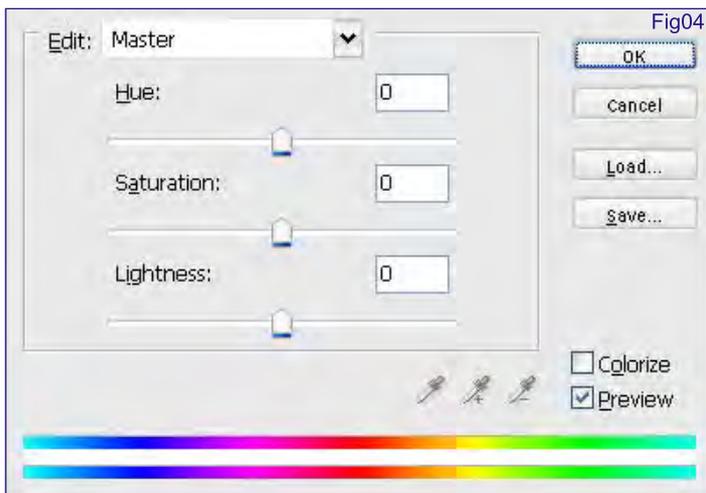


Fig04

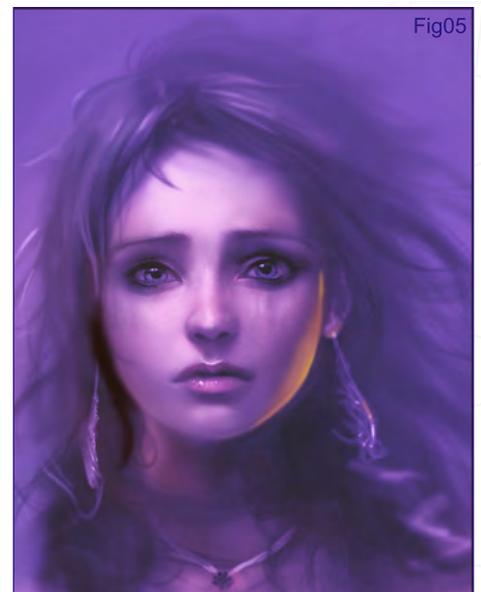
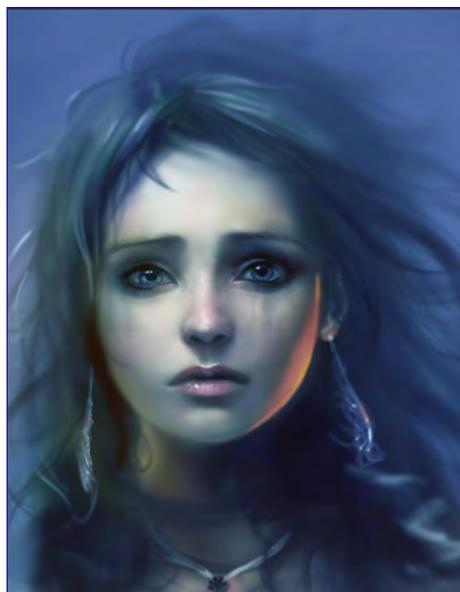
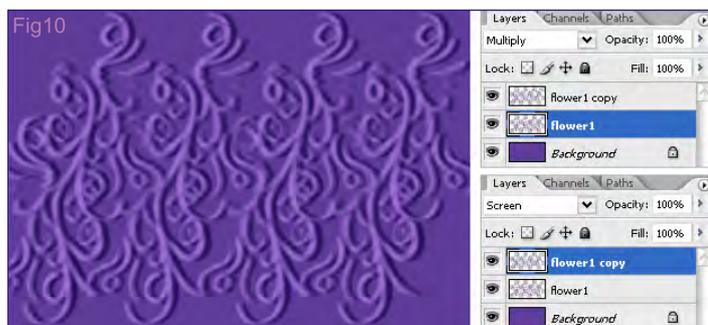
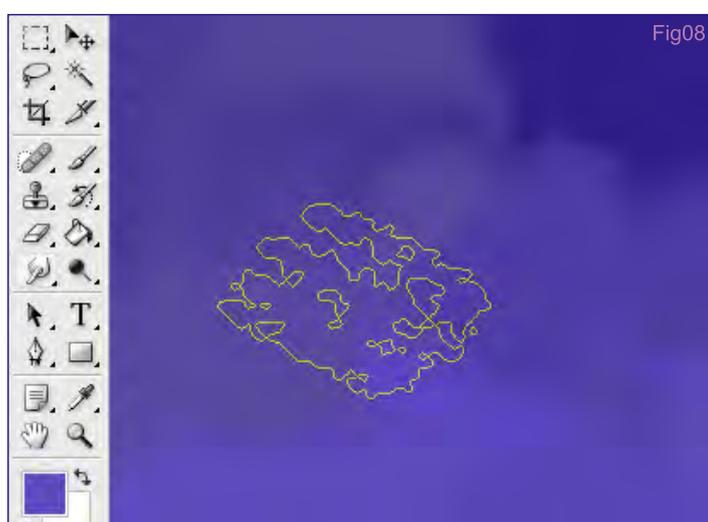
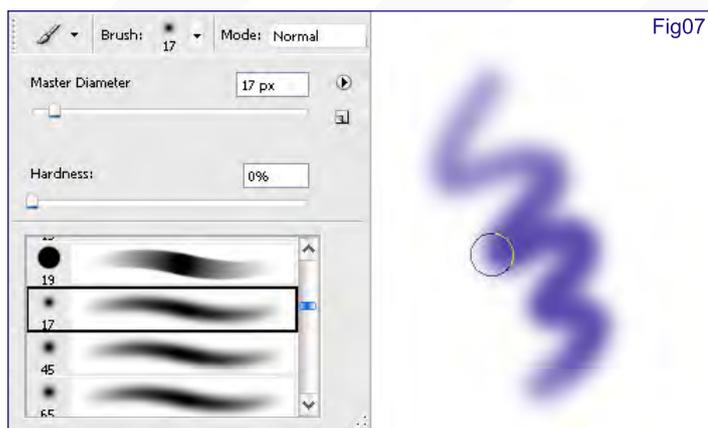


Fig05



Fig06



Background

Then I paint the mist in background. My technique of painting uses Photoshop's brush called "Airbrush Soft Round 17" (Fig07), with which I paint blue, using different shades and tones of the colour to achieve light and purity. I then use the Smudge Tool and a brush called "Chalk 60 pixels" to continue painting the background (Fig08). I have now spent about 15 hours on my picture, because 70% of it has been finished (Fig09).

Decorative Pattern

In my remaining time I add some decorative pattern for the blue skirt. First I draw a pattern on a new layer named "flower1", which I set to Screen





Fig11a



Fig11b

mode. I then set the copy layer named "flower1 copy" to Multiply mode. Don't forget to erase the edges to achieve the right effect (Fig10).

Flying Birds

To make this picture more lively, I will draw a bird under her right hand. Birds' feathers should be drawn carefully, and so I must pay attention to the direction of the light (Fig11a - c).

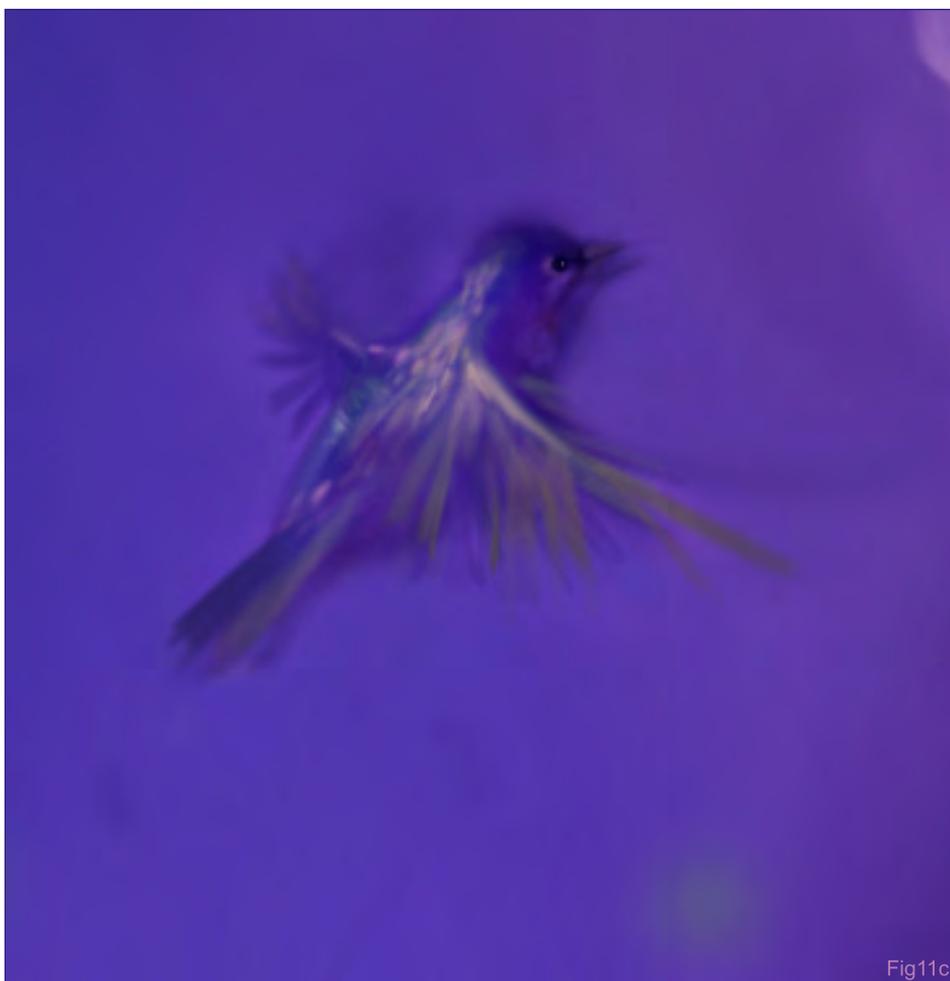


Fig11c

Fig12



Moon and Light

It took me 4 hours to paint the moon and the light held in her hand, which has a glowing emerald inside. I also add some fireflies flying around the light (Fig12 - 13).

Fig13





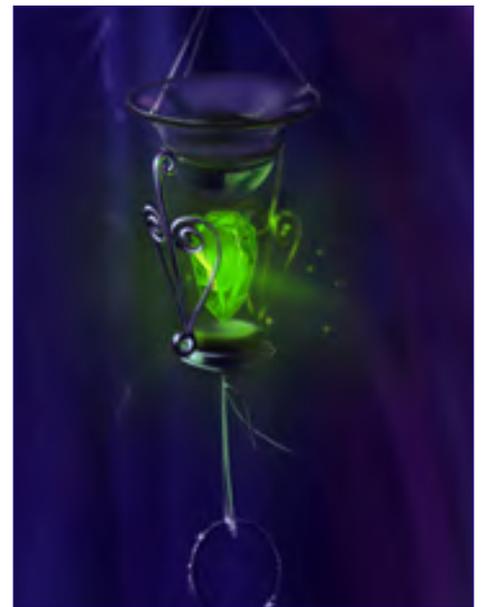
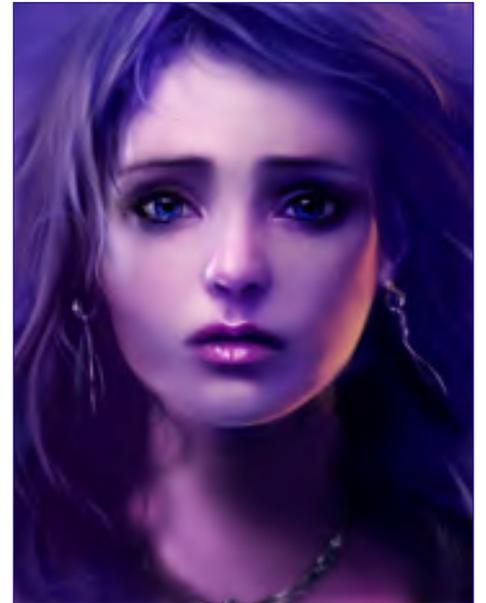
Xiao Bing

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Image by Cole Easturn

Another Rainy Day

For this tutorial I wanted to take people through the process that I go through when painting buildings. In this tutorial I will be showing you how to paint "A Rainy Day" in four easy to follow steps...

"When you are taking your reference, be sure not to use the flash. Using the flash will destroy any kind of lighting scheme you wanted and will also wash out the subject."



Another Rainy Day

Concept

In this tutorial I will be showing you how to paint a rainy day scene without having to paint any weather effects, but rather the feeling will be conveyed purely based around colour, mood, and some reflections on the street. I took the photograph on the right myself, a long time ago. It is a good idea to always shoot your own reference material, because that way you don't have to worry about any copyright issues,

especially if you want to sell your painting. When you are taking your reference, be sure not to use the flash. Using the flash will destroy any kind of lighting scheme you wanted and will also wash out the subject. Now that I have my reference I can get started...

The Block-In (Fig01)

For the most part of this tutorial I will just be using two different brushes for this painting; a round brush and a rectangular brush (I have included my brushes for download at the end of the tutorial). When I am painting from reference material I open the reference and place it next to my canvas. This way I can always look over at the reference while I am painting. I start out by painting in the colour of the sky, and then block in the main silhouettes of the buildings in a dark colour, but not pure black. Right now

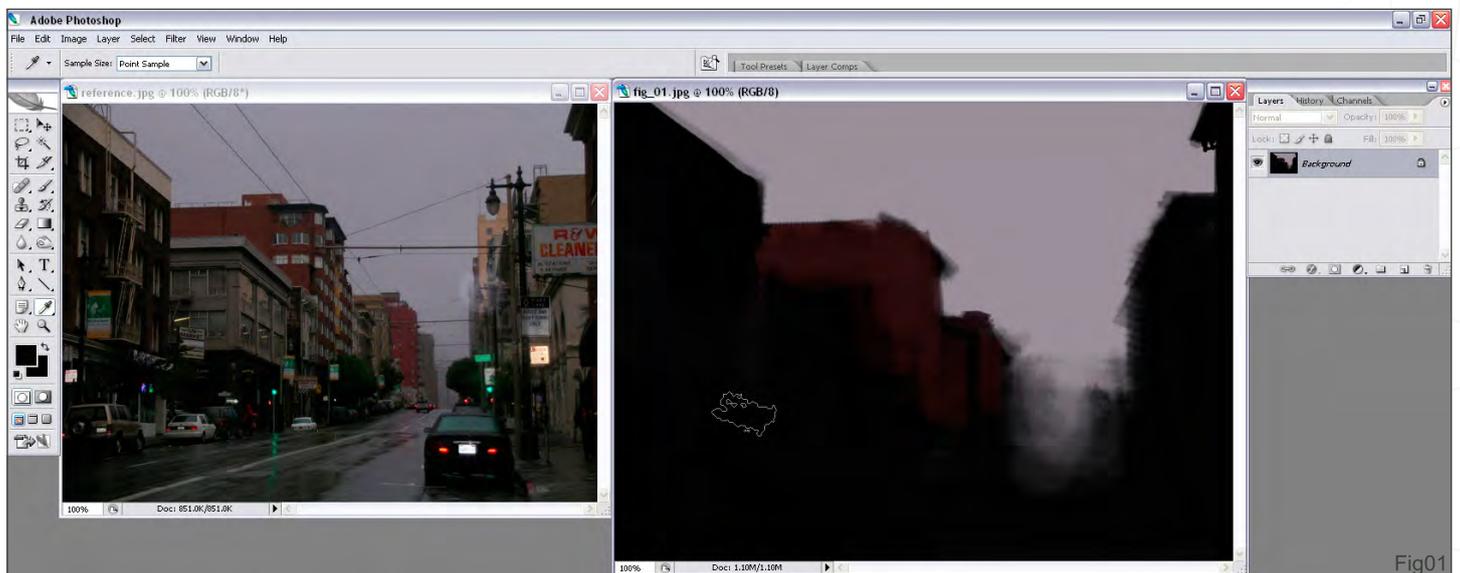


Fig01



Fig02



Fig03



Fig04



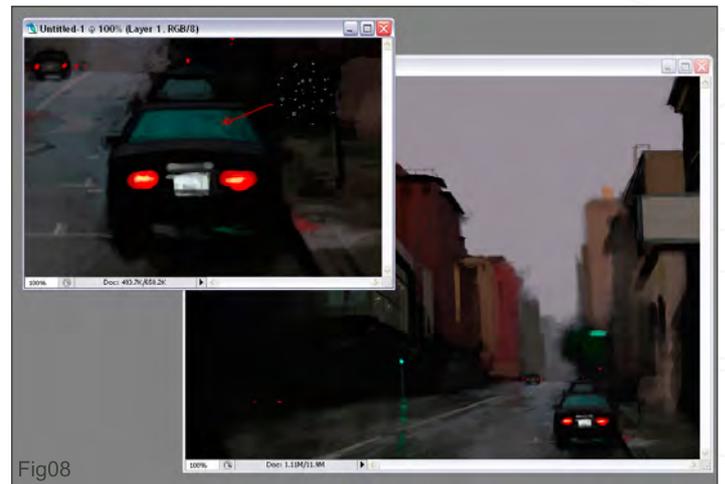
Fig05

I am using the natural, rectangular brush. I like using this brush because it is very versatile in the fact that you can get soft shapes as well as hard edges. You can also rotate the brush to get brush strokes in different directions. After I have all the main shapes in place I need to put in the base colour of the buildings (Fig02 - 03). Using the same brush I paint the buildings in the background with less pressure, as opposed to the buildings in the foreground. Usually things further away are softer, and things closer are sharper. Even when I know a building isn't going to be dark in colour, I will still block in the silhouette as a dark colour because that way I can get some of the dark colour to show through (Fig04). This will give the surface some more texture and depth, otherwise it will look too flat. I continue to work all around the canvas and try not to focus on any one particular element (Fig05). This will allow me to get a greater feel for the image as a whole and not to worry about spending too much time on something, only to have it be out of place or in the wrong perspective.

Adding the Detail

One of the really cool elements in painting a cityscape is the lights (Fig06 - 07). The red tail lights of the cars act as a directional element that lead the viewer's eye throughout the piece. Adding lights will also give your illustration a livelier feel to it, almost as if it were alive itself. The brush I

used to simulate rain droplets on the rear window of the car is a type of speckled brush (Fig08) (I also use this brush a lot when I am painting facial hair on men). The red tail lights look OK right now, but I really wanted them to feel like they were glowing. An easy way to do this is the use the "colour dodge" setting on the brush (Fig09). Do not use the actual Dodge tool because this will desaturate and wash out your painting, but



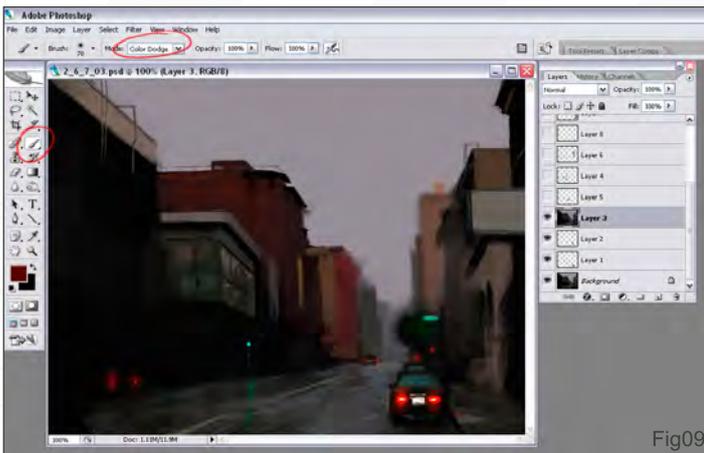


Fig09

instead use the Brush tool, and from the drop down menu select "colour dodge". Using this setting will preserve colour in your painting and will make it glow. I usually pick a darker colour than what I want, because otherwise you will risk over-exposing your image. In order for this to work you will need to use this brush on a layer that has your entire illustration on one layer. If you are working in layers just hit the Ctrl + A hot keys to select the entire canvas, and then again hit Ctrl + Shift + C to copy all layers. Now just hit Ctrl + V to paste the illustration into a new layer. Now you can use the colour dodge brush on this layer. The other brush that I used a lot in this illustration was just a Photoshop, default, round brush, with the Opacity set to Pressure (Fig10 - 12). Using this brush will give me some harder edges than the rectangular brush I used for blocking in the main shapes. Edge control is a very important aspect of a painting, and can cause an illustration to either succeed or fail. Most of the time I use the hard, round brush for when I am painting elements such as railings, poles, and wires. I try not to use the Shift key for drawing straight lines, but instead I just do them freehand. Doing this will give more life to your painting and it won't look so mechanical. Some of the lines look pretty straight, but that is only because I will keep redrawing the same line over and over until I am satisfied with the way it looks. Remember that the Ctrl + Z (Undo) hot keys are your friends. For many of the colours I have been picking colour directly from the photo, simply because it saves a lot of time. I would actually advise against doing this because it



Fig10



Fig11

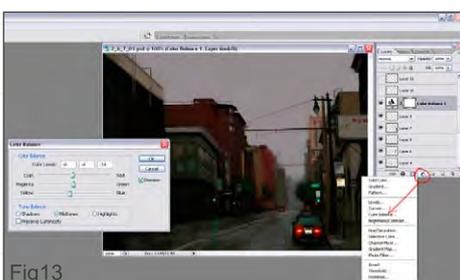


Fig13



Fig12



Fig14



Fig15



Fig16



Fig17

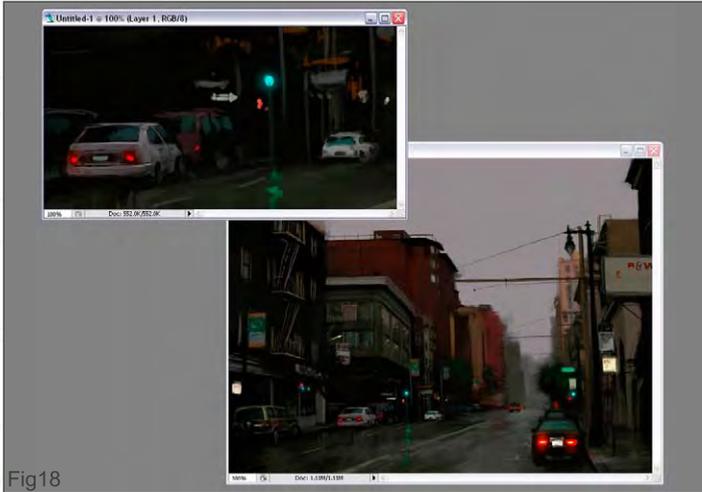
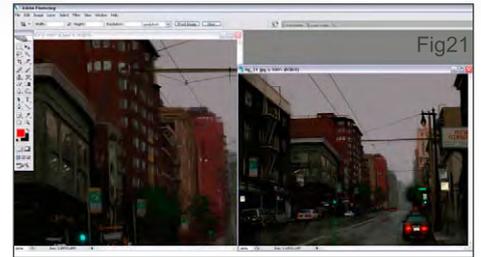
doesn't require any thought. In time you will start to lose the understanding of colour and you will not be able to identify which colour is which. You will begin to catch yourself thinking, "is that colour more blue or yellow?". It is good practice to look at a colour in a photo and try to pick the colour yourself just by looking at it. Also picking colours from a photo is generally bad practice simply because colours in photos are usually not very accurate, and can be washed out or dull. But anyway, I am being bad and colour-picking here! I wanted some more colour harmony in my piece, so I decided to change the Colour Balance of the illustration (Fig13). An easy way to do this without actually changing your painting is by clicking on the half-black, half-white circle at the bottom of your layers palette. Doing this will open up a window in which you can choose different options to change. I chose "Colour Balance." The colour balance dialogue box will open, and it is here that you can change your colours. I pulled the sliders

towards more Yellow, Magenta, and Cyan. You can also change the tonal balance by selecting Shadows, Midtones, and Highlights. It is fun to play around with these different settings.

The Final Touches

All that is left now is to add in some of the final details to the buildings, like the windows, signs, and railings (Fig14 -17). I am also adding in the rest of the cars on the left-hand side. These steps only take a few minutes because I am painting pretty loosely. One of the things I always battle with is how refined I should make the illustration. For this painting I wanted a more painterly feel, and not something that looked too photo realistic. You can see by the detailed shot that the cars are pretty loose, especially the ones that are further away from the viewer (Fig18). Even when I am painting something

this small I still paint zoomed out to about 25%. This allows me to keep things looser, and I can also judge what it will look like zoomed out at the same time. I think the hardest thing that I battled with in this illustration was the sign on the right (Fig19 - 21). Adding lettering to any illustration is tricky, because people like to read things in paintings, and often they take a lot of focus away from the rest of the piece. I didn't want the sign to be too much of a focal point, and I have been avoiding finishing the rest of the text. In the end I finished the text, but I tried to keep the value range between the letters and the background fairly similar so as to not call too much attention to it.



Another Rainy Day

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